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ISSUE #1

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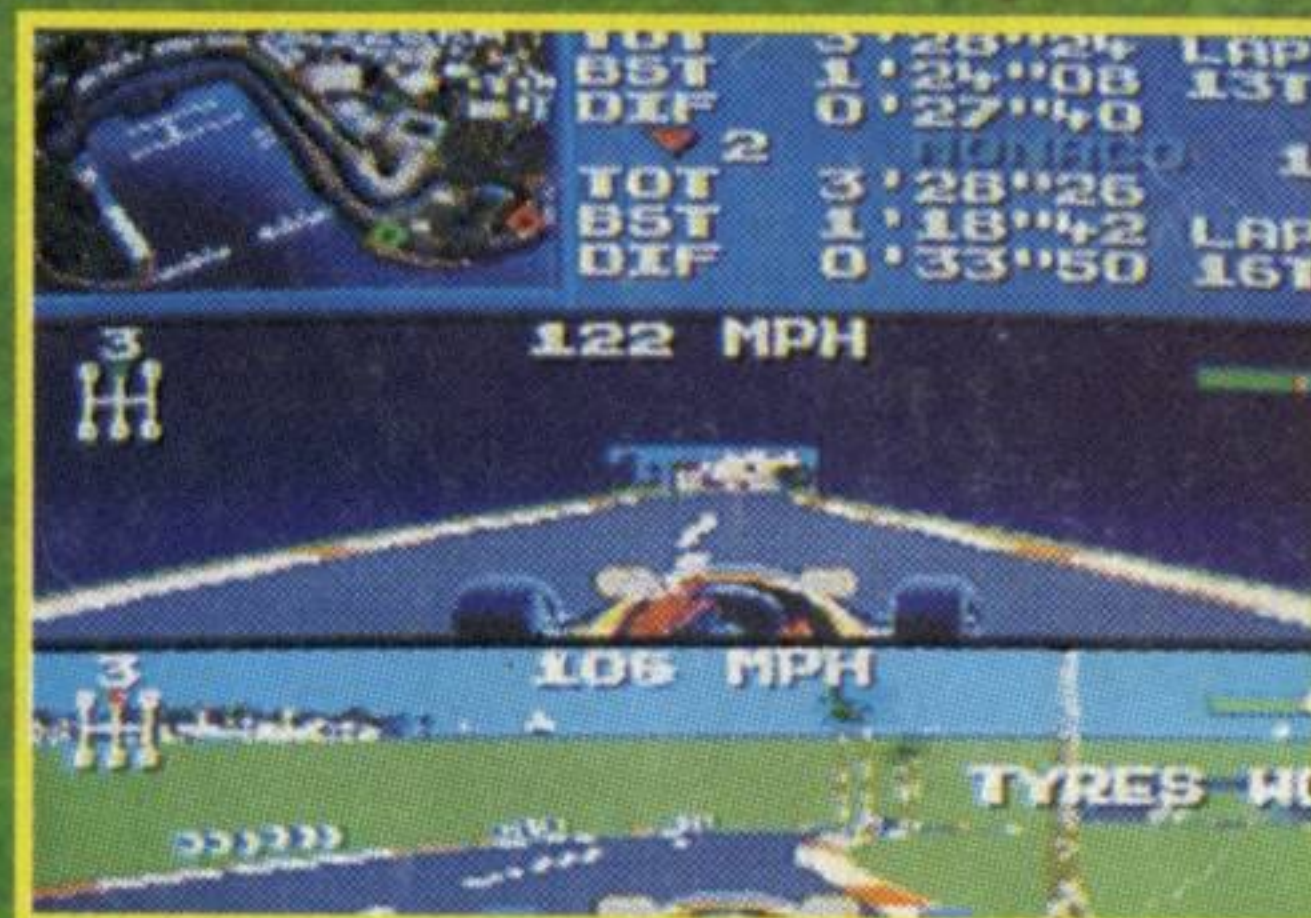
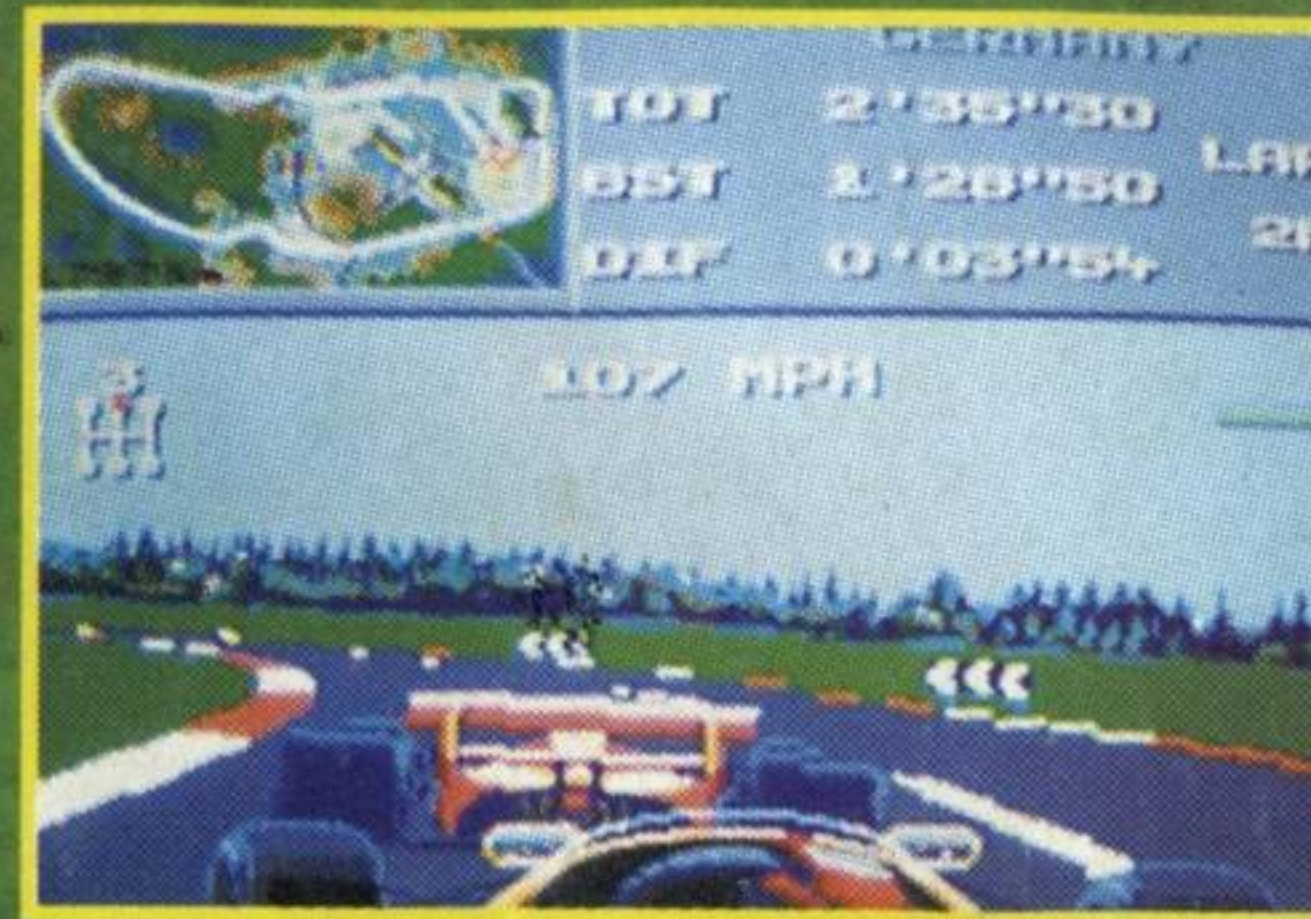
"It looks brilliant, it moves gorgeously and sounds superb... It's fast, fun and full of action... Brilliant!"

MEGA DRIVE ADVANCED GAMING 92%

"Stunningly addictive and outrageously fast gameplay... Domark's brilliant racing title should redefine current cart standards." SEGA POWER 92%

"It's the best racing game on the Mega Drive."

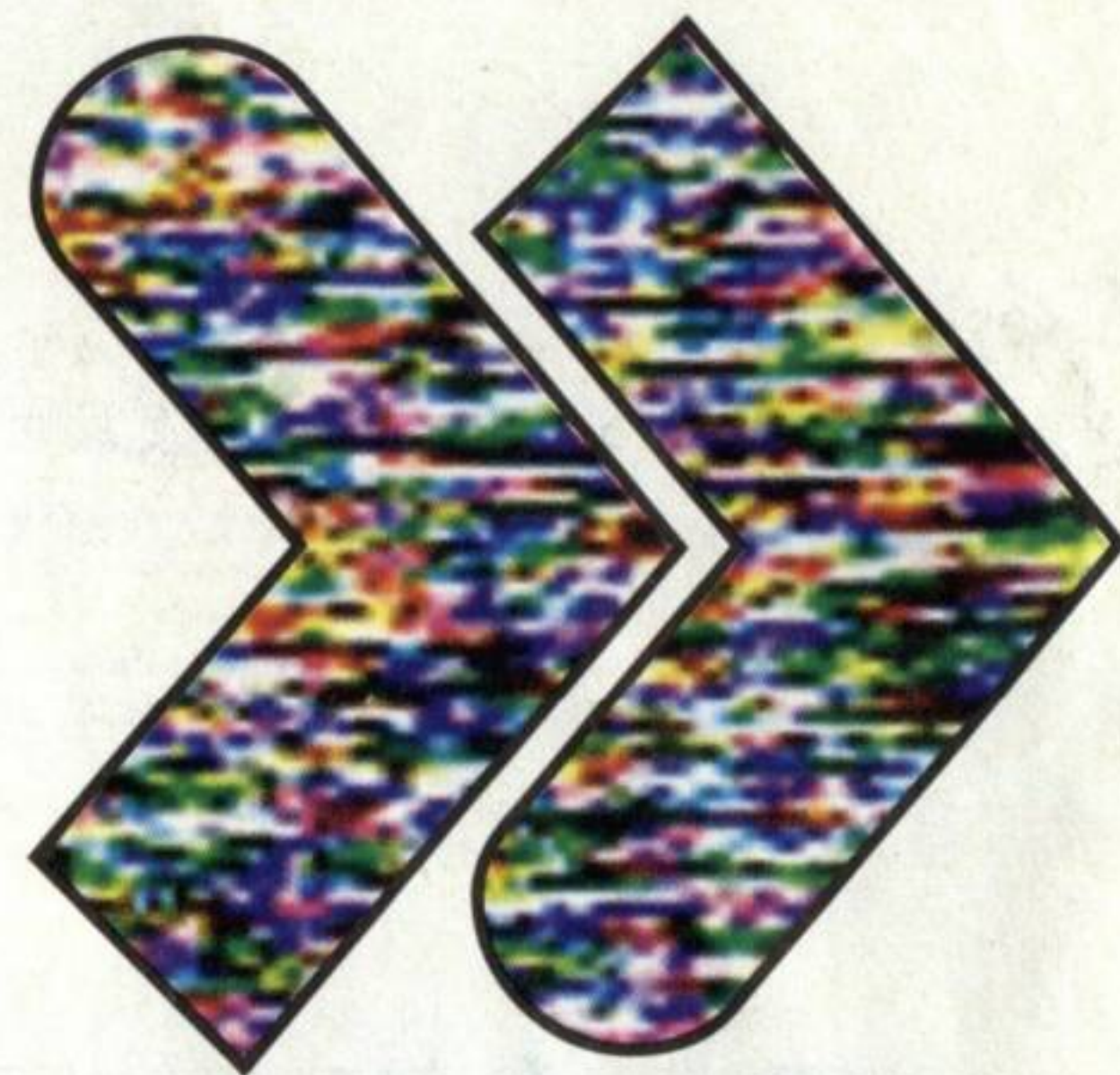
MEAN MACHINES 93%



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hype itup



Just another games magazine? No, HYPHER is more than that. For a start we're **100% Australian** so everything in these pages directly relates to the local scene. We are totally independent of games distributors and manufacturers, which means that we can be so honest it hurts when it comes to reviews.

We're not going to buy into the Sega/Nintendo war, or any other war for that matter, so you can expect fair and **unbiased** opinions.

Our **multi-format coverage** also allows us to directly compare games on different systems so you can see who's getting what and who's not.

Apart from comprehensively covering the latest in the digitised world, we're going to go beyond it as well, with features and articles on a whole range of subjects. With games quickly moving to become true multimedia productions that integrate music and video, it would be foolish to limit ourselves to the area of sprites and polygon graphics. Every issue we'll cover the hottest in **music** and **movies**, and we'll regularly take a look at new technology, comics, animation, street wear and anything else that takes our fancy. Yes, hard as it is to believe, there is life beyond video games. Our first issue is, we think, the best games-based magazine ever to come out of Australia, and we're definitely going to get a lot better. Our next issue will be out in mid-December and we'll be monthly from then on.

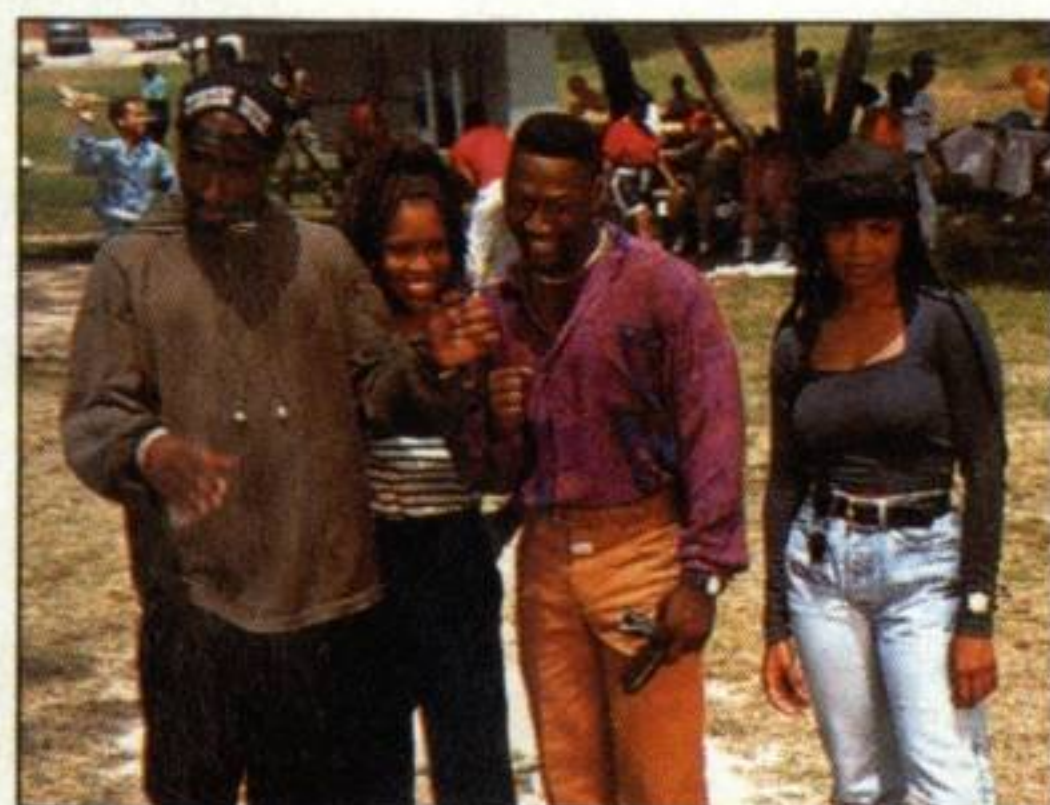
So, get into HYPHER, tell us what you think and look forward to us bringing you the

latest, fastest, loudest, hardest, most hyperactive news and reviews around.

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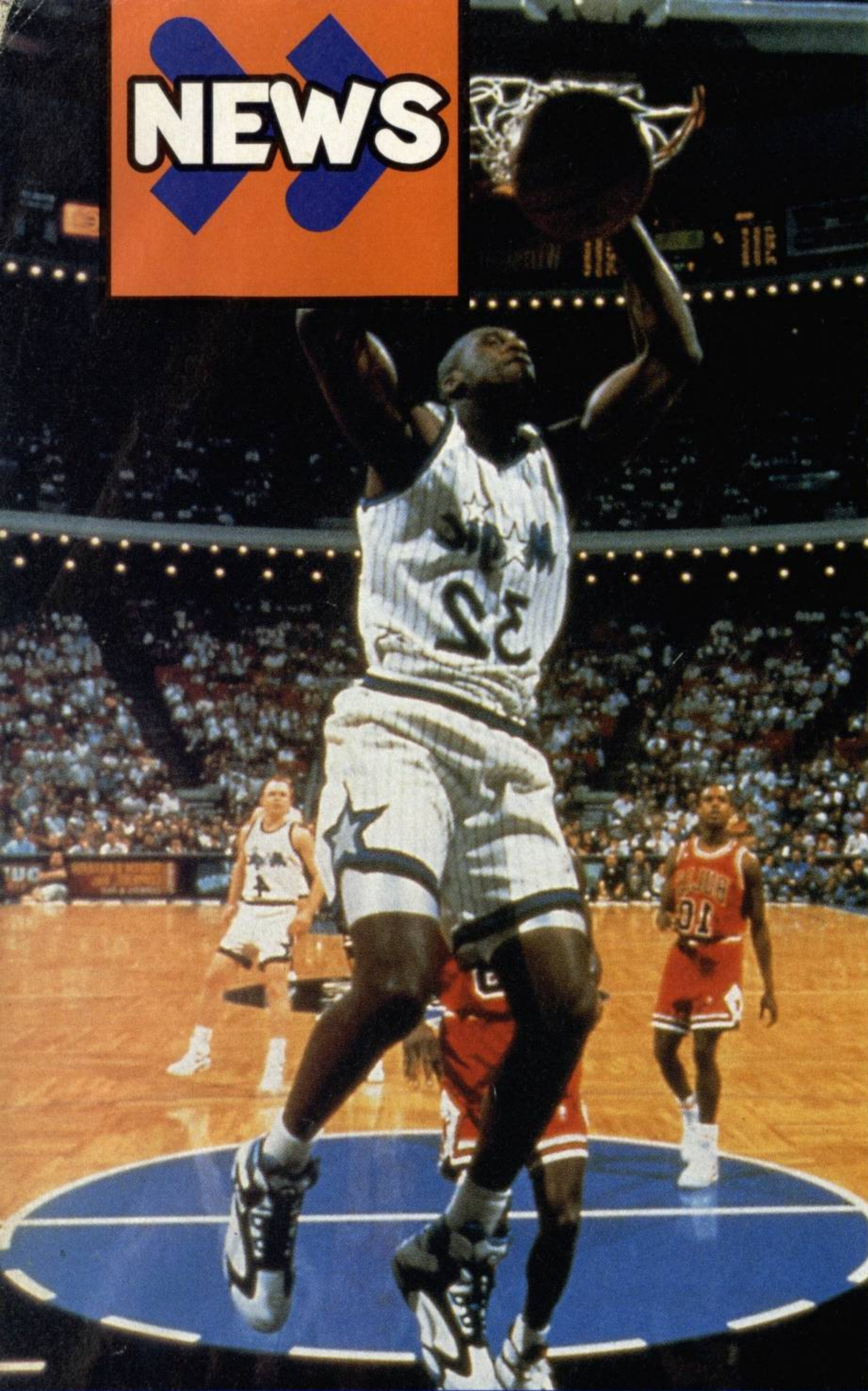
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It's the Shaq Attaq!

NBA basketball megastar, rap artiste, film actor, karate expert and all-round nice guy, Shaquille O'Neal, has got two new computer games coming out soon. Shaq, who stands 7'1" in his size 20 Reeboks, was in Sydney recently to play a date with Ice Cube and Fu-Schnickens and to show off a bit of his massively marketable talent to Australia.

O'Neal is the hottest NBA property since Michael Jordan, and at 21 he's already worth \$70 million from his basketball, sponsorships with Reebok and Pepsi. And if that isn't enough, now he's got albums, films (a new one with Nick Nolte called Blue Chips) and computer games in the pipeline.

Shaq wasn't giving too much away about the games that he is making for Electronic Arts - maybe because he hasn't even had a chance to play them himself yet! But what we do know is they're going to come as a two-in-one set, one basketball, one karate. The basketball game's to be called Shaq Attaq

(very original!) and it'll have three modes, according to the man himself: "regular mode, medium mode and trash-talking mode." Shaq doesn't go in for trash-talking too much himself. "I only speak when I'm spoken to," he says. But then when you're over seven feet tall, you can afford to let your actions speak for themselves on court!

The karate bit gets weirder. All we can say is, it involves Shaq (naturally), his Japanese karate trainer and the karate trainer's daughter. Could be a romantic interest here? Shaq is certainly a very attractive proposition ("I'm very tall, very dark and very handsome"), although his current girlfriend does have one problem with their relationship - she has to stand on a chair to kiss him! Anyway, back in the game, they all end up going to Japan where Shaq's karate skills are put to the test. The follow-up version has the Japanese coming to America to take on Shaq at basketball (just kidding!).

Sega sign up Cinepak for Mega CD

So far, Mega CD software hasn't exactly set the gaming world on fire (although maybe Thunderhawk, reviewed in this issue, will change all that). Games that boast the much hyped Full

Motion Video - like Night Trap, Sherlock Holmes, and the Make My Video series - have been the most unimpressive. The quality of the image is awful. It's grainy, dull, and horrible. Why? Because the

The Mega CDs notoriously small and grainy full-motion video pictures will hopefully be vastly improved with Cinepak technology, allowing full-screen conversion of movie blockbusters such as Aladdin



»Sega and Nintendo

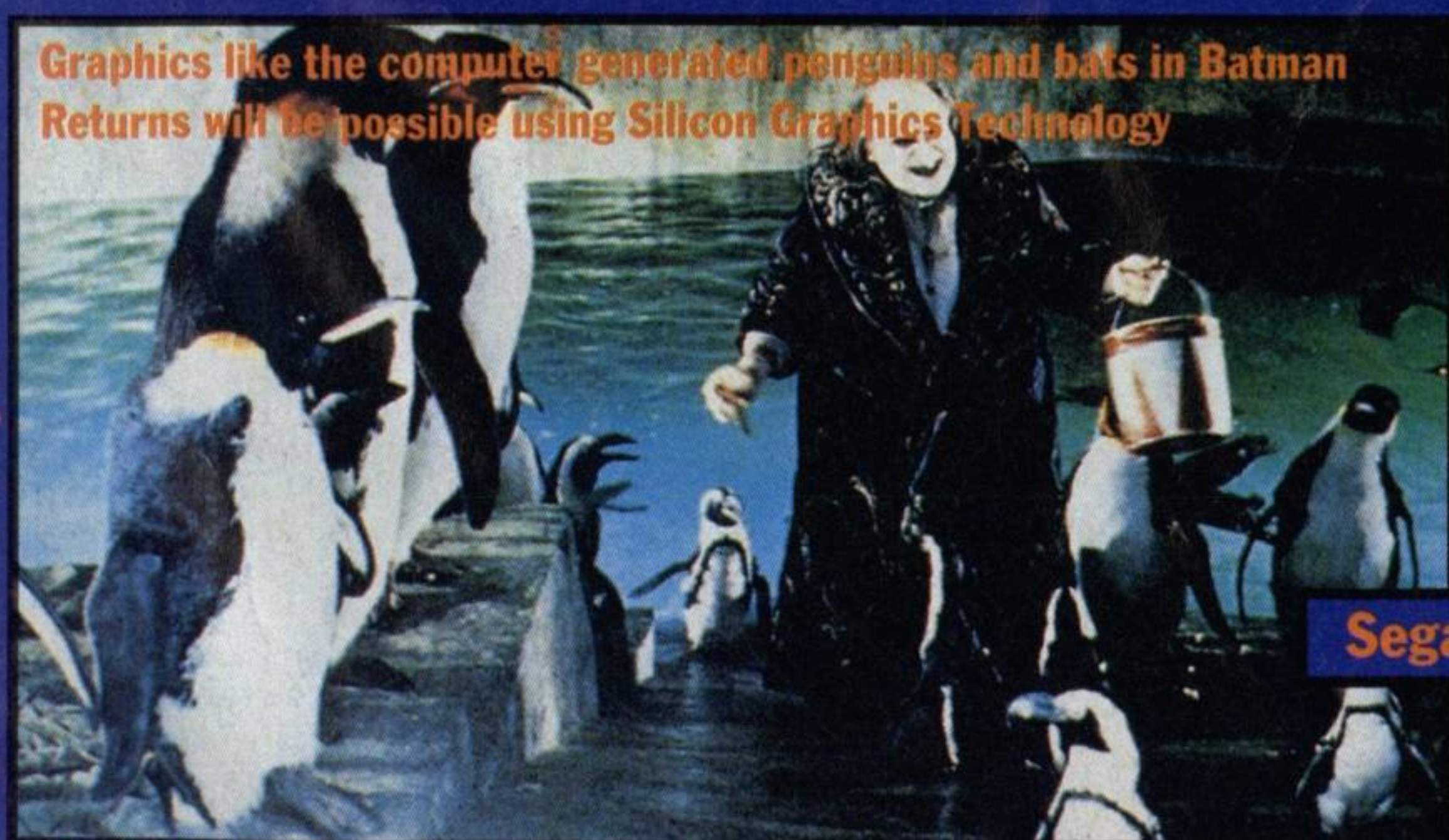
announce New Machines Whatever the future of

video gaming holds, one thing's for sure - the 3DO Company (check out the feature this issue) is not going to have it all their own way. Both Sega and Nintendo want to keep the market to themselves and they've got the experience, technological know-how, and the cash to do it. These guys are BIG players, and they've both just announced next-generation wonder machines of their own...

Sega's Saturn Tom Kalinske, the CEO of Sega America, has been pointing out to anyone who'll listen, that Sega "know more about 32-bit technology

than just about anyone". Have a quick play of Virtual Racing if you doubt him. Because of this arcade experience, Kalinske claims that Sega could bring out a machine equal to or better than the 3DO "tomorrow". The problem lies in getting the price of 32-bit technology down to an affordable level. Kalinske has repeatedly stated that, "I'm not interested in machines over (US)\$500".

So a 32-bit Sega console is coming, but not until late 1994 (at the very earliest). By that time, the technology will be cheaper, and the Mega CD would have had its time in the



Graphics like the computer generated penguins and bats in Batman Returns will be possible using Silicon Graphics Technology



SONIC THE ARCADE GAME

If you've been in to any arcades recently you probably have noticed a lot of Street Fighter clones and racing games. While

ter to star in such a game, than the character who revolutionized home console gaming - Sonic the Hedgehog! Sega's

jumping in response to the trackball controller. There's also a button control, mostly used for spinning jumps, which can attack or avoid enemies.

cles, to the desert where devious winds whip up sandstorms, to a series of cliffs overlooking Dr Robotnik's hideout.

Oh, yes, I almost forgot to mention that the evil Doctor is back. His animated interludes, where he gets more and more angry at Sonic, provide some light relief between levels. The overall standard of the graphics is nothing short of superb, and the playability is also top-notch apparently, with up to three people able to play at once. The game is still officially untitled, and won't make it to Australia until next year, but this is definitely one to start saving your coins for.

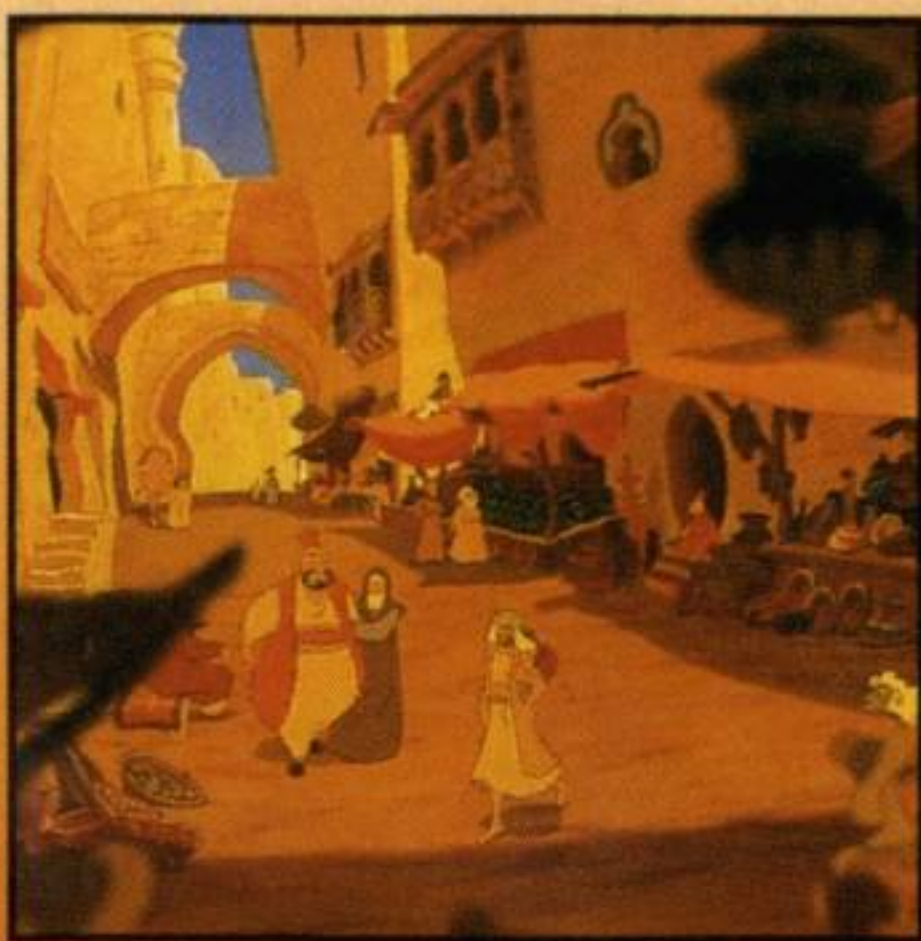
these may have stunning graphics, sound and action, they're all...well, lets face it, they're all pretty much the same. There are only so many dragon punches, special attacks and laps of the circuit you can do, before starting to feel a tad bored.

Well, cheer up, because Sega are hoping to breathe some new life into the coin-op market with a game that will completely revolutionize arcade gaming. And who bet-

ter omnipresent mascot is the hook to get hardened beat 'em up fans to dump World Heroes, Mortal Kombat and the rest, for some less violent, but no less intense, action.

The only arcade game it can really be compared to (graphics wise, anyhow) is the classic of yesteryear, Marble Madness. The game is presented in a three-dimensional overhead angle, with Sonic and up to two friends, running and

Sonic can be joined by up to two friends, Ray and Mighty, and all three characters are animated superbly. There are many different actions to perform, such as crossing chasms by swinging on chains, jumping onto a swinging trapeze, breaking steel bars to escape a wall of spikes and being shot out of catapults. There are many different levels and they are all long and challenging. Sonic and friends travel everywhere from ice caves full of falling ices



Mega CD can only display 64 colours on screen at the one time - until now, that is.

In a bid to keep the Mega CD competitive in the face of increasing competition, Sega have signed an alliance with

leading CD technology developers, CinePak. CinePak's technology will supposedly increase the number of on screen colours from 64 to 512, making the resolution for digitised video much sharper

than we've seen. It'll be full-screen too, not just tucked away in a window.

Sega will incorporate CinePak technology in their next batch of CD titles. You won't need to buy any extra

peripherals - CinePak is not an add-on cart; it's incorporated at the programming stage. However, because programming costs will rise, CD's with CinePak technology are likely to cost more. Sigh.

sun. The new system has already got a name - it's called (drum roll) the Saturn. It'll be a 32-bit CD-based machine, but whether or not it will be backwardly compatible with Mega Drive and Mega CD software is anyone's guess at this stage.

Here's what we do know. The central processor is a custom 32-bit RISC chip but with speed enhancements to make it run at 27 MHz (that's fast). It's also got some very nifty custom 24-bit graphics processors. The Saturn is capable of producing 16.7 million colours and, thanks to "The Alpha Channel" (special

graphics hardware much like 3DO's "Cinematic Software Tools"), it can produce all sorts of graphical effects - like textured shading, transparent colours, and modified colour palettes. Throw in a polygon generator chip that can display and animate on-screen 16 000 polygons and you've got yourself one tough machine.

Nintendo's Project Reality Like the special effects you saw in movies like Terminator 2 and Jurassic Park? They were created on Silicon Graphics (SGI) workstations. Wouldn't it be nice if a games machine could do stuff like that.

Nintendo think so. That's why they've just announced a joint development and licence agreement with Silicon Graphics for a 64-bit, 3D home entertainment system. The machine, called Project Reality for the time being, is due to appear in arcades at the end of 1994 and in homes in late 1995. Whether it will be CD only or a mix of CD and cartridge ROM is uncertain at the moment. The target price? A ridiculously low \$250 (US).

An impressive list of tech specs has been released. The system will have a 64-bit RISC processor with a speed of over 100 MHz, 24-bit

colour, high resolution, and CD quality audio. It should also contain "Reality Immersion Technology" - a radically improved version of home Virtual Reality.

The timing of the announcement was obviously calculated to show that Nintendo, the world's biggest video game company, is still in control. But for games freaks, the news means that the "Super CD" peripheral for the Super NES is now doubtful. Nintendo's next major piece of hardware may well be the Project Reality machine. And what a reality it looks set to be...

Compatibility Problems?

Just bought a Mega CD? Pissed off at the piddly amount of games on the shelves, and the crap quality of the ones that are? Upset that all the hot games you see in Japanese and American mags take six months to get here, or don't get here at all.



Well, there's a solution. The Pro CDX. This wonder cart allows Mega CD owners to play CD games from both Japan and the US in their Australian machine. While it's still best to buy the locally released game, because of warranty and instructions, the Pro CDX is for all you hardened game freaks who just have to play the very latest. Just a slight warning - there is sometimes a slight delay when it's

running full-motion video, so don't bother getting it for games like Night Trap and Sherlock Holmes. The Pro CDX retails for \$99.95, and should be available at most bigger game retailers.

Never fear Mega Drive owners, because you've got your very own cart to solve all your compatibility problems. The Universal Adaptor allows Australian Mega Drive owners to use Japanese and US Genesis carts. It fits in just like a Pro Action Replay cart and has a switch to be moved, depending on whether you're converting Japanese or US carts. The Universal Adaptor will also allow you to use Mega CDs from other countries to be used with your Mega Drive. It retails for \$44.

And the best converter we've found for the Super Nintendo is the SFX Converter which retails for around \$50 at big game stores like the Gamesmen. It converts most NTSC games (although it has problems with some new ones like Streetfighter Turbo) and is far better than the cheaper ones available.

multi-player mayhem



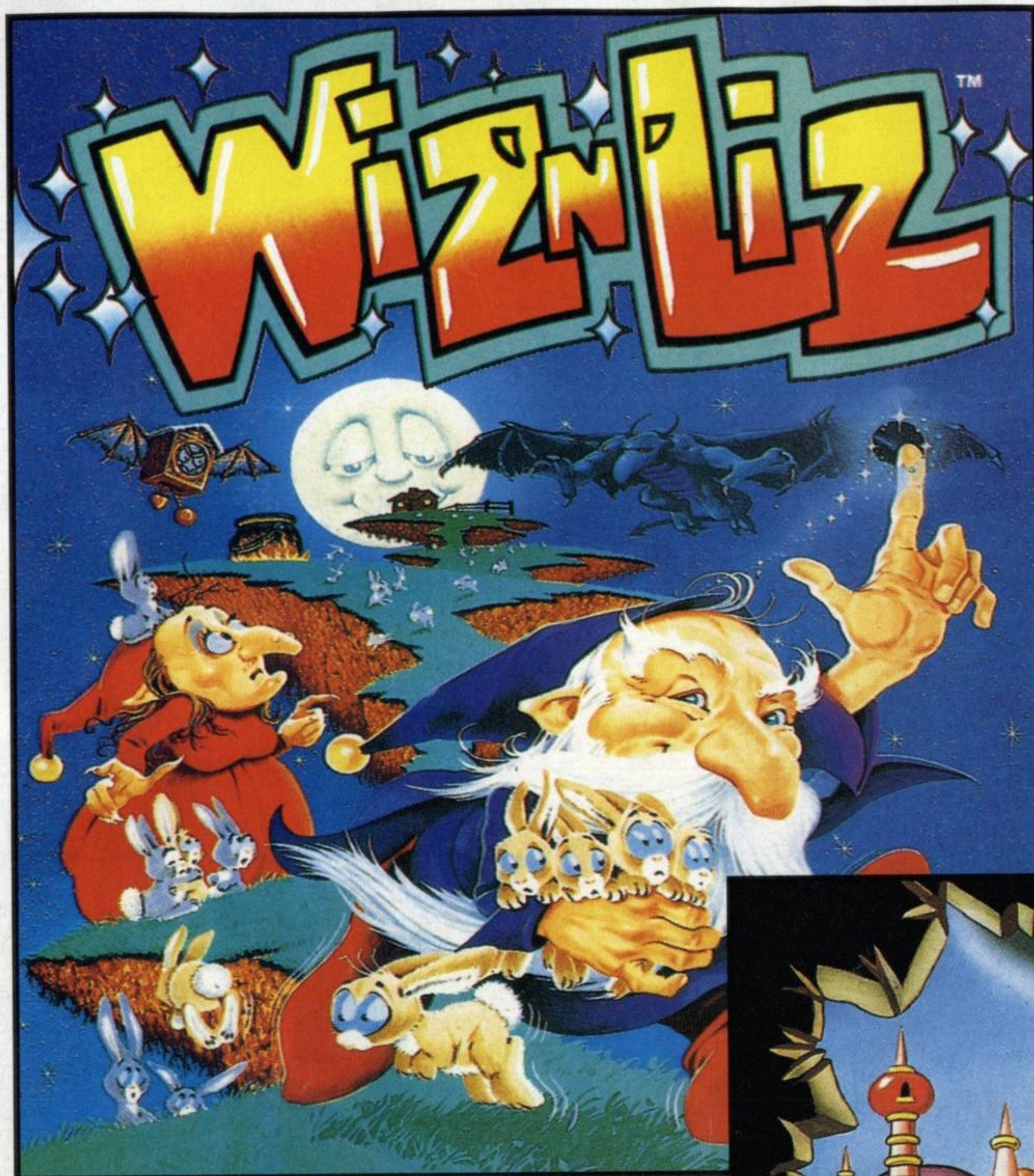
Multi-player (ie: more than two) games are the way of the future. Just think: more players = more arguments, and fist-fights in the lounge room = more fun. Get set for a new wave of multi-player games and all manner of gadgets.

Mega Drive owners could find themselves needing two add-ons. Sega's own MultiTap will be compatible with the none-too-shabby Ultimate Soccer (using two MultiTaps, up to 8 players can play simultaneously!) and Tengen's soon to be released arcade classic, Gauntlet 4. But Sega's Tap will not

be compatible with the new range of multi-player games from Electronic Arts - to get the most from them you'll need EA's new "4-Way Play" adapter.

Bill Walsh College Football and General Chaos (both reviewed this issue) are the first games to use EA's plastic device. It's prettier than Sega's "Multi Tap" and sits flush against the Mega Drive. Up to four players can now compete at the same time, in a range of combinations, like 2 on 2, 3 on 1, or 4 against the computer. Expect all future EA Sports titles, like NHL Hockey 94, Mutant League Hockey, Madden 94, and the still unnamed EA soccer game to be compatible.

Super Nintendo There are some great multi-player games headed our way soon for the SNES too, like Hudson Soft's excellent Super Bomberman, Super Formation Soccer 2 from Human, Super Family Tennis (Namco), and the nice-looking RPG, Holy Sword Legend 2. Only one adapter is needed for all these games - Nintendo's Super Multitap. It's similar to Sega's Tap (four extra control ports coming off one extension) and promises to be just as much fun. It's colour-matched to your SNES too. What will they think of next?



Wiz 'n' Liz

YOU WANT SPEED?

Faster than your average hedgehog...this is it! Two magicians...magic spells...rabbits that got away...You've got to save them over 56 levels and 9 worlds of fast and furious play!

"The two player game is everything that the jerky, fuzzy, head-to-head option on Sonic 2 should have been."

Mega magazine (UK)



Puggsy

FEEL LIKE ZAPPING ALIENS?

You are Puggsy cruising in your spaceship... you find yourself lost, marooned on a not so deserted planet...fight alien raccoons and their alien buddies with an assortment of tools...zip through 51 levels and 17 bizarre locations to find your spaceship and survive.

"Lots of puzzles and secret levels to keep even the most ardent platform fan amused - 90%"

Megadrive Advanced Gaming (UK)



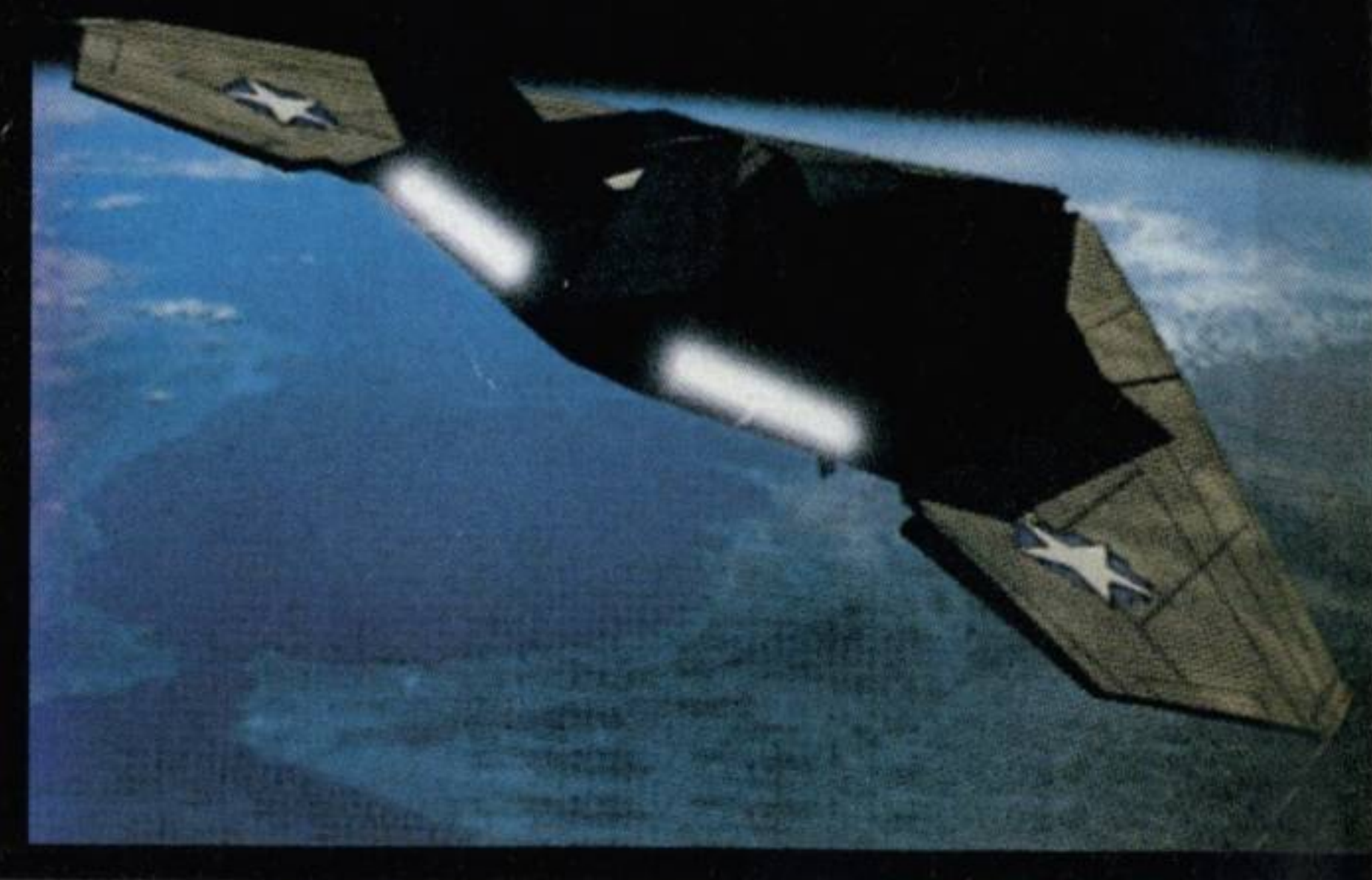
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3DO



The Shock of the New

The 3DO Interactive Multiplayer is the unit that could wipe Sega, Nintendo and even the humble video cassette recorder off the face of the Earth. It could well be the biggest revolution in leisure technology since the television, and it is currently being launched on a largely unsuspecting American public. All going well, the unit is planned for an April 1994 release in Australia, by which time they are promising lots of available software - both games and educational. STUART CLARKE takes a look at the multimedia system that could change the way you live.





Why would supposedly intelligent people invest US\$57 million in a company which has yet to produce any product and stated in its prospectus, "There's no assurance that (we) will ever successfully complete development of the (proposed) technology." Well it may be a mystery, but when the 3DO Company sold shares to the public in America earlier this year, they were some of the hottest stocks on the market. With good reason too, as it turns out. The Panasonic R.E.A.L Interactive Multiplayer is being released this month in America, and inside the sleek black casing is what everyone is talking about - the groundbreaking 32-bit 3DO technology.

3DO are claiming that their machine has a graphics animation processor that delivers 50 times the performance of current personal computers and video games systems. And just about everyone who has seen the machine in action is agreeing with them. However it's not just the 32-bit central processor that makes the graphics look so magical, it's the Cinematic Software Tools that have been built in, that really give 3DO the edge.

Apart from rotating and scaling, the 3DO can also warp objects. This tool allows the object to be rendered in 3D space, and then bent, twisted, shrunk and stretched however the programmer desires. The cinematic lighting

effects enable programmers to make light-sourced, ray-traced objects quickly and easily, while the transparency tool makes solid images look as if they're made of glass. It can also create fire, cloud, fog and water effects. The texture-mapping tool, like that of Nintendo's Super FX chip used in Starwing (although far superior), allows two dimensional images to be wrapped around 3D shapes, which looks mighty impressive.

The New World Standard

What makes 3DO a success even before it hits the market is the support it has received from the big money multi-national corporations. The 3DO company, under its charismatic CEO, Trip Hawkins, has formed strategic partnerships with some of the big guns in electronics and entertainment. The main players are AT&T (giant American telecommunications company), Time Warner (huge entertainment group),

Matsushita (humungous Japanese electronics firm) and Electronic Arts (pretty bloody large software developer). All these companies will be working towards establishing 3DO as the world standard, along the same lines as the VHS video recorder.

The reason why 3DO may just become that new world standard, is that they have announced an "open" licensing system for software. Unlike Sega and Nintendo's restrictive development contracts, where you can only produce games that meet with their full approval, 3DO will allow anyone to release games on the system (for a tidy sum, of course). This will allow for a wide variety of software, from games to educational material to CD movies and even...(snigger) adult-oriented material.

Everyone knows that sex sells, and if the 3DO has no restrictions on the developed software, we may see interactive pornography very soon. While this may not be to every-

Sega of America's boss, Tom Kalinske has gone on the record saying that "(Sega) could do a product like 3DO next month, and we will if we think there is a market."

one's taste, there's no doubting that there are slobbering masses out there just waiting to experience a digital orgasm or two. The "X-rated" market is one of the reasons why VHS beat the technologically superior Beta format when videos were launched. Graphic adult material was allowed on the VHS format, while Beta's manufacturer, Sony, tried to restrict pornographic material and paid the price in sales.

Failure?

So, how can it possibly fail? Well there's the cost for one thing. It's expensive. The starting price is \$700 in the US and the unit will sell for over \$1000 in Australia. Too much? Well, the Commodore 64 when it was launched, sold for over \$1000 if it were to be converted to 1993 dollars, and most of us can remember what a hit that was, so maybe it's not too outrageous. However, Sega of America's boss, Tom Kalinske has gone on the record saying that he wouldn't launch any new system for anything over US\$500, as there isn't the mass demand to make it feasible; "(Sega) could do a product

like 3DO next month, and we will if we think there is a market."

Is this an industry expert or a business rival speaking? With leaked plans of the 32-bit Sega Saturn already hitting the press, it looks as though Sega is indeed shifting quickly into the higher end market. Nintendo have apparently put their plans on hold for a Super NES CD add-on, working instead on a brand new 32-bit system along the same lines as the 3DO.

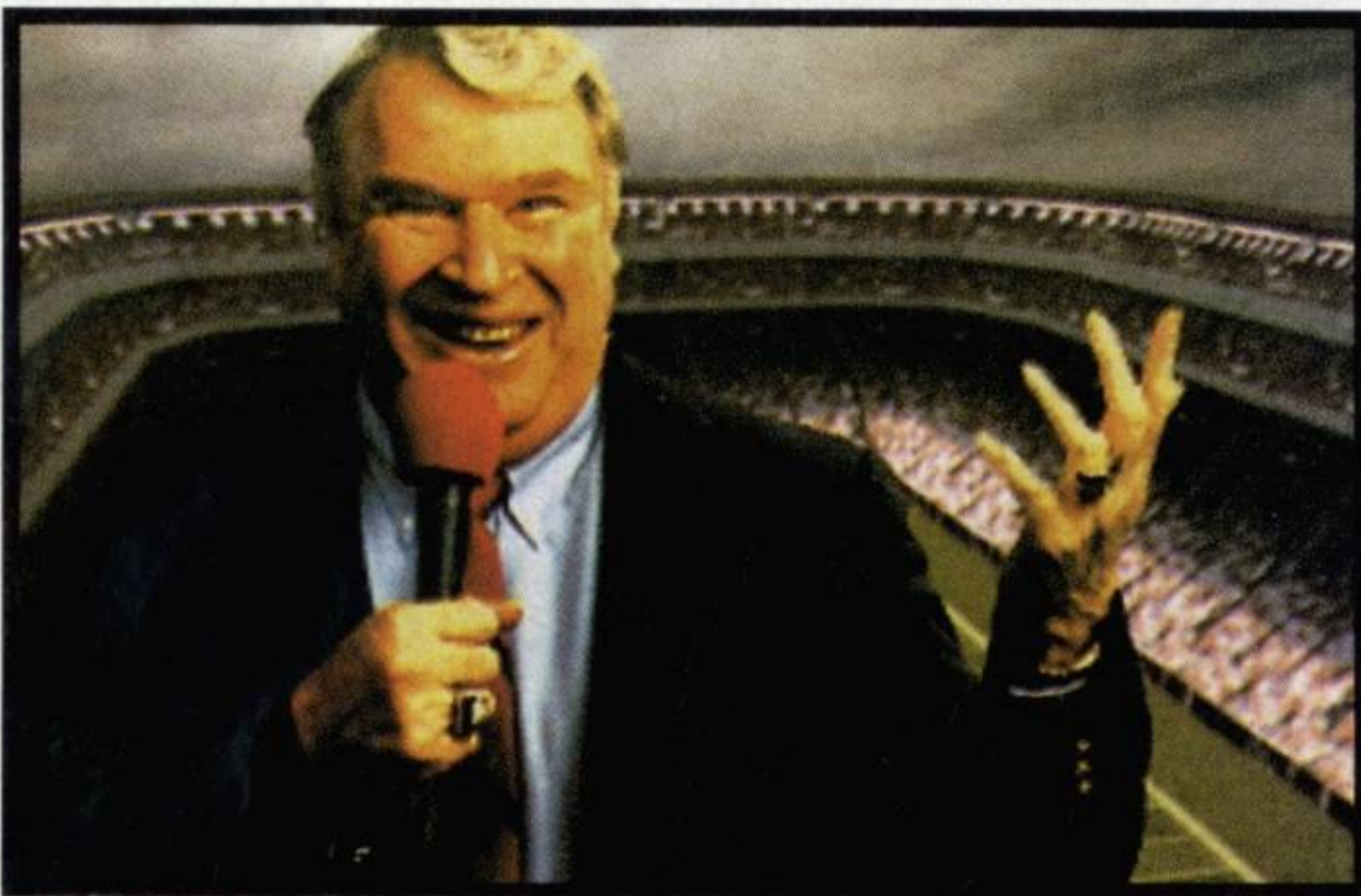
So, the battle lines have been drawn. It will be very interesting to see just how many 3DO units have been sold in America before the end of the year, and how long it takes until the price starts to fall. If it does drop quickly, then 3DO does indeed stand a good chance to become the leading multimedia system for the future. In the mean time you had better start saving your change if you want to get your hands on a unit. And while the massive hype surrounding 3DO, before it is even released, could be dangerous and misleading, industry insiders are saying that this looks like one of those rare moments in history where the goods actually live up to the publicist's claims.

The Competition The Amiga CD32

Creeping up so quietly that you'd think they had something to hide rather than promote, the Amiga 32-bit CD system, the creatively titled CD32, launched on the Australian market last month. It is the first of its type released in the world, and is retailing for a remarkably low \$699. And while the launch may have been low-key to say the least, there are already third party software producers lined up to have their share of the action. It is claimed that between 50 and 100 titles will be on the shelves by Christmas, and these include such hot numbers as Mortal Kombat, Zool 2, Microcosm, Syndicate, Chaos Engine, Lemmings, Sensible Soccer, Sim City and Dune.

At the heart of this new beast is a powerful Motorola 68020 processor that gives the CD32 a running speed of 20Mhz (almost twice that of the Mega CD and five times that of the SNES). It also has a double-speed drive, with 2Mb of backup RAM, which should mean games should access and save quickly as well as play quickly. As for the graphics department, the CD32 has a re-worked version of the AGA (Advanced Graphics Hardware) chip, which was used in the Amiga 1200. This is ca-

3DO will allow anyone to release games on



the system. So we will see a wide variety of software, from games to educational programs and even adult oriented material.

FOR THE TECH HEADS THE 3DO HAS:

- » an animation processor that delivers around 50 times the performance of typical personal computers and video game systems.
- » full-screen, full-colour video at 30 frames per second.
- » 640x480 pixel, 24-bit colour display for realistic still picture quality (this is higher resolution than your average TV).
- » a 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) central processing unit.
- » a multitasking operating system.
- » a double speed CD-ROM for faster data access and transfer.
- » compatibility with audio CDs and Kodak Photo CDs.

pable of showing an amazing 256 000 colours on-screen, from a palette of 16.8 million! Very nice.

It isn't capable of full-motion video just yet, but there is an expansion port for a cartridge to be plugged in, which will allow for CD movies, music videos and games with full-motion clips. There's not long to wait either, as the full-motion video module for the CD32 will go on sale before the end of the year for under \$400. There are apparently a whole host of add-ons for the console, including a keyboard, mouse and disk-drive.

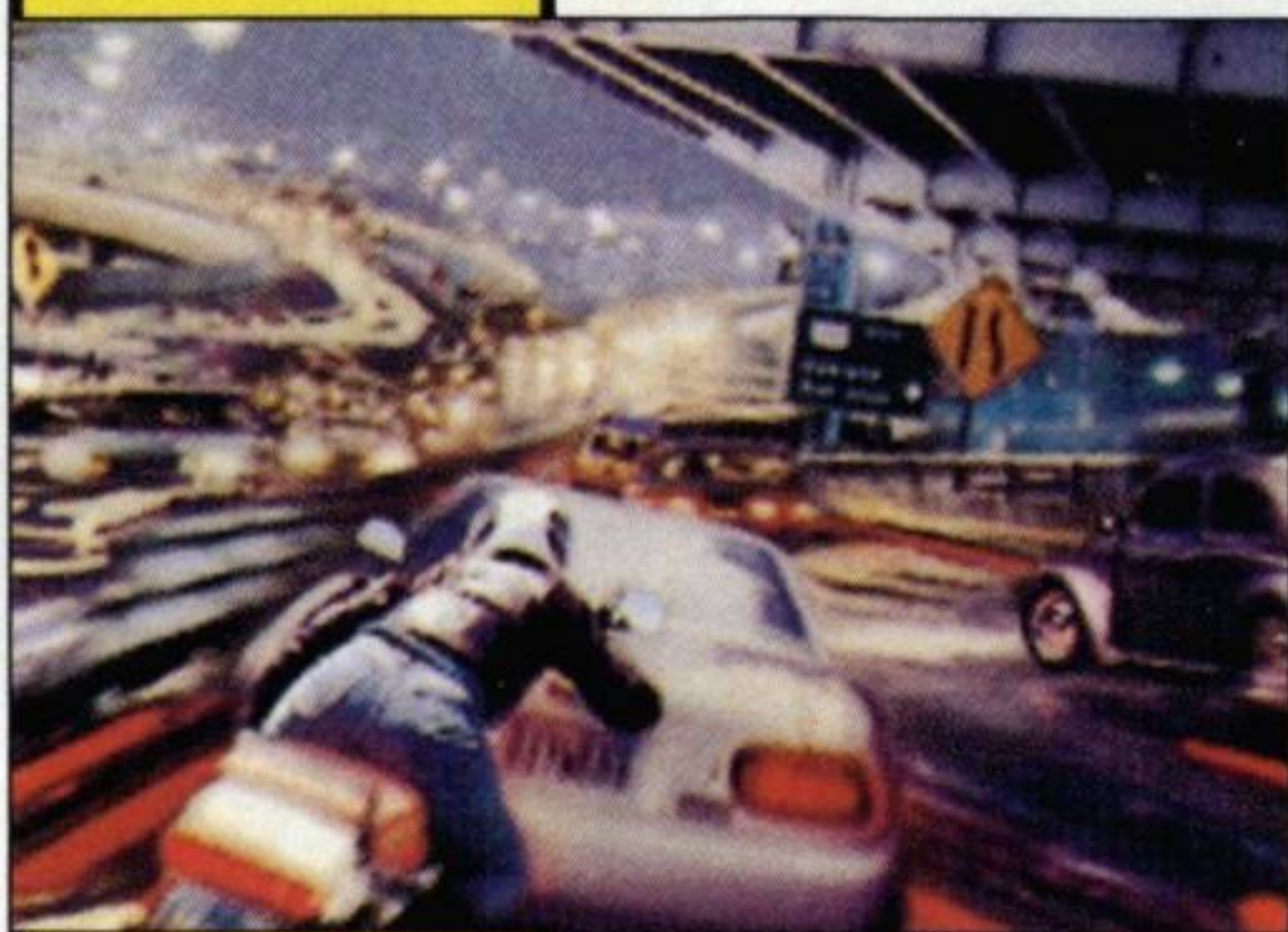
Commodore will be going all out to sell the CD32 (they need to avert the CDTV disaster), so you'll be seeing a lot of this very spunky bit of game hardware. But can it compete against Sega, Nintendo and 3DO. Well, there are two big pluses in its favour already - it's out first and it's cheap. The fight is now on. May the best console win!



**3DO
THE
SOFT-
WARE
SO
FAR!**

**Road Rash:
Blood of the Couriers**

Once you've seen this version of the classic biker beat 'em up, you'll never want to go back to your Sega or Nintendo. 3DO Road Rash pushes texture mapping to an almost unbelievable level, creating photo realistic road effects and amazing frame rates. It looks as though a real, live biker is burning through the streets, side-swiping real cars and trying to avoid real people. Like the 16-bit versions, this is

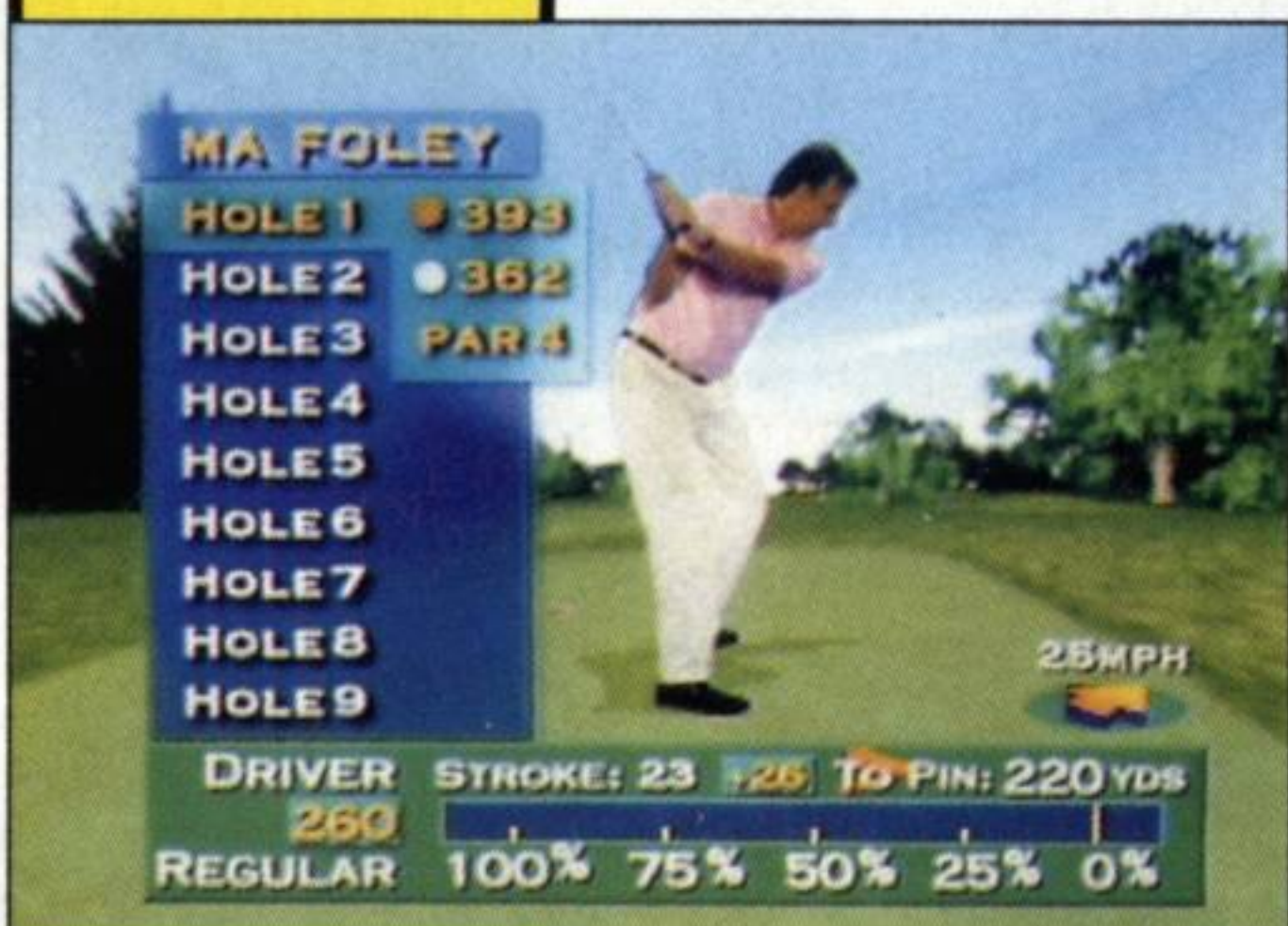


a no-holds barred, bare knuckle combat race, but unlike the open road of the previous editions, 3DO Road Rash takes place on city streets. You'll be cruisin' for a

bruising through squalid inner-city streets in peak hour traffic, as well as going for wild canyon runs, where you can really let go.

PGA Tour Golf

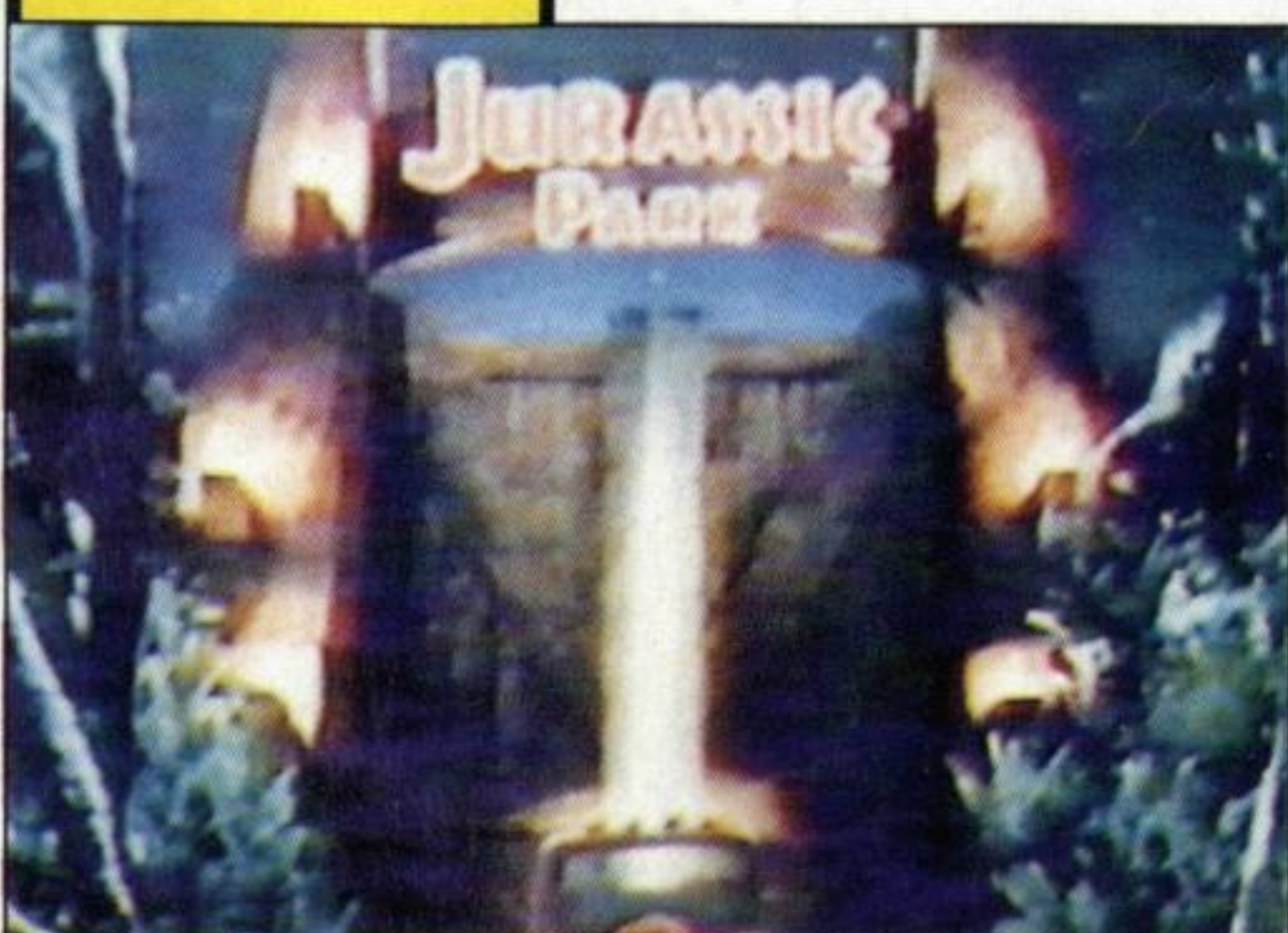
Every system has to have a golfing simulation, and the 3DO is no exception. This one looks particularly spunky however, as you control a real person,



not a nicely put-together pile of sprites. You take to the greens with 60 PGA Tour pros who have been filmed and digitised to be a part of the gaming action. There are four real

Tournament Players Club courses, and each is reproduced in minute detail, everything from hills to sand traps. There are also variable wind conditions, 10 different ball lies, specialty shots, CD sound and a new interface system designed especially for the 3DO.

Jurassic



off video games. Jurassic Park Interactive for the 3DO looks like

**Park
Interactive**

The shocking realism of Steven Spielberg's dino blockbuster has yet to be translated over into any of the spin-

changing all that, though. Spielberg is already a major advocate of the 3DO system, and has worked closely in the production of the 3DO Jurassic game.

It is a game of strategy, where you have to man the Park's high-tech control room in order to save the human guests trapped with the prehistoric predators. You'll have to utilise state-of-the-art computers, surveillance cameras, communications equipment and motion detectors to save lives. With the 3DO's multi-media capabilities, you will be experiencing all the sights and sounds of the movie, the only difference is that this time you can control the outcome!

Crash 'n Burn

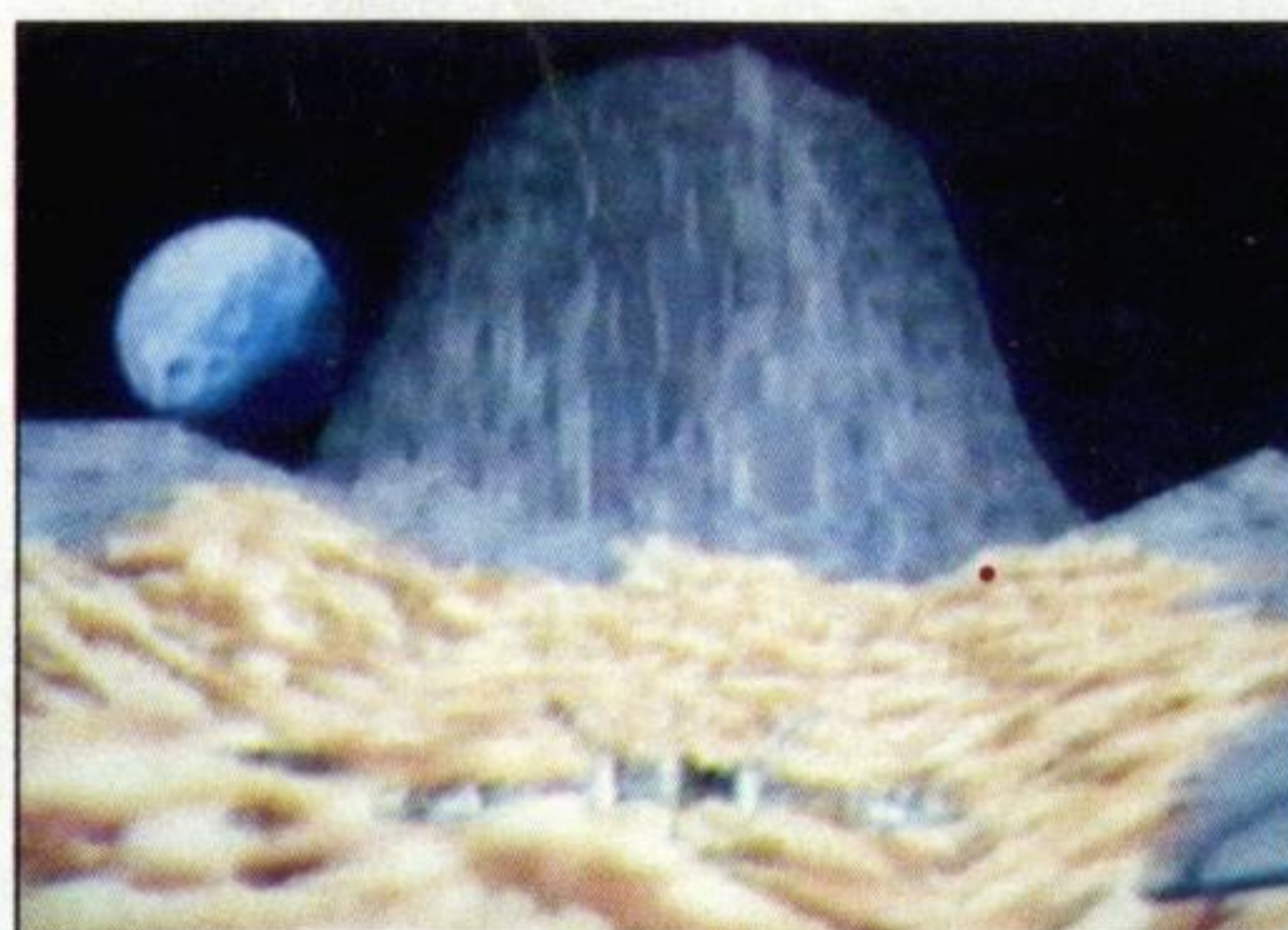
This game is so real it guarantees motion sickness! Crash 'n Burn is a 3D combat racing simulator which puts you head-to-head with 9 other sick drivers, competing on 30 mad tracks full of banked curves, corkscrews, jumps,



water patches, tar, ice, sand, stalactites, explosive mines and earthquakes. If that's not enough, the other cars are all armed with a variety of techno weapons, including vortex mines, fusion casters and 120 mm. Gauss cannons. You can customise your car for speed, defence or all-out warfare!

Total Eclipse

Total Eclipse will totally redefine shoot 'em up games. You are a pilot of a Fire Wing fighter, and one of humanity's last hopes against an invading



alien horde. You'll be flying into mind-numbingly realistic terrain, including mountains, canyons and a massive alien battle station. With 24 frames-per-second animation, Total Eclipse offers unparalleled sense of realism, and it really does look like a sci-fi movie rather

than a game. The CD sound effects allows you hear enemy ships coming up from behind, flying past and then burning off into the distance (that is if you haven't shot them first).

**Star Trek:
The Next Generation**

Join Captain Picard, Data, Lesley and the gang on this jolly mission to maintain the integrity of the galaxy. Yes, as usual, the happy crew of the Starship Enterprise are exploring the outer reaches of the universe. This time they are on a quest to find the mysterious Fifth



Scroll and in the course of the mission will need to visit a lot of star systems, beam down to lots of bizarre planets and interact with lots of alien lifeforms. But this time you're giving the orders, so if you can stop staring at the breathtaking graphics, you can boldly go where no one has gone before...

Shock Wave

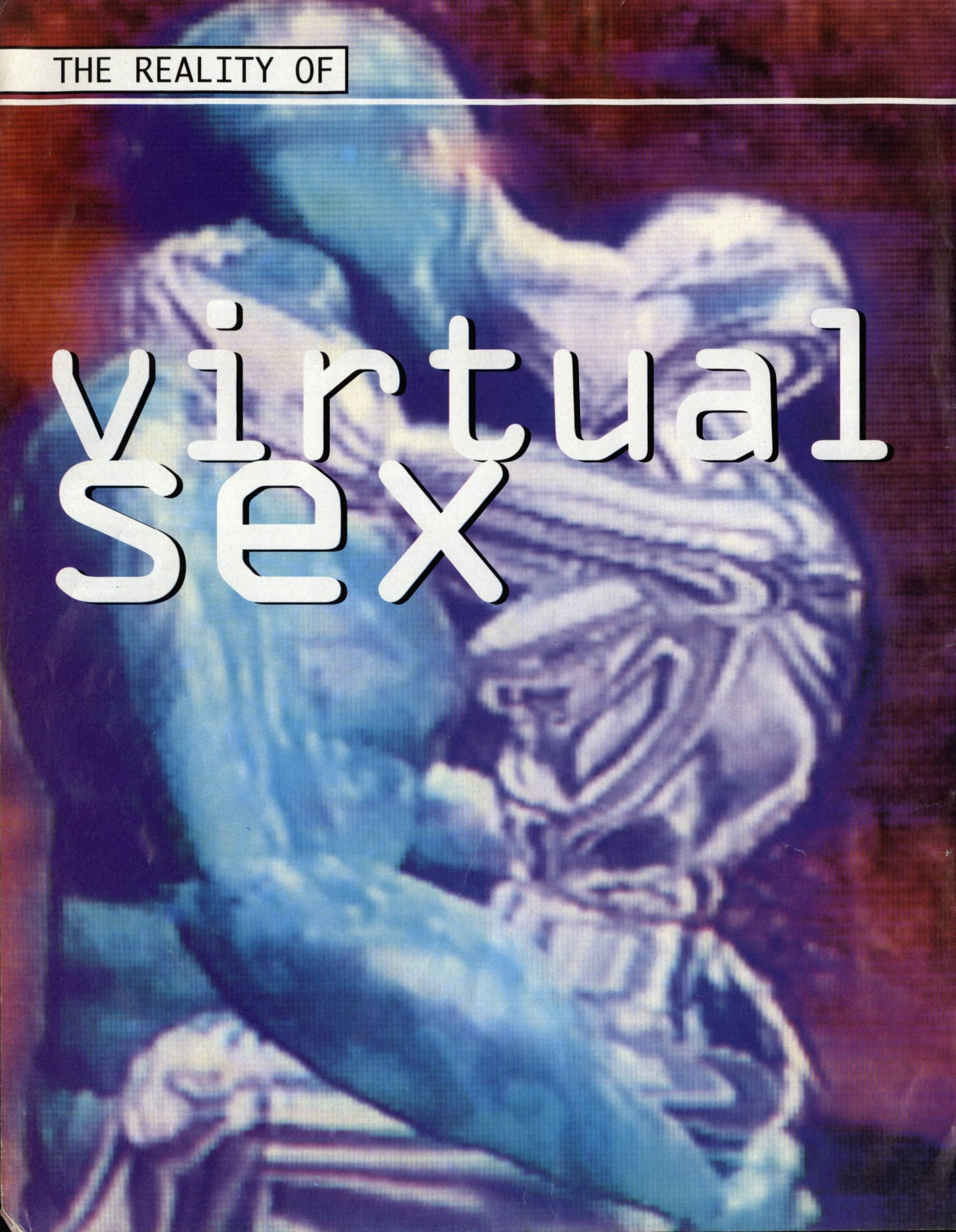
This one will cause shock waves in your lounge room all right! This 3D space fighter epic takes the 3DO technology to its limits, with full screen video mission briefings and updates, as well as true-colour photographic images combining with superb computer art to create a gaming environment unparalleled in its realism. The storyline is the same old tripe however. The Earth has been invaded by a race of technologicaly superior aliens, and the future doesn't look very bright for Homo Sapiens. It's all up to you, the pilot of an elite fighter, to destroy the enemy's hordes. You start on board a huge orbital aircraft carrier and go into combat over photo-realistic terrain, taken

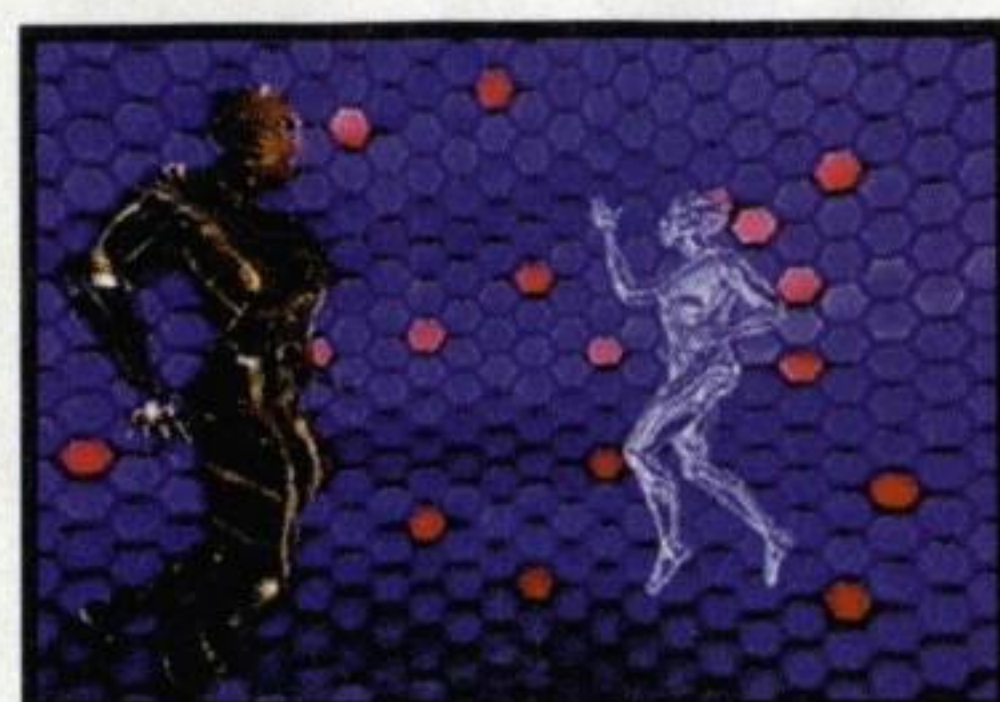
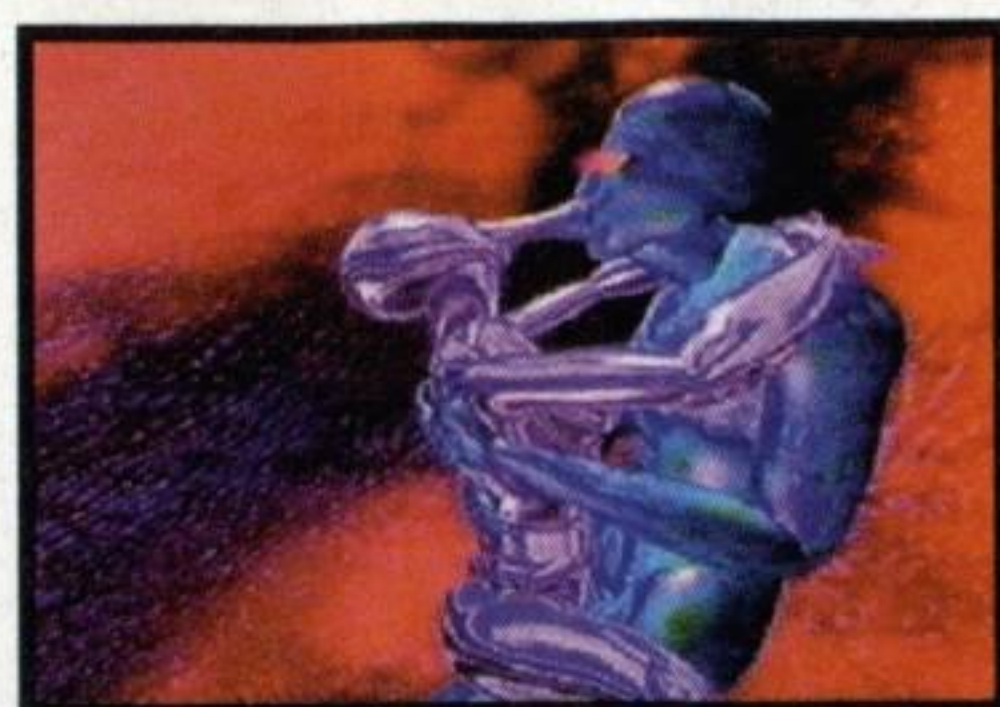


from NASA photos of Earth. So while the plots don't improve, the graphics certainly do!

THE REALITY OF

virtual sex





It is the subject of more hype than Jurassic Park, niftier than DCC or MiniDisc by a factor of about a billion, more fun than being given the keys to Timezone and apparently the most revolutionary thing humanity has invented since the wheel. It is Virtual Reality, and it allows humans not just to physically alter environments, but to create and manipulate them wholesale. SIMON SHARWOOD takes a look at the realities of VR technology, and its possible use in the world of rumpy-pumpy.

VR liberates our brains from the tedious task of imagination. As an entertainment medium, it immerses users in an experience, removing the need to suspend disbelief. As a tool for working with computers, it removes the need for interpreting ideas into a form computers understand; whatever a VR user does in Cyberspace happens; it can be printed out or actualised.

It is already enabling extraordinary advances in science: researchers are manipulating single molecules by hand and building otherwise untenable compounds. Architects are designing spaces virtually, so that clients can experience buildings before they approve construction and the military are fighting wars against their virtual enemies, testing virtual weapons on virtual targets. Animators create characters based on data derived from actors wearing bodysuits, doctors examine unreal bodies, shoppers create dream kitchens.

Coming soon is much, much more. If it's ever made, Jurassic Park V will enable the viewer to take the point of view of any of the film's characters or, for that matter, a dinosaur. In computer games you won't just control the hedgehog or the plumber, you'll be the hedgehog or the plumber, duck the barrels, leap the fire pits and feel the pain of losing a life. Television, if William Gibson's ideas are adopted, will be something you live not watch. Days of Our Lives will be replaced by Days of My Life in Someone Else's Body.

And then there's Virtual Sex, the best sounding promise yet. Sex of unlimited variety, anytime. The choice to sleep with anyone or anything. In your own body or out of it.

That Virtual sex is already on the agenda should not be surprising, sex has invaded every medium yet devised by humanity. Printed pornography appeared less than fifty years after the Gotheburg Bible, and amongst the first mass produced photographs was

pornographic material. Video porn is widely held to have been the kickstart for today's home video industry.

VR's interactivity make it a natural target for pornographers as an "advance" on today's fairly dull forms of sexual media, all of which are heavily reliant upon their user's imagination.

And even before VR came along, computers have been used to produce new forms of erotica. In it's earliest incarnations, Cybersex improved on conventional pornography by giving it's users a sexual reward for successfully performing an action. The infamous Atari game Custer's Last Stand rewarded players with access to a naked North American Indian woman, and Samantha Fox's Strip Poker showed a progressively more scantily clad Ms. Fox, contingent upon continued winnings.

Dull as these programs sound, in their time (the early to mid-eighties) they were mildly revolutionary and extremely popular. Here was titillation of a kind unlike previous pornography, with it's fiction of unconditional consent. Playing such games the consumer had some sort of control over the outcome whilst the program itself could, albeit to a limited extent, tease just like a real lover. Things could only get better, and they have.

Adventure games broke out of the dungeon and into the bedroom, with the successful Leisure Suit Larry series of games involving the pursuit of Passionate Patty, a capricious individual who occasionally dispenses sexual favours.

Today's cutting edge cyberporn is supplied on CD ROM, CD's carrying not music but data, and lots of it. The average CD can hold some 600 Megabytes of memory, the equivalent of nearly one million words, many thousands of static images, fifteen minutes of video or a combination of all three.

The leading purveyor of sex CD's is a California company "Reactor Inc.," and it's

founder Mike Saenz, who's CV includes creation of the first computer produced comic "Shatter."

Saenz also admits responsibility for "MacPlaymate" the first interactive pornographic game for the Macintosh. More recently, Saenz's company has released "Virtual Valerie" a CD based game in which the aim is to please Valerie. At the conclusion of the game, two dildos are proffered for the player's use, to be inserted via the Macintosh's mouse into Valerie's vagina as she moans and begs for more.

Reactor have already got a sequel, a director's cut and a new program "DanaMatrix.", lined up. Another game coming your way soon is "The Interactive Adventures of Seymour Butts."

The world's computer networks have also been invaded by sex. Internet, the world's most extensive network, features many news groups of a sexual nature. alt.sex.bondage, alt.sex.golden showers.sheep and alt.sex.rape scenes being but a few, although it is worth mentioning that the net is not dominated by such material. There's also alt.rec.scuba and alt.rec.bicycle to name but two of thousands.

Contrary to popular opinion and recent media hype, access to such material is not easy. Running on a separate digital phone network, Internet is imported to Australia by the sober Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, and is generally available only through Universities or at considerable cost from private providers. Users require a computer of reasonable sophistication, a modem and an access fee of around \$8.00 an hour.

More insidious and pervasive are local nets. Run largely by amateurs and students, and requiring considerable experience to establish, local bulletin boards are accessed simply by dialling them up, and phone numbers are passed along by word of mouth. There are at least five such services in Sydney alone, one of which claims to have recently logged it's half-millionth piece of correspondence.

Access is not automatic. Most charge medium sized subscription fees and many demand a photocopy of potential users' drivers licenses before full access is allowed. The material available online is extensive and varied. Most conceivable sexual orientations and preferences are catered to, and all generate considerable amounts of correspondence, little of which is meek.

Explicit language is the norm, and contributors are neither humble nor shy. The graphics available are comparable to those available in commercial pornography, although most are home made.

But such systems have their drawbacks. The responses to your fantasies and actions are limited by whether or not other subscribers to the bulletin board ingratiate you

with something that interests you.

And there's no physical aspect. Short of using the handset (or the whole phone, what the hell) or a mouse for manual stimulation, you still don't get to do much. Users can masturbate during the conversation, but it's not the same as making the choice of sticking it in or giving something a lick just when you feel like it. The advance on conventional pornography is small.

Which is why virtual sex has been conceived, so far in at least two models. The first of which involves a concept known as telepresencing, whereby one's actions are

It may even be possible, before clambering into one's virtual sex suit, to paw through one's collection of sex CD's and select the option of meeting Elle McPherson on a beach in Bali, and have her be a lesbian for the evening. Or perhaps you'd like to divest Luke Perry of his virginity?

duplicated in another location by robots. This trick is currently accomplished by virtue of sensors placed either in special tools one uses, or on the skin or in special suits, so that when a teleoperator -the wearer of such suits- raises his or her arm, the robot does likewise. Meanwhile, the teleoperator is simultaneously seeing through the robot's eyes and feeling the resistance to lifting weight the robot does.

The sexual version of telepresencing goes by the name Teledildonics, a term invented by one Theodor Nelson, a California computer scientist. Teledildonics calls not for sex with robots, but for the same suits that will allow telepresencing to create virtual bodies for their wearers. Couples, triples or whatever will meet at a location in cyberspace, where the host computers will transmit the suit's data in both directions, and cause the appropriate sensations in the suits of each participant. A kiss on the lips will be detected by the kisser's suit, which will transmit the data through cyberspace to the kissee's, who will then feel the appropriate sensations.

Meanwhile, both participants may well be surrounded by virtual environments of innumerable sorts. Perhaps you fancy a bonk in Paris, or maybe you'd like your lover to appear in someone else's body?

It may even be possible, before clambering into one's virtual sex suit, to paw through one's collection of sex CD's and select the option of meeting Elle McPherson on a beach in Bali, and have her be a lesbian for the evening. Or perhaps you'd like to divest Luke Perry of his virginity? Your computer will simulate the encounter for you, and you'll emerge from your suit into your real living room just in time for Virtual

Friday Night Football.

The second model for virtual sex is the neural interface, plugging the computer directly into the brain and stimulating it, rather than mucking around with unromantic sounding suits and the such like.

Or so the story goes...

In reality, any domestically useful VR is a way off yet, and neural interfaces are pure fiction. Sega may be bringing virtual reality to the home next year, but it will be simple games-based technology. There'll be nothing even approaching a virtual bonk for many years. Keep dreaming...



Images on the preceding pages are from the film *The Lawnmower Man*.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

Holding VR back are several factors, and foremost amongst these is that computers capable of the blazing speed and power necessary to drive a realistic VR of the kind sex will require do not as yet exist. The magnitude of the task is enormous; TV occupies about 6 degrees out of the 160 degree field of human vision, while VR requires a total environment of 360 degrees.

Even today's fastest graphics computers, the new Indigo series manufactured by Silicon Graphics, which can process video and audio input in real time, have no chance of producing VR alone. Machines capable of doing so may require experimental microprocessors which use light instead of electricity.

Which is not to say VR cannot be done. Improvements in the various technologies have lowered prices considerably and VPL limited, the California company founded by accidental entrepreneur and VR evangelist Jaron Lanier can sell you an off-the-shelf system for around \$750 000. Virtuality, the only commercially available VR game, costs a mere quarter million or so.

But these arcade realities are small, low res-

olution, uncomplicated and after not too much time, dull. Virtuality's "Dactyl Nightmare" is easily mastered, and quickly boring; the only part of your body which you can see is your arm. Improvements of the magnitude which would allow sex to be realistically simulated do not appear likely in the short term.

Better VR's are being held back by major problems with the speeds at which data is transmitted. The copper wire that connects most of the world's computers is useful but slow and inefficient. Wire can carry only around 120k per second - about as much as this article represented as pure data - with less than optimal accuracy, so telepresence is nigh on impossible with wire as a transmission medium.

The alternative to copper, fibre optic cables, are about a million times more efficient, and can carry the entire volume of information on a CD - around 5000 times the size of this article - in a second or two. Their potential for speedy data transport is so great that in the US, the term "500 channel environment" has been coined to describe future fibre optic cable TV networks.

Sadly, fibre optics are uncommon. Telecom and Optus make much of their use, but do so mainly between exchanges. Only when fibre optics replace your copper phone wire will data intensive systems like VR become available in the home, and the cost of installing fibre optics to every home in the land is such that it's quite a way off.

Problem number three is the lack of much of the technology needed to make virtual sex happen. Datasuits, bodysuits modelled on wet-suits, are currently available for around \$75 000, but at this stage only transmit data, and not much of it. Pacific Data Images, the California company responsible for creating the "morphing" in Michael Jackson's "Black and White," have more or less perfected such a suit for use in "performance animation" as seen in the film "Toys." Yet even this suit downloads it's data into animation programs which crunch numbers for a considerable time before spitting out the finished product, and before virtual sex becomes virtual reality this will need to happen instantly, in real time.

A virtual sex suit will also need systems to detect the state of every part of the body, as well as systems to stimulate every nerve ending with considerable precision. This is no mere fooling of the senses into perceiving a different space, this is fooling your brain into feeling the soft touch of your lover's lips on the base of your neck, and eventually creating orgasms. No technology capable of doing so exists at all.

VR's last problem is it's mode of display. Today's eyephones -the head mounted display containing small televisions VR users wear- operate with a mere 600 lines of resolution, and future high definition televisions will scan around 2000, still well below the amount of detail the human eye is capable of capturing. Experiencing VR is therefore like living in TV land. Colours are not true to life, and one's vision is grainy. In combination with the rather boxy and cartoon-like graphics today's VR creates a most unreal experience

The proposed solution to this problem, projecting via laser directly onto the rods and cones of the retina at a more lifelike resolution of some eight thousand lines, is yet another great idea with no hardware backup in sight.

Which leaves those hoping for a quick tumble in cyberspace with only the more conventional modes of sex to contemplate, although cybergurus assert that if VR follows conventional patterns, virtual entertainment of all sorts should be available to the public as soon as it is commercially viable. Just as cinema preceded video, the virtual cinema and the virtual brothel are likely to precede their home equivalents.

Just don't hold your breath or mark a date in your diary for your first cybersexual experience. Waiting for Virtual Sex is bound to produce a desire for the real thing in greater quantities than it does satisfaction.



Virtual Valerie, a CD-Rom for the Macintosh, is about as close as we get to virtual sex at the moment. We've got a hell of a long way to go before we get any sort of realistic interaction with a digitally created image, although Valerie's creator, Mike Saenz, a former illustrator with Marvel Comics, is currently working on more advanced sexually-oriented software.

These sort of discs can really only be viewed for their novelty value, and no one but socially rejected and sexually frustrated teenage boys would get more than a laugh out of it.

REN STIMPY

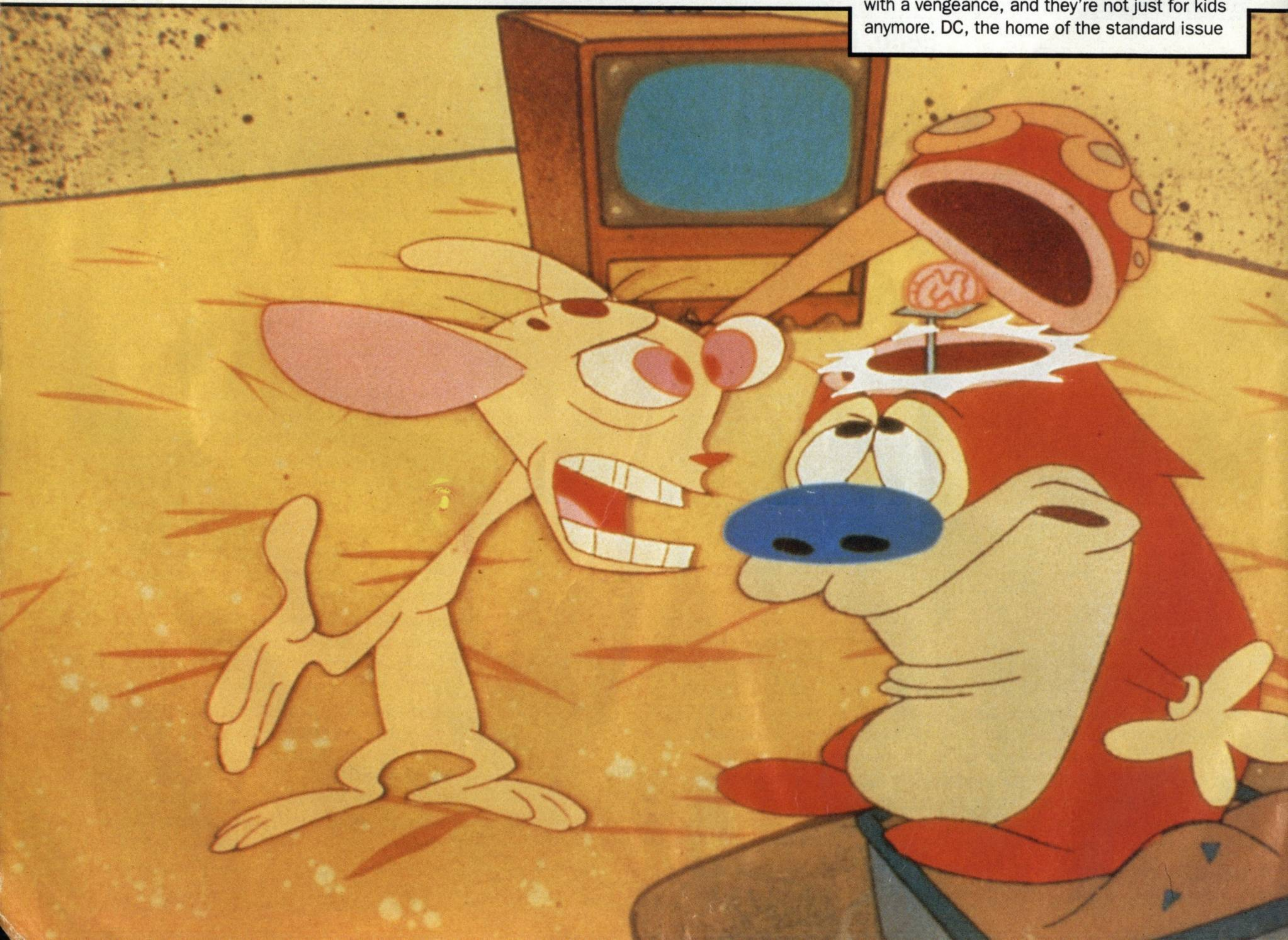
Riding a Cartoon Tsunami



The Ren and Stimpy Show is the latest visitor from Toon Town to hit our shores. The wave of cartoons has turned into a tsunami, with Ren and Stimpy riding the crest. JAD McADAM looks at the re-emerging popularity of animation.

It's getting to be like living in a 3-D version of Who Framed Roger Rabbit. Everywhere you look there's a cartoon. The latest street wear, from the like of Stussy, Mambo, Kepper and the rest, is designed to hide your body and make you look toonish. Rave fashion gets baggier and more comical every day. Street skaters hide their normal human shapes under loose cartoonish clothes, and perform stunts with their boards that were once only possible in an animated reality. Hip-hop kids like Kris-Kross are tiny - just like toons, cute - just like toons, and mock-violent - just like toons. So where do all these toonish characters come from?

The answer is that there has been a lot of action in cartoon land recently. Comix are back with a vengeance, and they're not just for kids anymore. DC, the home of the standard issue



super-hero, the type who wears his underpants on the outside, shocked the world by announcing the death of Superman last year. This was hot on the heels of Batman's dark overhaul, first through revamped comics, then via Michael Keaton and cat-babe Michelle Pfeiffer on the big screen.

On the big screen, toons celebrated their first serious chance at an Oscar last year when *Alladin* became the first animated feature to be nominated for Best Film. The Disney productions may be sweeter than the strongest sugar substitute, but they show exactly what cartoons are capable of. Full of incredible stunts, impossible fantasy locations, and amazing camera movements, the recent Disney movies *Beauty and the Beast* and *Alladdin* are hopefully just the beginning. Once audiences get bored of cheesy voices, tacky ballads, and "everything's rosy" scripts, we might get something decent out of Disney (we've been waiting 60 years or so! - Ed).

Something more like Japanese manga, for example. Manga are tremendously popular (and tremendously violent) comics, that evolved out of traditional Japanese illustration. Since the film *Akira*, they have come out of hiding in obscure comic shops, and received more widespread attention in the West. As with Disney, manga films can do things that a normal film can't - like the scene in *Akira* where a character evolves from human to steaming 100 ft high lump of muscle, tendon and protoplasm in under 60 seconds! Try doing that with a real actor!

The uncrowned king of the animation world is, of course, Bart Simpson. I'm already nostalgic for those wonderful days way back when you could collapse in front of the TV every Sunday at 6.30, for that remedial dose of Bart after a big weekend. Now that Bart is the secret weapon in a ratings war against the news on other channels (a cartoon up against the news!), we have been robbed of the essential weekend cure-all. And I don't doubt that Bart will come out on top. He always was a more reliable source of information about the modern world anyway.

Now that Bart is headed to rerun land, those of us who have come to need our comic fix have to turn elsewhere. An adequate replacement for the clever lunacy of *The Simpsons* is the undergraduate lunacy of *The Ren and Stimpy Show*. Also broadcast by the Ten Network (at 7 o'clock in the morning), *Ren and Stimpy* is about a cunning and slightly malicious hispanic chihuahua (Ren), and his friend, a fat, trusting but stupid cat (Stimpy). Stimpy loves Ren because he's dumb and sincere, and Ren needs Stimpy to protect him because he's a weed.

It's the most surreal thing on television. Try to imagine *The Itchy and Scratchy Show*, crossed with *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, with a bit of *Roger Ramjet* and *Bugs Bunny* thrown in, but with the jokes done by your six year old brother and the backdrops drawn by Salvador Dali. Well that doesn't even come close.

The two have bizarre and completely pointless adventures every episode. Today they

may join the fire department because they've run out of money, tomorrow they'll be stuck in the wild west and the day after that they'll fly to the moon. Just to give you an indication of how weird the show really is, two other stars of the *Ren and Stimpy Show* are *The Powdered Toast Man* and *Log*. *The Powdered Toast Man* is a superhero in the DC mould, underpants on the outside and all. For a head he has two pieces of toast, and in one episode he saves the President and the Pope (played by Frank Zappa), then gets his dong caught in his zipper. *Log* is the creators' chance to have a dig at the cynical marketing that so often accompanies children's TV. I haven't seen any *Ren and Stimpy* product lines as yet, but this doesn't stop the show advertising *Log* as its own product.

Ren and Stimpy doesn't moralise or contain lashings of drama, but just wants to make you laugh. We all know that kids (and adults) pick their nose, laugh at fart sounds and get kicks out of slapstick cruelty. *Ren and Stimpy* is unusual in that it translates kids' toilet and boogie humour onto the screen without censoring the excesses.

This has got Ten in a bit of trouble from overprotective and underimaginative parents. Two particular episodes provoked complaint from amateur moral guardians, encouraging Ten to cut *Ren and Stimpy* from five to one episode a week. In the first *Ren* refuses to brush his teeth against *Stimpy's* advice. His teeth rot and fall out, leaving him with bare nerve endings dangling out of stinking holes in his gums. *Ren* plucks the nerve endings with tweezers and leaves them under his pillow for the nerve ending fairy.

In the other episode that drew complaints, *Ren's* cousin *Sven* comes to stay. While he is a chihuahua like *Ren*, he is fat and stupid and looks exactly like *Stimpy*. The two get on famously, comparing band-aid collections, lumps of *Magic Nose Goblins* (boogies) and playing in *Stimpy's* stinky-but-edible kitty litter. They are about to play a board game called "Don't Wizz on the Electric Fence" when *Ren* comes home. Furious at them for messing up the house, *Ren* wizzes on their board game. His wizz hits the electric fence, it shorts, and the house blows up.

The success of *Ren and Stimpy* in the States, has seen the creators *John Kerefalusi* and *Bob Camp* nominated for an Emmy. That fact and the show's growing cult status, with some fans going as far as having *Ren and Stimpy* tattoos, should see us in episodes for a while yet. So if you want to see more of *Ren & Stimpy*, then write to your local Ten network station and demand your fix of cartoon toilet humour at a sensible time.

THE SHAVEN YAK IS COMING!

Games of cartoons have become some of the most popular titles over the past year. *The Simpsons* have spawned a whole host of games for just about every conceivable system. And in amongst the pile have been some absolute gems, such as *Bart's Nightmare* and *Krusty's Fun House*. Over the last few



months, games of the *X-Men*, the *Flintstones*, *Taz-Mania*, *Road Runner*, *Tom & Jerry*, *Rocky & Bullwinkle* and the *Tiny Toons*

cast, have been hitting the top of the charts.

Not to be left out, there are a stack of cartoon games in the pipeline. These include *Aladdin* (which is absolutely



stunning), *Beauty and the Beast*, *Itchy & Scratchy* (at last!), *Inspector Gadget*, *Sylvester & Tweety*, the *Pink Panther*

and of course, *Ren & Stimpy!* The Super Nintendo is getting its own version of the *Ren & Stimpy* show, with the game's levels being based on specific episodes. There are digitised voices



and the same style of tripped-out graphics as the show, so this one looks like a treat. Sega owners

should prepare for the bizarre *Quest for Shaven Yak*, in which *Ren & Stimpy* go on a bizarre quest for...um, a shaven yak! (Doh!). At the



moment it has only been announced on the Game Gear, but the Mega Drive version can't be far away.

RETURN TO ZORK

PC/PC CD-ROM

Available: October
 Category: Adventure
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Infocom

The Zork adventures will always have a special place in the hearts of many older game players. If you look back on them now, you may wonder why. There was no parallax scrolling, no digitised video, no point and click interface, no sampled speech. In fact there were no graphics or sound at all. They were text based adventures that became classics because of the clever puzzles, witty dialogue and fascinating plots. These attributes made Zork more like interactive novels than computer games.

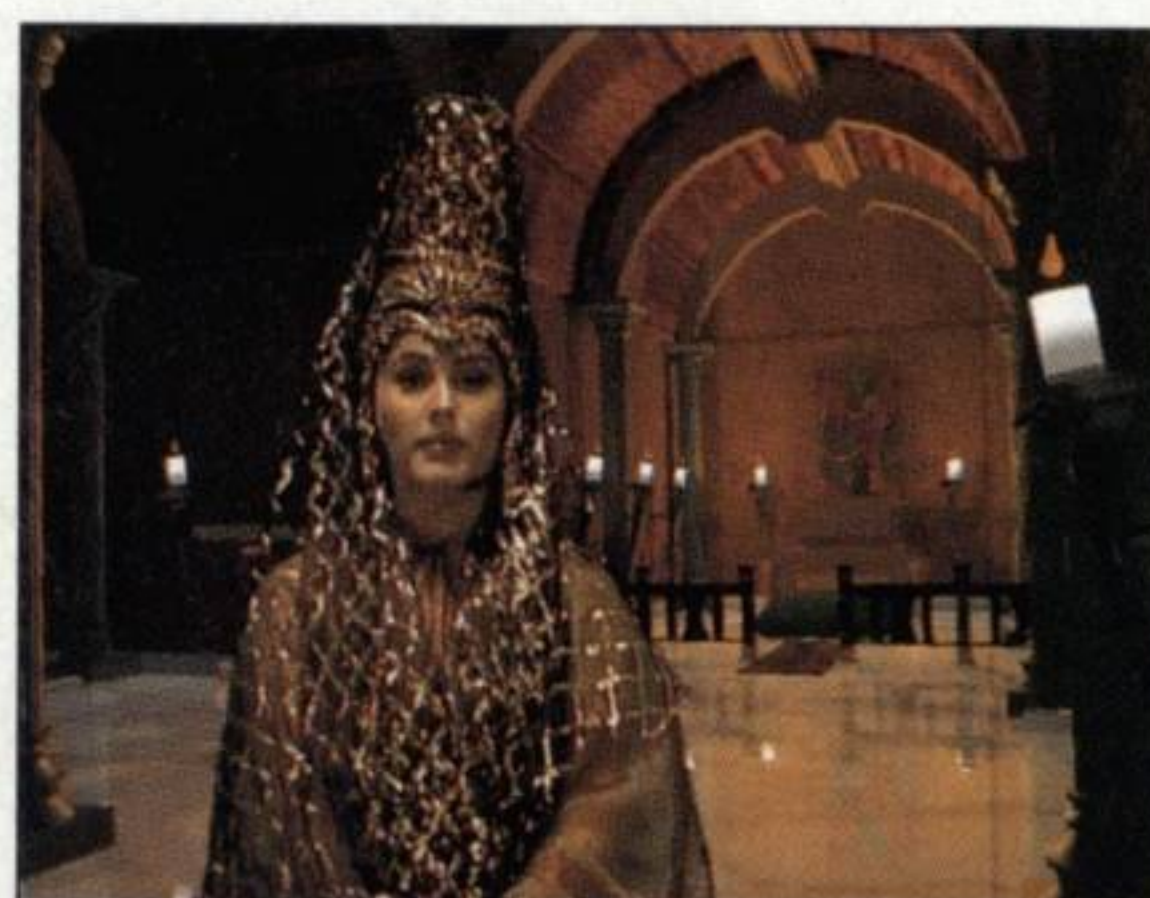
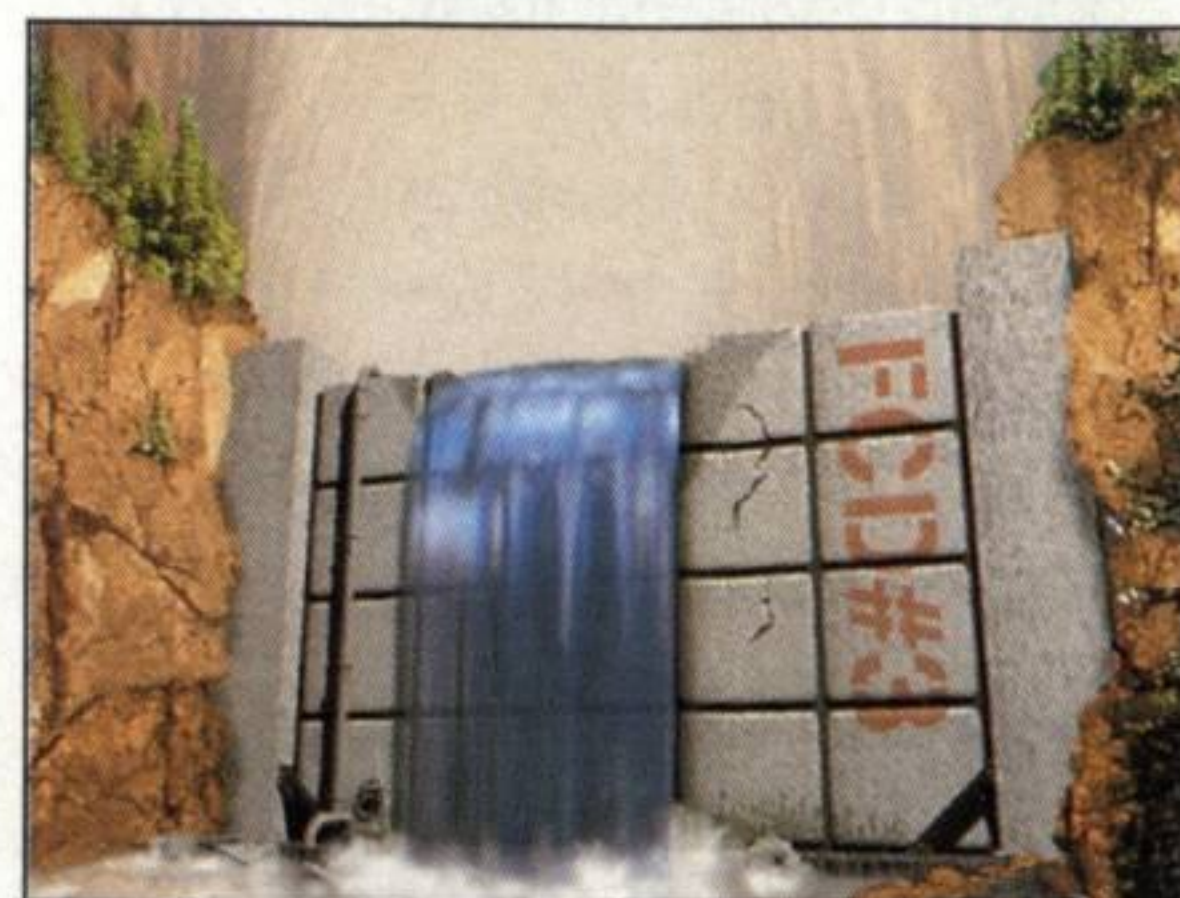
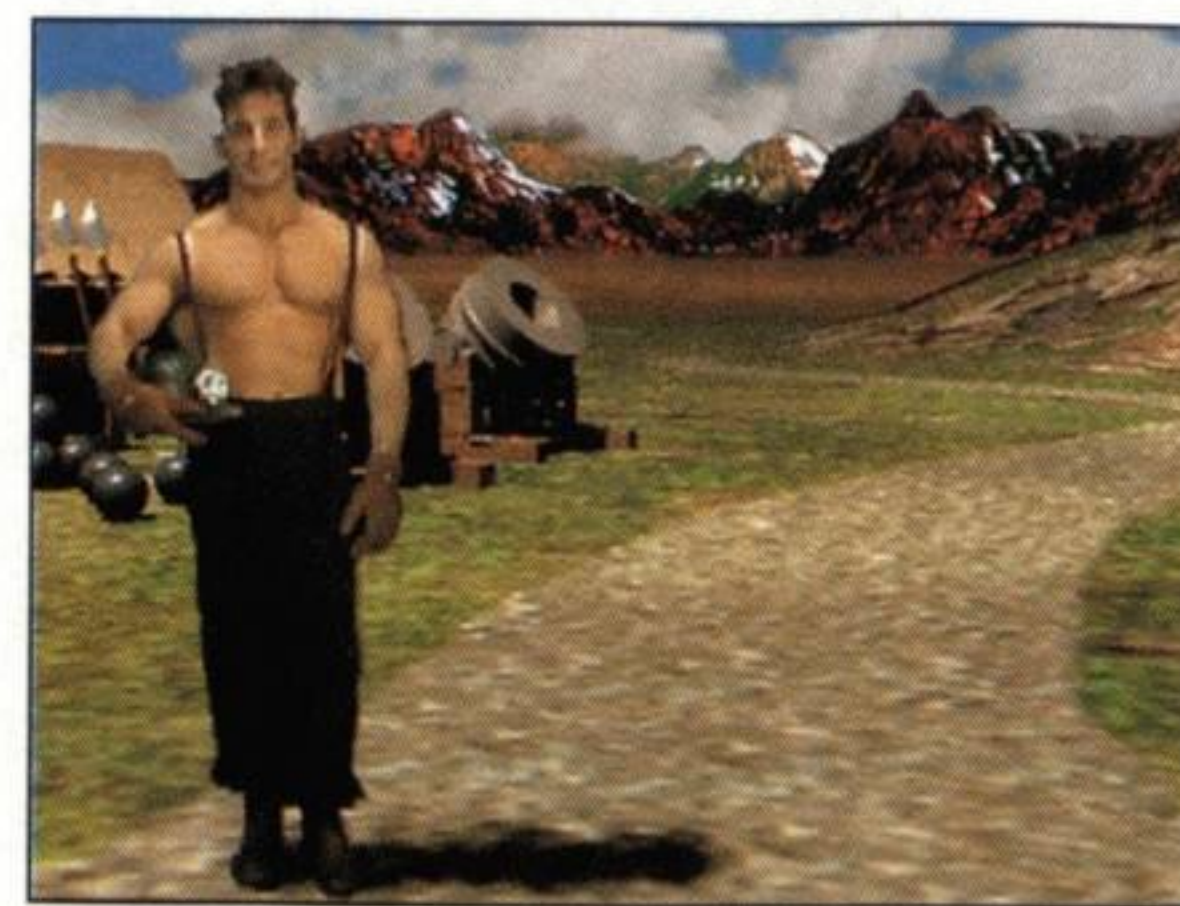
In Return to Zork however there is no text whatsoever. Everything is graphics based, and when you talk to anyone it's done entirely through digitised speech.

If you need help remembering what has been said, you can access a tape recorder in your inventory that automatically records all dialogue. What you see on screen is amazing full-motion video clips of live actors (including Jason Hervey from "The Wonder Years" and Robin Lively from "Twin Peaks"), set against computer generated backgrounds. The unique graphical interface allows for total interaction with a scene. In this sense, Return to Zork is probably the closest to an interactive movie that we've seen so far.

The game is set 700 years after the last adventure, so things in the Great Underground Empire have changed quite a bit. Like the original Zork series though, you will trek through the Eastlands and Westlands as well as the underground world carved out by the Frobozz Magic Construction Company. Your quest is to save

humanity from Morphius, the evil ruler of the Great Underground Empire. To do so you will have to solve puzzles of increasing difficulty and cope with the "Zorkian" humour that old players will know and love.

Return to Zork looks like being one of the most stunning looking computer games ever, and if the gameplay is anything like the old Zork adventures, we could well be looking at one of the greatest games of all time.



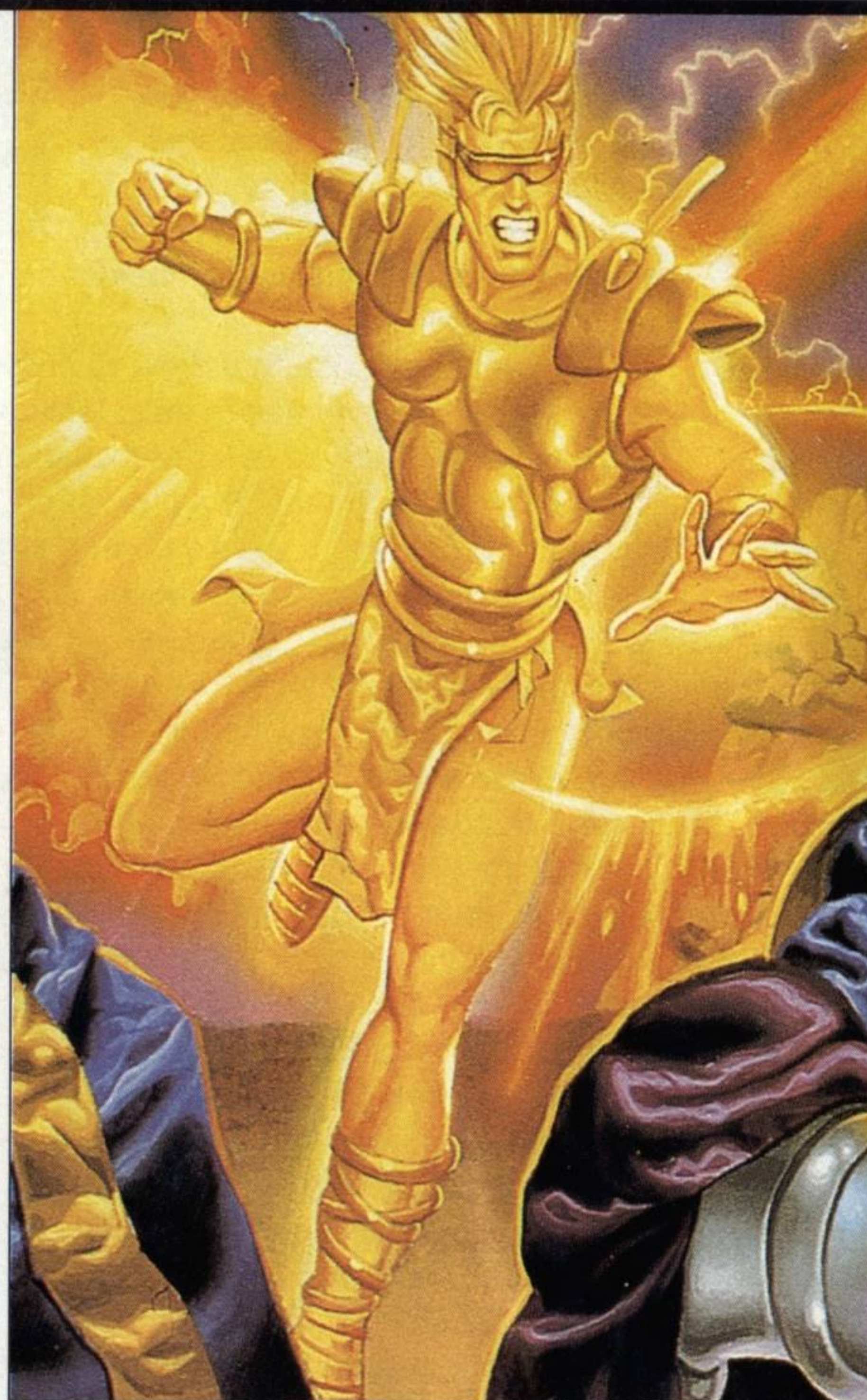
SKYBLAZER

SNES

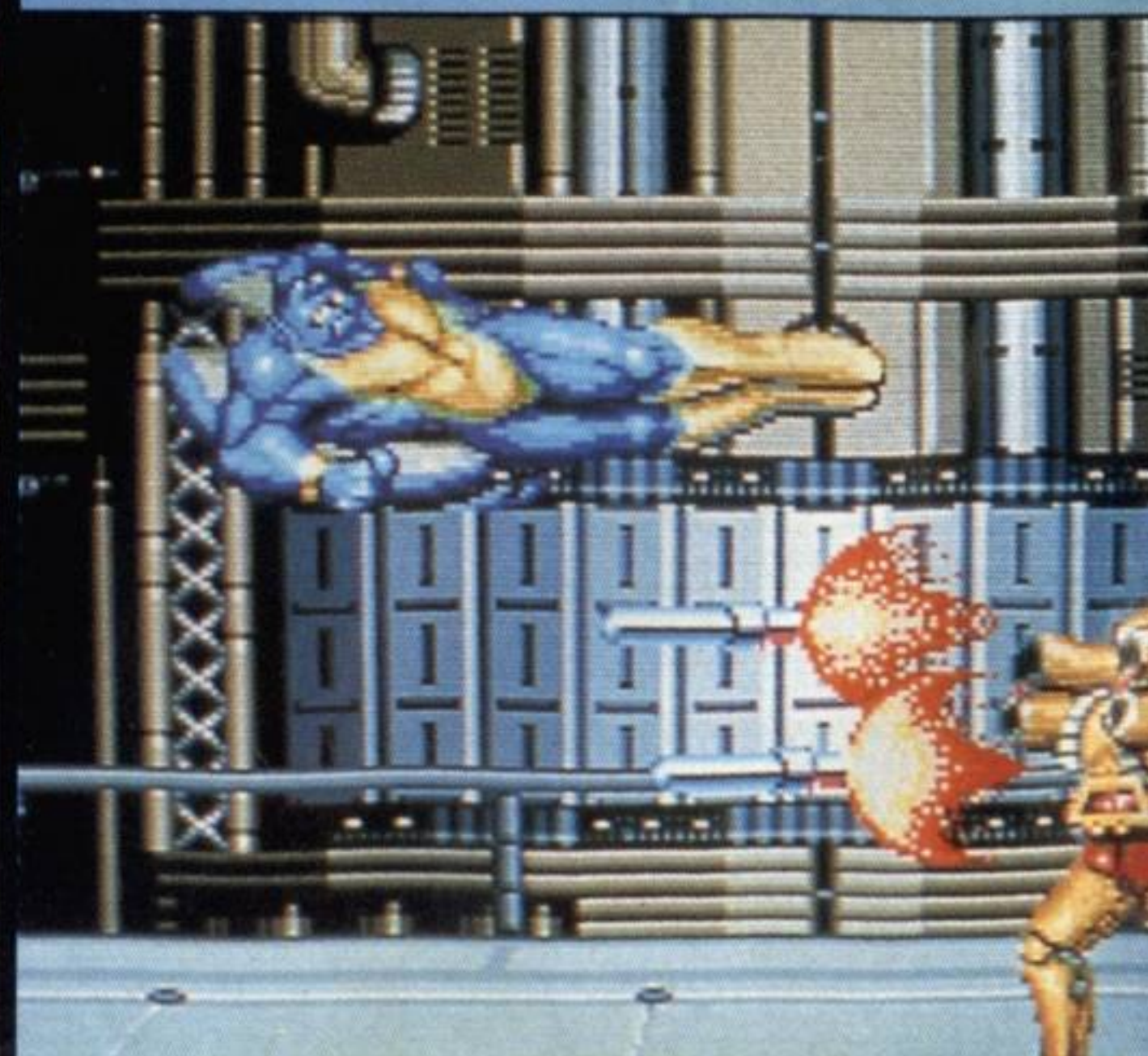
Available: November
 Category: Action/Adventure
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

Look out Superman, Spidey, Batman and all other lycra wearers - there's a new superhero in town! His name is Sky Blazer and not only can he summon the powers of nature at will, he can also transform himself into many different super beings.

The game is non-stop action, with 21 levels of intense gameplay and multiple worlds for the player to explore. You'll be battling enemies on land, as well as high in the clouds, swimming through underwater caverns, exploring bizarre ancient ruins and climbing dangerous cliffs. To help you, Sky Blazer has special magic powers. These include FireHawk, where you transform into a fiery bird that incinerates everything it touches; Lightning Strike, where bolts of lightning come pouring on top of enemy heads; Meditation, which freezes enemies so they can be easily destroyed, and Comet Blast, where Sky Blazer turns into a burst of electrical



energy and streaks across the screen, eliminating everything in his way. Look out for the new super hero in late November.



SNES

Available: October
Category: Action
Players: 1
Publisher: Ocean

Hopefully the SNES conversion of the year's biggest movie won't be as lame as it's Mega Drive counterpart. It's a totally different game, which is a good start.

You play as Dr Grant (Sam Neill's character in the movie) with your main objective being to escape the dino-infested island. To do this there are several missions to be completed which will take you to every corner of the island. These missions include restoring power to the island by starting the main generator; booting up the computer system; obtaining clearance to open and close electrified gates; securing the Visitor's Centre from the Raptors; stopping the ship from leaving and carrying Raptors to the mainland; destroying the Raptor's nest and making it to the Helipad and freedom.

There are two playing modes - one for the outside action and one for the interior scenes. The interior screens are in a first person 3D

JURASSIC PARK

perspective, looking a lot like Wolfenstein 3D, except with dinosaurs wandering the corridors instead of Nazi guards. All the sprites are fully scaled and animated, and look very similar to the dinosaurs in the movie. The outside scenes are on a 45 degree downward viewing angle, with high-res and detailed backgrounds. You have some powerful weapons with which to fry the big lizards... that is, if they haven't eaten you first.

The news is that the game is not as good as the hype suggests, but we'll give you the real story when we review it in full next issue.



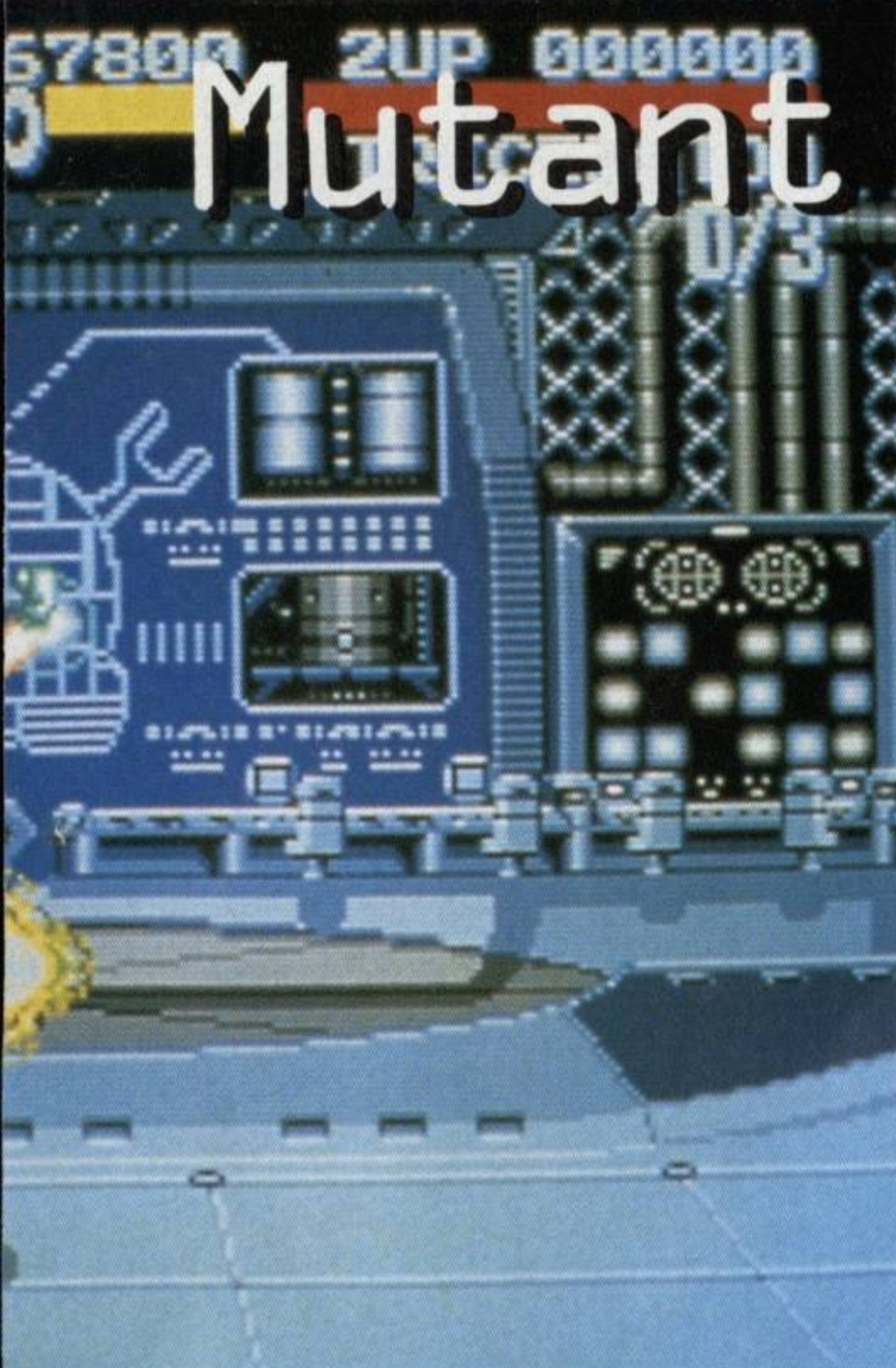
Equinox

SNES

Available: November
Category: Fantasy/Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

The sequel to the classic adventure Solstice, Equinox blends elements of action/adventure, role-playing and puzzles in a medieval fantasy setting. You play Glendaal, undertaking a quest to free the great wizard Shadax (your father) from the dungeons of Galendonia. There are dangerous battle-zones to fight your way through, puzzles to solve, strategies to plot and maps to be deciphered. There are also 450 secret chambers to explore, in eight levels of gameplay.

Mode 7 effects have been used throughout for added realism and the overhead 3D graphics look very spunky indeed. The music is billed as "innovative" and "other wordly" so we can only wait to see what that means. But if the gameplay is as good as all the other elements sound, Super Nintendo owners can look forward to spending many an hour in front of this action role-player.



Mutant

MEGA DRIVE/SNES

Available: December
Category: Fighting
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Konami

With stiff competition from Jurassic Park and the Simpsons, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have been losing out in the hype war recently. To remedy this situ-

Ninja Turtles: Tournament Fighters

ation they've got a whole new game, where they've copied the most popular game around, Street Fighter 2. If this doesn't win back their fans, nothing will!

Actually the Turtles Street Fighter clone looks like a lot of fun. The Super NES and Mega Drive versions are slightly different, but they both have the same basic premise - play as one of the Turtles (or a friend), or as an evil Boss, and pound the living shit out of your opponent. There is a one-on-one mode, or a tournament mode, where you play against the computer.

There are basically four moves each fighter can perform - a regular and a super punch, and a regular and a super kick. Of course there are also special moves for all the characters as well as an "Ultimate Move" which can be performed when a bar below the life meter is flashing.

All of the Turtles have their own special move. Leonardo, armed with two swords, launches into a huge flying blade, while he can also attack with vertical and horizontal spin. Michaelangelo can do a ball attack, a fireball and a deadly uppercut. Donatello can cause a flame to run along the floor, or perform a headstand using his legs like helicopter propellers. And lastly, Raphael can use fireballs, a flying attack and a summersault flip kick.

There are ten stages, all with great backdrops, plus bonus rounds where you can earn some serious points by smashing up falling safes. Of course, all the evil slime are in the game, like Armaggon, Chrome Dome, War and Shredder, so Turtles Tournament Fighter looks like shaping up to be a very nice little beat 'em up.

PREVIEW»

SONIC

The World's most hyped Hedgehog is back...



...ON CD

MEGA CD

Available: December
Category: Platformer/Action
Players: 1
Publisher: Sega Japan



He's back! The most famous blue hedgehog in the world is spinning back onto Sega systems just in time for Christmas (nice co-incidence that!). Not only is there Sonic Spinball for the Mega Drive and the new Game Gear title, Sonic Chaos, but the anxiously awaited Sonic CD is also being rushed released for the lucrative spending season. And while Sonic Spinball might be a good fun pinball game, it's really only a stop-gap measure until Sonic 3 is released for the Mega Drive early next year. Sonic CD, on the other hand, is a full-on hyper-active Sonic game with even more to see and do, thanks to the power of the Mega CD.

The programmers at Sega Japan have gone all out to make sure that while Sonic retains the same basic game qualities that made him a superstar, there are still lots of new stages and tricks that take full advantage of the Mega CD's scaling, rotation and memory capabilities. The 7 different special stages that are included will be full of scrolling, with Sonic jumping and running through weird and wonderful land-

scapes, destroying UFOs, avoiding water and oil slicks and rebounding off walls and bells.

As for the normal gameplay, it's the same as ever, there's just a hell of a lot more of it. There are seven zones, each with multiple levels. The new zone names are: Palmtree Panic, Collision Chaos, Tidal Tempest, Quartz Quadrant, Wacky Workbench, Stardust Speedway and Metallic Madness. Plus there's there's the Final Fever level where Robotnik will throw his big guns at you in desperation.

Out of Time

But here's where the CD version has some differences. Firstly, Sonic's so fast now he can travel through time, so for the first two stages on all seven levels, he can spin into the future or the past. For Sonic to "time slip" you must touch a Past or Future signpost, then run at top speed for a few seconds (he will be trailing stars as he goes) until you slip out of the present. You will be able to find lots more secret goodies in the past and the future, but also more traps and enemies. Be careful in the past though, because your actions can change the future.

There's also a Time Attack feature which allows you to return to

any round you have already played to try again for faster times. It will rank your time with other players to give the game an extra competitive edge. With the Mega CD's built-in RAM, scores can be saved, as can games, so you can now resume where you left off rather than having to go through everything again.

Friends and Enemies

As for friends and enemies, well there's no sign of Tails, but Sonic's definitely not alone! This time round he's got a bit of a girlfriend who goes by the name of Amy Rose. She's a young pink hedgehog who thinks the sun shines out of Sonic's spikes. It doesn't actually look like Sonic is too interested in her, but when she is kidnapped by Robotnik early on in the game, he's not too happy. So once again he's out to defeat the evil doctor and his army of robot creatures. Metal Sonic makes a return appearance, although it's an updated model, even tougher than the first one. As for Robotnik, he too appears in many updated guises at the end of each zone, and some of his incarnations have to be seen to be believed!

Sonic hasn't let us down yet, and Sonic CD doesn't look like any exception.



MEGA DRIVE

Available: November
Category: Pinball
Players: 1
Publisher: Sega

We were going to give you a full review this issue, but we decided we've already been more than kind to you lot. Let's just say we've had a bit of a spin on Spinball and came away mightily impressed.

To be launched on "Segamania Day" sometime in November, Sonic Spinball is the

first of a series of non-platform Sonic titles starring the spikey one. This is not Sonic 3 (expect that in January) - it's a pinball game with Sonic as the ball.

Doctor Robotnik has transformed a volcano into a high-tech robot factory - the Veg-O Fortress. It's protected with a special Pinball Defence Mechanism. Sonic must enter the fortress from under the sea and fight his way up through five levels of pinball mayhem for a final showdown with Robotnik (well, as final as any showdown

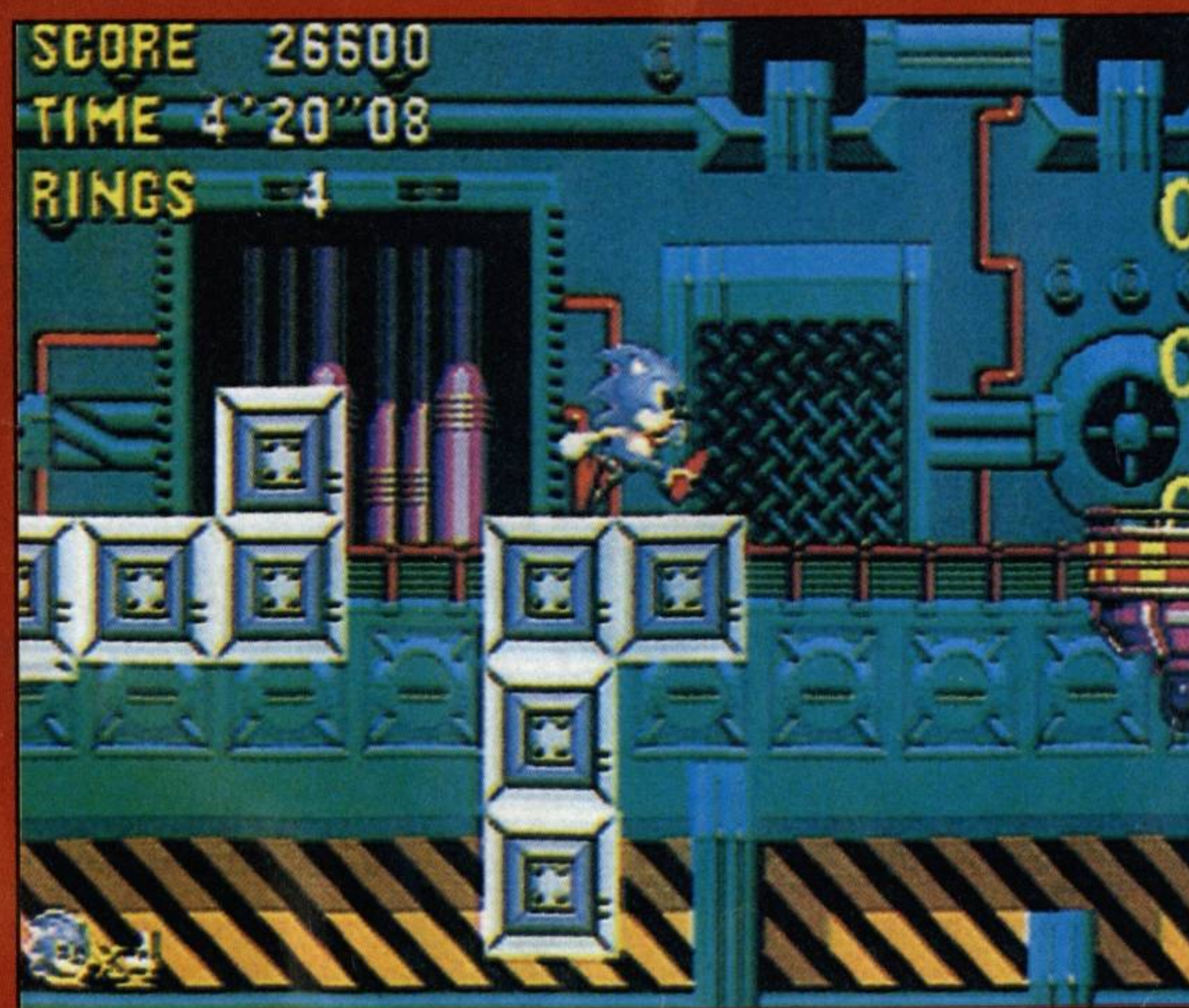
between Sonic and Robotnik can be).

The main controls are, as you'd expect in a pinball game, flippers, but you get to do a lot more than just bounce Sonic around (although that feature alone should make the game appeal to die-hard Nintendo lovers). No Sonic game would be complete without some speedy running and a few super Sonic spins, so just to make sure he doesn't feel too out of place in a pinball world, there's plenty of opportunities to make the hedgehog jump for joy.

Each level is, in a word, HUGE. They're tough buggers too. You need to find a set number of Chaos Emeralds before you're given access to the Boss Room. But just finding your way to the next section can be tough. In the first level you need to hit the right targets, flick the right switches, and take a couple of rides in a mine cart to get your first three Chaos Emeralds. There's some special 3-D bonus rounds thrown in for good measure too.

The California-based Sega Technical Institute (who developed the game) have put in a lot of added touches to make Sonic Spinball more than just another pinball game. It's a well designed and cleverly thought out game and it should be a great addition to the Sonic series. Full review next issue.

...IN SPINBALL



Wiz N' Liz

MEGA DRIVE

Available: November
Category: Platformer
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Psygnosis

Challenging Sonic's position as the fastest platform game on the Mega Drive is Psygnosis' new adventure, Wiz N' Liz. It apparently scrolls smoothly at up to 360 pixels per second, and has a split screen two-player mode that leaves Sonic 2 for dead. The advance press on this game has been very good indeed and it was voted one of the two best games at the April European Computer Trade Show.

Wiz and Liz are magicians, and pretty damn good ones at that. Like all top spell casters they collected a large family of cute white rabbits to use in their act. Unfortunately one day, while practicing some wizardry, Wiz and Liz let go of the wrong spell and their rabbits escaped and scattered all over the world. Surprise, surprise, you're going to have to travel all around the place collecting the wayward bunnies.

So while the plot is perhaps not the most gripping ever devised, Wiz N' Liz looks like being a fast and furious platformer that will take you through 9 worlds and 56 levels. There are also sub-games and over 100 magic spells which can be used to help save your rabbits. It's non-violent yet action packed and with its speed and variety in gameplay, it could be a winner this Christmas. Full review next issue.



PREVIEW»»

HAUNTING [STARRING POLTERGUY]



MEGA DRIVE

Available: October
Category: Action
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Electronic Arts

Haunting is for all those people who secretly wanted the demon in *The Exorcist* to let Linda Blair drown in her own pea-soup vomit. In fact, you play a very hip undead dude called Polterguy, who is out to scare some humans to death (or at least to insanity).

The Sardinis are a greedy, evil family who caused your untimely exit from this mortal coil, so it's time to return the favour by scaring them out of their minds. You'll need ectoplasm to play your tricks, so the first aim is to scour a supernatural dungeon for supplies.

Once you've avoided all the Ectobeasts and got your ectoplasm, it's time to start spookin' the Sardinis. The main game takes place in various rooms of the house, and your aim is to scare the family as much as (in)humanly possible, until they flee in terror. You do this by controlling household items and either making them move around or transforming them into something totally gross, i.e why not turn the dartboard into a bleeding eyeball, or have the lounge grow into a giant pair of lips. There are over 400 items to activate, so you won't run out of new things to see in a hurry.

If that doesn't work you can possess a family member and have them scare the others, or use one of your five special spells - Zom-B-ize, Super-Scare, Boo-Doo, Ecto-Xtra and Dog-Off. These use up lots of ectoplasm »

PUGGSY



MEGA DRIVE/CD, SNES, PC

Available: Nov/December
Category: Action/Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

Another huge movie to game conversion is *Last Action Hero*. Arnie's latest big-budget flick may have lost out at the box-office to the special effects magic of *Jurassic Park*, but Sony are apparently going all out to see that the game doesn't take after the woeful performance of its *Jurassic* counterpart.

Like *Cliffhanger*, this is a full tilt action romp with Arnie dodging bullets, crashing cars and beating up on the bad guys over five packed levels. As Arnie is subtly trying to change his image by not appearing in anything too ultra-violent, his character will not be carrying a gun in the game. This might disappoint some of the hard-core fans, but with the movie's meanest bad guy, the Ripper, appearing, this certainly isn't going

was forced to pull over to the nearest planet. Unfortunately he didn't check whether the inhabitants were friendly or not, and he soon finds his space ship stolen and himself being chased by a large gang of angry racoon-like creatures.

Not only has the Puggster got to avoid the aliens, but he also has to make his way through 51 levels of puzzling gameplay if he wants to find his ship and safety. He has an assortment of tools to help him, including guns, balloons, torches, axes and dyna-

mite. These tools are subject to real world forces like gravity and momentum, and they will need to be used properly if Puggsy is going to stay alive. There are over 100 different creatures in pursuit of Puggsy, which will make things exciting, and the backdrops look detailed and very colourful.

From the reviews it's been getting overseas, Puggsy looks like being another in a long line of hits for Psygnosis. It'll be released locally in November and watch out for a full Hyper review next issue.

MEGA DRIVE

Available: November
Category: Platform
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Psygnosis

Puggsy is yet another alien who's lost and far from home. While cruising along peacefully in his space ship he hit a ripple in the space time continuum and

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but scare the Sardini's more than anything else. The Sardini's reactions become more and more over-the-top as you keep up the haunting, with the mother losing her wig in terror and the little boy, Tony, wetting his pants in fright.

Once you've succeeded and the Sardini's have fled, there's no time to rest, because you're still bitter. In fact you can follow the Sardini's to four houses and scare them out of all of them. If you manage to do that, you are able to battle a grotesque secret boss who has the power to restore you to life.

Haunting can be played as a two player game, with players competing to scare the family out of the house. When you run out of ectoplasm you are sent back to the dungeon to collect more, with both players competing for the green goo.

So watch out for Haunting in late October. Polterguy's first adventure looks like being a bit of a scream (in more ways than one).

to be a woosy affair.

The Mega CD version, which is slightly different to the other versions, is modelled on the Streets of Rage/Final Fight type of game. It is a simultaneous two-player beat 'em up, where you get to select either Arnie (Jack Slater), his daughter Whitney or the cartoon Cat detective. There are six levels, each based around a scene from the movie. The action is introduced and

MEGA DRIVE/CD, SNES , PC

Available: November
Category: Action
Players: 1
Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

One of the hit movies of the year was the nail-biting suspense and action of Sylvester Stallone's *Cliffhanger*. While Sly's acting prowess never really came to the fore, everybody was very impressed that he managed to wear skin-tight T-shirts in the sub-zero temperature of the Rocky Mountains.

In the game you get to play Sly (in skin-tight T-shirt of course) who is fighting for the lives of his friends. As with the movie, this is a full-on action title and very few

brain cells are needed for success. You get to battle ruthless terrorists against the stunning Rocky mountain backdrop of avalanches and icy cliffs. To rescue the hostages you must first recover the \$100 million of stolen money that has been dropped in the mountains.

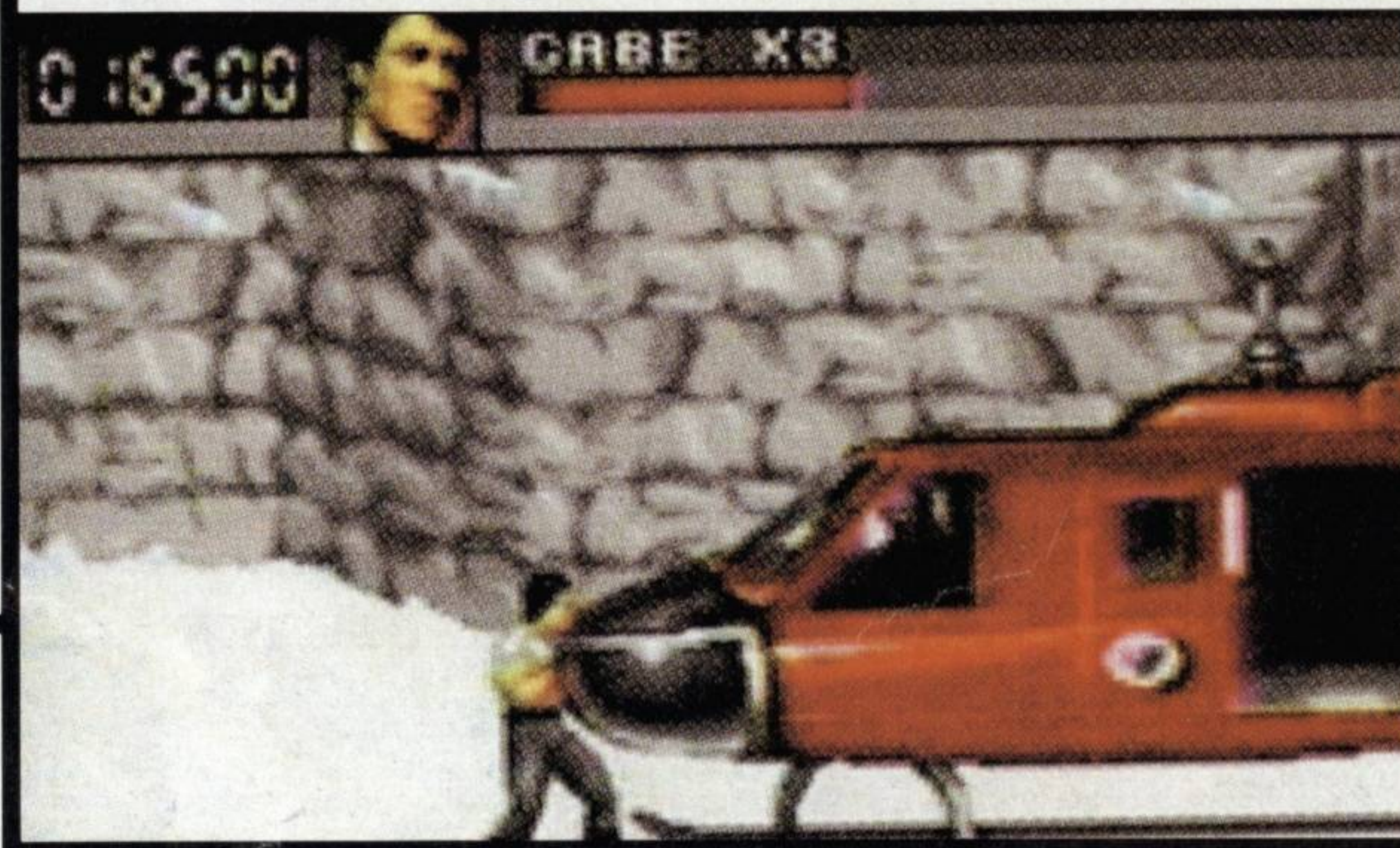
There are seven levels in all, with each level completing a section of the storyline. For example, levels one and two, which take place in the mountains and the snowy forest, are the search for the loot. Only when you've found the money and defeat the assorted psycho thugs can you start rescuing the hostages. Level 3 has Sly back in the mountains, securing shelter

CLIFF HANGER

in Douglas Cabin and fighting the kung-fu expert Kynette. In level 4, you attempt to escape the terrorists bullets by hiding in caves, only to find falling stalactites and other dangers. Level 5 has the ransom delivery for Jesse, but first you have to climb to the top of the Bitker ladder - easier said than done! After that it gets really interesting, with the final two levels being an assault on the terrorist's hijacked helicopter and an explosive showdown with the evil Qualen.

For weapons, you basically have to make do with your toned and muscled body, although there are Uzis and knives to play with on occasions. The opponets you will face range from martial arts experts to snipers and Uzi-carrying psychos. The natural world is against you too, with avalanches, crevices, raging waterfalls, rock slides and crumbling bridges all causing problems.

So if Sly and full-on action is your scene, you'd better HANG ON, because *Cliffhanger's* on its way!

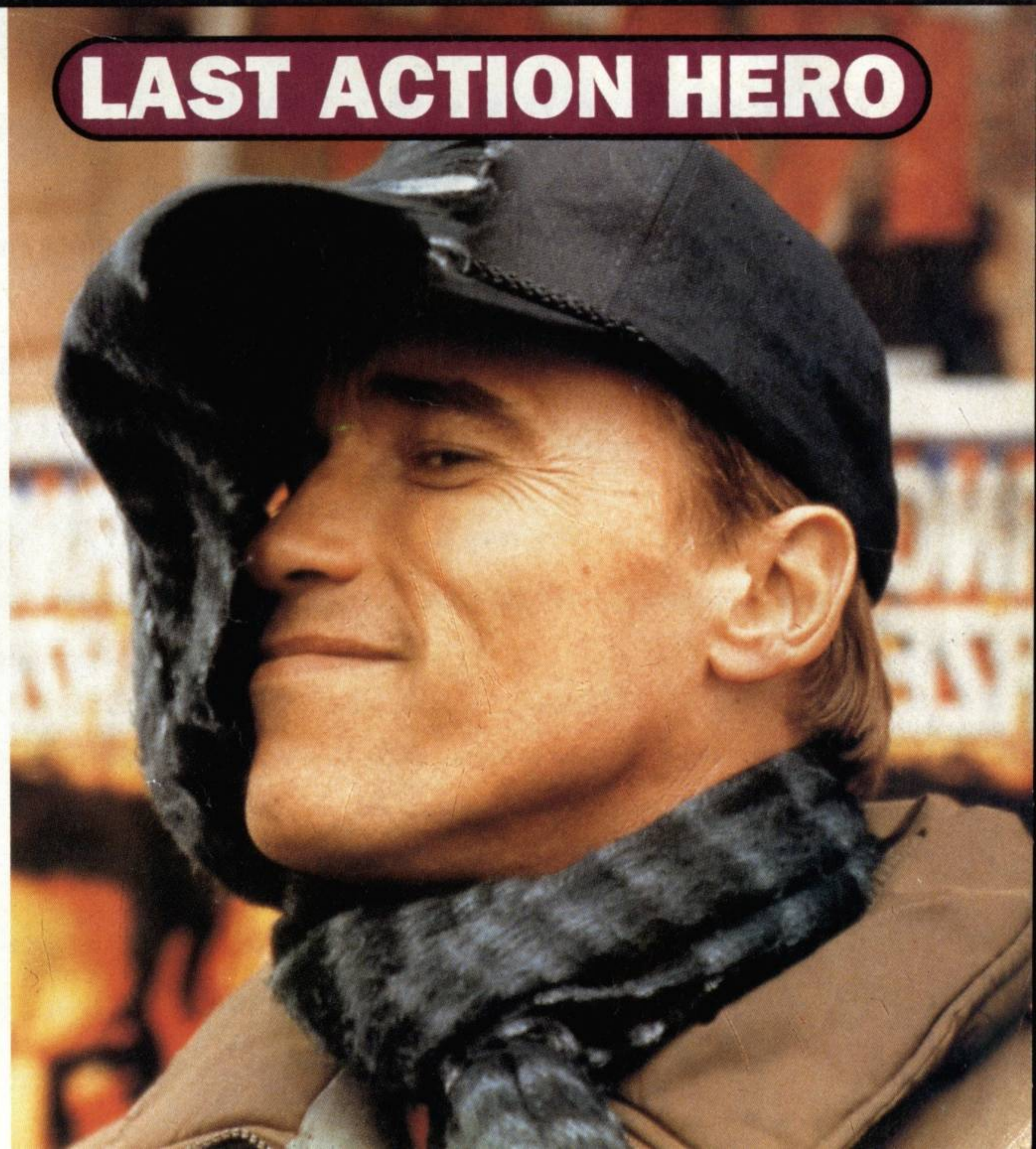


mixed in with full-video clips from the movie.

So while most previous Arnie games have been duds, hope is high for Last Action Hero. It will be launching on just about every format known to man, with the Super Nintendo and Mega Drive versions coming out in late November. Full review next issue.



LAST ACTION HERO



Game Charts

Hyper's game charts supplied by the Gamesmen.

Mega Drive

1. Mortal Kombat
2. Phantasy Star II
3. Bill Walsh College Football
4. Jurassic Park
5. Flashback
6. Fatal Fury
7. Bulls vs Blazers
8. General Chaos
9. Mazin Wars
10. Andre Agassi Tennis

IBM

1. Sensible Soccer
2. Comanche Maximum Overkill
3. Day of the Tentacle
4. Pinball Dreams
5. Syndicate
6. King's Quest V
7. Terminator 2029
8. Warlords 2
9. Prince of Persia 2
10. X-Wing

Super Nintendo

1. Mortal Kombat
2. Super NBA Basketball
3. Alien 3
4. NBA Allstar Challenge
5. World Class Rugby
6. King Arthur's World
7. John Madden Football '93
8. Pebble Beach Golf
9. Starwing
10. Desert Strike

Hyper's November Chart Predictions

Check these hot titles out! All available in November.

- Aladdin** (Mega Drive)
- Flashback** (SNES)
- Return to Zork** (PC)
- Rocket Knight Adventures** (Mega Drive)
- Pocky & Rocky** (SNES)
- Lethal Enforcers** (Mega CD)
- Jurassic Park** (SNES)
- WWF Royal Rumble** (SNES/Mega Drive)
- Last Action Hero** (SNES/Mega Drive)
- Cliffhanger** (SNES/Mega Drive)
- Haunting** (Mega Drive)
- Legends of Lore** (PC)
- John Madden '94** (SNES/Mega Drive)
- Night Trap** (Mega CD)
- Zombies Ate My Neighbours** (SNES/Mega Drive)

Mega CD

1. Sherlock Holmes
2. Prince of Persia
3. Final Fight
4. Black Hole Assault
5. Wolfchild

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Streetfighter

Sega and Nintendo are at each other's throats again, this time with the biggest arcade game of all time. The Mega Drive and Super Nintendo go head to head with two of the baddest carts ever. ANDREW HUMPHREYS sorts out the Streetfighters...

turbo



Bigger and Better

The original 16 meg Streetfighter II sold more Super Nintendos around the world than any other game. No matter what Sega came up with, they didn't have Streetfighter and it hurt. Rumours started circulating about Streetfighter II Champion Edition for the Mega Drive just before last Christmas. The timing of these rumours was obviously calculated to prevent old and potential Mega Drive owners from switching to the SNES.

But just as the first screen shots of Champion Edition started filtering through to the press, Nintendo, in a classic example of one-up-manship, announced that SNES owners could look forward to a massive 20 meg Turbo Edition, maybe even before hapless Mega Drive owners got their Champion Edition.

Sega were obviously not impressed, so now Mega Drive owners are getting the (gasp!) 24 meg Special Champion Edition, with even more features than the SNES cart.

In the end, both the Mega Drive and SNES versions are very, very similar games. Both Streetfighter II Turbo and Special Champion Edition give you a choice of either normal Champion Edition or Turbo play. Both have adjustable speed settings for the Turbo mode (called Hyper on the Mega Drive), both are excellent conversions of the arcade

The Super Nintendo Streetfighter II 2?

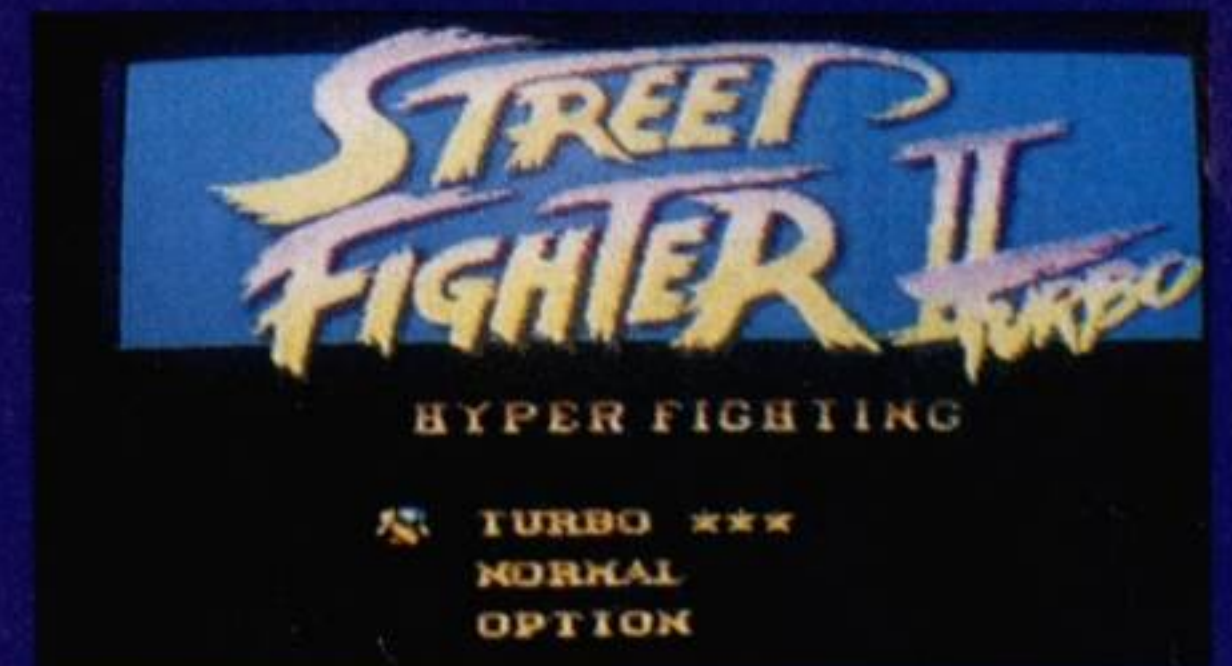
So you've got a SNES and you've got a copy of Streetfighter II - do you really need Streetfighter II Turbo? You'll have to make up your own mind. It's certainly not the "must have" that Special Champion Edition will be for Mega Drive fans. Some people will feel that Turbo and the old Streetfighter are essentially the same and they'll be happy with the first game. But if you don't have a copy of Streetfighter, Turbo is the better game. The speed, the extra moves, and the extra characters really do add a lot to the gameplay, making a great game even better.

The graphics aren't that different from the original Streetfighter cart. But they have been slightly improved, the missing frames of animation have been added, and the background colours have been changed to match the arcade versions. It's now even closer to being arcade perfect.

Most of the extra memory has gone into pumping up the speed. The opening screen gives you a choice of a Normal (Champion Edition) or Turbo game. For a one player game there's eight difficulty levels. The two-player (Vs mode) remains the same: you pick your character, the attack strength of both players (the handicap), and the stage.

There are five different speeds to choose from in a Turbo game, but whack in a cheat (find it in the Cheat Mode section in this issue!) and you'll get an extra six speeds, for a total of eleven Turbo speeds! The cheat gives the SNES game the same number of selectable speeds as the Mega Drive, but it has to be said that, while the top speed for both games is insanely fast (much faster than the arcade), the Mega Drive version is the faster of the two.

A lot of attention has also gone into the sound. All of the speech from the arcade is there and it's crystal clear. The sound effects are excellent too and »



games, both have three bonus rounds (car, bricks and barrels), and both of them are guaranteed to make you drool with excitement.

What's in a Name?

Streetfighter II Turbo is also known as Hyper Fight. It's full US title is Turbo Streetfighter II: Champion Edition Hyper Fighting. Capcom released it as the definitive version of Streetfighter 2, partly because there were a lot of dodgy pirate editions (like Blackbelt Edition) flooding arcades.

So what's so special about Turbo? Champion Edition added new moves, toughened up the sprites, ironed out some of the inequalities between characters, and best of all, gave the player control over all four boss characters. With Balrog, Vega, Sagat, and M Bison, there's now twelve playable characters in all.

Turbo retains the basic framework of the Champion Edition and adds a few more features of its own. There's even more moves to choose from, the most notable ones being all the mid-air moves, Chun Li's fireball and Dhalsim's Yoga Teleport, and every fighter gets a nifty new colour scheme on their outfit - Ryu's baby blue combo is, as Vega would say, simply gorgeous. But the major improvement lies in the speed of the Turbo version. It's now a much faster game, and because of that, it's also more challenging.

SNES

available

NOW
category

FIGHTING
players

1-2
publisher

CAPCOM

visuals

Apart from the intro, the graphics are **HOT**. Updated from the original Streetfighter, this is as close to the arcade as you'll get.

94

sound

Crystal clear voices and great stereo effects. The music is a bit tacky though.

93

gameplay

It's Streetfighter, what more can we say?

95

longterm

If fighting games are your thing, you'll play it forever.

95

overall

A fantastic update for SNES owners. It's hip, it's now, it's **HYPER!**

95%

now they're in stereo, so if Ryu and Ken are having a bit of a "Ha-do-ken" duel, you'll hear both of them screaming from separate channels. There's even some crowd noises and a fighter's final scream has a nice echo effect.

The music, however, is just a bit overdone. They've tried to give voice to too many instruments, so it ends up sounding a bit dicky. While we're being picky, the character selection icons are a bit shabby too and the intro, with a big bitmapped "Turbo" flying across the screen, is nowhere near as slick as the Mega Drive's, which uses the arcade intro (two guys hitting each other under a skyscraper).

But the gameplay and controls are as good as ever. By tweaking each character and adding the new moves, Streetfighter II Turbo is better to play than the original. Computer opponents have been smartened up to make cheap victories harder to come by, and there's even a cheat (look in Cheat Mode!) to let you play a one-player game (only) without your special moves.

What more can we say? Get it now. But be careful, even if you use a standard converter, import versions will probably crash on you (the US game kept crashing on us), so it's best to get the official PAL version.



The Mega Drive An Extra Special Champion Edition

With twenty four megs to play with, Special Champion Edition should be really special - and it is. It is going to be expensive though (it'll retail for around \$180) and to play it properly you'll need one of the new six-button control pads or Power Sticks. The good news is that the pads are excellent. They're ultra-responsive, so letting rip with a Dragon Punch is a breeze (if you know what you're doing).

There's a choice of Champion Edition or Hyper with eight difficulty levels for a one-player game - just like the SNES. There's also eleven different Hyper speeds and, as I've said, at top speed, it's faster than the SNES.

What the Mega Drive's got that the SNES hasn't is a special Group Battle mode. In Group Battle, two players pick a number of characters (anywhere between one and six) and fight each other in a special tournament (either match-play or elimination). So if you've always wanted to know who's the best all-around Streetfighter, now's your chance.

Another special feature for two-player games, in either a Group Battle or a normal Vs battle, is that you can turn off any special move for any character. This option is on top of the usual handicap/stage select business. Once you've both picked your characters, you can enter a screen that shows every special move for both fighters, and you can turn any of them off. So, if you're sick of Honda's powerful Hundred Hand Slap, then turn it off.

There may be only sixty four colours on the screen, but it is the best looking lot of sixty four colours I've ever seen. The graphics are virtually identical to the SNES version and in some places they might even be better! But overall, they're too close to call. Everything - the sprites, the backdrops - are superbly drawn and detailed. It's full screen, and close to being arcade perfect. All of the sound effects, like the SNES game, are in stereo, but their quality, and the quality of the speech, is not as

good. The music's good though, and I prefer it to the SNES version.

The Mega Drive plays just like the SNES game. The responsiveness is excellent, and the gameplay, well, it's Streetfighter II isn't it? This is THE game that all Mega Drive owners should own. Now that it's over, you can sit back, heave a sigh of relief, and know it was well worth the wait.



A Closer Look

Take a look at the two versions side by side - that's the SNES on the left and Mega Drive on the right - can you tell them apart?

Except for minor differences the colours and details are almost identical. Arcade perfect or what?



The screen shot to the left shows the Mega Drives' Group Battle Mode in action. It's Matchplay, not Elimination, so each pair of fighters battle it out one after another.

First up is Blanka (player 1) vs. Ken (player 2) The grey faces show which characters have already been selected.



SNES vs. Mega Drive

It's at times like this that Mega Drive and SNES owners around the world should hold their hands together in happiness. After all, we're all just part of one big caring, sharing, gaming universe, aren't we?



Ryu and Ken on SNES



Ryu and Ryu on Mega Drive



Guile and Vega on SNES



Guile and Vega on Mega Drive

MEGA DRIVE

available

NOVEMBER

category

FIGHTING

players

1-2

publisher

CAPCOM

visuals

The graphics are indistinguishable from the Nintendo's. Great detail and animation - arcade perfect.

94

sound

Great sound effects, full arcade speech and pumping music.

92

gameplay

Hot one-on-one fighting action. Simple as that.

95

longterm

With the bonus Group Battle and the ability to turn off special moves, the Mega Drive gets the edge on the SNES.

96

overall

A must have for all Sega owners. You've been waiting for a long time. Claim what is rightfully yours.

96%

The Mega Drive & SNES go head-to-head

Mortal Monday has been and gone but the hype lives on. Mortal Kombat is going to be a huge hit on both the Super Nintendo and the Mega Drive, but which version is the best? ANDREW HUMPHREYS visits the Shaolin

Mortal

Tournament on both systems to settle it, once and for all...

We all know the story behind the game by now: Streetfighter II copy, blah, blah, blah, arcade smash, blah, blah, Shaolin Tournament, corrupted by evil Shang Tsung and Goro, blah, blah, seven warriors, special moves, blah, blah, fatalities, blah, lots of blood and guts. And if you don't know the moves already we've printed them in the Cheat Mode section. What we really want to know is this: which home version of Mortal Kombat is the closest to the arcade game, and which one, Mega Drive or Super Nintendo, is the best?

Although both are published by Acclaim (under their sub-label, Arena, on Mega Drive), two different programming teams are responsible for the different versions. The SNES version has been programmed by US developers Sculptured Software; the Mega Drive version has been programmed in the UK by Probe. So who did the better job?

There's four areas of comparison: how they look, how they sound, how they play, and the all important question (for some), how much blood do you get for your money?



The Look

Both the Mega Drive and SNES versions of Mortal Kombat are excellent translations of the arcade game. They come as close to the arcade game as 16-bit home systems possibly could. Despite the limited colour palette of the Mega Drive (and a wide colour choice is very important when you're doing digitised graphics), there's very little difference between the two conversions in the graphics department - they both look great.

But the SNES does have a slight edge. All the fighters are just that little bit bigger and clearer than their Mega Drive counterparts, and the backgrounds seem to have more depth. But for some reason, the SNES sprites look a bit rough around the edges and the animation seems a touch choppy in comparison to the Mega Drive.

In terms of presentation, the Mega Drive version is closer to the arcade game than the SNES. Some of the digitised stills in the SNES version are quite poor, and the scrolling Battle Plan is awful. The presentation screens on Mega Drive stick much closer to what you see in the arcades, right down to running demos on each character.



The Sound

Both versions have excellent (but different) game music and crunching FX, but only the SNES has all the digitised speech from the arcade. The speech that's there on Mega Drive is good, but it's just not all there. Sound-wise then, the SNES version comes closest to the coin-op, and as everyone knows sound is important when you're talking about a game's overall atmosphere and impact.



FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: FIGHTING

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

visuals

A faithful conversion of the arcade graphics. Brighter and with more depth than the MD

90

sound

Heaps of great quality speech and good music.

88

gameplay

Slightly sluggish and not quite as playable as the Mega Drive.

87

longterm

Good, clean fighting fun. Watch that sweat fly!

87

overall

Nintendo were wimps for not allowing the blood. Thankfully the game is good enough to do without it.

87%



Kombat

The Mortal Kombatants
The players in the game are from the left; Scorpion, Sub Zero, Sonya Blade, Rayden, Liu Kang, Kano, Johnny Cage

The Feel

Because both versions basically have the looks and the sound of the arcade game, this is the area that I think it all comes down to - which one plays better? In my opinion there's no doubt, the Mega Drive cart plays faster and it plays better. If you've got the 6 button joystick (and you should have) it feels like the arcade game, both in timing and technique. By comparison, the SNES version feels stiff and a little sluggish. That's why Mortal Kombat is a better game on Mega Drive.



The Blood

What made Mortal Kombat such a huge hit in the arcades? Let's face it, in terms of depth of gameplay and challenge it was no match for Streetfighter II. It was the blood and guts and the fatalities that kept you playing, wasn't it? If the blood and guts is an important part of the gameplaying experience for you (it doesn't have to be), then the SNES version will be a real disappointment. There's no way of playing Mortal Kombat on the SNES with all of the graphic violence from the arcade game intact.

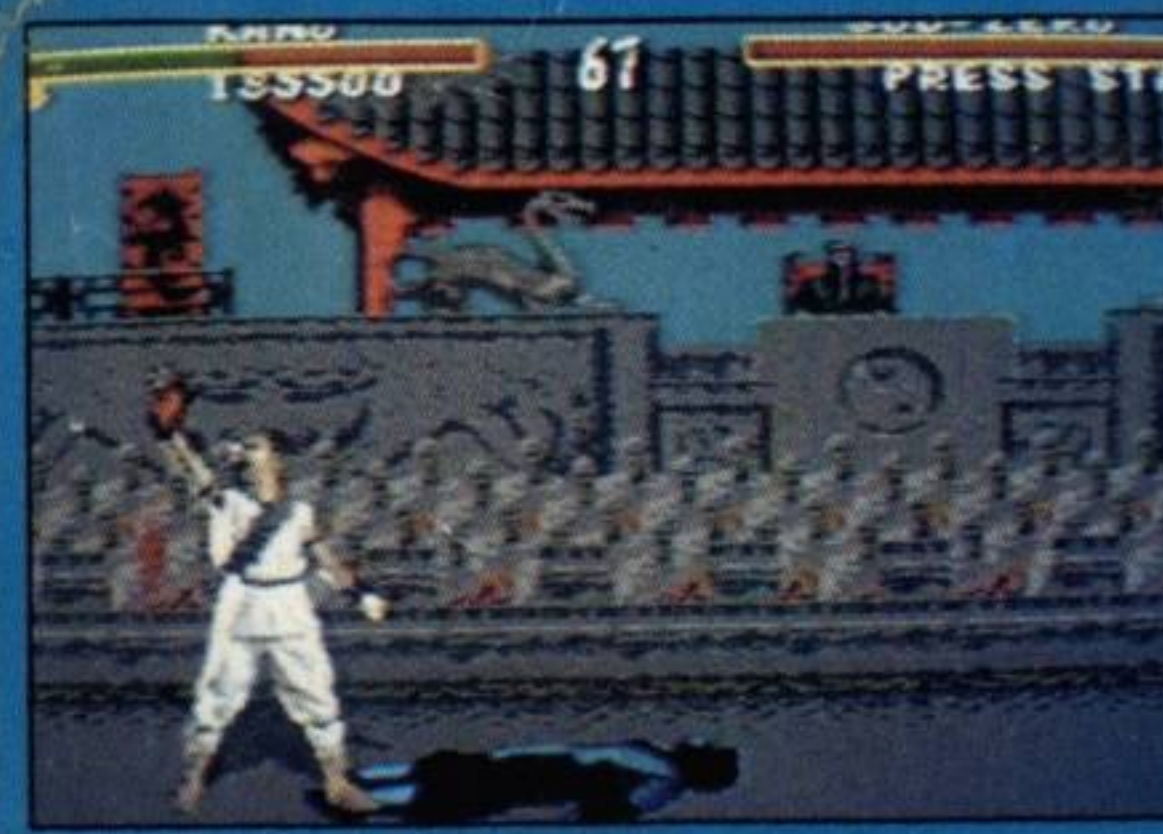
Instead of blood you get sweat flying off opponents and modified fatalities. But what's the point? Nintendo banned the ultra-violent bits because it wants to be seen as a responsible "family" company, but isn't this just a little hypocritical? Is it OK to beat up on digitised characters as long as they don't bleed? And why do some fatalities remain unchanged (Sonya's Kiss of Death and Scorpion's Bad Breath Fire Death)? Is it OK to burn someone to death, but not OK to explode their head? The whole game is about hurting people - it still says "Finish Him" and every gamer out there knows what that means.



The Secret Code What secret code?

With the Mega Drive version, you can have all the arcade gore and more. Play the cart normally and there's little blood and modified fatalities, but the secret code (and it's no secret now because we've printed it in the back!) gives you all the arcade blood and ALL THE FATALITIES! Rip out that spine! Tear out that heart! Knock off that head! Visit that psychiatrist! If it's violence you want, you'll only get it on Mega Drive.

So, Mortal Kombat is a very good game, at the arcade, on Mega Drive, and on Super Nintendo. But if you want the arcade game in your own home, in all it's bloody glory, but without taking up all that space, then you're best bet is the Mega Drive. Try them both out and tell us what you think.



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: FIGHTING

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: ARENA

visuals

The sprites are a bit smaller than the SNES and some backgrounds are not as spunky.

89

sound

Most of the digitised speech is here, and it's OK. Music is good.

85

gameplay

Fast, smooth with the same feel and timing as the arcade game.

90

longterm

The one player game can get tedious but ripping someone's heart out is never boring.

88

overall

Great conversion of the arcade game. The blood is an extra special bonus.

88%

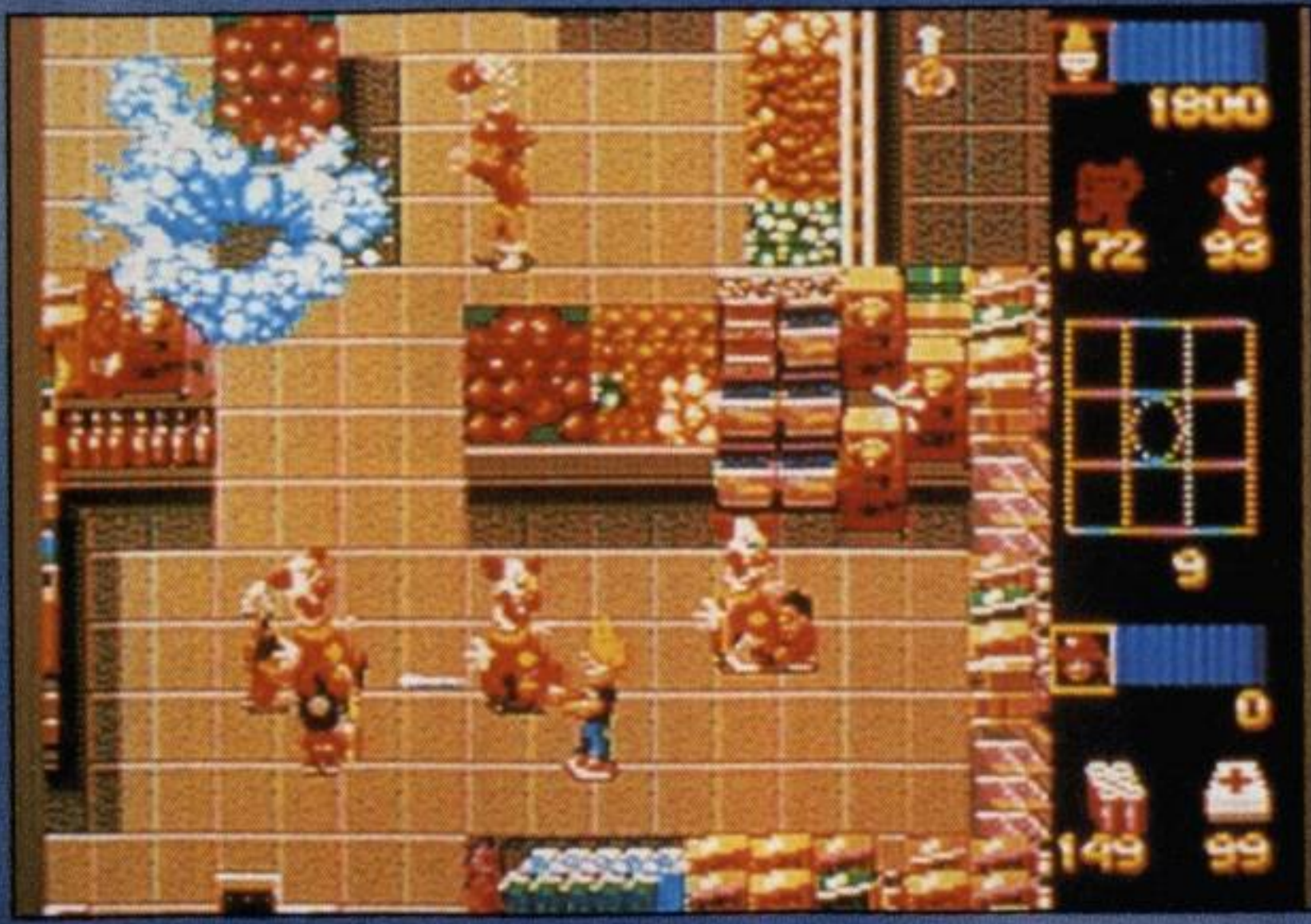
REVIEW »

ZOMBIES

Ate My Neighbours

Grab hold of your lover and fasten your seat belts because here comes a drive-in movie you're not going to forget! You'll SCREAM in terror as rampaging zombies go on a brain feeding frenzy! You'll FREEZE in fear as chainsaw wielding maniacs attack innocent cheerleaders, and you'll SCRAMBLE for cover as 50 foot tall toddlers take their first wobbly steps. Scared? Good! Because TIM SMITH certainly is...





Zombies Ate My Neighbors is a game which pays tribute to those B-Grade horror/Sci-fi movies we all hate to know and love to loath! Finally you can step out of the closet and take pride that you actually enjoyed those movies that Elvira presented. And while the movies may be very B-grade, LucasArts and Konami have come up with one of the most exciting games you're ever likely to play!

Blobs, Possessed Dolls and Aliens

The story line to Zombies... is standard B-Grade stuff. Firstly you have the obligatory mumbling, stark-raving-mad scientist, who is hell bent on complete domination of the world (well, at least your neighbourhood). From the dark vaults of every movie studio, the mad doc has brought back to life all your favourite monsters and madmen. You name the monster, Zombies... has got it! From blobs, werewolves and Jasons to aliens, possessed dolls and, of course, more zombies than you can swing a chainsaw at!

But never fear, you have plenty of weapons at your disposal. All are common household goods, friendly to humans, but deadly to the undead and unreal creations

remember that in the movie "The Blob", the liquid monster is finally defeated when it is frozen. Your B-Grade knowledge really will help you defeat the monsters, so you didn't stay up until 3am watching those movies for nothing, after all!

As well as weapons, there are also items you can pick up on the way. Potions are handy things, they can replenish your health, turn you invisible or turn you into a snarling, teenage werewolf! As the werewolf you can break down doors and walls and also defeat all the monsters without losing energy! Other items of help are the inflatable clown dolls (which come in very handy if you are being chased by three chainsaw guys!), keys which open doors and Pandora's Boxes which, well, open one and find out!

Weird Kids On the Block

You take the role of Julie or Zeke (or have a friend join in for two-player simultaneous action), in an attempt to save your neighbours. The game has 55 multi-directional scrolling levels, each with its own location and theme. In each level there are between one to ten neighbours for you to save, before their inevitable

that you'll encounter.

Each weapon is more effective against some creatures than others. Take for example the eight pack of Paddle pops you find in the supermarket level. They will have very little impact if you are cornered by a stocky lad brandishing a chainsaw. On the other hand, if you were being chased by a blob, throw a paddle pop at it and SPLAT, it's history! Of course, all B-Grade movie fans will

untimely deaths. Use your radar to track them down and rescue them. Each level has its own B-grade title, such as: "Terror in Aisle Five", "Chainsaw Hedge Maze Maze", "Weird Kids on the Block", "7 Meals for 7 Zombies" and "From the Depths of the Earth, Ants!"

In order to progress through the levels you will have to save at least one of the neighbours, if not, it's game over. You have three lives to start with, and must pick up first aid kits and potions to maintain your energy levels. There are also bonus lives to find. It is quite difficult to finish the game on the original three lives you start on, so to save your sanity, every four levels you obtain a password. When you complete all 55 levels, you get your chance to go head-to-head with the evil doctor himself.

The levels are humorous, and fun to play around in. The details of the monsters are excellent, and each have their own personalities that you will either laugh or scream at. The animation of the main characters is perfect for the action. Quite often you will need split second timing to get behind a zombie or blob, and the controls let you turn on a ten cent piece if need be.

One button allows you to change the weapon or item that you want in your inventory, and the other two buttons fire a weapon or use an item. As for the sound effects, they are both eerie and hilarious. From the monsters babbling away incoherently, to the cast of neighbours screaming as they are eaten by a monster, everything fits in perfectly. The music is so bad, it's great! The tunes that accompany the action is exactly like bad movie music. It sets the mood beautifully, especially when you are being chased by a dozen zombies!

All I can say is move over Boris Karloff, and Bela Lugosi, you suck badly! Zombies Ate My Neighbors is the next best thing to starring in your own B-grade movie.

MD/SNES

available

NOVEMBER

category

SHOOT EM UP

players

1-2

publisher

LUCAS ARTS/KONAMI

visuals

A great overhead perspective with detailed and gruesome cartoon monsters of all descriptions. **91**

sound

The B grade background music is a nice touch although it can be a bit much sometimes. But the FX go off! **88**

gameplay

Fast and furious shoot em up action with heaps of weapons and a great control system. **93**

longterm

48 huge levels, 7 bonus rounds, and more monsters than you can shake a crucifix at. It's even more fun for 2 players. **90**

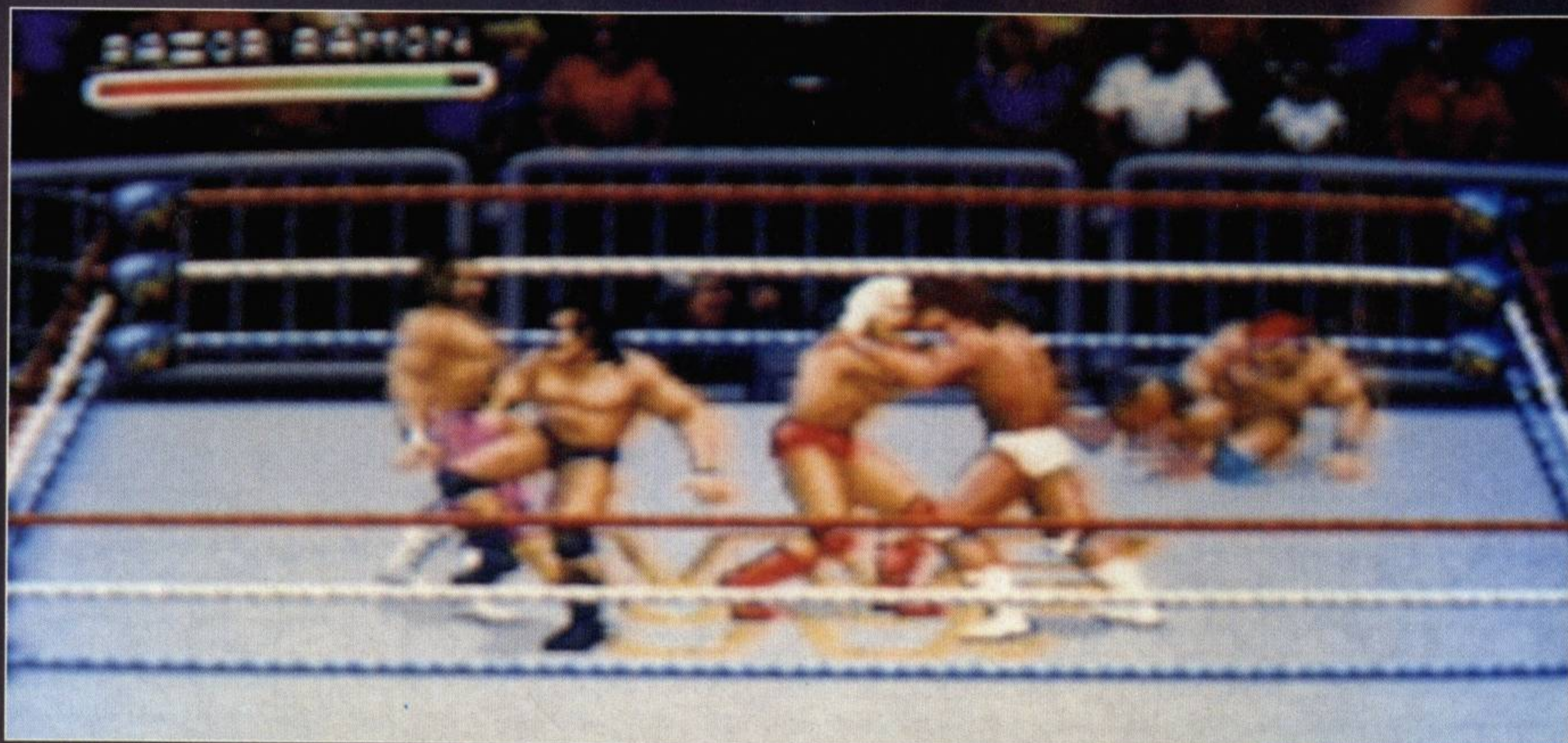
overall

It's original, it's funny, and it's action packed. It's also got one of the best names in the business. Buy it. **90%**

WWF Royal Rumble

Big men with lots of hair wearing nothing but spandex tights? It's got to be either a Guns 'n' Roses gig or the glitzy world of WWF Wrestling.

BRIAN COSTELLOE investigates...



Excitement is the food for the hungry fans who gather in their thousands to witness the high camp spectacle that is WWF wrestling. Muscle bound heroes and villains make this "sport" a multibillion dollar industry. Now after their first success with WWF Wrestlemania, Acclaim have another potential hit to unleash on the Super Nintendo.

WWF Royal Rumble features all the latest stars in the sport, such as Rick Flair, Crush, and Yokozuna. But some old favourites still remain, like Randy Savage, Mr Perfect and Brett Hart. In all, you have 12 wrestlers to pick from in either the Royal Rumble, a Tag Team encounter, One on One, Triple Tag Team affair, or the main Tournament mode, where you must defeat all your opponents one by one to get the crown that all others shall drool over, the WWF Championship Belt!

Steroid Abuse

In the Royal Rumble event you start with just one other wrestler at first but additional contestants enter the ring at regular intervals until a maximum of six are bashing each other at once. There's no ref, but when a wrestler is chucked out of the

ring he's out for good. The last steroid abuser left is the ultimate winner. This event can take a while, and it's the best of all of them.

The Tag Team events are much like the one on one matches but you can combine with your partner to pull off some extra-dirty tricks. Once the wrestlers leave the ring a 10 second limit is called out by the ref but no restrictions are in effect! So the chairs get some air!

There's a whole heap of basic moves - punches, kicks, head-butts, piledrivers, atomic drops, running dropkicks, clotheslines, stomps, splashes, and dirty tricks like eye gouges and choke holds. Each character also has a trademark manoeuvre, like Crush's "Cranium Crunch" and The Undertakers "Tombstone Piledriver"! The moves are easy to pull off and very effective.

Slapping Fists

The first thing you'll notice about the graphics is the exceptional quality of the digitised stills of all the wrestlers. However, the in-game sprites are

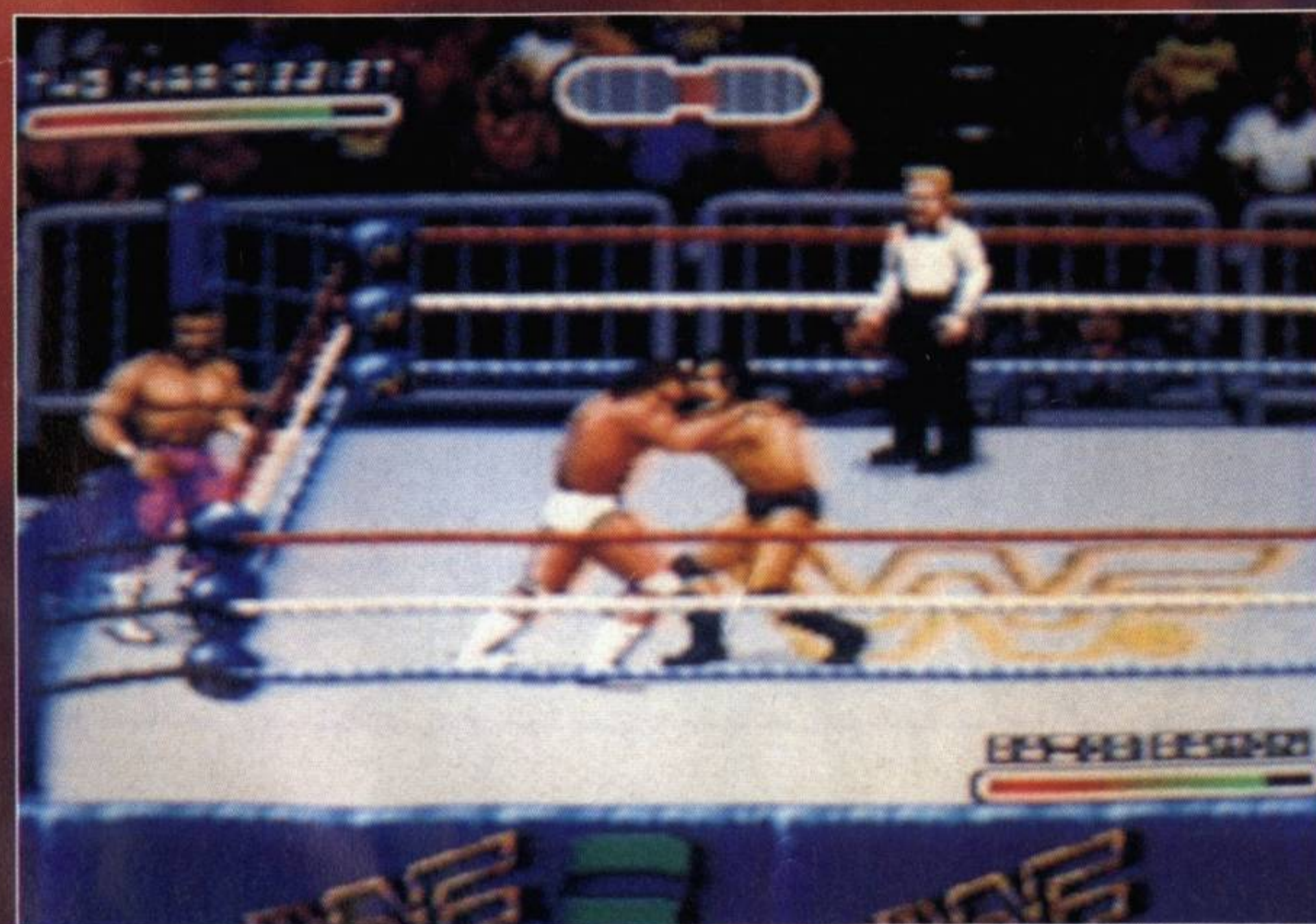
not animated as smoothly as I had hoped for. The sound on the other hand, has some great moments. The slapping fists sound good and the smashing chair really rattles the speakers! And each wrestler has his own trademark piece of victory music

The excitement's here, the fun is here, and the challenge is here too but the game's biggest plus is the humungous playability level that keeps you wanting to suplex your way through that one more time!

which sounds fairly cool.

The excitement's here, the fun is here, and the challenge is here too (there's 10 difficulty levels to please even the most seasoned player) but the game's biggest plus is the humungous playability level that keeps you wanting to suplex your way through that one more time!

For wrestling fans, this is THE game to get for Christmas. The Royal Rumble event has that much happening at once that just watching it is sometimes enough! WWF Royal Rumble had me hooked for quite some time and should do the same for you.



Rumbling on the Mega Drive

So is the Mega Drive version any different? Well, not really. In fact it's so similar that the score-box on this page is for both games. They're both 16 meg carts, they look virtually identical (both in game and presentation screens), have the same game modes and options, and more importantly, they play the same too (the button controls are a bit different, but that's all).

The only real difference between the two is that they give you a few different wrestlers to choose from. For example, you can only play Hulk Hogan, The Model, or IRS in the Mega Drive game, and you can only choose Yokozuna, Ric Flair or Tatanka on the SNES. So, this is only a real problem for those who idolise a particular wrestler, and let's face it, not many people do.

The quality of the individualised soundtracks is better on the SNES, but other than that, they're carbon copy carts. The in-game sprites are detailed enough to be distinctive (you'll get to recognise who's who in the rumble very quickly) and the animation is nice and smooth. The running dropkick is particularly cool.

When you're in the grapple it's a bit too much of a button bash for my liking, but overall, this is a high quality game that should keep Hulkamaniacs happy for a long time.

Andrew Humphreys

MD/SNES

available

NOW

category

WRESTLING/BEAT EM UP

players

1-2

publisher

ACCLAIM

visuals

High quality stills, detailed, well animated sprites, and a nice colourful ring (snigger, snigger).

85

sound

Excellent soundtracks and beefy FX for the big men.

87

gameplay

Lots of easy to execute moves make it a lot of fun to play, but it can degenerate into a button bashing contest.

83

longterm

It's a big enough game and there's two ways to play, but it might not last more than half an hour if you're the easily annoyed type.

82

overall

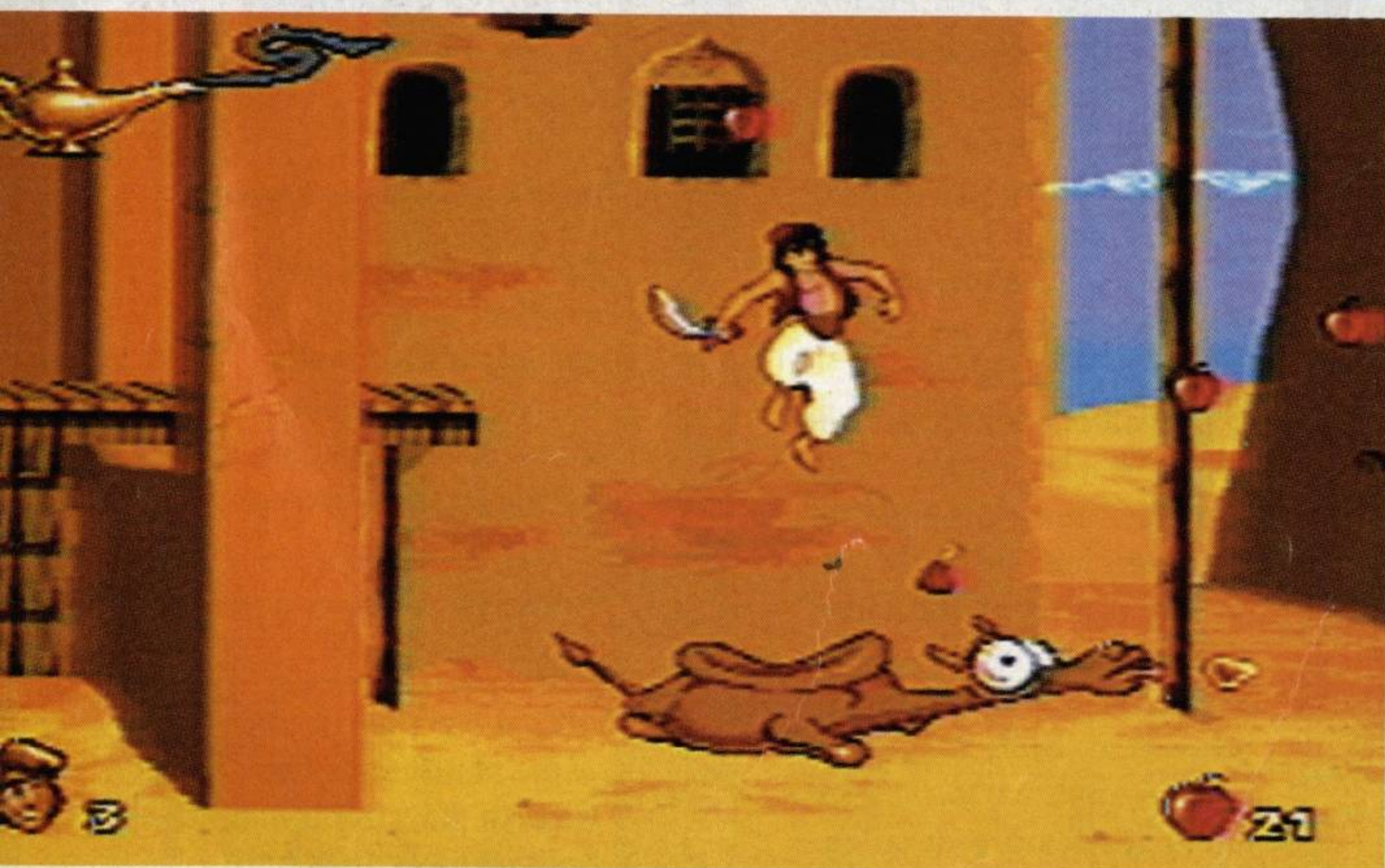
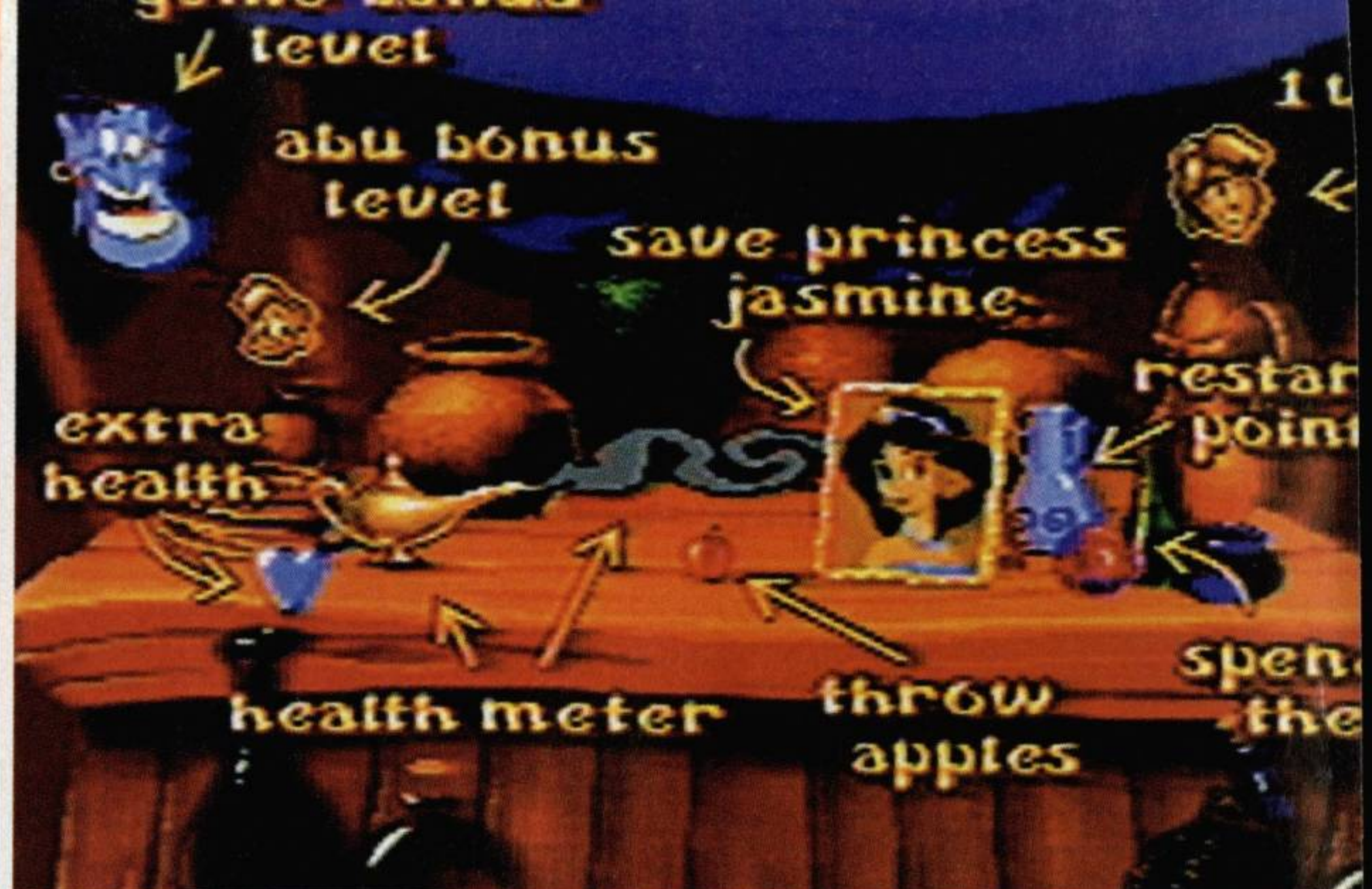
The ONLY wrestling game worth buying. As tacky as the real thing and just as much fun.

84%

REVIEW >>

2450

ABU





Aladdin

No fancy intro needed for this one. Aladdin is going to be one of the biggest games of the year. Pull up a camel as ANDREW HUMPHREYS rubs his magic lamp (that's what he's calling it this week, anyhow) and tells you why...

Ask anyone, this is THE game for Christmas. At the slightest mention of Aladdin, video game hacks like myself go weak at the knees. Some lose control of all their major bodily functions. It's not pretty, but that's what happens when Sega, Disney, and Virgin get together - people get excited. We expected something big, something extra-special, and that's exactly what we got. It's enough to renew your faith in Santa.

Some Things You Probably Know Already

Aladdin is an Oscar-winning animated movie masterpiece. Robin Williams provided the voice for the Genie. Aladdin (the game) follows the story line and the characters of the movie. Most movie licences are crap games. Aladdin is not.

Virgin developed the game for Sega with the help of a team of ten Disney animators, most of whom worked on the film. Although Disney are no strangers to the video game world, this is the first time that Disney animators have been involved in the development of a game. They

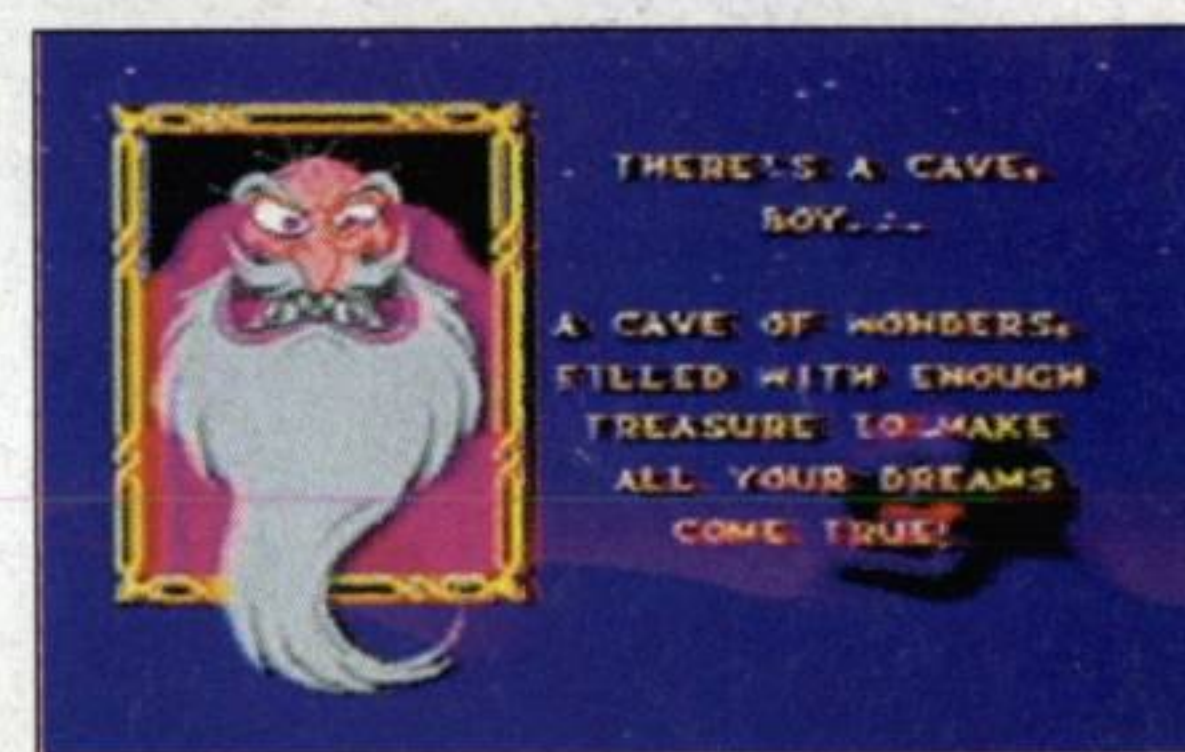
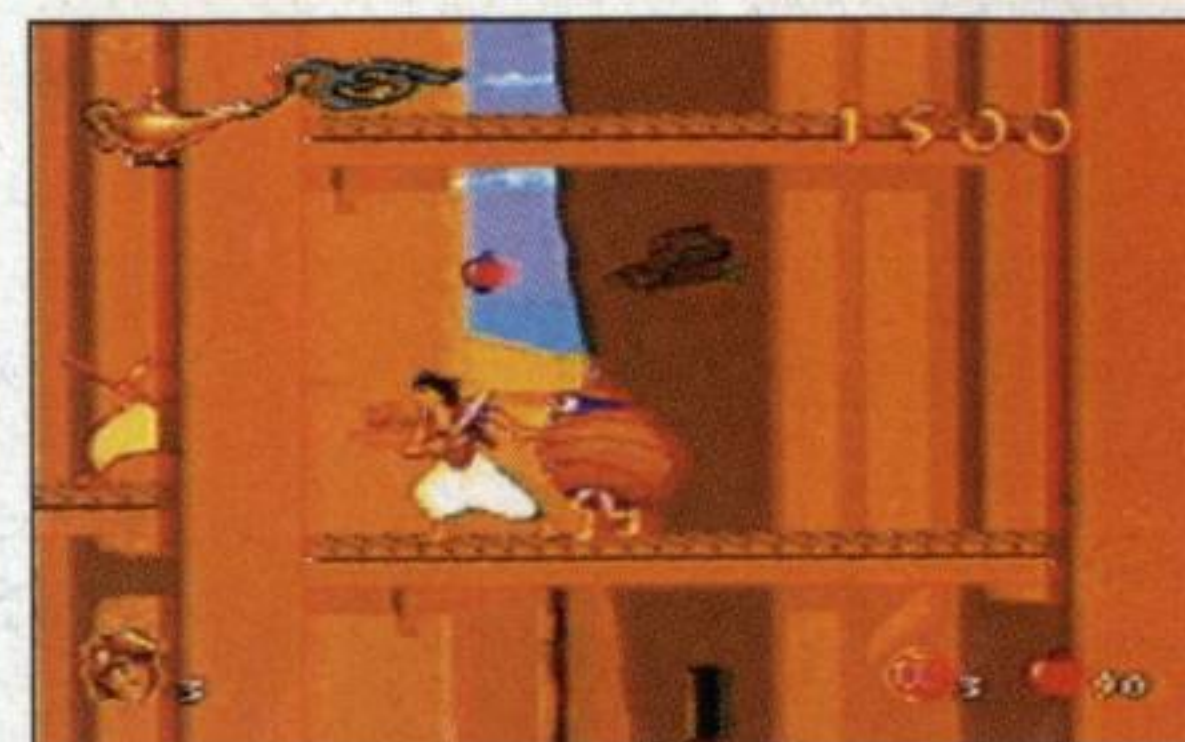
contributed 1500 hand-painted animation cels. In addition, over 250 000 cels from the film were made available to the game's designers.

Using a custom-designed cel transfer process, Virgin's programmers crammed all of this animated magic onto a 16 meg cart. The in-game animation moves at up to 60 frames per second. When you consider that the silky smooth animation of Flashback moves at 24 frames per second (the same rate as feature films) and that television images move at 30 frames per second, you begin to get some idea of just what a stunning technical achievement Aladdin is.

Some Things You Might Not...

Aladdin has ten very different levels. Playing as Aladdin (it takes a little while to get used to the funny pants), it's up to you to foil the plans of the evil Jafar and win the hand of the lovely Princess Jasmine. Your journey roughly follows Aladdin's journey in the film. You start out in the streets of Agribah with nothing but your sword and apple-throwing skills to help you. You cross the desert, escape the Sultan's dungeon, and journey to the Cave of Wonders in search of the Genie's lamp. Then you must escape the Cave and defeat Jafar to claim your bride.

There's a stack of bonus levels too. There are Genie bonus levels and Abu bonus levels. You get to both by collecting the appropriate icon (an intro screen shows you every item in the game). The Genie levels are simple - you just push a button and try to win extra lives, gems and apples. In the Abu levels you control Abu the monkey as he tries to collect items and avoid various traps. It's a nice addition to the main game.



Some Things You Should Know

Aladdin is the best looking Mega Drive game ever. Sega claim that Aladdin brings movies and games a step closer together, and they're right. It really does look just like a cartoon, and not just any old cartoon, but a high quality Disney feature. The backgrounds are beautifully drawn and coloured, Aladdin and the bad guys look like they jumped straight out of the film, and the animation is faultless. You've got no idea how good a game can look until you've seen Aladdin in action. The graphics and the animation set new standards of excellence, not just for the Mega Drive, but for all games machines.

The music for each level is lifted straight from the movie soundtrack. It would be much nicer if it was CD quality, but hey, this is a cartridge game, and for a cart game, the music is very good. The sound effects are great too. Squawking parrots sound like squawking parrots, swords clash together nicely, and there's some good speech in there - although I could swear I've heard some of the effects before.

Yep, no one adds spit and polish quite like Virgin. All of their Mega Drive titles are nothing if not polished (Global Gladiators is nothing but polish). But (and I can hear you all screaming now) what about the gameplay? Don't fret. Aladdin may be a platform game, but it's a very, very good platform game. There's heaps to do, the levels are well designed with plenty of twists, turns, and secret rooms and passages to keep you happy, and the three difficulty settings provide a reasonable challenge.

The controls are excellent. Usually, when a game looks as good this one, you start to worry about how well it plays. But Aladdin plays superbly. Every movement is ultra-smooth and very responsive. He

Capcom are currently working on the SNES version of Aladdin. It won't have the benefit of the Disney animation team or Virgin's new coding process, but it's still looking pretty smart. As soon as we get our hands on a copy we'll review it. Promise.

jumps when and where you want him to jump, swipes his sword when you want him to swipe, climbs ropes and swings hand over hand across washing lines when you want him to climb ropes and swing hand over hand across washing lines, and he's more acrobatic than Burt Lancaster (not now of course; when he was young and did all those movies like The Crimson Pirate).

All This and It's Funny Too

Aladdin does more than just look like the movie - it manages to capture the humour and feel of the movie as well. Talk a walk in the desert and, along with socks and underwear, you'll find a pair of Mickey Mouse ears hanging from a washing line strung between two palm trees. Only Disney can be this cute and get away with it.

The only problem with Aladdin might be its long term challenge. We all flew through the first four

or five levels on our first go (on Normal), but things did start to get a lot tougher after that.

Once you get used to the levels though, even the trickier ones, you won't have many new problems to face - and (if you collect enough gems) you can buy extra lives and continues from some shonky-looking traders along the way. The solution - play it on Hard right from the start.

Younger players will love Aladdin. Older players will love Aladdin. In fact, the world would be a much nicer place if all games were this, dare I say it in a tough, street-cred mag like HYPER, enchanting. Like Sonic, you won't play it forever, but you won't stop loving it.



MEGA DRIVE

available

NOVEMBER

category

PLATFORM ADVENTURE

players

1

publisher

SEGA

visuals

An absolutely stunning looking game. You'll pee your pants with joy.

96

sound

All the best numbers from the movie soundtrack, but it's not of the same quality. CD sound would've been perfect.

90

gameplay

Excellent controls and heaps of things to do. It's a joy to play, and that alone will keep you coming back to it.

93

longterm

10 levels, bonus levels and lots of secrets to discover, but once you're into it, you might fly through it very quickly.

84

overall

The movie was fantastic and (for once) so is the game. Why can't all games look this good and play this well?

94%

arcades revenge spiderman vs. X-men

A game with Spiderman AND the X-Men as its heroes! It's got to be good, doesn't it? No, it doesn't, and it's not. DAVID WILDGOOSE checks out the SNES version.

I remember when I was about eight or so, getting up at the crack of dawn every Saturday morning just to see Spiderman battling all kinds of evil foes and making the world a safer place. Spidey may have been a bit wet — there were always too many gooey (no pun intended) scenes for my liking — but that web shooting was so cool. And he had the decency to wear his underpants beneath his suit.

All of which means that I was quite eager to play this game. Unfortunately though, despite all the happy memories it brought back, I was left feeling pretty cold.

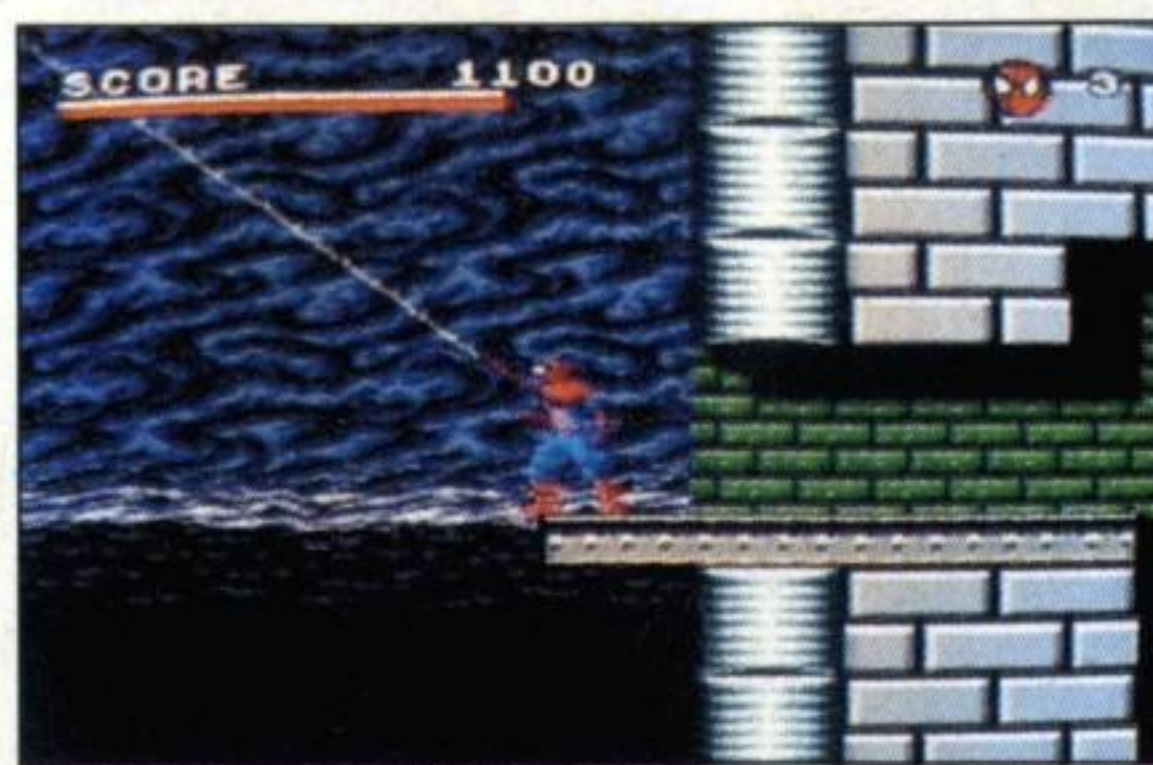
Initially it looks alright. You can play Spidey or any of the X-Men and they all have their different weapons and abilities. Spidey has his web, Wolverine his claws, Cyclops has his optic blast, Storm her lightning bolts and Gambit has some...well, um... playing cards. The fearless quintet have gathered to show token Evil bloke, Arcade, the error of his ways, ie. they are going to kill him. Each X-Men character has to negotiate two

levels and then Spidey will go in to complete the job, so there's plenty of variation in the gameplay. The graphics are good but not outstanding — the water effects on Storm's first level do come close, however.

But a few plays later you'll be bored. Why? Because it's soulless and has no atmosphere. Having so many different levels and characters may seem like a good idea but it doesn't hang together to create a satisfying game. I would have preferred to have just one or two characters (Storm and Spidey) and have them developed a lot further.

As it is, Spiderman & X-Men is ten times better than the similar Lethal Weapon, yet still no match for the likes of Super Castlevania IV.

Pity.



The Mega Drive's Revenge

This is another one of those games that's basically exactly the same on Mega Drive and SNES. Play the two of them one after another and, aside from the different control pads, you'd think you were playing the same game - and you'd be right.

On some levels (Gambit's in particular) it looks as though a bit more spit and polish has gone into the graphics on the SNES version, but for both machines, the graphics are nothing more than average. The soundtracks are the same but again, because of its superior sound chip, the overall quality is better on the SNES.

There's nothing particularly wrong with Arcade's Revenge, it's just not a good game. Being able to choose from five super heroes is a nice idea, but as David says, it doesn't come off. None of the levels offer anything beyond the usual jump/attack platform thrills and spills, so although you're playing as a different character, it never feels like you're doing anything different at all.

If you're a Mega Drive owner with a fetish for super heroes, give this one a miss and go for either Spiderman or The X-Men on their own. Both are better games than Arcade's Revenge. The X-Men is probably the pick of the two (because it's slicker and for two players), but even the old Spidey game stacks up against this.

Andrew Humphreys

FORMAT: MD/SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: PLATFORM

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM

visuals

Teeny-weeny sprites but the animation's OK. The backdrops are universally bland.

68

sound

The music is kind of super-heroic. Sound FX are sparse, and usually dull.

74

gameplay

A wide variety of characters with different abilities to choose from, but pretty standard platform stuff.

65

longterm

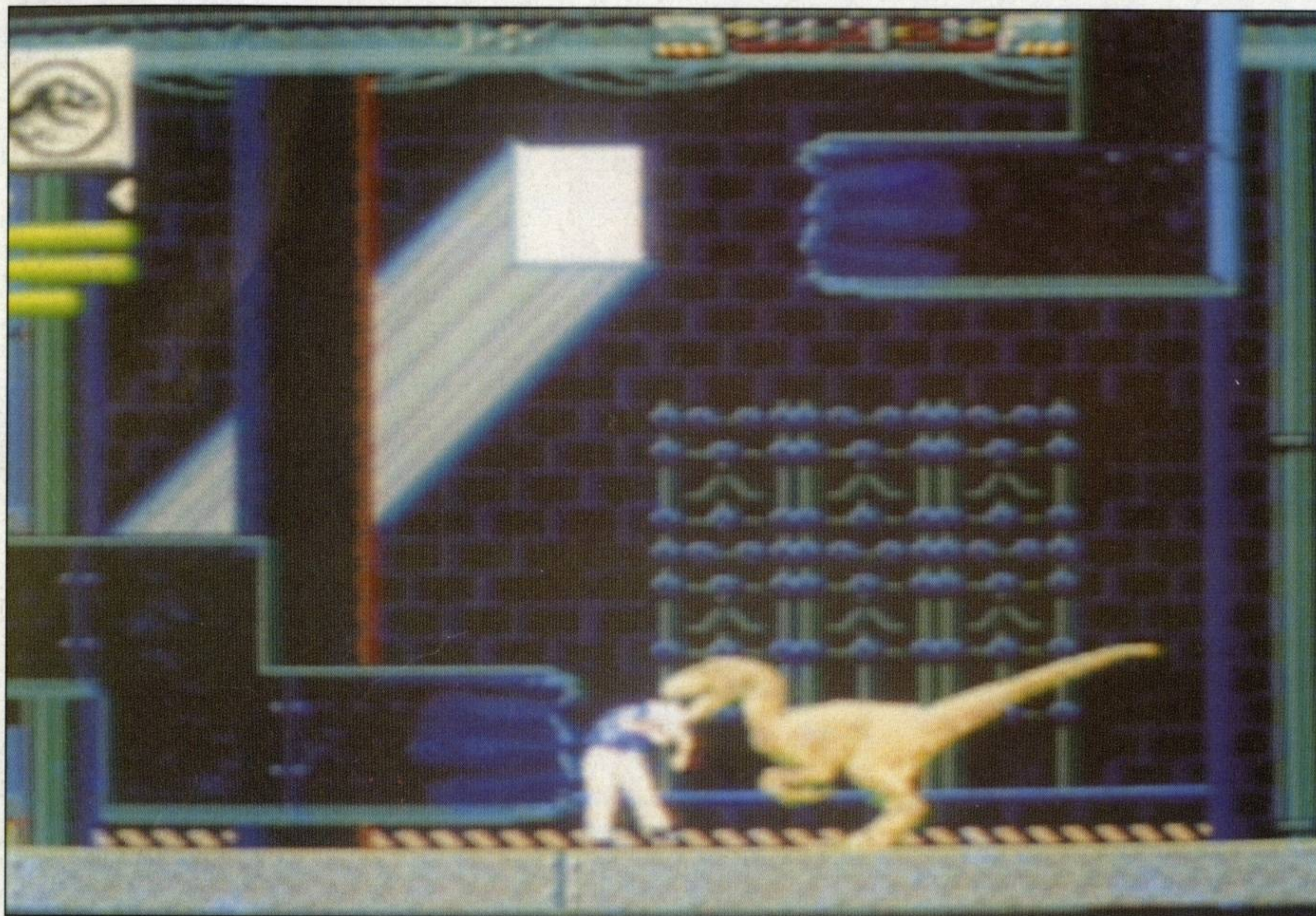
A decent amount of levels and it's not the easiest game in the world, but once you finish it...

62

overall

It may have a lot of characters, but there's not a lot of character. Uninspiring, standard platform fodder.

62%



It's the biggest film of the year, but is Jurassic Park on Mega Drive just a big, steaming heap of dino-poo? ANDREW HUMPHREYS puts on some rubber boots to find out...

Jurassic JPark

Jurassic Puke?

Surely it couldn't be, could it? I mean, Sega of America just wouldn't release any old game to cash-in on a blockbuster movie, would they? Besides, it's a 16 meg game. All that memory to play with should produce something special. And it's full of dinosaurs. It has to be good. But it isn't. Something has gone horribly wrong. Jurassic Park is just a very ordinary platform game, no more, no less.

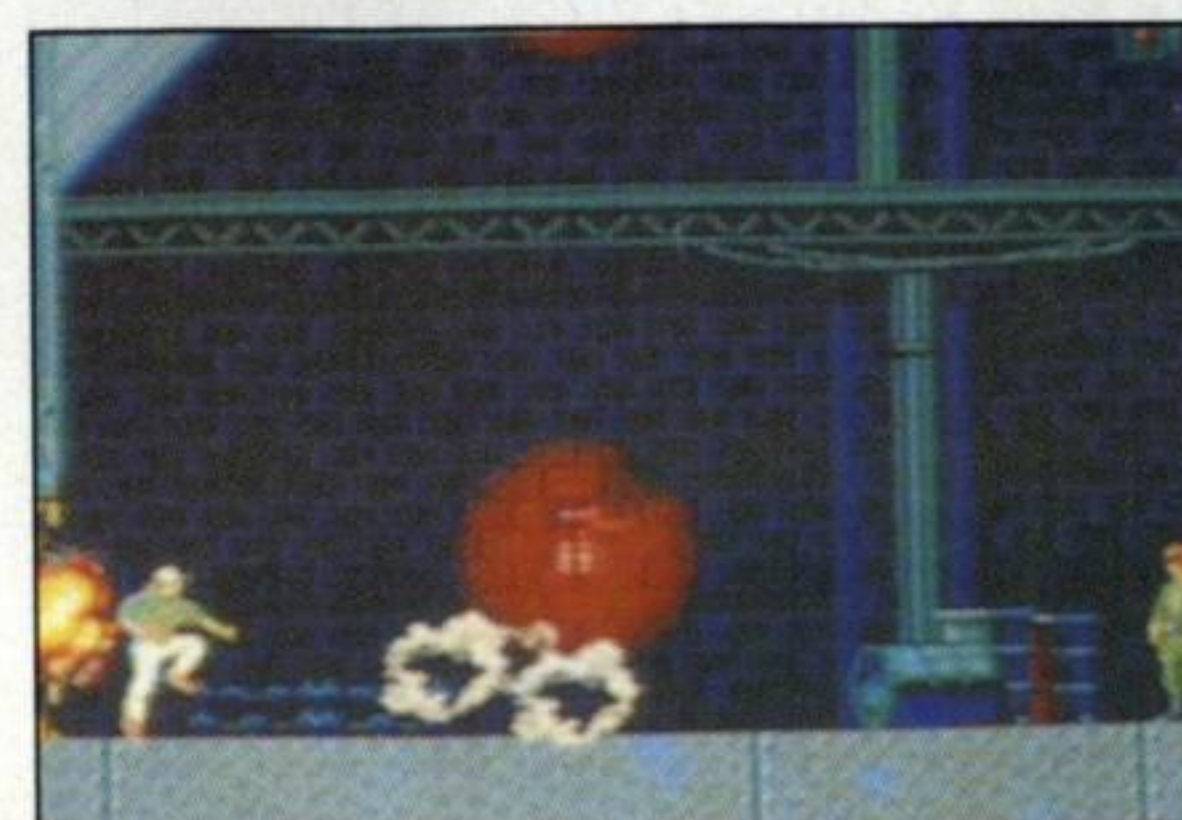
This revelation will no doubt come as a bit of a disappointment to those of you expecting big things. But don't let it get to you; look upon it as a learning experience, and don't be so gullible next time. I mean, when was the last time you saw a decent movie licence? Lethal Weapon for the SNES? I doubt it.

Anyway, on with the review. The problem with Jurassic Park (or is that Puke?) lies fairly and squarely with the game's controls. The control

layout itself (select weapon, fire, and jump) is fine, but everything is so horribly unresponsive that the game quickly becomes frustrating to play. You can't help but feel that it's somehow unfinished. Is it the gameplay glitches, those rough edges on the animation, or just the fact that occasionally you die suddenly for no good reason? Who can tell? Whatever it is, the gameplay is very tedious and finishing a level is a real work out for your patience.

Choose your player: Man or Beast

You've got the choice of playing Jurassic Park as either Dr Grant (that Sam Neill bloke) or as a Velociraptor dinosaur (The Raptor). Supposedly, this gives you two separate games with two separate objectives. As Grant, it's up to you to make your way through seven levels of the Park to rescue a group of people trapped in the Visitors Centre. As the Raptor, you're trying to escape from the Park.



But this time there's only five levels (uncannily similar to those for Dr Grant) to the game.

Playing as Dr Grant, Jurassic Park invites comparisons to Flashback. The first level is set in a jungle, there's loads of platforms and the like to climb and jump around on, and the animation of the main sprite makes some attempt at "realism". Unfortunately, whilst the fluidity of movement of Flashback's Conrad Hart is legendary, the animation on Dr Grant is quite rough so all of his movements seem a little jerky. His leaps border on the ridiculous.

And so, with Flashback still in mind, you realise that this game, unlike Flashback, has nothing to offer beyond its platform hijinks. There's no variety in gameplay, and nothing to test your puzzle skills. You just keep moving on, stunning a few dinos and flicking

A pretty face

All of this is a bit of a shame because, with the exception of the animation on Dr Grant, Jurassic Park is quite a nice looking game. The level of depth and detail put into the backgrounds and the number of dinosaurs that appear throughout the game shows that someone put a good deal of effort into their work. There's just no game to go on top of it all. Why? Because either no one bothered play testing the thing, or the play testers were very drunk at the time, saw a couple of nice looking dinosaurs and thought it was great.

No doubt some people out there will like Jurassic Park. If you can cope with high levels of frustration and a fair whack of tedium then this may be the game for you. As I said, it does look nice, and it will

MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

PLATFORM

players

1

publisher

SEGA OF AMERICA

visuals

Nice backgrounds and cool Dinos, with good animation on the Raptor. Grant's animation is poor and the scrolling could be better.

sound

The in game music is sparse and atmospheric, but the FX are repetitive and ultimately annoying.

gameplay

Awful controls, and nothing to do but jump around and fire. Less satisfying than Brenda and Dylan's unresolved relationship.

longterm

It's a big enough game and there's two ways to play, but it might not last more than half an hour if you're the easily annoyed type.

overall

I really don't like this game at all. It's unimaginative and virtually unplayable. If it didn't look OK the score would be lower.

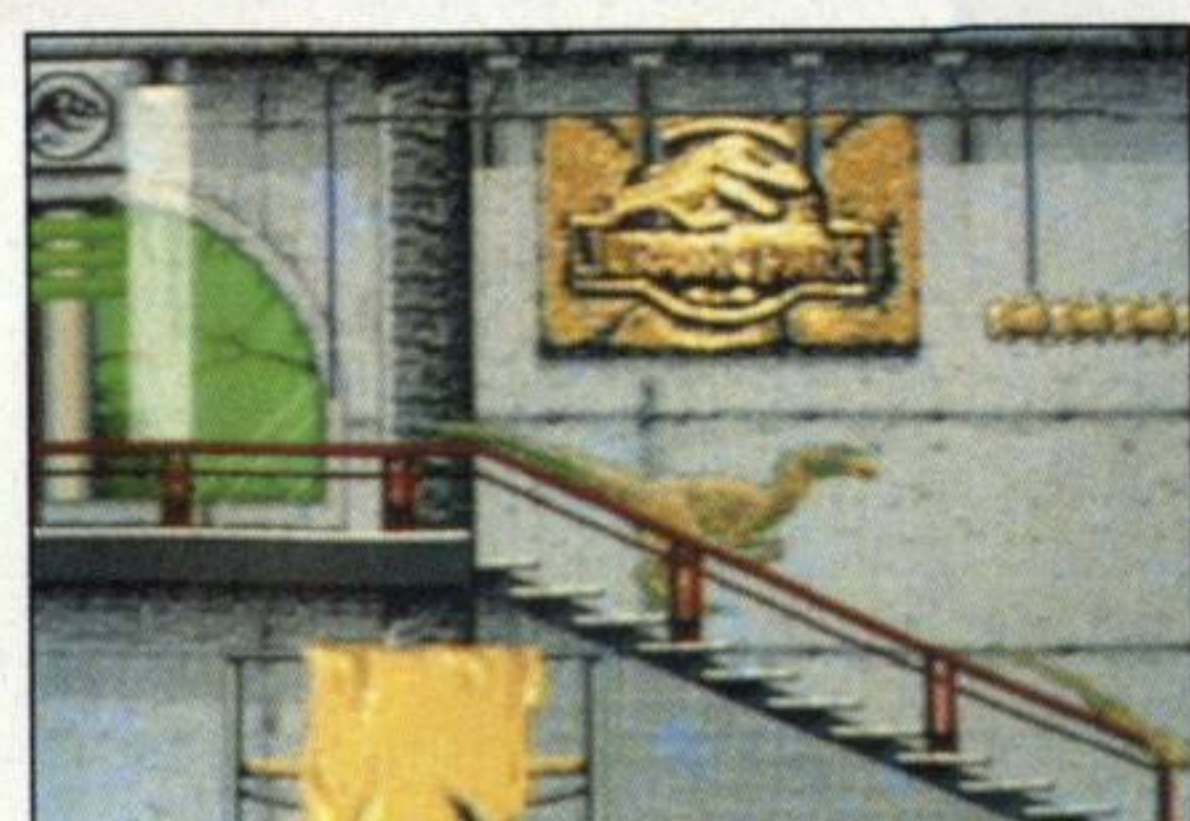
62%

Another Crap Movie Licence

Why are most movie licences crap? It doesn't matter how good a movie is, by the time software producers get around to whacking it on a cart, you can almost guarantee that it'll end up as very average platform game.

Is it because film licences don't need to be good games - they'll sell on the strength of the movie's hype?

Left: Some rare examples of quality movie conversions



the odd switch, until you find the exit.

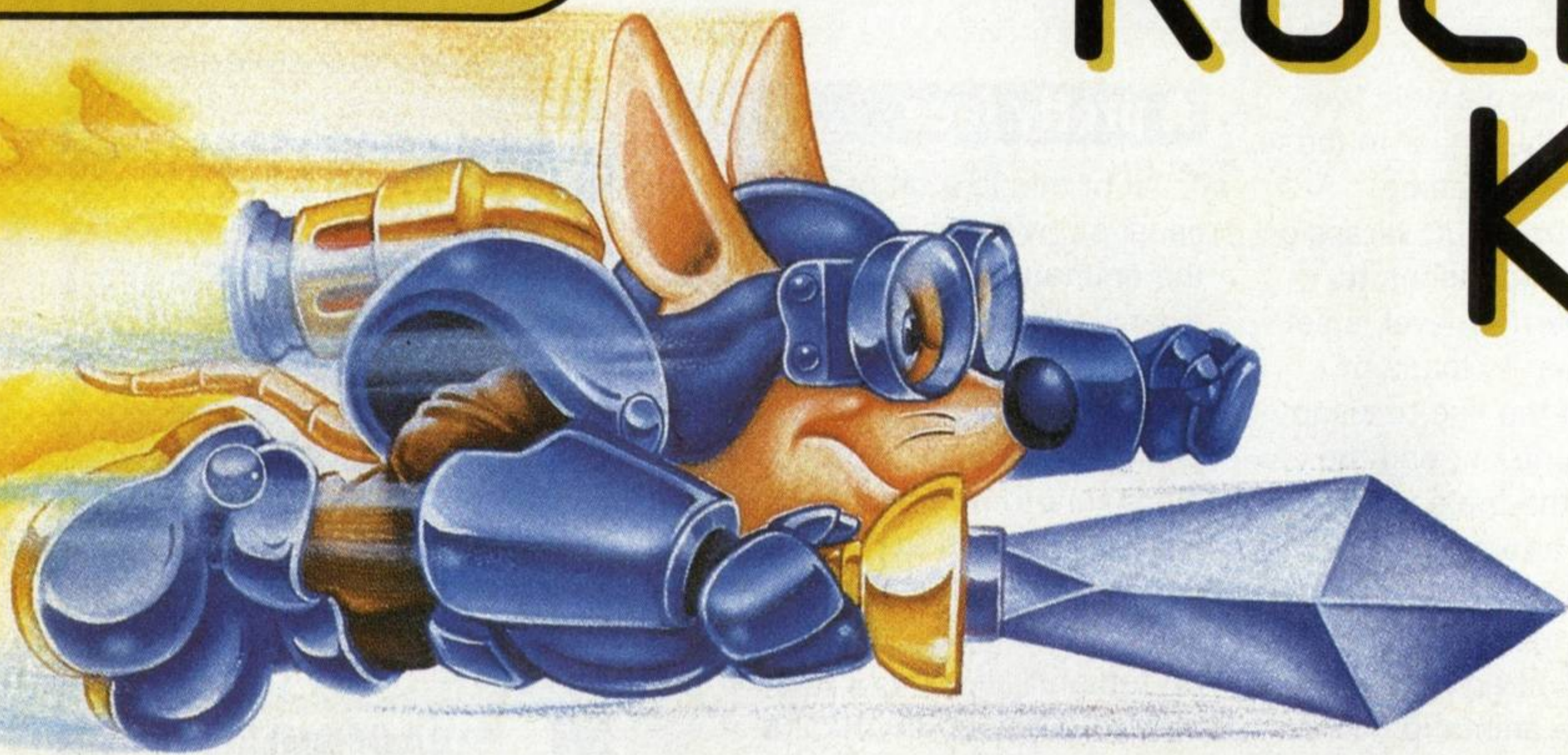
Playing as the Raptor is much the same, although because the controls are a bit more responsive, the animation is excellent and you get to be a dinosaur for a change, it's easier to convince yourself that you're having fun. Instead of shooting at dinosaurs, you get to jump on human guards (all of whom let out the same annoying scream - the very same annoying scream that Grant lets out as he dies) standing between you and the exit.

take a little while to complete because of the crap play control. But even if it played beautifully, it would still be a very average platformer. There's nothing in this cart you won't find done better elsewhere.

Unfortunately, a lot of unsuspecting Mums and Dads out there who don't read HYPER will buy Jurassic Park for their kiddies for Christmas. Don't be angry with them - they think they're doing a good thing. Forgive them - it's Christmas afterall.

Andrew Humphries

Rocket Knight



Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, no, it's... an Opossum with a jetpack? Yes, Sparkster, Konami's latest platform hero, is here and he's making a big spectacle of himself on the Mega Drive.

Demographically Targetted Cuteness

A jet-propelled 17 year old Opossum named Sparkster? With a sword? Done up in Knight's armor? An obvious video game hero really - he's cute, he's got a bit of an attitude, a silly name, and loads of youthful exuberance (his motto is the very radical, "Live life as you please"). Besides, he's also been heavily test-marketed. Konami apparently held an internal competition for its designers to create a bankable hero for a platform game. Eager Japanese gamers were then given a look at the candidates and the vote was a resounding win to the Opossum. Chuck in a silly "Good vs Evil in a mystical faraway land" story line and you've got yourself a product.

The mystical faraway land is called Elhorn, the bad guy's called Axle Gear (the Black Knight), and the innocent kidnap victim who Sparkster must rescue is the Princess Sherry. So much for the plot. What you find yourself playing is a platformer with loads of enemies, heaps of mid-level and end of level bosses, a dash of originality, and great variety in gameplay. It's not your run of the mill platformer - Rocket Knight Adventures is a game of exceptional quality. It's been well story-boarded and well programmed to give it that something special you should always be looking for in a game.

Playing Possum

As you'd expect from a platformer, there's a jump button and an attack button, but Sparkster's got a lot more hidden up his jet-pack. His sword fires an energy blast with every swipe to hit enemies from afar and his tail is more than useful for climbing and hanging off tree branches and the like. Holding down the attack button charges up the rocket engines; release it and he charges across the

screen in any direction you choose. It's handy for reaching high places, and it's handy for attacking - shoot across the ground with your sword as a lance, or go into a sword-spinning frenzy to dispatch the bad guys. It's a simple control system but it gives you a lot of things to do.

Rocket Knight's greatest strength is the variety in gameplay. It's the variety that keeps you interested. Sure an Opossum in armour is cute, but that's not enough to hold up a game. Every level (and there's lots of them) is different from the last. You find yourself glued to the screen just waiting to see what Konami's wizards will throw at you next. The first level might be your standard jump, shoot, and climb affair, but soon you'll be flying, swimming, riding a series of roller-coasters, or moving in and out of the screen to fight a particularly nasty character.

You have to keep adjusting yourself to the changes in gameplay, and because of this you have to keep thinking - a very rare quality in a platformer. You can't just jump and swing your sword and hope for the best; you need to take a close look at what you're faced with and then try to figure out a way past it. Each level averages about three or four bosses too, from the tough to the incredibly tough, so those of you that like a bit of a challenge need look no further.

Naked Pigs Get Embarrassed

The graphics are excellent in that very Konami style: lots of comical touches (ever seen how



Adventures

embarrassed a naked pig gets?), lots of colour, great depth, and faultless detail. Check out Tiny Toons on Mega Drive or SNES and you'll see what I mean. The baddies ooze personality, and the nameless ugly-as-sin creatures and monstrous machines, are well drawn and beautifully animated. Music wise, everything's dandy too. All of the tunes are nice and atmospheric, keeping up with the mood and pace of the game.

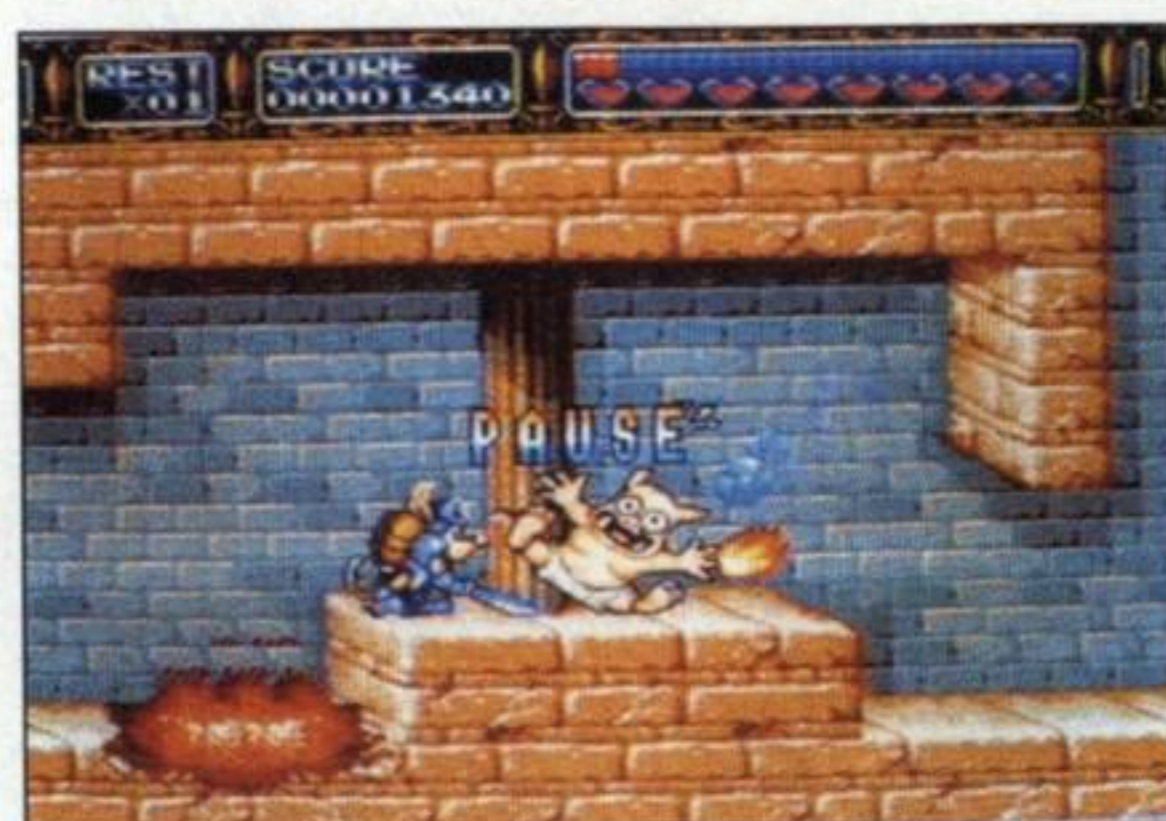
My only problem with the game is over long term play. Once you do manage to finish it - and make no mistake, anyone who keeps at it will finish it - what's in the cart to come back for? But that's more a problem with platform games overall; they just aren't made to last forever.



Charge up the jet pack and it's up, up and away!

Limitations aside, this is the way all platform games should be. Put a great character in a challenging game with excellent gameplay and you can't go far wrong. Hopefully Sparkster will be making an appearance on the Super Nintendo soon too. He really is one mean Opossum of action.

Andrew Humphreys



It's Sparkster and a naked pig. Careful Sparkster, people will talk...



One of the many flying sequences that break up the levels.



More naked pigs. Really Sparkster, you've got to control yourself more!



This looks nice doesn't it.



A mid-level boss thingy.



An end of level Boss thingy.



Another boss thingy. Oh, and yes we know they all say "Pause"!

MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

PLATFORM

players

1

publisher

KONAMI

visuals

Colourful and comical. Detailed backgrounds with well drawn and animated sprites.

85

sound

Cool FX and tunes that actually relate to what's going on on-screen.

87

gameplay

Easy to use and ultra-responsive controls mean this is an easy game to get into. The constant changes of pace keep you hooked.

83

longterm

Heaps of levels and even more bosses to defeat mean you'll be at it for a while, but once it's all over, what's left?

82

overall

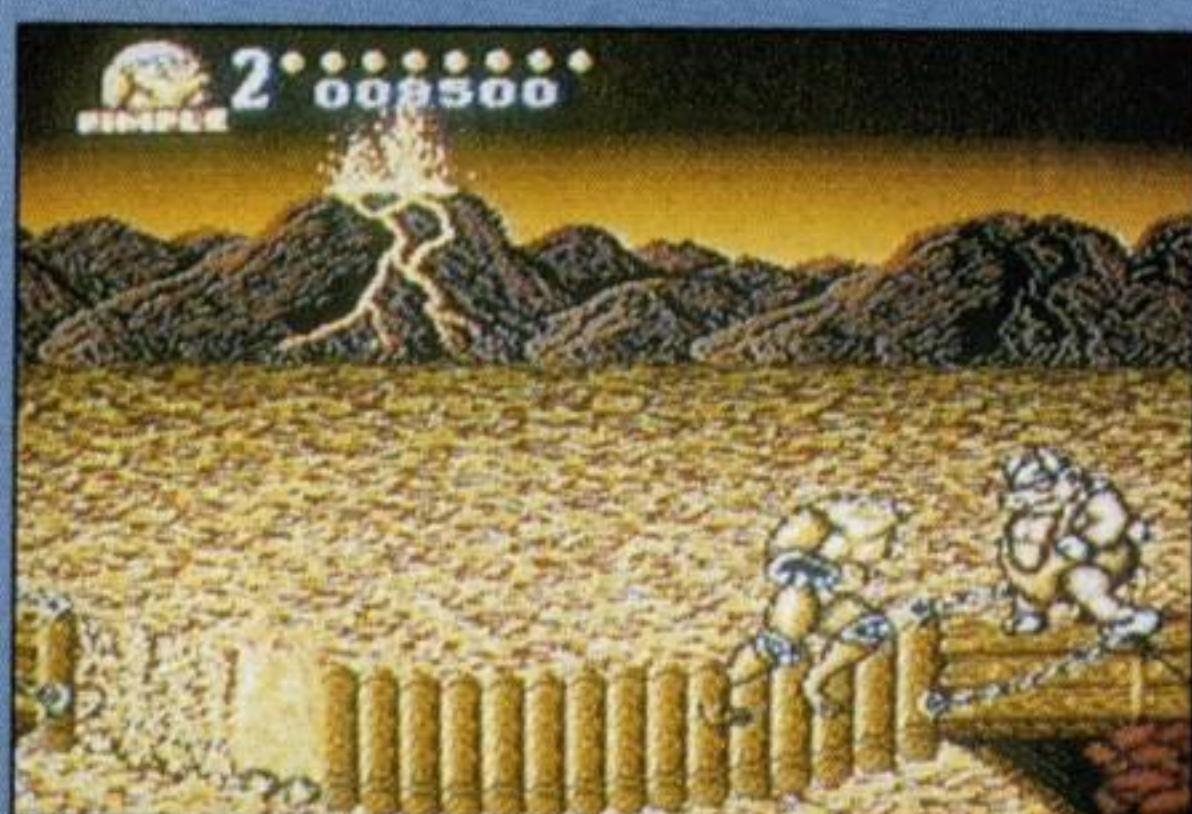
A well thought out and original platformer with instant mass appeal.

84%



Battletoads in Battlemaniacs

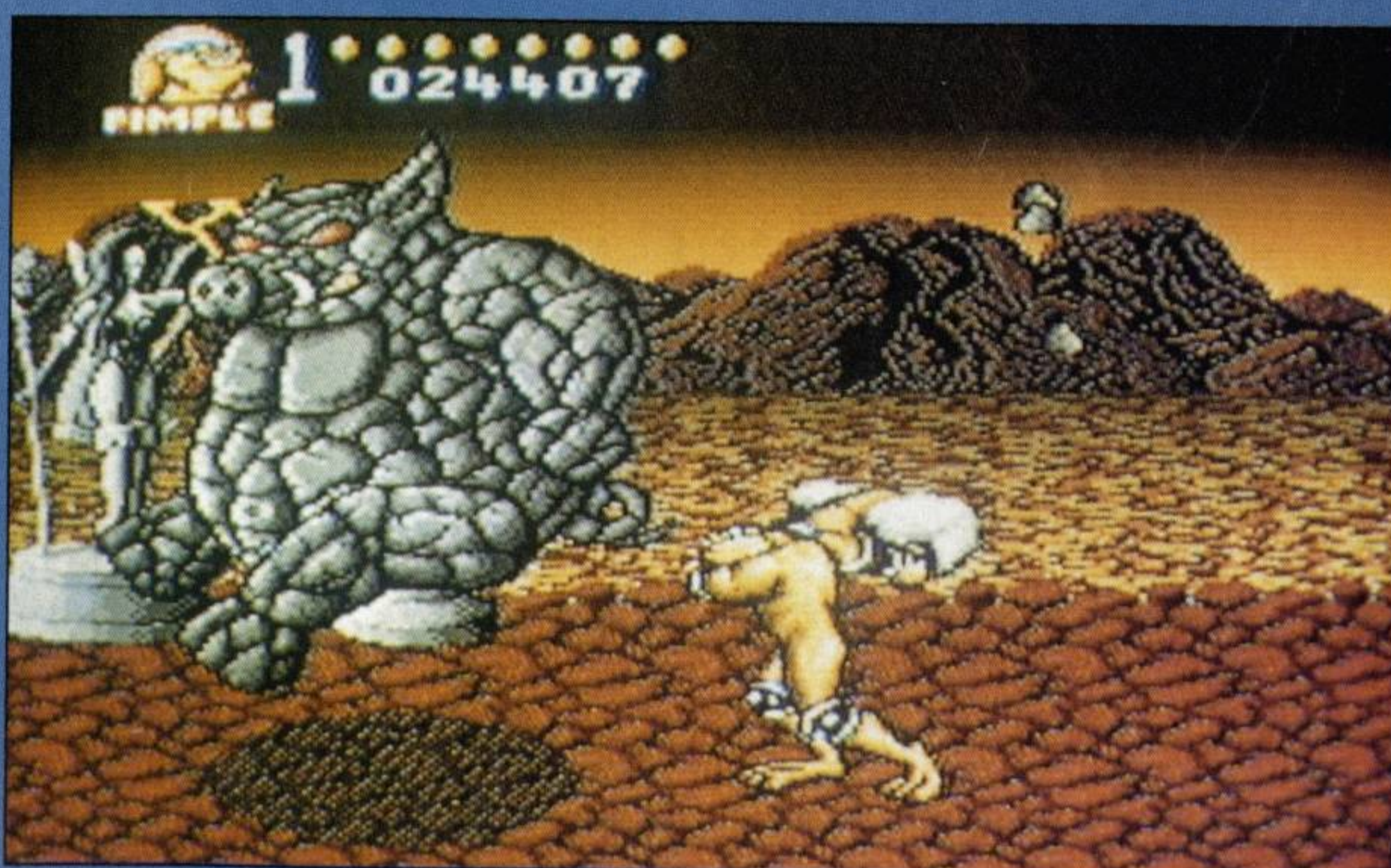
Zitz, Pimple and Rash are back!
ANDREW HUMPHREYS
returns from the
dermatologist
with a review of
Battletoads on
the SNES...



Don't cross that burning bridge until you come to it.



Pimple crapping himself when he sees the giant stone pig!



Battletoads was the biggest third party game ever on the old 8 bit Nintendo. It had a lot going for it - nice graphics (for the time), good characters, and most importantly, varied gameplay. After a bit of a failed trip to the Mega Drive, we've now got a brand new game for the SNES, and things are looking a lot better.

Clearasil

The plot is explained well with some nice intro screens. Zitz, Rash and Pimple, along with their mentor, Professor T. Bird, are testing a new virtual reality system, high in the Himalayas. Unfortunately, the Four Psyko Pigs of the Apocalypse burst through the computer generated portal and grab Zitz and some bird who was hanging around at the test site. Of course, those notorious bad guys, Silas Volkmire and the evil (but sexy) Dark Queen are behind it all. Rash and Pimple, being the heroic toads that they are, jump to the rescue.

What it all amounts to is a five level (plus bonus rounds), multi-scrolling beat em up bonanza for one or two players. The game scrolls both vertically and horizontally, and (surprise!) you get to hit things as you go. The toads have a lot of moves, but they're all

activated automatically. There's a jump button to go with the attack button and you can run by tapping twice to the left or right, but it's best to just concentrate on the good old attack button.

Take the Five Day Test

The graphics are uniformly excellent. The toad sprites are big, detailed and animated with a lot of humour. Their fists turn into hammers, they grow big rams' horns when they head butt, and when they get flattened by, say, a big stone pig, they really get flattened. The toads would hate me to say it, but it's very much like a Turtles' game. The backgrounds have a lot of depth, a lot of colour, and more than their own fair share of detail too.

Like all Battletoads games, there's more variety to the gameplay than just beating up an array of uglies (although for the most part, that's exactly what you'll be doing). There's tunnels to explore, trees to climb, roller coasters to ride, and the trusty toad vehicles - Speeder Bikes in level 3 and Tracktors in level 5 - to race. The ten pin bowling bonus level is a lot of fun too.

You might think that with only five levels you'll breeze through Battlemaniacs in a day or two. Don't be fooled - this is one tough game. There's no password feature and you've only got a couple of continues. Even with two experienced players, the sheer number of enemies is bound to take its toll. In fact, a lot of players will find the game too tough.

Battlemaniacs is the best Battletoads game yet. If you're a fan, you'll love it. The only thing that bothers me is that, in 1993, the Battletoads just aren't that special anymore. This is a very slick game, make no mistake, but much like Final Fight 2, you can't

help but wonder, what's the point of it all? But if a good side-scrolling beat em up still pushes your attack button, this could be the game for you.

Thanks to the Gamesman for the cart.

FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

BEAT EM UP

PLAYERS: 1-2

TRADE WEST

visuals

The Toads are big and tough and the backdrops are very impressive.

90

sound

Just the one tune, and the effects are nothing special either.

75

gameplay

A fair bit of variety, but just bashing away on one button for most of the time gets a bit dull.

78

longterm

Only five levels but they're all tough, and there's a conspicuous lack of continues.

80

overall

The best Battletoads game by far, but it is wearing a bit thin and it will be too tough for some.

79%



The first thing you'll notice when you look at Final Fight 2, is how much it looks like Final Fight 1. The first thing you'll notice when you play Final Fight 2, is how much it plays like Final Fight 1. In fact, Final Fight 2 is Final Fight 1 with only a few minor adjustments. I suppose I should be used to it by now, but game sequels (like movie sequels) just tend to ape the original success, and very little thought or originality goes in to their production. Final Fight is definitely a case in point.

The plot has barely even changed. After a crushing defeat in the first game, the Mad Gear Gang have inexplicably returned. Instead of kidnapping Haggar's daughter they've kidnapped Guy's master, Genryusai and his daughter, Rena. Same end result though, because Haggar rips off his Mayoral shirt and heads for the streets for a bit of biff. Guy and Cody are taking a holiday from being vigilantes, so this time around Haggar is joined by two new friends, Maki (Genryusai's other daughter) and Carlos, a sword carrying martial artist.

PC Points

Apart from Carlos' deadly swords, there's nothing particularly special about the two new fighters, but Capcom get PC (political correctness) points for including a female character. Too often the girls are just the helpless kidnap victim, but Maki is as hard and fast as the blokes, and has some very damaging kicks in her repertoire. In fact all three characters have their own special moves (ones that drain your energy). Haggar has his swinging arm trick that floors all opponents within reach; Maki has a spinning handstand kick (very clever), and Carlos whips out his sword and slashes anyone in the immediate vicinity.

The good thing about Final Fight 2 for Super Nintendo owners, is that it is a two-player

Well, Capcom lied. Final Fight was actually Penultimate Fight, because here's Final Fight 2 (otherwise known as the Really Final Fight). STUART CLARKE takes to the streets to do a spot of heavy fisting...

game, unlike the original Final Fight. So now you and a friend can do double the damage. And you'll need to, as some of the Mad Gear Gang are rock hard towards the end. You'll find that you'll cruise through the first few levels, then you'll start getting your ass whipped by the likes of Bratken, Philippe and Rolent. Conserve lives as much as you can in the first few levels if you want to survive the later ones.

Lobsters & Dim Sims

Luckily there are all sorts of food bonuses that will restore your energy. Smash in boxes and barrels and inside could be anything from a dim sum to a lobster. Weapons are also to be found, such as nightsticks, knives and chunks of wood.



Final Fight 2

There are also bonus point items like diamonds, incense and radios. But if you've played Final Fight (or Streets of Rage) you'll know all this. There's really not a lot more to say, except that this time you're not stuck in Metro City, but get to travel through Asia and Europe. This doesn't affect the gameplay at all, but gives the opportunity for some nice looking backdrops (look out for Chun Li having a cup of tea in Hong Kong).

If scrolling beat 'em ups are your thing, you'll love Final Fight 2, but to my taste it's unoriginal and boring. While it may look great and be technically excellent, as far as I'm concerned, if you've played one, you've played them all.

Thanks to the Gamesman for the cart.



FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

BEAT EM UP

PLAYERS: 1-2

CAPCOM

visuals

Detailed backdrops add atmosphere, while the large sprites move well (if a bit slowly).

91

sound

Sound effects are generally good, but the music gets very annoying, very quickly.

78

gameplay

Exactly the same as Final Fight, Streets of Rage 2 and all the other scrolling beat 'em ups.

77

longterm

You'll be bored fairly easily, especially if you own Final Fight.

75

overall

If you like beat 'em ups, and don't own Final Fight, then check this one out. Good fun for two-players.

80%

GENERAL CHAOS

Death to all Hippies! It's time to play soldier. Yep, burn that Peace sign (it's out of fashion anyway) and sign up with the army of General Chaos.

Take two Generals - General Chaos of Moronica and General Havoc of Viceria - give them armies to play with, a couple of VHS copies of Full Metal Jacket, and a large dose of angry pills, and what do you get? War, that's what. It's brutal, often degrading, and it reveals the essentially violent nature of Man, but done right, it can be a lot of fun.

General Chaos tries to do it right and, in part, it succeeds. It's fast and furious, it's funny (as funny as mass death and destruction can be), it's basically an original game concept, and with four players (using EA's 4-Way Play thingy) battling it out simultaneously, it's a lot of fun to play. But on your own, it's let down a bit by a difficult control method and the kill anything that moves gameplay quickly loses some of its shine.

Kill 'em all

The aim of the game is simple: fight your way across a map screen (choosing the battlegrounds as you go) to defeat your opponent in their capital city. After a quick victory celebration you get a different map to conquer. And on it goes...

As a General, it's your job to pick the men you want for each mission and then to order them around in battle. You can choose between four different teams of armed loonies: the Assault Squad, Brute Force, and the Demolition Team each contain five soldiers, or you can send in a team of two Commandos to go it alone.

Each soldier may have a different weapon - a squad can contain a Gunner (machine gun), a Launcher

(rocket launcher), a Scorcher (flamethrower), a Chucker (grenades), and a Blaster (dynamite). They can also fight hand to hand in close combat. They all aim automatically, but you have to put them in the right place first.

Five at a time?

That's when it gets tricky: you have to toggle control between your five men to move them around, and in the middle of a raging battle you tend to forget the finer points of your strategy. Using a team of Commandos is much simpler, and in a multi-player game, where each player only has to worry about a maximum of two soldiers, it's quite straightforward. Plus you've got the very handy option of spending as much time as you like in Boot Camp to come to grips with the controls.

Graphically, they've done a very good job. The sprites are small, but they're well animated with a lot of detail and loads of comical touches (although sometimes it's not so funny when your gun jams). Each battleground is only a single screen though, so despite the programmers efforts, everything starts to look the same after a while.

The sound effects (and there's lots of them) add a lot to the frantic feel of the game. The soothing sounds of explosions, gun-fire, rockets and hand-to-hand combat are everywhere so you do feel like you're in the middle of a raging battle or at least like you're having a particularly interesting evening.

All in all, it's a well thought out game, and for four players, there is a good deal of fun to be had. Dress up in full battle dress and it's a riot



(although I always ended up with the nurses' outfit). For one player though, the control system and the ultimately repetitive gameplay may put you off. The moral to this story: get some friends.

Andrew Humphreys



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: NOW

ACTION STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1-4

PUBLISHER: EA

visuals

Detailed, well animated, comical sprites, but the non-scrolling backgrounds are a bit dull. **79**

sound

Military style music (lots of snare drums) and good sound FX. **80**

gameplay

For 1 player, the control system is a bit tricky, but with more players the control system simplifies. **69**

longterm

Multi-player games always have a decent shelf-life. **75**

overall

A very nice idea that just falls short of the mark. Give it a look though. **74%**

X ranger



Just about anything is possible in this big, bold future of ours. Hmm, how about flying robots being used to protect the remaining human population from even larger alien killing machines! Sounds good, let's make it a game

In fact, the exact details of the plot are a bit of a mystery. Rather than make it up, as is usual with reviewers of these indecipherable Japanese games, I thought "stuff it". After all, who needs a plot when you've got a game as good as this! Basically though, you're out to save Mother Earth from the huge alien machines.

Ooh, What a Big Gun!

You control a robot, complete with booster rocket for flying, who is armed with a rather big gun. Several big guns, in fact. With heaps of other big guns in the support craft. These weapons come in handy, because you aren't the only one with a big gun! There are enough enemies to start up an ice hockey league and they're hard enough to skate with the best! You'll be taking on robots that scale the landscape like the Walkers out of Return of the Jedi, plus flying military ships that are seeking you out with an aim to destroy.

The support system allows you to choose from one of 7 different types of kick-booty fire power. There are Bombs, Thunder Laser Beams, Wide Beams, as well as Buster Beams that act like smart bombs but suck more power out of you than an Atari Lynx! And finally there are Fire Flame Thrower, Shield and Metal Bird, which is like a heat seeking missile. Sounds impressive but its use is restricted, as your power

supply is punished upon use.

Your power back-up system can be recharged by solar power. In some underground levels, this is a problem. You have a short-term energy meter that restricts your immediate flying distance, because every move you make depletes it. But if you stop moving you will regain lost energy. Your support system (the Ex-Up) also functions as a motor bike, and you can use it to get through narrow paths, or even gain height if you stand on it the right way.

Colour My World

One notable feature is the use of colour. Thanks to new programming techniques (not special chips, which is an important difference), programmers have used 128 on-screen colours rather than the usual Mega Drive maximum of 64, and this is quite noticeable in the backgrounds. There's nothing quite so special for the sound effects, but there's no sloppy explosions here either!

All the rounds are challenging and enjoyable. There are 8 stages in all, with each round having an excellent intro showing you your next target. Round 1



has you destroying cannons that are shooting upon a distant village, then heading underground to destroy the enemy's power grid. You'll go through underground passages, through the woods and into fierce cities in the course of your mission. It all looks brilliant but you'll have no time to admire the scenery as this is a rock hard game. This one is real tough. No wimps need apply!

I'm trying, but I really can't say a bad word said about Ranger X. It offers a long-lasting challenge, originality, and heart-pumping, adrenalin-charged action. Don't just get this to impress your friends. Get it to impress yourself!

Brian Costelloe

FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: NOV.

SHOOT EM UP

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: SEGA JAPAN

visuals

Great back-grounds, attention to detail and lots of colours make this a spunky-looking game.

92

sound

About what you'd expect from a frantic action title.

84

gameplay

It might take a while to get the hang of the controls, but it's worth the effort.

87

longterm

This game is a real bitch, so you'll be stuck on it for quite a while.

92

overall

This one's for all those arcade blaster fans who like their games hard, fast and full of action.

88%

Super Baseball 2020

It's baseball with robotic players and explosions in the outfield, but does it hit a homer? ANDREW HUMPHREYS pulls on the big leather glove and heads into the future to find out...

"If you build it, he will come..." So said the ghostly voice of some long dead baseball dude to Kevin Costner in the mega-weepy Hollywood sap-pic *Field of Dreams*.

He also says things like "Go the distance" and "Watch out for that exploding baseball stuffed down your trousers". OK, he doesn't really say that last one, but he would if he'd been playing a round of Super Baseball 2020 on his heavenly SNES before dropping around to Kev's place.

In this game the great American sport of baseball leaps into the year 2020. It's still their number one game, but now we've got men, women and robots playing side by side, robot umpires, some funky new outfits and armour, explosives dotting the outfield, and a few rule changes. But underneath it all, it's still baseball: you hit a little leather ball and run around the bases to score. And that's where we hit a problem - there's dozens of baseball carts out there, so what makes this one so special?

For a start, it's a conversion of a not too well known SNK arcade game, that also made it onto the Neo Geo. The arcade roots of the game are obvious - not just in the way it looks and sounds, but in the way it plays. The controls are simplified (just about everything is done by hitting button C) and the action comes on thick and fast. It's not the type of sports game EA are famous for - the realistic "sports simulation" - and that's probably why EA themselves stress that Super Baseball 2020 is "not an EA Sports title".

You also have the ability to beef up your players, reinforcing them (and boosting their stats) with batting, fielding, and pitching armour, or robot power ups. But you need a healthy bank balance to pay for it all. Everything you do out on the field, from swinging a strike to hitting a triple homer, will earn or cost you a certain amount of money, so it really does pay to play well. Add some exploding crackers for the fielders to contend with (set by the umpires at the start of each inning) and Super Baseball 2020 provides a bit of a twist to the usual sports theme.

Graphically, this is a nice, clean conversion of the arcade original. The sprites are big and the animation is smooth. Some of the detail is lost, but overall, EA have used the 16 megs of memory to good effect. Most of the digitised speech (the robot umpires' play calls and the like) has survived and the gameplay has that arcade feel to it too. Once you get used to the timing, it's fun to play, and fairly involving. But some of you (especially if you're used to more complex sports sims) may find that there just isn't enough to do to keep you interested for very long.

If you're after a fast-paced, arcade-style baseball game, then Super Baseball 2020 is for you. It's a very slick cart, and with two different tournament modes, it will keep you happy for quite a while.

If you've already got a baseball game though, I can't think of a reason why you'd want to add this one to your collection.

Hotdogs and Peanuts on the SNES

Super Nintendo owners can get their fix of future sports with their very own version of Super Baseball 2020. Strangely enough, it's not by EA. Tradewest grabbed the rights to the SNES conversion from SNK. But, different makers aside, the SNES cart looks and plays virtually identically to the Mega Drive version, except it runs slower. But other than that it's basically the same features, same teams, same game.

If interchangeable body parts are your thing, check out the main review to see what you're in for.



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: NOW

ARCADE SPORTS

PLAYERS: 1-2

ELECTRONIC ARTS

visuals

A good cyber-punk look all round. Big sprites and nice shifts to close-up views.

66

sound

Lots of digitised robo-speak and good crowd FX, but the music is, in a word, crap.

80

gameplay

Few buttons to push and arcade action ahoj. But a bit shallow and it lacks genuine excitement.

71

longterm

Two leagues with 6 teams each and a password feature, so you'll get your money's worth.

75

overall

A good looking arcade conversion, but the gameplay's just not compelling enough to make it a must have. Rent it first.

80%

Not another bloody driving game!?! Forgive my lack of enthusiasm, but there's a lot of them floating around out there for the Mega Drive (most of them crap), and you can't top Super Monaco GP II can you? Actually, Domark think they can, and they've released F1 to prove it.

This is the only "racing simulator" to be given the official licence from the FIA Formula One Championship, so it's got real tracks, and real F1 drivers to compete against. If you've ever fancied a spin on Silverstone, a hoon down Hockenheim, or even an amble around Adelaide, now's your chance. Twelve tracks have been included to help you feel like the globe-trotting, petrol sniffing warrior you always knew you were.

Choices, Choices Choi...

There are options galore too. The first thing to decide on is whether you want to play a one-player, or a split-screen two-player game (having two people to play helps here). Then you've got the choice of an Arcade, Training, or Championship (the load and save game feature is good) race, with a manual or automatic gear-box, using hard, medium, or soft tyres, and high, medium, or low wings (for the back of the car, not to wrap around your underwear). There are four difficulty levels, each of which affects the top speed of your car, and to top it all off, there's the choice of a normal (fast) or turbo (so fast it's almost silly) game. If you're not too dizzy by this time, you can also fully customise the control system before you get on to the track.

Start Your Engines

So you finally manage to squeeze yourself into the car, the lights flash green, and you're off. The first thing you'll notice is the speed. Lankhor, the French development team behind F1, have really pushed the Mega Drive to its technical limits.

Thanks to smooth scrolling and a nice display of polygon-based graphics, this game is incredibly fast. Even on normal, it's faster than any other game on the market, and on turbo, it really burns. All of this is achieved with the minimum loss of detail, even in split-screen mode. Trees, tunnels, sponsors' signs, and road directions all flash past before you can blink.

All this speed requires a steady hand and a responsive car. F1 provides the car, but the hand is up to you. The control system is excellent, and after you get used to the pace, the action is more than satisfying. As a one-player game, there's lots to do and a whole Grand Prix circuit to conquer, and for two players, it's even better. Head-to-head racing will bring out the competitive demons in anyone.

Add great in-game racing sounds (the roar of the engine is very effective), fantastic presentation screens, and a well-organised race screen, and you have got a Super Monaco GP beater. If

racing games are your thing, and I have to admit they're not mine, then you'll love it. Just remember that Sega of Japan's Mega Drive conversion of Virtua Racing (featuring Sega's all new DSP chip) is well on its way and is looking pretty nifty too. But for now, this will do very nicely, thank you.

Andrew Humphreys



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

RELEASED: NOVEMBER

RACING

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: DOMARK

visuals

Great presentation all round, super-smooth scrolling, and good detail.

86

sound

Sound effects so real you can smell the burning rubber, but the music is a bit flat.

87

gameplay

Wow, this is fast! Nice controls, lot's of fun.

85

longterm

Heaps of options, loads of challenge, and split-screen simultaneous action that will last for ages.

89

overall

Turbo-charged racing realism makes this the best driving cart on Mega Drive.

88%

pocky and rocky

What on earth is Pocky and Rocky? Is it one of those diseases you catch off a toilet seat, or a very cool Japanese shoot em up? **ANDREW HUMPHREYS** lifts the lid...

Pocky and Rocky (which you might also find hiding under its original Japanese title of Kikikaikai) is a strange name for a shoot em up, but then Pocky and Rocky is a bit of a strange game. Pocky is a little girl with a magic stick and Rocky is a Raccoon (who's also a Nopino Goblin) with a magic tail. Pocky fires magic cards; Rocky fires magic leaves. Weird, huh? It seems that the Nopino Goblins, who've been quiet for years, have suddenly gone on a rampage. Why? Because they're under the spell of an evil force. So Pocky and Rocky set out to find out who's behind it all, and to kick some butt while they're at it.

One of the many nice touches to Pocky and Rocky is that the story progressively unfolds as you make it through each level. Defeat the end of level boss and you'll learn a little more about the mystery. Trust me, it's weird. But it really doesn't matter, because this is a very, very good game.



Cute but tough

It's also a very, very cute game. The quality of the graphics is excellent. The sprites (Pocky and Rocky plus all the enemies) have been drawn in that ultra-cute/big-eyed Manga style, and they're detailed and well animated. The backgrounds (especially on the later levels) are utterly superb. Full of colour, detail, and depth, they're some of the best I've seen on the SNES. The fog and light effects are amazing, but everything looks great.

What's even more impressive is the fact that all of this is achieved with perfect scrolling and frantic on-screen action. The overall effect reminds me a bit of another weird Japanese shooter, Twinkle Tale (on Mega Drive) and the soon-to-be-released Gunstar Heroes (also on Mega Drive).

Gameplay galore

Like any good shoot em up, Pocky and Rocky contains lots of weapon power ups, but it's also got a lot more. For a start, it's a true multi-scrolling game. One minute it's a side-scroller, the next it's vertical.

Pocky and Rocky can also do a lot more than just shoot cards and leaves. They can both slide out of danger, drop bombs, and deflect enemy attacks (Pocky swings her magic stick, Rocky wiggles his magic tail). By holding down and then releasing the B button, Pocky can go into a deadly spinning attack and Rocky can turn into an invincible stone statue. In a two player game, you can slide into each

other, sending one player spinning around all over the screen, taking out bad guys on the way. You might even find a mad dog to ride for a while.

There's enemies all over the place too - walking enemies, flying enemies, skeletons, zombies - and plenty of mid-level and end of level bosses. Put it all together and you end up with a great game. This is the most enjoyable shoot em up I've played for a long time. The controls are great, the playing area is massive, and every level has been well thought out and beautifully drawn.

For one player it's a blast, but with two-players it's even better. The only problem is that you're given unlimited continues, but with three difficulty levels and hectic two-player action, you're bound to play Pocky and Rocky again and again. A very tasty game.

Thanks to the Gamesman for the review cart.



FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

SHOOT EM UP

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER NATSUM

visuals

Cute characters, superb backdrops, smooth scrolling. Excellent.

92

sound

Very nice, very Japanese soundtracks and loads of great FX.

90

gameplay

Good controls, lots of moves, great variety and full on action.

89

longterm

Huge playing area, bad guys that challenge, and a two player blast-fest. But unlimited continues.

80

overall

A great looking shoot em up with lots of action to keep you busy. This is a very classy game.

88%

STALKER landstalker

Landstalker is the most eagerly awaited RPG from Sega this year. The attention this 16 Meg game has received is usually reserved for sequels.

WAYNE LAWSON says it lives up to the hype...



We are first introduced to the intrepid treasure hunter, Nigel, in the brilliant intro sequence. Nigel differs from other game heroes in a number of ways. The most immediately obvious is his goal in life - to steal treasure and become obscenely rich. The game begins on an island which holds the fabled treasures of the ancient King Nole. Your aim is to find this treasure. There's no Dark Lord to defeat, no princess to rescue - basically you just want to get rich.

Old Fashioned Greed is Good

While this premise may seem painfully thin, it is the brilliant simplicity which pulls Landstalker above the norm. During the game you require certain items to aid you in your quest. Unfortunately you are made to work for your reward. You find yourself liberating towns, rescuing Mayors, repairing lighthouses and, yes, even rescuing princesses. All in the name of good old fashioned greed, of course.

Each task you accomplish has repercussions for the remainder of the game. The characters you meet change their attitude depending upon your deeds and misdeeds. Every time you re-enter a town, things change. Sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. There are many sub-plots and stories in each town and the only way to find out valuable information is to talk

to everybody! This gives the overall feel of some long cartoon soap opera. I found myself wondering around, doing nothing important and really enjoying myself.

Nice, Defined Equipment

Graphically, Landstalker is a masterpiece. Nigel's equipment is clearly defined and changes when you change it. The backgrounds, especially in the dungeons, are extremely detailed and very realistic. The animation is quite good but doesn't change much throughout, although that isn't a major problem. The colour is probably the best we've seen from the Mega Drive. It proves that in the hands of decent programmers, a reduced colour palette isn't an issue.

The thematic music really suits the on-screen action, drawing you in and adding a hell of a lot of atmosphere. However, while the sound FX are good the first time round, they become annoying due to a lack of variety.

Thankfully, the rest of the game is too good for this to distract you.

Landstalker's gameplay is top notch. Once you've adapted to the 3-D perspective, the controls are child's play. You've got one character, no magic and no complex menus to speak of. During the game the three buttons perform the same tasks. A & C - Jump, pick up, select. B - Attack, talk,

cancel. If you can't grasp that then you should forget RPGs altogether.

One drawback to the game is it's length. A lot of memory was used on graphics making it a visual feast, but this hasn't left a lot of memory for areas to explore. It only took me about two weeks to finish, playing 3-4 hours a night.

Landstalker mixes quite a few game styles. It is mostly roleplaying, but also combines arcade/adventure action and the labyrinths are all puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty. While this could've spelt disaster (let's face it, who could imagine Shining Force crossed with Golden Axe crossed with Lemmings), it somehow works superbly.

Landstalker is without doubt a benchmark game, and it has something to appeal to everyone. It looks amazing, sounds amazing, plays amazingly and basically is nothing short of amazing (bet you didn't see that last one coming!).

Don't miss Landstalker, the RPG/action/adventure/puzler of the Year.



Soro: The master isn't here now, but maybe I can explain how it works.



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER

RPG/ADVENTURE

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: SEGA

visuals

Nice detail and a distinctive overhead perspective make this a very spunky-looking game.

93

sound

Music is very atmospheric, but is let down by the repetitive FX.

86

gameplay

Once you're into the swing of things, you will want to keep playing... and playing...

92

longterm

Unfortunately, while there's a lot crammed into this cart, I wanted more.

87

overall

Sega Japan have come up with another classic RPG, however this one is not just for role-playing fans. Brilliant!

92%

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Wow (Batman Returns) returns!

Sega has added a few bells and whistles to their bog standard Mega Drive cart of Batman Returns and come up with a winner. Or so says STUART CLARKE.



You might be thinking that Batman has had his day. Or maybe you're already concentrating on the much-rumoured Batman 3 (otherwise known as Batman Returns...Again) which will at last have Robin pulling on his tights alongside the Caped Crusader. Well Sega still have their Batman Returns license to flog, so they've tarted up a very standard Mega Drive game to become one of the best Mega CD games yet released.

Yes, at last some programmers are using the Mega CD's capabilities in the scaling and rotation departments, and have created some some fairly wild



3D effects. You can choose to play either the Full Game (which combines the driving and platform parts of the game over five "Acts"), the Driving game only, or the Platform game only.

The platform bits are really just the old cartridge game with a nice new CD soundtrack. Unfortunately the cartridge game was never much good, and so neither is this. It's slow, hard to control and fairly monotonous, so my advice is to ignore it (like I'm doing) and stick to the driving sections.

Now this is good fun! It's got great visuals, amazing sound, and some hyper gameplay that occurs on and under the streets of Gotham City. You'll be driving

the Batmobile through the Streets of Gotham, the Winter Wonderland, and past the City Limits, before jumping into the Batskimobile for a wild journey through the Sewers and into the Penguin's Lair.

Watch out, waddle boy!



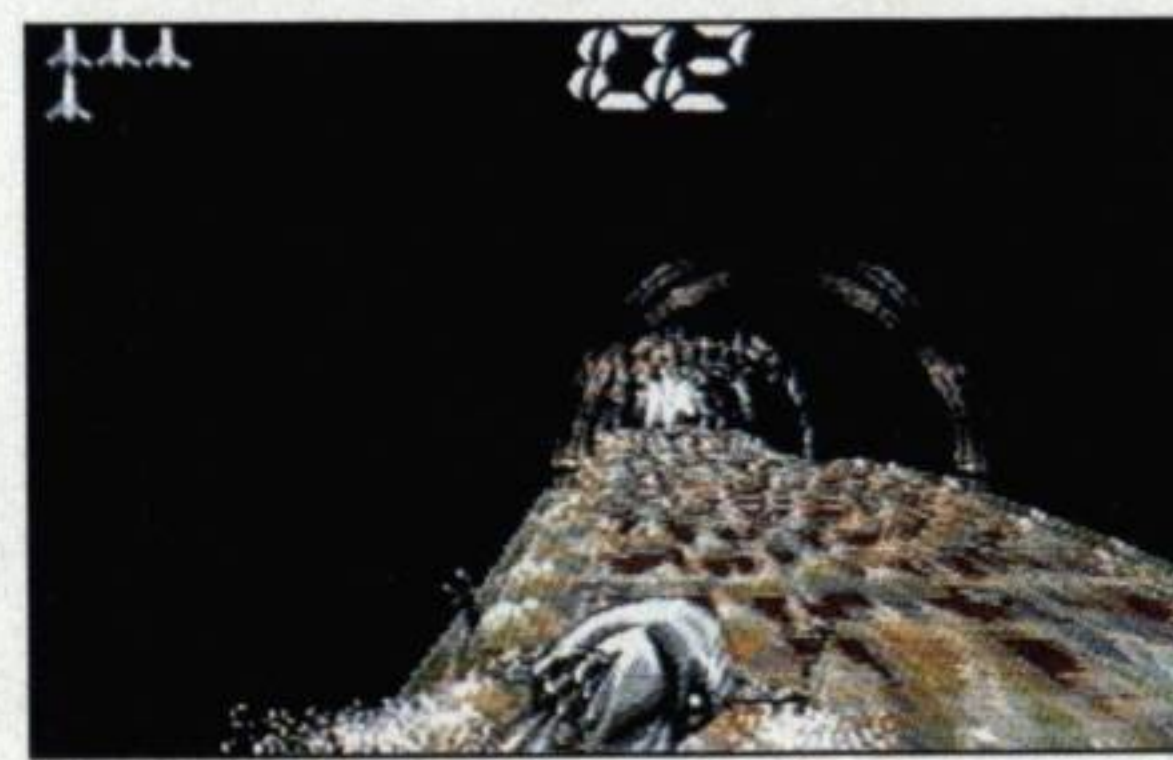
Armed and Dangerous

You have a tough time limit to meet for each stage, and the streets are crowded with hoodlums from the Penguin's Red Triangle Circus Gang who don't exactly go out of their way to let you past. You'll face clowns on motorbikes, in jeeps, trucks, and even flame-spitting fire engines. And you can't just attempt to avoid them because they'll drop mines, throw molotov cocktails, and try to ram you off the road.

However, the Batmobile is armed and you're feeling dangerous, so you've got to make sure that you dish out more punishment than you receive. To do this, you've got a rapid fire machine gun with unlimited ammo, a limited number of heat seeking missiles (which should be saved for the bosses if possible), and a turbo button to speed out of danger.

Dark and Atmospheric

Everything moves amazingly quickly, and I could almost feel



the scaling and rotation chips getting warm inside the Mega CD's casing. The scaled backgrounds are beautiful, with the distinctive Gothic-style buildings and towers, gliding past very elegantly. Both the Batmobile and Batskimobile handle superbly and while in the sewers you can attempt some wild 360 degree rolls off ramps in the Batskimobile.

The soundtrack is one of the most impressive yet on the Mega CD, and came straight from the movie. To remind you - it's all very dark, sombre and atmospheric, so turn all the lights off and scare yourself silly for some extra fun. The sound FX are also brilliant, and the explosions and screeches in the driving section really will have you ducking for cover behind the wheel of the Batmobile.

Apart from the dodgy platform sections which were average at best on the Mega Drive, Batman Returns must rate as one of the hottest Mega CD games yet (which admittedly don't say much).

Pull on your rubber undies, black latex face mask and get into it... it's got the graphics, sound and action-packed gameplay to keep both Batman freaks and adrenalin junkies very happy indeed.

FORMAT: MEGA CD

AVAILABLE: NOW

ACTION

PLAYERS: 1

SEGA

visuals

Apart from the Mega Drive platform sections, the graphics are hot, with top scaling and rotations.

90

sound

Atmospheric movie soundtrack with excellent FX.

93

gameplay

The platform sections are dull and useless, but the driving section is an absolute blast!

83

longterm

This game is both tough and exciting, which means you'll be back for more please mum.

84

overall

As I may have said before, forget the platform section, and get off on the heart-pumping blast 'em action of the excellent driving game.

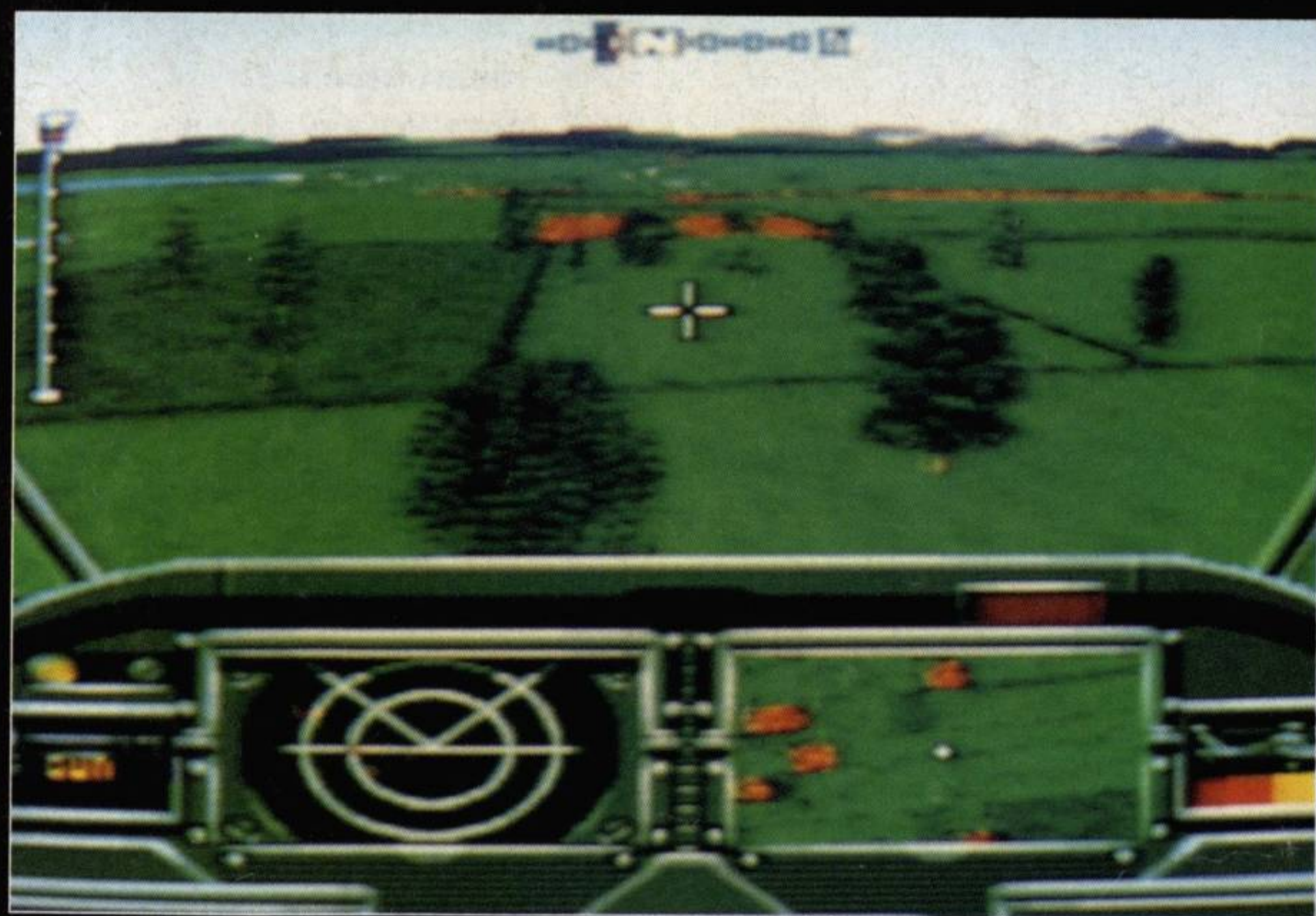
86%

THUNDER Hawk



Under imminent threat of attack from newer, sexier 32 bit systems, the Mega CD is still waiting for a killer piece of software to come to its rescue. Will Thunderhawk be its saviour?

ANDREW HUMPHREYS steps into the fray...



Go on, let it out. You're amongst friends here at HYPER. You handed over huge wads of cash for your Mega CD and you're starting to get worried, aren't you? Cobra Command looked OK, and even Final Fight was good for a laugh, but you still haven't seen anything that takes you into that mystical Next Level of gaming experience, have you? Where's the combination of custom hardware graphics, CD sound, and heart-pounding gameplay you were promised? It's right here - in Thunderhawk.

Thunderhawk, from English development team Core, is without a doubt the finest game yet for the Mega CD. Along with Sonic CD, it's disks like this that will convince



A night scene from Thunderhawk. Love that destruction.

Mega Drive owners (at least) to upgrade to the Mega CD. Thunderhawk is that impressive. It pushes the Mega CD to its technical limits, but best of all, underneath all the hardware tricks, is rock solid gameplay.

Fun in the Cockpit

Thunderhawk is kind of a first person perspective Jungle Strike, only better. As a gung ho, well-hung chopper pilot, it's up to you and your trusty co-pilot to take the heat out of the hottest of the world's hot-spots with a few well placed missiles. There's ten operations to complete, each with multiple missions, in any order that you choose. You can save your game to the Mega CD's built-in RAM after every successful mission.

The variety of missions and the constantly changing terrain will keep you on your toes. In South America, there's an arms smuggling operation that must be stopped and a captured Stealth bomber to destroy on a deadly night mission. Some pirates in the South China Seas need a lesson in international maritime law, and those terrorists in Central America could do with an attitude adjustment too. The Panama Canal's always handy for a crisis, while the Middle East chips in with an oil dispute. Eastern Europe provides a nice setting for an escort mission, and that old favourite, South East Asia, throws up a chemical weapons threat to deal with. There's even some fun to be had on the snow-covered fields of Alaska.

Each mission gives you a set of primary targets (which show up as

white dots on your main map) which must be destroyed. Depending on the task, you will be armed with a variety of weapons. Standard firepower consists of chain guns, rockets, and long-range missiles, but if you need to destroy a bridge or mess up a runway, you'll be given some extra-destructive toys.

The distressing news is that the bad guys know a nice weapon when they see one too, and they like to point most of them at you. No matter what height you fly at, there's always something shooting at you. On the ground, there's tanks and SAM missile launchers, in the water there's some nasty gunboats, and in the air, enemy choppers and jets whizz past you from every angle.





The cinematic intro gives you a taste of what's to come...

Smelly Old Fishing Boat

What makes Thunderhawk special is the quality of its graphics. Core have taken full advantage of the parallel processing power, custom scaling and rotation hardware, and advanced texture mapping capabilities of the Mega CD to produce a genuinely 3D world to fly about in. You couldn't find more scaling if you were on a smelly old fishing boat. Everything - the landscape, the ground forces, the buildings, all of it - is scaled at an amazing rate and it can scroll in any direction and at any height you please.

The overall effect is very similar to Comanche Maximum Overkill, one of the best PC games ever. The level of detail is not quite as good as in Comanche (because of the restricted colour palette), but the scaling itself is smoother, and much faster. The screen shots may look a bit blocky, but take our word for it, when Thunderhawk is in motion, it's fast, detailed, and fantastic to watch.



Just a Shoot Em Up?

There's been a bit of debate around here as to whether Thunderhawk, no matter how good it is, is "just a shoot em up"? It's certainly not a flight sim - the controls (select weapon, fire, and thrust) are much too simple and it's far too much fun. And strategy doesn't play a huge part in the game - but you do have to concentrate on your primary targets, watch your altitude, and choose your weapons wisely. Mostly, you do just shoot things, so it is a shoot em up, but it's definitely not "just a shoot em up" - the gameplay is too exhilarating. When you're screaming through a narrow canyon with tanks and chop-



pers doing their very best to knock you out of the sky, you'll know what I mean.

The sound effects and speech are excellent, the soundtrack is wild, and the presentation is first class. You can even play it in Spanish, German or French for a laugh. On Easy it may be a little too easy, but whack it on Medium or Hard and the tanks quickly learn how to shoot back. What more can I say? If you've got a Mega CD, Thunderhawk should be at the top of your Christmas wish list. An instant classic.

MEGA CD

available

DECEMBER

category

SHOOT EM UP

players

1

publisher

SEGA

visuals

Super smooth, super fast scaling and faultless scrolling.

94

sound

Excellent FX, HUGE explosions, and a full on, cock-rocking soundtrack.

91

gameplay

Simple, responsive controls, heaps to do, and it's all intense, heart in your mouth fun.

93

longterm

Heaps of missions and a hefty challenge. You'll want to play again and again, even after you finish it.

92

overall

Stop telling your friends what the Mega CD can do - show them. Buy Thunderhawk now.

94%

Lethal Enforcers

Handguns ahoy! Konami's arcade hyper-hit comes home on Mega CD, so now you can grab your Justifier (or that of a close personal friend) and clean up the streets from the comfort of your lounge room. **ANDREW HUMPHREYS** does just that.



A "Violence in Video Games" headline anyone? You know, what this industry needs is some more "family" oriented games; where Mum, Dad, little Johnny and even littler Mary can gather around the screen for hours of togetherness and happiness.

Games like Ecco, Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, and of course, Lethal Enforcers. Yep, there's nothing quite like blasting away societal vermin with your loved ones to instill values in the young and foster a healthy respect for law enforcement agencies.

Lost the Plot

Lethal Enforcers is a faithful conversion by Konami of their own coin-op blaster. It doesn't have a plot because it doesn't need one. It is, after all, a shoot em' up. All you need to know is you're a cop and you shoot people. But you only get points for shooting bad people. Your weapon is a very cool plastic six-shooter in a lovely shade of baby blue called "The Justifier" which Konami have very kindly packaged with the game.

There are five stages or scenes to clear, starting with a bank robbery, and ending with a shoot-out at a chemical plant. You can play any level any time you like, but if you're playing in Arcade mode,

you must achieve a certain strike rate (number of hits compared to shots fired) to improve your ranking and move on to the next stage. You've also got to survive five hits and you're dead and you'll need to use up a continue.

There's a nice cinematic introduction for every scene, some cheesy (in the coolest possible way) CD music, realistically satisfying sound effects, and the speech is great, too. As an added bonus, it's pretty tough.

Oh, and you're not allowed to hit any innocent victims either. If everything goes according to plan, you'll wind up as a Captain. In a two-player game, both players must reach the required rank at the end of each stage.

Picking up power-ups is a very smart thing to do. Some, like the grenade gun and the machine gun, only last for a limited amount of shots, but others - the Magnum, automatic, and shotgun - stay with you until you cop a hit from a bad guy. But you've always got to remember to keep reloading your weapon. The amount of bullets you've got left is shown in the bottom left corner of the screen, and if you try to fire an empty gun, a voice yells at you to "Reload". All you have to do is aim the gun off screen and pull the trigger.



Arcade Action at Home

The Mega CD version of *Lethal Enforcers* is very close to the arcade original. Apart from the fact that it's not full screen (there's a small black border at the top and bottom for the score and ammo count) and the limited colour palette leaves everything looking just a little dull, it's an excellent conversion. The digitised backgrounds and bad guys have been lifted straight from the coin-op and the gameplay is identical - only at home you get a choice of three difficulty levels.

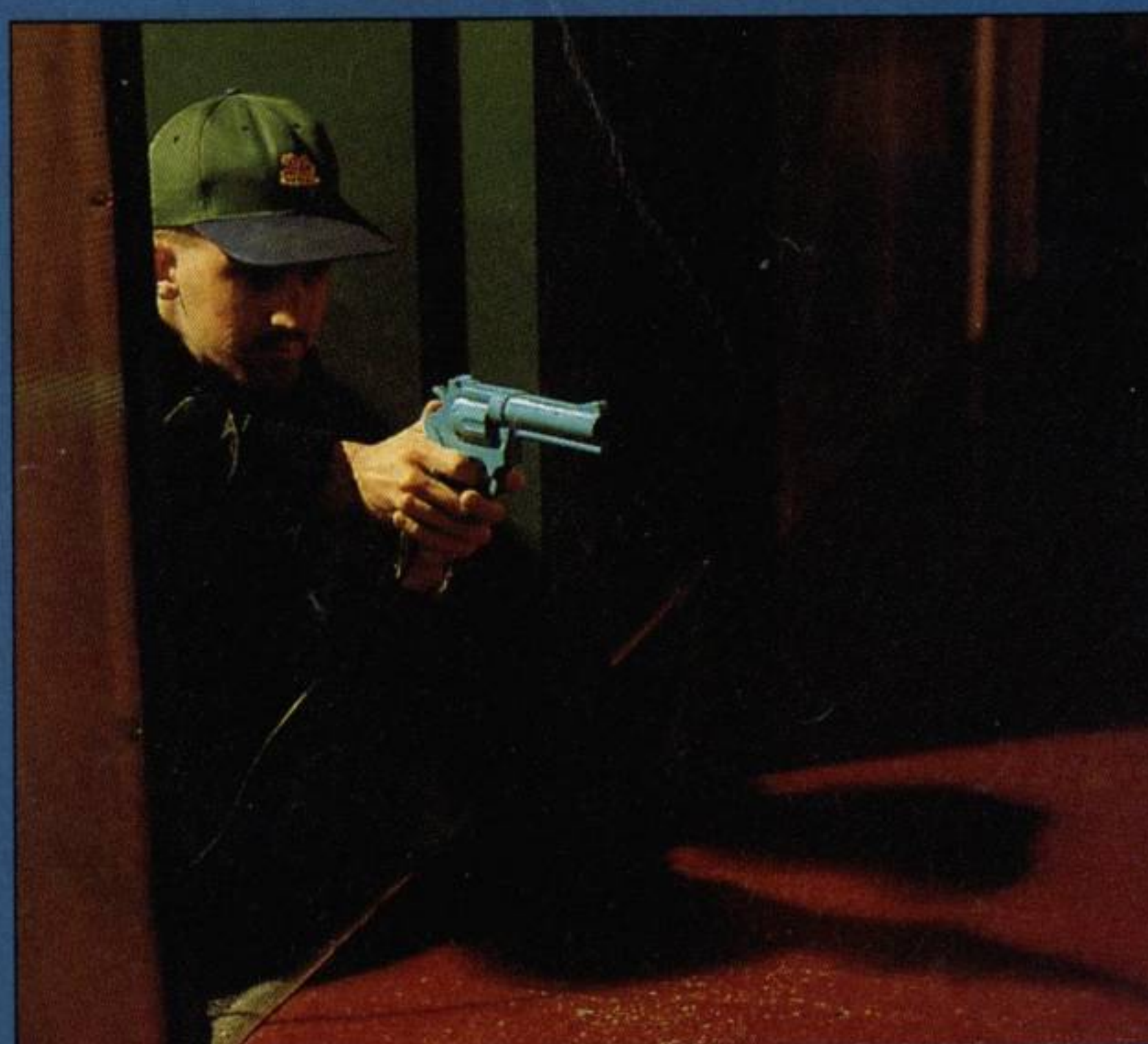
There's a nice cinematic intro for every scene, some cheesy (in the coolest possible way) CD music, realistically satisfying sound effects, and the speech is great too. As an added bonus, it's pretty tough. Even on easy with maximum continues, you'll need to be some kind of sharp-shooter to complete the game.

Lethal Enforcers is one of the best Mega CD releases to date. It's hopelessly addictive blasting fun. If you're a fan of the arcade game, buy it now. It might not be politically correct, but hey, what is these days? Go on, get it all out of your system.

Justify My Gun

The Justifier (even if the guy who named it saw one too many *Dirty Harry* movies), is a very nifty little piece of hardware. Compared to Sega's "Menacer" light gun it comes out miles ahead. It doesn't take any batteries; all you do is plug it into the second control port. For a second player to use a second gun, you'll need to buy a special "Player 2 Justifier" and plug it into the butt (no jokes please) of the other gun. An Aim Test at the start of the game lines up the sights for each individual player.

There's an option to play with control pads if you like, but don't do it! It's far too slow and much less exciting than using the gun. The only problem with it is your arms will quickly become very tired from holding it up through hours of play. Use it as motivation to start working out.



MEGA CD

available

NOVEMBER

category

SHOOTING

players

1-2

publisher

KONAMI

visuals

Looks every bit as good as the arcade game. Digitised images everywhere make for good realism, but the colouring's a bit dull.

89

sound

Great speech and FX and a nice hairy-chested soundtrack.

90

gameplay

The Justifier is the coolest light gun around. Loads of fun to use and lots of things to shoot.

90

longterm

Big, tough levels with even tougher bosses, bonus levels, and two-player action. It's just so much fun you'll play until your hand drops off.

85

overall

A top conversion of a top shoot em' up. If you've got a Mega CD, take a look this game.

89%

Wing Commander Academy

The Terran Confederation needs new recruits to help defend it from the evil Kilrathi. **BEN MANSILL** signs up straight away...

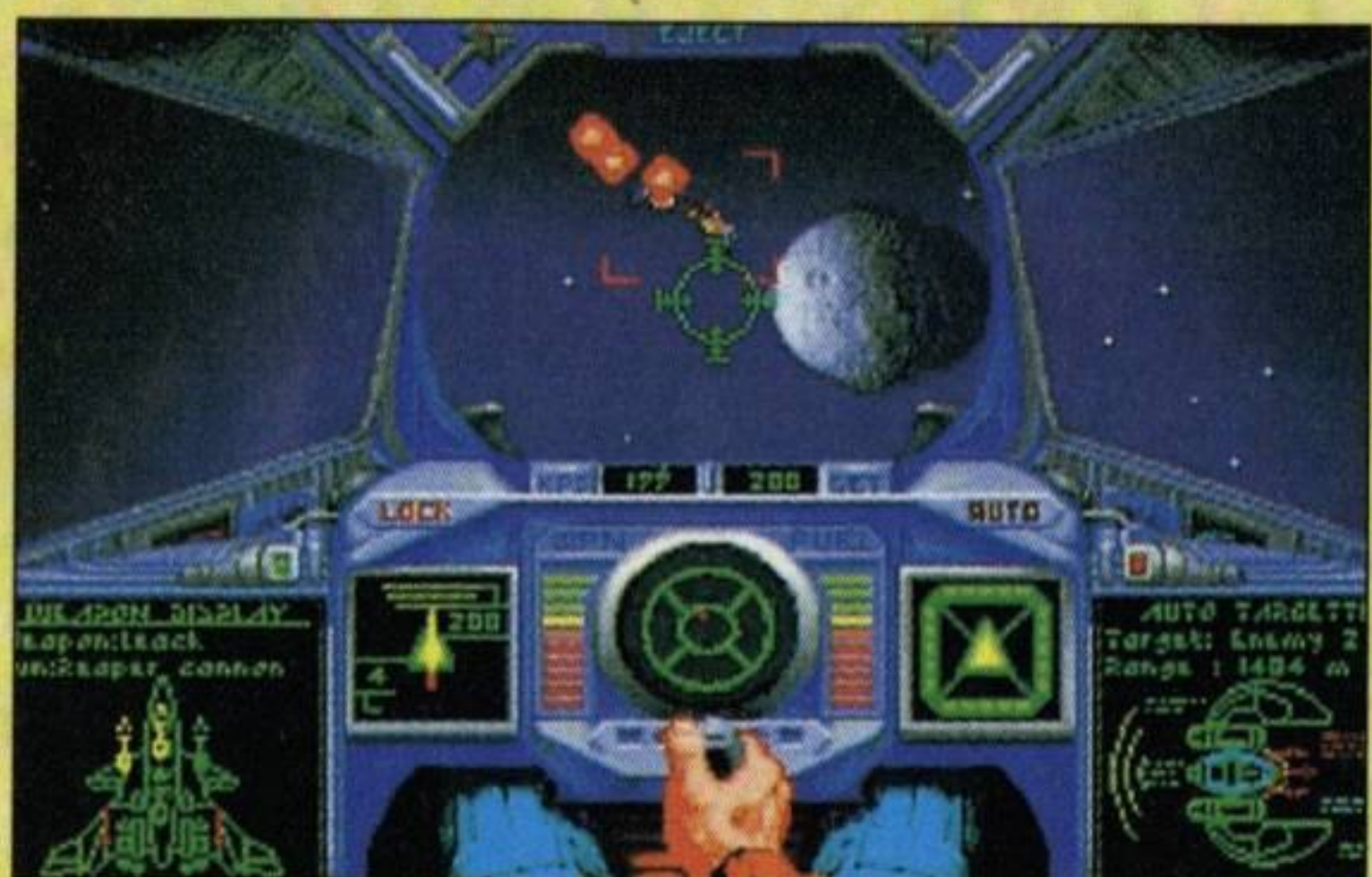
A New Epoch

The world of computer games would be a sad and barren place without Wing Commander.

The release of the original game was the beginning of a new epoch in PC entertainment. Standard setting in every important department, Wing Commander had amazing graphics, was huge in scale and unbelievable fun to play.

A string of mission disks and digitised speech packs followed, then Wing Commander II arrived, and was followed by a similar set of add-on's. Competitors flooded the market with imitations, some were worthy in their own right, like *X-Wing*, while others lost the plot and were spectacular failures, *Mantis* and *Epic* for example.

For those who have just emerged from a cave, Wing Commander puts you in the role of a space fighter pilot, defending the Terran (a favourite Sci-fi term for Earth) cause against the thoroughly evil Kilrathi. WC invented the concept of the "interactive movie", as successful missions were rewarded with rich and lengthy sequences of animated chit-chat. Your character would make friends, enemies and lovers, and the course of the war would reveal a genuinely addictive storyline that kept you coming back for more.



The nuts and bolts

Wing Commander Academy is the newest product from Origin's stable, and the first real deviation from the concept. This is not a continuation of the Terran saga, it is not another episode in the tale, rather it is a sort of "scenario designer", and will appeal to those WC fans who simply preferred the nuts and bolts of space combat to the whole interactive movie thing.

Note carefully please, this is not an add-on to the existing Wing Commander range, you will not need any of the earlier modules to run Academy. Nor is it possible to edit anything from the other WC games. Instead, WCA let's you create missions to fly for points and fun.

It's debatable as to whether the combat was Wing Commander's strong point. Personally, I never really enjoyed it in the cockpit, I only wanted to get back and find out if I got the girl. Truthfully though, my only real gripe with WC space combat is that it's REALLY HARD.

The radar shows a swarm of swift and agile Kilrathi fighters all around you. Another glance and you remember why the alarm is whoop-whooping — your shields are as useful as a wet paper bag, your missiles are long gone and guns are down to

half power. If you ever live through this you may just have a slim chance against the real objective — a Kilrathi destroyer on it's way to wipe out your own home base....And some people call this fun!?!

The Academy is a combat simulator at a Terran base. A very simple and intuitive screen allows any combination of enemy forces to be placed at various waypoints, through which you will fly on a Kilrathi killing spree. Anything can be put anywhere. There are 16 different bad guy's to put in your mission — including Terran fighters so you can be fair and objective about your great skill, or complete lack of it. There are Kilrathi stealth fighters, Starbases, asteroid fields, ejected crewmen and message pods to collect.

You own personal vehicle of destruction can be any of 9 fighters or bombers, including a Kilrathi fighter. A wingman is available from a pool of some of the more famous Wing Commander characters. If your serious and don't know about fun for it's own sake, then fly in a Ferret (a 26th century version of a Sopwith camel) with no wingman support. Points are based on difficulty, and taking the best fighter (a Wraith) with the best wingman (Hobbs) equals a low score but lots of fun.

This is a game that can comfortably live on your hard disk forever without the need to spend weeks "finishing" it. Academy will be bought and thoroughly enjoyed by anyone who has played the previous WC games, while WC virgins should take this opportunity to discover what the hype is all about.



FORMAT: PC
AVAILABLE: NOW
FLIGHT SIM
PLAYERS: 1
ORIGIN

visuals

No real improvement on other WC games, but that is a fantastic standard. **90**

sound

Great with a good sound card. **85**

gameplay

Fantastic. Simple and intuitive control screen and that famous WC space combat **90**

longterm

You'll be making your own missions for years to come. **85**

overall

A very fine addition to the superb Wing Commander series. Enlist in the Academy today!

90%

REVIEW»

DARK SUN SHATTERED LANDS

Some like it hot (and some like it not). JULIAN SHOFFEL looks at a pre-release version of Dark Sun, and decides he's one of the latter.

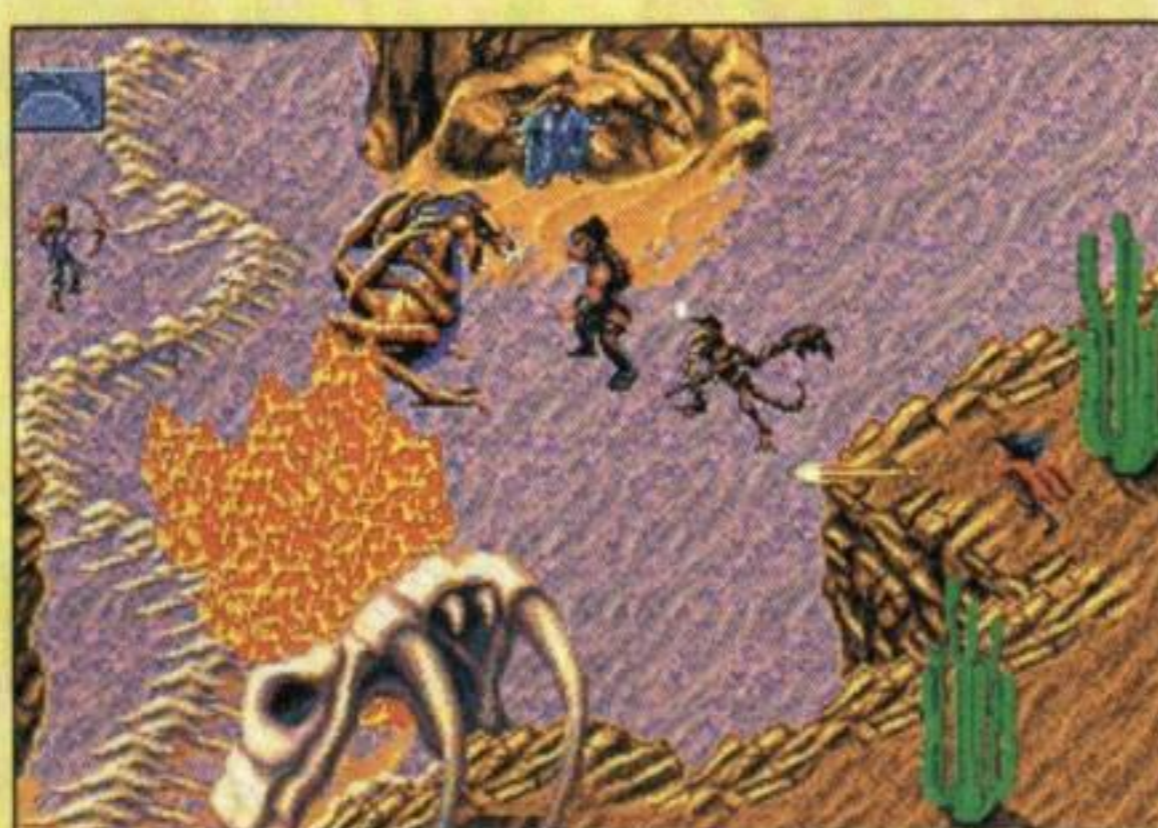
Dark Sun is set in a hot, barren, war-torn land brimming over with things that would very much like to see you dead. At the beginning of the game you generate a party of four characters. Once you've created your party it's time to find some action. You start off as gladiator slaves battling it out in the local arena. If you want to explore the world further you have to find a way to escape the slave pens. It's not a bad idea to fight it out in the arena a few times to get some money and gain experience points before you try to escape.

The game is mouse-driven, so all you have to do is point and click. While Dark Sun is graphically superior to the old "SSI Gold Box" series, it doesn't quite match the quality of some other contemporary games, such as Ultima 7. And while there are lots of objects in the game-world such as beds, torches, ovens etc. you can't interact with many of them. In Ultima 7 you could use every object in the game as you would be able to in real life. It was fun playing darts or doing a spot of cooking, even if it had little to do with successfully completing the game. In Dark Sun you move the icon to a person or object and click the right mouse-button until an eye icon appears. If you can't interact, the eye icon will have a red circle around it. Once you have established whether or not you can interact just click the left mouse-button and a menu will appear giving you a list of appropriate choices to choose from; talk to, use, get, attack and so on.

Un-real Combat

Combat is round-based rather than in real time so you don't have to rush things to survive a battle. I like this approach as it gives you time to work out your tactics. But I found that where I needed a magical weapon to score a hit on a particular creature, I was able to swap the only magical weapon from character to character, even when they were some distance apart! Although it helped me win the encounter it ruined any sense of realism in combat.

Unlike the Ultima series, the game-world of Dark Sun is split up into separate areas, so when you come to the end of a section you get a message saying; "Do you wish to leave this area?". Even though I have a 486DX 33 with a graphics accelerator card it still took some moments for the game to load a new section of terrain. This really detracts from continuity and gameplay. Another slightly annoying feature of Dark Sun is that you can only rest your characters where there is a ring of stones and in some places this ring doesn't appear until you've beaten some opponents. This means that if you've just battled your way out of a certain area, when you enter a



new map section you often have to jump right into another tough combat situation even though most of your party is at death's door!

Spontaneous Wanderings

I should stress that I was playing a pre-release version of the game and it had more bugs than an inner city squat! Frequently the cursor would mysteriously appear two or three times on the screen at once and sometimes my characters would just take off and start walking around on their own! I assume that SSI will iron these bugs out of the finished version, but I have my suspicions that some will appear.

All in all, Dark Sun was a little disappointing. It lacked smooth gameplay and the freedom to do more or less what you wanted, which was so much a part of the old AD&D series.

FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOV

CATEGORY: RPG

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: SSI

visuals

Good, but no where near the quality of some other current RPG/adventures.

75

sound

Nothing magical, but some nice effects.

60

gameplay

It lacks continuity and realism in parts, and isn't a patch on Ultima.

65

longterm

Like all RPGs, it will take a while to finish. But will you want to?

70

overall

Rabid AD&D fans will love it, but if you're not an RPG follower, it won't convert you.

66%

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

MEGA CD

Available: Now
 Category: New Age Platformer
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Sega America



Ecco the Dolphin is back, and this time he's got a machine gun. Well, not really, but he is on CD. When Ecco debuted on the Mega Drive earlier this year it gave a lot of tired old hacks like myself a renewed faith in the wonders of video games. In a gaming world full of crappy beat em' ups and sub-standard shooters, Ecco had no trouble standing out from the pack. Beautiful graphics and animation, eerie underwater sounds, and compelling, original gameplay make it a must have game for Mega Drive owners.

So what's new in the CD version? Nothing really. Ecco CD is essentially the same game as the cart. It does have some extra levels (about five or six, making a total of 30), some very nice intro sequences and nifty full motion video in the Library stage, amazing "Q Sound Virtual Audio", and it is faster (the speed almost makes you dizzy sometimes), but if you own Ecco on cart, there's no need to own Ecco CD too.

This Q Sound business is pretty cool though. If you run the Mega CD through an amp and a pair of speakers you get perfectly atmospheric CD stereo soundtracks and effects which place you in the middle of Ecco's world. It really does add a lot to the whole game experience.

If you didn't get Ecco on cart, take him home and play dolphin on CD. It's still an absolutely superb game that every gamer worth their joypad callouses should play.

Andrew Humphreys



SHERLOCK HOLMES CONSULTING DETECTIVE VOL. II

MEGA CD

Released: November
 Category: Puzzle
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Sega America



Fancy yourself in a nice Deerstalker hat? Maybe teamed up with an understated pipe, a basset hound, and a huge magnifying glass? Lucky you, because here's another chance to match wits with the world's most famous fictional private dick.

Sherlock II gives you three new cases to solve: The Two Lions, The Pilfered Paintings, and The Murdered Munitions Magnate. The basic format, the controls, and the gameplay remain unchanged from the first game. With the help of Holmes and the annoyingly chirpy Dr Watson, you set out to solve each case in the quickest possible time, using the least amount of resources. Wild guesses will get you nowhere - you must gather enough hard evidence to present your case in court. To complete a case, you'll need to correctly answer all of the questions the stony-faced judge will ask you. He's not really the understanding sort (unusual for a judge?), so make sure you've got all of the details covered.

Some of you will find all of this very intriguing. The use of full-motion video and CD sound capabilities recreates the atmosphere of all those old mystery movies very well, and if you don't mind a bit of logical thinking, you'll soon find yourself immersed in the role of detective. Others will find the gameplay to be deadly slow and boring. If waiting out CD access times annoys you and you don't feel comfortable playing a game where you can't hit anyone or shoot anything, then stay well clear of Sherlock.

Andrew Humphreys



FANTASTIC DIZZY

MEGA DRIVE

Available: December
Category: Platformer/Puzzle
Players: 1
Publisher: Codemasters



Dizzy is an egg. He's also a bit of an 8-bit hero. Fantastic Dizzy is his debut on a 16-bit system, but it retains that 8-bit, all-game-no-fancy-graphics feel. That's not a bad thing. I for one find it endearing, nostalgic even. Like all those Alex the Kidd and Wonderboy games, Fantastic Dizzy is a huge, sprawling game with a whacking big amount of gameplay lurking beneath its humble surface.

Dizzy's adventure (notice how I didn't go for some cheap pun, like "eggs-citing adventure") begins when his girlfriend, Daisy, is captured by an evil wizard. Dizzy, passionate egg that he is, sets out on a rescue mission. He starts out in his treehouse in the Yolksfolks village, and from there, he can go just about anywhere - the direction he takes is up to you. The way the game develops is very unstructured. As long as you've got the right items and can solve the puzzles as you go, you can keep adventuring away. The problem is that you can only carry three items at a time, so, if you want to make any real progress in the game, you'll be constantly travelling back and forth across a huge playing area. There's no save feature either. Once it's game over, you have to start all the way from the beginning again.

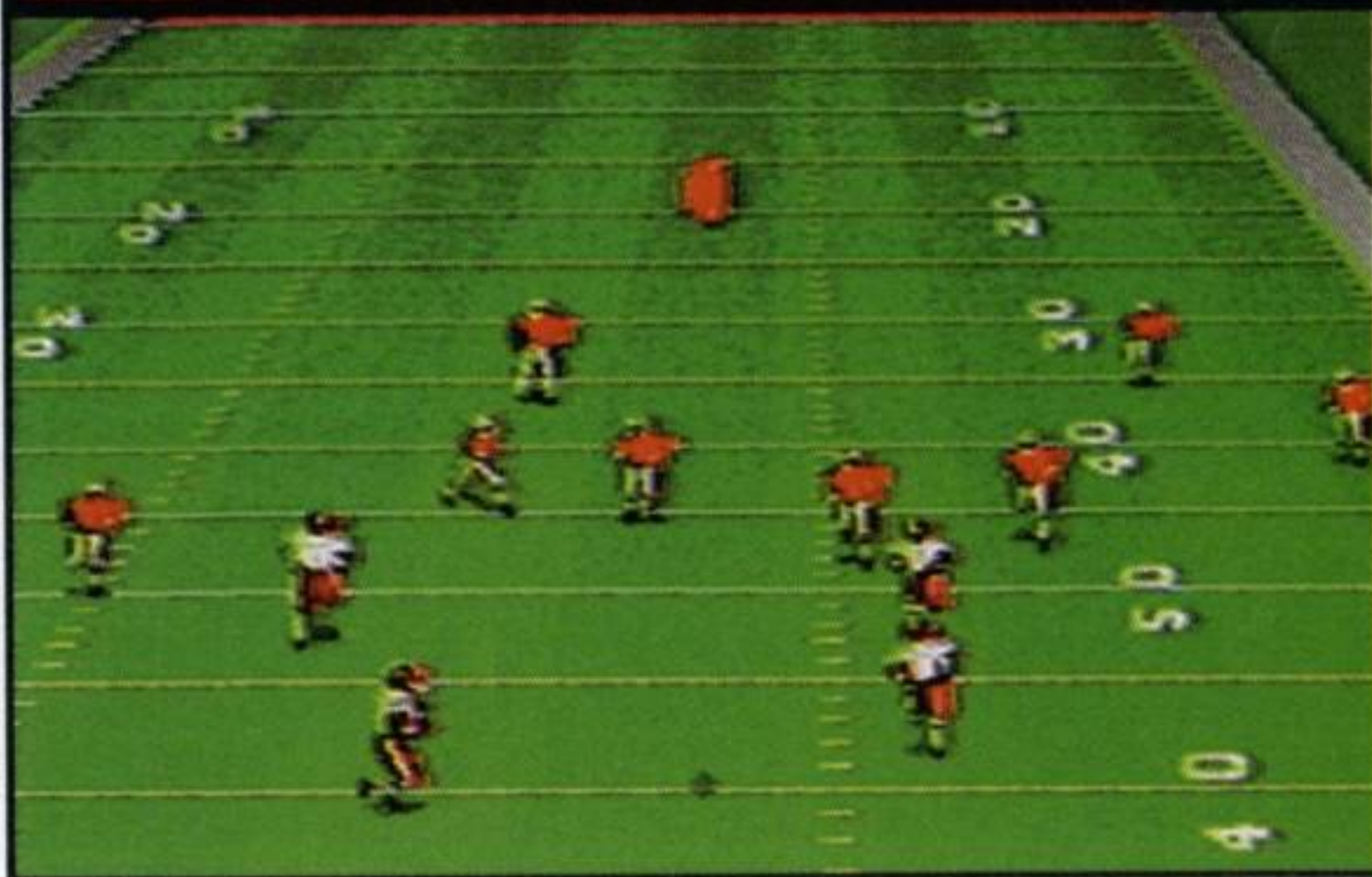
If this style of game that appeals to you, you'll find plenty of fun in Fantastic Dizzy. It's big, challenging, and more often than not, funny. The music may be mind-numbingly repetitive (in a cheery sort of way), but the graphics are good - bright, colourful, and full of character. But what really makes it a winner is the variety in gameplay. Ah, the good old days...

Andrew Humphreys

BILL WALSH COLLEGE FOOTBALL

MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
Category: Sport
Players: 1-4
Publisher: Electronic Arts



Bill Walsh College Football uses the same game engine as the Madden series and it's been designed and programmed by the same team. It looks the same and plays the same, but, because it's been tweaked here and there, it's a better game. This version of America's favourite sport gives you control of the best 24 college teams of '92 plus the top 24 teams since the 70's. You can play either one-off exhibition matches, playoffs, or "All-Time Playoffs". There's still no league or season option in there, but the playoffs are saved to battery back-up so those of you who have trouble with passwords are saved from unnecessary anxiety.

The players are bigger than their Madden cousins, which means animation and detail are a bit better too. Because of the 25 second college play clock and the new one-step play calling, the action in Bill Walsh moves along at a faster pace. You'll need to make decisions as quickly as your computer opponents or you'll be left behind. Computer opponents are also much tougher and actually adjust and react to your style of play.

The defensive plays are all Madden, but the offensive plays are new. Classic college formations like the wishbone, and plays like the triple option and the 2-point conversion are available. You can bluff your play calling, time the hand-off to a running back, and set your own offensive and defensive audibles at any time during play.

All things considered, this is the best Gridiron game I've played on any system. But it's simply not an original game. If you've already got a Madden game, why should you shell out cash for more of the same? The simple answer is, you shouldn't, but in the end it's up to you.

Andrew Humphreys

BULLS VS BLAZERS

MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
Category: Sports Sim Rehash
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Electronic Arts



It's been around on import for a while, but Bulls vs Blazers and the NBA Playoffs has just scored an official local release. Before Bulls vs Blazers there was Bulls vs Lakers and the Olympics cash-in, Team USA Basketball. Before Bulls vs Lakers there was Lakers vs Celtics. Hmmmm. I sense a pattern here. All four are basically the same game - the teams change and the players get a few more fancy - but a name change doesn't make a new game.

There's two new features in Bulls vs Blazers. The Custom Team Builder lets you create your own teams of NBA superstars. You decide the starting fives, and who gets to warm the bench. There's a new defensive play calling mode too. You can play Half Court or Full Court and set the aggression level for the defensive pressure. But the more aggro you are, the quicker your players tire, and the easier they foul out.

Other than that, it's the same game as Bulls vs Lakers - right down to the music. So is it any good? Yes, it is - sort of. Bulls vs Blazers succeeds as an involving sports simulation with long term appeal. It's full of stats and realism. But, in these post-NBA Jam days, it's just not fast enough to be overly exciting. One of the reasons for this is that players tend to get stuck together on court and, no matter how hard you try, you can't move. You do get used to it and figure out ways around it, but it prevents any chance of a fast moving game.

Bulls vs Blazers is good. You should check it out. But remember, Sega's 16 meg NBA Action '94 is coming soon and so is NBA Jam. It might be worth waiting.

Andrew Humphreys



MICRO MACHINES

MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
 Category: Racing
 Players: 1-2
 Publisher: Codemasters



Micro Machines, after rave reviews in the English press, is finally available in Australia. Why all the fuss? It's a game where you race eight different toys - toy cars, tanks, boats and choppers - around breakfast tables, gardens, garages, pool tables and bathtubs. It's not the prettiest looking game in the world either. But none of that matters. Micro Machines, especially as a head to head two-player game, is the best racing game on Mega Drive.

It's got loads of options and twelve different characters to choose from (ranging in talent from the "Ace" Spider to the "Dire" Walter). In the one-player Challenge, as long as you keep winning, you get to race all the different Micro Machines against all the other characters (three at a time) on progressively harder tracks. It gets very tough - so tough in fact that you may never finish it.

Then there's the one-player head to head game, where you race any individual character one on one. It's just like the two-player game - you and your mate in a single race or tournament. Eight coloured lights keep track of who's winning - when all the lights are your colour, you win.

Still not convinced? You won't be until you play it. Then you'll know how superbly Micro Machines plays and how much game-play you get for your money. The controls are perfect and some of the machines are furiously fast. Every vehicle and every track (there's 32 in all) is different, so strategy and cunning play a major part in success. Cheating - by pushing your rival's car off the edge or into the water for instance - and taking short-cuts is all part of the game. For head to head two-player action, you can't beat it.

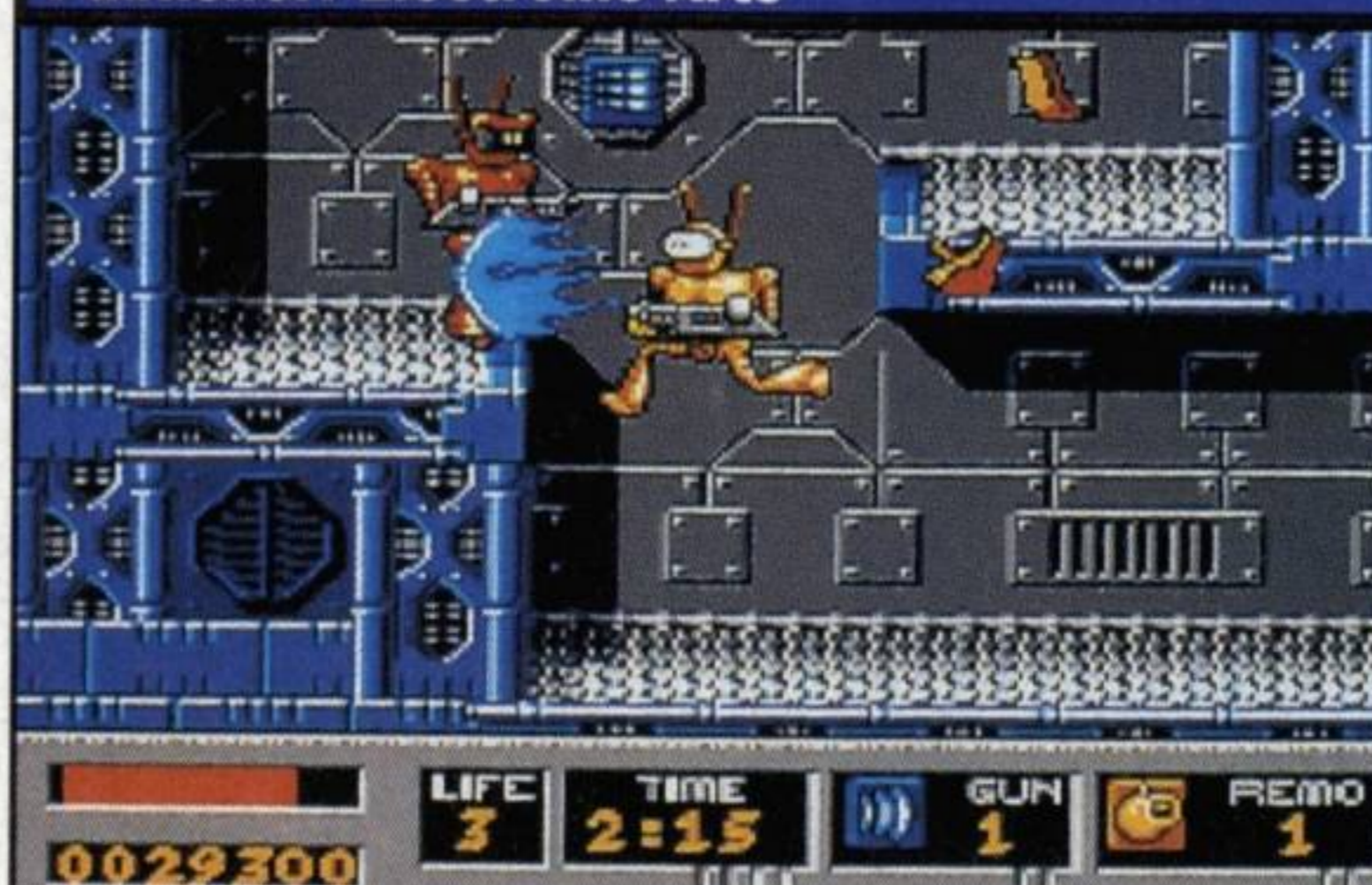
Andrew Humphreys



B.O.B

SNES/MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
 Category: Platformer
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Electronic Arts



Electronic Art's latest creation, B.O.B, is a cute android teenager, who's lucked out on a blind date. In fact, he's crash landed on the planet Goth, and the Goths aren't too happy to see him. He'll have to use his firepower to get out of this one!

Yes, B.O.B is a pretty standard platform shooter, and you take the role of the multi-talented android on a mission of escape. There are around 45 levels, and B.O.B will have to navigate through mazes as well as taking out a myriad of totally warped alien creatures. There are also obstacles to overcome such as floating mines, missiles, ceiling cannons and lasers. And if that isn't enough, there's quite a few bosses who are all rock hard.

But B.O.B's been around a bit so he's armed with an impressive array of weaponry and gadgets. You start with a single-shot gun, but can quickly graduate to a triple-shot, flamethrower, rocket, bolt or wave weapon. There are also special remote powers. The helicopter hat gives B.O.B a bit of a lift to high places, while the Flash freezes enemies and the umbrella lets B.O.B survive long falls. There's also trampolines, shields and floating bombs which are a lot of fun.

As you can see, there's more to B.O.B than meets the eye, but it still only rates as a mediocre platformer. It looks nice, it sounds nice and it's quite funny, with a streetwise B.O.B sprouting one-liners. However the controls are a pain and the animation and scrolling are less than perfect, which makes for a frustrating time. The Super Nintendo version has slightly better controls and B.O.B can jump around easier, but that's about the only difference. If you're a platform fanatic check it out, but don't be expecting wonders.

Stuart Clarke



TOYS

SNES/MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
 Category: Platformer
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Absolute



Take a movie that not even Robin Williams could save and turn it into a video game. Your chances of success aren't very good are they? Well this didn't faze those wacky guys at Absolute, and so Mega Drive and Super Nintendo owners get virtually identical versions of Toys to play with. They look the same, they sound the same, they play the same, and they're both crap.

Toys loosely follows the plot of the movie (yes, it did have a plot). You have to stop the evil General Zevo from building weapons disguised as toys by making your way through four levels of the Zevo Toy Factory. In the first three levels you need to destroy armies of "bad toys" (using your "good toys") in order to deactivate laser-firing security cameras (disguised as toy elephants) with your water pistol. At this point the very awkward top-down perspective (which makes it difficult to hit anything) switches to a first-person perspective. The final level is a side-scroller.

The real flaw in Toys is its lack of playability. There's not much to do, and doing even that is awkward at the best of times. With only four levels, there needed to be something special in the game to keep players interested - but there isn't. Thirty seconds into the game and you're wondering why you bothered.

Toys is a professional enough product. The graphics are passable (the animation on the Mega Drive may be a bit smoother) and the sound is OK (the SNES version does have much better sound quality though), and even the controls are fine, but in the end, it's just not a good game. Leave this one alone.

Andrew Humphreys



LETHAL WEAPON

SNES

Available: Now
Category: Platformer
Players: 1
Publisher: Ocean



Ocean's Lethal Weapon is a game closely based upon the hugely successful movie trilogy of the same name.

Right, did you spot the deliberate mistake in that sentence? Yep, that's correct, like most tie-ins Lethal Weapon, of course, bears practically no resemblance to the films whatsoever. Sure, Mel and Danny get their heads on the box and in the intro sequence, but that's purely incidental.

So, with game-publishers being as conservative and unwilling to take risks as they are (especially when it concerns big money licences such as this), what they inevitably do is churn out that old standby — the platform game. This time with a few shoot'em up elements. Yawn.

There are five increasingly tedious missions for you to work your way through. All five involve leaping from platform to platform, shooting some immensely stupid bad guys (most of whom don't even turn around when you fire at them from behind), avoiding falling rocks (which can still kill you after they have landed on the ground) and struggling with the frustrating collision detection. But by far the greatest challenge will be fighting off the intense boredom you will feel exactly thirteen seconds into every game (Guaranteed!).

The graphics are really dull, the levels are poorly designed, the action is non-existent at times, it's too easy and . . . well, I think you get the idea.

Occasionally, with a little thought and imagination, these things can actually work (see Alien 3 or The Addams Family). With Lethal Weapon it's like no one could be bothered to put the effort in.

David Wildgoose



PUGLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT

SNES

Available: Now
Category: Platformer/Puzzle
Players: 1
Publisher: Ocean



Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt begins when the Pugster's sister Wednesday devises a "game" to keep her little brother happy. She hides six items somewhere in the Addam's Family Mansion and, to make the game more exciting for both Pugsley and herself, protects them with traps and a series of mind-twisting puzzles. The result: a multi-scrolling platform romp through six very different levels of the oookiest mansion around with fantastic graphics, great sound, and challenging gameplay.

Pugsley's got all the platform moves down pat. He can jump, duck and crawl, climb chains, and, when you hold down button Y, build up a head of steam. The responsiveness of the controls is excellent. Like most of the current crop of platform heroes, he dispatches bad guys by jumping on them. Pugsley's bum (with the appropriate sound effect) is a lethal weapon. The Pugsley sprite is full of character too; leave him alone for a while and he'll pull out a sandwich to munch on.

The backgrounds are beautifully drawn and detailed too, with each level being very different from the last. The depth in some scenes is amazing. Visit Grandma and the entire level takes place within a crystal ball. It's an unusual but highly imaginative effect.

Best of all, the gameplay changes with each level. Everything is platform-related, but the puzzles and switches in the different sections all require a new approach to make it through to the exit. Pugsley is very tough too, so on top of varied gameplay, you get a hefty challenge thrown in for good measure.

Add some superb soundtracks (including the Addam's Family theme) and you've got yourself one of the best platform games available on any system. It even makes up for Lethal Weapon. Get this game.

Andrew Humphreys



WAYNE'S WORLD

SNES

Available: Now
Category: Platformer
Players: 1
Publisher: THQ Inc



Garth's been kidnapped! No Way! Actually he's hasn't, it's far worse. He's been inhaled by Zantar the gelatinous cube, who (as Wayne would put it) is a pixelated purple putridosity of the first degree.

So there's the plot, and it's up to you (playing Wayne) to rescue your best buddy without blowing chunks all over the place. And this is no mean feat as the gameplay in this one really makes you want to hurl. Now, maybe that's a bit harsh, but as a big fan of the movie I was expecting something funny and original, but this is neither particularly original (standard platform fare) and while it does provide some initial laughs, the jokes start to wear thin when you actually get around to playing the game seriously.

The graphics and sound are both good though, and do their best to hide the inadequate gameplay. The intro is effective and Wayne's digitised face is a nice touch. His guitar weapon is also pretty funky, and you can pick up some pretty good power-ups that will get rid of the many stupid enemies you'll face. There's floating bagpipes, trombone grabbers, sax mortars, grease donut monsters, psycho hose beasts, disco balls (ooh, there's a Barry Manilow flashback) and the terrifying lawn sprinkler!

There are only four levels, which really limits the game's appeal straight away. You begin in Kramer's Music Store, then move on to Stan's Donut Shop, followed by the Gas Works night club and then into the foul depths of Suburbia. So, if you're a half way decent player you should be through this in no time. That is, if you can be bothered....

Stuart Clarke



TAZ MANIA

SUPER NES

Available: Now
 Category: Racer
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Sunsoft



One of Sega's biggest successes last year was the very hungry Tassie Devil. The Mega Drive version was a solid platformer with excellent cartoon graphics. For the Super Nintendo, Sunsoft have decided to throw caution to the wind and completely change the format, making a road racing game instead. Is it for the better? Hmmm.

Taz is as hungry as ever, and this time his prey are Kiwi birds. But he'll need to dodge oncoming traffic, hunters and other obstacles that stand between him and his food. The game plays fast and the road twists and turns in all directions. If the pace is too slow, you can speed it up with Tazzy's tantrum spin! This will smash all obstacles except cars and buses. But Tazzy gets tired after too much exertion, so be careful not to overdo it.

The animation on Taz, especially when he croaks it, is excellent, but there are no Mode 7 techniques visible at all and the jerky sprite updating is really annoying. The sound is mediocre, with some good and totally disgusting effects. The music however is totally out of line. This stuff is TONE DEATH!

And the gameplay? Well, it may have been a nice concept on paper, but it just doesn't come off. All that running around and grabbing for Kiwis on one long and winding road does get a bit tiresome after a while. It'd be OK if it was just a part of the game (like the bonus levels in Sonic 2) but it's not - it's the whole game. It'll last about as long as a hungry snail in a poison pellet factory. Back to the sandpit for you Tazzy fans, I'm afraid!

Brian Costelloe

Thanks to the Gamesmen for the cart



JACK NICKLAUS GOLF

SUPER NES

Available: Now
 Category: Sport
 Players: 1-4
 Publisher: Tradewest



I'd really like to tell you the story of what occurred during my first round of Jack Nicklaus Golf. Trouble is, it's quite embarrassing. Not for me, but for Jack. So, if you lean forward slightly I'll whisper really softly and just hope he doesn't hear. Okay?

We both started well with birdies on the first hole of Mr Nicklaus' very own course, The Bear's Track. From there on, Jack began to lose it, bogeying three of the next nine holes to finish on +2. Meanwhile I raced away with a few more Birdies and an eagle, and my score was at -5 as we moved onto the eleventh. I teed off first, a lovely shot landing centre-left on the fairway, and Jack followed. His drive skewed to the right, pulling up metres short of the lake which was doing its best to hide the green. Then, on his second shot, Jack tried to carry the water and . . . missed. He then replayed the shot and . . . gulp . . . missed again. And then again. And again. And again. Oh dear. When he reached the stroke limit of sixteen, I couldn't bring myself to laugh one more time so I reset the machine.

Despite this completely inexplicable situation (which happily didn't arise during subsequent plays) Jack Nicklaus Golf is generally pretty good. The control system is very simple to get to grips with, utilising, as it does, a "single-button-which-you-press-three-times" technique (patent pending). The courses (both of them — there's only two) look kind of/sort of realistic, though a feeling of depth is lacking at times.

The best bit though, is that up to four people can play. And any game no matter how crap, is always a laugh with four players.

David Wildgoose



THE ADVENTURES OF ROCKY & BULLWINKLE & FRIENDS

SNES

Available: Now (Import)
 Category: Platformer
 Players: 1
 Publisher: THQ



I love Rocky and Bullwinkle, really I do. I didn't understand the cartoon much as a kid, but know that I'm older and wiser I appreciate its finer points of political satire. And Bullwinkle is still the coolest Moose on TV. But as for this game, well, where do I begin? It's bad. Bordering on crap even. It's just another platform game with little imagination and even less merit.

Boris and Natasha have stolen three valuable treasures from the Rocky and Bullwinkle Museum, so it's up to the Flying Squirrel and Meathead Moose to get them back. You play the first three levels as Bullwinkle (the Alps, caves, and the belly of a robot whale) and another three as Rocky (the docks, streets, and the haunted house). There's two bonus levels as well (which can be played straight from the options screen). One has you playing as Dudley Do-Right and his Horse in a bid to out race a speeding train, the other casts you as Sherman. This time you have to pick up bubblegum and blow bubbles at the mouth of a fire-breathing dragon. They're short, simple affairs.

The animators have made some effort to recreate the look and feel of the cartoon, but they've failed pretty miserably. The sprites look as though they've been drawn by an untalented nine year-old and the backgrounds, while colourful, lack any detail. The music comes a bit closer to the cartoon's themes. What really lets the game down though is the simple, unexciting gameplay. The controls respond well and it is playable, but there's nothing to hold the interest of even die-hard Moose fans like myself. Don't disappoint yourself. Go for Pugsley instead.

Andrew Humphreys

Thanks to the Gamesmen for the cart.



MIG-29

PC

Available: Now
Category: Flight Sim
Players: 1
Publisher: Spectrum HoloByte



Falcon 3.0 is not a computer game. It is a way of life. A simulator of the General Dynamics F-16 fighter, it uses the same computer flight model as the U.S. Air Force. Nothing else is like it, and since it's original release in 1991, Falcon 3.0 has remained the most accurate military flight simulator available for the PC.

The beauty of Falcon is the completeness of it. "The Electronic Battlefield" is the name Spectrum HoloByte have given the world they have created, where outside the cockpit a war rages. Intelligently controlled ground units go about their business over a huge area, and your actions directly affect it. Blow a bridge and the enemy won't cross, take out a fuel dump and they slow their advance. It's all dynamic and real-time. Add to this the unmatched realism and technical accuracy of the aircraft itself, and you have a nice bit of 2-D virtual reality to get lost in.

The Russian MiG-29 is the perfect fighter to be added to the Electronic Battlefield. It is a hugely powerful twin engined blend of Soviet high tech and agricultural sturdiness. A very sexy plane indeed. The MiG-29 can do things no other plane can, but it's also a pig to fly. Many frustrating hours will need to be invested before you are comfortable in the cockpit. Hot sim pilot will soon be humbled by this one. But persevere, as the satisfaction of mastering such a complex piece of software is great.

MiG-29 lets you fly all the original Falcon missions from the other side, it also adds a brilliant new perspective to one of it's strongest features, network play. Up to six players can fight it out in a war lasting weeks. All you need is a Novell network (available in most offices) and plenty of the right stuff!

Ben Mansill



PIRATES GOLD

PC

Available: Now
Category: Adventure/Strategy
Players: 1
Publisher: Microprose



A new and pleasing trend is emerging from the house of Microprose. Classic games which have endured the test of time, and developed a cult following of devotees are being majorly tarted up, and re-released as the "Gold" version.

Pirates is the first, and will be followed shortly by Railroad Tycoon. These games were notable for their high quality of playability, and appalling graphics. They were also responsible for society's high divorce rate, and the emergence of a new class of anti-social sleep deprived young males.

The Gold version of the original Pirates is not a sequel, instead it is the original game, with considerable enhancements, most obvious being the graphics. The original Pirates was released when 16 colour EGA was the cutting edge, and the hot PC was a 286. Today the poor-man's-PC is a 386, and unlike most new games, Pirate's Gold makes full use of the machinery available.

The special quality that sets Pirate's Gold apart from the crowd is it's deft combination of ease and depth of play. It doesn't take much effort to figure out what to do, although playing successfully requires an understanding of the mechanics of each aspect of the game. The good news is that PG's learning curve is painless, and a joy to explore fully.

Sailing, exploring, cannon battles, sword-fighting, strategic land battles, espionage, diplomacy, trade, romance, managing supplies, and naturally, treasure hunting are part of the daily grind. The caper is to live as a swashbuckler, until your booty is bountiful enough to retire gracefully, preferably with vast land titles, the respect of your peers and Government, and the hand of a beautiful princess. Pirate's Gold is a well designed and absorbing computer game that was already a classic years before it's release.

Ben Mansill



WAYNE'S WORLD

PC

Available: Now
Category: Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: Capstone



See the movie, read the book, wear the shirt, play the game. Capstone's ("The Pinnacle of Entertainment Software"?) Marketing Department had one too many Weet Bix one morning and decided that bucks were to be made from the merchandising bandwagon that is Wayne's World.

The release of Wayne's World was timed with devilish precision to coincide with the demise of the popularity of the phenomenon, and a good thing too, because if the hordes of WW cult-followers all went and bought this, then computer games would gain a sad name very quickly. The combined Installation Guide, Technical Supplement, Control Summary and Game Manual are all condensed into a handy 11 page volume the size of your hand, and it's triple-spaced with big diagrams. It can be read and memorised while the game is installing, and this is Wayne's World's strongest point.

Not to say though, that WW lacks any entertainment value. Wayne and Garth are endearing characters, no matter how they are packaged, and any buyer can be sure of at least a few days of mild amusement. It's simple adventure fare to be sure, W & G can be moved anytime to any of a dozen or so places, to talk to, use, pick-up, push, look at, etc. a fascinatingly dull collection of stuff, people, etc. There's not much chance of stuffing things up for yourself by not picking up some crucial item, in a strict sequence, like any Sierra game for example. You just keep on going backwards and forwards until all the right things have been given to the right people. It's OK if you want to re-live the movie experience and soak up some more of that WW aura, but I'm the only person in the world who hasn't seen WW, and I had to frequently leave the game and go and watch the paint dry to keep myself excited.

Ben Mansill

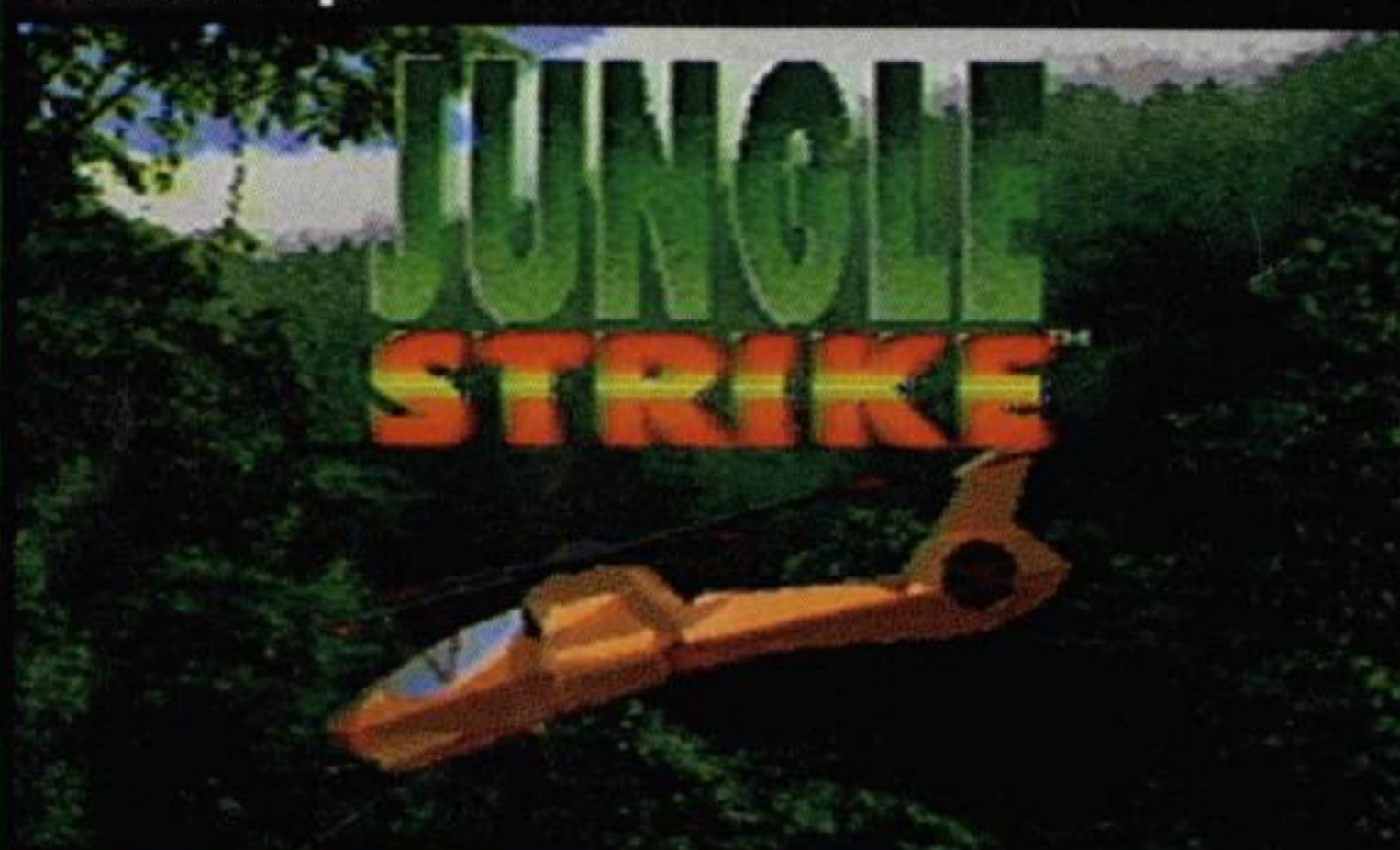


Jungle Strike

Play Guide

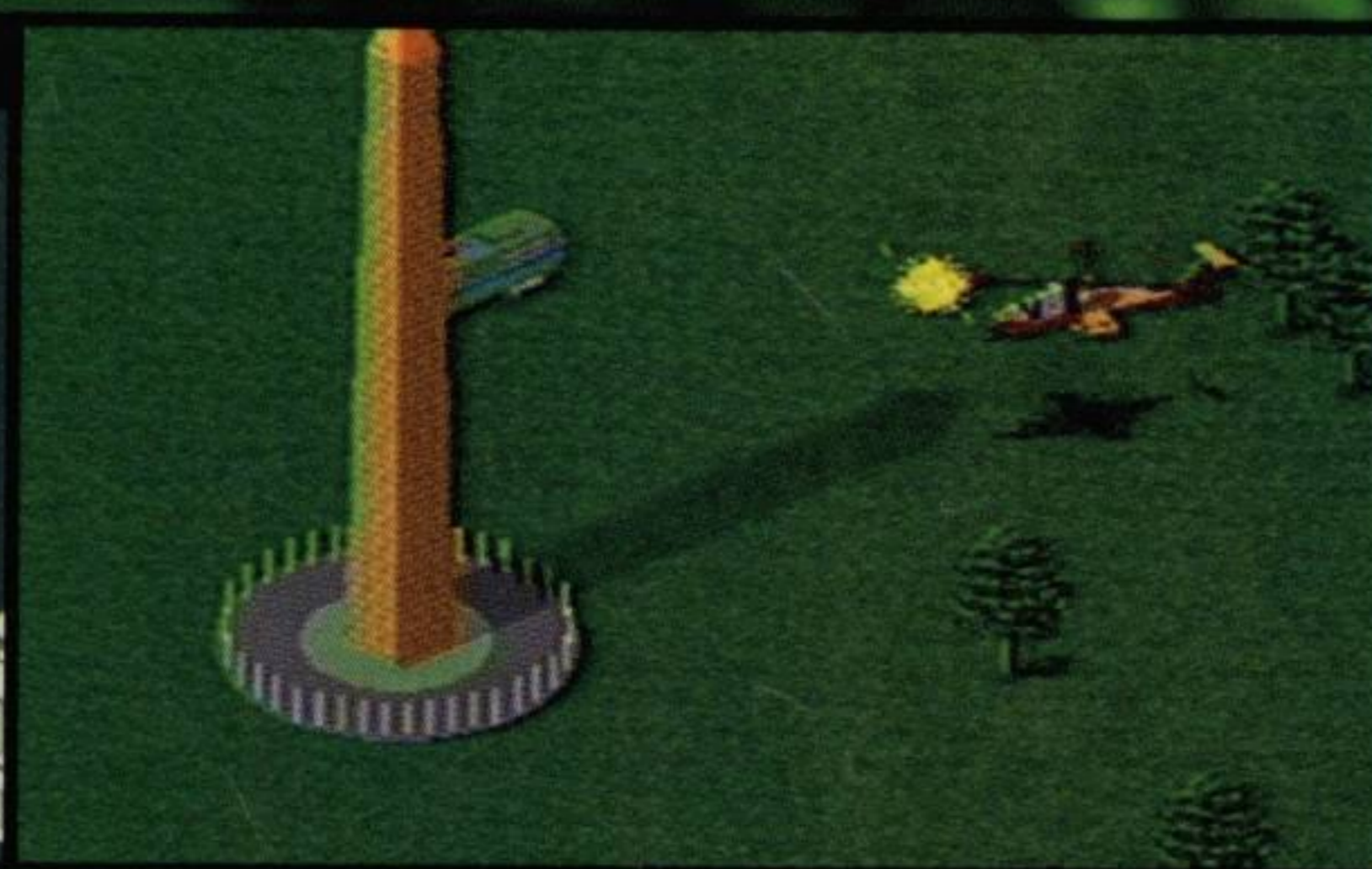
Problems with the Drug Lord? Can't deal with the Madman's son? Well, if you're playing EA's Mega Drive scorcher, *Jungle Strike* (and we sincerely hope you are), **HYPER** can help you out. Here's all the inside info and top secret tips on every mission. You lucky people!

General tips



- Read the instruction book carefully! It's there for a reason.
- Learn to jink your chopper (no "Ooo errs!" please). Jinking (by holding down button A and moving left or right on the D-pad) gives your gunner greater accuracy and helps you avoid enemy fire.
- Don't try to slug it out with the more powerful enemy defences - you won't last long. Always try for a sneak attack - hit fast and hard.
- There's enough fuel and ammo for every mission, but only if you use your supplies wisely.
- Generally (but not always), it's best to tackle the missions in order.

Campaign 1: Washington DC (No password)



You shouldn't have too many problems here - the instruction book takes you through each mission thoroughly.

Campaign 2: Sub Hunt : RLPGYKBX6GG



Again, follow the instruction book and you'll be fine. Getting used to the feel of the Hovercraft will take a bit of practice. Use your map to locate enemy defences. To destroy those pesky gun boats, take advantage of your speed, cut across in front of them, and drop a mine with button A. Make sure you're not moving too quickly when you're collecting supplies and plutonium or you'll destroy them. Don't waste a whole

load of ammo on the subs - again, cut across their path and drop a mine or two to destroy them.

Campaign 3: Training Ground: 9V6DBRV76GG



Look for an extra life to appear when you take out a Sheridan tank on the left hand side of the compound. You should also find at least two armor repairs in this level: one around the training ground, and one near the POW building.

Campaign 4: Night Strike: XTHGR9WNMCZ



Because you can't locate the position of supplies on your map, this campaign can give you a lot of trouble. After you complete the first mission, go after the Weapons Commander (he's the yellow dot South-West on your map). Capture him and he'll tell you where the fuel and ammo are, making the rest of the campaign much, much easier. Try to sneak into the compound from the West, destroy the shed with the Commander in it,

pick him up and get out as quickly as possible. Shoot every supply tent you see - there's loads of armor repair to be found.

Campaign 5: Puloso City: VNCFXTLSZYW



Grab the extra life hidden in a house just up from the landing site. Scout around the UN base and the prison camps, taking out the defences, and blowing up anything you fancy to reveal fuel, ammo, and armor repair. The toughest part of this campaign is retrieving the explosives. Take out the Tactical only; leave the MLRV's alone. Blast open the building and grab the explosives under the fire of the other defences. You only need one

to complete the mission. To get the motorcycle, take out the buildings containing the armoured cars first (they'll show up on your map). Make sure your armour's OK; as soon as you destroy the buildings they'll attack - and you can only destroy them with the bike. Land the chopper at the police station and transfer to the bike. Destroy the armoured car by cutting in front of their path and dropping a mine. Pick up the warheads they leave behind (your next mission) straight away. Transfer back to the chopper to complete the campaign.



Campaign 6: Snow Fortress: W6PDKV7LGFB



Pick up a quick winch and armor repair in the buildings near the landing zone and an extra life in a hut near the power station. Make sure you take out the hidden radar unit early to make your life easier: look for a Gatling Gun on the map to the West. Be careful not to destroy any of the nuclear weapons you need to pick up from the underground fortresses.

Campaign 7: River Raid: THFYXL6MHZD



There's 4 extra lives just up from the landing zone. Pick them up first. After the first mission, take out the hidden radar unit before you get in the Stealth Bomber: look for 3 twin-guns on your map. Take some time to get the hang of flying the Stealth. It's got heaps of armour, unlimited fuel and ammo, but it's very easy to crash. You need to get your height right: fly low for the bridges, and as high as you can over the drug fields (so

you don't crash into the glasshouses) and patriot launchers. Don't try to take out the fuel depot in the Stealth - you'll just crash and burn. Land the Stealth and jump back into the trusty chopper to complete the final two missions.

Campaign 8: The Mountains: 7CDT46HPGFR



Now things start to get tough. Finding fuel should be a priority here. You will find enough ammo and armor repair. Take out the lower control towers first: sneak up on the M1's, but only tangle with the ones you need to destroy. Use your chain guns from a distance to destroy the buildings. For the second mission, be very wary of the mobile attack cannons - finish them quickly and use your chain guns on the missiles. Look for a river escape

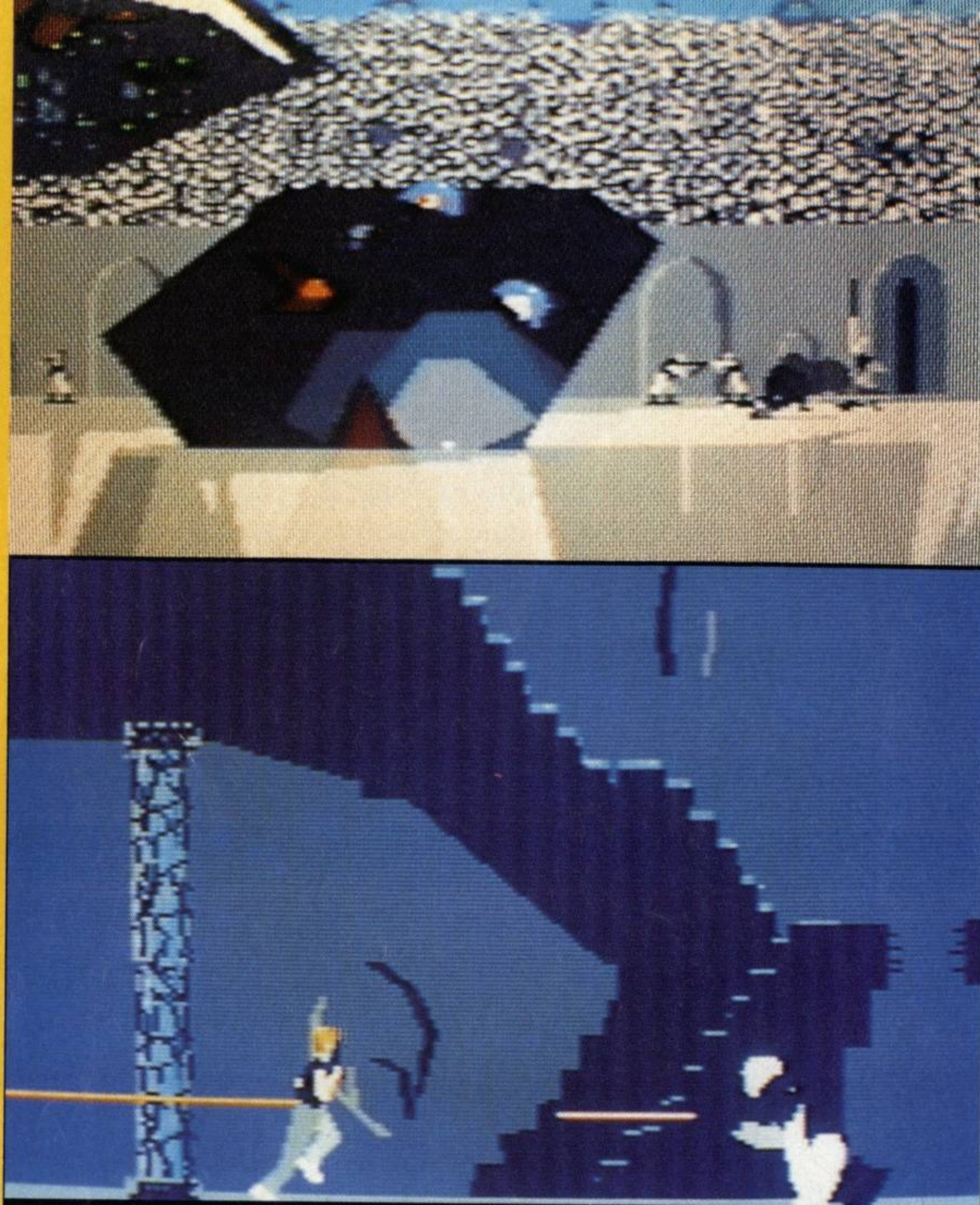
from the drug lord, just above his villa. Destroy his speed boat and pick him up. To breach the Madman's shelter, blast a hole in the right side then land the chopper next to the weapons truck to the right. Your co-pilot will drive the truck into the bunker. Pick him up, then blast the truck. The Madman will escape by helicopter; follow it and shoot it down quick! Pick up the Madster and head for home.

Campaign 9: Return Home: NSJX7SHPGFR



This is a mystery mission and we're going to keep it that way. You're on your own except for these two tips: blow up the fuel station to find an armor repair; blow up a civilian building on a pink square (the square below the White House) for fuel and another armor repair. Stay calm and you'll save the Free World.

CHEAT MODE



OUT OF THIS WORLD SNES

SECTION PASSWORDS

- Section 1: LDKD
- Section 2: HTDC
- Section 3: CLLD
- Section 4: LBKG
- Section 5: XDDJ
- Section 6: FXLC
- Section 7: KRFK
- Section 8: KLFB
- Section 9: DDRX
- Section 10: HRTB
- Section 11: BRTD
- Section 12: TFBB
- Section 13: TXHF
- Section 14: CKJL
- Section 15: LFCK

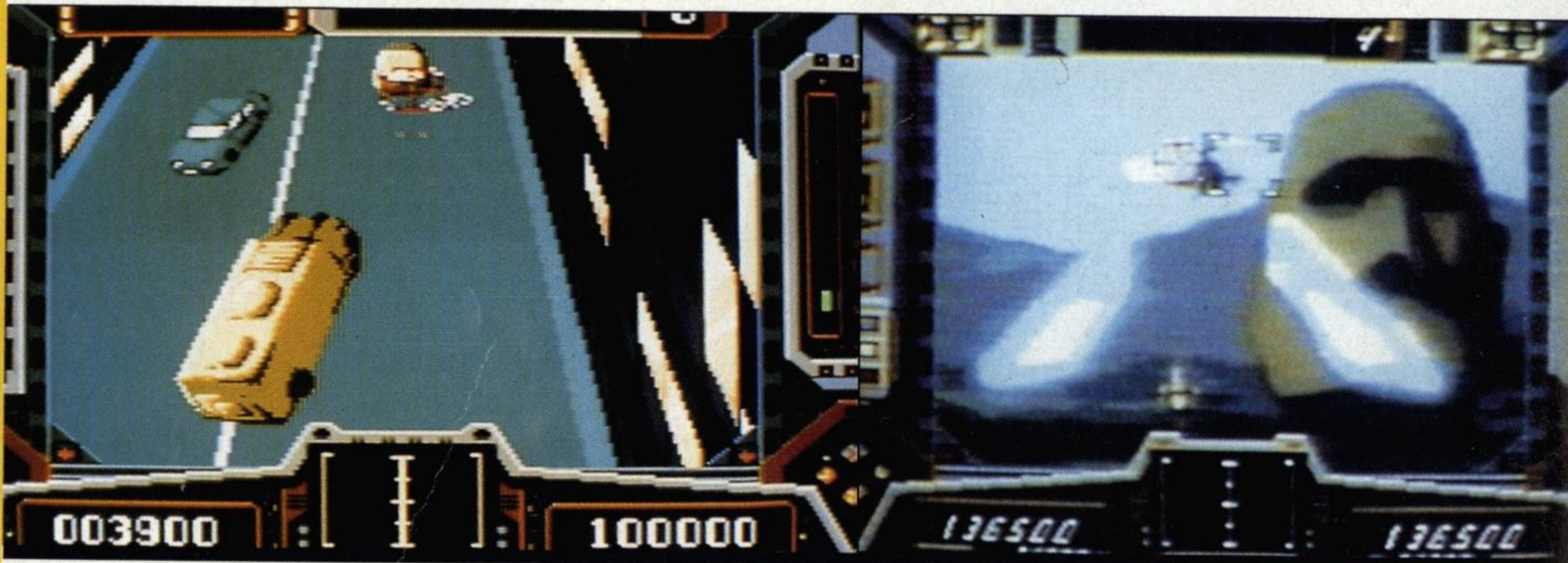
COBRA COMAND

MEGA CD

STAGE SELECT AND STAGE SKIP

On the Title screen (Game Start/Config), take controller 1 and press these buttons in this order: UP, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT and UP. When you start, and the screen shows "STAGE 1," move the directional pad

RIGHT to scroll through the different levels. You can scroll all the way up to Stage 9! You can also skip to the next level at any time simply by pressing START during play.



BUSBY THE BOBCAT

SNES

CHAPTER PASSWORDS

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Chapter 01:</u> JSSCTS | <u>Chapter 08:</u> SBBSHC |
| <u>Chapter 02:</u> CKBGMM | <u>Chapter 09:</u> DBKRRB |
| <u>Chapter 03:</u> SCTWMN | <u>Chapter 10:</u> MSFCTS |
| <u>Chapter 04:</u> MKBRLN | <u>Chapter 11:</u> KMGRBS |
| <u>Chapter 05:</u> LBLNRD | <u>Chapter 12:</u> SLJMBG |
| <u>Chapter 06:</u> JMDKRK | <u>Chapter 13:</u> TGRTUN |
| <u>Chapter 07:</u> STGRTN | <u>Chapter 14:</u> CCLDSL |
| | <u>Chapter 15:</u> BTCLMB |





NBA JAM

ARCADE

THE SECRET PLAYERS

Aside from the 54 NBA superstars, there are 18 secret characters hidden in NBA Jam, and you can play them all by entering their initials and birthdate before you play. Here are a choice selection:

- Mark Turmell (designer/programmer):** MJT March 22
- Tony Goskie (animator):** TWG December 7
- Willie Morris Jr (street legend):** WIL January 1
- Sheridan Oursler (street legend):** SNO January 3
- Stephen Howard (street legend/Jazz rookie):** HOW July 15
- Tony Scott (street legend):** TON July 3

CHEATS GALORE

There's a host of super cool cheats for NBA Jam, all of which are performed at the Match Up screen (the announcer will say, "Tonight's match up...").

- 1. BIG HEAD:** Hold the joystick UP and hold down the TURBO and STEAL buttons at the match up screen. Keep them held until the court appears with "Big Head On".
- 2. POWER-UP DEFENCE:** Tap STEAL or BLOCK 8 TIMES.
- 3. POWER-UP OFFENCE:** Tap STEAL or BLOCK 21 TIMES.
- 4. POWER-UP INTERCEPT:** Hold the joystick DOWN and hold down ALL THREE BUTTONS until the court appears.
- 5. COMPUTER ASSISTANCE OFF:** Tap TURBO 10 times (only for Version 3 machines).
- 6. LEARNING MODE:** Rotate the joystick CLOCKWISE (touch all 8 points) then PRESS ALL THREE BUTTONS TOGETHER 7 TIMES.
- 7. TANK GAME:** Hold the joystick DOWN and hold down ALL THREE BUTTONS for BOTH Player 1 and Player 2.

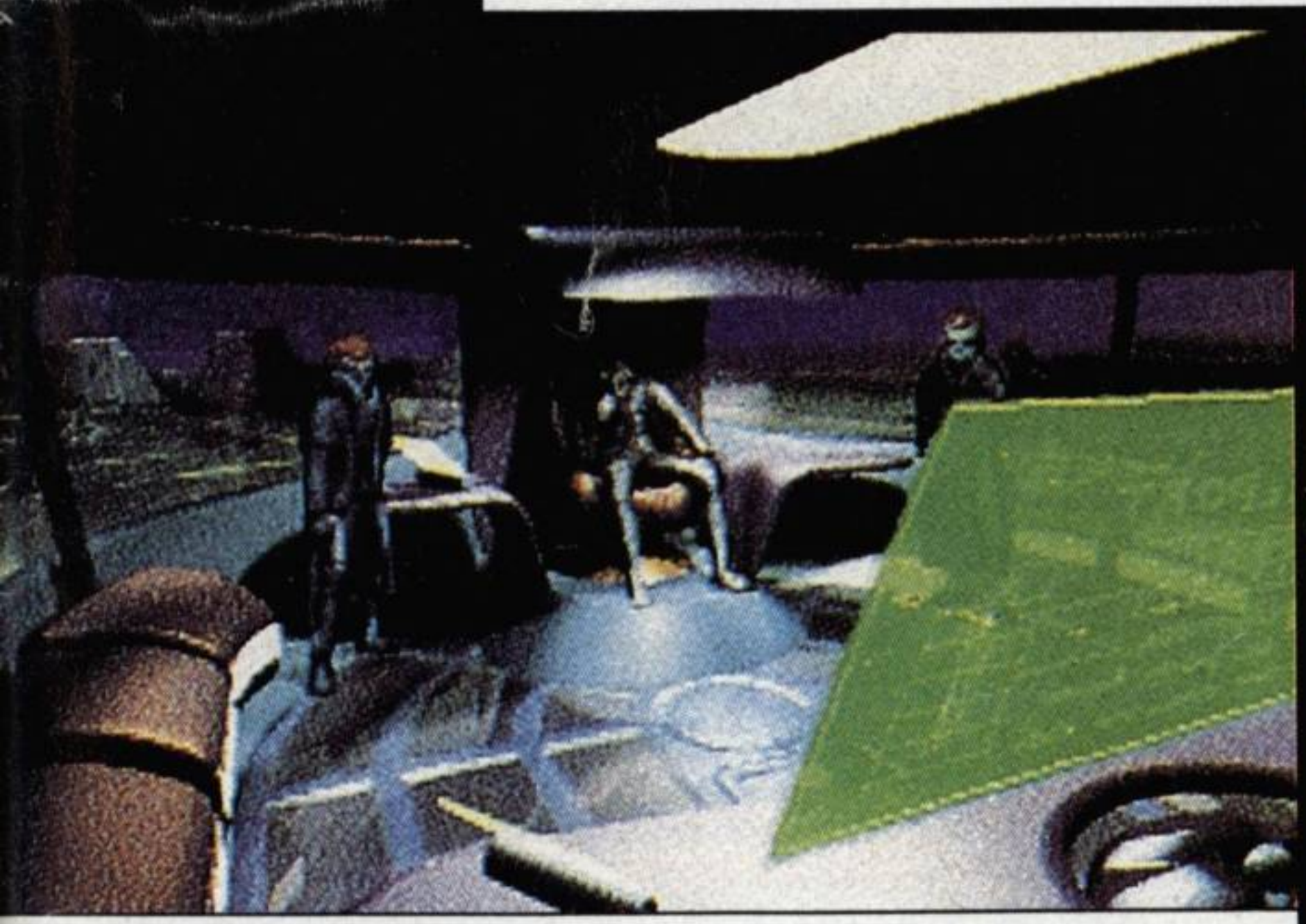
BATMAN RETURNS SNES

INCREASE TO 9 LIVES

On the Title screen, move the bat down to Options and press start. In the option mode, take controller 2 and do this code: UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A. Then you will hear a series of musical tones confirming that the trick worked. Using controller 1, move down to the option that says "REST". Now, make your life count go up to 9!

Increase to 9 Continues

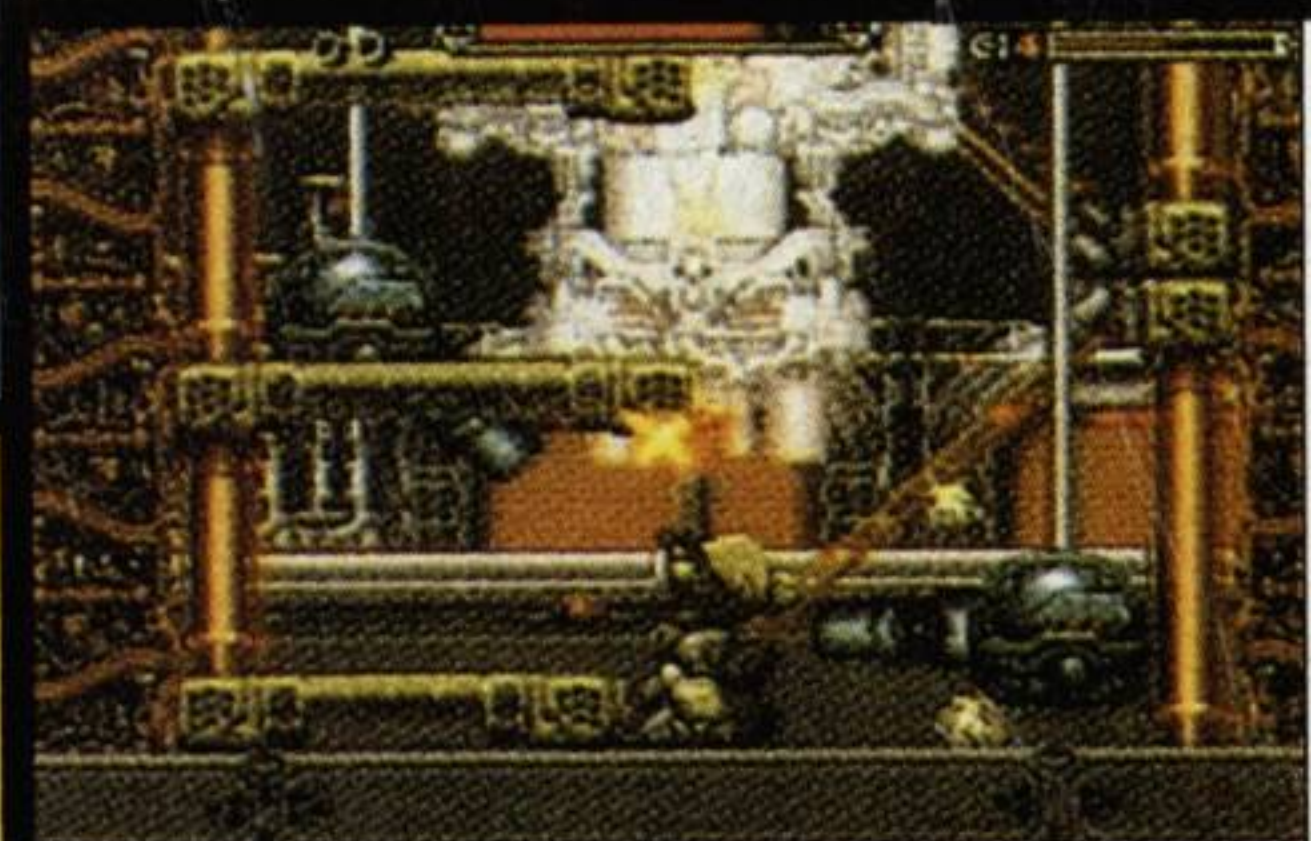
To do this, you must first go to the Title screen, move down to Options and press START. when you are in the Option mode, take controller 2 and press these buttons in this order: UP, X, LEFT, Y, DOWN, B, RIGHT, A, UP, X. You'll hear a ringing sound which indicates that the trick worked.



FATAL FURY MEGA DRIVE

UNLIMITED CONTINUES

After losing, the Continue screen will appear with your number of credits shown in the bottom left-hand corner. Hold UP on the control pad and press A, B and C simultaneously. Your credits will go up by 1 every time you do this.



CYBERNATOR SNES

INCREASE TO 6 CREDITS

Wait until the Konami logo has passed, and at the demo, before the Title screen appears, press and hold these buttons: L button, R button, and UP on the pad. Then, press START. Keep holding these buttons when the Title screen appears and press START again. Do this once more when the Game Start option is highlighted. Let go of all buttons and play past the first level to see your credit gain.



ALIEN 3 SNES

LEVEL PASSWORDS

Stage 2: QUESTION

Stage 3: MASTERED

Stage 4: MOTORWAY

Stage 5: CABINETS

Stage 6: SQUIRREL



T.M.N.T. IV: TURTLES IN TIME SNES

INCREASE TO 10 LIVES

At the Title screen, take pad 2 and put in this code: UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A. Go to the Options screen with pad 1 and change your lives up to 10!

CHEAT MODE

MORTAL KOMBAT

ALL THE MOVES AND FATALITIES!

For some reason, the instruction book tells you nothing. Luckily you have Hyper.

MEGA DRIVE & SNES

LIU KANG

FIREBALL

Mega Drive: Push D-button forwards, forwards, press Button A

SNES: Push D-button forwards, forwards, press Button Y

FLYING KICK

Mega Drive: Push D-button forwards, forwards, press C button

SNES: Push D-button forwards, forwards, press Button X

FATALITY

Mega Drive: Hold Start button, rotate D-button towards opponent

SNES: Hold L or R button, rotate D-button towards opponent

RAYDEN

LIGHTNING BOLT

Mega Drive: Push D-button down, forwards, press A button

SNES: Press D-button down, forwards, press button Y

FATALITY: Stand right next to your opponent (teleporting helps) and hit F, B, B, B + HP

Mega Drive: Press D-button forwards, back, back, back, press A button

SNES: Press D-button forwards, back, back, back, press button Y

CAGE

FIREBALL

Mega Drive: Push D-button back, forward, press A button

SNES: Push D-button back, forward, press B button

SHADOW KICK

Mega Drive: Push D-button back, forward, press B button

SNES: Push D-button back, forward, press B button

SPLITS PUNCH

Mega Drive: Hold D-button down, press A, B & C button

SNES: Press B button plus L button or R button

FATALITY

Mega Drive: Press D-button forward, forward, forward, press A button

SNES: Press D-button forward, forward, forward, press Y button

SONYA

ENERGY WAVE

Mega Drive: Press D-button back, back, press button A

SNES: Press D-button back, back, press button Y

FATALITY

Mega Drive: Press D-button forwards, back, forwards, back, press Start button

SNES: Press D-button forwards, forwards, away, away, press R or L

CHOOSE YOUR FIGHTER



KANO

ROLL SPIN

Mega Drive: Hold Start Button, rotate D-button towards opponent, release Start button

SNES: Hold L or R button, rotate D-button towards opponent, release L or R button

KNIFE THROW

Mega Drive: Hold Start button, press D-button down then up

SNES: Hold L or R button, press D-button back then forwards

FATALITY

Mega Drive: Hold Start button, press D-button down, down, press A button

SNES: Hold L or R button, rotate D-button towards opponent, press B button

SUB ZERO

ICE BLAST: D, DF, F + LP

Mega Drive: Push D-button down, forwards, press button A

SNES: Press D-button down, forwards, press button B

FATALITY: Stand next to your opponent and hit F, D, F + HP

Mega Drive: Press D-button forwards, down, forwards, press A button

SNES: Press D-button forwards, down, forwards, press Button Y

SCORPION

SPEAR AND CORD

Mega Drive: Press D-button back, back, press A button

SNES: Press D-button away, away, press button Y

FATALITY

Mega Drive: Hold Start button, press D-button up, up

SNES: Hold L or R button, press D-button up, up



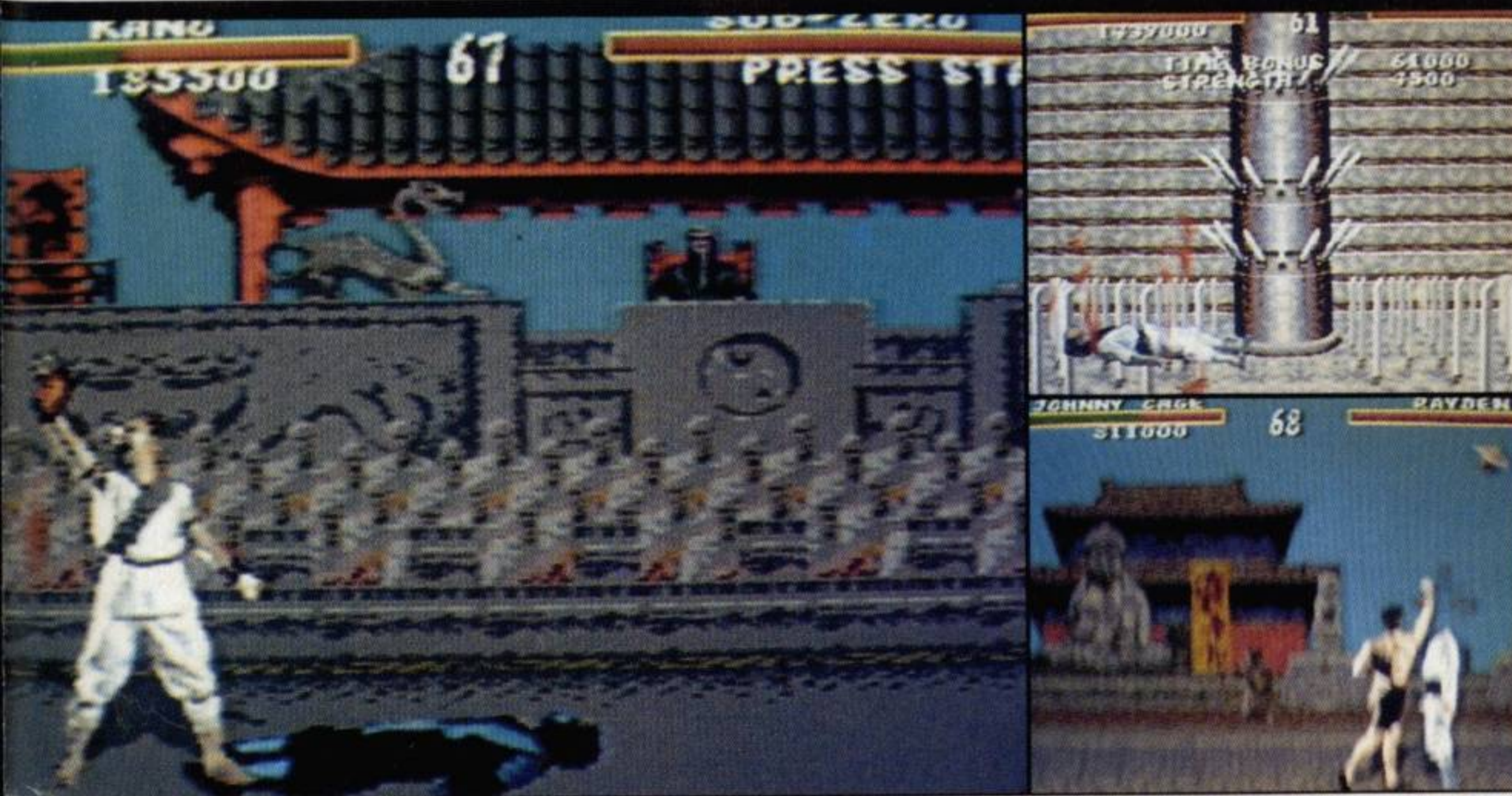


MORTAL KOMBAT

GAME GEAR

GAME GEAR GORE CHEAT

All that blood isn't just retracted to the Mega Drive! On the last of the "Codes of Honour" screens ("Mortal Kombat adheres to many codes. But does it contain one?"), press the direction pad and the buttons in this order: 2, 1, 2, DOWN, UP. Now get ready to finish him!



STREET FIGHTER II TURBO

SNES

6 MORE TURBO SPEEDS!

Here's the cheat for 6 extra Turbo speeds, making a total of 11 speeds, just like the Mega Drive version.

Plug in controller 2, turn on, and wait for the Capcom logo to pass. As the huge "TURBO" scrolls across the screen, on controller 2, press DOWN, R button, UP, L button, Y, B. You'll hear some tinkles to confirm the cheat has worked.

Now go to the Turbo/Normal/Option screen, put the cursor next to Turbo and push right to increase the stars.

NO SPECIAL MOVES/SPECIAL ENDING

Too tough for those wimpy special moves? Here's a cheat to turn them off in a one-player game. Your computer opponents will have all of their special moves, but you'll have none. Complete the game this way and look out for a special ending. This will only work for a ONE PLAYER GAME - you can't do it in Vs mode.

When the Capcom logo appears, quickly enter this code on controller 1: DOWN, R button, UP, L button, Y, B. You'll hear some tones to confirm the cheat has worked. Now see how good you are without that fireball and dragon punch.

MORTAL KOMBAT

MEGA DRIVE

ARCADE BLOOD AND FATALITIES!

OK, here's the hottest cheat in town - all the blood and guts you could ever want.

On the "Codes of Honour" screen, hit the following buttons on controller 1: A, B, A, C, A, B, B. The screen will tint red and you'll hear Scorpion's "Get over here" to confirm the cheat has worked. The screen will also say, "Now entering Kombat". Have fun.

SUPER CHEAT MODE OPTION

As the fighter's heads are scrolling down the sides on the option screen press Down, Up, Left, Left, A button, Right and Down (DULLARD) and it will then give you access to the extra special Cheat Mode Option. Select this and you can change heaps of cool stuff, like wood and steel strength tests into the much tougher diamond and ruby strength tests. It also lets you have one hit contests, infinite continues and lets you add a whole range of special effects, like the severed head of Probe Software's (the programmers) managing director, bouncing around in the pit stage.



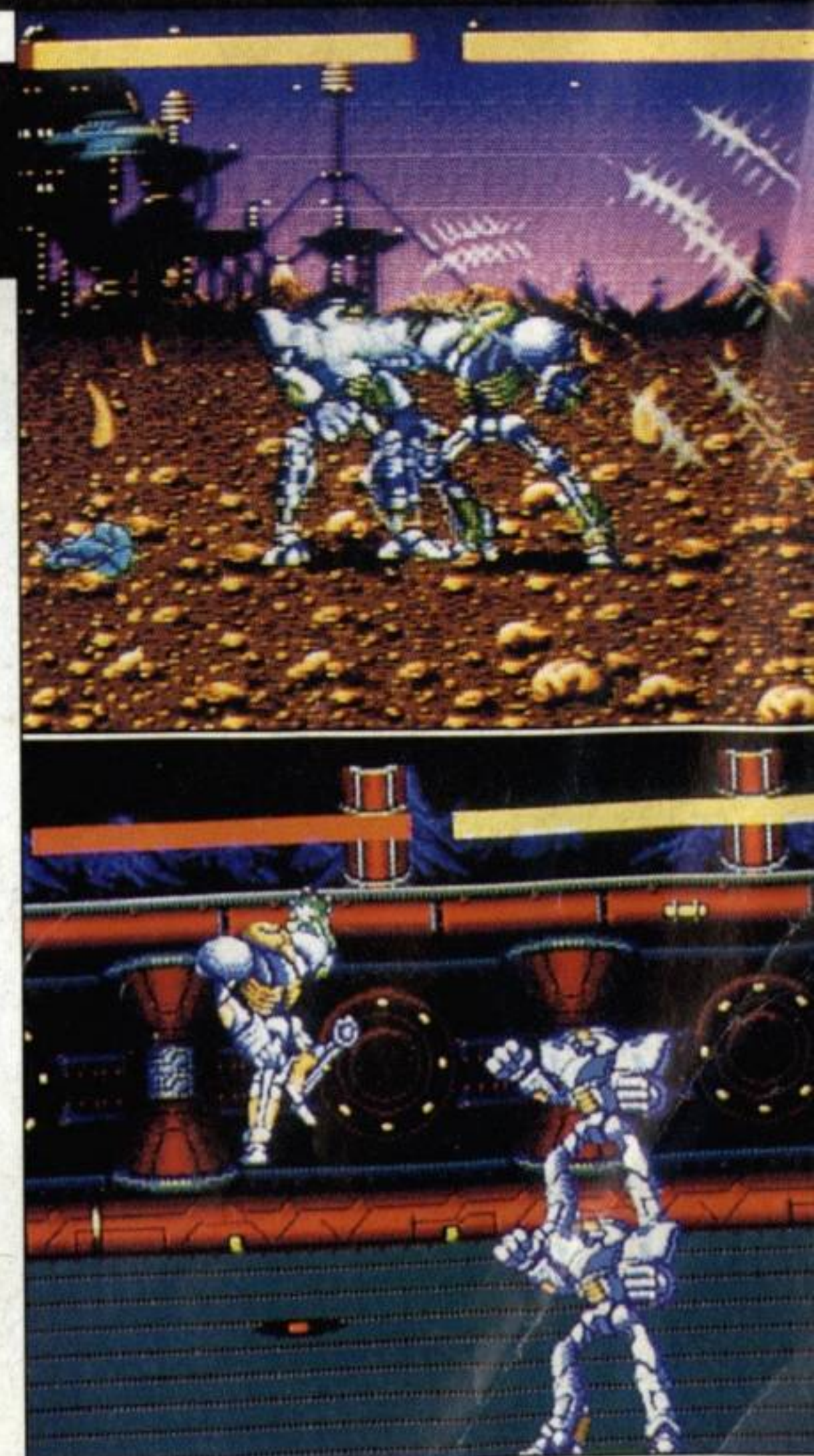
CYBORG JUSTICE

MEGA DRIVE

SPECIAL OPTIONS SCREEN

This cheat will take you to an extra-special options screen, hidden away in the middle of this robot beat em up. You can change weapons, select your level, increase your lives, and even record and playback your own demo!

Choose your cyborg and start playing the game. Pause the game and quickly hit these buttons (I said QUICKLY!): C, B, B, C, C, A, C, B. Keep trying till you get it.



Rolling Stone

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You Am I
Breeders
Iggy Pop
Crowded
House
The Fall
Evan Dando

Soul
Asylum
Platinum
Punks

Countdown
The Glam
Years

The
Edge
Takes
Charge

Yothu
Yindi's
Velvet
Revolution

U2's
Zoo
World
Order

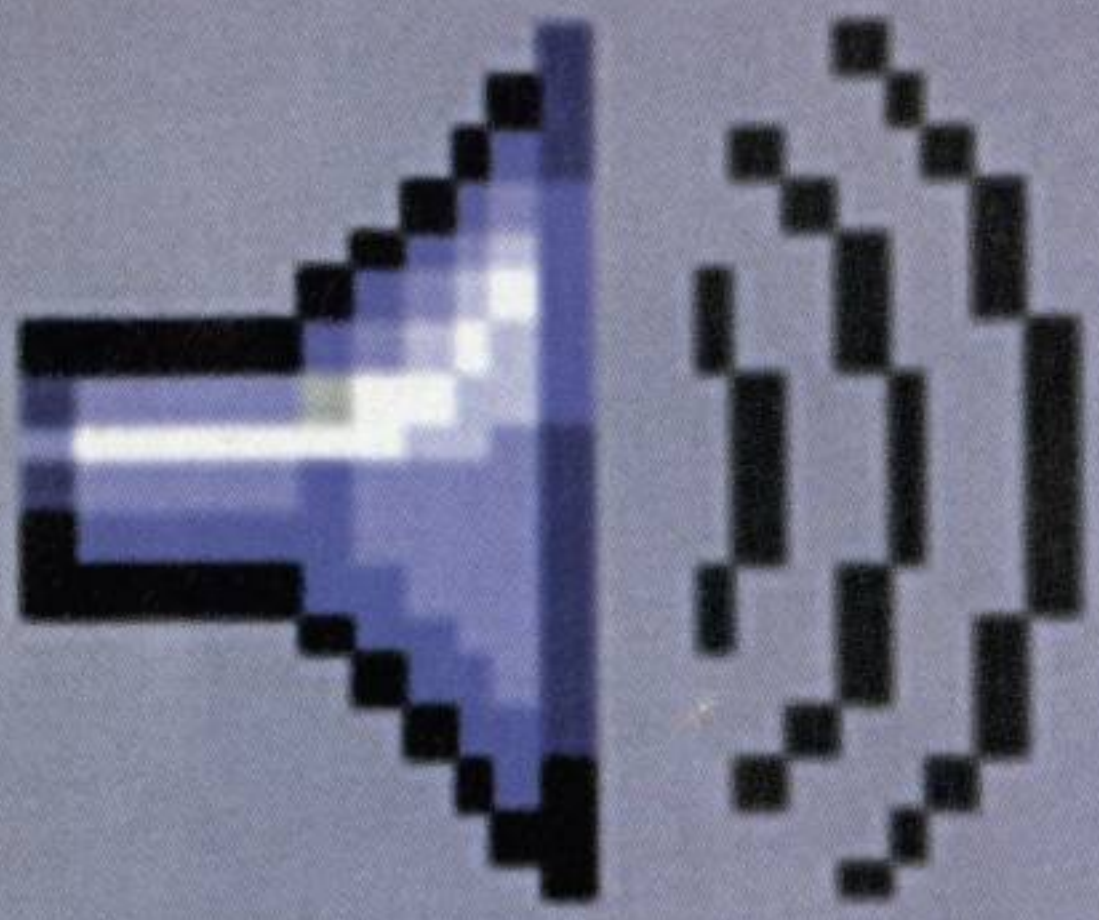
Bullets
& Ballots
Australia's
Extreme
Right

Win a
Walkman



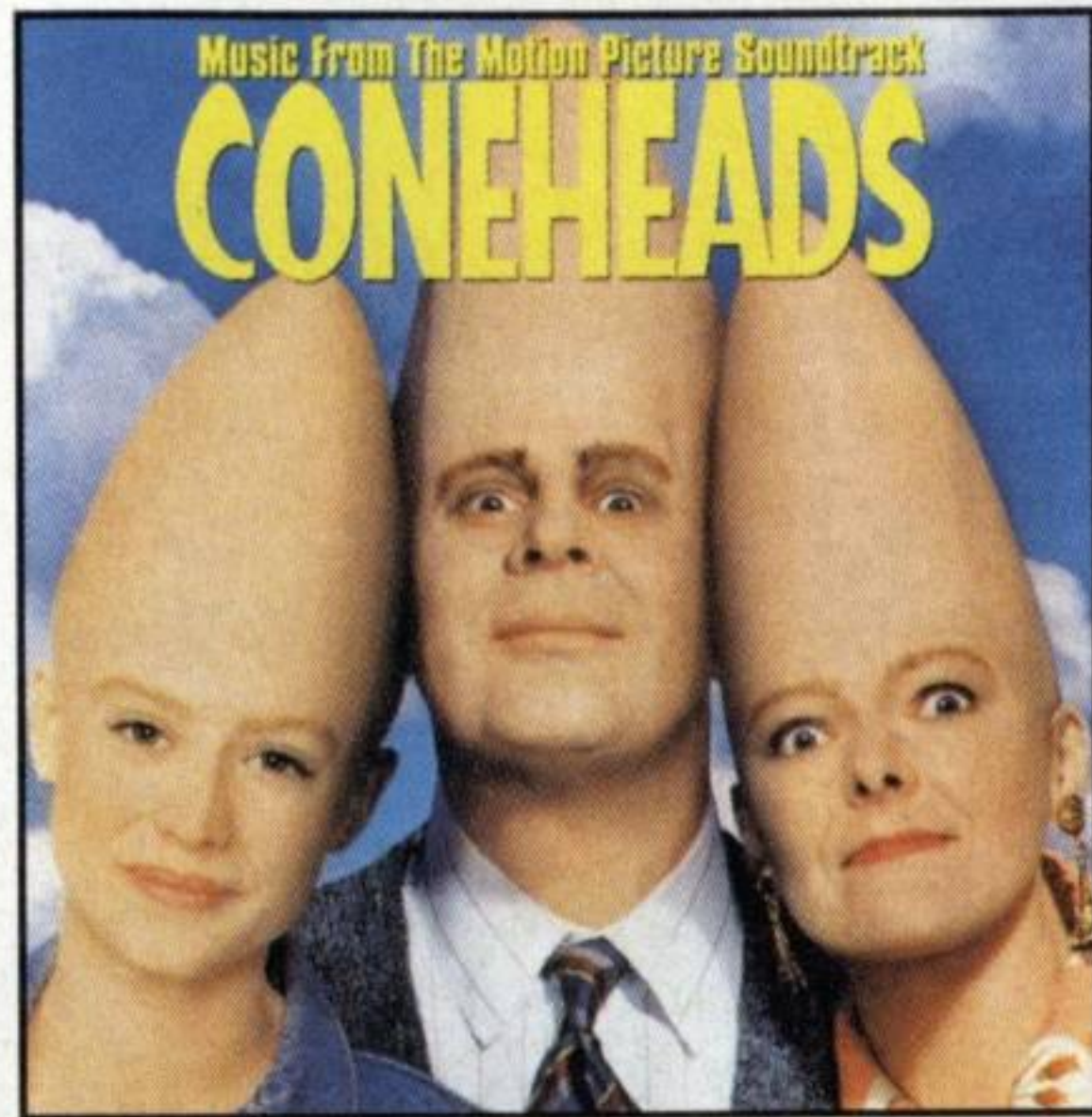
On Sale 20th October

Rolling Stone



Prince The Hits/The B-Sides Warners

Who the hell does Prince think he is? How dare one man write all these classic tracks. Over the past 15 years, Prince (now known as Victor, apparently) has been a bit of an over-achiever, as this "Greatest Hits"



Coneheads Soundtrack Warners

Most Hollywood movie soundtracks are to be avoided at all costs (as are most Hollywood movies for that matter). However *Coneheads* is a different story. Not only is the movie quirkily funny, but so is the soundtrack.

There seems to have been a very weird selection process for choosing the songs. It's got everything from Slash and Michael Monroe (who?) doing a re-gig of *Magic Carpet Ride* to the high camp electro-pop of Soft Cell's *Tainted Love*. Actually the whole soundtrack is a touch camp, and while in danger of becoming total trash, it ends up working well because it doesn't take itself too seriously. In amongst the weirdness (check out *Conehead Love* by the Coneheads themselves, as well as kd Lang and Andy Bell belting out *No More Tears/Enough is Enough*), there are also some classic tunes. R.E.M do their best impersonation of R.E.M with *It's A Free World Baby* (can this band do anything wrong?) and the Chili Peppers chip in with an off-cut from *BloodSugarSexMagik*, *Soul to Squeeze*.

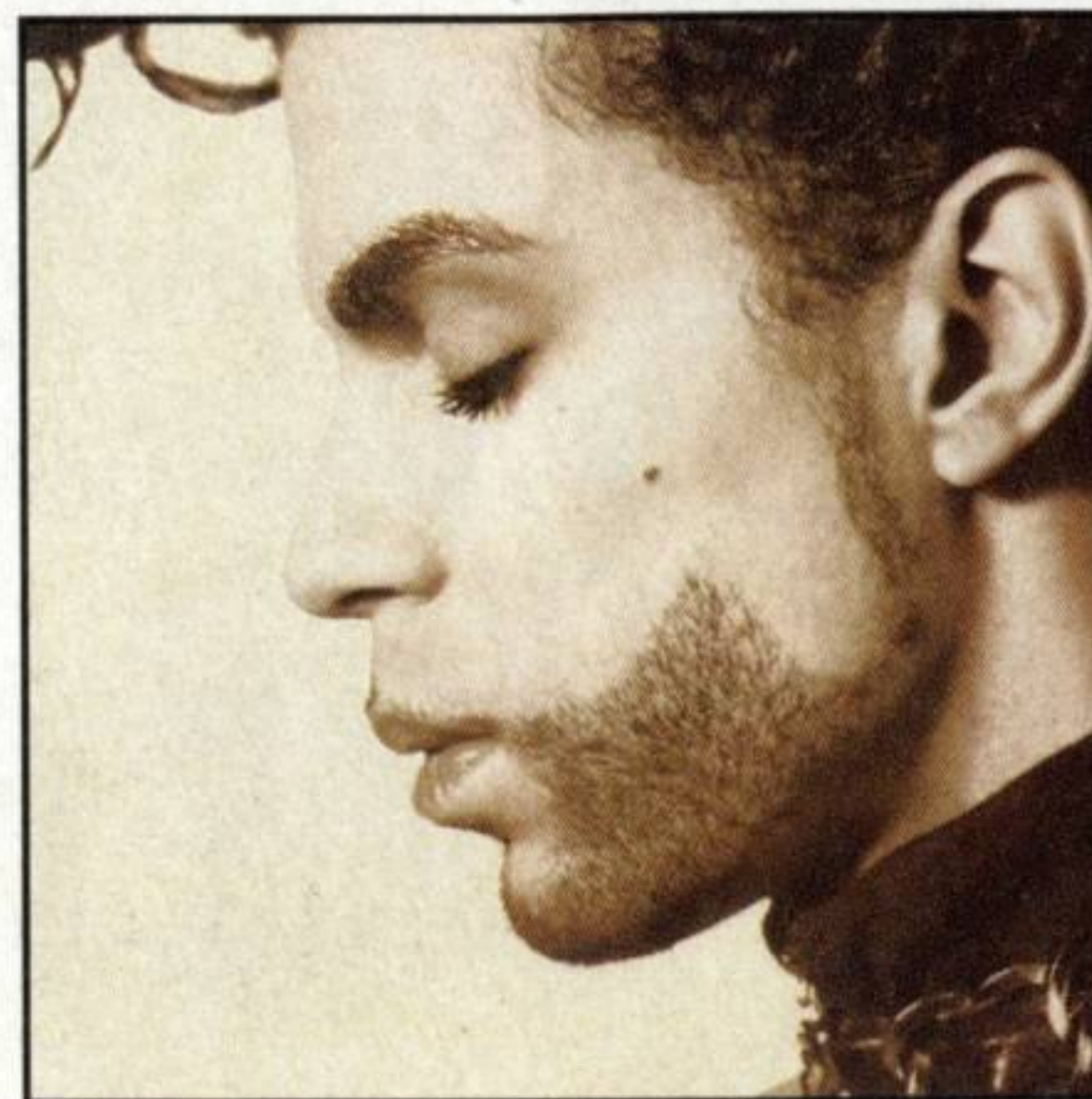
This CD certainly isn't going to please everybody, but if your musical taste is broad, then *Coneheads* is for you. Bong on!

7/10 Stuart Clarke

package proves. This 3 CD set captures all of Prince's styles and tastes, from "rock and roll, catchy pop songs, hyper club anthems, intoxicating ballads, jazzy funk, film scores, cartoon heroes, bawdy lust, visionary poetry with messages both hidden and blatant" (as the somewhat pompous introduction states). But hey, who cares what category the music falls into when it sounds as good as this!

You don't have to be a huge Prince fan to appreciate the quality of the man's songwriting. Several of the tracks included have been made famous by other people (*Nothing Compares 2 U* and *I Feel For You*), and others were immediately recognisable, even though their titles were unfamiliar. Every track here is a Prince gem, and it's got everything from *Controversy* to *Sexy M.F.* If you want to try and keep track of the man who has changed the face of music in the '80's and '90's, this is a perfect place to start.

9/10 Stuart Clarke



Nirvana In Utero Geffen

"Teenage angst has paid off well/Now I'm bored and old". So begins *In Utero*, and while it doesn't sound too promising, the album is neither boring nor old. In fact it's far more hard-core than *Nevermind*, and harks back to the bands early Sub-Pop efforts such as *Bleach*. After the phenomenal and unexpected success of *Nevermind*, Nirvana found the world breathlessly awaiting their next offering. Most people were expecting either a *Nevermind II*, or an unlistenable anarchic mess (as was widely reported) but it's turned out to be something totally different, and it's a good thing too.

No matter how many copies it sells, this is definitely not a "mainstream" or "commercial" record. Tracks like *Tourette's* and *Milk It* are overloaded with grinding guitars and Kurt Cobain's ragged screaming. Others, like the first single *Heart-Shaped Box* and *Frances Farmer Will Have Her Revenge on Seattle* are quite accessible and classic "Nirvana" tracks. Making millions of dollars has not dampened Cobain's anger though, and his lyrics can be quite disturbing. Take the song, *Rape Me* for example. It's one of my favourites, and is supposedly anti-rape, but when the lyrics shout "Rape Me/Rape Me again....I'll kiss your open sores/ Appreciate your concern/ You'll always stink and burn", you have to wonder what's going on inside his head. No matter though, this is a brilliant hard-edged rock album that consolidates Nirvana as the biggest (and best) "alternative" act in the world.

9/10 Freddy Friendly

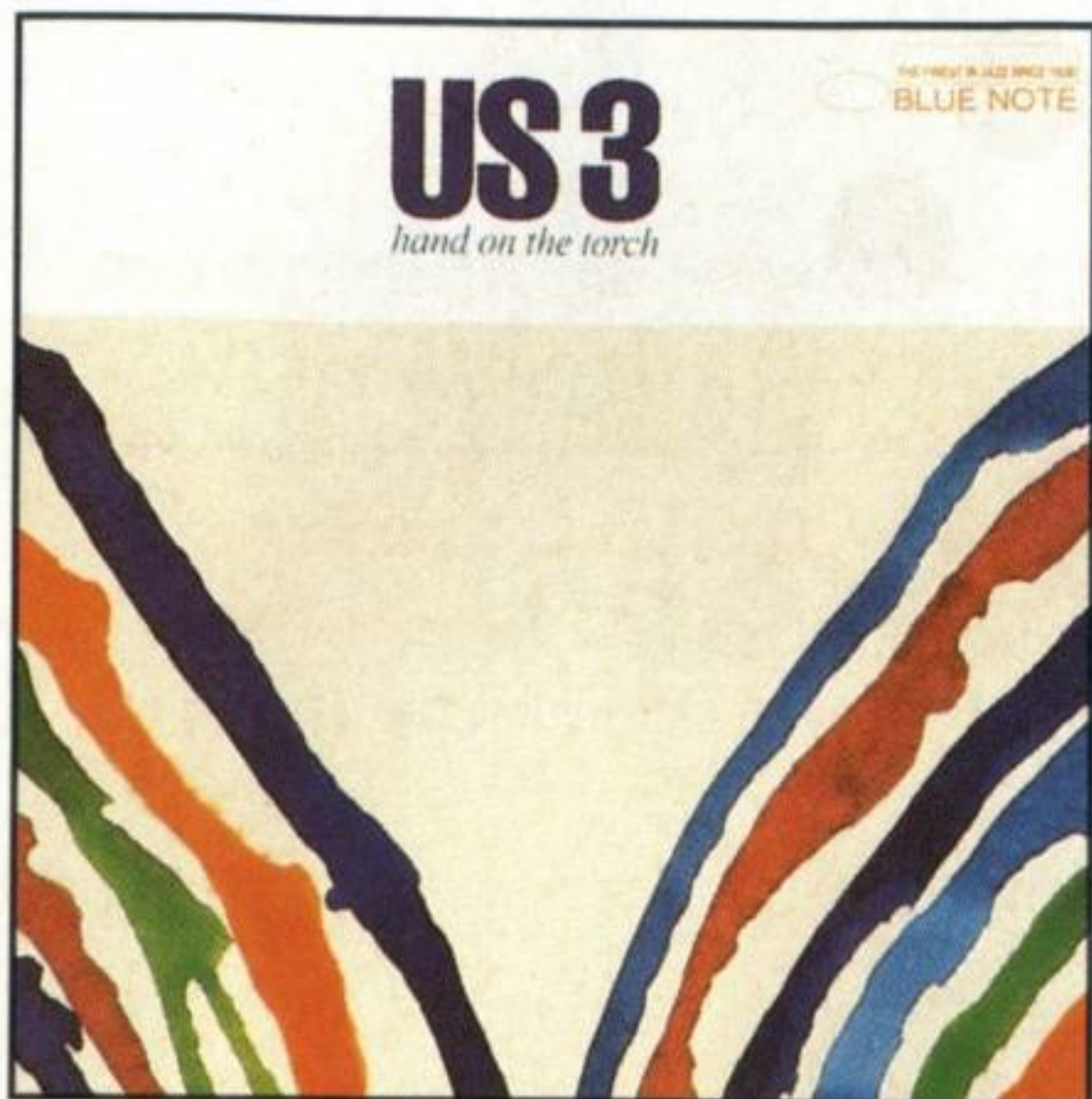
SO N M D



Baby Animals

Shaved and Dangerous
Imago/BMG

In debuting at number 2 on the National Charts, the second offering from the Baby Animals is further proof that this band kicks ass. The whispers always were that *Shaved and Dangerous* would top their first album, and fans can now rest easy, for although many of the tracks are more on the slow power-ballady side of the hard rock genre, the album contains all the essential ingredients that made them so successful so quickly.



Us 3

Hand on the Torch
Blue Note/EMI

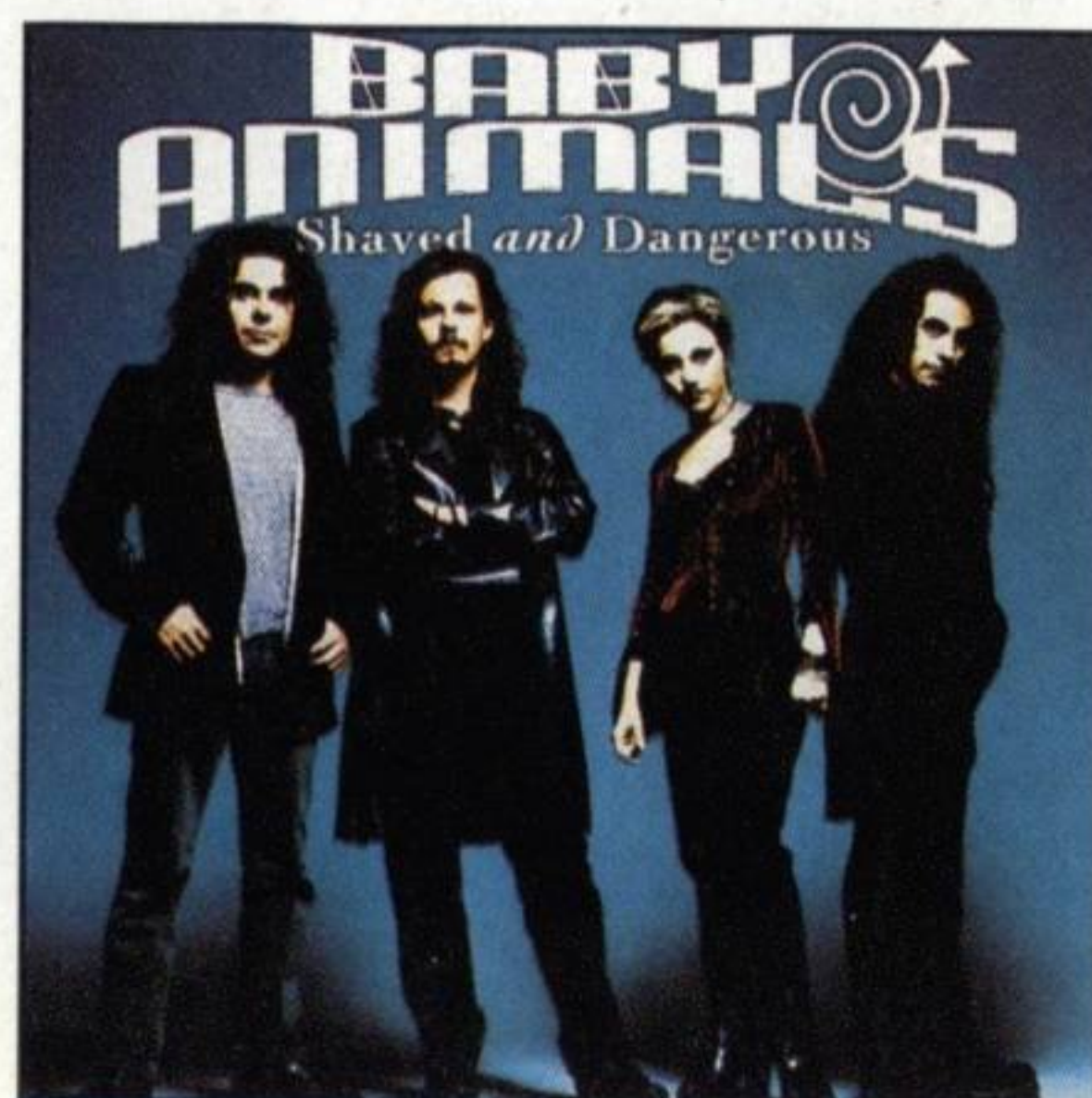
Hand on the Torch is the first hip-hop release on the ultra-long-life Blue Note, which is basically the jazz label with a back catalogue that stretches back to 1939. Their first releases were probably on wax cylinder.

This release isn't pure jazz, however, featuring the rappers Kobie Powell, Rahsaan, and Tukka Yoot. Their sound is fresh, without the gangsta obsessions of bitches, uzis and cash. Busy rhymes may feature on the CD, but they don't drown out what is happening underneath. And it's what's underneath that counts, because this is where *Hand on the Torch* stands out from so much other hip-hop. The production is fantastic, with complex layered beats and clean drum breaks. You can hear every individual snare and cymbal. The backing grooves are also pretty extraordinary, coming from the massive Blue Note back catalogue. The fact that the label was not only happy to let them be used, but released the album as well, shows how close to the spirit of the original jazz recordings *Us 3* are. The album is good overall, but if you like your beats fat and your hip-hop hardcore, this probably isn't the buy for you. It's definitely one for the born-again beatniks out there. Go crazy cats! Dig it, daddy-o!

7/10 Jad McAdam

You could never mistake Suze DeMarchi's voice for another. It's as powerful, strong, raunchy and distinctive as ever - so much from someone so small! The rest of the band compliment her talent with a tight, slick performance, and no-one could have asked for more on the production front. The creative formula of DeMarchi/Leslie/Parise turns out tracks of a consistent quality. Nuno Bettencourt (the prettiest one from Extreme) produced a couple of songs, including a cover of *Be My Friend*, as well as co-writing, singing backing vocals and playing guitar on *Because I Can*. Standouts are *Stoopid* and the current single *Don't Tell Me What To Do*. At the end of the day it's a little like hard rock by numbers, but the Baby Animals sure as hell do it better than anyone else.

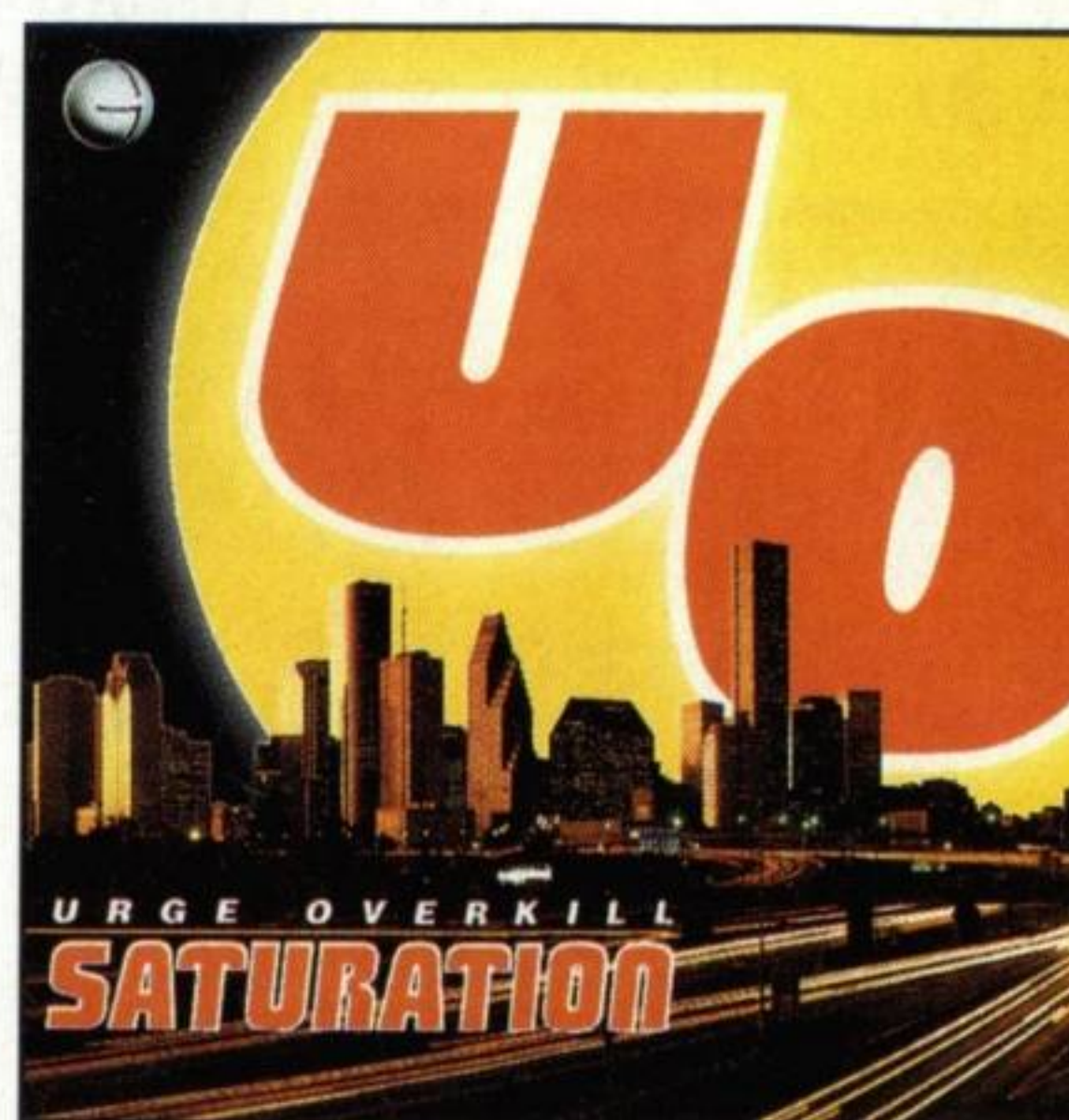
7.5/10 Sarah Longhurst



Voivod

The Outer Limits
MCA/GEFFEN

This is Voivod's eighth recording and their first release on MCA/Geffen. If you haven't heard of them before, let me fill you in. Voivod are the only French Canadian cyberpunk metal band on the planet and, you guessed it, their greatest influences are Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Chaos Theory. Sorry boys! The only word that springs to mind is "passe". Down here in reality where so little music is exceptional, it brings a tear to the eye to listen to the product of a truly misguided creative force. Voivod could be an excellent heavy metal band, but unimaginative, weak vocals plus the lack of lyrical substance leaves a gaping hole that not even Denis D'Amour's polished guitarwork or Michel Langevin's maniacal drumming can fill. Their epicentre is a track entitled "Jack Luminous". It's 17 minutes long and, although the musicianship is distinguished, the subject matter, a digitally created U.S. President, is as interesting as the chemical breakdown of bat poop.



Urge Overkill

Saturation
MCA/GEFFEN

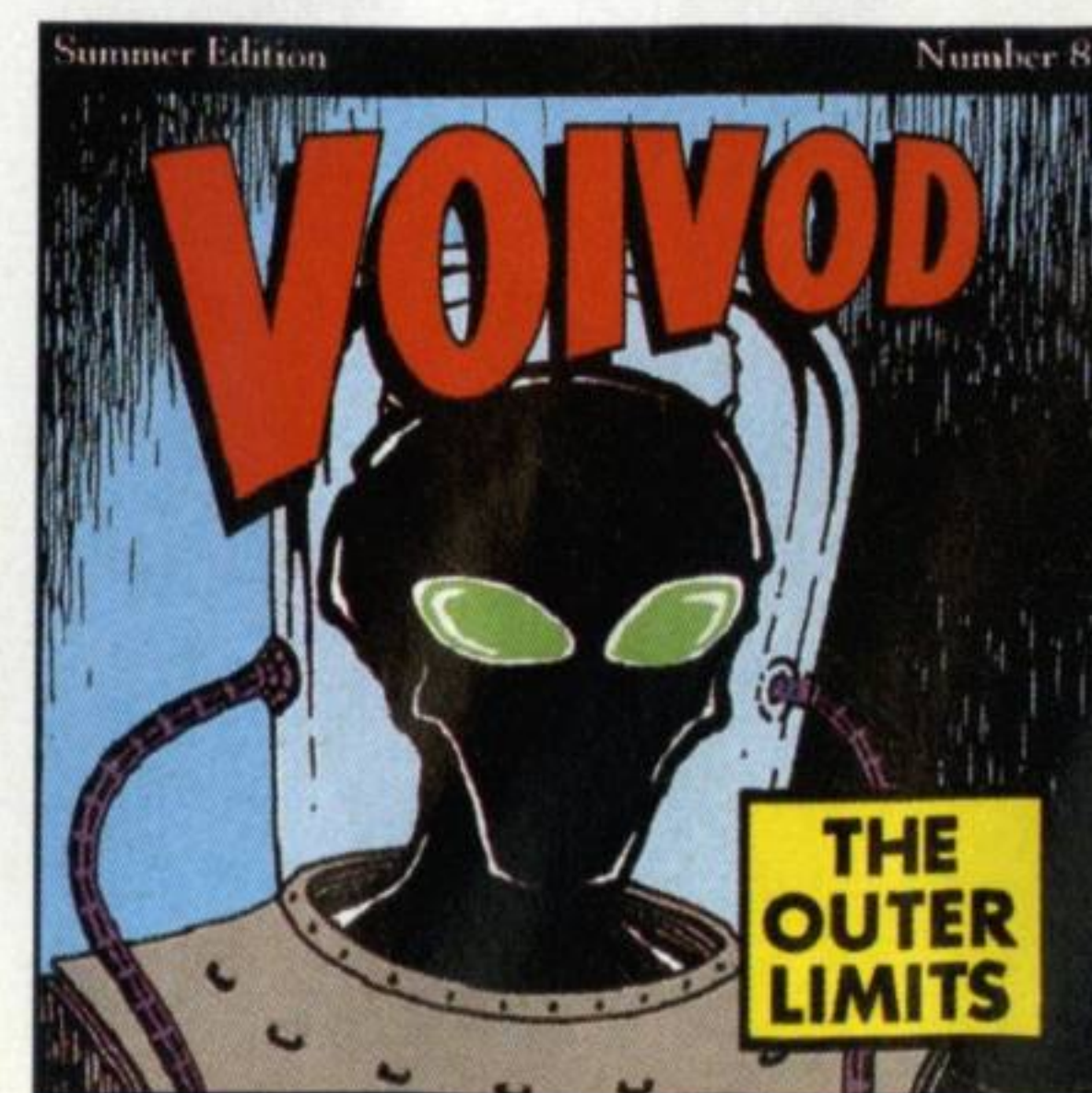
On their stunning single *Sister Havana*, Nash Cato, the vocalist/guitarist asks you to "Come around to my way of thinking". But Urge Overkill's way of thinking has certainly changed. Once they were a punk/grunge band that displayed occasional flashes of talent. But when you reach the point of *Saturation* you must realise this band do not skate along the cutting edge. *Saturation* returns us to the late seventies/early eighties. We are handed the smoothest one line chorus in *Sister Havana*, the shuffle riff to end all shuffle riffs in *Bottle of Fur* and the most exceptional rhyming couplets to hit the airwaves in years with *Woman 2 Woman*. Only true genius would dare to rhyme "Girl what's your sign" with "But that's not mine" in a track that is destined to lodge in the brain and repeat.

With this album, Urge Overkill have emerged from the underground - hair, skivvys, matching jackets and gold chains intact - to take a place slightly to the left of mainstream pop. Introduce yourself once to this album and suffer from the irresistible Urge to play it again.

8/10 Sarah Longhurst

Maybe next time Voivod will break free from the shackles of fractals and record something that exposes their true potential. Until then we can enjoy the Charles Burns style artwork that adorn the CD's sleeve.

6/10 Sarah Longhurst



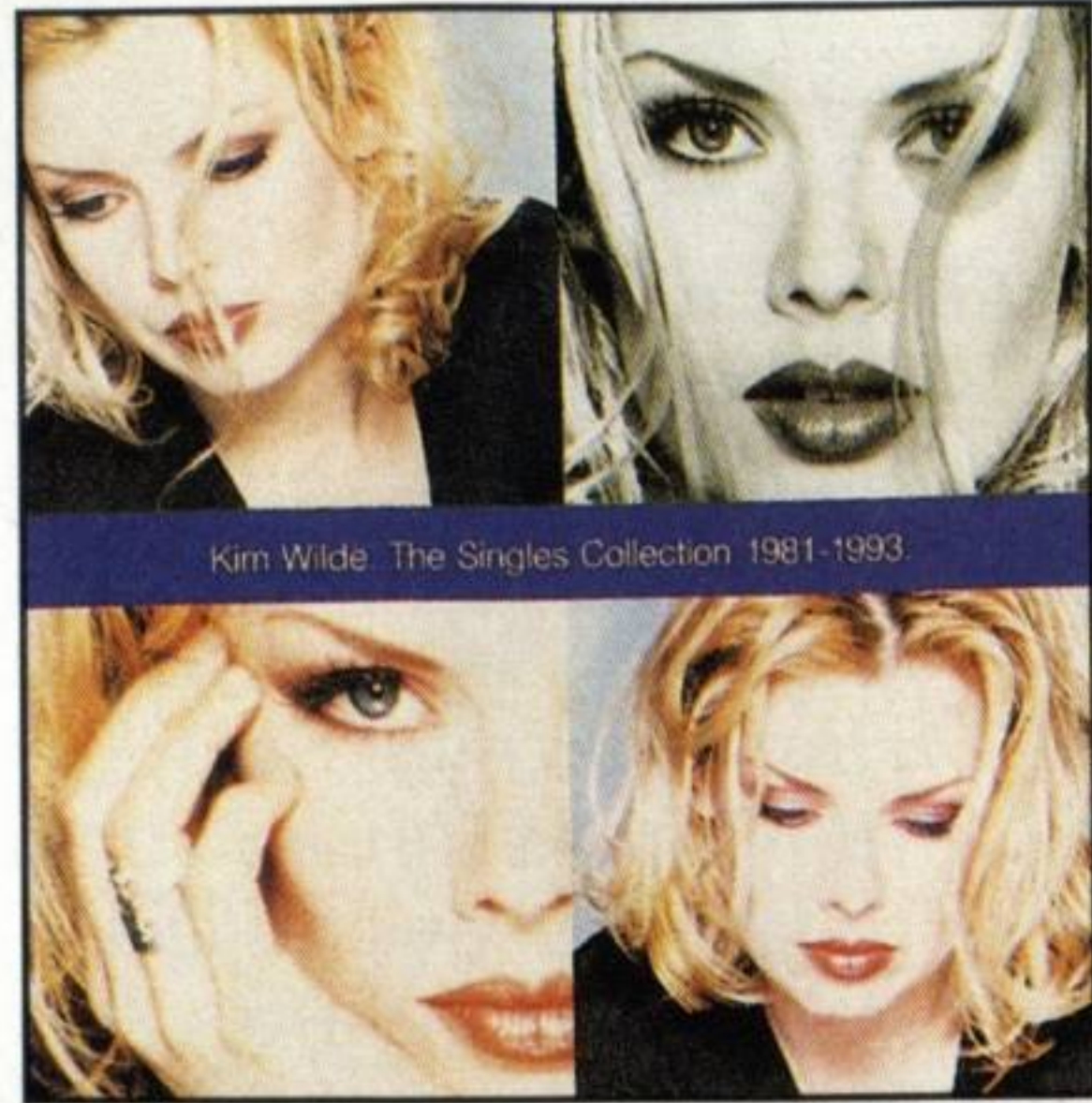
Kim Wilde

The Singles Collection
1981 - 1993
MCA

Kim Wilde holds up pretty well after 12 years in the music business. In fact she looks prettier now than ever, if my humble opinion is to be taken on board. I still have my treasured copy of *1982 With A Bullet*, with Kim's fab *Cambodia* playing alongside other pop gems such as Pete Shelley's *Homo Sapien* and Toni Basil's *Mickey*. Unlike those two though, Kim has refused to fade into obscurity, and re-emerges every year or so with a new single or album. Nothing has been spectacular, but at least she's still hangin' on...

Actually she has never really repeated her huge early successes with songs like *Kids in America*, *Chequered Love* and *View from a Bridge*. Sure, there have been the odd hits like *You Keep Me Hangin' On* and *You Came* but it's just never seemed the same somehow. If you want to recapture that Eighties pop vibe, or if you want to experience it for the first time, Kim Wilde's Single Collection isn't a bad place to start. Most of the songs are pretty crappy, but there are a couple of classics that make it all worthwhile.

7/10 Stuart Clarke



Babes in Toyland

Painkillers
Reprise/Warners

These little sweetpeas have more street cred in their little toes than *Tumbleweed* have in all of their hair. *Painkillers*, produced by underground legends Jack Endino and Lee Ranaldo (of Sonic Youth fame), should be the album that brings Babes in Toyland to a wider audience. There are faint traces of Siouxsie and the Banshees and hints of a more pop oriented past throughout the first four tracks. But this only adds to the full flavour of the Babes. It's punk/thrash/grunge and delicate all at once. It's everything the ideal all-girl band should be. *He's my Thing* is a winner and *Ragweed* is unusual and memorable. The album also contains

Fontanellette, which is a live CBGB's recording of nine tracks from the earlier *Fontanelle* album, and includes their most famous song to date, *Handsome & Gretel*.

It's not for everyone. Babes in Toyland are not Girlfriend - they certainly don't share the same wardrobe consultant - but when they're good they're very, very good and when they're bad they're even better. If you can handle the lack of choreography and the deliberately messy sound and you aren't intimi-

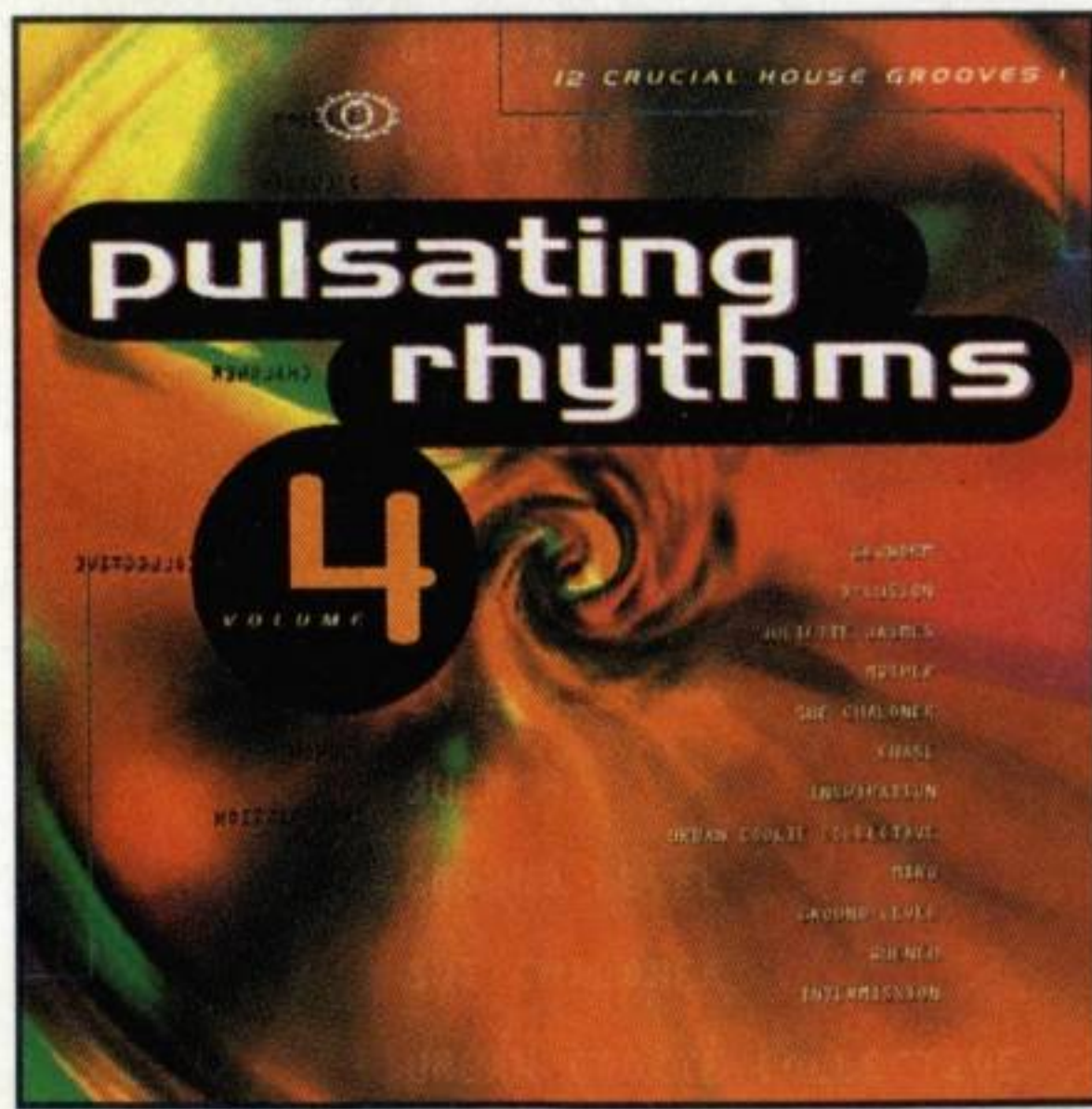


dated by a trio of talented, power-chord crazed women, then *Painkillers* might be the album for you.

7/10 Sarah Longhurst

Pulsating Rhythms 4

Various Artists
Liberation



Another bargain-buy compilation of house music from the UK, this time from the Pulse-8 label (geddit?... Pulse-8-ing Rhythms?). Over in the UK all these tracks are chart toppers. Locally however, the only track that really got a guernsey on the charts was *The Key - The Secret* by the Urban Cookie Collective, but there are some other good tracks, including a local effort, *Dreams of Heaven*, by Ground

Level. All Fumked Up by Mother is great, Music Is

My Life by Chase is good if you like more commercial stuff, and *Move On Up* by Sue Chaloner is a fantastic house interpretation of an old Curtis Mayfield track. The CD is worth buying for those tracks alone - if you like this kind of thing.

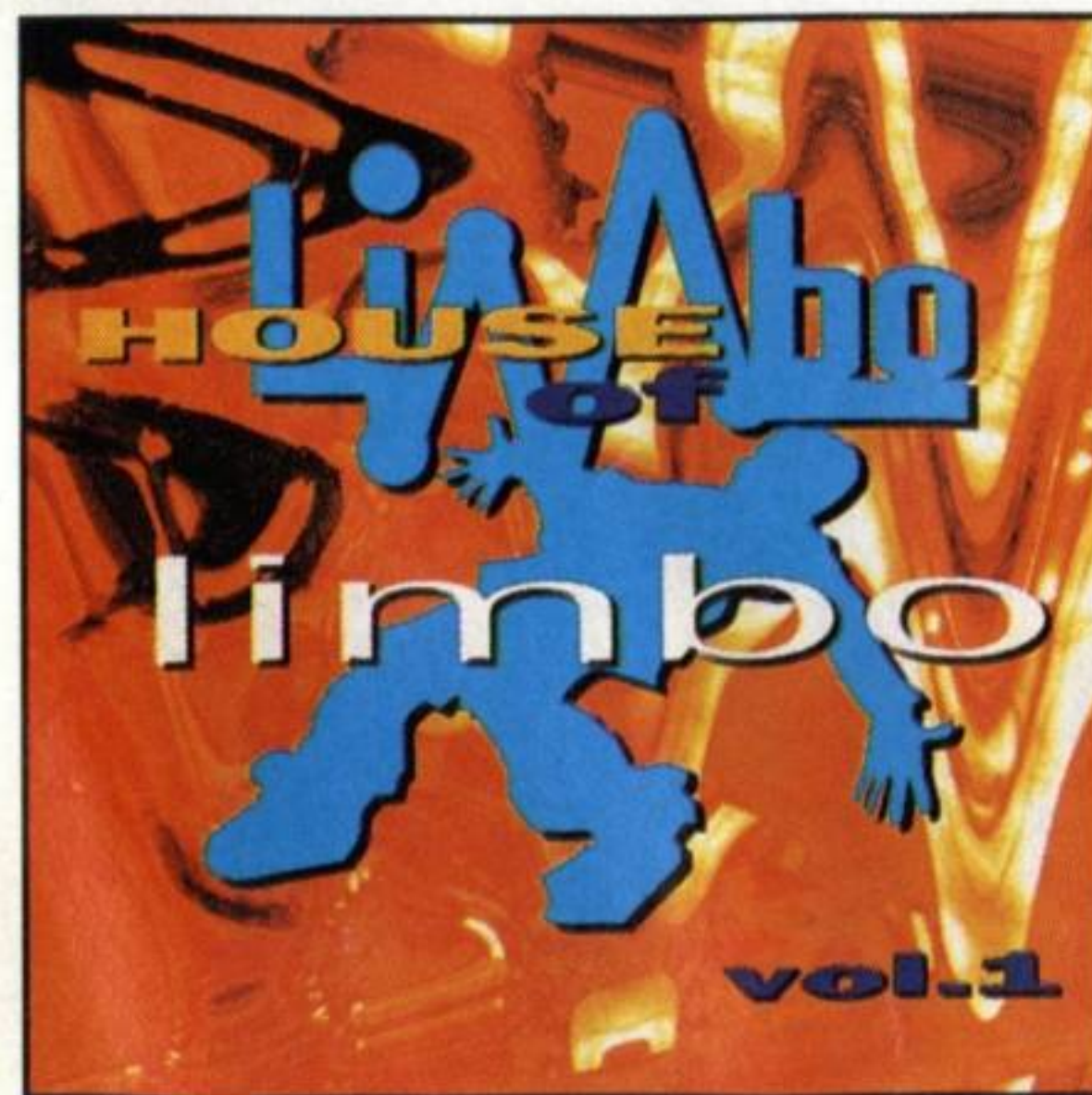
Subtitled 14 Crucial House Grooves!', *Pulsating Rhythms 4* has some pretty good stuff on it, on a more commercial tip than *Limbo*. Don't be fooled though - your life won't be incomplete without it. I reckon you should hang out for their next compilation: *Pustulating Rhythms 5 - 12 Crucially Infected Cuts*. It'll be severe!

7.5/10 Jad McAdam

House of Limbo Vol. 1

Various Artists
Limbo/MDS

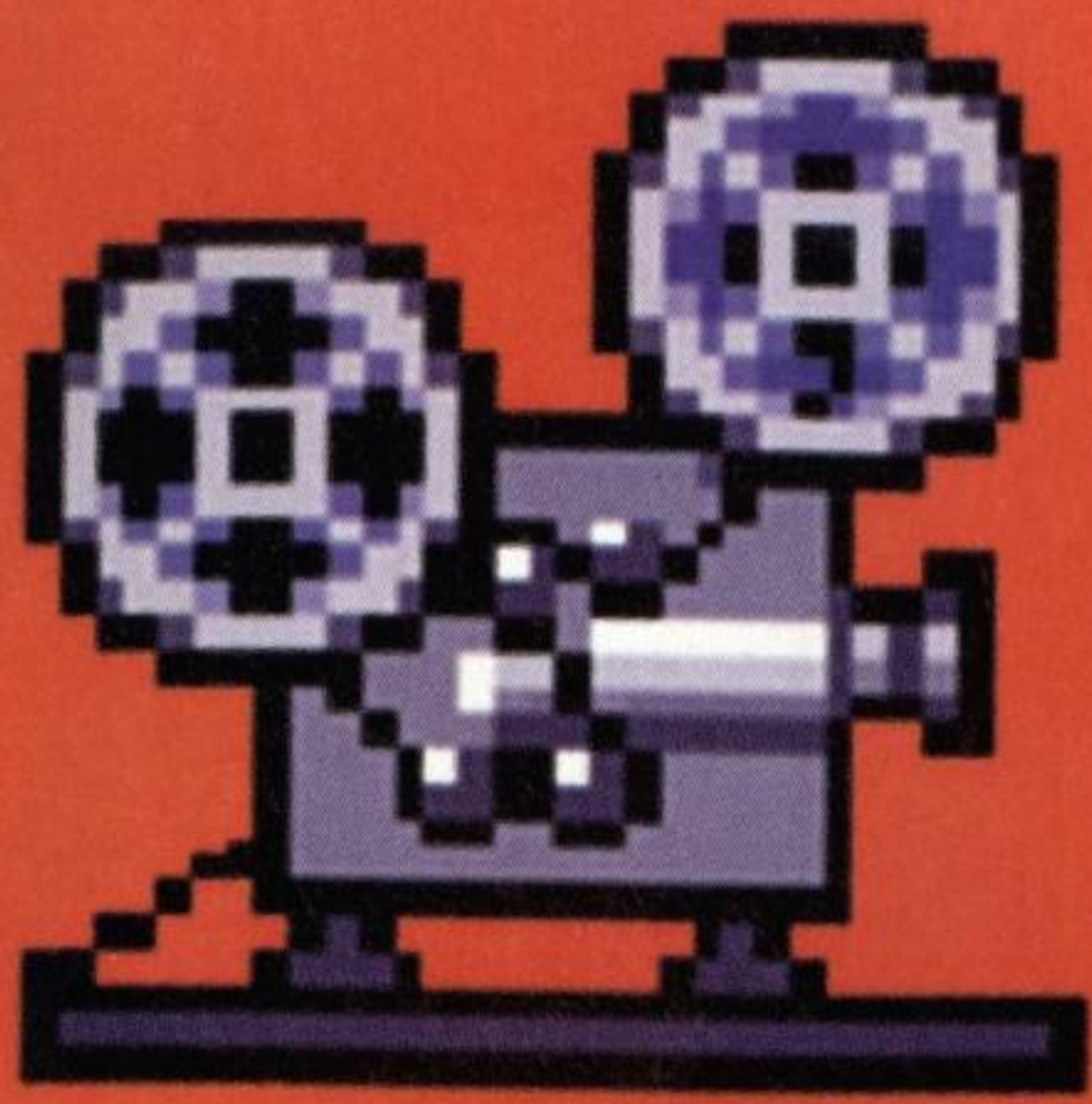
If *House of Limbo Vol. 1* sounds like a collection of Latin American melodies designed to be played at daggy parties while everyone takes turns shimmying under a broom stick, think again. It's actually a compilation of slamin' house choons from the UK. Limbo is the name of one of the most respected dance music labels around (geddit?...House of Limbo?). The 12 tracks on the CD are a selection of the best releases from their first year of operation.



The tracks were all originally released on either the Limbo label or its near Scottish relation 23rd Precinct, so the CD is either consistent or repetitive, depending on how much you like the style. Known as 'progressive house', you could describe it as either nasty house music, or soft techno. The beats are fast, hard and

tribal, the basslines funky with reggae/dub influences, and the mixes trancy. Listening to the CD is probably as close as you'll get to spending an hour in a London club, so if you like recent dance music, especially the less woosy stuff, *House of Limbo* is an excellent bargain.

8/10 Jad McAdam



«BIG SCREEN»

Another Stakeout

Emilio Estevez returns to the big people's big screens after a year or so off making kids' films. *Another Stakeout* is the sequel to - believe it or not - *Stakeout*, and of course features Emilio's sidekick from the first movie, the fairly awful Richard Dreyfuss. Now, in the second instalment, this classic twosome are joined by Rosie O'Donnell, probably most famous up till now for being Madonna's best friend. This time, Estevez and

Dreyfuss are in pursuit of a witness needed to put away a major crime boss. Trouble is, she's in hiding not only from the crims but from the cops! The relationship between the three stakeoutees takes up most of the movie - they have to pretend to be a family, with whacky results. Needless to say, our heroes finally find their woman - but things still don't go according to plan. Minimal violence, a few laughs and a big dog.

1/5



Poetic Justice

It's Janet Jackson in her first movie role and unlike Madonna, David Bowie, Mick Jagger and our very own David Dixon and Brian Mannix, here AT LAST is a pop star who can actually act!!! Janet plays Justice, a hairdresser who writes poetry to help get herself over the loss of her boyfriend who was shot at the drive-in just as she was about to undo her second button. Now she's caught up in this whole crazy road movie situation with a guy called Lucky (played by Tupac Shakur) driving between LA and Berkley. Sound stupid? Well, you're wrong again. *Poetic Justice* is full of surprises and a powerful story about love, life and hope. Uh-huh.

5/5.

Weekend At Bernie's II

So you thought no-one could base a whole movie on the adventures of a dead man? Then you saw *Weekend at Bernie's*, right? Fine, it could be done. But another movie - about the same dead man? Well, OK. Andrew McCarthy, Jonathan Silverman and Terry Kiser re-unite in this new foray into the adventures of the still very dead Bernie Lomax. Now, to perpetuate the rather profitable Bernie series, we see a spark of life return to Bernie's ghastly corpse: he becomes instilled with a voodoo dance spirit and gets to lead Larry

and Richard on another merry romp through tropical paradise. Of course, like the first movie, no. 2 is complete garbage, full of bad acting and terrible plot turns. However, like the first, it still has that rather hilarious strangeness which makes *Weekend at Bernie's II* hard not to enjoy. Still, there are probably better things to see at the movies - maybe you should wait for the video release? 3/5?



Calendar Girl

Jason Priestley's first starring role in a movie has got to be one of the major disappointments of the 1990s - that is, if you had actually hoped it would be good. It concerns three young men in a little American town in 1961 who hop in a car and drive to Hollywood in order to find the SEX GODDESS Marilyn Monroe.

Problem: the three guys are dweebs, Marilyn Monroe was just another movie actress, and the whole plot of *Calendar Girl* adds up to one big fat dead turkey. Young girls and perverts may like the sight of Jason's flabby bottom as he streaks across a beach car park, but even the biggest Jason Priestley/Beverly Hills fan would have to admit that there's not much about his character, Roy, that Luke Perry couldn't have done ten times better - if that's saying anything.

1/5

Much Ado About Nothing

Even though you may have been forced to read this *Willy the Shake* epic at school nothing will prepare you for the wonders of seeing it on the big screen. Even though Kenneth Branagh is the biggest priss on earth, he's done a great job of turning a funny and romantic play into an even funnier and more romantic film. Keanu Reeves is the evil Don John (sounds like a role for Melanie

Kalifornia

Say you were gonna take a trip across America stopping off along the way at sites of some of the greatest murders in history. You'd put an ad on a noticeboard, wouldn't you, asking if anyone wants to come along for the ride. And then you'd take the first person that replied. Well, that's what happens in *Kalifornia*. A nice couple - he's a writer, she's a photographer - decide to make the trek and advertise for driving companions. A serial killer and his childlike girlfriend are to be their companions, and a journey through old murder

sites becomes a horrific procession of new ones!!! Gory, scary stuff - with fabulous acting from everyone's favourite duo, Brad Pitt (with a large

amount of facial hair and a squint - don't see this movie if you just want a perve fest) and Juliette Lewis.

4/5



So I Married An Axe Murderer

"Hel-lo! Waitress! I think I ordered a large cappuccino!?" So begins the bizarre cavalcade of oddities that is *So I Married an Axe Murderer*. Mike Myers, as Charlie Mackenzie, seems to find it hard to not be some kind of Wayne Campbell on the big screen, although he does make a reasonable stab at playing his character's offensive father as well. Nancy Travis plays the axe murderer in question - she's a butcher called Harriet - and the "is she or isn't she" keeps you on the edge of your seat right up till the gripping final scene.

Well, actually, you might just be on the edge of your seat because you're not sure whether to walk out or not - it's that kind of film - but its weirdness tends to be outweighed

by its good bits, and three days after seeing it you'll probably decide you actually quite enjoyed it, even though Mike Myers has got to be the most unconvincing romantic lead since Billy Crystal. A very off-beat comedy.

Fiske Kissinger 4/5



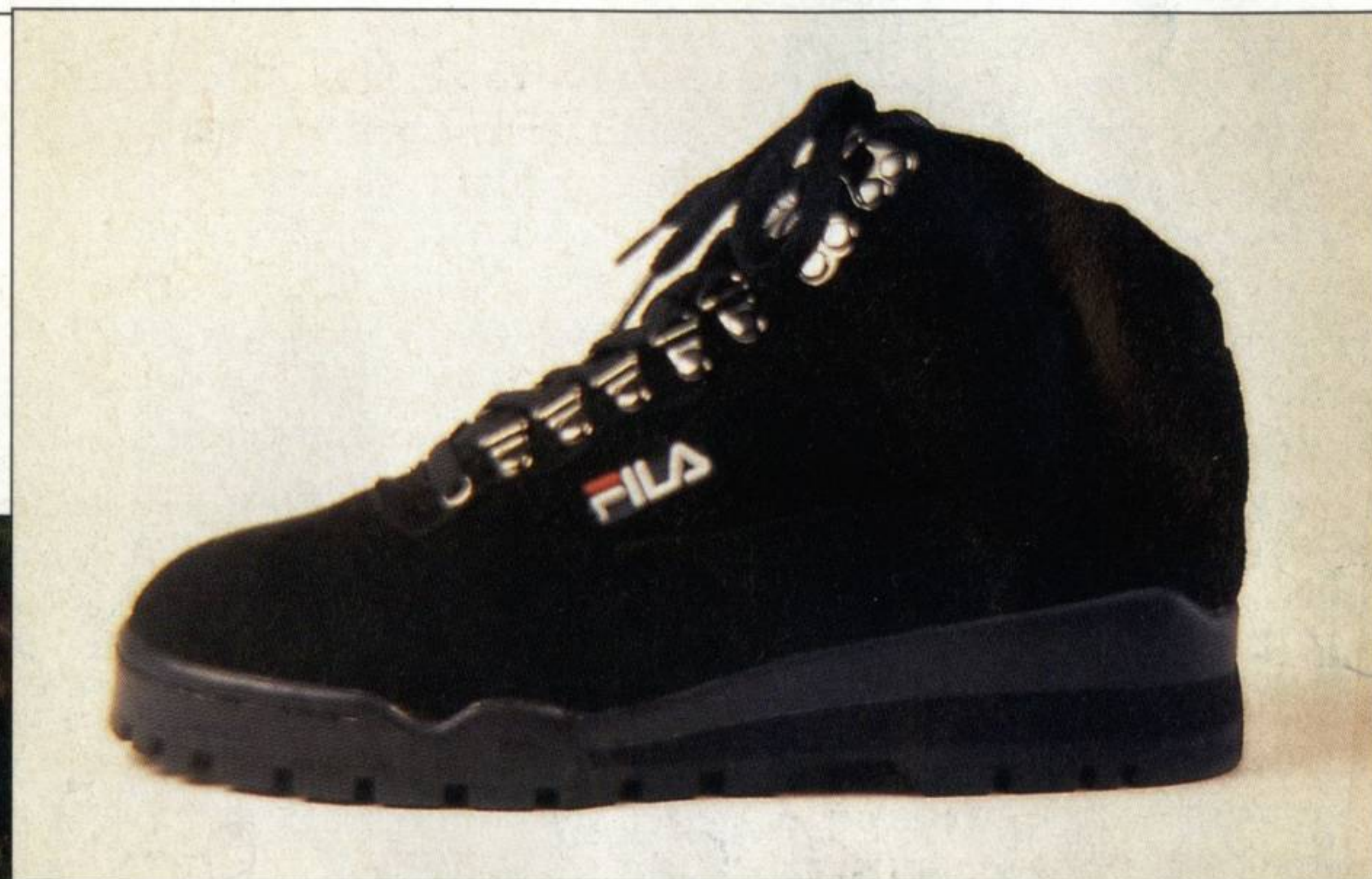
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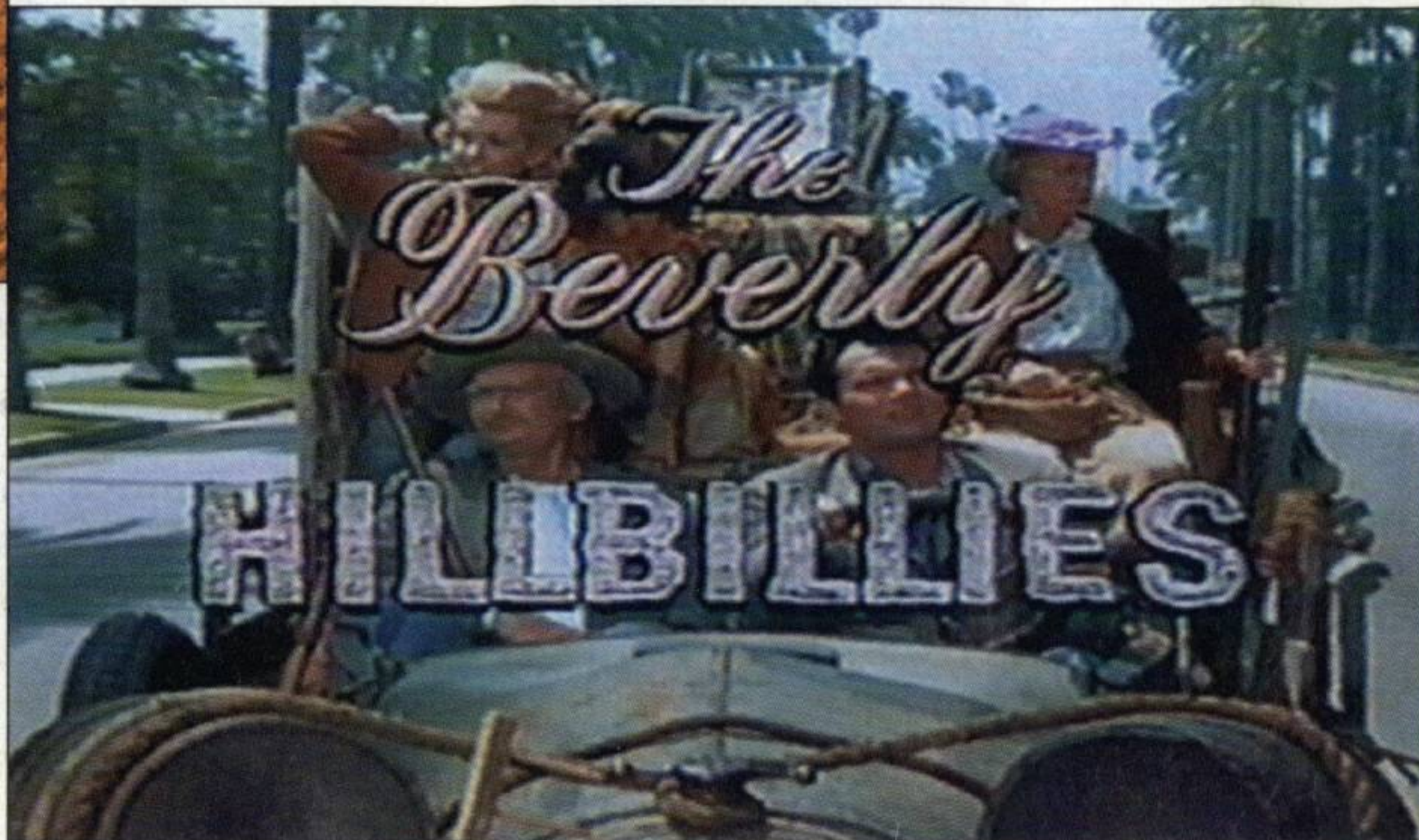


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win
what do you think?
 win



As this is the first issue of **HYPER**, we want to see what made you, our new readers, buy the mag. Fill out the questionnaire (it's not too taxing) and send it in to us. By doing so, you will go in the draw for some awesome prizes including a Sony entertainment system valued at \$700 and ten copies of both Pearl Jam and Suede's newest CDs). Not only will you have a chance at these mega prizes but you'll get a better magazine as well (you hope!).

Q1. How did you come to buy this issue of Hyper ?
 (Please circle ALL answers that apply?)

- 1 The cover caught my eye
- 2 It contained articles and reviews I wanted to read
- 3 I wanted the insert poster
- 4 A friend had a copy
- 5 I wanted an Australian games mag

Q2. Which of the following statements reflects your attitude to subscribing to this magazine?
 (Please circle ALL answers that apply?)

- 1 I never subscribe to magazines
- 2 I can't afford it at present
- 3 I'm only interested in buying occasionally
- 4 I will if the quality keeps up
- 5 I've thought about it, but haven't got around to it
- 6 I would if the price were right

Q3. How often do you play video or computer games?

- 1 Every day
- 2 Every other day
- 3 At least once a week
- 4 Less than once a week
- 5 Not much at all

Q4. What game system or computer do you own or have access to?

- 1 Mega CD
- 2 Mega Drive
- 3 Super Nintendo
- 4 PC
- 5 Macintosh
- 6 Amiga
- 7 Neo Geo
- 8 Other (please state) *MS, GB*

Q5. What machine do you want to buy next?

- 1 Mega CD
- 2 Mega Drive
- 3 Super Nintendo
- 4 PC
- 5 Macintosh
- 6 Amiga
- 7 3DO
- 8 Neo Geo
- 9 Other (please state) _____

Q6. How many games do you own?

- 1 None
- 2 Under 3
- 3 3-6
- 4 7-14
- 5 15-24
- 6 Over 25

Q7. How much would you spend on games in a year (approx) ? _____

Q8. Please circle the rating of each of the regular columns/pictorials ?

		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
1	Cover	a	b	c	d
2	News	a	b	c	d
3	Previews	a	b	c	d
4	Game Reviews	a	b	c	d
5	Byte Size Reviews	a	b	c	d
6	Music Reviews	a	b	c	d
7	Movie Reviews	a	b	c	d
8	Feature Articles	a	b	c	d
9	Cheat Mode	a	b	c	d

Q9. Is there anything missing from this issue that you would include in Hyper in future issues ?

Q10. Is there anything you would delete/change in Hyper in future issues ?

Q11. Over the past 12 months what other magazine have you read regularly ?

- 1 Nintendo Magazine
- 2 Megazone
- 3 Tracks
- 4 TV Hits
- 5 Hot Metal
- 6 PC Review
- 7 Other games magazines: (please state)

CVG

8 Other magazines: (please state)

mad

Q12. Favourite video game?

MK, SF II

Q13. Favourite TV show ?

Q14. Favourite movie ?

Q15. Favourite band/style of music ?

Q16. What extras would make you want to buy the magazine more ?

- 1 Insert posters
- 2 Stickers
- 3 Tattoos
- 4** Demo games on diskette
- 5 Other (please state) _____

Q17. Other comments on HYPER (c'mon, tell it like it is) ?

Q18. Are you male or female ?

- 1** Male
- 2 Female

Q19. In which age group do you belong ?

- 1** Under 12
- 2 12-16
- 3 17-21
- 4 22-26
- 5 Over 26

Q20. What do you do ?

- 1** School Student
- 2 University Student
- 3 Full-time work
- 4 Part-time work
- 5 Unemployed
- 6 Other (please state)

Q21. What is your postcode?

Don't know

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