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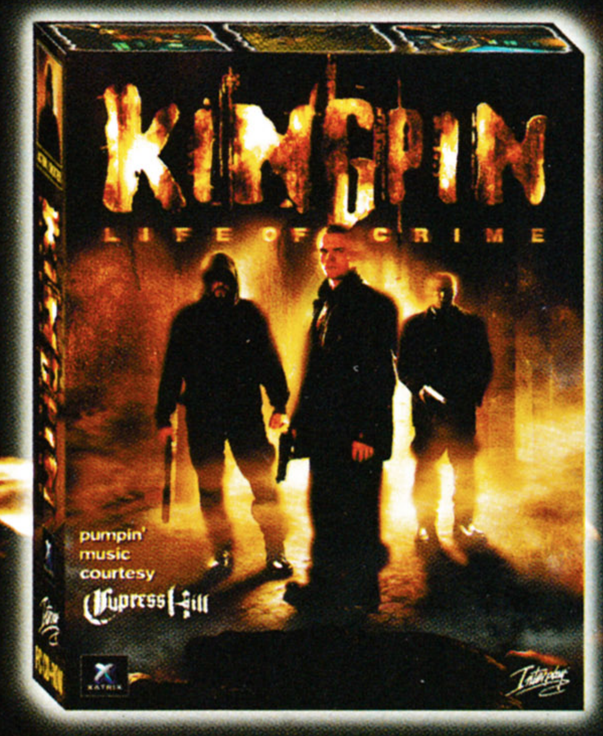

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INCONTROL

None of the next, next generation consoles are available outside of Japan yet, but already their presences can be felt. The Dreamcast, of course, is at the forefront of most gamer's minds, with the UK launch less than six months away. But despite the fact that Sony's PSY will certainly not be seen in the West until the next millennium, the Sony marketing machine is already drip-feeding information to people in all of the right places. Ourselves included.

Inside this month's issue you'll find no less than sixteen pages devoted to the next generation console war. Although in keeping with the fact that over 90% of you that read this are, along with the Total CONTROL team, quite happily still playing with your Nintendo 64s and PlayStations, you'll also find well over 100 pages devoted to games and products that you can buy right now.

Regular readers will also notice that we've undergone a bit of a facelift in certain areas of the magazine this month. Brand new this issue are an Internet section and a DVD reviews page. Several of our existing sections have also been greatly enhanced. Please feel free to write in and comment on our new look – after all, it's for your benefit at the end of the day.

Elsewhere inside this issue you'll find the usual mix of multi-format previews and reviews, this month including the likes of *Outcast*, *Gran Turismo 2*, *Shadowman*, *Wild Metal Country* and *Star Wars Episode 1 Racer*. So if you're stood reading this in a shop, contemplating your purchase, what's to think about?

On the other hand, if you've already made the right choice, what are you waiting for? Go on, find out what else we've got waiting for you inside... TC

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INCONTROL

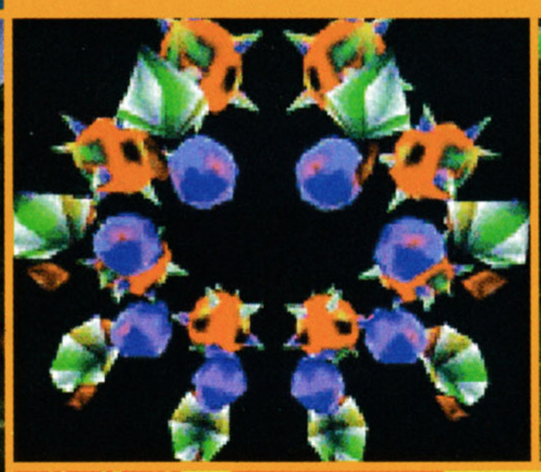
CONTROLALPHA REPORTS/FEATURES

030 Jump Runner
There have been many attempts to make the definitive space game, but few have succeeded. Could this stunning new game from Glass Ghost be *Elite* for the next millennium?

036 Shadowman
Never before has a computer game been this dark and terrifying. Acclaim's next multi-format monster is rewriting the rulebook as it approaches a release date later this year.

056 Handheld Heaven
Few people would argue that as far as handheld systems go, the Game Boy is the undisputed champ. Total CONTROL takes a look at the history behind the Game Boy phenomenon, and at the pretenders to the crown that fell short of greatness.

120 Welcome to Games Hell!
For every great game that comes out you can bet that at least three terrible ones somehow find their way to the shelves as well. Many of these games flop, and quite right to. But others, such as these, are games that people will buy because of a license or similar, only to be bitterly disappointed upon getting their chosen game home.



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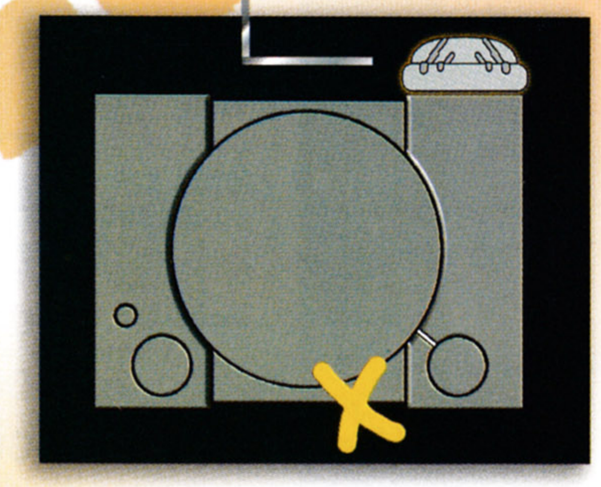

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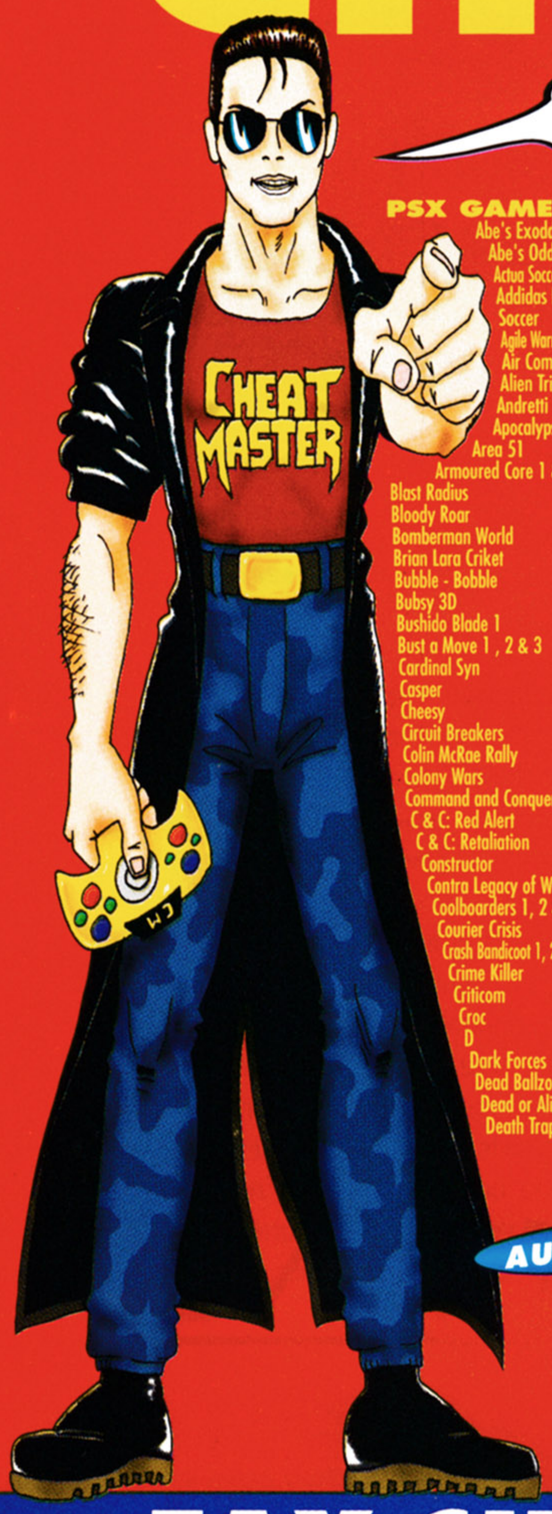

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Abe's Oddysee
Actua Soccer 1, 2 & 3
Addidas Power Soccer
Agile Warrior F-111X
Air Combat
Alien Trilogy
Andretti Racing
Apocalypse
Area 51
Armoured Core 1 & 2
Blast Radius
Bloody Roar
Bomberman World
Brian Lara Criket
Bubble - Bobble
Bubsy 3D
Bushido Blade 1
Bust a Move 1 , 2 & 3
Cardinal Syn
Casper
Cheesy
Circuit Breakers
Colin McRae Rally
Colony Wars
Command and Conquer
C & C: Red Alert
C & C: Retaliation
Constructor
Contra Legacy of Wars
Coolboarders 1, 2 & 3
Courier Crisis
Crash Bandicoot 1, 2 & 3
Crime Killer
Criticom
Croc
D
Dark Forces
Dead Ballzone
Dead or Alive
Death Trap
Dungeons
Destruction Derby 1 & 2
Diablo
Die Hard 1, 2 & 3
Doom
Duke Nukem : Time to Kill
Duke Nukem : Total Meltdown
Dynasty Wars
Excalibur 2555 A.D
Fade to Black
Felony 11-79
Fifa '96, '97, '98 & '99
Fighting Force
Final Doom
Final Fantasy VII
Formula 1, '97 & '98
Formula Karts
Forsaken
Frogger
Future Cop: LAPD
Gex, 3D & Enter the Gecko
Ghost in the Shell
G-Police
Gran Turismo
Grand Theft Auto
Gunship
Gu-Sun Oyoyo
Hercules
Hexen
Impact Racing
Independence Day
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J. Mcgarth Supper Cross
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Loaded
Lone Soldier
Lucky Luke
Machine Hunter
Magic Carpet
Magic Gathering Battle Mage
Marvel Super Heroes
Max Power RAcing
MDK
Mech Warrior 2
MediEvil
Metal Gear Solid
Micro Machines v3
Mobile Suit Gundam
Monopoly
Mortal Kombat 3 , 4 & Trilogy
Moto Racer 1 & 2
Nagano Winter Olympics '98
Need for Speed 1, 2, 3 & 4
NHL '97, '98 & '99
NHL Breakaway '98
NHL Face-off '97 & '98
Nightmare Creatures
Ninja
Nuclear Strike
Pandemonium 1 & 2
Parappa the Rapper
Pitfall 3D
Porsche Challenge
Power Move Pro Wrestling
Poy Poy
Premier Manager '98
Rage Racer
Rapid Racer
Rascal
Rayman
Rebel Assualt 2
Reboot
Resident Evil 1, 2 & Direct Cut
Ridge Racer Type 4
Rise of the Robots 2: Resurrection
Riven : The Sequel to Myst
Road Rash & 3D
Rockman X3
Rogue Trip
Rugrats
Samuria Showdown 3
Shellshock
Silent Hill
SimCity 2000
Skull Monkey
Small Soldiers
Soul Blade
Soviet Strike
Spice World
Spot goes to Hollywood
Spyro the Dragon
Steel Harbinger
Steel Reign
Street Fighter 2 Collection
Street Fighter Alpha 2
Street Fighter Alpha Ex Plus Alpha
Street Racer
Suikoden
Tekken 1, 2 & 3
Tempest X3
Tenchu
Tennis Arena
Test Drive 4, 5 & Off Road
Tetris Plus
The Lost World
The Raiden Project
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
Three Lions
Tiger Shark
Time Comando
Time Crisis
TOCA 1 & 2
Tokyo Highway Battle
Tombraider 1, 2 & 3
Tommi Makinen Rally
Top Gun
Total Drivin
Tunnel B1
Twisted Metal 2 & 3
V - Rally
Victory Boxing
Vigilante 8
VR Powerboat Racing
War Craft 2 : The Dark Saga
War Games
War Hammer : Dark Omen
Warhawk
WCW Nitro
WCW Thunder
WCW Vs the World
Wing Over
Wipeout & 2097
World Cup '98
World League Soccer '98
Worms
WWF in the House
WWF War Zone
WWF Wrestlemania
X-Men Children of the Atom
Zero Divide 2

N64 GAMES

Aero Fighters Assault
Automobili Lamborghini
Banjo Kazooie
Beetle Racing Aventure
Blast Corps
Body Harvest
Bomberman 64
Chopper Attack
Cruis'n the World
Cruis'n USA
Diddy Kong Racing
Doom 64
Duel Heroes
Duke Nukem 64
Extreme G 1 and 2
F1 Pole Position
F1 World Grand Prix
Fifa 98 & 99
Fighters Destiny
Forsaken
Glover
Golden Eye
GT 64 Championship Edition
Hexen
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ISS '98
Killer Instinct Gold
Lylat Wars
Mace : The Dark Ages
Mario Karts
Mario Party
Micro Machines 64
Mischief Makers
Mission Impossible
Mortal Kombat 4
Mortal Kombat : Trilogy
Nagano Winter Olympics '98
Penny Racers
Quake 64
Rampage Universal Tour
Rogue Squadron: Star Wars
San Francisco Rush
Shadows of the Empire
Snowboard Kids
South Park
Space Station
Super Mario
1080 Snowboarding
Top Gear Rally
Top Gear Overdrive
Turok 1 and 2
Vigilante 8
V-Rally
Wave Race
WCW Vs NWO World Tour
WCW Vs NWO Revenge
Wipeout 64
World Cup '98
WWF War Zone
Yoshi's Story
Zelda

PC GAMES

Abe's Oddysee
Age Of Empires
Alien Trilogy
Alpha Centauri
Andretti Racing
Baldur's Gate
Caesar 1 and 2
Cannon Fodder
Carmaggedon
Carmageddon 2
Championship Manager 97/98
Championship Manager 2
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G - Police
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MDK
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EDITORIALOPINIONS

The thoughts of the 'great' and the 'good'

JUSTIN CALVERT
editor
justice@rapide.co.uk

Driving games – you either love 'em or you hate 'em, and I'm not ashamed to admit that I definitely fall into the former category. Recently, however, I've noticed what I consider to be quite a worrying trend amongst racing games, and in particular those on the PC.

My concern is that while striving to make their game the fastest, or the best looking racer for the given platform, the AI of the opponents is often overlooked. A typical race in many games seems to consist of little more than a time trial stage with moving obstacles which vaguely resemble other vehicles dotted around the track.

When I play a racing game I want to do just that – race. I want to go up against cars that have just as much chance of winning as I do, not some strange vehicle that's able to leave me standing on the start line, only for me to catch it up two laps later as it crawls around the track at 30mph. In the past these techniques have been used to avoid the possibility of having large numbers of cars on screen at the same time, but with the power available to developers nowadays, I wouldn't think it's a major issue. And yes, if it is I'd gladly sacrifice the real-time reflections on the windows of my opponents in favour of an opportunity to race against them.

CRAIG VAUGHAN
contributor

There's never been a better time to be a video games player. But great as things are now, they're set to get a whole lot better. I'm fortunate enough to own a PC, a PlayStation and an Nintendo 64, and there's great things happening on all three formats. On the PC front, we've got the likes of *Tiberian Sun* and *Kingpin* looming large, as well as new 3D hardware pushing graphics to the limit. Meanwhile, Sony have just released details of PlayStation 2, which is not only a massive leap forward in technology but, more importantly, is set to be backward compatible with the current catalogue of games. The future's bright for Nintendo, too, as Mario fans continue to enjoy the big N's third generation of games, safe in the knowledge that an announcement concerning their N2000 can't be too far away. Historically, there's always been a degree of bitching between die-hard fans, and brand loyalty has always led each camp to claim that they have a bigger market share or the best games. But with the next generation of machines imminent, perhaps now is the time to celebrate the

"AS LONG AS GAMERS HAVE CHOICE WE CAN CONTINUE TO PURSUE A HOBBY WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF"

differences between the individual formats and to revel in their continued ability to amaze and entertain us. Competition is healthy for both manufacturers and consumers, because as long as gamers have choice – and express their preferences with their wallets – we can continue to pursue a hobby we can all be proud of.

CLIFF SMITH
senior staff writer

Well I'm off on a bit of a tangent this month, but I've got a bee in my crash helmet and I won't be happy until I've shared it with the rest of you. Sorry. The government have recently announced their intention to put internet capable computers into schools and colleges, and to encourage the use of the internet at home, in an effort to put Britain at the forefront of this 'information revolution' we've all heard so much about. While this is undoubtedly a laudable aim, they have missed out one vital factor in their plans.

In America, and in an ever-increasing number of other countries, domestic use of the internet is far more widespread than in the UK for one very simple reason: In those countries local rate telephone calls are free. Last year, BT announced profits of £3,657 million, which is £412 million more than they made in the previous year. A large proportion of this sum was attributable to domestic phone call charges. Until BT drop local rate charges, or at least introduce a flat rate regardless of the length of the call, access to the vast resources of what the Government still touchingly refer to as the 'information super-highway' will remain out of reach for the majority of people in the UK, and Britain will lag behind the rest of the world in vital areas of technology and commerce.

The future is not going to wait for Britain to catch up. If the government are serious about putting this country at the forefront of information technology, they should put pressure on BT to stop raking in vast profits for their shareholders at the expense of internet users. There, I feel better already.

JON EVANS
editor – ultimate pc

Ever since I left Total PlayStation for Ultimate PC two years ago, I have tried to keep in touch with the PlayStation market lest I found myself heading back that way at some point in the future. My attempts to keep informed have been restricted (mainly by *Championship Manager*, I must confess) to playing the odd blockbuster and catching a quick read of the aforementioned magazine whenever a new issue arrives

"THE PLAYSTATION MARKET SEEMS TO BE CRYING OUT FOR: SUB-£10 BUDGET GAMES"

at the office. As a result, I'm a little ignorant as to what is happening on Sony's machine, though it has not escaped my notice that there's one thing that the PlayStation market seems to be crying out for: sub-£10 budget games. The launch of early PlayStation classics such as *Wipeout* and *Toshinden* under the Platinum label at a price of £19.99 opened up a whole new market and offered an extended shelf-life to aging games. However, Sony have failed to exploit the budget market in the same way that PC publishers have. On the PC, budget games can range from just under £20, right down to £2.99, depending on the age and quality of the product. As a result, budget games on the PC have helped increase sales and, crucially, this has not been at the expense of full-priced products. So come on Sony, do us all a favour and let us get our hands on some PlayStation games for £9.99.

WILL ADKIN
staff writer

There has been a lot of talk about how the new generation of games consoles do not show any signs of innovation. The famous argument about how great graphics don't always make great games has been reborn once again. But with all the talk of how they 'don't make them like they used to', people seem to be forgetting that crap games have been around for a long time. Just because the crap of today looks a little better, it does not mean that modern day bad games are the fault of technological advancement.

Originality and innovation are hard to come by, but there are only so many genres available. Standard arcade-style titles (such as driving games) may be beginning to reach a pinnacle in their development from a gameplay point of view, and we are approaching the point where the only way forward is to apply the benefits of technological advancement to a game that mainly uses second-hand ideas.

Over the next three to four years I see the biggest changes taking place in story-based games that involve character interaction. These elements are only just being realised in games like *Half-Life*, *Kingpin* and *Outcast*, while future games such as *Team Fortress 2*, *Shenmue* and *FFIX* will hopefully extend it much further. This kind of advancement is only possible by breaking further boundaries in the technological restrictions we have at the moment, and also within the minds of the development teams. Sega, Sony and Nintendo should not be criticised for releasing nothing more than a higher spec machine – the potential quality of the software that appears on it is far more important.

CONTROLYOURSELF

Plenty of the usual 'my console's better than yours' rubbish in the mailbag this month, it's great that you all feel so passionately about your gaming, but how about writing in about something a little more interesting instead. All of your consoles are superb, now lets leave it at that, we've even had people slating consoles that haven't been announced yet. Of course it's possible that you know something we don't about these consoles of the future, maybe you've got a PlayStation 2 in your bedroom - but I very much doubt it.

Good topics to write in about, until further notice, include your opinions on our brand new look, comments on anything that you've read in Total CONTROL this month, and of course any complaints you might have regarding products that you've bought. Who knows, you might even get lucky like Jimmy Walker did last month.

Me, I'm going to write a letter to someone about my car - it's worth a try isn't it Jimmy.

Justin Calvert
justice@rapide.co.uk

MAD FOR IT

These pages are sponsored by Mad Catz. Every letter printed in its entirety will win a joypad, and the 'Mad Letter of the Month' wins a steering wheel plus either a camera, a Walkman, or a Mad Catz Wrist Rumbler. Plus you get to see your name in Total CONTROL.

Mad Catz Peripherals – By Any Means Necessary

Now that we have some prizes to give away, please don't forget to indicate your preferred format somewhere on your letter. You'll find that winning an N64 pad doesn't do you a lot of good if your only system is a PC.

If you'd like to comment on this month's issue or raise some issues of your own, please don't hesitate to write to us at the following address:

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This is your chance to let us know what you think, so write to the address below or use your e-mail...

THE CLUELESS PARENT THESIS

And so, here we are again...Generations of civilians waiting to make our wallets considerably lighter, mad with anticipation of the three up and coming next next generation consoles. Which to buy is the conundrum? I will put my hands up, ready to be shot, by saying I will buy a Dreamcast.

Why? All you PlayStation fans; fair play to you, but didn't Sony show you all the great games that were going to come out for their new PlayStation? I thought not. I cannot believe SCE has been so stupid – they have less than eleven months to produce original, top-quality titles for their beast, while SEGA will have had all that time AND a preceding few months to get the catalogue for the Dreamcast up to scratch. Also, SEGA have another advantage having 'stolen' a good few of Sony's top-selling games (Tekken 4, Cool Boarders DC etc,), they have the 'clueless parent' on their side. The games SEGA now have the rights to are the ones that parents will have heard of most, so if the Dreamcast is a surprise for their son/daughter, SEGA have it in the bag.

Also, Sony are trying to get everyone excited by saying it's the most powerful console in the world – even better than Intel's PC processors. But does anyone remember the Jaguar? The most powerful system of its time, but ultimately development costs were so high (as the 64-bit power made games more complicated to make) that only big companies' games were any good, and there weren't many of them, so all developers jumped ship. Atari promptly fell flat on its face. Finally, is the N64 the most POPULAR console on earth? Full marks to Sony if they make the son of PlayStation a success, but they've left themselves one hell of a task.

Dave Shaw – Via email

Justin: An interesting, if slightly unusual, opinion on the next generation debate, Dave. Your 'clueless parent' reasoning seems a little far-fetched, though. Firstly, because most parents are intelligent enough to do a minimum of research before forking out £200 for a present; secondly, because the percentage of people who don't play games or read games magazines but are aware of the Sony PlayStation will certainly be a lot higher than those that are aware of the Dreamcast. Don't underestimate the power of PlayStation marketing.

PSX2 - GOD'S OWN MACHINE?

I'll begin my letter by commenting on the superb content of your magazine. But there is a major thing wrong with it; you are always writing about the utterly crap SEGA Dreamcast. The bloody controller is 4.5 times bigger then the so-called "dream machine" itself. The Dreamcast will not reach the shores of Brittania until Christmas. The impressionable public are saving up for SEGA's new failure when they could be buying the already great games available for PlayStation and N64. In issue 6 you already mentioned the far superior PlayStation 2 – why must you insist on writing about the Dreamcast when most of us already know about the Saturn's failure? That's why we all bought the far superior PlayStaion and 64. We are all anticipating the arrival of 'the machine of GOD' PlayStation 2.

P.S The cheese won't melt. From 'Swaney' & 'L.X'

Simon McSweeney – email

THIRD PARTY DO GOOD

This is proof that writing to Total CONTROL can do some good. After reading Jimmy Walker's letter concerning a faulty Joytech rumble pak for N64, the company have been in contact with us and agreed to replace the old model for an all-new rechargeable version. Joytech also explained that the old pak has been improved upon in recent months. We suggest that if anyone else has any problems with Joytech peripherals then they should contact them immediately on 01525 371769.

TELL ME WHY I DON'T LIKE N64S...

I would just like to say that Anthony Errington is talking a load of rubbish (stupid N64 owner!) about the PC's controls. I know that the joypads for the PC aren't brilliant, but they aren't as bad as he makes out, and as for N64's controls (and the machine itself), they aren't the most wonderfully designed and they also look ugly (as well as feel bad).Anyway, the PC has the best controller of them all – the MOUSE!!! –which puts all other controls to shame and is much quicker and leaves one hand free to grab a nice drink or even eat a meal. P.S you can probably tell I don't like N64's. Oohhh, yes, I was just wondering if they will ever bring out a good racing games instead of all that kiddy rubbish. Feel free to argue!

'DarkThief' – Via email

Will: The PC has without a doubt the most varied range of controllers available. It is the only format where companies can experiment with new ideas without worrying about conforming to every title on the shelves. But the lack of uniformity in PC games means that support for the peripheral is usually low. The more arcade-style games do feel better when you play them with a pad or stick, but due to the lack of a standard PC controller of that kind, they must be developed primarily for the mouse and keyboard, which can hinder the development of the game. Oh, and if you're looking for a decent N64 racer, how about WipEout 64 or Star Wars: Pod Racer?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

INNOVATION WANTED!

I have witnessed with interest the slow but steady hype–building exercises that both Sega and Sony have recently indulged in, and which I believe Nintendo is shortly due to enliven further with leaks of its 'N2000' (or 'N2001', or 'NGN' as in 'NGPS', or is it Nintendo128? 256? Well, whatever…) specs.

Unsurprisingly, the rumoured launching titles for NGPS may include Tekken 4, GT3, FFIX, etc., and I fully expect the Big N to hint at launching 'N2000' with Super Mario 128, or 256, or well, whatever…

Now, correct me if you believe I'm talking out of that place where the sun never shines, and I'm only a punter, but after a CBS Colecovision ('You what?!?'), a C64, an Atari ST, Amiga 600, Sega Master System, Megadrive, SNES, Saturn, PSX, N64, not forgetting a string of PCs upgraded or new, I believe I know a thing or two about 'the Next Big Thing' and its 'Killer Apps' phenomenon.

Therefore I am asking the Big Three's brass (Sony, Nintendo, Sega) –via your esteemed publication if I may – where's the I-N-N-O-V-A-T-I-O-N in the Next Millennium Home Entertainment?

- More powerful hardware/system? It's to be expected every three or four years, sure as water is wet, so why the big "OOH! Surprise of all surprises!" ? It's evolution, not innovation.
- More Polys/Rendering/blablatechspeak? So when you get an output of five billions fully-texture-mapped-bumped-aliased-washing-whiter-than-white polys, then what? Go for 10?
- Cinema-Surround-Dolby-THX? Excellent, if the speakers are up to it. By the way, dear hardware manufacturers, not everybody can afford a pair of £5,000 Cabasse loudspeakers or a Bose Acoustimass system.

These features are not what I would call innovation, they are technical improvements –in some instances on a grand scale, I concede. But stillÖ Am I, punter nº 30,521,489, condemned to 25 Final Fantasy sequels, 15 Gran Turismo sequels etc.? Well, I want MORE!

- I want a lightweight VR headset that allows me to BE in that tuned-to-death Skyline R33 '95, or in Mr McRae's Impreza tonning it through Clumber Park.
- I want different software. Better still, as we've got Music Creation on the PSX (hey, I-N-N-O-V-A-T-I-O-N here! Music mixing for the Masses!), I want Games Creation on the PSX. No, I don't mean a Yaroze or a PC, I don't have time to learn C/C++/Assembler etc., I don't even want to learn C/C++/Assembler, I'm talking some routines and pre-rendered bitmaps and whatever's required to make your own Sub-Yaroze-Type Game in a few hours.

That's innovation!

I am fully aware that system requirements need to go up to accommodate more 'versatile' home entertainment software and accessories such as described above. Please don't get me wrong, I am certainly not complaining about the escalating power of home consoles. But I wish we could just try and shift the collective focus towards what's really innovative, being made possible through the power newly available, rather than marvelling at the power itself and what I would loosely call 'cosmetically-enhanced software sequels' to come.

I look forward to your future previews and reviews (even of GT2, FFVIII etc.) After all, sequels or not, someone still needs to tell us if they're any good!
Cheers,
Stéphane Ambrosini (South Yorks)

Nick: Innovation is indeed a wonderful thing and you'll find that (if you look hard enough) this is present in both the Dreamcast and the next generation PlayStation's hardware. More often that not, though, innovation comes from what software designers want to do. Miyamoto's influence on the N64 controller is a prime example.

If you want innovation, then look no further than the next PlayStation, Sony's innovation with electronics is the thing that will allow software designers to enter the most innovative period in the history of this medium.

Ken Katarugi's input into the design of the new PlayStation has put the software at the priority and his vision, more than anyone else's, is leading the way to the next millennium. Mark our words, it's going to be good.

Despite fears about a lack of innovation in the future, the games you're crying out for are sequels to existing titles

Justin: Dreamcast not available until Christmas? Wrong. The controller is 4.5 times bigger than the console: wrong. Cheese doesn't melt: wrong. Where on earth are you getting this stuff from? It's true that people are wary of investing in a Dreamcast after the Saturn flopped so disgracefully, but to dismiss a console completely because of mistakes made over three years ago is madness. There are already some great games available for the Dreamcast, and the line-up for the UK launch looks like it'll definitely be one of the best in recent years. We haven't really seen enough of the PlayStation 2, or PSY, to decide how it compares with the Dreamcast. The fact that it'll be released over a year after Sega's machine means that it will undoubtedly be more powerful – but then twelve months after that we'll be getting excited about Nintendo's next console. Oh, and try turning the grill on.

HIS NEPHEW KNOWS BEST

After having recently witnessed my nephew at work with his PSX (eight hours everyday), I felt compelled to purchase one for the bargain price of £99.99 (okay, games no longer cost £9.99 and take five minutes to load). But as a result of my purchase I have found the transition from old school flat screen classics such as Manic Miner, River Raid and The Last Ninja (C64) to the all-new (to me, anyway) 3D interactive anything-goes Resident Evil and Tomb Raider series' extremely difficult. Gone was the trusty joystick (Quickshot II – remember?) to be replaced by a pad with multiple buttons. As a result, I struggled for weeks to progress past those pesky mutant dogs and work out how to push blocks (brilliant!).

I must say, dues to the quality of these PSX titles, which expertly combine blister-inducing playability, genuine realistic sound and awesome graphics (or 'eye candy' as my nephew reliably informs me), this console purchase has worked out as money well spent. I shall not be spending

CHOICE CUTS

It is good to see that there are still some magazines out there that give opinionated and unbiased views of the new games that are coming out! Please keep this up and don't buckle under the pressures of those big-bully games companies that can harass you!
Adam Riley, Manchester

It's nice to know that our honesty is appreciated, there are a few companies that have 'expressed concerns' regarding our reviews policy, and even one or two that no longer send us games. At the end of the day there's nothing worse than buying a crap game that was recommended by a magazine; you'd feel cheated, and you'd probably think about buying a different magazine in future. We don't want you to stop reading Total Control, so we won't lie to you. It's as simple as that.

I was wondering if you know of anybody who has achieved a perfect score on all the challenges of Pilotwings 64?
Barry Lofthouse, Bolton
Any takers?

Sony is here to stay, and we can all sleep better at night knowing that Sony can beat anything that Sega or Nintendo throw at them.
Anthony Drew, Dorset
Sleepless nights ahead for employees of Sega and Nintendo then?

I would just like to say to anybody thinking of getting a console now, don't bother. Now is the wrong time to get a console. If anything, buy a SaturnÖ
Wayne Young – Dorset
At least, if you can find one for around £20.

Sadly the success of the PlayStation has just been an invitation for developers to churn out rubbish the likes of which we have been seeing for the last four years since the arrival of Sony on the console scene. And, alas, I can see the trend continuing on the PlayStation 2.
Stephen Ashcroft – Via email
Don't forget that there have been one or two decent games on the PlayStation as well.

We are simply writing to express our deep disappointment at the constant delays games now face, in particular Eidos Interactive's Championship

£40 per game (ouch!) on new releases, but I might occasionally buy one from the Platinum range.

My point is, games from the 80s normally only required two or three hours of concentrated effort to complete, whereas now I find I am getting the same rush from just reaching the end of a level. So these two titles (and sequels) should keep me busy for now.

PS. After having read a few magazines lately, I am convinced gamers today aren't made of the same mould as us from yesteryear, as every other page they're squealing for cheats. Pah! I tell you, when I was a lad...

Yours reborn,

Jason Tucker – Cardiff

Cliff: It's always nice to hear from a fellow golden oldie. As I'm always telling the young pups around the office, we were made of sterner stuff in my day.

A DIE-HARD GAMER WRITES...

First, I'd like to congratulate you on a very enjoyable, informative, honest and excellent value magazine.

After last issue's news about Sony's next machine and its technical details, it's obvious what Sony aims for: not just stay on top, but wipe out the competition completely. In other words, Sony Videogames Monopoly. And I can't imagine a true gamer out there feeling happy about that. Lack of competition will only harm the quality of future games. As a PlayStation owner, I wish Sony the best; but as a true gamer, the same I wish to Nintendo and Sega.

I grew up with a Master System and a NES. I still love them, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. And after all these gaming years I am not ashamed to admit that I feel a sympathy for Nintendo and Sega, fighting to survive against the mighty Sony. And you know what? Both Nintendo and Sega know that after all this time, I got to love them, and that I'll buy their next consoles for sure.

But how many people like me are out there? Not enough, I'm afraid. So if they want to survive, they have to do something. I mostly worry about Sega after I saw the first Dreamcast titles. It's that simple: if that's their best, their best won't do. But I'm sure that if they get two things right, they will survive:

First, unlike they did with the Saturn, they should concentrate on the European and American markets. And it seems that it's technically easy to convert PC titles to the Dreamcast. I don't have (and don't want to have!) a PC, but I'd love to play Half-Life, or a proper flight simulation or a strategy game. If Sega gets it right and market Dreamcast with a modem and a few good PC titles, they will have a sure winner.

Second, there's something that Sega should learn from Nintendo: times are hard for almost perfect games. It's better to delay a release date in order to make a game perfect. Do you remember how many months the N64 (along with Mario 64) or Zelda were delayed for? We were not happy at that time, but now I can tell, and I'm sure everyone would agree, that I wouldn't mind waiting even longer when I consider the quality of the games delivered. Why can't Sega do the same? I'm sure that both Sega Rally and Virtua Fighter 3 could have been better. Let's hope that in future Sega will realise that rushing things just makes it worse for them.

About Nintendo, I don't worry much. At least as long as Mr. Miyamoto works for them they will be the best. Even if their next console will be inferior to Sony's, I am sure the games will be better. No matter how good Crash 4 will look, it will be just crap compared to the next Mario game. Any doubts about that? And a sure bet is that almost every software house on the planet will develop games for Sony. And history will repeat itself: a bus load of shit in CD form will fill the stores. And games like Gran Turismo 3, FFIX and MGS2 will be the only exceptions. Because one thing I know for sure is that in the long term, you can't guarantee quality, on any system. How many games kept up in quality terms with Mario 64 or WipEout? Especially on Sony's console. Even if they were £1 each, I wouldn't buy more than 5% of the games.

Let's hope that whatever happens, it will be really good for us gamers. So long, and keep up the good work.

Kosta Klimis – Surrey

Justin: I think that Sega have learnt a lot from their bad experiences with the Saturn. It's been confirmed that the Dreamcast will launch with no less than ten games in the UK, including, you'll be pleased to hear, an enhanced version of Sega Rally 2. I also think we can take it as read that Sega will be investing plenty of money into getting the Dreamcast name known. They've already spent an estimated £12 million on sponsoring Arsenal next season.

BIG BROTHER

I enjoyed reading your magazine, TC7. I love Sega and own Megadrive and Saturn, and I was interested in Dreamcast. But I lose interest about it because of its network function. I think it has a serious problem about privacy. When people are going to connect to the network with Dreamcast, people have to make some agreements that all personal data will be used by Sega and Sega's co-operative companies and retailers.

Data stored in your Dreamcast will be used by Sega and Sega's co-operative companies and retailers. Furthermore, every Dreamcast has serial a ID. It means nearby game shops can know which game and how long I'm playing and what kind of game I favour and how many people own Dreamcast around the shop. Personal data implies name, sex, age, address and phone number. When the owner of certain serial ID's Dreamcast has changed, Sega knows it might be sold or given to another person. But as you wrote in your articles, not so few people connect network with Dreamcast. So they agreed with these, but I won't. What do you think of it?

By the way, Sega announced that they'll fire 25% of their employees (from the NIKKEI newspaper on 29April). The comment from Sega's parent company, CSK, caused a small sensation. They said, "Until now, we wrung water from a dustcloth in a bucket filled with water."

Kotaro Nakama – Via email

Nick: Our advice to you: never use a credit card, don't go within 20 miles of a populated area, always wear a big hat and only communicate with people by leaving messages inserted into the cracks of walls. Chances are though, that they've already intercepted this reply.

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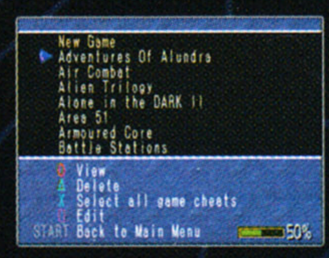

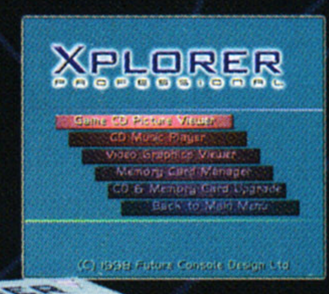

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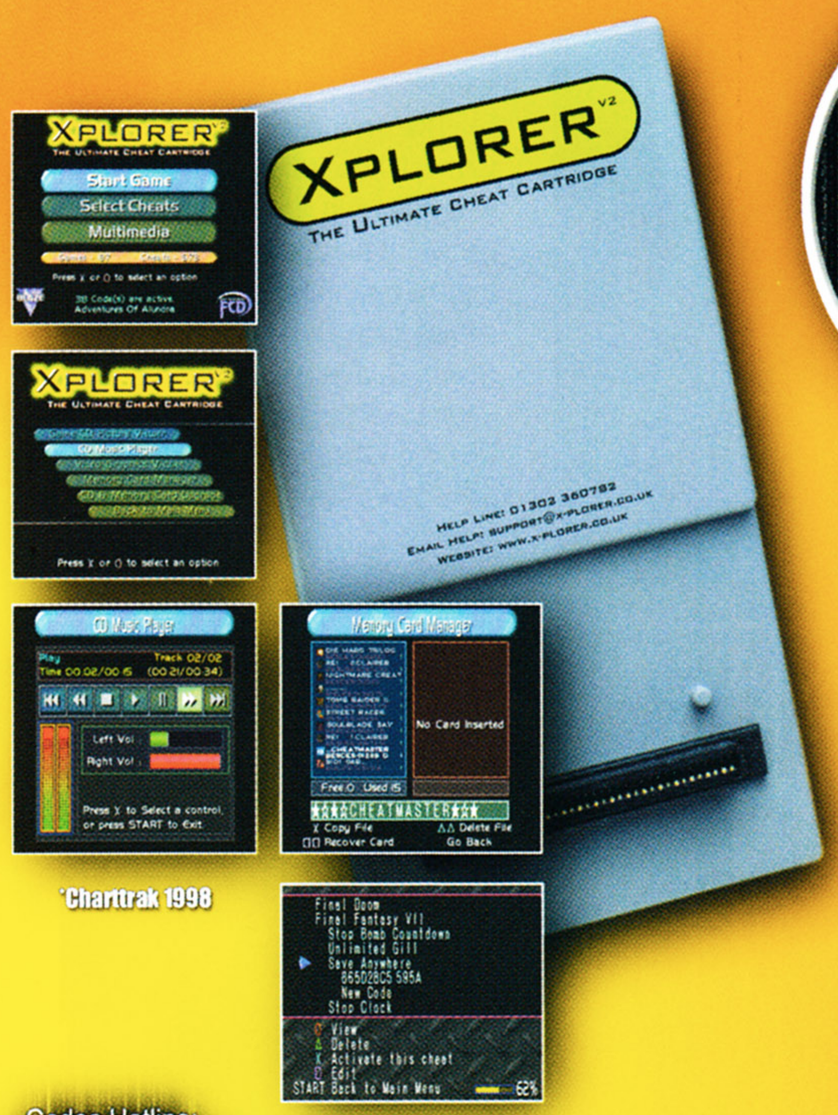

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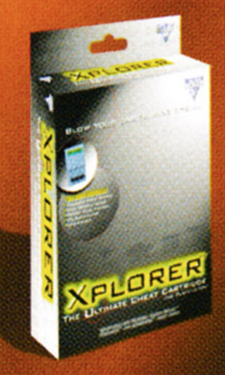

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REPORTAGE

NICKJONES
e-mail: nick@rapide.co.uk

Recent events in Kentucky following the brutal murder of three schoolgirls and the wounding of five others could have serious ramifications for the video game industry. Two years after the killings, it was recently announced that the parents of one of the murdered children are to sue various software companies, claiming that their games inspired Michael Carneal to commit the murders. What could the worst possible outcome be? The banning of all video game violence? Don't assume that it would be impossible when you consider that this lawsuit takes place in a society that allows a kitchenware company to be sued for not labelling their knifes with a warning not to cut yourself with them!

Though we may not be happy if a ban is indeed the eventual outcome, it does, however, force you to question the role that violence plays in computer games and how necessary it is. Perhaps it wouldn't be such a bad thing if violence were taken out of video games – it might force lazy developers to think of a new angle to sell their product and twist their arms into creating games that don't just rely on blood and guts for easy sales. After all, we all complain that the first-person genre isn't exploited enough and has far more potential than is currently seen, with almost every game centring on shooting.

Maybe there is a certain amount of hysteria building in the US over depicted violence and children's exposure to it, but perhaps this is good opportunity for the industry to think long and hard about the role of violence in games: Is it there purely as an easy and unimaginative selling point?

Of course many games are built around the idea of violence and murder but this needn't be the case. How about a game that encourages you to interact with human beings rather than blowing them away?

For the people searching for a reason behind the shootings, perhaps there is no answer and there is no one to blame. These things just happen.

Nick

GAMES TO KILL FOR

Games companies blamed for high school shooting spree

In what could turn out to be a landmark legal case, parents of the victims in the Paducah Kentucky School shooting spree on December 1st 1997 are suing numerous entertainment companies, claiming that the boy who carried out the shootings was inspired by several games and films.

On December 1st 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal brought six guns to Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky, killing three girls and wounding five others. A year later, Carneal was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 25 years.

Last month, the parents of the slain teenagers filed the lawsuit against several computer game companies, two adult-oriented internet sites, and the creators and distributors of the 1995 Leonardo DiCaprio film The Basketball Diaries.

THE PARENTS CLAIM THAT CARNEAL HONED HIS SHOOTING SKILLS PLAYING VIOLENT COMPUTER GAMES. HE OWNED DOOM, QUAKE AND RES EVIL

In the suit, the parents claim that media violence inspired Carneal to open fire on his classmates.

Among the companies named in the $130m lawsuit are Acclaim Entertainment, Activision, Apogee Software, Atari Corporation, Capcom Entertainment, Eidos Interactive, GT Interactive, id Software, Interplay Productions, Midway Home Entertainment, Nintendo of America, Sega of America, Sony Computer Entertainment and Squaresoft. Outside the video game industry, Time Warner Inc., Polygram Film Entertainment Distribution Inc., and internet sex sites Network Authentication Systems Inc. and Meow Media Inc. were all named as defendants.

The parents claim that Michael Carneal 'honed his shooting skills' whilst playing violent computer games. It was discovered by police that he had in his collection games such as *Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom*, *Quake*, *Resident Evil*, *Redneck Rampage*, *Final Fantasy VII*, *MechWarrior*, *Mortal Kombat* and *Nightmare Creatures*. They are also siting the 1995 Leonardo DiCaprio film The Basketball

According to the lawyers, Carneal honed his 'skills' on games such as *Quake* and *Mortal Kombat*

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Diaries as a major influence. As part of the plot, the film depicts a high school shooting.

The complaint also contends that these companies produced and supplied games that made the violence "pleasurable and attractive" and disconnected the savageness from natural consequences. In addition, the plaintiffs claim the games taught Carneal to point and shoot in a fashion that made him an "extraordinarily effective killer." "We intend to hurt Hollywood. We intend to hurt the video game industry. We intend to hurt sex porn sites on the Internet," said Jack Thompson, one of the plaintiff's lawyers.

Ion Storm chairman, John Romero, who worked on *Doom* and *Quake* while at id, said, "I think it's dumb. It's beyond dumb. The parents are supposed to be monitoring what kids are doing. And besides, that's what warning labels on games are for."

Romero believes the parents of the victims don't have a case against the entertainment industry. "It's simply not going to work," he stated. "The exact same thing happened with Ozzy [Osborne] and Judas Priest a few years back. There's no way they can blame the media or Hollywood. It's no one else's fault except the kid and the kid's parents."

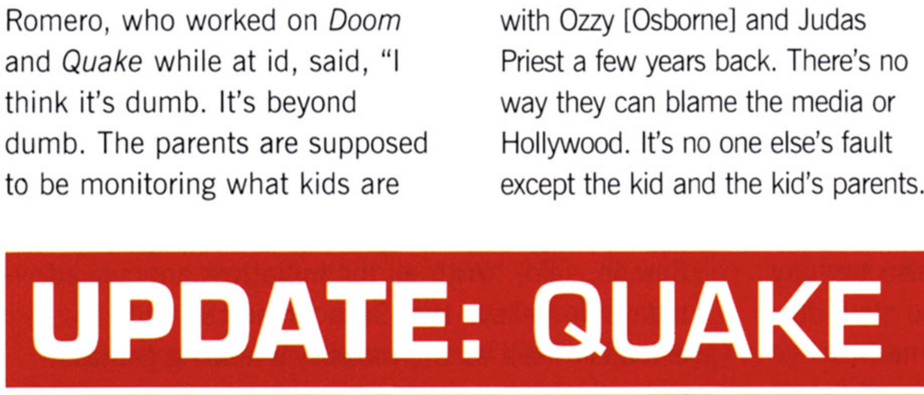
***Resident Evil 2* features police officers shooting zombies. It's comic book stuff, surely...**

UPDATE: QUAKE III ARENA

With the release of id's *Quake III Arena* drawing ever closer (this summer is the predicted release date), more and more screenshots for the game are filtering out from the company. We are finally seeing actual player models now, and quite excellent they are looking too.

Further to this, id have released the first test version of the game – for Macintosh only. id stress that the test version is NOT a demo of the game, purely a way of releasing the code to the public to gauge reaction and how well the game works online. The test is available for download from id's official *Quake III* site (www.quake3arena.com) and will only work with Power Macs with an ATI Rage card (8MB or better). There are also several servers up and running to test the code.

id will release Linux code next, followed by the Windows version. Apparently Windows will be released last to give graphics cards manufacturers enough time to update drivers and have them certified by Microsoft. We'll bring you more news next issue.



"SEGA DREAMCAST WILL ESTABLISH ITSELF AS THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE GAMES CONSOLE"

Worldwide launch of Dreamcast imminent

Above: A selection of UK launch titles for Dreamcast

Sega Europe has finally confirmed details of the UK launch of Dreamcast. Sega's next generation console will be available to buy at £199 from the 23rd September 1999; not the 9th as was previously predicted. The 9th of September remains the release date of the US Dreamcast, however.

On launch there will be ten titles available, although Sega only confirmed that *Sonic Adventure* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* will be two of those titles, and no other games were mentioned apart from to say that amongst them will be "outstanding new software developed specifically for Europe by Sega". *Sega Rally 2* will not be a launch title. We are reliably informed by an insider at Sega Europe that the game is undergoing an extensive reworking, and we are promised that all bugs present in the Japanese version will be removed and there will be more tracks and cars. The game will also be fully optimised to run on PAL televisions (no slow down or borders). This extra development time has meant that *Sega Rally 2* will join a second list of another twenty games that Sega will release in the run up to Christmas. Another two blockbusters we can expect in this list are *The House of the Dead 2* and *Cool Boarders*.

There was no word on whether the Dreamcast would be packaged with a modem, although we assume that no news is bad news in this instance, and this will have to be purchased separately. The only game scheduled for a UK release that utilises

the modem so far is *Sega Rally 2* – Sega may well be planning to package the modem with the game.

Sega also stated that they will be shortly announcing a $90M Euro (£60M) marketing plan for Europe which will cover all the usual television and cinema promotions, sponsorship and public relations. JF Cecillon, Chief Executive Officer, Sega Europe, said, "With all the initiatives announced today, we believe that Sega Dreamcast will establish itself as the industry's leading games console and will remain so into the next millennium." He went on to say, "Meeting consumer expectations is the priority at Sega. In addition to being sold at a competitive price despite its technological superiority to the competition, the range of titles at launch will easily exceed what out customers are anticipating. We will continue to grow the portfolio of games available, backed by the involvement of the industry's leading games manufacturers."

PC BUBBLE BURST?

According to The New York Times, AMD has reported a massive fiscal Q2 loss – somewhere in the region of a $128 million deficit. This news sent tech stocks into a downward spiral, leaving NASDAQ with a 75 point drop, the eighth largest point decline in history.

"We have seen a permanent – and I emphasise the word 'permanent' – change in the microprocessor business, and I don't think prices will ever recover," said Drew Peck, an analyst with SG Cowen. "PCs and microprocessors have stagnated in their technology. No longer is the PC business driven by technological advancement. It's driven by price."

The results, the equivalent to an 88% share drop, are going to have massive consequences for the PC industry in the coming years.

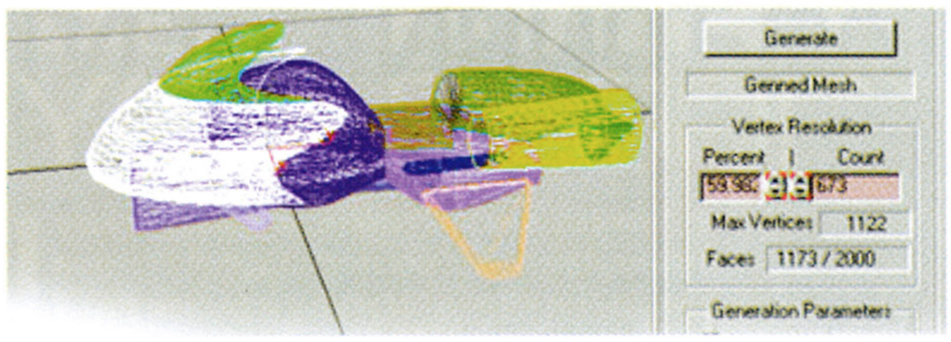
NINTENDO'S N64 ADD-ON TO BE RELEASED (FINALLY)

64DD set for July

Nintendo now seem certain to release the much delayed 64DD, and have pencilled July '99 for its Japanese release. One of the first titles for the machine will be *Mario Artist Paint Studio* from UK developers, Software Creations.

This multimedia game, which started life as *Creator*, has been in development for more than four years and is finally nearing completion. A spokesperson for the company stated that, "It was originally planned for N64, but as time went on, Nintendo wanted us to incorporate more and more hardware. The only indication we have is that it will be released for 64DD in Japan. It's pretty stunning. Miyamoto was seriously impressed by what he saw; he's been over, and inputs ideas regularly."

No news on the US and European launch of 64DD, but it is widely believed that the console will not see the light of day outside Japan.



INTEL'S MESH SOFTWARE

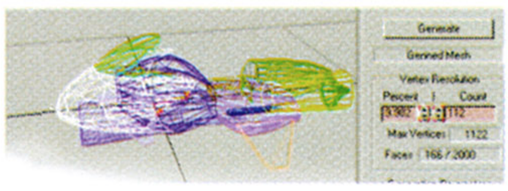
PC giants team up with top games developers

The Intel Corporation has announced the completion of its multi-resolutional mesh (MRM) software technology. To begin with, this software has been licensed to one 3D tool publisher, Digimation, and to three "key game developers", including the creators of *Half-Life*, Valve Software. The two other developers are Pandemic Studios and Dreamworks Interactive. All of the game developers will be releasing titles before the end of the year.

What the MRM technology will mean to developers is that it will enable them to easily create 3D content that is authored once and automatically maximises graphics performance and resolution to the available processing power on end user's PCs. It will also allow graphics that will automatically update with better technology.

Valve's Ken Birdwell said that, "Intel's MRM technology is by far and away the most technically sophisticated, full featured and easy to use level of detail technology available. Combined with our skeletal and parametric animation systems, MRM will allow us to create a *Team Fortress 2* game that not only looks great on existing hardware, but automatically adapts to future versions of hardware that we can only dream about today."

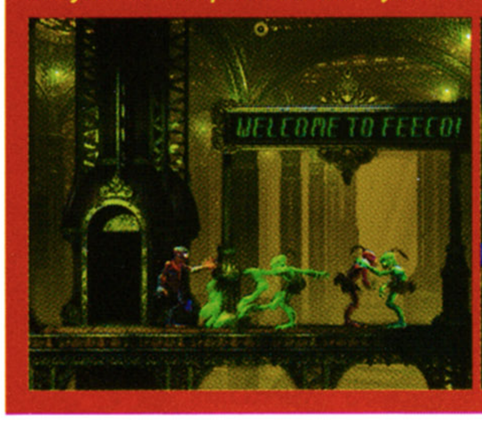
We'll bring you more news and info on what practical use MRM technology will have sometime in a future issue.



Mesh will allow games to automatically use the best settings

ODDWORLD GO FOR PSY

Oddworld Inhabitants, developers of *Abe's Oddysee* and *Exoddus*, are developing their latest in the series, *Munch's Oddysee,* for the PlayStation 2. "PlayStation 2 is our primary focus," said creative director Lorne Lanning. "We have been extremely ambitious, with a game design that has needed three years to fully develop. We thought we might be overshooting the system specs for the next level, and it was a big gamble designing the way we have been, but it paid off when Sony released their new specs. We realised at that moment that we were right on time, and were going to be able to build *Munch's Oddysee* the way we had been dreaming. It is very, very exciting... *Munch's Oddysee* will require two more years to finish."



CRITERION GO FOR HIGH VELOCITY

New PC and Dreamcast racer picks up speed

The industry's main concern for the Dreamcast is lack of decent and exclusive software support. But after looking at the majority of their pre-Christmas games line-up, the machine's future looks genuinely bright.

Velocity by Criterion Studies, creators of the stunning PC game *Redline Racer*, is one of the most promising of them all. Taking on a futuristic *WipEout*-style setting, the game also contains elements of *Cool Boarders*. The futuristic street races are performed using four different hover boards (anyone seen Back to the Future 2?), with all of the nine players having their own unique set of 20 different skills and stunts to master. The game contains over 100 different player animations and 50 different visual effects such as sparks and smoke. *Velocity* can also handle moving over 50 interactive objects on screen, which should give a very 'alive' feeling to the game.

If the game turns out to be as fast as the name suggests then, judging by these screenshots, Criterion will surely have outdone themselves again. *Velocity* could well turn out to be one of this Christmas's biggest titles.

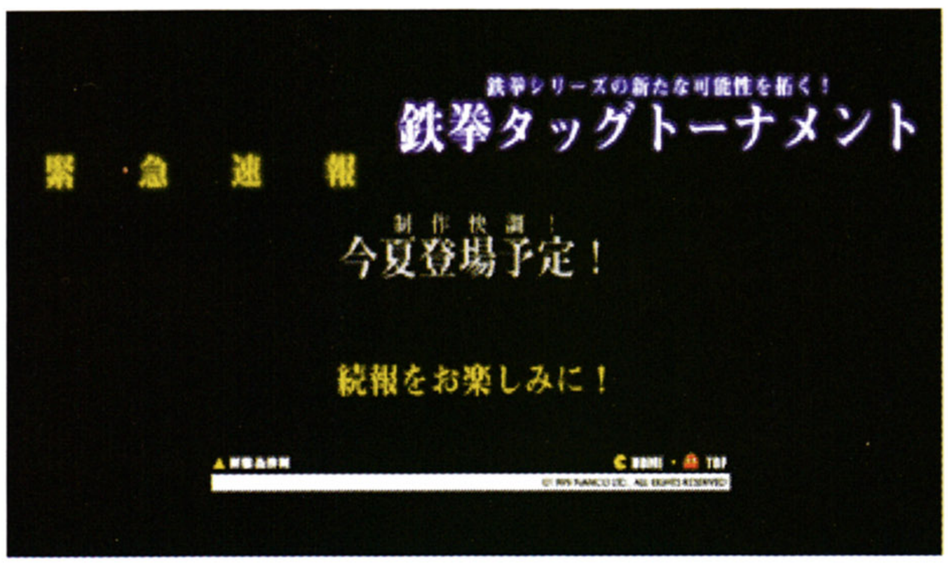
SQUARE ON PLAYSTATION 2

New Final Fantasy movie set for PSY?

It seems that Squaresoft are getting more than a little excited about the forthcoming PlayStation 2. The vice-president of their US film entertainment division, and producer of the Final Fantasy movie, Jun Aida, believes that it "brings a lot to the table for Square." He also says that, "The capability of the PlayStation 2 is so huge. And what we're doing on the film development side, a lot of the technology that we are gaining and creating here could be transformed over to the interactive side very quickly and very easily when we are producing games for the PlayStation 2. In fact, the same couldn't be said for other hardware platforms. So, I think we are trying to gain an edge over other game developers by doing this feature film. And I think it's going to be very, very interesting when the PlayStation 2 comes out. At the end of the day, what I think the PlayStation 2 brings to a company like Square, because we're so good at storytelling and visuals, is that the increased capability of the unit will do nothing but help us advance our games."

What odds on a Final Fantasy: The Movie game appearing on PlayStation 2 soon after launch?

In other PlayStation 2 news, it has been confirmed by Sony that the code name for the new machine will be the PS-Y, following the still-used-today code name for the original, PS-X.



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

The *Tekken Tag Tournament* website

New Tekken game announced

Namco have announced the latest game in their *Tekken* series. *Tekken Tag Tournament* will appear first in the arcades this summer, with a view to a PlayStation conversion in the autumn.

The game is based on the *Tekken 3* engine and features all of the characters from that game, as well as a few special appearances from characters in *Tekken 2*. It will also include a two-on-two tag team mode similar to Capcom's *Marvel Vs Capcom*. Players will also have access to limitless combos.

We'll have more information in forthcoming issues of TC.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF BLEEM

Sony's request to restrain Bleem PlayStation emulator denied

Sony have already been kicking up a fuss regarding the release of the new Bleem Emulator for PlayStation games, but they suffered a big blow recently when their request for a temporary restraining order was denied by a San Francisco Court judge.

"We're very happy with the court's decision," commented David Herpolsheimer, CEO for Bleem, LLC. "We've always held that Bleem will be good for Sony, since it expands the PlayStation's reach to include millions of PC gamers."

The software not only runs all existing PlayStation titles, but also drastically improves on the graphics, making full use of a 3Dfx card. The demo version that has been available on the net for just over a month was downloaded over half a million times in the first two weeks. The full retail version will include full 3D support, sound and memory card features, and should be released in America by the time you read this.

Bleem's advantage is that it can use 3Dfx cards. Left: Original PlayStation images. Right: Bleem enhanced versions

EA'S ANTIPODEAN ADVENTURE

Electronic Arts has revealed details on its new multi-million pound development studios in Australia. The focus of the new studio will be EA's own EA Sports titles, and it will take care of around 30 games per year, aimed at both Asian/Pacific distribution as well as a worldwide distribution.

AMIGA OS 3.5

New operating system includes WarpUp PowerPC support

Jim Collas, president of the Amiga Corporation, has announced in an open letter on the company's website that Amiga OS v3.5 will be available in July or August this year. While he acknowledged that past mismanagement had all but killed the Amiga as a platform, he stated that he still had faith in the machine's architecture and the support of the Amiga community. The new operating system provides easy access to the internet, support for hard disks larger than 4GB, CD-ROM support, an updated user interface and, most importantly, full support for the PowerPC processor, seen by many as the only viable future for the Amiga, especially since an Amiga with a PowerPC 604 upgrade can give a G3 Mac a run for its money. The WarpUp Power PC support includes backwards compatibility with existing AmigaOS applications and an easy-to-extend hardware independent driver system. Future plans include a reworked and extended Kickstart, PPC-native system libraries and 68000 emulation for PPC-only systems.

If you would like to join the OS 3.5 beta test program, you should log on to the Amiga Corp. website at http://www.amiga.com/amigaos35/index-e.html. In order to qualify as a beta tester you will need to have a machine with at least a 68020 processor, a CD-ROM drive, 6MB of RAM, the AGA chipset and OS 3.1 ROMs.

APE ESCAPE

GET AWAY FROM HIM, YOU BLOODY BABOON!

In our humble opinion, monkeys have been used nowhere near enough in video games. Only Nintendo's *Donkey Kong* has ever come close to satisfying our 'monkey needs'. Sony's *Ape Escape* looks set to turn the tables on the monkeys and place them in the role of bad guys, apparently trying to take over the world. Of course, a bunch of stupid monkeys couldn't possibly take over the world by themselves, they have help from an evil monkey-scientist called Spector.

Players take control of a character called Spike, and the object of the game is to capture all of the monkeys using various bizarre gadgets – a stun-club-sky-fly, time-net-sling-shot and hula hoop. There is also something known as 'monkey radar' – our hero has this installed in his hands so he can locate the monkeys. They must then be returned to the laboratory. The action takes place over twenty five levels and is the first game to only work with analogue controls. Basically, one analogue stick is used to move your character, the other is there to control your weapon. Each of the weapons has its own control method. For example, with the slingshot you must pull back and charge up before releasing. The controls also require you to use the L3 button (activated by pushing the left analogue down) in order to crouch.

Ape Escape certainly looks like it will be an original game – whether or not it will be as playable as it sounds remains to be seen. It's set for release towards the end of the summer, and we'll have more details then.

EASY AS 1, 2, PC...?

Microsoft aim to make PCs more user-friendly

At the recent Windows Hardware Engineering Conference in Los Angeles, Microsoft Corporation President Steve Ballmer outlined to industry professionals the details of the Easy PC Initiative, a plan which the giant software company have drawn up with Intel Corporation, the manufacturers of the processors found in most PCs.

The plan is focused on making the PC easier to set up, expand and use by phasing out obsolete hardware architecture and incorporating new hardware and operating system enhancements. Ballmer confirmed that Microsoft will continue to enhance Windows 95/98, with plans to introduce an easy-to-use new consumer version by the end of the year. This is being seen as a direct contradiction of Bill Gates' stated intention to replace Windows 98 with a version of Windows NT for the year 2000.

For Intel's part, they are pushing their new Hardware Implementation Guide and the FlexAT motherboard specification as a means by which home PCs can be made more user-friendly.

The Easy PC initiative is being backed by some of the major players in the computer industry, with names such as Compaq Computer Corp., Dell Computer Corp., Fujitsu Microelectronics Inc., Gateway 2000 Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., IBM Corp., Micron Electronics Inc., NEC Inc. and Toshiba Corp. already expressing their support.

Targets for the initiative include making PCs that are easy to set up, with internet connectivity out of the box or configured with a single phone call, easy to expand, using USB technology to eliminate the need to open the box, and easy to use with new operating system enhancements speeding up switch-on times. The new hardware configurations suggested by Intel will also make it possible to design PCs with unusual shapes and designs. This is being interpreted as a direct response to the success of Apple's iMac, which has become the fastest selling home computer in America, largely due to its ease of use. The iMac already embodies many of the features PCs manufacturers are now trying to implement, such as USB peripheral connection, being internet ready straight out of the box, and not being beige.

User-friendly Windows? We should be so lucky

RAYMAN TV

UbiSoft take to the telly

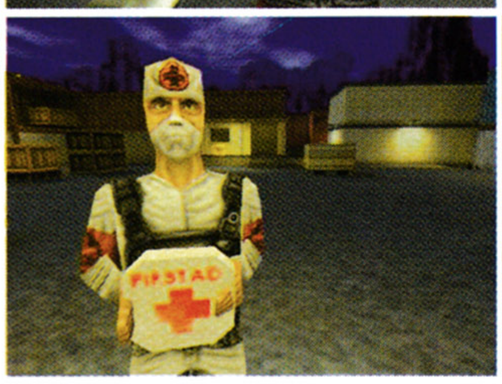
UbiSoft are currently working on a new television series based on their popular character, Rayman. The series of thirteen twenty-minute episodes will be shown across the United States, Europe and Asia. It is expected to show in the UK towards the end of 2000.

UPDATE: DUNGEON KEEPER 2

As Bullfrog's eagerly awaited sequel to *Dungeon Keeper* draws ever closer, the more excited we are getting. It looks like the company have given the same kind of treatment to *DK2* as they did to *Populous: The Beginning*. As well as using all the advantages of PC 3D accelerated hardware, the game will also feature some fresh and innovative ideas and several improvements over the original.

CLASSIC GAMEPLAY

Valve's Team Fortress Classic released to the frenzied masses



In what turned out to be a downloading of rabid proportions, Valve Software's sequel to their popular mod, *Team Fortress,* was released this month. Downloading of the add on for *Half-Life* began

The mod, which is seen as a preview to Valve's forthcoming stand alone title, *Team Fortress 2*, turns the multiplayer *Half-Life* game into a game designed purely for teamplay – with each team made up of different classes of player: Scout, Sniper, Pyro, Engineer, Medic, Soldier, Heavy Weapons Guy, Spy and Demolitions.

Each of the characters is distinct from all the others, and the decision taken on which you play not only alters the tactics that individuals take, but also the tactics the team takes. Health, armour, weapons and speed are the attributes that separate the characters – for example, the Heavy Weapons Guy has 100 health, 300 armour and carries an extremely powerful mini-gun. To counteract this, he is extremely slow. The spy, on the other hand, hasn't got much armour or any powerful weapons, but has the ability to play dead and disguise himself as a member of the opposing team.

Each of the levels provided with the mod represents a completely different style of game. The first and most recognisable to players will be the capture the flag scenario, but two, more innovative levels are included – a kind of football game and a level simply called 'Hunter'. Here the players are divided up between assassins and bodyguards and a single civilian. The object of the game is for the bodyguards to protect the civilian and help him get to the escape point while the Assassins (Snipers) try to kill him.

If this is anything to go by, *Team Fortress 2* should be excellent. *Team Fortress Classic* is available to download now from www.planethalflife.com and many other websites now. We highly recommend that you do so.

SEGA'S E3 PUSH

Sega will no doubt be out in force at the upcoming E3 show in Los Angeles, and they will have some important software to show off. *Velocity* (see news this issue) and *NFL Quarterback Club 2000* will be two of the games on show, along with their new 56k modem. This will be supported by demonstrations on *Sega Rally 2* and *Street Fighter Zero* using the online option.

YOU ONLY SING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

Sega have announced that they are currently working on an online football game. The game, titled *WWW. Soccer*, will allow players to create, train, manage and play as their own team. You will also be able to design your team's strip and logo. We'll have more on this interesting game in the future.

METAL GEAR SOLID SPECIAL EDITION

Konami look to cash in on their epic adventure

Konami have announced a special edition of their hit game, *Metal Gear Solid*. The new title will basically be the same game, albeit with a first person perspective and a mini-game for the PocketStation.

The game will also come on three CDs; the third dedicated to over 300 levels of the VR mode.

The complete list of new features:

Japanese or English subtitling
The level of difficulty can be adjusted
A photo session event with Naomi and other characters
A mini-game for the PocketStation
New controls and weapon adjustments
Behind the scenes with the development staff
Trailers of upcoming events in the game
Costume changes
New enemy locations after finishing the game in certain conditions

Metal Gear Solid Integral will be released in Japan on the 1st July, but no date has been set for a UK release.

GOOD MORNING, MR. PHELPS

Mission: Impossible for PlayStation

Infogrames have announced that their highly popular, although flawed, N64 game, *Mission: Impossible*, will be converted to the PlayStation. It seems that the game will remain largely faithful to the N64 version and will retain its mission-based structure and mix of puzzle and action. If sales of the N64 version are anything to go by, then the PlayStation version of *Mission: Impossible* should be a huge success when it's released later this year.

***Mission: Impossible* should be well-received on PlayStation**

FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

Sequel to premier flight sim announced

If flight simulations are your thing then you probably couldn't do much better than 1997's brilliantly photorealistic *Flight Unlimited II*. Not only did the game boast satellite sourced ground details, but it also had one of the most realistic flight models ever. It won accolades from all quarters.

Well, now Looking Glass are about to release the sequel to that game, and *Flight Unlimited III* looks to be the best of the series. It seems that the game will offer more of the same in terms of physics and ground details, but it should bring at least two new aspects to the genre.

Weather will now play a greater and more realistic part in the game – *Flight Unlimited III* has dynamic weather systems that constantly change. The game will also have a realistic, interactive system for communicating with air traffic control, and there are now computer AI planes flying around.

Flight Unlimited III should be one of the best flight sims available when it is released this summer on PC.

Photo-realistic ground detail and realistic weather will make this the best flight sim around

FOLLOW THAT CAB!

Sega's Crazy Taxi coming soon to Dreamcast

The latest in-house game from Sega to use the Naomi arcade board is something remarkable – an innovative driving game. The title says it all really: players take control of a taxi cab in San Francisco and have to take passengers to locations in the quickest time possible. As you can see from these shots, the game looks fantastic and promises to have gameplay to match. *Crazy Taxi* is due for a conversion to Dreamcast in time for the summer in Japan. Expect a UK release early next year.

Some of the routes in *Crazy Taxi* aren't always conventional

GREMLIN CONTINUES UNABATED

Gremlin unbowed by Infogrames takeover

With the proposed buy-out by Infogrames still going through, Gremlin's release schedule continues unabated. Following the success of *Premier Manager '99*, they have announced two new PlayStation games: a fighting game, *Gekido*, and an official European PGA licensed golf game.

Gekido takes its influence from the 'classic' sideways scrolling beat-'em-ups of yesteryear; Gremlin site *Renegade* and *Double Dragon* as two games that it draws upon. Gremlin promise us a host of original features and a destructible 3D environment. There will also be a choice between one of four playable characters. Its stereotypical futuristic story hides what could be a fairly standard beat-'em-up – Eidos' recent *Fighting Force* proved that the genre has long since had its day... we shall see. *Gekido* is due for release before the end of the year.

European PGA Golf is currently being developed by the team that brought us *Actua Golf*, and is shaping up to be the best of that series. The official license has allowed Gremlin to include many of the PGA tours major stars, including Colin Montgomerie, Nick Faldo, Jose Maria Olazabal, Lee Westwood and Ernie Els. We are promised all the usual golfing niceties such as motion captured players, AI that corresponds to the real life players and overall improved graphics. The game will feature six major PGA courses and the considerable commentary skills of Peter Allis and Alex Hay. *European PGA Golf* is due for release on PlayStation and N64 towards the end of this year and early next year on PC.

***Gekido* promises to bring some classic 1980s-style gameplay to the PlayStation. Do we need it?**

PLAYSTATION 2 PRICE?

There will be a lot of reports between now and March 2000, but for now the rumour is that the Japanese PlayStation 2 is likely to be the equivalent of $250. Or, more exactly, Y32,000. This price would be slightly more expensive than the release price of Dreamcast – extremely competitive, you'll agree. This news has come from Yahoo's Japanese news wire.

UPDATE: JET FORCE GEMINI

Rare's forthcoming 1999 release schedule reads like some kind of dream list – with titles like *Donkey Kong Country 64*, *Conker 64* and *Perfect Dark*, the N64 is in for one of its best years yet. However, *Jet Force Gemini* is the first of Rare's 1999 releases, and it looks primed to set the world of N64 alight all on its own. The game is a fantastic arcade shoot-'em-up (with puzzle elements) and will be out early this summer. But, for now, feast your eyes on these new screens.

ATARI'S LEGEND OF THE ARCADES

Gauntlet set for a welcome return

Ever since the ill-fated Jaguar crashed and burned, Atari have limited themselves to software development. Apart from the odd arcade beat-'em-up, the company have yet to produce anything that can stand head and shoulders with the company's golden era of arcade games. Cue *Gauntlet Legends*, a game based on Atari's finest hour, the *Gauntlet* games of the eighties.

Gauntlet was basically a swords and sorcery maze game. Players were able to choose from a variety of characters, each with his or her own powers. The *Gauntlet* of the nineties, however, will take a radically different viewpoint to the originals and will be entirely in 3D – no more top-down corridor action. Shame. The N64 will be the first platform to be graced by this intriguing game, featuring a four-player option (true to the original) and use of the memory expansion pak. You will also be able to create your own character and save him/her to the memory pak for use in a friend's game. *Gauntlet Legends* will be released towards the end of the year.

COMMAND & CONQUER FOR N64

Westwood and Nintendo have announced that the original *C&C* will be arriving on N64 in the summer. The game is being developed by Westwood and, despite being four years old now, will feature several 'enhancements'.

CHARTANALYSIS

Week ending April 27th

No surprises this month: it seems that Sony's £500,000 advertising spend on *Ridge Racer 4* seems to have paid off. However, *RR4* is one hell of a driving game and is deservedly number one. *Metal Gear Solid* is still selling well, as is *FIFA '99*. PlayStation's current market share now stands at 74.6% of all console titles sold. An amazing figure.

Nintendo 64 is kept afloat with sales of *FIFA '99* and a resurgence of interest in *Rogue Squadron* – the Phantom Menace hype is already starting to hit home. Nintendo can take some satisfaction from their 19.9% market share, despite the fact that it's been three months since any triple-A titles have been released on the console.

On the PC, meanwhile, *Championship Manager 3* is continuing to do the business, as are the *Grand Theft Auto* special packs and *X-Wing Alliance*. Out of the total market share, PC commands a 55.2% share compared to console's 44.8% share. TC

ALLFORMATS

01 Ridge Racer Type 4

Namco/Sony PlayStation **TC Score 85%**

Namco's excellent arcade racer is deservedly this month's number one, although you shouldn't believe the '321 cars' claim on the back of the packaging. There are a lot, but most of them are just different paint jobs and tunings of the engine. However, the racing is top notch, and it's fair to say that this is well worth the money.

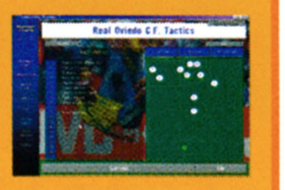
02 FIFA '99

EA N64/PlayStation/PC **TC Score 77%**

Still buying this? Well, it is the best football game on the PlayStation – not by much, but it is. Can't wait for *FIFA 2000*, though, and I'm sure it will sell just as well, if not better…

03 Championship Manager 3

Eidos PC-CDROM **TC Score 90%**



There's quite a '*CM3* thing' going on around the office at the moment. All of us football freaks have had our lives well and truly ruined by this exceptional management game.

04 Metal Gear Solid

Konami PlayStation **TC Score 95%**

Konami's epic adventure is still selling well three months after its release, and deservedly so. Quite unlike anything else out there, we look forward to *Metal Gear Solid Integral*.

05 Crash Bandicoot 2

Platinum/Sony PlayStation **TC Score N/A**

Sony's k-razy platform character is re-released on Platinum and is good value for £20. Don't expect anything original in the game, though…

06 Rugrats	THQ	PlayStation/Game Boy Color
07 Tomb Raider II	Eidos	PlayStation/PC
08 Grand Theft Auto	Take 2	PlayStation/PC
09 Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	Activision	PC
10 A Bug's Life	Sony/Disney	PlayStation
11 TOCA 2 Touring Cars	Codemasters	PlayStation
12 Civilization II	Activision	PlayStation/PC/Mac
13 Civilization: Call to Power	Activision	PC
14 UEFA Champions League	Eidos	PlayStation/PC
15 Roller Coaster Tycoon	Microprose/Hasbro	PC
16 Premier Manager '99	Gremlin	PlayStation/PC
17 V Rally	Infogrames/Platinum	PC/PlayStation
18 Rogue Squadron	Nintendo/LucasArts	N64/PC
19 Cool Boarders 2	Sony/Platinum	PlayStation
20 Superbike World Champ.	EA	PC

REPORTAGE

Produced in association with ELSPA

FORMATS

PlayStation		Nintendo 64		PC CD-ROM	
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco/Sony	FIFA '99	EA	Championship Manager 3	Eidos
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	Nintendo/LucasArts	Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance	LucasArts
Rugrats	THQ	Zelda: The Ocarina of Time	Nintendo	Civilization: Call to Power	Activision
FIFA '99	EA	South Park	Acclaim	Roller Coaster Tycoon	Microprose/Hasbro
Civilization II	Activision	Beetle Adventure Racing	EA	TOCA 2 Touring Cars	Codemasters

MOST WANTED

PC-CDROM
Dungeon Keeper 2 (Bullfrog)
Bullfrog's sequel to one of the most innovative PC games in recent times should be out soon and will be brilliant. We'll have more next month.

Nintendo 64
Mario Artist (Nintendo)
Along with the 64DD, of course. This was due to be released over a year ago, but delays have meant that 'the machine to save Nintendo' hasn't been released yet.

PlayStation
Gran Turismo 2 (Polyphony/SCEE)
The follow-up to the best racing game ever will almost certainly turn out to be the PlayStation's swansong. Looks like being even better than the first.

Dreamcast
Velocity (Criterion Studios)
Innovative racing games are scarce, so when one as good as this comes along, you can't wait to get your hands on it. Should be superb.

MOST RECOMMENDED

PC-CDROM
Team Fortress Classic (Valve)
This mod for the brilliant *Half-Life* is a must if you are a) a massive online game player, and b) want to try something a little bit different than the usual deathmatch stuff. *Team Fortress 2* should be outstanding.

Nintendo 64
Vigilante 8 (Activision)
Car smashing mayhem has never been so much fun, and compared to the competition on the N64, this wins hands down.

PlayStation
Kain: Soul Reaver (Eidos)
Proves that *Tomb Raider* isn't the only game that does 3D platforms well. Arguably better than Lara's outings.

Dreamcast
Blue Stinger (Climax Ent.)
Hasn't quite got the appeal of its inspiration, *Resident Evil*, but is still a quality product, albeit with formulaic gameplay. Looks fantastic, though.

TOTAL CONTROL PLAY LIST

Justin		Nick		Cliff		Will	
1 CM 3	PC	1 CM 3	PC	1 X-Wing Alliance	PC	1 Team Fortress Classic	PC
2 Ridge Racer 4	PlayStation	2 X-Wing Alliance	PC	2 Team Fortress Classic	PC	1 Secret of Monkey Island 2	PC
3 Power Stone	Dreamcast	3 Team Fortress Classic	PC	3 Official Formula One	PC	3 The Dig	PC
4 GTA: London 1969	PC	3 Curse of Monkey Island	PC	4 Tekken 3	PlayStation	4 Aliens Vs Predator	PC
5 Half-Life	PC	5 Smash Court Tennis 2	PlayStation	5 Aero Dancing	Dreamcast	5 Silent Hill	PlayStation

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JUMP RUNNER

Jump Runner

FORMAT: PC/Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: TBA

DEVELOPER: Glass Ghost

STYLE: Space Adventure

RELEASE: Nov/Dec

Many space games have laid claim to the title 'Successor to Elite' over the years, but none have truly measured up to that legendary game. The latest contender to make the challenge is the spectacular Jump Runner from Glass Ghost. With the resources of one of the industry's top flight sim specialists behind them and a state-of-the-art graphics engine, could Jump Runner be the game we've all been waiting for?

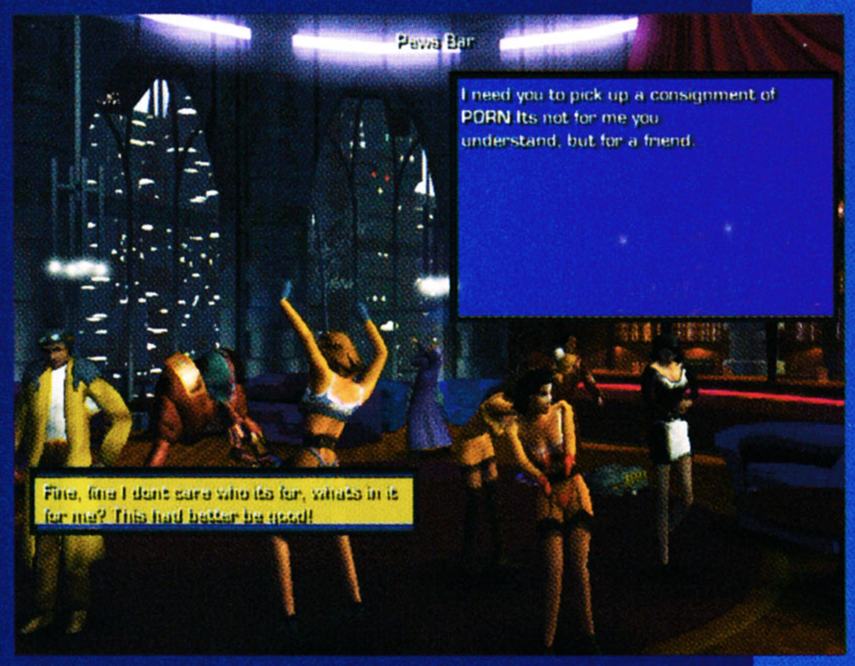
DAEDALUS

Simis are undoubtedly best known for their flight simulators, which include *Flying Nightmares*, *Flight Sim Toolkit* and last year's acclaimed *Team Apache*. *Jump Runner* is built around their new Daedalus engine, written for the sequel to *Team Apache*, *KA 52: Team Alligator*, a simulation of the Russian Kamov attack helicopter.

Simis have a close working relationship with leading players in the design of 3D chipsets, including such companies as Matrox, AMD and Intel, as well as Microsoft, who are responsible for DirectX. This gives the company a big advantage, because they can design their software to take advantage of features which will be appearing on cards still under development. Features such as bump-mapping, multi-textures and compressed textures are not yet common, but *Jump Runner*'s future-proof engine supports them all. The Daedalus engine is optimised for the Voodoo2, the AMD 3D Now! and Intel's Pentium III, but has a minimum spec of a P233 and a Rage Pro card.

Many years ago, long before Nintendos, PlayStations and accelerated PCs came along, there was a machine called the BBC Model B computer, and on that computer there was a game called *Elite*. For those of you too young to remember, it was an open-ended space trading and combat game which gave the player complete freedom to go wherever they wanted and undertake any mission they chose. It was incredibly addictive, and became one of the most popular computer games ever. The game's author, David Braben, created a couple of sequels for the Amiga and for the PC, but they both had major bug problems and never quite recaptured the magic of the original. Time moved on, games became more commercial, and before long there was no room for an open-ended space game. Plots, missions and FMV ruled, and *Elite* was no more. Of course, in these enlightened times no one believes a word of it.

Until now, that is. From a games company who have produced some of the best flight simulators on the market comes a space combat game which recaptures the old magic of *Elite*, but with amazing state of the art graphics. *Jump Runner*, from Glass Ghost, has many of the elements which made *Elite* special. You pilot your own ships, which you can customise and modify to your own specifications. You earn money by trading goods between different planets, by acts of piracy or by



undertaking dangerous missions for dodgy clients. But, most importantly, you have complete freedom of action. The game has a plot, and certain missions will advance the storyline, but the game is completely open-ended. You have the choice of when or even whether to do the plot missions. The rest of the time you are free to travel the galaxy, living a life of crime, violence and high adventure.

SPACE BROTHERS

The plot of *Jump Runner* would do credit to a major sci-fi film. It has all the makings of a classic space opera. The prosperous central part of the galaxy is ruled by the decadent and bloated empire of the Brethren, a tyrannical theocracy. The outer reaches of the galactic spiral arms are less civilised and are home to many alien species, as well as the criminal underworld of the galaxy, which is divided between a number of rival gangs. It is this underworld which will be your home in the game. Your character is Ethan Fall, a small-time criminal and freelance pilot. The game intro starts with Ethan standing in a bar talking to a potential client who wants you to take a small antique puzzle out of the system, no questions asked. Suddenly, Brethren assassins burst in and kill him, and you barely escape to your ship. Then you are at the controls and leaving town like the Millennium Falcon blasting out of Mos Eisley. What you don't know until later is that there are a group of bounty hunters on your tail, hired by the Brethren to recover the puzzle and eliminate you.

Glass Ghost describe the game as 'semi-plotted'. You have complete freedom to travel around the galaxy, trading, fighting and stealing for a living, but once every so often you will come across a mission which will advance the story. Maybe you will find a clue about the mysterious puzzle which caused all the

These are some of the characters you will meet on your travels. They all have their own special animation sequences

These animated pre-rendered backgrounds for the planetary scenes are bold and imaginative

SIMIS AND GLASS GHOST

Simis are a well-known name in the flight simulator genre, and since their formation in 1988, they have produced a series of superb games such as *Mig-29*, *AV-8B Harrier Assault*, *Flying Nightmares* and *KA-50 Hokum*. They have also done work for the RAF and the UK Defence Research Agency on advanced training simulators. The company was acquired by Eidos in 1995, and released several titles under that label, including the widely acclaimed *Terracide*. In 1998, a management buyout enabled them to regain their independence, and they have now returned to their former status as a developer of high quality flight simulators. They are currently working on a Daedalus-engined sequel to their 1993 PC hit, *Flight Sim Toolkit*.

Because Simis are so well-known as flight sim specialists, it was decided that the company needed a separate name to put on its other games. Glass Ghost are the branch of Simis which concentrates on games other than flight simulators. Their products so far include the mission-based space combat game *Xenocracy*, the Vietnam chopper attack *MIA*, and the recent release on both the PC and PlayStation, *Tank Racer*. They have full access to all the technology and expertise of their sister company and share many of the same staff. With a background like that, they can't go far wrong.

trouble in the first place, or maybe there's a bounty hunter waiting to claim the price on your head. The point is you don't have to take the plot missions. If you do, then you come one step closer to solving a galaxy-wide mystery. If you don't, then you will have some other adventure. The choice is yours.

The bounty hunters on your tail act as 'bosses', end of level challenges to be overcome. However, the main thrust of the game is building up your character from a small-time petty smuggler to a major player in the galactic underworld. By trading, piracy, smuggling and hiring yourself out for mercenary missions, you can make enough money to buy a wide range of ships and equip them for life on the frontier.

THE FINAL FRONTIER

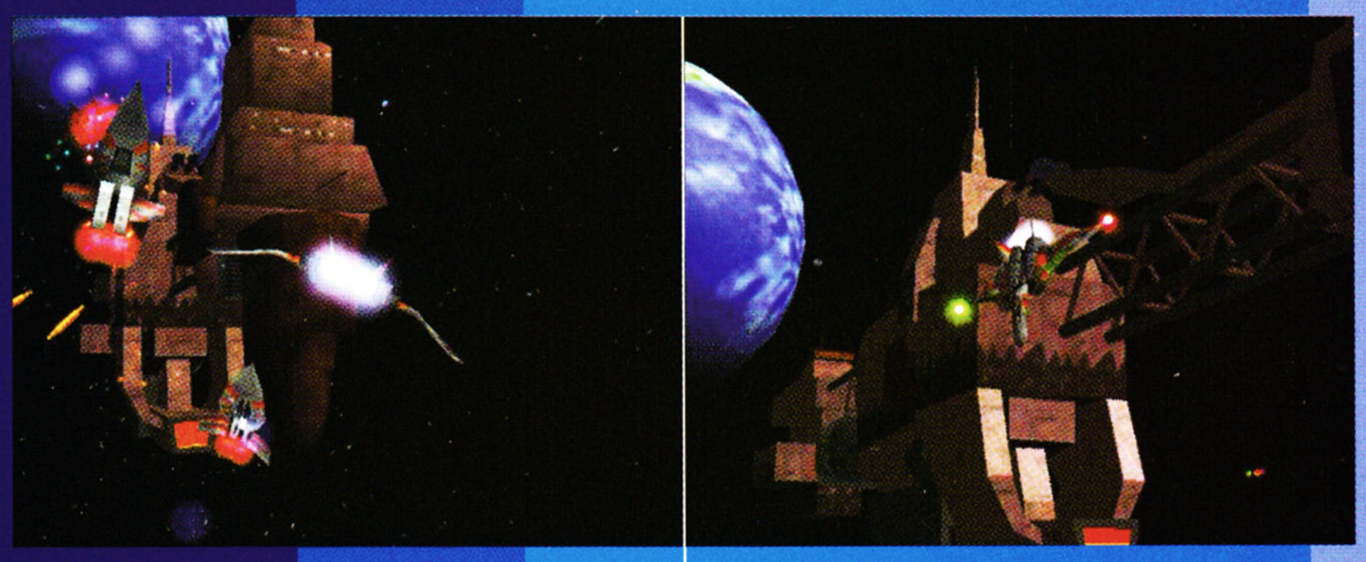
There are about a hundred and twenty different star systems to visit, and at each one you can meet many different people who may offer you work. In much the same way as in *Frontier*, you have the choice of which missions you will take (if any), but the method for choosing the missions is rather more involving. The game uses multiple levels of interaction so that your actions and the missions you have already done combine with the local economy and the over-arching plot to affect other parts of the game, such as who will be at certain locations, what new missions are available, and how many ships are in the area. The game economy is realistically modelled, so if you flood the market with a valuable commodity, the price will drop. None of those two-stop trading routes like you used to do in your old Cobra MkIII!

After docking at a space station, you can access the local facilities for refuelling and re-equipping your ship or take a shuttle down to the surface to see what jobs are available. The planetary scenes are handled using beautifully drawn pre-rendered backgrounds designed to give you plenty of information about the world you are visiting.

The characters you meet in these places are 3D animated figures who are blended into their background. There are plenty of spectacular effects in just these sequences. You may be sitting in a sleazy bar watching the dancers and wondering whether to talk to the fence in the corner, while outside a monorail zips past and a heavy ammonia snow falls, swirling in the thin atmosphere. The cut scenes, although pre-rendered, are played by the in-game graphics engine and can be modified by the software to include current game details such as the player's ship and weapon configuration. This results in a seamless transition from game to cut scene. The designers and artists at Glass Ghost have put a lot of work into the look and feel of the game... and it shows.

MAKE IT SNAPPY

Of course, the main element of *Jump Runner* is the space flight system, and for this Glass Ghost have called on the expertise of the programmers from their sister company Simis, who are specialists in flight simulator software. The game uses the



THE FLIGHT CREW

Total CONTROL spoke to some members of the Glass Ghost development team who are working on *Jump Runner*. Here's what they had to say...

TC: What is it like to work on the Dreamcast? Are there separate teams or personnel working specifically on PC and Dreamcast for *Jump Runner*?

GG: We have two teams: the core team who make the engine and the application team who make the game. The application team use PCs to do their work on until a later stage in development. The core team are porting the engine and the lower level application code over to the DC. When this is complete, the DC work will all be handled in the app team.

The game has been made with the DC in mind, and as such is designed to be accessible and fun. There is little that is specifically required for DC due to the flexibility of the engine. There is specific code, but it's quite low level and is mainly based around the engine.

TC: With such a broad, open-ended game world, is it hard to retain a playable structure?

GG: The universe is broad and open-ended, but the player is held in a tightly plotted game within that universe. The ultimate goal is to allow the player the freedom to use the expansive game world and help them progress through the narrative.

TC: How central was technology when you devised the game? A key objective must have been for you to really lay down a benchmark for the Dreamcast, but did you also have the objective to move the PC forward?

GG: The technology was sketchy when we designed the game, but we made our early designs flexible. When things firmed up, so did the spec. We are evolving the upper end of the PC spec to cover the latest developments. Bump-mapping is just plain cool!.

TC: The Dreamcast has a wonderful technical spec – on paper, anyway. Do you envisage being able to utilise all of its technology or are there proving to be restrictions?

GG: We do not feel restricted by it as the game was designed with its specs in mind.

Daedalus engine, developed by Simis for their latest flight sim, *KA 52: Team Alligator*, the sequel to the acclaimed *Team Apache*. The flight dynamics are not modelled with total authenticity, as this was felt to be too difficult to control. The space battles are more akin to those in Star Wars, with craft swooping about like WWII fighters. The other alternative, the realism of Babylon 5's Starfurys, tended to leave pilots spinning in space.

As you progress through the game and accumulate wealth, you will be able to buy new ships and upgrades but, unlike *Elite* or *Frontier*, you do not have to sell your previous ship. You can end up with a hanger full of different vessels, from large freighters for cargo carrying to small fighters for interception missions. This gives you the option for strategic planning in your missions, a feature absent from many other space combat games.

The flight controls and avionics systems on your ships start out at a fairly basic level, but they can be upgraded to allow more complex manoeuvres to be accomplished with relative ease. One which the team were quite proud of was the HET manoeuvre, a sort of handbrake turn in space. With practice this can take your enemy completely by surprise.

In the *Jump Runner* universe, space cargo is carried in standardised containers which can be attached to any ship, although the larger the ship, the more containers it can carry. Some of the largest freighters can carry thousands of containers. This means that if you destroy a cargo ship or damage it sufficiently to make it abandon its load, you can move in and pick up the containers. Piracy for fun and profit!

ASTRONOMY DOMINI

Undoubtedly the most impressive feature of *Jump Runner* is the astonishing Daedalus graphics engine. Simis and Glass Ghost enjoy a close relationship with the developers of advanced graphics hardware, and as a result the Daedalus engine incorporates not only the latest 3D effects, but also features which will be appearing on cards still under development. Using the new Matrox G400 card, the engine supports real bump mapping, specular lighting (for realistic metallic textures), multiple textures and other stunning effects. The game engine can support lights from multiple sources, such as laser bolts, engine flares, ship navigation lights, as well as nearby stars. The result is a game with space combat scenes comparable with those seen in the TV series Babylon 5, but all generated in real time.

The movement and animation of the ships is just as detailed. For example, if you manage to destroy a large capital ship, it doesn't just explode. First, it twists and breaks apart as

Beautiful though they may be, these still images cannot do justice to the visual impact of *Jump Runner*

TC: With the current emphasis on AI, to what lengths have you gone to create believable character responses?

GG: We have done basic AI sufficient to play the game at a basic level, but we have also made some very clever AI to test the combat – too clever in some respects! If we optimise the enemies and tell them to get behind the player and kill him, he will do it too well. We are now making the AI dumber and more human-like by making it 'err...' and panic.

TC: What form does the narrative take, and how do you pull the player through the game?

GG: The universe has its own narrative that is going on in real time. The player's story centres around the fact that he is a smuggler on the run from a set of bounty hunters and he needs to defeat them and find out why this is happening to him. This reveals the bigger picture to the player. Other events are keyed off when the player reaches a certain level of competence or when he visits a specific location.

TC: So how strong is the strategy element? Do you think that it will appeal only to role-playing fans?

GG: The game is not about role playing in the 'role-playing fans' sense. You are playing a character and you will need to advance yourself by doing many varied tasks, but it will appeal to RPG fans for a number of reasons. We have tried to create some of the characterisation, narrative, rich environments and character progression that are found in all the best RPGs

TC: Would you say a large part of the game will be 'space combat'? Where do you feel the true emphasis of the game lies?

GG: Yes, you will be playing out a lot of space battles – eighty percent or more of the time. You will spend the rest of the game in conversation or tweaking your cargo and ship.

TC: Do you feel that with two very different styles of game in one title you may be running the risk of not appealing to fans of either?

GG: There is only one game here, and the interface to it is accessible and immersive.

it loses structural integrity, shedding cargo containers and wreckage. When the explosion finally occurs, it is not some simple animated pattern. Instead the game engine supports multiple particle system effects and shock waves for bigger, better and much more realistic explosions. The Daedalus engine makes extensive use of particle systems for deflector shield effects, tractor beams and engine plasma trails.

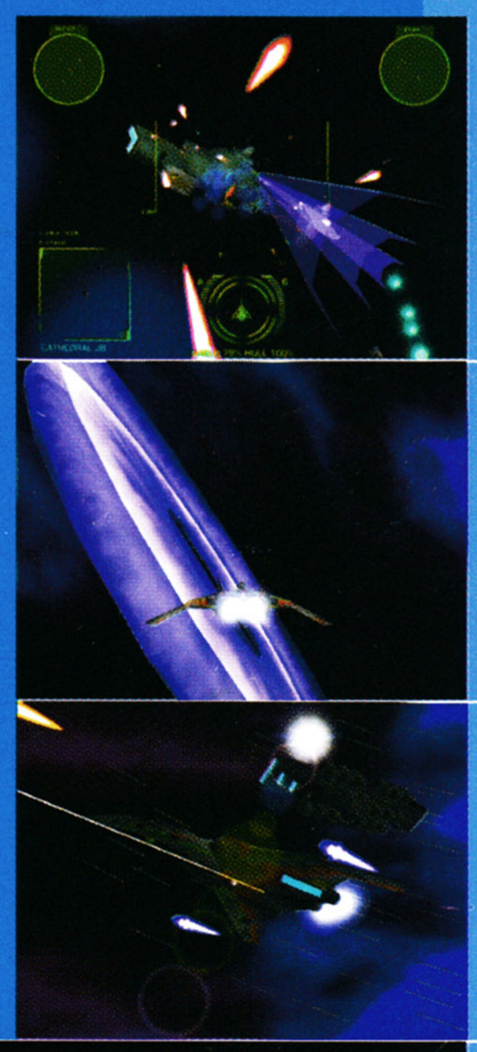
Other graphical niceties include point source lighting, so the windows on starships will glow realistically, and you will be able to spot cities on the night side of planets. Those planets aren't just 2D backdrops as they are in some games. The planets in *Jump Runner* are real 3D objects, with separate atmospheres and visible clouds moving over the surface. Using a false perspective method, the planets are drawn to a realistic scale. Although your ship can't fly right down to the planet's surface, with enough patience you can fly right around it.

DREAMCAST

Although the graphics engine of *Jump Runner* is designed to make the most of PC graphics cards, it doesn't stop there. *Jump Runner* is also being developed for the Sega Dreamcast. Glass Ghost have a core team who program the game engine, and an application team who build the game around it. The core team are currently porting the game engine across to the Dreamcast, and when they are finished the application team will convert the game. The software was always designed with the intention of converting it to the Dreamcast, so the process is relatively simple. On the Sega console's powerful hardware, the game is expected to run at about fifty frames per second in 640 x 480 resolution. The team are confident that nothing will be lost in the translation.

The team are also aiming to give the game serious multiplayer appeal. The current plan is for a persistent server-based universe, in which players can join the different criminal gangs in the game and have huge team-play space battles. If the technological sophistication of the rest of the software is anything to go on, the multiplayer section should be truly spectacular.

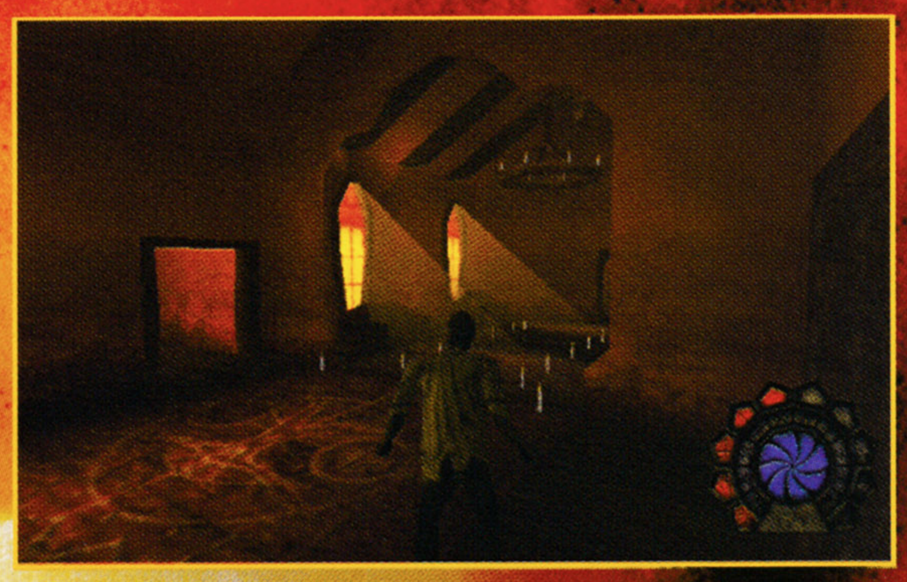
Jump Runner is still some eight months from completion, and a publishing deal is yet to be officially announced, but we will be following closely the progress of what promises to be a fantastic game. TC

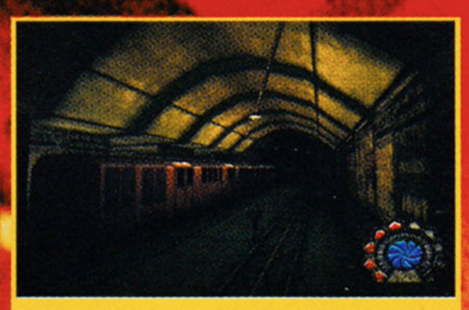


Check out the detail on these in-game shots. Multi-source lighting, motion blur and detailed textures make this an awesome experience

SHADOWMAN

A new anti-hero is about to make his eldritch mark across a swathe of unsuspecting formats, leaving a trail of shattered minds and torn psyches in his wake...





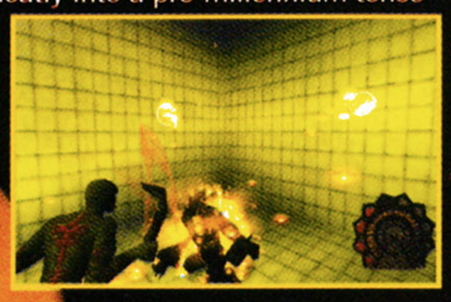
Even the Northern line was never as grim as this...

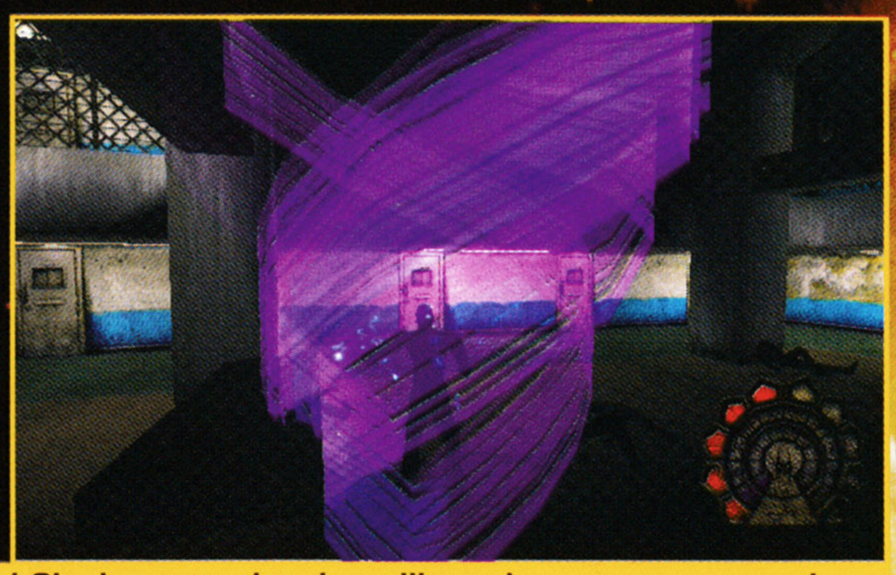
Being scared is a sensation that humans seem to compulsively seek out, be it in the form of adrenalising bungee jumping, horror movies or, of course, nasty-minded video games. We've all experienced the giddy thrill of the sudden shock screen slaying making us jump and squeak in micro-terror, felt genuine tension at not knowing what lies behind the next polygonal corner, and suffered from a giggly disgust at the spectacular dismemberment of another vile creature of the night. While the *Resident Evil* series fulfills the need for this George Romero-styled splatter violence admirably, the fear you feel is almost fun, being more about the visual element and honest, gut-churning gore. *Silent Hill* accordingly took a less overt approach and introduced traditional movie techniques to create unease and dread in the player, such as skulking hand-held camera angles and the challenging notion of laying about the heads of flayed toddlers with a crowbar. Now, however, Iguana have upped the ante once again and pushed the once-innocent video game into a new and mentally demanding territory, melding together both the psychological aspects of Konami's fog-bound chiller and the body horror from the streets of Racoon City, but adding an extra layer of truly dark thoughts that may prove just too much for the average games consumer to stomach.

Get thee behind me

Sourced from a popular adult-themed comic book of the same name, *Shadowman* is not your common or garden adventure game hero, and he certainly won't be used to sell Lucozade to the masses. The voodoo-tinged legend behind the character takes in the rich myths of the quasi-religion and some of the more unpleasant practices that it subscribes to, whilst adding a whole new set of twisted ideas and fables that slot neatly into a pre-millennium tense reading of death and apocalypse. Shadowman himself is a mystic manifestation of Mike Leroi, an underworld hitman known as Zero, who, in spite of his degree in English Literature, performs much the same role as Leon, a cold-eyed assassin even before his transformation into his haunted alter-ego at the hands of Nettie, a seductive voodoo priestess. Forcibly implanting the powerful Shadow Mask directly into his chest cavity, the magically-infused device gave him the ability to walk between the warm world of the living and the place where all of mankind must go upon their demise, a nether realm aptly termed Deadside. Nettie's motivation for this stemmed from a prophetic dream in which she foresaw an invasion from Deadside sweeping over the previously off-limits land of those still alive, a foul plague of decay that will forever upset the balance of what is meant to be. She hence sends Shadowman (who is in effect a slave to her will) on a fact-finding mission to learn more about the hideous plot before time is spent and darkness falls forever. At the heart of this horribly clever conspiracy is an esoteric figure known only as Legion, who has scoured the blacker points of human history looking for the very worst examples of scum and villainy who have preyed on their fellow man to degrees far beyond the usual call of psychopathy. The most perverse serial killers and child-murdering sadists are each paid a visit in turn and offered a place as princes of pain amongst Legion's glorious scheme, provided they are prepared to take their own lives first so as to join him on the other side. The first to be recruited is a certain disemboweller of fallen women that stalked the streets of Whitechapel and became known to his contemporaries as Springheeled Jack, but is perhaps better known to us as Jack the Ripper. Legion requires the unhealthily obsessed chap's expertise, as it turns out his day job is as an architect, and the mysterious figure requires someone of ill repute to design and construct an edifice to horror known as the Asylum. As far as the residents of

AT THE HEART OF THIS HORRIBLY CLEVER CONSPIRACY IS AN ESOTERIC FIGURE KNOWN ONLY AS LEGION, WHO HAS SCOURED THE BLACKER POINTS OF HUMAN HISTORY





The weird and ethereal wisps of ectoplasm that enshroud Shadowman when he utilises the strange powers in his teddy bear are both beautiful and unsettling

INFORMATION

Format: PC/PSX/N64

Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: Iguana

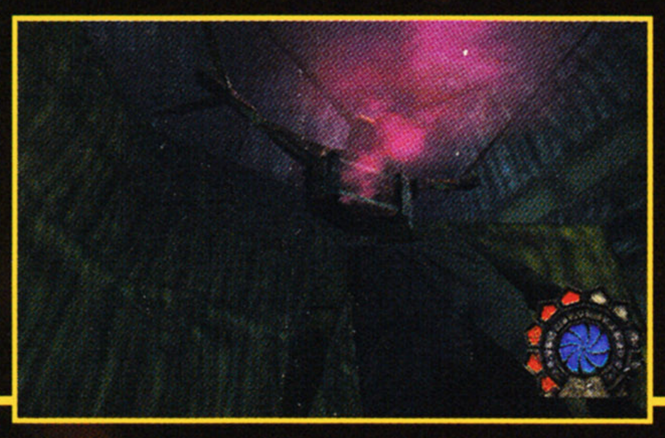
Style: 3D

Arcade/Adventure

Players: One

I'M COMPLETELY LEGLESS, MATE

Another macabre method of transport employed by Shadowman comes via the use of these unfortunate torsos known in the trade as Schisms. Quite why these poor wretches can be used as portals between worlds is left thankfully unclear.



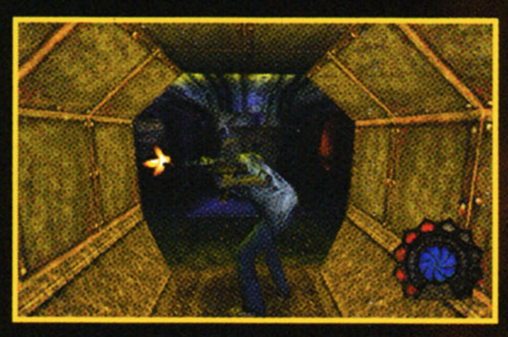
The more occult power he absorbs, the more brightly his eyes and mask illuminate the gloom

Deadside (if you can picture such a thing) are concerned the mile-high building will be used to keep all the very worst of humanity's monsters away from the other hapless souls, although in reality it is both a soul-squeezing factory for intruding into the living world and a barracks for the most horrible army ever assembled. All of this will come to pass unless Shadowman can piece together the spiralling conundra of clues and track down the six key serial killers throughout their particular periods in time and send them back to Deadside (again).

HE'S EVERY INCH THE KIND OF PERSON YOU'D RATHER NOT MEET DOWN A DARK ALLEY, HIS INITIALLY MUNDANE BACK TATTOOS GRADUALLY GLOWING A MORE ANGRY HUE OF CRIMSON THE MORE POWER HE GAINS

Arcane adventure

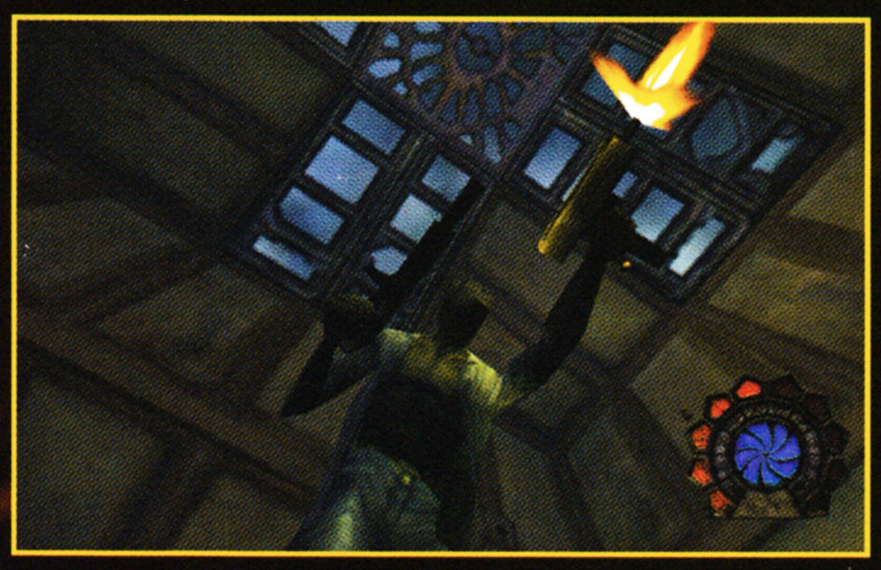
Shadowman follows the well-trod path of the 3D arcade adventure, but it's more than a mere macabre retake on *Tomb Raider*. While the unobtrusive-yet-sensible trailing third-person camera and repertoire of side-steps, jumps, crouches and various other manoeuvres are by the book, he is an unusual and non-standard character to adventure with, loping into danger with a rangy gait that reminds you more of the kind of creatures you would traditionally find yourself gladly wasting in most games. Clad in fetching blue Levi's and with his eyes glowing threateningly in the dark, he's every inch the kind of person you'd rather not meet down a dark alley, his initially mundane back tattoos gradually glowing a more angry hue of crimson the more power he gains through absorbing the occult energy stored in pulsing organic sacs that lie about Deadside. Periodically, during a firefight he will spout a blackly humourous one-liner, generally some kind of wry exclamation of pleasure at seeing the rent bodies of those out to do him harm. Considering his armoury, this is a common enough occurrence, as Shadowman rivals Charlton Heston for unashamed gun fanaticism. Alongside a standard sidearm of the Desert Eagle (a gun Dirty Harry would throw away his Magnum for) plus a clutch of bullet-spitting Uzis and barking sawn-offs, he can call upon a selection of devastatingly effective voodoo armaments. Prime amongst these is the Flambeau, a kind of bad-attitude magic wand that creates streaks of jolly lovely neon light and firework explosions whilst blowing things merrily to pieces, whilst the Shadow Gun emits a kind of muted banshee wail when its ghostly ectoplasmic bolts are fired. Top of the pile, though, is the genuinely scary Violator, a seeming refugee weapon from *Turok* that's a kind of enchanted Gatling gun which whirrs constantly but tears into life when activated with what I can only describe as the most truly terrifying sound effect I've heard in any game ever. The panels of glass in the room we were playing the game in (on decent-sized speakers) were trembling with the relentless bass judder, whilst the wheezing, ratcheting sound of thousands of rounds being squeezed off made me suddenly feel the need to duck and cover until it stopped. Nice one, Iguana! Aiming the weaponry is quick and accurate without feeling too stilted or over-aided, leading to vicious, quick firefights that can be turned your way through either pin-point accuracy or clever positioning and use of cover, whilst Shadowman's ambidexterity allows you to pick and choose the correct combination of firearms for any given situation.



On a purely aesthetic level, the voodoo-infused Flambeau is the most pleasing weapon to employ

Something wicked this way comes

Considering what our man comes up against, this arsenal is no luxury: these gruesome hordes are an unpleasant bunch that range from vicious Dobermans that growl with a threatening throaty rumble, insane sewer-dwelling albino versions of the same, and electrically-active flatfish which patrol the fetid waters of



Deadside. The other, more human-shaped nasties take things a step further down Arrgh! Alley, however, eclipsing the already pretty sickening examples we've seen in computer games up to this point. Weeping women crawl the weird lanes of Deadside, their corpse-like bodies wracked simultaneously with never-ending sorrow and what uncomfortably sounds like a sexual climax, while getting too close allows them to start draining Shadowman's life energy in a manner that would cost you at least a fiver in Soho. The rank cellars of the Playrooms which lie under the Asylum are jealously guarded by porcine butchers in gore-soaked aprons that squeal nastily with irritation upon spotting you and pile in with their meathook-tipped limbs flailing whilst projectile-vomiting abominations skulk about certain underground sections firing off gobbets of corrosive bile with accuracy and suitably retching sound effects. When pursuing a serial killer they will often lay an ambush and then taunt you cruelly, not happy with merely killing Shadowman but wanting to make him (and concurrently the player) angry and enraged. To see such twisted behaviour from a computer game is a jolt, and is exemplary of what really sets *Shadowman* apart from the mass of 'normal' horror games: Its warped and unhealthy attitude.

PERIODICALLY DURING A FIREFIGHT HE WILL SPOUT A BLACKLY HUMOUROUS ONE-LINER, GENERALLY SOME KIND OF WRY EXCLAMATION OF PLEASURE AT SEEING THE RENT BODIES OF THOSE OUT TO DO HIM HARM

Sick on the inside

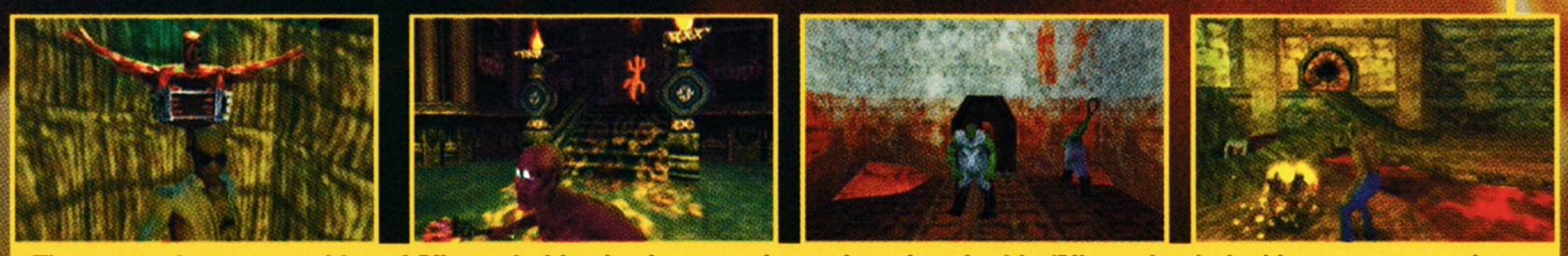
Those of you that have seen the film Seven will understand what I'm driving at. The perverse acts of the serial killer in that most cruel of movies went beyond the straightforward sadistic longing which drives most repeat murderers, and dwelled instead on making the policemen on his trail feel just as victimised as the poor wretches he tortures with a disturbing intellectual and aesthetic edge. A simple death is not enough to satiate his multi-faceted desires, with a determined corruption of mind as well as body his goal. The killers in *Shadowman* are spiritual cousins of this celluloid bastard, and go to great measures to attack the player on a psychological plane as well as the mundane physical. For example, the cackling runt that he must chase

COMICAL HORROR

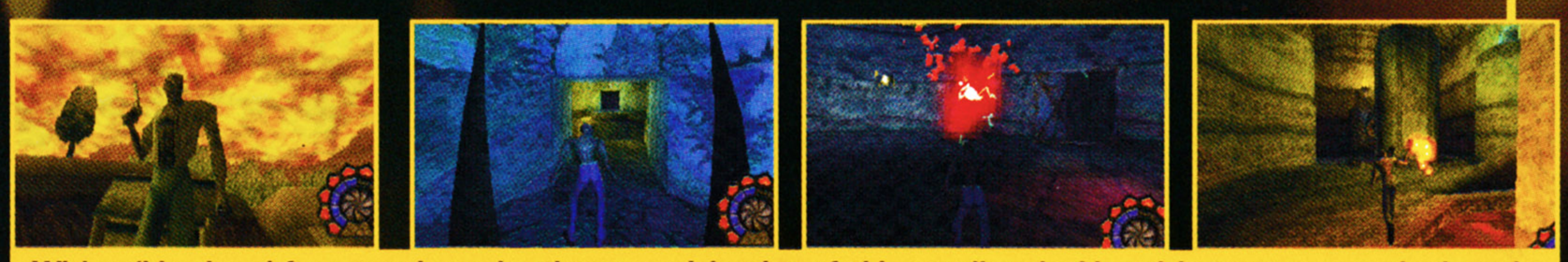
Being based on a dark-hued and maturely-pitched comic is a fine training ground for any computer game character, and the pen and ink Shadowman is particularly meaty fodder for any prospective level designer. The jump-cut narrative style and scratchy, subdued images have translated particularly well into a digital form, while the adult themes and black humour sets the stone dead star very definitely apart from the usual leotard-bedecked superhero wimps we're used to.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

While the PC version unsurprisingly has the edge in depicting the all-important lighting and particle effects that garners so much atmosphere, the PSX and N64 versions that are being coded in tandem with it aren't looking too shabby either. Apart from a few rougher edges and less nastily detailed textures, the experience of playing shouldn't be too far removed from the high-end version, although the all-important soundtrack may be a touch less expansive on the cloth-eared Nintendo.



There may be a vague hint of Nintendo blur in the area, but otherwise the big 'N' version is looking pretty spotless



With a 'big three' format release imminent, anticipation of this excellent-looking title goes across the board

through a deserted New York tenement uses tape recordings of his victims' last pleading moments of life to goad and appal as you search the rooms, and spouts disturbed Freudian psychobabble in his face ("My MOMMY won't give YOU a KISS!...YES!! I love my MOMMY!"). It's a far cry from groaning zombies and anonymous henchmen, and leaves a peculiar taste in the mouth whilst motivating you further to get and punish the S.O.Bs. The horror is nothing like the boo!-powered momentary frights of *Res Evil*, but more akin to a slowly creeping sense of dread and ever-mounting appalledness that clings long after you've stopped actually playing the game, leaving you to dwell on the pure and unrepentant unpleasantness that is at work.

If thine eye offend thee, gouge it out

Of course all this would be lacking an immediate punch if it wasn't for the high quality visuals that depict the varied locations Shadowman must explore. After the mockingly idyllic pink sunsets of the initial level, the cursed hero is forced to travel throughout space and time to track down his quarry, leading to a vast array of different environments to see, both in daylight (where he is mundane Mike Leroi) and by night as his alter-ego.

PLAYROOMS WHICH LIE UNDER THE ASYLUM ARE JEALOUSLY GUARDED BY PORCINE BUTCHERS IN GORE-SOAKED APRONS THAT SQUEAL NASTILY WITH IRRITATION UPON SPOTTING YOU AND PILE IN WITH THEIR MEATHOOK-TIPPED LIMBS

A disused London Underground station (modelled on a real-life example) is Jack the Ripper's labyrinthine lair, strikingly ordinary and familiar at first, but increasingly oppressive and unsettling the deeper he penetrates, whilst the dingy tenement mentioned

above is a subtle masterpiece of peeling wallpaper and icky stains that will have you holding your nose, wary of unpleasant odours. On the PC version in particular the textures are extremely effective in this sense, with a profusion of all-too-real looking blood streaks and what could well be faecal matter smeared over walls and floor cropping up with draining regularity. The use of lighting is also a prime factor in whipping up the worse end of the emotional spectrum, with darkness never far away, often leaving the main character a spooky silhouette against the foreground. Those pyrotechnical effects engendered by some of Shaowman's weapons are especially striking thanks to this, and complex-yet-subtle light-sourcing gives exploring a room with the aid of a torch (both battery and flame powered) a nervous and convincing experience. The varied nature of the level design in more than a plain graphical sense and overall 'feel' of the game from location to location is another oft-overlooked feature which gives the game depth as well as flavour, as some sections are akin to *Tomb Raider*-styled progression and path-finding, while others are closer to *Mario 64*, with moving platforms and skillful timing jumps a requirement. The Texan prison scene, on the other hand, is an intense slice of near shoot-'em-up action that needs quick trigger fingering as you storm the packs of reanimated and headless corpses that have been slain during a vicious riot, no

Stalking the sickeningly violent corridors of the prison, Shadowman had better watch that beheaded corpse doesn't get a new lease of life

If you draw your gun in front of Nettie's dobermans they stop merely growling and try to bite a few chunks out of our man

The antiseptic porcelain tiles of the Playrooms belie the disgusting acts that take place there

doubt instigated in some way by the machinations of Legion and his cronies. A wide range of different strategic and tactical demands are placed on the player, alongside the need for sustained logic and puzzle-solving abilities. It's a strong mix that even if removed from the compelling narrative trappings would give the game nourishing gameplay values. A mention must also be made of the equally heterogeneous soundtrack, which apes the structure of the game as a whole and spans from muted and indistinct sonic textures or groaning and throbbing anti-music (much like at key points in *Silent Hill*), while at other points it kicks in with urgent drum machine beats that nod towards John Carpenter's intense modernity. It meshes beautifully with the visual aspects and amplifies further the cloying ambiance and stark terror that waxes and wanes throughout the game.

No pain, no gain

Whether the game makes it to our shelves intact is dependent on how determined Acclaim are that this potentially ground-breaking game should be left undiluted by concerns over the corrupting effects of computer games in general, much less ones with such a mature and unflinching approach to telling a dark story in a powerful way. As it stands at the moment it will provide a unique episode in video gaming at a time when the genre is trying to push out of its kid's toy/mild diversion cultural ghetto and start to be regarded as (gasp!) an artform in its own right, with all the same degrees of respect and potential for seen in novels and film.

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY...

A cuddly toy is not the kind of accessory normally seen about the person of any self-respecting undead warrior, but Shad doesn't need it for comforting purposes alone. It belonged to his slain younger brother Luke, whose death our hero feels responsible for and whose plaintive cries can be heard filtering through from Deadside, imploring for help. The bear acts as a kind of emotional lens, letting Mike travel to the land of the deceased and back again at will. It sure beats a teleporter...

QUAKE II

The world's most **popular multiplayer game** is coming to the N64. Could this be **the end for Mr. Bond?**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Raster Productions
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	Autumn '99
PLAYERS	1-4

***QUAKE II*, SOMEWHAT THANKFULLY, ESCHEWS THE CURRENT TREND FOR MAKING GAMES INTO CINEMATIC FILMS**

Quake II surely has the most staunch of all game supporters. Amidst an onslaught from the likes of *Half-Life* and *Aliens vs Predator*, the faithful masses still maintain that nothing can beat the sheer adrenaline-pumping thrills that the id classic offers. *Quake II* is a god of a game. But hey, you're reading a multi-format mag, you probably own a PC, and therefore I'm preaching to the converted, and indeed the utterly conditioned.

However, many N64 owners may not realise the significance of such a major coup, and although the console's version of *Quake* was a disappointment, it looks like Raster Productions are going to do the job properly.

Quake II, somewhat thankfully, eschews the current trend for making games into cinematic films and realises that games are games. The plot is along the lines of "Earth has been invaded by ugly aliens. Kill them." And you don't need telling twice.

As a tough-nut marine, it is your task to frag every Strogg (cybernetic aliens reminiscent of Star Trek's Borg) you can find. The action is faster than *Turok 2* and less reliant on stealth than *Goldeneye*, with the emphasis placed on learning the attack patterns of your enemies and the best uses for your armoury, which includes the Eraser-like Railgun, and the BFG (Big F... reakin' Gun).

The minor delays from which the game is now suffering are apparently due to the introduction to the fray of the N64 expansion pak. According to Activision, this will not be used for hi-res graphics, rather the extra memory is being capitalised upon to improve water, lighting and other effects, and at getting the game to run at a Goliath frame-rate without slowdown. We'd be very surprised if final code made it out without some kind of improved resolution though.

Activision are also promising that the game's deathmatch mode will be one of the game's major selling points. *Turok 2* never came close to stealing *Goldeneye*'s multiplayer thunder, but *Goldeneye* is getting slightly boring after a year and a half, and a kick-ass new pretender to the throne would be highly appreciated. Oh, that'll be *Perfect Dark* won't it? Nevertheless, if anything can square up to the Rare's mastodon in the "killing your mates" stakes, then we'll put a tenner on it being *Quake II*.

TC

THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE

The N64 version is beginning to look top-notch, especially as far as the lighting effects go. The expansion pak has allowed the developers to spectacularly generate effects like lens flare, ray-tracing and reflection to stunning effect.

The *Quake II* train rolls into platform Nintendo

SUMMING UP

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- It's *Quake II*! The game has a little bit of a reputation in some circles.

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- The original *Quake* on the N64 was a bad mistake. Will lighting strike twice?

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We reckon it's going to be one of the games of '99, and we'll bring you more from E3 next month!

GRAN TURISMO 2

Arguably the **best driving game ever** is set for a return. It promises better physics, better graphics and better AI. **Will *GT2* be the best driving game in history?**

The focus in *GT* is on sports cars, not super cars

You'll have to look hard for a better racing game than the original *Gran Turismo*. Not only does the game boast the best physics and handling around, but the added option of earning money and tinkering with your car made this an incredibly addictive game. Its success has been unprecedented in the world of driving games – it has sold more than 6,000,0000 copies worldwide. So you'd think that *GT*'s sequel has a fairly good chance to be one of the PlayStation's best games.

It seems that the game's developer, Polyphony, have decided that no ordinary sequel is up to standard, and the next *GT* will feature many enhancements. The priority at the moment is to focus on car dynamics, and these will be even more realistic than the original. It will even be possible for your car to jump and take off in the worst crashes. The team are also working on the way that cars react when together on the track – not only the physics involved, but also the AI of the computer cars.

NEW RACING MODES ARE PROMISED, WITH RALLY, SPORTSCAR, GT AND DRAGSTER BEING THE FOUR DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT SELECTIONS

There will be somewhere in the region of 400 cars in the final game. This will obviously include all the variations of models that were present in the original. There will also be a wider selection of manufacturers from all over the world, although Porsche and Ferrari are not amongst them. New racing modes are promised as well, with Rally, Sportscar, GT and Dragster being the four distinctly different selections. Dragster is there purely for people who are obsessed with their car's acceleration, so don't expect this to be a good one for using the Mini Cooper.

There will be around thirty tracks in *GT2*, including those in different parts of the world for the 'world GT' mode, and a licensed track (the famous Laguna raceway in California). Other locations include Italy, Tahiti, Seattle and Colorado.

Gran Turismo 2 will undoubtedly be one of the high points of the PlayStation's life and will do as well as the original. Improved handling, more tracks, better graphics and a wider variety of cars can only add up to one thing: *Gran Turismo 2* will be the best driving game ever. TC

Simulation is the key to *GT 2*, right down to the suspension

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Polyphony
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	Autumn '99
PLAYERS	1-2

SUMMING UP

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- Better car physics, more realistic handling and better computer AI.
- New modes of play include a rally and dragster sections.

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- Lacks a few of the major car manufacturers – Ferrari and Porsche.
- Unlikely to be anything that the original wasn't already. Is it worth it second time round?

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Should be the best racing game ever made, bar none.

HI-RES RETURNS

One of the best features of the original *GT* was the hi-res replay option. Thankfully, this returns in the sequel, and it allows you a chance to view the even better car models. Appearing for the first time are the Mini, Mercedes and Lotus.

STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 RACER

The new Star Wars movie, **The Phantom Menace**, is going to be the **biggest film of all time**, but can LucasArts deliver a **game that lives up to the hype** of the film?

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	LucasArts
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
STYLE	Futuristic Racer
RELEASE	June
PLAYERS	1-8

Over the last fifteen years, LucasArts has established itself as one of the world's premier software publishers with a string of hits across numerous different formats. In particular, the company has received acclaim for its hugely entertaining adventure games, exemplified by the fine *Monkey Island* series and their excellent space combat simulators set in the Star Wars universe. However, for their latest title, which is based upon this summer's new Star Wars movie, LucasArts have taken a step in a new direction and will, for the very first time, try their hand at a racing game.

One of the most exciting parts of the new Star Wars film is purported to be a racing sequence featuring pods that hover off the ground and are pulled along by two huge engines at over 500mph! Rumours have it that George Lucas, a self-confessed racing fan, was so excited by these scenes that he decided that a game based upon pod racing should be made. A team at LucasArts set about producing *Star Wars: Episode 1 Racer*, and the fruit of their labour will be released on the PC this June.

MANY OF THE TRACKS WITHIN THE GAME HAVE BEEN PLUCKED STRAIGHT OUT OF THE NEW FILM

Racer offers players two main modes of play: single race or a tournament. The single race option provides players with a quick, uncomplicated route into the game for some single or multiplayer action. The tournament mode offers a more rigorous challenge, with players having to race 21 different tracks in all. These tracks are set across seven different planets, each of which has its own visual style and features unique obstacles and hazards such as ice plains and lava flows. Many of the tracks within the game have been plucked straight out of the new film, and LucasArts have painstakingly studied the relevant footage to help them recreate each as accurately as possible.

At the start of the game only a few basic pods will be available to the player, but upon beating the champion of each planet the defeated rider's pod will become unlocked and available for selection. Each of these pods has its own distinct look, as well as individual performance ratings for traction, turning, acceleration, top speed, air-brake, cooling and repair. These performance ratings can be boosted throughout the course of a tournament by purchasing upgrades with credits. These are earnt by claiming a high position in the finishing order. The higher up the order, the more credits players get. Only by consistently finishing in the top places will players be able to afford the upgrades necessary to compete with the skilled opponents which can be found on the harder tracks.

As with all LucasArts games, *Racer* promises to look superb. The individually modelled pods look fantastic, the tracks are enormous with multiple paths, and the speed is awesome. Unfortunately, this speed and the impressive graphics come at a price, and 3D acceleration will be a prerequisite. Exact requirements have not yet been finalised, but minimum specs are reckoned to be along the lines of a P200 with 32 MB RAM and a 3D accelerator card.

With the film due out in the UK in June, the imminent release of *Racer* couldn't have been better timed. As a result the game will no doubt benefit from the film's inevitable success, but from what we have seen so far, it should deserve all the acclaim it receives. TC

SUMMING UP

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- Everything in the game remains 100% faithful to the Star Wars universe that we all know and love.
- Surely the fastest and smoothest racing game to be released this year.

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- You'll definitely need a decent controller to get the most from it.
- And a 3D accelerator card will be compulsory, well worth it though.

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No game could be expected to live up to the movie's hype, but this one just might. Can't wait for a finished copy.

Repairs can be made in between races

THE FASTEST HUNKA JUNK...

As you race around the track you have the option of pushing your craft's nose down in order to charge up a turbo boost. This boost will last until you hit something or until your engines start overheating, at which point you need to ease off the throttle briefly to avoid landing yourself with some costly post race repairs.

EVIL ZONE

This summer sees the arrival of a brand new beat-'em-up. Total CONTROL moves **into the *Evil Zone*.**

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Digital Integration
DEVELOPER	Titus
STYLE	Beat-'em-up
RELEASE	June
PLAYERS	1-2

SUMMING UP

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- Excellent graphics and loads of typically stunning and extravagant special moves.
- Very strategic gameplay that makes the game much better suited to those who practice and not to button bashers.

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- The ten characters in the game may not have enough moves between them to keep you happy for that long
- The game is a bit slow, and *Bloody Roar 2* may prove to be the stronger competition.

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Evil Zone looks likely to do very well when it arrives in for review, but the genre is very tight for newcomers .

Evil Zone is another in a very long line of anime-style fighting games. The Manga influence on both story and visuals is not difficult to spot, and as a result you can be sure that before you even play the game it's going to rank very highly on the visual interest score.

Strangely for a beat-'em-up, *Evil Zone* uses only two fire buttons on the PlayStation pad; one for attack, another for block. The move list reflects this loss, but what the game may lose in quantity, it more than makes up for in quality. Almost every move that you pull off looks absolutely stunning. The screen is often totally full of pyrotechnical effects, making it difficult to keep track, but the camera follows the action very well and the game never appears to be too confusing. Your health bars are shown on the side of the screen, and by holding the attack button you can raise a secondary bar to charge a power crystal – the lower your health, the quicker to charge. You can have three during a bout, and at certain times they will allow you to perform your character's special move, which range from thermo-nuclear explosions (not quite as epic as you may expect) to intestine-eating aliens, depending on your selected character.

Dodgy

You can evade attacks either by moving around the player (up or down on the D-pad) or by using your block button, which can, if timed correctly, reflect the attacks back on to your opponent. Your move list changes depending on the distance between players as well; you have medium, short and long range attacks at your disposal. The game seems to attempt a strategic angle on the beat-'em-up formula, and there certainly appears to be a lot of potential in that department.

Graphically *Evil Zone* is not going to have any trouble at all, and the sound is also suitably impressive. If there is a negative point at the moment it's that the ten characters are all lacking in moves compared to the average game in the genre, and many hardened beat-'em-up fans may feel let down by this if things are not changed. The game is on sale in Japan, however, and Digital Integrations are boasting sales of 150,000 already. The game's main competition is likely to come from *Bloody Roar 2*, which was previewed last month. It will be interesting to see how both games fare when the final review code arrives at the TC office.

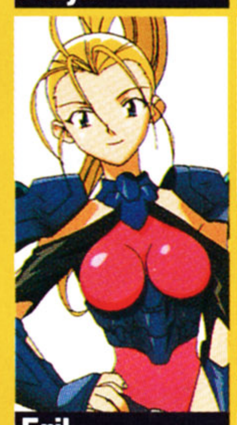
EVIL ZONE USES ONLY TWO FIRE BUTTONS ON THE PLAYSTATION PAD; ONE FOR ATTACK, ANOTHER FOR BLOCK. THE MOVE LIST REFLECTS THIS LOSS

GETTING INTO CHARACTER

You only need to hear the words 'anime-inspired' and you'll get a reasonable idea of the different characters available: Schoolgirls with lighter-than-air dresses; robotic warriors and a range of typical Japanese heroes, one of whom keeps one hand in his pocket throughout the entire fight. It's a pity there are only ten to choose from.

Altyal

Danzaiba


Eril

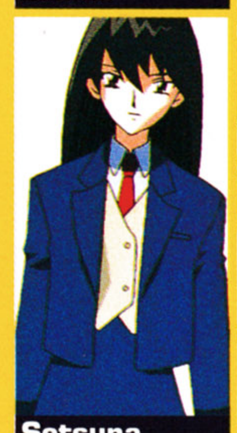
Gally

Kakurine

Keiya

Laindo

Midori


Setsuna

Ihadurka

V-RALLY 2

Eden Studios **have been furiously working** away on *V-Rally 2* since we left them in Issue 6. **How have things changed** since we last checked in?

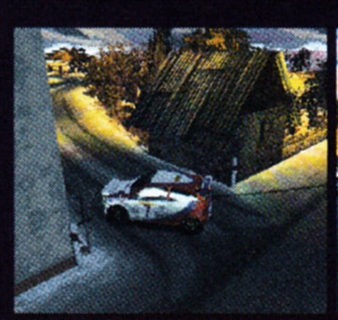
V-Rally 2 **is the sequel to what was widely considered at the time to be the best rally game ever. A lot has changed in the last few years, but Infogrames will certainly be hoping to reclaim that title. If you missed our Alpha Report in Issue 6, two of the major selling points in the game are the excellent four-player mode and detailed level constructor. The preview code demoed to us recently now shows this running with no loss in frame rate at all, and certainly looks like being the best four-player racing game on the PlayStation to date. It keeps up a pretty good speed, and although there is an obvious lack in detail, the screen is clear enough to retain all the playability of the single-player game. The level designer has also had a revamp and is now even more user friendly; once you have built your circuit, you can drag various parts of the course either up and down or sideways to smooth out the corners. Up to 250 can be saved onto a single memory card, and you can now create your own custom championship with your own tracks.**

Gimme, gimme

There are lots of other newer and less striking features still to be added. One that did make it to the preview code was the ability to test drive your cars instantly from the menu screen so you can decide which suits you best before you start the game .

None of the music, graphical effects such as progressive mud colouring and body damage, or intro sequences have been added, and graphically it seems incomplete, but the fun of the game remains the very realistic handling. Your car actually feels as if it is responding to the road, not hovering above it, which will go a long way to making this title a big success. The only problem that remains is the lack of weight of the cars, which is only really noticeable when you crash, but it can still be extremely bad.

YOUR CAR ACTUALLY FEELS AS IF IT IS RESPONDING TO THE ROAD, NOT HOVERING ABOVE IT, WHICH WILL GO A LONG WAY TO MAKING THIS TITLE A BIG SUCCESS



V-Rally 2 will surely hit the charts with a lot of force, but there is still work to be done. It already has a very strong foundation of lastability and good handling which will prove very important when the game is released this summer, it's just a question of adding a few final touches, and if Infogrames can do that, *V-Rally 2* will have a very easy ride indeed.

TC

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	Eden Studios
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	July
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-4
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

SUMMING UP

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- **Great four-player mode and an infinite amount of tracks due to the level designer and generator.**
- Very strong playability, good handling, and loads of game options.

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- Dodgy crashes and collision detection at this stage
- Graphics seem a little blocky compared to many of the more recent racing games.

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There is a lot of potential here, and alongside *GT 2* this will surely be one of this year's biggest PlayStation racers.

At this stage the graphics are still relatively primitive

SAVE ME

Before you begin a game you need to create a save game slot, which will then be used every time you race, recording all of your stats and displaying your overall performance in terms of a score. Infogrames will be holding a global competition to see who the best *V-Rally 2* driver is, the winner of which will receive an actual rally vehicle.

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

The Dreamcast continues to expand its impressive selection of beat-'em-ups, and *Dead or Alive 2* could come top of the list...

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Sega
DEVELOPER	Tecmo
STYLE	Beat-'em-up
RELEASE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2

Dead or Alive was the first 3D beat-'em-up to rival *Virtua Fighter 2* in the arcades. Its sequel, soon to be released on the Dreamcast, looks like it will be causing *VF 3tb* some problems later on this year.

Unlike the first game, *Dead or Alive 2* uses free-roaming battle arenas similar to *Ehrgeiz* or *Power Stone*, which gives gamers a lot more scope in learning new tactics and strategies. The backgrounds have had a lot of attention applied to them; they are huge, intricately detailed and designed so that fights in the same arena will be significantly varied. There has been no news concerning the likeliness of intractable objects in the scenery, but we wouldn't rule it out at this stage.

THE BACKGROUNDS HAVE HAD A LOT OF ATTENTION APPLIED TO THEM; THEY ARE HUGE, INTRICATELY DETAILED AND DESIGNED SO THAT FIGHTS IN THE SAME ARENA WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY VARIED

The arcade version of *Dead or Alive 2* uses Sega's Naomi technology, so the conversion should be very similar, and graphically there seems to be very little to fault the game on. It uses Team Ninja's Realtime Dynamics Simulation Engine, which means that things like hair, clothing and accessories all respond incredibly accurately to the action on screen. The images on this page are impressive to say the least – we truly are getting to the stage where real-time graphics can look as good as pre-rendered images.

Operating system

Apart from the free-roaming levels, the fighting system should merely be an extension of the original game. Combos are easy to pull off, and the more advanced ones are very impressive, but they are relatively weak compared to the counters and power moves. When you are facing an incoming punch, you can counter by pressing the hold button at the right time. You then grab your opponent and will be able to execute a much more visually exciting counter attack. For even more spectacular attacks you'll need to discover the power moves, which can be totally devastating to your opponent.

The standard in this genre was set at a very high level right from the beginning with *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. *Power Stone* was a very different style of game but equally as good. *Dead or Alive 2* takes ideas from each and has the potential to beat both of them. Whether it will take the crown depends on the final code, but this will be one game that beat-'em-up fans will be looking forward to with much anticipation. TC

SUMMING UP

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- Looks absolutely stunning, with intricately detailed backdrops and responsive character parts.
- Three-button control and a novel Hold feature should make it both instantly playable and potentially long lasting.

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- Free-roam arenas may overly complicate the gameplay.

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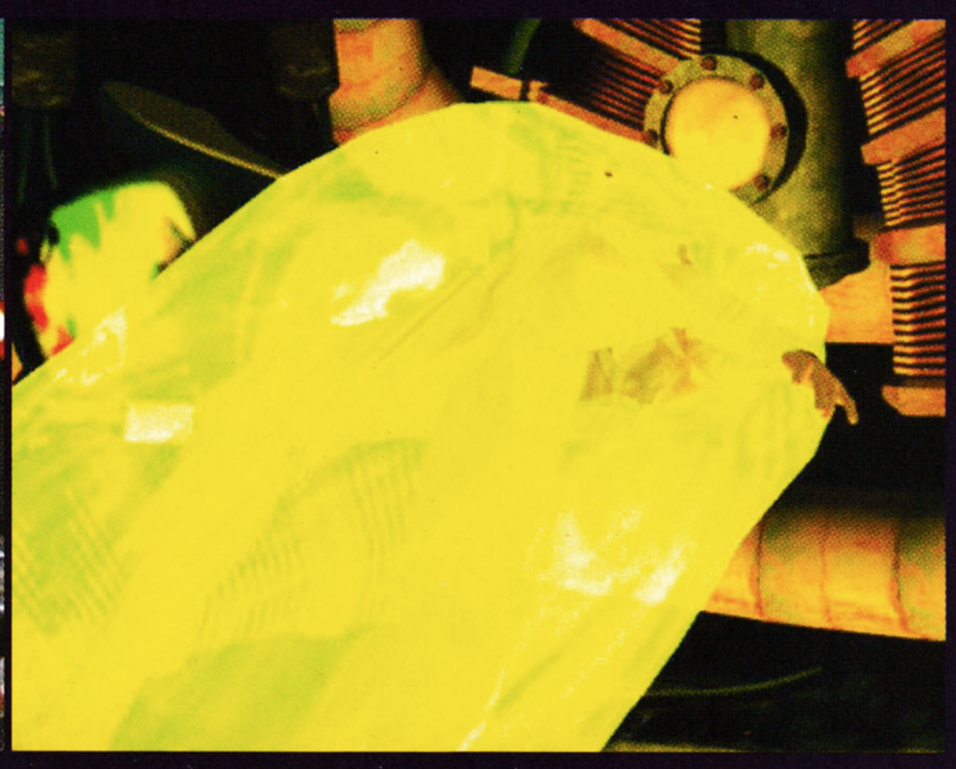
It looks like *Dead or Alive 2* is the strongest contender to *Virtua Fighter 3tb*'s crown. Not a bad situation at all.

THREESOME

With increased demand for more and more moves in many of today's beat-'em-ups, getting the balance with simplicity spot on is also very important. *Dead or Alive 2* uses only three of the buttons on the Dreamcast controller – punch, kick and hold – but the novel use of each and strong focus on timing and combos should allow for a massive move list.



Dead or Alive 2 retains all the bombast and camp of the original and builds on that sure footing with impressive real-time graphics

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS

We all loved **Big Foot when we were kids,** didn't we? Now we can all live out our dreams in **spectacular truckin' fashion...**

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Arcade Racing
RELEASE	TBA '99
PLAYERS	1-4

LET'S GET READY TO TRUNDLE!

Monster Truck Madness offers some top ideas for multiplayer battle shenanigans, with a football game, an ice-hockey variation and a giant rumble all looking like they could provide weeks of entertainment.

SUMMING UP

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- Great truck physics in place.

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- It's going up against *Mario Kart*...

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Like *Beetle Adventure Racing*, this could be one of the surprises of the year.

THE N64 IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE POPULAR IN THE AGE RANGE THAT SONY ARE KNOWN TO DOMINATE, AND GAMES LIKE THIS WILL HELP PUSH THE MACHINE EVEN FURTHER

The real-time lighting effects are stunning in *Monster Truck Madness*, as are some of the weather settings

When you think about it, karts are for kiddies really, aren't they? Tyres pinched straight from a radio-controlled buggy and the engine of an average lawn mower do not really make for transport that real men want to be seen in. Real men want to get behind a wheel the size of a hula hoop and get a grip on a throbbing gear-stick in a monster truck. Real men like Chris Eubank. Oh...

Anyway, Take 2 have decided to redress the imbalance in the world of fluffy Nintendo battle-racers by creating *Monster Truck Madness*, the Anti-*Mario Kart*, if you will. The game is a rough 'n' tumble racer where a variety of pumped-up Americans ride over a variety of landscapes wreaking havoc in the name of glory. And even at this early stage, it's all beginning to look fine and dandy.

The trucks themselves are beautifully rendered, and the physics which are already in place are nothing short of stunning. Each wheel reacts individually to the landscape beneath, and the trucks rock, roll and tip over with alarming realism and regularity.

Also stunning are the real-time lighting effects, which easily rival those seen in *Forsaken* or *Rogue Squadron*. Driving the police truck around in pitch darkness with the alternating red and blue lights bouncing off of the landscapes is quite something to behold.

The trucks of course have complete free reign along the race track and the surrounding area, crashing through walls, trees and whatever else may lie in the way with reckless abandon, and letting rip with the fearsome range of weaponry that lays scattered along the track.

The multiplayer modes are something that Take 2 has put much effort into, with at least three battle modes to appear alongside the more conventional racing. These are not finished, but look interesting to say the least. One is a football match played with two trucks and a ball the size of The Epcot Centre, similar to what was seen in *Buck Bumble*; one is an ice hockey game with a huge tyre taking the place of the puck; and the final is a massive all-in rumble taking place in a closed arena, with the winner being declared as last truck, err... standing.

Overall, like many games, *MTM* has all the foundations in place for a brilliant future, although it remains to be seen whether the developers will build something strong and sturdy from them... so I can knock it down in my truck!

DRAKAN

Psygnosis might be in a spot of trouble, **but their PC line-up for '99 is** stronger than ever!

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	GT Interactive
DEVELOPER	Psygnosis
STYLE	Action Adventure
RELEASE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-8

SUMMING UP

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- Excellent graphics and the epic scale will make it a real experience.
- There'll be a great variety of gameplay, with the character able to move about both on foot and atop a flying dragon.

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- The ambitious nature of the game design could could yet prove too great to fulfill.
- Psygnosis have in the past been saddled with a reputation for great presentation but stodgy gameplay.

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A truly monstrous title which could be one of the hits of the year if it lives up to its billing.

Psygnosis are going through all sorts of changes at the moment. The result of which is likely to be a vastly slimmed down version of the once-mighty developer/publisher which will now become a development-only house under the wing of Sony. With console titles likely to be the sole preserve of the new look Psyggy, the battle has been fierce to secure rights to their extensive range of in-development PC titles. GT have emerged victorious, and the first launch under the new agreement is likely to be this impressive-looking number.

Drakan is the name of the mythical land in which the game is set. For hundreds of years, the two most powerful indigenous races – the dragons and the humans – fought for supremacy. Eventually, however, some bright spark pointed out that it would make a lot more sense if everyone tried to get on with one another. The wars stopped, the economy boomed, and quality of life was something for everyone to enjoy. Naturally, one nasty old soul takes it upon himself to bugger things up, and it's your job to sort out the mess.

The gameplay exists on two levels. The player character, a girl named Rynn, can move around the world on foot, *Tomb Raider*-style. If this becomes a bit laborious, however, she can leap onto the back of her trusty dragon and soar skywards to do battle with other dragons in the clouds.

Drakan was originally demoed at last year's E3, and is a graphical tour de force. The levels will be huge to accommodate the ability to fly, but great detail is being applied to the landscapes. You'll be able to land anywhere you like and find everything brought to life in a richly detailed world. In addition to the main story there'll be hidden sub-quests to find, giving the action an RPG-esque slant and making *Drakan a* truly unique experience.

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LAND ANYWHERE YOU LIKE AND FIND EVERYTHING BROUGHT TO LIFE IN A RICHLY DETAILED WORLD

Although they've had their ups and downs in recent times, Psygnosis have always been renowned for producing polished products. *Drakan* is going to be just that, but if it lives up to its potential, it's also going to be one of the most impressive and addictive PC games this year! TC

CORE BLIMEY!

What have Core Design created? The games market, for so long the last male bastion of dominance, is now awash with unfeasibly figured heroines. *Drakan* is no exception, with the delicious Rynn slinking her way through the game in tight pants and skimpy leathers. All I can say is, no wonder that dragon wanted to be her friend!

Plucky Rynn rides dragons and weilds a mean sword, but can she cook?

CARMAGEDDON 64

Following our **multi-format Alpha Report,** Total CONTROL takes a look at the N64 version of one of the most **controversial games in history...**

Carmageddon 64 is not that far away from completion. The controversial title has been building up a lot of hype on the console circuit, and for good reason. On the PC, *Carmageddon* offered gamers a unique experience – drive ridiculously fast and smash up anything that moves, including the innocent pedestrians and often your own car. Bearing in mind the fuss that SCi's slaughterfest caused then, it's not surprising that the game's premise has been slightly altered for the N64.

THE N64 IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE POPULAR IN THE AGE RANGE THAT SONY ARE KNOWN TO DOMINATE, AND GAMES LIKE THIS WILL HELP PUSH THE MACHINE EVEN FURTHER

In the year 2026, fatal toxins have polluted the earth's atmosphere, and the majority of the planet's population now wanders around in a zombie-like state. The survivors have limited access to a series of sunny offshore islands, but to get over there you must enter in and win a death race known as The Carmageddon. The competition provides the only remaining form of entertainment for the diminished human population and reduces the zombie threat. You play the role of Max Damage, as you enter the game for the first time.

Car crash

To begin with you have a choice of only two cars, but as you waste the opposition you will be able to salvage their cars, repair them and use them for yourself. All of the twenty vehicles (plus three bonus cars, including an ice cream van) handle extremely differently to each other and can be upgraded in a host of varied ways. The game is split into many different scenarios: you have three races in which you must destroy all of the human opposition, kill every last zombie, or complete a set number of laps around the course. When these three tracks have been completed in any order, you will have to accept and complete a mission before the next three tracks are unlocked. Missions include destroying an outbreak from a Jurassic Park-style experiment, a slalom down the side of a mountain and several situations requiring a set number of laps or kills in an allocated time.

The levels look a lot fuller, but there is still a lot of screen blur and fogging. The game will make use of the RAM Expansion Pak, though, so hopefully this will not be too intrusive to the actual gameplay.

The N64 is becoming more and more popular in the age range that Sony are known to dominate, and games like this will help push the machine even further. There is not a lot that could go wrong with *Carmageddon 64* – it's bound to be a stunning game, and N64 owners should start saving now. TC

SPLITTING HEADACHE

Like the PlayStation version, the multiplayer game will only be for two players, but there are loads of different game modes to try, which should make it quite entertaining. These include Fox 'n Hounds, Eliminator, Terminal Tag, Driven to Destruction, Sudden Death, Checkpoint and Stampede. If the game plays as well as the PC version, there should be a lot of life in every one.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	SCi
DEVELOPER	Creations
STYLE	Violent Driving
RELEASE	May
PLAYERS	1-2

SUMMING UP

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- A game designed to be fun to play. Full freedom of movement and some very cool features, items and weapons.
- It looks excellent, and the multiplayer feature is shaping up to be very strong.

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- Like the PC version, its selling point revolves around dangerous driving, which won't be everyone's cup of tea.
- Eventually the fun of hacking through pedestrians may wear off. SCi will have to focus on making sure it is not too repetitive.

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Carmageddon has already proven itself from a gameplay point of view. Providing that isn't lost in the conversion, it is sure to be a huge hit.

The conversion retains all the mayhem of the original without the nihilism

DIABLO II

Sierra will **soon be releasing** the sequel to the cult PC title *Diablo*. Total CONTROL briefly jumps **on the bandwagon to see** what all the fuss is about...

Diablo flew in to the number one spot during January '97, and caused quite a lot of excitement on the PC scene at the time. *Diablo II*, soon to be released by Sierra and Blizzard Entertainment, is an extension of the original game for 1999, and should cause just as much of a stir when it hits the shelves.

The *Diablo* world is as big and diverse as any RPG, but the game is much more action-orientated than similar-looking games such as *Fallout 2*. There are now five new character classes to choose from – Barbarian, Necromancer, Sorceress, Paladin and Amazon – all of whom have 30 different skills, spells and unique abilities. Extensions of the game's scope are evident in many areas. Characters can now run, items can be stored in certain areas, there are loads of new enemies and players skills, including passive skills such as block etc. For all intents and purposes, it looks like an advancement over the original game in every area, and most people will have little to complain about in that respect. The game takes place over four sprawling and very different acts, all of which tie into the existing time-line of the *Diablo* world, exploring it yet further.

From a multiplayer point of view, Blizzard Entertainment have drawn obvious inspiration from the success of their Battle.net venture that drew hundreds of thousands of gamers together from around the world. Now, with that success in mind, *Diablo II* is being developed with many more specific multiplayer features such as clan halls, battle arenas, and the removal of the easy cheats that plagued the multiplayer mode in the original game.

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT HAVE DRAWN OBVIOUS INSPIRATION FROM THE SUCCESS OF THEIR BATTLE.NET VENTURE THAT DREW HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF GAMERS TOGETHER FROM AROUND THE WORLD

2D or not 2D?

2D games such as these have had trouble running smoothly even on very reasonable spec PCs, and the wealth of information needed by the game tends to take its toll on the loading times, but these two areas are being looked at and should not cause too many problems. Blizzard have stated that the transition times between areas and levels is seamless, and this will help to keep up the atmosphere and make for faster gameplay. The screenshots that have been released so far certainly look promising; the detail in the scenery is impressive, though it also appears a little empty at this early stage.

Diablo and the many games of a similar ilk tend to have what can only be described as a cult following; they are generally far from universal in their appeal, and while many of you will have been keenly awaiting this sequel for a long time, the complexity and detail of the world may put newcomers off. For *Diablo II* to be a mainstream hit, Blizzard will need to focus on this aspect and make sure that it is easy to get into. However, by taking this to an extreme they may alienate existing fans. It's a difficult balance to find, but whichever way they go, *Diablo II* is sure to go down well with a large section of the market later on in the year. TC

There's more to explore in this sequel

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Sierra
DEVELOPER	Blizzard Entertainment
STYLE	Action/RPG
RELEASE	July
PLAYERS	1-8

SUMMING UP

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- Hugely detailed and incredibly big game world that should completely immerse the majority of gamers.
- Nice looking graphics and the promise of smooth and polished gameplay will add to the experience.

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- The sheer scale of the game and the wealth of complex gameplay features may limit the potential audience.
- Some of the levels are a bit sparse at the moment, which may remove a lot of the visual impact.

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Diablo II looks like being a massive game. The range of items, moves, skills and enemies, and the intricate detail of the world, means that once you get into it, it should last you a very long time indeed.

GREAT OAK

The skill tree concept in *Diablo II* allows you to spend your experience points on various character attributes. As you defeat monsters, you gain EP, and can then allocate them to a number of different areas and skills. When some reach certain levels, others will open up, making it much more thought provoking than merely having the general character progression that normally comes as standard.

BUGGY HEAT

Third-party developers **CRI** are turning up the **heat on the Dreamcast racing scene** after announcing their **new** gaming venture...

With the popular *Sega Rally 2*, the surprisingly good *Monaco Grand Prix Simulation 2* and the highly anticipated *Metropolis Street Racer*, racing games are gaining a powerful foothold on the Dreamcast. CRI are hoping to add to that distinguished list with their forthcoming title, *Buggy Heat*.

Buggy Heat is based around the concept of 'buggy racing', a motor sport that is popular in both Australia and the US. There have been very few games of this type to date, and CRI intend to use that to their advantage; the obvious difference in handling should make it feel particularly unique. There are six confirmed courses, all of which will be of the typical variety; you can expect mountain, grassland, desert and snow courses, to name but a few. It's likely that the championship option will put the player through these sections more than once but using different conditions each time, as in the ten-year championship in *Sega Rally 2*.

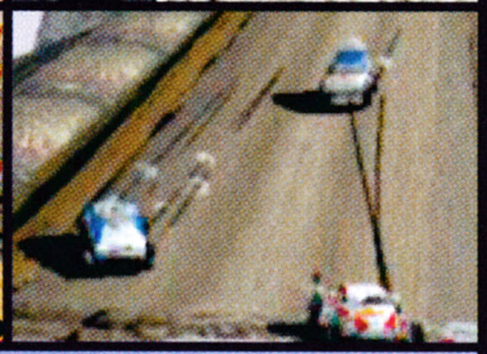
Graphically the game is looking very nice. It shares a similar style to *Sega Rally 2*, with very smoothed-off textures and detailed vehicles. There are a number of other effects such as smoke trails and dust blasts from under your car, and various weather and time variations. One possible concern at the moment is the lack of detail on the courses, which look very sparse and empty. Hopefully since CRI released these screenshots, that area will have been sorted in time for the game's imminent Japanese launch.

Tummy Bug

Buggy Heat will include Championship, Time Attack, Training and Split Screen-Head to Head modes for two-player races. The replay feature uses an in-cockpit view, allowing you to see the driver as he battles to control the steering, acceleration and braking. News concerning the game's use of the VMS is also interesting; players will be encouraged to stick to the same save game slot so that their character's whole history in the game is saved to the VMS. The unit will also allow you to survey tracks before the game, and many other yet-to-be announced features are likely. Puru Puru pack compatibility is highly probable.

PLAYERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO STICK TO THE SAME SAVE GAME SLOT SO THAT THEIR CHARACTER'S WHOLE HISTORY IN THE GAME IS SAVED TO THE VMS

Buggy Heat looks pretty impressive visually, but there is no evidence of anything out of the ordinary at this stage. Its strongest plus point will surely be the promise of good handling and gameplay, but we'll have to wait for the final version to see whether CRI manage to pull that off. TC



The graphical standard of the Dreamcast has been consistently impressive – very few games fall short of arcade standard

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Sega
DEVELOPER	CRI
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2

MILLENNIUM BUG

Apart from the multiplayer aspect of online gaming, little is known about the prospects of the Dreamcast modem. There are a lot of rumours concerning *Buggy Heat*'s use of the modem, with whispers of extra tracks, patches and various other downloads becoming available shortly after its release. Of course these are just rumours at the moment, but if confirmed it will be a very strong selling point for the game.

SUMMING UP

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- The vehicles handle similarly to real life – it could be a very entertaining game.
- The graphics look clear and crisp. Combined with a high frame rate, it could look superb.

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- The levels have an empty look at the moment. Apart from the buggy element, there may not be enough features in the game to elevate it above the strong competition.

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Buggy Heat will be a hit or miss game. If it handles well, CRI could have a winner on their hands.

BODY HITS

Every wannabe RPG has to have some form of character progression, and *Hybrid Heaven* is no exception. After each fight a number of screens pop up informing you of how your skills have improved. The first shows the general stats that have changed such as speed, stamina and health, while the next shows which individual body parts have increased in strength depending on how often and to what effect they were used in the fight. During combat you can also injure specific parts of your enemy. For example, kicking his legs will slow him down, and you can also change your stance should one side of your body be taking more hits than the other.

HYBRID HEAVEN

Can **Konami** manage to recapture the **magic of *Metal Gear Solid*** on the N64? We take a look at the **RPG hybrid**...

The N64 does not have a great RPG heritage. And although *Zelda* sought to change all that, it is difficult to see it as a pure RPG – there is an overwhelming action adventure element in there too. *Hybrid Heaven* is the game that many see as the first pure RPG for Nintendo's machine. There is far more in the way of character progression and experience statistics, and it has been billed as the best N64 title for hard-core RPG enthusiasts. However, the truth looks likely to be some way from this hype. It's not that the game is bad in any way, only that it too plays more like an action adventure than an RPG.

Hybrid Heaven makes excellent use of cut scenes to portray the story. Although they are not quite up to the standard of *Metal Gear Solid*, they are amongst the best on the N64. The intro shows your character being press-ganged by an unknown force into assassinating a secret service agent in an abandoned subway. Immediately after, as he slips in and out of consciousness, he is forced into a tunnel, where he finds himself inside a huge underground complex that extends right down under the surface of the earth. Breaking free from the surrounding guards, he attempts to discover how and why he was compelled to kill the man, what purpose the installation serves, and then ultimately escape safely back to the surface. A brilliant plot involving conspiracy theories, clones and human/alien hybrids develops, although it must be said that this is shown mostly though cut scenes at the end of each level and has little impact on the actual gameplay.

As you explore the levels, you may come across several larger enemies such as other human beings or a multitude of alien hybrids. If you approach one of these creatures, the game switches to the real-time combat mode. You lock on to the other character in a *Tekken*-style viewpoint, and at all times you are able to move your character around the enemy. A series of menus flash up on screen from which you select various punches kicks and combos. Of course the selection making is not done in real time, and it is all very easy to learn and perform. The key to combat is more in judging the position and momentum of the players before the attack so that you can select the right move than in constantly throwing the same stronger move over and over again.

THE KEY TO COMBAT IS MORE IN JUDGING THE POSITION AND MOMENTUM OF THE PLAYER BEFORE THE ATTACK SO THAT YOU CAN SELECT THE RIGHT MOVE

Character flaws?

Unfortunately *Hybrid Heaven* shares a similar graphic style to *Castlevania*. At the moment the levels are extremely open and very blurred, and there is something about the design of the complex that makes it feel unrealistic, with very little detail present. But it's early days yet and there's still a long way to go. If Konami manage to fill out the levels a bit and sharpen up the graphics, *Hybrid Heaven* could easily rank amongst the best of the best on the N64. We'll have to wait until the summer to find out. TC

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Konami
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	RPG/Action Adventure
RELEASE	August
PLAYERS	One

SUMMING UP

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- Excellent and very involving plot explained via quality cinematic cut scenes.
- Extremely innovative combat works very well and adds a lot to the game.

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- The levels are pretty sparse at the moment and don't give the feeling of a top secret underground base.
- That N64 screen blur is up to its tricks again.

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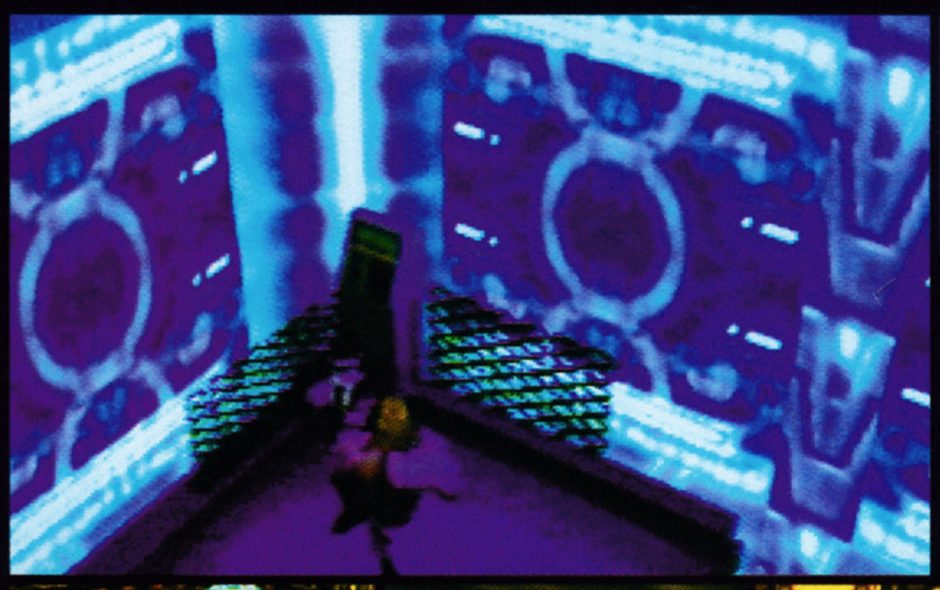
Hybrid Heaven has what it takes to become an excellent game, but there is a worry that Konami won't apply those all-important final touches.

You control this character on your mission to uncover the truth



SLAVE ZERO

Forget about **all those shooters** where people **run around** blasting each other with handguns. Now you can do it with **60 foot robots!**

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	Accolade
STYLE	Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	August
PLAYERS	TBA

No, I'm not a refugee from Episode 1

SUMMING UP

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- Major mayhem abounding with giant robots dwarfing most gaming heroes you see
- The game promises the power of Mechwarrior with the gameplay of Quake

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- Despite all the big claims it could easily degenerate into 'just another shoot-'em-up' Needs a dose of innovation
- The big, clunky nature of Mechs is part of their appeal. I'm not sure if athletic robots are really where it's at

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Action games are so thick on the ground nowadays it's going to take something quite special to make people sit up and take notice of it

Big robots are well in vogue right now. *Mechwarrior 3* and *Heavy Gear 2* are both poised to unleash striding mechanical hordes onto PCs everywhere. Godzilla proved that bigger is better and, as everyone knows, at the end of the day it's size that counts. With this in mind, EA's forthcoming robo-blast-'em-up is a surefire winner. Or is it?

Developers Accolade have brought in people with no shortage of expertise in this particular area of combat. The producer is Matt Powers, who previously worked on the excellent *Mechwarrior 2*. Also to their credit the team can boast *Uprising*, *Interstate 76* and *Test Drive 4,* so, though Accolade themselves are more widely known for their sports titles these days, the experience is certainly there. Unlike *Mechwarrior* and *Heavy Gear*, however, *Slave Zero* is set in a vast, towering city full of buildings, people, and, of course, other chuffing great 'bots intent on laying waste to your mechanical ass, man!

UNLIKE THE HEAVY, LUMBERING MECHS AND GEARS YOU MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH, THE SLAVE IS HIGHLY AGILE AND MANOUVERABLE, DESPITE ITS SIZE

The plot revolves around some looney-tunes dictator holding ultimate power over this vast city. To keep the people in line he begins construction of an army of powerful bio-mechanical robots called Slaves, but there's a rebel movement at work in the metropolis and they manage to steal a prototype Slave – 60 feet tall and armed to the teeth. As resident suicide jockey, you're the one assigned the task of taking on the dictator's army all by your lonesome in a series of diverse but action-packed missions. Unlike the heavy, lumbering Mechs and Gears you may be familiar with, the Slave is highly agile and manouverable, despite its size. It can run, crouch, roll and even climb up buildings. In fact it can do pretty much everything you'd expect of a normal man – only bigger!

The game is powered by the specially designed Ecstasy engine, which has been engineered to emphasise the sense of scale. The programmers really want you to feel like you're towing high above busy city streets. To add to the sensation of size, the streets will be packed with people and cars which you'll be able to crash, smash and even pick up. The AI of these and all the *Slave Zero* world's other inhabitants will be realistic. People will panic, run around and attempt to fight back

With some good ideas and plenty of action on offer, *Slave Zero* is an interesting proposition. There's still some way to go, however, so don't hold your breath.

SLAVE ZERO OR MECH HERO?

The idea of great big robots is cool, but the coolest thing about Mechs is that they're big, clunky and laiden down with firepower. It seems kind of self-defeating to have a robot which does all the same things a man does. Slave Zero is going to rely heavily on how well the programmers manage to convey the sensation of scale and power. Otherwise it'll be just like any of the other numerous 3D shooters on the market.

A great effort is being made to emphasise the size of the robots.

OUTCAST

Revolutionary graphics, immersive gameplay and a terrific storyline. What more could **you want from Infogrames' *Outcast*?**

CLIMB THAT LANGUAGE BARRIER

Although the inhabitants of Adelphi will speak to you in English, they will talk to one another in their native tongue. Infogrames have written a specific language for the game (kind of), and with a bit of patience it is possible to learn a few helpful phrases. Via this you can also find out how the population feels about you, or even how an individual person feels towards you. This can affect whether or not they tell you the truth.

Conversation and interaction play a large part in *Outcast*

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	I Magic
STYLE	Action Adventure
RELEASE	July
PLAYERS	One

SUMMING UP

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- Non-linear gameplay – the story unfolds depending on where you go.
- Incredible voxel-based graphics give the environment a brilliant organic look.

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- The camera needs a bit of work to prevent you losing sight of the action.
- Will need a high-end PC to play it a decent rate.

=

Outcast looks set to be one of the most innovative and playable games of the year. Expect to lose many hours of sleep playing this.

Infogrames' *Outcast* has been a long time coming, but it certainly looks worth the wait. The game has been touted by both Infogrames and the press as being something a little bit special. After witnessing a demonstration of the game, it's easy for us to see why…

For starters, the game shuns polygons and 3D acceleration technology in favour of a rendering technique known as 'voxels'. This has the effect of rendering everything in a convincingly organic way – there are no straight edges and no joins between textures. The result is that the game looks quite unlike anything else around today. The environment that players find themselves in is also quite remarkable, with a living and breathing world for you to explore. The inhabitants each have their own 'personality' and objectives, albeit fairly simple ones, but the overall illusion is that there is a real world going on around you.

Possibly the most enjoyable aspect of the game, however, is the interaction with the characters that inhabit Adelphi. In *Outcast* you will become part soldier, part detective in your quest to save the strange, alien people that you encounter on your journey. And talking to people rather than shooting them is always preferable. While you are trying to make your investigations, there is the added pressure of having the oppressors after you. This interaction brilliantly explains the game's story, which becomes more involved as you progress. Without giving too much away, it revolves around a second class race on the world of Adelphi. You must help them in order to get you and your comrades home.

The game certainly has a cinematic feel to it, what with the camera angles and epic musical score. In fact, the whole game has that epic nature that you see attempted often, but rarely executed well. *Outcast* pulls it off with aplomb.

The only downside that we can see with the game is the camera. In the preview version we saw it would often become stuck too close to your character and make movement a hit and miss affair. The camera is adjustable, as with all these games, but doing so hampers your enjoyment of the game. We hope that I Magic manage to sort this out before release.

Outcast is set for release this summer, and you can be sure that it will be one of the biggest games this year. It looks like it will be a landmark title in terms of both storytelling and gameworlds. You should look forward to the review next issue. TC

Cutter Slade is your archetypal video game hero. He is fairly charismatic, though

Handhel

A ONE HORSE RACE

Nintendo has won the handheld gaming war. Craig Vaughan and Paul Ditta argue that it was a race they were never going to lose...

It wouldn't be difficult to start a heated debate about who's winning the computer and video games war. PC gamers would argue that their favourite machine's open architecture means that it will always stay ahead of the competition. Sega fans would counter that the recently launched Dreamcast is set to become the new front runner, and Nintendo would hit back by showing off the third generation of N64 titles and spouting careless whispers about the mythical N2000. Sony, on the other hand, can't manufacture PlayStations fast enough, and have just wooed the world with the specs of their forthcoming PlayStation 2. It's clearly a four-horse race being played out across the world, and only a fool would predict the eventual global winner. Strange, then, that the handheld gaming scene has been reduced to a virtual monopoly. One machine, Nintendo's Game Boy, reigns supreme, unchallenged by any of its erstwhile rivals and looking set to blast into the new Millennium as the runaway leader in a one horse race. Obviously, Nintendo didn't always have it all their own way, but to explore the origins of their success involves a nostalgic trip down memory lane. As the journey unfolds, it becomes apparent that Nintendo didn't win the race, but rather relied on other companies losing their way. This, combined with the fickle hand of fate and a sprinkle of Nintendo magic, made their rise to handheld kings almost inevitable...

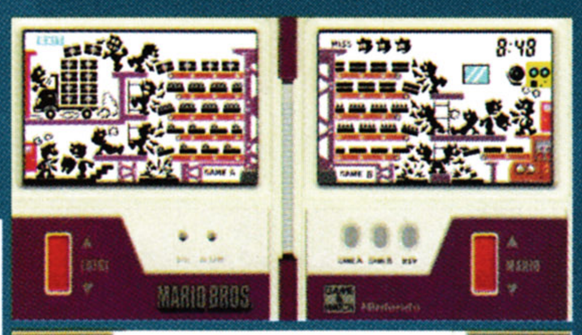
Anyone wanting to know where the handheld gaming war truly started should look no further. Vectrex was released in 1982 by a company called General Consumer Electronics. What the hell would today's teenagers make of the poor Vectrex? In a world of colour paddle mounted under the screen. To play the games you simply slapped the game cartridges in at the rear. Now, we can tell what you're thinking; it's not exactly small, is it? Well, no, not really. It didn't have much in the way of portability either, but that's missing the point. Vectrex was the first unit to

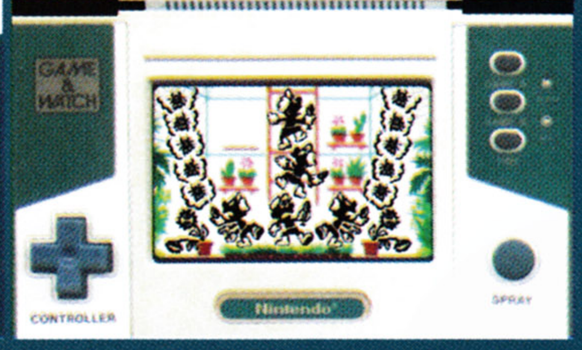
WHAT WOULD YOUR AVERAGE PLAYSTATION JOCKEY MAKE OF A UNIT THAT WAS ONLY CAPABLE OF WIRE FRAME GRAPHICS AND BEEP-BEEP SOUND?

depths in the millions, polygon counts in the tens of millions, mind buggeringly loud 3D sound effects and more controllers than the BBC, what would your average PlayStation jockey make of a unit that was only capable of wire frame graphics and beep-beep sound? Landfill, probably. The unit itself consisted of a black plastic monochrome 9" monitor with a game combine a cartridge based platform with a built in screen. Before Vectrex you either had cartridge based games that plugged into the TV or those little LCD games that played one game, usually a rip-off of *Space Invaders*. Vectrex wasn't pretty – pig ugly is a more appropriate term – but it can be considered the prototype for the modern handheld. The reason for its failure is as

BEFORE THE WAR

Although companies like Magnavox and Marvin Glass Associates had tinkered with the video games concept, it was Nintendo themselves that started the handheld gaming war with the release of their Game and Watch programs in the early 80s. These playing card-sized gizmos allowed people to play games on black and white LCD screens which came complete with built in clocks. Although they faced stiff competition from General Consumer Electronics and Mega Electronics (who released versions of their own), Nintendo won the day by creating games based on arcade favourites like *Popeye* and *Donkey Kong*, and by expanding the range with a series of double-sized games played out across two screens. Technology finally saw off the product, but in its heyday Nintendo shifted six million units. More importantly, they learned a few marketing strategies from the exercise which were to prove invaluable in securing the number one slot for the subsequent Game Boy range. Nowadays Game and Watch machines are tricky to get hold of, but thankfully one hobbyist programming group has dedicated themselves to keeping the spirit of Game and Watch alive. Total CONTROL recently had an exclusive chat with these retro heroes and spoke to TNG Creations' lead programmer, Luca Zossi.

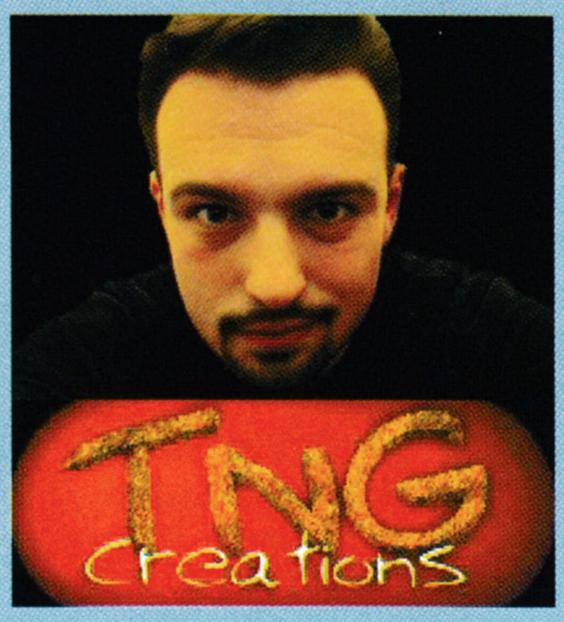




"Nintendo's baby. Brilliantly simple and simply brilliant"

NINTENDO'S FINEST HOUR GOES ON AND ON...

"Nintendo's recent enhancement added glorious technicolour to their minor miracle"



Luca Zossi

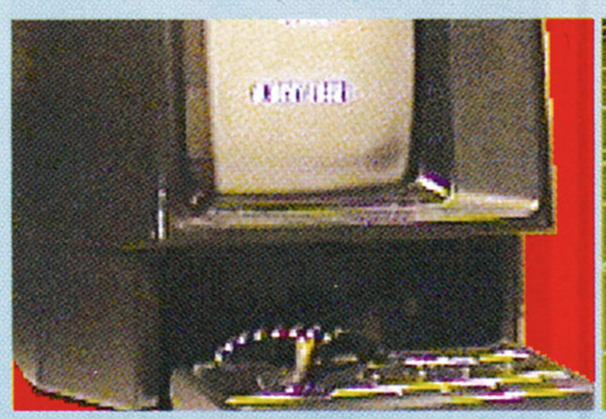
Total Control:- Tell us a little bit about yourself

My real name is Luca Zossi and I am an Italian programmer. I live in Monfalcone, near Trieste. In the early 80s I played many of the Game & Watch programs. As time passed, I became a fan of emulation (especially M.A.M.E) and thought I would try and recreate the Game and Watch series.

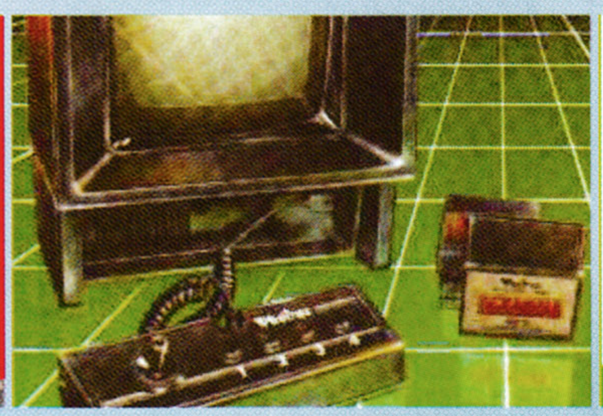
Total Control:- So who are TNG Creations, and what have you been up to thus far?

d Heaven

BACK WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...



Vectrex, in all its glory

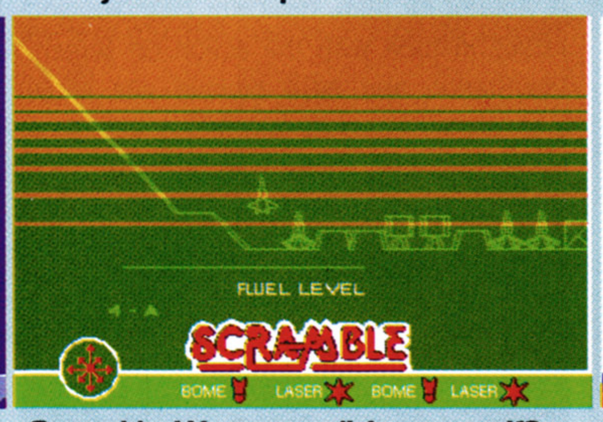


A very collectable piece of hardware

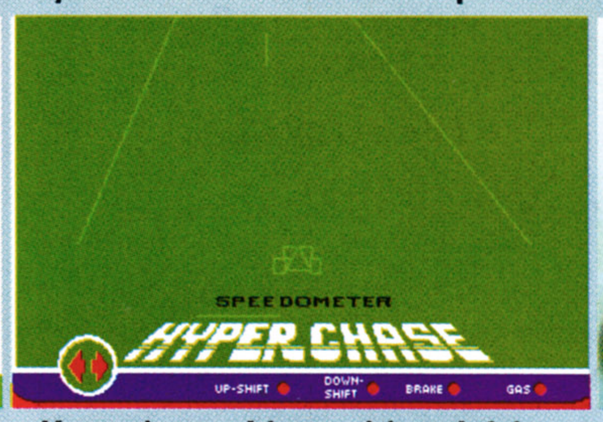
***Spinball*: all the fun of a real pinball**

A light pen – one cartridge used it

***Solar Quest*. Dire, dreadful, dross**



***Scramble*. Want one all for yourself?**



***Hyperchase* – I know, it's painful**

3D glasses. Pffffhh Hahaha

clear as hindsight can be. A gimmick will only sell something if that gimmick actually makes it more desirable than the competition. Vectrex's gimmick was the built in screen. The problem was that it was in competition with the Atari 2600 (piss poor graphics, large software catalogue), the Intellivision (not quite as piss poor graphics, not quite as big a software catalogue), and the emerging ColecoVision (gorgeous for the time, rapidly expanding software catalogue). People took one look at the Vextrex's graphics, which were retro even then, and quite simply didn't bother. Thinking that the monochrome vector graphics (utilising colour plastic overlays on a 9" screen) could compete with even the 2600's basic visuals was a display of optimism as endearing as it was misplaced. Given its short life span (GCE stopped making them in 1984), only a handful of games were made for the machine. One was built in to the system – a nifty little *Asteroids* clone. The rest were a motley assortment of *Asteroids* clones, *Asteroids* clones and, er *Asteroids* clones. Poor though the machine was, the Vectrex's fan base has grown somewhat as the years have past, and it's now considered something of a kitsch classic.

Boy's own

Nintendo has sold 70 million Game Boys of one variety or another, and 300 million games to go with them. The machine boasts a back catalogue of some 450 titles (a figure which grows daily) and, despite being ten years old, it continues to go from strength to strength. Designed by Japanese legend Gumpei Yokoi, the original machine has undergone a series of metamorphosis over the years. The original was a dull grey colour, the size of an average book, and made use of limited 8-bit technology to display graphics on a black and white LCD screen. It was a rather cumbersome device which required good lighting, favourable viewing conditions and judicious use of the contrast button to get the best from it. The games came on tiny cartridges which slotted into the rear of the machine, making them instantly accessible. Despite its apparent limitations, it saw off competition from Atari's Lynx and Sega's Gamegear (both of which were unquestionably technically superior machines – even if only by virtue of the fact that they utilised colour displays). The reasons for its continued success are many and varied, but initially at least are down to its comparatively long battery life (both the Game Gear and Lynx ate batteries like they were going out of fashion), its continued evolution, and the games it gives access to on the move.

NINTENDO HAS SOLD 70 MILLION GAME BOYS OF ONE VARIETY OR ANOTHER, AND 300 MILLION GAMES TO GO WITH THEM

TNG Creations is composed of three members: Myself (team name: 'Luke Skywalker'); Max Rossi (team name: 'Hans Solo') and Thomas Graber (team name: 'Obi Wan'). So far we've simulated four Game and Watch programs: *Donkey Kong Jr.* (100%); *Mario Bros* (100%); *Green House* (90%, no sound) and *Mario Bombs Away* (50%, no collision, no sound). We're trying for *Turtle Bridge* as our next release.

Total Control:- So, is this an emulation project?

No, we need to be clear on this: our project is a simulation rather than emulation. The difference is that emulators port the original ROMs (games) into PC hardware, whilst simulators rewrite the code into PC systems.

Total Control:- It sounds like your method involves a lot more work – how do you go about programming these games?

We use a Scanner to port over the sprites from the original Game & Watch, and then use a paint tool (like PaintShop Pro) to clean up the pictures. My system is a PII 333mhz (266 overclocked), 128Mbram, Matrox G200, Diamond MX 300, so there's no speed problems.

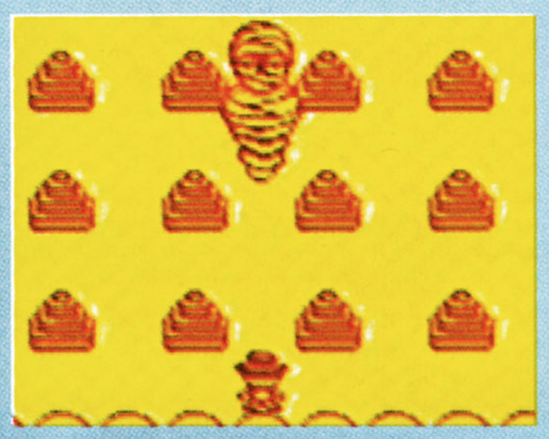
Total Control:- What does the future hold for your group?

We want to simulate all of the original Game & Watch programs before they're lost forever. Thankfully, we get a great deal of help from collectors who scan the original Game & Watches and leave us to write the code.

Total Control:- Thanks for your time and good luck for the future. By the way, where do gamers start if they're interested in your project or are curious about Game and Watch?

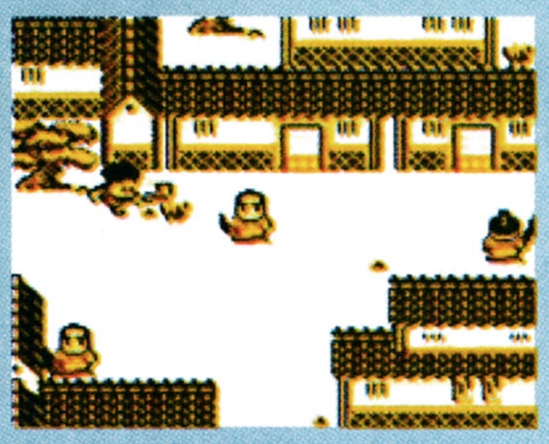
Point them towards: Http://tngcreations.cjb.net or Http://www.emuunlim.com/handheld. We'll look after them and bring back a few nostalgic memories.

MONO GAME BOY REVIEWS



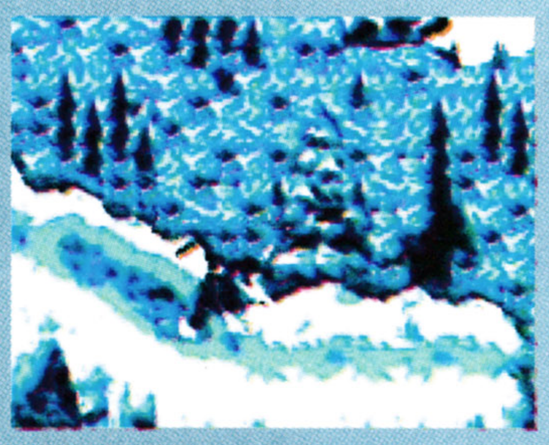
The original and still the best

There won't be many people unfamiliar with the original *Bomberman*. Essentially a maze game, the winner was the last man standing, the only rule being to blow up the opposition before they ambushed you or you accidentally killed yourself with a misplaced bomb. The game combined clever level design, with tricky opponent AI and proved as compelling as it was difficult to master.



RPG gaming at its black and white best

This five stage RPG also appeared on the Super Nintendo. Its maze-like surroundings were set against a Japanese backdrop and the objective was to complete the quest by mastering various Ninja fighting techniques. The fun came in the engaging and diverting sub-games, which were cleverly balanced with the need to trade and purchase items in order to make progress.



Diddy and Donkey Kong in platform antics

This massive port of the Super Nintendo original was played out against the backdrop of 30 diverse levels of platforming action. Like the SNES original, this game appeared light years ahead of its time and remains one of the most technically advanced Game Boy titles to date. This outing gave you the option of controlling the two Kongs independently via a 'tag-team' system, making progress as much a matter of strategy as platforming skill.

Mario, Mario, too scared of Wario

Although graphically showing its age, this Nintendo classic stands head and shoulders above other platformers. Superb level design, a host of hidden secrets and loads of power-ups are just a few of the treats which await those tracking down this inspirational treat. It may well prove too easy for all but the newest joystick virgins, but it has unsurpassed replay value and a charm all of its own.

***Tetris* – simply the best puzzler available**

The phenomenal success of this shape-shifting puzzler is a testament to its sheer brilliance. Puzzle games don't traditionally have wide appeal, but *Tetris* threw the stereotypes out of the window and presented a timeless classic. The only problem with this version was that many players ended up playing it in their dreams, whilst others suffered headaches and nausea due to the dodgy black and white display.

Unlike rival machines that stagnated and died, the Game Boy continues to grow, and as years have passed a wonderfully diverse range of accessories and upgrades have been released:-

ACCESSORIES

Pulse Pak

A vibrator for men, basically. Rumbles and rattles in tune with the action on screen. PlayStation and N64 owners will know what we're on about, the rest of you don't want to know. Supposedly makes the game feel more realistic. No comment

Game Shark

One of lots of add-ons that gives you lots of lovely codes and infinite lives and stuff. For cheats, basically. Yes, yes, I'm sure that there are games that are so hard that without help you'd never get to the end and you'd feel as if you wasted your money. Reality check: The type of people who actually put in the effort required to get to that point would have very little use for this thing. It's for people who can't be bothered. Don't get into a strop, just accept it.

Game Boy Printer

Does exactly what it says on the box, used in conjuction with the GB camera.

Game Boy Pocket Camera

We love the Japanese. That's not sarcasm, we really do. They have such a wonderful perspective on things. You see, men like toys, but Japanese men like toys bolted on to their toys, attached to some other toys, with some one else's toys daisy chained to them for good measure, God bless 'em. And, thankfully, they're good at making them. This thing has a stack of features that you could expect to find in a respectable digital camera, just not considered to be as good. You can copy your face into games as well, apparently, but we are left asking, 'what's the point?'

Game Booster

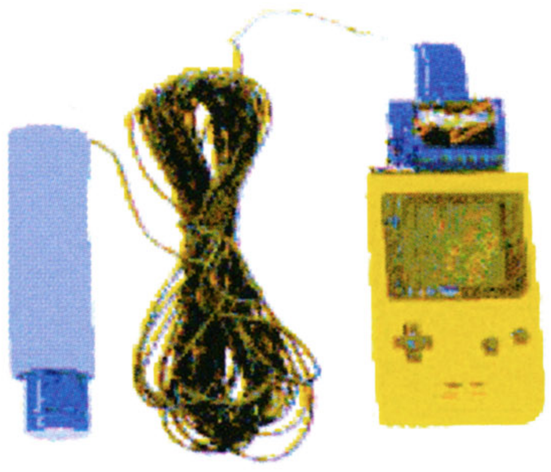
An add-on pack that allows you to play Game Boy carts on your N64, if you should feel so inclined. Will give limited colourisation to black and white games. Not so sure that a game designed to play on a tiny screen will translate that well to a whopping TV though. There was originally an official one for the SNES.

Game Buddy power pack
Rechargeable pack that adds to the overall bulk of the Game Boy but lets you play for ages. Useful for those long train journeys.

Arcade Boy (Hyperboy?)
Designed to enhance your Game Boy enjoyment; a joystick locks over the game pad, and a magnifying lens and night light improve your chances of reaching thirty years of age without needing corrective lenses. Tidy.

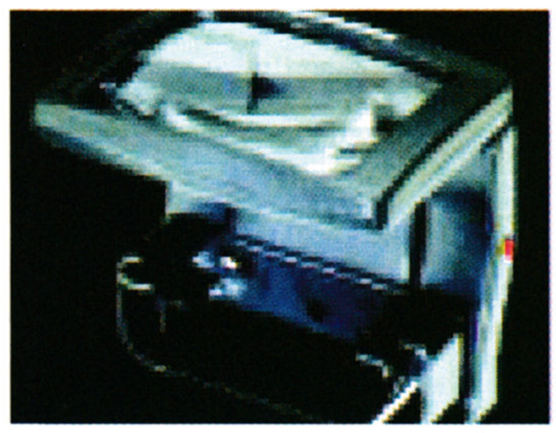
Game Boy amplifier
God alone knows why anyone should want to take the quiet, tinny squeak of a Game Boy and add an amp. What do you get for your trouble? Loud tinny squeaks, that's what.

Fishing Reel.
You like fishing? You like Game Boy? Then why not combine the two with a handy gadget that plays a fishing game on the screen while a reel – attached to the unit – is dropped into the water to sonar scan for fish!



That is just too surreal. But don't laugh too hard, there's already a fishing controller for the Dreamcast, and it's selling like saki and anti-depressants in the land of the rising sun. Just pray there are no Hunt the Dolphin secret levels or you might be psychologically scarred for life.

Multiboy
Still trying to figure out the name. Another of the bolt on attachments. A combination amp, joystick and lens. Sort of takes the portable out of the portable games market, don't you think?



Super Zoom
Yet another of the attempts to get around the fact that the Game Boy screen is TOO BLOODY SMALL. I have the sneakiest of suspicions that Nintendo must have some interest in Dolland & Aitchison. It's all a conspiracy, I tell you. They're all out to get you! Run! Run for your life!

Bardigan
Were you aware that there is a version of the Bar Code Battler for the Game Boy? If you weren't aware of what the Bar Code Battler (BCB) is, then the general idea goes like this: scan a bar code and the code creates a little egg in the game that grows into a monster.

You can then meet up with other BCB owners and fight their monsters against yours. Different bar codes create different monsters, and any bar code will do. You can just imagine how that was thought up can't you? Some pallid, repressed Japanese workaholic with an inexplicable hatred of supermarket checkout girls, saki fuelled and full of bitterness devises the Bar Code Battler and condemns the hated girls to spend all day every day chasing snot-nosed little brats around while they wreck the displays trying to find the best bar code. He makes a fortune, money, power and all the geishas his tongue can cope with, until one day he commits hari-kiri in a rage of self-loathing brought on by the knowledge that he has brought the Japanese economy to its knees because no one can get any shopping done anymore. Hey, it's a thought.

Power flash
Another emulation cartridge. This time you can play all your favourite GB titles on your PlayStation, in pseudo colour, on a 28" TV (not supplied). Great.

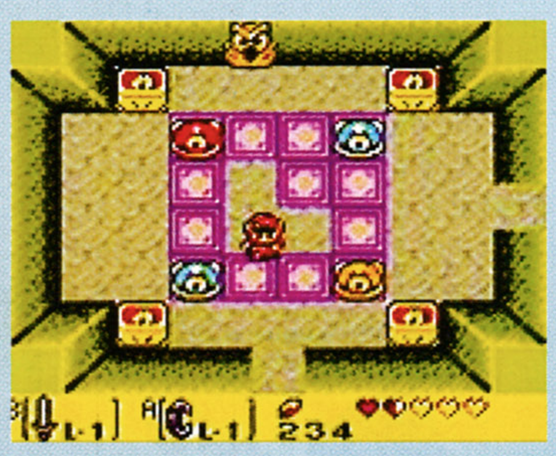
Workboy

Rare as rocking horse manure. This adds a keyboard and turns your Game Boy into a personal organiser complete with a diary, calendar, address book, database management system and all the other things that a top business executive, who for some reason can't afford a Psion, would want.

GB Getter 2
There are lots of different carrying cases made by lots of different people, but this is the cream. It has an LED that flashes when another GB Getter 2 case carrier is nearby. Why? What's the intention here? Capitalising on some poor spotty nerd's vain hope that one day the LED will blink and it won't be another rancid teenager with turbulent skin and 'problem' body odour, oh no. It will be some towering, olive skinned beauty, a goddess come to earth. Looking for a man with whom she can really connect, on a spiritual and intellectual level – someone she can play Tetris with. Then, afterward, they can spend long hours exploring every facet of their dew fresh sexuality... Oh, excuse me for a second... that's better. Sorry, where were we?

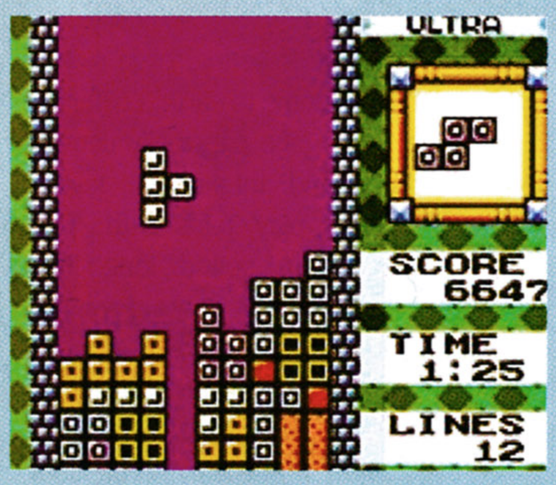
Perhaps aware that the machines looks needed an overhaul, Nintendo soon ditched the staid grey case colourings, opting instead for a range of aesthetically pleasing machines, which included transparent Game Boys with their inner workings on show and a slew of diverse case designs covering the complete spectrum of the rainbow. As the technological possibilities grew, the machine itself shrank, becoming the Pocket Game Boy (some 30% smaller and lighter, using less battery power and boasting a sharper picture). Cleverly, the machine remained backwardly compatible, and as a result sold like hot cakes. Recently Nintendo launched the third generation of the machine which, despite being colour, retained the ability to play the original games. Displaying graphics in 52 colours (from a range of over 32000), this machine overcame the display problems inherent with its predecessor and gave a cracking picture even in the poorest of viewing conditions. Although a relatively new platform, the Game Boy Color has already seen the release of some 'must have' titles.

GAME BOY COLOR MINI REVIEWS



Benefiting from a clearer display and vibrant colour, *Zelda* hits the Game Boy Color

Nintendo didn't have much choice really. A re-release of this seminal RPG was pretty much demanded by their loyal but expectant fans. Thankfully, Nintendo didn't mess with the gameplay or storyline, preferring instead to add vibrant colours to the original whilst enticing gamers with loads of added secrets. A stunning achievement given the platform it's running on, and a compulsory purchase for new Game Boy Color owners.



Say goodbye to blinding headaches and blurred vision. *Tetris* as it was meant to be

There's not much left to say about *Tetris* that you won't already know. It's simply the most straightforward and addictive puzzle game ever. Often imitated, and ported to every format under the sun, no other version has surpassed the feel or fluidity of the original. This new version adds vibrant colour and extra modes of play, but thankfully retains the original's playability and control method. For those unfamiliar with the game (impossible surely?), it's simply a case of arranging odd-shaped tiles into nice neat piles...

Turok 2 gets an outing on Nintendo's baby

Although this game shares the same name and theme as its N64 big brother, it's there that the similarities end. This outing is a frenetic non-stop sideways scrolling platformer packed with dinosaurs intent on making you extinct. It's difficult to describe the difference that a bit of colour makes, but *Turok 2*, which is as hard as nails, is one of the best adverts for the Game Boy Color's capabilities.

Suddenly it all makes sense. It's amazing the difference a bit of colour can make

Another classic puzzle game gets the re-release treatment, and to great effect. For the uninitiated, variously coloured tiles flip down a conveyor belt in your direction. You are tasked with stacking them in neat, colour coordinated horizontal, vertical or diagonal piles. If that sounds simple in theory, the execution proves less than straightforward. The colour adds an extra dimension to the proceedings and obviously reduces the steep learning curve of the original, leaving a fiendishly addictive and utterly compelling twist on an original theme.

Wario, Wario, too good for Mario....

Whilst the original *Super Mario Land* is showing its age, this tribute plays along similar lines but sees you controlling Mario's arch enemy, Wario. Looking gloriously sinister in full colour, Wario does battle over a massive 52 level world, encountering a wonderful mix of platforming and puzzle solving action. This huge cartridge offers weeks of taxing gameplay and puts the fledgling Game Boy Colour through its paces.

As well as playing specific new games in colour, the tech-heads at Nintendo allowed gamers to 'colourise' their original games so as to add limited colour whilst playing them on a Game Boy Colour. Nintendo then confounded the critics and surpassed even gamers' expectations by making many new Game Boy Colour games compatible with the original Game Boy (although you can still only play them in black and white – Nintendo are good, but they're not THAT good). The Game Boy Colour breathed new life into a machine which by now had seen off all its competitors, and early indications are that the latest – and perhaps final – incarnation of the machine could well out-sell and outlast its predecessor.

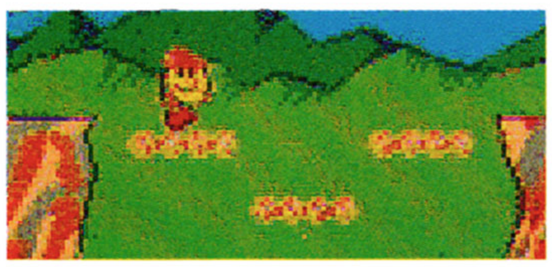
ATARI BITE THE BULLET

Born in 1989, dead by 1994, the Lynx is yet another example of why technical superiority will never, ever be a match for a healthy software base. Technically very similar to Sega's Gamegear, it's not as if it didn't have a lot going for it; its capabilities left the Game Boy looking a bit green around the gills, and the ability to daisy chain Lynxs together proved to be a real plus (remember the advert with all the kids in adjoining toilet cubicles at school, all playing the Lynx in some primordial deathmatch?). Add to the mix the might of Atari and you're halfway to a sure-fire hit. But only halfway. So what the hell went wrong? Well, by the time the Lynx had been released, Atari already knew the highs and lows of the fickle gaming market, posting annual profits that would make an accountant dribble in 1980, then losing two million a day three years later. Atari should have gained the sort of trial-by-fire wisdom that companies only develop after being crapped on from a great height. Unfortunately, it seems that they did no such thing. The Lynx was released on the back of very little third party support and a lot of advertising. Nonetheless, it was under-supplied during the crucial Christmas 1989 period, which allowed Nintendo to go strolling off with the market. Always trailing behind, despite some promising titles, the Lynx never regained ground on Nintendo's Game Boy. In the end Atari called it quits and stopped supporting the Lynx altogether. Shortly after that, Atari itself vanished down the corporate plughole. It's not all doom and gloom though. The Lynx has a strong, if small, fan base who are to this day trying to get software produced for the unfortunate platform. There's plenty of technical support for those of you that have just come into possession of your Lynx (car boot sale was it?) and some essential places where you can still obtain some class games (in an 'it's ten years old so don't get your sights set too high' kind of way). The games came on ROM carts that were usually 128K. A couple of games ascended the dizzy heights of 256K! Compared to the multi-megabyte behemoths of today these games might seem a little puny, but

remember, kids: size isn't everything (the best games are conversions of Atari's arcade favourites *Paperboy*, *Gauntlet*, *Joust*, *Battlezone* etc.).

One of Atari's classics

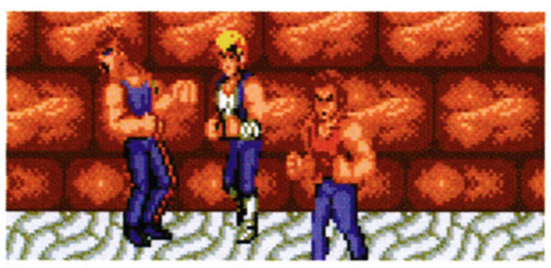
Superb two-player dueling fun



Pacman goes 3D in platforming action

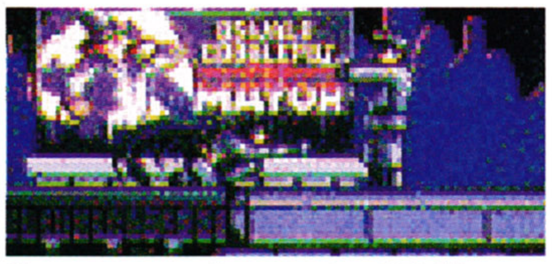
Green warrior is about to die. Again

Truly excellent adventure, dude



Beat-'em-up action on the go

The timeless classic hits the Lynx

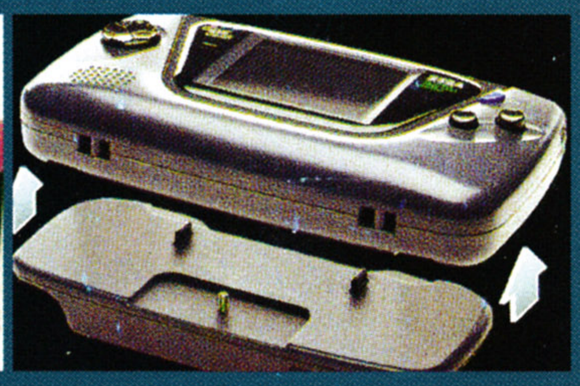


Batman goes in search of Robin...

SEGA STRIKES BACK WITH A HANDHELD WONDER

Sega's flagship handheld, the Gamegear

The link-up cable allowed multiplayer frolics



Rechargeable batteries became compulsory

In 1990, Sega realised that they had to do something – and quick. The Game Boy was going from strength to strength and was largely unchallenged in the handheld stakes, although Atari's Lynx was still making some muted noises of its own. Sega's answer was the Gamegear, which utilised an 8-bit CPU capable of displaying graphics in 32 colours from a palette of 4,096. The machine had a 3.2 inch LCD screen and provided mono sound. Its large memory meant that it could run comparatively sophisticated games, displaying up to 64 sprites simultaneously. Although it never excited the UK market, in America at least, the machine took off and had a wide following for over five years. Ultimately, although it was technically superior to Nintendo's Game Boy in every respect, its delayed launch meant that it was never going to topple its monochrome rival. Its main failings were that gamers couldn't escape the feeling that they were playing second rate Megadrive software, and the poor battery life, which proved frustratingly short. Nonetheless, Sega produced some neat accessories for their baby, which included TV and radio tuners, a hardware emulator for Master System games, a rechargeable battery pack and a multiplayer link-up cable. The machine also played host to a few classic games, many from Sega's back catalogue of arcade conversions.

GAMEGEAR REVIEWS

Sonic and the crew add a twist to the *Mario Kart* theme

Anything Nintendo could do, Sega had to try too. This cute racer pitted Sonic against six of his friends in a *Mario Kart*-style race for the chequered flag. The game produced a wonderful sensation of speed and combined it with sublime controls. Racing took place over eighteen varied courses strewn with power-ups and ample opportunity for ambushes.

Sonic's back, with Tails in tow

Sega's mascot, Sonic, stormed onto the Gamegear with his sidekick Tails to do battle against Knuckles in a bid to recover the Chaos Emeralds. This fast and colourful platformer won many fans for the Gamegear, especially in the States. British gamers, however, perhaps being less tolerant than their Transatlantic cousins, had already overdosed on Sonic with the Megadrive versions and failed to warm to the game in great numbers

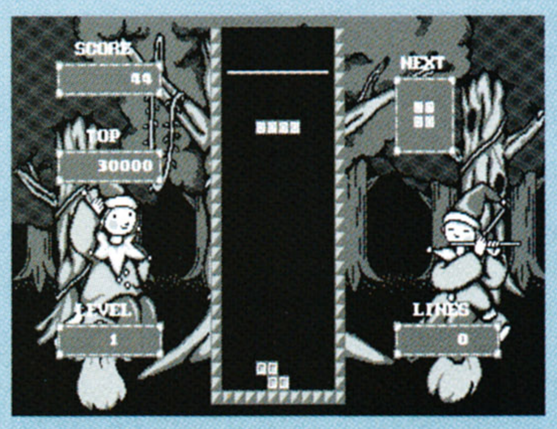
Fast, frantic strategic action hits the Gamegear

The *Madden* series of games has had a chequered history across the computer and consoles its ports have graced, and T•HQ have never been bastions of gaming excellence. So, although their Gamegear cart sounded like a recipe for disaster, it proved to be anything but. The tiny sprites were well defined and moved fluidly, there was ample opportunity for in-depth strategy, and it played out at break-neck speed. Its American origins again alienated the British market, but it went down a treat Stateside.

Can the Ninja master defeat the enemy? Shuriken!

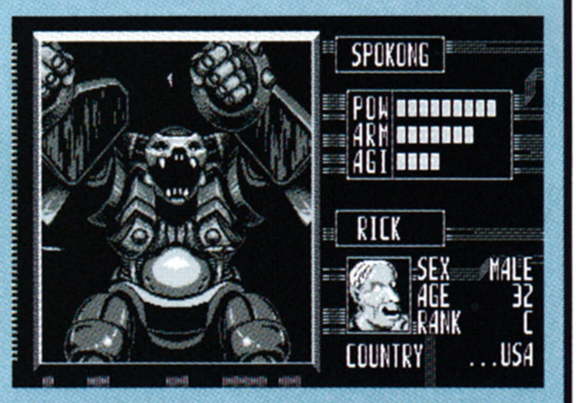
A stunning game on the Megadrive, and just as graceful on the Gamegear. *Shinobi* was a near faultless sideways scrolling platformer with superb controls, amazingly atmospheric sound and sharp colourful graphics. Our hero had a diverse range of weapons to assist in his quest, and if all else failed, his best move was an explosive suicide blast that turned him into a living bomb.

VIRTUAL BOY



Someone at Nintendo had a vision which became the Virtual Boy. Someone at Nintendo got sacked

1995 saw the launch of Nintendo's Virtual Boy and Sega's Nomad in the latest round of the handheld war. Neither machine made any real impact, but for glaringly different reasons. Nintendo's baby was a wonderful idea, but in the cold light of day, as a real, solid piece of hardware, it failed to impress. 'Virtual Reality' was an industry buzz-word at the time, and Nintendo tried to boost sales by jumping on the hype surrounding that concept. Designed in the style of a table top VR headset, gamers sat next to the device and peered through its goggle-like frontage to view the screen (this being an extremely uncomfortable posture to adopt for any length of time, which lead to many complaints of gaming-induced backache). Graphics were presented in red on a small dot matrix-type screen which gave a pseudo 3D feeling to the games. The 3D rarely worked as Nintendo intended, but occasionally players caught a glimpse – usually for only a few seconds – of what could have been. At times the graphics were truly immersive, giving a wonderful feeling of depth and solidity. Unfortunately, the tricks used to convince your eyes that you were viewing a true 3D image were also the cause of nausea and sea sickness in many. The system was never truly portable and was in fact of rather cumbersome design, thus making gaming on the move impractical and defeating the original intent. During the machine's two year life span, the twenty games released failed to have any real impact because they showed little advancement over their Game Boy counterparts. Nintendo quickly lost faith, refusing to throw good money after bad (millions had been spent on some seriously flawed research and development), and retailers soon followed by discounting the machine to bargain basement prices and throwing stock into clearance bins. A proposed link-up cable for multiplayer gaming failed to materialise, and before long the trickle of games had reduced to a drought. The machine was dead, and Nintendo had scored the biggest own goal in its history. With the Game Boy five years old and the Virtual Boy being given away, Sega had only to step in and grab the market for themselves. Unfortunately for them, Sega were about to prove that whilst Nintendo could fail badly, they could bomb-out even worse.



Blurry, bloody boxing in 3D shambles

Viewing Virtual Boy games without looking into the device gives a confused blurry image, similar to looking at a pseudo 3D image without a pair of those flimsy 3D paper specs that were all the rage a few years ago. Here we've printed the pictures in black and white to save your eyes.

Tetris ported well from Game Boy to Virtual Boy, but as the picture reveals, this version adds little to the graphics and nothing to the gameplay. This made it pointless in an 'identical to the Game Boy, but makes me giddy' sort of way.

SEGA'S NOMAD

Not even Sega could fail this time round. The market was theirs for the taking

The Virtual Boy was in the marketing equivalent of a persistent vegetative state, and the Game Boy was starting to show the first signs of old age. Whilst Nintendo hit back with the Super Game Boy (making Game Boy games playable on the Super Nintendo via a clever hardware add-on), Sega went the other way entirely, making their Super Nintendo rival, the Megadrive, portable in the shape of their Nomad device. The Nomad looked like a good idea: it played all the Megadrive's back library, it was a true handheld device that allowed gaming on the move, it was competitively priced and could plug into a TV for static gaming if required. The reasoning behind the machine was sound too: anyone who owned a Megadrive could enjoy comparatively cheap portable gaming without having to buy new games, and those without a Megadrive could buy a cheaper Nomad instead. In practice Sega were in fact robbing themselves of new software customers, and they never sorted out the battery problems which saw the machine drain flat in under two hours. Ironically, the machine was quickly killed off – not by anything Nintendo did, but by Sega themselves. Looking back, perhaps even Sega would admit that their abandonment of the sixteen bit console market was premature. Incredibly, in the same year as they launched the Nomad, Sega also released the thirty-two bit Saturn. They ploughed all their marketing and games design know-how into the Saturn – effectively killing off the Megadrive, and with it the Nomad. Once Nintendo had got over the shock off this internal Sega sabotage they composed themselves and had a very merry Christmas by cleaning up on discounted Super Nintendo stock. Sega took a blinkered but flawed approach to marketing the doomed Saturn and are still feeling the shockwaves from its demise.

NOMAD REVIEWS

Sonic goes portable"

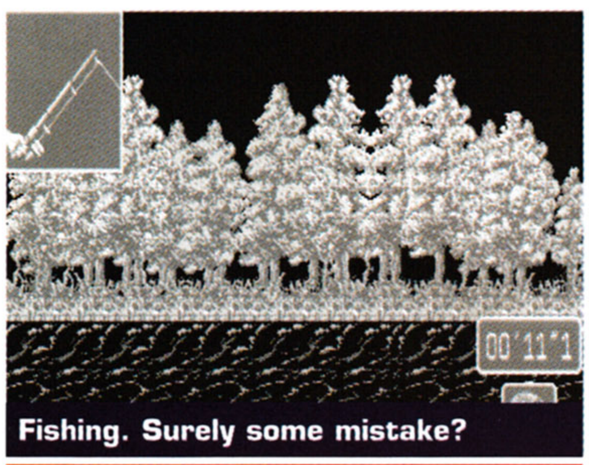
Sega were clearly thinking in the right direction with the release of the Nomad. The Megadrive was a well established machine with a huge back catalogue of outstanding software. Obviously sharing the specs of the Megadrive, the Nomad was a hugely impressive technical achievement and gave portable gamers a real buzz through being able to play classics such as the Sonic series

***Alladin* on the Megadrive, or is it the Nomad?**

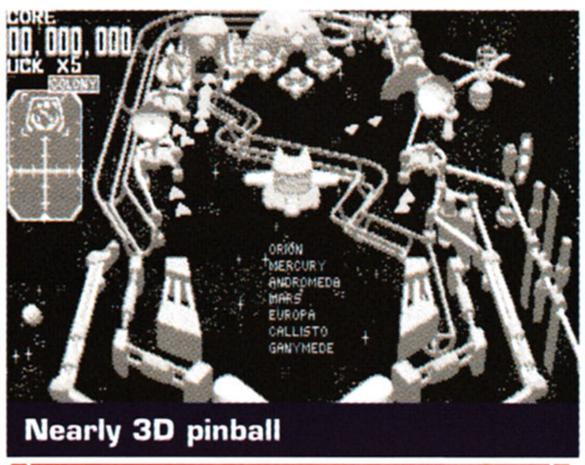
Nomad saw the launch of some innovative accessories which included a mouse, a multiplayer link-up cable and the infamous 'Activator' device. This encouraged gamers to place eight plastic panels on the floor. By moving between each, an infra-red beam would be broken and movement would occur on the screen – a 'full body' joystick no less. Whilst it was a brave attempt at getting away from the 'couch potato' image of computer gaming, it made controlling action games nigh on impossible.

EMULATION

Although many handheld systems are no longer being sold, you can still experience their simplistic gameplay through the wonders of emulation...



Fishing. Surely some mistake?



Nearly 3D pinball

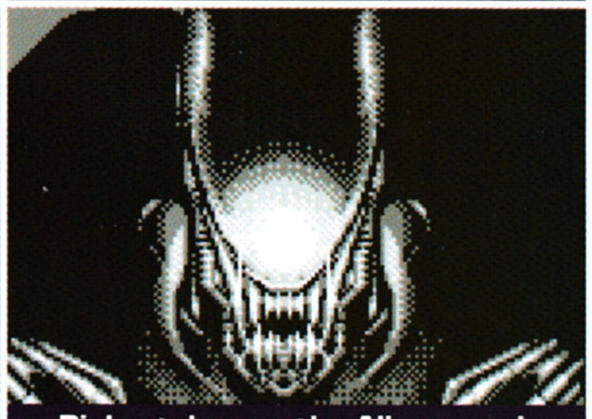
Tails gets an outing of his own

The best of the '*Strike*' series

Grab one of these rare beauties

Giving retro-gaming a bad name

This was as good as it got


Ripley takes on the Aliens, again

Game Boy gaming at its best

Dungeon based multiplayer frolics

Infuriatingly addictive jousting fun

Superb shoot-'em-up action

Thanks to emulation, PC owners are in the enviable position of being able to play games from most handheld machines in the comfort of their own home. It might seem a bit perverse wanting to play portable games at home, but because of the demise of many of the machines, it might well be the only chance most gamers get before the handheld hardware disappears into oblivion. As ever, the internet proves to be an invaluable aid in tracking down those smart programs that convince your PC that it is in fact another machine altogether. Allowing for the legal grey area of copyright infringement, you'll also be able to find a host of games to play too. So, whether you're after a nostalgic trip down memory lane, or you're simply curious about some of the machines that never made it to the UK, try pointing your browser at:

Gamegear Emulation: Http://www.emux.com
This is a clear, well laid out multi-emulator site. It also has the best Gamegear emulator, Massage, available for download. Massage is a fully functional program with a high compatibility rate. It plays most of Sega's back catalogue at full speed and with excellent sound. Thanks to the age of the Gamegear and the power of modern PCs, you won't need a fast machine to get the best from this program.

Game and Watch: Http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/lot/6166/gwsim.htm
This site is dedicated to Nintendo's little handheld wonders and contains links to all the games currently being emulated, which are at varying degrees of completion and sophistication. Because of the age of these games they take only seconds to download and are easy to set up. Playing them will remind many of the days when simple playability ruled over graphical flair. Incidentally, the machines themselves are becoming increasingly rare, so keep your eyes open at those car boot sales – you might just pick up a bargain.

Virtual Boy: Http://dana.ucc.nau.edu/~dbt/vbmain.html
Homepage of the Virtual Boy 98 emulator. Very much a 'work in progress', the site is dedicated to getting all the games up and running. Progress has been slow, but their efforts are now bearing fruit. Nintendo's 3D curio sank without trace after consumers complained of headaches and nausea as a result of prolonged exposure to the 3D head-up display. PC gamers should avail themselves of the opportunity to check out Nintendo's most innovative and spectacular failure, or nip down to their local discount electrical retailer where a piece of gaming history can be snapped up for £30 or less.

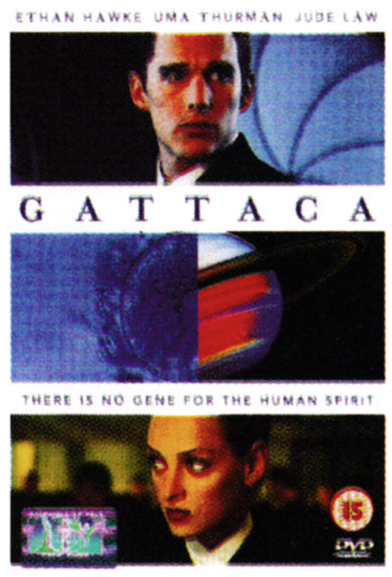
Game Boy: Http://www.emulation.net/gameboy/
You can pick up a copy of the Virtual Game Boy emulator from here. Running under DOS/Windows 95/8, this program offers near faultless reproduction of original Game Boy, Pocket Game Boy and Game Boy Colour titles. It's feature packed and provides a good introduction to Nintendo's masterpiece – although purists will tell you that it's no substitute for genuine gaming on the move.

Nomad: Http://top1000.virtualave.net/news/genesis.html
Essentially a portable Megadrive, Sega's Nomad has benefited from two wonderful emulators, KGEN and Genecyst. Both are superbly comprehensive and offer near 100% compatibility with Megadrive games. Cleverly, both include the option to save your progress at any point, meaning that many will now be able to finish games that defeated them first time round. TC

DVD Reviews

GATTACA

NAME	Gattaca
STARRING	Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Jude Law
DIRECTOR	Andrew Niccol
PRICE	£18.99
CERTIFICATE	15
RATIO 1	2.35
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby Digital, Dolby 5.1
REGION	2



The Film 7/10

Gattaca paints the picture of a future world where genetic engineering has made a new underclass – the Invalids. These are the people who haven't been genetically modified, and one such person is Vincent, played by Ethan Hawke. The story goes on to tell of how, despite his disadvantage, he fulfills his dream to go to the stars. Vincent enlists the help of Jerome, a Valid crippled in an accident, who is willing to give Vincent his identity – his blood, hair, skin and urine – all to escape being identified by the authorities.

Beautifully shot, Gattaca is sci-fi in the classic form, predicting a not too distant future. As a modern day warning, the film works brilliantly, and the performances from all the lead roles are excellent, especially Jude Law in his first Hollywood film.

Gattaca has a wonderfully sombre mood and is utterly convincing in its portrayal of one possible future for the human race. The way society is portrayed is suitably matter of fact and never begins to preach. Gattaca deserves to be rated alongside films like Soylent Green – it provides a certain amount of food for thought.

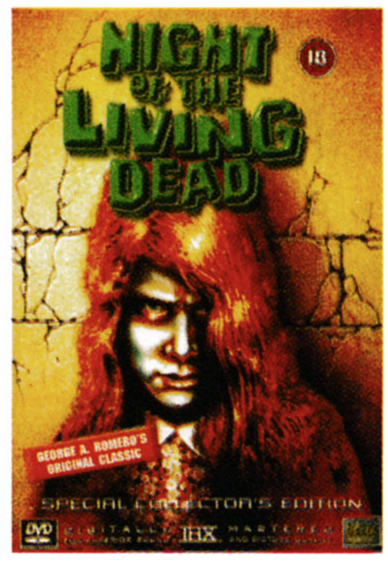
The Extras 2/5

A very short featurette with a few soundbytes from the cast, the theatrical trailer, filmographies, a photo gallery and out-takes.

Picture Quality 4/5 **Overall 13/20**

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

NAME	Night of the Living Dead
STARRING	Duane Jones, Judith O' Dea, Karl Hardman
DIRECTOR	George Romero
PRICE	£15.99
CERTIFICATE	18
RATIO 1	1.33
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby Digital
REGION	Multi-Region



The Film 8/10

If you don't know this film, then you've missed out in your adolescence somewhere. This is first of George Romero's 'Dead' films, and ground-breaking it was at the time too. Shot in black and white and on a minuscule budget, Romero's zombie flick has influenced many of today's directors and remains one of the best horror films ever made.

The story is fairly straightforward: the dead are coming back to life, and a group of people are locked up in a house trying to survive. This is classic edge-of-the-seat stuff. You'd have to be a real fan to want to buy this, but it's a film that you should see at least once in your life. The picture and sound have been restored from the original negatives and have been THX approved – this is the definitive version of the film. Also, Night of the Living Dead is one of the first multi-regioned discs in the UK and will therefore play on any DVD player. With so much Hollywood trash around on DVD at the moment, this should go down a treat with real movie buffs.

The Extras 4/5

Theatrical trailer and TV spot; Night of the Living Bread– a short parody on the film; Original commercials and two commentaries – one featuring George Romero and John Russo.

Picture Quality 4/5 **Overall 16/20**

THE BIG LEBOWSKI

The Film 8/10

The Coen brothers return in style with this wicked comedy set in Los Angeles in the early nineties. Jeff Bridges is on top form as The Dude, the bowling hippie who gets caught up in kidnapping farce when he is mistaken for the 'real' Mr. Lebowski. The dope-smoking, White Russian-drinking Dude stumbles around trying to find out who, if anyone, has indeed kidnapped Mr. Lebowski's trophy wife, aided and abetted by Walter, a foul-mouthed 'Nam veteran and fellow bowler, played by John Goodman.

Although the film's clever humour may not be to everyone's taste, it's hard not to admire the brilliant storytelling skills of the Coen brothers, and this is one their most accomplished films to date. The acting is top notch – both Jeff Bridges and John Goodman are superb –but the whole cast is excellent, including great cameos by David Thewlis and John Turturro.

The Extras 1/5

Theatrical trailer; 17-page booklet including production notes and biographies.

Picture Quality 5/5

About as good as you can get with DVD.

Overall 15/20

NAME	The Big Lebowski
STARRING	Jeff Bridges, John Goodman, Julianne Moore
DIRECTOR	Joel Coen
PRICE	£18.99
CERTIFICATE	18
RATIO	1:1.85
SOUNDTRACK	Dolby 5.1
REGION	2

QUALITYCONTROL

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VERDICTRATINGS

0 – 25

Generally speaking the games falling into this category are so pig ugly that not even their own mothers could care less about them. Perhaps the problem is that the programmers felt the same way? Please consider any game receiving a rating this low to be hazardous to your mental health – we're not scoring it this badly for fun you know! You wouldn't believe the grief we get from publishers for giving out these scores, but we're here to serve you, nobody else.

26 – 50

A below average game, but one which at least has some redeeming features. Certain aspects of these titles might be on a par with those scoring more highly, but if a game scores below 50% you can assume that it is flawed when seen as a complete package. Die-hard fans of a particular genre might still enjoy these games, but as a general rule you'll be better off saving your money. We might get sent games for free, but you don't, and we won't forget that.

51 – 75

Any game that achieves a score of over 50% should be considered an above average title worthy of your attention – especially if you're a fan of the genre. Most of these titles will not disappoint, they probably just lack that certain something that separates a good game from a great game. Please note that as our method of scoring is different to those in other magazines, a similar score in another publication might not represent a product of comparable quality.

76 – 100

These are the games that make buying the systems they appear on worthwhile. A lot of games players have access to more than one format nowadays, and these games are the reason why. Games achieving scores of 90% and above in particular can be considered highly recommended. We won't be giving out scores that high too often, so if you're thinking of purchasing a game that we've seen fit to endorse in this way, what are you waiting for?

Wild Metal Country

The idea of a **tank game is probably enough** to send many of you to sleep, but what about a tank game from **champions of playability,** DMA Design?

A barren world inhabited almost exclusively by tanks might not sound like the kind of place you'd want to spend your evenings, but when the invitation comes from innovative developer DMA Design, it's definitely one that you should accept. The good news is that you don't have to worry about getting run over by a tank, because you're a tank as well. The bad news is that you don't appear to be a particularly popular tank amongst your peers, which basically means that 100% of the other tanks you meet will try to kill you. So why not just find a nice place to live out your days in hiding? Well, firstly because that would make for a pretty crap tank game and, secondly, because you've got to collect the eight different-coloured power cores that have been scattered across the landscape on each level.

Animal instincts

Now up to this point the game is sounding pretty dull, right? But what if I tell you that each of the different tank classes you encounter, of which there are many, has its own sophisticated AI based on that of an animal? For example, if you come across a Rhino tank you can expect it to come straight for you, guns blazing, whereas a Roadrunner tank will behave quite differently – don't expect it to shout 'meep, meep' and speed off though – even the guys at DMA aren't that mad. Basically, no two classes of tank act in the same way, and if you're to be successful collecting the power cores without getting yourself killed, you'll have to learn how to spot and then deal with each of the different tanks.

GRAVITY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME, AND WILD METAL COUNTRY IS ONE OF THE MOST CONVINCINGLY SOLID GAMES I'VE EVER COME ACROSS

TAKING CONTROL

The revolutionary control system is very tricky at first, but after taking a few beatings from other tanks I soon learnt how to make good my escape. Graphically *Wild Metal Country* isn't stunning, but at the same time it's very difficult to pick fault with.

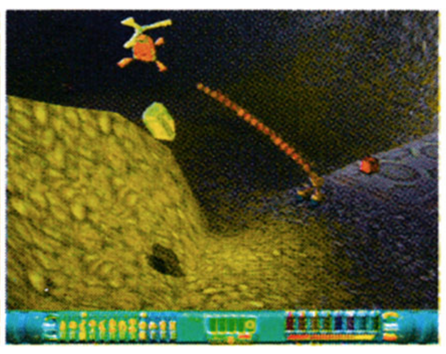
I'm looking forward to spending a bit of time with this one...

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Gremlin Interactive
DEVELOPER	DMA Design
STYLE	Action
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	50MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

MULTIPLAYER

Up to eight players can compete in any of a number of variations, including the usual capture the flag and deathmatch scenarios. Some of the levels are almost a little too big for this number of players, and it's worth noting that none of the levels are really worth playing with anything less than four players.



Just as innovative as the game are the controls used to play it, with all of the tanks' movement being controlled simply by the 2, 3, 5 and 6 keys on the number pad. 5 and 6 to go forward, 2 and 3 to reverse, while single keys and other combinations offer everything from a very slight turn through to a 360 on the spot. It sounds awfully complicated, but it really is great when you get used to it, adding to the gameplay rather than merely making it possible. In addition to this, the A and S keys can be used to rotate your turret, with the Space bar adopting the role of the all-important fire button. The longer you hold down the Space bar, the greater the trajectory of your shot – it's as simple as that. Achieving your goals, however, is anything but simple. Many of the power cores are well defended, and any that aren't will generally be in places that are almost impossible to reach in a tank. Gravity is the name of the game, and *Wild Metal Country* is one of the most convincingly solid games I've ever come across. Boulders, enemy tanks, and even the weapons crates dropped from passing helicopters are all affected by gravity in a way that has to be seen to believed. If you drive into a boulder, it'll move slightly and then settle according to its new centre of gravity. Fire one shot more than is necessary when blowing up an enemy tank, the first explosion will shatter the tank into pieces, but the second will then send those pieces up into the air, scattering the debris much further than usual.

Speed metal

Searching the massive levels can occasionally become tiresome, particularly as your radar isn't powerful enough to cover the whole map at any one time. But the amount of fun that can be had trying out over a dozen different weapons on the intelligent and varied adversaries roaming the landscape more than makes up for it. You'll find yourself blowing up boulders just to marvel at the way in which they react and then shatter, I guarantee it. Graphically the game isn't quite as accomplished as many that are on offer nowadays, but the extensive video options ensure that *Wild Metal Country* looks good even on a minimum required spec system. The sounds in the game are as realistic as they come – no music or fancy speech though, just a series of sound effects assigned to each and every object in the game, some of which, such as the gears on an enemy tank, can be heard as ambient sounds when the object is a great distance away.

A relatively easy game to pick up and play, *Wild Metal Country* contains all of the hallmarks you'd expect from the company that brought you *Lemmings*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Silicon Valley* – except sheep. Oh well, nobody's perfect. **Justin**

A VIEW TO A KILL

Although it has little bearing on the gameplay, I can't help thinking that a little more scenery would have been beneficial. The levels are, for the most part, featureless, and the lack of any real landmarks occasionally makes it difficult to find your way around.

The scenery's dull, but once you're playing you won't care

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

Unfortunately the PlayStation simply can't handle the *Wild Metal Country* engine. Otherwise this game would've been perfect for Sony's analogue controller.

Nintendo 64 ●●○○○

At the time of going to press, this version is uncertain. Apparently the prospect of an easy to program Dreamcast version was far too attractive to turn down.

Dreamcast ●●●●●

Recently confirmed by DMA, the Dreamcast version, which should be ready for the console's UK launch, will have all-new levels and multiplayer games. We can't wait.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Wild Metal Country
GRAPHICS	81
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	87
OVERALL Out of 100	85

Blood Lines

New ideas in the computer entertainment industry are few and far between, but can this twist on a **popular school game** make an impact?

It's not often that a new game turns up that can't really be compared to anything else on the market, but *Blood Lines* is exactly that. Perhaps the reason behind this is that the premise doesn't initially sound that appealing; it could easily be compared to chase, the sort of game you probably used to play at school, not the basis for a deeply skillful and involving pursuit. However, there's much more to this game than that.

Set in a distant future where a single culture forces humanity to act uniformly and diverse elements of traditional society have died off, a group of rebels take it upon themselves to re-enact the rituals of old. The social outcasts bring back an ancient sport and battle to become their own champions. The game involves lighting a set number of nodes around various arenas. At the beginning of a game, players must race to gain 'control' by running through a neutral node, which will then turn to their colour. Once in control, they must convert a certain pre-set number of the remaining nodes, and in so doing win the bout. Meanwhile, the other player must chase and tackle the person in power, thus gaining the power themselves, and then attempt to convert neutral or enemy nodes to his own colour.

Referee!

Tackling the opposition is merely a case of making contact with them, which simplifies the game immensely. This is not necessarily a good thing though, as the game is perhaps too simple already. I would have liked to see some elements of a beat-'em-up in their somewhere, which would have given the players much more variety and extended the life of the game considerably. Instead, much of the skill in *Blood Lines* centres around careful timing and planning of your weapon use. Every character is able to shoot a homing weapon at his opponent that will slow him down slightly, enabling you to catch up – this is rapid fire, but the effect is small. You can charge up this weapon

TAKING CONTROL

This is not an easy game to get into – for a long time you will almost certainly feel cheated – but a small amount of persistence gets you through the worst of it, and when you learn the moves, you'll find that there is a lot more to this game than you may have first thought.

Above: A selection of *Blood Lines*' alienated characters

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Radical Entertainment
STYLE	Action
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

WASTED EFFECT

The graphics in *Blood Lines* are generally fairly good, looking a bit average but with no real complaints (apart from a slight lack of detail on the characters). Some of the effects in the game are stunning – none more so than the water, which is one of the best graphical effects of its type on the PlayStation. It's a shame that the game makes almost no use of it though.

to unleash a much larger homing bolt, which will knock down the other player for a few seconds – more than enough time to approach and tackle him. But this can be easily evaded and will not recharge as quickly. Your character also has a special move that is specific to him. This could be anything from a huge shockwave that will knock an opponent over from a large distance away, to homing missiles or waves that will either pull or repel your opponent, depending on who has control at that point. If contact is made between the characters, the player in control will always lose out to the other player.

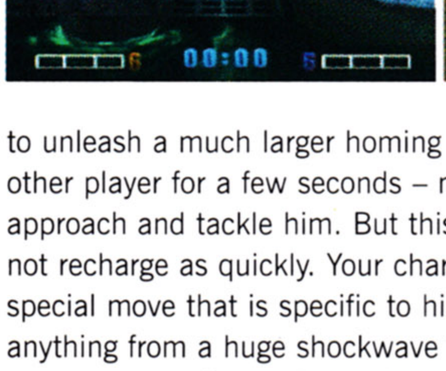
There are several items and weapons that can be picked up – speed boosts, teleporters, throwing weapons and shields – but these are often placed out of the way, so you have to divert from your route to collect them (when you're being chased around the level, a short detour can prove costly). Every form of attack apart from the item pick-ups costs a small amount of energy. Your current level is shown near the bottom of the screen and split into three sections; charging a homing bolt takes one section, a special move uses two, and converting an enemy node to neutral (which can be done when you are not in control) uses three. Your energy constantly recharges, but you can speed up the process by pressing the recharge button. The disadvantage of this is that you must remain stationary.

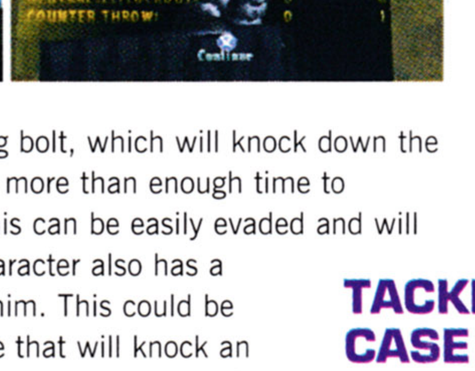
Let it flow

There is a lot of opportunity for skill to be developed in this game, and it can get extremely tense in the later levels, but as you progress the action stays the same, and this is not a game that you will want to play for extended periods of time. The speech from the other characters, though obviously intended to be humourous, quickly loses its charm and degenerates into a series of highly annoying comments. The other annoying point in *Blood Lines* is the frequent misjudging of depth in the arenas – perhaps more noticeable shadows would have helped a lot more.

Overall, this is quite fun, but only for brief periods of time. After a while it becomes very frustrating, which is a very bad thing for this type of game, the sort that should make you want to keep playing every now and again for months. *Blood Lines* doesn't quite have what it takes to make it worth wholeheartedly recommending, but you'll find some enjoyment here for a while at least. **Will**

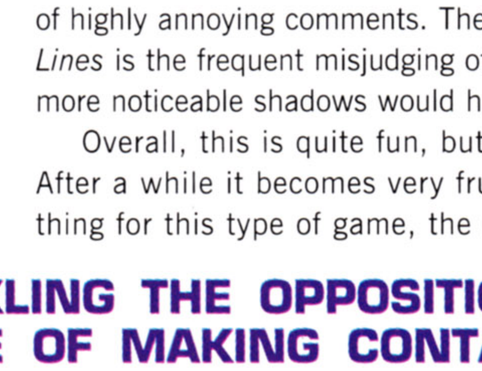
TACKLING THE OPPOSITION IS MERELY A CASE OF MAKING CONTACT WITH THEM, WHICH SIMPLIFIES THE GAME IMMENSELY

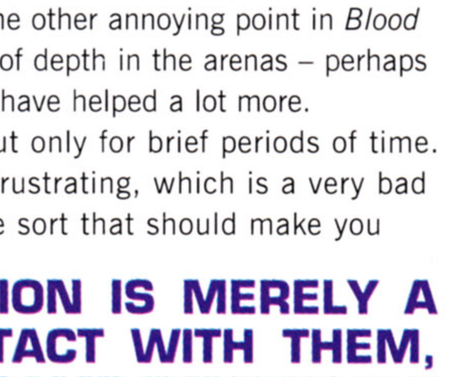




MULTIPLAYER

The multiplayer mode is good and extends the life of the game considerably, but if you're playing with people new to the game, the pace and style will take some time to get used to. If you are all on the same playing field though, there's quite a lot of potential, and being multi-tap compatible, this is one of only a few games that you can play with up to three friends on the PlayStation.





Plenty of scope for adventure

OTHER FORMATS?

Nintendo 64 ○○○○○

It's unlikely that this game will make a surprise breakthrough onto the N64 – after all, it is being published by Sony, don't you know? There isn't much in the way of an alternative either – *Smash Brothers* or *Mario Party* perhaps?

PC ●○○○○

While *Blood Lines* is the sort of game that you might expect to see on the PC, there is no news of a conversion. *Savage Arena* is kind of close, but that isn't that great either.

Dreamcast ○○○○○

A conversion will almost certainly never happen, and considering the time that the machine has been on sale for, trying to find an alternative to this game just isn't going to happen.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Blood Lines
GRAPHICS	79
SOUND	62
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	61

TAKING CONTROL

It shares a very similar graphical style to *Battletanx*. Many of the buildings can be totally demolished, and the flat, blurred textures are often very noticeable. It doesn't take long to get into the swing of things, but once you reach that point, you'll have seen about as much as the game has to give. It's fun to begin with, though.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Luxoflux
STYLE	Driving Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE GAME	Mem.card & Password
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	Yes

Vigilante 8

Vigilante 8 takes **elements from *Carmageddon*** and combines them with serious weaponry. Can Activision really **topple SCi's smash-'em-up?**

Violent driving games have been around for a very long time. Starting off from the top-down view, *Battlecars* on the Spectrum was one of the most popular in its time. *Supercars II* on the Amiga took over from that later on, and in recent years they have made the breakthrough to 3D with games such as *Interstate '76* and *Carmageddon*. If you discount cute games like *Mario* and *Diddy Kong*, the N64 has yet to see a decent driving shoot-'em-up, so only *Battletanx* can come close to a comparison.

You shooting at me?

Vigilante 8 bears much more resemblance to *Twisted Metal* on the PlayStation. You pick a character from a motley selection and strive to make your way through a series of levels and ultimately fight a boss character at the end to open up new characters and bonuses. Each level has a certain objective that rarely strays from the 'destroy a certain building' idea and is finished when you are the last car on the track. Your car is always equipped with a machine gun with unlimited ammo, but constant use will lower the frequency of the shot, so short bursts make for bigger damage. It's very low strength, though, and to make an impact on the enemy cars you need to collect some of the many weapon pick-ups around the level. These vary from missiles and lasers to sonic booms and UFO attacks. Some will constantly track vehicles, others will home in on them when they are in front of you, others will fire in a straight line only. All of them fit into certain slots around your car, and you cannot fill the same slot twice. You can fill multiple slots, though, and are then able to alternate between them.

TRICK OR TREE

Completing the game with any character will not take you very long, but to access every hidden bonus in the game will take ages. From the menu screen you can check your progress via a tree system. Every character is linked to another, and when both have completed the game, a new character is opened up. As these second level characters are unlocked, yet more stuff becomes available, which gives the game an interesting structure.

MULTIPLAYER

The multiplayer option is the best reason to buy *Vigilante 8*. There are six game modes available, three of which are for two players only, which include quest, co-operative and versus modes. There are options for horizontal and vertical screen spits, and also the option to turn the resolution down to smooth out the frame rate. This is the only feature that saves the cartridge from gathering too much dust.

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●●●●●

Yep, already out, but it's inferior to the N64 version in many ways.

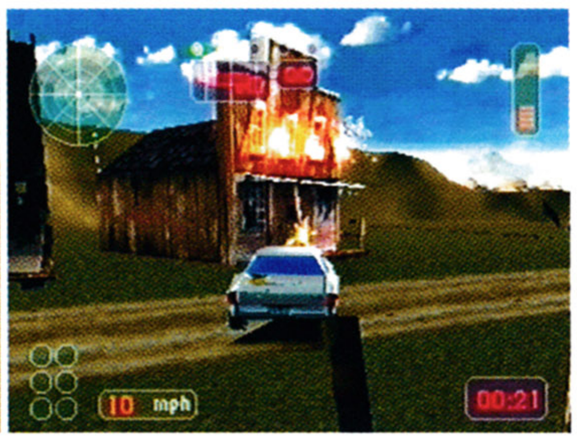
PC ●●○○○

It's a possible conversion prospect, but you won't need it with the choice of alternatives such as *Interstate '76*, *Carmageddon* and even *Redline* available.

Dreamcast ●○○○○

Could happen, but it's unlikely. We'd be hoping for a much more advanced version on Sega's super console.

Not a typical ride to school

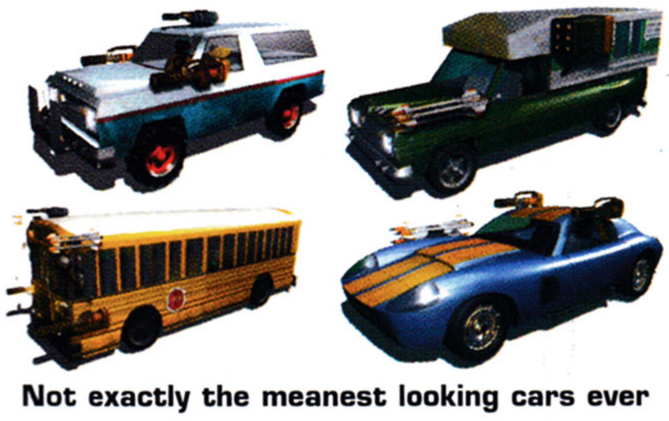


One problem with the game is the strength of the opponents. The arenas are fairly big, but there are only ever about five-six cars in them. The length of time it takes to destroy another car means that battles often become very unstrategic; you just fire all you have and take incoming fire until one of you dies. Whether you do this trying to follow the car or bumper to bumper makes little difference if you have the better gun. What it amounts to is a very repetitive game. Imagine *Carmageddon,* but without the pedestrians, excellent game engine and the ability to smash your opponents up with car to car contact and it's pretty close.

Dangerous minds

Several games could be simplified to the point where you say that all you do is drive around and shoot things, but you would be simplifying nothing if you said that about *Vigilante 8*. However, with that in mind, it's pretty well put together. There are several game modes to explore, and even if there is a lack of maps, the game structure (that encourages you to keep playing with all characters) will keep you going for a long time. Graphically it's not so bad either, and the multiplayer mode works well, but the soundtrack is a definite contender for worst of the year.

Vigilante 8 won't stun you, it won't show off your machine to your mates, and the single-player mode is unlikely to keep you playing for more than a month or so. That said, most people will have a reasonable amount of fun with it, and the multiplayer game will be used again and again. **Will**



Not exactly the meanest looking cars ever

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Vigilante 8
GRAPHICS	68
SOUND	30
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	58

The Monkey Island Bounty Pack

The *Monkey Island* series has been one of the most influential in the history of **adventure games.** Now **you** have the chance to **own all three...**

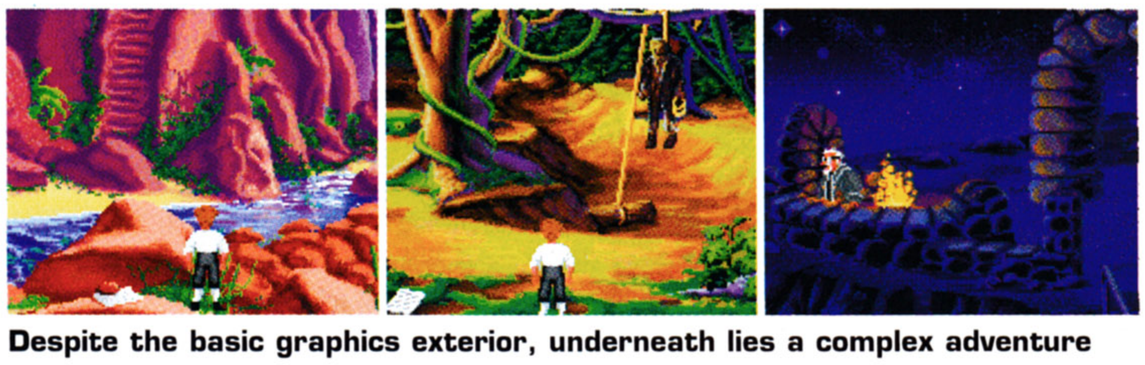
If you were to judge a game by the size of its packaging, then this repackaged *Monkey Island* series would be the best there is. The small CD box you find inside the gigantic packaging is a little surprising and a little disappointing. You might expect a little extra for £40 – maybe a T-shirt or some info on the series?

Anyway, you can't actually fault any of the games inside; each one is a classic of the genre, and in fact each one has helped define a genre. Even the crude (in comparison) graphics of the first two games can be excused – the puzzles and humour are a delight to behold. The third game, *The Curse of Monkey Island*, is the icing on the cake: brilliantly drawn and animated with the same humour, but it has puzzles which are a lot more logical than its predecessors. It's the best of the three, and the second best in the genre behind LucasArts' latest adventure, *Grim Fandango* (watch out for the reference to this in *Curse*).

If you've just discovered the genre through *Grim Fandango*, or maybe even the *Broken Sword* games, this *Bounty Pack* comes highly recommended. The three games here are all going to keep you going for quite some time and are quite unlike anything else on the market. If you want to spend a bit of time hunting down the games separately (on various budget labels), then you could probably get them for £30 in total. We recommend that you do this instead, but that doesn't mean that this pack isn't still excellent. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
STYLE	Adventure
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
PROCESSOR	P90
MEMORY	16MB
HARD DRIVE	20MB

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Monkey Island Bounty Pack
GRAPHICS	68
SOUND	30
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	85



Despite the basic graphics exterior, underneath lies a complex adventure

WCW vs NWO Thunder

THQ, the **undisputed masters of the wrestling game,** have been at it again to bring you what seems at first glance to be the biggest and **most action packed take on the whole showbiz** debacle yet...

When I was a lad, wrestling was all about who weighed the most, who had the scariest beard, or who could snarl with the most venom. Nowadays, if you can't benchpress a small building, leap over a seven foot man from a standing start and snarl with venom (okay, so some things never change) you've got no chance. Wrestling is a massively popular... err, sport, with a loyal following and a certain cult status. Nobody believes it is real, everybody knows it is just a show, but still we watch. Wrestling games are kind of the same. Wrestling fans will always buy the latest game to recreate their favourite match-up, even though they know they are not real fighting games, and the fans will always enjoy them. Ever since the early days of *WWF Wrestlefest* in the arcade, this offshoot genre has grown and improved until it is now considered the norm to have a choice of 60 wrestlers, several different rings to fight in, and a handful of hidden fighters to unlock.

WCW vs NWO Thunder is no different. On top of the 60+ wrestlers, each with his own totally authentic theme music and finishing move, every character has taunts and rants that can be used to put your opponent off. Different modes of play include heavyweight championships, tag team matches, cage fights and, of course, the battle royal. These take place in the actual rings you would see on telly, and each match is accompanied by a two-man commentary team who shout and harangue in frighteningly realistic fashion. Weapons are often employed in wrestling – chairs, tables, even clubs, have all been seen in the squared circle at one time or another, so, naturally, they appear here too, along with a whole host of additions.

There is, in fact, so much to see and do in this game that you almost don't notice the lack of finesse. For all its bells and whistles, *WCW vs NWO Thunder* offers little in the way of improvements once the fighting begins. Oh sure, there are new moves, but the promised 30+ moves per character turns out to mean 30+ shared moves, so once you have learnt one character's moves, you have almost learnt them all. Of course, as I have mentioned before, each character has his own signature and finishing moves, but there are sadly not enough of these. The game's developers, Inland, have really gone to town with the visual side of things, but have sacrificed fun gameplay in the process. That said, the multiplayer side of things is still fun – battering a mate into submission can be so rewarding – but why no multitap compatibility? Surely four is better than two?

Even with all its authentic touches, improved speed and character list, different modes of play and smoother graphics, *WCW vs NWO Thunder* falls well short of the mark and should have been much, much better. Fans will no doubt love it, and it's safe to say it will sell by the shed load, but there are better wrestling games out there to spend your money on. Let's just hope the inevitable next game will address these points fully and turn out to be a more complete game than this one. **Russ**

TAKING CONTROL

With so many choices and stats, this is a wrestling fan's dream. But delve a little deeper and disappointment awaits. Single-player action soon becomes boring, and even a multiplayer bash is not as satisfying as it should be.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	Inland
STYLE	Wrestling
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
DUAL SHOCK	No
ANALOGUE	Yes
GAME SAVE	Memory Card

The only people more ridiculous than the wrestlers

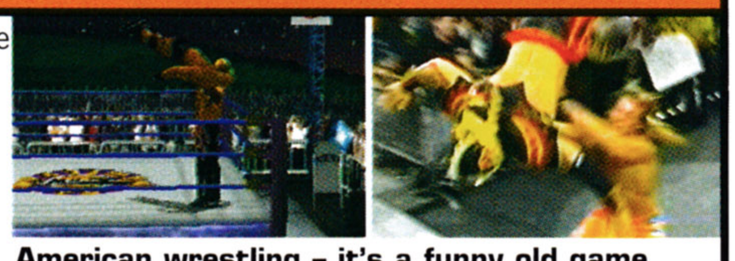
VERDICT

GAME NAME	WCW vs NWO Thunder
GRAPHICS	75
SOUND	68
PLAYABILITY	50
OVERALL Out of 100	65

ITS ALL IN THE NAME

You're not a proper wrestler unless you have got a signature move. All the greats have them, from Sting's Scorpion Death Lock to Curt Hennig's (formerly Mr Perfect) Hennigplex. Here are a few of the most famous names and moves in the game:

"Hollywood" Hogan
"Hollywood" Leg Drop
Bret Hart
Sharpshooter
Sting
Scorpion Death Lock
Diamond Dallas Page
The Diamond Cutter
Curt Hennig
Hennigplex
Scott Steiner
Steiner Recliner



American wrestling – it's a funny old game

Top Gear Rally

A game of firsts: Gameboy Color only, rumbling cartridge, and hopefully your finishing position...

The big news about *Top Gear Rally* is that this is the first Game Boy title ever to use a rumble feature. The cartridge that extends out of the back of the Game Boy houses its own mini rumble device that runs off a single AAA battery, which is included in the package. It's not going to shake your entire body, but it does work surprisingly well and is certainly a device that should be called upon again in the future. The only gripe is that *Top Gear Rally* is not a game that takes full advantage of the feature. It rumbles when you crash, when you run off the road, and also when you hit another car, but you still feel as though it might have been better used in a different style of game.

Rumbling free

The game itself is still very impressive. Alongside the rumble pack, it is also the first game that will work only with the Game Boy Color, which would lead you to expect that this is a technically accomplished title. It certainly would be had Infogrames not recently released the equally impressive *V-Rally*, a game that worked with new and old models. The two titles are incredibly similar to each other; they both look the same and handle very well, but even though *Top Gear Rally* uses a similar game engine to *V-Rally*, it feels much more responsive. You need to try to stay close to the inside of each bend, which helps to provide the illusion that the car is moving around the track and not the other way around.

Graphically it's very impressive, and there are both championship and time trial options, while the inclusion of a two-player link-up feature gives it much more value for money. Overall, it only just manages to steal the crown from *V-Rally*. Both titles are extremely similar, so don't get them both. But if you've yet to buy either, then *Top Gear Rally* is the better package, and the best of its kind on the Game Boy. **Will**

INFORMATION

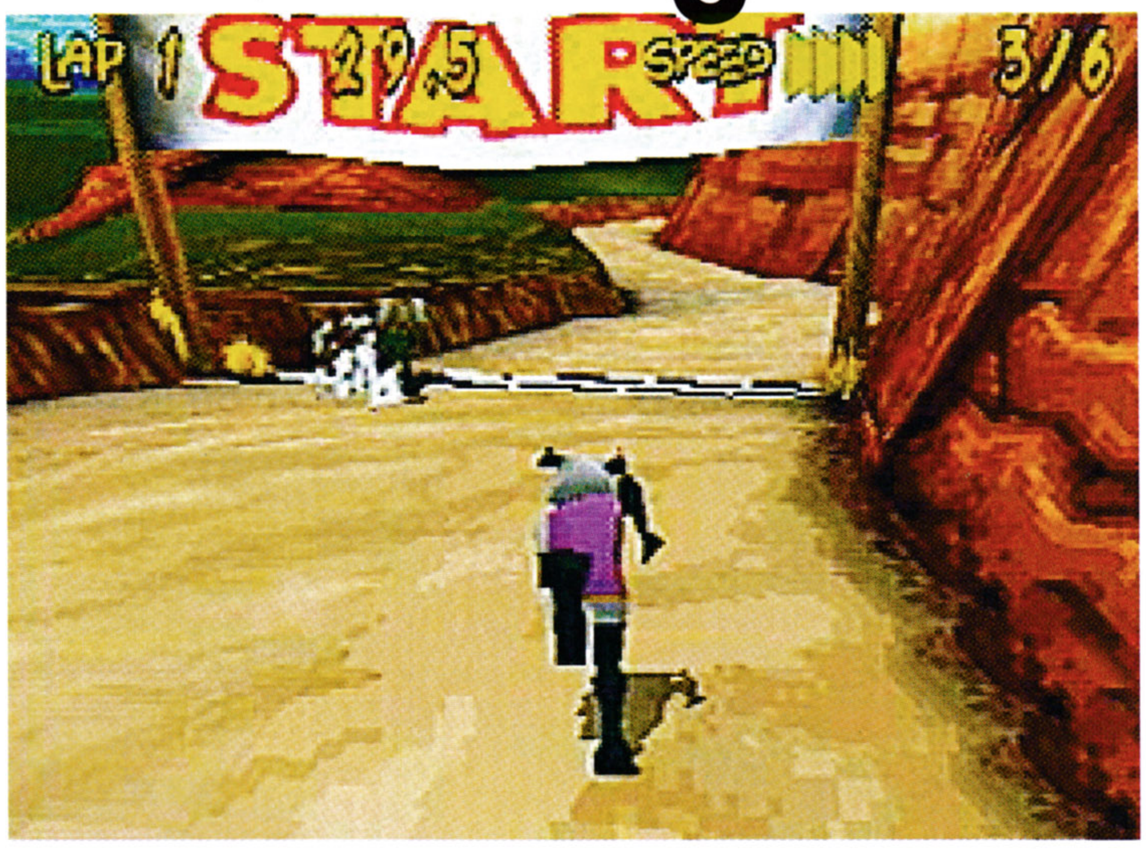
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Kemco
STYLE	Driving
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£24.99
COLOR GAME BOY	Required

Overtaking can be difficult

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Top Gear Rally
GRAPHICS	84
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	76
OVERALL Out of 100	81

Running Wild



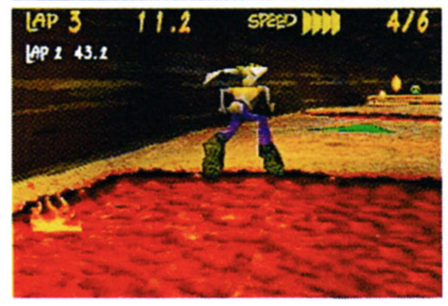
The PlayStation's answer to *Pen Pen Triathlon*? Actually, while I'm here, does anybody even care?

Pen Pen Triathlon has opened up a new area in racing games; instead of completing laps using various vehicles, you race them by running, swimming, jumping or sliding. As is usually the case with seminal games, this surprisingly original idea came packaged in a game that pulled it off brilliantly first time. Any game that tries to copy it will have to have a lot going for it, which sadly means that *Running Wild* is out-classed from the start.

To begin with the presentation is excellent. You have six characters to choose from, the majority of which are typical animal/human hybrids, and all have various stats for turning, speed, power etc. There are six levels, of which only four are available at the start, and you control your character in a similar manner to the running sections in *Crash 3*, i.e. you are always running into the screen and steer your character left, right and over the various obstacles by jumping. Most of the skill comes from trying to hit the speed-ups on the ground and collecting power-ups and weapons in the air. You can also control the amount of time spent in the air by holding the jump button.

Run forest...

Running Wild lacks the charm of *Pen Pen* by a long way; the levels are poorly drawn and the characters are terribly animated and do not feel as if they are actually interacting with the scenery at all. Although you can turn off the constant run option and explore in free mode to collect more power-ups that turn the world into ice or mud etc., it doesn't give the game enough depth, leaving it very simple and with little lastability. It is quite a lot of fun for a while, but even the multiplayer mode won't keep you going for long enough to warrant its purchase. **Will**



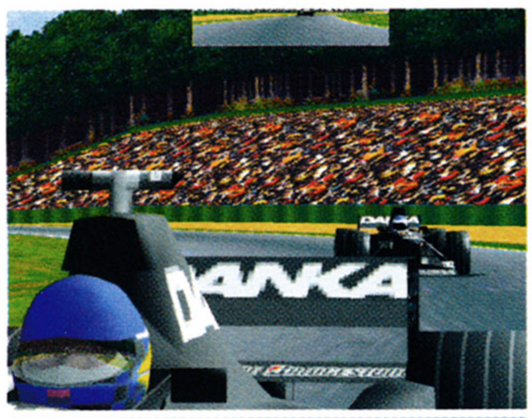
Graphically, it's a loser

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Blue Shift
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Running Wild
GRAPHICS	53
SOUND	68
PLAYABILITY	65
OVERALL Out of 100	60

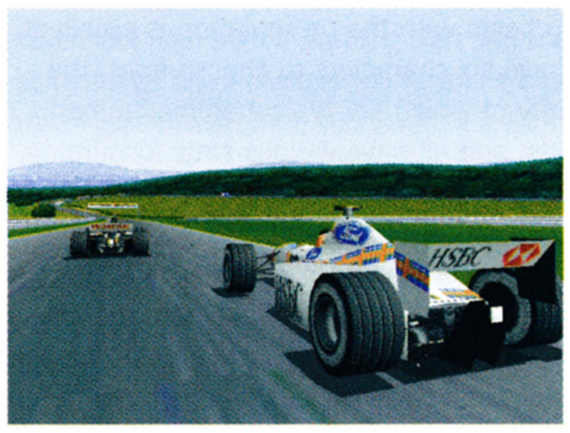


Official Formula 1 Racing

As the **only officially licensed simulation** of the 1999 Formula 1 racing season, this game **has got a lot to live up to...**

TAKING CONTROL

The interface screens have obviously been designed to be as accessible as possible, and with just a few key presses you can be out on the track behind the wheel of a Williams team Formula One car. The default settings will give you a moderately easy drive at novice level around the Melbourne GP circuit. At this level the sensation of real speed is lacking, but the car handles well and the graphics are superb.



INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Eidos
DEVELOPER	Lankhor
STYLE	Racing Sim
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-12
PROCESSOR	P90 P200
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	50MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

If you want to get the best out of a driving game, you really should invest in a decent steering wheel controller with pedals. Eidos recommend that you use one with this game, and I totally agree. I tried *Official Formula 1 Racing* with the excellent Saitek R4 force-feedback wheel, which I would heartily endorse. You just don't get as much out of the game trying to steer the cars with keyboard buttons.

Official Formula 1 Racing is another officially licensed sports tie-in which will do well in the shops simply because of that licence, and some publishers would use that as an excuse to knock off some second-rate tat in a fancy box. Not so with this game, however. Whether the FIA have higher standards for their licence deals than the FA, for example, or Eidos are just more conscientious than most, the result is the same. *Official Formula 1 Racing* is a high quality game with a lot of good features.

Pole position

Eidos have claimed that *Official Formula 1 Racing* will run perfectly well on a 90MHz Pentium PC with 16 Mb of RAM and a Voodoo accelerator card. Unfortunately we couldn't find a P90 anywhere, so I took the game home and tried it out on the venerable 16Mb P120 I keep for sentimental reasons. Scary to think that just two short years ago this doddering old wreck was the canine undercarriage of home computing power. These days I use it as a typewriter and part-time paperweight.

THIS IS A TOP QUALITY RACING SIMULATOR WHICH WILL RUN PERFECTLY WELL ON THE LOWEST SPEC SYSTEM YOU ARE LIKELY TO FIND

However, *Official Formula 1 Racing* ran on it, and ran well, which makes it one of only three games worth playing on that system, the other two being real-time strategy games. Even last year's driving

games like *Need For Speed II* won't run properly on that machine. How Lankhor have achieved this minor miracle is beyond my comprehension, but this is a top quality racing simulator which will run perfectly well on the lowest spec system you are likely to find. If you have an older PC and were lamenting the lack of decent games you could play on it, here's one you should definitely get. Even the software rendered mode was acceptably fast, and looked almost as good as the accelerated version. Running on a faster machine, it was actually difficult to spot the difference.

In the pits

As I said, *Official Formula 1 Racing* has a lot of nice features. Naturally it has multiple viewpoints for driving, including two cockpit views, an adjustable behind-the-car external view and a front wing view. It also has a superb replay feature which allows you to set up your own camera positions around the track and save the results to disk.

The game also features realistic pit stops with animated pit crews, although they suddenly spring into view when your car stops rather than being ready and waiting as you pull into the pit lane. If they were going to go to the trouble of putting in animated crews, the developers could perhaps have gone a little further and attempted to simulate the organised chaos of a Formula 1 pit area. As it stands it looks half-finished.

When you pit in, you have the option to choose what the crew do to your car. You can select which new tyres they fit, how much fuel they put in, and any repairs that might be necessary. You can pre-set a pit-stop strategy, and this will be executed automatically at the appropriate times. Other pre-race options include a 3D animated garage in which you can tweak various adjustments to the car's performance, such as suspension settings, wing angles and gear ratios, and then view the results on a simulated engine analysis computer. The options are fairly straightforward to use, and it is difficult to get confused.

On the podium

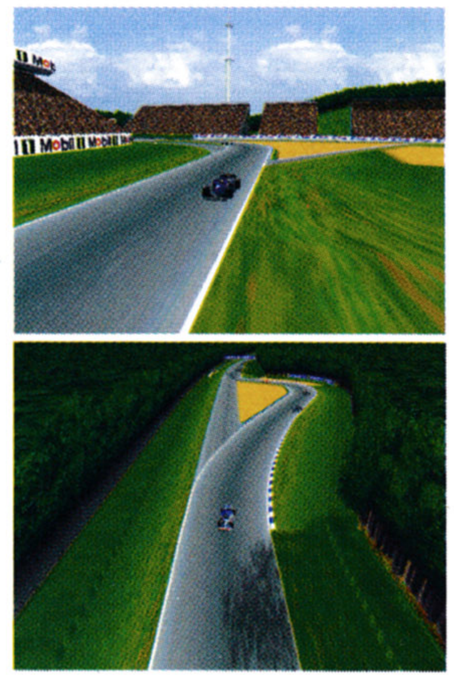
The simulation of the car's handling and performance is a function of the difficulty setting you have chosen and how many of the optional assists you have switched on. You can choose to have help with the steering, braking, gear changes and more. Using the game options, you can set it up to be anything from an arcade game to a full scale simulation of a Formula 1 season. The AI program controlling the other drivers can be altered to make them more or less realistic, collision damage can be toggled on or off, and even the number of cars competing can be altered. The engine providing the car dynamics is superb, with crisp, accurate handling and very good collision detection. With force feedback activated, crashing into another car was quite an experience.

I found that at the lower difficulty setting there was no real sensation of speed, but it soon made itself felt at the higher settings. The frame rate sustained by the graphics engine on even a medium spec machine was sufficient to give quite a rush.

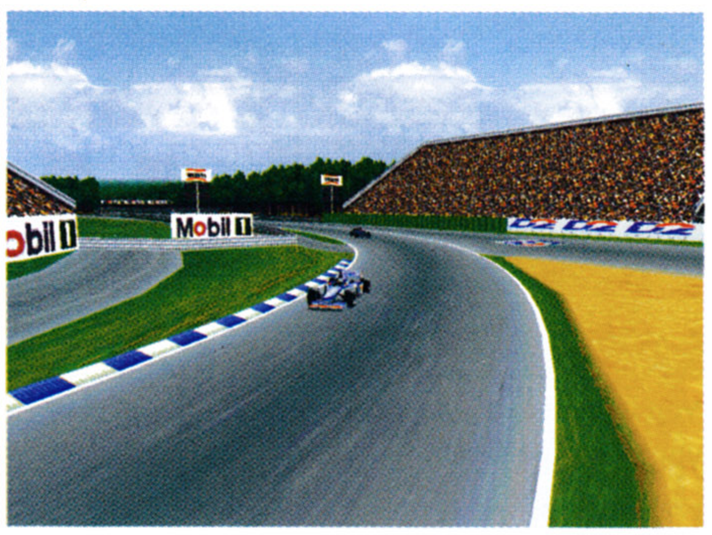
Official Formula 1 Racing is a superior racing game, with a wide range of well implemented options and features. Its remarkable minimum specification caters to the lower end of the market, while the scalability of the software ensures that owners of bigger machines get their money's worth. The full game has a twelve-player network or internet mode, which Eidos will be supporting on their website at www.eidos.co.uk The game also has full Mplayer support. If you are a fan of Formula 1 you will want to buy this game anyway, but if you are just looking for a good racing game, you will find nothing better. **Cliff**

RACING LINE

The lucrative Formula 1 license is one of the most sought-after of all sports titles. No other sport can compete with Formula 1 racing for glamour, excitement and commercial potential. The sport's governing body, the FIA, safeguards the interests of the teams and drivers both on and off the track, but even their efforts are not enough for one particular driver. The Williams team's Canadian number two driver, Jacques Villeneuve, is the only competitor notable by his absence from this officially sanctioned game. He has taken the unusual step of copyrighting his name to prevent it being used anywhere without paying him for the privilege.



The track layouts include all the latest modifications



With the 1999 season well under way, you can follow all the action on your PC with this incredibly detailed simulation

OTHER FORMATS?

Playstation ●●●●●

Eidos have promised that a PlayStation version of *Official Formula 1 Racing* is nearing completion and will be along shortly.

Nintendo 64 ●○○○○

With *Monaco GP 2* getting high marks all round, there probably isn't room for another F1 sim on the Nintendo.

Dreamcast ●●○○○

Eidos haven't ruled out a conversion for the Dreamcast in time for the European launch, but they will have to hurry.

VERDICT

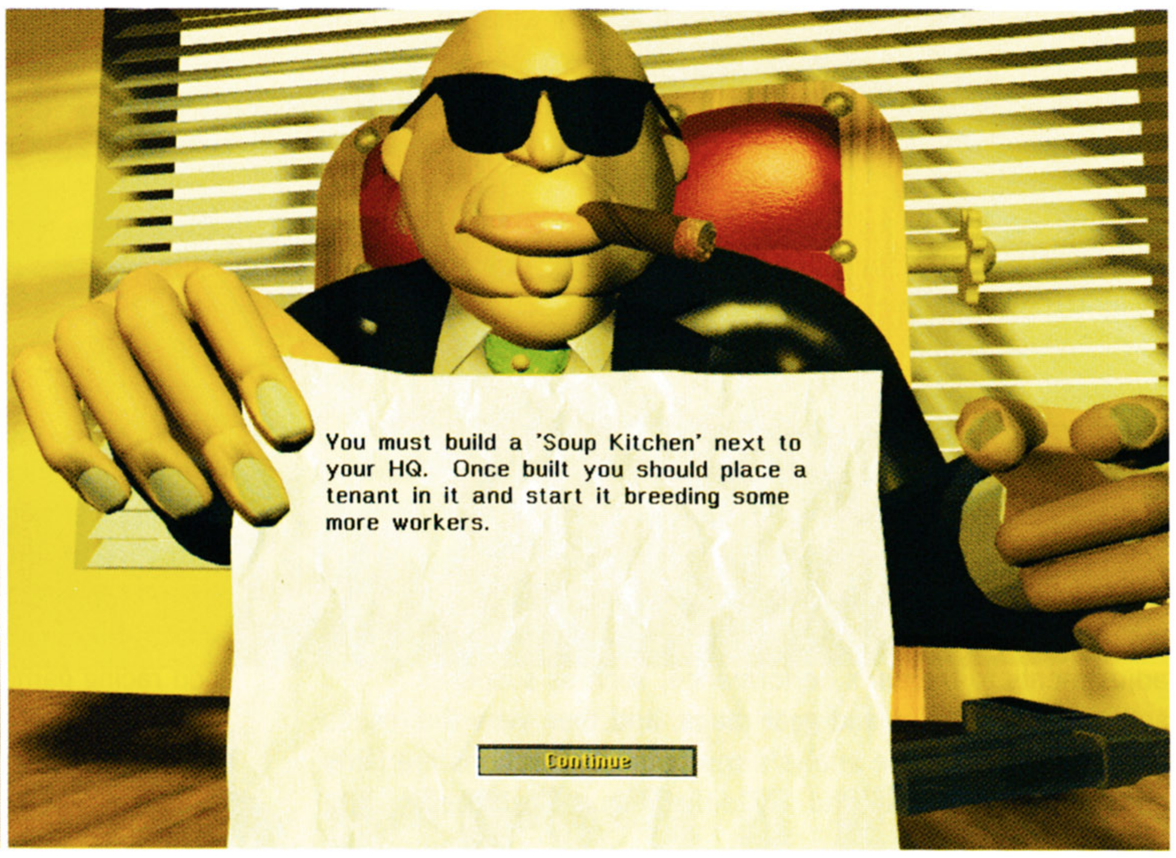
GAME NAME	Official Formula 1 Racing
GRAPHICS	79
SOUND	73
PLAYABILITY	86
OVERALL	84
Out of 100	

TAKING CONTROL

Street Wars starts off well enough, with the computer providing instructions on how to begin your game, but after fifteen minutes of watching the animated antics of your population, you start wanting more, and it just isn't there. The course of actions available is far too limited. Either you do it according to the rules or your town crumbles in ruins. It's just too inflexible to be much fun.

Constructor 2: Street Wars

Constructor **was a big hit for Acclaim** back in September '97. This new version from Infogrames isn't a sequel, **so just what is it?**



You'll need to make sure your accomodation is clean

When the original *Constructor* was released about eighteen months ago, it was rightly hailed as being a great game. It was original, witty, well-made and great fun to play. Admittedly it was a bit complicated, but then so are most strategy games until you get into them. It seemed fairly certain that it would merit a sequel, and I was quite looking forward to it. Unfortunately, the title has changed publishers from Acclaim to Infogrames, and it seems that the giant French software company are only interested in making a quick buck out of the game. What we have here is not being touted as a sequel, but it's not a mission pack either. It is a complete game, but it certainly does not improve over the original; quite the reverse in fact. I'm not sure what we should call it.

Perhaps the best description would be Constructor Lite. For reasons best known to themselves, possibly under direction from Infogrames, the developers have simplified the original game, taking out many of its best features because they were 'too complicated'. There are fewer buildings, fewer characters, and generally a lot less for the player to do. The object of the game is now more clear-cut, divided into discreet missions with set objectives. The game mechanics have been pared down to such an extent that in order to complete a mission you can really only follow a limited pre-set pattern. What emerges is a boring game with little or no replay value, especially compared to the addictive gameplay of the original. Once you have completed a mission, there is really no point in going over it again. As a single player game, I'm afraid it has little to offer.

What it does have, however, is more multiplayer options. The original game could be played over a local network, but *Street Wars* can also be played over the internet. Whether that makes it worth buying is strictly a matter of personal choice. Personally, I'd rather have seen an internet play patch for the original game.

The humour of the original game is still there, but it is only a shadow of its former self. The brilliant little animations which made it so funny have, like the rest of the game, been reduced to a bare minimum. The graphics are slightly improved over the original, to the extent that they use a wider colour palette, and the loading times have been improved, but this isn't enough to save the game from being a major disappointment. If you were a fan of *Constructor*, I'd advise you to keep playing it, and to give *Street Wars* a miss. **Cliff**

THE DEVELOPERS HAVE SIMPLIFIED THE ORIGINAL GAME, TAKING OUT MANY OF ITS BEST FEATURES BECAUSE THEY WERE 'TOO COMPLICATED'

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	Studio 3
STYLE	Building Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£34.99
PLAYERS	1-4
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	467MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Not Supported

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Street Wars
GRAPHICS	55
SOUND	43
PLAYABILITY	31
OVERALL Out of 100	34

OTHER FORMATS

With its cut-down gameplay, *Street Wars* is certainly closer to being a console game than the original, and I wouldn't totally rule out a conversion to the PlayStation at some point in the near future. I can't see it making it to the Nintendo 64, as strategy games are notable by their absence on that format. As for the Dreamcast, by the time it is released in this country I would hope to see a proper sequel to *Constructor*, which could be released on the Sega machine.

Puma Street Soccer

Some might say that there **are too many football games already –** one for every aspect of the game: sims, arcade, management. But no, there **hasn't been a street football game yet...**

Football games are brilliant. You may or may not be a fan of the sport, but you can't deny that the stiff competition over the 32-bit era has seen the technical aspects of the games become extremely advanced. There are also a lot of football games on the market, all wanting to be number one, and with competition from the likes of *ISS*, *FIFA* and *Michael Owen's*, how can you expect to break in and make a few bucks?

Not with the likes of this, I'm afraid. The whole game is flawed from the outset. Four-a-side football isn't the most enjoyable form of the sport, and it certainly doesn't offer the kind of depth that a full eleven-a-side game offers.

The basic premise of *Puma Street Soccer* (as the name would suggest) is that it's soccer, in the street, and it's sponsored by Puma. But it doesn't really take place in the street (jumpers as goalposts and all that), rather in specially constructed four-a-side pitches in various settings – airport, street, a port, and a secret Puma street stadium. Why it's only four-a-side is anyone's guess, but you'd think that five players on each side was the norm. You might as well release a simulation of Wembley pairs.

IT SHOULD BE A BONUS GAME ON A PROPER FOOTBALL GAME (I THINK FIFA HAD A FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL GAME AS A BONUS ONCE...)

The awkward controls and the unfair AI help none of this. It also takes a little while to get used to the speed of the game, but you're unlikely to even get this far before pulling the plug. There is also very little scope for any kind of subtlety or tactics, and the lack of different styles of play seriously hampers the longevity of this title.

You'd be better off buying yourself a real football and some Pringles at the end of the day

Puma Street Soccer is really the *NBA Jam* of football games, but it's not quite that fun. It should be a bonus game on a proper football game (I think *FIFA* had a five-a-side football game as a bonus once...). Anyway, *Puma Street Soccer* has little that redeems it, and it is hard to justify as a full-price release. Stay away – your money would be better spent elsewhere. **Nick**

MULTIPLAYER

As with every football game so far ever released in the history of the sport, *Puma Street Soccer* features a two-player mode. This makes things slightly better, as it always does playing against a human opponent, but... it's still the same game. Not very good.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	Sunsoft
STYLE	Football
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Puma Street Soccer
GRAPHICS	50
SOUND	30
PLAYABILITY	30
OVERALL Out of 100	30

Shadow Gate Classic

The old NES title **gets a Game Boy** Color conversion

Shadow Gate Classic is a conversion from a much older version released on the NES almost ten years ago. Although by definition it is an RPG, it is very loosely bordering on the edge of the genre – there are many other elements here as well. You are sent into a dimly lit dungeon with the mission of defeating a terrible warlock. The game is played in first person, you 'jump' from room to room, and using a selection of commands from the bottom of the screen (that can be scrolled down to show inventories and spells etc.) you interact with the objects and characters in the game. The system is not quite as user-friendly as a mouse and keyboard, but it is as good as you could get on the handheld.

It's not uncommon for you to enter certain rooms or use objects only to find that they are booby trapped and you die with no warning at all. It can be very annoying, but you restart fairly close to your previous position. Many of the puzzles are also fairly cryptic and difficult to solve, but this at least means that it will keep you busy for a while.

Shadow Gate Classic is a good game, far from perfect, but unique amongst the rest of the titles on the platform. If it sounds like your thing, you won't do any better elsewhere. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Kempo
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	One
GAMEBOY COLOUR	Optional

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Shadow Gate Classic
GRAPHICS	70
SOUND	66
PLAYABILITY	57
OVERALL Out of 100	67

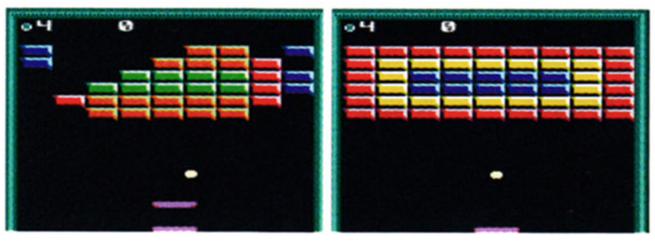
Super Breakout

The **arcade classic** tries it's luck on the Game Boy

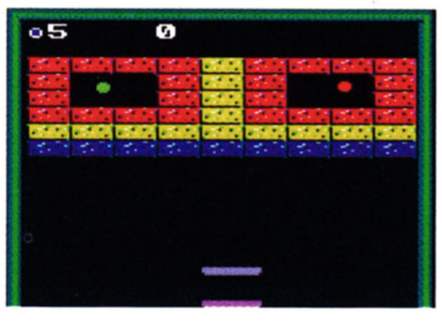
Super Breakout is a Game Boy conversion of the popular arcade title. The 16-bit title *Arkanoid* was one of the best Game Boy conversions to date, and considering the age of that game it's highly disappointing that there was no effort to make this one anything more than a very standard version.

The objective of the game is to clear a group of blocks by bouncing a ball against them. This is done by hitting the ball with a paddle that you move left or right along the bottom of the screen. If at any point you miss the ball, you lose a life, and if you clear the screen, you start all over again. There are several games modes, but every successive screen is identical to the last except for a slightly different colour arrangement, which makes it very repetitive. The driving force is to achieve a high score, but with no battery save option this is pointless too.

Super Breakout is a standard version of what was a highly playable and addictive game, but this version is much too simple and could have been so much better. **Will**



INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Hasbro Interactive
STYLE	Puzzle
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	One
GAMEBOY COLOUR	Optional



VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Super Breakout
GRAPHICS	35
SOUND	41
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	55

Sports Car GT

EA's latest racer **takes a similar mould** to their ***previous*** game: Need For Speed: **Road Challenge**

There are few low budget racing games that manage to make any headway in the current market – *Sports Car GT* instantly looks like a game that has had little time, money or passion spent on it, and as a result it suffers greatly. You enter into a series of championship events, racing for money that can be spent on either a new model of car, or upgrading an existing one. As you progress into the later leagues, the prize money is stepped up, and as a result you can upgrade your car much quicker. If at the end of a league you have not managed to finish in the top three in every race, then you start over, but you get to keep your existing car with all upgrades. Finishing each season after only one attempt is not an easy task to achieve.

Cheap parts

The major problem with *Sports Car GT* is its game engine, which seems to have been greatly neglected. You lean and spin unrealistically, and move around the course as if it was almost pre-rendered. The tracks often consist of huge straights which do you no good because your car does not catch up with the opposition. The only way that you can gain position is to steer close to the corners and power around any that are not going to throw you off. Even if that does happen, most of the time you rebound back on to the course, so you lose little time. Once you are in first position, you can easily hold your place by lining up your car with those behind you (shown by small arrows) and they will be seemingly unable to overtake.

Sports Car GT has very few redeeming features, and although it can be moderately entertaining for a while, you won't be happy with this purchase. **Will**

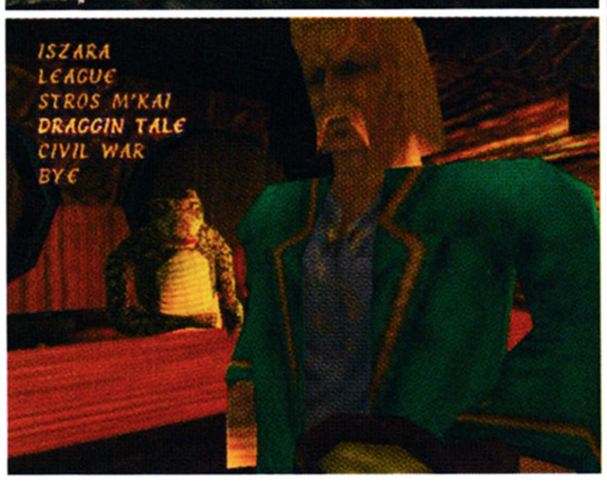
INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	Point of View
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-2
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

There are better alternatives

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Sports Car GT
GRAPHICS	47
SOUND	45
PLAYABILITY	30
OVERALL Out of 100	37

Redguard

Once in a **long while**, a game comes along that takes you **completely by surprise**. *Redguard* from **Bethesda Softworks** is just such a game.



Redguard from Bethesda Softworks is the first in a series of games called the *Elder Scrolls Adventures*, set in Bethesda's campaign world, Tamriel. *Redguard* is an adventure in which you control Cyrus, a mercenary on a quest to find his sister. The game bears comparison with *Tomb Raider III*, and in many ways *Redguard* is the better product. Lara may have a wider range of moves, and Core's graphics engine may do more tricks, but a fantasy story needs to be written with wit and imagination, and in this respect *Redguard* wins hands down.

Cyrus journeys to the island of Stros M'kai, a 3D environment with intelligent characters who you can talk to. A few may be less than polite, but most can be engaged in conversations. This is how you find your information in the game. The gameplay is open, and you can do things in any order. There are missions, but even these allow you a lot of freedom. The puzzles are imaginative and challenging, and there are also physical trials, such as swinging on ropes across lava pools, or leaping over shark-infested waters. *Redguard* has all the elements of a classic swashbuckling adventure.

En garde!

The combat is simple but elegant, and works well. Cyrus' main weapon is his sword, so most combat is at close quarters. Once you have drawn your weapon, the game switches into swordfighting mode. The camera view swings round to a more useful angle, and the controls change slightly, and movement control becomes a lot more precise. By combinations of movement and combat controls, you can fence with your foes. With practice, swordfighting becomes swift and deadly.

There is magic in Stros M'kai, but for Cyrus this is limited to drinking potions to restore lost health or to imbue him with greater strength or damage resistance. Potions can be found hidden in various places, or sometimes looted from fallen foes.

Smart design

One of the best features of the game is the character AI. From the guards to the guy who runs the hardware store, they all have distinct personalities and will react to your presence. The graphics engine powering Stros M'kai isn't going to win any awards when compared to the likes of *Half-Life*, but it's by no means bad. The design of the buildings and texture maps are beautiful, and the whole island has the feeling of being a real place, which is something that few games manage to achieve. The fact that the game engine handles all the cut-scene movies also helps to maintain the illusion of reality.

In conclusion, *Redguard* is a superb adventure game, elegant and sophisticated, and it draws you into its world as completely as any I have played. I look forward to the next game in the series. **Cliff**

TAKING CONTROL

During the game engine-generated intro sequence of Cyrus' voyage to Stros M'kai, the ship on which he is travelling is attacked by pirates, and you expect to watch as he fights them off. However, the game suddenly hands control over to you, and you have to fight for your life! This is an excellent way of pulling you into the game. By the time you reach the island and start meeting people, you are already involved.

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Virgin Interactive
DEVELOPER	Bethesda Softworks
STYLE	Fantasy Adventure
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£34.99
PLAYERS	One
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	350MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

You'll have to practice your swordplay and rope swinging if you want to survive for long in this swashbuckling adventure

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Redguard
GRAPHICS	64
SOUND	76
PLAYABILITY	90
OVERALL Out of 100	87

THE ELDER SCROLLS

Bethesda Softworks' *Elder Scrolls* games are set in the most complete and consistent fantasy environment ever created for a series of computer games, the world of Tamriel. The games are divided into three distinct categories. First, there is the *Elder Scroll* series, which are true RPGs. There are currently two chapters, Arena and Daggerfall, with a third instalment called Morrowind due out soon.

The *Elder Scrolls Legends* are more action oriented games, and the series so far only consists of *Battlespire*.

Redguard is the first game in the *Elder Scrolls Adventures* series, which are action/adventure games. If *Redguard* is anything to go by, this should be a series to watch out for.

SiN Mission Pack: Wages of SiN

Having had only a **few weeks of glory** before **giving way** to the might of *Half-Life*, **Activision** give us another **incentive to *SiN***...

TAKING CONTROL

I was quite surprised at how much I enjoyed playing *SiN* to begin with. First-person shoot-'em-ups are the favoured genre of mine, and this made a welcome change to the rest of the dross I had been playing recently. However, interest quickly dwindled. The levels are not well designed and the enemies uninspiring. This is the last game of the old generation of first-person shoot-'em-ups.

The life of *SiN* in the office was abruptly cut short after only a few weeks following the release of *Half-Life*. Obviously anticipating the threat of Valve's forthcoming PC game of the year, *SiN* was quickly rushed onto the shelves complete with numerous bugs, followed by a 20MB patch posted on the net to finish the game off (*Wages of SiN* does include this patch). The tragedy was that even though it was totally outclassed by *Half-Life*, it was (or at least would have been if it had been finished) a pretty good game.

WHAT STARTED OUT AS A GOLDENEYE-STYLE 'REAL-LIFE' FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER ULTIMATELY BECAME ANOTHER QUEST TO DESTROY A SERIES OF HOMICIDAL MUTANTS

SOFTWARE VS 3D

The extensive range of graphics set-up options allow for gamers with lower spec machines to play with as little slow down as possible, but the game still appears to be very jerky compared to similar games on lower spec machines. The software mode is more than reasonable though, as these two screenshots show. But still, the extra graphics routines do take a noticeable toll on the frame rate.

previous choice. It's quite an interesting notion, but for my money the idea didn't make too much of an impact on the game.

You take on the role of security expert Colonel John R. Blade, a stereotypically macho hero that the game thankfully doesn't take too seriously. After eliminating the threat of the crazed biochemist Elexis Sinclaire and her army of mutants from the city of Freeport in the first game, your new mission is to stop mob boss Gianni Manero from taking her place. The idea behind the mission pack is very similar to the original game. Your only ally is computer nerd JC, whom you have frequent contact with over your com-link.

There was a small illusion in the first game – what started out as a *Goldeneye*-style 'real-life' first-person shooter ultimately became another quest to destroy a series of homicidal mutants, but the settings were realistic at least. It's much the same this time around, except this time the mutants feature earlier on in the game. You travel though construction sites, shipyards, casinos and tower blocks, but the level design is poor, not from a gameplay perspective, but from the point of view of the building design, which never feels as realistic as it should. *Duke Nukem 3D* makes a good comparison, but that game pulled it off to much better effect.

Going down

There are several human enemies and civilians in the game, but although they do have multiple hit points, from an animation point of view they don't look or (more importantly) act the part. Although the box boasts 'superior enemy AI', the vast majority will always run towards you firing whilst making no attempt to dodge your fire. Civilians merely freeze and

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Ritual Entertainment
STYLE	First-person Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£24.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	350MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

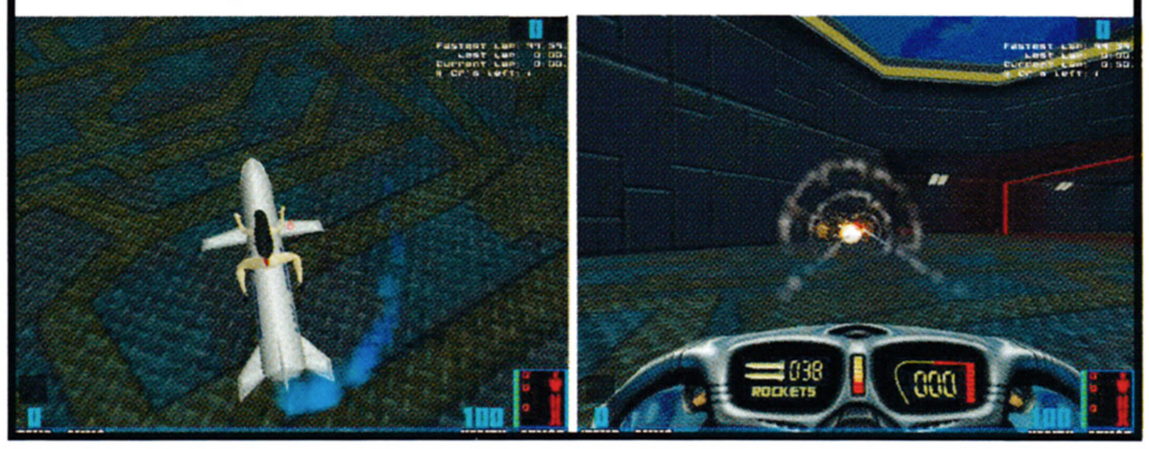
The major selling point of the first game was the action-based outcome scenarios, where each mission had a number of key choices that would directly affect later levels. For example, you could flood certain areas in one mission and then later re-enter those areas, with different areas being accessible depending on your

FLASH!! AAA-AAAHHH!

Taking inspiration from *Half-Life*, *Wages of SiN* now has a flashlight item for you to find. It's often essential, as many of the areas are submerged in total darkness, and it works in much the same way as the item in Valve's game. There's also the inclusion of TermOptic goggles, which although they do not help to enhance the scenery, they will show the heat signature of an enemy very brightly. Ropes make their debut as well, and you can use them to swing to certain other areas of the level.

MULTIPLAYER

First-person shoot-'em-ups do make for some excellent multiplayer games, but the original *SiN* only managed to serve as a middle course between *Quake II* and *Half-Life*. This pack includes a new deathmatch mode allowing the use of Hoverbikes, where you can gain frags for completing laps, setting fastest lap times and, of course, blowing up your opponents. It works much better than expected, even with only two players. There are two versions of Mob Rules as well, where one person takes the role of the informer and anyone who kills him gains a frag, but if he shoots you, you become the informer yourself. The other game has one specified informer throughout. It's just a bit of a shame that the Team Fortress patch has recently arrived– Valve won't be making any friends in the Ritual Entertainment camp at the moment.



cower whenever you shoot a gun in their vicinity, and only a few of the enemies will attempt to run away when they get low on health.

Boys with toys

Apart from the new story set around seventeen single-player levels, there are four new enemies and two extra boss characters. There are also five new weapons – the excellent Plasma Bow, an electronic Concussion Gun, a close-range Flame-thrower, a clumsy-but-powerful Stinger Missile Pack and a multiplayer-only Guided Missile. Details of the multiplayer mode extension can be found elsewhere on this page. It's a very interesting extension that works much better than you might think.

Wages of SiN is as good a mission pack as you could justifiably ask for, but it has dated so incredibly quickly. If you've already bought *Half-Life*, there's *Alien Vs Predator*, *Kingpin*, *Quake III* and *Duke Nukem Forever* on the horizon, and you would be a fool to put *SiN* before any of those titles. If you can afford it, *Wages of SiN* is a good extension of a not-so-great game. **Will**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●○○○○

If it did ever happen it would be very surprising, but then stranger things have happened. Again, *Quake II* will hopefully be making its debut soon, but there isn't much of an alternative at moment apart from *Doom*.

Nintendo 64 ●○○○○

Possible but highly unlikely. Activision will be throwing everything at *Quake II*, so check out our Beta Look on that instead. If you can't wait that long (or longer for *Half-Life* and *Perfect Dark*) and you've already got *Goldeneye* (and 95% of you will), how about *Turok 2*?

Dreamcast ●○○○○

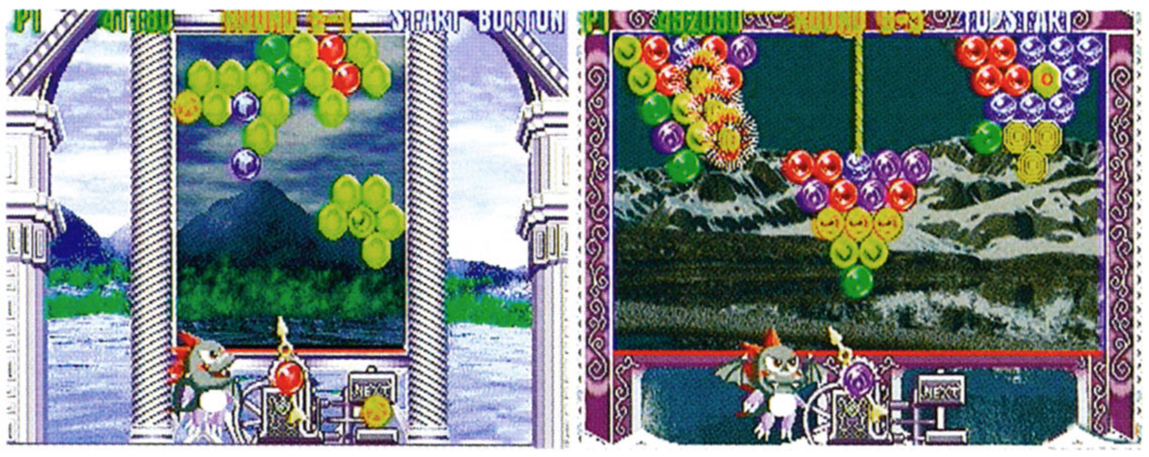
PC games have apparently been converted in a number of days, but I wouldn't expect *SiN* to make it across. *Maken X* may turn out to be a good alternative, and there have been rumours concerning the conversion of a certain Valve title…

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Wages of Sin
GRAPHICS	70
SOUND	72
PLAYABILITY	75
OVERALL Out of 100	77

Bust-A-Move 4

The *Bubble Bobble* **spin-off has gone** from strength to strength, **but is this** fourth game **one too many?** Total CONTROL finds out…



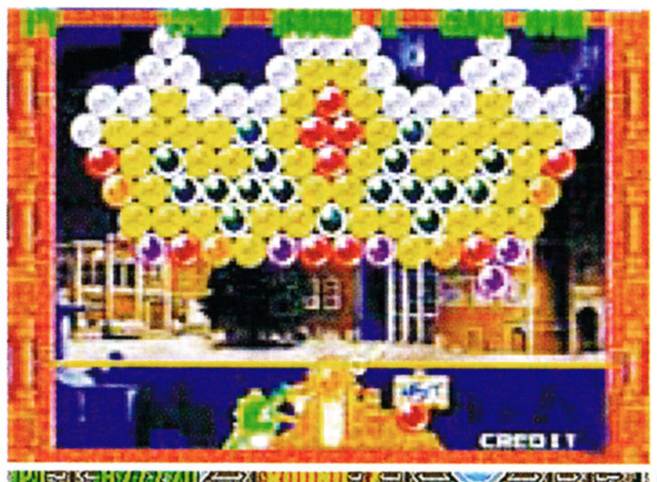
Bust-A-Move is, in many people's opinion, the greatest puzzle game since *Tetris*. The idea is simple; clear a screen of multi-coloured bubbles by connecting three of the same colour using a bubble shooter from the bottom of the screen. When the entire screen has been cleared, you move on to the next level.

As simple as it may be, like all good puzzle games there's quite a lot of strategy involved. Bubbles can be bounced off walls (and now the ceiling too), and if bubbles are cleared, leaving others not connected to anything, they will fall, giving you extra bonus points.

Bust-A-Move 4 offers little over the previous titles in the series – extra game modes, a level designer and editor, slightly more polished presentation and a few new in-game bonuses and surprises – but there isn't enough here to make owners of the previous games throw their money in this direction. However, if you have yet to sample this great puzzle game, this fourth incarnation is easily the best of the bunch and comes highly recommended. **Will**

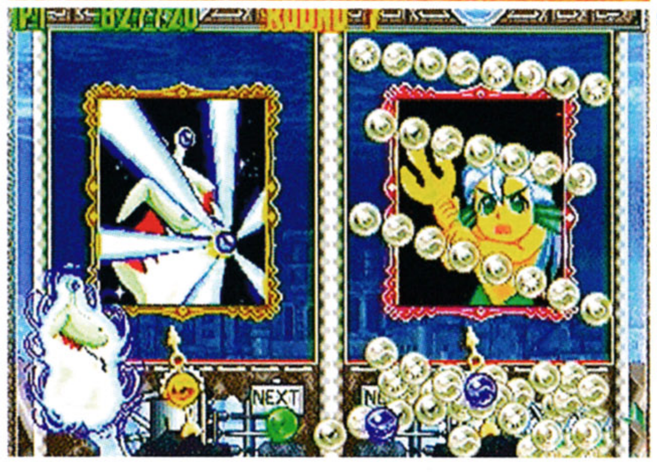
INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	Taito
STYLE	Puzzle
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card



VERDICT

GAME NAME	Bust-A-Move 4
GRAPHICS	61
SOUND	64
PLAYABILITY	86
OVERALL Out of 100	79



Bust-A-Move*, the most universal game since *Tetris

Frogger

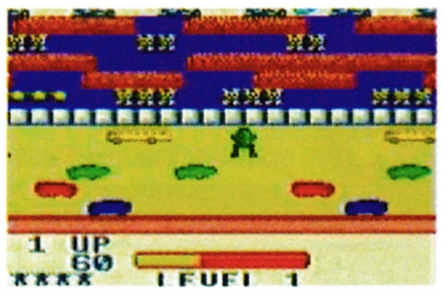
Crossing a road eh, **great idea for** a game!

Few of you will not have heard of this game. *Frogger* pits you as the controller of five misguided frogs attempting to cross both a busy high street and debris-strewn river. You manoeuvre each, avoiding five lanes of traffic and then the river, by crossing on the backs of turtles and logs, and then get each to a separate slot at the top of the screen.

This conversion is completely faithful to the original classic. As you progress, the complexity and speed of the objects increases, and incidental hazards such as crocodiles, snakes and alligators crop up every now and again. There is also a two-player mode, but for alternative play only.

Frogger is every bit as good now as it was before. There have been no major changes, but it will be a game that you'll keep returning to for ages. It passes the time well, and if you've got the money to spend it's a worthwhile purchase. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Game Boy
PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Hasbro Interactive
STYLE	Puzzle
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£19.99
PLAYERS	One
GAMEBOY COLOUR	Supported



VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Frogger
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	56
PLAYABILITY	79
OVERALL Out of 100	70

Yo-Yo's Puzzle Park

Look **out Bub and** Bob! It's... **Yo-Yo...?**

This is one of the strangest puzzle games I've played recently. It comes with completely bizarre sound effects and settings, and there's actually a lot of fun to be had with this surprisingly entertaining title.

You face over 130 platform-filled levels, all containing a number of enemies and bombs to kill them with. By jumping into the bombs you set the fuse. You can then nudge them around the level, attempting to destroy the enemies when they detonate. The levels become progressively more difficult as you move on, with some enemies multiplying if they are not killed correctly, while others will shoot at you. Some simply hurl themselves in your direction. There are also a number of vehicles to use, all of which have differing special abilities.

Yo-Yo's Puzzle Park is a return to the 16-bit days of gaming. The levels are bright and colourful and the enemies well quite well animated, but ultimately this is a very simple title that won't keep hold your interest long enough to warrant its purchase. Being a good game for young kids and having a nice multiplayer option are this game's only real saving graces. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	JVC
DEVELOPER	Irem
STYLE	Puzzle/Platform
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Yo-Yo's Puzzle Park
GRAPHICS	47
SOUND	52
PLAYABILITY	63
OVERALL Out of 100	61

Twisted Edge

Going up **against 1080 Snowboarding** is a pretty **brave thing to** do, in fact you'd only think of doing it if you had a **triple A product.** Wouldn't you?

While the N64 may not have a plethora of snowboarding games in its arsenal, there's no excuse for releasing this. With the release of *1080° Snowboarding 2* now in doubt, there appears to be little out there to better the original game, and it certainly won't be finding much competition here.

Although the players are well modelled and the game doesn't look that bad, the levels are extremely bland and are not as open as those in *1080°*, the game could have done with much more variety on the levels. Instead of using what could easily be a straightforward 'realistic' run, the arcade nature of the game dictates that it should be much more varied, with loads of ramps, houses, cars etc. There are several different routes available, but by following the course leader on the harder difficulties, you'll soon learn the best course line. The main problem is that the game runs at such a ridiculously low speed, often you'll find yourself stuck on near flat parts of the course, which is highly aggravating from that point of view it's hard to see how it got past the play-testers.

The more impressive stunts are difficult to pull off; it will take ages for you to get past the grabs and learn how to do spins, much longer than it takes for all interest to wear away. The tedious rock soundtrack will be turned off by most after about an hour, and to sum up, *Twisted Edge* holds nothing at all over *1080°* and should be avoided. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Kemco
STYLE	Arcade Snowboarding
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
RUMBLE PACK	Yes
MEMORY PACK	Yes
EXPANSION PACK	No

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Yo-Yo's Puzzle Park
GRAPHICS	72
SOUND	52
PLAYABILITY	59
OVERALL Out of 100	58

Bloody Roar 2

Shape-shifting **warriors** take their place in the **combat arena** in this **explosive beat-'em-up** sequel...

Each fighter in *Bloody Roar 2* has an animal alter-ego with unique and deadly powers

If you've been playing *Tekken 3* for the past eight months, you could probably do with a change about now, and I've got just the thing. If you are looking for another beat-'em-up to fill the gap, I can recommend *Bloody Roar 2*. This is a classy piece of work which deserves to do well in the shops. The quality of the graphics, the character animation, and the sheer playability of the game should win it a place on your game shelf right next to Namco's classic.

If you played the first *Bloody Roar*, you won't find many surprises in this sequel. The basic idea of the game remains the same, with a cast of characters who all combine their martial arts skills with the werewolf-like ability to transform into special animal forms. The only difference in this respect is that some of the characters from the first game have been replaced for the sequel. The cast includes those staples of all Japanese action games, the cute little girl and the leggy blonde in high heels. The overall appearance of the game is also very similar, with impressive lighting effects including realistic shadows and stunning special attack and knockout animations. The combat takes place against some gorgeous backgrounds, including an animated aquarium complete with fish swimming about.

There are only nine characters to choose from, which is a bit limiting for those used to *Tekken*'s cast of thousands, but they do all have distinctive styles. Each character has a range of special moves, including some which can only be accomplished while in animal form, and with sufficient practice you can pull off some impressive multi-hit combinations. The CPU-controlled opponents can sometimes manage twenty-two hit combos which will leave your character (and you) stunned and reeling. You'll be lucky if you can duplicate this feat. The AI controlling the opponents is not as cunning as some, which limits the appeal of the game in single-player mode, but as a two-player bash it is superb.

There are a number of things missing from the game which I would like to have seen, such as a training mode to explain how to do those massive combos, and some more variety in the game options. There is also one thing I could have done without, which is the appalling thrash metal soundtrack music. *Bloody Roar 2* isn't going to replace *Tekken 3* as king of the beat-'em-ups, but it certainly earns a place on the podium. **Cliff**

TAKING CONTROL

The hypnotic power of the spectacular visual pyrotechnics glue your eyes to the screen from the word 'Fight!', and the controls are intuitive enough to get you a couple of quick victories in the first minute or two. It's only when you start getting further into the game that the lack of variety starts to be a problem. The limited cast of characters and the lack of any training mode means that you can't really develop any particular style, which may restrict the longevity of the game

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Virgin
DEVELOPER	Hudson
STYLE	Beat-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Bloody Roar 2
GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	24
PLAYABILITY	78
OVERALL Out of 100	72

OTHER FORMATS

There's not much doubt that the PlayStation is the home of the beat-'em-up, in the same way that the N64 is home to the 3D platform game. *Bloody Roar 2* was written specifically for the PlayStation, and I would be surprised to see it appear on any other machine, except possibly the Dreamcast, which has yet to become identified with any one genre.

X-Wing Alliance

With the world about to go into a **Star Wars frenzy,** now couldn't be a better time to release a Star Wars game. Better **get it quick before the new film comes out...**

TAKING CONTROL

After being treated to a wonderful cinematic opening, you quickly realise that this is a high-quality product. You can't really fail with Star Wars, and this recreates the atmosphere of the films to a tee. If you forgive this for being almost identical as the *X-Wing* games then you'll be flying. It's basically more of the same, but then that's no bad thing...

INFORMATION

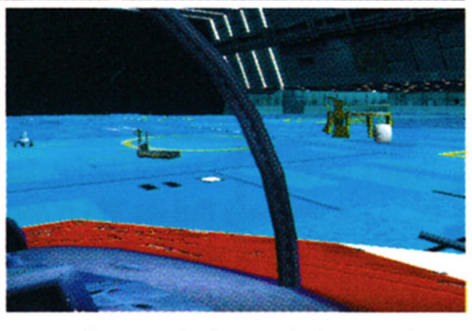
FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
STYLE	Space Flight Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-16
PROCESSOR	P200 P333
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	250MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

License to print money? You would think so, what with all the Star Wars merchandising down the years. Video games have been no exception from this, and *X-Wing Alliance* is the latest from LucasArts. With The Phantom Menace coming up soon, this could well be the last game (for a while) to focus on the original Star Wars universe.

X-Wing Alliance is set sometime before the end of Return of the Jedi and sees the player take his or her part in the Azameen family business, i.e. trading and smuggling. However, when the Empire sticks its nose in it's time for you to seek help from, and ultimately join, the Rebel Alliance.

Eventually you get the chance to join the Rebellion, and it is here that the game really opens up, giving you the opportunity to fly all of your favourite ships. Essentially, *X-Wing Alliance* is little more than a remake of the *Tie Fighter* and *X-Wing* games, but when it is done as well as this, there is little that you can complain about. It also has many advantages over those SVGA PC classics, namely the sheer amount of ships that can be flying around at any one time and some gorgeous 3D accelerated graphics. Lighting has been brilliantly implemented to give the game a more realistic look, one that is closer to the films than any other Star Wars game to date.

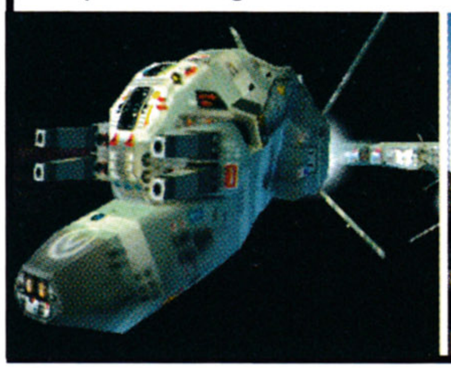
The action takes place over more than fifty missions, and the story that accompanies them is as important as the actual missions and an effective way to hook you into the game. As with *X-Wing* and *Tie Fighter*, the missions don't



The virtual cockpit is a great inclusion to the game, giving players an all-round view of the action

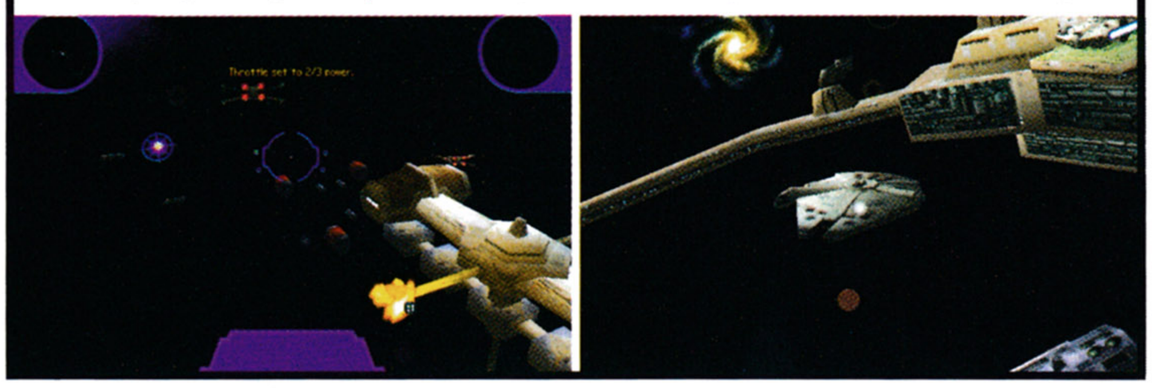
OR YOU COULD TRY...

If you're a fan of these type of games then you'll probably already know about the *X-Wing Collector's Edition,* which features *X-Wing*, *Tie Fighter* and *X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter* – all with 3D acceleration. However, you might want to keep your eyes open for both *Homeworld* and *Jump Runner* – both are space combat games. It's not Star Wars, but then what is?



MULTIPLAYER

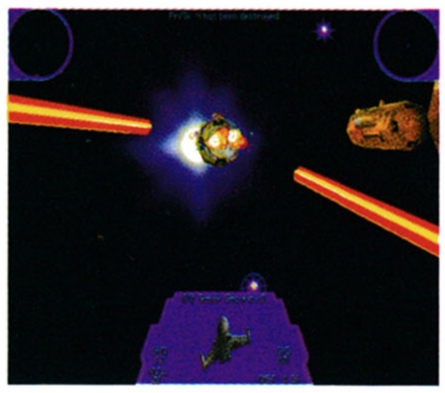
Featuring a brilliant multiplayer mode, *X-Wing Alliance* can pit two sides of eight each up against one another. Each team is given a number of points to spend, and each ship is worth a certain amount of points – the bigger/more powerful the ship, the more points it costs. You can pretty much choose from every ship in the game, from small transport craft to the larger vessels such as Star Destroyers.



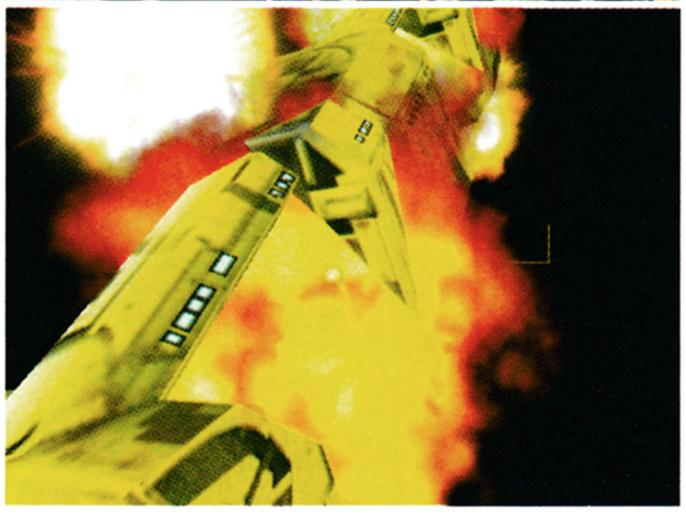
vary away from the usual space-based action. However, the learning curve is superbly judged, with the first few missions serving to introduce you to both the controls and a bit of background information.

This has to be the best use of a game soundtrack ever. Apart from the fact that it uses the classic John Williams music, it is all fully interactive; if you are flying along in space, minding your own business, then the music will be nice and peaceful, but as soon as any Imperial fighters show up, it's time for some bombast.

Obviously, with the music playing such an important role in the film, it would be hard to imagine this without the classical score, and it would then be just another space combat game – a good one at that, but a space combat game nonetheless. Having said that, though, *X-Wing Alliance* is a superb rendition of a classic theme. Some may baulk at what is essentially a serious simulation of a very unserious film, but Star Wars fans will absolutely love it. **Nick**



Your cockpit can be replaced with a Head Up Display



Battles are far more dramatic than before

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ○○○○○

Would be a poor relation if it ever did appear on the PlayStation, so it's highly unlikely.

N64 ○○○○○

Would be possible, but this is probably not arcade enough for the N64. Shame, because I'm sure that owners would lap this up…

Dreamcast ○○○○○

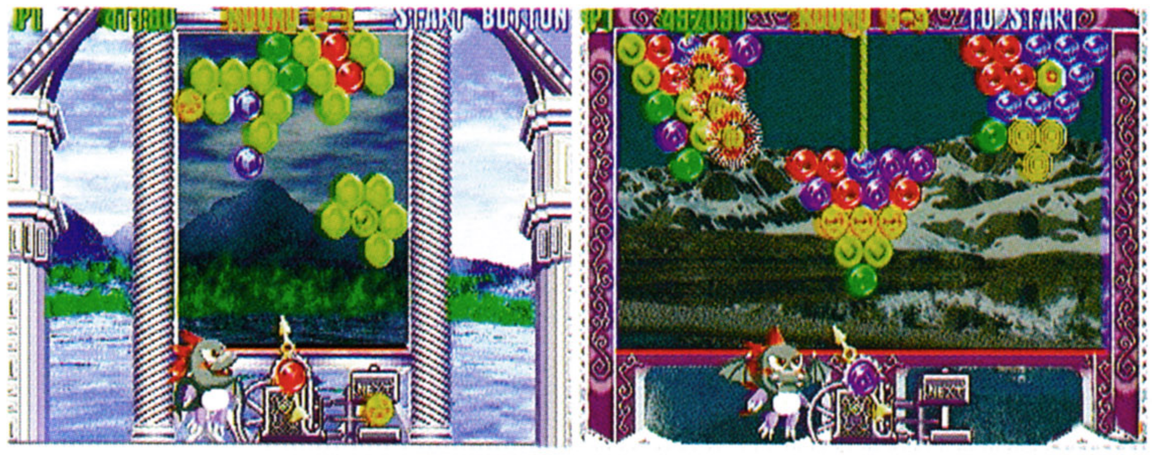
The same goes for the Dreamcast, but by the time Sega's console comes out, we'll all be going Phantom Menace mad.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	X-Wing Alliance
GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	90
PLAYABILITY	87
OVERALL Out of 100	89

Bust-A-Move 4

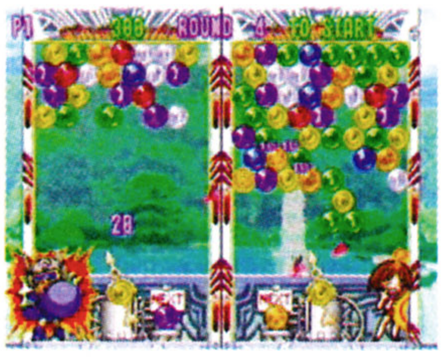
The *Bubble Bobble* **spin-off has gone** from strength to strength, **but is this** fourth game **one too many?** Total CONTROL finds out…



Bust-A-Move is, in many people's opinion, the greatest puzzle game since *Tetris*. The idea is simple; clear a screen of multi-coloured bubbles by connecting three of the same colour using a bubble shooter from the bottom of the screen. When the entire screen has been cleared, you move on to the next level.

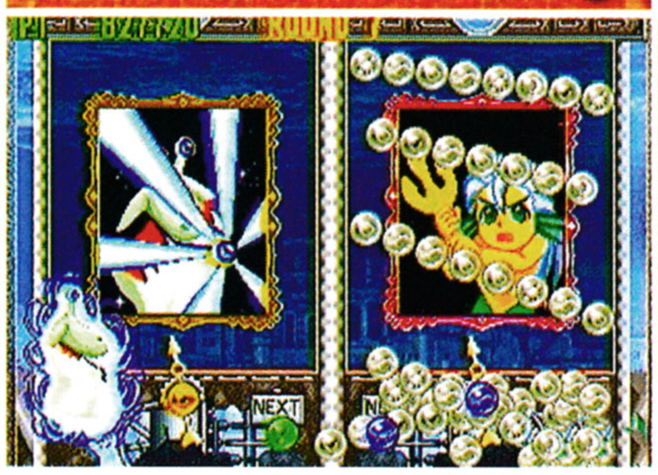
As simple as it may be, like all good puzzle games there's quite a lot of strategy involved. Bubbles can be bounced off walls (and now the ceiling too), and if bubbles are cleared, leaving others not connected to anything, they will fall, giving you extra bonus points.

Bust-A-Move 4 offers little over the previous titles in the series – extra game modes, a level designer and editor, slightly more polished presentation and a few new in-game bonuses and surprises – but there isn't enough here to make owners of the previous games throw their money in this direction. However, if you have yet to sample this great puzzle game, this fourth incarnation is easily the best of the bunch and comes highly recommended. **Will**



INFORMATION

FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	Taito
STYLE	Puzzle
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£29.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card



VERDICT

GAME NAME	Bust-A-Move 4
GRAPHICS	61
SOUND	64
PLAYABILITY	86
OVERALL Out of 100	79

Bust-A-Move*, the most universal game since *Tetris

Requiem

TAKING CONTROL

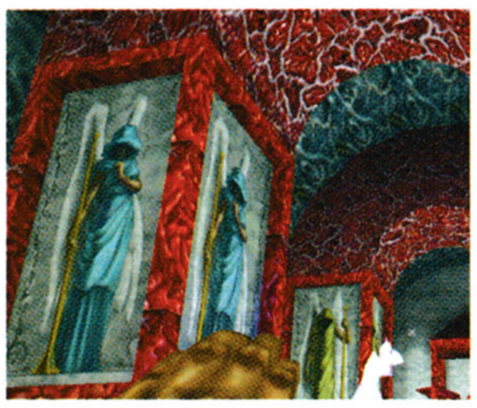
Requiem was initially frustrating due to the relative lack of direction in the game and the fact that you could die so quickly, but after a bit of extended play the story quickly becomes very engrossing. And although certain areas of the game are rather tiring, it is generally enjoyable from the start.

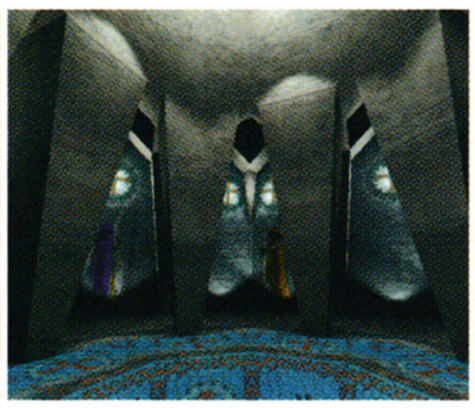
Teething problems?

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Ubisoft
DEVELOPER	3DO
STYLE	First-Person Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	May
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	275MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

It's a **tough genre to release** any game in, but Ubisoft will be hoping for **some divine influence** with their latest futuristic shoot-'em-up...





The original batch of first-person shoot-'em-ups were mainly futuristic, a setting that allowed your character to wreak havoc with some very big 'experimental'-style weaponry. Before the arrival of *Goldeneye*, developers seemed to want to rule out the use of modern day big guns, so those games that did not take place in the future took a more mystical approach so that magic and sorcery could provide the more impressive pyrotechnics. *Requiem* allows the player to use both kick-ass technology and a fair selection of pretty cool otherworldly powers.

Trouble in paradise

You play the role of Malachi, an angel soldier sent down from heaven to ward off the hellish demons that have been using their influence to turn humanity against each other. Set on a futuristic earth, the demons have been moving across the realm of chaos and are now preparing themselves for the big push, basing their operations around an orbital space station. Though the humans are blissfully unaware of the demons' existence, they have in actual fact taken over the military and political infrastructure of the planet. Fortunately, not all of the humans are prepared to accept their fate, and many soon rebel against their increasingly demonic society and formed a rebel faction. You follow in the footsteps of the above-mentioned angel warrior and must lead this band of rebels in an effort to push the demons back to hell for good.

You begin the game by moving through the realm of chaos and onto a city street, where things are even worse than you could have imagined. However, it is here that you will soon notice the first of two main problems with *Requiem*: There is often very little direction in the game, and getting lost is a frequent occurrence. It

ARMOURED CORE

In what is a pretty good twist on the body specific targeting system, the *Requiem* engine not only notices when you target limbs and heads, but also whether you target skin or armour. This means that certain parts of each limb will be more vulnerable, and powers such as blood boil will only work when you target skin. Also, for the more heavily armoured opponents, your weaker weaponry will be completely ineffective against their dense armour plating.

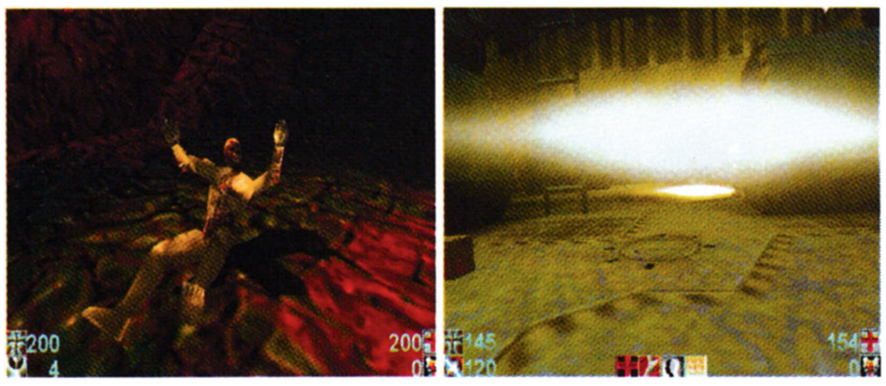
MULTIPLAYER

Sadly, the multiplayer mode for *Requiem* did not live up to expectations. Difficult to launch and generally sparse, this section of the game seemed to have very little thought put into it. The seven levels are only saved by an interesting team play option that allows proper use of your angelic powers, such as 'heal other'. The fact that launching *Requiem* (but luckily not playing it) requires you to have a copy of the game makes LAN battles somewhat inconvenient. Still, although it falls below par for the genre, it is a lot of fun if you have enough people playing.

seems to have been designed using a number of fairly large and very open areas, all connected by one very small tunnel or air vent, which means that you will often find yourself wandering around feeling lost for what seems like an eternity. It is generally pretty well designed though, with the landscapes actually looking fairly plausible, while graphically 3DO's new engine is very impressive, allowing for some very detailed texture maps, accurate shadows on all of the characters (albeit with a few minor bugs) and smooth gameplay. The only gripe is a lack of polygons on the other characters in the game, many of whom have noticeably flat faces and body parts etc.

...When I lay my vengeance upon thee

Being an angel has its obvious bonuses, but that doesn't make you an invincible fighting machine. There are a selection of weapons that you'll pick up in the usual manner as you make your way through the game, including shotguns, railguns, sniper guns (which are surprisingly low powered) and rocket launchers. At pre-set points you will also receive a number of angelic powers that can either be used as your main weapon or as a secondary power. There are a range of powers that you can learn – some defensive, some aggressive, others to manipulate humans – all of which require a certain amount of 'holy power' to be used, but this recharges slowly, and as you



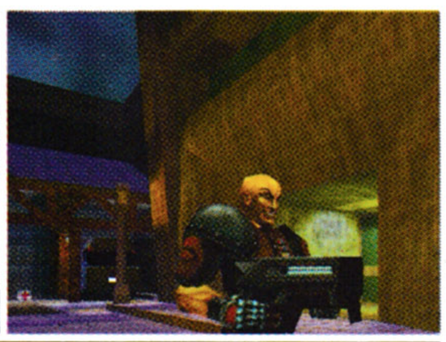
Many of the areas have already been taken by the demons

progress, the total amount of power that you can have at any one point increases. The aggressive attacks are usually extremely destructive but are either power-heavy or very difficult to aim with. The fun starts with commands such as insist, resurrect and possess, where you can (respectively) force human enemies to fight amongst themselves; gain allies until they die again; or assume control of their bodies for brief periods of time. Sadly, though it's pretty cool to play around with for a while, the game never seems to take full advantage of these more unique features, and you will rarely use any holy power other than your health boost, which will almost always be constantly selected as your non-aggressive power because of your lack of health.

A couple of small guards can bring your health down from 150 to 0 in about two seconds, so unless you play the game by constantly saving and re-loading after every conflict (which is thankfully almost instantaneous), you are going to want to assign this command to your right mouse button. Enemies also seem to have phenomenal ranges, fields of vision, reflexes and accuracy, which can be unfair at times, but it does make this a very tactical game, and as you master the controls it works very well.

A VERY WORTHY GAME THAT UNFORTUNATELY FALLS VICTIM TO HITTING THE MARKET AT A TIME WHEN THE COMPETITION IN THE GENRE IS EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG

Ultimately *Requiem* shares much in common with *SiN*. Having played both *Kingpin* and *AvP*, this will certainly fall short of their success, but it is in itself a very worthy game that unfortunately falls victim to hitting the market at a time when the competition in the genre is exceptionally strong. The only reason you'll regret your purchase is when you go over to a mate's house and see him playing *Kingpin*. **Will**



SOFTWARE VS 3D

Requiem is not a game that is recommended for those of you without 3D support – a quick go soon reveals how disregarded you non-3Dfx boys and girls really are. Apart from ridiculous slowdowns due to obvious processor strains, the lighting seems completely wrong, being far too dark. Perhaps the signs that Ubisoft are getting worried about the forthcoming competition are shown here. That is, if you put this down to it being a rushed product.

OTHER FORMATS?

Nintendo 64 ○○○○○

Well, yes it is possible to convert the game, but it's unlikely that a conversion would warrant the amount of time that it would require. *Goldeneye*, *Turok 2* and the imminent *Quake II* spring to mind as pretty good alternatives.

PlayStation ○○○○○

Again, the PlayStation may be able to handle a simplified version, but don't get too excited yet. You'd be much better off saving for *Quake II* when it finally gets converted.

Dreamcast ●○○○○

Depending on its success on the PC, a Dreamcast version may be a possibility, but we've heard nothing of it yet. Details on the first Dreamcast first-person shooter, *Maken X*, remain sketchy, but keep an eye out for news of that game in our foreign section.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Requiem
GRAPHICS	84
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	78
OVERALL Out of 100	79

NETTOTAL

STEVE BROWN
e-mail: steveb@rapide.co.uk

Isn't it about time you stopped playing with yourself? Why not reach out and touch someone else in the parallel universe of the internet? Slip through the virtual gateway of your ISP and enjoy some anonymous interaction with fellow gamers all over the globe. Everyone's doing it. It's easier and cheaper than ever with free service providers and free local calls (see News), and there is a wealth of game-related information, demo downloads and online multiplayer action to be had. Don't be put off if you are not primarily a PC gamer. We will provide plenty of links to console pages, with news, cheats and information on the developing internet aspects of the Dreamcast and PlayStation 2.

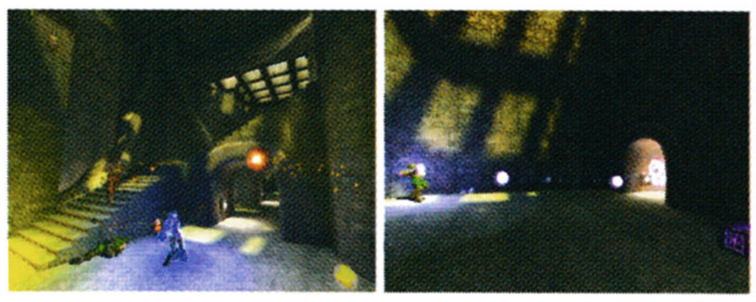
In our new Downlink section we will be giving you regular updates on the hot sites for the best downloads, including a Top Ten Demos directory. Network Focus will review a different game network every month, looking at the supported games, ease of connection and extra features. Our Hot Off The Wire news section will keep you up to date with the latest happenings in the online gaming world – this month be sure to look at the fantastic new offer from Screaming Net. In Application Form we will also be showing you where to find useful internet apps that you will afterwards wonder how you lived without. Quick-Click will provide you with links to useful website categories, and Wanted will feature an upcoming internet game that we are itching to play. Finally, in Game Over, Man, we will take a break from games and review some alternative sites that should interest and amuse you.

We would also like to feature a reader site every month, so if you want to send your hit-count soaring, send us details so that we can visit your homepage and put it in the mag. You can contact us by email (Total.Control@rapide.co.uk – put 'Reader Site' in Subject), or by snail mail (mark F.A.O. Steve Brown, Reader Sites, Total Control, 1 Roman Court, 48 New North Rd., Exeter EX4 4EP). Please include your name, the full address of your website, and any personal information you don't mind being re-printed.

HOT OFF THE WIRE

Buy a Mac! The Quake III demo is here

Loyal PC fans of ID software were disgusted that the most anticipated demo release ever, that of *Quake III Arena*, was released initially only for Macintosh, not traditionally a popular games format. So are ID just teasing, further heightening everyone's anticipation? Apparently not. John Carmack has had a lot of praise for the new generation Macs with their 3D accelerator cards, and was always determined that there should be a Mac version of *Quake III*. The order of release has always been (we are now told) Mac, then Linux, then finally PC. The official reason is that specific video card vendors are still waiting for their OpenGL drivers to be PC certified by Microsoft hardware compatibility labs. So, PC owners, don't blame John Carmack, blame Bill Gates. And who'd have thought Mac users would have something to thank Bill for?



If you don't have a Mac with a top ATI 3D card, you'll have to wait for scenes like these

Dreamcast unzipped

The Iomega Zip Drive has firmly established itself as an indispensable back-up and storage medium for the PC over the last couple of years. The compression utility has been encouraged in its use by bundling the device with new PCs, scanners and printers. In a recent move, SEGA have signed a deal with Iomega to provide internet storage facilities for the Dreamcast. This will be a 100MB Zip drive that connects to the console and allows game updates to be downloaded from the internet and stored for use. The Dreamcast will download the extra data using its 56K modem, which should be included with every console. SEGA will be also be selling its own Dreamcast-branded 100MB Zip disks through the usual retail outlets. The prices and release dates of the drive and disks have not yet been announced.

Localtel give BT something to scream about

One of the last barriers to free internet gaming has finally been brought crashing down. Over the last year we have seen the emergence and wildfire growth of free-from-subscription ISPs such as Dixons' Freeserve, Tesco's Tesconet, and recently Eidos' Eidosnet. Still, however, there are those dreaded quarterly phone bills to remind you just how long you have been on the net. This could now be a thing of the past with the launch of Screaming.Net, a free ISP that also offers free local connection with Localtel between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. and all weekend. It means changing your telecom provider from BT (or whomever you are using) to Localtel, but they offer 10% lower rates on all but mobile calls anyway. At present there is no online registration facility, but you can pick up a free connection CD from any of 48 nation-wide Tempo stores. This could revolutionise internet access in the UK, encouraging more and more people to get online to play internet games (who cares about the rest of it?), forcing BT and others to follow suit.

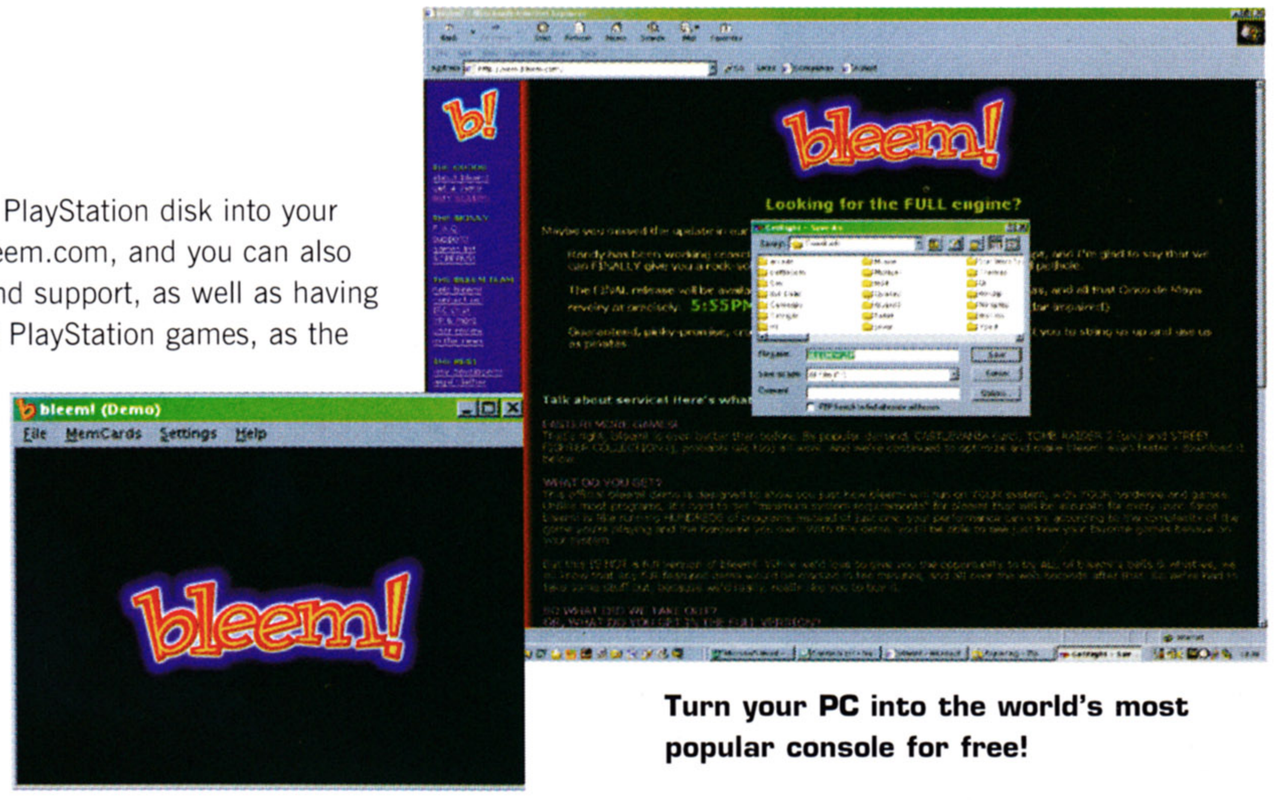
Love on the net with PlayStation 2

Mr. Kutaragi has apparently revealed an unforeseen special service that the PlayStation 2 will provide. Forget 0898 numbers, by the end of the year you could have your own virtual lover (or pet, depending on your preferences), who communicates with you at remote locations using the PlayStation 2's modem. The ability to set this virtual companion up to actually phone you conjures up all sorts of scary thoughts. Imagine your receptionist at work – "It's Bimbi again, she says she really needs to lick your feet".

DOWNLINK

Bleem me up, www.bleem.com

Bleem is a PlayStation emulator for the PC that allows you to pop an official black PlayStation disk into your CD-Rom or DVD drive and play away. The demo can be downloaded from www.bleem.com, and you can also order the full CD version from there. The full version offers 3D accelerator and sound support, as well as having virtual memory cards. However, you will not be able to play CD-backup versions of PlayStation games, as the Bleem developers do not want to step on Sony's toes and also do not want to be associated with any hint of piracy. Bleem will run in Windows 95/98 and requires only 16MB RAM.



Turn your PC into the world's most popular console for free!

Mac Quake III, www.q3arena.com

For those lucky enough to own a Mac with a 3D card, you can get the earliest official taste of multiplayer *Quake III* action by downloading the 22MB Mac Q3test file from www.q3arena.com. For those stuck with a PC, you will have to make do for now with the 3MB movie of the test demo or the 3D animated model viewer, also downloadable from this site.

One of the more popular models is bound to be the old *Doom* Marine

Japaneasy Manuals, www.maktos.com

If you are into Japanese console game imports and have access to the internet, then never again will you have to go on an Open University language course before being able to read the manuals. English translations of many popular import manuals are now available to download in rich text format from www.maktos.com. Apparently there is no Japanese term for 'thank you', but cheers anyway!

TOP TEN DEMOS

Championship Manager 3 www.cm3.com

With this demo you'll get to play around half a season in any English league with any English team. A great chance to see if you want to buy the great *Champ Manager 3*. What the hell, you've probably already bought it by now...

Kingpin: Life of Crime www.gangland.org

See, first-person shooters don't have to be all about corridors, shooting and aliens – *Kingpin* succeeds in being totally different to anything else in the genre. This is partly due to the X-rated language, but don't let that put off – this demo is superb.

Team Fortress Classic www.planethalflife.com

The brilliant *Half-Life* multiplayer game just took on an entirely new meaning with this excellent teamplay mod. All the usual games are here, and a few new ones as well. The inclusion of different classes of player is an inspired decision.

Starshot: Space Circus Fever www.happypuppy.com

Infogrames' wacky French 3D platform romp isn't quite up to the standards of *Mario 64* (especially since you can play that on emulation right now) but is probably as close as the PC is going to get for a while. The insane characters and humour are a delight.

MechWarrior 3 www.happypuppy.com

Big robots, destructive weapons and some fantastic graphics are going to make this one of the big games of the year. Get a good look at what could be a massive game on PC.

Field & Stream Trophy Bass 3D www.happypuppy.com

Fishing games are always much of a muchness, but there's something strangely enjoyable, nay relaxing, about *Trophy Bass 3D*.

Triple Play 2000 www.happypuppy.com

Baseball sells brilliantly in the US but (unsurprisingly) isn't too successful over here. It has to be said that it makes a great video game, especially when in multiplayer mode. Try this – you might just like it.

Wild Metal Country www.happypuppy.com

DMA Design's brilliant tank game is simply conceived, effortlessly executed and intensely addictive. The physics engine is one the best yet seen – it's great fun just watching boulders rolling down hills. Almost...

Requiem: Avenging Angel www.download.com

Doesn't offer anything that different than your usual first-person shooter, but it's still a well-put-together game. Closer to *SiN* than *Half-Life* on the quality scale, but it's a good game nonetheless.

X-Wing Alliance www.download.com

Yeah, we know this is getting as little old now, but it's still Star Wars and it's got a great 'un-winnable' space battle at the end. We could play it for hours...

NETWORK FOCUS

Mplayer, www.mplayer.com

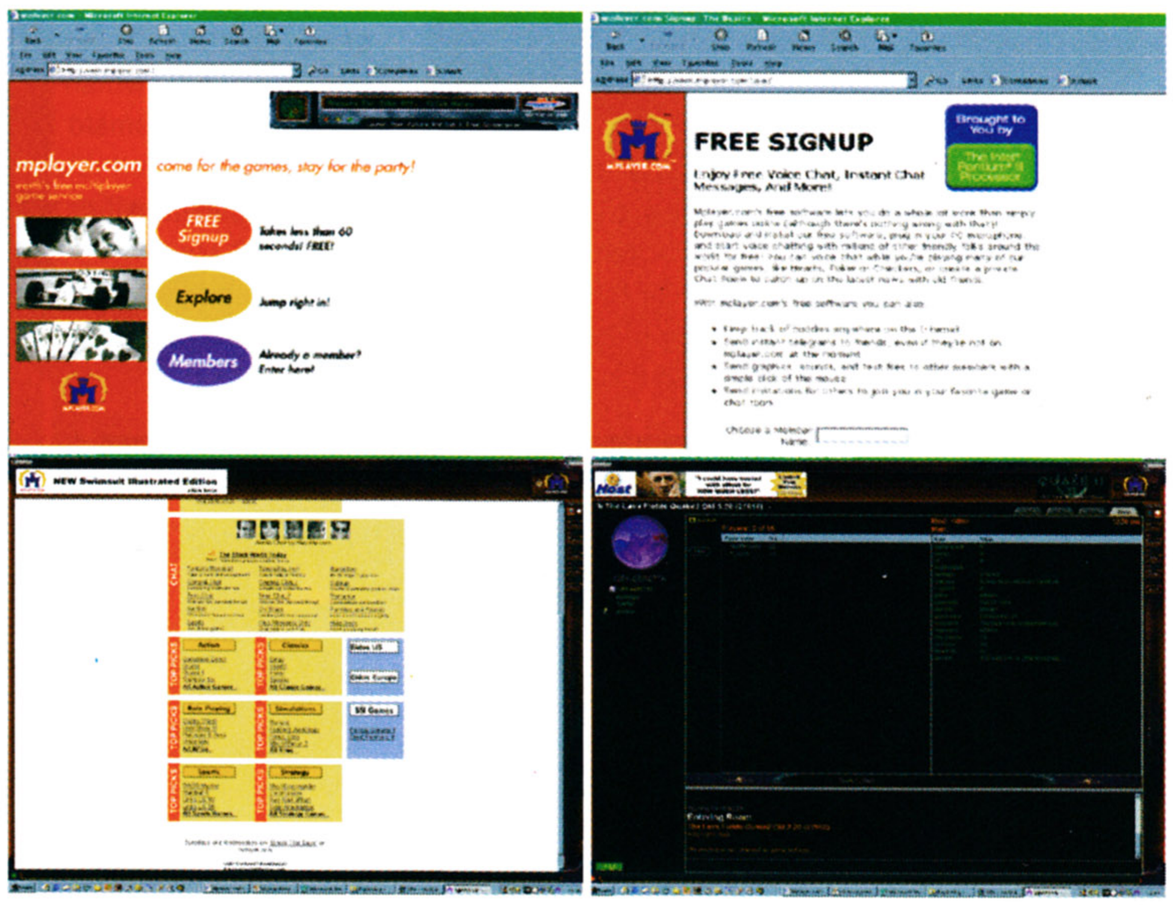
To sign on free with Mplayer, you need to fill in an online form, giving personal details and choosing a user name. This became my first hurdle. Victims of their own apparent popularity, it took me an age to find a name that was not already in use. Spiff, Mr. Sparkle, Pingu and even Tampax were already taken. Eventually I gave in and went for the suggested alternative option of Spiff510. You are next directed to download an installation program for the Mplayer client software. This tiny 25KB file must then be run to commence downloading and installation of the software proper. This only takes a few minutes and is pretty much idiot-proof. After launching and continuing on from a *Daikatana*-deathmatch splash screen, there is a list of category-grouped 'top picks' games to choose from (see box-out). Full lists of each category can also be pulled up and number around ten to twenty games for each category. There are also separate links to Eidos and SSI games.

I decided to go for a bit of fragging action with an old favourite, *Quake II*. It was only then that I discovered that you have to be a paying Mplayer Plus member to access Mplayer's own dedicated servers, otherwise you can only join servers found by Mplayer's Internet Server Browser. While the browser has some extra features such as automatically linking you to patch downloads if it detects that you need them, it does nothing that you couldn't do yourself with GameSpy 3D, Qview or Pingtool. This rather defeats the object of using a free game network. The Plus account, which gives the full access that I expected as a free member, is available to European users for $3.95/month. Not that much, but hardly worth it for slightly lower ping rates.

Having pulled up a list of available servers (also available to any non-Mplayer gamers on the Net), I found that I was unable to join any game, constantly getting an irritating ad suggesting that I go for Plus membership. I had cancelled an earlier request to update *Quake II*, as I knew I already had the final .20 version and had played using GameSpy only hours earlier. I finally gave in and allowed Mplayer to 'repair' my *Quake* files. This took at least 20 minutes using my ISDN line, but did eventually allow me to join games, where I enjoyed a very average ping rate of 280-300. If Plus membership gets a lower ping, then I am not prepared to pay to tell you, as I feel slightly conned that Mplayer servers were not part of the free package. Obviously they have to cover their costs, even make a profit, but the amount of game-related advertising surely does that anyway. I cannot see what Mplayer has to offer over a genuinely free service like Wireplay, with access to dedicated servers.

THE TOP PICK GAMES

Action:	Classics:	RPG:	Sport:	Simulations:
Daikatana demo	Bingo	Diablo	Bass Master	Burnout
Quake	Hearts	Gemstone III	Hardball 6	Fighter's Anthology
Quake II	Poker	Hercules & Xena	Links LS '99	Heavy Gear
Rainbow Six	Spades	Underlight	Links LS '98	MechWarrior 2



The order of play: go to the website, sign up Free Online, select your game of choice from the category boxes, choose a fast server for that game and, finally, discover that you have to be a Plus Member to reap the benefits

WANTED

Quake III Arena

The hottest internet game of this year will undoubtedly be *Quake III Arena*. If you hadn't already heard, it has been designed almost entirely as a multiplayer game, with no real single-player missions, only ranked competitions versus bots (artificially intelligent opponents) when you are playing offline. The network code promises to be the best ever, smoothing out play by intelligently predicting movement and filling in gaps caused by lag. There will be a host of features to help ensure fairer internet gameplay, including automatic invincibility if you are frozen by your connection for any period. No longer will you be wasted while helpless to react. Customisable weapon colours will mean easier identification of respective players, with different coloured plasma-beams shooting out all over the place. It should also be a little easier to discover who is shooting at you, with tracer rounds in many of the weapons sourcing the attacker. Power-ups such as quad damage now create a rippling blue field effect all around the player, which will draw a lot of fire, making the advantages of quad power something to weigh against the sudden unwanted visibility. A downside to the latest *Quake* episode will be the huge download size of even simple maps (around 20MB for a five-room map with textures), so the plethora of user-made *Quake II* maps may not be repeated for *Quake III Arena*. Nevertheless, we would be counting the days until final PC code appears, if it wasn't for the fact that ID's release date is still set for "When it's ready".

Okay, *Quake III* is featured heavily this month but, oh boy, do we want it!

APPLICATION FORM

TOTAL CONTROL

Name *Getright*

Size *1.25MB*

Present Wage *30-Day Shareware*

Expected Wage *$17.50 Registration Fee*

Job Description:
You will need to cope with multiple downloads and show experience in resuming talks when communication breaks down.

Why do you feel that you are suited to the job?

I have excellent experience of resuming multiple downloads from any FTP and most modern HTTP sites. I can easily resume after voluntary or accidental disconnection. I am able to stick to a strict downloading schedule of your choice and am happy to completely shut down your machine for you if you have gone home for the night. Should an older HTTP site be unwilling to resume communications, I maintain a full address book so that dialogue can be restarted from the beginning. I also have an extended list of contacts, so that if I feel a transaction may be completed more quickly and at less expense elsewhere, I can take that option. I am fully confident that within days of your employing me, you will come to wonder how you ever managed without me.

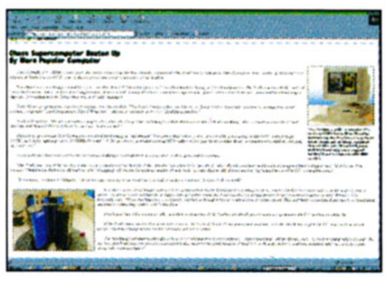
Please leave an address where we may contact you:
www.getright.com

GAME OVER, MAN

So, enough about games, what else is there to do on this sprawling mess they call the internet? This month I have been looking at spoof news sites, and have found three excellent examples that should provide a cool alternative to the gloomy real-world picture.

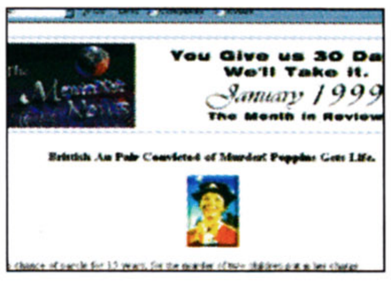
www.theonion.com

Although American in tone and general content, this online magazine features some of the best-written comedy articles on the internet and has international appeal. Check out the huge archives, as well as the weekly updates. The site is not intended for minors due to some explicit language content. Favourite archive story: Chess Supercomputer Beaten up by More Popular Computer.



www.impactmedia.com/mentadec.html

MentaNet News is not dissimilar to The Onion, although somewhat smaller. It tends to focus on irreverent slants of topical cultural and political stories, from Furbies to Monica Lewinsky, and is again mainly American in content. Best article: British Au Pair Convicted of Murder – Poppins Gets Life!



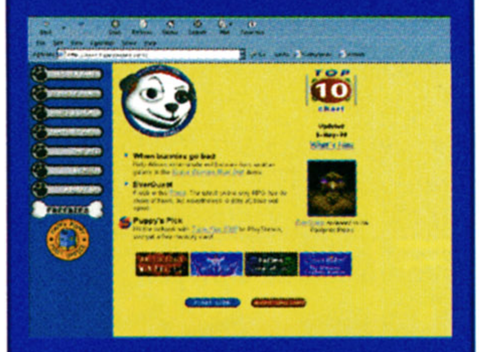
www.koekie.org.uk/funnel/

Glebe's Thrift Funnel is the surreal name of the number one Christopher Morris site. If this name doesn't ring a bell, then think TV and radio news spoofs, The Day Today, On The Hour, Blue Jam and Brass Eye. The site has transcripts, audio and video links, information on the man himself and Windows schemes and screensavers. Top quote in the Aphorism Bank: The twisted brain-wrong of a one-off man mental.

Quick-Click

Multiformat News:
www.fgnonline.com

Multiformat Cheats:
www.happypuppy.com



Multiformat Walkthroughs:
www.cheatplanet.com

PC Demos:
www.avault.com

PC Patches:
www.gamezone.com

PC Shareware:
www.tucows.com

Having words with...

They are the boot room boys for a generation of football simulation fanatics. Their seminal game is synonymous with lost weekends and its latest incarnation was the fastest selling PC game ever – so what is it that drives the Collyer's?

Oliver & Paul Collyer

Q. How did you come up with the idea of developing the original *Champ Manager*, and was it motivated by a lack of success on the part of your favourite team?

Bros: Well, the inspiration came from playing other football management games which were around in the mid-80s – a time when there was no lack of success for our team, Everton, I might add. We just thought we'd have a crack and see if we could make something with more depth of gameplay.

Q. I believe that the original *CM* development team was very small. How many people worked on *CM3*, and how do the development times and costs compare?

Bros: Well, we are still very small compared to most, I think. *CM3* was created in about two years by five full-time programmers, two full-time researcher guys, and fifteen part-time researchers from each country whose league we represent. That, plus hundreds of voluntary testers and individual club researchers.

IF COMPUTER GAME CULTURE IS GOING TO APPEAL TO A WIDER AND MORE MATURE AUDIENCE THEN IT NEEDS GAMES LIKE CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

The development scenario is different now – we spent about five years writing *CM1* in our spare time for fun and with no real plan to get it released. Now we are advanced large sums of money to develop something for a specific date. The transition has been hard at times, but I think we're getting used to it now.

Q. Many people, myself included, devote huge amounts of time to playing the *Champ Manager* series. Do you still play the games yourselves, and are there any other games that have had you hooked for long periods of time?

Oliver: Well, this last two weeks we have been playing a five-player network game, and we are just into our second season. Until now we haven't had much time to play the game, instead relying on our testers to give us feedback. As for other games, the only one in recent years to get me hooked (and the entire office I might add) was *Duke Nukem 3D* – probably the single biggest reason *CM3* was released later than we hoped! Heaven knows what will happen when the next one comes out...
Paul: The network game is brilliant. I would add *ISS64*, *World League Soccer 98* (two-player), and *Doom* to Oliver's list.

Q. If you managed a football team in real life, and were given unlimited transfer funds to sign three players of your choice, who would they be and why?

Oliver: Well, I think I'd have to go for Schmeichel, Zidane and Batistuta – not a bad spine for any team.

Paul: Stam, Zidane and Salas.

Q. Following the incredible sales of *Championship Manager 3* in its first two weeks – I believe the figure was around 55 000 – a piece entitled 'Stats Entertainment' appeared in trade publication, CTW. In it, Colin Campbell refers to fans of the football management genre as, amongst other things, "disgusting little creatures who inhabit a fabulously gross world

COLLYER BROTHERS

where no-one else wants to be". An insult? A cheap shot at self-promotion? Or the ramblings of a grown man who'd rather play games where he gets to throw apples at a pink gorilla? Would you care to comment?

Bros: I think the irony here is that the people who play our game are probably more 'normal' (for want of a better word) than most; many *CM* fans don't actually play other computer games at all. If computer game culture is going to appeal to a wider and more mature audience then it needs games like *Champ Manager*, otherwise it will remain largely the domain of kids wanting a cheap thrill from blowing something up.

Q. To settle the arguments between the *CM3* players in the office, who would you say is the best player in *CM3*? For the record, I reckon it's Peter Prospar from Ansar.

Bros: Well, everyone seems to end up competing for Robbie Keane in our games. Obviously there are better players, but their clubs are unlikely to release them.

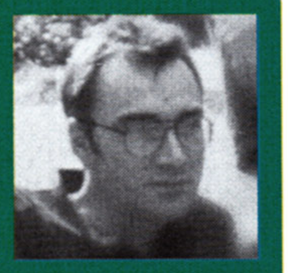
Q. There's already a lot of support for *CM3* on the internet, despite the fact that the game cannot actually be played online. Are there any plans to implement this, or will it be a project for *CM4*?

Bros: It is our ambition to write a version of *CM* which can be played by hundreds of people over the internet, but it won't be for *CM3*.

Q. So what's next for Sports Interactive? Have you considered developing games based on other sports, or for any other formats?

Bros: Other sports: no; other formats: yes. We plan on making Mac versions of our game in future, and maybe even getting a version onto a console – if somebody will invent a console with some decent storage capacity that is.

HARDSTUFF



CLIFFSMITH
e-mail: cliff@rapide.co.uk

Regular Total CONTROL readers will notice a few changes to the Hard Stuff section this month, not least of which is this editorial section, where I get to witter on for a few hundred words about Life, the Universe and computer hardware. As usual, most of the new hardware this month is aimed at the PC market, with only one PlayStation controller and a couple of new accessories for the Dreamcast. This isn't too surprising, as there are far more PCs in general use than there are games consoles, and they are used for a much wider range of tasks. It's in the nature of PCs that they need constant upgrades and add-ons to stay competitive, whereas consoles such as the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 stay the same from year to year. Only occasionally, when new consoles are released, do you get a lot of new peripherals hitting the shops at once. Next year should see a flood of Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 controllers, but for now there is barely a trickle of new console hardware.

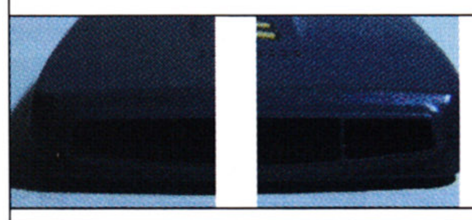
Meanwhile, manufacturers are constantly announcing new and improved accessories for the PC platform, and that brings us onto our other change to the Hard Stuff section. From now on we are going to have a separate news section covering hardware related issues and announcements of new products.

The various news items this month are indicative of the future of the PC games market, and of the computer entertainment market as a whole. The trend is towards ease of use, with USB hubs and more USB peripherals appearing all the time, and also towards better looking machines, with high-tech flat-panel monitors coming down in price. The PC is a powerful games platform for those who can afford it, and the console manufacturers need to make their next generation machines super-powerful to retain their place in the market.

JAM!! ADAPTER

Company: AIMS Lab Inc. Price: **£49.99** On sale: **TBA** Format: **PC**

I've been trying to get hold of one of these little beauties ever since I saw a prototype at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta last year. One of the problems we face here at Total CONTROL is cluttered desks, caused by having to have PCs for writing and playing games on, Macs for design, as well as TV monitors for the PlayStation, Dreamcast and Nintendo 64 consoles. The Jam!! adapter solves at least part of this problem by allowing games consoles to use a standard PC monitor and multimedia speaker system. You simply connect the device in between your PC and monitor and plug your console into it. At the flick of a switch you can change from PC to console input. The Jam!! doesn't confer high resolution graphics on your console, so the image quality is about the same as you would get from a comparable size TV, but a decent set of PC multimedia speakers makes a lot of difference to game you may be used to hearing through the speaker of a small portable TV. The great beauty of the Jam!! adapter is its versatility and ease of use. Any console, in fact any device at all with audio/video or S-video output, can be used to display on your monitor. There are no install disks, no special tools are required, and you don't have to open the case of your PC. For the price, the Jam!! adapter offers a value for money solution for multi-format gamers.

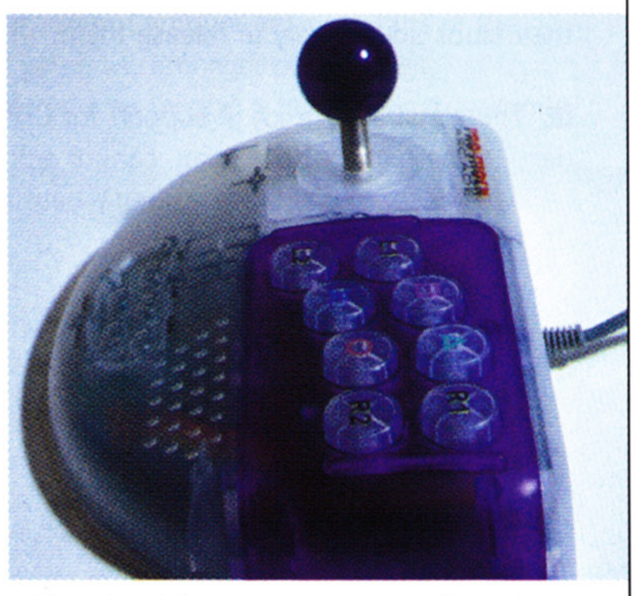


5 OUT OF 5

PRO SHOCK ARCADE JOYSTICK

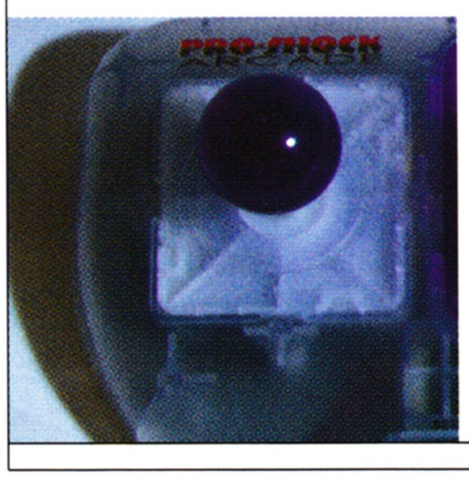
Company: Fire International Price: **£29.99** On sale: **Out now** Format: **PlayStation**

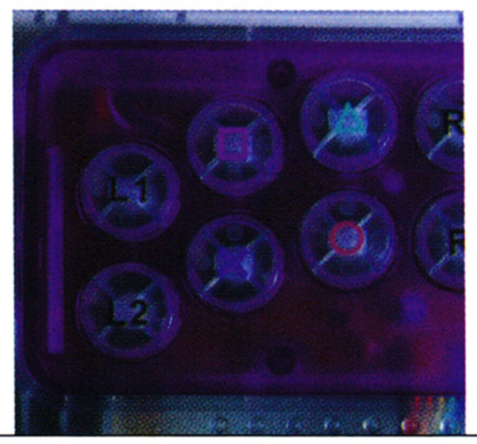
Available in a range of eye-catching colours, the Pro Shock Arcade Joystick is the ideal add-on for fans of beat-'em-up games and any other genre that requires a high degree of control without analogue. It is well made, with a heavy steel base plate and solid chunky buttons. The joystick is solidly mounted with a thick steel post, and has eight microswitches providing the control. The styling is adventurous, with most of the range having translucent two colour cases reminiscent of the iMac. I terms of quality and usability the Pro Shock compares favourably with the official Sony Arcade Joystick, which is currently retailing at about the same price.



Of course the main selling point of the Pro Shock is its Dual Shock compatible vibration feature. On the translucent models you can actually see the motor and its off-centre rotor working, but I have to say I was rather disappointed by the force of the vibration. The motor appears to be about the same power as the one in the Dual Shock hand-held controller, and while it performs admirably in that role, it is simply too weak to produce much of an effect in this far heavier device. With the Pro Shock sitting on a tabletop the vibration is so weak as to be almost unnoticeable.

Apart from that one minor gripe, this is a well-made, stylish and sensibly priced controller. If it had a decent sized rumble motor it would be just about perfect.





4 OUT OF 5

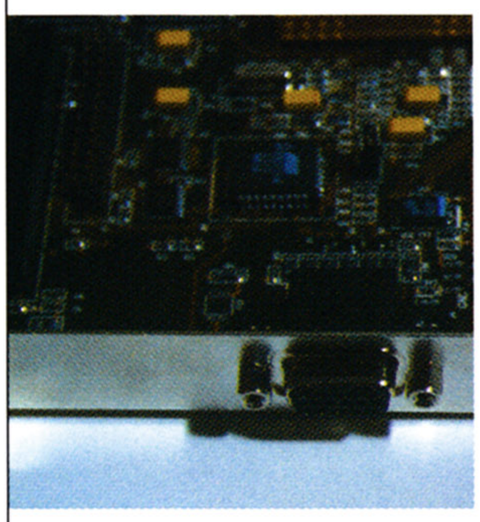
TECHWORKS POWER GRAFX

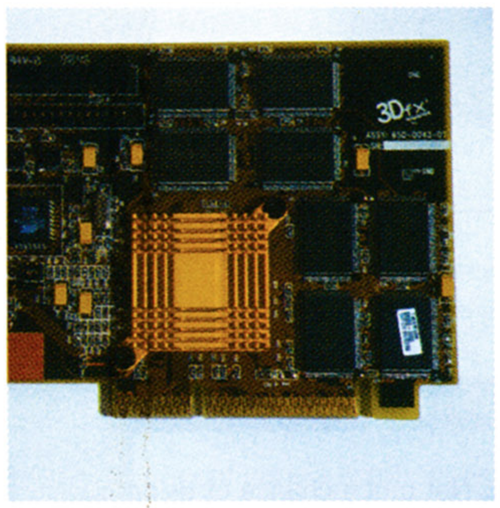
Company: Tech Works Price: £79.99 On sale: OUT NOW Format: PC

If you are running out of card slots in the back of your PC, one solution is to use cards that perform more than one function. The Power Grafx card from Techworks employs the Voodoo Banshee chipset from 3Dfx to provide 3D acceleration for your games, as well as high-resolution 2D graphics for other applications, replacing the usual SVGA card.

The Power Grafx is available in both PCI and AGP formats, so whatever slot format your PC uses you should be able to get on to suit. The device boasts an impressive specification, with 16MB SGRAM frame and texture buffer, a 128-bit memory interface and full support for Windows 98, 95 Gold and NT 4.0. The PCI model offers version 2.1 interface running at up to 66MHz, while the AGP model supports sideband addressing and pipelining.

The construction of the card is adequate, but not quite as good as the similar Pace 3D Edge reviewed back in March. It lacks the TV output which that card had. The Power Grafx card was easy to install, and the on-screen results were impressive. Only two SLI Voodoo 2 boards will provide superior 3D acceleration.





The only problem with the card was encountered when it was mounted inside a tower PC with no built-in motherboard cooling fan. The AGP slots are quite close to the main CPU, and the Voodoo Banshee chip generates a fair amount of heat when operating. The example I was using for review became so hot that some plastic parts on the circuit board actually melted and the device stopped working. Since many low cost tower systems do not have motherboard cooling fans, this could be something of a drawback. Check your system before purchasing.

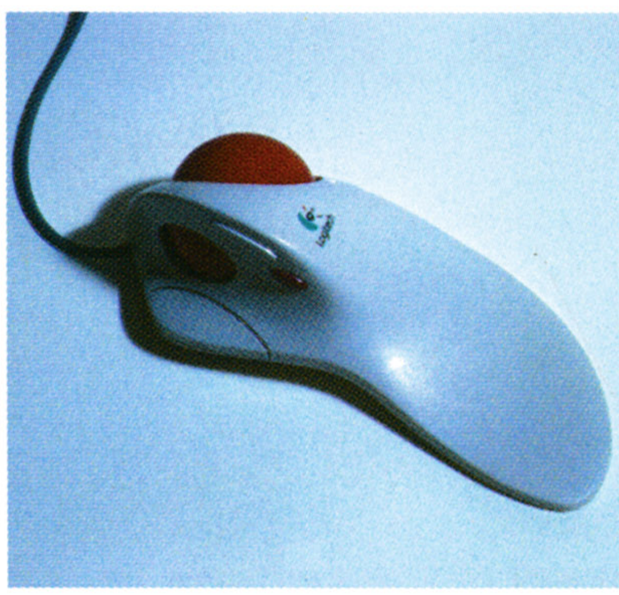
2 OUT OF 5

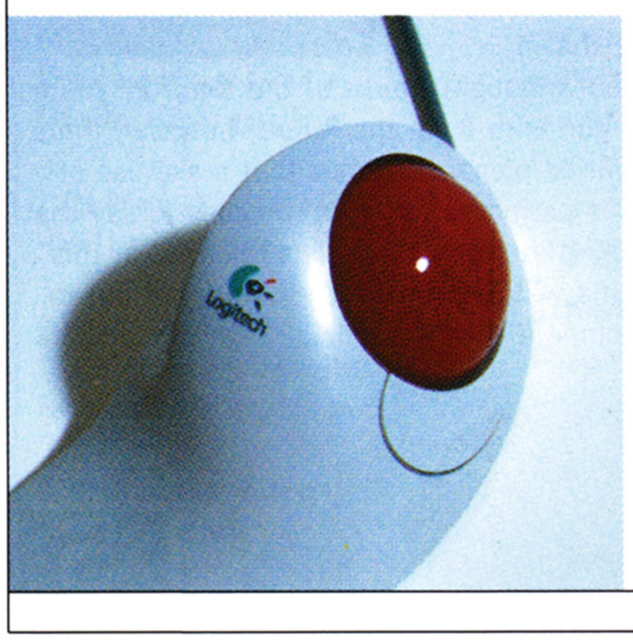
TRACKMAN MARBLE FX

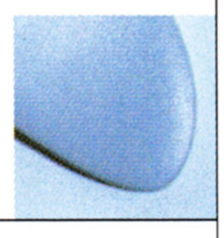
Logitech Price: £49.99 inc. VAT On sale: Out now Format: PC

This isn't really a gaming accessory, but if you do a lot of web browsing you could find it extremely useful. Using a trackball as a mouse pointer feels a little strange at first, especially if you have been using a mouse for years, but if you take a while to get used to it then it does have certain benefits. For starters, it takes up a lot less space on your desktop. The unit sits immobile, gripping your desk with its high friction rubber feet, while you turn the trackball with your fingertips. The Trackman is well designed to fit the hand comfortably, and all the buttons fall neatly under your fingers.

There are four buttons which can be configured through the easy-to-use supplied software to emulate several keyboard buttons, or to perform a variety of special functions. The normal setting has the left and right buttons performing their usual tasks, while the other two activate Universal Scroll and AutoScroll, both very useful for browsing websites or large text documents.







I have tried playing several games using the Trackman, but found it to be too clumsy for precise control. This may be because I am used to a mouse, but then again this was never designed as a gaming controller. It's a case of horses for courses, I guess.

3 OUT OF 5

MATROX 256-BIT GRAPHICS CARD

Matrox have long been one of the big names in PC graphics cards, with products like the Millennium G200 card being included as standard equipment in off-the-shelf PCs from manufacturers including IBM, Compaq and Hewlett Packard. Now they have announced their 'next generation' graphics card, and it has caused quite a stir. The Matrox G400, built around a powerful 256-bit dual bus graphics chip, combines high resolution 2D graphics with multi-function 3D acceleration and DVD support, as well as the ability to display on two monitors simultaneously.

The G400 has 3D rendering capabilities well in advance of anything else currently available, including the ability to create true environment mapped bump mapping, which enhances the realism of rendered objects by adding three dimensional details to the surface textures. The card also supports stencil buffering, which reduces the area of the image which has to be redrawn for each frame, as well as trilinear and anisotropic filtering for sharper textures. The card will enable developers to more easily make use of many special effects such as specular highlights which give metallic textures a realistic appearance.

The other capabilities of the G400 are equally impressive. As a 2D card for standard Windows applications, it can provide readable text at resolutions as high as 2048 x 1536. The full screen software DVD acceleration allows MPEG-2 movies to be run without the need for a separate decoder board. The unique DualHead Display technology allows two monitors, or a monitor and a TV set, to be connected to your PC.

NEW MAXI GAMER GRAPHICS CARD

Guillemot have improved the specification of their Nvidia-based Maxi Gamer graphics cards. They have now incorporated the TNT2 Ultra chipset into the 32 2D/3D card, giving it higher performance. They have also increased the on board memory clock speed of both the Maxi Gamer Xentor and the Xentor 32 to 166MHz and 183 MHz respectively. The Maxi Gamer Xentor incorporates the Riva TNT2 chipset and features 16MB of SDRAM memory, while the Xentor 32 card has 32MB. Both cards have software DVD playback capability, but the Xentor 32 also offers the benefit of a TV output.

The Maxi Gamer Xentor is going on sale at £99.99, while the Xentor 32 will be £179.99, both prices including VAT.

FLAT PANEL VDU

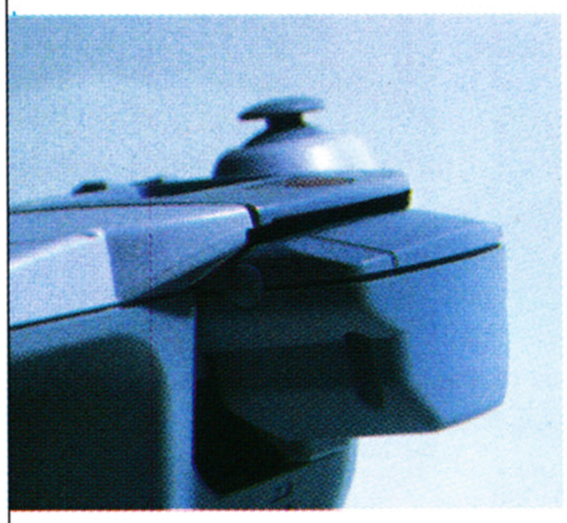
Techworks, best known for their Voodoo-based graphics cards, are moving into other fields with the launch of two new product ranges. Their TFT400 flat-panel monitor is the first in a new series, designed as much for the home user as the office. Competitively priced at between £625 and £650, the 14" monitor can display resolutions up to 1024 x 768 in 262-144 colours, and handles VGA, SVGA and XGA graphics modes with a full screen display. An optional adapter allows the TFT400 to be used with the Apple Macintosh.

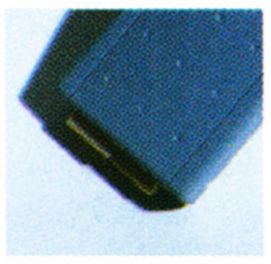
Their other new product line is aimed specifically at the iMac market. The PowerUSB M-Hub adds four extra USB ports and is styled to match the iMac's distinctive appearance. Snap-on top covers and cables are available in a range of colours to match the casing of the popular Apple computer. The M-Hub is priced at £39.99 (ex vat).

DREAMCAST PURU PURU PACK

Company: Sega Price: £20 On sale: OUT NOW Format: Dreamcast

The Dreamcast's answer to the Nintendo 64s Rumble Pak, the Puru Puru Pack is significantly smaller than its Nintendo counterpart and doesn't require batteries, but is every bit as powerful. There are already several games available that support the pack, along with the gun controller that's bundled with copies of *House of the Dead 2*. I'm a little disappointed that the pack does nothing but vibrate though. I would've thought by now that for a game such as *House of the Dead 2* one of these packs could accurately simulate the recoil of a gun with a short, sharp jolt rather than a hopelessly inappropriate vibration. An adequate accessory, but nothing new.

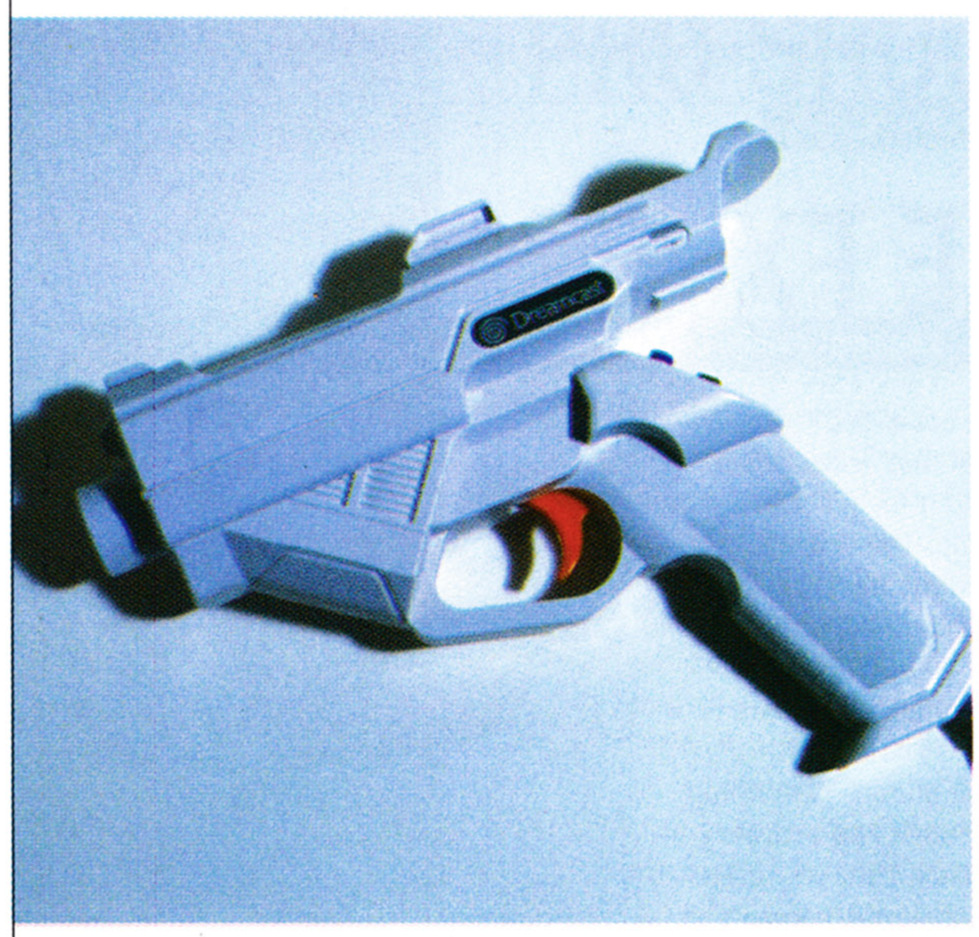


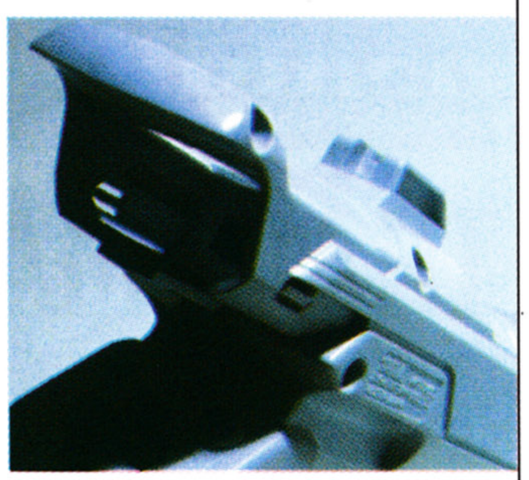


3 OUT OF 5

DREAMCAST GUN

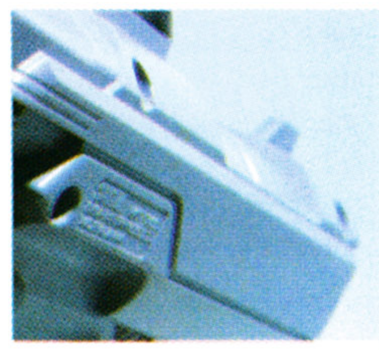
Company: Sega Price: £80 On sale: OUT NOW Format: Dreamcast

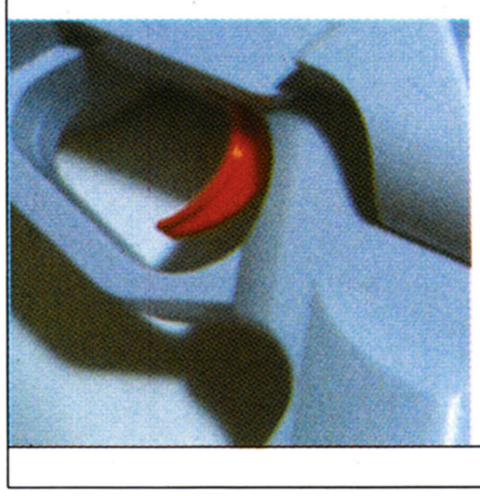


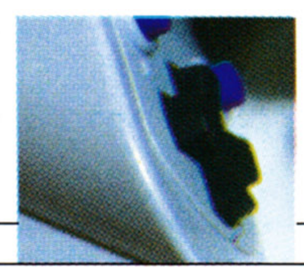


Not much chance of using this one to hold up your local post office. Sega have wisely opted to avoid any unwanted publicity by producing a gun that is not only in keeping with the look of their other peripherals, but would only stand a chance of passing for a real gun in the Buck Rogers universe or one similar.

The gun works as well as any that I've come across, and the d-pad and buttons used for accessing options etc. are conveniently located just above the handle, easily accessible with your thumb without the need to change your grip. At present there's only one game that supports the Dreamcast gun, and the chances are that if you've bought *House of the Dead 2,* you got a gun with it. In the future, however, there will be plenty of games that make use of this peripheral, and I'm pleased to say that any third-party light guns released at this time will really have their work cut out to compete with the official Sega product.







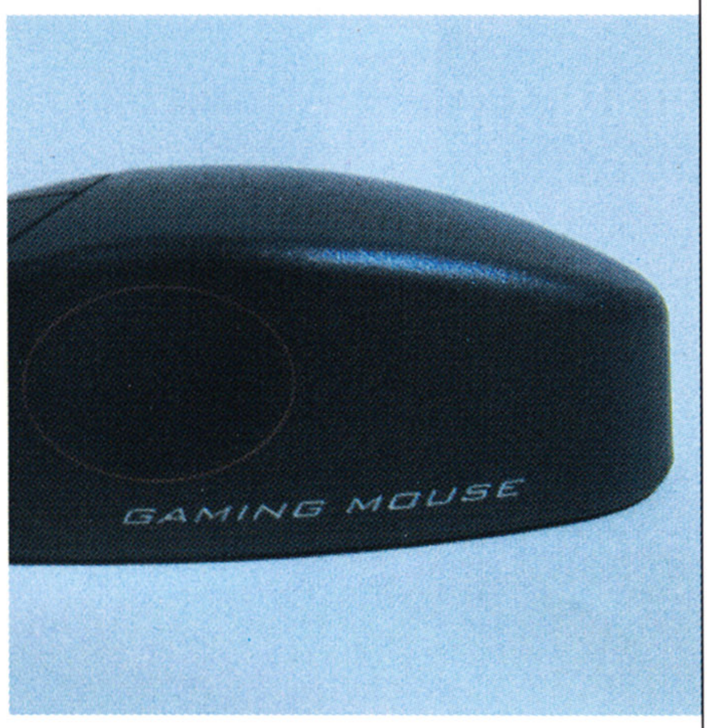
5 OUT OF 5

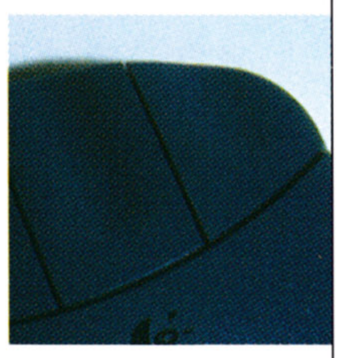
WINGMAN GAMING MOUSE

Company: **Logitech** Price: **£29.99 inc. VAT** On sale: **Out now** Format: **PC**

When it comes to first-person shoot-'em-ups like *Half-Life* or *Quake II*, the weapon of choice for the dedicated gamer is a good solid mouse. Trouble is, your average off-the-shelf PC system tends to be supplied with a budget mouse made of flimsy lightweight plastic, with a ball weighing about the same as so much confetti. In a hectic firefight you just can't rely on such inferior equipment.

Logitech have come to the rescue with the first mouse designed for the dedicated gamer. The Wingman Gaming Mouse is a solid, dependable looking piece of kit, moulded in gun metal grey plastic, and is fitted with a heavy high friction ball which won't slip no matter how hot the action gets. It has three buttons and, like most Logitech gear, it is ergonomically designed and comfortable to use.





The Logitech Mouseware install software is reliable and easy to use and allows you to configure the buttons to do just about anything. This is the only gaming accessory that is just as useful for other computing tasks.

My only reservation is the lack of a scroll wheel. You can configure a scroll wheel to select weapons in many first-person shooter games, and it is a very handy feature both in and out of games. Since many Logitech mice have this feature, I'm surprised to find it missing from the Wingman.

3 OUT OF 5

BUDGET AIWA

Hi-fi manufacturer Aiwa has launched a new high-spec mini system at a budget price. The NSX-S555, not to be confused with a Honda sports car, features a powerful 100W four-way amplifier, twin enclosure speakers and a three CD auto-changer, all for the miserly sum of £180. The system, which is expected to be popular with students and young people living at home, has an eight-band spectrum analyser, a full logic double cassette deck, a tuner with thirty-two station presets and a two-way timer, and an AUX input so you can plug in a VCR, DVD player or games console to take advantage of the system's superb sound. If you don't have a game console, don't worry, because the NSX-S555 has a built-in Casino Jack game to stop you dying of boredom during Martine McCutcheon's latest single. You can find out more by contacting Aiwa direct on 0990 902 902, or checking out their website at www.aiwa.co.uk

OH! WHAT A GIVEAWAY!

Since we're all filled with the joys of spring, we've decided to celebrate and give away some stuff that's been cluttering up the office for a while. Up for grabs are three superb InterAct V3 steering wheel controllers, one each for the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and the PC. All you have to do to win one is to answer the following simple questions:

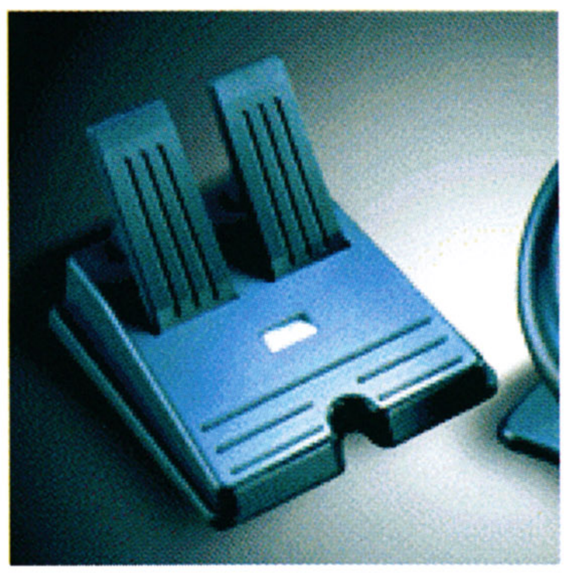
1. The InterAct V3 is the official wheel for which games console?

2. Which member of the Total CONTROL team has the coolest haircut? (Careful with this one)

3. Which contains more crap?
a) A big pile of crap
b) A Martine McCutcheon CD

The closing date for this swag-fest is the 21st of July, by which time I will be on holiday in Ibiza, so you'll just have to wait. Send your random scribbling in green crayon on the back of an envelope or a postcard to the following address, and don't forget to include your own address, or it would all be rather pointless wouldn't it? Oh yeah, and also tell us whether you want the PC, PlayStation or Nintendo 64 version.

V3 For Me
Total CONTROL
Rapide Publishing
1 Roman Court
48 New North Road
Exeter EX4 4EP



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TOTAL CONTROL

CONSOLES: THE NEXT GENERATION

DREAMCAST

SEGA PREPARE TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

PLAYSTATION 2

SONY'S VISION OF THE FUTURE

N2000

CONSIGNING CARTRIDGES TO HISTORY

TC

Everyone you know owns a PlayStation...

NICKJONES
e-mail: nick@rapide.co.uk

The Sony PlayStation has changed the face of the industry forever. It has brought video games to a mass market like no machine has managed before. It's no coincidence that almost everyone that you know owns a PlayStation – this is really the first time in their history that video games are cool. This is largely thanks to Sony and their inspired marketing of the PlayStation. But will the bubble burst? Apparently not, as the sales of video games get bigger and bigger every year. The video games industry will soon generate twice as much revenue as the movie industry.

As the millennium approaches, there stands three companies, all with a valid reason to believe that they will be the ones to capitalise on the new 'golden age' of video games. Sony, Sega and Nintendo will, over the next two years, all launch their new consoles. Each one hopes to gain the upper hand in the market; more consoles installed in homes than their rivals, more games sold than their rivals, and a larger slice of the huge monetary pie on offer.

Dreamcast launches at the end of September. The next generation PlayStation will be here by the end of 2000. Nintendo are looking at the year 2001 for the launch of their new system. The next two years will be the most interesting that this young industry has had in its history.

At the moment it seems that Sony have the advantage, but then this could all change within a matter of months. Total CONTROL takes a look at each of the three machines that you will be playing your games on in the next century... TC

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Sega's President speaks out

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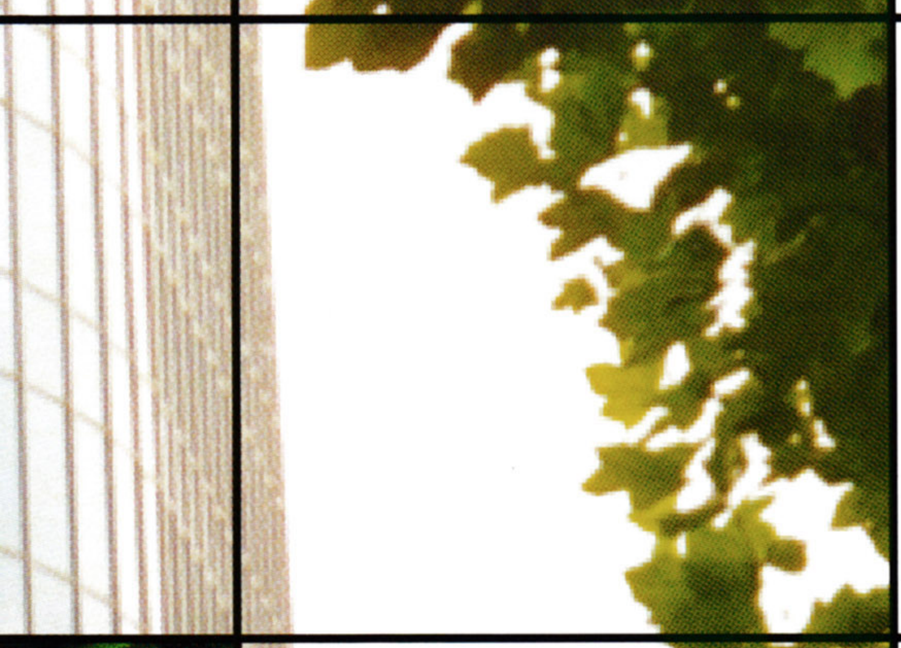
- **Dreamcast specifications**
- **The key titles of 1999**



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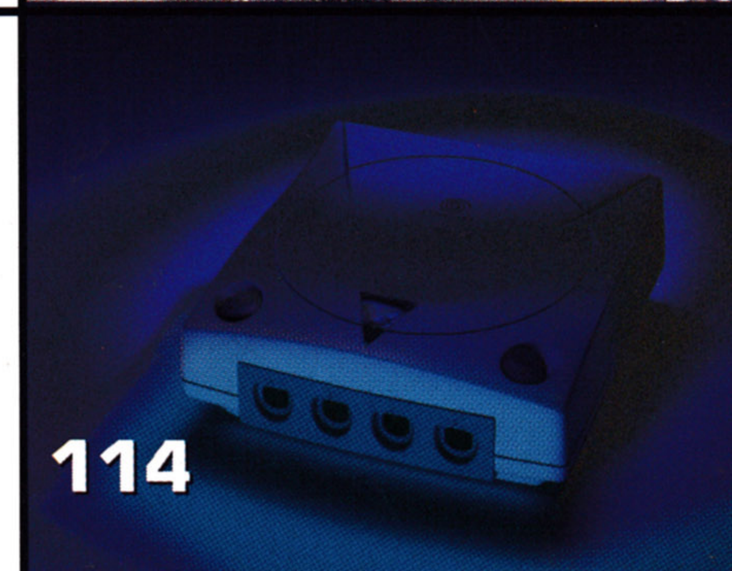


"TO BE THIS GOOD TAKES AGES"

Sega's Dreamcast

"The most important thing is that before PlayStation 2 comes out we get a considerable share of the market and generate enough momentum to carry through... Our hardware will remain superior because I believe all of the basic elements are the most advanced technology available"

- SHOICHIRO IRIMAJIRI, PRESIDENT OF SEGA CO. LTD.

Sega's Dreamcast will be launched **in the UK on the 27th September 1999.** Only then will you be able to judge for yourselves what Sega's vision of **the next generation gaming** will be like. Is Sega's Dreamcast a case of too little, too early?

After the announcement and demonstration of Sony's PlayStation 2, it would be easy to write off Sega's chances of gaining a significant market share. But a few things need to be taken in consideration before you make a judgment. The first thing is time; Dreamcast is now, whereas PlayStation 2 won't be until the spring next year at the very earliest, and not until the following Christmas for us Europeans. What does this mean for Sega? Well, this gives them the chance to capitalise on the market that the PlayStation was the first to tap into, namely the twenty-somethings with a high disposable income. What do you do when you've exhausted your PlayStation? Despite Sony's promises to continue to support PlayStation, the big question will be what sort of reaction PlayStation owners will have when they see Dreamcast up and running. If you've never seen a high-end PC then Dreamcast just has to impress you, and for the competitive price of £199, it's only a pay cheque or credit card transaction away from owning one.

And then there's the rest of the deal. Not only does Dreamcast offer PC quality graphics, but there are other advantages to the PC-based architecture as well. Internet browsing and e-mail become an attractive prospect, even if you aren't a games player, for the sum of £199. There will also be a number of peripherals that take the console even closer to the PC – a keyboard and mouse, a hard drive-type add on which will give you 1GB of storage space, and a Zip drive. So with around £300 in your pocket you could set yourself up with a system that can rival high-end PCs that would cost more than £1500.

Then there are the games. From what we've seen so far, these will come in three categories: conversions of Sega's own arcade games and those using the Naomi arcade board (see boxout), original Dreamcast games (at the moment these are mostly driving and RPG/adventure games) and thirdly, speedy conversions of the best PC games. The latter is due to the close relation that the Dreamcast bears to the PC. The RISC CPU, Power VR2 (graphics) technology and Windows CE-based operating system are all elements that are found in a games PC and make the Dreamcast extremely programmer friendly.

The speed at which conversions can be made is reckoned by some developers to be in the region of days rather than months, and this should see a steady release schedule for the Dreamcast. Many publishers have already confirmed some of their key PC games for Dreamcast: Infogrames' *Silver* and

SHOICHIRO IRIMAJIRI ON DREAMCAST

"We're thinking of developing some completely new types of software that never before existed. Of course we intend to keep increasing the amount of game software by making full use of Dreamcast's communication functions. Instead of limiting our target to the younger generation, we also plan to develop the kinds of software that will appeal to a wide range of age brackets."

"The fact that the high-performance, low-priced Dreamcast was put on the market at that time made it gain the upper hand over video game machines to be sold by other companies in the future. We are also calling for cooperation by many software houses so that we won't lag behind others in the amount of software, and we are sure about the results too. We are fully confident about competing with other companies' next-generation video game machines."

"We have lost some credibility among our Saturn users – even in Japan – because they have seen the PlayStation become the dominant force. To recapture their minds, we have to convince them that Sega is serious about satisfying its customers."

"Online facilities will be a mandatory requirement for all game development in the very near future. At the same time, we know that we can't make money from the online game business, but we also know that everyone has to add value by developing online gaming."

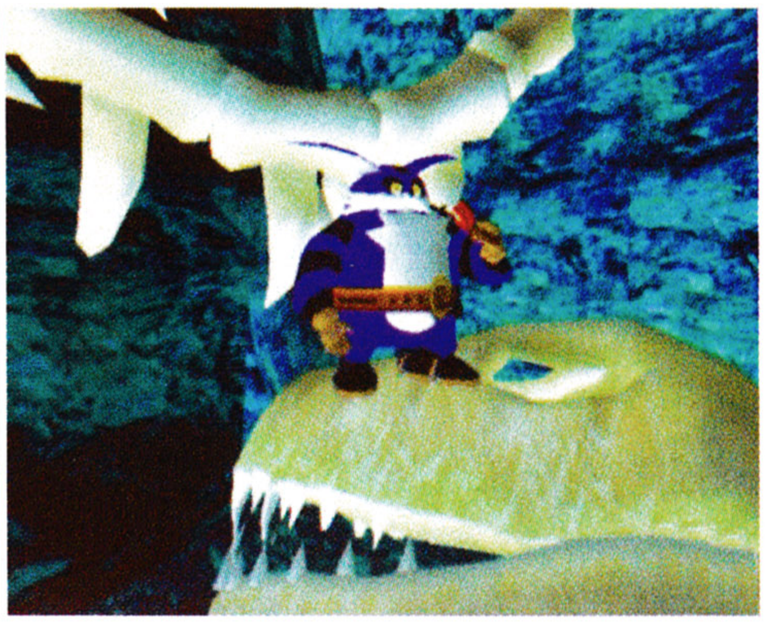
"Sonic will remain as the major character for Sega, but we also want to bring lots of new characters forward, and that's one of the major challenges."

SEGA™

Outcast, Valve's *Half-Life*, Interplay's *MDK 2* and *Messiah*, and Rage's *Incoming* and *Expendable*, to name but a few. And you can be sure that any major title that has been years in development will be quickly ported to Dreamcast. We're expecting games such as *Quake III Arena*, *Kingpin*, *Black & White* and any other major PC release to appear quickly and as good, if not better, than their PC counterparts.

From what we've seen so far, the games are of a good standard – easily better than the launch titles of the Saturn and PlayStation. This bodes well for the future; we've seen in the past that the best games in a console's life span come towards the latter half of its life. The SNES and PlayStation are both prime examples of this, and although Dreamcast games are not quite up to the playability standard of the 'triple A' PlayStation and N64 games, they aren't far behind. It stands to reason that within a year they should catch up, and from what we've seen recently, it looks like this is going to happen even sooner...

The online capability of Dreamcast will also be used to play games over the internet. The first

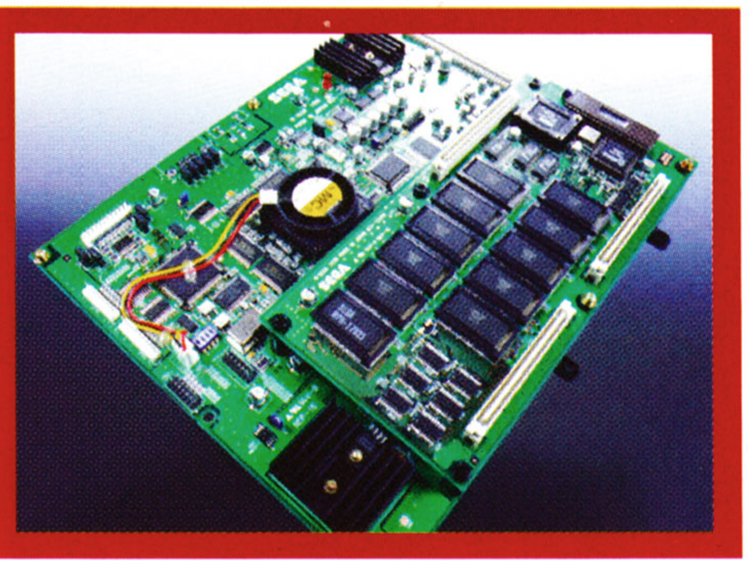


Sega's in-house titles will be vital to the success of Dreamcast. If they can continue to release high quality games at the current rate, Sega have a good chance

FROM NAOMI TO DREAMCAST

The famous Model 3 arcade technology is dead. The arcade board that brought us the likes of *Sega Rally 2* and *Virtua Fighter 3* has been dropped by Sega and replaced by the new 'Naomi' board. Interestingly enough, the board is identical to the guts of the Dreamcast, albeit with about twice as much RAM. Not only does this give you some idea of how powerful the Dreamcast is, but it is obviously a move to make conversions to the home format as easy and accurate as possible.

Not only are Sega using the board themselves, but they have also succeeded in convincing their arcade rivals to adopt the board in favour of their own. So far only Capcom have produced anything using Naomi and converted it (the superb *Power Stone*), but there are many to follow. Not least of which is Yu Suzuki's latest racer, *Ferrari F350*. This does use six Naomi boards in series and three monitors, but a straight conversion shouldn't be beyond Sega with the basics in place.



DREAMCAST SPECIFICATIONS

CPU: Hitachi SH4
200MHz clock rate
360 MIPS (millions of instructions per second)
1.4 billion floating-point operations per second
3D calculations
800+ Mbytes/second bus bandwidth

Graphics: NEC Power VR Second Generation
3 million polygons/second peak rendering rate
Perspective-Correct Texture Mapping Point – Bilinear, Trilinear and Anisotropic Mip-map filtering – Gouraud shading – Z-buffer Coloured light sourcing – Full scene anti-aliasing – Hardware-based fog – Bump mapping – 16.77 million colours – Hardware-based texture compression – Shadow and light volumes – Super sampling

Memory
16 MB main RAM
8 MB video RAM
2 MB sound RAM

Sound: Yamaha Audi Core
RISC CPU
DSP for real-time effects
64 sound channels
Full 3D sound support
Hardware-based audio compression

Storage Media
1 Gbyte data storage 12x speed Constant Angular Velocity drive

Control Pad
Digital and analogue directional controls
Dual analogue triggers

Expansion Options and Peripherals
Visual Memory System
Keyboard
Mouse
Modem (upgradeable)
Hard Drive (TBC)
DVD Video (TBC)

of these was *Sega Rally 2*, but there will also be more to follow, including many of the PC games that have made this such a popular pastime. In fact, one game currently in production, known as *WWW Soccer*, will only be playable over the net, allowing players to design, manage and play with their own football team. Unfortunately, Sega haven't confirmed whether or not the UK machine will come with a modem or not. We assume that it will not, but the cost of such a move is probably being discussed at a high level of Sega as we speak. The cost of UK phone calls is obviously a disadvantage – US and Japanese internet users' calls are free. Even if the modem has to be purchased then Sega are continuing their support for their free internet service. Hopefully this will continue for UK users.

As time goes on, the Dreamcast will also become upgradeable and different versions will be released. The current Dreamcast in Japan is version 1.0, but as technology becomes cheaper, Sega will release more versions, the first of which is expected to be a machine that incorporates a DVD drive, allowing users to play DVD video. Other upgrades are expected to be chip-based, so sending your Dreamcast back to Sega seems like one option.

To succeed against the PlayStation, other companies will have to offer something different and something better. It is not simply enough to just release a more powerful console – software will have to be a great deal better. So far this is not happening, and probably won't do until the Dreamcast reaches its second-generation software. By then we may see what the PlayStation 2 has to offer, and if the first games fulfill the promise of the amazing demos shown in Tokyo, there could be a permanent shift in power to Sony. Sega have a head start over Sony, but will it be time enough?

Both the controller and VMS show that Sega are a company that is not afraid to innovate

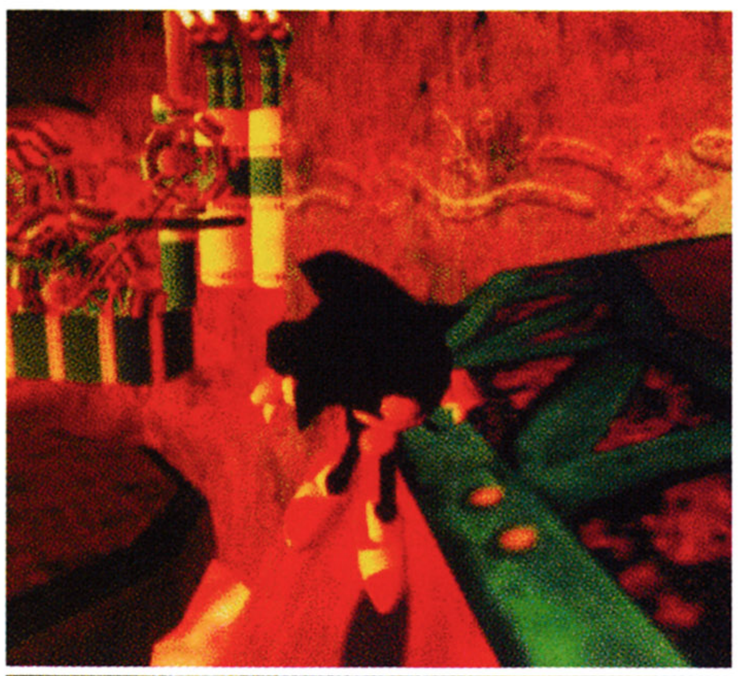
THE SOFTWARE

Virtua Fighter 3tb (Sega)

Sega's flagship beat-'em-up is close to arcade perfect and visually stunning. The gameplay's not bad either – classic *Virtua Fighter* stuff, with the added element of true three dimensional backgrounds and movement. We don't quite rate it as highly as *Tekken 3*, but it's still a brilliant game.

Sonic Adventure (Sega)

Sega's reluctance to use Sonic to promote the Saturn was seen as a big mistake in some quarters. The return of the blue-haired one couldn't have been more dramatic in this superb 3D adventure. This really is a showcase for the Dreamcast, and if it doesn't shift consoles then nothing will.



Sonic will play a major role in Dreamcast plans

Shenmue (Sega)

An epic RPG that looks to put *Final Fantasy VII* to shame. The first game that can boast a truly 'real' environment with changing weather and real-time gameplay. It also has graphics that look as good as any of the PlayStation 2 demos.

D2 (Warp)

Although the original *D* wasn't received too well in the West, it was a huge success in Japan. The sequel looks incredible and is clearly an attempt to give the Dreamcast its own *Tomb Raider* (the lead character is even called Laura). Should be superb.

Sega Rally 2 (Sega)

The best racer in the arcades? Probably, but the translation to the home left it struggling in the wake of *Gran Turismo*. A whole host of new features promised for the European version will, however, make this one of the best Dreamcast titles – new courses, new cars, new improved AI and more options.

Biohazard: Code Veronica (Capcom)

'*Biohazard*' is the name of the game in Japan, but it will no doubt be changed to '*Resident Evil*' for the European market. Not only do Capcom say that this is the true sequel to *Resident Evil 2*, but it is also exclusively on Dreamcast.

Power Stone (Capcom)

Capcom's brilliant conversion of their Naomi-based arcade beat-'em-up is easily on a par with *Virtua Fighter 3tb* but is a totally original fighting game. The completely interactive 3D arenas bring a whole load of tactics that can be employed. Brilliantly addictive.

Metropolis Street Racer (Bizarre Creations/Sega)

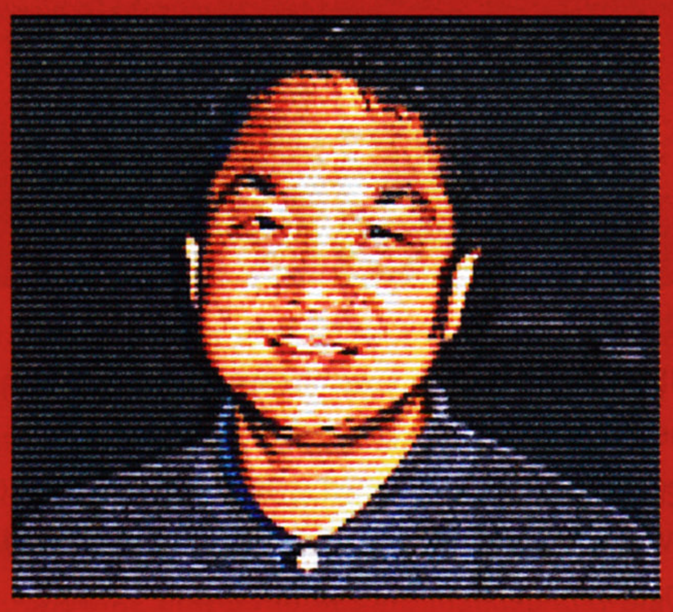
Bizarre Creations, the UK-based team that brought us the original *F1* on PlayStation, have been working on this brilliant racer for quite some time. Features some incredibly realistic car physics and accurately mapped cities (based on the real things). It looks stunning too.

Note: *Sonic Adventure*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* are launch titles for the UK Dreamcast, while *Power Stone* and *Sega Rally 2* will be released before Christmas. The remainder are due for release in the UK next year.

THE NEXT GENERATION PLAYSTATION

"THE REVIVAL OF ENTERTAINMENT"

"The next PlayStation's power to depict images will take it out of the realm of simple gaming machines... People will look like real people, cats will look like real cats, and smoke will look like real smoke." KEN KUTARAGI, PRESIDENT SCEI



The biggest thing to happen to the industry or **the most massively over-hyped event ever?** It would be easy to succumb to Sony's vision for the 'future of interactive entertainment', **but are they making promises that they cannot keep?**

March of this year saw Sony gather the leading developers from the gaming industry and announce their vision of the future. That vision went further than anyone had expected; it was a vision that did not only see video games as being part of it, but one that would inspire a "new form of digital entertainment". To put it in a nutshell, PlayStation 2 has the power to render real-time graphics that are of the quality of pre-rendered movies. But that's not all: at the heart of the machine is a processor that has been specifically designed to replicate 'real world' situations and occurrences. Rather than drawing a block and texturing it with a wooden texture, the PlayStation 2 will be able to simulate the wood as it would be in the real world. In other words, it wouldn't just look like wood, it would react like wood. It could be cut like wood and it could be burnt like wood. Any number of real world entities can be simulated easily – water, fire, wind and so on. This microcosm is how Sony envision the PlayStation 2 will change the way that games, or rather digital entertainment products, are developed and conceived. They see this as the 'real' next generation of games machines.

The PlayStation 2 will be used by both game designers and designers from other mediums such as film, literature, art and music. In short, the PlayStation 2 will be a vehicle for the step that this medium will take, and that doesn't mean just games. Interactive novels, plays or films is one direction that it looks like Sony are going, and it looks like this coincides with the direction that Square's *Final Fantasy* series is taking. Sony have set PlayStation 2 up as the future of interactive entertainment.

Or at least that's what the plan is. Since the announcement of the machine, several people inside the industry have pointed out several problems with Sony's plan. The first is the production of the Emotion Engine (the central CPU) and the Graphics Synthesiser (the dedicated polygon pusher). Both require microchips that use 0.18-0.15 micron technology. This is a new production process that can make state of the art chips. Despite the fact that no one in the world has managed to perfect the process (NEC have spent millions and two years trying to do this), Sony plan to have PlayStation 2 out in Japan by the spring – and they haven't even built the factory yet. Never mind that though, the cost of producing software for the PlayStation 2 is expected to be astronomical – even Square (one of Sony's strongest allies) have said that only five or six companies will have the resources to develop for it.

KEN KUTARAGI ON PLAYSTATION 2

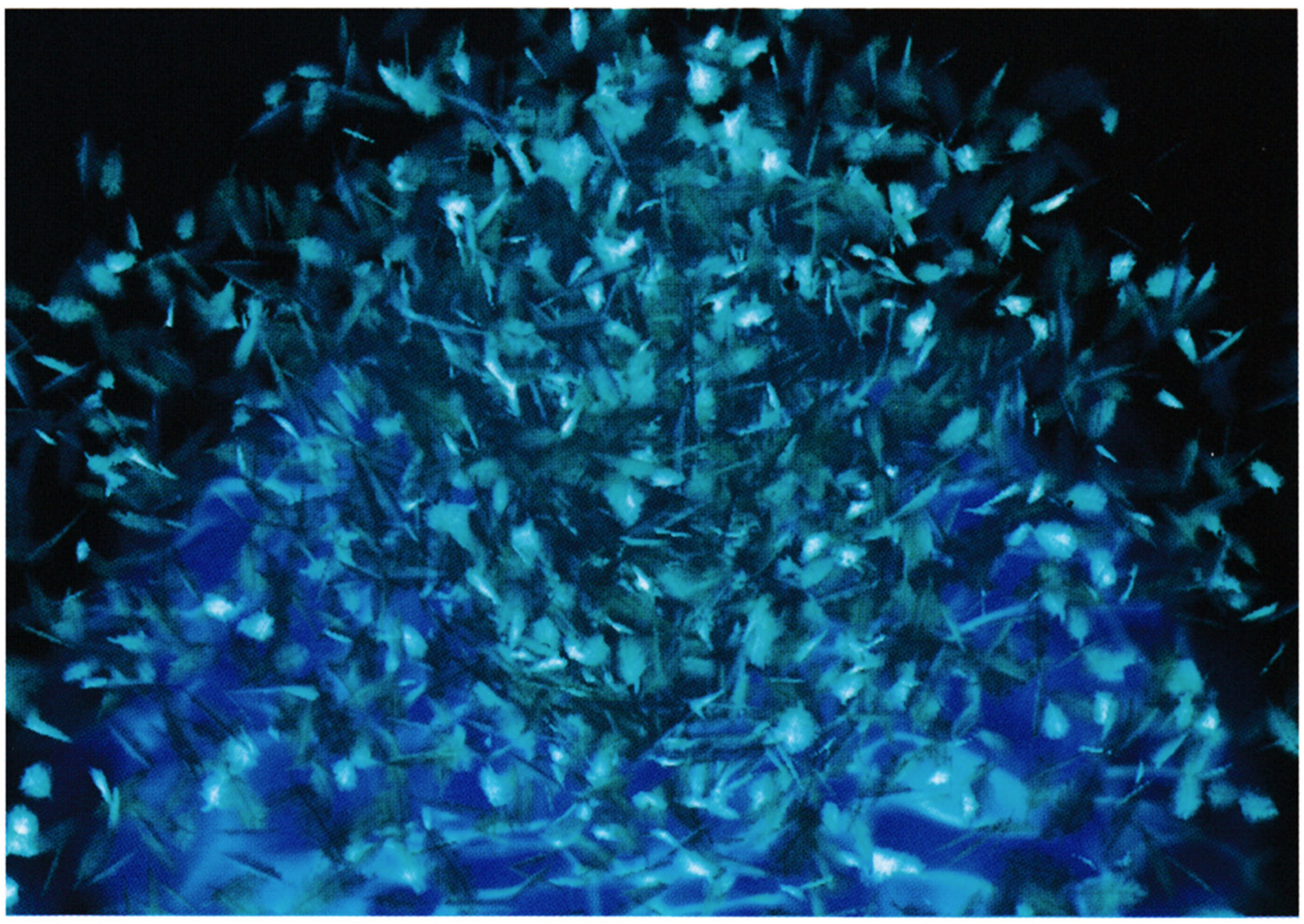
"I'd been dreaming of bringing out a product like this for a decade, ever since we started work on developing the original PlayStation. I've been harbouring the same dream for all that time, and even now the dream has only partly been fulfilled. There are still many, many things to do. I want to look ahead to what things will be like five years down the road."

"The next PlayStation's power to depict images will take it out of the realm of simple gaming machines. Current gaming machines can only show prepared things which, to the user, only seem to be created when he or she is playing. It's a distorted world – not real at all. With the next-generation machine that "world" will be created there and then, as the user plays. People will look like real people, cats will look like real cats, and smoke will look like real smoke."

"There will be lots of new and different kinds of software creators – novelists and scenario writers, for example. We will welcome all people with good ideas for new content that they want to show on the machine."

"We will use communications features to make it possible for users to interact with virtual pets or lovers inside the machine. Even if they are at work away from home, they will be able to receive email from their virtual pet or lover, and they could even get telephone calls."

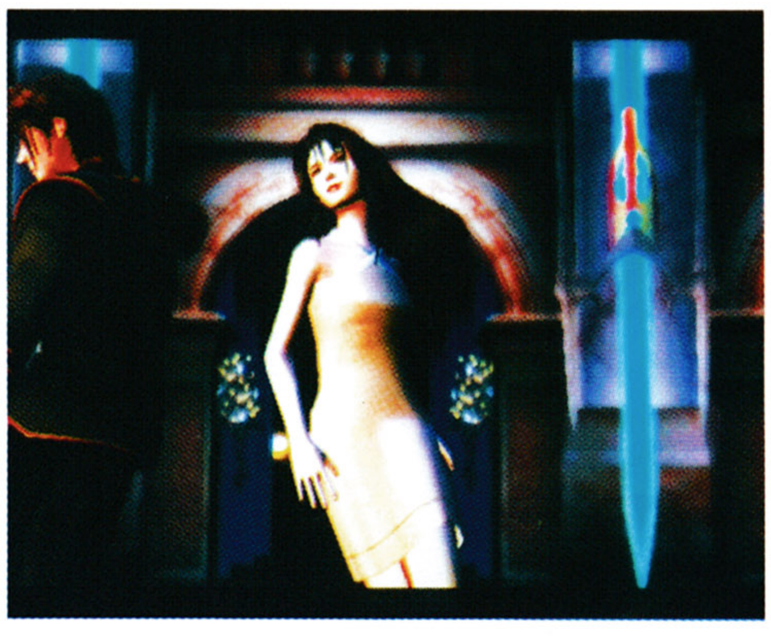
"I personally love music and movies. However, the widespread use of AV equipment means that both music and movies have become passive pastimes. Originally, there were only live performances and theatrical dramatisations – the audience experienced the real thing. That is the soul of entertainment. If we make the most of the computing power now available to us, we will be able to experience the 'real' thing via home entertainment machines. My theme is 'the revival of entertainment.'"

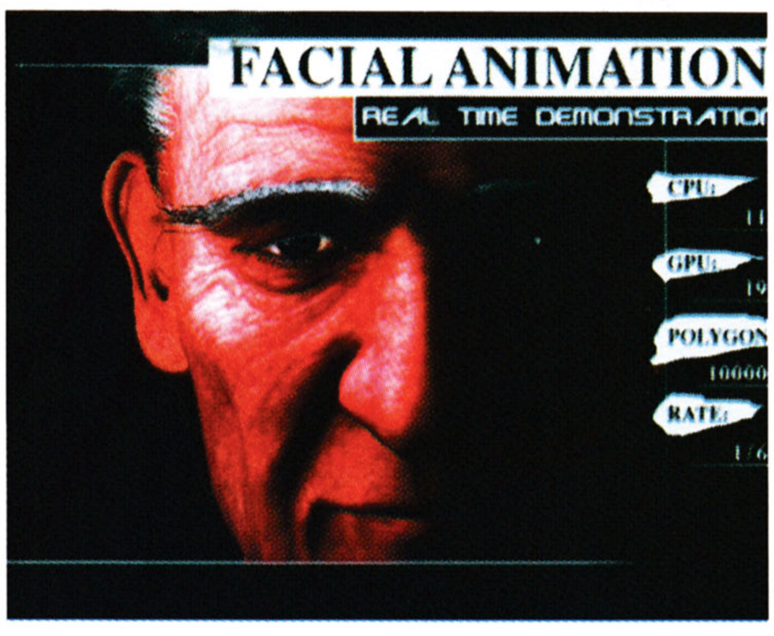


That's not all there is to the PlayStation 2, however, and Sony have said that it is not intended to be a replacement for the original PlayStation - they will continue to support that machine. PlayStation 2 will be 100% compatible with the first generation PlayStation games but, unfortunately, will not feature any graphical enhancements. The backwards compatibility chip (the I/O chip) will also handle the USB port – the 'new standard in digital connection'. This port will allow all manner of devices to be attached to the machine: video camera, digital camera, printer, mouse, modem and almost anything that Sony can come up with in the future. It will also allow an easy connection between two PlayStation 2s, and it will also be possible to link them in serial, just like with PCs.

Despite the fact that the PlayStation 2 will use a DVD-ROM drive AND features an MPEG 2 decoder, it is has yet to be confirmed whether or not it will play DVD Video. This is certain to feature in Sony's plans for PlayStation 2, but at the moment DVD Video is still expensive – current players cost between £300-£800 – so this added cost would obviously increase the price of PlayStation 2 considerably. The MPEG 2 decoder will be used specifically for decompressing textures from DVD. This will give the necessary storage space for the high quality textures that the PlayStation 2 will use.

There's been no word on whether or not the machine will be online capable, but it is just about certain as anything, and Ken Kuturagi has gone as far as to suggest a few uses for this online capability: "We will use communications features to make it possible for users to interact





PLAYSTATION 2 SPECIFICATIONS

CPU 128 Bit 'Emotion Engine'
System Clock Frequency 300 MHz
Cache Memory Instruction: 16KB, Data: 8KB + 16KB
Main Memory Direct Rambus (Direct RDRAM)
Memory Size 32MB
Memory Bus Bandwidth 3.2GB per Second
Co-processor FPU (Floating Point Unit)
Floating Point Multiply Accumulator x 1, Floating Point Divider x 1Vector Units VU0 and VU1 Floating Point Multiply Accumulator x 9, Floating Point Divider x 3Floating Point Performance 6.2 GFLOPS3D CG Geometric Transformation 66 million polygons per second
Compressed Image Decoder MPEG2

Graphics: 'Graphics Synthesiser'
Clock Frequency 150MHz
DRAM Bus bandwidth 48GB per second
DRAM Bus width 2560bits
Pixel Configuration RGB:Alpha:Z Buffer (24:8:32)
Maximum Polygon Rate 75 million polygons per second

Sound: 'SPU2+CPU'
Number of Voices ADPCM: 48ch on SPU2 plus definable, software programmable voices
Sampling Frequency 44.1 KHz or 48 KHz (selectable)

IOP: I/O Processor
CPU Core PlayStation (current) CPU
Clock Frequency 33.8MHz or 37.5MHz (Selectable)
Sub Bus 32 Bit
Interface Types IEEE1394, Universal Serial Bus (USB)
Communication via PC-Card (PCMCIA)

Storage Media
CD-ROM and DVD-ROM

Expansions
TBA

PHIL HARRISON ON PLAYSTATION 2

"The Pentium is based on legacy architecture dating back 20 years. This constrains the performance of the Intel chip in some areas, while it excels in others. The Emotion Engine was designed from a blank sheet with optimum performance for the processing of 3D graphics and simulation of physics and other graphics-related techniques. That is why we achieve such a dramatic performance increase over other systems."

"Developers should not think just about huge numbers of polygons, but the beauty of each and every pixel that can be achieved. Sometimes the best effects come from a relatively low polygon count but a high multiple of recursive pixel modifications."

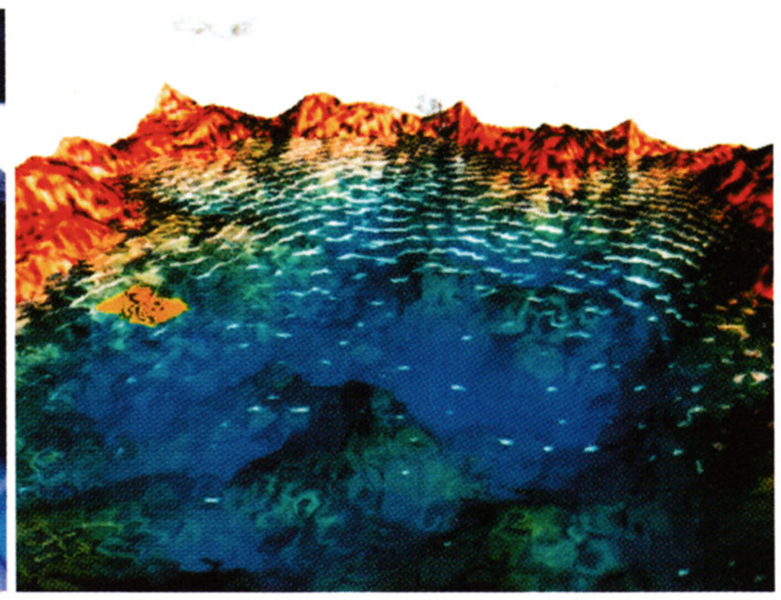
"Software development is like a gas – it quickly fills all the available space, so we will see developers push certain parts of the technology much quicker than we imagine. Based on my conversations to date, there are some very exciting and innovative thoughts bubbling around certain developer's heads!"

Phil Harrison is Sony's VP, Third Party Relations and Research & Development

with virtual pets or lovers inside the machine. Even if they are at work away from home, they will be able to receive email from their virtual pet or lover, and they could even get telephone calls." Yes, with PlayStation 2 you won't even need to leave your house to find a girlfriend, you can just download one off the net... Does this sound like science fiction to you?

Anyway, virtual lovers aside, the online part of PlayStation 2 will possibly play a greater part than with the Dreamcast, and connecting two or more PlayStation 2s could have greater connotations than playing *Quake* online. It would be possible for people to become players in an online film, each one seeing the story from his or her character's point of view. It would even be possible for participants to make the story with their actions and reactions, leading to a different experience every time you play.

It seems that Sony have made the greatest thing since sliced bread. The only real problems are to do with the manufacture of the microchips and the cost of the machine. This was initially thought to be around the £450 mark, but recently it has thought to have dropped to below £300. If this were true and Sony could afford the massive losses this would incur, what reason would there be to buy a PC? What reason would there be to buy a DVD player? What reason would the be to buy a CD player, a fax machine, a VCR? The PlayStation 2 is set to replace all these products and then offer you a whole lot more besides. The page is blank at the moment, and the only limitations are the imagination.



Real life objects can be rendered with ease. The water shown above, for example, is the best yet seen

THE DEMOS

The Final Fantasy VIII demo

The dance scene from *Final Fantasy VIII*, but here it is rendered in real time. This actually looks better than the movie in *FFVIII* created on SG machines.

The Gran Turismo demo

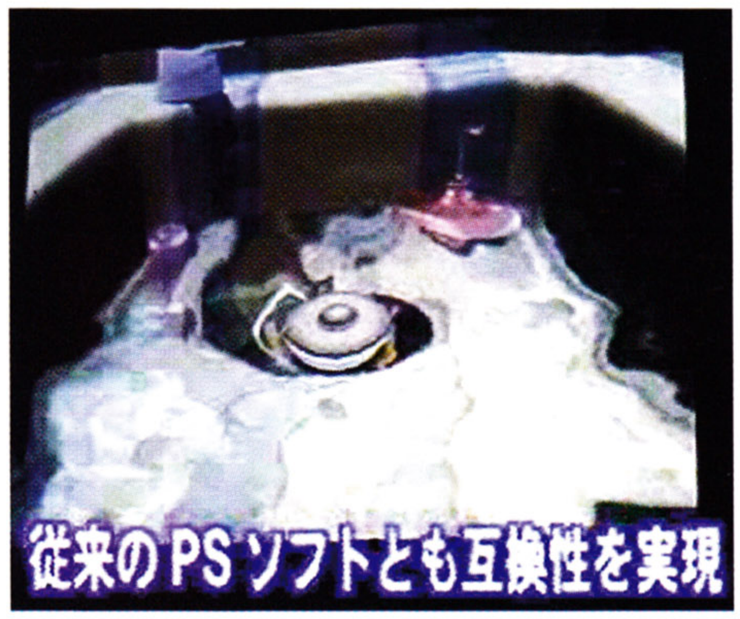
This demo from the *GT* team is basically the original *Gran Turismo* but running on PlayStation 2. This was on show in playable form.

The Ridge Racer girl demo

The girl from the *Ridge Racer* series is shown walking to the end of a catwalk, and the camera cuts to a close-up of her face. Here we are treated to some brilliant animation of the face, and especially her hair.

The skeleton demo

Shows a graveyard scene. Suddenly, skeletons begin to rise from the dead, and before long there are hundreds. A giant dinosaur skeleton finally joins them.



The 'duck in a sink' demo

Shows a sink full with water and various objects floating around on the surface. Suddenly, the plug is pulled and the water drains out in an amazingly realistic fashion.

The Tekken 3.5 demo

Shows a street brawl between Jin Kazuya and Paul Phoenix – brilliantly rendered fighters surrounded by a crowd of onlookers – about thirty in all.

NINTENDO 2000

"MARIO'S LA

The simple fact is that if Nintendo want **to regain the market superiority that the NES** and SNES gave them in the eighties and early nineties then something drastic must be done. **It is make or break time for world's most famous** video game company...

Time is not on Nintendo's side. The popularity and longevity of the SNES gave Nintendo a certain amount of arrogance and led them to delay the launch of the N64 until a year after PlayStation and Saturn. With hindsight, this was not the best move, and in that short period Sony took advantage. And the rest, as they say, is history. If you don't learn the lessons of the past, history is destined to repeat itself. With Sega installing Dreamcasts into Japanese homes at a decent rate and the world-wide launch only a couple of months away and the release of PlayStation 2 confirmed for March 2000, the big N may find that it is too late already...

But no, we'd be stupid to write off Nintendo so quickly, and while the company isn't in financial trouble and Hiroshi Yamauchi remains at the helm we can count on them not giving up just yet. Well, the Game Boy (along with Pokémon) is currently selling as well as ever, and Yamauchi has postponed his retirement to oversee the launch of the company's new home console. An industry without Nintendo would be a dark and scary place. Besides, where would everyone copy their ideas from if there was no Nintendo?

NCL have promised an announcement concerning the N2000 by the end of the year and have pencilled in October 2000 as a possible launch of the new console. However, Nintendo are a company notorious for software and hardware delays, and no one, including those inside the company, expect this date to be attainable. A more realistic date would be the spring of 2001.

In the wake of Sony's PlayStation 2 announcement, most of the industry were in something of shocked state – either one of disbelief or one of joy. Predictably, Nintendo remained calm, reminding us that the consumer is more interested in games that they can buy now for games consoles that they own. They cited their 1999 release schedule as a reason to invest in an N64 rather than wait for PlayStation 2.

The rumour was that the announcement also made Nintendo go back to the drawing board and think again about the specifications of the N2000. Apparently this is not the case and the team have not changed plans; they are quietly confident that the N2000 will have more processing power than the PlayStation 2. We shall see. The development of the machine is being handled by ArtX, a breakaway company from Silicon Graphics, the company that developed the Reality Processor Chip for the N64. Work began on the N2000 some 18 months ago, and although nothing has been announced officially, a few rumours have been leaked from NCL and ArtX. Apparently the N2000 uses a dual chip design and will run at 400Mhz – 100Mhz faster than PlayStation 2 and twice as fast as Dreamcast. It will also use something

NINTENDO 64 – GAMES THAT ARE 'NOW'

The official line from Nintendo at the moment is that you shouldn't worry about the future, the games available for the N64 this year will be stunning. They have a good point, especially if you look at titles like those coming from English developers Rare. The trio of *Perfect Dark*, *Donkey Kong 64* and *Jet Force Gemini* will be the triple-A titles that Nintendo can bank on, but there is also *Conker 64: Twelve Tales* (also from Rare), *Pod Racer* (LucasArts), *Turok 3* (Acclaim) and a secret Christmas game from Rare that will also sell extremely well. There's a lot of life left in the N64, and you shouldn't trade yours in just yet.

ST STAND?"

known as 'Propriety Technology' developed specially by ArtX for use with the N2000.

What format the machine uses is of priority to Nintendo, and the choice could well make or break the machine, despite how powerful it may be. The choice of cartridge for the N64 is now seen as a mistake and caused large publishers such as Squaresoft, Konami, Capcom and Namco to ignore the N64 as a major gaming platform. This has disastrous consequences in Japan where the hugely popular *Final Fantasy* series has moved from Nintendo to Sony. It is highly likely that Nintendo will bow to pressure from publishers and make the N2000 a DVD-based machine, although they may decide to incorporate some kind of writable media – an idea they first tried with the 64DD. The idea behind the 64DD was that it would give gamers more creativity, the sort of creativity that PC owners enjoy, giving them access to level designers and all manner of multimedia applications. This will be a key aspect of the N2000, along with its internet capabilities and Pokémon-friendly interface. Well, maybe not the last part, but the machine will definitely incorporate an adapter to use Game Boy cartridges and the save game data on them. The idea is that you'll be able to play your Game Boy game while at work or at school, bring it home and continue playing there. A great idea, and one that is already in operation in Japan with the N64 and Pokémon.

All we can do is wait and see what Nintendo have up their sleeve. It certainly would be a shame if Nintendo lost their position as one of the major players in the industry, but don't think it can't happen – look what happened to Atari. All we know is that something special is needed from them – even a concession to the will of software developers and their preferred format would be a start. We'll know more before the end of the year, but until then we can be sure that the company will continue to innovate. Watch out for news on N2000 – it could be very special indeed.

N2000 SPECIFICATIONS

We can only emphasise that these specs are pure conjecture. They are, however, based on what the N2000 would have if it were to match the PlayStation 2, or thereabouts.

CPU
128-bit dual chip design
400 MHz
'Propriety Technology'
Graphics – Maximum Polygon Rate 80 million polygons per second

Storage Media
DVD-ROM and/or writeable M/O Disk
Expansions
TBA

Q&A

STEVE TAKLE
Editor Total PlayStation

What is your opinion of Dreamcast and PlayStation 2?
Dreamcast is, without doubt, a powerful and impressive bit of kit. Although it does represent a significant improvement over Sony's established PlayStation system, it lacks the killer applications that any console needs to find favour with the fickle games buying public. PlayStation 2 will benefit from the extension of a number of successful franchises with strong brand identity in the public eye.

Dreamcast is available now (or at least in September), PlayStation 2 won't be with us until the end of 2000. What advantage does this give Sega over Sony? Or maybe it's the other way around…
Sega are staring down the double barrel of the Saturn syndrome once more, as they are releasing a capable machine too late in the day to avoid the looming shadow of a Sony super system. Early adopters who crave the latest machines will embrace the Dreamcast, just as they will defect to the PlayStation 2 a year later. For the more casual gamer, the PlayStation brand is so dominant that a continuation of this will be perceived as being a much safer bet.

Dreamcast has an on-line capability, promises to be upgradable to DVD and have a variety of other add-ons. Graphics aside, is there really that much difference between Dreamcast and PlayStation 2?
That's like asking if the Saturn and PlayStation are identical because they're both stand-alone CD-based systems – and one of those systems now rules supreme, while the other makes a good paperweight. A console stands and falls by the quality of its software alone. As yet, there is not a single Dreamcast game that is truly a 'must have' title.

Do you think Sony's vision for the PlayStation 2 as a 'new form of digital entertainment' will come to fruition?
Although it's a powerful machine which looks set to produce some amazing games, this does smack of PR overkill. The games will look slicker than ever before, the user interactivity will reach new levels and the gaming environments will be more authentic. I can't see it being the revolution Sony claim it to be. Of course, if I knew what the next breakthrough would be, I'd be a very rich man.

Many people (including Sony) have suggested that PlayStation 2 will change the industry radically. In what way, if any, do you think this could be?
Home entertainment consists of three disparate elements – music, moving image (TV/films) and now video games. What do you get if you combine all three in a single box? An essential purpose for a very large cross section of the public. With such a large installed user-base, an increase in software diversity and availability is inevitable. The original PlayStation has already gone some way to set the ball rolling, and the mark two will see it snowball

Nintendo are rumoured to have a new console ready by the beginning of 2001. What hope do they have against the might of an electronics firm like Sony?
Unless they get their corporate head out of their laurel cushioned arses, the once mighty N are set for a tumble. Their complacency and arrogance – as demonstrated by the painfully late software releases in the UK and shoddy conversions – has made them few friends in the software industry. The preclusive costs of development for a cartridge based system were retained solely for Nintendo's benefit i.e. to maximise their profitability. If Nintendo are to avoid relegation, they need to work with the entire industry, not try and rule it.

What would you like to see them include in the new machine's make-up?
A dead good lippy – nice and red!

Could you see a future for Nintendo as developer only?
Definitely. And Sega. And Sony. Why the industry has tolerated a multiple format approach for so long remains a mystery to me. If Betamax hadn't fallen by the wayside, Blockbusters would need double the floorspace to house their stock! As consumers, our purchasing options are paradoxically limited by having more than one platform available. How many of us can really be bothered – or afford – more than one console? If there were a single machine whereby the consumer were empowered to purchase any 'A' grade title by any developer, then the weaker software developers could only be encouraged to produce software which will genuinely innovate rather than weakly imitate across platforms.

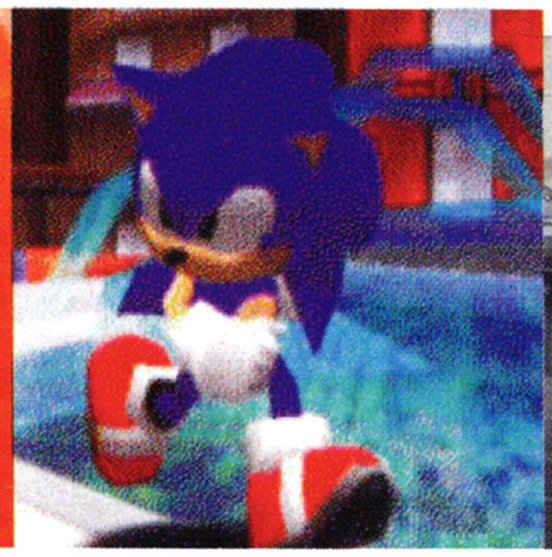
Red Stor

While **you can never predict** what might happen in the **battle for supremacy** in this market, the **Japanese experience** still gives an insight into what might happen in the rest of the world. **Total CONTROL** takes a look at the current **state of play** in Tokyo…

Sega's Dreamcast was first seen in its native Japan in October of last year. The reaction from consumers then, as it is now, has been one of quiet reservation. It seems that the Japanese games playing public, or at least the majority of the 19 million who bought PlayStation (and are still buying at the same rate that Dreamcasts are selling), are reserving judgement on Sega's machine. So far, less than one million Dreamcasts have been sold, a number that has yet to eclipse the Saturn and the N64. Why is this? The software so far released for the Dreamcast has been what you might think of as traditionally high selling and sure to bring the punters in. Sega themselves have so far released almost arcade conversions of the brilliant *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Sega Rally 2* and *The House of the Dead 2*. There has also been some top quality third party software, like *Power Stone*.

Market dominance

The simple fact is that the PlayStation is as dominant in Japan as it is in the UK and everywhere else in the world. And the public perception is that there is no need for a new console, the current PlayStation is enough. This is not only true for the home console market, but for the handheld market as well. The current 'revival' of the market in Japan with the popularity of Pokémon has seen both SNK and Bandai release for their rivals on the all-conquering Game Boy Colour. Also, Sega and Sony have tried to tap into the market with the VMS and PocketStation, respectively. Again, though, sales are not earth shattering for the new handhelds – the NeoGeo Pocket and the Wonderswan and the ten-year-old technology of the Game Boy



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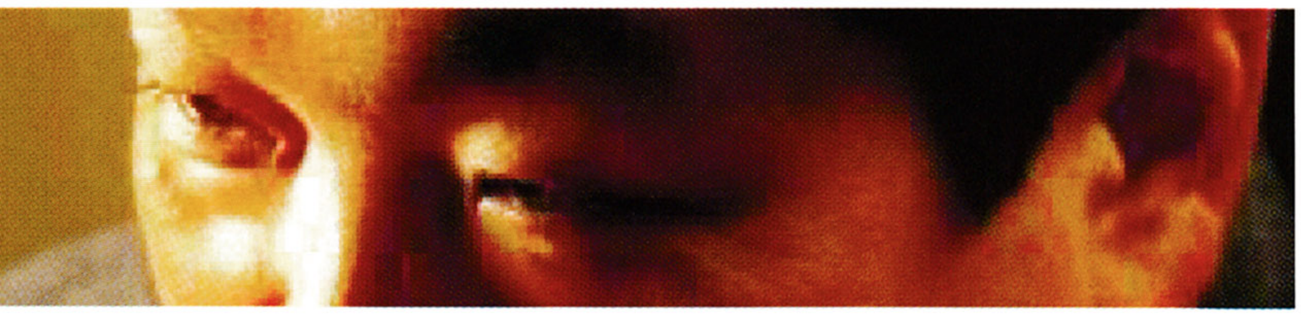

(albeit spruced up with some colour) is enough to satisfy the demand. Of course, it helps if you have a catalogue of games of the calibre of Nintendo up your sleeve (as well as the phenomenon of Pokémon), but the simple fact is that people do not want to upgrade. In fact, the perceived upgrade is not a great deal better. Is this the how consumers see the difference between Dreamcast and PlayStation?

Thirty two Vs 128

In terms of the quality of software, there isn't that much between the two systems, and in many cases the PlayStation just has the edge. Certainly games like *Tekken 3* and *Gran Turismo* are better than *Virtua Fighter 3* and *Sega Rally 2*, so where is the reason to buy Dreamcast? Sales have proved so far that there is very little reason to and that gamers are not wooed only by the lure of flashy, arcade standard graphics. It takes something more to pull the punters in, and in Japan, where the traditionally big selling games are RPGs, the Dreamcast has little to boast about. This will change in the near future, however, with the launch of games like *Evolution* and *Climax Landers*, two games that are eagerly awaited after their Saturn incarnations. The big games that will really test the response of the public are *Shenmue* and *D2*.

Nice balls...

You should also remember that this isn't really about winning and losing, selling the most consoles, or even who has the biggest balls. It's not the perceived battle between electronics giants that magazines such as ours sometimes make it out to be. If all the companies involved are making enough money, then that's all that is required. There is room for at least three video game consoles in the market, and while Sega offer one thing, Sony claim to be going for a completely different market and Nintendo do what they do best, and that's produce top quality games. There is a danger that Sony may trample all underfoot, but if Sega and Nintendo's games appear on PlayStation 3, that wouldn't be such a bad thing now... would it? TC

JONAUSTIN
Reviews Editor Total N64

What is your opinion of Dreamcast and PlayStation 2?
To be honest, Dreamcast has yet to impress me in the slightest – apart from *Shenmue*, which looks stunning. PlayStation 2, on the other hand, looks a lot more promising. But, unlike everyone else, I'm not about to jump on the bandwagon due to some demos that the console will not be able to live up to for years.

Dreamcast is available now (or at least in September), PlayStation 2 won't be with us until the end of 2000. What advantage does this give Sega over Sony? Or maybe it's the other way around...
I don't think it gives them much of an advantage. PlayStation games are getting better and will keep the punters happy until PlayStation 2 arrives, and people will be willing to wait that year longer. People still remember the Saturn, unfortunately. And the Mega CD...

Dreamcast has an on-line capability, promises to be up-gradable to DVD and have a variety of other add-ons. Graphics aside, is there really that much difference between Dreamcast and PlayStation 2?
The word 'PlayStation' is a world-famous brand name that is about as synonymous with gaming as Hoover is with vacuum cleaning, and this may be the main difference in the war. 'Dreamcast' means nothing to the average Joe. Then, of course, there's the small matter of Sony's huge installed user-base and backwards compatibility.

Do you think Sony's vision for the PlayStation 2 as a "new form of digital entertainment" will come to fruition?
No. They're lying.

Many people (including Sony) have suggested that PlayStation 2 will change the industry radically. In what way, if any, do you think this could be?
It's going to put many smaller developers out of business because they won't be able to afford to develop games for the thing. This will create an oligopoly where only Sony, Konami and EA are going to be able to make games, starving us of originality and charging extortionate prices for the software. This will cause a depression and lead to millions dying of starvation. Possibly.

Nintendo are rumoured to have a new console ready by the beginning of 2001. What hope do they have against the might of an electronics firm like Sony?
People in the games industry seem to have extremely short memories. Nintendo have always been the innovators where games are concerned, and if you count them out now then you're a damned fool. Nintendo are a ruthless and dangerous company with far more experience in the games industry than Sony. Yamauchi, Arakawa, Miyamoto, Main and Lincoln are going to blow us all away. In other words, they made mistakes with the N64 which they won't make again. They have every hope of winning the next war.

What would you like to see them include in the new machine's make-up?
Writability, for altering games to suit your own specifications. A DVD drive, obviously. A modem. A special chip called the "Emulsion Engine" which faithfully re-creates the physics, and smell... of paint drying. That would be pretty cool.

Could you see a future for Nintendo as developer only?
If it came to that then, yes. Nintendo are games developers at heart, and will always make the best games in the world, be they for the Dreamcast, PlayStation 2, N2000 or the Coleco 3000 Mega UltimateVision (you haven't heard?).

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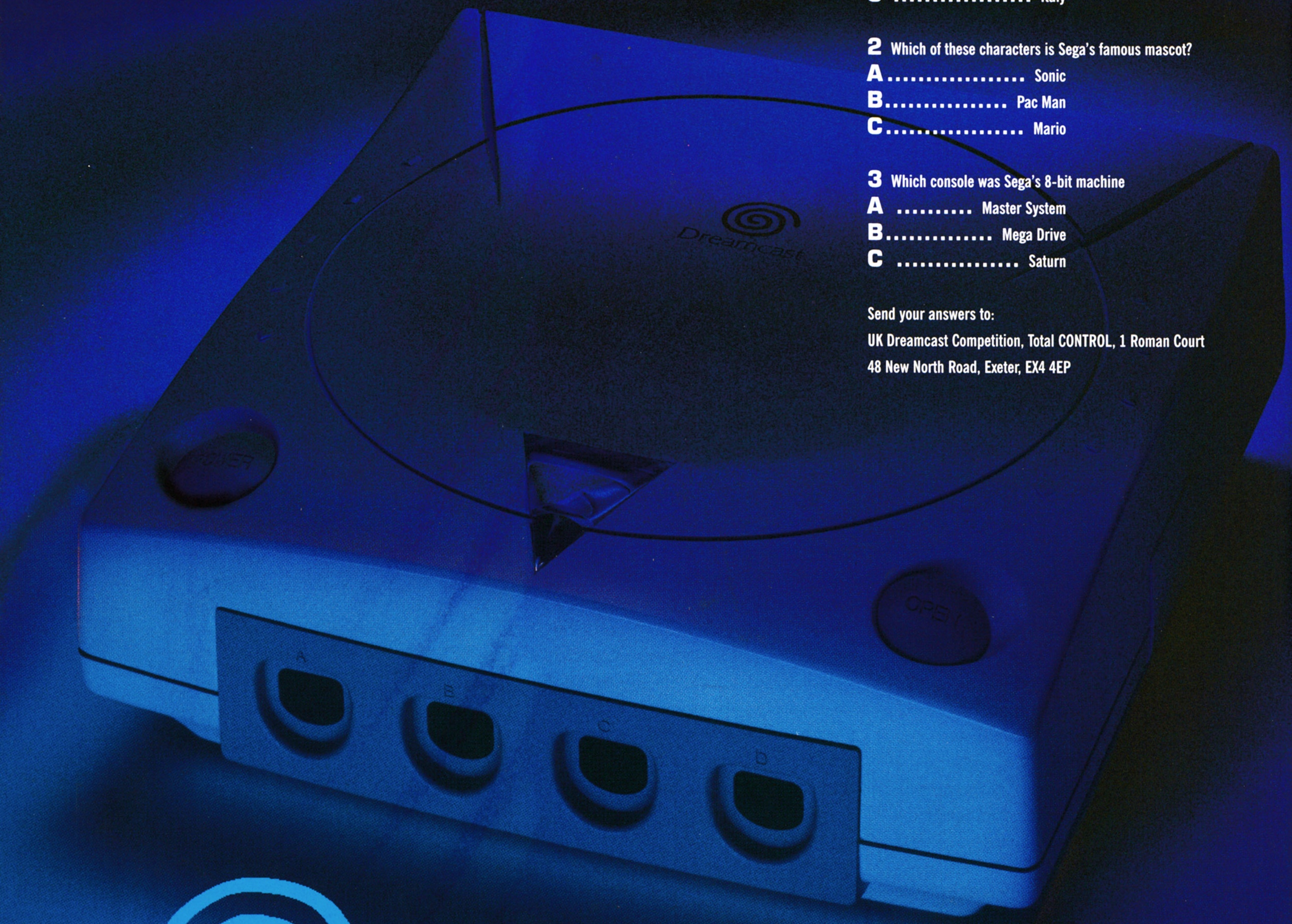
Sega launch the Dreamcast in the UK **on 27th September,** and you could be one of the first people in the country to own one. Not only that, **we'll give you all of the launch games.** These include *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Incoming*. **The total prize is worth around £600.**



To win this fantastic prize all you have to do is answer the three Sega-related questions below:

1 Sega is a company originating from which country?

A..... Japan
B ..... United States
C ..... Italy

2 Which of these characters is Sega's famous mascot?

A..... Sonic
B..... Pac Man
C..... Mario

3 Which console was Sega's 8-bit machine

A ..... Master System
B..... Mega Drive
C ..... Saturn

Send your answers to:

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Dreamcast™

Rules and conditions

The closing date for the competition is the 23rd August 1999 and all entries must be on an postcard or a sealed down envelope. Employees of Rapide Publishing, their family and friends are forbidden from entering the competition. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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WILLADKIN
e-mail: will@rapide.co.uk

Welcome to the new-look cheats pages of Total CONTROL. Due to popular demand we decided to make this section a little bit more bulky during our re-design, and these four pages will be constantly updated with the latest tips and cheats each month, while still retaining a selection of the more popular codes in a TC cheats library. Of course, we will try to check all of the cheats that we print, but if you are having problems, feel free to contact me via e-mail and I'll get back to you as soon as possible. Please note that keys followed with a number in brackets means that that key should be pressed/entered the number of times specified within the bracket.

Even before we added our cheats page, we have been receiving numerous queries on how to complete certain parts of your games. The majority of this space will be giving way to a specific Q&A section next month, so if you find yourself stuck on a particular part of a game, have been looking for specific codes, or just want general advice, send your request via letter or e-mail to the address shown elsewhere on this page and I'll do my best to answer as many of them as possible in the next issue. Here are a few of the requests we have received so far:

Q: 'I have heard there is a secret adventure mode in *Diddy Kong Racing*. I've explored everywhere, but I still can't find it.'
• Alice Derins – Leicester
A: *First you must collect all of the trophies and amulets and then beep your horn near the sign by the lighthouse. The lighthouse will then morph into a rocket and launch into space, giving you access to the fifth world. If you then beat Wizpig on this new bonus world an Adventure 2 option will become available where you must collect platinum balloons on reversed tracks.*

Q: 'I recently bought the import version of *Silent Hill* and I've read that Cybil can be saved in the fairground, but I don't know how to do it... Can you help?'
• Mark Denley – via e-mail
A: *Before reaching that area, you need to find the 'red liquid' in the normal hospital, which is on the floor near the administrator's desk. Then, when she runs out of ammo and throws her gun away, use the liquid on her.*

Q: I've recently bought *GTA London* on the PC, but I'm not very good at games and I keep dying all the time. Do you have any good cheat codes for it?'
• James Rush – Crediton
A: If you're finding it really difficult, try typing in 'iamfilth' to get infinite lives.

Our **new-look cheats section** has now expanded to four packed pages of vital **sanity-saving information.** If you've been having trouble with this year's biggest games, **look here for liberation...**

PC CHEATS

Commandos: Beyond The Call of Duty

Mission Passwords

The Asphalt Jungle H239Z
Dropped Out of the Sky IR291
Thor's Hammer NGYA7
Guess Who's Coming Tonight? .. 6S5TL
Eagle's Nest VND2R
The Great Escape BUK2L
Dangerous Friendships LL42X

Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith

Press T and then enter one of the following case-sensitive cheat codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.

Unlimited full force powers... iamagod
All weapons ..... diediedie
Full inventory ..... gimmestuff
Disable AI ..... statuesque 1
Enable AI ..... statuesque 0
Increase Force level ..... trainme
Fly ..... freebird
Enable invincibility ..... boinga 1
Disable invincibility ..... boinga 0
Full mana ..... trixie
Full map ..... cartograph
Slow motion ..... gospeedgo 1
Resume normal speed ... gospeedgo 0
Level skip ..... gameover
Jump to specified co-ordinates . quickzap

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

View unexplored locations:
Hold the left mouse button when getting ready to move a unit. Move the unit over the map grid. As it passes over each grid square, co-ordinates and distance will be displayed, along with text associated with landmarks and cities, even if the square is unexplored

Map editor:
Press [Ctrl] + K during gameplay to enter the map editor. Enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding effect.

Change year ..... [Shift] + [F5]
Create unit ..... [Shift] + [F1]
Discovery technology ... [Shift] + [F2]
Edit energy credits ..... [Shift] + [F4]
Edit faction diplomacy .. [Shift] + [F9]
Full map ..... Y
Kill opponent ..... [Shift] + [F6]
Switch sides and reset view [Shift] + [F3]
View FMV sequences.... [Shift] + [F8]
View ..... [Shift] + [F7]

Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil

Cheat Codes:
Enter one of the following codes at the 'Enter Cheat' screen. If you have entered the code correctly, the cheat will be displayed. Then, select the 'Cheats' option and set each enabled code as desired. All cheats entered will be saved after saving:

Big hands and feet mode ... TROMPEM
Big head mode ..... BIGBADNOODLE
Stick mode..... HELLOSTICKY
Tiny mode ..... LILLIPUTIAN
Pen and ink mode ..... PICASSO
Gouraud mode ..... HENRYSBILERP
Blackout mode ..... INEEDAUPS
Erooty stripes..... WIZARDOFOZ
Juan's cheat ..... YOQUIEROJUAN
Jane's cheat .... JANESSPECIALWORLD
Zach attack cheat..... LEGOMANIAC
Do nothing ..... MRNOPRULEZ
Big cheat ..... OBLIVIONISOUTTHERE

Trespasser

Level skip:
While playing a game, hold [Ctrl] + [Shift] + Q + W, then release W.
Secret level:
Go to the "Research Center" in town. Approach the steps, then turn 90 degrees to the right before climbing up. Walk directly to the blockaded gate. Go around the blockages to reach the gate, which is locked by a pair of beams. Climb up the gate by jumping and walking forward until you reach the top – your character cannot fall off the opposite side. Walk on top of the gate and get on the wall to the right. Walk on top of the wall, towards the church and Hammond's house. A niche will appear on the top of the wall. Step on it to reach the secret level, which contains all weapons, two gold bars, a raptor and other strange objects.
Cheat Codes:
While playing a game, press [Ctrl] + [F11] to display the console prompt at the bottom-left corner of the screen. Then, enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function

Invincibility, but slower running .. invul
Infinite ammo..... woo
Higher jumps, but slower running.....
..... bionicwoman
View location ..... loc
View end sequence ..... win
Increased gore level ..... gore 2
Dinosaurs paused ..... dinos
Shows objects or items that are interactive
..... bones
Transport to important locations on current level ..... tnext

Redline

During the game hold G + O + D to display the command line. Now enter one of the codes from below.

IMMORTAL ..... God mode
MORTAL ..... Turn off God mode
RETICLE . Gives you a smart reticle that turns red when over a target
CAMERA.. Third-person view when on foot
TARGETS .....
... Targeting for weapons (on foot only)
DMDAMAGE .....
..... Deal out double damage on foot
RADAR ..... Gives you radar on foot
CW ..... All car weapons
CA ..... Max car ammo levels
STONEAGE ... Puts a running person place of the car
CAROFF..... No car geometry
CARFLIP ..... Flip the car geometry
WHEELSOFF .. Toggle on/off car wheels

Thief

These codes will only work with Thief v1.33
Mission Skip = CTRL + ALT + SHIFT
Open the dark.cfg file in your *Thief* directory and add the lines: 'cash_bonus' to give yourself lots of money and 'starting_missionx' to start on the mission number that you replace 'x' with.

Wargasm

Enter the following level passwords to jump to that level:

CHEESE ..... Level 1
TOAST ..... Level 2
BUTTIES ..... Level 3
KEBAB ..... Level 4
GATEAUX ..... Level 5

Warzone 2100

Create a shortcut in Windows and enter the command line "warzone.exe -ImACheatingScallyWag". Then, in the game, use the following codes.

CTRL + M ..... Skip mission.
CTRL + N ..... Power boost
CTRL + G ... Reveal all map on RADAR
CTRL + X ..... Instant research
Timedemo .....
Frame rate averaged over last five minutes
Carol Vorderman..... Sound sample
Hallo Mein Schatz..... Mission skip
Normal .....
Change skill level on the fly to Normal
Easy .....
... Change skill level on the fly to Easy
Hard ..... Change skill level to Hard
Frame Rate .....
..... Displays the current frame rate

EASYWAYOUT

Worms Armageddon

First, earn a gold medal in any training drill. You will then be able to enter the following cheat codes.

Basic Training . . . . . Worms will bleed when shot

Artillery Range . . . . . Grenades will be more powerful

Euthanasia . . The longbow will work better

Super Sheep Racing . . . . . Aqua sheep will be activated

Crazy Crates . . . . . All weapons crates will contain sheep

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Civilization II

Trouble managing your money? Enter '_CasH' as a town name. (Hold R1 when entering the letter "H" at the end of the name)

Crash Bandicoot: Warped

Access the *Spyro The Dragon* demo:
Press Up(2), Down(2), Left, Right, Left, Right, Square at the title screen.
Hot Cold bonus level:
Go to Level 14 and ride about halfway through the level to find the alien crossing sign on the left-hand side. Run into the sign to be transported to level 31.
Eggipus Rex bonus level:
Go to Level 14 and take the yellow gem ride. Continue until you reach the area where the huge dinosaur chases Crash. Allow the second pterodactyl capture Crash to reach level 32.
105% completion:
Collect all relics and gems, including those from the Hot Cold and Eggipus Rex bonus levels. The relics that are collected must be at least gold or platinum. Then, approach Crash's sister, next to the save spot, to find another clear gem. Take the gem to view a very nice fireworks display and finish with a 105% completion status.
Instant Uka Uka:
Press Triangle + Circle + X + Square. This may only be done once per life.
Five lives location:
Begin game play on level 14 and take the yellow gem ride. Go all the way to the end and use a double jump over the yellow gem. Then, use a double jump to cross over the steel wall to find five lives.

Metal Gear Solid

Alternate costumes:
Successfully complete the game, wait until the credits end and save the game. Load the saved game file and play through the game again. After successfully completing the game a second time, wait until the credits end and save the game. Load the saved game and play through the game again. Snake will change into a tuxedo in the elevator during this game.
Konami game surprise:
Play the game using a memory card that contains a saved game from any prior Konami title (*Castlevania, ISS Soccer, Suikoden, Silent Hil*l etc.)
When Psycho Mantis attempts to read your character's mind, he will mention various game titles.
Stealth gear:
Successfully complete the game under the easy difficulty level after submitting during the torture by pressing Select. Otacon will give your character the stealth gear after being saved. Allow the credits to complete, then save the game. Load the saved game to begin with the stealth gear.
Bandanna:
Successfully complete the game without submitting to the torture. Your character will save Meryl and receive the bandanna. When equipped, the bandanna will allow unlimited ammunition on any weapon.
Camera:
Reach area B2 of the tank hanger. At the end of the hallway to the right of the door where you fight revolver is a secret room that is entered after using C4 explosive. In the room are card 4 and card 6 doors. The camera is in the room behind the card 4 door. Use the camera to take pictures to see various extras, such as the faces of the development team.
Development team photos:
Use the camera to take pictures at the following locations.
Fujimura . . . . . Elevator in the Comm Tower B complex
Fukushima . . . . . Heliport; looking out to sea from cliff
Hirano . . . . . Elevator in Comm Tower B; deep in the shaft of top level
Ishiyama . . . . . Heliport top of building
Ito. . . . . Inside elevator to tank hangar
Jerem Blaustein . . Sniper Wolf's corpse
Kaneda . . . . . The mirror in the rest room
Kimura . . MG underground base; tip o Metal Gear's railgun
Kinbara . . . . . Dark area of stairs
Kitao . . . . . Decoy Octopus (fake DARPA chief) corpse
Kobayashi . . . . . Rock in canyon
Kobayashi . Johnny Sasaki holding cell, near DARPA chief
Kojima . . . . . Otacon lab; the picture frame to the right
Korekado . . . . . Men's rest room
Kozyou . . . . . Behind the watertank in the Canyon
Kutome . . . . . Observation room
Makimura . Hidden armoury store room; behind the weakened wall
Matsuhana . . . . . Hallway of corpses; outside Otacon's lab
Mizutani . . . . When fighting Metal Gear
Mori . . . . . Lowest point of elevator; Comm Tower B
Mukaide . . . . . Reflection in wolfdog cave puddle
Muraoka . . . . . Water in cargo dock
Nakamura . . . . . In Meryl's blood pool; where she is sniped
Negishi . . . . . Sewage waterfall
Nishimura . . . . . Next to Baker's corpse
Okajima . . . . . Maggots of the real DARPA Chef in cell
Onoda . . . . . Where Baker is tied up
Sasaki . . . . . Picture frames in the Commander's room
Sato . . . . . Comm Tower A; roof destroyed by Hind D missiles
Scott Dolph . . . . . Deep down in the dark from the walkway between Comm Towers A and B
Shigeno. . . . . Heliport, security camera by staircase
Shikama . . . . . Electric floor
Shimizu . . . . . Wolfdog cave; first crawling point
Shinkawa Deep in Sniper Wolf's hallway behind the second pillar
Sonoyama . . . . . Torture machine
Takade . . . . . Ninja room; glass atedga
Tanaka . . . . . Heliport; sleeping soldier
Tougo. . . . . End of boiler room; in B Furnace with the steam
Toyota . . . . . Container in the Raven's warehouse
Uehara . . . . . Edge of elevator; where the ravens are
Yamashita . . . . . Tip of nuke warhead in nuke storage room
Yoshimura . . . . . Dead end of air duct
Yoshioka . . . . . Bridge on third floor of the blast furnace
Red Grey Fox:
Get to Grey Fox while dressed in the tuxedo.
Pantless Meryl:
Follow Meryl into the women's bathroom and reach the last stall in less than five seconds. Meryl will be caught with her pants down during an FMV sequence.
Look in the vent just before the DARPA chief (Decoy Octopus) to see Meryl doing sit-ups. Leave the vent and re-enter and she will be doing one-armed push-ups. Repeat and she will be doing leg stretches on the wall. Repeat one more time and she will be doing the leg stretches while pantless.
Alternate title screen (Japanese version):
Press the D-pad at the title screen to change the background colour.

Max Power Racing

GTI cars:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Rome course and press L1, Circle, R1, Square, L2, Square.
Performance cars:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the U.K. course and press R1, Square, L1, Circle, R2, Circle.
R/C cars:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the USA course and press Square, L1, R2, L2, Circle, R1.

Max Power track:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Peru course and press Circle, Square, R2(2), R1(2).
All tracks:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Africa course and press R1, R2, R1, L1, Square, L1.
Reversed tracks:
Successfully complete all thirty tracks to race any of the tracks in the opposite direction.

Oddworld 2: Abe's Exoddus

Advance to next path:
Hold R1 and press Circle(2), X(2), Square(2) during game play. Note: This will not play any FMV sequences. The final level must still be played to advance to the end of the game.
View FMV sequences:
Hold R1 and press Up, Down, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Left, Right at the main menu.
Level select:
Hold R1 and press Down, Up, Left, Right, Triangle, Square, Circle, Triangle, Square, Circle, Down, Up, Left, Right at the main menu.
Invincibility:
Hold R1 and press Circle, Triangle, Square, X, Down(3), Circle, Triangle, Square, X during game play.

Rollcage

Try out the following passwords:
All easy difficulty tracks: . . . . EEFNIEBA
All hard difficulty tracks:. . . EEFPHMBC
All expert difficulty tracks: . HEMPCMDD
All hard difficulty and mirrored tracks: . . . . . EADNCMAH
All expert difficulty tracks, bonus car, mega time trial, mirror mode, all deathmatch modes . . . . . HHMPNEED
Air horn: . . . . . AIRHORNS. (press Select in game play)
Development team high scores: . . . . . BESTLAPS
Ultimate cheat mode . . . . . MAXCHEAT (Ignore the invalid password message)

Spyro The Dragon

Ninety-nine lives:
Pause game play, enter the "Inventory" menu, and press Square(6), Circle, Up, Circle, Left, Circle, Right, Circle.
Level select:
Pause game play, enter the "Inventory" menu and press Square(2), Circle, Square, Left, Right, Left, Right ,Circle , Up, Right, Down. Go to the balloonist to select any level in the game.

TOCA Touring Car Championship 2

Enter the following codes as your name when racing in the single player mode.
All cars. . . . . MECHANIC
All tracks: . . . . . BIGLEY
Bonus track . . . . . TECHLOCK
Micro Machines mode: . . . . . MINICARS
Faster damage: . . . . . DUBBED
Padded barriers: . . . . . PADDED
Bouncing collisions: . . . . . BCASTLE
Forty lap race: . . . . . LONGLONG
Disable championship disqualification: . . . . . PUNCHY
Battle mode: . . . . . BANGBANG
Turbo mode: . . . . . FASTBOY
Higher elevated tracks: . . . . . ELASTIC
Oulton Park Island circuit: . . DINKYBIT
Drive Ford Mondeo: . . . . . CMFORD
Low gravity: . . . . . LUNAR
Blurred background: . . . . . TRIPPY or CASTLETRIPPY
Special effects: . . . . . CODENAME
Invisible car except for tyres: . . JUSTFEET
Locked frame rate during qualifying run: . . . . . TECHLOCK

N64 CHEATS

WipEout 64

Unlimited energy:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right during game play.
Unlimited ammunition:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Down(2), C-Left(2), C-Right(2), C-Up during game play.
Unlimited time:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Up, C-Right, C-Left, C-Down, C-Up, C-Right, C-Left, C-Down.
Cyclone weapons power-up:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, C-Up at the main menu. This power-up doubles the damage caused by your weapons.
Velocitar track:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, C-Right, C-Left at the main menu.
All ships:
Hold Z + L + R and press C-Down(4), C-Right, C-Up, C-Left at the main menu.

EASYWAYOUT

Space Station: Silicon Valley

Alternate introduction sequence: Hold A or B and power on the Nintendo 64 to view two different introduction sequences after the DMV man appears.
Gold Evo: Collect all 390 metal orbs to turn Evo gold on the last level.
At the game or level selection screen enter the following codes:
Asteroid level: Press Down, Up, Z, L, Down, Left, Z, Down.
Extra energy: Press C-Left, L, Z, Down, L, Z, C-Left, C-Right.
Europe level: Press Up, Down, L, Z, Down, Up, Z, Down.
Ice level: Press Up, Down, Z, L, Down, C-Right, Z, Down.
Jungle level: Press Up, Down, L, Z, Down, C-Left, Z, Down.
Desert level: Press Up, Down, L, Z, Down, Left, Z, Down.
Final level: Press Up, Down, L, Z, Down, Right, Z, Down.
Secret level: Press Down, Up, Z, L, Down, Left, Z, Down.
Funny effect 1: Press Up, L, Z, Down, Left, Z, Down, Up.
Funny effect 2: Press L, Down, Z, L, Down, Up, L, Left.
Funny effect 3: Press Z, Down, Up, L, Right, L, Left, Right.
Funny effect 4: Press Left, Right, Z, L, Left, Z, Right, Left.
Stop camera in wall race: Press Down, A, C-Up, L, C-Down, L, Left.

Smash Brothers

Alternate costumes:
Press C-Left, C-Right, C-Up, or C-Down at the character selection screen.
Play as Luigi:
Successfully complete the Bonus 1 "Break The Target" with the eight original characters and one bonus character. This can be done during Bonus 1 practice. Then, defeat Luigi. If you lose the match, complete Bonus 1 again with any character for a rematch.
Sound test:
Successfully complete Bonus Games 1 and 2 with all characters, including the secret ones. This can be done during Bonus 1 and 2 practice.
Change character view:
Hold Z and press the analogue stick at the character biography screen.
Borrow a life:
Begin a team game under versus mode. Press Start if you lose a life to take a life from your partner. Alternatively, press A, B, Z, Start.
Item switch:
Use any character to record one hundred kills to unlock an item switch menu. This menu allows various weapons to be toggled and control the frequency in which they appear. Alternatively, select versus mode, choose any character for yourself, and the three CPU players. Select "stock" mode, set the number lives to ten and computer handicaps to five. Begin game play and win. Enter the options screen under versus mode to access the items switch selection.
Lose a power as Kirby:
If you want to intentionally lose a power gained after eating another character as Kirby, press L to execute his taunt.

Micro Machines 64 Turbo

Change into objects:
Pause game play and press Down(2), Up(2), Right(2), Left(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.
Behind car view:
Pause game play and press Left, Right, C-Left, C-Right, Left, Right, C-Left, C-Right. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.
High bounces:
Pause game play and press C-Left, Right(2), Down, Up, Down, Left, Down(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.
Turbo mode:
Pause game play and press C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Left, C-Up, C-Down(4). A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.
Slow CPU racers:
Pause game play and press C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Enter the code again to return to normal.
Debug mode:
Pause game play and press C-Left, Up, Down(2), C-Left, C-Right(2), C-Up, C-Down to enable debug mode. The following debug functions may now be used:
Instant win
Press Z + C-Down during game play.
Note: This cannot be done during the time trials.
Change camera angle
Hold Z and press Up, Down, Left or Right during game play.
Zoom camera view
Hold Z and press L or R during game play.
CPU control of car
Hold Z and press C-Left during game play.
Destroy all cars
Hold X + C-Up + C-Right + C-Left during game play.

Extreme-G 2

Enter the following codes as passwords:
68QCMH3H9HT ..... Venom bike
55HZ1MH3H9H1 ..... Wasp bike
3GP8ZKW76ZMW ..... All bikes
8KLSZKW76ZM7 ..... All tracks
HSFDCCV611FV ..... Spectre bike and Duel mode
HS3B9BQ9DGPL ..... Mirror mode
N31GG76CG9DZ Extra multiplayer levels (enable the "Venom bike" or "Wasp bike" codes first)
Level skip:
Enter RA50 as a name at the bike selection screen in extreme contest mode. Begin game play, then press Start to pause the race. Select the "Quit" option and choose "Yes" to confirm. Select the "Go" option at the placing screen to advance to the next level.
Extreme modes:
Enter the following codes at the bike selection screen in extreme contest mode and listen for the phrase 'Extreme' to confirm that it has been activated. Enter it again to deactivate the code.
Wipeout mode 2064
Spiralling screen ..... SPIRAL
Full screen ..... NOPANEL
Overhead view ..... SPYEYE
Turbo mode XXX
Unlimited lasers and shields . XCHARGE
Unlimited weapons ..... MISTAKE
Unlimited nitros ..... NITROID
Blurred graphics ..... FLICK
Remove screen fog ..... PIXIE
Wireframe graphics ..... LINEAR
TRON mode ..... NEUTRON
Random tracks ..... JUGGLE
All homing and multiple missiles ..... MISPLACE

Vigilante 8

Enter the following codes as passwords to activate the cheats
All cars:
GANGS_UNLOCKED ..... This does not unlock the UFO.
Y The Alien: ..... GIMME_DA_ALIEN
All characters and levels: JTBT7CFD1LRMGW
Same vehicle in multiplayer mode: ..... MIX_MATCH_CARS
Ultra-high resolution mode:
MAX_RESOLUTION (this code requires the memory expansion pak).
Interceptor Missile power-up: ..... MISSILE_ATTACK.
Invincibility: ..... LIVING_FOREVER
Quick firing weapons: .....
FIRE_NO_LIMITS (this does not affect the machine gun).
Low gravity: ..... A_MOON_GETAWAY
No enemies: ..... POPULATION_OUT
Slow motion mode: . GO_REALLY_SLOW
Expert mode: ..... I_AM_TOUGH_GUY.
Level select: ..... LEVEL_SHORTCUT
View ending sequences: .....
LONG_SLIDESHOW (view any character's ending to see all the game's endings in sequence).
Special weapons:
Enter the following actions during game play to active the special attack of the indicated weapon. Note: The required weapon must be in the inventory, but does not need to be currently active.
Interceptor Missiles (Halo Decoy), uses 2 missiles - Press Up(2), Down then shoot the machine gun to cause your opponent's homing missiles or special attacks to follow your missiles instead of your vehicle.
Interceptor Missiles (Turbo), uses two missiles
Press Up(3), then shoot the machine gun to speed up for a few seconds
Bull's Eye Rockets (Stampede), uses 1-5 rockets
Press Up, Down, Up, then shoot the machine gun to rapidly fire multiple non-homing rockets
Bull's Eye Rockets (Boost Rocket), uses two rockets
Press Up, Down, Up, then shoot the machine gun. If an opponent is hit, he or she is taken for a sky ride
Sky Hammer Mortar (Turtle Turnover), uses two shells
Press Down(3), then shoot the machine gun to flip your opponents' vehicles
Sky Hammer Mortar (Crater Maker), uses five shells
Press Down(2), Up, then shoot the machine gun to drop a mega bomb that will leave a crater
Bruiser Cannon (Cow Puncher), uses two shells
Press Down, Up, Down, then shoot the machine gun to punch opponent vehicles back
Bruiser Cannon (Scatter Blast), uses six shells
Press Down, Up(2), then shoot the machine gun to shoot six cannon shells simultaneously
Roadkill Mines (Cactus Patch), uses 1-6 mines
Press Left, Right, Up, then shoot the machine gun to rapidly deploy a group of mines
Roadkill Mines (Magnetic Mine), uses two mines
Press Left, Right, Down, then shoot the machine gun to drop a mine that will attract nearby cars
Bonus cheats:
Use the analogue stick to highlight the following options at the main menu in order, and press Z at each selection for every one of the following – a smiley face and the sound of an engine will confirm correct code entry:
All standard cars: 'Credits', 'Championship', 'Championship', 'Versus'.
First bonus car: 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Versus'.
Second bonus car: 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Setup', 'Credits'.
Third bonus car: 'Versus', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Setup'.
Dump truck: 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Setup'.
All cars: 'Credits', 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Championship', 'Championship', 'Versus'.
Season four: 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Setup', 'Championship'.
Season five: 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Credits', 'Championship'.
Season six: 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Setup'.
Alternate credits: 'Setup', 'Setup', 'Championship' 'Versus'.
View Wienermobile sequence: 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Versus'.
View NP car sequence: 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Setup', 'Credits'.
View Nintendo logo car sequence: 'Credits', 'Versus', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Championship', 'Versus', 'Championship', 'Credits', 'Setup', 'Versus', 'Setup'.

DREAMCAST CHEATS

Virtua Fighter 3tb

Fight against Alphabet character:
Highlight Akira on the character selection screen and press Start. Then, highlight Lau and press Start. Finally, highlight Pai, hold Start, and press X.
Fight as Alphabet character:
Highlight Akira on the character selection screen and press Start. Then, highlight Lion and press Start. Then, highlight Pai and press Start. Then select any character and press A.
Fight as Silver Dural:
Press Start + X + A at the character selection screen in training mode.
Fight as Gold Dural:
Press Start + Y + A at the character selection screen in training mode.
Arcade backgrounds:
Select team battle, normal or training mode. Then, intentionally allow the timer to reach zero on the stage selection screen.
New training mode backgrounds:
Select training mode, then hold Start and press A at the stage selection screen.

Alternate stage backgrounds:
Hold Start + B at stage selection screen..
Slow motion replay:
Press B before the instant replay begins.
Alternate costumes:
Hold Start and select a fighter at the character selection screen.

Godzilla Generations

Play as original Godzilla:
Hold L + R and press any button at the monster selection screen.
Play as Mech Godzilla:
Hold L + R and press any two buttons simultaneously at the monster selection screen.
Play as Beta Godzilla:
Hold L + R and press any three buttons simultaneously at the monster selection screen.
Play as American Godzilla:
Hold L + R and press any button four times at the monster selection screen.
Play as Minilla:
Successfully complete the game as American Godzilla.
Play as Dr. Serizawa:
Complete the game as Minilla.

Sega Rally 2

All seasons:
Press Up, Left, Down, Right, B, A, B, Right, Down at the title screen. All tracks, including the Secret Rally track, will be unlocked.
All cars:
Press Up, Down, Up, B, A, Left, B(2), Down at the title screen.
Change frame rate:
Press Up, A, Down(2), Left, Right, B(2), Down at the main menu to change the frame rate to 60 per second. A sound will confirm correct code entry. Press Up, A, Down(2), Left, Right, B(2), Up at the main menu to change the frame rate to 30 per second.
Less detailed tracks:
Press Y or R when making a choice on the track or mode selection screen. The track will be less detailed and the race timer will appear on the right side of the screen while the game's display rate is increased.
Alternate car colours:
Press L when making a choice on the car selection screen.
Control car preview camera:
Use the D-pad to change the view of the cars at the car selection screen.

GAMEBOY CHEATS

Harvest Moon

Extra crops:
Capitalise the first letter of your name to get eggplant and carrots as extra crops. Leave the first letter of your name in lower case to get broccoli and peanuts. Replace the first letter of your name with a symbol, such as the heart, to get all four crops.
Easy $1000:
Click on the cupboard after starting the game to get a quick $1000.

The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX

Free bow:
Purchase the bow and press A + B + Start + Select and save the game as the rupees appear from your hand. Continue the game with the bow and your rupees.
Bomb-arrow:
Configure the bombs and arrows as two button items, then press A + B to shoot.
Easy money:
In level three, the Boss will taunt you and say that you will never find him. To get unlimited rupees, get to the Boss, but do not ram the wall with the Pegasus Boots. Kill the blobs that fall on the screen for easy money.
Cheaper purchases:
Select an expensive item from the counter and begin payment. As your character's money is being deducted, quickly press Start + Select + A + B, then save and quit the game. Reload the saved game to keep the item and most of the money used to purchase it.
Heart piece locations:
Refer to the game map as a grid with 1 to 16 going left to right and A to Z going up and down. The heart pieces are located at the following co-ordinates:

1: 1-K	4: 3-G	7: 15-C	10: 8-A
2: 2-I	5: 15-M	8: 14-M	11: 2-A
3: 5-E	6: 9-H	9: 7-H	12: 7-I

Always have Marin:
Complete the first three levels and get Marin as a follower. Use the teleport hole to travel to the animal village. Move to the left, then press Select just when you are about to enter the next screen. Your character should move across the screen. Marin will now remain in your party for the duration of the game.
Stealing:
Your character can steal from shops by taking an item and standing above the store keeper. As he looks towards of the top of the screen, use the door to leave the shop. Note: Your character will be branded a thief and may never return to the same shop. However, the game can be saved and reloaded if your character is killed by a store keeper, which allows the store to be re-entered without penalty.
Bonus seashells:
Find exactly five secret seashells, then go to the Seashell Mansion. Enter, then walk right until finding the water flowing up a big pipe. Another bonus shell can be found by doing this with exactly ten seashells. Note: Return to the Seashell Mansion with twenty seashells to obtain a level two power sword. This sword can shoot when your character's life is full.
Flight:
Obtain the Boomerang and the Rooster. Throw the Boomerang and pick up the Rooster. The Boomerang should hover below you. You cannot get attacked by normal enemies but you may attack them.

Mortal Kombat 4

Bonus credits:
Press Up at the difficulty selection screen to obtain up to five credits.
Kombat Kodes:
To enter one of the following passwords use the key immediately below:
Dragon = ... 0
MK Logo = ... 1
Ying-Yang = ... 2
Four = ... 3
Question Mark = ... 4
Lightning Bolt = ... 5
Goro = ... 6
Raiden = ... 7
Shao Kahn = ... 8
Skull = ... 9
Fight as Reptile 192-234
Fight against Reptile 205-205
Disable throws 100-100
Swicharoo 460-460
Dark Kombat 688-422
Psycho Kombat 985-125
No blocking 020-020
Programmer's message 987-666
Programmer's message 123-926
CPU 25% life 000-707
CPU 50% life 000-033
Player 1 25% life 707-000
Player 1 50% life 033-000
One-hit win 123-123
Explosive Kombat 050-050
Weapons never dropped 002-002
Disable max damage 010-010
No throw, disable max damage 110-110
Random weapon appears 111-111
Start with random weapon 222-222
Randper Kombat 333-333
Start with weapons drawn 444-444
Many weapons 555-555
Silent Kombat 666-666
Big heads 321-321

TC

If you're stuck on a particular part of a game, have been looking for specific codes, or just want general advice, send your request via letter or postcard to: Easy Way Out, Total CONTROL, Rapide Publishing, 1 Roman Court, 48 New North Road, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4EP, or via e-mail to will@rapide.co.uk, and I'll do my best to answer them all.

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Welcome to Games

THE 50 MOST DISAPPOINTING GAMES EVER!

The history of video games chronicles dozens of genuine classics – veritable masterpieces that continue to defy the passage of time and which remain as playable today as when they were first released. But it also recounts the heaps of dross off-loaded onto unsuspecting punters by cynical, or just plain desperate, software houses. These half-baked (and often unfinished) games were released in a bid to make a quick buck or, in many cases, to recover ever spiraling licensing and production costs.

Craig Vaughan trawls his personal gaming memories and recalls the sick, the sad and the downright tragic...

50 Hopkins F.B.I

Publisher: Cryo • Format: PC

A French point and click adventure, and possibly the sickest video game ever. The plot was engaging enough and exercised the brain cells thoroughly, but Cryo saw fit to lace the game with grotesquely gratuitous cut scenes that depicted character's heads being blasted off and murder victims' throats being cut. Inappropriate, inhumane and not in the slightest bit funny.

49 By Fair Means Or Foul

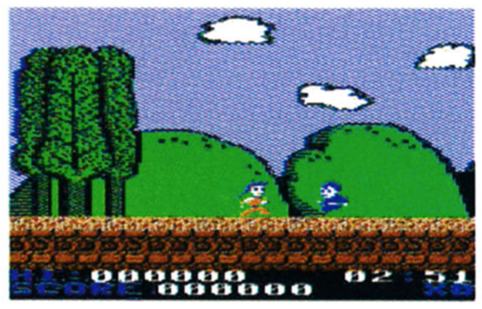
Publisher: Superior Software • Format: Spectrum

A side-on boxing sim knocked out by a series of sucker punches that included mammoth fifteen-round bouts, stiff animation and ropey graphics. The main point of interest proved to be whether the player would fall asleep before the referees. They dozed off with alarming regularity, giving the player the opportunity to use the game's four 'foul' moves with complete impunity, thus ensuring repeated victory.

48 Kid Niki

Publisher: Quicksilver • Format: C64

Data East unfortunately left the job of converting this little-known platformer to Quicksilver. Taking no account of the Commodore's generous colour palette, the game was programmed in a small range of gaudy pastels which proved uncomfortable on the eye. Many enemies shared the same colours as the background graphics, which made them almost invisible to your character. The hero charged headlong through the levels, only stopping when you activated his weapon, which was some sort of stick which protruded from his mouth.



47 Space Dude

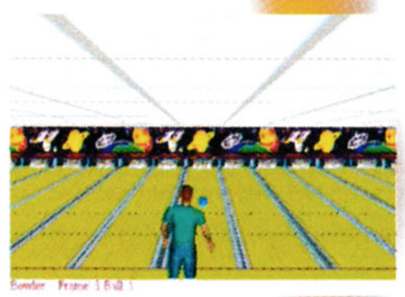
Publisher: Form-Gen • Format: PC

The title tells you all that you need to know. You have to wonder who actually writes this stuff. The central character was teeth grindingly annoying and the story couldn't have been worse if you organised a "world's worst game plot" competition. To cap it all off, it didn't know what it wanted to be – adventure, puzzle game, bucket of slops? Avoid if you have any respect for your mortal soul.

46 Pro Bowl 3D

Publisher: Activision • Format: PC

A bowling simulator that had you ripping out your own intestines with a ladle rather than ever having to look upon its flat, sprite-infested utter hideousness. Slow and ugly, it took an age to set up to bowl, and when your ball finally took off it took an age to lumber down the alley. We could go on, but what's the point... It was just pitiful. Don't buy it.



HELL!

45 Garfield's Winter Tale

Publisher: The Edge • Format: Atari ST

Done properly, sports sims often prove addictive and full of variety. Quite why some idiot chose to cast Garfield in the role of Winter Sports Superstar remains a mystery to this day. Superficially the game promised much – Garfield looked and moved superbly – but you couldn't take a cat skiing and ice-skating seriously. The tragic and incessant 'music' used up the last of Garfield's nine lives.

44 Willow

Publisher: Mindscape • Format: PC

Back in the days when PCs filled rooms and provided graphics in a range of sixteen colours, Mindscape broke away from Mirrorsoft with this half-baked movie tie-in. Loosely described as an adventure, Willow was actually six mournful sub-games bolted together with little or no apparent thought given to playability or longevity. It stank, but sold well on the back of the movie.

43 Spitting Image

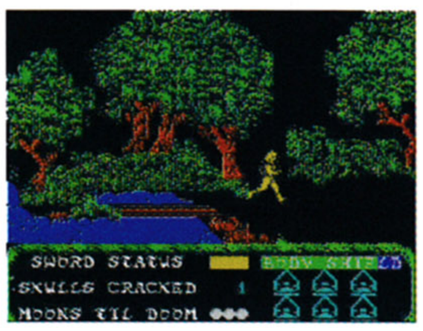
Publisher: Domark • Format: C64

Domark had reasonable success with their unlicensed rip-off of the Spitting Image TV programme, 'Split Personalities', and followed it up with this satirical beat-'em-up starring Thatcher, Gorbachev, the Pope, P. W. Botha and the Ayatollah. The fact that none of these eminent world leaders sued defies belief. Even today, the sight of P. W. Botha pulling off his special move (urinating on the opposition) fails to distract from crusty graphics, abhorrent animation and non-existent gameplay.

42 Masters Of The Universe

Publisher: Gremlin • Format: Spectrum

Gremlin spent a fortune on the license, and had little cash left to program the game. It emerged as little more than a still-born Robocop clone, with little to do and nothing to see. A Gremlin spokesperson failed to fully grasp the scale of the disaster, commenting, "We're not 100% happy with it, but for kids we think it's good."



41 Action Service

Publisher: Infogrames • Format: PC

Infogrames took Combat School, removed the intuitive control system and limited the palette to four colours. Then they distorted the sound, added juddery scrolling, and included an uncypherable level construction editing tool. The result was, unsurprisingly, an unmitigated disaster. Another strangely French game, with a charm all of its own.

40 Dream Warrior

Publisher: US GOLD • Format: Amstrad CPC

A plodding and laborious platformer on every format it polluted, but supremely awful in this 8-bit incarnation. The packaging stated that failing in your mission could lead to insanity – unfortunately it quickly became apparent that those merely playing the game could suffer the same fate – although sleep was the most common result of prolonged exposure

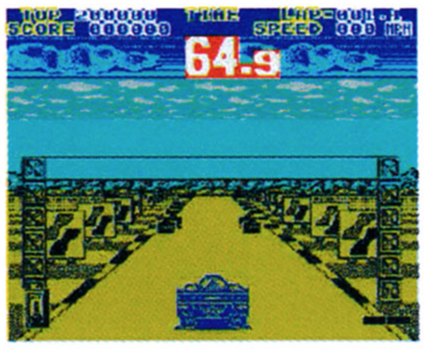
39 1943

Publisher: Go! Capcom • Format: C64

The unimaginatively titled sequel to the vertical blasters 1941 and 1942, 1943 bombed dramatically on the C64. Although it offered plenty of variety across its 16 levels, Go! didn't waste time or money on playtesting prior to release. Reports of untrained chimpanzees completing the entire game in twenty minutes – without loss of life – were never verified, but were completely believable.

38 Wec Le Mans

Publisher: Imagine Software • Format: C64



Imagine Software converted a whole host of arcade favourites rather successfully to home machines –and then released Wec Le Mans on to the unsuspecting market. The C64 version was, undeniably, utter tosh. The car sprites were detailed and moved fluidly enough, but the road surface repeatedly scrolled the wrong way, reducing the game to a vomit-inducing farce.

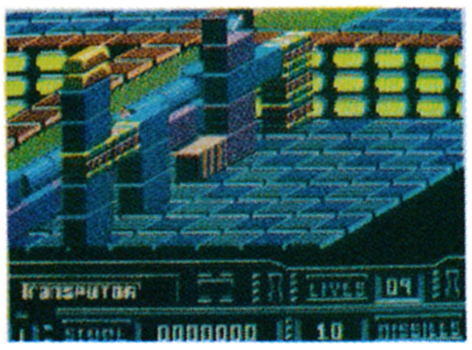
37 Captain Fizz Meets The Blastertrons

Producer: Psyclapse • Format: Atari ST

A Gauntlet variant from a company that should have known better. Bizarrely, nearly 50% of the playing area was taken up with status and scoring panels, and the screen flipped (rather than scrolling), which would have been but a minor irritation except for a nasty bug that caused enemy sprites to flicker and disappear from view when things got too hectic.

36 Transputer

Producer: CRL • Format: Amiga



You'd think it would be impossible to mess up a Breakout clone, but that didn't stop CRL churning out this dire isometric 3D nightmare. The bat and ball both doggedly defied the laws of physics, slowing and speeding up seemingly at random, and the tragically inept viewpoint completed the farce by obscuring most of the play-field

35 Fifth Element

Publisher: Activision • Format: PlayStation

It's possible that this game was released in error following some sort of cock-up at the disc duplication centre. A 3D action adventure with beat-'em-up overtones, it suffered from the 'one move beats all' syndrome, stilted character animation, pathetic enemy A/I, tragically inept lip-synching and a glitching sound engine. If the PC version had been released in this state it would have needed a 30Mb patch to put it right. Unfortunately, PlayStation owners didn't have that upgrade luxury

34 Space Jam

Publisher: Acclaim • Format: PlayStation

Cartoon characters playing basketball? Surely some mistake? Indeed not, because this was the game of the film of the Nike commercial. Aimed squarely at five year olds, even they would have struggled to find any challenge in this pointless, humorous, shambolic mess. Not only a pale imitation of the NBA series, but a criminal waste of the Looney Tunes license too.

32 PYST

Publisher: Palladium Interactive. • Format: PC

There is only one trick to making a parody of a sad game and that is to avoid duplicating the things that made the original sad in the first place. MYST sold by the truckload, lord only knows how. PYST just did the same thing again, just not as well, amazingly enough. Linear, unfunny and too like the source material. Still if people liked MYST...

33 Mortal Kombat Mythhologies: Sub-Zero

Publisher: Midway • Format: N64

There are bandwagons and there are bandwagons. Then you have the Mortal Kombat series, which is the neon-lit, spangly fireworks and scantily-clad girlies hanging off it bandwagon to end 'em all. 3D technology rendered this a dinosaur before it hit the shelves, and a quick note: making a game impossibly difficult is not the same as making it fun, okay?

31 X2

Publisher: Ocean • Format: PlayStation

A beautiful looking shoot-'em-up with a range of devastating weapons, and the best demonstration that flashy graphics alone don't make a good game. In fact, it was the flashy graphics that caused the problem. Massive explosions lit up the play area repeatedly, obscuring your craft, the enemy and the background scenery. Pretty, but frustrating

30 Dark Rift

Publisher: Nintendo • Format: N64

There's a large school of thought that argues that the N64 can't 'do' fighting games, and this farce proved the point. Excusing the bland background graphics and the lack of variety in the computer combatants, it was a game you could complete, literally, with your eyes closed and one hand tied behind your back, such was the rank ineptitude of the computer opponents.

28 Spawn

Publisher: Sony • Format: PlayStation

Those fortunate enough to have missed both the book and the film will no doubt have been wooed by the graphical eye candy on offer here. Unfortunately, whilst the game was pretty to look at, it was dreadful to play. Pitched as a 3D adventure beat-'em-up, things didn't get much worse than this bug-ridden, ill-executed, sluggish, glitching mess.

29 Aero Gauge

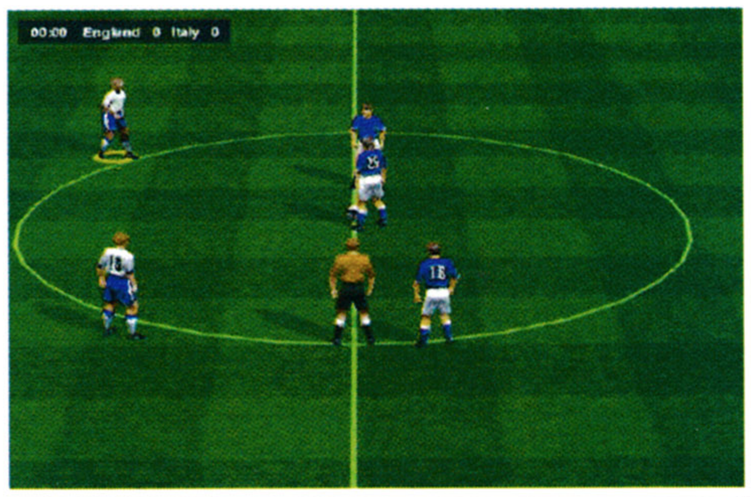
Publisher: Ascii • Format: N64

A futuristic racing sim with great potential – it might even have been a classic if they'd finished programming it prior to release. Ascii made extravagant use of fogging techniques, but left horrendous 'pop-up' in anyway. Racing through pea soup fog with scenery drawing in before you eyes could have been entertaining in a 'magical mystery tour' sort of way, were you actually able to control your craft – which you weren't.

27 FIFA 64

Publisher EA • Format: N64

An outright insult, plain and simple. Tragic 'motion blur' added to the general confusion as constipated players lurched around the pitch repeatedly failing to stay on their feet or to complete even the simplest of passes. A triumph of marketing over content, the game went straight to the top of the charts, and EA laughed all the way to the bank. Again.



26 Intergalactic Cage Match

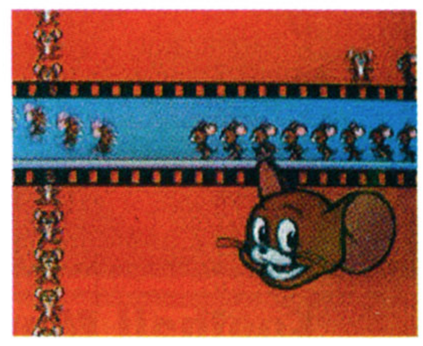
Producer: Mastertronic • Format: C64

A bizarre 3D futuristic wrestling sim fondly remembered for the inadvertent sexual antics of the main protagonists. Devoid of AI, the enemy would either stand motionless (allowing you to reduce them to a pulp) or would turn their back on you, making any contact appear overtly sexual in nature. The crowd, an assortment of intergalactic refugees, queued excitedly awaiting their chance for some 'rough and tumble'

25 Tom And Jerry

Producer: Magic Bytes • Format: Amiga

Someone, somewhere, should have sued. Whatever Magic Bytes paid for the rights to abuse this license, it wasn't nearly enough. This American national treasure was destroyed by possibly the worst example of amateur coding since gamers typed in basic listings from magazines in the heyday of the Spectrum and C64.



24 Streets Of Sim City

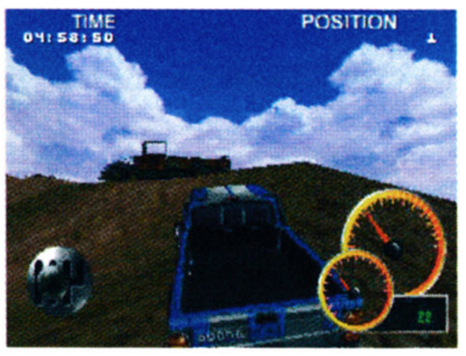
Publisher: E.A • Format: PC

Carmageddon might have been a sick blood-fest, but it was an enjoyable and engaging one. This wasn't. Your car defied the laws of physics, driving through trees, ignoring water hazards, and careering through scenery and pedestrians with gay abandon. Cows, when run over, shattered rather than pulverising, and despite the carnage, not a drop of blood was spilt.

23 Test Drive Off-Road 2

Publisher: Accolade • Format: PlayStation

Let's get something straight: if I wanted to play an off-road game that treated sheep like immovable objects then I'd throw out my PC, PSX and my N64 and dust off my old 2600, because that's the only platform that has an excuse for doing it, okay? Oh, and six tracks? All pretty much the same? No thanks. Someone pass me TOCA, I need a lift.



20 Lula – The Sexy Empire

Publisher: Take 2 • Format: PC

A porn cartoon adventure, released in a cynical bid to titillate. Unfortunately ample portions of outsized cartoon breasts couldn't distract from the game's numerous failings, with tedium setting in from the word go. Leisure Suit Larry, sad though it was, had Oscar winning production values compared to this shambolic mess.

21 Trash-it

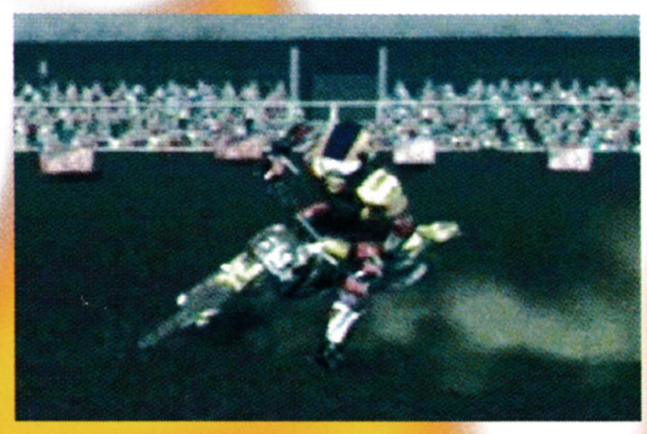
Publisher: GT Interactive
Format: PlayStation

Full marks for originality, but none for execution. This crazy 'hammer-'em-up' armed our hapless hero with a huge range of near identical tools with which to demolish each level. Although it proved a good antidote to the stress inducing 90s, it was also clearly mad and tragically repetitive

22 VMX Racing

Publisher: Playmates • Format: PlayStation

Now here's a thought: big, BIG sprites, poorly animated. Absolutely dire control and, just to add the final nugget to this nightmare of a game, you crashed as soon as you so much as touched grass. My God, what happened in the personal life of the programmer that he should want to inflict this weeping sore of a game on to the unsuspecting gaming world?



19 Who Framed Roger Rabbit

Publisher: Beuna Vista Software • Format: Amiga

Another film license destroyed through rank incompetence and lack of development time and money. Riding on the back of the innovative film, the three sub-games proved to be sub-standard, boring, repetitive nonsense. Roger may have been innocent, but whichever culprit spawned this joke deserved life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

18 Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom

Publisher: US GOLD • Format: C64

Indy suffered dreadfully on the C64, walking painfully around the levels as if afflicted with piles. Thugs appeared from nowhere – giving little chance to run or hide – and repeatedly resisted Indy's limp-wristed whip antics with remarkable precision. A multi-load disaster with all the speed of a retarded sloth.

16 Peter Beardsley's International Football

Producer: Grandslam • Format: Atari ST

A game that scored too many own goals. All the players looked identical and moved in the same haphazardly inept fashion. The pacing of the matches was far too pedestrian to generate any atmosphere or excitement and the ball was frequently lost as groups of players gathered for a mincing melee in the centre circle.

17 Miracle Warriors

Publisher: Matertronic • Format: Sega Master System

Superficially a neat and tidy adventure with catchy tunes and pleasant scenery. Unfortunately, the quasi-English in-game text betrayed the game's Oriental origins and added too much unintentional humour to the proceedings. Those who persevered found little to reward their linguistic gymnastics, as a shallow and repetitive RPG lurked beneath the inept translation.

15 Football Manager 2

Producer: Addictive • Format: Amiga

An option-laden football management sim that presented a real challenge for those shooting for the top of division one or seeking cup glory. Impressive though the strategy was, the entire ambiance was dashed by the self-defeating match highlights that wouldn't have looked out of place on a lowly Spectrum

14 Slam N' Jam

Producer: Crystal Dynamics • Format: Saturn

A quite bizarre basketball sim with atrocious 3D graphics that combined tragic camera tracking with zero depth perception. Confused players blasted round the court in search of team-mates and the ball, but their best efforts were hampered by the verbose commentary that appeared genuinely random, bearing no relation to the on-going match at all.

13 Congo

Producer: Jumpin' Jack • Format: Saturn

The game of the film of the book, and a failure in every respect. Superb cut-scene video footage only served to highlight deficiencies in the main game. The jungle setting led players to become completely lost in a sea of green foliage, with each area being almost indistinguishable from the last. Our hero was confronted by a plethora of mutated creatures (flying monkeys?), all of which added to the unintentionally surreal atmosphere

12 The Crow: City Of Angels

Producer: Acclaim • Format: Saturn

Acclaim's darkest hour, and one which they no doubt hope will fade into history with the now defunct Saturn. A good looking and smooth moving beat-'em-up, it suffered from dodgy camera angles and non-existent collision detection. Woeful programming meant the fighters defied the laws of physics by occupying the same space at the same time. Most blows failed to make any contact, eerily passing through the ghostly opposition, meaning victory was in the lap of the gods.

11 Bomberman Hero

Publisher: Hudsonsoft • Format: N64

The Bomberman series is great. Bomberman is a great game to play with other people. That's the fun of it. Take away the multiplayer aspect and you had better make damn sure that the game is as entertaining as a single player game. This wasn't, not by a long chalk. The sheer excellence of Super Bomberman is what drove the nails of despair into the coffin of mediocrity that was this sad piece of crud.

10 Battlecruiser 3000AD

Publisher: Take 2 • Format: PC

You have to sympathise with the creator of this game. Derek Smart has done an awful lot of work on it – it's been years in the making and by God it's big; 150 megs of solid code. All for naught though; it's still riddled with bugs years after its release, and even if it wasn't it's unplayable because you still have to contend with the manual. You could choke a whale to death with it. Too much, too hard and too damned bugged. Sorry, Derek.

09 Extreme Paintbrawl

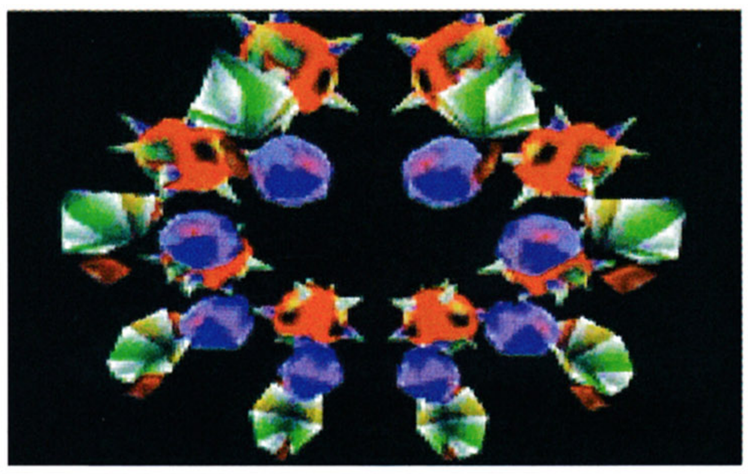
Publisher: Activision • Format: PC

Quite simply one of the worst games ever to be produced on any platform... ever... in the history of the universe. Whoever thought of using a three year old 3D engine to re-create the thrills of paintballing should be shot. Here's a clue: paintball is a substitute for real violence– first-person shooters are a substitute for real violence. Using one substitute to represent another is redundant nonsense, and doing it this badly is criminal.

08 Baby Universe

Publisher: Sony • Format: PlayStation

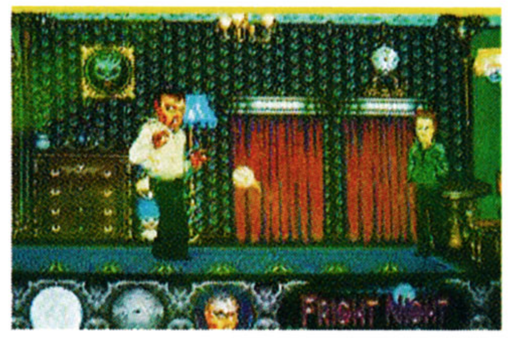
When I was a kid, my grandfather bought me a kaleidoscope, and I spent many a grateful hour fascinated. I love my grandfather and he loves me. Were I a kid now and he wanted to get me something he would buy me Metal Gear Solid or Half-Life. It's simple really– kaleidoscopes cut it back then and don't cut it now, even electronic ones like this. There's nothing else to say on the matter.



07 Fright Night

Publisher: Microdeal • Format: Amiga

The Addams Family met Zombies Ate My Neighbour – without the humour. The play area was prohibitively small and the hero of the piece, Gerry, walked with a gait. This made pursuing the object of your desire – a nude female ghost, no less – extremely frustrating, especially as she always led our hero into cunningly inescapable traps



06 Ghostbusters

Publisher: Sega • Format: Sega Master System

One of the best selling computer games of all time, and a worthwhile effort on all the machines it graced – except the Sega Master System. The catchy Ghostbusters jingle was reduced to the aural quality of a drowning cat, the sprites flickered relentlessly and the gameplay sank without trace. Arriving far too late, the Master System version was released so long after the other formats that it didn't stand a ghost of a chance.

05 Time Fighter

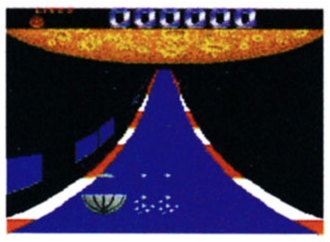
Publisher: CRL • Format: C64

This platformer gave hapless gamers no chance of success. Our hero – nothing more than a well-animated matchstick man – moved at a snail's pace, pursued by enemies attacking at light speed en masse and with unfaltering accuracy. Escape proved impossible because the background graphics repeated with alarming regularity causing disorientation, and the whole game teetered on the edge of crashing because the scrolling routines were clearly only half-coded.

04 Road Wars

Publisher: Melbourne House • Format: C64

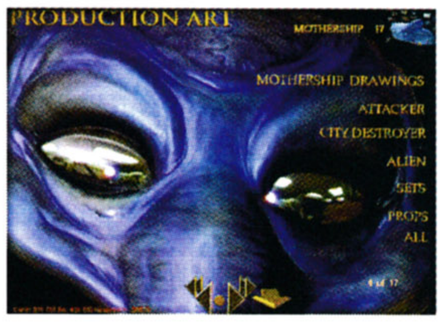
Something of an oddity, this one. The original Amiga based coin-op translated well to the ST and Amiga but was reduced to a complete joke on the C64. The machines' lack of graphical finesse led the programmers to concentrate on the enemy AI. They perfected it to such an extent that, combined with the syrup-like controls, even accomplished gamers became victim to computer induced road rage.



03 Inside Independence Day

Publisher: EA • Format: PC

Not, thankfully, the ID4 game (although that was worthy of an entry of its own). Instead, this interactive guide churned out a plethora of useless movie facts and figures via an atrociously constructed interface. Not only was it a cynical cash-in on the blockbuster movie, but it offered little of substance and nothing of style.



02 Iron Assault

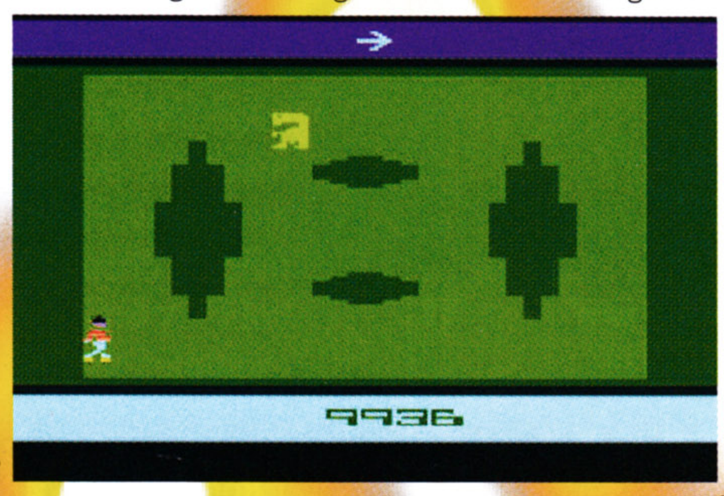
Publisher: Sold Out Software • Format: PC

A Mechwarrior variant with turgid sound, dire animation, flat two dimensional 3D graphics and anally retentive gameplay. Those foolish enough to doubt the outright sadness of this game should dash out now and purchase it. It's available for £5, but even at that price it's far too expensive

ET

Producer: Atari • Format: Atari

The gulf between gamers' expectations and what was actually delivered couldn't have been wider. Undeniably, without reservation, the worst video game anywhere, ever. Rumours that two and a half million unsold copies were buried in the desert were inaccurate – three million was the alleged actual figure. So bad was the game (which was programmed in three weeks) that shops gave refunds to thousands of disgruntled gamers. An early contender for 'worst game ever', and still waiting to be knocked off the top spot decades later.



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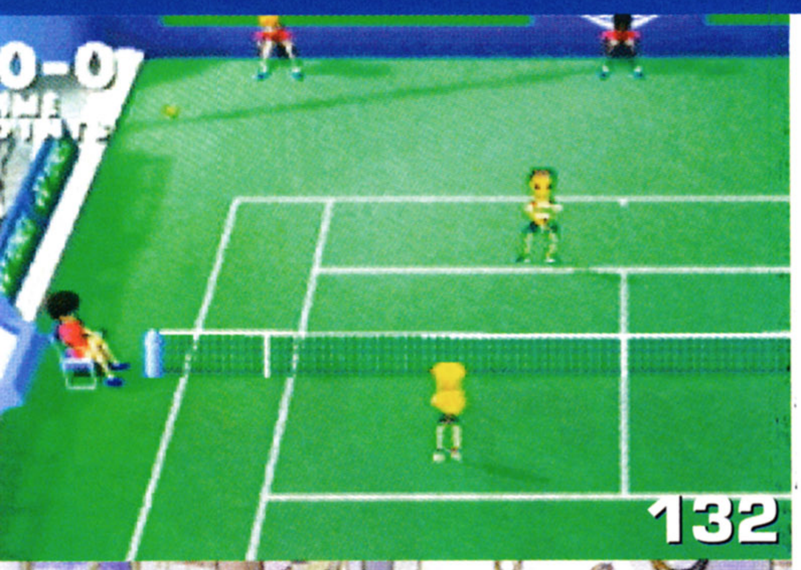

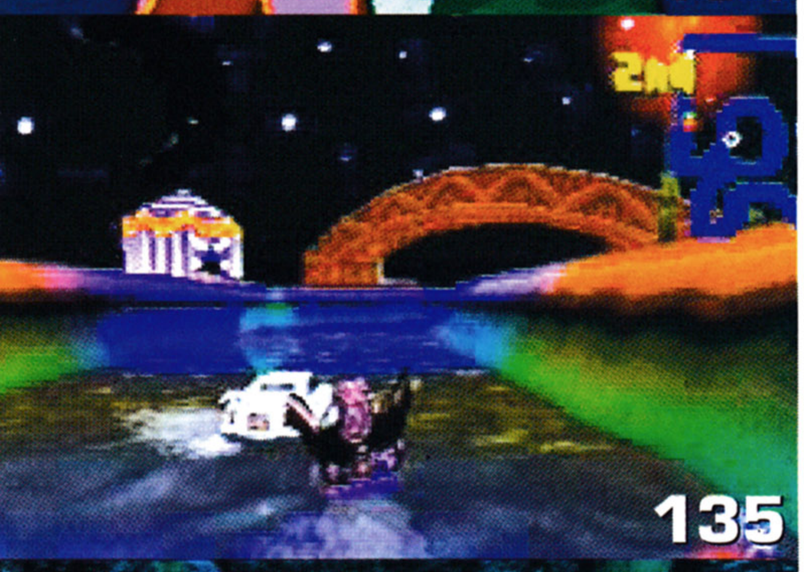

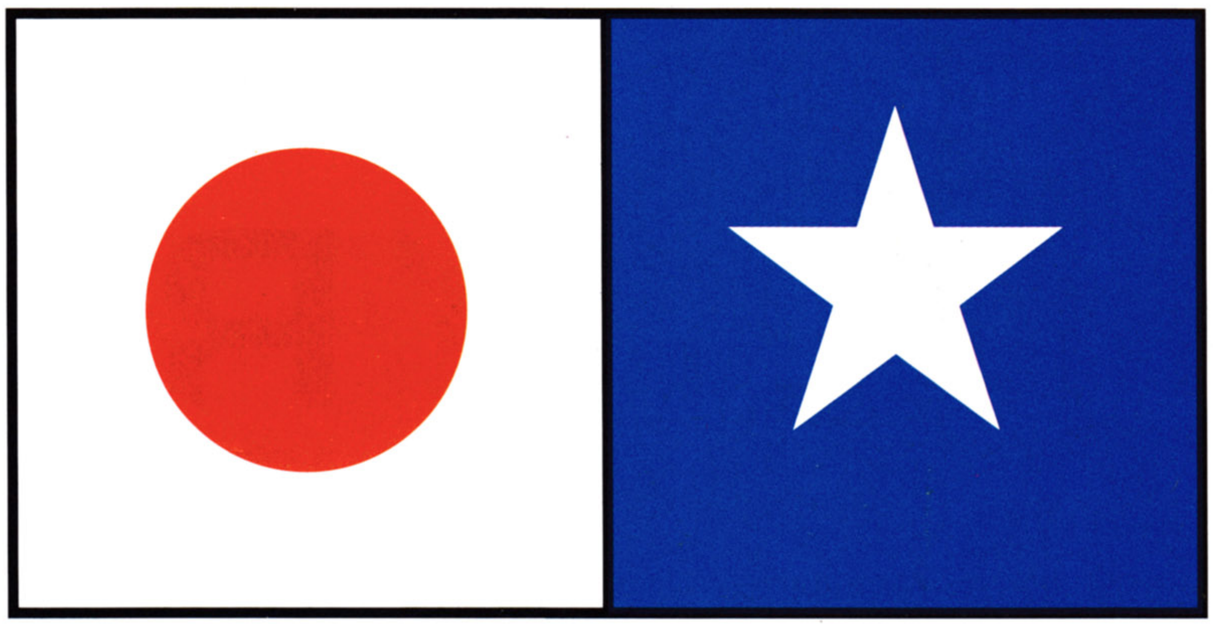

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REPORTAGE

NICKJONES
e-mail: nick@rapide.co.uk

The announcement of a new *Tekken* game is hardly a surprise, but it's welcome nonetheless. There's a couple of years left in the life of the PlayStation – too short for *Tekken 4* (that'll be on PlayStation 2 no doubt) to be developed for the console, so an in-between will do for now. The idea is sound enough – bundle together the best fighters from the three *Tekken* games and add a tag team option – a special edition, if you like. But wouldn't it be a good idea to give other games a similar treatment? A special edition of *Mario 64* would go down a treat – perhaps a simultaneous two-player mode would be a great idea. Mario Vs Luigi – first to reach the level's objective wins. Simple, but something like that could revive a classic game.

There are others, of course, how about *Resident Evil* but with different camera angles? That would be great! Hang on a minute, hasn't that already been done? And didn't it cost forty quid?

Of course *Tekken Tag Tournament* is not the only special edition game we've had recently. *Metal Gear Solid* will be getting its own, with a few extra options for the main game, but the emphasis will be on the virtual training missions – a whole disk is dedicated to them, around 300 in all. It would appear that this will be as much of a rip-off as *Resident Evil: Director's Cut* and, as it may turn out, *Tekken Tag Tournament*.

The point is that games cost enough as it is without companies releasing 'special' editions. It's true that if the original is a huge success then any product with its name on will sell just as well. This is a measure of just how gullible we are and how greedy the games companies can be. You've bought the original already – that should be enough, and that should include all these special modes. God knows, you've paid enough for it.

READY? FIGHT!

Namco's Tekken Tag Tournament set to stun

There is much debate going on as to whether *Virtua Fighter 3tb* actually managed to better *Tekken 3*. Although it came close, we reckon that Sega's competitor fell just short. *Tekken 3* is still the king, but it looks set to be outdone by Namco's next venture on the PlayStation, *Tekken Tag Tournament*.

Previously known as *Tekken 3.5*, the new game should not be confused with *Tekken 4*. It is the *Tekken* equivalent to *Street Fighter 2 Championship Edition* – essentially the same game but with a multitude of tweaks and new gameplay options. The main addition to the title is the tag team option, a similar feature to that seen in this month's *Marvel vs Capcom* on the Dreamcast. The 'fifth button' allows players to swap between two previous selected characters during a bout at any time. Both have their own individual power bars, with a red increment representing the total amount of recoverable energy which will refill slowly while they are not in play. Namco have stated that this area is still under debate, as is the way that the actual 'tagging' is performed. The option is highly likely to give way to new combo moves where a new player can enter during a combo and continue it.

THE NEW SWEEP STAGGER; BY BLOCKING A STRONG LOW ATTACK MOST CHARACTERS WILL STAGGER BACK A FEW STEPS

The plot of the new game is yet to be confirmed, but the CG intros are very close to completion. You can expect the same stunningly high quality as before, and multiple ending sequences to boot. *Tekken Tag Tournament*'s other big feature is its high-profile player list. There are a colossal 20 characters available to pick from at the beginning of the game, fifteen of which make a return from *Tekken 3* (Nina Williams, Anna Williams, Forest Law, Eddy Gordo/Tiger, Paul Phoenix, King, Lei Wulong, Jin Kazama, Brian Fury, Heihachi Mishima, Yoshimitsu, Hwoarang, Ling Xiaoyu, Gun Jack and Julia Chang). The other five players will be remembered from *Tekken 2* (Baek, Jun Kazama, Michelle Chang, Armor King and Ganryu). In the character selection screen there are an addition twelve question marks for bonus characters to appear. No news on these characters has been announced, and as Namco have stated that the game is currently only 50% complete, this area is still subject to change. It is unlikely that these

Tekken Tag Tournement will be remarkably similar to Capcom's arcade fighter, Marvel Vs Capcom

FGN online

Total CONTROL's REPORTAGE is produced in association with
FGN Online – www.fgnonline.com

will all be new characters to the game, though. Every character has a selection of outfits as well – a mixture of old and new.

The five characters returning from *Tekken 2* have had major surgery on their move list to bring them up to speed, side throws being one of the most impressive areas. The remaining *Tekken 3* characters have had only minor tweaks, but one area of the game that has been looked at is the new sweep stagger; by blocking a strong low attack most characters will stagger back a few steps, and the characters with strong sweeps, such as Paul, will have to get much closer to their opponent to knock them off their feet.

Tekken Tag Tournament is only 50% complete, so there is still a long way to go. It's unlikely there'll be any shortage of news in the next few months, so keep an eye out for it in future issues.

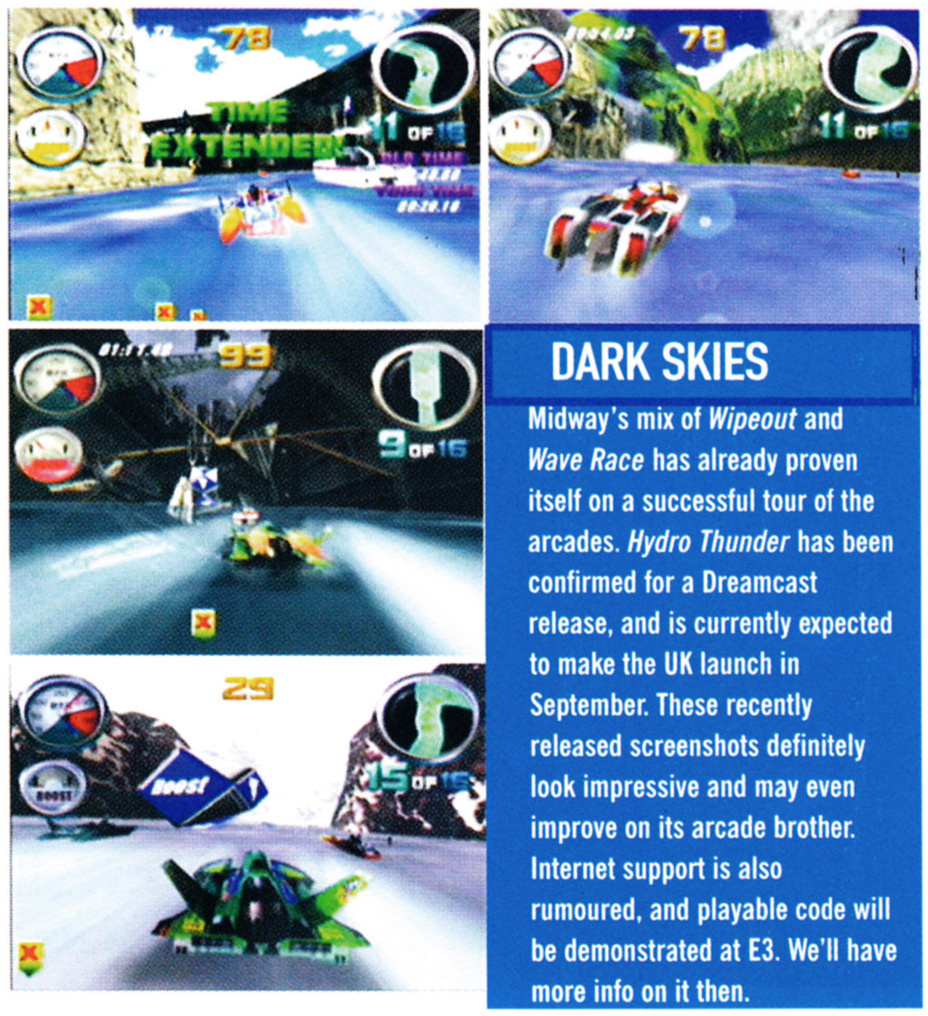
While the basic frame of Tekken remains, you will be able to change between characters at any point and perform infinite combo moves. Graphically its very similar

SEGA IN TROUBLE... AGAIN

Games giant reports huge loses in console market

In Japan, Sega have announced that they are posting losses for the last financial year totalling Y45 billion, or around £234 million. The company have been hit by slower than expected sales of the Dreamcast console and games titles. Sega were hoping to have sold a million consoles by the end of March, but actual sales have been about ten percent down on this figure. Games sales were worse, with only three million out of an expected five million units sold.

Following the replacement in January of company president Hayao Nakayama by vice-president Syouichirou Irimajiri, Sega have announced more than a thousand job losses, including around thirty percent of their American staff.



DARK SKIES

Midway's mix of *Wipeout* and *Wave Race* has already proven itself on a successful tour of the arcades. *Hydro Thunder* has been confirmed for a Dreamcast release, and is currently expected to make the UK launch in September. These recently released screenshots definitely look impressive and may even improve on its arcade brother. Internet support is also rumoured, and playable code will be demonstrated at E3. We'll have more info on it then.

PICK OF THE CROP AT E3

1999 looks set to be the best show yet...

Many of the top games companies have announced their product line-ups for the forthcoming E3 show in Los Angeles. Both Sega and Nintendo promise to have strong line ups – Sega will be showing US Dreamcast launch titles, including *Sega Rally 2* running on their new 56k modem. Nintendo's big titles will be mostly from Rare: *Perfect Dark*, *Jet Force Gemini* and *Donkey Kong 64,* although *Star Wars Episode One: Racer* should pull in the crowds. Sony will be showing PlayStation 2 – but only behind closed doors. But the original PlayStation will have as big a presence as ever, with more than 100 titles on show including *Ape Escape*, *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Legend of Mana*.

This show could be one of the best ever for the PC with some potentially stunning games. On show will be *Kingpin* and *Messiah* from Interplay, the much-delayed *Tiberian Sun* from Westwood, *Team Fortress 2* and *Homeworld* from Sierra, and Lionhead Studios' *Black and White*.

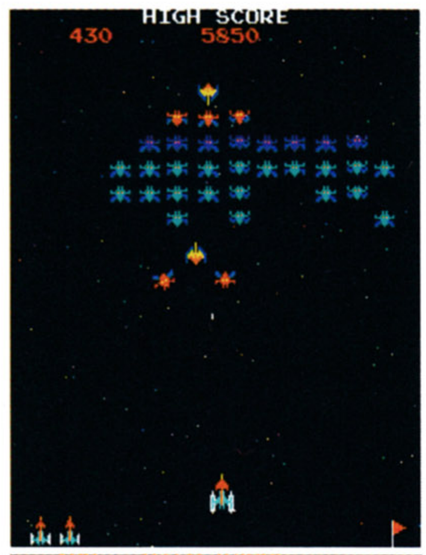
Also thought to be at the show are *Quake III Arena*, *Giants*, *Gran Turismo 2*, *Shenmue*, *Shogun*, *Crazy Taxi*, *Tekken Tag Tournament* and *Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace*.

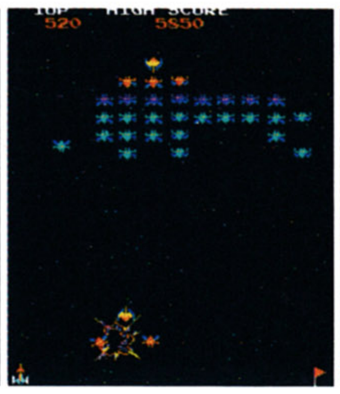
PAC IT IN

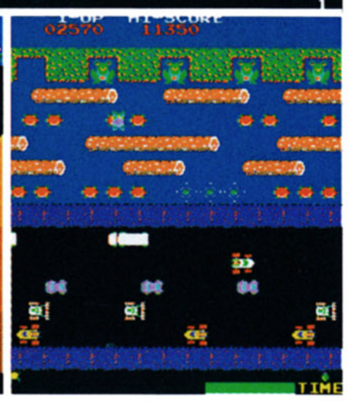
Hasbro get all retro on us

Hasbro Interactive, who were responsible for (or guilty of, according to some) *Frogger 3D*, have bought up the rights to eleven of Namco's old arcade titles, including *Pac-Man*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Dig-Dug*, *Galaga*, *Galaxian* and *Pole Position*. Their fiendish plan is to inflict upon unsuspecting PlayStation owners a 3D game called *Pac-Man World*, to be released in the autumn to coincide with the international celebrations surrounding the twentieth anniversary of the original *Pac-Man* arcade game. Hasbro appear to believe that the world is crying out for re-hashed versions of primitive arcade games. Tim Christian, Managing Director of Hasbro Interactive, was quoted as saying, "Our success with *Frogger* on both the PC and PlayStation game console has paved the way for future development in this genre of games." The 3D version of *Frogger* sank without a trace when released in the UK.

Yasuhiko Asada, Managing Director of Namco, said "Hasbro Interactive's success in bringing classic arcade games to the mass-market made them the right partner for us in this venture." He didn't mention the words 'money' and 'old rope' once on the way to the bank.







CARRIER

More on the survival horror front with this, Jaleco's stab at the genre, *Carrier*. With *Blue Stinger* (reviewed this issue), *Under Cover: 2025AD*, Infogrames' *Alone in the Dark 4* and (of course) Capcom's *Biohazard: Code Veronica*, *Carrier* will have to do something a little bit different to get noticed in the crowd. Fortunately, it seems that the game does so via its anti-human storyline. It seems that man's arrogance over the animal kingdom will be his undoing when, in the the 21st Century, an ancient and deadly form of life is discovered, something that threatens man's very existence. The decision is made to transport the entity to a secure lab via an aircraft carrier. A terrorist organisation attacks the aircraft carrier and all hell breaks loose. This is where you come in. Players take control of a member of a hand-picked squad of special services men and endeavour to determine what has happened on board.

Judging by these screenshots, *Carrier* is one of the better looking games in this genre, even if the control method and gameplay aren't the most original we've seen. *Carrier* is set to be released this summer in Japan. We'll bring you more details then.

JAPANESE TOP 10

01 Super Robot Wars F – Final Conflict (Banpresto)
02 Dance Dance Revolution (Konami)
03 Bust a Move 2 – Dance Heaven Mix (Enix)
04 World Stadium 3 (Namco)
05 GLAY complete works (Orashon)
06 Saga Frontiers 2 (Square)
07 Devil Summoner Soul Hackers (Atlus)
08 Final Fantasy VIII (Square)
09 Um Jammer Lammy (SCEI)
10 Chocobo Racing (Squaresoft)

THE PLAYSTATION'S NEMESIS

New Resident Evil game set for PlayStation

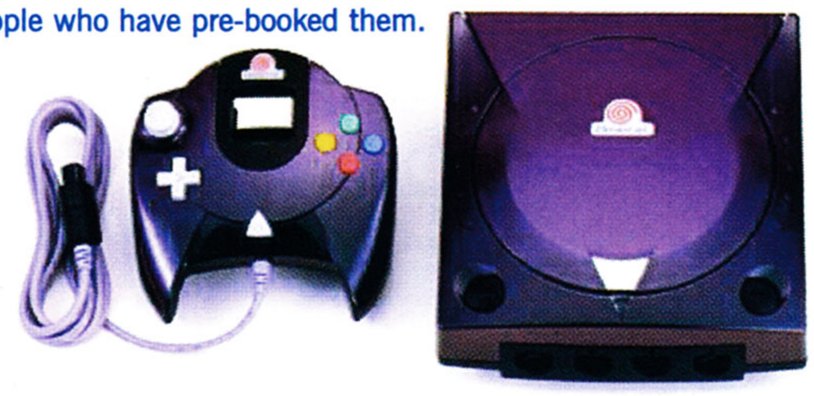
Just as we were going to print, news surfaced on the new *Resident Evil* game for PlayStation. Title: *Resident Evil: Nemesis*, the game is not a sequel to *RE2*. More of an expansion of that story, it uses the same game engine and takes place 24 hours before *RE2* and 24 hours afterwards. You play the role of Jill Valentine – you may remember her from the first game – beginning before *RE2*. Halfway through she is rendered unconscious, and the rest of the story continues 24 hours after that event.

Little else is known about this game at the moment, but for now take a look at these screenshots. We'll have more next issue.

LIMITED EDITION DREAMCAST

Consoles changing colour?

Sega have announced a very special limited edition Dreamcast. The console is coloured with a special paint that changes according to the type of light it is in. The colour changes from a dark purple to a green and to grey. If any of you are hoping to get your hands on one of these machines then you may find it too late – Sega are only issuing 500 of the consoles, all to people who have pre-booked them.



NINTENDO 64

Nintendo

NINTENDO SWIMS WITH THE FISHES

Rumours of alliance with sea mammal abound

According to rumours circulating on the Internet, Nintendo's new console has been give the code-name Project Dolphin. Despite these reports being unconfirmed, a spokesperson from inside NCL was quoted as saying, "Management is claiming better graphics than the PSX2, and supposedly it will run on DVD, but that's still a big maybe at this point." According to the anonymous source, "The buzz is that the system is a lot easier to program for than the Nintendo 64, and it appears that ArtX have managed to slap out a nasty chipset for pretty cheap."

Apparently, there are a few developers who already have development kits, and these include Rare, EAD and Retro Studios. There is a good chance that there will be an announcement at this year's E3. If that's the case then we'll bring you more next month.

STOP TAKING THE MICKEY!

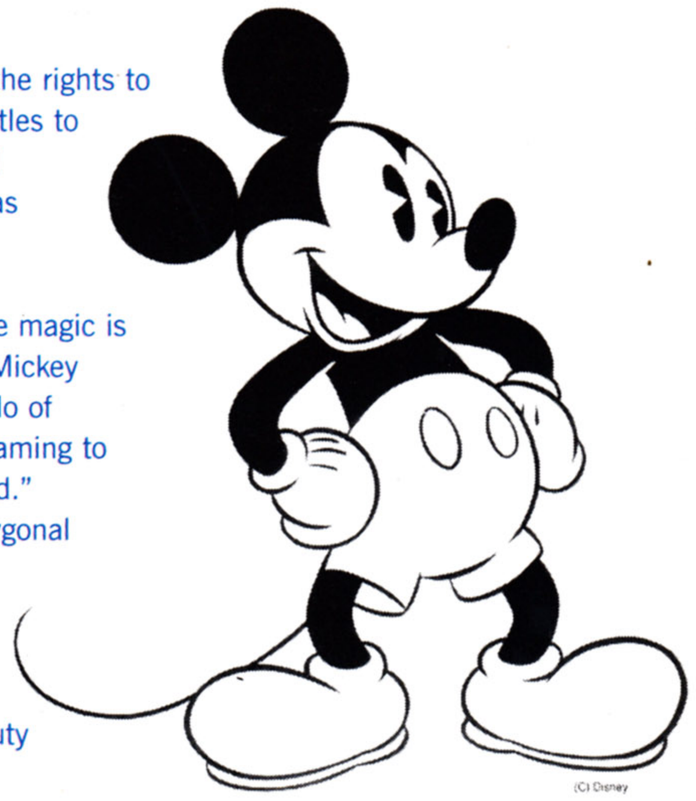
Nintendo sign deal to take the mouse

Nintendo have announced that they have signed the rights to produce approximately thirteen Mickey Mouse titles to be spread across the N64, Game Boy Color and Nintendo's next generation console. Further to this, it has been revealed that the games will, at least in part, be developed by Rare.

"The incomparable ability of Rare to create interactive magic is about to be integrated with the incomparable appeal of Mickey Mouse," commented Howard Lincoln, chairman, Nintendo of America. "The results will broaden the appeal of video gaming to an ever-widening number of households around the world."

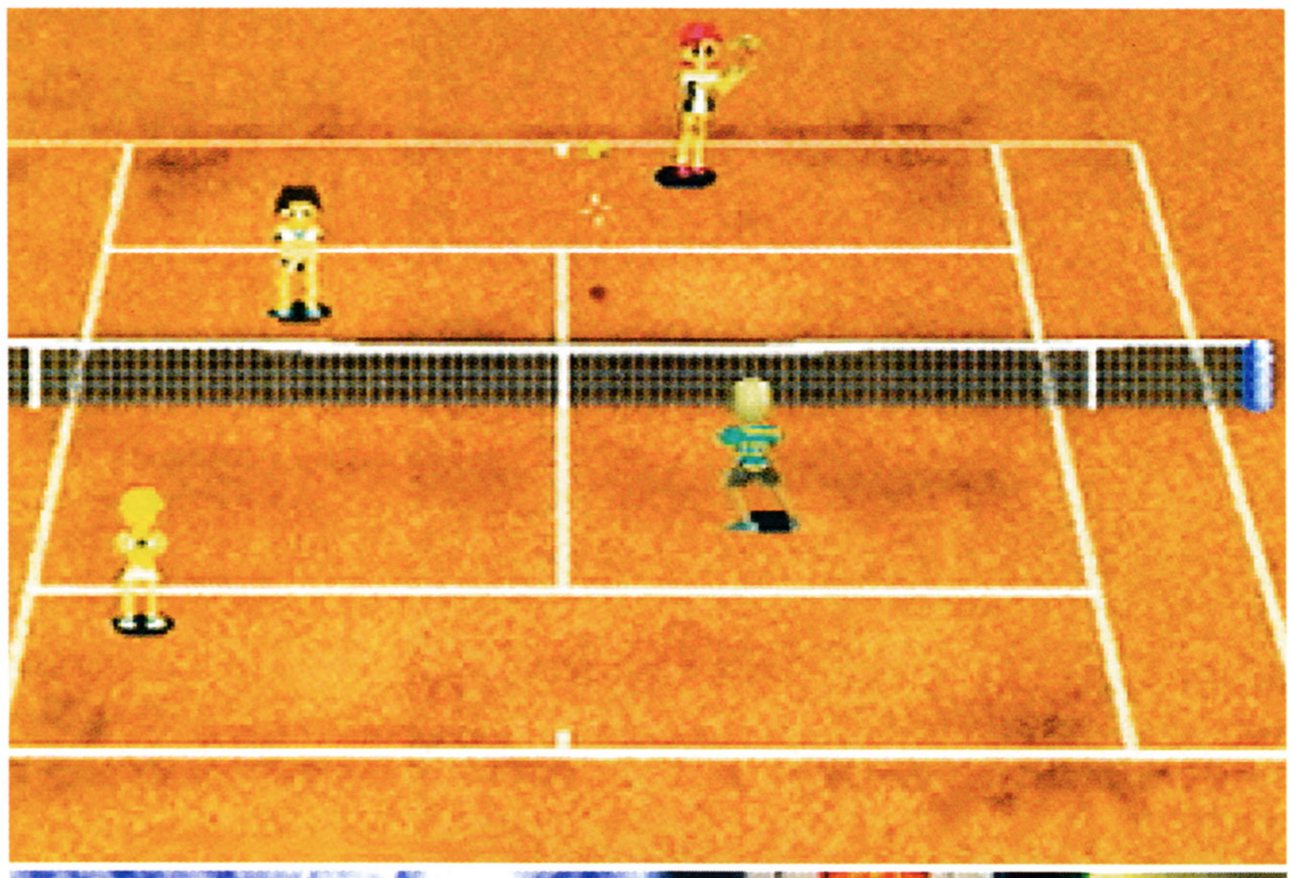
The first game to come to fruition is said to be a polygonal affair which will appear on the N64 towards the end of the year. At least one other Mickey Mouse title will appear on the machine.

The deal also gives Disney Interactive the rights to publish software for the Game Boy Color. Expect a Beauty and the Beast game out very soon.



SMASH COURT TENNIS 2

SNES classics are always welcome, especially when they are **done as well as this...**



The original SNES *Smash Tennis* was one of the best games to appear on Nintendo's 16-bit machine. It had two qualities that we admire here at Total CONTROL: it was easy to get into, and addictive once you were there – the simple gameplay hid the fact that there was much more subtlety to the controls than first meets the eye. The game remains playable today, and is arguably better than any tennis game to come after it.

Smash Court Tennis 2 is a reworking of the SNES classic with only a few differences. Firstly, the game is based more on strategy (if a tennis game can be strategic) and less on reactions and speed of thought. While this gives the game the opportunity to include some more realistic touches, it takes away that arcade edge somewhat. The speed is also a little too sluggish and can be more than a little frustrating. On the plus side of things, the tennis players now have a greater number of moves.

True to form, this Namco title isn't your average simulation, and this is reflected in the choice of courts open to you. Not only do you get clay, grass and cement, but there's a wider variety of locations, with courts in Hong Kong, Westminster, Japanese temples and so on. These offer a small amount of interactivity; background objects can be hit, and occasionally things happen that try to distract you from the game.

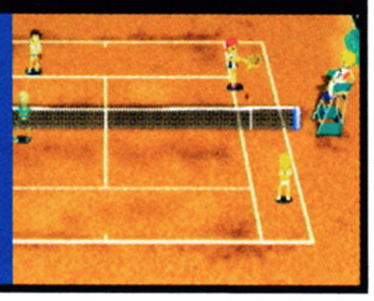
The game's best gimmick, however, is the inclusion of many of the famous Namco characters from *Tekken* and other arcade games. You find Heihachi, Eddy Gordo, the boss character from *Time Crisis,* and even Pac Man as secret and playable characters. *Smash Court Tennis 2* also boasts an endorsement from Anna Kornikova, and it is a little bizarre to see her running around with all the Namco favourites.

Smash Court Tennis 2 represents the best tennis game around, and if you like this sort of thing then you'll obviously love it. The game has its moments of brilliance, especially in a doubles multiplayer game, and as such is ideal with a couple of friends. The single-player game offers enough options and rewards for you to get enough out of it. Good, but not great. **Nick**

Anna is strangely out of place with Namco's cartoon characters

TENNIS WITH TEKKEN

Amongst the hidden characters for you to earn are a number that you might recognise from Namco's beat-'em-up, *Tekken.* Heihachi, Yoshimitsu and Paul are just a few of the folk to spot. There's also a cameo appearance from Pac Man!



INFORMATION

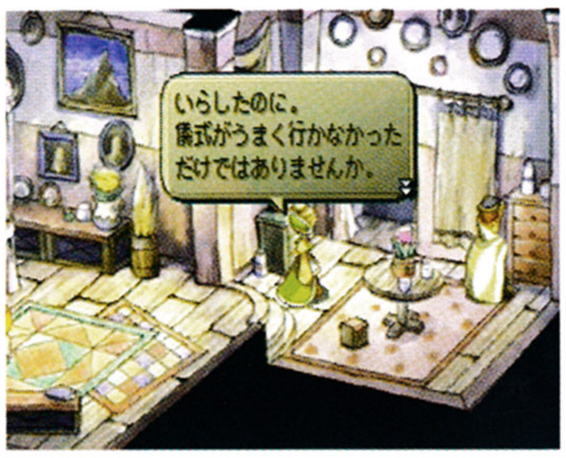
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Namco
DEVELOPER	Namco
STYLE	Tennis
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£50
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD	Save Game

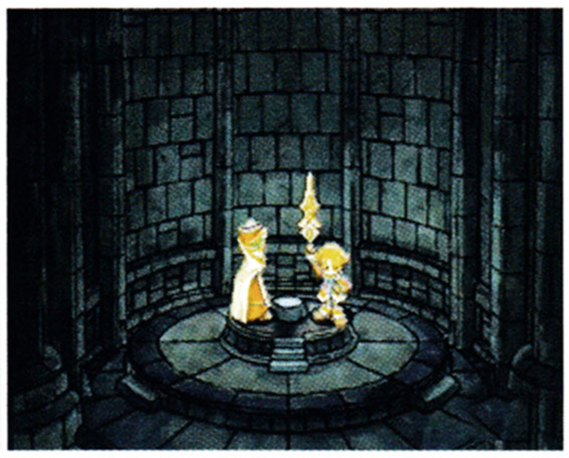
VERDICT

GAME NAME	Smash Court Tennis 2
GRAPHICS	45
SOUND	30
PLAYABILITY	70
OVERALL (Out of 100)	70

SaGa FRONTIER 2

A sequel **promising vast improvements** over the disappointing original, **but can it deliver?**





The first *SaGa Frontier* was a disappointment for many of the gamers who had been keenly awaiting it for so long, falling down due to a terrible lack of direction. In a bold attempt to make a non-linear RPG, the unfocused and confusing plot and quests did not work together well. Taking this to heart, Square promised many changes for the sequel. In the years since the first game, Square have proven themselves in the genre, and expectations are naturally high for this game.

You begin *Frontier* with the option to follow two different storylines. One follows Prince Gustav XIII, who has been banished from the land for lacking in magical power; the other follows William, a treasure hunter seeking his missing father. In true RPG fashion, more characters join the game, adding their own individual quests to yours.

The combat system relies on the combination of attacks and techniques. Skills are improved after successful attacks, and there are many to be found or learnt. One of the better new features is the ability to fight a one-on-one battle with the enemy before team attacks so you can hone the skills of an individual member of your party. The recovery systems have also had a big rethink since the first game.

Graphically the game is totally hand-drawn, which looks okay and gives it a very fantasy-style atmosphere. It may not look as good as the best polygon-relate alternatives, but it's still genuinely nice.

SaGa Frontier 2 cannot be recommended for those who are not fluent in Japanese. This is an exceptionally text-heavy game, and its strength lies in its plot, so the vast majority of you should be warned away. However, if you are one of the remaining few and a follower of the original, this will not disappoint. **Will**

We now look forward to an English version

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Squaresoft
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£39.99
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
SAVE GAME	Memory Card

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	SaGa Frontier 2
GRAPHICS	79
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	71
OVERALL Out of 100	72

POKEMON SNAP

A **photographer simulator** based in the Pocket Monsters universe - **sounds reasonable** enough?

Pokémon is huge in Japan and the States, and if you're aged between 5 and 10, then you'd better be ready for the latest playground fad. If you're not aged between 5 and 10, then you'll want to be aware of the Pokémons so that you can avoid them like the plague that they are. Nah, not really... the loveable little critters do have something of a certain charm, and it's easy to see why they are so popular.

Pokémon Snap is the latest incarnation of the series to appear on N64, and is perhaps the most bizarre. What you basically have is a photography-based game where the objective is to take photos of 'wild' Pokémons. On each level the player is taken around on rails, passing the local wildlife, hoping to get a few great photos. At the end of the ride, your photos are judged and points are awarded for getting the face of the Pokémon, action shots and the composition of the photo. That's about it really, although you are able to use some of your points to buy treats to tempt bonus Pokémons out of the undergrowth and score more heavily. The game also provides you with a photo album in which to keep your favourite Pokémon pictures.

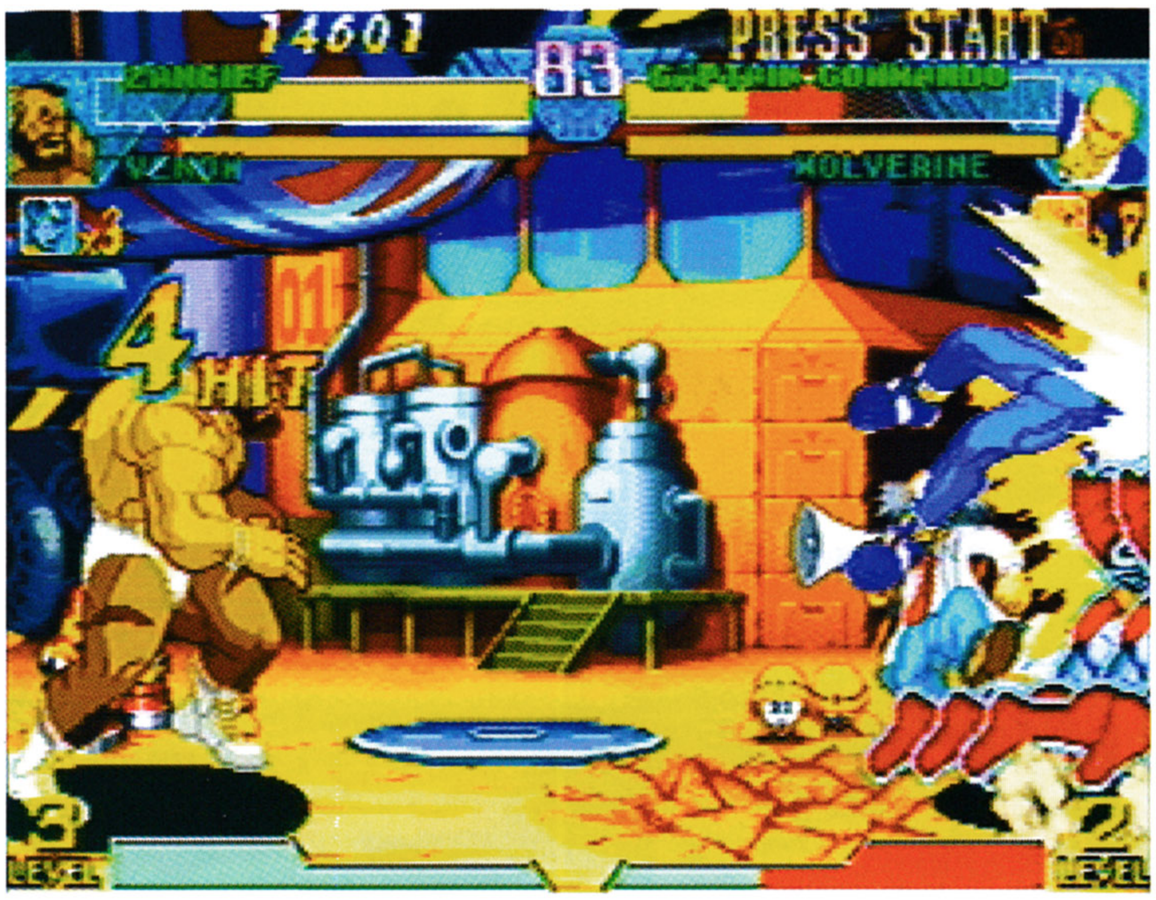
This is fairly interesting idea, in a sort of novel I'll-never-play-this-game-again kind of way. It plays more like a shoot-'em-up than anything else, and as such it does have a certain addictive quality. It is, however, not a game that will appeal to a mass audience, and only your true Pokémon connoisseur will really appreciate it. **Nick**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	N64
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	HAL
STYLE	Photo-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£50
PLAYERS	One
SAVE GAME	Memory Pack
EXPANSION PACK	No

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Pokémon Snap
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	50
PLAYABILITY	45
OVERALL Out of 100	50

MARVEL VS CAPCOM: CLASH OF THE SUPER HEROES

Platform: **Dreamcast** Publisher: **Capcom** Developer: **Capcom** Style: **Beat-'em-up** Release: **Out Now** Import Price: **£50** Players: **1-4** Analogue: **Yes** VMS: **Yes** On-Line: **No**



The first 2D **beat-'em-up on the Dreamcast** has arrived, and we endeavour to find out how it fares against the **mighty *Virtua Fighter 3tb*...**

TAKING CONTROL

Both well-presented and very arcade orientated, initial impressions were good. You have the option to select either manual or automatic game modes, which determines the ease of pulling off the various special attacks. It's quite a good option for introducing you to the game, but if you're playing the single-player arcade mode, you'll be wanting to learn the moves for yourself, which can prove to be a very frustrating procedure.

In almost every genre there are a few games that make cult status, having a style that is much less universal than most other titles in their field. It's usually either because of the intricate detail of the game world and character backgrounds, a dedicated following passed on from previous media of the same subject, or, as in the case of *Marvel vs Capcom*, a graphical style that has since been outdated. 2D beat-'em-ups now have a very specific cult following – the majority of Dreamcast owners over here would generally choose a 3D alternative such as *Virtua Fighter 3tb* over this if both games had been awarded a similar score.

3D beat-'em-ups remain an area of the industry that has yet to be fully explored – they are still relatively in their infancy. 2D beat-'em-ups have been around for much longer though, and, at least from a technical point of view, it's much more difficult to improve over what is already available.

Marvel vs Capcom does not seem to make full use of the Dreamcast's technology, but apart from a few unintrusive moments where the animation seems slightly jerky, it looks every bit as good as you could want. The characters are huge, the gameplay is fast, and overall it looks about as nice as you would expect for this style of game.

As you might expect, *Marvel Vs Capcom* is very cartoonish

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Marvel vs Capcom
GRAPHICS	74
SOUND	75
PLAYABILITY	78
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	

CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

Of all the fighters to choose from, very few will not be recognised. Famous names from Capcom classics such as *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* include Ryu, Chun-Li and Morrigan. Of course, there are many other names such as The Hulk, Spiderman and the very difficult to beat Wolverine that you may have heard of. Overall there are twenty-two different types of characters, but there remains many different variations – for example, Captain America will play very differently if he loses his shield mid-fight.

Play the game

From a gameplay point of view there is much that is new and innovative though. You choose two characters, and at any point during a bout can swap between the two. Attacks can drain your health in one of two ways – health is either totally lost or it is clipped and turns red. This red area can be recharged when the player is not being used, so by carefully alternating between your players in a bout, you can make sure that there is always one player recharging their health. Certain fighters will be more effective against different opponents, of course, so it may not always work to your favour. A third character is also chosen at random before each bout and can be summoned for a limited number of times during the fight. All of the moves that come easy to you to start with are far from inspiring (high punch, low kick etc.), while the more extravagant moves are very hard to pull off.

It's certainly not a good introduction to the genre for newcomers, but beat-'em-up fans will lap this game up. If you are the sort of person who would enjoys searching for the multitude of special moves and combos that are hidden away on the CD, this will keep you going for ages. *Marvel vs Capcom* is, in my opinion, the best 2D beat-'em-up on the market at the moment. But unless you are sure of what you want from your game, the average player would be better advised to check out *Virtua Fighter 3tb* or *Power Stone* before this, both of which are much more easy to get into and will impress your mates that little bit more. **Will**

BOTTOM OF THE 9TH

Sports sims are **big business** in the States, but does the **N64** need yet **another baseball game?**

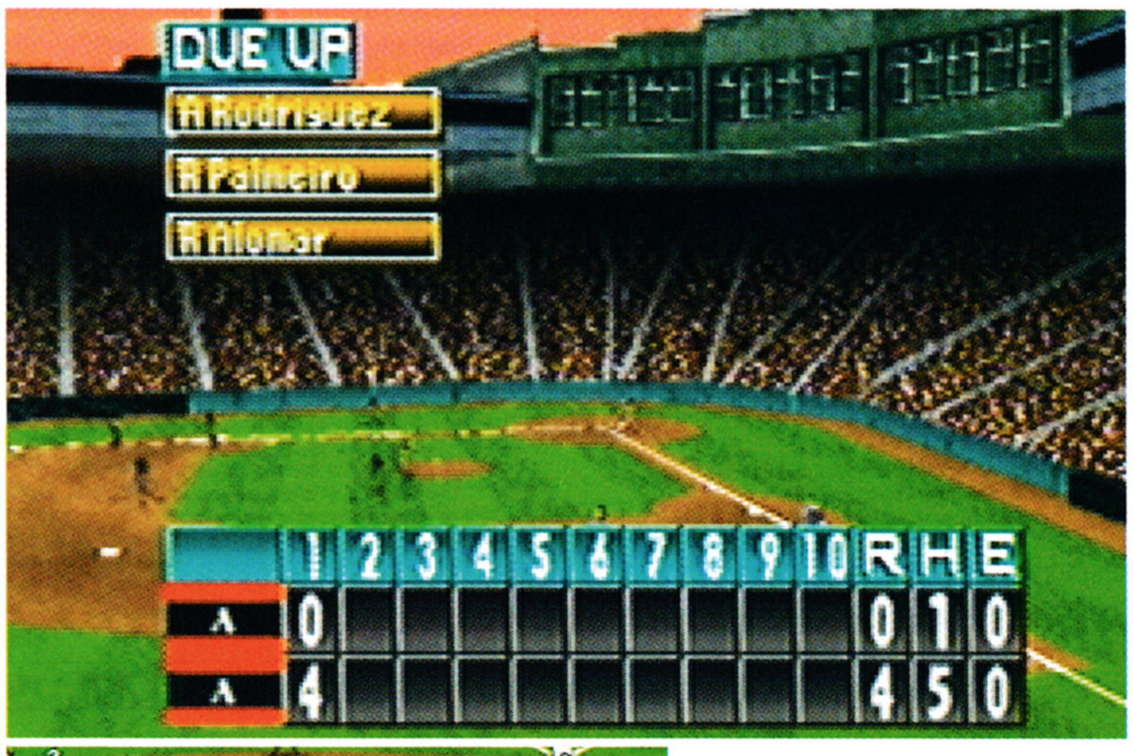
INFORMATION	
FORMAT	N64
PUBLISHER	Konami
DEVELOPER	Konami XXL
STYLE	Baseball
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	1-4
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	Not Supported

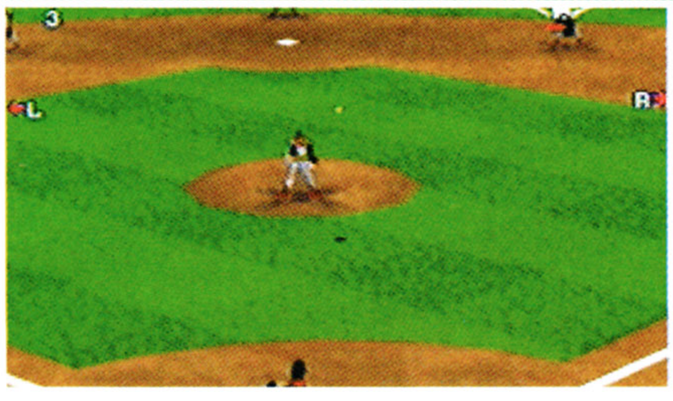
American sports titles will always seem much of a muchness to us Brits. Games like gridiron, basketball and deer hunting will always hold us at arm's length; you have to play a sport to really appreciate it. Having said that, though, the general standard is as good as football games over here, so half the time they turn out to be half-decent.

Bottom of the 9th from Konami is one such example – a baseball game that is playable by beginners and experts alike. Baseball translates quite well as a video game, especially when playing against a friend, and this game is no exception.

Everything in this game is competently done – the gameplay, the options of play, the graphics. The only problem that *Bottom of the 9th* has is that it's just not as good as its rivals. The animation isn't quite there, the frame rate isn't quite high enough, and the controls aren't as good to use as they might be. In short, this is your average baseball game. It doesn't offer you anything new, or anything that you wouldn't expect. All the Major League baseball players are in the game, it features commentary from TV commentators, and it has all the stadiums mapped out to perfection. But so what? So do all the others.

The bottom line here, though, is that this game is not as good as any of Acclaim's *All-Star Baseball* games or Nintendo's own *Ken Griffey Jr.* games. If you're a fan of baseball then either of these will do. Leave *Bottom of the 9th* on the shelf. **Nick**





VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Bottom of the 9th
GRAPHICS	55
SOUND	60
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL Out of 100	60

DEAD IN THE WATER

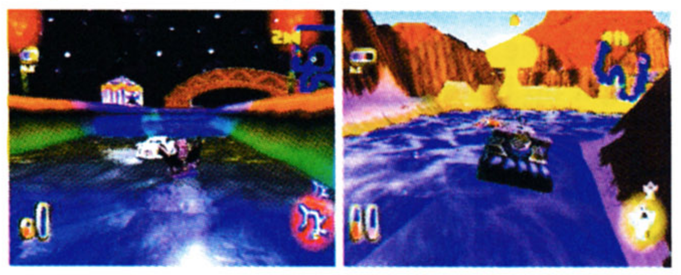
Wave **Race** meets Twisted Metal

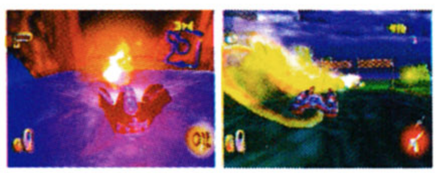
Cryo are currently working on what could turn out to be their best game so far. We've seen very early code of that game, and with any luck it should turn out to be a lot better than this, as the two games share a lot in common.

Dead in the Water pits you as a master of boat racing chosen by an unknown party to compete in a secretive race in the Bermuda triangle. Your boat is equipped with a variety of weapons (none of which seem to have much effect on the competition), and you race a number of laps over a variety of maps with multiple routes.

The problem is that the collision detection is terrible. Certain parts of the scenery are marked so that you can slide over the land, but other very low-lying sections will cause your ship to rebound if you attempt to move over them, even if your boat is totally out of the water.

Dead in the Water is visually bad, very confusing, extremely bugged and, worst of all, very little fun to play. **Will**





INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	ASC Games
DEVELOPER	ASC Games
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Dead in the Water
GRAPHICS	59
SOUND	42
PLAYABILITY	29
OVERALL Out of 100	30

PSYCHIC FORCE 2012

New beat-'em-up **action for** DC

I use the term beat-'em-up loosely, because *Psychic Force*, as you may be able to see, is a little bit different from the norm. The fighters are thrown together in a virtual floating arena in which you are able to move easily in two dimensions.

All of the players in the game are able to fly using their psychic powers, and they can also use them to beat the crap out of their opponents. The main attacks reduce the level of your psychic power bar, but staying stationary will replenish it. Each character has a different style of attack, ranging from fire to lightning to gravity. Their speed (as usual) depends on their attacking strength. The energy bar is a little different, though. You start with 100% health and 100% psychic power, but both are joined, and as you take hits, your capacity for psychic power increases, allowing you to unleash deadly attacks more frequently.

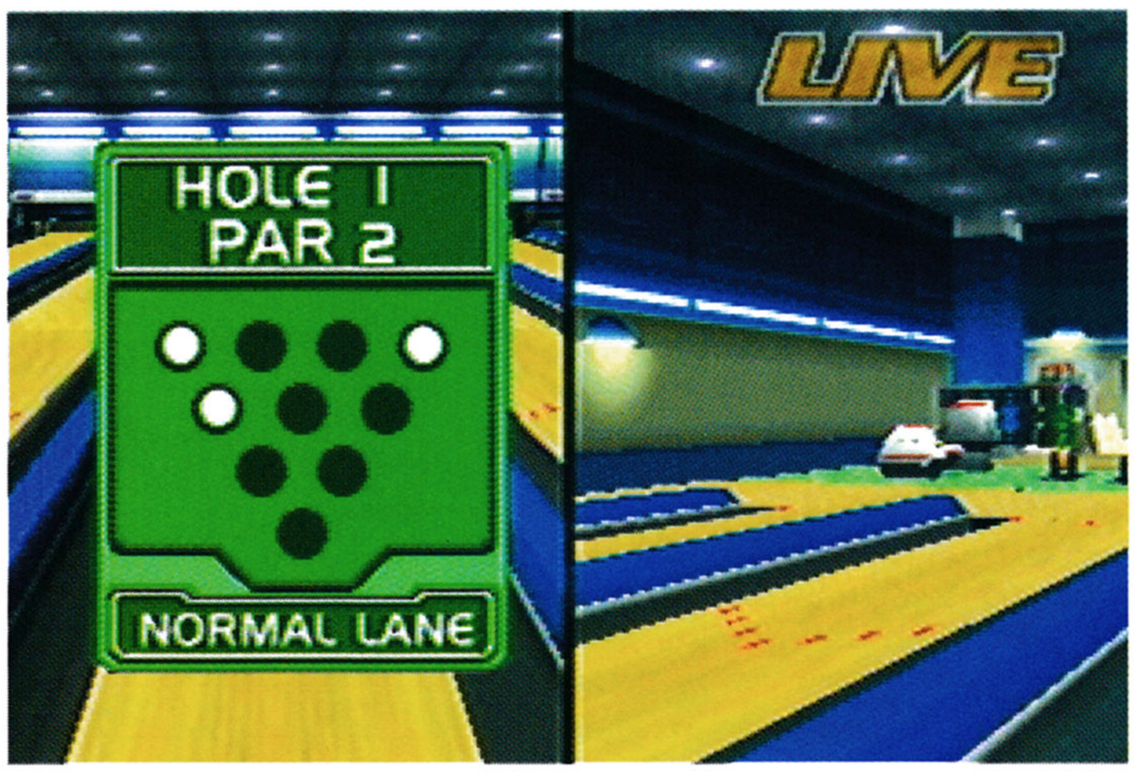
The problem with this game is its move list. There are two basic moves and several more complicated ones, but the best moves are extremely difficult to pull off, especially with the pace of the game. There are already two stunning games in this genre (*Virtua Fighter 3tb* and *Powerstone*) which should last you for ages. *Psychic Force 2012* may be a good arcade-style game, but there is no depth to be found, and it will ultimately disappoint all but hard-core beat-'em-up fans. **Will**

Not exactly VF3tb is it?

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Taito
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Beat-'em-up
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	1-2
VMS	Yes
ON-LINE	No

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Psychic Force 2012
GRAPHICS	57
SOUND	60
PLAYABILITY	35
OVERALL Out of 100	37

SUPER BOWLING



Why bother visiting the local bowling **alley when you can** have just **as much fun** at home?

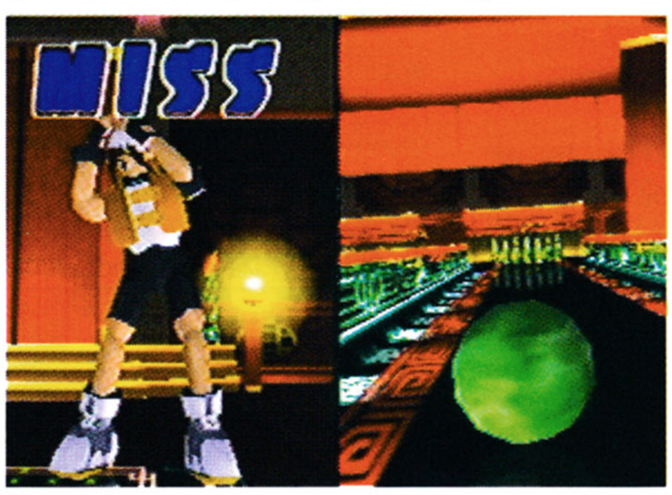
Ten-pin bowling has to be one of the worst starting points for a computer game – it ranks right up there alongside darts and poker. But *Super Bowling* is a little bit unique in that, unlike every other attempt in this field, it is genuinely enjoyable.

Balls up

The single-player mode can get a little repetitive, but the multiplayer options give an incredible amount of life to the game. You and up to three mates take as many shots as is necessary to clear all ten bowling pins. As you plan and position your shot, a time limit slowly clocks down. If you fail to clear all ten in two shots, you lose a progressively higher number of points. The last player to have any left wins.

This mode is the main focus of the game, but the multitude of single-player game modes, such as bowling golf (where a certain position of pins on the alley is given a par score), makes the practice fun as well. The championship option works as you would expect, but if you do well you can unlock several hidden characters and new bonus alleys, such as the garage that has no gutters so that your ball will rebound, which make the multiplayer game more fun.

It looks nice with a few good effects, it's easy to play and games don't drag on for too long (your opponent is usually on a separate lane, so you don't need to wait for them). There's also a lot of skill that can be learnt with the control system, borrowed from standard golf sims. Basically you need to ask yourself this question: Can I see myself enjoying a bowling game? If the answer is yes, then this is the best game you'll find in its genre, and its excellent multiplayer game gives it a surprisingly universal appeal. **Will**



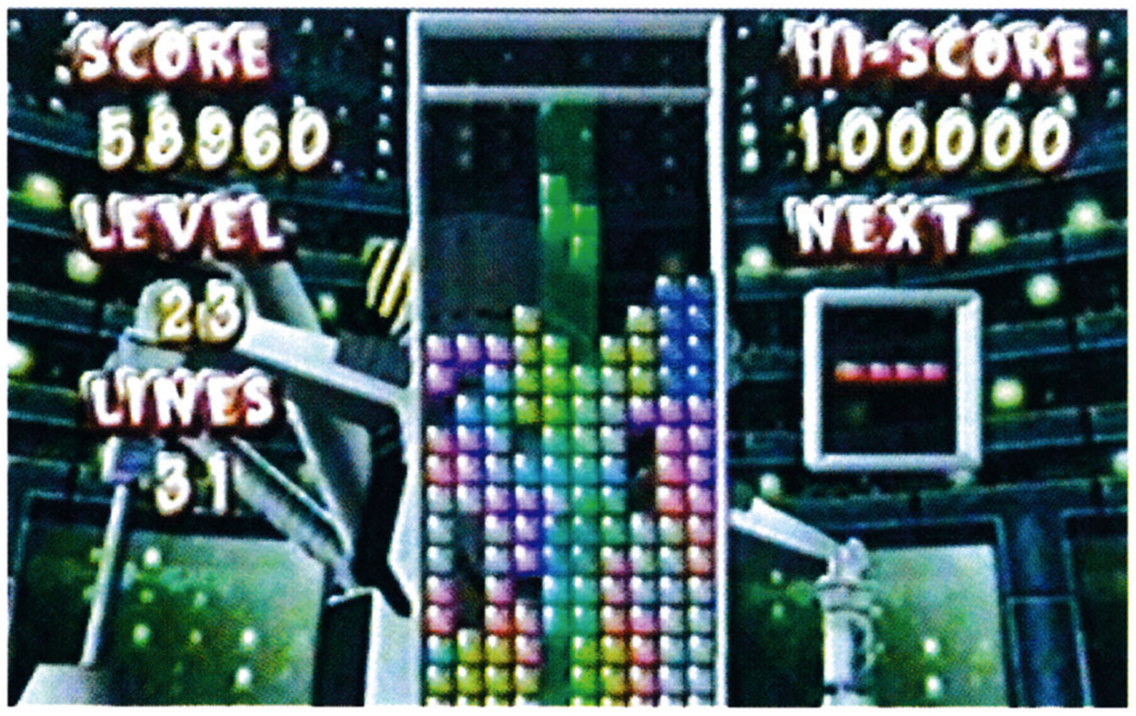
The split screen means there's no waiting

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Nintendo 64
PUBLISHER	Athena
DEVELOPER	She Games
STYLE	Bowling Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£54.99
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE GAME	Battery
RUMBLE PAK	Supported
EXPANSION PAK	Not Supported

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Super Bowling
GRAPHICS	70
SOUND	67
PLAYABILITY	78
OVERALL (Out of 100)	67

TETRIS 4D

What games console **worth its name doesn't have a version** of this classic puzzler? Can superior technology make **this the best version yet?**



It had to happen sooner or later. The popularity of *Tetris* is sadly declining, and it was only a matter of time before someone decided to cash in on it on Sega's new machine. The name suggests that this version is going to improve on the original in some way, but that couldn't be further from the truth. This is basic *Tetris*; no special bonuses, no twists on the original game, and no different game modes – only a choice of difficulty and a choice of music tracks (in single-player mode only). The single novel and interesting feature is the backgrounds. Starting off totally static, you notice parts of them beginning to move in small steps until the whole screen is moving. It's a good way of making the game progressively difficult, while also making you want to keep going to see what happens next.

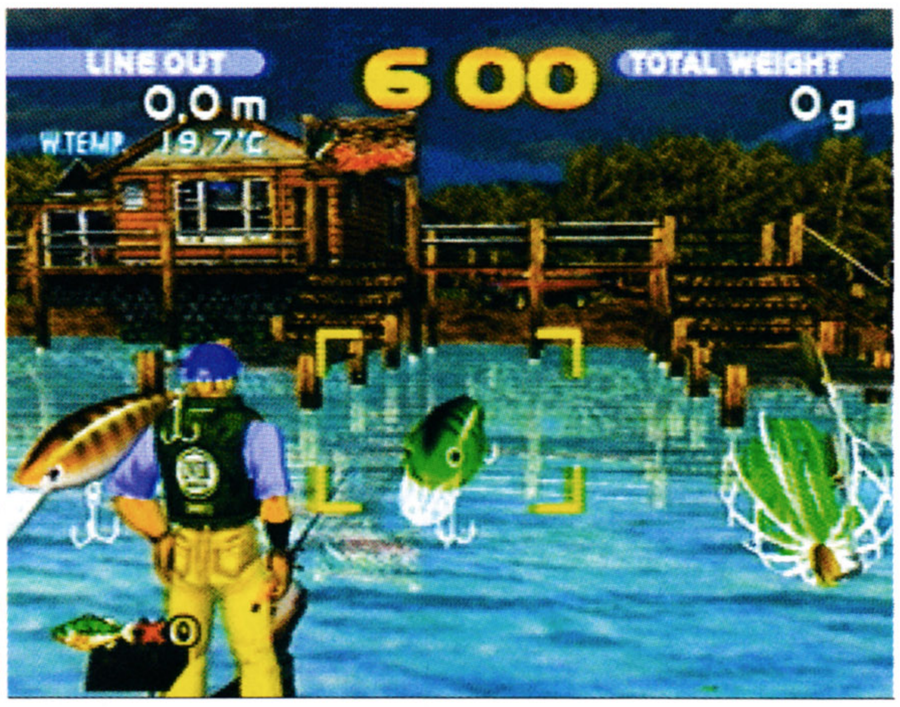
Block head

Of course, this is *Tetris* – a brilliant and everlasting game. There is not much that can be done with new technology to make this any better than the existing titles, but there is a lot that can be done with a little imagination – *Tetris DX* on the Game Boy Color proved that. The only real reason to buy this game is its four-player mode. It can get a little frustrating with the same music track repeating over and over again, and the winner is usually the player who makes the first Tetris, but it has infinite lastability and will constantly be coming out of the cupboard every time you have enough mates over. To sum up, *Tetris 4D* is far too basic and, especially from an import point of view, a large waste of your money. **Will**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Bullet Proof Software
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Puzzle
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	1-4
VMS	Yes
ON-LINE	No

VERDICT	
GAME NAME	Tetris 4D
GRAPHICS	40
SOUND	58
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL (Out of 100)	52

GET BASS FISHING



Fishing games have only ever been **available on PC and have only really** been popular in America, but Sega are trying to change all that with the **release of *Get Bass* on the Dreamcast...**

Obviously realising that fishing games generally have a marginal audience, a whole new peripheral has been designed especially for this game. This pad, shaped like the butt of a rod complete with reel, is the first of its kind (as far as we know), and may further interest in the game beyond that of fishing fans.

The game itself is also geared up towards enticing more than just fans of the sport, offering arcade modes where as many fish as possible must be caught in a certain amount of time in order to open up new areas. Each of the areas available comes complete with realistic scenery, wildlife (though only the bass can be hooked) and differing conditions. Your tacklebox contains a wide selection of lures, spinners and jigs to exploit these differing areas, and you must choose accordingly if you want to catch the big fish. New lures can be earned and collected during your game for use in other areas. As well as the more traditional fishing spots, there is also a bonus area, a castle moat, that contains only super bass.

YOUR TACKLEBOX CONTAINS A WIDE SELECTION OF LURES, SPINNERS AND JIGS, AND YOU MUST CHOOSE ACCORDINGLY IF YOU WANT TO CATCH THE BIG FISH

Other game options include a practice mode and tournament mode. The tournament mode is played out over several days, with fishing taking place in several different areas at different times of the day. Your ranking is shown after each day, and if at the end of the tournament you are placed high enough, you can then move on from the amateur league into the professional one. This league is obviously much harder to win, and it is here that the flukes are shown up and the deliberate, careful thinkers are rewarded. Once into the professional league, new areas are open to you, offering more challenges and, hopefully, bigger fish.

This game looks very nice, with good water effects and realistic fish. There are, however, a few too many glitches when underwater; the fish sometimes pass through rocks and logs, the camera has a nasty habit of changing at the wrong time, and you can't get snagged on underwater reeds or branches even in the supposedly realistic tournament mode. The constant shouts from the commentator, although funny for about five minutes, get annoying after a short while and may put some people off, while the lack of refinement on the so-called rod may also turn away some of the more serious fishing fans.

All in all, a good laugh for about an hour, but unless you are a big bass fishing fan, there is little here to keep you amused for long. For this game to succeed in this country I think it needs to contain a wider variety of fish and tackle choices and less shouting. **Russ**

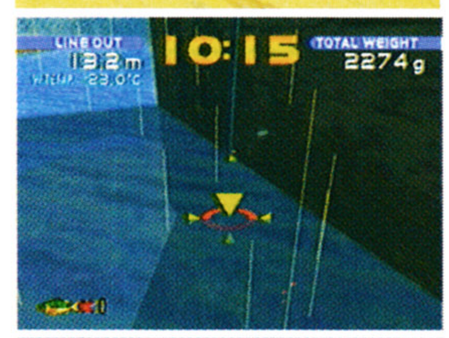
SUPER BASS

Possibly the best bit of the game is trying to catch one of the huge and evasive super bass in the castle moat, but once you do there is no substitute. My personal record is ten kilograms.

Male or female, it makes no difference to the fishing

INFORMATION

FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Sega
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Fishing Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£75 With 'Rod'
PLAYERS	One
VMS	Yes
ON-LINE	No



TAKING CONTROL

A fun game for a while, and if you have the rod and a few beers, it can stay so for quite some time. You will, however, need to be a serious fishing fan to enjoy this beyond a couple of days. Get your waders on and try the sport for real.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Get Bass Fishing
GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	53
PLAYABILITY	63
OVERALL Out of 100	59

LEGEND OF LEGAIA

The latest RPG to **hit the PlayStation has built up a lot of hype** during its development, but has it been **worth the wait?**

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	PlayStation
PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Radical Entertainment
STYLE	Action
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£44.99
PLAYERS	1-4
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
ANALOGUE	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

Look into my eyes...

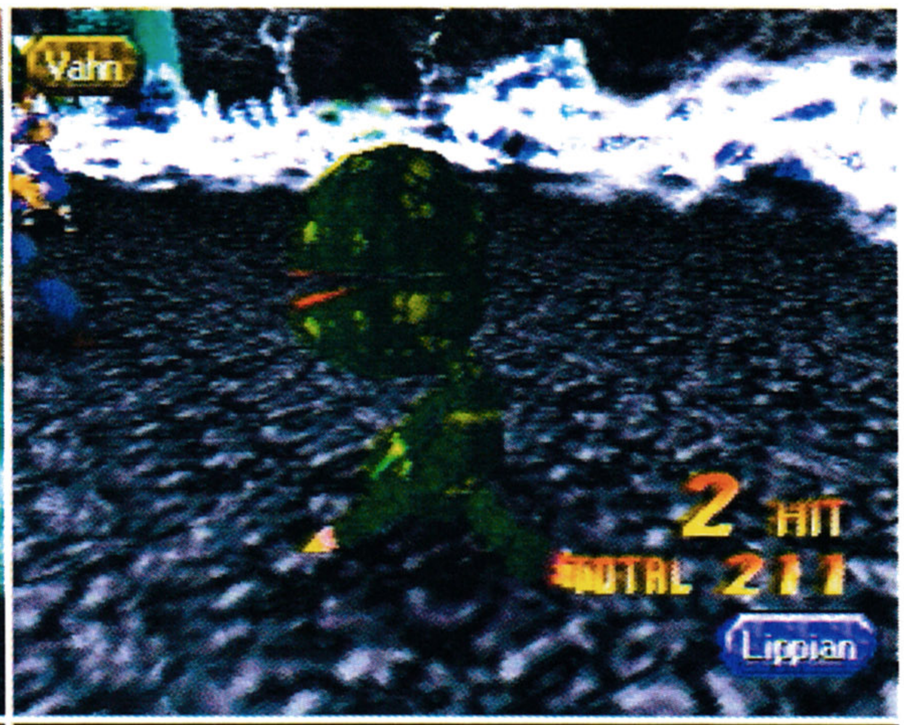
It's not uncommon for RPGs to be compared to *Final Fantasy VII* – it's very difficult to be handed any game in the same genre and not compare it to the current leader in its field – but often the game in question falls a long way short. After a small period of time playing *Legend of Legaia*, it seemed as if this could be the game to come closest to the best RPG of all time (apart from Square's sequel, of course).

Legend of Legaia begins as the majority of RPGs do, with you assuming control over a young, aspirant adolescent just before danger strikes. In the *Legend of Legaia* you assume control of Vahn on the day before you are initiated into following the elder members of your tribe on their hunt. Wandering around your enclosed village, you learn a bit of the history of the planet. A long time ago, godly devices known as the Seru inhabited the land. All of the privileged intelligent life wore the Seru, making them much stronger than before, and also allowing them to inherit magical powers. Things went bad when a strange mist appeared which turned the Seru and anything that came into contact with them into evil monsters. Going to sleep that night, you wake to find the village wall broken, allowing the mist and later the monsters to enter. You discover a Ra-Seru, a rare form of Seru unaffected by the mist, which bonds to you and helps you unleash the power of the Genesis tree that dispels the mist. You then set off on a quest to awaken the remaining seven Genesis Trees, and ultimately find and destroy the source of the mist.

THERE IS A LOT IN LEGAIA THAT IS BORROWED FROM FFVII – MENUS, ITEMS AND MANY OF THE ENEMIES ALL SEEM TO HAVE A SQUARE-STYLE APPEARANCE

TAKING CONTROL

It is always difficult to judge the strength of any RPG after twenty minutes, but *Legend of Legaia* was promising from the start. The plot takes a while developing and the real-time graphics are not as detailed as they could have been, but you are given the impression that it is going to get a lot better later on.

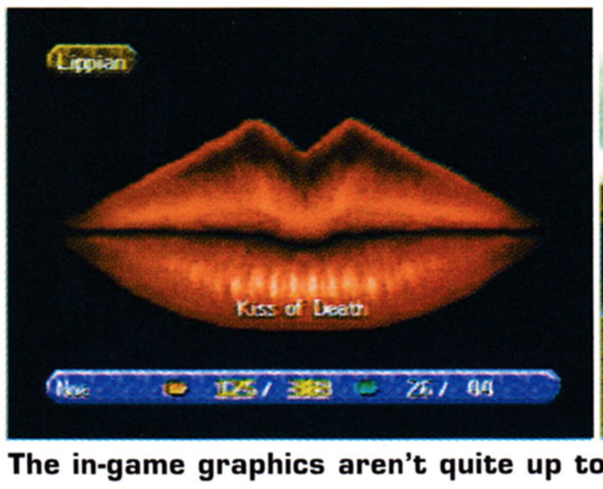


Spirit Level

There is a lot in *Legaia* that is borrowed from *FFVII* – menus, items and many of the enemies all seem to have a Square-style appearance – but it makes a name for itself with its novel combat system. Although it is very similar to that of *Hybrid Heaven*, the system in *Legend of Legaia* is a little more involved. When in combat you choose to use items, attacks, spirit moves or magic moves. The attack system splits into high, low, weapon or Ra-Seru blows, and depending on the amount of spirit the character has, he or she will be able to perform a number of each. There are a number of 'arts' (special moves) that can be learnt also. These occur when attacks are performed in the right combinations and encourage the player to try several different methods of attack. Not all are learnt by accident, though; some of the characters that you meet will teach them to you, and others can be found on scrolls hidden away in some of the many treasure chests. There are also hyper arts that can be learnt which are essentially a more powerful form of attack. In order to perform these moves you need a certain amount of spirit and AP, both of which can be recharged by selecting the spirit move instead of an attack. Spirit is shown as a bar that will increase for one move only after the spirit move is performed. The length of the bar determines how many hits you can perform at once. AP stands for Art Points, and performing an art or hyper art will sap at this level until the character cannot perform a special move. You can also choose magic attacks, which are learnt by defeating Seru opponents using non-Seru or non-magic moves when fighting in the mist. These are essentially summon spells and will drain your MP (Magic Points). The combat is well though out and very strategic, but it quickly becomes repetitive due to the fact that you will eventually have three characters' move selections to wade through, and combat occurs far too often, leaving you little time to explore without getting very frustrated.

Forgotten legend?

The Legend of Legaia is a very well thought out RPG. The story is good and holds your attention, the combat is also well realised, and it looks and sounds good as well. It doesn't quite have the magic of *FFVII* and is let down by far too frequent and random combat situations, but pure-bred RPG fanatics will not have a problem with this. The average gamer, however, should be advised to wait for *Final Fantasy VIII*, which will almost certainly blow everything else out of the water. **Will**



The in-game graphics aren't quite up to the standard of *Final Fantasy VII*, but then how many RPGs are?

REAL TO REAL

Unlike *FFVII*, *Legend of Legaia* is drawn totally in real time. Though the game doesn't make full use of this potential advantage, it does mean that there are no loading times when exploring cities and other large areas. Sadly, it also seems to have taken its toll on the character detail, which seems to be very limited.

OTHER FORMATS?

Nintendo 64 ○○○○○

This is a Sony game, so don't expect a conversion of any shape or form on the N64.

PC ○○○○○

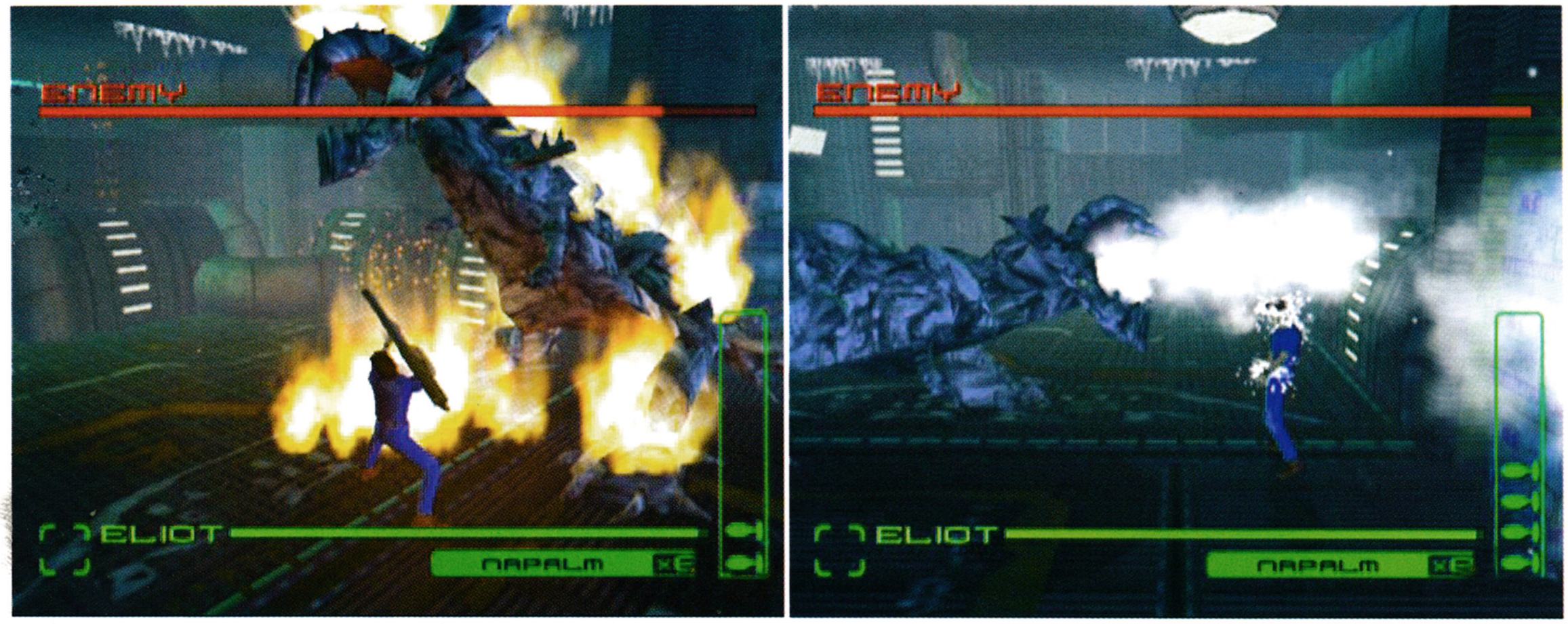
Okay, so *FFVII* may have made it across eventually, but it's not common for this type of game to appear on the PC.

Dreamcast ○○○○○

As with the N64, it would be surprising to see a Sony published game on a rival console.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Legend of Legaia
GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	79
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL Out of 100	78



BLUE STINGER

INFORMATION	
FORMAT	Dreamcast
PUBLISHER	Sega Enterprises
DEVELOPER	Climax Graphics
STYLE	Action Adventure
RELEASE	Out Now
IMPORT PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	One
VMS	Yes
ONLINE	No

***Resident Evil*-style** gameplay, *Resident Evil*-style **monsters**, and the **graphic capabilities** of the Dreamcast. **Sounds great**...

After playing *Blue Stinger* briefly at the Tokyo Game Show last autumn, I've been eagerly awaiting its arrival ever since. The fifteen minutes or so that I spent with the game last year didn't really afford me much knowledge of any plot that might be present, but I remember that at the time the visuals in particular seemed breathtaking.

Six months or so and a Dreamcast launch later, we've finally got our hands on a boxed Japanese copy. But I'm sorry to say that it appears I may have been wearing my rose-tints since last October...

Mutants, thousands of 'em...

After sitting through the great looking, although slightly bizarre intro, you find yourself washed up on Dinosaur Island, which as a result of various experiments and a large explosion, is now inhabited almost entirely by mutants perhaps best described as human/lobster hybrids – you get the idea. You're quickly contacted by one of the few survivors on the island, who outlines your first mission and fills you in on some of what's been going on. Unfortunately, the bulk of your mission – and the game for that matter – consists of little more than locating keys and passwords for doors whilst avoiding or killing any mutants that cross your path. There are a few more interesting puzzles to be found as you progress, but nothing as involving as those found in the *Resident Evil* or even *Tomb Raider* series of games.

WHEN ENTERING A ROOM FILLED WITH MUTANTS, THE LAST THING YOU WANT TO BE LOOKING AT IS A REVERSE ANGLE SHOT OF YOURSELF AND THE CORRIDOR BEHIND YOU

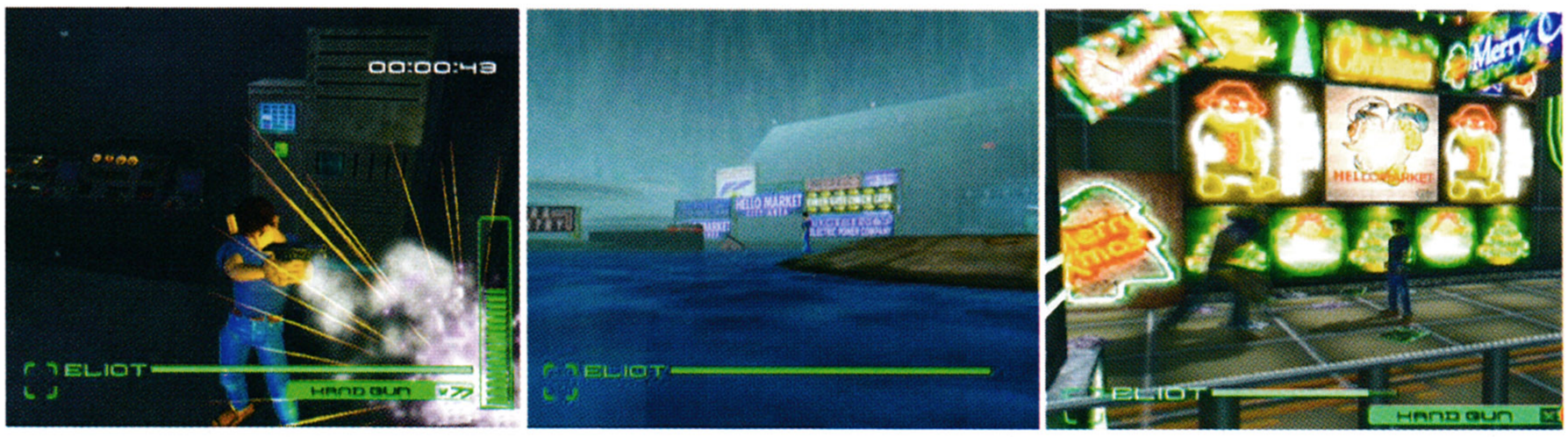
Upon loading, the intro sequence was initially very pleasing, although this was mainly down to the fact that I was incredibly relieved to find that the in-game speech is all in English – at last, a Dreamcast game that I could really sink my teeth into, and understand. Although it doesn't hinder the gameplay in any way, I have to give a special mention to the lip-sync in the intro at this point – it is by far the worst you will ever see (Hong Kong movies included). But anyway, you can enjoy it for yourselves if you decide to buy the game.

Killing a mutant results in an obscene amount of tomato ketchup spillage, along with an explosion of gold coins which should be collected and spent on weapons, ammo and energy restoring snacks – a hot dog, for example. Perhaps the strangest of your potential purchases, though, are the T-shirts, which when worn by Dogs Bower, your slightly rotund second character, give him special powers (for more information on those see boxout).

The Hello Market, not a place to shop at night

TAKING CONTROL

One of the strangest intros I've ever seen – a strange blue woman floating above my head, and a selection of continually changing and extremely irritating camera angles. Not quite what I was expecting, but I'm determined to give it my best shot, though.

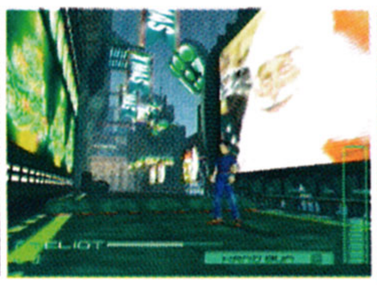


The graphics are, in places, quite spectacular, but then nowadays on a console such as the Dreamcast it's to be expected

Don't shoot till you see the...

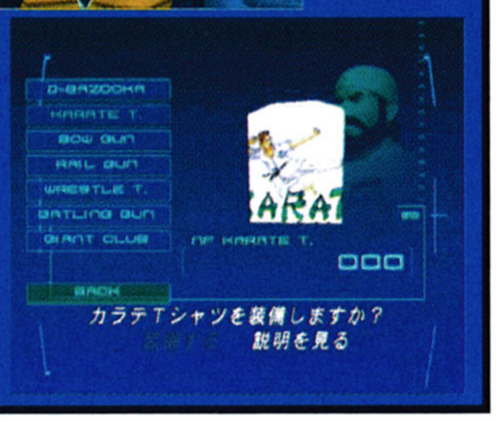
The developers have done everything in their power to give *Blue Stinger* a cinematic feel, and in the case of the orchestral soundtrack composed by Toshihiko Sawatari it works extremely well. Unfortunately, some of the camera angles are perhaps a little too adventurous, and although great for the voyeur, they can make life extremely difficult for the games player. When entering a room filled with mutants, the last thing you want to be looking at is a reverse angle shot of yourself and the corridor behind you, but all too often this is the kind of thing that you're faced with. To add insult to injury, Climax Graphics have opted for a control system whereby rather than always pushing up to walk forwards, you have to push the stick in the direction that you wish your character to move according to his position on the screen. All well and good, but not when the camera is busy swooping around showing off the fact that all of the locations are beautifully rendered in real-time. I occasionally found myself re-entering locations I'd just left or even walking around in a complete circle trying to get the grips with an ever-changing camera angle – this could have so easily been avoided.

At the end of the day, *Blue Stinger* isn't a bad game, and it's one that import buyers won't have many problems with language-wise. Unfortunately, it falls well short of those it seeks to emulate and my overall feeling is one of disappointment. **Justin**



YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR

Dogs Bower, the second controllable character in the game, initially has no hand-to-hand combat skills whatsoever. Kit him out with a special T-shirt, though, and he becomes a fighting machine. The three T-shirts available are Wrestler, Sumo and Karate Man, each making available to Dogs a unique set of offensive moves.



OTHER FORMATS?

Nintendo 64 ○○○○○

This is a Sega published game, so don't expect to see it coming to Nintendo.

PC ○○○○○

It would be possible, but it's about as likely as the idea of gaining fighting skills simply by wearing a special t-shirt.

PlayStation ○○○○○

Why would they? Resident Evil has the PlayStation covered thankyou very much.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Blue Stinger
GRAPHICS	83
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	78
OVERALL (Out of 100)	78

CHOCOBO RACING

Platform: **Playstation** Publisher: **Squaresoft**
Developer: **Squaresoft** Style: **Kart Racing** Release: **Out Now**
Import Price: **£50** Players: **1-2** Save Game: **Memory Card**

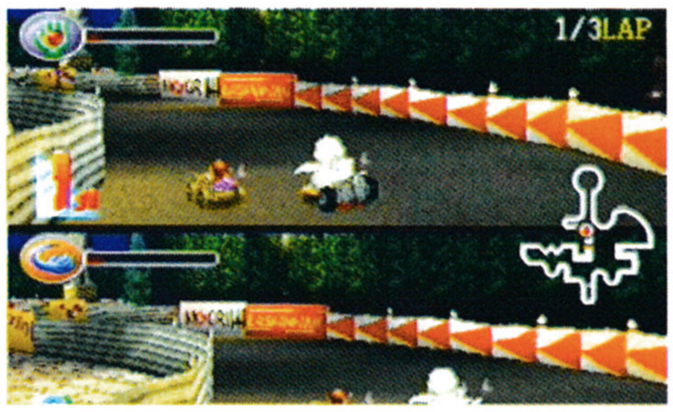
The **Chocobo Races** from **FFVII** have **spawned their** very own game for the **PlayStation...**

The quest for a '*Mario Kart* beater' continues. Not since the release of Nintendo's instant SNES classic has anyone come close to realising that game's simple-yet-brilliant principles of character, fun and challenge. Even the N64 sequel is arguably inferior to the SNES version that brought joy to so many, and so many close to failure of their A-Levels.

This latest attempt to recreate this hit game comes from Square, and you'd think that they, more than anyone, would have a chance of doing just this. Sadly, *CR* is NOT *Mario Kart* for PlayStation. It is a sorry shadow of Nintendo's genius.

All the options that you would expect are here – Grand Prix, Time Trial and a Story mode (a complete rip-off of the presentation of *Yoshi's Story*, by the way). There is an interesting (sort of) 'relay' option where you take control of a three-man relay, but this is little more than a distraction from the real game.

This has none of the joy of *Mario Kart*; the tracks are too bland (in both design and looks), weapons have very little subtlety, and the handling of the cars/characters/karts leaves a lot to be desired. Overall, *Chocobo Racing* is a poor imitation of a classic game, and in this case you really would be better off buying a SNES and *Mario Kart*. Why didn't Square just expand the Chocobo Racing from *Final Fantasy VII*?



The two player isn't as fun as it should be

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Chocobo Racing
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	50
PLAYABILITY	45
OVERALL (Out of 100)	48

EA

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COMING SOON

OUT OFCONTROL

NICKJONES
DEPUTY EDITOR

By this time next month The Phantom Menace will have opened in Los Angeles and the internet and media will be awash with information on the new Star Wars film. Obviously, I'll be steering well clear of the web for starters... Instead, I'll be concentrating on LucasArts' brilliant *Racer* game based on the section of the film where Anakin Skywalker takes part in a futuristic racing-type event. We've seen it, and it's safe to say that it's the best game of its kind ever.

This aside, the rest of the team and myself will be taking it easy while Justin braves the most stressful and hectic three days of the industry year in LA. Los Angeles is a nice place to visit, but in this case, rather you than me, mate.

The big game for me next month, however, will be a certain game that goes by the name of *Outcast*. It's the kind of title that rewrites a genre – *Tomb Raider* and all you wannabes had better watch out, the goalposts just got moved a lot further apart... You'll find out more next month...

JUSTINCALVERT
EDITOR

For three days next month, the city of Los Angeles will become the centre of the gaming universe for everybody involved in the interactive entertainment industry. Naturally Total CONTROL, or more specifically I, will be in attendance, attempting to break the world record for the number of unreleased computer games played by a single person in 24 hours. It's not something I'm especially looking forward to, but when the games I'll be playing are of the quality of those listed on the next page, the trip across the pond is a sacrifice I'm willing to make. Let's see, what else will I be up to next month? Well the quest to get my *CM3* Bolton Wanderers side into the Premiership will no doubt continue to occupy most of the evenings, although I'm a little concerned that with great games like *Star Wars Episode 1 Racer* and *Outcast* coming in, I may get distracted from the job in hand. (My real job that is, as manager of Bolton Wanderers). In my spare time I'll be playing this new publishing game: 'Total CONTROL'.

CLIFFSMITH
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Oh, how our hearts bleed for poor noble Justin, sacrificing himself for an all-expenses-paid trip to Los Angeles next month. What Justin doesn't know is that while he's off schmoozing with the superstars in LA, we are going to be taking it easy and playing *Team Fortress* until our eyes bleed. He's going to come back to find that none of us have done a damn stroke of work for the whole week. Not that there's much we can do about it. The entire computer games industry is going to be at E3, so there isn't going to be a lot for us to write about until they recover from their hangovers and jet-lag.

Personally, I could use the break. My week's holiday in Scotland consisted mostly of walking slowly around a large number of boring old castles in the company of my family. I do love my folks, but I sometimes wish they'd hurry up a bit. At least I got to visit Doune Castle, otherwise known as Castle Argggh from Monty Python and the Holy Grail. All together now, "Your mother was a hamster and..."

WILLADKIN
STAFF WRITER

With E3 just around the corner, there's going to be no shortage of games turning up in the next few weeks. The big games to look out for will surely be *Shenmue*, *Dino Crisis* and *Perfect Dark,* but all are a long way from completion.

The most anticipated title expected to arrive next month is the stunning *Kingpin*, which has the potential to throw the whole genre in a new direction with its superb character interaction. But I'll be taking a strong interest in two other PC titles: Infogrames' epic *Outcast,* and Activision's *Star Wars: Pod Racer*. The three add up to make June one of the strongest months for PC fans.

The console scene in the UK seems to be going through a barren phase. The release schedule for the N64 over the next few months does not make for lengthy reading, and I won't be getting that excited about many of the imminent PlayStation titles either. Hopefully things will change around nearer the end of the summer.

NEXTMONTH

1·2·E

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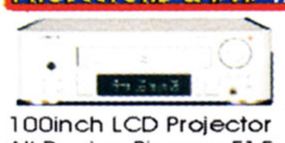

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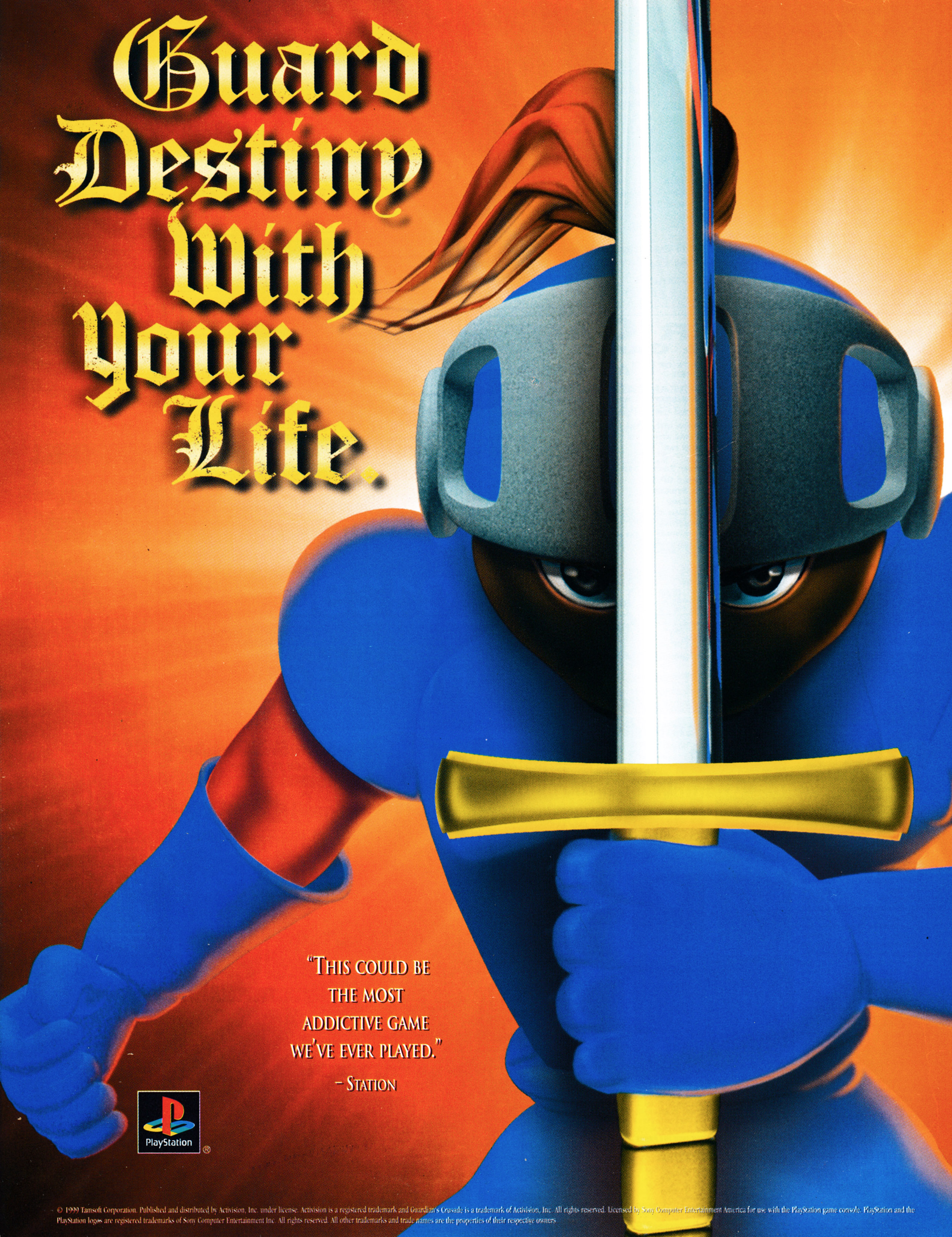

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Next Generation

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