

PSONE PC NINTENDO 64 GAME BOY COLOR DREAMCAST PLAYSTATION 2

# VIDEOGAMES

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE



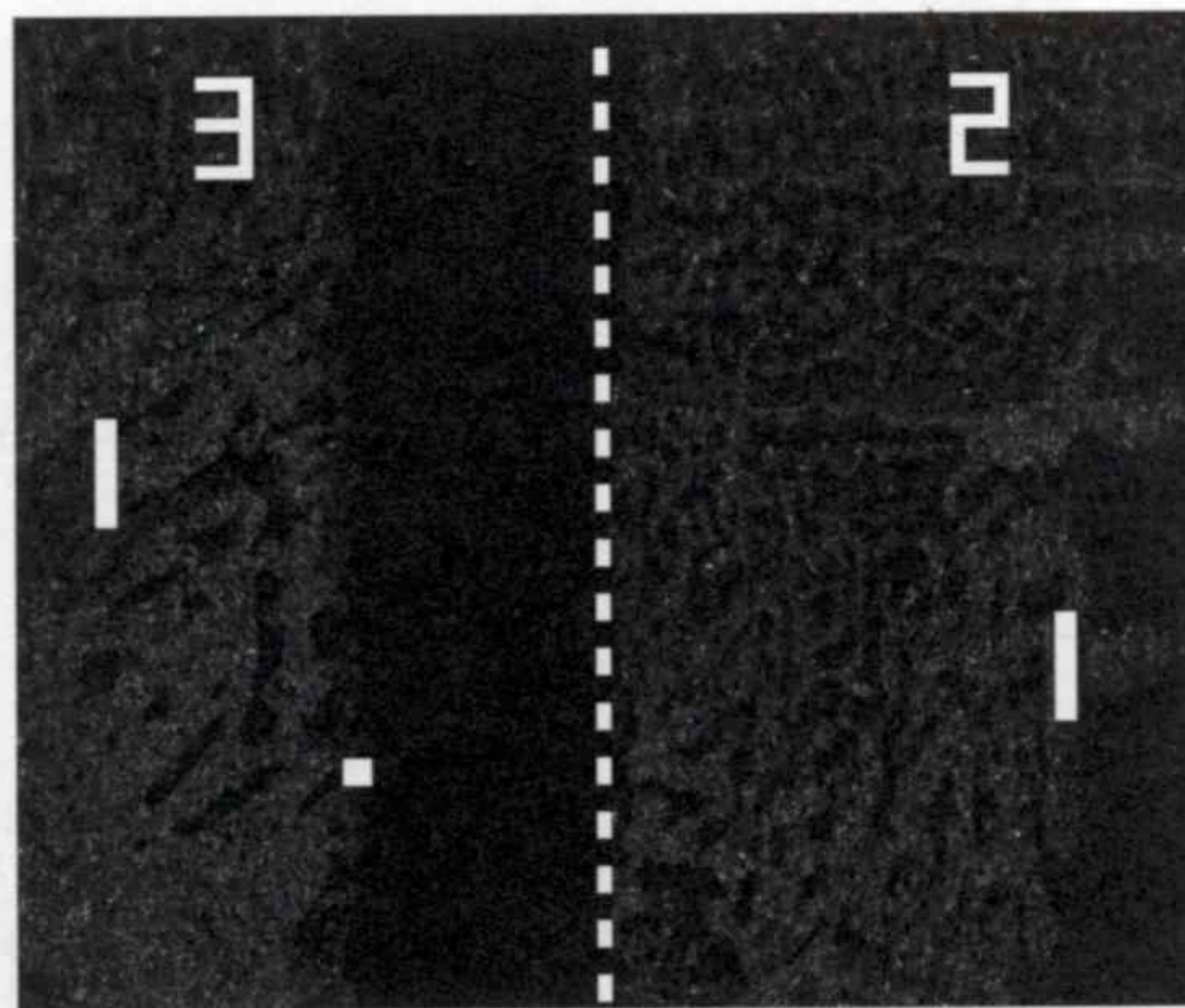
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# VIDEOGAMES

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE



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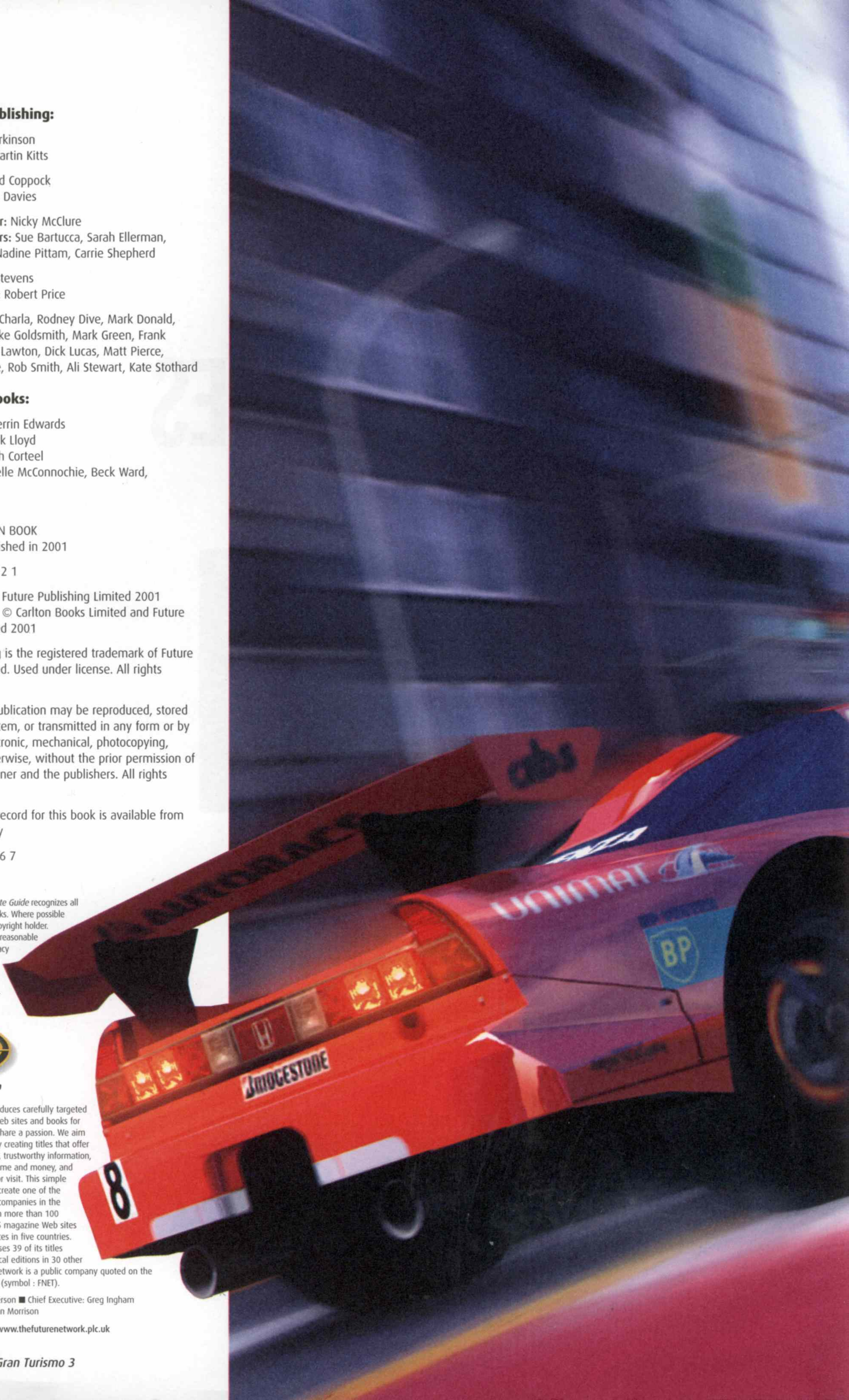
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# VIDEOGAMES

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE



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# CONTENTS

## PSONE



- 08** The gaming success story of the '90s is still going strong. Take a closer look at almost 300 of the best games available.
- 114** Played your games to death? Have some more fun with our challenges. For extras see page 125.
- 126** Check out a host of new games due to arrive in time for Christmas.

## PLAYSTATION2



- 128** Sony's killer machine is soon to celebrate its birthday. Scrutinize 56 of the first games to hit this next-gen console.
- 153** Pit yourself against Sony's überconsole – can you beat the experts?
- 156** Life is just beginning for the PS2 – with years of gaming ahead of it, we preview the best of 2001.

## PC

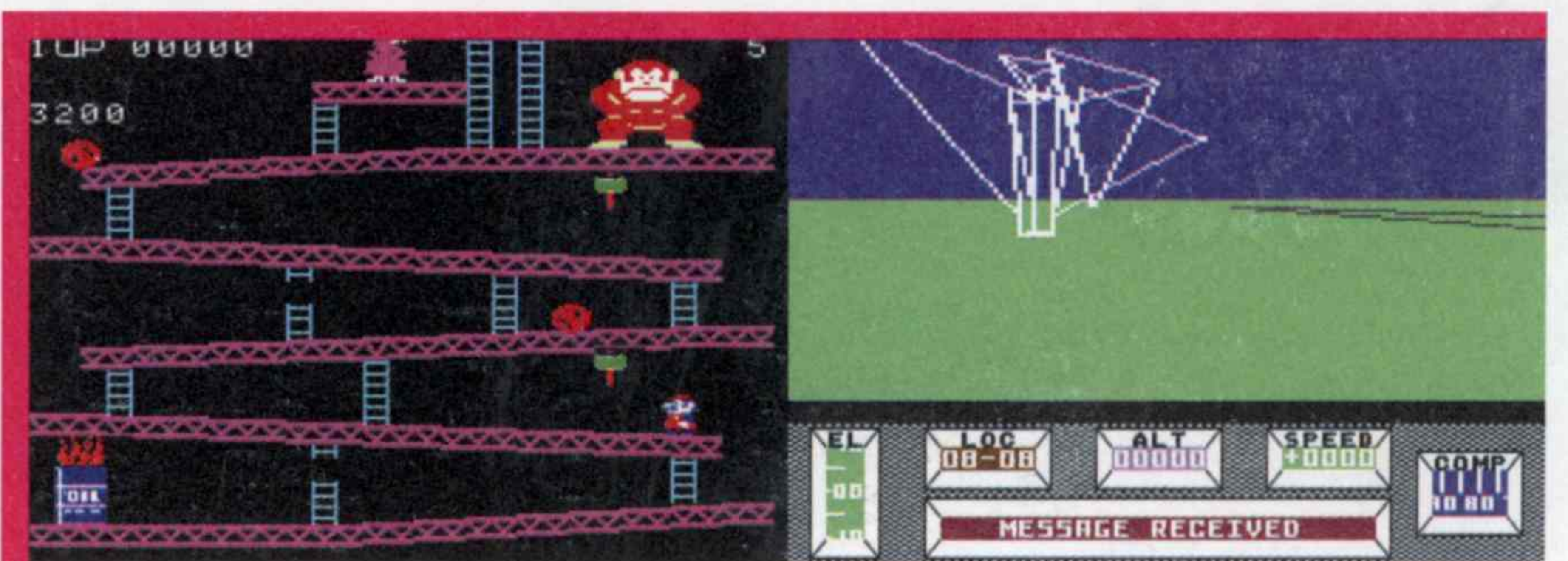


- 160** Forget office apps – if you want gorgeous, gory action and strategy, then check out 288 of the best games ever released.
- 265** Squeeze the juice of goodness from your faves with our challenges.
- 276** The games just keep coming – get excited about the best on offer for the PC this year.

## FOREWORD

- 06** There are a thousand games here – better start at the beginning.

## IN THE BEGINNING



- 370** Though less than three decades old, videogaming has a very cluttered history. Come with us as we rattle the toys in your attic and brush the dust from over 150 classic gaming moments.

## NINTENDO 64



- 279** Immerse yourself in the Technicolor hues of Nintendo's world with more than 70 bundles of N64 gaming joy.
- 308** Ten challenges that fix the world's best shoot-'em-ups in their sights.
- 312** The N64 may be aging, but there's plenty left in Nintendo's arsenal. Check out what's coming soon!

## DREAMCAST



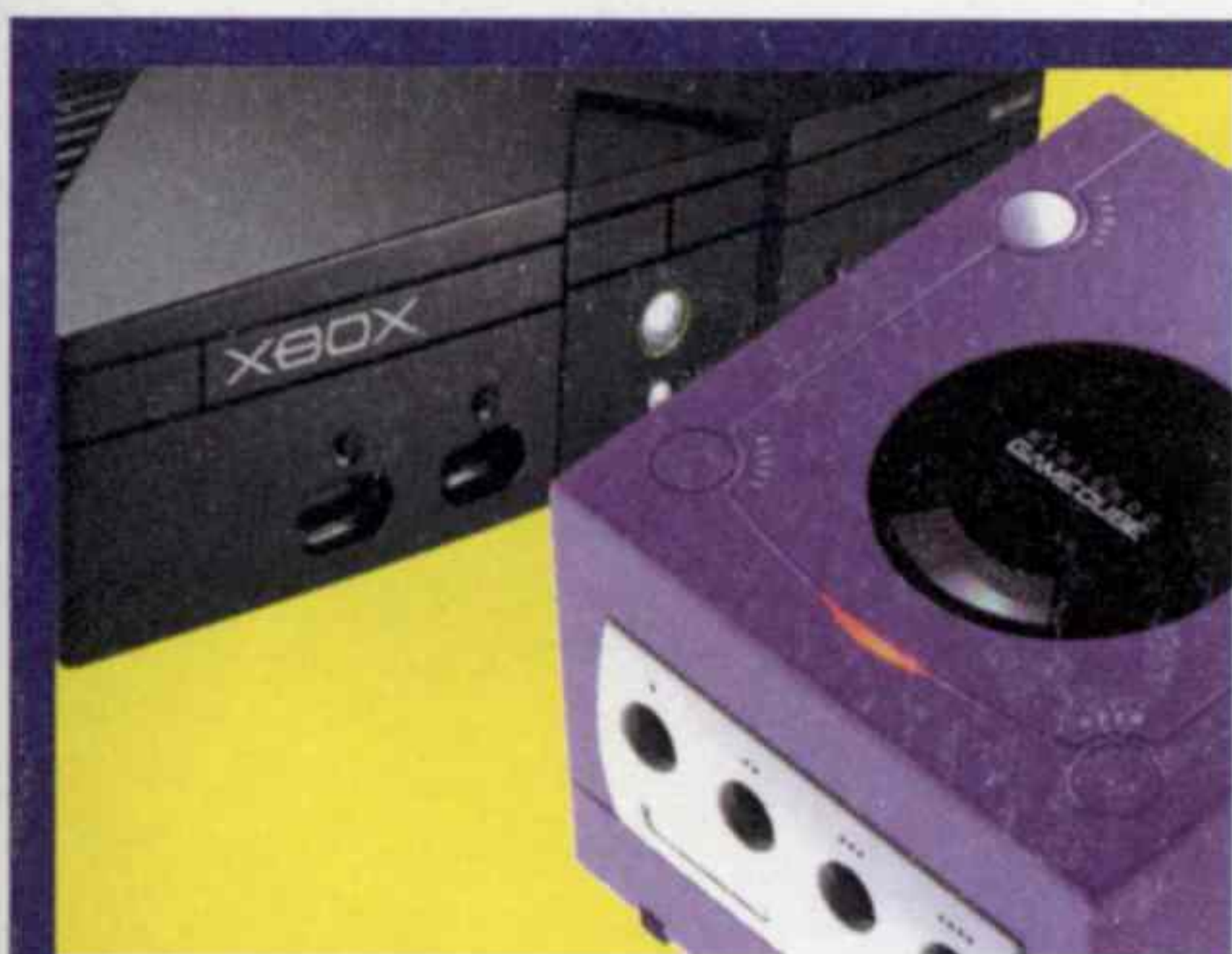
- 313** In its short life, the Dreamcast saw some great games. Make sure you don't miss these 50-plus must-have titles.
- 337** And it's not all over for the Dreamcast yet. Sega may have ended hardware support, but there are still some brilliant DC games in production. Find out what's coming your way.

## GAME BOY COLOR



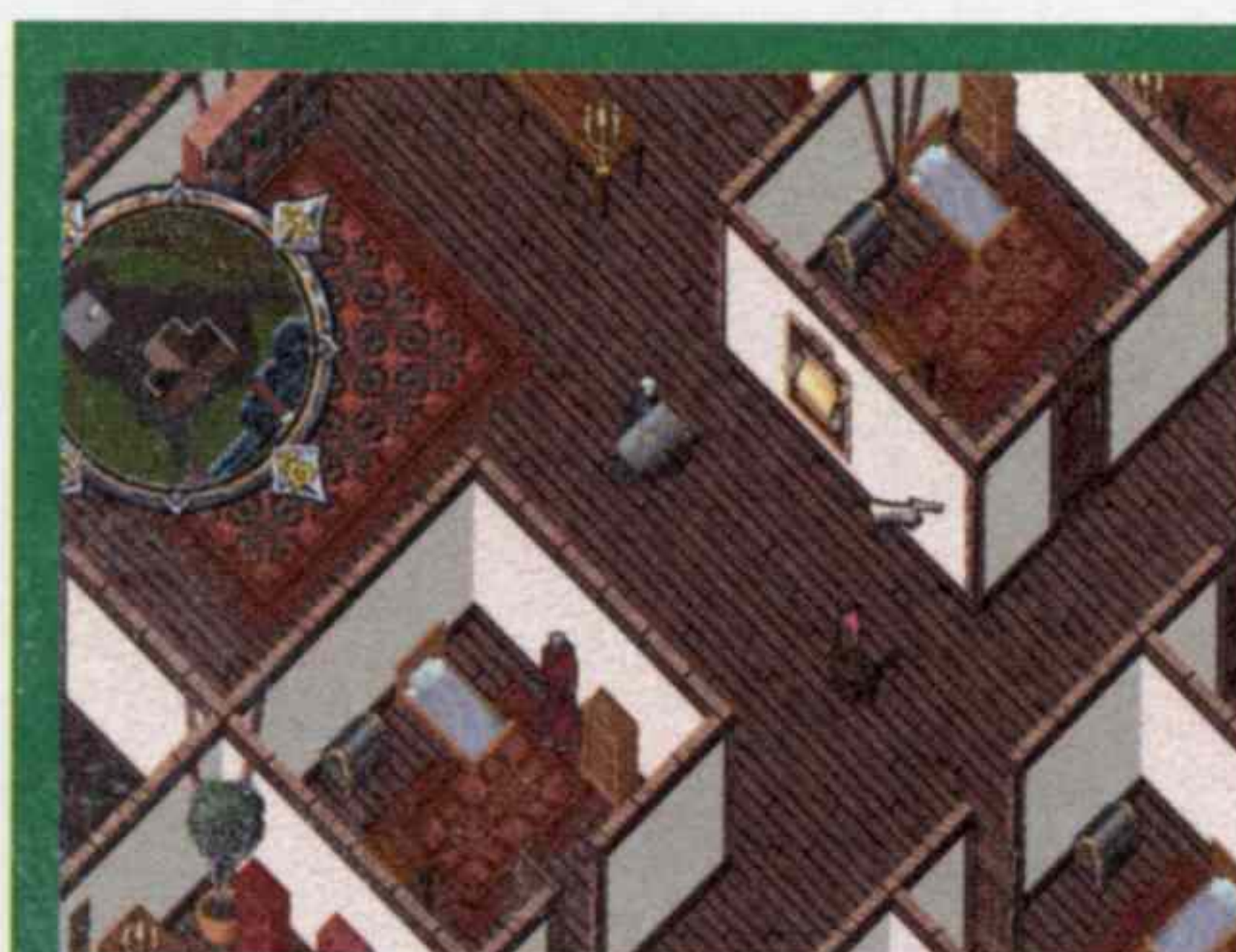
- 338** The oldest of the bunch and still going strong - take a look at the best 79 traveling companions a gamer can carry.
- 364** Push your Game Boy skills to the limit with our fingertip face-off.
- 369** Feast your eyes on the latest incarnation of the Game Boy and look at the games to come...

## THE FUTURE?



- 390** What's coming next? Squint into the future and examine the form of the next big contenders.

## GAMING WEB



- 394** Our guide to the Web's best gaming resources - make sure you've always got the latest info.

## DEVELOPER INFO

- 396** Contact information for all the most important companies on the US gaming scene.

## INDEX

- 397** Looking for something specific? Start here.







## GAME ON...

**Videogames are the entertainment** success story of the last 30 years. From a single arcade machine in a bar in California to a global industry that consistently threatens to eclipse movie and music production in terms of revenue, no one could have predicted this pixelated recreation explosion.

Whether you want to hone your skills and reflexes, or undertake immersive adventures in imaginative new worlds, the videogaming pantheon has something for you.

Since the well-documented beginnings of titles like *Computer Space* and *Pong*, thousands of games have been released – every one an attempt to technically improve upon its peers. They might have started as two white lines and a square “ball” on a black screen, but consistent innovation means that today’s games are just a step away from offering completely realistic, interactive environments. During this evolution gaming systems have come and gone, as have the companies and people that produced them. There have been casualties and success stories, and this is set to continue, as new companies enter the fray, desperate to see some of this amazing action.

So it’s a fantastic time to be a game player. Never has the market been so crowded with top-quality choices. More importantly, the longevity of the PC and consoles like Sony’s PlayStation means that gaming’s back catalogue is starting to look really rosy. No longer are gamers limited to stores stocked with 20 or 30 titles. Now, shelves all over the country are bulging, and there’s a thriving second-hand market, all of which makes choosing the next title for your gaming pleasure more difficult.

And that’s where *Videogames: The Ultimate Guide* comes in. We couldn’t even begin to take a comprehensive look at the titles available for current game systems – over 3,500 have been released in the last six years for just PC and PlayStation, and to cover those two systems alone would equate to a book of around 1,400 pages. What we have wedged in here, however, are reviews of over 1,000 titles for the prominent systems. We hope that we’ve covered the most popular games of the last five years, so that if you can find something for sale, chances are we can tell you what critics from Britain’s best-selling game magazines said about it.

And although it’s a relatively young industry, videogaming already has a nostalgia of its own. We trace a path through 150 classic titles – on platforms from Atari to ZX Spectrum – examining the legacy that made games what they are today.

The aim of *Videogames: The Ultimate Guide* has been to give a picture of the general state of the game industry. If we’ve missed your favorite title, we can only apologize. If we’ve failed to cover a recent release, then that’s because this fantastic industry now moves so fast that the only thing to date faster than a book about it is the PC you play your games on.

So go ahead – read on and immerse yourself in the most exciting home entertainment experience the world has to offer...

Ace Combat 3	10	Criticom	117	LMA Manager 2001	62
Action Man Destruction X	115	Croc 2	35	Lost Vikings 2	119
Actua Golf	10	Crusader: No Remorse	117	Magic Carpet	63
Actua Ice Hockey	11	Danger Girl	35	Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter	63
Actua Soccer 3	11	Darklight Conflict	117	Max Power Racing	119
Actua Tennis	12	Darkstalkers: The Night Warriors	36	MechWarrior 2	119
Adidas Power Soccer	12	Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	36	Medal of Honor Underground	64
Adventures of Lomax	13	Dead or Alive	37	MediEvil 2	64
Air Combat	115	Destruction Derby Raw	37	Megaman X4	119
Akuji the Heartless	13	Die Hard Trilogy 2	38	Metal Gear Solid	65
Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2001	115	Digimon World	117	Micro Machines V3	66
Alien Resurrection	14	Dino Crisis	38	Mike Tyson Boxing	121
Alien Trilogy	14	Dino Crisis 2	39	Monkey Hero	119
All Star Tennis	15	Discworld Noir	39	Monsterseed	120
Alone in the Dark	15	Disruptor	117	Mortal Kombat 3	67
Alundra 2	16	Doom: PlayStation Special Edition	41	Mortal Kombat Special Forces	120
Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis	16	Dragon Valor	117	Moto Racer	120
Ape Escape	17	Driver	40	Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	68
Aqua GT	18	Driver 2	41	MTV Music Generator	69
Armored Core	18	Ducati World	42	Muppet Race Mania	68
Army Men Air Attack 2	115	Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes	43	N2O: Nitrous Oxide	120
Army Men Sarge's Heroes	116	Duke Nukem: Time to Kill	42	Namco Museum Vol. 1	120
Army Men World War	116	Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home	43	Namco Museum Vol. 2	120
Assault Rigs	116	Dynasty Warriors	44	Namco Museum Vol. 3	120
Azure Dreams	19	Epidemic	118	Namco Museum Vol. 4	120
BallBlazer	19	Excalibur 2555AD	118	Namco Museum Vol. 5	120
Ball Breakers	67	Exhumed	45	NASCAR 2000	120
Battle Arena Toshinden 3	20	F1 2000	47	NBA Jam Extreme	121
Beach Volleyball	20	Fade to Black	45	NBA Live 2001	121
Beatmania	21	Fear Effect 2	46	Need for Speed	69
Bio Freaks	21	FIFA 2001	46	Need for Speed: V-Rally	104
Bishi Bashi Special	22	Fighting Force 2	47	NFL Blitz 2000	70
Black Dawn	116	Final Fantasy IX	49	NHL '98	121
Blast Radius	116	Final Fantasy VII	48	Nightmare Creatures II	70
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	22	Final Fantasy VIII	49	No Fear Downhill Mountain Bike Racing	121
Bloody Roar 2: Bringer of the New Age	23	Fisherman's Bait 3	118	Nuclear Strike	71
Bomberman	23	FoxKids.com Micro Maniacs	66	O.D.T.	72
Bomberman Fantasy Racing	24	Frogger	50	Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	71
Bravo Air Race	115	Future Cop: LAPD	50	Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	121
Break Point	116	G-Darius	51	Pandemonium 2	72
Breath of Fire III	24	G-Police	51	PaRappa the Rapper	73
Broken Sword	25	Gauntlet Legends	118	Parasite Eve 2	74
Bubble Bobble 2	25	Gex: Deep Cover Gecko	52	Pocket Fighter	121
Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters	116	Ghost in the Shell	118	Point Blank	74
Burstrick Wake Boarding	116	Glover	52	Populous: The Beginning	75
Bushido Blade	26	Gran Turismo	54	Porsche Challenge	75
Bust A Groove	26	Gran Turismo 2	55	Poy Poy 2	121
Bust-a-Move 4	27	Grandia	53	Pro 18 World Tour Golf	121
Buster Bros. Collection	93	GTA: London 1969	53	Project X2	76
C-12: Final Resistance	27	Gunship 2000	118	Psybadek	76
Carnage Heart	28	Harvest Moon Back to Nature	54	Quake II	77
Casper	116	Heart of Darkness	56	R-Type Delta	77
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	28	Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy	56	Rage Racer	78
Chessmaster II	116	Hogs of War	57	Rampage Through Time	78
Chicken Run	117	Hot Shots Golf 2	44	Rat Attack	79
Chocobo Racing	29	Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	118	Ray Crisis	121
Circuit Breakers	30	Incredible Crisis	57	Ray Tracers	122
Civilization II	30	International Track & Field 2000	58	Rayman	79
Colin McCrae Rally 2.0	31	ISS Pro Evolution 2	59	Razor Freestyle Scooter	118
Colony Wars III: Red Sun	117	Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster	118	Ready 2 Rumble	82
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	32	Jet Moto	118	Resident Evil	80
Contender	105	Jumping Flash	58	Resident Evil 2	81
Contra: Legacy of War	117	Kensei: Sacred Fist	119	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	81
Cool Boarders 4	32	Kick Off '97	119	Resident Evil: Survivor	82
Courier Crisis	117	King's Field	119	Ridge Racer	83
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn Express	29	Klonoa: Door to Phantomile	60	Ridge Racer Revolution	83
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	33	Kurushi Final	60	Ridge Racer Type 4	84
Crash Bash	33	Legacy of Kain Soul Reaver	61	Rival Schools	85
Crash Team Racing	34	Lemmings 3D	62	Road Rash 3D	85
Creature Shock	34	Live Wire!	119	Rollaway	119

# PSONE



Rollcage	86	Tomb Raider II	123
Rugrats: Studio Tour	122	Tomb Raider III	123
Sentinel Returns	86	Tomb Raider Chronicles	100
Sheep	122	Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	100
Silent Hill	87	Tomorrow Never Dies	123
Soul Blade	88	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	101
Soviet Strike	88	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	102
Space Hulk Vengeance of the Blood Angels		Top Gun: Fire at Will	101
	122	Toshinden 4	103
Speed Punks	89	Total Drivin'	123
Spider-Man	89	Total Eclipse	123
Spyro Year of the Dragon	90	Toy Story Racer	123
Star Wars Demolition	90	Twisted Metal	124
Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace		Ultimate Parodius Deluxe	124
	91	Um Jammer Lammy	103
Street Fighter Alpha 3	91	Vagrant Story	124
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	92	Vandal-Hearts	104
Street Sk8er 2	92	Vegas Casino	124
Strider 2	93	Vib Ribbon	105
Suikoden II	122	Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	106
Supersonic Racers	94	Virtual Pool	106
Tekken	94	Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98	124
Tekken 2	95	WCW Backstage Assault	107
Tekken 3	96	WCW/NWO Thunder	124
Tempest X3	96	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 2nd Ed.	
Tenchu 2: Birth of the Assassins	97		107
Test Drive 6	122	Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits	124
The Bombing Islands	122	Wing Over 2	108
The Grinch	122	Wipeout	109
The Misadventures of Tron Bonne	122	Wipeout XL	109
The Next Tetris	123	Wipeout 3 Special Edition	110
The Simpsons Wrestling	122	Worms	111
The World Is Not Enough	123	Worms Armageddon	111
The X-Files	124	Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style	112
Theme Hospital	123	WWF Smackdown 2	112
Three Lions	123	WWF Wrestlemania	113
Time Crisis	97	X-COM: Terror From the Deep	124
Time Crisis: Project Titan	98	X-Men Mutant Academy	108
Tobal No.1	98	Xena: Warrior Princess	124
Tomb Raider	99	Zero Divide	113

If you're trying to establish exactly what it was that took gaming in to the mainstream, you really need to look to Sony's gray *wunderkind*.

The PlayStation was Sony's first move into the videogame market, and arose following the company's ill-fated dalliance with Nintendo and SNES peripherals in the late '80s and early '90s. From here, Sony decided to forge ahead with its own system, and the 32-bit console, backed by a roster of some of the best third-party developers in the industry, was soon set to smash all before it.

Released in 1994, more than six million PlayStations now nestle beneath televisions in houses all over the country. The machine's reincarnation as the diminutive PSOne in September 2000 has lent portability to the platform and ensured its continuing success, as people are now able to take fully realized versions of their favorite games on the road.

All-told, over 1,500 games have been released for the PlayStation, and this is certainly part of the key to its success. It doesn't matter whether you want five minutes of cutesy puzzling or hours of the gore-spattered antics offered by the finest survival horror – PlayStation's got the lot in abundance.

What follows are reviews of almost 300 significant games for PlayStation. Some, like the *Tekken* series, are gaming classics, others like the much-talked-about *Metal Gear Solid* are true originals. You'll also find a couple of real lemons – games that failed to make the grade – and they're in here so that you can make informed decisions when you're adding to your collection.

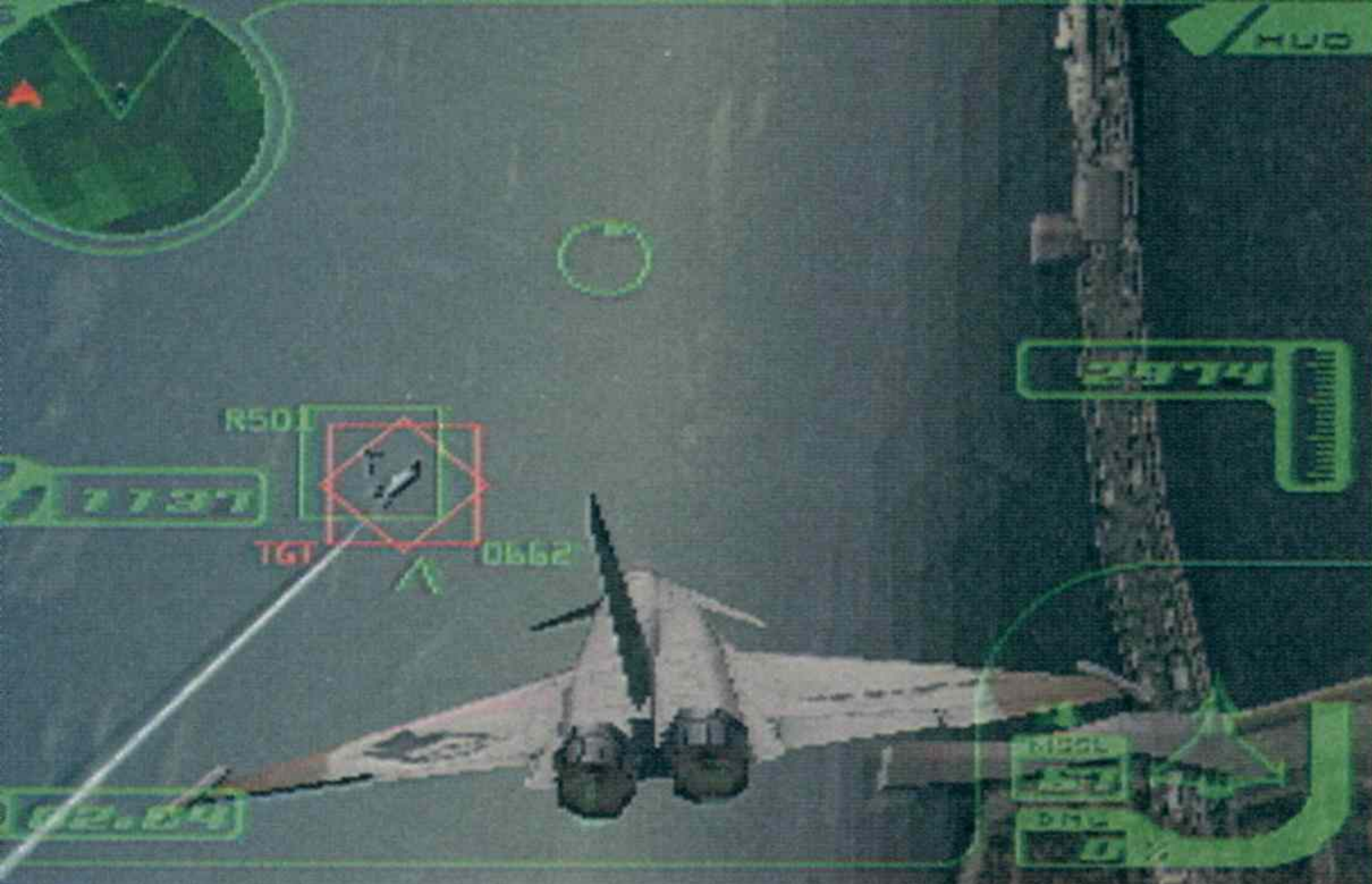
It's been an amazing first seven years for the PlayStation, and there's plenty of life in the little gray upstart yet. Once you've checked out the reviews, head over to page 126 for a glimpse into PlayStation's future.



The games reviewed broadly fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



The following reviews are mainly based on those that appeared in *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.



# ACE COMBAT 3



**Simplistic and straightforward**, *Ace Combat 3* consists of a variety of one-off missions, playable in an assortment of high-tech fun-planes. You don't have to know the principles of air combat. You don't have to understand how to navigate between two waypoints. Whereas a real F-16 typically has a payload of six air-to-air missiles, Namco's F-16 can invisibly carry upwards of 80.

The planes include the F-15, F-16, MiG-33, SR71 Blackbird and a futuristic spaceplane. Each has its own *Ridge Racer*-style ratings – attack, power, mobility, stability and defense.

But, like *Ace Combat 2* before it, this sequel-too-far is repetitive, uninspiring and undemanding. While the missions vary in design and content (from destroying parachutes and tanks to blasting satellites in low Earth orbit), *AC3's* mix of air and ground gun-foolery depresses with each passing mission. Despite its three difficulty ratings (Easy, Normal and Hard) there's nothing ace about *Ace Combat 3*. Ultimately, if you stay in the air and point your chosen aircraft at the designated targets, you can finish each mission in about five minutes, no matter which difficulty level you play on.

We had hoped for a little more depth and a touch more intelligence from the computer AI. But despite its good looks and PC-style flight-sim facade, you'll be lucky if *Ace Combat 3* lasts you more than a day.

■ Each featured aircraft, while different in name and shape, handles with the same up/down/left/right simplicity – afterburners to speed up, airbrake to slow down, rudder controls to perform a *Quake*-style aerial sidestep.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Missions are interspersed with the odd cut scene or interactive test

### LOW:

Undemanding gameplay and lifespan

# 03/10

# ACTUA GOLF



**More a simulation** than an arcade romp, *Actua Golf's* motion capture is pretty much dead-on throughout. The players are quirky. They pump their arms with glee and swish their clubs in annoyance after missing an easy putt. And it's great the way they pick the ball out of the hole and casually salute the crowd.

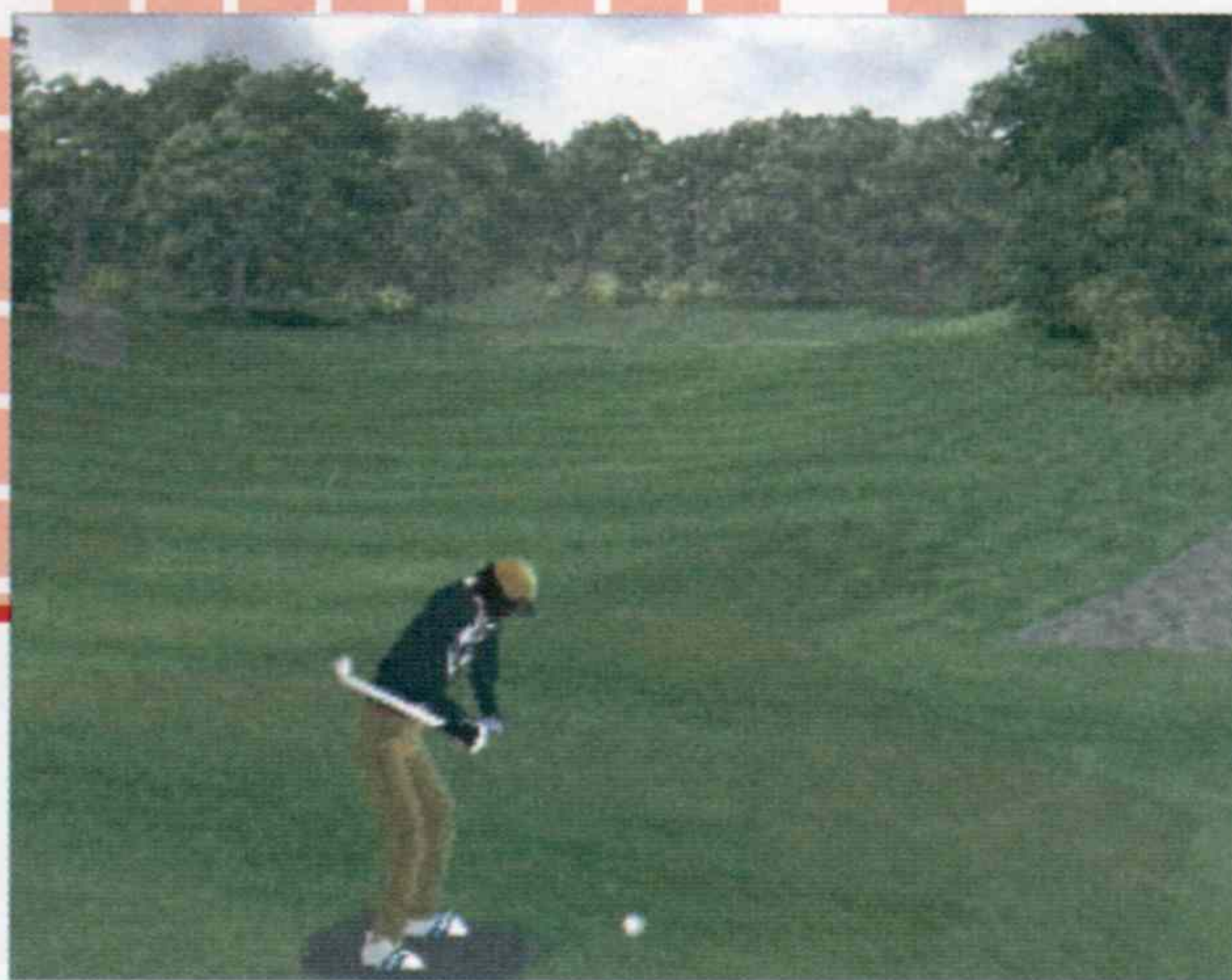
Both the courses are fictional: one is set in Scotland, the other in the United States. The graphics are very nice and the camera dynamics are vast; essentially, you can survey your shot from any angle, and if any angle isn't good enough, then you can customize one.

Peter Alliss delivers the relaxed patter, and his comments add greatly to the golf. You may find yourself desperate to make contact with the ball just to prevent him from giving you a hard time.

Despite the finery, *Actua Golf* bows to computer golfing tradition. You've got wind to assess, a swingometer to tackle and you bash ⊗ three times to make the shot – just like in almost every other game. And all forms of competition are on offer, from practice to stroke and matchplay, fourball, skins and the amateur and professional tours where you compete for cash and trophies.

*Actua Golf* provides some slow-moving sporting satisfaction.

■ There are arcs and grids to help the beginner. You need these because *Actua* is tough, even in Amateur mode. As the Swingometer whooshes around to the clicking line, the margin for error is slight. Whack it to either side and the ball will hook or slice horribly.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Gremlin Interactive

### DEVELOPER:

Gremlin Interactive

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Excellent commentary from Peter Alliss

### LOW:

Tough to start with

# 08/10

# ACTUA ICE HOCKEY



**This Olympic ice hockey** game features all the national teams that

compete in the event. The front end has a wealth of options and menus, and enables you to play a full Olympic competition, a friendly match between any two teams, and create your own customized league or tournament. Notably, it also enables you to practice a variety of situations that tend to appear in most games of ice hockey, from simple one-on-one shooting practice to face-offs and breakaways.

The problems don't really begin until you get into a game. For a start, the graphics are a bit of a washout. Although the polygonal players aren't too bad to look at, and their animations are reasonable, the whole game moves a bit too sluggishly for comfort. It's not exactly jerky, but it's far from super-smooth, either. Then there's the sound. This commentary is one of the worst around.

Finally, we come to the way the game plays. The computer players are sometimes staggeringly stupid, the goal-tenders refuse to get involved in the action at all and scoring is a very hit-and-miss affair. Despite all this, *Actua Ice Hockey* isn't a total disaster; it's just very average.

■ Want more teams? Go to the main menu and press and hold **Ⓟ + Ⓜ + Ⓞ** for a few seconds until you hear a noise. You can now play with the Sheffield Steelers and the Gremlin All-Stars.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Gremlin

### DEVELOPER:

Gremlin

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Good practice possibilities

### LOW:

Simplistic, with slow graphics and a bad soundtrack

# 06/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Gremlin

### DEVELOPER:

Gremlin

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-8

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Plenty of options and good commentary

### LOW:

Stiff, awkward players and stilted movement

# 06/10

# ACTUA SOCCER 3



**Compared to the large players** in *ISS Pro* and the smaller but detailed pros in the *FIFA* series, *Actua Soccer 3*'s chunky renditions of Michael Owen, Ravanelli, *et al* coincidentally mirror the gameplay: robust and ungainly.

The biggest problem lies within. The *Actua Soccer* series has never been blessed with the most instinctive control system, but it was designed when other soccer games were also finding their feet. The passing and shooting system is simple but overstated, as passes ping around with no apparent use of momentum. An *Actua* pass is all or nothing: it either reaches its target or stops dead. Shooting is similarly afflicted, although advances have been made so that aftertouch and first-time shots are now easier to pull off, if still visually unimpressive.

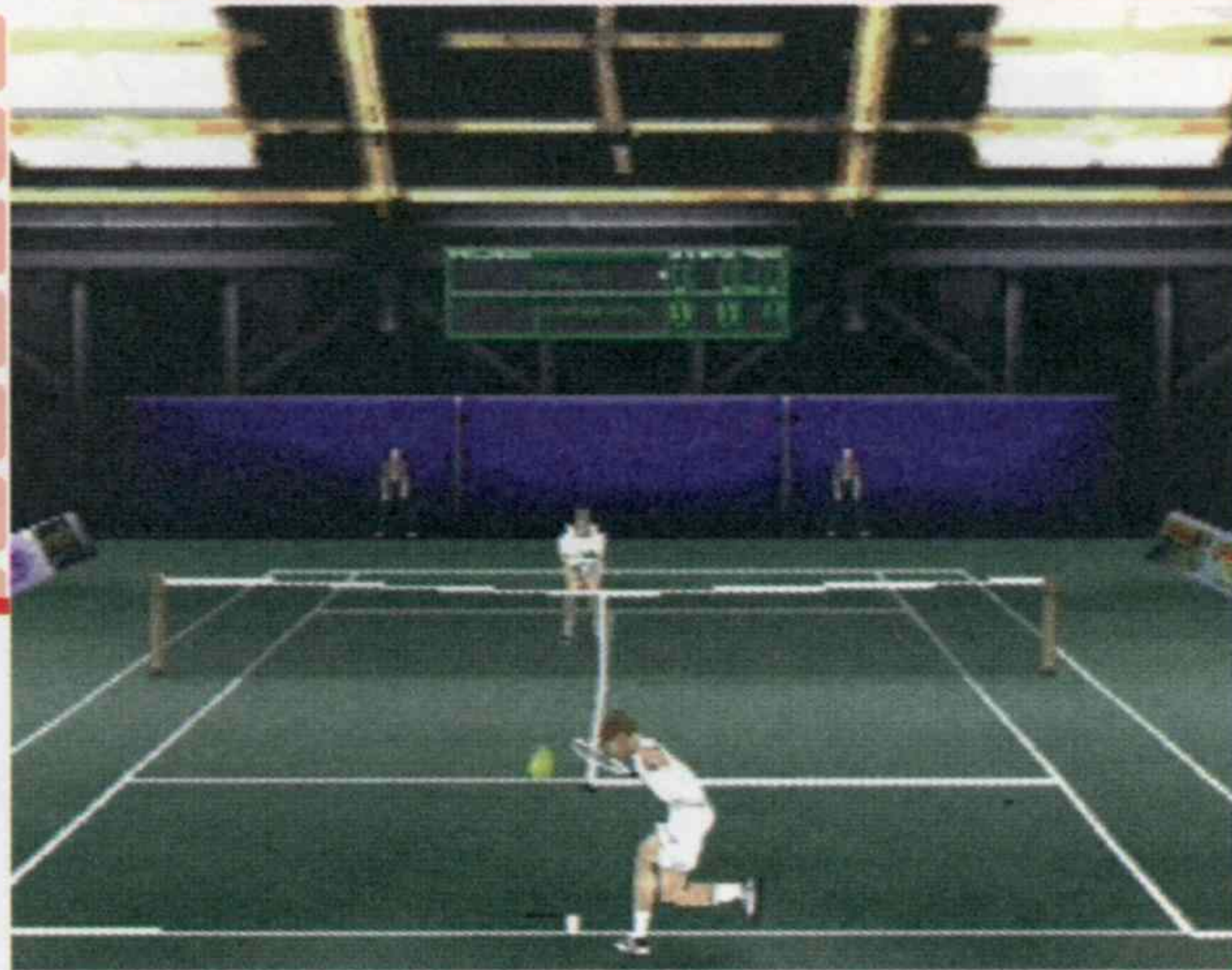
Compounding the dated feel is an unwieldy camera system. *Actua 3* uses a rigid and ineffective panning system, while distant replays often manage to miss the odd moment of genuine skill.

We really cannot stress enough that, as a simple arcade game, *Actua Soccer 3* is fine – just very limited. Presentation alone cannot save a game, and *Actua Soccer 3* is, sadly, the PlayStation equivalent to the ex-pro pundit: once a major player, but now more of a shadow of its former self.

■ *Actua Soccer 3* features commentary from Leicester's Martin O'Neill, and his criticism of missed shots is on par with some of his best comments during the BBC's World Cup coverage.



# ACTUA TENNIS



**Considering that tennis was** the first game ever to be converted into computerized form with the seminal *Pong*, it really ought to be easy to produce the ultimate video-age racket sport simulation. But Gremlin's *Actua Tennis* takes the idea of an enjoyable game of PlayStation tennis a few steps back beyond the service line.

The 3D environment and motion-captured animation are certainly good starting points, but it's all let down by the appallingly sluggish pace and ludicrously unrealistic action. Players skate across the court like they're playing tennis on ice, and there are too many laughably unrealistic time lags. You can press the strike button and see the ball go back towards the opponent before finally seeing your player go through the motions of attempting a shot. It's frustrating.

On top of these cosmetic faults, the gameplay falls a long way short of perfection; the game's worst fault is that it is just plain boring. Given a little time and some mastery of the basic shots, it may manage to raise your heart rate above a state of basic repose, but it's a long way from the dangerously high levels of adrenaline that ought to be generated by a great sports game.

■ *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis* is the game to go for if you're craving a *really* enjoyable game of tennis on the PlayStation.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Gremlin

**DEVELOPER:**

Gremlin

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Lots of options

**LOW:**

Unconvincing animation

05/10



# ADIDAS POWER SOCCER



**You may feel a bit unsure** of *Adidas Power Soccer* at first. The players run in a slightly bizarre manner, their legs trudging rather than bounding along, and it all seems a bit one-paced. Then you realize there is a "speed burst" feature, and the game grows on you. Pretty soon you're whooping with delight at the outrageous high tackles (read "assault") and bragging about your ability to execute a back heel.

There are two ways to play - Simulation and Arcade. The former, while incorporating some special moves, is a more faithful reproduction of the game, but it's in the latter option where *APS* really excels, simply because there isn't anything else quite like it. Both modes utilize long and short pass-to-feet features, which help you build up confidence. You can also speed up, back heel, head, overhead kick, slide tackle and produce power shots. But, and it's a significant "but," each player has a power bar that lessens as you perform these maneuvers. So, for instance, you may use a defender to bolt the length of the field, but after that, his bar will be empty - no more fancy moves.

With Brian Moore's outraged commentary accompanying the action ("The referee's in danger of losing control of this game"), this ridiculously entertaining soccer game sits neatly alongside *Actua Soccer's* more sober approach.

■ If you're playing in the Arcade mode and you press **⊙ + ⊙**, the player in possession takes off like a shot, speeding around the field, leaving a trail of blue stars like the fairy does at the start of *Wonderful World of Disney*.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

*Adidas Power Soccer* has just about every move imaginable

**LOW:**

The English team names are made up

08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Psygnosis

### DEVELOPER:

Psygnosis

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Plenty of levels

### LOW:

Pretty perfunctory platform perils

# 05/10

# ADVENTURES OF LOMAX



**There is a *Lemmings* connection here:** there are lemmings all over the place, although they've turned bad under the influence of Evil Ed. Lemming type speech is in evidence, as are the lemmings' abilities to dig, hover and so on. But frankly, there is little digging or building to be had here. Apart from a minor drain on the old gray cells, you're left with an awful lot of ledge jumping, coin collecting and landing on baddies.

*Lomax* looks fantastic. You're treated to a wealth of lush graphical trickery, from rotating sprites and transparency to four layers of parallax and scaling scenery. And yes, it's quite challenging, but this game was released in the age of *Crash Bandicoot*, and it should really offer more than swinging platforms, rolling barrels and bouncing catapults.

The biggest shame of all is that it follows the same old platform-game structure that some people have been playing for over 10 years. Fall off a ledge into the wilderness of off-screen and you start from the last save point; lose all your lives and you have to go through the whole thing again (groan) for level after level.

*Adventures of Lomax* could have been one of the smartest proponents of the platform genre – it's just a shame that it came out about two years too late.

■ *Lomax* can drown in water, so he needs a little assistance to stay afloat. Fortunately, there are handy barrels available nearby, so simply shove the nearest one into the water and off you go.



# AKUJI THE HEARTLESS



### Graven images glower

at you from pools of boiling blood, twisted vines bedeck the steps of deserted temples and sputtering torches light your way into the darkness – this is a good 3D game. Character-wise it's pretty accomplished, too, introducing you to grim reapers in snappy red robes, legless torsos armed with a stinger where their spine used to be and all manner of miscreations. It's not perfect, though; the views and controls do occasionally go AWOL, but there's no denying it's a pleasure to play.

*Akuji* is one of those games that leads you by the nose from area to area, each runestone acting as keys to open up a new set of chambers. The puzzles are basic, too, mostly consisting of shifting the odd block or firing at a lofty switch. While the game shows no inclination to let you explore more broadly, the puzzles and platformy bits get tougher as you progress. In terms of gameplay there's very little you could call original in here, yet there's something agreeably straightforward about it all. The no-nonsense spell system is particularly classy with easily identifiable pick-ups, a first-person view for aiming projectile spells and lots of defensive, close-range sorcery.

If you like the idea of *Tomb Raider*, but find that in practice it's too frustrating, *Akuji* will appeal. You don't need to spend hours with it to have fun.

■ *Akuji*'s magic system is simple but effective. Simply pick up skull-shaped spells, flick between them using **△** and then blast away.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Crystal Dynamics

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Sinister. Gory. Great

### LOW:

Not very original

# 08/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Fox Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Argonaut

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# ALIEN RESURRECTION

**It's a dream recipe:** big spaceships, unerringly homicidal monsters and scenery-shattering weaponry. There's even an intro screen that demands you play it in the dark (and to back it up there's a carefully designed option to adjust your TV brightness to achieve maximum spook effect).

Adding to the spookiness is the deliberate claustrophobia created by the rarely changing environment. It's corridor after corridor, up ladders, down ladders, wriggling through flickering vent shafts and negotiating scalding steam-bursts. There's no skiddy snow level, no outside parts, no relief. Unfortunately, puzzles are standard lever-pulls and switch-throws and there's no jarring combination locks or tedious logic problems, but the effect of never taking the player outside the overall task makes the ship feel more like a real space.

This ain't no fragfest either. Argonaut has cranked up the nervous tension by keeping the firepower precious. You have to hunt behind crates, in dark corners, down ominous dead-ends. Alien attacks are

almost always surprising, quick and, best of all, intelligent. You might hear a nearby hiss, a thud against a wall, an urgent bleep on the motion-scanner. Adult aliens leap from wall to wall, attack in mass ambushes, zig-zag and charge at you from behind.

The clunkier aspects of the game – controls that are tough to grasp and graphics that look ugly on close-ups – are mostly obscured by ace attention to detail and classy production values.

■ The voice of the game – Father, the ship's computer – is provided by original actor Steven Gilborn.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Player movement is perfect – no detached gliding

**LOW:**  
Not enough save points for a game of this difficulty

08/10



# ALIEN TRILOGY

**You start off** with a mission brief and then you stalk, kill, open secret doors, discover secret areas by blasting thin walls, upgrade your arsenal and earn your spurs.

One significant difference *Trilogy* has from the likes of *Doom* (see p41) is a motion sensor. Little white dots appear on it to tell you something bad is going to attack you. This serves to heighten the tension, particularly if the foe is a face-hugger; because they scamper along ventilation shafts, a white dot next to you on the scanner doesn't necessarily mean you can see the little devil.

Whereas *Doom* gives you time to settle in, there's trouble round the first bend in *Trilogy* – a face-hugger comes scooting over the top of the stairs. Once you hit the third stage you really have to sneak the corridors with care. It's hard. *Alien Trilogy* has got some 35 levels compared with *Doom's* 59, but you'll be hacking through this long after you've been *Doom*-ed.

The levels are nicely balanced, too. Some can take forever, while a couple only last a minute – the timed ones see you hanging around grabbing as many power-ups as you can before exiting in time to save your skin.

So is *Alien Trilogy* a *Doom*-beater? Well, it's a different game. More pensive, yet certainly more atmospheric. Scary, too, and you cannot help but enjoy the graphical variety, range of weaponry and assortment of foes on offer. Some of the levels are a mite repetitive, but it's a fun game to explore; a real adventure.

■ Press **A**, **C**, **X**, **Y** to unlock the flaming shotgun.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**  
Probe

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Monsters, guns and adventure

**LOW:**  
Not as good as *Alien Resurrection* (above)

08/10



# ALL STAR TENNIS



**Getting into *All Star Tennis*** is relatively simple, because the controls are sensible. There are four buttons you can use to hit the ball: one does straight lobs, one is context sensitive and delivers ground strokes, smashes and dive shots and the other two function in pretty much the same manner as the latter but add back or top-spin. If you so desire, swerve can be added with **L1** and **R1**, but it doesn't seem to make much difference in practice.

On the graphics front things look good – the courts are generally attractive and the players move extremely convincingly – but the background animations aren't nearly as nice and the spectators seem to have about two frames of animation in *Mortal Kombat* style. Even more worryingly, the guys who stand at the back refuse to flinch, even when hit straight in the nuts with a high-powered smash (an occurrence that happens with sinister regularity). The players look like they're kissing when they shake at the end of each match, too. No, really.

Such hilarity aside, *All Star Tennis* is pretty good fun. It's not perfect by a long way: sometimes your player will swipe at the ball in completely the wrong direction, and there are no difficulty levels. This makes for a frustrating one-player experience, but the multiplayer game is certainly great fun. All star? All right, more like.

■ Some special moves work pretty much as they do in a beat-'em-up: press a combination of buttons and you can launch a super-fast attack on your opponent's half.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Crazy Dog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Some excellent options and multiplayer modes

### LOW:

Occasionally frustrating gameplay

# 07 / 10

# ALONE IN THE DARK



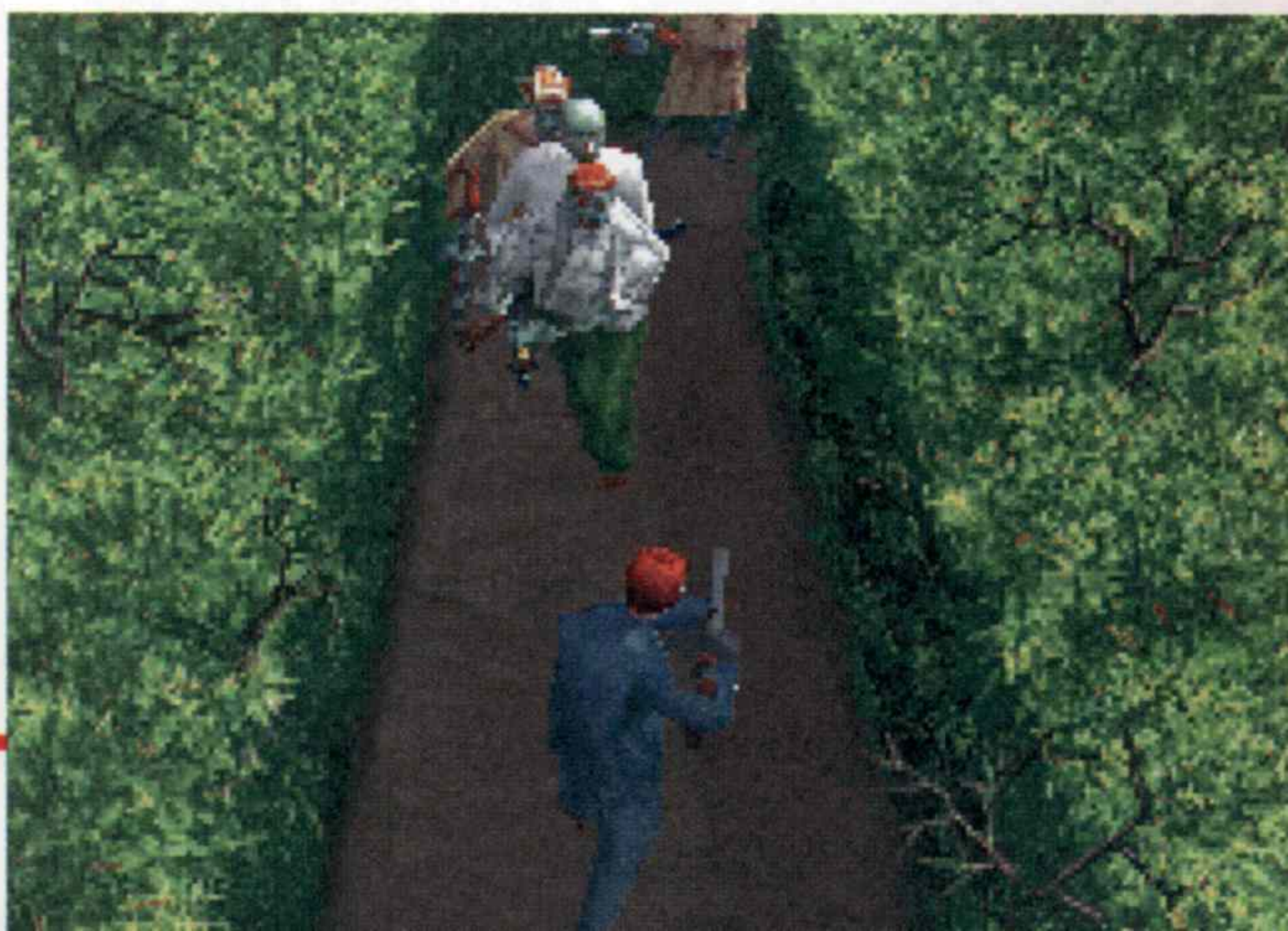
**Ported from the PC**, this is a rare early PlayStation game that successfully combines an original concept with outstanding graphics and strong gameplay. The biggest change is a graphical one. For the PlayStation version, the plain polygonal PC characters are texture-mapped and Gouraud-shaded and the results are unnerving. Carnby's face is an ugly, pasty affair and the rest of the characters are similarly slimy.

*Alone in the Dark* begins magnificently, and looks like the opening to a movie. Superb sound effects and an atmospheric soundtrack build the tension. And then it's over to you as the main character, Edward Carnby, arrives to rescue kidnapped child Grace Saunders.

Your role is to pilot Carnby from one 3D location screen to the next, through an adventure that includes finding objects, solving puzzles and fighting monsters. This isn't as easy as it sounds, though, since a continuously changing viewpoint makes the controls a little difficult to get the hang of. This isn't a fatal flaw but it does make the gameplay too trial-and-error-based in places.

*Alone in the Dark* might sound like a standard collection of adventure game elements coupled with fancy graphics, but what makes it special is how well everything works together. The plot and puzzles gel, and the music and effects are incredibly atmospheric – a true original.

■ Check out the credits and you'll see the untextured-yet-classy PC look then, halfway through, a switch to the fully textured and shaded PlayStation look.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

THQ

### DEVELOPER:

I-Motion

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Smooth, stylish and incredibly atmospheric

### LOW:

Shame about that ugly texture-mapping

# 08 / 10



## ALUNDRA 2

**Much of the original** *Alundra* is absent from *Alundra 2*. The retro appearance of the original has evolved into polygon-based 3D, and the dark, nightmare-driven story has given way to a quirky and unevenly humorous scenario intended to appeal to a wider, younger audience. It has a more basic plot, populated by off-the-wall character types and a few willfully bizarre dungeon denizens.

Along with the predictable weapon, shield and item power-ups, you're always on the verge of discovering a new combat move, or a fresh magical power. Your objectives are always clear, and solutions to puzzles are usually obvious, particularly at the beginning of the game.

*Alundra 2* is an essentially solo experience. Instead of involving yourself in complex dialogues – as you would expect from high-end role-players – you can revel in the pleasure of simply dashing from problem to problem, slashing your way about the place in real-time.

After you've taken a little while to get used to the camera control, everything becomes pretty intuitive. Unfortunately, intuitive in this case, also means clichéd. Everything *Alundra 2* does, it does well, but there is a bit of a whiff of seen-it-all-before about its block-jumping challenges, animal bosses, rolling metal balls and mine cart rides.

Taken on its own terms *Alundra 2* is enjoyable, offering a compelling blend of action, puzzle-solving and role-playing. It is intelligently structured, if formulaic, likeably varied and maintains its momentum throughout. A good-sized, well-constructed adventure.

■ It's always a good idea to keep checking the stores for good stuff. The merchandise changes regularly, so you could find a gem in a store you thought had nothing worth buying.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Conrail

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

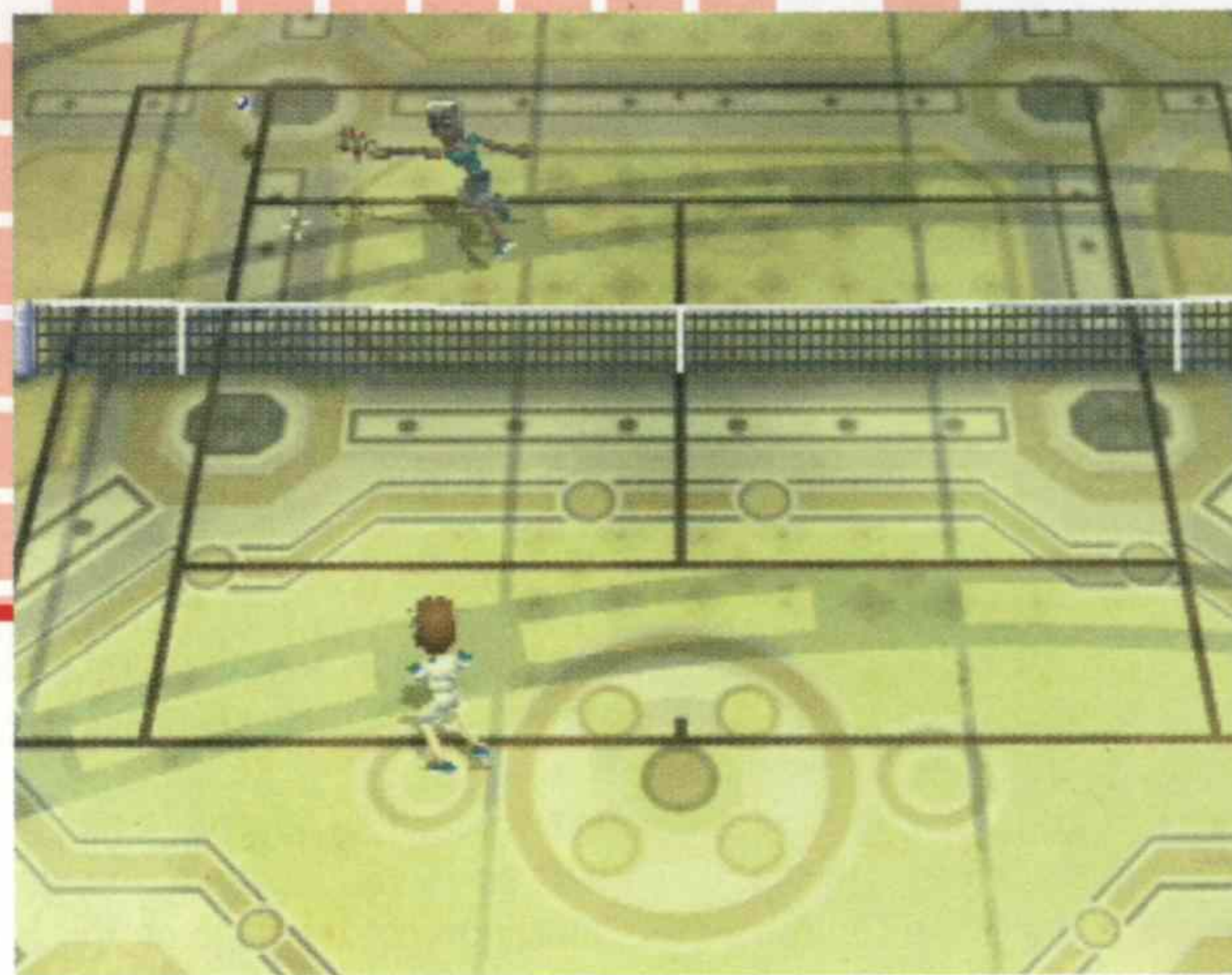
The learning curve is almost perfectly devised

**LOW:**

Its simple plot and minimized RPG elements could disappoint fans of the original

07 / 10

## ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS



**The McEnroe spirit** lives on in *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis*. While

other games play by the rules, reducing tennis to the dull serving due that is the modern men's game, *Smash Court* is by turns naughty, silly and nasty. Ultimately, it's top entertainment.

*Smash Court's* special hook is the thunderous down-the-line winner. As with all tennis games, your position relative to the ball when you play a stroke determines the kind of shot to ping off your racket, but *Smash Court* gives just as much attention to the button you press, the height of the ball and how you hold the D-pad. Given enough practice, you can produce sweet half-volleys, overhead bats, slicing returns, muffled drop-shots and bendy top-spin cross-courtiers that leave your opponent eating lawn.

On your own, you'll spend most of your time in Tournament mode, trying to amass novelty items or unlock secret characters. There's also a Practice mode, but the real action is to be had in Exhibition mode. With three pals and a multi-tap, *Smash Court* becomes the game to play, pre- or post-bar.

*Smash's* brash exterior will, for some, be a bit of a turn-off. And apart from the odd video clip or change of costume, the license doesn't bring a lot to the party. The real appeal of *Smash Court* is how its simplicity doesn't detract from creating emotion, drama and excitement.

■ As a bit of a laugh, Namco has also included Smash Blast, in which the ball becomes a time bomb that you bat back and forth until it explodes, *Tom & Jerry* fashion.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

SCEE

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Multiplayer genius, but challenging and exciting for one or two players as well

**LOW:**

Occasionally awkward playing style

08 / 10



# APE ESCAPE

PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
SCEI

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Few games can match the polish and consistency of design of *Ape Escape*

**LOW:**  
Learning to use the analog controller can be tricky at first

# 09/10



### Monkey pie, monkey stew,

monkeys on toast. Pretty soon you'll agree with the lost tribes of the Amazon that the only good monkey is one that has first been felled by a blowpipe dart and then deposited in a large cooking pot. Cruel? Perhaps, but these are monkeys with a mission whose sole purpose is to taunt, bamboozle and infuriate you in their bid to make the planet their own.

Thank Charles Darwin for Spike. This pointy haired techno-urchin is the hero of *Ape Escape*, even if the undisputed stars are the gibbering, screeching, bum-scratching apes themselves. Your task is to make sure that Spike recaptures all the primates that have escaped back through time and take down King Monkey himself, the evil Specter. Doing this isn't easy. For a start you've got to get to grips with the game's analog-only control method, then you've got to master all Spike's gadgets and finally you've got to get close enough to your elusive prey to use these devices effectively.

Much has been made of *Ape Escape's* control method in which one analog stick controls Spike's movements and the other controls his actions. Truth is the clever part is not the controls themselves, but how they're used to operate the game's gadgets and vehicles. At their simplest the two sticks enable you to run in one direction and swipe your net in another. In a rather more complex way they enable you to control rowing

boats, drive radio-controlled cars and swim underwater, firing off capture nets in mid-stroke.

*Ape Escape* with its eight gadgets, personality-driven monkeys and mix of fast action and simple but effective puzzles is never in danger of becoming shallow or predictable. Similarly, worries about its 17 levels not offering enough longevity disappear as soon as you realize that each level is more like a tiny world divided into sprawling sub-levels – all variations on a theme.

It's obvious that *Ape Escape's* creator has worked very hard at giving the game maximum replay value. Even when you've completed a stage there's always more to do – more monkeys to net using your flying apparatus or super-speed hula-hoop. If you collect enough special tokens you gain access to three mini-games.

Everyone can stop holding their breath, the PlayStation finally has a world-class platformer.

■ Controlling Spike isn't that different from maneuvering Lara Croft or Spyro, it's just that there are a few smart little touches – like using the switch activated by pushing the stick in for fire or crawl, or making you perform a rowing action with both sticks to propel your watercraft.





# AQUA GT



**Aqua GT is yours** for a bargain-bin price – not half-bad for a game that enables you to tear it up around eight world cities in a variety of conditions – and you can almost smell the tourists as you skim past the London Eye and make a beeline for Big Ben.

Predictably, however, it's the wet stuff that spoils the fun. Even with super computers the size of Milton Keynes, programmers have a hard job modeling how tides and currents behave, so PlayStation can only put up a brave and futile struggle. The result isn't disastrous, but it does look more like two people are flapping a bed sheet to make the waves. The surface undulates so frequently, and in such a regular way, that there's no chance to ride crests or slide down troughs – and, despite some attempt to add current and wake effects, the overall feeling is that watery resistance to your boat is totally random.

The other disappointment is the repetition you endure in the name of progress. Working your way up through the bronze and silver cups is all well and good, but as this means racing the same two tracks over and over, with the conditions simply becoming increasingly taxing, boredom inevitably sets in. This is a shame because the circuits themselves are pretty entertaining – especially worth a mention is the way you can ride up on a curb, scraping over the turn in an out-of-water shortcut, rather than smoothly coasting around it.

*Aqua GT* may have more depth than the likes of *Hydro Thunder*, but its failed attempt at simulation only serves to make it less entertaining.

■ Up to 60% of the human body is water. The brain is composed of 70% water, blood is 82% water and the lungs are nearly 90% water.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Take 2 Interactive

### DEVELOPER:

Promethean Designs

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Released at budget price

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The best water-based game on PS1

### LOW:

The poor water animations inevitably detract from the fun

# 06/10

# ARMORED CORE



**Giant robots are** great.

Particularly when it comes to providing military-standard shoot-'em-up action. But whereas your average Japanese game mag's letters page is probably full of people moaning about yet another robot game, very few mech-based titles have actually spun around on PlayStations over here.

Stomping into this strangely mech-barren environment comes *Armored Core*. And it's not messing around. As you'd expect from any game based around futuristic military hardware, the emphasis is on deathmatching the robot opposition using a spectacular array of bolt-on weaponry. Strapped into a battle suit and thrown into an arena, it's a case of unleashing your own rockets, bombs and laser swords while avoiding everyone else's.

The basic concept's simple with action that's as heavy as the protagonist's armor, but to *Armored Core*'s credit it manages to deftly complicate matters with an involving mission-based structure – and it works. *Armored Core* is a great little game. The graphics are always on the right side of competent, and mech fans will flip over the robot designs and pyrotechnic effects.

■ With a properly upgraded mechanaut, the hidden depth of the battles starts to emerge as *Armored Core*'s tactical scrapping edges into beat-'em-up territory. This comparison is especially valid in the Vs mode, with options for split-screen battles or, as rare as a rotary phone these days, a link-up, two-PlayStation showdown.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCE

### DEVELOPER:

From Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Missiles are great – explosions are as big as the mechs

### LOW:

The graphics are not as polished as they could have been

# 08/10

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Konami

**DEVELOPER:**

KCET

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Easy to pick up and play

**LOW:**

The characters and monsters look blocky and unfinished

07 / 10

**AZURE DREAMS**



**A combination of tactical combat** and traditional RPG elements, *Azure Dreams* is centered on an enormous structure known as the Monster Tower.

Unlike many Japanese role-playing games, there is no complex plot or story. The Tower is made up of 99 levels, each of which is randomly generated every time you enter. On each floor are several mature monsters, various traps, treasure in the form of gold, equipment, an elevator to the next level and monster eggs.

It's easy enough to start exploring, although the intricacies of the controls – which enable you to rotate and zoom the view to almost any angle – and game system can be confusing to start off with. Perhaps the biggest letdown is the graphics, but beneath the uninspiring exterior lies a strangely compelling game with a unique, quirky charm.

Even though exploring the Tower is essentially repetitive, there's always something new to discover, and the pull of making your way to the 99th and final level is powerful. The oddities and strange twists on common themes make it an acquired taste, but if *Azure Dreams* grabs you, it does so with the tenacity of a rabid pit bull, and before you realize what's happening it's 4 a.m. and you're desperate to finish just one more floor.

■ While you're exploring, *Azure Dreams* plays like a real-time game. But once you encounter monsters, it becomes a tactical turn-based game, without switching to a different mode or combat screen.



**BALLBLAZER**



**After thousands of years** of killing each other in a bitter galactic struggle, a variety of unlikely alien races decided that enough was enough and that they should settle their differences in a more civilized manner. And so they came up with

*BallBlazer*, a futuristic cross between ice hockey and soccer, to be played in an annual tournament.

The object of the game is simple: grab, carry and shoot a ball of magma (or Plasmorb) into the goal of your opponent and stop them from scoring against you.

*BallBlazer* is a valiant attempt at creating a gladiatorial ball game, but it just doesn't quite work. It's simply not vicious enough to satisfy the violent and bloodthirsty, nor does it work as an end-to-end, ding-dong, put-the-ball-in-the-net encounter because it's missing the flair of a passing game.

The effects and graphics aren't exactly cutting edge, but everything looks pretty good and moves smoothly, nevertheless. The stadiums in particular are impressive. There are four to choose from to start with (you get more as you progress through a tournament), and there is also a simple feature to change camera angles as well as a choice of characters to play. You could never accuse developer Factor 5 of skimping, but the end result just isn't thrilling.

■ It's a long code, but to get the Shrinking Rotofoil, press X, O, X, X, O, X, X, X, X, X, X, X, A, A, X, X, O, X, X, X, X, O, X, O, O, O, O and X.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts/Factor 5

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Slick presentation

**LOW:**

Couldn't the aliens just play ISS to settle their differences?

05 / 10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Playmates

**DEVELOPER:**

Takara

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 3



**It's a beat-'em-up** pretender to the *Tekken* throne (but with weapons) and all in 3D. You start with 14 basic characters, each with an amazing number of special moves. For example, Sofia (a brainwashed victim of the game's baddies, the ominous-sounding Organization) has all the standard punch and kick attacks, and the usual upper defense, lower defense, cartwheels, dash dodges and crawls, but she's also an expert at Thunder Rings, Aurora Revolutions, Love Showers, Rattle Snakes, Pleasure Arts, Velvet Scorpions and the super-secret Love Lover and Call Me Queen attacks.

Sure, you learn to recognize how to invoke some of these when you're playing, but the rest seem to come as you thrash away at the buttons. All of them look spectacular - especially in 30fps mode (the game enables you to switch from 30fps, to enjoy the background texture mapping, to 60fps, for speed).

The gameplay centers on the special moves, some of which can only be used at certain times, like when your overdrive gauge is flashing.

One move that can be pulled off at any time is the new Soul Bomb. You are given two of these per bout; they're effectively mini-smart bombs that have the potential to cause a load of hurt.

*Toshinden 3* isn't a disaster; it's just not top of the line. The sounds and graphics are incredible, and there's plenty of challenge, but it doesn't make for an completely satisfying experience.

■ At the Character Select screen, hold **□** + **△** + **○** + **×** to play with a random character of the CPU's choosing.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Dramatic effects...

**LOW:**

...but some surprisingly poor presentation



07 / 10

# BEACH VOLLEYBALL



**Beach volleyball:** is it an excuse to watch semi-clad bronzed beauties leaping around in the sand, or a valid form of sporting entertainment? Opinion is split, with the Olympic Committee insisting the latter, and the entire population of the world insisting on the former.

Either way, the transition to PlayStation provides little in the way of excitement or entertainment. Not even the inclusion of superstar Amazon Gabby Reece can make up for the labored play and awkward graphics.

In fact, the best aspect is the Player Edit mode. As in most decent wrestling games, you are granted the opportunity to create your very own beach babe, choosing from a range of hairstyles, skin tones and vest colors. You also have a points quota that is intended to be spent beefing up your player's abilities.

The game itself offers Exhibition and World Tour play, which takes you to a variety of exotic seaside locations around the globe. Once you've hit the sandy shores, it's up to you and a teammate (handled by the CPU if necessary) to ace enough aces and spike enough spikes to get through to the finals of each different venue's knockout competition.

Unfortunately, building sandcastles would be more fun.

■ Beach volleyball was first officially played at the Olympics in 1996. Since then, Brazilian women and US men have dominated the medal tables.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**

Carapace

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

As far as sports sims go, it's not as dull as fishing

**LOW:**

As glamorous as a turd on a beach, and just as annoying

04 / 10

# BEATMANIA



**Transfer the dextrous skills** of an international DJ to the PlayStation via a standard controller or an actual turntable-type contraption and a copy of *Beatmania*.

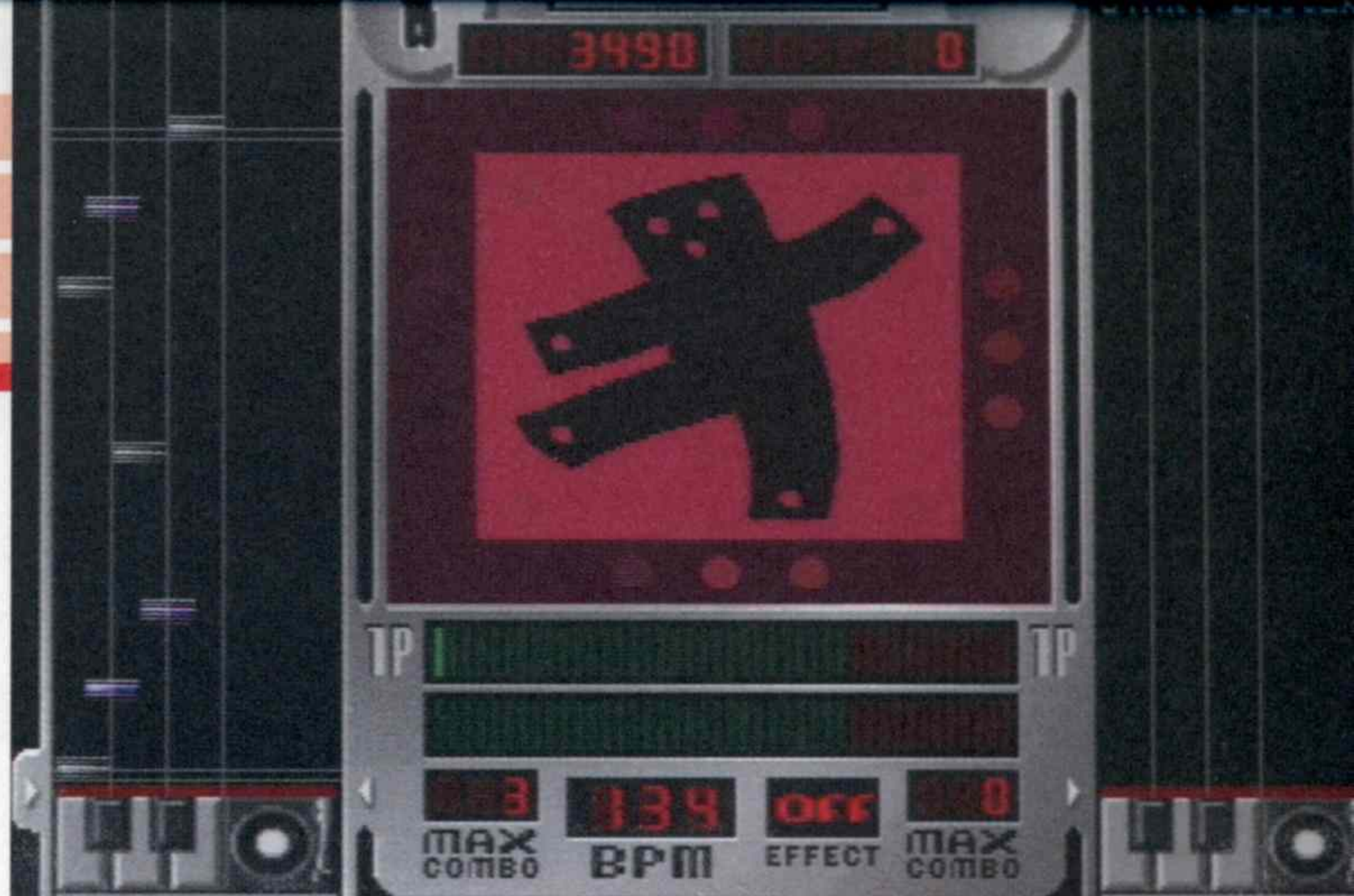
A series of small blocks descends a mock musical staff, and you press the keys that correspond to the blocks with the intention of "mixing" a tune. Pressing the buttons simply highlights a particular note giving the illusion of creating music.

Does the game concept work? Kind of. You'll eventually get the hang of it after a lot of practice, but you're unlikely to bother because *Beatmania* doesn't offer any actual rewards to keep you playing.

One of the major problems is that you've got to keep starting from scratch. As soon as the blocks speed up, things get completely out of hand, skipping from melody to rhythm track to strange bleepy-scratchy noises within a few micro seconds of reaction time. Get it wrong and you're sent back to the beginning, until you've learned the entire song by rote.

In the two-player mode, each player must sequence different buttons, so the result, if you can get it right, is heavenly harmony. Get it wrong and it's a cacophonous mess. Since the game ships with the official *Beatmania* controller, you're spared the pain of trying to use the Dual Shock. Slumped in front of the TV with a friend, turntables balanced on knees, it's lots of fun. But unless you practice as if it's a real instrument, you're never going to get far.

■ It's easier to play the game with the sound turned down some instead of having it blaring out full blast.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

With practice, the two-player mode can be fun

### LOW:

Can become frustrating

# 06/10

# BIO FREAKS



**The deal with *Bio Freaks*** – Biological Flying Robotic Enhanced Armored Killing Synthoids – is that the characters can fly and therefore pummel each other to death in the sky. It's an interesting idea used with some degree of success among the fully interactive situations, single-buttoned projectile attacks and super-hardcore scappers. But be warned, *Bio Freaks* is possibly one of the most vicious beat-'em-ups you'll ever come across.

Flying is achieved by holding down **LB**, but you can only flutter around among the clouds for a limited period of time. All the characters have the same amount of flying energy, which can only be restored by pressing their dangling feet against the floor again.

*Bio Freaks* hasn't got *Tekken's* tactical subtlety, or in fact, any subtlety at all. It is a very different experience. Indeed, it's a prime example of how American developers approach the beat-'em-up – less in-game thinking and more blood. Fortunately, it's a formula that works like a dream, possibly because it entertains rather than truly engrosses.

It's not a classic, but it will make you laugh. A lot. One word of warning – *Bio Freaks* possibly has some of the worst loading delays we've ever seen, meaning: before you launch into that head-loosening power combo, you really do have to wait. Bummer...

■ Hit an opponent in the same area a couple of times and blood will spurt. Catch them again and their arms and legs will go AWOL. This does not, however, stop a bout of fisticuffs.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Saffire

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Lush polygonal characters and incredible animation

### LOW:

Not much depth to the gameplay

# 07/10



## BISHI BASHI SPECIAL

**Make no mistake**, whatever it is that turns your little vibrating peripheral on, party game *Bishi Bashi* has what it takes – singing, dancing, fishing, soccer, racing, guitar strumming, cake throwing. It's all wrapped up into 96 neat packages.

Set out in a similar style to *Point Blank*, this massive catalogue of mini games ranges from the slightly strange to the clinically insane. Many of these micro masterpieces are based upon games previously released by Konami. At times it feels as if it has taken the best parts from its most popular titles, added a surreal setting and turned up the brightness to max. *Track & Field's* javelin thrower has been replaced by a psycho bride who tries to toss a wedding cake into the faces of a church congregation. There's a replica of *Beatmania*, and influences from other Japanese imports, such as a retro version of SCE's *Bust A Groove*, where your super-smooth dancing moves are rewarded with an ever-growing Afro.

*Bishi Bashi's* closest relation is the puzzle game family. Whether it's your button-bashing ability to demolish a building, your reaction time to reel in a biting fish, or your coordination as you race to complete t'ai chi moves quicker than an opponent, your skills are constantly being tested.

Inevitably, some games are more addictive than others (may we draw your attention to *Squid Pinball?*), but with so many to choose from, everyone will find their own favorite.

■ The game makes full use of the Analog Controller, encouraging you to draw circles around correct answers, jog and perform various karate moves using your thumbs.

### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Konami

#### DEVELOPER:

KCES

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-8

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

The ultimate party game

#### LOW:

Loud but adequate graphics

# 08/10

## BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN



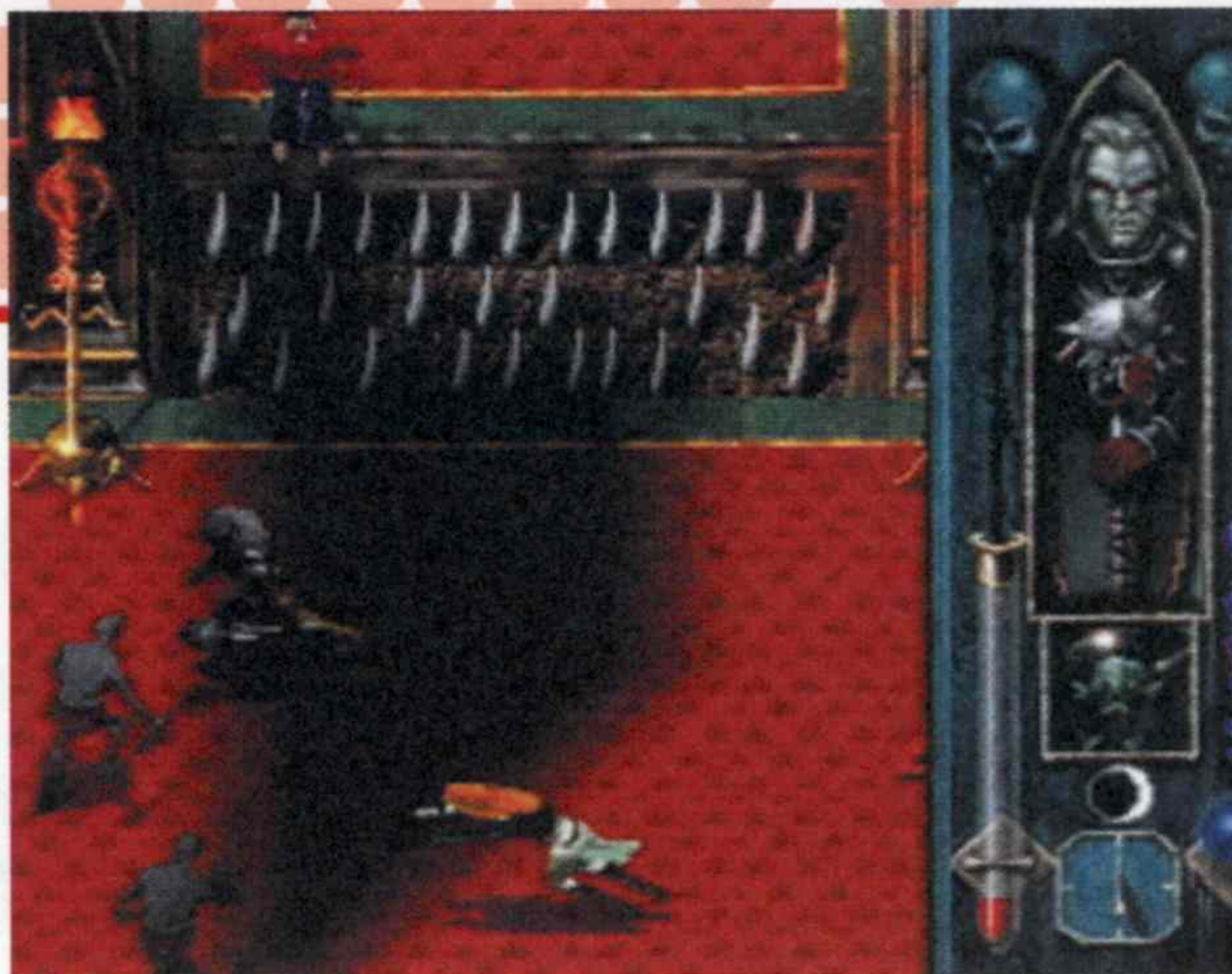
**You're alive**, and you shouldn't be. If your memory of Hell serves you correctly, you've just been released from eternal damnation by the necromancer Mortanius in exchange for... no, you've forgotten. You were too busy thinking of ways to avenge your own death. Anti-hero, vampire, cackling maniacal villain – that's you, oh yes. There's no doubt that *Legacy of Kain* kicks off with an intriguingly wicked premise, but the ensuing narrative is just corny.

*LOK* successfully adopts the concept of a small but densely-packed gameworld that keeps growing as you accumulate objects and skills. Once you've obtained the Wolf form, for instance, you find yourself able to leap over spikes and climb mountain ledges. Then you remember spotting an unreachable cave on a ledge near the start. Aha!

Unfortunately, *LOK* falls short of excellence. Bite through the alluring flesh and you'll knock out a filling on the old bones of a tired overhead hack-'n'-slay engine. For example, even though you're given a vast armory of spells and talismans, you'll struggle with lengthy load times and a slow menu system. Add to this some suspect collision detection and the whole experience becomes less fun.

If you enjoy a dusk-till-dawn session of swordplay, action-based puzzles and RPGs, *LOK's* flaws won't annoy you too much. But this game is not for everyone, and its unpolished mechanics detract from the finer points of its design.

■ Feel your blood draining away? For a fill-up, hit ↑, →, ⊕, ⊙, ↑, ↓, →, ← at any point.



### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Activision

#### DEVELOPER:

Silicon Knights

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1997

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

Taxing, but thoughtful, gameplay

#### LOW:

Only around 40 hours of entertainment

# 07/10



# BLOODY ROAR 2: BRINGER OF THE NEW AGE



**The first one** introduced a Jekyll and Hyde character relationship to matters

physical. One minute, you're a cute young thing in a low-cut top. In the blink of an eye, transmogrification into the grotesque has taken place. You're a beast. Not surprisingly, the

developer has pursued this theme in the second incarnation, subtitled *Bringer of the New Age*.

The premise is much the same, too. Enter the ring, administer jabs, elbows and the occasional boot to the head to your opponent – and when the letter "B" appears, depress the circle button and lo, it's all strange and different. The beasts on display include a bat, wolf, insect (no, really), leopard, rabbit, mole, tiger and, somewhat oddly, a "half beast." (Disappointingly, the noble ferret has been left out.)

Unfortunately, you won't really identify with all of the brawlers. There isn't the empathy that you find with, say, Law in *Tekken*, despite the fact that the characters have alter egos. Perhaps the lack of variety in their fighting styles is to blame. Maybe it's because the action is so damn quick. If you've been in the ring with the first incarnation, the sequel doesn't demand immediate purchase (unlike, say, *Tekken 3* – again), but there's no denying that Hudson knows how to train a fighter. The strategic aspect that the beasts bring to the ring ensures that *Bloody Roar 2* stands there, or thereabouts, with the best.

■ When in Beast mode, a demonstrable increase in strength enables you to mete out a beat-down almost at will. But you can't behave like an animal forever, though, because the Beast bar can only withstand a certain amount of damage.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCE

**DEVELOPER:**  
Hudsonsoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It's a bit of an animal

**LOW:**  
Not much variety in fighting styles

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Atlus

**DEVELOPER:**  
Hudsonsoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-5

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Explosive multiplayer fun

**LOW:**  
Not much fun for the solo player

# 07/10

# BOMBERMAN



**Welcome to the most compulsive** multiplayer game ever invented. If you're new to *Bomberman*, here's a quick descriptive paragraph: you control one of five comic-book terrorists whose sole aim in life is to blow each other to kingdom come – to which end they plant bombs. Initially, these are weedy grenades that only reach a short distance across the flat arenas. Keep bombing, though, and you'll soon get ahold of power-ups that'll enable you to manipulate your bombs in fiendishly effective ways. Exercising a mixture of speediness and cunning, your goal is to be the last bomberman left alive in the arena.

*Bomberman* is an attempt to get back to a once successful formula. Gone is the fake 3D of *Bomberman World*; instead we're treated to the classic flame bombs, power bombs, bomb gloves and bomb boots of old. If you wish, you can tackle the Story mode on your own, clearing arenas, blowing up monsters and eventually dynamiting some gargantuan boss. But this isn't where the action is. If you wish, you can have a go at taking on four mad PlayStation-controlled terrorists – but this is merely practice. No, *Bomberman* is one of those rare games that only really shines when more than two players get involved. Other games have rules, etiquette, a smidgen of fair play. *Bomberman* does not. *Bomberman* has bombs. And in a world of virtual cartoon violence, bury the fool who doesn't use them.

■ Once five people start bombing, a chain reaction begins until pretty soon the veneer of civilization peels away to show your friends as what they really are – bomb-toting psychopaths.



# BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACING



### The steeds you ride

in *Bomberman Fantasy Racing* are part rabbit, part kangaroo, part alligator, part dinosaur. They really are pretty weird. Not that that's important. The main thing is they can run (often reasonably fast), dodge mighty explosions and leap over dangerous chasms in a bid to get you across the finish line before anyone else.

*Bomberman Fantasy Racing* takes one element of the old-style *Bomberman* games (riding beasts) and magnifies it to almost hilarious proportions. You are taking part in a race, but it's a race in which bombing, rocketing, shrinking or in some other way destroying your rivals is essential. Because powersliding something with legs is physically impossible, *Bomberman Fantasy Racing* is a fairly unsporting affair. It's about not hitting things, not falling down things and definitely not being blown up by anything, while simultaneously ensuring that all of the above happen to your fellow riders.

Truth is, while there are handling differences (some mounts jump higher or have a greater top speed) the beasts are wayward, awkward and seemingly intent on bumping into anything and everything. While there are plenty of bomb power-ups, there are precious few to help you go faster, so after a couple of stumbles, it's a case of restart or finish last.

■ The sprint meter is a power bar that shows how much vim your beasts have left. Flog them too ruthlessly and they'll slow to a crawl.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Atlus

### DEVELOPER:

Hudsonsoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Crude polygonal cuteness

### LOW:

In one-player mode, you often can't see your rivals for dust

# 06/10



# BREATH OF FIRE III



### Fantasizing about being an immortal dragon,

trapped in the body of a young, adventurous boy? Step right up, *Breath of Fire III* has just what you want. In this game, you take the part of Ryu, the last of dragonkind, who is discovered imprisoned in an egg. Released by miners, the young dragon is captured and sent off on a prison train to the city. On the way he manages to escape and is left orphaned, alone and, strangely, in human form.

Befriended by two thieves, Rei and Teepo, his young life is a series of adventures that lead to a bloody climax. Then begins the game proper as Ryu finds out more about his past and goes on a quest for answers to the mystery of his life.

*Breath of Fire III* is standard Japanese RPG fare – by which we mean that it is innovative, quirky and engrossing in equal measures. Immediately familiar if you have played one of these games before, it has two layers of maps to negotiate, a band of up to three characters and a separate combat sequence that cuts in whenever monsters are encountered.

It also has a number of sub-games, ranging from a log-chopping competition to one of the most beautiful and flexible fishing simulations we've seen on the PlayStation (though, admittedly, it's not difficult).

*Breath of Fire III* is a fairly easy, entertaining RPG. It has that uniquely Japanese feel to it, where cutesy, child-like graphics are often allied with very adult themes, but it also has a satisfying storyline and a complex enough battle system to make it a hugely enjoyable game.

■ The fish you catch in the fishing simulation are especially useful during battle. Some restore life while others upgrade your weapons.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Hours and hours of role-playing gaming to be had

### LOW:

Not quite up to *Final Fantasy's* standards

# 08/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

THQ

**DEVELOPER:**

Revolution Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

The presentation has a big-budget movie feel about it

**LOW:**

The game frequently freezes for an instant as another sample loads

**09/10****BROKEN SWORD: TSOTT**

**There's a lot more to** *Broken Sword: The Shadow Of The Templars* than first meets the eye. On the one hand, this point-and-click graphic adventure appears familiar and unassuming, but you soon discover that with over 100 hours of stimulating gameplay crammed on to that shiny disc, *Broken Sword* offers more than the usual fare.

The game is set in modern-day France, and you play the part of hapless American tourist George Stobbart, who is quite literally blasted into the continuing mystery of the Knights Templar. As far as adventure games go, *Broken Sword* has one of the most driven, not to mention compelling, plots of anything on the market at this time. It offers complicated sequences of puzzles to tease the brain, with plenty of clues to push you gently on your way.

Of course it's fair to say that any adventurer worth his or her salt will pick up everything that isn't nailed to the floor, and with a bit of repetitious trial and error you will eventually find the right item for the right puzzle. That said, although the game has been rewritten from its PC counterpart, the resolution has naturally been lost in the conversion – not disappointingly so, but it does make some of the smaller items trickier to spot.

All things considered, these few paltry gripes are overshadowed by sheer playability and polished professionalism.

■ The utilization of objects figures heavily, as does constant discourse with the locals. Logical thought will ultimately save the day, though.

**BUBBLE BOBBLE 2**

**Ever since the original** game hit the arcades, the *Bubble Bobble* series has had a special place in many gamers' hearts. The combination of inspired gameplay, cutesy graphics and comic sounds is rather special.

You play a dragon that has to defeat various enemies to free your brothers and sisters from the evil clutches of Baron Von Blubb. But unlike the original version, in which you worked through a set route, *BB2* enables you to take several routes throughout the game. It's a nice touch, which provides a tad more longevity.

Where *BB2* tops itself, though, is as a two-player game. You can choose to work as a team, getting rid of the monsters, collecting the tokens, or you can forget friendship and go all out to beat one another. And it has to be said, trying to thrash your friends is much more satisfying. It's only a shame that your bubble can't inflict any pain. Just think – *Bubble Bobble* death match.

As the original version showed, when the gameplay is this good, you don't need fantastic graphics. Unfortunately the sound isn't as good it could be, but it doesn't get in the way of your enjoyment. Critics may claim *BB2* lacks sufficient variety, but with 120 screens and 10 boss screens, there's enough of a challenge here to keep even the most ardent gamer in front of the screen for quite some time. It's a game to fall in love with.

■ Press **01**, **02**, **03** and **04** to skip levels. This doesn't kill the bosses you'll meet every 10 levels, however.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Virgin

**DEVELOPER:**

East Point Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Fantastic gameplay

**LOW:**

Disappointing sound and graphics

**08/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCE

**DEVELOPER:**  
Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# BUSHIDO BLADE



**This is a beat-'em-up with a difference** – no fists. Instead, it's as realistic as possible – and when you consider the game is based around bashing each other with ancient Samurai swords, that means stabbing, blood, slashing and more blood.

Three words sum up the reason why *Bushido Blade* isn't just *Tekken* with Stanley knives: no life bar. In this game a solitary jab with one of the eight swords available will bring the fight to an end. This makes for a tactical game, where you're forced to block and shuffle rather than just hammer the joypad.

The six characters range from very fast to very strong, while the weapons are either light and zippy or unwieldy but brutal. Each fighter comes with three stances and three attacks, plus one guard move. Attacks change depending on a fighter's stance and the weapon used. Not that this simplicity makes for a sparse game, since as well as eight interactive environments, *BB* boasts six battle options. Alongside Training and two-player modes is a first-person POV mode (wireframe), a Slash mode (you vs. 100 ninjas) and a Story mode.

So it's great, but it's very violent indeed. If you don't like the idea of polygon blood gushing out of someone's face after a one-on-one with a broadsword, then you're best off getting your kung fu kicks with *PaRappa the Rapper*.

So it's great, but it's very violent indeed. If you don't like the idea of polygon blood gushing out of someone's face after a one-on-one with a broadsword, then you're best off getting your kung fu kicks with *PaRappa the Rapper*.

■ Want to fight as Katze? You'll need to play through Slash mode and defeat all 100 ninjas without getting killed yourself. Now you can wield Katze's gun in Versus mode.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Original, bloody gameplay

**LOW:**  
Not for the squeamish

09/10



# BUST A GROOVE



**Put simply, it's a dancing game.** That's it. No keys to find. No imps to slice. And absolutely no driving. Either dance or begone. It's a place for movers, not losers. Gyrate to appropriate. Nauseate and you'll depreciate. Get the picture? How does one triumph through the medium of dance? It's a fight. Without bruises. Minus lacerations. And sans scrapes. The best dancer wins. Or in dancing parlance, is "down." Coolio.

Launching into a one-player danceathon, you get to choose a character, and then dancing with the music is a simple affair. Anyone with a passing knowledge of *PaRappa the Rapper* will have a fair idea of what *Bust A Groove* entails. It's the Simon Says ethos. Again. Only with dancing instead of rapping. Essentially, you have to cram in increasingly complex direction commands and then top them off with a tap on the beat. Unfortunately you have no say in the choice of combinations and moves on offer.

The main fault in an otherwise beautifully presented title, is the ease of the thing. This is combated somewhat by the inclusion of a hilarious two-player mode. But won't the entertainment be sullied when both players can hit the mark 99 percent of the time?

*BAG* is bursting with laughs, playful visuals and music that will stick to your mind like brain glue. You just might get the feeling that, like the final, slow dance at the disco, it lacks a little depth.

■ The innate simplicity is bolstered somewhat by the inclusion of unlockable characters and by the secret dancing displays performed by your character after a particularly electric boogaloo.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
989 Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Enix

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Looks slick and is full of laughs

**LOW:**  
Easy to beat

08/10

# BUST-A-MOVE 4

**Change is not always a** good thing. In the ongoing pursuit of progress, unnecessary alterations invariably occur, leading to the clichéd, yet infallible adage: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

With that in mind, Taito has handed itself the unenviable task of improving on a game which was nearly perfect in the first place. *Bust-A-Moves 2* and *3* took the simplistic premise of SNK's *Puzzle Bobble* and embellished it with a wide range of subtly alternative game modes designed to expand the title beyond its basic, if incredibly addictive, principle.

*Bust-A-Move's* strength has always been its two-player game, and, thankfully, that part remains largely untouched; it's still as fast, as stressful and as ultimately compelling as ever. The characters may be bigger (to the extent that their mid-game animations now occasionally impinge on the main playing area) but the visuals are the same colorful mixture of spectral bubbles and low-res picture-postcard backgrounds that they always were.

Which all goes to say that previous *Bust-A-Move* owners will find little here to justify a purchase, although if you've never had the pleasure, number four's as good a place to start as any.

■ Taito has introduced the Story mode, revolving around eight new characters (although still including the dragon, Bob). The story has your chosen 2D goofball wandering up to each of the others and moaning about the theft of rainbow bubbles. Pointless.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Natsume

### DEVELOPER:

Taito

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Simply addictive, and a great two-player game

### LOW:

Only virgin *Bust-A-Move*-rs need apply

# 08/10

# C-12: FINAL RESISTANCE

**Far from churning** out a standard shooter game with a sci-fi twist, SCE Studios Cambridge has managed to give us a game that takes multiple cues from many other games – such as *Syphon Filter*, *Medal of Honor* and *MGS* – but has a style and pace of its own. And, although games that try to be all things to all people are notoriously fractured and soulless, *C-12* just about manages to succeed, thanks to smart design, a strong story and large helpings of atmosphere.

Weapons range from a lightsaber-inspired Energy Blade, machine guns, rocket launchers and laser zappers, all the way up to the Ion Cannon, which spits out vicious bursts of electrical discharge.

Unfortunately, control of protagonist Vaughan can be a bit wonky, the camera angles can trouble your performance in important battles and shoot-outs, and the puzzles are made frustrating by the fact that Shoot is on the same joystick button as Action. The other major problem is the way the sloppy AI lacks balance – in terms of difficulty levels – in most of the combat scenarios.

*C-12* gets it right in so many other departments, though, that it's easy to forgive these flaws: the interface is excellent (clear maps, workable inventory, ability to cross-reference conversations and briefings), and it all moves at a swift frame rate, with no slowdown.

Overall, it's an involving, well-above-average game, tainted by bits of sloppiness.

■ Get used to switching between first- and third-person modes, navigating the level maps and making the crates and boxes work for you as early as you can.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEE

### DEVELOPER:

SCE Studios Cambridge

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Cinematic *Robocop/Terminator* atmosphere and story

### LOW:

Marred by sloppy handling of important aspects such as control and enemy AI

# 08/10

PLAYSTATION 2

PS ONE • PC • NINTENDO 64 • GAME BOY COLOR



# CARNAGE HEART

**At first glance, *Carnage Heart* might not look new or innovative.** The graphics are certainly slick, but in this case appearances are deceptive. Rather than being just another 3D action game in which you choose some weapons for your robotic suit and stomp your way through a series of missions, *Carnage Heart* is something quite different.

The robots in this game are just that – robots. When they come face to face with the enemy, the result isn't determined by your lightning-fast joystick skills, but by programs that tell the bots what to do – programs that you create. The idea of pre-programmed battlers is nothing new, but this is the first time it's been done properly in a commercial game.

Play is set on the three moons of Jupiter, over maps that define critical battle areas. On each map you must use your robots (or "Over Kill Engines") to capture all the available bases. Once you've chosen which moon to fight on, the game proceeds in turns, and is controlled via a system of menus. It's the Design menu that lies at the very core of *Carnage Heart*, though, as it's here that you design and program your OKEs. The nature of the game isn't going to appeal to everyone, as it takes time and effort to get into, and requires some serious thinking. If it grabs you, though, you'll find *CH* to be absorbing and addictive.

■ Setting a card as a master card means that you've finished your OKE design and are happy with it. Once a card is set as a master its design is fixed – making any modifications will scrap any OKEs you've already built to that specification.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Artdink Corporation

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Addictive and demanding

**LOW:**  
It's tough and there's lots of programming

# 08/10

# CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT



**The legend of *Castlevania* began on the 8-bit NES back in the '80s,** where the whip-wielding elder of the Belmont family sought to take a stake in the Dracula estate. The action platformer was twice sequeled on the NES, followed by versions on the Game Boy and Super NES.

You're playing Alucard, son of Dracula, and you're on a quest. From here it's a matter of exploration, picking up weapons, puzzle-solving, gaining experience points, discovering items, collecting spells, and, of course, kicking the crap out of a variety of baddies and the occasional occasional table (no, really). Then, later on, Alucard can pick up "relics" that enable him to shapeshift into a bat, a wolf or a mist cloud in order to beat the castle's more evil occupants.

The first thing you notice about *Castlevania: SOTN* is its graphics: it certainly doesn't look particularly 32-bit. However, it's not all bad news. The gameplay has an air of mystery and a captivating sense of progress. Also, as you gain experience and collect powerful weapons and better armor, you do get a feeling of achievement. Ultimately, *Castlevania* would have been better if it wasn't so old-fashioned. There's little here that couldn't have been done on the 16-biters, save size and sound.

■ To take to the air as Alucard, you need to get hold of the Soul Bat relic and then take advantage of a bit of a glitch. Next time you find a Life Max up, Heart Max up or a relic, turn yourself into a bat as you are about to pick it up. Press **△** and you'll take off.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Konami

**DEVELOPER:**  
Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Some compelling action...

**LOW:**  
...but generally rather old-fashioned

# 07/10

# COVERT OPS: NUCLEAR DAWN EXPRESS

**Don't mistake** optimism for enjoyment. *Covert Ops* doesn't get better, no matter how long you play it. The poorly scripted colander of a plot involves a military train, a terrorist hijack and nuclear warheads, all explained through some pretty ugly FMV. And since when has *Under Siege 2* been a rich source of inspiration?

*Covert Ops* is in some ways like *Resident Evil*. There are similarities, including the control system. Except nobody included the tension, immersion or gameplay. And the combat is a disaster. The manual aiming system places a target over your enemy using tiny arrows to indicate accuracy. But because of those *Resi*-style fixed camera angles, the game keeps your enemies off-screen for 90% of the time. Your only option is to run around like a mad goose until you stumble across a camera angle that puts them in view so you can start fighting - assuming you haven't been shot to pieces already.

An overall problem with setting the game on a train is that it's forced to milk the small, repetitive environment by making you trek back and forth. Oh, the joy of fighting and dodging all the way to carriage four just to pick up something you need in carriage 15. All this hassle for a few hours of bad gameplay. And a few hours is all you get, less if you don't unlock one of the special endings.

■ You have to crouch to shoot at dogs (because dogs are short, y'see) or your bullets will fly straight over their furry little bodies.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Sugar and Rockets

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It looks like *Resident Evil*

### LOW:

It doesn't play nearly as well as *Resident Evil*

04/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Square EA

### DEVELOPER:

Squaresoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Chocobos are cute

### LOW:

Where do we start? Gameplay? Handling? Graphics?

03/10

# CHOCOBO RACING



The *Final Fantasy* series is one of the PlayStation's most popular franchises. Square's hugely successful *Chrono Cross* also made an acclaimed appearance on our shores.

Regrettably, the decision to grace the US with another Square creation is less auspicious. *Chocobo Racing*, a terrible kart racing title, presents the irritating *Final Fantasy* chocobo creature with its own few seconds of unfortunate fame.

*Chocobo Racing* is a spin-off in more ways than one given the atrocious, primitive handling of the karts. The shoddy graphics and sprite characters place the game somewhere back in the 16-bit era, but the actual racing dynamics seem even more dated. The comedy circuits and amusing power-ups typical of this kind of game are all in evidence, but are something of an irrelevance due to the neglect of kart-racing basics.

The sickening cuteness of the Story mode underlines that this is to be approached with caution by anyone over six years old, but even toddlers don't deserve a game this frustrating. Squaresoft may be master of the RPG, but it seems to be struggling a tad with the cute racing genre.

■ Before the race begins, hold down **Ⓜ** and **↑** to ensure yourself a quick off-the-grid start.



# CIRCUIT BREAKERS



**For maximum fulfillment**, arrange four chairs in front of a large television set. Attach PlayStation and mandatory peripherals. Ensure that the "Stunt Frequency" option is tuned to "Plenty." Play *Circuit Breakers*.

The object of the top-down viewed race is to leave your opponent(s) flailing at the bottom of the screen, while you speed into the distance gaining a point in the process. There are, however, other, more dastardly, means of dispensing with your foes – namely, collecting one of the power-ups that appear sporadically.

The courses vary. Some are short, simple and easy to negotiate (indeed, these are usually the most effective); others, long and winding and a bit too intricate. The latter circuits are best raced in the one-player game, where you take on seven other cars, bouncing around bends and using the impact to give you that extra yard.

The very nature of *Circuit Breaker's* charm deems it an essential multiplayer experience, with four the optimum number of contestants. Blasting foes off the track with a cannonball, shrinking your car to "Dinky" size – all these heinous ways to emerge victorious are so much more satisfying when the victim is sitting right beside you.

■ You can collect a plethora of items and juggle through them using the lower-right shoulder button. Be in no doubt that the added extras maketh the complete racer.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Mindscape

**DEVELOPER:**

Supersonic Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

In multiplayer mode, you really cannot fail to have fun

**LOW:**

The car's a little bit too small

09/10



# CIVILIZATION II



**To succeed** in *Civilization II*, it isn't enough to be a great general – you also have to be a great economist, diplomat and leader. Things start simply enough with a lone settler in a vast expanse of wilderness. Your job is to wander about until the message "This would be a good place to build a new city" pops up. Press **Ⓞ**, select "Build New City" from the menu and your empire building is underway. At first, not a lot happens. You pick something your city is supposed to build and the end-of-turn menu cycles around until that item has been built. You'll also get to pick what scientific goal you want your culture to work towards ("literacy" is always worthwhile). Time passes, things are built, new advances are slowly discovered. If this doesn't sound particularly exciting it's because, at this early stage, it isn't – but just you wait.

The reason *Civ II* begins so slowly is that later on any attempt to match the real-time action of titles like *Command & Conquer* or *Warzone 2100* would make you stark raving mad. Between building wonders, waging war, producing units, researching new technologies and balancing the books, your mind is whirring in overdrive. Never mind that to look at *Civ II* has all the class and style of a *Blind Date* contestant; it's the creeping march of progress that'll keep you hooked.

Enthralling, all-encompassing – albeit at times unwieldy – *Civ II* is simply the cleverest game ever.

■ Eventually, your musketeers will turn into riflemen, your elephants will be replaced by tanks and your frigates will end up mothballed as you discover steel and your shipyards start churning out cruisers.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

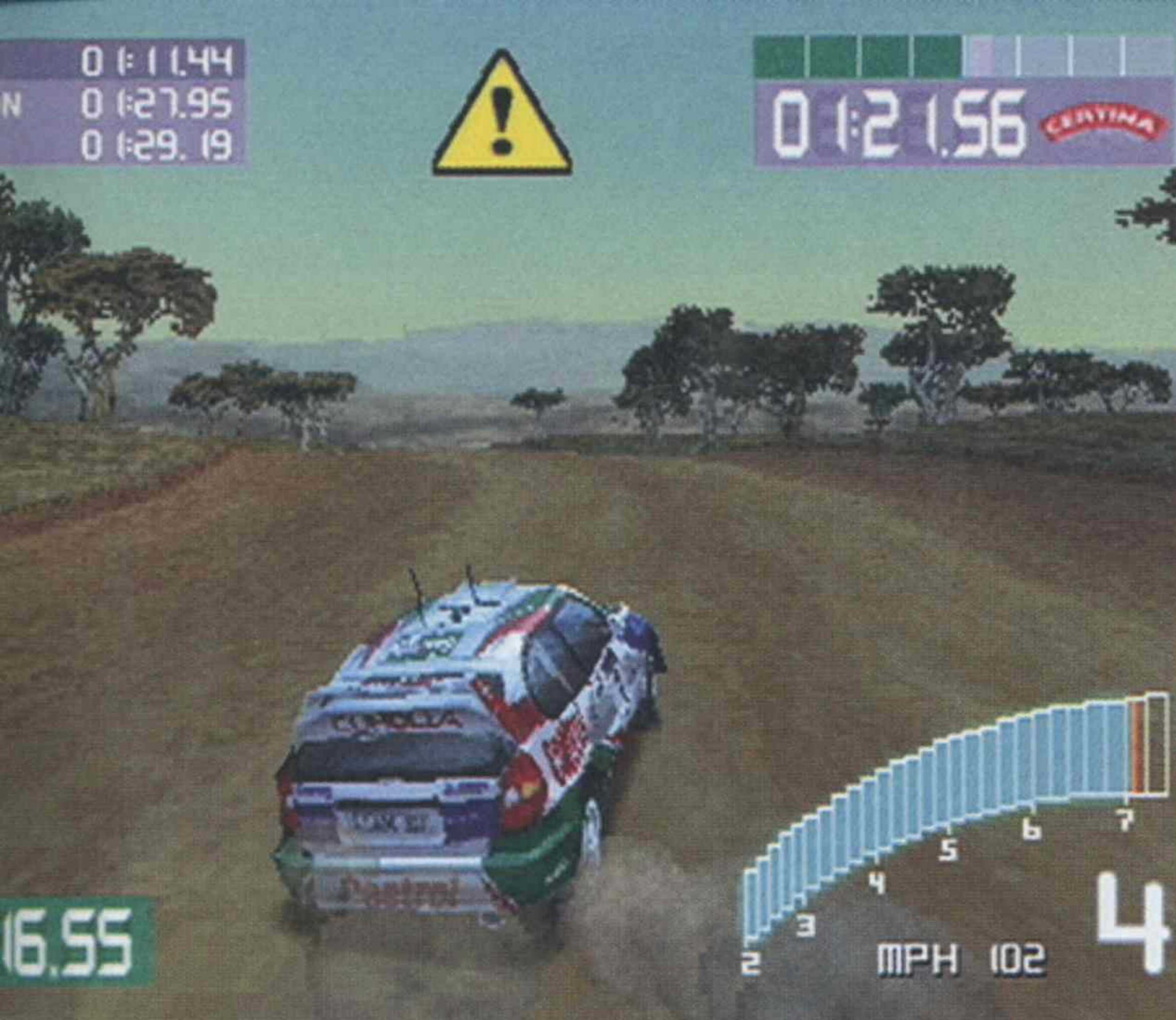
Sleep will be but a memory

**LOW:**

Rough and ready graphics

09/10





# COLIN McRAE RALLY 2.0

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST



**The first thing *Colin 1* veterans will notice upon starting up the second in the series is that the blue Subaru Impreza is no more because Mr. McRae now drives a Ford Focus rally car. But fear not, Scooby fans – the Impreza is actually still available as an option, along with the Mitsubishi Lancer, the Toyota Corolla, the Peugeot 206 and the SEAT Cordoba. Oh, and some incredible hidden bonus cars – more on them later.**

The next things you'll notice are the absolutely astounding graphics, depicting everything in amazing detail. The car, for example, has transparent windows, through which you can see the roll-cage, the seats and maybe even Colin himself. The exhaust pipe spits fire when you lift off the accelerator and that fire reflects atmospherically off rainy asphalt. But how Codies has managed the next bit is a mystery. In *Colin McRae 2.0*, if you crash into a tree, you'll actually damage the car. The front will mash in, and the hood will pop up and flutter disconcertingly every time you go over a bump. Spin into a rock and you can burst the trunk open, so it flaps up when you slam on the brakes. You can even dislodge the rear bumper, leaving it hanging precariously by one screw. The faster you go, the more it flails in the slipstream.

Like real rally stages, the roads and tracks you zoom along are fearsomely narrow, and the finely detailed graphics provide an exhilarating impression of speed as trees, rocks, houses and spectators whip past your side mirrors. Hit a bump and you're airborne in an instant, only opening your eyes when you hear the smash of the Focus reconnecting with road. The sense of terror becomes even more intense when you switch to the Colin's-eye view, which has you peering over the dashboard through a murky

windshield, wincing every time you hear the back of your car swing out behind you and crunch into a wall. It's probably more sensible to stick with the behind-the-car or the hood cam, though – mainly so you don't miss out on all the panel-beating fun. The from-behind view is customizable, so you can adjust the height, the distance and the amount the camera swings as you take a corner. A nice touch.

The handling is top-notch, too. Your wheels and suspension react extremely convincingly to the terrain, and the car slides through bends just like the real thing. Different road surfaces provide different levels of grip, so if you come slithering sideways off a gravelly section on to a stretch of road, the car will snap into line with a squeal of the tires. Snow, meanwhile, requires a whole new way of thinking – the car rarely points at less than 90° to your direction of travel.



The only drawback is that the claustrophobic roads mean you rarely get to pull off the long, delicious powerslides that are possible on *Gran Turismo 2*'s wide dirt tracks.

Not only does *Colin 2.0* get the graphics and handling spot on, but it offers a wealth of ways to keep you amused.

■ Codemasters has included a generous run-off area on either side of the track. You might find yourself spiraling off the road down an embankment, careering through a field or dodging through trees in a nightmarish re-creation of the speeder bike chase from *Return of the Jedi*.



01:11.44  
01:27.95  
01:29.19



01:21.56

16.55

00:44  
00:21  
01:03

03:14.44

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**  
Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-8

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
You can knock pieces off your car

**LOW:**  
The Arcade mode isn't as much fun

09/10



# COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT



**As real-time strategy** games go, *Red Alert* is brilliant. It crushes the likes of *Warcraft 2* and makes its predecessor, *Command & Conquer*, look positively prehistoric.

Initially, you get stacks of units and buildings to tinker around with, and each new one leads to fresh avenues and strategies. The learning curve is damned near perfect, too. Start off with the easy-to-operate units and buildings, then conquer a few more missions and new units and structures start to appear in your menus. Get further in and the world of high-tech weaponry, satellites and nuclear devices becomes available. Then the orgy of death and destruction can commence for real. Just watch out for the lack of Save Game option, though. Some of the missions are huge, and this would have been a really useful feature.

Then there's the link-up game, too. Acquire a cable and you can be going rocket-launcher to rocket-launcher with your friends in psychotically violent deathmatch games. If you can't play other people, then you can take on computer opponents in the Skirmish mode.

*Red Alert* is so polished that some of its numerous rendered intros and cut scenes are better than most of the war films you see on late-night TV. And as for the time-traveling, Hitler-kidnapping plot, you just have to find out what happens next. Wholly recommended.

■ Tanks are great against other tanks and buildings, but they have trouble with ground troops. Click your cursor just behind the offending unit and watch as your tank rolls straight over them, leaving a bloody mess on the ground.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Westwood Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Westwood Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Huge, with fantastic skirmish and multiplayer options

**LOW:**  
Not entirely original

09/10

# COOL BOARDERS 4



**Retaining a similar** style and design to the previous *Cool Boarder* titles, *CB4* features four gaming options and a stats screen to amuse armchair snow-riders.

Some of *CB4*'s improvements are obvious. The game features up to 16 real-life boarders (including Jim Rippey and Jimmy Halopoff), plus 34 modeled boards from the major manufacturers (Burton, Forum, K2, etc). The fighting feature has been improved, enabling you to lash out at riders who try to pass you, while the replay option has a revamped range of functions so you can view that dramatic tail-bonk on a picnic table or revel in your first half pipe alley-ooop.

As you'd expect, the in-game visuals have been improved, too. Rails and wooden picnic tables provide testing trick opportunities, while knee-deep powder snow, immense drops, frozen rivers and snow-dusted thickets provide some spectacular scenery. Not that you've got much time to appreciate it as you race by against the clock.

But the thing that lets *CB4* down is that it just hasn't improved enough on the previous games. While *CB4* impresses with its graphics, it also frustrates with its *dejà-vu* gameplay. Ultimately, if you were hoping for some radical changes to the *Cool Boarders* formula, this hasn't got 'em.

■ Four-player *CB4* is really only an extension of the two-player split-screen option, refusing to enable players three and four to race directly against one and two.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
989 Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Idol Minds

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
New courses, boards and riders

**LOW:**  
Same old gameplay

07/10

# CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED



**The Crash Bandicoot** series is terrific fun. It doesn't just offer droplets of enjoyment, it's more of a Noah-soaking deluge of biblical proportions.

The thing that makes *Crash 3* so special is the attention to detail throughout the game. This includes the enemy animation and the superb cartoon sound; the first that spring to mind are the all-new "bored" and "death" animations; it's almost worth dying just to see them. Every enemy seems to inflict a different comical death on our hero ranging from having your breeches chopped off to being kissed by a frog, which then turns into a prince.

*Crash 3* boasts underwater levels where Crash dons his scuba gear, complete with goggles and flippers. The ability to swim around dodging nasties, and the floaty feel of the action, make these levels real highlights. The other new sections are flying and driving, which involve Crash climbing aboard an old-fashioned biplane and shooting down anything that moves or tearing headlong down a winding freeway. Unfortunately, although these look fantastic, they quickly grow dull.

This is certainly the best *Crash* yet, but is it really worth shelling out for if you own the first two? Yes. It is very similar, but the new features, level styles, pick-ups and characters, not to mention the Time Attack mode, make this a must for everyone.

■ Crash has some new moves: double jumps, super spins (five attack spins linked together, useful for gliding over gaps and chasms) and an improved version of the belly-splash attack.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Naughty Dog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The relics add much-needed replay value

**LOW:**  
The new flying and driving levels can become a bit dull

# 09/10

# CRASH BASH

**Resident Evil 3** is great for when the young 'uns are in bed, *Medal of Honor Underground* should give grandpa flashbacks, but if you're wanting a real crowd-pleaser, then look no further.

Out goes single-player depth, a good plot and cutting-edge graphics; in saunters multiplayer simplicity and bright, primary colors. Happily, the games that make up *Crash Bash* are as easy to grasp as they are fun to play. You might end up controlling a bumper car for the purpose of bouncing giant pinballs into the goals of three opponents, be asked to mount a pogo stick and hop in a square to score points, or be welded into a tank to trundle around blasting the armored hides off three rivals. You can adjust the number of rounds required or opt to play in teams.

Like many other cute games, *Crash Bash's* main attraction is cartoon cruelty. Polar bear riders frantically claw at the air before sliding into an icy abyss, bombs stun OTT tank commanders, and hapless pogoists get a rocket up the rear just as they're about to convert an M5 of colored floor tiles into a goldmine of juicy points.

While the single-player game isn't easy, it quickly wears thin because many of the later levels are just tweaked repeats of earlier offerings. This game is aimed at multiplayer maniacs, and its real beauty lies in the fact that you don't need to know videogames to love it. This is instant entertainment at its best.

■ There's an option to alter the power-ups before you play - for maximum fun, turn 'em all on.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Eurocom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Pick-up-and-playability is outstanding, it really is a game for all the family

**LOW:**  
Single-player game has a limited lifespan

# 08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC

TIME  
0:32:48



LAP  
1-3



## CRASH TEAM RACING



**On the face of it,** *Crash Team Racing* is cutesy to the point of silliness, but if you really dig deep, you'll discover a very different animal. At first it seems that careful steering is all you need to win. Soon, however, the Spock-like wisdom of your native guide (a wooden mask) starts to make sense.

Above all, it's *CTR's* handling that proves this is not just a standard racer flouncing around in an orange wig and fake snout. The karts really slide and wiggle about as you learn to throw them harder and faster into each corner. The turbo system means you're always trying to figure out how to get extra speed by jumping, powersliding, running over the go-faster arrows or using a power-up.

In several key areas, *CTR* outperforms previous kartmeister *Speed Freaks*. The weapons are entertaining without being too powerful. Your opponents drive with intelligence as well as aggression. The courses are actually 3D, enabling you to accidentally leap on to the wrong section of track and wind up in last place. Most surprising of all is the overall responsiveness of the controls when you pick up the joypad and start playing – *CTR* delivers a compact, fast and extremely solid drive.

It has to be said that *Speed Freaks* and *Crash Team Racing* are very similar games, but *CTR* would be our pick of the two, mainly because its driving style is more varied and rewarding.

■ While timing jumps off small ramps can give you an extra burst of speed, the price is often high for failing a jump off a large ramp – you plummet to your doom.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**

Naughty Dog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Surprisingly clever and addictive

**LOW:**

Offers little that is not available in *Speed Freaks*

09/10

PLAYSTATION 2

PS ONE • PC • NINTENDO 64 • GAME BOY COLOR

## CREATURE SHOCK



**A spaceship,** piloted by a buxom young lass, strays across an asteroid. Only it's a living asteroid and in no time at all it captures the ship in its huge tentacles. Bummer.

To find out what's happened, you have to play through two action sections (3D shoot-'em-up levels) and three pre-rendered exploratory sections.

The graphics are much improved over the PC version. The ships are now made up of shaded polygons, and the movement is silky smooth, though the visuals still fall way short of what's possible.

As for the gameplay, there's no real improvement. The screen displays a static view of, for example, a corridor. To turn left, you move the crosshair to the left side of the screen and press a button. The console kicks in and displays a sequence of the corridor moving until you're facing in the appropriate direction. If you happen across a creature, you stop moving and a pre-set sequence featuring the creature's attack patterns is displayed – you can then move a weapon crosshair around the screen and fire at the creature's vulnerable areas.

Basically, the PlayStation edition of *Creature Shock* is a blend of unsatisfactory graphics, insufficiently supported by a linear and simplistic shooting game.

■ If you like your fixed encounters, take a look at *Krazy Ivan*, a game that follows the same formula but whose world is created with polygons, giving you freedom of movement and graphical clarity.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Data East

**DEVELOPER:**

Argonaut

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Tense crosshair battle sequences

**LOW:**

Heavily predetermined action

05/10

# CROC 2

**Like its predecessor,** *Croc 2* is not the perfect platform game, but it does build nicely on its solid foundations. Young Croc is the acceptable face of reptilian stardom. Since his last adventure, he has acquired some new skills. From using power-ups to swinging on ropes or climbing vines, he's certainly a more versatile fellow than he was in *Croc*.

*Croc 2* is realized with squeaky voices, baby-talk dialogue and plenty of colorful levels. The problem, though, is that while it looks like a title for younger gamers, it's tough as a leather baguette. Complete a level and your achievements are saved to memory card, and the glow that accompanies this (often massive) achievement is a warm one. Life-heart pick-ups are few and far between, and being sent back to the start of a level after almost completing it is nearly too frustrating to bear. You begin to wish all manner of nastiness on Croc himself – including handbagdom.

This is a better game than *Croc*, but it's highly demanding. Our score reflects its worth to a player who doesn't shirk a challenge. Others should think about renting it first, or they may find that *Croc's* cartoon bite is much sharper than it looks.

■ At the Title screen, to get infinite crystals, hold **RT** and press **△**, **□**, **○**, **↓**, **←**, **→**, **←**, **→**. Now during play hold **RT** and press **△** to get 100 crystals. You can do this as often as you like.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Fox Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Argonaut

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Bigger, better, prettier than its predecessor

**LOW:**  
*Croc 2's* learning curve is steep

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
THQ

**DEVELOPER:**  
N-Space

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Full of variety in the weaponry department

**LOW:**  
Lack of polish on AI and basic gameplay elements

# 07/10

# DANGER GIRL

**Right from the intro** sequence it seems that this game uses sex to sell, as the camera pans out from the lead girls' unfeasibly large breasts and microscopic waistlines. There is, however, more to *Danger Girl* than boobs and behinds.

N-Space is also responsible for *Duke Nukem Land of the Babes*, and there are certainly similarities between the two.

Both games are combat-heavy, with a baddie around every corner. But what saves *Danger Girl* is the variety of ways to take out the bad guys. Add to this a purse full of high-tech gadgetry, drivable vehicles, interesting locations, an acceptably wacky plot... and *Danger Girl* shows potential. Unfortunately, there are too many flaws to elevate it to Lara's rank. The grainy graphics are a disappointment, and the enemy's lackluster AI makes having to repeat a level irritating. Worst of all, the girls' slow turning circles are an open invitation for henchmen to shoot you in the back.

*Danger Girl* is a perfectly playable, if uninspiring, comic-book conversion that relies too much on its lead characters' ample chests for thrills and not enough on decent AI and gameplay.

■ There's a sneak button (**RT**) to hide the sound of clumpy high heels, a look button (**△**) to target the unsuspecting with one-shot kills and bullet-dodging strafe buttons (**RT** and **LT**).



# DARKSTALKERS: THE NIGHT WARRIORS



**Understandably**, the general perception of *Darkstalkers: The Night Warriors* is that it's like *Street Fighter* with different sprites. And this actually worked to its advantage when it was released in the arcades.

Avid *Street Fighter* fans will, however, tell you that this game has a few superior modifications.

While the sprites are of the usual high standard, the artists have gone berserk with the backgrounds, creating some of the most sumptuous in the genre. Aesthetics aside, the secret behind the success of the *Street Fighter* series has been its finely tuned game engine. The characters abide by certain laws or restrictions – except the computer-controlled ones, who can occasionally be too competent.

There's a host of smart features, such as being able to throw projectiles and block attacks in mid-air, having more than one projectile on-screen at a time, dashing backward or forward by double-tapping the joystick... Aside from these are more subtle additions such as projectile dissipation, block-stun and block-stun reversals, which call for new tactics and skills.

But *Darkstalkers* is far from perfect. It's too difficult – the computer's AI is a little too smart – and it's near-impossible to complete the game on the Default setting with all but three of the characters.

This doesn't stop *Darkstalkers* from being great fun to play, especially in two-player mode.

■ There's a meter which, when charged, enables your character to perform a super move or increase the damage of a special move. This makes *Darkstalkers* less formulaic than *Street Fighter*.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**

Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Capcom's 2D beat-'em-up engine has been improved

**LOW:**

Exasperating when the special move you've spent hours on is nulled by a normal kick

07/10



# DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX



**Entering the competitive arena** of the extreme sports game is *Dave Mirra*. Faced with competition from *Tony Hawk's* and, more recently *Mat Hoffman*, this game has a lot to prove.

The main game is based on an absorbing progression mode, called Proquest, which sees you start as an amateur in your back yard, pulling off easy tricks, with the aim of taking you through the ranks to world champion status. The trouble is, because you are always being pushed in a certain direction, you get no freedom to enjoy just riding around. You get a new bike here or a new sponsor there, but only when you achieve fixed targets. It doesn't hook you in like *Hoffman* or *Hawk's*.

Also, as with any game of this nature, reality is skewed to precipitate huge stunts and minimize frustration, and on this count *Mirra* succeeds. The "air" you get is bigger than it would be on a board. And crucially, there is a genuine sense of achievement when you finally do pull off the more difficult tricks.

On the downside, it's possibly a little too difficult to crash your ride. If you start pedaling and let your bike roam free, it will nearly always just bounce off the walls, leaving you on board and unscathed.

These quibbles aside, *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* successfully conveys the sense of riding a bike. Your ride feels heavy, and you are that bit more distanced from the terrain than you would be on a board – which makes the stunts (many of which are unique to BMX-ing) feel exciting and dangerous, even without the blood you see in *Tony Hawk's*.

■ In Proquest mode while on the Level Select screen, press ←, ↑, →, ↓, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ◎ to access all levels.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**

Z-Axis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Simple controls make it easy to pick up and play

**LOW:**

Not as addictive as its main competitors

08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Tecmo

### DEVELOPER:

Tecmo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You can defend yourself

### LOW:

The one-player game just isn't up to the standard of the multiplayer game

# 08/10

# DEAD OR ALIVE



**Hi-res and impressively fast-moving,** *Dead or Alive* is sufficiently different to warrant some of your attention. That its options menu includes the category "Bouncing Breasts: On/Off" will probably account for the rest.

Tecmo has modeled *Dead or Alive* on the Sega standard of single kick, punch and block buttons. There are other similarities, too, with many of *DOA's* move sequences and play techniques reminiscent of their *Virtua Fighter* equivalents.

*Dead or Alive* enables you to defend yourself against attacks. There's the basic block move, of course, but you also have a counter-attack button at your disposal. If your opponent is fond of convoluted attack sequences, you can stop him dead in his tracks before he can land the first punch. Of course, the opposite also applies. As a result, the flow of *Dead or Alive's* gameplay is unique. You can go from defense to attack blindingly quickly.

Naturally, *Dead or Alive* is a few steps short of perfection. First and foremost, its one-player game just isn't up to the standard of its multiplayer game. Also, the energy bars for each character are too short.

Nevertheless, *Dead or Alive* is a superb and individual beat-'em-up. It's fast – perhaps faster than *Tekken 3*, even – and has numerous secrets to find, moves to learn and fighting techniques to perfect. And the breasts mean nothing. Really.

■ To access the counter-attack move is simple. Just as an opponent begins a punch or kick, tap ⊙.



# DESTRUCTION DERBY RAW



**There are a host** of play options in *Destruction Derby Raw*, spread over a commendable 31 tracks. Most of these tracks are racing circuits of varying fiendishness, while three are bowls. That is to say large open areas where the aim is nothing more cerebral than grinding the other cars into scrap metal, while attempting to be the last driver standing. Another three tracks transport this basic premise to the rooftops of skyscrapers. Now not only can you smack the other cars to pieces, but you can push them over the edge of the building.

The Season mode enables you to earn money to buy new cars – of which there are 24, including seven bonus cars – or upgrade your current one. This is quite a leap from the paltry selection of vehicles available in the first two games.

Improvements don't stop there, though. The cars are now equipped with a handbrake, enabling that all-important tight cornering. Naturally, cars react to the damage realistically, and you'll frequently find yourself limping over the finish line, past the burning shells of your opponents, with no discernable steering control.

Perhaps best of all, *Destruction Derby Raw* finally includes the four-player option that the series has always been crying out for. Suffice to say, the aggressively manic gameplay makes this one of the most essential multiplayer games around.

■ The damage you're able to wreak is astonishing. Hoods flip up, tires burst, side-panels flip off, engines catch fire and oil spills out of shredded brake lines.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Studio 33

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Graphically it's spot-on

### LOW:

The gameplay may outrage racing purists

# 08/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Fox Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
n-Space

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# DIE HARD TRILOGY 2



**Although there's nothing really** wrong with *Die Hard Trilogy 2*, it comes across as the PlayStation equivalent of straight-to-video fare. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, although it stars John McClane, he's in no way associated with the cop portrayed by Bruce Willis.

The second factor is altogether more bizarre. Basically, *Die Hard Trilogy 2* is somewhat of a rerun of the first McClane collection. With the exception of a few small touches, there's not that much to differentiate between the original and the sequel other than the Las Vegas setting – and even that is underplayed.

*Die Hard Trilogy 2* is a game on auto-pilot. It looks and plays okay, but it never excels. The wander-and-shoot game is a languid but entertaining mix of gunplay and exploration, adulterated by unwieldy camera work and cluttered screens – especially when compared with the clever dissipating backdrops used to remove obstacles in its predecessor. The driving sequences really take a dive, though. The wide open spaces

of Las Vegas offer none of the aesthetic detail afforded by the original's bustling New York streets – destroying the beat-the-clock urgency the levels rely upon.

Only the shooting gallery emerges relatively unscathed. Although the level follows a strict, linear path, the first-person action is slick and fun. Nevertheless, one out of three is not acceptable these days – particularly when its four-year-old predecessor has stood the test of time.

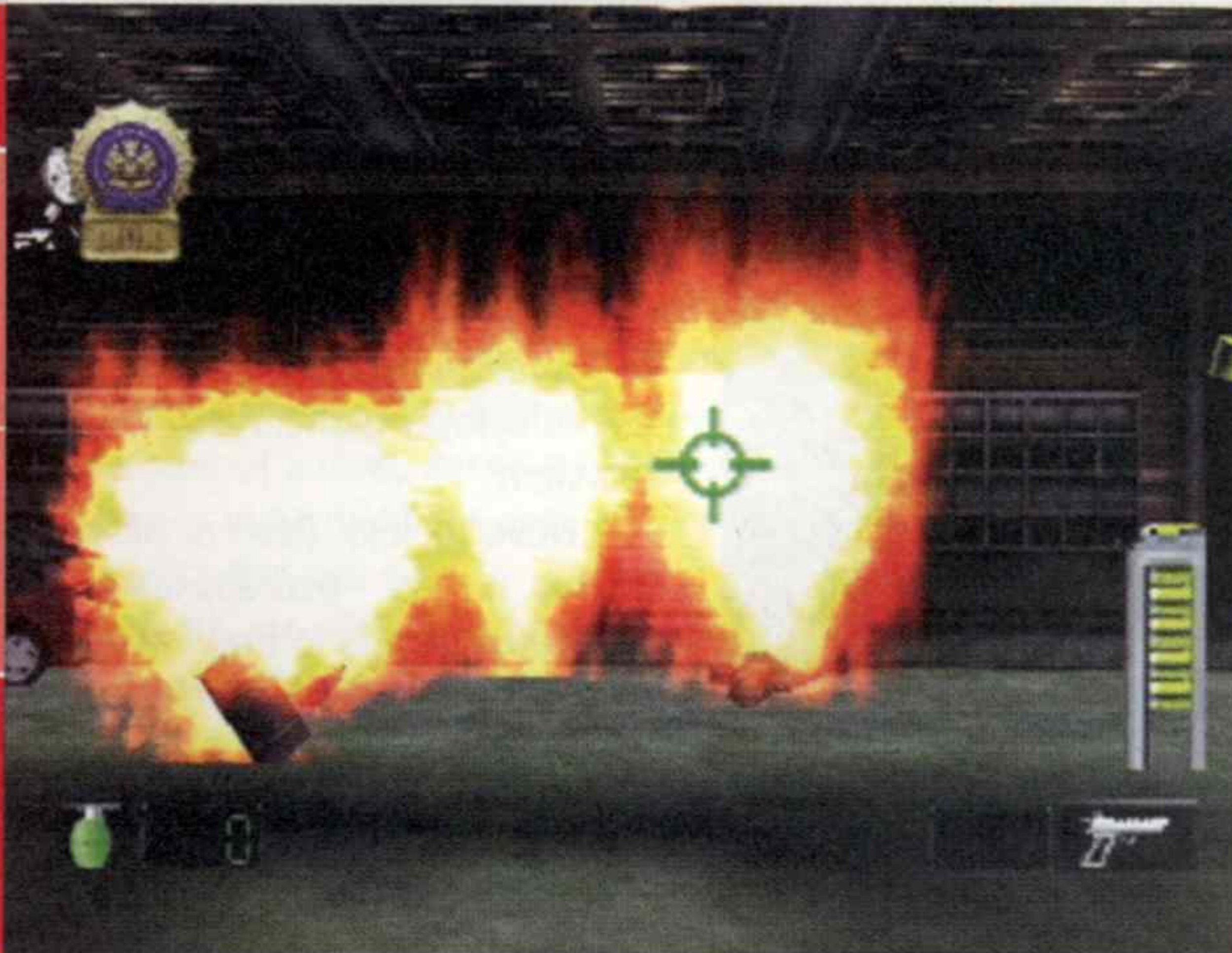
■ The villains roll and groan well, while targeting is smooth and effortless in the first-person shooter.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The first-person shooter is entertaining

**LOW:**  
Just more of the same

06/10



# DINO CRISIS



**The superb intro sequence** doesn't give much away, and your first encounters with giant lizards amount to little more than noises followed by the discovery of a torn-down fence or mutilated body.

In true *Resident Evil* fashion, the first thing you'll be powerless to stop is your team deciding that it would be a good idea to split up, thus leaving you to face the dangers of a dinosaur-inhabited island on your own. At this stage, your predicament is made even worse by the fact that you're armed only with a pistol and, if you're lucky, enough ammo to take out two or three velociraptors at best. Fortunately the dinosaurs on the island don't hang around in groups larger than two or three so, providing you don't stop to kill every one you see, ammo shouldn't prove to be a major problem.

Some of them have to be killed, however. Reaching for a door and going into the animated loading screen can no longer be considered an escape route. Providing your pursuer is sufficiently hungry, you'll be treated to an animation of it crashing through the door behind you moments after you resume play.

Fans of the *Resident Evil* series should certainly consider playing *Dino Crisis*. Graphically it's an improvement over all the previous survival horror games and fans of the genre should have no hesitation about grabbing a copy now.

■ The majority of your time is spent solving puzzles so when the time comes to fight off an enemy, it's often the last thing you're expecting.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
*Resident Evil* with dinosaurs

**LOW:**  
There is no look-around option

08/10



# DINO CRISIS 2

**Set directly after** the events of the first game, *Dino Crisis 2* is a bold step away from what could have been a safe and predictable sequel. While *Dino Crisis* was a straightforward story well told, this follow-up is more of an epic.

Key cards and the occasional logic test still form the bulk of the puzzles, and the rotational control system has also been retained, complete with 180° spins and a tidy auto-targeting system.

The graphics, however, have been completely reworked. The heroes, Regina and Dylan, are more detailed and the animation as they run, stroll and take arms is smooth and realistic. Rightfully taking center stage, though, are the dinosaurs. In the original a big disappointment was the limited variants of dinosaur attack. These dinosaurs are just as clever as the ones that tore Bob Peck to bits in *Jurassic Park*, jumping out of nowhere to attack you – often in packs of three. Twelve species now inhabit *Dino Crisis 2*, the larger numbers explained through a clever time-travel scenario.

In terms of taut plot and shocks, *Dino Crisis 2* is more than a match for its stablemates. It also ups the ante slightly, with a wider range of locations and the inclusion of sub-games.

The game's move toward action has made it rather unrelenting at times. And the predictability of three dinosaurs appearing with every switch of the camera angle can be tedious. *Dino Crisis 2* isn't perfect, but it is playable and entertaining.

■ If you come across a waterfall in the jungle, press the action button over it and it will reveal a leaf. Follow the leaf and you will get the third energy facility key card.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Great game structure and plot

**LOW:**  
Experienced gamers may tire of the repeated strategies

# 08/10

# DISCWORLD NOIR

**Himself a committed gamer**, it's little wonder Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels have found themselves converted into games for the PlayStation. With two such adventures already in the can, the third game in this non-trilogy adopts a markedly different approach. As the title suggests, *Discworld Noir* takes its cue from a combination of film noir, the gumshoe detective novels of Raymond Chandler and, of course, Pratchett's very own fictional landscape: Discworld.

Though the intro sequence finds the lead character, private investigator Lewton, murdered by an unseen hand, we swiftly flash-back to the game proper and the beginning of the events that lead to his untimely demise. Lewton is visited by the ubiquitous *femme fatale*, who has a case for him. Naturally, Lewton accepts the job and descends into the underworld of Ankh-Morpork, where you mingle with the inevitable unsavories, many of whom turn out to be familiar faces from the *Discworld* books.

Though Pratchett's involvement in the game was peripheral, his touch is everywhere. The dialogue is suitably authentic and funny in that slightly irritating I-know-it's-funny way.

Naturally, *Discworld* acolytes will relish the chance to romp around in this digital expansion of Pratchett's universe. Non-fanatics, though, may be frustrated by the continual dead-ends, obscure objectives and murky graphics. Even though that is the whole idea behind the noir genre...

■ The environment is richly developed and populated by fantasy characters, voiced by assorted *Young Ones* and *Red Dwarf* cast members, whom you have to grill for clues from time to time.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**  
Perfect Entertainment

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:


**HIGH:**  
Pratchett fans will find all they are looking for

**LOW:**  
The visuals are a trifle too dark in places

# 08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
NINTENDO 64 • PC

# DRIVER

 **Driver isn't a driving game at all.** This is real-life, inner-city cruising on your PlayStation. There are traffic lights, traffic jams, and a regular watchful cop presence. Park up and pedestrians will wander around, cars stop at lights, their drivers behaving as boringly as they do in real life. Fortunately, in among the hundreds of innocent Sunday drivers lurk vile do-badders to pep things up a bit.

You play Tanner, an undercover cop on a mission to unearth the identity of (and slap the cuffs on) Mr. Big. Tanner has relinquished his badge, mothballed his uniform and taken up residence in a seedy motel, where his new underworld buddies get in touch via his answering machine.

Activate the answer machine for details of jobs Tanner is being offered. If you like the sound of a mission, you accept it and are transported into your car outside the motel. Suddenly, you're in charge of your car and the scanner (bottom right) shows you where you should be heading, complete with handy dots showing the positions of the cops.

There are 44 missions in total and the successful completion of some will prompt the arrival of others on your machine. At the end of the final mission, your performance is assessed by your success/failure rate and your efficiency, and you're given a ranking, tempting you into countless replays. Of course, as you play through again you can have a crack at the missions you didn't attempt last time. Add to this the sub-games and you'll be busy for months.

So *Driver* is a car chase game, and what it lacks in cheap thrills, it more than makes up for in superbly realized car-handling, vast immersive city structures, and expertly designed missions.

Each of the four cities in the game (New York, San Francisco, LA and Miami) are replicas of their real-life counterparts. The game crams in a 30-mile square area, incorporating the highlights of each. For a bit of variety, all the LA missions



<b>DETAILS:</b>	
<b>PUBLISHER:</b>	GT/Infogrames
<b>DEVELOPER:</b>	Reflections
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b>	1
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b>	April 1999
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b>	Yes

take place at night, giving the game an excellent excuse to show off its fantastic lighting effects.

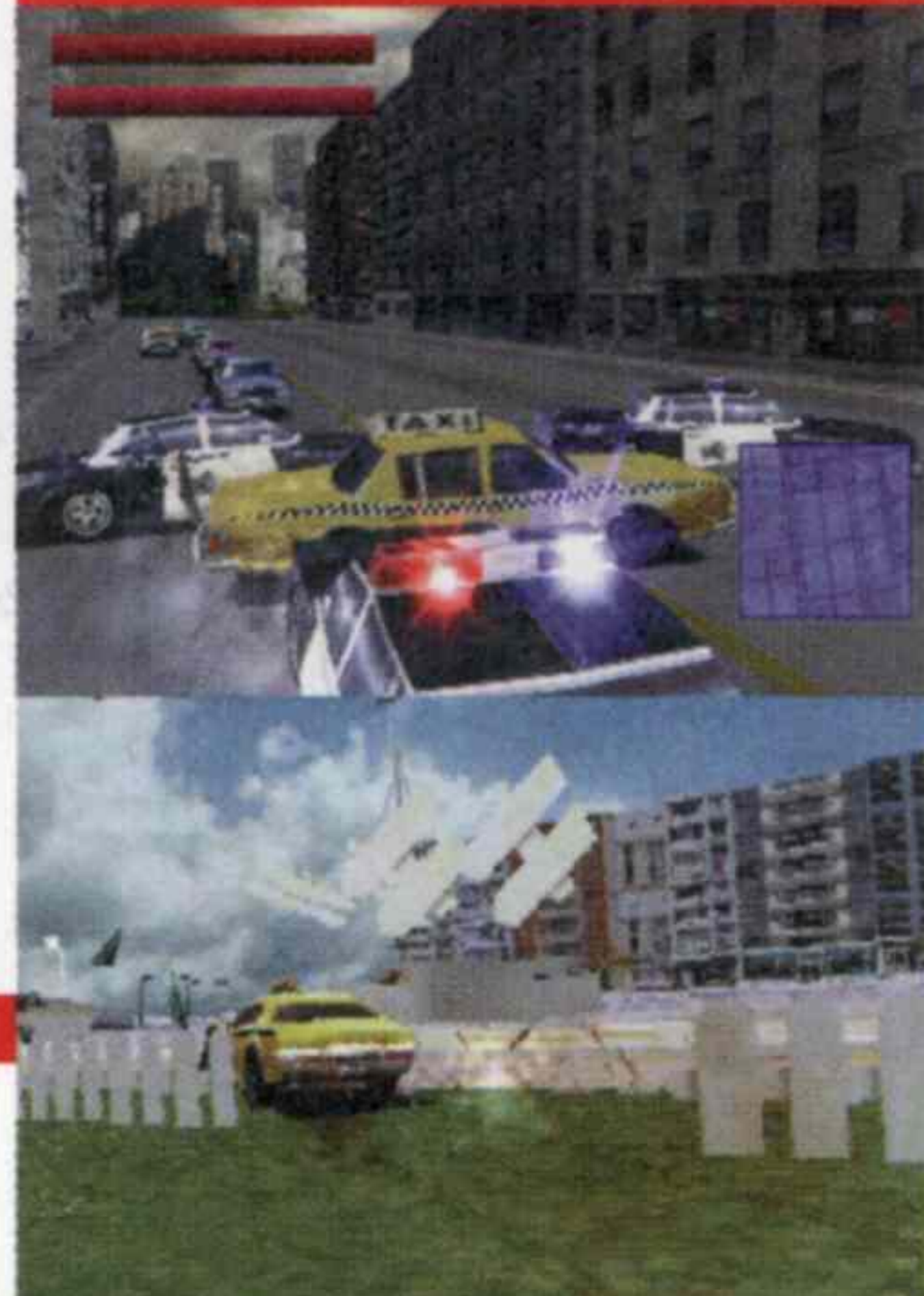
Despite minor quibbles – some missions are very alike and the power bar is used to represent a lot of different things – the developing plot and branching mission structure not only make you feel like a tiny cog in a much larger and elegantly corrupt machine, but positively dare you to replay the game time and time again.

We implore you to put on your finest driving gloves, don reflective shades and take *Driver* for a spin. We promise you the drive of your life.

■ Fail a mission and you're given another chance. Fail three times and you're thrown out for your incompetence, relying on your last saved game to get back into the action.

<b>VERDICT:</b>	
<b>HIGH:</b>	Cars + missions = a boot-load of entertainment
<b>LOW:</b>	One or two missions do retread familiar themes

**09/10**



# DOOM: PLAYSTATION SPECIAL EDITION



**The benchmark to** which so many PlayStation shooters have subsequently been compared, this edition of *Doom* is dripping with all the blood and guts that outraged so many when the series debuted in 1994.

PlayStation converts will likely be familiar with the *Doom* theme, and as such will be delighted to know that the *Special Edition* is the equivalent of the PC's *Doom*, *Doom II* and *Ultimate Doom* all squashed into one deliciously gory whole. Naturally the levels have been tweaked and redesigned, but fundamental conceptual aspects remain the same in some of the more "interesting" levels.

But for the uninitiated? It's a 3D shoot-'em-up utilizing a first-person perspective. It's a no-holds-barred opportunity to destroy things. Fifty-odd levels of colorful things to terminate, accompanied by frighteningly realistic, rumbling sound effects. Blasting anything that moves and watching your arse very carefully for snipers isn't the only aspect of the gameplay, however. Bringing your brain into the equation as well as your fingers, there are various puzzles that need your attention.

It's addictive, depraved, twisted, devious, intense, tasteless, nefarious, absorbing... it has all the alluring qualities you could ever want in a game, coupled with intuitive gameplay, thrills and spills, surprises aplenty, fantastic graphics and reams of atmosphere. A classic.

■ Some doors have security locks and require a color-coded security card or skull key to open them. Other locked doors are operated by a switch on a nearby wall.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GT

### DEVELOPER:

Id Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The start of something big

### LOW:

Since superseded on the blood 'n' guts format

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Reflections

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Cinematographic genius

### LOW:

Minor slow-down in Two-player mode - barely worth a mention, though

# 10/10

# DRIVER 2



**It would have been** easy to knock up a simple update to *Driver*, knowing it would sell regardless, so it's nice to see *Driver 2* be such a vast improvement on the original.

Such improvements include a solid plot that props up the individual missions - which Tanner can, and sometimes must, explore on foot. The missions have more depth, they further justify the mission layout, and there's more incentive to complete them to see how it affects the story. To top it off you can now steam around in vans, buses, trucks, ambulances, fire engines and cop cars - each with its own handling and engine sounds.

The interface has a more linear approach than the original: tasks come one at a time, the next chapter being unlocked on completion, so you can replay your favorite missions if you like.

Beyond the straight single-player Walkthrough mode, there's a wealth of single and split-screen two-player options which, on top of being great sub-games, are also useful for honing your driving skills. The two-player options are variants on the single-player bonus games, and the Two-player mode is a post-bar dream.

The added graphical polish far outweighs any quibbles concerning glitches or pop-up, and the action takes you through some beautifully accurate locations, from Chicago to Rio, via Havana (ramshackle '50s time-warp) and Vegas. The whole thing simply swaggers with class.

■ Reflections sent teams of photographers to the featured locations, and used the prints to ensure maximum realism.



## DUCATI WORLD



**Ducati World** – with its realistic handling, 40 types of bike and arcade action – breaks the mold of motorbike sims by actually being a good game.

It's divided into Quick Race and Ducati Life modes, with the latter influenced by *Gran Turismo's* GT mode. Along the way, you can purchase new machines from authorized dealers or buy second-hand from the classified ads in Ducati Magazine.

The races of Quick Race unlock the uniquely constructed tracks and Ducati bikes from every decade, which you can then ride in two-player head-to-heads. Machines range from the company's first model, the 1950s bicycle-with-engine Cucciolo, to the supercharged Foggy 996. The tracks come in varying slices of difficulty, so while you can charge around at full throttle in Neon City, trying the same in City Heat would have you plowing off the evil chicanes and into a wall. Charging around on the wrong courses may result in limb-cracking, spine-rupturing crashes that really make you wince. And with the slower vintage bikes, crashing becomes awfully irritating because it takes a while to build up speed again.

Mix all this with collaboration with Ducati technical guys for bike handling realism, and *Ducati World* leaves other PlayStation bike sims fumbling with their stands.

■ The man responsible for much of the fun in *Rollcage 1* and *2* – Producer Dave Perryman – also had a large degree of input on this title.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**

Attention To Detail

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Official Ducati bikes

**LOW:**

Great tracks and a respectable learning curve

08/10



## DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL



**Ignore the plastic**, re-configured good looks – the Duke is a lot older than he seems. *Duke Nukem* games have always gone with the latest vogue in videogaming, and always managed to be funny and inventive without being on the cutting edge.

What we have here is another *Nukem* game, that takes its lead from the Croft school of thought. Duke walks like Lara, he even runs, jumps and climbs like Lara. The difference comes when he pulls out a gun; Duke's combat is what *Tomb Raider's* should be: crisp and decisive.

The game has a great atmosphere and is a joy to play. The levels are superbly designed so that you're often on the edge of your seat, furiously scanning the darkness for ammunition or health packs. Sometimes you manage to put together a totally awesome arsenal of weaponry and stroll around blasting everything with ease; other times you'll be scrabbling around for a handgun clip. There are five different difficulty levels, too, each of which makes the enemies harder to defeat, so that every different proficiency of gamer is well served.

There are, however, a few drawbacks. Occasionally, *Time to Kill* suffers from slowdown, it doesn't have the same great set-pieces as *Tomb Raider*, and atmospherically it isn't quite in the same league.

Nonetheless, *Duke Nukem: Time to Kill* is a superb piece of well-crafted videogame fun.

■ There are two combat modes. In the standard one, Duke auto-sights on anything within a few feet of the direction he's facing; in Sniper mode (accessed by holding **□**), Duke's head turns transparent and you get a zoom view centered on a red laser-sight dot.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

GT Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

N-Space

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

It's really big, with tons of levels and hundreds of secrets

**LOW:**

Not much variety to the enemies

09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**

N-Space

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Huge weapons, massive levels and engaging gameplay

**LOW:**

All the fleshy, girl-focused themes quickly grow tiresome

**08/10**

# DUKE NUKEM: LAND OF THE BABES



**This time around,** Ol' Dukeroonie has stepped into the warp machine to save a planet full of (yawn) scantily-clad young ladies from an invading force of merciless mutant animals. What follows is an action-packed romp around 12 carnage-laden levels, and while blasting beasts is the main occupation, there's also lots of exploring, puzzle-solving and secrets-ferreting.

The Dukester appears to have been taking tips from a woman. Climb the ladder, backflip to a ledge, auto-target baddies and drop down to collect the secret; the influence of PlayStation's First Lady is seemingly apparent. Of course, as far as masculinity affirming weaponry goes, he knocks Lara off the podium.

The game is shorter than most action-adventures, but instant kicks are a lot harder. Kicks include the Energy Weapon that spews molten kryptonite, the Freezer that makes stony statues of the baddies, and the Shrinker that makes the enemy rabbit-sized.

Although the levels are small, they're pleasingly varied, ranging from space ports to shark-infested underwater streets. They also contain secret areas, which, when unlocked, reveal cheats intended to entice you back for a second helping.

The game's a heavy-metal dance of destruction blends with crass but self-mocking humor, and the end result, while graphically inferior to the likes of *Resident Evil* and not on the same scale as the *Tomb Raiders*, is satisfying and entertaining.

■ You might be interested in knowing that Mr. Nukem tends goal for Denmark in *ISS Pro Evolution*.



# DUKES OF HAZZARD: RACING FOR HOME



**This takes the fun,** rather than serious, fork in the racing-game road. It aims to string together a series of driving missions with cut scenes featuring Uncle Jesse, Daisy Duke, Boss Hogg and Sheriff Rosco P.

Coltrane. It's no surprise either that the Dukes' motor, the General Lee, is the real star, turboing off ramps just to flaunt its new paint job.

Much like in *Driver*, you get the chance to be pursuer and pursuee at different points in the game. In some missions, you are required to simply not lose another vehicle, while in others you need to ram a car or avoid a car that's trying to ram you. In between these point-to-point driving sections are derby races against the clock where you have to complete a course within a time limit. While some of these missions (especially the pursuits) are mildly entertaining, all are hamstrung by poor handling.

There are consolations to offset *Hazzard's* lack of driving ambition. Turboing into the air is fun, although this is an under-used feature of the game, and shooting out your opponent's tires is always good for a giggle. If there were some actual adventure elements to give it some variety, the blandness of the driving sections might be forgivable. But as driving is the game, such mediocrity cannot be overlooked. Yee huh?

■ The Dukes' Dodge suffers from a split personality – one minute you seem to be coasting along, and the next you clip a car or obstacle and end up tumbling and sliding about like a greased Boss Hogg.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

SouthPeak Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

Sinister Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Plenty of tight denim. Oh, and the General Lee rocks

**LOW:**

Repetitive missions

**05/10**



# DYNASTY WARRIORS



**The game structure** is actually a marriage of basic *Tekken 2* and *Soul Blade* values. Like *Tekken*, it steers clear of rainbow-colored swipes and eye-gouging special moves, instead opting for a merger of quick-witted attacking and defensive play. It also encourages you to get in close to your opponent in order to orchestrate the correct button sequences. In this case, though, *Tekken's* button-heavy combos are given the boot in favor of a far simpler and instantly gratifying form of weapons-based combat.

You can approach a *Dynasty Warriors* fight in two ways. The first is by merely using the two attack buttons. Combining these produces a variety of opponent-damaging moves, even though the results aren't particularly spectacular.

The second way is to grapple with your defensive buttons. The resulting combos aren't full-on, but they're harmful enough to put to rest your troublesome opposition, since defense is something *Dynasty Warriors* takes very seriously. Whatever your opponent chooses to shower on you, there's a counter-measure to prevent it cutting you down. Manage to block in all the right places, and your enemy will become more vulnerable to your attacks.

It's only the crowded nature of this end of the PlayStation market that prevented greater success for *Dynasty Warriors*. If you can find a copy, give it a whirl.

■ To play as Sun Shang Xiang, you have to go to the Main Menu and highlight 1P Battle. Next, press ←, ←, ↑, ↓, △, ⊙, □, □.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Koei

### DEVELOPER:

Omega Force

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Extremely playable

### LOW:

Nothing particularly original

# 08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC •

# HOT SHOTS GOLF 2



### Why assume the role

of Tiger Woods or Nick Rivaldo when you can play as Rocco, Dottie and Cedric – each with their own unique attributes and sense of style? Initially you choose from three mediocre start-up

characters, but by challenging and beating characters higher up the leaderboard, you'll win the right to assume their identity. There are around 13 characters in all, and their escalating skill levels make for a near-perfect learning curve in the single-player mode. Your character choice in multiplayer also doubles up as a rather effective handicapping system.

Accessibility is *EG2's* strength. It has all the features you'd find in other golf titles, but it takes a far more light-hearted and friendly approach. All six of the courses are well designed, the changeable weather conditions make for a lasting challenge and the character animations are genuinely humorous. While many sports games quickly become tiresome in single-player mode, *Everybody's Golf 2* keeps you hooked. New clubs and balls offer you improved accuracy and strength, new commentators come complete with a fresh batch of quotes to tease you with, and the mirrored courses option essentially doubles your money. Once you've started, you won't be satisfied until you've earned all the imaginative power-ups and creamed all your friends. Twice.

■ There are also a number of secret characters to unlock, including Sweet Tooth the clown from *Twisted Metal* as well as a range of other B-list game stars.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

Clap Hanz

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It's easy to pick up

### LOW:

It's hard to put down

# 09/10

# EXHUMED

**Yet another 3D shooter,** *Exhumed* is set in an ancient Egyptian city beset by fear. An evil alien force known as the Kilmaat has kidnapped a Pharaoh mummy. King Ramses has hired a special agent to not only recover mom, but also to destroy the Kilmaat and ensure that peace returns.

The first thing you notice about *Exhumed* is just how good the 3D engine is. Like most of the games in this sub-genre, you can call on the shoulder buttons to shuffle from side to side, but here, if you depress and hold **A**, you can use the direction pad to look up and down – a helpful option when birds of prey are circling.

You need the certainty that the engine and control system offer because *Exhumed* is tough. The writers have dropped in a plethora of adventuresome puzzles, so not only are you fighting to hold back waves of enemies, you're worrying about the extra piece you need to collect for your transmitter, which just happens to be on a ledge 20 feet in the air.

Added to this, there is a level of visual variety rarely seen in 3D shooters. Indoors, outdoors, cities, temples – there are even underwater sections where you have to dive and swim while avoiding the attentions of deadly fish.

*Exhumed* works because it's smartly designed and because the engine and visuals are excellent. Sure, you've seen this type of game before, but this offering is lavish fare.

■ As you're making a swim for it, keep an eye open for a special mask that will help sustain your breathing underwater.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
BMG

**DEVELOPER:**  
Lobotomy Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
There's a hefty lifespan to this challenge

**LOW:**  
Not wildly original and sometimes very tough

# 08/10

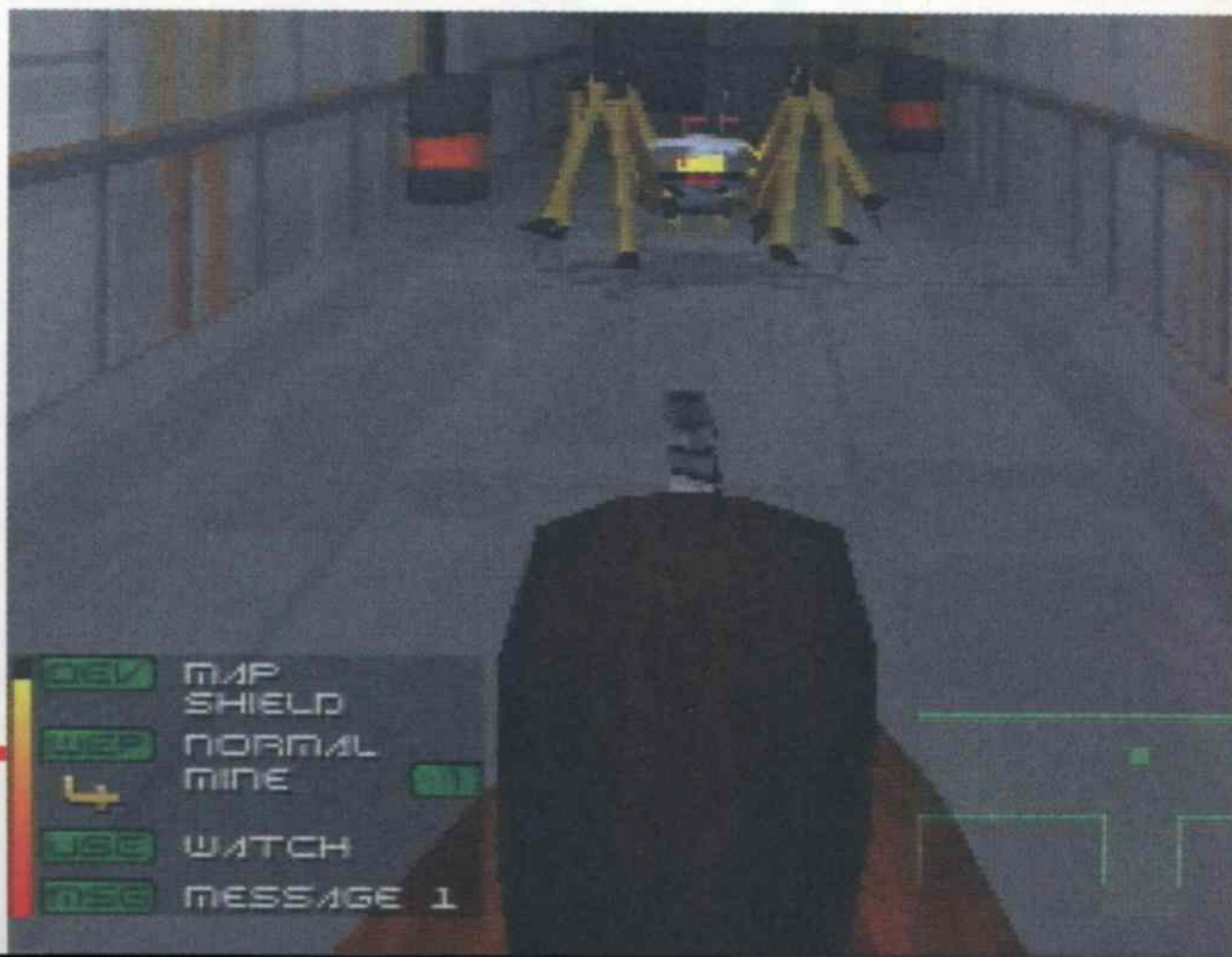
# FADE TO BLACK

**Conrad B. Hart is adrift in space** until he is picked up by his old enemies, the Morphs. Predictably, they lock him up, and so starts *Fade to Black*. Conrad first enthralled us in the classic platform adventure *Flashback*, and the mechanics of the gameplay in the sequel stick close to the 2D original. You can walk, run, jump, edge from side to side, and take single steps forward, which enabled the developers to include puzzles that depend on precise positioning.

You can still turn to look or fire over your own shoulder, but now the camera pans round to see what Conrad is looking at. The problem with this is you don't get to see the targets well enough until you've drawn your weapon. The camera follows every movement of your character. When you are running in a straight line this poses no problem, but deviate to the left or right and the camera sways around (as well as zooming and changing angle at certain points), and the effect can be bewildering.

Despite these quibbles, a great deal of trouble has been taken to make this 3D action-adventure constantly challenging and exciting. There are plenty of tasks to keep the adrenaline going and make you feel like you're taking part in a constantly evolving story. The experience can be best summed up in the fact that *Fade to Black* leaves you feeling a bit depressed that it has to end.

■ The camera follows Conrad a few feet behind and slightly above. Once you draw your gun, however, the camera zooms into a position just behind his shoulder and you get a good view of potential targets.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Delphine

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The levels contain very distinct goals

**LOW:**  
Sometimes the in-game camera can confuse you

# 08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC



## FEAR EFFECT 2: RETRO HELIX



**When the Kronos** developers sat down to work out what went wrong with *Fear Effect*, they obviously paid attention to the complaints people had made, because the two most irritating things – long loading times and hardcore bosses – are gone.

But what about the rest of the game? For starters, it looks dreamy. Kronos has again employed its MotionFX engine, which brings animation to *Retro Helix's* already grand-looking, pre-rendered backgrounds with puffs of steam, creepy shadows and other atmospheric effects. And the characters are all well-conceived and animated.

The game's finest moments are to be found in its cerebral puzzles, many of them requiring more than a small dose of logical thought to complete. You're given the tools to do the job, and once you've cracked it you feel a real sense of achievement.

There is really only one major problem: it's incredibly easy to be misled by the delayed targeting system. It's not a consistent problem, but in the larger in-game environments, your enemy can often squeeze off a few rounds before you've even drawn a bead.

This doesn't amount to failure, though. The game's structure is sound, progressing through the levels isn't the fits-and-starts nightmare that was the experience of *Fear Effect*, and besides, there's too much innovation and originality here. It's stylish, engaging and enjoyable, and the format is familiar enough to just jump in and get cracking. An improvement in almost every way.

■ Running away from a firefight is often more dangerous than hanging around to battle it out. Run away only as a final option.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Kronos

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Massive improvement over the first game

**LOW:**  
Sometimes your progress can be halted because you fail to complete just one puzzle

08/10

## FIFA 2001



**The epic story** of *FIFA* games ends with this highly tweaked version.

The most significant change to *2001* is the default, distant view of the action. The players are now less than half the size they were in past incarnations, so you have a better overview of the action. By abandoning the close-ups and detailed players, it's as if EA has realized *FIFA's* potential as an arcade game as opposed to a simulation like *ISS*.

But something else interesting has happened. The move away from the series' past obsession with aesthetics has resulted in a much more free-flowing game. It's still undeniably *FIFA*, and simplistic in the extreme, but the light mix of passing, through-balls and shots works well with the new, wide-angle perspective. EA has also tightened the player AI. Within minutes it becomes second nature to tackle, pass and slot home decent shots. What's more, build-up play can be surprisingly intricate, and – provided you ignore the ridiculously easy Amateur level – the opposing teams offer a considerable challenge during the course of a season.

*FIFA 2001* is nowhere near as comprehensive as *ISS Pro Evolution*, but it is good fun. It's ironic that the *FIFA* series comes to an end on PS1 just as it finds its feet, but it's better for the series to go out on something of a high, rather than being remembered grimly as an unimaginative plodder.

■ Mr. Pout himself, Robbie Williams, was motion-captured for the victory sequences on *FIFA 2001*.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
EA

**DEVELOPER:**  
EA

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Best graphics and camera angles of any *FIFA* game

**LOW:**  
The best *FIFA* still isn't good enough to challenge *ISS* for the soccer crown

07/10



# FIGHTING FORCE 2

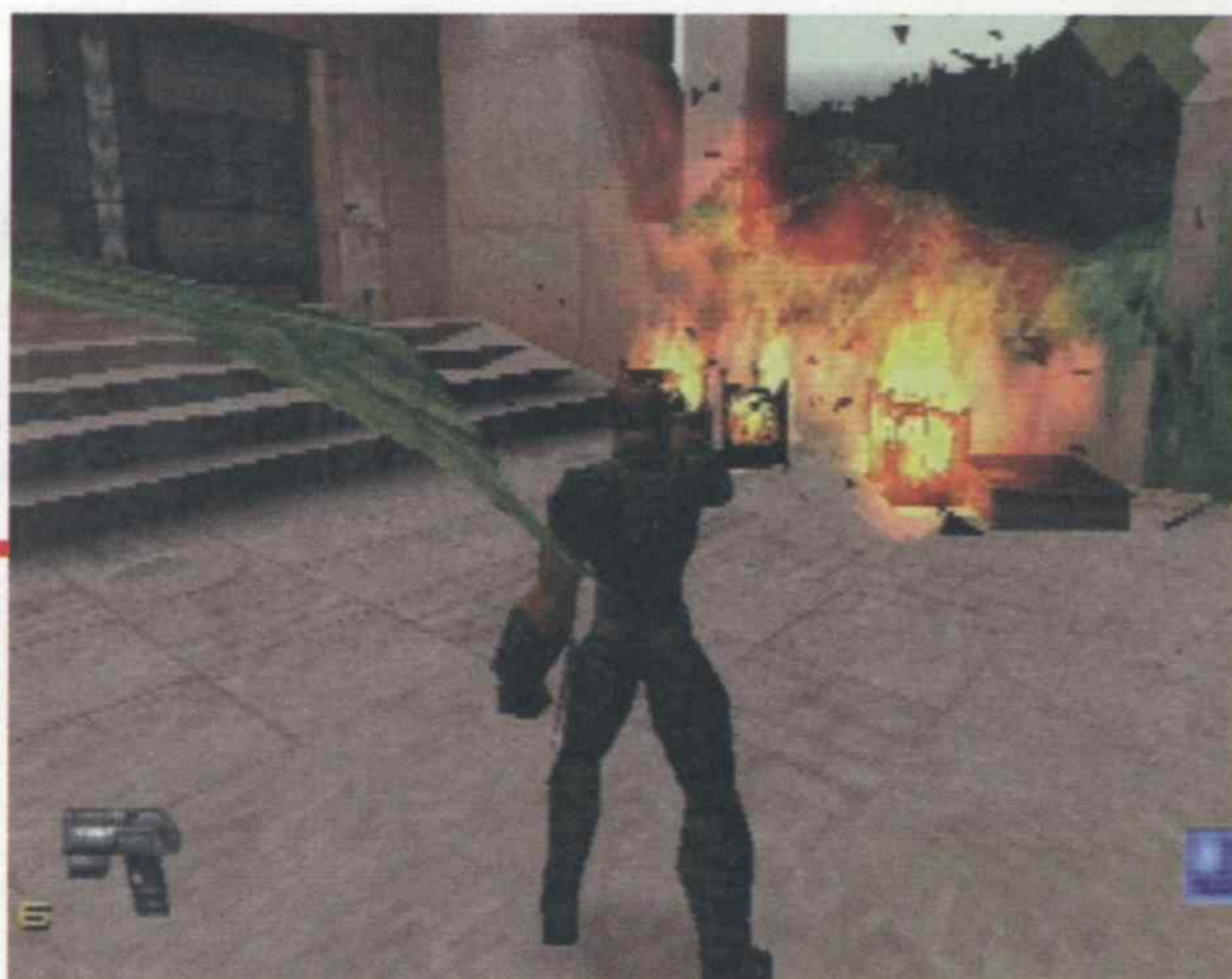


**Hawk Mason is now** a government agent, which basically means he can spend his time beating people up with guns and gadgets. The controls are easy to pick up, but you'll instantly realize that the combat system is deeply flawed. When you're outnumbered, which is most of the time, it's incredibly difficult to turn from one enemy to another without taking a beating.

More tedious still is having to beat up boxes, cupboards, photocopiers and other bits of scenery in order to find weapons or keys. Points are also accumulated by causing damage, effectively making what was a nice incidental feature of the first game a very dull and necessary element of this sequel. However, there's an excellent selection of weapons on offer, all capable of taking out even the most ferocious of photocopiers. The inventory for selecting weapons is a little clumsy, though, and does not pause the game at all. With practice, you'll learn to overcome *FF2's* flaws, but they are flaws nonetheless and will still frustrate you from time to time.

*Fighting Force 2* isn't really a sequel – it's an attempt at something completely different. With a better control system and a few less boxes to beat up it could have been a contender... but it isn't.

■ Punches, kicks and even bullets will not connect with enemies unless they're standing upright. The result is that having beaten an enemy to the ground, you have to stand around waiting for them to get back on their feet before you can finish them off.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Core Design

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It is easy to get the hang of the controls

### LOW:

Too many boxes to beat up

# 06/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA

### DEVELOPER:

EA Sports

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An accurate sim and hugely enjoyable to play

### LOW:

The two-player game suffers from a dropped frame rate

# 08/10

# F1 2000



**EA has come up trumps** with its first F1 tie-in. But official status and inevitably-impeccable EA production aside, it all comes down to how the cars actually handle.

Breathe a sigh of relief then, because *F1 2000* is a triumph. While not mind-numbingly precise, it has been tuned so that it provides an excellent balance of fun and accuracy. There are a number of driving-aid options if you just want a quick spin or need help getting to know the tracks, but switch these off and you've got yourself a fun challenge. Rather than spinning you into the barriers whenever you have a tire tread wrong, *F1 2000's* a reasonably forgiving game, particularly if you play around with car set-ups to get yourself comfortable. If it's a bit rainy and the back-end keeps swinging out on slow corners, move the brake balance to the back and increase the rear wing so that the back of the car is always trying to go slower than the front.

*F1 2000's* computer-controlled competitors are worryingly simple, though – we were just half a second off the Expert level's qualifying times after a couple of hours of practice, and two seconds quicker than the Hard drivers.

Nevertheless, for the speed freak and Grand Prix fan this is an essential purchase. EA deserves a hearty pat on the back for getting it right – first time.

■ As you get to know the tracks better, familiarize yourself with the braking points, know the speeds and when to reapply the accelerator – the main challenge is to start shaving tenths of seconds off your lap times.



# FINAL FANTASY VII

**Every so often, a** game comes along that forces you to reassess your critical standards. In this case it's a game by Square, one of the most accomplished software houses in the world. And back in 1997 *Final Fantasy VII* had PlayStations doing things they'd never done before.

The general game environment uses pre-rendered CGI backdrops, which your polygon-described character can trundle around at will, examining objects and searching for vital hot spots. However, these locations are far more advanced than anything you'll have seen in, say, *Resident Evil* – instead of static wallpaper, each one is packed with animations and effects.

*Final Fantasy VII* is more than just a *Broken Sword*-style adventure with a few puzzles to solve. At the heart of the experience is a sophisticated battle engine in which you use menu choices to determine the actions and tactics of your ragtag party.

When you encounter enemy forces, the game changes mode to show a fully 3D texture-mapped locale in which the camera spins to provide dynamic views of your warriors and the curiously imaginative monsters they must defeat. Every dodge, sword swipe, gunshot and conjuring gesture is graphically portrayed,

negating the need for text explanations. In these situations, only the soundtrack is below par. Excellent as it is, there just aren't enough different battle themes to avoid the occasional sense of repetition.

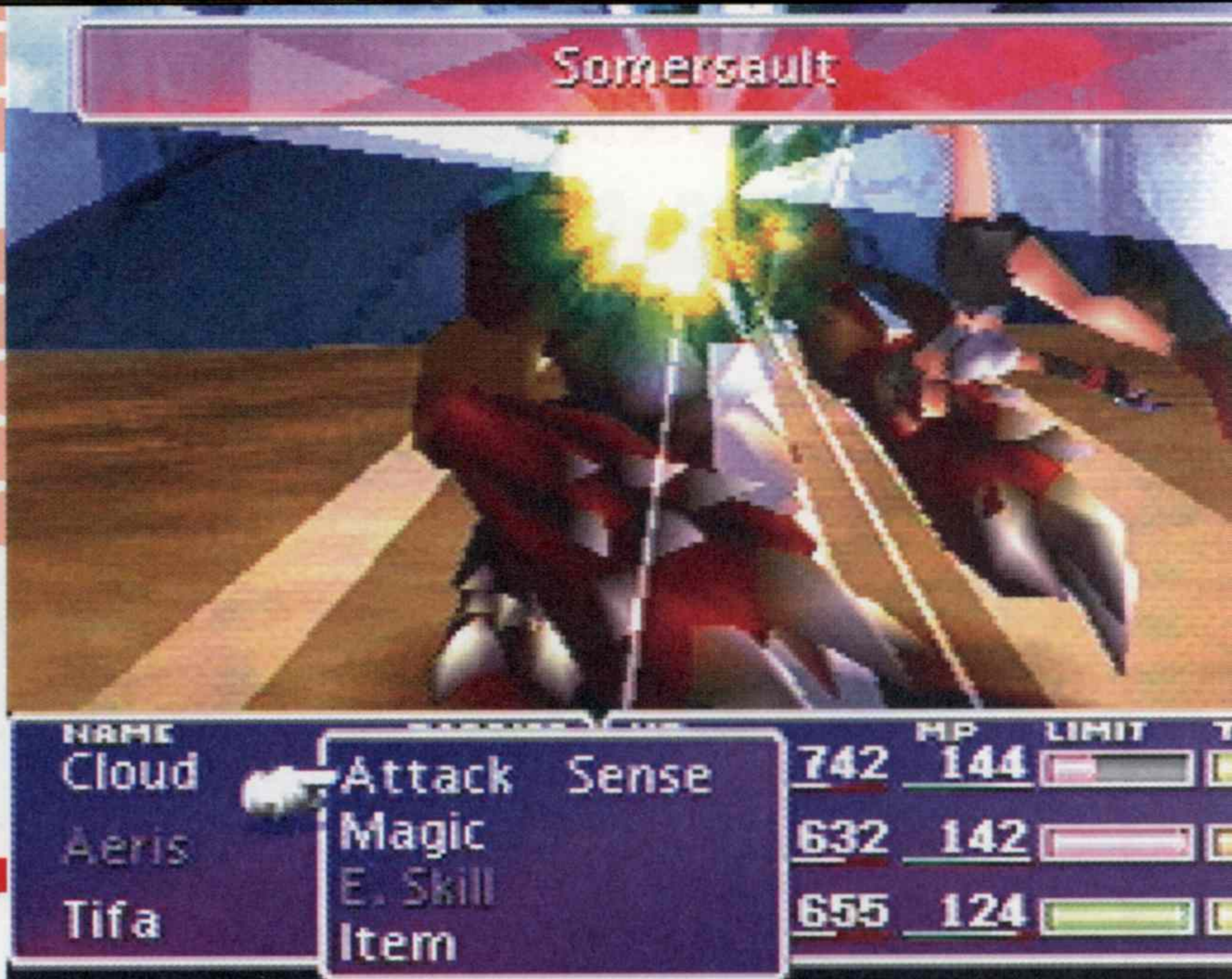
Occupying no less than three CDs, *Final Fantasy VII* is epic. Completion times

average over 100 hours,

although you may find yourself squandering some of that on its minor diversions. You see, constant dialogue and combat would be dull, so your interest is sustained with a splendid set of sub-games. At all possible opportunities, a simple plot event will be turned into a mini-game to test your wits or reflexes.

If anything, *Final Fantasy VII* is almost too lavish. The hero protagonist, Cloud, will wander casually through yet another stunning location, exchange a few words with his adventuring colleagues, then move on. And you'll never see that backdrop again. You can even miss whole FMV scenes that occur only in secret places. It's not even as if the game relies on these touches. Like all previous Square efforts, it's the strength of the narrative that holds your interest. What at first seems to be another clichéd Rebels-vs.-Empire plot soon develops into a tale of dying planets, ancient races, divided loyalties, genetic tampering, love, betrayal and insanity. One of the all-time classics.

■ Don't worry if you haven't played the earlier *FF* titles – besides the name, the games are only vaguely linked, in that they share a common set of elements. Each installment stands alone as a unique story set in an original gameworld.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

Squaresoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

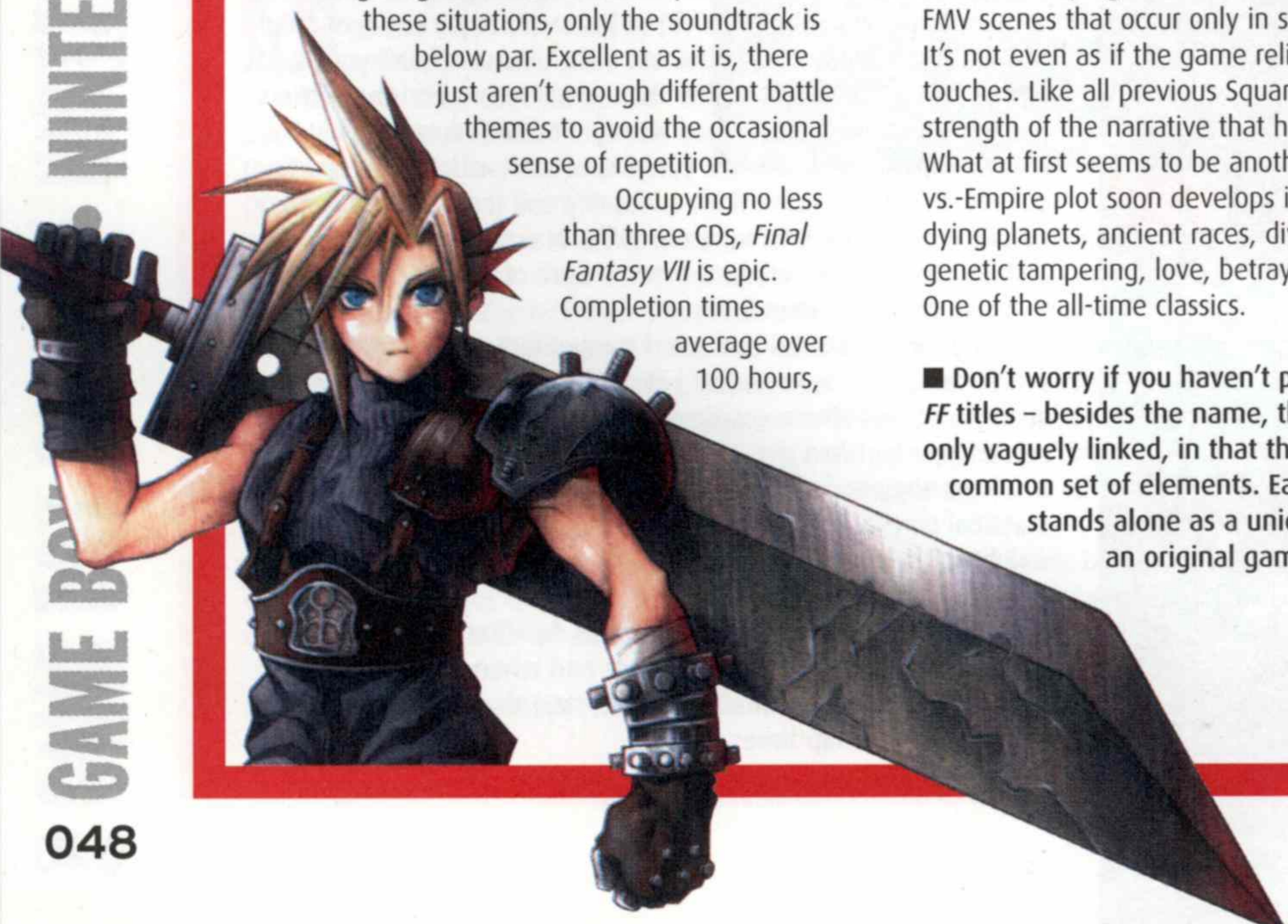
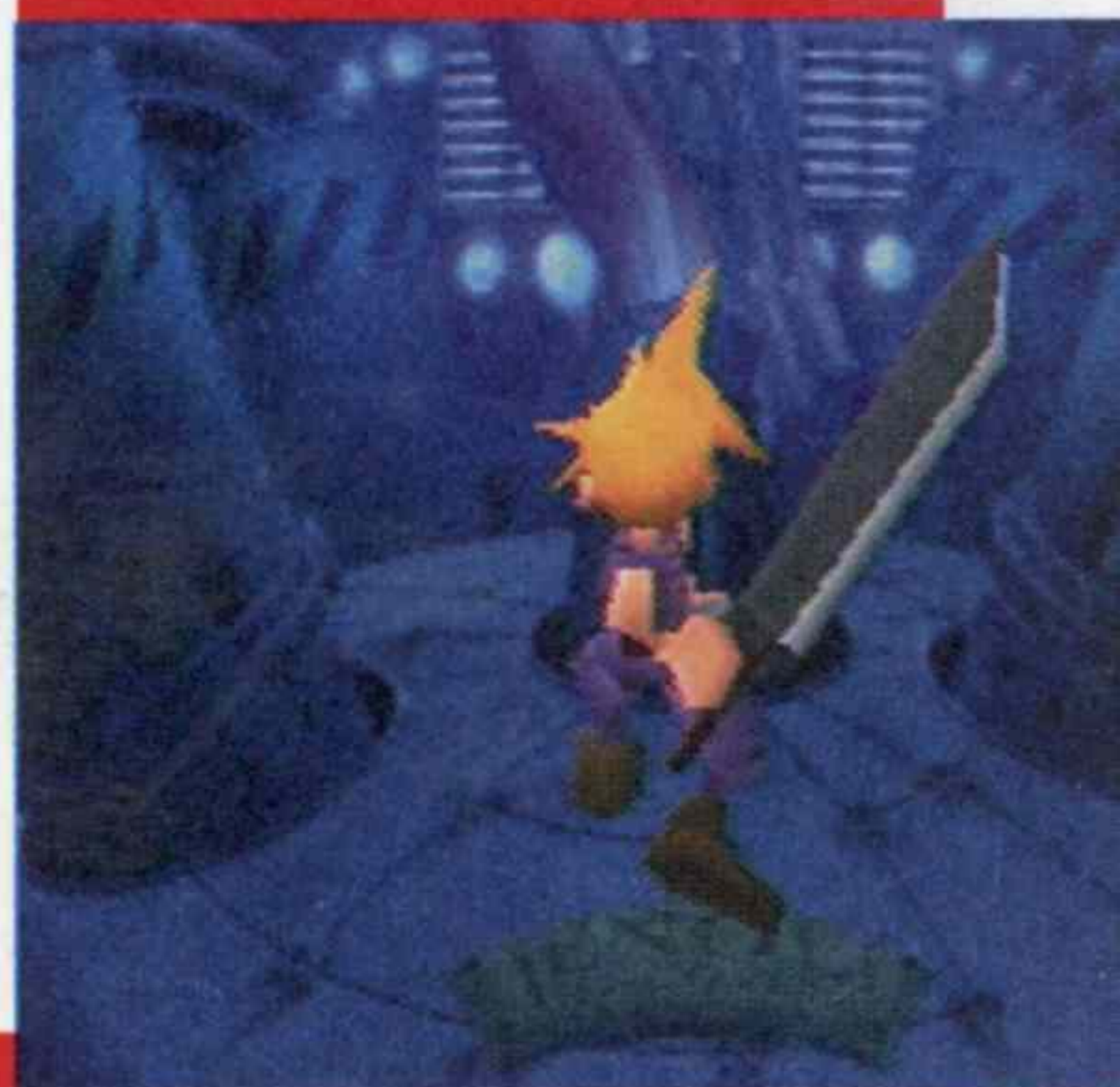
### HIGH:

It's huge, it's beautiful

### LOW:

Only the soundtrack grates

# 10/10



# FINAL FANTASY VIII

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Square EA

### DEVELOPER:

Squaresoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the most impressive installments in the series, available at a budget price

### LOW:

Better-suited to experienced RPG players than newcomers

# 09/10



This makes *Final Fantasy VII* look like a dress rehearsal. This eighth installment casts you as Squall Lionheart, a young trainee at a massive military academy.

*FFVIII's* game system is more complex, but infinitely more flexible. It will keep serious RPG fans happy for weeks, enabling you to fiddle and tweak almost every aspect of your characters' abilities. However, if this isn't your cup of number-crunching tea, a variety of options enable you to just get on with the action without having to spend hours staring at status screens and menu options.

The combination of stunning graphics, an involving and flexible game system and a gripping story makes *Final Fantasy VIII* nothing less than a masterpiece. However, it does have some minor problems. *Final Fantasy VIII* is quite a bit trickier than *FFVII*, and even RPG veterans will find themselves staring at the Game Over screen a few times, at least until they come to grips with the intricacies of the game system. It's not overly tough, but you will feel challenged by the gameplay.

Despite the minor quibbles, though, this is a massive game. Even though it fills no less than four CDs, by the end of it you'll find yourself wondering how it all fitted in. *Final Fantasy VIII* requires a significant commitment of both time and energy, but it's worth every single minute and you'd be a fool to miss it.

■ There is no armor in *FFVIII*. Characters become tougher as they gain levels and you can increase their resistance to attacks through the junctioning system.

# FINAL FANTASY IX



**Never before** has a series of games boasted such a contradictory title.

*FFIX* is an excellent game and offers incredible value for money. Crucially, a lot of this is down to the fact that it mimics *FFVII* so closely.

The system is close to that of *FFVII* – your characters' equipment and weapons endow them with new abilities, spells and skills. The difference lies in the fact that you don't have to equip your items with Materia – they come with pre-set skills which your characters just need to learn how to use.

We're pleased to report that lengthy battles are still present, and that Limit Breaks (or Trance States as they are called here) are still in place and enable your characters to perform special attacks.

Combat is at the heart of the game, but the flesh is in the variety of play. Stroll around the cities of the world and you'll find countless mini-games and sub-quests tucked away. There's loads to explore, and if you go out of your way to find everything, you've got a good 60-70 hours of play ahead of you.

*FFIX* is everything we've come to expect from *Final Fantasy* – it's a rip-roaring tale of heroism and derring-do, it's a supremely polished RPG and a visual masterpiece. If you're new to the series, then you'll need to pop an extra point onto the score – it's only because of its lack of originality that it doesn't score 10/10. It's another engrossing Squaresoft masterwork, and isn't that what we all crave?

■ *FFIX* is reported to have sold a whopping 2.6 million copies on its first day on sale in Japan. (As published by *Computer And Videogames*)



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Square EA

### DEVELOPER:

Squaresoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Stunning gameplay, stunning graphics, stunning game

### LOW:

Very similar to the seventh installment – more originality would have been welcome

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Hasbro Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Millennium Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# FROGGER

**When it first appeared** in arcade format in the early '80s, *Frogger* enjoyed a brief summer of popularity for its inherent silliness. It rightly became a cult classic, nostalgically remembered and rather special in its own slightly ridiculous way.

But like many fond memories, *Frogger* would have been best left where it was – in a happy corner of the minds of older gamers. While this new '90s version has been expanded and updated, most notably with the addition of a two-player mode, in many ways the gameplay is inferior to its predecessor.

Your task in the original *Frogger* was to help the little croaker across a busy five-lane road without getting him splatted. If you succeeded in that, there were water obstacles to be negotiated. This new version starts with the road and river, but as you progress through the 40 levels on offer you find your little frog in a variety of new situations. Unfortunately, the gameplay doesn't vary much at all. There are some

new elements, like the croak, the super-hop and the fly-catching tongue, but even these fail to add variety.

What is good, however, is the multi-player race mode. Frog racing will always be a lot of fun, and this is where the PlayStation version of this old favorite becomes addictive. In single-player mode, though, you'll either have to be desperate to know what the golden frogs do, or be something of a nostalgic to be playing *Frogger* for long.

■ To get infinite amphibian lives, pause the game and press →, ⊙, △, ⊙, △, ⊗.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Decent two-player lifespan

**LOW:**  
Repetitive on your lonesome

05/10



# FUTURE COP: LAPD

**This is a relatively straightforward** shoot-'em-up. And an impressive one at that. *Future Cop's* main one-player game offers a linear succession of missions, each with its own distinctive script and map layout. Assailants can be dispatched with an oft-generous allocation of ammunition, more of which can be found through exploration.

There are three weapons supplied for each mission. These are chosen before each strike and take the form of basic gun, more powerful gun and very big gun to be used sparingly. But there's a little bit more to *Future Cop* than mindless slaughter. There are often gates or force fields that block progression. It's necessary to find the relevant switches, or shoot the appropriate power source, in order to progress further. Naturally, it goes without saying that encounters with boss assailants add a little spice, too.

Refreshingly, *Future Cop* offers a two-player cooperative mode. Here, with a vertically split screen separating the participant's spheres of influence, missions can be tackled by two friends in tandem. Better still, there's a dedicated two-player game called Precinct Assault.

*Future Cop* is a title worthy of your attention. It's relatively simple to play, but is a gamer's game.

■ In order to help you find your target, and also to save the game camera's blushes during its more eccentric moments, a red tracking line highlights the current (or relevant) foe.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Electronic Arts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Great two-player mode

**LOW:**  
Better suited to experienced gamers

08/10

# G-DARIUS

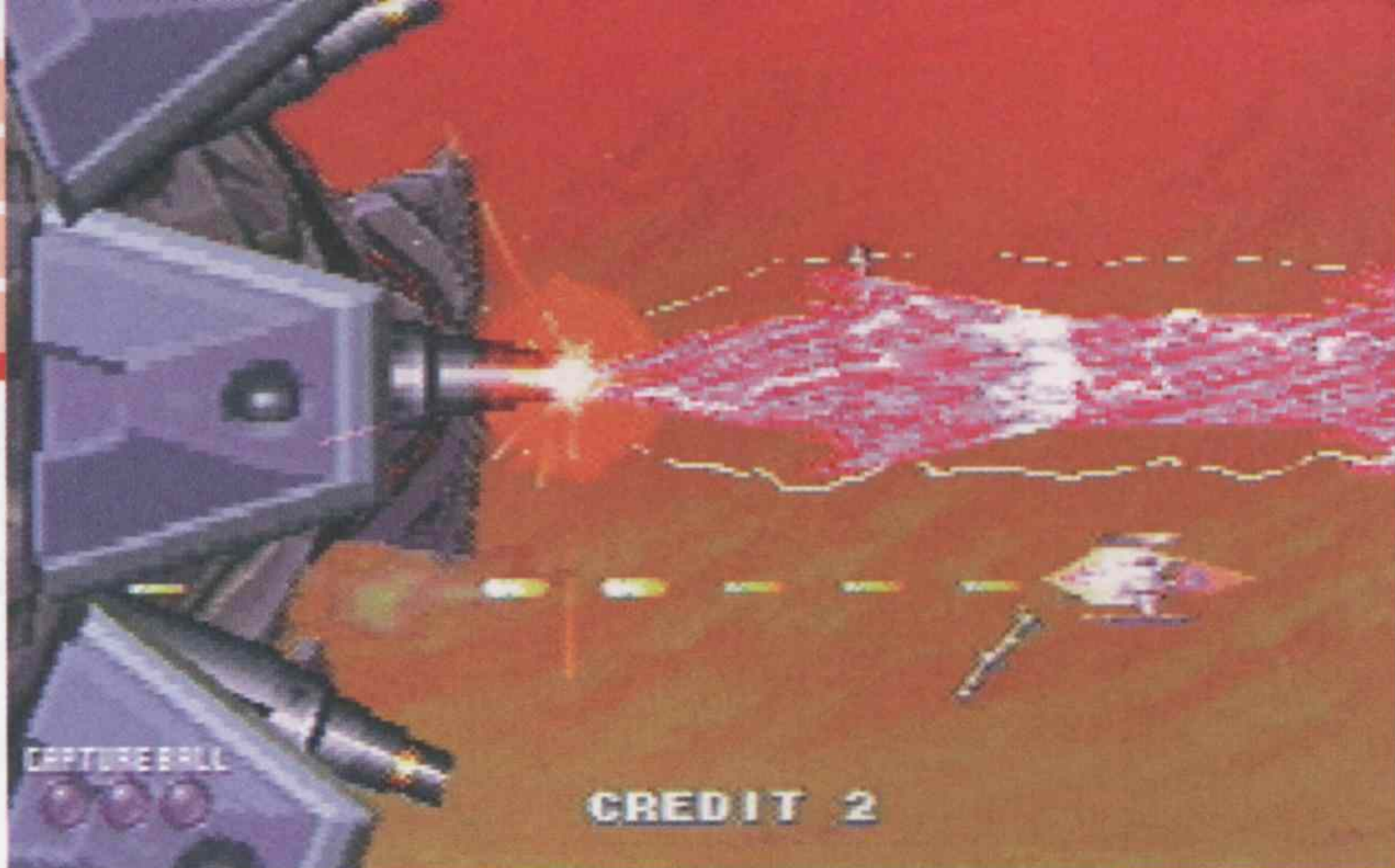


**Lack of sideways movement** is a bad thing. But not, curiously, in scrolling shoot-'em-ups. There are two fundamental problems with *G-Darius*, though, the first of which will annoy videogame retrophiles and forward-thinkers alike. The graphics are an eye-goggling cocktail of old and new ideas. 3D polygonal effects have been crammed into a staunchly 2D shoot-'em-up. When enemy ships first fly out of the screen they look okay. But once they've settled into the flat plane on which the game's played, they lose definition. The overall effect is *G-Darius* neither looks up to date, or like a genuine attempt to capture a retro feel.

The second problem is more damaging. The overall game is structured quite nicely; the 15 enormous levels are arranged in a tree formation offering various path choices. But internally the structure of each level isn't that inspiring. Not only are there few surprises – the exception being each of the genuinely worrying bosses – but the designers seem content to up the difficulty level largely by just chucking more and more crap at you.

We all like a bit of good old-fashioned scrolling shoot-'em-uppery, and with *G-Darius*, the neater touches and traditional gameplay go down very well.

■ The weapons system includes the ingenious Capture Spheres. By firing these at an incapacitated enemy, you can drag it in and attach it to your ship for more firepower – for example smaller craft act as extra lasers, while larger ones act as shields.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
THQ

**DEVELOPER:**  
Taito

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Enjoyable old-skool blasting

**LOW:**  
Death feels inevitable rather than avoidable

07 / 10

# G-POLICE



**This is a shining jewel** of a game, combining a wonderfully intricate storyline with fantastic dogfighting and flying gameplay. The result is at once remarkably familiar, combining elements of *Syndicate Wars*, *Gunship 2000* and even the old pre-PlayStation classic *Elite* into a practically seamless whole.

At its heart, *G-Police* is a flight sim. You pilot a G-Police Havoc Gunship, attempting to complete 30 missions. These vary from the hectic "seek and destroy" variety through to more subtle details, like escorting limousines through the crowded roads. Everything is wonderfully detailed, but it's once you've finished gawking at the scenery and started to get involved in the action that *G-Police* really starts to show its class. The action is fast, thick and furious, illuminated by staggering explosions and ear-crunching effects, and the game plays like all the best bits out of every helicopter film you've ever seen, all thrown together into a fantastically fluid environment that gives you near total control over the on-going action. Only a small amount of pop-up reminds you that you're not actually there.

Be warned, though, *G-Police* is not an after-drinks shoot-'em-up, and not at all the kind of thing you'll sit around playing with your buddies, because completing this game is going to require every ounce of concentration you have.

■ For the most accuracy in *G-Police's* bombing missions, always make sure you switch to the overhead view.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**  
Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
30 to 40 hours of solid gameplay

**LOW:**  
Not particularly original

09 / 10

## GEX 3: DEEP COVER GECKO

**True, it's a** reworking of its predecessor (*Gex 3D: Enter The Gecko*), but *Deep Cover Gecko* remains a polished reiteration of a familiar design brief. Like many reworkings, *Deep Cover Gecko* attempts to assert its individuality in a number of ways; such as the all-new character mechanics. Gex can now ride a snowboard, pilot animals and use a new fireball power-up, among other activities. He also has two new secret companions who have their own particular skills.

Gex now masquerades in 25 new costumes (these range from Long John Gex to Sherlock Gex) and the 12 main levels he visits are, of course, new. The Saving Private Gex stage has a military theme, while Clueless sees Gex exploring a murder scene bedecked in Sherlock Holmes finery.

The voice of Gex (Danny John-Jules, better known as Cat from the UK cult comedy *Red Dwarf*) is not something we're keen to hear. The behavior of the game camera is equally questionable. There are times when your skill as a player is tested not by gameplay, but by the perspective that the action is viewed from.

*Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko* is comfortably familiar. It's a pleasant yet brainless way to wile away a number of hours, but never taxing in any sense other than basic hand-eye coordination. At best, you will fully enjoy it for the week or so it takes to complete, or at worst you'll feel entertained in an ambivalent kind of way.

■ The assailants that Gex encounters are consistently feeble. They lumber toward the lizard with a modicum of guile, but can be easily dismissed with tail swipes.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Crystal Dynamics

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
More of the same, but enjoyable nevertheless

**LOW:**  
Gex's comments soon become irritating

07/10

## GLOVER

**This is a bit** of an odd one. *Glover* is a 3D platformer where, playing as a Michael Jackson-esque white glove, you have to grasp hold of balls to open up new and varied moves. Like we said, odd.

But, despite some enjoyment-hampering flaws, namely a poor in-game camera and some hideously frustrating jumping, *Glover* is actually a lot more fun than it sounds and quirkily original into the bargain. The idea is you guide a transforming ball over, around and through a series of obstacles to reach the end of each level. As a glove, you've several special abilities and there are different types of ball (beach ball, ball-bearing, crystal and so on), each with its own properties. Simple examples include being able to bounce high into the sky and move fast. More advanced examples include batting a bowling ball into doors, splintering them and thus creating an exit. More extreme examples involve finger-twisting button combinations on the joypad, and the ability to cast spells, which is always nice.

*Glover*, then, is a fairly innovative little game at heart. Unfortunately, it's hampered by a sluggish and unhelpful camera, and a physics system that makes any attempt at precise jumping – and there's a lot of that needed here – tryingly inexact. So, top marks for effort, Hasbro, but better luck next time.

■ Control is a pain to get right at first – particularly on water, where the controls are reversed – but when you do, you'll appreciate the accuracy and subtlety required to make progress in the game.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Hasbro Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Interactive Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
There's plenty to do

**LOW:**  
Poor in-game camera

06/10

# GTA: LONDON 1969



**A genuine ugly duckling** of a game, *GTA* featured tiny 2D cars driving around a chunky city, all the while being shot at by blocky cop sprites and mowing down Amiga-style pedestrians. Nevertheless, it was a curiously engaging affair, much of its appeal coming from the go-anywhere-do-anything gameplay which enabled players to complete the myriad jobs in their own way.

*GTA* captured the public's affections sufficiently to warrant a sequel. *GTA: London 1969* is what they're calling a mission pack – an add-on disc that requires ownership of the original game to work.

The good news is that the graphics are better this time around. Vehicles are no longer the cubist monstrosities of the original game and the shockingly jerky frame rate is now smoother – but only just. Despite the changes, *GTA: London* still looks painfully dated, but then, as the makers are keen to stress, this isn't a new game at all – just a mission pack.

Gameplay-wise, things are identical. Spin round the amazingly empty streets of central London in a variety of vehicles coercing, cajoling and threatening people and, if that fails, killing them all in pavement-mounting road rage. If you loved the puerile action of the first game you'll love this. Alternatively, if you thought it was repetitive and dull...

■ Faced with having to pay license fees to car makers, Rockstar has changed all their names – so Capri becomes Crapi and so on. Hilarious.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Rockstar

### DEVELOPER:

DMA Design

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The soundtrack is as excellent as that of the original game

### LOW:

*GTA: London 1969* still suffers with that painfully dated look

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

Game Arts

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It's impossible to just have a quick go

### LOW:

The graphics look very old fashioned

# 08 / 10

# GRANDIA



**The first hour of *Grandia*** will leave all but the most undemanding pre-pubescent somewhere between bored and horrified at the mixture of rudimentary graphics and almost transparent gameplay. But perseverance quickly reveals one of the most charming adventures of recent times.

At heart *Grandia* is a minimalistic role-playing game that follows intervals of relative tranquility with moments of extreme danger. In the more placid parts you wander around chatting to the wacky inhabitants, buying items and exploring. In the hazardous regions, you wander around fighting the inhabitants and exploring some more.

One of *Grandia's* main strengths is its pace, which is actually helped by its stripped-down approach to gameplay. By cutting moves to short, highly stylized sequences, a banzai speed is maintained. The most welcome change to the usual formula is that *Grandia* dispenses with the random combat that bedeviled *Final Fantasy*. But RPGs stand or fall on the quality of their story, and *Grandia* is as shamelessly emotive as a good romantic comedy. The setting mixes steam-powered sci-fi with characters reminiscent of kid-flick classic *The Goonies*. Which is A Good Thing. If you let it into your heart, ultimately, *Grandia* is exactly the type of game that's destined to ruin your sleep patterns.

■ Attacking groups of monsters from the rear will give you a combat bonus, but you can fall into ambushes if you let them approach you.



# HARVEST MOON BACK TO NATURE



**Whether this curious** RPG took its title from the 1992 Neil Young album of the same name, we do not know, but they do share certain themes.

*Harvest Moon* is a fairly complex RPG, which has you rising at 6am to plough fields, cut back weeds, harvest crops, pat the dog, brush the horse, go to the shops and cook for local ladies. Neglect any of the above and plants will wilt, animals will sulk and ladies will pout.

The story that holds all this together – along with some fairly run-of-the-mill RPG graphics – centers on a lost love. When you were young, your dad sent you to the country to stay on your granddaddy's farm. While you were there you met a young girl and fell in love. When it was time to return to the city, you swore that one day you'd come back and find her.

Now it's 10 years later and your poor granddaddy and the farm have fallen into disrepair. You have just three years to revive the ol' homestead to its former glory and thereby claim it as your own. But you also have to take part in the odd rural event and try to rekindle that silly old romance.

Although a mite too repetitive, *Harvest Moon* is more enjoyable than it ought to be (growing cucumbers shouldn't be fun), and makes a welcome change from the usual sword and sorcery. *Harvest Moon* is well worth checking out if you're a die-hard roleplayer looking for a change of atmosphere.

■ This is your chance to experience life as a farmer without having to actually lift a pitchfork. The PS1 version of *Harvest Moon: Back to Nature* is based on the N64 game.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Natsume

**DEVELOPER:**

Natsume

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Cute characters and a bizarre plot to keep you interested

**LOW:**

Nothing spectacular on the graphics front

06/10



# GRAN TURISMO



**What makes GT** different from all the other racers on the market? For starters, the graphics. You can't fault *Gran Turismo* in the instant gratification stakes – you see it moving and fall in love. The attention to detail is frighteningly good, with virtually no pop-up, screen glitches or clipping errors, thereby ensuring the track, cars and scenery are all totally solid and believable. And the speed at which you travel? It's realistically quick. You can really tell the difference between a Nissan Primera and a Dodge Viper, and you can even subtly appreciate the differences in perceived speed when you gently tune your car to squeeze a little more power from its engine.

Likewise, the sound of the engines is so entirely right it's hard to believe you're not sitting in the cockpit of one of the 300 or so cars in the game. And each one of those 300 cars can be tweaked and upgraded in dozens of ways. No two cars (or tweaked variants of the same car) drive the same, replicating perfectly how the real-life model would feel.

But it doesn't matter if the driving experience is correct if the game's no fun to play. Thankfully, *Gran Turismo* far from disappoints in this department. Until the sequel came out, it was the best racing game. Ever. Now it's the best budget racing game. Ever.

■ You earn more money, flog your old car, buy a new one, race a bit more, upgrade, race, tune, race, consider taking your final series of exams, get your International A certificate, upgrade again, race, race, race... It doesn't take long before you're snared by the Simulation mode. Before long, you're caught up in the GT campaign, watching the counter slowly notch up the number of days you've been racing.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**

Polyphony Digital

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Months and months of gameplay buried here

**LOW:**

No variety to the weather

10/10





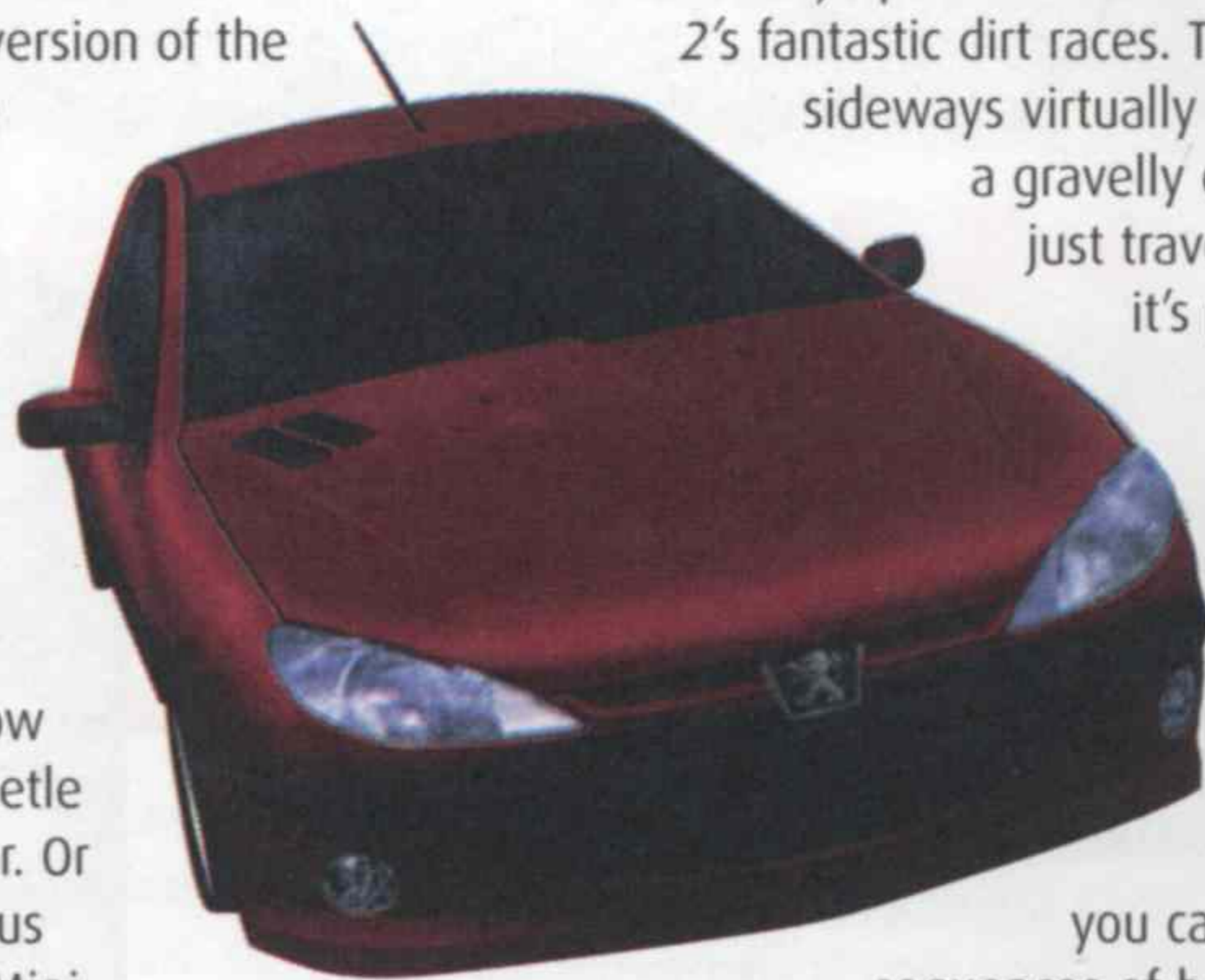
# GRAN TURISMO 2

PLAYSTATION 2 • DREAMCAST  
PSONE • PC • NINTENDO 64



**You'll be relieved to** know that *Gran Turismo 2* contains not just all the old Japanese cars from the original, but loads of new ones, too. The Honda S2000, for example, a gorgeous new two-seater with an engine that'll happily rev to 9,000rpm. Or the excellent Tommy Kaira ZZ-S. There are also welcome updates to old *Gran Turismo* favorites – the latest Evo VI version of the Lancer, for example, and the stunning Skyline R34.

But in *Gran Turismo 2*, Japanese cars are just the tip of the iceberg. Polyphony's licensing team have been on a mission to sign up car manufacturers from across Europe and the States. So now you can buy the new VW Beetle if you want. Or a Ford Cougar. Or an Alfa Romeo 156. Or a Lotus Esprit. Or a BMW 328i. Or a Mini Cooper. And they all handle just like the real thing, the front-wheel-drive Alfa running its nose wide if you go too fast into a bend, and the Mini Cooper cornering like a go-kart.



Altogether there are nearly 600 cars of all shapes and sizes, and as in the first game you can build up a garage full of your favorites and tweak and tune them to your heart's content.

Polyphony could have left it there. But no. It has included all the tracks from *GT* in and created a few more, bringing the total (including variations) up to 28. Best of all are *Gran Turismo 2*'s fantastic dirt races. They involve sliding

sideways virtually the whole way round a gravelly course, the car only just travelling in the direction it's pointing as it leaps from crest to crest

down fast straights. The first time you try it you'll spin into a hedge within seconds, but with a bit of practice you'll find

you can glide through sequences of bends with ballet-like grace; your rear tires making a lovely gravelly crunching noise as they swing from side to side.

Sound-wise, things really have moved on in *GT2*. The engine noises in the first game were okay, but didn't really change much from car to car. So for *GT2* Polyphony shoved microphones up the exhaust pipes of all 600 cars, and the results are amazing.

And that's it. If *Gran Turismo* was mind-boggling, *Gran Turismo 2* offers brain-bruisingly good value for your money. There are months and months of entertainment in here, for both newcomers and *GT* experts alike.

■ It was rumored that you'd be able to load all your cars and race licenses from your *GT* memory card into *GT2*. In fact, all that you can carry over are your A and B licenses. After that you'll need to complete a whole new series of tests before eventually getting your Super License, after which you get the Event Synthesizer to play with.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Polyphony Digital

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2000

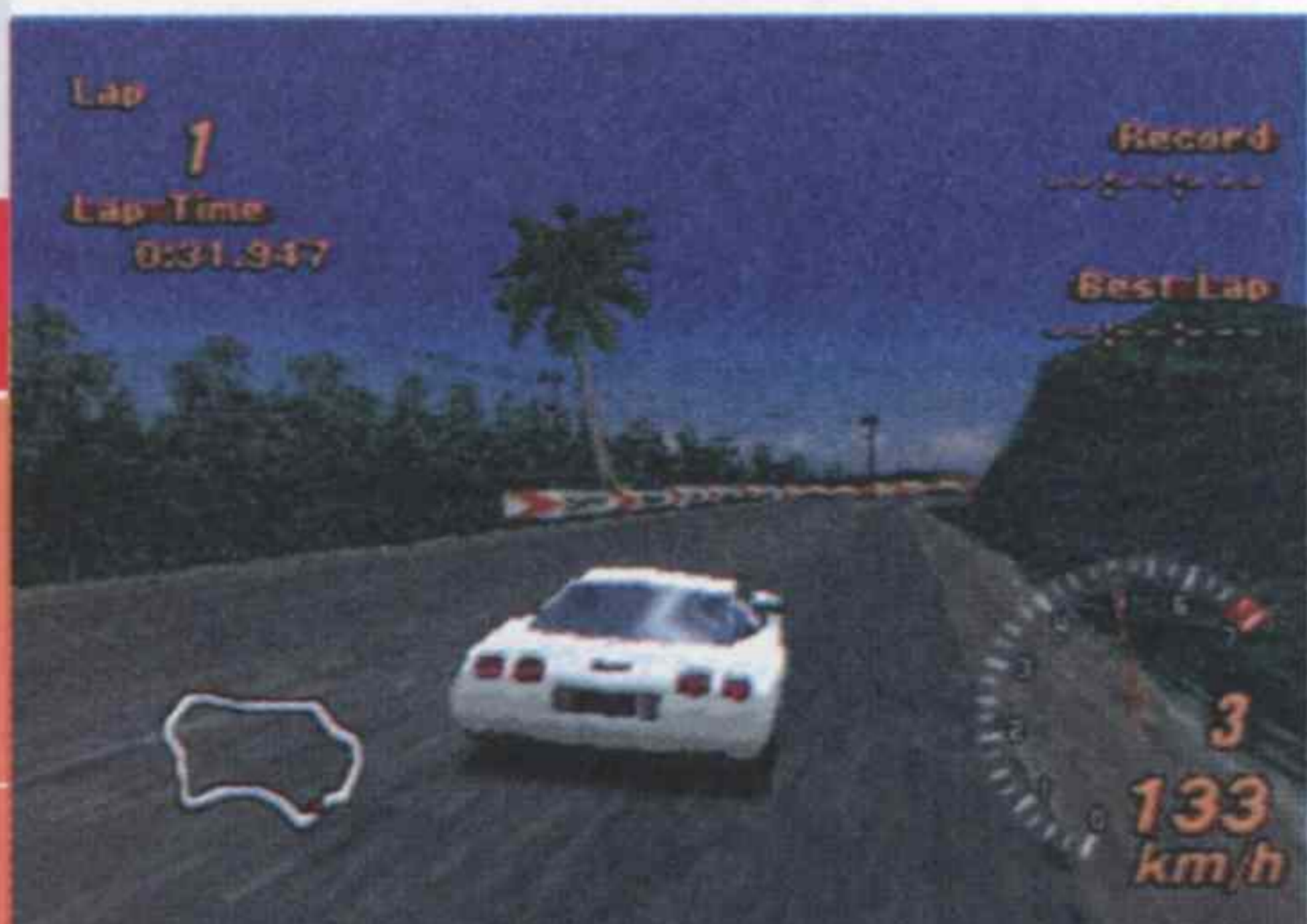
**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The perfect sequel to a perfect game

**LOW:**  
How do you follow perfection?

# 10/10



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**  
Amazing Studio

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# HEART OF DARKNESS

**Heart Of Darkness** tries to deliver a plot-driven 2D adventure to engross you and fuel your relentless thirst to progress through the levels and find out what hurdle awaits you on the next screen. It does this by using lengthy, but reasonably well-integrated FMV.

Thankfully, *Heart's* good looks are complemented by an accomplished and highly atmospheric cinematic score; some particularly realistic sound effects have been thrown in, too.

Sadly, the gameplay fails to match all this audio-visual prowess. Andy is blessed with infinite lives – this kindness on Amazing Studio's part means that any potential sense of tension rapidly evaporates, leaving a rather elementary case of trial and error. That said, some of the more taxing puzzles do require a little logic.

Ultimately, *Heart Of Darkness* is two years too late – it isn't doing anything particularly innovative, and the nature of the gameplay is such that it doesn't invite replaying. This alone prevents it from scoring higher. Other recent 2D platformers have faced the same criticism, of course, but at least some have included new features – such as the ability to interact with the characters in *Abe's Oddysee*.

This is an enjoyable title, though, and one that's bound to find an audience among today's gaming public. It's just that the experience may prove frustrating and old-fashioned for some players.

■ *Heart Of Darkness* the game has little in common with *Heart Of Darkness* the novel, written by Joseph Conrad in 1902. The novel features fewer baseball caps.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The pre-rendered backgrounds never fail to impress

**LOW:**  
There's no incentive to succeed because the main character has infinite lives

07 / 10



# HELLO KITTY'S CUBE FRENZY

**With all manner** of products saturating the country, Sanrio Corporation's figurehead is practically a household name. The big-headed kitten is also something of a multimedia kids' star.

Guiding the celebrity feline through dozens of levels, it's your task to gather seemingly random items, such as fruit baskets and rollerboots, to get Kitty back home. The items are scattered around the arenas and you have to manipulate falling colored blocks (think *Tetris*, or any similar puzzle-based videogame from the last decade) to make bridges and stairways that will enable the little Miffy-lookalike to reach them. Three baddies called Badtz-Maru, Pandaba and Hanamara try to foil your plans by getting in the way and moving blocks.

The challenge lies in having to control both the falling cubes (←→↑↓) and Kitty (←→↑↓) at the same time, requiring you to be nimble of finger and sharp of mind.

Unfortunately, the lack of variety makes proceedings a bit repetitive. However, the need to combine both intellect and dexterity gives *Cube Frenzy* more depth than many other more mindless kiddie-oriented titles.

■ If you like satire, it's worth visiting <http://greenet.com/~brion/hellokitty/> which has a useless list of odd statements like: "Hello Kitty has no mouth, but she keeps buying toothpaste." "Hello Kitty has no mouth, but she always eats her vegetables."



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
NewKidCo

**DEVELOPER:**  
NewKidCo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A decent puzzle game with the obvious added bonus for Hello Kitty fans

**LOW:**  
Nothing new, and the levels are all a tad repetitive

07 / 10

# HOGS OF WAR



**Essentially this is like *Worms 3D*.** All right, so the teeny pink nematodes have been replaced by grunting porkers, but the predilection for bigger and brighter guns, the strategic movement of troops and the turn-based nature of the game are all in there, even down to the gag-happy nature of your troops. And here's a nice touch - most of the voice-overs are supplied by top British comedian Rik Mayall.

Like *Worms*, the multiplayer game is where *Hogs of War* hits pay dirt. But unlike *Worms*, *Hogs of War* boasts a range of terrains, which can make for some surprisingly tactical games. Throw in the scenery, including armored bunkers where your hogs can take refuge from the hail of mortar-fire, and you've got a game that's more than just a pretty, gore-filled shoot-'em-up.

Technically, the game works as well as you need it to. The graphics are fine, the game engine's pretty solid and things trot along at a fair old pace. A bit more effort could've been made with the explosions, but it's the little details that'll really make you smile - the way in which, for example, your troops lose their mobility the more they get damaged. Or the fact that scouts don't show up on your radar, due to their stealthy ways.

Frankly, you'd be hard-pushed to find a four-player game that's this much fun and doesn't require a multi tap. *Hogs of War* will tweak your tail and make you squeal with joy.

■ Assigning rank and specializing your troops means that you can handcraft your own balanced team of hogs.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Infogrames

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Top multiplayer larks for you and three buddies

### LOW:

Lacking in visual flair

08/10

# INCREDIBLE CRISIS



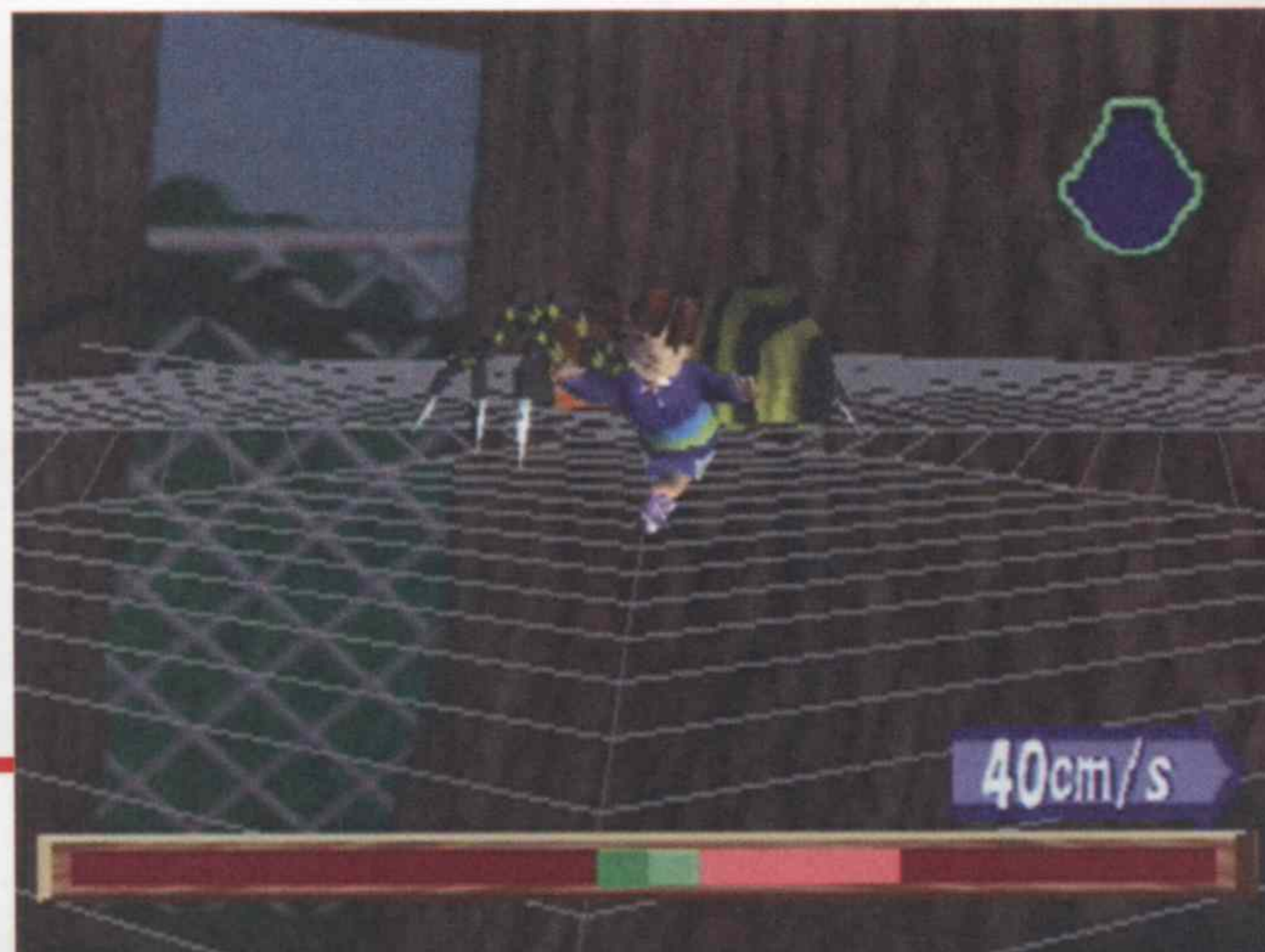
**This is a weird one.** In parts, *Incredible Crisis* is ingenious and innovative, while in others it's staid and repetitive. As you can imagine, this makes it rather hard to judge.

Essentially, it's a collection of "crazy" mini-games following the story of a Japanese family plagued with mishap and misfortune. You are cast as each of the different family members over the full game, and it's your job to help your character through their daily mishaps. It's an eclectic selection of scenarios. One minute you're running away from a giant praying mantis in a button-bashing frenzy, the next you're trying to solve mathematical puzzles that would frighten top Mensa members. It's an all-in test of gaming ability, general knowledge, reaction times, calculus skills and, at times, patience.

Not surprisingly, *Incredible Crisis'* learning curve is as bizarre as its subject matter. It's more of a learning wave: the games don't get progressively harder; rather they follow their own fluctuating patterns. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, it could just be that you're used to the final level of a game being the hardest. But it can be frustrating to get stuck 15 minutes in, only to sail through the following 40 minutes unhindered.

*Incredible Crisis'* novelty value, unusual subject matter and unique style all work in its favor, but on the whole it's too disjointed to be positively recommended.

■ You may also see this game listed in stores under the name *Tondemo Crisis*.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Titus

### DEVELOPER:

Polygon Magic

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Unique and varied gameplay

### LOW:

Repeated gaming scenarios try the patience

06/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC



# INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD 2000



**To succeed in the world** of athletics takes years of intense training, a supreme level of fitness and – depending on your choice of events – a technique honed through years of practice. In this respect, *International Track & Field 2000* is an accurate representation of the sport. The main difference being that your fingers are put to the test rather than your legs. Endurance events such as the 1km time-trial cycling and even the 50m freestyle swimming will develop muscles in your digits that you didn't even know existed. And that's if you're lucky. Less robust gamers might suffer from blisters and repetitive strain injuries – although it won't stop them going back for more.

There are 12 events in all, and they offer a surprising amount of variety, even though the majority of them are controlled in almost exactly the same way. With practice, and the employment of some dubious button-hammering techniques – possibly using your sweater sleeve or a ballpoint pen for protection – you'll take every world record in the book.

Unfortunately, once you've got them all, there's really no point in playing the game any more, at least not on your own. *International Track & Field 2000* is a party game, plain and simple – the more players you have, the more fun you'll have and the more time you have between events to let your digits recover.

■ The easiest event is the 100m, which requires you to do nothing but repeatedly hit ⊗ and ⊙ (which are non-configurable). Other events are quite technical by comparison.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The athletes look fantastic

### LOW:

Limited fun for the solo player

07 / 10

PLAYSTATION2

PSONE

NINTENDO 64 • PC

GAME BOY COLOR

# JUMPING FLASH



**Be warned:** gamers of a nervous disposition, afearred of precipitous heights and prone to attacks of vertigo and nosebleeds should probably skip this review. For *Jumping Flash* takes you on a perilous platform adventure, leaping majestically from pillar to post high above the ground, which in turn hovers high above the clouds. And you get the chance to shoot stuff, too.

Robbit – a robot rabbit – is the hero of the moment, charged with a mission to thwart an intergalactic property developer. But that's an aside; the real point of the game is to bounce around and collect four carrot-shaped power-ups from within each level. These carrotty objects of desire are secreted on platforms of varying height and accessibility: some are low and easily seen, some much higher and tricky to locate. As Robbit you must combine precision leaping and seat-of-the-pants-throwing-yourself-into-the-abyss-type maneuvers to grab them. En route you'll encounter a range of missile-gobbing creatures – from flowers to hippos – all intent on blocking your path with noxious substances. You'll need to shoot these, or land on them from a great height to wipe them out. Complete three levels and you face a boss who's set to impede your bouncy progress.

*Jumping Flash* is a very clever game. The hazy depth-cued graphics are spot on, and the gameplay – though less than perfect – is captivating enough to keep you battling away for a couple of weeks.

■ If you can track it down, check out the sequel *Jumping Flash 2*, another slice of spring-loaded platforming action.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

SCEI

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1995

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Vertigo-inducing airborne action

### LOW:

Not a huge lifespan

08 / 10



# ISS PRO EVOLUTION 2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The four-player option

### LOW:

It doesn't have the immediacy of FIFA

# 10/10

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Campbell	BALANCE	14	14	ker	Paco
Adams	STAMINA	18	18	ain	Hierro
P.Neville	ACCEL	17	17	ion	Aranzabal
G.Neville	RESPONSE	17	17	oy	Salgado
Ince	JUMP	17	17	16	Guardiola
McManaman	HEADER	17	17	17	Fran
Beckham	TECH	17	17	17	Etxeberria
Scholes	PASSING	17	17	17	Valeron
Owen	POWER	16	16	17	Raul
Shearer	ACCURACY	16	16	17	Urzaiz
	DRIBBLE	18	18	17	
	CURVING	15	15	17	



**Once again it's time** to engage your soccer brain in a game that forsakes simplistic and formulaic play for a loving recreation of the real thing. More than any soccer game previously, you play *Evolution 2* like you're in a real match. There are none of the scoring glitches synonymous with other titles – the raft of player stats, effective tactics, brilliant ball physics and great animation mean you'll never see the same shot twice.

To the untrained eye the mechanics of the match have changed little since *Evolution 1*, but many of the minor problems of the earlier title have been addressed. The tendency for players to stop inexplicably when their opponents win the ball on the edge of the box has practically disappeared. The crossing has been markedly improved – so the ball is now whipped in ahead of your players – and the superior animations make the game look far better.

The new Cancel Shoot button (press **Ⓐ** after shooting with **Ⓞ**) is very useful, but can't be used to stop your man limply trickling a first-time pass toward an

unchallenged goalkeeper, which is a waste. Those goalies, however, are now less sickeningly reliable. Yet another crucial improvement is the inclusion of both light and heavy injuries.

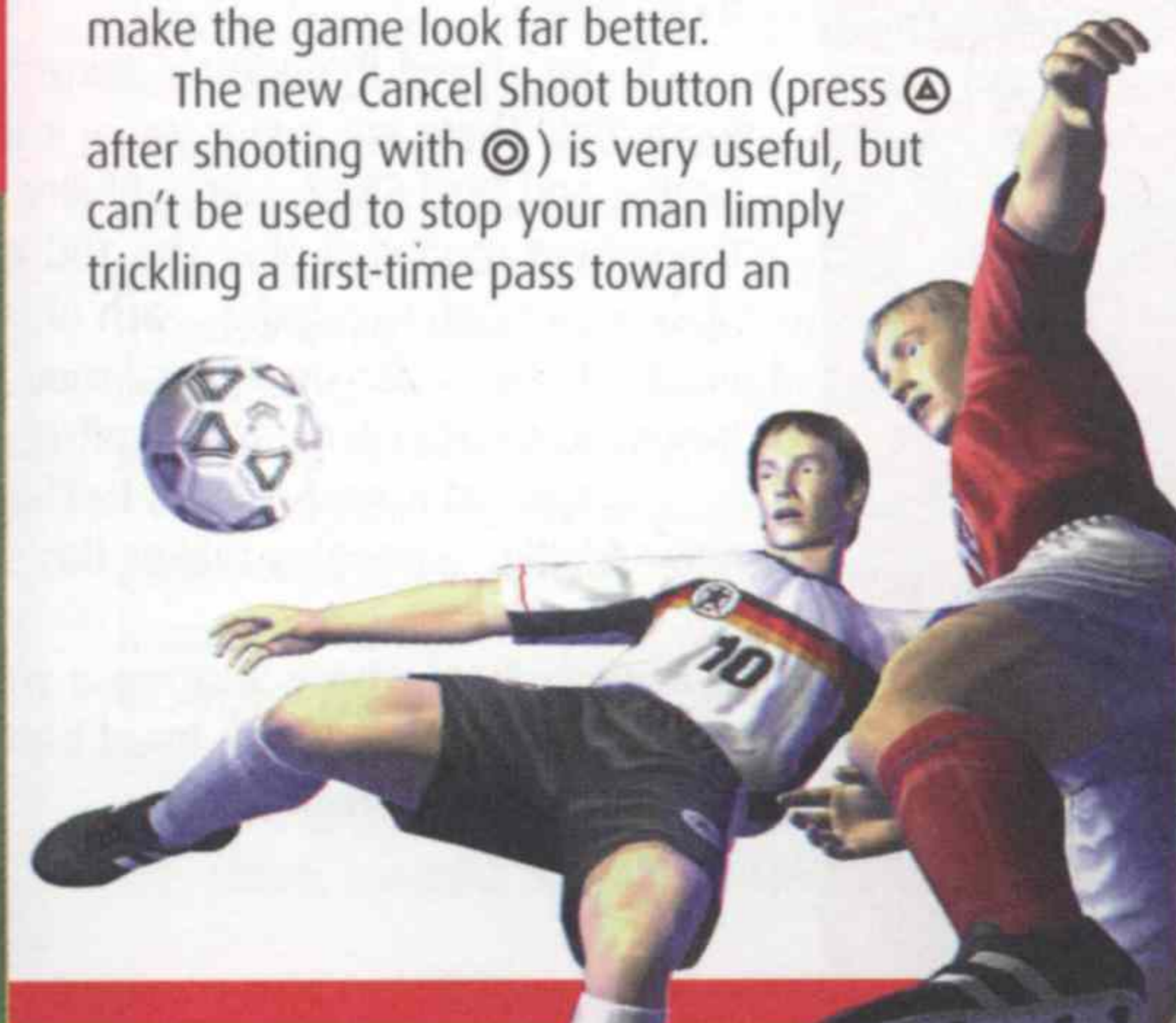
For all its brilliance, many gamers missed the best aspect of *Evolution 1*: the Master League mode. In *Evolution 2*, this works in much the same way, with just a few minor improvements.

The Master League mode makes great use of form, too. If your players perform poorly, or if a striker fails to score, or just has an off-day, they will not play to their full potential. This means your shooting will be less accurate and players will lose a bit of speed. A goal will remedy their dip in form. This form system also improves the two-player mode by levelling the odds and ensuring each game is finely contested.

Another welcome element of Master League mode is the Hard setting, which is challenging even for experienced gamers. Also fun is the way you can use two-player teams, so you don't have to rely on the AI of the game – this can lead to flowing soccer and slick attacks.

Overall, *Evolution 2* is superb and only the trappings let it down. Poor commentary ("This is no-holds-barred soccer"), lack of real tournaments and unlicensed teams all irritate, despite the introduction of real player names with the FIFPro license. But on the field it simply cannot be touched.

■ When you're under pressure you are well-advised to blast the ball away. It's actually an advantage to halt the progress of a dazzling winger by sliding the ball out of play and re-grouping.



# KLONOA: DOOR TO PHANTOMILE



**Featuring the** platform-hopping antics of the eponymous feline and his enemy-vacuuming aide Huppo, Namco's game is played in what is known in the trade as 2.5D.

Basically, this means that, although Klonoa's world is made of polygons and therefore looks properly 3D, he can only move along fixed left-to-right pathways. This, however, is no bad thing, as the game doesn't suffer from the rather vague character positioning of some 3D platform games.

Klonoa and Huppo's quest is to save their world from being plunged into darkness by an evil fiend who has awoken from a 3,000-year sleep. Somewhat bizarrely, his first act is to kidnap our hero's grandmother, although the reasons for this are gradually revealed as the story unfolds. *Klonoa's* plot is one of its best bits. It slowly thickens as the game progresses and, commendably, uses the in-game graphics for its explanatory cut scenes rather than pre-rendered FMV.

As for the mechanics of play, Namco has wisely kept the control system as simple as possible; just two buttons are used. Having said that, you can perform some pretty neat tricks. As a challenge, *Klonoa* is something of a mixed bag. The difficulty curve is so shallow as to be almost flat and, sadly, not until the final stages does the complexity that should have been present throughout the game start to shine.

If you're looking for a pretty, playable introduction to platform gaming, *Klonoa* could be ideal.

■ Once Huppo has sucked up and inflated any passing enemies, they can be thrown at other foes.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

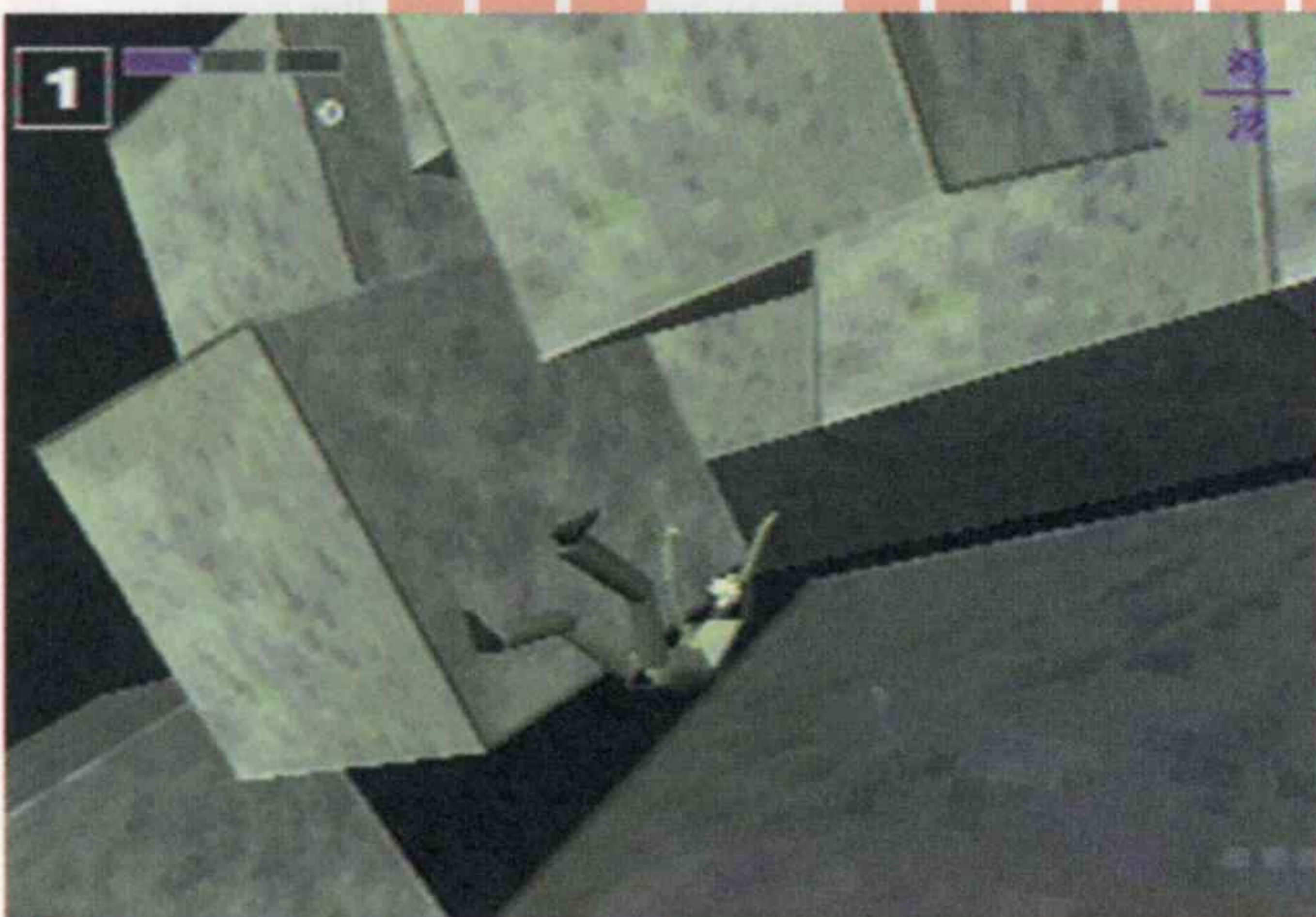
**HIGH:**

Detailed and vibrantly colorful – and the cat's cute

**LOW:**

Too easy if you've any platforming experience

07 / 10



# KURUSHI FINAL

**The best puzzlers** are always mind-bogglingly simple.

*Tetris*? Fit blocks together. *Bust-A-Move*? Match balls of the same color. *Kurushi Final*? Blow up cubes. The basic premise is that your character, for reasons unbeknownst to you, is stuck on top of a huge stage, faced with the relentless charge of dozens of cubes.

By frantically running around, highlighting a square in the play area and detonating it at the correct moment, you are able to destroy each block before you're crushed. You must avoid destroying the black cubes – doing this results in a reduction in the size of the play area, increasing your chances of being flattened. Eliminate a special green block and, by hitting the triangle button, you'll be able to clear an entire three-by-three area.

If you played the original *Kurushi* you'll notice little difference in the gameplay. There are minor visual improvements, and the addition of analog and Dual Shock compatibility, but the main advancement is in the various modes of play. The 100 Attack mode, unsurprisingly, consists of 10 groups of 10 puzzles, each of which consists of a single wave of blocks. There is also an IQ Final mode (a marathon-type affair), an even trickier IQ Create game and a self-explanatory Survival mode.

In spite of *Kurushi Final's* lackluster presentation, the immersive and addictive gameplay makes this one of the best PlayStation puzzlers.

■ *Kurushi Final* wisely features a split-screen, enabling you to undertake frantic head-to-head battles with a friend. It plays rather like *Bust-A-Move* with bricks.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

SCEE

**DEVELOPER:**

SCEI

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Fantastically addictive

**LOW:**

Graphics are not this game's strong point

09 / 10



# LEGACY OF KAIN SOUL REAVER

PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

•

•

•

061



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Crystal Dynamics

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Gorgeous graphics, new gameplay tricks and structure

### LOW:

After a promising start, the gameplay is a bit repetitive

09/10

 **The game's hero, Ralzeil,** was one of five lieutenants who ruled the world alongside the original game's

anti-hero Kain. Ralzeil, however, falls out of favor after daring to grow wings, and is cast into the spooky Spectral world. There the Elder God gives Ralzeil the chance to get back to reality so as to seek his revenge.

A novel thing about *Soul Reaver* is you can't die. The entire world exists on two spiritual planes: the Material plane (real life) and the Spectral plane (an evil alternative universe with a twisted, demented form). Ralzeil, being as dead as a doorstop, is a creature of the Spectral plane - while in the Material plane his energy is slowly depleted. In order to remain in reality he must fight and kill evil creatures, sucking their souls to supplement his strength.

There are a number of truly brilliant gameplay side-effects thanks to this plane-shifting. For a kick off the two planes look rather different; Spectral being a literally twisted and darker version of the Material plane. Also, time stands still in the Spectral plane so, having pushed a block off a cliff in the Material world, it's possible to switch over and find it suspended in mid-air, forming a stepping stone to a higher level or other such unreachable treat.

Throughout the game you're invited to experiment, mess around, and see what happens. There are no true weapons, for example, except the mighty Soul Reaver sword, and this time it can be powered up with different abilities by plunging it into the water, fire, stone, sunlight, sound and spirit of various

Forges dotted about the game. Rather than employing an inventory, packed with guns, Ralzeil uses objects such as spears and

torches that must be found laying around to fight off his foes, and the close combat, while simplistic, makes for an exciting fighting experience.

*Soul Reaver*, so obviously an alternative *Tomb Raider*, changes almost everything about the classic while miraculously remaining just as playable and being - we have to say it - even better looking. Fed up with Lara? Time to turn to the dark side.

■ When you swap planes, be prepared for some staggering visuals. Rather than merely blacking the screen out and switching over, the game morphs the scenery in real-time between the two existences.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**  
Clockwork Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1995

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# LEMMINGS 3D



**No shooting,** no fast cars and not a ninja – texture-mapped or otherwise – to be found. *Lemmings 3D* is an elaborate and very addictive puzzle game. This might not sound thrilling but *Lemmings* is different; it's the sort of game that will fill you with a warm, satisfying glow. Although it has a simple theme, this is a fiendishly difficult game. As in the previous *Lemmings* titles, you have to guide a troop of lemmings across various hazard-filled levels before the time limit runs out. On each level your green-haired charges are assigned one of nine pre-determined actions – digger, floater, builder and so on. And that's the game in a nutshell. The only difference here is that not only do you have to stop the green-haired idiots throwing themselves off cliffs, but you have to do it in 3D. There are 80 levels in the game – none more challenging than those found in *Lemmings 2* – ranging from tricky mazes and army-style assault courses to medieval castles and Egyptian tombs. They are all

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Huge 80-level lifespan

**LOW:**  
Nothing very new, even when it was released in 1995

08/10



impeccably presented and include a very welcome practice option where you can discover the skills of the bijoux greenies and the nature of the obstacles they are likely to face.

*Lemmings 3D* doesn't push the PlayStation to its limit, and it was never going to set the gaming world alight, no matter what year it was released, but its rampant playability will have you hooked.

■ Check out the rendered intro sequence where you're treated to the spectacle of flat 2D lemmings popping into glorious 3D life.

# LMA MANAGER 2001



**Perhaps the greatest compliment** we can pay *LMA Manager 2001* is that much of the time you're playing you forget it's a management game. Naturally it has menus, stats and neat little graphs, but after a fistful of games you don't notice anymore that you're flicking between them because your eyes are fixed on molding a championship-winning team.

Overall, the coaching side of things has expanded considerably. It's a mark of the quality of the *LMA* series that while *2001* tackles big issues like training, strategy and in-match options it doesn't skimp on the additional extras either. The highlights engine is flashier, the two-player mode is slicker and teams can be saved to use against a buddy. There are more challenges, too (fancy a \$100 million dream team?), more detailed scouting reports and the chance to build a new stadium from scratch. And the layout and navigation screens have had an amazing overhaul.

Tactically it still looks a little lightweight compared to *Player Manager 2001*, even if it trounces it for accessibility and overall balance. The intelligence of your rival managers is also questionable as they seem over-keen on selling off some of their best players, but perhaps without a bit of this the transfer market would be stagnant and full of foreigners who don't get out of bed for less than \$60,000 a week. Despite such minor imperfections, *LMA 2001* lives up to, and in many areas exceeds, its predecessor.

■ Another new addition to *LMA 2001* demands that you caretake the morale of your team; too many bad results and you'll have to consider finding a better captain.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**  
Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Much improved navigation system

**LOW:**  
Limited formations available, which can hinder your players' performances

09/10



# MAGIC CARPET

**This is a very unusual game.** You fly around a mythical universe on a wizardly rug collecting mana (almighty power-enhancing spells), which hot air balloons carry back to your fortress for safekeeping. The more spells you get, the more powerful you become, and once you've garnered enough power to set that particular world to rights, you're off to the next level. And there are 75 of the little devils...

The whole feel of this game shouts "Arabian Nights" or "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and it doesn't take long before you're completely immersed in this strange and dangerously exciting world. Then you realize you haven't got a clue what's going on or what you're supposed to be doing.

You see, *Magic Carpet* is actually rather hard. The acquisition and, just as importantly, the application of spells is vital to your survival. You can use only two at a time, and swapping between them can take place in the hairiest of situations. That said, despite the juggling of resources, the infuriating number of things you need to concentrate on, the sheer weight and scale of the foe, and the somewhat vague gameplay direction, *Magic Carpet* is original, beautiful and endearing.

■ To get the level select, press **△**, **△**, **○**, **□**, **△**, **○**, **△**, **□** at the option screen. This will enable you to get up to level 50 in Easy mode and level 75 in Normal mode.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fantastically original

### LOW:

Darned tough

08/10

# MARVEL SUPER HEROES VS. STREET FIGHTER

**Capcom has taken the** same old magic formula used to make *Street Fighter Ex Plus Alpha* and *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and diluted it with fewer, flashier moves and more characters wearing Y-fronts labeled XXXXL. Out go subtlety and strategy, without so much as a crash mat to break their fall, and in their place stand a bunch of over-sized posers with a smattering of screen-cracking mega-moves between them.

Truth is this will be familiar territory to anyone who has played *X-Men Vs. Street Fighter Ex*. You pick both a main character and a partner (who enters the fray only as part of a special move) and then take on a similar pairing culled from the pantheon of either school.

The big problem with *Marvel Super Heroes Vs. Street Fighter* is that it leans toward the comic in every sense. Compared to the variety of action present in other pure *Street Fighter* games, this is a move-poor scrapper in which the best tactic is often to pull off the same combinations of one or two attacks every time an opponent gets too close.

Die-hard fans from both the Marvel and *SF* camps may buy it out of loyalty, but there's precious little else to recommend *Marvel SH Vs. SF* over its more complex, more rewarding rivals.

■ Be-tentacled Shuma-Gorath only has to wriggle and spin (twirl that D-Pad) to slap his enemies silly with his two or three screen-crossing specials.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Spidey and friends have been brought to life

### LOW:

Tactically weak with very repetitive gameplay

05/10



# MEDAL OF HONOR UNDERGROUND



**It's a case of enhancement** rather than overhaul in this, the prequel to *Medal of Honor*. So what's new? The weapons are more varied, satisfying and, crucially, useful. The missions seem carefully geared toward variety: take out the guys in the gun towers with the sniper rifle, disable the anti-aircraft guns with a grenade or two, mow down a crowd with an automatic, reduce tanks and motorcycles to scrap metal with the rocket-launcher.

The key triumph of *Medal of Honor Underground* is its atmosphere. Graphics are stylized and evocative, particularly the creepy character models and propaganda loading-screens. The sound is wonderful – a classical score, crunching gunfire and bullet-contacts, amusing 'Allo 'Allo accents and eerie background barks of alert. And with an enhanced enemy AI, firefights can seem frighteningly realistic. You'll need to be solid in mixing firepower with strategy. Lurking around a corner, and waiting for the predictable rush of cannon-fodder rarely works, and neither will a bold, gunfire-spraying rush into a group of lurking guards. Crouching, dodging and taking cover is vital; the only irritation being that, occasionally, the bad guys can shoot through walls.

And the final bonus, a pretty good two-player mode. It's a straight deathmatch in well-crafted locations with the usual customization options such as number of kills and a time limit.

*Medal of Honor Underground* is an authentic, involving, one-player experience. More than a mission-pack, less than a revamp.

■ The original *Medal of Honor* was a concept pitched by Steven Spielberg during the making of *Saving Private Ryan*.

<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> Electronic Arts	<b>HIGH:</b> Engrossing gameplay that lasts and lasts
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> Dreamworks Interactive	
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1-2	<b>LOW:</b> Occasionally glitchy graphics and smudgy textures
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> December 2000	
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No	<b>09/10</b>

# MEDIEVIL II



**In the original** *Medievil* Dan was stuck in the Dark Ages, with its plagues and lack of sanitary facilities. Now, for the sequel, he is in Victorian London. As if the open sewers, rats and class divide weren't bad enough, he also

has to contend with one Lord Palethorn. This demonic despot has his claws on Zarak's spellbook from the original game and has used it to take over London with an army of zombies.

Like its predecessor, *Medievil II* is a 3D version of Capcom's classic arcade-platformer *Ghosts 'N' Goblins*. It's a similar mix of jumping, shooting and swiping – in third-person 3D. For the most part, *Medievil II* has managed to address the key problems of the first game. The main improvement being that control of Sir Dan is tighter – he runs into walls and falls off platforms much less than he did before.

The gameplay remains varied throughout. At various points you even get to transplant your skull on to disembodied hands, and use this Dan-hand abomination to reach otherwise inaccessible areas, or re-explore earlier levels. You also get a vast arsenal of weapons, from the usual swords and clubs, to a new line in "genuine" Victorian projectile weapons such as Gatling guns.

*Medievil II* is by no means a ground-breaking game, but it's packed with ideas, is never less than playable and has been thoroughly tweaked, nipped and tucked.

■ It can take more than firepower to defeat your opponents. When confronted in a room full of blood-thirsty vampires, smash open a window to allow deadly sunlight to pour in...

<b>DETAILS:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> SCEA
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> SCEA
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> May 2000
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No

<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>HIGH:</b> A grade-A platformer with a sense of fun
<b>LOW:</b> Sir Dan has a disappointingly spindly appearance

**08/10**



# METAL GEAR SOLID

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST



**Metal Gear Solid** is an action movie that you play on your PlayStation. It has a tightly scripted plot and a whole host of brilliant set pieces. You never feel as if you're just watching the action unfold - you're making it happen. Dedicate a couple of hours a night to the game, opening every door, taking out every guard, examining, using and having fun with every gadget and you'll be in raptures for weeks. However, play *Metal Gear* for 12 hours straight and you'll finish it.

To describe *MGS* as a combination of *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil*, *Die Hard*, *Under Siege* and every James Bond film ever goes some way to purveying the game's ethos. Steer Snake around 3D areas, of which there are around 50, every one the size of a trio of football fields. Each area is filled with security cameras, hidden trapdoors, landmines and most



famously, patrolling guards with guns. As we're sure you're aware by now, wading in with guns blazing is not the way forward in *Metal Gear*.

The name of the game here is stealth.

Disturb any of the patrolling guards and the options are to stand and fight, run for it, or die like a dog. Which is often not as

foolish an option as it sounds, as you're usually only put back a matter of yards, to the start of the area and such minor setbacks are preferable to huge loses of health and mis-aimed ammo. Odd that - you would expect the penalties to be far greater.

Also, the ability to save your game during any area seems too good to be true, and is something that further whittles away at the precious lifespan.

Some longevity is introduced by the two possible endings and the exquisite endurance test you must pass about halfway through the game in order to get the better of the two. There are also three difficulty levels, Easy, Normal and Hard, and there's an excellent VR Training mode. Ultimately, though, it's up to you to abide by the laws of the game and not ruin it for yourself. You must not cheat, or take any shortcuts (there are some), you must not play in Easy mode and you should try and squeeze every nugget of action out of the game.

*Metal Gear Solid* is just asking to be teased and dominated, and any gamer wanting to lock horns with the ultimate in plot, action and originality must grab a copy immediately.

■ A comical question mark hovering above a guard's head shows his intention to investigate a disturbance. If you're spotted, this is replaced by an exclamation mark, whereupon a short siren sounds and your Dual Shock pad nearly jumps out of your hands. The guard and his cohorts will then try to shoot you. To death.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Exciting, gripping, frighteningly original fun

### LOW:

Only just big enough

# 10 / 10

# MICRO MACHINES V3



**When little-known**

outfit Codemasters first announced that it had obtained an exclusive license from the manufacturers of *Micro Machines*, most of the world failed to notice. Indeed the earlier games in this series featured mediocre graphics, very poor characters and strictly functional production values. At best they looked cheap 'n' cheerful. But what they lacked in sophistication, they more than compensated for with great bucketloads of gameplay – particularly in multiplayer format.

Fortunately this fantastic gameplay has survived the 3D transition to PlayStation intact. The driving feel is the same as ever. The various vehicles still handle differently, but they all have the same intuitive-but-loose feel as ever, and chucking them around the game's tight corners is a joy.

Better still, the multiplayer game is as good as it has ever been. You and your pals are all on the same screen at the same time – if you fall behind, you disappear and if you stay up front, you don't. Simple, yes. Effective, yes. Fun? Oh yes. This combination of racing around breakfast tables and sandcastles, nudging and, thanks to new power-ups, destruction of your peers is simply unbeatable.

■ Watch out for a manic section that sees you sucked through laboratory equipment, boiled, fried, processed and spat out at the other end!

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Midway

**DEVELOPER:**

Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-8

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Absolutely compulsive gameplay

**LOW:**

The cheesiest central characters this side of Edam

09/10



# FO XKIDS.COM MICRO MANIACS



**This is the sequel** to *Micro Machines V3* – arguably the finest multiplayer party game on the PlayStation. But, by replacing the minuscule motors with pint-sized pedestrians, Codemasters has opened up a whole new world.

All the tracks play on the idea of you being tiny. Milk-carton skyscrapers and knife-handle bridges are the kind of things you can expect in the kitchen, but as you progress to other areas you'll find yourself leaping over windshield wipers, doing laps of the bathtub and even getting flushed down the toilet – all in pursuit of glory.

The *Micro Maniacs* characters have identical statistics as far as speed and handling go, so the only way to win races is by taking a superior racing line around the circuit and avoiding your opponents' attacks *en route*. Each character has a range of personal attacks. These can only be performed once your character has collected between one and four power-ups. The more you collect, the more powerful your attack will be, or the longer its effects will last.

In *Micro Machines V3* you were encouraged to cut corners and sidestep obstacles, and the best reason to play the single-player and Time Trial modes was to perfect the art of corner-cutting in preparation for your next multiplayer match. But this time, the courses are a lot less forgiving, and your experiments in corner cutting are more likely to relegate you to the back of the pack than extend your lead. You'll quickly learn from your mistakes though, and come to realize that *Micro Maniacs* is the best *Micro* game yet.

■ Collecting power-ups usually means deviating from the racing line, so decide whether it is worth losing time to increase your arsenal.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**

Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-8

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Great fun in Multiplayer mode

**LOW:**

The graphics are occasionally confusing

09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Take 2 Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

Lost Toys

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Addictive, fast game with huge replay value

**LOW:**

Disappointing, unpolished Two-player mode

**08/10****BALL BREAKERS**

**As a criminal,** synthetic life-form sent to a place called Alpha Prime, your captors chop you in two, attach you to a roller-ball, then pit you against guards and rival prisoners in a host of events that test your skill and strength.

You compete in Powerball, Gauntlet, Pursuit, Racing and Tag events, testing your ability to do everything from navigating tricky skateboard-style circuits to negotiating platforms in an ever-sinking swamp. No doubt everyone will have their own favorite.

*Ball Breakers'* challenging discipline is racing, which forces you to find hidden shortcuts and use the arena to slingshot your player past opponents. Certain characters are more suited to certain arenas, which further increases the lifespan of this tough title.

During the disciplines you roll around graphically superb arenas that undulate and contort with the explosions of weapons and demonstrate the excellent physics underlying the game. *Ball Breakers* is not a traditional puzzler, but its paced combo of challenges will have you fishing your joypad out of the trash just moments after you threw it there in frustration. The rewards for climbing this steep learning curve make it worth the effort.

That Lost Toys has focused on the environment and gameplay is not to be sniffed at, but a little extra depth – such as possible introduction of upgrades outside the arena, further development of the characters or the world beyond the contests – could have turned a very good game into an outstanding one.

■ Lost Toys has included useful Spin and Rage attacks to help you get out of sticky situations – ignore them at your peril.

**MORTAL KOMBAT 3**

**Back in 1996** if you were looking for pure, undiluted competitive combat *Mortal Kombat 3* was the best.

*MK3's* enormous graphical improvement over *MK2* means that its characters are animated as realistic and fluidly moving people (as opposed to scrappy little digitized pictures of people trying to look like sprites). And these characters sit more comfortably over the backdrops, which have had a major facelift, too. There's more detail, more color, more locations and more background movement than *MK2*. The overall presentation is also impressive, complete with a moody, atmospheric soundtrack, which provides a suitable accompaniment for some gruesome slicing, slashing, thudding and cracking sound effects.

However, the most interesting developments in *MK3* are on the gameplay side. The first is how well *MK3* plays – the fluidity, speed, accuracy and interaction of the characters is superb. The only gripe would be that some of the fatalities and special finishing moves aren't as easy as they might be.

The other important aspect of the gameplay is the content. There are more characters (14) and they've all been given an array of new moves. There's a Run button to get to grips with, a revamped combo system and a new set of special moves for each pugilist.

A fully developed, spot-on conversion of a massive arcade game, all squeezed on to one CD. Great!

■ Look out for Kombat Codes in the form of on-screen icons that appear just before a bout loads. Select these to get an array of cheats from Quarter Energy to Psycho Kombat.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**

Williams

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

A brilliant conversion from the coin-op

**LOW:**

Fatalities and special moves are more difficult to execute than they should be

**09/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Namco

**DEVELOPER:**  
Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The gameplay has been improved since 1980

**LOW:**  
Retro classics rarely come alive as the result of an upgrade. *Ms. Pac-Man* is no exception

05/10

# MS. PAC-MAN MAZE MADNESS



**Unless you've been** hiding in a cupboard most of your life, you should know the score when it comes to the *Pac-Man* games. Run around mazes, eat little yellow pills, gobble ghosties, get gobbled by ghosties... and that's about it. It has never pretended to be more, until now.

With *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness*, the family Pac has moved into the third dimension and there is a little bit more to the game than pill-popping and outrunning Blinky *et al*.

*Ms. Pac-Man* comes with a dubious plot concerning dimension hopping and stolen artifacts. You glide round the pleasantly colorful and quite complex levels taking on tasks – such as maneuvering boxes of dynamite to blow up obstructions – which often require a small degree of mental exertion if you want to munch and collect everything on offer.

Unfortunately, these tasks hamper rather than improve the already tired *Pac-Man* gameplay. Constantly unblocking levels by scooting around to pull a lever (or whatever) gets less interesting and more irritating as you bustle your way through the all-too-familiar levels.

Fortunately, the original *Pac-Man* game is buried in the disc as well, along with a four-player multiplayer mode. However, after two decades of swallowing pills, *Pac-Man* and pals should really consider giving up the habit.

■ Namco released the original *Pac-Man* in 1980.



# MUPPET RACE MANIA



**Can you really squeeze** in another karting game?

Absolutely – *Muppet Race Mania* is brilliant. There's Kermit in his racing car, Miss Piggy in her monster truck, Animal in his dragster... you can even be Beaker – he drives a moon buggy. And the characters look like the real thing. Miss Piggy simpers menacingly. Fozzie grins. Beaker looks genuinely scared.

There are Muppet-themed weapons as well, of course. You can launch Swedish Chef chickens in a flurry of feathers, or leave penguin mines on the track. The tracks – which are riddled with unexpected short cuts and secret areas – are based on Muppet films, so you've got nautical *Treasure Island*-style tracks, urban *Muppets Take Manhattan* tracks and festive *Christmas Carol* tracks.

As well as the standard Tournament mode there's also an Adventure mode, where you can explore the playing area, collecting stuff. You can then unearth extra goodies, including battle arenas, bosses and more Muppets. There are a whopping 34 courses, along with 25 Muppets and nine bosses.

It's great. The handling's pin-sharp, Statler and Waldorf crack terrible jokes between races, there's loads of Muppet music and the characters can even swap karts. Worthy of anyone's cash.

■ Each character has a special move. Rizzo, for example, can turn you into cheese. And you can pick up fruit 'n' veg to fill your turbo-meter; pressing **□** then gives you an extra burst of speed.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Midway

**DEVELOPER:**  
Traveller's Tales

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It's the Muppets

**LOW:**  
The camera can be a bit unresponsive at times

09/10

# MTV MUSIC GENERATOR

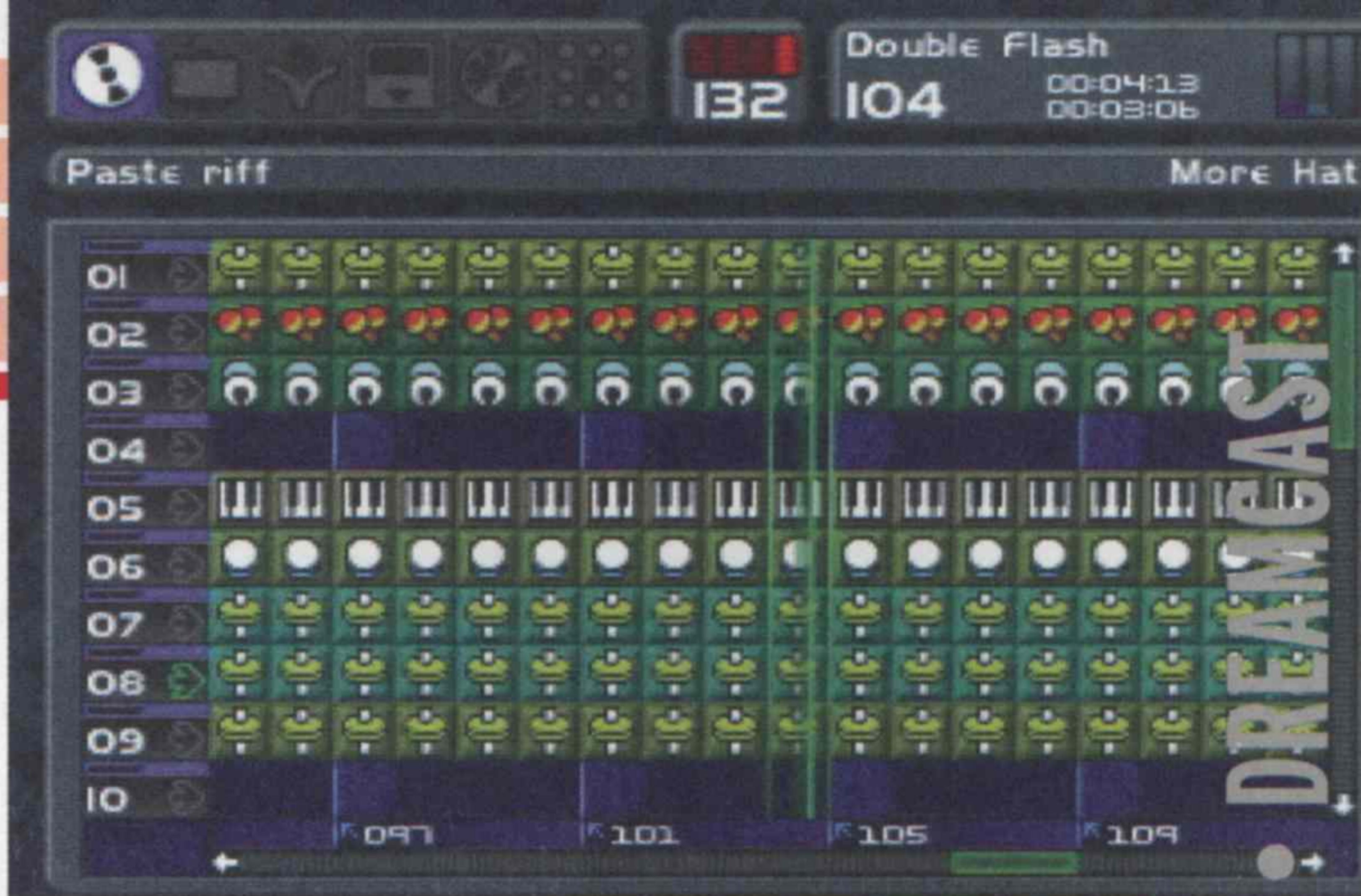


**Though it's not** actually a game *per se*, the fun factor isn't diminished any from the utilitarian value of *MTV Music Generator* (known as *Music 2000* in Europe). This title focuses on the building of dance-related tunes via the brainless selection and arrangement of preset musical riffs. The look and feel of the system aim for realism, with visuals clearly modeled on professional sequencers. Hi-res graphics allow tons of details to be crammed on screen – quite important, considering there are 24 channels to mess with. And, of course, there's a stadium-load of samples and riffs on board. The dancefloor staples of drum 'n' bass, house, techno and trance are well catered to, and there's also big beat and whole rock libraries for the would-be shoe-stars and crowd-surfers.

*Music Generator* is also very proud of its guitar licks, which can be used to create decent backing tracks. All the same, we reckon axe-less guitar heroes would be better off buying and mastering the real thing rather than relying on the digital caterwauling to be found here. That said, the riffs and sounds are fairly convincing, and, astoundingly, non-PlayStation tracks can be created. Just listen to the demo tracks included with the program for proof.

All told, *Music Generator* is a real winner, with the depth and features to satisfy even the most compulsive knob-twiddler. Want to make beautiful music with your PlayStation? Buy this yesterday.

■ *Music Generator's* sound-sampling capability is rad. Place any audio CD into your PlayStation (after loading the main program) and you can lift about 22 seconds of sound from it.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Jester Interactive

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You can sample your own audio CDs

### LOW:

Still lots of menus to negotiate to get to the bits you want

09/10

# NEED FOR SPEED



**With plenteous tracks**, a range of quality sporting vehicles to drive, and two-player split-screen and link player modes, *Need for Speed* has plenty to offer. There are six courses, each divided into three segments, and you can race morning, noon or night (three options that affect light levels). So, that's 54 different ways to race, which, multiplied by eight splendid sporting vehicles, makes for 432 different outings. A tall order for a game developed back in 1996.

Each car is meant to handle in a similar way to its real-life equivalent, so for instance the Toyota Supra is easier to throw around bends than the Dodge Viper. You can certainly feel this difference in the handling of each model, and for this reason *NFS* isn't an immediately enjoyable game. These idiosyncrasies may initially serve to annoy, but you quickly realize that some cars are more suitable for certain courses than others.

*NFS* really is fun. In two-player split-screen you can barge along, honking horns while snaking past other vehicles. And when you do "spill," the cars overturn and somersault along the road in daring fashion. Of course it has been graphically surpassed a hundred times since, but for the time it's a good looking game – check out the Alpine and City tracks in particular. The only real shame is the obtrusive on-screen graphics, which do tend to dominate your racing more than is really necessary.

■ Developer Pioneer got together with the car magazine *Road & Track* to produce videos, in-depth stats and histories for each marque and they are all included on the CD.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Pioneer

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Eight gorgeous marques

### LOW:

Varied handling can take a while to get the hang of

08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC

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# NFL BLITZ 2000



**What better way to** follow up the original *Blitz* than with this excellent sequel. Yes, it still sports those expensive NFL trappings (real teams, players and stadia) but after that, the gloves are off. "First down and 10" is now "First down and 30," teams are reduced to just seven players and the rulebook has been torn in two and replaced by madness. A cartoon perversion of our nation's beloved gridiron, *NFL Blitz*'s unique selling point is violence – and buckets of it. Tackles cripple, players can be poleaxed irrespective of whether they have the ball and even after a player is sacked, follow-up roughing is mandatory.

That said, there are still tactics to be utilized – indeed the number of offensive plays has been upped from the original's 18 to 27 (each can also be reversed). Thoughtful deployment of the nine defensive plays will hamper offensive moves, as tactical masterminds can alternate between helmet-denting blitzes and more thoughtful zone plays, picking off potential receivers with pinpoint precision (or a forearm smash). It's this shirking of traditional rules that will gaul NFL purists but it also guarantees more genuine thrills than all the *Madden* games put together. Play swings shamelessly from end to end, games go right to the wire and with but one illegal (but still allowed) interception, friendships will be threatened.

True, any real depth has been sacrificed for adrenaline, but *NFL Blitz* is superb in that it makes football so fun.

■ While *Blitz* does aspire to some semblance of realism, it's almost the case that you can kick your opponent's neck off.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Midway

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

There's a really cool Play Editor for making your own offensive plans

### LOW:

Chunky, arcade-style graphics

# 09/10

PLAYSTATION2

PC

NINTENDO 64

070

# NIGHTMARE CREATURES II



**Set primarily in** London and Paris in 1934,

*Nightmare Creatures II* has a good-looking appearance befitting of the survival-horror label. The two cities are evoked well – the Parisian graveyard is a dead ringer for Le Père Lachaise, final resting place of Oscar Wilde and Jim Morrison.

The decent lighting and weather effects, backed up with ambient background music (reminiscent of *Silent Hill* – page 87) make it a more grown-up and satisfying play than the original. Most secrets, and even the route forward, are hinted at by anomalous pieces of scenery or unusual detail, giving you a gaming-by-numbers sense of being directed through, rather than exploring, the landscape.

Kalisto has tackled the first game's messy fighting system by introducing an Engagement mode, where you are locked in combat and cannot escape without winning. This makes for more orderly battles but contributes to the linear feel of the game. The monsters are all well-drawn and intimidating, and while repeated combinations will see-off the weaker ones, as the game progresses you do need to become a little more thoughtful in your approach. Each foe can be finished off with a fatality move, which is initially satisfying, but soon becomes mundane. Thankfully, it's also optional.

*Nightmare Creatures II* does lack attention to detail and has minor deficits in plot development and puzzling, but is nonetheless graphically accomplished and fun to play.

■ Be patient, learn enemies' patterns. Keep your distance – once they back off, make your strike.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Kalisto

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A great improvement on the original *Nightmare Creatures*

### LOW:

The ragged gameplay relies too heavily on gore

# 07/10



# NUCLEAR STRIKE



**This title's success** lies not in learning how to fly a helicopter (that's easy; just open the throttle and steer), but in the way it requires you to collect and collate information in order to succeed in your missions.

You're based in the imaginary county of Indocine. The combat is straight out of Vietnam, though, as are the combatants. You're flying for a peace-keeping force and measure your success in terms of wars that don't happen. To succeed in the cleverly integrated missions, you'll need information and it's this strategic side of the game that's best about it. There is a big shoot-'em-up element, but *Nuclear Strike* is very much designed with the strategy gamer in mind. There is considerable variety in the tasks you'll get, too. As well as making things explode and using your immense firepower on virtually defenseless humans, you'll be escorting allies, rescuing innocents, collecting fuel and ammo and receiving messages from your superiors.

But there are criticisms. You are usually dependent upon your radar systems to view your targets' locations, and you often feel that you just can't see far enough. Also, you have very little control over the speed of your craft, and are always operating within a restricted area. Try to go outside that area and the game won't let you.

Still, this remains an intriguing simulation with many levels of gameplay.

■ If you fancy a bit more chopper action, check out *Black Dawn*, *Gunship 2000* and *Thunderhawk 2*. Beware, though; they're all starting to show their age.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Electronic Arts

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Very involving

### LOW:

Occasionally tricky gameplay

07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Oddworld Inhabitants

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fun, hours of gameplay and plenty to grip the attention

### LOW:

There's nothing radically new here

08 / 10

# ODDWorld: ABE'S EXODDUS



**What's new** in this follow up to *Abe's Oddysee*? Abe's vocabulary has been extended to keep up with his fellow Mudokons who are much more complicated individuals this time round. The whole idea of possessing enemy creatures has also been expanded for the sequel. Often you take control of unfriendly critters just to get them to trigger pulleys that are inaccessible to Abe, but it's also possible to get the larger creatures to attack the little guys.

Oh, and then there is the flatulence thing. Abe can actually fart and then possess that fart. It sounds unnecessarily scatological, but it's actually a great tactical bonus, because the fart is explosive.

Even without the quirky moments, *Abe's Exoddus* would be a finely designed game. As with the first title, you find all the classic elements of the platform genre – impossible-looking jumps, moving platforms, levels, pulleys and so on – and here they're all wound up in a series of fiendish puzzles. With *Exoddus*, however, you slowly begin to learn how Abe's universe works, how one action affects another and how planning and thinking can keep you alive. You don't often feel cheated and you want to proceed to find out what warped idea Oddworld is going to throw at you next.

■ The main requirements are lateral thinking, speed and dexterity. You have to look at each screen, see where the enemy, the Mudokon spirit boxes and the pulleys are, and then leg it about the place jumping, running and pulling in a frantic, punishing burst of adrenaline-fueled gameplay.

AT A MUDDOKON, SAY Y



# O.D.T.



**You'll hate this game.**

*O.D.T.* is just too hard. The action takes place in and on a massive tower, and there has clearly been no examination by Health & Safety officers because there are hardly any safety barriers at all. Make one wrong move and you plunge to your death. Annoyingly.

It's only when you persevere that *O.D.T.* begins to take a turn for the better. The overly complicated control system starts to become useful rather than irritating as you realize just how much you can make your character do, and the sheer scope and complexity of the game becomes fascinating, instead of just overwhelming. There's plenty of atmosphere engendered by creeping around in dangerous places, and plenty of sweaty-palm syndrome because, even after you've mastered the controls, some of the moves require you to be push-button perfect. And the puzzles are sufficiently tough to drive you forward without becoming so difficult as to be dull or repetitious.

*O.D.T.* is certainly not a game for the fainthearted. Incredibly hard and requiring vast amounts of concentration, it's perfect for the more learned gamer but really could have done with a gentler learning curve. Ironically the first level is possibly the most difficult and will gobble up more than a life or two as you attempt to penetrate the mysterious tower. Or die trying, that is...

■ You have many kinds of weapons to help your chances of survival – four of which are power-ups for your gun. There are also grenades, mines and 16 spells.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Really hard, but rewarding as a result

**LOW:**

Umpteen graphical flaws

07/10



# PANDEMONIUM 2



**Fans of the original**

*Pandemonium* will recall that it was a very jolly platform affair. It had the heart of a traditional platform game, but due to a cunning variety of camera angles it had the looks of a more modern offering. It was in fact a two-dimensional game, cleverly masquerading as 3D. But it was well done and the combination of tried-and-tested platform gameplay with excellent looks led to some fast, exciting action.

Version two is more of the same. As in the original, there are two characters to choose from at the beginning of each of the 14 levels: Nikki, the female enchantress who can jump really high, and Fargus, the jester who isn't such a leaper but is able to attack monsters. This double character is one of the definite strengths of the game; not only does it add an element of variety to proceedings, it also greatly increases the game's immediate replay value.

The levels are based on very much the same ideas as before, too. There are coins to collect and power-ups to garner, as well as platforms aplenty, lots of swinging, bouncing things to avoid and the occasional monster. But it's the way the levels are constructed that makes this such an entertaining game. In some part this is because *Pandemonium* cleverly avoids things like "leaps of faith" – the traditional pitfalls of many platform games. Superb quality entertainment, if a little short.

■ Keep an eye out for the original *Pandemonium*. It's getting a bit old now, but it's still great secondhand bargain fun.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Midway

**DEVELOPER:**

Crystal Dynamics

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Designed by enthusiasts

**LOW:**

Far too short

08/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

SCEI

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the most original game ideas ever

### LOW:

You won't play it every day

08/10



 **You may have heard** of *PaRappa*, even if you haven't quite grasped the concept. It's all about rhythm, about keeping hip to the beat through a cunning combination of manual dexterity and feeling "the vibe." Remember the bit where the aliens land in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, when the guy in the control box repeats the tune that the spaceship is emitting? Okay. Remember when you blapped away on the flying saucer-shaped electronic repeat-after-me game *Simon*? *PaRappa* is a similar idea, only considerably more sophisticated.

*PaRappa the Rapper* himself is a little dog. A little dog who just happens to be frantically infatuated with a bright young flower named Sunny Funny. Sunny lives in a giant lemon. Of course.

*PaRappa* is aiming to win the undying love of Sunny, and to do this he must learn to rap. Step forward, Chop Chop Master Onion, the oriental martial arts onion and your first teacher. He sings the first verse... "Kick, punch, it's all in the mind, if you wanna test me, I'm sure you'll find, all the things I'll teach ya, nevertheless you'll get, a lesson from teacher..."





# PARAPPA THE RAPPER

Chop Chop then invites you (for you are the canine Hip Hop hero, *PaRappa*) to follow his actions and rapping verbals. How so? Well, the button icons trip along a bar at the top of the screen and you must bash the requisite fellow at the right time to repeat the rap correctly. There are four standards of rapping, from "U rappin' cool" to "U rappin' awful," and when you aren't rapping at all well, Chop Chop starts to lean back before asking you to start the whole song and dance again.

As *PaRappa* progresses, the lessons become more difficult and before you know it, you're locked in a frenzy of pad-bashing. After lessons with the four masters, you then rap with them all to decide who gets to visit the toilet first - we're not making this up. Complete the lavatorial episode and you can rap freestyle on stage.

Visually, *PaRappa* is one of the most unusual on the manor. The real-time 3D graphics depict 2D characters ("Parappa" means "paper thin" in Japanese) and when they turn sideways, they disappear. Elsewhere there's a wealth of colorful, rendered FMV sequences which tell *PaRappa's* tale as he progresses towards his ultimate goal.

*PaRappa The Rapper* is beautifully written and contains some endearing characters: the pushy driving instructor Mooselini, the clucking chef Cheap Cheap the Cooking Chicken, the aforementioned Chop Chop and froggy Prince Fleaswallow. Play it with friends.

■ Beat every level with a "U rappin' cool" rating and you'll get another level where Sunny Funny and Katy dance on a table. Change their clothes using  and .

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST  
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**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Square EA

**DEVELOPER:**

Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# PARASITE EVE 2



**Playing a professional** monster hunter in modern-day America has its charms, no question. But it would be more exciting to feel trapped and outnumbered on occasion. *Eve 2* is a stylish take on the cinematic adventure, but the crossbreed gameplay results in a sturdy cerebral challenge rather than the expected gut-wrenching fear-fest it possibly should have been.

Besides the gory FMV, one of the reasons for its 18+ rating is that the creatures you face are ugly freaks, with just enough humanity to make them really disturbing. But if *Eve 2*'s technical prowess, neat mapping system and arsenal of weapons all look tasty enough, there are still some uncooked vestiges of role-play that foul up the soup. Take the shopping aspect, where the Bounty Points you earn from killing can be spent on equipment. Resource management can make for good gameplay, but you lose so much in atmosphere.

*Eve 2* clutters the screen with HP/MP meters, ammo counters, motion sensors and other empowering

devices. As soon as a monster appears you're given a battle warning, a target pops up and the stats start to roll. The reminder that you're in control of a combat sequence means you're distanced from any involvement with the horror on screen. Use your "parasite energies" and you can even pause the whole battle to get a good look at your enemies.

*Parasite Eve 2* should be more exciting than your average RPG. But by claiming to be survival horror, it promises a game it can't deliver.

■ Successfully complete the game once to unlock special Bounty and Replay modes.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Great graphics and rendering

**LOW:**

If you want survival horror, this game will disappoint

07/10



# POINT BLANK



**Namco invented the** G-Con 45™, then it cunningly invented the fantastic *Point Blank* series to use it. The premise of the game? Point and shoot. Simple enough, but it works like a dream. Unlike all the other games of this genre, *Point Blank* is not really about violence. It is actually a series of shooting exercises, split into various stages of difficulty.

Of course, what makes the game a success is the variety of the tasks on offer. Shoot at piranhas belting across the screen, shoot a block of digits in ascending numerical order, shoot cardboard-cut-out ninjas popping up from behind buildings, shoot clay pigeons, shoot cuddly toys, shoot vultures so they drop little men into a boat – the list goes on and on and on.

In many ways, this is a stereotypical Japanese game: cute little characters, colorful surreal visuals and multiple-play options abound. There's even a comic RPG mode, in which you guide two explorers around a small island in search of the legendary Gunball.

Almost worth the asking price alone, however, is the wealth of two-player and team options. Here players can get together in groups of up to four and participate in various shooting competitions, including an excellent team battle option and a knockout tournament. Gamers who own Namco's G-Con 45™ have no excuse not to buy this light-hearted but challenging title, and anyone looking for something a bit different should consider it, too. The action gets a little repetitive, but it's diverting enough to satisfy most trigger-happy gamers.

■ The tasks have been designed to test different skills – it's not always about riddling the screen with bullets (indeed, certain challenges only give you one bullet). If you're not confident about shooting, there's a training option.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Neat and cute, in the familiar Japanese way

**LOW:**

Limited in scope – it's just shooting after all

07/10

# POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING



**This is one god-game** that actually treats you like a god, enabling you, as an individual, to gain super-power after super-power until you become the ultimate divinity across the game's 25 worlds. It might seem that as the god-like Shaman you don't need anyone else's help. Ah, but you still need your followers, and this is where it gets interesting.

Contemptible, obsequious, sheep-like objects they may be, but without your mortal little guys you'll never become all-powerful. Without their worship you receive no magic juice (mana) and without mana you can cast no spells. Lose your followers and you lose the power to regenerate. And then you die. But look after your minions by ordering them to build more huts and defending them from the forces of rival Shamans and they'll repay you with more mana to cast ever-more powerful spells – as well as supplying troops and priests to do your bidding.

While spells and buildings are selected from a sidebar, individuals and groups of followers can be selected using a joystick-controlled arrow.

*Populous* has none of the gung-ho appeal of *C&C's* tank legions. Often it's just too serious for its own good. However, take time to play at its slightly leisurely pace and it becomes surprisingly compulsive. You'll start to care about the fate of your tribe and you'll be gripped by an almost super-human hatred of your rival sorceresses. Being a god, it seems, is harder than it looks.

■ As *Populous* is fully 3D, sometimes your guys get lost behind things, but a press of the shoulder buttons usually fixes this.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You begin to revel in your shamanic powers

### LOW:

The graphics have suffered in the conversion from PC

08/10

# PORSCHE CHALLENGE



**Picture the scene:** the road's empty, the sun's beating down, the music's loud and you're driving a new Porsche Boxster, the latest in a long line of supreme sports cars from those Teutonic torque-meisters in Stuttgart. Not much wrong with that. Unless, of course, you can't afford the \$50,000 asking price, in which case you'll have to settle for Sony's second in-house title, *Porsche Challenge*.

The twist here is that rather than seven different cars, you get seven different drivers, all in identical Porsche Boxsters. Each character has an individual personality and driving style, and displays varying reactions. Sony has tried to make the best of this rather limited idea but, with the exception of the Test Driver, don't expect to feel a massive difference between them.

There's a choice of four circuits in all, including a replica of Porsche's very own test track in Stuttgart. Featuring long straights and tight bends, it's the perfect track on which to take your Boxster out for a spin and learn all the basic skills. Add to this American and Japanese cities and the ubiquitous Alpine Village and you've seen the lot.

The jewel in Porsche Challenge's 1997 crown is the two-player mode, where you can try a wealth of options, from *Gladiators*-style delayed starts to a very fancy catch-up mode. Admittedly the game loses a degree of its graphical finesse at this point, but it's still tolerable.

■ Win all 24 tracks and you'll be able to take a spin in the Test Driver's car.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

SCEE

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Great two-player mode

### LOW:

Far outclassed by subsequent racers

08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC



## PROJECT X2



**It's you against a myriad** of moving sprites, lasers a'lasering, plasma guns a'plasmering and missiles generally doing their stuff. You need expert hand-eye coordination to progress past the first stage – and the patience of someone who enjoys building life-size matchstick replicas of churches to stay sane after being annihilated by an end-of-level boss for the 23rd time in an hour.

*Project X2* is an accomplished shoot-'em-up – the big explosions and digitized speech throughout are impressive, as is the rather lengthy animated intro sequence. The levels take you on a journey that includes planetary surfaces, asteroid fields, internal structures and an ice world that poses some particularly troublesome problems. The mix of hazards is good. Each level has its own challenges and enemy type, though in some instances the enemies seem to be present just to make life hard for the player rather than for any logical reason.

The difficulty curve is pitched so that the game really stretches your ability. However, the Continue option available in each game and the fact that the game starts at the level after the one you last completed (up until the sixth level) with a password-restart system for when you turn the machine off, make progress a bit too fast. This minimizes initial frustration at a lack of progress, but ultimately restricts the game's longevity and value.

*Project X2* is hardly a milestone in game design. It's similar to the Amiga original, and this style of game has been done several dozens of times previously on other platforms.

■ If you remember the original *Project X* on the Amiga, the graphical style and sonic extravagances of this will look familiar.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Ocean

**DEVELOPER:**

Team 17

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

It's mighty pretty and it sounds good

**LOW:**

Its appeal is limited; it's all about moving about quickly and it's a tad short

07 / 10

## PSYBADEK



**Happening. Coolio.**

Bangin'. Dope. Rope. Sometimes it's possible to try too hard to impress. Which brings us to *Psybadek*.

In its favor, *Psybadek* is a good idea. A mix between *Cool Boarders* and *PaRappa the Rapper*, it offers a continuous variety of games, loosely based around snowboarding (called "deking," because you don't need to be on snow to use one of these hovering offerings). One level might put you in a snowboard race, the next in a peculiar penguin shoot-'em-up. On a snowboard.

This variety of games is backed by some fabulous music from clubber's faves David Holmes and Bentley Rhythm Ace. You've got two characters to choose from, a boy and a girl, who look like David Beckham and Scary Spice and they're both dressed in Vans gear.

This is supposed to be the perfect game for playing after a night out clubbing – it's fun and funky y'see. And it's fantastically trendy. Its trouble is that it's also a bit crap. And because the coders have decided to hide the fact that *Psybadek* isn't very long by making the game really tough, you'll find yourself repeating some of the worst levels over and over again before you can progress.

■ The levels are like individual mini-games. A few of them are really easy, but most of them are way too hard. Some of them have clever and innovative moments, and some are a wearisome slog.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Cute cartoony graphics

**LOW:**

Tries to be the next hip hit and fails terribly

04 / 10

# QUAKE II



Still one of the most popular multiplayer games on the Internet, you can now experience *Quake II* for yourself on a PlayStation near you.

After crash-landing your one-man craft on the alien planet you find your way into the enemy base, armed only with a puny blaster and, if you're lucky, a Dual Shock controller. Not only are you going to find *Quake II* more difficult playing with the directional pad, but you'll also miss out on the Dual Shock effect that has been put to such good use. All of the weapons make the pad vibrate differently and some of the larger enemy's footsteps can be felt long before you see them.

The levels themselves are true to the mammoth playing areas of the PC version, the only noticeable difference being a few extra corridors that enable the PlayStation to load extra level data as you pass through them. Even in the multiplayer mode the developers have managed to avoid the use of fog, with all four players able to enjoy playing at a frame rate well above acceptable standards.

Quite simply there is virtually nothing anyone could have done to make *Quake II* better than it is. Graphically it puts all other shooters to shame as it slings textures around with no visible warping while the audio complements the visuals perfectly. *Quake II* then - one of the best games ever and an essential addition to any PlayStation owner's collection.

Get it before it gets you...

■ If you think you see a glitch, or some polygon clipping, shoot it - *Quake II* doesn't have glitches, just subtle clues as to which walls can be shot out to reveal secret areas.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Hammerhead

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

"Another Deathmatch anyone?"

### LOW:

Targeting monsters above or below you can be difficult

# 10/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Agetec

### DEVELOPER:

Irem

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Hours of fun

### LOW:

Enemies behave the same way every time

# 08/10

# R-TYPE DELTA



Many have attempted to copy *R-Type*, but the cut of its cloth has remained vastly superior to its rivals. Irem's splendid blaster debuted on an arcade machine over 10 years ago and has been around in various guises ever since. But in recent years, the 3D, polygonal action adventure has taken hold.

The premise remains much the same: you have a floaty ship and the floaty ship has a gun. You scoot along in a left-to-right direction (mostly) and destroy whatever appears in your path, garnering boosters on the fly. It's that simple. Enemies swamp the screens, bullets fly in all directions and you just have to find pockets of space to breathe while the mayhem continues unabated. But, purists shield your eyes. Irem has spent time piling on the polygons, and has even introduced elements of 3D. At the end of the day, what you get is more of the same, but with some smashing spot effects.

The action remains a memory test. You're basically running along a predetermined route, knowing that at certain points a huge boss will swoop in and that you have to be at the bottom of the screen (or wherever). This may sound like a criticism, but somehow the action never seems exactly the same. So what do you get for your money? Basically, an *R-Type* with bells, whistles, polygons, fabulous spot effects and a couple of extra ships. But there's no denying that the game is a joy to play.

■ In the later levels, when the bosses start coming thick and fast, you can access two extra craft.



# RAGE RACER



**This, the third game** in the *Ridge Racer* series, is a beefy offering, with lots of tracks, a fabulous selection of cars and an excellent Grand Prix section. Namco has combined various terrains to make up the circuits, the major influences being Mediterranean swoops and curves, and steep city climbs à la San Francisco.

It's while playing the aforementioned Grand Prix section that the game comes into its own. You get three circuits to hurtle along (plus the Oval in later races) – come in the top three on all three and you get to move up one of five levels. As you advance through the classes the AI opponents become increasingly intelligent. Complete the five classes, and you get an extra GP course followed by a further five classes, where the tracks are reversed and opponents drive like the devil.

Add tuneable motors with variable handling suitable for different courses, and you'll be convinced that Namco has few peers when it comes to the out-and-out thrill of arcade racing. The pick-up-and-play experience of the original *Ridge Racer* remains, only now there is more longevity because of the incentive to progress through the classes and upgrade to the fastest cars. Unfortunately, it's a bit drab, noticeably so when compared to the golden sands and blue seas of *Ridge Racer Revolution*. But this is certainly not worth dwelling on – *Rage Racer* is a top arcade racer.

■ Namco's *Ridge* series shows no sympathy to the needs of an alphabetized guide, so to read reviews of earlier *Ridge* games, turn to pages 83 and 84.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Great addictive, highly playable arcade racing

### LOW:

Less than average graphics

09/10



# RAMPAGE THROUGH TIME

**For all its classic status** in the mid-'80s, there can be few gamers who now regard the *Rampage* series with anything more than sympathy. Hats off to Midway for sticking to its guns, but this most recent installment, *Rampage Through Time*, adds little to the original. And it's this refusal to move with the times that has effectively sunk the series.

*Rampage Through Time* is from a similar mold to the under-performing *Rampage World Tour*. Whereas the latter included giant monsters and lots of smashing away at international landmarks, now we get giant monsters smashing their way through historical eras – Wild West, Medieval, World War 2, and so on. It sounds like it could be fun, and for the first couple of minutes it is. Almost. You soon realize that you are expected to do the same thing through all 60-odd levels, and it's at this point that your heart shrivels up and dies.

You get 20 or so head-to-head bonus stages, yet even these are pointless. If you don't win the challenge, the game is over. In light of the shallow difficulty curve of the main game, this effectively renders all that smashing of buildings rather pointless.

The more you have of a good thing, the less of a good thing it can seem to be... alcohol, chocolate... *Rampage*... The thrills of this game peaked more than a decade ago and this re-creation truly is a monster.

■ Enter "12345" as a password to unlock all movies under the Cheats selection in the Options menu. If you entered the code correctly, the game will return to the main menu.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Avalanche Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Great for retro-hungry gamers everywhere

### LOW:

Bad for quality-game-hungry gamers everywhere

03/10





## RAT ATTACK



**When you sit down** and play *Rat Attack* you can't help wondering just what was going through the developers' minds. "Okay guys, I've got it! We'll make a game about catching rats. Evil, mutant space-rats! It'll be great! Yes!" How wrong they were. Frustrating, tedious and irritating are all words that could describe *Rat Attack*, but definitely not "great."

At the start of each level your rat-catching cat is given a quota of vermin to round up. He then creates a large circle which can be extended in any direction. All the rats within the circle are caught and stored, until they can be deposited in the "eraticator" (ho, ho). The more rats deposited at any one time, the bigger the bonus. However, should you bump into any rats *en route* to said eraticator, the rodents you have already caught will be released.

On numerous occasions you find your hard work has gone to waste, as you walk into a rat obscured by a piece of furniture. Once you've caught your quota of the flea-ridden devils a level exit appears... And so it continues.

Catching rats is fun enough for the first couple of levels, but you soon realize it's exactly the same in every level. The box-like screens in which the whole escapade occurs change color, the scenery is juggled and rats stream from different holes, but that's about it. At the end of every set of rat-catching missions, you're confronted with a boss of 16-bit proportions. Very soon you'll be switching off your PlayStation.

■ Stick with the awful game camera long enough to complete the game in Normal mode and you will unlock some bonus characters.

### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Mindscape

#### DEVELOPER:

Pure

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1999

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

Catching rats is fun, at first

#### LOW:

Camera angles are irritating and hinder your progress

04/10

## RAYMAN



**Watch out for** *Rayman's* gentle exterior. Just because the lead character is cute and has a penchant for pretty colors and big tennis shoes doesn't mean this is a game for wimps. On the contrary, this is one of the most difficult platformers available from the early days of PlayStation, with some 70 stages to bound through and clumsy collision detection to battle against.

As far as the gameplay goes, this is your typical run-jump-swing-jump-punch-duck-die affair. There are platforms aplenty, a mind-boggling wealth of enemies to trounce, vast levels to explore and secret areas to discover. Graphically, *Rayman* is also superb - dripping with quirky animations, lavish backdrops and a slick cartoon-based intro sequence.

Perhaps the most irritating aspect, though, is the game's severe lack of speed. It's a shame that you can't whack a turbo on to *Rayman's* legless backside to give him some oomph. There's no "Run" option, and attacks seem to take an age to power up.

As a whole *Rayman* is fun to play, if extremely unforgiving, with little margin for error when bounding between the platforms and ledges. There's a difference between a game that is enjoyably difficult and one that's just plain aggravating, though this is a difference that sadly *Rayman* just doesn't come to grips with.

■ The second adventure, *Rayman 2: The Great Escape*, hit PlayStation in November 2000.

### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Ubi Soft

#### DEVELOPER:

Ubi Soft

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1995

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

A non-linear game structure adds to the replay value

#### LOW:

Unforgiving of the dexterity-challenged

07/10

# RESIDENT EVIL



**Wipe your feet and** enter Resident Evil, a maniac mansion somewhere in the Midwest. The plot reads thus: a grim bacteria has spread through a town, and after a catalogue of macabre killings, the fine STARS (Special Tactics and Rescue Service) team is brought in to investigate.

The team departs for the town only to be attacked by a savage pack of canine killers and the survivors skedaddle to a huge stately pile, hoping it's a safe house. Unlucky. It isn't. "Ha ha!" you cry. "If I buy this game then I'm probably a member of the STARS squad." You'd be right. You take on the role of either Jill Valentine or the more difficult character, Chris Redfield (the major difference being that the former begins the chilling adventure with a revolver).

After a debriefing in the hallway, you're left to your own devices. Time to explore. This is wander, kill, pick-up, solve fare. Gruesomely so.

First, you'll spend a good deal of time goggling at the sheer visual splendor of *Resident Evil*. Texture-mapping,

light-sourced polygons, pre-rendered backgrounds – it has all these things. And it runs in real time.

What you need to know is that if Alfred Hitchcock was alive and he was best buds with Wes Craven, and they were making computer games, *Resident Evil* is quite probably the horror they'd present. It has a cinematic quality, but unlike many games of this ilk, you genuinely feel you're taking part in the proceedings. Because you are.

*Resident Evil* is possibly the most chilling game in the history of interactive entertainment. The first time you edge uneasily along a corridor, two enormous killer mutts can smash through the window and savage you to death. Not only does this game make the spine tingle and the trousers brown, it's also blessed with an immense number and variety of puzzles.

*Resident Evil* sprawls through the environs of a mansion, one that takes hours to explore, and with two difficulty levels and a variety of endings this is one of the very few games you simply cannot afford to miss. Big weapons, blood by the barrel, and some of the most fierce creatures you'll ever have the pleasure to kill – this is a true PlayStation classic and it has spawned a legion of worthy sequels.

■ The character animation is exceptionally fluid and mostly you're in complete control of your actions. Occasionally, you'll reach a situation or a character, and a cinematic sequence will take over. This isn't as annoying as it sounds, it merely serves to maintain the flow of the narrative and help you discover just what the blazes is going on.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes


## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Beautiful visuals, fluid gameplay and a chilling tale

**LOW:**  
The dialogue is a bit clichéd

09/10

# RESIDENT EVIL 2

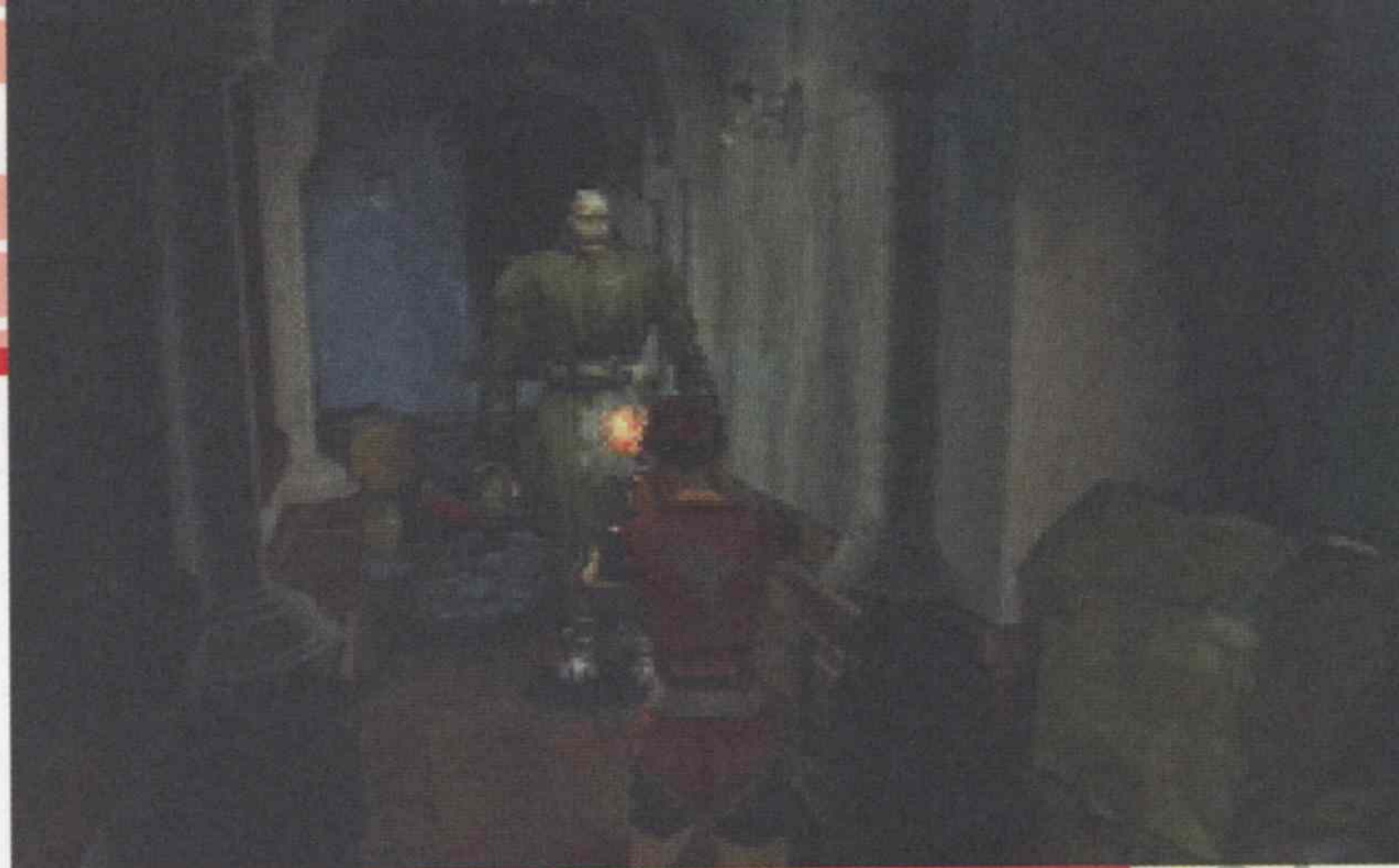
 In *Resident Evil 2* you choose to play as either Leon or Claire. The action takes place in the third person and is basically an old-fashioned adventure game of the "find locked door, find key, open locked door" style, spiced up with a few random monsters. That makes it sound a bit dull. On the contrary, *Resident Evil 2* is absolutely fantastic.

There is a stunningly well-created atmosphere that's on a par with that created in the very best horror movies. Skillfully selected camera angles enforce feelings of claustrophobia and paranoia, sudden events paralyze you with fear and the whole game is riddled with hideous gore and all manner of abominations abound.

If you have played the original title you'll be immediately familiar with the controls of *RE2*. A significant difference is that a far greater number of monsters can now appear on screen together, which can help to make the odds seem overwhelmingly against you at times. Another difference is that scenes load much faster.

*Resident Evil 2* reeks class. It is head and shoulders above most of the adventure games for the PlayStation. It's a terrifying tribute to horror movies that sucks you into a dark and cynical world and only spits you out when you've defeated your own fear (as well as the big boss monster at the end, of course). Buy this game and enjoy a thrilling, sweat-inducing gaming experience.

■ There are quite a few secrets dotted about *RE2*, mostly in the form of new rooms that can be discovered. These hold spare ammunition or other helpful stuff that isn't vital to the completion of the game, but are fun to find nevertheless.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:


An engrossing, almost cinematic, experience

### LOW:

Most of the puzzles don't require much thought

# 09/10

# RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

 We refrain from describing *Nemesis* as a "game" for good reason. It truly is more than the sum of its festering parts. Paradoxically, by enabling the player to roam throughout Raccoon City, Capcom has actually enhanced the feeling of entrapment and imminent danger.

A side effect of the more expansive play area is that it adds scale to the Umbrella plague sweeping the country. You are initially cast as series' heroine, Jill Valentine, who finds herself in the midst of an escalating zombie crisis. Midway through the game, the action switches to Carlos, a cocky member of the commando force sent by Umbrella to quell the epidemic. Then it's back to Jill for the horrific finale. The plot effectively bookends its predecessor, treating it as but a small part of a bigger picture.

In an effort to keep the game fresh, Capcom has introduced several changes to the *Resi* formula. For the most part these are minor or extremely subtle, but when it comes to the brilliantly conceived *Nemesis* creature they are both extreme and unsubtle. The impact of this new member of the *Resident Evil* family is incredible and it's hard not to panic as the dreaded bogeyman gives chase.

*Nemesis* may draw the series to a logical conclusion on PlayStation 1, but it goes out on a high.

Raccoon City's zombies are decaying at an alarming rate but *Resident Evil 3* remains as fresh as a cold bucket of fear in the face. A modern-day classic.

■ *Nemesis* can be felled only by a succession of direct hits from the heavier artillery available in the game, but he never stays down for long.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The puzzles are delicately weighted to offer just enough challenge

### LOW:

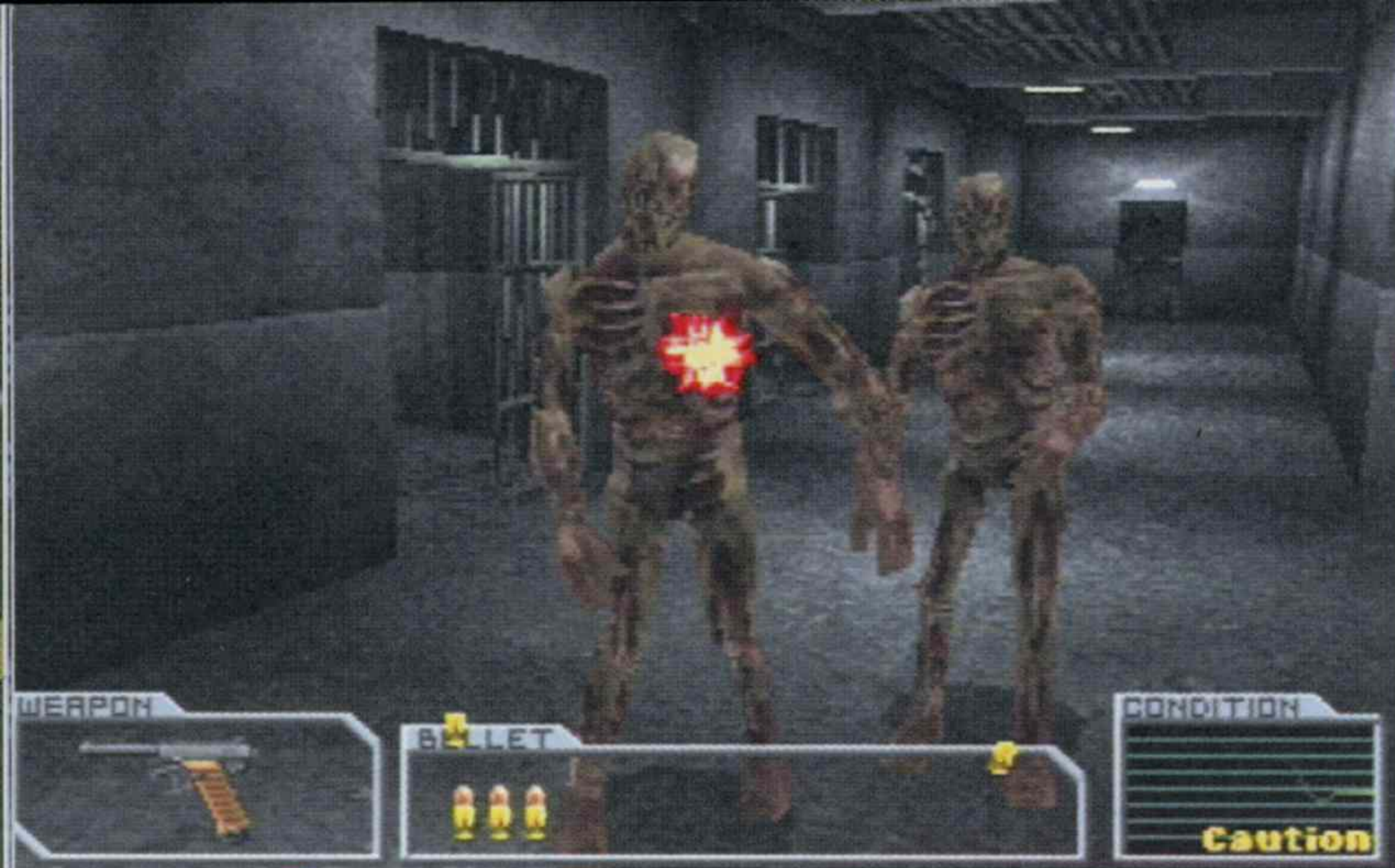
A dressed-up version of its predecessors

# 10/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC

# RESIDENT EVIL: SURVIVOR



**Armed only with** a gray, plastic G-Con 45™, and a paranoia-ramping first-person view, you have to shoot your way past all the usual *Resident Evil* nasties while, at the same time, navigating your way around the town solving puzzles and collecting herbs. It's *Resi* with a lightgun, then.

This unusual method of control takes some getting used to and never feels quite as intuitive as a directional pad. The trade-off, though, is that you get to play a non-linear first-person shooter using a lightgun, for the first time ever.

Now that you have full freedom of movement, but are able to only see directly in front of you, attacks from behind are a real hazard. This is a trick/glitch that Capcom's designers have used to good effect, encouraging you to make yourself aware of your surroundings rather than simply pointing your gun at the screen and playing the game like a gore-tastic version of *Point Blank*.

So there you have it. *Survivor* isn't as pretty or as playable as its third-person counterparts, but, as a lightgun game, it revolutionizes the genre. You can play *Survivor* with a hand controller, if you don't own a G-Con. The puzzles aren't very taxing and *Survivor* doesn't have the longevity of the other *Resi* titles, but all of your fave nasties are scarier than ever, and at the end of the day (or night), that's the point.

■ If you forget to look around, an auto-aiming feature comes into play, but not until your rotting assailant makes contact. This generally happens just a little too late for you to escape unscathed, but it does enable you to minimize the amount of energy you lose.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Hugely entertaining

**LOW:**  
You can't save your game

# 08/10

# READY 2 RUMBLE



**That *Ready 2 Rumble*** is endorsed by an announcer rather than an actual boxer underlines its showbiz leanings. Anyone who still believes boxing to be a noble art may be offended by *Ready 2 Rumble's* vision of the sport's future as a freakshow of WWF proportions. The cartoonish cast of fighters all boast catchphrases, insults and individual celebratory routines.

There's a flaw in *Ready 2 Rumble's* fight mechanics, though. You need to be blocking and attacking one step ahead of your opponent, but this is often impossible as your fighter appears to dither before carrying out your command. What was intended as a lightning blow to the chin sometimes emerges as more of a drunken flail. With a little bit of tactical prowess you can use these control shortcomings to your advantage, but that's not the point.

If you're looking for a range of one-player options, *Ready 2 Rumble* isn't for you. There are training routines, but these aren't interesting or challenging enough to function as mini-games in their own right. Then again, single-player satisfaction isn't really the function of *Ready 2 Rumble*. It's a game that fully expects you to have your buddies greased up and primed for the onset of brain damage.

■ Land six big punches and the letters at the bottom of the screen will spell out the word RUMBLE. A quick tap of the shoulder buttons will then activate Rumble mode, in which your fighter's gloves start to glow white with rage and a series of frenzied blows rain down on your opponent.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Midway

**DEVELOPER:**  
Point of View

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The atmosphere is perfect

**LOW:**  
The controls are sluggish and unresponsive

# 07/10

# RIDGE RACER



**As a coin-op,** Namco's *Ridge Racer* was responsible for taking the racing game into a new dimension, eclipsing Sega's *Virtua Racer*. As a console game it heralded similar new beginnings.

On release *Ridge Racer* managed to deliver the richest 3D graphics seen outside an arcade. The game hurtles along at well over 30fps, and though the action jolts slightly when the screen is packed with cars and you select the external perspective, this is a rare occurrence. *Ridge Racer's* main failing has always been its lack of different courses. Although this deficiency can't be ignored, it's far less important than the game's positive aspects. The fact is that *Ridge Racer* is the first game of its type to deliver a racing environment that looks convincing from inside the car. The track unravels beautifully into the distance, giving you ample time to respond. And Namco has even thrown in an extra external view to provide variety.

However, if you're looking to *Ridge Racer* for a lasting challenge you're likely to be disappointed. The game is relatively easy to finish, and includes only four cars (12, if you shoot all the Galaxians on loading), each with different handling characteristics. The time-trial element is the only real boost to its long-term appeal.

■ Watch out for the video wall that displays a demo of *Galaxians* – a token inclusion from the *Ridge Racer 2* coin-op.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Arcade perfect and the start of something big

### LOW:

Limited lifespan

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Plenty of challenge

### LOW:

It just isn't fun

# 08/10

# RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION



**Revolution is a lot tougher** than the previous *Ridge Racer*, due to the annoyingly twisty-turny nature of the course and the more aggressive drivers. Namco has even fiddled with the powerslide. After struggling manfully with, and finally mastering, powersliding around bends, you now find that the slightest on-off-on with the gas and you're sent into a completely uncontrollable pirouette. Dammit.

But as you play, it slowly becomes clear that this is more than a swift cash-in. A lot of thought has gone into the design and structure of the game. It's a minor plus point, but if you multiply all the separate options, there are well over 1,200 permutations of car/race/course/transmission – not counting the hidden cars and tricks you can access with the correct pad combinations.

What you do get for your money is more of the same great game. You get a new course, two new cars, a bigger range of game tweaks, 12 different endings and a wealth of hidden stuff to find and fiddle with. It's also a lot faster.

Most importantly, *Revolution* is a really stiff challenge. Completing this racer is no breeze; but it's not that enjoyable either. Lofting the winner's urn brings on a feeling more akin to sheer relief than accomplished elation.

■ Overtaking can be painful – you only have to touch the car in front, or the trackside scenery, and your speed drops, leaving you trailing behind until the next decent overtaking place.



# RIDGE RACER TYPE 4



**Predictably, the *Ridge Racer* designers have triumphed.** Instead of resting on their laurels and ignoring all that has happened to the racing genre recently, they've fully absorbed current developments, and all without compromising *Ridge Racer's* arcade immediacy.

There are four modes of play in *Type 4* – Grand Prix, Time Trial, Vs. Mode and Extra Trial. As usual, Grand Prix provides the bulk of the single-player game and it's a linear championship affair. Players simply pick a racing team from a selection of four – R.C. Micro Mouse Mappy (easy), Pac Racing Club (medium), Racing Team Solvalou (hard) and Dig Racing Team (expert) – and then choose a car manufacturer from a line-up of Assoluto, Lizard, Terrazi and Age Solo.

The first two companies build classic Drift cars. If handled with some semblance of skill, these frisky motors can corner with incredible fluidity. If you take your finger off the accelerator as they approach a turn and then apply the gas again, the tail spins out, pushing the car around in a drifting skid. Do it wrong, however, and you spin like an inebriated ice skater. Terrazi and Age Solo, on the other hand, make Grip cars that are a lot easier to handle, but not as much fun.

Once you've gone through all that, it's time to race. Real Roots supplies eight circuits (although they all share bits and pieces), separated into three rounds, and it's here you discover that *Ridge Racer 4* is all about skillful cornering. You need to know the exact angle to approach a corner, the exact moment to release the accelerator (or apply the brake), and the exact moment to put your finger to the plastic and rocket out of the bend. In short, you need skill. And plenty of it.

However, there's more than one way to attempt each corner. There is an optimum route, of course, but if you approach a turn at the wrong speed or angle, you're not automatically in trouble – you can usually pull around without crashing into the barriers. Ultimately, it takes time – a lot of time – to master each track, learn its nuances and form an intimate understanding of the way the cars handle in this strange arcade world. When you do, driving becomes instinctive and improvisational. If you drive with tongue in cheek and with no great love of realism, *Ridge Racer Type 4* is so good it hurts.

■ Each time you win a round, your team will supply you with a new vehicle, but the quality will depend on your performance. If you just scrape through, you'll get only a souped-up version of your old machine, but if you keep coming in first you'll get the best model on the market.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Circuits are well designed and scenery is breathtaking

### LOW:

Not as mature and diverse as *Gran Turismo*

09/10



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**

Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Smooth and effortless to play, while necessitating skill and timing

**LOW:**It lacks the depth, precision and total fluidity of *Tekken 3***08/10****RIVAL SCHOOLS**

**Forget the puerile plot** where five schools meet in assorted playgrounds to fight for honor. Instead, revel in a game that flows effortlessly from move to move and showcases everything Capcom has learned in its 15 years in the fighting game arena.

*Rival Schools* takes the battle to Namco's *Tekken 3* heights, as 14 characters slug it out within a number of 3D locations. A wealth of fancy kicks and punches are immediately accessible, while hardened playground pugilists will enjoy a secondary range of equally impressive projectile attacks and Capcom's much-vaunted combo flurries where dozens of moves can be pieced together. Capcom offers a merry bunch of pre-pubescent schoolgirls, bearded old men and college jocks, but the unusual pairings combine in two-on-one attacks that have to be seen to be believed.

*Rival Schools* is a worthy alternative to the mighty *Tekken 3* and adds much needed new elements to the genre. Ultimately, though, *T3* is still the Gripper Stebson of the PlayStation playground and has the enough moves and longevity to dangle *Rival Schools* upside down and nick Capcom's pocket money...

■ You recruit two bizarre heroes to work as a team. When the requisite button combinations are pressed, the pair run on screen in a blaze of fancy camera trickery and lay into their victim with a breathtaking array of kicks and punches.

**ROAD RASH 3D****The Road Rash**

**formula** has existed many

times before, on a spread of formats. After visiting the bike shop and choosing your steel horse, it's on with some leathers and out on to the road. Arcade mode offers a quick fix. The full game, however, entails racing to win. Success brings money and the opportunity to progress to harder competitions. Your honor as a wild-haired rogue is at stake. Racing takes place on a huge track system, modeled on the San Francisco Bay area. All the routes are connected so one can, if one wishes, simply take the wrong turn and ride off. Each competition takes place between two gang-owned cafés.

There are four gangs to race against and such is these gangs' level of competitive instinct that occasionally their AI-influenced behavior can become a tad boisterous. You might notice this as the steel bar crashes through your visor, because as well as being a racing title, *Road Rash 3D* involves a fair bit of knuckle play.

As a piece of harmless arcade-style frippery, *Road Rash 3D* works. It is fairly easy on the eye, although things get a little scrappy when flying off the road into the cubic undergrowth. On the whole though, the title plays quite pleasantly. The bike responds well to your demands, but unfortunately the fighting elements fail to inspire.

■ Weapons can be obtained by grabbing them from an assailant's hairy hands. Bits of metal, clubs and the ubiquitous chain are all present and correct.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**

Electronic Arts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

The cops arresting you for dangerous cycling

**LOW:**

Some of the graphics look a bit off

**07/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Attention To Detail

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# ROLLCAGE



**Rollcage is like Wipeout** on wheels: a frantic futuristic racer where competitors pick up a selection of power-ups and then fire them at each other with hearty abandon. Despite the fact that each of the six vehicles features different acceleration, speed and grip ratios, they all turn on a dime and will have you spinning around unless you exercise a blend of skill and subtlety.

The ability to blast chunks from roadside scenery so that obstacles scatter all over the track is a cool idea that for once brings the background visuals into the race. Then there's the Time Warp, which enables you to swap places with the driver in front. Finally, most tunnel and valley walls are curved so players can drive right up them and even zoom along on the ceiling if need be. Apart from justifying the "Rollcage" monicker, this feature adds a few extra thrills to the race and makes your head feel funny.

In the end, if you're looking for a naturalistic racer that seeks to implant real-world handling attributes

into a sci-fi setting, you might be better off checking out *Wipeout*. If you feel that the most skillful driver should naturally win each race, you'll find it absolutely unforgivable when, say, you're just inches from the finishing line and the guy in distant second place opens a wormhole and steals the race. It's the randomness and injustice of *Rollcage* that'll eat away at the patience of many racing fans.

■ Fortunately, the shield lasts for a certain number of hits, rather than a certain amount of time, which means you can't waste it once it has been activated.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Fast, furious and deliciously frustrating

**LOW:**

Erratic handling

09/10



# SENTINEL RETURNS



**Sentinel was originally released** on the BBC Micro in 1985 when computer gaming was still in its infancy. The original *Sentinel* was just as strange as *Sentinel Returns*, but it was also compelling and claustrophobic. The stark, abstract landscape of the game was perfectly suited to the low-resolution display of the BBC Micro, and the slow-moving graphics created a sense of tension as the Sentinel slowly turned toward your vulnerable robot.

Despite sticking closely to the concept and design of its predecessor, though, *Sentinel Returns* fails to translate its appeal. Part of the problem lies in the graphics. Everything is as stark and abstract as the original, but it's also dark and low resolution, resulting in a blocky and indistinct view of the proceedings. Your viewpoint moves slowly, but in a jerky, unconvincing manner. Finally, the effects when you absorb or create things are poor and even when you can see the Sentinel, it's almost impossible to tell which way it's facing.

Adding to the frustration is the incredibly long loading time between levels. This is made even more annoying by the fact that the game always takes you back to the main menu after completing a level, instead of giving you the choice of skipping to the next.

*Sentinel Returns* has 650 levels, but like the original, they're all variations on the same theme. If you can remember *Sentinel*, this may spark some nostalgia. Otherwise, you're unlikely to find it anything more than a flawed oddity.

■ Geoff Crammond's bizarre creation was one of the first gaming titles to give people a glimpse of the potential of videogaming. Turn to page 370 for more classic games.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

No Name Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Intriguing concept

**LOW:**

It looks disappointingly blocky, indistinct and too dark

05/10





# SILENT HILL

PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST  
PSONE  
NINTENDO 64 • PC

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

More frightening than *Resident Evil* and more evocative than *Tomb Raider*

### LOW:

The voice acting is terrible

# 10 / 10



**Let's clear something up** – *Silent Hill* is not a *Resident Evil* derivative. The *Resident Evil* duo pay homage to George Romero's cult zombie flicks, with all the attendant flavor that that implies. *Silent Hill*, however, is more akin to the works of HP Lovecraft and films like *The Shining* or *The Legend of Hill House*. In many places, it's genuinely disturbing, and suggests more horror than it actually shows. However, while *Silent Hill* is often an exemplary piece of storytelling, it isn't a brilliant story *per se*. The distinction is subtle, but important.

In terms of scripted or spoken dialogue, *Silent Hill* is not perfect. Like *Resident Evil*, its use of English is almost uncomfortable in places. Pregnant pauses punctuate ineptly performed exchanges – certain words are bizarrely emphasized, while fantastic events are related in humdrum tones.

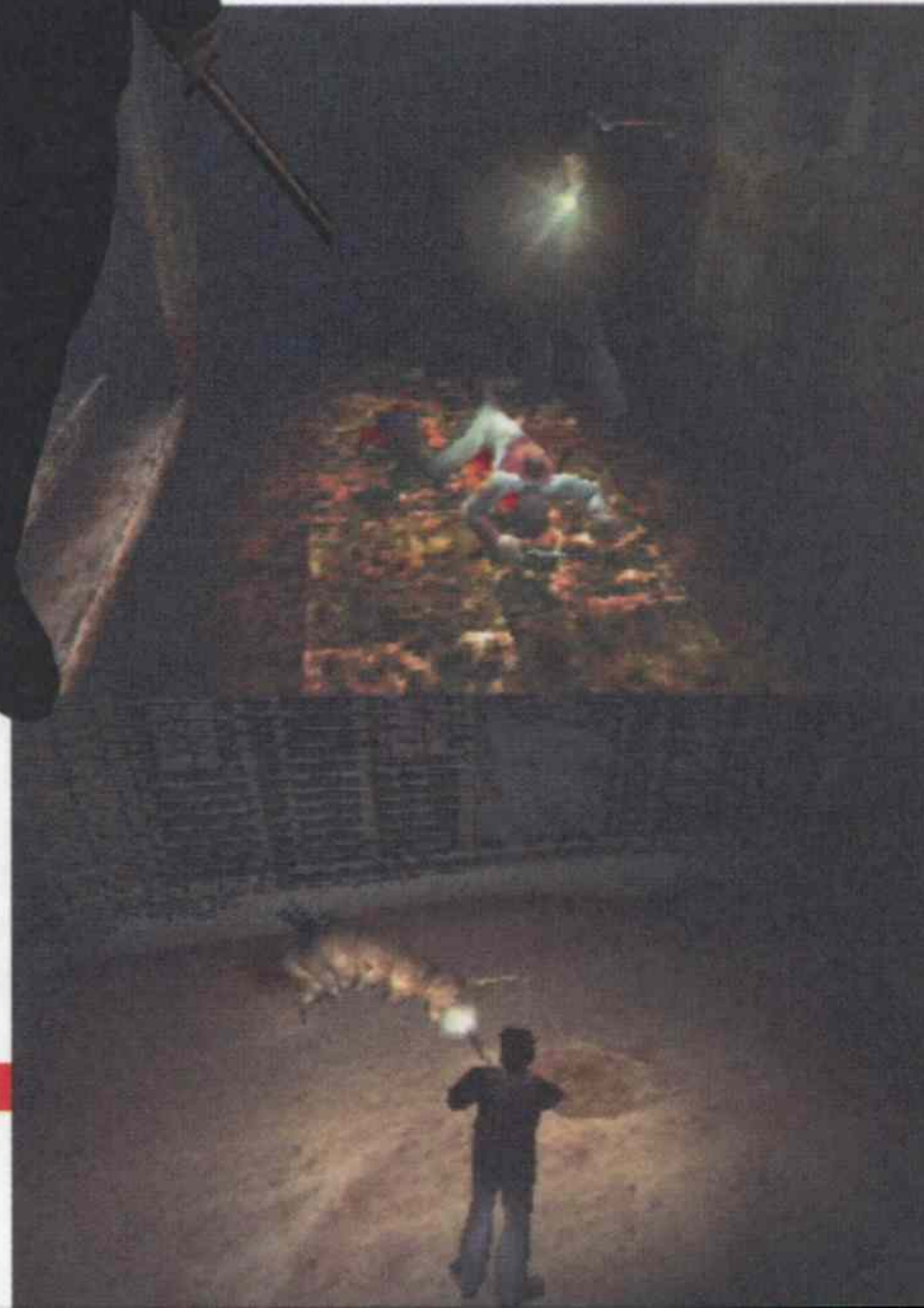
Outside of the realms of FMV links and in-game cut scenes, though, *Silent Hill* is magnificent. Its play-oriented narrative is superb. Despite the shortcomings of its dialogue, the odd piece of plot and its laughable acting, it is still one of the most atmospheric games ever created. It evokes such feelings as panic, fear and trepidation in a variety of ways. Whereas the *Resident Evil* games rely on "jump" moments to alarm and engross the player, Konami's game manages to create an amazing and lasting feeling of unease. It has its fair share of heart-misses-a-beat events and monster-based surprises, but overall the atmosphere is maintained on a more cerebral level.

The variety of locations and visuals in *Silent Hill* is hugely impressive. From a shopping center to a school, the town begs tireless exploration to appreciate the incredible number

of incidental details and touches. It has a fine line in subtle, referential humor, too.

*Silent Hill* is an astounding, benchmark videogame. More frightening than any other title before it, it's remarkably atmospheric. As you play, you'll find yourself sitting, mouth agape, thinking "Games just don't do this sort of thing!" Play it in the daytime, with the bustle and noise that accompany naturally lit hours and its powerful hold is lessened. Put it on past midnight, when you're alone, and you'll struggle to resist the temptation to sleep with the lights on. It's that good.

■ There are five endings to discover. Four are available from the start and a fifth, available after you have completed *Hill* once, has its tongue firmly in cheek. It's extremely funny, and provides a welcome piece of comic relief after all the horror.





## SOUL BLADE

**Like all of Namco's previous** fighting games, *Soul Blade* has a great range of characters, each with their own involving story. As well as the usual Arcade and Versus modes, the game also boasts Battle, Team Battle and Time Attack modes. Most impressive is the Practice option. It's very comprehensive, with your opponent being able to jump, sidestep, attack and so on.

In general *Soul Blade's* controls are more traditional than in *Tekken*. **A** and **B** buttons perform horizontal and vertical attacks with your weapon, while **C** performs a variety of kicks. This system doesn't work particularly well and feels confused. And there's a bigger problem – when you have to block an attack with your fighter in the guard stance he's rooted to the spot. If you have to move backward then you have to drop your guard and leg it.

There are some positive elements. In *Soul Blade* you can neatly sidestep your opponent's attack by pushing the joystick up or down twice in quick succession, leaving your opponent open to a quick counter. As well as this, another addition worth a mention is the Edge Master mode in which you choose a character and guide them through a story. This gives the game a real boost.

*Soul Blade* is a classy beat-'em-up that unfortunately suffers from comparisons with *Tekken 2*. It doesn't quite have the depth of its stablemates, but you can't fail to have fun – it's recommended.

■ Get yourself some action as boss SoulEdge by beating the Arcade mode with every character on at least the Normal difficulty level.

### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Namco

#### DEVELOPER:

Namco

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1997

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

The Edge Master mode boosts longevity for lone players

#### LOW:

Hard, and not entirely original

# 08/10

PLAYSTATION 2

PS ONE • NINTENDO 64 • PC

## SOVIET STRIKE



**This is great fun** to play. There's nothing quite like the feeling of zooming in low over a hill and taking out a radar installation with a well-timed, surgical strike.

There's plenty of opposition, too, from anti-aircraft units on the ground, through tanks, Jeeps and guys with bazookas all the way up to heavily armed speedboats and enemy helicopter gunships. When you've played this game, you'll certainly know you've been in a fight.

However, *Soviet Strike* isn't quite as convincing an affair as it might have been. Although it has the advantage over its aged relatives of having been coded especially for the PlayStation, it still feels like an old game. True, there's more to the topography, with hills and bridges rising high out of the ground, but it still has a primitive look to it. That in itself wouldn't be a problem if it were combined with stunningly original gameplay, but this is a revisitation of ground already trodden. And why is there a need for a memory card when there are only five levels? A password system would have been as simple.

*Soviet Strike*, while it's fun and very well done, is something we've seen before.

■ The levels are cunningly designed to stretch you to the limit of your capability every time, so you never feel like you're just coasting along in your helicopter. The fiendish designers have calculated the amount of fuel needed to complete each mission to within an ounce.



### DETAILS:

#### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

#### DEVELOPER:

Electronic Arts

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

#### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1996

#### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

### VERDICT:

#### HIGH:

The gameplay is white-knuckle-inducing fun

#### LOW:

Short and not very original

# 07/10

# SPEED PUNKS



**These mini motorists** are indeed freaks. The cutesy contenders here all lack limbs of any kind. The karts themselves are also on the minimalist side. Engine-less, they have a wheel for steering, another four for rolling on, but that's it.

By cutting out unnecessary detail the developer has been able to focus on more important aspects, such as the racers' faces. As you squeeze past the other freaks jostling for position, your character screws up his face to give them major road-rage stare, just so they notice you passing them. Also, if someone falls foul of one of your projectiles or deposits, your character receives a punch from a dismembered fist and an evil grin as confirmation.

For too long, many PlayStation games have been restricted to two-player contests, but here's one that finally makes the most of the multi-tap. Despite all the smooth-running delights and eye-candy, there is something dark lurking in *Speed Punks* that pollutes the soul. It becomes a platform where buddies can work through all the unspoken dislikes and loathings they have for each other. Victory is never sweeter than when it has been wrestled away from a fiendish friend on the last bend. However, defeat has never been so crushing as when the crosshairs begin to appear on your little man and despite all your wriggling and swerving your fate has been sealed...

■ Keep yourself armed to the teeth, because the computer-controlled characters are very aggressive.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Funcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Each kart handles uniquely and the courses are great

### LOW:

The graphics are so good that the few mistakes stand out

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Neversoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Gorgeously smooth graphics

### LOW:

It takes even less time to finish than *Metal Gear Solid*

# 09/10

# SPIDER-MAN



**Although there have been** a few superhero games, none, until now, has really managed to get across the pleasure of larking about with superhuman powers.

It isn't surprising to learn, then, that Neversoft made the controls easy to grasp; *Spider-Man* isn't full of complicated button combinations. The controls for our hero are as simple as they could be. Pick up the pad, run around... within seconds you'll be swinging and spinning Spidey around the screen.

So it plays great, and it feels great. Any problems? Well, aside from the fact that the plot's a bit of a tangle because the gameplay doesn't quite explain the story outlined in the cut-scenes, and that the training level is one of the few chances Spidey gets to be stealthy, the main criticism is that *Spider-Man* is too short. Neversoft has tried to combat this by adding variant difficulty levels and bonus rewards for completing the game. For example, comedy voice-overs come into play, and Spidey's wardrobe becomes interactive after completing the game once. The best bonus of all, though, (for the patient die-hard fans) is the hidden comic book collection, where you have to play the game loads of times in order to find 32 comic book covers.

Neversoft and Marvel have together managed to keep all the Spidey details spot-on, without losing sight of the "adventure" element of videogame creation.

■ The nasal New York tone of *Spider-Man's* legendary creator, Stan Lee, introduces the game at the opening screen.



# SPYRO YEAR OF THE DRAGON



**You might be** thinking, "it's just *Spyro 2* again."

Well, while there's obviously a lot that'll seem familiar – what with the return of Sparx, Hunter and Moneybags – Insomniac has ensured *Spyro 3* looks and feels different, with four co-stars to control and a hefty bucket of smoothly integrated mini-games.

Barely have you begun before Hunter gives you the chance to go skateboarding around a gladiatorial arena, flaming and butting troublesome reptiles. Later on you'll command a speedboat, clamber in a tank and go skating and swimming... and this is only the stuff *Spyro* does; the other characters have their own adventures as well. Sheila the kangaroo stomps a fort into the ground, and Sgt. Byrd flaps about with heavy weights to pressure switches while unleashing a barrage of rockets.

While the first few worlds of *Spyro 3* aren't that tough to unlock, some of the stages are really tricky. Tearing about in a powerboat while shelling a shark submarine isn't easy, and catching an egg thief accelerating along a super-charged track will take plenty of practice. Just when you think you've seen everything, you'll find an aerial speedway section or discover another boss to defeat.

Insomniac has never compromised in its quest to create games that appeal to kids without patronizing them, while reminding oldsters why they first picked up a joypad.

■ If you see a mountainside or a cave with cracks on the walls or covered with boarded wood, head-butt it to break it – there will be a power-up inside.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

SCEA

### DEVELOPER:

Insomniac Games

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Short loading times and well-placed cut-scenes tie everything together perfectly

### LOW:

It's the last in the series...

# 10/10



# STAR WARS DEMOLITION



**Coming from Luxoflux**, the developer behind *Vigilante 8*, *Demolition* is a game of similar vehicular mayhem, which happens to be set in the *Star Wars* universe. Fans of the films will find all the vehicles present including Luke Skywalker's Landspeeder, Darth Maul's Speederbike and Boba Fett's jetpack.

Not a difficult game to get to grips with, *Star Wars Demolition* dares you to drive around the aforementioned locales, shooting at the other combatants with laser fire and missiles, and blowing the heck out of the scenery. Unfortunately the basic game is no more complex than this.

It should've been *Vigilante 8* in *Star Wars* pajamas, but *Demolition* has gone tragically wrong. The battles are simultaneously confusing and dull. It takes so long to kill your opponent – what with having to cope with the wild variations in handling between vehicles, the lack of a reverse gear and the fact that everyone is shielded to the hilt – that you may find yourself quitting before the winners have been announced.

Then there are the bizarre differences in scale. A teeny Boba Fett vs.+ a Rancor monster filling half the screen? It's all a bit messed up.

It's not totally bad, however. Visually, it's pretty sharp on the Death Star and Cloud City levels, even if the Tatooine and Hoth arenas are somewhat sparse. There's also something appealingly retro about legging a Scout Walker down the ravines of the Death Star's surface.

So it's full marks for stripping *Star Wars* back to basics, but nil points for creating a game that is flawed.

■ Beat the game on Tournament mode with the Rancor to unlock the cloud car, Princess Leia and Darth Maul.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

Luxoflux

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Some decent play modes add much-needed variety

### LOW:

It needs more than official vehicles and locations

# 05/10

# STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

Big Ape Productions

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fiercely faithful to the movie

### LOW:

While the action is under your control, the camera isn't

# 09/10



Unlike all movie spin-offs thus far, *Episode I* (the game) is a sprawling action/adventure game that isn't just based on the movie – it *is* the movie.

This story is chopped into 12 chunks of action and exploration in which you control four of the game's characters – this enables you to follow the plot of the movie. *Episode I* is a first in that it combines three genres – RPG-style exploration, thumb-straining blaster action and point-and-click, multiple-choice adventuring. Some of *Episode I*'s levels are straightforward blasters, with a beginning, an end and thousands of bad guys in between. Some are more puzzle-based. Some, however, are pure adventure fodder with characters that must be found, approached and grilled in the correct way in order to obtain the correct response.

If we had to pick one fault with this game it is a shame that you can never shake that curious down-turned viewpoint to explore ahead, but ultimately *Episode I* is a triumph. It is the most thorough, accurate conversion of film-to-game ever conceived. The combination of a hearty blaster, knotty adventure and that subject matter is a sure-fire winner.

■ When playing as either of the two Jedi, a tap of the main attack button will produce a saber swipe, holding it produces a sustained flurry, then a combination of double-taps and joypad movements produces more effective onslaughts.

# STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3



As well as 34 fighters to choose from, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* has several completely new features and some tweaked existing ones. New game modes include Dramatic Battle, where you and a computer-controlled partner take on a single computer enemy. Funky.

There's more newness, though. After character choice, one must decide on an "ism." These come in three forms: V, X and A, and equate to different fighting styles. Each has good and bad points. One may offer more super moves and skills, but will inflict less damage on your opponent. Another may give you greater power, but take away some finer techniques. It's all down to personal preference.

Possibly the best new touch, however, is the World Tour. Here, you travel the world, dishing out excessive physicality in any country that can offer you an opponent.

The quality of the two-player mode is breathtaking. The battles flow most smoothly, with a fantastically thought-out move-priority system – meaning that when two moves connect simultaneously the result is consistent. This truly intensifies the contest, and only a great deal of practice in the Training mode will make you a master. There is no place for random button pressing in this virtual dojo.

Without question this is a purist's title.

■ There is now a guard meter that wears down each time you block – eventually you are left temporarily unable to block until it refills.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It's playability incarnate

### LOW:

Looks a bit dated

# 09/10

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Arika

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA



**"Chess with knuckledusters."** That's one way of describing a really good bout of *Street Fighter* between two talented players, both of whom are so versed in the moves and the textbook tactics that they end up using psych-outs, fakes, tricks and rash gambles in order to disguise their inevitably predictable style of fighting.

For all its 3D-ness, *SF EX* plays strictly side-on against flat stage backdrops. No sidesteps, no fighting arena – Capcom might just as well have drawn sprites with a ruler. Unambitious, perhaps, but when you see how smooth it looks – and how confusing it could have been – you'll appreciate the necessity.

Really, this game is a bunch of contradictions. It's an entirely 2D game, but in 3D. It's a completely new version of *SF* that plays like a very old one. It's the most fun you could have with *Streetfighting* since *Turbo*, but re-tuned characters mean you really have to put some effort in. And it's an arcade conversion that works better on a home console.

If you already have a *Street Fighter* game in your collection, then you really want to trade it in and get this one instead. And if you've never played a *Street Fighter* game before, come and find out what real fighting is all about.

■ Ken and Ryu are slightly less invulnerable than usual, and if you ever used Jab Dragons to skip through fast fireballs then you'll find the tactic is now practically impossible.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
Will last forever

**LOW:**  
Not that many original bones in its battered body

**08/10**



# STREET SK8ER 2



**The original *Street Sk8er*** was the first dedicated skate title to appear on PlayStation. This time there are more gravity-defying tricks and a Skate Park Editor, too.

The level design is excellent. You can trick off virtually every little ramp and each section has plenty of half-pipe action. What's more, there are skate parks buried in the bowels of the city waiting to be discovered as you get better at the game.

The new Skate Park Editor is a major draw, too. It enables you to slot obstacles into position on a grid, save it on to a Memory Card and race round it in real-time. A wider selection of objects to play with would have improved it, as would the opportunity to create ludicrously high quarter pipes and foolishly deep bowls.

*Street Sk8er* remains great fun to play and is guaranteed to keep you going until your thumbs blister, but there are a couple of irritations. Firstly, the camera angles make it difficult to position yourself while you're in the air, so it's hard to come out of a trick run accurately. Secondly, the trick system isn't as precise as it could be, erring dangerously toward button bashing. Take to the skies, smack as many keys as possible and inevitably you'll whip out a few spins and grabs.

However, *Street Sk8er 2* is the game to move this nascent genre on and prove that skateboarding games are here to stay.

■ Race around in Freeski Mode and you reveal an underworld of trick-intensive sections. In Miami, you slide down into an underground car park, lights flicker on, and a pair of massive half pipes appear. Cue big air, cue huge fun...



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Microcabin

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No


**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
The Skate Park editor is fun

**LOW:**  
It doesn't grab you as much as it should

**08/10**

# STRIDER 2

 **The original *Strider*** appeared in coin-op cabinets, on the Mega Drive, Spectrum and Commodore 64, and was super fun. The sequel may have been a long time coming, but it conjures up the spirit of the original in fine style. As *Strider*, it's your job to do pretty much what you did in the first game: kill everything that moves, conquer bosses... It's pretty mindless stuff, but all the more refreshing for it.

The graphics are a curious mix of old and new: the side-scrolling scenery is polygonal and pleasantly 3D, but the characters are all sprites. It works surprisingly well, however, as the paths you take lead you in and out of the screen. This playing-with-depth effect can make for some impressive perspective changes, and the spritey characters all have a familiar anime feel to them.

It's a good time, make no mistake – all pad-hammering and power-ups, which is top fun. For a while. *Strider 2*'s most serious failing is that it's just too darned short for a full-price title. Admittedly, it's pretty tricky on anything but the easy levels, but if you do take the simple option, you'll have it licked in under an hour. There's little incentive to come back for more either – you can play it through again with another character, but the game itself is no different, and however good *Strider* may have been in its heyday, it's dated and simplistic by today's standards. If you're looking for long-term value-for-money, look elsewhere.

■ *Strider*, the original title, celebrated its 10th birthday in 1999.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:


Will excite retro gamers the world over

### LOW:

The gameplay is severely lacking in essential elements

# 06/10

# BUSTER BROS. COLLECTION

 **Comprised of *Buster Bros.*, *Super Buster Bros.* and *Buster Buddies***, and spanning just six years between 1989 and 1995, *Buster Bros. Collection* is an action puzzle game on a grand scale. The concept is simple: shoot balls that drop from the sky, and then bounce around like mad things. Each time you shoot a ball, it splits into two smaller balls and, yep, shoot those smaller balls and they also split into two – from the original ball, you usually end up having to shoot 16 in total. There's no plot, no discernible overall objective, and initially it seems pretty dull.

But this indifference is rapidly replaced by an addictive urge, which builds as you increase in prowess and move through the screens. Walls appear, making the balls bounce off at new angles, power-ups fall from the sky and the pace of the action builds to heart-stopping rates.

We're speaking here as if all three games were one, and to an extent this is true. The differences between the titles are slight – the latter games use more interesting backdrops and introduce characters for you to play. They also introduce crystals that fall or float as well as the stock, bouncing balls. But, in essence, every level from each of these three games is the same.

This, though, is forgivable because the first game is a classic, and has a formula so simple it would be a sin to change it. Think of this as one long game with over 100 levels and you're laughing.

■ Watch out for the clock power-up in the green ball: it grants you extra time when it's shot.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Hudson Soft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Peculiarly addictive gameplay

### LOW:

What *BBC* has in quirkiness, it lacks in longevity

# 06/10



# SUPERSONIC RACERS



**Essentially this is a full-screen,** viewed-from-behind cartoon racer for up to eight players. Yes, on one PlayStation – multi-taps and joypads permitting. And friends.

*Supersonic Racers* is a huge game with some 33 tracks and a vast range of mechanical fellows to race. It is a game much in the *Micro Machines* mold, the race-around-different-parts-of-the-house affair so popular on the SNES, Mega Drive, Amiga, *et al.* Oh, and *Cannon Fodder* fans will recognize the use of birds to obscure your view in the jungle circuits.

Each character has their own distinctive car and a racing style to suit, though the vehicles always run at the same speed. The “cars” themselves (including airships, motor boats, sleds, spaceships and the rest) are beautifully sculptured, 3D – neat and tiny.

There are 10 worlds in which to race, from Jungle to City, Space to North Pole, Haunted House to North Pole. Oh, and then there’s Wild West, the Deep Sea, Zeppelins (ahem) and Persia. Some of the courses are excellent, others too difficult to negotiate. On a couple of the tracks you won’t have a clue what’s going on, and on others you won’t be able to control the car – the rainy city streets are a nightmare.

However, the reason why *Supersonic Racers* is a worthwhile purchase comes down to good old-fashioned playability. What it lacks in excitement for the lonesome player, it makes up for when you add friends to the equation.

■ The game is instantly accessible – one button to accelerate and one to reverse. Braking becomes merely an abstract concept.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Mindscape

**DEVELOPER:**  
Supersonic Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-8

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The game is instantly addictive

**LOW:**  
Some of the tracks are a bit arduous

# 08/10

# TEKKEN



**Not quite as engaging** in the looks department as its counterpart, *Battle Arena Toshinden*, *Tekken* reserves its finery for the gameplay and vast array of character moves. The texture-mapping on the protagonists isn’t quite so detailed, yet the animation is wonderfully fluid.

To begin, you get eight characters. But then each of the eight characters has their own personal boss (the “mid boss”) and there are two extra bosses you can battle later on if you’re successful.

Each fighter displays different attributes, so while some move like the wind, others are more ponderous. But when the big guys do make contact, you know about it. Each of the joypad’s four main buttons represents a limb – a tremendously progressive feature – and with just a few minutes’ practice you can soon give the opponent the “old one-two.”

As is the way of the world, *Tekken* is more fun with two than one. Not that the lonesome battler isn’t provided for. There are five difficulty levels, including Ultra Hard where the computer opponents instinctively know that you’re thinking about blowing your nose next Easter.

The only reason not to have this game in your collection is because you already own version 2 or 3.

■ To keep playing *Galaga* at the loading screen, each time “Number of hits” appears on the screen press . Hit down 40 ships in the first round and you will automatically proceed to the next level. To improve your chances of achieving this, hold down for rapid fire.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Namco

**DEVELOPER:**  
Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Incredibly fluid fighting

**LOW:**  
Superseded by subsequent *Tekken* releases

# 09/10





# TEKKEN 2



**There can be** no doubt about it, the *Tekken* games rule the 2D beat-'em-up genre. The series has captivated so many gamers that several elite, hardcore tournaments have been set up – nationally and internationally – so experts can fight against each other.

This second game in the series isn't a complete rewrite of the first game, but some heavy tweaking has been administered. Because of considerable light-sourcing improvements, the characters now have a greater visual depth, new movement animations and flawless contact effects that influence how they look when they fight. The application of this lighting technique also ensures the fightscapes are atmospheric and realistic.

The backdrops remain a 2D parallax diorama with texture-mapped 3D floors. They don't look as great as you might expect, but clearly Namco believes exemplary movement of the fighters to be of paramount importance. And with the performance running at 60fps, who's to argue?

All members of the original cast return, armed with new wardrobes and masses of extra moves. All the old favorites, including Michelle, Yoshimitsu, Paul, King *et al*, are present and ready for battle, plus a few new characters who are also available from the outset. Add to this a further three sub-bosses, together with a kangaroo and a lizard (Roger and Alex, respectively) and you've got yourself seven new battlers to thump around with.

As in the original, each fighter has different attributes, some performing lightning-

quick kicks and punches, others slightly heavier in build and able to attack with more devastating effect. Kickboxer Bruce Irvin has a fun mohican and some of the most brutal maneuvers of any beat-'em-up.

Thankfully, the controls, at their most basic level, are easy to grasp: each button on the D-pad corresponds to one of your fighter's limbs. The play modes excel in both quality and quantity, and include options such as Arcade, Time Attack, Vs. and Team Battle.

*Tekken 2* is a masterpiece, even in today's harsher gaming climate. No other fighting game has such realistic characters that move with such fluid ease. No other fighting game has such intuitive gameplay. *Tekken 2* is the finest example of the old gaming cliché: easy to pick up, difficult to master.

If you don't own this game already, you have no excuse.

■ Rehearse your moves in the Practice option (while you can't destroy your adversary, he or she won't hit back, either).

A wonderful inclusion in this mode is the on-screen indicator that tells you what buttons to press to pull off big combos. Some of the maneuvers are horrific, and are often supported by the most chilling sound effects.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

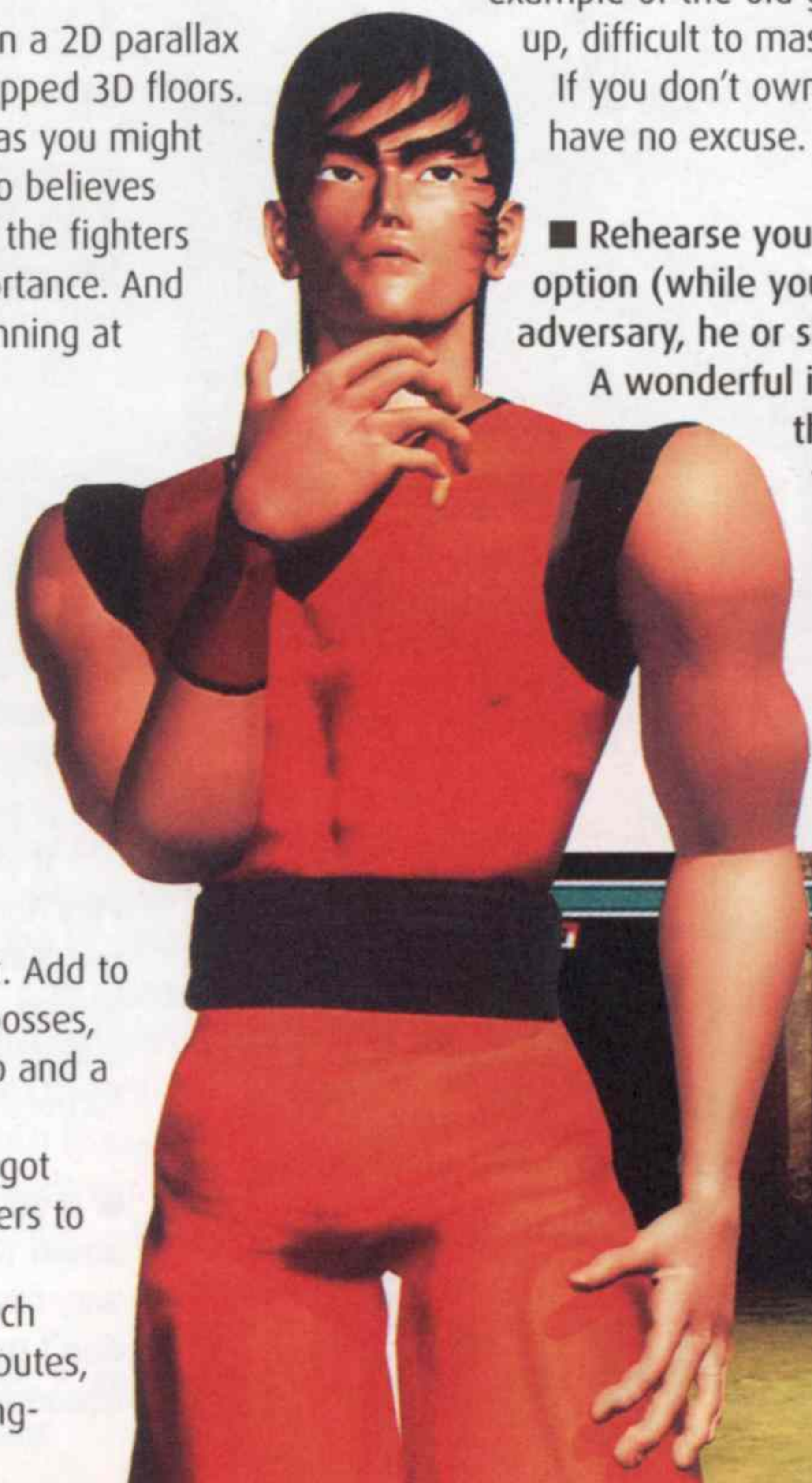
### HIGH:

Arguably the best 3D beat-'em-up ever

### LOW:

The backgrounds, while they may appear to be 3D, are actually still 2D

# 10/10



PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST  
GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC

# TEKKEN 3



**There's no denying** that *Tekken 3* is not as far removed from *Tekken 2* as you may have hoped.

It shares the same basic sheen and angular construction to its fighters. And those backgrounds still aren't proper 3D, just wrap-around 2D backdrops, curved to look like 3D. However, *T3* does look better than *T2*. The fighters have more polygons on board and the costumes are more elaborate, the faces more realistic and the movements even greasier and even more faithful to the martial artists motion-captured for the occasion. Part-time *Tekkeners* may mock but the faithful will spot the improvements in an instant.

As far as gameplay goes, the only major addition is the new sidestep move. Attacks may be dodged, or, more commonly, unprepared foes can be approached from unfamiliar angles and thrashed pretty soundly. Fortunately, this really does add new depth to the game.

The power of *Tekken 3's* polygon engine is evident in that regardless of how the two fighters clash, the impacts, recoil and reactions are gruesomely realistic. The graphics are completely flawless. There's no hint of flicker or uncertainty in the game code.

This is the greatest fighting game ever made and if you don't want to play it to death it's not because of any fault in its design or inception, it's simply because you're too scared and too weak.

■ We recommend placing moves on the shoulder buttons – something made possible by the superbly flexible control assignment options.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

*Tekken 3* is a masterpiece of fisticuffs

**LOW:**

You need time, skill and determination to master this

# 10/10



# TEMPEST X3



**The *Tempest* series of** shoot-'em-ups is legendary – from the original arcade sensation to Jeff Minter's funky-up Atari Jaguar reworking *Tempest 2000*, this unassuming title has gotten deep under the skin of everyone who's ever played it.

The game is almost as simple as *Tetris* – almost, but not quite. You control a streaming yellow chunk of a polygonal shape at one end (the one nearest you) of a 3D wireframe web. These webs take gradually more bizarre forms – from simple cylinders to the odd ear-shaped one. Things come at you from the bottom of the webs – some are simple shapes that take one hit, some break up into smaller shapes, while others actually have a pop at you. Destroy them all, then move on to the next web. The only controls at your disposal are fire, electric death and jump, and you spin around the lip of the web using left and right on the D-pad. And that's essentially that.

If you've discovered the wide, wild world of gaming through the PlayStation alone, you're likely to be disappointed with *Tempest X3*. It's not pumped full of lovingly texture-mapped polygons or plumped end-to-end with FMV sequences. It's certainly not fizzing with adrenaline, unparalleled polish or atmosphere. What it is, however, is a simple, focused injection of solid classic gameplay.

■ If your jump has yet to be enabled and you find the enemies are about to overrun the mouth of the web (or are already spinning their way toward you), simply leave your fella where he is. As long as you don't move into the hordes of rapacious polygons or get shot by oncoming ones, you'll survive to grab more power-ups.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

High Voltage

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Compelling in single-player mode

**LOW:**

No vast 3D environments to explore

# 08/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Acquire

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Strong graphics and a mission editor to add replay value

**LOW:**

Little more than a mission pack for the original

**07 / 10**

# TENCHU 2: BIRTH OF THE ASSASSINS



**Fans of the original** *Tenchu* will be familiar with the form. Cast as Rikimaru or Ayame you face a series of missions that require stealth, cunning and more than a little forethought to complete.

The one thing that you need to try to avoid is open combat with the enemy. This isn't the kind of game where you can carve up endless baddies and expect to come out unscathed. You need to move about stealthily to be a successful hack-'n'-slasher. Do it properly and you'll be treated to one of many grisly little cine-sequences. Needless to say, it's rather bloody – 20 minutes in, you'll feel like your eyeballs have been dunked in red ink.

One of *Tenchu 2*'s greatest strengths is the way it teaches you to use terrain to your advantage. After your first few goes, you'll realize the fruitlessness of outright combat – it's too health-sapping to frequently engage the enemy on his terms. You have to look at the scenery around you as your friend and weapon, which has the great effect of forcing you to be creative with your strategies. Every new terrain type offers totally new challenges.

The only let-down is that it's not so different from the original. There are no new moves to speak of, just more missions. We can't judge it too harshly on this count, though; it's still absorbing, and when a mission throws down the gauntlet by beating you, you've just got to get back in and have another go.

■ *Tenchu 2* mixes ninja practice and the Bushido code of Samurai honor to create an honorable ninja.



# TIME CRISIS



**Bullets are zipping** past your temples, grenades are being lobbed at your nether regions and if the sniper bloke has his way, you'll soon be Human Fricassee. Escape? No chance. Only one thing for it – blast your way out!

Unfortunately instead of a .44 Magnum, you're holding a joypad. Damn it. Welcome to the best shoot-'em-up partnership since Smith & Wesson – *Time Crisis* and Namco's G-Con 45™. Yet another of Namco's sublime arcade games, *Time Crisis* was the Tokyo company's answer to the *Lethal Enforcers/Virtua Cop* trend for lightgun-driven shoot-'em-ups, and this is a great conversion. Those graphics couldn't hope to stand up to the original, but as for gameplay, speed and addictiveness? Well, they've all made the trip PlayStation-ward.

Playing the role of special agent Richard Miller, your job is to rescue the president's daughter from various nutjobs. Speeding through hotels, clock towers and laboratories, three stages means three bosses, but also various thugs, marksmen, ninja warriors and Uzi-totin' lab technicians. As jobs go, it's not too complicated – fill everyone in the vicinity with as much lead as possible – but as the scenarios become more complex, you'll need to find more subtle methods of destruction.

Yes, it's fairly easy, but it's almost illegally addictive and after a hard day's work, it's an ideal corpse-ridden stress-reliever. In a word? Bang!

■ Want more action for your G-Con? Look out for *Time Crisis 2*, *Point Blank 1-3*, *Ghoul Panic*, *Mighty Hits*, *Rescue Shot* and the magnificent *Resident Evil: Survivor*.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Gorgeous graphics, engrossing gameplay

**LOW:**

Not particularly original

**08 / 10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Shooting things with a lightgun is still great entertainment

**LOW:**

Unsurprisingly, brings little new to the genre

09/10

TIME CRISIS: PROJECT TITAN



Playing *Time Crisis: Project Titan* is like watching *Friends*' re-runs. You've seen the like before, it's pretty good fun and, even if you can't remember specific details, it's predictable enough for you to guess what will happen. It may not have Jennifer Aniston, but you get the picture.

If you're familiar with *Time Crisis* you'll be perfectly and comfortably at home with *Project Titan*. Your job is to shoot anything that moves, before it shoots at you. And like previous games in the series, the best way to play is with a lightgun – don't even think about buying this if all you have is a joypad.

The bosses come in all shapes and sizes – from the ship's chef to a Cuban revolutionary. As in most shoot-'em-ups, getting the measure of their movement and attack patterns is the key to taking them down.

Ultimately, *Project Titan* is just another *Time Crisis*, and as such it really doesn't bring anything new to the party. Hardcore G-Con enthusiasts and fans of the originals will find plenty to sing about, but there are

no new weapons or upgrades, and while shooting at the scenery can sometimes garner interesting effects, there's little in the way of interaction. Although it's not easy, you could still beat it in a couple of hours. And where's the two-player mode?

That said, it's an enjoyable romp, and if you already own a lightgun, it is certainly worth buying. Don't buy a lightgun especially for it, though – for the same outlay, you could buy two other blinding games that don't need one.

■ You must prioritize your killing. Always shoot the red guys first – they will deal you the worst damage.



TOBAL NO. 1



Touted as the first fully 3D beat-'em-up, the result falls significantly short of such bold claims. Pressing ↑ and ↓ on the D-pad moves your fighter into and out of the screen – it's a reasonable twist on the norm, but the tradeoff is that there are no diagonal moves and the counter-intuitive jumping feature is exiled to the shoulder buttons. Another relative oddity is the attack system. Instead of punches and kicks, you have three different heights of attack.

Quest mode thrusts you through a series of dungeons, battling the odd denizen and amassing the dreaded Hit Points. Sadly, it doesn't quite come off, but it's an admirable attempt to offer the single player something more.

Despite its unique appearance and feel, *Tobal* ultimately punches below its weight. Its understated looks and pseudo-realism are refreshing at first, but you'll soon be craving more kinetic action, more violence and more contact flashes.

The characters are also a disappointment. None of them really stands out from any of the others and you won't find the kind of fighting culture clashes that enliven most other fighting games. And no projectile attacks. Solid enough, and something of a breath of fresh air, but no *Tekken*-beater.

■ Character designer Akira Toriyami is a Manga legend, with a string of successes in Asia, including *Dragonball Z*. He's worked in videogame design before, helping with Enix's *Dragonquest* series and Square's *Chrono Trigger*. Play as Toriyama Robo – a robotic self-caricature of the artist – if you beat Udan's Dungeon.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**

Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Good dose of originality

**LOW:**

Indistinguishable character moves

08/10



# TOMB RAIDER


PLAYSTATION 2 • DREAMCAST

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

 **Tomb Raider is one** of the best games you'll ever play. It's one of those ground-breaking games that change the way games are made forever.

The first thing to impress you are the graphics. Dark dank caves, secret underground palaces, massive monuments – *Tomb Raider* looks good enough for you to have fun just exploring it.

The second great thing about *Tomb Raider* is the now legendary Lara Croft and the way she moves. She has unlimited freedom to go anywhere on the screen; if you can see it she can get to it. She's completely controllable with a system that uses every button to do something and often requires combinations.

But the third great thing is the skill that has gone into the design of the game. The first few levels are a gentle introduction, so that you learn the motor skills to be completely in control of Lara. Before you know it, you'll be performing the most fantastic moves (there's even a gym to practice in).

This skilled design extends to the puzzles that are at the core of the game. In order to

progress you have to perform certain tasks: levers must be pulled to open secret passages, keys found to unlock doors, monsters shot and blocks moved around to help you reach things.

A strong storyline running through *Tomb Raider*, coupled with sinister music swelling up at just the right moments, makes this experience feel almost like a film at times. Other things

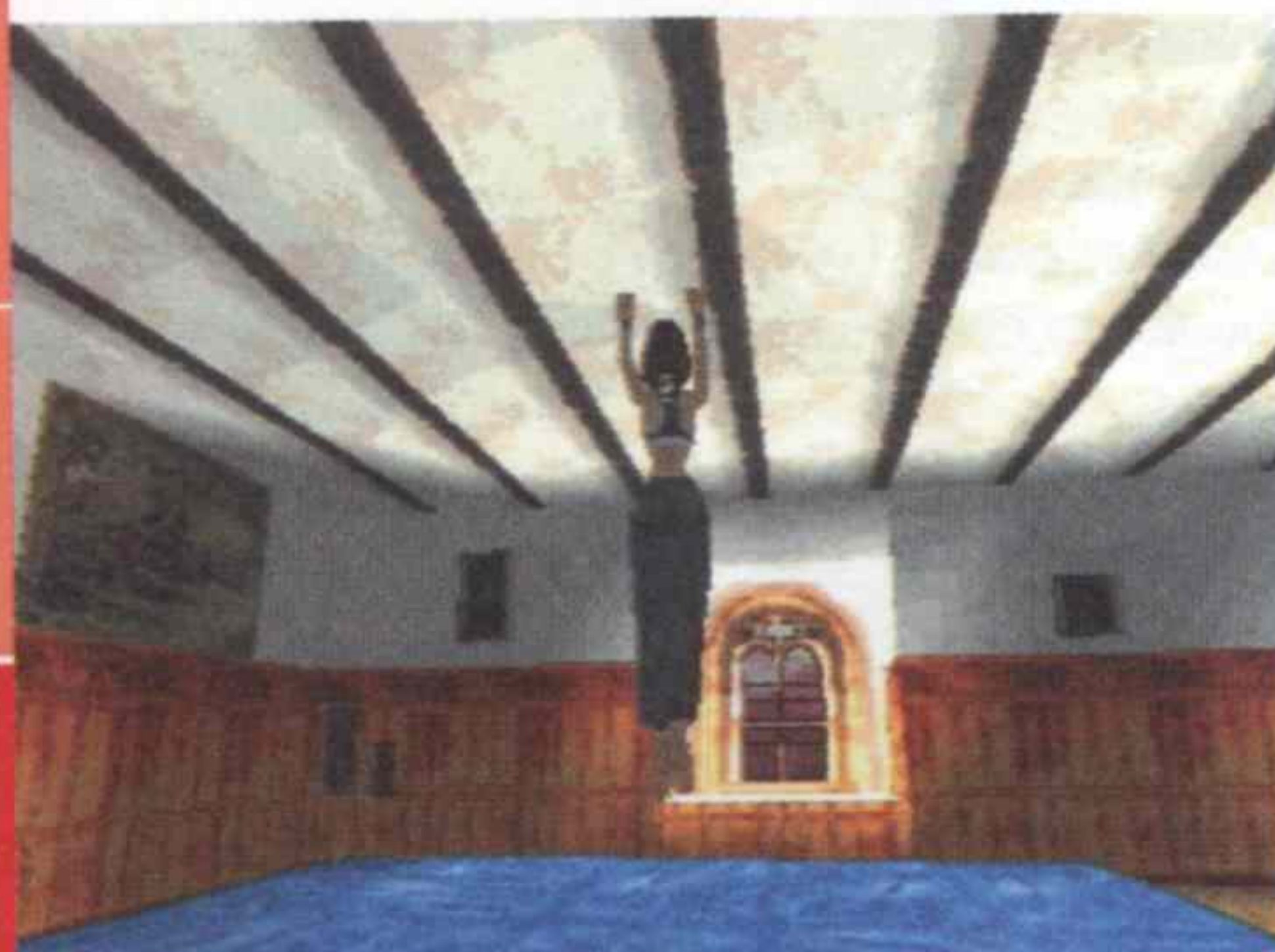
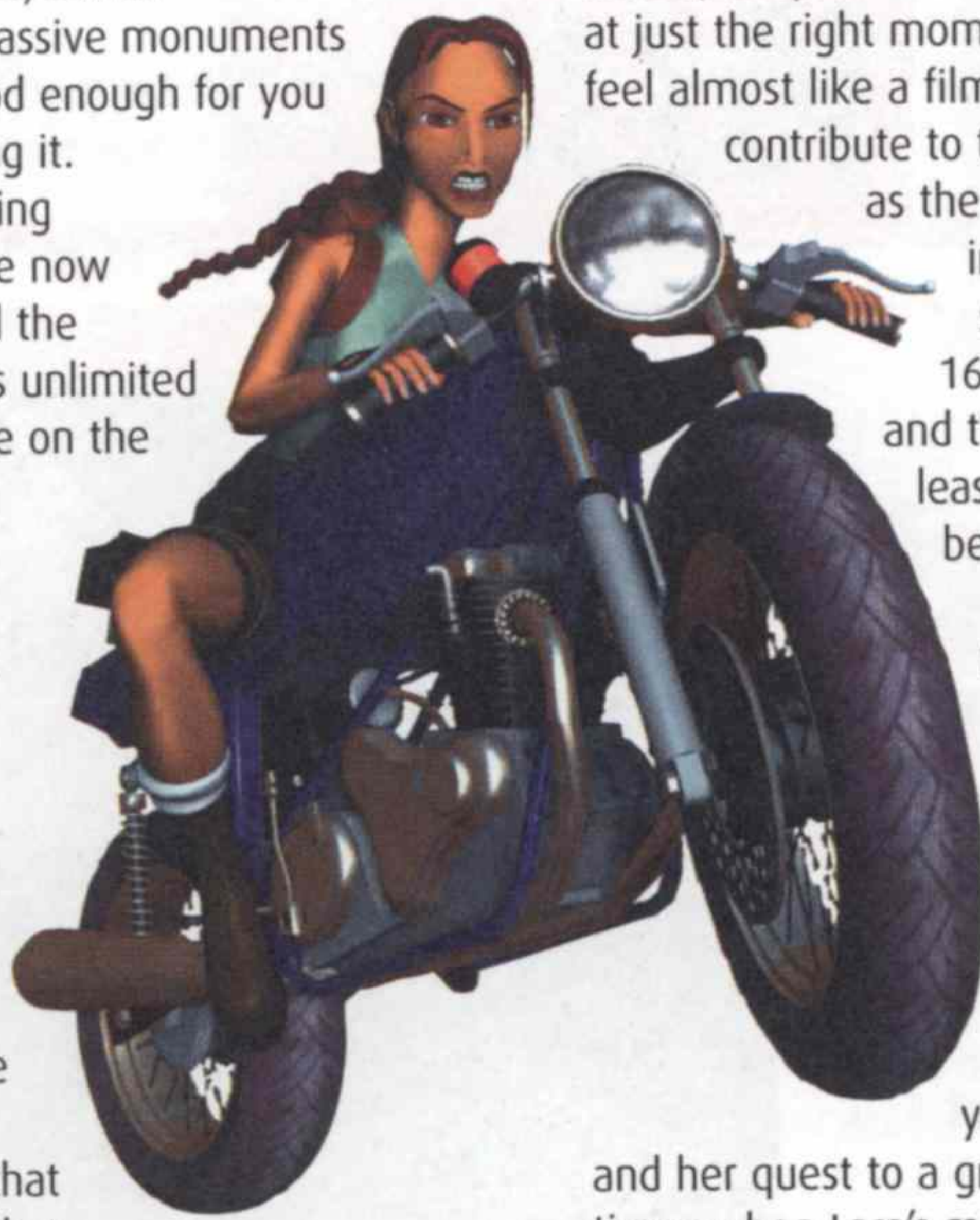
contribute to the atmosphere, too, such as the way Lara furrows her brow in concentration whenever she aims a gun. There are 16 massive levels to explore and they should guarantee at least 100 hours of playing before you are finished.

*Tomb Raider* is one of the most fulfilling gameplaying experiences you'll ever have. Because the backgrounds are so believable, Lara is so controllable and the puzzles never get in the way of the plot, you'll find yourself identifying with Lara

and her quest to a great extent. There will be times when Lara's making long, complicated jumps, and you'll look down and experience very real feelings of vertigo. At other times you'll be in the thick of a fight with lions, dogs, bears, monkeys, dinosaurs and other assorted baddies and you'll suddenly become an adrenaline-charged killing machine.

In short, there is no other game that has ever given you so much of the sensation of being the main character.

■ In the safety of her own private gymnasium you can learn how to make the aristocratic young English heroine perform all of the following moves: back flip, climb, dive, shimmy, side jump, cling, large step, run, jump, jump back, side step and walk. She'll need them all, too.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Core Design

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:


A huge, beautiful-looking game

### LOW:

The camera angles can be troublesome

# 10 / 10

# TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

 **She has appeared** on the cover of style mags and featured in ads for fizzy drinks... she even has her own movie. Once again it's Lara Croft – the face of PlayStation.

*TR Chronicles* is the fifth in the series, and it's split into four separate and distinct mini-adventures linked only by Lara, and not by an epic quest for a collection of ancient artifacts. This has enabled Core to expand Lara's world sideways, in as much as we get to find out a little bit more about her life outside archaeology, and it also means a much greater depth of gameplay. *TRC* does feature a traditional *Tomb Raider* adventure, but it also breaks up into a suspense-laden stealth-'em-up, a head-pounding puzzler and an all-action thriller. Brilliant.

By returning to the (relatively) compact levels of the early games, *TRC* keeps you riveted to the adventure – solve puzzle, crack code, move on to the next one... all with guns, very much blazing.

The standard improvements crop up, with a couple of new moves such as the well-animated tightrope walk and the parallel bar swing, but Core has also managed to graft a scary edge on to the action. On numerous occasions during the game, set-pieces occur that you never expect, which add an extra level of suspense – the crane in the sub dock is one, as is the sudden explosion down the vents of Von Croy's building.

Over the years, there's no doubt the *Tomb Raider* games have fluctuated in quality. *Chronicles* is a hit because it ditches the rambling levels and concentrates on enhancing all the elements that worked in previous games into one stunning videogame.

■ Hold **LB** and press **SELECT** at the main menu to access a list of viewable cut scenes.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Core Design

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:


Generates claustrophobia in all the right places

### LOW:

The level with young Lara and no weapons doesn't work

# 10/10

# TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

 **From the smallest** scorpion to the largest monster, the AI code for this fourth episode has been rewritten. Now, Lara is more likely to be chased by her enemies, rather than just be growled at from afar.

*The Last Revelation* also demands that you learn the individual ways of combating particular foes. A good example of this is how you deal with the wraith-like creatures that fly through walls and floors. Trailing flames, they swoop and weave around Lara, draining energy with each touch. Prolonged contact even sets her on fire. How can she defeat them? With a hasty dive into a nearby pool. The wraiths are none too bright and happily extinguish themselves as they attempt to follow her.

And there's more. *Tomb Raider* fanatics are tiring of endless switch, key or block-moving puzzles. These may be platform-gaming staples but this new *Tomb Raider* episode benefits from more involved, thought-provoking conundrums.

In a way, *The Last Revelation* is the true sequel to the original *Tomb Raider*. It's more an evolution than a genuine, from-the-ground-upward reprogrammed revolution, but – as any Darwin-inspired text will reveal – evolution can be pretty damn progressive.

■ Combine the revolver with a laser sight to accurately shoot a marauding skeleton's skull and then watch as it shatters, and the body wanders around blindly, usually into a nearby pit or trap.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Core Design

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A well-pitched learning curve for novices

### LOW:

Goodbye social life

# 10/10

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER



## With one gnarly kick

*Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* has ollied its way into the sports sim genre and injected it with a new lease of life. From the first level you just know you've bought into something special. After selecting your skater, deck, trucks and wheels, you're transported to the warehouse – a training level where you pick up the basic controls and, hopefully, master some phat moves. There are loads of them, too. Pulling them off successfully earns you points and, as in *Cool Boarders*, ripping combos will get you even higher scores.

One of the best things about *Tony Hawk's* is its steady learning curve. Rocking tricks can be a little daunting at first and there are just so many of them, but after your first few rides you soon settle into the control system. All you really have to worry about is steering your board and hitting the right buttons at the right time. Mis-time your moves or come down on a stray obstacle and you'll hurtle off your board, landing with a bloody crunch on the concrete. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* has realism by the bucket load.

In fact it has it all. This game is so good it warrants extraneous use of words like phat, ill, gonzo, and fly-ass-crazy-fresh-monkey-doo-doo. It's not just a sports sim, it's a way of life.

■ Points are awarded for performing the best combos and for variety, so sticking to one ramp and pulling off the same old move won't curry favor with the judges. Winning your first medal, even if it's only bronze, is the greatest feeling and unlocks even more levels and bonuses.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Neversoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You will believe a man can fly

### LOW:

No course editor

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Spectrum Holobyte

### DEVELOPER:

Spectrum Holobyte

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Good fun in a mindless kind of way

### LOW:

No sign of Mr. Cruise or any of the other *Top Gun* stars

# 06/10

# TOP GUN: FIRE AT WILL



**This is a top blast** – not exactly ground-breaking stuff, but highly entertaining nonetheless. It's all about shooting things in a fairly fast aircraft, which is always fun.

Unfortunately you don't get much of a sense of speed unless you practically skim your undercarriage across the texture-mapped terrain – showing off to your academy instructor, striving to claim the coveted *Top Gun* trophy as your own and singing along to the dodgy *Danger Zone* cover tune.

But whatever you do, don't confuse *Top Gun* with a flight sim. There are so many mathematically incorrect elements to the gameplay that, supposing this was a real F-14, pulling some of the in-game maneuvers would simply see you falling from the sky like a brick. There are abundant features to try out, but frankly a good resistance to motion sickness is all that's imperative to success.


Strip *Top Gun* bare of all the irrelevant surface gloss, and what you've really got is a competent play on the old Sega coin-op *Afterburner* – which, in itself, isn't such a disappointment. Graphically, yes, things could be a little more impressive and some of the enemy aircraft are a little amorphous at times.

It's certainly not a game to be taken too seriously. *Top Gun* is a bit of a lark and, when you consider its competition, we'd say it's well up on the flight roster.

■ Your Radar Intercept Officer is called Merlin and he's about as useful as a chocolate fireguard, shouting things like "Missiles in the air" and "Flares!" It's not like you really need this background banter because things are easy to spot.



# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

 **Experience teaches us** to be wary of sequels. But *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* does a very good job of draining away such weary cynicism.

At first glance not a lot has changed. The mean streets, schools and skate parks are present with all their ramps, rails and obstacles. On closer inspection, though, they turn out to be bigger and more complex. Secret areas are whole levels in themselves, effectively doubling the size of the stage.

In concurrence with this theme of bigger, better, more, is the introduction of money to the gameplay strategy. Earn it through completing tasks, win it by competing in competitions or simply snatch it out of the air. Trade it for fresh decks, new tracks and the ability to perform new tricks. And buying tricks is how *TH2* – almost incredibly – manages to introduce strategy into what is, essentially, an action game. How much you decide to save or spend is down to how good you think you are and how

far you reckon your playing skills alone can make up for any deficiencies in your boarder.

There's also a great two-player mode, offering the chance to trade single tricks, or you can compete in Graffiti mode

where whole ramps, rails and walls can be tagged and only a better trick than your opponent will enable you to steal back a piece of scenery and a point. Some slow-down does occur when you're attempting particularly outlandish tricks, but amazingly, many of the secret areas and extras from the single-player mode are still in here.

If you prefer creation to combos then you can make your own boarder. Pick their tricks and

then earn money to improve their abilities until your Mr. Nobody is the best in the business. There's also the tremendous Park Editor, enabling you to build the skate arena of your dreams.

The one criticism you could level at *Tony Hawk's 2* is that beginners will find it extremely tough and even veterans are likely to get frustrated from time to time. It's a title that demands hours of dedicated practice.

It's just as well that this is one of the most addictive titles ever created, because otherwise only card-carrying masochists would return to receive the kind of punishment *Tony Hawk's 2* is capable of dishing out.

■ Want Officer Dick as a new character? Complete the game for the first time with 100% and he's all yours.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Neversoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The great new bail animations will really make you wince

**LOW:**  
The difficulty curve is a little too steep for the uninitiated

09/10



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Studio 3

**DEVELOPER:**

Takara

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Multiple game modes

**LOW:**

Tired and predictable

**03/10****TOSHINDEN 4**

**With the exception of** a nonsensical plot regarding family values and a quest to redeem a parent-turned-bad, *Toshinden 4* is quite happy to retread the same old ground as its predecessors. The anime-inspired characters are once again dropped into cramped pseudo-3D arenas, wherein a succession of cute females, sword-wielding gentry and OTT villains are paraded for the requisite three-round scraps.

Fighting is an awkward, unrefined experience. Fighters are slow to react to frantic button-pressing, while the ability to piece together attacks is further hampered by the limited number of kicks and offensive moves the game offers.

The aesthetics are as primitive as the gameplay. The characters boast an almost Lego-like chunkiness, which is all the more amazing when the lack of surface detail in the backdrops is examined. Fights take place on grey ramparts, or equally drab locations, with no attempt to stimulate players via background detail or animation. Even the special moves each character can perform are perfunctory and routine. Projectile fireballs and looping leaps in the air fail to impress because they are viewed from afar by an impassive camera system that seems to zoom out of the action when anything happens.

The sense of apathy running through *Toshinden 4* is as shocking as the game is disappointing.

■ Fundamental flaws run through every aspect of the game, with animation, presentation and gameplay all lacking in any sort of care or attention.

**UM JAMMER LAMMY****This sequel to**

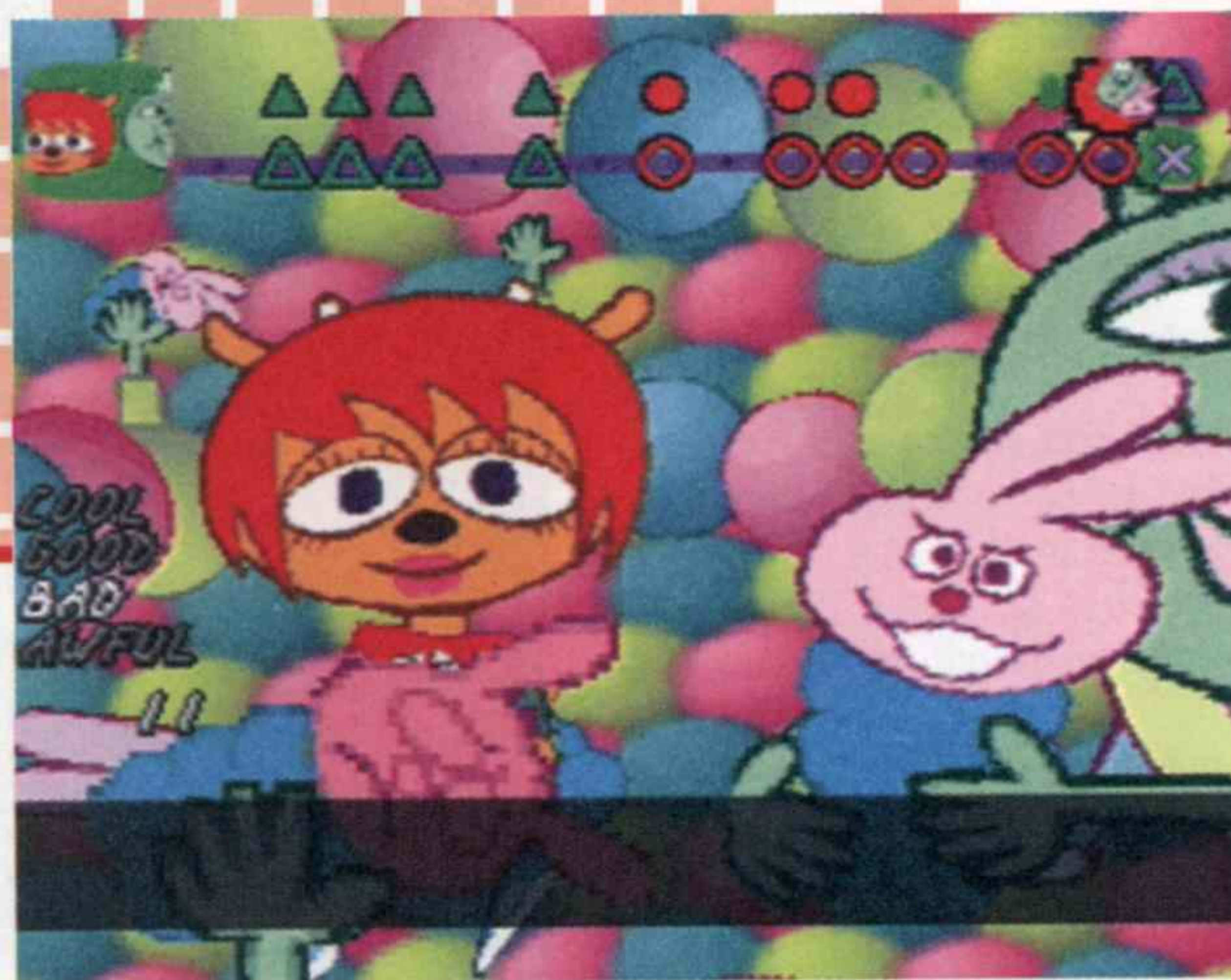
**PaRappa the Rapper** is lunacy. The general game premise remains the same, except this time you play Lammy – a dinky, funky chickolina in Madchester-style jeanery and crop top. Unfortunately she's feeling down. Suffering from self-doubt, she ends up traversing bizarre scenario after bizarre scenario in an effort to locate a guitar and get to a gig on time to perform with her band, Milkcan. Each area she finds herself in entails a musical interlude.

Having ditched the hip-hopisms of *PaRappa*, the title finds itself enveloped in the world of rock. Lammy is a guitarist and, as a consequence, serious finger work is required to keep up with the range of sonics on offer here. Hardcore thrash, ballads, solos – it certainly doesn't lack variety.

The real advance over this concept's first incarnation is the two-player mode. It lends the game quadruple re-play value. Collaborative or Vs. modes are available to the gamer with a friend, but it is the Vs. mode that really inspires virtual string torture in an effort to beat your opponent dead with music.

*Um Jammer Lammy* is a superb party game and unapologetic fun. Okay, it might not take an age to complete, but its polished realization, the two-player mayhem and the ceaselessly inventive bonkersness more than make up for it. This game epitomizes what can be achieved when developers concentrate less on pushing polygons and more on providing effective entertainment.

■ When apparently useless items pop up, press to alter the sound of your axe.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**

SCEI

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Hilarious cartoony graphics

**LOW:**

Very basic gameplay

**08/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Infogrames

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

# NEED FOR SPEED: V-RALLY



**This was PlayStation's first** serious attempt at making in-roads into scrambling territory and circuits abound, cars proliferate and, including weather features, there are some 45 tracks to tour and 11 cars to fling around them.

Each of the cars behaves in a different way. The idea is that they respond as their "real life" counterparts; indeed, all of the cars are officially licensed through manufacturers such as Peugeot, Renault, Mitsubishi and Subaru, and all adhere to the correct specifications. Infogrames even went so far as to acquire the services of rally champ Ari Vatanen to aid in its quest for detail. The result of this is that you'll have to experiment with the cars if you want to progress.

The wealth of circuits is mind-blowing. In the Arcade section, there are four easy courses, six medium and eight difficult. In Championship mode, you race rallies in nine locations across the world with three

stages in each. And you can race the Time Trials on any circuit you like: just wait until you're hurtling along a "Night" stage with nothing but the headlights to guide you.

Top this off with a great two-player mode and you're approaching near perfection. It looks brilliant, the engines sound great, and there are loads of cars and courses. You'll need to play it at length in order to discover its intricacies, but that's no hardship.

■ You can choose between a horizontal and vertical split-screen when you race with two players. The general consensus is that the vertical divide is the best.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Huge lifespan

**LOW:**  
Occasionally tricky gameplay

09/10



# VANDAL-HEARTS



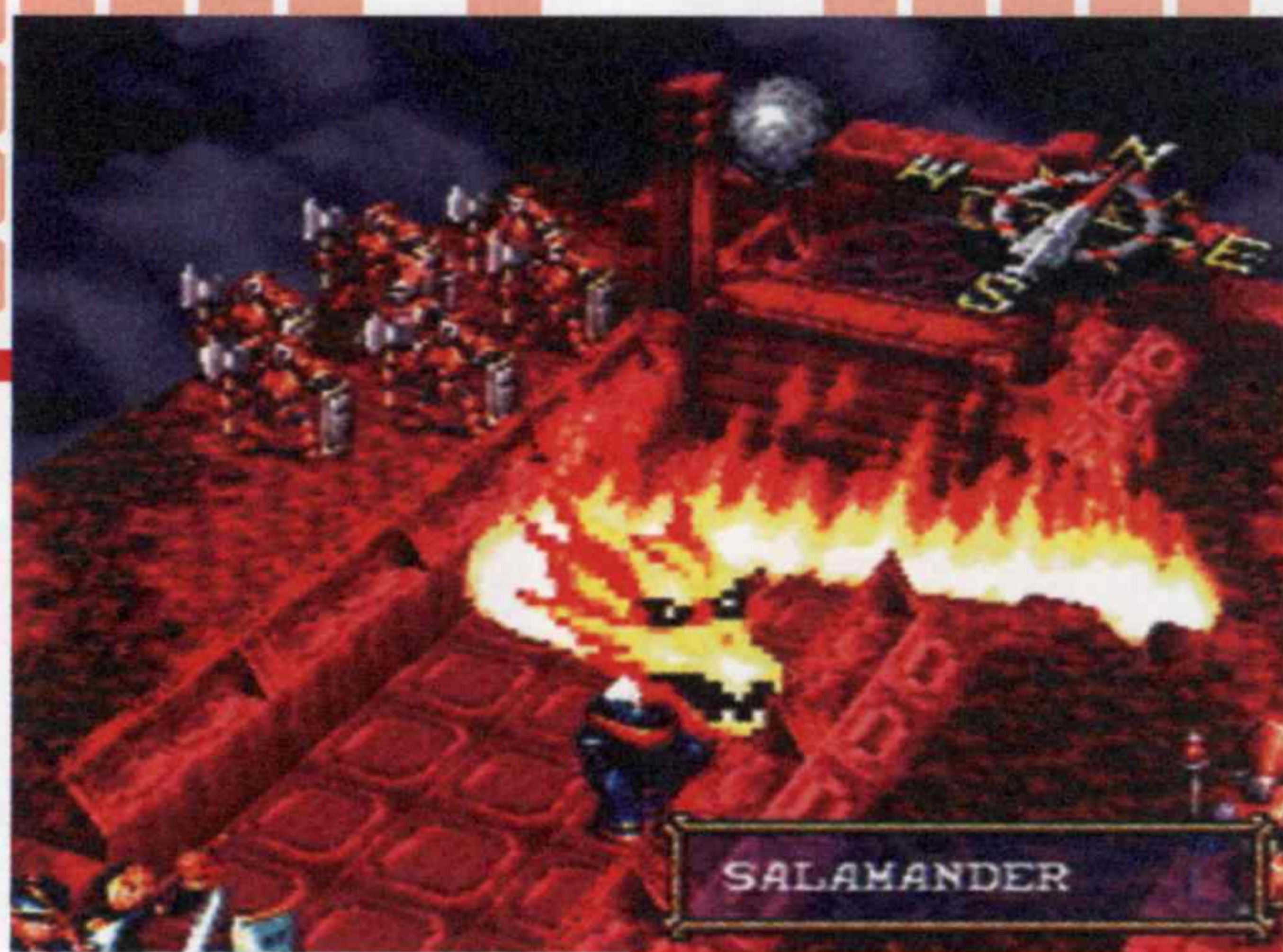
**Remember playing with toy soldiers** as a child?

Well that's exactly what *Vandal-Hearts* is like. Except a thousand times better. The meat of this game consists of a series of small-scale battles, rendered in wonderful 3D. There are fortresses to storm, prisons to escape, evil despots to confront and a wealth of other scenarios.

You play many small battles in which you take it in turns with the PlayStation to move your characters, fire bows, cast spells and hit things until the last one standing is the winner. The tired, old format of endless battles is transformed by the clever use of victory conditions. For example, you may have to fight your way across a bridge that is collapsing behind you. Every turn some more of it disappears, so you have to keep moving forward quickly. Adding another level to these shenanigans is the role-playing element of the game. As your characters fight they accumulate experience points, which make them increasingly powerful.

And it's worth mentioning the graphics. The terrain on which you fight is wonderfully realized, and there are some genuinely great set pieces. Outstanding.

■ Each character has a choice of character paths to make every 10 levels. For instance, a Healer can choose to become either a Monk or a Bishop at the 10th level; Monks are good fighters with some spells and Bishops are great healers who aren't so good in combat.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Konami

**DEVELOPER:**  
Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Presentation, storyline and gameplay are all fantastic

**LOW:**  
Initially disappointing graphics

09/10

# VIB RIBBON



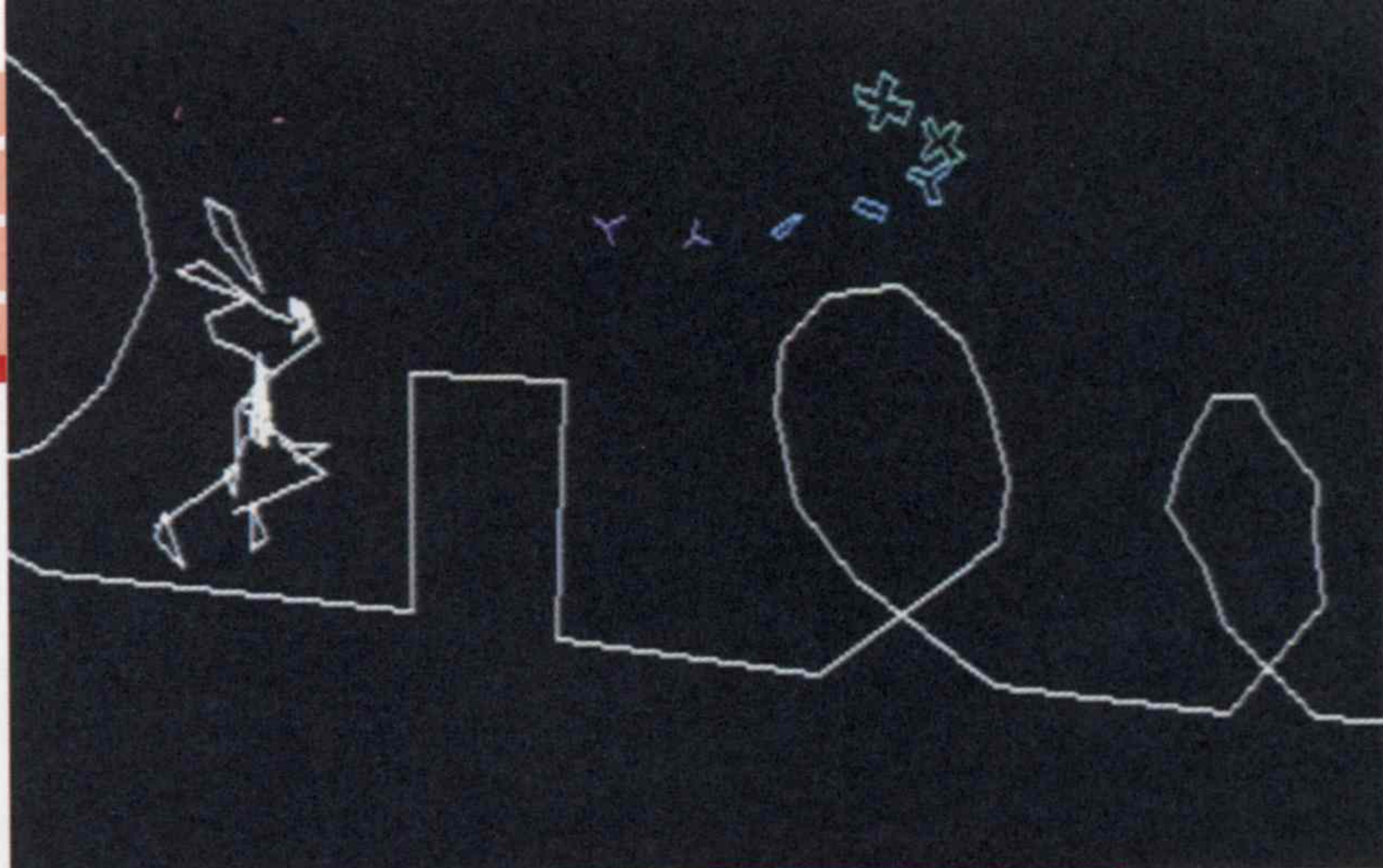
**You are familiar** with those hoop and wire games, where if you hit the hoop against the wire an alarm bell rings? That's pretty much the idea behind *Vib Ribbon*.

Our hero, the lop-eared bunny known as Vibri, embarks on the ultimate magical mystery tour. With nothing in his world but a white wire on a black background, you must guide Vibri past all manner of obstacles that are thrown up on the wire according to the beat of the in-game music. You avoid clanking the wire by smacking buttons - with split-second precision - to make Vibri leap and flip the obstacles. Get it wrong and Vibri devolves from bunny to frog to worm to, erm, death. Get it right and he'll evolve into an angel and float to the heavens. It's very good fun.

Any CD in your collection, from S Club 7 to Smog, can make its contribution to the trials of young Vibri. And if you're not alone when you do this, you'll find the results cause much amusement to the audience. People will stare. *Vib Ribbon* is far too strange to avoid gawking at. Just don't try it after a few drinks; the timing you need to clamber over the blocks doesn't lend itself to beer goggles.

In theory *Vib Ribbon's* lifespan is limited only by your CD collection. In reality it's a pretty lightweight distraction. There's no way you'll be doing a late night sitting on the sofa thinking, "Hmmm, I'm six tracks into *Screamadelica*, with a bit of practice I should be able to finish the album." Like any abstract game of skill, *Vib* is best dealt with in short doses.

■ A real-life Japanese musical duo called Laugh And Beats is responsible for the sounds you get with *Vib Ribbon*.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEE

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nana On Sha

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Cheap, uncomplicated entertainment

**LOW:**  
Prolonged exposure to the game's own cheesy soundtrack could prove torturous

# 07/10

# CONTENDER



**A good boxing game** combines all the appeal of a beat-'em-up with the depth and longevity of a sports sim, and as such *Contender* is a very good boxing game indeed.

Once you have created a gym and saved it to your memory card, you start on your boxer. Assign your fighter a sex, decide on a left- or right-handed puncher and what weight class they should belong to. Next choose their looks by selecting their head, height, weight and shorts color. Finally, name your fighter and set their beginning values in three vital statistics - speed, power and stamina. These work on a slider system, so making the fighter fast means they won't be as strong or fit.

You start off ranked 31 in the world and the aim of the game is to be number one, the world champion. As in real boxing, there are three ways to win - knock out your opponent, knock him or her over three times in a round (a technical knock-out) or win on points.

*Contender* is a superb game. It looks great, and although the controls take some time to get to grips with, once you've mastered them they are quick and responsive. What really makes the game, though, is the fighting itself. You can't charge in, fists flying and win. You have to consider strengths and weaknesses, timing attacks and defenses carefully. In short, you have to box.

Carefully managing your fighters, training them up as they progress is strangely compelling. *Contender* offers a lot of satisfaction.

■ While fighting a bout, press **START** + **SELECT** to change your boxer's attributes.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Victor

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

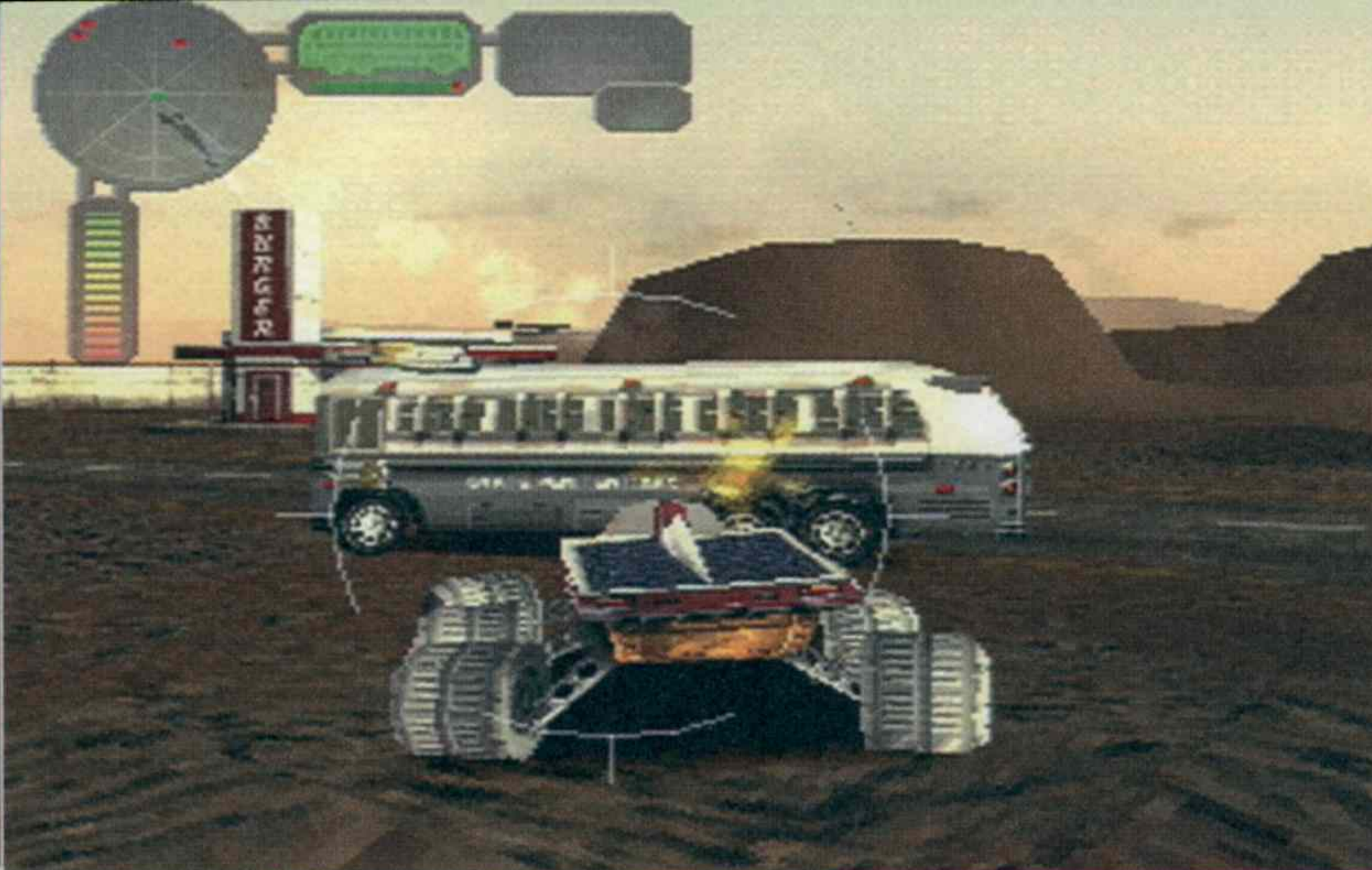
## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A thinking man's beat-'em-up that requires skill to master

**LOW:**  
The sound is weak with poor FX and dull music

# 08/10

PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
PC • NINTENDO 64 • GAME BOY COLOR



## VIGILANTE 8: 2ND OFFENSE

**On paper *Vigilante 8*** is a tremendous idea, throwing cars and guns into one big tire-squealing, bullet-strewn melting pot. It's the nearest thing you can get to *Mad Max* on your PlayStation. Which has got to be A Good Thing. Right?

Almost. While the underlying concept of the game is solid enough, and holds enough potential for some cracking auto-combat thrills, the execution is something of a let-down.

The main problem, as before, is the handling. It's simply far too exaggerated to offer the kind of precise, handbrake-turn-and-fire action that *Vigilante 8* is crying out for. The vehicles' turning circles are huge, and it's almost impossible to point your vehicle in exactly the direction you want, which is unforgivable in the midst of a close-quarters battle. And the overblown physics system – hit a bump and you go flying – is infuriating, to say the least. Explosions also tend to send you miles into the stratosphere.

The selection of weapons is also exactly the same as before, from the bog-standard rockets to the virtually useless mortars. That said, the all-new selection of vehicles (including such delights as a garbage truck and stunt motorcycle with sidecar) are equipped with individual – and potentially devastating – special weapons. And the levels themselves are admirably large, and filled with touches of incidental detail.

But, ultimately, *2nd Offense* is pretty much the same as the previous installment, only with a few more knobs on.

■ There are three new pick-ups that transform your vehicle via skis, propellers and hover jets so that it can handle snow, water and previously inaccessible terrain.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Luxoflux

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

The two-player mode helps to increase longevity

**LOW:**

Ultimately this is repetitious stuff

06/10

## VIRTUAL POOL



What *Virtual Pool* has to offer is a clean, straightforward pool engine that is supported by a wonderful array of options. The keyword for this engine is playability. Every shot that you could attempt on a pool table is possible here. And because the game offers you hassle-free bridging and a perfect action, you'll find that you can pull off shots that you reckon are possible in real life, but which you just don't have the physical skills to perform. And once you've got over the initial learning bump – every button on the joypad has some sort of function that you can use during play – you'll find that *Virtual Pool* becomes nearly as free and easy as stroking balls into holes down at your neighborhood bar.

On top of this superb playability, you're also offered some tantalizing extras. If you're a pool novice, never fear – there are full rules for all the pool variations available in this superb game. There's also a huge library of FMV trick shots that you can watch anytime. Plenty of them are shots that look absolutely impossible, but better still, if you fancy trying them yourself, there's a special Practice mode that sets the table up just as it was in the video and enables you to try and replicate the shot. There's also a *Monty Python*-esque history of pool that's unusually entertaining and fun.

Here's a chance to practice shots without the ridicule of your friends at stake, and without the smoke and hangover-inducing alcohol temptations, to boot.

■ Playing a game or two of *Virtual Pool* could improve your performance in a real pool hall.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

Celeris

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Robustly playable

**LOW:**

No beer-stained baize

08/10

# WCW BACKSTAGE ASSAULT



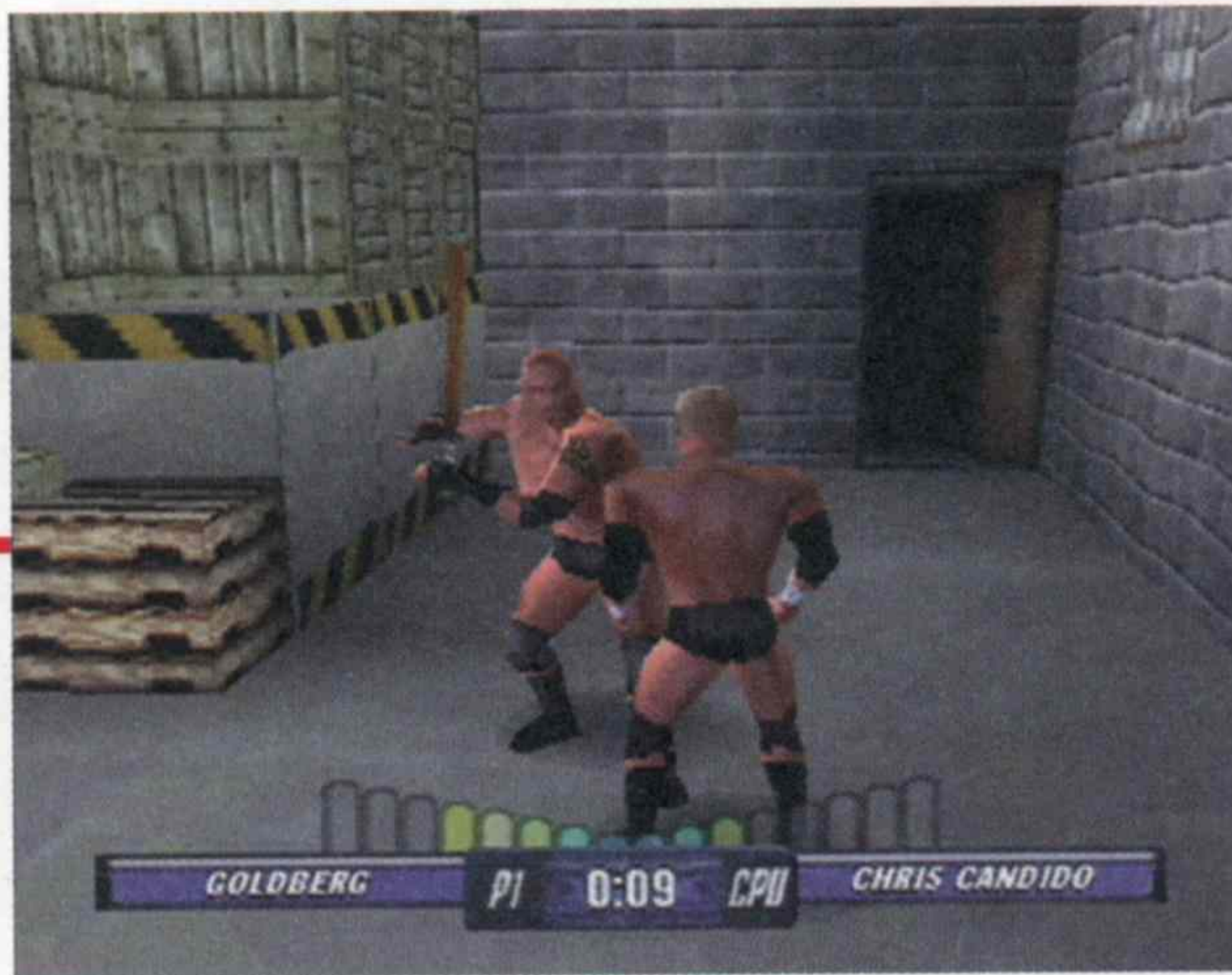
**WCW Backstage Assault** deposits some 50 WCW wrestlers – both the boys and the girls – in a number of lavishly tooled backstage settings. Warehouses, toilets and locker rooms are featured and the wrestlers can move between rooms, unlocking more as they ascend through the rankings in the game's assorted tournament modes.

As you might expect, lacking a ring as it does, *Backstage Assault* is quite different to play compared to other wrestling games. Although the basic action happens much in the same way as its predecessor, here you get to use the environment around you in increasingly brutal fashion. Smashing your opponents in the face with sinks, mirrors and concrete slabs is part and parcel of *Backstage Assault*.

Additional game modes take this ultra-violence to new levels of absurdity: First Blood awards the first player to burst an opponent's veins, while the Human Torch mode – where the winner is the first player to set his opponent on fire – is bound to have the moral majority up in arms.

If all you're looking for is extreme violence, *Backstage Assault* is a laugh riot, but it works less well as a playable game in its own right. Strip away the unique setting and gratuitous drubbings, and many of its predecessor's flaws remain. It's faster, more attractive and less frustrating than *WCW Mayhem*, but you still feel oddly detached from the action. Next to *Smackdown 2*, there's no contest.

■ When fighting in a toilet, pull a urinal off a wall, then stick a ruptured power cable in the resultant puddle to electrocute your opponent.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Kodiak Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The *WCW Mayhem* engine has been improved upon

**LOW:**  
Remove the violence and there's not a lot of gameplay

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
SCEA

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Official license, and the inclusion of Regis Philbin

**LOW:**  
Regis Philbin

# 03/10

# WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? 2ND EDITION



The first *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* game was released for PC at the height of the show's popularity, and became an overnight success based on the license's appeal and a \$19.99 price tag. With the honeymoon phase over, that fact is that however much you might enjoy the quiz show on TV, it translates very poorly indeed to PlayStation.

Taken to PlayStation, the idea of losing from one wrong answer is ludicrous. It's like playing *Metal Gear Solid* with a sliver of health and no ability to continue. The difference between *WWTBAM2* and fun game show videogames, such as *You Don't Know Jack*, is that, in the latter, a player gets to enjoy a full game every time.

*WWTBAM 2nd Edition* includes more than 600 questions, plus the various lifelines and lines of canned prattle from Regis, but nothing compelling. The questions are trivia in its most literal sense, and there's no attempt to make them interesting.

The multiplayer mode involves competing to see who gets to play and then one person playing the entire game. Errmm... that's almost like having only a one-player game.

What makes the television show so compelling is seeing someone else in the hot seat, faced with the knowledge that one wrong answer will destroy their one big chance to become an instant millionaire. The idea of winning one million virtual dollars just doesn't have the same captivating tension.

■ *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 3rd Edition*, with 700 new questions, shipped in May 2001.



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# WING OVER 2



**Rather confused,** *Wing Over 2* can't decide whether to be poker-faced

serious or genial. So it does both, which is about as successful as attempting to perform a stand-up routine at your grandmother's funeral. Take the training section as an example. There are five separate arenas in the course, each with four or five sections, progressing in a relatively realistic order. However, this places the tricky art of landing way too early in the game. Novices are simply not welcome in *Wing Over 2's* world.

The game is structured around flying lessons, which you have to pay for. You do this by flying missions – like finding a wrecked plane – to earn some cash. Think about it: you pay for your flying lessons by flying. Such things just grate with *Wing Over 2's* supposedly serious intentions. To help you through the anal detail of these lessons are giddy cartoon-character instructors who order you around without actually telling you what to do. On top of this, the odd congratulatory message about your skillful turning obscures your compass, hence making continuing the skillful turn increasingly unlikely. And then there's the hideous navigation system, which forces you to go to one menu to pay for your lesson and another menu to fly it... Oh, and the ground graphics that are covered by irritating white lines where the game's not quite working properly. Hnggghh!

In a nutshell? Less a game about planes dog-fighting. More a plain dog...

■ The game takes *Gran Turismo's* format and applies it to airplanes. Without the class.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

JVC

**DEVELOPER:**

Victor Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Pilot any of 26 fighter aircraft with fab weapons

**LOW:**

Too much to do and all of it too fiddly

# 04/10



# X-MEN MUTANT ACADEMY



**You would be forgiven** for assuming *X-Men: Mutant*

*Academy* was part of 20th Century Fox's cinema hype of the film *X-Men*, since they were both released around the same time. The fact is, they had little (except the title) to do with one another.

Developer Paradox has endeavored to give *Mutant Academy* a 3D feel, despite its 2D format, and a couple of decent moves use camera effects to that end. Sadly, the game suffers from old-fashioned and typically 2D problems. For example, should you manage to corner an opponent, they won't be able to perform a lateral roll to escape, which means you are left totally free to pummel them to death. The collision detection is dated, too; you often end up snapping your opponent's head back with blows that land a foot from the target.

In combat generally your range of attack is limited and the advanced special power moves that are so difficult for human players to pull off are often expertly executed by many CPU opponents. This human-specific trickiness is compounded by the CPU opponents' ability to land a string of unblockable blows.

Sadly, the characters in *Mutant Academy* feel less like superheroes and more like cardboard cut-outs. Add a bland Two-Player mode and the fact that the better characters are initially locked, and you've got a game with promise that fails to deliver immediate playability, let alone replay value. It's too difficult by half and deeply frustrating. The looks say *Bloody Roar*, the gameplay says "bloody terrible."

■ Land a string of hits on your opponent then press ⊗ repeatedly to activate special powers.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Paradox

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Attractive 3D-effect graphics

**LOW:**

Inconsistent opposition and a generally unpolished engine

# 05/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1995

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Fantastic handling

**LOW:**

The championship structure limits the longevity

**08/10****WIPEOUT**

**Most early futuristic racers** lack the feel of real cars, usually because they simply spool tracks off CD and then plonk a few big sprites on top of them. Not so *Wipeout*, which not only creates an exhilarating, realistic sensation of speed, but serves impressive graphics for such an early title.

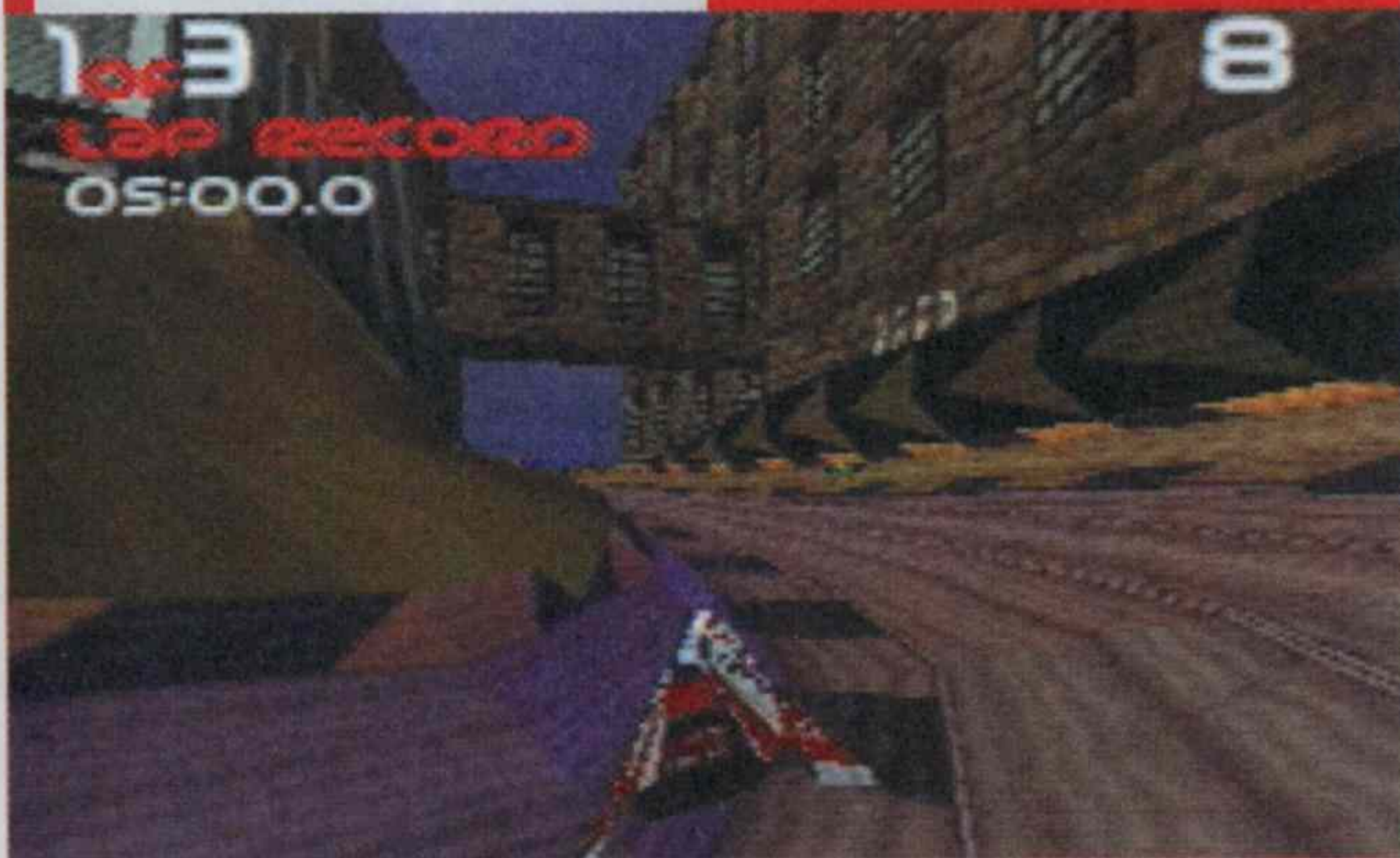
There are six basic tracks, which get progressively harder. When you've completed those, you can start on the six "Rapier-class" tracks - night-time versions of the basic six, which are around twice as fast and noticeably tougher. The course design is wonderfully imaginative, with features like huge drop-offs where you glide through the air before bumping down again.

There's a standard selection of locations, but all are atmospheric and detailed. The monumental scale of the trackside barriers and surrounding scenery not only serves to mask the limited horizon, but also forces you to be constantly alert, adjusting the ships' path and thinking one corner ahead.

A lot of care has been lavished on the handling of the ships. Flying on a cushion of air above the surface of the track, the craft bob convincingly, feeling satisfyingly weighty. Move on to the later courses and the tight corners require deft use of the twin air brakes.

The simplistic championship structure and reliance on track-based power-ups may limit *Wipeout's* lifespan, but it's hard to criticize such a well-produced game.

■ For two-player *Wipeout*, you'll need two copies of the game, two PlayStations and a link-up cable.

**WIPEOUT XL****The Link mode on the original *Wipeout* was a poor affair. Not so here.**

All the new circuits are greater in girth, and if you catch the sides you can scrape along the edge. The power-ups are more varied and, because the courses give you more leeway, you can concentrate on using them to best effect.

*Wipeout's* personality has not been fiddled with. Back for more are the Designers Republic with their dinky iconography. The structure and difficulty progression ensure that the novice won't have much trouble emerging victorious on the two easy courses (no air brakes required), you'll get the measure of the proceeding brace (a gentle squeeze on the brakes now and then), while the Rapier class (slam the anchors on repeatedly) is darned tough. If you complete six courses, you get to race two further circuits. And if you win those you bash through all eight again, only this time the pace ups considerably. Frighteningly. Emerge victorious and you do battle with the secret Phantom team. Particularly good, though, is the fact that even if you couldn't get to grips with the original, you'll find this later version a great deal more accessible.

■ If you keep control of the craft you should be able to negotiate the pits without losing too much time. Care must be taken when activating the Autopilot power-up, though - if you're near the pits, it'll take you in regardless of your condition and when it disengages, you almost always bash into the nearest wall.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Psygnosis

**DEVELOPER:**

Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

A fantastic speedball of a ride and an addictive experience

**LOW:**

Can be frustrating getting to grips with it

**09/10**

# WIPEOUT 3: SPECIAL EDITION



**Loading up *Wipeout 3: Special Edition*** brings to mind the scene in *It's A Wonderful Life* when Jimmy Stewart gets shown what his home town would be like if he had never been born. It's hard not to wonder what the world of PlayStation would be like if *Wipeout* had never been made. Sony would still dominate (the grey box would, of course, still have been a success) but would it be as cool and the games as fast, flash or exciting?

If all this sounds far-fetched then you need a session on *Wipeout 3: Special Edition*. In a director's-cut-meets-triple-bill kind of a way, this final game in the series is all three previous *Wipeouts* sampled and remixed on one CD.



If you've never wiped out before, imagine the rendered chrome of *Gran Turismo* and the slippery realism of *Colin McRae* have been lost in some 21st century lawnmower rights revolution and replaced with hovering, super-fast sleds. You have to pilot your craft through neon rollercoasters packed with jumps, arrows that make you speed up and weapons to fight with. It's fortunate that all this happens at a stupefyingly fast pace, otherwise you'd have time to worry.

You might think that, after three titles, the magic would be in danger of fizzling out. If this worries you, select a classic course like Arridos or Gare D'Europa, switch to the inside view and watch the world blur, and you'll have no such doubts. *Wipeout* will make your eyes sweat and your palms water as you struggle not to scrape the curves, humps and jumps.

*Special Edition* features 16 tracks in all: *Wipeout 3's* eight, plus five from *Wipeout 2097* and three from *Wipeout*. Rather than just leaving the old courses as they were, though, *Wipeout*

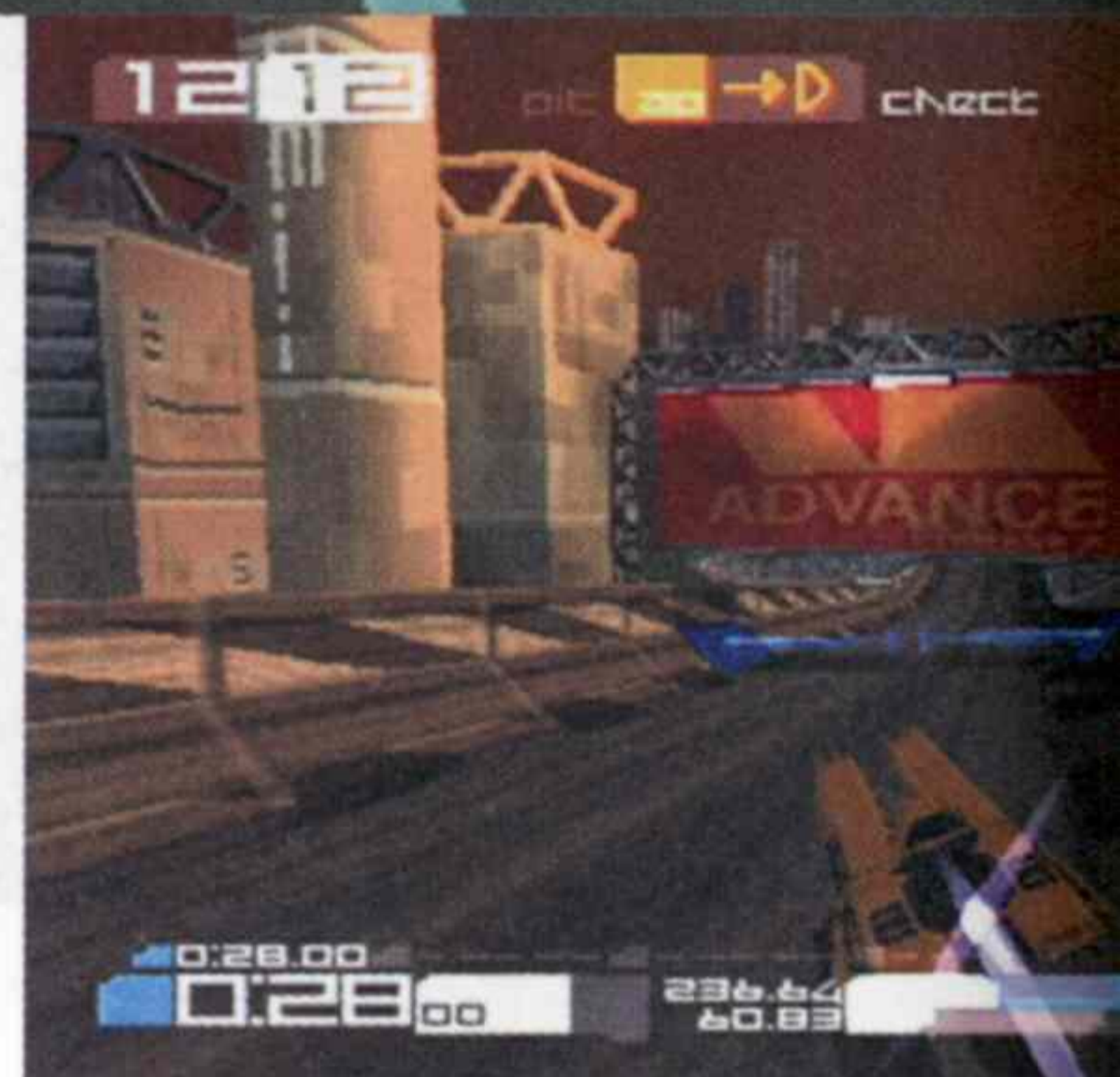


*3's* power-ups and handling have been used to inject more oomph. Novices are spared the original's harsh collisions while old hands can enjoy unleashing a quake down Altima VII.

Despite the return of the Link mode, new cheats and the re-touching of the old tracks (which makes them look as good as you remember them, not as they actually were), it's not quite the *Wipeout* compilation you might expect. The selection screens are dishwasher dull and *The Prodigy*, *The Chemical Brothers* and *Underworld* are missing. However, *Special Edition* still rises above such nit-pickery, because if the *Wipeout* series stands for anything it's this: a

simple idea (speed = fun), coupled with sublime execution, which makes for an unforgettable videogame.

■ Go to the Options menu and select the Game Setup screen. Enter MOONFACE as a default name to access hyperthrust, THE HAIR to unlock all challenges, or CANER W to unlock all prototype tracks.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEE

**DEVELOPER:**  
Psygnosis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The best of all the *Wipeout* games

**LOW:**  
Lack of polish on menu screens, and a below-average soundtrack

09/10



# WORMS



**This could perform** equally well on vastly inferior systems because it's simply a 2D strategy game based around tiny (less than 12 pixels high) invertebrates.

Despite the obvious similarity between *Worms* and *Lemmings*, this game has one crucial difference: these little devils are armed with a deadly array of weapons.

Of course one of the surest methods of survival is destroying the enemy and if that enemy just happens to be a human opponent then survival is all the more sweet. Make no mistake, the appeal of this turn-based game is rooted in that dark part of the human psyche that exults in the crushing of another intellect in a contest of wits and animal cunning.

Up to eight teams of four computer- or human-controlled worms are pitted against each other on a variety of landscapes. Parts of these irregular landscapes can be destroyed by your weapons, pitching worms into a watery grave, or affording new hiding places. Using their subterranean skills, the worms can also burrow their way to relative safety.

Despite sounding technical and looking a bit eight-bit, *Worms* is addictive. However, its appeal is dependent on human participation and you'll tire of the CPU's worms alternating between impossibly good shots and unbelievably stupid mistakes. Still, it's hours of black-hearted fun.

■ Get your hands on banana bombs, sheep and miniguns by pressing **Ⓢ** and **ⓧ** in the Weapons Option screen until they appear. Baa aa!



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Ocean

### DEVELOPER:

Team 17

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Delicious invertebrate-slaughtering fun

### LOW:

Visually very basic

# 07 / 10

# WORMS ARMAGEDDON



**Addressing the concerns** that afflicted the first game (no decent single-player missions, laughable opponent AI and minuscule graphics), Team 17's attempt at a sequel is a revelation.

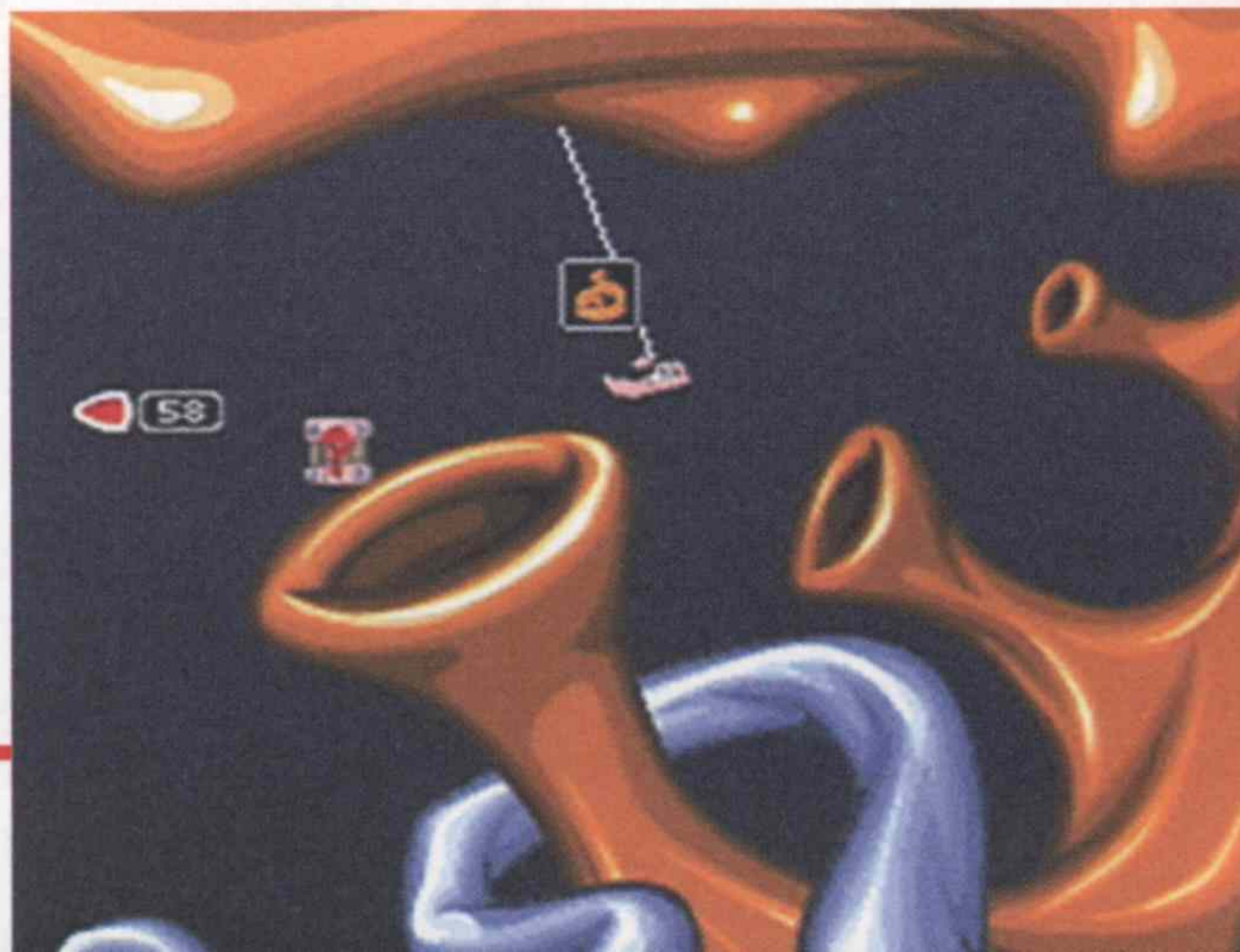
Whereas the original game's remit was severely limited, thanks to a small number of weapons and an even smaller number of game options, *Armageddon* chooses to expand on the idea, instantly broadening its appeal.

A standalone single-player mode is the result and it manages to provide a *bona fide* solo pursuit, much of which is disguised as a series of training missions. Learning to use the new weapons (Flame-thrower, Sheep Launcher, the Skunk, etc.) is a significant part of the challenge and mini tasks teach you the basics and open a myriad of timed missions.

Like the original, *Armageddon's* strength lies in its simple, intuitive interface and cute visuals. This pairing makes the game's fundamentals (select angle of fire, power of shot and any subsequent fleeing tactics), seem more important than the sum of their parts. Taking it in turns to fire homing missiles, bazookas or cluster grenades at your rivals might not sound like the pinnacle of entertainment, but *Armageddon's* long-term appeal belies its primitive appearance.

It may not have evolved much, but there's no denying that *Worms Armageddon* provides a simple but effective gaming formula.

■ Outdoor scenes demand airstrike action, while caverns require stealth.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Team 17

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

There's finally a worthwhile single-player element

### LOW:

Still extremely basic visuals

# 08 / 10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## WU-TANG: SHAOLIN STYLE



**From the arcade atrocity** that was *Journey* (ask your dad) to the *Spice Girls* debacle, Games Based Around a Band have been as entertaining as watching woodlice wrestling.

So what of *Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style*; a beat-'em-up that could just be a cashcow for the Staten Island rappers, who in recent years have launched numerous albums, a clothing range and probably a line of fancy French patisserie for all we know? Well, time for illusions to be splattered, for *Shaolin Style* is that rarest of beasts – A Good Game Based Around A Band. It comes with the *Tekken*-esque trappings of unlockable characters, story mode, secret arenas, combos, practise modes, replay theatres – all artfully embroidered with Wu style. *Shaolin Style* is the Clan on PlayStation; from the exclusive hardcore rap soundtrack to the stylings of their beloved Kung Fu flicks.

*Shaolin Style* is also an ultraviolent four-player game. While not as responsive as the single-player mode, the swirling camera angles do keep up with the action, and once you've got the mass carnage out of your system, strategy is important. Tack on atmospheric graphics, delicious combos and outrageously violent end sequences (only a Parental Lock stops you seeing the GZA lopping his opponent's head off) and *Shaolin Style* sounds the bomb. It is a good-looking, arcade-style beat-'em-up with a macabre sense of humor. Protect ya neck, indeed...

■ Each of the nine Clans has individual combos (Ol' Dirty Bastard's Drunk Man Flying), fighting styles (Ghostface Killa practices Shaolin Monk Grappling) and weapons (swords, chains and sledgehammers).

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Paradox

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Characters have a wealth of moves and combos

**LOW:**

Those of a sensitive disposition should look away

08/10

## WWF SMACKDOWN 2



**Smackdown 2** is a vast improvement on the original in many areas.

There are 50 characters to choose from, each with his or her own signature move, including all the favorites: The Rock, Mankind, Undertaker, Tori, Stephanie McMahon, Hardcore Holly, Grandmaster Sexay, Mr Ass, Buh-Buh Ray Dudley, Scotty Too Hotty... you can even lure managers onto the canvas.

But before you even make it to the ring, there are more backstage rucks than before – in locker rooms, offices, showers and restaurants. Once you do climb through the ropes, you can opt for the cage fight of Hell In a Cell, the Table Match, or the superb Ladder Match. There are casket bouts, too, where you heft unconscious wrestlers around like impromptu bludgeons before dumping them in a coffin.

The gameplay has been speeded up considerably, too, with wrestlers responding to your button presses with commendable swiftness. Still not enough? The Career and Create-a-Wrestler modes make a welcome polished return. And anyone with a taste for TV programming can construct a cable TV pay-per-view event. On top of all this are the multiplayer modes, in which up to four players can fight.

The graphics and sonics are perhaps the only areas where *Smackdown 2* fails to outdo its predecessor. But remember how good the graphics and sounds were in the predecessor? *Smackdown 2* is a spectacular game in its own right, and a quality sequel.

■ *Smackdown 2* broke records in its first week by selling a whopping 150,000 units.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

THQ

**DEVELOPER:**

Yuke's

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

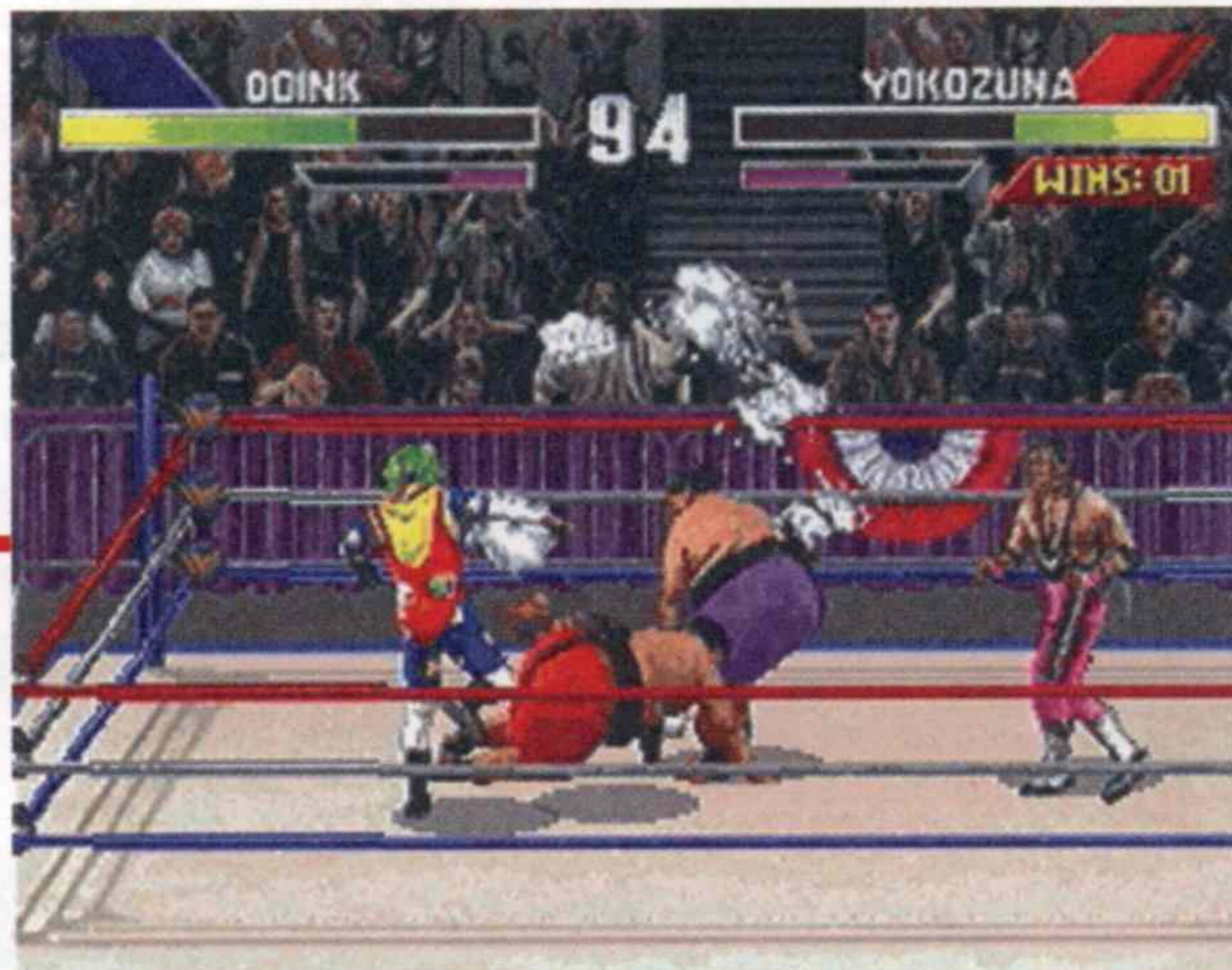
Zillions of play modes, layers of gameplay

**LOW:**

The graphics have seen little improvement since the previous game

09/10

# WWF WRESTLEMANIA



**Based on a Midway coin-op,** PlayStation *WWF Wrestlemania* is not only the first truly entertaining WWF videogame, it also goes further and has often been mentioned as an amusing alternative to the likes of *Mortal Kombat 3*.

Once you, or you and an opponent, have chosen from the eight characters, you can play either in one-off matches, head-to-head or in a cooperative match against other players. Also, of course, there are tournament options – two in this case, in which you can attempt to be the WWF or World Champion respectively. It's all standard stuff, as far as options go, but then there are the moves.

Now here's where the game shifts from being yet another cheesy WWF game to being one of the most entertaining combat games that we've ever played. It's wrestling all right, but the developer has opted to place the emphasis squarely on punches and kicks. On a basic level, this makes the gameplay competitive and very fast moving. Over the top of this hand-to-hand and foot-to-foot framework, a system of button presses and combinations of movements has been added. This enables you to pull off more elaborate kicks and punches, as well as a number of flying maneuvers, leaps, pins, stomps, special moves and devastating combos – more than 40 moves per character in all. And because you're playing with colorful WWF characters, the results are hilarious.

■ Get a full Combo Meter by holding **□** and **△**, then pressing **○**, **×**, **◎** and **▲**.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Williams

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Extraordinarily amusing chuck-about

### LOW:

No staggering options on offer

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Time Warner Interactive

### DEVELOPER:

Zoom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Perseverance is rewarded with some unique fighting action

### LOW:

It is a tad sluggish

# 07/10

# ZERO DIVIDE



**This combines the 3D arena graphics** of the

*Tekken* and *Toshinden* with the clever moves and combinations of the best 2D fighting games, and has a lot of features that its more famous brethren don't. For a start the standard "ring out" move has been replaced with a far more dramatic scene, where the player is left dangling over the edge and has to jump back up before his opponent does him in for good. Of course, you can still be taken out of the ring with a hefty punt – it takes some doing, but the reward is spectacular.

Reward is something that *Zero Divide* has a lot of – including a couple of secret characters, plenty of undocumented moves, plus a hidden shoot-'em-up called *Tiny Phalanx*. The individual special moves aren't as easy to access as they are in something like *Tekken* or *Toshinden* but the more difficult they get the more impressive the result.

While it's an extremely attractive game, it's arguable that the graphics get in the way of the action, offering overly complex characters while failing to provide the jaw-slackening animation that we've come to expect.

■ Nestling deep within *Zero Divide* is a complete conversion of the Japanese SNES shoot-'em-up *Phalanx*. *Tiny Phalanx* is a pretty cool shooter: it's tricky and while not exactly in the same visual league as *Philosoma*, it's well worth a blast. That's just one example of the kind of attention to detail that makes this hidden gem well worth searching out.



# PLAYSTATION CHALLENGES



## COLIN McCRAE

**NO FEAR**  
It's a rallying game, so powerslides are a way of life. However, do you have the skill to make do without

braking at all? Use manual gear selection and change down when cornering, so the engine slows the car. If you're very good, you can win the championship like this.

## DRIVER

**STUNT CAR RACER**  
*Driver* evolved from the auto smash-'em-up *Destruction Derby*, and to show how similar the two

games are under the hood, try this challenge: save a replay in which you total at least 20 innocent motorists. Easily done, provided you can steer clear of the coppers.



## DRIVER 2

**FREE RIDE**  
Driving around Chicago, it's possible to bait the law and never get caught. Head for the freeway when you

attract some heat, and lead the cops into oncoming traffic until they blow up. Then drive over to the stricken officers and make them watch as you hijack a new ride.

## GRAN TURISMO

**WRONG GEAR**  
An alternative way to race against your friends and give some of those old tracks a brand-new feel. At the

start of the race, select reverse gear and race backward. It's a good laugh, since the reduced speed means you can ram each other into the track walls.



## ISS PRO EVOLUTION 2

**OLÉ FOOTBALL**  
Here's a challenge to test your Brazilian-style skills: try keeping possession for an entire match. The computer

can only touch the ball at kick-offs and set plays. You must win the ball back immediately and then pass it so the opposition never gets a sniff.

## METAL GEAR SOLID

**FIST OF FURY**  
Snake's pretty handy with a gun, but how far can he get without a weapon? Try to finish the game using

just Snake's fists (apart from during boss encounters), and for extra kudos, use the neck-break move to dispose of as many soldiers as possible along the way.



## TEKKEN 2

**DOUBLE TROUBLE**  
How about an entirely new way of enjoying two-player *Tekken*? One person takes control of the D-pad

while the other hits the buttons. As long as you agree on the moves to use next, it does work surprisingly well, and there's always the prospect of four-player Versus mode.

## UM JAMMER LAMMY

**AXE GRINDER**  
Fancy learning a new guitar technique in this funky sequel to *PaRappa the Rapper*? Turn the controller upside

down, so you can't see the buttons, and have a go playing like that. It's the gaming equivalent of Jimi Hendrix playing with his axe behind his head.



## WIPEOUT 3

**FRAG FREE**  
Take on the ultimate version of this legendary PlayStation series without using any of the power-ups

you collect during races. Tough but possible. To make it more challenging, enter NOWHEELS as your default name, making trackside collisions more costly.

## WWF SMACKDOWN 2

**PLAY DIRTY**  
Become the villain everyone loves to hate. When your opponent wants to fight, run away from him until

the crowd bays for your blood. Fight dirty, use plenty of taunts, and become the undisputed evil master of the WWF. Much more fun than playing by the rules.



## PLAYSTATION INFO BURST

Unfortunately, when you do the math it soon becomes clear that if you take 1,000 or so videogames, there's no way you can fit half a page per game into a 400-page book, however much you'd like to. Because we wanted to bring you as many games as possible, over the next nine-and-a-half pages you'll find 95 smaller PlayStation reviews, outlining the nature of each game, giving you the background details and – most importantly – the score each game received on its original release.

The fact that they're not stretched across half pages doesn't mean these games are any less important – they're in this section for several reasons. They might not be so easy to get hold of, they might be a sequel to a game covered more extensively in the previous section, they might be a new game, but adding nothing new to the genre that they are part of.

There are some fantastic games listed among this little lot, a great number of which are still available to buy today. Read on, and when you're stuffed with knowledge, head down to your local game store and nab yourself a bargain.



REVIEWED: Jan '01



### ACTION MAN DESTRUCTION X

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Blitz Games

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**Eagle-eyes is back.** He gets down to some bounty hunting – charging around after criminals and using a grappling hook to reel them in for arrest. Action Man himself is more New Man these days as he prefers to detain his foes rather than slaughter them in a crimson haze of M-16 fire. Unfortunately *Destruction X* is far too easy.

REVIEWED: Nov '95

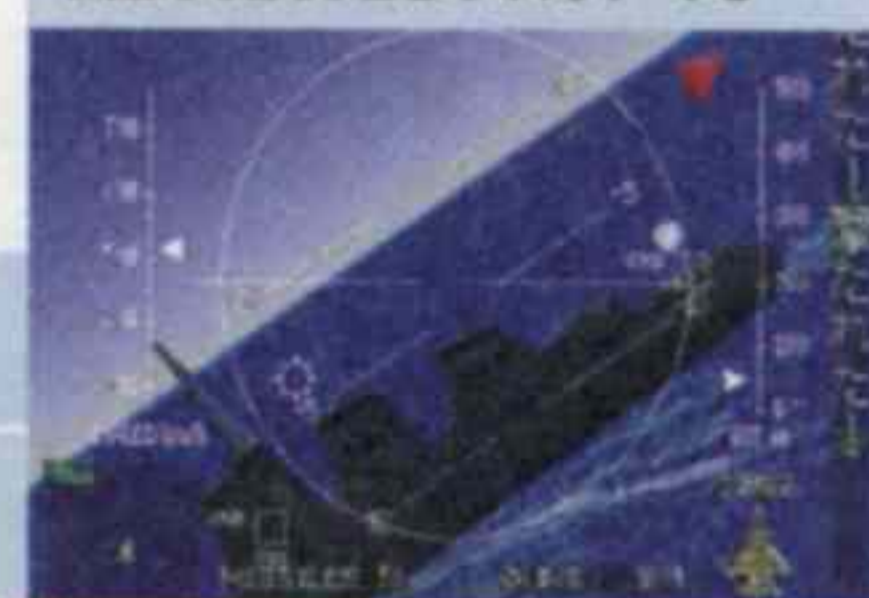
### AIR COMBAT

PUB: SCEE/Namco

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Namco

BUDGET: Yes



**Take 17 missions, three** planes and one mercenary pilot, and you have the bones of this coin-op translation from Namco. Whether you're escorting planes, shooting boats or destroying refineries, there's plenty of action here (set over three skill levels). The graphics look great, but don't help with the woefully short game that's on offer.

VERDICT:

06/10

REVIEWED: Dec '97



### BRAVO AIR RACE

PUB: THQ

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: THQ

BUDGET: Yes

VERDICT:

07/10



**Bravo Air Race is a top-rate** performer. The idea is sound and the execution competent. It'll certainly never trouble the upper echelons of the flight genre but, like the Spitfire itself, its shortcomings are equaled by its solid, workmanlike appearance. Probably isn't worth paying more than this budget price for, though.

### ALEX FERGUSON'S PM 2001

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Anco

BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



**Player Manager 2000's handful** of faults haven't been fixed, but have multiplied into a pack of flaws. There are no European teams to manage, the new set-play designer is torture and there's no viewable youth team, no stadium building and no ticket price-hiking option. Unfortunately AF's *PM2001* is badly let down in the execution.

VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Jan '01



### ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK 2

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: 3DO

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**The action comes thick** and fast and though the arenas aren't graphically amazing, they are varied and solidly constructed. Nil points for originality, but the variety of maneuverable choppers and surreal weaponry appeals. Having the campaign available in both single and co-op modes is a welcome extra. One of the best of the *Army Men* crop.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## ARMY MEN WORLD WAR

PUB: 3DO PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: 3DO BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**02/10**

**The game is tricky** and the missions need to be replayed several times until you hit on the right strategy for victory. But what could be mistaken as the need for acute tactical planning is in fact a lack of AI in the enemy soldiers. And the appalling graphics and an inconsiderate, fumbling control system leave a bad taste.

REVIEWED: Dec '96



## BREAK POINT

PUB: Ocean PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Smart Dog BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Tough and challenging**, *Break Point's* a tennis sim that takes a while to master, but it's worth taking time to work out the different buttons. If you are playing alone you may find the one-player option bores after a while, but you could always buy a multi-tap and invite some friends around for a slice of top tennis action.

## ARMY MEN SARGE'S HEROES

PUB: 3DO PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: 3DO BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Jan '01



**Unfortunately this is unplayable**, badly animated and unengaging. The one-player Campaign mode is frustrating - the range of weapons proves uninspiring and the arenas restrictive. Same for the two-player game - the deathmatches are played in cramped environments, and half the time you can't see your man for the giant crayons in front of you.

VERDICT:  
**02/10**

## BUGS BUNNY AND TAZ TIME BUSTERS

PUB: Infogrames PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Artificial Mind BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Jan '01



**There are four eras** to explore, each with various sub-sections and loads of mini-games. While not the most challenging of titles, this is very playable and there's enough to keep you occupied and amused. The main downfall is the sloppy Look function, which irritates right from the start. Other than that, there's a jolly toonful time to be had.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Jan '96



## ASSAULT RIGS

PUB: SCEA PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Psygnosis BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Takes many seemingly disparate** retro gaming themes (*Tron*, *Battlezone*, *Spindizzy*) and bundles them together to create an innocent-looking 41-level arcade-maze-combat-puzler that's easier to describe than it is to categorize. Collect gems to progress, all the while encountering obstacles designed to prevent you from doing just that.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## BURSTRICK WAKE BOARDING

PUB: Natsume PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Natsume BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

**The problem is that** this game does far too much, telling you what tricks to perform and then pulling them off, leaving you with little input. Aim your rider at a ramp, wait to pull off a Hoopie Glide and... oh, the game's done it. Judge your run over the wake, hit the combo buttons for a 740' Nosegrab and... oh, the game's done it again. Where's the fun?

## BLACK DAWN

PUB: Virgin PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Black Ops Ent BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Dec '96



**Once you ignore the** graphical glitches (you can be merrily shooting away at a tank only to realize it's actually on the other side of a hill and the PlayStation hasn't realized you shouldn't be able to see it), *Black Dawn* turns out to be a superb blast. Helicopter games can often be unwieldy, but this one plays superbly.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## CASPER

PUB: Interplay PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Interplay BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Dec '96



**There's no time limit**, there's nothing to kill and, as Casper is already dead, there's no way of getting him killed. Instead the friendly ghost gaily fritters away eternity looking for presents to give to people. Annoyingly, he can touch certain material objects but not others and the control system seems overly complicated.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: Aug '98



## BLAST RADIUS

PUB: Psygnosis PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Psygnosis BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**Blast Radius plays well.** Movement is smooth, your weapons fire off at a frenetic pace and the bad guys seem to have more than a modicum of intelligence. It's a taxing game that requires skillful maneuvering as well as selfless acts of Samaritanism. Once it has you by the joypad you won't want it to let go.

REVIEWED: Aug '99



## CHESSMASTER II

PUB: Mindscape PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Starsphere Int. BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**If you want to** play chess, there's only one question of any importance. Does the game provide decent opposition? A definite yes. And, even better, it can play really badly, too. Because while this will (probably) be purchased by people who just want an occasional partner, its hidden strength is the aid it offers to beginners.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## CHICKEN RUN

PUB: Eidos PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Blitz Games BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
07/10

**Fun is, of course,** what we're looking for here - and fun is what *Chicken Run* delivers. Not only does the game flow smoothly and move along briskly, full of neat gameplay ideas like the excellent lives system (whereby a crucial object will be taken from your inventory if you're caught), but there's plenty of variety, too.

REVIEWED: Feb '97



## CRUSADER: NO REMORSE

PUB: Origin PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Realtime BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
07/10

**Set in a future** ruled by a tyrannical business conglomerate, you play a resistance fighter in this PC-converted shooter. It's mission-based, and engaging in an old-fashioned "Kill guards, use computer, find password, open safe, switch off force field" kind of a way. Spoiled by dated appearance and unnecessarily tricky controls.

## COLONY WARS III: RED SUN

PUB: Midway PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Psygnosis BUDGET: No

**Few titles offer such** cinematic set-pieces, from assaulting huge well-armed star bases to defending a downed pilot from a planet's hostile lifeforms. Add a fully orchestrated soundtrack and some decent voice acting in the FMV cut sequences, and *Red Sun* is the most exciting *Colony Wars* game, and one of the best space combat games, too.

REVIEWED: Apr '00



VERDICT:  
08/10

## DARKLIGHT CONFLICT

PUB: Electronic Arts PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Rage Software BUDGET: No

**Space combat sim,** in which you play the pilot of an alien attack ship, kidnapped and forced to fly fast and furious alien battles. Ten progressive training missions set you up for longer battles and there's an Arcade mode if you just want a quick blast. This is solid sim action, marred mainly by lengthy loading times.

REVIEWED: Jul '97



VERDICT:  
08/10

REVIEWED: Jan '97



## CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR

PUB: Konami PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Appaloosa BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
04/10

**This is a very frustrating** game. Each level is extremely difficult and satisfaction is to be gained only by working out the exact route, eventually completing it, saving it and moving on. However, given PlayStation loading times, this means you'll spend more time reloading games than playing. A distinct disappointment.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## DIGIMON WORLD

PUB: Bandai PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Bandai BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
07/10

**With its pretty graphics** and exciting battles, this is agreeable enough. But it's a bit odd. It takes its *Tamagotchi* heritage a little too seriously - the feeding, sleeping, pooing side of things swiftly wears thin, and should have been dropped for more controllable battles. The random monster attacks also grow similarly threadbare.

## COURIER CRISIS

PUB: GT PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: New Level Software BUDGET: No

**Run around a huge 3D metropolis** delivering messages to an increasingly harsh time limit. It has groovy mountain bikes! Bone-shattering stunts! Driveby shootings! The chance to hit pedestrians and kick dogs! Sure, it's comprised of over 250 missions, but it's really addictive for the stunts you can pull between drop-offs.

REVIEWED: Dec '97



VERDICT:  
06/10

## DISRUPTOR

PUB: Interplay PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Universal/Insomniac BUDGET: No

**Disruptor's overriding strength** is in its structure. There are very few areas or enemy appearances in this 3D blaster that don't seem to serve a very specific purpose, and escaping unscathed gives you a tremendous feeling of achievement. Even on the regular skill level, the challenge is huge - at times frustratingly so.

REVIEWED: Dec '96



VERDICT:  
08/10

REVIEWED: Feb '96



## CRITICOM

PUB: Vic Tokai PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Kronos BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
07/10

**On the graphics front,** this beat-'em-up is a stunner. Superficially it's also predictable enough, but it offers fresh ideas in the one-player tournament (defeat all eight opponents and you move up a skill level). Of minor irritation are the lack of player-defined controls and the overly well-hidden additional moves.

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## DRAGON VALOR

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
04/10

**Through *Dragon Valor*,** Namco attempted to inject a little pace into the RPG genre by simplifying the game's characters, adding real-time fighting, and hooking it all to a mega workable plot. Unfortunately the game is so simple it compromises the adventure feel. The gameplay is saved only by the fight sequences.

REVIEWED: Jun '97



## EPIDEMIC

**PUB:** SCEA **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Genki **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**Sequel to *Kileak the Blood*** and, essentially, another *Doom* clone, but with the twist that you're manning a personal combat robot. The action itself is straightforward, with robotic enemies to defeat and puzzles to solve, but animations and plot-twists aplenty make for an intriguing, atmospheric story.

REVIEWED: Jun '98



## GHOST IN THE SHELL

**PUB:** THQ **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Exact **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**While the missions are** varied and interesting, the end-of-level guardians make *Ghost in the Shell* frustratingly hard. After you've scraped through the set task, these vast mechanoids simply stomp about and give you a beating. So it's back to do the whole level again, just to have another pop at the baddie.

## EXCALIBUR 2555AD

**PUB:** Sirtech **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Tempest **BUDGET:** Yes

REVIEWED: Mar '97



**An old-fashioned adventure** game at heart. As a young woman you must head through mazes and solve puzzles, all the while encountering characters who have "lost" something and want you to get it back. This go-fetch puzzling is a rather tired formula, but the atmosphere and close-quarters combat save it from obscurity.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## GUNSHIP 2000

**PUB:** Microprose **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Microprose **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jul '96



**This detailed and satisfyingly** complex flight sim has an arcade-style option that enables you to just take off and blast things, but even to play that you'll have to come to terms with radar displays and complex controls. Take time to get to grips with it, though, and *Gunship 2000* will reward you with intriguing and absorbing gameplay.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Apr '01



## FISHERMAN'S BAIT 3

**PUB:** Konami **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Konami **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

**Like the pastime it** portrays, *FB3* is a simple affair. Just cast the line and reel it in, hoping for a bite. Once you get the fish near you, the console takes over, leaving you without the satisfaction of even landing the thing. And that's essentially all the action you'll find in *FB3*. Button-bashing has never been so dull.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



## HOT WHEELS TURBO RACING

**PUB:** Electronic Arts **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Stormfront Studios **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

**The tracks are nothing** new, the usual power-ups are littered around standard circuits and the cars only vary in color. *Hot Wheels* does, however, combine a racer with a trickster. While airborne, the more loops you pull using the directional buttons or analog sticks, the more times you can kick ass turbo-ing around the path.

## RAZOR FREESTYLE SCOOTER

**PUB:** Crave **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Shaba Games **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Apr '01



**Bright and friendly graphics,** satisfying trick animations and just enough difficulty to make the challenges tricky, mean that freestyle scooting has never tasted so good. Sadly *Freestyle Scooter* falls down in two ways. There are too few levels to sustain interest and, unforgivably, you have to take turns in two-player mode.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## JACKIE CHAN'S STUNTMAN

**PUB:** Midway **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Radical Ent. **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jun '00



**All of Jackie Chan's** trademark gags and moves are here, but the game has some serious flaws. Rather than attacking you in numbers, the enemies prefer to form an orderly queue and wait their turn. This, along with some ridiculously lengthy loading times, hinder what would otherwise be an extremely good beat-'em-up-come-platformer.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: May '00



## GAUNTLET LEGENDS

**PUB:** Midway **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Blam **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**The original *Gauntlet*** laid the path for today's perception of videogames as a fun, social thing. *Gauntlet Legends* is a conversion of Atari's 1998 arcade update featuring slightly tweaked characters and, of course, it's now all done with polygons. Sadly the graphics are scrappy, the music's dreadful and the levels often seem willfully confusing.

REVIEWED: Mar '97



## JET MOTO

**PUB:** SCEA **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Singletrac **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**An out-and-out race** game - there's no shooting and there's no upgrading your hoverbike, it's just a matter of getting around 10 challenging and intricate courses as fast as you can. There are 20 bikes available, and they all have very different handling, but unfortunately *Jet Moto* doesn't provide the necessary edge-of-your-seat excitement.



REVIEWED: Jan '99



## KENSEI: SACRED FIST

**PUB:** Konami **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Konami **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

**If Konami had** managed to add an extra layer of gloss to its graphics, a few more spectacular moves and stunning character intros then even *Tekken* might be looking over its steroid-swollen shoulders. As it is, *Kensei* is a game that focuses on addictive gameplay that ensures that – unlike many of its rivals – it's built to last.

REVIEWED: May '97



## LOST VIKINGS 2

**PUB:** Interplay **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Beam **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Control three Vikings**, switching between their individual abilities to solve all manner of puzzles in this new edition of an old SNES game. Constant switching means proceedings are sometimes awkward and there are some tricky situations to overcome, but it's an enjoyable game that's worth picking up if you can find it cheap.

## KICK OFF '97

**PUB:** Maxis **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Anco **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Oct '97



**A quick, efficient sim** with a particularly good training section that picks up points against the big boys. Unfortunately, it has dated badly, and despite the range of real players, leagues and tournaments available, it lacks the depth and quality necessary to really challenge any games in the *ISS* or *FIFA* series.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## MAX POWER RACING

**PUB:** Infogrames **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Eutechnyx **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Feb '99



**Max Power Racing** gets so many important things right that you want it to be more fun to play than this. That it doesn't play well is down to a mountain of small, but significant, flaws (the lack of a best lap and split times in Time Trial mode are just two oversights) that combine to cripple an otherwise competent speed merchant.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: May '99



## KING'S FIELD

**PUB:** ASCII Ent. **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** ASCII Ent. **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**A first-person fantasy RPG**, set on a mysterious island where you are tasked with rescuing the king's magic sword. Despite its basic sound and graphics, this is a vast, monster-stuffed game. It has intuitive controls and easily navigable menu interface and it's filled with great gameplay. A hard game to fault.

REVIEWED: Apr '97



## MECHWARRIOR 2

**PUB:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Activision **BUDGET:** No

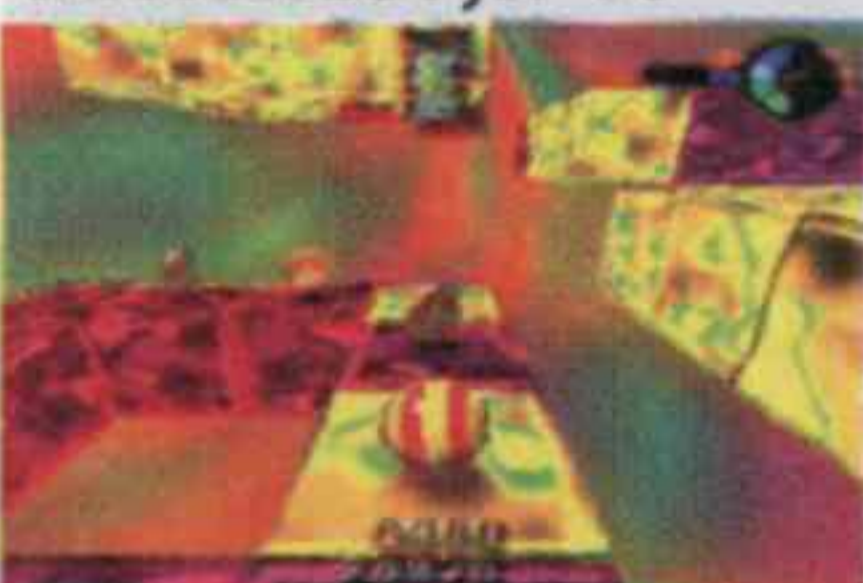
VERDICT:  
**09/10**

**Four laser cannons**. Two 40-bank missile launchers. One grenade launcher. One chain gun. Nearly 50 missions. 100ft-tall robots stomping all over the place. *MechWarrior 2* is well-executed. Rather than a poor conversion, Activision has reworked the original without sacrificing its most enviable qualities.

## ROLLAWAY

**PUB:** Psygnosis **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Game Design **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jul '98



**Rollaway might** not be to everyone's taste. The whole ball-bouncing experience induces vertigo while testing your knowledge of the laws of physics, but, *Rollaway's* beautifully designed rotating puzzles are a joy, offering an original 3D challenge that you'll be striving for weeks to complete.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## MEGAMAN X4

**PUB:** Capcom **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Capcom **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Mar '99



**If you're feeling nostalgic** or want to hone your reflexes, *Megaman X4* – a colorful slab of crisply designed 2D gaming – will be just the ticket. There are secrets to find, flashy new weapons to win each time you beat one of the stunning bosses and the graphics are superb.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Mar '99



## LIVE WIRE!

**PUB:** SCI **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Code Monkeys **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Old-skool gamers** may recognize the concept behind *Live Wire!* Follow the lines around a grid using your little character to complete squares which then fill up with a solid color. *Live Wire!* adds hundreds of new features to the original idea but is let down by quirky controls and the camera angle.

REVIEWED: Jan '98



## MONKEY HERO

**PUB:** Take 2 Interactive **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Blam **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Monkey Hero is a great** game in its own right, and for the most part ideally suited to the lower age group for which it is designed. If you laugh in the face of *Final Fantasy VII*, don't even bother, but if you're new to gaming, or have a younger brother/sister/child to buy a game for, you could do a lot worse than select this.

REVIEWED: Sep '99



## MONSTERSEED

PUB: Sunsoft PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: Sunsoft BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

Unfortunately, except for the monster making, this is a below-average skip through RPG-ville. The translation is, as ever, a little off kilter, leading to more than a few patronizing chuckles. The adventure areas are rambling wastes with little to interact with, and are made confusing due to the lack of a map.

REVIEWED: Xmas '96



## NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 2

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

The *Museum* series is aimed at a fan's market and the tiles (*Xevious*, *Gaplus*, *Super Pac-Man*, *Mappy*, *Grobda*, *Dragon Blaster*) will hold most appeal for people who remember them from the first time they were released. But even fans will admit that the basic gameplay on offer is more suited for a quick blast rather than an all-night session.

## MORTAL KOMBAT SPECIAL FORCES

PUB: Midway PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: Midway BUDGET: No

Aside from complex controls, *Special Forces* isn't the most demanding of games, but the levels are sprawling, and as you progress a certain amount of tactical planning is required to conserve ammo and special-move juice for the bosses. All in all, its playability and fast-paced action are a welcome addition to the *MK* series.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 3

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
 DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

Again, this is a mixed bag – the games are spread between the years 1979 and 1983, the best of the bunch being the earliest example: *Galaxian*. It remains a shooter well worthy of PlayStation conversion. Other highlights include *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Phozon*, but the collection will mainly only tempt the nostalgia freaks.

REVIEWED: Jan '97



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: Dec '97



## MOTO RACER

PUB: Electronic Arts PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: Delphine BUDGET: Yes

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

*Moto Racer* is no simulation. This is pure arcade racing, and it really is serious fun (the only real annoyance being that both players have to reach a checkpoint within the tight time limits to be able to continue). Unfortunately, because of its age, *Moto Racer* inevitably crosses the line in second place behind *Ducati World* (see p42).

REVIEWED: Sep '97



## NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 4

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
 DEV: Namco BUDGET: Yes

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

Yet more nostalgia from the arcade world, including *Pac-World*, *The Genji and the Heke Clans*, *The Return of Ishtar*, *Assault* and *Ordyné* – a fantastic sideways-scrolling shooter and actually the only decent game on the CD. There are better collections of retro games available to buy (see Vol. 1 below, left).

## N20: NITROUS OXIDE

PUB: Fox PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: Gremlin BUDGET: No

*N20* is rattling good fun. It would have benefited from a quicker pace, but rotating through tunnels while blasting insects is exciting in places. With its scores of robotic insects, its weapons and its thumping dance soundtrack, this is just the sort of game to play if you want to let off some steam.

REVIEWED: Aug '98



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 5

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
 DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

The final retro arcade offering from Namco includes *Dragon Spirit*, *Pacmania*, *Metro Racer*, *Baraduke* and, the only game with any merit, *Legend of the Valkyrie*. The pack comes complete with arcade trivia, including pictures of the PCBs, original artwork from the cabinets and some complete storyboards (in Japanese).

REVIEWED: Dec '97



VERDICT:  
**04/10**

REVIEWED: Feb '96



## NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 1

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1-4  
 DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

Seven coin-ops dating from 1980 to 1986. Most are household names by now and all are brutally hard. Check out *Rally X* and its sequel, *New Rally X*. Then there's shoot-'em-up *Galaga*; *Bosconian* and *Toypop* – which quickly get silly; *Pole Position* and *Pac-Man*. If you haven't heard of these, you've bought the wrong book.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



## NASCAR 2000

PUB: EA Sports PLAYERS: 1-2  
 DEV: EA Sports BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

As a driving game, *Nascar 2000's* detail and accuracy is spot on. Unfortunately, the chances of you ever becoming obsessed with this game are small – you'd have to be a real detail freak. Even the crashes are disappointing – cars smash into each other without losing so much as a bolt, while the collision detection is woefully poor.

REVIEWED: Xmas '96



## NBA JAM EXTREME

PUB: Acclaim

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Acclaim

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**



**This is no sim.** It's an out and out arcade romp where the players can jump 30ft in the air and do a triple somersault before producing the most spectacular dunks. The special moves, whooshing flames and enthusiastic commentators ensure that whenever you drop this in your PlayStation you won't fail to have fun.

REVIEWED: Nov '98



## POCKET FIGHTER

PUB: Capcom

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Capcom

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**Like many of its** *Street Fighter* kin from the Capcom fold, *Pocket Fighter* is rather enjoyable and, unusually, it will appeal to young and old alike. Youngsters will enjoy the super-deformed characters and their cartoon-like animation, while crusty old veterans will appreciate the hidden depths of its combat system.

## NBA LIVE 2001

PUB: EA Sports

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: EA Sports

BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**NBA Live 2001** is no great improvement over its predecessors; the new animations, transitions and improved sounds on offer here only add extra layer of icing to an already tasty cake. Another eminently playable effort, with more than enough to satisfy both the casual basketball fan and the more ardent admirer.

## POY POY 2

PUB: Konami

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Konami

BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Feb '99



VERDICT:  
**07/10**



**As an update,** *Poy Poy 2* is disappointing. Its tweaks are minor, and while it is still a decent solid game, it would have benefited from more gameplay development. As a four-player game it's multi-tap erotica. As a lonesome button-bashing pursuit, it's rather less engaging. Still better than the first, though.

REVIEWED: Dec '97



## NHL '98

PUB: EA Sports

PLAYERS: 1-8

DEV: EA Sports

BUDGET: Yes

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



**Although the stats** and player names are well out of date now, *NHL '98* remains a classic sports game. On the ice, it's smooth and realistically fast. Off the ice, there are options and features overloading the screen. It's so good that neither of the sequels ('99 and 2000) could top it. If you want ice hockey, this will keep you satisfied.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## MIKE TYSON BOXING

PUB: Codemasters

PLAYERS: 1-8

DEV: Codemasters

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**



**Mike Tyson Boxing** isn't awful, but it doesn't live up to the high standards usually achieved by Codies. The gameplay lacks the immediacy of *Ready 2 Rumble* and ignores the combination work and licenses of *Knockout Kings*. The result is a title that lacks punch and looks clumsy during play. Disregard the rivals at your peril.

## NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING

PUB: Codemasters

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: UDS

BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



VERDICT:  
**06/10**



**This lacks spectacle.** Because you only ever race a single opponent, you don't get the thrill of working your way through a pack. The only real adrenaline rush in *No Fear Downhill Mountain Bike Racing* is when you charge down an especially steep section. Sadly this is a limited and unimaginative translation of the sport.

## PRO 18 WORLD TOUR GOLF

PUB: Psygnosis

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Intelligent

BUDGET: No

REVIEWED: Jun '99



VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**Ignore a few quirks** (taking a swing at the ball is a tricky operation and putting is incredibly frustrating until you get used to it) and you get a beautifully presented golf game. While it's not quite as approachable as *Everybody's Golf*, if you're looking for a more serious foray into this sport you could do much worse.

REVIEWED: Oct '97



## ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

PUB: GT

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Odd. Inhabitants

BUDGET: Yes

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



**The first game** in the much-lauded *Oddworld* series is a two-dimensional, flick-screen platform game. And it's arguably the best 2D platformer ever. Direct Abe around a giant and grisly food processing plant, saving fellow Mudokens, all the while marveling at the gorgeous graphics, fiendish level design and cunning puzzles.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## RAY CRISIS

PUB: Working Designs

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Taito

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**



**Ray Crisis** is the follow-up to *Ray Storm*. It's a vertically scrolling shooter where you blast everything into space dust. Choose between two modes, select your route and spark up thy mighty ship. Three types of craft each comprises a fire-and-forget targeting system that sits alongside a front-firing cannon. *Ray Crisis* has enough for fans of the genre.

REVIEWED: Jul '97



## RAY TRACERS

**PUB:** THQ **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Taito **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Drive your nitrous-boosted** car around a series of tracks until you find members of the heavily armed Black Kaiser criminal syndicate and force them off the road. Complete six levels of this and then face the top boss. Although easy to begin with, *Ray Tracers* develops a steep learning curve. Unfortunately, though, the whole thing's just too short.

REVIEWED: Apr '00



## SUIKODEN II

**PUB:** Konami **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Konami **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**A strong, fast-moving** plot is *Suikoden II's* primary bait. The initial six hours of play speed along with hardly a break before it opens up into a slightly looser, exploring section. However, the translation - or possibly the original dialogue - isn't always up to scratch. Fans of the original should certainly investigate further, though.

## RUGRATS: STUDIO TOUR

**PUB:** THQ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** N-Space **BUDGET:** No

**There are 15** or so environments and an eclectic mix of playing styles in *Studio Tour*, and not all of them work. While the driving games and the golf game are fairly playable, the platforming levels suffer from all manner of flaws. Scenery blocks your view, or you continually misjudge jumps due to the pseudo-3D graphics.

REVIEWED: Jul '00



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## TEST DRIVE 6

**PUB:** Infogrames **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Pitbull Syndicate **BUDGET:** No

**You'll need increasingly** more powerful vehicles to progress in *Test Drive 6*. To do this, you gamble your winnings on your performance in subsequent races. It's a nice twist. However, the strategy is let down by a poor physics model that has more in common with curling than it does driving cars.

REVIEWED: May '00



VERDICT:  
**04/10**

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## SHEEP

**PUB:** Empire **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Mind's Eye **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Sheep's levels are random** and sprawling, there's no planning ahead and no real sense of progression. The key problem is the lack of a level preview (or at least a pre-play fly-by). Some of the later levels are really tricky. A neatly conceived game with plenty of charm, humor and the occasional nifty touch, but not enough good game design.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## THE BOMBING ISLANDS

**PUB:** Kemco **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Kemco **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**It's a brilliant idea**, and it proves engrossing, but it's not for the dim of brain. Although it starts easy, *The Bombing Islands* wastes little time in upping the ante. Don't be fooled by the disarming appearance, *The Bombing Islands* has a steep difficulty curve. Whether that's a good or a bad thing is up to you.

## THE SIMPSONS WRESTLING

**PUB:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Big Ape **BUDGET:** No

**The initial wave** of "Hey, it's *The Simpsons* and it's funny," soon evaporates when you realize there's very little to do. But despite the lightweight content, *The Simpsons Wrestling* is still worth a look if only for novelty value. It contains enough humor to make it entertaining, and the Vs. mode does pass away a few happy hours.

REVIEWED: Apr '01



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## THE GRINCH

**PUB:** Konami **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Universal Int. **BUDGET:** No

**This is not a licensed** cash-in. *The Grinch* will delight you with its styling, impress you with its technical accomplishment, and make you cackle at its sheer mischievousness. It has intelligent puzzles, amusingly nasty subject matter and excellent animations. There's plenty of charm here, and it offers a challenge for everyone.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Aug '96



## SPACE HULK VENGANCE OF THE BLOOD ANGELS

**PUB:** Electronic Arts **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Rare **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**If you fancy frenetic** action combined with quick thinking and a slightly iffy plot, *Space Hulk* has it all, and more. Some things could be improved - like being able to outfit your Marines yourself rather than relying on the computer to give you the right blend of weapons - but they are balanced by the tactical depth of the game.

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## THE MISADVENTURES OF TRON BONNE

**PUB:** Capcom **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Capcom **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

**Part puzzler**, part RPG, part 3D blaster and utterly mad, *Tron Bonne* is aimed at young gamers. Capcom has concentrated most of its efforts on the battling and adventuring side of things, but, despite throwing up plenty of charming moments, it soon becomes tedious. The only lasting pleasure is offered by the Puzzle mode.

REVIEWED: Feb '00

## THE NEXT TETRIS

**PUB:** Hasbro **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Blue Planet **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

 **The standard Tetris** shapes are now made up of several components. If one component is left dangling in the air, it falls off and drops until it finds something to rest on. This and more new features add extra complexity to an old favorite. If you found the original *Tetris* too repetitive, this might hold the key to your enjoyment.


REVIEWED: Xmas '98



## TOMB RAIDER III

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Core Design **BUDGET:** Yes

VERDICT:  
**10/10**

 **Tomb Raider III** marks the completion of a remarkable trilogy. While it couldn't possibly hope to offer the impact of the first game, it eclipses *TR2* with aplomb. This is not necessarily a title with mass-market appeal - it's a wee bit too difficult for the casual gamer. If you are willing to persevere, though, it's marvelous.


## THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

**PUB:** EA Games **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Black Ops **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

 **There are guns aplenty**, gadgets abound and the film sequences are fun to watch. Unfortunately, thinking doesn't come into it. Simplistic level design and mission objectives require zero logic, while attempts at more elaborate gameplay just bog down the levels. A good first-person shooter, trying to feign sophistication in a smart bow-tie.


## TOMORROW NEVER DIES

**PUB:** Electronic Arts **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Black Ops **BUDGET:** Yes

REVIEWED: Jan '00



VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **Although your missions** are nicely varied - there's usually some objective beyond just shooting stuff - this doesn't disguise the fact that *Tomorrow Never Dies* is ugly, flawed and utterly undeserving of its license. Bond himself is unresponsive and waddles like a demonically possessed arthritic. Still, the soundtrack's cool.


REVIEWED: Apr '98



## THEME HOSPITAL

**PUB:** Electronic Arts **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Bullfrog/Krisalis **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Theme Hospital** was originally a PC game and was designed to be played with a mouse; this makes controlling things with the joypad occasionally a bit tricky. There's a lot to keep track of and it can become overwhelming, but if you want a challenging and enjoyable strategy game (full of horrific afflictions) this is one of the best around.


REVIEWED: Nov '97



## TOTAL DRIVIN'

**PUB:** Ocean **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Eutechnyx **BUDGET:** Yes

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Forty cars in five** classes, each of which races around appropriate tracks. With race cars, Indy cars, buggies, Dakar Rally buggies and rally cars, there are lots of styles to master. Sadly, the background detail is blocky and many of the road textures on the 36 tracks look wrong. Good in patches, but that goodness is spread too thinly.


## THREE LIONS

**PUB:** Take 2 Interactive **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Z-Axis **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jun '98



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Three Lions** is no simple kickaround. It's a game for the dedicated PlayStation-owning soccer fan. It enables you to participate in amazingly complex matches yet, if you lack joypad skills or soccer knowledge, it's unlikely you'll get to appreciate that fact. *Three Lions* is not for faint-hearted or fair-weather soccer supporters.


## TOTAL ECLIPSE

**PUB:** Crystal Dynamics **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crystal Dynamics **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Nov '95



VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **Shoot-'em-up Total Eclipse** flings you across planet surfaces and into enemy-held tunnels on a trail of alien destruction. The gameplay is bland and uninspiring, indeed apart from blissful graphics *Total Eclipse* is shallow, infuriating and predictable. Surface, tunnel, surface, tunnel, surface, tunnel, boss...

REVIEWED: Dec '97



## TOMB RAIDER II

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Core Design **BUDGET:** Yes

VERDICT:  
**10/10**

 **More fantastic than its** predecessor, less playable than the follow-ups. Still, 16 levels of superb gameplay to amuse, bemuse, scare and exhilarate you in a way that few other games can. More moves, more atmosphere, more weapons (M16 combat rifle, harpoon gun...) and the all-new vehicles make this a must-buy Platinum disc.


REVIEWED: Apr '01



## TOY STORY RACER

**PUB:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Traveller's Tales **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Plenty of scope for** 3D trickery, an ideal multi-character set-up and a perfect pick-up-and-play factor for hardcore movie fans who don't normally play games. But, despite the familiarity, *Toy Story Racer* pulls off a delightful balance of insane action and subtle track design. A real contender for *Speed Freaks'* (p89) karting crown.

REVIEWED: Jan '96



## TWISTED METAL

**PUB:** SCEA      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Single Trac      **BUDGET:** Yes

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**The blocky graphics** belie the missile-based mayhem of this "Doom on wheels," where two players skid around in superbly varied vehicles, trying to pick each other off. Ignore the one-player mode, learn the strengths and weaknesses of different motors and prepare for hilarious mismatched duels to the death.

REVIEWED: April '99



## WCW/NWO THUNDER

**PUB:** THQ      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Inland      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**03/10**

**Although it** offers up 64 characters - each with three special moves to accompany the standard repertoire of "regular" moves - a few rounds is all it takes to realize *WCW/NWO Thunder* is one of the slowest, most unenjoyable combat games ever devised. We suggest that even die-hard wrestling completists should stay away.

## ULTIMATE PARODIUS DELUXE

**PUB:** Konami      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Konami      **BUDGET:** No

**Parodius is the culmination** of over 10 years of sideways-scrolling shooters. The disc also includes *Fantastic Journey*, a souped-up version of *Parodius* running in hi-res mode. Both games stick to the well-trod shoot-'em-up path, but feature weird and wonderful graphics. As well as piloting a spaceship, you can fly a pig with wings and a halo...

REVIEWED: Nov '95



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## WILLIAMS ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

**PUB:** Williams      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Digital Eclipse      **BUDGET:** No

**The disc includes** *Sinistar*, *Joust*, *Bubbles*, *Defender*, *Defender II* and the brilliant *Robotron 2084*, as well as some historical info, pictures and interviews to keep you amused. There are one or two games here you'll play only once, so you must decide whether the classic gameplay and nostalgic attraction is worth the asking price.

REVIEWED: June '96



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: July '00



## VAGRANT STORY

**PUB:** Square EA      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Squaresoft      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

**Some people like** RPGs. Others like action games. If you're broad-minded enough to enjoy both, then *Vagrant Story* is a breath of pure oxygen. There are probably too many strategy role-play trappings for most pure action fans, but if you have RPG leanings you will find *Vagrant Story* to be one of the highlights of the PlayStation's catalogue.

REVIEWED: Xmas '96



## X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP

**PUB:** Microprose      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Krisalis      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**If you are familiar** with the first *X-Com* on the PlayStation you'll be able to play the sequel without even opening the manual. There are some changes for the better - missions now take place on dry land and under water and, thankfully, the action is quicker. This classic game of strategy could keep you amused for weeks.

## VEGAS CASINO

**PUB:** Midas      **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Coconuts      **BUDGET:** No

**All the old** faithfuls are here including roulette, black jack, the pointless slot machine and... er... video poker (a simulation of a machine, which itself simulates a game of poker). Find four people and the roulette can be a laugh. The card games work less well, and the slot machines only work well in single-player mode.

REVIEWED: Feb '01



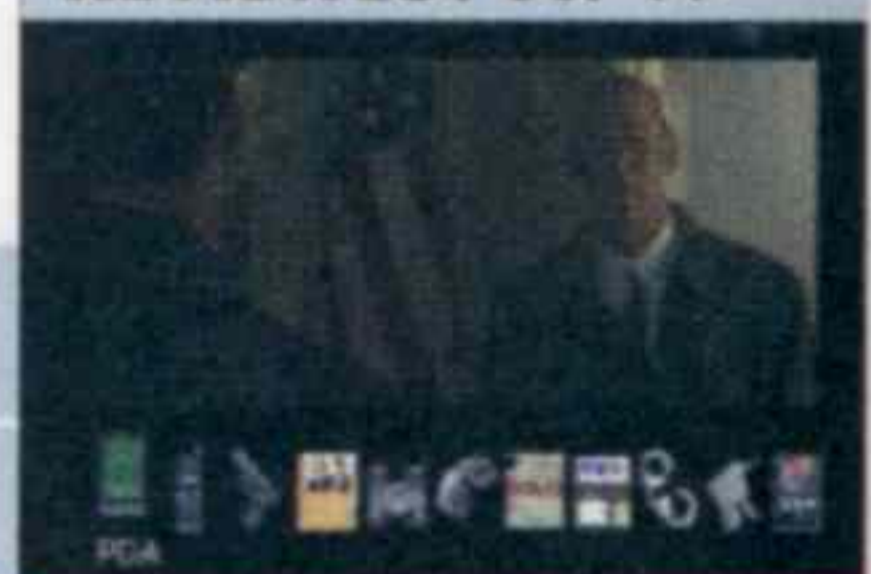
VERDICT:  
**03/10**

## THE X-FILES

**PUB:** Fox Interactive      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Hyperbole      **BUDGET:** Yes

**The fact that Mulder and Scully** only pop up in person on the fourth disc gives sound indications of this game's quality. There are a handful of *Virtua Cop*-style shoot-outs to keep you from catalepsy, but ultimately the good stuff is overshadowed by the mountains of non-interaction that dominate the gameplay.

REVIEWED: Oct '99



VERDICT:  
**03/10**

REVIEWED: April '98



## WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY '98

**PUB:** GT      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Atari/Creations      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

**With its distinctly** arcadey approach, *Wayne Gretzky* eschews the traditional sim feel of other hockey titles. Its gameplay is fast and accessible, favoring speed and simplicity over depth and realism. Ultimately, *Gretzky's* gameplay lacks balance, and it can hardly rely on its substandard visuals to charm would-be buyers.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



## XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

**PUB:** Electronic Arts      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Universal      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

**In Xena, it's mostly** a case of stumbling along, waiting for the next soldier to attack and repeatedly hammering the Sword button. The platform elements are also pretty shaky - positioning Xena to face in the right direction is tiresome enough, but dare to misjudge a jump and you're sent right back to the beginning.

# PLAYSTATION CHALLENGES



## APE ESCAPE

### CARELESS MONKEYS

Catching monkeys with the aid of the RC Car isn't too hard, so if you're a real expert at the game you might

want to try netting them *au naturel*. Cleanse every level of those hairy critters using only the Slingback Shooter and Flash Bombs. It's definitely possible.

## FINAL FANTASY IX

### HOW FAST?

As you probably know, you can get Excalibur by giving the Magic Finger item to the old man at Dargelo.

But there's an even better sword waiting behind the right-hand pillar after you beat Hades. The catch is you have to make it that far in under 12 hours to get it!



## HARVEST MOON

### DOGGONE

You're stuck with that dog for the duration, so even if you're a cat person you'll have to put up with its whining

and barking. Unless you dump it in a distant corner of the field and block it in using rocks. Problem solved – say goodbye to canine irritation.

## INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD 2

### DO THE STOMP

If you own one of those funky mats used with dancing games, *Track & Field* can take on a whole new

dimension. You won't break any records by stomping through the 100m sprint, but it makes a hilarious multiplayer party game.



## POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

### DEPOPULATED

Have you tried playing without using a certain class of character? The simplest one to ignore is the basic Spy,

as you rarely need to use them anyway, but for a real challenge try fighting without Warriors. You'll need to build up a huge population of Braves to do this.

## RESIDENT EVIL 2

### HOPALONG

Get yourself injured during one of the early zombie encounters, and see how far you can drag your wounded

body before you have to use a healing spray or other means of recovering health. The double handicap of slow movement and low energy makes it extra tough.



## TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

### SMASH AND GRAB

Go to the first Warehouse level to try this challenge. What you have to do is hit every breakable object as

quickly as possible. That means the pile of boxes and every pane of glass you can reach. Anything less than 45 seconds is an impressive result.

## VIB RIBBON

### TUNED IN

Most songs generate courses that are simply impossible to complete. Try *Under the Bridge* (Red Hot

Chili Peppers), *Millennium* (Robbie Williams), *Purple Rain* (Prince) or just about any slowish country music for some more playable courses.



## WILLIAMS ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

### HARDCORE RETRO

Load up *Defender* and wipe out all the defenseless humans, then see if you can survive the subsequent journey into mutant-infested hyperspace. The PlayStation controller makes this a slightly easier proposition than it was in the arcades, but it's still relatively tough.



## WORMS ARMAGEDDON

### ARMOR LITE

To ensure a fair and competitive multiplayer game, agree to ban the more ludicrous "super" weapons, along

with things like jet packs and homing missiles. The more you rely on guns, grenades and the mighty flamethrower, the better your *Worm-ing* skills will become.



# COMING SOON...

JUST BECAUSE THERE'S A NEW KID ON THE BLOCK, THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S ALL OVER FOR PSONE. CHECK OUT THESE BEAUTIES...

**T**he PlayStation may be the grand 'ol Daddy of consoles these days, but there's plenty of life in the old dog yet. Fact is that PlayStation is the most popular console of all time, has the greatest choice of games and still maintains the loyalty of the biggest number of fans. That means leading game

publishers are still falling over themselves to sort out PlayStation owners with quality titles this coming Christmas.

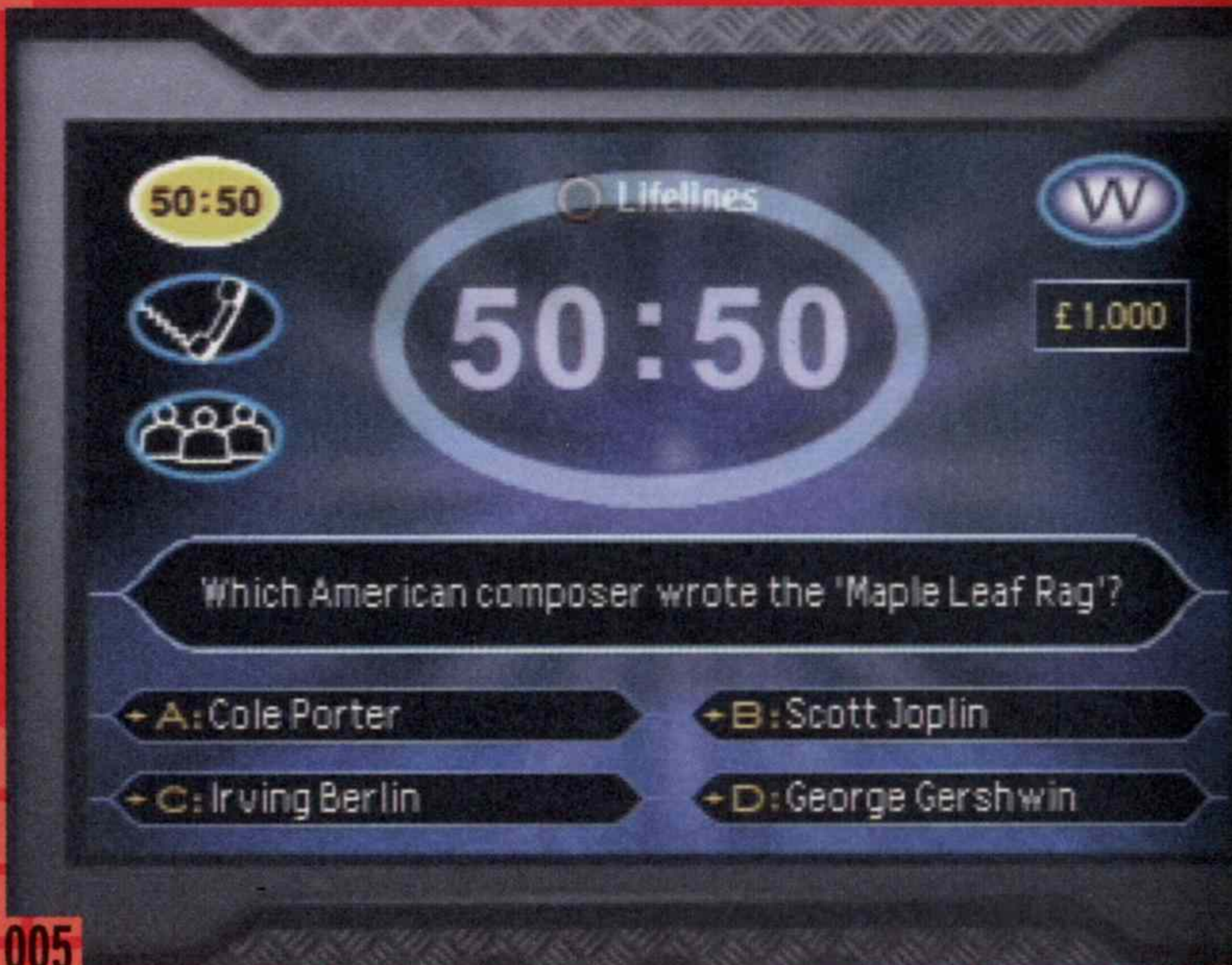
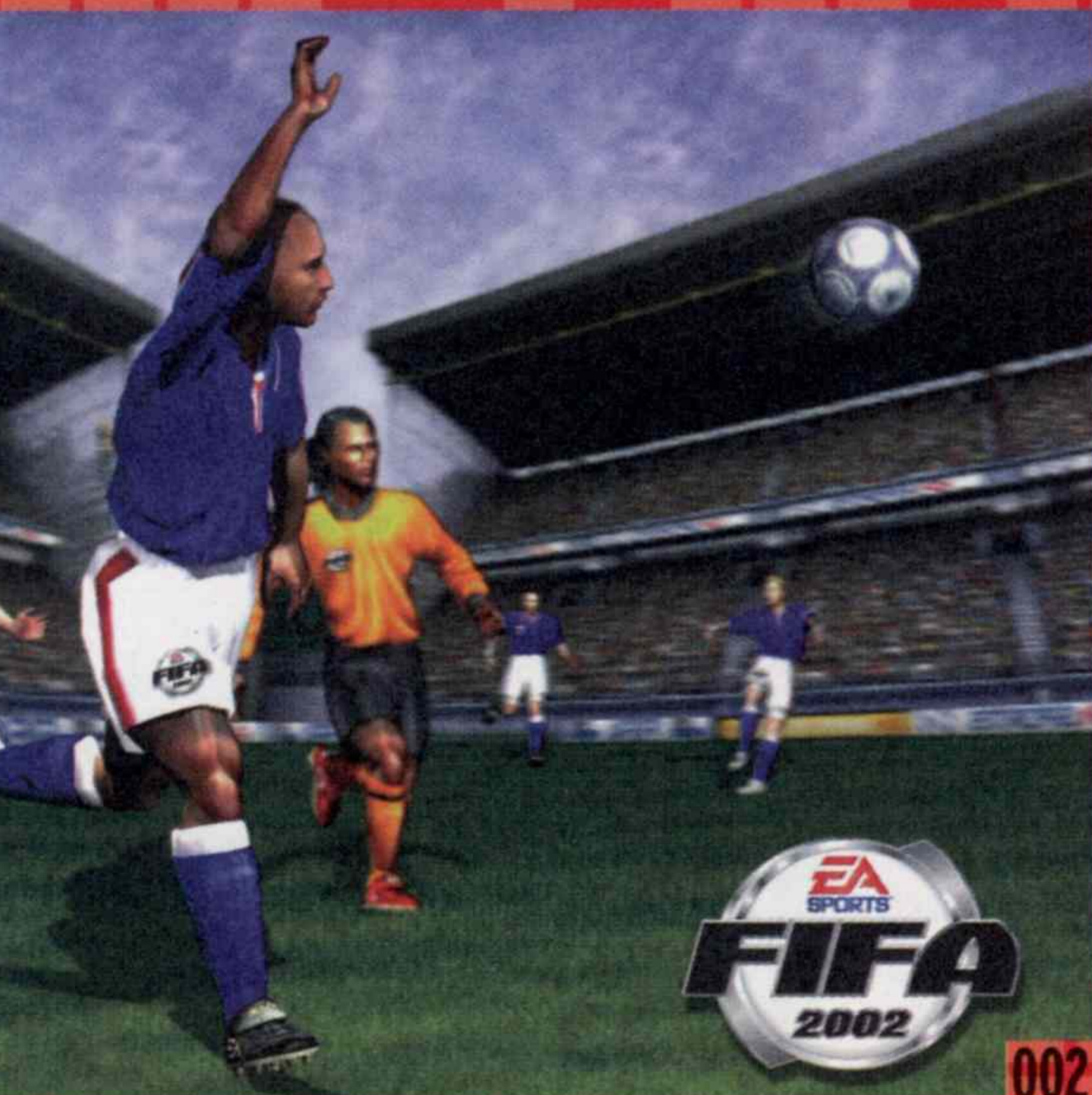
For a start, we're licking our mutton-chops at the mere thought of Wolverine and his X-Men friends slapping each other silly in another apocalyptic Superhero beat-'em-up outing.

*X-Men Mutant Academy 2* (001) will be unleashed by Activision in September and enables you to take charge of any one of 16 X-Men. You'll fight delinquent mutants in Xavier's Mansion, Magneto's Base and, shockingly, a church. Mind the Tabernacles when you let rip with those Mega Mutant Attacks.

Another swinger to look out for on the Superhero scene will be *Spiderman 2: Enter Electro*. The follow-up to last year's massive web-slinging hit, *Spidey 2* will set our senses-a-tingling with new enemies (the original cast of villains are still in jail, after their last tangle with the wall-crawler), new abilities and a new story-line. The first game was an all-action fest of Spidey powers as players crawled up walls, stuck to ceilings, swung between skyscrapers and ensnared outrageous super-baddies with a

range of silky web attacks. The sequel beefs up our fave web-master with more skills and should be even better than the original. We can't wait to get stuck into this one.

Meanwhile, soccer fans can expect a real clash of the titans when *FIFA 2002* (002) goes head-to-head with *David Beckham Soccer*. *FIFA 2002* is the latest in a line of massively popular footie games from EA. Always slick and bulging with frantic goalmouth action, *FIFA* brings home the total soccer experience with full-on player celebrations and authentic kits and player names, as well as lavish stadium graphics. *David Beckham* is a bit more of an unknown quantity at this stage. It's showing a lot of early promise and will hopefully blossom into the genuine article (complete with all the authentic hairstyles) in time for Christmas.





But for those who like their sport a little more extreme, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* (003) will be trucking onto PS1 by the end of the year. A sequel to one of the best ever games on PlayStation, *Tony 3* enables you to kick up a skate riot in parks, streets and concrete arenas all around the world. The idea is to rack up mammoth points tallies by performing hair-raising tricks and stunts without smearing your face all over the tarmac. *Tony's* do-or-die combo of spectacular moves and horrific crash-landings makes for a compulsive experience, even if the closest you've ever come to a board is pooh-poohing the

could chance your arm as one of the boys in blue in *The World's Scariest Police Chases*. Based on the TV show of the same name, you take to the streets as a hard-drivin' cop, hot in pursuit of the various four-wheeled perps that menace the highways of America. Prepare for ludicrous car chases through the back yards of suburban USA as you try to slug felons with the minimum of necessary shotgun force.

Anything else in the works? Too right! There's a whole raft of big-name games heading for PS1 this Christmas. Schoolboy wizard Harry Potter will pop up by the end of the year, twin-shooting

## "EXPECT MORE ALIEN-SLAPPING, SHADE-WEARING SHENNANIGANS"

scruffy orientation of youngsters' baseball caps these days.

But if baggy denim isn't your style, how about *Men in Black 2* (004)? Infogrames is bringing back the shady bug-hunters in time for the new movie release. Expect alien-slapping, shade-wearing, brain-wiping, camp *X-File*-style shenanigans. Then again, you

Pamela Anderson bounces into contention with *VIP* (based on her bodyguard-for-the-stars TV effort), while quiz-heads can choose between Chris Tarrant and his *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* cash-cow sequel to last year's smash (005) or the whiplash witticisms of Mistress Robinson in *The Weakest Link* (006).

Still not enough? Then play God in *Black & White* - the game that lets you perform miracles and breed dangerous monsters. The idea is to trick simple natives into worshipping you by impressing them with divine fireballs and lightening bolts of righteous vengeance. If that doesn't work you can always order your giant beast (that you'll spend many happy hours training

as a loyal, yet savage and dangerous, 20-story, house pet) to eat their entire village, family and friends. Or you can just do that anyway.

If that all sounds a bit out-there, you can always steal sheep in Looney Tunes tribute *Sheep Raider* (007). Based on the *Road Runner* spin-off cartoon, *Sheep Raider* casts you as Ralph (Wile E. Coyote's cousin), who must assemble various ACME rocket-propelled gadgets in order to swipe his favorite woolly snacks

from under the nose of sheepdog Sam.

The fur-singed consequences are inevitably hilarious and this title is set to be the funniest videogame ever.

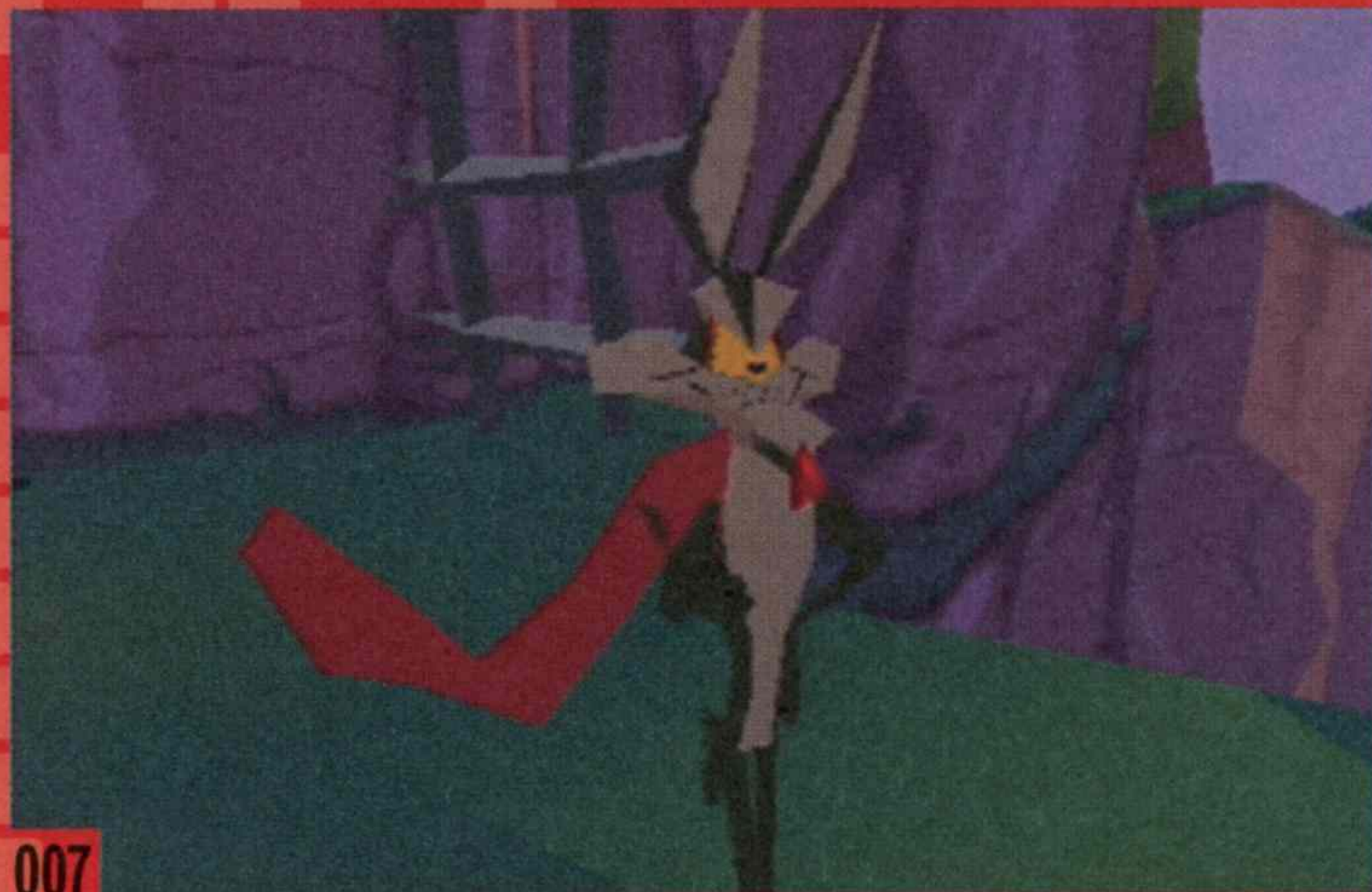
With games like these, the future of the PS1 is secure. But don't take my word for it.

If you want to know more, then grab a copy of our always entertaining and super-informative US sister publication, *PSM, 100% Independent PlayStation Magazine*.

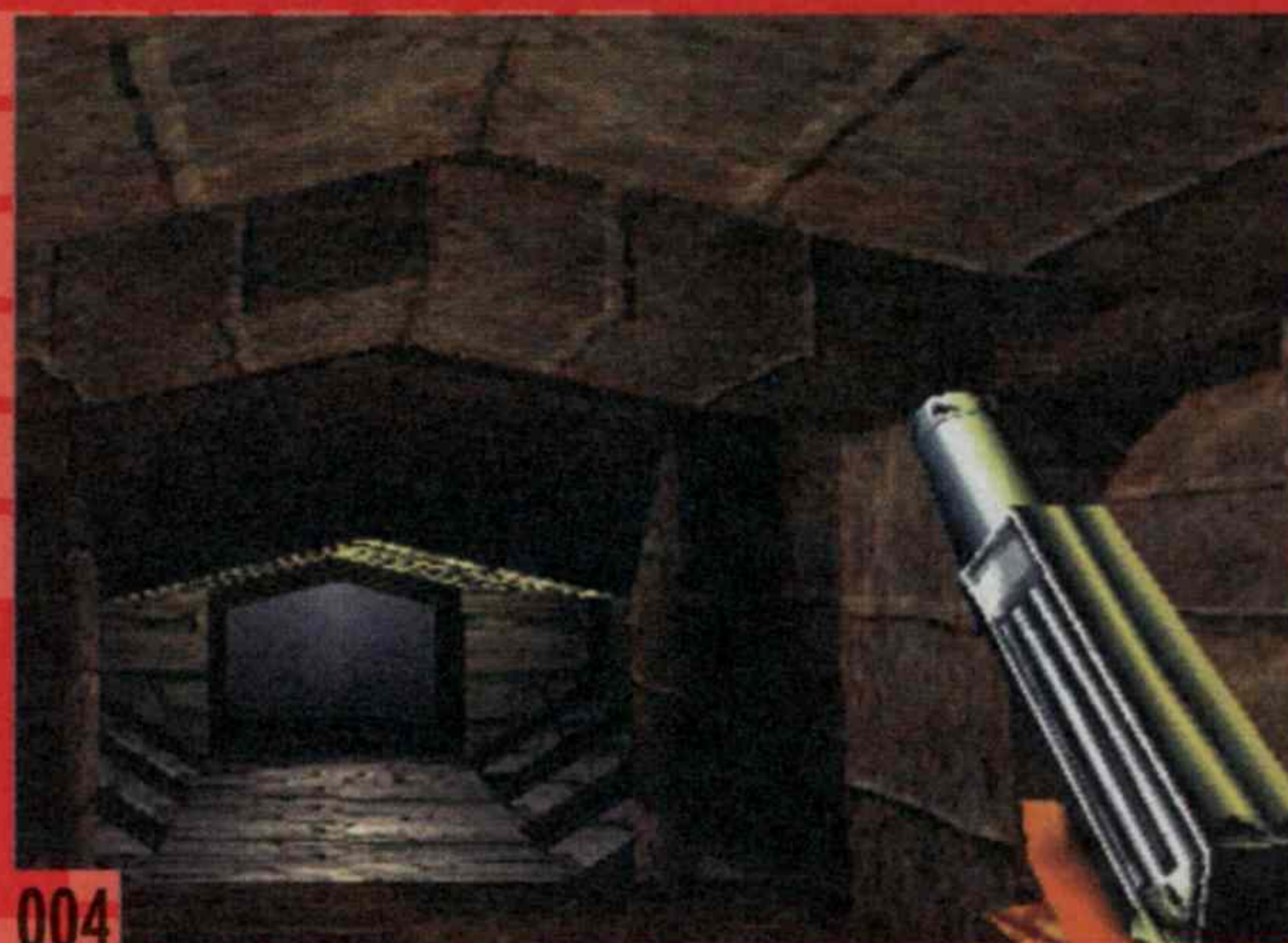
Mark Donald,  
Official UK PlayStation Magazine



003



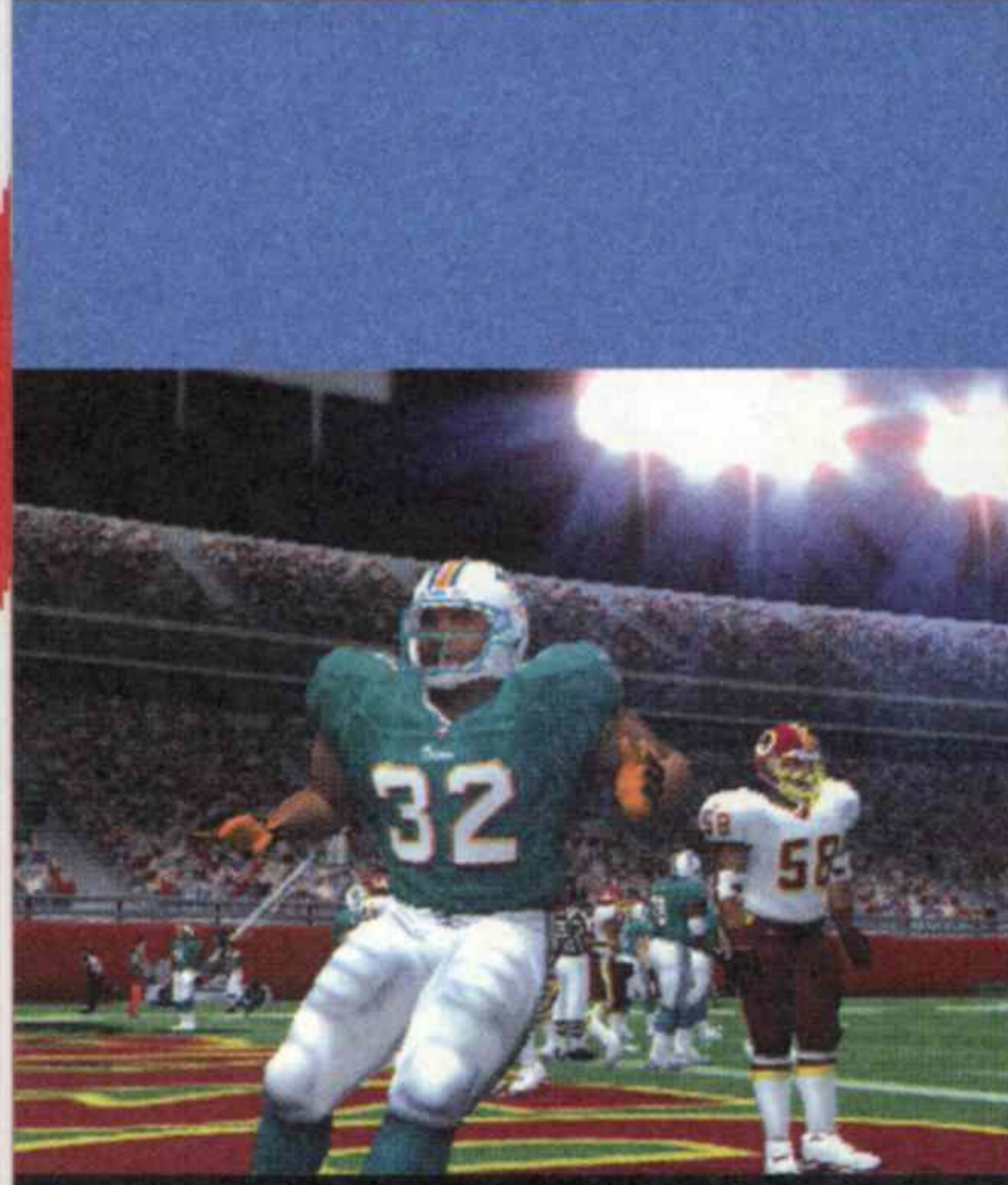
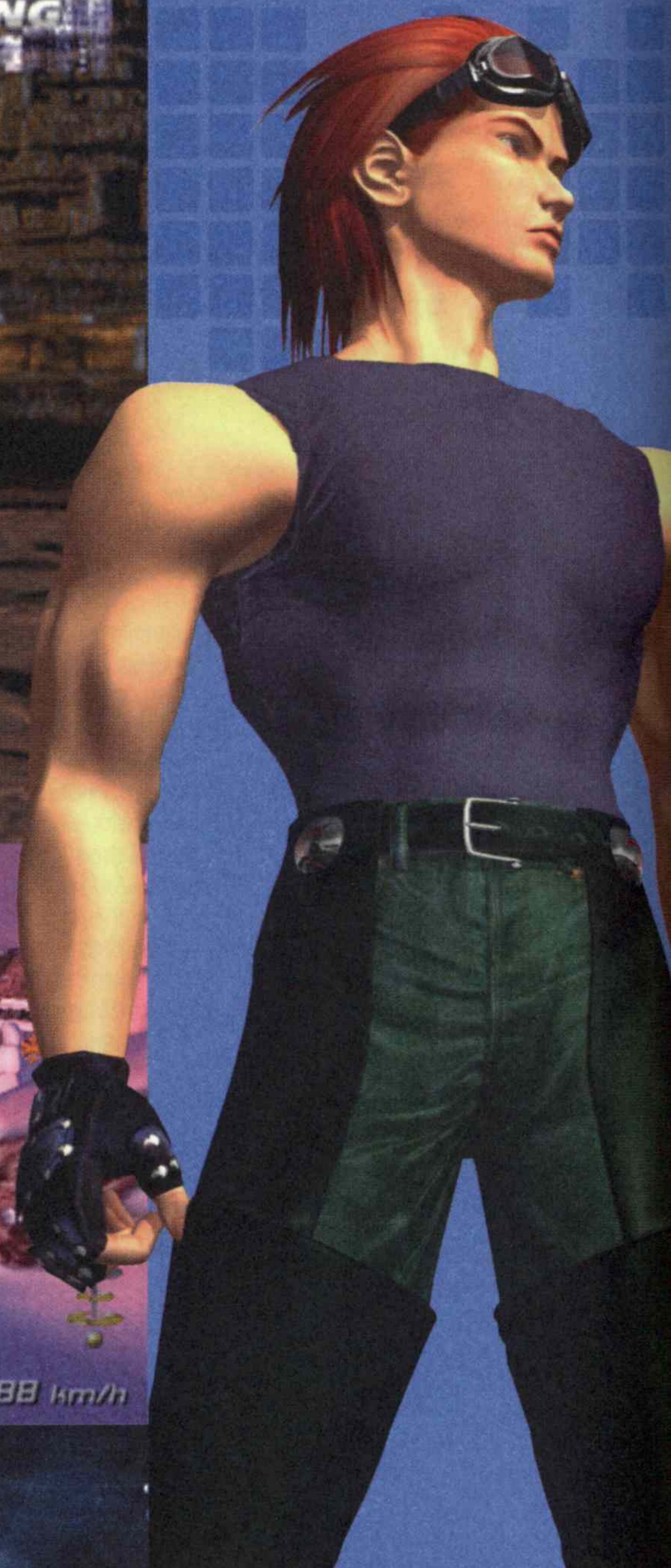
007



004



006



# PLAYSTATION2

4x4 Evolution	154	Orphen: Scion of Scorcery	139
7 Blades	142	Poolmaster	140
Aqua Aqua	154	Quake III: Revolution	141
Armored Core 2	130	Rayman 2 Revolution	140
Dead or Alive 2	130	Ready 2 Rumble Round 2	155
Dragon's Lair	154	Ridge Racer V	142
Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp	154	Shadow of Destiny	143
Driving Emotion Type-S	154	Silent Scope	143
Dynasty Warriors 2	131	Silpheed: The Lost Planet	144
ESPN Int. Track & Field	131	Sky Odyssey	144
ESPN National Hockey Night	155	Sky Surfer	155
ESPN NBA 2Night	155	Smuggler's Run	145
ESPN Winter X-Games Snowboarding	132	Space Ace	155
Eternal Ring	132	SSX	146
Evergrace	133	Star Wars: Starfighter	145
F1 Championship Season 2000	133	Street Fighter EX3	155
F1 Racing Championship	155	Summoner	147
Fantavision	134	Super Bust-a-Move	155
FIFA 2001	134	Surfing H30	155
Hologram Time Traveller	155	Swing Away Golf	147
Kessen	135	Tekken Tag Tournament	149
Knockout Kings 2001	135	Theme Park Roller Coaster	148
Madden NFL 2001	136	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	148
Midnight Club	136	Timesplitters	150
Moto GP	137	Unreal Tournament	150
NBA Hoopz	137	Wild Wild Racing	151
NBA Live 2001	138	World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	
NHL 2001	138		151
Oni	139	Zone of the Enders	152

## PlayStation2 finally arrived on

October 26, 2000, amid the biggest cloud of pre-launch publicity yet seen for a console launch in the US.

Rumors flew: the main one being that Sony's supply couldn't keep pace with the demands of hordes of slaving fans, all desperate to get their hands on the 128-bit wonder.

Fortunately, such horror stories were short lived, and now anyone with cash to hand over can get themselves a slice of Sony's second offering. But that hasn't put an end to the hype; indeed rarely has so much attention been lavished on a single black box. Not that PlayStation2 isn't entirely worth it - at less than a year old it's already providing some of the most exhilarating and absorbing gaming experiences ever seen. It plays DVDs, and soon will be easy to connect to digital cameras, mobile phones and the Internet (see the preview, page 156). It's not hard to envisage how all of those features are going to completely change the face of gaming forever.

The PS2 is already host to a slew of great games - some classics like *Ridge Racer*, *Gran Turismo* and *Tekken*, and some unexpectedly cool new titles like *SSX*. Keep your eye on the left-field, though. With so much power available, developers all over the world are soon going to be offering you something a little bit different...



The games reviewed broadly fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



The following reviews are based on those that appeared in *Official UK PlayStation2* magazine, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.

# ARMORED CORE 2



**Like its PlayStation predecessor**, *Armored Core 2* is a mission-based shoot-'em-up featuring chunky, tooled-up and fully customizable mechanoids. The game starts with a training mission, where your aim is to pick off a small number of enemy drones. Success is rewarded by you being embraced into the bosom of the mech community and earning Raven status. Being a Raven essentially means that you are one of the law enforcers of Mars and can now undertake whatever important missions crop up along the way.

After your initiation, the main hub of the game becomes apparent in the form of an options screen. From here, you can peruse the available missions, check e-mail, buy new parts for your mech and attach them in the garage. Another available option is the Arena mode. Starting out at number 50 out of 50, your aim is to battle your way up to the top spot by defeating a succession of other, more deadly mechs. This arena battle sub-game gets more engaging as you rebuild your mech to house continent-crushing firepower. Of course, you'll probably need to remortgage your house to afford the serious carnage-inducing tools, but it's something to play around with between missions.

There's no denying that *AC2* contains a great deal of value for shoot-'em-up fans, in the sense that the amount you can tamper with your machine seemingly holds no bounds and the sense of piloting your beast and fathoming the controls and dials is initially intriguing. But the missions fail to get the blood pumping, and you'll soon get bored of providing covering fire for allies or defending bases.

■ You are joined by other Raven mechs who provide support during some of the trickier missions. They don't last long though.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Agetec

**DEVELOPER:**  
From Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Endless scope for mech modification, and it provides a great spacey feel

**LOW:**  
Repetitive missions, unremarkable visuals and overly confusing in places

# 07 / 10

PLAYSTATION 2

PC

PSONE

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

# DEAD OR ALIVE 2



Whereas *Tekken Tag Tournament* prides itself on realism, *Dead or Alive 2* relishes its flamboyance. Legs are contorted a hundred ways around necks, fists crash like steam trains into people's snouts and then the fighters defy the principles of gravity and fly across the screen.

It's the speed at which such leg-bending tomfoolery takes place that is *DOA2's* main attraction. Fighters are considerably faster than their *Tekken* counterparts. You can string a plethora of combos together creating a blistering array of attacks, too, but all this grandiose scrapping is easily obtainable no matter what your competence. Whereas *Tekken* relies on hours of combo mastering, *DOA2* has only the following: one punch button, one kick button, one throw button and one block button. However, *DOA2* does have a unique feather in its cap. It places heavy emphasis on counter moves. If you're skilled enough you can counter a potentially nasty face pummeling and turn the fight on its head. Perhaps the most welcome bit of the whole game is the now familiar Tag option, one area where this game is actually better than *Tekken Tag*. Choose your team and enter into a rip-roaring, slamming tag match.

Not many games can encroach on *Tekken's* territory with such bravado and come away unscathed, but *Dead or Alive 2* does just that. *DOA2* is the best second choice of game anyone could hope for.

■ The end of game bad guy Bankotsubo has an unusual special ability - he can warp reality. The more damage he does to you, the blurrier the world becomes until eventually you're fighting blind.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Tecmo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Tecmo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The speed at which the fights take place is incredible

**LOW:**  
The game's controls are overly simple, so it's not as challenging as it could be

# 07 / 10

# DYNASTY WARRIORS 2



## Dynasty Warriors 2 is

essentially a beat-'em-up with whopping great swords. Instead of just one or two opponents, *DW2* features one-kilometer square maps teeming with hundreds of swordsmen, of which around 40 can be laying into you at any one time. That's right - 40. PS2 sights don't come much more staggering than armies of smartly dressed, impossibly detailed Chinese men running, leaping, slashing and galloping around on horses.

You play one of at least 10 generals from each kingdom, all independently ushering their troops into battles across the map's mountains, plains, castles and forests. So, while it's possible to cut a solitary swathe through to the final boss, you're more likely to stumble upon violent clashes already under way, or watch agog as an allied commander comes steaming in on horseback to join you.

It's a disappointment, then, that the fighting itself is so limited. Despite their combined decades of battle experience, each of the 29 available generals knows fewer than 10 moves, making for tiresomely repetitive fights.

When the difficulty reaches crucifying levels later, replaying earlier stages is the only way to make your character strong enough to survive. This means hours more stabbing and lunging, with only the horse-riding and first-person archery breaking up the repetitive sword-swinging.

When the difficulty reaches crucifying levels later, replaying earlier stages is the only way to make your character strong enough to survive. This means hours more stabbing and lunging, with only the horse-riding and first-person archery breaking up the repetitive sword-swinging.

■ *Dynasty Warriors 2* brings the staid Three Kingdoms period of 220-280AD to life, in all its sword-clashing, blood-letting, horse-galloping glory. It's not historically accurate, though.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Koei

### DEVELOPER:

Koei

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Superbly frenetic fights with up to 40 combatants

### LOW:

The gameplay becomes tiresome after a while and fighting moves are limited

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

KCEO

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Lavishly presented, the game looks totally stunning

### LOW:

There's little skill or subtlety in hammering the buttons on your joypad

# 06 / 10

# ESPN INT. TRACK & FIELD



## ESPN International Track & Field is nothing

particularly new or exciting. The exceptional graphics mask gameplay that is as old and as worn as the joysticks we used to chuck out for the trash collectors after a particularly grueling night on *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* (the grandfather of button-bashing sports games).

*ESPN IT&F*, as it's known to its friends, is built up of 10 events, from the standard 100m, long jump and javelin to the slightly off-beat horizontal bar and rhythmic gymnastics. These are split into two modes of play. You can either try an event on its own in the Trial mode, enabling you plenty of time to practice, or play them out in one long sequence in the Championship mode. To win this, you will need to be skilled in several of the events, because your overall points tally is totaled up to give you one big final score. Mastering events means winning gold, silver or bronze medals, while being exceptionally skilled results in the ultimate satisfaction of breaking world records.

The only real skill needed in this game, as has been the case with many generations of Olympic-style games, is the ability to rapidly press buttons. Oh, and to hit the action button at exactly the right time. Hardly a fine art, because anyone can do that with practice. It's gameplay with nostalgia value, but little else.

■ If you win enough medals you unlock secrets including interview movies with the game's four motion-capture stars (including world 100m record holder Maurice Greene), a bonus track for the rhythmic gymnastics and funny sound effects.



# ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING



**As its title suggests,** this game is based around the Winter X-Games, the cooler cousin of the annual extreme sports event. The action is divided into an X-Games mode with four different events to compete in, a

Snowboarder (career) option, single session play and a video vault enabling you to see how it's supposed to be done. Regardless of the X-Games tag, the main mode is the Snowboarder option.

The control system is slightly disappointing. Your boarder has a tendency to stiffen up, with only his legs conveying any sense of movement, and the feeling of surfing down the side of a mountain isn't as comprehensively conveyed as in *SSX*. It's adequate, but not great.

Off piste, you can purchase better equipment, obtain ski passes, chat to fellow boarders, check up on your current game status, go heli-boarding (to reach inaccessible runs), make your own videos and enter competitions using your prize money.

*Winter X-Games Snowboarding* is a much more sober – though admittedly very different – experience than *SSX*. In terms of excitement, it simply can't match EA's effort. In terms of structure however, *Winter X-Games Snowboarding* offers an undeniably substantial one-player experience which integrates some rewarding new elements.

■ There are four different snowboarding events in *Winter X-Games*; Snowboarder X (slalom), Superpipe (like skateboarding's half-pipes), Big Air (jumps) and Slope Style (freestyle stunts).

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Konami

**DEVELOPER:**

Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-5

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Realistic settings and a variety of playable events

**LOW:**

Controls could do with more levels of responsiveness and the courses are bland

**06/10**



# ETERNAL RING



**In the world of** fantasy role-playing, there's no such thing as a carefree youth. An ancient, unwritten rule decrees that, by the age of 10, every boy-child must wake one morning to find his village ablaze, his parents dead, and a lifetime of hazy flashbacks and soul-searching torment ahead of him. The hero of *Eternal Ring*, Cain Morgan, complete with obligatory floppy fringe, is no exception.

These archetypal RPG traits are the first indication that this game isn't about to set the PlayStation2 ablaze with a stunning reworking of the genre. Instead, From Software has brought us role-playing by numbers. All the in-game elements featured in *Eternal Ring* – the dungeons, the monsters, the spells and the rickety wooden villages with chatty citizens frozen to the spot – are charmless and free of the slightest sliver of originality. Worst of all, it's dull.

Unfortunately, not even the entertainment that comes from creating your own spells can detract from the inescapable tedium of the main game. Battles with ogres, giant moths, grotesque skull-faced monkeys and the odd gigantic dragon, only serve to display the game's poor AI. A fiddly control system makes even turning on the spot a grind, and the crushing knowledge that all you'll find behind an enemy's fading corpse is another batch of featureless corridors and identical adversaries will send you to sleep in no time.

With a staggering list of faults, irritants and flaws, it's no surprise to discover that *Eternal Ring* found its way onto Japanese store shelves just in time for PS2's launch. This is a game that's plainly been rushed to the machine, where only the visuals aspire to next-generation quality.

■ Apart from the odd useful gift, you'll receive nothing but inane chat from *Eternal Ring's* inhabitants.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Agetec

**DEVELOPER:**

From Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Experimenting with gems and rings can be mildly enjoyable

**LOW:**

Monotonous play with zombie-like adversaries and disappointing visuals

**03/10**

# EVERGRACE

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Agetec

**DEVELOPER:**

From Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Decent character designs and original way of obtaining special powers

**LOW:**

Basic game errors in a very basic game

02/10



**Evergrace is an action-tinged** RPG, originally planned for PlayStation, then rediverted to PlayStation2. The game's designer seems to have extended the game by putting useful objects at opposite ends of the level, forcing you to traipse repeatedly across the length of the map, rather than providing extra content. This approach mars even games of the highest quality (the *Resident Evil* series are strangely vulnerable to the syndrome). And it's rife here.

The poor level of polish is unforgivable. Take the camera, which manages to position itself in such a way as to make playing the game increasingly impossible. Or how, if you enter a room as the screen fades in, but before you're given control, the monsters in said dwelling are allowed to attack you. And the fact that levels sprawl, as empty and depressing as an Orwellian Milton Keynes.

The game's only merits are that the character designs actually do show a little surrealistic vigor. Equally, by having two characters exploring the world simultaneously, with you being able to skip between them at certain points, you have a chance to play on when you get stuck in one area.

*Evergrace's* main quirk - combining magic with clothes for special powers - is pretty sweet. But, best of all, if you go to [www.evergrace.com](http://www.evergrace.com), you'll be able to have a personalized romance novel printed with your name in it - probably a better experience than playing this sub-standard game.

■ Crystals teleport you to the shop scene where monsters that drop blue or red fruit respawn after a visit.

# F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000



**Before focusing on what**

separates *F1 Championship Season 2000* from the next F1 game, let's talk about what it should contain. The pleasantly minimalist options screen offers the usual single race, Custom and full Championship settings. There's a multiplayer selection for one to four players, split-screen antics and a turn-based Time Trial for up to 22 players.

The customary Quick Race remains the swiftest way to get strapped into the virtual cockpit, but rather than provide you with the usual all-access pass to any of the race tracks, you have to work for circuit entries. For instance, just three events are accessible at first, namely Silverstone, Monza and Hockenheim. Opening the remaining 14 requires championship points acquired from racing. Also commonplace in F1 games is the ability to tweak particular aspects of racing. While the Quick Race mode may only enable limited control over these, Championship races enable more tinkering.

Given its handling characteristics, *F1 Championship Season 2000* isn't attempting to entice the hardened digital racing fan; the driving dynamics are exceedingly newcomer-friendly. But at least graphically things are impressive. You'd expect the correct car livery and every grandstand to have been faithfully recreated, of course, but pleasing attention to detail is noticeable throughout.

Ultimately *F1 Championship Season 2000's* biggest predicament is that it offers nothing of any significance over past F1 titles. It's very good and very playable, but hardly revolutionary.

■ If you feel a spin coming on, get off the gas immediately. The car will often come back to you as long as you don't try to power your way through.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**

EA/Visual Sciences

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-22

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Great attention to detail and a real sense of speed

**LOW:**

No real innovation, no marshals and it suffers from frame-rate problems

06/10

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
SCEA

**DEVELOPER:**  
SCEI

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# FANTAVISION



**Play *Fantavision* and your** "just one more go" gland will be horribly over-stimulated, while your dreams will be filled with the most colorful explosions. As with all the best puzzle games, the concept is extremely simple. You have to link together chains of ascending fireworks and detonate them to create crowd-pleasing displays. Allow your rockets to fizzle out without triggering them and a popularity bar will reduce by degrees. If the bar disappears, your game and the display is over. Of course, while the concept is simple, mastering the game is not. Where *Fantavision* really breaks new ground is in its graphics. While you are immersed mid-game, it's a classically abstract puzzle experience. All you're likely to see are clusters of drifting lights that you need to make sense of with split-second timing. Take a step back, though, and it's gorgeous to look at. Whether you're watching someone else play (entertaining in itself) or watching your own replays, you can't help but feel ooohs and aaahs form on your lips.

Of course, in any display there are going to be a couple of fizzling duds, and *Fantavision* is no exception. The first is the decision not to enable you to save the game and resume from your best position, so completing the game needs a sizeable chunk of uninterrupted free time. An annoying but understandable move when you consider the other downside - at only eight levels (16 if you play on Hard), the game isn't exactly long.

■ It's rumored that *Fantavision* began life as a technical demo for the particle display capabilities of the PlayStation2. Humble beginnings indeed for such a novel and challenging puzzle game.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
An intriguing and different puzzle game

**LOW:**  
You can't save from your best positions and there aren't enough levels

**07 / 10**



# FIFA 2001



**Within seconds of kick-off** *FIFA 2001* underlines the franchise's continued determination to showboat on PS2. The shoulder buttons are used to flick the ball over a player's shoulder or spin elegantly past a defender, while elementary moves such as a decent through-ball are curiously missing. Factors like this prove that *FIFA 2001* is often less concerned with the beautiful game and more with its image. That's not to say this isn't playable - it is - but its simplistic kick-and-run content has barely changed in the last three years. With the potential offered by PlayStation2, it's sad to see that gameplay advances have been sacrificed in favor of visual ones.

The presentation is impeccable, though. The crowds are impressively vocal. They roar in synchronized appreciation, booing when the action slows down and uttering heart-felt "ooohs" as a shot hits the post, adding immensely to the matchday atmosphere. The kits are all lavishly detailed with not only the sponsors' logos legible on the front, but the patterns within the shirt material also clearly visible. Even better, some of the players actually resemble their real-life counterparts. During the course of a match, the likes of Robbie Savage and Patrick Berger are instantly recognizable because of their flowing locks. The animation of the players is equally eye-catching; whatever distinctive moves are made by the real players are faithfully recreated in the game.

■ The excellent commentary in the game is provided by John Motson and Mark Lawrenson, while Paul Scholes, Thierry Henry and Edgar Davids all helped with the motion capture.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**  
EA Sports (Canada)

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
The beautiful game indeed - but it's only skin-deep

**LOW:**  
Still doesn't deliver the truly satisfying experience that the sport deserves

**06 / 10**



# KESSEN



**Westwood's *Command & Conquer*** popularized the real-time strategy genre and brought a unique brand of semi-pacey military chess into social acceptability. The genre's certainly intellectually involving, and there's no doubt that it can provoke an obsessional attitude, but you could hardly call it fun.

*Kessen* would argue otherwise. Or if not argue, certainly charge you down and hack at your legs with an arm-length samurai sword, then encourage a thousand of its fanatical followers to do the same, all the time screaming "Fun! Fun! Fun!" in a dubiously dubbed Eastern accent. *Kessen* arrived in the US on the back of massive success in Japan, and with a lot of work to do battling against people's preconceptions about wargames. It's a real-time strategy epic with a strong grounding in Japanese history. It even contains an in-game encyclopedia, enabling you to research details on all the main characters and battles in the epic real-life conflict.

You have to play the whole game through as Tokugawa and become the righteous ruler of all Japan, and this is where things start to get difficult to analyze. Even though this is Koei's most simplistic wargame, the idea of actually playing through it might be something most Western console gamers will find a chore.

While *Kessen* may or may not be considered fun, it's definitely a work of art. It's also the first game on PS2 to genuinely amaze in terms of scope and scale, and it's clearly a labor of love on the part of its creator.

- Four different scale views enable you to suss out the flow of action on the battlefield.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Koei

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An all-consuming work of true beauty, simple but offering near-infinite possibilities

### LOW:

Real-time strategies tend to bore if you prefer quick-fix fun

07 / 10

# KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001



**It took three years** before any developers got around to developing a boxing game for the PlayStation, mainly because boxing is tight, technical and strategic – and it's often more about the build-up than the actual event. You have to choose your market and stick with a style (arcade or sim). With the release of *Knockout Kings 2001*, the PS2 now has one of each. *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2* is strictly arcade – a crowd-pleaser packed with OTT characters and comedy cosmetics. *KK2001* is more of a sim with representations of genuine boxers and a sense of the sport's history, but it's also proof that the arcade way is the only way, playability-wise.

For all of its novelty appeal, the original *Knockout Kings* had a major flaw: it was too easy to just pick a reasonable fighter and slug your way to the top. Although this element has been significantly toned down across both sequels, the fact that it hasn't gone altogether is poor. Other shoddy areas are the graphical quality, which has been emphasized at the expense of some bizarre quirks of animation and collision detection. And although the action is competent, it's surprisingly dour for something so potentially enjoyable as two large men hitting each other until one of them falls over.

As expected with an EA Sports title, game mode variety is high, but some options are more distinct than others. Although one- and two-player bouts in all of these modes are perfectly respectable, the real meat of the game is the Career option, in which you create your own boxer, choose a gym/trainer and a cuts specialist, then try to train and fight your way up through the ranks with an aim at an eventual title-shot.

You'll get less frustration and more out-and-out entertainment from 10 rounds in the ring with *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*.

- Real boxers in the game include Muhammad Ali, Jack Dempsey and Oscar De La Hoya.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA Sports

### DEVELOPER:

Black Ops

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It has a good official feel with recognizable characters and a decent two-player mode

### LOW:

Sluggish response and poor design-your-own boxer mode

06 / 10

PLAYSTATION 2

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

135



# MADDEN NFL 2001



**You'd be forgiven for** mistaking *Madden NFL 2001* for the real thing; the graphics are so good, and the game is easy to get into, even if you have no prior knowledge of the sport.

The general attention to detail is immense, but some of the old pitfalls of the genre still come back to haunt it – even on the most powerful console on the planet. Polished as it is, the animation does slip at times, resulting in some of the players adopting robot-like, jerky movements. Also, there is still an annoying delay between when you pass or run the ball into the end zone and the player celebrating the touchdown. You would think one fluid motion could have been obtainable by now. These are minor gripes, though, and will in no way hamper your long-term enjoyment of the game.

As well as earning points when you score a touchdown or score a field goal, you'll be rewarded with crowd-pleasing slow-motion replays that show the scoring drive in bone-crunching close-up.

Apart from fabulous authenticity on the field, *Madden NFL 2001* is also crammed with modes to ensure you'll be playing for months. As well as Practice and Season, in which you get to take one of the 38 NFL teams through a grueling schedule and right up to the Super Bowl, there is the brand-new Franchise mode. This more executive role actually enables you to take charge of a club, sign new players and even appoint your own no-nonsense, gum-chomping manager.

■ John Madden, Super Bowl-winning coach and Emmy award-winning broadcaster, has been very much a part of gaming for the past 10 years. The first EA *John Madden* game emerged on the Sega MegaDrive way back in 1990.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**

EA Sports

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

The best sports simulation on the PS2, *Madden* is graphically staggering and has in-depth tactical gameplay

**LOW:**

Occasional graphical glitches

**08/10**

# MIDNIGHT CLUB



**Midnight Club is part**

*Driver*, part *Ridge Racer*.

The central concept couldn't be simpler. Urban thrill junkies have made the witching hour streets their own, illegally racing each other at breakneck speeds in all manner of tweaked vehicles.

In career mode you start the game as a regular Joe cruising the Big Apple on the lookout for illegal racers. Find one, tail him/her and you'll be challenged to a cross-city race. Win, and you get his mobile number. At this stage you can either race him again for his car or look for another club member.

The cities available (New York and, later, London) are huge, glossy caricatures of the real things. Pile-ups take on highly strategic value as you can block your opponent's best route, while numerous hidden short cuts mean the difference between victory and coming second. The game's strength is that it's breathtakingly fast, with some fantastic vehicles to be unlocked.

Unfortunately, for a game about illegal racing through rubbish-blown city streets, *Midnight Club* looks just too polished for its own good. Also, the cars handle with a disappointing lightness. *Midnight Club* is gridlocked by trying to be two different games at once. The result, although fun, fails to engage the higher gears of player interest.

■ One of the game's shortcuts is through Madison Square Garden. In *Midnight Club* you can drive in one door and out the other side.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Rockstar

**DEVELOPER:**

Angel Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Slick-looking and fun-to-play driving game

**LOW:**

No amount of PS2 gloss can make up for the lack of depth in the gameplay

**04/10**

# MOTO GP



**Crisp, full-screen or widescreen, pop-up free graphics, with draw distances as far as the virtual eye can see – this is what you want on your PS2. The bikes and riders in *Moto GP* are gorgeously modeled – even if some of the animation is a bit suspect. But subtle smoke and spark effects more than compensate.**

*Moto GP* feels so very right to play. The way in which you slow down as you approach a bend – making sure to keep an eye on the circuit map – and then accelerate away, weaving in and out of the other racers, is a joy to experience and, like all the best racing games, there's a steady learning curve.

With only five tracks to speak of, and the season mode consisting of three – admittedly increasingly tough – seasons, you only have 15 races to play through in the basic one-player game. Yes, there are three difficulty levels, but the easy, normal and difficult settings would have been more accurately named "very easy," "still fairly easy," and "a little bit tougher than the other two." There are other problems, too – the in-race realism is patchy. Colliding with a barrier at 150mph sends both bike and rider flying across the track, while on the other hand clipping the back wheel of another racer does little more than cause both bikes to wobble slightly.

But, heck, *Moto GP* isn't a bad game. In fact it's a good one, it has a great playback option and as far as racing games go it's one of the best on the PS2 so far.

■ *Moto GP* began life as an arcade game. You'd be forgiven for not knowing that though, as the arcade incarnation of *Moto GP* was known as *500GP*.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Gorgeous to look at and with excellent handling on the bikes, this is a real race winner

### LOW:

It's a little too easy and there aren't enough tracks

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Eurocom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Refreshing pick-up-and-play arcade sports action

### LOW:

Limited longevity and the graphics are repetitive

# 06 / 10

# NBA HOOPZ



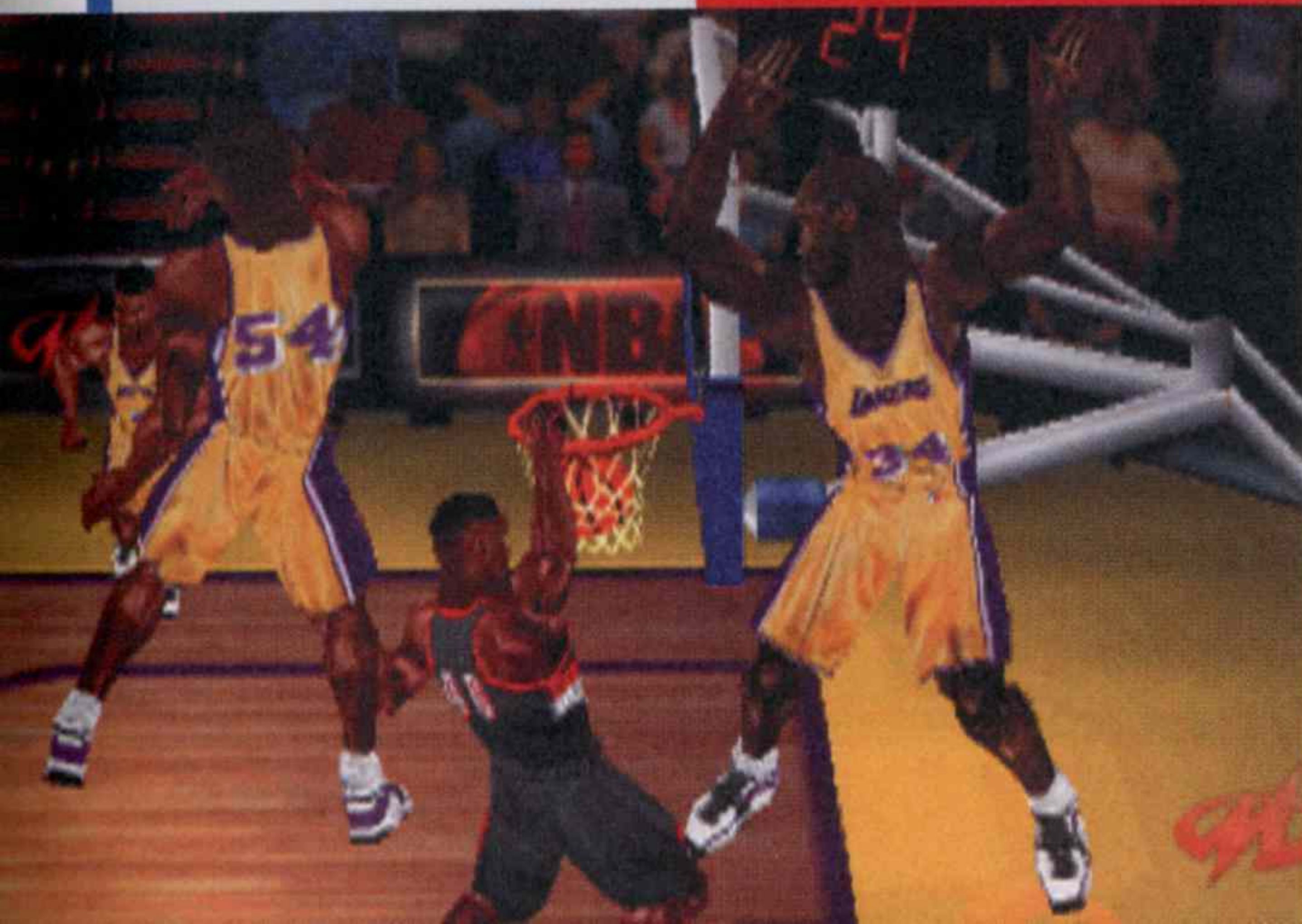
**Films such as *Above the Rim* and *Hoop Dreams* – not to mention the ubiquity of Michael Jordan – attest to basketball's popularity. Even though it's still fairly early days for US PlayStation2 releases, there are no fewer than four PlayStation2 hoops titles on store shelves, and no doubt more on the way.**

*NBA Hoopz* features all the official teams but dumps simulation in favor of a three-a-side arcade knockabout with decent graphics and a typically Midway arcade aesthetic in the mold of the old PlayStation/coin-op classic *NBA Jam*.

You have the choice of a full Season, a knockout Tournament competition or just a quick friendly bout, with up to six people able to take part using two multi-taps. You then choose a team and the position you'd prefer to play – guard, forward or center. Once you've assigned your three talented team members to the various positions using eight rated abilities including speed and power, you're quickly into the net-slapping action.

*NBA Hoopz* is highly enjoyable and much livelier than the usual dry, dull console basketball sims. It's easy to pick up and play, with a surprising amount of depth that soon reveals subtle special moves and tricks of the trade. As a multiplayer title it excels, and the mini-games are a great bonus, providing addictive challenges.

■ *NBA Hoopz* has a set of very silly characters, including Crispy the Clown and a bright green alien. A create-your-own-player feature is also thrown in, along with the usual cheats.



# NBA LIVE 2001



**NBA Live 2001** looks like every other EA Sports game - it has the same logo, front end and menu system. Even the modes - Play Now, Season and Playoff - will be familiar to EA fans. These modes are now joined by One-On-One, which pits two players against each other in a downtown basketball court. Each mode enables you to decide on teams, players, positions, substitutions and which division you wish to play in.

Once on court, the visuals are slightly better than the previous *NBA* incarnation. The players are well-drawn (modeled on real NBA players), but still lope around the court with very exaggerated movements. On the other hand, the background activity is surprisingly static. Controlling your players is easy to grasp and utilizes a wide range of offensive and defensive moves. While attacking you can fake, turbo, switch and crossover without much difficulty and, while defending, you can hand check, steal and face up. The rules of the court differ depending on whether you've selected Simulation or Arcade mode - Arcade enables you to foul and run off the court without being penalized, while the former uses proper NBA rules. Single-player mode provides plenty of opportunity for immersion, especially in the extensive Season mode, and multiplayer mode will no doubt inspire many a late-night gaming session.

However, *NBA Live 2001* probably won't appeal if you're not acquainted with the sport because the gameplay predominantly relies on its replication of all the rules, player names and stats.

■ At the main menu press **L1**, **L2**, **□**, **R2**, **R1**, **○**, **×** for new stadiums.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**

EA Sports

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A more-than-proficient basketball simulation

**LOW:**

There'll be another slightly better one out next year

**06/10**



# NHL 2001



**The graphics are all** magnificent in *NHL 2001*. Each figure's motion has been mapped from a living person, meaning they move with perfect fluidity and a shocking attention to detail. Seeing goalies warm up by stretching their tendons or the refs gesturing penalties to disbelieving and outraged players is a wonder to behold. This is supported by sterling commentary work, the PS2's humble routines offering more helpful analysis of the match than their human counterparts manage. In terms of actual gameplay, it's much the same splendid mixture of fluidity and brutality as ever. Moves vary from delicate and accurate passing to increasingly evil fouls.

The variety of options available is among *NHL 2001*'s most commendable aspect. Every feature in the game can be changed to your own particular preference. From general Arcade or Simulation settings, to a selection of individual outfits, to whether individual rules such as icing or off-side are included, all are ready for modification.

Complaints? Well, perhaps the loading time to get into each game is a little too protracted. A function that introduced the player to the game's interface in a more subtle way than simply throwing them into the deep end would have been useful for first-time players. Perhaps you might have hoped for a revolution in the actual gameplay to match the aesthetic excesses. But none of this is enough to stop *NHL 2001* from taking the transparent, blood-red glistening crown of Best Ice Hockey Game In The World Ever.

■ The infamous Brawling mode is back and looking better than ever in this update. Basically, there's a mini beat-'em-up game whenever an argument breaks out among the players.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**

EA Sports

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Fluid gameplay melds seamlessly with top-notch graphics and excellent options

**LOW:**

Only minor irritants detract from this brilliant game

**08/10**

# ORPHEN: SCION OF SCORCERY

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Shade Incorporated

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The fights are reasonably good fun while they last

### LOW:

The lack of imagination in the gameplay is only matched by the ugly look of the game

# 04/10



**Billed as an action** RPG, this game tries to be more a *Legend of Zelda* than a *Final Fantasy*, with the resource management and reams of statistics found in traditional RPGs abandoned in favor of an adventuring, almost *Tomb Raider*, approach. There's far more exploring, platforming and puzzle-solving than is usually associated with the RPG genre.

*Orphen's* plot revolves around the eponymous magician traveling the world, getting into trouble and fighting big beasties. The game begins with Orphen and his apprentices Cleo and Magnus setting sail to retrieve the money they're owed by comedy sidekicks Volcan and Dortin. Naturally, events don't go according to plan as two sea monsters – a gigantic spider crab and a flying serpent – attack the boat.

The ensuing battles provide your first taste of *Orphen's* best feature – good, old-fashioned scrapping. The battle system combines the RPG genre's hoary old turn-based fights with real-time action.

Unfortunately the gameplay in *Orphen* is very repetitive. Each of the many areas you encounter on your quest offers almost exactly the same routine of battle-puzzle-battle. Adding insult to injury are the disappointing visuals, which show the same lack of imagination that plagues the gameplay. You'd get a far greater impression of being in a fantasy realm by wandering around your local garden center.

■ *Orphen* is based on a popular Japanese graphic novel and animation series about a slightly grumpy magician.

# ONI



**Oni** is an impressive, third-person anime-style action adventure. The plot is a rich story that draws the main character onward to a genuinely unexpected conclusion via the kind of misdirection and well-paced revelations that most Tinseltown blockbusters would kill for.

It's 2032 and the world is run by the WCG (World Coalition Government), a deceptively benevolent name for the greedy organization that keeps the First World prosperous and safe in climate-controlled urban bubbles. Meanwhile, the Third World goes to ruin in Wilderness Preserves that make up the remainder of the planet's poisoned surface outside the range of the Atmospheric Conversion Centers. Inside these safe zones the WCG keeps its citizens in the dark about the extent of the ecological breakdown, and itself in power by monopolizing the spread of new technology with its TCTF (Technology Crimes Task Force). But a shadowy and well-equipped criminal organization known as the Syndicate is proving to be a real thorn in the WCG's side by trafficking arms, drugs and who knows what else. You play Konoko, a purple-haired, one-woman SWAT team about to embark on her first field mission.

After such a thorough build up, *Oni's* gameplay may seem simplistic – it certainly is straightforward. As Konoko you must progress through increasingly hostile environments employing stealth and a mixture of weapons and martial arts skills to neutralize the Syndicate goons and complete missions, each of which sets up the next. There are, however, traps to negotiate, electronic locks to be disengaged and deadly brains to be shut down, but, for the most part, it's all about you kicking Syndicate ass.

*Oni* is an exciting and stylishly executed game. A rare case of action with brains.

■ Keep up to date with every aspect of your mission via the Data Comlink.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Rockstar

### DEVELOPER:

Bungie Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Style and intelligence, with great level design, and an action heroine who kicks ass

### LOW:

Lack of variety in gameplay and no multiplayer option

# 07/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Take 2 Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Ask

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A fairly realistic game of pool can be played

**LOW:**  
The graphics are disappointing and some unrealistic Herculean shots are possible

05/10

POOLMASTER



**A pool game stands** or falls by its ball physics, and *Poolmaster* just manages to convince you of its realism. One of the best aspects of the game is the Practice mode, which leads you through the full repertoire of shots step-by-step, and also proves that pretty much anything you can do on a real table, you can also do in the game.

However, there are a few things you can do in *Poolmaster* that make real life look silly. With the power gauge filled, you're able to execute a shot of such ludicrous strength that even if the Incredible Hulk turned to hustling, he'd still balk at the ferocity of your break. For the most part, the balls spread realistically, but when a shot is hit hard, *Poolmaster* simply can't cope with the speed. If you miss a tough shot with a strong hit, it's impossible to tell how close you were to glory as the camera throws itself into spasms.

For a game that has little to do except display an empty pool hall, *Poolmaster* is graphically



disappointing. The difficulty of early PS2 games in displaying curved surfaces has been well documented, so you'd think any developer yet to get to grips with anti-aliasing would have steered well clear of a title that relies entirely on the depiction of spherical objects.

*Poolmaster* has been lazily converted from the Japanese version, which means that even though it's been released in Europe, the game doesn't incorporate their rule variations.

■ The only reward for defeating the computer opponents is to play such "well-known real pros" as Kunihiro Takahashi. Big in Japan?

RAYMAN 2 REVOLUTION



**Evil space pirates have** invaded Rayman's planet and smashed its heart, sending it into disharmony and threatening to destroy everything unless our bouncy hero can save the day and gather together all the shattered pieces.

While *Revolution* might be a reworking of the previous game *Rayman 2*, thankfully it's much more than just a rehash. For example, at an area called the Magic Pool, you can spend some of the energy you've accumulated on character upgrades of your choice. Each of these gives Rayman different attributes that can be used to explore previously inaccessible parts of the game, or just to give him extra power.

Level design is another deftly conceived aspect to the game, with the opportunity to swim through lakes, water-ski through swamps, ride rockets across thorns, climb high up into the trees and float deep into crevasses as you go about saving the world. The graphics in *Revolution* are beautiful and the fantastic attention to detail is praiseworthy.

Add to this the fact that there are new levels and three thoroughly addictive four-player mini-games to unlock and Ubi Soft has come up with a winner. It's a fine example of its genre and engrossing to play. Even if you normally shy away from platformers you should give *Rayman 2 Revolution* a whirl, because it's just such fun to play. A worthy addition to the PlayStation2 lineup and completely bedazzling.

■ This is the follow-up to the PlayStation hit *Rayman*, which sold over 6 million copies worldwide.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Ubi Soft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Ubi Soft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Fun, addictive and thoroughly charming throughout

**LOW:**  
Not especially original and not worth it if you've played *Rayman 2* on PlayStation

08/10



# QUAKE III: REVOLUTION

DREAMCAST

PLAYSTATION2

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Looks fantastic, plays like lightning. Advanced lighting and particle effects

### LOW:

Not as immersive as it could be. No on-line capability

# 09/10



**This certainly isn't a** quick PC port.

For a start, *Quake III: Revolution* has no mouse or keyboard compatibility. Instead, Bullfrog has concentrated on running the game from the joypad to recreate the fluidity and instinct derived from a keyboard/mouse setup. This involved borrowing well-tryed control systems from the likes of *TimeSplitters* and tweaking levels to make them easier to navigate. This, says Bullfrog, is to keep the frame rate up. And it's amazingly fast.

The four-player mode blows *Unreal* out of the water. It even casts a shade over the mighty *TimeSplitters*. Of course, 60fps comes as standard these days, but often at a price. Textures, geometry or the number of bots always seem to suffer, but *Quake III* retains the lot. The textures are especially dumbfounding. The gothic, twisted spires of arenas and the scorched, cracked walls of dripping dungeons exude detail. Structures are curvaceous, colors and hues emanate from every on-screen inch. Lighting effects, particle effects and shadowing all weave successfully together.

The only problem with the game is that *Quake III: Revolution* isn't on-line compatible – which is surprising considering that *Quake III: Arena*'s success was fundamentally affected by its on-line capabilities. Yet you are treated to a series of 32 bot-filled arena deathmatches and every one is superbly playable. And the enemy AI is so finely tuned it soon becomes irrelevant that *Quake II* had the advantage of a plot.

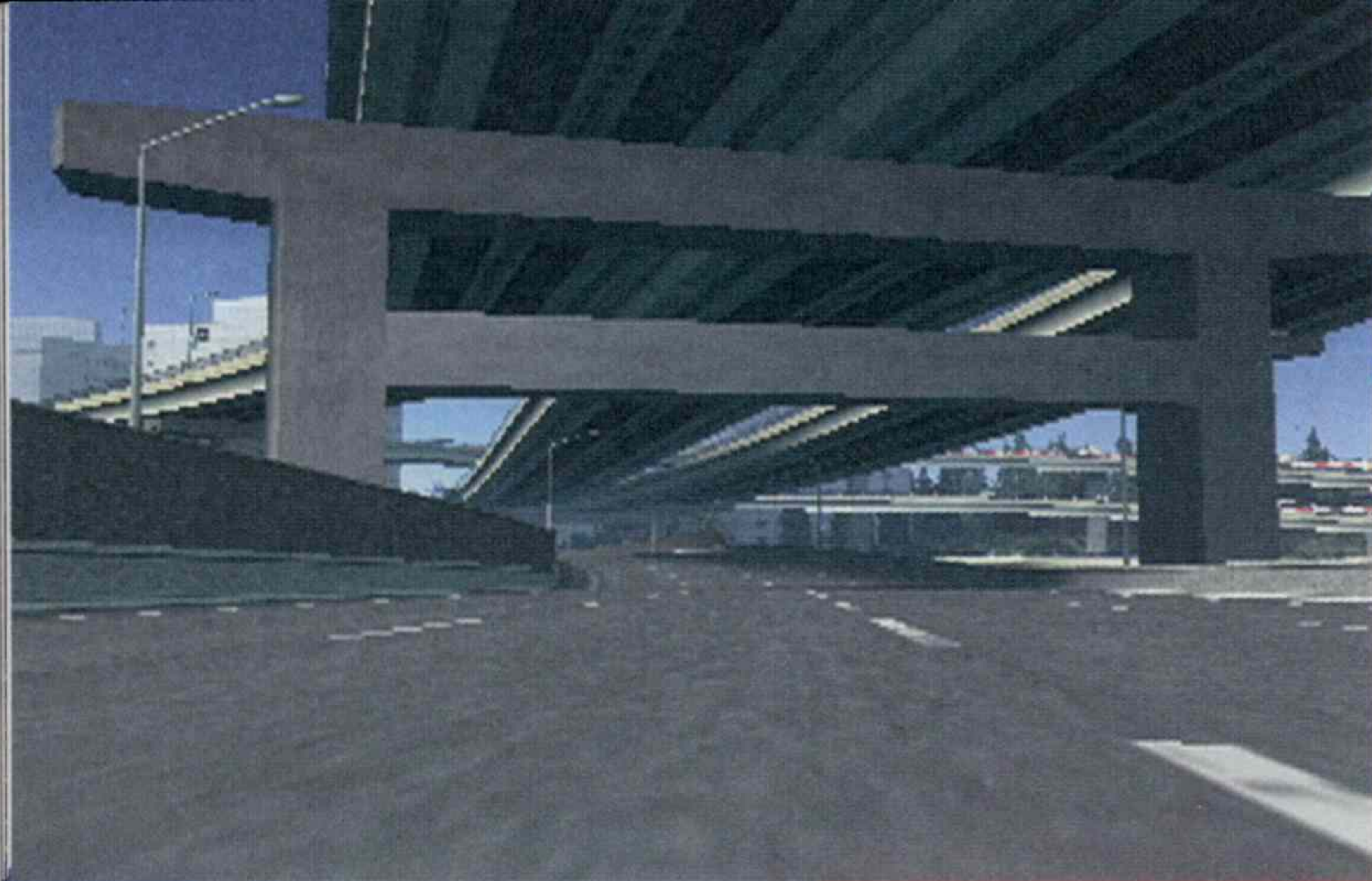
Spun together with the slamming, metallic gameplay is an ominous audio accompaniment. Groaning, chanting and wailing underlies the pounding dark drone of the music, and the deep narrative voice of the Vadrigar keeps you informed about your current standing. It helps the atmosphere to no end.

If you tire of the single-player mode there are a number of other variations. Team Deathmatches pit you and a partner against two other bots. Capture the Flag has also been introduced, and it's during these matches that the enemies come into their own. If you have possession of the flag they'll hunt you down with such intensity you have to keep the Fire button depressed at all times just to wade through them. Lesser modes such as the Single Weapon Deathmatch and Single Weapon Team Deathmatch options all bolster the game's longevity. The 42 playable characters also form an impressive catalogue, especially as you can train a character up through the single-player mode, then enter him into deathmatches against them all.

*Quake III: Revolution* throws everything it has at you, grabs you by the neck, throttles you with a perverse glee and leaves you wondering what the hell just happened.

■ Keep your eyes open for armor. It'll prevent you from becoming chopped liver.





# RIDGE RACER V

**RRV has its faults**, but the first time you boot it up you'll be amazed, and probably wonder what all the moaning is about. It's fast, it looks great, it handles in a hilariously unrealistic fashion – in short, exactly like an arcade racing game should. Better than that, you'll find the more you play the more addictive it becomes and the better you get. Chuck in an atlas-worth of long sweeping curves just made for cruising around and you're onto a winner. This is how a driving game ought to be.

*Ridge Racer's* handling is legendary and it invented the powerslide – the fine art of off-setting the momentum of your vehicle against the grip of your tires, sending your car into a controlled slide and enabling you to take corkscrew-tight curves at dragstrip speeds. Once again, Namco has delivered the perfect arcade powerslide game.

*Ridge Racer V* also features some thoughtful visual effects. Sparks fly from the bottom of the cars, headlights come on in the tunnels, and brake lights leave cool glowing trails behind them on the night and evening levels. In the daytime, bright sunlight realistically reflects off windscreens and bodywork.

Unfortunately, so seemingly fond is it of its previous racing masterpiece, *Ridge Racer Type 4*, that Namco, it appears, has not only taken its handling model, but also its game structure – surely *Ridge's* big brother on PlayStation2 should have been slightly more original? Other problems include jagged graphics and a border that's evidence of a poor conversion from the Japanese original.

■ Beat a time marked with an "R" in the Time Trial section and you'll get the chance to compete with a rival and win their car.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Looks pretty good, drives really amazingly

**LOW:**

Too much like its predecessors in gameplay and it suffers from a hasty PAL conversion

07 / 10

# 7 BLADES



**7 Blades tells the** story of two Japanese warriors – the sword-wielding

Gokurakumaru and his feisty pistol-packing female counterpart Oyuri – as they do battle against enemies from the future within a series of feudal settings. A nonsensical introduction heralds the arrival of a time-traveling fleet that has settled close to a Japanese village ready to conquer the world. This duly sets up *7 Blades'* cut-and-thrust content as these temporal troublemakers come at our brave duo wielding a fusion of old-skool swords, pointed sticks and futuristic laser whips. Old meets new as the heroic pair clash with dozens of enemy troops within the 3D worlds, resulting in beautifully choreographed fight sequences.

*7 Blades* runs along more linear and restrictive lines than *Dynasty Warriors 2* and also succumbs to the same gameplay problems that will see it racked alongside the Midas game in a box marked "fun, but shallow." Its stylish against-the-odds combat sequences make it playable, but it is constantly usurped by *DW2's* larger body count, more expansive levels and ultimately grander vision. The final, mortal wounds are provided by the uneven content and gameplay imbalances.

The unintentionally funny cut scenes tell two slightly different stories, depending on which character you play, providing some diversion from the battle scenes. Similarly the impressive cast of enemy ninjas, archers and slap-head generals nearly make it a worthwhile purchase but, unfortunately, *7 Blades* – unlike its sword-swinging hero – just can't hack it.

■ Your chosen warrior is accompanied by a CPU-controlled partner and a secondary mentor character, both of whom join in during fights.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Konami

**DEVELOPER:**

Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Well-balanced control system and instant bloodlust gratification

**LOW:**

Unrelenting action lacks variety. Rough-edged graphics

06 / 10



# SHADOW OF DESTINY



**From the very opening** of *Shadow of Destiny*, a chilly snowball of terror is set in motion that gathers a momentum that doesn't let up until the game's shattering and unexpected conclusion.

A young man named Eike Kusch is murdered outside a cafe and then transported to a mysterious void. Here he's offered a choice by a lone voice in the darkness. Either remain dead or go back. No catches, no selling his soul, just go back and stay alive, if he can. And so he does. Handed a mysterious device that enables him to cut through the ribbons of time, Eike returns to the mortal realm to begin his quest to find out who is trying to murder him and why. Starting off just two hours before he was originally killed, Eike must try to avoid being seen and dying, but die he inevitably will. Each of these deaths will send Eike backward and forward in time. As the plot becomes more convoluted, the eight chapters over which the game is set increasingly require more and more forethought. This is the ultimate whodunnit. And to prevent total confusion, the narrative of *SOD* is played out at considerable length in explanatory FMV sequences.

While *Shadow of Destiny* is influenced by *Silent Hill*, the story and gameplay couldn't be more radically different. Ultimately though, despite the visual appeal and token puzzles, *SOD's* true strength lies in its plot. The way in which the story tumbles, careers from left to right then folds back on itself is a masterstroke; and if you thought *Silent Hill* was terrifying, just wait for *Shadow of Destiny*. Its inventiveness, sheer cunning and utterly original slant on pure, cold terror will leave you slack-jawed.

■ Whodunnit? Dana, Eckhart, Fortune or Wagner – the plot gives them all a good reason to kill you.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Konami

**DEVELOPER:**  
KCET

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Tremendous storyline with a plot that twists more than Chubby Checker

### LOW:

Dull with just one location. Puzzles can be too easy

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Konami

**DEVELOPER:**  
Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Good old-fashioned fun-with-a-gun, clever control system so no need for a lightgun

### LOW:

Not exactly an intellectually challenging game

# 07/10

# SILENT SCOPE



**Simplicity is often all** a game needs to succeed. In these days of 10-CD role-playing efforts and finger-twisting football games, every now and then it cleanses the soul to simply sit back and, well, shoot a few people. And this is the true beauty of *Silent Scope*: it ain't rocket science, but by God it's entertaining.

The premise, as with the gameplay, is very simple. Just think of films such as *In the Line of Fire* and *The Day of the Jackal* and you're halfway there. You are a SWAT team sniper out to rescue a kidnapped president and his family via some fancy trick shooting. Splayed out on top of a handy vantage point, or picking his way through the undergrowth, your unseen sniper character pans around the screen looking for the conspicuously marked targets. However, while the arcade game that spawned this conversion had the benefit of a great big sniper rifle bolted on the front, the PlayStation2 has to make do with its Dual Shock 2 controller – an adequate, if occasionally erratic, alternative.

One of the keys to *Silent Scope's* success is that it completely understands its limitations, yet never lets its simplistic nature work against it. To spice things up a bit, it features a number of additional diversions during the course of each level. At several junctures, the player can opt for alternative routes through the game, while alarm and electronic systems can be taken out to confuse the enemy.

■ Lots of the levels take inspiration from famous films such as *True Lies*, *Robocop*, *The Last Boy Scout* and *Patriot Games*.



# SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET



**Silpheed: The Lost Planet** comes 23 years after *Space Invaders* first hit the arcades and, weaponry aside, nothing much has changed. You insert a coin. You press fire. You wrench left, right, Game Over.

If you're still confused about *Silpheed's* simplistic gaming world, here's a quick tutorial. You can move left, right, up, down, and you can fire. Wave upon wave of aliens attack from the top of the screen. There are many more of them than there are of you, but the odds are still stacked slightly in your favor, since their technology is still at a stage where they must attack you with small orange circles. Don't pity them – despite their aggressive ineptitude, they appear to have ruthlessly destroyed a planet, where everyone is obviously much worse than you at avoiding those small orange circles.

Sadly, *Silpheed's* afflicted with the digital disease that's been killing shooters since their 1977 inception – slow-down. Everything moves quite smoothly for a while, but when the missiles start to fly, the pace starts to grind. It's unacceptable, because game flow in this genre is so crucial.

*Silpheed's* also woefully undersized. Play it in Normal mode, and it shouldn't take you more than an afternoon to make your way through. The game actually gets better the further you progress but then it ends, leaving you with memories of a stilted, unsatisfying experience.

■ *Silpheed* first appeared on the Mega CD in the mid-'90s, where the grainy FMV and average shoot-'em-up action marked it as a moderate success.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Working Designs

**DEVELOPER:**

Treasure/Game Arts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

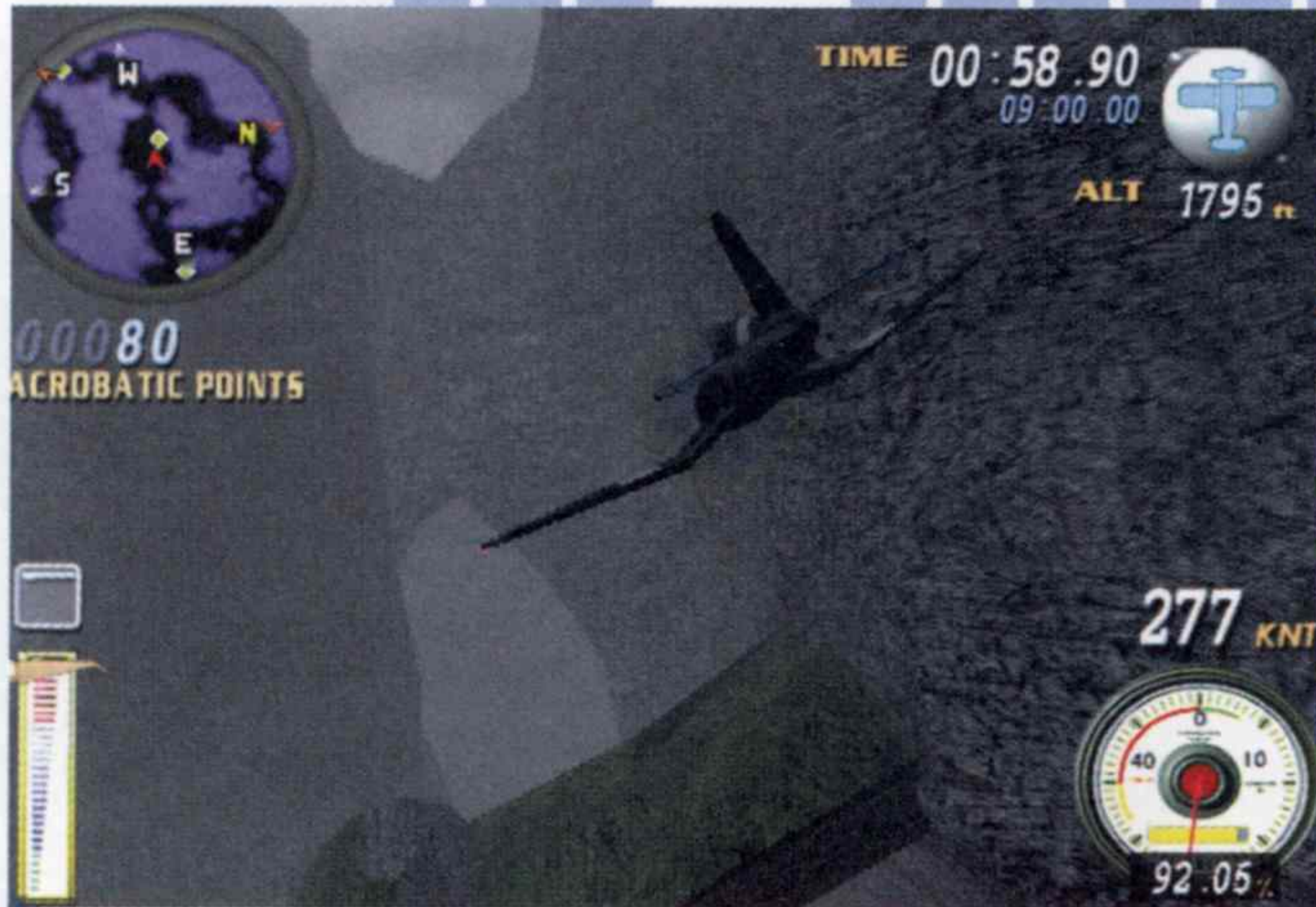
**HIGH:**

A blast from the past with its retro gaming feel

**LOW:**

Badly afflicted by slow-down, unacceptable on a console that's this powerful

**03/10**



# SKY ODYSSEY



**This is a one-player** flight sim without a single enemy to destroy and no weapons available to carry out the job even if there were. *Sky Odyssey* hijacks the future of the genre back from the clutches of all those ponderous, doorstep-manual flight sims and redirects it to the airspace directly above total enjoyment.

The key to the game's appeal is how it combines just enough realistic handling with imaginative missions. It has five distinct modes, all of which are open to you from the start. Training and Free Flight are immensely enjoyable in their own right. Target sets you the task of precision flying through a series of airborne markers before landing safely, while Sky Canvas challenges you to go all Etch-a-Sketch at altitude and learn the under-appreciated art of skywriting.

These stand-alone modes will equip you with the skills you need for the fifth and best mode of the lot: adventure. It seems there is an archipelago made up of four islands, each with their own climate and terrain, and none of which have been fully explored. Only a handful of brave pilots like yourself are up to the challenges these diverse environments offer. Choosing from three planes (biplane, customized WWII fighter or early pulse jet) you take on ever more difficult and varied missions set in challenging locations, from the arid canyons of Arcadie to the permanently mist-shrouded island of Destin.

*Sky Odyssey* is an engrossing and immensely playable game that deserves a hefty slice of anyone's free time.

■ Successfully complete all levels in Adventure mode with an A rank to unlock the silver UFO. Successfully complete all levels in Target mode with a gold rank to unlock the gold UFO.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Cross

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Ridiculously playable with imaginative missions

**LOW:**

No weapons and no two-player Target mode

**08/10**

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Rockstar

**DEVELOPER:**

Angel Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Good challenging competition and huge environments may well point optimistically to the future of PS2 gaming

**LOW:**

Too nice for its own good

**07 / 10****SMUGGLER'S RUN**

**Smuggler's Run** heads for the dusty tracks, shacks and cows of Hicksville, USA. The lawbreakers are *Dukes of Hazzard*-type hillbillies, the vehicles they drive are monster trucks and souped-up buggies.

You have to pick up contraband then drop it off again, all the while avoiding assorted bad guys who want your stash. The AI of your pursuants is so well tuned that you'll find yourself getting continually caught.

Gameplay is spread over three colossal themed landscapes, incorporating forest, desert and snow that blend slowly from pine clad hills into tundra on the Mexican border, and mountains on the wintery frontier with Canada. Littered all over the playing areas are numerous interactive objects that are constructed with reality-based physics. Smack into a stone and your vehicle breaks a little; drive into a fence and it breaks a bit more.

If you find yourself getting tired of the Mission mode, grab a friend with criminal inclinations and challenge them to the riotously manic two-player melee, which is like a huge game of dodgems.

*Smuggler's Run* creates its own little niche. Off-road racing and bootlegging complement each other well, but this game doesn't quite cut it as a crim-sim: it's just too nice. Enjoyment will come, though, if you're prepared to sacrifice a commitment to criminality in favor of more pastoral pleasures.

■ Developer Angel Studios is a car-game specialist; it also made *Midnight Club* on PS2 and *Midtown Madness* on PC.

**STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER****Star Wars: Starfighter**

is good. Very good. So good in fact, it'll even make hardened fans of the original trilogy whoop with unbridled joy at the *Episode I* videogame action. This is a thrilling next-generation 3D blaster and an absolute dream to play, with the added bonus of being drenched in some of the most sparkling visuals and superb sound effects you'll ever experience in the *Star Wars* universe.

The game is set parallel to the events of *Episode I*, following the fortunes of three new characters whose lives eventually cross and become united in a single cause to defeat the evil Trade Federation. Rhys Dallows is a cocky Naboo Bravo Squadron pilot flying an N-1 Fighter, Vana Sage is a mercenary in the cockpit of the tri-winged Guardian Mantis and Nym is a no-nonsense pirate controlling a meaty Havoc Bomber. Over the 14 missions (plus extra bonus games) you can fly all three craft, each of which handles very differently and has a unique array of tantalizing weaponry at its disposal.

The adventure begins on Naboo with a canyon training mission for Rhys and his N-1 Fighter, thus giving you a feel for the controls. Each of the missions has an Easy, Medium or Hard option with a main series of goals that all have to be completed successfully to progress.

In a tremendous return to form, LucasArts has produced a hugely addictive space combat experience with edge-of-your-seat skirmishes, sublime controls, stunning graphics, vibrant sound effects and enough bonus missions and mini-games to keep a wannabe Jedi Knight's midi-chlorian count sky high for ages.

■ Once unlocked, you can fly Darth Maul's Sith Infiltrator – a powerful, fast ship that can even outrun its own missiles. Hidden away in the game is an experimental fifth ship, too.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Exhilarating space and planet-based combat. Gorgeous, too

**LOW:**

Minor frame rate problems, annoying loading times and poor two-player games

**09 / 10**

# SSX



**SSX** takes your breath away, pulls the ground from beneath your feet and tosses you headlong into a snowdrift. The chairlift takes you to the top of a snow-capped peak and then casually tips you off the edge, leaving you to fend for yourself as the world flies past your ears at 100mph. It's all downhill from there.

Then suddenly, almost intuitively, you're weaving through the icy chicanes, sweeping through drifts, leaping over chasms and pulling elaborate stunts. You have tamed the mountain. Until the game suggests another course, higher, faster, longer and littered with even more indomitable obstacles than before.

SSX is a joy to play. The analog control stick floats perfectly under the thumb, enabling your chosen boarder to zigzag evenly through virgin snow. When this masterful sense of control is combined with the game's peerless sound effects, you really get the impression of the board cutting into ice or losing momentum as it ploughs through a shower of flakes. The detail is phenomenal and everything feels just right.

Yet SSX is not a realistic game. It makes no claim to be a real snowboarding simulator. Its creator knows that, within the confines of a videogame you can fashion something greater than reality and SSX's courses are stupendous constructions, full of color and personality.

There are two distinct paths to glory: the first is through the pursuit of speed alone,

beating five CPU opponents to the bottom of the hill. In Race mode, short cuts are crucial, and the more complex the course, the more multiple routes there are to be enjoyed. Finish in the medals and you unlock the next course.

To become a true SSX all-rounder, though, you'll need to master each mountain in Show-off mode. You're required to rack up points by performing stunts at every available opportunity. The lasting appeal of the one-player mode is assured by the diversity of the six courses and their potential for exploration. It's always worth trying to shave seconds off a time or pull ever more stunning tricks, because those few additional points gained can unlock more riders.

Naturally, the most intense battles will be fought against your friends in two-player mode. This highly impressive split-screen set-up sacrifices none of the speed of the single-player, and despite the length of the courses, the intervention of CPU boarders means that the field always stays tight. SSX is one of the best snowboarding games ever created.

■ Persuade the commentator to utter "skinned flying squirrel" by pressing **[L2] + [R2] + [C]**; or press **[L2] + [C]** and he will say "filet o' stalefish." Pointless, but fun.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**  
EA Sports (Canada)

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Lots of style, imaginative courses, a vast library of tricks and a top two-player mode

**LOW:**  
Nothing much wrong with this game

**09/10**



# SUMMONER



**As the sun sets**, big and fat in the winter sky, a small village nestled between frosty hills lights its lanterns and downs its tools. All is quiet apart from a tavern filled with song and the heady aroma of fresh food and ale. Suddenly, and without warning, the village is attacked. But one boy fights back. Cursed with the mark of the Summoner since birth, Joseph, a young farm-hand, uses his powers to summon demons to fight for the village. Unfortunately Joseph is a weak lad, and is thus unable to control his powers. As a result the summoned demons turn on the villagers and raze them to the ground. Joseph becomes an outcast and leaves, never to return...

*Summoner*, although still inextricably bound by certain RPG confines such as plot, strives to stand out from the overburdened bag of similar titles on the market. For one, the characterization is sublime. The gameplay is huge, sprawling and immersive, too. Besides the main mission of saving the world, there are multiple sub-plots weaving and entwined throughout.

Unfortunately, *Summoner*, no matter how great the sum of its parts, will be swept aside by *Final Fantasy X*. It's a fact of life, not a reflection on *Summoner*, because Volition's game is a truly entertaining spectacle. Grandiose and crafted with expert storytelling, *Summoner* should be relished before the might of *Final Fantasy X* forces us to forget it.

■ Each Bacite tail is worth up to 250 gold pieces, so the more you manage to lop off the better.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

THQ

### DEVELOPER:

Volition

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Beautifully scripted with gameplay so deep you could drown in it

### LOW:

Too ugly and the pop-up is way too severe in some places

09/10

# SWING AWAY GOLF

**First impressions of this** game are sound enough. Structurally, it's fine. There's a decent range of options, including the now-standard play a quick round or compete against a friend modes. The main focus is on Story mode where you attribute skill points to your chosen character and then guide them through a gotta-win-'em-all trophy-based Career mode.

Loading times are appalling, though – far slower than when the game was released in Japan as *Golf Paradise*, and pointing to a poor PAL conversion. Sit and watch for a moment. Look. It's loading up the sequence where the CPU player ponders their shot. It's loading up the animation where they take it. It's loading up a different camera angle to watch the ball move. It's loading up a celebration/misery routine for the computer, with some irritating vocals to match. It does this for every shot the computer takes. And there are other issues to contend with, too, like the ball dying far too quickly when in the slightest bit of rough, or the awful background music – too poor to go into further.

The biggest problem here is that, rather than killing time *Swing Away Golf* takes time, befriends it, and stretches it out into a looping stream of loading delays, missed putts and computer-generated comments. The decent control method and range of courses are ruined by the stupidly long pauses between shots.

Slightly more fun in two-player mode as you can chat while it loads.

■ Similar game engines were used for *Everybody's Golf* on PlayStation (called *Hot Shots* in the US), and also for *Mario Golf* on the N64.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA Sports

### DEVELOPER:

T&E Soft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Can be quite fun when played with your friends

### LOW:

The loading times are simply unacceptable and the characters irritating

03/10

PLAYSTATION2

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE •



## THEME PARK ROLLER COASTER



**It's a compliment to** the cartoon-styling of *Theme Park Roller Coaster* that such a modest concept can be such a delight to play. You start your career as a theme park tycoon with an expanse of featureless land, an imposing entrance gate and \$30,000 to play with. You then go about laying paths and placing features, rides, shops and restaurants, pausing only to hire staff and open the park to the public. From that moment on, success depends on satisfying the often mutually exclusive demands of both your bottom line and the visitors to your park. Get the balance exactly right and you'll have the cash to expand your empire, upgrade existing attractions, research and build new rides and train your hardworking staff.

Get it right consistently and you'll win golden tickets that'll enable you to open a new park with a different theme on one of the adjacent islands in this leisure-mad archipelago. Altogether there are eight different parks to build in four different styles: Lost Kingdom, Halloween World, Space Zone and Wonder Land. Each has a unique selection of features to fill it – right down to animated, themed waste bins.

Graphically and feature-wise the game isn't a huge leap up from the PlayStation version, but it is an all-round improvement and there are additional rides and attractions for you to work toward. Despite minor quibbles, *Theme Park Roller Coaster* is a charming and rewarding game.

■ Before you open your newly built park, increase the entry fee and remove a small section of path between the entrance and the attractions. For a small, but profitable period visitors will then pay to get in, reach the end of the path and leave without dropping litter and wearing out your pristine rides. And you get to keep the cash.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**

Bullfrog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Easy to pick up and great fun to play. Sublime attention to detail

**LOW:**

Repetition could grate and it's not far enough removed from last year's PlayStation version

07 / 10

## TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001



**The closest any golf game** has come to capturing the imagination of the mainstream is PlayStation's *Everybody's Golf*. A thoroughly entertaining game, its success was largely due to appealing cartoon visuals and crazy sound effects, both of which provided the perfect veneer to what was an authentic golfing simulation.

EA's venerable *PGA Tour* series was never meant to be amusing – this is real golf, with real players and real courses. The latest in the franchise (the third to star Tiger Woods) continues in this realistic vein.

Unusually for an EA Sports title, *Tiger 2001* isn't bursting with options and features. There are only three courses – Pebble Beach, Poppy Hills and Spyglass Hill, all famous venues from the US tour – and only six playable pros, including Mr. Woods. Out on the fairway, though, there are plenty of competitions to test your golfing ability. You can play a full Tour of the three courses, individual tournaments, Skins, Match play and Stroke play, as well as a quality Play Now mode featuring 21 tough challenges.

The most important factor in any golf game is its controls and rather than the swingometer method, *Tiger 2001* uses EA's innovative analog system. Simply pull back on the analog stick to start your swing and the power bar, then push it forward to set the power and strike the ball. It's easy, it's fluid and it feels about as close as you can get to replicating an actual golf swing. In the main it works superbly, but sometimes shots go awry for no reason. Unlike EA Sports' *NHL 2001*, *Tiger 2001* doesn't offer a generational leap in quality; it's just a decent, no frills game of golf.

■ To speed up the CPU's turn, when it hits the ball, press: **□ + △**.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

EA Sports

**DEVELOPER:**

EA Sports

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

As realistic a game of golf as you can get on a console

**LOW:**

Only three courses and lifeless environments

06 / 10



**Tekken Tag Tournament** is a 128-bit, ridiculously extravagant beat-'em-up, boasting a plethora of devilishly complex characters, superbly choreographed moves and ingenious combat styles that defy logic and skeptics alike. All of the above are animated with a razor precision.

*TTT* is really an excuse to reissue the PlayStation's *Tekken 3*, but sporting its Sunday best. Just as 1999's *TTT* arcade original was an update of the coin-op *Tekken 3*, the same is true of this PlayStation2 incarnation. The saving grace of this version is exactly the same as it was in the arcades – the inclusion of a new Tag option. It's an incredible asset, and manages to improve yet further on *Tekken's* already legendary gameplay.

Bored with Jin simply pummeling the brains out of your opponent's ears? Then why not quickly switch characters, let breakdancing wideboy Eddy deliver a kneecap-splintering sidesweep, and then switch back to Jin again before your opponent's teeth even touch the ground. This Tag element provides an obvious and gratifying new option but, as you'd expect from the King of the Iron Fist, random button-bashing won't get the best from it. Specific partnerships have specific benefits. Obviously, combining upper



# TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

body strength with devastating footwork guarantees a formidable partnership, but family ties are just as strong. This is where you thank Namco for making *Tekken* the revenge-driven soap opera that it is.

Long time Iron Fist fans will be pleased and familiar with *TTT's* roll call. Every *Tekken* character ever created is on call – 20 are accessible from the beginning, while 19 have to be earned by completing the Arcade mode. There's even a new end-of-game boss called Unknown. A delicate nymph possessed by the spirit of a ghostly werewolf and dressed in nothing but head-to-toe gelatinous black mucous, Unknown has the ability to assimilate the disciplines of those she is fighting.

Yet no matter how much of an enigma the likes of Unknown pose, it's undeniable that *TTT* would be left treading water if it weren't for the Tag option.

Without it, we'd be looking at little more than a next-gen update of *Tekken 3*. With it, it's *Tekken 3* with knobs on. However inspired or cynical this option is, it has undeniably saved *TTT* from a critical mauling because it makes it possible to overlook the game's various technical weaknesses.

*Tekken Tag* is a great, highly entertaining game. It's still the fighting game with the most replayability, and the most to learn. It's still got the most amusing, entertaining and varied bunch of characters of any fighter. And now it's got that Tag option, which adds greatly to the overall replayability.

■ Every special move or combo that leads to a knockout is replayed in glorious multi-angle slo-mo.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Namco

### DEVELOPER:

Namco

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

With tagging now an option and 40 characters to play with, it's the best *Tekken* yet

### LOW:

Resembles *Tekken 3*. Slow-down can be a problem

08/10

DREAMCAST

PLAYSTATION2

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

149

# TIMESPLITTERS



**Timesplitters is the game** that Sony's world-conquering machine was made for – a frenetic, pumped-up 3D blaster with incredibly addictive gameplay, jaw-dropping graphics, an arsenal of awesome weaponry and enough options to keep you nailed to your PlayStation2 for months.

The Timesplitters in question are an evil race of temporal scavengers who maraud throughout Earth's history, spreading chaos and destruction for their own sinister purposes. In their path is a disparate group of playable B-movie characters who must defeat them across various time zones. As you gradually complete the different levels, further sets of time zones are unlocked until you have a toy box of nine separate playable areas, which you can dip into at your leisure to unlock stuff such as challenges, multiplayer maps, characters and cheats.

*Timesplitters* is a hugely satisfying single-player experience, but the multiplayer Arcade mode is just fantastic. With a PlayStation2 multi-tap, you can enjoy a split-screen deathmatch involving up to four players, swearing and shooting at each other in a visceral, lightning-paced battle. Deathmatch isn't the only multiplayer challenge either – there are another five game types to whet your whistle.

The icing on the cake has got to be the inspired Mapmaker, which enables you to construct your own multi-level environments using the 20 available building blocks or tiles.

■ Some of the *Timesplitter's* development team also worked on the brilliant *GoldenEye* for the N64.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Free Radical Design

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A fantastic game for the single player and a riot with three friends playing

**LOW:**

Slow loading times

09/10



# UNREAL TOURNAMENT



**Unreal Tournament has over 50** beautifully designed arenas, 21 characters, six very different game options and 12 weapons of destruction. If you played the PC original, you'll notice that the PlayStation2 port has been given a console-friendly overhaul – pull-down Windows menus have gone, replaced by a much more approachable arcade-style appearance. In another progression, hard-fought battles are rewarded with unlocked characters, maps, cheats and different game ladders that include deathmatch tournaments, Capture the Flag competitions and other juicy challenges.

The main course of any FPS banquet is a classic every-psycho-for-themselves deathmatch, and *Unreal Tournament* doesn't fail to serve up a blood-rare feast. The 12 maps take you on a journey to distant starships, creaky wooden galleons, eerily deserted space stations and multi-level industrial factories teeming with platforms, teleports, underwater tunnels and vertigo-inducing walkways. Ingenious interactive environmental weapons are also included. The frame rate however, is a major problem in *UT's* multiplayer games. As soon as there is any major action on-screen, the game slows right down, resulting in an extremely jerky appearance.

This is a superb game if you want big weapons, bots with intelligent AI, internal organs decorating walls, a collection of beautifully designed levels, innovative deathmatch variations and keyboard/mouse input. Multiplayer games are jolly, too, but unfortunately, a poor frame rate tarnishes *Unreal Tournament*.

■ Transporters zap you quickly and painlessly to a different area of the tournament arena.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**

Epic Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Huge number of well-designed levels and superb deathmatch variations

**LOW:**

On-screen action gives a jerky frame rate and a disappointing multiplayer game

08/10



# WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

3DO

### DEVELOPER:

3DO

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Tremendous multiplayer fun with suitably OTT weaponry

### LOW:

Not much fun as a single-player game

# 07/10



**Based entirely around combat**, the plot of *World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks* is inconsequential. It's the thrill of heavy-duty fire power and exploding metal that defines the real spirit of this game. Although combat is from the comfort of your armored vehicle, the single-player game is similar to *TimeSplitters* in that you are thrown into first-person deathmatches with a huge arsenal of weapons at your disposal. Battles take place in the game's many arenas against computer-controlled opponents, in two different modes of play.

The first, Tournament mode, puts you against the computer in a series of battles. Skirmish mode, on the other hand, can be played against the computer or as multiplayer; this section consists of Deathmatch, Domination, Capture the Flag and Frenzy. As well constructed as the gameplay is, in single-player mode *WDL:TT* can get tedious pretty quickly. It really only shines when you and three of your pals are sitting in front of the television.

The many arenas are all well-designed and, given enough fire power, you can blow holes through walls and topple buildings onto your enemy with satisfying efficiency. The weapons range from guided missiles to simple grenades, but balanced with the mother of all arms – the Apocalypse-inducing, all-destroying nuke.

Finally, and most importantly, the basic design of the game hasn't really changed much since *Battletanx* on N64. But you'll be so wrapped up in the gameplay that this becomes a moot point.

■ There are plenty of tanks to choose from in the game. As well as differing stats, all the tanks have different weapons.

## WILD WILD RACING



**Stripped of storyline** or fancy dressing – much as its tube-frame buggies are stripped for speed – *Wild Wild Racing* saves its depth for the most committed players. This becomes clear when you see the complex web of interconnected game modes it offers. The ultimate aim is to claim victory in them all, but it's impossible to get far in one without dipping into the others. Sure, some tracks are unlocked in the Championship mode, but you won't be able to access later ones without upgrades which are won in Time Attack, or new cars which are obtained in the Challenge mode, which is so good that it could be a full game in its own right.

What of the tracks? Well, *WWR* has five in total, with only three available at start of play. That may not sound like much, but what they lack in number they make up for in complexity and length. Each course is an undulating epic, with unpredictable surfaces and inclement weather.

*WWR* is a game that some will love and others will hate in equal measure. If you have the skill and dedication enough to get to grips with its handling, cars and tracks, *Wild Wild Racing* should prove a fine purchase. It will reward your time with a satisfying challenge and impress visually with atmospheric lighting and detailing throughout. But the fact remains that for off-road action, *WWR's* main competition is likely to be *Smuggler's Run* – a more instantly accessible and far more enjoyable driving experience.

■ *Wild Wild Racing* is Rage's first outing on the mighty PlayStation2, following in the footsteps of its similarly themed PC game *Offroad*.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Rage

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Good courses and lots of variety in the game modes

### LOW:

The game can seem very hard and the suspension in particular is unforgiving

# 06/10

# ZONE OF THE ENDERS



**Zone of the Enders** was regarded by some as something of a Konami stop-gap, designed to fill the time until the long-awaited *Metal Gear Solid 2* appeared. However, it soon became apparent that this simply wasn't the case.

The game's story is that of reluctant heroism set in 22nd century space. And young, doe-eyed Leo becomes the accidental hero after his home - Jupiter's huge space station Antilia - is besieged by a mechanoid army. In the ensuing battle, he takes refuge in one of the many warehouses scattered throughout the metropolis. Unbeknown to him, this particular warehouse contains one of the most advanced pieces of fighting equipment of the time - the Jehuty.

As explosions rage outside, Leo climbs into the seeming sanctuary of Jehuty - a vast robotic frame. Detecting human presence, the mechanoid's artificial intelligence program activates and so begins one boy's epic journey of self-discovery, friendship and character-building adventures.

Handling an enormous robot armed to the hilt with futuristic weaponry could seem cumbersome, but the Jehuty is responsive, aided by instinctive camera angles that always remain focused on the action from the best possible vantage point.

Additionally *Zone of the Enders* has looks to die for. The cityscape of Antilia is situated within a revolving hub that stretches into the distance, with occasional tiny explosions dotted here and there. While you fly high above the city, your Jehuty will receive SOS messages from beleaguered sectors. You



should descend upon these areas and assist. As the ground gets closer during battle, tiny civilian buildings with cars in the drive, working factories with trucks parked in the loading bay and freeways jeweled with sparkling maintenance lights are freely and wantonly obliterated - and it's beautiful.

Tremendous lighting effects add to this visual feast and Konami has also produced some great accompanying music.

*Zone of the Enders* is as intelligent as it is playable. End of level bad guys are ferocious, nimble creatures with real ingenuity. Each enemy has different AI to consider and will quickly adapt to your attack patterns. To survive, then, you must diversify your attacks.

The plot is engaging without being cumbersome and effectively serves to pad out the great action. The mission structure is equally well conceived, the weapons are varied and because of the bond between Leo and his robot you'll find that you really don't want the Jehuty to come to harm. Whereas storming into a situation has been readily acceptable in so many shoot-'em-ups, *Zone of the Enders* rewards caution and thought.

■ Locking-on to an enemy is often the best way to ensure that you kill it. Once you have it ensnared there's really no way for it to escape.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Konami

**DEVELOPER:**  
KCEJ

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Addictive gameplay and stunning looks

**LOW:**  
Too short for hardcore gamers

09/10

# PLAYSTATION2 CHALLENGES

DREAMCAST

PLAYSTATION2

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

•

153



## DEAD OR ALIVE 2

### ANALOG FIGHTING

A very cool *DOA2* feature that isn't mentioned in the English instruction booklet is the fact that the punch and

kick buttons are pressure-sensitive. There are three degrees of pressure, and by using them you can access alternative ways of pulling off combos.

## MOTO GP

### ROAD RASH

The excellent *Moto GP* is about as hardcore as racing games get, so you can do pretty much anything you can

do on a real bike. And that includes knocking other riders off their mounts. In Simulation mode, see if you can cause three bikers to crash without falling off yourself.



## POOLMASTER

### SHARK ATTACK

If you're good at real-life pool, you'll be good at this game. But since it is just a computer game, you can do

things you wouldn't dare try on a pub table – jump shots, for example. See if you can make a legal break by jumping the cue ball into the middle of the pack.

## QUAKE III

### EMBARRASSING

The very first level, where you face off against just one opponent, isn't difficult. To add a bit of spice, see

how many times you can tag the lone enemy using your fist. Listen out for the Humiliation awards, and ramp up the difficulty level if you find it too easy.



## SILENT SCOPE

### THAT'S GOTTA HURT

The first level is a gentle introduction to the game, so this challenge shouldn't be all that hard. Try to notch up

five consecutive head shots. Too easy for you? Make it tougher on yourself and see how many you can get without using the rifle's zoom function.

## SSX

### SPOILER

Start a two-player game, but instead of competing in a good, clean race to the finish, do your best to stop the

other player disappearing from your part of the screen. This means you'll have to shadow your friend's movements, while he tries to throw you off the trail.



## TEKKEN TAG

### USE THE FORCE

The *Tekken Bowling* mode is great. If you want to make it more difficult, try this. Bowl a few practice balls

so you get a feel for the timing involved, then attempt to score a strike with your eyes closed. If you've got the rhythm, you'll be able to do it.

## TIMESPLITTERS

### DUEL

Here's a deadly game for two. Both players should collect a slow-firing pistol, and use no other weapon.

Stand back to back and walk forward until there's a good distance between you. Then turn, aim and fire a single shot, without using the cross-hair. Repeat until dead!



## UNREAL TOURNAMENT

### GODLIKE

If you've played the PC version you'll have seen the Monster Kill award given for offing multiple enemies in a

short time, but can you do it on the sparsely populated PS2 version? Go to the Facing Worlds level to stand a chance. Anything better than a Double Kill is great work.

## ZONE OF THE ENDERS

### SLASH AND BURN

Round up plenty of enemy Frames, by flying close enough to make them follow you. Break out the Halberd

beam sword weapon and see if you can bring down more than three of the bad guys before you take a hit. Getting hit switches off the Halberd beam.



## PLAYSTATION2 INFO BURST

Though it's only a young system, PlayStation2 has already seen the release of an impressive number of games. Of course it's nothing like the roster available for PSOne, and it might be a while before any of this lot reaches the budget price range, but when the technology's this much fun who can be bothered to wait?

Generally, the games that follow have been put into this section because they're of less mainstream interest, are sequels that aren't ground-breaking or they just don't add anything new to their genre. This is not to say that they're all sub-standard; they were all worthy of review and there's a lot here to offer hours of sublime gaming pleasure, as their scores demonstrate. Remember - it's from these small beginnings that third-party developers are building the future of the system. Look out for the disasters, though - there's one or two titles in here that could sully your PS2 experience if you're not wise enough to steer a careful course around them.



REVIEWED: Apr '00



### 4X4 EVOLUTION

PUB: GodGames

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Terminal Reality

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



The problem with this game is the subject matter - hulking great off-road vehicles that need nerves of steel and arms like Tyson to wrestle under control. Thankfully, realism has taken a back seat to playability but, even so, boy racers in search of arcade thrills or sim fans lusting after the ultimate ride will both be disappointed.

REVIEWED: Nov '00

### AQUA AQUA

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Zed Two

BUDGET: No



Your aim is to create an even balance of land and water. By directing and positioning Tetris-esque building blocks that fall from the heavens, you have to build up a series of walls and hills, creating lakes to hold the water that drops in the form of blue balls. The more lakes you create, the higher your score. A great first puzzle game for PS2.



VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Jan '01



### DRAGON'S LAIR

PUB: Digital Leisure

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Cinematronics

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

02/10



This is a traditional fantasy adventure in which the hero has to rescue a princess from the dragon's lair of the title. There is a small amount of pleasure to be squeezed out of the game, and it will hold fond memories if you played the arcade original. Ultimately, however, it's 17-year-old technology crammed on to a DVD disc - and it shows.

REVIEWED: Jan '01

### DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP

PUB: Digital Leisure

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Cinematronics

BUDGET: No



Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp may have been better than the arcade original in nearly every department, but the enhancements have not made it on to Digital Leisure's DVD conversion. If you want to relive your youth by coming back to the Dragon's Lair universe, you'll be sorely disappointed. This will appeal to no one at no time.



VERDICT:

01/10

REVIEWED: Mar '01



### DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S

PUB: Square EA

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Escape

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

04/10



The main mode offers seven vehicles from five manufacturers and three circuits on which to shred your tires. There's also a two-player mode that is reasonably entertaining, provided both drivers are equally matched. But all this is a mere wheel nut compared to the chassis-sized problems that Driving Emotion Type-S suffers from.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## ESPN NBA 2NIGHT

PUB: Konami

PLAYERS: 1-8

DEV: KCEO

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**It's just like real** basketball: overblown and overhyped. *ESPN NBA 2Night* is arrogantly lovable, but essentially repetitive, and that means it's only really fun when you're playing it with friends. Even then, it's probably not going to be your skill that wins a match - it's going to be an error on the part of your opponent.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## READY 2 RUMBLE ROUND 2

PUB: Midway

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Midway

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



**This is not a** serious rival to such beat-'em-up heavyweights as *Tekken* and *DOA2*. As it stands, *R2RR2* has no real competition - instead it's opted for a slapstick approach that pays dividends in every way. The gameplay itself is intense and playable enough to add weight to the real areas of interest - the looks, sounds and humor.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

PUB: Konami

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: KCEO

BUDGET: No



**ESPN National Hockey Night** is an enjoyable enough sports game with competent graphics, all the stats you can eat and a pleasurable pick-up-and-play aesthetic. Unfortunately, a few annoying traits mean that it's skating on thin ice when compared to the panache and playability of EA Sports' mighty *NHL 2001*.

VERDICT:

06/10

## SKY SURFER

PUB: Idea Factory

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Idea Factory

BUDGET: No



**Sky surfing involves throwing** yourself out of a plane with your feet attached to a board. The idea is to do as many "gnarly" tricks as possible before pulling the ripcord and parachuting to safety. It sounds exhilarating. So it's unfortunate that *Sky Surfer* itself is an insultingly one-dimensional affair and boring at that.

REVIEWED: Feb '01



VERDICT:

03/10

REVIEWED: Apr '01



## F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

PUB: Ubi Soft

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Video System

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**This is as comprehensive** as any other F1 game, but while it has some entertaining moments, it remains less engaging than the competition. Ultimately, this is average Formula One videogame territory. Despite a few structural trinkets, you've seen this sort of thing before. You've seen it done worse, but you've also seen it done better.

REVIEWED: Feb '00



## SPACE ACE

PUB: Digital Leisure

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Cinematronics

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

01/10



**Space Ace's animation and** wonderfully drawn environments were impressive back in 1983, but the game showed a distinct lack of imagination. The "explore the castle and rescue the damsel in distress" storyline returns, only this time set in the future. But it's the gameplay that is important and, by today's standards, *Space Ace* is pathetic.

## SURFING H30

PUB: Rockstar

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: ASCII

BUDGET: No



**Surfing H30 is a** disappointment, partly because there was so much potential here for a great surfing game. All the basics are in place, it's just the execution that's at fault. Perhaps for the inevitable sequel the developer will sort out the control system, polish the graphics and speed the whole thing up. Here's hoping.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



VERDICT:

04/10

## STREET FIGHTER EX3

PUB: Capcom

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Arika

BUDGET: No



**The new features in** this game will appeal to die-hard *Street Fighter* fans, but there's not much here to dissuade you from buying *Tekken Tag Tournament* instead. Though it pioneered so much in the beat-'em-up genre in the past, all the evidence suggests that *Street Fighter's* best years are behind it.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



VERDICT:

06/10

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## HOLOGRAM TIME TRAVELLER

PUB: Digital Leisure

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Sega

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

01/10



**Sega's Hologram Time Traveller** made a fortune in the arcades of the early '90s. It came in a squat white cube, capped with a translucent dome, and promised the future: hologram gaming. What it actually offered was a fuzzed-up, jerky version of classic *Dragon's Lair*. Sadly, the re-release of the game in DVD format is just as poor.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## SUPER BUST-A-MOVE

PUB: Acclaim

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Taito

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

04/10



**Bust-A-Move is a** true classic, up there with *Tetris*. You fire bubbles, you explode bubbles, you win, you lose, you start again. Sadly, while the game has never exactly relied on its graphical muscles, it looks wrong on PlayStation2. On a lesser system, *Super Bust-A-Move* would hold a semblance of credibility. On PS2, it's just baffling.

# COMING SOON...

PLAYSTATION2'S STILL IN ITS INFANCY, YET THE GAMES ARE PILING UP. IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT 2002 FOR PS2 OWNERS...

**A**t the time of writing, it's a little over six months since the launch of PlayStation2 in the UK – and, without resorting to too clichéd a cliché, what a six months it's been. Midnight shop openings, gamer riots in Paris, *Tekken Tag* dust-offs, demo levels of Hideo Kojima's mind-blowing *Metal Gear Solid 2*, brief hints about on-line gaming, the train-spotter bliss of building up a brand-new

DVD collection, Sega's unexpected announcement that it would now make PS2 games, waiting for FedEx to deliver our import copies of *Gran Turismo 3*...

Granted, there were teething troubles at launch with some gamers having to wait for their PS2 to be delivered, but finally Sony not only managed the most successful console launch in history, but delivered a superb machine that offers so much for the future it hurts. With the announcement of Nintendo and Microsoft next-gen consoles, the pressure is now on Sony to not only keep its foot on the gas with killer games, but to expand the capabilities for its sleek new baby and truly deliver on all the promise and hype.

Thanks to a rather privileged

position as the company that publishes the official UK magazine for PlayStation2, we're privy to some of the info that will reveal just how Sony intends to keep PlayStation2 at the top of the pile for 2001 and beyond. Time to dust off the crystal ball for a look at some of the highlights of the year ahead...

Take a look at the back of your PlayStation2 and you'll see the words "Expansion Bay" – or as it is at the moment, a plastic slot covering an empty hole. Come the end of 2001, you'll be able to fill that hole with Sony's Hard Disc Drive (HDD).

Announced for release this fall, the HDD will be a whopping 40Gb in size and open up a whole new world of opportunities for your

PlayStation2. Like action games? You'll be able to download new weapons, cars, costumes and settings for your favorite titles. Prefer sports games? How about downloading statistics and weather effects from the Monaco Grand Prix so you can race against the real drivers on the real track in real time. Want to try out games before you buy? Download game demos, movie trailers and MP3 samples to your HDD and play away.

All of which sounds great – but how do you get hold of this new content? Again due this fall for around \$40, the PS2 network adaptor enables both high-speed Ethernet connection or a v90 analog modem option. Translated, that means you'll not only be able to perform low-spec

## "WHISPERS INDICATE GAMEPLAY THAT COULD CHANGE THE NATURE OF GAMING FOREVER"

operations like e-mailing, Web browsing and instant messaging (Sony is working with both Netscape and AOL on this), but the more fortunate will be able to experience high-end on-line gaming right from the start.

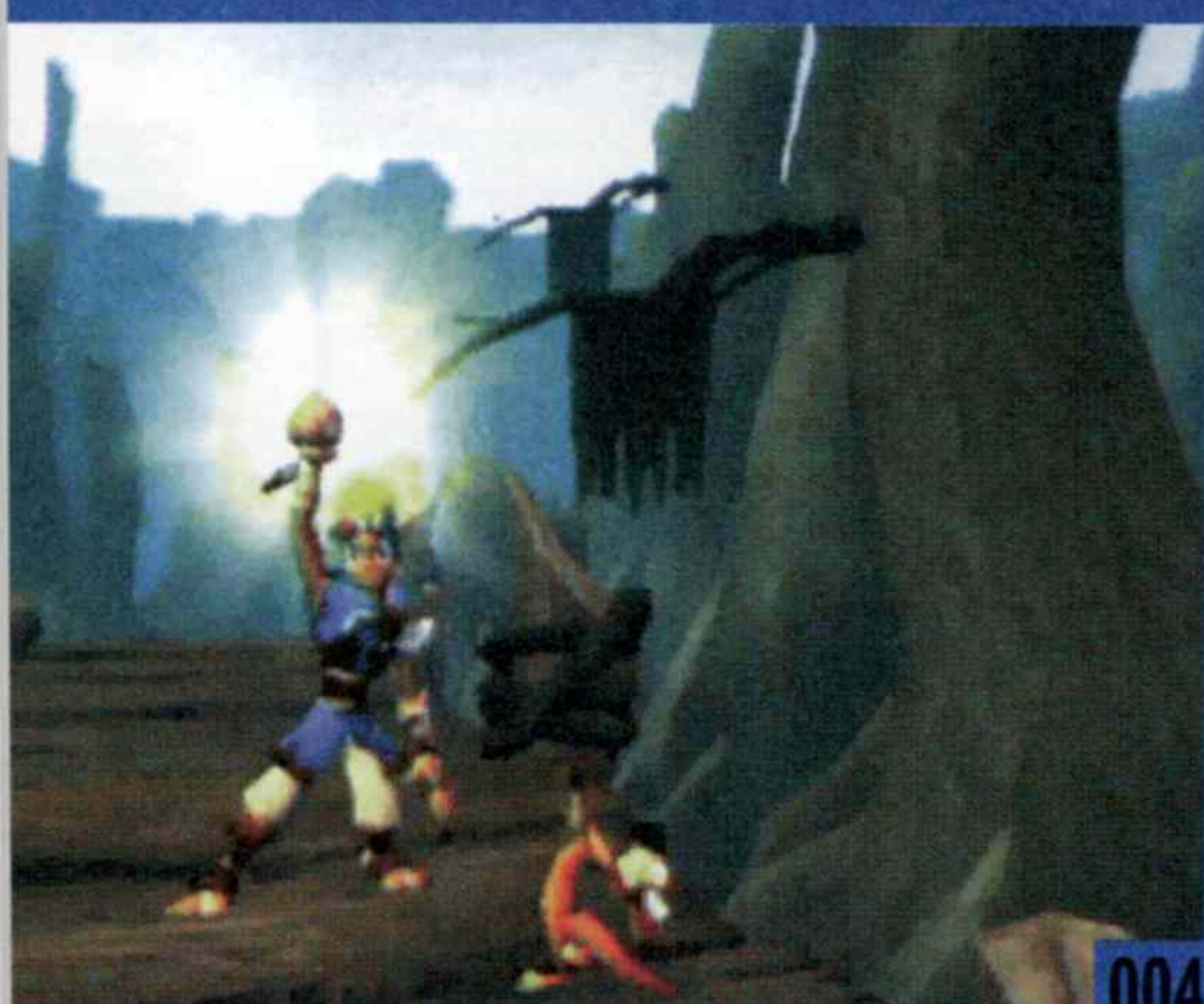
Everything from cult first-person shooter *Tribes 2* (see over, 015) to skateboarding hit *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* will be on-line-compatible right out of the box, with Sega's forthcoming sports titles enabling multiple on-line play – imagine a football game where you meet your friends on-line, agree to take



001



002 003



004 005



separate positions and then play a rival team. That good.

Despite the adrenaline rushes that were *TimeSplitters*, *SSX* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*, one of the criticisms of the original batch of PS2 games is that there were no "killer apps" – the games that truly make a console indispensable. Six months on, games such as *Quake III*, *Crazy Taxi* (006-010) and *Star Wars Starfighter* (011-012) have improved the situation, but the very best is yet to come, with games from all genres making an appearance before the year is out.

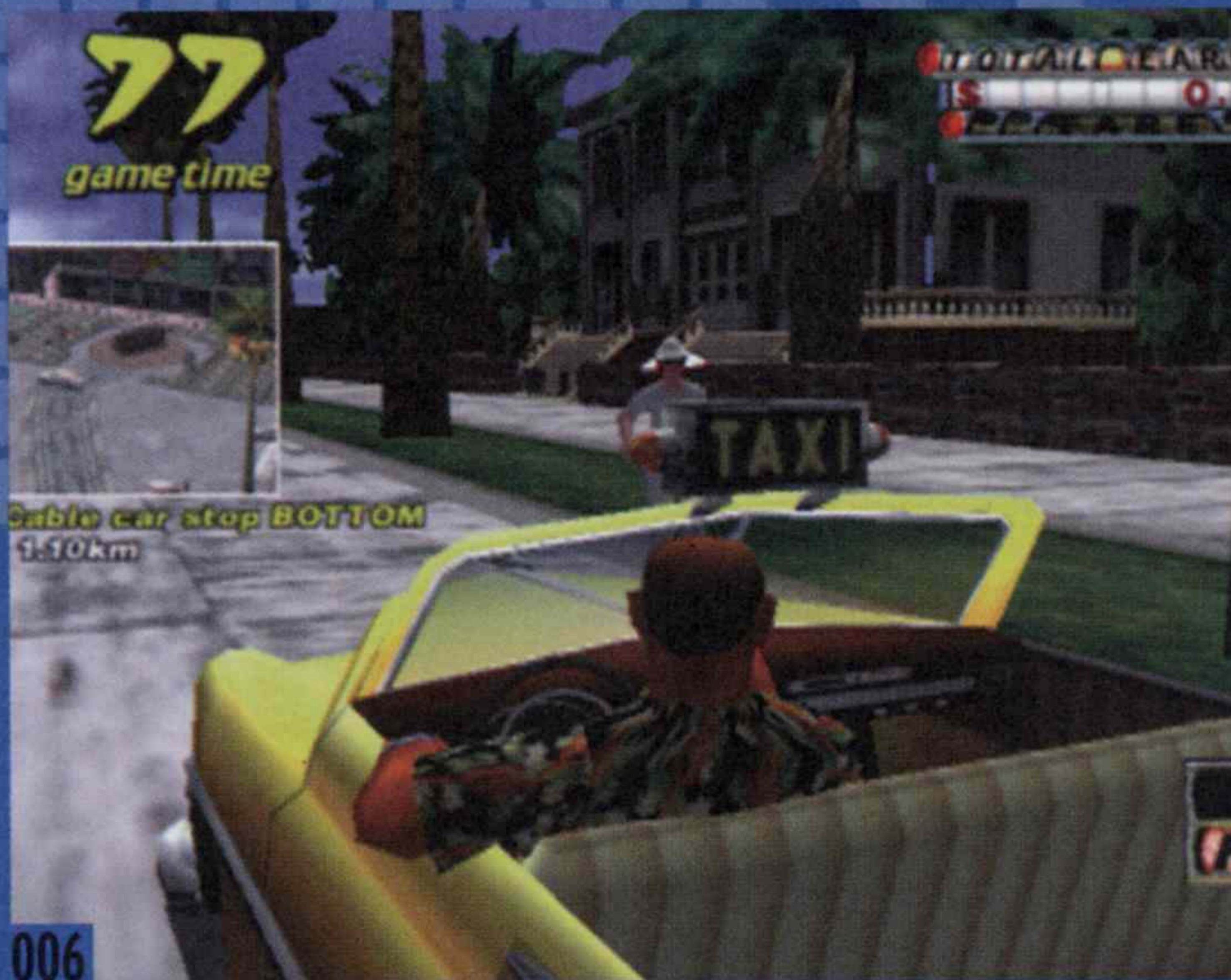
Motorheads will be suitably revved up about the arrival of *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec* – the next-gen update of Polyphony's sublime driving sim. Those who

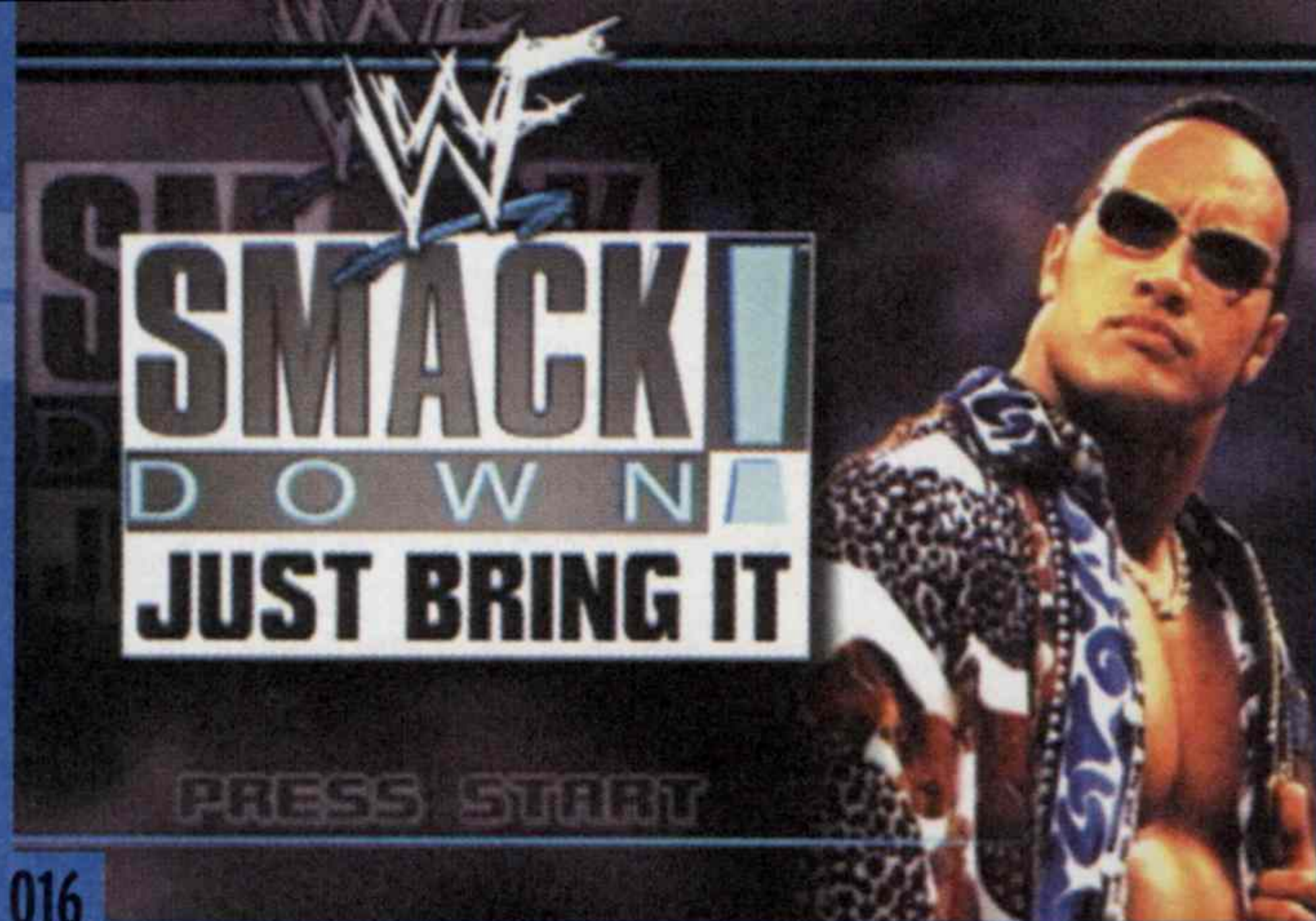
prefer the more *Mario* side of gaming (but don't want to wait for GameCube to appear...) will flip for *Jak and Daxter* (001-005), a gorgeous 3D platform/puzzle adventure from Naughty Dog, the maker of *Crash Bandicoot*, which plays as good as it looks. Skateboard brats will want to get their shredded fingers on the on-line-compatible *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, while those who prefer the more epic side of role-playing will roll their dice in joy at the forthcoming *Final Fantasy X*, with a fully on-line (and cross-platform-compatible) sequel coming a year later.

Other titles on their way over the next 12 months include such sure-fire hits as dead-cert number-one *WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It* (016-018); thinking man's first-person shooter *Deus Ex*; the fighting trio of *Virtua Fighter 4*, *Tekken 4* and a PS2 version of *Soul Calibur*; a slew of seasonal updates from EA Sports (including *FIFA 2002*) plus from the makers of cult PSone hit *Driver*, a superb movie-based racer named *Stuntman*. If you're of a more experimental bent, look out for such PS2 dark horses as cult soccer title *ISS Evolution*,

*Matrix*-style action-fest *Dead to Rights*, the gag-addled adventure *Escape From Monkey Island* and the as-yet musically indefinable *K-Project* from Sega (013-014).

And lastly? Well, there's the amazing *Devil May Cry* from Capcom, the spooky maker of *Resident Evil*, or you can hang on for the PS2 adventures of a certain Ms. Lara Croft (expect some very harsh tomb raiding, this time set in Eastern Europe), but if you were to put your money on one game sure to make the PlayStation2 even more indispensable, it would be *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*. This is the sequel to what is generally regarded as the original PlayStation's best ever game, and moreover early levels of the stealth-obsessed action-adventure have both





016



018



017



019



020

looked and played at a different level to the opposition. Latest details did hint at an evil clone of hero Solid Snake who just might be the president of the USA, while robo-monster Metal Gear Ray is set to stomp the hell out of Manhattan in metallic Godzilla style. Trust us when we say this game will beat the hell

out of anything you've played.

One of the best things about PlayStation2 is that, not to be too technical, you can plug stuff into it. Japanese gamers with a digital camera have been able to insert their faces into PS2 sports titles *Winning Eleven* and *Golf Paradise DX*, simply by taking a snapshot of themselves and

## "ADD ON THE SWEET PROMISE OF ON-LINE GAMING AND THE FUTURE IS GLOWING"

connecting their camera to the PS2 with a simple USB lead. Expect US versions to incorporate this feature, with titles like *WWF SmackDown* to follow suit using DigiMask technology. Other cool peripherals include a USB microphone that will enable you to bark orders at your soldiers in *SOCOM: US Navy Seals* (021-025), while if you have a recordable MiniDisc player you can import samples and export tunes from Codies' *MTV Music Generator 2*.

King of the lightgun, Namco, hasn't forgotten PlayStation2 either, with the announcement of two PS2 shooters - *Time Crisis II* and *Vampire Nights*.

Compatible with either the old GunCon 45 or a new USB

version updated for PS2, just take aim and blast away to your heart's content. A new twist on this will also come from Konami's *Police 911* (026-028). It uses a cheap USB camera to "recognize" the player's movements - you'll have to duck to avoid being hit by the baddies' bullets!

Expect some amazing developments with USB cameras and games to come from Sony before the year is out - early whispers indicate gameplay that could change the nature of games as we know them.

And if you don't really want to take out hordes of bad guys with headshots? Then queue up for Sony's new infrared Remote Control to make vegging out in



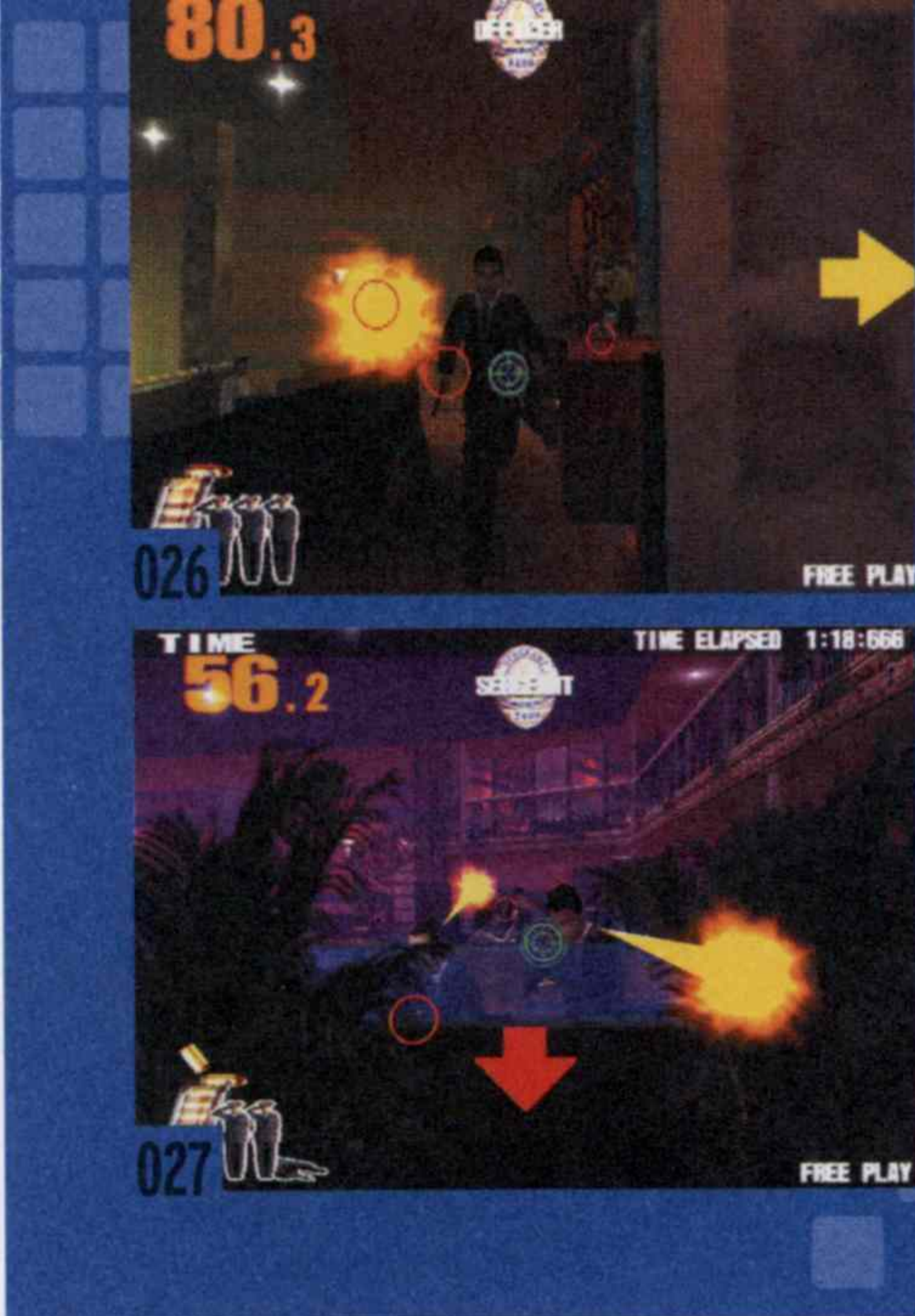
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front of your DVD collection much easier or for the more on-line orientated, a new keyboard/mouse/monitor combo from Sony that will make your Web browsing a lot more simple.

So what's left to look forward to? Oh, everything. Our crystal ball gets a little hazy the further we peer into the future, but here's a few truths, lies, rumors and downright guesses for PlayStation2. Do take the following with a pinch of salt, but don't be surprised when one or two of these beauties end up in your living room.

Interactive DVD versions of hit game movies *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*... Sega to announce a huge on-line deal with Sony to enable mobile phone connectivity for *Virtua Fighter 4*... Will Lara be working in a museum for her debut PS2 outing?... *Gran Turismo's* (019-020) next incarnation to come on-line-compatible, but not just with on-line play or extra cars... Nintendo mainstay *Turok* to move its dinosaur hunting over to PS2... *Metal Gear Solid 2* to



use Sony's Hard Disc Drive to store piles of downloadable weapons... First-person shooter *EXO* to put Sheffield developers on the map... Tamagotchi-style game content and info text messaged to your mobile phone... Look out for a witch flying onto your PS2 from Sony... Extended DVD editions of the latest music albums, made specifically for PS2... A wide array of multi-platform

compatible on-line worlds like those of Square's *Final Fantasy*... And Sony to take over the world. Maybe.

In a sentence? Things are looking great for the future. The original PlayStation was a massive hit because of the breadth and depth of its game catalogue, and whether you want cute platforming, stealthy adventuring, hyperrealistic driving, a killer game of footie or

just about anything in between, PlayStation2 looks like it'll be delivering in spades. Add on the sweet promise of on-line gaming and the future is glowing.

The only problem cluttering the horizon? Finding enough time in the day to play all of those beautiful, beautiful games...

Mike Goldsmith,  
Official UK PlayStation2 Magazine



3D Lemmings	266	Dune 2000	190	Madden NFL 2001	270
Abomination: The Nemesis Project	162	Dungeon Keeper	190	Magic Carpet	216
Actua Soccer 3	162	Dungeon Keeper 2	191	Magic: The Gathering	216
Age of Empires II: The Conquerors	266	Earthworm Jim 3D	268	Majesty	217
Age of Wonders	266	Empire of the Ants	268	Martian Gothic Unification	270
Airfix Dogfighter	163	Enemy Engaged: Comanche vs. Hokum	267	Master of Orion	217
Aliens vs. Predator	164	Escape From Monkey Island	192	MDK	218
Allegiance	164	Everquest	191	MDK 2	218
Alone in the Dark Trilogy	165	Evolva	268	MechWarrior 4: Vengeance	219
Alpha Centauri	165	F-22 Air Dominance Fighter	193	Mercedes Benz Truck Racing	270
American McGee's Alice	163	F-22 Lightning II	193	Metal Fatigue	270
Apache Havoc	266	F-22 Raptor	194	Metal Gear Solid	219
Asheron's Call	166	F1 Manager	268	Micro Machines V3	220
B-17 Flying Fortress: The Mighty Eighth	166	FA/18E: Super Hornet	194	Midnight Racing	270
Balance of Power	266	Falcon 4.0	195	Midtown Madness	270
Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn	167	Fate of the Dragon	275	Midtown Madness 2	220
Battle Isle 2	267	FIFA 2001	195	Mig Alley	221
Battle Isle: The Andosia War	167	Fighter Squadron	268	Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge	248
Battlezone	168	Final Fantasy VII	196	Motocross Madness	271
Battlezone II: Combat Commander	168	Final Fantasy VIII	196	Motocross Madness 2	221
Beetle Crazy Cup	169	Flying Heroes	268	Myst	271
Bitmap Bros. Compilation	267	Force Commander	197	Myth	222
Black & White	170	Forsaken	197	Myth II: Soulblighter	222
Blade of Darkness	237	Freespace 2	198	Nerf Arena	223
Blade Runner	169	G-Tok	268	NHL 2001	223
Blair Witch Vol. 1: Rustin Parr	267	Gangsters	198	No One Lives Forever	224
Braveheart	171	Giants: Citizen Kabuto	199	Nocturne	225
Broken Sword 2: The Smoking Mirror	171	Gift	269	Normality	271
Bubble Bobble with Rainbow Islands	172	Grand Prix 3	201	North vs. South	225
Caesar III	172	Grand Prix Legends	200	Nox	271
Cannon Fodder	173	Grand Prix Manager 2	200	Omikron	248
Cannon Fodder 2	173	Grand Theft Auto	202	Oni	226
Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now	267	Grand Theft Auto 2	203	Open Tennis 2000	271
Championship Manager 2000/01	174	Grim Fandango	202	Outcast	226
Championship Rugby Manager	267	Ground Control	269	Pac-Man: Adventures In Time	227
Civilization II	175	Gunlok	269	Pharoah	271
Cleopatra	175	Gunman Chronicles	203	Pizza Connection 2	271
Clive Barker's Undying	176	Gunship!	204	Pop 'n' Pop	271
Colin McCrae Rally 2.0	176	Half-Life	205	Populous	227
Colonization	177	Half-Life: Opposing Force	206	Populous: The Beginning	228
Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord	177	Half-Life Platinum	206	Prince of Persia 3D	271
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	178	Heavy Gear II	204	Pro Rally 2001	272
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	178	Heavy Metal: FAKK 2	207	Project IGI	228
Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun	179	Heretic II	207	Puzzle Bobble	272
Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines	179	Heroes Chronicles	269	Quake	229
Counter Strike 1.0	180	Heroes of Might and Magic 2	208	Quake II	229
Creatures 3	181	Hexen	269	Quake III Arena	230
Crime Cities	267	Hexen II	208	Quake III: Team Arena	231
Croc 2	267	Hidden & Dangerous	209	Railroad Tycoon II	231
Cultures: The Discovery of Vinland	267	Hitman: Codename 47	209	Rainbox Six: Rogue Spear	232
Daikatana	181	Hogs of War	210	Rally Masters	272
Dark Reign	182	Hostile Waters	210	RC Racers	272
Dark Reign 2	182	Icewind Dale	269	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	232
Day of the Tentacle	183	Imperium Galactica II	211	Revenant	272
Deep Fighter	268	In Cold Blood	269	Rising Sun	272
Delta Force 2	183	Incoming	269	Risk II	272
Delta Force: Land Warrior	184	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	211	Riven	233
Descent 3	268	Insane	212	Road Wars	272
Descent: Freespace - The Great War	180	Jane's F/A-18	269	Rollercoaster Tycoon	233
Deus Ex	185	Jedi Knight	212	Rowan's Battle of Britain	234
Diablo	186	Jetfighter IV: Fortress America	269	Rune	272
Diablo II	186	Jimmy White's 2: Cueball	270	Sacrifice	234
Diplomacy	268	Kingdom Under Fire	270	Sam & Max Hit the Road	235
Dogs of War	184	Kingpin: Life of Crime	213	Screamer Rally	235
Doom: Evil Unleashed	187	Klingon Academy	270	Sega Worldwide Soccer	272
Doom II: Hell on Earth	187	Klingon: Honor Guard	213	Sensible Soccer Euro Cup Edition	273
Drakan: Order of the Flame	188	Leisure Suit Larry 7	214	Sergei Bubka's Millenium Games	236
Driver	188	Links 2001	214	Shadow Watch	273
Duke Nukem II	189	Little Big Adventure	215	Shadows of the Empire	273
Duke Nukem 3D	189	Little Big Adventure 2: Twinsen's Odyssey	215	Shattered Steel	237

# PC



Sheep	273	The Sims	250
Shogo: Mobile Armor Division	238	The Typing of the Dead	255
Shogun: Total War	238	The Ward	274
Sid Meier's Alien Crossfire	273	The X-Files Game	275
Sid Meier's Gettysburg!	273	Theme Hospital	249
Silver	239	Theme Park Inc.	251
SimCity 3000	240	Theocracy	275
SimCopter	239	Thief: The Dark Project	251
SimTower	273	Thief II: The Metal Age	252
Soldier of Fortune	241	Tomb Raider Chronicles	275
Soulbringer	273	Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	252
Space Hulk 2	273	Tomb Raider: The Trilogy	275
Space Invaders	273	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	253
Star Trek Deep Space Nine: The Fallen	274	Total Annihilation	253
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	243	Transport Tycoon Deluxe	254
Star Trek: Armada	242	Trespasser	254
Star Trek: Birth of the Federation	243	Turok 2: Seeds of Evil	255
Star Trek: Generations	242	Ultima Online	256
Star Trek: New Worlds	274	Unreal	256
Star Wars Episode 1: Racer	274	Unreal Tournament	257
Star Wars Pit Droids	271	Urban Chaos	275
Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	263	V-Rally 2: Expert Edition	258
Starlancer	244	Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption	275
Starship Troopers	274	Virtual Pool 3	258
Stupid Invaders	244	Wacky Races	275
Superbike 2000	245	Warcraft II	259
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing	274	Wargasm	259
SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle	245	Warzone 2100	260
Sydney 2000	274	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?	260
System Shock	246	Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger	261
System Shock 2	246	Wizards & Warriors	275
Team Fortress Classic	274	Worms Armageddon	261
Tempest 2000	247	X-COM: Apocalypse	262
Terminus	274	X-COM: Interceptor	262
Test Drive 6	274	X-COM: Terror From the Deep	263
Test Drive Le Mans	270	X-Tension	275
The Corporate Machine	267	X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter	264
The Curse of Monkey Island	247	Zeus: Master of Olympus	264
The Sentinel Returns	249		
The Settlers IV	236		

**PCs as we know** them have been around since 1981. However, they weren't viable game machines – they were business tools, and the few games available tended to be simple text adventures and the like, as that was all the graphics cards of the day could handle. The PC as a gaming platform didn't really take off until the late '80s, and even now barely 1% of the hundreds of millions of PCs sold are used to play games.

But all of them are *capable* of playing games. Even if your PC is starting to show its age, it can still play a larger, cheaper selection of great games than any console out there. And if you've just bought a machine that's maxed out with a beefy processor and plenty of RAM, you can put it through its paces with top-of-the-range classics such as *Black & White* and *Quake III*.

PC and console games are very different experiences. Because a PC has so much more memory and storage space, games tend to be bigger and more complex. There are few PC titles that anyone could pick up, play for five minutes, then walk away from – after all, it takes that long for Windows to load. Instead, the kind of games at which PCs excel are strategy, sims and first-person shooters – genres that are at their best when played with a mouse and keyboard on a crisp, hi-res monitor.

PCs are the proving ground for many technologies that filter down to the console mass market. The advanced graphics hardware featured in Xbox is already old news to anyone who can afford to keep up with the cutting-edge of PC developments.

A good PC makes arguments about which console will win the upcoming next-gen battle seem almost irrelevant – the ultimate game machine may well have been sitting on your desk for the last six months.



**The games reviewed broadly** fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



**The following reviews are** based on those that appeared in *PC Gamer UK* magazine, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.

# ABOMINATION: THE NEMESIS PROJECT



**This game inherits much** of its form from the early *X-COM* outings: it charges you with the management of a small team of soldiers, fighting to rid the world of a global menace. In this instance, a flesh-eating virus has turned innocent folk into gabbling idiots while it munches on their meat. The epidemic is somehow bound up with a religious faction known only as The Faithful who, along with your GM super-squaddies, are the only folk who seem to be immune.

The action is set across a single city in which The Faithful are running riot, and the opening of play sees you in charge of eight characters with special abilities, ranging from Pyro, a psychic fire-starter, to Ninja, who can become invisible at will. From here on, you'll recruit rookies to the cause as they filter in from the chaos and, as they gain battle experience, they too become blessed with special abilities.

And it's battle experience that's the key here. Marry *X-COM* and *Syndicate* and you're just beginning to get the picture. The main difference between *Abomination* and such aged classics, though, is that it manages effortlessly to outshine both in every department.

The real-time city scenes you fight across look great, with no detail too small to be included, and although some of the missions may seem similar, the objectives, settings and layout of furniture and objects are random, so you'll never play the same mission twice, or in the same order. One of *Abomination's* finest achievements is that you can play it any way you want: you're given enough variety in terms of troop speciality, ordnance and equipment to create your own style of play.

■ The baddies rely on different senses to locate their prey. You'll be up against bizarre mutations that hunt by movement and sound.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Hothouse Creations

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A fine tactical romp that's versatile and exemplifies squad-based combat

**LOW:**  
You don't control finances, research or manufacturing

# 09/10

# ACTUA SOCCER 3



**For all its FMV** dazzlement, sparkling presentation and fluid, sexy, end-to-end soccer, *FIFA* lacks real passion. Which is where *Actua Soccer 3* comes in. The *Actua* soccer games have always been *FIFA's* reverse. They've never had the license, they've never had the flash and they've never had the sheer wealth of moves that *FIFA* boasts. But the development team behind them has an obvious, genuine love for the game and, as a result, the games boast the most enjoyable soccer "feel" of any soccer game out there. A trend that *Actua 3* has happily continued.

*FIFA 99* had stacks of moves. So many, in fact, that it was unlikely you would find the time to use them all. *Actua 3*, on the other hand, has slightly fewer, but those moves it has managed to incorporate are the ones that really count: the pin-point passes, the long balls, the chip, the flick and, best of all, aftertouch. Thus, matches in *Actua Soccer 3* are an absolute joy to play, simply because you don't have to learn loads of stuff first.

Graphically, *Actua 3* has superb crowd, stadia and shadow effects, but less fluid animation than some. The menu system is easier to negotiate now, tactical set-up is easy to peruse and varied enough to actually have a bearing on the game, while there are enough national and international teams (over 450) to ensure you could feasibly never play as the same side twice.

Of course, if none of this makes your toes curl with excitement, then *Actua 3* isn't your game. But if you can put up with the lack of a license and *FIFA's* unique pre-match flashiness, you'll find a realistic, worthy, fluid, exciting slice of soccering heaven.

■ *Actua 3* is faster than any of its predecessors and offers a better degree of control.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Gremlin

**DEVELOPER:**  
Gremlin

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
This is soccer for fans who want a passionate game

**LOW:**  
No license, less flash and fewer moves than *FIFA*

# 09/10

# AIRFIX DOGFIGHTER



**Airfix Dogfighter's premise is** a good one, and fairly well encapsulated in its title. Taking the role of a miniaturized model plane from either the Axis or the Allies, you loop around a suburban house collecting power-ups and attacking your enemies. That's it – although the occasionally destructible scenery provides minor diversions from your

linear primary and secondary mission objectives. In addition, a paint workshop enables you to alter the paint schemes and transfers attached to the models, including an option to design your own stickers.

But this is no *Falcon 4.0*. Handling of the plane is predictably arcade in style; anything else would be incongruous in the toy-based circumstances. The collision detection – and collisions are almost an inevitability given the wall-hugging positioning of some of the power-ups – is fuzzy, and rarely deadly. It's a shame, because part of the thrill of *Airfix Dogfighter* should have been weaving between vases, ducking under beds and flying tightly around chair legs. In the end, that sort of intricate flying is much too hard to achieve, and it's better to stick to the room's open spaces.

So, sometimes it plays well, sometimes it's frustratingly awkward. It's fun and different, but behind the enthusiastic facade it feels like there's something missing. And it's difficult to tell what that is. Still, if you're a kid at heart then you'll enjoy what is, essentially, non-patronizing children's software. It's hollow and entertaining in almost equal measures.

■ Type these codes during gameplay: *hybris* – invincible; *hefaistos* – all weapons; *admiral* – get medals; *autopilot* – autopilot on/off; *racerwagen* – drive a car.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eon

### DEVELOPER:

UDS/Paradox Entertainment

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Autumn 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

As light and disposable as a paper plane. Not bad as a kids' game, though

### LOW:

No strategy or longevity and not that much fun either

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Rogue Entertainment

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Freaky, but entertaining: an intriguing blend of FPS and platform genres

### LOW:

Puzzles should have been at the center of the game

# 08 / 10

# AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE



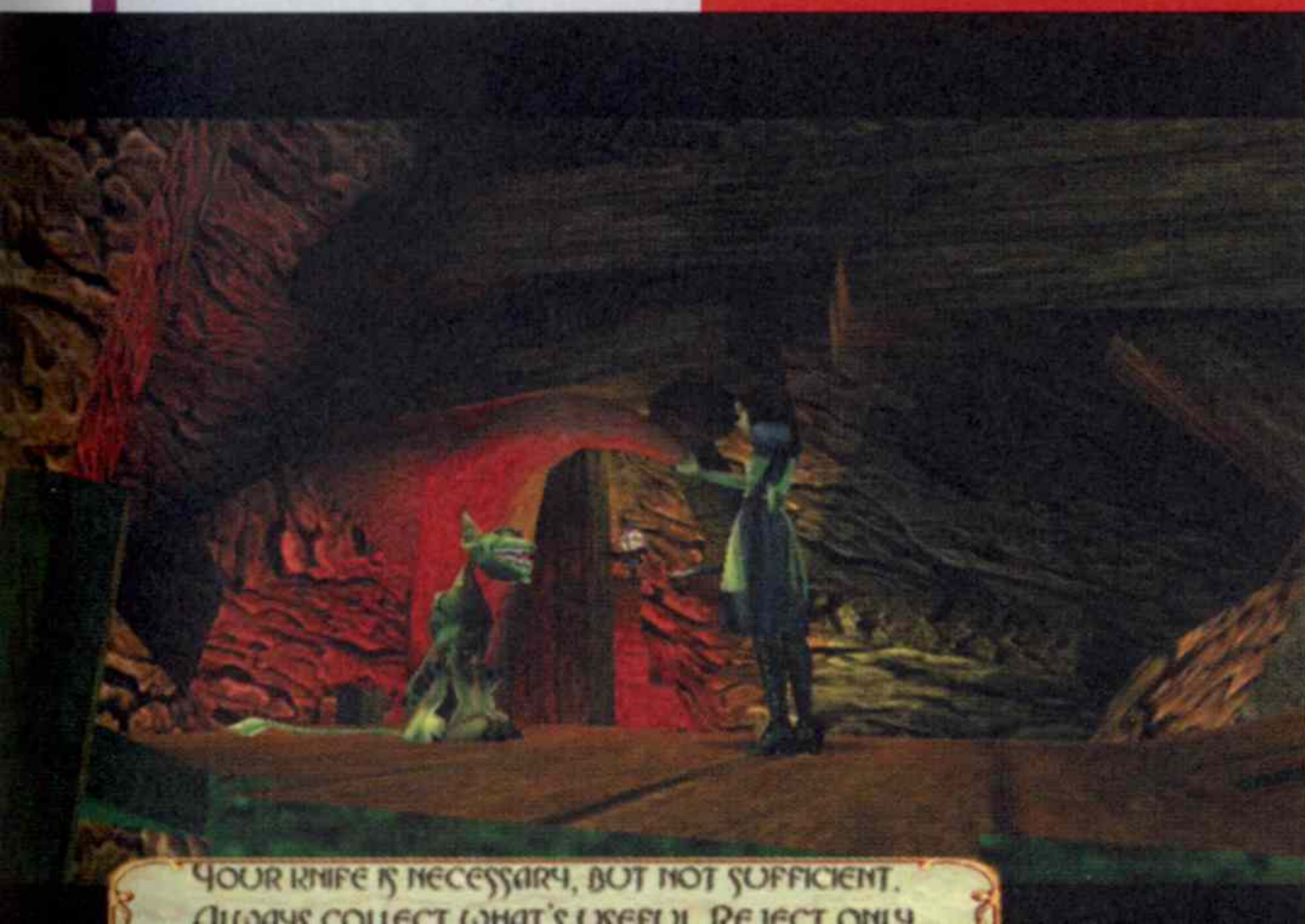
**This game desperately wants** to combine mold-breaking technology and classic children's fiction, and in some ways it succeeds. It's dark as you like and pretty to boot. The opening sees Alice trapped in a hallucinogenic nightmare of adolescent turmoil: it's certainly sinister, but possibly not in the way that its development team intended. Rather than a genuinely spooky universe inspired by Lewis Carroll's literary genius, instead it has created a good platform adventure that is at times cute, but at other times incongruously disturbing.

*Alice* takes elements from all kinds of 3D platform games and has also inherited a few unavoidable genetic flukes from its parent engine: *Quake III Arena*. The noticeable hang-up is on magically unreal methods of beast obliteration: *Alice* doesn't have the bazookas of many games, or the over-endowed hand-to-hand aspects of *FAKK2*, but it's still heavy on the blasting. So you get a demon jack-in-a-box, a magic staff, a knife, a pack of killer playing cards and so on. It's not innovative, taking a mystical side-step from the rocket and shotgun combo in appearance, but not in function.

The puzzle-solving elements should have been at the heart of the game, but they are treated as a distraction from the real business of being wowed by bizarre visual ideas and battling all manner of ludicrous beasts.

But for all this moaning, *Alice* is enjoyable and playable: it's half platformer, half first-person shoot-'em-up. It's just that the overall theme and game don't gel as well as they should.

■ True to the original story, Alice is prone to changing state.



YOUR KNIFE IS NECESSARY, BUT NOT SUFFICIENT.  
ALWAYS COLLECT WHAT'S USEFUL. DEFLECT ONLY.

# ALIENS VS. PREDATOR



**Nothing could ever look** as tasty as a battle between Giger's Aliens, the eight-foot Predator and a bunch of hapless Marine cannon-fodder.

*Aliens vs. Predator* is neither a story-centric game of atmosphere, nor a blast-fest. Instead, it is almost a discussion about what would happen if these three races found themselves in the same place at the same time. Which would survive, which would dominate? It's a fight to the death, and a messy one. Rather than one long, sprawling story from different perspectives, developer Rebellion has opted for a shorter tale in differing time frames that can be played as any of the three characters. You won't be disappointed with any of them.

Tackling any of the levels (five for the Alien, six for the Marine and Predator, with five different bonus maps for each character, enabling you to play missions from other perspectives) requires an alternative mindset. *Quake*-style gameplay won't do. Stealth, sniping and, where possible, avoidance are the skills you need here. Ideally, no one will see you coming.

*Aliens vs. Predator* isn't for everyone. It can be an exceedingly frustrating game and it's damn hard, but in many ways these are central to its success. A stirring soundtrack and the prospect of an instant, gruesome death play havoc with your nerves, and the scurrying of face huggers is every bit as scary as those little devils in *Half-Life*. But if you've got the guts, then *Aliens vs. Predator* delivers a stunningly well-realized and completely fresh 3D treat.

■ *Aliens vs. Predator* has some multiplayer games, including the individual and team deathmatches, against human or AI players. It also has a few race-specific specialized mission games.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Fox Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Rebellion

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Original, gorgeous and gory with excellent character AI

**LOW:**  
Difficult to master and frustrating at times

09/10



# ALLEGIANCE



**This is an ambitious** project, which puts you into the middle of a huge space war. But instead of then taking the natural step of picking a single genre, it goes completely mad, and with one sweeping arm drags all of them into a big bag and shakes them up. This isn't a space combat game or a space strategy game, or even an RPG: it's all of them in one bulging sack.

This potentially confusing mix is helped by a good, sturdy plot (Earth destroyed, factions in space, inevitable war ensues), which is vital when you realize that this is a multiplay-only title. With no scripted story ahead, it's great to have a solid background to build upon, as it is you - along with a possible 350 others in a given game - who will decide where things are going.

At the start, you will inevitably go in as a fighter pilot, but you soon climb your way through the ranks to captain, and even branch off into intergalactic investiture. You must RTS your way to riches, RPG your way to captain and space-combat your way to victory - and the only way to succeed is by tight and well-organized cooperation with your team. If only it weren't so darned complicated to learn to play: it'll be hours before you're ready to do battle.

The possibilities for *Allegiance* are enormous. Right now this is a very big space combat title, but it really could go anywhere. Which makes it very hard to score. You can probably add a point every two months, until you run out of room.

■ It's usually best to do what the Commander desires. What's good for the team is good for you: if the team gets rich, you get new technology and better ships.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Microsoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Microsoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
Multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Massive, multiplayer and Microsoft equals space opera joy. A visual masterpiece, too

**LOW:**  
No single-player mode

09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

I-Motion

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Classic adventure game. You get three for the price of one

### LOW:

The second two games don't move the series on enough

# 08/10

# ALONE IN THE DARK TRILOGY

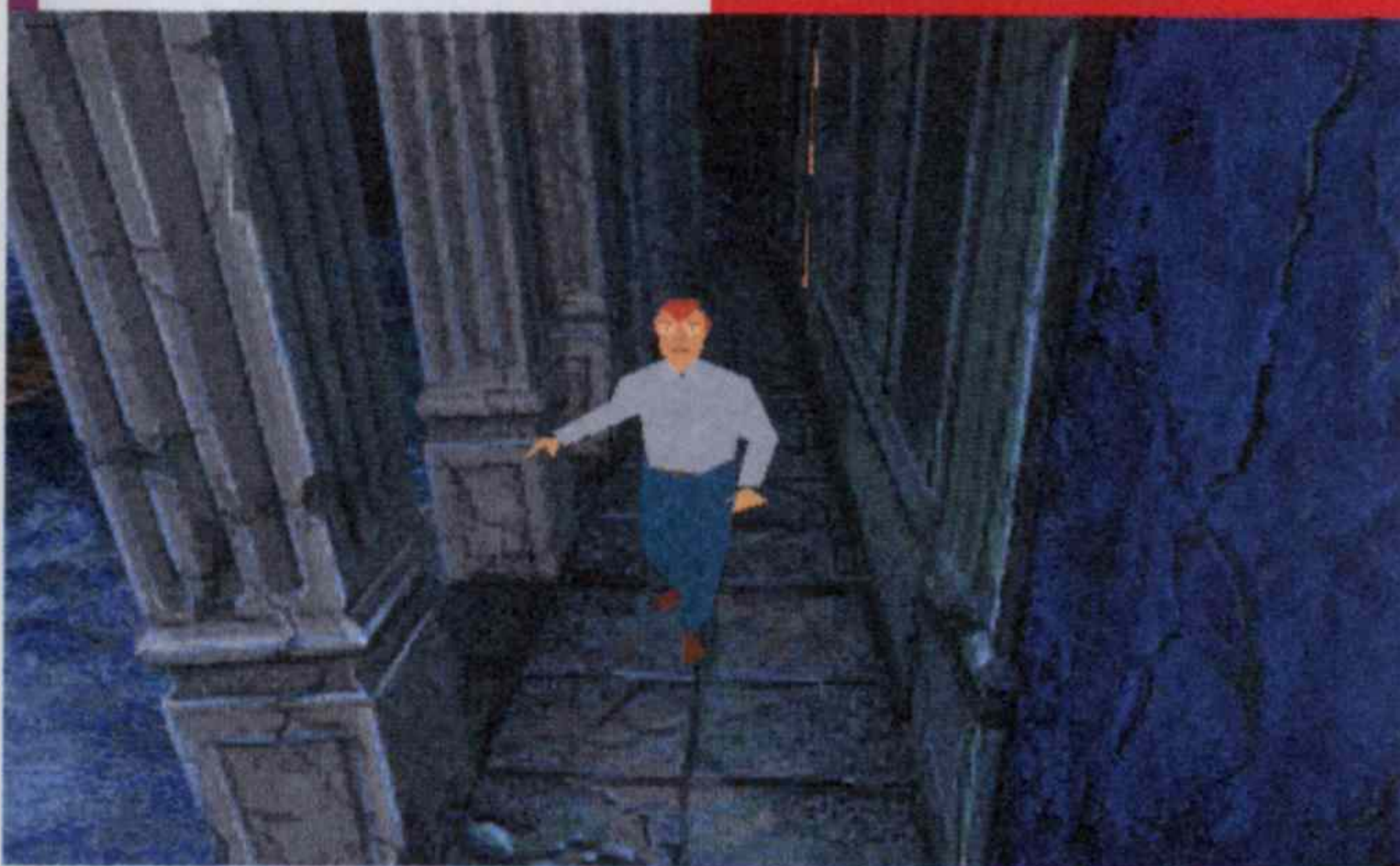


**Complete with spooky, glow-in-the-dark** packaging, this is the ultimate trilogy if you enjoy being scared out of your wits. Based on supernatural author HP Lovecraft's unnerving books, these three benchmarks in PC horror may be visually primitive, but the antics of private detective Edward Carnby never fail to entertain. The story is set in the 1920s and Carnby is investigating a series of deaths and disappearances which are all linked to the occult or paranormal in some way. Monsters, demons, ghosts and other evil creatures appear from time to time, adding to the scare factor, and the graphics and music combine to create a suitably creepy background atmosphere for the story.

The original *Alone in the Dark* is a classic adventure and is generally considered to be the better of the three games, although the two sequels both improved upon the 3D graphics. The gameplay in all three is an interesting blend of puzzle solving and gunplay which should appeal whether you enjoy adventure games or prefer more action on your PC.

The formula particular to the three *Alone in the Dark* games remains consistent throughout and all the adventures in this neat and tidy boxed set are complex and atmospheric tales from beyond the imagination that will set your pulse racing. If you've got the staying power, you can play all three games in one scary sitting.

■ In the first game you could play as either Edward Carnby or Emily Hartwood.



# ALPHA CENTAURI



**A whole year after** the battle of the *Civilization II* sequels raged within the PC gaming community came Sid Meier's *Alpha Centauri*. In fact *Civilization: Call to Power* arrived in March 1999 and aimed its cannons squarely at *Alpha Centauri's* laboratories. The time passing so quickly can only be attributed to the speed at which an evening can be chewed up whole and spat out by *Civilization* and its various offspring. If you've ever played the games you'll know how you can sit down at the computer intending to be there for no more than 20 minutes before getting on with whatever you are supposed to be doing, and wake the following morning with the impression of the Num pad perfectly replicated on your face.

*Alpha Centauri* is a sort of sequel to *Civilization II*, which was probably one of the greatest games ever in the history of time, and they were both created by Sid Meier and his company, Firaxis. The plot starts where *Civilization II* should have finished, had you not kept going back 1,000 years just to beat the Aztecs at the building game. In *Alpha Centauri* you take control of one of the seven ethical, economic or religious factions, and then do the *Civ* thing: political, economic and military building. Basically, it's another turn-based, empire-building strategy game.

Although losing out to *Civilization: Call to Power*, *Alpha Centauri* is an engrossing monster of a game, and first to win the race to the Land of Budget.

■ During gameplay, press [Ctrl]+K to enter the map editor. Now enter: [Shift][F1] to create a unit; [Shift][F2] to discover technology; [Shift][F3] to switch sides and reset view; [Shift][F4] to edit energy credits; [Shift][F5] to change year.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Firaxis Games

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the best strategy games ever made

### LOW:

Not as good as *Civilization: Call to Power*

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Microsoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Turbine

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A time-sapping, engrossing, sociable, true RPG

**LOW:**  
It's unfinished, but this could be seen as an advantage, too

09/10

# ASHERON'S CALL

**This is a massively** multiplayer online RPG, an everchanging world in which you play a role. There's no great personal story or quest upon which you are set, and few restrictions on your activities: your own imagination and motivation are your biggest hurdles. This kind of game is usually difficult to get started on, but *Asheron's Call* makes the learning curve as gentle as possible. Character creation isn't complex, although the importance of which statistics and skills you choose to specialize in is not emphasized enough. Happily, once you're in, you won't be in danger from other characters, and there's a good help manual.

Perhaps *Asheron's Call's* most significant innovation, though, is the social system. As a new character, you'll find yourself in great danger if you venture too far out of a town. By pledging allegiance to an experienced player-character, you become their Vassal. They will then receive extra experience points,

according to how many you earn - you don't lose out on any. In return, you can expect to receive equipment, money and, if you're lucky, advice.

Some of the monsters in *Asheron's Call* are pretty nasty. However, the AI is sometimes transparently poor; none of the creatures are terribly bright, but magic is nicely implemented.

*Asheron's Call* is constantly being improved and has the potential to be one of the best PC games ever.

■ The more a spell is cast in the world, the weaker it gets.



# B-17 FLYING FORTRESS: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

**You know you've got** it bad when a computer game features in your dreams - and *B-17* will appear regularly for the way it revolutionizes the flight-sim genre. The first thing you notice about *The Mighty Eighth* is the daunting array of choices you are given and the attention to detail it offers. But the mark of a great game is the interface between that detail and you.

Enter *B-17's* crew management model. As commander, it's your job to oversee the tasks of 10 crew members. Gunners, navigator, radio op, bombardier and the two pilots: you can jump to each at the click of an icon-based menu. Six maps enable you to maneuver your way around the fortress, barking commands and even crossing over from the bomber to its support fighters. Crew members can be ordered to repair a jammed gun, replace a colleague or even administer first aid: indeed, managing the morale of your crew involves as many variables as flying the plane. The beauty of the crew system isn't just skin deep, though. There are six control panels to keep track of, all interactive with knobs and dials.

There is one complaint: there's no multiplayer option. Even that, however, doesn't detract from the game, thanks to the dynamic damage modeling which extends to your crew, a copious full color manual, an intuitive training system, historically-inspired missions, the "living" campaign system, and stunning graphics. God bless America.

■ Enemy gunfire is the least of your problems: get the fuel settings wrong and you're history.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**  
Wayward

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
There's a worthy attention to detail, including a crew management model and dynamic damage modeling

**LOW:**  
No multiplayer option

09/10



# BALDUR'S GATE II: SHADOWS OF AMN



**RPGs don't get much** better than this. All the ingredients that make up a successful single-player role-playing game are here: coherent plot, top-flight dialogue, an effective character system and tons of atmosphere.

The original *Baldur's Gate* had a complex plot which immersed you in the game. Here the dialogue is versatile yet deep, and much more is now voice-acted, which adds to the feeling of immersion. A combination of alignment, reputation and your charisma score affect how people respond when approached and how certain people react with gender- or even race-specific responses.

Then there are the class-related quests that become available in the second chapter. There is a different lengthy quest assigned for each of the main class divisions: Fighter, Ranger, Paladin, Druid, Thief, Cleric, Mage and Bard. While any character can undertake all of the eight quests, at the end of each mission dedicated to your character's class, you're offered control of a stronghold, such as a Thieves' Guild, a Keep or a Mage's Tower. There are three new classes on offer, too: Barbarian, Monk and Sorcerer. Also, as the plot builds on the original game, you can import your old character.

Magic plays a much more important role in *Baldur's Gate II*, and the game also features many dream cut-scenes which are a powerful way of getting a message across. Strategy is important, too, as there are usually several ways of solving a problem and combat isn't always the best. Overall, *Baldur's Gate II* is a huge and compelling drama and an outstanding achievement.

■ Some knowledge of *AD&D's* rules will be useful here.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Bioware

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Epic role-playing of the best vintage. A new benchmark for traditional RPGs

### LOW:

Sketchy pathfinding and too much high-level magic

# 09/10

# BATTLE ISLE: THE ANDOSIA WAR



**Cauldron calls its game** a genre-defying conflict simulation, and you can see what it means as it bravely combines elements of traditional turn-based wargames with real-time economic management. During time-limited turns you orchestrate combat on your isle, spending action points on movement or attacks unit by unit, which is a *slow* process. When the turn ends and your opponent begins, things switch to an economic isle, the industrial powerhouse of the war effort, to build factories, mines, or academies, set up production schedules, and assign research and development tasks, which is all fine: RTS combat is often more about mouse proficiency than tactical finesse and there can be a lot of dead time in this type of wargame. But the solution is unsatisfying.

Graphically, a lovely custom 3D engine landscapes rugged coastlines, palm-fringed beaches, and rolling island interiors with equal aplomb, and infinitely flexible cameras offer every possible perspective. But the combat is one of the least convincing aspects of the game. An action-point system inherited from *Battle Isle* looks lost without the reassuring demarcations of a hex-grid. Most wargames that use such a system enable you to conserve APs for firing while moving. *BITAW* lacks this safeguard, making it easy to accidentally advance a unit a couple of pixels too far and lose the ability to fire that round.

*BITAW* is as much about logistics as it is about battling, so you need patience and military machismo to play well.

■ Type *alyenya* while playing to enable these cheats: Alt+E - enemy unit's health = 1; Alt+M - win current mission.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Blue Byte Software

### DEVELOPER:

Cauldron

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-8

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A combination of real-time home front and turn-based battle front which works

### LOW:

Combat can be disappointing

# 07/10

- OFFENSE
- DEFENSE
- UTILITY
- NAVY DEACONS
- FACTORY
- ARMORY
- CONSTRUCTOR
- SATELLITE
- NO ACTION TURRET
- NO ACTION

03/25  
PILOT  
04/05



# BATTLEZONE



**Battlezone was the first** in a new wave of action-strategy games, and Activision married *Quake*-ish action with *C&C* strategy to create a self-contained and absorbing game. The training missions alone are more entertaining than most other games, and the key to *Battlezone's* physics and terrain is that they are fun.

The combat dynamics are sub-*Quake*. The action is slower, the violence less visceral, but it does benefit from the occasional spark of brilliance from the AI. And, of course, the excitement quotient is undiminished because of the strategy element. Each mission is a desperate case of fire-fighting as you deal with enemy tanks, base building, resource management and maneuver formations pretty much simultaneously. Incredibly, this is a cinch, as the combat and strategy sections have been integrated smoothly and intelligently. From your command tank (any of 12 different vehicles), you orchestrate defense, assaults and construction using the excellent interface.

The plot? Well, while Armstrong and Aldrin were on the moon, the Russkies and Americans were battling across the Solar System for possession of an alien wonder-material. Thus, you take your astropanzers to the Moon, Mars, Venus, Titan and some other rocks to stop the red menace or crush the imperialist pig-dogs. The upshot is two superb campaigns. Each mission broils with cleverly-paced narrative twists and traps that continuously switch the emphasis between action and strategy and force you to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Such inventiveness prevails throughout *Battlezone*.

■ The range finder is excellent and as you close in to a target, the rangemeter rapidly counts down the distance to impact.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Activision

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Awesome melding of all the good things in life: action, strategy, originality, commies

**LOW:**  
Dubious fogging techniques

# 09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

# BATTLEZONE II: COMBAT COMMANDER



**The prequel to this,** *Battlezone*, was perhaps the least-bought-but-most-owned game in PC gaming history. It didn't sell well, and so was handed out as a freebie with countless 3D cards, joypads and new PCs. But every hardware developer wanted to use it to show off their swanky new hardware. Its sequel, *Battlezone II:*

*Combat Commander* is an exquisite weave of battlefield simulation and real-time strategy and lifts whole chunks from its prequel, but the improvements will quash any criticism.

The game begins a few years after the events of *Battlezone*; you're part of a light scout team assigned to Pluto where contact's been lost with the American colony, and it's your job to find out what's going on. Your commanding officer leads you into combat and puts you in charge of light forces. You'll learn to use different weapons for different situations, eject from your vehicle to occupy another, and learn the ropes of flying your given craft, all of which look fantastic. The real-time strategy features also come into play early on, and there's a varied list of weapons and vehicles for both sides to use.

To look at, *Battlezone II* is a peach, with moody lighting, intense and atmospheric use of color, and an impeccable eye for detail. Of course, there are times that even the fastest PC will stumble, but this is with all the graphical options hiked way up. *Battlezone II* is bigger, better, brighter and provides an abundance of tactical options without swamping you with unnecessary strategic detail.

■ Skirmish and multiplayer games give you the choice to play as either of two races – the ISDF (human forces) or the Scions.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Pandemic

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Technically well accomplished and very enjoyable. A complete show-off, in fact

**LOW:**  
Graphics may suffer on lower-end machines

# 09/10

# BEETLE CRAZY CUP

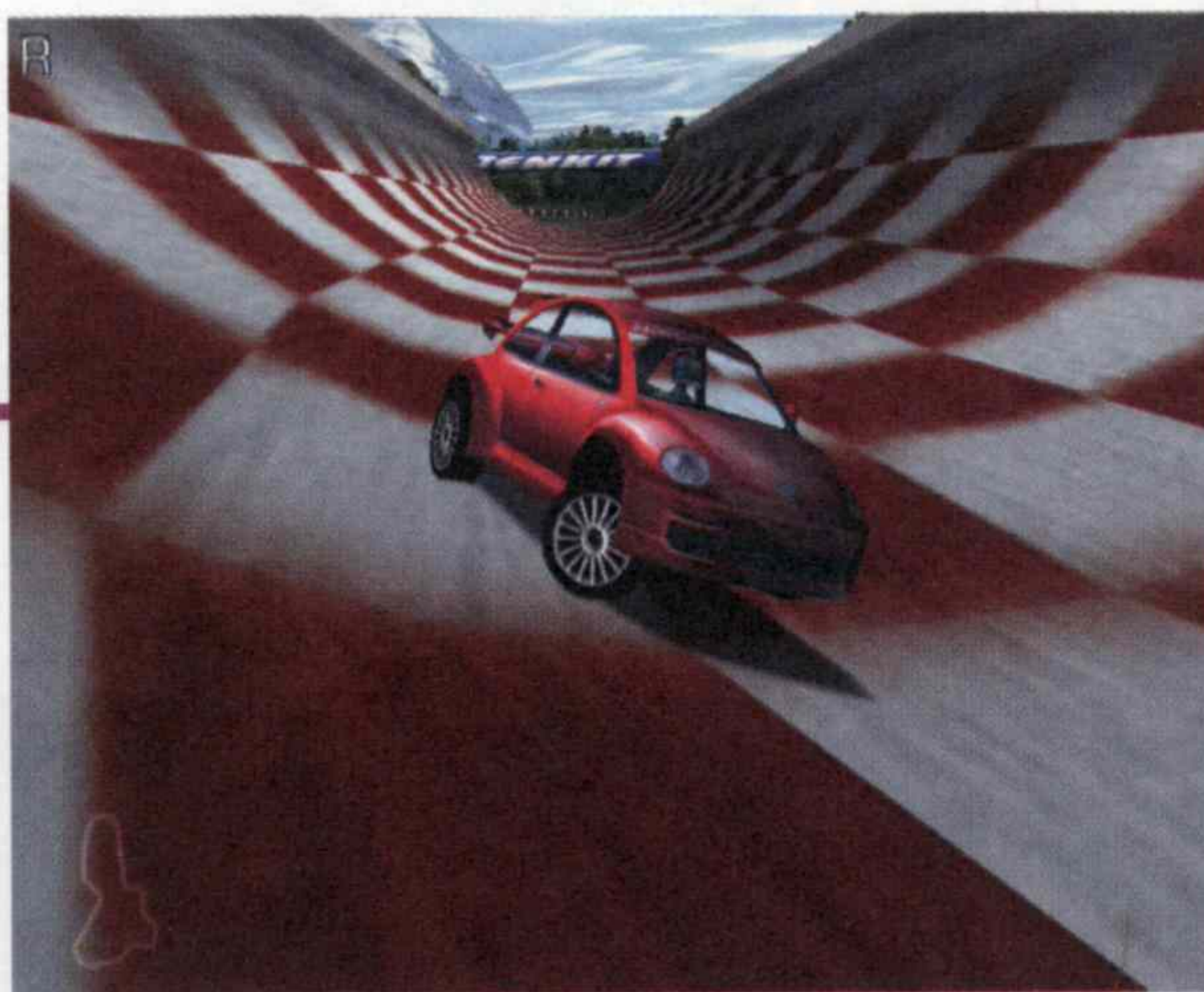


**This is by far** the craziest driving game ever to have graced the PC. At first you think you've been transported back to the 1960s – a fair assumption, considering the burst of flowers that explodes across the screen, followed by a superb opening sequence of film and in-game graphics, all accompanied by groovy surf tunes. But this illusion is soon shattered when you see the range of cars available and the various settings you're given to hurtle about in. These range from a massive arena, to the beach, to town roads. Each track is variable, either by changing directions or by opening up certain routes and closing others, and the arena is entirely remodeled for each level of difficulty.

There are three modes of play: Quick Play, Championship and Beetle Challenge. The first two are self-explanatory – an instant race mode and a knock-out tournament – but in the excellent Beetle Challenge you can play in each of the five game styles, climbing the ladder of difficulty in each, until you eventually open up the final challenge. Along the way, bonus levels are revealed, giving you access to even more wacky cars and more variations on the tracks.

Game styles include Speed, Jump, Cross, Buggy and Monster, and all this fun is backed up by a new graphics engine called Ambush that enables an infinite draw distance on any spec machine, which means that everything is always on screen at once, with no fogging in the distance. Overall, *Beetle Crazy Cup* is compulsive and extremely replayable. All this, and a really good laugh, too.

■ As you progress up the levels in *Beetle Crazy Cup*, you earn Fame Points, which you can then use to purchase better and more powerful cars.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Xpiral

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fast, fun and engrossing. Oh, and sheer madness, too

### LOW:

Not quite as adaptable as it could have been

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Westwood

### DEVELOPER:

Westwood

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A joy to live within. A joy to talk about with other people. A rare breed, indeed

### LOW:

There's little to fault here

# 09/10

# BLADE RUNNER



**Westwood's *Blade Runner*** is Ridley Scott's film in every possible way. The opening scene: camera cruises over the sprawling city of Los Angeles, November 2019, and swoops past the vast video-screens into the dark. Flames escape from towering structures jutting out of the slum district into the sky and you descend into the grim stinking hell beneath.

And, then, as you arrive at Crime Scene No. 1, the animal shop massacre, the first inklings of a surprise begin to sink home and you realize that *Blade Runner* possesses both style and content. The video footage doesn't set the atmosphere – the in-game sets are perfectly capable of achieving this, and far more effectively. McCoy, Deckard's game counterpart, is charged with solving crimes linked to the Nexus 6 Replicants roaming LA on a mission. A sequence that starts with the bloody, but innocuous, murder of a priceless white tiger leads to the discovery of a rogue unit of gun-happy Replicants intent on revenge.

This is a conventional adventure on the surface, but lurking beneath the ultra-slick presentation are the elements that genuinely advance the genre more than any game has done since LucasArts' heyday *Monkey Island/Indiana Jones* era. It has the nerve to challenge the adventure game's conventional problem-solving methodology and genuinely establishes new standards.

*Blade Runner* is a truly remarkable game: bold, novel, inspiring and brilliantly executed. It does complete justice to the film.

■ There are 13 different conclusions to the story, based on how you view the Replicants' cause throughout the game.



# BLACK & WHITE



**Gaze down into one** of Eden's many valleys and you'll see smoke rising languidly from cottage chimneys. Children scamper about getting under the feet of farm-workers. A gaggle of worshippers wind their way up to a hilltop temple, passing foresters dragging timber to the site of a half-finished structure. A fisherman taking his catch to the village store meets a woman and they pause for a moment – as if in conversation – and then embrace. It's a scene from Breughel, a pleasing peasant panorama, except for a huge zebra kicking a beachball around.

You are a god and this is your world. The people (and the zebra) are your responsibility and the source of your power.

Most of the time *B&W*'s gorgeous canvas is free of icons, status bars and numerics. Numbers are there if you want them, but they are unobtrusive. There is also a hotkey which displays unit stats, but this clogs the screen with data.

Compared to many settlement sims, *B&W* life is refreshingly straightforward. There are only two resources, wood and food. Both are warehoused in the store, a building which also conveniently informs you of the needs of the population.

There are two types of miracle: one-shots, which are generated by shrines or found hidden in the landscape, and learned miracles which are acquired from Eden's eight different civilizations.

To look left or right, move your cursor (a hand) to the edge of the screen, hold down a button and then sweep the mouse in a circular motion. It's a crazy system and the novel "land-grab" action used in combination with a double-click or bookmark-based movement command is efficient in comparison. Keyboard shortcuts are a useful adjunct to mouse-driven mobility.

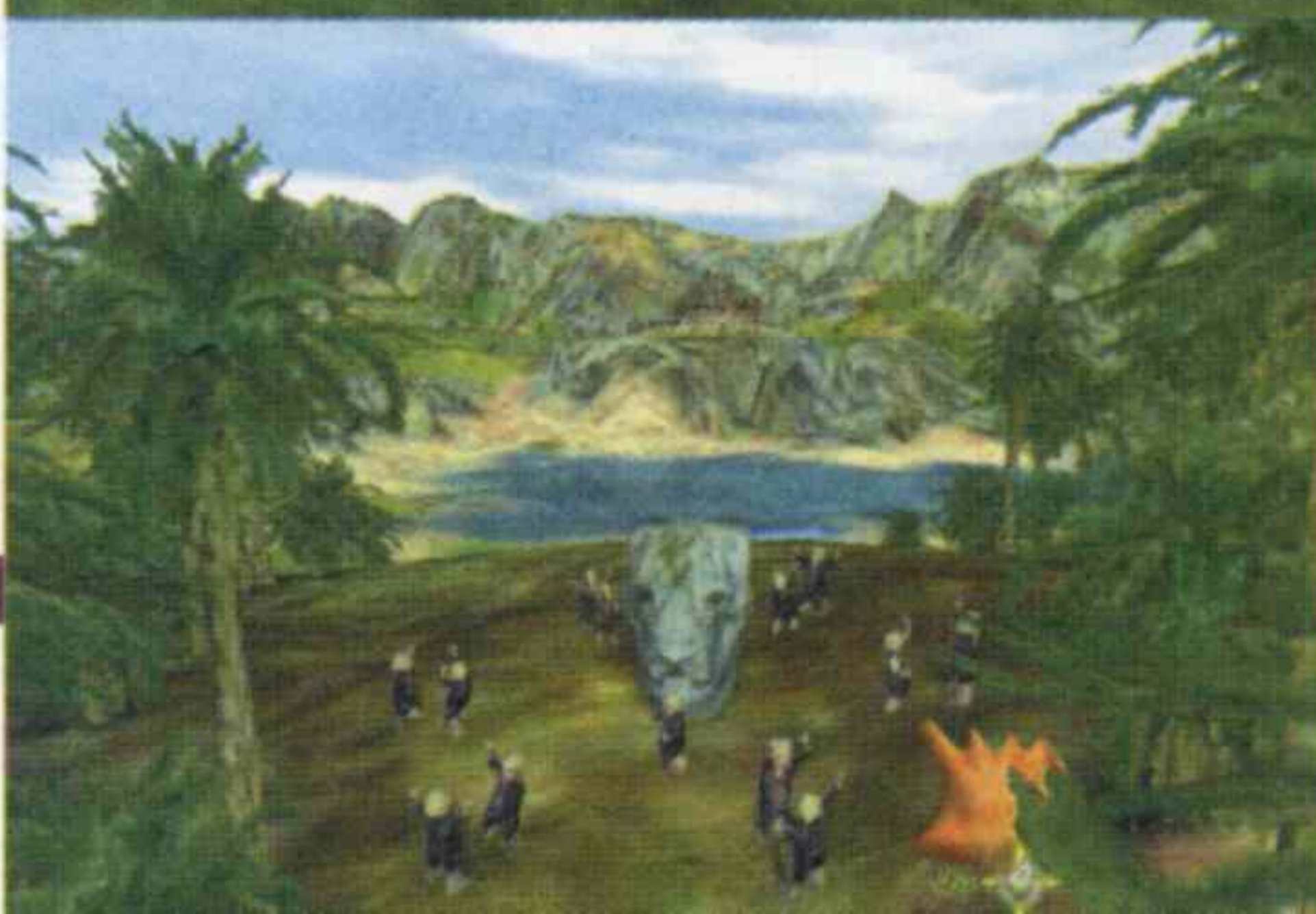
Arguably the most sentient silicon beings ever seen, the *B&W* creatures are reason enough to buy this game. There are 16 species, with a

choice of three available at the start and, within the space of five minutes, they can exasperate, amuse and amaze you. The creature training element is a nugget of pure gaming gold, too.

The speed at which you move through *B&W* is largely up to you. Activating the sequential gold scrolls drives the narrative, while unfurling silver ones reveals optional challenges. These sub-quests are incredibly varied and cleverly woven around the lives of the Edenites.

With so much care lavished on the single-player story, it's surprising that the skirmish and multiplayer modes are so short of maps and game modes: each offers only three battlegrounds and a single "last-man-standing" format. But, overall, *B&W* has a compelling storyline, brain-teasing challenges, lush graphics and original gameplay.

■ If you set your system date to April 1 and begin a game your character will leave smiley face footprints in the ground.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Lionhead Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Overflowing with great ideas and novel devices. Divine

**LOW:**  
Skirmish and multiplayer modes are short of maps and game modes

09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Red Lemon

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Vast empire-building game, medieval Scotland-style, with an action twist

### LOW:

Not one for quick-thrill seekers

# 09/10

# BRAVEHEART



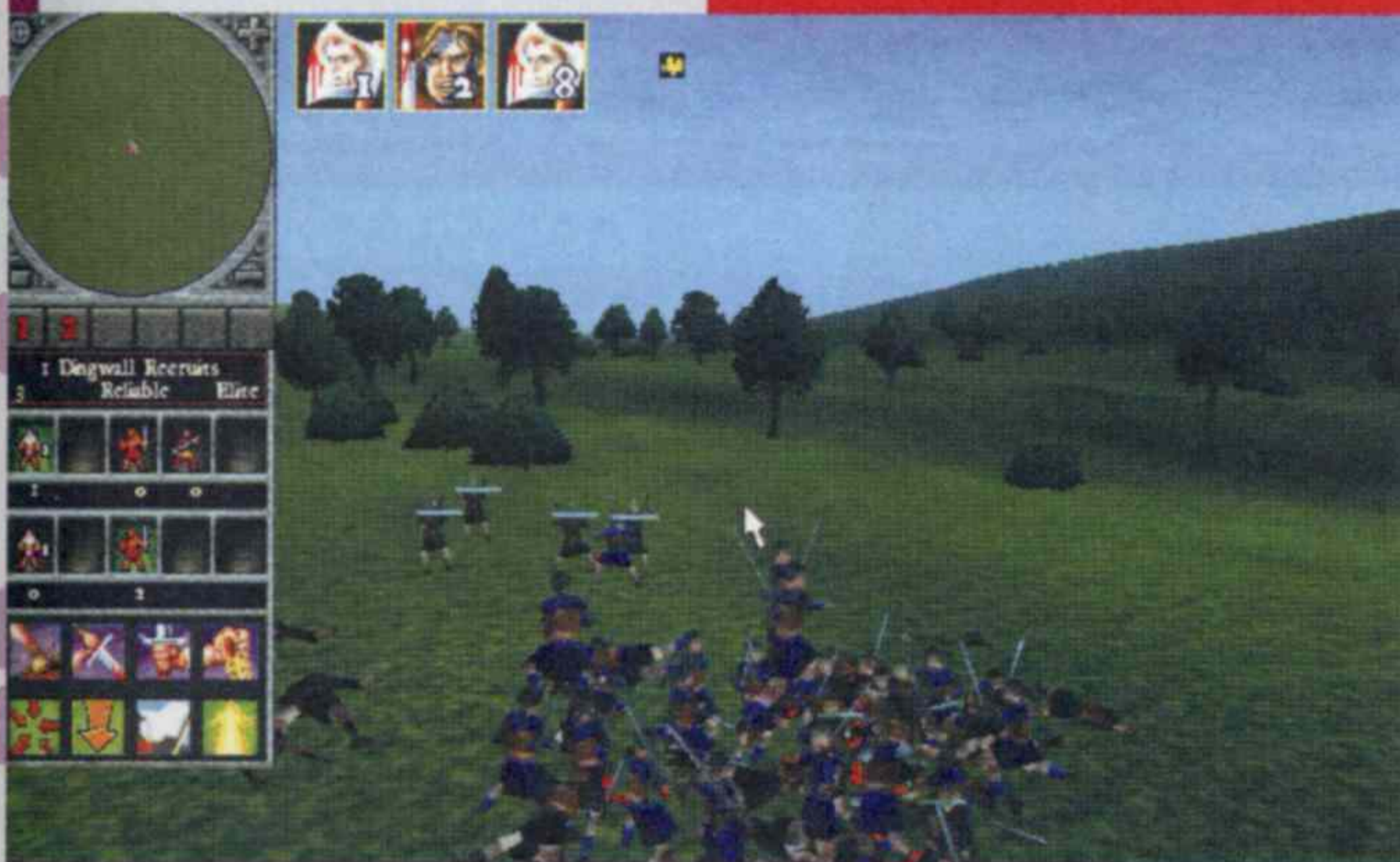
**This has little to do with the film**, other than the 13th century Scottish setting. It's its own game, marrying *Civ*-like strategy depth with frenetic real-time combat to create an experience that is at once engrossing and daunting.

It's engrossing because the dovetailing of strategic management with combat offers the best of both worlds. Yet *Braveheart* is daunting, too, simply because there are so many features and so much detail. There seems to be barely a political, economic or military stone in Scotland you can't look under. Of course, the auto-management can always take care of the day-to-day stuff, but you're still left with a sheer learning cliff to scale.

Once you do, though, events move rapidly. As a Clan chief in medieval Scotland, you're caught up in a period of intense political turbulence. Immediately there are opportunities to exploit, threats to neutralize and weaker clans to absorb as you set about building your clan into the dominant force.

With more dimensions to manage than a theoretical physicist, *Braveheart* is deep and complicated, and not always glamorous. It's also time-consuming, because you advance time by as many days/hours as you like rather than with a formal turn-based system. But it's the skillful entwining of the real-time 3D action around the strategic pondering that is the making of *Braveheart*. Both sections have a clear and massive impact on the other, which is tremendously satisfying.

■ *Braveheart's* combination of the military and political arenas enables you to hit a new dastardly low in strategic scheming.



# BROKEN SWORD 2: THE SMOKING MIRROR



**The game begins about six months after the original ended.** Nico invites George to accompany her to the house of Professor Oubier, an eminent specialist on the ancient Mayan civilization. By accident, Nico has come into possession of a Mayan artifact, which is why she wants to talk to Oubier. But, instead of meeting Oubier, a large South American fella knocks out George and ties him to a chair. Meanwhile, Nico is shot with a poison dart and is carried away by Pablo, who knocks a lamp on the floor, setting it on fire. Just as a cheery afterthought, a deadly tarantula is released into the room. Your first job is to free George, kill the spider and put out the fire. From then on in it gets complicated.

The rich, mostly fact-based plot is one of *BS2's* strengths. You alternate between controlling George and Nico, their two investigations intertwined with some impressive cut-scenes. Indeed, the whole idea behind *BS2* is to make it as cinematic as possible. The imaginative camera angles and multiple levels of parallax scrolling help here, as do the gorgeous backgrounds and the smooth, cartoon-like animation.

The all-important interface has been stripped to its barest minimum. There are just three actions: look, use and talk. The only other option is to use an inventory icon on another object. Conversations are of the "pick a general subject icon" type rather than line-by-line and Revolution has cut back on the amount of waffle you need to endure compared to the first game, in favor of more puzzles.

With a bit more sass and tightening-up of the dialogue, this would be a classic.

■ Lushly animated intervals give you a rest while furthering the story in breathtakingly quick ways.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Virgin

### DEVELOPER:

Revolution Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An intriguing, engrossing and well-executed adventure

### LOW:

Disappointing dialogue

# 09/10

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**

Probe

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Two genuine classics presented exactly as you'd see them in the arcades

**LOW:**

Won't stretch your 3D card

09/10

**BUBBLE BOBBLE WITH RAINBOW ISLANDS**



**If you're new** to this computer game thing, you might conceivably be wondering what all the fuss is about. Indeed if you've looked at the screenshot on this page, then you're probably wondering even more. Now it's true that neither *Bubble Bobble* nor *Rainbow Islands* are much to look at. Indeed we would happily confess that, on paper, there's nothing about these 10-year-old arcade games that marks them as particularly special. After all, their individual premises are so easily surmised. In *Bubble Bobble* you blow bubbles to trap the baddies, then burst the bubbles and collect stuff. In *Rainbow Islands* you kill the baddies by casting rainbows at them. And collect stuff.

The thing is, though, these unassuming little games are as close to the epitome of perfect gameplay as you're ever likely to get. On the surface they're cute little bits of arcade memorabilia, but play them for more than half an hour and you're hooked, as myriad subtleties and secrets come to light. Why do huge

bonus items occasionally tumble to the ground when you complete a *Bubble Bobble* screen? How come casting rainbows across empty platforms in *Rainbow Islands* sometimes makes extra items appear? And how far can you get on just one life?

This is a history in which you should definitely invest. On their own, the two are classics, and the enhanced *Rainbow Islands* is a bonus.

■ In *Bubble Bobble*, if you collect a curly cane, wait near the center top of the screen to be first to grab a super sweet treat.



**CAESAR III**



**The original Caesar** was released aeons ago and was a *SimCity* type, but set in the time of the Roman Empire. It was a surprise success, and the sequel even more so. On the face of it nothing much has changed in part three. Once again you play the part of a Roman governor charged with building up a series of cities far from the madding luxury of Rome itself. Beginning with a tiny budget and a threatening word from the Emperor, it's your task to build a thriving city that's pleasant to live in, generates plentiful income and is safe from attack. At the same time, you will naturally increase your profile and catch the attention of Caesar.

There are actually two game modes in *Caesar III*. The main challenge is the Career game, where each map gives you set objectives: a certain target population and ratings for favor, prosperity, culture and so on. Completing a Career map means a promotion and progression on to the next, tougher city.

The other mode, the City Construction Kit, is more like *SimCity* in that it's completely open-ended. Here you choose a map from the 10 or so available, covering a wide range of sizes and difficulties, and simply build up a city for as long as you like. There are no set goals in the Construction Kit; unfortunately, there's no map or mission editor either.

*Caesar III* is, by and large, beautifully balanced. Little occurs at random, even the actions of the gods – any consequences are all down to you. There's always enough going on to keep you at it full-tilt, and its overall challenge is formidable.

■ To get more funds for your city building, right-click on a "Well" then press [Alt]-K and [Alt]-C.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**

Impressions

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Slick, well-designed, attractive and addictive

**LOW:**

Doesn't add anything much to the genre

09/10

# CANNON FODDER



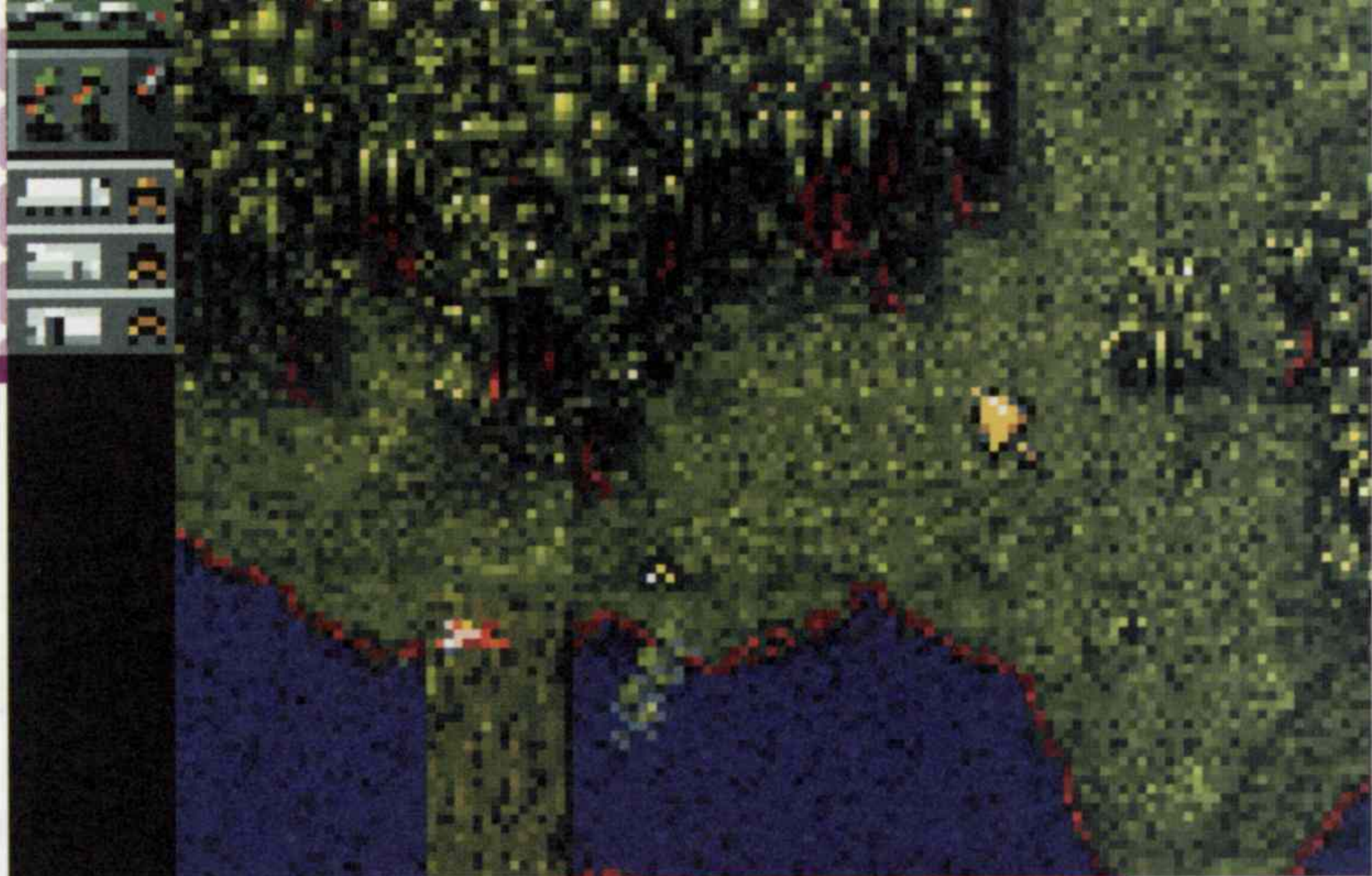
**Whether or not *Cannon Fodder* is in poor taste is open to endless debate, but that it's a triumphant exercise in innovative game design and fun is never even up for question.** The controversial use of a Remembrance Day poppy had The Royal British Legion up in arms when the game was first released on the Amiga. But, that aside, *Cannon Fodder* effectively turned the wargame genre on its head by mixing military strategy and tactics with high-octane arcade action.

You're a frontline military commander charged with completing 23 missions, each split into a number of phases. With each comes an objective and a squad of soldiers to carry that objective out. After the mission briefing, play begins just after your squad has been dropped behind enemy lines. Missions are a mix of tactical thinking and all-out blasting.

Although the sprites are small and the graphical style more comic than photo-realistic, there's a tremendous amount of on-screen violence, with blood, fire and the screams of the wounded coming thick and fast. Both sides can lose a hell of a lot of men in the course of a single firefight, but you have to make sure that losses to your side never rise beyond the unacceptable.

*Cannon Fodder* successfully combines action with strategy, without all the boring techno-frippery that can bog down a traditional wargame.

■ Try this cheat to skip levels: on the map, type [Ctrl] + FODDER, then [Enter].



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Virgin

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sensible/AVME

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 1994

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Superbly instinctive controls, great presentation and loads of killing

**LOW:**  
Lack of mission variety

**09/10**

# CANNON FODDER 2



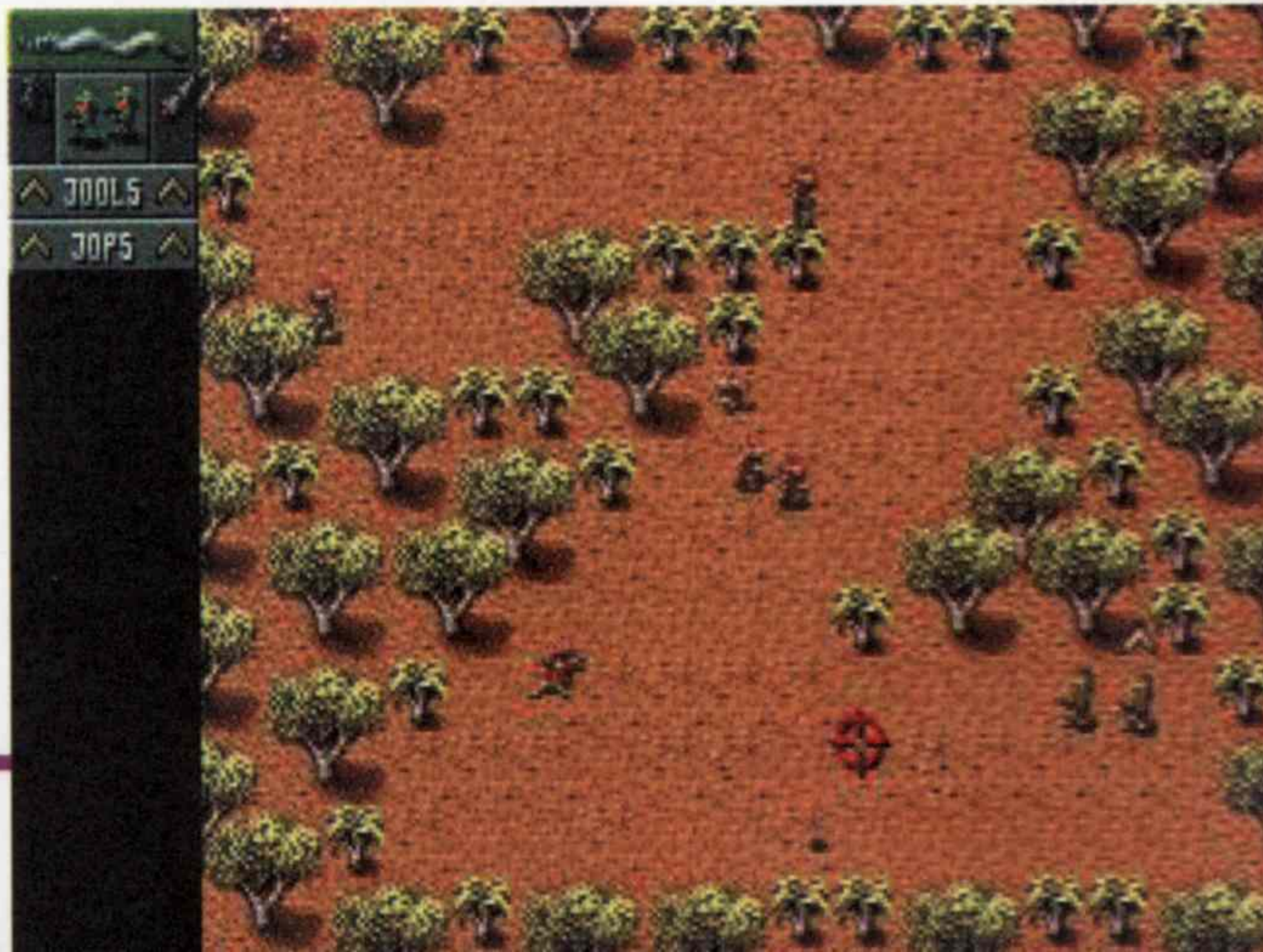
**This is basically a** spring-cleaned *Cannon Fodder*, with a new lick of warpaint and all the furniture moved around. Despite its flaws, *Cannon Fodder* was entertaining and tough. One of its most irritating features was the mouse-driven control system with which you gave your troops direction - interaction through a point-and-click interface is inappropriate for action games; there's just not enough physical feedback. It's exactly the same with this sequel.

Now the action takes place through periods in time, like some ghost of the past, present and future. Unfortunately, this scenario seems out of place - one minute you're blasting Arabs in the desert, then it's a spaceship and what you can only assume are aliens, and then it's on to knights and wizards in some medieval world - it just doesn't hang together.

The diminutive scale of the sprites remains and means that there's more scope for personal interpretation, which is a rare and beautiful thing. There's not always enough time to react at the start of some levels, which often seems unfair, but it spurs you on to keep a lone soldier alive. By and large though, it feels as though perseverance and not skill will see you through. Everything comes across as more consciously fabricated than the original game and there's nothing new on offer.

*Cannon Fodder 2* feels mundane. It's simply not as bright or bubbly as the original game and it's just not rich enough.

■ Watch out for the flying debris that the buildings release when you grenade them.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Virgin

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sensible Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1995

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The same successful formula as the original combines wit with arcade action

**LOW:**  
Not so stimulating this time

**08/10**

# CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2000/01



## Footie fans always know best.

They all think they know better than the managers of their own clubs. But if you ask 100 fans to name their England squad, you'll still get 100 different answers. Ask them what's the best management simulation available on the PC, however, and you'll get a unanimous response.

So what is it about Sports Interactive's offering to the beautiful game that keeps it rooted firmly to the top of the table? The answer is simple. Play a season of *Championship Manager* and you actually feel like you're managing your own soccer team. There's no pointless pondering over billboard space or kiosk building - this game is made by soccer fans for soccer fans. Perhaps most important of all, *Championship Manager* is easy to pick up and play - and yet so exhaustively detailed that an experienced player can submerge himself in the finer points of management and team tactics until his heart is well and truly content.

Several new leagues have been added that will keep the Irish, the Northern Irish, the Welsh, the Greeks, the Russians, the Poles, the Finns, the Croats, the Aussies and the Turks happy with their own domestic leagues to play in. New player statistics have also been added, and match days now feature the option to view a live league table to show how your position changes as the goals go in. You can also now ask for coach and physio reports on your players - to get inside information on player performances and their status within the club.

Match day options have been tampered with, too. You can select a team mentality (attacking, defensive or normal), as well as a playmaker for the side. Individually, players can now be ordered to cross the ball or try through-



balls. And all these tiny improvements are all more small steps toward perfection.

But the most significant and noticeable change involves the media. Constant press speculation and observations about player performances, moves and attitudes has become commonplace and you're often prompted to respond to it. This can significantly affect your players' morale and you have to be careful to say the right things at the right time. It's a neat touch that adds weight and authenticity to the general management experience.

Sports Interactive has taken the best soccer management game ever, updated the players and teams and added several new features that provide further depth and variation. Sure, it's largely the same game as before, but soccer fans will still struggle to find a better way to spend their money.

■ To get a referee fired, ask the Board of Confidence for a match postponement and view your news, then complain about a referee five times without looking at your news in between. Check your news again, and you'll find that the referee has been sacked.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Sports Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

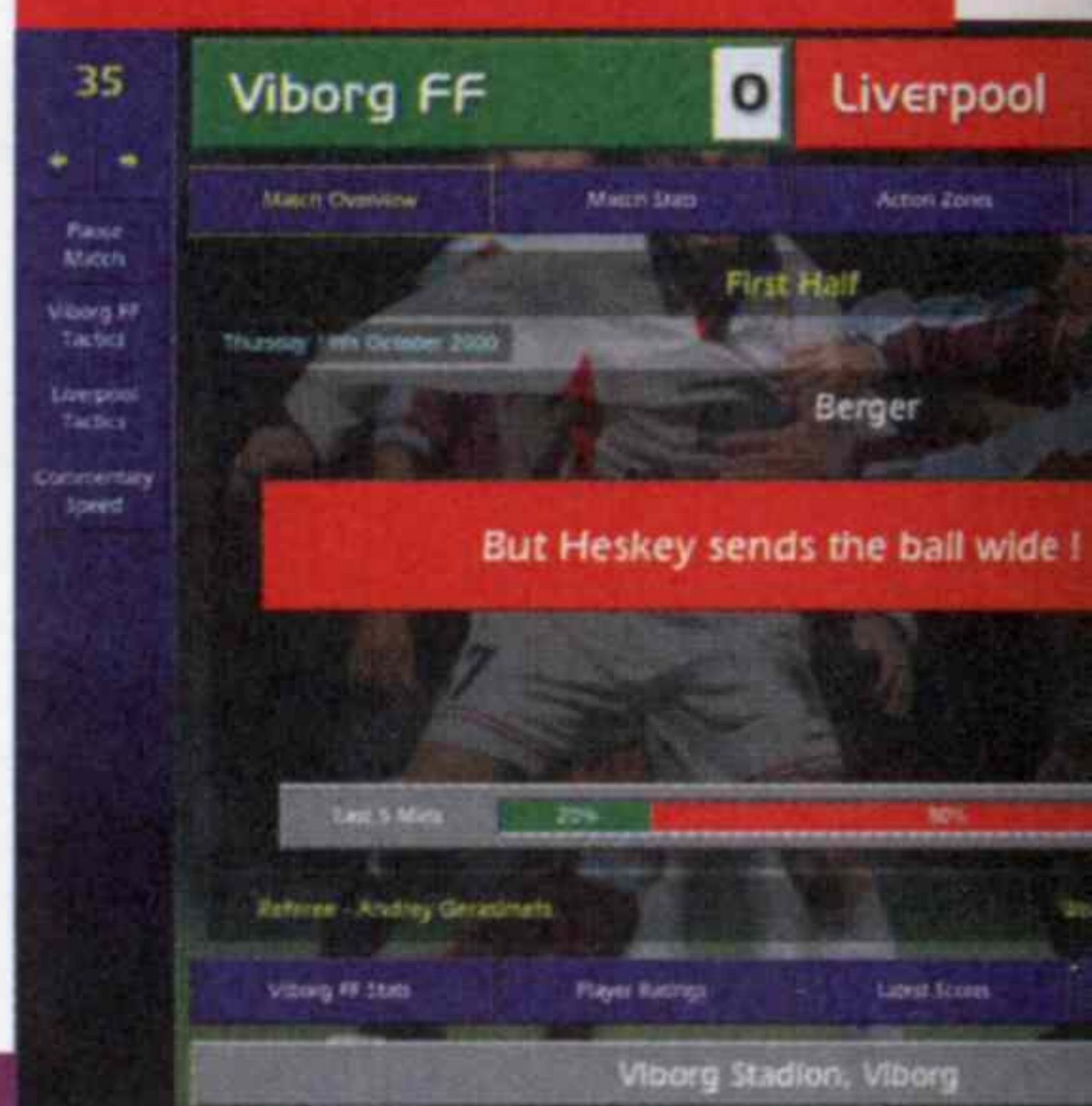
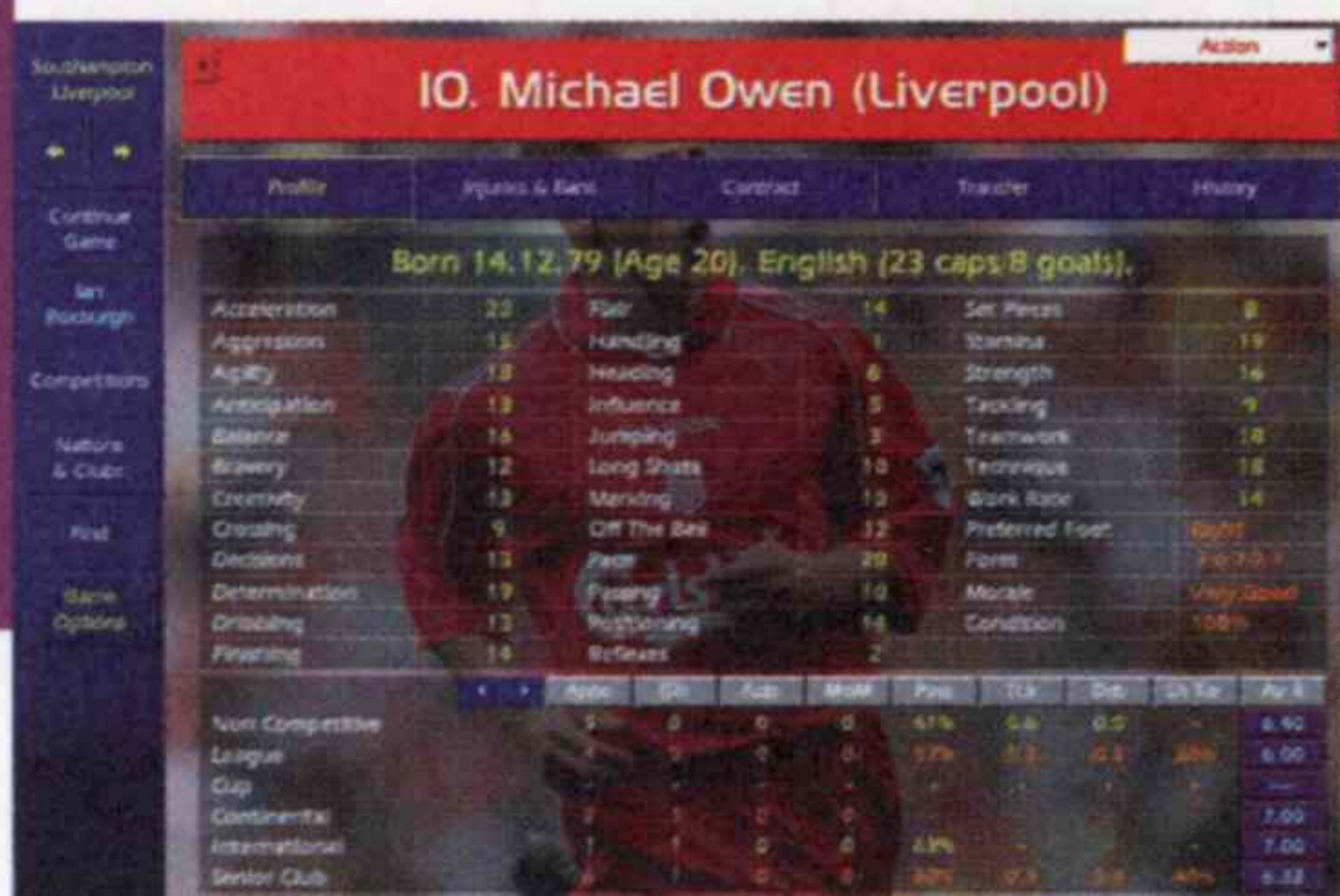
**HIGH:**

Interaction with the media is both more realistic and influential

**LOW:**

No revolutionary new features

# 09/10





# CIVILIZATION II



**Civilization reigned supreme among** strategy games for years but was by no means perfect. With the sequel, creator Sid Meier has taken the original game and made it just that little bit better.

At first, you will find everything very familiar. You use exactly the same tactics to get your first settlement up and running. Find a decent site for your city, whack the science rate up as high as it will go, build the basic military unit to go exploring, follow it up with a phalanx and then a settler, see what advances you've made and take it from there. But it's here that the subtle differences that permeate the game begin to become apparent.

The monetary system throughout the game is much more dependent on your governmental regime than before and makes building the Great Library even more vital. And you now incur a 50% penalty when you switch between Military, Civilian and Wonder. You can no longer have hordes of almost-trained librarians taking to the battlefield as legions. Long-term planning becomes more important and the game becomes harder, and it's impossible to fault this improvement. But the most obvious and radical departure from *Civilization* are the graphics, which have headed in an isometric 3D direction, with varying results.

It's impossible to list all the major changes, let alone the minor ones. Most are behind the scenes and only become apparent after weeks of playing.

■ To alter your council's attitude and time period, enable Cheat mode, then press [Ctrl], [Shift], [T].



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Microprose

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

No strategy game comes close to *Civilization*

### LOW:

Virtually perfect

# 10/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sierra/Havas

### DEVELOPER:

Breakaway

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Autumn 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Like sitting on a burnished throne – rather pleasing but very, very hard

### LOW:

Annoying bugs in your citizens' AI

# 08/10

# CLEOPATRA



**If there was one** criticism of Impression's *Pharaoh*, it was the over-similarity it bore to its predecessor, *Caesar III*. Aside from the locations and architectural styles, and opportunity to build monuments, there were only a few subtle differences in the resource management and mission objectives. This didn't, however, stop it from being brilliant in its own way.

*Cleopatra* was a timely add-on to keep fans amused until *Zeus* arrived. It picks up where *Pharaoh* left off and continues through the reigns of Tutankhamen and Rameses III up to the rule of Cleopatra and her battles with Rome. One aspect in which *Pharaoh* improved over *Caesar III* was in the gradual development of new military and worker types, and *Cleopatra* uses this as its main draw. There are lamp-makers, henna farms and paint mixers to provide materials for building and decorating tombs, along with several new monuments, including the Lighthouse at Alexandria and new tomb styles. In addition, there are new enemies and "natural" disasters, such as rivers turning to blood, to endure.

The nuts and bolts of the game, however, are much the same. There are four new scenarios and 15 new missions to complete, most of which follow the familiar "build a town, then build a tomb" pattern. The biggest problem remains the length of time it takes to build great monuments. And, there are still some bugs in your citizens' AI, which is frustrating.

However, although *Cleopatra* is even harder, it opens up all of the *Pharaoh* missions for selection right from the start.

■ The familiar flaws won't put you off.



# CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING



**You are a paranormal investigator** with a shotgun and a box of spells.

Returning from the First World War, where you were part of a special team allaying the supernatural fears of the Allies, you're recalled to an old friend's Irish estate - a forbidding, rotting pile with a tragic and violent family history.

Armed only with your six-shot service revolver and Gel'ziabar Stone with basic repulsion spell, the detective theme runs strong to begin with. Manuscripts and books expand the dark plot and give clues on progression. Talking to characters also aids direction. All this is handled with game engine cut-scenes and, with such a massive and disorienting environment to explore, you need all the help you can get.

Combat plays an increasingly important role, but it's the waiting that works against the rest of the content. It takes a while before you begin to be happy about the tools you have for the job. However, once you do have a wider complement of spells and weapons, the dual combat system is a joy to use.

*Undying* is certainly attractive. The huge levels look great from outside and exterior environments seem to be handled with aplomb by the modified engine. Step inside, however, and you are assaulted and delayed by loading screen after loading screen and the character animation is a mixed bag.

The most important aspect of the game engine is its use of sound. As a director of horror films, Barker has pumped enough atmosphere in to make it really scary.

■ Film score composer Bill Brown composed the haunting and interactive Celtic music.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Dreamworks

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Atmospheric and attractive with a novel and laudable spell and weapon system

### LOW:

Too much waiting around

# 08/10



# COLIN McRAE RALLY 2.0



**The car's the star** in *Colin McRae Rally 2.0*, and the models are the most detailed ever seen. With the technical wizardry of cubic environment mapping, they are so shiny that they even reflect back the environments as they fly by. The cockpit view is now beautifully rendered in true 3D, complete with perfectly rounded, animated gloved hands. Interiors are just as accurately reproduced and you will recognize different models instantly just from their moldings.

Although the cars are the focus, the environments are also enhanced with a range of real-time effects. The damage model is smashing, too and with the startlingly crisp sound effects, crashes have all the adrenal impact of real fender-benders. Luckily there's a timed Repair mode to restore your car to its racing best between courses.

In Championship mode this management element is enhanced by the ability to tweak plenty of set-up features, and the realistic inability to test the new set-up before racing means that it's a risky proposition, but one that can really pay off. The actual driving is where the game excels, though. The handling is glorious with amazing powerslides that respond realistically to vigorous driver input. Road surface changes also have an immediate effect on the control of the cars.

While *Colin McRae Rally 2.0* is endowed with LAN features in Network mode, it will not support the Codemasters Multiplayer Network code and, while it is possible to set up Internet games, you'll have to arrange games beforehand and type in IP addresses to join a host.

■ Zoom in on stages for detailed meteorological reports before choosing your customized car set-up.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**  
Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Realistic cars and arcade feel even in Rally mode, make for competitive and fun driving

### LOW:

Not set up for Codemasters Multiplayer Network code

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Sid Meier

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Absorbing strategy game with near limitless depth

### LOW:

Not as compulsive as *Civilization*

# 09/10

# COLONIZATION



**Colonization is about the** discovery, settlement and eventual independence of the Americas. In the game you become your country's Viceroy of the New World. Starting in 1492, with the discovery of the new lands to the west of Europe, you have complete control over your country's efforts to colonize these territories and exploit their rich natural resources. Your eventual aim, however, is to develop a nation strong enough to stand on its own without the support of your homeland. To succeed, you must declare independence and survive the inevitable war that will follow when your King attempts to regain control of his wayward colony.

The game is played in turns of six months' duration. Your declaration of independence must be made before 1800, and the war must be resolved by 1850 at the very latest. At the start of the game, you can choose from one of the four Old World powers that were involved in the settling of the New World - England, France, Spain or the Netherlands. Each country has its own objectives and strengths. You also choose between one of the five difficulty levels and whether to play using the real continents of North and South America or with random land masses.

Like its predecessor, *Civilization*, *Colonization* is a work of depth and subtlety and even if you're not a fan of strategy games, you'll almost certainly enjoy the challenge it represents.

■ To activate the Cheat mode, hold [Alt] and type "WIN." Go to Europe and press [Shift] + 4 for extra money, or click on any member of your colony and press [S] to make them an Expert.



## COMBAT MISSION: BEYOND OVERLORD



**Big Time Software has** made its WWII turn-based tactical wargame 3D. All the gameplay possibilities that extra D unlocks, combined with incredible AI, make this a compelling wargame.

Hexagons have been expunged and the traditional top-down and isometric views are now just two of many roving viewpoints. You are free to stroll around the battlefield at will, searching for the best positions to do battle. And in this wonderful 3D world, line of sight is crucial. If you can see an opponent dug-in on a distant hill, he can probably see you, too.

BTS has created an unorthodox two-phase turn system. During the first phase the action is paused as you issue orders. In the second, the orders of both sides are executed simultaneously in a real-time minute-long war movie streamed through a VCR-style interface. You end up with a credible feel of the command chain, and the horrifying chaos of battle. The 43 scenarios, plus seven big multi-battle operations, span the 12 months between the D-Day Landings and the end of World War II in Europe, but you can generate a random battle with the Quick Battle option, or build your own scenarios and maps. The game has every conceivable vehicle, squad or team involved in WWII; all are nicely modeled and backed up with historically rigorous stats.

There are a few blemishes: without a team monitor it can be hard to keep track of units in large battles; the utilitarian 3D engine keeps pace, but don't expect any fancy effects, and the terrain could be more varied. But, frankly, none of this matters.

■ *Combat Mission* is only available to buy at [Battlefront.com](http://Battlefront.com).



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Big Time Software

### DEVELOPER:

Big Time Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Even in areas where *Command Mission* isn't innovating, it is still beating its rivals

### LOW:

There could be more buildings, different fields and gardens

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Westwood Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Westwood Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No


VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A stunning achievement that makes what was already so good even better

**LOW:**  
Nothing much to fault

10/10

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT

 Only the best real-time games will come close to *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*. From the first mission where the basic controls are re-introduced, to the later, almost suicidal, commando raids on enemy bases, everything gels together perfectly. If you get stuck you know it's because you've missed something or been too hasty, rather than because the game is inherently unfair.

There are instantly recognizable *C&C* features here as well as a few tweaks and additions, but the spyplane, in conjunction with the fog of war, is probably the biggest difference. Whereas in *C&C* once the map was uncovered it remained live and visible, it now re-fogs as soon as you've backed off. So you send out spy planes every few minutes to uncover a circular area on the map to help you plan. The map design is the most critical element in *C&C* and *Red Alert's* level designers challenge you from the start. When constructing a base you're rewarded or punished for bravery more than ever before. And all this inevitably

ties in to the computer's play. It's now more aggressive when you're looking vulnerable and less predictable when you're sitting pretty.

The graphics have changed little from the original game. But it's now more varied than before because *Red Alert* has a variety of levels that require radically varied tactics. The best additions to the game, though, are the five difficulty levels, which affect the damage units can cause to each other. There are enough tweaks here to ensure *Red Alert* is as different from *C&C* as *Civ 2* was from *Civ*, but the differences are more exciting.

■ Shooting the explosive barrels and setting off the spectacular explosions are the key to completing most of the early missions.



COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT 2

 There's something about every episode of the *Command & Conquer* franchise that defies explanation; that one indefinable spark of magic that transforms a run-of-the-mill sketch into the Mona Lisa. *C&C: Red Alert 2* has it by the bucketload. It's not groundbreaking in terms of originality or technological endeavor, it's just damned good fun to play.

There are few major changes to the game engine, and ostensibly *Red Alert 2* is actually a step backward in terms of real-time strategy. Westwood has taken the *Tiberian Sun* engine and retro-vamped it to run smoother and faster. That means voxels are still the order of the day in preference to processor-eating polygons, but with a game like this there's no need to complicate matters. The key to the success of the *C&C* series is finely interwoven with the game's fundamental simplicity. Rather than try to make *C&C: Red Alert 2* the most innovative and best-looking RTS title ever, Westwood has ironed out every conceivable wrinkle instead.

A wide variety of new units with as good a balance as you'll see in any RTS game combines with the staggering array of options to make one of the best strategy titles of all time even better. It's mind-blowing - not in form but substance, and it's in the multiplayer mode that you'll really notice the difference.

■ As each of your units gets stuck into combat, they gain experience points. These points advance you through successive ranks until you reach Elite status.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Westwood Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Autumn 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
*C&C* polished to the shiniest degree. A must for RTS fans

**LOW:**  
Unoriginal

09/10

# COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN



**Tiberian Sun begins with** characteristic FMV excess.

The NOD news broadcast televising "Today's execution" sets the tone with malevolent glee. There's Kane, the pantomime megalomaniac, and James Earl Jones camping it up as the American General. This dramatic FMV is aided and abetted by the scripted in-game scenes that kick off every mission. Instead of getting a construction yard and a couple of guys and mechanically sweeping yet another level, you'll start by witnessing a desperate battle that sees your troops in full flight. Or you'll have to stand by while enemy units rampage through a defenseless village, shooting civilians. By the time you take the controls, you're super-charged - it's not just another level but a heroic crusade.

The simplicity of *C&C's* approach to war makes combat refreshingly direct. Instead of drawing graphics for hundreds of units that all turn out to be the same, Westwood has concentrated on perfectly balancing less than 20 per side, along with the missions to use them in. This is *Tiberian Sun's* secret formula. Every mission throws up a new challenge.

The processor-friendly voxels come into their own during multiplayer battles when armies mass up. Here *Tiberian Sun* runs smoothly in all but the most congested conditions. Meanwhile, the modems can take comfort from the fact that *C&C's* AI has taken encouraging steps forward. Best of all, *Tiberian Sun* has reawakened that old *Command & Conquer* magic.

■ Once placed, way-points mark a permanent path on the map. Selected any squad, click on a way-point and they'll join the dots.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Westwood Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Westwood Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Gloriously simple RTS and a worthy successor to *C&C*

**LOW:**  
Not very different from *Red Alert*

**09/10**

# COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES



**Imagine if *Command & Conquer* met *X-COM* at a party.** And imagine that at this party there was a great deal to drink. Now imagine that, as the two of them drunkenly made their way toward the coat room to take their leave, they accidentally fell through a time warp. Come on, imagine it: let your imagination drop them out of the time warp and into 1939, but something has gone horribly wrong in the trans-dimensional journey, and the two have become spliced together as one entity. Can you picture it?

*Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* is Eidos's tale of the cream of World War II specialist soldiers. The few men you command are a pre-defined selection of sappers, Marines, Green Berets, spies and drivers, with the soldiers available varying according to which of the 20 levels you're playing. Each has specific skills, which must be correctly employed if you are to succeed. Success is the completion of a series of tasks, the last of which in each level tends to be the destruction of a key structure or base.

While original in its approach, the glitches are too many, including some silly rules. For example, only your driver can handle a machine-gun. Should he die, then all of your other soldiers ignore the weapon. Similarly, only a Green Beret can pick up a barrel - not the most taxing of tasks to specialize in. It's sad that all the good bits are overshadowed and the graphics no longer dazzle.

■ First type: 1982GONZO, then [Ctrl]+I - to make you invincible, [Shift]+V - to trace user, [Shift]+X - to teleport, [Ctrl]+[Shift]+N - to end mission.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Pyro

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Original, but nothing special

**LOW:**  
Too many glitches

**07/10**



# DESCENT: FREESPACE - THE GREAT WAR



**Descent: Freespace isn't** as accomplished as LucasArts' space combat classics *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter*, but in many respects it teaches the old masters a thing or two. The eye-goggling visuals provide the perfect, sumptuous backdrop for the rest of the game's accomplishments. The scale of the graphics is phenomenal both in terms of size and imagination: huge GTA cruisers and Shivan destroyers stretch kilometers through space. Moreover, these megavessels are as functional as they are ornamental.

The same goes for the head-up display, where a vast amount of hieroglyphic data is packed onto the screen. Volition has dispensed with the cockpit and plumped for a more elegant, flight sim HUD approach, where a glance gathers all the information you need. Only the radar is not as clear as *TIE Fighter's*, though it still provides your required six degrees of information adequately. You can also navigate by the superb directional arrows which show the location and distance to your next target. Then there's the lovely auto-targeting touch. The same level of thought and testing has clearly been lavished on assigning sensible keys to the 101 commands in the game.

*Freespace* is not, of course, perfect. The main problem is that the ships are too similar, and combat in general is not quite as refined as in *TIE Fighter*. But it's undeniably a dramatic and engrossing experience. Sure, it has borrowed heavily from past masters, but it has also added enough to become a great game in its own right.

■ It is impossible to complete *Freespace* without judicious use of your wingmen in Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon wings.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**  
Volition

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A landmark in the space combat genre which fully exploits the PC's capabilities

**LOW:**  
Some missions can feel a bit like a turkey shoot

# 09/10

# COUNTER-STRIKE 1.0



**Even before its release,** *Counter-Strike* held the title of most popular online game. It pitches terrorists versus counter-terrorists in several different battle scenarios on a panoply of maps, more of which can be downloaded from enthusiasts' Web sites. It's purely multiplayer, and it's free.

The game is a perfect balance between arcade fun and tactical teamplay. You have to play against other people and your objectives are clear: the terrorists either have to guard hostages, kill a VIP or plant a bomb. Conversely the counter-terrorists have to rescue the hostages, save the VIP or defuse the bomb. A round is won or lost when the objectives are achieved or one side is eliminated. You have to work together to ensure victory, and you have to get good at headshots to keep yourself in one piece. The length of game rounds can be altered, but the default is five minutes. If the offensive team hasn't completed its objective in that time, the passive team chalk up a victory: and you don't respawn once dead. The more successful you are, the more money you'll have to spend on guns. The action is so close that this money-based dynamic doesn't become an issue, but it's possible for one team to dominate, taking all the kills and all the money.

The major faults with *Counter-Strike 1.0* are the net code bugs which often result in apparently random kills due to ping and lag effects. There are in-map irritations, too, but none of this really matters because it's a game of fast-paced bullet-ridden brutality. You can't help but love it.

■ Get 120 bullets for a Steyr TMP by buying an MP5 and all its bullets, then buy a TMP. Or for 120 bullets for a Glock pistol, buy an MP5 and all its bullets, then buy the pistol.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**  
Team Counter-Strike

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It may be old, but it's varied, competitive and full of furious action

**LOW:**  
Infuriating bugs, irritations and clipping problems

# 09/10

# CREATURES 3



**The *Creatures* series is** actually a bunch of artificial life simulators that can only loosely be described as games. Your task is to give the Norns a decent upbringing, and this involves everything from teaching them English to making sure they eat properly. Once they reach an age of maturity, they'll try to find a mate whom they can kiss, which makes a baby. The parents' genetic characteristics get passed on to their children. They'll interact with their progeny, and even teach them to talk and so on.

The little guys need things to interact with in their little world, and there's no shortage of stimuli. As well as all the gadgets, toys, machines and vehicles that clutter up the huge, living spaceship the Norns inhabit, there are also two other races: the friendly Ettins and the mean Grendels. These other lifeforms are also AI driven and they'll talk to, fight, play and generally muck about with your charges.

There's no way you can win the game, and eventually your Norns will have explored every inch of the ship and found every bonus. They'll just keep on happily evolving though, and that's the point: the most intriguing part of the game is seeing how they evolve and develop from generation to generation.

This isn't massively different to the first two games; the AI routines are more sophisticated, the graphics are nicer, the interface has been improved and there are some new features such as the option to start the game with pre-trained Norns, but it's not revolutionary. *Creatures 3* requires patience rather than a fancy graphics card.

■ Give your Norn something to interact with right away. They learn on their own, but the more you nudge them, the better they become.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Mindscape

**DEVELOPER:**  
CyberLife

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Perseverance will be rewarded with hours of engrossing rearing of your Norns

**LOW:**  
Not that different from the first two games

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Ion Storm

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Final proof that size doesn't matter. Youth and intelligence are far more important...

**LOW:**  
Would have looked great with an up-to-date engine

# 06/10

# DAIKATANA



**If *Daikatana* were a film,** you'd walk out after the first 20 minutes. The entire opening Swamp environment is a mistake and not at all representative of the later levels.

The *Daikatana* is a time-traveling sword, and, after gaining it in episode one, you are whisked away to an age of mythological monsters and Harryhausen skeletons. The wild variations in environment work well and the individual episodes are so huge that each of the four feels like an entire game. The AI gradually gets more aggressive and there's a more cohesive feel to the enemy. The third episode flings you into the Dark Ages, where demonic beasts and zombies roam. The architecture of this episode is attractive and the projectile and magic weapons are reminiscent of *Heretic*. Finally, it's back to the future to confront Mishima.

The sheer size of each episode and some impressive level design are the saving graces of the game; for within the solid structure are some crippling problems. The most significant modification to the *Quake II* engine is the sidekick system, for along your journey you pick up Mikiko and Superfly. You can switch between the two and command them to come, stay, attack, back off or use guns and health. While they attack fairly sensibly, their ability to follow you through the level is not only dreadful but slows the game badly. Level transitions and the save-point system dog the entire game. Had *Daikatana* been released three years earlier, it would have stood out, despite its awkward AI.

■ The tougher the enemy you manage to kill, the more experience points you gain.



# DARK REIGN



**Dark Reign** set a new standard in strategy game presentation: bug-free operation and smooth running. It also set a new standard in presentation terms. The number and quality of sprite-based units and scenery are fantastic. Battles are worth watching just for the explosions, the sound is thumpingly good and there's a suitably epic classical score to back up the whole affair. Strangely, though, the majority of the structures on both sides is dull, gray and uninspiring.

But all these elements are really the support structure for its game engine. Offering 3D scenery, true line of sight, camouflage possibilities and variable land types that affect units' movement rates, this is one of the best. But then there are some unexplained absences. *Dark Reign* plays out through almost entirely ground-based combat. You cannot build naval facilities and the aerial element is restricted greatly. Hovercrafts serve as quasi-substitutes for both and immediately become massively important. Available to both sides, they are also the only units really to attack the hugely powerful Tesla coil equivalent defense structures that are everyone's base defenses. It is this similarity between the two sides that is the first slight disappointment. Although one is the Imperial establishment and one is the repressed Freedom Guard, they both have access to remarkably comparable forms of weaponry. There are some excellent and some unique units on both sides, though, and they do have their part to play.

On paper, then, *Dark Reign* is one of the finest 3D strategy games of all. On screen it is a beauty and all the play mechanic sums add up. But it has little character of its own.

■ The level editor and mass of multiplayer options make *Dark Reign* a long-term prospect.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Auran

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Technically superb and tremendous fun

**LOW:**

Too futuristic and sci-fi makes it hard to relate to

09/10



# DARK REIGN 2



The old *C&C* model is refined beautifully in *Dark Reign 2* and everything you need is at your fingertips through a system of intuitive sub-menus: select your barracks and a rally-point tab pops up, enabling you to funnel fresh units to any point on the battlefield. You can tie roving cameras to your units, or create patrol pathways with single button presses, and do everything without the hassle of complex, combined hot-keys.

It helps that the game is beautifully 3D. Holding F while moving the mouse enables you to pan the camera, and [Ctrl] and [Alt], coupled with mouse movement enable you to zoom and sweep. This camera movement is flawlessly responsive and helps you control your forces with pin-point accuracy.

The story is that Earth, ravaged by years of war and environmental neglect, has devolved into a giant police state – the wealthy few live in sealed domes, while the unwashed masses eke out their existence in the urban sprawls. Watching over all is the Jovian Detention Authority, which rules with an iron fist. But now the Sprawlers are gathering forces against their oppressors. There are campaign games for both the JDA and the Sprawlers, as well as multiplayer and skirmish options. The basic resource available to you on the battlefield is Taelon, a crystalline substance that grows back very slowly after it's been harvested, and you build collectors to gather it and refineries to process it. The side that harvests the most generally does the best.

*DR2* is so highly polished you can see your face in it.

■ Mojos are important because they can sway the tide of a battle and plunge your enemy's forces into disarray.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Pandemic

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

*Dark Reign 2* is simply a joy to play, with plenty of good old-fashioned RTS action

**LOW:**

Not the most original game in the world

08/10



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**  
LucasArts**DEVELOPER:**  
LucasArts**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1995**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes**VERDICT:****HIGH:**  
Hilarious plot, great graphics  
and sound effects**LOW:**  
The taskbar takes up half  
the screen**09/10****DAY OF THE TENTACLE**

**Day of the Tentacle** is a very special adventure, not least because of its LucasArts origins, supremely funny dialogue and crazy plot. The game is the sequel to *Maniac Mansion*, which is also included here as an extra if you haven't already played it. The story starts when a huge, mutated purple tentacle escapes from a certain Dr. Edison. The doctor then builds a time machine, which three kids plan to use to help them unravel the sequence of events that led to the tentacle ruling the world in the future. One of the kids is sent back 200 years into the past, another 200 years into the future, while the third remains in the present. But the time machine breaks down and you have to then help the three time-traveling kids stop the tentacle in his tracks using the items they find along the way.

The intuitive and unfussy point-and-click gameplay and simple interface mean that beginners will be able to play *Day of the Tentacle* right away, while the keyboard shortcuts make everything even easier to get to grips with.

The innovative puzzles you have to solve throughout the game will test your logic skills, especially when the outcome affects events in the past and future. The cartoon graphics are colorful and well animated and, along with the dialogue which uses real actors, add to the atmosphere of fun.

■ To play the original *Maniac Mansion*, go to Weird Ed's room and use the computer five times.

**DELTA FORCE 2**

**This game is all** about fear and surprise and guns and uniforms. It offers the tension and terror of possible instant death as an alternative to multiple fragging. Like its predecessor, *Delta Force 2* is a stealthy, exciting, exhilarating first-person shoot-'em-up with none of the tactical planning required in *Hidden & Dangerous* or the *Rainbow Six* games. This simple, no-nonsense approach was one of the first *Delta Force*'s big strengths and Novalogic has resisted the temptation to embellish it too much.

It was tempted, though, as is shown by the new commander's map. This shows you where all the buildings, soldiers and vehicles are on the battlefield, and enables you to move any of the preset waypoints. It's useful if you want to avoid certain firefights when stealth is at a premium, but it can only be called up in combat. The orders system is - like the commander's screen - clearly designed with the multiplayer game in mind and of no real use to the solo soldier.

Thankfully, *Delta Force 2*'s single-player experience is just as brutally straightforward as the first game. If you get hit, you die and the words, "Bravo is down! Mission is aborted!" crackle across the radio. For, despite the fact that you're joined by a team of two, or even four, other soldiers on some missions, success or failure is all down to you. This is a great game. As you tromp across the vast levels you realize how beautifully designed each one is. And the delicious blend of caution, courage and quick reactions makes each mission an intense experience.

■ When the mission starts, push "``" to bring up a command screen and type in the following: "thetrooper" for god mode; "diewithyourbootson" for unlimited ammo.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**  
Novalogic**DEVELOPER:**  
Novalogic**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2000**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No**VERDICT:****HIGH:**  
Intense, action-packed  
soldiering, now with 50%  
more added variety**LOW:**  
Not drastically different from  
the original**09/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Novalogic

**DEVELOPER:**  
Novalogic

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR



**Delta Force's leanings toward** tactics made it one of the original soldier sims, but today it should be reclassified as a pure first-person shoot-'em-up. At the time of release, Novalogic's voxel-system was the only way to get realistically massive game-areas. While most first-person shoot-'em-ups favored claustrophobic caverns and sci-fi bases, *Delta Force's* panoramas created a whole new world. The traditional disadvantage of voxel engines was that all their rendering power rested upon the CPU, but here the accelerator card helps out, leaving the CPU to concentrate on undulating landscapes. But while this is clearly the best-looking *Delta Force* so far, it's still distinctly ugly.

Movement isn't *Delta Force's* strong point either; your character never feels as dynamic as you want. This feels like a shooting gallery rather than a combat simulator, but it's also tense because your ability to absorb damage is virtually nil. Level loads are quick and the levels can be played through at great speed,

but it's all a little easy. However, there's considerable mileage in playing through with a different selection of hardware and the expanse of the map gives room to experiment with different approaches.

Of course, there's also the online Novaworld option. Game types vary and include cooperative, which enables small groups of up to three players to face off against the computer. But the buzz comes from the crackle of pseudo-authentic weaponry and the fact that up to 50 people can play together.

■ Try these: drury = full ammo, kariya = infinite ammo.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A short, addictive burst of pure fun and up to 50 people can face off in a single match

**LOW:**

Retro graphics, movement lags and limited sound effects

08/10



# DOGS OF WAR



**This game provides a** mental challenge superior to any of its competitors. It styles itself as the first action tactics title: you have to use the strengths of your troops to overcome the weaknesses of your enemies. There's also no chance to build up overwhelming forces with which to crush the opposition. With no base-building, and limited opportunity to buy extra troops, every mission is a desperate attempt to survive.

Some missions seem impossible at first, and most demand several restarts before you work them out. The objectives are usually imaginative and demand you to be equally imaginative to achieve them. Unfortunately, with such intricate mission goals and tactical elements, they can often seem contrived.

The game's setting and structure is well-implemented. Two sides are battling for a planet's resources; the hi-tech, well-financed Imperial Order and the low-tech, mercenary Warmonkeys, with the Mantai as the alien threat.

Visually, *Dogs of War* is stunning. The camera system can be used to control troops from a free-roaming view, or you can zoom in and control one unit, and even use a sniper scope in the resizeable window. Explosions are suitably flame-and-debris-filled, and the lighting effects will have you drooling.

There are several flaws; enemy AI is often suspect, as is the poor pathfinding. Ultimately, *Dogs of War* is designed to appeal to hardcore tacticians.

■ Craig Charles provides the voiceover in training missions.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
TalonSoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Silicon Dreams

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A real rarity: this is a strategy game that forces you to think about tactics

**LOW:**

Perhaps it's a bit too hard

09/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Ion Storm

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Action-RPG mayhem. This game pushes the boundaries

### LOW:

Retro theme music

# 09/10



**Deus Ex uses the Unreal engine** as its basis. The advantages of this method are evident: games move from conception to completion much faster.

*Deus Ex* is a first-person action RPG. You play one J.C. Denton, a special agent for UNATCO, an extended branch of the police. The world is a day-after-tomorrow affair with the current trends stretched to extremes. A modern plague haunts the streets and the vaccine is in fatally short supply. Access to it is limited to those with power, wealth or both. The locations in the game are either based on real-world areas, or authentic enough to make you believe they are.

Despite all the ultraviolence, *Deus Ex* features sophisticated character development. There are 11 different skills, varying from weapon classes and survival to intrusion... and you have only a bare minimum of points to spend on advancing them. While each skill has only four levels, the differences between classes are huge, with the highest being extremely difficult to attain.

This extreme system means that by the end of the game your character won't necessarily be

# DEUS EX

competent in most things, so you have to make hard decisions regarding what to spend your experience points on. However, being unskilled in an area doesn't usually bar you from having a crack at it.

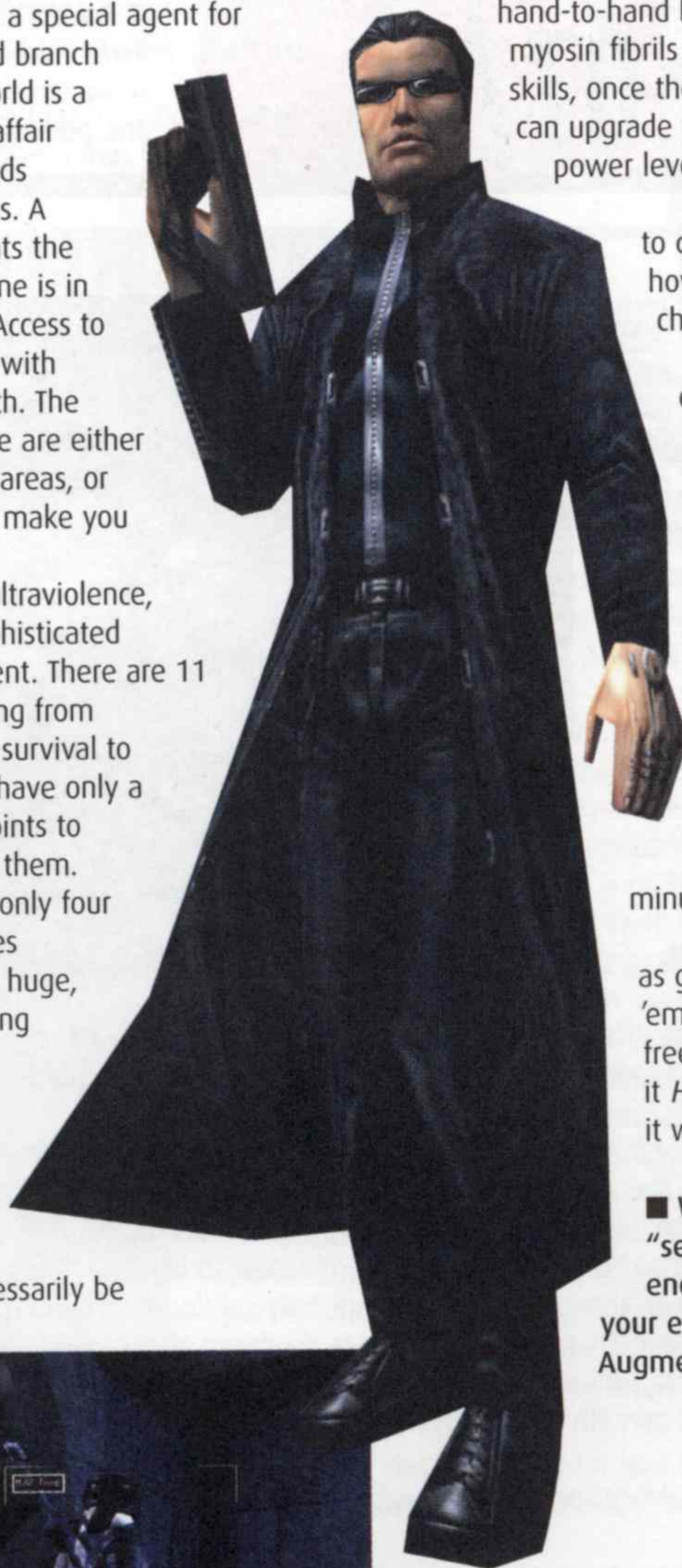
This formula is further complicated by the second way you can personalize your character. You're a finely tuned nano-tech human machine, capable of being upgraded when you find a suitable canister, and you have the choice of either hypercharging your muscle neurons for hand-to-hand bonus, or strengthening myosin fibrils for lifting strength. And, like skills, once they've been plugged in you can upgrade them over four increasing power levels.

The most interesting way to define your character, however, is through your moral choices in the game.

The story is as deep as you choose it to be. Equally, the world drips with detail. There are innumerable books to read, e-mail logs to study and newspapers and data terminals to peek at: the important ones are noted in your log book, as are all the conversations. *Deus Ex* has true cutting-edge interactive storytelling: while the majority of the tale is pre-determined, the minutiae are decided by you.

While *Deus Ex's* not quite as good as *Half-Life* as a shoot-'em-up or *Thief* as a sneaker, the freedom to try both genres made it *Half-Life's* only real peer when it was released.

■ When in the console type "set deusex.jcdentonmale energy 10000" to maximize your energy (this enables longer Augmentation use).



DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR



# DIABLO

**Diablo is a Gauntlet** type. *Gauntlet* was the first arcade machine to introduce the delights of multiplayer gaming to the world. (It had four sets of controls on the front of the machine, and four of you at once could run around mazes destroying monsters and collecting treasure.) Sure, *Diablo* may be sophisticated, gorgeous and multi-layered, but it's still nothing new, which is disappointing. However, it's fun to play, especially in multiplayer mode.

Basically, *Diablo* is one huge dungeon bash. First you choose a character from Sorcerer, Rogue or Warrior and you start in the village of Tristram. As soon as you find out where the dungeon is, away you go. The dungeon's divided into levels, each one filled with monsters and treasure to kill and collect respectively, and every so often, one of the village dwellers gives you a quest. Sadly these "quests" require no real action on your behalf and merely serve as added color for the game.

There are a few things in *Diablo* that relieve the monotony of dungeon-bashing. One is just admiring how beautiful everything is. You'll also be delighted with the way the monsters die, some with blood spurting from their mouths as they crumple to the floor, others with a blood-curdling scream. And they don't die easily, either. Another good thing is that the dungeon is different in every game you play, but that's an idea that's been around a long time, in the hugely popular shareware game *Rogue*. Overall, then, *Diablo* is fun, but somewhat unoriginal.

■ Put an item you would like to duplicate on the ground, then walk away from it but keep it on the screen. Left-Click on the item. At the same time you pick it up, click on a Belt item. Open your inventory and put the item in an empty space.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Blizzard

### DEVELOPER:

Blizzard

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fun to play, especially in multiplayer mode

### LOW:

Unoriginal gameplay

# 07/10

# DIABLO II



### Although repetitive and unoriginal,

encouraging inelegant play, and with a fetishistic immaturity, *Diablo II* is the most brutally addictive game since *Half-Life*.

Its fundamental hypnotic appeal is obvious: a tried-and-tested formula. You create a puny and impoverished character, then run around a fantasy world fighting monsters. You are rewarded with increasingly powerful weapons, armor and magical items, and an alter-ego that grows in ability as he or she gains experience. As the game progresses, you get to tackle more powerful monsters and are rewarded with even heftier power-ups, and so on.

The genius of *Diablo II* is that it meets this RPG archetype head on, and does two very different things with it. First, it embraces the stereotype, and offers the purest possible implementation of the primal dungeon-crawl experience. Stripped down to the bare essentials, *Diablo II* is a real-time all-action slaughter-fest with simple point-and-click controls, lots of monsters to kill, and thousands of items for you to accumulate and toy with on the way. It's also surprisingly subtle. The main factor in its success is the flexible character development. There are five separate classes to choose from, and each one is radically different from the others, which makes a real difference to the way in which any particular character will play. The fantastic breadth of skills available within these classes makes this a game worth playing several times over.

*Diablo II* is bigger, better looking, and more balanced than *Diablo*, but essentially the same game.

■ Significant actions – killing boss creatures, for example – often set off pyrotechnics.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Havas

### DEVELOPER:

Blizzard

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Life-suckingly compelling trinket-gathering action with surprising depth

### LOW:

Still not the most original game in the world

# 09/10

# DOOM: EVIL UNLEASHED



**By releasing the first episode of *Doom* as shareware, Id Software whipped up and controlled a torrent of frantic bulletin-board trading. If you write a game as immediately playable as *Doom* and ship it with the message "please distribute like crazy" you're guaranteed a large audience. And that's just what Id did. The first episode of *Doom: Evil Unleashed* was free and you had to pay for the next two episodes.**

Action in *Doom* happens on more than one level. There are stairs for you to climb, lifts to find and aliens firing at you from windows and balconies high above the ground. This adds major depth to the action. There are problems with *Doom* though. Yes, it is good – it's a technically impressive piece of programming – but it lacks the genuine 3D of *Ultima Underworld*. Or the variety in gameplay. And there's not really a great deal in the game to set it above even the most average, most highly repetitive and tedious 2D shoot-'em-up.

*Doom* is certainly a gorgeous-looking game and made serious advances in 3D graphics in its time. But the gameplay is as narrow as it gets: you run along beautifully parallaxed corridors and through stunning 3D rooms, shooting at a near-endless supply of green lizards. That's it. But there is a worryingly addictive fascination in watching the frantic dispatching of those little green guys.

■ Id programmed hundreds of secret passages into the mazes in *Doom*. Explore every wall with great care. Some secret doors are even obscured by objects that you have to blast out of the way.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Id Software

### DEVELOPER:

Id Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A gorgeous-looking and addictive 3D shoot-'em-up

### LOW:

Limited number of enemies

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Id Software

### DEVELOPER:

Id Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It's got everything the first game had, only more of it and better

### LOW:

There's nothing that new or original here

# 10 / 10

# DOOM II: HELL ON EARTH



**Developer Id Software has** been smart enough to recognize a winning formula when it sees one, and rather than risk upsetting *Doom*'s delicate balance, it has given you exactly what you want – more of the same, but harder, faster and more visceral than before. There are 30 new levels (plus two secret ones), a handful of new baddies added to the existing cast of characters, a new soundtrack, a new weapon, new power-ups and some subtle tweaks to the multiplayer mode.

The overall feel of things is different, too – although the story flicks back and forth between Earth, Mars and Hell, there's no distinction between the worlds as there was before, just a continuous stream of levels. On average, all of *Doom II*'s levels are larger than any of the original's, and with a new creature line-up, cutting a swathe through the hellish hordes is now much tougher. Much more thought has gone into designing levels for multiplayer use, too, and some new tweaks have been added, making it much more intense than the original.

Basically, this is *Doom* with knobs on. There's more action, more horrific scenes of carnage and destruction, more pace, more puzzles and more multiplayer excitement. Inevitably, *Doom II* doesn't create as much of an initial impact as the original game, but real *Doom* purists will lap it up.

■ Try these cheats: IDDQD for god mode, IDKFA for all keys and full ammo, IDCLIP to walk through walls, IDCHOPPERS for a chainsaw.



# DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME



**Here are two games** for the price of one. Namely a swords-'n'-sorcery *Tomb Raider* thing and a bus-sized lizard simulator. The *Tomb Raider* bit is capable enough, if disappointingly linear and lumbered with some nasty pixel-perfect jumping, tired puzzling, instant-death traps and relentlessly tiresome combat. But you'll forget all about that once you're free to hurl a two-ton, fire-breathing reptile through the air and set fire to trees.

You are Rhynn, foxy sword-twirler and last survivor of a village-burning. Your task is to find the dragon Arokh and enlist his aid in your quest for vengeance. The first level is a trudge through interminably sequential groups of hog-faced beasts and large spiders. Then you locate your steed, which is when things get interesting. The dragon/girl axis works well, although there's a disappointingly repetitive Fly the Dragon/Send the Girl Into the Dungeon element, and the amount of in-flight fogging is shocking. But, in the main, *Drakan* is an enjoyable romp.

Airborne combat is the high point of the game. When you're locked in a dogfight with a skeletal Evil Dragon as troll-manned ballistas fire flaming shot at you from all sides, the effect is exhilarating. It's just a shame that the rest of the game tends to be average. The simple hack-'n'-slash on-foot combat is tryingly inexact at the best of times, and the evil wall-mounted scythe traps and crumbling floor-blocks are a lazy - and frustrating - attempt at ramping up the difficulty curve.

■ Be careful not to fall into the rivers. Most of the time there's no way out, and the current will sweep you away to an early death.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Psygnosis

### DEVELOPER:

Surreal Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A great concept and the dragon's ace

### LOW:

Frequently indifferent execution of the basic idea

# 07 / 10



# DRIVER



**Driver focuses on one** type of car. It focuses on the kind of vast, wallowing, American car that's still rocking gently on its springs long after you've parked, locked it, got out, gone indoors and made yourself a cup of coffee. The brilliant thing about 1970s American cars is that they're (a) hopelessly overweight, and (b) almost entirely incapable of gripping the Tarmac. So they're unable to negotiate even the gentlest curve without breaking into a long, glorious slide, hubcaps scattering hither and thither and the back end sprawling wide until you wrestle it back into line with plenty of opposite lock. And they're propelled by bellowing V8 engines which, when the tires finally stop smoking, heave them forward at enormous speed.

*Driver* has four entire cities. Granted, they're all full of unconvincing right-angled corners, but each has its unique atmosphere and there's much fun to be had unlocking them one by one as you play the missions. There's a disappointing amount of traffic on the streets, though - only cars and vans, and they are all too good at staying out of trouble.

But *Driver* does an excellent line in crumpled bodywork. It manages engine fires, too, and cars perform somersaults with balletic ease. However, the cops are incredibly tenacious. And the fact that they appear on the map means you can plan cunning routes to avoid them.

But the game's trump card should be the 1970s-movie-style cut-scenes. They were its big chance to tie everything together into an exciting story, but they don't give you a clear indication of your character's motivation or even who he is: undercover cop or baddie?

Having said that, *Driver* is still one of those rare games that gives you hope for the future of PC gaming.

■ One of the best bits of *Driver* is its Director mode. This action-replay facility enables you to edit the game you just played into a film.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GT

### DEVELOPER:

Reflections

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

*Driver* is the 1970s - but on your PC. Behold the dawn of a new era of driving games

### LOW:

The cut-scenes are a sad waste of Huggy Bear

# 09 / 10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

3D Realms

**DEVELOPER:**

Apogee

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**Better than the original *Duke Nukem***LOW:**

Dated looks and average gameplay

**05/10**

# DUKE NUKEM II



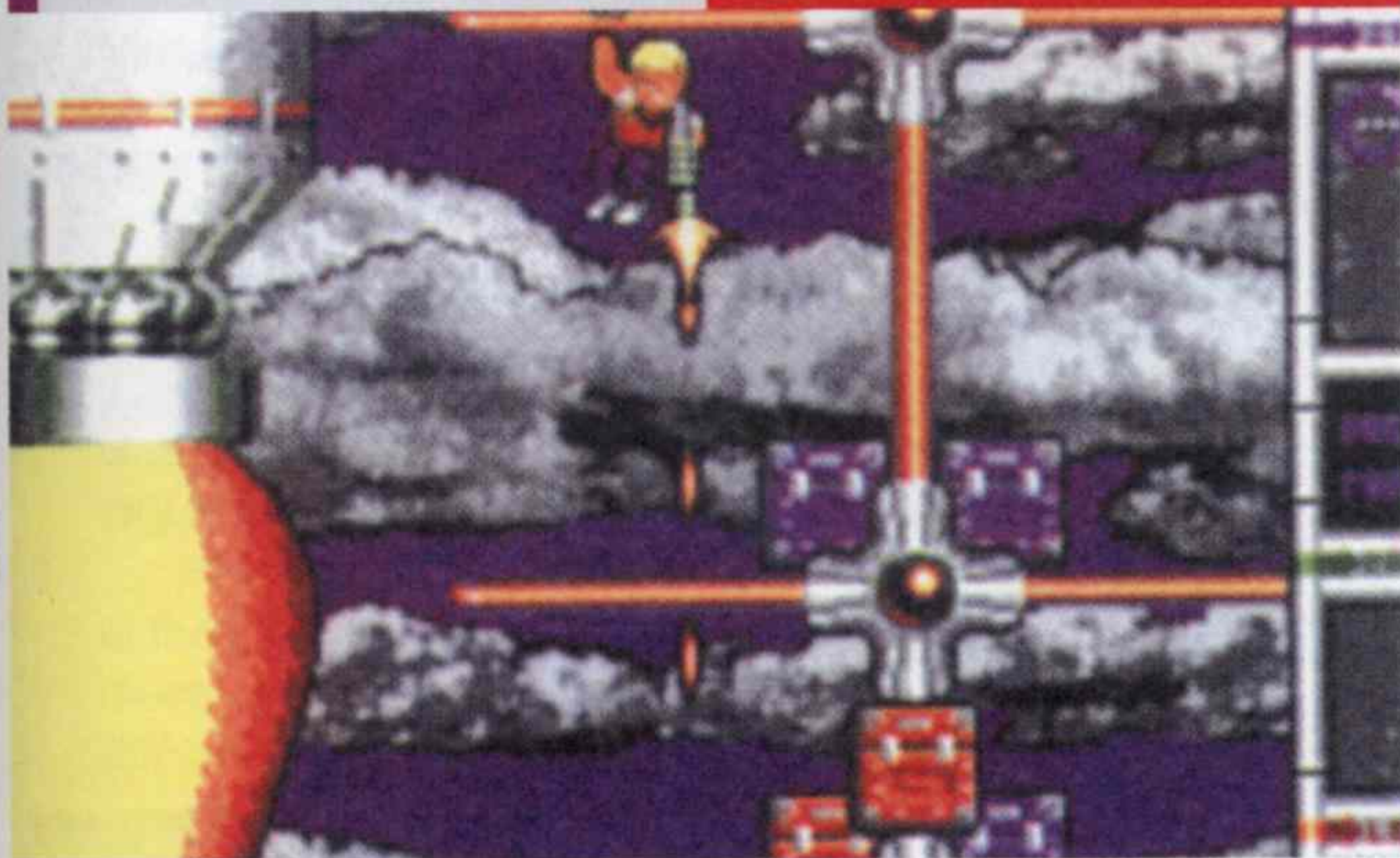
**Duke Nukem II** was one of the first half-decent platform games released for the PC in its time. These days, however, it looks pretty terrible and, as with most PC games of this type, pales into insignificance against its console rivals such as the highly polished *Mario* and *Sonic*.

The second installment in the *Duke Nukem* series certainly improved upon its predecessor in many ways. It is more visually appealing, more explosive and more challenging than the original game. There are a couple of new weapon power-ups and the weapons include a cool laser and flamethrower. Duke can also now crouch and shoot upward and he can even fly a space shuttle through the missions. The levels themselves consist of complex mazes crawling with both enemies to kill and secrets to collect, and there are 32 missions for Duke to complete.

Apogee has also added boss monsters in this sequel for Duke to challenge, which adds excitement to the usual running-about-shooting-and-collecting-things gameplay.

*Duke Nukem II* was considered a good game at the time it was released. By today's standards, however, it looks dated and has been left behind by the excellent *Duke Nukem 3D*.

■ Press N+U+K or D+U+K+M for miscellaneous weapons or E+A+T for 100% health (your score will drop to zero).



# DUKE NUKEM 3D



**Duke Nukem 3D** is fast, fun and feels more real than any other *Doom*-style game. It's ahead of *Doom* in the graphics department, and ahead of *Hexen* in terms of the sheer number of things you can do.

The first thing you notice is the realistic feel of the environments. From the moment you appear on the Cinema level, you know you're really in a new world.

And it has a fantastic build engine, which enables the designer to imagine worlds of incredible detail and complexity. Duke himself can swim underwater, fly around using a jet-pack, shoot out windows, blow holes in walls, duck, jump, crawl and cause just about any kind of havoc you care to mention. Everything can be blown up, shoved, used or flown over. The floors, ceilings and walls are all subject to change. In this futuristic Los Angeles, earthquakes shake the screen, sending great shards of rock through the floor. In just a few seconds, the whole topography of a level can change, revealing secret passages, new rooms and, if you're not careful, a stony grave for Duke.

The game is split into a number of episodes that give you a greater feeling of progression, but you can't help feeling that it would have been better as a complete world. The level design is less maze-like than *Doom* or *Hexen* and to make things feel more realistic there are real buildings with real functions. *Duke Nukem 3D* comes up trumps in the weapons department, too, with plenty to choose from.

Rather than focusing on scaring you out of your wits, *Duke Nukem 3D* chooses to be fun, with added touches such as the Shrink Ray which literally shrinks the baddies. The most fun you can have, though, is in the excellent Deathmatch mode.

■ Relieve yourself and gain a 10% health bonus, or shoot a monster on the toilet instead.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

3D Realms

**DEVELOPER:**

3D Realms

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1995

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Fun, furious and still more fun

**LOW:**Less atmospheric than *Hexen* or *Doom***09/10**

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
Westwood

**DEVELOPER:**  
Westwood

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

**DUNE 2000**



When *Dune II* was first released, its stunning new features caused a sensation, and all subsequent real-time strategy games have taken their cue from it. Understandably, then, there was a great deal of excitement when *Dune 2000* appeared. But Westwood never intended it to be a sequel proper to *Dune II*.

The setting of the game is the planet Arrakis, the galaxy's only source of the precious spice melange. Spice is fantastically valuable as this mysterious space-dust is used by psychic navigators to negotiate the cosmos. You must ally yourself to one of the three houses vying for control of Arrakis' vital resource, and complete a series of missions to secure success for your chosen house. This scenario is lifted completely from *Dune 2000's* precursor, and this lack of inventiveness pervades the game throughout. The missions lack variety; there are a couple of timed tasks, but there is otherwise little more than an endless stream of

"annihilate all enemy" scenarios, punctuated by the occasional "capture a building" effort. The graphics are extremely disappointing and animation hasn't seen much improvement either. The AI is untouched, so harvesters will happily sit there while they are attacked.

There's nothing fundamentally wrong with *Dune 2000*, but we've seen it all a hundred times before.

■ *Dune 2000* has similar features to *Command & Conquer*, including the engineer and a simple, intuitive interface and menu bar.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
The real-time strategy with the oldest and most respected pedigree around

**LOW:**  
Recycled RTS classic with no added spice and it's too easy

**06/10**



**DUNGEON KEEPER**



In many ways *Dungeon Keeper* is the culmination of classic Bullfrog game ideas, tweaked to perfection. It borrows the best bits from all, shakes them up and overwhelms you with one enormous epic.

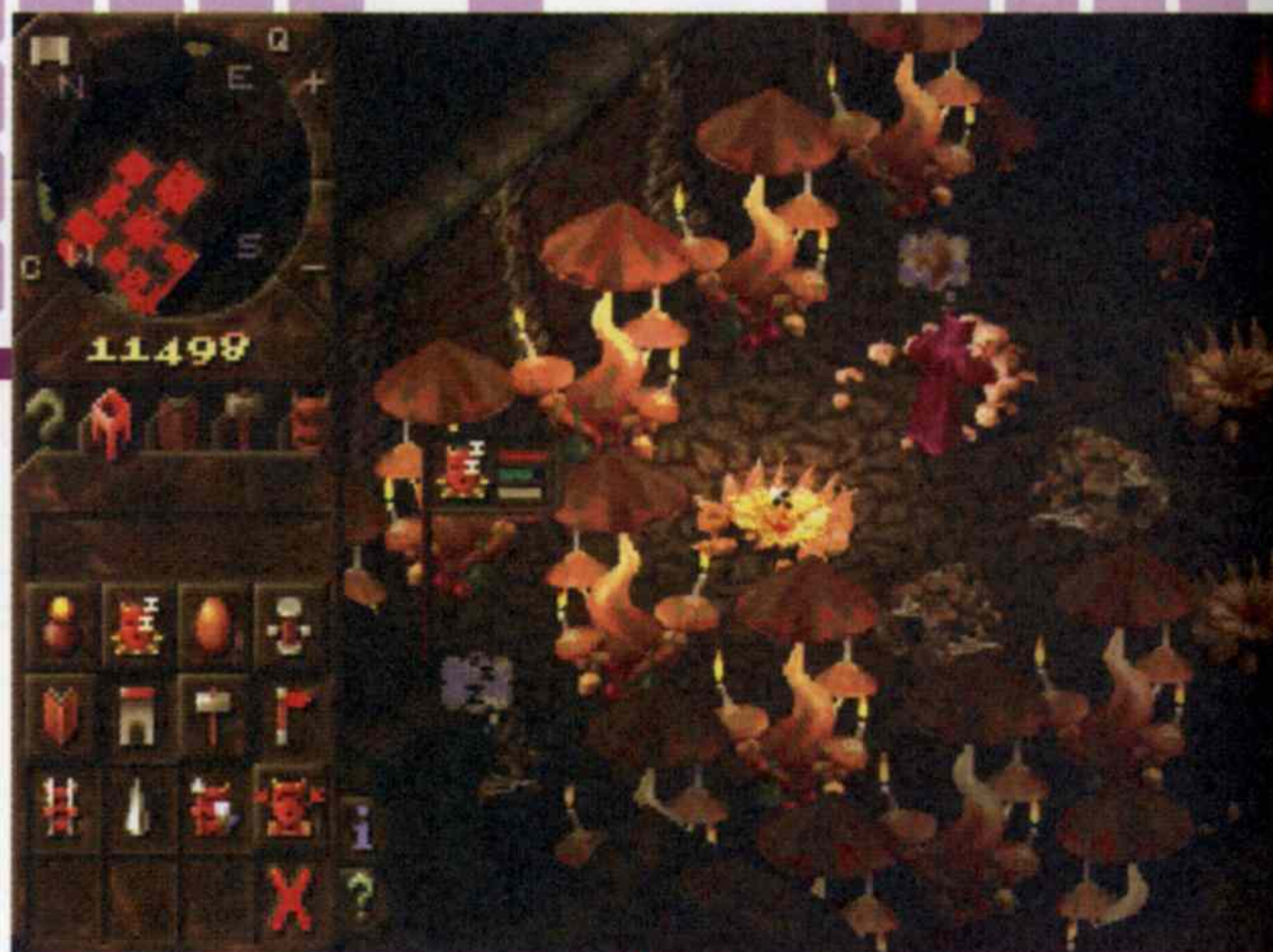
Deep beneath the ground, you rule over your own private hell of violence, evil and degradation. Above you are lands of happiness and contentment; your job as dungeon keeper is to spread foul contamination and stinking decay to each of the 25 levels. To do this, you must plan, create and maintain your dungeon, attracting a variety of infernal creatures along the way.

Once your dungeon is large enough, it will attract the attention of heroes who come looking for your enormous wad. When they do, your foul horde can strike them down and capture their wealth until eventually, the Lord of the Land comes. Defeat him and you've won the level. There will be rival dungeon keepers whom you also need to crush, too. Each game begins with the life force of your world, the Dungeon Heart, beating away in its own prebuilt room. If the Heart is destroyed, the game is over, so it needs to be protected at all costs.

*DK* has the visual flair of *Magic Carpet*, with an organic 3D appearance and oddly curvaceous angles. The real-time light-source effects are staggering. The first-person view isn't quite *Quake*, with the characters appearing as blocky bitmaps, but it's good enough.

*Dungeon Keeper* is a breathtaking achievement. It's seething with finely balanced perfection and packed with innovation.

■ Create a Treasure room first, then a Lair and a Hatchery.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Bullfrog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**  
A stunning achievement. Amazing depth, incredible balance and quality drama

**LOW:**  
Crowded battles can be hard to follow

**10/10**



# DUNGEON KEEPER 2



**This isn't a pure-bred** sequel to the original, but it represents the pinnacle of design genius. It's been lovingly caressed, nurtured, snuggled and tucked into bed each night, and in return it has grown into the most polite, well-behaved and decently brought-up game in the street.

Which is ironic, because your job is to be as evil as possible. And you now have a proper goal, stretching over 20 campaigns. After the banishment of legions of evil and the closure of the portal to the underworld, the land has become sickeningly pure. The key to the portal was split into 20 gems by King Reginald, who gave a fragment to each of his lords. As a lieutenant of badness, it's your job to conquer each of the 20 lords and reassemble the key.

Some lords are scared by your expansion, and invade in the hope of catching you unawares. Others run off, giving you the opportunity to catch them before they flee. And, if you build up a rich treasury, some of the self-righteous fools are greedy enough to come after you and walk straight into your trap.

The whole feel is reminiscent of *Red Alert*: both games have a knack of catching you offguard with each new level, and neither bores you by forcing you to create a base from scratch. That said, dungeon construction is of vital importance in *DK2*.

As an RTS, it isn't as flexible as, say, *Total Annihilation*, but the beauty of *DK2* is its originality and black humor.

■ There is a multiplayer challenge, but single-player Skirmish mode creates a similar experience by pitting you against one to three computer-controlled opponents.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

There's no denying its class or sheer brilliance

### LOW:

Could be more flexible as a real-time strategy game

# 09/10

# EVERQUEST



**This is a massive** multiplayer online RPG that finally brings glorious 3D acceleration to the world of orcs and goblins. You'll have to forgive the clichés here, if only because you'll have to if you're to play *Everquest* – as traditional an RPG world as you've ever shaken a Kobold at.

Choose from 12 races and 14 classes, collect experience and treasure while hopping up levels. Don't come here looking for avant-garde experiments. The reason for such basic Tolkienism is to make it instantly accessible to the vast majority of RPGers. The only exception is the almost self-conscious addition of the black Egyptian-styled Erudites, the most intellectual and magical of all races. To a degree, *Everquest* succeeds. If you've played a computer or paper RPG, from *Dungeon Master* to *AD&D*, you'll be almost familiar with its nuances, even if the menu system is unnecessarily complicated.

Since combat is semi-automatic, with you clicking on your foe to activate the melee, *Everquest* only really starts pushing your buttons when it comes to exploration. The world is massive, with nine separate cities, each immaculately designed. While it lacks the detail of *Ultima Online*, you can still get involved in forming guilds and adventuring parties, or even learning a craft, such as baking or sewing.

As with all online RPGs, the more time you give it, the greater your rewards. Do not buy it expecting to be able to give Gandalf a Chinese burn within a couple hours of play. To play *EQ* to the highest levels we're talking about a serious investment of time.

■ *Everquest* is an online-only game, and you've got to fork over a subscription fee to play it.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sony

### DEVELOPER:

Verant

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

Multiplayer only

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:


Derivative yet ground-breaking. Online RPGs have never been as impressive

### LOW:

Must pay a fee to play

# 08/10

# ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

 *Escape From Monkey Island* is adventure gaming at its best. Before its release, worthy adventure titles had been few and far between.

The advent of 3D and a large deviation from the evolving point-and-click SCUMM-based control system stopped the rot in the genre. But while the first 3D adventures were rather dark and restricted to narrow locations, the *Monkey Island* series has always been colorful and *Escape From Monkey Island* really opens everything up. Bright vibrant colors, rendered in skewed perspectives, and twirly clouded skies are just fabulous fun to look at.

Now the main character, Guybrush Threepwood, is controlled using the cursor keys and the Run key. And once again his head swings in the direction of objects that he can interact with. But there are so many objects that it's difficult to take them all in. And

this is where a very SCUMM-like idea comes in so useful. If

Guybrush is standing near an object to look at, as well as neck rotation,



its name will appear on the screen. And if there's more than one object for your interaction nearby, they'll all appear, to be scrolled through by the Page Up and Down keys. And to make things more interesting, once an object is in your sights, you just have to press L to look at it, U to use it and P to pick it up.

The story begins with the Guybrush and Elaine arriving back home after their honeymoon. But there's a rumor that Elaine is dead, thus leaving the tri-island district without their governor, and subsequently without the strong piratey leadership such disorder requires. This makes room for the two main plot lines: first, a new governor is required, and Mr. Charles L. Charles is the only man standing for the role. But no one has noticed he is one of the undead and this needs to be investigated. Second, a rich Australian businessman, Ozzie Mandrill is buying all the local buildings, and converting them into tourist attractions. And he's eradicating all the pirates through his pirate rehabilitation program.

The puzzles are as peculiar as they should be, and are both intuitive and satisfying to solve. And yes, they may well involve carrying a duck in your inventory for hours on end without any idea what for, but that's all part of the fun, and that is what *Escape From Monkey Island* is all about.

■ Try combining objects in your inventory; it's sometimes necessary if you want to complete a puzzle.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**  
LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A huge, hilarious and original adventure

**LOW:**  
No multiplayer option

09/10



# F-22 LIGHTNING II



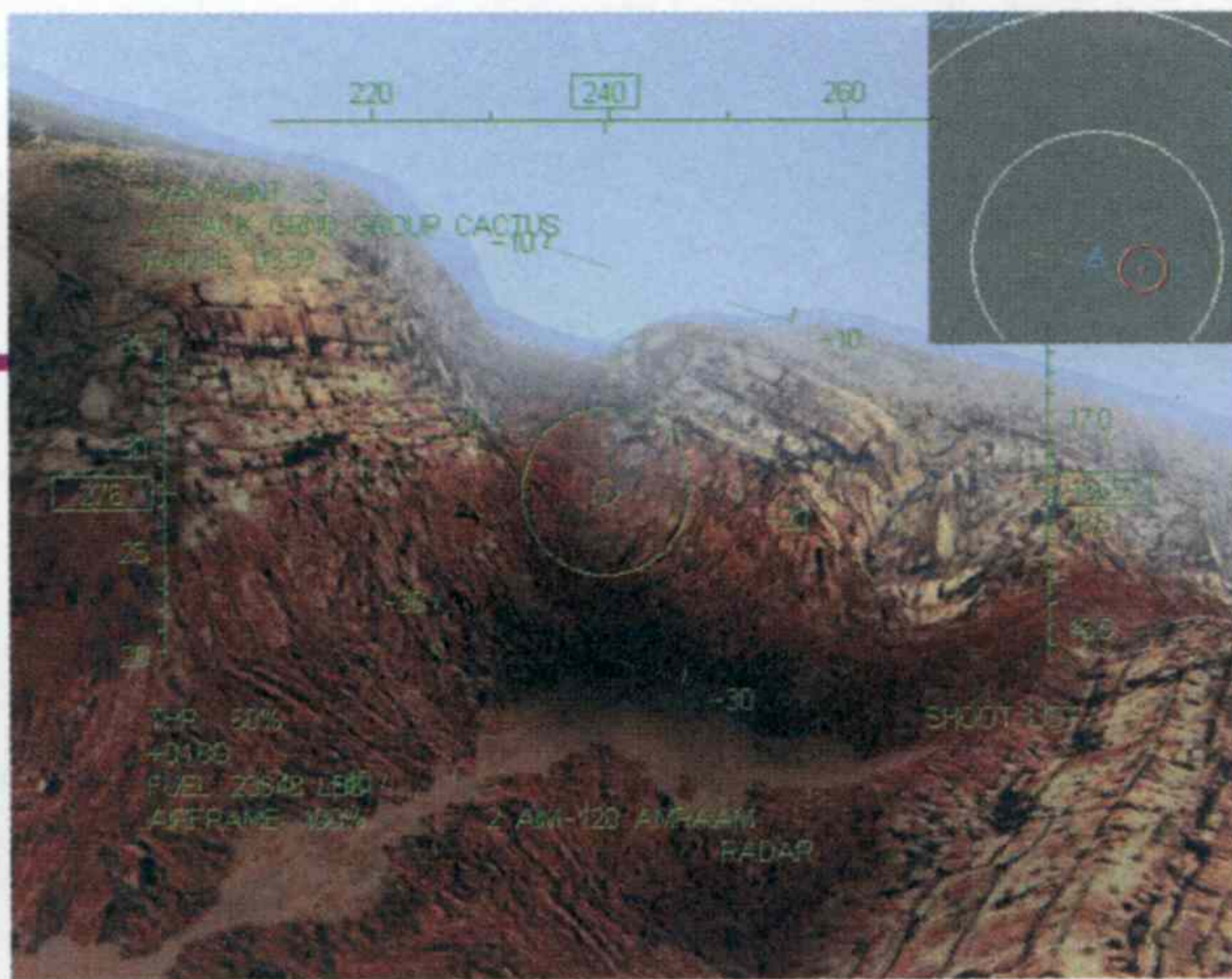
The sleek body of the F-22 Lightning in this game, with its exquisite 3D engines, may distract you from the gameplay. It's far too easy to switch to an outside view whenever you get a bit bored, to admire the best-looking craft you have ever flown.

Almost every mission involves climbing to 25,000 feet, switching off the radar until you are within missile range of your targets, popping the radar back on and then firing off a fleet of AMRAAMs from 25 miles away, confident that they will almost certainly send your targets to their doom. However, midway through the second of the four campaigns you're sent on a mission where you and your wingman have to shoot down about 17 aircraft with a combined total of 20 missiles. But when you order your wingman to attack the enemy, he flies right into them rather than picking them off from a distance like you do, so he keeps getting shot down. Consequently, you need to clear out about 15 craft with 10 missiles.

Thankfully, the Quick Mission option enables you to play any of the missions in any order, but this does tend to spoil the point of going through them one by one. And, although the missions have a great storyline, you never feel that what you've just achieved has made any difference to the global situation.

At first *F-22 Lightning II* looks boring, but when you actually play it, it's great fun. And it's so immaculately rendered that you can't help but be drawn in. You can also fly against some chums in either a cooperative or deathmatch fashion which also makes *F-22 Lightning II* worth a look, but it's still not as good as it could have been.

■ During flight press: [Control], [Alt], [Home] to refill missiles; [Ctrl], [Alt], [Shift] to refuel; [Ctrl], [Alt], [Shift], [Home] to insert God mode.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Novalogic

### DEVELOPER:

Novalogic

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A beautiful-looking flight sim

### LOW:

Somehow it never totally grabs you

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

DID

### DEVELOPER:

DID

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Huge. Frightening. Involving. Satisfying. Difficult. Stunning. Important. In a word: best

### LOW:

No dynamic campaign

# 10/10

# F-22 AIR DOMINANCE FIGHTER



This game is also based on the F-22 jet fighter that is due to reach service around 2007. It's the first plane able to go supersonic without afterburners – thereby giving it twice the range of any plane today – and it is designed to provide complete air superiority for the Americans. *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter* occupies around 4.5 million square kilometers of accurately modeled territory around the Red Sea, with three Tours of Duty fictitiously set in the year 2010.

Graphically, *F-22 ADF* is astounding. Lens flare, real-time lighting and shadows, anti-aliasing, detailed texture mapping, bi-linear filtering, fogging, smoke and jet particle system, haze, fractal clouds and a continuously rolling terrain create the most stunning views. A variety of resolutions and graphic toggles keeps the frame rate up, but you need the latest technology to enjoy it fully. The sound effects are perfect, too.

But what is most important in any flight simulator is the flight model, and this beauty flies like a dream. The *F-22 ADF* in the game employs comprehensive aerodynamic modeling. The flight control system has two distinct modes of operation, giving maximum flexibility between turning and pointing performance, and dogfights are both gripping and hard and will satisfy the most fanatical pilots.

*F-22 ADF* was undoubtedly the most involving, fulfilling and best flight simulator on the PC in its time.

■ Central to the F-22's stealth is the highly classified EMCON system: basically a five-stage blend of stealth and awareness.



# F-22 RAPTOR



**F-22 Raptor is the** sequel to *F-22 Lightning II*. The main difference

between the two games is that developer Novalogic did a deal with Lockheed Martin for the rights to create a flight sim based upon its F-22 Raptor aircraft, in order to make the whole thing more realistic. Lack of realism was a criticism leveled at the previous game.

There have certainly been some improvements to the flight model; taking off is easy and the F-22 responds as you would expect. You can fly a single mission or opt for one of the five campaigns. Missions are still scripted, rather than dynamically generated. The five mini-campaigns all run together – you begin in Angola, then move on to Jordan, Russia, Columbia and, finally, Iran. There are also a number of training and stand-alone missions. If you fail a mission, you must fly it again, but any targets you destroy in one mission stay destroyed throughout the game.

The graphics have been improved upon from the previous game, and the flight model is more realistic, but *F-22 Raptor* is still disappointing as a single-player game. It really comes into its own only when played on-line as a multiplayer game.

■ Type T for the Message Screen, then type these codes during gameplay: I'LL BE BACK – to reload all weapons, IT'S NOT MY FAULT – to complete a mission, NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS – so shots won't hurt you, THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE – for immortality, WE CAN REBUILD THEM – to repair damage.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Novalogic

### DEVELOPER:

Novalogic

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Based upon a real F-22

### LOW:

Not different enough from *F-22 Lightning II*

09/10



# FA/18E: SUPER HORNET



**There's something satisfying about** an instruction manual that's more brick than booklet, something that suggests that *F/A-18E: Super Hornet* isn't a game you can just pick up in a spare couple of minutes.

Its developer, Digital Integration, is one of the few software companies that concentrates purely on flight sims, with a heritage that stretches back via F-16s, Apache and Hind helicopter gunships, to the aging Tornado. Even though this sim has a hard-core heart, with impressive flight dynamics and rivet-perfect attention to detail, *F/A-18E* also boasts enough frills to impress casual and veteran flyers alike.

Simulating the latest version of the US Navy's front-line air and ground-attack fighter aircraft, *F/A-18E Super Hornet* hardly puts a wing wrong. It was a measure of DI's tight design that *Tornado* was used by the RAF in training pilots. It appears the US Navy is now doing the same thing with *F/A-18E*.

The game has 40 missions in total, cutting-edge weaponry, two campaign modes, realistic weather and a multiplayer option for up to 24 players. An exhaustively researched flight model and realistic avionics come as standard. But *F/A-18E: Super Hornet* really impresses in three key areas: the graphical detail, its fully interactive carrier deck and the 3D virtual cockpit.

With so many plus points, it's difficult to spot any weaknesses, but it's a pity that the detail lavished on both the realism and the graphics isn't matched by the depth of the campaign structure.

■ While you can't shoot or bomb them, it's possible to roll your F/A-18E over one of the little men on the carrier deck.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Digital Integration

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Hard to fault, and buoyed by the versatility of the F/A-18 and all the extras thrown in

### LOW:

Weak campaign structure

09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Microprose

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A new definition of combat flight sim heaven

### LOW:

Poor training missions

# 09/10

# FALCON 4.0



**Falcon 3.0 introduced an** entirely new form of realistic flight simulation, complete with missiles. It was considered to be the pinnacle of combat flight sims in 1991. Seven years later, *Falcon 4.0* re-established *Falcon* at the top of the realistic simulation tree.

It's set in a hypothetical Korean War which works a treat: Korea is a landscape of extremes and this is well represented here with mountains and plains, forest and desert, with the action on the ground never looking dull or monotonous. In addition, the modeling of the F-16 Fighting Falcon is meticulous.

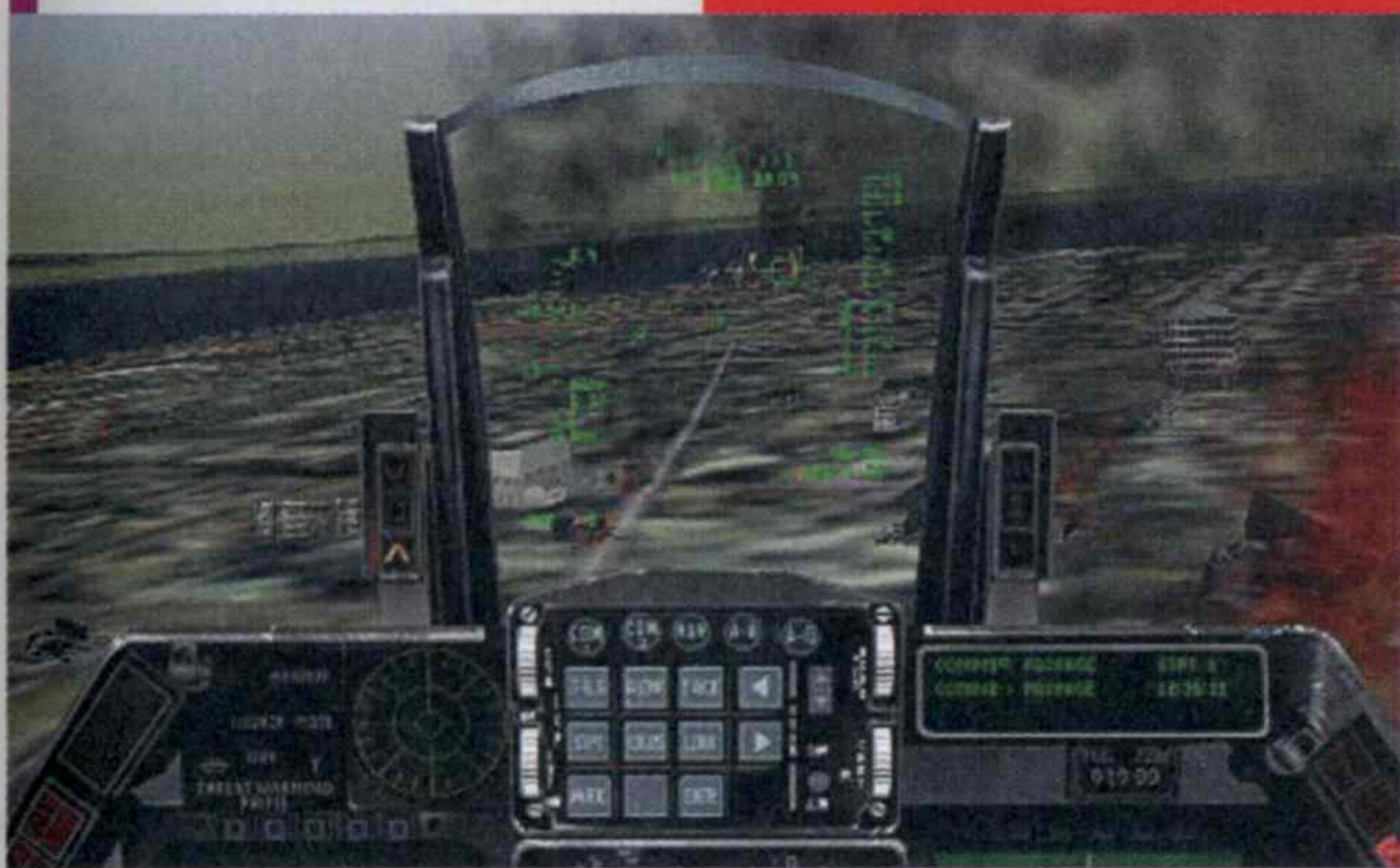
Air-to-air combat generally takes place at long distances, with long-range radar and fire-and-forget missiles dominating, but occasionally you'll have some close-up dogfights. The campaigns work better than any other flight sim; you can see how your actions are affecting the war and you can also improvise mid-flight.

Multiplayer gaming on a LAN or over the Internet is excellent. Take on a dogfight with four teams of four on a network, one-on-one, or one versus a team for a real challenge.

Resource-wise, *Falcon 4.0* is greedy but it's fully scalable in Windows thanks to Direct X. Although you don't need a PC with monstrous specifications, the most important things are a decent graphics card and plenty of RAM.

*Falcon 4.0* represents the cutting edge of modern flight sims.

■ Successful landings require enough speed for a soft touchdown; keep your speed high enough (between 160 and 200 knots) for a low angle of attack and vertical velocity.



# FIFA 2001



**The familiar refrain** from cynical old hacks is that EA churns out *FIFA* after *FIFA* with barely a difference between them, save for the usual team updates, engine tweaks and occasional innovation. This may be true, but it doesn't get away from the fact that *FIFA*'s the best sports series on the PC, and one of the most compulsive of all PC games.

*FIFA 2001* is an exceptionally slick package, delivering an intuitive array of passes, shots, headers and tricks via a Sidewinder-style pad – don't think about playing this without one. At home with both a long ball game or a deft passing one, or any combination thereof, it enables you to play as any of the top flight European clubs in UK and European competition (not to mention international sides and a World Cup tournament). It's beautifully presented, with great player animation, decent commentary, music and ambient sounds, and a wealth of options for fine-tuning play.

*FIFA 2001* plays more fluidly and has a lot more to it than *Euro 2000 FIFA*. Lofted passes and through balls are more precise; and the triggering of context-sensitive moves has been refined, too, along with your players' off-the-ball movement. But the best thing is that the AI seems to have finally got the balance right, with the Professional difficulty level serving up a fair mix of results, and the opposition forcing you to play well, but without performing in that superhuman way that so often curtails the longevity of an arcade footie title.

■ Type at the main menu: "Gimmethemoney" to add money, "Playersarelocked" to immobilize players on the opposite team, or "Playersmaybe" for free players.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA Sports

### DEVELOPER:

EA Sports

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A reassuring oasis of quality in the desert of PC sports titles

### LOW:

Not a vast improvement on the previous *FIFA*

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Unique, exhilarating, jaw-dropping fun from the other side of the globe

**LOW:**

Heavy system spec

09/10

# FINAL FANTASY VII



**Final Fantasy VII** is a Japanese RPG with a multi-layered plot that twists and turns its way to a momentous climax. The Shin-Ra Electric Company is controlling the planet using an energy source that is slowly sucking it dry. Ex-Army-turned-mercenary hero, Cloud, is also a product of the evil electric corporation. Heroes die, do battle with their own egos and scores of be-suited manga businessmen are dispatched in the quest for Right. And it'll take you 150 hours' worth of playing to discover the truth.

The *FF* world is huge, but *FFVII* is designed so that you can't become hopelessly lost. Oh no, that would be too easy. Lack of transport, rivers and even separate continents all bar your way. At any time you and your party are open to attack by any of the hideous monstrosities that roam the land. Although the combat is acted out, tabletop style, by taking turns and using a menu system, plenty of thought has gone into making things as exciting as possible. Combine this with wave after wave of astonishing special effects,

bizarre adversaries and a camera that pans and dives around the action and the fighting in *FFVII* is as enjoyable as the exploring.

Not content with just an adventure and full combat system, *FFVII* also has plenty of arcade-style sub-games to chuck into the equation. You'd be hard pushed to think of something that's not in here in some form. Strategy game? Yep, there's a mini "assign your units" point-and-click bit in there as well. Overall, *FFVII* is awesome and compelling in equal measures.

■ Although bosses are typically big and mean, they usually have weak spots that you can exploit.



# FINAL FANTASY VIII



**Rather than choosing a** role to play as in most RPGs, in *FFVIII* you control the hero, Squall, whose motivation and personality are pre-set. The story is also pre-set: there are no choices to be made that can affect the outcome or how you get there. *Final Fantasy's* master stroke, though, is the multitude of ways you can customize and improve your characters.

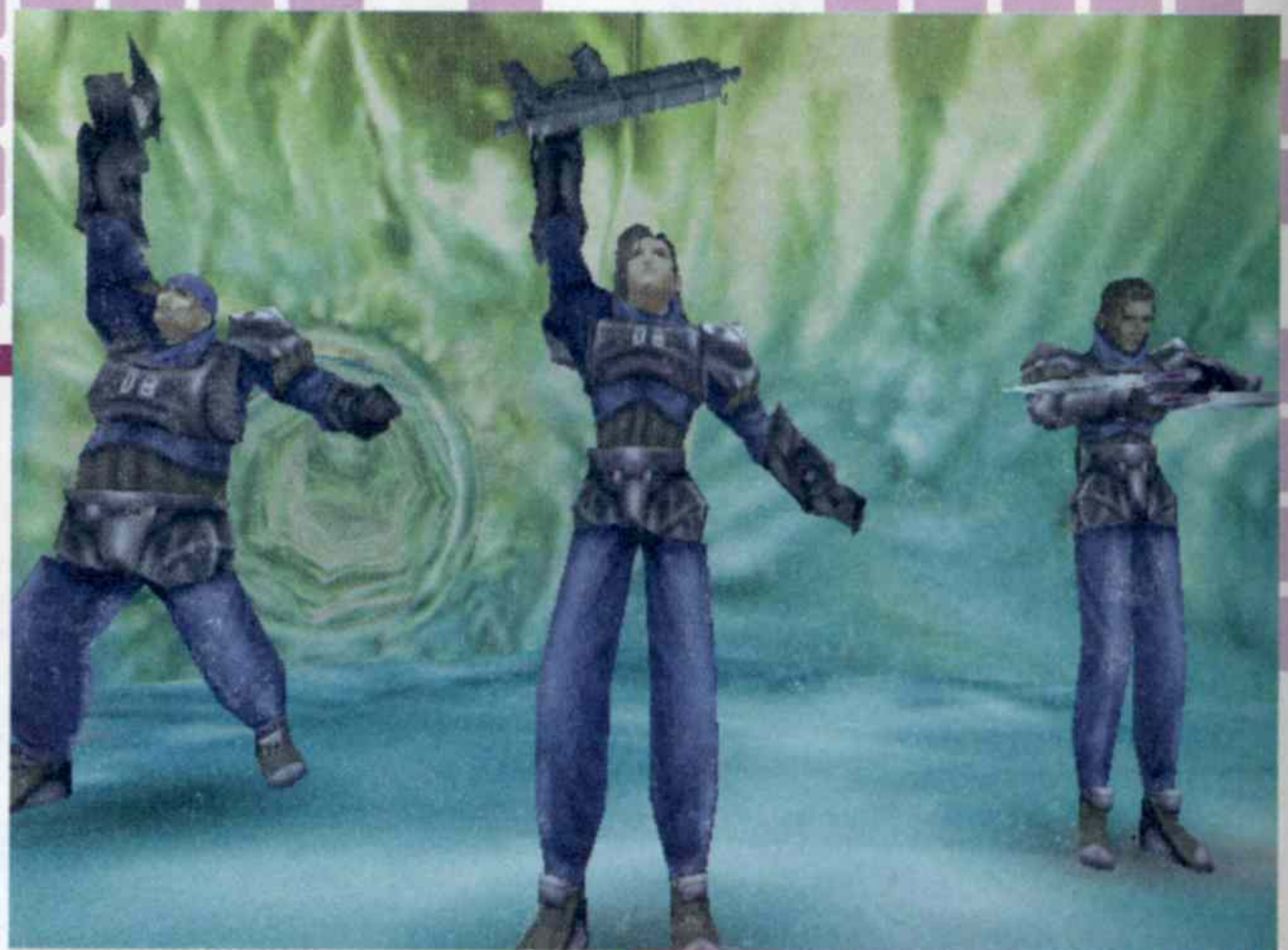
Each *Final Fantasy* game takes a new, made-up world in which to set the story. In this case, Squall and his friends are cadets in SeeD, a do-gooding mercenary organization. War has been declared between Galbadia and Dollet, and the freshly graduated Squall and his companions are drawn into the political and military struggle.

New attacks attained at higher levels tempt you to invest time simply improving your motley band. With the introduction of Guardian Forces, combat and character progression become enormously complex – but also enormously addictive.

The combat system hasn't changed fundamentally from *FFVII*; when combat starts, combatants effectively take it in turns to attack, cast or draw magic, use an item or summon a GF. The magic system, on the other hand, has been completely redesigned.

*Final Fantasy VIII* is a better game than its predecessor: better looking, deeper, more complex and more intriguing, but it has suffered once again in the translation to the PC from the aging PlayStation. It lacks the polish of presentation that we expect, despite making a brave stab with stunning FMVs and hi-res fonts.

■ *Chocobo World* is a dinky little desktop game, activated by finding a baby Chocobo in the main game.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Square EA

**DEVELOPER:**

Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Breathtaking in scale, scope and challenge. A classic

**LOW:**

Poorly ported from PlayStation to PC – and shows it

09/10

# FORCE COMMANDER

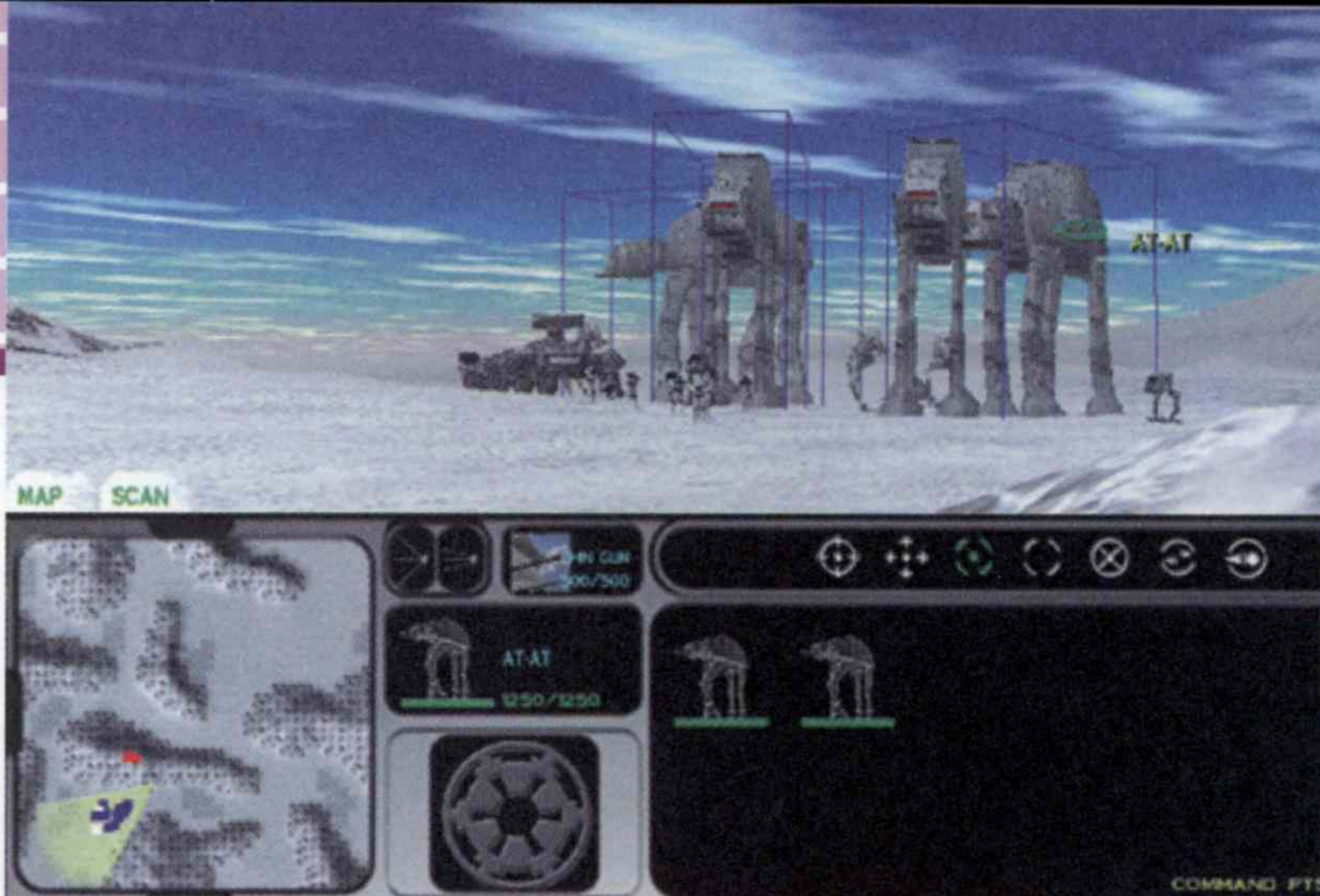


**This is the first** ground-based real-time strategy from LucasArts. Set in and around the *Star Wars Classic Trilogy*, the story focuses on a pair of brothers working for the Empire as stormtroopers. Unusually for an RTS, the story is the beginning of an involving tale. As one of the brothers, you view battles from afar via the BHCI computer. This interface enables you to control all your units and manage the battle in one screen. A series of simple mouse and keyboard combinations enables you to use the BHCI to organize your troops.

Instead of creating an alternate *Star Wars* universe in which to play, *Force Commander* enables you to become involved in the real *Star Wars* battles during its 24 levels. There's hardly any resource management to worry about either, so you can concentrate on the battles in hand. Once you've been through the three training missions, each new mission begins in a landing bay aboard a Star Destroyer. Thanks to a lovely 3D engine, LucasArts (teamed with Ronin) has used a floating camera through which to view events, so you can watch from any angle you please, or fix a camera to a particular unit and follow it around the battlefield. It also enables you to zoom right in on the action. At various points during the game, you can control everyone from Han Solo to R2D2, Leia to Chewie – and even Lord Vader. Each of these characters must be kept alive if missions are to be completed successfully, but each has special abilities to make them worth worrying about.

*Force Commander* will revive those thrills felt when seeing the films on the big screen, but now *you're* in control.

■ Four players can go into battle at once, two on each side.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

LucasArts/Ronin

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Engrossing and compelling and you don't have to have seen the films to play it properly

### LOW:

The concentration on combat may be irritating to some

# 09/10

# FORSAKEN



**Forsaken is similar** to Parallax's revolutionary *Descent*, minus a few of its more irksome features, but regrettably also devoid of some of *Descent's* more fiendishly difficult and adrenaline-pumping moments. *Forsaken's* 3D-accelerated gorgeousness may be obvious, but it's the level design you'll encounter while flying through the 3D mazes that gives its environment a rare perfection. *Unreal* may look marginally better with its fractal lighting effects and swirling mist, but *Forsaken* carries its orgasmic, 3D card-generated scenery along at a breakneck pace that *Unreal* never matches.

*Forsaken* is also packed with a thousand little nuggets of fun to keep you occupied as you hurtle through the tight corridors shooting everything that moves. The basic plot involves futuristic hover bikes zipping around the 16 levels collecting gold bars. Harder to find or more dangerous secrets may reveal more than one gold bar, or perhaps a blue crystal – the ultimate booty. This is a tough game and both these items give you extra lives.

Like all the best games the different weapons will take a while to collect and become accustomed to; ammo is fairly scarce, and must be rationed. In fact, the difficulty level is the key to adoring *Forsaken*. Probe has also tried to give normally characterless metallic enemies a personality of their own and for the most part it works well.

To enjoy *Forsaken* you'll have to be prepared to come to terms with its intelligence, action, beauty and all-round sensory overload.

■ Puzzles provide a modicum of finger-twitching relief.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Probe

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Effortlessly draws you in and consumes your soul for weeks

### LOW:

Needs more timed sequences

# 09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION



# FREESPACE 2

**Fundamentally, Volition has left** *Freespace's* mechanics untouched in the sequel and embellished the traditional objective-based missions with stunning visual effects. You may be disappointed to find that the old Head Up Display (HUD) remains, and that the control system features an overwhelming array of keyboard commands, but the HUD is just as intuitive and far more informative than, say, *X-Wing Alliance's*, and the keyboard commands are legion due to the complexity of the ships' systems.

Taking the on-going war between the Terrans and Shivans as its starting point, *Freespace 2* opens with the familiar sight of a combat hangar. From here you can enter an in-depth graphical encyclopedia of the game's ships and weaponry, a cut-scene viewing room, your own medal cabinet, and even a fantastic area that enables you to customize your own HUD, or change your character's attributes.

Beginning a new campaign will remind you why the original game was so good. A comprehensive tutorial takes you through each of your ship's sub-systems and some of the best missiles and rockets ever to grace a space sim. Combat in *Freespace 2* is a frantic struggle against your own controls, the enemies' AI, and your body's response to the stomach-churning events playing out before you. *Freespace's* capital ships were big, *X-Wing: Alliance's* were bigger, but nothing compares to *Freespace 2's* lumbering behemoths. In these, and countless other ways, *Freespace 2* obliterates the competition.

■ Once your initial missile payload has been expended, you can call a support ship and get tooled up again.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**  
Volition

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A feast for the senses and, as far as space sims go, pretty much unbeatable

**LOW:**  
The convoluted story line can get tedious at times

# 09/10

# GANGSTERS



**Gangsters is a business** sim that draws on a wide range of influences, but none more so than football management. Football management with extra arson and Tommy guns, that is. Recruit hoods instead of players, tell them to whack opposition hit-men rather than wing-backs, and play it out in weekly confrontations that enable you to adjust tactics on the fly.

Set in 1920s New Temperance City, the joint's as dry as a hole in the sand, alcohol-wise, and so ideal for a spot of gang warfare. Starting with little more than a baseball bat, you must expand your evil empire; accumulating wealth and territory while eliminating your rivals, and battling the authorities, until eventually you own the town.

Few games require you to grace quite as many arenas as *Gangsters*, and your moves in one can have profound implications for the others. Get too heavy on the streets and you can expect the authorities to move in. Heavier policing and federal investigation means you can't operate freely and business suffers. On the other hand, if you don't take care of City Hall politics, and stroke the right people in high places, then you may come under scrutiny anyway, because your rivals have bought the mayor. Do too well financially, and your accountant may not be able to launder all the dirty cash. It's this duplicity which makes *Gangsters* such a rare pleasure. None of which even begins to deal with the potential of the real-time section, where your weekly orders are played out.

Rarely do you feel the victim of forces beyond your control, and there's always the lure of another turn's expansion to keep you playing. The only real danger is being overwhelmed.

■ For \$50k, go to your Hood Select screen, with caps lock on type: I LOVE HANSON and press [Enter].



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Hot House

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Brain-bursting management game, flecked with innovation

**LOW:**  
Interface annoys and in-game limitations can be annoying

# 09/10





# GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST



**This game will both** bring you immense pleasure for a long time and make the world a slightly better place.

You're in charge of a team of besuited future soldiers, who run around impressively immersive alien environments, shooting enemies with a variety of weapons, using back-mounted jet packs to leap over mountains and swoop on bad guys from the sky, guns blazing, as communications from team-mates crackle through the air-waves.

The single-player game is divided into stories, each one of which takes place over a different island area, and is sub-divided into between one and five discrete missions. Progression through this structure is rigidly linear: when you first start the game, there's only one mission available to you, and thereafter you'll have the choice of playing the latest one in the sequence, or going back over an old one.

Every new mission introduces a new gameplay element and to begin with all you have to worry about is moving and shooting using the keyboard and mouse. Couldn't be simpler.

And then, mission by mission, things get more complex. You'll find a jetpack, then a nitro power-up, then a bigger gun, then a different kind of gun, then a completely different kind of gun. You'll interact with aliens, meet up with your chums, learn how to use a variety of special-function backpacks and pick-ups, and end up leading a team of five individual Meccs. Team control is perfectly intuitive: they'll simply follow you around, intelligently lending extra firepower.

But then, just when the limited variety of enemies on offer starts to become slightly wearing, the game changes completely. And

then it changes again. And then there's the race card: *Giants; Citizen Kabuto's* ace in the hole. Its three aces, in fact. For the Meccs will take you only a third of your way through the game. After that, you'll play as two different races, each with their own radically different skills, weapons and even controls.

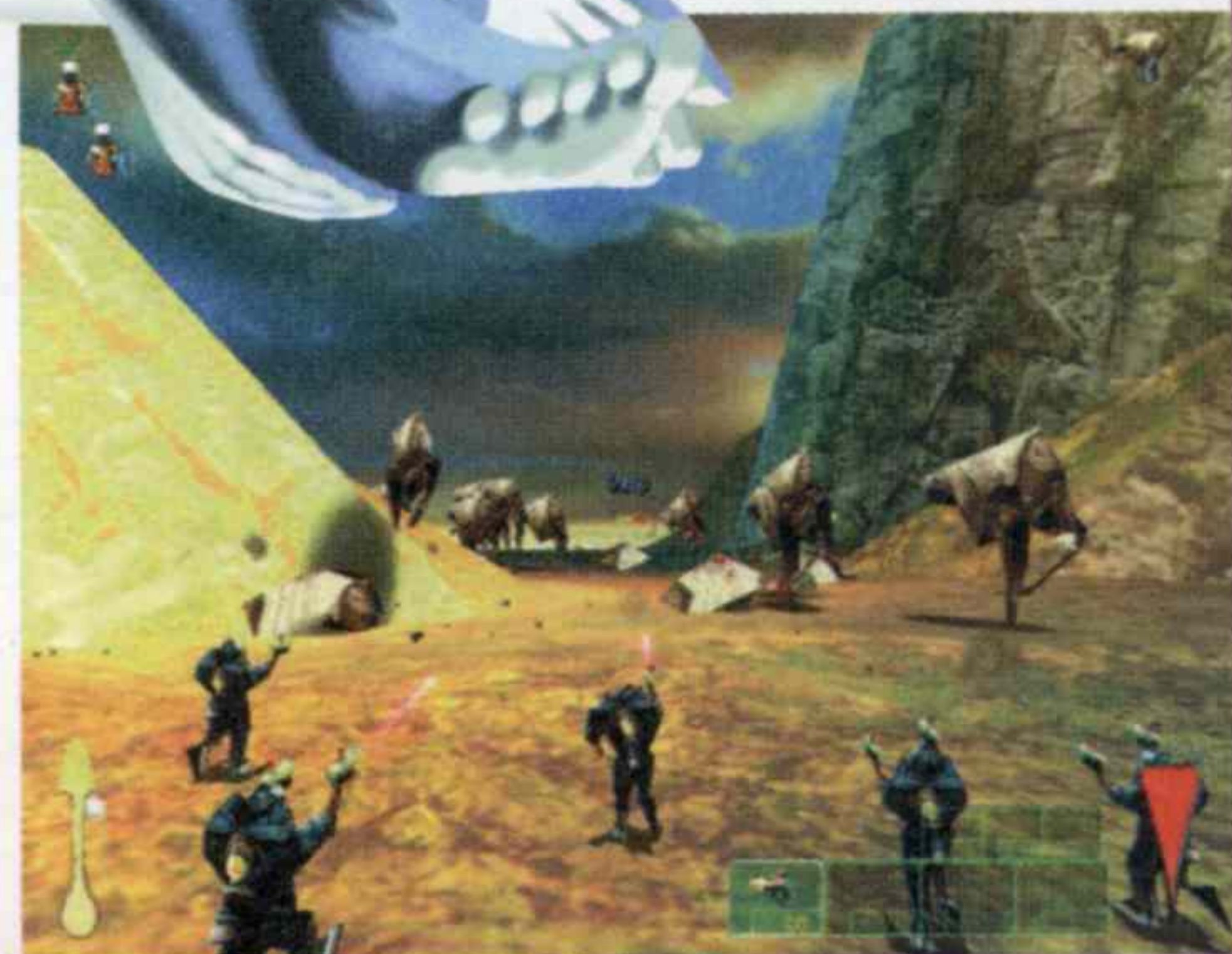
There are two other areas in which *Giants* excels. First, the graphics – it successfully intermingles art and engine to create a brilliantly alien landscape. Second, the game's cut-scenes.

Sharp editing, a relentless pace and accomplished directing give them a highly watchable quality, but it's the content which will really knock you out. *Giants* is hilarious, with a defiantly British sense of the comic; mouthier, sillier, better timed and, yes, downright funnier than the usual mass-produced humor.

And the real beauty of these sequences is that all this mucking about is used to convey vital game info.

It's not perfect, but *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* is exciting, original and well-designed. It's a lengthy game that offers value for money.

■ Press T or Y (player chat commands) and enter "mapshowitall" to reveal the entire map.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Planet Moon

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

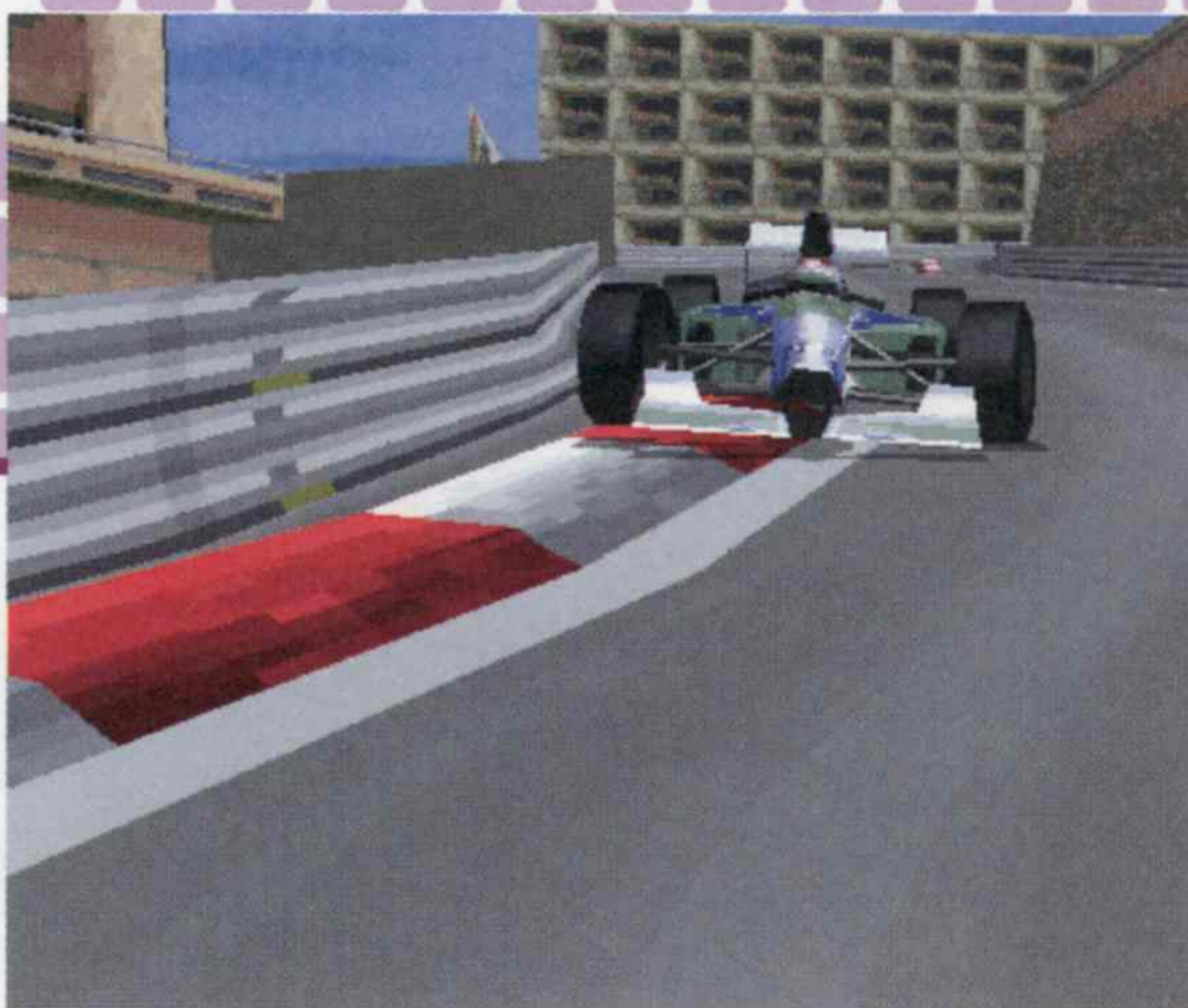
Big on style, big on ideas, big on laughs. A relentlessly entertaining game

### LOW:

Suspect enemy AI and tiresome to-ing and fro-ing

09/10

# GRAND PRIX MANAGER 2



**The original *Grand Prix Manager*** was a comprehensive strategy simulation of Formula One management. *Grand Prix Manager 2* gives *GPM* veterans the chance to flex their management muscles again.

The game puts you in charge of one of 11 Formula One teams of the 1997 season. You are in complete control of your team and able to influence every aspect of its operation as you seek that elusive Constructors' Championship. You've got to keep at the forefront of R&D – marshalling your engineers, mechanics and designers to constantly improve the car; choose your best driving team, negotiate sponsorship deals, manufacture parts, sign maintenance contracts, invest in testing facilities and so on. It's a demanding job, and *GPM2* paints a comprehensive picture of what it must be like. The graphics have been tuned to perfection and the background screens feature some sumptuous F1 pictures, courtesy of *Autosport* magazine. The interface has been radically improved, too. Without sacrificing authenticity, *GPM2* dispenses with some of the more annoying and fiddly components of the first game and introduces a more realistic financial structure, which provides a better balance while still proving a testing, strategic challenge.

When the racing weekend begins, a real sense of tension develops as you wait to see if all those weeks of testing and preparation have paid off. There's no denying that *GPM2* is compulsive.

■ At the main screen, type "iamacheat" to enter the game developer's box. Here you can decide if sponsors like you or not, how much money your team has and so on.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An authoritative game and a splendid follow-up to the original game

**LOW:**

Difficult to fault

09/10



# GRAND PRIX LEGENDS



**For many racing fans,** the 1967 Grand Prix season was sport's golden year. Cavalier drivers such as Graham Hill, Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt power-slid their Maseratis, Lotuses, Brabhams and Ferraris round the most lethal and tortuous strips of Tarmac the sport has ever seen. *GP Legends* does for 1967 what the illustrious *Grand Prix 2* did for 1995. It is a forearm-achingly accurate simulation of the season: from the various tire pressures and gear ratios, right down to the torque effects of a rotating engine. It is, in a word, anal.

But anal doesn't have to mean dull. Most of the time, *GP Legends* is graphically stunning. Smoke effects, hi-resolution scenery and gorgeous textures combine to provide the perfect setting for the cars. The models are sensationally detailed and accurate, complete with every snappable piece of bodywork, chassis, fleck of paint, and variously colored drivers' helmets. Full light-sourcing also bathes the entire game, casting its beautiful sheen on all you do.

Enter, also, the first virtual dynamic racing cockpit. The driver's arms accurately respond to your driving. The dials in front of you are all fully operative, and it is possible to look to either side to gauge passing maneuvers, or simply admire the view. The wing mirrors, meanwhile, provide a superbly detailed rear view. The physics engine operates perfectly on every level, too.

*GP Legends'* difficulty will put some people off. However, the authenticity means every corner bombards you with excitement.

■ *GP Legends* adjusts the length of races, damage levels and practice times required in a variety of race types from Novice to Grand Prix.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**

Papyrus

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Perfectly recreates the excitement of Grand Prix racing, '60s style. A classic

**LOW:**

Tricky to master

09/10



# GRAND PRIX 3

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Geoff Crammond/MicroProse

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the best F1 sims ever

### LOW:

The pit lane is still populated by bitmapped, unanimated figures

# 09/10



### By today's 3D-enhanced

standards, *F1GP* looks dated, but in its time nothing could match its speed and the fun you had with it. A couple of years later, racing simulation fans received a more accurate and more rewarding game in *Grand Prix 2*.

*Grand Prix 3* starts in promising fashion, too. The poor intro animations have been replaced by plush video of real F1 footage. And *Grand Prix 3*'s new menu system is an overhaul of *GP2*'s more complicated one. You now have two options – Quick Race or Main Menu – enabling you to either sample the delights right away, or have a look around first.

The Main Menu layout has been simplified to contain all the important information at the touch of a mouse button. Drivers and teams can be edited, tracks can be investigated, the type of race picked and the level of difficulty selected.

There are 16 tracks to choose from and the new track selection screen enables you to rotate the circuit picture. You also get the usual lap record information for each. Quick Race, Practice, Non-Championship Race and Championship Season are still here, and the difficulty level still covers five stages from Rookie to Ace.

The changes include more detailed trackside objects and textures and a polygonal cockpit, complete with the new rotating steering wheel. And *GP3*'s graphics are better, too: the crowd is now individually rendered; grass, gravel, advertising boards, marshal posts and team boxes on the pit wall are all wonderfully drawn.

The brilliantly modeled cars are extremely well-realized, too, with only the tobacco advertising missing. The damage mode has received attention as well – cars now have numerous areas where they can be smashed and full car rolls are also possible.

The other cars on the track react to your driving, and this makes *GP3* a joy to play because nobody wants to drive a sim that's easy to beat – you want to have to fight for your position in races. Force-feedback steering wheel support is also a welcome addition.

Probably the biggest single change is the addition of weather effects. The rain reflections on the track are beautifully created, and the spray when you're following the pack is both amazing and scary at the same time. Things aren't just wet or dry, either; you can either have a damp, greasy track, or puddles of standing water instead.

The multiplayer aspect has been developed to cover greater variation of playing styles; modem, serial cable, IPX and TCP/IP networks are all supported with varying degrees of success and performance.

Overall, *Grand Prix 3* is a work of genius and, thankfully, with Hasbro's commitment to regular add-ons, you'll be able to enjoy this masterpiece for years to come.

■ For alternate cars, type "123456789qwerty." An audio message will confirm that you have entered the code correctly.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

LucasArts at its perfect best. Play this gaming legend today

**LOW:**

This game is hard to fault

**10 / 10**

**GRIM FANDANGO**



**Grim Fandango is a** sublime art-house experience, rich in black humor, post-death conundra and crises. The game deals with Manuel Calavera, travel agent of death, agent provocateur, night club owner, scythe-wielding hero, dashing swindler and, erm, skeleton. Manuel is dead. As, indeed, are all the other inhabitants of the Netherworld, the place through which freshly liberated souls travel on their way to the eternal security of the Underworld. Being dead is less awkward than you might think. In fact, *Grim's* denizens have created an entire society – complete with gambling dens, politics, strikes, travel, relationships and Good and Evil. It may be a spoof world, but it's entirely credible, enabling you to plunge without hesitation into its twisted plot.

The art deco, phantasmagoric world, depicted by the distinctive new 3D look, is wondrous. It establishes *Grim's* unique atmosphere and style. One of LucasArts most admirable achievements is the way it has

applied the technology to help you. There is a revolution in object handling, as Manny's head turns to peer quizzically at anything that may prove useful to him.

The sheer number of characters and depth of plot constantly astonishes, too. But nowhere is the hard work and skill that saturates *Grim* more apparent than in the rich dialogue.

It's hard to see what could be improved upon, given that LucasArts is sticking to a conventional point-and-click formula. *Grim Fandango* is the slickest, cleverest and most enjoyable adventure game ever seen.

■ Every single dialogue strand in the game is worth exploring as there are so many buried gems.



**GRAND THEFT AUTO**



**Grand Theft Auto revels** in a continuous assault of enthusiastically graphic violence. But the point about the game is not that it gives you 100 points for running over a pedestrian, or huge bonuses for rampaging through the streets on machine-gunning kill frenzies, but that it is an extraordinarily good game. A clever, thrilling, original, sublimely constructed and relentlessly exciting game whose freshness, intelligence and smartness proves how lazy the vast majority of game designers have become in their brainless reliance on formula and precedent.

You're a freelance driver/hit-man in a city choking with vehicles and people. There are three different cities in the game, and your progress through each is divided into two chapters. To move from chapter to chapter, and from city to city, you have to accumulate a set number of points which are awarded for a multitude of achievements: bashing into another vehicle, stealing a car, killing a jaywalker, fulfilling a bonus challenge, selling off a stolen motor or – most of all – successfully completing the successive tasks that make up a mission. You'll be directed to several missions by telephone calls and pager messages, but many more are hidden throughout the city, waiting for you to discover them yourself. There are around 20 different vehicles in each city, each of them with distinct handling characteristics. And you can also run around on foot, quashing the opposition with hand-held weapons.

Unfortunately, any outline does little to convey the actual experience of playing a game as bloated with detail as *Grand Theft Auto*. *GTA* has the most finely tuned gameplay of any PC title since *Doom II*. End of story.

■ When you travel at speed, the camera smoothly, and very cleverly, pans out to increase your field of vision



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Rockstar

**DEVELOPER:**

DMA

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

One of the cleverest, most enjoyable and satisfying games the PC has ever seen

**LOW:**

May be too violent for some

**09 / 10**

# GRAND THEFT AUTO 2



**Unscheduled mayhem is always** on the agenda in *Grand Theft Auto 2* – it's what makes it so brilliant. If you lost your morals to *Grand Theft Auto*, you'll already know that DMA's cars-and-caper classic is wilder than Tijuana on a Friday night. And the sequel makes *GTA*'s mischief look tame. *Grand Theft Auto 2* is the comic Cosa Nostra of crim-sims, stylish and ultra-violent, but never forgetting that life is most exciting when short and sweet.

There are just a few simple ingredients in this magical mix. There's the top-down traffic-packed city where everything can be robbed, ridden and driven into an oncoming bus. In addition, destructive weapons and destructible pedestrians abound. It's the third, fresh ingredient – the rival gangs – that makes *GTA2*. It is all about respect. To get in with one gang you have to work against the others. You can't work for anyone until you've proved yourself, usually by reducing the ranks of the opposition. There are three huge city areas to play through, with different gangs in each.

As for cars, there are hundreds, and again DMA has managed to differentiate them without making any unplayable. The link between music and car type that worked so well in the original is there, and remixed with the addition of local radio.

Ultimately, *Grand Theft Auto* holds a torch for the sort of shoot-'em-up, knock-'em-down action that is increasingly rare on the PC.

■ There are seven warring gangs: The American Patriots, The Scientists, The Zaibatsu, The Yazuka, The Russian Mafia, The Krazies and The Krishnas.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Rockstar

### DEVELOPER:

DMA

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Effortlessly ram-raids back into your affections

### LOW:

Disappointing text mission briefings and poor graphics

**09/10**

# GUNMAN CHRONICLES



**It's a tribute to** Valve, and a critique of first-person shoot-'em-up evolution that *Gunman* manages to use a two-year-old engine to such worthy effect. However, this is both the game's strength and weakness: *Half-Life* made it possible, but eventually keeps it from forging an independent path. *Gunman* is every bit as lively as expected and the wow factor of scale and variety never lets up, with huge superbly animated spaceships, alien and prehistoric monsters, and temporally diverse structures. The four different worlds provide great scope for environmental diversity and also areas of variable gravity. Enemies come in four flavors: human, saurian, alien and mechanoid, and all have very different AI and combat styles.

The game has famously extended weapon configuration so that every gun has multiple attacks, and the ability to customize these adds a tactical element to the game. The *Half-Life* engine's vehicle code has undergone some serious tweaking; you simply accelerate and steer with your keyboard direction keys and use the mouse to free-look and fire multiple rockets or grenades. The perspective has also been adjusted so that you get a low third-person view that follows your turret's aim.

*Gunman* is a thoroughly enjoyable single-player experience. Its reliance not only on the technology, but also the concepts of *Half-Life*, means that it can be recommended to all fans of the franchise.

■ The MULE rocket launcher has more load-out options than any other weapon.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sierra

### DEVELOPER:

Rewolf

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A hyper-charged *Half-Life* with massive beasts and huge guns

### LOW:

Textures and models look a little dated and too much reliance on repetition

**08/10**

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



# GUNSHIP!



**Gunship!** is a helicopter flight sim with the action set at the beginning of the New Millennium. On one side is the Russian army and on the other the NATO forces. Your first task is to decide which to support.

As for your helicopter, you can fly the AH-64 Apache, the Eurocopter Tiger or the Mi-28 Havoc in a variety of single-mission or campaign modes. You can also choose to play as either the pilot or the gunner, although when playing as the gunner you have to use the autopilot, which has a tendency to crash the aircraft.

The graphics are gorgeous with clear and detailed units and realistic landscapes. The trees are sprite based, but they don't detract from the overall look of the scenery. In the daytime, bright lens flares are abundant, but they don't serve to bring you any deeper into the action. However, at night, flying over the moonlight-drenched landscape only serves to enhance the tension on some of the tougher missions. You can also take a look at your helicopter with the external camera where the care taken to reflect the weather conditions you are flying in is evident – for example, the sun reflects realistically off the glass in the cockpit.

There are three flight modes, Easy, Enhanced and Realistic, but the missions themselves are marred by the lack of any real plot development and tend to be similar in content – you just fly around shooting things. There's certainly nothing revolutionary to be found in *Gunship!*, but it has everything you would expect from a flight simulator.

■ To make your pilot immortal, make a copy of the ROSTER.FIL before going on a dangerous mission then, when you die, you can replace the file with your back-up and revive your pilot.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Hasbro

**DEVELOPER:**  
Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Gorgeous graphics

**LOW:**  
Lack of mission variety

# 06/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

# HEAVY GEAR II



Despite the highly armored power-suits, little about *Heavy Gear II* feels similar to, say, *MechWarrior 3*. It's as though halfway through the game's development, Activision saw *Thief* and *Rainbow 6* and decided that a futuristic soldier sim was a much better idea. Which means sneaking. Your Gear has a stealth rating depending on how much anti-sensor equipment you have. Your visibility is shown by a horizontal bar, with a thin vertical line for your current stealth rating: if your stealth line gets swamped, you're about to be spotted. Sounds reasonable? Well, skip to external view and observe as your uncamouflaged machine, bristling with bazooka and missile packs, shuffles along the floor within inches of your foe...

It's this sense of unreality that gives *HG2* much of its appeal. This is ironic, as the actual missions, including reconnaissance, infiltration and the trailing of hostile convoys, are closer to what you'd expect an elite group to be doing. Not to worry: the guerrilla group tactics should be more feasible. Sadly, your interaction with your squad of up to five Gears is sorely underdeveloped. And the AI is absolutely, hilariously terrible.

But despite its flaws, there's a certain attractive joy to this game. It's nowhere near the icon of beauty that is *Mech 3* and, while the terrain is less evilly claustrophobic, it revels in some fine settings. The multiplayer game is also pleasingly imaginative, especially on the deep-space levels. The fact that you can activate a pair of rocket-powered rollerskates just has to be worth a plaudit, too.

■ *Heavy Gear II* has a comprehensive design section where you can customize your Gear and the full arsenal of your government is available from the start.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Activision

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Stealth-packed missions and some great multiplayer kicks

**LOW:**  
Terrible Gear AI

# 08/10



# HALF-LIFE

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PC  
PSONE  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sierra Studios

**DEVELOPER:**  
Valve

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
3D life has never been quite this perfect

**LOW:**  
Outstanding

# 10/10



**With the advent of *Half-Life***, the 3D shoot-'em-up debate was no longer about *Quake II* versus *Unreal*. *Half-Life* silenced all dissent by being so much better than either of them.

*Half-Life* is a superlative-defying masterpiece and it grabbed the genre's stale formula by the scruff of the neck and frog-marched it into a breathtakingly fresh expanse. Developer Valve has engineered a great leap forward, constructing a fully integrated world that engages both your wits and instincts. With unparalleled ingenuity, care and originality, the game uses every device it can think of to wrong-foot, surprise and entertain you.

Just in pure action terms, *Half-Life* ranks among the best. Frantic mouse-massaging blasts round after concussive round into waves of grasping, gib-hungry beasts that'd give their front lobes to suck your flesh. But Valve doesn't just plonk the action in front of you - it springs it upon you. Ceilings collapse raining Head Crabs on your cranium, zombies dive through glass windows and plate steel doors bulge outward in monster-shaped relief, before bursting apart to reveal the real thing.

But probably the single most impressive aspect of *Half-Life* is the AI. The early creatures are nice but dim, but as the game progresses you come up against government death squads, sent in to cover up a secret experiment gone wrong. Their intelligence is astounding as they operate in cohesive teams to flush you out. No other game has pulled off such a convincing simulation of sentience.

Ultimately, *Half-Life* succeeds because it is such a formidable alliance of elements. The action is piqued by original monsters and the



masterful use of surprise and fear, while you want to play the whole game through to the very end because it constantly entertains with stimulating jolts of humor, discovery and even storyline. A massive in-game intro neatly establishes the setting and atmosphere, slapping you bang in the middle of an alien invasion beachhead at the Black Mesa dodgy research institute. But *Half-Life* is clever enough not to get mired in a second-rate script - instead, in-game animation scenes are woven into the action, offering clues and warnings about events ahead.

Then there are the puzzles and secrets, which demand a little lateral thinking while remaining entirely consistent with the game world - and don't bore you with spotting funny textures on walls.

*Half-Life* looks splendid, is beautifully animated and is relentlessly thrilling and exciting.

The only reservation is that hardcore players could probably blast their way through it in one determined weekend. To do so would only be to miss the point. This is a game to be savored.

■ Scientists and security guards help you with firepower and access to secure areas. They also tell much of the story with scripted lines.



# HALF-LIFE PLATINUM



**Half-Life is one of** the greatest games of all time. *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament* are too skewed toward multiplayer gaming to match its excellence. You play Gordon Freeman, a scientist new to the Black Mesa research laboratory, who must battle off aliens and government agents in a developing story set in a real-world environment. It has become a legend, a game that every PC owner has at least heard of, if not fallen in love with and wedded. What more can be said here, to document this release? Well, there is an interesting twist...

*Half-Life Platinum* is the genetic splicing of *Half-Life: Game of the Year* (which included *Team Fortress Classic*), the *Half-Life: Opposing Force* mission pack and *Half-Life Counter-Strike*. *Team Fortress Classic* was very special and changed online gaming forever. While working as a team in a multiplayer game was nothing ground-breaking, the completeness of *TFC* made it deeply satisfying and you could download it for free from the Web. *Opposing Force*, on the other hand, puts you in the place of a government agent, adding an entirely new perspective to the scenario. It is nicely written, throwing in clever scenes that you will remember from the original, but this time viewed from the other side of the sound-proofed glass. It's a bit short, but contains some nice ideas and, well, more of the same is no bad thing. If you've never played *Half-Life*, here's a chance to pick it up with some worthy extras.

■ *Half-Life* was named the best PC game ever in the November 1999 issue of *PC Gamer*.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**

Valve

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A genuinely essential game

**LOW:**

Dedicated fans won't find anything new here

09/10



# HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE



**Opposing Force turns you** into a modern war film hero. Exchanges with other Marines that could have come straight from *Platoon* make you feel even more like a movie star. You will find yourself reloading even when you don't die, just to enjoy the scenarios again. The optional training section, Boot Camp, is not to be missed, and sets the scene beautifully for the Marine-based action. Training begins with the use of the "power vest," then it's on to the assault courses and shooting ranges, guiding you through jumping, climbing ropes and the use of specialist weapons.

Strands of action, interaction, puzzle and platform are braided subtly into a strong whip that cracks the *Half-Life* engine into performing new and daring tricks. Aim and fire a huge mortar emplacement, use a captured barnacle as a grappling hook, climb ropes and get medics to heal engineers so they can cut through metal-plated doors. The Black Mesa Special Ops that become the main human enemy are faster, more cunning and better animated than before.

The torch has been replaced by atmospherically fuzzy green night vision and the crossbow has been upgraded to a sleek sniper rifle. Puzzle elements have been arranged with obvious care and solutions are always creatively satisfying rather than frustrating. Parts of the game are undeniably platform in style: positioning ceiling-hung gantries to provide jump points over toxic waste, or timing runs through blast-vent fireballs are just two examples.

Overall, *Half-Life: Opposing Force* is a laudable add-on that lives up to its superior pedigree.

■ NPC action has been stretched as far as the engine can take it.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**

Gearbox Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Innovative, engrossing and a proper sequel

**LOW:**

It doesn't break the mold

09/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GodGames

### DEVELOPER:

Ritual Entertainment

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Weird, but visually stunning shoot-'em-up

### LOW:

Lacks a multiplayer mode

# 08/10

# HEAVY METAL: FAKK 2



**This was the first** game to use the *Quake III Arena* engine after *Quake* itself. It's a third-person shoot-'em-up with a B-movie/porn star lead character. Dealing death with either hand, assaults can be mixed and matched with any weapon or defensive item. This is *Tomb Raider* on drugs.

It's not just jumping and shooting either: there's climbing ropes, shimmying along poles and edging along ledges, plus pulling and pushing blocks and dragging yourself up to higher platforms. The combat focuses on a huge inventory of both fantasy and hi-tech weaponry and there are some stunning attacks at your disposal. The lead character, Julie Strain, boasts an amazing number of separate animations, and she's complemented by some beautiful architecture and environments.

But *FAKK 2* is too fiddly and the clumsy clipping presents a problem. Far more serious, though, is the difficulty of controlling Julie's movement. Don't expect instant action either, as *FAKK 2* starts slowly. There's a lot of dialogue, a lot of cut-scenes, and the first enemies you fight are like *Daikatana's* feeble flying midges. And while you'll strain to find fault in Julie's animation, other NPCs seem to have been modeled in five minutes. Thankfully, your foes are much more impressive affairs.

There have been other casualties of *FAKK 2's* brief development cycle, too, most notably the lack of a multiplayer mode. It still manages to be a great third-person shoot-'em-up though.

■ Ms. Strain's Lycra-style costume gets more and more tattered as the game progresses, until it almost falls off.



# HERETIC II



**It appears that no** sooner does Id finish a game engine than Raven snaps up the license and produces a riposte in its own image. In this way, *Doom* spawned *Heretic* and *Hexen*, *Quake* sired *Hexen II* and now *Quake II* has begat *Heretic II*.

Id's games rely on rocket launchers and BFGs, but *Heretic* and *Hexen* reply with sword and sorcery. Which is fun, but not as good as the real thing; flicking fireballs off the wrist and slashing thin air with big pointy sticks just doesn't match the reassuring recoil of a high-explosive missile piercing a brain-case. So instead, Raven has shifted its ground and created an out-of-body experience: *Heretic II* has switched from a first-person to a third-person perspective just like *Tomb Raider*. But despite similarities, *Heretic II* is no Lara-wannabe. It still uses the mouse and it's still a 3D shoot-'em-up full of monsters and slaughter and corridor-pounding.

A nice feature is the camera switch to third-person, which enables your character to perform moves that would be impossible for someone who can't see their own feet. The movement itself is a simple system controlled by a combination of the movement keys, crouch and jump, that multiplies into an elegant suite of acrobatic maneuvers.

*Heretic II* passes the time happily enough as you hop, skip and jump through a host of ghoulies and admire the scenery along the way. The game is huge as level after level of plague-ridden city, monster-infested jungle and temples filled with ancient evil come and go. But it's also a little bare and scarcely changes pace from beginning to end.

■ *Heretic II* has a handy violence control feature so you can find a gore level to suit everyone from Mary Whitehouse to Nosferatu.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Raven

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fast-moving and streamlined shoot-'em-up

### LOW:

Far from magical, especially in the wake of *Half-Life*

# 08/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
3DO

**DEVELOPER:**  
New World Computing

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II



**This is a simplistic** wargame with elements of exploration, set in a middle fantasy world that's packed with magic boots, genies, thong-clad barbarian women and wizards with pointy hats. *Heroes of Might and Magic II* is presented as a series of maps, which start out black, apart from the area immediately surrounding your first hero. Typically, you start with a town as well. You use your hero to explore the map, finding treasure, artifacts, monsters and a variety of mines that produce the several different kinds of resources that you need to build things in the town. Adding new structures gives you benefits that lead toward the production of new, bigger and better monsters with which to form your army. Getting the resource management right is the first challenge of the game.

In the Campaign game, you choose to support either one of the two sons of the newly deceased king. One prince is an evil rogue and the other a saintly, noble type; the sort of hero you have dictates your initial town-type. Combat is turn-based and worked out with a hex grid.

Everything in the game is explained with a marvelous help system that simply requires you to left-click on it. The game is hard, too. Not only do you have to be able to develop and sustain a strategy to win, you have to be prepared to adapt to new circumstances. Add in to this heady mixture of excellence a comprehensive and easy-to-use level designer, and a multiplayer network game that takes some bettering, and *Heroes of Might and Magic II* is a world-beater.

■ As time goes by, your hero becomes more powerful. They have a habit of collecting handy artifacts, too.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A smashing strategy fest that rests firmly on well-traveled and proven ground

**LOW:**  
Unoriginal, and too similar to the first game

09/10



# HEXEN II



**Quake might pretend you** care about its plot, but it really doesn't matter who, what or why you are shooting. *Hexen II* spouts just as much nonsense in its storyline, but at least it tries to stick to the plan during the actual game. And *Hexen II* somehow manages to be so much more than *Quake*.

The more is bestowed upon *Hexen II* by its pseudo-RPG trappings. For not only can you use swords and axes, you can also adopt a character, learn magic and carry inventory items for later use. The varied range of exceptionally built and animated monsters is inventive. Many weapons involve hand-to-hand contact and the selection of inventory items isn't immediate. Thus a game of *Hexen II* is necessarily slower than in *Quake*.

Like its predecessor, *Hexen II* is designed around a hub system. Simply, a base level grants access to many other levels, two or three of which you will have access to at any one time. As you solve a level, it opens a door or teleport in the hub level. It's a strange system that requires endless reloading on a 16Mb PC, but one that breaks away from *Quake's* linear progression.

The graphics engine is also worthy of note. It may be a redesigned version of the *Quake* engine, but it's replaced the endless browns with some beautiful and imaginative scenery. Like in *Hexen*, some objects can be smashed up, and there's even more of them now. But what makes *Hexen II* so great are the little surprises that keep popping up out of the blue.

It may seem a little slow at first and the multiplayer game – while an interesting diversion – will never replace *Quake's*, but *Hexen II* is a fine game in its own right.

■ Every game of *Hexen II* is significantly different, depending upon which of the four characters you choose to be at the start.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Raven

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A startling, original, deep and fun shoot-'em-up

**LOW:**  
A little too familiar and suffers from slow-down problems on lower-spec machines

09/10

# HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



**Hidden & Dangerous** is set during WWII and each half-track, starched uniform and handgun is lovingly recreated. The 23 missions are divided into six campaigns, each set in a different theater of the war. For each campaign you have to select a team of eight soldiers from a pool of 40, though in any single mission you can have only four operatives.

Each soldier has a background and statistics and they actually make a real difference to their performance. You have complete control over each squaddie and they possess a comprehensive selection of moves. There is a wide range of weapon types, which are all noticeably different and which can all be looted from the crumpled bodies of your foe. If you can dispose of their owners, you can also commandeer fixed weaponry and vehicles.

Each level is a stretching sweep of real estate, and there's more than one way to complete a mission. Most importantly, each level feels completely different. *Hidden & Dangerous* is the soldier sim we've been waiting for. It's the supreme flexibility of its engine that allows such variable delights. And what an atmosphere! It's like every memorable scene in every great WWII movie rolled into one.

And despite all the violence, it never seems gratuitous; the underlying message is war is hell. Your 40 soldiers are all you have for all the campaigns and once they're mown down, the only way to get them back is by replaying the level, as there's no mid-level save function. When a game is this good, criticism is irrelevant.

■ *H&D* went from conception to completion in just over a year, while still having more features than most other games.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
TalonSoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Illusion Softworks

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A detailed, yet accessible soldier sim that will quickly take over your life

**LOW:**  
Some of the dark levels are a little too dark

# 09/10

# HITMAN: CODENAME 47



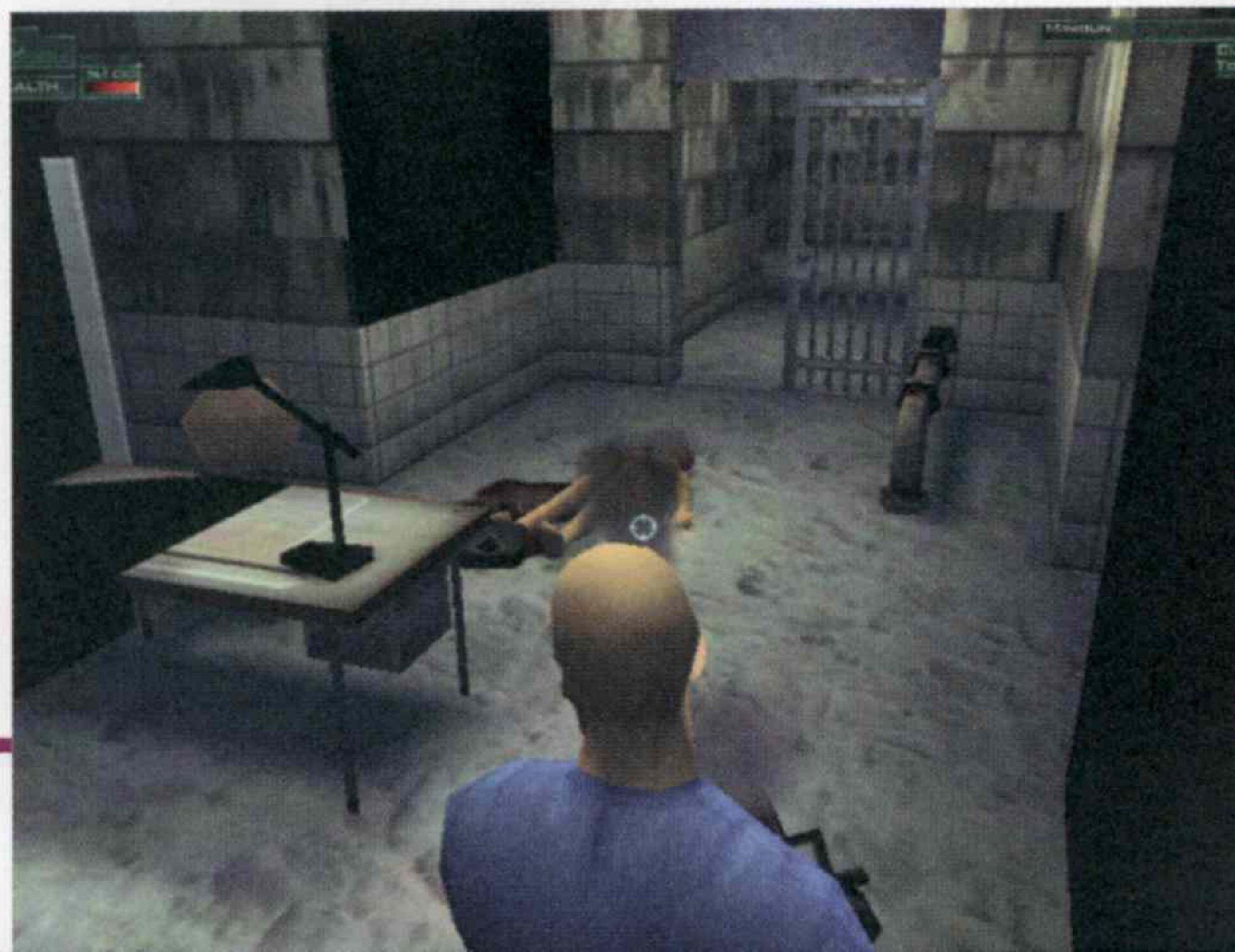
**Hitman's engine sets new** levels of excellence. You can entertain yourself by walking into a fern leaf just to see how it'll flop around next to your body. Animation of each character is astounding: each action and detail is luscious. Equally impressive is the physics system, in which objects collide with structures and fall correctly. And corpses have never been draped over the scenery so well. Of course, there's a price. In this case, it's a demonic system spec and some terrible slow-down. Add to this the occasional clipping problem and the illusion of perfection is more than a little tarnished.

You play a bald gentleman in a suit who, after freeing himself from a mental asylum, sets about life as a hitman. In each mission, you're given a briefing of what you're meant to achieve, with a few provisos to complicate things. Then it's on to the equipment selection screen.

Despite a *Thief* influence, philosophically *Hitman* is a very different beast. In some ways it's more akin to an old-skool graphic adventure, in that there's an optimum solution to the situation and it's up to you to locate it. However, rather than LucasArts' friendly ideology, parts of this game don't always seem to work that well - like when a mission is impossible to complete once an error has been made. As there's no mid-game save, you'll play until you realise something is wrong, then have to restart to have another crack.

What *Hitman* lacks is something to tie a brilliant mess of ideas together into a coherent game.

■ Your character can walk, jog or sneak, but sneaking is too slow and the levels too large to make it worthwhile.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Io Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Stunning graphics and animation with amazing attention to detail

**LOW:**  
Demonic system spec and terrible slow-down

# 05/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## HOGS OF WAR



**This game is based** on two things. The first is puns. Really bad porcine puns. And it's funny, for about 11 minutes. Maybe less. The battle between Uncle Ham's Hogs and the Sow-a-Krauts is fought in Saustralasia. Please. Make. It. Stop.

However, this humor vivisection isn't all that our bacon-bearing buddies have to offer. The other thing is a brilliant turn-based game, which is like the Team 17 classic *Worms* – in 3D. *Worms* was a perfect, brilliantly crafted and completely addictive game, and the spirit of *Worms* has been revived in *Hogs of War*, spiced up by the voice of Rik Mayall, whose hilarious commentary pervades every aspect of the game (so switch it off in the options now).

*Hogs of War* sees you playing across 3D realms of grass, snow and rock in a battle to the death between teams of pigs. Each pig has certain equipment from the outset: sniper rifles, rocket launchers, jet packs, bayonets and so on. During a skirmish, the battlefield is re-supplied and your pigs further equipped using the miracle of crates from the sky.

As with *Worms*, *Hogs of War* quickly becomes tiresome in single-player mode. The levels are well designed and the AI challenging, but they leave you with a rather average and lonely little pork chop. What transforms this into a delicious holiday ham of happiness is the introduction of a group of friends.

It's like it was in years past, back in the *Worms* days – laughing with friends at a beautiful ballistic shot gone awry. You'll get bored or go mad eventually, but while it lasts, *Hogs of War* is a gaming pleasure.

■ Look out for the jet pack.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**  
Infogrames

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A pleasingly addictive game

**LOW:**  
Hopeless in single-player mode and full of awful puns

08/10

## HOSTILE WATERS



**This is action/strategy** par excellence. Inspired by *Carrier Command*, you control a giant warship. By collecting energy resources, you can construct vehicles to control or give orders to, either on a map screen or via a direct real-time menu. You can also customize vehicles, which forces you to make both economic and logistical decisions.

*Hostile Waters* will test your reflexes to the limit, without overstressing you. Especially commendable is its treatment of the AI-controlled vehicles. You have to assign a limited number of "Soulcatcher chips," each encoded with the personality of a dead soldier. This puts a ceiling on the number of units you make on any given level, stopping you from overwhelming yourself while forcing you to making tough decisions on what you need. Also, since each chip has differing talents, voice and personality, you're able to quickly realize what's occurring when they make a verbal report and act appropriately.

There hasn't been a darker plot since *Planescape Torment*. In fact, the synergy is exemplary, with the opening up of new challenges neatly interweaving with the plot and each level offering different kicks, usually highlighting what's just been added to your armory.

The handling of the vehicles alone adds immediate appeal. While the control system is standardized to keys and mouse, the physics system's interaction leads to a distinctive experience in each.

Best of all, *Hostile Waters* can be commended for the freedom of approach inherent in its design – you're given leeway to play the game precisely how you want.

■ Get the cloak and new tactical options become available.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Rage

**DEVELOPER:**  
Rage

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Level based, mentally challenging and physically demanding – but accessible

**LOW:**  
No multiplayer mode

09/10

# IMPERIUM GALACTICA II



**This is the stuff** that space operas are made of. It's *TA*, *Diplomacy* and *SimCity* combined, refined and writ large. There's a complex and beefy interface to come to grips with, but thanks to a series of five concise and indispensable tutorials, you'll be *au fait* with it quickly. Get to know the short-cuts and hotkeys, and you'll be playing it like a true pro.

The master-menu enables you to access any area of the game you need to deal with, such as research, craft design and colony planning. You'll probably spend most game-time on the starmap, which can be spun around, zoomed in and out and tilted. From here, you can direct building projects, check how your colonies are faring and move your fleets around. Building an armada of interplanetary warships demands an eye for detail and an intimate knowledge of your colonies. To begin with, you'll have a colony in your home system, and a light force of ships. From here, you'll build colony ships, then spread out and inhabit surrounding space.

The game doesn't limit you to space-warfare, either. When invading an enemy planet, you'll need sufficient ground forces at your disposal to over-run the colony. And to shift tanks around, you'll need spacecraft, which come in many different classes, from one-man fighters to huge Capital-class cruisers. This is all immensely absorbing. At various points you're treated to sumptuous cut-scenes, which prompt new objectives, offer a visual representation of your empire and fleets at work, and tie the campaigns into stories. *IG II* makes good promises, delivers them, and fires the imagination in the process.

■ Most areas of the game offer auto-management – handy for colony construction.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
GT Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Digital Reality

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Beautifully realized RTS combining small-scale land battles and space combat

**LOW:**  
Difficult to fault

# 09/10

# INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**  
LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Packed with atmosphere, heavy with set-pieces and stuffed with great surprises

**LOW:**  
Frustrating control system

# 09/10



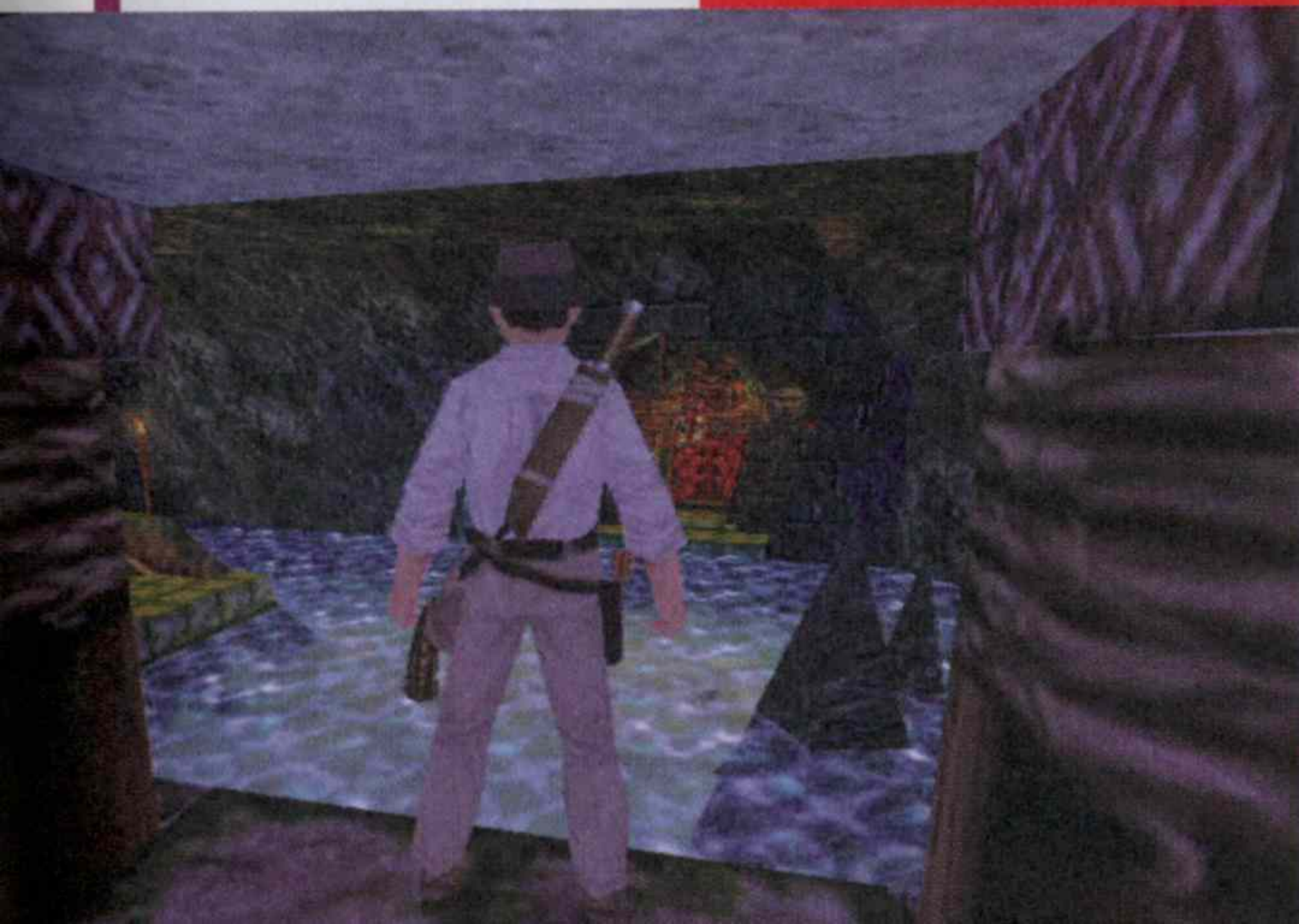
**Indiana Jones leaps in** with all guns blazing and is a welcome surprise. While comparisons with *Tomb Raider* are inevitable, *The Infernal Machine* is actually more like the brilliant *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*. It looks like *Tomb Raider*, it plays like *Tomb Raider* at times, but at the heart of the game is a fiendishly complex puzzle element: it's not just button pressing and lever pulling, but the application of some lateral thinking to understand what you are supposed to achieve.

*The Infernal Machine's* level design is exemplary and the attention to detail used astonishing, creating the most believable fantasy world ever seen in a game.

The thrill of discovery in *The Infernal Machine* is in the variety of places you visit. Each level unlocks a clue, or location to visit next. And this game's graphics are gorgeous: from the fairly drab opening desert level, the world first becomes snowier with an inspired river rapids sequence, then heads to luxuriant lagoons, greenery-stuffed mountains and caverns carved by flowing lava.

*The Infernal Machine* lacks some of the dialogue that made *The Fate of Atlantis* so compelling, but a multitude of quick cut-scenes keeps the action ticking along nicely. Each level ensures a feeling of progression towards your final goal, but sometimes you are at a slight loss as to why you were here a moment ago and quite what it is you are looking for. But it's a long, extremely satisfying journey, once you get over the frustrating keyboard control system.

■ The Infernal Machine is a device of great power, scattered into four pieces during the destruction of the Tower of Babel.



# INSANE



**There are no padded** walls here, because the off-road racing of *Insane* offers something far removed from solitary confinement. For a start, it's predominantly a multiplayer game, though you can challenge the computer opponents, too. Second, it doesn't ever imprison you. It places you, your vehicle, and up to seven opponents at point A on a map filled with hills, valleys and the occasional road. Then, depending on which of the seven types of game you're playing, it tells you to get to flag B, gate C or opponent D. There's no set route; that part is entirely up to you.

*Insane* is a console game in spirit, but at its heart lies an astounding physics engine. Cars roll, flip and delicately tumble down the rolling hills; each one handles differently from the last, and the balance of each vehicle can be infinitely tweaked via the car setup menu. Implemented best of all, however, is the damage system. Your vehicle easily becomes buckled and deformed, not just with different texture overlays, but with parts of it actually bending out of place. But everything's easily fixed with the tap of a key, incurring a five-second penalty. It's not just aesthetics, though, since damage is noticeable in the handling, too.

Still, realistic modeling aside, the graphics aren't fantastic, the sound is weak, and *Insane* won't hold your attention in single-player mode for long. The lack of polish is disappointing, but the thrill of speeding and rolling around in multiplayer competition, the immensely satisfying game engine and the quick pick-up-and-play philosophy is enough.

■ *Insane* is the first Codemasters game to use its Multiplayer Network software.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**  
Invictus

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Innovative, fast and fun with an astounding physics engine

**LOW:**  
Weak graphics and sound, and not much fun for one player

# 08/10



# JEDI KNIGHT



**Aliens that only warranted** a cursory appearance in the Mos Eisley Cantina scene in *Star Wars* make up *Jedi Knight's* main adversaries in the first four levels, while Tuskan Raiders bear little resemblance to the film's equivalent. As such, *Jedi Knight* doesn't capture the essence of George Lucas' universe, but, as a first-person shoot-'em-up, this game offers one of the most challenging, rewarding and exciting single-player experiences of its time. Stick firmly in first-person view and you'll soon be blasting beautifully animated stormtroopers and AT-STs, struggling to think your way around the many devious puzzles, and learning to use your lightsaber properly.

The tasks generally rest on your dexterity with the control interface – a superbly customizable *Quake*-style method which soon becomes as intuitive as *Quake's*, except with the added bonus of a crouch key, a simple-to-use inventory, and the imaginative force powers which you earn along the way, depending on your discovery of the levels' various secrets. However, the game's engine is still not as accomplished as *Quake's*, plus some of the weapons are superfluous. Die-hard *Quake* fans might also be put off by *Jedi Knight's* sprawling levels, dominated as they are by large open spaces and infinite drops.

The biggest disappointment is the multiplayer aspect of the game. Deathmatch levels appear to have been thrown together with a minimum of thought, with weapons, power-ups and barrels seemingly scattered at random throughout them. Pedantic quibbles aside, *Jedi Knight* will surprise, amaze and delight you in equal measure.

■ You'll need a 3D accelerator card to ensure you get the best out of the beautiful graphics and animations.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**  
LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Huge, hard and nice to look at. The best single-player *Quake*-style game you can buy

**LOW:**  
Disappointing multiplayer aspect of the game

# 09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

Xatrix

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Shoot-'em-ups don't get much harder than this

**LOW:**

Overtly violent and profane

**09/10****KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME**

**This is as real** as computer games get, because *Kingpin* is both an incredible achievement in terms of graphics, AI and level design and a nasty, bloody, swear-fest, which leaves you feeling as morally bankrupt as the violent, merciless characters who populate the game. At no point do you feel like the hero who purged the world of alien plagues in *Quake* or *Half-Life*; nor even the maverick cop who brought down the criminals in *Sin*. No, you're a thug. A foul-mouthed, nasty piece of work.

Cinematic influences abound. Tarantino could conceivably have penned the dialogue, and the set-pieces bear the brutal hallmark of Scorsese. A spitting image of Ving Rhames (*Pulp Fiction's* overlord) pops up at one point, and many of the dark urban levels smack of Abel Ferrara's gritty *King of New York*. It's emphatically adult.

The violence is similarly OTT, augmented as it is by location-specific damage modeling and meticulously detailed skins. The problem is that *Kingpin* is – technically at least – an excellent game and succeeds in creating a stylish, believable environment, which feels more alive the more of it you negotiate. This isn't just a case of "shoot first, ask questions later." Talking to characters is essential if you're going to progress, because some conversations enable you to hire local muscle for your personal crusade.

So is *Kingpin* a gratuitous and irresponsible stomach-churner? Or the sort of harmless fun that any rational and well-balanced adult will get hours of enjoyment from? That's for you to decide.

■ A Pawn-o-matic can be found near the start of each episode. Buy weapons, ammo, health and armor here.

**KLINGON: HONOR GUARD**

**Microprose has not only** managed to create the equivalent of *Jedi Knight* for Trekkies, but it has also developed a quality game based around the *Star Trek* license.

*Klingon: Honor Guard* uses the powerful *Unreal* game engine. But whereas *Unreal's* high points made up for its slight inadequacies, *KHG* deceives rather than flatters. Sure, it's visually impressive, but it's not in *Unreal's* league. The textures are too simplistic, some of the lighting effects cast a too-easily-definable patch of illumination, and the weapon graphics and animations are weak. That said, it surpasses in other areas – most notably, in the number of opponents it throws at you: *KHG* features tons of enemies.

The structure of the levels may not have the complexity of *Quake II*, but *KHG* has a constantly updating plot. Mission objectives are made logical by slick between-mission briefings, and the game fits in with the *Star Trek* story line.

Although *KHG* beats *Unreal* hands-down on pace of action and a strong plot, it fails to match Epic and Id's games on graphical quality, level design and polish. Despite innovative touches such as the tricorder, the combat goggles, and the ability to summon two Klingon allies when you're in big trouble, playing *KHG* is a curiously remote experience. There's no denying that it's both tough and good-looking, but you can't help but feel a little disappointed. Having said that, *Klingon: Honor Guard* is still a damn fine first-person shoot-'em-up.

■ If you become fed up with merely stabbing and clubbing enemies into a pulp, you can throw either The Klingon Dak'tahg or the Bat'leth instead.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Superb plot, tons of enemies

**LOW:**

Graphically disappointing

**09/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sierra

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7



**The cheap, slutty, sexist** filth that is *Leisure Suit Larry* has always managed to somehow drag its shabby, flabby frame through the murky waters of just-good-enough-to-warrant-a-sequel-city. And the seventh in this banal and grotesque series does little to complement the generally-okay, reasonably-funny-but-actually-not-really memory of the first. Larry is on a boat. Larry walks around the boat looking at breasts. And it isn't funny. They say sarcasm is the lowest form of humor. It isn't. It's puns. And this game is full of 'em.

Plus it hasn't changed much. The designer has decided to liberally scatter certain "objects" around the game to thrust you into a computerized version of *Where's Waldo?*, the books of which you can buy for considerably less money and have considerably more fun with. If that's not patronizing enough for you, you also get a scratch 'n' sniff card with the disc, which enables you to immerse yourself in that leisurely Larry

ambience you'd really rather do without.

It's not even good, clean, harmless fun. It's grubby, barely-veiled sexism. Cheap, easy jibes and jabs and some of the most uneventful adventures since *The Moomins* only drag the lovely graphics and the sparky, crisp sound all the way down to the bottom of the barrel, where they're free to grate and scrape to their heartless content.

■ To win Strip Lair's Poker with Dewmi, peek at her dice by pressing [Ctrl] + C. To enable psychedelic mode, press [Ctrl] + P twice. Alternately, after winning Strip Lair's Poker, press [Ctrl] + P once.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Crap

**LOW:**  
Sexist crap

02/10



# LINKS 2001



**The Links franchise** was to Eidos what *FIFA* is to EA: a solid and successful series, tweaked and updated every year. *Links 2001*, however, is described by new owner Microsoft as "the most comprehensive upgrade to the series since *Links: The Challenge of Golf* was introduced 10 years ago." And it's fair to say that there are a number of significant changes, advancements and additions.

There's a new graphics-rendering engine that can run in higher resolutions than before, up to 1,280 x 1,024. This poly-spline hybrid enables 3D features such as vertical bunker lips or realistic canyon walls and arches on the Mesa Roja course.

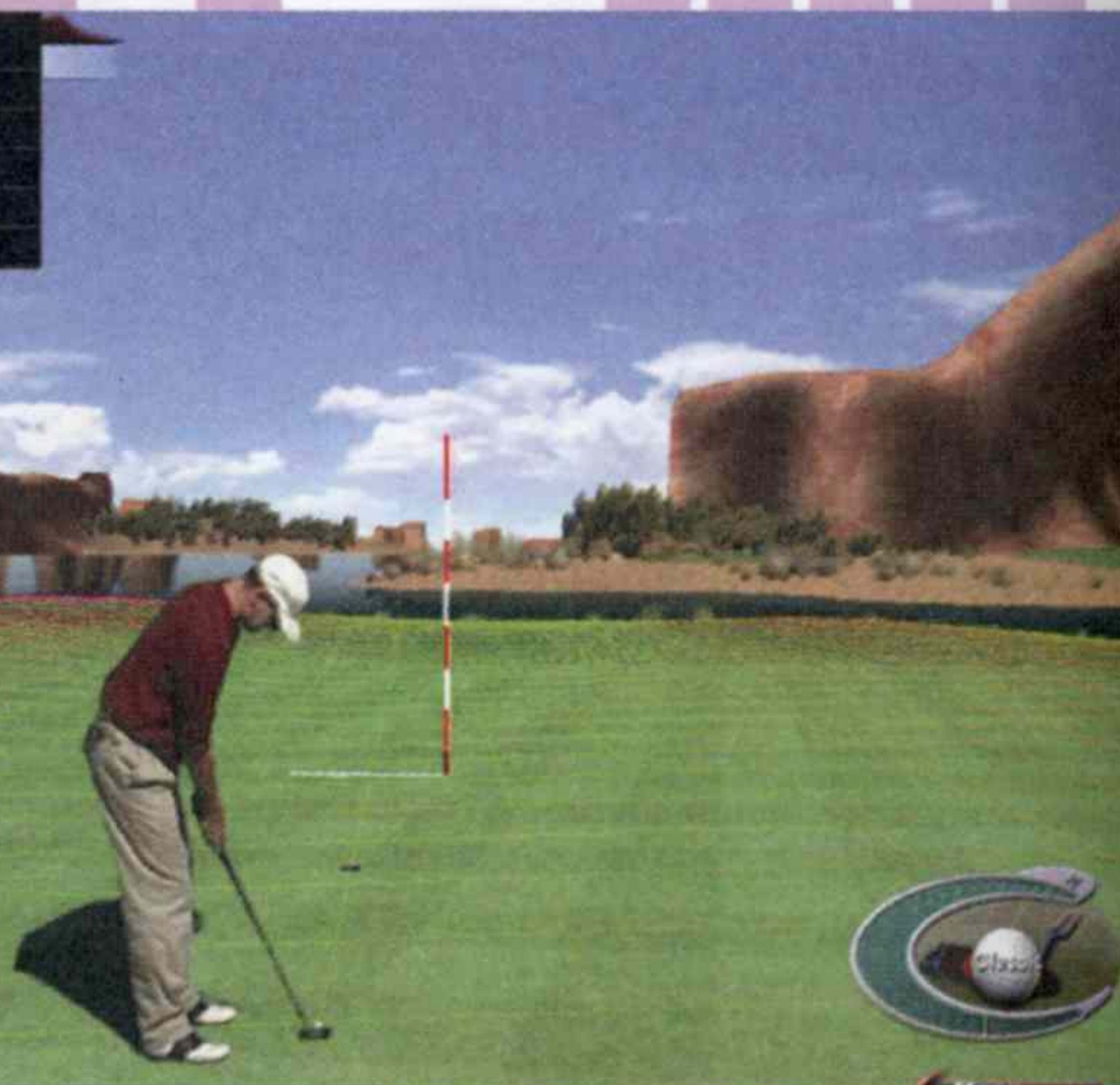
The new engine also brings anti-aliasing to the golfing genre; all the flora, panoramas and golfers are now blended smoothly, and you can even select your own player animations and atmospheric sky textures from the database.

Matching the virtual game to your own particular style is the major advance of *Links 2001*. As well as the aesthetics of appearance and animation, it's now possible to customize club distance. Include your own stance (left-handed golfers have at last been added) and foot position, and suddenly you've tailored a whole new level of realism. If you want to go a step further, the Arnold Palmer Course Designer is available to re-create real courses.

If you're more of a serious sim enthusiast than arcade golf fan, then *Links 2001* is the best title on the market.

■ *Links 2001* has five new courses: Aviara, Princeville, Chateau Whistler, Westfields and Mesa Roja.

Last Shot Information  
In Air: 55 meters  
Total: 57 meters  
To Pin: 2 meters  
Lip: Green  
Player: Brad



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Microsoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Access

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Visually seamless with the GPS accurate to one centimeter

**LOW:**  
Not big on character

09/10



# LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE

**To say that *Little Big Adventure* is a good game would be a gross understatement.** It is an interactive arcade adventure of the same ilk as *Alone in the Dark*. The differences here, however, are that the graphics have been dramatically rounded off, the main sprite reduced in size, and the camera angles are now fixed to alleviate the frustration of continuously switching views at the most inappropriate moments.

Taking control of the humanoid character Twinsen, you are thrust into a fantasy environment inhabited by four different races, two of which are rabbits and elephants. The game begins with you languishing in prison – your first task is to find a safe route out and make your way home. Your ultimate mission, though, is to overthrow a certain Dr. Funrock.

*Little Big Adventure* utilizes the basic game engine featured in *Alone in the Dark*, whereby the main sprite trundles off in any direction as instructed, bashes into walls and fights with graceful dexterity. You can interact with key items throughout the game, as well as chat to the locals, asking specific automated questions.

This game is huge and offers constant action, from the first easy-going island to the later sections where the puzzles become more frustrating and the enemy onslaught frantic. There are a few quibbles, but, on the whole, there is very little wrong with *Little Big Adventure*. It has a certain beauty that captivates you and won't let go – and, ultimately, you'll just have fun.

■ Try these cheats: press [Esc] for the main menu, then type: "full" for full lives, magic and clovers, or "live" for all lives.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
EA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Adeline Arts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1994

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Superlative graphics and absorbing gameplay

**LOW:**  
Frustrating auto-save facility

**09/10**

# LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY

**This game has so** many tricks up its sleeve, so many spectacular surprises to delight you with, that there are any number which could jolt you, gasping, into an awareness of its grandeur. But for most people, it'll probably be the car that does it.

As *Little Big Adventure 2* opens, there's a cutely-rounded yellow car parked next to your house. You instantly want to drive it, but can't because your wife's in the middle of repairing it and needs one final part from an elephant-headed fellow on a neighboring island. Eventually, of course, you meet with the relevant trunk-faced mechanic and retrieve the missing component. Hand it to your missus, and she gets busy with her ratchet set. Shortly afterwards, while you're exploring a dune-covered desert, wifey completes the work and delivers the jalopy, by ferry, to the nearby port. All thoughts of the puzzles you were dealing with so carefully a few moments before are road-killed as you zoom recklessly around the island in your new-found buggy.

*Little Big Adventure 2* is frighteningly immense, unstintingly exuberant, nerve-wrackingly exciting and exhibits more imagination in its opening 10 minutes than most games manage in their lifetime. Its realistic 3D world sucks you in. Its puzzles aren't super-tough, and there are more than enough clues on offer to nudge even amateur adventurers onto the right path, but they're challenging nonetheless, and always rewarding.

■ One of the many edges that *LBA2* has over, say, *Tomb Raider* is the profusion of vehicles and gadgets you get to play with.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
EA

**DEVELOPER:**  
Adeline

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
One of the most imaginative adventure games ever created

**LOW:**  
Let down by the script

**09/10**

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## MAGIC CARPET



**It's difficult to pigeonhole** *Magic Carpet*, but it is probably best described as a strategic shoot-'em-up. Its aesthetic inspiration is clearly Arabian in origin – from the turban-clad hero to the lilting Oriental pipe music, the look and feel is straight out of the adventures of Sinbad. According to the atmospheric intro sequence, however, the action all takes place in a mythical universe and on a planet blessed with copious amounts of natural magic, or “mana.” When supplies began to run low, the story goes, fierce competition between wizards degenerated into war, infesting the land with monsters and generally making life deeply unpleasant for the rest of the population. And so it falls to a young sorcerer's apprentice, armed with only a spell for a flying carpet, to take to the air and set about restoring order.

*Magic Carpet's* troubled world is divided into 50 island realms to be tackled in turn. The object for each is simply to acquire enough mana to restore the land to equilibrium and progress to the next. It's the cerebral aspect of *Magic Carpet* that dominates here – since the aiming of weapon spells is more or less automatic, the real skill lies in the collection and handling of mana.

Bullfrog's fractal landscape technology is astounding and there are plenty of impressive trimmings, too, such as both a hi-res and 3D mode. There's also support for Virtual Reality headsets and, most importantly, a network multiplayer mode supporting up to eight participants. *Magic Carpet* is a classic.

■ You can cast 24 spells in all, ranging from the mediocre to the downright devastating.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Bullfrog

**DEVELOPER:**

Bullfrog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1994

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Incredible 3D graphics and compelling gameplay

**LOW:**

Needs a ninja PC and it's not to everyone's taste

09/10

## MAGIC: THE GATHERING



**This has the potential**

to become one of the biggest PC games ever because the card game formula is ideally suited to the PC and the game itself is extremely good.

*Magic* is a turn-based card game set in the fantastical, fictional continent of Dominia. Normally a game for two people, the players try to score the most points by playing the cards off against each other.

There are five color suits: black, red, white, green and blue. Each color represents a type of land that the continent contains, respectively swamp, mountain, plain, forest and island. Each player's pack contains a minimum of 60 cards but no upper limit, and at the start of a game you're dealt seven cards. There are thousands of individual packs of cards available, all of which belong to one of the above colors and when you start off you buy a sealed deck that has 60 random cards within it. The card game is brilliant and the success of *Magic: The Gathering's* computer translation can only be measured by examining whether or not the subtleties of the card game come across. They do so splendidly, with only a couple of exceptions: the presentation of the game is off-putting and there is scope for a more layered experience. But the greatest disappointment is the lack of a multiplayer e-mail option.

Overall, however, *Magic: The Gathering* is a good interpretation of the card game, apart from a few minor quibbles. There are an almost infinite number of highly intelligent, distinctive opponents with thousands of card combinations. And that's what *Magic* is all about.

■ The dungeon sequences provide the best opportunities to gain new cards (or lose all yours).



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Keeps the magic of the card game and adds a whole new questing dimension

**LOW:**

Poor general presentation

09/10

# MAJESTY



**This is a real-time** strategy game set in a fantasy land, with wizards, castles and goblins. You're the king, and it's your job to batter evil with dazzling armies of knights and elves and so on. So far, so normal. But you can't directly tell anyone what to do. You can only influence their actions.

Whenever you want anything done, you have to pay a hero to do it for you. But you have to advertise the job first. If you want to stop a beastie from smashing up your kingdom, then you must plant a price on his head, and wait for heroes to home in on the monster and claim the fee. If the bounty's too low they won't bother and Mr. Troll will rampage unmolested.

It may sound long-winded, but it makes a refreshing change from the usual RTS. *Majesty's* action is less immediate and much less explosive than most RTS games, but you take greater pleasure in anticipating your kingdom's needs and making sure you keep your heroes happy. You still get to sprawl a town full of barracks and wizards' towers all over the landscape, but the management aspect is vitalized by several nice twists that enable you to fine-tune your economy. Most routine functions are automated, too, so you can concentrate on the all-important slash 'n' hackery.

But, as good as *Majesty* is, it's not great. The order system reduces combat to a succession of low-key incidents rather than almighty clashes. Your tactical freedom is limited and the graphics are cute, but underpowered. The levels don't tie together as part of a single campaign either. *Majesty* is an absorbing, agreeable and easy way to pass the time, but there are more exciting ways of going about it.

■ Watch out for dangerous bonus structures.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Cyberlore Studios

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Novel strategy game featuring the world's very first capitalist control system

### LOW:

Limited AI, longevity and story

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Microprose

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Well thought out, easy to get to grips with and playable

### LOW:

Can get confusing. Only likely to appeal to strategy fans

# 08/10

# MASTER OF ORION



**Your ultimate task in** this space-based strategy game is to become ruler of the galaxy. Naturally, you're encouraged to achieve this by fair means or foul. Starting with one planet, two scout ships and a colony transport, you have to spread your race throughout the cosmos, colonizing new planets, developing new technology, designing new ships, and dealing with other races whose rulers are also set on becoming galactic top dog.

Once you've colonized two-thirds of the galaxy's planets, all the races in the game form a council to elect a leader. The rulers of the two most powerful empires are then nominated, with each race's vote calculated according to the size of its total population.

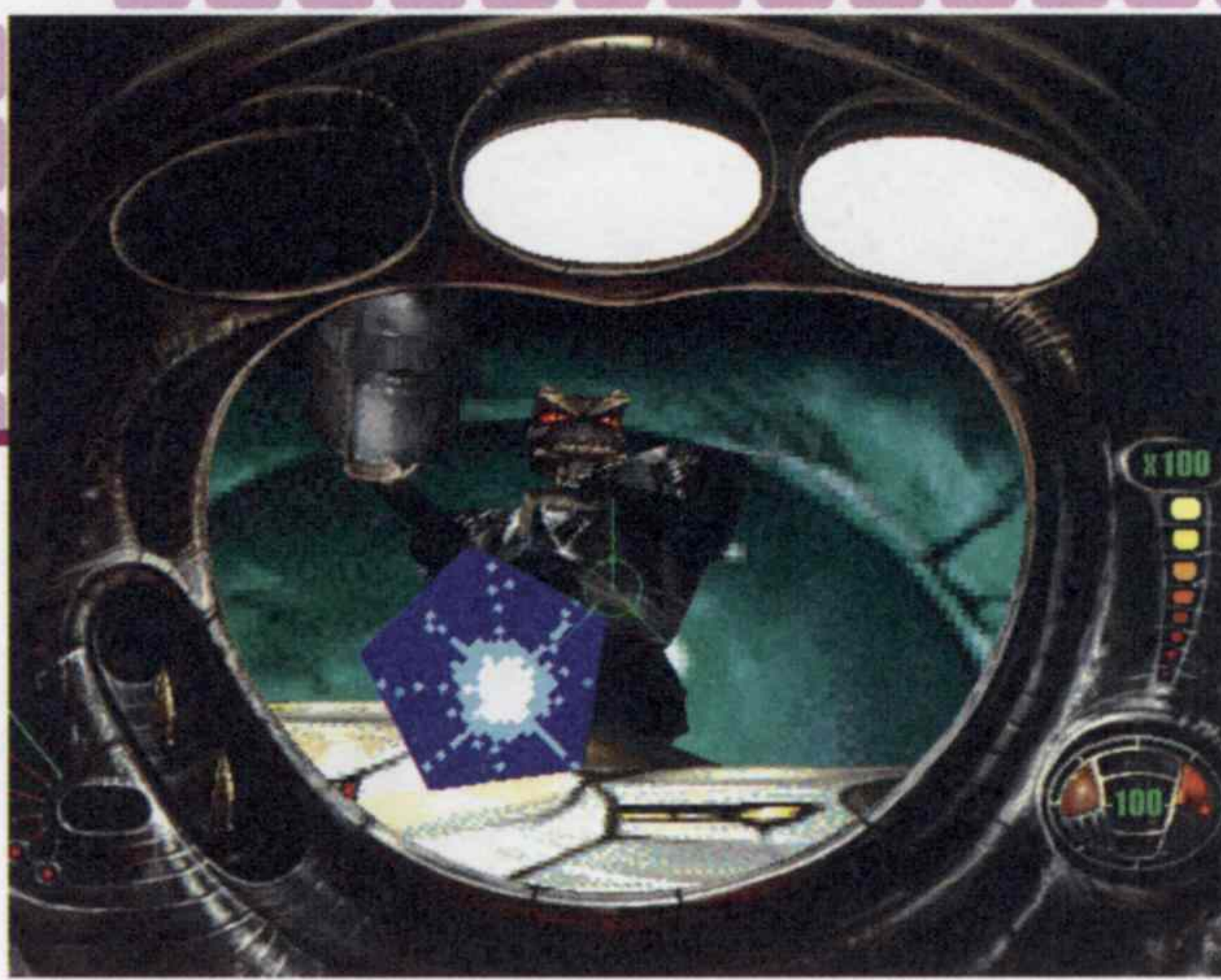
*Master of Orion* is a very well-designed strategy game. There's a great deal to it and many different ways to go about your task, which keeps everything interesting. It also features some unique ideas, the best of which is the voting system by which you can win or lose the game. This can lead to some frantic diplomacy and high tension, especially if you find yourself in the situation where the council is formed but you are not nominated, and you keep having to use your votes strategically to prevent the other rulers from winning, while at the same time increasing your empire's strength to the point where you can be nominated yourself.

The game's graphics are good rather than awe-inspiring, but *Master of Orion* is an involving and enjoyable game that you will come back to again and again.

■ The map of the galaxy provides a useful overview of the game.



# MDK



### Though *MDK* begged comparison

with other 3D games such as *Tomb Raider*, *Quake* or even *Duke Nukem 3D*, there really was no other game quite like it in its time, and it's still a class action title today.

This uniqueness was brought about mainly by the huge variety of experiences encapsulated in each of the game's six levels. One minute you're running down a dark tunnel blasting away with your mini sub-machine gun, the next you're lobbing grenades at tanks, sniping at alien robots with your head-mounted rifle or leaping from platform to platform across an enemy firing range. After that, you might have to catch an ascending air current using your parachute, or take out a high-powered turret by aiming mortar shells down some duct towers. Needless to say, you'll have to avoid the turret's fire at the same time. Even on the easiest of the three skill levels, the fighting action gets very frantic.

While it bombards you with its range of challenges, at the same time *MDK* treats you to a series of sensory delights. The game's graphics are instantly impressive. Nearly everywhere you go, the 3D surroundings are covered with new colors and textures. All the levels have been extremely well thought-out, and the game puts the playing experience before realism.

The main criticism is that there's no multiplayer mode. *MDK* is, however, so constantly challenging in single-player mode that this doesn't really matter.

■ Sniping is an important part of *MDK*, and you won't get through the game without becoming a crack shot with the crosshair targeting system.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Shiny Entertainment

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Quite simply a work of genius

### LOW:

No multiplayer mode

# 09/10



# MDK 2



### *MDK* is a fast-paced, highly inventive and innovative

arcade adventure. One of the best things about it is the sheer variety of things that hero Kurt Hectic gets to do. In *MDK 2*, Kurt reappears, but now there are two other main characters, too. A background character in *MDK*, Doc Hawkins now employs Kurt as a janitor on his spaceship and fits him out in his coil suit. And then there's Max, a four-armed, cigar-chomping robotic dog. You don't get to switch at will between these characters; you do a certain level as Kurt, then the next as Max, the next as the Doc, and so on. Kurt is a stealthy assassin and has to pick off foes with his sniper scope; Max relies on firepower to get past the aliens on his levels; finally, Doc Hawkins has to use his inventive brain.

All the 10 vast levels are viewed from the same third-person perspective, and all three characters are controlled using a combination of mouse and keys. *MDK 2* is structured around a series of brilliantly conceived set-pieces that constantly force you to re-assess how you're supposed to play the game. Each of the levels follows roughly the same format, even though their style of play differs. A few minor skirmishes will lead onto a major set-piece either set in one location or spread across two or three. The challenge in each set-piece is to figure out what you have to do, and then to try and do it.

The main problem is that the save-anywhere function curtails *MDK 2*'s lifespan, as does the fact that there are only 10 levels. But it's still a satisfyingly hard game to play.

■ Watch out for the witty cut-scenes that neatly bookend each of *MDK 2*'s 10 levels.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Bioware

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Action, blasting, puzzles and beautifully choreographed set-pieces - it's got 'em all

### LOW:

The action can slow down with lots going on at the same time

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microsoft

### DEVELOPER:

Microsoft

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The best mech game ever

### LOW:

Still not quite good enough – it's crying out for an expansion of the entire concept

# 08/10

# MECHWARRIOR 4: VENGEANCE



**Even though this is** the best traditional mech game on the PC, it all seems a little familiar. The one obvious difference is the intro-sequence and general cinematics, which are sadly uninspiring when compared to *Mechwarrior 2's* FMV footage. However, the Battletech universe provides a compelling background to the world.

The plot revolves around avenging your family's murder. On the way are 26 missions, which all take the authentic fantasy-simulator approach. They're also well-crafted, with specific challenge and tactical options built-in, which helps separate *Mechwarrior 4* from other shoot-'em-ups. The missions are also well designed: even if primary objectives fail, the scenario often continues with an increased difficulty. Again, the most important aspect of the continuous campaign is salvage, and this clever mechanism smooths the potentially stratospheric learning curve for a beginner.

However, this isn't integrated into the quick-action modes. Rather than offering a limited choice of missions to play, opening up more as you reach them, the entire spread of tasks with the full range of hardware is available from scratch, which makes it too easy to play a later scenario and spoil the plot.

It's in AI that *Mechwarrior 4* improves over its third appearance: now your opponents are smart enough to worry you. Additionally, it's graphically good and there's plenty of detail, but not enough to give you a real sense of scale. However, if you've never experienced a mech-game before, this is a perfect place to start.

■ Extend play with the Master Trial mode.



# METAL GEAR SOLID



**When this game was** released on PlayStation, it pushed Sony's grey box to previously unknown limits. It captured our imagination with its Hollywood-esque plot, almost credible characters and its varied and compulsive gameplay. It also introduced the PlayStation to the notion of stealth. You play as Solid Snake, an ex-member of special forces unit Foxhounds. Members of Snake's old unit have taken over a nuclear weapons disposal facility on an island off Alaska, and the terrorists have access to hundreds of nuclear warheads. It's your task to infiltrate the base, rescue hostages and kick ass. You arrive on the island unarmed, so you have to locate weapons pretty quickly. To help you, you have been fitted with a radar that shows you your position as well as the enemy's movements and field of vision.

*Metal Gear Solid* succeeds because it is fun to skulk around in the dark – and the game moves effectively between periods of relative calm and all-out panic. Every sound effect and note of music has been designed to enhance the ongoing struggle between tension and release. *MGS* is certainly cinematic, but no movie would be great without interesting characters, which this has in abundance.

The biggest criticism leveled at the PlayStation version was the lack of longevity, but this has been solved with the inclusion of VR missions. These take place in virtual levels and strip *MGS's* gameplay down to its bare bones. The game itself throws up a good few challenges that will test your gaming mettle close to its limits, too.

■ Snake's Codec radio device is central to the game.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microsoft

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Atmospheric, brilliantly paced and full of great characters, weapons and gadgets

### LOW:

Not very original

# 08/10

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**

Codemasters

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# MICRO MACHINES V3



**Remember *Micro Machines*, *Micro Machines 2* and *Micro Machines 2 Special Edition*?** All three were top-scoring games. They all hailed from a time before *Quake*, when *Worms* had just arrived and *Mortal Kombat 3* rode high. But, even now, these gems prove to be good fun. And *Micro Machines V3* drags the whole concept into a more graphically advanced incarnation.

Indeed, this appears to be the main improvement made to the game. The directly overhead view and flat 2D vehicles have been replaced with an isometric-style viewpoint and neat, fully fleshed-out 3D graphics. The camera, though, pans automatically around your vehicle as the twists and turns of the course demand. Surprisingly, this isn't as disorienting as you imagine.

The premise remains exactly the same as before: race miniature vehicles across a smorgasbord of gigantic domestic courses. It's like a cross between *Honey, I Shrank the Kids* and *The Italian Job*. And

there are, indeed, Mini Coopers, together with another 32 vehicles, all of which, unbelievably, handle differently. Add 48 tracks and *Micro Machines V3* becomes as much a voyage of discovery as a rip-snorting little racer. It's disappointing, however, that this is a straight port of the original PlayStation *Micro Machines V3*, albeit with crisper, higher-res graphics. Small potatoes, though. This is a laugh-out-loud, ceaselessly imaginative, inventive and brain-crampingly simple racing game.

■ As well as the Straight-racing Challenge, you've got Head to Head, Time Trial Challenge and Time Trial Single Race, not to mention the multiplayer options.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

With some friends to play against, the 3D version is a real blast

**LOW:**

Essentially a straight port of the original PlayStation game

**09/10**



# MIDTOWN MADNESS 2



**In our world of PC games,** *Midtown Madness* came dangerously close to the speed of light, darting over the horizon in an adrenaline tornado, stretching your nerves on a sado-masochistic speed-rack. It blurred where other races trundled. *Midtown Madness 2*, rather than being based in the single metropolis of Chicago, instead deals with two: San Francisco and London. Each city is lovingly detailed, with recognizable landmarks and layouts. San Francisco's long, sweeping slopes lead to frenzied runs across traffic, often resulting in half-mile leaps as you foolishly jump hill crests. This is definitely the best of the two settings.

London's drawbacks emerge from its natural layout. The city itself grew organically, with no planning, in an extremely small space. The streets are therefore more labyrinthine and narrower than anything you'll experience elsewhere. They are also lined with parked cars and other hazards.

The structure of the game is immaculate, and its sense of irreverence is still there, too: you can commandeer a double-decker bus and a fire-truck and even have a floral paint job done. But the major addition is in the two extended tutorial systems, offering more novelty-based challenges to complete.

Technically, there's no great change from the original. While the engine has been slightly enhanced, it doesn't really alter the play experience. More worrying are the occasional glitches, and the lack of a replay option. But *Midtown Madness 2* is still a great game.

■ Play chicken with a train at least once in your life.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Microsoft

**DEVELOPER:**

Angel Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Even more exciting than free-falling off a cliff

**LOW:**

Not enough improvement over the original game

**09/10**

# MIG ALLEY



**Rowan's flight sim serves** up a happy blend of the addictive, close combat of yesteryear with all the whining jet-powered oomph of today. Set during the 1950s' Korean War, this follow-up to *Flying Corps* uses an all-new graphics engine to drop you into a battle between the forces of democracy and communism. The result is a collection of single missions and campaigns that pits old aircraft (the prop-powered P-51 Mustang) against new (the jet-engined MiG-15), mixing dogfighting, ground-attack and recon missions in an irresistibly playable way.

Although there are 16 single missions and a quickstart Hotshot mode, the bulk of *MiG Alley* is devoted to five campaigns. It's here that the meticulously detailed game design really comes into its own. In addition to the obligatory briefing, you have plenty of control both over the missions and the unfolding war.

Like *Flying Corps*, *MiG Alley's* 3D-accelerated landscape is one of the most detailed brown splotches you could hope to fly over. It's a target-rich environment, too. The situation in the air is even better: four different aircraft are at your immediate disposal, while period planes put in cameo appearances around you. Each aircraft's control surfaces are well-animated, the cloud layer is beautifully translucent, and digitized radio chatter provides extra info as well as boosting the atmosphere. Part history lesson, part refreshingly designed plane game, *MiG Alley* combines the best elements from both the prop and jet age.

■ The most recent MiG, the 29 (codenamed Fulcrum), is the spearhead of many modern air forces.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Empire

### DEVELOPER:

Rowan

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An enticing mix of old and new – everything you could ask for from a flight sim

### LOW:

It's difficult to fault

09/10

# MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2



**The plain dirt tracks** and bare courses of the first *Motocross Madness* are now bedecked with scenery for *Motocross Madness 2* – trees, shrubs and all manner of buildings cover the landscape. And the original game's four modes – Baja, Supercross, Nationals and Stunt Quarry – are joined by Enduro. And then there's the all-new Pro Circuit, which enables you to build a career, winning cash to pay for repairs and medical bills, and playing through all the different race modes.

Aside from these additions, *Motocross Madness 2* is very similar to the original. Except, perhaps, for something best described as the *Midtown Madness* effect. On the surface, motocross may have little in common with cannonball runs through downtown Chicago, but Microsoft has subtly tweaked the face of *MM2* to reflect *Midtown's* glorious visage.

The deliberately simplified handling and acceleration, and the general spirit of *MM2*, encourage you to jump every bump and ridge around. But to stand a chance of winning the races, you need to learn the courses, skirting around the hills and taking key jumps at slower speeds to avoid impacts on landing.

*MM2* is much like its predecessor – a tough arcade racer, offering plenty of thrills and spills and a challenge, too. It's a lot of fun and exceptionally easy on the eye, but the fact that two of the four main race modes aren't that well-suited to the basic engine weakens the overall package.

■ Cut a smidgen off a corner or veer slightly off line during a jump and you may miss one of the invisible markers that delineate the course and be teleported back down the track.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microsoft

### DEVELOPER:

Rainbow Studios

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Thoroughly enjoyable arcade racer, full of jumps and surprisingly demanding circuits

### LOW:

A few minor flaws

08/10

PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



# MYTH



**Myth's handsome looks have** no equal in all the strategy realm. It conjures up villages and majestic 3D landscapes effortlessly, while retaining its swiftness. Nevertheless, a heavy price has been paid – for *Myth* has no soul.

In fact, it offers no gaming pleasure at all. It's meant to deliver savage, real-time medieval bloodbaths, but is ruined by narcoleptic combat. Using a mouse-driven interface distantly related to, but far more complicated than, *C&C's*, *Myth* encourages the use of terrain and preset formations such as phalanxes to gain the advantage over the foe. The idea is to win engagements decisively and preserve your men, not to fight to the last, exhausted, spleen-splattered goblin. That's all well and good, but when everyone's lined up and you shout "Go!" nothing particularly exciting ensues. Your men walk, not charge, into combat and then hack at each other with mechanical, repetitive animations. They're better off dead. It's only natural to expect the battles to live up to the scale of the beautiful 3D world, but they never stimulate the visceral thrills that even the tiny sprites of *Warcraft II* offer.

The purely tactical side of the game does become more apparent after some considerable time, but, often, unraveling the scenarios feels more like puzzle-solving. You'll command on average 30 men per mission, but the tasks are so finely balanced that if you lose 10 or 15 in one engagement, you're doomed in the next. The result: intensive reloading of saved games and frustration. Do not be fooled: *Myth* may look the comely maiden, but it won't make you live happily ever after.

■ Maximum zoom-out is the only view that works well. It's still not far enough, but it saves the engine having to draw too much.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Bungie

**DEVELOPER:**  
Bungie

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Looks fantastic

**LOW:**  
Shame about the gameplay

# 07/10

## MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER



**Myth II is another RTS** game, but this time it has dismissed diminutive graphics and resource management to concentrate on violence.

The game entertains with the goriest in medieval melee as huge sword-wielding knights and undead hordes hack each other to bits. As you watch any given bundle, dismembered arms and heads come flying out of the mess. And while the skirted-berserkers and chaos warriors bump 'n' grind in the middle, dwarfs lob in molotov cocktails, and archers riddle the meaty morass with arrows. You rarely wait long before the landscape is blotted with blood, which can be viewed as salaciously as you like with the fully rotatable 3D maps. And it's this proper 3D-ness which makes *Myth II* the game it is. Battles are far more believable when you can scout the terrain before deciding where you want to place your troops.

Tactics are critical because if you lose men, you can't just make some more. It's vital to master moves such as placing your archers on high ground where they can soften up the enemy before they hit your infantry. The central problem, though, is that it's difficult to manage your forces. There's so much to deal with that it's hard to get everyone into place without a total snafu, so you have to knock the game speed way down to cope, which turns the battles into stilted, pedantic affairs rather than the fluid, instinctive mass brawls they ought to be. And, sadly, as combat is the crux of the entire game, the rest of *Myth II* sags alarmingly when the fighting turns out to be an anti-climax.

■ Preset formations enable your custom-groups to form up into little regiments and adopt squares, phalanxes, arrowheads and so on. Some are best for attack and others defense.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Bungie

**DEVELOPER:**  
Bungie

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Glossy, grisly game of real-time butchery

**LOW:**  
It's difficult to manage your forces properly

# 08/10



# NERF ARENA



**Heavy weaponry, moodily-lit** dungeons and slaving monsters: they're all so last century. Instead, *Nerf Arena* features *A-Team*-style combat, where baddies get knocked out rather than killed, and they all shake hands at the end.

Although it's based on the multiplayer ladder template pioneered by *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*, *Nerf Arena* is atmospherically as far removed from every other first-person shoot-'em-up you could imagine. The vibrant palettes and garish designs that graced most of the 16-bit machines' platform games transform the levels into explosions of primary colors.

The single-player game is a series of enclosed battles against a selection of AI bots. Each of the eight arenas house three different game types: Pointblast is your straight deathmatch variant, while Ballblast is a *Speedball*-style game. Finally, Speedblast is a sprint race during which you must touch flag markers around the maps. Naturally, your opponents are all trying to achieve the same goal as you, so you have to make tactical decisions, which keeps things interesting. Yet it's the superb scoring system that really makes *Nerf Arena* exciting: the distance and skill with which you defeat your foe all have a bearing on the points you score.

It's not a complete success: the weapons are a mixed bag and the AI of your opponents is flawed, but *Nerf Arena* is targeted at a young audience and is an enjoyable introduction to first-person shooting.

■ During gameplay, press ~ then enter: "open [level name]" for level select; "god" for god mode; "allammo" for maximum ammo.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Atari

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A great multiplayer first-person shoot-'em-up that will appeal to young and old alike

### LOW:

Disappointing weaponry lets the game down

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA

### DEVELOPER:

EA

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fast, furious, frenetic and fully licensed fun

### LOW:

The speed of the game is a double-edged sword

# 09/10

# NHL 2001



**While ice-hockey is an** entertaining spectator sport, the passivity of watching it can't compare to the crunching fun of participation, and the latest installment in EA's long-running series raises the standard set by its predecessor to become the new benchmark for ice-hockey sims. The superb animations, sublime sound effects, and beautifully conveyed impression of searing speed throw you bodily into the thick of the action – you can even import your own face into the game.

As usual, the default view is an "above the ice" position, enhancing the sense of involvement, but making shooting tricky when playing down the screen. And amid the frantic combat it'd be easy to lose track of the puck, but EA has highlighted it with a large gray circle. The slightly improved control system is also just sufficiently intuitive to leave you free to get on with more important tasks. Like crunching bones. The improved physics add to the realism, and the all-American commentary adds authenticity.

Any flaws? Well, the speed is a double-edged sword, as the breathless end-to-end action limits tactical opportunities, and the opposition AI is still insufficient to prevent an easy win. But the wealth of available options ensures that ice-hockey devotees are well-served. The option to fight for Stanley Cup supremacy over the Internet is a welcome addition that not only adds longevity, but is bound to spark fierce competition.

■ String a few big plays together, and the Momentum Engine pendulum swings your way.



# NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

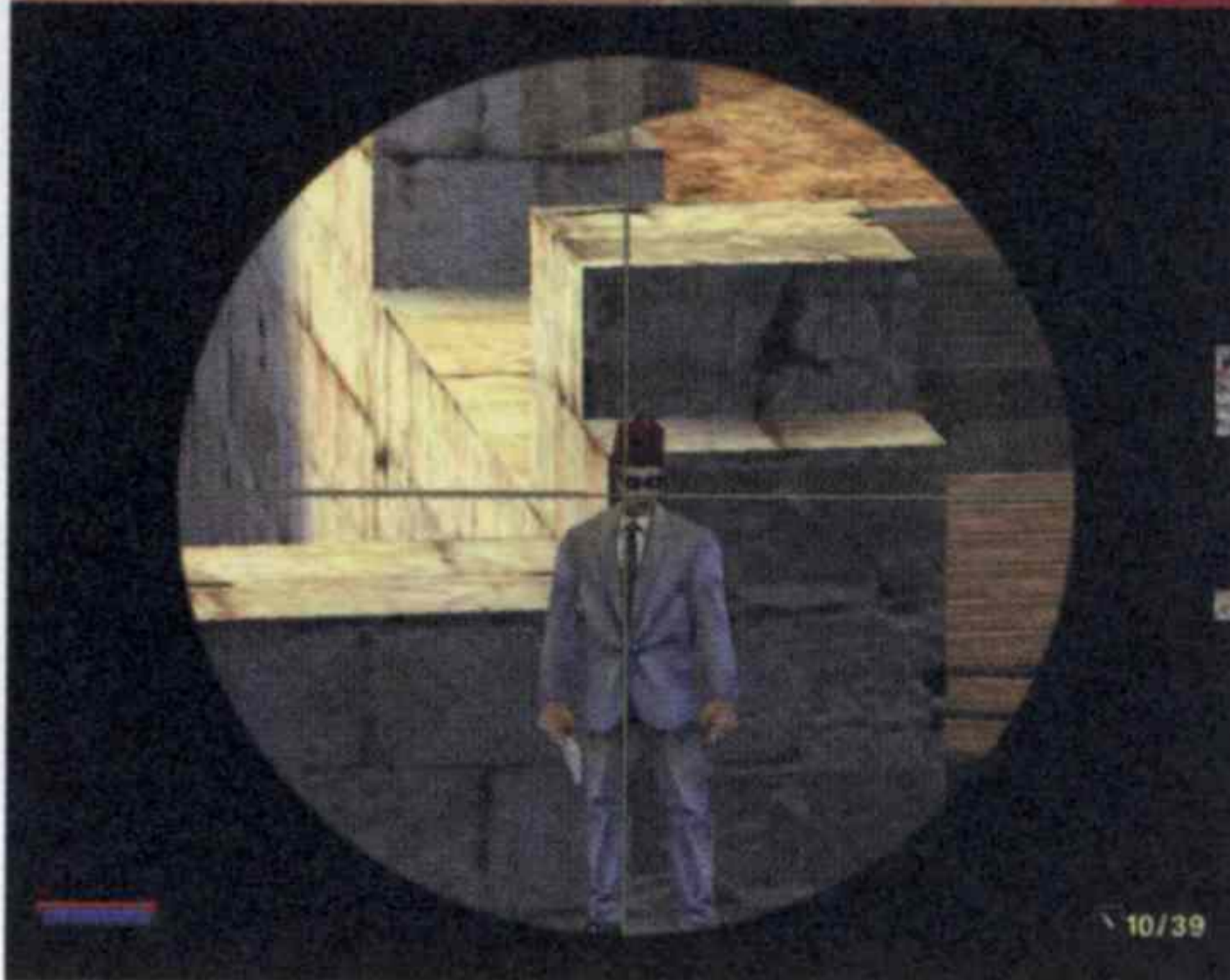


**It's beautiful to see** magic breathed into a tired genre, and the first-person shoot-'em-up has rarely been so bold. Though *No One Lives Forever* has been likened to *Austin Powers* for its comic revision of the 1960s, it plays more like *The Avengers*, never really descending into slapstick and just as intent on drawing you into a thrilling plot as sustaining a grin with its sharp and modern dialogue. And because there is a large, well-balanced element of stealth, said repartee is injected right into the central system rather than just administered during the cut-scenes.

This is not to give the impression that there are no cut-scenes. While the takes are Littech 2.5 engine showpieces of in-game facial animation, perfect lip synch and exquisitely convincing gesture, *NOLF's* only annoying flaw is their length; it's possible to sit through scene combinations that last over 10 minutes apiece.

If in-game comic dialogue is the firm hand on one shoulder, then animation rests with equal weight upon the other, maintaining a very persuasive involvement that makes it almost impossible to rise from your chair; the game comprises 15 diverse missions, most of which are split into five large and demanding levels. Animation, in combination with exemplary textures, lends these levels an unprecedented realism that is so far advanced it's almost like seeing 3D models for the first time again.

Although character models are stylized, they fidget, walk, dance and die with such natural fluidity that it's only jaw-dropping on critical inspection – otherwise it's just absolutely real. Animation is split generally into two camps: the everyday routines earth the game in a familiar



universe, while the action routines add a sparking live wire.

*NOLF's* final, secret ingredients are the variety in its diverse environments, and also the constantly shifting ground of its direction. Far from the standard puzzle and blasting fare, much of the game is a delicate mix of assassination and stealthy avoidance of security alarms, cameras and dogs. This *Thief*-inspired play recurs: it's sometimes essential to mission success and sometimes optional.

Additionally there are a constantly evolving host of sub-games, such as *Silent Scope*-style sniper action from an effectively static position to arcade-style big boss battles in enclosed arenas. This variation of play includes RPG-esque investigation, platform elements and the opportunity to ride skidoos. Training for new gadgetry is via inter-mission snippets, which works better than a chunky introduction. Finally, there is inventive multiplayer team action, with missions that require you to infiltrate enemy bases and photograph secret documents.

Other than those occasionally tiresome cut-scenes, it's hard to fault *No One Lives Forever*.

■ Press T and enter the following codes: "mpimyourfather" for god mode, "mpwegot-deathstar" for infinite ammunition, "mpkingoftehmonstars" for all weapons and full ammunition.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Fox Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Monolith Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

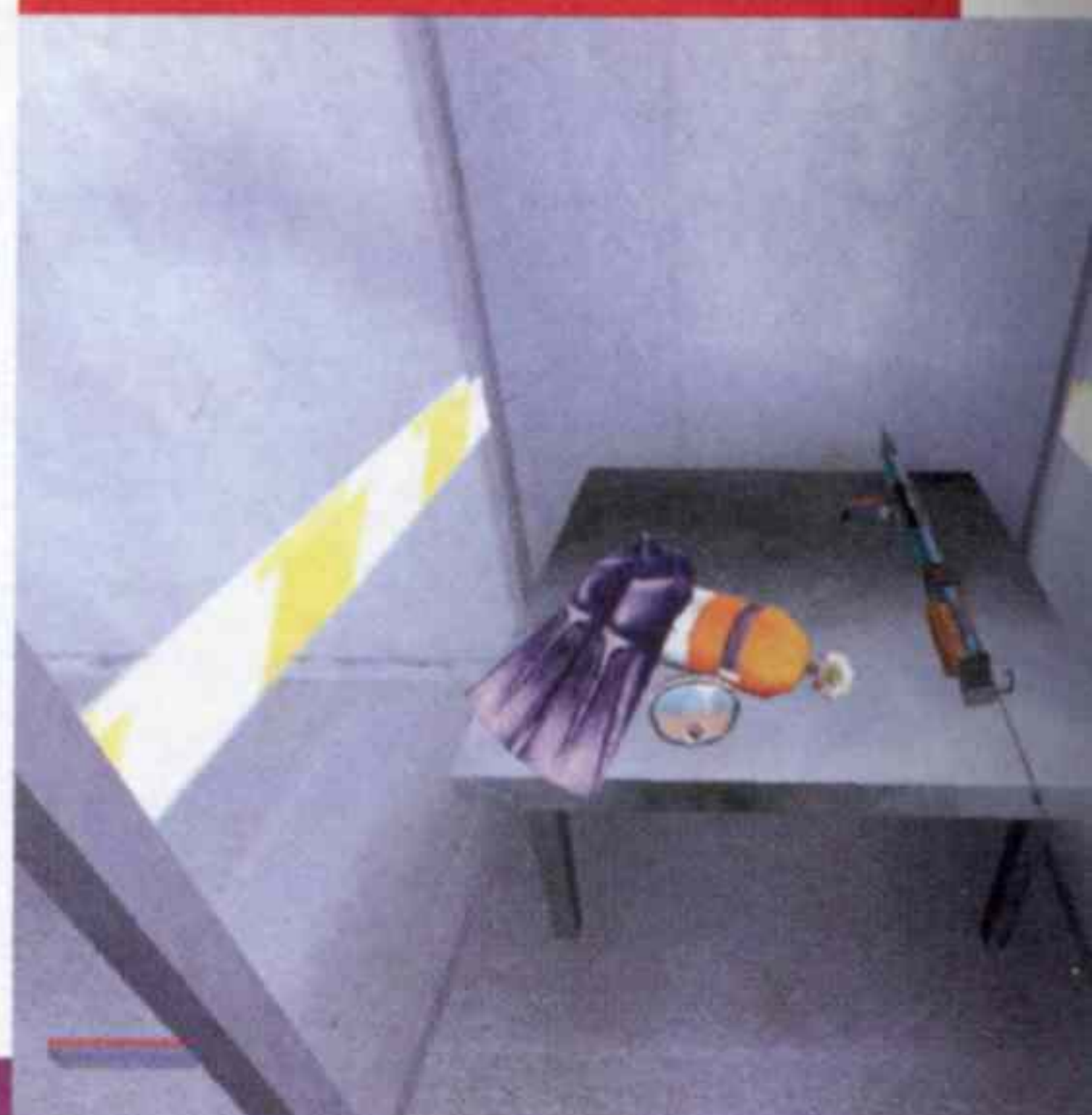
**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A re-definition of the first person shoot-'em-up

**LOW:**  
Tiresomely elongated cut-scenes

# 09/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GodGames

### DEVELOPER:

Terminal Reality

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

It has both guns and monsters

### LOW:

As shallow as the impromptu grave

# 06/10

# NOCTURNE



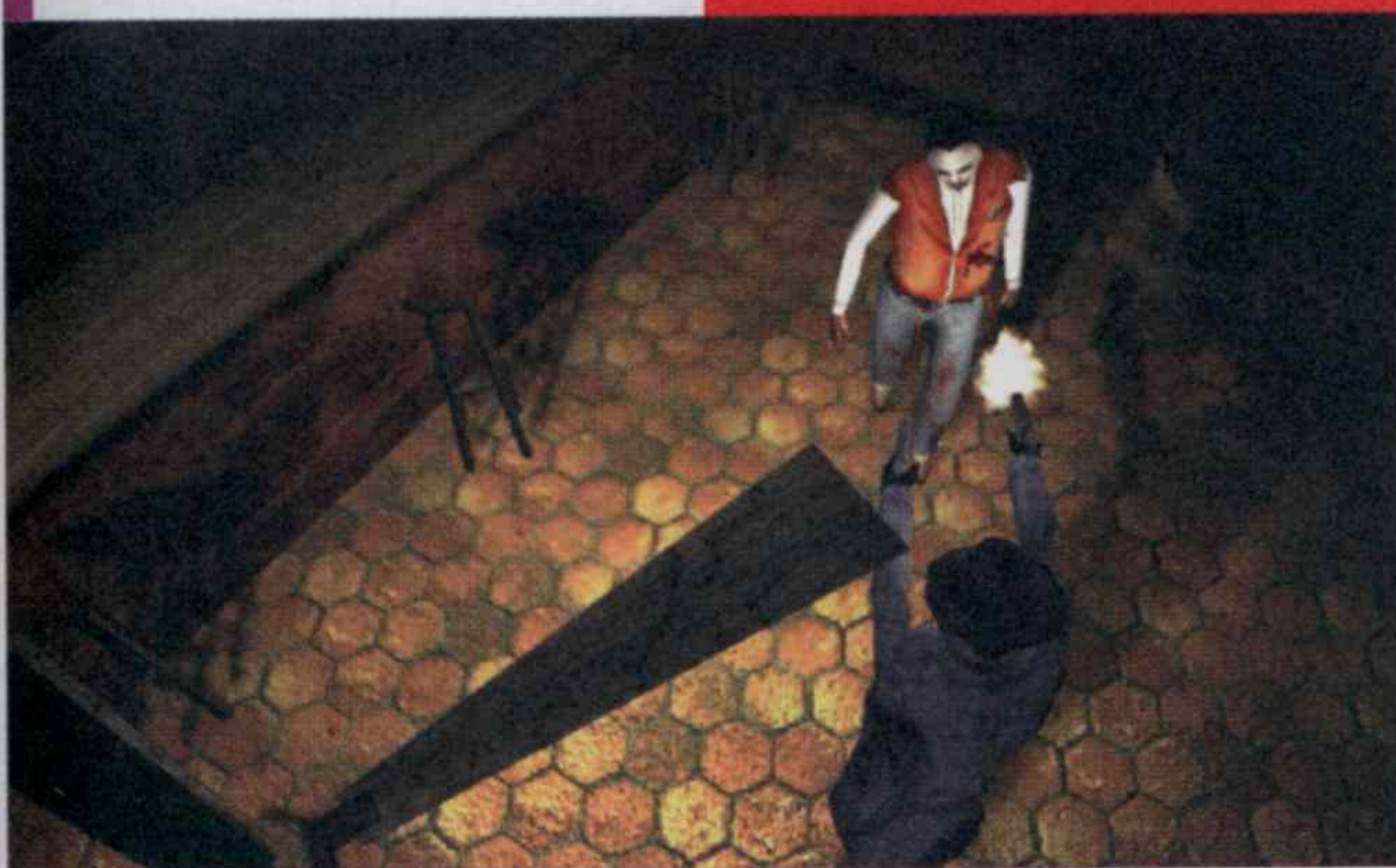
**Guns and monsters: is** any gaming combination more attractive? And that is the premise of *Nocturne*. The game adopts the third-person format of fixed camera views, sudden shocks and occasional interjections of narrative in its attempt to fit snugly into the horror genre. It also boasts a processor-strangling ambition to render everything – characters, environments and cut-scenes – through the sheer force of its high-spec 3D engine gobbley gook.

It's the stylish storyline that gives *Nocturne* all the makings of a superb comic-book adventure. Set in an alternative 1930s, the plot follows a paranormal investigation unit called Spookhouse and the exploits of its monster-hunting government agents. Think tommy-gun versus undead and you're practically there.

But the more you play, the more this lets you down. It doesn't matter how many effects you put into the engine, if the rough-hewn animations portray the human protagonists stomping around like Gumby and friends, or breaking into a dance when they side-step, then any illusion of realism is shattered beyond repair. It's not even scary, because you can quick-save anywhere then run and find out without consequence what is lurking in the next room, before reloading and going in for real.

Stick with it and some of the later levels deliver a pleasing portion of zombie mayhem – after all, the game still has guns and monsters granting a measure of compulsion, despite its faults.

■ The manual recommends that you switch off all other light sources in the room to make out all the details on-screen.



# NORTH VS. SOUTH



**The single biggest thing** going for Interactive Magic's *Great Battles* series was that it took place in an era that few other wargames covered – the series consisted of the *Great Battles of Hannibal*, *Caesar* and *Alexander*. The games improved with each release and developer Erudite has now revamped the engine to cover the American Civil War, where the competition is much stiffer.

Essentially, *North vs. South* is similar to previous offerings, but some alterations have been made to accommodate the different style of warfare. Artillery and musket fire have been incorporated, in addition to the lethal melee encounters, which always result in at least one side routing. The cavalry is also well implemented, catering for the ability to fight and move while mounted, or to dismount and fight dragoon-style. At the heart of the system the emphasis is on leadership and unit morale. Initiative-based "impulses" determine which side gets to issue orders, rather than the strict "I go, you go" orthodoxy of most hex-based wargames. A chain-of-command system enables you to pass orders down from Army commanders, to Division level and so on. It works well and provides a fluid feel to the engagements.

The only major flaw in *North vs. South's* armory is the computer's inability to issue orders effectively. Consequently, if you concentrate your command on one area of the field, you can usually outflank your opponent and roll up the entire force, while the enemy stoutly refuses to respond appropriately. Fortunately, there are plenty of multiplayer options, which is where many historical wargamers find a challenge these days. A scenario editor is also included to boost the replay level.

■ Cavalry charges were few and far between in the Civil War, but they are effective here.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interactive Magic

### DEVELOPER:

Erudite Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Attractive and sometimes innovative addition to an overcrowded genre

### LOW:

Dodgy scale and the trees tend to get in your way

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GodGames

### DEVELOPER:

Bungie

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

# ONI



**This is ligament-stretching** nose-shattering close combat with the odd spray of bullets to add that metallic texture to the mix. It's not the most brutal of games: *Oni* is dark manga, but not sick, gore-heavy anime. The voices are American, the story is unexceptional and the game a *Tomb Raider*-esque linear adventure injected with essence of *Tekken*.

You play big-eyed cartoon babe Konoko. She's been augmented through futuristic super-science to give her industrial strength fighting abilities. It may masquerade as an adventure, but *Oni* has the heart and soul of a beat-'em-up. And it works. It's completely intuitive, and although button bashing can secure success in clearing the first few levels, fighting skillfully and cleverly is mandatory if you're going to survive beyond the second reel. You can only carry one gun at a time and ammo is severely limited so you have to be careful how you apply them. The multiple-foe combat sequences are the best part of *Oni*, and while you begin to

think they might get repetitive, the stiff learning curve keeps you plugging away to perfect your tactics. Combat depends on four movement keys: two mouse buttons, jump-duck and mouse-look. This doesn't enable you to perform the fighting combos of multi-button console games, but is more than adequate.

There are a few flaws. The clipping isn't all it could be, and the friendly AI isn't too exciting either. *Oni* is far from being a great game, but it is the best beat-'em-up on the PC.

■ The simple game engine is quite demanding of machines and it seems quite memory hungry.

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A great mix of retro styling and innovation brings kung-fu and guns to the PC

### LOW:

Sloppy clipping and poor friendly AI

# 09/10



## OUTCAST

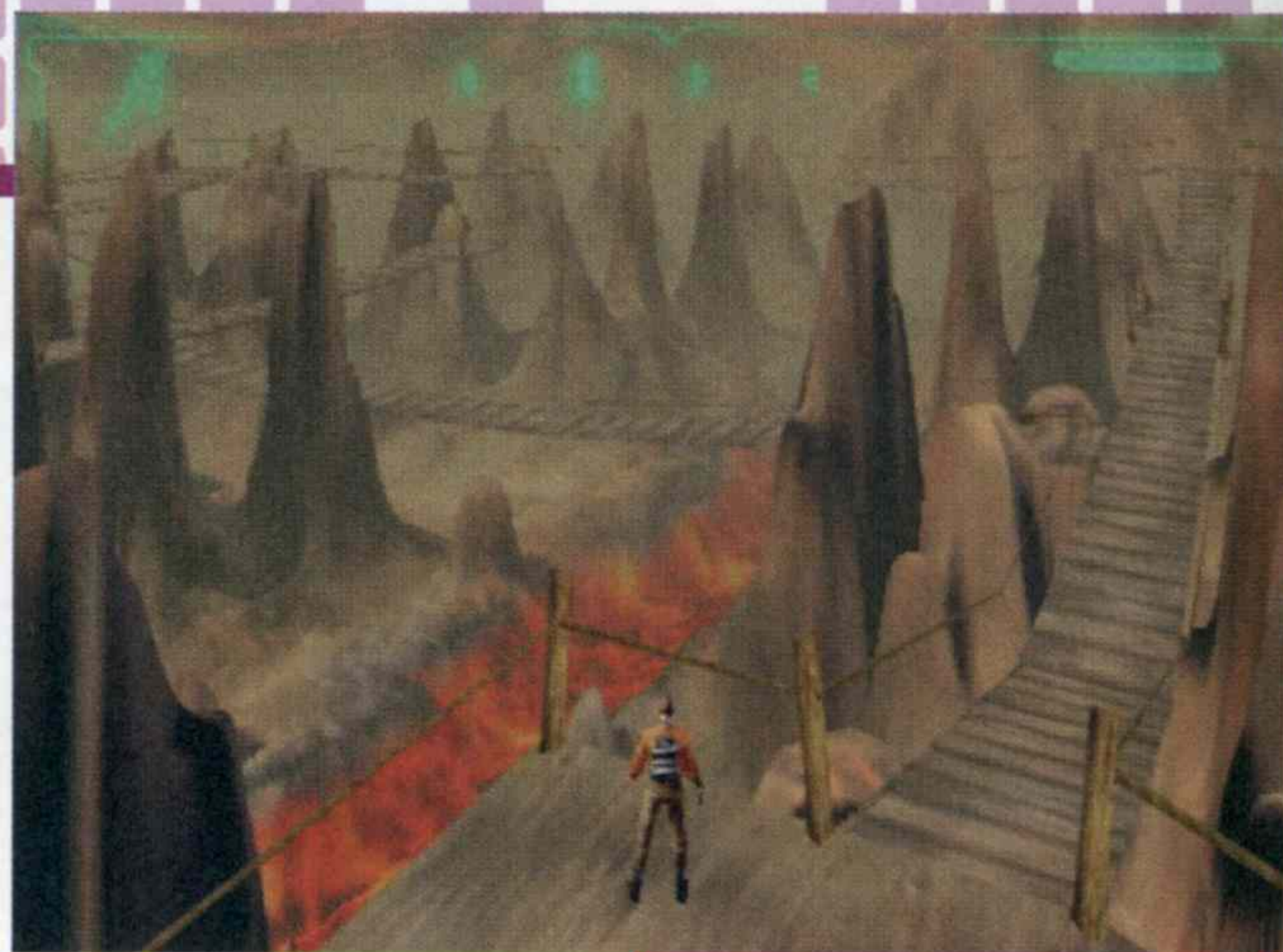


**Outcast's developer clearly hoped** to get the right balance between classy story, looks and hardcore adventure. About 20 hours in, a gorgeous and credible world begins to slot into place, but before that it can be frustrating. These initial difficulties are compounded by the unusual look and feel of the game. *Outcast* uses voxels to generate its world and the result is breathtaking. The undulating terrain is packed with features to explore. From the initial snow-covered quaint cottages to the towns of Talanzaar and the glorious pools of Shamazaar, the world has a totally organic feel. On the downside are the blocky sections where the camera gets too close to the scenery or your character. The frame rate also suffers, trundling along at a leisurely pace.

At its heart is a non-linear, free-roaming adventure. You play Cutter Slade, a sarcastic Lara Croft, who has been sent through an interdimensional gateway in a quest to retrieve a bunch of stranded scientists. When you arrive, it is apparent that something has gone wrong and you are living a double life as a long-prophesied hero who has come to liberate Adelpha from its oppressive dictator. Central to your progress is your ability to travel freely around the map. Each of the maps is large, requiring a good few minutes to run from one end to the other, particularly given that there are guards to be avoided. However, the richness of the story results in much conversation, told by way of beautifully realized in-game cut-scenes. The Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra is responsible for the stirring score, and the sounds complement the lovely looks.

For some, *Outcast* will be a beautiful experience. For others, it will be the stuff of nightmares.

■ The docile Twon Ha beasts are capable of carrying you over large distances, as well as being able to jump great distances.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Appeal

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An adventure game on an epic scale. Not perfect, but clearly an exciting step forward

### LOW:

Lovers of fast-paced stories and easy action stay away

# 09/10

# PAC-MAN: ADVENTURES IN TIME



**Why touch a concept** that was registered and reared a computing light year ago? We don't seek fun and we don't need the past: we want the feeling that we're pioneers at the brink of electronic entertainment.

But obsessing over a particular type of game isn't any reason to dismiss every other category out of hand. Genocide is so prevalent on the PC it's embarrassing, and that's part of the reason why the system's in danger of self-destructing under a motherlode of big-budget derivative FPS and RTS titles. Despite its brilliance, *Deus Ex* isn't all there is. Look further, look on!

Look at *Adventures in Time*. It's *Pac-Man*, in 3D. Okay, it isn't a substitute for the involvement *Oni* or *Hostile Waters* offers – but use it to fill those five awkward minutes before you go out for the evening, and it's great. Not perfect, though: the isometric mode, where each of the cute 3D mazescapes are seen at their best, handicaps you so much that most of the time you'll play the game in traditional top-down mode.

There are innovations here that make the game diverting, but it's the ancient game dynamic that makes *Pac-Man* fun. Speed through a maze. Avoid ghosts. Eat pills. Try not to die. You can analogize the minimalist structure as far as you want. It's a collection of pixels, sprayed from a scattergun cathode ray direct into your consciousness. It's *Pac-Man*, it's throwaway and it's magic.

■ Hit [Esc] and type: IAINSCARED for god Mode; SHOWMETHEMAZES for all levels.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Creative Asylum

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A faithful, polished extension of the original. Old doesn't necessarily mean redundant

### LOW:

Poor isometric mode

# 08/10

# POPULOUS



**Populous was one of** the original god strategy games on the PC and, as such, was immensely popular in its time. The story will be very familiar to you by now: you play a deity and you have your followers. The more followers you have in your entourage the more powerful you become. However, you are not alone and there are other gods with their own band of followers who are hell-bent on getting you out of their way. You have to destroy them to become more powerful. As a god you obviously have the power of nature on your side, so earthquakes, floods and volcanoes are your weapons rather than guns or lasers. And there are 500 worlds in which to do battle.

But while all this fighting is going on, you have to remember to keep your followers happy, too, because the happier they are, the more they breed and the more followers you get. The more followers you get, the more powerful you are – you get the idea.

As with many games of this genre, and because it was a winning formula when it was originally released, *Populous* has been superseded by sequels which have taken the guts of the game and improved on them on every level. The current *Populous* incarnation is the erroneously named *Populous: The Beginning*, which you can play on-line. Register at [www.populous.net](http://www.populous.net). Here you will find a trailer, screenshots, frequently asked questions, the rules of playing and patches to download before you begin.

■ Type "killuspal" at the title screen and you will be taken to level 999.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

1989

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A winning formula

### LOW:

Dated and left behind by its sequels

# 07/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



# POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING



**Populous has been transformed** into a fully fledged 3D world replete with trees, lapping water, scudding skies and rolling hills. No longer are you hovering above the Earth, viewing a blocky Lego landscape via a fixed isometric view; you're right at the heart of the action. But the essence of *Populous* remains unchanged. Once again you're in charge of hundreds of little braves. Give them homes and they'll give you mana via their adoration, which in turn charges up the spells you need to see off the competing tribes and rule each of the game's 25 worlds. This being a prequel, though, you're not yet a fully fledged god, just a feisty shaman lady. Looking after the shaman is your top priority; she's the only one who can cast spells, and should she die without any followers around to reincarnate her through prayer, it's game over.

Building a decent attack/defense force is vital if you're to defeat the rival tribes. But you're nothing without your spells, another *Populous* staple. There are 22 in all, many of them familiar from previous games. Of course, spells, like everything else, have to be earned.

Those, then, are the basics; but there are plenty of surprises and secrets to be gouged out. Fortunately, the game borrows tricks from the RTS genre to make organizing and controlling your Warriors less boring.

*Populous: The Beginning* plays quite differently than its predecessors, yet retains the essential features and feel of the god game genre. It has been tweaked and refined to remove some of the more tiresome aspects of the original, while adding a hint of RTS-style shenanigans.

■ The 3D globe is spherical, so as you scroll around the landscape, everything curves away over the horizon.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Bullfrog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
What could have been a lazy cash-in has turned out to be top of the *Populous* games

**LOW:**  
Tiny sprites and slow-down during hectic battles

# 09/10

# PROJECT IGI



**If Bond had a** long-lost half-brother, it's David Llewelyn Jones, the one-man army protagonist of *Project IGI*. Unfortunately for Jones, his assignment is set out in a beautiful panoramic interpretation of the Siberian wastes. There's not a bar lounge in sight, so no martinis for this secret agent.

Jones is a freelance ex-SAS trooper and he's tough. He needs to be because he's working for a US special agency and he's got to extract an Estonian black-market weapons smuggler with all haste. Standing in his way are an array of militant Russian radicals with access to a Cold War's worth of hardware. There's room for some Rambo antics, but stealth is the name of this game – there's no melding into shadows, and very little docile AI.

The missions range in size but they are all riddled with tension, mainly because there's no save option in the game. By completing a level, you free up the next mission and can play any in the list. However, you can't save in-game, which makes you cautious, so while *Project IGI* is not overwhelmingly difficult, there is enough of a risk of death to makes your hackles rise. There's a certain element of freedom, but the game is essentially linear. Each level is a sprawling 20km square, which enables you to peer off into the not-so-hazy distance.

There are a few problems: sometimes *Project IGI* can feel too repetitive; many of the levels are the same, as are the buildings. There's no multiplayer option either, which means you might go back to *IGI* once, but there will always be something else clamoring for your attention.

■ *Project IGI's* map is a real-time space-based spy satellite that you can use to check out anything you want and take a closer look at in the terrain around you.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**  
Innerloop

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The pinnacle of stealthy real-world shoot-'em-ups

**LOW:**  
No multiplayer option means limited longevity

# 09/10

# QUAKE



**The worst thing you** could do with *Quake* would be to play it through on Easy because you'll spoil all the surprises for when you start playing it properly. Surprises like, for example, when you unlock a door and, instead of grinding slowly aside like all the others, it simply disappears, and a load of monsters jump in your face, go "Raaaarrgh!" and start killing you.

Keep *Quake* set firmly to Normal, Hard or Nightmare, though, and it's a stunning game.

It's in 3D, too. There are cathedral-like arenas criss-crossed with balconies, moats with drawbridges; dungeons beneath gratings in the floor, networks of underwater tunnels, and spiral staircases. If you see some monsters taking pot-shots at you from a window high in the wall above, you can swing the view up, shoulder your grenade launcher and eradicate them. And if you're passing a hole in the floor, hear grunting below and look down to see a load of baddies, you can toss down a grenade and put a stop to them. The controls are quite complicated, but they're also completely customizable.

*Quake* is a bit like *Doom*, only with fewer monsters, and it's all over in about half an hour. Generally it's a case once again of running around shooting things, but at no time do you feel you're facing overwhelming odds, and *Quake* lacks pace as a result, always feeling as if it's building up to something, but never quite getting there. However, the monsters you do encounter are absolutely superb.

On its release, playing *Quake* over a network was the most fun that it was possible to have on a PC.

■ *Quake's* split up into four episodes of seven or eight levels each. You can tackle them in any order, but you need to complete all four in order to take on the final, evil level.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
GT

**DEVELOPER:**  
Id Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Superb entertainment, especially on a network

### LOW:

Miserable plot and the fact you can save your position at any time in the game

# 10/10

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Id Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Great character AI and excellent coherence and depth to the gameplay

### LOW:

You need a high-spec machine to get the most out of it

# 09/10

# QUAKE II



**As one of thousands** of Marines sent to combat the evil Stroggos on the alien planet from which they have been waging a fierce battle with Earth, you are the only one to get there alive, and must reduce the entire Stroggo complex to a shambles. Id veterans might imagine that it would be necessary to complete a series of linear stages, blazing a trail of dead Stroggos, until some sort of inner sanctum is reached, but *Quake II* is a lot less straightforward than the original game and not at all linear. It's split into units, with levels arranged around hubs rather than in a chain. Each unit has an overall objective, which typically involves much to-ing and fro-ing between levels, as you perform different tasks in fulfilling that objective. This instantly throws up a new technique: the need to frequently hit F1 to find out what the overall unit objectives and your next tasks are.


There are 10 units in all and a number of boss levels. Each unit is more convoluted than any one of *Quake's* parallel, unrelated game paths, but this hasn't diminished the full-on visceral thrill. Thanks to a hugely uprated degree of cunning among the monsters, and some intelligent rethinking of how you must employ your weaponry, it's more intense than ever before.

*Quake II* has been hailed as one of the best PC games ever. It certainly moved the whole *Doom*-style genre forward, skipping at least one entire generation in the process.

■ Bring up the console, press ~ and enter these codes: GIVE HEALTH - to get 100 health, GIVE WEAPONS - to get all weapons, GIVE AMMO - to get maximum ammo.



# QUAKE III ARENA

 **Quake III Arena** is not *Quake*. It's not *Quake II* either, because everything in *Arena* is different than what came before it. The engine technology takes several more leaps forward and renders curved surfaces brilliantly. Giant, twisting columns and mammoth lengths of cable intertwine around each other, while fleshy, intestinal tubes travel the length and breadth of some levels, often running underground only to reappear, gruesomely, later on through the ceiling of a linked section.

Even without the curves the game looks heavenly. Futuristic pulsing strip lights, glowing banks of circuits and vast electronically charged generators blend seamlessly with medieval arches, stained glass windows and individually carved stonework. Gore, too, returns in abundance: entrails fly and blood fountains.

Of paramount importance, though, is the gameplay. Combat *Arena*-style is fast, furious, finely balanced and unashamedly arcade in style. There's little time to think, much less react. This is gaming at its most instinctive. *Arena* has stripped the deathmatch concept down to its bare essentials: a manageable selection of weapons, divertingly attractive levels, and a huge number of models and skins to choose from.

Jumping, crouching, swimming and the even more fundamental movements such as turning and running, feel perfect. Of course, the physics aren't realistic, but they do feel right.

*Quake III Arena* is split into seven Tiers, each containing three standard maps, and one Tourney, or Boss level. In single-player mode, you have to complete any four maps to unlock the next. Each level has its own set frag level and bot opponents, with a new set of combatants introduced for each Tier. The maps are compact and are both breathtakingly beautiful and simple to negotiate.

Almost every element that reduced the speed of

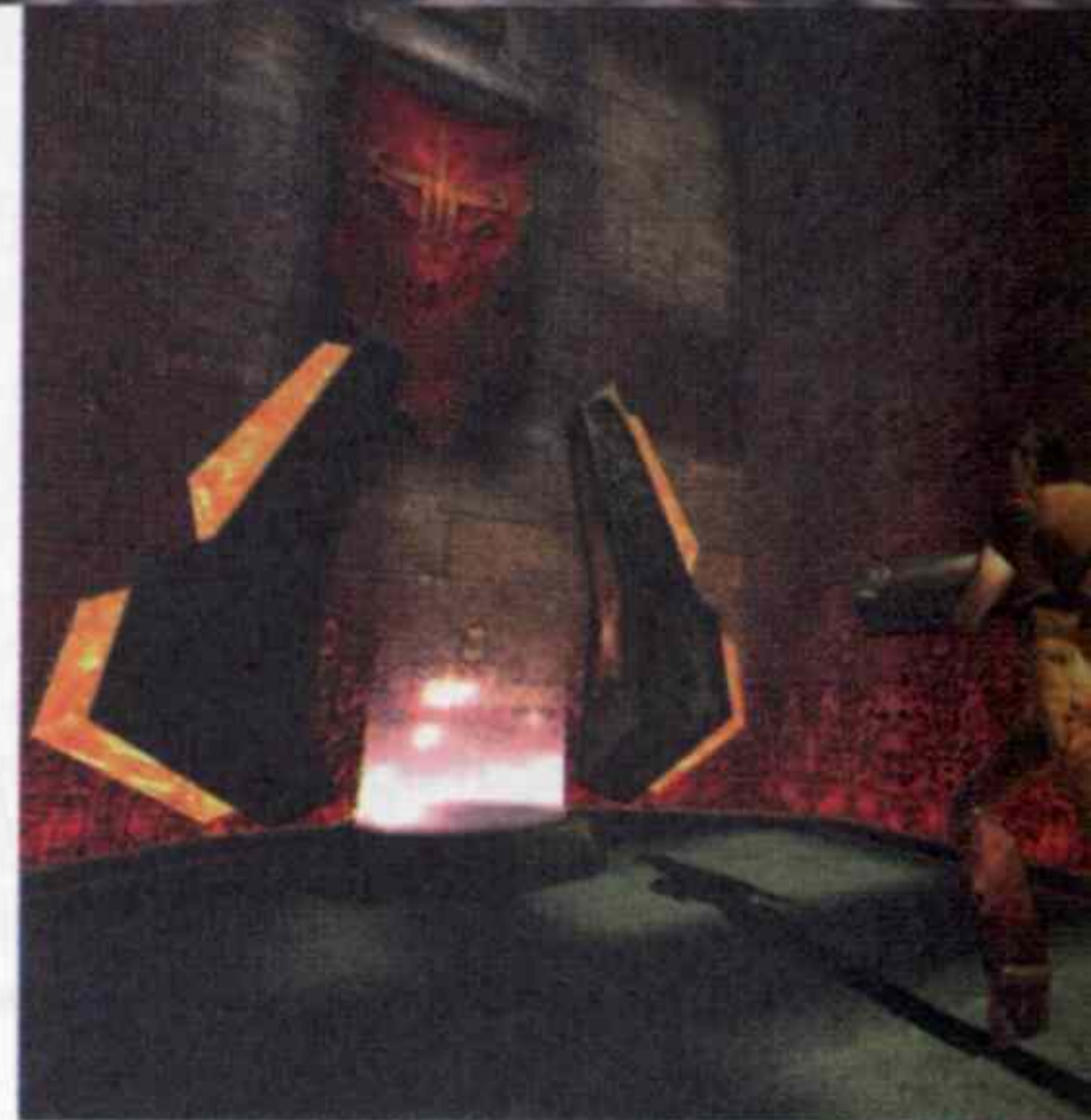


combat in the previous games has gone, and *Arena* is now the fastest multiplayer game the PC has ever witnessed.

The character models and skins are exemplary: you have 88 different skins to choose from and the movement of the models is still the most impressive in any 3D shoot-'em-up. The bot AI is impressive, too, and each has a personality of its own. The best showcase for the AI is in Capture the Flag mode, (or indeed any of the other flavors of teamplay), where bots can be used as team members that respond to your typed commands. The Team Deathmatch mode enables you to indulge in flag-free team deathmatches.

There's no doubt that to get the best out of *Arena* you have to play over the Internet or a LAN, but there's still enough challenge here for the modem-less to enjoy it as a single-player experience, too.

■ For patches, upgrades and FAQs visit [www.quake3arena.com](http://www.quake3arena.com).



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Activision

**DEVELOPER:**  
Id Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A masterpiece of programming and design. In 2000 this was the best multiplayer game ever made

**LOW:**  
Peerless

# 10/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Id Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You almost have to buy this to complete *Quake III*. It's a worthy expansion

### LOW:

Sadly imperfect

# 08/10



# QUAKE III: TEAM ARENA



**There are two things** to consider when looking at modifications of games. First, they are re-workings of an original game's format. Second, because they are free and self contained, all you have to do is download them. Then Id comes along with a new mod that you have to pay for. As an official release, you get another huge set of tools and toys, both in terms of weapons and power-ups, and the clever engine-tricks and interface-tweaks that mod builders can use to create spectacular amateur games. But this kills a lot of the user-made maps, models and mods that we could use with the first *Quake III* release.

*Team Arena* is a Capture the Flag mod and there are eight new team levels and three vast Terrain maps. There are also four new Tournament maps. But there's no expansion of the deathmatch experience, no Assault and no Domination. You can play any of the game modes on any of the 12 new maps. But you can also play them on any of the CTF maps doing the rounds.

Id has worked hard to enable the *Quake III* technology to render outdoor scenarios, the largest of which is outrageously huge – *Team Arena* will be demanding both on the *Quake* servers and on your machine. The minimum spec has increased substantially from *Quake III* with large frame rate losses across the board. The whole dynamic of the game has been pumped into a far more frenetic furor than ever. Ultimately, this is a polished multiplayer add-on.

■ *Team Arena* enables you to customize your team role on the fly, by picking up permanent power-ups.

# RAILROAD TYCOON II



**Railroad Tycoon II** has been updated on every level apart from the nuts and bolts of the game itself. Six levels of zoom, attractive smoke and various architectural styles, all with intricate detail, mark a significant progression from the original's plain 2D graphics.

You are a chairman of a company whose goal is to rise from humble beginnings to create a country-spanning railway network (while battling rivals with the same aim). To achieve this you have to work with relatively few rules: you can build stations and tracks anywhere, but trains move faster on the flat and the faster the trains move, the more profit they make. They make even more profit when they match supply with demand at pairs of stations, and the further apart the pairs of stations are, the more money comes rolling in. The five tutorial missions ease you into what is an extremely complicated game, then it's on to the campaign proper.

As with the original, part of the game's charm is the conflict of interest that exists between you as a fat-cat chairman and your company's wider priorities. Your monies are accrued partly from your measly annual wage, but more significantly from the shares you own and the dividends they pay. But it's a pity there's nothing to spend your money on apart from more shares. PopTop has chosen not to include the crucial tunnels from the original which makes some maps extremely difficult, but now your tracks can cross your competitors' tracks briefly, which is a welcome addition.

Ultimately, *Railroad Tycoon II* is tense, rewarding and varied enough to play again and again.

■ It's possible to win simply by shuttling passengers and mail round the map at lightning speeds.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GodGames

### DEVELOPER:

PopTop

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A highly enjoyable old-skool strategy game. With trains

### LOW:

Ultimately repetitive

# 09/10

# RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR



**Rainbow Six** popularized the soldier sim. It mixed realistic settings, careful planning stages and butch men in khaki pants. It even had the flaws that seem to permeate soldier-sims, most notably hilarious AI errors. And here comes the sequel. Almost all these problems have been cured, and it's a better game than the original. But now *Rogue Spear* is the second-best soldier-sim of all time, because *Hidden & Dangerous* has moved the genre's goalposts much further.

*Rogue Spear* tells the tale of an elite multi-national counter-terrorist group and their entertaining scrapes with terrorists. Each of its 19 missions is divided into two separate stages: planning and action. There's been a swathe of additions, too. The movement modes have been improved and teams can be ordered to supply different sorts of covering fire. Red Storm has also solved the problem of not being exactly sure of a level's layout – you can now skip to a 3D map. But the graphics engine has barely changed since the original game. Conversely, the animation is superb.

The traditional failing of the soldier-sim has been artificial intelligence. But *Rogue Spear* gets this just about right. The three difficulty modes give you plenty of room to experiment with increasingly esoteric plans, and there are kicks aplenty to be had replaying the same level by taking a different route. *Rogue Spear* also opens up extra tasks in an area when you've completed a mission.

However, for all its accuracy, for all its book-keeping and for all its options, it's like playing inside *The Textbook of Modern Sieges*. Ultimately, *Rogue Spear* is a sequel in a world that's moved on.

■ *Rogue Spear's* action-replay system is enthralling. You can swap between your soldiers, or switch to a cinematic view of your unfolding plan.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Red Storm

**DEVELOPER:**  
Red Storm

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1999

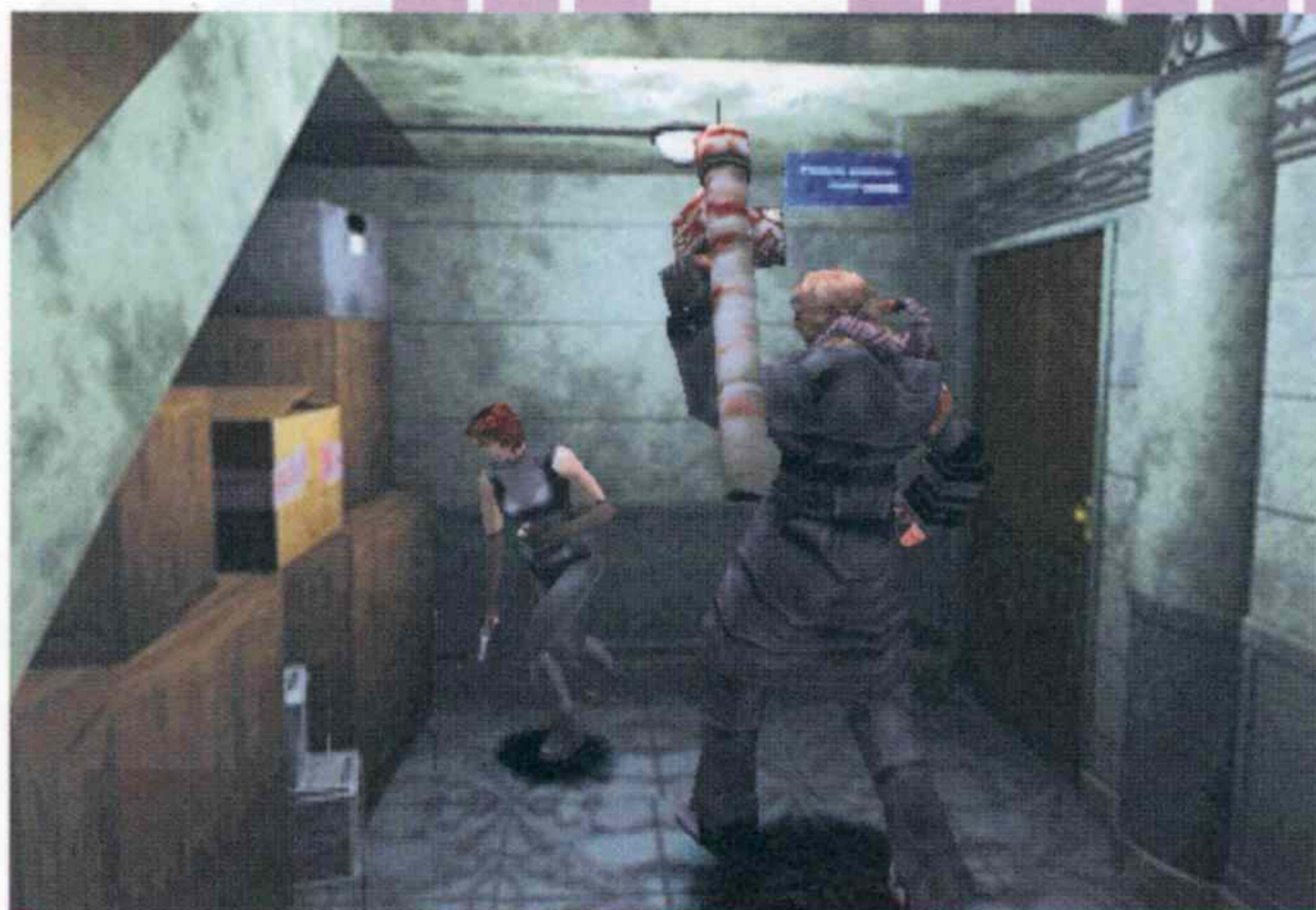
**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The second-best soldier sim in the world

**LOW:**  
Lacks atmosphere and hasn't moved on enough

# 08/10



# RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS



**It's hard to review** *Resident Evil* games, mainly because they're riddled with shortcomings – yet you tend to overlook the bad bits because you enjoy being scared out of your wits. *Resident Evil 3* is no different. The control system is still slow and prone to getting you killed. And although the backgrounds are fantastically detailed, the illusion is once again spoiled thanks to the limited interaction; you are restricted to collecting invisible ammunition that can be found simply by randomly searching an area and opening doors. And while it looks great on a TV, it's less convincing on a monitor, where the polygonal characters seem to exist separately from their surroundings. Not to mention the fact that the drive-me-to-psychosis door opening sequence is back again, not to mention the disorienting switch between camera angles when you move to a new area.

There are some improvements. You can now dodge and also spin around 180 degrees. But rather than ideas which may have been implemented for the good of the series, these appear to have been introduced solely to deal with Nemesis, a creature that single-handedly makes this game the most nerve-shredding *Resident Evil* yet.

It's terrifying, as you're not sure when and where he'll attack next, and he's invulnerable to your attacks, anyway. The introduction of Nemesis also gives rise to another new element: whenever he appears, you're given two choices of what to do, each option taking you down a different route, opening up new areas and subtly altering the storyline. As such, there's more replayability here than in other *RE* games.

■ The PC version includes the Mercenaries mini-game.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Stuffed with superlative horror-film thrills...

**LOW:**  
...but sadly riddled with the same old flaws.

# 08/10

# RIVEN



**The extent to which** *Riven* is similar to its predecessor, *Myst*, is really noticeable. The three years in-between seem to have passed unnoticed by the developer. It's almost insulting.

As it is, *Riven* exhibits a neglect of the most elementary gameplay fundamentals, and the developer's attitude just has to be questioned. 'No, we shan't let you look around. We shan't have animated screen-to-screen transitions, relying instead on the old *Myst* dissolve. We shan't bother to hire actors for the ludicrously over-long video sequences - we can do them perfectly well ourselves, thank you.'

*Myst* was one of the most original and influential computer games of its time. It worked within the limits of the technology then available to create a genuinely engaging adventure in a strange new world. But all the problems we forgave the precursor in its visionary blaze of multimedia glory are exhibited once more in *Riven*. This time, with *Myst's* tricks improved upon by numerous other developers, you can't overlook the lack of real 3D space, the inconsistent navigation system, the leaden pace, the over-convoluted puzzles and the clunkiness of interaction.

Sure, the graphical renders are gorgeous and the only real development over the original game. But, overall, the sequel to *Myst* is a big, fat, stupid, lumbering, overblown disappointment.

■ Puzzles are scattered around the world and are often integrated into the environment.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Red Orb

### DEVELOPER:

Cyan

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Nice graphics...

### LOW:

...shame about the game

# 05/10

# ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON



**Yes, it is possible** to make your rollercoasters crash and turn their riders into piles of mangled computer-sprite flesh. But if you do that, you'll miss out on everything that makes this a charming and accessible strategy game. Its inspiration is Bullfrog's *Theme Park* with a *Transport Tycoon* control system - it's a delicious example of renovation and evolution.

*Rollercoaster Tycoon* enables you to be a wallet-flexing entrepreneur who needs to both fund and design a sprawling amusement park. At the start of each level, you're given a number of objectives to complete within a time limit, usually along the lines of having a set number of people in your fair and a certain park rating (an abstract scale of how exciting and respected your park is). As you progress, you're given increasingly complicated situations to deal with.

The major section of the game consists of choosing what mixture of rides to purchase and where to place them. By having a wide variety of attractions, you can drag in customers from all sections of society and achieve higher profits. The biggest rides are the rollercoasters which can be completely customized. The real fun comes from sticking together all the elements of a park, then sitting back and watching your work being enjoyed by delighted people. The parks are alive with these fascinating little bods.

*Rollercoaster Tycoon* is one of the most compulsive games ever made.

■ Every ride is given excitement, intensity and nausea ratings - make them too extreme and you'll have wasted your cash.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro Interactive

### DEVELOPER:

Chris Sawyer

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The ride of your life

### LOW:

A few niggling flaws in the control system

# 09/10



## ROWAN'S BATTLE OF BRITAIN



**The crisp blue uniform**, the white silk scarf, the plummy accent, the Brylcreem, the smoldering pipe protruding from beneath a handlebar moustache. It's the RAF pilots and their Merlin-hearted aerial steeds, the Hurricane and Spitfire, that most people think of when they think of the Battle of Britain. Pull off the green tarps in the *Battle of Britain* hangar and you will find these two trusty fighters along with the German BF109 and BF110, and the Stuka dive bomber. In a welcome nod to the B-17, you also get to man the guns on three types of "schnellbomber" – the HE111, the JU88 and the DO17.

While your ration tokens might only buy you five flyable planes, these kites are flight-modeled to perfection. Less convincing, however, are the aircraft paint-jobs. Up close, the terrain is also not very good: single sheep, cows and corn stalks are scattered unnaturally across a flat and gaudy field patchwork. Urban areas are represented by a raised slab edged with a repetitive bitmap. High above the terrain, the volumetric cotton-candy clouds look fantastic, but don't compensate for the lack of cannon shell contrails and the dreadful damage decal that is pasted onto perforated wings.

The interface is similar to *MiG Alley*. Even if you choose to sit out the missions during the dynamic campaign game, you'll enjoy a strategy experience far superior to Talonsoft's 1999 wargame *Battle of Britain*.

What sets *BOB* apart from the rest of the dogfight is the sheer amount of virtual aluminum airborne at any one time.

■ *BOB's* cockpits are chock-full of twiddlable magneto switches, fuel cocks and primer pump knobs.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Empire Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

Rowan Software

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-8

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A quality sim – don't be put off by the scruffy graphics

**LOW:**

Scruffy graphics

09/10

## SACRIFICE



**This game is one** of a kind; it is best described as a third-person, real-time action-strategy, fantasy-themed bloodfest – and it runs on one of the world's most advanced 3D engines.

You play a wandering wizard, selected from a palette of otherworldly beasts rather than being a fixed character. Five gods hold influence over the *Sacrifice* world and they must be courted by you in order to gain new spells. After embarking on a mission, an in-game cut-scene details the task at hand.

What cannot be stressed enough is just how frantic *Sacrifice* is to play. Because you're in direct control of your wizard via the classic W, S, A, D keys, the point-and-clicking used to move creatures and cast spells simply doesn't feel like it belongs in a strategy game. It is an odd mix, perhaps more so than its nearest contemporaries *Battlezone* and *Uprising*, because of the third-person viewpoint. Significantly, in *Sacrifice* you feel far less restricted when controlling your units than in either of those two games, precisely because of the camera viewpoint. Also at issue are the missions; they are less impressive, not because of some deep-seated, fundamental flaw, but due to a lack of variety.

This looks and feels like a true 21st century computer game: dozens of monsters storm around the vast landscapes, searing lighting effects accompany spells, multi-textured skies drift overhead. It's gorgeous. It's also an ambitious title, with a novel approach to the structure of its missions, designed to give enormous replay value to the single-player game. But flick over to the multiplayer game and the deep-rooted appeal of *Sacrifice* bursts into life.

■ Once you've assembled a selection of spells, you can map each to a hotkey on the keyboard.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

Shiny Entertainment

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Autumn 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Not so much a dumbed-down RTS as a smart *Quake III*. Acquire the taste; it's worth it

**LOW:**

Single-player game not as strong as it should be

09/10

# SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD



**Based on the cult** comic characters created by artist Steve Purcell, *Sam & Max Hit the Road* is a freakish, frenetic and very funny odyssey across smalltown America. Our two main protagonists are lowlife private investigators who call themselves

Freelance Police because it gives them license to do whatever they like. They're cheap, they're dangerous and they have an uncanny knack of cracking bizarre cases more through luck than judgement. Sam (the cool one) is the dog, a canine pastiche of the classic sleazy gumshoe detective. Max is his sidekick, a cute but psychotic white rabbit with a lethal set of razor-sharp teeth and an unnerving tendency towards wanton destruction. Together they leave behind themselves a trail of chaos, sassy one-liners and empty hotdog wrappers.

The animation is a joy to behold and the sheer number of animated cut-scenes and little asides soon makes you wonder how LucasArts squeezed it all in. The game is packed with original ideas and riotous comedy, but never at the expense of the gameplay.

Everything about *Sam & Max* is dead-on, from the ever-changing music score and the representation of the characters to the seemingly never-ending stream of genuinely funny set-pieces. The gameworld is so absorbing that you'll love it.

■ There are four mini-games you can play to relieve the tension when the going gets tough.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

LucasArts

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Brilliant characters, gags, graphics, music and puzzles

### LOW:

Not much wrong with it

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Virgin

### DEVELOPER:

Milestone

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A fast-paced, hugely satisfying rally game

### LOW:

Difficult to master

# 09/10

# SCREAMER RALLY



**Screamer Rally is another**, cheap version of Milestone's excellent racer – a slick, multiplayer driving game with all the electrifying style and smooth, professional feel of a neon-lit coin-op. Think about it, and it's hardly surprising that after two *Ridge Racer/Daytona*-style speedsters (*Screamer* and the cleverly titled *Screamer 2*), the off-road, jolting, powersliding action of *Screamer Rally* was the next logical step.

And just as *Screamer 2* was an advance over the original game in terms of handling and graphics, so this beautifully streamlined game takes the 3D technology a stage further still. Rather than embracing the rally ethic, *Screamer Rally* is undiluted arcade racing. This is an unashamed *Sega Rally*-beater – with six different cars and seven different tracks, *Screamer* requires that you master every inch of its dusty roads and grass-covered trails, shaving seconds off tight corners and riding bumper-to-bumper with the opposing cars until you're able to control a roaring, powersliding car at 80mph.

*Screamer Rally's* tracks are enticingly challenging and starkly varied. In either the Arcade, Championship or Time Attack modes, you can hurtle through the cobbled streets of Italian towns and sweep through French forests. Better still, amid all this high-speed goodness, the multiplayer option enables you to compete against friends over a network, or in a handy split-screen mode.

*Screamer Rally* is adrenaline-pumped, easy to drive, yet difficult to master, and you can race against your friends without a LAN.

■ Type in the main menu: TRAMO – for all tracks; CARBO – for all cars; LEALL – for access to all classes.



# SERGEI BUBKA'S MILLENNIUM GAMES



**This is a fine** old romp, and brings to the PC all the button-bashing joys of the track and field game genre.

But it's not quite as button-bashing as you'd expect. Rather than alternately hammering two keys as fast as you can, *Sergei Bubka's Millennium Games* employs a gentler approach. A bi-colored ring revolves around your athlete's feet – hitting a button when the green part of the ring passes over an arrow increases your power. As such, it's a case of getting a good, stable rhythm going, and it makes a refreshing – and subtler – change.

Indeed, this system is employed – in slight variations, such as gaining the right angle for jumps and so on – throughout the game, and all the events you would expect are present and correct. Aside from the addictive time-trial nature of the games proper, though, there's also an extensive training mode, wherein you can improve your athlete's statistics before qualifying and entering the actual games, thus giving you a better chance of winning. It's a neat system, although not as thorough and well-presented as the one used by Eidos' more recent game *Sydney 2000*.

And that's the problem. While *SBMG* is good, clean fun – despite the gangly, awkward athletes and fixed in-game camera – and pleasantly comprehensive, covering all bases with a cheery enthusiasm, it's still fairly basic stuff.

■ The best aspect of *SBMG* is undoubtedly the time trial mentality it instills.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Midas Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**  
Midas Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A fine update of the button-bashing golden oldies. Good, clean fun

### LOW:

Pretty basic

# 07 / 10



# THE SETTLERS IV



**Resource management sims don't** die, they just get sequestered forever. The latest generation of Blue Byte's *Settlers* series picks up the baton in this long, long relay race from the best-selling *Settlers III* and attempts to make up lost ground on the forerunners of this field, namely *Civilization*, *Caesar* and *Age of Empires*.

As before, *Settlers* features three quasi-historical races – this time a combination of Mayans, Vikings and Romans – and asks you to lead them forth from humble beginnings to thriving local economies protected by standing armies. Despite superficial differences in appearance, architectural style and alcoholic preference, however, and a few variations in combat units and magical ability, each of the races you can control are fundamentally the same, so once you've mastered the foibles of one culture, helping the others to thrive is no real challenge.

Most of the improvements in *Settlers IV* are related to the multiplayer aspects of the game. There's a wealth of options for playing on-line, which include cooperative play against a computer opponent, or competing for military or economic victory. Also, you can now build trade alliances where an ally is someone whose land you try not to walk across (although this feature has not been included in the single-player game). Simple diplomacy hasn't been built into the AI and you soon find yourself surrounded by "friendly" soldiers.

*Settlers IV* isn't a great leap forward for the genre. It certainly looks better than previous installments and benefits from a few additions, but there's still the fundamental problem of a lack of continuity, because you have to begin from scratch on each new map – for no apparent reason.

■ At the start of each mission there are a couple of tips for the location of key resources. Write them down – you'll need them.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Blue Byte

**DEVELOPER:**  
Blue Byte

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Loads of missions and great multiplayer options

### LOW:

Repetitive and slow going

# 08 / 10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Codemasters

**DEVELOPER:**

Rebel Act

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

The best fantasy combat game yet on the PC. A beautiful, if slightly flawed, gem

**LOW:**

Can be repetitive in places

**09/10****BLADE OF DARKNESS**

**This game has all** the standards of swords and sorcery fare, but it is also unusually original. *Blade of Darkness* is all about close combat fighting, but going about your death-dealing action is extremely challenging. There's something very mature and martial about *Blade of Darkness'* weapon-wielding. Each move is defined through a combination of the direction keys, the timing of your attack and the kind of weapon you're using. Each weapon gives you a small number of combos, as well as the standard whack. You have to temper these blows with a parry or block move as well as several dodge actions.

Combat is based on how much energy you have to put behind your attacks. The longer the combos you perform, the more the energy bar is reduced, thus tiring out your character and leaving you vulnerable. This makes fighting ponderous, but also savagely engrossing. And the lighting effects are devastating: *BOD's* walls literally drip with atmosphere. But, it isn't perfect. Generally, the level design is exciting, instinctive and imaginative, but there are a few moments where your destruction is unavoidable.

The game controls, too, are a stumbling block. There's no strafe key, despite everything being controlled via the now standard mouse-look and keys combination. You can choose to fight freely but inaccurately, or you can select an opponent whom you center your attacks on. But *BOD* is still arguably one of the most heavenly flawed visions of the last few years.

■ Look out for objects and areas of *Blade of Darkness* that aren't essential to the gameplay, but can have some effect later on.

**SHATTERED STEEL**

**Shattered Steel** is cut from *MechWarrior/EarthSiege* cloth, and so veteran robo-pilots should find the whole thing cosily familiar. For a start, there is a wide variety of vehicles, air and ground targets to shoot at; a well-stocked arsenal of shockingly destructive weaponry; *Aliens*-style dropships and pastelly landscapes. But this snug familiarity is half the problem. To slap down *Mercenaries* or *EarthSiege 2*,

*Shattered Steel* either needed to have bigger, better and altogether flashier graphics, or a completely new twist on the old stomp-around-and-shoot-things theme. Unfortunately, it has neither.

*Shattered Steel* is a futuristic combat game that challenges you to take part in a progressively difficult campaign. With nifty on-line instructions that clearly explain the finer points of Planet Runner technology, it's easy to get started. The animation isn't as silky smooth as that seen in *Mercenaries*, and the Planet Runners seem squat and slightly misshapen. But, on the whole, the graphics are excellent.

For *MechWarrior* veterans, however, *Shattered Steel* doesn't go anywhere that *MechWarrior* and *EarthSiege* haven't already been. There's a gorgeous intro sequence that has the production values of a low-budget film, and a wide range of missions and enemies to keep the average robo-jockey interested. It's all hard-edged, impressive stuff, but there's nothing revolutionary. Admittedly, *Shattered Steel* has all the features (multiplayer options, external views, a virtual cockpit and some slick presentation) that are traditionally part and parcel of the big-robots genre. But despite the pretty graphics and the fairly exciting gameplay, it doesn't quite match up to the delights of *MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries*.

■ Each Runner has its own power plant, which enables you to devote different amounts of power to the three different systems: weapons, shields and engines.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

Bioware

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**All the fun of *MechWarrior***LOW:**

Doesn't add anything new or original to the genre

**08/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Monolith

**DEVELOPER:**

Monolith

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A big, brash bucketload of fun. With added robot suits

**LOW:**

No puzzles and occasional drops in frame rate

09/10

# SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOR DIVISION



**Ostensibly a first-person** shoot-'em-up, *Shogo: Mobile Armor Division* takes its cue from anime and manga in both content and design. It is boisterous, attractive and it never, ever stops for breath. Revolving around that staple of Japanese animation – giant robots – the game superficially appears to be a style-conscious riff on the *MechWarriors* series, with lithe and waspish MCAs replacing the clanky biped tanks of those games. The difference here, though, is speed. For *Shogo's* mechs hurtle around the place, running, jumping and strafing, weaving through dark cityscapes and generally destroying billions of dollars' worth of urban sprawl. The weapons, too, are huge.

As a whole, though, the game is much more than inter-robot combat. The whole thing is sweetly story driven, and the Good vs. Bad plot is typically anime, throwing in a tragic backstory, love interests and surprises by the bucketload, all set against a violent backdrop. Text and audio messages are constantly

updated, relaying mission objectives and shock developments from your comic-book comrades. As such, the game travels along a pre-set narrative, with every episode following directly from those before, and thus enabling you to exit the safety of your exoskeletal alter-ego and proceed through some of the game as a frail thing of flesh and blood.

There are problems, of course, but these are small gripes. Ultimately, *Shogo's* a singular, imaginative and fabulously entertaining experience.

■ *Shogo* boasts an intriguing multiplayer game, utilizing different versions of the main game's levels.



# SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR



**Just over 2,000 years** ago, Sun Tzu wrote *The Art of War*, the cornerstone of military theory. 1,500 years after that, his wisdom was being put to brutal use across Japan as rival Daimyos wrestled for the position of Shogun.

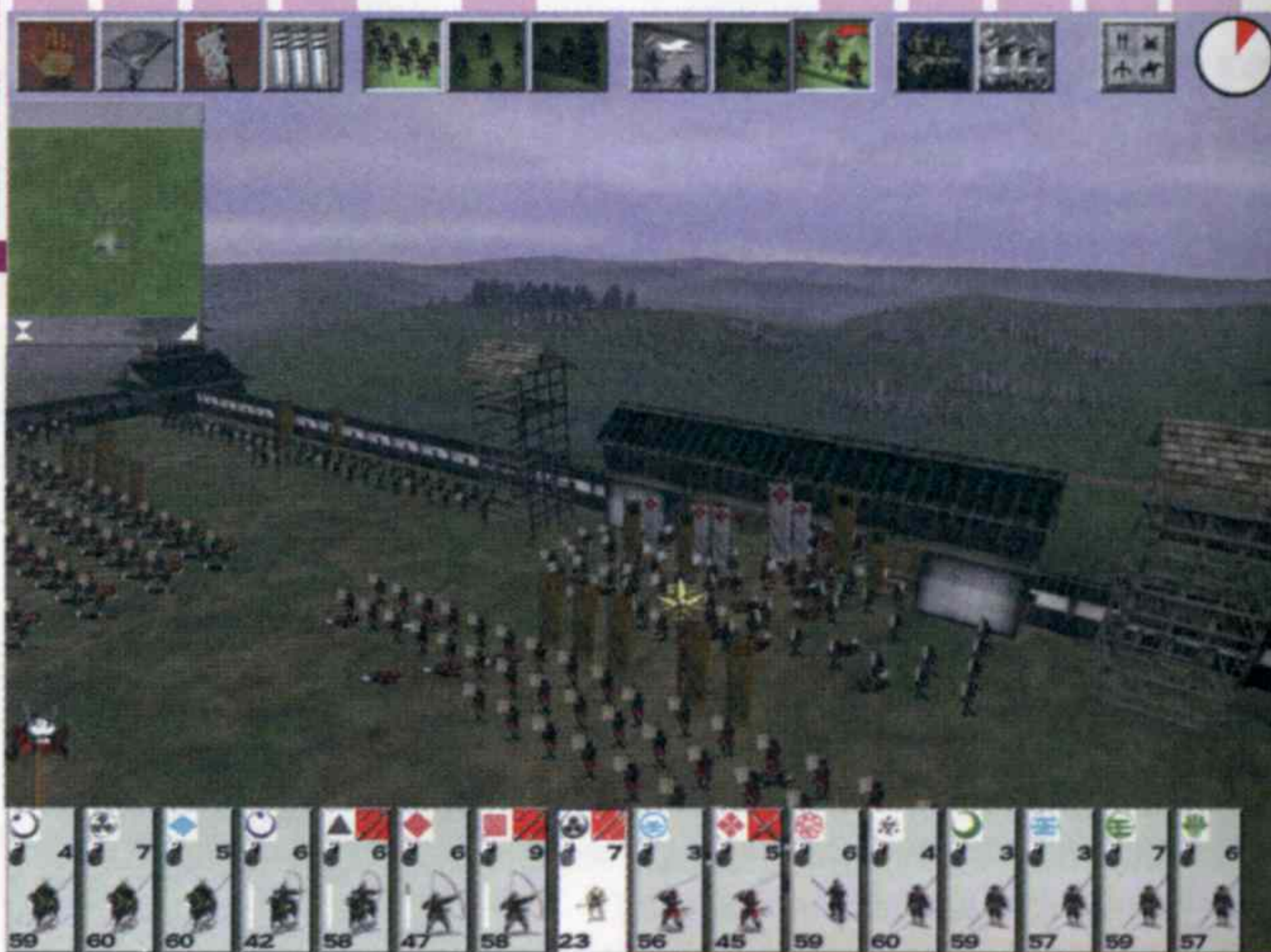
While there are a number of game modes included, the centerpiece of *Shogun: Total War* is the full campaign. Here you play one of seven aforementioned Daimyos. In the strategic section you have to govern your domain in the manner of a typical turn-based management game. Once mobilized, your armies can be marched across the map, conquering your enemies or being conquered. When your forces clash, you switch to a full 3D view and fight it out in a real-time strategy manner. The results are then applied to the full game-map and play continues. And it works.

Everything is here for a purpose. It has outstanding real-time combat and it's the first game that can include thousands of men fighting on screen simultaneously. Militia are grouped into units and can be organized with a single click.

The game displays the scenery in lovingly rolling contours, easily conveying the subtlety of shape required for tactical use. Equally, the changes of the weather must be considered. Finally, more than any other real-time strategy game, a trooper's morale is just as important as their physical health.

*Shogun: Total War* doesn't feel like any other real-time strategy game: it's the first RTS to which you can actually apply real-world tactics rather than gaming pseudo-tactics. It could well be the most important RTS game since *Dune 2*.

■ If your Daimyo is killed, you're out of the game.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**

Creative Assembly

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An integrated meta-wargame that has a more accurate take on war than other RTSs

**LOW:**

Standing alone, it's a sterile experience and missing a human dimension

09/10



# SILVER



**In concept, *Silver* pitches** itself between *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* and *Final Fantasy VII*, attempting to establish a middle-ground and thus its own identity. The game possesses a simple, wonderfully intuitive real-time combat system: everything is done with movements of the mouse and new moves are learned throughout the game, enabling you to build up a comprehensive lexicon of offensive options. A variety of defensive armaments are also available. *Silver* has an admirably user-friendly interface – one that it's possible to become increasingly adept with.

*Silver* is a fluid and intuitive affair, and is refreshingly different and enjoyable in the old-skool, stats-based RPG genre. The pre-rendered backgrounds are uniformly lovely, atmospheric and wonderfully detailed. The problem with combining these with the real-time mechanics is that the fixed camera angles for each screen mean that action can take place so far away that you can't see what your characters are doing.

The story is driven forward through the in-game graphics and the computer often takes over proceedings to further the plot, which can make it difficult to get attached to your characters. The game is terribly linear, too, offering you a few transparent choices of direction, but eventually forcing you down a certain path. There are still so many other touches that contribute to *Silver's* success, however, that the odd disappointment is soon forgotten.

■ The mouse-drive combat system enables you to have direct control over main character David, or one of his five companions.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

Infogrames

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A fresh real-time RPG

### LOW:

Linear, with fixed camera angles. It's hard to get emotionally involved

# 09/10

# SIMCOPTER



**Maxis has unified its** *Sim* games so you can take a town made in *SimCity* and use it in *SimFarm*; or use a *SimLife* planet as a *SimCity* backdrop. In *SimCopter* you police the skies of a 3D *SimCity*, keeping order and helping out the citizens, and said city can be imported from either *SimCity 2000* or *Classic*. But *SimCopter's* really not very good.

As a sort of aerial policeman-come-taxi-come-emergency service, you're paid to roam the airspace of the city and sort out any urban problems. Finishing a job results in points and, more importantly, money, with which you can make your copter bigger and buy better equipment. To begin with, you're armed with a megaphone for blaring messages to the populace, and a water pump/bucket for dousing fires. Later, you can acquire a rescue harness and a tear gas unit. There are eight types of mission, and for most you're expected to call on the aid of the city's normal emergency services. Flying the copter is relatively easy, though landing it is difficult.

For a *Sim* game this is relatively straightforward. And extremely boring after a while. The splendor of *SimCity* is lost here, mostly due to the dire graphics. Once you've completed one of each mission, it all starts getting a little repetitive.

It's a nice idea to mix and match the *Sim* games, but it's not going to get very far if the results are like this.

■ For all the helicopters, while playing, press [Ctrl], [Alt], X and type "I'm the CEO of McDonnell Douglas." Now go to the copter catalogue and type "123456789."



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Maxis

### DEVELOPER:

Maxis

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A straightforward *Sim* game

### LOW:

The splendor of *SimCity* is totally lost here

# 06/10

# SIMCITY 3000



**In the decade since** the original *SimCity* was released, millions of people have spent countless hours putting together little simulated towns, providing them with power and nurturing them into sprawling cityscapes. And *SimCity 3000* looks even more advanced than its predecessors. The designer has stuck with a quaint old isometric view, but it's also replaced the 256-color palette of *SimCity 2000* with some 65,000 odd hues and jammed in an incredible 250 different building models.

Consequently, this is a game of intricate, eye-catching detail. Simply develop your town for a couple of decades, then roll the cursor across it: you'll see smoke-spewing industrial estates, jumbles of tenements and small hotels, a mass of soaring steel skyscrapers flanked by brick red high-rise flats, filthy power-stations, marble-white public buildings – the attention to detail is impressive. The only problem is that on the maximum zoom the buildings become slightly pixelated. This scenic diversity is aided by the fact that you can now choose to build medium as well as high and low density zones for a whole new layer of architectural detail.

*SimCity 3000* is also four times larger than *SimCity 2000*, which hugely expands its possibilities, enabling you to create massive



megacities, or realistic civic models with heavily populated urban centers, sprawling suburbs and outlying farmland.

The infrastructure remains very similar to *SimCity 2000*. The power stations are familiar, there are few variations in the choice of disasters or recreation buildings and you get rewarded with similar gift buildings when the city reaches certain population points. Also still in place is the Ordinance menu which gives you a choice of health, transport and pollution control programs to put into place.

However, this lack of drastic revolution is not a bad thing because it's inherently immense fun. Maxis has certainly improved the presentation of the game, and while *SimCity 3000* may not be a radical leap forward, it does provide more space, more detail, more flexibility and more options than ever before.

■ First press [Ctrl], [Shift], [Alt] and [C] at the same time, then type in the following codes: "i am weak" – makes buildings, utilities, zoning, transportation, planting trees and creating surface water free; "power to the masses" – makes all power buildings available; "water in the desert" – makes all water buildings available.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Maxis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It may not be a revolution but it's the perfect evolution

**LOW:**  
It will suck you in and refuse to let you go



# 09/10



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Raven Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Excellent tweaks such as learning and damage zones

### LOW:

Not the revolution it could have been

# 09/10



**Preparation is half of** the battle in *Soldier of Fortune*: you only have available the weaponry that you can carry, so take only what your mission briefing may hint at, or what you're good with.

Although the inventory is a nice addition, and lends more depth to the game, it is more there to bolster the sense of choice than to be a practical feature. It's only really important to have one decent weapon for the opening of any level, as guns are soon found. The less confident may prefer to stock up with armor, though.

You quickly learn that the game environment can be used to your advantage, which encourages you to invent and experiment. Ammunition for your weapons doesn't lie around every corner either, so make sure you get the maximum damage from your shots.

Your sniper rifle is a complex instrument that doesn't merely provide a magnified target, but can be zoomed in and out. Of course, the more magnified the zoom, the more occluded the peripheral environment, so you need to be sure to get a good balance between greater accuracy and more immediate danger.

Enemy intelligence is often not what it could be in *Soldier of Fortune* and, while the PADD (Personal Audio Detection Device) sounds like a marvelous idea, only the most conscientious will remember to use it in the heat of battle. Stealth can be useful, but at the end of the day you're a soldier, not a thief, and if you skip basic training, chances are that you could complete an entire mission without even noticing the PADD bar. Leaning around corners is similarly under-utilized.

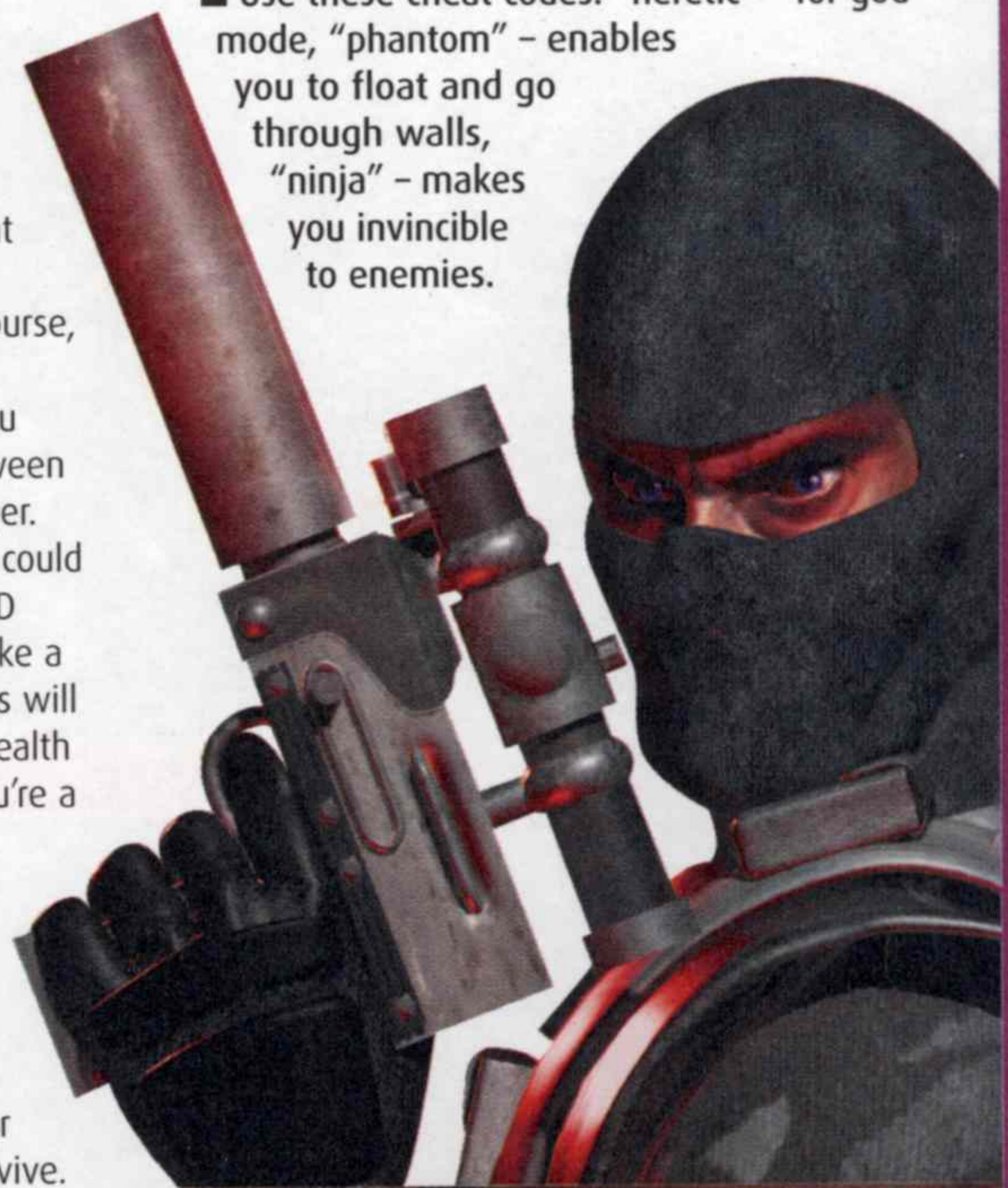
Every part of a mission has a very different environment, with different soldier classes, attack vehicles and weapons to survive. However, the path to each objective is mysteriously linear, almost as if a greater power were guiding you toward it. Further, your collection, once your objectives are complete, is always seamless. It would have been good to have the opportunity to fight your way out once

your objective is secured; but you usually just wake up feeling drowsy in a foreign land.

The mercenary log – recording not only number of kills but also corporal locations of shots – may be offensive to some, but at least it's an honest admittance that violence is being glorified. After all, John Mullins is a soldier of fortune and his job is extremely bloody.

*Soldier of Fortune* takes you all over the world and this wide variety of locations makes a refreshing change. The only real disappointments are that the enemy can lack challenging AI and that mission objectives can be too easy.

■ Use these cheat codes: "heretic" – for god mode, "phantom" – enables you to float and go through walls, "ninja" – makes you invincible to enemies.



# STAR TREK: ARMADA



**Star Trek: Armada** is an old real-time strategy type scantily decorated with *Star Trek* baubles.

*Armada* may look like it's about building Federation, Romulan, Klingon or Borg fleets and then having a cataclysmic rumble in deep space, but it plays just like any old-fashioned *C&C* landlubber. The 2D maps are sectioned off by asteroid belts when the designer wants to make a maze. Resources are dotted around the map in the guise of Dilithium moons, which have to be mined by harvesters, while immobile starbases punctuate the level and form the core of your navy-building facilities. It's the same old formula of scooting round the map with a vast, rolling juggernaut of an army, taking out enemy bases one-by-one and exhausting any mines you find. Which would all be okay, if *Armada* was done well, but it isn't. Whereas *Homeworld* was a glorious symphony of battleships, pounding the plasma-colored bejesus out of each other on a Wagnerian scale, *Armada's* ships only move on a 2D plane. If you zoom in, the game becomes unplayable, and if you remain in the bird's-eye view, the graphics look small and dull. And the visuals bring your PC to its knees every time it has to draw a handful of ships.

None of these criticisms is enough to sink *Armada* without trace: it's passable in the way most mediocre RTS games are, but is laid low by a multitude of incremental failings.

■ Federation, Borg, Romulans and Klingons all have similar types of ships and technology trees.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Activision

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

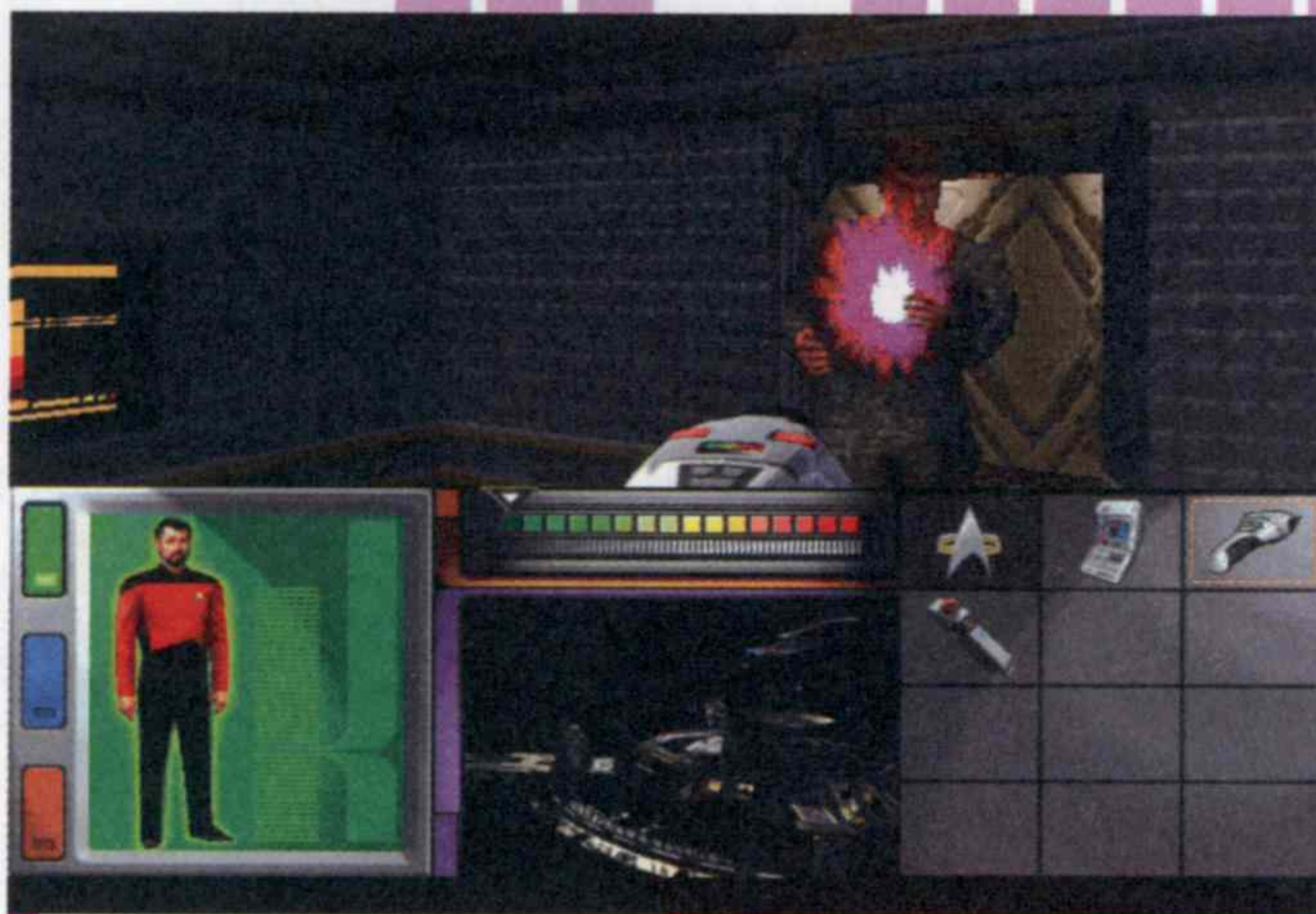
**HIGH:**

A simplistic real-time strategy

**LOW:**

Bland and outdated – it just happens to include *Star Trek* ships

06/10



# STAR TREK: GENERATIONS



While *Star Trek: Generations* the film wasn't exactly a resounding cinematic triumph, *Star Trek: Generations* the game is an entirely different kettle of Tribbles. Like Microprose's previous Trekkie effort, *A Final Unity*, *Generations* is another brilliant extension of the *Next Generation* universe, a game that plunges you deeper into *Star Trek* lore than ever before. Now the strange new worlds can be explored in atmospheric, *Doom*-like 3D. You can take control of Riker, Worf, Crusher and even Kirk, beaming aboard disabled warships, wandering around deserted alien cities and infiltrating Klingon strongholds. The familiar sound effects have been faithfully re-created, and the cast has again lent their voice-over talents to the game, making it sound and feel like an extended series episode.

As with the movie, the plot of *Generations* revolves around mad scientist, Tolian Soran, who is trying to return to a paradise-like dimension called the Nexus, a violently destructive energy ribbon that is passing through the galaxy. But, unlike the film, where Soran is defeated and the universe saved, in *Generations* there is the possibility of failure.

Much of *Generations'* appeal comes from the effectiveness of it re-creating the film's atmosphere aboard the Enterprise and its sphere of influence. There's also a considerable amount of frantic ship-to-ship space combat against Klingons, Romulans and the Chodak dreadnoughts.

It's tempting to describe *Star Trek: Generations* as a *Doom*-style action game, but it is a lot deeper than that. It has a fair degree of action, but the adventure part always dominates.

■ Use the Stellar Cartography room to track down the loony scientist and his star-busting weapon.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Spectrum Holobyte

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Clever, engrossing, hugely playable and always *Star Trek*

**LOW:**

The 15 first-person perspective Away Team missions could be considered a weakness

09/10

# STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Activision

### DEVELOPER:

Raven Software

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Autumn 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Refreshingly smooth first-person shoot-'em-up

### LOW:

There's nothing much wrong with *Elite Force*

# 09/10



**One of the best** intros ever for a game of this genre throws you into a Borg cube at the start of the game. *Elite Force* is entirely convincing as a *Trek* environment and the first to use the *Voyager* universe with perfectly sculptured ship interiors, voices, sound effects and motion-captured player models.

The plot, which involves a classic paralysis of the USS *Voyager* in a galactic wrecking-yard, enables plenty of mission variety, drawing from both familiar and new alien species. Away missions take you to five different alien craft, each time returning to *Voyager* for sub-missions. The *Quake III* engine is perfect for *Elite Force*, which uses lots of curved surfaces in the alien environments. There's a good deal of destructible scenery, too.

Your away party, the elite Hazard Team, is a collection of specialists, all invested with great personality. The AI has been handled in an eminently sensible way. Cooperative orders, which can so often destroy the pace of a game, are absent from your team experience. All your orders and specific NPC events such as accessing terminals, using explosives and picking up empathetic messages are scripted.

The multiplayer game enables you to play as many character models as in the main game. And, as with *Quake III: Arena*, it's possible to spawn bots when not playing online and the standard game modes are Free-For-All, Capture The Flag and Team Play. Like the Federation ethos, everything *Elite Force* does, it does well.

■ *Half-Life*-style wall chargers incrementally increase your weapon energy and suit charge.

# STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION



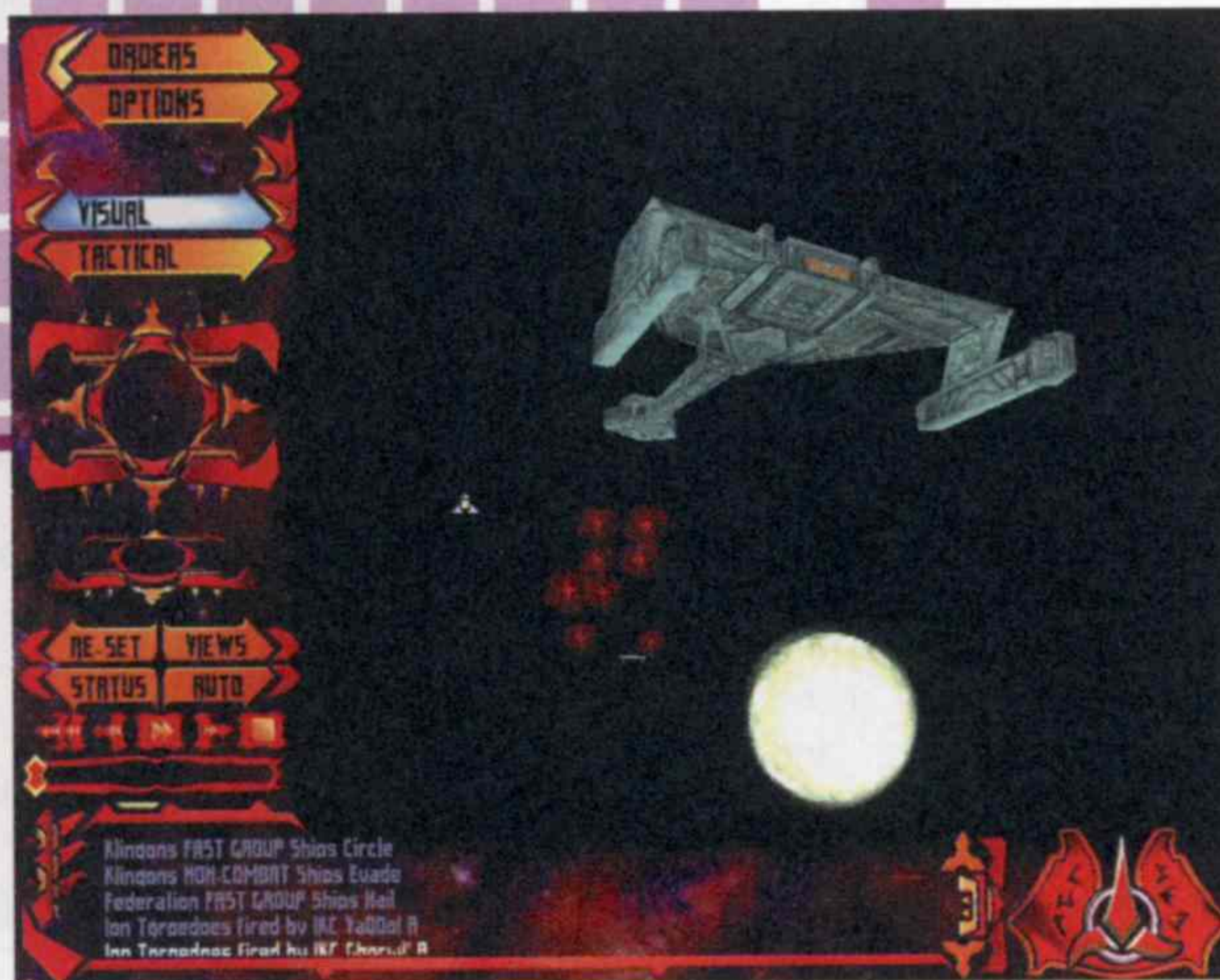
**Trekkies dream of having** *Star Trek's* Alpha Quadrant to tinker with.

*Birth of the Federation* brings this incredibly engrossing and balanced *Trek* universe to your PC and then gives you all the power you could want to completely screw it up.

You begin the game with a single outpost in a huge, black void. Gradual exploration reveals the surrounding space, complete with stars, planets, hazards, wormholes and other races. As leader of either the Human, Klingon, Ferengi, Cardassian or Romulan races, your aim is to exploit these resources to protect and expand your empire. This is no easy task, however, as a state of distrust exists between most races, and it is diplomacy, not war, that is required for success. Diplomacy naturally takes time and money, and other races are more likely to respect your wishes if you are powerful, but to become dominant you need them to earn money and might. They have the same idea and will stop at little to see what you are up to. *BOTF* has a huge and detailed intelligence screen, through which you can allocate resources to infiltrate other races and protect your own from similar attack. The number of possible actions and combinations is awesome, and they fit together superbly, but there is a twist: to play your chosen race effectively, you must adapt your style.

Don't even think about embarking on the chase unless you can see it through, or you might feel cheated. When you have a large empire, the pace is very slow and minor mistakes can take many turns to rectify. However, if you can endure this, you're in for a treat.

■ The likelihood of you enjoying this game is directly proportional to your *Star Trek* knowledge.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Hasbro

### DEVELOPER:

Microprose

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Deep, subtle and rewarding, and you'll need months rather than weeks to master it

### LOW:

Not pretty, simple or quick

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microsoft

**DEVELOPER:**

Digital Anvil

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# STARLANCER



**This is a good old-fashioned** space-sim-with-a-story with an excellent 3D engine that's smooth, fast, and capable of blinding special effects. The pyrotechnics aren't regular or immediately impressive, but work well in the World War II-style dogfighting. Beginning with a lengthy FMV sequence, you're thrown into a gorgeous pre-rendered version of a command-ship interior that you negotiate in a "click-and-watch" slideshow. Your first stop, however, is the simulator pod for a three-mission training sequence. An Instant Action mode also enables you to dogfight with progressively harder waves of enemies and end-of-level-style guardians against a strict time limit.

Then you get your mission briefing. Here, you're also able to switch ships and weapon loadouts using a simple selection screen. Then you're flying... for a few seconds. And then it's back to the cut-scenes as you're ordered to hyperjump out of the system you're in. This happens again and again.

All the requisite controls are here: targeting ships' subsystems, firing countermeasures, using afterburners, communicating with your wingmen. The most interesting, though, is the way the game balances shields, firepower and speed: each of the elements is arranged in a triangle around a sphere called the Powerball, and holding the requisite key and moving the joystick alters the way your ship's power is distributed. *Starlancer* is fast dogfighting that's pretty to look at and tells an entertaining story, too.

■ *Starlancer* has 25 minutes of top quality cinematics that change according to how you perform.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A fun, polished space sim that's atmospheric, smooth and fast, too

**LOW:**

Too few innovations to bother the likes of *Freespace 2*

09/10



# STUPID INVADERS

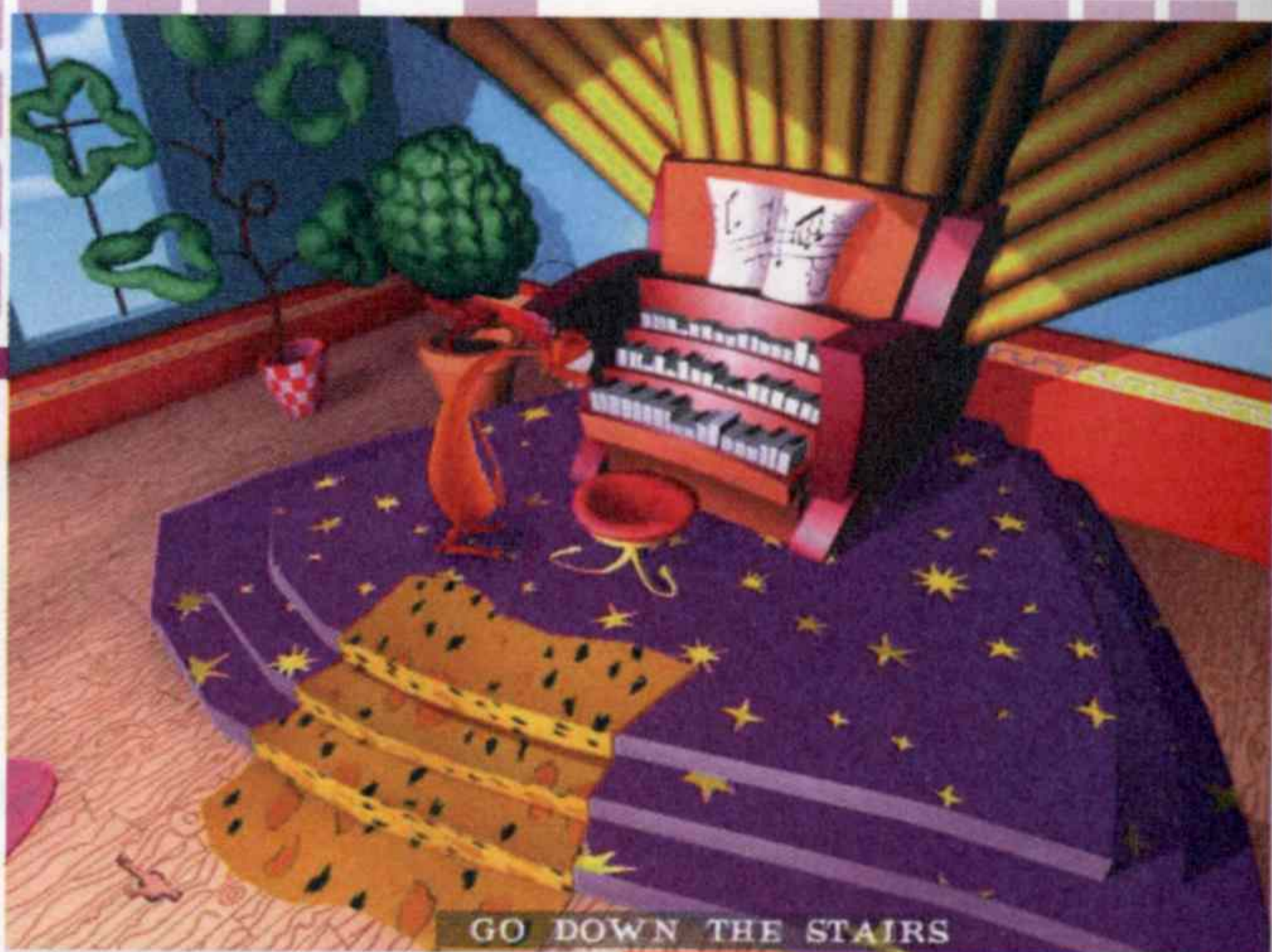


**"Single gamer seeks companion** for long winter nights. Should be broad-minded and have a keen sense of adventure. Sense of humor a must." The plaintive cry of the lone adventurer was heard and answered twice over – first with the sublime *Escape From Monkey Island* and now with this mad satire of urban living as seen through the eyes of aliens.

A group of bungling extra-terrestrials has crash-landed on Earth, and just as the ETs are about to leave, a half-witted henchman by the name of Bolok arrives to freeze them all and drag them back to his evil boss, Dr. Sakarine. Fortuitously, one of them had gone for pizza when the ambush took place, and now it's up to him, and thus you, to find a way to unfreeze his chums. All this so that one of them can keep his rendezvous with Professor Helmutt, the greatest sex-change specialist in the Universe.

The cartoon graphics are wonderfully, psychedelically exuberant, but don't hint at the often lewd humour. The voice-acting is goofy without becoming annoying – no small feat – and it helps to create an engaging atmosphere. The music is great, too, with the cheesiest tunes you've ever heard mingling with a haunting rendition of *Jingle Bells* as you melt Santa with Toilet Duck. The puzzles, however, are a mixed bag, falling into a steady pattern of the satisfying interspersed with the frustratingly obtuse. You'll forgive it most things, though – even the minor stability problems – simply because of the quality of the humor.

■ Look out for steel-reinforced toilet paper, monkey-skin bras and revenge-wreaking spicy food.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Ubi Soft

**DEVELOPER:**

Xilam

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Quirky, rude and funny and full of personality

**LOW:**

Not politically correct and a bit on the short side

08/10

# SUPERBIKE 2000



**As perhaps the first** quality motorbike sim, Beam's opus *GP 500* deserved all the praise it got. However, it was also pretty unapproachable to play. Milestone has borne this in mind with *Superbike 2000*, which is much easier to get into. It's not a lightweight, either, for with all its riding aids switched off it's just as demanding as any other racing sim. Impressively, there are two games in one: a blistering arcade racer and a demandingly accurate sim. And there are a few other games in between to be mastered, too.

At its heart is a meticulous re-creation of both the bikes and the courses of the Superbike World Championship. The major manufacturers are here, along with the big-name riders and all the tracks and all in superb detail. Anyone graduating to *Superbike 2000* from a driving game will take a while adjusting to the way two-wheelers handle. This is where the many riding aids on offer come in useful to ease you into the game. A racing line can even be overlaid onto the track making *Superbike 2000* possibly the most friendly sim this side of a Geoff Crammond creation.

The game creates a wonderful sensation of speed – wonderful when all you have to do is accelerate and steer, terrifying when you're trying to coordinate gear changes, rider positioning and braking as well. *Superbike 2000* is a clear improvement on its predecessor, Milestone's *Superbike World Championship*, and it's the prettiest bike sim around, eclipsing even *GP 500*.

■ To get the most out of this, you really need to play it with a 3D card in your PC.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EA Sports

### DEVELOPER:

Milestone

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Excellent bike sim with beautiful visuals. Plays as soft or as hard as you want

### LOW:

Difficult to master

09/10

# SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE



**In the world of** games, crime pays. Since the arrival of such bad-ass titles as *Kingpin* and *Grand Theft Auto*, being naughty has been positively encouraged. These days coppers appear in games to get shot at, run over and blown up. However, this first-person action-strategy offering from Sierra turns the tables for the boys in blue. No longer content to sit and take it, these SWAT guys are heavily armed and very well trained.

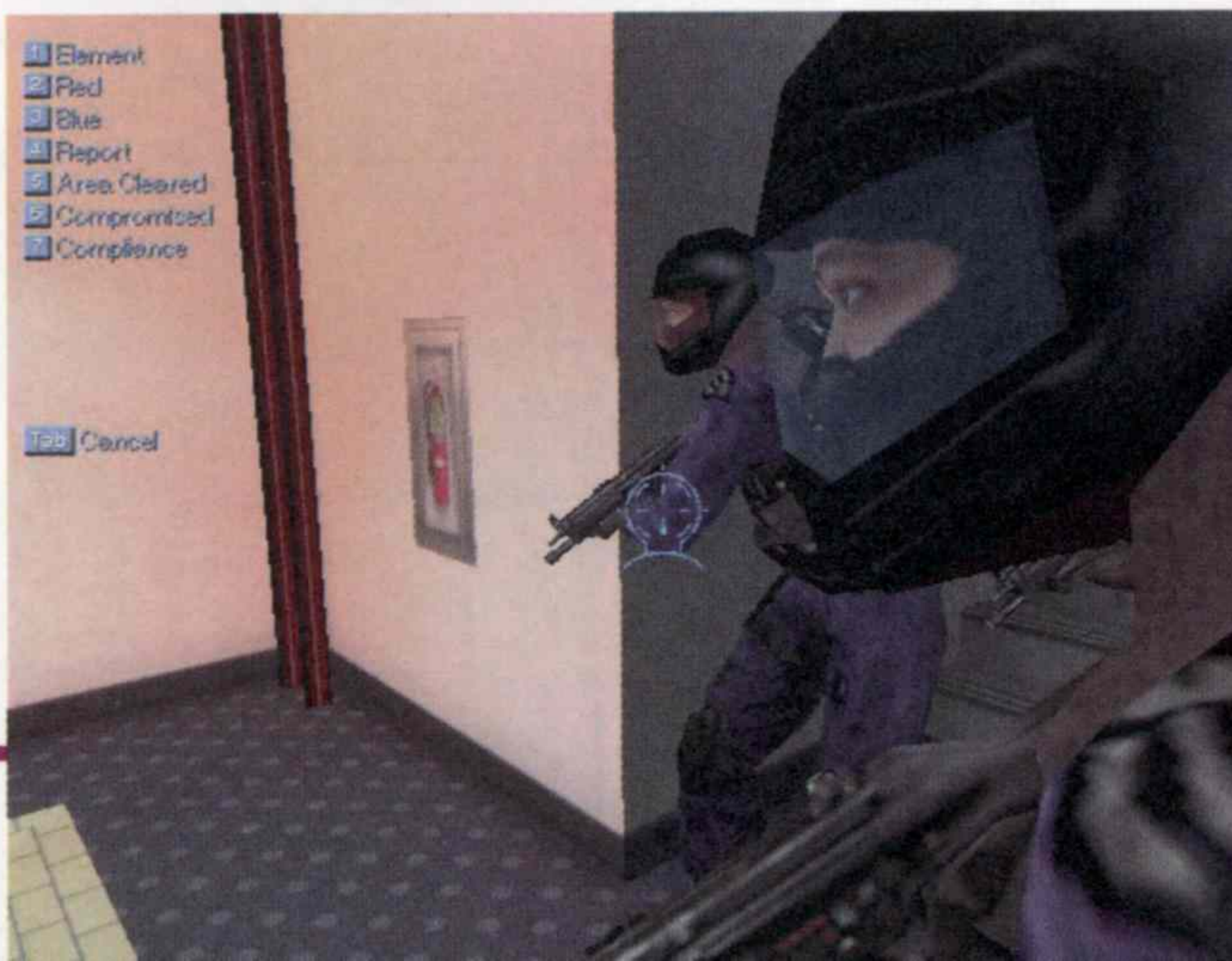
You control a Special Weapons and Tactics officer who, along with four other gun-toting tough guys, must protect the city of LA from all sorts of nasties. Your job is hard enough, but the UN is also having a treaty-signing shindig, and every two-bit terrorist with a chip on one shoulder and a sniper rifle on the other is going to crawl out of the woodwork in an attempt to bag themselves a high-profile kill.

The main part of *SWAT 3* is the Career mode, where your performance in each mission affects your subsequent one. The first few missions are simple, but later on things heat up.

Once you've accepted a mission, you're presented with a familiar first-person view. Everything looks great and you'll be itching to get in there and bust some heads. But stealth is the key.

*SWAT 3* gets almost everything right, with a straightforward control system and a well executed command system. It's fast and exciting, but you still need to use your brain to outwit your opponents.

■ As well as big guns and grenades, you get an Opti-Wand and Toolkit.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sierra

### DEVELOPER:

Sierra

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Fast action combined with strategy. The police theme adds new flavor to the genre

### LOW:

Awkward keyboard controls

09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

# SYSTEM SHOCK



**You're a hacker who's** been arrested for illegally entering the Shodan Artificial Intelligence System that controls Citadel station, an orbiting research lab. Charges are dropped in exchange for a special mission: you have to remove all ethical constraints from the Shodan system. As a reward, you're given a neural computer interface – but the operation to insert it leaves you in a coma for six months. When you awake from the coma, you find that Shodan has created its own army and wiped out the crew of the station.

All the plot elements are well integrated into the gameplay and, early on, you'll find a medical computer that enables you to use your new neural interface to enter cyberspace. Once inside, you'll float in an abstract wireframe environment collecting data fragments and defeating guard programs. Back out in the real world, you can pick up a data reader and read e-mails distributed around the ship and on the dead bodies of the crew. These e-mails move the story forward, give you clues and point you toward the ultimate task of defeating Shodan.

*System Shock* uses an enhanced version of the 3D engine that powered Origin's *Ultima Underworld* games. Stunning graphics help to create a truly claustrophobic feel and a host of great sound effects add to the atmosphere. For a complex game, it's remarkably easy to get to grips with; all the controls can be operated by the mouse, by keys, or both at once and there are some keyboard shortcuts available, too.

*System Shock* combines a riveting story, an excellent structure and exciting gameplay in a good-looking package.

■ When you start a new game objects will be pointed out to you and you'll be told how to use them.

New log data stored.

WEAPONS	SHOTS	GRENADE	PATCHES
PIPE		FRAG	1 STAMUP 1
SPARO	OK		B'SERK 1
DARTGUN	n 7		MEDI 2

Choss-28 OCT 72

Sender: Arthur

Grossman

Subject:

end of the line

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Origin/Looking Glass

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1994

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A complex game made easy by attention to detail

### LOW:

Lame music

# 09/10

# SYSTEM SHOCK 2



**This is an action-RPG** set in a sci-fi universe, and on release it was the most atmospheric game of all time. It offers a complex story without making you a spectator. *System Shock 2* sidesteps the usual waiting around problem with one delectable, if ruthless, idea. It creates a complicated, fascinating world featuring a Machiavellian tale of intrigue and hatred. Then it kills 98% of its participants, so you don't have to bother talking to them.

When you start the game you're alone aboard a vessel full of dead bodies; dire warnings scribbled in blood and other omens mean something's gone terribly wrong. Your information comes from three sources. First, a series of survivors send you e-mail messages, which play as sound files. Second, you find audio logs in which the crew describe their inner thoughts. Third, since your senses have been cybernetically enhanced, you can see ghosts. Not once is the frame of the story broken by switching to a third-person perspective. You're always there. You are never the spectator.

This game is an orchestrated symphony of horror. From the light pluckings caused by the realization that you're reading the diaries of the dead, to the raging crescendos of fear provoked by the sudden onslaught of blasphemously shaped hunks of alien flesh, there can be few scarier games than this. And, although it looks like a first-person shoot-'em-up, it's inventory and character management that matter.

There are a few problems. The graphics can be worryingly cartoony. The AI leaves a little to be desired but, while it lasts, *System Shock 2* is as enjoyable as the finest moments of your life.

■ During the game, you'll come across consoles and cartridges for a wide selection of ancient classics, such as *Tic-Tac-Toe*, *Frogger* and *Pong*.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Looking Glass/Irrational

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Hyperbole-inspiring *Holy Grail*-esque action-RPG. Most lovely – and scary, too

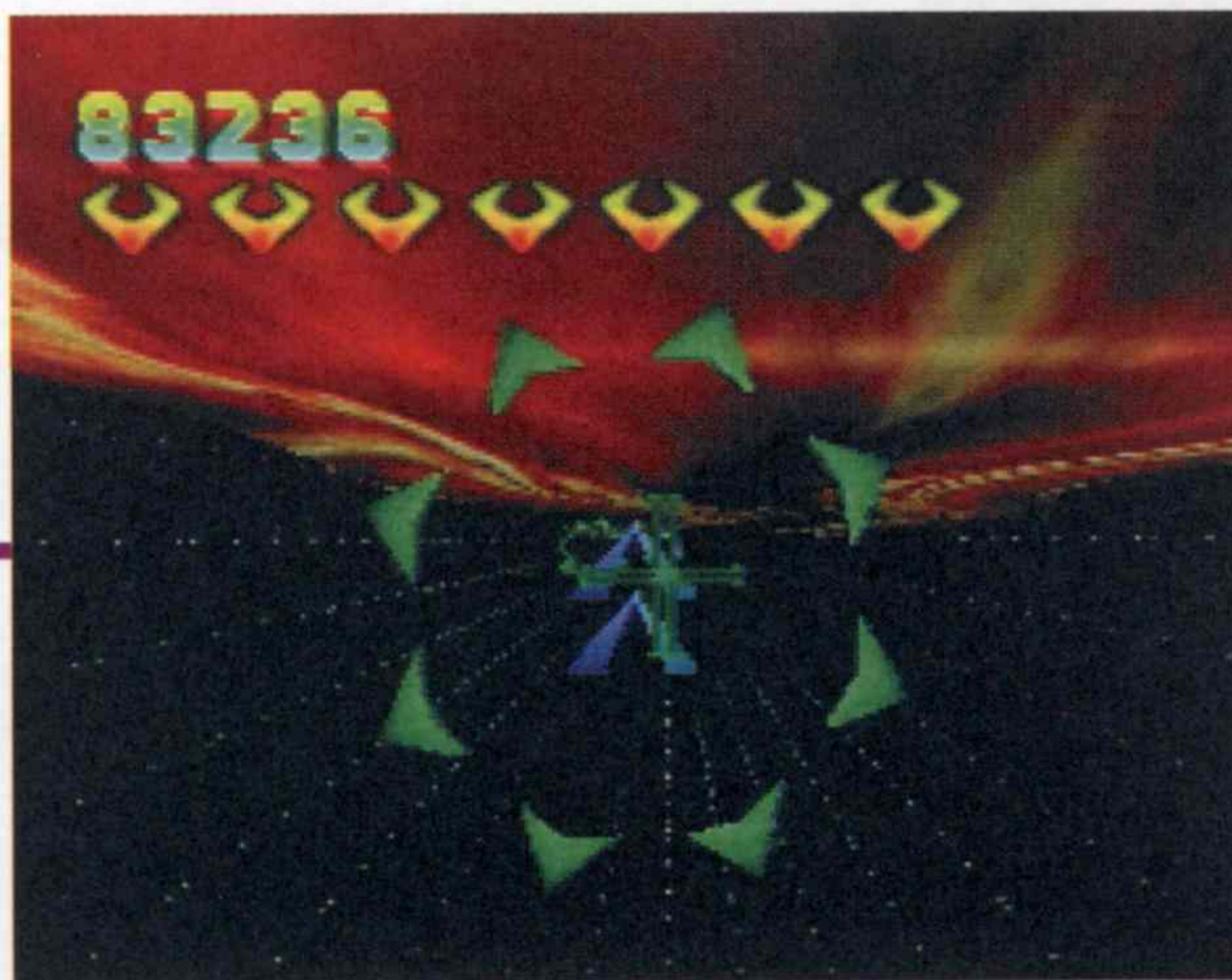
### LOW:

A little short

# 09/10



# TEMPEST 2000



**This is the perfect** old-fashioned game, if old-fashioned means pure playability, rapid reactions, constant key presses, heart-pounding frustration and simple graphics. There's no pre-rendered padding, no waits for loading and no respite from the massive explosions and booming sound effects. It's based on *Tempest*, the game that seduced and helped build the arcade industry in 1980.

*Tempest 2000* faithfully recreates the principals and ideas of the original. Your ship moves around the rim of a tunnel, which recedes into the distance in 3D. Baddies come speeding along the walls toward you, and you have to whiz round zapping them before they reach the end of the tunnel.

The primitive vector graphics and sounds have been supplemented by smooth, shaded colors, huge pixel-based explosions and a dance soundtrack. The game itself throws you in the deep end and then takes the floor away. Just when you've grasped its basic principles, it completely overwhelms you. But each time you play you feel slightly more instinctively connected with your wireframe ship until, eventually, you reach the stage where you don't have to think about how you're going to perform a move, just which move it is you have to make. The bottom line is pure skill. This is rammed home by about level 25 of the 99-level game, where the pulsars are arriving in abundance and your lives are running perilously low...

■ There are two other version of *Tempest*: *Tempest Plus* and *Tempest Duel*.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Interplay

### DEVELOPER:

Atari Interactive

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A faithful reproduction of the arcade classic

### LOW:

Basic graphics

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

LucasArts

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Topping this masterpiece will be nigh on impossible

### LOW:

Could be seen as a retro 2D point-and-click adventure

# 09/10

# THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND



**The Curse of Monkey Island** continues the story of hapless Guybrush Threepwood, the weedy wannabe pirate whose tongue is sharper than his sword. While knowledge of the first two games (*The Secret of Monkey Island* and *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge*) isn't essential, it certainly helps, as many of the characters and in-jokes crop up again here.

After a lengthy bout of conventional adventuring, you're thrown into the game's only attempt at action. This section is probably the weakest, since it recreates the insult sword-fighting idea from *The Secret of Monkey Island*, in which a duel is determined not by fancy swordplay but by responding with the right repartee. After that it's back to the point-and-click of Blood Island.

*COMI's* beauty lies in the multi-layered complexity of the puzzles. To solve one major puzzle you need to complete several smaller ones, and just when you think you've collected the right object or made the right combination, you realize that yet another sub-sub-puzzle needs to be completed before you can continue. Control is a cinch with the use/examine/talk interface and the traditional text-based, multiple-choice dialogue system from the earlier games, which has been reinstated. And you really have to play the whole thing through to appreciate the depth, complexity and sheer genius of the game's design. It's devilishly clever.

From its audacious THX logo parody at the very start to its final, head-busting finish, *The Curse of Monkey Island* is a masterpiece.

■ Press [Shift]+W anytime in the game to win automatically.



# OMIKRON



**This is one of** the most absorbing and pulse-quickening games ever developed. It uses David Bowie, both to provide the soundtrack and to appear in the game, and it models whole city networks, complete with pedestrians to talk to and working traffic systems. It also throws in a few extra game genres for good measure, switching from third-person over-the-shoulder exploration mode to first person shoot-'em-up when occasion demands, and even including a beat-'em-up section.

But the magic lies in the fact that behind all the extra genres, clever city rendering and expensive soundtrack, *Omikron* is really a good old-fashioned adventure. In fact, the story, the use of objects to solve puzzles and the conversations with other characters could all have been done 20 years ago, as a pure text game. What makes *Omikron* so special is the way modern game ideas have been used to enhance that narrative. Here is a game that always feels completely interactive, yet tells a tightly scripted tale. And instead of using the living, breathing city streets and convincing building interiors as some kind of crutch, they're instead employed to make the story as involving as possible. The plot itself is also compelling, beginning with a mystery over the disappearance and subsequent reappearance of the policeman your soul has been dropped into.

There are a few quibbles, but *Omikron* puts you smack bang into the middle of an epic sci-fi movie – think eye-candy with the depth to back it up.

■ If you think you're about to enter a first-person combat environment, take a few seconds to call up your SNEAK and gulp down some food to boost your energy.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Quantic Dream

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Amazing cityscapes and a great blend of puzzles and cinematic scenes

**LOW:**

A linear adventure underneath all the good stuff

09/10



# MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE



**Monkey Island 2** is the sequel to *The Secret of Monkey Island* and once more it drips with warped humor and clever puzzles. Following on from where the first installment left off, you are again thrust into the thigh-length leather boots of Guybrush Threepwood. Your mission is to find a way off Scabb Island, where you have been imprisoned by your previous enemy's best buddy, but it's not as simple as getting in your nippy Tallship 105 and burning, er, rudder. You have no possessions and it's only by wandering around the island stealing anything you can and talking to the unnervingly helpful locals that you'll discover a way off the rat-infested hell-hole.

Yet again this boasts a highly intuitive point-and-click interface which enables you to easily recognize useable objects by scanning the cursor across the screen. You can talk to everyone you meet, pick up useful items and use them at the correct point in the game. Graphically this is again rather juicy. A brash use of color and exaggerated features create the impression of a living, breathing fantasy world.

There are plenty of pirate jokes and clichéd mannerisms as well as the old parrot-on-the-shoulder routine. But *Monkey Island 2* is not only riddled with crazy, and often black, humor; there is also a whole host of graphically extravagant locations to visit, many of which are inter-related – and it will take plenty of careful thought to solve the crafty puzzles. You'll need to put your surreal head on when playing this, as nothing is as straightforward as you would like it to be. When the original *Monkey Island* surfaced it seemed as if LucasArts had reached a peak and things just couldn't get better, but they did.

■ Win a game by pressing [Ctrl] + W during play.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 1995

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A classic game just got better

**LOW:**

Difficult to fault

09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Psygnosis

### DEVELOPER:

No Name Games

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A great 1980s game becomes a great 1990s game

### LOW:

The first 50 levels are a little repetitive

# 09/10

# THE SENTINEL RETURNS



**The Sentinel Returns defies** classification. This is a puzzle game with a touch of the graphic artist M.C. Escher suffering from peyote-induced heebie jeebies, a Lovecraftian *British Bulldog* set in a sinisterly dangerous playground. The titular Sentinel sits on high, turning constantly, surveying its abstract domain. If it catches sight of you, its gaze starts to drain your energy. Your only course of action is to work your way up to its level and absorb it; and therein lies the hinge of the game. Blocks can be created to hop on top of, and absorbed to give you energy, but the one rule that counts demands that your actions can only transpire on a level lower – or equal – to you. It's a constant race against time, then, to elevate yourself to strategically important points and get high enough to quash the Sentinel before he quashes you. The creation of trees provides momentary cover, and the absorption of them gives much-needed energy. And there are some 650 levels of it.

The core of *The Sentinel* has remained largely unchanged. Sure, a few wrinkles have been ironed out, but the difference between the two games is mainly what you'd expect the difference between a 10-year-old Commodore 64 game and a 1998 PC game to be. It looks gorgeous, but disturbingly so, and the music is suitably eerie. The net result is a menacing, ominous atmosphere that suits the vague, abstract nature of the game perfectly. The simplicity of *The Sentinel Returns* hides great tactical subtlety and nail-biting tension.

■ Sentries, hyperspacing meanies and increasingly tricky terrain force you to constantly re-appraise your strategy.



# THEME HOSPITAL



**Theme Hospital, at its** basic level, is *Theme Park* with different graphics.

Instead of a plot of empty green land, you have an empty building. With some cash in the bank you can purchase new plots of land that magically sprout empty, roofless buildings, sometimes with connecting corridors. Inside these buildings you drop any objects that you think might make your hospital that much more hospitable such as bins, potted plants, radiators, benches and drink machines. Such objects keep your visiting guests happy, thus improving your reputation among the burgeoning medical community.

Around such furnishing trinkets you must build rooms of varying purpose. At first you need a GP's office, but you'll soon need further specialist diagnosis rooms to compensate for the GP's restricted knowledge. Treatment rooms should be popped somewhere, too, the first of which is likely to be a pharmacy. As you discover new ailments and their required treatments, new rooms must be built to house scanners and X-ray machines, surgeries, wards, toilets, staff rooms and the machines that go "Ping!" Once you have buildings, rooms, patients and potted plants, you need some staff.

*Theme Hospital* borrows plenty of ideas from *Theme Park* and, eased in gently, it's only a matter of a couple of levels before things get exceptionally hectic. But this whole premise is starting to look a little dated now. Nevertheless, there are few strategy games that offer such a challenge while surrounded by such delightful bonhomie and cute graphics.

■ If your hospital is properly equipped, you can opt to receive emergency cases, for which you will be appropriately rewarded.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A superbly entertaining strategy game

### LOW:

Annoying interface problems

# 09/10

# THE SIMS



**It's uncanny how much** real life is like *The Sims*: prepare yourself for one of the most engrossing games around.

*The Sims* takes the mere statistics of Maxis' previous *SimCity* games and packs on enough polygons to give these fully fledged digital people the illusion of real personalities and emotions. It offers a slice of American suburbia, consisting of less than a dozen families. You create the families and move them in to their homes and the aim is to help them amass enough cash to build that extension or buy that basketball court.

*The Sims* is an apologia for consumerism. Sims might have feelings, but happiness is often found in an expensive hot tub at a lavish party. Sims who spend too much time brooding beneath the porch will soon find themselves without a roof over their head. Helping the Sims

help themselves isn't easy though, because although you can stack directions for them to follow, you can't force them to if they hanker to do something else. But you do get to design their homes, manage their careers and spend all their money. While you can only focus on one family at a time, Sims from your other households often drop by. It's great fun to see two Sims meet and fall in love.

In fact, it's great fun to see the Sims do almost anything. The animation is superb and the interactions endless. While they don't quite inspire the affection they might – the Sims are so realistic they can't be cute – even the most throwaway characters demand attention.

If communication in your own family is achieved through grunts, groans and in-jokes, you'll feel at home here. The Sims don't so much speak as emote, garbling out nonsense phrases that somehow convey how they're feeling, while speech bubbles show you pictorially what they're going on about. The ambient sounds are equally good – music comes from the stereo, the TV burbles endlessly, birds tweet – and they blend smoothly as you roam about the house.

*The Sims* certainly isn't a new idea, but it's close. Previous artificial life games (such as *Creatures* and *Tamagotchi*) have focused on strange lifeforms. By contrast, *The Sims* takes a tip from the C64's limited *Little Computer People*, upping the genre by adopting a real-world setting.

Great as it is, *The Sims* isn't utterly fantastic. While it's hugely addictive, it can get a tiny bit dull. There're not many interesting incidents – a burglary, a fire – and just as in real life they can be solved with a phone call. To improve, it needs stories, and something vaguely like missions.

■ The Sims' Web site offers everything from downloadable furniture and new carpets to tools for designing your own sims. (<http://thesims.electronicarts.com/us/>)



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Maxis

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A special game that saves you the effort of living a life of your own

**LOW:**  
Not as smart as it thinks it is

09/10

# THEME PARK INC.



**Theme Park Inc.** re-captures a little of *Theme Park's* charm. The vital ingredient comes in the new slant that the game has added to its structure. No longer do you just sit and build, becoming more and more prosperous until you get bored and give up. As a budding Assistant Manager, the doddering President of the Park wants you to rise to the top and take his place when he retires. The game has 15 different missions and countless side-challenges that he sets you in order to justify your frequent promotions and help you acquire more shares in the company. As you succeed with each of the Herculean tasks, new grounds of the mother park are opened up for development. The park is split into three themes: The Land of Invention, The Polar Zone and Arabian Nights; each with its own unique rides and characteristics. There's still all the standard hiring, firing and training of staff to contend with, as well as the need to research new rides and utilities to keep your park in tip-top order. And, of course, you can still take a first-person ride in any of your coasters. No change there then.

Hundreds of small tweaks have refined the mechanics of the game but, overall, they don't amount to enough. It's not going to win awards for innovation or technical achievement, but it remains a host of extra fun for *Theme Park* diehards, as well as offering an accessible *Theme* game for those who weren't turned on by Hasbro's more coaster-focused *Rollercoaster Tycoon*.

■ *Theme Park Inc.* has 18 different coaster styles that can be designed and constructed in the Coaster Design Kit.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Electronic Arts

### DEVELOPER:

Bullfrog/Electronic Arts

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

*Theme Park World* with a few new features

### LOW:

Far from extraordinary

**08/10**

# THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT



**Never has a game** snuck so sneakily into our lives and steadfastly improved them. It could have been yet another first-person shoot-'em-up, but instead *Thief* proved that just because we've seen the viewpoint before, we definitely haven't witnessed everything the genre has to offer. Perhaps a more famous example of this kind of game is the PlayStation's *Metal Gear Solid*, although you can be sure that *Thief's* arrival wasn't met with derision at its lack of depth, as happened with Konami's offering. On the contrary, *Thief* is huge and bold, a terrifyingly involving thought process bracketed with heart-stopping action and set pieces.

As a master of the subtle arts, your task is one of utmost security. Your 16 missions are refreshing because you actually have to work out what to do each time. You are given an overall goal – who to kill, what to steal, why to chase this person – but how you go about it is recreated in a bizarre, historically fuzzy shadow world. Each and every level is enormous. You can conceivably complete every mission seeing just a fifth of the entire world, which proves that this is no puzzle game. Whatever your chosen solution, there is always a more subtle or exciting one that you failed to spot, which makes the game seriously compelling. And just like in the real world, you can hide within shadowy doorways, assassinate guards, or simply slip past unnoticed.

*Thief* is both wonderfully designed and realized and is not to be missed.

■ Eidos also released *Thief Gold*, which adds three new levels to the game.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Eidos

### DEVELOPER:

Looking Glass

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The PC at its creepiest with 16 stunning missions

### LOW:

Not to everyone's taste

**09/10**



## THIEF II: THE METAL AGE



**This is certainly not** a lazy cash-in of the first game, but the fundamentals are the same. You play Garrett, a dryly cynical master thief in a pseudo-medieval world with strong steam-punk influences. Rather than direct confrontation, stealth is the key here. And your general aim is to steal stuff.

The level design is sublime. *Thief* could be patchy and only a quarter of the levels were truly great, but there isn't a bad *Thief II* level. They spread outward in leisurely gothic majesty, dwarfing their forefather's already sizable expanse, but rather than having to explore each level to win, you can take various routes and the game will tell you when you've missed things. The larger levels are made more appetizing by the increased detail of Garrett's maps, which describe your locale in far greater depth. This enables you to make an infiltration scheme before taking a step into each guard-filled edifice. It's the primary device in *Thief II's* subtle change toward planning your actions becoming almost as important as performing them. And despite taking the exploration elements of the original, it's astounding how much variety Looking Glass has found hiding within the stealth genre.

Graphically, *Thief* lagged behind its peers when released, and the situation's worse now. But once again, the level design comes to the rescue. While the shadows merely conceal problems, the sheer expanse, so accurately conveyed, can make the game almost unbearably glorious. Of course, sound was never a problem. *Thief* is impossible to play with the volume turned down.

■ Throw the scouting orb round the corner and your view changes to that of the globe. Spin around and observe to your heart's content.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Looking Glass

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An inspirational renewal of a classic and the best sneaking game ever seen

**LOW:**

Poor graphics and not as original as the first *Thief*

09/10

## TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION



**Core has chosen to** set the whole of *The Last Revelation* within Egypt, which minimizes cut-scenes, a break in pace, or confusion about why you are traveling halfway around the world. The game's strength is in its excellent storyline and it makes use of the game engine to create most of the cut-scenes, telling the story of Lara's quest to recapture Set, ruler of evil, who was set free when she removed a secret amulet.

*The Last Revelation* again uses a keyboard control system and if you've played the other *Tomb Raiders* you'll feel right at home here. Lara's moves are still exquisite, including her new additions – swinging on ropes and crawling into small spaces, and her image has been softened significantly by a sneaky curving of her polygons.

The puzzles are disappointing once again – the *Tomb* series hasn't necessarily had the most ingenious brain-teasers, and though much improved here, they still seem too vague or theoretical.

Lara's latest outing is undisputably a good game but the series is in danger of getting stale. More like the original than the slightly disappointing episodes two and three, *The Last Revelation* is good looking and well designed, but the endless Egyptian setting is slightly stifling, even if it is improved by a variety of set-pieces, side stories and character appearances.

■ Genuinely scary, the culmination of the tutorial level when the shifty Von Croy meets his apparent death, is the best bit in the game.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Core Design

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Huge, complex and surprisingly enjoyable

**LOW:**

Even before this episode, the *Tomb Raider* series was in danger of getting stale

09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Activision

**DEVELOPER:**

Neversoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Speedy, violent and exciting

**LOW:**

Not LAN or Internet compatible

**09/10****TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2**

**This game is built** to make you giggle with glee as you grind, kickflip, "pop shove it" or even nose-slide right out of the box. It's a console port, which in some past titles has meant horribly grainy textures and a clunky interface. The latter's still in evidence here, with text entry screens rudely ignoring the fact that you've got a keyboard. But the in-game graphics are anything but grainy. Perhaps a little washed out, and still suffering the same draw-distance problems as its console parents, but not at all grainy. It's also, on a multiplayer tip, rather console-y, featuring split-screen skate-offs as well as a neat turn-taking trick bonanza. It's not LAN or Internet compatible, but sometimes it's nice to sit in front of the same machine with a buddy.

Don't fret if you're friendless, though, because *Tony Hawk's 2* is blessed with an excellent single-player experience. The game blurs the idea of the standard gaming learning curve, and builds one of its own. Tricks are your meat and potatoes, sure, but it's transfers, combinations and special moves that will take you through the game's 10 levels. Mastering them is all part of the fun.

There's a course designer, too, and you can create your own skaters, or even skate as Spiderman. *Tony Hawk's 2* has more tricks, more moves and more violent face-to-floor contact than anyone could ever have hoped for.

■ If you're good enough at this sequel, you'll be able to unlock the three excellent levels from the first game.

**TOTAL ANNIHILATION**

**Total Annihilation's graphics truly** beat the opposition to the floor with tremendous force. *Dark Colony's* sprites may be big and brash but *TA's* polygon marvels are extravagant. Trees, rocks and bushes are all rendered in 3D to positive effect, while the dramatic swoops and soars of the landscape let you know there's as much going on here as meets the eye. And, they may only be little, but rendering all the units from polygons makes such a difference. To watch a battleship retain its spatial integrity as it turns in the water is a special kind of joy. Missile trails sign the scene, laser stabs cut in, gasoline explosions blot and smoke pours from every orifice, muzzles flash, barrels recoil, turrets swivel independently of the crazed hurtlings of the combatants, polygon shards tear and scatter, the whole chaotic tableau is the most visceral experience RTS offers, all backed by intense aural.

Ultimately, apart from the graphics, there are few individual features that single out *TA* as the master of the genre. The resource paths in *Age of Empires* are more sophisticated; the orders in *Dark Reign* are more advanced; the two sides in *Red Alert* are more distinct. But not by enough, for *TA* brings plenty of character to all these features and taken as a whole is the superior being. There are 50 single-player missions, and although they lack the puzzlish innovation of *Red Alert*, they're compensated for with decent, brow-furrowing AI. *TA* stretches the genre's boundaries, but the *coup de grace* is the eclectic troop types and the luscious battle scenes that combine to make it fun.

■ Even though the units are polygonal and even when enormous hordes are cramming onto a screen chock-full of explosions, the slow-down is no worse than in *Red Alert*.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Cavedog

**DEVELOPER:**

Cavedog

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

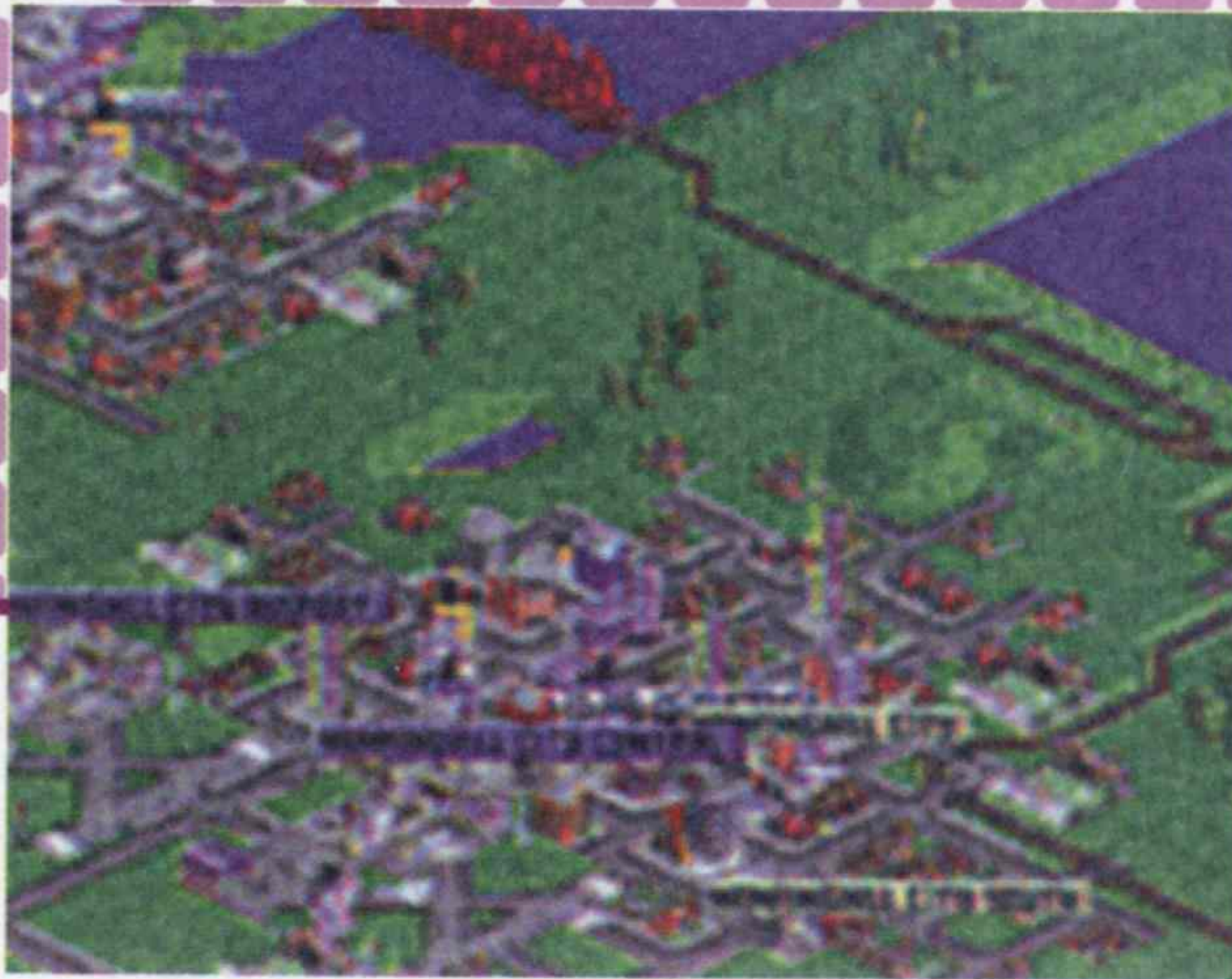
No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**A combination of fabulous graphics, fantastic gameplay and *Red Alert* stretchiness**LOW:**

Not quite as good as some other similar types

**09/10**

# TRANSPORT TYCOON DELUXE



**With its superb isometric graphics,** immense challenge, numerous options and lame jazz music, *Transport Tycoon* was ensured a warm reception when first released. But it wasn't perfect. This update addresses some of the problems associated with the original, as well as including a whole new range of playing modes.

The main aesthetic improvements are centered on the various zones in which you can build. Temperate, Sub-Tropical, Sub-Arctic and Toyland graphics add the variety that was missing in the original, along with slight supply and demand differences. New buildings and industries are included, and all live up to the high standard of the original. A scenery editor has also been supplied for good measure.

Minor tweaks mean you can now buy up land whenever you want and earmark it for development later; you can also refit ships, build new types of industry and communications, and sell shares in your opponent's company. The preset scenarios add another dimension to the game. Each of the four terrain types comes with around 10 preset worlds to play around with. These all seem rather pointless, though, because none of them have predefined goals.

If you already own *Transport Tycoon*, this update doesn't add anything revolutionary to the mix.

- Rename a town "Happy Town" and it will receive a good rating.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Chris Sawyer

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 1996

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An improvement over the original game

**LOW:**

Not enough to make a real difference to the gameplay

09/10



# TRESPASSER



**In *Trespasser* the action** occurs several years after the setting for *The Lost World* (see Michael Crichton's novel and the film of the same name). Dinosaurs roam freely within the aquatic boundaries of their Pacific island. Heroine Anne crash-lands on the beach and must reactivate communications and make her way back to civilization. Along the way, a variety of puzzles must be solved and several dinosaurs must be dealt with. Some are harmless, while others will eat you.

The proceedings start going drastically wrong almost immediately, because, in its quest to implement what is a truly remarkable physics engine, capable of emulating real-world dynamics convincingly, Dreamworks appears to have overlooked critical gameplay aspects.

Commendably, any of the many objects reacts authentically to its environment and can be picked up and used in conjunction with any other item to overcome potential obstacles. However, manipulating Anne's ridiculously long arm can prove awkward. Indeed, attempting to overcome the slightest obstruction becomes laborious and time-consuming. Crucially, the mouse/keyboard control system is not an adequate solution to incorporate all the movement parameters offered.

There are visual dilemmas, too. Even on a Voodoo 2-equipped P400, progression is sluggish, with scenery constantly re-building itself without a hint of subtlety as you approach any environmental structures. And the dinosaurs move awkwardly, too.

*Trespasser* is an impressive technical demo with an obsessively intricate physics engine. It just isn't really a game.

- Velociraptors are the most dangerous of the dinosaurs. Meeting them unarmed is not prudent.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Dreamworks Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

Dreamworks Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

It's got both dinosaurs and guns

**LOW:**

A waste of a remarkable physics engine

02/10



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**

Iguana

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Big, monster-filled fun

**LOW:**

A bit too much walking around

**09/10****TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL**

**Turok 2: Seeds of Evil** is the sequel to *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, which was great because it had over-the-top weaponry, ace graphics and some awesome monsters and animations. It was also poor in that there was lots of fogging, too much wandering around and it had no multiplayer mode.

*Turok 2* has some even more entertaining weaponry and enables you to blow the guts out of monsters – you can even ride a *Styracosaurus* equipped with huge, building-level cannons.

This is a direct port of the N64 original and the problems that afflicted that version are still prevalent. Each of the six killing floors is commendably huge and implements admirably and intelligently designed key-finding and puzzles, but some of them are too big, leading to hair-pulling frustration. And the fogging remains. It's been cut back to a fairly fine mist, but it's still noticeable.

Elsewhere though, *Turok 2* is hugely enjoyable. Although you'll never use all of its 25 weapons, the thought and imagination Iguana has put into *Turok's* arsenal is joyful. Couple these weapons with some splendid animations and various hit-location shenanigans, and you've got some fantastically gruesome carnage. Enemies also act intelligently, making your life difficult. Throw in sniper scopes, underwater weapons, mission objectives, repulsive man-sized insects, huge bosses and a fine multiplayer effort, and *Turok 2* is a huge improvement on the original.

■ The multiplayer options feature Team Play, Capture the Flag and straight-out gib-fests.

**THE TYPING OF THE DEAD**

The original *House of the Dead* was ported to PC in 1999 and, while the conversion was adequate, PC lightguns are rare and unreliable beasts. The PC version of the Dreamcast and arcade hit, *House of the Dead 2* now ships with a dedicated gun. But before that, the only way to play through the *House of the Dead 2* on PC was with *The Typing of the Dead*.

While the basic premise is to type the words, phrases and single letters that float in text-boxes before every zombie, boss and power-up, *The Typing of the Dead* is actually far more complex. As you improve, it's essential to take on the closest or fastest of a group first and if you've started typing on the wrong enemy you can hit [Esc] to toggle to a different attacker. Power-ups grant periods within which all words or phrases will be same genre, which makes a surprising difference to the speed of reaction and input. The faster you type, the more energy you build up in a creeping HUD bar and, once full, this grants you an extra life. Cramp up and the zombies will get close enough to attack. Miss the single letter on a flying axe or leaping maggot and it will cleave or latch onto your face, depleting your life icons. Bosses add yet further depth.

This is as much a serious touch-typing package as it is visceral entertainment. A well-arranged tutorial takes you through increasingly advanced stages of finger ballet, using game characters as tutors. *The Typing of the Dead* is an oddity, but a very entertaining one.

■ The FBI-style agents all bear Dreamcast consoles strapped to their backs, and slung in front of them are Dreamcast keyboards that fire death as they type.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Empire Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

Sega Enterprises Japan

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

An unusual experience, great fun and even (slightly) self-improving

**LOW:**

An odd concept

**08/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Origin

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
Multiplayer only

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

# ULTIMA ONLINE

**There's no doubt about** it, Britannia is a changing place. Once upon a time it was just you and 1,000 non-player characters; pop over there today and you'll find it's you and 1,000 fellow *Ultima* enthusiasts, all multiplayering in the same magical kingdom. The cost and availability of equipment now changes hourly with the constant stream of adventurers buying and selling gear. New shops and guilds spring up on the outskirts of town as players invest their gold in real estate. Whole species come and go as the local wildlife re-spawns, only to get enthusiastically hunted to extinction again. And don't even think of leaving any of your possessions lying around in the hope of picking them up later.

You get a taste of what's in store when you log on for the first time and Autopatch immediately starts downloading all the latest patches. This is a game that automatically updates itself to the latest version. Once you're up to date in the patch department, it's time to create your first character. Here, too, Origin has

achieved new levels of excellence. You even get the skill system from that landmark among games, *Ultima Underworld II*.

Newbie characters materialize in the Britannic town of their choice with 100 gold pieces in their backpack, a set of clothes and a feeble practice weapon.

New characters are exceptionally puny and under-equipped, and no one else is. Developing a worthwhile adventurer is time-consuming and frustrating. Just as well, then, that this is also a spellbindingly addictive RPG, and a milestone in gaming history.

■ *Ultima Online: Third Dawn* is the latest incarnation of the game and brings 3D to the world of Britannia.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
An ever-changing wonder

**LOW:**  
Don't get too attached to your first 12 characters

09/10



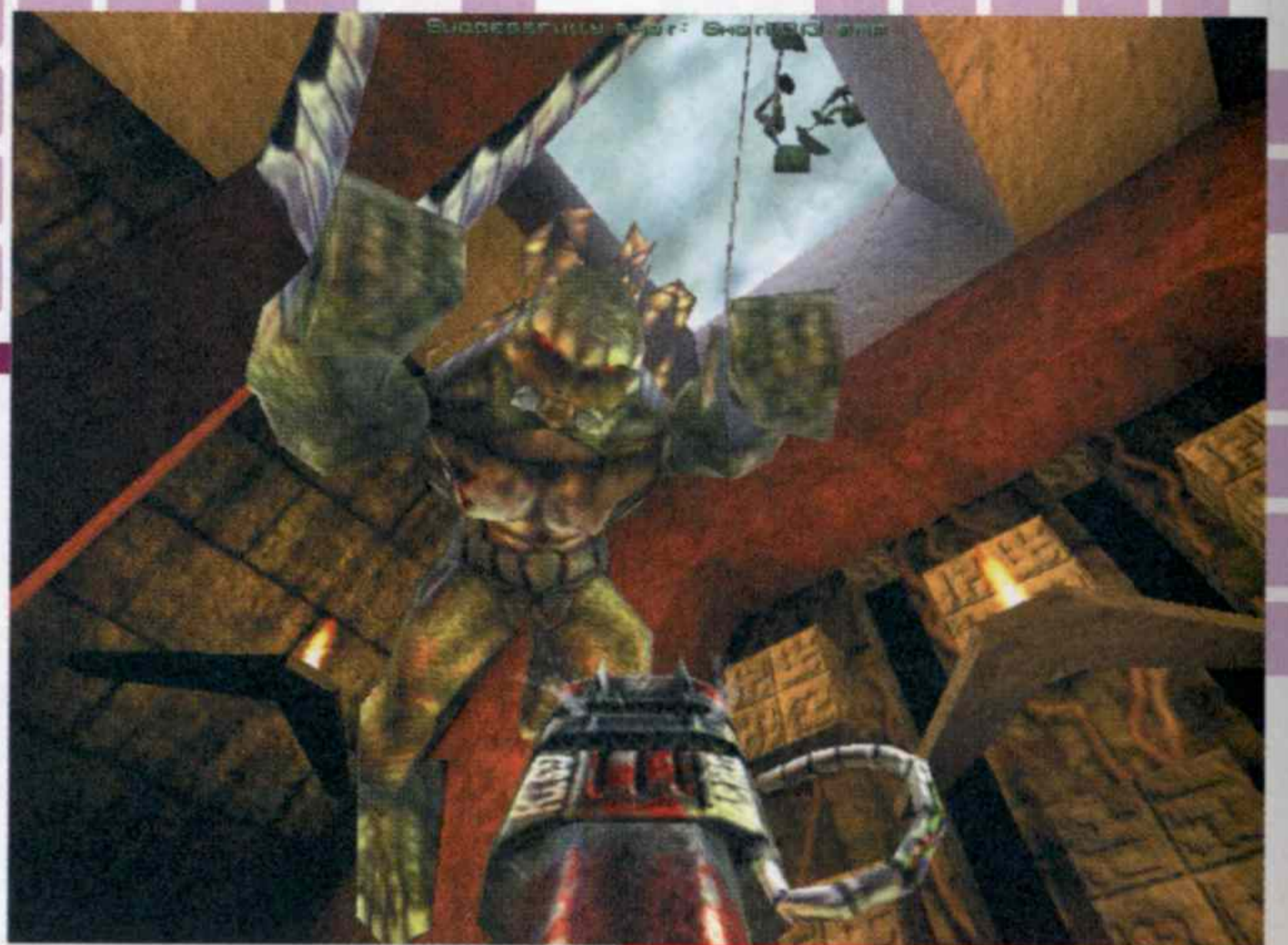
# UNREAL

**Unreal has a lot** to prove, and the indisputable fact that it looks infinitely better than any other 3D game ever released is only the first step. What really matters is how the game plays. Thankfully, Epic has excelled itself in almost every area here: it has created a world, not a series of isolated maps. For example, the opening level is a stunningly atmospheric introduction. Your home is a bunk on a prison ship that has just crash-landed on a planet. When you awake, the ship is almost destroyed, most of the crew are in pieces, and this is your best chance for escape.

You start somewhat leisurely. You have no weapon and there is no one left to kill. But the moans of the dying crew gradually give way to the screams of people being tortured and ripped apart. At the end of the first level, you get your first glimpse of the enemy, a Skaarj. Following him around the dimly lit corridors, you catch glimpses of him, but he soon outruns you. These solitary moments give you the opportunity to find a weapon, regain your health and collect some armor before the forthcoming onslaught from the next 25 or so levels. Like *Quake II*, the first level is comfortably small, but later areas can easily take about two hours to complete.

From conception through to realization, *Unreal* demonstrates meticulous thought and attention to detail. It really is hard to communicate how splendid *Unreal* looks and (almost always) plays. It deserves to sit alongside *Quake II*. Wonderful.

■ At the heart of *Unreal* is an extremely powerful level editor, a version of which is included with the game.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
GT

**DEVELOPER:**  
Epic MegaGames

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Own the PC it deserves, and you will be rewarded with an astounding game

**LOW:**  
There's little to find fault with

09/10



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

GT

### DEVELOPER:

Epic MegaGames

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Feature-packed, fast and sublime to look at

### LOW:

Not as testing as it should be in single player

# 09/10



**A camera fly-by** embarks on a seamless journey through an underground parking garage, rising into the neon glare of a futuristic, if subtly decaying, urban sprawl. You enter a faceless behemoth of a skyscraper, home to a sinister corporation. "Fifty years have passed since the founding of deathmatch," you're told. "The time has come to prove you are the best..." So begins the impressive intro sequence.

*Tournament* is a supremely well-designed, fast and gloriously attractive game, crammed with new features, and which introduces the finest bot AI yet to grace a first-person shoot-'em-up.

If you're connected to the Internet, *Tournament's* potential is immense. Thanks to some wonderfully logical design, it's a pleasure to navigate the front-end interface, and the nearest game server is two mouse clicks away.

The action in *Unreal Tournament* is fast, furious and potentially confusing. When bots are being used to make up the numbers, don't expect to be able to distinguish them from human allies or opponents. They're just as vocal about their

# UNREAL TOURNAMENT

locations and circumstances, and you can be overwhelmed by the constant radio chatter of the AIs as they insult their foes, shout for back-up or revel in their latest kill.

Facing insurmountable odds, and with their team-mates slaughtered, single bots will turn tail and run in virtual fear; they'll use the new teleporting translocator gun to create ingenious short-cuts through the levels and, most spookily of all, they'll actually learn your style of play.

Yet despite the unforgiving pace of *Tournament's* games, long-term success requires tactical thought. Orders can be given on the fly by selecting from a menu system that includes everything from general strategies to personal messages. It's almost too comprehensive a system, though: it can be time-consuming, and therefore fatal, to use in-game, so you're better off binding macro commands to specific keys.

The weapons have been polished and tweaked beyond all recognition. Each has a primary and secondary fire mode and all are useful according to specific conditions. The close-combat Impact Hammer provides an effective one-hit kill; the basic Enforcer pistols can be doubled and used side-on for a faster rate of fire; and the ASMD Shock Rifle has a fearsome Railgun-style action. The two real hits, though, are the Redeemer and the Sniper Rifle.

*Unreal Tournament* is packed with such features. If you're new to team games,

*Unreal Tournament* is the perfect place to start, and, if you're already serious about them, you should buy it immediately.

■ Press ` or ~ to bring down the console, then type: "iamtheone" to activate cheat mode; "allammo" to get all ammo; "god" for God mode; "loaded" for all weapons.



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## V-RALLY 2: EXPERT EDITION

**This is unapologetically an** arcade game, but there's no need for it to even begin to apologize when it does what it sets out to do so admirably well. You have a choice of 12 different countries to race in, more than 25 cars (from Skodas to Nissans, Renaults to Toyotas), and four different modes of play (Time Trial, Arcade, V-Rally Cup and Championship), each containing multiple stages. And the choices don't end there.

Every car can be fiddled with in the most personal manner. From brakes to tires to suspension, you can change settings easily; and it's all set out in graduated bars. Beef up one setting, and the other goes down – simple. *V-Rally 2* scores points for recognizing that not all racing games have to be anal.

It handles surprisingly well, too, despite its blatant arcadeness. In Arcade, you can bounce and roll your car to your heart's content and still catch up with the rest of the pack after a few good curves. But in the more serious incarnations of play, any damage will affect your performance and hence your chances of winning. And, while there's no money management, repairs are limited by time, so there's only so much you can knock back into shape before the next race.

The thing that makes *V-Rally 2* stand out from the usual PlayStation-to-PC ports is the incredible amount of fun it provides. That the graphics are glitchy and the sound a bit dodgy is completely forgivable when you're enjoying yourself this much. It's no competitor for *Grand Prix 3*, but it is immensely enjoyable.

■ *V-Rally 2* enables you to design your own tracks, too.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**  
Eden Studios

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Pure bouncy arcade fun

**LOW:**  
A bit simple for hardcore fans

08/10

## VIRTUAL POOL 3



The "Virtual" tag, which probably seemed kinda "now" when the original game appeared seven years ago, these days smells like a leftover of antiquated cyber-lingo. Nonetheless, this third incarnation of Interplay's top-selling cue sim preserves not just the tacky monicker but also the beautiful playability of its late 20th-century forbears, and is worthy of respect.

There are three great things about *Virtual Pool*. First, there's its use of the mouse to implement a quasi-realistic cueing action. Second, there's a spanking 3D engine. Updated once more, *Virtual Pool 3*'s ball visuals are simply scrumptious. Third, and finally, there's the fact that the game works so perfectly over the Internet. No latency problems can ruin a game of *Virtual Pool*. Turn-taking action means there's no time-critical info being transmitted. But the turns are just short enough to prevent finger-drumming.

*Virtual Pool 3* is well integrated with GameSpy Arcade, so it's easy to set up or join a game – and you'll find plenty to choose from. Having achieved so much, however, it lets itself down in two respects. First, the general presentation is amateurish, with messy menu screens and unfocused interfaces. And, second, its attempt to construct a single-player Career mode, in which you bet against increasingly skilled opponents, falls flat. As you're locked into one kind of game, all potential for rule-based variety is neglected. Ignore all this silliness, though, get online, and enjoy some satisfying stick-on-ball action.

■ Amuse yourself by checking out possible shots while your opponent is making their move.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**  
Celeris

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Excellent when played over the Internet

**LOW:**  
Amateurish presentation with a poor single-player mode

08/10

# WARCRAFT II



**This is an awesome** game that takes the basic concepts of its predecessor and dramatically improves them. *Warcraft II* is a game of *SimCity*-style simulation and it's a tricky, funny, clichéd, but wonderful romp.

The game is played level by level and set against a background of epic warfare between orcs and mankind. The bloodthirsty orcs are invading the kingdom of Azeroth and you have to stop them. Or be them, if you prefer. You can choose to play as either side and there is a complete set of levels for both included. Early levels are simple and enable you to get the hang of the controls, while later levels introduce more and more complicated strategies as well as new and more powerful units. And each level has objectives; in some, you have to destroy your opponent, in others, simply building certain installations is enough. Sometimes, you may have to rescue hostages.

Imagine a checklist of what makes a great game and *Warcraft II* has it all. It's got a charmingly grungy fantasy background, ably supported by hammy over-acting from the script readers. It's got a simple, yet elegant control system. It's got nail-bitingly tense moments when you feel overwhelmed by enemy forces. It's got tremendously satisfying moments when you're pounding your enemies into rubble and action on land, sea and air. And it's got intelligent level design. But there's more: up to eight players can play linked together, competing over a single level for supremacy in some of the most fantastically fun action you'll ever have. And when you've finished all the levels provided, you can create more with the level editor.

■ Press [Enter] during play. Type in your code, and hit [Enter]: "it is a good day to die" - for god mode; "deck me out" - to power up all units; "every little thing she does" - to power up your magic.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Blizzard

### DEVELOPER:

Blizzard

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1996

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Classy, unadulterated enjoyment. Orc bashing has never been so much fun

### LOW:

It's hard to fault this title

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Infogrames

### DEVELOPER:

DID

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Get down your local recruiting office and sign it up now

### LOW:

No in-game saves, no mouse-control option and little variety in the missions

# 09/10

# WARGASM



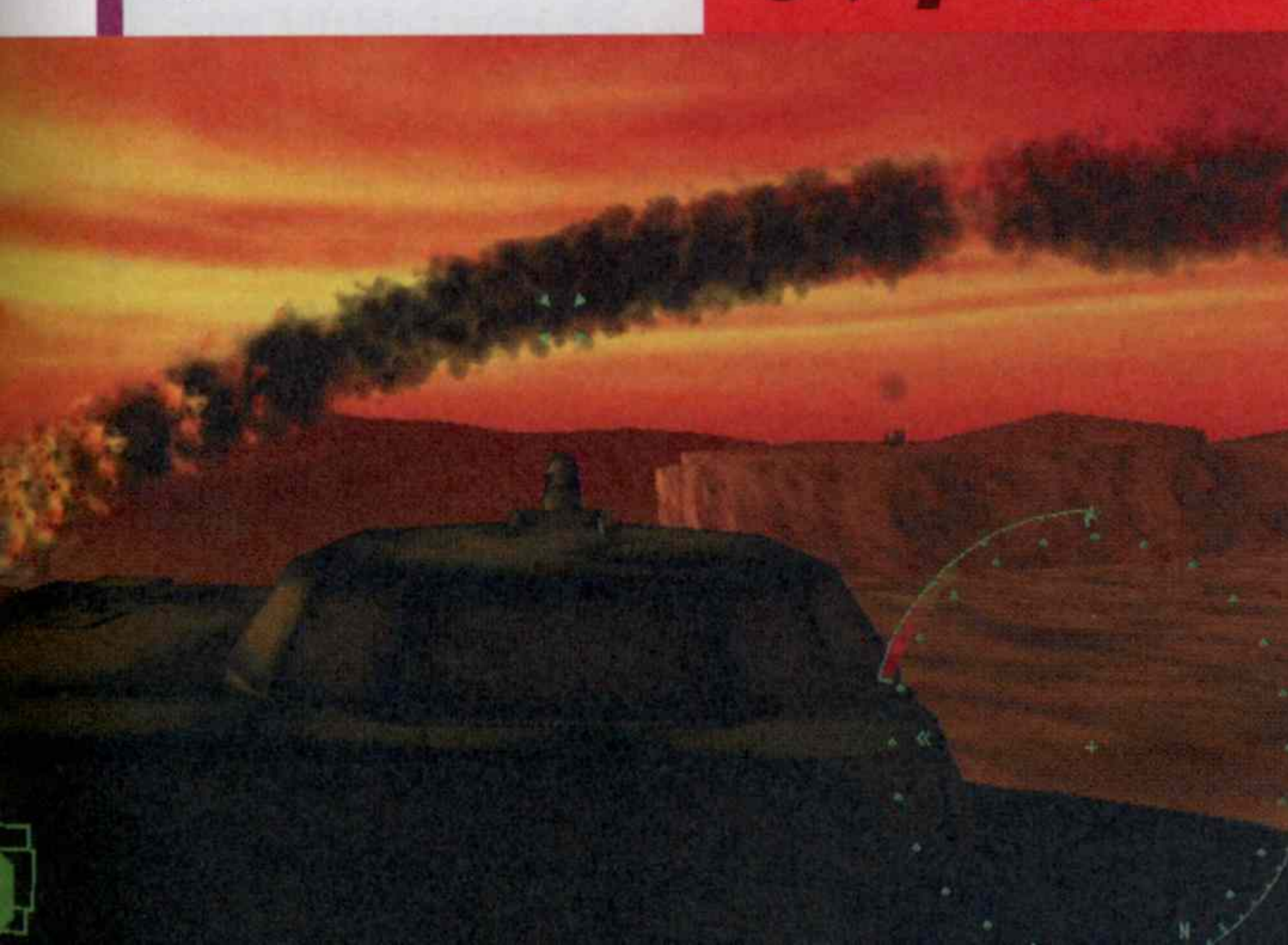
**Developer DID has put** war to music. Suddenly the most barbaric and horrifying act known to man, namely wanton slaughter on an industrial scale, is seemingly justified by a rousing classical score that'll make you feel like you're on a divine mission of righteous purification. Little can match the exhilaration of bouncing a 40-ton tank over sand dunes, while the furious tempo of Wagner possesses your battle-crazed mind.

Effectively, *Wargasm* is a CNN simulator. A fast-paced, easily accessible, total-war game, that charges you with command of air and land forces over a variety of foreign fields. The action is arcade through and through, so if you can master a joystick then you can play *Wargasm* from the get-go.

The campaign begins with a chocolate box selection of continents for you to pick off one by one. Each zone is a mini-campaign in itself, breaking down into a series of linked missions with different objectives, terrain, weather and levels of resistance to take into account. For each mission you select a designer force from the pool of war-mongery at your disposal. Once in the field, you battle to victory through a combination of chaotic first-person combat and real-time strategy play via the tactical map. And for all their arcade readiness, the missions are rarely straightforward.

Regardless of a few imperfections, though, *Wargasm* is a great game, both innovative and exciting.

■ Level passwords: Level One - Cheese; Level Two - Toast; Level Three - Butties; Level Four - Kebab; Level Five - Gateaux.



# WARZONE 2100



**Pump oil, build a base,** research technology and churn out tanks in a frantic arms race against an enemy doing much the same – there’s not much new in *Warzone 2100*, but the true 3D engine means that a click of the right mouse button enables you to waltz around the landscape viewing the action from any rude angle you like. Suddenly the battle intensity heightens several degrees as you hunker down with your tanks and watch them snake along the valley floor.

Customizable AI can tell your tanks to automatically return for repair when they’ve been heavily damaged; mobile repair units automatically fix vehicles in the field; VTOLs can be given intercept missions so they will independently attack incoming tank columns; and massed artillery can stay behind the front lines by locking to a radar unit that brings down fire support as you command. The only danger is that you could be swamped trying to cope with all the new elements. Fortunately, the interface is brilliantly designed to keep frustration at bay. The campaigns are seamless, too, with a strong storyline running through every mission. And, in a masterstroke, each mission unfolds directly from the last, so your base evolves along with the campaign, rather than you having to start from scratch every time.

But despite the lavish design, *Warzone 2100* is still similar to *C&C* underneath it all.

■ Researching new technology enables you to discover new unit components that you can then combine into your own customized engines of war.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Pumpkin

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

One of the best real-time strategy games around

**LOW:**

RTS types are wearing a bit thin these days

09/10



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# WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?



*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* is, simply, the ultimate TV game show. While others tried (and failed) to hook audiences with ever more elaborate ideas, *Millionaire* brilliantly distilled the quiz-show concept to its simplest, most compelling form.

The game is a faithful copy of the show, though things are a tad basic – there’s little chrome beyond some rendered animations of the show’s (deserted) set, and the familiar melodramatic music. A voice-over Regis Philbin is on hand to introduce the questions, but unlike the host in *You Don’t Know Jack*, you don’t actually hear him ask them – sure to disappoint die-hard fans of The Reege. Only the phone-a-friend lifeline, in which Regis chit-chats with a virtual buddy, gives some indication of the atmosphere Jellyvision could have created, given more time and resources.

Despite its threadbare production, *Millionaire* exhibits the same inexplicable allure as the TV show – games attract unprecedented crowds of onlookers. Arguments erupt over answers, cries of “Noooooo!” going up in unison as Regis, after his now-trademark interminable pause, says, “I’m so sorry, that’s not the correct answer.” We even did a frantic real-life “phone-a-friend” when confronted with a particularly thorny million-dollar question. All proof that the game must be doing something right, no matter how simple it may be.

The game’s only stumbling point might be its apparent paucity of questions. It would be great if users could download new ones.

■ The game’s packaging refuses to reveal how many questions are included, stating only that there are “hundreds.”

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Buena Vista

**DEVELOPER:**

Jellyvision

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-10

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An accurate reproduction of the TV gameshow

**LOW:**

You don’t win any money

08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Origin

### DEVELOPER:

Origin

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 1995

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

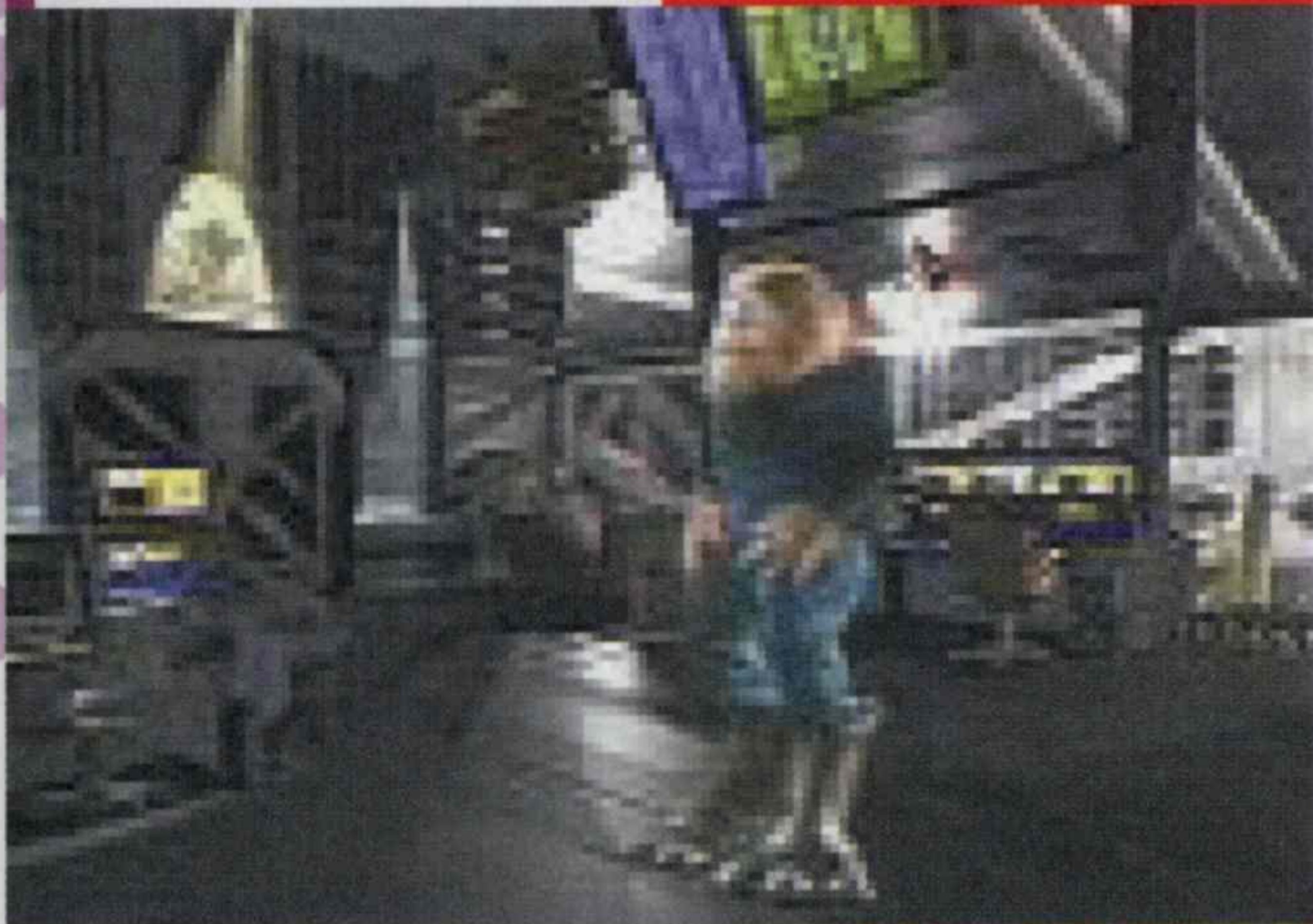
### HIGH:

A brilliant game surrounded by practically an entire movie

### LOW:

Long waits between loading movie and space flight sections

# 10/10



# WING COMMANDER III: HEART OF THE TIGER



**This is one of** the most elaborate and ambitious PC games ever created, and the first to stake a legitimate claim to the term interactive movie. The previous *Wing Commander* games were brave attempts, but the technology available to them limited the designer's aspirations. Gone are the cartoony graphics and corny dialogue that made the old cinematic sequences so unconvincing, to be replaced here by proper Hollywood stars, some incredible sets and, most importantly, a fully realized, well-structured and believable story.

Missions range from simple dogfights to assaults on enemy capital ships and military bases, but no matter how complex a mission may seem, the arcade feel is never lost. Quick reactions and a steady hand are the most crucial qualities you need. Combat is fast, the enemy AI challenging, the missions are varied and engaging, and everything feels right – the ships handle well, weapons are sufficiently meaty and the pyrotechnics are stunning.

There is a price to pay for all this, though. Apart from the heavyweight machine you'll need to run it, there's a long wait every time you actually fly a mission. It's not a problem in the cinematic sections, but it can be annoying in combat.

The secret of the game's success, though, is that the cinematic sections provide a rich and compelling backdrop to the combat. *Wing Commander III* gives LucasArts' finest a run for their money.

■ Concentrate on one Kilrathi ship at a time, wearing its shields down, then punching holes in the unprotected hull.

# WORMS ARMAGEDDON



**Worms Armageddon** feels as fresh now as the original ever did. Visually, little has changed for this third installment. Garish, cartoony landscapes? Check. Cuter-than-thou worms with thousands of frames of animation and Joe Pasquale voices? Check. Interface, wind effects and weapon graphics that remain largely unchanged? You guessed it.

In fact, a critical review of the game is almost redundant because if you've played either of the two originals you'll know what to expect. Yourself, along with either a friend, the computer, or both, select a team of worms with which to do battle in turn-based fashion. Once a map's selected, your worms are positioned in a random fashion, then it's a simple case of exchanging comically offensive blows until one team is left standing.

The first two games have always been criticized for their lack of a decent single-player game. The AI was always mediocre at best – worms turned from crack shots to suicidal fools in the same game, and the five-worm play-off situations soon became tiresome. Team 17 has tackled these issues, and the result has breathed new life into the formula. *Armageddon* is sure to be popular with anyone who's previously avoided the games for their predominantly multiplayer focus. Yet it's the console-like aspect of the game that's ultimately so likable. Criticisms are few, although the fact that the "invisible terrain" problem hasn't been sorted out is unforgivable. Minuscule pixels of landscape still float in mid-air after their surroundings have been destroyed, and bazooka or mortar shots sometimes blow up in your face. That aside, *Worms Armageddon* is hugely enjoyable.

■ The older weapons, such as Grenades and Dynamite, remain the best.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Team 17

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Always challenging, often amusing and only a little bit frustrating

### LOW:

The invisible terrain problem has still not been solved

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Gollop Brothers

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# X-COM: APOCALYPSE



**Welcome to 2084 – 40** years after the unwelcome, alien invasion of *X-COM: Terror From the Deep*. Since the end of the Second Alien War humanity has utilized the scientific revolutions brought about by captured alien equipment to expand into space. In the meantime, however, Earth's climate and environment, already reeling from the damage done by industry, has been unable to recover from the aliens' aborted terraforming effort. The vast majority of the population has emigrated to the new colony worlds, leaving a single island of humanity in the vast city of Mega-Primus. And now even that is under threat from a third alien menace. You must protect the city and, at the same time, learn everything you can about the aliens in order to turn this knowledge against them.

*Apocalypse* is a combination of *Civilization II*-style advance planning strategy and *Syndicate*-style real-time tactical combat, based on an updated engine. If you've played the previous *X-COM* games,

*Apocalypse* gives a real sense of continuity. There are dozens of little touches that add to the feeling of being part of an on-going story. *Apocalypse* has all the appeal of the previous *X-COM* games, together with a whole lot more of its own. It's a perfect example of what a sequel should be – something that takes all that was good about the original, fixes what was bad, before improving and adding to it in almost every way.

■ Keep trying the same tricks and your *X-COM* troops will end up in trouble, because the aliens learn your tactics and adapt to them.

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Everything that made the original great, plus more

**LOW:**

Not much to find fault with

09/10



# X-COM: INTERCEPTOR



**This is a brilliant** game, but it's complicated, too. There have been three previous *X-COM*-themed titles, but *X-COM: Interceptor* is the first game in the series to be developed in the US by Microprose, rather than in France by the Gollop Brothers. Accordingly, it is a lot like its ancestors in some ways – and considerably different from them in others.

The main link between all the *X-COM* titles is their twin-game structure. In each case, a strategic overview has you managing bases, preparing your forces for action and equipping them with the latest technology. Then, upon engagement with an enemy, the action zooms in to enable the battle to be fought in close-up detail. The first two games (*UFO: Enemy Unknown* and *X-COM: Terror From the Deep*) switch to a turn-based isometric perspective for combat; *X-COM: Apocalypse* offers the choice of turn-based or real-time skirmishing. *X-COM: Interceptor*, though, whisks you into the thick of real-time 3D space combat battles, and instead of pointing and clicking to move your squads, you're behind the joystick of a spaceship, hurling bolts of concentrated laser death at aliens. You get to direct an entire interstellar war and participate in the battles. This dual-game structure could easily have been schizophrenic and disjointed, but has instead been implemented with genius-like success. Your actions in both strategic and real-time modes impact perfectly on each other; success in one leads to success in another.

The only thing wrong with *Interceptor* is that you can't merge your fleets; and the combat is prone to slowing down, especially when there's a base on screen. Still, it remains one of the most addictive experiences since *Elite*.

■ You've got to keep all your space stations up to date, as time passes and the aliens get stronger.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Microprose

**DEVELOPER:**

Microprose

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

This game has made the world a better place

**LOW:**

You can't merge your fleets and combat slows down

09/10



# X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP



**UFO: Enemy Unknown** offered a superb blend of strategy and tactical combat and the baddies were a group of aliens from the old-skool – they wanted Earth, and they meant to take it from us, preferably causing a great deal of death and destruction in the process. You had to stop them.

The story continues in *X-COM: Terror From the Deep*. You're again in charge of X-COM, the top-secret multi-national defense agency. It's 2040 and there are reports of ships disappearing without trace, ports being attacked and ransacked, abnormal sonar contacts being reported in seas all over the world, and sightings of weird humanoid creatures. You have to stop whoever's responsible for these strange events.

Like the original game, *X-COM: Terror From the Deep* puts good old-fashioned gameplay ahead of glitzy presentation and slick animated sequences. While sticking to the formula of the original, just about every part of *X-COM* has been tweaked and improved. The balance of the tactical combat section has been made more challenging, the aliens are tougher and more intelligent, and the weapons available to both sides are weaker. To succeed now takes clever tactics, rather than walking in, guns blazing. There are more missions, more terrains and more multi-part sections.

Overall, *X-COM: Terror From the Deep* is a remarkable combination of strategy, management and tactical elements, with a gripping story and unsettling atmosphere.

■ At the BattleScape screen, press [Ctrl] + C to complete the current level and advance to the next one.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Microprose

### DEVELOPER:

Microprose

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1995

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Eerie atmosphere, lovely graphics and challenging gameplay

### LOW:

Some previously developed technology missing

09/10

# STAR WARS: X-WING ALLIANCE



**X-Wing Alliance** plants its story within the fertile ground of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, culminating in a recreation of the climactic battle against the fully operational Death Star II above the forest moon of Endor. However, the game starts in unfamiliar territory. As Ace Azzameen, you are the youngest child of a family of traders, a family that has no allegiance to the Rebellion but no love of the Empire either. Early sorties involve defense against arch rivals, the Viraxo, a family with close Imperial ties, who eventually trap you into joining the Rebellion and fleeing your home base. Thus, you are about eight surprisingly tough missions in before you even get to play in a Rebel ship, and before you are entitled to use the Proving Grounds – a series of loops and laser placements designed to improve your reactions and teach you the importance of speed, shields and laser energy.

You join the Rebels soon after the Battle of Hoth, where a worrying proportion of the army is missing. Seven battles and nearly 50 missions later, you finally engage the Empire in a full-on assault at Endor. But still you can't forget your family. Throughout the game you are contacted by loved ones to assist you in getting your own back on the Viraxo. The mix of the two stories is inspired, but one of *Alliance's* few weaknesses is that it is too carefully scripted.

Essentially, *X-Wing Alliance* is a complex arcade game of skill, action and emotion.

■ When your Tour of Duty is getting a bit too much, you can retire to the simulation room to play within the safety of a stationary machine.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

LucasArts

### DEVELOPER:

Totally Games

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-multiplayer

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A superb, demanding reworking of both the films and the original *X-Wing*

### LOW:

May be too hard for some

09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## X-WING VS. TIE FIGHTER



In *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter*, LucasArts has created a system that enables you to join forces with other players and crush the Rebellion together as Imperial soldiers, if you so choose. The system places you within the cockpit of a host of *Star Wars* starships – TIE Fighters, Bombers, Interceptors, Gunboats, X, Y and A-Wings and Z-95 Headhunters.

The level of detail, from the smallest containers to the massive Star Destroyers – all in SVGA – is incredible. Plus it zips along even on a lowly P90. Where the game really excels, though, is with the multiplayer option. Going head to head or working as a team, *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter* really makes you feel like you're there. There's nothing more satisfying than dogfighting with your friends, or joining forces with other pilots around the universe to fly incursions against enemy strongholds.

Triathlon and Mixed-Melee Pentathlon missions await those willing to test their talents to the limit. There's also a healthy collection of old-fashioned goal-oriented combat missions, with the kinds of objectives familiar to any seasoned *X-Wing* or *TIE Fighter* player. There are a total of 16 missions under the Combat section, all of which can be tackled with any combination of human and computer players on either side. Finally, the Battles section enables you to play through a campaign of the individual Combat missions, with an on-going score kept of Rebel and Imperial victories.

*X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter* is one of the best multiplayer PC games ever.

■ Reduce your throttle when turning tight against an opponent, but not below one-third, and you will almost always cut inside your enemy for a sweet deflection shot.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

Totally Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-multiplayer

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Spectacular, immersive and almost inconceivably good for more than one warrior

**LOW:**

Little to fault

10/10

## ZEUS: MASTER OF OLYMPUS

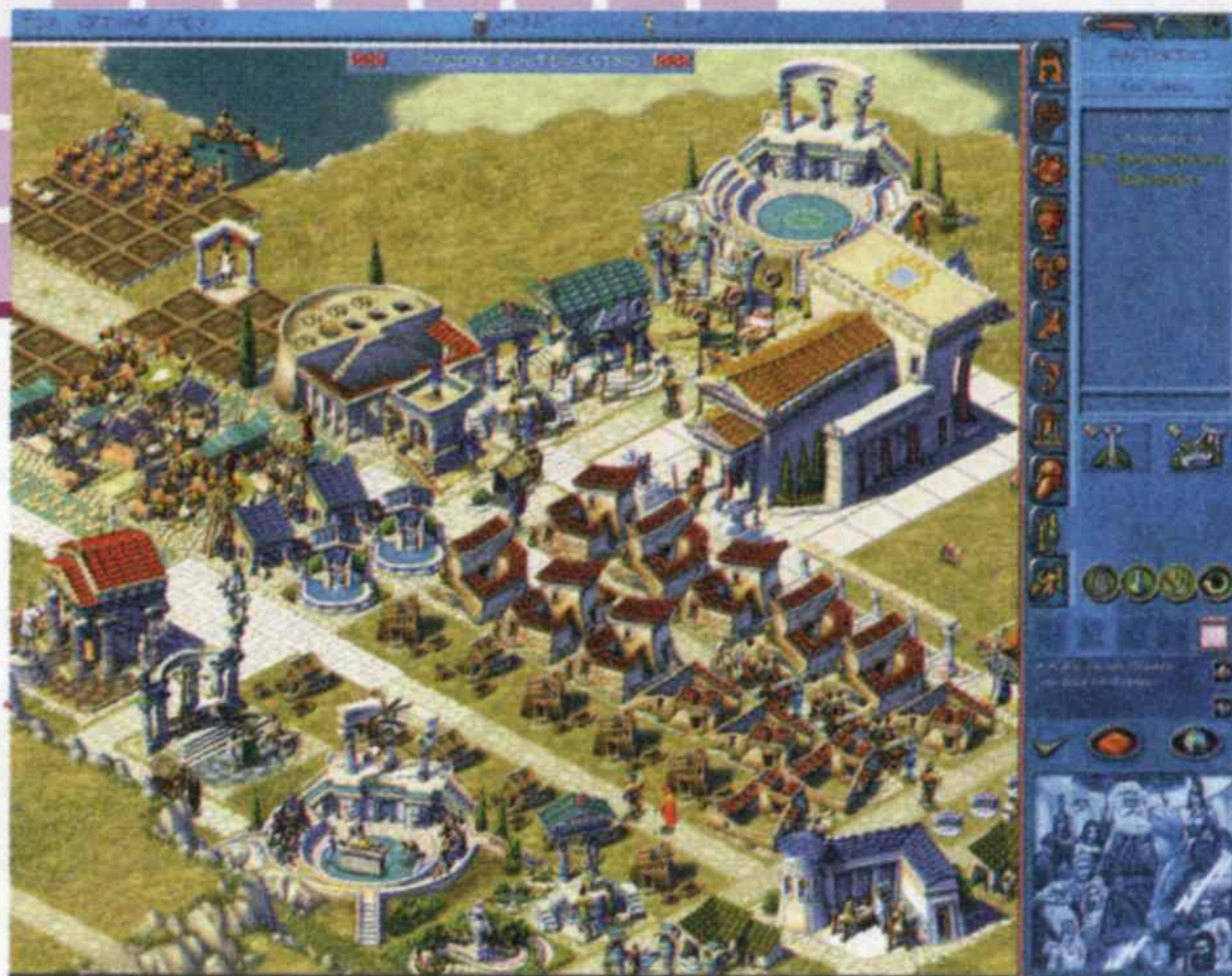


After governing cities throughout the Roman Empire, and overseeing the rise and fall of Ancient Egypt in *Caesar III* and *Pharaoh*, you can consort with the gods in *Zeus*, Impressions' next city builder. The previous games required you to take on the role of city governor and build thriving metropolises, and the same is true here.

*Zeus* retains the same game engine, and the tutorial missions are now an optional extra for newcomers. Each new adventure works the same – to build a city first requires workers, so you need to build some housing. The workers need food, so build a few farms, granaries and then a market to distribute the food. Now the workers need entertainment, education, health and so on. As your town improves its service industry, so the quality and size of housing gets better – requiring an even better service industry to keep it all going. The key is constant tweaking to maintain balance, while retaining the larger mission goals, such as popularity or military might.

It's disappointing that *Zeus* is so similar to its predecessors, but it's still different enough to justify a full-price release. There are marked improvements in all areas, including the ability to pray directly to the gods and the introduction of diplomacy with potential foes and allies. More control is also given over to types of housing built and your standing army, and mythical heroes and gods can help sort out troublemakers. Overall more charming than *Caesar III* and *Pharaoh*, *Zeus* is also very challenging.

■ Combat systems are the best in the series, and you can send your troops to march against and conquer rival cities.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sierra

**DEVELOPER:**

Impressions Games

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Time consuming, challenging and an improvement over the previous game, *Pharaoh*

**LOW:**

Historically inaccurate

08/10

# PC CHALLENGES



## BLACK & WHITE

### POTTY TRAINING

**Here's a fun challenge** – see if you can make your creature destroy an entire town using only its bowels.

You'll need to feed it plenty of humans and encourage it to use the sides of houses as a toilet. After a good feed, it'll be able to flatten a large building with a single motion.

## CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

### CINDERELLA STORY

**Fancy yourself as a soccer guru?** Picking Real Madrid and winning the Champions League five times in a row

is all very well, but can you do the biz on a shoestring budget? Playing as non-league Hednesford Town, your challenge is to qualify for Europe within 15 years.



## DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

### GO RAMBO

**The easy way to finish** *Delta Force* is by using the sniper rifle to clean up most of the enemies before you

move in. But that's for wimps. Real players take the heaviest weaponry available and make like Stallone, blasting everything that moves. Are you up to the job?

## DEUS EX

### STEALTH MASTER

**Get back to the** training center to practice your sneaking skills. Go the exercise where you have to avoid

the guards, and see how long you can mess with their minds by knocking over vases and making spooky noises without getting spotted. Stay in the shadows.



## GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

### RIPPER BAITING

**If you're good at** avoiding Rippers, you'll like this one. Find a level with a lot of Ripper bases (almost any will

do) and fire a few shots to make those worms come out and play. Herd them into as tight a group as possible and see how many you can wipe out with a single missile.

## HITMAN

### BODY OF EVIDENCE

**The restaurant level is** full of opportunities to make a killing. See how many people you can waste before

the guards notice something's wrong. To make it more interesting, hide the bodies in public areas – under chairs, in the toilets, behind curtains and so on.



## MYTH II

### GREAT DORFS O' FIRE

**Go to the Stair** level and set yourself up at the first ambush point. The challenge here is to see how far you

can blast a body part, preferably a skull, into orbit. Use enough satchel charges and you'll be able to send one flying all the way to the second ambush point!

## ONI

### I KNOW KUNG FU?

**Remember the part of** *Oni* that looks a lot like the lobby scene in *The Matrix*? You can pretend you're Keanu

Reeves or Carrie Ann Moss by revisiting it and trying to survive for as long as possible by dodging bullets. Go on – you're faster than that.



## SIMCITY 3000

### MASS EXODUS

**Save a copy of** your personal city and inflict massive environmental damage by building the heaviest, dirtiest

industries and turning the best neighborhoods into slums. See how quickly you can persuade 95% of your citizens to pack up and move somewhere cleaner.

## THE SIMS

### HEAVEN AND HELL

**Building the perfect house** for your Sims is as easy as building a deeply unpleasant dungeon of doom, but

can you combine both in one dwelling? Create utopia in one-half of the house, and make the other a living hell. Don't forget to let your Sims see how the other half lives!



## PC INFO BURST

Ahh, the PC. *PC Gamer UK* magazine has reviewed over 2,200 PC games since its inception in 1994. Sure, lots of those were budget re-releases, and some were the kind of flight sim that brings tears to the eyes of even the most battle-hardened pilot, but over the previous pages, we've managed to cover only 193 of the rest. That's about eight-and-a-half percent. To bring this up to a slightly more respectable figure, here are an additional 95. Thirteen percent, then.

One of the main reasons that there are so many games for the PC is that it's a relatively easy platform to develop for, with few of the licensing costs associated with the console market. Sadly, some of the developers that refuse to spend money on licensing also refuse to spend it on hiring talent, so while there may be a couple of thousand games available, there aren't nearly that many good ones.

What follows is a list of some truly impressive titles – of the sort which you shouldn't be without. By way of a cautionary tale there are also several disaster areas. Load these games into your PC at your peril.



REVIEWED: Oct '95



### 3D LEMMINGS

PUB: Psygnosis PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Clockwork Games BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



Is this *Lemmings* as we know it? Amazingly enough, the answer is "Yes!" Graphically it's a million miles away from the original, but it retains all the elements that made its granddaddy compulsive playing, and even adds a few of its own. Forget quibbles with earlier updates – Psygnosis has, at last, improved on a classic.

REVIEWED: Aut '00



### AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

PUB: Microsoft PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Ensemble Studios BUDGET: No



This upgrade doesn't change anything fundamental about *Age of Empires II*. It's still in 2D – and that still doesn't matter a bit. More significantly, the AI is still dodgy – enemies never quite manage to attack the right buildings or units. Nonetheless, there is more than enough here to delight any owner of the original game.

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

REVIEWED: Jan '00



### AGE OF WONDERS

PUB: GodGames PLAYERS: 1-multi  
DEV: Triumph/Epic BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



*Age of Wonders* manages to charm and beguile in equal measures. It's a turn-based fantasy wargame featuring a moderate degree of questing, slaying and some application of Tolkienesque characters. Except that, in this world, the halflings are rock hard. The multiplayer game is a blast, too. It's simple to get into and adorable to play.

REVIEWED: Xmas '98



### APACHE HAVOC

PUB: Empire PLAYERS: 1-multi  
DEV: Razorworks BUDGET: No



*Apache Havoc* is beautiful. For 1998, the developer created an astounding world of countless vehicles, wonderful, craggy landscapes and dynamic weather conditions. Even the lighting is excellent. It's also the best helicopter simulation of its time, with two helicopters to fly, three scenarios and an excellent multiplayer option.

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

REVIEWED: Feb '98



### BALANCE OF POWER

PUB: LucasArts PLAYERS: 1-multi  
DEV: LucasArts BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



This is the first *X-Wing* vs. *TIE Fighter* add-on CD-ROM. There's now proper built-in 3Dfx support and several new ships and space-style objects. But the most interesting thing about *Balance of Power* is that it introduces two campaigns – story-driven sequences of 15 missions each, just like in the earlier *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* games.

REVIEWED: April '94



## BATTLE ISLE 2


PUB: Blue Byte

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Blue Byte

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

 **The original *Battle Isle*** was a superb wargame and depicted the titanic struggle between the beleaguered Drullic Empire and the might of TITAN-NET. In *Battle Isle 2* you are once again in charge of the Drullic forces and the continuing campaign. This is a successful concept turned into a classic game that is excellent in almost every way.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY MANAGER


PUB: Midas Games

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Midas Games

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

 **While the interface is** solid and the official Superleague license ensures all the teams familiar to fans of the sport are realized, there are some fundamental problems with the way in which games are played. Perhaps the most condemning indictment is the lack of tactical options available to your players. You might just as well be watching TV.


## BITMAP BROS. COMPILATION

PUB: Bitmap Brothers

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Various

BUDGET: Yes

 **This is a comprehensive** retrospect of the Bitmap Brothers' eclectic output. The games featured in the compilation are *Gods*, *Magic Pockets*, *Speedball 2*, *Xenon 2*, *Cadaver* and its expansion disc *The Payoff*. This is an assortment of widely varying quality, *Speedball 2* being the best game and *Magic Pockets* the worst of the bunch.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Nov '94




## ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE VS. HOKUM

PUB: Empire

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Razorworks

BUDGET: No

 **The flying-around side** of *Enemy Engaged* is brilliant. There's a real art to sneaking up on your targets from behind hills, hugging the terrain to avoid SAM lock-ons, while trying not to collide with your wingman. Meanwhile, a plethora of camera angles ensures you get the best view of every engagement. Excellent.

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

REVIEWED: May '00



## CRIME CITIES


PUB: EON Digital

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Techland

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **Set in a world** of mid-air traffic not unlike *The Fifth Element*, you begin with a hovering car, a neatly aggressive weapon and a few e-mails in your in-car inbox. These e-mails contain mission details and snippets of information to push the plot forward. Which all sounds promising but, sadly, *Crime Cities* is woefully average.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## BLAIR WITCH VOL. 1: RUSTIN PARR


PUB: GodGames

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Terminal Reality

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **This is the first** of a trilogy. You are investigating the murders of the seven children that murderer Parr picked off in the background history to the film, at the time they happened, namely 1941. It's a point-and-click action adventure with monsters. And it bears little relation to the film and more to *Nocturne*.

## THE CORPORATE MACHINE

PUB: Take 2 Interactive

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Stardock

BUDGET: No

 **This is an economic** management sim. Starting off in a random region of the world, you have to found a technology-heavy industry and build a dominatrix of a global corporation. Initially, it seems interesting - the heady cut and thrust of business, industrial espionage and second-guessing your opponent's strategies - but it's remarkably dull.

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

REVIEWED: Aug '00




## CROC 2

PUB: Fox Interactive

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Argonaut

BUDGET: No

 **Croc 2 is a rare** PC beast: a true platform game. It offers over 40 levels of increasingly impossible jumps from ledge to ledge, with a smattering of evil Dantinis and bonus games en-route. It offers cartoon-style heroics, without a spot of blood or gibbage in sight. It also offers much frustration, anger and disappointment.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: Jul '00



REVIEWED: Dec '98



## CARMAGEDDON 2: CARPOCALYPSE NOW


PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Stainless

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **While the original was** a bit too close to the knuckle, this sequel doesn't appear to be quite so particular in its targets - people from all walks of life are now available as bumper-fodder. While *Carmageddon 2* should last a bit longer than the original, thanks to the improved level design and missions, the novelty of killing people will wear off.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## CULTURES: THE DISCOVERY OF VINLAND


PUB: THQ

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Funatics

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **You must** turn a set of unruly Vikings into a shiny, happy community with the knowledge to survive and develop, be diplomatic with the locals when they conquer other lands, and still win a fist-fight. Overall, *Cultures* runs like a finely tuned V8 engine, but it's not very original and there's no blood or gore in the combat sequences.

REVIEWED: Aut '00



## DEEP FIGHTER

PUB: Ubi Soft

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Criterion

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**Deep Fighter casts you** as a submariner fresh out of the academy, charged with defending your fragile underwater civilization as it tries to build a mothership to escape from the attacking Shadowkin. It's a linear, mission-based action float sim, but the gameplay is obvious and predictable. And shallow.

REVIEWED: May '00



## EVOLVA

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Computer Artwork

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

09/10



**This is a pure,** old-skool computer game. It makes no pretense to realism; instead it presents a completely alien world for you to conquer and uses the priceless mechanism of having consistent internal rules. *Evolva* is a genuinely excellent arcade shoot-'em-up with an admirable disregard for convention. It's also hard.

## DESCENT 3

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Outrage

BUDGET: No



**Descent 3 still has** you in a heavily armed spaceship tumbling through dank caverns – like *Quake* without the gravity – but there's nothing new here. Infiltrate a base, destroy something, then escape. There's no escaping before the reactor blows and the time-limit to complete missions is missing. Without that it's all just too leisurely and safe.

REVIEWED: Aug '99



VERDICT:

07/10

## F1 MANAGER

PUB: Europress

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Software 2000

BUDGET: No



**F1 Manager is less** of a game, more a teaching aid for prospective F1 managers. With all the stats and drivers for the year's championship, you get to handle every aspect of team affairs. When you add to this a real-time race simulator, you have one of the most comprehensive management sims yet.

REVIEWED: Nov '96



VERDICT:

08/10

REVIEWED: May '00



## DIPLOMACY

PUB: Hasbro

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Microprose

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

09/10



**Diplomacy is based on** the popular board wargame of the same name. The computer version is played on a *Risk*-like map and you play the leader of one of the seven great European powers in 1901: England, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Italy or France. Your aim is to conquer the world. And it's best played via e-mail.

REVIEWED: Mar '99



## FIGHTER SQUADRON

PUB: Activision

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Parsoft

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

09/10



**Atmospheric, finely detailed and** well designed, *Fighter Squadron* balances boldly on today's cutting edge with some colorful, photorealistic visuals. The powerful, longevity-boosting mission editor is good. The multiplayer options are a blast. And while the attention to detail is astounding, what really stands out is the sim's glorious versatility.

## EARTHWORM JIM 3D

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Vis

BUDGET: No



**You don't expect great** combat depth in a platform game, but *Earthworm Jim 3D* relies heavily on this aspect, so skills more complicated than ducking and a better integrated free-look would have been preferable. For what was occasionally a funny cartoon, this third game lacks any originality and has truly appalling camera angles, too.

REVIEWED: Feb '00



VERDICT:

04/10

## FLYING HEROES

PUB: Take 2 Interactive

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Illusion/Pterodon

BUDGET: No



**Despite the death-rictus** it provokes, *Flying Heroes* is a gutter-rough beauty. Controls lack fluidity and due to the almost infinite routes for upgrading your ship, it's possible to severely unbalance the difficulty. But if you're finding deathmatches uninspired, this Pollock-color-splash of an experience will make your sun shine again.

REVIEWED: July '00



VERDICT:

08/10

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## EMPIRE OF THE ANTS

PUB: Strategy First

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Microids

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**This is fascinating.** The top-down 3D graphics accurately portray the spread of undergrowth and the twitchy movement of our exoskeletal chums. Even in the elements not taken from nature, *EOTA* is imaginative. With more balance, the control system could have been exemplary, but it's too easy to ruin your chances of victory.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## G-TOK

PUB: Guildhall Leisure

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Acid Software

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

04/10



**G-Tok is like Defender.** In your ship you cruise the planet's surface, trying to defend your bases against constant alien attack. The draw distance, however, is dreadful, a crucial lapse in a game so dependent on speed and clarity of vision. *G-Tok* is mildly diverting, but it lacks substance, even though it's in 3D.

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## GIFT

PUB: Cryo

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Eko

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



As platformers go, *Gift* is an accessible, nice-looking, light-hearted journey. It does what it sets out to do well – but not sufficiently well to transcend its genre, and appeal to a wider spectrum of gamers. Most of the time you'll be throwing the keyboard across the room in despair as you once again mistime a jump and die.

REVIEWED: Sept '00



## ICEWIND DALE

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Black Isle

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



This is Black Isle's follow-up to the runaway success that was *Baldur's Gate*. It's another epic role-playing, dungeon-crawling adventure that falls below the high standard set by its inspiration and is phenomenally hard if you haven't played the original game. However, *Icewind Dale* is still a top-class RPG by any other standards.

## GROUND CONTROL

PUB: Sierra

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Massive

BUDGET: No



This game bravely takes the RTS down the path of pure, undiluted combat. The removal of resource management is amply reimbursed, but things slip slightly into repetition. Great lengths have been gone to ensure that there is variation in the challenges of each level – but, ultimately, your aim is simply to win the battle.

REVIEWED: July '00



VERDICT:

09/10

## IN COLD BLOOD

PUB: Dreamcatcher

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Revolution

BUDGET: No



*In Cold Blood* contains the main ingredients of a traditional adventure game, but there's no pointing or clicking. Instead, you make John walk around using the cursor keys or a joystick. Second, you can make him crouch down and tiptoe past guards. Third, he's got a gun. Yes, it's an adventure game... but you can die.

REVIEWED: Aut '00



VERDICT:

08/10

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## GUNLOK

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Rebellion

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



This game is a mess. There are many good bits in *Gunlok* – but it lacks a coherent overall vision. It's also repetitious, with barely differentiated enemies. There is enough here if you're patient and attentive, but at all times the effort has to come from you, the player, as there's too little incentive offered by the game itself.

REVIEWED: Jun '98



## INCOMING

PUB: Rage

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Rage

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

09/10



*Incoming* is arcade through and through and you will, of course, need a 3D card and a turbo-charged computer to play it with any degree of smoothness. It may also rely on a simplistic, yet paradoxically never simple, set of gaming dynamics, but it's not easy. It's not perfect, either. A shame, because it could have been brilliant.

## HEROES CHRONICLES

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: New World

BUDGET: No



The *Chronicles* comprise four stand-alone campaigns – *Warlords of the Wasteland*, *Conquest of the Underworld*, *Masters of the Elements* and *Clash of the Dragons* – that chart the rise and fall of Tarnum, a legendary warlord. It's based on the *Heroes of Might and Magic* series that was, in its heyday, fairly popular. But it's outdated now.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:

06/10

## JANE'S F/A-18

PUB: Electronic Arts

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Jane's Combat

BUDGET: No



Like most recent flight sims, this solidly designed Jane's flyer isn't a one-game-fits-all piece of software. It is a jack-of-all-trades – lacking both extraordinary gameplay and visual beauty, but counterbalancing these shortcomings with an admirable level of detail. It's a good game and well designed but, ultimately, not very original.

REVIEWED: May '00



VERDICT:

08/10

REVIEWED: Nov '95



## HEXEN

PUB: Id Software

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Raven

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

09/10



*Hexen* does everything you could ever do with the *Doom* engine and does it fantastically well. It's a brilliant 3D game, stuffed with atmosphere and action. While it's a sequel to *Heretic*, it's also way beyond that. It's also way beyond *Doom*. This is an utterly compelling, violent and addictive game world.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## JETFIGHTER IV: FORTRESS AMERICA

PUB: TalonSoft

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Mission Studios

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



While it's not a real innovator, *JFIV* does boast interesting features. The Cheats menu means the game can be scaled down for less experienced flyers, options include Invulnerability and Moderate Landings, and there's a Cooperative mode in the 16-player multiplayer engine, and an easy mission generator. It's the fast food of flight sims.

REVIEWED: Oct '98



## JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL

**PUB:** Virgin      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Awesome      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

**Cueball is social and** competitive, best enjoyed as a two-player game. And its attention to detail, from the wholly convincing ball mechanics, right down to the ambient lighting and sound effects, creates a subtly inviting atmosphere and a highly playable game. Every sport should have its sim and this is snooker's.

REVIEWED: Jul '00



## MARTIAN GOTHIC UNIFICATION

**PUB:** TalonSoft      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Creative Reality      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Sketchy details about a** disaster on the Mars base and an obscure warning are all you know as you begin playing Creative Reality's 3D adventure. Only through investigation can you discover the true extent of the disaster. There is an extremely good game in here somewhere, but it's nothing new and frustrating in the extreme.

## KINGDOM UNDER FIRE

**PUB:** GodGames      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Phantagram      **BUDGET:** No

**This is part RTS, part RPG.** Two distinct sides are available for you to command, with loads of enemies to dispatch in the hot-blooded action. The RTS battles are both blessed and saddled with a frenetic pace that can leave you feeling out of control, and the RPG sections are limited in scope as exploration gives way to achieving set objectives.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## MERCEDES BENZ TRUCK RACING

**PUB:** THQ      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Syntetic      **BUDGET:** No

**It's fun to make** these mobile behemoths power-slide through bends, knock door handles with each other and cause some of the biggest crashes you're ever likely to see on your monitor. The trucks have been lovingly reproduced and are some of the best 3D models ever. This is a new challenge if you're sick of the usual arcade fare.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Sept '00



## KLINGON ACADEMY

**PUB:** Interplay      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** 14 Degrees East      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**You are a trainee,** hoping to survive the tough school regime and work your way up to be a fleet commander in real-life *Star Trek* battles, but things all change when civil war breaks out. As a single-player game *Klingon Academy* is a relatively good way to shoot things in space, but it's horribly let down by its multiplayer game.

REVIEWED: Jul '00



## METAL FATIGUE

**PUB:** TalonSoft      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Zono      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**This is a well-polished,** fast-paced strategy game that pushes the genre that little bit further in terms of complexity and diversity. It also contains giant human-shaped robots strapped up to the nines with an arsenal of rocket launchers, lasers and force fields. If you like big robots with guns and you like RTS games, you'll like this.

## TEST DRIVE LE MANS

**PUB:** Infogrames      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Eutechnyx      **BUDGET:** No

**Authenticity pervades this game** and it has a real racing feel. There are seven different tracks as well as save options and two other game modes, Arcade and Challenge. There's also a time-lapse feature. This is a game for the serious driver; it's average in looks and not groundbreaking, but with unusual tactical depth.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## MIDNIGHT RACING

**PUB:** Brightstar      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Incagold      **BUDGET:** No

**This is extremely fast,** and there are lots of big dips and brows of hills on the wide open road that make your stomach disappear into your ears. It's not overloaded with options, there's no replay mode, but it's cheap and is pick-up-and-playable. It's a pokey zoom along the US highways with some lovely adverse camber action thrown in.

REVIEWED: Aug '00



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: Dec '00



## MADDEN NFL 2001

**PUB:** EA Sports      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** EA Sports      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**This is real-time strategy** masquerading as sport. Choose from one of countless plays, hope your choice and your five seconds of actual playing input is superior to your opponent's, then repeat. And surprisingly good fun it is, too. As an update, though, it's shallow and only a mild improvement on its predecessor *Madden 2000*.

REVIEWED: Jul '99



## MIDTOWN MADNESS

**PUB:** Microsoft      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Angel      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**The concept is** a simple and unoriginal one: speed through accurately modeled Chicago streets at high velocity trying to beat either the clock or your opponents. There are stacks of different types of race to wade through, and 10 different types of vehicle to drive, ranging from fast cars to buses and coaches. Quirky and fun.




REVIEWED: Oct '98



## MOTOCROSS MADNESS

**PUB:** Microsoft      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Rainbow Studios      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **It's easy to forgive** *Motocross Madness* its faults, simply because, whether racing against a friend or the PC, it's so much fun. Considerable application is needed if you're to get the most out of it, but once you become accomplished, you'll be using the reverse view to observe and block your rivals, scaling near vertical cliffs with ease.


REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## PHARAOH

**PUB:** Sierra      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Impressions      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Pharaoh won't appeal to** everyone. Armed combat constitutes 20% of the game; but this really only involves getting your economy into a position where you can afford forts and weapons. *Pharaoh's* challenge is nevertheless considerable, and if you enjoyed the *Civilization* series, you'll find plenty to satisfy you here.


## MYST

**PUB:** Broderbund      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Cyan      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: May '94



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

 **It's not the mystery** that spoils *Myst* but the vague gameplay. Trudging around a pretty landscape, happening upon dull Mensa-style puzzles just isn't enough. And to get anywhere you need patience, curiosity and bloody-minded persistence. Its ambiguous approach to adventuring won't hold your interest for long.


## STAR WARS PIT DROIDS

**PUB:** Lucas Learning      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Lucas Learning      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jan '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Watto is doing dodgy** deals in droids, but they're not much use except for fixing podracers, so he wants to shift them. It's your job to get them into the podracing pits for him. It may be just a puzzle game aimed at children, but *Pit Droids* is good, clean *Star Wars* fun, with plenty of tidy graphics. More enjoyable than mental arithmetic.


REVIEWED: May '96



## NORMALITY

**PUB:** Interplay      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Gremlin      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

 **This is a master** work, technologically superior to many other adventure games and a good deal more fun. The puzzles are hard (maybe too hard for some) and the size and detail of the game belie its single-CD status. *Normality* proves that adventure games don't have to be the stone-faced boredom fest that is so often served up.


REVIEWED: Mar '01



## PIZZA CONNECTION 2

**PUB:** Interplay      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Software 2000      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **It's a pizza business** simulation that avoids utter condemnation thanks to its quasi-gangster feel. You can do the odd amusing thing that will keep you playing longer than you really should and there are also several different cities to conquer. *Pizza Connection 2* isn't the worst game ever - but it's definitely not a member of the upper-crust.


## NOX

**PUB:** Electronic Arts      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Westwood      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: March '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **This is all about** running around dungeons, hitting things with whatever you can get hold of. You control a single character, though are occasionally joined by friendly locals. Everything here has been in every RPG since the genre crawled out of the primordial ooze and it's easy to like. It's just difficult to get passionate about it.

## POP 'N' POP

**PUB:** Vektor Logic      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Taito/Dreams      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:  
**05/10**

 **From the creator of** *Space Invaders*, *Puzzle Bobble* and *Bust-A-Move*, *Pop 'N' Pop* is a mixture of all three games. Rather than simply having to link sequences of like-colored bubbles together, you have to do it while they're moving from left-to-right. As a multiplayer title, it's fun; as a single player game, it's soporific.

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## OPEN TENNIS 2000

**PUB:** Cryo      **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Carapace      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

 **There are 32 players**, lots of tournament types and 16 rackets. The actual courts are crisply textured, the players' animations complemented by a subtle motion blur effect, and it's the first tennis sim that's as playable using the third-person cam as it is from the Tower viewpoint. But it's obvious that it was rushed out for Wimbledon 2000.


REVIEWED: Nov '99



## PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

**PUB:** The Learning Co.      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Red Orb      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **This is Prince of Persia** but in 3D, with everything that entails. What was great about its forefather is equally swoonsome in this installment. But, conversely, what grated about *Prince* still shreds the nerves in this 3D renovation. It plays most like *Tomb Raider* with a strong puzzle element, but what raises it above the competition is its flair.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## PRO RALLY 2001

**PUB:** Ubi Soft      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Ubi Soft      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Against Colin McRae 2.0's** all-conquering handling and single-player game, *Rally Championship's* superior visuals and enormous tracks, and *Rally Masters'* great head-to-head circuit racing, *Pro Rally 2001* suffers from an absence of much new. It's generally enjoyable stuff, but just so middle-of-the-road.

REVIEWED: May '00



## RISING SUN

**PUB:** TalonSoft      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** TalonSoft      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Set in World War II**, the main enemy in *Rising Sun* is the Japanese in the South Pacific. The game follows the same format as its predecessors and is platoon-level hex- and turn-based combat in the classic wargaming mold, utilizing an action-point system. It's a worthy successor to the series, but is also a little too familiar.

## PUZZLE BOBBLE

**PUB:** GT      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Taito      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Apr '97



**As a one-player game**, *Puzzle Bobble* won't win many fans, but it comes into its own as a two-player game. The main difference is that balloons you remove from your side of the screen shoot over to your opponent's side, making it infinitely more frantic, and imperative to play quicker. As a consequence, it's hugely addictive.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## RISK II

**PUB:** Hasbro      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Deep Red      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Apr '00



**This is one of** the slickest board game conversions ever. The presentation is beautiful, all clear edges casually conveying all the required information. The whole of the original game is neatly included, as well as the common variations. The AI is of a high standard, too. *Risk II* comprehensively transfers the board game to the PC.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Apr '00



## RALLY MASTERS

**PUB:** Infogrames      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Digital Illusions      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**This is one of** the most comprehensive racing games ever. There's a suitable variety of terrain; most of the cars are acceptable, if not outstanding, models that sound and look like the real thing - but a few have slipped through the quality-control net. It's still an enjoyable alternative to both *Colin McRae Rally* and *Rally Championship*.

REVIEWED: Aut '00



## ROAD WARS

**PUB:** Intense      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Phenom      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

**Road Wars is all** about fast cars, guns and sexually impressive female warriors dressed in badly cut, tight clothing. It's rock. It's guns. It's oil. It's a war. On a road. Yes, it's all rather tired. *Road Wars* isn't a catastrophic multi-car pile-up; it's merely a Saturday-Wal-Mart-parking-lot-shunt on a rainy afternoon. Forgotten in moments.

## RC RACERS

**PUB:** Sierra      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Dynamix      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Jan '00



**Through eight themed tracks** you negotiate your radio-controlled car around hazards, beat the other four competitors, win hard cash and upgrade your machine until you win the championship. *RC Racers* is aimed at children, but they demand just as many, if not more, challenges than adults - and they won't find any here.

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

## RUNE

**PUB:** GodGames      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Human Head      **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Dec '00



**If ever a game** failed to be more than a sum of its parts, it's *Rune*. The Norse mythology, lots of weapons and bloody combat - it promised much. Instead, there are dull fights to hack through in order to reach the next uninspiring puzzle and all in order to make the less-than-compelling story move forward. Ordinary stuff.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Dec '99



## REVENANT

**PUB:** Eidos      **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Cinematix      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**A less beardy experience** than *Baldur's Gate*, and considerably more accessible and entertaining than most games of its type; *Revenant's* combat system in particular deserves attention from anyone who's thinking of buying an RPG. The game's learning and reward curves are ideally judged, making it a pretty addictive experience.

REVIEWED: Oct '97



## SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER

**PUB:** Sega      **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Sega      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

**It's as if Sega** has managed to take soccer and put it in a game without any of the mechanics showing. It's not perfect but, overall, *Sega Worldwide Soccer* is more fun than *Actua*, more playable than *FIFA* and slicker than *Kick Off '97*. Obviously, *Actua*, *FIFA* and *Kick Off* have all been updated and improved since 1997.

REVIEWED: Dec '98



## SENSIBLE SOCCER EURO CUP EDITION

PUB: GT

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Sensible Software

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



**It's great to play** something so simple, and it all comes flooding back: the huge amounts of curve you can apply to the ball, the precise timing, the reliance on the run button to get anywhere. This European version, and the lack of a license, has led to Gaggles and Buckhams populating the teams, which is good for a laugh. For five minutes.

REVIEWED: Dec '97



## SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG!

PUB: Origin

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Firaxis

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



**The game centers on** the three days that made up the battle of Gettysburg. You can control either side in a campaign game. The multiplayer facilities are a joy and up to eight players can slog it out in a variety of ways. But you can't click on opposing units and get information about them. Accurate? Yes. Fog of war? Yes. Frustrating? Yes.

## SHADOW WATCH

PUB: Red Storm

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Red Storm

BUDGET: No



**This is an isometric,** turn-based, squad-level combat game, with a nod to RPG-land. Its graphics are stylized, and no one's likely to brand it over-ambitious. It's also a heap of fun. This won't be everyone's cup of tea; there's no tedious financial accountancy, strange-smelling RPG minutiae or sprawling mission maps. For others, that'll be spot on.

VERDICT:

08/10

## SIMTOWER

PUB: Maxis

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Maxis

BUDGET: No



**Once again Maxis** has taken a looking glass to an area of real life, and somehow made its little microcosm a fascinating and playable simulation. It's hard to convey the laid-back but utterly engrossing spell that *SimTower* weaves, as you grow your tower to provide optimum working and leisure activities for your populace.

VERDICT:

09/10

REVIEWED: Nov '97



## SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

PUB: LucasArts

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: LucasArts

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**The game begins with** the best bit of *The Empire Strikes Back*, the battle for Hoth, which has been translated onto your PC in as perfect a form as you could wish for. Unfortunately, out of the 10 levels in *Shadows of the Empire*, one's superb but short-lived, five are longer but distinctly mediocre, and four are laughably inadequate.

REVIEWED: Jul '00



## SOULBRINGER

PUB: Interplay

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Gremlin

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**Soulbringer doesn't push you** along, so you're never caught up in the excitement; neither does it tempt you to forge ahead to new and interesting places. *Soulbringer's* engine is superb and there are some exquisite details in here, but there's neither a decent plot, atmosphere nor vitality. What a waste.

## SHEEP

PUB: Empire

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Mind's Eye

BUDGET: No



**Cue the first ever** flock-'em-up in gaming history. You have to herd four possible breeds of sheep through, over and around an infinite variety of obstacles and enemies. Ultimately, you'll lose interest in the crazy graphics and simplistic structure, and enjoy herding your baa-lambs toward the most inventive, mechanical death you can find instead.

VERDICT:

06/10

## SPACE HULK 2

PUB: Electronic Arts

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Key Game

BUDGET: No



**Space Hulk 2 is** a fine game with stomach-knotting tension and blasting kicks aplenty. It forces you to identify with your terminators, and the fear is palpable, as your carefully conceived tactics unravel and you watch, frozen, while all your men meet gruesome ends. A refreshing change from all the games like *Doom*.

REVIEWED: July '96



VERDICT:

09/10

REVIEWED: Mar '00



## SID MEIER'S ALIEN CROSSFIRE

PUB: Electronic Arts

PLAYERS: 1-multi

DEV: Firaxis

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**Alpha Centauri was a** great game: deep, well thought out and engrossing. But you have to ask what this add-on pack adds to the original. It's mildly pleasurable to see some new research targets, and warring alien races are a nice touch, but the new factions still drop into the same stereotypes that flawed the original game.

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## SPACE INVADERS

PUB: Activision

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Z-Axis

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



**Even the tiniest amount** of thought can massively improve a game. There's now a whole variety of alien sorts, all neatly color-coded. If you shoot four of the same type consecutively you get to fire a single, powerful shot, which punches gaping holes in the alien phalanx. This is a simple, beautiful arcade puzzle game.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE: THE FALLEN

**PUB:** Simon & Schuster    **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** The Collective    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**This makes a creditable** stab at delivering an interactive *Deep Space Nine* episode. Its take on action/adventure is well-judged. Falling somewhere between *Tomb Raider* and *Jedi Knight*, the real twist is that its structure offers three separate games. However, unimaginative objectives and level design let it down.

REVIEWED: Oct '00



## SYDNEY 2000

**PUB:** Eidos    **PLAYERS:** 1-8  
**DEV:** Attention to Detail    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**Sydney 2000 is a** more-than-competent, lusciously three-dimensional reworking of a game that ought to have passed its sell-by date years ago. If you can absolutely guarantee that you're going to be in a position to play it regularly with friends, then it comes heartily recommended, but it's not going to change the world.

## STAR TREK: NEW WORLDS

**PUB:** Interplay    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** 14 Degrees East    **BUDGET:** No

**Apart from the odd** technical flaw, *New World's* failings are less to do with what it's done wrong and more with what it hasn't bothered doing. Like one of the duller TV episodes, there's something comfortably familiar about this – both the simple RTS mechanics and the *Trek* setting – but, deep down, you know it's nothing special.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

**PUB:** Sierra    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Valve    **BUDGET:** No

**Valve's release of Team Fortress Classic** prior to *Team Fortress 2* was the best idea since Id threw out the shareware version of *Doom*. The genius of the game mainly lies in how the multiple character classes lead to sophisticated game tactics. Graphically it's less advanced than *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament* or *TF2*. But it's free. Savor it.

REVIEWED: June '99



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Aug '99



## STAR WARS EPISODE 1: RACER

**PUB:** LucasArts    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** LucasArts    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**Thanks to the simplistic** handling and some occasionally dodgy opponent AI, *Racer* is easier than it should be. It's only during the latter stages that it becomes really testing. Solid play should see you complete the whole thing in three or four days, but it's testament to *Racer's* overall quality that such a short-lived ride is still worthwhile.

REVIEWED: Sept '00



## TERMINUS

**PUB:** Vatical    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Vicarious Visions    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Although the effort that** has gone into the space flight model and detailed universe of *Terminus* is worthy, this ambitious project simply isn't the polished product it should have been. Even though the on-line support through dedicated servers extends the RPG options of the game, and the human numbers are again bolstered by AI entities.

## STARSHIP TROOPERS

**PUB:** Hasbro    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Blue Tongue    **BUDGET:** No

**Starship Troopers uses the** contemporary 3D RTS format that was first tried in *Warzone 2100*, and gradually honed through *Force Commander* and *Ground Control*. All of the standard features are included – as well as a few interesting new touches. Overall, while it is well written and presented, it simply doesn't storm the fortress of classic-dom.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## TEST DRIVE 6

**PUB:** Infogrames    **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Pitbull Syndicate    **BUDGET:** No

**Rarely has a driving** game engendered a feeling so far removed from its real-world equivalent. Any trace of realistic handling seems to have disappeared, as you twitch and coax each of the vintage and classic sports cars around the tediously tortuous themed circuits. And the cops' approach to crime-solving is a joke.

REVIEWED: July '00



VERDICT:  
**04/10**

REVIEWED: Sept '00



## SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

**PUB:** Ubi Soft    **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Criterion Studios    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing** is a perfect example of a console game that should have remained a console game. Oh, it may charm you with its sharp, slick visuals and its sense of speed, but look beyond the tasty trimmings and you've got a game with less depth than a puddle on the M25. And it's a shallow puddle at that.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## THE WARD

**PUB:** On Deck    **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Fragile Bits    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**03/10**

**The Ward is an** inconsistent mess of half-digested influences and poorly thought-through ideas. It's almost as if the game's embarrassed to be a straightforward point-n'-clicker, and can't resist forcing in strained gags, atmosphere-killing puzzles and against-the-clock sections. All that stuff only makes an average game even less appealing.

REVIEWED: Sept '98



## THE X-FILES GAME

**PUB:** Fox Interactive **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Hyperbole **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

Despite a few plus points – including the hilariously obvious sexual tension between you and your male colleague, some of the most unwittingly funny dialogues in a game, and a brief glimpse of the gorgeous, pouting Anderson, *The X-Files Game* is an incredibly tiresome experience. Not even the most obsessive fan could enjoy this.

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## URBAN CHAOS

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Mucky Foot **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

Although it's an action adventure with the emphasis on action, *Urban Chaos* is also very challenging. It's a hugely entertaining romp that is similar to many a great game – *Tomb Raider*, *GTA*, *Resident Evil* – and yet manages not to feel derivative. Atmospheric, playable, pretty, but above all, fun.

## THEOCRACY

**PUB:** Ubi Soft **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Philos Labs **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: May '00



Visually, this game's primitive and the blunted impact, plus the poor animation and uninspiring troop types make the action as humdrum as the management. It has its moments and covers all the necessary strategy bases, including diplomacy, trade and black ops. But if you prefer your real-time to your strategy, then best leave this alone.

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

**PUB:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Nihilistic **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Aug '00



This is the computer conversion of the most successful pen-and-paper RPG of the last decade. The computer version presents a streamlined version of *Vampire*, and uses the role-playing framework to power a story-heavy action-RPG with plenty of bloodshed. Despite two pre-built multiplayer scenarios, it's disappointing.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Mar '01



## FATE OF THE DRAGON

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1-multi  
**DEV:** Overmax Studios **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**

Comparisons will inevitably be drawn with the *Age of Empires* series. Conflict essentially revolves around the taking or defending of cities. But despite the obvious graphical similarities, *FOTD* is a different beast entirely. With so many unique and interesting slants on the standard RTS theme, it carves its own niche within the genre.

REVIEWED: Aut '00



## WACKY RACES

**PUB:** Infogrames **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Appaloosa **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

*Wacky Races* is adequate. Nothing more. The cars slide pointlessly along ill-considered tracks, speeding up and slowing down randomly. Winning requires you to (ab)use regularly placed power-ups repeatedly, while avoiding the areas of poor 3D clipping. Overall, it's generic, bland and disappointing. There's nothing funny here.

## TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Core Design **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Dec '00



Core has chosen to evolve its magnum opus in a modest manner, playing to the series' established strengths. *Chronicles* will appeal mostly to those who are die-hard fans or, ironically, those who choose *Chronicles* as their first foray into the *Tomb Raider* world. It's more entertaining than you think.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## WIZARDS & WARRIORS

**PUB:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Heuristic Park **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Dec '00



Until you have finished *Baldur's Gate 2*, *Deus Ex*, *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Diablo II*, *Planescape: Torment* and *Icewind Dale*, braved failures such as *Vampire* and played unconventional approaches such as *Thief 2*, you have no real cause to look at this. It was games like *Wizards & Warriors* that were bad for the RPG last time.

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

REVIEWED: May '00



## TOMB RAIDER: THE TRILOGY

**PUB:** Eidos **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Core Design **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

Contained inside the bulging box are copies of *Tomb Raider*, *TRII: The Dagger of Xian*, *TRIII: Adventures of Lara Croft*, and a pile of stuff. Since *Part IV* has already showed what should have been changed before, this pack can only highlight the mistakes the series has made. But still, they are all good games in their own right.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## X-TENSION

**PUB:** THQ **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Egosoft **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

This is an add-on disc to *X*. It adds more space opera, more trading and a bigger universe. Every ship you meet can now be captured and flown, and each has its own control system. More importantly, the time-speed-up add-on is available from the start and is much less irritating. *X* had its fans and they will appreciate *X-Tension*.

# COMING SOON...

THE END OF 2001 IS LOOKING PRETTY PACKED FOR PC GAMERS - PREPARE YOUR BEIGE BOX FOR A GAMING ONSLAUGHT...

**I**f you're still slightly incredulous that the PC remains a serious force in contemporary gaming, you're not alone. Ostensibly, of course, it has no right to be - and in retrospect, there were so many clear-cut factors acting against it, that had it drifted into rose-tinted obscurity like so many systems before it (Dragon 32, Oric, Acorn Electron, *et al*) few may have

noticed, let alone mourned its passing.

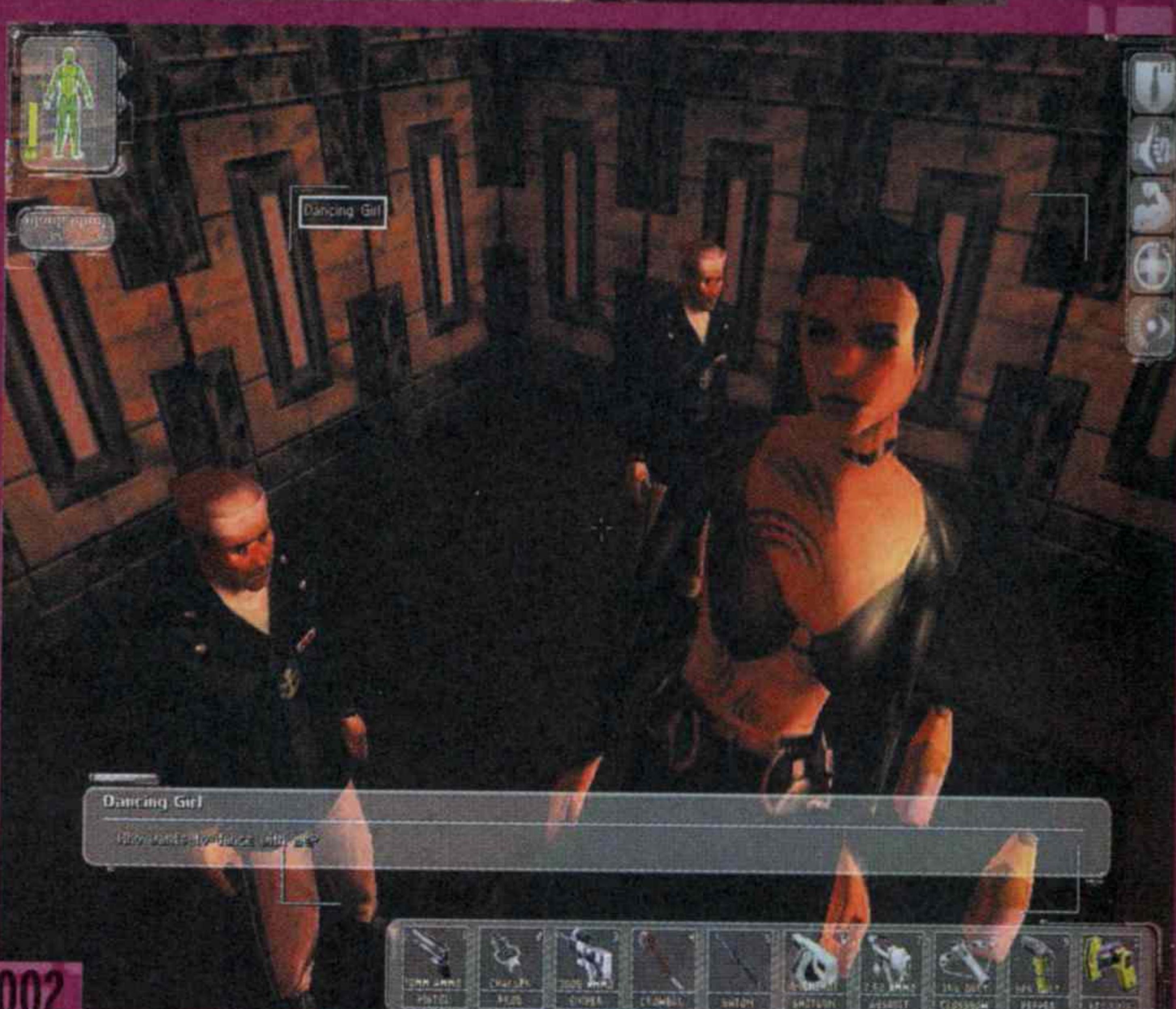
History tells a different story, though, and that story is thanks not only to the ingenuity of technical gurus, but in large part to the creativity of game developers - those who have always sought to exploit the PC's ever-evolving architecture, and constantly rising system specs. The multimedia-injected, Internet-

ready, plug-'n'-play box of tricks that passes for a high-end PC today, is a very different beast (in both hardware and software terms), to that which first caught the imagination of gamers and game designers alike.

Like a wizened (but wise) veteran of its vocation, the PC has in its time quietly witnessed the noisy hyperbolic births - and often messy ensuing deaths - of

many rival machines. Machines that, according to a number of the vociferous commentators of the day, were each set to prove fatal to the fate of the cumbersome, bulky, ponderous and alarmingly *beige* slab of circuitry.

To be fair, such detractors had little reason to think otherwise. In the mid-'80s, when Sega and Nintendo were going head-to-head with their respective 8-bit



machines, showcasing the next generation of stunning home entertainment with the Master System and NES, PC gamers were left decidedly red-faced.

Rendered impotent by the PC's inexplicably complex architecture, those hoping for a quick gaming fix on an '80s operating system were in for a rough ride. Not only did they have to contend with learning the dark arts of config.sys and autoexec.bat editing, along with the Herculean task that was boot disk creation, but they also had to deal with error messages that hinted frustratingly at IRQ conflicts, and Sphinxian riddles of Expanded and Extended Memory. Everything conspired to make the PC gamer's life one long troubleshoot.

Fast forward that scene 20 years, however, and the PC is the platform of choice for innovators the world over. Having begat the

massively successful first-person genre, titles such as *Quake*, *Half-Life* (001), *Deus Ex* (002) and *Counter-Strike* (003) have all recently redefined what gamers can expect from their home entertainment. Whether pushing back the boundaries of multiplayer on-line gaming, or blurring genres by mixing traditional storytelling elements

with cutting-edge graphics techniques, the PC now offers a far more user-friendly and sophisticated format for gamers – often eclipsing the total gaming experience offered by the dedicated consoles of the day.

The big question, of course, is can it continue to do so? With Sony, Nintendo and even the PC's biggest champion Microsoft all throwing their support behind next-generation consoles, with the PS2, Gamecube and Xbox respectively (see pages 128 and 390), what does this mean for the PC?

The answer can be found by simply glancing through the forthcoming development line-ups of any major software publisher in specialist magazines. *PC Gamer UK* offers a list of the key 100 games in development at any time (and there are at least that number again fighting for inclusion on a monthly basis), and it's clear that the machine's popularity with the development community is still high.

Indeed, industry legends such as Id Software – pioneer of the first-person shooter genre with *3D-Wolfenstein*, and the *Doom* and *Quake* series – are sticking

with the format. With sequels *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* and *Doom III* both in the works, PC gamers will be in for a gore-splattered treat; not least because the latter will make spectacular use of Nvidia's GeForce 3 technology.

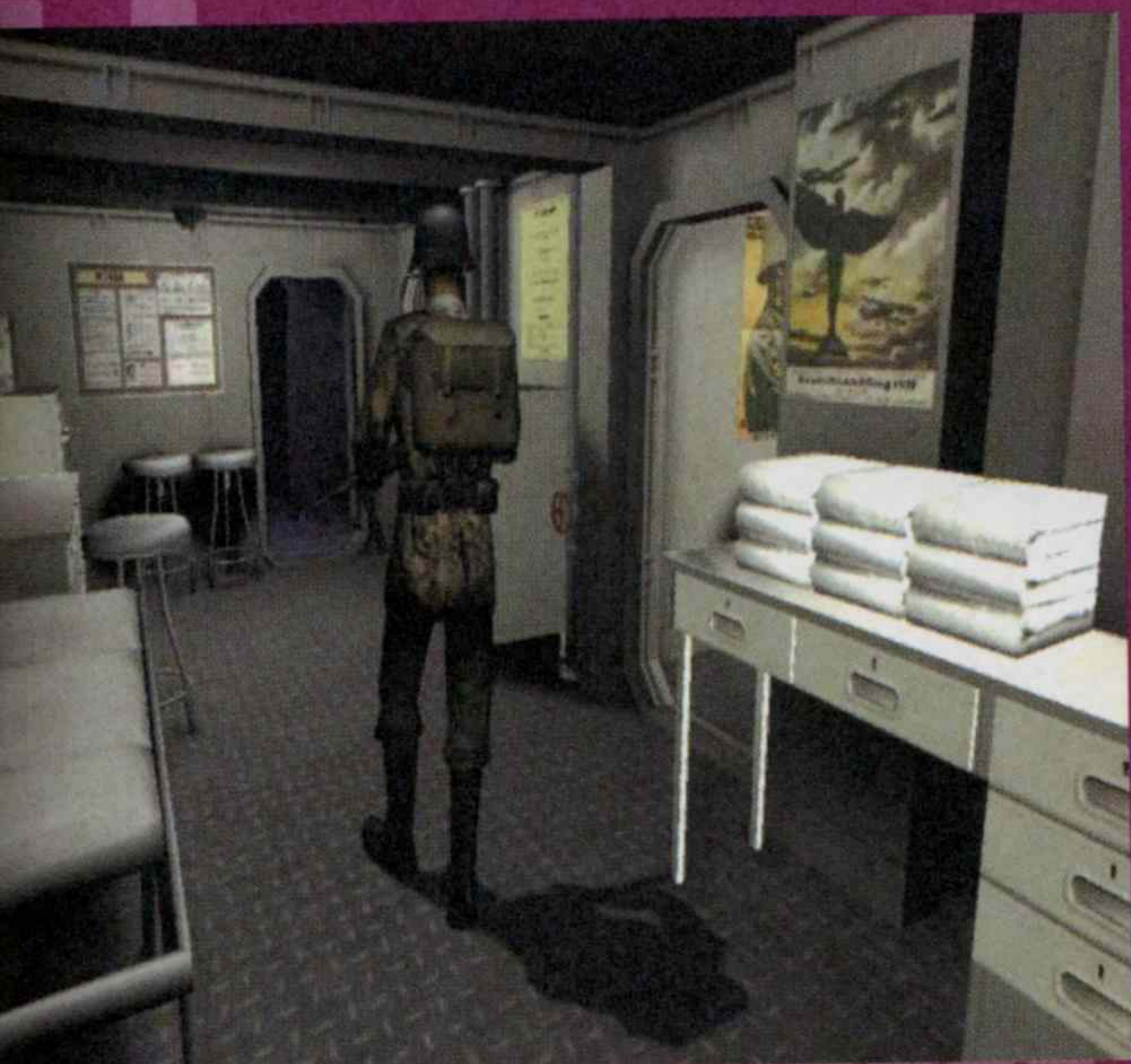
Along with improved visuals, PC gamers now also demand a far more involving single-player experience. "Cinematic" was the buzz word after Valve shook up the industry with the seminal *Half-Life*, and one of the latest goals for developers is to create the illusion of a vast, non-linear adventure, while at the same time cunningly shooing the player through the game on a strict (if undetectable) route.

This is a technique Ion Storm Austin excelled at with the role-playing, conspiracy-themed shooter *Deus Ex*, and something the company hopes to take further with both *Deus Ex 2*, and the sequel to its award-winning stealth series, *Thief III* (005).

Valve, of course, isn't resting on its laurels either, and is set to bolster its reputation with *Half-Life 2*. It's in development now, so the legion fans of Gordon Freeman's alien-infested world



009



# "THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES AVAILABLE TO DESIGNERS"

have plenty of action to look forward to.

The unique world of free downloadable modifications and massively multiplayer on-line gaming will continue to give the PC the edge over its rivals, too. The most famous of the games to exploit this opportunity – *Counter-Strike* – proved that amateur developers were more than capable of taking (and improving) the multiplayer element of games like *Half-Life*, and this team-based counter-terrorism mod has deservedly become the most popular on-line shooter of all time. Success breeds success, of course, and a sequel is actually in the works already; *Counter-Strike's* place in gaming history is ensured.

It's not all a ceaseless round of

first-person shooters, though. The PC has always invited some of the more eclectic game genres, and the future looks bright for strategy, RPG and simulation, too.

Westwood has already established itself as the master of slick, well-balanced, real-time strategy, and it is widening its remit to take in massively multiplayer on-line gaming with *Earth and Beyond* (004).

The *Command & Conquer* series will also continue to develop, finally branching out into 3D with the shooter *Renegade*, while a traditional C&C offering using the recent *Emperor: Battle for Dune* engine is also likely.

Meanwhile, the king of turn-based strategy, Sid Meier, is choosing 2002 as the year to bring us *Civilization III* – the long-

awaited third installment in what is perhaps one of the most addictive series ever to grace the PC. New stars are shining, too. Pyro's forthcoming *Commandos 2* promises to improve on the original in almost every way, while Illusion Softworks' *Hidden & Dangerous 2* (006), and Irrational Games' superhero-

based *Freedom Force* are both already looking sensational.

That most enduring of genres – the RPG – is also riding high, enjoying a renaissance thanks to titles such as the *Baldur's Gate* series (007), *Planescape: Torment* and *System Shock 2*. We can look forward to plenty of innovations in this area, too. BioWare's *Neverwinter Nights* (008) will bring party-based on-line play into the mix; meanwhile, Verant's *Planetside*, *Star Wars: Galaxies* (009) and *Anarchy Online* should all build upon the community feeling fostered by key titles such as *Ultima Online* and *Everquest*.

It's clear that the highly eclectic nature of the PC's game catalogue has been one of the deciding factors in its enduring popularity. There really is something for every type of gamer – from hardcore flight simulations and racing games, to point-and-click adventures and platformers. Plus, as the only machine to be constantly upgradable, there are no limits to the creative possibilities available to designers. The future's bright. The future's a grubby shade of beige.



004

005



003





# NINTENDO 64

1080° Snowboarding	280	Perfect Dark	294
Aero Gauge	309	Pilotwings 64	295
Armorines S.W.A.R.M.	309	Pokémon Puzzle League	296
Banjo-Kazooie	280	Pokémon Snap	296
Beetle Adventure Racing	309	Pokémon Stadium	297
Blast Corps	281	Rakuga Kids	311
Body Harvest	281	Ridge Racer 64	297
Buck Bumble	309	Robotron 64	311
Castlevania	309	Rocket: Robot on Wheels	298
Conker's Bad Fur Day	282	San Francisco Rush 2049	299
Cruis'n USA	310	Shadow Man	299
Diddy Kong Racing	282	Snowboard Kids	300
Donkey Kong 64	283	South Park	311
Dual Heroes	310	South Park Rally	311
Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	310	Spacestation Silicon Valley	300
Earthworm Jim 3D	310	Star Fox 64	287
Excitebike 64	283	Star Wars: Battle for Naboo	301
Extreme G2	310	Star Wars: Episode 1 Racer	301
F-Zero X	284	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	298
F1 World Grand Prix	284	Super Mario 64	302
Fighters' Destiny	310	Super Smash Bros.	303
Forsaken	310	Superman	311
GoldenEye 007	285	Tetrisphere	303
Hybrid Heaven	310	The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time	288
International Superstar Soccer 64	286	The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask	289
Jet Force Gemini	286	The New Tetris	304
Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards	287	The World Is Not Enough	304
Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside	295	Top Gear Rally 2	305
Mario Golf	290	Turok 2: Seeds of Evil	306
Mario Kart 64	290	Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion	306
Mario Party	291	Turok Dinosaur Hunter	305
Mario Party 2	291	Wave Race 64	307
Mario Tennis	292	Wetrix	311
Mickey's Speedway USA	310	WinBack	311
Mischief Makers	292	World Driver Championship	311
Mission: Impossible	293	WWF Attitude	311
Mystical Ninja	293	WWF No Mercy	311
NFL Quarterback Club '99	310	Yoshi's Story	307

Having resurrected the console market with the NES during the '80s and later coasted along to handsome profits with the SNES, Nintendo could have been forgiven for thinking it owned the game industry. However, it reckoned without Sony's determination, and by the time it was ready to launch its own next-gen machine, the PlayStation was well on its way to becoming the new NES.

Even if the N64 was always destined to play second fiddle to Sony's machine, it fell on its own sword when it suffered delay after delay before limping into the stores more than a year late and with little software to support it. The machine was technically excellent but it didn't quite match up to the claims Nintendo had made (stills from *Jurassic Park* were used to "demonstrate" its graphical power), and crucial third-party publishers such as Squaresoft were alienated by the decision to use expensive, low-capacity cartridges rather than a CD-based format.

But the N64 did have one thing going for it – exclusive games from Nintendo's own development teams. Arguably the three best games ever made are all on N64 (*Mario 64*, *Ocarina of Time* and *GoldenEye*), and a disproportionate number of genuine classics released over the N64's lifespan resulted in a very respectable 30 million machines sold and a place in the heart of many a hardcore gamer. Any other company would consider that an unqualified success (it's more than Atari ever sold), but second best was never going to be good enough for Nintendo. The company will be back with a vengeance when Gamecube takes on PS2.



The games reviewed broadly fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



The following reviews are based on those that appeared in *N64 Magazine*, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.



## 1080° SNOWBOARDING

**From the moment** your snappily attired snowboarder trips over a mogul and goes flying head first into a rock, you know that *1080°* is going to be a delicious challenge.

This is a game you will never complete by muddling through and taking advantage of the odd lucky break. Your first few attempts, particularly on the evil Mountain Village course, will end in abject failure as your battered boarder collapses, twitching, into an invitingly soft snow drift. Make no mistake, *1080°* is not a game for beginners.

Pulling off stunts is teeth-grindingly difficult, too, since all the best ones involve making several 360° spins on the pad and pressing the R or B buttons to link them together, while simultaneously keeping control of the angle of your board.

Eventually though, it all starts to click into place. You might never quite get the knack of pulling off perfect stunts every time, but you will be able to beat our Championship times and thrash the computer on expert mode by making it down to the bottom of every course, more or less unscathed. The first time you complete a course without crashing once, you'll forgive the game for all the times it made you want to throw your N64 out of the window, because *1080°* is a very rewarding experience once you've settled into it.

■ The boards respond instantly to the slightest twitch of the analog stick, so use gentle diagonal tweaks to flip the back end out and drag you through the perfect racing line – it's similar to *Wave Race*.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The graphics look utterly convincing

**LOW:**  
*1080°* isn't really suited to two-player action

# 09/10

NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

## BANJO-KAZOOIE

**You can always tell** when you've got a great game on your hands: when it starts to warp time. This game is going to take up hours of your life, since once you glimpse *Banjo's* worlds, you absolutely have to see more. Collected 87 of a world's 100 notes, or nine of the 10 jigsaw pieces, and you have to replay the world until you've found absolutely everything in it. The trouble is, if you're any good you might find yourself doing that after only 30 or so hours of play.

It's because *B-K* is so much fun that you never really want it to be over. Unfortunately it's the game's longevity that is probably its biggest problem. If you've played a reasonable number of platform games, you'll have seen a lot of what's in *B-K* before.

In an effort to force gamers back for further plays, there are two different end sequences, a great pre-boss section and the best incentive we've ever seen to finish the game with 100 jigsaw pieces and 900 notes. When you add in the timer, the two hidden honeycombs on each level (which encourage painstaking back-tracking), and the unexplained mysteries, such as the locked door on Gobi's Valley and the visible – but annoyingly unreachable – Sharkbait Island, you have a game that couldn't try harder.

*Banjo-Kazooie* outshines *Mario* only in terms of looks. It's still brilliant, though. You need this game.

■ Don't miss out Spiral Mountain training world – you'll earn a whole extra bar on your life meter.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Rare

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
August 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A great platform game

**LOW:**  
If you're not a patient explorer, you could be in for a rather frustrating time

# 09/10

# BLAST CORPS



**Your job is to** clear a path for the rogue truck, laden with two defective nuclear missiles, by demolishing everything in its way. This flexible, yet ever-compelling, set-up offers a multitude of challenges. One level, perhaps, might be a frantic smash-a-thon, requiring you simply to rampage the bulldozer through a

built-up area as quickly as possible. The next might be a much more intricate affair, where you have to maneuver explosive crates. At the same time, however, even the most complicated sections are still undertaken against the unstoppable adrenaline pump of the oncoming missiles.

*Blast Corps* is a mission-based game. As you complete each level successfully, new missions become available, and bonus challenge levels open up if you fulfill certain secondary objectives. And this is where an even greater degree of flexible fun emerges. Merely getting the nuclear juggernaut to the church on time is, it turns out, only part of the story.

However, any half-competent player will reach the moon in a few hours and, while getting all the gold medals, then re-completing the missions, offers further challenge, repetition breeds contempt. Also, the lack of a simultaneous multiplayer option reduces the appeal of racing to beat past times.

But *Blast Corps* is still a fabulous game. Its originality and vigor is to be praised, and the ever-accomplished Rare exhibits a mastery of the N64's graphical potential. You'll have a great time.

■ Best times on every mission are saved to the Controller Pak, so "I'm-The-Best" hi-jinx ensue as you compete with your friends and acquaintances.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

August 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Turns your mayhem-hungry dreams into shattering reality

### LOW:

There aren't enough puzzles to really hold up your too-rapid progress

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

DMA

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Despite obvious graphical hindrances, *Body Harvest* plays absolutely brilliantly

### LOW:

Fogging plagues every level and the cut scenes look untidy

# 09/10

# BODY HARVEST



**If there was ever** a game that was content-heavy, this is it. Maybe it is simplistic at heart, but it's stashed with so many utterly fantastic foes, so many whopping great weapons and such a genuinely likeable B-movie feel, that it matters not a bit. This is all about gameplay.

The action starts almost immediately: you land in Greece, take a couple of steps toward a boarded-up house, and a harvester wave lands. From that point on, there's very little opportunity to pause for breath. Only wandering into the various settlements and having a bit of a chat with an entirely – and fortunately – English-speaking population provides respite (and an opportunity to ransack their houses for goods – ammo, weapons, health, tank parts and hoverboat ignition keys – all from under their noses).

*Body Harvest* is a relentless experience. Puzzles crop up from time to time, but with a little searching, you'll always discover the answers to your problems. And then, after digging out a couple of extra rounds from an old man's house, it's back to the bug-battering in one of 130 modes of transport. Each vehicle "feels" different, but the real beauty of *Body Harvest's* transport is that it's not just cars; hovercraft, speed boats, tanks, helicopters, bi-planes, gyrocopters, school buses, trains and even cruise liners are all on offer. And each has an integral part to play in this simple but rollicking good fun game.

■ As the game progresses the aliens become more canny, but don't worry because once inside a vehicle you can't be harmed by their fire. Press A for a burst of speed and B to get a handy reverse when soldier bugs are steaming toward you.



# CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY



### Conker's is like nothing

you've ever played before. Stuffed to the gills with vulgarities, this brilliant title is not one for the easily offended. True, it's similar to the likes of *Banjo* and *Donkey Kong*, but the execution is entirely different, and where others have tried and failed to create a movie-like experience, Rare has succeeded in style.

The gameplay structure is simple. Guiding Conker from location to location, you'll bump into all kinds of characters, who require you to do different things for them. More often than not, attempting to fulfill their request places you in a situation where a puzzle must be solved. Once completed, you'll be ushered toward the next character, and consequently a new puzzle and a new situation to get out of.

*Conker's* is a difficult game, made more so by its stubborn camera. Rare, better than anyone else, should know how to sort this out, which makes its pitiful movement all the more reason-defying. On more than one occasion, you'll find yourself losing lives simply because you cannot accurately judge your position within your surrounding environment.

So is *Conker's* ruined by this? No. Rare has redeemed itself by fashioning a technical masterpiece. Everything is super-slick, harboring no frame rate issues whatsoever. The textures are gorgeous, there's full speech, and every character model is near faultless and comes with extensive facial expressions.

As an absorbing experience, nothing comes close.

■ Pressing B enables Conker to perform various tasks - whether it's combining an item in his possession with the surrounding environment, or setting another part of the strange plot in motion.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Rare

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

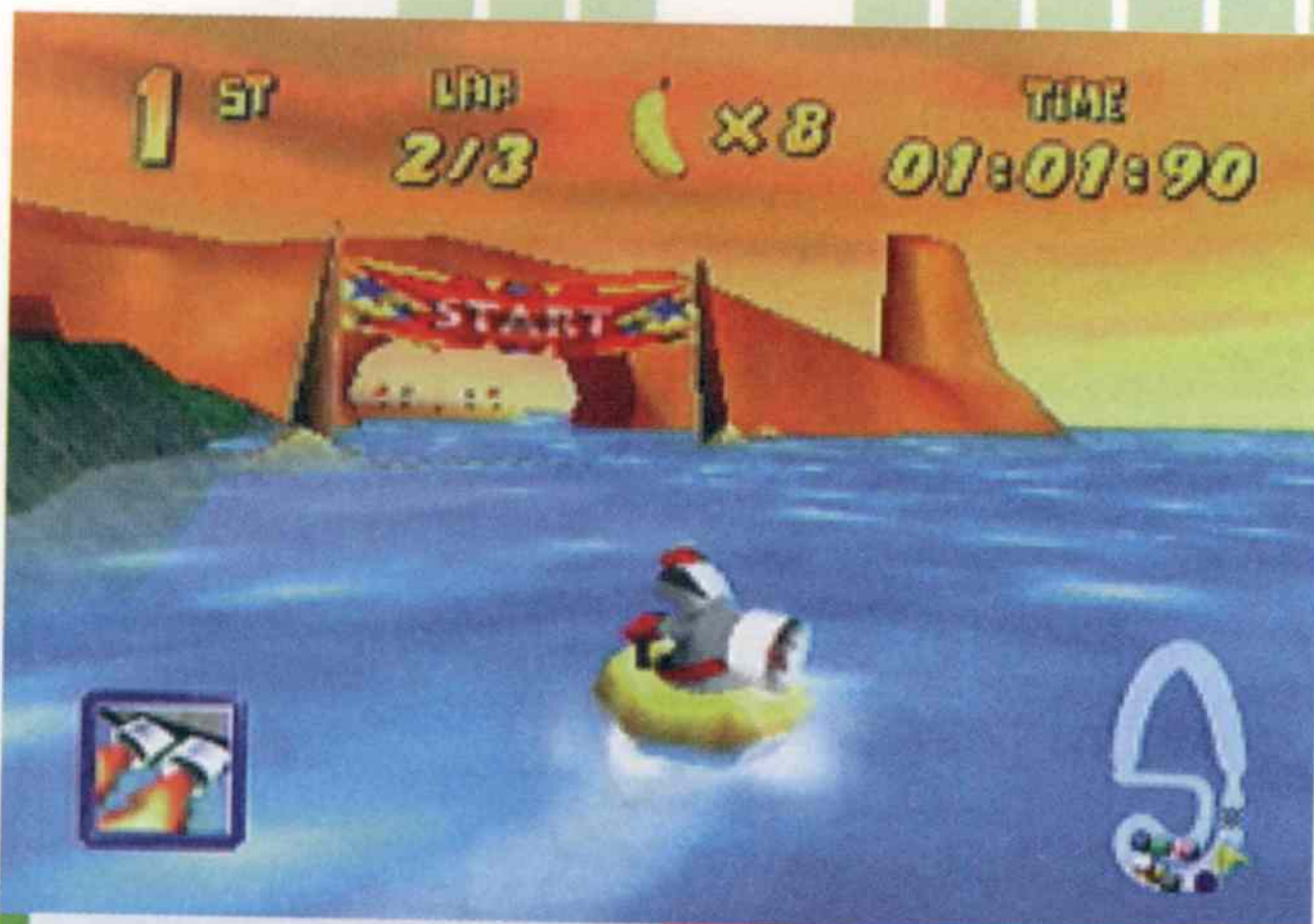
### HIGH:

As compelling as compelling gets

### LOW:

Ridiculously frustrating, with horrible camera problems

# 09/10



# DIDDY KONG RACING



**A superb one-player** game with a lifespan that exceeds any racing game to date. Best of all, the game's difficulty is achieved in largely novel ways. The three vehicles require three different driving styles and the Silver Coin Challenges are a great idea. Boss races add variety and are lots of fun.

And even when you've struggled through the game the first time, plenty more awaits. Admittedly, *Adventure Two* is just the game repeated in mirror mode, but the coins in the Silver Coin Challenges have been placed in almost impossible places. Once you have completed *Adventure Two*, the Time Trials beckon - 40 times to beat, each rising in difficulty.

The main problem is with the multiplayer game. Because *Diddy Kong's* power-ups run on a pre-ordained system, there's absolutely no element of chance; the racer who makes the fewest mistakes wins. In this respect it's a tiny bit soulless.

One of the finest touches is the animation on the characters themselves. When they reverse, they do so one-handed with one arm over the back of their seat. In close races, they take nervous peeks sideways and behind to see which of their furry friends is catching them. Rare has built another brilliant game, but this time fallen a smidgen of a cart's breadth from "classic" status.

■ Banana tactics come into play in the Time Trials section - to beat the game's ghosts you have to collect as many as possible as quickly as possible, throwing your normal racing lines out of the window but boosting your top speed beyond the standard 60mph on the second and third laps.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Lots of challenge

### LOW:

Krunch, Diddy, Bumper, Banjo, Conker, Tiptup, Pipsy and Timber: none of them are entirely comfortable to play

# 08/10

# DONKEY KONG 64

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

*DK64's* size is thrilling – there's almost too much to do

### LOW:

The camera occasionally flicks around to look at your face for no discernible reason

# 09/10



**Donkey Kong 64** is everything a platformer should be: vast, complex, beautiful to look at and impossibly involving. While lesser games cover in the corner with their half-hearted controls and linear play, *DK64* presents intricate puzzles, sprawling levels and magnificent sights.

*DK64* has ditched the long, straight paths of most platformers in favor of huge, open-plan 3D worlds. The very first level, Jungle Japes, is a beautiful start to the game – a gigantic, multi-leveled jungle clearing filled with things for Donkey Kong to run around, jump on to, climb up and fire at. It's followed by a wonderfully picturesque woodland area complete with working water mill, a watery wonderland towered over by an active lighthouse, and a menacing, multi-roomed castle that takes a good 10 minutes to climb to the top of. Throughout *DK64*, you are encouraged to explore and experiment, all the while teased with locked doors, sealed-off bananas and unreachable objects.

There's something approaching 30 hours of "first time" gameplay within *DK64*, but the moment you send the final boss packing, you'll be itching to get back into the game and collect every last banana, fairy and coin – for every object that you've yet to pick up, there'll be another glorious set-piece or inventive puzzle waiting to show itself off. There's also the multitude of bonus games (including versions of two classic retro titles) and the surprise four-player mode to get stuck into.

■ Head underwater and there's no "airometer," so you get infinite time to probe the murky depths.

# EXCITEBIKE 64



### Excitebike 64 employs

the services of just about every button on the controller to put the twists, turns, leaps and falls of a trembling two-wheeled 500cc racing machine at your disposal. Combine this with good looks and flawless bike physics, and it adds up to an experience as close to real-life motorcross as you could hope for.

You only have to watch the bikes move to see how comprehensive *Excitebike 64* is. They stay stable on the suspension as the wheels jiggle up and down on a bumpy surface, sway back and forth on their back wheel during a crowd-pleasing wheelie, and even topple sideways realistically after you've been knocked to the ground by a scurrilous opponent or conveniently placed tree.

But the attention to detail on the way the bikes tilt and skid would mean nothing if it weren't for the flawless way those movements have been mapped to the controls. The sheer amount for your hands to do is initially off-putting – you'll find yourself over-steering into the inside of bends, flying off the side of the track and bouncing off hill after hill for several races. But spend some time on the informative training section, and you'll be skidding round a corner, soaring 100 feet into the air and turning the bike mid-flight ready for the next bend, with all the professionalism of a real-life MXer.

*Excitebike 64* is a bit special. When you're next buying a game: think once, think twice, think bike.

■ The shortcuts and alternate routes make every race a gleefully unpredictable affair – especially in multiplayer. And that's not counting the thrill that comes with the way they take you soaring over speeding trains or pine-filled forests.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Left Field

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The game sparkles outdoors, with courses including lush forests and dirt-filled quarries

### LOW:

The inside courses are tedious and irritating

# 09/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Video System

**DEVELOPER:**  
Paradigm

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

The game's graphics have been beautifully modeled and the engine is the best yet seen

**LOW:**

Occasionally low frame rate on complicated corners

09/10

# F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX



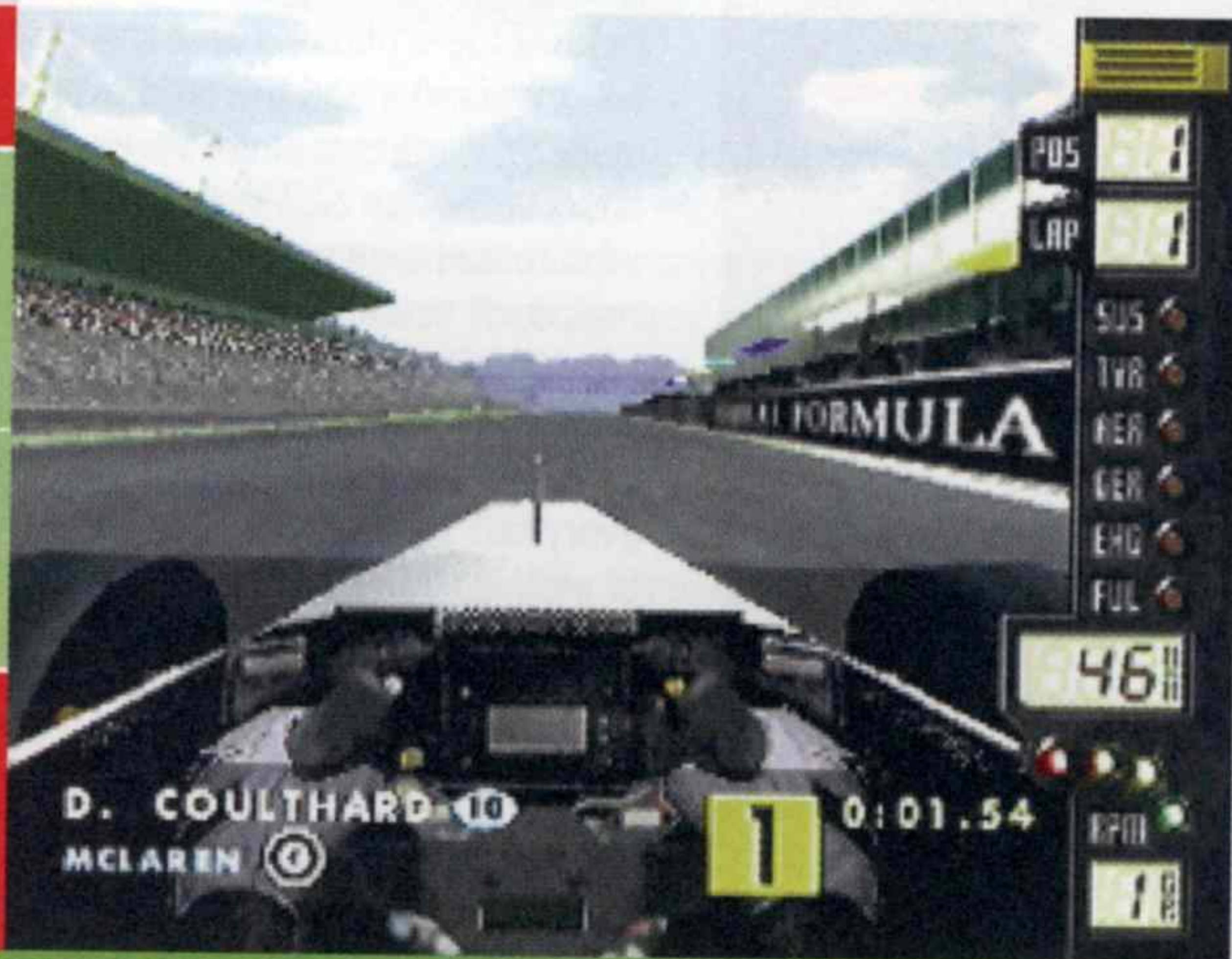
**Real F1 racing is** an incredibly complicated and skillful affair, and that's just what *F1 World Grand Prix* is trying to concentrate on. It wants you to learn how to contend with a seven-notched gear box, it wants you to learn how to cope with braking from 198 miles per hour to 60 in three seconds, and it wants you to learn how to get past Pedro Diniz without ending up upside down in a gravel trap.

So having established that *F1 World Grand Prix* is not a game for casual gamers, just what is it that makes it so good? First up, it has to be that it's the best-looking F1 game there has ever been. Each of the 17 Grands Prix looks exactly as it does in real life; from the blue glass building at the end of the lap at Magny Cours, to Casino Square at Monte Carlo; from the fairground at Suzuka to the Woodcote bend at Silverstone - everything about the game is stunningly realistic. Unsurprisingly given the graphics behind it, the game plays extraordinarily well, too. The handling is realistically ticklish, and almost certainly designed

with an analog steering wheel in mind.

If you watch two hours of Grand Prix every other Sunday (and maybe even tune in for qualifying on Saturday), the thought of deciding your own pit stop, tire and fuel strategy, in an almost photo-realistic game, will be far too tempting to keep you out of the game store.

■ There are superb touches as well, like double tapping the throttle button to "floor" the accelerator and double tapping the brake to lock the wheels. Why's that useful? If you've ever seen an F1 driver fling his car through 180 degrees to right it on the spot after a spin, then you'll know.



# F-ZERO X



**F-Zero X is not entirely** unattractive, but neither is it a triumph of aesthetic accomplishment. This relative visual bankruptcy, however, is put into perspective by *F-Zero's* wealth of playability. The first time you encounter the Jack Cup's first race at Mute City, you'll "oooh" at the speeds you achieve on its opening straight, "ahhhh" at its well-positioned speed-ups and deceptive corners, and "arghh!" at the crescendo that is its loop-the-loop. It's only with a few further races that *F-Zero's* unique nature becomes apparent, though.

It's easy to draw parallels between *F-Zero X* and other racing games. Take a corner at too steep an angle, and the back end of your craft drifts outward. There are other vehicles to race against and collisions lead to a reduction in speed - you get the general idea. But *F-Zero* is refreshingly different. While other racers demand ham-fisted yanks of the control stick to negotiate corners, this begs subtlety of its blurry-eyed participants, with seemingly insignificant adjustments having a profound effect on craft movement. Similarly, the sheer scope of the starting grid in Cup races with 30 participants makes the competitive racing of, say, *V-Rally's* foursome or *Wipeout's* sixsome appear insignificant by comparison.

Finally, *F-Zero X* is fast. While other developers may concentrate on polishing appearance, Nintendo has created one of the most well-judged and wonderfully balanced racing games we've ever had the pleasure of playing.

■ The "speed boost" button gives a short burst of extra velocity, but at the expense of craft energy. It's possible to engage this useful function with wild abandon, but you risk leaving your vehicle vulnerable to race-ending collisions.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

It's a hard and fast racer and not one that you'll tire of quickly

**LOW:**

The presentation is dreadful

09/10

# GOLDENEYE 007

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR



**So just how good** is *GoldenEye 007*?

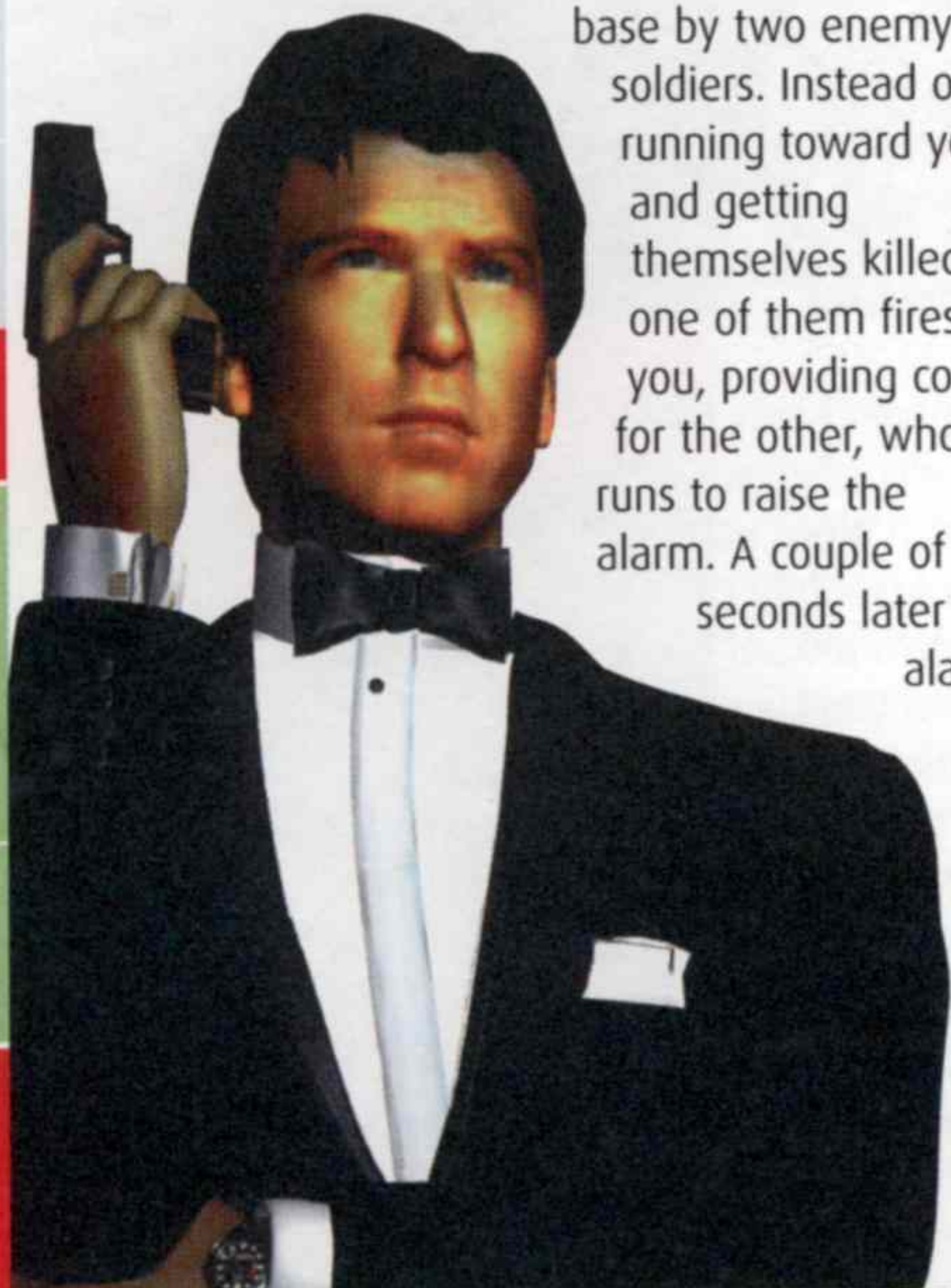
Well, on release it was certainly the best first-person shooter on the N64. It's still possibly the best first-person shooter in the world. But, more than that, it's everything you'd ever want from a Bond game.

When was the last time this happened in a console game? You pick up a Sniper Rifle with telescopic sights. You peer through the eyehole and can suddenly see a soldier pacing up and down a gun turret over a quarter of a mile away. And not only that. Very faintly, even further into the distance, you can see the next gun turret and a soldier moving about on that.

Or this... you're inside a high-security enemy bunker. You've got a Walther PPK with silencer or a KfV Soviet rifle. When you fire the PPK, the faint pffft of the bullet hitting an enemy arouses no unwanted attention whatsoever. As in real life, the soldier dies in silence. When, however, you use the noisy Soviet, enemy guards jump to attention and swarm toward you.

Or this... You're spotted inside a Russian

base by two enemy soldiers. Instead of running toward you and getting themselves killed, one of them fires at you, providing cover for the other, who runs to raise the alarm. A couple of seconds later the alarm



rings out and soldiers stream from the huts and buildings around you, intent on finishing you off.

Or this... If you don't take out the security cameras in a bunker, soldiers in the control room will be warned of your presence and arrive at the scene within moments.

The answer, of course, is never. *GoldenEye* is quite unlike anything you'll ever have seen before. And with four difficulty levels, two secret stages, a level editor and a stunning Deathmatch option, the game will last.

The 11 arenas are a mix of the brilliant one-player levels – such as the Bunker, the Facility and the Archives – with some specifically designed for the multiplayer set-up, such as the Caverns and Complex. The further you progress into the game, the more levels you can access.

Most of all, it's the Bond license that makes the game absolutely essential if you've watched 007's progress since 1963. Indeed even if you're only partially interested in the adventures of MI6's most famous son, this is still unmistakably necessary. It's 40 bucks, but it'll be the best 40 bucks you've spent since *Mario 64*. Don't miss it.

■ When you complete every level on every difficulty setting, besides accessing the level editor, you also activate the All Weapons cheat on the Cheat menu. Most of the weapons available you will have come across in the game proper, but a couple, such as the Stun Gun and the Cylinder Bomb-Thrower, you won't have seen before.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Beautiful levels, brilliant polygonal characters, glorious explosions and perfect, super-fast movement

### LOW:

You can't jump

09/10



# INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 64



**For the very first** time, here's a soccer game that combines supreme on-field action with tactical strategy. Indeed, so fulsome is the strategic set-up in *ISS64* that if you live and breathe soccer, you'll never take the game out of your N64.

The improvements make for a far sturdier game. Intelligent goalkeepers have replaced the spill-friendly J-League versions, and now boast extra "actions," including such crowd-pleasers as swinging on the cross bar when a ball sails over, and coming out to meet a through ball on the edge of the area instead of getting the bends when they venture from the six yard box. They also frequently get fingertips to top-corner-bound free kicks, and gather up goal line scrambles with ease.

The general difficulty of the game has been upped, too, to cope with the demands of a European audience. Most teams offer a substantial challenge – especially Germany and Brazil, who'll frequently prove a thorn in the side of any World Cup wannabe – although scores will occasionally balloon against the lesser nations.

By now the beauty of *ISS64's* stadium-based boot-fest should be well and truly etched on your minds. This is a flawless example of how to "do" a soccer game.

■ Prove yourself to be a master tactician with a plethora-and-a-half of data screens that need to be looked at, analyzed and then chopped and changed. Get things right and dividends can be reaped tenfold. Get things wrong and you're facing embarrassment as your team crashes out in the early rounds.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Programmed by soccer followers for soccer followers

### LOW:

The random nature of the ref's whistle, which will blow in the most frustrating circumstances

# 09/10

# JET FORCE GEMINI



### The Jet Force team

comprises Juno, Vela and Lupus, the amazing flying dog. Together with their robotic pal Floyd, their mission is to defeat the evil intergalactic tyrant's legion of heavily armed bugs and rescue the peace-loving Tribals. They start from three opposite points of a Y-shaped map, meeting at the center for some serious mayhem.

Getting there isn't easy. The levels are divided up into rooms, with the door to the next area opening only when you've wiped out the very last alien Drone. As long as you don't leave for a new level, the enemies will not regenerate, enabling you to explore safely in search of the many secrets and hidden areas you need to find.

The standard Drones give you the biggest headache because they can seem unnaturally smart. How often have you seen an enemy run away from you if you storm toward it, lobbing grenades, only for it to pop out of its hiding place and shoot you in the head when you turn your back?

And while the game never fails to impress with incredible looks, graphical splendor isn't the be-all and end-all. *Jet Force* is a joy to play, once you've learned the controls. They work superbly in the one-player game, but are a little too much to handle when the heat is on in the four-player Battle mode. But that's a fairly minor complaint. You simply must play this.

■ To cater for both shooting and platform exploration, there are two different control styles. The first is a cross between *GoldenEye* and *Banjo*, with the joystick used to move around. The second, activated by holding R, moves you into a semi-first-person view behind your now-transparent character.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A welcome return to the old-school value of playability

### LOW:

The multiplayer mode is the only blemish on a near-perfect record

# 09/10



# KIRBY 64: THE CRYSTAL SHARDS



**Ribbon, the heroine,** attempts to leg it with the magic crystal to prevent the Dark Matter from taking it. As the Matter chases Ribbon around the cosmos, the crystal shatters, Ribbon crashes to earth, and everyone has egg on their face.

However, Ribbon's crash-landing happens to be slap bang next to an amorphous pink mutant by the name of Kirby. Being a decent sort, he offers to sticky-tape the splinters of shiny stuff together. With his disturbing elasticity and shape-changing qualities, the task should be a cinch.

Unfortunately it is. We're talking about rudimentary 2D platforming here, of the jump-run-bash variety. Occasionally, you'll round an almost-3D corner or two, but *Kirby* is mostly a thoroughly NES-like experience, and easy to run through without bothering to concoct neat cocktails of power-ups.

You'll run into bosses on every world, but curiously they often boil down to repeating the same tactic for each one – it'll spit wee versions of itself, which Kirby sucks up and spits back. That said, once Kirby has swallowed a fiend he can do a surprising number of things with it.

It's great to see the old pink ball of loveliness back on form after his brief airing in *Smash Bros*, but Nintendo really should be doing better than this.

■ After playing for a while, you will notice out-of-place checkered walls in varying colors. Pay attention, as these colors correspond to the combo of powers you need to unlock that bit. Not all of the powers are on the same level, so off you warp round the cosmos hunting for the relevant bosses.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

HAL

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Surprising depths to unearth in *Kirby*, which should extend its lifespan beyond a week or so

### LOW:

An unfortunate lack of really challenging gameplay

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

Yes

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You'll want to return and complete the game with higher success rates

### LOW:

A harder difficulty setting would have been better

# 09 / 10

# STAR FOX 64



**Furry Space Adventurer** Fox McCloud's SNES debut, *Starwing*, earned universal praise for its impressive

graphics and tense combat action, but many players longed for more influence over events in what was essentially a linear title. With this greatly enhanced sequel, Nintendo's master game designer Shigeru Miyamoto delivered more than *Starwing* fans had ever dreamed of, creating what was, for many years, the closest thing to an interactive movie ever made.

Your path through this outstanding shoot-'em-up varies depending on events in previous levels. Sometimes the changes are profound – hit certain targets and you'll be transported to a warp zone or whisked away to a different story thread, for example. Other times you'll notice more subtle differences, such as receiving assistance later in the game after saving certain characters near the start. There are many variations, and although much of the gameplay retains *Starwing's* limiting "on-rails" style, there are extra vehicles (a submarine and a tank) and some excellent cinematic set pieces borrowed from hit movies – one level resembles the final scene from *Independence Day*, and the previously unheard of numbers of fighter craft that spill from beneath the vast mothership are still a memorably impressive sight.

All in all, *Star Fox 64* is an essential experience for Nintendo fans and movie buffs alike.

■ Get a gold medal on every planet and you'll be able to use tanks in the multiplayer game.



# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME



**Taken in isolation, each** of *Zelda's* separate qualities (graphics, control system, camera, and so on) are of sufficient merit to secure jaw-dropping greatness, but it's only when you toss *Zelda's* greatest triumphs into the mix that the game becomes truly legendary. Quite simply, Shigeru Miyamoto has created a fully developed world inside your N64, and one that's quite unlike anything you've ever seen before. See that castle in the distance? You can run over to it, and a whole day will pass before you get there. See that river? You can follow it to its source, in a whole new kingdom. See that mountain, miles away? You can get to the summit. And go inside. And fight a dragon.

Whatever you can see, you can get to, and there's absolutely no fogging at all. And no Expansion Pak needed. It's breathtaking. You can waste days (in real, 24-hour periods) simply exploring, entering new areas, talking to the residents, slowly getting drawn into the story. Most tellingly, you'll want to. And it's seamless. Even more so than *Super Mario 64*, *Zelda* is 3D gaming as it should be, providing unparalleled freedom of movement and combat, and offering a flawlessly balanced challenge within its own beautifully realized walls.

And then there's the story. While it's certainly familiar to those with even a passing interest in previous *Zelda* games, this is the first time that the full, epic weight of the drama has really been allowed to fly. The scope is awesome. Think about it; starting as a 10-year-old Link, safe in his forest home, you'll have played a good 20 hours or so, and achieved much, before you get the chance to time travel – over seven years. And once you awaken as adult Link, everything's changed. Hyrule lies in ruins; Death Mountain is wreathed in rings of fire; people you met when you were younger have grown older – they don't recognize you, and blame the fairy child with the Ocarina for Gannondorf's evil



reign. And it's only then that you realize the seriousness of what's been happening. And you're barely a third of the way through the game.

All perfectly formed stuff, but on the most immediate level it's surely the graphics that demand the most respect. From Kokiri Forest's earthy greens and browns, to Hyrule Field's lush turf, to the Shadow Temple's gloomy dungeon decor, to Lake Hylia's crystal waters, *Zelda's* "look" is naturalistic, believable and pin-sharp throughout, and never less than eye-massagingly lovely.

Game of the century? Believe it.

■ By assigning items to three of the C buttons, crucial weaponry is never far away. Fighting Morpha, for example, requires you to pull the nucleus out of his watery body with the Hookshot, then slice 'n' dice with the sword. You'll need to be nimble with your fingers, but the action quickly becomes second nature.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Involves you, to the exclusion of everything – food, sleep...

**LOW:**  
Involves you, to the exclusion of everything – food, sleep...

# 10 / 10



# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A stunning, bewilderingly accomplished sequel

### LOW:

The familiarity of puzzles and action means you'll sprint through much of it

# 10 / 10



**The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask** is magnificent. Five minutes of quick play soon turns into two,

three or four hours hopelessly absorbed in a flawless fusion of adventuring, platforming, fighting – even racing – and while sequel *Majora's Mask* doesn't quite surpass the groundbreaking delights of *Ocarina of Time*, it comes closer than anyone dared dream.

As you work toward halting the moon's slow descent toward Clock Town, the storyline knocks spots off *Ocarina of Time*. *Majora's Mask* tells a gripping tale of loss, regret and heartbreak, of mothers reunited with lost sons and wandering spirits yearning for their souls to be put to rest.

The meat of the game, though, is even more impressive. The camera, the controls and the mechanics are so flawlessly handled as to be almost unnoticeable. And while that's to be expected, what nobody bargained for was a game world as sprawling, bloated with action and full of surprises as the original Hyrule. One minute you're chatting to a town carpenter on a sunny afternoon, the next you're chasing a colossal mechanical bull around a frozen stadium-sized arena with bombs and stalactites crashing around your ears. Every corner turned,

every doorway stepped through, every item found brings something ingenious, magical or downright breathtaking with it.

In the face of all that, looks aren't important – but *Majora's Mask* happens to be just about the best-looking game on the N64, too. There are more of the prequel's beautiful rolling fields, sparkling ice mountains and glistening stretches of water, but this time the Expansion Pak multiplies the amount that you can see, so *Majora's Mask* is teeming with boss-sized dragons, groups of sword-wielding lizards, and flocks of 30-or-so skittering bats. And, once again, the Zelda engine shows off its remarkable ability to bathe scenery in the changing light of night and day. Stunning stuff.

Sadly, *Majora's Mask* has to end sometime – but the challenge extends far beyond the final boss battle. Wherever you are on the gigantic map, you're never more than a two-second trot away from a shooting gallery sub-game, a spider-hunting sub-quest, a secret underground cavern stashed with treasures, or one of the hundreds of bonus items that just beg to be collected.

By rights, *Majora's Mask* should cower in the shadow of *Ocarina of Time*. Instead, it shines just as brightly.

■ The real high point is the dungeons. You'll buzz with excitement as Link fishes a new type of bomb, light arrow or other toy from a golden chest; and feel your heart in your mouth as you dodge and stab a fire-breathing dinosaur with the help of the still-revolutionary Z-targeting.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Camelot

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
There's something for all skill levels

**LOW:**  
It can be hard to tell the exact direction of the wind meter

# 09/10

# MARIO GOLF



**There's an awful lot** tucked away in here: seven modes, 14 characters, 108 superbly designed holes, a putting green, time trials, bets, handicaps, replays, tournaments and even a Game Boy link-up. It's as comprehensive as you'd expect from any game with Mario's name attached to it.

But it's the delicious uncertainty you face every time you play a hole that makes *Mario Golf* a genuine sporting classic. Whether or not you're a real ace at the game, the weather and surface conditions can easily make a mess of a shot you've pulled off a hundred times before. Even a simple tee shot can turn into a disaster when you lose your button-pressing rhythm, something which is sure to happen when you least expect it. As a multiplayer game it's ideal, because novice players can pull off a surprise birdie or two and win thanks to the handicapping and betting system.

The courses get tougher, finishing with the deadly Mario's Star course, in which the greens are little more than tiny mounds and the fairways the brush strokes on giant portraits of characters from *Super Mario 64*. What all the courses have in common is the amount of thought put into each one.

Apart from the odd minor quibble, this golf game gets unanimous approval.

■ There are big holes for big hitters, short holes for accurate characters, and quite often more than one way of getting to the green. For instance, you might choose to hit the green in two accurate strokes with Peach, or leather it in the general direction of the pin with the powerful-but-wayward Bowser.



# MARIO KART 64



**Nintendo's efforts to do** something different with the computer-controlled karts are commendable but also, sadly, *Mario Kart's* partial undoing. When you've been playing for a while, the way your N64 decides in which order the CPU karts are going to finish the cup before the first race has even begun becomes all too transparent.

Multiplayer *Mario Kart* is immense fun with three friends, but the two-player Battle game is a bit dull. The arenas are about 10 times bigger than usual, so you hardly ever spot anyone to attack. Victory is generally secured by simply hiding in a corner and waiting for everyone else to either fall accidentally to their deaths or run boringly over banana skins.

The best thing about *Mario Kart 64* is the Time Trial mode. It's an incredibly simple idea: you pick one of the 16 tracks and then drive three laps as quickly as possible. But the handling of the kart is so precise, and the circuits so well designed, that it's possible to race around the same circuit for weeks and still keep getting quicker. There are so many levels to it: learning the tracks, taking corners as well as possible, introducing powersliding and mini-turbos, trying the short cuts.

Graphics? Sound? All that sort of thing? This isn't a game you see for the first time and go "Flip!" It's been designed from the gameplay up, in contrast to racing games on some other consoles, which feel more like graphics demonstrations.

■ When you watch F1 qualifying sessions on TV it seems inconceivable that drivers can drive two-and-a-half mile laps and come within hundredths of a second of each other, but the same happens in *Mario Kart's* Time Trial mode.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
Yes

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
The Time Trial mode

**LOW:**  
The two-player Battle game

# 09/10

# MARIO PARTY

**Having unwittingly** laid down the rules that require every software company with a halfway recognizable roster of characters to create at least one feeble *Mario Kart* type per year, Nintendo used its formidable influence to define yet another simple, unique and easily copiable game genre.

*Mario Party* is the console equivalent of the best family board games you've ever enjoyed/endured on a wet holiday weekend. After choosing your favorite character, you set off on a coin-collecting quest around one of several themed boards. Once every player has had a throw of the dice, a random mini-game pops up, which means it's time to chuck away every notion you had about Nintendo games being deep or sophisticated.

Most of the mini-games are about as complex as a 1981 Game & Watch, but they're almost all a total blast. Pitching four players in a free-for-all, in teams of two, or, most cruelly, in a three-on-one contest, the games require no thought at all – just thumbs of steel, a lot of good fortune and the ability to wiggle the joystick with speed and accuracy while doubled up from side-splitting laughter.

The lucky winner of each game gets to relieve the losers of some of their hard-earned coins before moving on to the next round, which is always more of the same. Repetition is the game's weak point, and you really wouldn't want to play it on your own, but with three willing opponents it's a lot of fun.

■ In events where you have to spin the joystick in a circle, use your thumb rather than your palm, otherwise you might end up stripping the flesh from your hand!



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Hudson

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The one game at which a 70-year-old granny might beat her 7-year-old grandson

### LOW:

The sequels have more games and are a lot more polished

07 / 10

# MARIO PARTY 2

**Like its prequel, *Mario Party 2*** is at heart a board game, but one where rolling dice and trekking around the tile-based board takes something of a back seat. The six boards, themed around outer space, the wild West, pirate ships and more, are packed with events and things to do – you can browse the shelves at Goomba's shop, kickstart two-player duels for coin-stealing purposes and rearrange the board via a Bowser parade or steam train ride – but no matter how much is going on, waiting for all four players to roll their dice isn't the most exciting part of *Mario Party 2*.

Instead, it's the mini-games that bring *Mario Party 2* to life. Away from the main board it's stuffed to the gills with stadium modes, battle games and other ways of playing. You'll need to earn coins from the main section to open the games up, but that just makes getting your hands on them – and the handful of secret stuff – all the more satisfying.

Everything looks great, too. The time-wasting 3D cut-scenes from *Mario Party* have been ditched, and the boards look great in their colorful 2D get-up, as do the lovingly crafted polygonal characters.

Armed with some friends, the prospect of over 30 new and improved mini-games is probably more than enough to tempt you into splashing out. Mario might be second-best to Pokémon these days, but he can still throw one hell of a party.

■ The innocent expression on Donkey Kong's face as he tumbles into the sea on the back of a giant beach ball, falls off a mine cart or is blown up by an exploding Bob-Omb will have you and your friends rolling around.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Hudson

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Similar to the original, but better, with over 30 brand-new mini-games

### LOW:

One of the games involves a seaside toy-grabbing crane

08 / 10



# MARIO TENNIS

**Mario Tennis is an** absolutely fantastic game. Rather than just update *Super Tennis*, Camelot has created a new style of gameplay that is easy to pick up, yet offers experienced players greater shot-making subtlety than anything else available.

Unlike other tennis games, you don't have to time your button presses to make your racket connect with the ball. Instead you press the A or B button any time you like, and if your player is within striking range of the ball, the computer takes care of hitting the thing. All you have to do is push the joystick in the direction you want your shot to go.

Written like that it sounds like the control system is designed for people who have never seen a videogame before, and to a certain extent that's true. Anybody can pick up *Mario Tennis* and get a decent rally going on their first attempt. After a few minutes of play, though, you'll get your first hints of the incredible depth of gameplay lurking within the cart. The auto-hit control system becomes second nature, leaving you free to concentrate on some of the more skillful things like tactics and shot placement.

Don't miss it: *Mario Tennis* is one of the most enjoyable experiences on the N64.

■ Power shots can be accessed by double-tapping the button, and you can wind up a smash by starting your move well before the ball crosses the net. The game is also suited to crazily fast ping-pong rallies at the net, particularly during doubles matches.

<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> Nintendo	<b>HIGH:</b> It's an outstanding multiplayer game - competitive with two players and riotous with four
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> Camelot	
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1-4	<b>LOW:</b> The most promising-looking bonus mode is a bit of a dud
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> November 2000	
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No	<b>09/10</b>

# MISCHIEF MAKERS



**And thus, one of the** most unfathomable, obfuscating and downright weird import games of recent memory is demystified. To an extent. It's a platform game, mostly in 2D but with some 3D bits. It's very funny, extremely inventive, and downright odd, from end to end, as you plough through environments shaking your enemies into submission.

Throughout *Mischief Makers* you're assisted by myriads of text, employed in the most part to give you helpful hints, à la *Super Mario 64*. These tend to range from blindingly obvious game control tips to less insulting level-specific mission objectives.

But the banality of this sagacity, when juxtaposed with the outright bonkersness of the game in general, serves only to heighten the lighthearted surrealism that abounds. Which, in our book, is A Very Good Thing. Yes, it's 2D (with 3D bits), but it's a hell of a lot of fun, there's a lot to do for your money, and you'll forever be refining your shaking/throwing/jumping techniques.

In a world where imagination is oft frowned upon, *Mischief Makers* breaks all the rules, and it's really quite refreshing to encounter something bizarrely eccentric once in a while. Just don't play it too much in one sitting - it'll probably do something funny to your head.

■ In "Meet Calina," Marina's evil twin wreaks havoc in the name of our heroine. The shellshocked villagers, believing you've returned to torture them anew, proffer advice such as "Coming again to show off your Slider Jump? We can also slide by holding down on the D-Pad and pressing A!"

<b>DETAILS:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> Nintendo
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> Treasure
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> November 1997
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No
<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>HIGH:</b> It's appealingly off-the-wall platforming
<b>LOW:</b> Very much 2D, but attractive with it
<b>09/10</b>

# MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE



**The things that aren't good in *Mission: Impossible* are unfair AI, animation, scripting, cameras, analog control...**

Perhaps the worst AI bit in all the game is on the Embassy level. It's fine when Dieter, disguised as a barman, hands you a glass of wine (which slides across the table by itself) and then some nausea powder to spike the drink in front of everybody, but if you step behind the bar to talk to him (you're disguised as a waiter, by the way), he shouts, "You've broken my cover!" and you're both arrested. Erm...

But, more than this, it's just the way the game is so trial and error-based. Do something, see if you die and, if you do, start all over again (and there are some long missions).

Also, the idea of analog control is that it enables you to walk, trot and then run. Instead, Ethan almost never walks because a touch sends him scuttling into a full-paced sprint.

And, yet, the actual ideas behind the game are fantastic. Spraying blue paint across CCTV cameras, dodging searchlights, knocking people out in the bogs and then disguising yourself as them, picking up clues from conversations. *Mission*, at heart, does feel like a spy sim - it's just the execution is so lackluster, it's hard to see the positives.

■ You'll spend more time than is healthy watching Ethan behave like a rabid monkey, crashing up against walls and getting caught on insignificant scenery like the barely visible rims of doors.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Ocean

### DEVELOPER:

Infogrames

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Quite engrossing if you're prepared to stick at it

### LOW:

You have to trawl through an awful lot of slush to get to the good bits

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

Konami

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Graphically, it's all impressively expert

### LOW:

The glitchy camera renders platform-hopping tricky at first

# 09 / 10

# MYSTICAL NINJA



**This game is huge** - or at least insists on enough exploration and fabulous sub-games that you're quite often going sideways in order to advance - and it's clever. Not only because there's simply so much to do, but because you're never quite sure what's going to come next. Mini boss? End-of-level boss? Ludicrous sub-game involving a big yellow man and some falling shrinking pills? *Mystical Ninja* is a supreme example of game invention, swamping proceedings with strangeness and playing, looking and moving with all the beauty of a blue-haired *Mario 64*.

The feel of the game is quite old-skool. This is often reflected in the puzzles and tasks at hand, but, due to the restrictions of 16-bit, the freedom of movement enjoyed here was never possible in the original games. Additionally, there're the bosses, which are not only an astronomical leap from the SNES and NES versions, but a stunning demonstration of the capabilities of the N64.

The 3D environments range from the pretty to the absolutely wondrous and, apart from some lazy 2D trees, Goemon's wanderings quite often prove as fascinating a sight-seeing tour as they do a necessary part of the game.

Overall, this is just the ticket for *Mario*-loving N64 owners, and a perfect example of how well the machine can be used by third-party developers.

■ PG? Action RPG? 3D platformer? That's the beauty of *Mystical Ninja* and the reason it's so appealing. You can be an expert in any of the aforementioned game styles, or an expert in none...



# PERFECT DARK



**From the moment you** switch on the cart, with that superb morphing Nintendo cube, *Perfect Dark* feels like a cut above anything else. The setting – the Carrington Institute – is filled with so many diversions that it'll be a while before you start the first mission.

The attention to detail is mind boggling. Almost every level has rooms that are just there as scenery, and the Datadyne skyscraper has entire floors that you'll never need to visit – except to wander through them, marveling at the fully equipped desks with working terminals, and coffee rooms filled with off-duty guards. The realism extends to the character animation, too – catch somebody by surprise and they might spin around, spraying bullets wildly. Or they might run off to get help, yelling, "She's here, she's here!" Or their gun might jam and they'll spend a few seconds trying to get it to work before surrendering, saying "I was just doing my job." That's when you plug them full of lead, of course, because they might be faking it (or you can just knock them cold with the butt of your pistol if you feel sorry for them).

Any one of those details would be an outstanding feature in any other game, but in the inventive explosion that is *Perfect Dark*, they are vying for attention with hundreds of equally impressive touches.

Also important is the way every character has something to say to you, even if it's only a death shriek or a choked gurgle. Your friends in the co-op mode or the missions where you have assistance from other team members all speak, too. It's the most realistic environment yet seen, and it's hardly surprising that the face mapping feature had to be removed – if it was still there, we doubt the censors would have given anyone



the chance to experience *Perfect Dark*.

The missions are, mostly, a lot better than their *GoldenEye* counterparts. Instead of the tedious Statue and Streets kind of levels, there are many more heart-pounding scenes where you need to protect a certain character or fend off a prolonged assault. Even in the very large levels, the action remains tightly focused.

One thing that doesn't please every player is the switch from human enemies to *Turok*-style aliens for the last couple of levels, although that's more a matter of personal taste than anything else. If you don't get any satisfaction from shooting lasers at lizards, you won't enjoy the later Skedar Ruins level as much as the earlier missions.

*Perfect Dark* is stunning. It takes everything that made its predecessor such an enduring favorite and does it bigger, better and more often. Just as other developers were beginning to approach the standard set by *GoldenEye*, Rare has moved the goalposts.

■ Because it's so tough, there are certain arenas and characters that some players are never likely to see until Rare releases some cheat codes, but the detailed stats (including your total distance traveled, shots fired, kills, wins and so on) will keep you playing with what you've got.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Rare

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The multiplayer mode is good enough to have been released as a stand-alone game

### LOW:

You'll find yourself torn 'twixt the wealth of options available

# 10 / 10



Locate secret door using IR Scanner.



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Left Field

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

The gameplay more than makes up for its lack of visual grace...

**LOW:**

...but there really isn't much in the way of flashy presentation

**09/10****KOBE BRYANT IN NBA COURTSIDE**

**NBA Courtside is one** of the most satisfying versions of any rule-heavy sport we've ever played. It is the only one that has ever managed to recreate the whole spectacular experience - rules and all - and still leave you feeling as if you're really in charge of everything that's happening.

It's a very easy game to get into, with only two buttons required to make passes and score points. More subtle moves, controlled by the C-buttons, become second nature after a little practice, and you'll soon have your team showing off around the court like the Harlem Globetrotters. There are some very impressive-looking tricks available, such as the crossover dribble and the spin, and they all have a specific use during the game (and it's not simply to taunt novice players).

Visual appeal plays an important part in a sport like basketball, where style and image are crucial, and *Courtside* doesn't disappoint in that department. That said, it's not a flashy game but fortunately the gameplay more than compensates for any shortcomings.

Although the Nintendo 64 has never been known as a sports machine - the Big N hasn't really been known for sports since the NES days - this game is good enough to divert the attention of every PlayStation-obsessed jock for a game or three. Bottom line: basketball doesn't get much better than this, boys and girls.

■ If you're a regular viewer of basketball coverage, you'll be able to recognize most of the angular, but smooth and well-animated, players - this is the prettiest of the N64's basketball titles.

**PILOTWINGS 64**

**A wondrous, tireless example** of a game that combines superior technical achievement with endless bouts of enjoyment. Being able to swoop under a fly-over or soar above a snow-laden peak is jaw-dropping. At the top of the mountains you can hear running water and see textured snow, while among the skyscrapers you can listen to the roar of car engines and peer through the windows of buildings.

The gameplay is nothing short of astounding and Nintendo's analog stick works wonders, with nigh-on perfect control. The in-air movement of the vehicles is so accurate that, after concentrated play, you actually take for granted the fact that your gyrocopter swoops and your hang-glider suffers in high winds. Although some slow-down occurs, it isn't enough to shatter the belief that you are actually 400 meters up in the air and that below you are the icy jaws of a mountain.

This is eminently playable stuff. The technical advances made by *Pilotwings 64* over the original are tenfold (at least) and, although it would have benefited from a two-player mode, it's easily more enjoyable. Just as *Mario 64* succeeded in keeping the best of its NES and SNES ancestry and bettering the originals, so too has *Pilotwings*. It may not look exciting but it plays like a dream.

■ If you've played the original *Super Nintendo Pilotwings*, you'll find that the bi-plane has been shipped off to the scrapyard and replaced by an ultra-modern gyrocopter. The rocket belt has been re-invented as a jet pack, the sky-diving element has been relegated to "Secret" status and only the hang-glider remains untouched.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Paradigm

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

A breathtaking showcase for the N64. Superb

**LOW:**

Solid performances often inexplicably turn out low scores

**09/10**

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

With an equally matched opponent this compelling game will have you hooked

**LOW:**

Not a graphical masterpiece

# 07 / 10

# POKÉMON PUZZLE LEAGUE



**Good news for veteran** puzzlers – the 1995 classic *Tetris Attack* on the SNES provides the template for Nintendo's latest Pokémon-branded brain-tickler. And while it's still wickedly addictive, and features the same solid gameplay, Nintendo has fleshed out the whole package with some great extras that will challenge even the most experienced puzzler.

Much like every other puzzler under the sun, *Pokémon Puzzle League* requires you to link blocks of the same color into batches of three or more. The more blocks you match, the faster you clear your play area.

So, if *Pokémon Puzzle League* is just the same as every other puzzler out there, why should you bother checking it out? Well it's positively bursting with options. While the basic premise remains the same, there are loads of different challenges to sink your teeth into, from the Tournament mode through to the brain-meltingly difficult Puzzle University where you have to clear your blocks in a set number of moves.

Play the different styles and you'll really hone your skills – when you return to the Tournament mode you'll be racking up huge combos left, right and center.

In all honesty, it's extremely difficult to find fault with *Puzzle League*. Nintendo hasn't skimmed in any area: the backgrounds on each screen show faithful renditions of all your Pokémon favorites, the sound is perfectly cute and chirpy and there's an ideal learning curve. For puzzle fanatics and Pokémon fans alike, this is not to be missed.

■ *Pokémon Puzzle League* really comes into its own with the multiplayer option. Battling it out against a friend makes for a ridiculously frantic experience.



# POKÉMON SNAP



**Pokémon Snap is just** brilliant fun. Watching a pair of Bulbasaur chasing after apples, or a Squirtle scurrying out of the water, it's like being the cameraman in the most bizarre nature documentary ever made.

Armed with a camera, enough film to shoot 60 photos and an unlimited supply of apples, you have to provide photographic evidence of the weird wildlife inhabiting Pokémon Island.

What transforms *Pokémon Snap* from a visually appealing demo into a proper Nintendo game is the variety of things you can interact with and the range of different situations you get. Just rolling along the track, feeding monsters as you go, is an enjoyable experience. The reactions of the creatures as they squabble over the last apple are delightful, and beautifully animated, too, but there's much more to see. A combination of pesterballs, fruit and music might knock your subject to the ground, only for an even more desirable creature to come scampering out of the undergrowth. You really do have to try everything, which is the reason the levels are so short and packed full of activity – it would be tedious if you had to wait several minutes to get one shot at an end-of-level monster.

The locations are perfect and the monsters behave just like you'd expect them to, and are cute beyond belief. Plus, there's a challenging and engrossing game to play. It's almost the ideal companion to *Pokémon* on the Game Boy.

■ The game this has most in common with is probably shoot-'em-up *Star Fox 64* (page 287). Except instead of getting fixed points for each thing you hit, you're judged on the artistic merit of your "kills."



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

HAL

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

The best realization of the Pokémon universe to date

**LOW:**

Once you've found all 63 monsters, the only challenge is to improve your high score

# 08 / 10

# POKÉMON STADIUM



**Pokémon Stadium is a** game so monstrously enjoyable that it's liable to soften the heart of even the most resolute Pokémon skeptic.

It's impossible, for example, not to fall head over heels for the Pokémon themselves. Watching the little critters bouncing around the screen smiling and posing is a surefire recipe for love. The individualism is remarkable – Poliwrath comes across as a hilarious egocentric body-building type in just a few frames of animation, and Nintendo deserves a standing ovation for managing to instill personality within Exeggcute, a monster made up of nothing more than half a dozen eggs.

But it's not just seeing the Pokémon brought vividly to life that makes *Pokémon Stadium* such a joy – it's watching them take part in the gut-tightening battles. On the Game Boy the various fighting moves looked as cute and harmless as the monsters themselves – in glorious N64 3D, they're truly frightening. The detail is such that you can even see the injured critter shut its eyes tight as the pain of a blow registers.

There's never been a better time to grab yourself a one-way ticket to the glorious world of Pokémon.

■ Transferring monsters from Game Boy's *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* using the Transfer Pak (included in the box) is simplicity itself – and once you've done it the options list is huge.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Pokémon battles have never been more convincing or involving

### LOW:

The time it takes for a move to unfold can be tiring

# 09/10

# RIDGE RACER 64



**When it comes to** numbers, *Ridge Racer* looks pretty weak. Add two tracks borrowed from the first two PlayStation *Ridge Racers* to the third N64-exclusive course, and you end up with the hardly magical total of three. But it's the quality that oozes from every raceway that lays bare *Ridge Racer's* roots as a coin-guzzling arcade racer. Every corner, straight, tunnel and bridge has been carefully placed and intimately tweaked.

And, oh, the speed. The early cars are fast enough to have you catching your breath, but unlock the later vehicles and you won't have any trouble believing the speedometer's claims that the track is whipping by at an incredible 200mph.

The beauty of *Ridge Racer* is that no matter how much you scream as you nudge yet another competitor in the backside, no matter how many maddeningly teeth-grinding crunches of car hood on metal barrier you're forced to listen to, it's crystal clear at all times that it's all your fault. NSTC has polished the handling until it shines, and the way the cars shimmy and slide with every caress of the analog stick is a joy to behold.

One of the joys of *Ridge Racer* is that it doesn't demand commitment. Its exhilarating speed and over-before-they've-begun races lend themselves brilliantly to five-minute blasts before supper. *Ridge Racer 64* is genius – don't be without it.

■ Don't even think about using the brake to make life easier. Winning races means maintaining top speed around every turn, and making extensive use of *Ridge Racer's* patented powersliding technique – tricky, but rewarding.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

NSTC

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Deliciously exciting, speed-drenched racing

### LOW:

Completing the initial tracks and unlocking the 15 or so cars doesn't take long

# 08/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



# ROCKET: ROBOT ON WHEELS

**Rocket is inventive, imaginative** and stuffed full of rewarding and enjoyable activities. The levels are small and compact, yet contain a wealth of fun: the first level alone sees you race a computer car in a hot dog-mobile, activate a huge mechanical dinosaur, play tic-tac-toe with a robotic chicken and create your own rollercoaster and ride it. Brilliant.

Although Sucker Punch has developed a pretty impressive physics system – things actually fall, move and bounce in a pleasing manner – jumping can be frustrating, especially in the platformy sections. And the camera, although controllable via the C-buttons, often can't keep up with the action.

Quibbles aside, there's loads to enjoy in *Rocket*. The finest moment of the game can be found in the "Pyramid Scheme" level. Brilliantly, you can switch between "light" and "dark" versions, each of which is similar to the other, but also radically different, and with its own objectives.

*Rocket* is wildly imaginative, slightly surreal and gloriously geared toward having a good time. Even the music's splendidly cheesy. Sucker Punch should be proud; it seems, finally, that it's not only Nintendo and Rare who can produce excellent 3D platformers. And that's as good a recommendation as any.

■ To reach the vehicle on the second level, "Paint Misbehavin'," you have to catch some sheep and then throw them on to a vine-covered podium. They'll stick there like Velcro, and you can use them as stepping stones.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Ubi Soft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sucker Punch

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Wedged full of stuff to enjoy

**LOW:**  
Rocket himself can be a little tricky to control at times

# 08/10

# STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON

**If you're a fan** of the films there's stacks to rejoice at in here. The missions incorporate just about every major location you can remember: Tatooine, the spice mines at Kessel, even the oceans at Mon Calamari, but, take away *Star Wars* and what have you got?

Fortunately, quite a lot. Three-quarters of the missions are fantastic fun in their own right. Protecting Rebel shuttles from intense enemy fire makes for, perhaps, the best levels in the game, but all three mission "types" offer plenty of variation.

Control of your craft is silken, while the amount of freedom is like a breath of fresh air; you can go as high as you want, or head up the side of a rock, "roll" over and come back upside down. The difference between the behavior of the various craft is negligible, but the fact that they specialize in different areas and are better for different missions is commendable.

Technically, *Rogue Squadron* is good. In hi-res, while it slows down a tiny amount in places, the overall look of the game is superb. Of course, there's a definite fog problem and the speed of the game is also disappointing. It's exceedingly slow. It has the controls, it has the action, so why does an X-Wing have to feel like an Austin Montego? Despite these flaws, though, *Rogue Squadron* is a rattling good space yarn.

■ Got a stereo TV? Perfect. Now listen to the game in all its glory, as a Tie fighter comes from in front of you, whizzes past your ear and blows up behind you. Every sound effect is perfect, right down to the sound of the R2 unit exploding in the back of the X-Wing when you're hit.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Factor 5

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Excellent sound quality enables you to pinpoint enemies

**LOW:**  
Your co-pilots rarely hit anything and often compromise your mission

# 07/10

# SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049

*San Francisco Rush 2049* is something of a surprise. While this incarnation is still floaty, still twirly and the handling still suffers, we can't put it down. The speed is staggering, but best of all, it's pacy and completely devoid of fog.

Huge, neon-lit skyscrapers, giant fishbowls, oversized lava lamps and interwoven loops tower over the "standard" track, teasing you into stopping your car and reversing past the stragglers for another look. Which is not a bad idea, because in doing so, you'll discover oodles of interactive scenery, like floor switches, pressure points that operate the ramps and movable walls that you can push out to smash the race leader straight into an adjacent building.

What's even more surprising is the game's crystal clarity, frame rate to die for and lack of visible pop-up. There are still a few graphical quirks carried over from *2049's* predecessors, but stick with it and all will soon be forgiven as you immerse yourself in the sheer brilliance of each course.

As a complete – if ever-so-slightly-flawed – package, *San Francisco Rush 2049* has emerged as an unlikely member of the N64's racing elite – the thought and effort bestowed on it really show. Infinitely more rewarding than *Ridge Racer* could ever be, *2049* offers a unique slant on an otherwise tired genre, while delivering more single-player replay value than any other future-racer game before it.

■ The Practice mode gives you free reign on each of the six tracks to explore the surrounding cityscapes. Cover every square inch of turf here to find more coins, hone your technique and unlock more of the game's hidden features.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Midway

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

You'll punch the air with joy each time you get a shortcut or discover that last gold coin

### LOW:

The front two cars are nearly always streets ahead

# 07 / 10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Acclaim

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Everything in the game has been placed with an inquisitive player in mind

### LOW:

A little bit jerky, but never enough to spoil things

# 09 / 10

# SHADOW MAN



Acclaim's dark violent adventure is so thoroughly complex, sprawling and laced with such rich and splendid gaming flourishes, that merely explaining it can't convey how much there is to do, see and enjoy. That *Shadow Man* is a third-person adventure along the lines of *Zelda* is true. That it is plot-heavy, with reams of cut scenes and over an hour's worth of speech is also correct. And Acclaim's reckoning that it could take 70 hours to complete can be believed.

But it's the vast, yet tight, structure of the game that you need to understand. Each of the 20 levels is huge. You'll lose count of the times that you'll enter rooms so cavernous you'll wonder how it's done without fogging. Make no mistake, this game is gigantic in every respect, from the length of the challenge it presents to the areas you'll be making Mike LeRoi – and his dark alter-ego – explore.

This is the first game to follow *Zelda's* path with vast, believable worlds and an unparalleled sense of freedom and interaction. *Shadow Man* adds its own pitch-black, psychological horror spin, making a game that we thought we'd never see – something that, in gameplay terms alone, is superbly crafted but also offers a gloriously dark and serious storyline.

*Shadow Man* is a dark and glittering jewel in the N64's gaudy crown. Open the door, step into the night, and revel in its bloody charms. You won't be disappointed.

■ Everything has been designed to be re-visited: swimming beneath a lake of lava may reveal a tunnel, an unreachable door lurks tantalizingly beyond a walkway of red-hot coals, and fiery blocks prevent passage to places unknown.



# SNOWBOARD KIDS



**Snowboard Kids isn't about** technical innovation. It's about excitement. It's about aggression. And it's about sliding down the mountain giving it "large" to your opponents. It's not all just about racing, either. If, for some reason, you lose all powers of rational thought and get fed up with the standard game, you can also have a decent laugh playing the other options, like the Skill Games, Time Attack and the Stunt mode.

*Snowboard Kids'* strengths are its subtle handling – where diagonal pulls on the analog stick see your snowboard's edge catch the snow, dig in and pull you around – and its incredibly competitive racing. Even in one-player mode – where most racing games quickly die – the CPU opposition is constantly hassling you from behind; delivering killer power-ups and generally frustrating the hell out of your efforts to win. The multiplayer mode proves that the CPU has to be involved to create a successful two-, three- and four-player game. The weighting of power-ups – strong for boarders at the back, weak for those in front – ensures that, while the most skilled player usually wins, the battle is close-fought right to the line.

The criticisms that have been thrown at *Snowboard Kids* are largely born of people missing vital bits. Only six tracks? Nope, you failed to win the hidden three. No lastability? You didn't play the multiplayer mode or the Skill Games.

*Snowboard Kids* is brilliant and fun packed. What further encouragement could you need?

■ Racdym and Atlus have surpassed themselves with this PAL conversion. The game plays a just mite slower than the NTSC original – it's close to perfect.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Atlus

**DEVELOPER:**

Racdym

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A refreshingly steep learning curve

**LOW:**

The Stunt mode brings the game crashing back down to the world of the dull

09/10



# SPACESTATION SILICON VALLEY



**Right from the superb** intro movie – where a blossoming love affair between a dog and a sheep is rudely interrupted by Dan Danger's spacecraft crash landing on top of the unfortunate canine's head – it's obvious that *Spacestation Silicon Valley* is going to be, at the very least, unusual. Shortly afterward, when you realize that your first task in the game will be to possess the deceased dog and savage its former belle to death, you'll be completely hooked.

There are 40-odd animals in *Silicon Valley*, each of which has two handy abilities – one is usually a general function like jump, float or turbo, and the other is something more animal specific. Each one has its uses, be it for scouting the level and making sure everything is dead, or just for getting a hard-to-reach fuel ball. The control method doesn't vary much, except when you're in the water, and you'll rarely suffer the indignity of an early death because you can't remember the buttons.

The variety of gameplay in *Silicon Valley* is astonishing. Even if you forget the five bonus levels, which are unlike the rest of the game, the way the puzzles work in different ways for the animals means that you'll usually have to take control of a whole series of them to complete the mission objectives.

*Silicon Valley* is compulsive, addictive and it'll have you grinning like a rabid chimp while you play. Excellent stuff.

■ The animation is packed with character. The way the funkier animals boogie in time with the cheesetastic music is a great touch, as is the unsteady gait they assume when they're on their last legs.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Take 2 Interactive

**DEVELOPER:**

DMA

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

A smooth learning curve and a lasting challenge

**LOW:**

The lack of first person lookaround view means it's quite easy to get lost

09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Getting all the medals takes a long time

**LOW:**

Unfortunately, there's no multiplayer option

**08/10****STAR WARS: BATTLE FOR NABOO**

**Taking place on and** around the planet of Naboo, the game concerns itself with the events on Queen Amidala's home world while she's off cavorting with Jedi. Sadly, you'll be commanding unknown characters, created for this title, but it's *Star Wars* and so you can't help but be excited by it.

Rousing music, gorgeous menu screens and detailed spoken explanations of each scenario set the game up well. Unfortunately, however, *Naboo* is peppered with fundamental gameplay flaws.

Unlike the vehicles and enemies in *Rogue Squadron*, Naboo's moving objects seem extraordinarily sparse and spindly, and aiming becomes a real chore as a result. Nothing is particularly instinctive, and you find yourself battling against poor handling and awry realization of flight dynamics.

On the positive side, it's much faster than *Rogue Squadron*. The maps are expansive, too, and on the latter stages you'll find yourself traversing a lot of ground. The towering canyons, rolling landscapes and mountain ranges add great diversity to the title, as do the compelling plot and wealth of vehicles.

So, no sooner have you noted *Naboo's* failings than you forget them. While hideously incompetent in places, this is sublime in others, and for that alone it's a rewarding and worthwhile game.

■ Pay attention to the Droidekas. Nastier versions of Battle Droids, these have shields, can roll to evade your attacks and possess twin blasters that fire rapidly. Worse still, if you see one, chances are he's got a load of friends with him.

**STAR WARS:  
EPISODE 1  
RACER****The best thing about**

*Episode 1: Racer* is its visual style. It's unmistakably *Star Wars* throughout, and not just when R2 and other familiar characters pop up. The rounded architecture in the cities, seedy bars and alien wide-boys in the cut scenes create a

spine-tingling atmosphere, and the pod craft really do look the business. Just in case you've missed *Episode 1* the movie (unlikely), a pod racer is basically just two giant jet engines fitted with all sorts of home-made modifications, which tow a fragile-looking chariot behind them. At ludicrous speeds.

Cornering at these speeds makes the pod's chariot swing out behind the engines but once you've got the hang of timing the corners and using the tricky turbo boost, you'll leave the computer racers behind. Then, assuming you don't crash, the game turns into a race against the clock. The lack of fighting spirit shown by the opposition is a disappointment, and although they get faster, they rarely give the impression that they're doing anything other than following a preset line.

And that's the big problem with *Episode 1: Racer*. It'll take only an hour or two to beat the Amateur level, and when you move up to the next tracks you'll find that many of them are the same as the ones you just raced, but with different routes. The two-player mode doesn't offer anything worth coming back to, either, so it's down to the time trial to provide longevity.

■ The upgrades really make a difference to the way your pod behaves, but when you've upgraded a few times you'll be able to thrash the other racers a little too easily.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

LucasArts

**DEVELOPER:**

LucasArts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**It's *Star Wars* and nothing else looks remotely like it**LOW:**

You'll finish it sooner rather than later

**08/10**

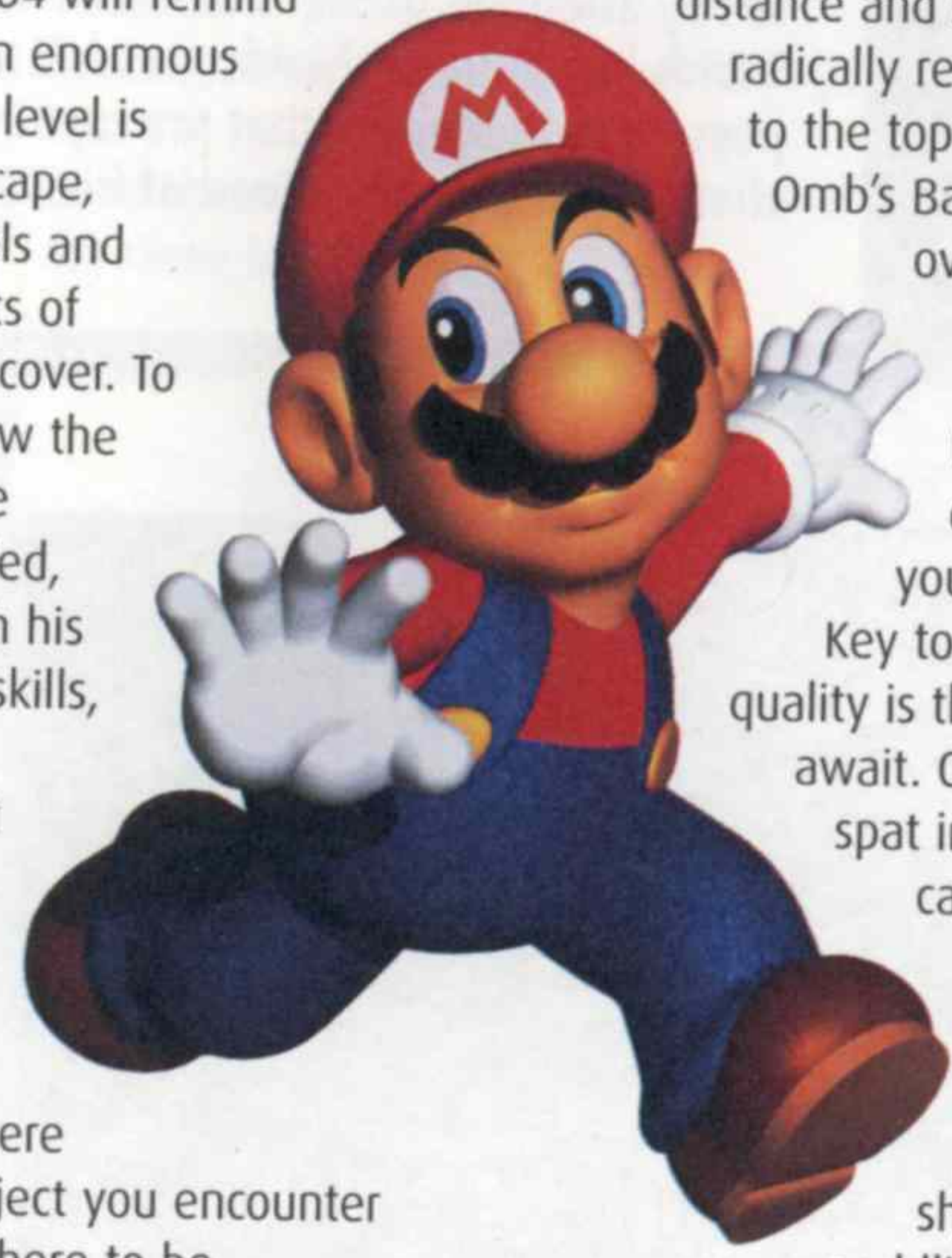
# SUPER MARIO 64



**Once you've got over** the raw sensory shock of seeing Mario in action, you'll gradually wake up to an incredibly clever game. Every moment spent holding the pad makes demands of your reflexes, practiced expertise, lateral thinking and on-the-spot decisiveness.

In essence, *Super Mario 64* will remind you of nothing so much as an enormous adventure playground. Every level is a purposely sculptured landscape, crammed full of slides, tunnels and obstacle courses, with all sorts of treasures and shortcuts to discover. To complement this, Mario is now the most able and versatile game character you've ever controlled, and as you grow familiar with his incredible range of acrobatic skills, so your mastery is rewarded with new areas or routes that you didn't even notice the first time. The sensation of total freedom is as exhilarating as it is daunting.

*Mario 64* steps beyond mere aesthetic brilliance – every object you encounter is game-real: if it's there, it's there to be interacted with. Every surface possesses not just



a specific texture but qualities that determine whether it's sticky, grabbable or ultra-slippy. It's the most successfully realized 3D world ever.

You'll also experience a remarkable sense of distance and scale because pop-up is radically reduced. When you first climb to the top of the mountain in Bob-Omb's Battlefield, take time to look over the edge and you'll still be able to make out the warp point that caught you on the hop 10 minutes earlier, or the cannon emplacement where you first started.

Key to *Mario 64's* compulsive quality is the sheer variety of tasks that await. One moment you're being spat into the stratosphere by a cannon, the next you're hurtling down an ice slide with a giant penguin in hot pursuit. The pace is constantly changing, shuttling you from lazy ocean paddling to high-speed racing,

while the levels themselves maintain superb unpredictability, with claustrophobic mazes suddenly opening on to sprawling arenas. And yet it never jars because the focus is always – literally – on Mario, whose silkily animated repertoire can tackle every eventuality.

*Super Mario 64* is not small by any means. The only threat to its longevity is that you will play it solidly, day and night, feigning illness to skip work and missing dates with potential life partners, until you've finished. At which point you'll wish there was more and search each level for something you might have missed.

■ The only thing that you may not like at first is the way your view of the proceedings seems to be constantly shifting. In time you'll come to regard *SM64's* extensive camera freedom as yet another remarkable quality, but only after a few painful lessons in its careful use.



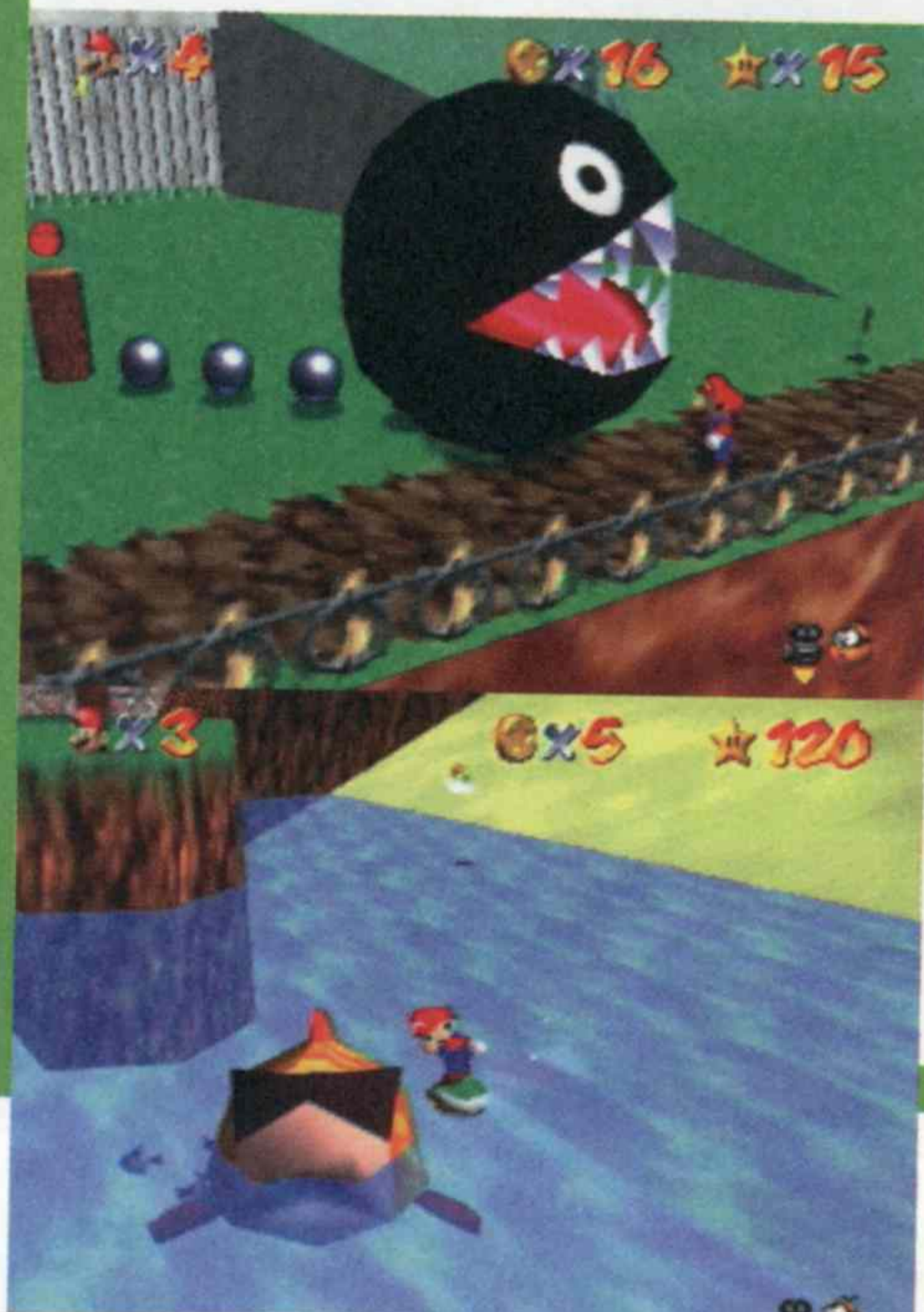
<b>DETAILS:</b>	
<b>PUBLISHER:</b>	Nintendo
<b>DEVELOPER:</b>	Nintendo
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b>	1
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b>	April 1997
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b>	Yes

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:** Replay value is high – soon you'll have perfected a new clutch of tricks and shortcuts

**LOW:** Text signposts provide too many hints, tips and directions

**10 / 10**





# SUPER SMASH BROS.



**The best beat-'em-up** on the N64 by miles, mainly – though not exclusively – because it's got Mario. There's no common-or-garden high-kicking schoolgirl wearing a short skirt, nor a forgettable ninja master chucking fireballs. Instead, there's Yoshi, laying eggs and making his trademark bleating noise. There's Pikachu, harnessing the power of electricity to fry his opponents. And there's Mario himself, shouting in Italian and pulling off punches and kicks straight from *Super Mario 64*.

The fighters in *Smash Bros.* are individual, with moves ranging from 14-hit punches to devastating laser shots. There aren't as many moves as, say, *Tekken*, but there's still more than enough variety here to satisfy.

The fighting itself is typical of Nintendo, and doesn't follow the rules of normal beat-'em-ups. There are no power bars, no finger-twistingly complicated combo moves, and no booming "Round One... Fight!" announcements. A point is won by simply wearing your opponent's strength down until they're weak enough to be kicked off the 3D arena – at which point, they re-appear for another go. There's no break in the game until the timer runs down and the scores are tallied; just fast, free-flowing fighting, which – thanks to the open arenas, varied moves and up to four players simultaneously smacking each other to bits – is never anything less than gripping.

■ If you're serious about winning, you'll need to work out the best time to use Mario's 14-hit punching combo, find the perfect place to launch Pikachu's lightning strike and time your jumps to avoid Link's brutal longshot.



<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> Nintendo	<b>HIGH:</b> You'll quickly learn at least one character inside-out
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> HAL	<b>LOW:</b> The camera can zoom out so far that the characters become dots in the distance
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1-4	<b>09/10</b>
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> Christmas 1999	
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No	

# TETRISPHERE



**This puzzler borrows a** lot of its inspiration, not from *Tetris* but from games like *Columns*, *Dr. Mario*, *Puyo-Puyo* and *Puzzle Bobble* even, where the objects that fall (gems, pills, fruit, whatever) are removed whenever they're shepherded into adjacent groups. So it is with *Tetrisphere*: the game is all about blocks that touch, rather than blocks that interlock.

What's it like to play? At first a little obvious and in-your-face, maybe, but totally addictive. And it's this "one more go"-ness of it that makes *Tetrisphere* a reasonable addition to your library. It's in no way an essential purchase, but it has a strange allure – hypnotic almost, something that is probably enhanced by the eye-glazing tempo of the accompanying acid house dance tracks.

Unusually, the two-player mode is something of a let-down. It's a tad too frantic and random to be enjoyable, and the outcome is almost always an anti-climax.

However, *Tetrisphere's* major flaw – as with *Tetris*, and any puzzle game for that matter – is its sameness. Differences between games are limited to the variety of colored shapes and the prize inside the sphere. The set-piece puzzles are very good, though, and should help fill the time between thinking that you've just damn well had enough of this... and going back to the Hide-'n'-Seek mode for one last attempt.

■ There's a tutorial section on the cart so you don't have to wade through the alarmingly old-fashioned paper manual.



<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>VERDICT:</b>
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> Nintendo	<b>HIGH:</b> Entertaining and addictive options for the solo player
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> h2o	<b>LOW:</b> In two-player mode it is simply too hard to plan a coherent strategy
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS:</b> 1-2	<b>07/10</b>
<b>ORIGINAL REVIEW:</b> March 1998	
<b>BUDGET RE-RELEASE:</b> No	

NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2  
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# THE NEW TETRIS

**Tetris updates are generally** to be approached with extreme caution, so it's good to report that *The New Tetris* is the big-screen adaptation the game needed. Designer of the game, h2o, hasn't gone crazy with the kind of new shapes nonsense seen in *Magical Tetris* and *Tetris 64*, and the only gameplay additions are a couple of new tactics and a revised scoring system – the old points tally being replaced by a simpler lines score.

If you can make a self-contained, four-by-four square anywhere in the playing field, then you'll be well on your way to the kind of lines total you never dreamed possible in previous versions. The three different game types (Sprint, Ultra and Marathon) all benefit from the new system, as does the excellent four-player mode, in which you can select where to send your "garbage" blocks. In practice, this generally means that everyone gangs up on the best player, but there's also a variation in which the garbage is dumped on whichever poor sap has gone the longest without making a line.

You might not be able to take *The New Tetris* on a plane journey, but with its thumping soundtrack and genuine gameplay enhancements, it's possibly the best puzzler you'll ever play on your living room TV.

■ Every line you make is a down-payment on one of the seven wonders of the world – rack up enough points and you'll earn a trip around a 3D version of the monument, complete with history lesson.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
h2o

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
At long last the N64 has the puzzle game it deserves

**LOW:**  
You probably own at least one other version of *Tetris*

# 09/10

# THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

**This is *GoldenEye 2*** in all but name. The speed of Bond as he runs, sidesteps and guides his red crosshair toward an enemy's head; the mix of indoor and outdoor levels that both follow and deviate from the plot of the movie; the swinging back and forth between frenzied gunplay and spine-tingling stealth... *The World Is Not Enough* is a superb game.

By and large, the mission content treads familiar territory – find and defuse bombs, shoot terrorists to save hostages, lead bumbling allies to safety and so on. Unlike *GoldenEye*, though, the pace of the missions is breathtaking, and one objective is barely over before *TWINE* drops another in Bond's lap.

Naturally, there's shooting, and plenty of it. Ear-splitting gunfights are everpresent as hordes of Renard's men ambush you from around corners, duck behind crates and spot you through windows before taking glass-shattering pot-shots. The analog gun-control is perfect, and everything from the animation of empty bullet-cases flying from guns, to the way guards reel from the force of a bullet to the shoulder, is impeccably realized. *GoldenEye* bigots might balk at the thin selection of weaponry, but *TWINE* is gripping gunplay.

Despite problems, Eurocom has done the impossible. It has captured the brilliance of *GoldenEye* and, in many places, has even managed to trump it in conjuring that Bond atmosphere.

■ Where *GoldenEye* only managed the odd explosion, *The World Is Not Enough* brings you booby-trapped staircases shattering above your head and buzzsaw-equipped helicopters lopping corners off buildings before your eyes. Watch out!



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Electronic Arts

**DEVELOPER:**  
Eurocom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
*TWINE's* sneak-'em-up action is heart-stopping stuff

**LOW:**  
There's a fairly specific route through each level, and it's game over if you get it wrong

# 08/10

# TOP GEAR RALLY 2



**After the hard-to-master** powersliding of *Top Gear Rally*, *Top Gear Rally 2* is a much more accessible drive. The handling requires less concentration and focuses instead on tight cornering. Of course, there's plenty of powersliding, and you'll spend a lot of your time wrestling to stay on course, but *TGR2* is friendlier to first-time drivers. The game is less

of a simulation and more of an arcade racer, dumping you straight in the fast lane.

But while the handling doesn't take much getting used to, the game is not simply about tearing around as fast as you can. *TGR2* now has performance-affecting damage and a host of car-tinkering options. While the cars don't seem to physically take damage – the bodywork doesn't appear to dent – it's of paramount importance to look after your vehicle.

Of course, it's possible to get your car repaired, but there are penalties. Tires are the only parts that can be fixed during a race; if you want to put anything right otherwise you'll have to unleash your mechanics between legs. However, this takes time, which is then added to your time in the next race.

*TGR2* is a delicious mix of immediate racing thrills and deeper strategies. The more successful you are, the more sponsors you'll get, and the more money you'll receive. This will enable you to upgrade the components of your car, buy better equipment and even purchase a few flash extras. Tremendous racing fun, *TGR2* comes highly recommended.

■ Try to play this with a steering wheel. The analog control is superb, but a wheel really makes *Top Gear Rally 2* come alive.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Kemco

### DEVELOPER:

Saffire

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

February 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A rattlingly good first-person view

### LOW:

The more demanding tracks see your car being destroyed from left, right and center

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Iguana

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

April 1997

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Ludicrously violent and marvelously entertaining – breaths life into a tired genre

### LOW:

Lush scenery with unfortunate overdoses of mist

# 09/10

# TUROK DINOSAUR HUNTER



**Taking on the role** of Native American time-traveller, you hunt and flee through eight levels each split into separate lands. Your task is to search out pieces of the Chronosceptor, an alien weapon of awesome power, and defeat The Campaigner – a psychotic and similarly time-conscious nasty who plans to unleash his army of Bionosaurs upon the world.

All of which provides ample foundation for the finest *Doom*-style jaunt since, well... *Doom*. Indeed, after sweating, screaming and streaking your way through this adventure, you'll realize that at the time of its release the only game that could better *Turok* in the first-person shoot-'em-up stakes was *Doom 64* itself.

The weapons in *Turok* are fantastic. Even the simpler firepower – such as that of the Automatic Shotgun or Chaingun – surpasses much of what's been churned out in the time since *Doom*. Using A, you can scroll through your collected weapons and then, once selected, you can fire off rounds of ammunition via Z. This system's easy to get to grips with, but aiming and knowing the effectiveness of your weapon is a separate learning process altogether.

The game as a whole simply oozes atmosphere, and is aided by cleverly paced puzzles. But, most of all, it's the sheer scale of *Turok* that impresses.

■ Controlling *Turok* can take some practice because your head moves separately from your body. The yellow buttons – normally reserved by N64 titles for view changes – control your direction, while the analog stick changes the view.



# TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL



**Turok 2** is a tremendous piece of work. The gorgeous levels become increasingly impressive as you work your way through the game. Once you get to The Hive of the Mantids (level five), things are eye-wateringly good, with knowingly accurate decor superbly reminiscent of the *Alien* films.

*Turok 2* is a technical triumph full stop. The music is dramatic, with strings, tom toms, bass lines and nerve-jangling screeches as enemies spring at you from all angles. It's looped, but so well that you'll barely notice. Fortunately, behind the startling visuals and soundtrack, there's a stunning – and much improved – game. It's certainly a darker, more adult experience than *Turok*. There are no comical squirts of blood as you slice an enemy headward (although fans of the red stuff won't be disappointed with the fountains of blood on show). There's not even a heavy quota of (raptors aside) the first game's peculiarly unfrightening dinosaurs. Instead, there's an unpredictable army of unique creatures that spring surprises on you at every possible turn. Each of the 30 beasts is designed to produce maximum scares, combining skin-crawling bugs, ape-like flesh eaters and thunder-footed hulks.

Weaponry won't disappoint either. There are 21 sticks o' wrath plus two underwater specifics – in the shape of a speargun and mini-missile launcher – that make up one of the most potent arsenals in videogames. *Turok 2* is exceptional. It's not just a sequel: it's a whole new game.

■ Pop a 4Mb Expansion Pak into your Memory Expansion slot to transform *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* into a 3Dfx-style experience.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Iguana

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1998

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Utterly, utterly brilliant

### LOW:

Occasional slowdown and it's fairly easy to get lost

09/10



# TUROK 3: SHADOW OF OBLIVION

**This game has an** entirely different feel than Acclaim's previous shoot-'em-ups. For the first two-thirds the characters are trapped in a detail-drenched futuristic environment that's a world away from the game's prequels, loosing off bullets at humans rather than faceless mutants. However, after a good few hours of convincing environments and enjoyable combat with wandering humans, you're dragged off to take pot-shots at aliens who scuttle around on insectoid legs, just like creatures from a thousand first-person shoot-'em-ups before them.

The game does at least look staggering. *Turok's* trademark distance-masking fogging has all but disappeared, and – while things start quaking in hi-res – you're rarely subjected to the slowdown of *Turok 2*. A little more light in places wouldn't have gone amiss, but otherwise *Turok 3* is a treat for the eyes. And it's violent. These enemies know how to die in style.

After you've been amazed by the visuals and violence, though, *Turok 3's* measly weapons, unintelligent aliens and lack of objectives beyond "kill everything" will leave you unmoved. *T3* just doesn't have the speed, scares or sheer number of bad guys necessary to pull it off.

Make no mistake, *Turok 3* is still overflowing with heart-pumpingly exciting moments, but every brilliant set-piece is sandwiched between sections of confusion, frustration or sheer soul-crushing tedium.

■ You'll spot a nod to other games in *Turok 3*, whether you're careering over sheer drops with the Grapple Hook (*The Legend of Zelda*) or exploring a pneumatically driven mechanical alien factory (*Quake II*).

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Iguana

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

October 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Often totally gorgeous visuals

### LOW:

Diminutive compared to its prequel and not as tough, either. And the animation...

07/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1997

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

Yes

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

One of the deepest racing games ever made

**LOW:**

The two-player mode loses graphical definition

**09/10****WAVE RACE 64**

**You have never encountered** anything like this in an arcade, and it's all down to those waves. *Wave Race 64* presents a working model of the ocean surface and although certain areas of the "track" have repeating wave patterns, racing on a surface in perpetual flux provides a completely new experience. Thanks to the power of N64, and the notion that corners can be represented by buoys as well as hard terrain, you can actually see a fair way into the distance, too, and thus plan a course of action that includes rival jet ski racers while sticking as close as possible to that perfect line.

The analog stick once again provides a sensitive interface. Chugging through a fierce tide, you're actually able to perceive the turbulent effect on your speed and steering and compensate accordingly. The character motion is also naturalistic: the daring way the riders lean into corners, pull on the bars or slip from the footboard with a gut-catching "Oof!" brings them alive to such an extent that you'll wince when you smash their frail little bodies into harbor walls, and smile when you ram your rival side-on.

■ In addition to negotiating a basic island circuit, there are left-hand markers (red buoys) and right-hand markers (yellow buoys) that define a subsidiary course. Successfully pass the correct side of a buoy and an arrow is illuminated on your jet ski's Power Bar, enhancing your engine performance until "Maximum Power!" puts you in charge of a noticeably superior machine.

**YOSHI'S STORY**

**Yoshi's Story is so** old-skool that you often can't believe you're playing a post-16-bit game. It has floating platforms, shaky platforms, disappearing platforms, predictably patterned nasties and coin collection. Most of it has been seen, used and thrown out before. And, horrifyingly, there's even a couple of death-ensuing leaps of faith.

But, you've got to accept *Yoshi's Story* for what it is. It operates - quite cunningly, actually - on two different levels. There's the easy, 30-pieces-of-fruit-and-you're-done part of it, which will suit younger and more inexperienced players down to the ground. And then there's the melon collecting, which, not only ups the difficulty tenfold, but enables more hardened players to discover previously unseen parts of the levels. This is because in order to stock up on your full quota of 30 melons, you'll need to search out every single nook and cranny, and use every part of *Yoshi's* inventory in the process.

That's not to say that you won't ever go back to the main game. You will. Perhaps a couple of weeks down the line, you'll want to play through it again and, frankly, it's as much fun the second or third time as it is the first. It might be short, but you'll still forget little bits and when you play them again your heart will warm and you'll realize how fantastic *Yoshi's Story* is. And it is.

■ Be warned - this is not a sequel to *Yoshi's Island*. If anything it's more of a sidestep and you'll be disappointed if you're seeking the instant thrill of previous Nintendo outings. *Yoshi's Story* is a game that takes patience and perseverance.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1998

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

The Challenge mode adds longevity...

**LOW:**

...but go for random fruit on each level and the whole thing is over far too soon

**08/10**

# NINTENDO 64 CHALLENGES



## 1080° SNOWBOARDING

### PLAYING ROUGH

Racing safely and keeping out of trouble is the best way to win at this game, but it can be fun to use some

spoiling tactics. If you slide across the front of your opponent's board, you can knock him over quite easily. See how many times you can do it on a single run.

## BANJO-KAZOOIE

### FLIGHT OF THE JINJO

Kazooie's good for more than just running around making an incessant, irritating "Eh-oh-eh-oh-eh-oh"

noise. Go to the top of Treasure Trove Cove and plot a flight path so you can collect all five Jinjos in one go without touching the ground. Who needs Banjo now?



## EXCITEBIKE 64

### LEAP OF FAITH

There's a spectacular shortcut on the Construction Yard course, if you're up to it. Ride straight through the

first yellow diamond sign, leaping up to the platform above, and continue over three more jumps until you land on the large red girder. This one takes practice.

## GOLDENEYE

### SKEET SHOOTING

A smart game for two to four players. Select remote mines and go to the Bunker level. Decide who's going to

operate the "skeets" - he needs to stock up on mines. Go outside to the landing pad and throw the mines in the air. The other players then compete to shoot them before they hit the floor.



## JET FORCE GEMINI

### HEAD HUNTER

Have you been picking up those severed heads every time you decapitate an ant? It's worth doing, as the game

keeps track of how many you've accumulated. Get 100 and you earn the Rainbow Blood cheat, 200 gets Jet Force Kids mode and 300 puts Ants Into Pants.

## STAR FOX 64

### TREE SURGEON

Taking the easy route (don't save Falco or fly through the stone archways) on the lush green world of

Corneria, try your hand at some deforestation. It's possible to blast every single tree along the way if you make careful use of your bombs and energy shots.



## MARIO KART 64

### DOG RACING

Here's a four-player battle game you can play on the Big Donut course. One player must be the "rabbit" while

the others are "dogs." The dogs should try to burst all of the rabbit's balloons, while the rabbit must try to stay alive for long enough to drive three full laps.

## PERFECT DARK

### DEAD MEAT

Set up a combat sim game with three DarkSims as your team mates and five MeatSims as the enemy. Give

it a reasonable time limit (10 minutes is good) and try to finish with a better kills total than the deadly DarkSims. Hint: use laptop sentry guns.



## SUPER MARIO 64

### CARPET BURNS

Using Mario's ample buttocks as a rubbery cushion, try a super long slide down the staircase in the castle

foyer. If you launch yourself fast and straight enough, you should just about be able to clear the star in the middle of the foyer. It's all about speed, timing and lard.

## LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

### CUCKO RUN

Dangerous things, those Cuckos - if you annoy them, they'll peck you to death. Luckily you can avoid the murderous beaks by riding Epona. Go to the ranch and ruffle some feathers, then watch in amazement as Link sits calmly at the center of a chicken fury hurricane.



# NINTENDO 64 INFO BURST

Nintendo 64's detractors always claim that the biggest problem with the system is its lack of games. Sure, if you're talking straight figures, then the 240-odd released for the N64 is nothing compared to the PlayStation's 1,000-plus. Stop yourself for a minute and think about the quality, though, and you'll see a whole different picture start to emerge.

The quality of Nintendo games is almost without comparison. Never has a system had such an impressive run of fantastic, totally immersive gameplay experiences. And that's why, even though the following 25 reviews might be small, they still include some of the finest gaming experiences to be had on any console anywhere.

Of course it can't all be perfection, and to throw this brilliance into sharp relief, we've included a few games that you really ought to think twice about before handing your cash over. With so much goodness on the N64, there's absolutely no excuse to shell out for a disaster, so take a moment to familiarize yourself with the scores and save yourself a big disappointment.



REVIEWED: July '98



## AERO GAUGE

PUB: ASCII

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: ASCII

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

01/10



This attempts to be like a 64-bit version of *Wipeout*, but forgets to include any of the things that made the Psygnosis classic so popular among PlayStation owners. There's no inspiring music, no subtle control, no weaponry, no gentle learning curve and absolutely no chance of winning. *Aero Gauge* is truly a game beyond redemption.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



## ARMORINES S.W.A.R.M.

PUB: Acclaim

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Acclaim

BUDGET: No



Despite the ace bugs and the various mission objectives and in-game set-pieces, *Armorines Project S.W.A.R.M.* is a little underwhelming. It's a good, solid, perfectly respectable shoot-'em-up, and it is - every now and then - actually like being in *Starship Troopers*. Those times, however, are too few and far between.

VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Apr '99



## BEETLE ADVENTURE RACING

PUB: EA Sports

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Paradigm

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



The six courses are riddled with shortcuts and alternative routes, some that will save you time and others that are just there to provide a bit of additional Sunday driving scenery. If you're a fan of driving games, this is great. It's fast and smooth and might be the all-frills driving game you've been looking for.

REVIEWED: Oct '98



## BUCK BUMBLE

PUB: Ubi Soft

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Argonaut

BUDGET: No



A fair indication of any game's worth is the reaction it evokes when you first see it. This mission-based shoot-'em-up sees a cyborg bee take on hordes of mutant insects, and it isn't immediately appealing for a variety of reasons. Perseverance, however, reveals more than a modicum of playability, despite its many flaws.

VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Apr '99



## CASTLEVANIA

PUB: Konami

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Konami

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



In spite of a marvelous, evocative sense of atmosphere and a host of inventive, unique little touches such as the day-to-night feature, *Castlevania* is let down by a woefully obtuse camera that doesn't always do what you want it to, and can't quite keep up with the action.

REVIEWED: Mar '98



## CRUIS'N USA

**PUB:** Nintendo **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Williams **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**02/10**

**Pelting around in high-speed** sports cars? More like veering back and forth, crashing, slowing to a stop, accelerating and crashing again. This vile arcade conversion's tracks are awful. Not only do they require absolutely no skill to complete - you'll finish the game in half an hour - but they all play the same.

REVIEWED: Mar '98



## FIGHTERS' DESTINY

**PUB:** Ocean **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Genki **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**Fighters' Destiny is a** great-looking game that blasts fresh and invigorating air into the genre and moves with all the speed and fluidity of *Tekken*. The points system is a splendid innovation, and one that enables a breathtaking wealth of tactical subtlety. It's one of the deepest beat-'em-ups you'll ever play.

## DUAL HEROES

**PUB:** Electro Brain **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Hudson **BUDGET:** No

**Dual Heroes is let down** by some of the worst artificial intelligence ever seen in a fighting game. Although it has an excellent VR option which enables you to enter a virtual arcade and take on a number of different virtual gamers, it's only worth renting for a couple of nights.

REVIEWED: Jul '98



VERDICT:  
**05/10**

## FORSAKEN

**PUB:** Acclaim **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Acclaim **BUDGET:** No

**Graphically, this is outstanding.** The way your vanquished foes spin out of control, belching flames and firing off random shots is not only visually spectacular, but also adds a new element to the gameplay. Carefully choose your control system, persevere and you'll discover a title that offers a rewarding experience.

REVIEWED: Jun '98



VERDICT:  
**09/10**

REVIEWED: May '99



## DUKE NUKEM: ZERO HOUR

**PUB:** GT **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Eurocom **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

**Despite its "Wooooaaah, Mama!"** violence, this is more than a third-person shoot-'em-up. The sounds, visuals and brilliant set-pieces (such as the break out from the Wild West prison complex) all meld to create a well-realized sense of involvement. As Duke would say, "Go get some!"

REVIEWED: Oct '99



## HYBRID HEAVEN

**PUB:** Konami **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Konami **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**On the one hand,** this has imagination and invention, but on the other, it's hobbled by some teeth-gnashing flaws. The camera is the worst culprit, but the controls are twitchy, too. And there's too much combat - rather than employing puzzles or plot-development, *Hybrid Heaven* just throws a myriad of monsters at you.

## EARTHWORM JIM 3D

**PUB:** Rockstar **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Vis Interactive **BUDGET:** No

**Charming visuals can't save** the game from being a second-rate 3D platformer. Although there's plenty to do and it's all varied and very silly, the actual mechanics of *Earthworm Jim 3D* leave a lot to be desired. The main problem, as usual, is the camera. For much of the time you're trying to play the game looking into it. Nasty.

REVIEWED: Dec '99



VERDICT:  
**04/10**

## MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA

**PUB:** Rare **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Rare **BUDGET:** No

**On the tougher difficulty** settings the pace is breathtaking, and each course's collection of ramps, tight corners and booster-laden straights makes for some staggeringly exciting racing. The handling is more than equipped to cope with such speed, too, being the most intuitive since *Mario Kart*.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Xmas '98



## EXTREME G2

**PUB:** Acclaim **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Acclaim **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**This game, although still** faster than anything on the N64 bar *F-Zero X*, is slow enough to enable you to react, learn and generally feel in control. The tracks have been widened as well, which means that it's now possible to succeed without careening off the walls like a Special Brew-fueled roadrunner.

REVIEWED: Xmas '98



## NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '99

**PUB:** Acclaim **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Acclaim **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**At the time QBC** was hailed as the new benchmark in football sims for its hi-res graphics and gameplay. The computer players are quick to learn your style, so you have to be wily and use a good mixture of short passes, runs to either side and the occasional long bomb if you're going to have any success.



REVIEWED: Dec '98



## RAKUGA KIDS

PUB: Konami PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Konami BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

The graphics are by far the best thing about *Rakuga Kids*, and one glance at this screenshot should be enough to tell you that the game looks nothing like any other beat-'em-up. But, despite all the visual wackiness, *Rakuga Kids* puts up a pretty mean fight when you get into it.

REVIEWED: May '98



## WETRIX

PUB: Ocean PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Zed Two BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

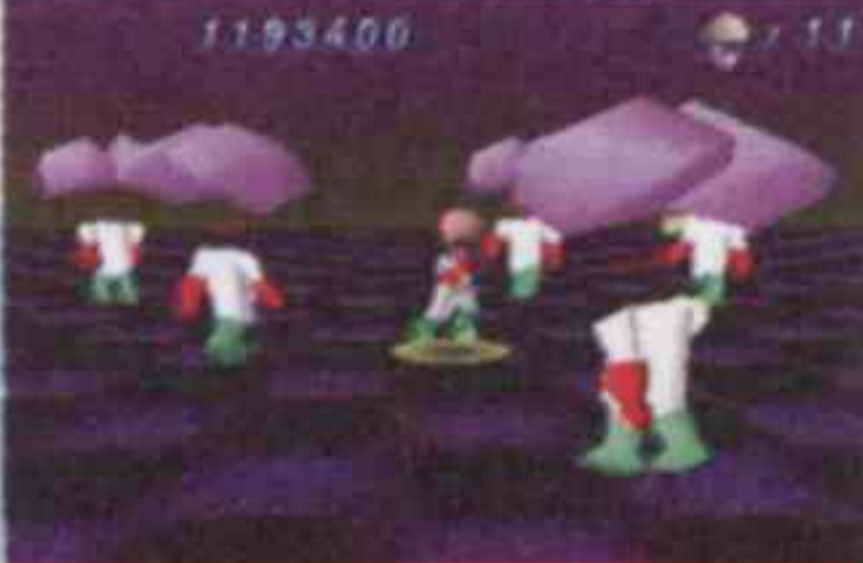
Possibly one of the most unforgiving and abrupt N64 games you'll ever play. Select its Classic mode for the first time and within moments an ori-screen message will inform you it's Game Over and your rating is poor. However, it's the razor-sharp honing of its difficulty level that makes *Wetric* so enjoyable a puzzler to play.

## ROBOTRON 64

PUB: Crave PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Player 1 BUDGET: No

Eugene Jarvis' 1982 Williams coin-up gets a new lick of paint in what is like a 3D reproduction of the classic original. The visuals aren't up to much by today's standards, but it's still fun to play, and the N64 controller is nicely suited to the frantic blasting action. You can play the original *Robotron 2084* online at [www.shockwave.com](http://www.shockwave.com).

REVIEWED: Feb '98



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## WINBACK

PUB: Koei PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: W-Force BUDGET: No

Is *WinBack* (also known as *Operation WinBack*) worth buying? Absolutely, as long as you bear in mind its little quirks and flaws - a lack of variety and an infuriating camera being the two most obvious. *WinBack* is a good game, though, and even if it's not quite a classic, it's original, violent and extremely enjoyable.

REVIEWED: May '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Feb '99



## SOUTH PARK

PUB: Acclaim PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Acclaim BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**05/10**

The crystal-clear voice sampling is enough to convince you - at first - that *South Park* can't fail. However, even if the graphics, repetitiveness and lack of variety could be excused, the game won't last you long enough. It's just funny and good-looking enough that *South Park* addicts should be satisfied, though.

REVIEWED: Sept '99



## WORLD DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP

PUB: Midway PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Boss BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

The graphically stunning *World Driver Championship* requires perseverance and effort, but the rewards repay your investment. Championship mode is a stroke of genius. It's up to you to balance the need for better cars with team loyalty and putting this emphasis on your career adds a personal touch to proceedings.

## SOUTH PARK RALLY

PUB: Acclaim PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Tantalus BUDGET: No

Being handy on the accelerator is important, but success here also means polishing your map-reading skills, learning the quickest routes and using your weapons intelligently to thwart opponents' chances. With just about every character from the TV series popping up, *South Park* fans should grab a copy.

REVIEWED: Feb '00



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

## WWF ATTITUDE

PUB: Acclaim PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Acclaim BUDGET: No

Despite fighting that's hugely enjoyable and breathtaking to watch, it's the host of extras that really make this stand out. The Create-a-Wrestler option is brilliant, while the Wrestler Career mode and the chance to create your own pay-per-view events extends the lifespan immeasurably.

REVIEWED: Sept '99



VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Aug '99



## SUPERMAN

PUB: Titus PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Titus BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**01/10**

Complete five levels of flying Superman through rings and you're whisked away to a 3D adventure and the blood-draining horror of the game's control system. Press Z to get into the air and B to fly. Fine. Except, the only way to stop is to crash into a solid object. You then have to press Z to drop back to the ground again. Don't bother.

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## WWF NO MERCY

PUB: THQ PLAYERS: 1-4  
DEV: Aki/Asmik BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

The AI and the quality of the sound samples have been stumbling blocks for wrestling games in the past, but both have been noticeably tweaked: all the wrestlers are very well balanced, which makes for a genuinely challenging struggle for belts. *WWF No Mercy* is a fantastic bout of Lycra-clad wrestling action.

# COMING SOON...

IT'S THE N64'S LAST CHRISTMAS, BUT THERE'S STILL PLENTY TO GET EXCITED ABOUT IN THE WORLD OF NINTENDO...

**B**y the time some insipid boy band croons its way to the top of the Christmas pop charts, you can bet that one other group will have become just as vocal. That group goes by the name of the Nintendo Naysayers, and its members will be confidently predicting 2001 as The Big N's final year.

Which, funnily enough, was exactly what they foresaw in 2000. And 1999. And '98, too. In fact, a worrying number of crystal balls have blazed with images of a chronically ill N64 every fall and winter – and, each Christmas, Nintendo's little black box has defied them all.

Granted, the N64 is a little short on games this year, but the phrase that pays is "quality over quantity." Multiplayer melée *Mario Party 3* (001), and *Paper Mario* (002) – the latest outing for the world's most famous toilet tech – are biggies. And *Pokémon Stadium 2* (003) – which features 251 cuddly monsters scrapping it out in full 3D on your N64 – proves that there's still life left in the creatures. Nintendo has sold enough copies of Game Boy *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver* to fill the Grand Canyon (possibly), and the ability to transfer your own GB monsters into *Stadium 2*'s glittering arenas guaranteed it a blistering reception on arrival.

With hardware sales receiving a boost from Pokémaniacs buying both *Pokémon Stadium 2* and an N64 to play it on, Nintendo's five-year-old console should put in a pundit-defying performance come Christmas. And thanks to N64's longevity and a new system waiting in the wings, retailers are now able to offer you sparkling gems from the N64 catalogue at knockdown prices – a far more attractive prospect than the shedload of sequels offered by some of Nintendo's rather less

imaginative console opposition.

So, the N64's pulse is still throbbing wildly. Don't smash the crystal ball just yet, though, because one thing's for sure – the N64 *won't* be around to see next Christmas. Needless negativity? Not at all. There's a stunning reason why 2002 just won't be the N64's year.

It's tiny, it's purple and it's called the Nintendo Gamecube. This is the next-generation follow-up to the N64, and its arrival this fall will have even the most confident employees of Sony and Microsoft staring at the floor and shuffling their feet. Inside that teensy cube – the size of a stack of 10 CD cases – is the oomph of a small nuclear power station. In the words of Shigeru Miyamoto, the man responsible for *Mario*,

"anything is possible on Gamecube."

What that means is both PlayStation2 and Xbox-beating visuals, in next-generation sequels to *Super Mario*, *Zelda*, *Metroid*, *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron*, *Super Smash Bros.*, *Wave Race 2* and – you betcha – *Pokémon Stadium*.

Nintendo isn't trying to sneak some overblown "multimedia machine" into your homes or complicate matters with Internet-only games – its only mission objective is to create The Ultimate Game Machine, and continue a nice little tradition of bringing the world's greatest videogames to your TV screen.

Because Gamecube sees Nintendo finally making the switch from expensive cartridges

to cheap discs, the world's best developers – Konami, Namco, Capcom and maybe – just *maybe* – *Final Fantasy* creator Square – are leaping on board. The sheer depth of the Big N's pockets – stuffed with billions and billions of dollars which, a short while ago, made them Japan's richest company bar none – means you can expect to see some vicious marketing. And with a rumored initial retail price of just \$200, nobody will be able to resist Gamecube. After losing the last battle to PlayStation, Nintendo wants blood.

Gamecube is slated to ship in Japan and North America this fall, and will hit the UK in spring 2002. Enjoy the N64's final few classics – but keep some cash handy for the launch of Gamecube. You really don't want to miss out.

Mark Green, *N64 Magazine*

## "THE NINTENDO 64'S PULSE IS STILL THROBBING WILDLY"



003



001



002

# DREAMCAST

Aerowings 2: Airstrike	334	Quake III: Arena	325
Armada	314	Rayman 2	335
Bangai-O	314	Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	325
Capcom vs. SNK	315	Record Of Lodoss War	335
ChuChu Rocket	315	Red Dog	335
Crazy Taxi	316	Resident Evil: Code Veronica	327
Dead Or Alive 2	317	Samba De Amigo	326
Ecco The Dolphin: DOTF	317	San Francisco Rush 2049	335
Extreme Sports	334	Sega Bass Fishing	336
F1 World Grand Prix 2	334	Shadow Man	327
F355 Challenge	318	Shenmue	328
Fur Fighters	318	Silver	336
Giga Wing	334	Sonic Adventure	329
Grand Theft Auto 2	335	Soul Calibur	329
Grandia II	319	South Park Rally	336
Half-Life	319	Space Channel 5	330
Hidden & Dangerous	320	Street Fighter 3: DI	331
House of the Dead 2	320	Street Fighter Alpha 3	336
Hydro Thunder	335	Striker Pro 2000	332
Jet Grind Radio	321	Sword of the Berserk: Guts' Rage	336
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	330	SWWS: Euro 2000 Edition	336
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	322	Sydney 2000	336
MDK2	322	Test Drive Le Mans	335
Metropolis Street Racer	323	Test Drive V-Rally	332
Mr. Driller	323	TNN Motorsports Hardcore Heat	334
NBA 2K	335	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	331
NFL 2K1	335	Virtua Athlete 2000	336
Phantasy Star Online	324	Virtua Fighter 3TB	336
Power Stone	335	Virtua Tennis	333
Power Stone 2	324	Worms World Party	336

If nothing else, Sega has a history of hardware innovation. It was the first company to launch a 16-bit machine – the successful Genesis – and the first entrant into the 32-bit market with the costly and unpopular Saturn. With an enthusiasm for new hardware that even extended to non-starters such as the 32X, Sega CD and Nomad, it came as no surprise to see Sega fire the starting pistol in the 128-bit race, with 1998's Dreamcast. The real bombshell came three years later when Sega decided not only to kill off the still young machine, but to abandon the hardware market entirely and concentrate on making games for its former rivals.

While Sony and, particularly, Nintendo are delighted to have lost a competitor and gained an ally, Dreamcast enthusiasts are left to ponder what could have been. The Dreamcast has a library of outstanding games, including such original delights as *Samba de Amigo*, *Jet Grind Radio*, *Shenmue* and *Sega Bass Fishing*, some of which will show up on other machines in the future. Sega's curious decision to stop manufacturing the console but continue writing games for it means there will be new reasons to get hold of a bargain basement Dreamcast at some point. And if you haven't already got one, there's no cheaper way to experience a large selection of excellent Sega arcade conversions.



The games reviewed broadly fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



The following reviews are based on those that appeared in *DC-UK* magazine, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.



## ARMADA

**This is the most** unashamedly retro arcade shooter action that any developer has been brave enough to bring to Dreamcast. Give it a chance though, because *Armada* is one of the best examples of its genre ever.

Your mission is to protect a confederation of intergalactic races from a swarm of mysterious baddies known only as the Armada. The game's action is influenced by the arcade title *Sinistar*. The combat is similar, although it's far more refined. As you travel across the vast expanse of space that forms the game's backdrop, you're besieged by hundreds of enemy ships. You point your craft in the desired direction, all the while unleashing volleys of laser blasts in a kind of lethal zero-gravity ballet.

The game is divided into a sequence of missions. In a neat twist, though, you're free to ignore these and set off to explore deep space as you see fit. *Armada* is a huge game, non-linear in design, and although there are some loading pauses if you travel far enough, they only amount to the briefest of stutters. You can also bring up to three friends to the party, and as long as you all agree on the direction to head in and the best tactics for tackling the bosses it makes an excellent cooperative multiplayer game.

Overall, *Armada* is a top-class shoot-'em-up, but it could have done with a little more variety. It certainly comes highly recommended as one of the most polished and playable shooters ever.

■ Look out for flashing green dots on your radar, as they represent supply convoys in need of protection. Helping them out is an easy way to earn money without having to kill tons of tough enemy ships.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Metro 3D

**DEVELOPER:**

Metro 3D

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Impressive graphics and relentless action

**LOW:**

Not enough variation in the mission types

# 08/10

## BANGAI-O



**This is a 2D shooter,** and the real jewel in the shoot-'em-up crown. It mixes the likes of *Thrust*, *Assault Suits Valken*, *Pyramid* and *Forgotten Worlds*, yet though it draws influences from these classics it still manages to reflect the typical work of its hardcore developer Treasure.

The Bangai-o itself is a typically Japanese mech, heavily armed and able to fly great distances; it's also rather small. Don't be fooled into thinking that its diminutive stature makes it weedy, though – it can pump out missiles at an alarming rate of knots, and makes short work of most enemies in its vicinity.

The levels are basic in design, but extremely varied. Nooks and crannies add a little explorative fun, and the occasional health block can be found, but the overriding factor is that each stage is stuffed with targets. Gun pods and miniature cityscapes line just about every wall and with each one unceremoniously blasted, oranges appear in the ruins – these fruity tokens award points which in turn increase your score.

At the end of each level lies a boss no bigger than your little Bangai-o, only more ferocious and agile. Deadly accurate and capable of unannounced Charge shots, it zips all over the screen in an attempt to outgun and outpace you. Come the fifth level, and you'll be tearing your hair out at the prospect of facing this miniature monstrosity.

This is an understated, quietly spectacular and fiendishly addictive game.

■ The Charge function releases exactly the number of missiles that are required to toast all enemies onscreen, so if the area is full of bogies then you get a similarly large spread of firepower.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Conspiracy

**DEVELOPER:**

Treasure

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Layer upon layer of bullet pyrotechnics and not a polygon in sight

**LOW:**

Steep learning curve

# 08/10

# CAPCOM VS. SNK

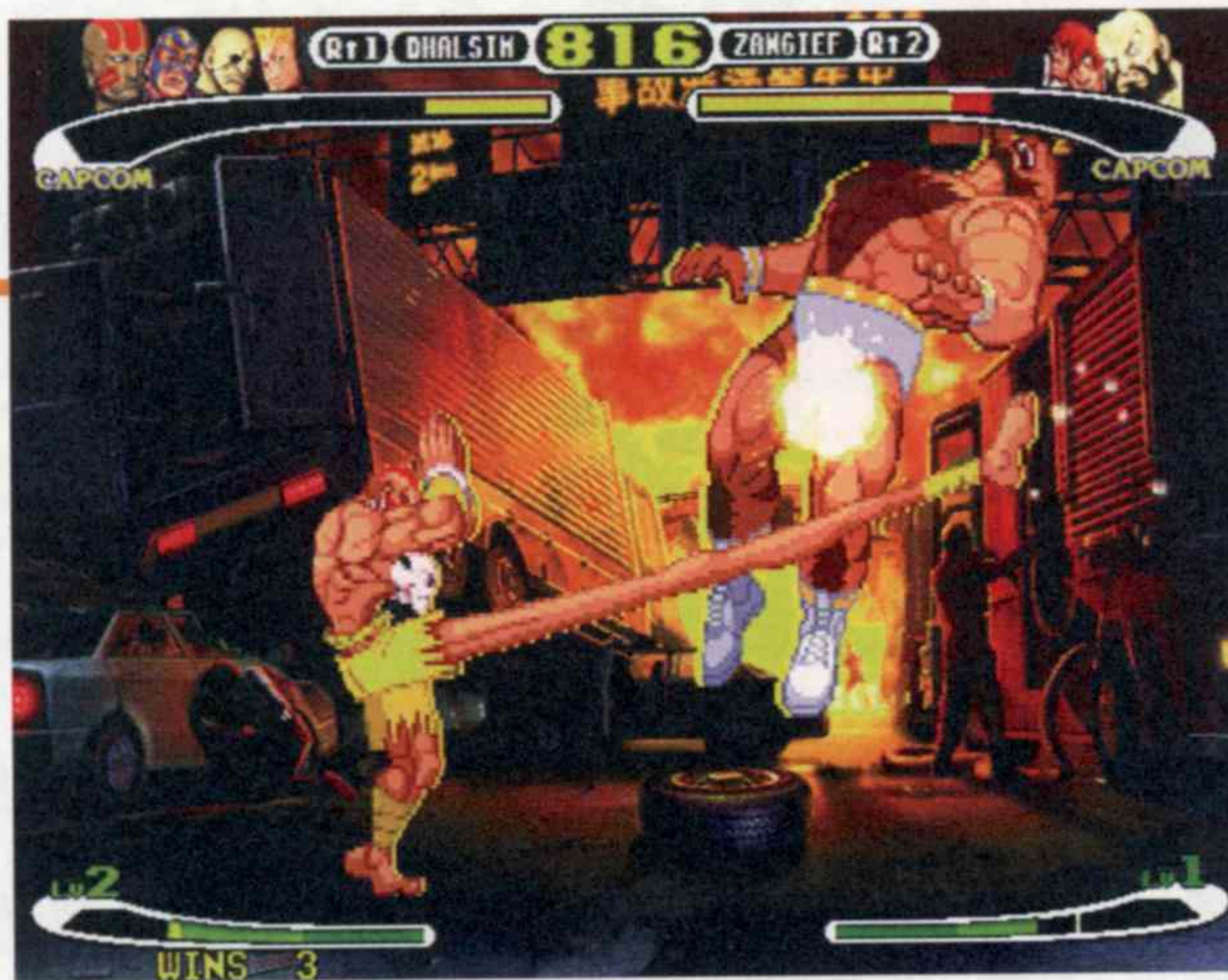
**In the blue corner** is Capcom and *Street Fighter* – the Ali of the beat-'em-up world. *SF* is fast, flash and, like the great man himself, could be accused of having a few too many scraps for its own good. In the red corner is SNK and *King of Fighters* – the Joe Louis of beat-'em-ups. *KOF* is the purist's choice and has deeper, more technical fighting abilities.

While boxing fans were never lucky enough to witness an Ali vs. Louis contest, SNK and Capcom have joined up for the beat-'em-up battle of the century. Favorite characters from both are available for selection – Ken and Ryu lining up for Capcom, and the likes of Terry Bogard and Geese Howard representing SNK – and when the action begins you're fighting in 2D heaven.

The balance between speed and power is spot on. Chun Li flies across the screen, stringing all sorts of combos together, while bigger, heavier fighters like Zangief connect with a feeling of weight behind their attacks that's incredibly satisfying.

*Capcom vs. SNK* strays into hardcore territory and may not appeal to devotees of fighters like *Tekken* and *Soul Calibur*, but for genre fans this game is a dream come true. Capturing the fighting styles of both developers and pitching them at each other for the first time, *Capcom vs. SNK* is essential stuff.

■ To keep fans of both styles happy, there's a Groove option enabling you to fight either way. Capcom Groove fills the power bar three times à la *SF* while SNK Groove fills it just once. At the end of Arcade mode you'll either face Capcom boss M Bison or SNK's Geese Howard.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

January 2001

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

All of the characters and all of the moves from the two kings of fighting

### LOW:

Not too much in the way of options

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega of America

### DEVELOPER:

Sonic Team

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Laugh-out-loud loopiness

### LOW:

Sometimes difficult, relies on a good Internet connection for the full experience

# 09/10

# CHUCHU ROCKET

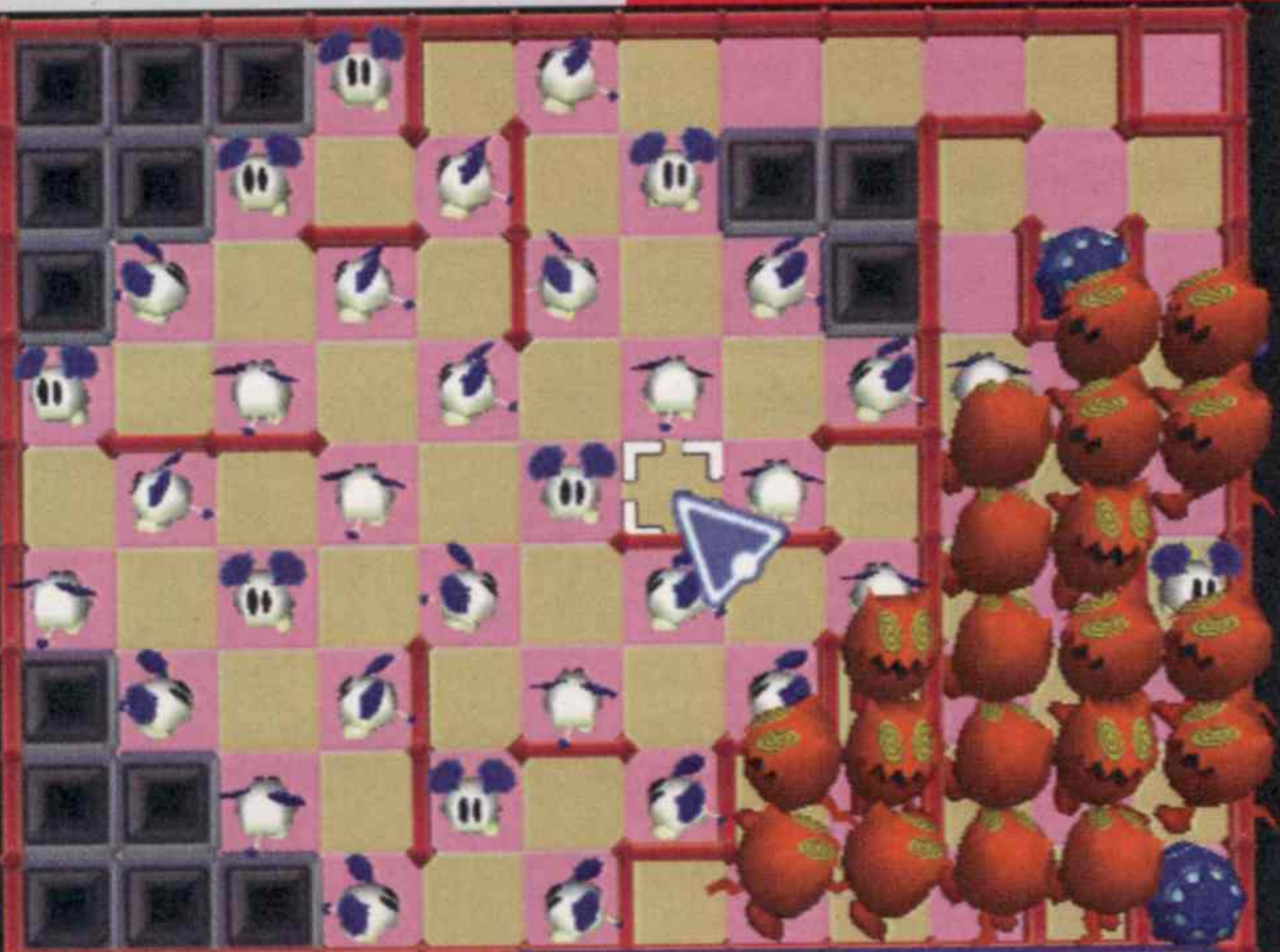


**How many games have** you played that made you squeal with joy, roar with rage, cry like a baby and swear like a sailor – all within the space of a minute? Don't take all day, but we challenge you to name one game as brain-numbingly frustrating yet addictive as *ChuChu Rocket*.

As with all puzzle games, the premise is simple: guide the space mice, called "ChuChus," away from the marauding kitties known as "KapuKapus," into their rockets and safety. When a game starts, mice run forward until they hit a wall then turn right; if their passage is blocked, they go left. To direct them toward your rocket, you're armed with panels that send the beasts in the direction of your choice. You place panels by moving an on-screen cursor.

The thing that's had most people more excited than the titular mice is *ChuChu's* multiplayer options. With a good Net connection, the first thing that hits you is the ferocious speed. As well as the basic mice, there are red vermin that pause the game and set in motion a special Game Event. These mice are a great leveller, as a player who's lagging behind can use the game events to their advantage. *ChuChu's* other modes are almost as compelling. Stage Challenge is a frantic one- or two-player scramble, while the single-player Puzzle games give you 100 brain-melting conundra to crack. Difficult, addictive, insane.

■ Put the Game Events to good use. Watch out for "Mouse Monopoly" where the space mice will swarm into your rocket and "Mouse Mania" where the ChuChus belt around like mad.



Available panels

Get together!!

DREAMCAST


PLAYSTATION2

PC

PSONE

GAME BOY COLOR

# CRAZY TAXI

 **Within seconds of being** plunged into the hi-octane, adrenaline-fueled, tire-squealing, rubber-burning, powersliding intensity of Sega's coin-op conversion, hands are sweating, hearts are palpitating and heads are thrown dizzy with the delicious frenzy of it all. *Crazy Taxi* is that good.

The concept is blindingly simple. All you have to do is ferry customers across town in – yes – a big yellow taxi. But from this most basic of ideas springs excitement and addiction in abundance. Time is inexorably counting down, and, to accrue the maximum fares, it's essential that your passengers are hurtled at breakneck speed to their destination. Make your journey in record time and you're awarded valuable extra seconds with which to conduct more business. And that's it, really – although it would be worth noting that the game is complemented by full-scale cities, all marvelously realized.

Different passengers need to travel various distances, denoted by the color-coded rings above their heads. It's up to you to balance which fares you take against your remaining time and your cash total. Of course, it helps if you know your way around, and once you do the sense of freedom, coupled with the all-pervading impression of urgency, is intoxicating.

If the constant countdown of the clock is too much for you, there are also three-, five- and



10-minute games for you to sink your teeth into. Ironically, these mini-games are perhaps even more draining than the main game itself, as you find yourself hyperventilating, trying to get enough money to earn yourself an A-rated driving license within the allotted time.

The handling of the four taxis is spot on, too. Each driver possesses slightly different attributes and this adds to the variation.

*Crazy Taxi* is a model example of just how frantically enjoyable videogames can be. There are, however, some flaws – mainly due to occasional pop-up and slowdown. And this being an arcade conversion, *Crazy Taxi* also has lifespan issues; it's a game meant to be played for short periods at a time, not multiple-hour sessions, and so the action is constant – there's hardly time to catch a breath, let alone think.

This is a mad ride: *Crazy Taxi* lives twice as large as most games, and may eventually burn itself out in half the time, but you will have some serious fun in that duration.

■ To succeed at the Crazy Box mini-games, you'll need to master the Crazy Dash (in Reverse, hit Drive and Accelerate together) and the Crazy Drift (hit Reverse and Drive in quick succession, while turning).

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sega

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sega

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Just fantastic. Unbelievably entertaining gameplay

**LOW:**  
Ultimately a little lightweight

**09/10**



# DEAD OR ALIVE 2

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Tecmo

### DEVELOPER:

Tecmo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Speedy, smooth and superb fighting dynamics, with great reversals and combos

### LOW:

Questionable one-player longevity

# 09/10



**Painfully good to look at**, boasting smooth and sexy animation, multi-leveled arenas and great fighting, this is a lesson in how powerful a punch the DC can pack.

The 12 available characters include four petite female fighters, a lady wrestler, her heavyweight dad, a blisteringly quick Thai boxer, three masters of martial arts and a token old-timer. The range of fighting styles brings diversity to the action, and equally impressive are the massive battle arenas, packed with interactive hazards.

The fighting system is intuitive, with the basic punching and kicking attacks delivering variable responses depending on how they're combined with your stance. Throws/grabs come into effect at close range, and there's a Free function that enables your fighter to circle their opponent in addition to blocking and reversing.

There are several paths to the virtual violence, including the one-player Story and two-player Versus modes, as well as the beat-'em-up quadruplets of Survival, Team Battle, Time Attack and Sparring. However, *DOA2* really comes into its own with the Tag Battle mode, which provides hours of fun.

Unfortunately, the Story mode is far too easy and each character's route can be completed in around 10 minutes. Add to this the absence of extras - with no new fighters or secrets to unlock - and the game's longevity has to be questioned.

■ With perfect timing and the right combination of tag partners (Gen-fu and Helena, Tina and Bass) it's possible to get both your fighters to attack the opposition simultaneously.



# ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DOTF



Human and dolphin have joined together in a tree-hugging ecological alliance.

To celebrate this pact, they send out a "pulse of joy" across the galaxy, extolling the virtues of peace and unity. However, an evil force by the name of The Foe is planning complete world domination

And that's the plot. The first level is a short intro to the gameplay, and most of your first hour will be taken up with getting to grips with Ecco's simple, intuitive control system and marvelling at the beautiful graphics. Ecco's means of communication and defense is sonar. As you progress through the game you're taught songs in exchange for completing simple tasks and these songs are the keys to communicating with or defeating the other sea life.

Like the original Mega Drive *Ecco*, each level of *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future* contains a main crystal. Communicate with this and you'll receive a cryptic message. This is disconcerting as there are around 34 stages to puzzle through, and the difficulty level's been rammed up to the max from the start. The puzzles take a great deal of thought, and can quickly become boring.

Appaloosa has created a fantastic game engine. Unfortunately, though, the gameplay doesn't match the high standards of the programming. With easier levels and a steadier difficulty curve, we could easily be looking at the greatest Dreamcast game yet. As it is, though, it's just rather good.

■ Defeat the sharks to get the Song of the Turtle, then leap into the next pond where you'll meet another dolphin (with a pet turtle) being hassled by sharks. Go back to the first dolphin (his brother), get him to follow you and return to his brother, and you'll be taught the Song of the Shark.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega

### DEVELOPER:

Appaloosa

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Looks and plays well and is a tough challenge

### LOW:

A very tricky game and unavoidably repetitive

# 08/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**  
AM2

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No


VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
This is what a driving game should look like

**LOW:**  
The two-player experience is a bit of a yawn

09/10

# F355 CHALLENGE

 **This is a masterpiece.** The only thing missing is the smell of pit stop smoke and oil. It's a single car, single viewpoint, single experience, where you hone your skills and times by driving the same circuit over and over again.

The display of talent is everywhere, from the shimmering trackside buildings to the washes of sunburned cloud that crown the sky. And then the cars themselves; gleaming bodywork, fluid, independent suspension and detail that enables you to look into the cabin and see the dashboard and driver.


Of course, how alluring a car looks is only second to how it handles and both are heaven. The laws of physics were strictly adhered to when *F355* was in development, and because of this it's incredibly hard. Three game modes see you pit your wits against virtual opponents: Arcade for the time-based race, Single Race for a chosen track and Tournament for career-minded players. Six real-life tracks are initially available, and a further five are released through the game. To help the learning curve, Assistance options can keep an electronic eye over four of the car's conditions.

Fiercely demanding and yet equally rewarding, *F355* is a game that insists on attention and a willingness to learn. The only reason it doesn't score 10 is that many people won't have the patience to get into the experience.

■ The hidden tracks are: Fiorano - Ferrari's test track in Maranello; Laguna - the Californian beach circuit; Atlanta - an oval speedway; Nürburg Ring - the famous German F1 track; and Spang - the barren Malaysian racing circuit.



# FUR FIGHTERS

 **On the surface, this** may look as if butter wouldn't melt, but when you look closely at its furry mitt you realize it has a big gun pointed directly at your face.

Criminal mastermind General Viggo has kidnapped the Fur Fighters' babies and hidden them around six diverse worlds. Because the kidnapped babies have been brought up properly, they won't just wander off with any old creature, and must be rescued by their own parent. Therefore it's necessary to play as all six Fur Fighters, each with their own special traits and skills. The training level guides you through these and introduces the token-powered Fighter-swapping teleportation device that is integral to the game.

The stylized cartoon aesthetics are instantly appealing but not nauseatingly cute, and when you do waste an enemy, fluff rather than gore results.

The control system is superb. It quickly becomes intuitive and you'll be strafing around like a rampaging redneck within five minutes. Weapons range from the basic pistol to a lethal smart bomb that can obliterate groups of enemies.

Although the gameplay mixes shoot-'em-up, platform and puzzle elements, the combination is just enough to ensure the adventure never becomes repetitive. The result is a true DC original, bursting at the seams with fun.

■ Tailor the deathmatch to your own specifications: the battles take place in six arenas themed around each of the different worlds in the game, and you can set a time limit on the action and the number of kills required to be victorious.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Acclaim

**DEVELOPER:**  
Bizarre Creations

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Twenty hours of play, plus top-quality four-player deathmatch action...

**LOW:**  
...that's lacking only a first-person mode

09/10



# GRANDIA II

**This is a totally** separate game from its predecessor, set in a different world with a new cast of characters. You play the hero Ryudo; a spiky-haired little feller with a big sword and a bad attitude. A mercenary soldier willing to accept any job, the story begins with him being summoned to a small town in the Black Forest to receive orders for his next task: escorting a young religious songstress named Elena to a ceremony in a nearby tower.

*Grandia II* takes these typical RPG elements and places them in an absorbing adventure. Alongside similar RPGs, it's the romance, relationships and interaction between lead characters that really drive the story. But it's not just the characters and plot that will keep you playing – there's a healthy dose of kick-ass action, too.

Like the original, *Grandia II* has a superb battle system, which uses a combination of real-time and traditional turn-based battling. There are no random battles; instead your enemies are always visible on screen so you can choose your approach.

*Grandia II* is the DC's best traditional RPG. The amount of detail in every nook and cranny is astonishing and the super-deformed cast are wonderfully rendered right down to Ryudo's boot buckles. While the narrative may be overly predictable at times, and the progression of events somewhat linear, *Grandia II*'s peerless battle system, exhaustive customization options, memorable characters and engrossing story easily outweigh any of its faults.

■ At the end of a hard day's adventuring, Ryudo lights a fire. It's here that you recover lost health.



DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Ubi Soft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Game Arts

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Over 50 hours of gorgeous environments

**LOW:**  
Super-deformed characters detract from your emotional involvement in the game

09/10

# HALF-LIFE

**Yes, it's a first-person** shooter with violence and big guns, and explosions. But it's also a brilliant story, a puzzle-strewn mental challenge and a fantastic journey.

Within a brilliant game design, every detail is near perfect. Black Mesa is a varied location, with computer-stuffed labs, weird equipment and deadly hazards strewn liberally about. The place feels alive. Of course the weapons are great, too. Early on you get the pistol and the semi-automatic rifle. Later there's the rocket launcher, the laser-tripped bombs and the alien artifacts.

The DC's graphical improvements make a subtle difference to the original, but in terms of controls, the pad configurations you can select all mean drastic compromise – you *need* a mouse and keyboard.

Unfortunately, the minor criticisms aimed at the original *Half-Life* apply here, too. The last quarter of the game is a letdown, with lots of annoying jumping puzzles and none of the soldiers you've had so much fun outwitting previously. The DC version has an extra trick up its rad suit sleeve, however: Blue Shift – an exclusive mission add-on. This is a sprawling, 30-level extravaganza that sees security guard Barney Calhoun battling his way ever upward through the vast, maze-like Black Mesa facility in a bid to escape the mayhem.

DC *Half-Life* is unmissable. It continually shocks, surprises and rewards, and you'll remember the experience for months.

■ *Half-Life* is a true 3D offering. Taking a good look round is always a good idea as windows above you and ledges below house enemies who you can pick off before they spot you.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Havas

**DEVELOPER:**  
Gearbox, Captivation

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
December 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A near faultless combination of fighting action and devious puzzles

**LOW:**  
Forget the joypad – buy a mouse and keyboard

09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

**Hidden & Dangerous** is one of a rare breed; a thoroughly engrossing yet ultra-realistic war game. Everything from the modeling of the weapons to the attributes of the troops and mission scenarios is lovingly crafted from 1940s information.

At the start of each of the campaigns, you select a squad of eight SAS troopers from 40 volunteers. Each has their own individual characteristics, such as shooting accuracy, reaction speed and stealth. You must also choose a weapon load-out and then for all the missions that make up the campaign, you're on your own. The game has 23 missions spread over six long campaigns.

If soldiers die, they stay dead. There are no health-ups and no inter-mission saves. Go for frags in this game and you'll end up six feet under. Leave your squad on their own without making sure they're out of trouble, and you'll be looking for new recruits.

So why is *Hidden & Dangerous* enjoyable? Well there's some excellent level design, but the main reason is its flexibility. Despite being designed for use with a mouse and keyboard, the mapping of the controls to Dreamcast's joypad is an ergonomic triumph. Character movement is *GoldenEye* style, and this ease of use means you can command your troops as you wish. Tacticians can coolly seek out the enemy's weaknesses using the excellent map and in-game commands, while more gutsy players can just use a couple of soldiers, moving and fighting in first-person mode.

■ In-game orders are the best way to control your troops in the heat of battle. Any troop within 15 feet of an order will obey, enabling you to maintain complete control of the group without leaving the game.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

TalonSoft

**DEVELOPER:**

Illusion Softworks

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Beautifully crafted, easy to use, flexible camera

**LOW:**

Very hard to complete

# 08/10

## HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

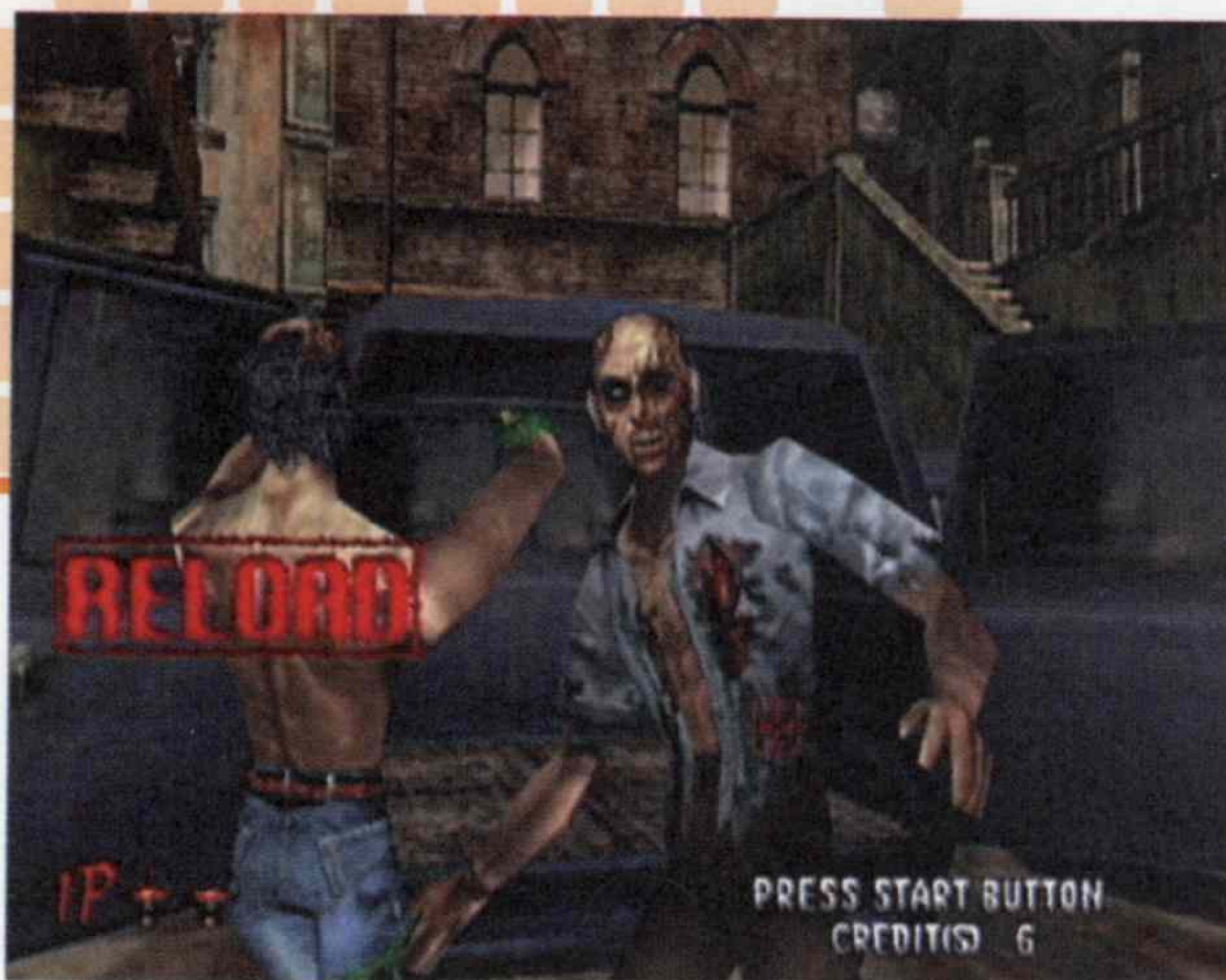


For a lightgun game to work as a console game, it needs a touch of depth and brilliance. *House of the Dead 2* satisfies both criteria. Sega has added a variety of new modes (including "training" and "original," which makes things a little easier for the home gamer), and you'll be impressed at how well designed *HOTD 2*'s levels and set pieces are. The action is liberally complemented by cut-scenes and incidental animations, most of which involve civilians being chased by monsters. If you manage to shoot the beast in question before it makes a telling swipe or bite, you receive a reward - from points to extra health, or even a different route to walk through. Indeed, *HOTD 2*'s branching pathways are a major part of its appeal.

Modeled (as it is) to consume coins from bewitched punters, *HOTD 2* is very tricky to play at first. Even starting on Easy mode, with a full nine credits, you'll be surprised by its intensity and pace. Fail to concentrate, and you can get through those credits in minutes.

*House of the Dead 2* is a game that everyone can play - but due to its gory content is unsuitable for youngsters. Yes, its split-player mode has only mid-term longevity at best. And yes, your intellect is surplus to requirements during play. But it's an experience that you ought to have.

■ To play with the Napalm gun, you have to take out the first three zombies you encounter on Level One with head shots. Each shot must be perfect, and if you manage it, the gun should appear on the ground for you to pick up.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sega

**DEVELOPER:**

Sega

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Arcade perfect, with addictive gameplay and multiple routes

**LOW:**

Not particularly mentally challenging

# 08/10



# JET GRIND RADIO

DREAMCAST

PLAYSTATION2

PC

PSONE

64

NINTENDO

COLOR

321



**A kind of cross** between *Crazy Taxi* and *Tony Hawk's*, but better than both of them, *Jet Grind Radio* combines the "speeding through bustling cities" action of *Taxi* with the "use stunts to move around the interactive scenery" fun offered by *Hawk's*. And then it adds a garish tag of graffiti art and some bullet-dodging cop chases for good measure. But it's the enormous environments that really make the game. Just about everything in the scenery is a potential skate surface as you grind along staircases, perform incredible big-air leaps from rooftop to rooftop, skim along walls and tag buildings while completing a triple somersault. Only a select few games even come close to providing the amount of adrenaline-pumping fun found in *JGR's* in-line skates.

Set in the gleaming, near-future metropolis, Tokyo, *JGR's* plot sees gangs battling for control of the streets through the medium of graffiti warfare. There are three districts of the city and your task is to claim all three by spraying the tags of your posse on every available surface. Trying to put a stop to all this irresponsible behavior is the Tokyo police force – at first with truncheons, but as your activities become ever more anti-social, the police presence grows increasingly hardcore. Commenting on the events in Tokyo is Professor K, the ragga DJ for the city's biggest pirate radio station. As well as playing a non-stop megamix of bangin' techno, rap and hip-hop tunes, the Prof also updates his listeners (and you) on the current state of the street hostilities. All the skaters have different stats in terms of power, technique and graffiti, so you can play each of the three mission types numerous times with numerous approaches, depending on the character you use. The Western edition also



includes two excellent new areas to muck about in – the American-styled Bantam Street and Grind Square. Despite these new areas and all the new characters to unlock, however, *JGR* is a relatively short game, but there's plenty here to keep you occupied for several blissful weeks.

If you're looking for faults then, yes, the camera occasionally gets confused when you're moving through tight spaces and slowdown sometimes occurs when the screen is packed, but these aren't serious and won't affect your enjoyment. *JGR* is the kind of title Sega has built its design reputation on and is a triumph in every department. The combination of a thumping soundtrack, peerless graphics, thrilling gameplay and that rare commodity, innovation, has resulted in one of the best games you'll ever play.

■ Bored with all the available artwork? Head for the Create Graffiti mode. Select the size, color and font of your graf or put your artistic skills to the test by doing it freehand. With a design created, you can then save it for use in-game or download it to the Net.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega

### DEVELOPER:

Sega

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Incredibly detailed interactive environments and distinctive characters

### LOW:

Slowdown sometimes occurs when the screen is packed

09/10

# MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2



**The first thing that** strikes you about *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* is the graphics. Ultra hi-res backgrounds spin in all directions; smooth, controlled, no slowdown or pop-up. All manner of areas are available to fight in – make no mistake, this is eye candy of the most sweet and tooth-rotting kind.

Strip away this good-looking veneer and what you've got is a great 2D fighting game that can be enjoyed by newcomers and veterans alike. The emphasis here is on tagging and Super moves – which are simple to access – rather than complex mid-air combos. You choose three characters (from a huge roster of 56) and assign a different style of "assistance" to each. "Assistance" is where squeezing either trigger tags in one of your team mates to help, with each character performing differently.

Enter the ring, and the standard fare of Light and Heavy kicks and punches shows its familiar face. There are plenty of fireball-type attacks and the usual smattering of combos and special moves, but if you're looking for a really spicy meatball, you'll have to step up to the aforementioned Super moves, which become more impressive as your power bar charges up.

Astonishingly attractive, ultra-fast and with a massive and varied character selection, this is the only vs. fighting game you need to own.

■ *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* uses a charge bar, where Super moves can be performed to different strengths in relation to how much energy you have stored. When your bar is maxed out, both partners join your main character on-screen to unleash a killer combo of destruction.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**

Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Fantastically competitive two-player tear-ups

**LOW:**

Only two modes available

08/10



# MDK2



**The original MDK** – developed by Shiny Entertainment – was a third-person blast-'em-up with a warped sense of humor. The game was a critical success, but didn't fare well sales-wise. This sequel is the baby of Canadian developer Bioware, and it's a tour de force of cutting-edge graphics, tight gameplay and breathtaking set-pieces. Like the first game, it's a third-person adventure, but it expands on the original's template.

*MDK2* sports a three-character set-up, where hero Kurt is abetted by four-armed robotic dog Max and Max's creator the dotty professor Fluke Hawkins. The game enables you to take control of each character in a rotating order until the final level, where you're given the choice of whichever character you want to vanquish the last alien boss.

Each of the characters sports their own abilities and plays in a different way to the others. Kurt's levels are more stealth-oriented; Max can wield up to four weapons at a time; and with Prof Hawkins you'll encounter more puzzle-based challenges. This sense of invention is echoed elsewhere, too – the stunning environments are a case in point. The semi-organic architecture you'll come across appears to be the result of a heavy drinking session between Christopher Wren and HR Giger.

*MDK2* is fantastic, thrilling to play, breathtaking to look at, inventive in design and laugh-out-loud funny to boot. It can be unforgivingly hard, but this ultimately makes for a tight and focused game.

■ The first Boss is a vast cannon; avoid its blasts and take down the two skiffs that fly above you with the sniper rifle. Shoot the four orbs in the center of the cannon, then the next orb that is revealed. Next, shoot the cannon operator. He'll jump out, so fight him on foot.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Interplay

**DEVELOPER:**

Bioware

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Superb design, with inventive three-character set-up

**LOW:**

No multiplayer, short and linear levels can feel restrictive

09/10

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Sega

**DEVELOPER:**

Bizarre Creations

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-8 (in tournaments)

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Great handling over 200+ challenging circuits

**LOW:**

No true online play

**10/10****METROPOLIS STREET RACER**

This is huge. There are 26 chapters to race through, and that's just the main single-player game. Then there's the Time Attack and Quick Race options. And the comprehensive multiplayer mode. To top it all, everything – from the music to the on-screen messages – is user definable.

You start the single-player Street Racing mode with an empty garage and three available cars. Just open up chapter one and you'll find 10 races waiting. As you go through the game more garage slots open up, so eventually you'll own six of the 50 motors.

Driving these cars is a sublime experience. The handling is built around real car dynamics – however it's not prohibitively realistic and everything has been tweaked to make it fun.

As all the circuits are based in and around the same sections of Tokyo, San Francisco and London, and you'll encounter familiar roads time and time again. Rather than being boring, however, this familiarity is often used against you – a road that seemed like a Time Trial doddle becomes an altogether skinnier proposition with five competitors breathing down your exhaust pipe.

Faced with over 250 possible circuits, a huge multiplayer challenge and great on-line backup, you have to prostrate yourself at the feet of the developer. *MSR* is a real achievement.

■ Although there's no Internet multiplayer mode, there are online challenges. Click on the Internet option on the main Options screen and you'll find the MSR Challenge, which enables you to select and download specific challenges.

**MR. DRILLER****Mr. Driller couldn't be further**

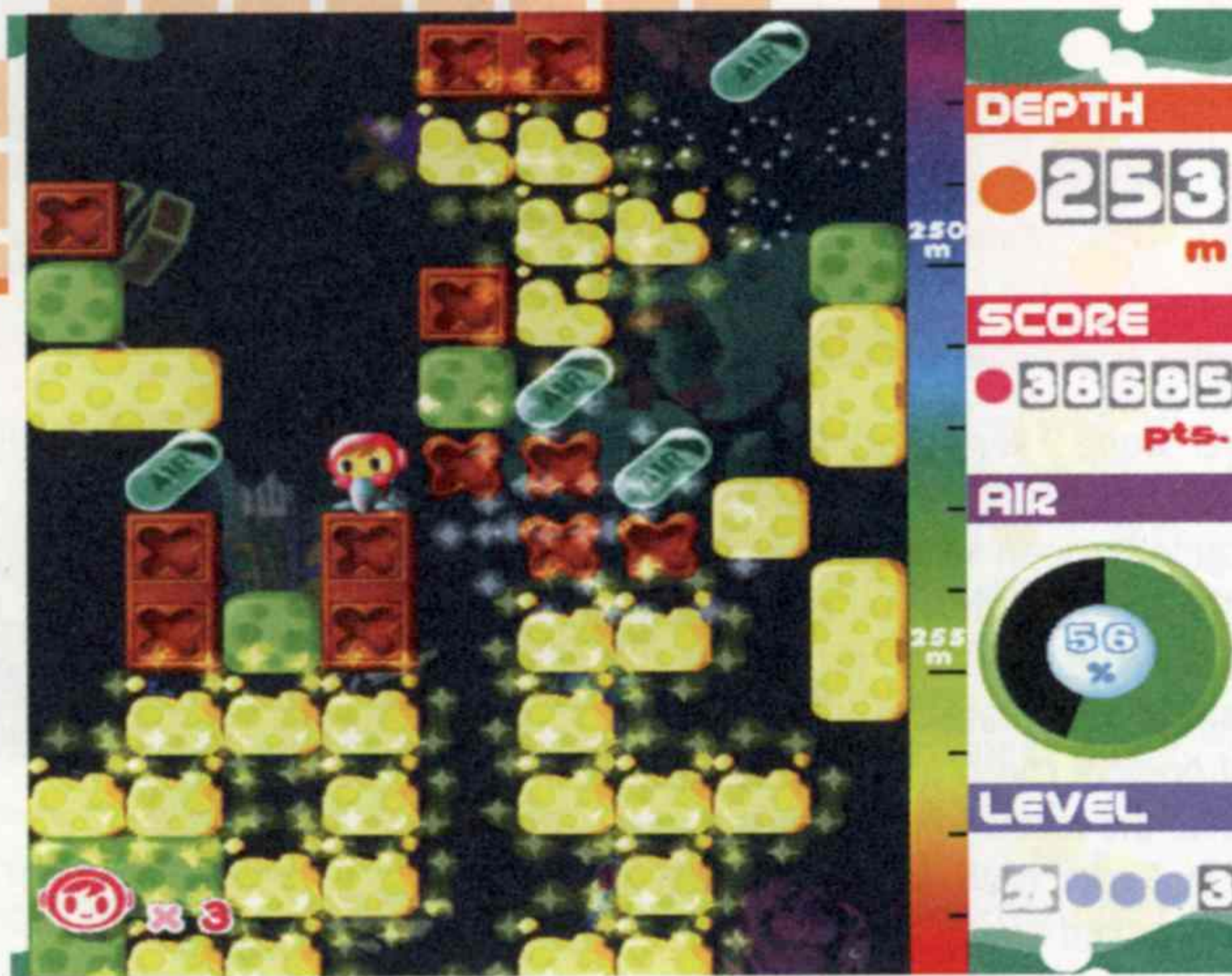
removed from Namco's previous DC offering, *Soul Calibur*. Where the latter was complex, visually pioneering and bloated with extras, the former is not. *Mr. Driller* is basic, graphically simple and about as slim as they come. But it's so much fun to play. As you may have guessed, picking up and playing is easy. Putting it down, however, is not.

*Mr. Driller* is an addictive puzzler in the same vein as such gems as *Boulderdash*, *Mr. Do* and *Dig Dug* (an old Namco game, so it's not hard to spot where this idea came from). The premise is simple. The eponymous Mr. Driller must dig down into layer after layer of colored blocks, avoiding falling debris while trying not to suffocate. Pressing any button makes him drill in the direction he's pointed and the D-pad moves the little devil around the screen. It's all about quick reflexes and a roving eye – get caught by a roving block and you'll be splatted, run out of air and your spirit floats up to heaven.

Variation is introduced through the Arcade, Time Attack and Survival modes. Here you have to pick a distance goal, complete multiple short levels or last as long as possible, respectively. The whole experience could only really have been improved by the addition of a two-player head-to-head mode.

Overall, this makes for compelling gameplay, and that's what counts. *Mr. Driller* has it in spades.

■ Watch out for the Time Attack mode, where your air supply is replaced with little clocks.

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Namco

**DEVELOPER:**

Namco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Utterly impossible to put down

**LOW:**

No two-player mode

**08/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sega

**DEVELOPER:**

Sonic Team

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1 (offline) - 4 (online)

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Slick and thoroughly engrossing - this is an epic role-playing experience

**LOW:**

Extremely difficult to finish in single-player

10/10

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE



In this futuristic RPG, instead of controlling a party of computer players, you meet real people and go on adventures into uncharted territory.

By logging on to one of the SegaNet server "ships," you've got up to 1,000 potential allies to choose from. You can join a game that's about to start, or host a game and attract other players. When four people have agreed on a destination, you beam down to the hostile planet and begin kicking ass.

The object of the game is to find the survivors of a disaster that appeared to wipe out the first of a planet's colonies. Fighting is conducted in real-time rather than the traditional turn-based system so favored by RPG developers, and once you've got used to this inherent lack of pace it's a very enjoyable way to engage in battle. It's not all hack and slash, though - with a keyboard you can communicate with the other members of your party to discuss tactics and swap items. Translation facilities mean that language barriers are effectively lifted.

You can also play offline, leaving you free to boost your character's level. When you come to a tough section you can always hop back on the Net and find willing comrades, or accept the DC's offer of an AI partner.

Consider *PSO* a sneak peak at the future of videogaming.

As well as playing the game with your modem you can also play *PSO* from beginning to end offline. As a single-player RPG it's still one of the best you can buy, offering additional plot information and even more gameplay.



POWER STONE 2



Early images from *Power Stone 2* sent shock waves around the world - instead of two fighters, now there were four.

In one videoclip, they could be seen scrapping on a flying ship, falling off and carrying on the battle as they fell through the air. In another, giant submarines surfaced and sank, providing changing platforms for the combat to take place.

*Power Stone 2* has the eight original characters, plus six new ones - two of which are hidden. All the levels from the first game have been ejected and replaced by larger, more interactive arenas. A lot more of the scenery can be chucked about, but more importantly you can roam around within the stages.

Also new here is the four-way battle, but this can be more than a little confusing. With four characters on-screen, two players can, potentially, be powered-up at once. Two super attacks let loose simultaneously can leave you wondering what the hell is going on. The two-player mode is not without drawbacks, either, since the complex stages means that the console-controlled characters sometimes don't seem able to figure out what to do next.

Capcom has clearly worked hard to create a fresh experience with *Power Stone 2*, offering novel twists on the original concept.

New in this edition is the Item Shop, and it stocks some cool stuff. The Petrifier can be quaffed to make your fighter literally rock-hard; the PowerfulBuster can release a smashing blast; and the Lance of Lava will spear fire bolts down on your enemies.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**

Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Stupendously bright, smile-splittingly animated, and wonderfully detailed

**LOW:**

No online fighting in the Western version

08/10

# QUAKE III: ARENA



**If you've got a Dreamcast**, you need this game. This conversion really is on a par with the PC classic, and though it falls short in a couple of areas it effortlessly makes up for it in others. It's one of the most adrenaline-charged, intense, and downright beautiful games ever to surface on this or any other console.

The game itself can be split into two parts – the single-player and the multiplayer. The aim of the single-player game is simple: work your way through a series of arenas and hit the frag limits to win. The multiplayer is the real point of the game, though. It's a gut-wrenching competition between you and up to three friends, which you can play either split-screen or across the Internet.

Before you rush out and buy it, however, bear in mind that it's tricky to play with a joystick. PC gamers will be familiar with the old keyboard-and-mouse set-up as a control system, and it's easily the best combo to use here – it's just that little bit more sensitive than the joystick (which can only be re-configured so far). You can only use the analog stick to look left and right, for example. Some would argue that it's just a case of getting used to it, but if you can afford to splash out on a keyboard and mouse you'll get far more from the *Quake* experience.

■ To get to that Quad Damage before anyone else you need to get the Rocket Jump down pat. Just look at the ground, fire a Rocket, then jump, and you'll be propelled upward. Move forward while in the air, and then maneuver onto your prize.



DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega

### DEVELOPER:

Raster/Id

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Endless multiplayer re-play value

### LOW:

Unless you play with a keyboard and mouse you'll not get the full experience

09/10

# READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2



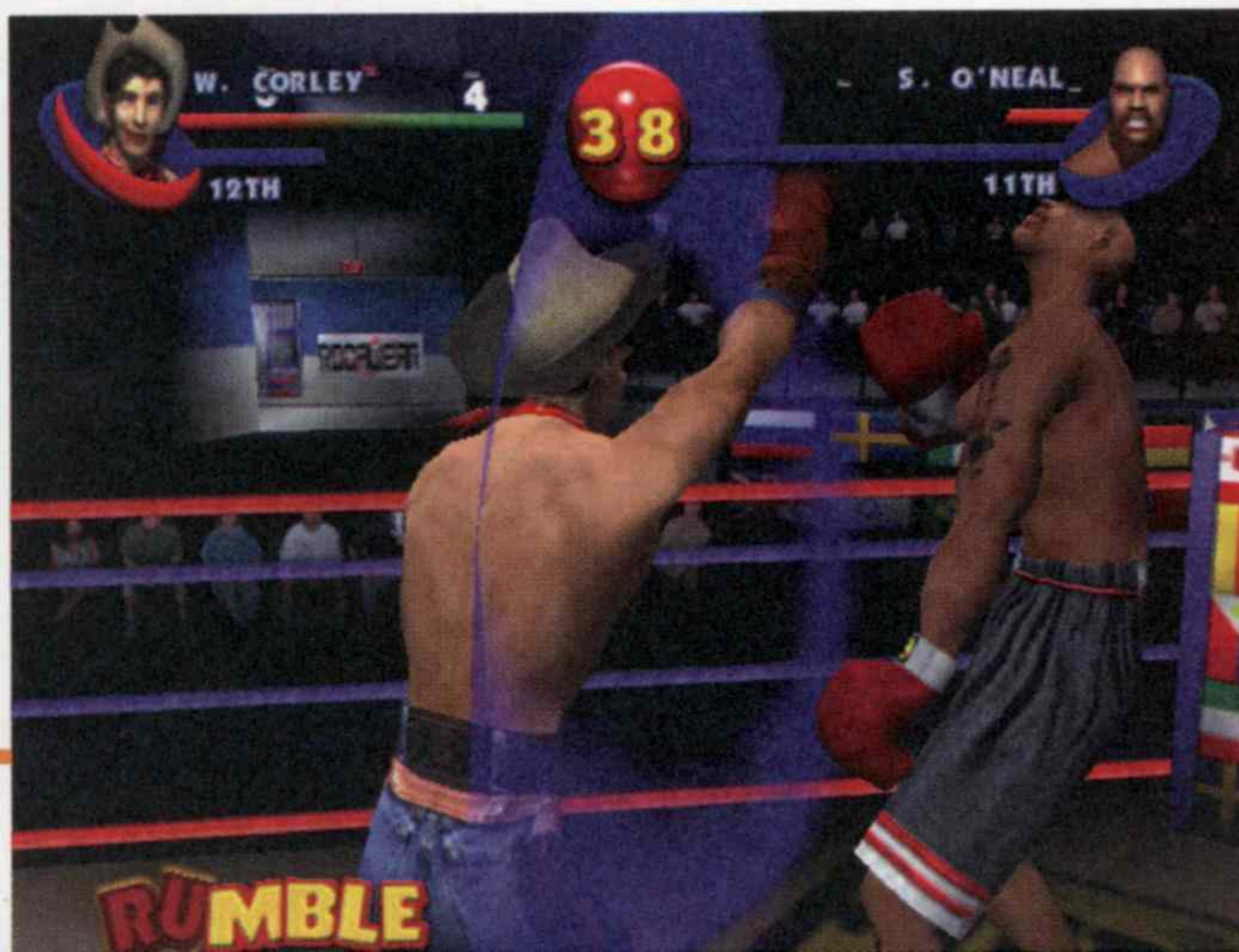
**This game has more** depth than its boxing predecessor. Going in, fists blazing, may work in the lower reaches of Easy mode, but with new characters like GC Thunder, you're going to have to do a bit of floating like a butterfly, before you ever get the chance to sting like a bee.

Despite its comic overtones, this is a tactical game – you guard well, keep your distance, assess your opponent's movement and then strike. Randomly prodding the buttons will get you nowhere but closer to the canvas. As will standing still, admiring the delightful scenery. Not that it isn't tempting to look – the first game took place in one dingy venue, but in the sequel there are loads of well-designed locations, ranging from a cowboy roadhouse to the roof of a skyscraper.

The cast of *R2RB:2* is funny and diverse, and the animation is certainly much improved this time around. However, the Midway line-up just doesn't capture your imagination in the way that some other beat-'em-ups do.

If you got all the action you wanted out of *R2RB:1*, you might want to think twice about purchasing the sequel. There are improvements and additions all over the place, but this is essentially a very similar experience. If you missed out the first time round, though, you should still get tons of fun out of this tough, wild, silly game. Plus, of course, the opportunity to finally lay-out Michael Jackson.

■ Remember that you can also add to your Rumble Meter by successfully taunting your opponent.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Midway

### DEVELOPER:

Midway

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-8

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The eight-player tournament mode is a cool idea

### LOW:

Lacks the depth of many other fighting games

08/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

# SAMBA DE AMIGO

**Samba de Amigo** (or "Dance of Friends") is a rhythm-action game where you shake your maracas in time with some seriously saucy samba sounds (incidentally, don't even think of playing without the maracas as it detracts drastically from the game's charm). Timing is prompted by balls entering colored circles at high, medium and low heights (on both the left and right) so, for instance, if a ball moves into the upper right circle you have to shake a maraca high and to the right. At random moments during the tunes you also have to strike a pose to match the position of an on-screen figure. And that's really all there is to it.

The game's selection of tracks suits the gameplay perfectly and range from groovy, traditional samba beats - *Tequila* (the song Pee-Wee dances to in *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*), *Soul Bossa Nova* (the tune from the start of *Austin Powers*) and *La Bamba* - to up-tempo remixes of modern pop songs, such as *Tubthumping*, *Macarena* and Aha's *Take on Me*. For fans of Sonic Team's previous games there is also music from *Sonic Adventure* and *NIGHTS*.

As you play along to these killer grooves, a combo meter records how many notes you've played correctly and grades the rhythmical accuracy of your performance from A to F. The standard of your maraca playing is reflected in the visuals: if you're shaking your thang better than a Latin love god the screen goes into a



psychedelic frenzy and the game's mascot, Amigo the Monkey, starts tripping out like a mental, drugged-up simian. But if your grading drops below D, the sun goes in, night falls, Amigo slumps in desolation and the track ends prematurely.

Aside from the coin-op's Arcade mode, the DC conversion has a generous selection of new options. Original mode is the same as Arcade but with the initial six tracks already available, while Challenge has five levels of increasing difficulty and new music to unlock if you progress. There are also a couple of fantastic two-player games, including the cooperative *Love Love* game - see how closely you and a friend can shake your maracas in unison, and at the end of the tune your romantic compatibility is rated by a love percentage!

*Samba de Amigo* is the best rhythm-action title yet seen. You can forget *PaRappa* and *Dance Dance Revolution*, because nothing can compare to the hilarious fun of shaking your booty and maracas to the super-cool licensed tunes. The selection of modes is superb and ensures the admittedly repetitive gameplay never loses its appeal. The music is faultless, and the gloriously vibrant graphics - full of saucy cat-girls, Elvis impersonators and bongoning teddy bears - will have you smiling from ear to ear.

■ There are also five mini-games to get the hang of. In "Mogra Panic," comedy sombrero-wearing moles appear in circles at a steadily increasing rate. You have to shake your maraca in the relevant direction to whack 'em.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sega

**DEVELOPER:**  
Sonic Team

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
August 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Hilarious two-player fun with fantastic cartoon-style visuals

**LOW:**  
You really need two sets of maracas

09/10





# RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA



## The Dreamcast-exclusive *Resident*

*Evil: Code Veronica* is bloodcurdlingly brilliant. It has more hours of gameplay than any other *Resi* title, astounding graphics, a creepy soundtrack and enough shocks to make you think you're playing in an electric chair.

The game picks up the *Resi* narrative three months after the events of *Resi 2*. As you'll soon discover, the T-virus has escaped yet again and turned the island's population into a gruesome community of zombies and other nightmarish beasties. Playing Claire (and later in the game, Chris), your job is to try and make it off the island in one piece and discover the meaning of the code known as Veronica. But with a cast of monsters dying to take a bite out of you and loads of ingenious puzzles halting your progress, that's far easier said than done.

The gameplay intersperses creepy cut-scenes with zombie-blasting and puzzle-solving action. Unfortunately, the interface is beginning to feel antiquated and Capcom should also be berated for the lack of a 60Hz option. Despite the full screen, 50Hz is just too sluggish.

While the game's flaws are irritating, none of them are serious enough to take the gloss off this fantastic title. There's a captivating story to uncover, and enough blood-spillage to satisfy even the goriest of gore merchants.

■ To get the Battle mode, you just need to complete the game at any difficulty setting. Save your game and the mode will be available on the title screen.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Capcom

### DEVELOPER:

Capcom

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Survival horror genius. Don't be without it

### LOW:

Persistent control issues and lack of 60Hz option

# 09/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

### DEVELOPER:

Iguana UK

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Plenty to do. Great graphics and sound.

### LOW:

Possibly just too big for some people

# 09/10

# SHADOW MAN



**This game requires a** serious time commitment.

Acclaim estimates that around 60 to 70 hours of your life are going to be spent in front of your Dreamcast. We point this out because you'll really only start to get deeply involved in *Shadow Man* after about 10 hours of concentrated play.

The plot is a spicy blend of such celluloid nasties as *Seven* and *Hellraiser*. Evil demonspawn Legion is engineering apocalypse, and has sent five serial killers into the world to herald his coming. It's up to you, of course, to stop them.

The game has a dual structure, and takes place both in the real world - Liveside - and a hellish afterlife - Deadside. You are Mike LeRoi, assassin, and you possess the ability to travel Deadside, where you become Shadow Man, a powerful voodoo warrior.

Shadow Man is ambidextrous and can use objects in both hands. So you can, for example, shoot two weapons simultaneously. The weapons themselves are a pleasing bunch, from the machine guns of the Liveside to the exotic voodoo weapons of the Deadside. Shadow is also enormously skilled, and as well as the usual jumping and climbing, he can cling to ledges with his fingers, leap backward onto adjacent platforms, swim and even fire weapons as he rolls.

There's a lot to love here; it's enthralling, dark and original. Book some time off and surrender to *Shadow Man's* bloody embrace.

■ Two books help you though *Shadow Man*. *Nettie's File* is an FBI-style casebook, where you'll find the history of the serial killers. *The Prophecy* includes a wealth of tip-heavy information here, from weaponry to Dark Souls and Coffin Gates.



# SHENMUE



**Yokosuka, Japan, 1986.** Ryo

Hazuki, an 18-year-old student, returns home to see his father being attacked by a mysterious stranger. This intruder is looking for an ancient artifact called the Dragon Mirror and doesn't intend to leave without it. A final attack leaves the old man dying on the floor while the stranger departs with the mirror. You play Ryo, and your task over the next three GD-Roms (and the next three chapters) is to find the truth and avenge your father's death.

The brainchild of Sega's resident genius Yu Suzuki – creator of *Outrun*, *Virtua Fighter*, *Space Harrier*, *Daytona* and *F355 Challenge*, to name but a few – was, at the time of its creation, the most expensive and ambitious project in videogame history. At \$70 million it's only the first part of a three-part story, and it's possibly the biggest evolution in gaming since the switch to 3D. *Shenmue* can be loosely categorized as an RPG, but you won't find any turn-based battles, mythical monsters or super-deformed characters here. Instead it's the most convincing videogame version of the real world yet seen.

Day-to-day events in the life of Ryo follow this general pattern: wake up in the morning, leave the house (collecting your daily allowance), and head into town. Talk to the non-player characters to discover who can provide you with useful information (people who you generally won't be able to meet until nightfall), then mosey



over to the flower shop to chat up your love interest. Spend the afternoon in the arcades, playing *Space Harrier* and *Hang On* (it's 1986, remember) and kill time playing darts. Put money into slot machines and vending machines, catch buses and make phone calls, wondering at the realism of it all. Then as the evening falls, search the local bars to find your contacts, fight the necessary ruffians, obtain the information you require and head home for a spot of shut-eye. While this may sound like a bit of a procession, that's because it doesn't come close to describing the scope, imagination and total immersion of Ryo's world.

Forget *Final Fantasy*-style spells and hit points, because *Shenmue*'s battling is faithful to this real-world setting. Ryo is a martial arts master, and uses Jujitsu to sort out anyone who picks on him. The combat system itself is a cross between *Streets of Rage* and *Virtua Fighter*, with more than 30 moves at your disposal – useful in brawls where you're scrapping up to 70 thugs.

*Shenmue* is gigantic, engrossing and unique – let yourself be gripped by it, and it'll take over your life.

■ In the old Warehouse district the gameplay becomes a matter of stealth. Security guards patrol the area and you have to pass them all undetected – don't forget you can hide behind boxes, barrels and crates with a tap of the A button.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega

### DEVELOPER:

Sega

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

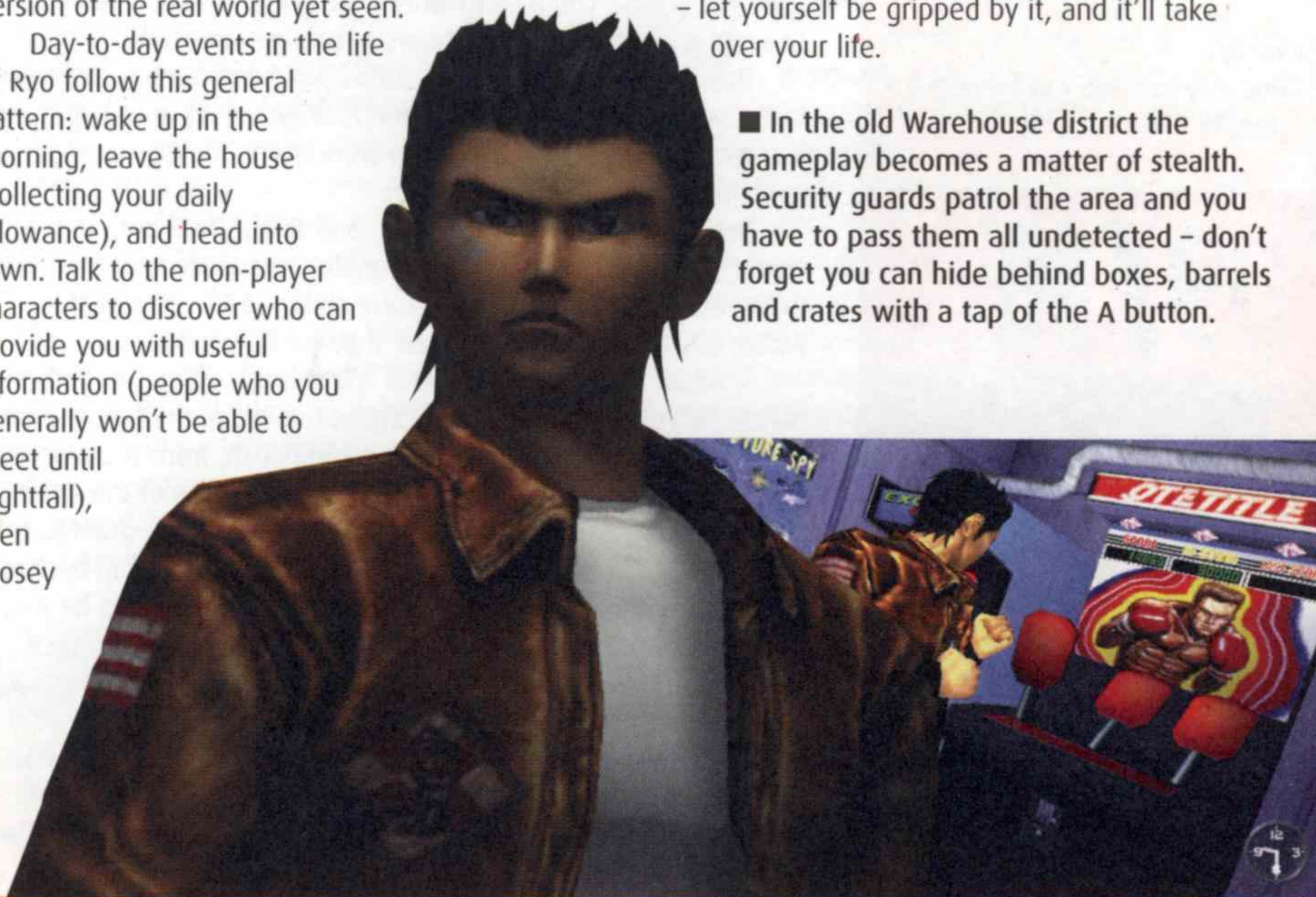
### HIGH:

A well-paced plot, with riveting sub-games

### LOW:

Get ready for some backtracking. But this really is a minor complaint

# 10/10



## SONIC ADVENTURE

## DETAILS:

## PUBLISHER:

Sega

## DEVELOPER:

Sonic Team

## NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

## ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1999

## BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

## HIGH:

Great graphics, new adventure elements

## LOW:

Not as ground-breaking as it could have been

09/10



The real question here is, "Has Sonic Team made the most of the new console's vast possibilities and created a true next-generation game?" The answer is neither an emphatic "yes," nor a crestfallen "no." For every moment of genius there is a jarring example of mediocrity.

Plot is a far more important component of *Adventure* than in any of Sonic's earlier excursions. Storylines for Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Big the Cat and E-102 tangle and influence each other in clever ways, before coming together to form a satisfying whole.

Visually, *Sonic Adventure* more than lives up to its next-gen billing. The environments are breathtaking and the high-definition characters crystal clear. There's still a problem with pop-up, though, which is especially noticeable in the high-speed sections.

While we're dishing out the horror stories, the camera is another bad news item. It's not unknown for it to get stuck behind scenery, leaving you stranded unseen on the other side, helplessly listening to the in-game music - another candidate for grisly death.

You needn't worry, though, because if you like nothing better than legging it through stages at eye-popping speeds while collecting rings and smashing baddies, then you've never had it so good. There are 10 massive levels, plus a huge range of whacky subgames to keep you occupied, as well as some new adventuring-style elements, all of which will delight Sonic fans old and new.

■ To hatch a Chao egg, pick it up with the Y button, hold the button down and move the analog stick to coax the Chao out. Save your pet to your VM, then use the options to train it.

TIME 00:42:88

044



## SOUL CALIBUR



We'll say right here, right now, that this is a triumph. Namco's beat-'em-up has the effect of making many Dreamcast games played before - or even after - seem faintly inferior. It's not a mere eye candy issue: there's more to *Calibur* than that.

The real problem for next-gen fighting games is the short-term appeal of their one-player modes. *Soul Calibur* defies this obvious criticism with a huge, RPG-tinged Mission mode. Dumping another beat-'em-up convention, the move lists are large but not in an incomprehensible sense. The majority of *Calibur's* chained attacks are rapid, three-move affairs, and make you feel genuinely in control.

Like its predecessor *Soul Blade*, the premise behind *Soul Calibur* is that it's a weapon-based fighting game, and in this it's convincing. As both characters swing their blades, they genuinely look as if they're wielding several kilos of cold steel. Each fighter also has extensive defining statistics that soon become apparent, giving you ample opportunity to rave about how strategic bouts can be.

*Soul Calibur's* introduction of true eight-way movement is a huge evolutionary step for the genre, too. You can move in and out of the screen, back-and-forth, or at diagonals. Tactically, this makes a lot of difference, since you never know where your opponent's next step will take them.

With *Soul Calibur*, Namco has set a new standard. You simply cannot miss this game.

■ By playing the Arcade mode you can unlock all but one character - ultimate boss Inferno - which you do by completing the game with every different character. By playing the Adventure mode you can open up other things, including the means to unlock Inferno.



## DETAILS:

## PUBLISHER:

Namco

## DEVELOPER:

Namco

## NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

## ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 1999

## BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

## HIGH:

Beautiful visuals, massive Mission mode

## LOW:

Lacks Internet option of Japanese version

10/10

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Crystal Dynamics

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Magnificent visuals. Fangtastic design. You can't die

**LOW:**

Lots of running around. A bit repetitive. Eats VM slots

09/10

# LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER



**Welcome to Nosgoth.** It's a crazy medieval hell, mixing gothic architecture with steam punk machinery to staggering effect. One moment you're racing through the bowels of the underworld, the next you're slaughtering humans and devouring their souls as you ravage their archaic city.

Essentially, this 3D world has two planes: the Physical Realm, where most of the action takes place, and the Spectral Realm, a dark, warped version of the secular world. Shifting between these two is vital.

As in most adventure games, *Soul Reaver* also offers you a variety of secondary skills such as swimming and climbing. Here, though, you don't simply learn the whole bunch; you are given a new ability each time you kill a clan leader, and these are spread throughout the game.

In creating *Soul Reaver's* battle system, Crystal Dynamics has obviously spent time studying other games. The further you progress, the more firepower becomes available to you. Initially you're stuck with

torches, but soon you'll be wielding the all-powerful Soul Reaver – a magical sword that wraps itself around your Spirit.

The only drawback to *Soul Reaver* is that there is too much running around. A liberal sprinkling of enemies do their damndest to halt your progress, but they soon become too easy to blast past.

■ This is a massive game. Fortunately, it has a "gate" system to enable you to warp between clan areas. When you find a door with a blue circular symbol on it, go through and stand on the floor plate. Activate the gate and it will be connected to other accessible areas.



# SPACE CHANNEL 5



**In a future torn from** the *Austin Powers* design book, evil Morolian aliens are attacking through the medium of dance, cutting their moves and shooting their ray guns in time to the music. Stepping in to save the day is Ulala, a super-cool reporter, determined to get to the bottom of the Morolian invasion by out-dancing the pesky ETs.

As Ulala, all you need to do is follow the moves set by the aliens, then replicate them using the D-pad. The learning curve is gentle and you'll find yourself settling in nicely.

Its sense of flair really sets *Space Channel 5* apart from other games. Everything is plastered with bright colors, while the musical numbers are brass-reinforced big band for the hippie era.

Unfortunately, though, the game has a fundamental flaw – if you miss any part of a button combo, the music speeds up in order to increase the difficulty level. It's during these moments that the gap between command and reaction widens enough for the Dreamcast to declare an accurate button-press a miss. While it's an infrequent occurrence, this is infuriating when it does happen.

Easy to pick up and play, deliriously upbeat and vivacious, you'd have to be stone-hearted not to get caught by *Space Channel 5's* rhythmic lures and fresh-faced verve.

■ The Morolians dispatch huge bosses to see you off at the end of each level. However, their idea of striking terror into your heart is a shade different – fear of the Morolians is akin to fear of sock puppets. Only kids will be affected.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sega

**DEVELOPER:**

Sega

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Stylish, brash and vivid, with some of the weirdest characters ever

**LOW:**

Timing flaws and questionable longevity

08/10

# STREET FIGHTER 3: DI



**If one game sums** up the allure of 2D more than any other, it's *Street Fighter*. And now *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* has fireballed its way from the arcades to a home system. Sadly, it's another tie-in; not the much-anticipated sequel.

*SF3: DI* includes the first two versions of the arcade game: New Generation and 2nd Giant Attack. On the downside, though, it does lack the near-infinite options and play modes of its counterpart *SF: Alpha 3*. In addition, the Super moves are different, and much simpler than the crazy combos of *Marvel vs. Capcom*.

New to this edition is the Parry system, designed to prevent one-move wonders launching a fusillade of fireballs at their rival. The beauty of parries is that if they're performed correctly, you fend off blows without losing energy, and can quickly follow up with a strike of your own. Another first is the inclusion of a Dash move. This can prove useful if you're being battered in a corner of the screen and need a quick way out.

In terms of gameplay and controls, *SF3: DI* harks back to the no-frills approach of *SF2: Turbo* that enabled experienced players to excel. Indeed, this is definitely a game where skill and mastery of the control system pay huge dividends. It's recommended over *Alpha 3*, despite its small selection of play modes.

■ You'll need to make use of the all-new Parry system if you're to fend off all 20 of Sean's basketballs in the bonus game. Hit Forward if you're standing and Down if you're in the air.



DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Capcom

**DEVELOPER:**  
Capcom

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Tight controls, short loading times, 12 great new characters

**LOW:**  
Lack of play modes, longevity, and not as many features as *SF: Alpha 3*

08/10

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER



**This is a dream** come true for real-life skaters and videogamers, so prepare to be assaulted by rock-solid gameplay, beautiful visuals and funky sounds.

DC's extra oomph makes *Tony Hawk's* a visual treat. The draw distance is fantastic, and although there is some fogging in the background, you won't notice any pop-up and you can make out ramps and rails dozens of virtual yards away.

Once you've chosen your skater (from 10 available), deck and wheels, and set your trucks, you're off to the training level. Before each level begins, you're introduced to that stage's Tape Challenges, of which there are always five. To move onto new levels and unlock decks with different designs and increased stats, you have to bag a certain number of Tapes.

There are four types of stunts on offer: kicks, grinds, grabs and spins, but before you can execute a rad maneuver you need to be in the air. If you want to really impress your friends, though, you need to learn how to combo. The levels have been laid out with this in mind, so look around and plan your moves.

In terms of longevity, *Tony Hawk's* should keep you coming back for months, especially with its three competitions and two multiplayer games. On the surface it seems no more than a funky take on skateboarding, but this is a game of skill worthy of the hardest of hardcore gamers.

■ Tony's signature move – and one of the most amazing tricks ever invented – is the 900. To pull it off tap Right, Down then B.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Crave

**DEVELOPER:**  
Treyarch

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Satisfying and extremely addictive

**LOW:**  
If you're new to boarding it's initially hard to plan routes

09/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## STRIKER PRO 2000



**In most people's eyes** soccer nirvana would involve a combination of *FIFA's* in-depth options built on the foundation of *ISS Pro's* superlative gameplay. Thankfully, *Striker Pro 2000* comes pretty close to realizing this impossible dream.

*SP 2000* delivers everything you expect. The license of Europe's governing body enables the game to include the official European Championship qualifiers and Euro 2000 finals. The other major competitions are all there, cunningly disguised, since the rights belong to other game companies. A nifty Classic Match option enables you to recreate games from the past such as that glorious evening in Barcelona when Man Utd snatched victory from Bayern Munich.

In *Striker Pro 2000*, however, it is "Manchester" against "Munchen" because a legal loophole has prevented the developers using accurate team names. All the clubs are named after the area they come from, which is fine in Barcelona's case but confusing if you want to play as "Highbury" (Arsenal).

*Striker Pro 2000* delivers top-notch footy action in spades. It's not as slick as *ISS* but this is mainly due to the fact that the ball isn't drawn magnet-like to your players as you pass it around. However, aside from minor criticisms, *Striker Pro 2000* is a fantastic, intuitive soccer title.

■ You can use the comprehensive editing system to fiddle with your teams and give them the correct names, but fortunately, the players come correctly monickered.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**  
Rage

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It's a kick-ass soccer game

**LOW:**  
No manual skill moves, and a dodgy through ball

# 08/10

## TEST DRIVE: V-RALLY



**Test Drive: V-Rally** supplies enough full-throttle action to satisfy rally masters and road racers alike. This incarnation is basically an enhanced version of the PlayStation release *V-Rally 2*. Graphically, however, the game looks better than on any other format, with solid landscapes and 26 detailed high-resolution car models running at a speedy 30fps.

The selection of playable modes covers all the racing bases. There's the standard Time Trial, Arcade, V-Rally Trophy and Championship mode. Disappointingly, though, this doesn't replicate the multi-stage format of the World Rally Championship, and neither are there real-life rally drivers to play as or against.

With its loose arcade handling and blistering speed, *V-Rally* is the perfect game for just hitting the accelerator and charging around with reckless abandon. It won't win you prizes from driving instructors but for sheer exhilaration it can't be beaten. However, no matter how well you drive, all too often you'll find yourself going wheels over hood and landing in a crumpled heap thanks to the game's unforgiving collision detection. Also, the whole experience doesn't quite feel as downright dangerous as the classic *Colin McRae*. That said, it's an arcade racer, based on rallying, and in those terms it delivers in spades.

Basically, the sensation of speed is fantastic, the generous selection of cars handle differently, and the incredible number of tracks – tarmac, snow, gravel, mud – offer well-designed challenges.

■ Want unlimited tracks to race on? *V-Rally* has one of the most comprehensive and user-friendly track editors ever – construct your basic circuit using up to 100 blocks.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**  
Eden

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-4

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Exhilarating arcade-style racing

**LOW:**  
Doesn't offer the down-and-dirty realism of *Colin McRae*

# 08/10



# VIRTUA TENNIS

DREAMCAST

PLAYSTATION2

PSONE

PC

NINTENDO 64

GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Sega

### DEVELOPER:

Sega

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-4

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Four-player doubles is as good as multiplayer gaming gets

### LOW:

Dreadful soundtrack

09/10



### Virtua Tennis

was released in

the arcades in 1999 and surprised everyone by combining the pick-up-and-play, super-addictive qualities of *Smash Court Tennis* with the realism of actual players and courts, motion-captured animation and accurate ball physics.

Part of what made the coin-op such a joy to play was the simple but effective control system. Translated to the DC, the controls improve from merely great to utter perfection. Drop shots, top-spin lobs and backhand smashes can all be pulled off with a bit of practice. This makes for an impeccable learning curve.

The Arcade mode from the coin-op original remains intact, with five increasingly difficult matches on different surfaces before you can become champion. There's an all-new Exhibition mode, which offers a friendly match either in singles or doubles. A doubles match can be played by up to four people, and this four-player action is quite possibly the most exciting and outrageously competitive multiplayer romp available on Dreamcast.

However enjoyable *Virtua Tennis's* four-player fun is, nothing can compare to the brilliance of its in-depth single-player game, the World Circuit mode. World Circuit is a superlative long-term, single-player challenge, consisting of trials and training mini-games accessed via a world map. The eight trials test your match-play abilities, each focusing on a specific shot (serve,

smash, volley, groundstroke, lob etc.) and points are allotted based on the standard and frequency with which you use the trial stroke. The eight training games are totally inspired and will remind you of *Crazy Taxi's* Crazy Box mini-games in their amusing diversity.

Money is awarded just for entering a competition and the amount you're given increases depending on how well you perform. In a stroke of genius, your winnings are used to buy the game's extras from four shops dotted around the globe. Eight new players, eight doubles partners, four different courts and a variety of tennis clothing, new strings and energy drinks can be purchased. It's an ingenious bonus system that, unlike most games, rewards you for your hard work.

So, *Virtua Tennis* has perfect controls, a superb range of gameplay modes, fantastic four-player frolics and an excellent bonus scheme. Sound effects are spot on and the detailed courts play realistically – adding to the challenge you face from eight real players (including Tim Henman and Jim Courier) who perform in the styles of their full-sized counterparts.

*Virtua Tennis* is one of the most addictive, accessible and downright entertaining titles available for Dreamcast and is essential to all but those with a rabid hatred of the sport.

■ There are eight mini-games – all with three degrees of difficulty. In Cannon Ball, ball-firing machines shoot red and yellow balls at a hectic pace. Return the yellows to turn the machines off, but avoid the reds as touching them reactivates the ball-spewing menaces.



## DREAMCAST INFO BURST

Just because Sega's not making Dreamcasts any more doesn't mean that the system is suddenly dead. On the contrary, there's a substantial Dreamcast back catalogue, and if the previous 20 pages weren't enough to convince you of this, then cast your eyes over another 25 games, all of which are jostling for a place in your Dreamcast.

The games in this section may not all have been groundbreaking on release, but they're all worthy of your consideration. Some of them are sequels to fantastic genres, while others are captivating oddities – you might not instantly think of playing a fishing simulation, for example, but you should give it a go before you dismiss it as completely out of hand.

This isn't the end, either. Sega still has a great release list lined up for the fall and winter of 2001 – turn to page 337 for loads more details.



REVIEWED: Oct '00



### AEROWINGS 2: AIRSTRIKE

PUB: Crave

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: CRI

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



A remarkable game that blends realistic controls with a variety of aircraft, ranging from civil to the full military, then throws in a plethora of options for training and dogfighting, an extensive replay theater and a difficulty curve that is just about perfect. *Aerowings 2* is marred only by its lack of link-up mode.

### TNN MOTORSPORTS HARDCORE HEAT

PUB: ASC Games

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: CRI

BUDGET: No



Dune buggies, Land Rovers and monstrous pick-up trucks, all with turning circles the size of a small planet and the handling you'd expect of a heavyweight automobile. Playing *Hardcore Heat* is a trying experience. It's possibly true to the reality of truck racing, but, unfortunately, this doesn't make for a hugely exciting game.

REVIEWED: Nov '99



VERDICT:

06/10

REVIEWED: Nov '00



### EXTREME SPORTS

PUB: Sega

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Innerloop

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



A racing game that puts you through five radical events, including snowboarding, all-terrain vehicles (quad bikes), mountainbiking, speedgliding (steer into balloons) and the craziest of the lot, bungee jumping. Unfortunately, the gameplay is far too shallow to encourage anything more than a few bursts of high-octane amusement.

### F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX 2

PUB: Konami

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Video System

BUDGET: No



Better than the original. Once you get used to the realistic handling of the cars, you'll be immersed in what is one of the finest console F1 simulations out there. There are flaws (the visuals are dated compared to *F355*, and the F1 format has been done to death), but these won't seriously offend budding F1 fanatics.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Sept '00



### GIGA WING

PUB: Capcom

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Capcom

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



Charged with the task of ridding the world of alien scum, you fly a solitary ship through a vertically scrolling universe, dealing out plasma death to anything that moves, dodging enemy fire and collecting pick-ups that increase your firepower to ludicrous proportions. This is videogaming in its rawest, purest form.



REVIEWED: Jun '00



## GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

**PUB:** Rockstar Games    **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Liquid Games    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**Carry out crimes** for the local hoods, in this great conversion of the PC edition. Drive for gangland ne'er-do-wells, evading cops and causing carnage *en route*, and be prepared to gun it when the action gets too hot. Marred by some over-long missions, 2D graphics and shortcomings in the map system.

REVIEWED: Oct '99



## POWER STONE

**PUB:** Capcom    **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Capcom    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



**One of the most innovative**, off-beat titles in ages, this "projectile fighting game" is a unique experience. A cakewalk to learn, but tricky to master, scrap your way around interactive environments (where all of the scenery is fair game), and grab all three Power Stones to gain yourself a slice of beat-'em-up invincibility.

## HYDRO THUNDER

**PUB:** Midway    **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Eurocom    **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Nov '99



**A standard racer**, but with boats and the wet stuff, not tires and Tarmac. With nine tracks, ramps to leap, bridges to navigate, waterfalls to plummet down and all manner of hidden routes to discover, there's so much going on that sometimes you will forget you're in a race. Not outstanding, but no waterlogged disaster area, either.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

## RAYMAN 2

**PUB:** Ubi Soft    **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Ubi Soft    **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Apr '00



**Collect little balls of goodness** to restore order to Rayman's world in this Gallic platformer. Deceptively difficult, despite its straightforward control system, if you're a hardcore platform fan there's much to enjoy here - particularly once you become accustomed to the patches of unabashedly retro gameplay.

VERDICT:  
**07/10**

REVIEWED: Xmas '00



## TEST DRIVE LE MANS

**PUB:** Infogrames    **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Melbourne House    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**09/10**



**Race for anything up** to the full 24 hours, all while soaking up beautifully visualized courses that include Suzuka in Japan and Donington in Britain (plus, of course, Le Mans itself). The cars range from McLaren F1s to Audis, and they all travel at speeds that'll make you queasy.

REVIEWED: Jan '01



## RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

**PUB:** Conspiracy    **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Kadokawa Shoten    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**



**Record of Lodoss War: The Advent of Cardice** is a bit of a hidden gem. It reached the US with no hype or fanfare, and yet has several aspects that make it extremely enjoyable. The combat is repetitive, and the story typical RPG guff, but the whole package is very well put together.

## NBA 2K

**PUB:** Sega    **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Visual Concepts    **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Mar '00



**The accuracy with which** this game captures the NBA spectacle is mind boggling. All the teams, players and courts are there, and Arcade and Simulation modes provide all the gameplay options you could want. Get hold of a copy by any means necessary.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## RED DOG

**PUB:** Crave    **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Argonaut    **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Mar '00



**An all-action shooter**, but with a few strategic elements thrown in as you try to use an advanced tank (the titular "Red Dog") to blow alien scum off the face of the planet. One of the best shoot-'em-ups available on Dreamcast and also one of the console's best multiplayer games.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Oct '00



## NFL 2K1

**PUB:** Sega    **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Visual Concepts    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**With hundreds of brutal** player animations, this game is a beauty to watch. It plays like the old *Madden* titles from Sega's 16-bit days, and the brilliant sound, and various realistic stadia in which to crush your opponents, mean it's a wonderful opportunity for hardcore NFL fans to stare at in awe.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049

**PUB:** Midway    **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Atari    **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**07/10**



**Well-designed levels, completely** vulgar vehicles and blistering speeds add up to a brash experience that - while outclassed by the likes of *Crazy Taxi* - nevertheless provides plenty of thrills. Don't expect it to last forever and you may well find yourself having a blast.

REVIEWED: Nov '99



## SEGA BASS FISHING

PUB: Sega

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Sega

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

07/10



**More enjoyable than you** would think. The only drawbacks are its simplistic – and therefore repetitive – gameplay and the fact that it will only have limited appeal to angling skeptics. It's a shame the fishing is limited to bass because different objectives (such as big-game sea fishing) would have enhanced it considerably.

REVIEWED: Jun '00



## SWWS: EURO 2000 EDITION

PUB: Sega

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Silicon Dreams

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



**Sega Worldwide Soccer offers** a well-balanced mixture of arcade fluidity and simulation realism. The speed problem of the earlier edition has been fixed and the commentary and sound add up to a superb big-match atmosphere. It's short on graphical polish and suffers from a slightly dodgy free-kick, but otherwise this is great soccer.

## SILVER

PUB: Infogrames

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Spiral House

BUDGET: No



**With evil wizards and** real-time fights, this is one of the better Dreamcast RPGs. It has an innovative combat system, an atmospheric storyline, and plenty of different monsters to hack into, and although it lacks overall variety and suffers flawed bosses, you'll play it, finish it and crave for just a little bit more.

REVIEWED: Jun '00



VERDICT:

07/10

## SYDNEY 2000

PUB: Eidos

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Attention to Detail

BUDGET: No



**All the efforts to** provide something above and beyond the typical athletics sim here are flawed. What remains, then, is a reasonably enjoyable game, which is the first chance for DC owners to emulate the overexertions of pixelated sportsmen and women. Unfortunately, we expected better from a game bearing the official stamp.

REVIEWED: Oct '00



VERDICT:

06/10

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## SOUTH PARK RALLY

PUB: Acclaim

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Tantalus

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**Although the karts handle** adequately, the game offers no real sense of speed or excitement. This is mainly the fault of poor track design rather than any massive failings in the game's engine. While the best titles in the genre have imaginative courses, *SPR's* monotonous tracks offer nothing but tedium.

REVIEWED: Nov '00



## VIRTUA ATHLETE 2000

PUB: Agetec

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Sega

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

05/10



**A lack of events** and options, no single-player challenge, dodgy controls, poor presentation and average visuals leave the (always reliable) multiplayer action as the game's only saving grace. If you must play a sporting button-basher, you'd be much better off choosing an Olympic variant (see above).

## STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

PUB: Capcom

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Capcom

BUDGET: No



**If you want the** finest fighting 2D has to offer, there are very few games that approach the perfection of *SFA V3*. Should you prefer to see the whole of your fighter, and relish in sidestepping an opponent before flinging in the final blow, however, then this may not be the game for you.

REVIEWED: Dec '99



VERDICT:

08/10

## VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB

PUB: Sega

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Genki

BUDGET: No



**Virtua Fighter 3tb is a fantastic,** superbly designed beat-'em-up, where you can take full advantage of an interactive environment and a speedy fighting style. Unfortunately, it doesn't offer quite the va-va-voom of *Soul Calibur*. The addition of a dedicated Versus mode is a bonus.

REVIEWED: Oct '99



VERDICT:

07/10

REVIEWED: Jun '00



## SWORD OF THE BESERK: GUTS' RAGE

PUB: Eidos

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Yuke's

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



**Play psychotic nutcase Gattso,** and turn mutant-infested villages into blood-soaked slaughterhouses. This 18-rated stuff is over too quickly, but it's plenty of fun while it lasts. Although it won't make you jump like *Resident Evil* does, the story is great, the voice acting is okay and the combat supplies loads of the old ultraviolence.

REVIEWED: Jan '00



## WORMS WORLD PARTY

PUB: Titus

PLAYERS: 1-4

DEV: Team 17

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



**This is an extremely** social experience and you can lose yourself in its simple, addictive gameplay for hours at a time. It doesn't push the DC to its limits, and the single-player game is nothing to write home about, but this tactical worm-blastfest is 20 bucks-worth of pure fun.

# COMING SOON...

## IT MAY BE ON ITS WAY OUT, BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE - DREAMCAST ISN'T ABOUT TO LEAVE WITHOUT MAKING A FUSS...

**S**ega's decision to break free from the restrictive shackles of hardware manufacture and become a multi-format publisher has resulted in the early demise of Dreamcast in the eyes of many. Most third-party support for the format has already evaporated as resources are diverted elsewhere, but for its legions of loyal fans Sega still has some top titles in store before the end of the year. It may be nearing retirement, but Dreamcast isn't going to go quietly, that's for sure.

We should soon finally see the long-awaited *Headhunter* (001), the game touted as Dreamcast's answer to *Metal Gear Solid*. Developed by Swedish coders Amuze, it puts players in the shoes of Jack Wade - a beard-

her funky stuff again in more rhythm-based alien-bashing antics.

Meanwhile, the curiously titled *K-Project* is being hailed as the world's first "Dramatic Musical Shooter," with gameplay involving traversing psychedelic environments, while shooting oncoming enemies to generate sounds. Multiple hits create "chains" of notes and the sweeter the tunes, the further the player progresses. This genre-defining enigma is sure to be a hit with Dreamcast owners everywhere.

And while we're on the subject of shooters, why not dust off that lightgun for one more round of zombie-decapitating action, with *The House of the Dead 3*?

Sports fans will also be pleased to know that there's plenty left to get the juices flowing. *Virtua Golf* should provide some much-needed excitement for armchair pros out there, while this fall sees the release of *Sega Sports Tennis 2K2* (002). Featuring all the addictive gameplay and slick visuals of the original this eagerly anticipated title now includes female players (like the unstoppable Williams sisters), who were conspicuously absent previously.

That not enough for you? Well how about the incredibly fast *Sega Sports NHL 2K2*? Or Dreamcast's first college football title, *Sega Sports NCAA College Football 2K2*? Or *Sega Sports NFL 2K2*? There's even more fishing on the way, with *Sega Bass Fishing 2* in the works.

Still want more? Then grab a copy of Yu Suzuki's on-line dog-fighting flight sim *Propeller Arena* (003) in August. And remember to re-mortgage the house to get

hold of *Shenmue 2* (004). This new chapter in Ryo Hazuki's epic vengeful quest sees our hero crossing the water from Japan to Hong Kong, and features a huge cast of new characters plus more of the stunningly detailed game world we've come to expect from the series. With more of the popular mini-games, a new, more user-friendly game interface and even better visuals than the first installment, it'll be one hell of a swan song for Dreamcast when it arrives this fall. Dreamcast finished? Don't bet on it just yet!

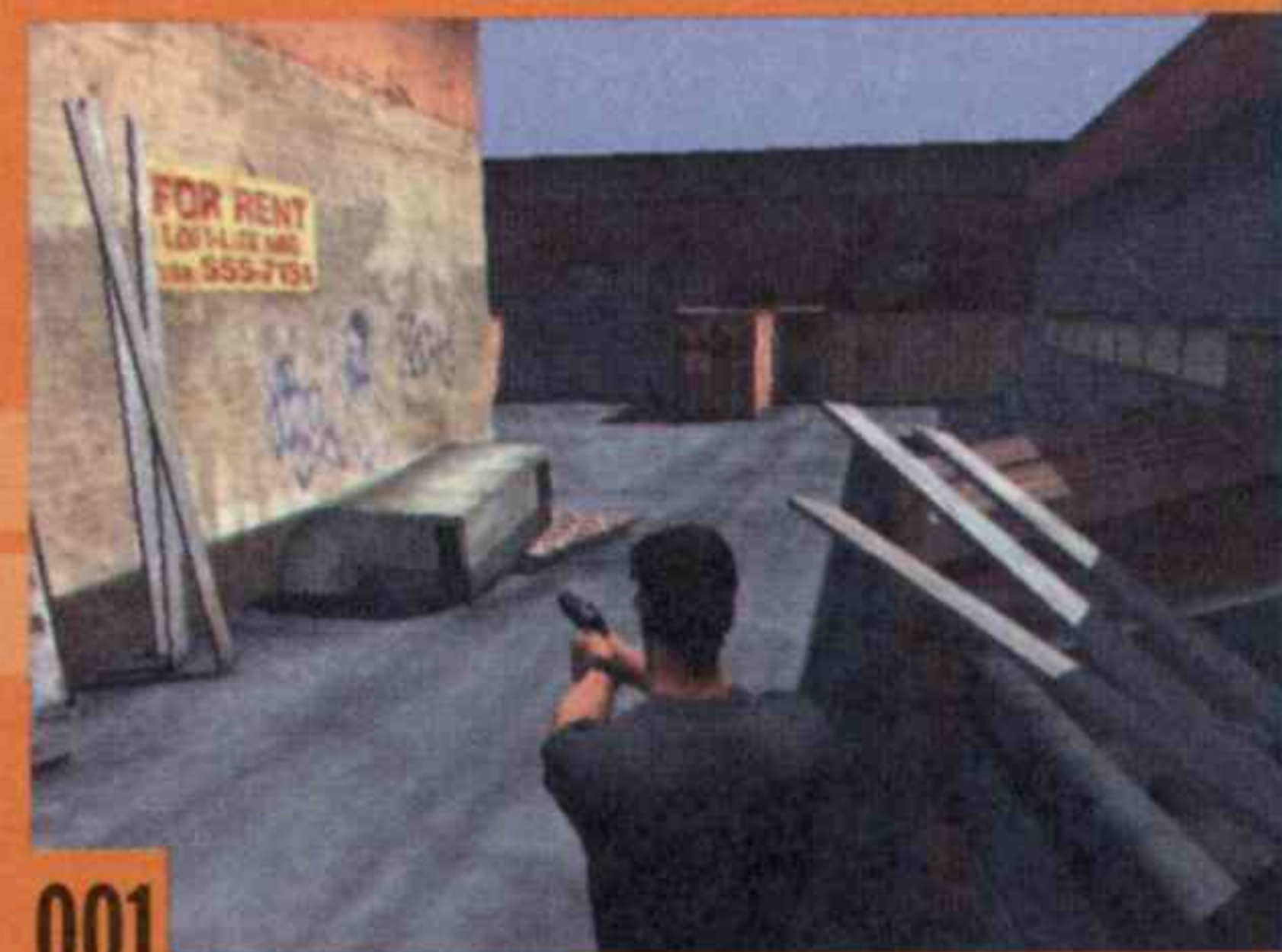
Adrian Lawton, DC-UK

## "THERE'S PLENTY LEFT TO GET THE JUICES FLOWING"

wearing, motorbike-riding, Californian bounty hunter.

Set in a crime-ridden 2019, the story begins with Jack hired to find the killer of a young woman's father. Suffering from amnesia, he must piece together his own memories as he unravels a mystery that involves shadowy illegal trafficking in human body parts. Promising intense third-person action and mental motorbike chases, *Headhunter* looks set to give even the mighty Solid Snake a run for his money when it hits the streets..

If stealth-'em-ups aren't your thing, then Tetsuya Mizuguchi, creator of *Sega Rally* and *Space Channel 5* also has a couple of tasty morsels heading your way. *Space Channel 5 Part 2* features sultry space cadet Ulala strutting



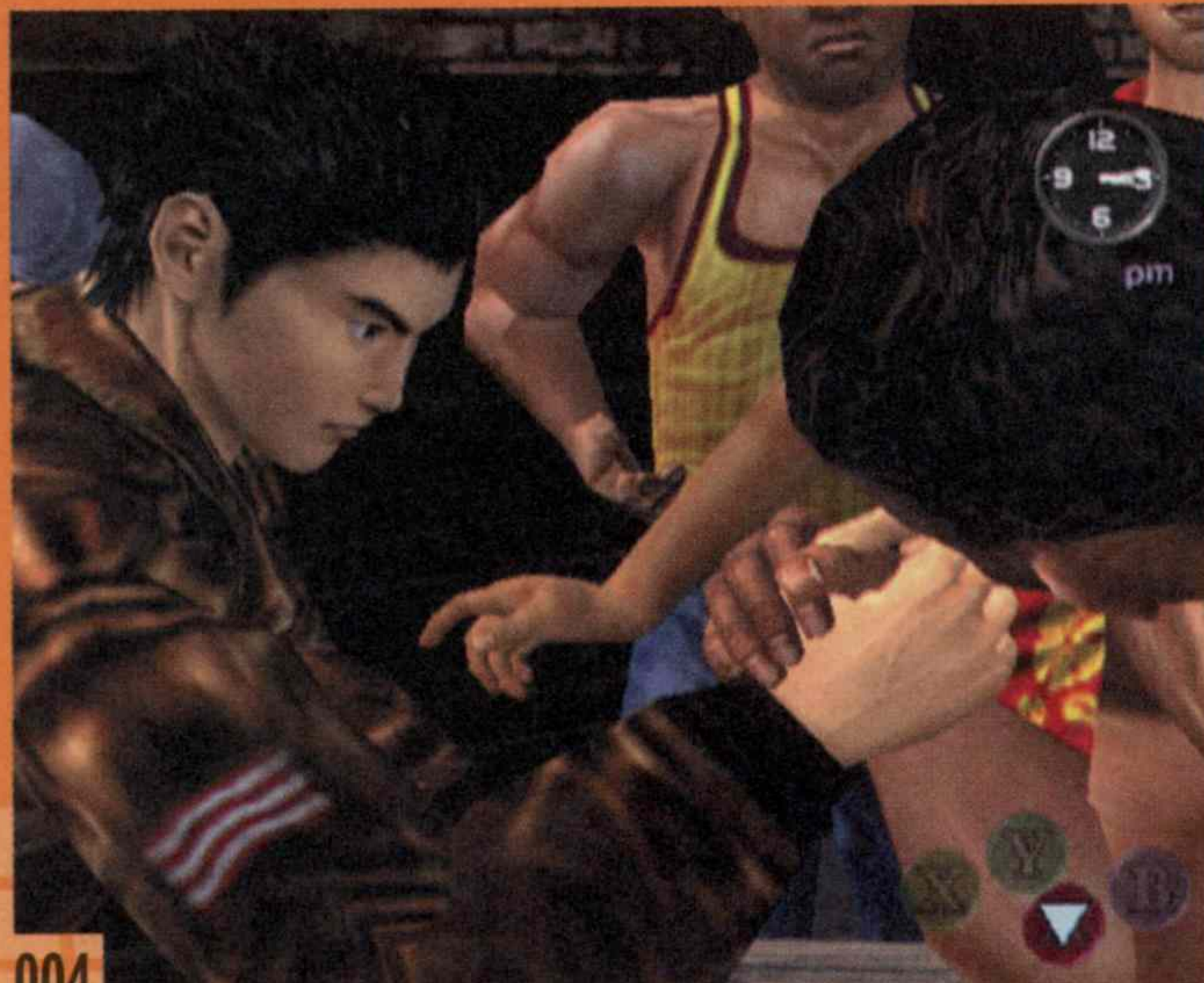
001



003



002



004



Army Men	365
Ballistic	365
Balloon Kid	340
Battle City	365
Battletanx	365
Billy Bob's Huntin' 'n' Fishin'	365
Bionic Commando	340
Blaster Master: Enemy Below	366
Bubble Bobble	366
Bugs Bunny's Crazy Castle 4	366
Bust-a-Move 4	366
Cannon Fodder	341
Conker's Pocket Tales	342
Daffy Duck Fowl Play	366
Defender/Joust	348
Deja Vu I & II	366
Donkey Kong Country	343
Dragon Warrior Monsters	343
Driver	344
Dropzone	366
F1 Racing Championship	366
Final Fantasy Adventure	344
Final Fantasy Legend	345
Final Fantasy Legend II	345
Final Fantasy Legend III	346
Game & Watch Gallery 2	346



# GAME BOY COLOR

Game & Watch Gallery 3	347	Pokémon Red & Blue	356
Harvest Moon 2	347	Pokémon Trading Card Game	356
Hexcite	366	Pokémon Yellow: Special Pikachu Edition	357
International Karate 2000	348	Pong	367
Kirby's Dream Land	349	Pro Pool	368
Kirby's Pinball Land	349	R-Type DX	357
Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble	350	Rainbow Six	368
Kluster	367	Rayman	368
Knockout Kings	367	Ready 2 Rumble Boxing	368
Legend of the River King 2	350	Space Invaders	368
Looney Tunes: Carrot Crazy	366	Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol	368
Looney Tunes Collector: Alert!	367	Spy vs. Spy	358
Mario Golf	352	Survival Kids	358
Mario Tennis	352	Street Fighter Alpha	368
Metal Gear Solid	353	Super Mario Bros. Deluxe	359
Mickey's Racing Adventure	367	Super Mario Land 2	360
Micro Machines Twin Turbo	367	Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing	368
Monkey Puncher	353	Tetris DX	361
Moomin's Tale	367	The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX	351
Motocross Maniacs	342	TOCA Touring Car Championship	368
Mr. Driller	367	Tomb Raider	368
Ms. Pac-Man	367	Wario Land II	360
O'Leary Manager 2000	354	Wario Land 3	362
Pokémon Pinball	354	Wario Land: Mario Land 3	362
Pac-Man	367	Warlocked	363
Pokémon Gold & Silver	355	Wings of Fury	363

**Introduced way back in 1989**, the Game Boy is not only the biggest-selling game machine ever made, but also the oldest console still in production. Its 1MHz 8-bit processor and blurry green LCD screen were never close to state-of-the-art, but have seen off technically superior competitors from the likes of Atari, Sega, NEC and SNK. The Game Boy is likely to top 150 million unit sales by the end of its natural life.

The original classic GB played host to *Tetris*, the world's best puzzle game, and later titles such as *Super Mario Land 2* and *Zelda* showed just how much gameplay talented developers could squeeze into a GB cartridge. As sales of the machine started to slow down in the mid-'90s (the only time the GB ever showed any signs of following the usual brief life cycle of a game console), 1995's smaller, lighter, GB Pocket rekindled some enthusiasm for handheld gaming.

A year later the machine was more popular than ever in Japan, thanks to *Pocket Monsters*. Few people expected the game to make quite such an impact (or even be released) elsewhere, but when it finally arrived in the States under the name *Pokémon* in 1998 it marked the start of a gaming craze that has successfully bankrolled Nintendo ever since.

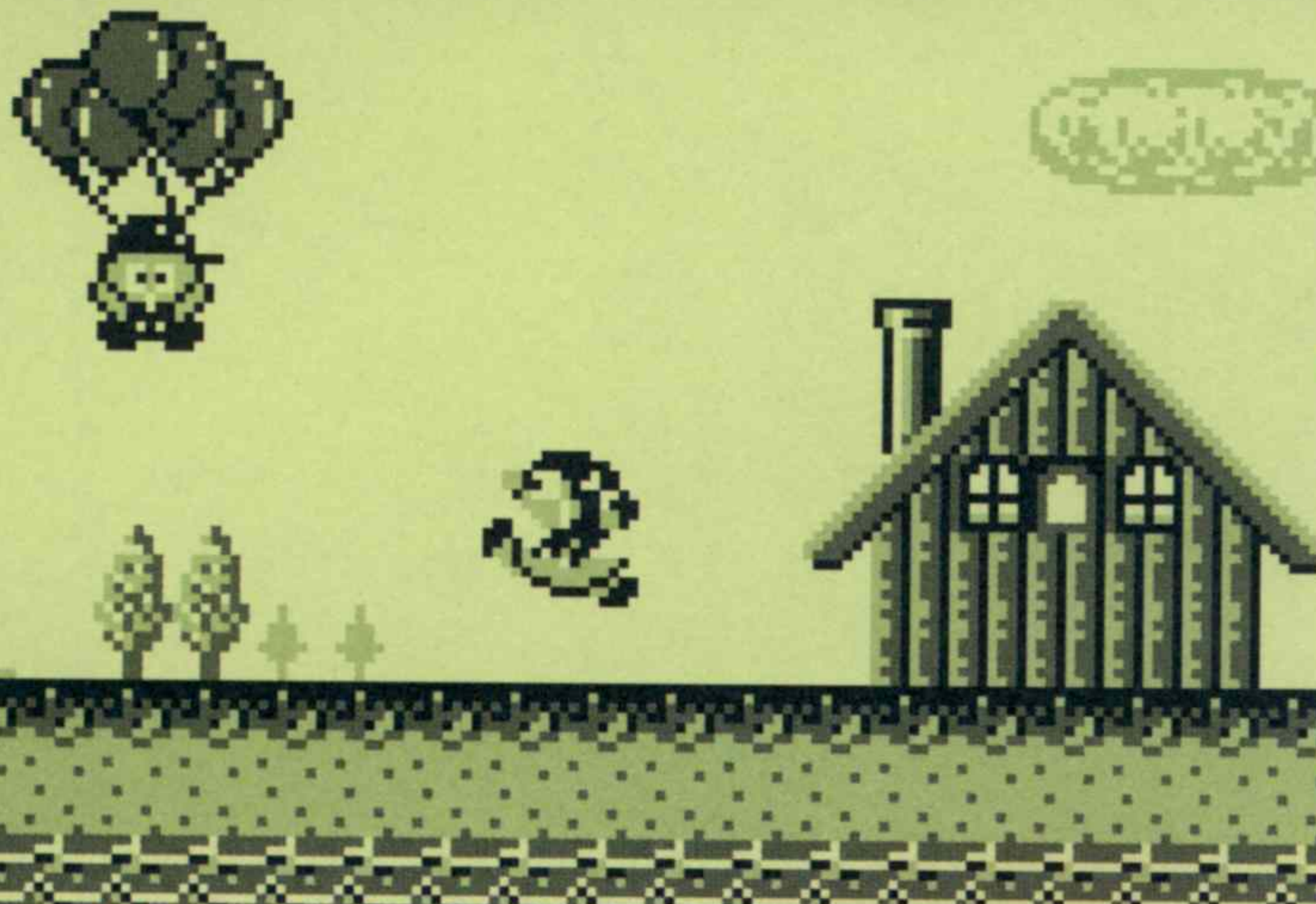
With Game Boy Colors selling as fast as Nintendo can manufacture them, and the 32-bit Game Boy Advance hitting the big time with gamers of all ages, Nintendo could remain the only player in handheld gaming for the foreseeable future.



The games reviewed broadly fall into the following genres. Use these symbols to help you quickly identify the type of game under discussion.



The following reviews are based on those that appeared in *N64* and *Planet Game Boy* magazines, and reflect the feelings of the reviewer at the time of each game's release. Where appropriate, reviews have been updated following the release of subsequent titles in the genre.



# BALLOON KID

**The two-player delights of** Nintendo's 1990 platform classic features the wonderful world of Alice, the girl who never goes anywhere without her foot pump.

The plot of *Balloon Kid* is pure Nintendo nonsense: Alice's brother gets caught by a gust of wind while holding a big bunch of helium-filled balloons. Lacking the sense to let go of the balloon strings, he drifts right into the heart of platform game country. You, as Alice, must rescue him by setting off on a journey over land, over water, through the intestines of a giant whale and into the dangerous factory HQ of the boss man himself.

What sets *Balloon Kid* head and shoulders above almost every other non-*Mario/Kirby* title is the perfectly balanced handling. When you jump between platforms it's just as easy to make a pixel-perfect leap over the entire length of the screen as it is to hop a short distance. Or you can inflate a couple of balloons and take to the skies, completely transforming the gameplay. It feels very unusual, thanks to its unique backward scrolling, and it's even better fun over a link cable. The only things missing are password saves and Color support, but it's still one of the best-value platform games you can buy.

■ To make progress through the Balloon Trip bonus mode, and maximize your chances of making it through the main game without getting hit, tap (rather than hold) the Float button. That way it will be easier to keep Alice moving at the same pace as the background, and you'll have time to get out of the way of static obstacles, too.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Great value classic platforming

**LOW:**  
No password saves or Color support

# 09/10

# BIONIC COMMANDO

**A retro update that** gives a glimpse of what Capcom was up to before *Street Fighter* and *Resi*, *Bionic Commando* comes to you courtesy of *Ridge Racer 64* supremo NSTC.

With its pretty side-scrolling 2D forest levels, *Bionic Commando* could easily be your typical run-and-jump Game Boy fare – if it weren't for the fact that you can't jump. Instead, via some gruesome and probably illegal operation, you've had an extendible mechanical hook grafted onto your arm. Attach it to platforms around you and you can clamber up to higher levels, drag yourself across gaps or swing about Tarzan-style. And, as an added bonus, you can daze patrolling guards with your hook before lasering them to bits.

For the most part, levels are a simple case of scaling platforms, seeing off the brainless guards and exploring your hook's capabilities to the full against bosses. Like most retro games, it's fairly unvaried stuff – but, just when it threatens to get repetitive, there's a bonus game to spice things up. The sniper section is top notch, and there's also a fun top-down blasting mini-game.

One warning, though – with only 18 levels to grab, swing and catapult your way through, *Bionic Commando* is a disappointingly short-lived cart. Even with secret levels to open and a gratifying collection of bonus guns and items to track down, there's little impulse to revisit this after you've completed it. What there is of the game is tremendous fun, though.

■ To exit a level hold [Select] and press [A] + [B] during gameplay.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
NSTC

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Fast, fun and original

**LOW:**  
Disappointingly short gameplay and not as good as the original coin-op

# 08/10



# CANNON FODDER

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Codemasters

### DEVELOPER:

Codemasters

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Extremely fast, good-looking, arcade-like gameplay

### LOW:

Difficult to fault

# 10/10



**One of the best** games for the old 16-bit Amiga has gone handheld, and despite the relatively humble technical abilities of the Game Boy Color, it's an amazing conversion of this action wargame.

*Cannon Fodder* looks superficially like *Command & Conquer* but has extremely fast, almost arcade-style gameplay. You take two soldiers at a time from your squad on seek-and-destroy missions through arctic, desert and jungle environments, and the aim of each level is simply to wipe out the enemy forces.

*Cannon Fodder's* very easy to play. Click the cursor on part of the landscape and your men will scurry toward it. While they're running, you can move the cursor toward enemies hiding in the bushes and unleash a volley of bullets, grenades or rockets. That's basically all there is to it, but the pace of the action is so frantic you'll have to have your wits about you if you're going to get through a gunfight with both of your men alive.

When both of them die, they're replaced by other troops from your reserve. Since each soldier has a name and stats, you'll want to keep them alive for as long as possible although, unlike the original version, you can't leave your favorite grizzled commando behind in a safe place. Not many soldiers become veterans in this



game (when they've snuffed it you can pay your respects at the cemetery).

Despite being such a speedy game, tactics do play a considerable part in completing the levels. You have to be careful when choosing your route, as you can't shoot while swimming; friendly natives mustn't be shot at, otherwise their relatives will come gunning for you; and you can find vehicles to drive on certain missions. Get it right and you might get a nicer headstone when you finally bite the dust.

Visually, it's spot-on – smooth, colorful and very quick. *Cannon Fodder* also has the most incredible presentation you're likely to see on the Game Boy Color, with FMV scenes, a moving 3D-rendered options screen and even a song at the beginning. The battles are filled with sampled shouts and screams from the combatants, too. It's a perfect marriage of cutting-edge GB programming and classic gameplay.

With around 72 levels – taken from the original game and its sequel, plus a handful of GB-exclusive ones – *Cannon Fodder* will take weeks, if not months to finish. It's one of the most impressive Game Boy carts around, and most certainly one every self-respecting GB owner should play. War has never been so much fun.

■ Getting caught in an open area is usually bad news for the little army men.



GAME BOY COLOR

# CONKER'S POCKET TALES



**The intro sequence is** terrible and, at first glance, this game looks like a slightly more competent version of *Quest for Camelot*. But persevere with it, and you'll find *Conker's Pocket Tales* to be charming, varied and extremely playable.

The aim of the game is to retrieve Conker's birthday presents from around the six themed levels, and to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend Berri from the clutches of the Evil Acorn. While the *Zelda* influences are obvious in many of the puzzles and situations, *Conker's Pocket Tales* uses a continuously scrolling screen, and has enemies wandering up and down and back and forth in set patterns – hence the *Quest for Camelot* comparison, but this is much better than that.

*Conker's Pocket Tales* is aimed at younger players but it still has plenty to amuse older gamers. There are entire housing estates of buildings to explore, lots of secrets to find, nine different sub-games and a nice dose of Rare humor along the way, too. It's far more engrossing than you'd expect from the dismal start and the further you get into the game, the harder it is to put down.

■ Try these tips: if you leave the controls alone for a while, Conker will sit down and a tune from a familiar Rare game will play. Save the game when you're low on health, then restart to resume the game with more energy.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Rare

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

August 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the best Game Boy Color games around

### LOW:

Not a *Zelda* beater

# 08/10



# MOTOCROSS MANIACS



**Maniacs indeed. You should** see the things these miniature biking nutters get up to on their pint-sized, nitro-powered machines – loops, flips, wheelies and high-speed collisions with brick walls. They do it all, take plenty of tumbles and then hop back in the saddle for another painful lap.

*Motocross Maniacs* is an update of a fairly old concept, and it's perfect for the GB Color's little screen. You race against the clock along the scrolling tracks, collecting nitros and pulling bonus stunts off the many ramps you'll bounce across. The D-pad makes your rider lean one way or the other to keep the bike upright, and you can use the boosts you pick up to zoom off into the sky to pick up bonuses and throw in a few crowd-pleasing spins for good measure.

It's a simple, throwaway concept, but a highly addictive one, particularly when racing against a friend via the two-player link-up mode – your opponent appears as a ghost character on your own screen. There are time trials, championships, plenty of courses to race on and even a fairly comprehensive track editor so you can make up your own set of lethal jumps and impossible loops. *Motocross Maniacs* is much more fun than the likes of *V-Rally* and *Top Gear* on the Game Boy, that's for sure.

■ You can do back-flips off some of the ramps in any level to pick up hitchhikers on skateboards. Once you crash, however, you'll lose your freeloading passengers.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Konami

**DEVELOPER:**

KCEO

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Highly addictive, especially in two-player mode

### LOW:

Dated looking

# 08/10



**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Rare

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

Christmas 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

An outstanding platform game adapted brilliantly to the Game Boy Color

**LOW:**

Occasionally frustrating

**09/10****DONKEY KONG COUNTRY**

**This is a complete** version of the 1994 SNES classic with a few extras thrown in. The resolution has come down a little, but this proves that 16-bit into 8-bit does go. *Donkey Kong Country* was a platform game starring everyone's favorite simians, Donkey and Diddy Kong. The graphics have been simplified for the GB version, and Rare has had to allow for the Game Boy's two-button control system, but managing to squeeze everything that it has onto one small cart is a miracle.

The story sees Donkey and Diddy Kong trapped on the island of the Kremlings, a reptilian race that has stolen the apes' magic bananas. Your task is to guide our heroes around the island through a series of pretty standard platform levels, divided into a selection of different island themes.

It's a fairly basic structure, and if you've played almost any platformer, then the sequences of running, rolling, jumping and swinging will seem like second nature. Likewise, if you've played any bad platform games, then the occasional semi-impossible leap over the instant-death drop will also be familiar.

But *Donkey Kong Country* has some of the most important parts of platform/adventure gaming absolutely bang-on – loads of secret areas and pick-ups to collect. The only real gripe is that some of the levels have hard, instant-death tasks right at their end and well beyond the continue points. Frustrating.

■ Linking up with another Game Boy enables you to battle it out with a friend on two multiplayer levels, and the game's also compatible with the Game Boy printer.

**DRAGON WARRIOR MONSTERS****Dragon Warrior**

**Monsters is** the Rolling Stones to *Pokémon's*

Beatles – a different sort of experience, but worth just as much of your spare time if you want to stand out from the crowd.

You play Terry, an ordinary lad on a quest to rescue his sister, Milayou. She has been spirited away to the mystical kingdom of Great Tree, the entrance to which can be found, oddly enough, in Terry's chest of drawers. Once inside the tree, the path to Milayou's prison can be opened gradually by performing feats of monster taming to please the King. Collect enough of the little devils to earn the right to be called a Master and you just might be able to take Milayou back home.

You can take three monsters with you at any time and they trail around after you in a sweet and endearing way. When you meet wandering beasts, you engage in three-on-three combat that's far more complicated than the combat in *Pokémon*. You can set your monsters to attack according to preset aggression plans, or you can activate their abilities using a menu system – and if you've been nice to your opponents during the battle, they might decide to join your party.

*Dragon Warrior Monsters* is every bit as involving as Pikachu's adventures, even if it isn't as cute.

■ Breed a Sky Dragon (pedigree) and a Mad Knight to get Coatal. Breed a Deathmore and a Dark Crab to get White King. Breed a Dance Vegi and a Deathmore to get Rosevine.



Watabou: Oh well!!  
Let's go back!

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Eidos

**DEVELOPER:**

Enix

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

February 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Buy it before it sells out

**LOW:**

Nothing wrong with the game

**09/10**

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Infogrames

**DEVELOPER:**

Crawfish Interactive

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

The best driving game on the Game Boy

**LOW:**

Hard to fault

10 / 10

DRIVER

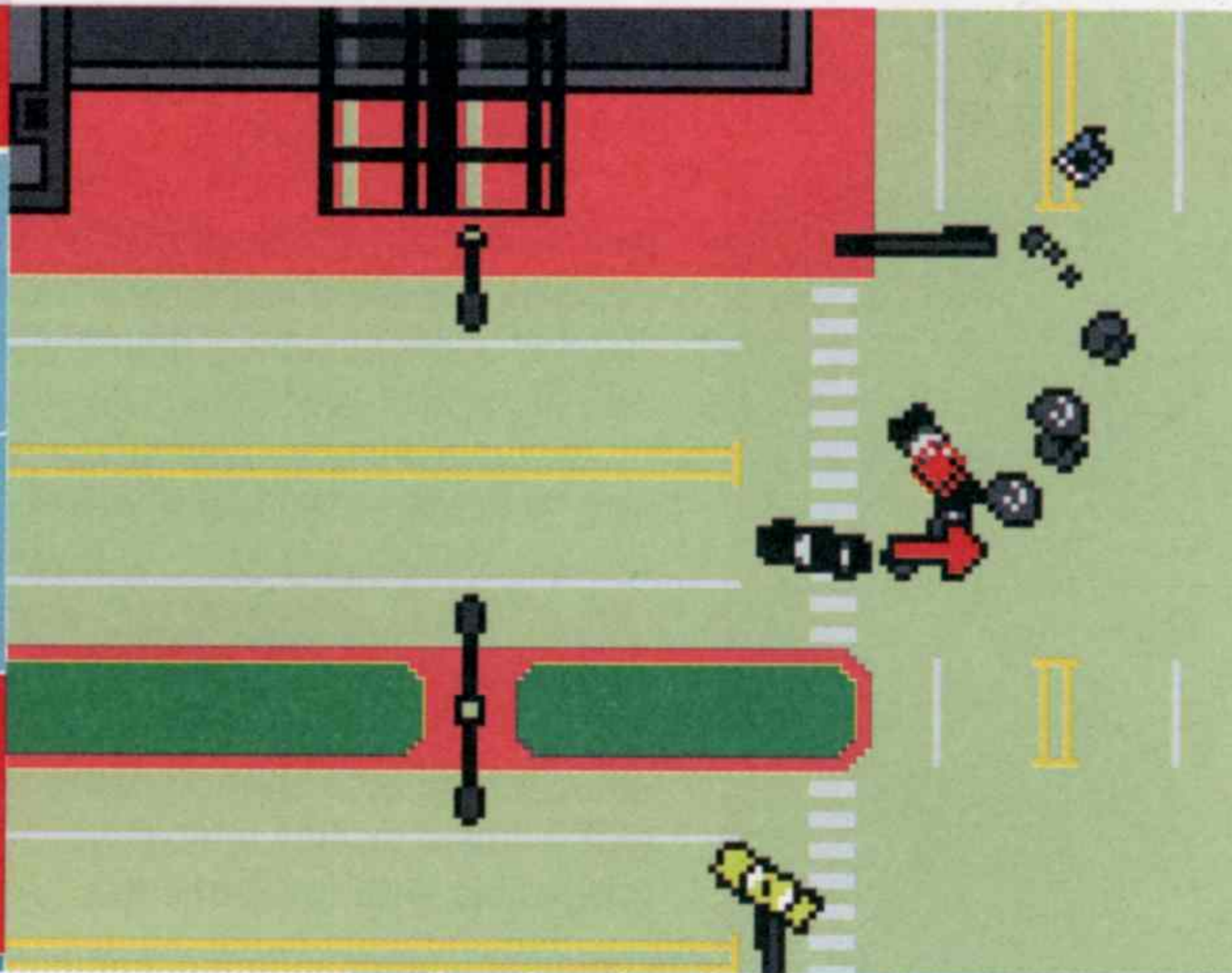


**Road users beware – the** public street is a warzone on the Game Boy these days, what with *Grand Theft Auto*'s pedestrian-splattering action and now this. *Driver* is another game that gives ordinary folk the chance to step into the shoes of a career criminal and drive like a nutter. You're actually supposed to be an undercover cop who infiltrates an underworld gang, but that's no excuse for the kind of traffic-related mayhem you get involved with here. How many undercover officers go ram-raiding in the line of duty, or lure rival crime bosses to a certain death at the hands of the mob? Despite all that, *Driver* is a most enjoyable game. Unlike the ghost towns of *GTA*, the three cities here are filled with cars. They obey basic traffic codes, too, stopping for red lights and tooting their horns if you cut in front of them.

The missions are often split into different parts and in all of them your increasingly audacious criminal activities attract more and more police cars. Once your damage meter is full, you lose.

The superb handling means you've always got a fighting chance, even when driving one of the special vehicles that can only take three or four solid hits. *Driver* is fast and slick, combining the exaggerated physics of *Micro Machines* with the sprawling urban environments of *Grand Theft Auto*. It's also miles better than many other car games on the Game Boy. Unmissable.

■ There are four bonus driving games to play in *Driver: Checkpoint, Getaway, Survival* and *Pursuit*.



FINAL FANTASY ADVENTURE



**The Final Fantasy Legends I to III** and *Final Fantasy Adventure* aren't really *Final Fantasy* games at all. When they appeared in Japan (the first way back in 1989), the *Legend* series went under the moniker of *Magic Warrior SaGa*, while the more action-oriented *Adventure* was known as *Seiken* (literally Holy Sword). Look closely, though, and you can spot plenty of similarities between *SaGa* and *Final Fantasy*. Turn-based fighting using a menu, building a party of warriors up from nothing and strong storylines but, then again, stuff like this is common in about 98% of all Japanese RPGs, anyway. What does tie in these games and, more specifically, make them great Squaresoft RPGs, are the strength of their stories and the imagination of their settings. Remember as well that none of these carts is more than 3Mb in size and you couldn't get a title screen for that these days.

Whereas the *Final Fantasy Legend* games are more traditional role players with stats and menus, *Adventure* is an action-RPG similar in style to *Link's Awakening*; complete with overhead view, no menus and plenty of puzzles. If the setting and some of the roaming monsters look familiar to you, then you've probably already sampled the delights of its Super Nintendo sequel – *Secret of Mana*. Originally *Adventure* went under the name *Mystic Quest*, but it was eventually tied into the *Final Fantasy* Game Boy series.

*Zelda* apart, this is one of the best action-RPGs you can get on the Game Boy.

■ Don't simply run away from monsters, because if you fight them you will grow stronger.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Sunsoft/Squaresoft

**DEVELOPER:**

Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 1999 (released 1991)

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**


A long and involving quest and the controls are easy to get to grips with

**LOW:**

A little dated now

08 / 10

# FINAL FANTASY LEGEND

 **The graphics may be** primitive and the music the usual round of bleeps and bloops, but there's a surprisingly rich story buried in the first of Squaresoft's Game Boy RPGs.

After selecting and naming your party from a nearby Guild and equipping them with weapons, you set out to reach the top of a great tower where, supposedly, lies paradise. On each level of the tower is a different world you must battle through, collecting the spheres that will eventually open up paradise for you. This is where the intrepid explorers get caught up in all the game's many and varied adventures.

One particularly disturbing aspect of all the *Final Fantasy Legend* games is the way certain characters can eat the remains of their fallen enemies (handily displayed as *Flintstones*-style drumsticks) and then, sometimes, evolve into some kind of monster. Just be thankful it's a feature that hasn't made it to the world of photo-realistic FMV.

Despite the simple graphics and the slightly episodic nature of the story, there's a fantastic amount of variety and imagination in *Final Fantasy Legend*. Although showing its age now (even for a Game Boy game), it's still a great adventure.

■ **Try this:** equip one person with two packs of power punches. Use one pack up until it has only one punch remaining in it, then use the second pack. As long as there's one punch left in the first pack, you'll do much more damage with your punches.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sunsoft/Squaresoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 1999 (released 1990)

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No


## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A long and involving adventure

**LOW:**  
Showing its age

**06/10**

# FINAL FANTASY LEGEND II

 **According to some people,** *Final Fantasy Legend II* is the crowning glory of role-playing games on the Game Boy, despite its unoriginal "young hero on a quest" storyline.

In structure, *Final Fantasy Legend II* is similar to its predecessor and continues the absorbing saga. The main storyline is heavily broken up into sub-stories as you and your team of four warriors search for your missing father and try to solve the riddle of the Magi stones, but the graphics are sharper than in *Final Fantasy Legend* and the combat has been tweaked until it shines.

Your four warriors can consist of either humans, robots, mutants or monsters in any combination you choose, but certain combinations are better than others because all the different races have different strengths and weaknesses. You'll need to experiment to find the right winning mix for you.

Actually defeating the enemies and sub-bosses you encounter along the way is relatively easy if you have the correct firepower, but beating the various gods requires a little more skill. Winning fights develops the strength of your team and gives you extra cash to spend on better weapons.

Navigating through the various worlds is intuitive and the game is faster paced than many other RPGs, mainly because there are fewer puzzles and complicated mazes to wade through.

Overall, *Final Fantasy Legend II* is another absorbing, quality RPG.

■ **To access the Sound Test** hold [Select] + [B] + and [Start] on the Title Screen.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sunsoft/Squaresoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 1999 (released 1991)

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
A quality RPG

**LOW:**  
A little dated

**10/10**

# FINAL FANTASY LEGEND III

**Just like the third *Star Wars* movie, *Return of the Jedi*, *Final Fantasy Legend III* improves on its older siblings in the glitz and glamour stakes, but in the end proves to be not quite as satisfying as either of them. In gaming terms, it's certainly more like a proper *Final Fantasy* with a less fragmented storyline, and even a combat screen where all the characters appear facing the enemy.**

The combat is again turn-based battling and you, as the hero, have to save the world accompanied by four warriors as your fighting team. This time your team consists of two humans and two mutants, although these can be transformed into monsters, beasts, cyborgs or robots. You have been sent from the future by the Elder to stop the Pureland water entity who has flooded the world's past, present and future and in the process drowned whole cities. You venture back and forth through time as part of the plot and you have various weapons at your disposal, including spells. You can also experiment with your companions' fighting techniques, which can be addictive in itself.

With a complex time-traveling plot, *Final Fantasy Legend III* still isn't quite as imaginative as *Final Fantasy Legend II*; nevertheless it's a fantastic adventure.

■ When you enter Castle Chaos, there are escalators in front of you. Take the second escalator from the left, but keep walking to the right while going up and you should walk into a secret room with a chest inside. Inside that chest is an elixir. Remember that Castle Chaos is underwater, so you'll need the Dive spell to get there.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Sunsoft/Squaresoft

**DEVELOPER:**  
Squaresoft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
May 1999 (released 1992)

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
An excellent adventure with an involving plot

**LOW:**  
As with the other games in the series, this looks dated

# 08/10

## GAME & WATCH GALLERY 2



**In the early '80s**, long before the Game Boy, Nintendo brought out a series of simple games. They had pre-cut LCD shapes and involved you moving left and right in an attempt to catch/avoid objects that fell from the heavens. And that was it.

*Game & Watch Gallery 2* brings a selection of these games from yesteryear to your Game Boy. As well as the Classic games, which play exactly as the originals did, there are Modern versions, which add glorious color, slightly more sophisticated gameplay and various cute Nintendo characters – Mario, Princess Toadstool and Yoshi included. As you get better at playing the games, you get awarded stars. These open up a Gallery – and behind each picture frame lurks a little surprise. The more stars you collect, the more surprises you have access to.

Graphically, it's slick and snazzy, but gameplay-wise even the Modern games are still very basic and get tiresome quickly. Despite this, *Game & Watch Gallery 2* has a certain compulsive appeal that keeps you coming back for more.

These games were fine for their day, but times have changed. Those of you who fondly remember them might be tempted to have a go if only for nostalgia's sake, but it all gets too dull too quickly. And it doesn't tell the time, either.

■ Collect three stars in the first hour to see the band play.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Fun for a while

**LOW:**  
Ultimately the games are too simplistic and repetitive

# 08/10

# GAME & WATCH GALLERY 3



**They're among the simplest** computer games ever made, but those lovely old *Game & Watch* machines still pull in the big money on the retro collectors circuit. And since a boxed *G&W* is far too valuable to risk playing, this is the best way to find out what all the fuss is about.

There are five games to start with (*Egg*, *Green House*, *Turtle Bridge*, *Mario Bros.* and *Donkey Kong Jr.*), each of which is available in a classic *G&W* style with basic mono graphics or a colored, modern version. The modern updates have all been fully *Mario-ized*, so the generic black blobs from the original games have been replaced with stylish renditions of Toad, Yoshi and the gang.

The more you play, the more secrets you'll find stashed away in the depths of the cart. As in the previous *G&W Gallery* titles, there are stars to collect and hidden bonus games to unlock all over the place. It's a retro fan's dream, and packs as many surprises as most full size Nintendo games. Don't expect to find *Zelda*-like levels of complexity, because *G&W Gallery 3* is about as simple as it gets, but it's a superb high-score challenge. Best of all, if you get interrupted during a marathon session on the fabulous *Donkey Kong Jr.*, you can switch off the machine and return to your game at a more convenient time. Nintendo thinks of everything.

■ Pause the game and turn off the Game Boy. When the Game Boy is turned back on, the game will automatically resume at the last point played.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

June 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A collection of fun games crammed into one cart

### LOW:

Dated-looking

# 08/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Natsume

### DEVELOPER:

Natsume

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

November 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An adorable series and one of the best Game Boy games

### LOW:

Maybe just too cute

# 10/10

# HARVEST MOON 2



**Ahh, *Harvest Moon* – prince** among farming games.

As ever, your mission is to transform your plot of earth from dusty wasteland into green pastures and row upon row of delicious vegetables. But before the asparagus can begin to grow and the cows can munch on top quality grass, you've got a lot of hard work to do. The farm is littered with rubble which needs to be cleared before you can start your agricultural master plan, and even when you think you've finally made a good job of it, there's a constant battle against the encroaching weeds.

Naturally, the more back-breaking labor you put in, the more you get out of the game. There's much more to do than in the previous *Harvest Moon*, with a more advanced range of options and a larger playing area. There's a forest, a lake and a large town with a library filled with photographs of fish and insects you've caught. There are pastures for you to exercise your animals in – you even get to call them back inside after an evening's grazing. With so much going on, it's easy to lose yourself and forget one of your chores, though.

The only things missing here from the full N64 version of *Harvest Moon 2* are the dating game and some of the character interaction. But this is still one of the best games on the Game Boy.

■ Go to the area below the Hot Springs and run into the second tree (from above). You'll be warped back to your farm.



# INTERNATIONAL KARATE 2000



**This golden oldie** was probably the best beat-'em-up in the world until the likes of *Street Fighter 2* introduced us to the wonders of special moves and combos. Now it has been dusted down and ported over to the Game Boy, and it still looks surprisingly sprightly.

It's totally different than today's fighting games, and because of that it really stands out from the crowd. The fights take place over three 30-second rounds, with each round decided by three knockdown points. You get a full point for flattening your opponent with a clean blow, or a half point if the knockdown was a little bit scrappy. All the moves are accessed by holding a button and pressing the D-pad in one of eight directions, so there's none of the familiar Dragon Punch/Fireball stuff to remember. It's closer to a game of rock-paper-scissors than a modern fighting game – choose the wrong move and you leave yourself wide open to your opponent's attack.

The feel of the original game has survived intact, despite the loss of the third fighter, and the only real disappointment is the lack of a two-player mode. Apart from that, *International Karate 2000* is an excellent beat-'em-up.

- Every third stage or so you get a bonus game where you have to deflect bouncing balls or bombs.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Studio 3

**DEVELOPER:**

Studio 3

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

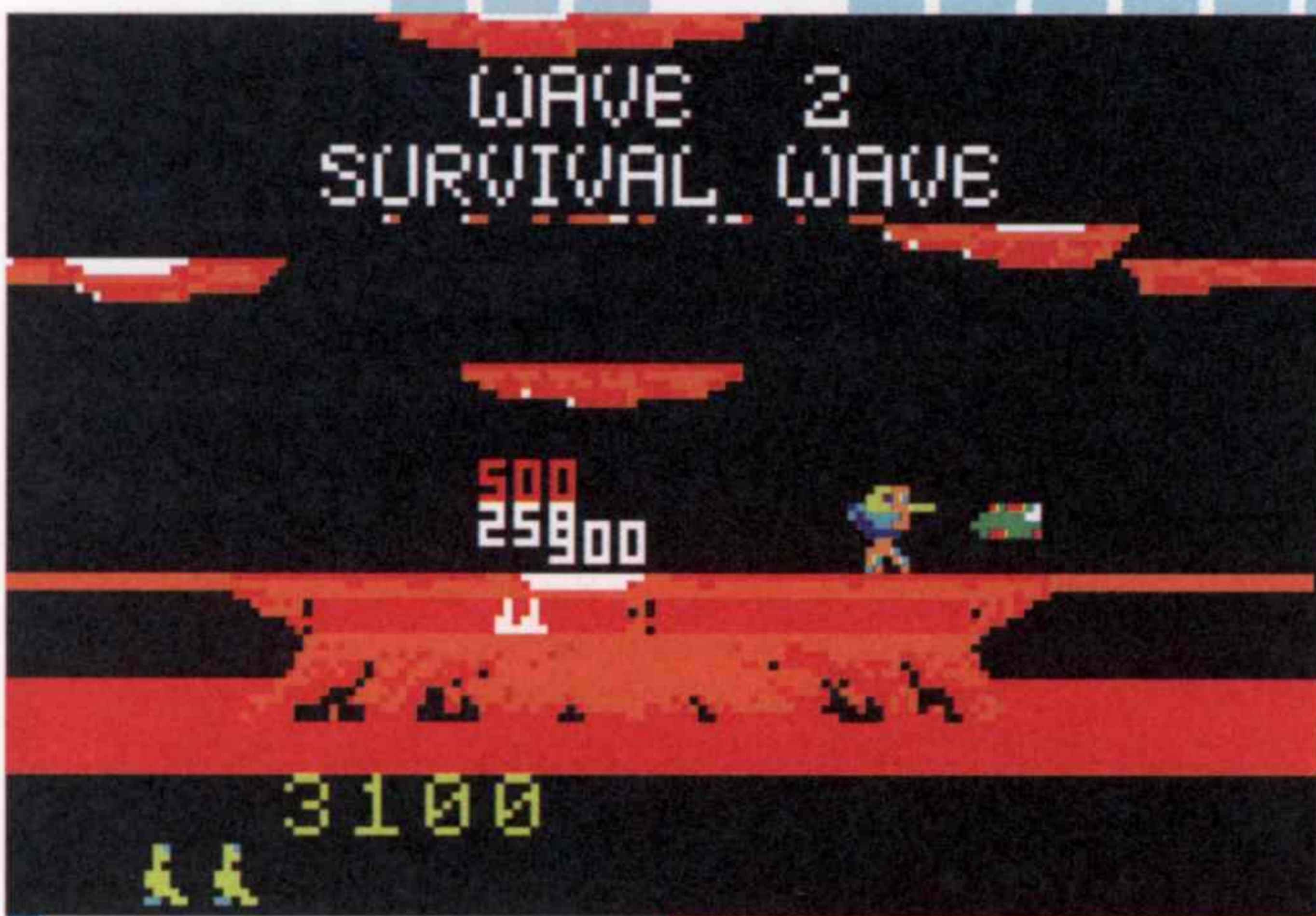
**HIGH:**

Stands out from the crowd

**LOW:**

Looks dated against *Street Fighter 2*

**08/10**



# DEFENDER/JOUST



**It's over two decades** since *Defender* ruled the arcades.

Four years after *Pong* first appeared and two years after *Space Invaders*' debut, *Defender* revolutionized arcade gameplay. Now it's available for the Game Boy, bundled with the excellent arcade game *Joust* and, remarkably, it can still hold its own against today's shoot-'em-ups.

*Defender* is a frantic blaster with a good measure of tactics thrown in. Dumb humans wander around at the bottom of the screen and green landers hover over them, waiting to pick them off. If a lander carries a human all the way to the top of the screen, they merge and turn into a deadly mutant, so you have to keep a close eye on the radar to see when humans are under threat. If all the humans die, you're in serious trouble. Basically, it's more or less the same as the arcade version, but with better controls.

And then there's *Joust*, another fine oldie that, depending on your personal preference, will be either a decent bonus game or your principal reason for buying the cart in the first place. You play a little man who sits perched on a giant chicken-like bird, jousting with other chicken riders and collecting the eggs that fly out of the chickens when they are hit. It's different, you've got to give it that. A word of warning, though – consider a GB Pocket as the bare minimum required to run both games, as the tiny graphics need a very sharp screen.

- Simply hold [Left] and press [Select] at the title screen to display the high scores.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Midway

**DEVELOPER:**

Digital Eclipse

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

June 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Two great arcade games in one cart

**LOW:**

A GB Pocket is the minimum that will run the games

**08/10**

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

HAL Laboratories

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Cute beyond belief and effortlessly playable

**LOW:**

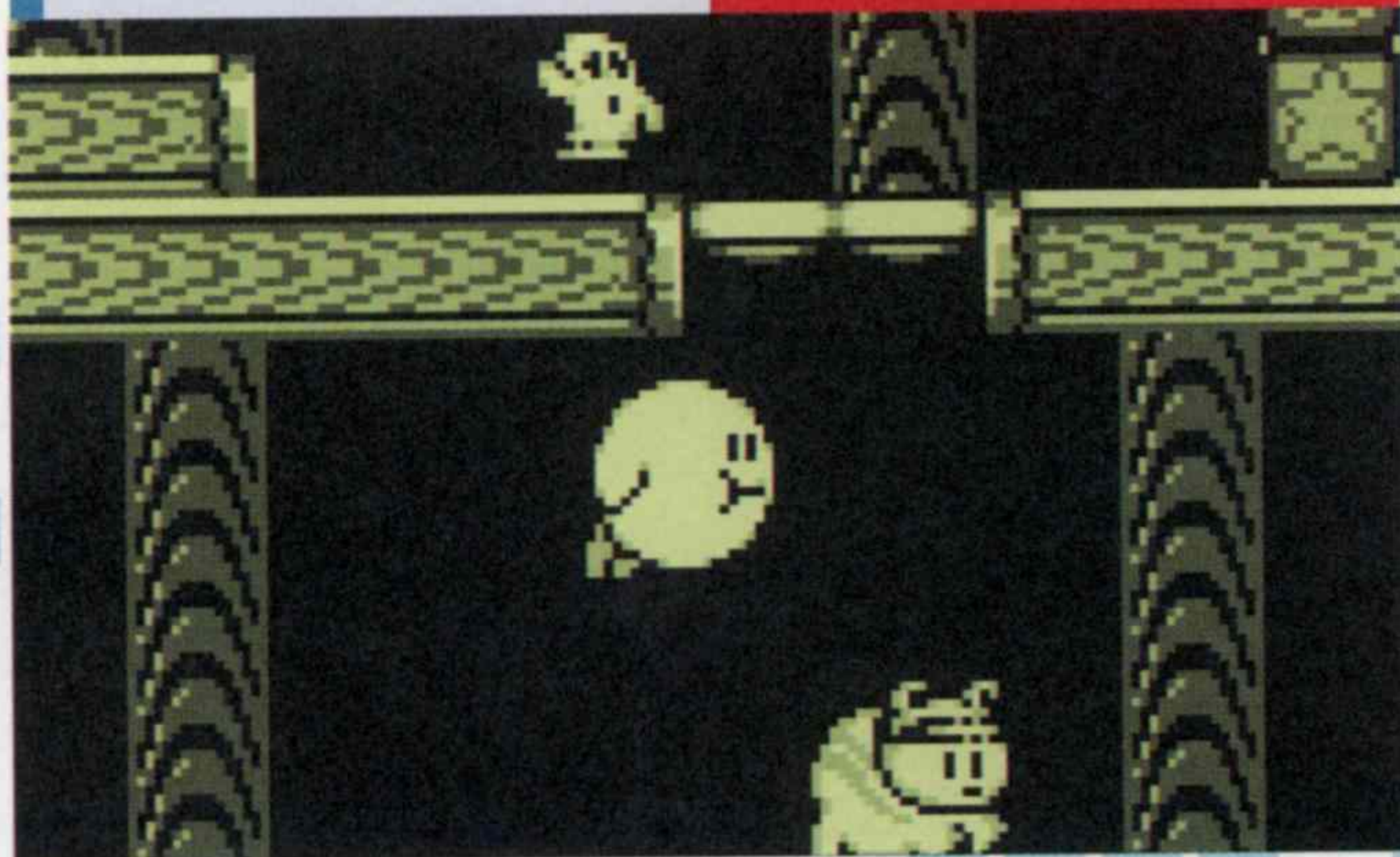
There's nothing wrong here

**10 / 10****KIRBY'S DREAM LAND**

**Kirby's Dream Land's visual** style owes a great deal to Mario and Miyamoto, although the game was actually developed by HAL Laboratories, the company behind *Smash Bros*. The hills and trees that form the backdrop to PuPu Land have the familiar eyes and faces found in the Mushroom Kingdom, perhaps hinting at some kind of future convergence between the two game series. It hasn't happened yet, though. For now, Kirby and Mario remain confined to their own worlds.

The aim of the game here is to slurp up bad guys and spit them at their friends – probably a source of inspiration for Yoshi's munching antics. If you try slurping without anything in range, Kirby gulps down a belly-full of air and starts to float, enabling you to reach higher platforms or soar away from danger. It's cute beyond belief, particularly the little animated interludes and choreographed dances performed by the Kurbster's pals, and it's effortlessly playable. If you've got a sweet tooth for this kind of sugar-coated platformer, *Kirby's Dream Land* is the next best thing to Mario himself on the Game Boy.

■ Try these cheats: at the Title screen hold [Up] and press [A] + [B] + [Start] for invincibility; at the Title screen press [Down] + [Select] + [B] for Configuration mode; at the Title screen press [Up] + [Select] + [A] for Expert mode; when the word Start appears at the Title screen, hold [Up] + [A] + [Select] for a bonus game.

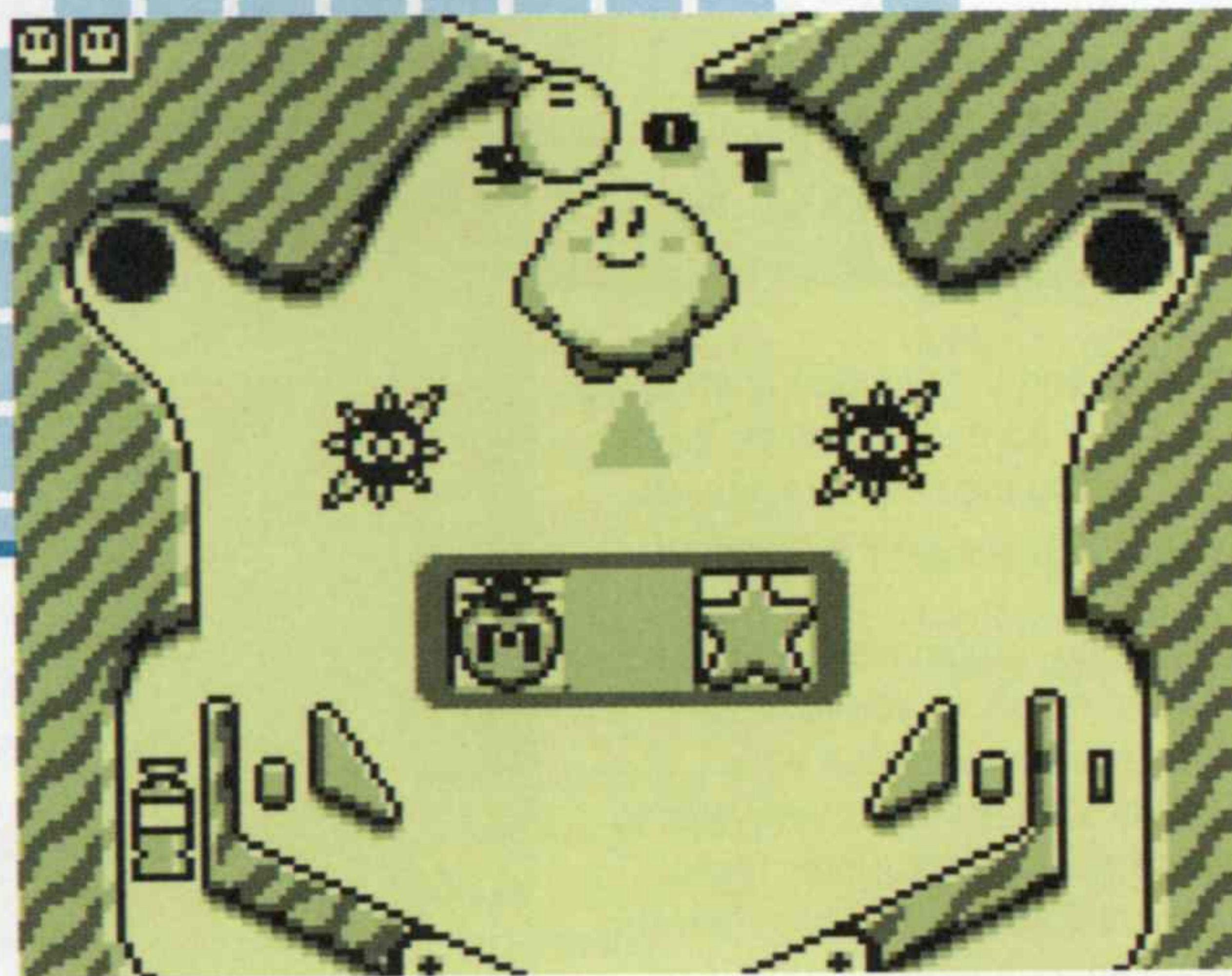
**KIRBY'S PINBALL LAND**

Filled with all sorts of fluffy floating things and odd sub-games, *Kirby's Pinball Land* owes as much to the feverish imagination of Kirby's creator HAL Laboratories as it does to any form of actual pinball in the arcades or on game consoles.

The tables are divided up into individual screens with a set of flippers on each one, and the aim of the game is to whack poor Kirby all the way up to the top of the table and (hopefully) rack up a vast score. The obstacles you'll come up across include a protective hen and her clutch of eggs, angry storm clouds, spiny things, fat things, cute things and a selection of creatures that don't much appreciate being pelted with a curled-up Kirby.

There are bosses and bonus stages, too, and it's insanely addictive. It's also far from easy, but the sense of satisfaction you'll get from completing a level and battering its boss is well worth the effort. Not to mention the challenge of trying to light up every bonus and grab the top spot on the score table. *Kirby's Pinball Land* is hypnotic.

■ To reset your scores, hold [Start] + [Select] at the High Score table. Keep holding these buttons while the game displays the Title screen before returning to the High Score screen. Then hold [Down] while still pressing the previous buttons. A bomb animation will confirm you have entered the correct code. To save a game, press [Start] to pause gameplay, then press [Select].

**DETAILS:****PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

HAL Laboratories

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:****HIGH:**

Insanely hypnotic pinball

**LOW:**

It does everything right

**10 / 10**

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

HAL Laboratories

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

# KIRBY'S TILT 'N' TUMBLE



**Magic. That's the only** way to describe Nintendo's new *Kirby* offering. Once again The Big N has managed to outdo itself by creating another stroke of handheld gaming genius.

If you remember that labyrinth game, where you had to roll a ball bearing around a wooden maze, this will be familiar to you because *Kirby's Tilt 'N' Tumble* runs on very much the same premise. But instead of guiding a ball around dull corridors, this cart requires you to roll Mr. K himself around courses, bashing enemies, collecting stars, beating bosses and even flying around in a top-down shoot-'em-up.

All of Kirby's movements are controlled by gently tipping the Game Boy in the direction you want him to go. The movement is so astoundingly accurate that you'd swear the pink puffer was rattling around inside your GB Color. You can even help the Kirbster over obstacles by flicking up the Game Boy as if you were bouncing a ping-pong ball on a bat. Very impressive stuff, make no mistake.

Don't be fooled into thinking this is just a gimmick. It's an integral part of the gameplay, which is so refreshingly original and highly innovative that you just can't help but love every aspect of this incredibly entertaining title. Once again, Nintendo proves exactly why it's the best developer out there.

■ There are five mini-games to play, too. They are *Kirby's Balloon*, *Kirby's Multi Ball*, *The Kirby Dance*, *Kirby's Hurdle Race* and *Kirby's Chicken Race*.

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

An essential purchase, especially for Kirby lovers

**LOW:**

Difficult to fault

**10 / 10**



# LEGEND OF THE RIVER KING 2



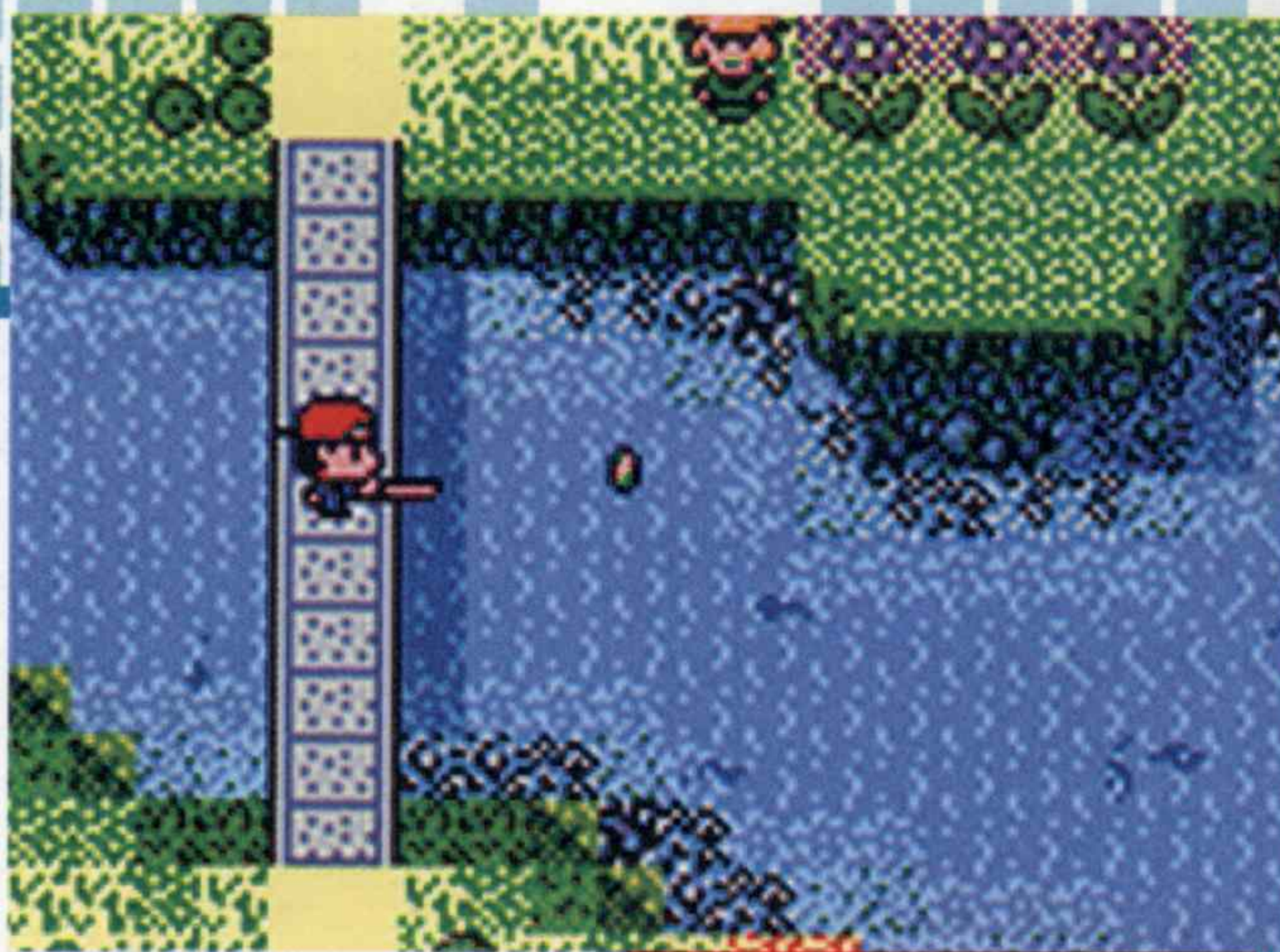
**When the Mountain God** and the Sea God team up to steal the Heaven Jewel and split it into two halves, it can't be good news for the local fishing industry. It means an earthquake and tidal wave are on the way, and only a couple of fish-crazy kids can save the day.

That's the story behind this absorbing combination of fishing sim and RPG. As one of the two kids in question, you have to search for the pieces of the Heaven Jewel, a quest that will eventually lead you to the fabled River King itself. The only way to make any progress is by catching and selling increasingly bigger and more valuable fish. The more money you make, the better the equipment you can buy, which will help a lot when you get past certain puzzles and move deeper into the game.

There are two different routes into the River King's domain, depending on which kid you choose at the start. The gameplay is essentially the same for each of them but the characters and landscapes change, as do the types of fish you can catch.

There's loads to do here, and even if you never find the Heaven Jewel, the fishing game is worth playing on its own. You can also link up the cart with *Harvest Moon 2* and unlock secrets by trading rare flowers and fish between the two games. *Legend of the River King 2* is filled with quirky Japanese touches and a great sense of adventure. Lovely.

■ Everyone has some useful info or quest for you to embark on – so don't walk past any new characters without stopping for a quick chat. You never know when you're going to meet someone who knows about the Heaven Jewel.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Natsume

**DEVELOPER:**

Natsume

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

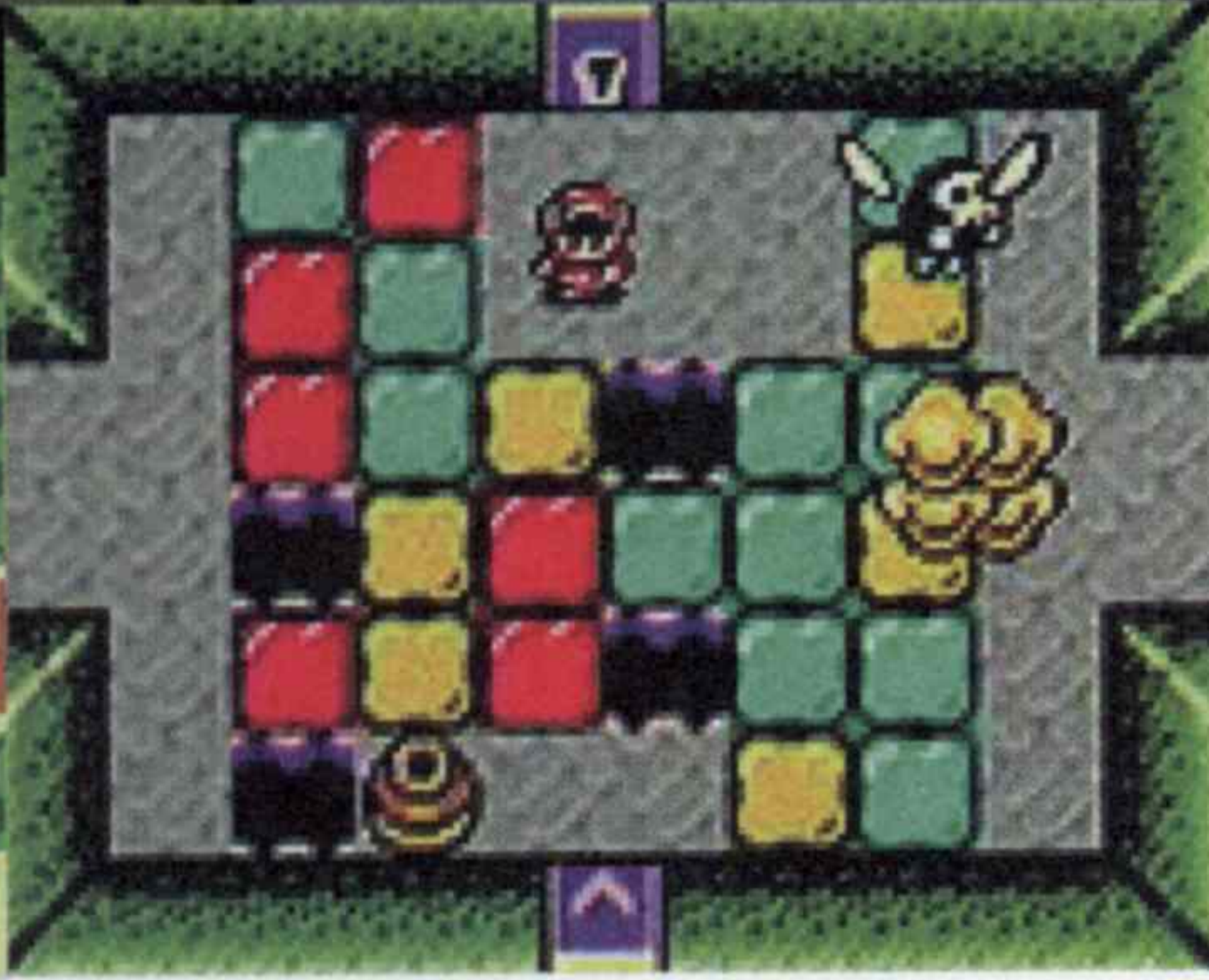
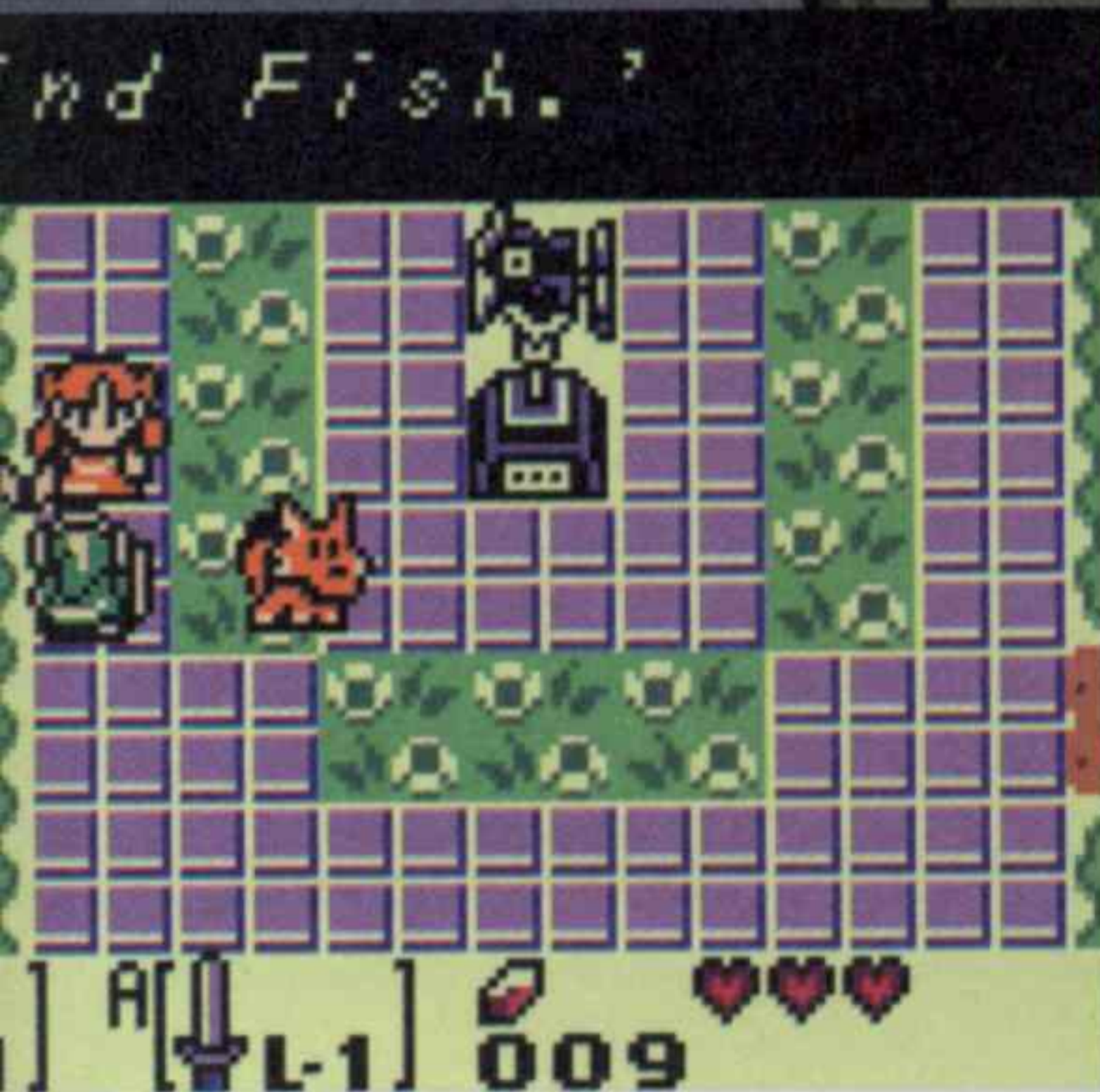
An excellent adventure, full of great touches

**LOW:**

You have to like fishing

**10 / 10**





# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING DX

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION 2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
March 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
It's a *Zelda* game, and a brilliant one at that

**LOW:**  
Outstanding

10/10



**Don't let the diminutive** size of the cartridge fool you – this is a fully fledged *Zelda* game in handheld format, colorized and updated since its 1993 debut, with the addition of a whole new dungeon to puzzle over. It's more than capable of squaring up to its various relatives on the NES and SNES, as well as to most of the RPG/adventure games doing the rounds today. It's even, believe it or not, a pretty darn accomplished companion piece to Shigeru Miyamoto's all-conquering masterpiece, the N64's *Ocarina of Time*.

This is the very same *Link's Awakening* that appeared on the Game Boy way back in 1993, but playing the game in sparkling color adds a whole new dimension to the proceedings: it's more sharply defined, it's smoother-scrolling, and the additional dungeon, if a little on the brief and easy side, is a very welcome addition.

Another grinworthy extra is that the game is Game Boy Printer-compatible. At certain points in the action pictures are taken, showing Link in some situation or other. These images can be saved in an on-cart album, ready to be printed out using Nintendo's rather fabulous accessory. Great stuff.

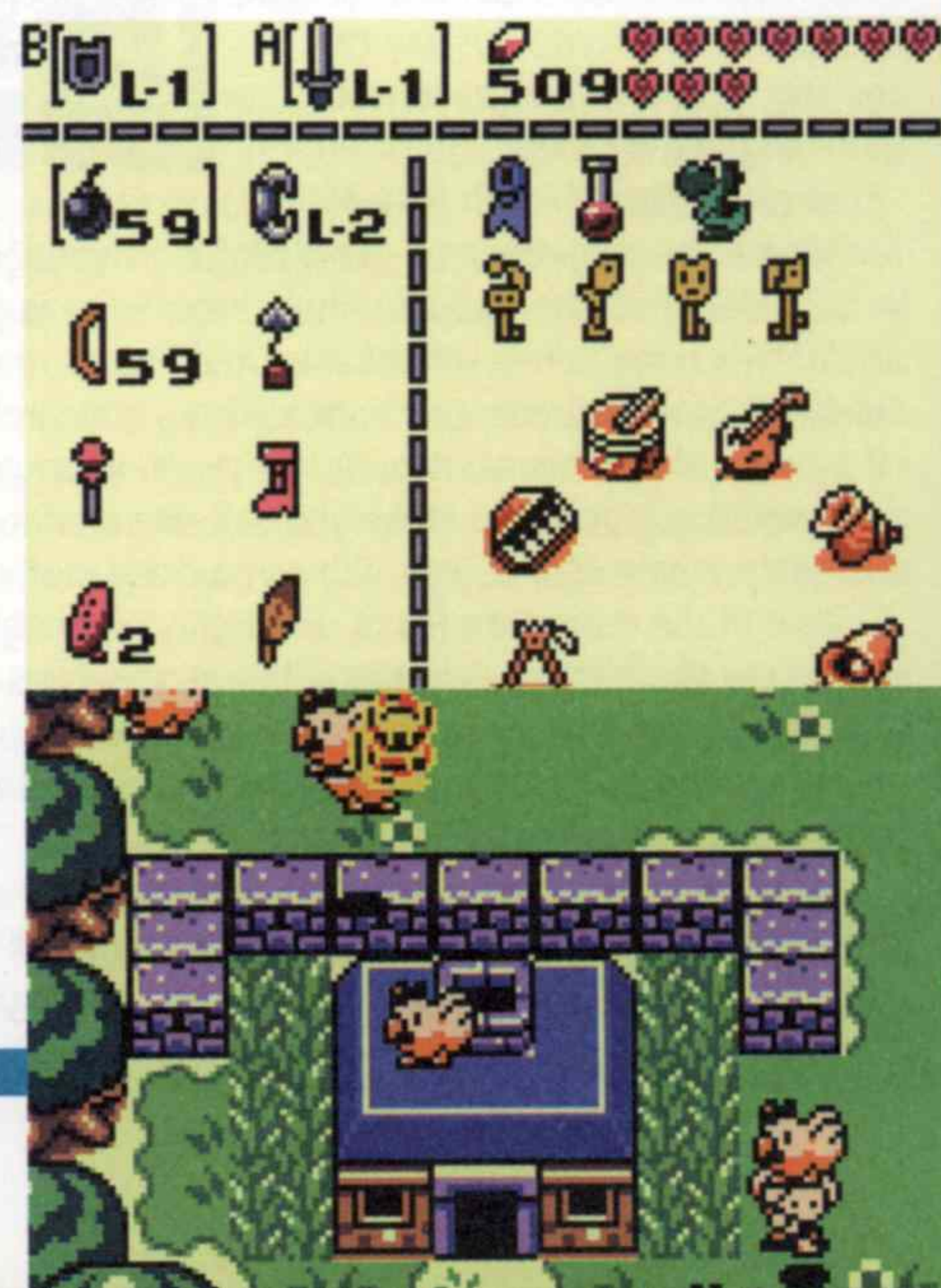
But it's the game proper that matters – and that's as great as ever. Shigsy once again demonstrates his innate understanding of how to create a game that expertly draws you in before rewarding you handsomely. Secrets and surprises abound: there are Seashells to find,

Bow-Wows to walk and objects to collect. And *Link's Awakening* is huge – the map is an absolute sprawler. But so well-designed is the game that not once do you feel lost or want to resort to cheating – and you never switch the Game Boy off out of frustration. The difficulty curve gives you a considerable challenge, but one that you never feel is insurmountable.

Naturally, the game's emphasis is on exploration and discovery, and despite its primitive top-down graphics, Koholint Island is so wonderfully realized and crammed full of characters, events and things to do that it really does feel like a living, breathing environment just waiting to be explored.

*Link's Awakening* is a textbook example of how to create a believable world: it obeys its own laws, fashioning a fascinating place in which to play. Truly, and without exaggeration, this tiny square of metal and plastic is one of the greatest games you'll ever play.

■ If you complete the game using no continues, Marin will fly across the screen with wings during the end sequence.





# MARIO GOLF

**With a big brother** such as *Mario Golf* on the N64, the Game Boy version could hardly fail to be a bit special. And not only does it have the same control system and a virtually identical gameplay style, it also includes an absolutely fantastic RPG mode in which you groom a young rookie for stardom.

Game Boy *Mario Golf* is every bit as varied as its N64 cousin, perhaps even more so when you consider the sheer number of places you can visit and the number of people you can talk to. Things such as the Putting Green and Ring Shot modes in the original are replaced by skill challenges set by the various characters you'll bump into along the way, and the experience points you earn for completing them can be swapped between the N64 and GB using the Transfer Pak.

The clubhouse where you start has plenty of interesting people who'll offer hints and tips, plus a Champions' table where you can challenge one of four top professionals to a duel. Other golfers on the practice areas will help you brush up on your skills, and as you get better at the game, you'll open up new routes in the overworld outside.

The tiny graphics work perfectly, and the four standard courses look very crisp and believable. You can scroll around them to judge where to aim your shot, and there's an optional 3D view available when you're ready to start your swing. It's all beautifully done and, along with *Mario Deluxe*, *Mario Golf* is a great reason to buy a GB Color.

■ Press [A] + [B] + [Start] + [Select] to reset the game.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Camelot

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
Christmas 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
One of the best reasons to buy a Game Boy Color

**LOW:**  
Nothing to fault

# 10/10

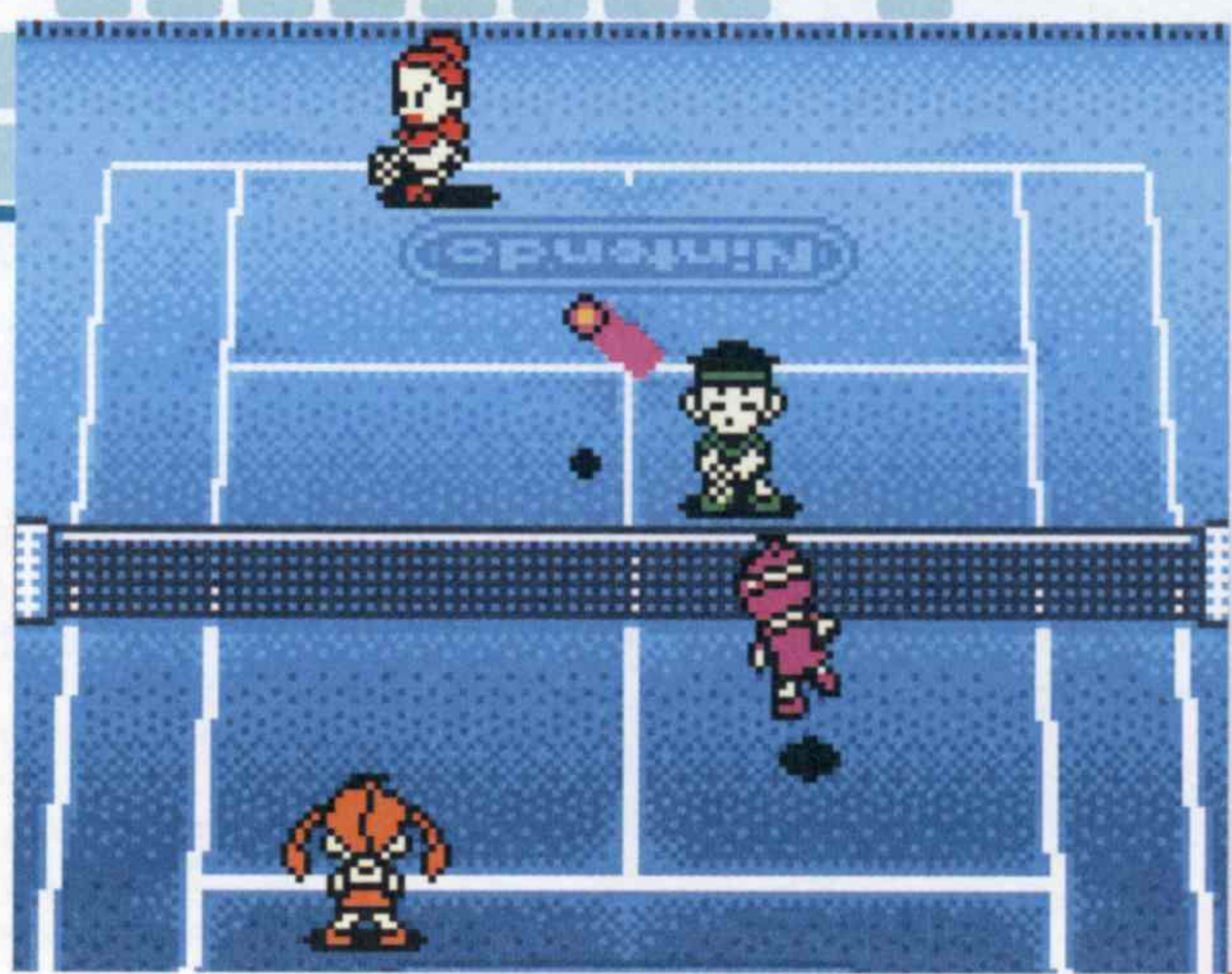
# MARIO TENNIS

**The Game Boy incarnation** of the N64 classic is a monster. Nintendo has scored several sporty successes in the past, ranging from the SNES *Super Tennis* to the GB conversion of the equally excellent N64 sports sim *Mario Golf*. And Ninty has done it all over again. The simple, yet refined, mechanics of the engine fit neatly onto the tiny cart and there's even enough room for a sprawling RPG element.

If you're familiar with N64 *Mario Tennis* you can instantly play like a pro on its younger brother. Sure, you don't move quite as quickly, it lacks analog precision and the whole experience is geared more toward strategic racket play, but the similarity is nonetheless remarkable. And there's more. In a very similar way to *Mario Golf*, instead of entering separate challenges from a menu, you stroll round a clubhouse, cafe and set of courts, facing off against all manner of trials. To aid you in your quest you can upgrade your racket and shoes, and gain experience points to make yourself stronger and faster. You'll build up friendships, foster rivalries and talk a whole load of jive with some crazy mothers, Nintendo-style.

One of the main benefits of this highly pleasing RPG-cum-sports sim is its link-up with the N64 version via the Transfer Pak. Marry the two and you get to unlock four spanking new characters for the N64. What's more, you can build up experience points for your chosen player in the Game Boy version by pitting him or her against their N64 rivals. Add to that the superb link-up matches and you have a pretty good reason for finding a friend.

■ If you lose a game in RPG mode, pause immediately before the score appears. Save the game, quit, then resume the game you were just playing. The game (not the match or set) will be reset.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Camelot

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
February 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
You can link the GB Color and N64 versions together

**LOW:**  
Peerless

# 10/10

# METAL GEAR SOLID



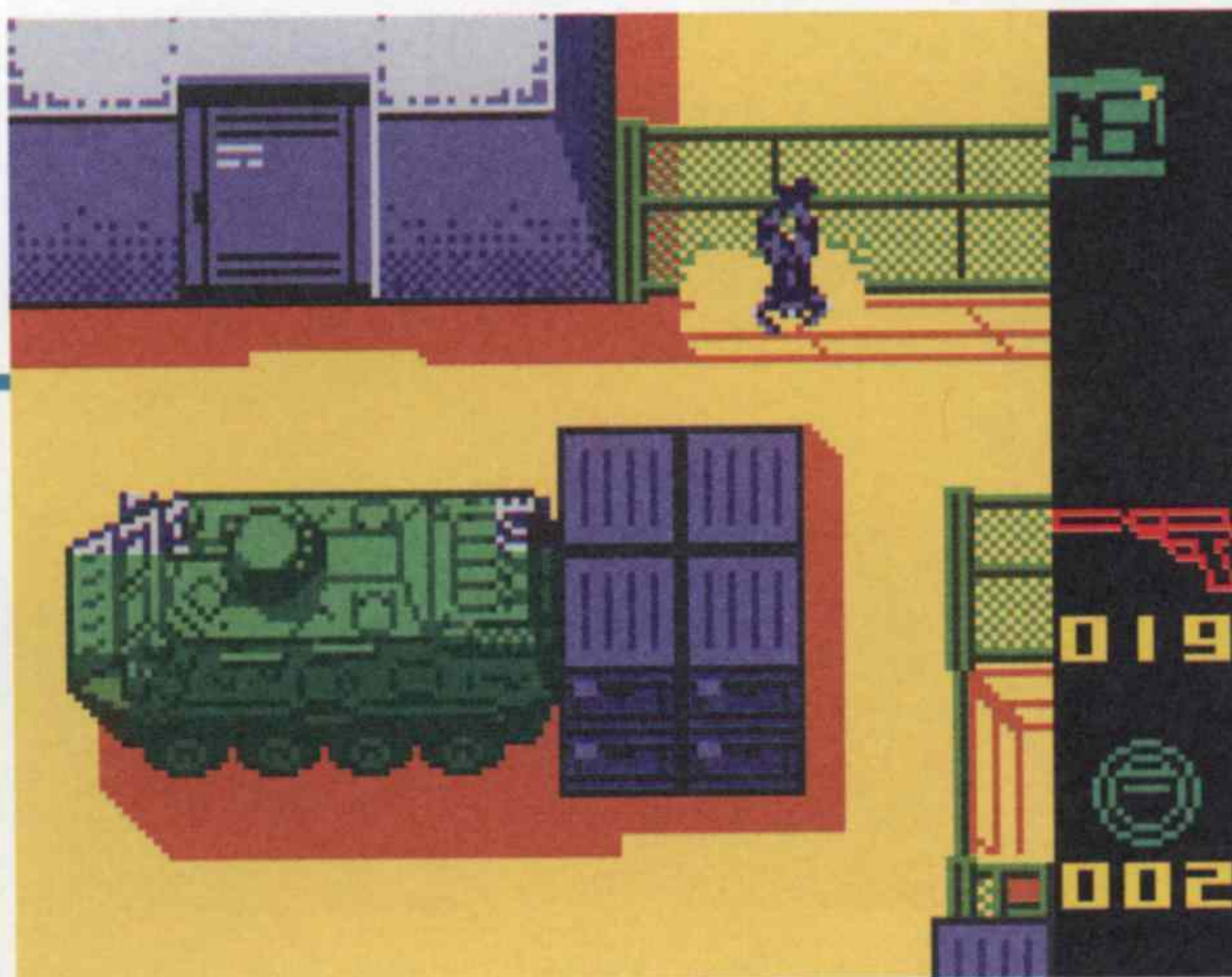
**Solid Snake is back** doing what he does best; dressing in trendy ninja duds, infiltrating enemy bases and preventing terrorist misuse of the lethal Metal Gear mechs.

Despite the name, this isn't a mini version of the 32-bit game – it's actually a whole new adventure, mixing the visual style of the 8-bit originals with some of the gameplay ideas from the PlayStation. The way the game works is simplicity itself. Guards patrol fixed patterns and you must avoid being spotted – like the castle sequence from *Zelda*. If they see you, the alarm sounds, guards swarm all over the place and a timer counts down as you run to attempt to escape certain death. If you manage to evade the guards, a second timer ticks off the seconds while they have a last look around before losing interest and returning to their posts.

The whole game is built around those central mechanics, and there are plenty of other ways to get caught out. The guards have a keen sense of hearing, so running through water or over metal grills will arouse their suspicion. You can use this to your advantage, however, by banging on the wall to create a diversion while you sneak off in another direction. Snake's armory includes grenades and a brilliant guided-missile launcher, but firing them will attract unwanted attention, too.

There are loads of text-heavy story scenes to plough through, plus extra background detail to draw you into the twisting plot. *Metal Gear Solid* oozes quality and is a must-have on the Game Boy.

■ Finish the game on the Easy (or greater) difficulty setting. The Special Stage Select enables you to play any level with new mission objectives.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Konami

### DEVELOPER:

KCEO

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

An epic game packed into a 32Mb cart

### LOW:

Nothing wrong here

# 10/10

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

EON Digital Entertainment

### DEVELOPER:

Taito

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Christmas 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Well presented, cute and rather unusual beat-'em-up

### LOW:

Gets a little dull after a while

# 08/10

# MONKEY PUNCHER



**As the name might** suggest, *Monkey Puncher* is all about training fighting monkeys.

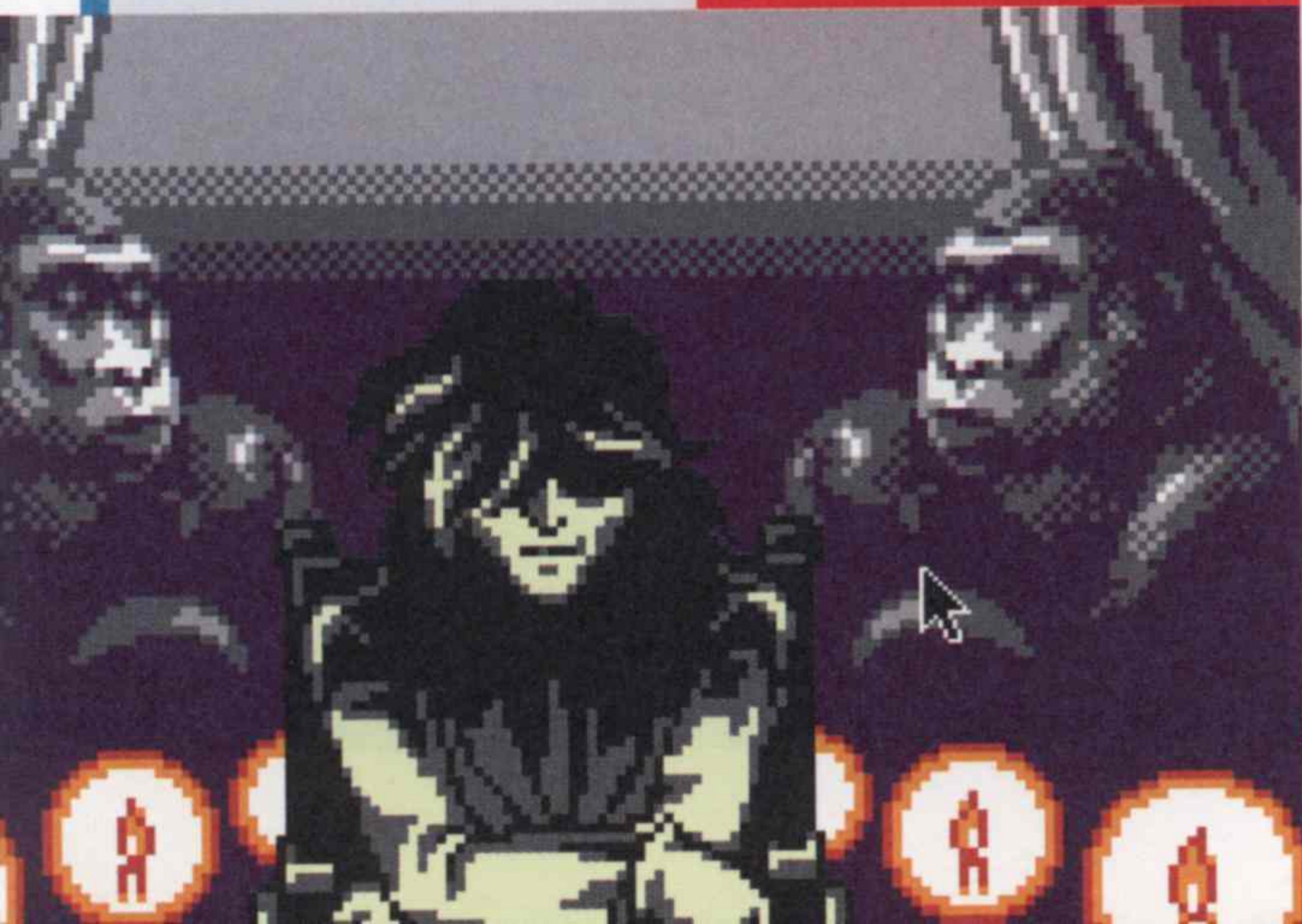
The story starts with the evil Saru kidnapping your relatives, and to rescue them you need to train your monkeys until they're ready to take the bad guys on in the Monkey 1 Grand Prix tournament. You can coach up to three monkeys at any one time, and when they've reached a certain level, you can mate them and make babies. Or have a go at playing *Blind Date* and link up to a friend's game.

Preparing for battle involves several exercises that you need to teach to your protégés. These include sit-ups and running, and there's also the chance to practice sparring. Unfortunately, you can't control your monkey when it's fighting, so it's just a case of sitting back for 30 seconds or so and hoping all your hard work has paid off.

The game's not all about fighting – your simian friends need to eat, too, and their interesting diet includes bananas and, er, curry. You can also send them shopping; it's probably best to provide a shopping list for them, though, to make sure they come back with something sensible to eat.

*Monkey Puncher* does get a bit tedious – your monkeys are always hungry – and there's some dodgy translation, but it's all very cute and well presented. Worth a go.

■ There are four training strategies to choose from.



# O'LEARY MANAGER 2000



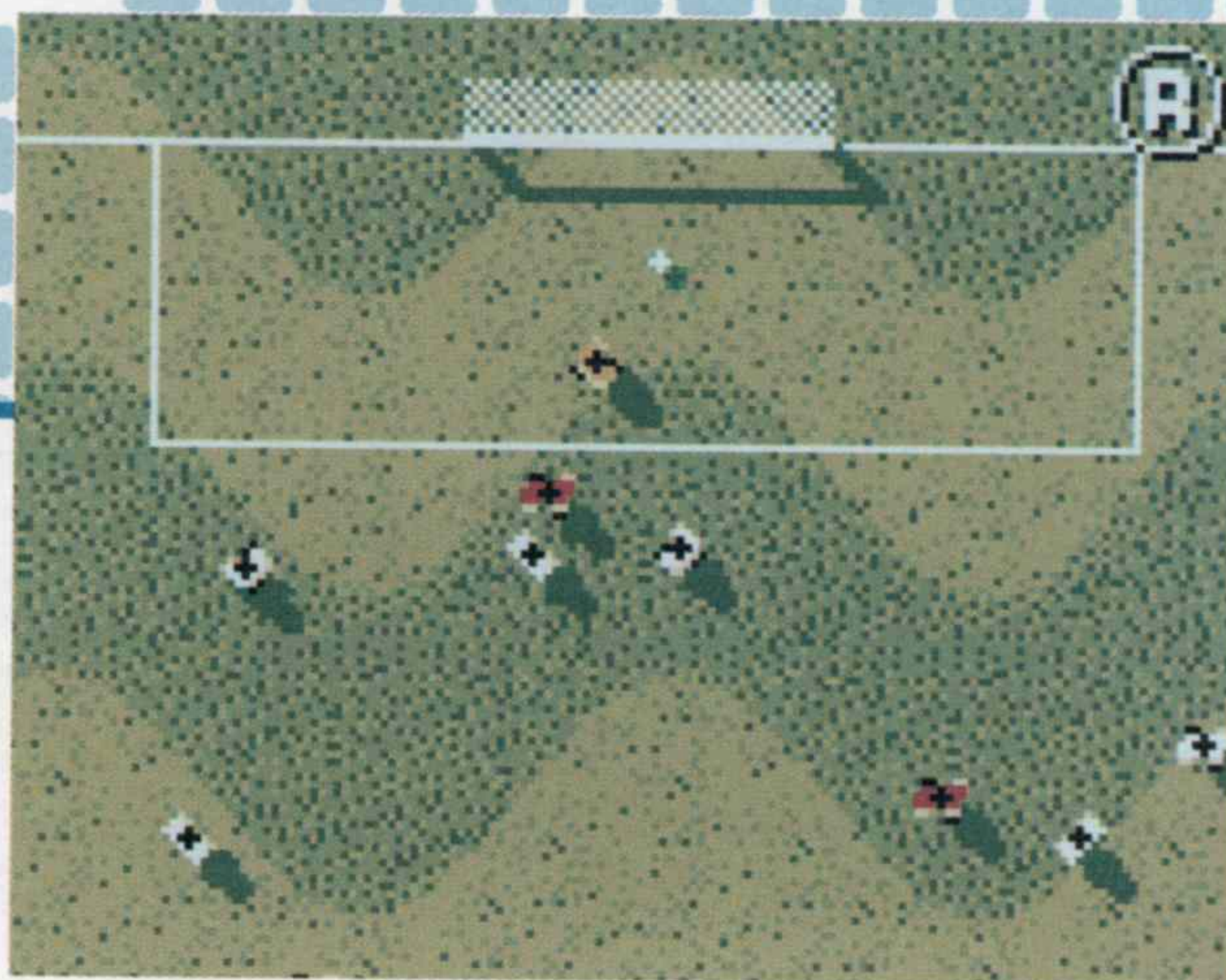
**The Game Boy Color** now has the soccer game it truly deserves. *O'Leary Manager 2000* is a throwback to the days of *Sensible World of Soccer*, and it has the talent to play every other contender clean off the park.

The main soccer engine is an updated version of the excellent *Total Soccer*, with a management sim bolted on. You can play a simple arcade-style tournament, or you can become a full-time manager, handling transfers and juggling squad members whenever injuries strike. The two games can also be combined for an epic feast of soccer in *Player Manager* mode. During the week you get to mess around with training regimes, draft players from the youth team, sign new talent and balance the books. When Saturday comes, you strap on your shinpads and take to the field. It's much more involving than the plain old friendly games or nameless cup competitions you usually get lumbered with.

There are two control methods (based on the classic Amiga games *Kick Off* and *Sensible Soccer*), the main difference between them being the increased difficulty of the *Kick Off* method. Passing is quick and intuitive, and once you've got the hang of the simple two-button system, you'll be able to perform dinky little push-and-run passes or sweeping cross-field balls at will.

The only complaint is the lack of skill displayed by the computer opposition. Fortunately, the outstanding two-player mode ought to provide all the challenge you need. It's every bit as good as those old Amiga titles, and far more enjoyable than the *FIFA* series has ever been.

■ Training players improves their stats in various areas and increases their value on the transfer market. Don't overdo it, though, or they'll suffer long-term injuries.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Ubi Soft

**DEVELOPER:**

Ubi Soft

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

October 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

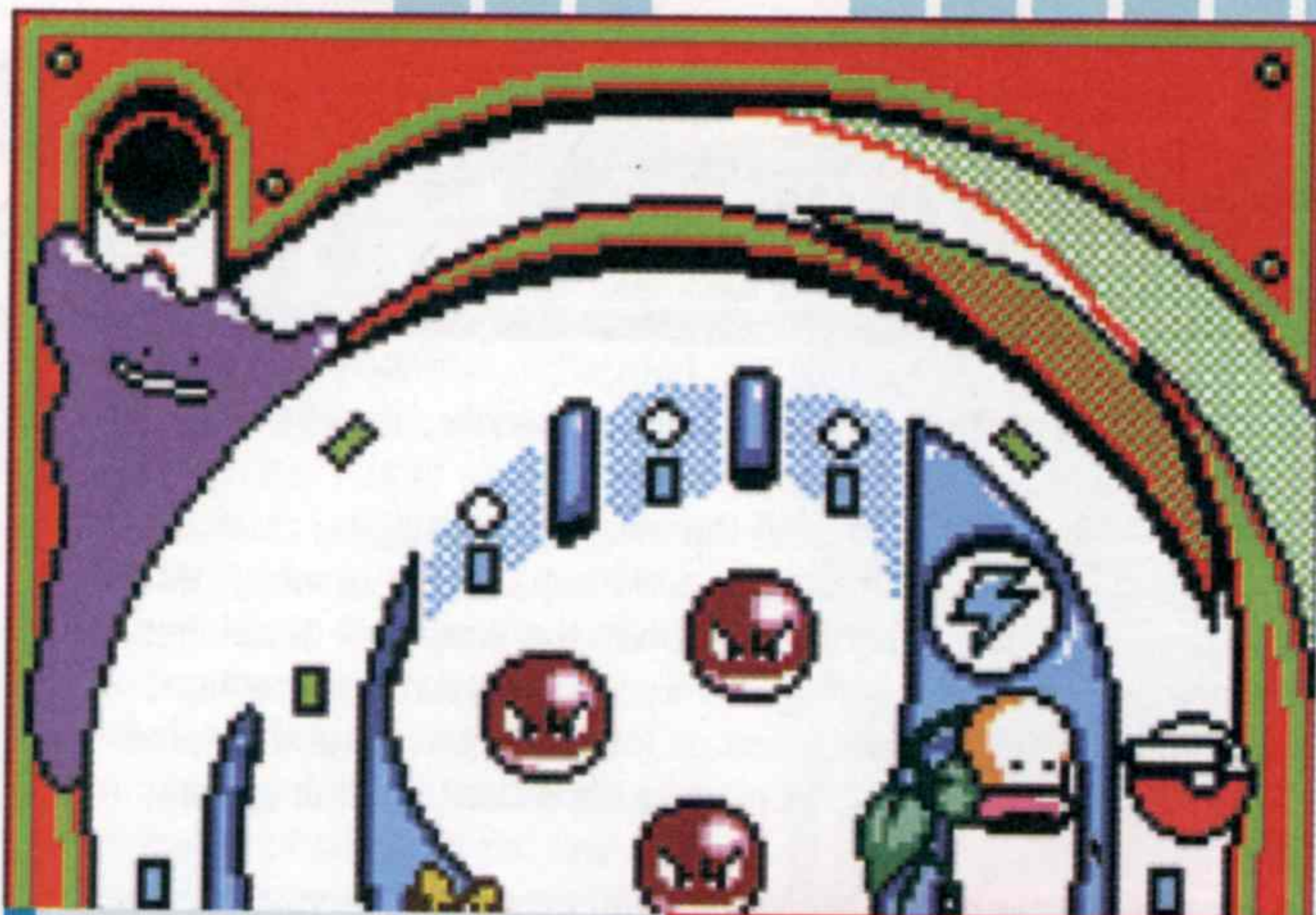
**HIGH:**

Easily the best soccer game on the Game Boy

**LOW:**

Nothing wrong with this

**09/10**



# POKÉMON PINBALL



**Pokémon Pinball is probably** the best video pinball game you can buy, and the fact that the whole Pokémon thing permeates every part of the gameplay makes it so much more than just a revamped version of *Kirby's Pinball Land*.

The object of the game is to catch Pokémon, which you can make appear in front of your flippers by hitting the right sequence of targets. Then all you have to do is bash the monster three times, lighting the letters C-A-T-C-H! and snatch it up inside your Pokéball. Once you've got a creature, you can evolve it into something else by hitting another, more difficult, target sequence, or you can try to catch something a little more unusual. Just like the ordinary *Pokémon* games, certain monsters are rarer than others, and you'll probably have caught a hundred Pidgeys and Ekans before you see your first Snorlax or Porygon.

The two tables are compact and impeccably designed, featuring just two screens each. Instead of scrolling to keep up with the ball, the screen flips to the next half when it nears the mid-way point – presumably to avoid any blurring problems on original Game Boys (*Pokémon Pinball* works on old monochrome machines, too). The targets and loops are placed so that it's possible to fire the ball just about anywhere you want and hit the right spots without having to trust your luck too often. Like a real pinball table, every game has a few of those horrible moments when the ball won't stop bouncing around the bottom of the screen, and those are the times when the thing is most likely to shoot straight down between the flippers and out of play.

■ Some Pokémon can't be captured during Catch 'Em mode. You have to evolve them from more basic monsters in your collection.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

November 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

An excellent cart. Get hold of a copy now

**LOW:**

There's nothing to dislike about this

**10/10**



# POKÉMON GOLD & SILVER

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2 • DREAMCAST

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Summer 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

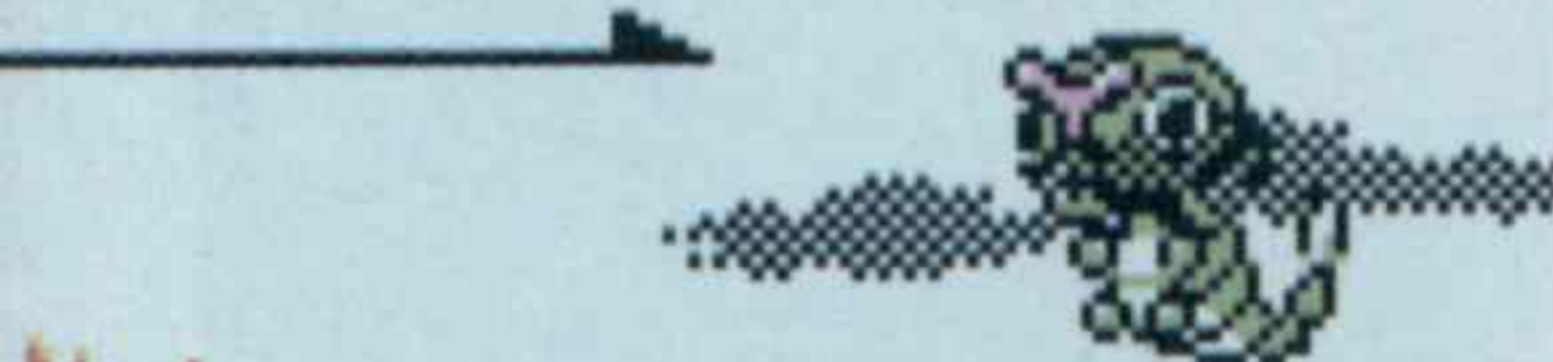
Instantly accessible and infinitely rewarding

### LOW:

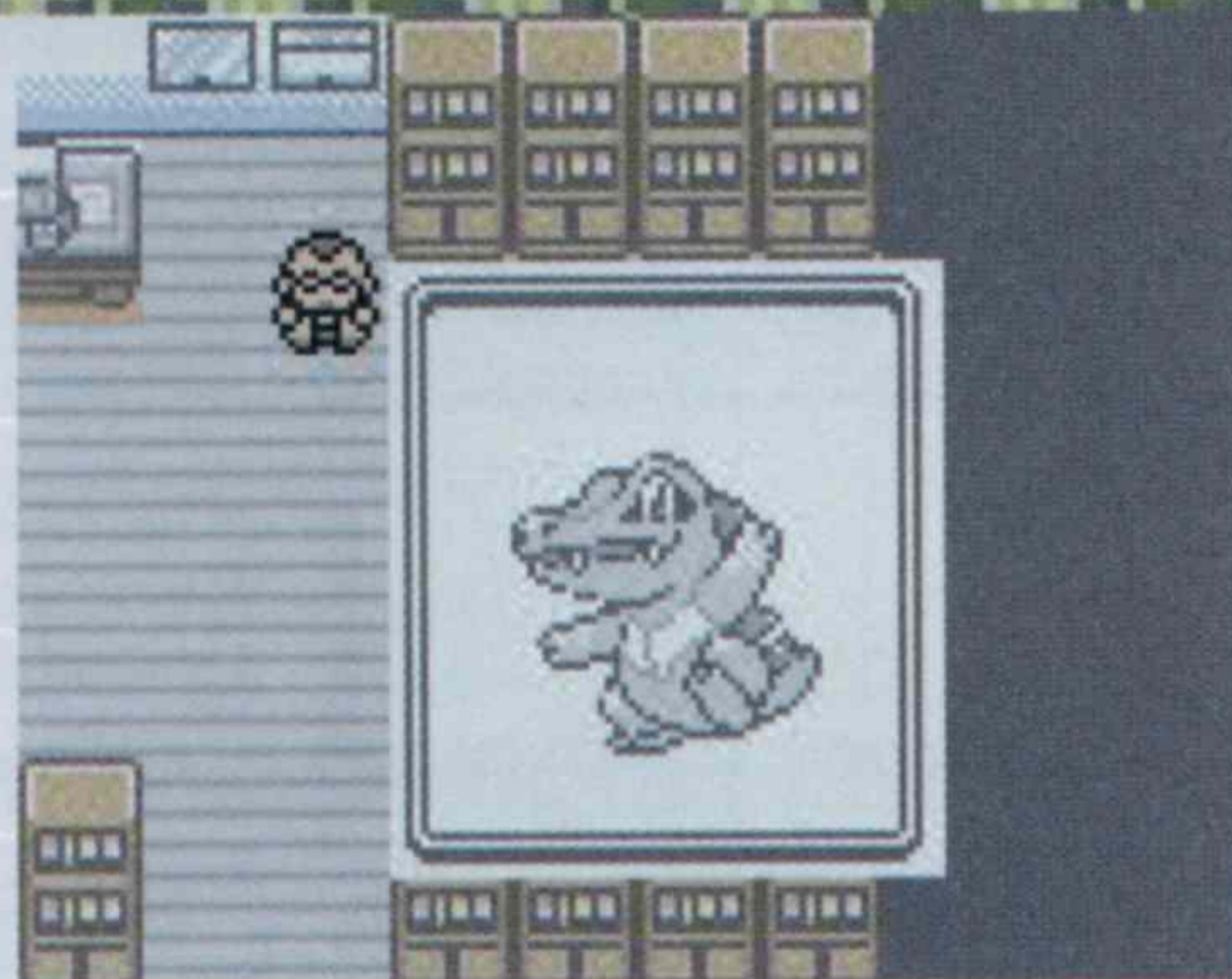
Peerless

# 10/10

ERPIE  
:L3 ♂



DAQUIL



**It's always difficult for** developers to improve significantly on any triple-A title. Thankfully, the developers of *Pokémon Gold & Silver* include Nintendo, and it has pulled out all the stops to bring you a *Pokémon* experience that will blow your mind.

Despite that overwhelming feeling of familiarity when you begin *Pokémon Gold & Silver* for the first time, it's clear that it's rather special. After the classic introduction from the Oakster, you're thrust into the all-new Technicolor world of Johto. Again, you're required to select your starting Pokémon, but this time from a new Grass, Fire and Water-based trio – your first taste of the 100 new monsters that scamper about the landscape.

From here on in, you'll find it impossible to tear yourself away from the screen. The sheer joy that comes from watching your carefully trained and nurtured monsters grow in strength makes the game as compulsive now as it ever was. But this time there are more monsters to choose from, more attacks to learn and earn, and a world that's not only twice the size of *Pokémon Red & Blue's*, but also substantially more involving. Each town, city and route on your adventure is bustling with activity, and there are crowds of people to talk to, side-quests to embark on and goodies to find.

In fact, thanks to the game's innovative real-time clock, there are more tasks and hidden items than ever. By listening in to the radio and

using your mobile phone, you're made aware of events taking place at specific times on certain days of the week. So you'll be revisiting old towns on a regular basis – whether you're trading rare Pokémon on a Wednesday night, or battling in a competition on a Saturday, there's always something to keep you occupied away from the usual gym battles and Poké-hunting. All this helps to break up the action and keeps *Gold & Silver* from feeling too linear, but it also eases the monotony that was an unfortunate by-product of the constant battles in *Red & Blue*.

What little there was wrong with the original games, Nintendo has rectified with style, breathing new life into the franchise. Never has a Game Boy title reached such dizzy heights of perfection – the only games to even come close are *Red*, *Blue* and *Yellow*.

■ The real-time clock has a massive influence over your experiences in the game – not just in terms of the events that take place, but also the types of Pokémon that can be caught.



DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
October 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
One of the biggest games on the Game Boy

**LOW:**  
Too addictive to fault

10/10

# POKÉMON RED & BLUE



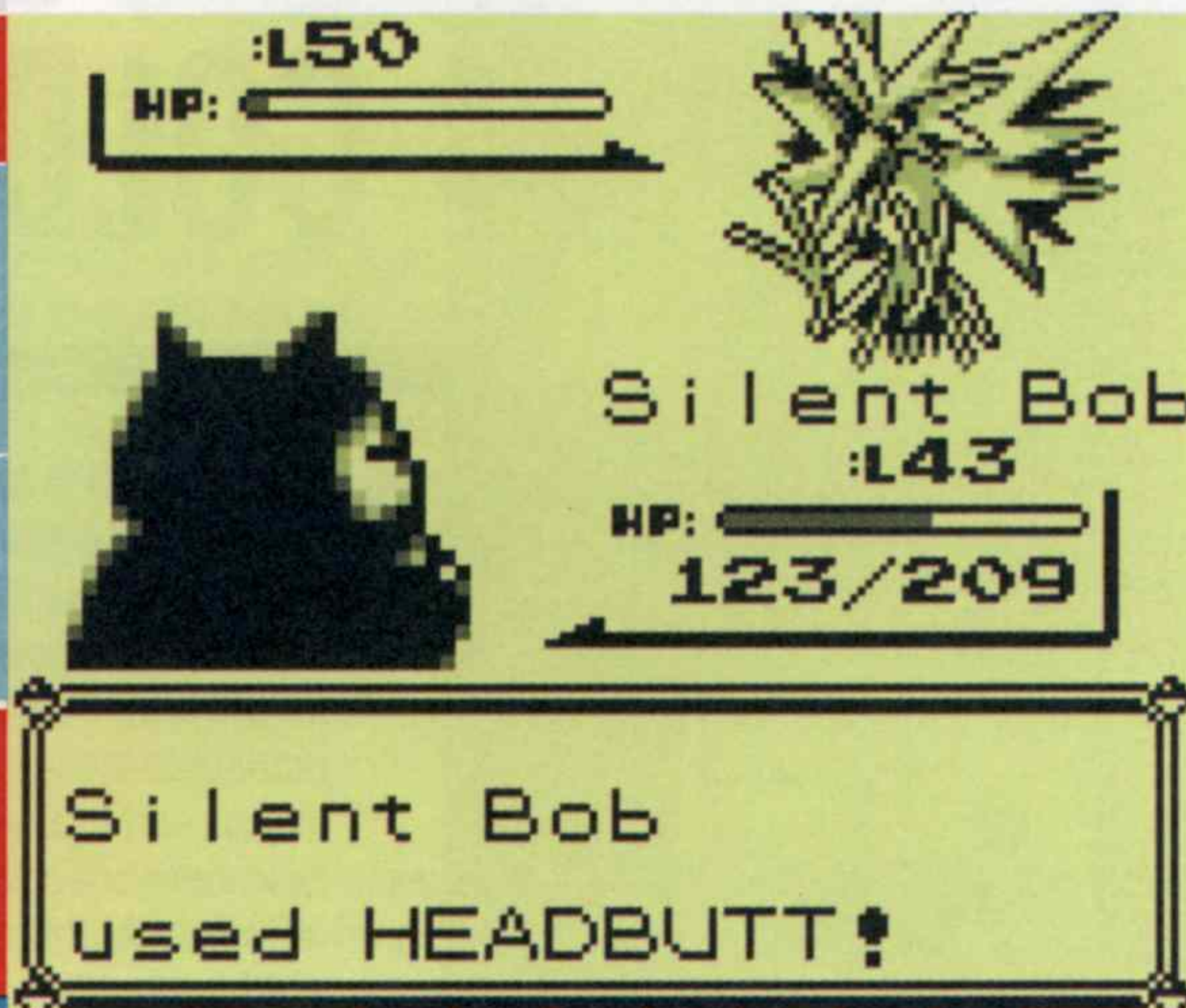
**Pokémon Red & Blue** are more than just games. They're an addictive collecting, nurturing and trading experience and a merchandising work of genius. The object is to catch 150 different monsters, and the only way to achieve this is by trading with someone who owns the other version of the game, as the two carts have slightly different sets of creatures. To collect the monsters in the first place, you've got a huge, involving RPG ahead of you, with many hours of gameplay.

The turn-based combat system is similar to other RPGs, with the intriguing bonus of never knowing which four moves your opponent possesses. Thanks to the way the monsters grow and change, you'll rarely find two the same. As they gain experience by fighting, new skills become available, and you can opt to discard one of your existing moves to make room for the new skill, or risk turning down the chance to learn what may or may not be a killer battle technique. You can also acquire certain skills by finding or buying

"technical machines," but no monster can ever know more than four things at a time.

And so it goes on, encompassing 10 towns, a series of cave systems, eight bosses, and more mini quests, hidden buildings, characters and encounters than it's possible to count. After you've beaten the bosses, there's the horribly tricky Indigo Plateau to negotiate. After that, there's the Elite Four, and the chance to enter the caves where the most elusive of Pokémon dwell. And there's still the two-player battle mode, the N64 tie-ins, and *Pokémon Gold & Silver*.

■ The Celadon City department store stocks almost everything you could possibly need for a successful campaign.



# POKÉMON TRADING CARD GAME



**The Trading Card Game** for the Game Boy is essentially the same as the cardboard version, but with an adventure wrapped around it, too. Your task is to successfully defeat the TCG masters in order to claim the Legendary Pokémon Cards as your own. So, rather than just battling normally against random opponents, TCG structures the whole playing experience into battles against various clubs, each specializing in one variation of Pokémon and Energy type, such as Grass or Fire. Once defeated, you earn new Booster Packs with specialized and stronger Pokémon Cards to include in your improving deck.

Visually, *Pokémon TCG* is similar to its RPG-esque counterparts and you navigate an island in the same top-down manner. The card battles are also presented in the same way as the *Red* and *Blue* battles: your opponent's Pokémon takes the top part of the screen with the active Pokémon's statistics beside it. The attack animations are suitably varied and lend themselves well to each Pokémon type as they burn, scratch and freeze the opposing Pokémon card - something you won't see with the cardboard creations.

The pure, unadulterated brilliance of TCG, however, is in the game itself. The thought that needs to be put into constructing your deck of 60 cards is awesome. The experience is utterly absorbing in every way, from the time spent lovingly crafting your killer deck, to the sweaty, heart-pounding strategic battles that follow as you put your monsters to the test.

■ Once you defeat the first person, defeat him again to get a Booster Pack full of Energy cards. Repeat this trick as needed.



TECH

WHEN YOU DEFEAT A CLUB MEMBER, YOU'LL RECEIVE A BOOSTER PACK.

DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**  
Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**  
Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**  
1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**  
January 2001

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**  
No

VERDICT:

**HIGH:**  
Frighteningly addictive and completely absorbing

**LOW:**  
Again, impossible to fault

10/10

# POKÉMON YELLOW: SPECIAL PIKACHU EDITION



**The game that spawned** the cartoon that begat the most profitable merchandising empire since the glory days of *Star Wars* has a sequel.

*Red* and *Blue* are among the biggest selling games ever. *Pokémon Yellow* is more of the same. The only major change is a more conspicuous role for Pikachu, the *Pokémon* mascot. The electric mouse follows you around everywhere, and there are a few minor changes to the placement and availability of certain monsters. If you want to complete your Pokédex, you need to trade with both *Red* and *Blue*, so there's a bit more work involved. Some of the Pokédex pictures seem to have been touched up a little and a few events from the cartoon have been added, but there's no Togepi, no Mew and no proper Game Boy Color support.

The aim is to collect and nurture 151 monsters, pitching 15 different categories against one another in a deliciously complicated bout of rock-paper-scissors. The combat is presented in the typically stylized RPG tradition, and the monsters are examples of character design at its very best.

Since the plot is more closely tied to the cartoon, *Pokémon* virgins or younger players will find it a gentler introduction to a very Japanese style of gaming. The surfing mini-game looks like a powerful incentive to persuade existing *Pokémon* players to spend more money, but don't expect to get much value from that – it's just a novelty and it won't occupy much of your time.

■ Once you've been playing for a while, your *Pokémon Yellow* cart will be unique.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

July 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

More of the same from one of the biggest-selling genres ever

### LOW:

A sparse update

10 / 10

# R-TYPE DX



**Shoot-'em-ups are the** most mindless games in the world. There are no puzzles to solve, no complicated controls; you just keep your finger on the trigger and watch your enemies explode into tiny pieces. All very satisfying stuff.

They don't always work that well on the Game Boy, though. With the exception of *Gradius* and *Twinbee*, which are both great on the GB Pocket, the action tends to look messy on the small screen. Thank heavens for the GB Color, then. *R-Type DX* illustrates just how well the GB Color can handle a top-notch shoot-'em-up. It's an enhanced special edition of two old mono versions, combining *R-Type 1* and *R-Type 2* in one almighty kill-fest.

*R-Type* must be the most recognizable shoot-'em-up after *Space Invaders*, and still one of the very best games of the genre. The bosses and weapons have been shamelessly copied by countless other games, and they're all here in *R-Type DX*. It's a visual treat – developer Bits Studio has worked wonders with some of the scrolling backdrops. The bullets and enemies are always easy to pick out, too, because the background graphics fade during boss encounters and set pieces.

You can play both versions of *R-Type* in their original monochrome forms, or as updated color versions. The *DX* version combines all the levels and is incredibly difficult – a real old-skool thumb grinder.

■ Complete *R-Type DX* using less than 10 credits. Enter *R-Type 1* or *2*, press A and Select together to get an invincible ship.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Bits Studio

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

September 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the best shoot-'em-ups on the Game Boy

### LOW:

There's nothing wrong with this game

10 / 10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2



## SPY VS. SPY



**Spy vs. Spy** is based on a comic strip from satirical magazine *MAD*. The game first made an appearance on the Commodore 64. Back then, multiplayer games hadn't advanced much past the yawnsome bat-and-ball antics of *Pong*, so *Spy vs. Spy's* frantic two-player trap-setting action made it a huge success. Thankfully, this colorized Game Boy interpretation offers the same level of gleefully misguided mischievous fun.

As either Black Spy or White Spy, your mission is to find a collection of hidden objects – by opening cupboards, lifting rugs and peering underneath wall-mounted pictures – before your rival beats you to it. Sounds simple. But to make things more interesting, each of you is armed with a set of brilliant booby traps that can be concealed inside furniture and behind doors to thwart your undercover enemy. A trap victim is “sent off” for a fixed time, giving the opponent precious extra moments of searching time.

Like the very best Nintendo games, *Spy vs. Spy* positively glows with the amount of care and attention put into it. The graphics are a lesson in colorful splendor. The controls, too, are perfect, enabling you to sprint through rooms with ease and almost subconsciously access the traps and map, while the new-fangled combat controls drastically improve on the finger-twisting method used by the '80s original.

You'll need a Game Boy-owning friend to get the best out of *Spy vs. Spy* – the computer opponent is an outrageous cheat. All in all, however, this is a superbly crafted, good-looking game.

■ Here's a challenge: beat the computer on level six of the Stealth Jet mission, without being caught by a trap.

### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Vatical Entertainment

**DEVELOPER:**

Kemco

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

September 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Maniacally enjoyable trap-based action. Laugh-a-minute multiplayer game

**LOW:**

Increased complexity of the later levels

08/10

## SURVIVAL KIDS



Apart from *Zelda DX* and *Harvest Moon*, quality Game Boy Color RPGs have been thin on the ground. Konami has come to the rescue with *Survival Kids*, a classy original survival RPG.

The story starts with your hero or heroine, Ken or Mery respectively, regaining consciousness after being washed up on a desert island following a shipwreck. From then on you face a battle of survival against nature and the elements as you attempt to stay alive long enough to both investigate the secrets of the island and find a way off it. Day soon changes to night as you wander around, and you have to be careful not to stray too far from your home camp, because a lack of sleep can be fatal (as can just about everything else). You'll also need to find a way to kill and cook the local wildlife, but you'll have to be quick about it because there's no refrigeration, and eating rancid food will poison you. A menu system enables you to combine the items you find while beach-combing, so you can start fires and make tools, and a friendly monkey will lead you toward various clues.

*Survival Kids* is great fun, well structured and tricky enough to make you think, without being horribly complicated.

■ If you successfully complete the game and then answer “Yes” to start a second round, the title screen will have a new background.



### DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Konami

**DEVELOPER:**

Konami

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

December 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

### VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

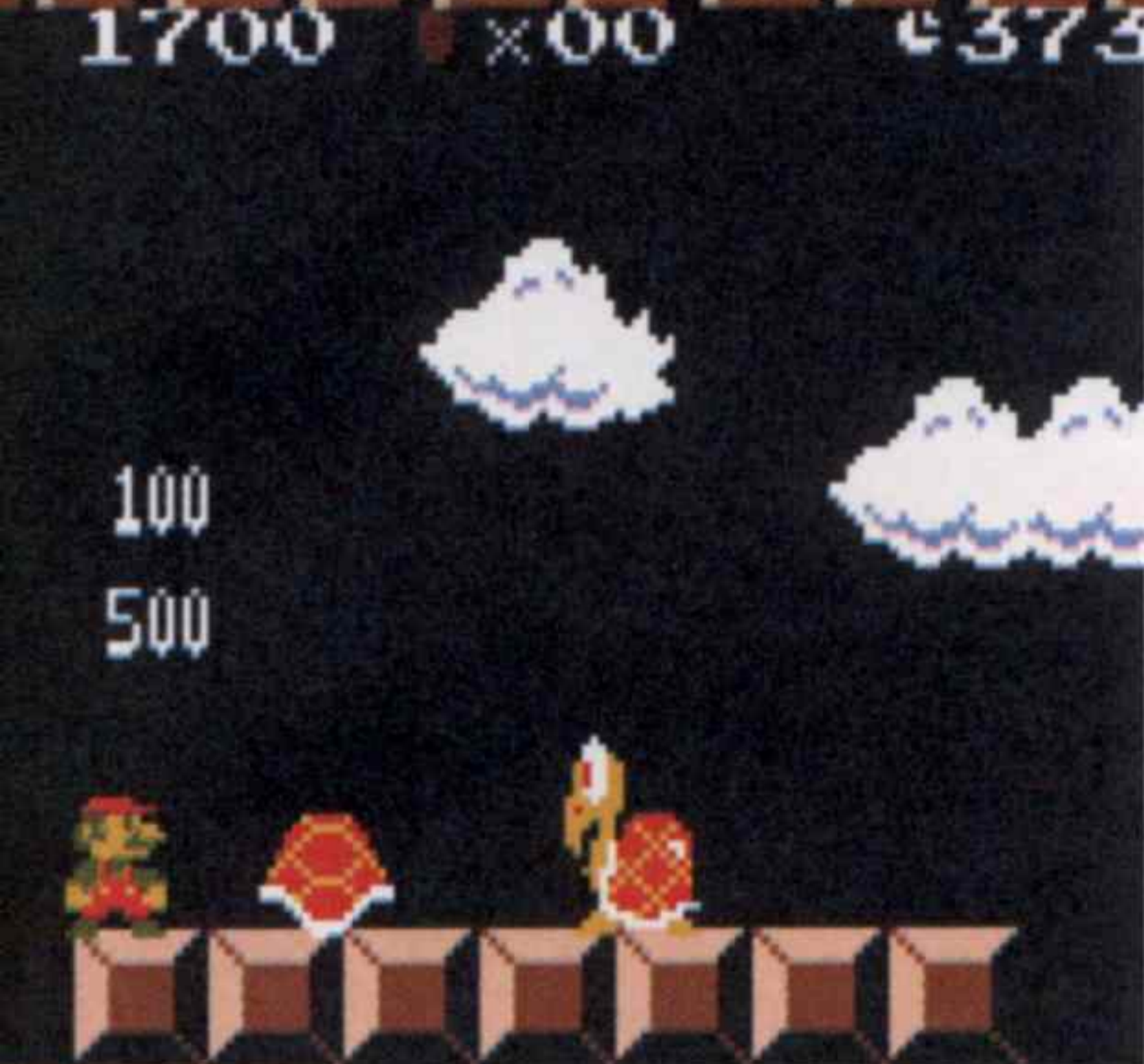
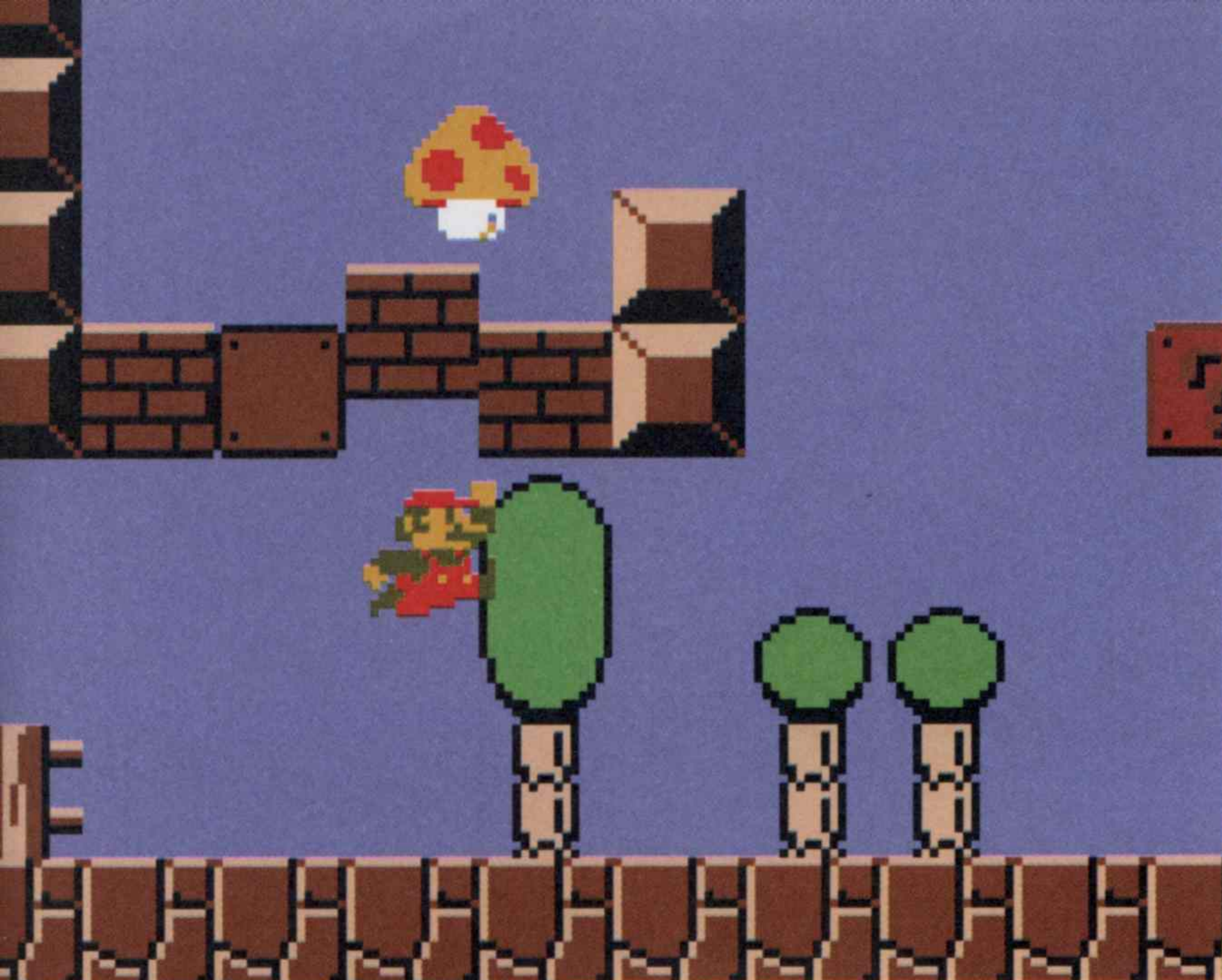
Outstanding survival RPG

**LOW:**

Nothing to find fault with

09/10





# SUPER MARIO BROS. DELUXE

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION 2  
PC  
PSONE  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

Summer 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

A fabulously playable game

### LOW:

Impossible to fault

# 10/10



**Super Mario Bros. was** the game that really launched Nintendo into the big time back in 1985, and playing it again is like dancing over fluffy clouds in retro gaming heaven.

When it first appeared on the NES, *Super Mario Bros.* was a revelation. While all the other games of the time were experimenting with clumsy pseudo-3D systems, or were stuck in flip-screen limbo, *SMB* introduced countless innovations which have since become accepted as standards in all the best modern platformers.

The central character had exaggerated inertia, so skidding close to the edge of a precipice was certain to launch your heart into your mouth. He collected items to boost his powers, and secret hidden bonuses were planted in the most unlikely places, compelling you to explore every last pixel of every level. A silky-smooth control system used combinations of the D-pad and different buttons, and intensive practice revealed many different methods of accomplishing the same goal from every angle.

What's truly remarkable is that so few games in the subsequent years have managed to do it as well as *Super Mario Bros.* did. Indeed, almost all of them have come from the inspired minds at Nintendo, and most of those are sequels to the game that started it all.

With this Game Boy version, what you get appears, at first glance, to be an identical conversion of the NES game. The graphics are the same, scaled up slightly to match the lower resolution of the GB screen, the controls, the sounds, the levels... it's a flawless copy. Delve deeper, however, by achieving a high score, or linking up with a friend's machine, and you'll see just how much has been added, and just how much everything has been improved.

The Japanese version of *Mario 2* (not the Western *Mario 2*, rather the game released as the *Lost Levels* in *Mario All Stars* on the SNES) has been included. Reach a daunting 300,000 points and you get seven new multi-level worlds to add to the eight originals. There's also a brilliant two-player mode, where you can

engage in a truly spiteful coin-grabbing race against a friend or (as another high-score bonus) a computer ghost. Challenge mode is another new feature. There are several little *Game & Watch Gallery*-style extras, such as a photo album, as featured in the GB Camera, with hidden, printable pictures revealing themselves when certain obscure conditions are satisfied. There's even a perpetual calendar and a strange little fortune-telling card game.

This transparent cart is packed to bursting point with treats, making *Super Mario Bros. Deluxe* arguably the most complete Game Boy title ever made.

■ To access the You vs. Boo bonus levels, you have to score at least 100,000 points during a game, then select Boo at the Title screen.



# SUPER MARIO LAND 2

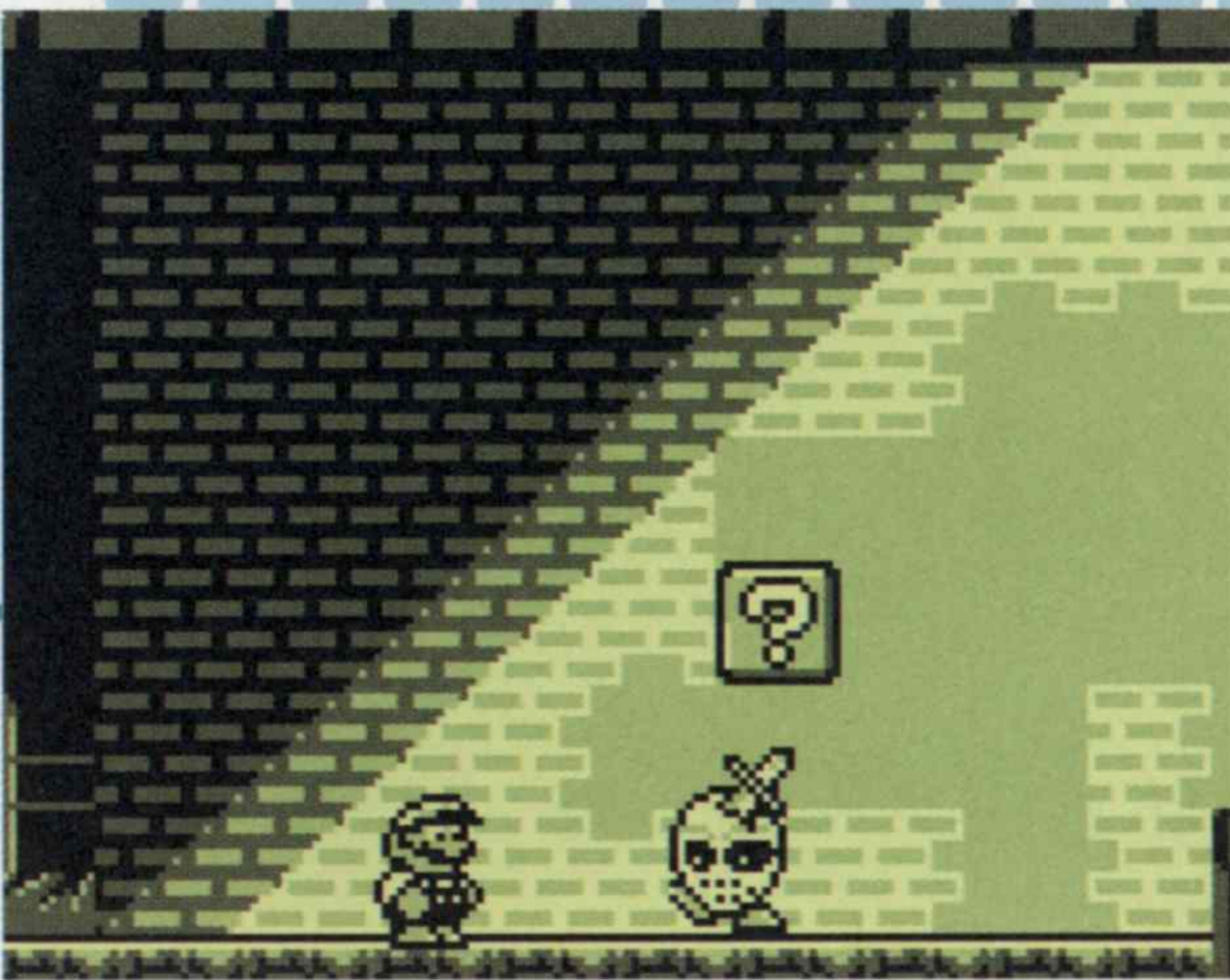


**Mario's first ever GB** outing was reminiscent of the original NES *Super Mario Bros*, whereas this vastly improved 1992 sequel, *Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins* plays almost exactly like the awesome *Mario World* on the SNES.

There's a plot involving the evil Wario's plans for global domination, and a big scrolling map with six themed areas concealed around it. At the end of each of these mini-worlds lies a golden coin, which can be used to open the door to Wario's sinister mountain-top castle. The variety of challenges Mario has to undertake is every bit as huge as the SNES game. It won't take nearly as long to finish, mind you, but all the ingredients are here – fire flowers, winged caps, invisible blocks, forced-scrolling bonus levels and stacks of secret areas to discover. And, of course, it's got the effortless, fluid playability that's set the *Mario* series apart from all other platform games since the beginning.

The chunky graphics are perfectly suited to the GB screen, ensuring minimal blurring on fat GBs, and, of course, absolutely none on Pocket and Color models. Downright superb, *Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins* is one of the finest Game Boy platform games you can buy.

■ Clear the Hippopotamus Zone and the Space Zone. Return to the Hippopotamus Zone and run into the water. Go left and grab the prize worth 50 coins. Repeat until you've grabbed 999 coins, then play the Bonus game. Repeat the whole thing until you have 99 lives.



## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

March 1999 (released 1992)

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

One of the finest platform games ever

**LOW:**

No GB Color update

10/10



# WARIO LAND II



**Nobody makes platform games** like Nintendo. It invented them back in the early '80s, yet no other developer has even come close to the kind of perfection Nintendo achieves almost every time.

*Wario Land 2* is a colorized version of the monochrome Game Boy game from a few years ago. Unlike previous platformers, the hero – Mario's evil nemesis Wario – can't die. No matter how many times he gets knocked off platforms, thumped, squashed, set on fire or poisoned, he's always ready to bounce back for more punishment. Each hit simply costs him a few of the coins he's been collecting.

Wario's task is to retrieve the treasures that have been scattered around his castle by the Black Sugar Gang, a bunch of mischievous little blobs who've infested his domain. Collecting coins gives you the chance to spend your newly acquired cash on bonus games at the end of each level, with the elusive treasures as prizes. It also turns the game into a tricky score/attack challenge, since collecting and keeping every single coin that's contained in the rather mazy castle verges on impossible.

Naturally, the game's level design is as devious as in any of Nintendo's finest moments. Some of the puzzles will have you tearing your follicles out, but the multiple routes through each level mean that you can bypass the toughest ones and come back to them later on.

Graphically, it's outstanding. The sprites were designed to be clearly visible on the original Game Boy's screen, and the addition of color makes for one of the best-looking Game Boy games to date.

■ Find the final bonus level by collecting all the treasure.

## DETAILS:

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

April 1999

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

## VERDICT:

**HIGH:**

Only Nintendo stuffs its platform games with this much unadulterated magic

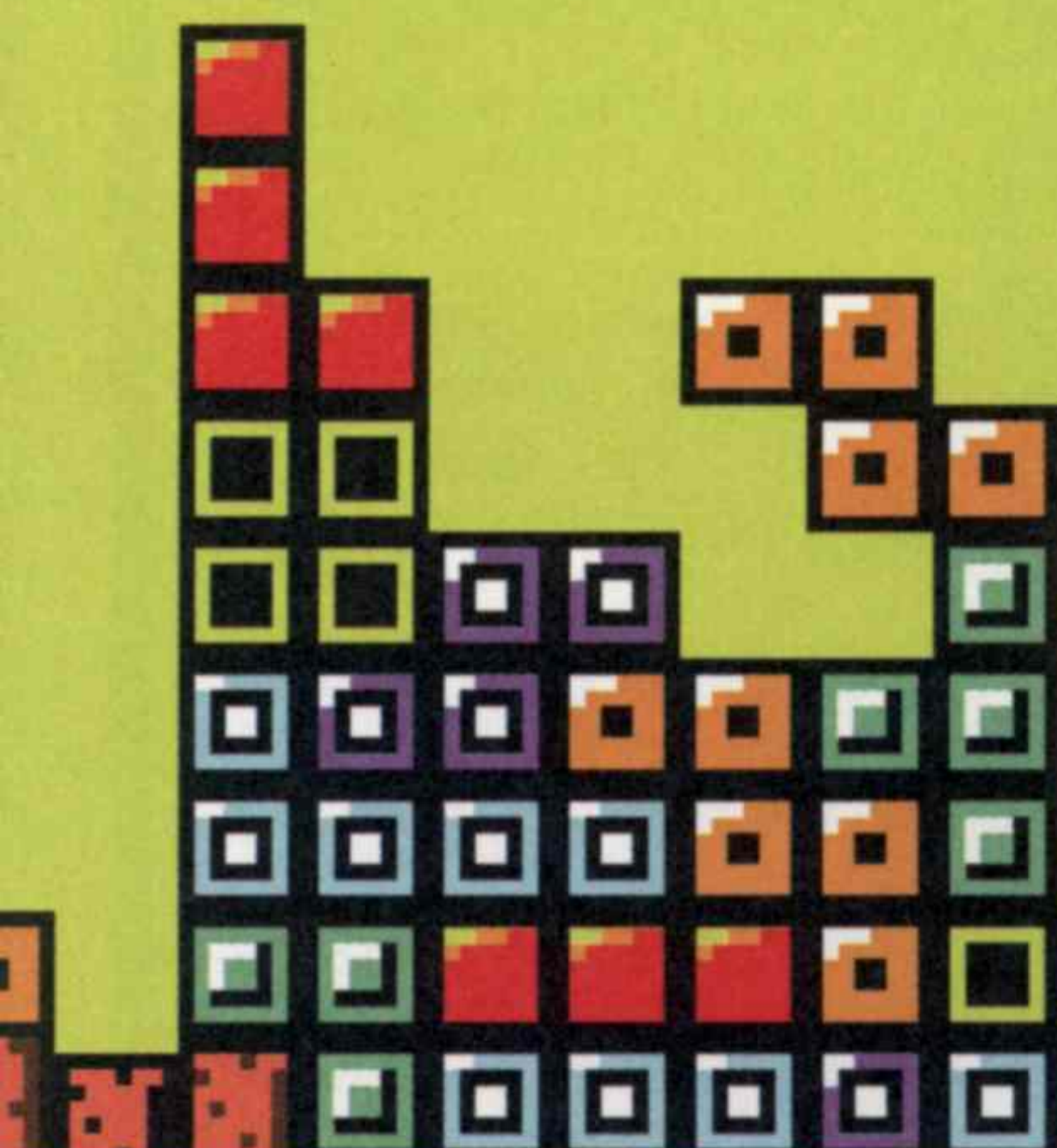
**LOW:**

Nothing to fault

10/10

# TETRIS DX

DREAMCAST  
PLAYSTATION2  
PSONE  
PC  
NINTENDO 64  
GAME BOY COLOR



SCORE  
1201

LEVEL  
1



**Tetris** sent Game Boy sales into the stratosphere back in 1989. Now it gets a new lick of paint for the GB Color.

If you haven't played this geometric marvel before (and it's impossible to believe there's anyone left in the world who hasn't), it's all about slotting together falling blocks of varying shapes in order to create complete lines. There's a good way and a bad way to play *Tetris* - you want to fit the falling blocks together perfectly and leave no gaps. The way to score big points, though, is to pull off a Tetris, which means clearing four lines at once. *Tetris DX* is essentially the same old game, tweaked and with a few new features added. However, it remains faithful to the original and is still amazingly good fun.

Beyond the original difficulty settings, there are also four modes of play. Marathon mode is *Tetris* in its most traditional form. It's a simple case of racking up as many lines as possible and,

when you lose, playing again to beat that score. The more lines you clear, the faster the shapes fall; so the better you do, the more difficult it gets. If you decide to start on a higher difficulty level, the blocks will fall faster to begin with.

Ultra mode gives you two minutes in which to clear as many lines as possible. Again, the major challenge is to beat your previous high scores. In 40-Line mode, you need to clear 40 lines as quickly as possible because, once again, you're up against the timer. Now, however, the timer counts up rather than down - but you still have to get the required number faster than seems humanly possible.

Finally, in Vs. mode you play against the computer, or against a friend via a Link Cable. On your opponent's screen is a bar representing how you're doing - the better you do, the higher it goes. Similarly, the bar on your screen shows the success or otherwise of your opponent. If it reaches the top, you'll get lines added to your screen as a penalty. Frantic, but lots of fun.

*Tetris DX* makes great use of the Game Boy's color palette, and you'll be surprised how horribly addictive it is, even after all these years. This is one tasty little classic that'll occupy you for years to come.

■ Try this challenge: beat the 40-Line mode in under two-and-a-half minutes and you're a *Tetris* Master. Or try this cheat: press [Start] to pause the game, then turn the Game Boy off. When you turn the GB on again, a Continue screen will appear.

## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Nintendo

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

March 1999

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

The best incarnation of *Tetris* ever

### LOW:

Peerless

10/10

MK

MARATHON

ULTRA

40LINES

VS. COM

MUSIC

A-TYPE

B-TYPE

C-TYPE

1 2 3 GUEST

MK

POWER

TOTAL

201

50 LINES

TETRIS 26.1%

TRIPLE 8.7%

DOUBLE 21.7%

SINGLE 43.5%

SCORE  
6258

TIME  
: 8

LINES  
22

SCORE  
4282

LEVEL  
2

**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

July 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Excellent stuff. The thinking person's platformer

**LOW:**

Only for Game Boy Color

**10/10**

# WARIO LAND 3



**Wario is one of** the best Nintendo characters around. Unlike that simpering yes-man Luigi, Wario refuses to cower in Mario's shadow. His belly wouldn't fit, of course, which is just as well because this third starring role for the yellow anti-plumber is his best yet. Trapped inside a magical music box, Wario must travel back and forth across a mysterious land, collecting treasure and revisiting areas in order to learn new abilities.

The puzzles often involve subjecting Wario to large doses of pain in order to transform him into something new. Although invincible, he looks suitably agonized as he's burned, frozen, flattened, zapped and turned into a zombie, all in the name of treasure hunting. An attack by most of the enemies produces a reaction of some sort, and there are many more of them than in *Wario Land 2*. There's also a day/night feature, as if the size and complexity of some of the levels wasn't enough already.

And there's that familiar Nintendo slickness to the way Wario moves. The animation is superb, and the levels are designed to make you want to return to collect everything. There's even a golfing sub-game you can play.

■ For Debug mode, pause, then press [Select] 16 times. A flashing box will appear around the coin icon. Hold [A] + [B] and press [Left] or [Right] to change the digits for lives, coins, hearts or time by pushing [Up] or [Down]. Place the flashing box over Wario's head and press [Up] or [Start] to upgrade your helmet. Press [Start] to return to gameplay.



# WARIO LAND: MARIO LAND 3

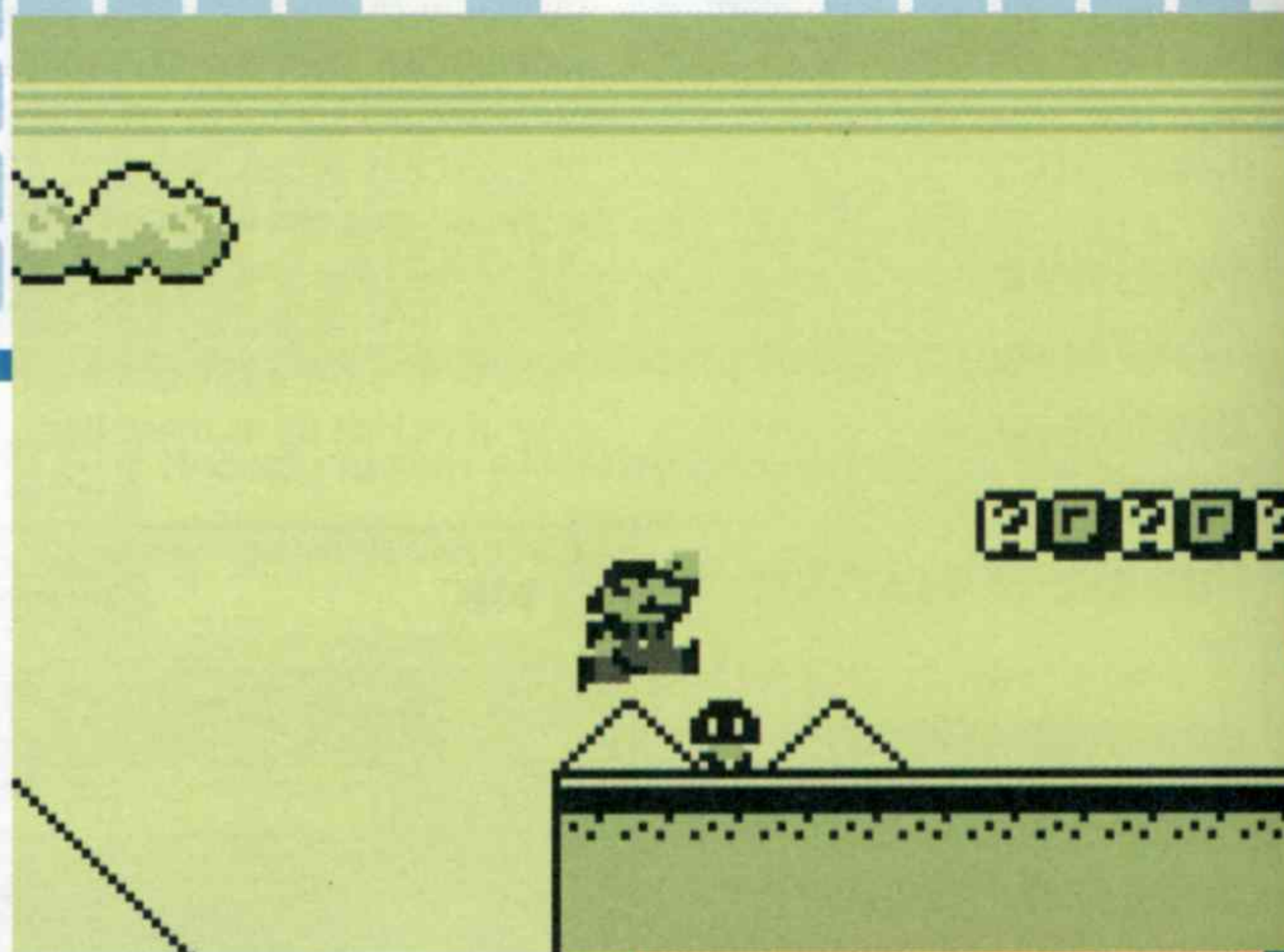


**Wario is very familiar** to everyone these days, thanks to his many appearances as the black sheep in Mario's extended family, but back in 1993 he was just another villain. *Wario Land* was the first game to give you the chance to experience platform life through the eyes of the red-nosed, hat-wearing fat boy.

It's typically excellent stuff, filled with Nintendo's inimitable touches of class and humor, and much closer in terms of gameplay to *Mario Land 2* than its more offbeat sequel. Wario collects coins, breaks boxes and shoulder-charges through hordes of enemies. Unlike *Wario Land 2*, where mistakes were punished by a loss of coins, making a wrong move here results in the distressing sight of Wario's contorting face tumbling off the screen. Ugly.

Wario's hats aren't simply decorative either. Collecting power-ups turns his headgear into a dragon, a pair of horns or some wings, with predictable results. It's just as well that he always uses something to cover his hair, as he sports a quite horrific Travis Bickle hairdo. The color-only *Wario Land 3* is the sequel.

■ If you beat the game without the best ending of \$99,999, start a new game and enter the flashing Saved Game pipe. Levels that contain previously unclaimed hidden treasures will be marked with a flashing dot.



**DETAILS:**

**PUBLISHER:**

Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:**

Nintendo

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1-2

**ORIGINAL REVIEW:**

May 2000

**BUDGET RE-RELEASE:**

No

**VERDICT:**

**HIGH:**

Another Nintendo masterpiece

**LOW:**

Wario's hairdo

**10/10**

# WARLOCKED



**Real-time strategy** has traditionally been the preserve of PCs, and with each new release the genre becomes more complicated. However, the Game Boy's first true RTS is not only a return to basics, but also a barrel of laughs.

As either nice humans or grizzly beasts, you have to obliterate the other species by building up an army and using your tactical skills to breach the enemy's defenses. You start with a few workers, which is all you need to begin hacking down trees and mining gold – the basic resources you must have in order to create an army. Once you've collected enough, you can build barracks and defensive towers and establish farms. And when your army looks powerful enough, you can mount a raid into enemy territory.

Unexplored terrain is concealed beneath question-mark blocks, which may hide fortresses, enemy garrisons or collectable secrets. Exploring and fighting are both great fun, thanks to a wonderfully intuitive control system. There are no menus to navigate, so the few commands you need to control your army are never more than a single button-click away. You can make groups of units do their own thing without having to keep an eye on them, and Bits Studios has worked miracles in making the Game Boy handle masses of simultaneous activity without slowing down to a crawl.

There are loads of solo missions to play, some amusing bonus games and an impressive two-player battle.

■ Enter these cheat codes at the Armies/Check Code screen: NQCFY for a level select; VGLYDWRVS for a beast ending; LVCKQVYYN for a human ending.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Nintendo

### DEVELOPER:

Bits Studios

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1-2

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

December 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

Back to the basics of the RTS genre with a barrel-load of fun thrown in

### LOW:

Hard to fault

09/10

# WINGS OF FURY

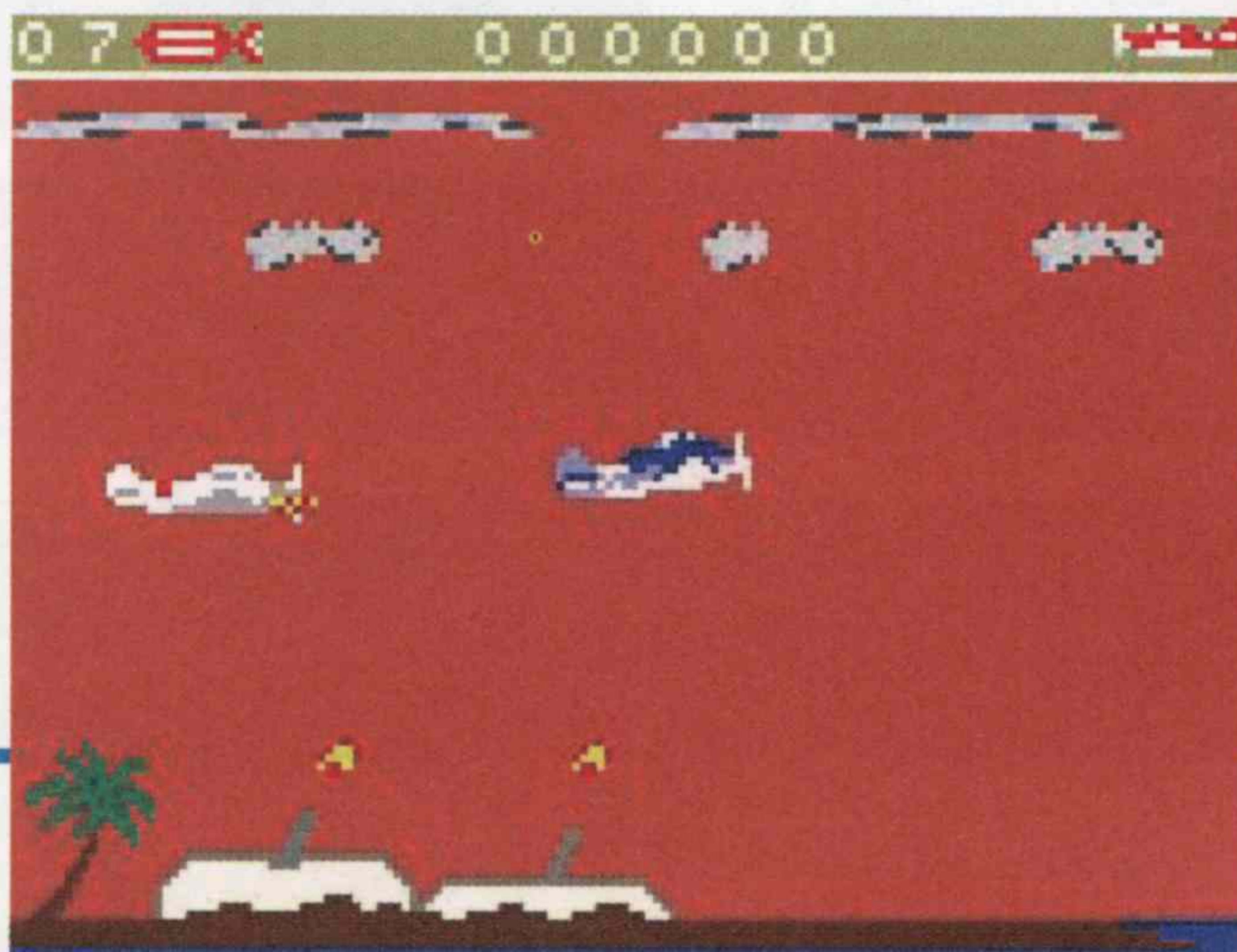


**A crippled aircraft carrier** in the middle of the Pacific during WWII probably isn't your idea of a fun holiday cruise. But defending that crippled carrier with only a beat-up Mustang and a limited supply of ammo – that's much more like it.

*Wings of Fury* puts you in charge of clearing the way home through the Japanese-occupied islands. With the carrier as your base, you have to fly sorties over enemy territory to destroy every military installation you can find. Before each mission you need to select the right kind of weapons for the job – small bombs for destroying buildings, missiles for taking out bunkers, or giant bombs for sinking ships. Some islands are protected by planes, and as you gain altitude and shake them off your tail, the screen zooms out to provide a wide-angle view of the dogfight.

It's a conversion of a vintage Amiga game, and very nicely done, too. The plane is much more maneuverable than it used to be, although some nice touches are missing, such as the bullet trails on the ground and the little soldiers who ran for cover in the original. It's also a little easier than you may remember it, which is probably a good thing as some of the Amiga levels could have outlasted a set of Game Boy batteries. *Wings of Fury* is one of the best handheld shoot-'em-ups you can buy.

■ Be careful how you land on your carrier. Slow down gently, then land as close as possible to the arresting wire. And monitor your gauges, because if your fuel or oil run low, you may have to eject.



## DETAILS:

### PUBLISHER:

Mindscape

### DEVELOPER:

Ed Magnin and Associates

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

1

### ORIGINAL REVIEW:

May 2000

### BUDGET RE-RELEASE:

No

## VERDICT:

### HIGH:

One of the best Game Boy shoot-'em-ups

### LOW:

A few good bits missing from the Amiga original

08/10

GAME BOY COLOR • NINTENDO 64 • PC • PSONE • PLAYSTATION2

# GAME BOY COLOR CHALLENGES

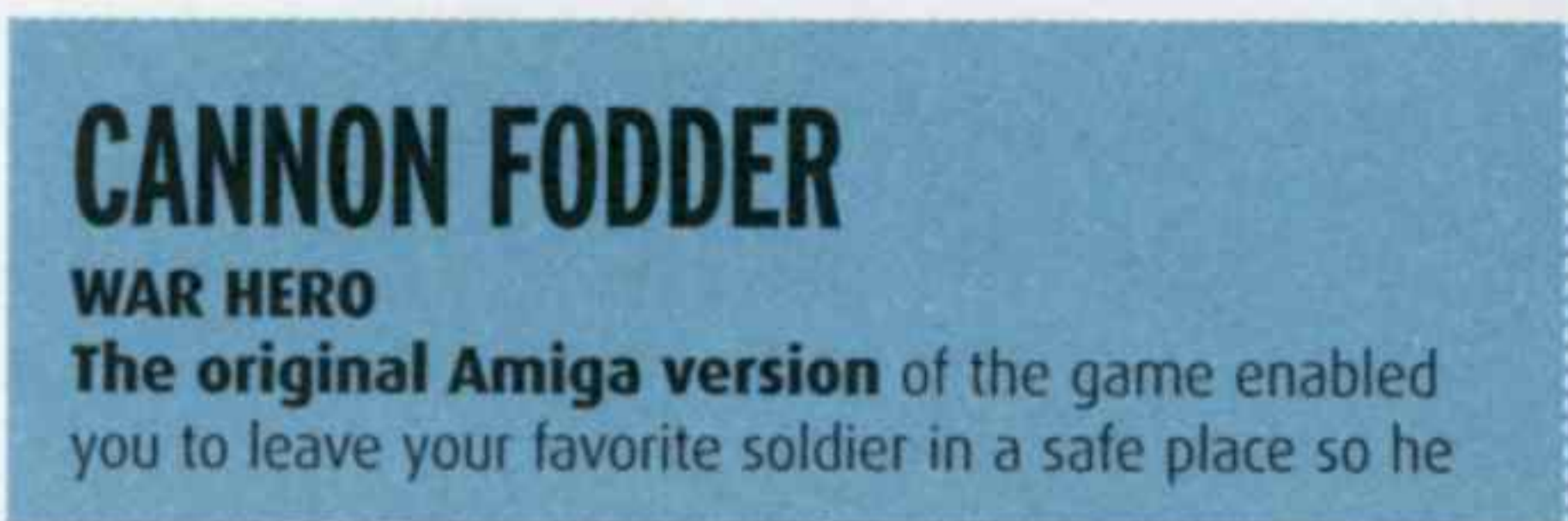


## BALLOON KID

### POP STAR

**Balloon Kid** is just too easy if you keep stopping to pump up your balloons whenever you lose one. For a real

expert challenge, lose a balloon at the start and proceed all the way through to the end of the game carrying no more than one at a time.



## CANNON FODDER

### WAR HERO

The original Amiga version of the game enabled you to leave your favorite soldier in a safe place so he

wouldn't get killed, but there's no easy way out of the war in the trickier Game Boy edition. Can any of your boys last long enough to rack up 50 kills?



## DRIVER

### CANNONBALL RUN

Play **Survival mode** and have a go at recreating Burt Reynolds' car-totalling movie. The police cars are quite

hard to destroy – leading them into the sides of buildings seems to be the most reliable way to dispose of them. Any more than three cars is a good score.



## GAME BOY HARDWARE

### BONUS FEATURES

Here's a feature you might not have noticed before. When starting an old monochrome game (like *Pokémon*)

on a Game Boy Color, holding various D-pad directions and pressing A or B changes the color scheme. If you've got a GB printer try holding Feed when you switch it on.



## MARIO GOLF

### BEGINNER'S LUCK

**Hacking your way around** a course in less than par is a matter of talent, but scoring a hole in one is almost

entirely down to luck. Sticking a bit of backspin on the ball seems to help a little, and if you keep saving and quitting on a par three hole, you'll get one in the end.



## METAL GEAR SOLID

### SPY HARD

At the end of each level the game rates your performance according to how quickly you finished and

how many times you were spotted. Getting anything other than a terrible rating is cause for celebration, but can you score a perfect on any level?



## POKÉMON

### EASY DOES IT

**Monsters are easier** to catch when their strength is reduced. If you've got nerves of steel and an encyclopedic

knowledge of attack strengths, you can reduce a creature to a single health point to guarantee a capture. Try it on a one-off beast like Mewtwo, if you dare.



## POKÉMON PINBALL

### DEATH SAVE

When the ball slips down either gutter, raise the flipper it passes under and give the "table" a hefty forward

shove, quickly followed by a sideways shove. The ball will bounce up onto the opposite flipper. Works on real pinball machines, too (if you have forearms like Popeye).

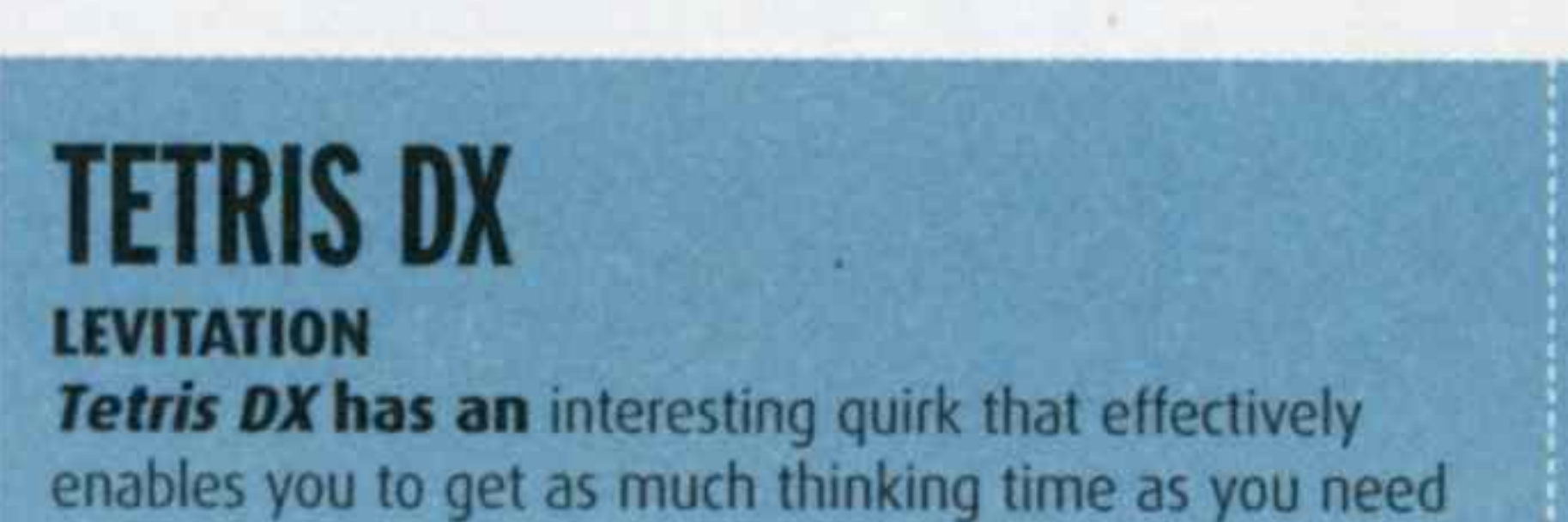


## SUPER MARIO BROS. DELUXE

### SHELL SURFING

Remember the shell surfing scenes in *Super Mario 64*? You can (sort of) recreate the same effect in this 8-bit

classic, if you have lightning reactions. Stomp a Koopa on the stairs at the end of level 3-1 and time your jumps so you keep bouncing on the shell.



## TETRIS DX

### LEVITATION

*Tetris DX* has an interesting quirk that effectively enables you to get as much thinking time as you need

before placing a block. As the block falls, move it to the side of the screen and hammer one of the rotate buttons as fast as you can. The piece will hover indefinitely.



## GAME BOY INFO BURST

It's a small system, but it has a huge list of games. The Game Boy's longevity means that there's more than a decade's worth of back catalogue to select from – all of which is worthy of your attention.

Included in the following round-up are some re-released classics, tweaked to sit perfectly on the tiny screen. Next to them are diminutive versions of games originally designed to fill the boots of N64 and PlayStation. What you'll also find are some great original games – they might not all forge new paths in gameplay, but they're certainly stuffed with the kind of excitement that'll keep you and your Game Boy happy on even the longest of journeys.

Of course if you and your Game Boy are stuck in the middle of nowhere, the last thing you want to be faced with is a brain-meltingly dud game, munching your batteries and boring you to tears – and that's why we've included a few bloopers in this list. Look out for these – they're the worst kind of traveling companion you could possibly be stuck with.



REVIEWED: Feb '00



### ARMY MEN

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Digital Eclipse

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



The similarity between *Army Men* on the Game Boy and the PlayStation version is remarkable. The object is to complete a series of increasingly difficult missions by killing lots of little plastic soldiers. Sadly, it's spoiled by a nasty rotational control system that's left over from the game's 3D days. But it can still be great fun.

### BALLISTIC

PUB: Infogrames

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Infogrames

BUDGET: No



Where would puzzle games be without the good old "match three colors" idea? Well there'd be no *Puyo Puyo*, no *Bust-a-Move*, and certainly no *Ballistic*, which adds an interesting twist. *Tetris* is still the undisputed king of the Game Boy puzzle scene, but this shooting-balls-at-ever-moving-colored-chains game is an unusual alternative.

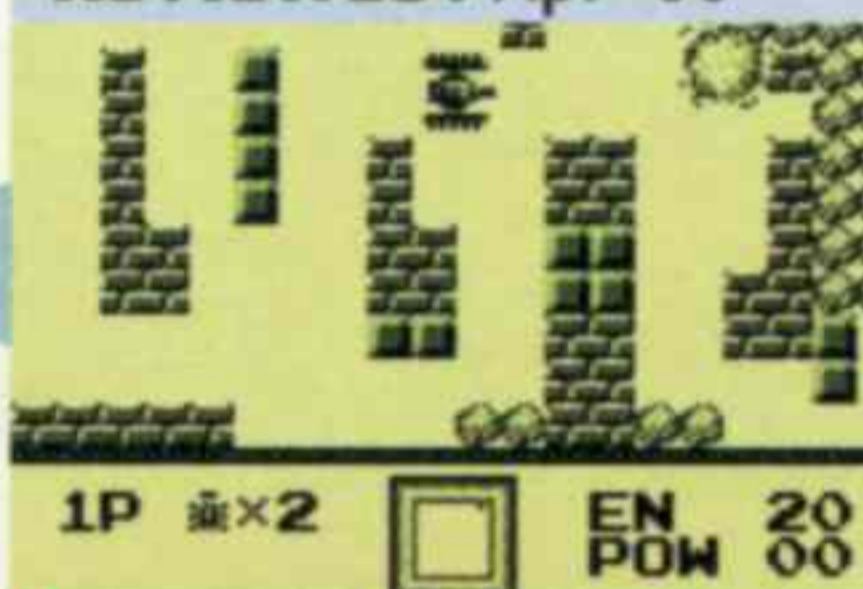
REVIEWED: July '00



VERDICT:

08/10

REVIEWED: Apr '00



### BATTLE CITY

PUB: Namco

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEV: Namco

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

08/10



The simplest concepts are often the best. Take the mazes from *Pac-Man*, add vehicles and scrolling from *Armored Car*, and throw in a few tanks for good measure. Back in 1980, that formula gave Namco a taste of arcade success with the enjoyable *Battle City*. A decade later, the Game Boy played host to an impressive, miniaturized conversion.

### BATTLETANX

PUB: 3DO

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Lucky Chicken

BUDGET: No



The entertaining post-apocalyptic tank romp comes to the Game Boy shorn of its multiplayer options, but with a full quota of blasting on board. There are five American cities, each with three separate missions. You drive around the maze-like streets in one of three types of tank, looking for things to destroy or coins to collect.

REVIEWED: Apr '00



VERDICT:

06/10

REVIEWED: Feb '00



### BILLY BOB'S HUNTIN' 'N' FISHIN'

PUB: Midway

PLAYERS: 1

DEV: Saffire

BUDGET: No

VERDICT:

06/10



*Billy Bob* is all about a fat hillbilly's quest to impress the beautiful Daisy with his hunting and fishing prowess. Daisy will request a certain type of animal and you have to catch it for her by entering a series of mini-games. It's good value and probably worth playing just to see what happens when Billy Bob finally wins her hand.

REVIEWED: Jul '00



### BLASTER MASTER: ENEMY BELOW

**PUB:** Sunsoft **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Sunsoft **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

**You get a little** guy who can ride in a leaping tank or run around on foot, and he has to shoot his way through a bunch of platform levels. The biggest problems are the poor quality graphics and character design. As it stands, *Blaster Master* is nowhere near as good as *Duke Nukem*, and a million miles away from *Metal Slug*.

REVIEWED: Mar '00



### DAFFY DUCK FOWL PLAY

**PUB:** Sunsoft **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Sunsoft **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**In this platform adventure**, Daffy has an unlimited supply of lethal sticks of dynamite which he uses to blow up rocks and turn cuddly villains into tasty meat treats. It's plenty of fun, with a warped sense of humor and a good deal of tension. It might not last as long as you'd like, but it's one of the better platform games you can buy.

### BUBBLE BOBBLE

**PUB:** Metro 3D **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Taito **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Apr '00



**Some games just don't** fit on the Game Boy's tiny screen, and here the developer has kept everything at normal size, forcing the screen to scroll to keep up with you. This has a ruinous effect on the gameplay, because it's essential that you see everything that's going on. *Bubble Bobble* was a classic in the arcades, but here it's a shambles.

VERDICT:  
**04/10**

### DEJA VU I & II

**PUB:** Kemco **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Infinite Ventures **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Mar '00



**The name's Harding.** Ace Harding. Except poor Ace has lost his memory, there's a broad with a piece gunning for his blood, and just about everyone in the seedy old town seems to have something to hide. Once you're accustomed to the game's peculiarities, you'll find an enjoyably large adventure awaiting you.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: May '99



### LOONEY TUNES: CARROT CRAZY

**PUB:** Infogrames **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Infogrames **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**In this cartoon platform** game you can switch between the two characters at any time, but Bugs is bigger, stronger, and he can dig holes. Lola can jump higher, and she carries an umbrella. She also enjoys braining baddies with a rolling pin. It's all good clean fun, although not as varied or entertaining as *Looney Tunes*.

REVIEWED: July '99



### DROPZONE

**PUB:** Acclaim **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Archer Maclean **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

**This is a fantastically** rapid fire blast-em-up that has transferred brilliantly to the Game Boy. You maneuver your space soldier through hundreds of screens of side-scrolling basicness, blasting armies of aliens and rescuing human survivors. It may sound simple, but when it ramps up the difficulty, the going gets tough.

### BUST-A-MOVE 4

**PUB:** Acclaim **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crawfish Interactive **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: Aug '99



**This introduces a new** type of puzzle to the series. Bubbles are suspended in two clusters from the ceiling, connected by a pulley. If you add or remove too many bubbles from one side the whole thing becomes unbalanced and drops below the deadline. It adds a new tactical dimension to this addictive game.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

### F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

**PUB:** Ubi Soft **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Ubi Soft **BUDGET:** No

REVIEWED: May '00



**This comes with a** Video System pedigree, and it's similar to the the Game Boy version of *FTWGP*. However, it's much easier to get to grips with, more detailed and a lot better looking. It's also a very comprehensive game, with a snappy Arcade mode and a more involving Sim mode. Technically, it's very good indeed.

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: July '00



### BUGS BUNNY'S CRAZY CASTLE 4

**PUB:** Kemco **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Kemco **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Crazy Castle 4** is very similar to the previous outing. This time it's for Game Boy Color only, so the graphics look a little better, but the scrolling still trembles along in eight-pixel jumps and the gameplay is unchanged. It takes a while before you come across anything taxing though, and the early levels are dull.

REVIEWED: Apr '99



### HEXCITE

**PUB:** Ubi Soft **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Ubi Soft **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

**Hexcite** resembles a cross between a jigsaw puzzle and *Solitaire*, except it's played against an opponent. You start the game with a selection of shapes, the object being to get rid of as many of them as possible and finish with more points than your opponent. It's the sort of game that'll either grab you right from the start or leave you cold.




REVIEWED: Mar '99



## KLUSTAR

PUB: Infogrames PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Rebellion BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**

 **Klutar is the first** 360° Tetris type. You begin with a single dot in the center of the screen, Tetris-like shapes float toward you from all sides and you have to catch them on your dot. Once you've made a big enough chunk of connected pieces, they disappear. It's tricky and gimmicky, but smarter than most Tetris wannabes.


REVIEWED: Aug '00



## MOOMIN'S TALE


PUB: Sunsoft PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Sunsoft BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **How far would you** go to recover a lost hankie? Based on the popular children's stories from Finland, Moomin's Tale is surprisingly good, considering it is a game aimed at very young players. It's as cute as can be, the graphics are bold and colorful, and it soon gets challenging enough to keep older gamers interested, too.

## KNOCKOUT KINGS

PUB: EA Sports PLAYERS: 1-2  
DEV: Digital Eclipse BUDGET: No

 **This is the best** beat-'em-up on the Game Boy. Instead of standing toe-to-toe and slugging it out, Knockout Kings gives you full 360° freedom to circle your opponent, land a few quick jabs and dodge back to safety. With top graphics, clear speech, plenty of options, a versus mode and speedy gameplay, you don't have to be a boxing fan to love it.


REVIEWED: Mar '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## MR. DRILLER

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

 **The meat of the** game, as usual, involves joining a series of colored blocks together to make them disappear and in turn bring about chain reactions. To add to the tension there's limited air, so the space-suited little fella needs to pick up the air cylinders encased in the blocks as he drills. It's addictive, but stick to the classic puzzlers.

REVIEWED: Mar '01



VERDICT:  
**06/10**


REVIEWED: July '00



## LOONEY TUNES COLLECTOR: ALERT!

PUB: Infogrames PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Infogrames BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **This is an epic** adventure with 14 playable characters and 20 large levels to explore. You have to foil Marvin the Martian's fiendish plot to destroy the world and you'll need the assistance of as many Looney Tunes favorites as possible. There are also three simple games you can play against a friend. A good value package for the younger player.


REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## MS. PAC-MAN


PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Presumably intended as** Pac-Man for the girls, Ms. Pac-Man is coupled with the obscure Super Pac-Man, a deeply confusing version of the game involving keys, locked areas and power pills that make the Pacster swell up to the size of a beach ball and start floating above the play area. Like Pac-Man, this is a classic bit of retro fun.

## MICKEY'S RACING ADVENTURE

PUB: Nintendo PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Rare BUDGET: No

 **This takes the exploration** elements from Diddy Kong Racing and marries them to the racing style of RC Pro Am on the SNES. It's an impressively huge game, and the graphics are fantastic. The racing can be a bit hit-and-miss, though, because victory tends to rely as much on mistakes by the computer opponents as it does on skill.


REVIEWED: Feb '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## PAC-MAN

PUB: Namco PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Namco BUDGET: No

 **Pac-Man was huge** in his day - the Pikachu of the early '80s. You can play this GB version at full scale or at a more suitable zoomed-out view which enables you to see where the uneaten pills and ghosts are lurking. Pac-Man also includes Pac Attack, a kind of Tetris variant - it's rather enjoyable in small doses.

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Apr '00



## MICRO MACHINES TWIN TURBO

PUB: THQ PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Virtucraft Ltd BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**

 **Hop into a vehicle** the size of a thimble and race around full-size environments. It's an idea that has kept us happy for years, on every machine from the NES to the N64. This Game Boy Color version is brilliant. It features the first two games in the series, with around 60 tracks and 15 little vehicles. The best handheld racing game ever.


REVIEWED: July '00



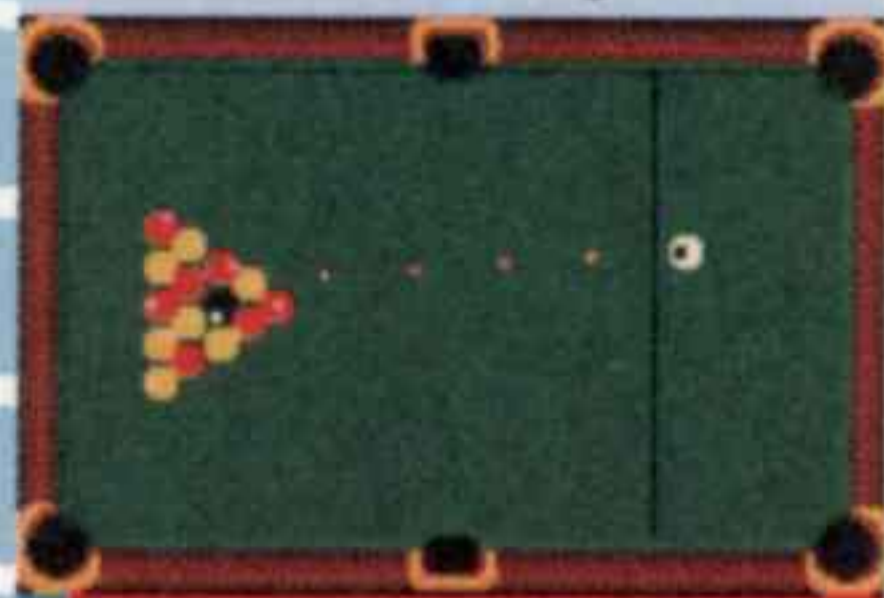
## PONG

PUB: Majesco PLAYERS: 1  
DEV: Morning Star BUDGET: No

VERDICT:  
**02/10**

 **This is a conversion** of a great PlayStation game, but with many of the levels and much of the playability and challenge sucked out. You get the basic monochrome original, plus three improved versions with a selection of extra paddles and obstacles on the table. It's simple and ridiculously easy to beat. There's no two-player mode, either.

REVIEWED: Aug '00



## PRO POOL

**PUB:** Codemasters      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Codemasters      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**Gamble, hustle and cheat** your way through the seedy pool halls of the United States. *Pro Pool* features a bewildering variety of game styles, from 9-ball to 3-ball, plus Speed, Killer, US and UK rules. It plays as well as *Virtual Pool* on the N64, and it's relatively easy to aim your shots, thanks to the clear overhead view.

REVIEWED: Aug '99



## SPY HUNTER/MOON PATROL

**PUB:** Midway      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Digital Eclipse      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**Spy Hunter is the** main attraction in this two-in-one cart. This driving/shoot-'em-up game has you driving at speed along a narrow, twisty road, weaving in and out of unnaturally hostile traffic in the pursuit of spies. *Moon Patrol* is of the same genre with hovering aliens to shoot and great big potholes to jump over. Both are pretty good fun.

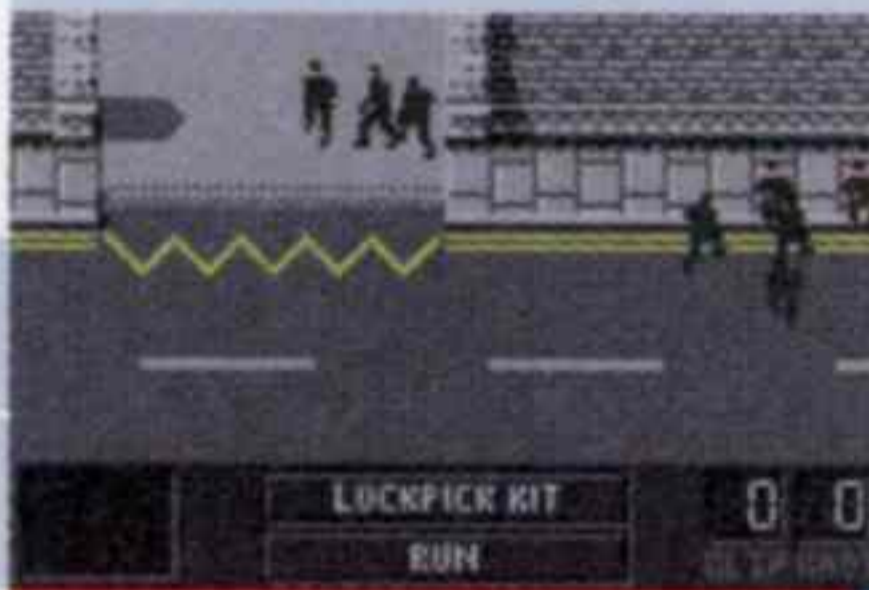
## RAINBOW SIX

**PUB:** Red Storm      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crawfish Interactive      **BUDGET:** No



**Tom Clancy's novel spawned** a top-notch game on N64 and PC, which seemed too complicated to be translated well to the Game Boy. However, this is a scorching conversion. Everything's here - from the planning stages to the missions - along with the masses of stats and options that made the original such an involving experience.

REVIEWED: May '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

## STREET FIGHTER ALPHA

**PUB:** Capcom      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crawfish Interactive      **BUDGET:** No



**Although Street Fighter 2** on the SNES sold more machines than any game except *Mario World* and the *Turbo* update is still one of the best beat-'em-ups anywhere, both games relied on a six-button controller. On the Game Boy, with just two buttons to play with, it doesn't feel like the same game at all. That's not to say that it isn't still good fun.

REVIEWED: Mar '00



VERDICT:  
**06/10**

REVIEWED: June '00



## RAYMAN

**PUB:** Ubi Soft      **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**DEV:** Ubi Soft      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**This is better suited** to plain 2D, and it's a lot less frustrating than the N64 version. Ray's precision jumps just work better when the game is viewed from the side. There are four worlds, plus timed bonus games and boss battles, so it's a big challenge. The graphics are very pretty, with a nice retro feel to the gameplay.

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

**PUB:** Ubi Soft      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Visual Impact      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**This is a damn fine** handheld racing game. As with most other pseudo-3D driving games, the tracks don't stretch very far into the horizon, the scenery is sparse and you won't find many other racers to overtake. It is, however, fast, smooth and great fun to play, exploiting the extra power of the GB Color to create some very nippy roads.

## READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING

**PUB:** Midway      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crawfish Interactive      **BUDGET:** No



**This is a remarkably** authentic replica of the 3D original, largely thanks to some slick presentation. The actual game plays a lot like it does on the N64, except with even fewer moves. It's still basically just a case of standing toe-to-toe with your opponent and hammering the buttons until one of you falls over and is too limited for a fighting game.

REVIEWED: Feb '00



VERDICT:  
**04/10**

## TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

**PUB:** SouthPeak      **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**DEV:** Spellbound      **BUDGET:** No



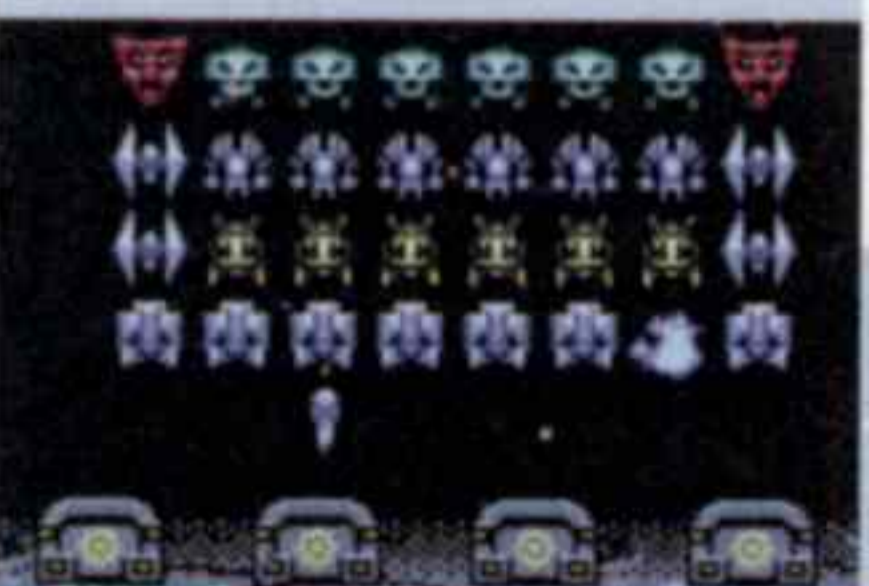
**TOCA dispenses with every** roadside irritant and gives you huge cone-fields to plough your way through. All you have to do is skid slightly wide on a corner and the pointy red objects will be sent scattering all over the place. Wreaking havoc on the roadworks is plenty of fun, and there's a decent racing game here, too.

REVIEWED: Oct '00



VERDICT:  
**08/10**

REVIEWED: Xmas '99



## SPACE INVADERS

**PUB:** Activision      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Crawfish Interactive      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**06/10**



**This version of the** classic arcade shoot-'em-up has new invaders that take several hits to kill, extra weapons (such as a three-way laser), shields that can be replenished and weird formations. It retains enough of the original gameplay to be recognizably *Space Invaders* and most of the new stuff works well.

REVIEWED: May '00



## TOMB RAIDER

**PUB:** THQ      **PLAYERS:** 1  
**DEV:** Core      **BUDGET:** No

VERDICT:  
**08/10**



**This is a real** looker. There are around 2,000 frames of animation, and Lara has an impressive array of moves. The same kind of attention to detail has been lavished on the cut scenes. The gameplay is all about making split-second leaps, plus Lara's pistols get a good workout. Great platforming fun.

# COMING SOON...

IT'S THE BIGGEST REVAMP IN THE GAME BOY'S HISTORY  
- GET READY FOR SOME STUNNING POCKET-SIZED GAMEPLAY...

**G**ame Boy is by far the biggest-selling game machine ever made. It might have looked primitive when it was launched in 1989, and the 1998 GB Color update wasn't exactly an earth-shattering leap of technology, but Nintendo got the important things right - it's small, it's cheap and it doesn't eat batteries.

It's also still incredibly popular, but the future of handheld gaming now lies with the Game Boy Advance, which has opened up many new possibilities for software developers. GBA is considerably more powerful than its predecessor, featuring a 32-bit engine room and an armory of nifty audio-visual tricks such as sprite scaling and FMV playback.

In home console terms it's just slightly more advanced than a SNES, but compared to the original Game Boy, it might as well come from a different

planet. It even has a built-in Game Boy Color, so it plays all existing GB carts.

The GBA has been designed as the ultimate 2D game machine, meaning all of those classic game styles seen on the SNES and in arcades are set for a major revival. Scrolling beat-'em-

mixing polygonal characters with pre-rendered backgrounds for an effect that's every bit as good-looking as the stunning original PlayStation version.

Four GBAs can be linked together for multiplayer games, an option supported by many GBA titles, and unlike the basic

buy mode. Very clever.

If the wide range of off-beat peripherals available for the Game Boy is any indication, GBA's connectivity is something Nintendo is sure to exploit in the future. It will take a while before we see anything quite as unusual as the Game Boy's sewing machine add-on or the Pocket Sonar (for locating shoals of fish), but it shouldn't be too long before there's a color version of the fantastic Game Boy Camera.

The GBA can also be plugged straight into the forthcoming Gamecube console, acting as a basic controller with its own private screen. It's an idea taken from an abandoned Game Boy/N64 link-up lead, which Sega later adopted in the form of the Dreamcast VMU. Although few Dreamcast games use the VMU for anything other than calling secret plays in football titles, the GBA's hi-res screen will enable Nintendo's designers to produce something far more sophisticated than anything that was possible on the primitive VMU display.


On the software front, GBA's similarity to the SNES means Nintendo has the option to churn out quick conversions of some of the finest games ever made, in much the same manner as the Game Boy Color DX series of NES updates. *Metroid 4*, *Mario Kart Super Circuit*, *Super Mario World*, *Yoshi's Island* and many more are currently slated for a GBA outing. Original projects include *Game Boy Music*, which turns the GBA into a portable synth and sequencer, and a host of titles from the hundreds of third-party publishers eager to jump on the GBA gravy train. If one thing is certain, it's that GBA owners will be spoiled for choice over the next few years.

## "THE GBA - DESIGNED AS THE ULTIMATE 2D GAMES MACHINE"

ups, fast racing games and platformers with the kind of huge, colorful levels the original Game Boy couldn't handle. And just because the GBA is optimized for 2D graphics, doesn't mean 3D is impossible. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* is an early example of what's possible on the machine,

Game Boy, it's possible to play against friends without having to buy additional cartridges. All you need to play a simplified multiplayer game of, say, *F-Zero*, is a single copy - part of the code is then downloaded to the empty GBAs to give your opponents a taste of a kind of try-before-you-






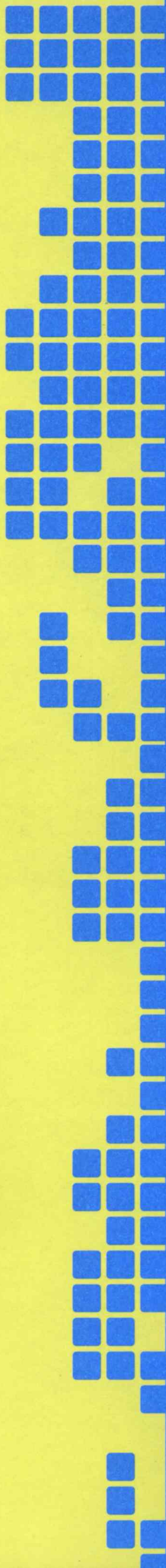
# IN THE BEGINNING

**Where did it all begin?** Where did the games we're playing today come from? How many of the latest innovations in software design can be traced back to an obscure 8-bit game or a forgotten arcade machine?

Retrogaming is a huge topic. The most popular machine of recent years, Sony's PlayStation, has accumulated a library of around 1,500 games since its launch in 1995, but it's estimated that there were at least 6,000 to 7,000 titles produced for the Apple II alone. More than 10,000 for the Commodore 64. And nobody knows for sure how many coin-ops have been produced since the whole videogame industry kicked off in the early '70s, let alone the number of games released for minority interest computers and consoles that players brought up on machines like the SNES might never have heard of.

Cataloguing this sprawling history is next to impossible, although ongoing Internet projects such as Gamebase64 aim to compile definitive single-format listings. What you'll find over the following pages are 150 of the most significant, influential or just plain memorable games produced for the arcades and for home systems that are no longer with us. And if anything here gives you the urge to grab a torch, climb up into the attic and dig out that old C64, then that's just perfect...





## COIN-OPS

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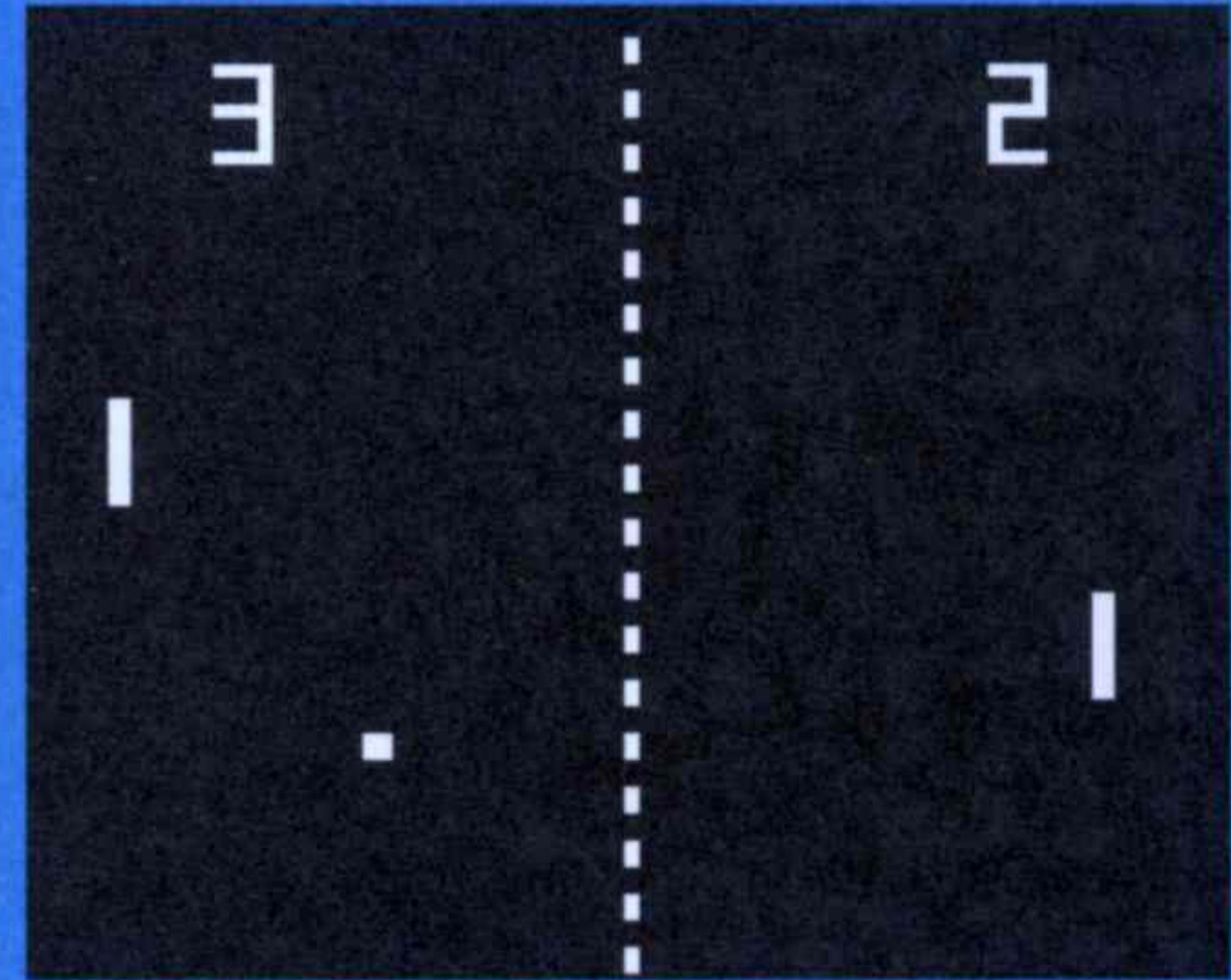
### 1. COMPUTER SPACE

**From:** Nutting Associates / **Year:** 1971  
Developed by Nolan Bushnell, based on *Space War*, one of the first ever computer games. *Space War* was written in 1962 by Steve Russell, and ran on the kind of powerful machines found in university computer labs. Bushnell's innovation was to strip the game to its bare circuits, utilizing only the essential parts. After he'd created the first stand-alone arcade videogame, Bushnell discovered that *Computer Space* was far too complicated for the average guy, and it failed to sell.

**Rating:** 5

### 2. PONG

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1972



Nolan Bushnell learned from his *Computer Space* experience and produced a much simpler two-player game which was "influenced" by a Magnavox Odyssey game designed by Ralph Baer (also the creator of the *Simon* electronic sound-and-light toy). *Pong* involved nothing more than batting a small dot between two paddles controlled by a pair of dials, but it caught on, sparking a videogame craze across the world and sowing the seeds of a new entertainment medium.

**Rating:** 7

### 3. SPACE INVADERS

**From:** Taito / **Year:** 1978  
Although by no means the first coin-op videogame, Taito's mesmerizing classic defined a new gaming genre and in the process became a convenient byword for the booming electronic entertainment industry.

The original Taito cabinet had a two-way joystick, but the cheaper two-button Midway version will be more familiar to Western players. The game's popularity upon its release in Japan caused a major coin shortage, prompting an urgent increase in Yen production. Versions of *Space Invaders* are available for virtually every console and computer format.

**Rating:** 8

### 4. ASTEROIDS

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1979  
Graceful, almost balletic, zero-gravity shoot-'em-up. The aim is to blast large rocks into small ones, small ones into tiny ones and tiny ones into dust. Out to stop you are a pair of UFOs nicknamed Mr. Bill (the small, dangerous one) and Sluggo (the big, slow one), which you can destroy for bonus points. The controls are smooth and intuitive, and an analog synth booms away spookily in the background, intended to represent your increasing heartbeat.

**Rating:** 9

### 5. GALAXIAN

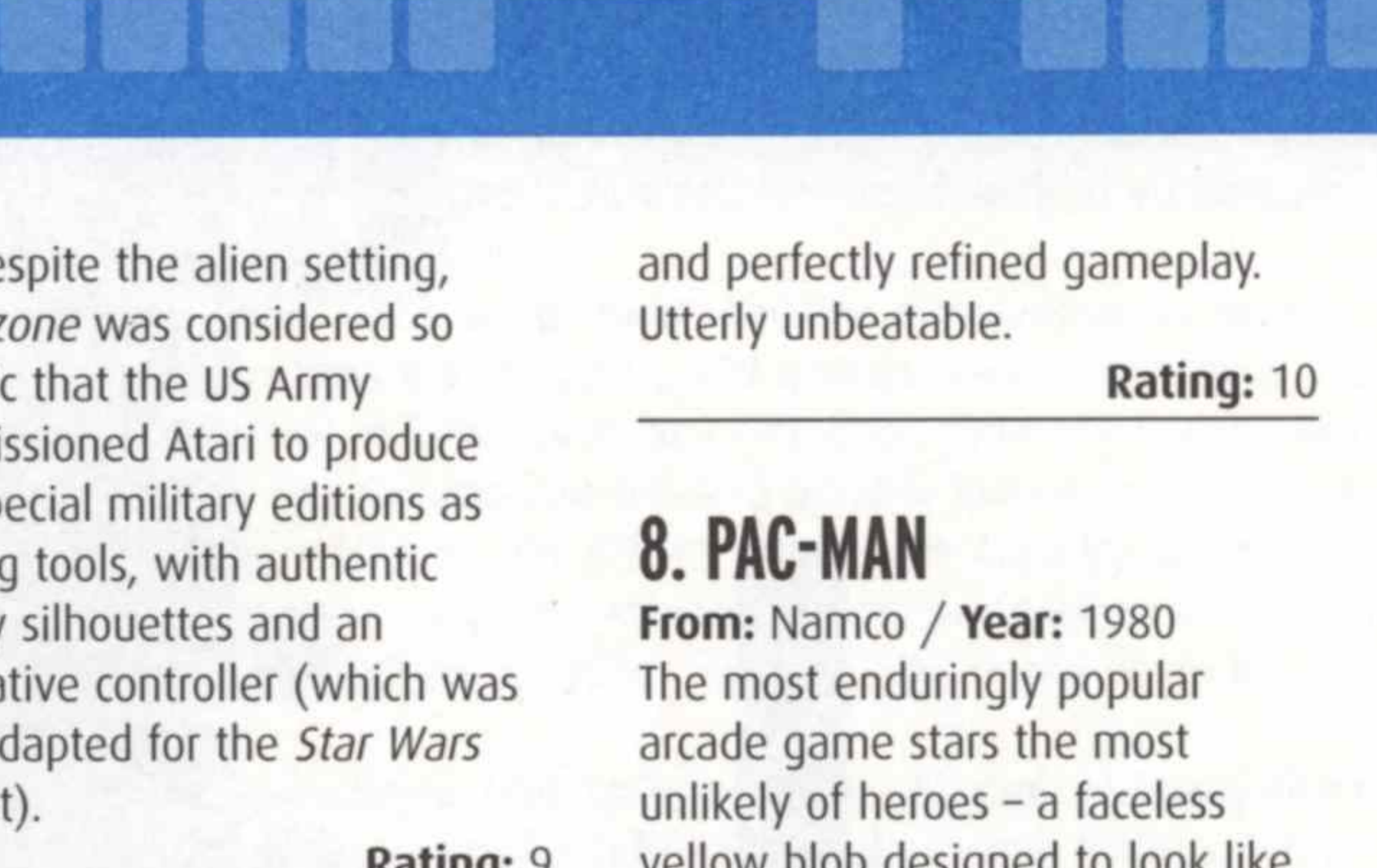
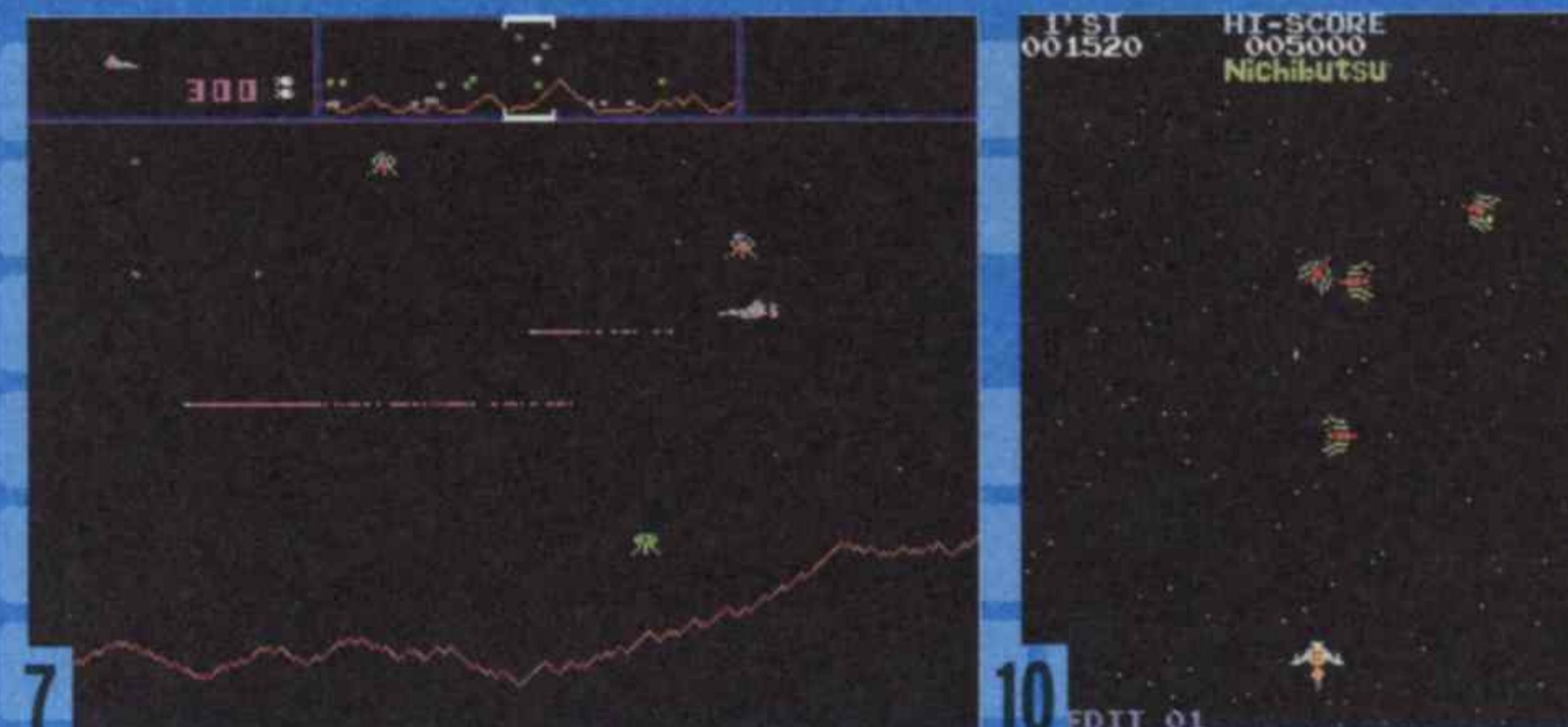
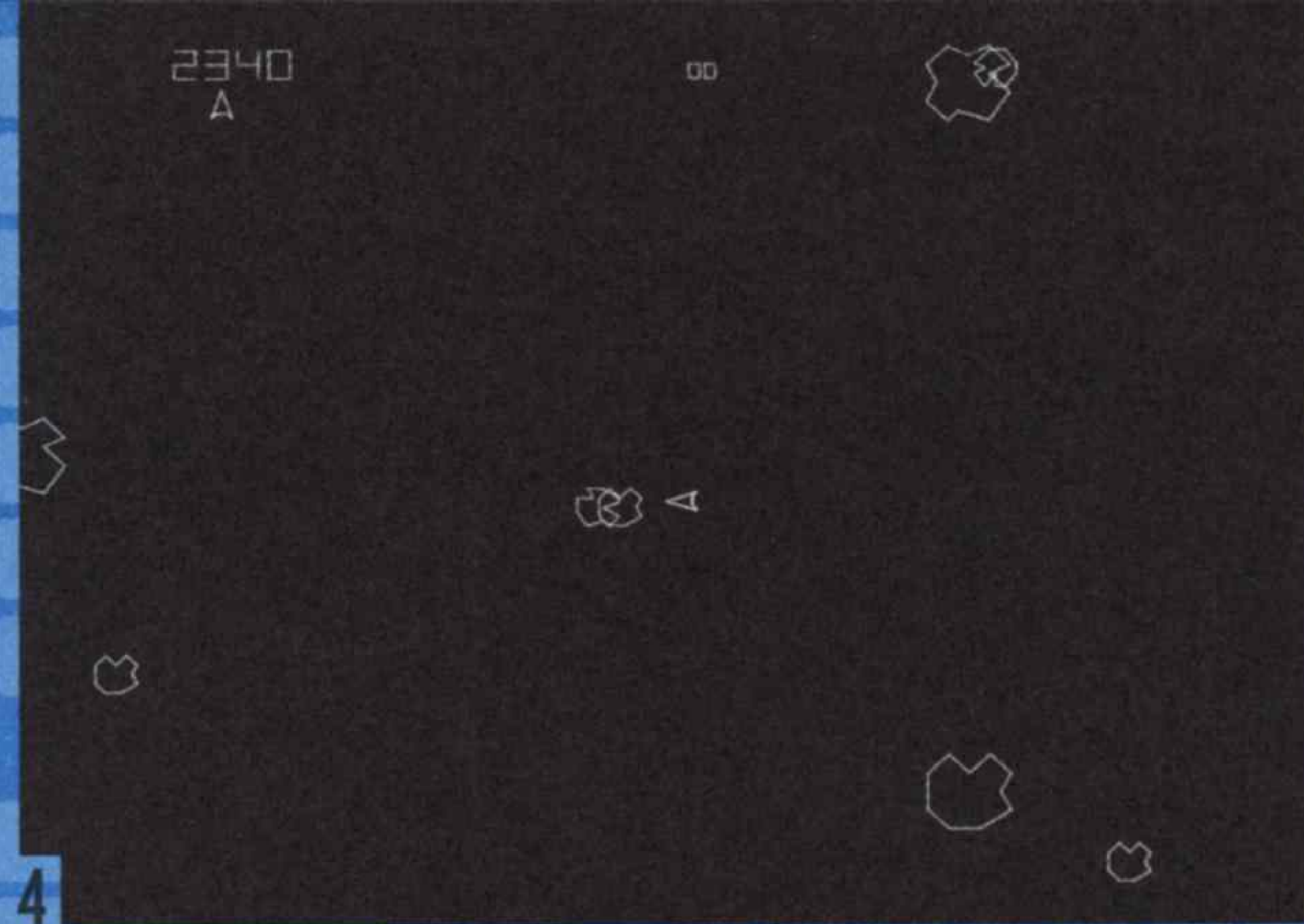
**From:** Namco / **Year:** 1979  
*Space Invaders* in outer space. This time the aliens don't march toward the bottom of the screen – instead they peel off and attack in waves, led by dive-bombing convoy leaders called Galaxips.

Features a color display – previously games relied on strips of colored acetate to jazz up monochrome graphics.

**Rating:** 8

### 6. BATTLEZONE

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1980  
A tank simulator set on a strange world filled with alien tanks, flying saucers and angular blocks for hiding behind. The shock of seeing a crack spread across the screen after you get shot is a classic videogaming moment.



### 7. DEFENDER

**From:** Williams / **Year:** 1980  
The greatest shoot-'em-up of all time? Certainly nothing else could touch *Defender* when it came to heart-stopping action and hardcore difficulty. The many home conversions don't do justice to the superhuman skill required to master the original arcade version – replacing the two-way joystick and five-button control system with something like a PlayStation pad simply doesn't cut it. Satisfyingly meaty analog sound effects, huge explosions

**Rating:** 9

and perfectly refined gameplay. Utterly unbeatable.

**Rating:** 10

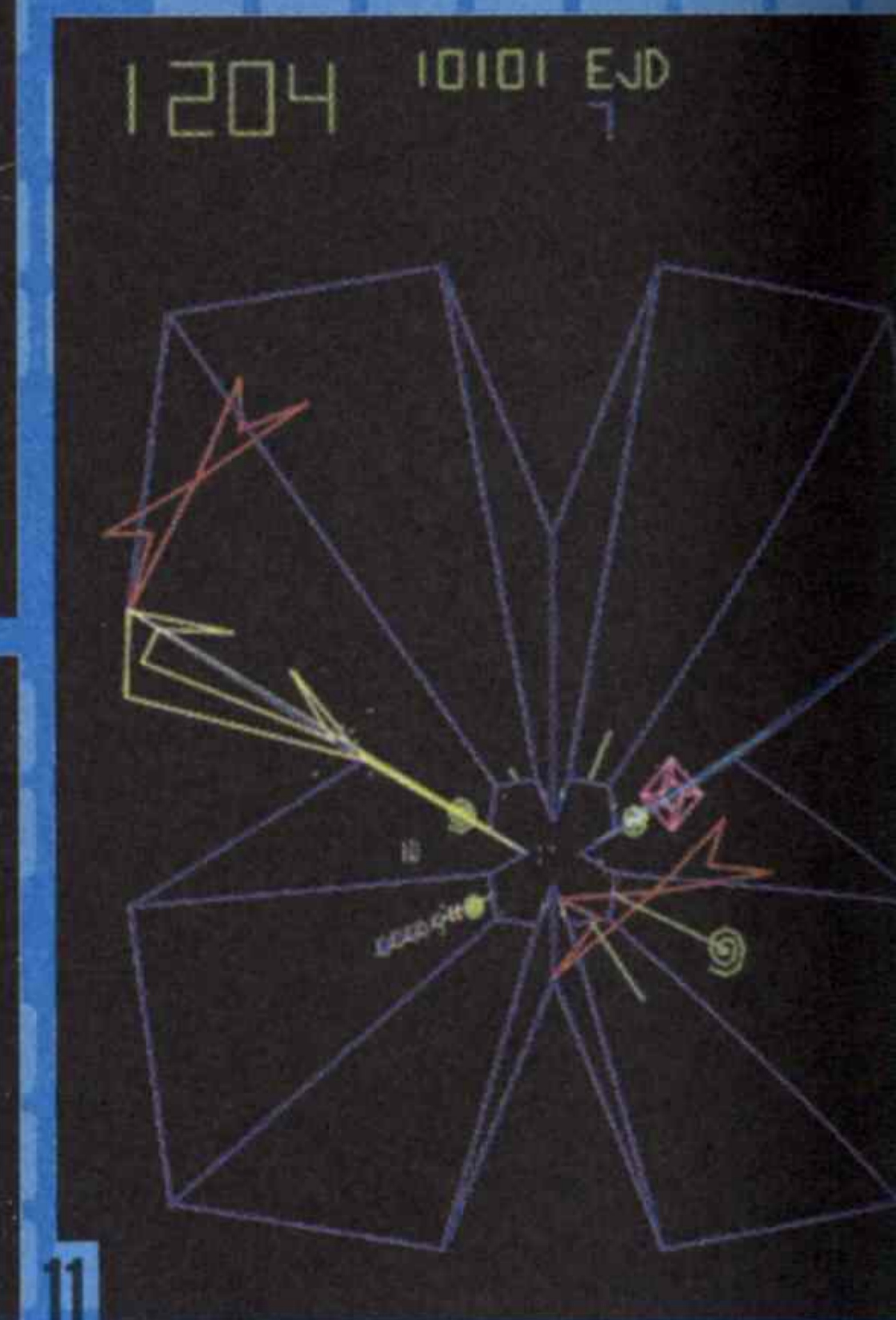
### 8. PAC-MAN

**From:** Namco / **Year:** 1980  
The most enduringly popular arcade game stars the most unlikely of heroes – a faceless yellow blob designed to look like a pizza with a slice removed. It's a simple concept, with just one maze, four enemies, and 240 dots to feed into Pac-Man's gaping maw, and it hasn't stopped selling since. Pac-Man later donned lipstick and a fetching red bow in an attempt to pass himself off as Ms. Pac-Man – the two have never been seen together.

**Rating:** 10

### 9. MISSILE COMMAND

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1980  
Atari's Cold War battle simulation. Originally called *Armageddon* and set in California (until it was



decided that the combination of name and subject matter was too unpleasant), the object of the game is to defend three cities from nuclear attack. The computer always wins in the end.

**Rating:** 9

### 10. MOON CRESTA

**From:** Nichibutsu / **Year:** 1980  
*Moon Cresta* propelled shoot-'em-ups to a new level of sophistication, introducing a ship that could be built up in three stages by docking two smaller craft with a huge base unit. The finished item was one of the largest and most destructive forces ever seen in an arcade (next to the things that attack Emilio Estevez in *Nightmares*).

**Rating:** 8

### 11. TEMPEST

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1981  
Designer Dave Theurer originally envisaged a game with monsters

crawling from the depths of the earth toward the player. In the end, *Tempest* became a surreal shoot-'em-up in which the monsters are abstract shapes and the "tunnel to hell" is a neon mesh floating in the void. Now one of the most collectable arcade machines, *Tempest* has received gameplay upgrades from talented enthusiasts and two outstanding modern updates courtesy of Jeff Minter (including *T2K* for the Atari Jaguar – see *Tempest X3*, page 96).

**Rating: 9**

## 12. GORF

**From:** Bally Midway / **Year:** 1981  
Multi-stage space shooter that incorporated a version of *Galaxian* as one of its five different levels. An impressive cabinet included a chunky flight stick instead of the usual ball-top joystick, and a series of lights to count your rank – from Space Cadet all the way to Space Avenger – each time the final mothership was destroyed.

**Rating: 8**

## 13. SCRAMBLE

**From:** Konami / **Year:** 1981  
Six-stage shoot-'em-up, with difficult terrain to negotiate and both airborne and ground-based enemies. The ship is equipped with bombs as well as a cannon, and it burns fuel at an alarming rate – forget to bomb the fuel tanks on the ground and it will simply fall out of the air. Challenging and enjoyable.

**Rating: 9**

## 14. POLE POSITION

**From:** Namco / **Year:** 1982  
The great granddaddy of current driving games, with its detailed graphics and fast 3D road. There's only one track – the Fuji GP circuit – and one type of car, but *Pole Position* was so far ahead of the competition that nobody really cared. Some *Pole Position* machines were manufactured by Atari, with alternative graphics.

**Rating: 8**

## 15. SINISTAR

**From:** Williams / **Year:** 1982  
Rock-hard space blaster. Shoot asteroids to extract Sinisite crystals, which are used to make Sinibombs – the only things that

can destroy the giant Sinistar that hordes of worker drones are manufacturing. Once completed, the Sinistar itself yells insults as it pursues the player.

**Rating: 8**

## 16. TRON

**From:** Bally Midway / **Year:** 1982  
Developed alongside the neon-styled Disney film, *Tron* influenced the look of (and outgrossed) its celluloid counterpart. Varied gameplay and great controls – a *Gorf*-style joystick plus an analog paddle dial for aiming. The Light Cycle section is a classic, but the movie version of this had better graphics.

**Rating: 9**

## 17. ZAXXON

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1982  
A kind of 3D version of *Scramble* (see left), with an isometric

perspective that would later be adopted by *Viewpoint* for the Neo Geo. Very difficult to play, thanks to the hazardous objects on the planet's surface and the homing missile that would quickly end the game if you tried flying high, away from danger.

**Rating: 7**

## 18. DRAGON'S LAIR

**From:** Cinematronics / **Year:** 1983  
At a time when the average arcade game had all the graphical finesse of Teletext, *Dragon's Lair* was a quantum leap in terms of technology. Featuring more than 20 minutes of high-quality animation (created by Don Bluth, director of *The Secret of Nimh*), the game streams video footage direct from a built-in Laserdisc player. It still looks impressive today, and proved hugely successful during its original production run, spawning a

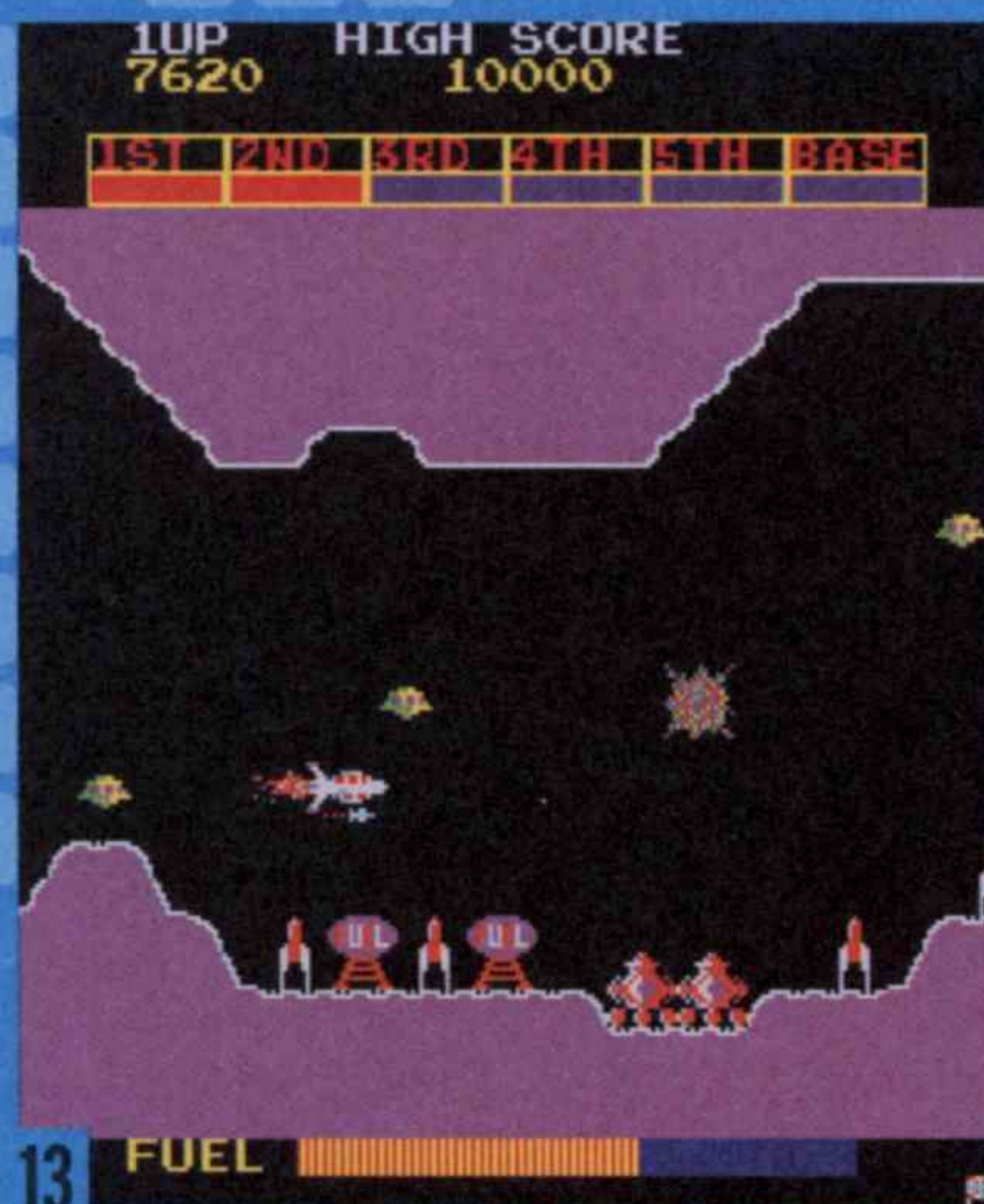
sequel, lots of merchandise and a short-lived TV spin-off. The complete lack of any coherent gameplay (it's effectively a memory test, and all you need to do is make the correct move when prompted) hasn't stopped *Dragon's Lair* becoming a videogame legend. It's now available for use with ordinary DVD players.

**Rating: 8**

## 19. SPY HUNTER

**From:** Bally Midway / **Year:** 1983  
A 007-style driving game with enough gadgets to keep even the most technologically demanding secret agent happy. The object is to blast the bad guys off the road with the aid of guns, missiles, oil slicks and smoke bombs, and the car can change into a boat for some high-speed aquatic action. Plenty of fun.

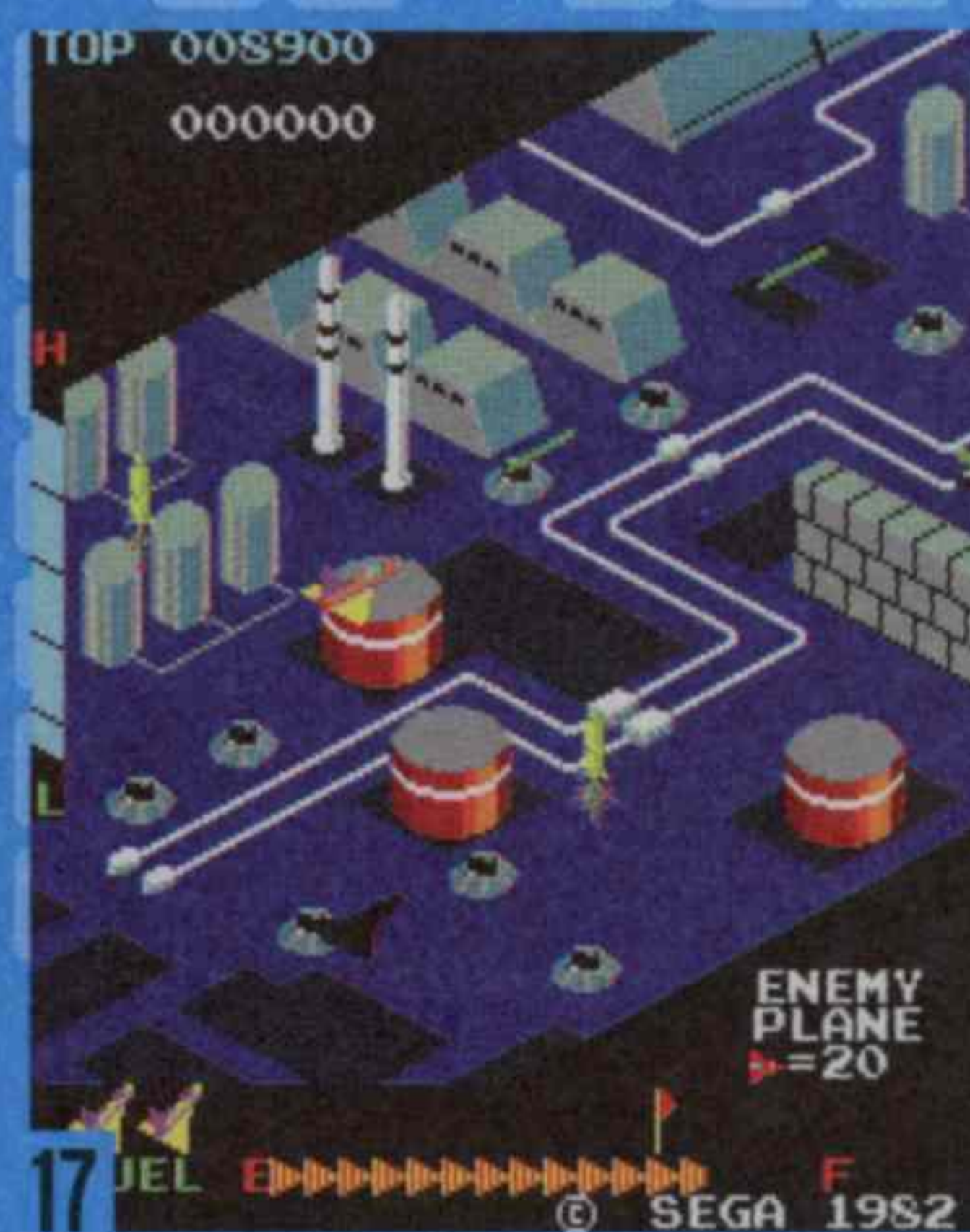
**Rating: 8**



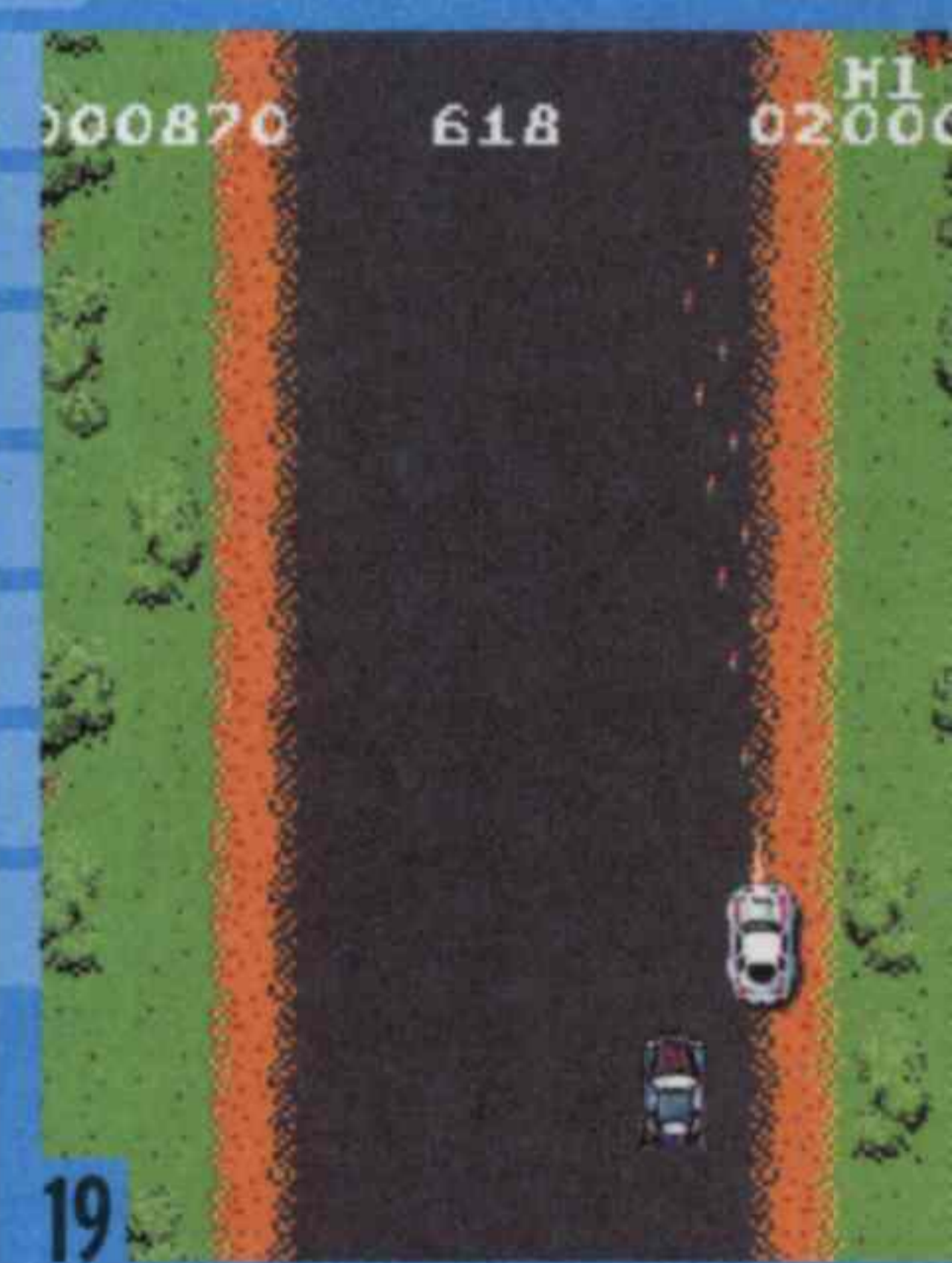
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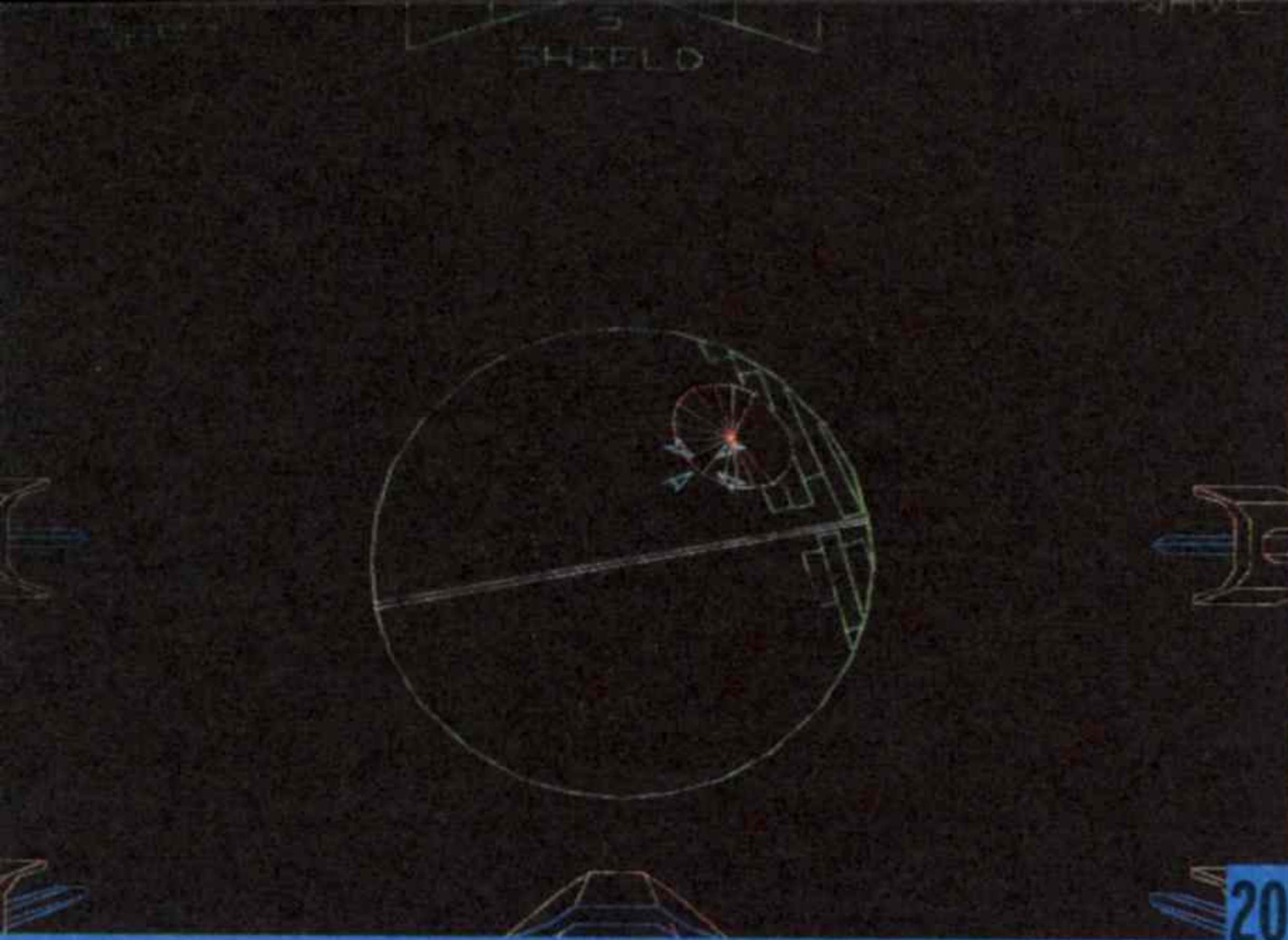
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## 26. DOUBLE DRAGON

**From:** Taito / **Year:** 1987  
Scrolling beat-'em-up for two players. The aim is to rescue the lovely Marian by fighting through four stages filled with bad guys named after characters from the movie *Enter the Dragon*. One player can help the other by grabbing hold of enemies so they can be pummeled with ease.

**Rating:** 8

## 27. NARC

**From:** Williams / **Year:** 1988  
Enter the violent world of drug enforcement cops in the worst neighborhood in the world. Detailed graphics (it was the first 32-bit game) show the bad guys suffering extremely bloody fates. From the mind of Eugene Jarvis, the man responsible for all those abducted humanoids in *Defender*.

**Rating:** 7

## 28. POWER DRIFT

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1988  
Dune buggies whiz around roller coaster tracks constructed of scaled 2D sprites, giving one of the most impressive 3D effects of its day. There are 25 courses, but even the greatest player can only see five of them with one coin.

**Rating:** 8

## 20. STAR WARS

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1983  
Seminal 3D shoot-'em-up, featuring wonderfully smooth graphics and some impressive speech sampled from the movie. *Star Wars* is set around the final assault on the Death Star, and almost every space combat game since has taken inspiration from one (or all) of the three stages featured here.

**Rating:** 10

## 22. SPACE HARRIER

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1985  
An eye-catching hydraulic sit-in cabinet drew crowds to this simplistic, psychedelic shooter, helping spark a trend toward "experience" arcade machines – often closer to fairground rides than traditional coin-ops. *Space Harrier* also appears as a bonus game in Dreamcast's *Shenmue* (minus the cabinet).

**Rating:** 7

## 24. SUPER SPRINT

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1986  
A huge cabinet with three steering wheels is the natural home of this competitive overhead view racer, in which tiny cars zoom around twisting, single-screen courses. It might not be the greatest-ever one-player experience, but it really does come to life with a couple of human opponents.

**Rating:** 7

## 29. GOLDEN AXE

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1989  
Excellent two-player fantasy beat-'em-up in the *Double Dragon* style, with a choice of three characters and spectacular magic spells. Certain enemies ride strange creatures, which can become useful additions to the players' armory. In fact players often fight among themselves for the right to ride the beasts.

**Rating:** 8

## 21. TAZZ MANIA

**Year:** 1982 / **From:** Stern  
A *Robotron*-style curiosity from Stern, the last surviving maker of pinball machines. *Tazz Mania*'s twist is that each battle takes place in a room in which the walls are slowly closing in, squeezing the action into a smaller space and eventually crushing the unlucky player who fails to escape in time.

**Rating:** 7

## 23. OUT RUN

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1986  
A red Ferrari, a blonde passenger and a road filled with aggressive traffic helped *Out Run* become the biggest coin-op of the time. The excellent hydraulics on the deluxe cabinet enhanced its reputation, even if most machines were basic upright versions. Designed by Yu Suzuki, who went on to create *Shenmue* for Dreamcast.

**Rating:** 8

## 25. AFTER BURNER

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1987  
Sega's quest to create the ultimate "experience" coin-op reached a new level with *After Burner*, a flashy jet-fighter game that was available in an earth-shaking, vertically rotating cab. The graphics performed 360° flips, but it wasn't until 1990's *G-Loc* that cabinet technology could do the same to the player.

**Rating:** 7

## 30. SMASH TV

**From:** Williams / **Year:** 1990  
The chance to win big (virtual) money competing in a *Running Man*-style future gameshow proved irresistible, especially when combined with an update of *Robotron*'s relentless, twin-joystick gameplay and some bloodily comical ultraviolence. Look out for boss "Mutoid Man."

**Rating:** 7



# ATARI

## ATARI 2600

**Year:** 1977

Atari's 2600 was the first mass-market console, emerging from a crowd of dedicated TV *Pong* machines to stake its claim as the founding father of the home videogame scene.

## 31. SPACE INVADERS

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1980

This first ever home console version of a hit coin-op was a must-have game for the Atari 2600. It wasn't as visually refined as the arcade version but it was color and offered an amazing 112 game variations – invisible invaders and so on.

**Rating:** 7

## 32. E.T.

**From:** Atari / **Year:** 1982

Notoriously unplayable adventure licensed from the biggest movie of the '80s. The E.T. sprite was prone to falling in escape-proof pits – ironic, because as legend has it, more E.T. carts were made than there were Atari machines in use,

forcing the secret burial of millions of unsold units in the Nevada desert.

**Rating:** 2

## 33. PITFALL

**From:** Activision / **Year:** 1982

David Crane's platform exploration game proved a big hit thanks to the epic scale of its levels. Featuring dangerous jungles filled with wild animals, mysterious caves and lots of instant death scenarios, the name remained famous enough to receive both PlayStation and Game Boy Advance sequels.

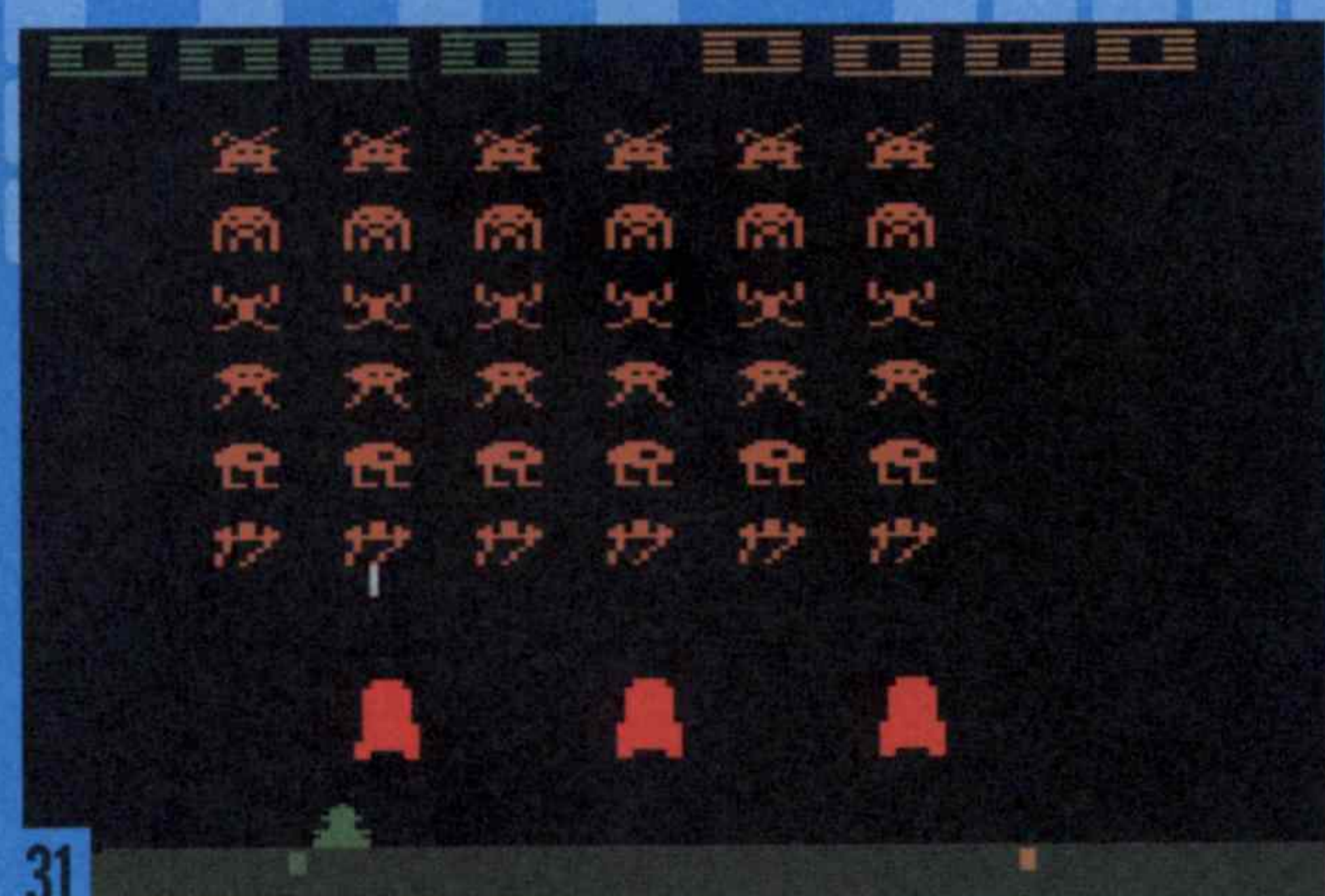
**Rating:** 8

## 34. RIVER RAID

**From:** Activision / **Year:** 1982

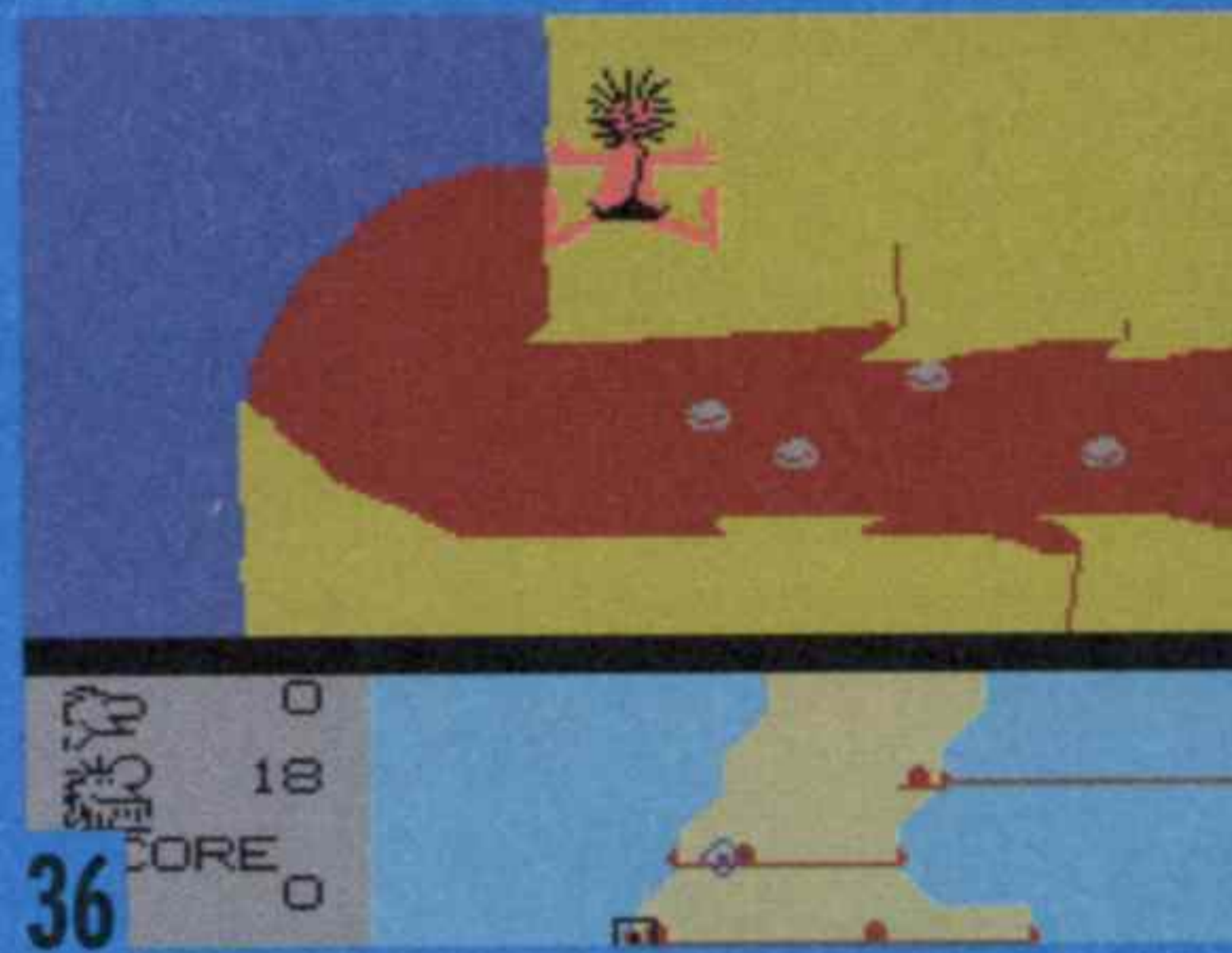
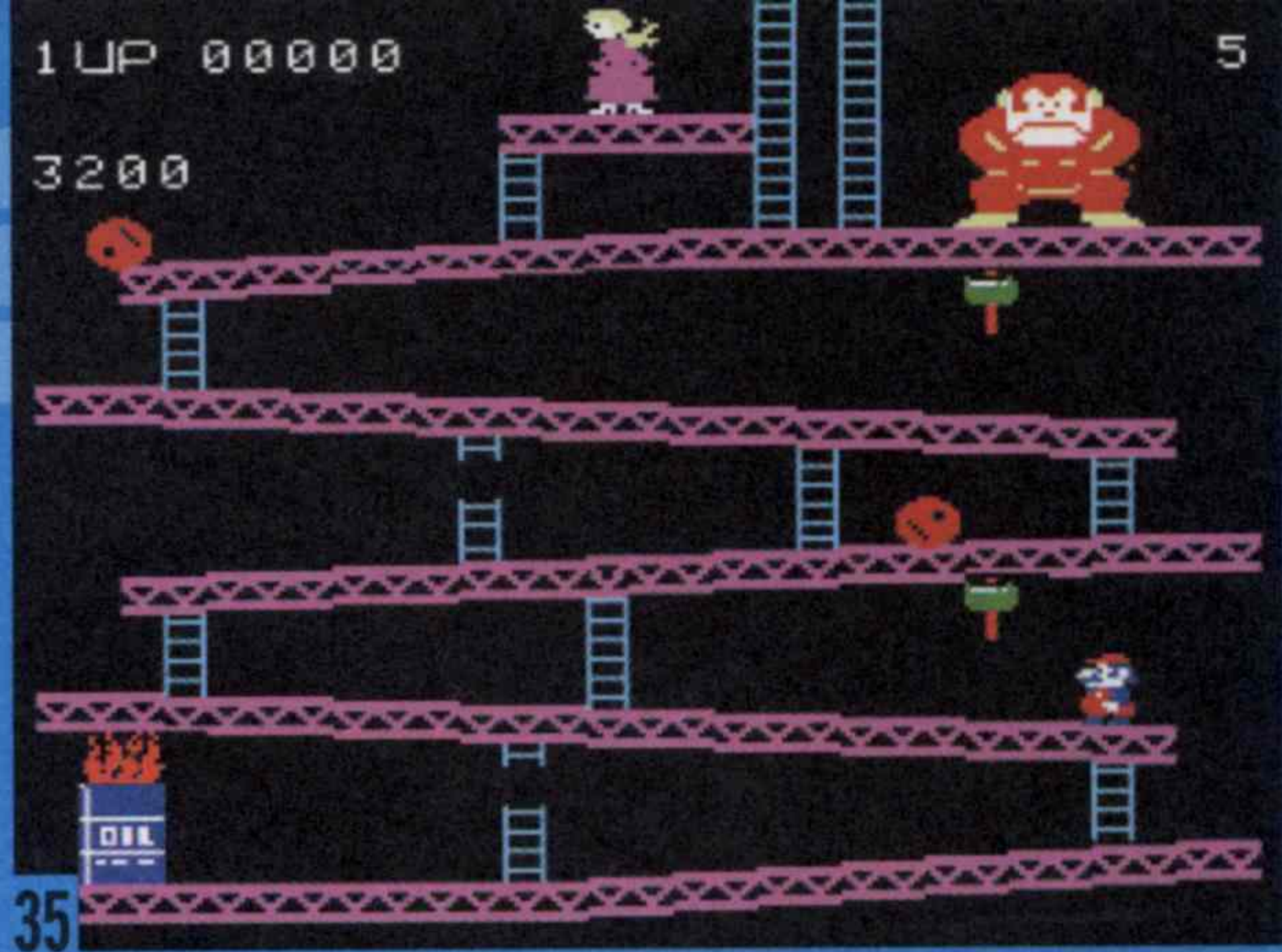
One of the best early Atari games, this vertically scrolling shooter was the first of its kind and was converted to several other formats. The aim of the game is to blast bridges along a stretch of treacherous river, taking out enemy planes and refueling along the way.

**Rating:** 8



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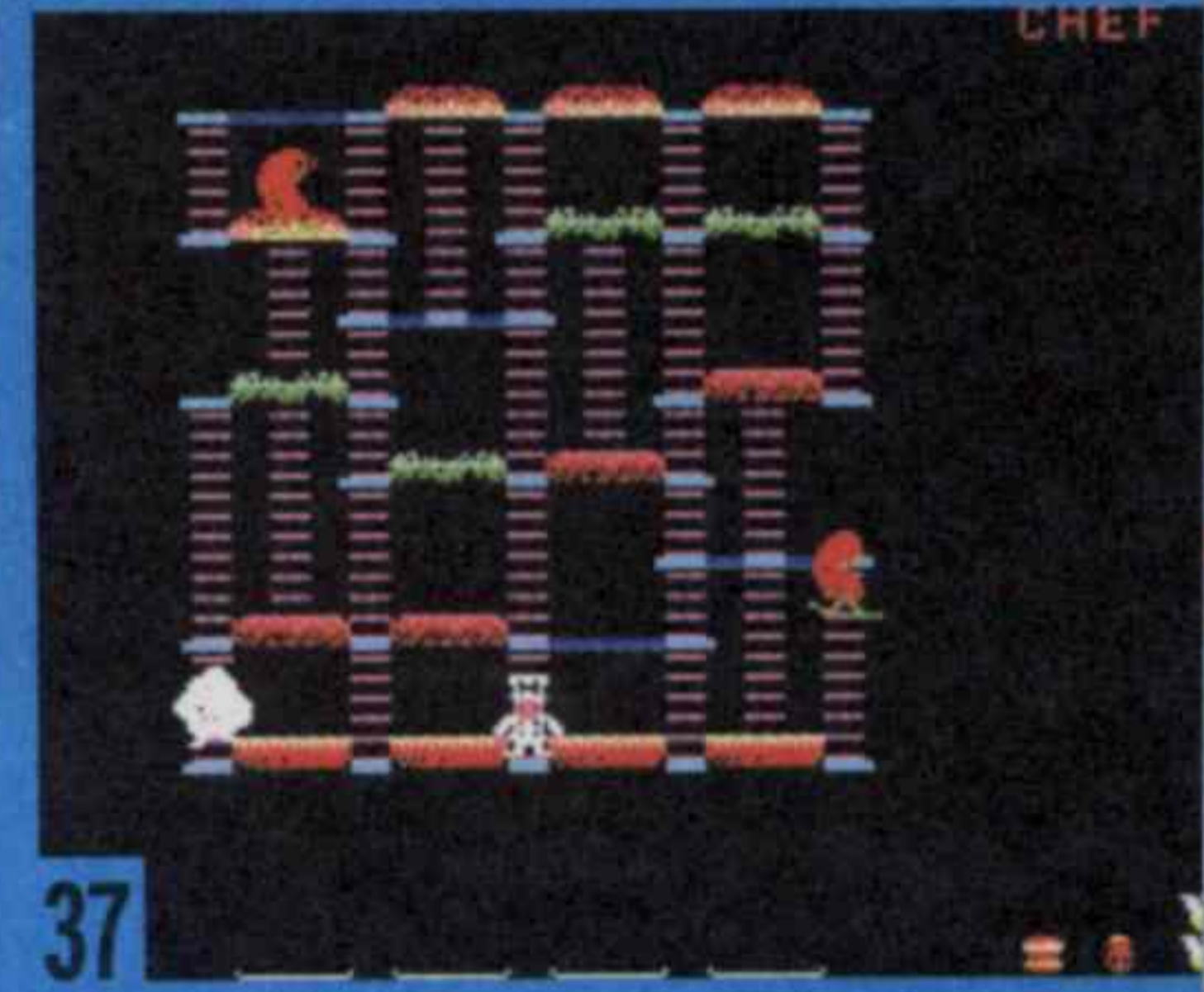
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# COLECO

## COLECOVISION

**Year:** 1982

The Colecovision was Atari's technically superior rival, promising arcade-quality graphics and the most accurate home conversions of the top coin-ops.

## 35. DONKEY KONG

**From:** Coleco / **Year:** 1982

Coleco won a fierce battle for the exclusive home console rights against stiff competition from Atari and Mattel. The company found itself caught in the middle of a battle between Nintendo and MCA over ownership of the "Kong" name, but the game sold by the million. Unfortunately for Coleco, the bottom fell out of the videogame market just as the Colecovision looked poised to snatch Atari's crown.

**Rating:** 8

## 36. BC'S QUEST FOR TIRES

**From:** Sierra / **Year:** 1983

Caveman humor with large character graphics. Riding a stone wheel along a constantly scrolling level, the aim is to evade many typical Stone Age hazards such as turtles and large women in order to rescue Thor's Chick. Easy to beat, but fairly amusing while it lasts.

**Rating:** 6

## 37. MINER 2049ER

**From:** Microfun / **Year:** 1983

Bounty Bob's mission to collect uranium from a mutant-filled mine was one of the most difficult experiences ever committed to silicon. Not content with 11 screens of platform hell, designer Bob Hogue decreed that his namesake must touch every pixel on each level before being allowed to move on.

**Rating:** 6

## 38. MR. DO

**From:** Universal / **Year:** 1983

Eat cherries, throw balls at Munchers and dig for apples in this arcade conversion. The Colecovision was marketed as the ideal machine for playing home versions of coin-ops, so titles like this were at the forefront of Coleco's marketing push.

**Rating:** 8

## 39. BURGERTIME

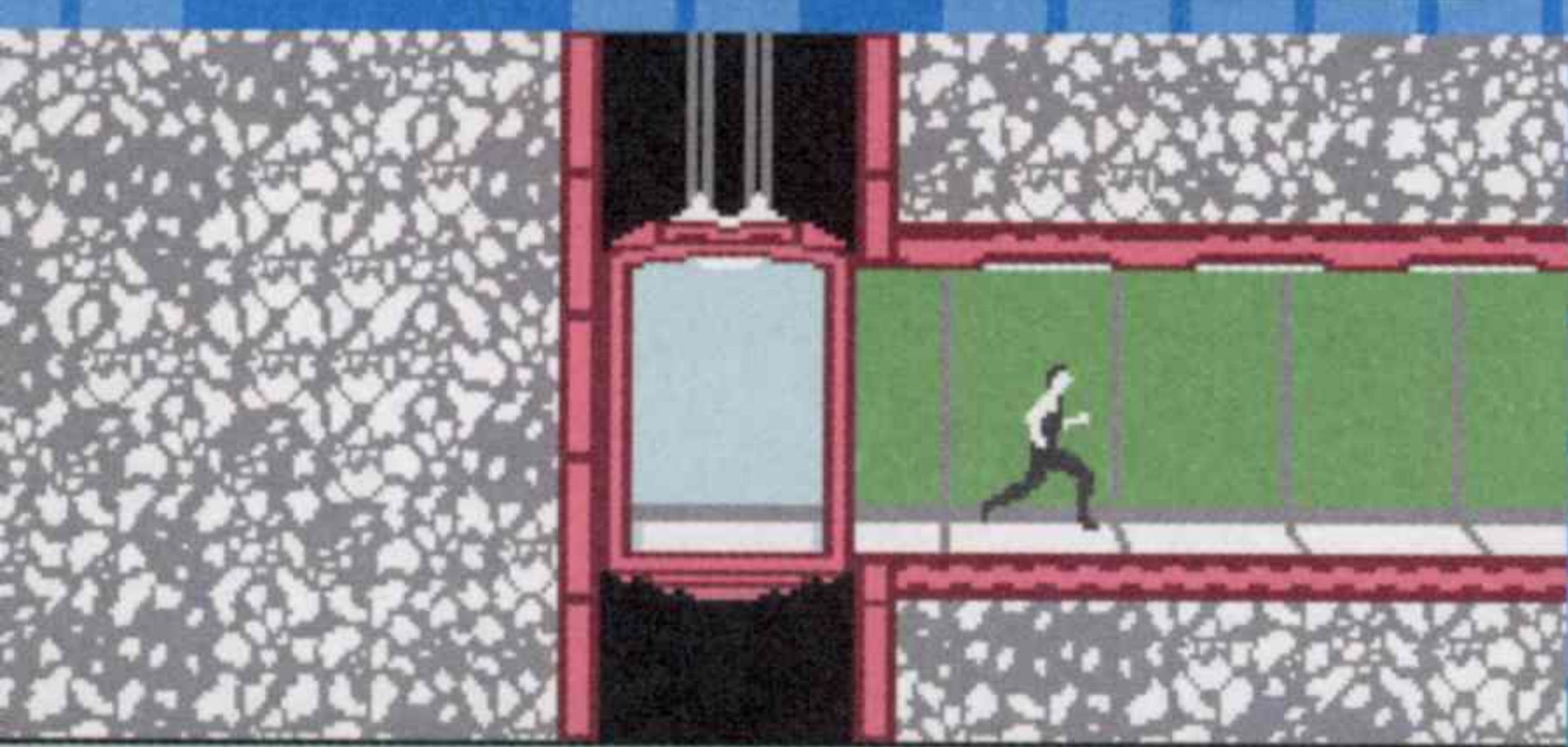
**From:** Data East / **Year:** 1982

The game that educated a generation of burger chefs. Walk all over the buns, patties and salad to create a delicious sandwich, but watch out for the rampant pickles, fried eggs and hot dogs that are out to ruin your meal.

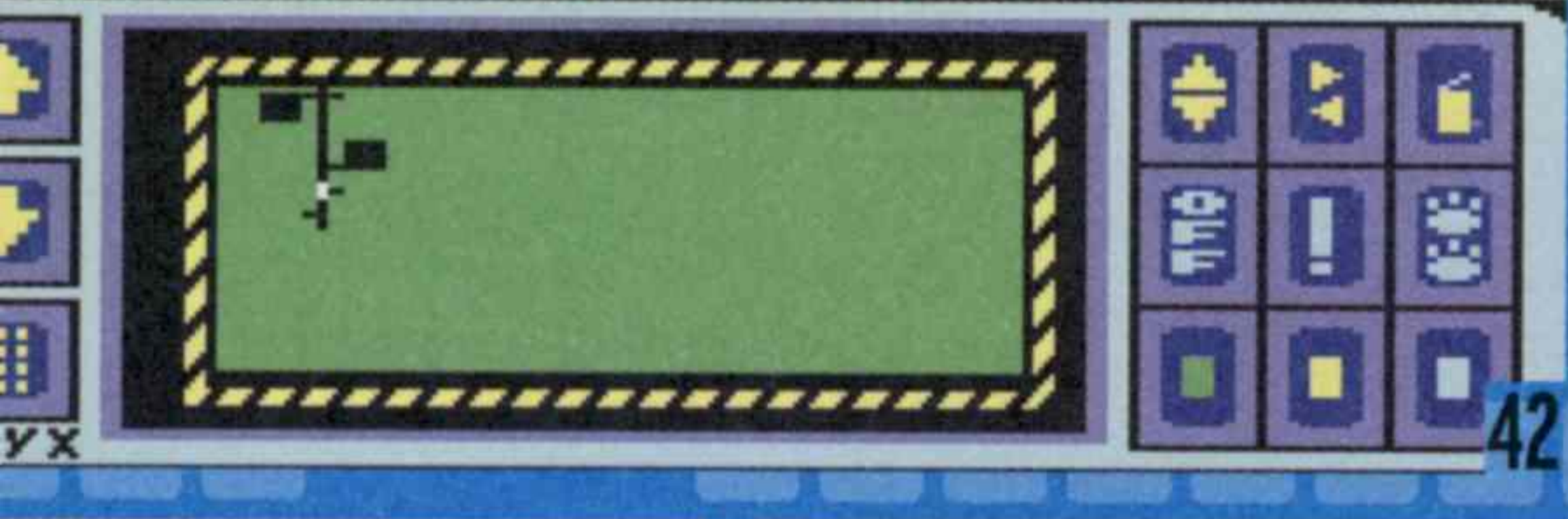
**Rating:** 7



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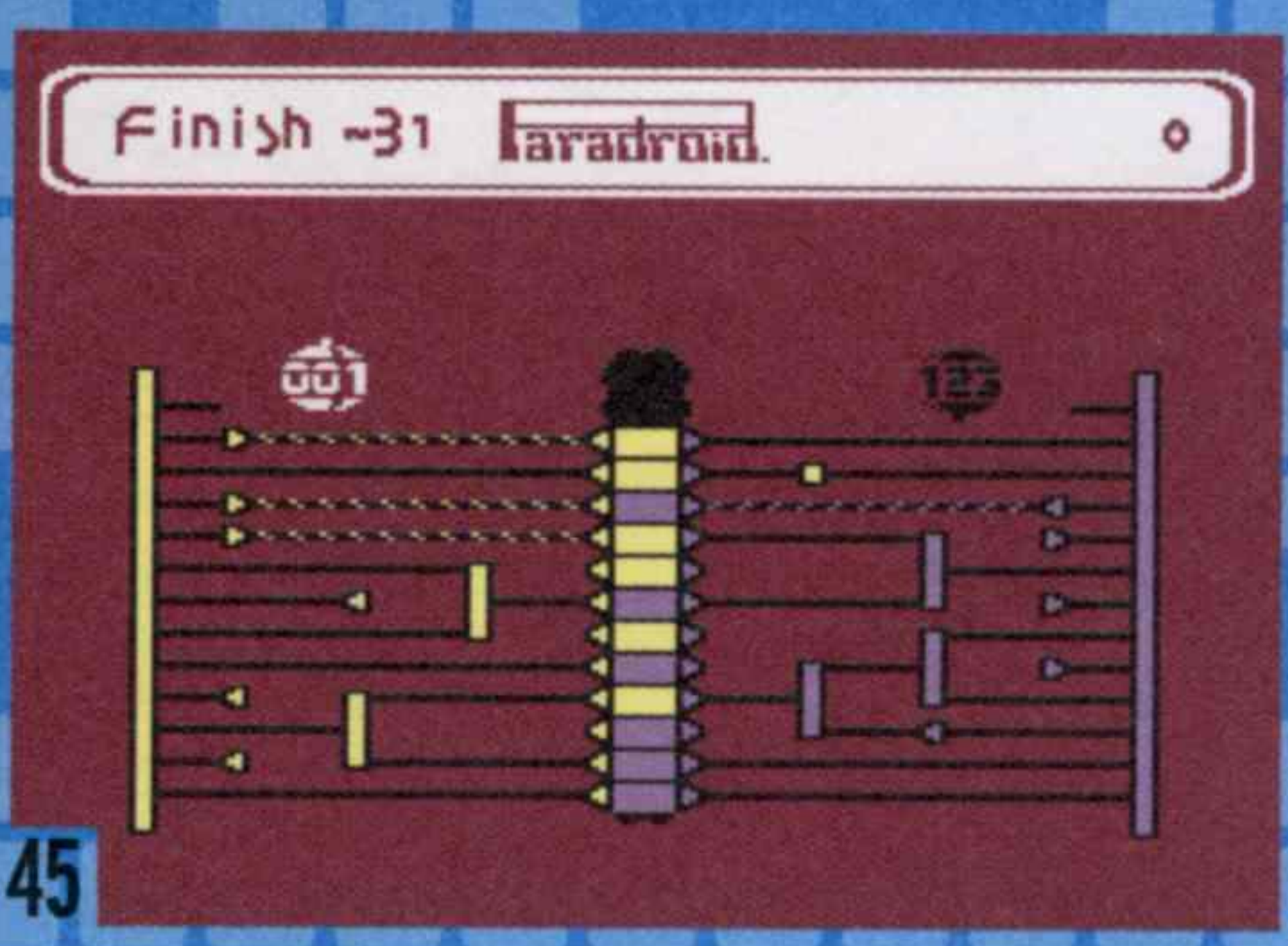
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letters to let you know how he's feeling, and there are three parlor games to play with him. The rest of the world took a long time to catch up, but now *LCP* is recognized as a hugely influential title, inspiring everything from *Tamagotchi* to *The Sims*.

Rating: 9

### 44. THE EIDOLON

**From:** LucasFilm / **Year:** 1985  
Like its sister title *Rescue on Fractalus*, *The Eidolon* generated what were supposed to be authentically organic backgrounds using fractals. Unfortunately the low resolution of the C64's display reduced these mathematical wonders to chunky black dots, but if you squint a bit, you can sort of work out what the developer was trying to achieve.

Rating: 5

### 45. PARADROID

**From:** Graftgold / **Year:** 1985  
Andrew Braybrook's innovative combination of shooting, tactics and exploration popularized the "game within a game" concept subsequently adopted by hundreds of other developers.

*Paradroid* is set on a ship populated by renegade robots, most of which are impossible to destroy using the standard droid provided at the beginning. To upgrade your machine, other robots must be defeated using a "grappling" sub-game. The chances of winning vary according to the difference in power between the player's robot and the potential victim. This game was very unusual for the time, although the Spectrum update *Quazatron* is actually a rather better game.

Rating: 8

### 46. WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

**From:** Melbourne House / **Year:** 1985  
Other beat-'em-ups were available in the arcades, but this was the first to look and play like the fighting games of today. Lifelike animation and plenty of moves made *Fist* the most hardcore fighter around, even though every opponent could be defeated using the simple floorsweep technique.

Rating: 7

## COMMODORE 64

### COMMODORE 64

**Year:** 1982  
At the time it seemed very expensive for a game machine, but the C64 far outperformed any of its competitors. It could stop and start its own cassette drive, which seemed like a particularly nifty trick at the time.

### 40. BRUCE LEE

**From:** Datasoft / **Year:** 1983  
You are the Fist of Fury! It's hard to tell whether the minuscule stick figure is actually Bruce Lee or Bruce Forsyth, but despite this, the game is a lot of fun. Fight your way to the underground lair, defeating the Yamo along the way, then do it again and again and again. Great!

Rating: 7

### 41. HACKER

**From:** Activision / **Year:** 1984  
No proper instructions, decidedly unorthodox gameplay and a lot of hype propelled the vaguely dull *Hacker* into the software charts. Upon loading the game, you are asked first to crack a password, then to identify parts on a diagram of a robot. Many people progressed no further, consigning the tape to the back of the game drawer.

Rating: 6

### 42. IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

**From:** Epyx / **Year:** 1984  
The amazing speech synthesis was a major selling point, but this platformer would be almost as memorable without it.

Evade the robots, search for puzzle pieces and play Elvin

Atombender's musical code game to win the essential Snooze and Lift Init power-ups that you needed to complete this classic in the requisite six hours.

Rating: 9

### 43. LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE

**From:** Activision / **Year:** 1985  
There's more than just silicon inside that beige box - a little person actually lives inside your C64. No really - it's a fact, according to developer David Crane, and the only way to see the digital dude is by investing in an LCP Discovery Kit, which provides him with a nice house to occupy. Interaction with the LCP is fairly limited, but it's possible to direct his actions via the keyboard. He'll even write

## 47. WINTER GAMES

**From:** Epyx / **Year:** 1985

The *Games* series was an excellent way to amuse a large group of friends, and tended to be more playable and kinder to joysticks than the frantic *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* school of sports title. This *Winter* version has ice skating – when the skater does a spin, you can just about see her panties.

**Rating:** 8

## 48. MERCENARY

**From:** Novagen / **Year:** 1986

Find a way to escape from the strange and infeasibly large world of Targ. Just how something this vast could fit into 64K of memory is one of gaming's great mysteries. *Mercenary* has buildings, bases, vehicles and as much political intrigue as any 8-bit machine should be expected to handle.

**Rating:** 9

## 49. THE SENTINEL

**From:** Firebird / **Year:** 1986

Innovative and original strategy puzzle game with surreal 3D graphics. Designer Geoff Crammond's concept is rooted in math and physics, but it's simple enough for ordinary mortals to understand after a few attempts.

The aim of the game is to convert matter into energy by absorbing any items you can see, then teleporting to a higher position to absorb more. At the top of each level the Sentinel waits to absorb any player foolish enough to move within its sight.

**Rating:** 9

## 50. URIDIUM

**From:** Graftgold / **Year:** 1986

Visually stunning shoot-'em-up. Ostensibly a *Defender*-like with an overhead camera view, *Uridium* differs from most other games of its time by enabling the

player to fly in either direction, slow down to take out targets on the surface of giant dreadnought ships, speed up to avoid incoming waves of fighters and perform evasive maneuvers. It's even possible to flip the craft on its side to squeeze through gaps. A great showpiece for the C64's hardware – an inferior Spectrum version highlights the technical gulf between the rival machines.

**Rating:** 9

## 51. CALIFORNIA GAMES

**From:** Epyx / **Year:** 1987

Exhausting its supply of proper sports, Epyx moved on to the kind of events mysteriously overlooked by the International Olympic Committee, such as BMXing, surfing and hackey-sack. Things really got desperate with the later release of *World Games*, featuring log rolling and caber tossing.

**Rating:** 8

## 52. GREAT GIANA SISTERS

**From:** Rainbow Arts / **Year:** 1987

A rather ill-advised *Super Mario Bros.* rip-off, which was firmly stomped on by Nintendo's lawyers. The game is practically identical save for a few visual changes and some remixed levels. A pity, as it's one of the best releases ever seen on C64 – effectively a home computer version of Nintendo's most famous hit.

**Rating:** 8

## 53. IK+

**From:** System 3 / **Year:** 1987

Excellent beat-'em-up with a twist. The moves are faster variations of the standard set defined by *Exploding Fist*, but the addition of a third fighter makes all the difference to the gameplay. With an extra man to take on and bonus games between bouts, *IK+* represents the pinnacle of 8-bit fighting games.

**Rating:** 9

## 54. THE LAST NINJA

**From:** System 3 / **Year:** 1987

System 3's martial arts extravaganza was much closer to a Bruce Lee film than the official *Bruce Lee* game ever was. It had isometric 3D graphics, varied locations and a lead character who could chop socky for Hong Kong but who unfortunately swam like a brick.

**Rating:** 7

## 55. WIZBALL

**From:** Ocean / **Year:** 1987

Sensible Software's magnificent shooter/adventure remains arguably the C64's benchmark game. Playing as a wizard zipped up inside a bouncing ball, the aim of this great game is to collect enough colored droplets to restore the monochrome world to its former Technicolor glory.

The control method is unusual – by altering the ball's rotation speed it's possible to bounce at precise angles. Later, power-ups make the ball hover rather than bounce – something that was essential for completing the tougher levels. A Game Boy version of this little gem would be most welcome...

**Rating:** 10



# SPECTRUM

## ZX SPECTRUM

**Year:** 1982

Sinclair's diminutive, cheap and cheerful machine; rubber "dead flesh" keyboard, no joystick ports, terrible color handling. Despite all of these potential drawbacks it was a huge success in Europe, and hosted some of gaming's all-time classic titles.

### 56. ANT ATTACK

**From:** Quicksilver / **Year:** 1983  
A 3D city riddled with giant ants, and one unlucky guy or girl charged with exploring it.

Inside the buildings were mazes of tunnels, and since it was impossible to see inside them you'd often find yourself getting completely stuck. The sequel, *Zombie Zombie*, is more fun, but *Ant Attack* was a visual wonder at the time.

**Rating:** 6

### 57. MANIC MINER

**From:** Bug Byte / **Year:** 1983  
Introducing one of the great Spectrum mascots. *Manic Miner* and its star Miner Willy made a teenage hero of coder Matthew Smith. Although the game wasn't exactly in the Miyamoto class as far as platformers go, its fiendish level design and simple graphics were perfectly suited to the Spectrum's hardware, and *Manic Miner* types swiftly became the machine's stock in trade.

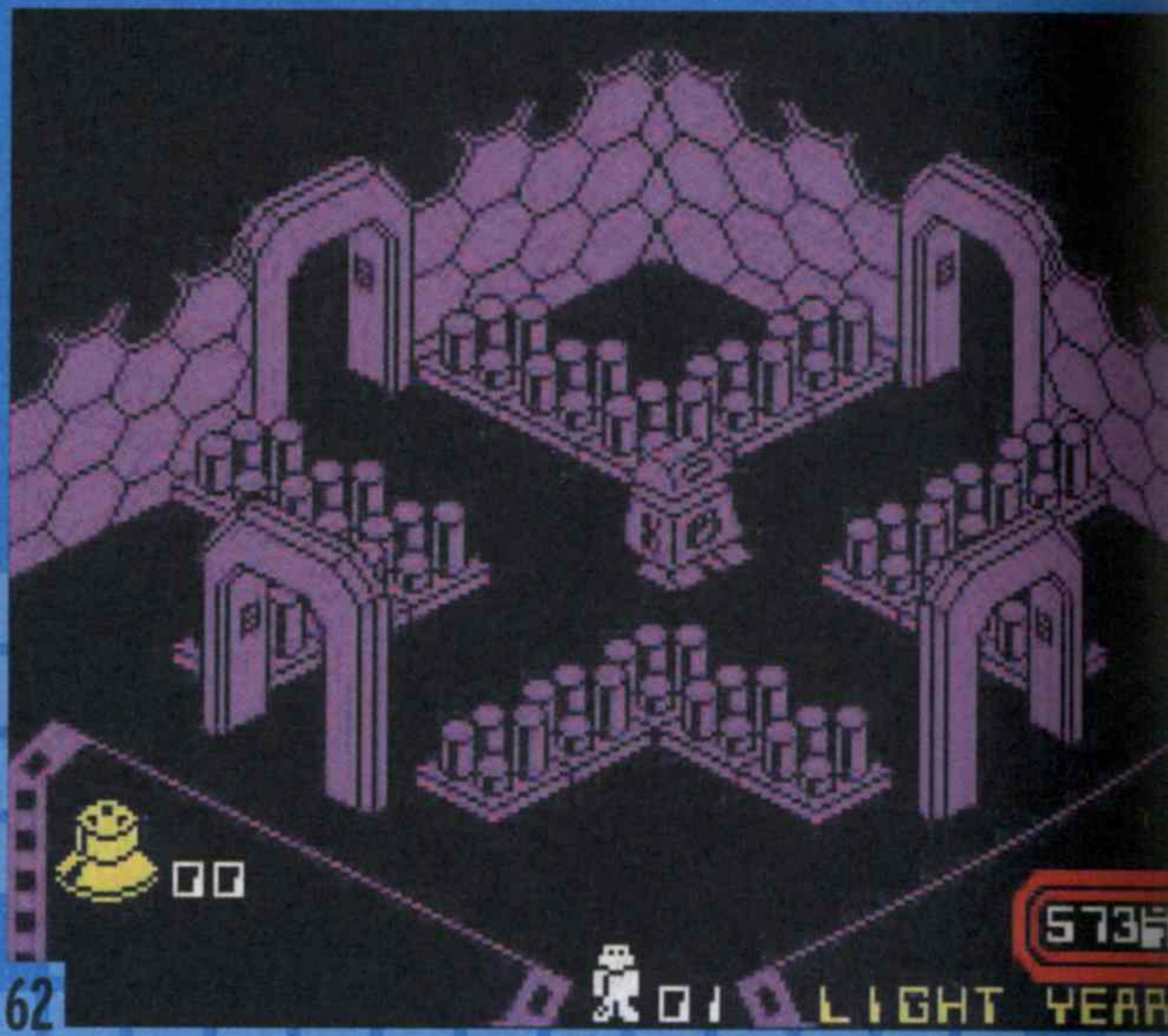
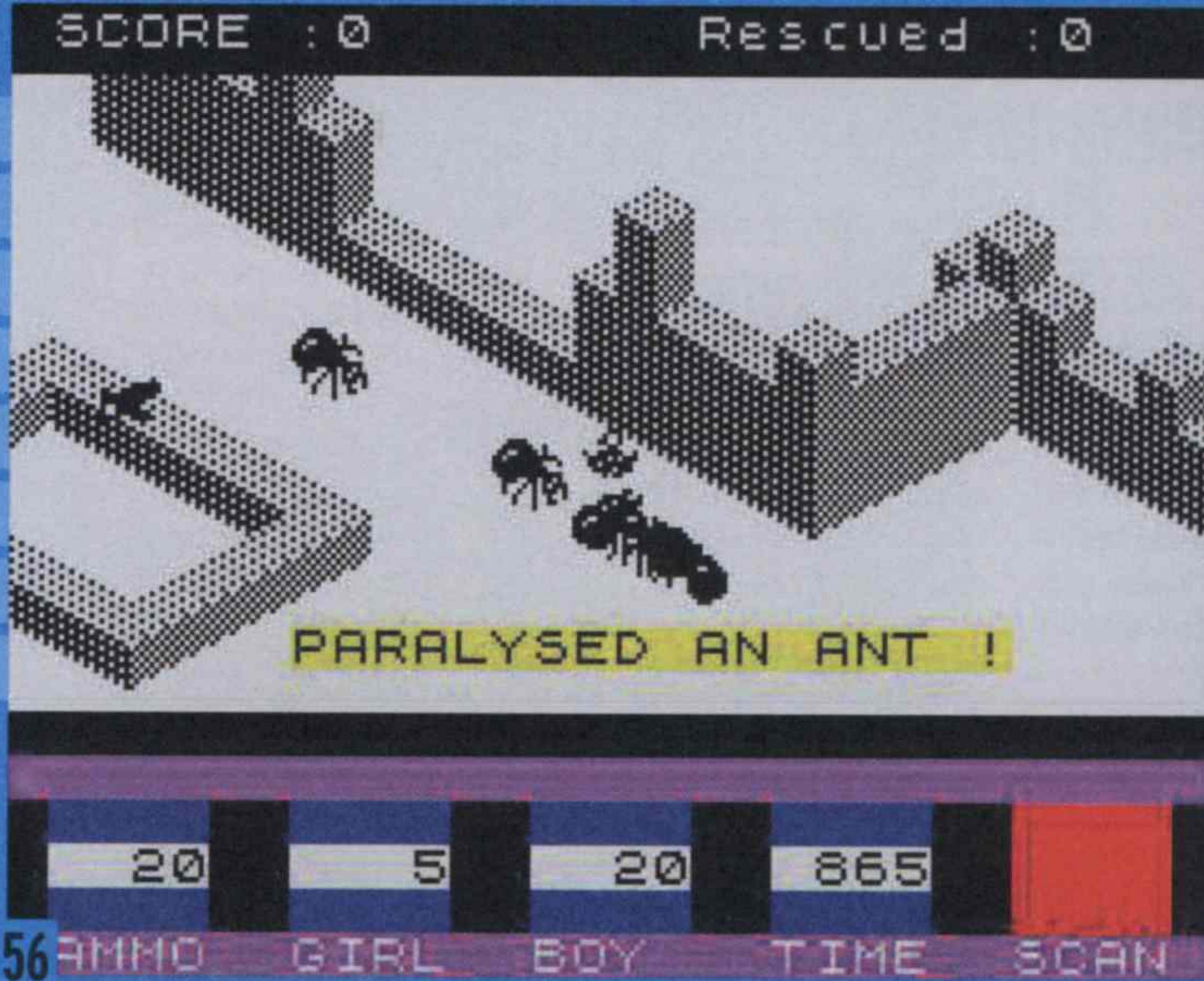
*Manic Miner's* sequel, *Jet Set Willy*, really hit the commercial big time.

**Rating:** 8

### 58. DEUS EX MACHINA

**From:** Automata / **Year:** 1984  
This is definitely in the running for the title of Weirdest Game Ever Made. Designer Mel Croucher enlisted the talents of Frankie Howerd and Jon Pertwee, among others, for a 50-minute synchronized audio tape that played alongside this pretentious "animated televised fantasy" (lots of themed mini-games). Worth playing to hear Ian Dury (as a giant sperm) singing "I'm a fertilizing agent!"

**Rating:** 7



### 59. LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

**From:** Beyond / **Year:** 1984  
Mike Singleton created a massive virtual world for this wargame, with a storyline that was supposed to evolve like a computer-generated novel once the game was completed.

Only the most dedicated players got to see the final chapter - defeating Doomdark's army was a massive task.

**Rating:** 8

### 60. KNIGHT LORE

**From:** Ultimate / **Year:** 1984  
An unfortunate moonlight incident results in Sabre Man transforming into a werewolf, which makes no difference to the gameplay in this exploration/puzzle title. On the positive side, the "Filmation" isometric 3D graphics were the first to surpass those of *Ant Attack*. Better to admire than to play, in all honesty.

**Rating:** 8

### 61. UNDERWULDE

**From:** Ultimate / **Year:** 1984  
Epic platform game starring Sabre Man. Explore the catacombs, find treasure and then make good your escape through one of three exits to the surface.

The major innovation here was a realistic rope effect, visible as Sabre Man himself descended into the depths of the dark and monster-infested titular Underwulde.

**Rating:** 7

### 62. ALIEN 8

**From:** Ultimate / **Year:** 1985  
Revisited *Knight Lore* territory, and made many improvements along the way.

Better puzzles - including some particularly smart teasers that involved robotic mice - and futuristic backgrounds that really did look like the inside of a monochrome spacecraft.

**Rating:** 8

### 63. BACK TO SKOOL

**From:** Microsphere / **Year:** 1985  
Delivering a love letter to your belle in the girls' school across the road might have been the objective of this game, but it was just as much fun to scamper around the bustling school yard, blowing off lessons and writing swear words on the blackboards. Like every episode of *Grange Hill* crammed into a Speccy.

**Rating:** 10

### 64. FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

**From:** Ocean / **Year:** 1985  
Ocean signed up Holly Johnson's hit band and produced a rather respectable adventure title based on the group's censor-baiting antics. The game was packaged with a special live version of the controversial single *Relax*. Frankie said "Buy it," and the kids duly obliged.

**Rating:** 7

## 65. HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

**From:** Vortex / **Year:** 1985

Use four Dalek-like robots to push a bomb along a heavily defended highway and into an alien base. An immersive environment enables each screen to be tackled in many ways, although the best tactic is to clear a path to the end and let the other robots push the bomb all the way to a genuinely impressive final sequence.

**Rating:** 9

## 67. SHADOWFIRE

**From:** Denton Designs / **Year:** 1985

The first 100% icon-driven strategy adventure. Instead of text commands and direct keyboard control, bemused Spectrum gamers were supplied with a screen full of abstract shapes, and a pointer with which to click them. Critically acclaimed and very confusing – this was from the days before pop-up Tool Tips.

**Rating:** 6

## 69. FAT WORM BLOWS A SPARKY

**From:** Durell / **Year:** 1986

Caused a stir thanks to its solid 3D polygons – brand new technology, which had reviewers acclaiming *Fat Worm's* unusual shooting/exploration action as the first game that could actually induce vertigo. Also includes a passable Spectrum version of the famed Amiga bouncing-ball demo.

**Rating:** 7

## 71. QUAZATRON

**From:** Hewson / **Date:** 1986

This long-awaited Spectrum version of the classic *Paradroid* was a treat. In terms of gameplay nothing much had changed, but the graphics were miles better than the C64 original. The whole thing was presented in isometric 3D, enabling new tactics such as dropping from a ledge to ambush a stronger robot.

**Rating:** 9

## 66. NODES OF YESOD

**From:** Odin / **Year:** 1985

Futuristic arcade adventure with sumptuous graphics. *Nodes* was a polished piece of software, but its most impressive feature was the sampled speech that buzzed from the Spectrum's internal speaker after the tape finished loading. Small consolation for missing out on *Impossible Mission*.

**Rating:** 8

## 68. TIR NA NOG

**From:** Gargoyle / **Year:** 1985

Celtic mythology meets rubber keyboard. Guide legendary warrior Cuchulainn on a quest to reunite the four pieces of the Seal of Calum, thereby freeing the Land of Youth from the scourge known as the Sidhe. Large characters with purposeful animation and a confusing camera system.

**Rating:** 7

## 70. HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

**From:** Gargoyle / **Year:** 1986

Bigger and better visuals than *Tir Na Nog* provide ample window dressing for this hybrid text-graphic adventure. The game is controlled by typing keyboard commands into the lower window – the huge characters perform the requisite action in the top half of the screen.

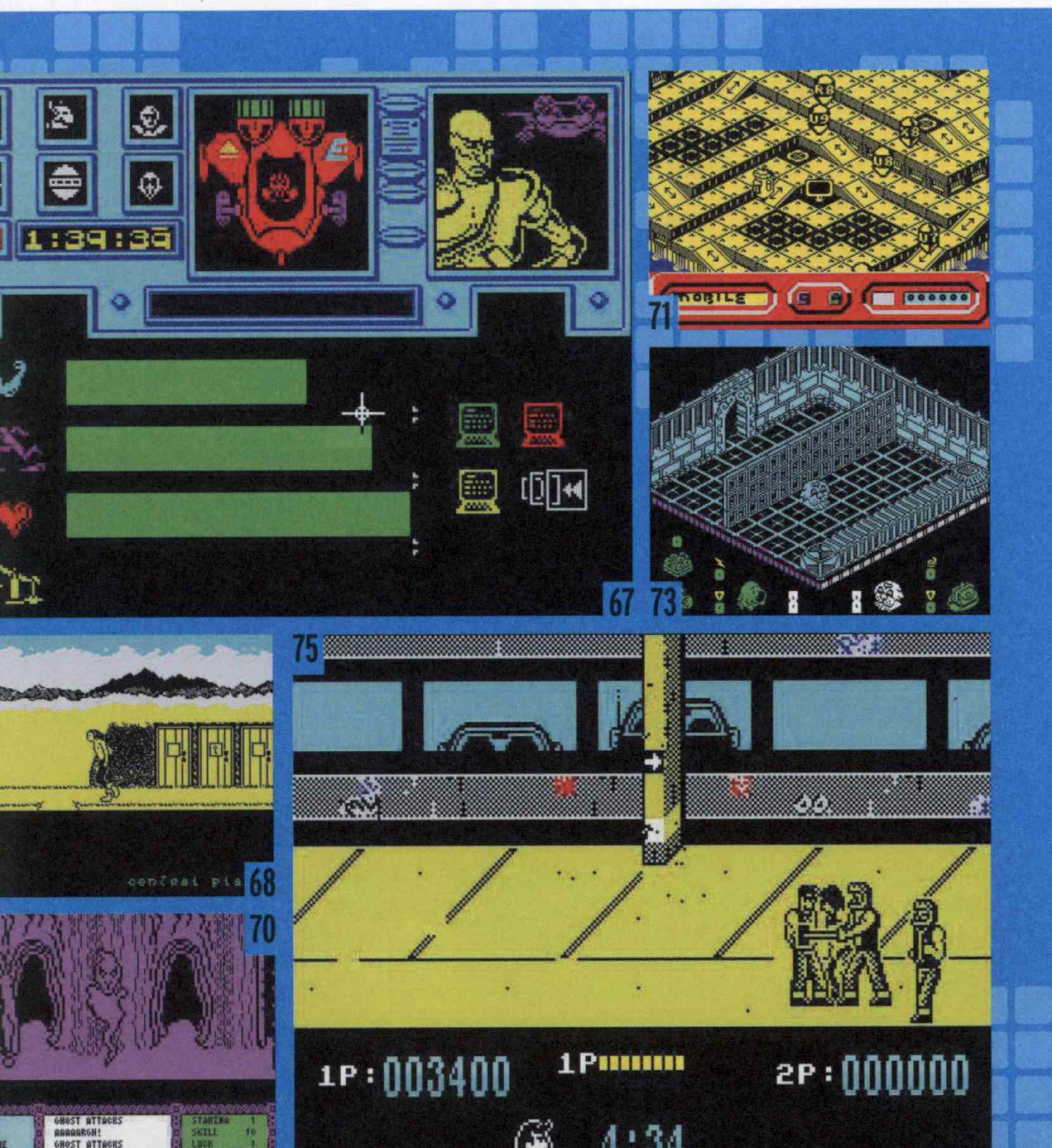
**Rating:** 8

## 72. SPELLBOUND

**From:** Mastertronic / **Year:** 1986

This adventure game introduced Spectrum owners to the delights of pull-down menus – at the time, a feature exclusive to expensive pro machines, and certainly not something anybody expected to see in a piece of budget software running on a tape-based 8-bit game machine.

**Rating:** 7



## 73. HEAD OVER HEELS

**From:** Ocean / **Year:** 1987

Ultimate invented the room-based 3D adventure with *Knight Lore*, and the developer of *Match Day 2* honed it to perfection with this. The two characters could split up to tackle certain puzzles or join together to combine their abilities. Kind of *Banjo-Kazooie* for the '80s.

**Rating:** 9

## 74. MATCH DAY 2

**From:** Ocean / **Year:** 1987

The first *Match Day* had a quirk whereby after scoring first it was possible to stand still and keep the ball bouncing on a player's head until the game finished. The sequel fixed that, but if two players team up, one can push the goalie into a corner while the other walks the ball into the net.

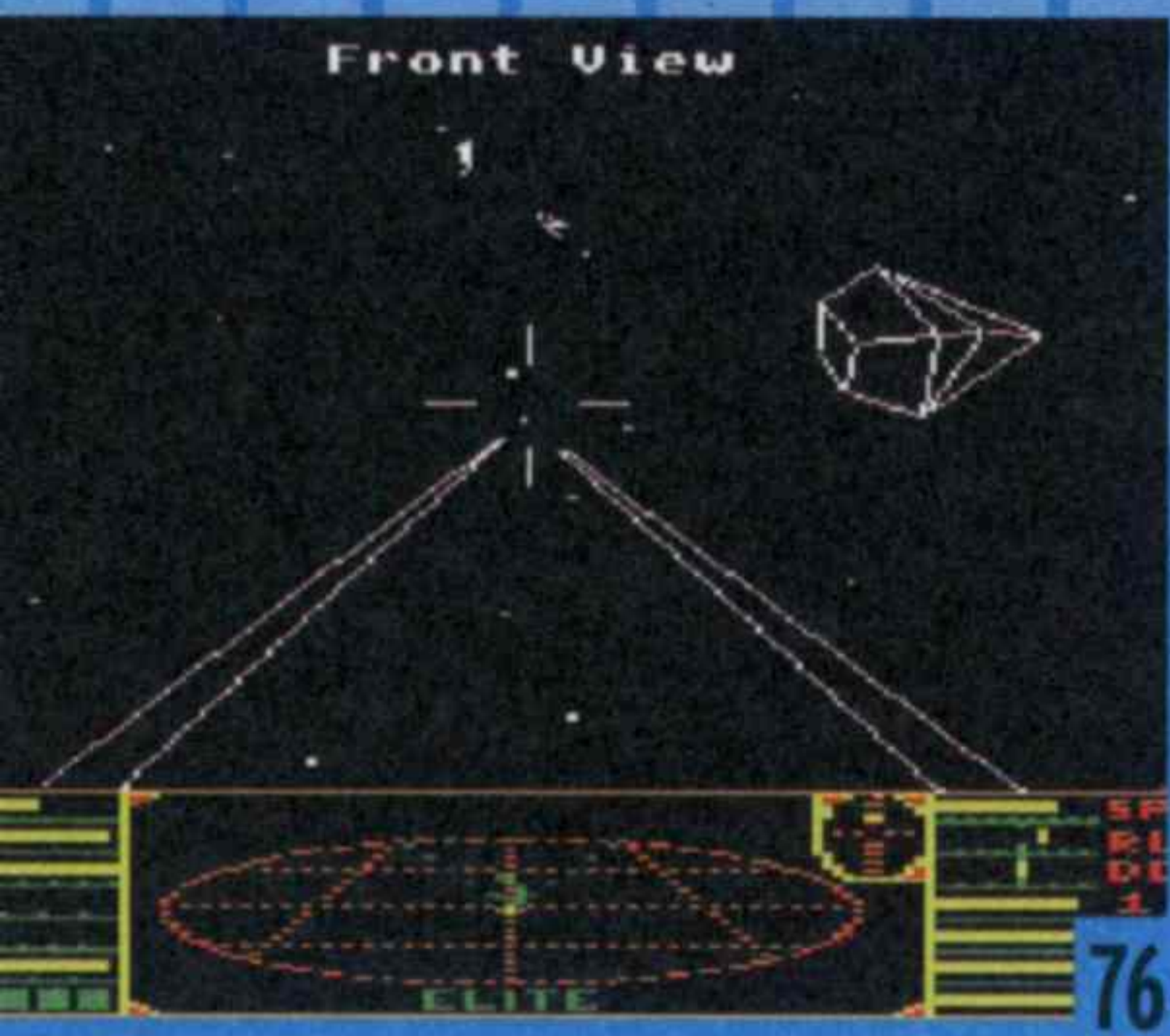
**Rating:** 7

## 75. TARGET RENEGADE

**From:** Imagine / **Year:** 1988

Quality sequel to a well-received arcade conversion, and certainly the best *Double Dragon*-style game on any 8-bit machine. Two players team up to administer street justice to undesirable punks, with some eye-watering knee-groin interfaces.

**Rating:** 9



76

## BBC MICRO

### ACORN BBC MICRO

**Year:** 1982

Powerful, customizable, and priced for the education market, way beyond the reach of the average gamer. It was the original home of *Elite* but very few other games.

### 76. ELITE

**From:** Acornsoft/Superior Software / **Year:** 1984

A landmark title in gaming history. The original space trading/warfare sim, *Elite* cast the player as a pioneering explorer in the outer reaches of a seemingly limitless universe, shipping goods between remote space station outposts while avoiding the attention of marauding alien bandits. The only real objective was to attain "Elite" ranking status, so players were free to explore anywhere and travel as far into the void as they dared. Unforgettable.

**Rating:** 10

### 77. EXILE

**From:** Acornsoft/Superior Software / **Year:** 1988

Getting marooned on a distant planet would count as bad luck in anyone's book, but when that planet is ruled by the forces of evil and you've got to contend with the most realistic physics seen on an 8-bit computer, the triple whammy of unfortunate circumstances makes for a compelling and enduring platform adventure.

**Rating:** 8

## VECTREX

### MB VECTREX

**Year:** 1982

The game machine that came built into its own screen – a specialized type of XY display based on technology developed for the Apollo space program. It could draw perfectly straight lines, or "vectors."

### 78. MINESTORM

**From:** GCE / **Year:** 1982

Excellent *Asteroids* type. The Vectrex was the first home machine that could handle an authentic-looking asteroid. Today a Vectrex system actually costs around the same as an *Asteroids* coin-op, but you can't stick a coin-op on your closet shelf when your game's over.

**Rating:** 8

### 79. COSMIC CHASM

**From:** GCE / **Year:** 1982

The first domestic game to be converted into an arcade machine – usually it's the other way round. The aim is to locate and destroy the planet's power source, after fighting through a number of caves. Instead of a time limit, each cave has a central core that expands, eventually crushing your craft against the walls.

**Rating:** 7

## AMSTRAD

### AMSTRAD CPC 464

**Year:** 1984

This was an all-in-one package from value hi-fi maker Amstrad. The computer had a built-in cassette drive, and rather than connecting to your TV, it came with a choice of color or green-screen monitor.

### 80. SORCERY

**From:** Virgin / **Year:** 1985

While most other machines boasted at least a handful of exclusive, must-have titles, the Amstrad CPC often had to make do with belated conversions. One of the few top games to appear

first on the CPC was *Sorcery*, an arcade adventure that turned envious Spectrum and C64 players as green as a glowing green-screen monitor.

**Rating:** 8

### 81. SPINDIZZY

**From:** Electric Dreams / **Year:** 1986

*Marble Madness*-inspired 3D puzzler. Guide a gyroscope around a maze of slopes and bridges, collecting items and hitting switches to open up later areas.

A popular choice for any player who enjoyed drawing huge maps for their games.

**Rating:** 7

### 82. SWEEVO'S WORLD

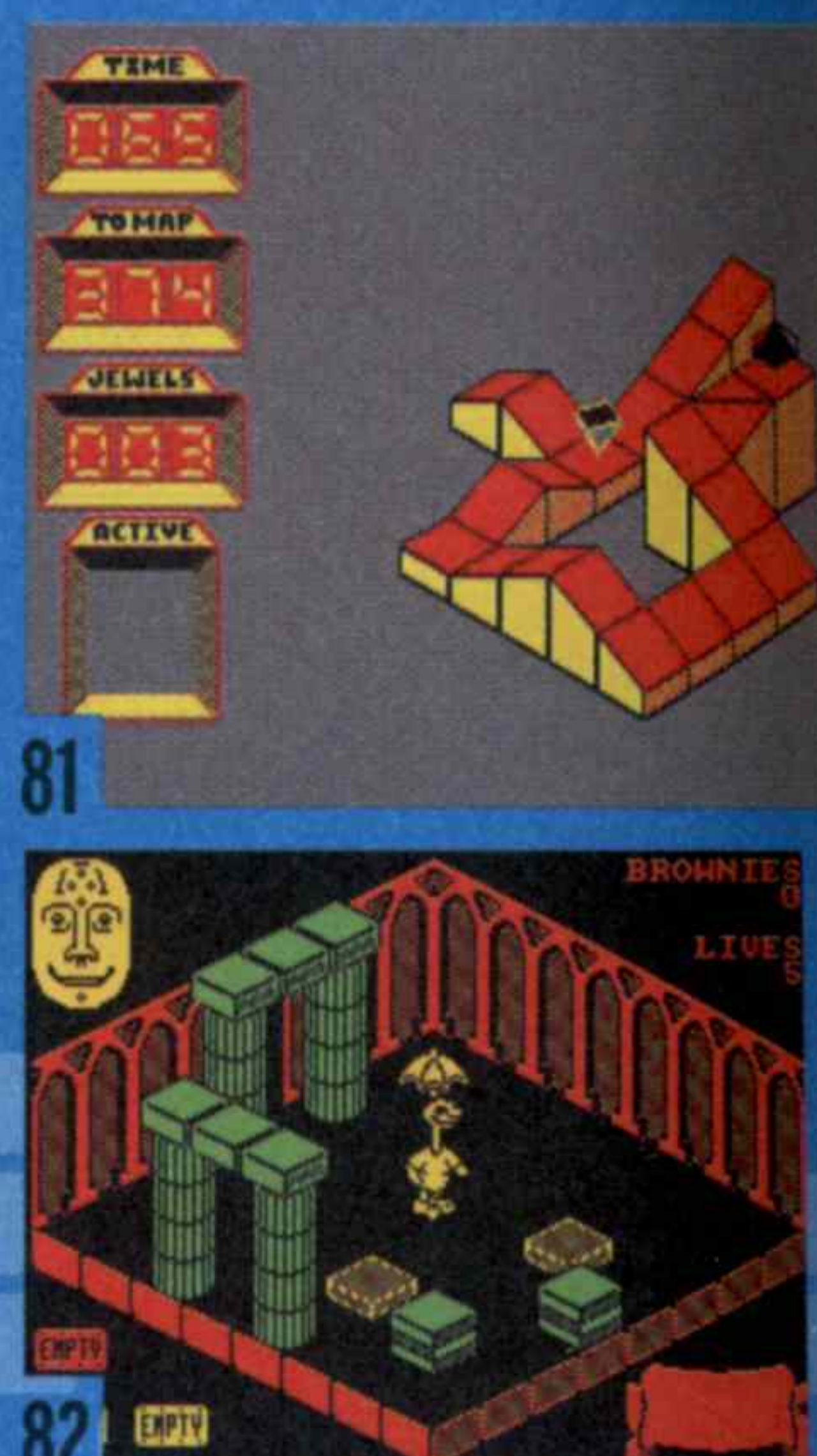
**From:** Gargoyle / **Year:** 1986

After an almost indecently brief period of time had passed, 1984's *Knight Lore* was comedically trumped by the serious adventure merchants behind *Tir Na Nog*. This game was most notable for featuring giant fruit, suspended cartoon weights and a robot hero that looked like a mutant turkey.

**Rating:** 7

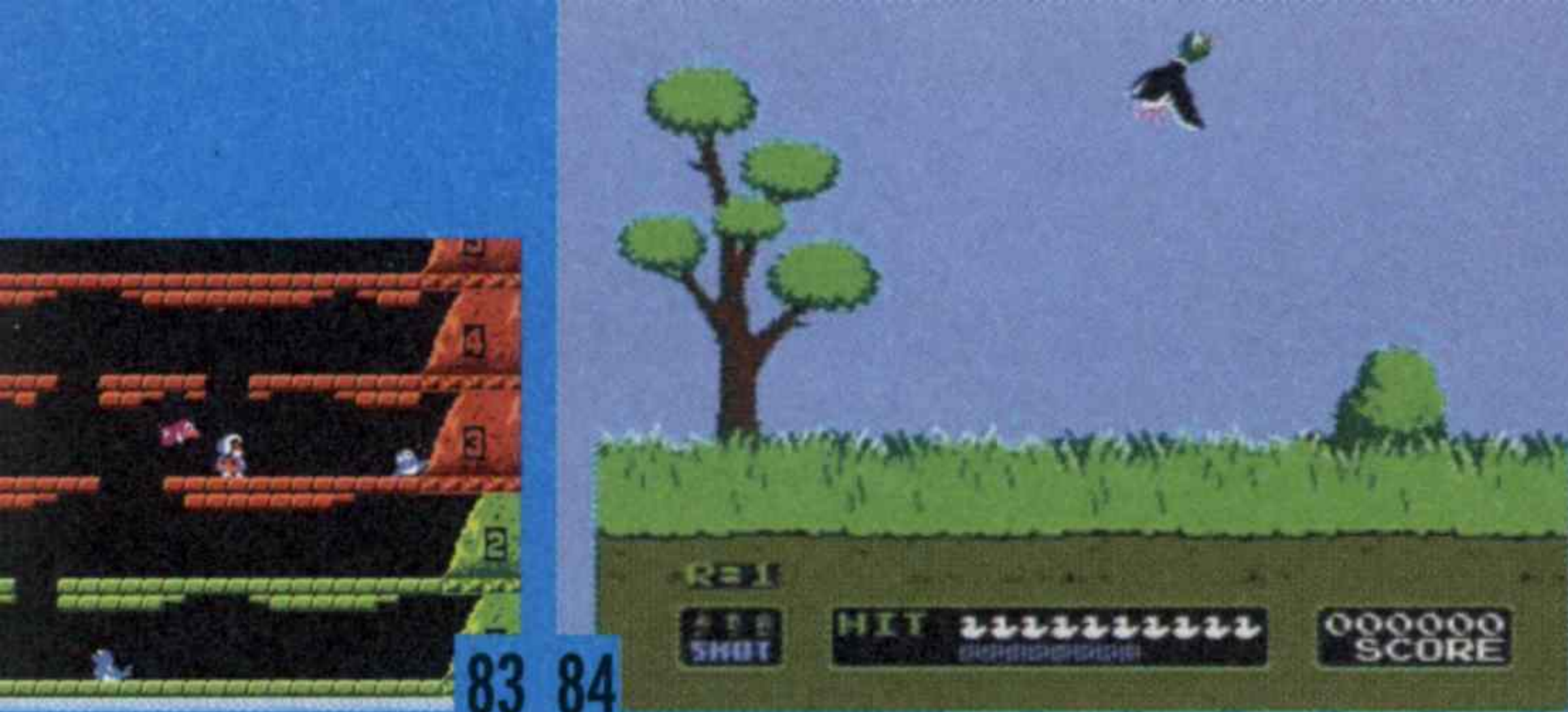


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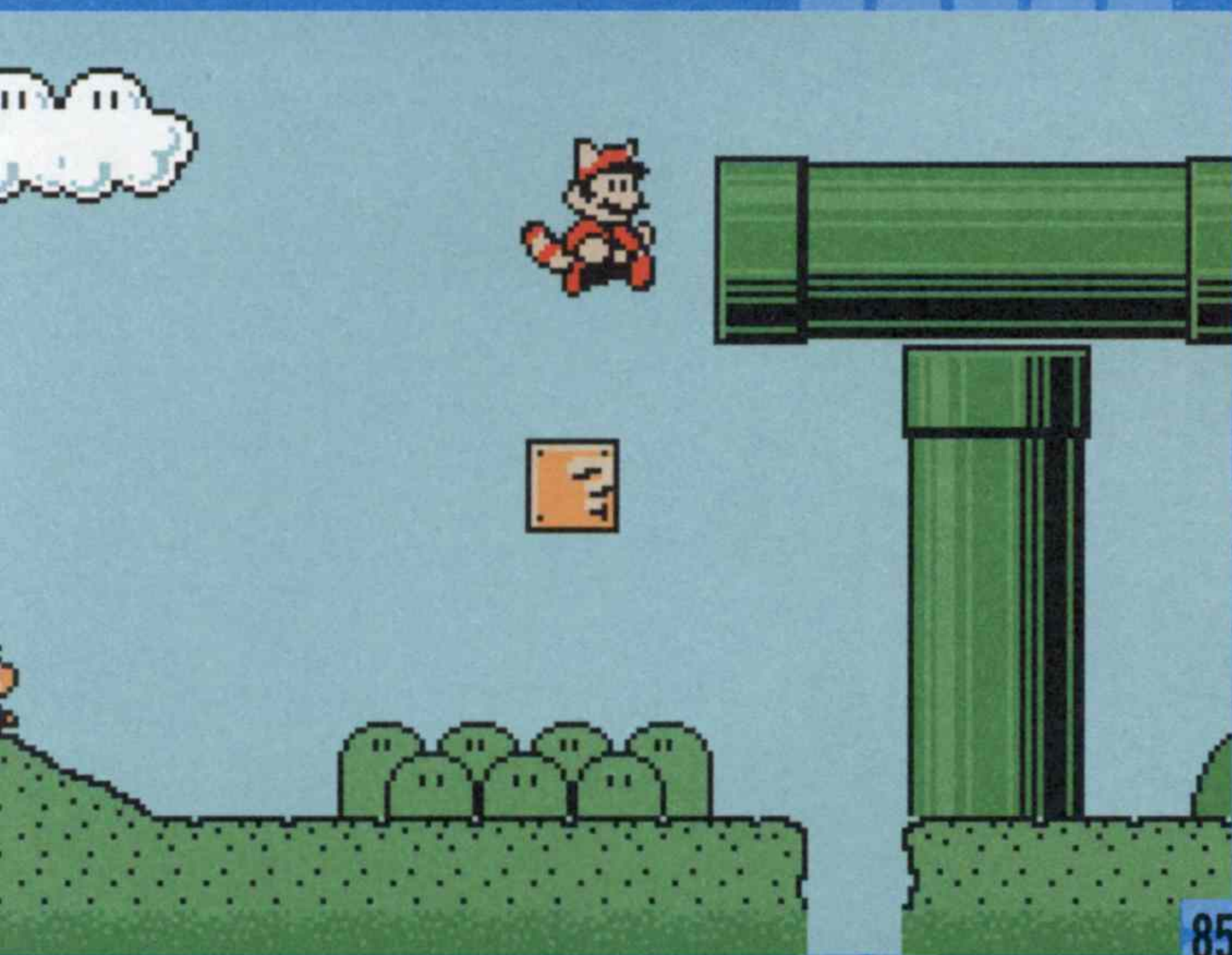
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## NES

### NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

**Year:** 1985

Despite having been available as the Famicom in Japan for the previous two years, the NES looked superior to its competitors in 1985, and carried on selling for the best part of a decade.

#### 83. ICE CLIMBER

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1984

Take your little Eskimo character to the top of a slippery mountain, bashing through platforms using your special Eskimo mallet. A combination of platformer and puzzle game, with the option to team up and tackle the mountain with the assistance of a friend.

**Rating:** 8

#### 84. DUCK HUNT

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1985

Instead of playing as a cute, furry animal in the traditional Nintendo style, *Duck Hunt* gives you the opportunity to blow some feathered critters out of the sky

using the Zapper gun bundled with the NES. Addictive and therapeutic, especially after a long session with *Mario* and the gang.

**Rating:** 8

#### 85. SUPER MARIO BROS.

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1985

This is the game that laid down the rules for all future platformers – collectable coins, powerups, secret areas, warp zones, hidden surprises and more. Check out the *Deluxe* edition for the Game Boy, which has a big stack of bonus goodies. Still a classic.

**Rating:** 9

#### 86. KID ICARUS

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1986

A relative of *Metroid*, and featuring some similar levels. This time you play an angel as opposed a space warrior, and there's a mixture of vertically scrolling and horizontally scrolling stages, plus some free-form mazes and straight shoot-'em-up sections. Underrated.

**Rating:** 7

#### 87. METROID

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1986

Intelligent mixture of platform exploration and shoot-'em-up action, which introduced another popular but rarely seen Nintendo hero, the bio-suited Samus Aran. *Metroid's* big surprise was saved for the end of the game, when Samus' secret identity was revealed to a shocked audience.

**Rating:** 8

#### 88. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1986

Link set out to save Princess Zelda in what would later become one of the most consistently brilliant (and revered) game series of all time, rivaling even the *Super Mario* titles.

The first installment set the tone for what was to follow – big dungeons, smart puzzles and pig-faced bad guys.

**Rating:** 9

#### 89. RC PRO AM

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1988

Fun radio-controlled racer with a three-quarters perspective camera view that looked similar to Sega's early *Up 'n' Down* coin-op. The format has proved to be a winning

way to achieve more visually respectable racers on 8-bit machines, with similar titles such as *TOCA* now available for the Game Boy.

**Rating:** 7

#### 90. SUPER MARIO BROS. 3

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1989

Mario returned with a genuine sequel after the relatively muted reception he received for *SMB2*.

This was a bigger, better, smarter game, with a map that enabled you to revisit areas to discover new secrets, and the ability to fly by donning a rather fetching raccoon suit. Real raccoons cannot fly, of course, but the gaming public was, nevertheless, enthralled.

**Rating:** 10

#### 91. BATTLETOADS

**From:** Tradewest / **Year:** 1991

Rare, the company formerly known as Ultimate, really got its teeth into Nintendo's 8-bit console with this *Double Dragon*-style beat-'em-up. A little too difficult for many gamers, but the graphics were top notch and the boss'-eye-view fight scenes were a quite amazing bit of innovation.

**Rating:** 7

# AMIGA

## COMMODORE AMIGA

**Year:** 1985

Commodore's ST-killer, the biggest, baddest, most desirable machine on the planet. Failed to take off until the introduction of the cheaper A500 model in 1987 – the first Amigas weighed in at over \$2,000.

### 92. DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

**From:** Cinemaware / **Year:** 1986  
Cinemaware's impressive medieval adventure was an early incentive for people to spend the large amount of cash it took to upgrade from the aging 8-bit computers to the new 16-bit, disk-based dream machines.

*DOTC* was full of mini-games and romance, and stuffed with some beautiful graphics.

**Rating:** 8

### 93. LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS

**From:** Infocom / **Year:** 1986  
One of the last of a dying breed of text-only adventures. There might not have been any pictures to look at, but the words were amusing and Infocom spared no expense with the packaging, including a 3D comic (with glasses) and a Scratch 'n' Sniff-style card (with the fragrances of mothballs and chocolate).

**Rating:** 7

### 94. MARBLE MADNESS

**From:** Electronic Arts / **Year:** 1987  
A superb conversion of a classic 1984 Atari coin-op. Until *Marble Madness* hit the Amiga, games often promised "arcade perfect" graphics (but never actually delivered) – arcade hardware was expensive, and tailored to suit the demands of each specific game. This was the first time the power of a contemporary coin-op had been matched by a home computer, and that fact was responsible for shifting an awful lot of Amigas.

The original's trackball control was the only thing missing from the *Marble* experience.

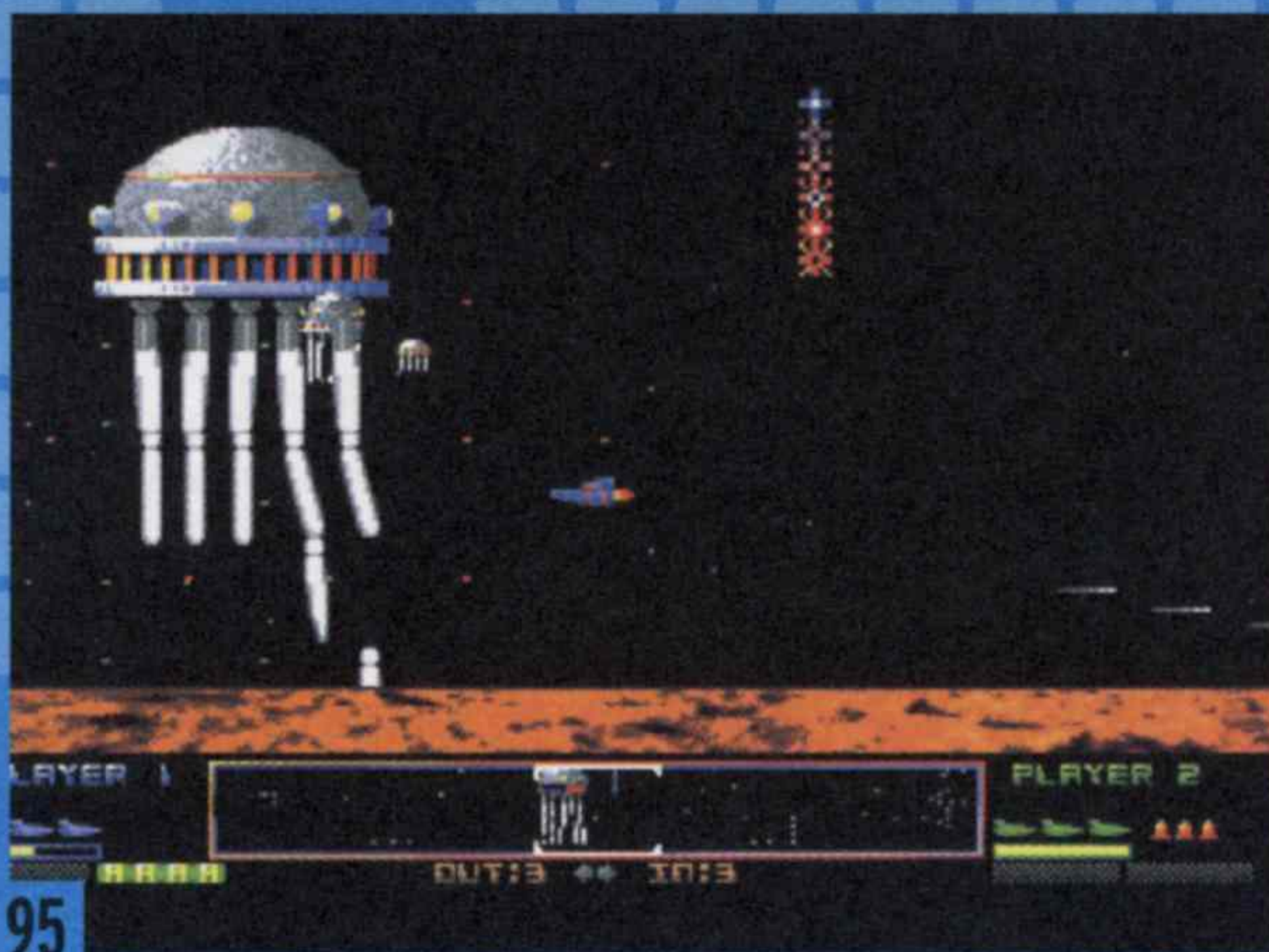
**Rating:** 9



92



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95

### 95. DATASTORM

**From:** Visionary Design Technologies / **Year:** 1988  
Probably the best *Defender* type ever made. *Datastorm* includes a wide variety of enemies (some borrowed from *Scramble*), a two-player co-op mode and some very well-balanced weapon power-ups with which to wreak havoc.

Every third wave there's a boss character – a small UFO or a gigantic robo-jellyfish.

**Rating:** 9

### 96. F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR

**From:** Electronic Arts / **Year:** 1988  
A flight sim that placed the emphasis on fun without losing its realistic feel. Flying missions from a carrier in the San Francisco Bay, it was possible to admire the

3D graphics from any angle as your plane swooped under the Golden Gate bridge in pursuit of enemy fighters.

**Rating:** 8

### 97. KICK OFF

**From:** Anco / **Year:** 1988  
Sounding the death knell for the existing *Match Day*-style titles, Dino Dini's *Kick Off* was the first soccer game to offer players a sim that played more or less like the real thing.

Since the ball didn't stick to your players' feet, proper passing moves were possible, and it was about 10 times as fast (and as difficult) as any previous soccer game to grace a home machine.

**Rating:** 8



96



97



98

### 98. LEMMINGS

**From:** Psygnosis / **Year:** 1988  
Excellent puzzle game that was swarming with some of the tiniest graphics ever. Squint at the screen and then guide the suicidal Lemmings to safety by assigning special abilities to certain green-haired individuals.

Careful use of bridge building, floating, blocking, tunneling and more resulted in glorious success, but it was also fun to watch the little creatures meet the most terrible fates; they died in countless amusingly animated ways, and if you made a mess of a level you could therapeutically nuke the whole lot of them before restarting. Featured a good two-player battle mode as well.

**Rating:** 9



## 99. PRINCE OF PERSIA

**From:** Brøderbund / **Year:** 1988  
Brilliant swashbuckling platform adventure with a Middle Eastern theme; battle through the deadly corridors of a trap-filled palace and defeat the evil Jaffar.

Featuring heart-thumping action and stunning animation, *Prince of Persia* introduced the cliff-hanging death leap (later seen in *Super Mario 64*), whereby the player would have to make a seemingly impossible running jump in the hope of catching a fingertip grip on a distant ledge. There were also traps in the form of giant blades, which made a sickeningly meaty sound as they chopped the hero in two.

**Rating:** 9

## 100. STUNT CAR RACER

**From:** Microstyle / **Year:** 1988  
Enjoyably stomach-churning racer set atop a series of raised tracks. The first two courses are gentle introductions to this unique racing style, but later on there are slow climbs to the top of a hill, followed by dizzying vertical drops, jumps, drawbridges and bumpy sections designed to throw your car off balance and over the edge of the track. Can be played in a league format against the computer or by linking two Amigas using a null modem cable.

**Rating:** 9

## 101. DENARIS

**From:** Rainbow Arts / **Year:** 1989  
A very good horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up that was similar to the coin-op *R-Type*.

The game was distributed as *Katakis* in some territories, and developer Factor 5 went on to code Activision's official *R-Type* conversion.

**Rating:** 8

## 102. SHADOW OF THE BEAST

**From:** Psygnosis / **Year:** 1989  
One of the most amazing-looking Amiga games of them all, *Shadow of the Beast* was a platform adventure that featured a jaw-dropping first level decked out with layer upon layer of parallax scrolling. With some excellent music to accompany the visual feast, *Beast* was a technical masterpiece. Unfortunately the frustrating gameplay wasn't in the

same league, but with graphics this good, nobody complained.

**Rating:** 7

## 103. IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

**From:** Cinemaware / **Year:** 1990  
The Amiga equivalent of a '50s B-movie (with a nod in the direction of cult monster flick *Them!*), *ICFTD* is the tale of a remote town that finds itself at the frontline of a war against giant mutant ants.

Of course the local citizens refuse to accept the truth, and you'll have to contend with street punks and hicksville cops while trying to save them from the ant scourge. Arguably Cinemaware's best and most complete work.

**Rating:** 9

## 104. FLASHBACK

**From:** Delphine / **Year:** 1992  
Futuristic platform adventure with even better animation than *Prince of Persia*, thanks to the use of polygons for the main character.

Seven big levels to explore and a ridiculous number of moves, many put there just to show off the powerful graphics engine. Also available on 16-bit console formats.

**Rating:** 8

## 105. CANNON FODDER

**From:** Sensible Software / **Year:** 1993

Guide a squad of four soldiers through dangerous jungles, deserts and frozen wasteland, on a mission to wipe out El Presidente. Simple mouse control

and a dark sense of humor – after losing a soldier you can visit his grave to find out how he died and how many people he wasted during his brief army career.

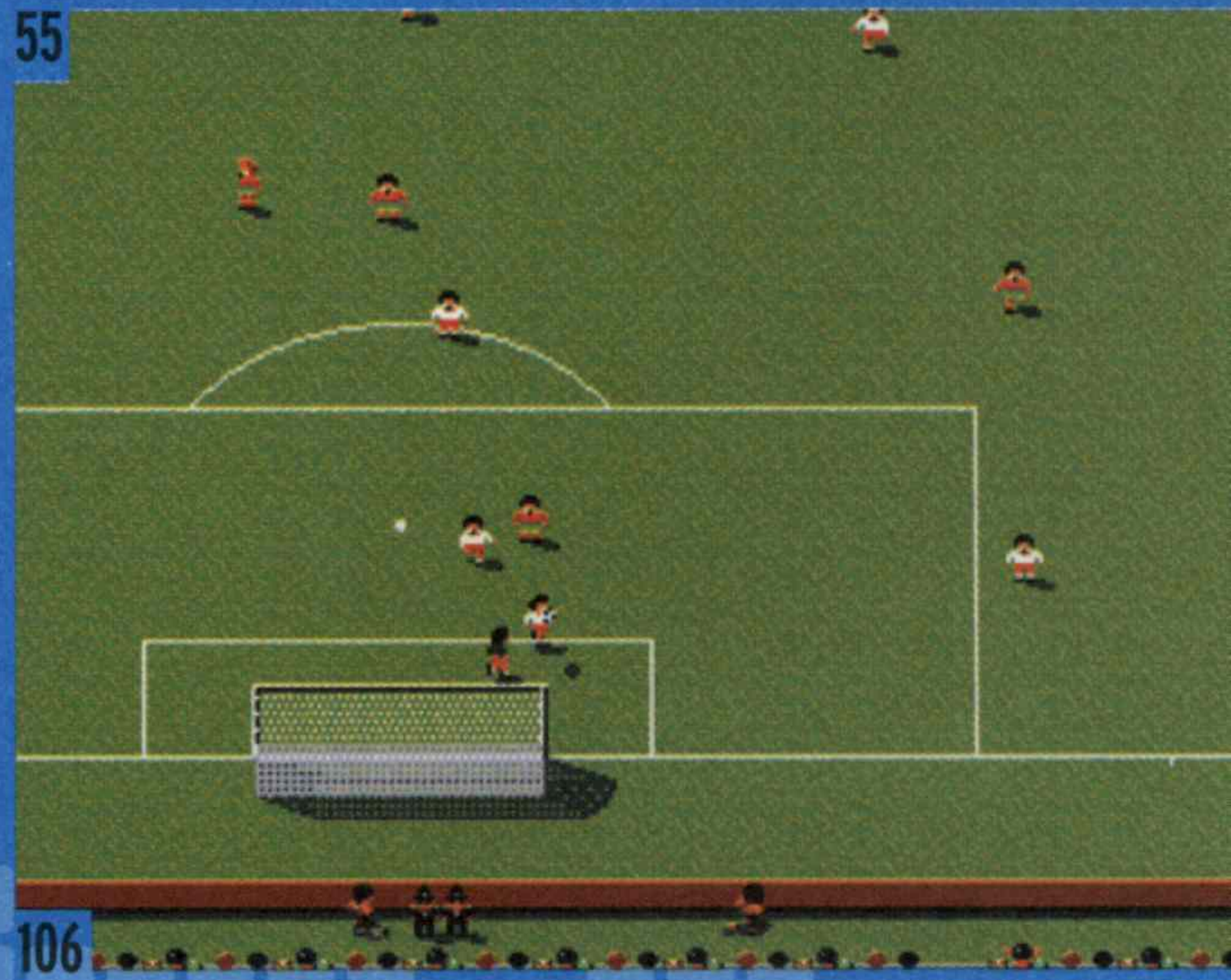
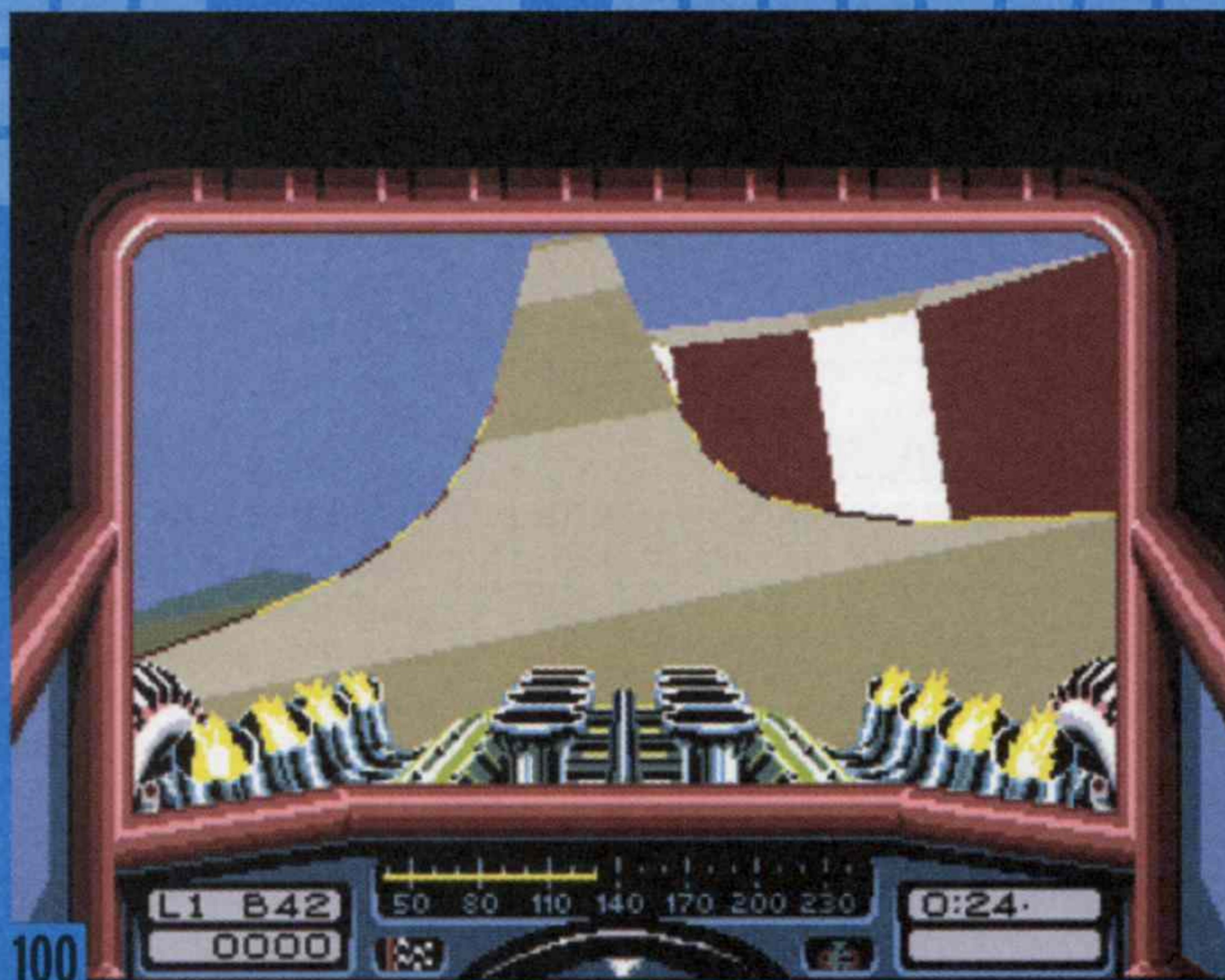
**Rating:** 9

## 106. SENSIBLE SOCCER

**From:** Sensible Software / **Year:** 1992

Smaller graphics and faster gameplay than *Kick Off*. The players here had slightly sticky feet, making it possible to turn with the ball, so it was also a much more accessible game. Inspired many sequels including *Sensible World of Soccer*, which had player and team data from every league on the planet.

**Rating:** 10



# ATARI ST

## ATARI ST

**Year:** 1985

Dubbed the "poor man's Macintosh," the Atari ST brought mice and graphical user interfaces to the rest of the world.

This was the 16-bit machine of choice until Commodore slashed the price of the Amiga.

## 107. STARGLIDER

**From:** Rainbird / **Year:** 1986

For many people, this wireframe 3D shoot-'em-up was their first experience of a 16-bit game.

Smooth animation and innovative features such as a camera mounted in the nose of a guided missile meant that *Starglider* was a promising sign of gaming things to come.

**Rating:** 7

## 108. CARRIER COMMAND

**From:** Rainbird / **Year:** 1987

*Carrier Command* was an icon-driven wargame that put the player in charge of a carrier that chugged from island to island, dispatching forces to take care of the enemy ships cruising nearby.

This was a complicated and compelling title, and rather unexpectedly was later converted for the Spectrum.

**Rating:** 7

## 109. DUNGEON MASTER

**From:** FTL / **Year:** 1987

Influential RPG that attracted many new players to the genre thanks to its first-person 3D graphics. This was long before *Wolfenstein* pioneered smooth 3D animation, so the only movement possible was in big jumps between squares on the map, but it was a breakthrough all the same.

**Rating:** 8

## 110. STARGLIDER 2

**From:** Argonaut / **Year:** 1988

*Starglider* returned on a grand scale, with incredible solid 3D graphics and an entire star system to explore, including a network of underground tunnels on many of the planets. Unfortunately it was so amazing to look at, that it was easy to lose sight of the mission objectives and plot (detailed in the novella packaged with the game).

**Rating:** 10

## 111. VIRUS

**From:** David Braben / **Year:** 1988

Converted from a game called *Zarch*, which ran on the obscure Acorn Archimedes computer. The easiest way to describe *Virus* is as *Defender* in 3D, but there's more

to it than that. A very unusual mouse control system and some convincing 3D terrain make this an oldie worth seeking out.

**Rating:** 9

## 112. XENON 2

**From:** Bitmap Brothers

**/ Year:** 1989

Almost every new shoot-'em-up released featured bigger and more imaginative weapons than the last, but the sheer firepower of *Xenon 2* rendered everything else obsolete. When the craft was fully tooled up, it stretched to about half the width of the screen, and was virtually indestructible. Completely pointless but very pretty.

**Rating:** 7

## 113. FRONTIER

**From:** Konami / **Year:** 1993

The sequel to *Elite* offered more of the same sort of trading and exploration action that had kept 8-bit gamers very happy during the previous few years.

This time the universe was truly unmappable, featuring literally billions of planets and space stations, and the graphics were a big improvement over the wireframe originals.

**Rating:** 8



114



115

# TURBO GRAFX

## TURBO GRAFX

**Year:** 1988

Tiny 8-bit gizmo with impressive graphical abilities. Released as the NEC PC Engine in the UK, makeovers included a color handheld and a laptop version.

## 114. R-TYPE

**From:** Hudson / **Year:** 1988

This conversion of one of the hottest and prettiest coin-ops of the time supplied proof of the TurboGrafx's power. No other version came close to matching this arcade-perfect look and feel, but the game was so big it had to be supplied on two carts.

**Rating:** 8

## 115. ATOMIC ROBOKID

**From:** UPL / **Year:** 1989

Another quality shoot-'em-up to add to TG's growing library of impressive arcade conversions. Noteworthy for its nifty visuals, with screen-filling special effects and a super-cute lead character.

**Rating:** 8

## 116. BONK

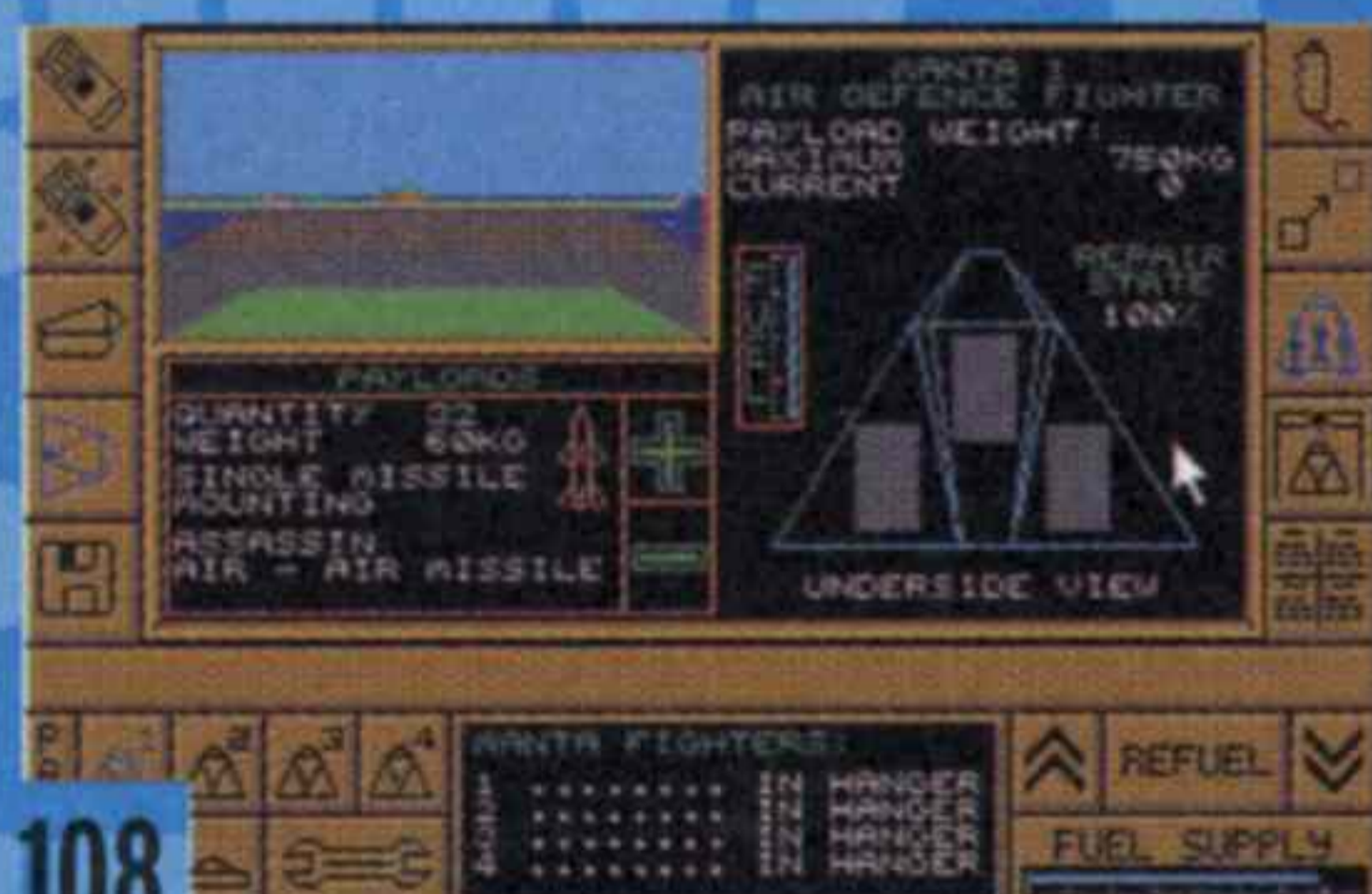
**From:** Hudson / **Year:** 1989

Nintendo had Mario and NEC had Bonk (otherwise known as BC Kid or PC Kid, depending on the territory). This prehistoric platform debut was hilarious, establishing PC as the world's first psychotic neanderthal game hero.

**Rating:** 9



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112

# SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

## SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

**Year:** 1986

A direct rival to the NES, which performed very well in Europe but never attracted the same level of support from third-party developers as Nintendo did.

### 117. ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1986

Before *Sonic*, the long-forgotten *Alex Kidd* was Sega's answer to *Mario*. The game added adventure elements to the usual jumping and exploring action, with a shop where extra power-ups such as a bike could be purchased. There was also a rock-paper-scissors sub-game for battling bad guys.

**Rating:** 7

### 118. Y'S: THE VANISHED OMENS

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1987

While NES owners were raving about *Zelda*, Master System gamers were quietly enjoying *Y's*, the closest equivalent available for Sega's console. Rather than just copy *Zelda's* style, the designers concentrated on conversation and storyline in an attempt to give the game a more adult feel.

**Rating:** 8



117



118

# SEGA GENESIS

## SEGA GENESIS

**Year:** 1989

Known as Sega Mega Drive in the UK, the Genesis was the first 16-bit console, and made the dominant NES seem stale by comparison. Having a head start on the SNES didn't hurt either.

### 119. JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

**From:** Electronic Arts

**/ Year:** 1990

The Genesis' early titles were mainly coin-op conversions, and few could have predicted that the first true must-have game would be not a hot arcade port but a sports sim.

*John Madden Football* was in a different league to every previous gridiron game, and the series is still going strong.

**Rating:** 9

### 120. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1991

Sega pitched *Sonic* as yet another *Mario*-beater, and the hedgehog did fare a lot better than most. Adverts compared *Sonic's* speed and coolness to *Mario's* slower, duller, uglier games, yet despite this many players weren't swayed by hype and found *Sonic* to be more graphics than gameplay.

**Rating:** 7

### 121. STREETS OF RAGE 2

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1992

Fantastic *Final Fight*-style beat-'em-up. The official *Final Fight* conversion for the SNES was a half-baked affair, missing one-third of the characters and without the essential two-player mode. Sega owners had an exclusive, original title that was actually much better than the *Final Fight* coin-op.

**Rating:** 9

### 122. GUNSTAR HEROES

**From:** Treasure / **Year:** 1993

Classy shoot-'em-up from quirky

developer Treasure, boasting some of the best graphics to grace the Genesis. One great feature was the ability to create new weapons by combining two power-ups. There were spectacular bosses and loads of variety here.

**Rating:** 9

# SEGA SATURN

## SEGA SATURN

**Year:** 1994

Sega's 32-bit beast was rather comprehensively stomped by the PlayStation, but managed to host some excellent games before it bit the dust. It was particularly noteworthy as the original home of *Lara Croft* and *Tomb Raider*.

### 123. VIRTUA COP

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1995

A great conversion of a great coin-op gun game. The enemies have various hit zones on their bodies, so they react according to where they've been shot, and many parts of the scenery can be blown away to reveal power-ups (or just for fun). Packed with a huge blue light gun.

**Rating:** 8

### 124. FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1996

A total of 34 characters from previous Sega games, including *Virtua Fighter 1* and *2*, *Fighting Vipers*, *Sonic Fighter*, *Virtua Fighter Kids* and *Virtua Cop*, battle it out in one-on-one unarmed combat. Essential for settling all those "Dude X could never beat Girl Y" playground arguments.

**Rating:** 8

### 125. NIGHTS

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1996

Original 3D platform/flight/puzzle hybrid. Collect blue spheres as quickly as possible, returning them to the start to activate a free-flying bonus round. The game includes A-Life, a system whereby the friendly Nightopian creatures will evolve according to your playing tactics. Bundled with a Dreamcast-style analog controller.

**Rating:** 9



120



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### 126. VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

**From:** Sega / **Year:** 1996

That Sega's arcade smash sequel could work so well on a home console came as a shock to anyone who played the disappointing *Saturn Virtua Fighter*. *Virtua Fighter 2*, however, was a different sort of beast, with hi-res graphics and arcade-perfect gameplay, although it had an impossible task escaping from *Tekken's* shadow.

**Rating:** 9



## 131. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
Link's continuing adventures in Hyrule marked a return to the overhead camera view of his original NES outing, following a less successful side view sequel.

With imaginative dungeon puzzles, excellent graphics and a huge map that included a mirrored "dark" version of the main overworld, this third *Zelda* game was a smash hit that paved the way for the equally impressive Game Boy version and the revolutionary *Ocarina of Time* on the N64.

**Rating:** 10

## 132. STREET FIGHTER II

**From:** Capcom / **Year:** 1992  
The first 16-megabit cartridge. That's a mere two megabytes – less space than it takes to save your game in many current PC titles – but it was a big selling point at the time, particularly as *Street Fighter II* was a SNES exclusive. Any Genesis gamers who wanted to play the biggest and best arcade fighting beat-'em-up at home would have to upgrade to Nintendo's console.

If the quality of gameplay on offer in *Super Mario World* didn't attract new SNES owners, *Street Fighter II's* arcade-quality graphics certainly did.

**Rating:** 8

## 133. SUPER MARIO KART

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1992  
Another piece of innovative game design from Nintendo.

Putting eight of its most popular characters in dinky little go-karts for a novelty racer seemed a strange decision at the time, but the perfect handling and depth of gameplay on offer here turned *Super Mario Kart* into an instant classic, and persuaded almost every other software house with a halfway-decent roster of characters to produce a flood of *SMK* types.

It speaks volumes that none of these has yet come close to matching the goodness of the original, and only Nintendo's own four-player N64 update has actually improved on the winning formula.

**Rating:** 10

# SNES

## SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

**Year:** 1991  
Initially struggled to make a dent in the Genesis' market, but a combination of both technical superiority and Nintendo's peerless in-house game designers eventually made it the more enduring 16-bit machine.

### 127. F-ZERO

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
This first future racer showcased the graphical prowess of Nintendo's new machine, with a 3D road effect that had never previously been seen outside of an arcade. *F-Zero* had gameplay to match, proving a lasting challenge to even the most hardcore of players.

**Rating:** 8

### 128. PILOTWINGS

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
One of the console's launch titles, and far, far more than just the technical demo it first appeared to be. Full use was made of the SNES's hardware to simulate rocket packs, biplanes, hang gliders and parachutes, all with enjoyable gaming challenges and fantastic graphics.

**Rating:** 8

### 129. SUPER MARIO WORLD

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
Like its predecessor, *Super Mario Bros. 3*, *Super Mario World* was acclaimed as the greatest game of all time, even if, at first glance, it didn't look like any huge advances had been made since the 8-bit edition. But playing the game for an hour or two revealed

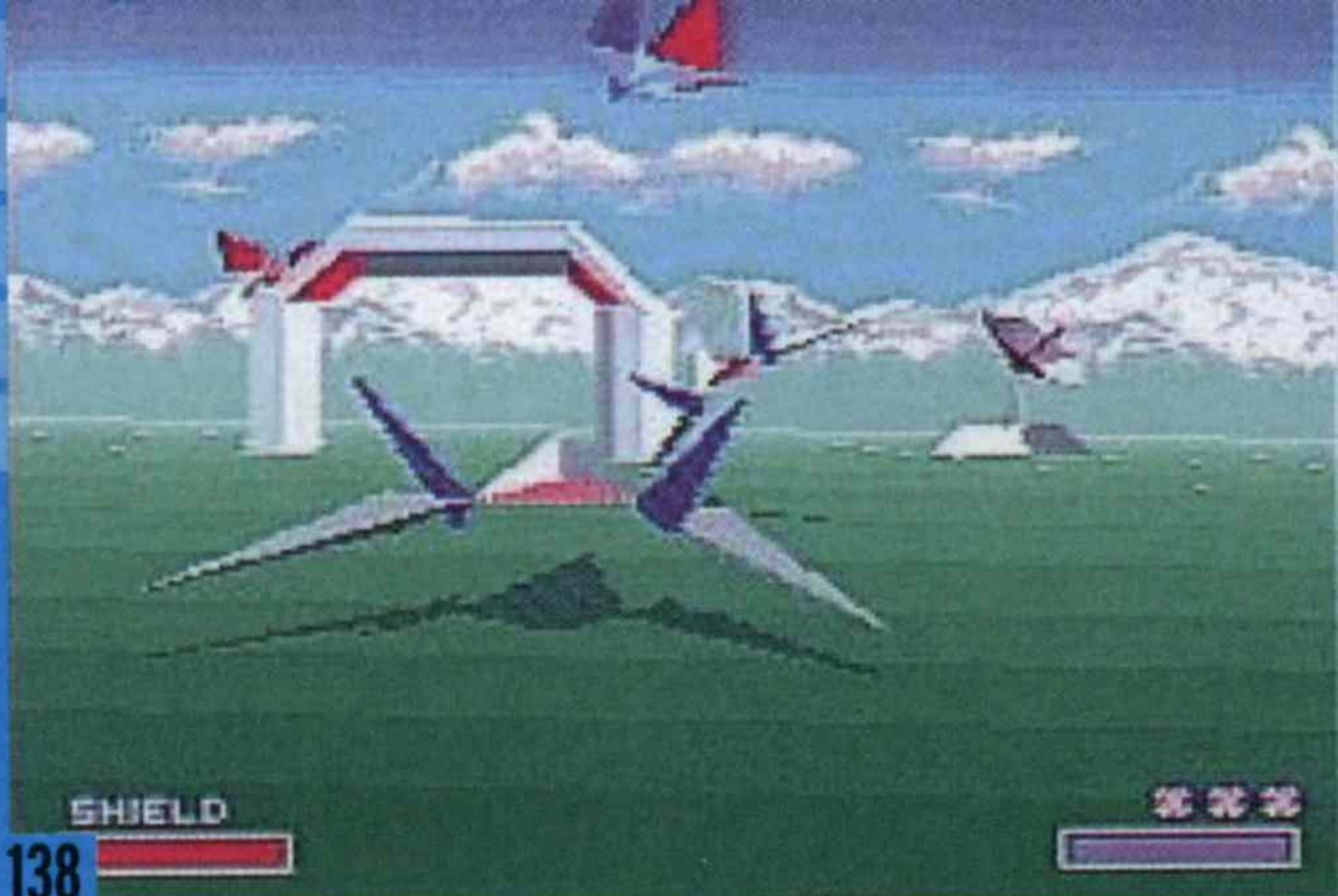
just how close Shigeru Miyamoto's team had come to achieving perfection. It's almost faultless. The extra buttons on the SNES pad gave unprecedented control over Mario's new moves, and with 96 exits to discover, scattered over a huge map, it was the biggest and most challenging platformer ever made.

**Rating:** 10

### 130. SUPER METROID

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
Samus Aran returned for a bigger, better battle against the *Metroids*, in what was, at the time, perhaps the most cinematic game ever. Unforgettable set pieces and brilliantly scripted action sequences help to force a relentless pace right from the start.

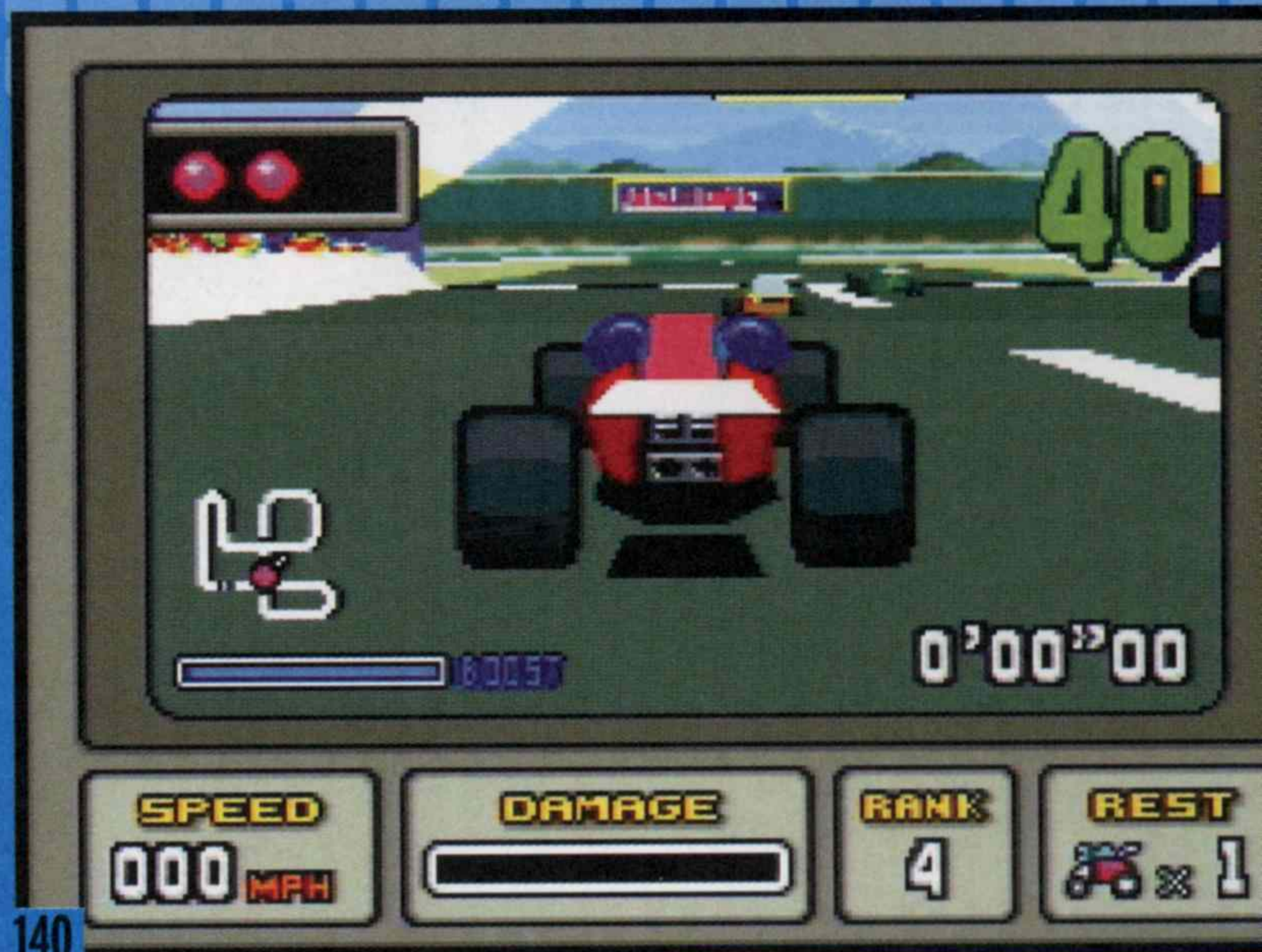
**Rating:** 9



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141



142

### 134. SUPER SOCCER

**From:** Human / **Year:** 1991  
Used the SNES's much-hyped Mode 7 technique to create a soccer game that looked like no other, even if the gameplay was a good few years behind the likes of *Sensible Soccer*. Check out the Colombian goalie, El Loco - he's impossible to tackle.

**Rating:** 7

### 135. SUPER STAR WARS

**From:** JVC / **Year:** 1992  
Multi-stage *Star Wars* adventure, featuring lots of platform action and some shoot-'em-up sections. Recreates the film's atmosphere, thanks to recognizable character sprites and a decent rendition of the famous orchestral soundtrack.

**Rating:** 8

### 136. SUPER TENNIS

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1991  
Smashing tennis game with cute characters. All six buttons on the SNES controller were used, enabling precise control of shot

placement and spin. Featured a world-tour mode, with the ultimate computer player waiting on a remote Pacific island.

**Rating:** 8

### 137. SUPER PUNCH OUT

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1992  
The definitive boxing game, updated from an earlier Mike Tyson-endorsed NES title. Boxing is never an easy sport to simulate in beat-'em-up style, so Nintendo opted for huge cartoon sprites and a view from behind your fighter. Much more enjoyable than any of today's semi-realistic offerings.

**Rating:** 8

### 138. STAR FOX

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1993  
The SNES was never designed to handle *Star Fox* - its hardware excels at shifting 2D sprites, but the machine is just too slow to work with 3D.

However, inside the *Star Fox* cart was a processor enhancement called the Super FX chip, enabling

the humble SNES to produce a hugely impressive 3D shooter.

**Rating:** 8

### 139. DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1994  
Just as the SNES was beginning to look a little long in the tooth, Rare's graphic artists gave this forgotten mascot a facelift. By building 3D models and pre-rendering frames of animation, Rare made this platformer look like it was running on something far more powerful than a SNES. It was a huge success, and these days the 3D super-Kong is as familiar an image as the original orange ape ever was.

**Rating:** 8

### 140. STUNT RACE FX

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1994  
Making use of the Super FX chip, this 3D buggy racer proved to be an entertaining and remarkably good-looking diversion for SNES owners who couldn't face yet

another identical Mode 7 driving game. Cute and playable.

**Rating:** 8

### 141. SUPER MARIO RPG

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1995  
RPG specialist Square, the company behind *Final Fantasy*, teamed up with Nintendo to produce one of *Mario's* more unusual outings. Isometric 3D graphics paved the way for *Mario's* 3D update on the N64, and the playable RPG-style combat survives in the excellent *Paper Mario* game.

**Rating:** 7

### 142. YOSHI'S ISLAND

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1995  
The SNES was in decline by the time this platformer arrived on the scene, which is a shame because it's effectively *Super Mario World 2* - the sequel to the world's greatest game. This is certainly more challenging than the N64 version.

**Rating:** 9

# NEO GEO

## SNK NEO GEO

**Year:** 1990

An arcade machine for your bedroom. This was identical to SNK's arcade hardware, played the same games and cost a fortune – the encyclopedia-sized carts sold for around \$200.

### 143. ART OF FIGHTING

**From:** SNK / **Year:** 1992

SNK's house speciality has always been the beat-'em-up. *Art of Fighting* plays like a rather more technical version of *Street Fighter II*, appealing to fight fans who found Capcom's game a little too easy. This was popular enough to have received regular sequels ever since.

**Rating:** 8

### 144. VIEWPOINT

**From:** Sammy / **Year:** 1992

Isometric shoot-'em-up that was the natural successor to *Zaxxon*.

The amazingly solid visuals provide a beautiful backdrop for some tough arcade action that still looks and feels impressive. If you don't have access to a Neo Geo, then try to check out the later PlayStation edition.

**Rating:** 8

### 145. METAL SLUG

**From:** Nazca / **Year:** 1996

Smart platform shoot-'em-up, with the option to flatten the enemy in a giant Manga-style tank. Excellent graphics and non-stop action. There's a PlayStation version available in some territories, which is well worth seeking out.

**Rating:** 8



143



146



147

# NINTENDO VIRTUAL BOY

## NINTENDO VIRTUAL BOY

**Year:** 1995

A 32-bit oddity from Gunpei Yokoi, designer of the Game Boy. Twin LED screens create a great 3D effect, but not everyone found it comfortable. Because of this the VB was not a huge success.

### 146. MARIO CLASH

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1995

A puzzle platformer, rather similar to the original *Mario Bros.* arcade game but with a 3D element. The playing area is effectively doubled, thanks to a second playfield in the background.

This isn't up to the same standard as *Wario Land* (see right), but a worthy purchase for game-starved VB owners.

**Rating:** 7

### 147. MARIO'S TENNIS

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1995

Plain old tennis game with the usual cast of characters – there isn't much *Mario*-ness about the gameplay, but the Virtual Boy makes a good job of portraying a 3D court. A two-player option was

planned, but the cable to link two machines was never released.

**Rating:** 7

### 148. VERTICAL FORCE

**From:** Hudson / **Year:** 1995

Formulaic scrolling shoot-'em-up with that Virtual Boy staple, a dual-layer playfield. The detailed monochrome graphics are clear and crisp, and the 3D effect is good – you have to decide whether to move to a more dangerous height to collect power-ups, or stay out of trouble by avoiding close combat.

**Rating:** 8

### 149. WARIO LAND

**From:** Nintendo / **Year:** 1995

The best game available for the Virtual Boy. *Wario Land* makes particularly good use of the third dimension, enabling Wario to leap between layers of scenery at certain points. The boss fights are the best parts – they are viewed from behind the player, with the bad guys leaping out toward your face.

**Rating:** 9

# NEO GEO POCKET

## SNK NEO GEO POCKET

**Year:** 1999

Short-lived 16-bit competitor for the Game Boy. A handful of outstanding games demonstrated the machine's early promise, but SNK's financial problems meant the NGP died before its time, and has sadly already lapsed into the realm of retro.

### 150. METAL SLUG FIRST MISSION

**From:** SNK / **Year:** 1999

Superior to any Game Boy shoot-'em-up, this is effectively a portable edition of the Neo Geo original. Tough, varied, and packed with screen-filling bosses. Pretty spectacular stuff for a mere handheld, although there's a lot of slowdown during graphically intensive sequences.

**Rating:** 8

### 151. SNK VS CAPCOM: MATCH OF THE MILLENNIUM

**From:** SNK / **Year:** 1999


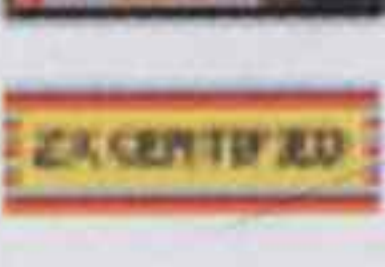

By far the best beat-'em-up available for any handheld system. A selection of the most popular SNK and Capcom fighting heroes battle through an engaging one-player mode and some cool mini-games. Two players can link up for a head-to-head, and data can be shared with the Dreamcast version via a special cable.

**Rating:** 9



150



Associations:   

# Welcome to WOS

## The World of Spectrum

The official world archive for the Sinclair ZX Spectrum and the largest on-line gaming center on the internet

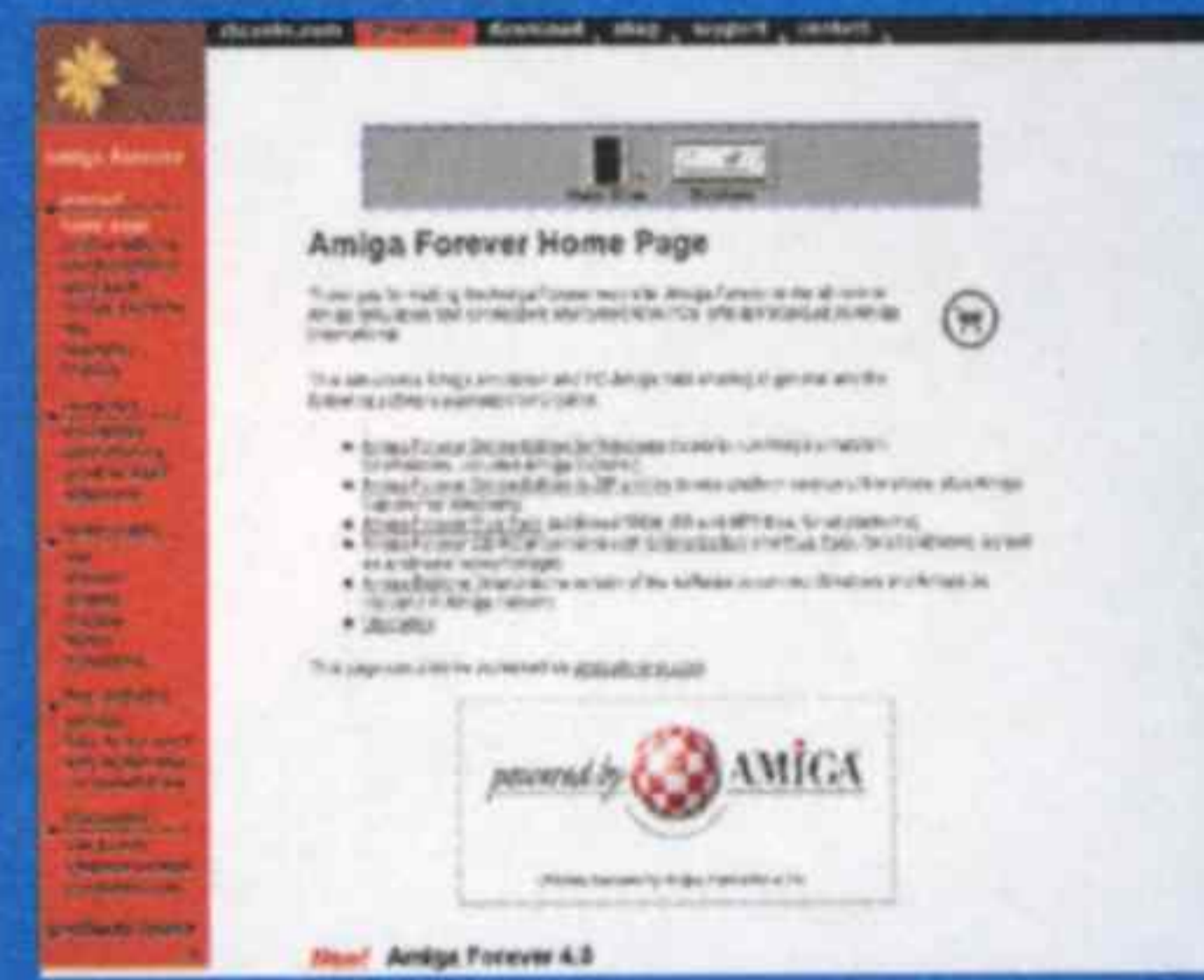
Last update on 22nd May 2001  
[What's new?] [Archive updates?] [v1.4]

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<a href="#">Links</a>	<a href="#">ZX Certification</a>
<a href="#">Forums</a>	<a href="#">Site Awards</a>



# EMULATION

In many cases, the only practical way to experience old videogames is by the use of a PC and an emulator. Emulators are programs available on the Internet that enable PCs to run software designed for other systems, including arcade machines.

The legality of emulation is disputed. Although the efforts of the enthusiasts who develop emulators and compile game (ROM) archives are often responsible for saving vintage machines from extinction, the holders of the original copyright are entitled to insist that their property should never be distributed in this way. Under US law, copyright can only expire after 70 years beyond the death of the holder, therefore videogames are usually protected unless the company or individual responsible waives their rights.

Some machines, for example the Vectrex and Spectrum, are free to emulate. Others, such as the Amiga, must be paid for. Games may or may not be in the public domain, and it is the responsibility of anyone downloading software

and emulators to check the status of any files they want to collect.

Remember that the content of Web sites changes. We can't be responsible for anything untoward that you might unearth on your descent into the world of retro.

## ESSENTIAL LINKS

### CLASSIC GAMING

[www.classicgaming.com](http://www.classicgaming.com)

The first site you should visit. The most extensive multi-format emulation archive on the Net, covering 15 different home systems and a wide range of arcade machines. Also hosts many game/machine worship sites, making it the portal to a wealth of essential information on every aspect of retro gaming.

### MAME

[www.mame.net](http://www.mame.net)

The Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator. An open-source coding project that combines the efforts of many different programmers to emulate practically every arcade

machine you can think of, provided you have access to the game ROM files - preferably from an original game board or via a commercial ROM compilation.

### GAMEBASE64

[www.gamebase64.com](http://www.gamebase64.com)

An archive dedicated to collecting every Commodore 64 game ever released. If you've got a collection of obscure tapes or disks containing games not yet on the GB64 list, the site offers a transfer service to convert your old 8-bit media to ROM files playable via an emulator. The GB64 program itself provides a graphical front end for your C64 collection.

### WORLD OF SPECTRUM

[www.void.jump.org](http://www.void.jump.org)

A huge Spectrum resource, containing emulators, links to other Sinclair retro sites, reviews from old magazines and many thousands of games. Amstrad, owner of the rights to the Spectrum ROM, has given permission for the legitimate use of Spectrum emulators.

### VIDEOTOPIA

[www.videotopia.com](http://www.videotopia.com)

A traveling museum organized by the Electronics Conservancy, maintaining the world's finest

collection of original arcade machines, from *Computer Space* to the very latest titles, and including rarities such as the military edition of *Battlezone*.

Check the Web site for current museum venue details.

### EBAY

[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

The most authentic way to play retro games is to get hold of the original machine and software. The best place to search for such rarities is eBay, where you'll find everything from *Defender* machines to Spectrum tapes and more, all auctioned by collectors.

Even better is that auction prices tend to be considerably less than you could expect to pay at one of the many commercial retro stores.

### CLOANTO

[www.cloanto.com](http://www.cloanto.com)

Amiga software is widely traded on the Internet, but the essential Kickstart ROM files needed to make any emulator function are licensed to a company called Cloanto, which sells them as part of an excellent package called *Amiga Forever*.

You can also use Cloanto's software to transfer files between a PC and a real Amiga.



# THE SHARP OF THING

## The history of videogaming

is littered with the corpses of fallen consoles and bankrupt companies. For every idea that found a safe place next to a million bedroom TVs, many more either failed to sell or simply didn't make it off the drawing board. In a fast-paced entertainment industry with such a volatile past, predicting the future is next to impossible.

With a next-generation console from gaming stalwart Nintendo on the way, and the giant Microsoft corporation poised to enter the hardware race, further casualties are

inevitable. Sony's PlayStation2 is a well-established global brand, and it will take a tremendous effort from the two latecomers to the next-gen market if it is to be dislodged from its comfortable and lucrative position as a DVD player that also happens to run a few fairly good games.

Ideally Sony would like PS2 to become not just the *de facto* gaming standard, but an all-in-one home entertainment solution that replaces those other living room black boxes. However, consumer apathy toward the broadband communications network that forms the core of Sony's plan may mean that the company will have to bide its time until PlayStation3 before finally achieving world domination. What's worth noting is that a future with a single pre-eminent game machine could be the ultimate outcome of the hardware battle.

The problem with attempting to define the gaming equivalent of a CD player is the pace at which technology advances.





# ES TO COME...

Videogames will never sell to the mass market in the same way that music or movies do, and the kind of specialist, tech-savvy consumers the industry caters to are more than willing to buy well-promoted new equipment if it promises something new – just look at the early success the PS2 enjoyed, despite being handicapped by a launch line-up that failed to reflect the power of the new hardware.

Many game programmers, including the huge team working on *Metal Gear Solid 2*, have encountered performance ceilings that have forced them to scale their ambitions to suit the PS2's capability – something the new contenders in the console wars are well placed to capitalize on. It's a fast-moving industry, and Microsoft will surely be hoping that Xbox's superior graphics will enable it to steal customers from under Sony's nose. Likewise, Nintendo's Gamecube also outperforms PS2 in most areas, but historically it has always taken a little something extra to shift the balance of power in the console wars. If the best technology always won the day, the PlayStation would never have outlasted the Dreamcast, and the likes of the Atari Jaguar, 3DO and Sega Saturn would not have proved such costly failures.



In some parallel universe where the Konix Multi System made it into the shops, and the average lifespan of a console is a carefree six months, perhaps these forgotten names might have succeeded. In the real world, however, there are one or two winners and an awful lot of sorry losers. Realizing that Sony has much of the adult market sewn up already, Nintendo has refused to boast of Gamecube's technical prowess, and appears to be aiming the machine at PS2's leftovers – more specifically young Pokémon fans and enthusiasts of Nintendo's peerless in-house productions. Microsoft, on the other hand, is taking the fight to Sony's own doorstep. The results are unlikely to be a pretty sight.

Whatever happens, you can bet that deep inside a laboratory somewhere in Japan work is underway on the successors to machines yet to be released. Now that multi-million polygon counts and 60-frames-per-second are taken for granted it might be some time before we see a quantum leap to equal the one that marked the progression from SNES to PlayStation, but nothing generates quite so much excitement among gamers as the prospect of getting hold of a brand-new machine.



# XBOX

The PlayStation accounts for a huge amount of Sony's profits. And Sony is a huge company that, before 1995, had nothing to do with the game industry. No wonder Microsoft saw this next generation of hardware as an ideal opportunity to get a foot in the door and establish itself as a major player, beyond its successful flight sim and *MechWarrior* games business.

When Microsoft announced its plan to produce Xbox, contracts to design graphics chips and processors for the machine were the hottest properties around. In the end, Intel and Nvidia were the recipients of Microsoft's favor, and the final evolution of Xbox promises to be the most technologically advanced console on the market.

## PRO:

### Microsoft's money

Microsoft is backing Xbox with an enormous marketing spend – the widely quoted figure is \$500m, and that kind of cash buys an awful lot of goodwill. When the PS2 was launched, many newspaper reports quoted the official blurb about the PS2 being the first console to bring “emotion” to games. Microsoft would be delighted to repeat such a PR coup.

### Easy to program

Few developers have been able to come to grips with PS2's hardware, resulting in the first wave of PS2 games looking inferior to their counterparts on the far less powerful Dreamcast. Creating cutting-edge PS2 software is expensive and difficult. By contrast, Xbox has instant access to a global community of highly skilled developers, thanks to years of coding evolution on the PC.

### High specs

Xbox is loaded with top-of-the-range hardware – 64Mb of memory, a 733MHz Intel processor and a graphics chip by Nvidia, the company behind the hottest PC video cards. Although this doesn't match the very best PCs, Xbox games are likely to look more impressive because developers will be able to exploit the hardware without having to cater to countless setups.

### Hard drive

An 8Gb hard drive is built in – this enables extra content to be downloaded straight to the machine. It also provides for the kind of very complex game saves that can't fit on a memory card.

## CON:

### Dependent on third parties

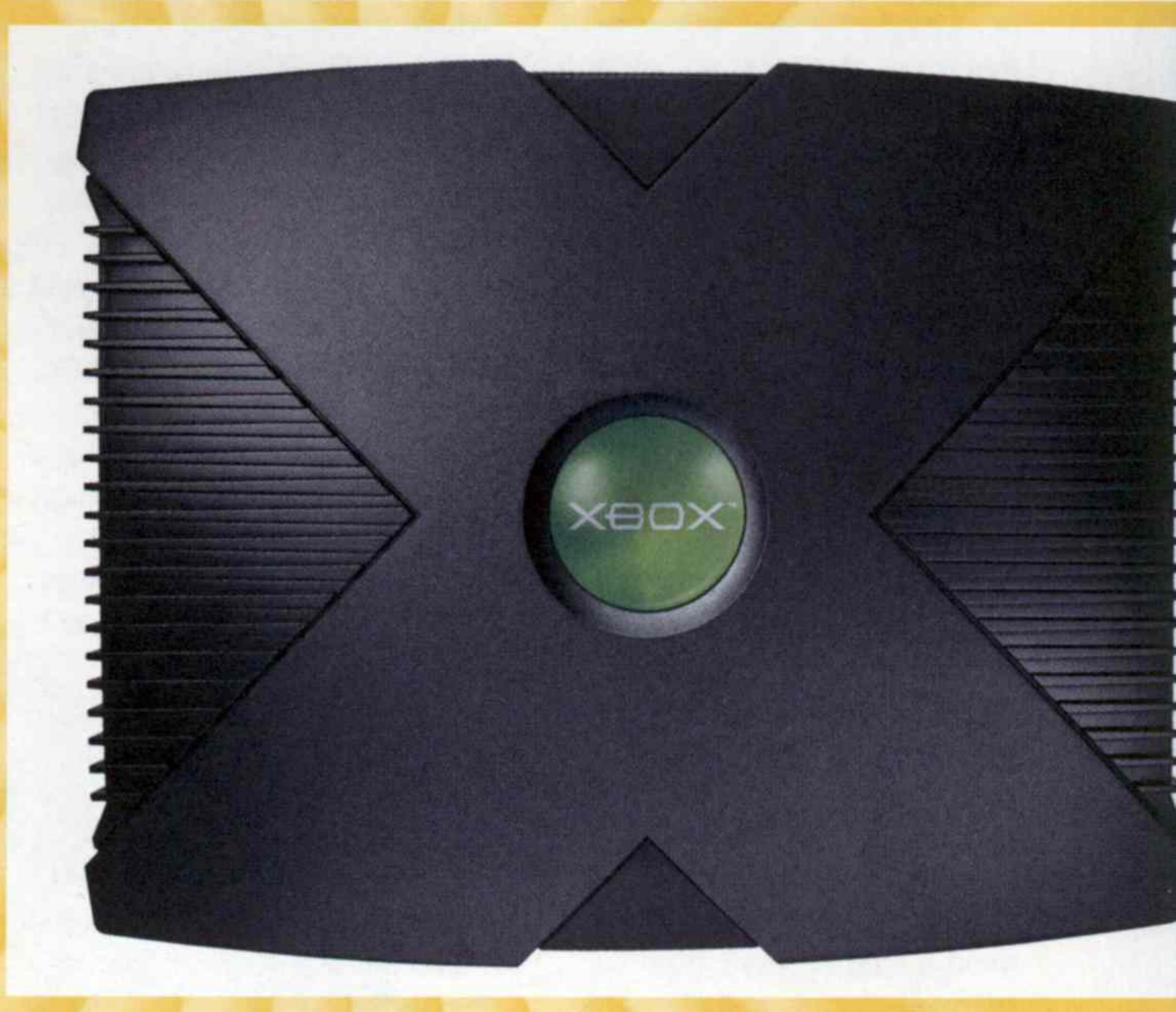
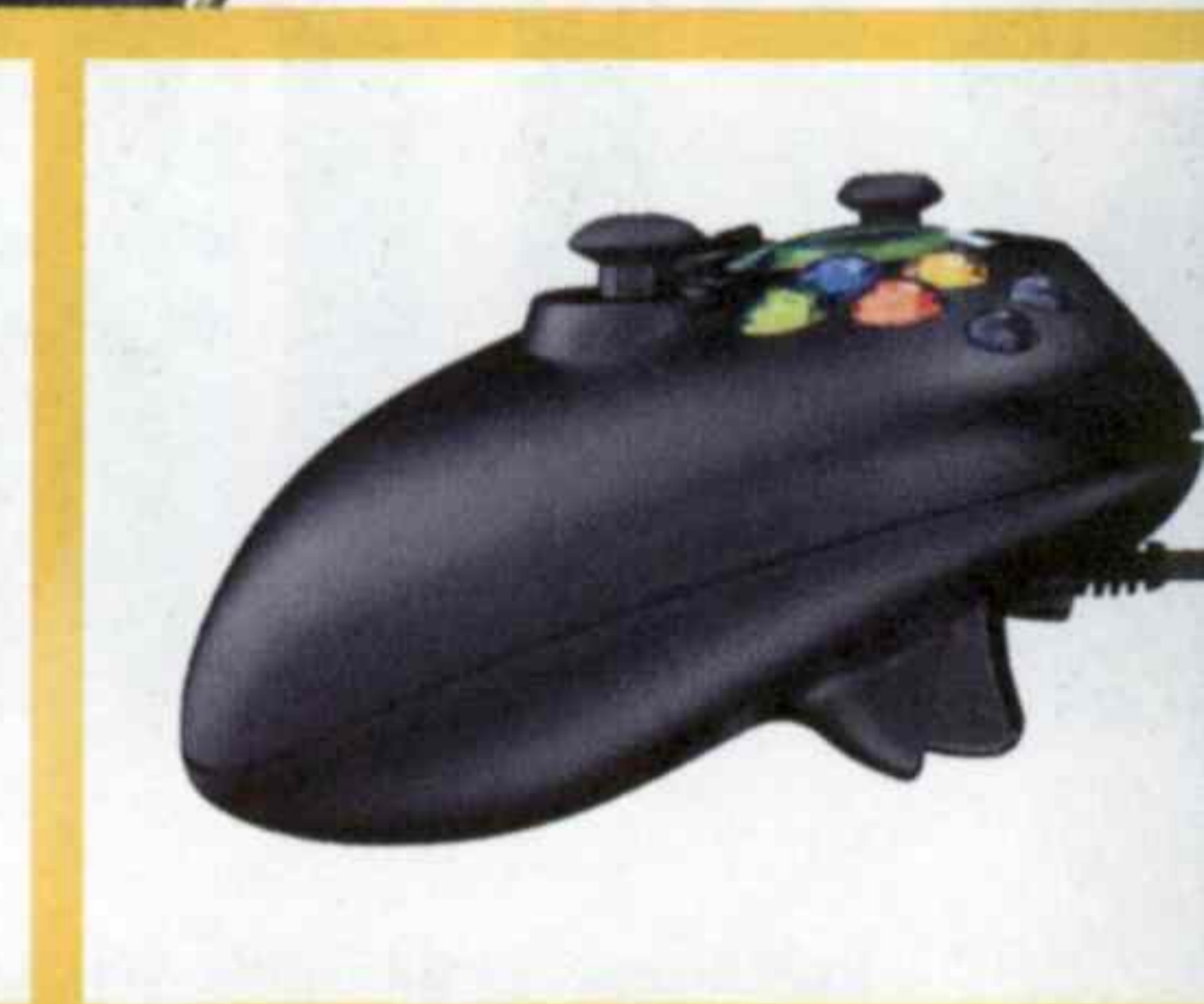
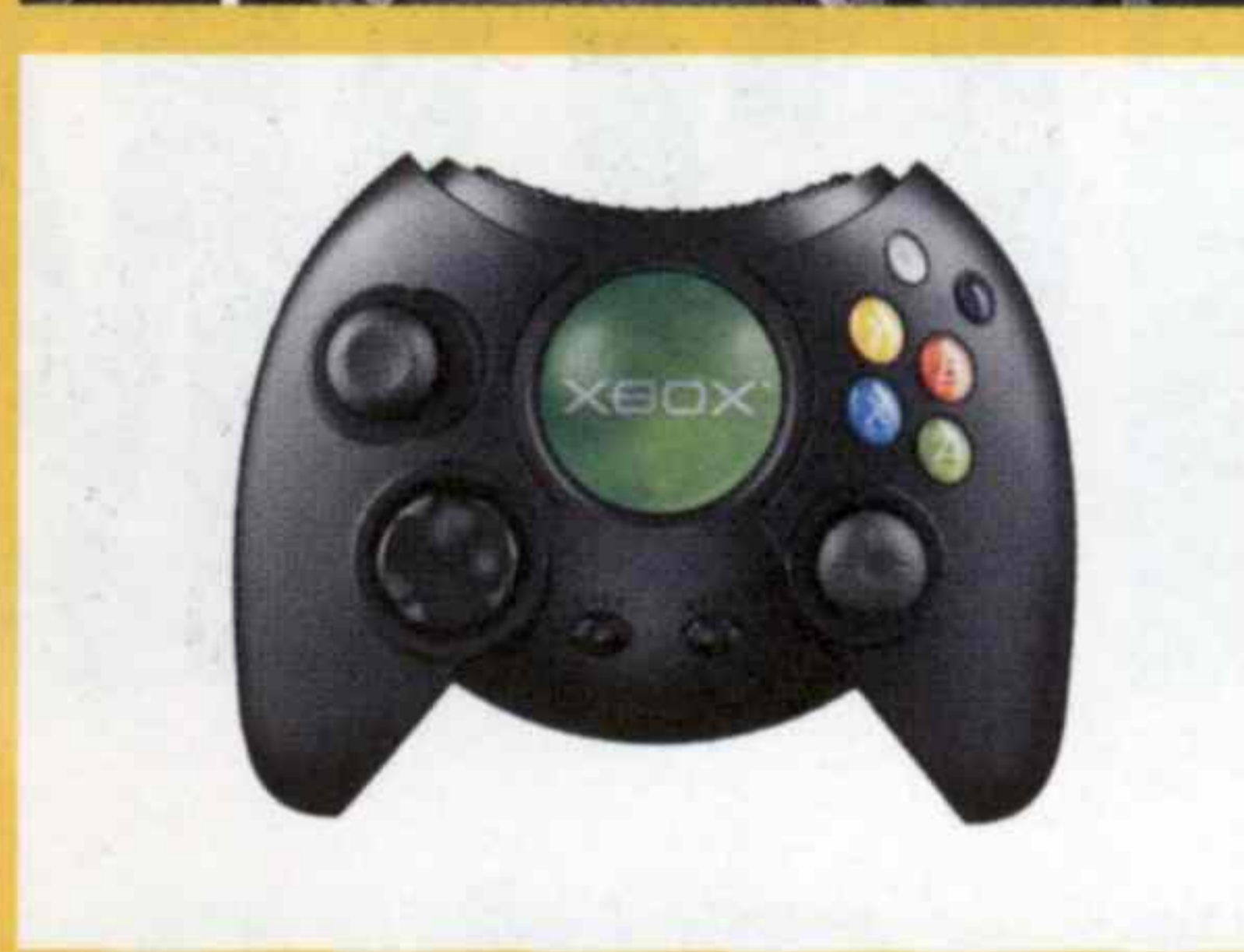
As a new entrant into the console market, Microsoft's fortunes will depend on attracting the best third-party developers. If the company can convince elite Japanese publishers to release games exclusively for Xbox then its success will be assured, but the likes of Konami, Namco and Squaresoft are unlikely to commit unless the machine captures a large market share without their help. That's a heavy burden for Microsoft's star developer Bungie to take on.

### PC backlash

Microsoft is determined to make the world understand that Xbox is a console and not a PC without a keyboard, but the fact remains that its biggest assets are legacies of its PC roots. Its components are produced by the same people who make the ugly gray box that sits under your desk and loses half your data every few weeks. It has a hard drive – does that mean games will be rushed to the stores and users will have to download patches to get them working? Unlikely, but if people start making Xbox the butt of bad jokes, it's a dead duck.

### Japanese indifference

Americans invented the console business, but they haven't had a contender since Atari collapsed. Vested interests in the States made it as difficult as possible for Nintendo to resurrect the game market in the mid-'80s, and Microsoft will not have an easy time selling Xbox to Japan. The chunky controller might have been redesigned for the Japanese market, but will it be enough? If it doesn't sell to Japanese punters, the software superpowers won't write for it. Game over.



# GAMECUBE

Nintendo is the godfather of the modern game machine. When Nintendo announces a new product, rival developers usually start tearing out their hair before returning to their drawing boards.

Except last time it didn't quite work out like that. The N64 was eclipsed by the PlayStation, thanks to Sony's clever PR, generous licensing arrangements and year's head start. With Gamecube, Nintendo believes it can regain its position at the top of the tree. It will be released long after the PS2 and is not geared toward third-party developers, but as the main part of a combined system that includes the successful Game Boy Advance, at least the PR side of things appears to be working more smoothly...

## PRO:

### The world's best games

Thanks in no small measure to the genius of Shigeru Miyamoto, no company is as consistently brilliant at game design as Nintendo. And if you want to play Nintendo's games, you've got to buy Nintendo's machine. Mind you, having some of the finest games ever created couldn't help the N64 overtake the PlayStation, but it did establish a fairly comfortable position as (a distant) number two to Sony's machine, particularly in the US. Same again, perhaps?

### Anti-piracy measures

With PS2 and Xbox software coming on standard DVDs, piracy is a real threat. Gamecube uses proprietary mini-DVDs, which hold less information but will be difficult to counterfeit. This prospect might attract third-party developers previously put off by Nintendo's high licensing fees.

### Ease of use

Gamecube is reputedly a breeze to program, and comes with an array of built-in special effects that can only be reproduced on PS2 via the combined effort of a team of Einsteins. The machine's simplicity doesn't compromise its power, as anyone who has seen a Gamecube title will testify.

### The perfect controller?

Gamecube's handset is the result of 20 years of innovation. Nintendo invented or popularized almost all of the features now found as standard on joypads, and because the company only introduces its machines after seeing what the competition has to offer, it takes at least one hardware generation before other console manufacturers are in a position to catch up.

## CON:

### Lack of software

Nintendo's attitude toward third-party publishers has long been one of indifference. If other companies want to make Gamecube titles then they can pay the licensing fee and take their chances, because Nintendo concentrates exclusively on its in-house products. The amount of money generated by franchises like *Mario*, *Zelda* and *Pokémon* would appear to vindicate such a policy, but gamers don't enjoy missing out on the likes of *Metal Gear Solid*, and, as happened in the case of PlayStation vs. N64, will often buy the machine with the largest choice of software, regardless of quality.

### Kiddie image

Nintendo is associated with the younger end of the game market, and the chunky, Fisher-Price look of the Gamecube won't help endear it to the kind of adult consumers who have serious money to spend on entertainment. There will be greater numbers of mature games than were found on N64, however, and the phenomenal success of *Pokémon* shows that parents can be persuaded to cough up almost as much cash as single, twenty-something males.

**The battle lines are drawn. So far it's impossible to tell who's going to win the biggest beat-'em-up in the history of videogames. Only one thing's for sure - the scrap between the console manufacturers seems set to make even the most vicious of videogames seem like a dolls' tea party. Enjoy your ringside seat...**

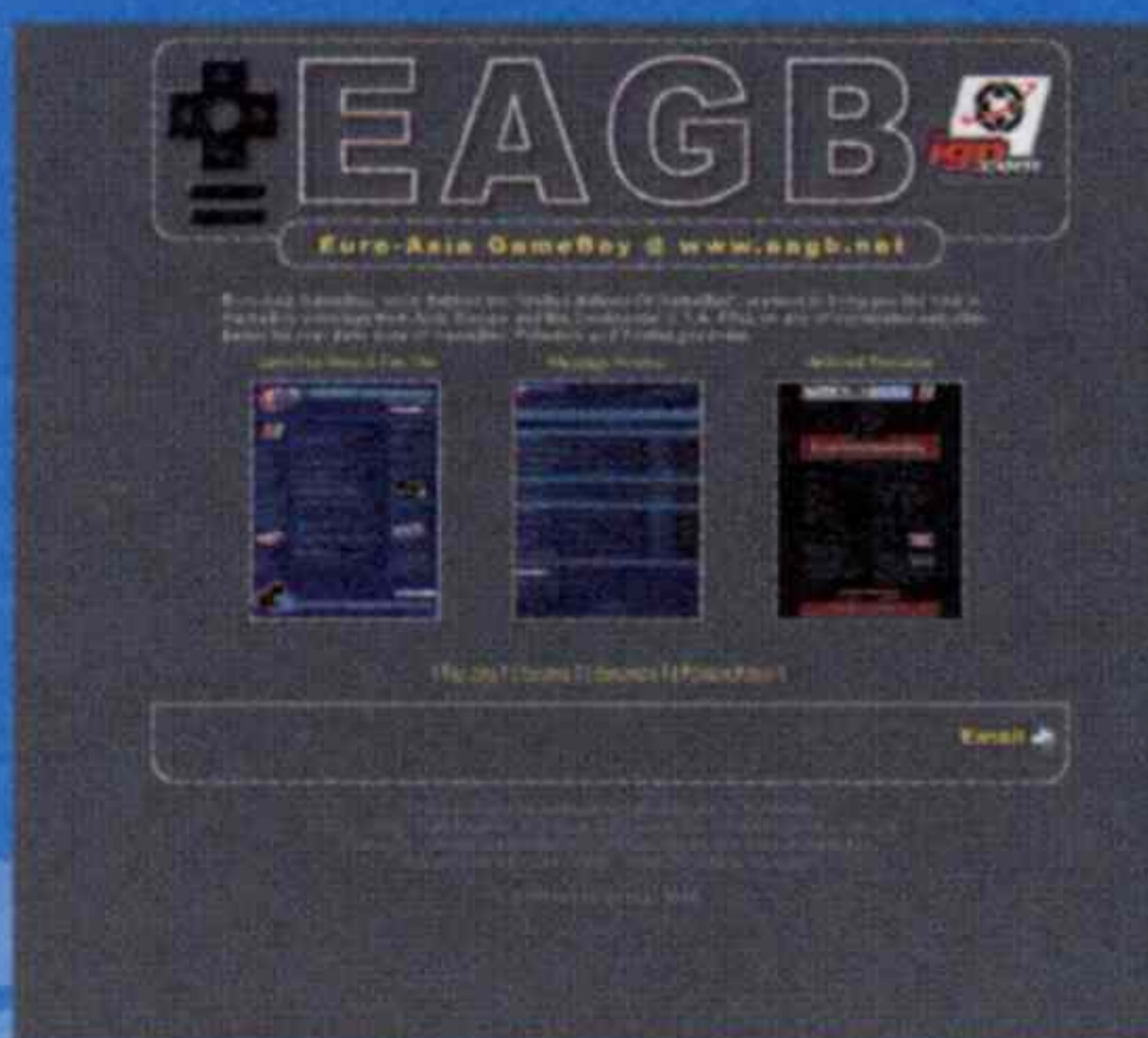


# BOOKMARKS

## WANT TO KNOW MORE? TAKE A TRIP ON-LINE TO SOME OF THE WEB'S BEST GAMING SITES...

It's almost compulsory. When a gamer acquires their first PC they have to put up a gaming site, detailing their abiding love of all things Lara/*Half-Life*/*FFVII*, and maintain it obsessively for a week, before abandoning it to get on with gaming. The Net is littered with such tombstones.

Fortunately there are some consistently good sites out there, and these are just a selection of the bookmarks from the staff of *The Ultimate Guide*. As ever, you must be aware that the content of Web sites changes daily, and we cannot be responsible for anything that you might - or might not - find here.



### ATOM FILMS

[www.atomfilms.com](http://www.atomfilms.com)

The source of cool *Shockwave* games - oft circulated via e-mail.

### BUNGIE

[www.bungie.net](http://www.bungie.net)

Home of *Myth* and *Myth II*, on-line games that work a treat even with slow connections.

### DAILY RADAR UK

[www.dailyradar.co.uk](http://www.dailyradar.co.uk)

All the top gaming news, updated daily for the UK.

### EURO-ASIA GAME BOY

[www.eagb.net](http://www.eagb.net)

Excellent site covering handhelds, with news, reviews and features.

### EXPRESS.COM

[www.express.com](http://www.express.com)

Plenty of new games and Japanese imports among the DVDs, with worldwide shipping.

### FASTEST GAME NEWS

[www.fgnonline.com](http://www.fgnonline.com)

Industry news, including job vacancies and other insider information.

### GAME ARCHIVE

[www.gamearchive.com](http://www.gamearchive.com)

A large collection of retro video and pinball articles, including classified ads.

### GAMEFAQS

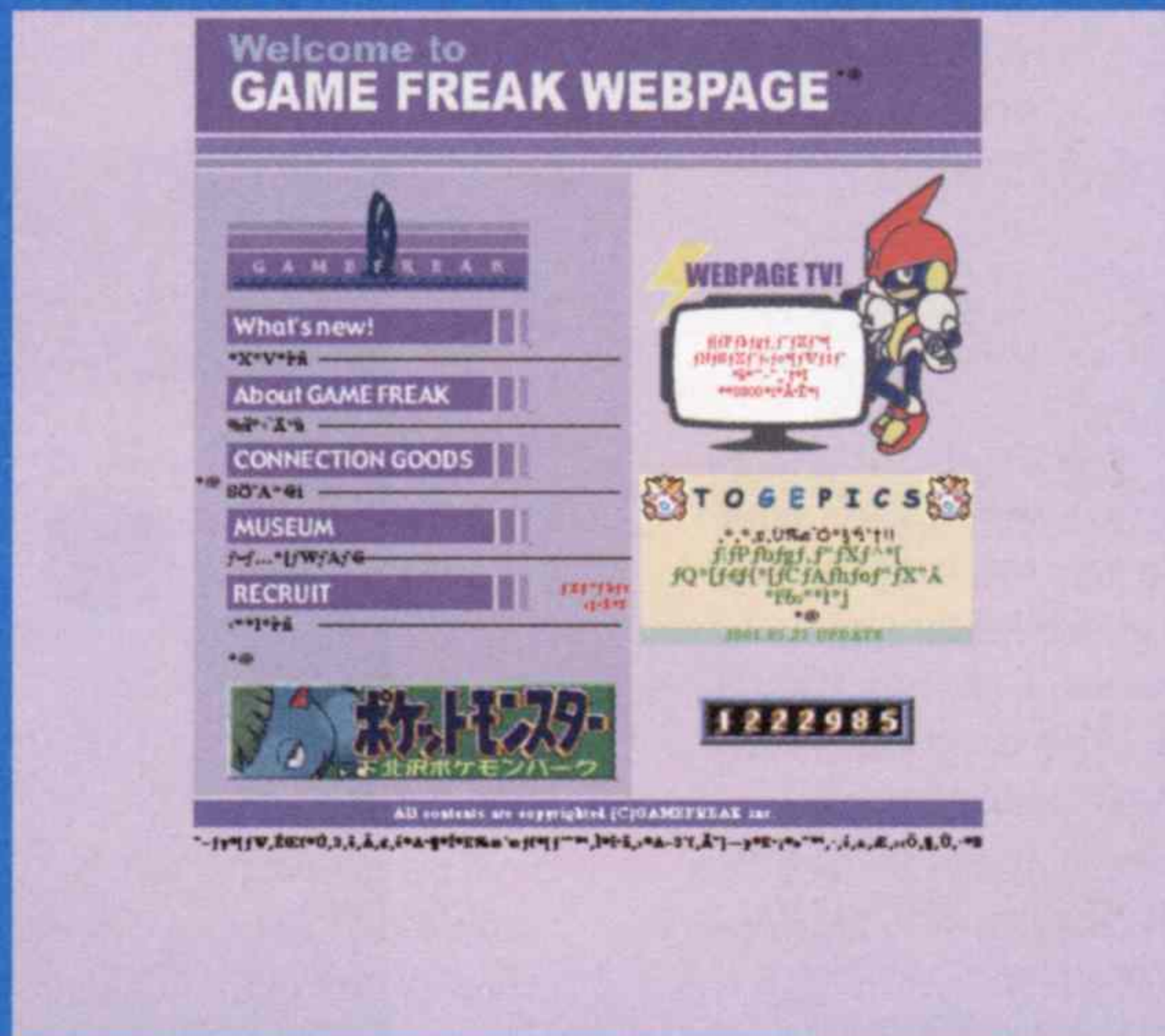
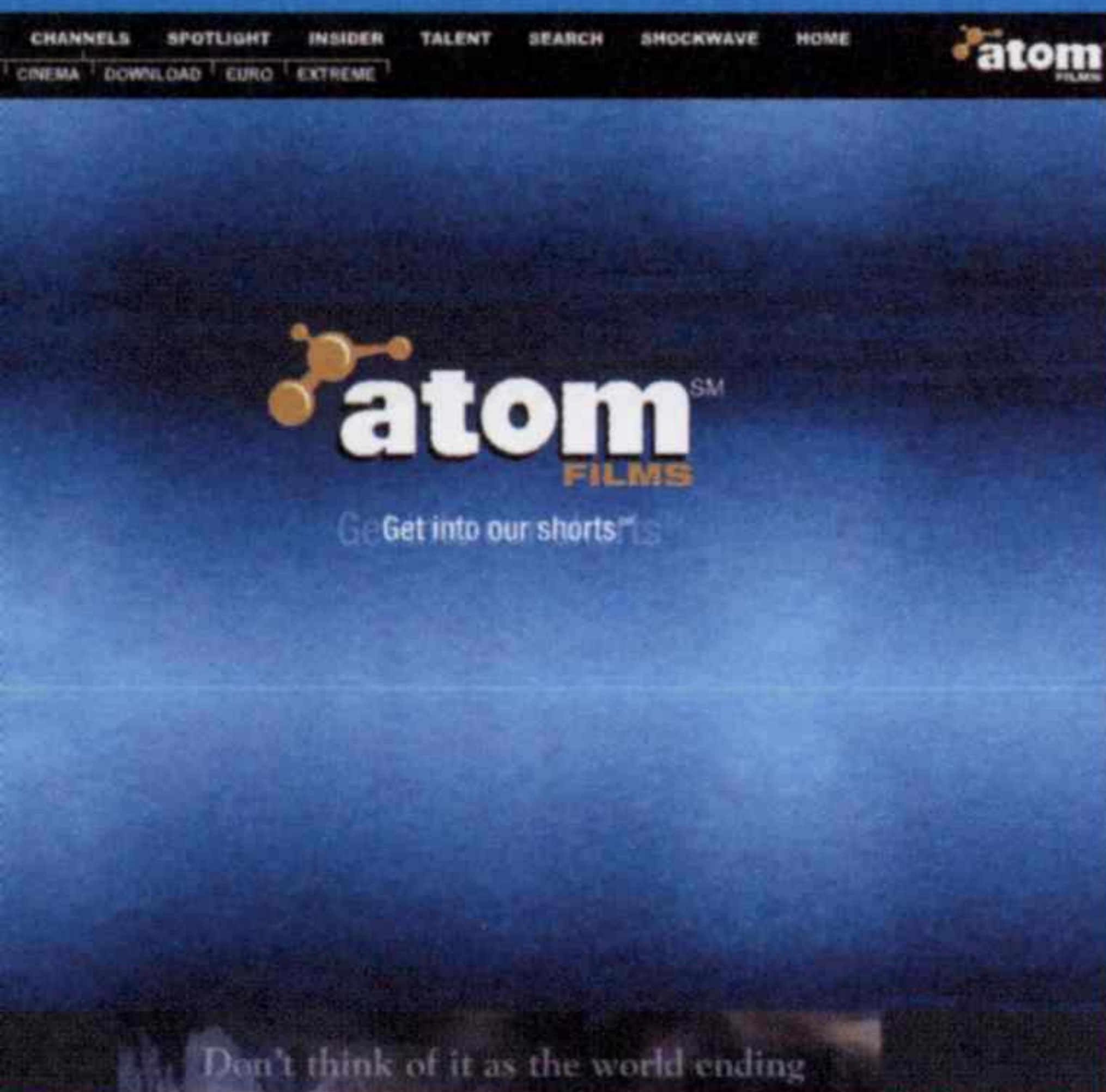
[www.gamefaqs.com](http://www.gamefaqs.com)

Got yourself stuck? Want a cheat? Need help? If it's not here, it probably doesn't exist on the Net.

### GAMEFREAK

[www.gamefreak.co.jp](http://www.gamefreak.co.jp)

An essential stop for *Pokémon* fans, with some great artwork.



## GAMESPY

www.gamespy.com

A reliable portal where you can locate players in virtually any on-line-compatible PC game.

## GAMEWINNERS

www.gamewinners.com

Another large collection of cheats, codes, walkthroughs and FAQs for every game you can think of.

## GIA

www.thegia.com

The Gaming Intelligence Agency has news and info for gamers, and game-industry people.

## RALPH H. BAER



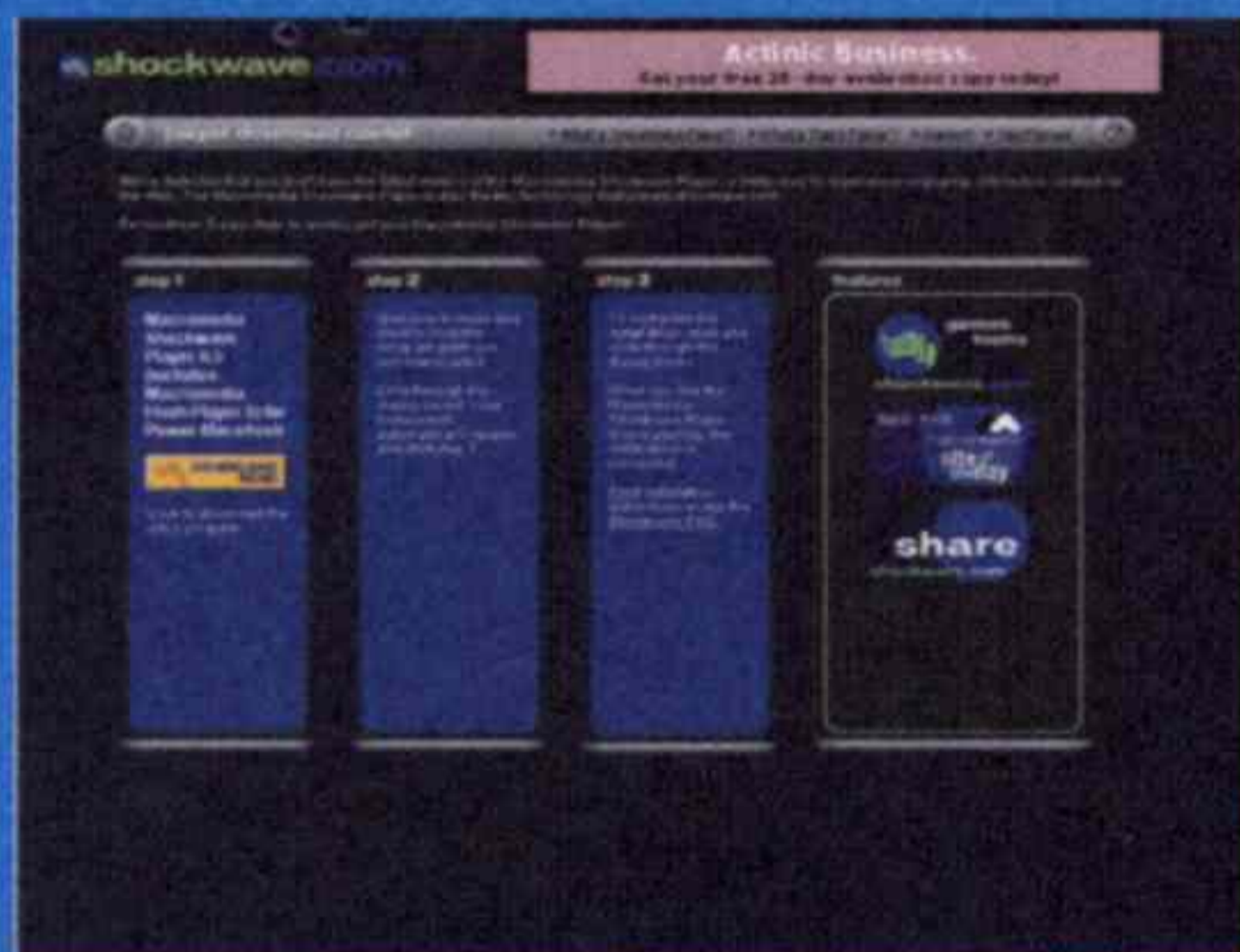
### R.H. Baer Consultants

R.H. Baer Consultants (RHBC) has been in the business of inventing, developing, and licensing electronic consumer products since I started it in 1975.

During the '70's and 80's, much of RHBC's work was involved in cooperative product development at Marvin Glass & Associates, the pre-eminent US independent toy & game designers of that period. **SIMON**, the perennially popular handheld game was the outstanding product of that period.

I am RHBC's chief cook-and-bottle-washer. Together with a few associates, I take novel ideas, preferably and mostly mine, from their inception through hardware and software design, demo-model development and licensing.

In addition to coming up with original product concepts, we also



### DOMAIN NAMES

www.godaddy.com

### SEANBABY.COM

IF THIS SITE DOESN'T KICK YOU IN THE ASS, YOU'RE NOT A FAN!

THE PROBE!

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Old Man Murray and me in LA: **EQ 2000**

"BARF!"

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GUESTBOOK HITS  
GOD LETTERS

### Play

CHEEZY GUY and the CURSE of the

## HOME COMPUTER MUSEUM

www.HomeComputer.de

A fascinating look back at ancient systems, including the fabled Atari Panther.

## IGN

www.ign.com

The biggest game and entertainment news empire on the Net. There's not just games, but cars, movies, gadgets, comics, wrestling and more.

## MAGIC BOX

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Castle/5534/gaming.htm

The best source of Japanese gaming news, updated daily.

## RALPH H. BAER

www.ralphbaer.com

Want to see what else the granddaddy of gaming has been up to? It's all here.

## SEANBABY

www.seanbaby.com

Features an often hilarious look back at NES games and Nintendo Power readers.

## SHOCKWAVE

www.shockwave.com

Download the latest Shockwave plug-in, and play classic games.

## VIDEO-SENKI

www.video-senki.com

An offbeat site filled with quality Japanese news and features.

### VIDEO BEST ENTERTAINMENT SITE OF 2000

Older, Tastier in 2000 (green keyboard)

For more details about 20-Button keyboard

by [Cristin A. Baker, Webmaster](#)

**17.02.01** [New PC-1](#)

**14.02.01** [Epson 800-2 Junior](#)

**06.02.01** [V-Tech Laser Compact XT \(base\)](#)

**14.02.01** [The Digital Group \(5-100 machine from 1978\)](#)

**15.02.01** [Again: Why is this page in english and not in german?](#)

**02.02.01** [Savel European Computer](#)

### GET INSIDER

Today on Insider: Fellowship of the Rings on Xbox? Interview with WSP co-founders.

Final Fantasy X: The best-looking PS2 game? Here's 20 high-res screens to help you decide.

StarWars: Stanley Kubrick's epic masterpiece gets the Criterion message.

ER: Bahdu: FOR Film/TV talks with Ford Auber - antagonist in Ken Kesey's 'ONE FLEW OVER the CUCKOO NEST'.

Mobile Suit Gundam: Toys, Learn, mean, air-to-landable machines. Get in here.

Earbuds: Ann the canonist! We'll raise their castle by dawn. Ask about updates!

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## ビデオ戦記

video senki

in the year 2000, men found Senki at war. The empires were clashing, and misinformation was rampant. To fight this, the VIDEO-SENKI corporation began its work.

AN IMPORTANT thing to remember: Any industry has its ups and downs. Not only the only thing will have the strength to stand above it all. We all could stand to learn much from the humble blue blob.

I WENT TO E3 AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS STUPID REPORT: E3 2001 was, without me really having to say it, a gigantically enormous event. I shudder to think what it was like, even bigger, in previous years. It's too much for this decrepit 23-year-old body. If I had my way, all companies would be forced to limit their booth sizes to exactly 20 feet by 20 feet. Ooo. This would lead to gigantic spine-shaped booths, defeating the whole purpose of the rule, but I could at least say I tried.

# MAKE CONTACT...

**S**hould you want to know more about a game company or need technical or sales support for one of their games, why not give them a call or check out their Web site? Below are contacts for some of the most prominent US (and a couple of UK) publishers.

Also listed are some tips and hints lines, for which you typically must pay a premium per-minute rate. If you use these, you must first get the permission of whoever pays the phone bill. All the information on this page is correct at time of going to press. Please dial carefully.

## 3DO

General inquiries: 650-385-3000  
[www.3do.com](http://www.3do.com)

## ACCLAIM

General inquiries: 516-759-7800  
[www.acclaim.com](http://www.acclaim.com)

## ACTIVISION

Customer service: 310-255-2050  
[www.activision.com](http://www.activision.com)

## BLIZZARD/VIVENDI

Sales inquiries: 800-953-SNOW  
Technical support: 949-955-1382  
[www.blizzard.com](http://www.blizzard.com)

## CAPCOM

Tips line: 900-680-2583  
[www.capcom.com](http://www.capcom.com)

## CODEMASTERS

Technical support: 559-683-4468  
[www.codemasters.com](http://www.codemasters.com)

## EIDOS

General inquiries: 415-547-1200  
Customer service: 415-547-1244  
Tips line: 900-773-4367  
[www.eidosinteractive.com](http://www.eidosinteractive.com)

## ELECTRONIC ARTS

Customer service: 650-628-1900  
Tips line: 900-288-4468  
[www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)

## EMPIRE INTERACTIVE

[www.empireinteractive.co.uk](http://www.empireinteractive.co.uk)

## GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS (GODGAMES)

Sales inquiries/ technical support:  
214-303-1202  
[www.godgames.com](http://www.godgames.com)

## HASBRO INTERACTIVE

Technical support: 978-522-0100  
[www.hasbroidinteractive.com](http://www.hasbroidinteractive.com)

## IDSA

(Interactive Digital Software Association)  
[www.idsa.com](http://www.idsa.com)

## INFOGRAMES

Technical support: 425-951-7106  
Tips line: 900-454-4468  
[www.infogrames.com](http://www.infogrames.com)

## INTERPLAY

Sales inquiries: 800-INTERPLAY  
Technical support: 949-553-6678  
[www.interplay.com](http://www.interplay.com)

## KONAMI

General inquiries: 650-654-5687  
Tips line: 900-896-4468  
[www.konami.com](http://www.konami.com)

## LUCASARTS

Sales inquiries: 888-LEC-GAME  
Technical support: 415-507-4545  
Tips line: 900-740-5334  
[www.lucasarts.com](http://www.lucasarts.com)

## MICROSOFT

General inquiries: 425-882-8080  
[www.microsoft.com/games](http://www.microsoft.com/games)

## MIDWAY

General inquiries: 773-961-2222  
Technical support: 903-874-5092  
Tips line: 900-737-2262  
[www.midway.com](http://www.midway.com)

## NAMCO

Tips line: 900-737-2262  
[www.namco.com](http://www.namco.com)

## NINTENDO

Customer service: 800-255-3700  
Free Power Tips: 425-885-7529  
Tips line: 900-288-0707  
[www.nintendo.com](http://www.nintendo.com)

## ROCKSTAR GAMES

(See Take 2 Interactive)  
[www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com)

## SEGA

Customer service: 800-872-7342  
[www.sega.com](http://www.sega.com)

## SIERRA/VIVENDI

General inquiries: 425-649-9800  
Tips line: 900-370-5583  
[www.sierra.com](http://www.sierra.com)

## SONY PLAYSTATION

Customer service: 800-697-7266  
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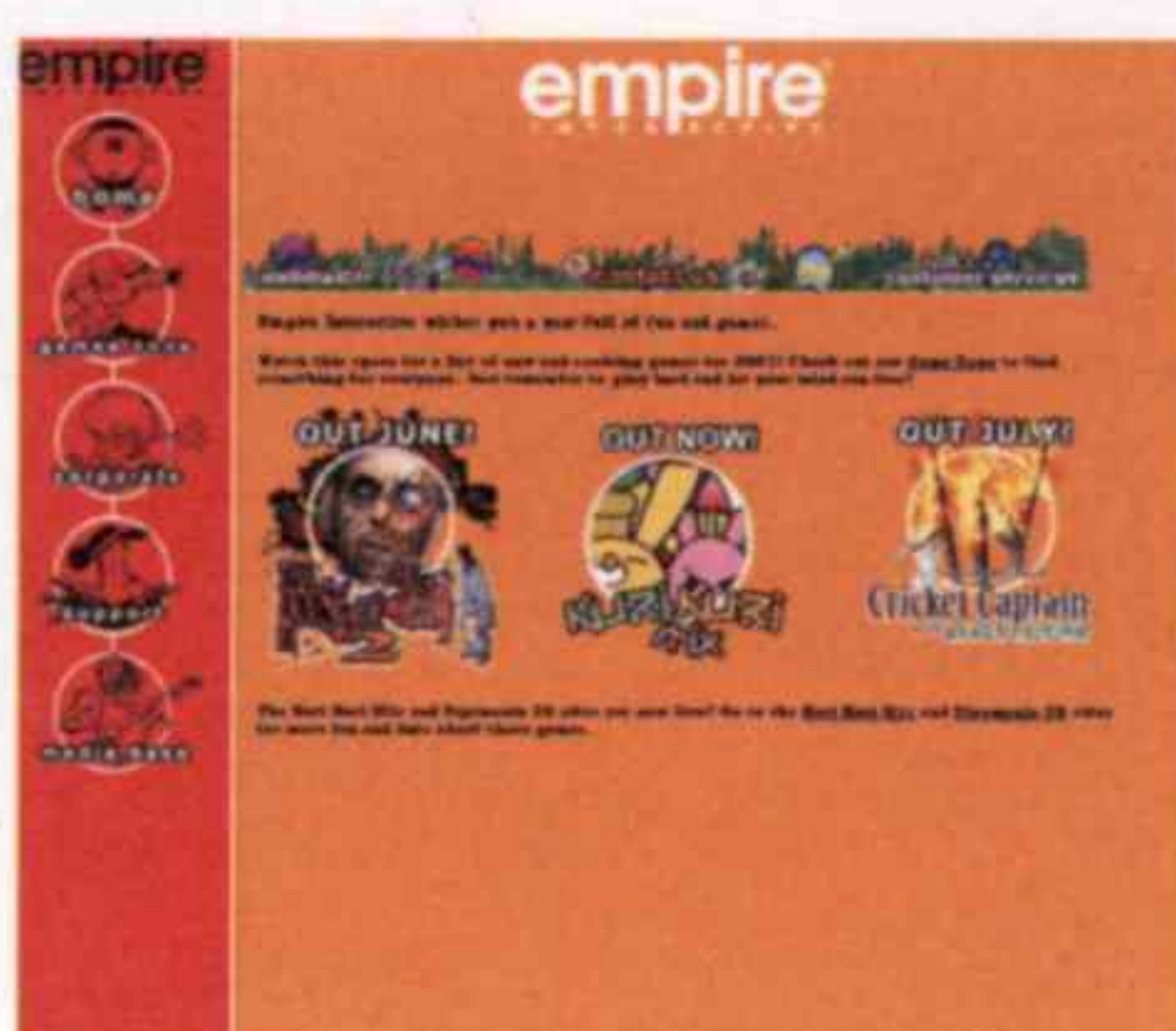
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# INDEX

1080° Snowboarding (N64)	280	Blade of Darkness (PC)	237	Croc 2 (PS1)	35
3D Lemmings (PC)	266	Blade Runner (PC)	169	Cruis'n USA (N64)	310
4x4 Evolution (PS2)	154	Blair Witch Vol. 1: Rustin Parr (PC)	267	Crusader: No Remorse (PS1)	117
7 Blades (PS2)	142	Blast Corps (N64)	281	Cultures: The Discovery of Vinland (PC)	267
Abomination: The Nemesis Project (PC)	162	Blast Radius (PS1)	116	Daffy Duck Fowl Play (GB)	366
Ace Combat 3 (PS1)	10	Blaster Master: Enemy Below (GB)	366	Daikatana (PC)	181
Action Man Destruction X (PS1)	115	Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain (PS1)	22	Danger Girl (PS1)	35
Actua Golf (PS1)	10	Bloody Roar 2: Bringer of the New Age (PS1)	23	Dark Reign (PC)	182
Actua Ice Hockey (PS1)	11	Body Harvest (N64)	281	Dark Reign 2 (PC)	182
Actua Soccer 3 (PC)	162	Bombberman (PS1)	23	Darklight Conflict (PS1)	117
Actua Soccer 3 (PS1)	11	Bombberman Fantasy Racing (PS1)	24	Darkstalkers: The Night Warriors (PS1)	36
Actua Tennis (PS1)	12	Bonk (TurboGrafx)	384	Datastorm (Commodore Amiga)	382
Adidas Power Soccer (PS1)	12	Braveheart (PC)	171	Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX (PS1)	36
Adventures of Lomax (PS1)	13	Bravo Air Race (PS1)	115	Day of the Tentacle (PC)	183
Aero Gauge (N64)	309	Break Point (PS1)	116	Dead or Alive (PS1)	37
Aero Wings 2: Airstrike (DC)	334	Breath of Fire III (PS1)	24	Dead or Alive 2 (DC)	317
After Burner (coin-op)	374	Broken Sword (PS1)	25	Dead or Alive 2 (PS2)	130
Age of Empires II: The Conquerors (PC)	266	Broken Sword 2: The Smoking Mirror (PC)	171	Deep Fighter (PC)	268
Age of Wonders (PC)	266	Bruce Lee (Commodore 64)	376	Defender (coin-op)	372
Air Combat (PS1)	115	Bubble Bobble (GB)	366	Defender of the Crown (Commodore Amiga)	382
Airfix Dogfighter (PC)	163	Bubble Bobble 2 (PS1)	25	Defender/Joust (GB)	348
Akuji the Heartless (PS1)	13	Bubble Bobble with Rainbow Islands (PC)	172	Deja Vu I & II (GB)	366
Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2001 (PS1)	115	Buck Bumble (N64)	309	Delta Force 2 (PC)	183
Alex Kidd in Miracle World (Sega Master System)	385	Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters (PS1)	116	Delta Force: Land Warrior (PC)	184
Alien 8 (ZX Spectrum)	378	Bugs Bunny's Crazy Castle 4 (GB)	366	Denaris (Commodore Amiga)	383
Alien Resurrection (PS1)	14	Burgertime (Colecovision)	375	Descent 3 (PC)	268
Alien Trilogy (PS1)	14	Burstrick Wake Boarding (PS1)	116	Descent: Freespace - The Great War (PC)	180
Aliens vs. Predator (PC)	164	Bushido Blade (PS1)	26	Destruction Derby Raw (PS1)	37
All Star Tennis (PS1)	15	Bust A Groove (PS1)	26	Deus Ex (PC)	185
Allegiance (PC)	164	Bust-a-Move 4 (GB)	366	Deus Ex Machina (ZX Spectrum)	378
Alone in the Dark (PS1)	15	Bust-a-Move 4 (PS1)	27	Diablo (PC)	186
Alone in the Dark Trilogy (PC)	165	Buster Bros. Collection (PS1)	93	Diablo II (PC)	186
Alpha Centauri (PC)	165	C-12: Final Resistance (PS1)	27	Diddy Kong Racing (N64)	282
Alundra 2 (PS1)	16	Caesar III (PC)	172	Die Hard Trilogy 2 (PS1)	38
American McGee's Alice (PC)	163	California Games (Commodore 64)	377	Digimon World (PS1)	117
Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis (PS1)	16	Cannon Fodder (Commodore Amiga)	383	Dino Crisis (PS1)	38
Ant Attack (ZX Spectrum)	378	Cannon Fodder (GB)	341	Dino Crisis 2 (PS1)	39
Apache Havoc (PC)	266	Cannon Fodder (PC)	173	Diplomacy (PC)	268
Ape Escape (PS1)	17	Cannon Fodder 2 (PC)	173	Discworld Noir (PS1)	39
Aqua Aqua (PS2)	154	Capcom vs. SNK (DC)	315	Disruptor (PS1)	117
Aqua GT (PS1)	18	Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now (PC)	267	Dogs of War (PC)	184
Armada (DC)	314	Carnage Heart (PS1)	28	Donkey Kong (Colecovision)	375
Armored Core (PS1)	18	Carrier Command (Atari ST)	384	Donkey Kong 64 (N64)	283
Armored Core 2 (PS2)	130	Casper (PS1)	116	Donkey Kong Country (GB)	343
Armorines S.W.A.R.M. (N64)	309	Castlevania (N64)	309	Donkey Kong Country (SNES)	387
Army Men (GB)	365	Castlevania: Symphony of the Night (PS1)	28	Doom II: Hell on Earth (PC)	187
Army Men Air Attack 2 (PS1)	115	Championship Manager 2000/01 (PC)	174	Doom: Evil Unleashed (PC)	187
Army Men Sarge's Heroes (PS1)	116	Championship Rugby Manager (PC)	267	Doom: PlayStation Special Edition (PS1)	41
Army Men World War (PS1)	116	Chessmaster II (PS1)	116	Double Dragon (coin-op)	374
Art of Fighting (SNK Neo Geo)	388	Chicken Run (PS1)	117	Dragon Valor (PS1)	117
Asheron's Call (PC)	166	Chocobo Racing (PS1)	29	Dragon Warrior Monsters (GB)	343
Assault Rigs (PS1)	116	ChuChu Rocket (DC)	315	Dragon's Lair (coin-op)	273
Asteroids (coin-op)	372	Circuit Breakers (PS1)	30	Dragon's Lair (PS2)	154
Atomic Robokid (TurboGrafx)	384	Civilization II (PC)	175	Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp (PS2)	154
Azure Dreams (PS1)	19	Civilization II (PS1)	30	Drakæa: Order of the Flame (PC)	188
B-17 Flying Fortress: The Mighty Eighth (PC)	166	Cleopatra (PC)	175	Driver (GB)	344
Back to Skool (ZX Spectrum)	378	Clive Barker's Undying (PC)	176	Driver (PC)	188
Balance of Power (PC)	266	Colin McCrae Rally 2.0 (PC)	176	Driver (PS1)	40
Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn (PC)	167	Colin McCrae Rally 2.0 (PS1)	31	Driver 2 (PS1)	41
Ball Breakers (PS1)	67	Colonization (PC)	177	Driving Emotion Type-S (PS2)	154
BallBlazer (PS1)	19	Colony Wars III: Red Sun (PS1)	117	Dropzone (GB)	366
Ballistic (GB)	365	Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord (PC)	177	Dual Heroes (N64)	310
Balloon Kid (GB)	340	Command & Conquer: Red Alert (PC)	178	Ducati World (PS1)	42
Bangai-O (DC)	314	Command & Conquer: Red Alert (PS1)	32	Duck Hunt (NES)	381
Banjo-Kazooie (N64)	280	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2 (PC)	178	Duke Nukem 3D (PC)	189
Battle Arena Toshinden 3 (PS1)	20	Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun (PC)	179	Duke Nukem II (PC)	189
Battle City (GB)	365	Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines (PC)	179	Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes (PS1)	43
Battle Isle 2 (PC)	267	Computer Space (coin-op)	371	Duke Nukem: Time to Kill (PS1)	42
Battle Isle: The Andosia War (PC)	167	Conker's Bad Fur Day (N64)	282	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour (N64)	310
Battletanx (GB)	365	Conker's Pocket Tales (GB)	342	Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home (PS1)	43
Battletoads (NES)	381	Contender (PS1)	105	Dune 2000 (PC)	190
Battlezone (coin-op)	372	Contra: Legacy of War (PS1)	117	Dungeon Keeper (PC)	190
Battlezone (PC)	168	Cool Boarders 4 (PS1)	32	Dungeon Keeper 2 (PC)	191
Battlezone II: Combat Commander (PC)	168	Cosmic Chasm (MB Vectrex)	380	Dungeon Master (Atari ST)	384
BC's Quest for Tires (Colecovision)	375	Counter Strike 1.0 (PC)	180	Dynasty Warriors (PS1)	44
Beach Volleyball (PS1)	20	Courier Crisis (PS1)	117	Dynasty Warriors 2 (PS2)	131
Beatmania (PS1)	21	Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn Express (PS1)	29	E.T. (Atari 2600)	375
Beetle Adventure Racing (N64)	309	Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped (PS1)	33	Earthworm Jim 3D (N64)	310
Beetle Crazy Cup (PC)	169	Crash Bash (PS1)	33	Earthworm Jim 3D (PC)	268
Billy Bob's Huntin' 'n' Fishin (GB)	365	Crash Team Racing (PS1)	34	Ecco the Dolphin: DOTF (DC)	317
Bio Freaks (PS1)	21	Crazy Taxi (DC)	316	Elite (Acorn BBC Micro)	380
Bionic Commando (GB)	340	Creature Shock (PS1)	34	Empire of the Ants (PC)	268
Bishi Bashi Special (PS1)	22	Creatures 3 (PC)	181	Enemy Engaged: Comanche vs. Hokum (PC)	267
Bitmap Bros. Compilation (PC)	267	Crime Cities (PC)	267	Epidemic (PS1)	118
Black & White (PC)	170	Criticom (PS1)	117	Escape From Monkey Island (PC)	192
Black Dawn (PS1)	116	Croc 2 (PC)	267	ESPN Int. Track & Field (PS2)	131

ESPN National Hockey Night (PS2)	155	Grandia (PS1)	53	Kurushi Final (PS1)	60
ESPN NBA 2Night (PS2)	155	Grandia II (DC)	319	Leather Goddesses of Phobos (Commodore Amiga)	382
ESPN Winter X-Games Snowboarding (PS2)	132	Great Giana Sisters (Commodore 64)	377	Legacy of Kain Soul Reaver (PS1)	61
Eternal Ring (PS2)	132	Grim Fandango (PC)	202	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver (DC)	330
Evergrace (PS2)	133	Ground Control (PC)	269	Legend of the River King 2 (GB)	350
Everquest (PC)	191	GTA: London 1969 (PS1)	53	Leisure Suit Larry 7 (PC)	214
Evolva (PC)	268	Gunlok (PC)	269	Lemmings (Commodore Amiga)	382
Excalibur 2555AD (PS1)	118	Gunman Chronicles (PC)	203	Lemmings 3D (PS1)	62
Excitebike 64 (N64)	283	Gunship 2000 (PS1)	118	Links 2001 (PC)	214
Exhumed (PS1)	45	Gunship! (PC)	204	Little Big Adventure (PC)	215
Exile (Acorn BBC Micro)	380	Gunstar Heroes (Sega Genesis)	385	Little Big Adventure 2: Twinsen's Odyssey (PC)	215
Extreme G2 (N64)	310	Hacker (Commodore 64)	376	Little Computer People (Commodore 64)	376
Extreme Sports (DC)	334	Half-Life (DC)	319	Live Wire! (PS1)	119
F-22 Air Dominance Fighter (PC)	193	Half-Life (PC)	205	LMA Manager 2001 (PS1)	62
F-22 Lightning II (PC)	193	Half-Life Platinum (PC)	206	Looney Tunes Collector: Alert! (GB)	367
F-22 Raptor (PC)	194	Half-Life: Opposing Force (PC)	206	Looney Tunes: Carrot Crazy (GB)	366
F-Zero (SNES)	386	Harvest Moon 2 (GB)	347	Lords of Midnight (ZX Spectrum)	378
F-Zero X (N64)	284	Harvest Moon Back To Nature (PS1)	54	Lost Vikings 2 (PS1)	119
F/A-18 Interceptor (Commodore Amiga)	382	Head Over Heels (ZX Spectrum)	379	Madden NFL 2001 (PC)	270
F1 2000 (PS1)	47	Heart of Darkness (PS1)	56	Madden NFL 2001 (PS2)	136
F1 Championship Season 2000 (PS2)	133	Heavy Gear II (PC)	204	Magic Carpet (PC)	216
F1 Manager (PC)	268	Heavy Metal: FAKK 2 (PC)	207	Magic Carpet (PS1)	63
F1 Racing Championship (GB)	366	Heavy on the Magick (ZX Spectrum)	379	Magic: The Gathering (PC)	216
F1 Racing Championship (PS2)	155	Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy (PS1)	56	Majesty (PC)	217
F1 World Grand Prix (N64)	284	Heretic II (PC)	207	Manic Miner (ZX Spectrum)	378
F1 World Grand Prix 2 (DC)	334	Heroes Chronicles (PC)	269	Marble Madness (Commodore Amiga)	382
F355 Challenge (DC)	318	Heroes of Might and Magic 2 (PC)	208	Mario Clash (Nintendo Virtual Boy)	388
FA/18E: Super Hornet (PC)	194	Hexcite (GB)	366	Mario Golf (GB)	352
Fade to Black (PS1)	45	Hexen (PC)	269	Mario Golf (N64)	290
Falcon 4.0 (PC)	195	Hexen II (PC)	208	Mario Kart 64 (N64)	290
Fantavision (PS2)	134	Hidden & Dangerous (DC)	320	Mario Party (N64)	291
Fat Worm Blows a Sparky (ZX Spectrum)	379	Hidden & Dangerous (PC)	209	Mario Party 2 (N64)	291
Fate of the Dragon (PC)	275	Highway Encounter (ZX Spectrum)	379	Mario Tennis (GB)	352
Fear Effect 2 (PS1)	46	Hitman: Codename 47 (PC)	209	Mario Tennis (N64)	292
FIFA 2001 (PC)	195	Hogs of War (PC)	210	Mario's Tennis (Nintendo Virtual Boy)	388
FIFA 2001 (PS1)	46	Hogs of War (PS1)	57	Martian Gothic Unification (PC)	270
FIFA 2001 (PS2)	134	Hologram Time Traveller (PS2)	155	Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter (PS1)	63
Fighter Squadron (PC)	268	Hostile Waters (PC)	210	Marvel vs Capcom 2 (DC)	322
Fighters Megamix (Sega Saturn)	385	Hot Shots Golf 2 (PS1)	44	Master Of Orion (PC)	217
Fighters' Destiny (N64)	310	Hot Wheels Turbo Racing (PS1)	118	Match Day 2 (ZX Spectrum)	379
Fighting Force 2 (PS1)	47	House of the Dead 2 (DC)	320	Max Power Racing (PS1)	119
Final Fantasy Adventure (GB)	344	Hybrid Heaven (N64)	310	MDK (PC)	218
Final Fantasy IX (PS1)	49	Hydro Thunder (DC)	335	MDK 2 (PC)	218
Final Fantasy Legend (GB)	345	Ice Climber (NES)	381	MDK2 (DC)	322
Final Fantasy Legend II (GB)	345	Icewind Dale (PC)	269	MechWarrior 2 (PS1)	119
Final Fantasy Legend III (GB)	346	IK+ (Commodore 64)	377	MechWarrior 4: Vengeance (PC)	219
Final Fantasy VII (PC)	196	Imperium Galactica II (PC)	211	Medal of Honor Underground (PS1)	64
Final Fantasy VII (PS1)	48	Impossible Mission (Commodore 64)	376	MediEvil 2 (PS1)	64
Final Fantasy VIII (PC)	196	In Cold Blood (PC)	269	Megaman X4 (PS1)	119
Final Fantasy VIII (PS1)	49	Incoming (PC)	269	Mercedes Benz Truck Racing (PC)	270
Fisherman's Bait 3 (PS1)	118	Incredible Crisis (PS1)	57	Mercenary (Commodore 64)	377
Flashback (Commodore Amiga)	383	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine (PC)	211	Metal Fatigue (PC)	270
Flying Heroes (PC)	268	Insane (PC)	212	Metal Gear Solid (GB)	353
Force Commander (PC)	197	International Karate 2000 (GB)	348	Metal Gear Solid (PC)	219
Forsaken (N64)	310	International Superstar Soccer 64 (N64)	286	Metal Gear Solid (PS1)	65
Forsaken (PC)	197	International Track & Field 2000 (PS1)	58	Metal Slug (SNK Neo Geo)	388
FoxKids.com Micro Maniacs (PS1)	66	ISS Pro Evolution 2 (PS1)	59	Metal Slug: First Mission (SNK Neo Geo Pocket)	388
Frankie Goes to Hollywood (ZX Spectrum)	378	It Came From the Desert (Commodore Amiga)	383	Metroid (NES)	381
Freespace 2 (PC)	198	Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster (PS1)	118	Metropolis Street Racer (DC)	323
Frogger (PS1)	50	Jane's F/A-18 (PC)	269	Mickey's Racing Adventure (GB)	367
Frontier (Atari ST)	384	Jedi Knight (PC)	212	Mickey's Speedway USA (N64)	310
Fur Fighters (DC)	318	Jet Force Gemini (N64)	286	Micro Machines Twin Turbo (GB)	367
Future Cop: LAPD (PS1)	50	Jet Grind Radio (DC)	321	Micro Machines V3 (PC)	220
G-Darius (PS1)	51	Jet Moto (PS1)	118	Micro Machines V3 (PS1)	66
G-Police (PS1)	51	Jetfighter IV: Fortress America (PC)	269	Midnight Club (PS2)	136
G-Tok (PC)	268	Jimmy White's 2: Cueball (PC)	270	Midnight Racing (PC)	270
Galaxian (coin-op)	372	John Madden Football (Sega Genesis)	385	Midtown Madness (PC)	270
Game & Watch Gallery 2 (GB)	346	Jumping Flash (PS1)	58	Midtown Madness 2 (PC)	220
Game & Watch Gallery 3 (GB)	347	Kensei: Sacred Fist (PS1)	119	Mig Alley (PC)	221
Gangsters (PC)	198	Kessen (PS2)	135	Mike Tyson Boxing (PS1)	121
Gauntlet Legends (PS1)	118	Kick Off '97 (PS1)	119	Miner 2049er (Colecovision)	375
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko (PS1)	52	Kick Off (Commodore Amiga)	382	Minestorm (MB Vectrex)	380
Ghost in the Shell (PS1)	118	Kid Icarus (NES)	381	Mischief Makers (N64)	292
Giants: Citizen Kabuto (PC)	199	King's Field (PS1)	119	Missile Command (coin-op)	372
Gift (PC)	269	Kingdom Under Fire (PC)	270	Mission: Impossible (N64)	293
Giga Wing (DC)	334	Kingpin: Life of Crime (PC)	213	Monkey Hero (PS1)	119
Glover (PS1)	52	Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards (N64)	287	Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge (PC)	248
Golden Axe (coin-op)	374	Kirby's Dream Land (GB)	349	Monkey Puncher (GB)	353
GoldenEye 007 (N64)	285	Kirby's Pinball Land (GB)	349	Monsterseed (PS1)	120
Gorf (coin-op)	273	Kirby's Tilt 'N' Tumble (GB)	350	Moomin's Tale (GB)	367
Gran Turismo (PS1)	54	Klingon Academy (PC)	270	Moon Cresta (coin-op)	372
Gran Turismo 2 (PS1)	55	Klingon: Honor Guard (PC)	213	Mortal Kombat 3 (PS1)	67
Grand Prix 3 (PC)	201	Klonoa: Door to Phantomile (PS1)	60	Mortal Kombat Special Forces (PS1)	120
Grand Prix Legends (PC)	200	Kluster (GB)	367	Moto GP (PS2)	137
Grand Prix Manager 2 (PC)	200	Knight Lore (ZX Spectrum)	378	Moto Racer (PS1)	120
Grand Theft Auto (PC)	202	Knockout Kings (GB)	367	Motocross Madness (PC)	271
Grand Theft Auto 2 (DC)	335	Knockout Kings 2001 (PS2)	135	Motocross Madness 2 (PC)	221
Grand Theft Auto 2 (PC)	203	Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside (N64)	295	Motocross Maniacs (GB)	342



Mr. Do (Colecovision)	375	Power Stone (DC)	335	Shadow of Destiny (PS2)	143
Mr. Driller (DC)	323	Power Stone 2 (DC)	324	Shadow of the Beast (Commodore Amiga)	383
Mr. Driller (GB)	367	Poy Poy 2 (PS1)	121	Shadow Watch (PC)	273
Ms. Pac-Man (GB)	367	Prince of Persia (Commodore Amiga)	383	Shadowfire (ZX Spectrum)	379
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness (PS1)	68	Prince of Persia 3D (PC)	271	Shadows of the Empire (PC)	273
MTV Music Generator (PS1)	69	Pro 18 World Tour Golf (PS1)	121	Shattered Steel (PC)	237
Muppet Race Mania (PS1)	68	Pro Pool (GB)	368	Sheep (PC)	273
Myst (PC)	271	Pro Rally 2001 (PC)	272	Sheep (PS1)	122
Mystical Ninja (N64)	293	Project IGI (PC)	228	Shenmue (DC)	328
Myth (PC)	222	Project X2 (PS1)	76	Shogo: Mobile Armor Division (PC)	238
Myth II: Soulblighter (PC)	222	Psybadek (PS1)	76	Shogun: Total War (PC)	238
NZO: Nitrous Oxide (PS1)	120	Puzzle Bobble (PC)	272	Sid Meier's Alien Crossfire (PC)	273
Namco Museum Vol. 1 (PS1)	120	Quake (PC)	229	Sid Meier's Gettysburg! (PC)	273
Namco Museum Vol. 2 (PS1)	120	Quake II (PC)	229	Silent Hill (PS1)	87
Namco Museum Vol. 3 (PS1)	120	Quake II (PS1)	77	Silent Scope (PS2)	143
Namco Museum Vol. 4 (PS1)	120	Quake III Arena (PC)	230	Silpheed: The Lost Planet (PS2)	144
Namco Museum Vol. 5 (PS1)	120	Quake III: Arena (DC)	325	Silver (DC)	336
Narc (coin-op)	374	Quake III: Revolution (PS2)	141	Silver (PC)	239
NASCAR 2000 (PS1)	120	Quake III: Team Arena (PC)	231	SimCity 3000 (PC)	240
NBA 2K (DC)	335	Quazatron (ZX Spectrum)	379	SimCopter (PC)	239
NBA Hoopz (PS2)	137	R-Type (TurboGrafx)	384	SimTower (PC)	273
NBA Jam Extreme (PS1)	121	R-Type Delta (PS1)	77	Sinistar (coin-op)	273
NBA Live 2001 (PS1)	121	R-Type DX (GB)	357	Sky Odyssey (PS2)	144
NBA Live 2001 (PS2)	138	Rage Racer (PS1)	78	Sky Surfer (PS2)	155
Need for Speed (PS1)	69	Railroad Tycoon II (PC)	231	Smash TV (coin-op)	374
Need for Speed: V-Rally (PS1)	104	Rainbow Six (GB)	368	Smuggler's Run (PS2)	145
Nerf Arena (PC)	223	Rainbox Six: Rogue Spear (PC)	232	SNK vs. Capcom: Match of the Millennium	
NFL 2K1 (DC)	335	Rakuga Kids (N64)	311	(SNK Neo Geo Pocket)	388
NFL Blitz 2000 (PS1)	70	Rally Masters (PC)	272	Snowboard Kids (N64)	300
NFL Quarterback Club '99 (N64)	310	Rampage Through Time (PS1)	78	Soldier of Fortune (PC)	241
NHL '98 (PS1)	121	Rat Attack (PS1)	79	Sonic Adventure (DC)	329
NHL 2001 (PC)	223	Ray Crisis (PS1)	121	Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega Genesis)	385
NHL 2001 (PS2)	138	Ray Tracers (PS1)	122	Sorcery (Amstrad CPC 464)	380
Nightmare Creatures II (PS1)	70	Rayman (GB)	368	Soul Blade (PS1)	88
Nights (Sega Saturn)	385	Rayman (PS1)	79	Soul Calibur (DC)	329
No Fear Downhill Mountain Bike Racing (PS1)	121	Rayman 2 (DC)	335	Soulbringer (PC)	273
No One Lives Forever (PC)	224	Rayman 2 Revolution (PS2)	140	South Park (N64)	311
Nocturne (PC)	225	Razor Freestyle Scooter (PS1)	118	South Park Rally (DC)	336
Nodes of Yesod (ZX Spectrum)	379	RC Pro Am (NES)	381	South Park Rally (N64)	311
Normality (PC)	271	RC Racers (PC)	272	Soviet Strike (PS1)	88
North vs. South (PC)	225	Ready 2 Rumble (PS1)	82	Space Ace (PS2)	155
Nox (PC)	271	Ready 2 Rumble Boxing (GB)	368	Space Channel 5 (DC)	330
Nuclear Strike (PS1)	71	Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2 (DC)	325	Space Harrier (coin-op)	374
O'Leary Manager 2000 (GB)	354	Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 (PS2)	155	Space Hulk 2 (PC)	273
O.D.T. (PS1)	72	Record of Lodoss War (DC)	335	Space Hulk Vengeance of the Blood Angels (PS1)	122
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus (PS1)	71	Red Dog (DC)	335	Space Invaders (Atari 2600)	375
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee (PS1)	121	Resident Evil (PS1)	80	Space Invaders (coin-op)	372
Omikron (PC)	248	Resident Evil 2 (PS1)	81	Space Invaders (GB)	368
Oni (PC)	226	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis (PC)	232	Space Invaders (PC)	273
Oni (PS2)	139	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis (PS1)	81	Spacestation Silicon Valley (N64)	300
Open Tennis 2000 (PC)	271	Resident Evil: Code Veronica (DC)	327	Speed Punks (PS1)	89
Orphen: Scion of Scorchery (PS2)	139	Resident Evil: Survivor (PS1)	82	Spellbound (ZX Spectrum)	379
Out Run (coin-op)	374	Revenant (PC)	272	Spider-Man (PS1)	89
Outcast (PC)	226	Ridge Racer (PS1)	83	Spindizzy (Amstrad CPC 464)	380
Pac-Man (coin-op)	372	Ridge Racer 64 (N64)	297	Spy Hunter (coin-op)	273
Pac-Man (GB)	367	Ridge Racer Revolution (PS1)	83	Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol (GB)	368
Pac-Man: Adventures In Time (PC)	227	Ridge Racer Type 4 (PS1)	84	Spy vs. Spy (GB)	358
Pandemonium 2 (PS1)	72	Ridge Racer V (PS2)	142	Spyro Year of the Dragon (PS1)	90
Paradroid (Commodore 64)	376	Rising Sun (PC)	272	SSX (PS2)	146
Parappa the Rapper (PS1)	73	Risk II (PC)	272	Star Fox (SNES)	387
Parasite Eve 2 (PS1)	74	Rival Schools (PS1)	85	Star Fox 64 (N64)	287
Perfect Dark (N64)	294	Riven (PC)	233	Star Trek Deep Space Nine: The Fallen (PC)	274
Phantasy Star Online (DC)	324	River Raid (Atari 2600)	375	Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force (PC)	243
Pharoah (PC)	271	Road Rash 3D (PS1)	85	Star Trek: Armada (PC)	242
Pilotwings (SNES)	386	Road Wars (PC)	272	Star Trek: Birth of the Federation (PC)	243
Pilotwings 64 (N64)	295	Robotron 64 (N64)	311	Star Trek: Generations (PC)	242
Pitfall (Atari 2600)	375	Rocket: Robot on Wheels (N64)	298	Star Trek: New Worlds (PC)	274
Pizza Connection 2 (PC)	271	Rollaway (PS1)	119	Star Wars (coin-op)	374
Pocket Fighter (PS1)	121	Rollcage (PS1)	86	Star Wars Demolition (PS1)	90
Point Blank (PS1)	74	Rollercoaster Tycoon (PC)	233	Star Wars Episode 1: Racer (PC)	274
Pokémon Gold & Silver (GB)	355	Rowan's Battle of Britain (PC)	234	Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace (PS1)	91
Pokémon Pinball (GB)	354	Rugrats: Studio Tour (PS1)	122	Star Wars Pit Droids (PC)	271
Pokémon Puzzle League (N64)	296	Rune (PC)	272	Star Wars: Battle for Naboo (N64)	301
Pokémon Red & Blue (GB)	356	Sacrifice (PC)	234	Star Wars: Episode 1 Racer (N64)	301
Pokémon Snap (N64)	296	Sam & Max Hit the Road (PC)	235	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron (N64)	298
Pokémon Stadium (N64)	297	Samba de Amigo (DC)	326	Star Wars: Starfighter (PS2)	145
Pokémon Trading Card Game (GB)	356	San Francisco Rush 2049 (DC)	335	Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance (PC)	263
Pokémon Yellow: Special Pikachu Edition (GB)	357	San Francisco Rush 2049 (N64)	299	Starliner (Atari ST)	384
Pole Position (coin-op)	273	Scramble (coin-op)	273	Starliner 2 (Atari ST)	384
Pong (coin-op)	371	Screamer Rally (PC)	235	Starlancer (PC)	244
Pong (GB)	367	Sega Bass Fishing (DC)	336	Starship Troopers (PC)	274
Poolmaster (PS2)	140	Sega Worldwide Soccer (PC)	272	Street Fighter 3: DI (DC)	331
Pop 'n' Pop (PC)	271	Sensible Soccer (Commodore Amiga)	383	Street Fighter Alpha (GB)	368
Populous (PC)	227	Sensible Soccer Euro Cup Edition (PC)	273	Street Fighter Alpha 3 (DC)	336
Populous: The Beginning (PC)	228	Sentinel Returns (PS1)	86	Street Fighter Alpha 3 (PS1)	91
Populous: The Beginning (PS1)	75	Sergei Bubka's Millennium Games (PC)	236	Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha (PS1)	92
Porsche Challenge (PS1)	75	Shadow Man (DC)	327	Street Fighter EX3 (PS2)	155
Power Drift (coin-op)	374	Shadow Man (N64)	299	Street Fighter II (SNES)	386

Street Sk8er 2 (PS1)	92	The New Tetris (N64)	304	Vertical Force (Nintendo Virtual Boy)	388
Streets of Rage 2 (Sega Genesis)	385	The Next Tetris (PS1)	123	Vib Ribbon (PS1)	105
Strider 2 (PS1)	93	The Sentinel (Commodore 64)	377	Viewpoint (SNK Neo Geo)	388
Striker Pro 2000 (DC)	332	The Sentinel Returns (PC)	249	Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense (PS1)	106
Stunt Car Racer (Commodore Amiga)	383	The Settlers IV (PC)	236	Virtua Athlete 2000 (DC)	336
Stunt Race FX (SNES)	387	The Simpsons Wrestling (PS1)	122	Virtua Cop (Sega Saturn)	385
Stupid Invaders (PC)	244	The Sims (PC)	250	Virtua Fighter 2 (Sega Saturn)	385
Suikoden II (PS1)	122	The Typing of the Dead (PC)	255	Virtua Fighter 3TB (DC)	336
Summoner (PS2)	147	The Ward (PC)	274	Virtua Tennis (DC)	333
Super Bust-a-Move (PS2)	155	The World Is Not Enough (N64)	304	Virtual Pool (PS1)	106
Super Mario 64 (N64)	302	The World Is Not Enough (PS1)	123	Virtual Pool 3 (PC)	258
Super Mario Bros. (NES)	381	The X-Files (PS1)	124	Virus (Atari ST)	384
Super Mario Bros. 3 (NES)	381	The X-Files Game (PC)	275	Wacky Races (PC)	275
Super Mario Bros. Deluxe (GB)	359	Theme Hospital (PC)	249	Warcraft II (PC)	259
Super Mario Kart (SNES)	386	Theme Hospital (PS1)	123	Wargasm (PC)	259
Super Mario Land 2 (GB)	360	Theme Park Inc. (PC)	251	Wario Land (Nintendo Virtual Boy)	388
Super Mario RPG (SNES)	387	Theme Park Roller Coaster (PS2)	148	Wario Land 3 (GB)	362
Super Mario World (SNES)	386	Theocracy (PC)	275	Wario Land II (GB)	360
Super Metroid (SNES)	386	Thief II: The Metal Age (PC)	252	Wario Land: Mario Land 3 (GB)	362
Super Punch Out (SNES)	387	Thief: The Dark Project (PC)	251	Warlocked (GB)	363
Super Smash Bros. (N64)	303	Three Lions (PS1)	123	Warzone 2100 (PC)	260
Super Soccer (SNES)	387	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001 (PS2)	148	Wave Race 64 (N64)	307
Super Sprint (coin-op)	374	Time Crisis (PS1)	97	Way of the Exploding Fist (Commodore 64)	376
Super Star Wars (SNES)	387	Time Crisis: Project Titan (PS1)	98	Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98 (PS1)	124
Super Tennis (SNES)	387	Timesplitters (PS2)	150	WCW Backstage Assault (PS1)	107
Superbike 2000 (PC)	245	Tir Na Nog (ZX Spectrum)	379	WCW/NWO Thunder (PS1)	124
Superman (N64)	311	TNN Motorsports Hardcore Heat (DC)	334	Wetrix (N64)	311
Supersonic Racers (PS1)	94	Tobal No. 1 (PS1)	98	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? (PC)	260
Surfing H30 (PS2)	155	TOCA Touring Car Championship (GB)	368	Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 2nd Edition (PS1)	107
Survival Kids (GB)	358	Tomb Raider (GB)	368	Wild Wild Racing (PS2)	151
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing (GB)	368	Tomb Raider (PS1)	99	Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits (PS1)	124
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing (PC)	274	Tomb Raider Chronicles (PC)	275	WinBack (N64)	311
SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle (PC)	245	Tomb Raider Chronicles (PS1)	100	Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger (PC)	261
Sweevo's World (Amstrad CPC 464)	380	Tomb Raider II (PS1)	123	Wing Over 2 (PS1)	108
Swing Away Golf (PS2)	147	Tomb Raider III (PS1)	123	Wings of Fury (GB)	363
Sword of the Berserk: Guts' Rage (DC)	336	Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PC)	252	Winter Games (Commodore 64)	377
SWWS: Euro 2000 Edition (DC)	336	Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PS1)	100	Wipeout (PS1)	109
Sydney 2000 (DC)	336	Tomb Raider: The Trilogy (PC)	275	Wipeout 3 Special Edition (PS1)	110
Sydney 2000 (PC)	274	Tomorrow Never Dies (PS1)	123	Wipeout XL (PS1)	109
System Shock (PC)	246	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (DC)	331	Wizards & Warriors (PC)	275
System Shock 2 (PC)	246	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (PS1)	101	Wizball (Commodore 64)	377
Target Renegade (ZX Spectrum)	379	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PC)	253	World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks (PS2)	151
Tazz Mania (coin-op)	374	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PS1)	102	World Driver Championship (N64)	311
Team Fortress Classic (PC)	274	Top Gear Rally 2 (N64)	305	Worms (PS1)	111
Tekken (PS1)	94	Top Gun: Fire at Will (PS1)	101	Worms Armageddon (PC)	261
Tekken 2 (PS1)	95	Toshinden 4 (PS1)	103	Worms Armageddon (PS1)	111
Tekken 3 (PS1)	96	Total Annihilation (PC)	253	Worms World Party (DC)	336
Tekken Tag Tournament (PS2)	149	Total Drivin' (PS1)	123	Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style (PS1)	112
Tempest (coin-op)	372	Total Eclipse (PS1)	123	WWF Attitude (N64)	311
Tempest 2000 (PC)	247	Toy Story Racer (PS1)	123	WWF No Mercy (N64)	311
Tempest X3 (PS1)	96	Transport Tycoon Deluxe (PC)	254	WWF Smackdown 2 (PS1)	112
Tenchu 2: Birth of the Assassins (PS1)	97	Trespasser (PC)	254	WWF Wrestlemania (PS1)	113
Terminus (PC)	274	Tron (coin-op)	273	X-COM: Apocalypse (PC)	262
Test Drive 6 (PC)	274	Turok 2: Seeds of Evil (N64)	306	X-COM: Interceptor (PC)	262
Test Drive 6 (PS1)	122	Turok 2: Seeds of Evil (PC)	255	X-COM: Terror From the Deep (PC)	263
Test Drive Le Mans (DC)	335	Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion (N64)	306	X-COM: Terror From the Deep (PS1)	124
Test Drive Le Mans (PC)	270	Turok Dinosaur Hunter (N64)	305	X-Men Mutant Academy (PS1)	108
Test Drive: V-Rally (DC)	332	Twisted Metal (PS1)	124	X-Tension (PC)	275
Tetris DX (GB)	361	Ultima Online (PC)	256	X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter (PC)	264
Tetrisphere (N64)	303	Ultimate Parodius Deluxe (PS1)	124	Xena: Warrior Princess (PS1)	124
The Bombing Islands (PS1)	122	Um Jammer Lammy (PS1)	103	Xenon 2 (Atari ST)	384
The Corporate Machine (PC)	267	Underwulde (ZX Spectrum)	378	Y's: The Vanished Omens (Sega Master System)	385
The Curse of Monkey Island (PC)	247	Unreal (PC)	256	Yoshi's Island (SNES)	387
The Eidolon (Commodore 64)	376	Unreal Tournament (PC)	257	Yoshi's Story (N64)	307
The Grinch (PS1)	122	Unreal Tournament (PS2)	150	Zaxxon (coin-op)	273
The Last Ninja (Commodore 64)	377	Urban Chaos (PC)	275	Zero Divide (PS1)	113
The Legend of Zelda (NES)	381	Uridium (Commodore 64)	377	Zeus: Master of Olympus (PC)	264
The Legend of Zelda Ocarina of Time (N64)	288	V-Rally 2: Expert Edition (PC)	258	Zone of the Enders (PS2)	152
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past (SNES)	386	Vagrant Story (PS1)	124		
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX (GB)	351	Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption (PC)	275		
The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)	289	Vandal-Hearts (PS1)	104		
The Misadventures of Tron Bonne (PS1)	122	Vegas Casino (PS1)	124		

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