REVIEWED! **TOMB RAIDER** STREET FIGHTER **RAYMAN 2** JO JO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE **AND MORE!**

DC-UK

DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

Exclusive: New screenshots. New interviews. Secret info. Make no mistake: MSR **will** destroy Gran Turismo!

SEGA GT

Exclusive: The amazing racer stripped to its wheel nuts!

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

Sega's tuna-gobbling adventure explored in depth **p68**

VIRTUA STRIKER

Score beautiful goals. Beat your friends. Win every time! **p102**

56 GAMES REVIEWED

Including: **Red Dog** Crazy Taxi **Soul Reaver** Deadly Skies **NBA 2K** Slave Zero

Future Publishing Media With Passion

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TOMB RAIDER

Massive review of Lara's latest and (yes!) greatest adventure **p10**

PLUS! FREE LARA ART PRINT

The ultimate out-of-body experience

An epic Action/Adventure game featuring
an original soundtrack by David Bowie and Reeves Gabrels

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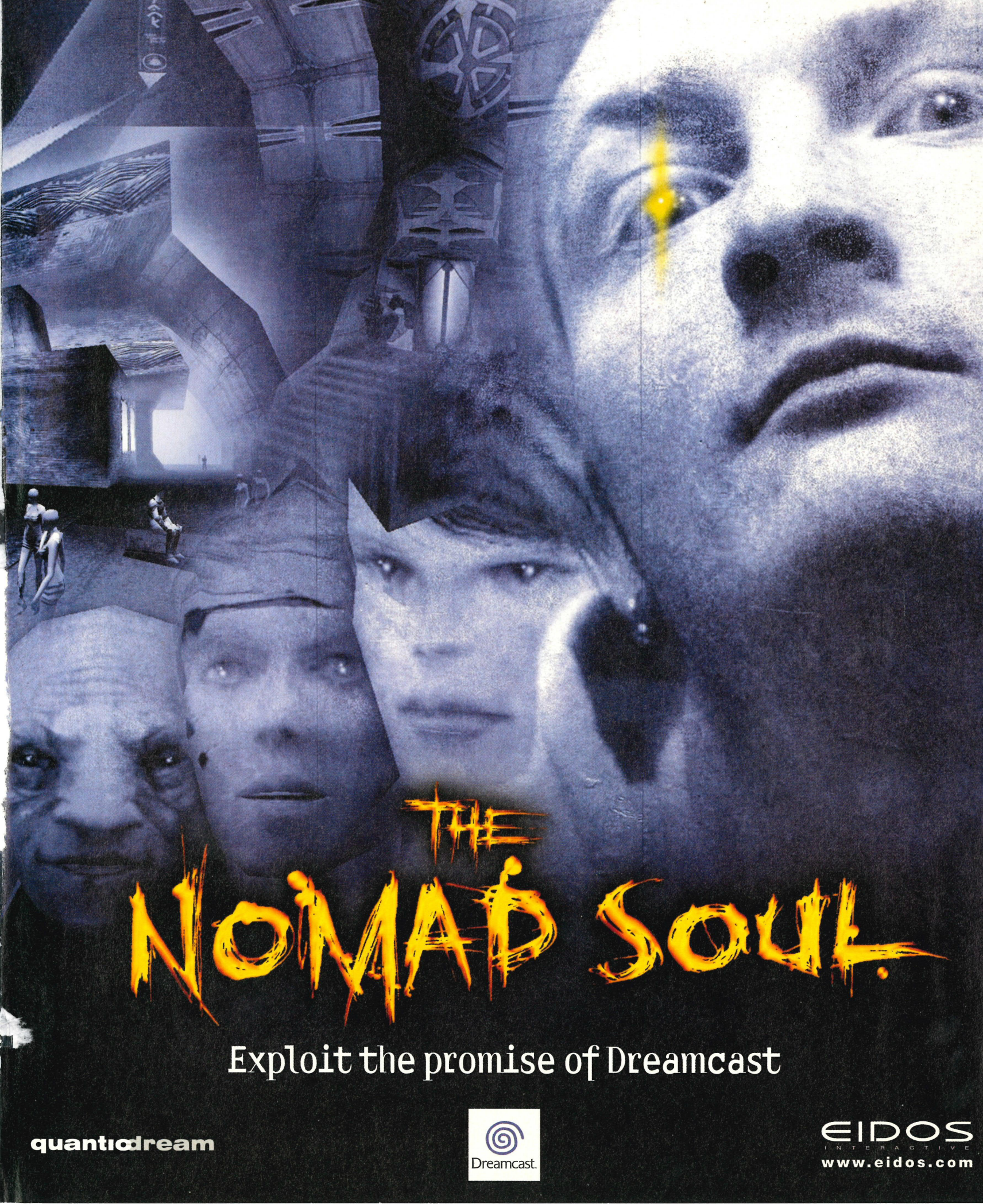

Exploit the promise of Dreamcast

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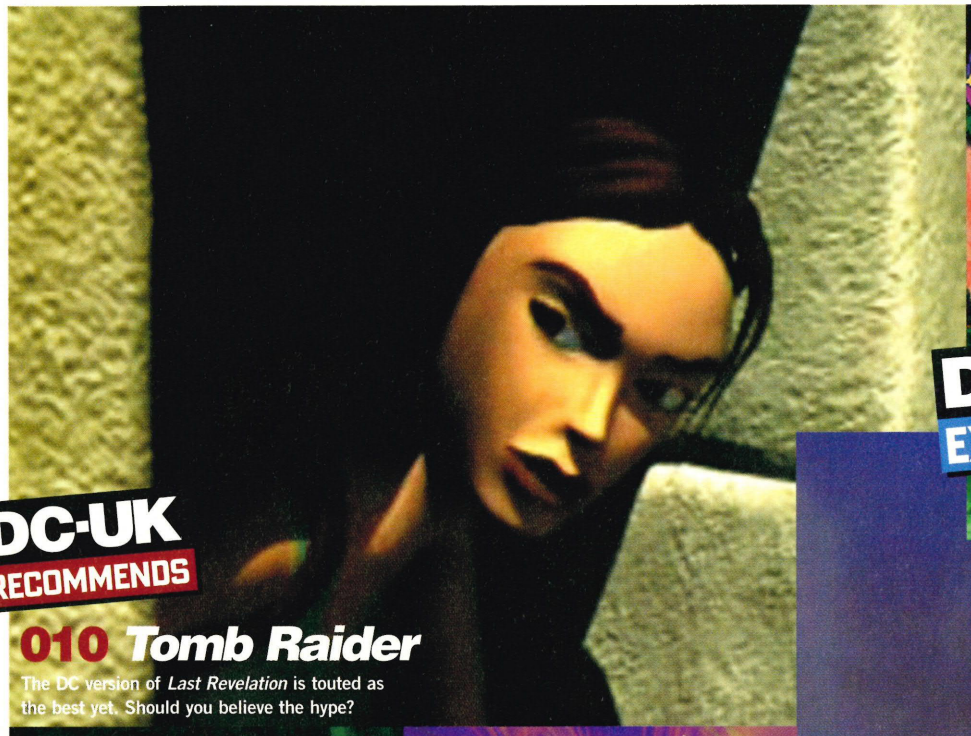

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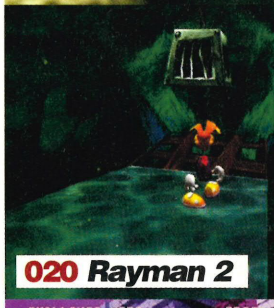

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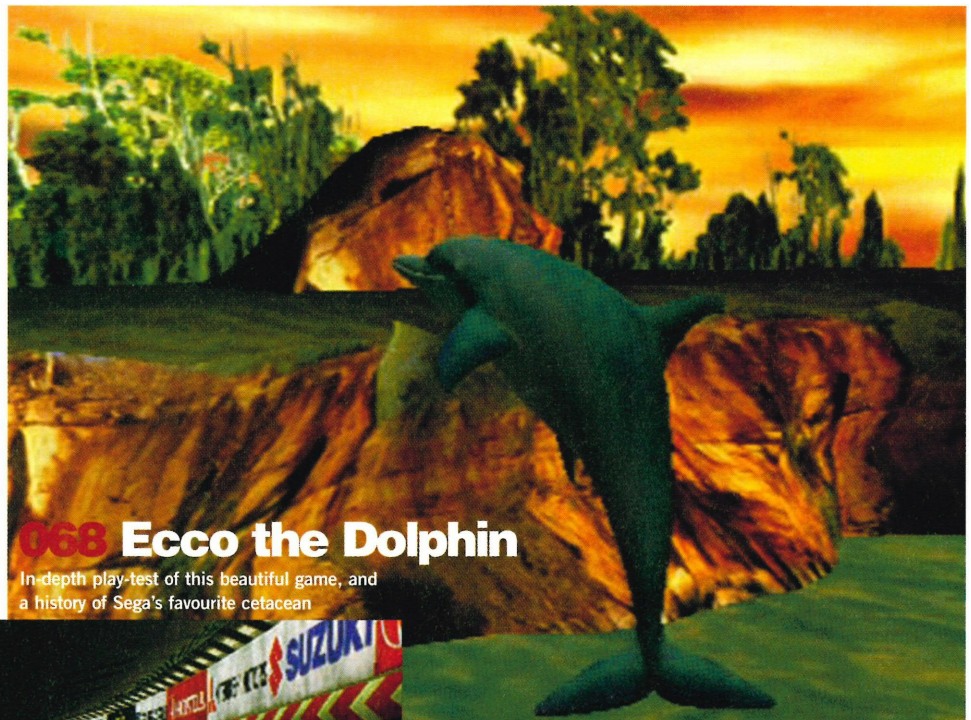

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In-depth play-test of this beautiful game, and a history of Sega's favourite cetacean

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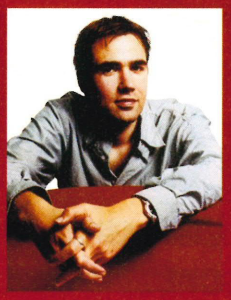

Sorry to sound so gushingly positive, but Dreamcast has amazed me this month. Things started well with a visit to Bizarre Creations where I saw the final touches being put to *Metropolis Street Racer*. This is one of the most ambitious projects I have ever witnessed, and the fact that it is being developed by a team of just 17 people is astounding (*Sega GT*, our other big racer this month, *started* with a team of 40). Then, on returning to the office, I found *Ecco the Dolphin* had arrived at last. Appaloosa's incredible 3D follow-up to the classic Mega Drive titles looks to be a singular experience, abandoning the usually fraught action/adventure gameplay for a relaxing, thought-provoking ride. And then of course, there was *Tomb Raider* and *Street Fighter 3* – two legendary videogame properties given excellent Dreamcast outings. We'll be playing both to death as you're reading this.

"The Dreamcast development community is buzzing; there's so much going on"

It's also been an amazing month for news. We've got 13-and-a-half pages of the stuff, covering everything from videogame exhibitions to amazing PC conversions, via hardware announcements and obscure Japanese RPGs. Not a day went by without something new popping up in my email in-tray demanding coverage. The DC development community is buzzing; there's just so much going on. And as usual we're in the thick of it, playing the games, finding the stories and giving you real, impartial information. It's what we're good at. It's what you deserve. Have a great month, and let us know what you think of the mag ■

Keith Stuart
Editor

When you see this icon above a page it means there's extra info on our website. Check it out!

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Everything Dreamcast

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New screenshots, every area described in full, interviews with the team. It's all here

068 *Ecco the Dolphin*
Take a peek at this incredible-looking fisherman's friend

010 *Tomb Raider* Lara swings onto DC. But does DC swing onto Lara? Er...

D-M@IL

Rant and rave, mumble and moan, **scream and shout:** This is your chance to **set us, and Sega, straight**

Put the boot in

I am really impressed with your magazine. Your reviews are the most honest around. You hyped up *Virtua Striker 2* like all the other mags but unlike most, you actually admitted that you made a mistake and the game was utterly disappointing. Not many other mags would admit a mistake. I hope you keep giving honest reviews and not give games high scores just because everybody thought they would be good. Thanks to you I am very happy playing *UEFA Striker* whilst my friends are sad because their copies of *Virtua Striker* are sitting on the shelf picking up dust.

Tom Petznick, Stoke-on-Trent

Gee, thanks. It's true that we were a little disappointed with Virtua Striker 2 *– but we'd like to reiterate that it's not a rubbish game, folks, it's just not the best we've seen so far. Shame, really.*

A couple of digits

I've been playing games since the days of the old cartridge-based Atari, so I would say I am a well seasoned (console) games player, and through the years I have come to respect Sega as a top class games and hardware developer, even though the Saturn wasn't as big a success as it might have been. But not because it was a bad console, Sony just rammed the PlayStation so far down peoples throats, who had a choice?

Anyway in **DC-UK 06** you did an interview with Digitiser editor Paul Rose. Now I have been reading this Teletext mag for quite a few years, mainly for release dates and up-and-coming console news, and I've found that not only are most of their articles a load of uninformative crap, they are the most biased and critical of Sega journalists that I know of. So I was absolutely gobsmacked when I saw that **DC-UK,** the only source of truly brilliant Sega related information that I have ever read, had a full page with a picture (of which they complained about) of the editor of the most Sega-hating mag (even if they desperately try not to show it) I have ever read. Surely you have no need to stoop so low? You have a brilliant mag in **DC-UK** – please don't spoil it. In one of your articles you said 'you can't polish a turd' and Digitiser is just that – a turd.

Oh, your reviews are spot on, you were the only one who gave *Shadow Man* (which is a corker of a game) the review it deserved. In fact, I am completing it for a second time just in case I missed any small part of this masterpiece. Your reviews are a valuable source of information, so please keep up the fantastic work that you're doing, Sega ought to be thankful for the great effort you put in.

Just one more thing, is there a realistic release date for the up-and-coming *Soul Reaver* by Eidos, if it's anything like the aforementioned *Shadow Man* it will be high on my list of games for 2000.

Bryan Varnam, Nottinghamshire

We like to interview the kinds of people we think that our readers would be interested to hear about, no matter what their views. If we only interviewed people who loved Sega and Dreamcast, we wouldn't be very good journalists, now, would we? In any case, we're not so sure Digitizer is anti-Sega – sounds like a conspiracy theory to us. Soul Reaver *should be out at the end of March.*

Super Sonic

I am writing in response to a letter you received in **DC-UK 05** by someone named Keith via email.

He talks of comparing *Mario 64* to *Sonic Adventure*, and this is what got me rattled. *Sonic* and *Mario* are completely different games, and any comparison would be unfair to both. Not only are both games different in style, presentation and gameplay, but they are aimed at totally different audiences. While I agree that *Sonic* does have its flaws – dodgy camera, pop-up and glitching, name one game on any format that doesn't. Also, *Sonic*, unlike others, manages to remain a Triple A title despite these bugs.

He also says, "No original titles on their way." Allow me: *Shenmue, Crazy Taxi, Samba de Amigo, Seaman, Ferrari F355 Challenge, Chu Chu Rocket, Sega GT, Resident Evil: Code Veronica, D2, Ecco the Dolphin, Metropolis Street Racer, V-Rally 2, Tame the Bullet, Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram, Galleon, Street Fighter 3, Space Channel 5...* I could probably go on. Suffice to say that most of the above are either original concepts or exclusive to DC.

Please print my letter so I can put Keith and any like-minded folks right.

Anthony Swift, Merseyside

Your wish is our command. Fair point about the Mario/Sonic *debate, although you must also see the similarities, what with them both being cute platformers, and both being launch games...*

Sound advice

Now that I have bought myself a Dreamcast, I consider myself somewhat more hardcore than when I was living on the PlayStation's platinum range. I know that we have some great games coming out, but the sound my telly produces leaves a lot to be desired. With The Offspring on the *Crazy Taxi* soundtrack I'd really like to get myself some new speakers. I've seen the Screenbeat Soundstation, but it isn't made anymore. Any ideas? I was thinking about spending no more than £50.

Richard Hale, via email

We had difficulty finding anything in your price range, as to get a really good sound, you'd need a home cinema set-up (you can get a basic one, like JBL's Simply Cinema set-up, for £300). Otherwise, you

Sonic: We repeat – it's not a bit like *Mario 64.* Hedgehogs don't know the first thing about plumbing

MAIL OF THE MONTH

Chips with everything

I feel that I have to reply to Grant Potter's letter in issue 07. I've just had my Dreamcast chipped, and it's not so that I can use pirated software. I was an early adopter, and purchased a Japanese Dreamcast before it became available in the UK. Unfortunately, because Sega (and Sony and Nintendo) continue to persist with the territorial lock-out system, the MOD chip was the only way that I could play UK and US games on my machine without going to the ridiculous step of buying a DC from each territory. It is people like myself that help contribute to the success of a new system by creating an expectation and anticipation through introducing others to the delights that the new machine will offer when it's eventually released in the UK. The only question that should be asked is why manufacturers continue with the territorial lock-out system when a thirdparty always produces a device.

Stuart Delaney, via email

This is a very ambiguous area for console manufacturers. On the one hand, early adopters are vital in spreading reliable word-of-mouth hype about forthcoming products. On the other, territorial lock-out prevents millions of copies of pirated games flooding all over the world from Asia, where software piracy is rife. The MOD chip market is tiny compared to that, so it's 'tolerated'.

You win...

This month, thanks to those chaps at Simply Games, we are giving away four top games and a VM to the reader lucky enough to win Mail of the Month. So, well done, Stuart.

simplyGAMES.COM

could route a phono lead from your TV into your stereo, which would improve the sound no end. Or, if you have a headphone socket on your telly, you could plug in some cheap active PC speakers, but to be honest if you have a Nicam TV you needn't bother as the sound is probably as good as you're going to get. Likewise, if your telly is mono, you'll get no benefit from spending the extra cash.

Monkeys

I am in a bit of a dilemma and I blame it solely on Sega. Previously I was fine just to let Sega's console fly by... but then I saw *Soul Calibur*. Then *Shenmue, Crazy Taxi, Dead or Alive 2*, etc (you get my drift), and to top it all off I then played *Power Stone*. Why does Sega have to insist on having the best games on its console? Can't it let us have an easy console decision? And if that wasn't enough, it's giving free Internet access for good measure. Oi Sega, stop making my life so difficult!

Matthew Storm, Fife

Quite.

Take my advice

I find it very annoying when you don't answer peoples' queries and problems in the mail section, like when people judge the console by its first games. You need to explain that the games will get better as the capabilities rise – the amount of games now is very good, even if silly people say that there aren't many. The PlayStation has been out for five years, that's why it has over 500 games. I know a lot about Dreamcast, thanks to magazines, and I'm very pleased with the line-up – *Code Veronica, MSR, Sega GT, Ferrari F355...*

Mitch, via email

Thing is, we like to think of our letters page as a comment page, which means that some letters don't necessarily require an answer. Plus, it's far more interesting when we get answers from other readers, like yourself.

Talking balls

I would like to appeal to Sega via your magazine against the booking my striker got in the Brazil Vs France game in the league, which meant he was sent off. It clearly was not a foul as he had the ball and the French striker dived. Please review this decision as I need the striker in question for our next big game with China next week.

Chris Jaggs, via email

We've spoken to Sega and they told us that they stand by the referee's decision. He had a good view of the incident. And you're clearly crazy.

Virtua Striker 2 Chris Jaggs should consider playing something less competitive. Like Solitaire

Power Stone The second instalment is on its way, and we're all crossing our legs here at **DC-UK** to stop ourselves weeing with the sheer excitement of it all. Apart from Karl, who quite likes that warm damp feeling

Talking balls (2)

I'm just writing to moan about the quality of the current football titles on Dreamcast. I bought three fighting games – *Soul Calibur, Power Stone* and *Ready 2 Rumble* – all quality games, but being the football game enthusiast that I am, I've been longing for a good footie sim. I got *WWS2000* and was not overjoyed – far too slow. Then exchanged that for *UEFA Striker* – the controls are extremely dodgy and tackling was just pants. Now I have ended up with *Virtua Striker 2* and had high expectations for the game, only to find Sega just rushed it out, with no ability to run and no skills button, and you need these essentials to make the game top quality. I hope and pray that Konami brings out an *ISS* game soon otherwise life won't be worth living!

J Haydon, via email

Well, we were perfectly happy with UEFA Striker. *Oh and Konami is working on an* ISS *title for DC.*

EA delay

So Electronic Arts wants five million Dreamcast owners before it will support Dreamcast? That absolutely reeks! When and if you decide to throw us poor serfs some scraps from your table, you may find that the majority of gamers have already filled up on other game companies' titles.

David Stevens, via email

Good point, David. Although we've discovered that EA is rumoured to be developing a game as we speak...

The end?

I was extremely shocked to hear that Dreamcast will be the last Sega console and that after that Sega will be just an arcade and games producing company. This would mean great disappointment for me and all my Dreamcast owning friends as we all love Sega. Can you confirm these rumours?

Nick, via email

As far as we know, the rumours are rubbish. A couple of months ago a Japanese newspaper printed a comment by Sega of Japan's president in which he apparently suggested Dreamcast might be Sega's last console, but Sega was quick to deny that. If Dreamcast makes money, Sega will make more consoles – simple as that.

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Make sure you check out the reader comments on our forum's Website

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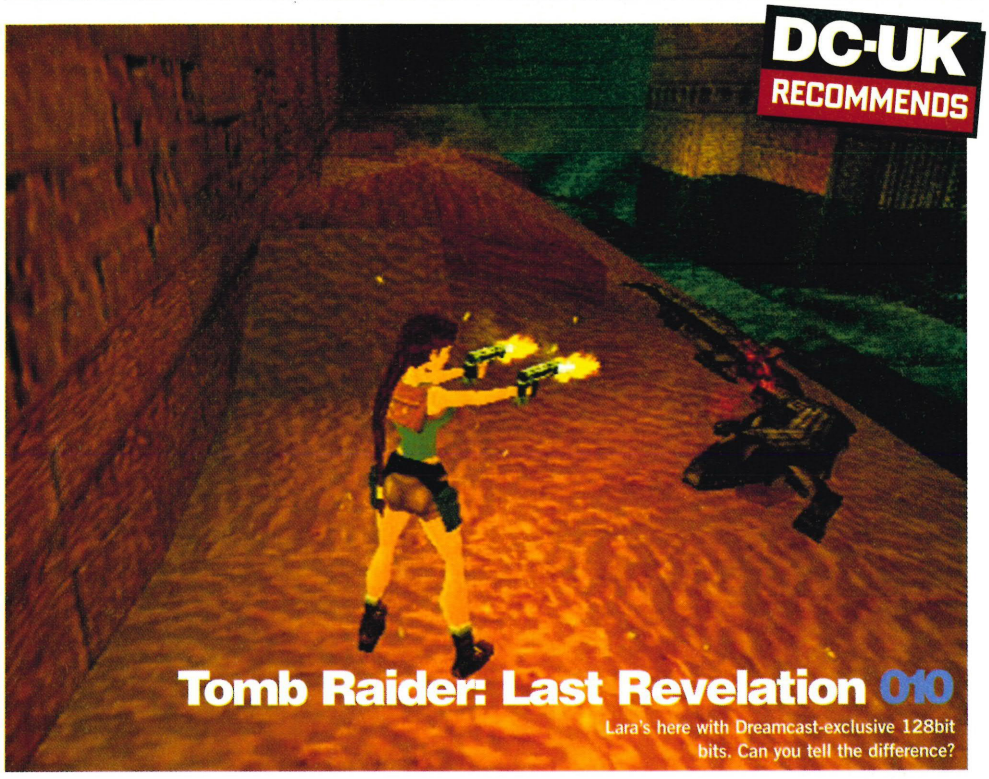


DC-UK RECOMMENDS

Tomb Raider: Last Revelation 010

Lara's here with Dreamcast-exclusive 128bit bits. Can you tell the difference?

REVIEWS #08 04.00

010 *Tomb Raider: Last Revelation* Lara gets back to her roots with the best *Tomb Raider* title since the original. It may be a near straight PC conversion, but a good game is a good game, whatever its origins.

016 *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* Capcom finally provides a sequel to the much-loved *Street Fighter 2*. Has it been worth the wait? Oh yes. Turn those pages and find out why we've gone 2D mad yet again.

020 *Rayman 2* Starved of a platform game since *Sonic Adventure*, Dreamcast-owners can now pig out on the second portion of this fine French platter.

024 *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* If you prefer your 2D beat 'em ups a little less basic than *Street Fighter 3*, look no further than this crazy fighter from Capcom.

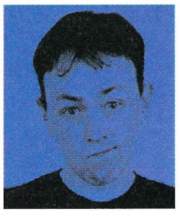
028 *Wetrix+* Although it won't be long before the brilliant *Chu Chu Rocket* touches down, fans of puzzle games should definitely have a butcher's at *Wetrix+*.

030 *Wild Metal* Is DMA's hunt and shoot 'em up as instantly appealing as the developer's classics, *Lemmings* and *GTA*, or is it a case of 'tanks but no tanks'?

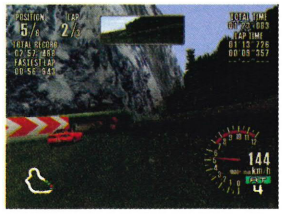
034 *DC-UK Games Chart*
035 *Reader Reviews*

The Review Panel

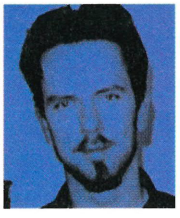
Name: Lee Hart
Games of the moment: Lee's been getting stuck into *ISS Pro Evolution*, which he claims is "the best footie game on the market". So, naturally, he's looking forward to the Dreamcast conversion.

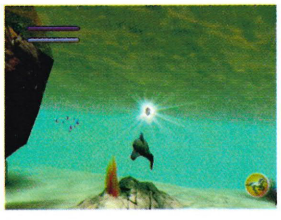


Name: Martin Kitts
Games of the moment: Besides *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, Martin's been enthralled by the miniature delights of *Metal Gear* on Game Boy. We reckon he's a dead ringer for Solid Snake.



Name: Stephen Lawson
Games of the moment: "*Sega GT* pees all over *Sega Rally 2*, and I love it," said Stephen. Quite. He's also been rediscovering the joy of *NHL '93* on the SNES he brought back from Glasgow.





Name: Dean Mortlock
Games of the moment: Sega vet Dean has enjoyed splashing around with Ecco this month. *Sega GT* has also proved quite a distraction, so much so that we've had to chuck him out the games room.

What's the score?

DC-UK is committed to delivering the most honest, accurate and comprehensive Dreamcast review section anywhere, anyhow. So that you can find the opinions you need in the time you have, we've placed our reviews pages right at the beginning of the magazine.

Drawing on Future Publishing's deep pool of videogame experts, we aim to employ only the most experienced, knowledgeable, sweetest-smelling reviewers in the country. Some of these people have been playing videogames since doing so wasn't even heard of, never mind considered geeky and anti-social.

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

If a review sports this icon it means the game in question may not be an eternal classic, but it certainly boasts plenty of positive features. It'll usually be a fine example of a certain genre or a game that's particularly innovative.

DC-UK RECOMMENDS

An absolute must-buy, offering most if not all of the following: lasting depth, beautiful visuals, originality and charm. Don't expect this one to crop up every month – we're reserving it for games that you simply cannot be without.

DC-UK ESSENTIAL

REVIEW

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation

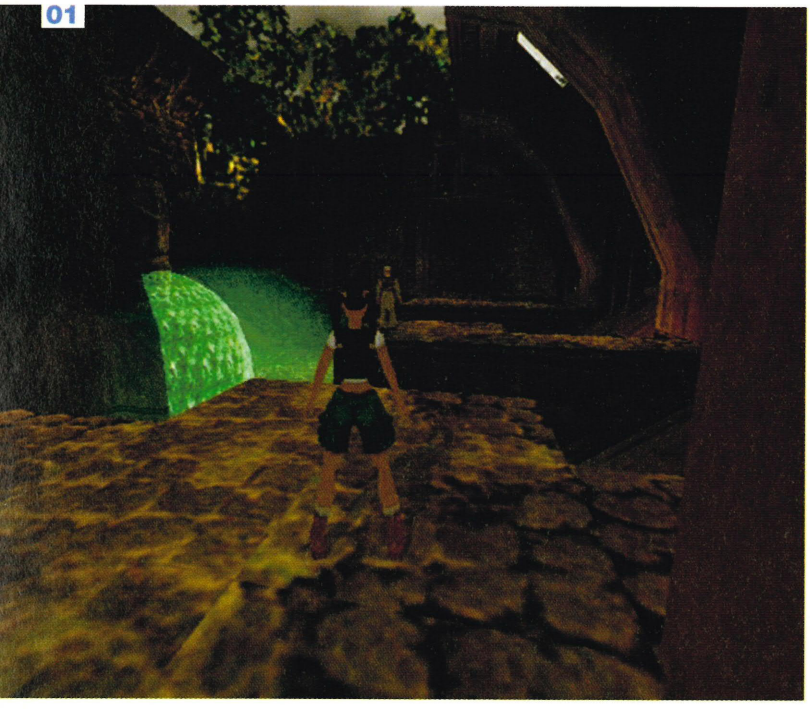
The world's foremost videogame archaeologist steps onto DC with relics to discover and endangered species to kill

DC-UK RECOMMENDS

We told you it was going to happen and now here it is: *Tomb Raider* is on Dreamcast. If any further proof were needed that Sega's machine has been accepted as a viable, mass-market videogame console then surely the arrival of Ms Croft rubberstamps the fact. Even though it's ostensibly a direct port of the PC version (with better sound and prettier lighting/shadow effects), the symbolic impact of having the face of Western videogaming on Dreamcast cannot be ignored, and every DC owner (whether you love or hate the *Tomb Raider* series) should be grateful for Lara's belated appearance. But it does present a rather big problem: namely, approaching the game with an open mind. ▶

FINEPOINTS

- Publisher: Eidos
- Developer: Core Design
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: March
- Players: One
- Extras: None



01 The opening level will be invaluable for newcomers to the series as it familiarises the player with the controls and is perfect preperation for the events that follow
02 The Tomb of Semerkhet has a plague of irritating beetles chasing you around. They may look like puny insects but they attack like piranhas, and you won't last five minutes unless you get a flaming torch to scare them away
03 Lara's new rope-swinging move is invaluable for accessing those hard to reach places

► We have to ignore all the merchandising ephemera and the notion that the *Tomb Raider* games are mere vehicles in which that gaming icon and cultural ambassador Lara Croft gets to strut her stuff. Ignore the harsh reality that Ms Croft is merely a female Indiana Jones whose notoriety is largely due to a top-heavy physique that would only be practical had she a Weeble-like rounded base to stop her from falling over. And, most of all, ignore the fact that this game was released on PlayStation and PC at Christmas and is the fourth instalment in a series that began in 1996. Because *Last Revelation* is the only *Tomb Raider* game you can play on Dreamcast we have to treat it as such; which means none of the baggage attached to the franchise matters a jot.

For *Tomb Raider*

veterans we'll get a few things out of the way from the offset. Firstly, *Last Revelation* is the best *Tomb Raider* game since the groundbreaking original. The second game had interesting modern-day locations but far too much combat (the weakest aspect of Lara's adventures), while the third instalment was too big, too dull, too difficult and wasn't rewarding enough to justify the frustration involved in toiling through to the end. *Last Revelation* triumphs by returning to the spirit of the original: the game's focus is back on building and sustaining its other-worldly atmosphere; the gameplay is more about exploration and discovery than constant action and puzzle-solving; and events take place in one main location (Egypt) split into lots of different environments, rather than all of that constant to-ing and fro-ing across the globe.

Secondly, this Dreamcast version is exactly the same as the PC and PS incarnations in terms of gameplay, so if you've already completed the game on one of those formats you'll find nothing new here to tempt you into splashing out again. Unless you simply want to experience the pleasure of playing the word's biggest videogame franchise on the world's most powerful videogame machine. Right, now we've got all that out of the way we can wipe the slate clean and review the game as if it were the first *Tomb Raider* title ever to be released... No, really.

Core Design's inaugural Dreamcast outing is *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, an adventure game starring an all-action Indiana Jones-like archaeologist named Lara Croft. The game begins with Lara as a 16 year-old accompanying a veteran Austrian explorer, Werner Von Croy, on an expedition in Cambodia. This opening stage cleverly acts as both a prologue for the story that follows and a useful training mission. As Von Croy teaches Lara the skills required to be a successful adventurer, so the game teaches the player the skills required to

> "Ignore the harsh reality that Ms Croft is merely a female Indiana Jones **whose notoriety is largely due to a top-heavy physique**"

2nd opinion

"If you love *Tomb Raider* then everything you love about it is present here. The cinematic locations, the puzzles, the baddies, the acrobatics, the girl. You ought to go out and get it. However, I can't help but feel a tinge of disappointment about this rendition of the game. Obviously Core didn't have time to truly push Dreamcast and come up with something state-of-the-art, but it would have been great to at least get a few really stand-out exclusive features. Perhaps *Tomb Raider 5* will deliver that"
Keith Stuart

DC-UK RECOMMENDS

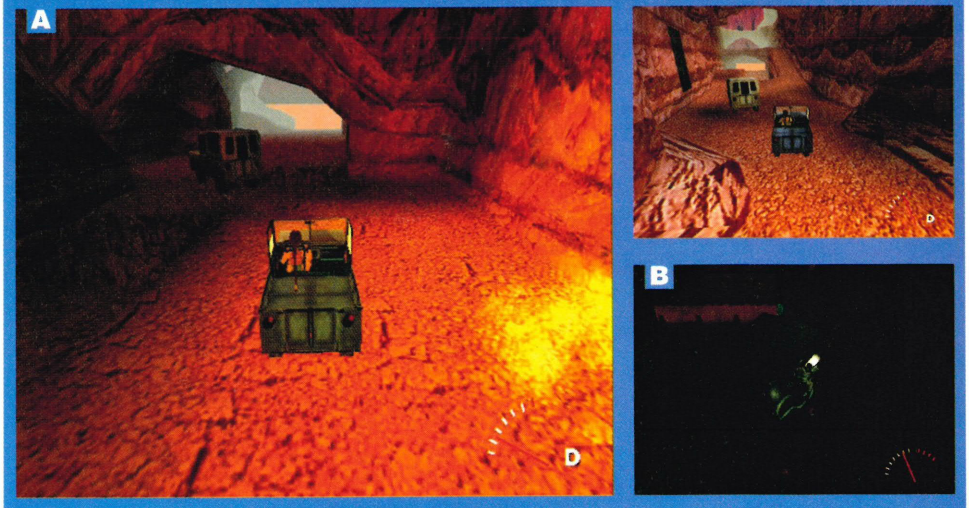
control Ms Croft successfully.

Lara has a whole host of moves including climbing, sprinting, crawling, rolling, swimming and jumping. The tutorial level allows you to master all of these abilities as you traverse through the Cambodian ruins and Von Croy sets a number of tasks that test your dexterity. The moves are intelligently implemented to make full use of the joypad and controlling Lara soon becomes second-nature.

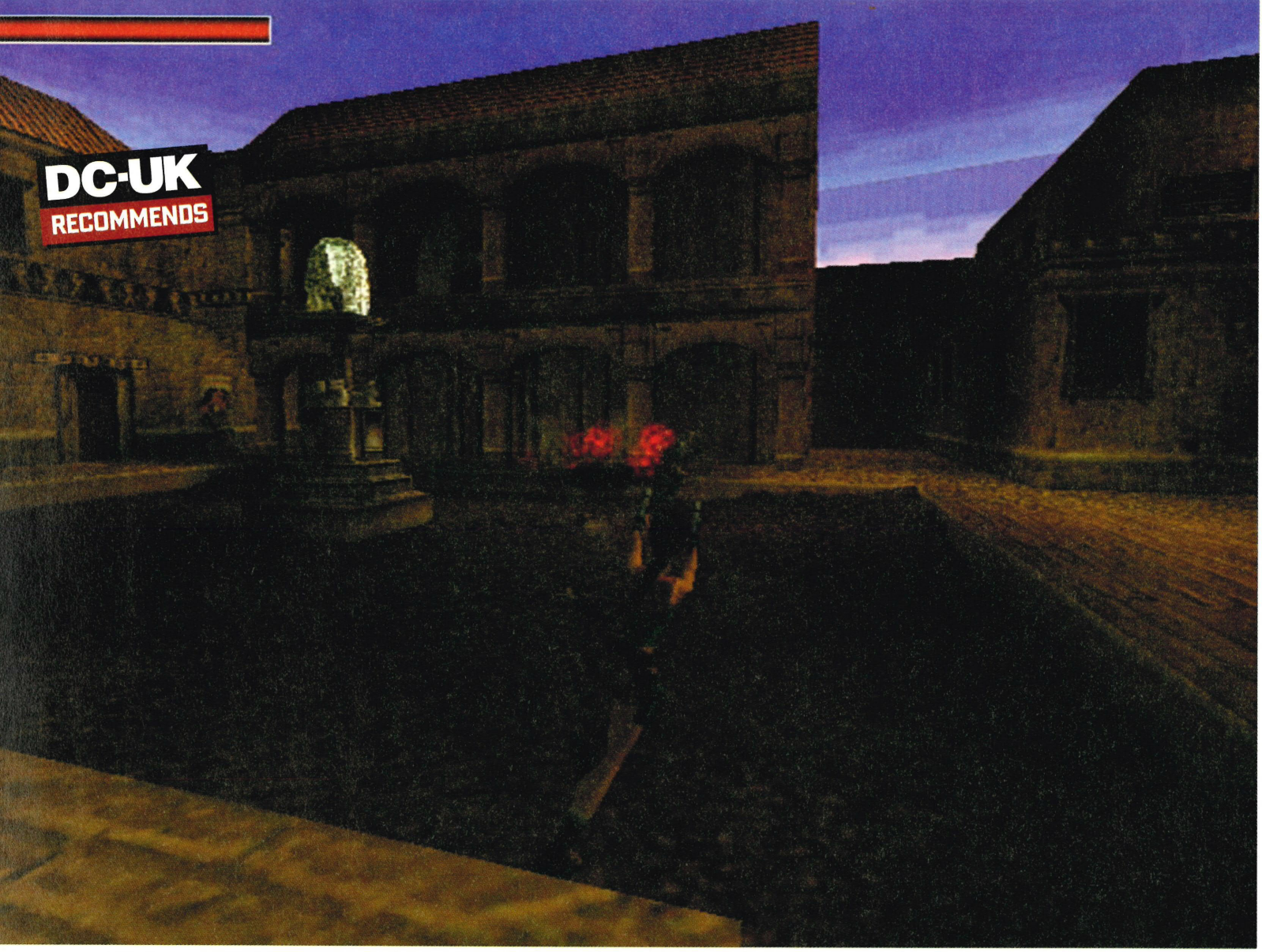
Unfortunately, while Ms Croft has a different ability to overcome whichever obstacle presents itself, her basic manoeuvrability is about as lifelike as a rusted-up C-3PO. Turning Lara and lining her up in a specific direction (a regular occurrence with the puzzles and jumps in the game) is a frustratingly awkward process; especially when you have to stand on exactly the right polygon to pick-up an object or activate a switch. But, as with the *Resident Evil* series, the flaws in the control system cannot detract from the inherent quality of the game and once you've finished the introductory level and begun the ▶

Baby can you drive my car

Where would a girl be without her accessories? Ms Croft appears to have a different vehicle for every occasion and her previous adventures have seen her at the wheel of speedboats, skidoos and motorbikes to name but a few. *Last Revelation* has two new means of transport for Lara: a nippy jeep plus an ancient motorbike and sidecar. There are more driving sections than ever before as Lara races from one expansive level to another.



A Lara gets her mitts on the jeep at the beginning of the Burial Chambers level, after wasting a bad guy and nicking his keys. A race through two stages then ensues as Ms Croft tracks her enemies' Land Rover while avoiding the grenades they chuck and keeping an eye out for traps in the road
B The motorbike and sidecar can be found in the City of the Dead and you'll spend as much time running people over as driving sensibly



DC-UK RECOMMENDS

"It's impossible not to become immersed in *Tomb Raider*'s **enthralling narrative and superbly cinematic atmosphere**"

► game in earnest, it's impossible not to become immersed in *Tomb Raider*'s enthralling narrative and superbly cinematic atmosphere.

The Last Revelation's plot revolves around the evil Egyptian God, Seth, who Lara inadvertently awakens from eternal sleep by taking an amulet from his tomb. In order to prevent a plague of destruction descending on humanity, Lara must embark on a quest to summon Seth's more virtuous brother who is the only one who can put a stop to Seth's threatened global apocalypse. The ensuing action takes place across 33 massive levels which are impressively diverse and cover everything from gigantic board games in ancient tombs, to the more advanced antics of driving a jeep through the streets of Egypt in pursuit of baddies.

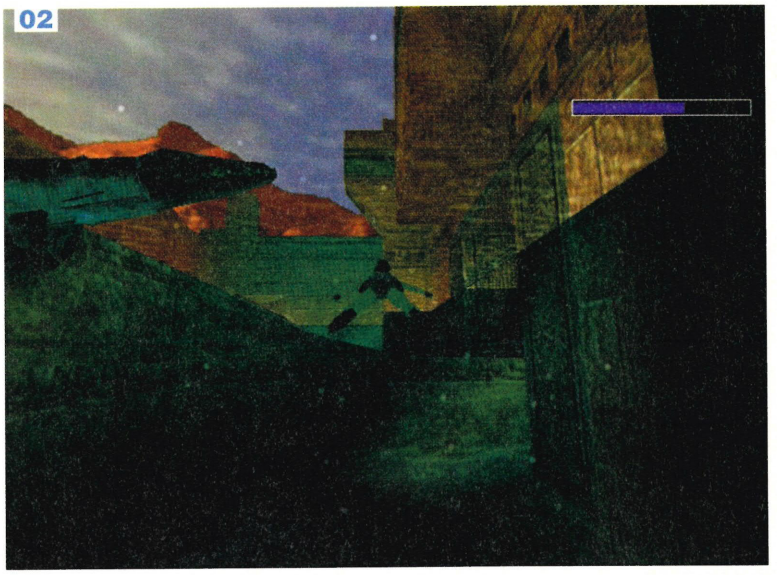
www.tombraider.com
A gorgeous Flash-heavy site with background info and playable PC demos

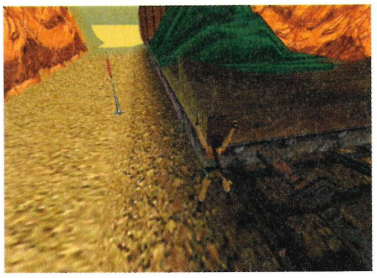
The enemies themselves are also a creditable facet; displaying impressive AI as they track Lara from one room to another, using the scenery to take cover and moving around until they locate the best attacking point. Instead of being cannon fodder waiting for death by pistol, shotgun or whatever weapon Ms Croft happens to be carrying, some enemies require intelligence rather than aggression to be dispatched. For example, there's no point attacking fire wraiths with puny gunpowder, you have to leg it to the nearest body of water, dive in and watch the daft wraiths follow you into the pool and douse themselves to death.

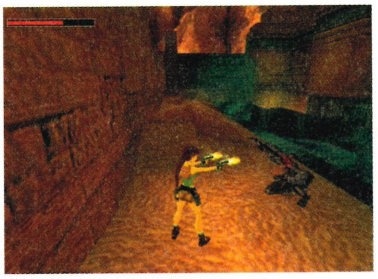
Instances of inventive skirmishes are all the more praiseworthy because, in general, *Tomb Raider*'s combat system is extremely disappointing. It utilises an auto-aiming system, which usually translates as somersaulting around like a boozed-up gymnast while pressing fire until the enemy, who you can't see because of the constantly switching camera angles, drops dead from chronic dizziness. There is an option to change to manual-aiming but this is sadly no better and often results in suicidal confusion as a group of beasties kick your head in while you're trying to decide which one to target first.

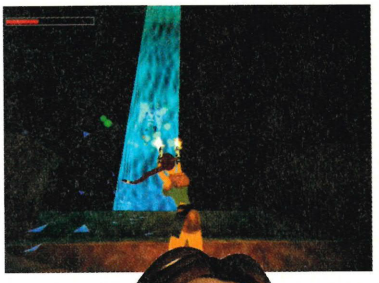
Another area where *Last Revelation* fails to impress is in its graphical quality. Although the design of the environments provides a perfectly convincing representation of an ancient world (and the lighting effects are beautifully effective as rays of light shine through the dark caverns), the basic graphics engine appears a little dated. Background scenery is very blocky and texture seams regularly stick out like sore thumbs. Character models are also extremely blocky and angular and, although Lara is highly-detailed

> "If Core Design decides to produce a sequel, we'd recommend a **complete overhaul of the graphics engine**"









01 This big old fire-breathing dragon is desperate for a toasted Lara sandwich... I say!
02 Egyptian waters are full of crocodiles begging to be turned into tasteful handbags by Ms Croft
03 The mirror puzzle in the Coastal Ruins level is a tricky one. You have to look at the mirror image to see a load of spikes which are barring your way to a crossbow pick-up

and boasts smooth animation, compared to the likes of Ryo from *Shenmue* and *Code: Veronica*'s Claire Redfield, the *Tomb Raider* star looks a bit ropey.

If *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* and its appealing protagonist capture the public's imagination, and Core Design decides to produce a sequel, we'd recommend a complete overhaul of the controls, graphics engine and combat system. Aside from these three (admittedly quite important) problems, *Last Revelation* is an incredibly good game with thrilling action and testing puzzles, plus a captivating atmosphere that draws you into the gameplay and refuses to let go. It may not truly convince as a next generation title but in terms of playability, *Tomb Raider* is as good an adventure game as you can currently get on Dreamcast ■

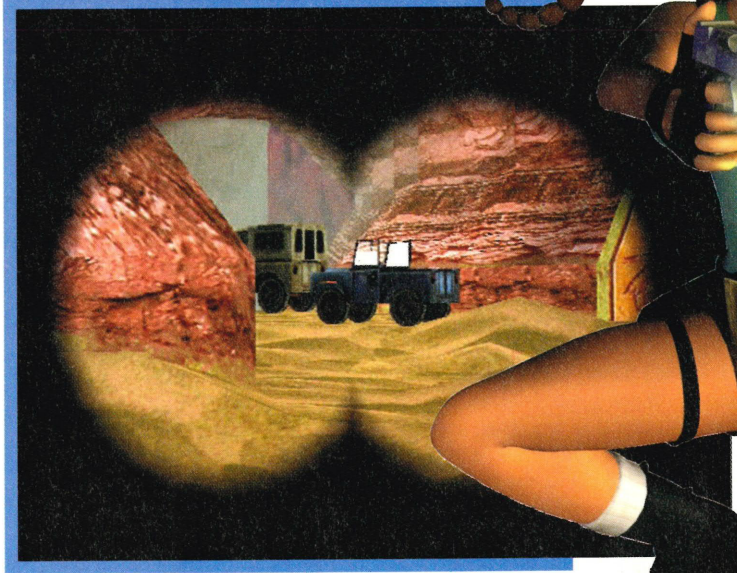
Lee Hart

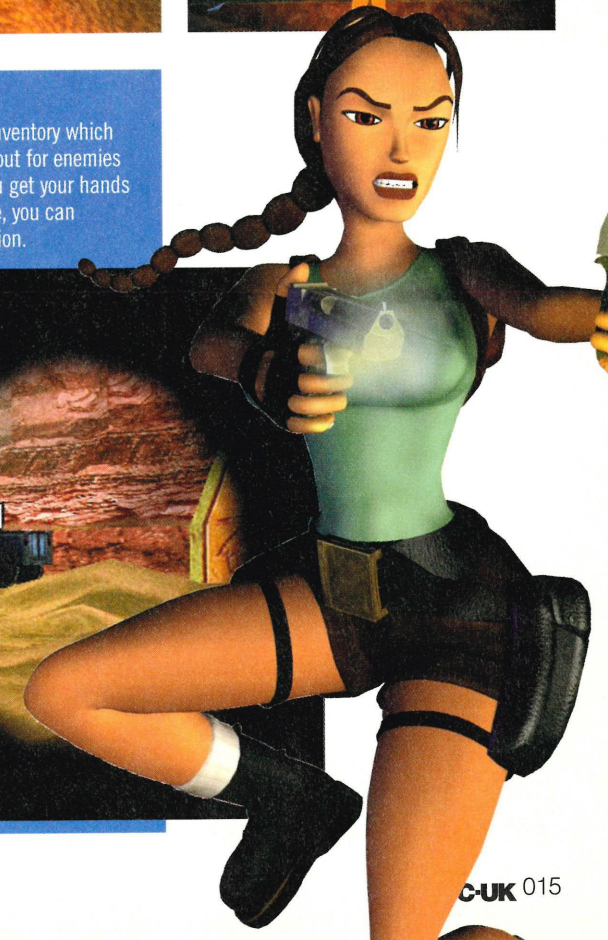
- **For:** Enthralling atmosphere, classic gameplay, it will take you weeks to finish it
- **Against:** Awkward controls, dodgy combat system, dated graphics engine

DC-UK 8

I spy with my little eye...

Lara now has a handy set of binoculars in her inventory which enable you to read far-off inscriptions and look out for enemies lurking up in the distance. Additionally, once you get your hands on the laser sight and revolver later in the game, you can combine all three for sexy long-range sniper action.





DC-UK RECOMENDS

REVIEW

Street Fighter 3: Double Impact

Almost a decade since *Street Figher 2*, Capcom strikes back with a basic but brilliant sequel

No matter how flashy 3D beat 'em ups become – even years from now, when *Soul Calibur IX* characters have more polygons in one fingernail than an average frame of Toy Story 2 – 2D fighting games will still hold the same inexplicable appeal. Somehow the gaming experience seems purer, more hardcore when played out in two dimensions. If one game sums up the allure of 2D more than any other, it's *Street Fighter*. And now, at last, *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact*, the third instalment of the legendary series has fireballed its way from the arcades to a home system. It turns out that *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is actually another of Capcom's tie-ins; not the anticipated sequel some people imagined it to be.

Of course, with both games available on Dreamcast, some of you are going to have to make a decision about which to buy. We reviewed the much-delayed *Alpha 3* back in issue 04, hailed it as 'arcade perfect' and awarded it an 8 out of 10, so *Double Impact* had a lot to live up to. The good news for fans of the series is *SF3* is every bit as good as *Alpha 3* and includes the first two versions of the arcade game: *New Generation* and *2nd Giant Attack*. On the downside, though, it lacks the near-infinite options and play modes of its Dreamcast counterpart. However, hardcore fans suggest *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and Capcom's other 2D DC scrapper *Marvel Vs Capcom* were ridiculously over-the-top, with their air blocking, custom combos and all-powerful special moves reducing gameplay to a skill-less void. And though it may only offer arcade and versus modes, and, in the case of *2nd Giant Attack*, a bonus game (see Ballbuster), *Double Impact* manages to fill that gameplay gap.

For starters, the super moves are different, much simpler than the crazy combos of *Marvel Vs Capcom*.

> "*Impact* **harks back to** *SF2 Turbo*'s approach that allowed **experienced players** to excel, **dispatching fly-by-night** fighters with ease"

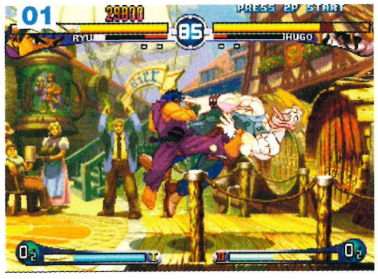
2nd opinion

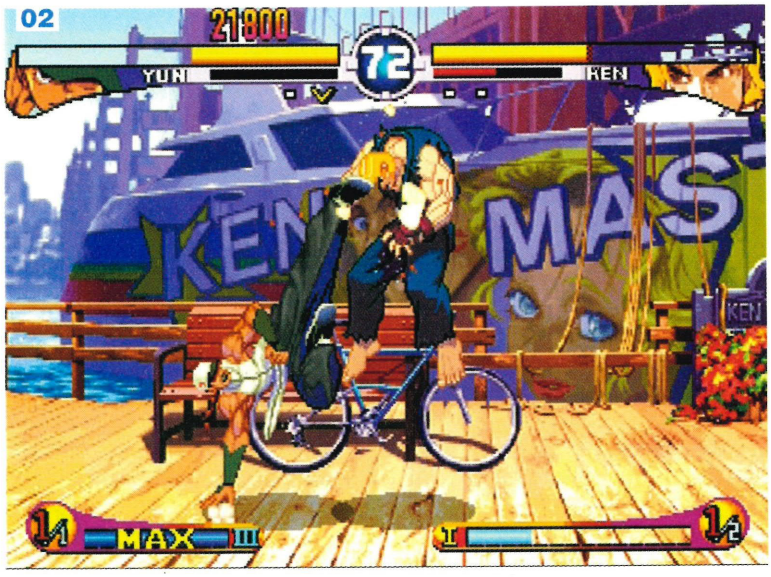
"Okay, I admit it, I don't like 2D beat 'em ups. Never have done. I've played numerous incarnations of the legendary *Street Fighter* series over the years and remained entirely resistant to their charms. Give me *Way of the Exploding Fist* or *IK+* any day of the week. This latest version is enjoyable enough but plays just like every other *Street Fighter* game I've ever encountered. But I suppose that's entirely the point. Fans of the series will love its familiarity, Doubting Thomases will probably remain unconvinced."

Lee Hart

FINEPOINTS

- Publisher: Virgin Interactive
- Developer: Capcom
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: Early Summer
- Players: One to two
- Extras: Vibration pak, 60Hz option





> "We reviewed *Alpha 3*, hailed it as '**arcade perfect**' **and awarded it** an 8 out of 10, so *Double Impact* has **a lot to live up to**"

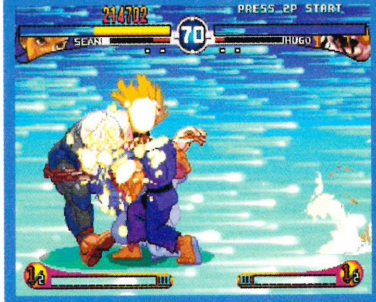
01 Hugo is one of the ugliest *Street Fighter* characters yet, so a few hurricane kicks to his gob won't really make much of a difference
02 One of our favourite moves is Yun's kick which fires opponents into the air
03 Blond boss Gill wears skimpy trunks and is prone to insisting, "I am your god." We wonder what Freud would have said about this deviant

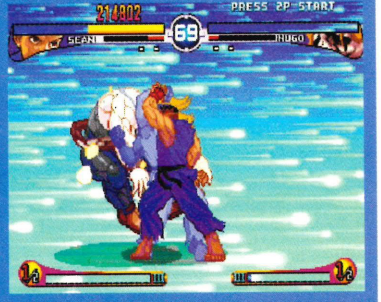
They're called Super Arts (see Modern Arts), and each character has three – you can choose one and one only when you select your player. This system makes *Double Impact*'s bouts the antithesis of *MVC*'s; fights are based much more on regular attacks, with the occasional Super Art pulled off if you can time it just right during the moments when your opponent isn't on the offensive.

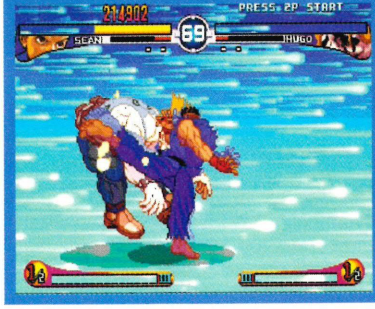
However, it's still possible for one-move wonders to stand at the opposite end of the screen from their opponent and launch a fusillade of fireballs at their rival, but there's a new 'parrying' system that can put a quick end to such guileless tactics. Parries are similar to blocks, except instead of pressing back or back-down on the d-pad to defend, you press forward, or down if you're in the air, to 'parry' your opponent's attack. The beauty of parries is that if they're performed correctly, you fend off blows without losing any energy, and can quickly follow up with a strike of your own. Mind you, this system hasn't been without its critics, most ▶

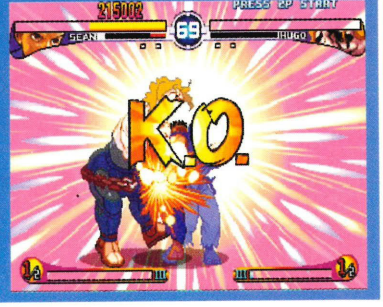
Modern arts

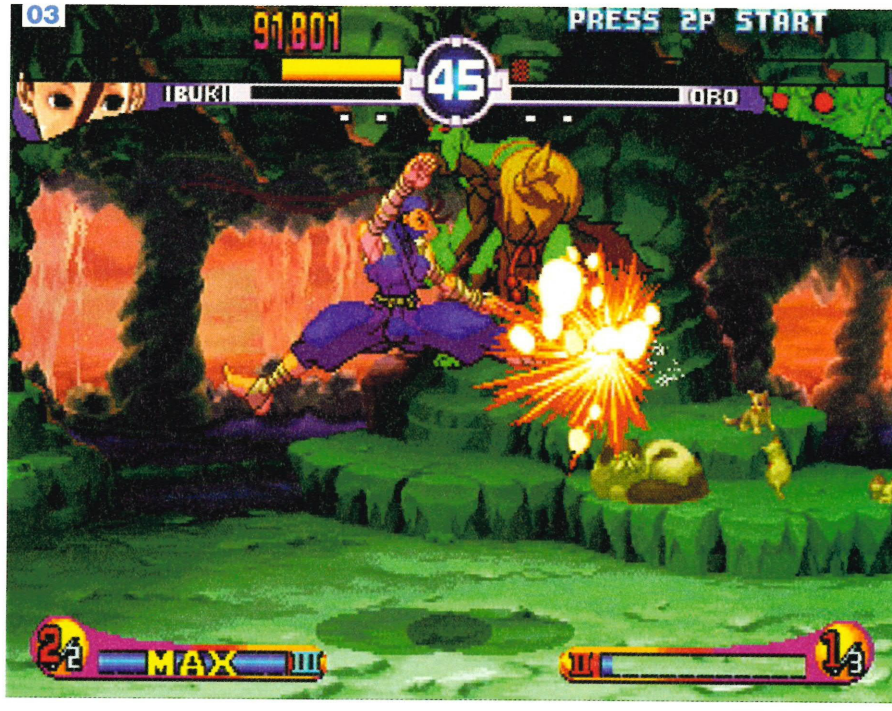
Double Impact's Super Arts are a far cry from the outlandish power moves of *Marvel Vs Capcom*. For a start, you can only use one per fight. However, it takes more skill to pull them off and it's so satisfying to achieve multiple hit Super Art finishes like this one...











"After each bout a bridge collapses and the **fighters drop down** to the next level for **some more kung-fu fighting"**

▶ of them die-hard *Street Fighter* enthusiasts who complain that you can parry almost every move without penalty, turning twoplayer games into namby-pamby defensive scuffles. It's a fair comment, but it would take a considerable length of time and practice before you could parry everything your opponents throw at you.

Another first for a *Street Fighter* title is the inclusion of a dash move that's executed by tapping forward or back twice in quick succession. This can prove quite useful if you're being battered in a corner of the screen and want a quick way out. You can also catch your opponent off-guard sometimes by dashing in and dishing out some punishment.

www.capcom.com
Page of hyperlinks to Capcom USA, as well as Capcom of Asia and Japan

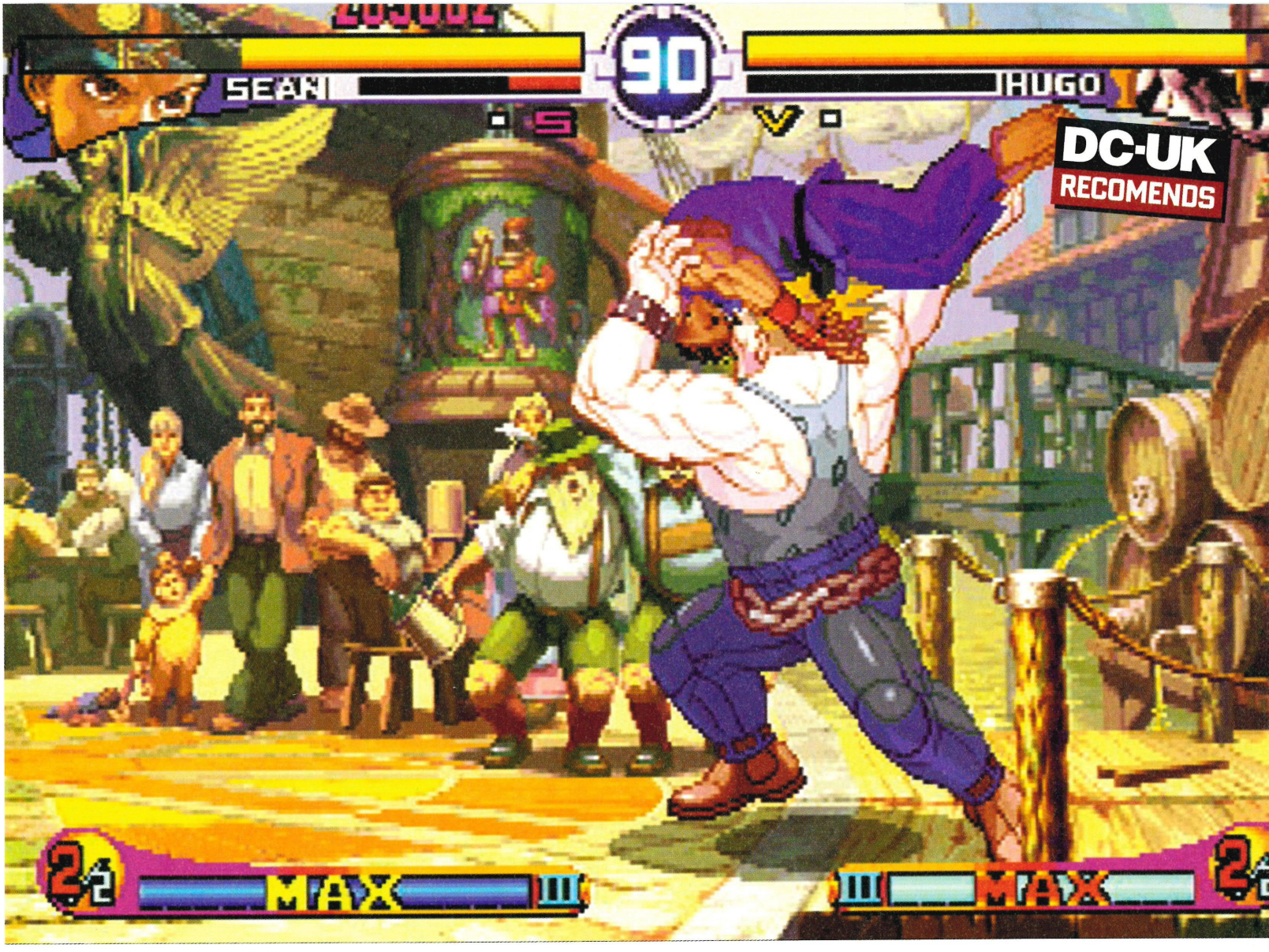
Gone are the super jumps of *Marvel Vs Capcom*, which, let's face it, were pretty useless. There is a sort of sub-super jump that can be activated by pressing back-down then forward-up, or forward-down then back-up, but the increase in height over the normal jump is minimal.

In terms of gameplay and controls, *Double Impact* harks back to *Street Fighter 2 Turbo*'s no-frills approach that allowed experienced players to excel, dispatching fly-by-night players with ease. This is definitely a game where skill and mastery of the control system pay huge dividends.

Impact's graphics are some of the finest 2D visuals yet. Character animation is swift and seamless, with no sign of any slowdown. Watching Elena, one of *SF3*'s new characters, as she limbers up in her stationary position, performing a flowing, capoeira-like boogie, is a highlight of the game's animation. Capcom certainly hasn't skimped on frames. Some of the animated backgrounds are equally impressive. Elena's stage is set on a series of rope bridges over a giant waterfall. After each bout a bridge collapses and the fighters drop down to the next level for some more kung-fu fighting. However, some stages are a little lacklustre, for example Necro's stamping ground could almost have been ported directly from *Street Fighter 2* on the SNES, with its low-res and gaudy renders.

Besides the inclusion of Ken, Ryu and Akumi, *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* boasts 12 new characters. One of our favourites is Sean, whose fighting style is a mixture of Ken and Ryu's dragon punches and fireballs, and Deejay's kickboxing. It's nice to have a new character with familiar moves as well as entirely new ones. Ibuki is another star and is one of the coolest-looking videogame characters Capcom has created. After winning a fight, she discards her ninja threads to reveal a

01 First encounters with Elena can be briefer than her, er, briefs. She's the toughest leggy lovely since Linda Carter donned those chunky metal bracelets and tiara
02 If all else fails, fireballs can get you out of a rut or two, not that we'd resort to that
03 Why do fools fall in love with videogame characters? Why, Ibuki? You're so lovely. Come and live with us in our analogue world. It's nice out here; you'd love it



DC-UK RECOMENDS

Ballbuster

We can all remember how, as teenagers, we combatted the stress of puberty with the original *Street Fighter* bonus level, in which you were invited to smash a car to a heap of scrap. It was so simple yet so much fun. *Double Impact*'s bonus game requires a little more skill and mastery of parrying if you're to deflect all 20 of Sean's basketballs. We did it. Once.

"Although the fight for the title of champion is very close to call, we'd recommend *Double Impact* over *Alpha 3*"

trendy white vest, red jeans and trainers – Chun Li, your time is up. Ibuki's moves are every bit as aesthetically pleasing as her get-up, especially her fantastic slide-jump-headlock-spin-neck-snap attack. As with all great 2D beat 'em ups, it's details like these that make *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* so appealing. Though, some *SF* fans might complain about how similar some of the new characters are to former *Street Fighter* cast members. For example, Brit boxer Dudley is little more than an Anglicised, bow tie and handle bar moustache sporting Balrog, and Necro uses his telescopic limbs for long-range attacks just like *Street Fighter 2*'s violent yogi Dhalsim.

By the time you read this, the chances are both *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* will be available in your local Game or Electronics Boutique. Although we reckon in overall terms, the fight for the title of *Street Fighter* champion of the Dreamcast world is very close to call, we'd recommend *Double Impact* over *Alpha 3*, despite its paltry selection of play modes. This is the purest *Street Fighter* experience since *SF2 Turbo*, and if it wasn't for its lack of options we would have awarded it a 9 out of 10; it's the only true sequel to Capcom's classic brawler, and though its dynamic is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, this is without a doubt the game we've been waiting so long for ■

Stephen Lawson

- **For:** Tight control system, short loading times, great new characters, fluid animation
- **Against:** Lack of play modes and longevity, not as many features as *Street Fighter Alpha 3*

DC-UK 8

REVIEW

Rayman 2

Great looks, old-school gameplay. This is France's most interesting export since Serge Gainsbourg

You might think that old-school platform games were dead and buried from the moment the genre moved into proper 3D. When Mario first stepped out into that brave new world back in 1996, it seemed that the days of precision jumping and hair-tearing puzzles were behind us. But after the kind of protracted development period that might make Nintendo blush (a decadent three years), *Rayman 2* has emerged from the gaming hotbed of France looking more like one of the classic, simplistic platformers that graced the 16bit machines than any of its late '90s, go anywhere, do anything, 3D peers.

The game picks up where the original *Rayman* left off, complete with shockingly difficult instant-death sections and predictably unfunny Gallic humour. Rayman is something of a cult (ie, not very popular) cartoon hero in his home country, where freaky, limbless characters and amorphous creatures made entirely from blue snot are among the daily hazards of tea-time TV. His zany antics with the Teensies, Globox and Ly the Fairy might not be to everybody's taste, but if you're the kind of person who can complete *Sonic Adventure* without ever breaking into a sweat then *Rayman 2* might provide the challenge you're looking for.

The story concerns evil intergalactic pirates and (supposedly) cute creatures. The cute creatures would like to be able to live in peace on their home planet, but because the mean old pirates have taken all of the Lums (little balls of goodness that cute creatures need) from the planet's core and scattered them all over the place, the balance of space harmony is all messed up and nobody can sleep at night. So, the plot is typical platform game tosh too. Suffice to say that Lums are just like the traditional gold coins/rings, and *Rayman* must collect a certain number to gain entrance to the pirates' lair and restore order to the Great Scheme of Things.

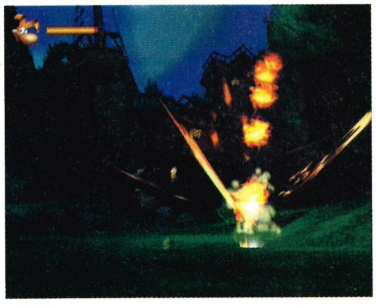
After a lengthy cut-scene (one of many), you have to help the limbless wonder escape from the prison deck of a flying galleon – a simple matter of shooting a hole in the side and jumping out. Another cut-scene follows,

FINEPOINTS

- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: In-house
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: March
- Players: One
- Extras: 60Hz

"If you can complete *Sonic Adventure* without breaking into a sweat then **Rayman 2 might provide the challenge** you're looking for"

"The **environments are** fabulously **detailed** with **startling clarity**"



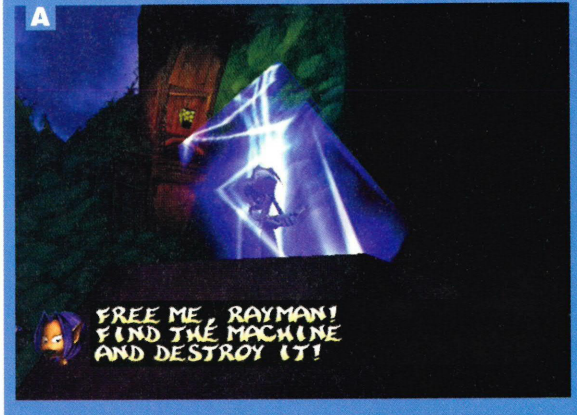
01 When you see piranhas leaping from the water, that means a dip will be fatal. In most other water, swimming is fine (except when the game decides to trick you)
02 Swinging from a vine-covered log. A great sense of scale and superb animation

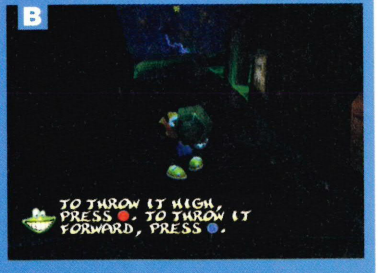
and then you're running around in the training area, learning *Rayman*'s refreshingly limited range of moves (jump, shoot and glide) and admiring the stunning scenery. Little stone pads in the floor provide tips on which move you need to use, and how to activate it to get past each obstacle. The controls are responsive and easy to get used to, you can access moves and throws with just two buttons, and use the left trigger to activate a lock-on targeting system, as seen in *Shadow Man*, and that's all there is to it. It all seems very friendly and open, although right from the start it's clear the game is forcing you along a linear path rather than allowing you the freedom to explore. Less chance of getting lost, maybe, or a hint of helpful CPU assistance to follow.

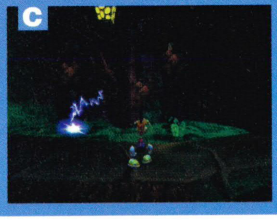
But it isn't a game that could, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as easy. Or, for that matter, fair. *Rayman 2* has a massive, festering, pub doorman-size attitude problem and consequently has it in for you from the moment you show the sheer audacity to beat the first level. After thumping a ▶

Pleasing puzzles

Rayman 2 is at its best when it forgets all about precision jumping and shows you why it took a mind-boggling three years to produce. Some of the set pieces and boss encounters are simply brilliant. Take this puzzle sequence, for example.

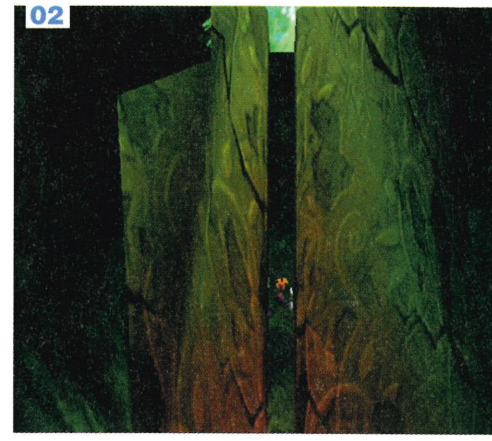






A Ly the Fairy is imprisoned in this glowing blue light. Better switch it off
B Carry the explosive barrels towards the suspicious machine at the end
C Toss them in the air when a rocket approaches – this takes fine timing
D And lob them at the machine when you've finally inched close enough

01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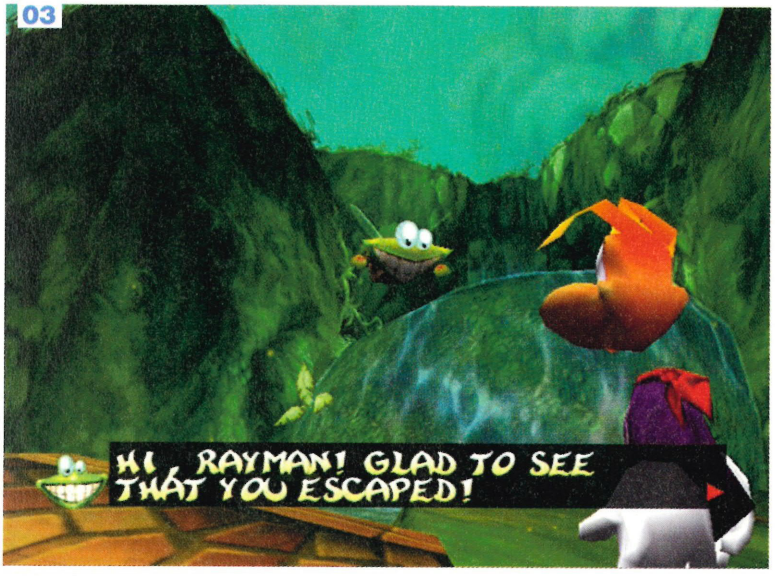

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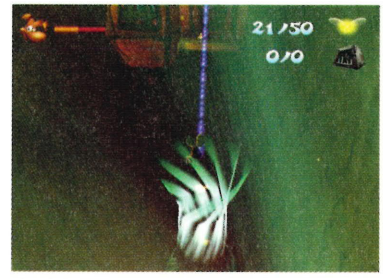


04

"There are too many moments when **we wished a section would go away** so we could get to something more interesting **around the corner**"

► few dumb pirates and floating on lazy hot air thermals in the game's gentle opening scenes, you'll find yourself being towed behind a sea monster on a high-speed water-ski slalom course, riding an explosive rocket at even higher speeds, and negotiating some of the most annoying disappearing platforms we've seen since *Prince of Persia*. Make the slightest mistake and you'll get placed back at the start of the section, minus a small slice of your health bar, until the inevitable moment when you 'die' for real and have to return all the way back to the start of the whole level. Then it's time to muster up the will to continue or just admit defeat and play something less nerve-wracking. Like Russian roulette.

There's nothing wrong with difficulty in a game just so long as it's honest. A little inventive design makes all the difference in a 3D adventure. There are too many moments in *Rayman 2* when we wished a section would go away so we could get to something more interesting around the corner. Barely visible traps which are guaranteed to catch you out once, and once only; sequences of vanishing platforms which require microsecond timing; precision long-jumps over gaping chasms – these are not the things that make videogames a joy to play. At least, not in the post-*Mario* world.

As for the way the game looks, the naffness of the character design is the only criticism we could possibly make. The environments are fabulously detailed, with pleasures such as waterfalls and underwater reefs picked out with startling clarity. The textures and models are from the PC version rather than the N64 one, and Dreamcast does real justice to them. Movement is a silky smooth 60fps throughout, making the whole thing look almost like a computer-generated movie. It's impressive indeed, a fine showcase for Sega's graphics hardware.

Whether *Rayman 2* is your kind of game depends on how much you value graphical prowess and how much of a hardcore platform fan you are at heart. There's a lot to admire once you become accustomed to the patches of unabashedly retro gameplay, particularly when the game's designers flex their creative muscles and throw in a puzzle that actually makes you smile rather than sigh in relief when you figure out how to do it. Rent it for an evening, and if you're still playing after two hours, you can probably count on getting a good few weeks' entertainment out of it ■

Martin Kitts

- **For:** Beautiful graphics, huge levels, a lasting challenge. Fans of tough, traditional platformers will love it
- **Against:** Too much tedious precision jumping, repetitive at times, some genuinely unlovable characters

DC-UK 7

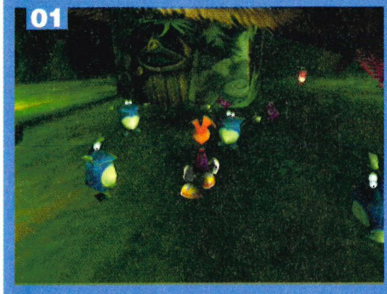
01 Rayman is so shockingly ugly, butterflies fall from the air, dead, at the sight of his face
02 If there are two parallel walls like this, Rayman can climb between them like a mountaineer
03 It's times like this when you wish you'd brought a camera. A nice portrait of Rayman and winged 'friend' framed against the waterfall would look lovely in the downstairs toilet
04 The little balls of energy don't cast realtime lights – just about the only thing we could fault the game on, visually

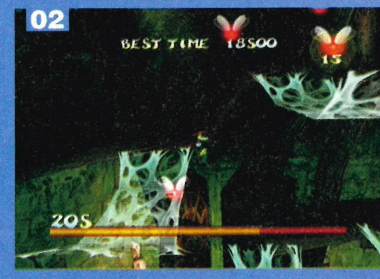
What do Lums make?

Like any decent platform game, *Rayman 2* has its fair share of hidden extras for expert players to uncover.

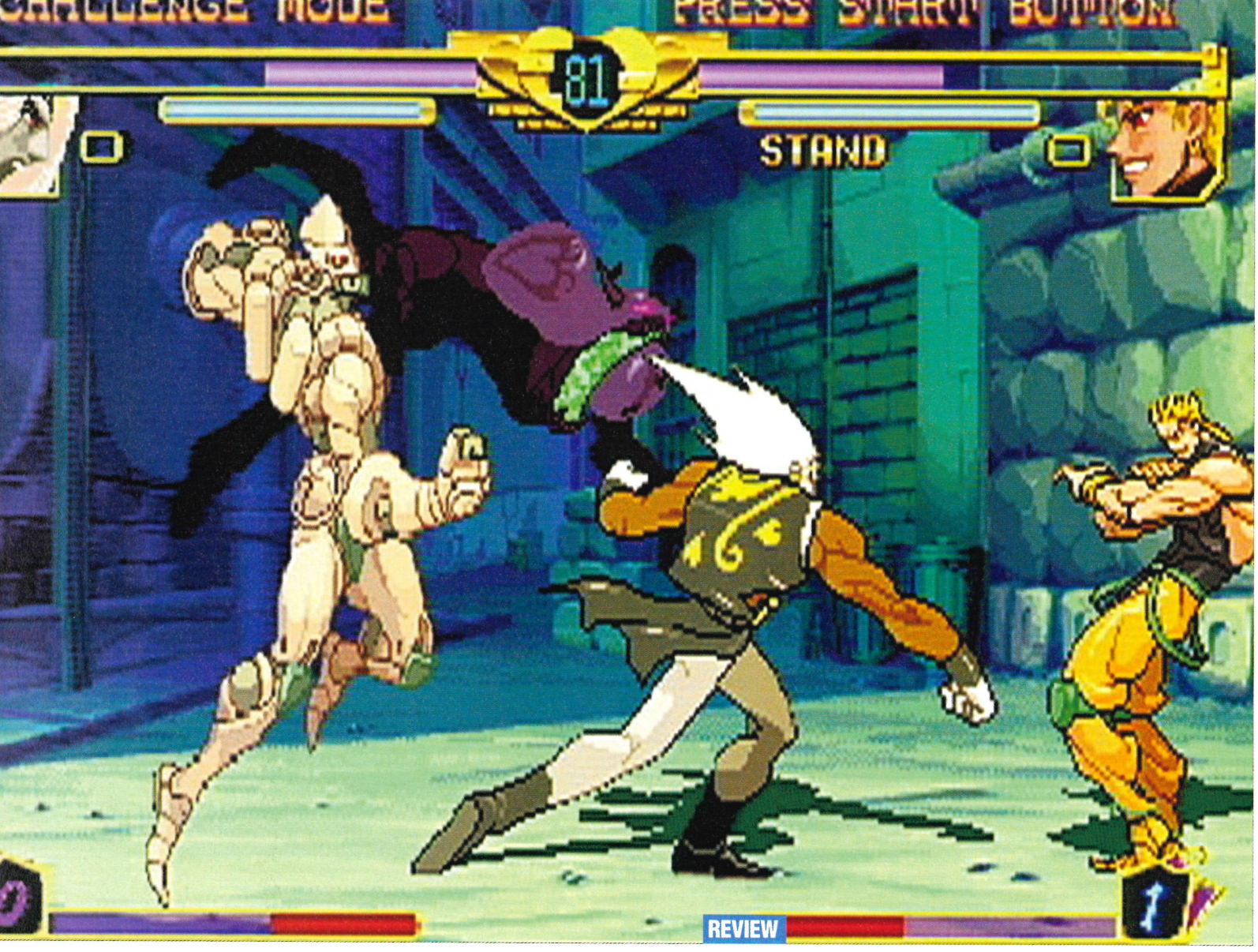
If you're good enough to find all of the Lums on certain levels, you'll unlock some pretty respectable bonus games. One of them is a race between a baby Globox (you) and a giant robot. You have to hammer the buttons as fast as you can to make the ugly blue critter's legs pump, and there's a prize for Rayman waiting at the end, assuming you've got the stamina to win. There are other sub-games (including one where you have to collect hearts from awkward locations before the timer runs out), but the best of all is found right at the end of the game.

Globox Disc (involving more of those disturbing baby mushroom things) is apparently the 'ancient game of the gods' in Rayman's world, but for the rest of us it's a nifty puzzle battle for up to four players. The aim of the game is to collect Lums from the centre of the maze and ferry them back to your home base to score points. You can drop temporary barriers to block the other players, and they'll lose a life if you manage to crush them up against the rotating walls. The winner is the first player to hit a predetermined score, so the action becomes truly frantic towards the end of a round, with three players desperately trying to stop the leader racking up the last few points. It should keep us busy until *Chu Chu Rocket* get a PAL release.





01 Ray receives a warm welcome in Globox Village
02 Bouncing on cobwebs to collect hearts. Easy
03 The pyramid game is a bit more difficult
04 Superb! A *Tempest*-style blaster for one player
05 The main course, Globox Disc. Get a few friends round and settle down for some top multiplayer action



JoJo's Bizarre Adventure

Expanding breasts and psychotic dwarfs are par for the course in this game. It's not just bizarre. It's mental

Capcom's mastery of the 2D beat 'em up doesn't begin and end with the *Street Fighter* series. Somewhere in a seedy arcade, probably tucked away in a corner next to the trusty *Bubble Bobble* machine, sits an imported oddity called *JoJo no Kimyouna Bouken*. We have to admit that we'd never come across it before, which made its unhyped arrival on Dreamcast all the more pleasant a surprise.

JoJo's Bizarre Adventure, as it's known outside Japan, is a game which treads a fine line between Oriental weirdness and complete insanity. Based on a manga comic book, it tells the story of a pair of adventurers, Joseph and Jotaro, and their carnival freakshow entourage. The 16 fighter line-up is one of the most unorthodox collections of characters we've ever seen. Even the relatively straight ones come up with eye-opening moves in which they summon up a used car to throw at their opponent, or drive a choice piece of road-building equipment across the screen. One shapely female character inflates her breasts until bits of shrapnel shoot out, which is, naturally, a traumatic thing to look at. Also huge pieces of static artwork flash up during special moves, and there's an awful lot of Japanese shouting and screaming.

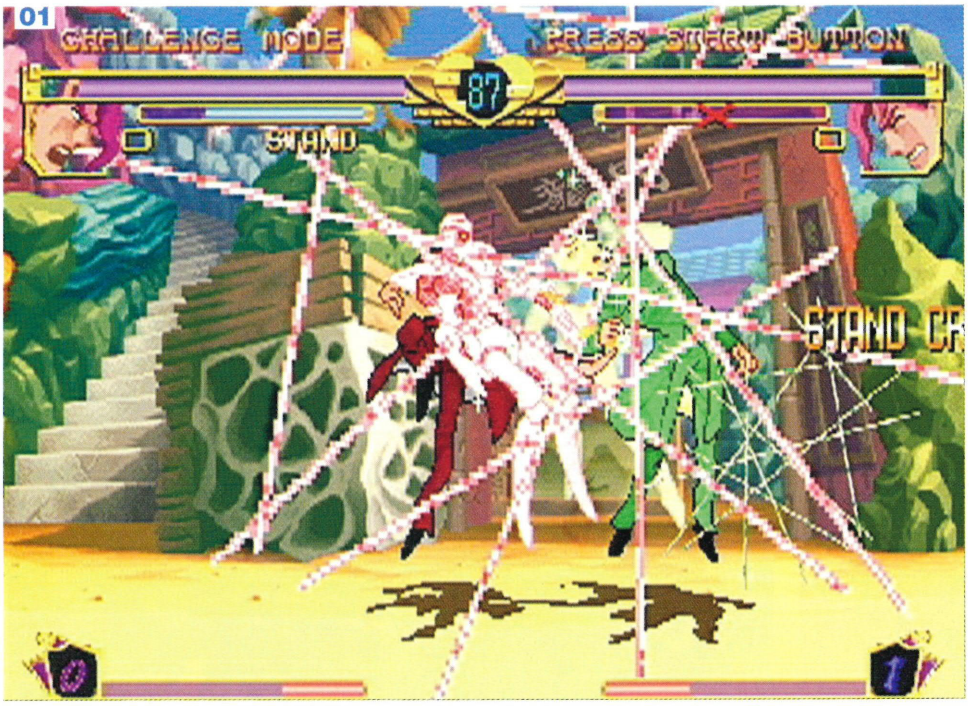
It's very strange indeed, but the combat system is simple and elegant. Three buttons call up light, medium or heavy attacks – there's no distinction between punches and kicks. The type of move you get depends on what your character and opponent are doing at the time, so impressive combos and aerial juggles can be created from just a few taps on the controller. It's possible to get some outrageous ten-hit combos by just leaping around and pressing the buttons in sequence, although these can't easily be replicated outside of the training mode. It isn't particularly challenging on the default difficulty level (we completed it on our first ▶

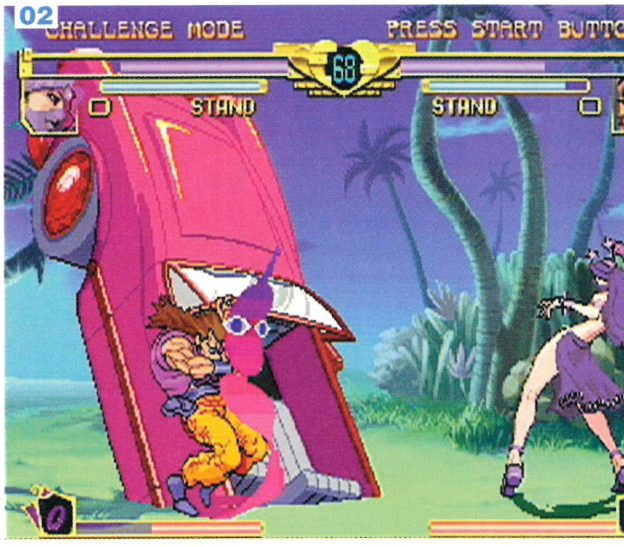
FINEPOINTS

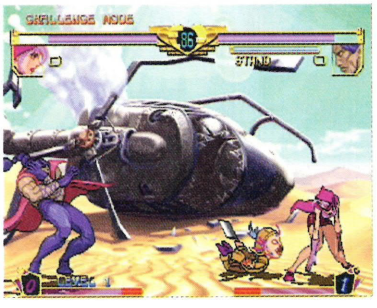
- Publisher: Virgin
- Developer: Capcom
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: March
- Players: One to two
- Extras: 60Hz, rumble pack

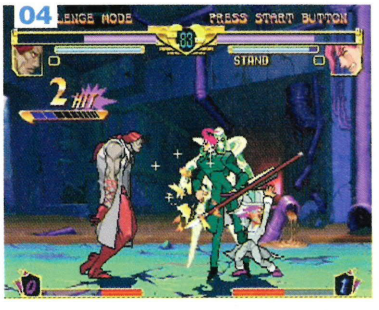
> "***JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* is** a game which treads **a fine line between** Oriental weirdness and **complete insanity**"

"It's **good to find** a fighting game that can still throw up **a few surprises**"





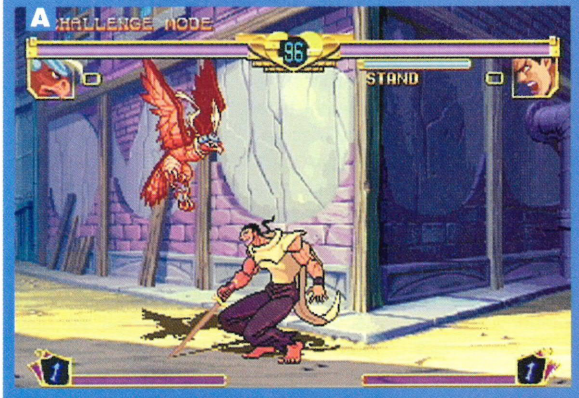




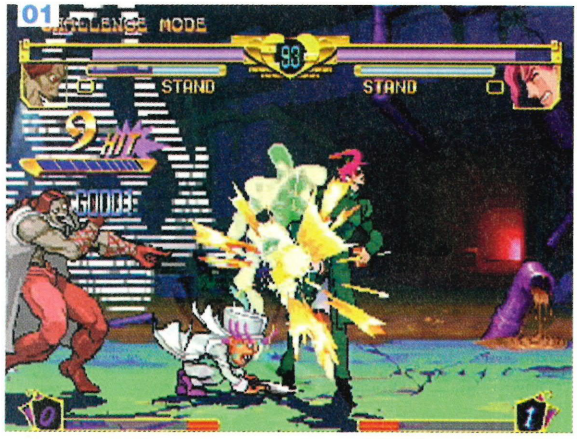
01 Static pictures don't do justice to the quality of the animation during many special attacks
02 The car rises out of the floor to deliver a beating. No idea why
03 Alessy's shadowy Stand holds onto an opponent and keeps him out of mischief
04 Psycho-dwarf goes to work! Get him away!

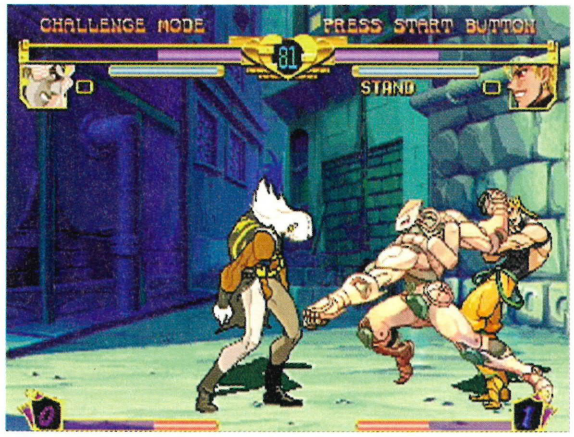
Stand in the place where you live

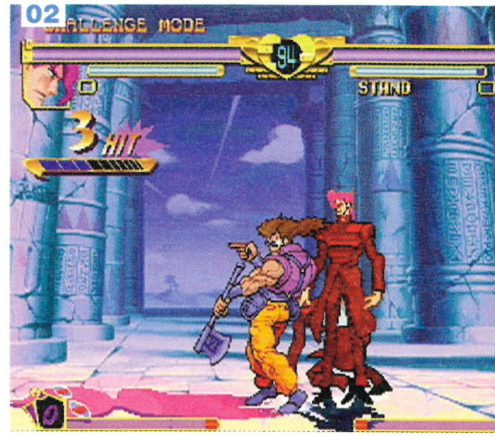
Stands are great. Everyone should have one. They come in all shapes and sizes, and they're not fussy about which species they attach themselves to. Look out for Petshop (an eagle) and Iggi's (a harmless-looking mutt) stands. Iggi's unsavoury speciality, while his Stand keeps the enemy occupied, is to attach himself to the face of his opponent and perform an unspeakable act of oral violation. Thankfully, a piece of fuzzy screen censorship spares us the worst of it.

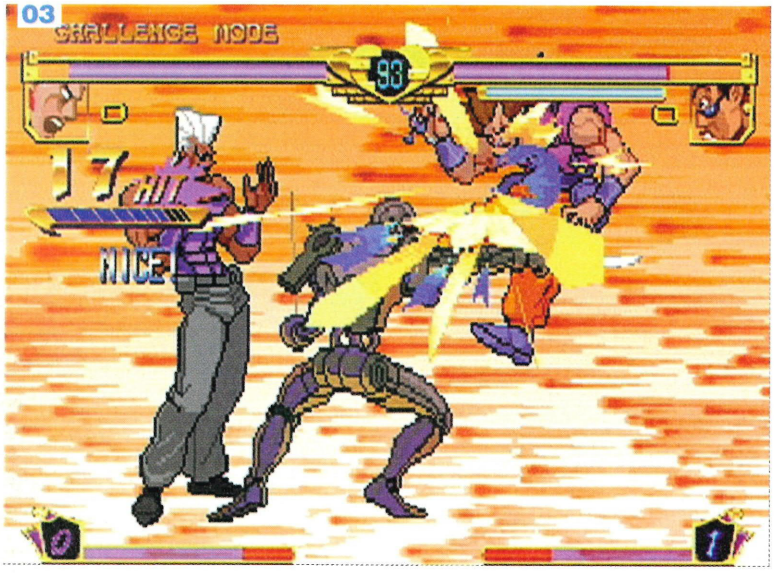


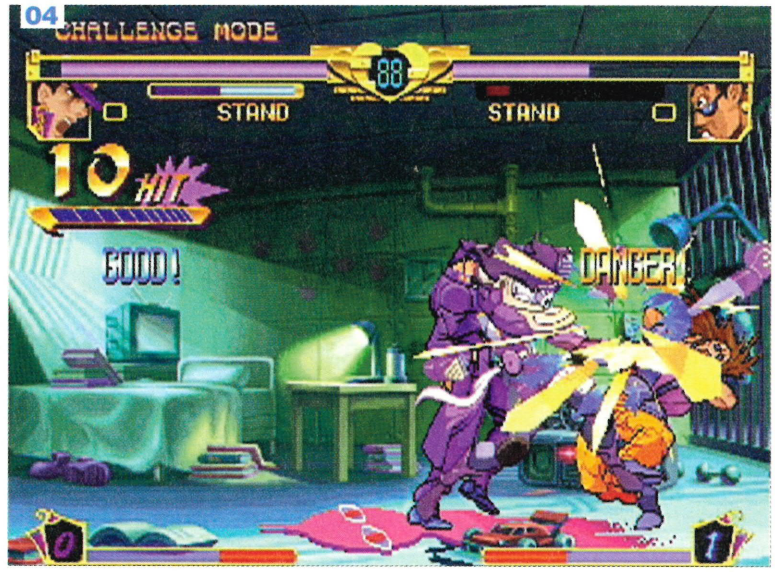
A Petshop is something of an acquired taste. Very lightweight and easy to kill
B Unless you hover out of reach, you're easy pickings for any bird-hating enemy
C Oh dear. Iggi has his way in one of the cut scenes. Let's hope one of those blokes brought some mouthwash











"If you're already experienced at *Street Fighter* then we'd recommend switching the difficulty level up a couple of notches"

▶ attempt by hammering away at the buttons) but it'll take a beat 'em up expert to conquer the hardest setting. If you're already experienced at the likes of Street Fighter then we'd recommend switching the difficulty level up a couple of notches, otherwise you'll experience the disappointment of blasting through the game in next to no time.

Where *JoJo* really differs from other fighting titles is in its use of 'Stands'. A Stand is a kind of elemental superhero which each character can invoke at any time. When the Stand is active, it does most of the dirty work for you, with a whole new set of power moves to use. The Stand takes damage just like its master character, and it also has a charge meter which is depleted with each hit. When the meter is empty, the Stand departs temporarily, leaving its owner vulnerable for the split second it takes to recharge – the ideal time to attack.

The Stands are even stranger than the main characters, although it's hard to make out the detail on some of the more ghostly ones. Midler, a woman who lives in a tree (as far as we can tell) has a particularly excellent Stand, which takes the form of a gore-encrusted hovering mouth. It's absolutely lethal, as is Iggi's hunchbacked thug and Alessy's purple shadow. The most dangerous of all the Stands is Dio's, as it can freeze time around an opponent – very annoying if you're on the receiving end. There seems to be some kind of hint about Dio's weakness in one of the story screens, but we haven't figured it out yet. The only Standless fighter, D'Bo, has a razor-toting ventriloquist's dummy as a travelling companion, so he can sit back and watch as the psychotic dwarf attacks in a whirlwind of glinting steel and woodchips. Perfect for fans of the Child's Play movies and 'little people' in general, a bit creepy for everyone else.

It's an engagingly unusual sort of fighting game. The story which unfolds in the cut-scenes between battles is suitably offbeat, and is completely different for each character, providing a good incentive to play through the whole thing with all 16 fighters. The disc also includes the arcade prequel, *JoJo's Venture*, a smaller version of the main game with fewer characters and a different plot. Even though it doesn't have the depth of gameplay that Capcom's more illustrious beat 'em ups offer, it's good to find a fighting game that can still throw up a few surprises. Bizarre simply isn't the word for it ■

Martin Kitts

01 The most evil ventriloquist's dummy since Orville
02 Strange how a combo meter can rise when both fighters are just standing around, posing
03 A reasonably good total to get out of a charged special attack, and a pretty effect too
04 The fight looks like it's all over, but – wait – what's that on the floor... A doormat? Or...

www.capcom.com
Page of hyperlinks to Capcom USA, as well as Capcom of Asia and Japan

■ **For:** Visually stylish, with plenty of attention to detail in the animation. Two complete arcade games on one disc
■ **Against:** The range of moves is limited compared to the serious fighting games on Dreamcast. Easy(ish) to beat

DC-UK 7

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Wetrix+

Take 2 Interactive takes the plunge and makes a splash with this quirky water-based puzzler

Puzzle games are notoriously difficult to get right. Arguably, there have been only two in the history of mainstream videogaming that succeed in offering perfectly formed gameplay and an addictive edge that borders on the illegal. Those games, of course, are *Tetris* and *Bust-a-Move.* And yet developers persist in meddling with the simple beauty of these games, adding absurd new shapes and destroying the finely-tuned balance that makes them what they are. See, for instance, last year's N64-based *Disney's Magical Tetris*, which added huge blocks half the size of the screen. Understandably, it's not only the purists who are disgusted by this behaviour.

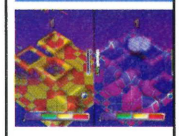
So, along comes *Wetrix+*, attempting to offer a refreshing new spin on an age-old genre. By rights, of course, it should be rubbish – an unwieldy mess, over-complicated and confusing. And, initially, it is. The aim of the game, via blocks that drop from the top of the arena, is to construct a watertight board; falling water must be contained, and any that escapes (ie, leaks off the board) fills up a drain meter. Once the meter is full, and too much water is lost, it's game over.

Granted, it doesn't sound too exciting. But *Wetrix+*, given an hour or so's concerted play, proves to be as addictive as the best puzzle games, and this is due to genuine strategic depth. As well as water and blocks – the basis of the game – there's a wealth of other objects to contend with. 'Downers' flatten previously built-up areas; meteors evaporate water; ice cubes freeze lakes; and bombs decimate the board, rending huge water-sucking holes in the environment. As with any puzzle game worth its salt, it's using each of these disparate elements to your own advantage that makes *Wetrix+* work. For instance, build up an area too much and you'll run the risk of an earthquake, which can potentially ruin everything – necessitating the need of a bomb or a downer. If you have too many leaks, a meteorite is a god-send, or, in a pinch, an ice cube can prove to be a temporary stop-gap measure as you try to repair broken walls.

And there's more. Success, of course, is measured in points, and

"Given an hour or so's concerted play, *Wetrix* proves itself to be as addictive as the greatest puzzle games"

Wetmatch



As with all the best puzzle titles, *Wetrix+* boasts a competitive twoplayer mode where combatants can attack each other with bombs, ice, etc, while ensuring their own environment remains leak-free. The option captures much of the tactical allure of link-up *Tetris* on the Game Boy, and adds plenty of longevity to the title. It's just a pity there's no online mode.

FINEPOINTS

- Publisher: Take 2 Interactive
- Developer: Zed Two
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: April
- Players: One to two
- Extras: Rumble Pack

"**Forgive it its few faults** and you'll find that *Wetrix* is a **wonderfully original** and **deftly-executed game**"

01 The pulsating, psychedelic backgrounds may impress your Grateful Dead-lovin' uncle, but they'll have many gamers turning to the Nurofen
02 The earthquake meter on the left is dangerously high. You'll be needing a Downer before long
03 Creating duck ponds leads to mega-points. Unfortunately, you can't throw bread at the feathery little critters

points are garnered by containing water, and certain point multipliers are required to get really high scores. These, generally, are gained in two ways; create a large enough body of water and you'll get a rainbow multiplier (signified by, yes, a rainbow), and create a deep reservoir and a duck will appear, multiplying points even more. The most desirable situation, therefore, involves several ducky pools and one large body of water, but even then, there's scope for extra scorage, as evaporating water and repairing bomb damage incurs extra bonuses. Bearing all of the above in mind while dealing with earthquakes, explosives and trying to build a watertight board makes *Wetrix+* a frantic yet pleasingly tactical affair – and, as you progress through levels, everything naturally speeds up.

Basically, *Wetrix+* has all the ingredients for a top-notch puzzle game, and proves itself to be exactly that – eventually. As we said, the game is, at first, confusing and none-too-friendly. Yet, once the aim of the game has become clear, and you realise exactly what everything does, and how to use all those different elements, *Wetrix+* bursts into full, watery bloom. There's almost infinite potential for high score improvement, and there's an exquisite 'one-more-go' sensibility at work here. It's tremendous fun.

But, of course, it's not perfect. Aside from a harsh learning curve, placing blocks and other objects isn't quite an exact science, and can, on occasion, be tryingly vague. The isometric perspective and ill-defined shadows conspire against accuracy, and the rotation of blocks is agonisingly slow (but perhaps that's the point). Forgive the game these faults, though, and you'll find something wonderfully original and deftly executed. And, for a puzzle game that isn't *Tetris*, that's high praise indeed. Go on, dive in. The water's lovely ■

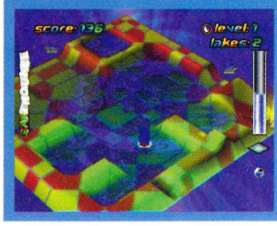
Jes Bickham

- **For:** Satisfyingly strategic gameplay, very addictive, an original take on a familiar genre
- **Against:** Steep learning curve, a little over-complicated, lacks block-placing accuracy

DC-UK 7

Bombs away

The bomb is the single most annoying thing in *Wetrix+*. Although it can be essential – especially if you're about to have an earthquake (although a meteor will do almost the same job and evaporate water at the same time) – it more often than not creates huge holes in the landscape through which water escapes by the gallon. The best tactic to avoid this is to create a 'bomb pile'; simply pile a load of blocks onto one corner of the screen to act as an emergency area for bomb disposal. Build a high enough pile, and the bomb will simply destroy the pile, lessening water-leakage considerably.



REVIEW

Wild Metal

The first DC game from the creators of *Lemmings* and *GTA* falls way short of its predecessors' classic status

Nothing sets alarm bells ringing faster than when you're summoned to collect a review copy of a game only to be presented with a finished boxed copy, rather than a pre-production gold disc. No eye contact is made, no rabid enforcement of deadlines. Just the game and a weak smile. Why? Because usually that's a cast-iron guarantee that the game is ropier than a tug-of-war contest, and the publisher involved is trying to sneak a game into the shops without going through the usual channels, ie, the games mags. Does that woeful tale ring true with *Wild Metal*?

Initially the answer would seem to be yes, as the game is simplicity itself. Simple gameplay, simple graphics and simple missions. No lengthy FMV intro, techno soundtrack or stodgy storyline to bog us down, this is old skool gaming of the most ordinary kind.

Each of the 21 singleplayer levels (there's also a load of multiplayer ones, too) centres around you collecting and storing eight coloured Power Cores that are scattered around huge, largely-barren stages. A simple task for the first few levels but, as the difficulty level raises a notch or two, each of the Cores is only likely to be found in an almost inaccessible and heavily-guarded location. Thankfully, a scanner is displayed onscreen, showing you the positions of enemy craft and Cores.

On the surface it sounds dull, but delve a bit deeper, and it's actually quite enjoyable to play... for a while. The graphics are functional, but the control and movement of your vehicle is absolutely spot-on. Before you know it, you're actually beginning to enjoy trundling about in search of the enemy and the elusive Power Cores.

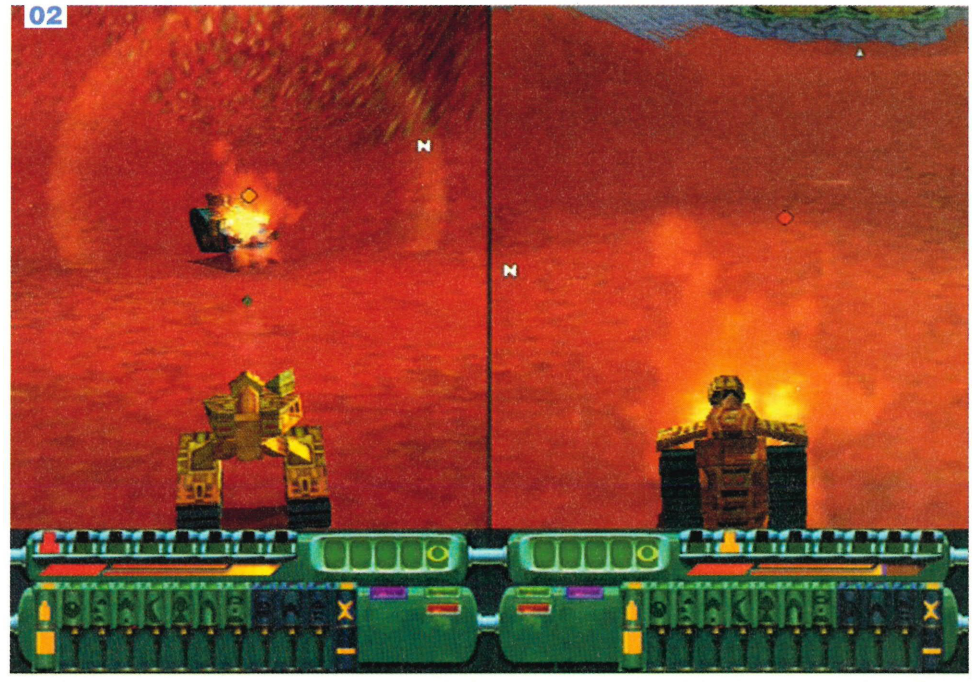
Graphically, you might be forgiven for assuming that this is a direct port from the N64 as, apart from the now-standard hi-res mode, there's very little here to tell you that you're playing a 128bit game. Oh, everything runs as smooth as a Guinness milkshake, but there's tons of misting, sparse locations and you could hardly accuse the vehicles of being fast.

Claims have been made that the five vehicles you can choose from are based on the animals they were named

> "On the surface it sounds dull, but delve a bit deeper **and it's actually quite enjoyable to play... for a while**"

FINEPOINTS

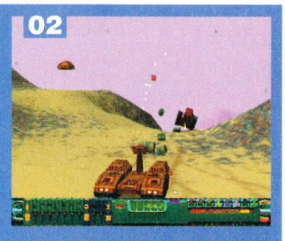
- Publisher: Take 2 Interactive
- Developer: DMA
- Price: £39.99
- Release date: Out now
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None



"The split-screen mode is like sex in the back of a car; **enjoyable but cramped**"

Fun with firepower

Wild Metal offers limited gameplay variety – the depth comes with trying to master the large range of weapons. Here are a few of our favourite things. Of mass destruction.



01 The standard bomb. Takes a fair few shots to kill anything bigger than a fly, but you do have unlimited ammo **02** The Mine. Great for when you're on the retreat **03** The Bouncer. Perfect for enemies at a distance. Fire one off and it bounces towards them **04** The Sniffer. You won't find too many of these lying about, but they're more commonly known as the homing missile

after. So, with that in mind, you'd expect the Rhino to be larger than the Cheetah, but don't start hoping for a large difference in speed, as they all tend to fall into the slow category. The Bulldog (stumpy and repulsive to the eye), Manta (a sleek, effective killer) and Roadrunner (Meep! Meep!) make up the other three and, after significant play-testing, differences and alternative strategies do begin to come through.

The split-screen mode is like sex in the back of a car; enjoyable but you can't help wishing that everything wasn't quite so cramped. The range of weapons is pleasing but predictable (missiles, bullets, mines) and, without a doubt, the best part of the singleplayer game is the intelligence of your computer-controlled opponents. Attack them with full force from a hiding place and they'll back off; run in with all guns blazing and, depending on the odds, they'll either fight or leg it. It's rare to find a game where the computer bots are genuinely intelligent, but this title is certainly one of them.

Wild Metal is a throwback to the days when games *had* to rely on solid gameplay because there was nothing else to sell them on. It's routine arcade action with a plain, uncomplicated structure, superb AI and little in the way of originality. But in these days of 128bit processors and mammoth graphics chips, the thrill-hungry masses crave a bit more flesh on their gaming carcasses. Sadly, *Wild Metal* is a bit lean in too many areas.

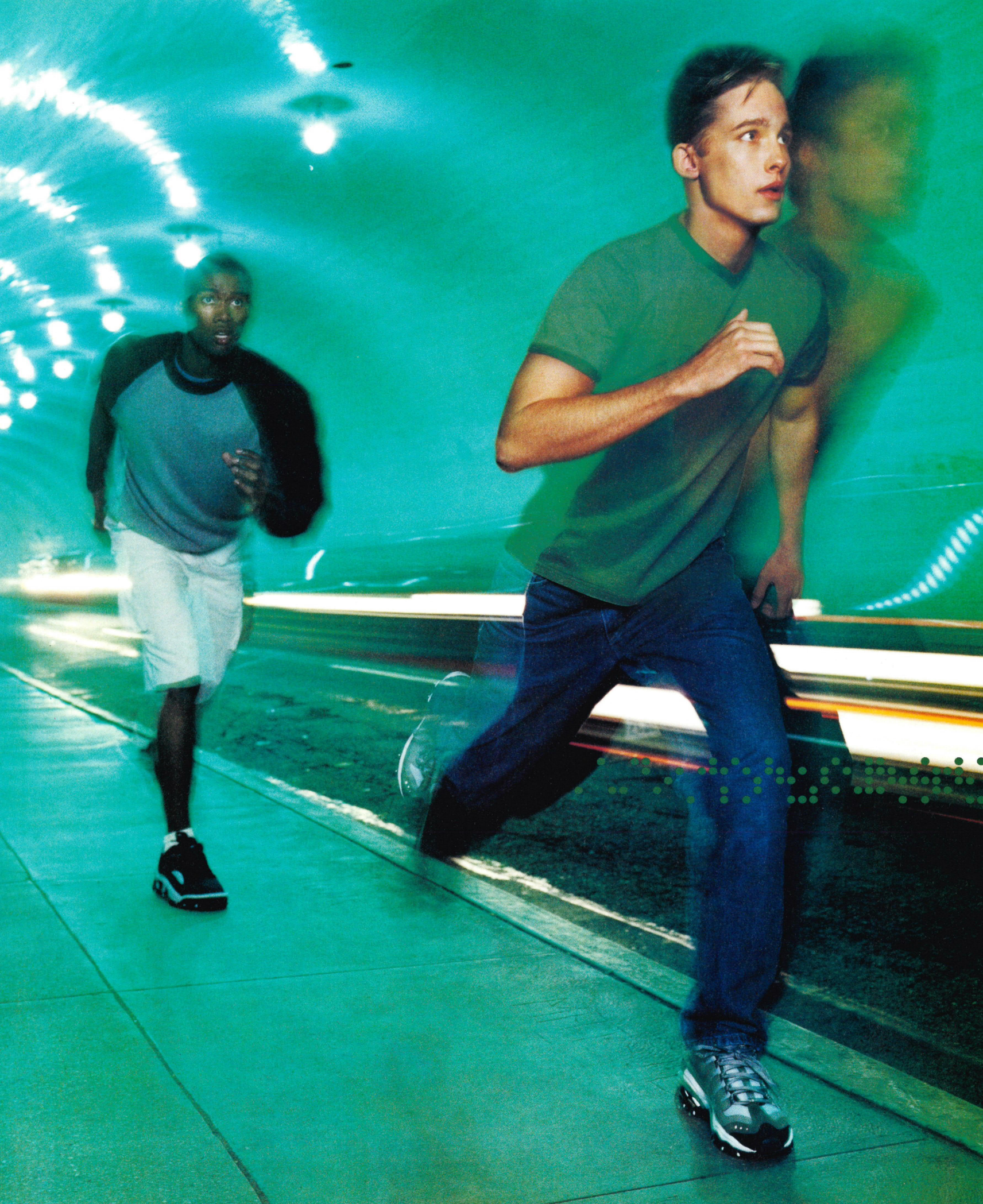
If you're programming for a 128bit machine with more bells and whistles than Soft Mick, it's almost criminal not to take advantage of them. Okay, so it's fun for a wet weekend and the multiplayer arenas are jolly, but it won't keep you going for long. And if it's vehicles, undulating terrain and multiple weapons you're after, you'll be just as well off with *Incoming* ■

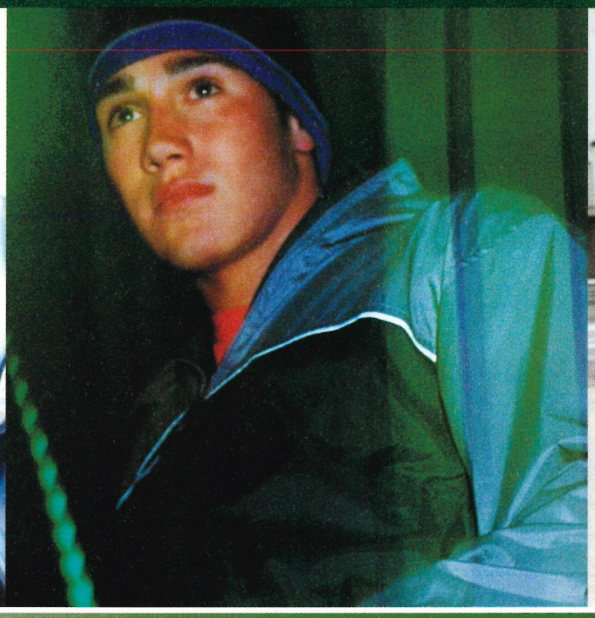
Dean Mortlock

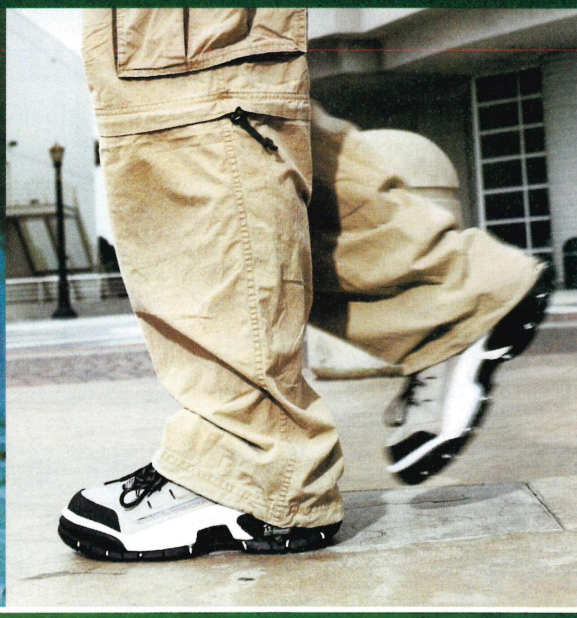
- **For:** Simple, old-fashioned gameplay. Great computer AI. 21 missions to plough through. Good twoplayer mode
- **Against:** Quite samey. Very basic in most departments. You'll soon tire of the repetitive sand-strewn backgrounds

DC-UK 5

01 Long-range attacks are perfect for those stubborn, hard-to-reach missile towers
02 The jolly twoplayer mode: definitely one of *Wild Metal*'s highlights
03 Small tip: If you're facing something that's likely to kill you, take the best 'gun' in your 'armoury' and fire things called 'bullets' at them. If they fire back at you, try to avoid them by moving in a 'wiggly' kind of way
04 The Manta is the vehicle of choice for the more discerning gamer. It's fast enough to avoid almost anything else in the game and tough enough to absorb a few hard knocks







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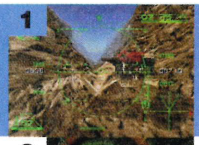
Charts

The games that rocked your Dreamcasts this month

Dreamcast top ten

ChartTrack

Courtesy of ChartTrack, it's the official UK sales chart. Konami's top gun for hire screams to the top, with *Re-Volt* speeding along its jet stream



1 Deadly Skies

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** In-house

Deadly Skies hits pole position in its first outing. We weren't fantastically impressed with Dreamcast's first air-bound shooter when we reviewed it in issue 07, but that hasn't dissuaded UK gamers from buying it by the truckload ■

2 Re-Volt

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Probe

Probe's novelty racer creeps up behind *Skies* in its first month on release. Far from being another *Mario Kart* clone, *Re-Volt* is technically impressive and much more realistic than any similar racer. Plus the petrol cars go like the clappers ■

3 Virtua Striker 2

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** In-house

It's fallen from top spot this month, but *Virtua Striker 2* seems to be as popular as ever, despite the fact that it plays more like pinball than football. Suppose the drop-dead gorgeous graphics can't be doing it any harm, either ■

4 Sonic Adventure

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Team Sonic

Five months in from launch and *Sonic* is still in the top five, moving up one space from last week, despite the fact that *Skies* has managed to push most of the other titles down. Nothing can get rid of this pesky little hedgehog ■

5 Soul Calibur

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Namco

Another hardy perennial, *Soul Calibur* has lost none of its appeal, it would seem. This is a game we certainly keep coming back to, and who can blame us? Fantastic gameplay and gorgeous visuals combine in a title we just can't ignore ■

6 Shadow Man

Publisher: Acclaim **Developer:** Acclaim Teesside

This distinctly dark offering has slipped a few places from number three, but it's still proving extremely popular. Why? Because Acclaim has crafted a 3D adventure with atmosphere by the bucketload and a psycho-killer plot to die for ■

7 Jimmy White's 2

Publisher: Virgin **Developer:** Awesome

Cueball, while not being among the more exciting titles, proves to be almost as addictive as the real thing, although the crap jukebox and dreadful loading times can detract from the playability. Good for after the pub, though ■

8 House of the Dead 2

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** In-house

As far as gun-based games go, it doesn't get much better than this. Well, except for that Russian roulette scene in The Deer Hunter. It's crept up the charts again since last month, and well it might do – *The House Of The Dead 2* deserves to be a classic ■

9 Sega Rally 2

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** In-house

Sega Rally 2 has proved popular among all you Sega-heads for its accessibility and good looks. It doesn't quite have the depth of a *Gran Turismo*, but *SR2* is still hanging on in there despite the skating cars and dodgy pop-up ■

10 UEFA Striker

Publisher: Infogrames **Developer:** Rage

UEFA's still selling rather well, and rightly so, considering it's the best football game on Dreamcast. Sure, it's far from perfect, but we prefer it to the ping pong-like *Virtua Striker 2 ver.2000.1*. The inclusion of club sides also makes a big difference ■

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DC-UK's list of love

The three games most responsible for making us grin this month

Virtua Striker 2 ver.2000.1

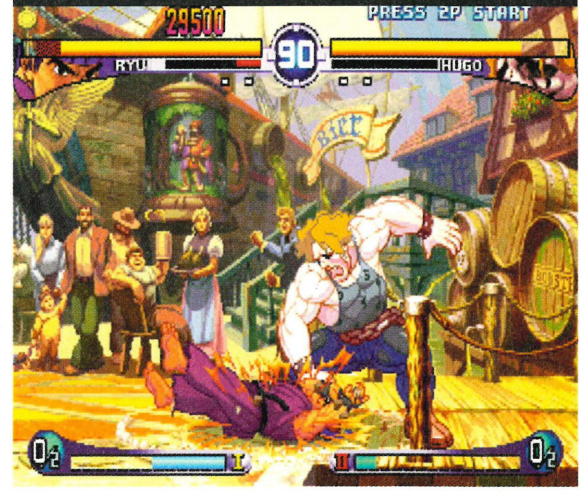
No matter how flawed this is, we can't seem to put it down. Karl and Lee have been especially reluctant to any lunch-time alternatives. Oh well, our neighbours will have to put up with our cries of agony and elation a little longer.

NHL 2K

Knowing the game was due to arrive the next day, Stephen invited Lee round to his flat for a game of *NHL '93* on his SNES. After a 10-0 defeat, Lee swore he'd never play another hockey game, then he saw *NHL 2K* and changed his mind. Can't wait for the PAL release.

Street Fighter 3: Double Impact

We've been dusting off our Dragon Punches, trying to discern who's the *SF* daddy. Preliminary bouts and the fact he refuses to leave the games room suggest that Stephen is the father – expect a shotgun wedding soon ■



Reader reviews

We like you so much, we've given you an entire page to yourselves...

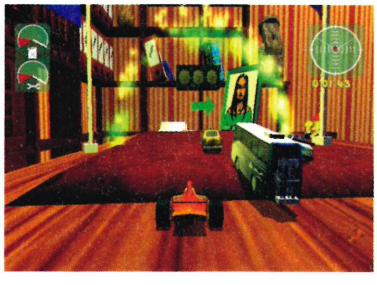
Well aren't you an opinionated bunch? And just to prove it, here are a selection of the reviews we've received from you this month. If you fancy getting your name in print, we advise you to get writing too. And look what you can win!

WORMS ARMAGEDDON & TOY COMMANDER

REVIEWER: WILL MOSSOP

> After reading your review of *Worms Armageddon*, I decided I would leave the house on Boxing Day to go to my local EB and get myself a copy. I took it home and at first it seemed awful. I knew the graphics were going to be 2D, but it had never bothered me before.

When I started playing it, I could have mistaken it for a Genesis game. The controls were terrible and the game



was basically ugly. It's hard to describe, but I simply don't get enjoyment from 2D games on my 'revolutionary console'. I stuck with it for a while, but I eventually lost my patience. However, instead of smashing it I returned to EB the next day and exchanged the game for *Toy Commander* which I fell in love with instantly. I have to say that *Toy Commander* is better than *Worms Armageddon* in every way possible. I even think the multiplayer game, which for some reason everyone puts down, is brilliant and still play it all the time – even after two months and even though I have finished the game. And all the time I discover new passages and tactics for all my favourite levels.

My scores are *Worms*: 6 out of 10 and *Toy Commander*: 9 out of 10. Having *Worms* simply isn't fun (sorry about the pun). Whereas *Toy Commander* is possibly the most fun and original pre-*Crazy Taxi* title.

PEN PEN TRIICELON

REVIEWER: GAVIN STUART

> You're a blue hippo. Ahead of you is a penguin wearing a top hat. Both of you are sliding along on your bellies trying desperately to out-pace the menagerie of freaks who are flapping, swimming or waddling in your wake. Welcome to the weird world of *Pen Pen Trilcelon*.

A racing game in the broadest sense of the word, *PPT* pits a motley collection of cute-but-grotesque creatures against each other in three-part waddling, swimming, and sliding contests (hence *Trilcelon*). Races consist of steering your Pen Pen through a series of obstacles while the little bleeder does his damnedest to go the wrong way or walk face-first into a wall.

The swimming and belly sliding sections follow the same kind of formula, but also involve you rhythmically pumping the A button to build up your speed. If you think this sounds infuriating, you're right. Even committed Jap-ophiles will find it hard to like this game. While the courses have been designed to make the most of the extremely basic concept, the fact

remains that there is little challenge, or indeed fun, on offer here. Even the multiplayer mode sucks. We'd all like to see a *Mario Kart*-style fun racer on Dreamcast, but believe me, this isn't it.

EVERYTHING!

REVIEWER: NORMAN JOBLING

>Right then, I think it's time I gave you my opinions on all the Dreamcast games I have bought and played:

House of the Dead 2

Okay, your review was about right on this one: 8/10 is a fair score.

Hydro Thunder

Outstanding graphics and an excellent course design, which is marred only by a lack of home enhancements – but definitely worth 8/10. Buy it if you have money to spare.

Power Stone

Vastly overrated. The oneplayer game is pointless and twoplayer fights usually degrade into hit-and-run affairs where both players avoid being struck to prevent power moves. Nice to look at but little else. 5/10

Sega Rally 2

Oh dear! Poor in the arcades (you could go full throttle all the way round and end up 14th); further crippled in the home by a poor conversion. Easier but no more satisfying (cue howls of derision). 2/10

Shadow Man

A slow burner? Too right! And unfortunately a slow, and obvious, loader. Poor controls and average gameplay. 5/10

Sonic Adventure

What a disappointment! This had terrible controls, poor camera, some dreary levels and average graphics – not a patch on *Mario 64*. 5/10

Soul Calibur

Great. A little easy (as with all Namco games), but I like to win. Adventure mode a nice touch too. But no game deserves a 10/10, so a 9 then.

Speed Devils

Completely average – 5/10. Too slooooooowwwwww.

TrickStyle

Great game, but a few faults. Free Run, Time Attack, Ghost Mode, etc – where are you? And the final track is far too hard. 8/10

Virtua Striker 2 ver etc, etc...

Very poor, Sega. What's going on? This is uncontrollable rubbish. Sure, it looks nice, but so what if it's unplayable? 2/10

Worldwide Soccer 2000

Agree entirely; too slow but fun. 7/10

Worms Armageddon

Poor conversion with borders and slowdown. Oneplayer game cheats and multiplayer are okay, but nothing special. Better suited to the PC market. 5/10

WHAT YOU WIN!

Every single one of our reviewers receives a **DC-UK** T-shirt. So if you want to be seen in this season's must-have accessory, scribble down your reviews to the usual address, or contact us by the miracle of email at **dcuk@futurenet.co.uk**.

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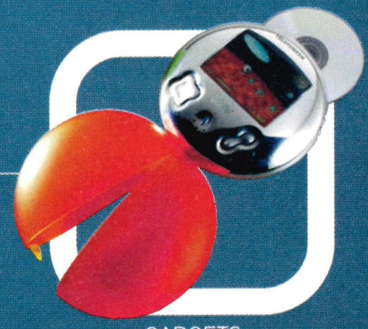

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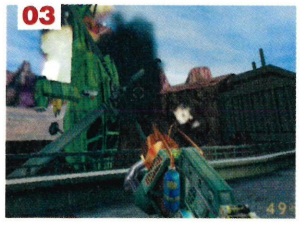


01 Lionhead's *Black and White* was originally developed for PC but the team always had consoles in mind (see interview on page 038)
02 *Alone in the Dark 4* makes *Resident Evil* look like *Super Mario in Magic Flowerland*
03 It's one of the finest PC games ever, but Valve reckons the Dreamcast version is even better

MILIA: HALF LIFE, AITD4, BLACK & WHITE ALL CONFIRMED FOR DC!

French show goes Dreamcast crazy, with some top titles and peripherals announced for the coming year

France's Milia exhibition (the videogame version of the Cannes film festival) is usually dominated by dull-as-hell developments in the PC scene. But not this year. Going into a kind of publicity frenzy not seen since the Mega CD pirate TV campaign, Sega pretty much took over the show, bringing in SoJ president, Shoichiro Irimajiri, to give the opening speech (see page 039) and filling a massive Sega Europe booth with loads of playable demos.

And at ****ing last, it seemed the industry was keen to play along. Several huge Dreamcast games were officially announced at the event including conversions of *Black and White*, *Half-Life* and *Alone in the Dark 4*. And they're not any old 'port the beggar across willy-nilly' conversions either. Valve software claims that DC *Half-Life* will be the definitive version of the game, boasting improved visuals and a whole new singleplayer mission in ▶

NEWS

038 MILIA
The lowdown on the show. Who turned up, what did they bring and what did Peter Molyneux think?

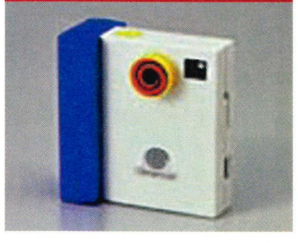
039 BOND FOR DC
We sniff out the truth behind the rumours about a new James Bond game for Dreamcast

040 VANISHING POINT
Not the hip '70s film or the Primal Scream album, but a promising new driving game from Acclaim

042 EVOLVA
DNA, giant spiders, fighting – *Evolva* has them all. Science and fun rarely collide. Boom! They just have

044 HOT PERIPHERALS
The latest thirdparty VMs, keyboard and steering wheel reviewed

048 INTERNATIONAL NEWS
I've been around the world, and I, I, I can't find my baby. But I can find mountains of Dreamcast news!



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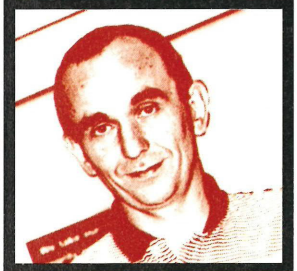
INTERVIEW



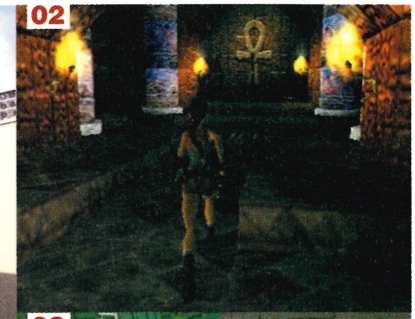
PETER MOLYNEUX LIONHEAD STUDIOS

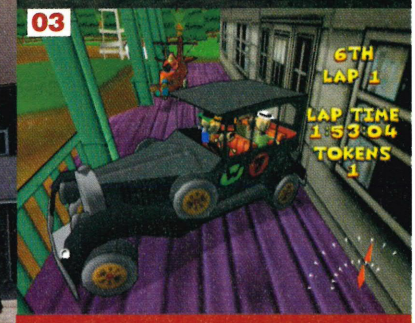
> What changes are you making to the Dreamcast version of B&W?
The major challenge for the DC version is the amount of memory available – usually the biggest headache is the interface, but as the control mechanism of *Black and White* was inspired by the joypad this does not present any problems at all. The memory restraints will mean that some of the graphical detail of the PC version will be lost, but we hope to compensate for this with loads of spot effects – so the answer is very few.

What prompted a console version of B&W? You don't seem to have been a fan of them in the past...
Well, the PC version was inspired by the consoles as I have always enjoyed playing console games. The truth of the matter is that Bullfrog got channelled into producing PC games and one of the things I wanted to change at Lionhead was for us to be able to make amazing console games. In fact *Black and White* will probably be the last PC lead format game from Lionhead.

Will the 33kbps modem drastically effect *B&W* as an online mulitplayer game?
It will limit the number of players in multiplayer games, but the amount of information that needs to be passed across is so small that the modem won't have any effect on the playability of *Black and White*.

How do you think console owners will react to this 'PC-style' game?
Black and White was inspired by console games, so in some respects it is a console game on the PC not the other way round – yes, it is deep, but it has a console-style interface and so many innovations that I hope we will get a very good response from console owners ■





01 Milia is traditionally a show where publishers get together with developers and talk 'business'. Usually the event is dominated by PC matters, but Sega barged in there and grabbed a massive slice of the exhbition floor space. Go get 'em!
02 The DC version of *Last Revelation* was present at the event
03 As was the promising cartoon conversion *Wacky Races*. Here the Ant Hill Mob get into another of their hilarious scrapes

MILIA CONTINUED...

▶ which you will play as a security guard (the original game follows a research scientist named Gordon Freeman as he copes with an alien invasion at a top-secret science base).

Meanwhile,

Infogrames was showing off both playable code of *Wacky Races* and new screenshots of forthcoming terror adventure *Alone in the Dark 4*. *AITD* gave birth to the whole survival horror genre back in the early '90s on PC, and the original hero, psychic investigator Edward Carnby, is going to return for this visually spectacular third sequel.

Finally, *Black and White*, the revolutionary god game from Lionhead Studios will definitely be coming to DC, too. Peter Molyneux (MD of Lionhead and designer of such Bullfrog classics as *Populous* and *Magic Carpet*) has even gone so far as to say it was always conceived with consoles in mind (see Interview left). Yes, they are all PC conversions, but the fact is publishers are taking the console seriously en masse, which is something that never happened with the Saturn. Such support for the machine, at a usually PC-oriented show, can only strengthen the position of the platform in these difficult times.

This being a

show obsessed with Internet technology, Sega was also keen to talk up the online aspect of Dreamcast. Irimajiri-san's boisterous keynote speech set out many of the company's plans for the future, while on the show floor Sega execs talked of online games employing the Dreamcast camera (the Dreameye) and DC microphone, so that players can see and speak to each other over the Net. They're just plans at the moment, but just imagine. Just imagine.

Overall then, Milia was a positive experience for those involved with Dreamcast. With all the big players present bigging up the machine, and plenty of key game licences onboard, all that's required now is that flipping online gaming infrastructure. We've heard the promises, now we need the facts. *Chu Chu Rocket*, *Quake III* and *Half-Life* are all lining up for release, screaming "Multiplayer Internet gaming mode!" at the top of their lungs. Come on, Sega, let's get this party started ■

■ On the show floor Sega execs talked of online games **employing the Dreamcast camera and DC microphone** ■

EARCON

The videogame industry is rife with rumour and gossip, and Every month **DC-UK** rides the titbit network, gathering news like a runaway freight train

> DREAMCAFÉ OPEN
A new Internet site has opened dedicated to Dreamcast. It's called Dreamcafé (**www.dreamcafe.co.uk**) and has game reviews, an online store with discounts and loyalty points, and a tips section. It also features the first Flash chatroom on the Web, which should be worth a look. The opening screen looks really cool, so make sure you take a peek before it goes live ■

> COLOURED VMs
Not only do fortunate Japanese gamers now have the option of purchasing one of those funky Millennium controllers, they can now get VMs to match. The memory units will come in a choice of colours, including see-through blue, green, black and pink, and will set Dreamcasters back ¥3,000 (about £18). Sadly, there's no word as to when and if the controllers or the VMs will be coming to Europe ■

"THE INTERNET IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH!"

Sega Japan President Shoichiro Irimajiri promises new online service for Dreamcast users

Shoichiro Irimajiri is not a man who pulls his verbal punches. So when, in his keynote speech at the Milia show, he outlined Sega's aggressive plans for high-speed networking, the assembled industry bigwigs drew up their chairs and paid very close attention.

"The Internet is not fast enough for the interactive content designed to take advantage of it," said Irimajiri, "The Internet is not good enough." Sega's partnerships with Japan's biggest cable service provider Titus and Jupiter is the first step towards changing all that. With fibre-optic networks reaching a potential seven million Japanese homes, Sega hopes to offer digital games at gigabyte speeds, as opposed to the 33 kilobytes we're used to.

With one in four DC owners already using their machines to connect to the Internet, there will be a massive market for the kind of services that broadband connections can offer, which is why Sega is so keen to be one of the first companies to stake a claim in the new world networks. Iramajiri speaks of "seizing the 21st century with a vengeance", but for the rest of us it means a commitment to faster, better online games. When the standard Dreamcast games network finally gets off the ground in Europe, we'll see exactly why we need digital connections for fast action games ■

> NO PRICE MOVE

The CEO of Sega Europe JF Cecillon has responded to allegations that the company is about to start dropping the price of Dreamcast dramatically as a spoiler reaction to the release of PlayStation2, by saying that there will be no knee-jerk reaction to demands made by retailers. He promised that any eventual drop in price would be as part of an overall long-term business strategy rather than as a quick fix to boost sales ■

> SEGA AND SWATCH TEAM UP

Sega and Swatch have announced that they are jointly launching an Internet-compatible watch, which will allow you to download information from the Net. It's an ecommerce strategy, as this information can be uploaded from the watch to your Dreamcast, where users will then be able to make transactions via the Dreamcast network. The watch is based on Swatch's Access model, which is already being sold as ski passes to It girls and minor royals on hi-tech slopes and as city passes to tourists for entry to museums and art galleries. It'll be available in Japan sometime between April and May for ¥15,000-20,000 (£85-£113, and you can get a glimpse of what it'll look like by surfing along to our Website at **www.dc-uk.co.uk** ■

> DREAMCAST TV

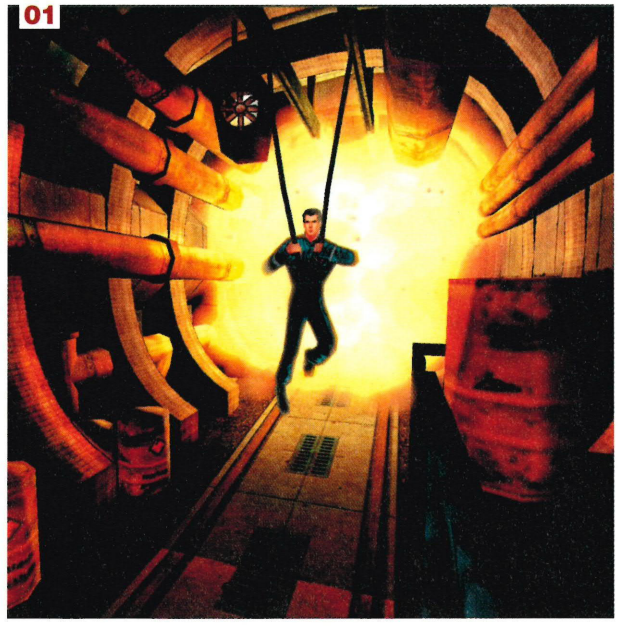
Fuji of Japan is releasing an all-in-one Dreamcast TV, under the catchy title Dever 2000 Series CX-1. The unit comes complete with four controller ports and a modem, and is shaped (to the joy of Ulala lovers) just like a Morolien – the enemy dancing creature in *Space Channel 5*. This limited edition TV is priced at ¥88,888 (a reasonable 500 nicker) and is available in Japan from March 21 ■

> TOKYO XTREME RACER 2 CONFIRMED FOR US RELEASE?

We look at hundreds of Dreamcast-related Websites each week, most of which contain exactly the same information as each other, but a casual glance at **www.gamestop.com** made us look twice at an entry on the Forthcoming Title's list. It lists Crave's *Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2* as being available for Yanks on August 15, despite the fact that neither Crave nor Genki have issued a press release on this title. If this release is confirmed, it could prove to be just the right antidote to the, frankly, dull *Tokyo Highway Challenge* which was released last October to pretty much all-round critical disinterest. Here's hoping... ■

EA TO JOIN FRAY?

New James Bond game could be the publisher's first Dreamcast title



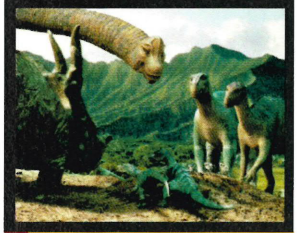
Though it is as yet unconfirmed, it's just too exciting to ignore – EA's forthcoming game based on the recent Bond film The World Is Not Enough could be heading Dreamcast-wards by the end of the year.

The software giant has licensed id's acclaimed *Quake III* engine for the game, and Derby-based Eurocom is expected to take care of the coding chores. It will be a firstperson shooter, like the fantastic *GoldenEye* on the N64, rather than the hideous mess that was *Tomorrow Never Dies* on PlayStation, so Eurocom's designers are doubtless poring over a hot copy of Rare's classic as you read this, trying to isolate that magical spark of greatness.

The whole thing has been strenuously denied, of course, with EA's men in black greeting every enquiry with a stony-faced "No comment". But our sources tell us that the game does indeed exist, and that it's well into development. Plus, because it's based on existing PC technology, it's a natural for conversion to Dreamcast. We'll keep our fingers crossed, and hopefully we'll be able to weed out some more solid information for you over the next few weeks ■

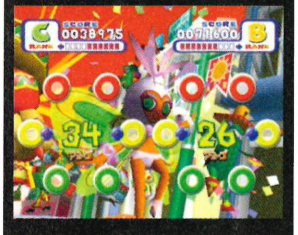
01 James Bond gets his bottom burnt in the forthcoming videogame version of The World is Not Enough. EA is denying that this is coming to DC. We think the publisher doth protest too much

LITES



UBI SOFT RESURRECTS DINOSAUR

> Disney Interactive and Ubi Soft are teaming up to create a game based on the forthcoming Disney feature Dinosaur. Players will be able to take on the role of lead character Aladar the iguanodon as he explores a lush reproduction of the Mesozoic era, meeting giant lizards and prehistoric monkeys along the way. Sounds like a 3D action adventure to us – which wouldn't be entirely out of character for a Disney videogame adaptation. Both the game and the film are destined to arrive on these shores by Christmas ■



DREAMCAST INFECTED WITH SAMBA FEVER

> Sega's hilarious maraca-shaking arcade hit *Samba de Amigo* is coming to Dreamcast. The game requires players to shake a plastic version of everyone's favourite percussion instrument in time with various sultry Latin-flavoured vibes, while a selection of unhinged characters leap about on screen like demonically possessed members of Five. Sega has not specified yet whether a dedicated controller will be produced for the DC version of the game, but our fingers are certainly crossed. Could this lead to a whole in-flux of maraca 'em ups hitting the shelves of Electronics Boutique? We're convinced it will. Due for release in Japan at the end of April, there's been no mention yet of a European version. Start picketing the Japanese embassy now ■

VANISHING POINT

Acclaim's super-charged racer set for a Dreamcast release

01

02

01 The PC version of the game (where these shots came from) has been scrapped, but the DC version lives on
02 There's no definite word yet on the car models, although we can expect high levels of realism

Acclaim has officially announced that its PlayStation driver *Vanishing point* is coming to Dreamcast. The game, designed by UK outfit Clockwork Games (previously responsible for top-down PlayStation racer *Speedsters*), is a crowded urban affair with around 80 cars on each track at any given time – 40 of them racing and 40 irritating Sunday drivers getting in the way.

To heighten realism, the physics engine has been put together by experts from a top vehicle physics research centre, while opponent cars sport highly advanced AI. A full selection of game modes includes Championship, Twoplayer and Stunt mode which provides a series of insane Fall Guy-style challenges for willing drivers. No definite date has been given for a Dreamcast release as yet, but the PlayStation incarnation is due out in May. Expect a vastly superior 128bit version to appear at roughly the same time.

With *Sega GT*, *Metropolis Street Racer*, *Stunt GP* and *Wacky Races* also on the way, Dreamcast is certainly shaping up to be *the* platform for racing fanatics. We should have more info on *Vanishing Point* next month ■

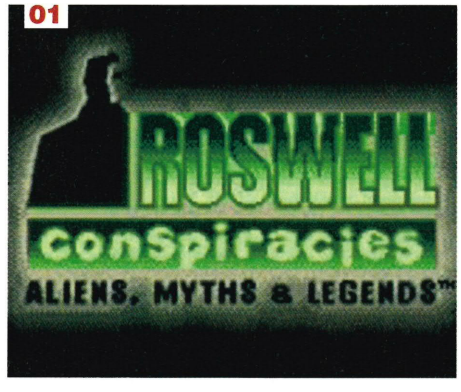
> **UBI SIGNS PAMELA**
Ubi Soft, publisher of *Speed Devils* and *Rayman 2*, has signed an exclusive deal with Sony Pictures Consumer Products to produce games based on hit US TV show VIP. The highly plausible action comedy stars the lovely Pamela Anderson Lee as Vallery Irons, a bodyguard working for rich and famous stars in Hollywood. The show has been aired in around 60 countries since its launch in 1998, and its success can in no way be solely attributed to Pamela's huge boobs.

Few details about the game have been released, but we know it's going to be a 3D action adventure in which you protect Hollywood stars with a variety of increasingly powerful weapons. The DC version is out in November and is set to include a VM sub-game named 'Pamela and Tommy's Yacht Adventure'. No, that's not true, we made it up ■

> **SOUL REAVER 2 ANNOUNCED**
Eidos has announced that a new *Soul Reaver* title is in development and should be out before Christmas. No other details have been given yet ■

> **CRAVE COMES OUT FIGHTING**
US publisher Crave is working on a

01



02

ALIENS REACH EXCITED CLIMAX

It's a Scooby Doo for the new millennium and it's coming to a Dreamcast near you soon

Fareham-based developer Climax has a busy few months ahead, working on two big multiformat licences for separate publishers. We told you about the mysterious Austin Powers game due for summer release in last month's DC-Express, so this month it's the turn of *Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths and Legends*.

The game is based on a cartoon series which has yet to be aired in this country but, we're assured, will be one of the big guns on Sky in the Summer and the BBC in the Autumn. It's a kind of X-Files for a younger audience, with a former bounty hunter called Nick Logan and a banshee called Sh'Lainn Blaze taking the Mulder and Scully roles.

Details on the actual gameplay range from sketchy to non-existent, but we confidently expect it to be a thirdperson action adventure with very nice graphics and a few frights. More details in a couple of months.

Oh, and Climax is apparently also working on a boxing game, provisionally named '*Title Defence*'. More later ■

01 *Roswell Conspiracies* bills itself as an X Files for kids. They'll probably replace 'Cigarette Smoking Man' with 'Donut Munching Monkey'. Well, we can but hope
02 Little is known about the forthcoming Austin Powers game at the moment, so all we can show is this publicity still from 'The Spy Who Shagged Me'. It's that bit when Dr Evil's assassin, Mustafa, falls down the (ha, ha, ha) cliff and he survives (ha ha)

DOA2 SET FOR UK

The beat 'em up with more silicon than an episode of Baywatch gets a British publisher at last

This is the news that all mammary fans have been waiting for. Tecmo's breast-infested beat 'em up *Dead or Alive 2* has been picked up for UK release by Acclaim. It's set to wobble onto top shelves everywhere in May.

For those who haven't spent the last two months cruising the Internet looking for new shots of Kasumi in bra and panties, *DoA2* is a visually stunning fighter, boasting amazingly animated characters and large multi-levelled environments. Oh, and all the girls have massive boobs. Did we mention that? Yes? Well at least we didn't splash them all over the cover ■

01 *Dead or Alive 2* has become infamous for its bevy of fighting beauties. Apparently, there's a code you can put in to get them to play in school uniforms. Lord help us
02 Gen-Fu's leg-waxing technique was unorthodox, yet highly successful

game based on the Ultimate Fighting Championships – the infamous fighting tournament shown on cable TV in the States where large men smash each other's faces in using various different hand-to-hand combat styles. Expect plenty of gore. Expect more news soon ■

> TAKE 2 GETS LOST

Take 2 has signed up developer Lost Toys, the group of ex-Bullfrog employees who set up their own studio last year. The company's first game is currently going under the likely-to-be-changed working title '*Moho*' and is due for Dreamcast release in October ■

> RPG FRENZY

It's been a good news month for fans of orcs and little pixie girls. Japanese developers Capcom, Hudsonsoft and Quest are all working on RPG titles for Dreamcast. No details have been released about the first two, but Quest's title may turn out to be a DC version of the great N64 title *Ogre Battle* ■

> SF3 HIT BY DELAY

We heard in the dying moments before going to press that the release of *Street Fighter 3: Double Impact* has unfortunately been put back to June. Apparently, this is so that Internet features can be added to the European version of the game. We'll give you more information next month ■

> "TYPE OR DIE!"

Sega of Japan is converting our favourite arcade oddity, *The Typing of the Dead*, to Dreamcast. Due out on March 30 the game will be packaged with a keyboard – which is of course, the only way you can play because the action involves typing in the correct words and phrases in order to kill zombies. Predictably, there's no word on a European release, but this time next year we reckon it'll be on every RSA typing course in the land. Well, we hope it will ■

> WRONG NUMBER

Sega Japan has had to ask owners of *Shenmue not* to call the phone numbers in the game. Apparently, they're real numbers and the poor folks on the other end of the line are fed up of gamers calling them up and asking for hints and tips. Oh dear ■

> THE ARMADA RETURNS

Metro3D is developing a sequel to *Armada*. Due out in the US in August, the game will feature online capabilities ■

TOO HOT TO HANDLE?

COMING SOON	HOW FIRED UP SHOULD YOU BE?
Arcatera	3
Deep Fighter	4
Dragon's Blood	3
Ecco the Dolphin	4
4 Wheel Thunder	2
Furfighters	4
Giga Wing	2
Grand Theft Auto 2	4
Hidden and Dangerous	4
Metropolis Street Racer	5
Nightmare Creatures II	3
The Nomad Soul	3
South Park Rally	2
Space Channel 5	3
Sword of the Berserk	3
Tech Romancer	3
Time Stalkers	2

COMING NOT QUITE SO SOON	HOW FIRED UP SHOULD YOU BE?
Bust-A-Move 4	3
Chu Chu Rocket	5
Dead or Alive 2	5
Gauntlet Legends	3
Resident Evil Code: Veronica	4
Sega GT: Homologation Special	5
Sega Worldwide Soccer: Euro 2000	3
Silver	3
Stunt GP	4
Tony Hawk Pro Skater	4
V-Rally 2	4
Wacky Races	3

COMING FROM A LONG WAY OFF	HOW FIRED UP SHOULD YOU BE?
Alien Breed Conflict	4
Alone in the Dark 4	5
Black and White	5
Half-Life	5
Power Stone 2	5
Quake 3: Arena	5
Shenmue	5

RUMOUR

Rumour: Sega is currently developing an arcade driving game based on NASCAR racing, the popular American motorsport.
DC-UK: Apparently, true. The game is being developed for Naomi by Sega's R&D Department 5 (most recently responsible for *Star Wars Episode 1*). The game features 30 NASCAR vehicles and the standard oval tracks ■

Rumour: Game Boy classic *Tetris* will appear as an online game for Dreamcast.
DC-UK: Dodgy. This one originated from a job ad placed on Gamejobs.com by Blue Planet software. The company is looking for staff to work on a Dreamcast version of *Tetris* and the ad also mentions that the game will have an online mode. Blue Planet was unavailable for comment at the time of writing but check out our online gaming feature next month for more ■

Rumour: Konami is developing a sports game to tie in with the upcoming Sydney Summer Olympics.
DC-UK: It's true! The game is called *Gambare! Nippon! Olympic 2000* (*Excel! Japan! Olympic 2000* – this title might just change for the Western release) and is currently in development for all major platforms and is due for a timely release this Olympic Summer. The gameplay is tap-crazy *Track and Field* in all but name, and currently includes 12 sporting events. Start exercising those tapping fingers ■

Rumour: ITV has bought the rights to turn *Shenmue* into a situation comedy. Due to hit our screens on April 1, the show transfers the action from China to Milton Keynes and stars Nicholas Lindhurst as Ryo – a disenfranchised systems analyst who sees his retired bank manager father murdered by ninja assassins. Inevitably, much hilarity ensues – most of it revolving around aged double entendres.
DC-UK: This is so true ■

VIRGIN EVOLVES FOR DC

Virgin Interplay's long-awaited strategy title *Evolva* is heading for Dreamcast. **DC-UK** takes an early look at the unique gameplay

Following the news that *Half-Life*, *Alone in the Dark* and *Black and White* will all be coming from PC to DC, we've just heard that yet another astonishing game will be making the transition.

Due for a Spring release on PC, *Evolva* is a shoot 'em up strategy game which puts the player in control of a team of Genohunters – genetically modified creatures that can steal useful DNA from anything they kill and absorb it into their own bodies.

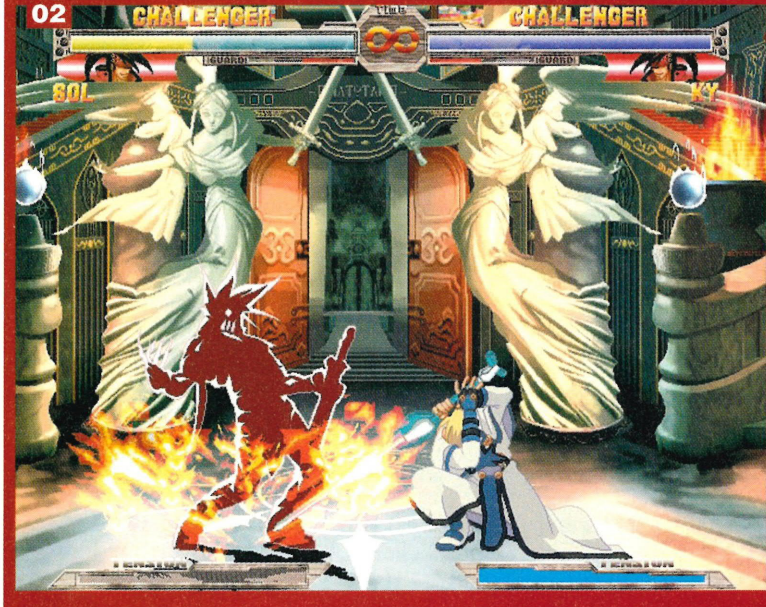
The story revolves around a space parasite that lands on earth and starts to kill all organic matter, building an army of giant insectoids to protect itself. You control four Genohunters whose job it is to kill the insectoids and eventually vanquish the cosmic tapeworm. Employing beautiful 3D landscapes and advanced artificial life technology the game seeks to replicate the processes of evolution – but in the framework of a strategic blast 'em up. If only Darwin had thought of that.

Keith visited the developer, Computer Artworks, two years ago while *Evolva* was in its early conception stages and was stunned by the complexity of the game. As Genohunters take new abilities from their kills (shoot a creature that can jump high and you take on the genetic ability to jump high, etc), they become more and more specialised. By the end of the game, each member of your team will be unique to you, as there are billions of different genetic possibilities as you progress through the action.

Rarely do advanced genetics and ultra violence mix. Here they don't just mix, they mate. We'll give you an in-depth report soon ■

■ **You control four Genohunters** whose job it is to kill the insectoids **and eventually vanquish the cosmic tapeworm** ■

01 Starship Troopers meets Charles Darwin. Blood and DNA splatter the game
02 The player can keep an eye on his four Genohunters simultaneously
03 The environment is incredibly organic, filled with plant-life, water and creatures
04 Monsters huddle round the campfire for warmth. Giant spiders get cold too, y'know



GUILTY GEAR X

The cult fighter returns with beautiful artwork and an over-hauled fighting system

The coin-op sequel to Arc Systems' PlayStation beat 'em up was recently shown off in Japan and is due for a DC conversion soon. Many of the original characters from the first outing have been brought back. Their quest: to discover why the Gears (a race of biomechanical warriors created as the ultimate wepaons), have begun to reawaken, even after the death of their leader, a villain named Justice.

In terms of gameplay, the sequel uses one-hit knock-down moves, as well as side-stepping counters and dash attacks. The emphasis will be on combos and skill rather than button-bashing, with characters able to perform multiple hits and other special moves. We've yet to hear of a release date for Europe, but judging by these shots, someone is bound to pick it up, possibly by the end of the Spring ■

01 Most characters reflect *SF 2* standards. Potemkin is basically Zangief, while Sol is a Ryu-style all-rounder
02 The art style is less brash and cartoony than Capcom's, employing a softer colour palette and realistic backgrounds
03 ...but the influence of *Marvel vs Capcom* and *Darkstalkers* is clearly visible in some of the character design and extravagant special moves

GUILTY PAST

The original *Guilty Gear* premiered on the PlayStation in 1998. Its main selling point was a special sudden death move which fighters could pull off to immediately kill opponents. However, this fatal manoeuvre has been removed from the sequel, which should bring more balance to the gameplay.

The story was pretty standard manga fare, revolving around an apocalyptic 22nd Century battle between mankind and the Gears. As a last hope, a tournament is arranged to discover a circle of super fighters to take on the Gears. So that's biomechanics, apocalypse and fighting – all that's missing is a girl in a cute sailor's outfit ■

DREAM TEAMS

Arsenal are still floundering, while Sampdoria are simply boring. Is there no hope at all for the Sega three?

Spanked Arse'

Arsenal's recent meetings with Man United have so far been great footballing spectacles, and their encounter in January proved no different. The plan was simple for Arsenal: they couldn't lose if they wanted to stay in the Championship race. With United playing their first game since returning from the sun and sea of Brazil, the Gunner's strength was depleted, with Messrs Bergkamp, Kanu, Suker, Overmars and Adams all missing. It was left to Freddie Ljungberg to sparkle, capping an impressive performance with a first half goal. Sadly, Arsenal couldn't stop United from equalising, despite the endeavour they showed in the second half.

With that game, the signs were good for the Gunners, but all their hard work was undone in the fifth round FA Cup replay against Leicester City, where a combination of Tim Flowers' goalkeeping and the failure of Davor Suker's killer left foot, helped the Gunners demise after a nail-biting penalty shoot-out.

Realistically, the FA Cup was Arsenal's only real chance of collecting some silverware this season and picking themselves up after proved surprisingly hard for the players. What followed, was a hellish 2-1 loss to basement dwellers Bradford City and a 1-0 home defeat to Liverpool. Slipping down to fourth place, even a Champions League place in Europe is looking decidedly ropy for the Gunners ■

Samp soar

Sega could be sponsoring a team playing in the French second division next season, if St Etienne's current form is anything to go by. The team gave their fans a near heart attack when they met last-place side Montpellier, almost drawing 4-4 until Jose Da Silva Aloiso slotted home the winner in the 80th minute.

Sampdoria are Sega's only shining light at present, but watching Samp can hardly be the most exciting of pastimes. Still, after a couple of typical 1-0 victories (Sampdoria will get that 'Boring' Arsenal tag if they're not careful) against Brescia, the Italians have slowly got to second place, just three points behind leaders Vicenz ■

Nick Renshaw writes for Total Football

Caption Competition!

What could the Arsenal mascot be saying to Sonic? Or vice versa? Come up with something witty and send your suggestion on an envelope, postcard or email marked 'Sonic Caption Contest' to **DC-UK** at the regular address. The best suggestion will win one of these brilliant Sonic figures usually available from Wicked Ware (01993 844885) ■

THIRDPARTY PIECES

Dreamcast peripherals announced and reviewed for your delectation

After a quiet first few months, thirdparty peripheral manufacturers are now starting to jump aboard the good ship Dreamcast to sail the retail seas and display their wares to the curious natives. This month, Datel, Joytech and Thrustmaster drop their kecks and invite us to check for scurvy.

Datel, unsurprisingly, has a Dreamcast version of its renowned Action Replay cheat card due for release in March. The card contains all the cheats and secrets for every game available on DC. With Sega's Dreamcast keyboard harder to find than the World Hide and Seek Champion, Datel is also releasing its own version in a lovely see-through aquamarine colour.

Joytech is to release an entire range of Dreamcast peripherals in the coming weeks including 1Mb and 4Mb memory cards which will retail for £12.99 and £17.99 respectively. These stand-alone memory cards are perfect for people who just want to save their games and have no interest in messing with VM mini-games ■

01

02

03

01 Datel's keyboard – £19.99
02 The Action Replay package – £39.99
03 Joytech's memory cards are available in transparent orange, black and blue designs. We'll have our usual incisive reviews of all the Datel and Joytech products once we get our sticky mitts on them

THRUSTMASTER FERRARI STEERING WHEEL

With Sega's own steering wheel proving disappointingly lightweight and unresponsive, the pound sterling of the racing game enthusiast is ripe for the taking by any thirdparty manufacturer with a half-decent wheel in the back of their Cortina. First onto the grid is Thrustmaster.

The Ferrari licence makes the wheel an immediately attractive proposition before you've even driven with it. The styling is cool and classy, with the famous Ferrari stallion in the centre and sequential gear levers on the sides – dispensing with that awkward gearstick nonsense. It feels extremely comfortable and, when attached to a desktop (via a clamp that comes as standard), it's also very sturdy – as are its non-skid footpedals.

So, the appearance and build are both first class, but how does it play? We tested the wheel with the newly-arrived *Sega GT* after initially playing the game with a joypad. Although using the wheel provided a much greater sense of interaction, actually controlling the car was more difficult than with the ultra-responsive analogue stick. Still, despite losing out to analogue, the Ferrari wheel is currently the best available for DC and is highly-recommended for serious racing fans. **7/10** ■

c: Netscape Online

File Edit View Help

Name	Size	Modified

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POCKET WORLD

OUR REGULAR GLANCE ACROSS AT SNK'S HANDHELD CONSOLE

SNK VS CAPCOM: MATCH OF THE MILLENNIUM

Oh. My. God. The two biggest names in beat 'em ups are together at last. This clash between Capcom and SNK must be one of the most anticipated fighting games ever.

Match of the Millennium boasts the first opportunity to prove who's hardest out of Capcom and SNK's roster of celebrity fighters. One thing's for certain: the Neo Pocket produces stunning graphics, and *MOTM* does a miraculous job of recreating those cutting-edge 2D visuals. Ryu's stage is familiar to anyone who's ever stood near a *Street Fighter* machine in the last ten years, and the mini men and women look extremely cute and are recognisable even on the console's diminutive screen.

Gameplay is equally impressive, capturing both SNK and Capcom's unique styles perfectly. It's even possible to alter your combo styles to *Street Fighter* or SNK rules – whichever suits your persuasion.

Add to that loads of mini-games, unlockable extras, as well as tag, tournament, and team battle options, plus the chance to link two machines – and even connect to the up-coming Dreamcast version – and *MOTM* is easily the most option-loaded beat 'em up on any console.

The brave little Neo even has the perfect d-pad for performing all your favourite *SF* and SNK moves. It's easily the best handheld fighting game yet, and another must-have game for the equally essential and loveable Neo Pocket **9/10** ■

01 The story follows David on a quest to save his wife from the evil sorcerer Silver. This scene is early in the game where Silver's son Fuge has kidnapped the sorry spouse
02 A scary forest alive with foe. 'Boo!' they might say

SILVER DREAM MACHINE

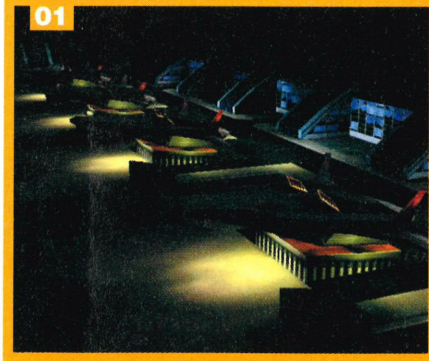
Infogrames has announced that its innovative PC RPG is coming to Dreamcast in time for Summer. Forget that expensive holiday!

Publishing giant Infogrames is porting a massive PC adventure to Dreamcast. *Silver* takes the major gameplay features of the Japanese RPG genre but irons out some of the more eccentric and complex quirks to provide an invigorating quest.

The main innovation is a stripped down real-time combat system which lets you indulge in arcade-style fights with dozens of different monsters, from wily imps to hulking orcs. The PC version allowed you to make sword thrusts and swipes with the mouse, so it'll be interesting to see how this intuitive system changes for DC.

What's definitely staying the same, however, is the character control system which allows you to simultaneously guide the lead character David (who's wife has been kidnapped by Silver, an evil sorcerer) and two of his allies around the amazingly detailed 3D world. There are several controllable characters in the game, each with their own strengths, weaknesses, weapons and magical abilities. And you can expect plenty of exploration, fighting and plot-twisting along the way.

Boasting amazing spell effects, hundreds of lush locations and full VM support, this is going to be a whopping release for DC. Infogrames has pencilled it in for a June release in the UK, just pipping *Shenmue* into the shops. Here comes the sun, little darling ■



01 *Dogs of War* employs a detailed 3D environment boasting realistic weather conditions, dynamic lighting and a host of other visual tricks. The 3D engine can apparently cope with up to 200 units careering around each level, making for stunning battle sequences

DOGS OF WAR

Take 2 cries havoc and lets loose Silicon Dreams' promising battle strategy romp

Those who have been praying for a decent Dreamcast strategy game are soon to be satisfied. Banbury-based developer Silicon Dreams (*UEFA Striker*) is working on a futuristic 'action tactics' title for PC and DC.

In *Dogs of War*, players choose one of three warring factions and then attempt to destroy the others through 25 enormous, true 3D levels. Gameplay apparently combines *Command & Conquer*-style unit management (there are over 35 different units in the game including tanks, gunships and even lone snipers) with more arcade-esque action and intuitive controls. You can direct your campaigns using satellite views or take control of individual units for close up combat thrills. Due for release in the Summer, this is certainly one we'll be coming back to in the near future ■

DAVE 2000

Our man on the inside of the videogame industry takes his usual sideways swipe at all things Sega

Why are the best games always a few months away?

We spend ages waiting for *Crazy Taxi*, we play it until we could pass The Knowledge blindfolded, and then there's nothing else to do but start waiting for The Next Big Thing to meander along.

The thing is, these gaps between Big Things are getting a bit too long for comfort. Yes, *Crazy Taxi* was completely awesome, but what other games were released around the same time? Or, to put it properly, what other *decent* games were released around the same time?

The games harvest was good in 1999, with villages all over the country reporting an excellent crop. But, so far in 2000, the poor old Dreamcast has struggled to offer a steady stream of those Grade A games that keep the kids excited. *Metropolis Street Racer* is now so near you can almost see its aura of perfection glinting on the horizon then, after that, there's... another one of those long waits until the next quality game arrives. And that'll probably be a driving game, too.

Shenmue will make it to Europe some time this year, with thousands of Japanese schoolgirls locked in a factory working on the translation at this very moment. Although with *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* presently outselling it in Japan, maybe their time would be better spent translating those various undead groans and gruesome squelches into English for us. Either way, it's a long wait for both.

No, if it's short-term fun you want between Dreamcast releases, you're best off buying a Neo Geo Pocket Colour. It's not the enemy; it's your friend. Sega even produces games for it (including the console's best game, the stunning *Sonic Pocket*), and it's ready and willing to plug itself into Dreamcast's future releases.

But at the moment, like so many of Sega's big ideas, there aren't any games that currently connect a Neo and a Dreamcast – just like there's no online gaming after six months of promises. What exactly is going on with the Dreamcast team? So many of Dreamcast's unique features are still 'TBA' – they've surely either given up, or are so chuffed with the magnificent job they did at launch last year that they've given themselves the rest of the year off.

Maybe they're in Japan, desperately explaining to their bosses why the Advertising Standards people have asked them to stop screening the "Up to six billion players" adverts, due to it being blatantly not true. Some serious finger-extraction is needed to speed things – everything – up if Dreamcast is to continue to thrive. Oh well, it's back to *Crazy Taxi* while we wait ■

Dave 2000 is a well-known industry insider. His true identity can never be exposed

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PLANET DREAMCAST

Every month, **DC-UK**'s game junkies scour the world to deliver a grade A global news fix. Get what you need here, first

GRANDIA 2 PROMISED FOR DC

GameArts' long-awaited RPG sequel confirmed for a Dreamcast outing

01

02

03

Some trustworthy details have finally emerged on this much-anticipated RPG. There were worries earlier in the year that a Dreamcast version of the game had been scrapped in favour of PlayStation2, but that now appears to be 'baloney', as our American cousins might put it. This amazing-looking sequel to the classic Saturn title is set for a Japanese Dreamcast release in the Spring.

So what can we expect from this stylish adventurer? Well, it seems GameArts has taken the *Final Fantasy* approach to sequel design, meaning everything is completely different from the original – new characters, new world, new story. The background goes like this: about a thousand years ago, good and evil played out a huge battle, which resulted in the planet being divided into pieces, with evil residing in the sky directly above the continent of Granacliff.

New characters include Rudo, the main hero who just happens to be an ideologist employed as a monster hunter, Elena, a priestess in a Granas church and Millenia – the obligatory mysterious female that RPG's just have to include. GameArts has also confirmed that the game is now fully 3D (replacing the sprite-based antics of the first adventure), making use of the Dreamcast's polygon pushing power. As you can see, the effect is nothing short of breathtaking.

Little is known at this time about the specifics of the battle system, but it is said to be fairly similar to the first game. What is known, however, is that your party can include up to four people simultaneously, just like before. More news should be uncovered soon, so stick with us for the full lowdown and preview within the next few months ■

04

01 The cute, bright artwork will be familiar to anyone who saw the original title on Saturn
02 Characters have the 'super-deformed' look RPG fanatics are accustomed to
03 The battle scenes usual for RPG titles should be accentuated here by the beautiful 3D visuals and multi-coloured lighting
04 The player can apparently control up to four characters at a time, each with different abilities

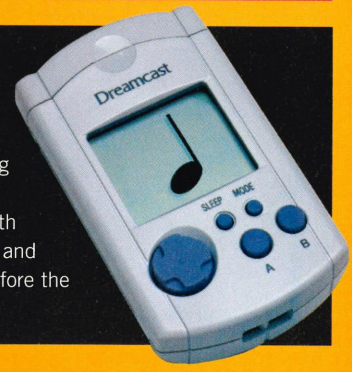
KING OF FIGHTERS TO GO 3D?

Hardcore Japanese game retailer Amusement Graffiti has claimed on its Website that SNK is developing a 3D version of *King of Fighters* for Naomi.

The long-running series has so far been confined to two dimensions, competing very much with the *Street Fighters* of this world rather than the *Tekkens* or *Virtua Fighters*. SNK may well be looking to widen its international audience, capitalising on the global popularity of the Neo Geo Colour Pocket console – where *King of Fighters* and *SNK vs Capcom* have been well-recieved. Last year's highly esoteric 2D DC effort *King of Fighters 99* never made it to Europe. More to follow ■

MP3 4 VM

Sega of Japan's Dreamcast Internet affiliate ISAO corp has been a busy news bee this month. Not only has it been revealing details about Dream Passport 3 (see opposite page), but the company has also mentioned plans to release an MP3 player with VM functionality. In other words a VM unit which can also store and play MP3 music files. The device is set to premiere in Japan before the end of the year. No news on a Euro version as yet ■



SEGA PLANS SHOW ONSLAUGHT

The Tokyo Game Show is coming, and tantalising details are beginning to emerge

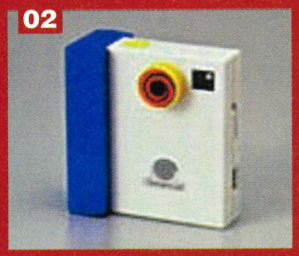
One of the biggest happenings on the videogame calendar, the Tokyo Game Show, is being held from March 31 to April 2 at the massive Makuhari Messe convention centre in Chiba. The gigantic event boasts 1,257 booths, taking up 54,000m² of space. In other words, it's otaku nirvana.

Sega, of course, is among the exhibitors and will be attracting big crowds with playable demos of new Dreamcast titles *Grandia 2*, *Phantasy Star Online*, *Eternal Arcadia* and *Jet Set Radio*. Hopefully, there will be plenty of new project announcements, too – including arcade titles using Sega's new Model 4 technology. We'll give you a more comprehensive round-up of the show (which we'll be attending) next month ■

01 *Grandia 2* will be one of the stars of the show – it's certainly keenly anticipated **02** Could *Phantasy Star* lead the online revolution?

CANDID CAMERA

Sega of Japan reveals its latest Dreamcast-related gizmo to the world



01 One of the typically Japanese Dreameye advertisements. How could you resist? **02** The camera with battery pack attached. Just three triple AAA batteries and you can take photos anywhere **03** The microphone required for videophone chats **04** Sega demonstrated the videophone capabilities recently with an online transatlantic chinwag between MD Hideki Katou and Sega President Shoichiro Irimajiri, who was at the Milia show in France

Dreameye is a digital video camera that plugs into one of the DC controller ports and enables users to perform a variety of tasks over the Dream Passport network.

The camera's three main functions are: 1) Videomail – up to 25 seconds of video footage can be recorded on the camera, sent via email, and then saved to a VM at the receiving end. 2) Photomail – using Dreameye as an ordinary digital camera, still photography can be edited and attached to emails. Dreameye can also be used as a stand-alone camera by making use of its battery pack. 3) Videophone – most impressively, by using a microphone (which slots into a controller à la the *Seaman* mic) Dreameye can be used for holding realtime videophone conversations by going through the Net or by direct dial.

Dreameye is due for its Japanese release in June but there's been no word as yet on a possible European outing ■

INTERNATIONAL LITES

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

> After the shock announcement of *Virtua Fighter 4* at London's ATEI show last month, the Internet has positively overflowed with speculation about the game – which may well use the engine developed for battle sequences in *Shenmue*. Yu Suzuki has confirmed, however, that modifications to the fighting engine are being implemented at the moment. The most likely change is the dodge system which will probably mimic *Soul Calibur*'s 'eight-way run' system.

There's been no official word on characters, but it is safe to assume that at least two new fighters will be developed for the game, as has been the case with each of the previous sequels. Then again, if Sega is to compete with the likes of *Soul Calibur 2* and *Tekken Tag*, it may be considering including more fresh young combatants.

Needless to say this is one story we'll be keeping an eye on. We were expecting more news to surface at the recent AOU (Arcade Operators' Union) show at the end of February, but at the time of going to press, Sega had not brought up the game at the event. Perhaps more will become clear at the forthcoming Tokyo Game Show ■

DREAMCAST GETS SOCIAL

> ISAO Corp, the company responsible for organising Dreamcast's Internet service in Japan is planning some interesting online chat tools for Dream Passport 3, the next version of the country's browser GD-ROM. According to Nikkei Business Publications, an Asian news network, Ch@b Talk, will allow users to converse in real-time on various themed chat sites, Docodemo ('anywhere') Chat will enable surfers to exchange messages with other DC users while visiting the same Websites, and Dreamcast Visual Live Communication is a videophone that employs the Dreameye. Clearly, increased communication between Dreamcast owners is a priority for the company, and should add to the machine's popularity. Passport 3 is due out in Japan in April ■

PLANET DREAMCAST

We uncover the headlines and rumours in American and European gaming this month

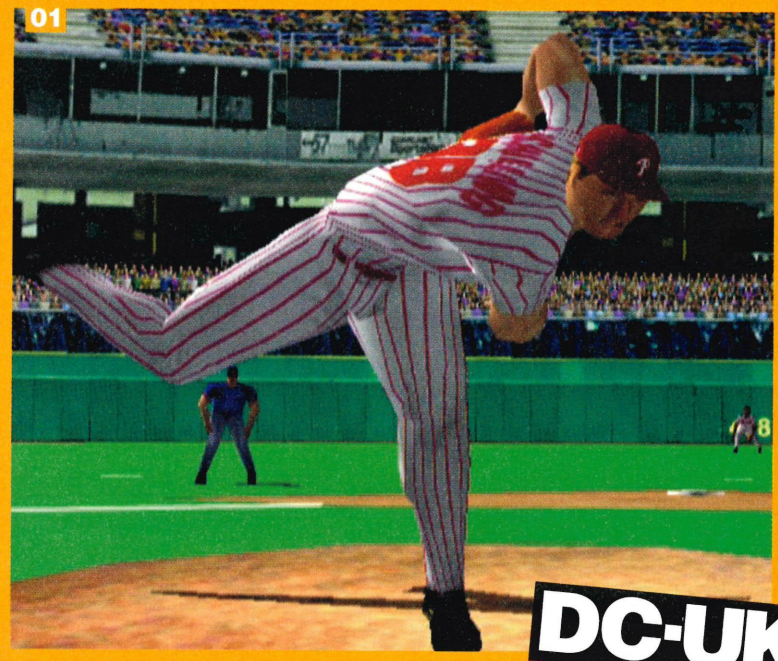
KONAMI LINES UP SPORTS DUO

Two new sports sims are set to hit DC. But watch out, Limeys, they simply aren't cricket

When Konami signed a joint development deal last year with Disney Interactive and US sports channel ESPN, the company promised a range of sporting sims would result from the ungodly union. Well, the first fruits of that menage à trois are now in the development oven.

Both due out in the US in Spring, *NBA 2 Night* and *ESPN Baseball Tonight* are being billed as accurate reproductions of the sports that'll have plenty of lush, TV-style presentation. *NBA 2 Night* boasts a total of 25 different dunks, realistic player graphics (including facial hair and tattoos), and a more complex range of defensive moves than previous sims. *Baseball Tonight*, on the ther hand, boasts a revolutionary Smart-Cam that follows the hot spots of the action from the pitcher, to the batter to the runner. You can also choose from dozens of different pitches (curveballs, etc), while fielders can vary the velocity of their throws.

There's been no word as yet from Konami Europe about a release in Britain, but given the steady rise in popularity of basketball games in this country, we should at least see *NBA 2 Night*. We're not sure how a baseball game would go down ■



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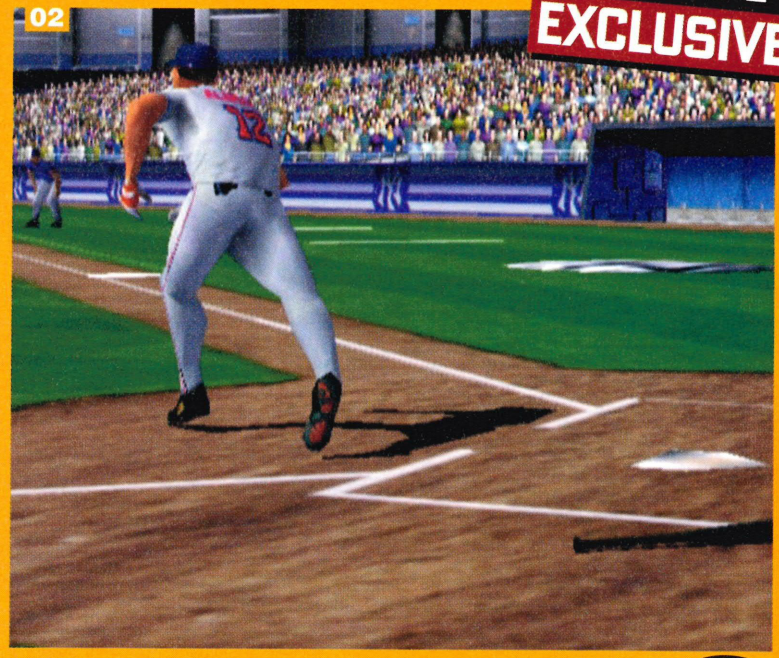
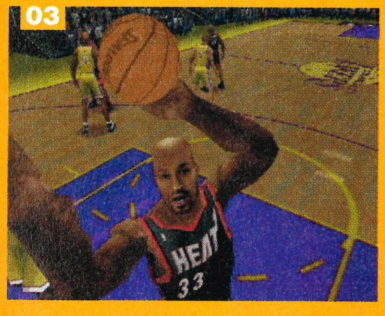


01 There are dozens of different pitches allowing you to throw evil curveballs and employ other tricky strategies
02 The game takes accurate stats from the ESPN research department. Americans love stats
03 *NBA 2 Night* features amazingly realistic facial animation
04 Checks, rejections and backboard pins are all possible



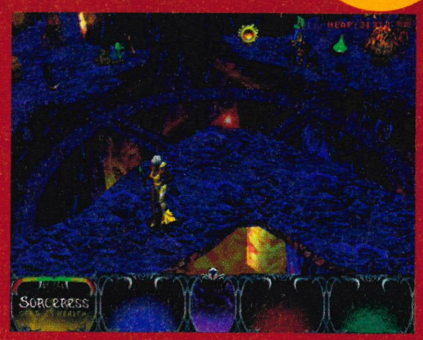
GAUNTLET THROWN DOWN

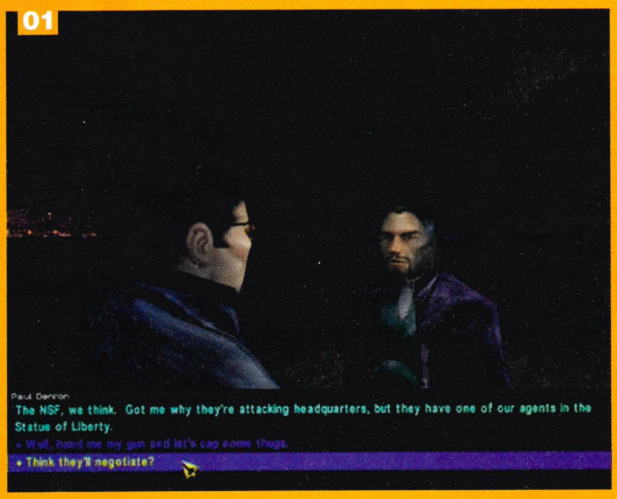
www.dc-uk.co.uk On the Net

New screenshots of *Gauntlet Legends* promise great things to come

Midway kindly took some brand new screenshots of *Gauntlet Legends* for us, and we just had to pass them straight to you.

The game is almost ready for Dreamcast release and should be here within the next couple of months or so. Taking the classic Atari coin-op of the mid-'80s and updating it into a fully 3D hack 'n' slasher, *Legends* will hopefully make us forget other recent D&D-themed fighting games. Which we won't name right now. Even though we really want to. Because, man, it really was an abomination ■





DEUS EX MACHINA

A role playing game without an orc in sight? Surely not...

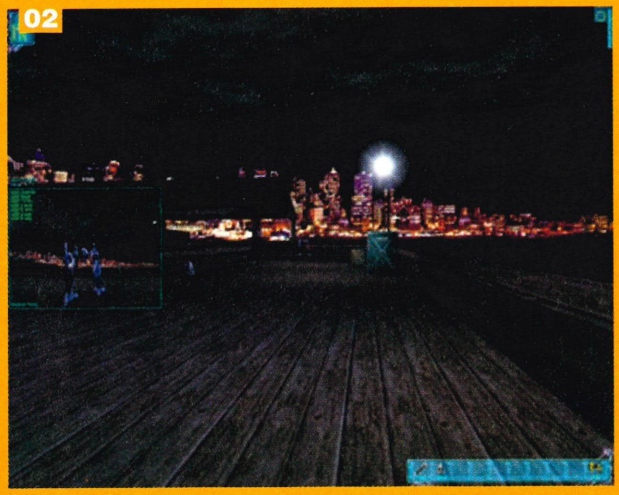
You'd think that a development studio set up by Jon Romero, the creator of *Doom* and an all-round god to PC gamers, would steer well clear of consoles. But no, the team's forthcoming sci-fi RPG is coming to Dreamcast before the end of the year.

Designed by Warren Spector, the man behind *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*, the game takes place in a not-too-distant future, where ultra violent terrorism, government conspiracy and military espionage are rife.

The player enters this world as an anti-terrorist operative who must complete a series of missions to clean up the city streets. In a cyberpunk twist, players can fit themselves with ever more powerful cybernetic body augmentations, which can be used to survive the X Files-style plotlines, stealth-based action and violent encounters.

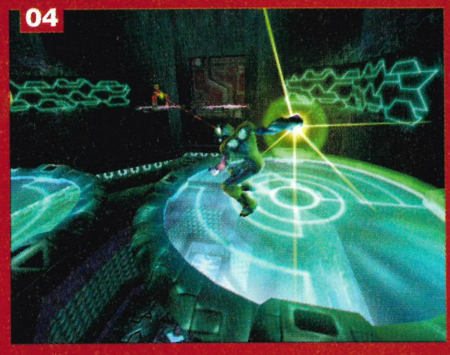
At least this is an alternative to orcs, imps and princesses with magic bloody fairy sticks ■

01 The game features a complex conversation engine with dozens of alternative routes
02 Shove in Harrison Ford in a dirty mac and you'd get Blade Runner



DRONEZ ON

What happens when Tron is introduced to *Speedball* by William Gibson? French developer Zetha knows



As far as Dreamcast is concerned, *TrickStyle* currently stands alone in the futuristic sports sim sub-genre, but that is about to change. Set for a Spring/Summer release, and due to include online multiplayer gaming, *DroneZ* is a sci-fi merging of the Disney classic Tron with deathmatch gameplay. As the screenshots show, the results could be a fresh and visually impressive Dreamcast jaunt.

The action takes place in a cyberpunk future where humans can only exist in life-support systems giving them no access to the outside world. Their only leisure activity is a virtual reality sport known as *DroneZ* which puts fighters on a series of floating platforms, gives them a range of projectile weapons, and invites them to blow each other to virtual kingdom come. Players can hop from platform to platform, rebounding bullets off walls, and repelling enemy fire with force fields – they can also drive certain platforms around to navigate the beautifully lit and intricately detailed arenas.

We talked to the development leader Giovanni Caturano about the design of the game and his influences: "Taking Tron and its derivatives for granted, there are many classic videogames that influenced us during the design: *Arkanoid*, *R-Type* and even *Dig Dug* are just some. For the AI I've been using techniques used commonly in the development of chess games." He promises wily computer-controlled opponents, and gameplay that revolves as much around timing and tactics as it does around bullets.

Moving to visuals, Caturano was keen to point out how advanced the graphical engine is in *DroneZ*, "Our system handles character models with skeletal animation and smooth skin deformation [like in *Soul Calibur*] and also lets us have parts of the body that move procedurally [part of the animation is created and performed in real time] to allow full, smooth flexing of the body." In other words, characters animate in real-time – they don't simply go through predetermined movements, like the retarded footballers in *Virtua Striker 2*, for example.

In a world dominated by safe, familiar gameplay design, an idea as left of field as this (the concept came from a short story written by Caturano) is certain to provoke interest. We're reminded of the classic American football-style game *Speedball* which appeared on the Amiga. If *DroneZ* is half as good as that Bitmap Brothers treasure, prepare yourself for future sport addiction ■

01 The hi-tech lighting effects are great
02 The influence of Disney's Tron is more than evident here – especially with the blue pallette
03 Some of these platforms can move, allowing players to whiz around the arenas
04 *DroneZ* uses skeletal animation for smooth character movement

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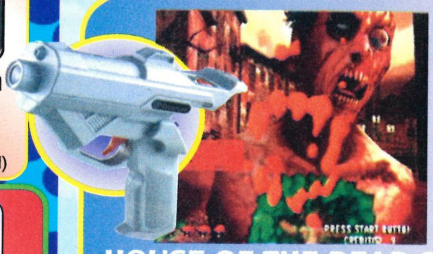

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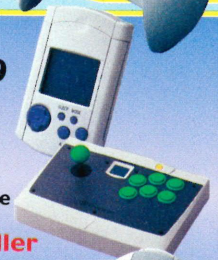

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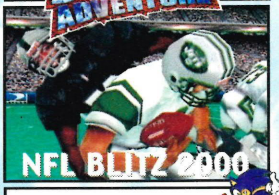

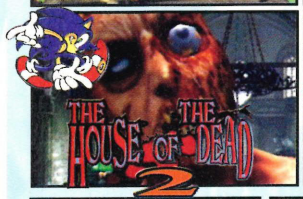

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>NAME Vernon Fields
>BIOG Vernon, a 38-year-old bank clerk from Chippenham, has been stalking Chun Li obsessively for the past eight years. He knows where she lives, he knows where she works, he knows her phone number, he knows what she puts in her rubbish bin, and more importantly – he knows all her fighting moves. Spurned by Chun Li, who called the police after he stood naked in her garden singing love poems, Vernon enters the Street Fighter tournament to exact his revenge. If he can't have her, no-one can!
>REMOVED FROM *Obsessive-compulsive New World Disorder*
>REMOVED BECAUSE Chun Li's involvement in real-life stalking case.
>SPECIAL MOVES Press Forwards then Back quickly to avoid making eye contact with your opponent. Repeat until enemy feels uneasy.

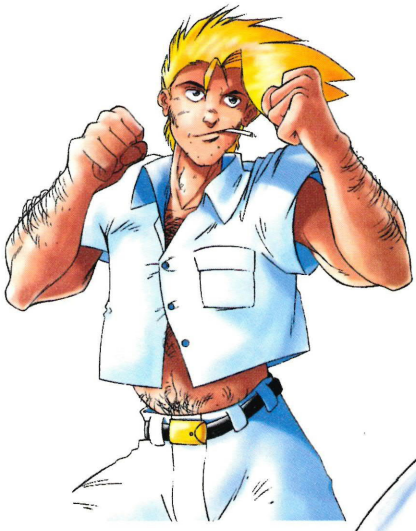
>NAME Super-Man
>BIOG After the break up of his marriage, David Adams turned to alcohol. He tried Guinness, various spirits, even a brief flirtation with wine, but nothing could prepare him for the nine-per-cent-proof power offered by a can of Tennents Super. Mild-mannered Dave drew power from the cheap yet unfeasibly strong lager, gaining the strength to take anyone on. "Anyone! Come ahhnn! D'you think you're hard?" he said to the *Street Fighter II* machine in his local kebab house. Then it was struck by lightning and Dave was magically sucked into the combat. Or maybe he just fell asleep in the street and dreamed it all.
>REMOVED FROM *Drunken Master III: Meths of Rage*
>REMOVED BECAUSE Sends 'alcohol is good' message to the kids.
>SPECIAL MOVES The stumble, the long walk home, the vague gesture, the over-confident chat up.

>NAME Tony Slayer
>BIOG Crazed by power and enraged by Britain's dwindling global influence, Prime Minister Tony organises a Street Fighting event to prove once and for all that the UK is the hardest country in the world. But the Japanese ministers pull a fast one, entering the *Street Fighter* warriors in the Japan side.

This will be Tony's toughest challenge yet, requiring him to call on all his country's resources if he is to win. Teletubbies, The Queen, fading tapes of Monty Python, old Beatles records and even Cliff Richard come to his aid, fighting for Queen and country.
>REMOVED FROM *Parliament Warriors 3: The Whiff of Scandal*
>REMOVED BECAUSE Frankly, no-one cares.
>SPECIAL MOVES Press Up, Up, Up, Up, Up, Up to introduce the Feelgood Factor. (Does not work on opponents who read newspapers or watch Panorama.) Press X and Y to bring on vote-winning tag team partner, Pregnant Wife.

The beat 'em ups of Capcom and Namco are filled with cool, sexy and heroic characters. But do the designers ever have an off day? Are there lesser fighters that never made it through to the final games? Of course there are. We asked **Dave 2000** to imagine 'the characters that taste forgot'...

FAILED



>NAME Dave Racer
>BIOG Overhearing a conversation about how superior the Nissan Skyline is to all other cars, Dave Racer is enraged and ships his trusty Escort Ghia to the Land of the Rising Sun intending to humble those Japs into submission. But disaster strikes – Dave's unstoppable urge to steal hubcaps attacks in downtown Tokyo, leading to a nasty run-in with the Yakuza. Forced to enter the Street Fighter tournament as punishment, Dave must now fight – fight like it's closing time down the Dog & Duck and someone's looking at his girlfriend. Fight for Essex and all she stands for!
>REMOVED FROM *Cultural Stereotypes EX2*
>REMOVED BECAUSE
Anonymous death threats with Essex postcodes received.
>SPECIAL MOVES The bottle in the face, the glass in the face, the stab.

>NAME TokenBabe
>BIOG Entering the Street Fighter tournament because she read an article about it in Wallpaper magazine, TokenBabe packs her Gucci handbag and heads off to Japan. Sadly, all her luggage is sent accidentally to Australia, and the long dress she wore for the flight got stuck in the plane door and ripped to an incredibly short length. The only replacement she could buy was a skimpy Japanese schoolgirl uniform. Then a mugger stole her jacket and shirt, leaving her to fight virtually naked. The crowd in the background spray her with water. She regains energy by sucking lollypops. Sometimes she just likes to be held by her opponent. Pressing A makes her bend over for no reason.
>REMOVED FROM *Blatant Gusset Detectives 2*
>REMOVED BECAUSE On-set fall-out with Chun Li.
>SPECIAL MOVES Kick and you get a flash of her knickers. Jump and you get a flash of her knickers. Punch and you get a flash of her knickers. Or simply press X to make her lift up her skirt and show you her knickers. It's what she's there for.

>NAME Serial Simon
>BIOG Released from prison after serving nine years for GBH after a robbery on an arcade went badly wrong, Simon Pearce is now a rehabilitated, content and reformed member of society.

Celebrating freedom with a trip to his local arcade, Simon rediscovers the joys of *Street Fighter*, triggering horrendous flashbacks to his evil past. Tortured by visions, and kept awake at night by the stinging impact of a thousand fireballs, Simon heads off on a mission – to travel to Japan and destroy the *Street Fighter* team once and for all. He packs some blades and a pipe. Probably a chain saw and a big sword. And piano wire. Not forgetting the blow torch and sandpaper.

Make them pay.
>REMOVED FROM *Who's The Daddy? 3*
>REMOVED BECAUSE
Possible game violence/ criminal media outrage.
>SPECIAL MOVES Press A+B together to exchange a couple of snouts for some of your opponent's energy. Also, the snooker balls in a sock, the concealed blade.

FIGHTERS

CANCELLED

A few high-concept pitches that never quite made it into production...

> ***Kendo Nagasaki's ITV Wrestling Showdown*** **(1985)**
Would have pre-dated *Street Fighter II* by a full six years. Cancelled due to most of its main stars dying before they could be motion captured.

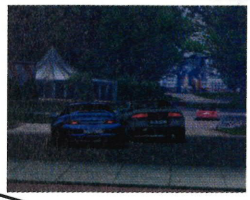
> ***Capcom Vs Neighbours*** **(1988)**
A failed attempt at breaking into the difficult Australian market, *CVsN* was planned to capitalise on the hype surrounding Scott and Charlene's wedding. Delayed due to rocketing pop careers, then cancelled when Helen Daniels demanded to be included as the game's final boss.

> ***A-Team Vs Capcom*** **(1985)**
The slow yet strong Mr T, or the light and fast but not as powerful Murdoch? The tactical expertise of Hannibal, or the slick combat skills of the Face-man? Sadly, we'll never know who was the hardest 'Teamer – Capcom couldn't get to America, due to its lead programmer insisting, "I ain't going on no plane."

> ***Boy Band Battle Team Ex Alpha*** **(1994)**
Hoping to appeal to both fighting fans and the untapped pre-teen girl pop market, *Boy Band* was due to be the largest ever gathering of boy bands in one place. Hit problems when Robbie's departure from Take That threw the boy band market into a downward spiral.

> **Paul Oakenfold's Disco Attack (1998)**
While in Japan playing to an exclusive Capcom party arranged for Ryu's 30th birthday, Paul accidentally played a Kylie Minogue record, bringing back painful memories of Street Fighter: The Movie and creating all-out chaos at the party. Paul must fight each *Street Fighter* character if he's to leave Japan alive. Cancelled after Paul refused to remix the *Street Fighter* tunes, commenting, "They were doing my head in, man."

> ***Michael Barrymore's Mobile Assault Vehicle Gamma*** **(1992)**
Michael steps up to fight alien invaders in a specially designed robotic bodysuit. In space. Thought up by Capcom execs during a beery lunch break. Didn't get past the drawing board stage.



METROPOLIS NOW

YESTERDAY WE DROVE A MITSUBISHI FTO THROUGH THE STREETS OF LONDON AT 180 MPH. THE POLICE CAN'T TOUCH US FOR IT. WELCOME TO THE ASTONISHING WORLD OF METROPOLIS STREET RACER...

Initially, we were sceptical. We'd heard about a revolutionary racing title based around an entirely new gameplay system and featuring hugely realistic renditions of Tokyo, San Francisco and London. We'd heard about the months of painstaking research. We had even seen a few impressive screenshots. But still we were unconvinced. The videogame industry is very good at creating hype. All it needs is a few touched-up pics, a good PR campaign and a developer prepared to shout, "This is the best game since X." But the weird thing is Bizarre Creations has never claimed anything for Metropolis Street Racer. It's prepared to let the game speak for itself. And having visited Bizarre, seen the game and talked to the team, we know why.

MEAN STREETS

www.dc-uk.co.uk On the Net

MSR **is based in San Francisco, Tokyo and London – one city for each of Sega's major business territories and all jam-packed with well-known locations. Instead of trying to build the entire cities, the artists have selected three interesting sections from each, taking into consideration both the visual impact of the surrounding architecture and the racing potential of the road layouts. These nine areas have then been used to construct at least 20 different routes each, all based on actual street plans, which means there are over 200 circuits in the game. Here the game's artists guide us around these areas (they're all around 1.5-2 square miles) and tell us why they've been chosen.**

SAN FRANCISCO

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

- This is the touristy coastal area, boasting views of Pier 39 and Alcatraz island. Glen Griffiths let us drive around for a while, cruising Beach Street and Jefferson Street in a black MX-5. Some big dips and a vicious hairpin turn coming into Leavenworth Street were the highlights of our intro to the area.

THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT

- Chock-a-block with postmodern skyscrapers, the business district of San Fran provides loads of good intersections to speed through, and some amazing architecture to gawp at in the process, including the TransAmerican Pyramid – a bizarre 850ft mall, reproduced exactly to scale. You may never see the top of it in the game, but it is there.

PACIFIC HEIGHTS

- Made famous by the car chase in Bullitt, this is a rigidly-blocked district of older properties and giddy hills. The gothic-style architecture is especially impressive. "We walked down one street and saw this Gotham City-type building and thought, we have to have this in the game," explains Mark Sharratt, "This is a cool place to live, but very expensive."

TOKYO

SHIBUYA

- The main square of this nightlife hotspot is surrounded by neon adverts. Artist Jon Dugdale drove us through, and it looks staggering, with manga posters and TV monitors looming over the roads. There's also a huge open-plan bus station where some of the driving challenges take place.

SHINJUKU

- Futuristic skyscrapers dominate the business and financial area of the city. "We chose this section for its sheer scale," explains Jon, "The majority of the buildings are over 200 metres in height and some of them are circuits in themselves." He then drives into a vast underground car park, screeches around it and zooms out into the Tokyo night.

ASAKUSA

- The main religious area of the city, where ancient temples and bustling street markets nestle between skyscrapers – a contrast that attracted the artists. "There are loads of long straights, but also plenty of narrow rabbit runs." notes Paul Spencer. His car emerges from a covered market into a courtyard in front of Tokyo's main temple. A breathtaking vista.

LONDON

WESTMINSTER

- Big Ben, County Hall and even the tiny Florence Nightingale pub next to St Thomas's Hospital have all been included in this varied location. The circuits take in two bridges crossing the Thames at this point, and there are plenty of roundabouts; "An interesting challenge when racing," comments Derek Chapman.

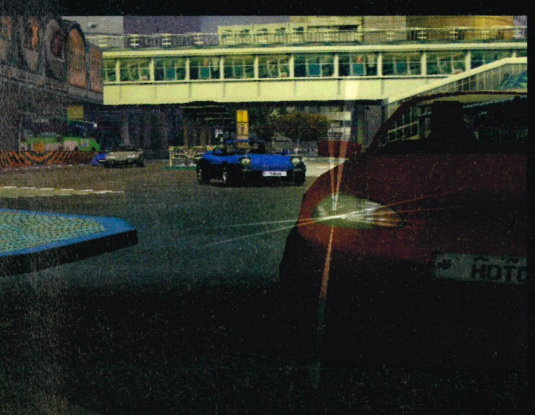
TRAFALGAR

- The tourist heart of the West End, taking in Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus and, of course, Trafalgar Square. Anyone who knows London will recognise the areas immediately. "A friend of mine was talking about a tiny Tibetan restaurant he'd been to on Irving Street off Piccadilly Circus," says Julie McGurren, "I checked the game, and sure enough, we'd put it in."

ST JAMES'S PARK

- Based around London's government and royal areas. The long tree-lined Birdcage Walk contrasts well with the open-plan Horse Guards Parade, and you get a glimpse of Downing Street as you drive by. You can even drive through St James's Park – with the difference in surface resistance between grass and tarmac noticeable in the handling.

"MSR IS A REVOLUTIONARY RACING TITLE BASED AROUND AN ENTIRELY NEW GAMEPLAY SYSTEM"



Note: All the images used in this feature are taken from work in progress. For the final version of the game Bizarre Creations and Sega Europe are applying for licences to use the various company names and trademarks visible here. Any that are not secured will be removed from the final product.

But first, the basics. *Metropolis Street Racer* is, as the name implies, an urban driving game. It's not *Gran Turismo*, and doesn't want to be. You can't collect 276 cars and shove them in your garage (there are over 30 models in the game, but the most you're allowed to own is six at a time) and the system of progression is totally different. We can't go into details, unfortunately, as Sega wants to keep it all a surprise. What we can tell you is that it's also not an arcade bash-about like, say, *Tokyo Highway Challenge*. "It's all about driving well," says a very tired-looking Martyn Chudley, Managing Director of the company and still a lead programmer, "It's not just about speed; it's about being in full control of the car and driving it with style, finesse and care." Consequently, the game isn't simply a series of races – it also includes driving challenges that fully exploit the opportunities provided by the huge, realistically modelled city areas. The roundabouts, the city squares, the wide-open bus bays – they're all there for a reason. Think about it. And unlike many racing games, you won't be finishing this in two days flat.

At the same time, however, the handling allows for super cool powerslides, wheel spins and other boy racer manoeuvres. In fact these show-off stunts are another integral part of the gameplay, woven into the unusual set-up. Bizarre knows that burning rubber is fun. This is not a sim either.

So what is it and where did it come from?

To answer that we have to go back... back... back into time... [Cue weird, swirly music and psychedelic lights.]

It's 1996 and a Sega producer named Kats Sato is wandering around the European Computer Trade show when a particularly good-looking game catches his eye on the Psygnosis stand. The game is *F1*, a visually stunning and highly accurate Formula One sim for the PlayStation which will later go on to sell 2 million copies. Unfortunately, Psygnosis isn't letting on who developed the title, so Sato-san sneakily switches the demo unit off and asks an attendant to re-boot it. The Bizarre Creations

METROPOLIS NOW

"BIG BEN WILL SHOW THE CORRECT TIME – DRAWN FROM DREAMCAST'S INTERNAL CLOCK"

logo appears. He jots it down and vows to get in touch with the company.

A while later, influenced perhaps by games like *Ridge Racer* and *Gti Club Cote D'azur*, Sega begins looking for someone to develop an urban driving game for the forthcoming Dreamcast. Bizarre Creations is signed up for the job, and decides to set it in San Francisco, London and Tokyo, all laden with globally recognised landmarks. Then the artists set about modelling tiny sections of each – a famous square here, a world-renowned building there – which they plan to link together with imaginary streets based on the architecture of the original cities. But that doesn't seem to be enough. So, over the next two and a half years, they build nine completely realistic areas which reproduce in fine detail key sections of the cities. Which brings us to the present day.

Fortunately, the gameplay has evolved alongside the artists' ambitions. As the number of possible circuits multiplied, Chudley and co realised a standard 'choose car, choose circuit' racer wouldn't be possible – there was no way they could store detailed time targets and checkpoints for 200 tracks. So they began to formulate a new progression system, taking advantage partly of Dreamcast's unique in-built extras. And that's the bit we can't tell you about. They were still fine-tuning the system when we saw them and they'll probably keep plugging away until Sega turns up in a big black truck and prises the game from their work-worn fingers.

Whatever Sega has had to go through during this helter-skelter dev process, though, it's going to have been worth it. Having watched several of the 30 beautifully modelled cars cruising through each of the areas, it's clear *MSR* is a testament to the

01 The official car licences mean the streets have to be empty, ie, no suicidal pedestrians
02 Huge chevron boards block closed sections of the areas. These are moved around during the game to open various different routes
03 There are six cars in each race. Plenty

01 Tokyo at night – an amazing environment for driving
02 The square layout of Pacific Heights may look dull, but the wide streets allow for excellent powerslides

BUILDING THE CITIES

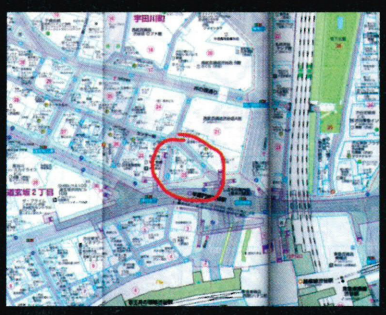
***MSR* features the most accurate virtual city streets ever created. But how did Bizarre manage it? We take a step-by-step guide...**

1 The first step in recreating the cities was to decide on which areas of San Francisco, Tokyo and London to base the game in. For this the artists studied tourist guides keeping an eye out for interesting architecture and road systems with racing potential. They eventually settled on the nine areas we will see in the final game.

2 Next, Mark and Jon from Bizarre, and Jose from Sega packed their bags and actually visited the three cities, gathering maps and guides, and walking along each of the many streets taking photos of every building along the way. "We almost got arrested once for taking photos of this guy's house," confesses Mark, "Another bloke got so excited when we told him what we were doing that he invited us around the back to photograph his garage. We declined." They eventually took over 30,000 reference photographs and many hours of video footage.

3 When they got home the initial task was to model the topography of each city, getting all the heights and contours of the land exactly correct. For this they used government survey maps, land usage data, and aerial photographs – all of which are 'filed' around the office.

4 Next came the task of modelling the roads and scenic detail. And that doesn't just mean the buildings – every object over a metre in height is in the game, including pot plants lining the road, and adverts and signs on the fronts of shops. Bizarre's 2D artist Gren Atherton has scanned photos and used them as textures to create the surfaces of buildings and the ads and signs. The effect is so realistic that Bizarre has had to approach many of the shops and advertisers for their permission to feature them in the game. They've had to change a few of the Japanese neon ads in Shibuya, as they turned out to be advertising pornography. Oops.



01 The contrast in surfaces between the gravel of Horse Guards Parade (in the background) and the Tarmac of the road will be noticeable in the handling 02 Each window light is a separate texture so they can go on or off individually. Most games simply tile the same texture over the entire building 03 Nelson's legs!

PHATMOBILES

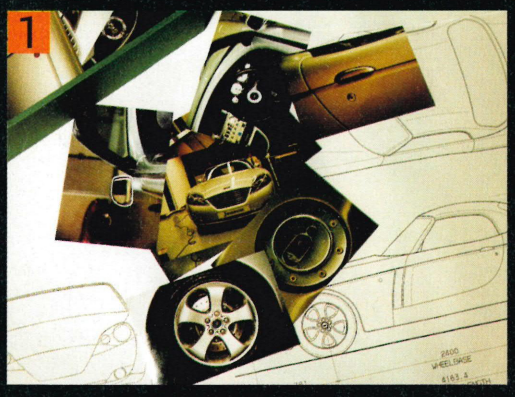
MSR **features just over 30 cars based closely on real models. Toyota, Audi, Mitsubishi, Fiat, TVR and Rover have all lent their most desirable vehicles, with the likes of the Lancer Evo 6, FTO and Toyota Supra making this a gritty urban line-up – definitely more Max Power than Car magazine. And here's how they made 'em…**

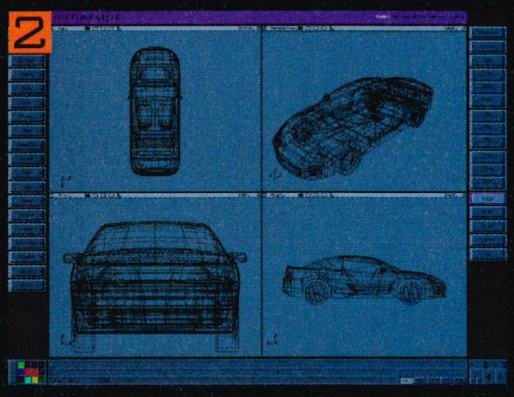
1 First, the car artists Steve Heaney and Lee Carter got hold of all the information they could on each of the models. This varied from brochures and manufacturers' plans, to hundreds of photographs taken at motor shows and car showrooms. "Some of the small manufacturers were particularly helpful," says Steve, "They were up for any publicity they could get. Ford were great as well. They sent us accurate computer schematics of the Mustang, for example."

2 Steve then used these plans as a point of reference to build complex wireframe models of each car. This process usually takes a day, although some models have been easier than others. "The Mitsubishi FTO was my favourite," comments Steve, "It went together like a dream."

3 The wireframe models were then passed over to Lee Carter, who added the textures to give each car those desirable contours. "I get excited by the backs of cars now," admits Lee happily, "I like doing the grills; that's why I like the Jenson. Look at those grills! I want to touch them." We try to get away, but not before he tells us that his favourite car would be a Ford Transit van. With a double bed in the back. We create a diversion and leg it.

4 Finally, all the peripheral details were added. The lights are texture maps taken directly from photographs of the cars. The driver in each vehicle uses the steering wheel to mimic your driving and even changes gear.





"HAVING SEEN THE BEAUTIFULLY MODELLED CARS, IT'S CLEAR MSR IS TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF DREAMCAST"

power of Dreamcast. According to Bizarre, the machine's huge 8Mb of V-RAM (the area of memory which stores texture mapping information) as well as its excellent texture compression system means that a whole area can be loaded into memory at once. There is no slowdown because graphical detail isn't being streamed from CD, and buildings never suddenly pop up right in front of you. Which means gliding down the slopes of Pacific Heights, spinning through the neon-drenched chaos of Shibuya or exploring Westminster (complete with a Big Ben that actually shows the correct time – drawn from your Dreamcast's internal clock) can all be done at an ultra smooth 30 fps. Amazing stuff.

When we visited Bizarre, the 17-strong team was just putting the finishing touches to the game. While the artists were filling in the obsessive graphical detail (Jon Dugdale was painting shadows under stationary buses, someone else was drawing in Home, the massive club that's just opened on Leicester Square), Martyn Chudley was busy tweaking the handling, ensuring a mix of realism and playability. They are quietly confident about what they're doing, but they're also disarmingly humble. "At the end of the day, whether people will like it or not, I don't know," says Chudley in a rare break from coding, "But the way it's ended up has been down to luck and continually throwing ideas around. What works for us is sitting and playing the game and working at it until we like it – and then we hope that everyone else does too. We're just creating a game that *we* want to play."

They don't have much to worry about. Anyone who's ever lived in London and fantasised about speeding through empty streets, powersliding round the Houses of Parliament or pulling off donuts outside the Odeon cinema in Leicester Square will have their desires realised. Honestly, it's going to become a kind of rage therapy for gridlocked city dwellers. And those Tokyo rude boys who blast round Shibuya in banana yellow Nissan Skylines are finally going to have somewhere to practise before they risk their prized vehicles. It's too early to talk about a revolution, but the storm clouds are certainly gathering. Let's end on a cliché: driving games may never be the same again

TOBY GARD

The man who invented a cultural icon gives us the lowdown on life after Lara and his forthcoming Dreamcast premiere

PROFILE

- **Name:** Toby Gard
- **Title:** Creative Director, Confounding Factor
- **History:** Toby's been in the videogame business for seven years and is rightly famous for being the Baron Frankenstein who created a popular culture monster named, Lara Croft. Since leaving Core Design three years ago, Toby and *TR* lead programmer Paul Douglas have formed the development studio Confounding Factor and have been busy working on their adventure epic, *Galleon*. Confounding Factor's first game is one of Dreamcast's most anticipated releases and is due out in the Summer.

Go to the most inhospitable outskirts of Siberia and you'll probably find a family huddled round the TV playing Tomb Raider. That is the legacy of Toby Gard, the man who gave Lara to the world, but if TR is gaming's past and present, then his new game, Galleon, could be its future...

How did you get into the industry?
I went straight from being an unemployed layabout to working at Core Design. I applied for a job there because I'd spent a couple of years producing artwork and animation demos on my Amiga at home, and it seemed like a good idea to try and make money as well as having fun. Core employed me on the strength of these demos, and I was put to work on a game called *BC Racers*. I was thrown in at the deep-end; having to generate all the graphics. The game didn't turn out very good, though. I never really liked that Hannah Barbera style of cutesy racing game, so my heart wasn't really in it.

After that I proposed the idea for *Tomb Raider* to a baffled audience. The general consensus was that it was an impossibly ambitious design. Luckily, one programmer believed in it, and on the strength of his support we were given the go-ahead. That was Paul Douglas, lead programmer of *Tomb Raider* and the other director of Confounding Factor.

Why did you leave Core Design?
Well, it was just a simple wish to develop games that we would own the rights to, instead of making them for someone else all the time.

In hindsight are you glad you made the move?
Yeah, definitely. We have far more freedom and control over the the things we do and it's nice to have the ability to set up a working environment exactly the way we think is best for us. On the downside, it's hard to get hold of good people before you've made a name for yourself, and there are all the extra pressures of management.

How does it feel to be the bloke who unleashed Lara Croft on an unsuspecting world?
It's very strange sometimes, although I mostly feel disassociated from it. After all, it's three years now since we left Core and Lara behind.

Your new title, Galleon, is also a thirdperson adventure game. Were you tempted to go in a completely new direction to avoid lazy comparisons with Tomb Raider?
Not really, *Galleon* is a much stronger stab at what we were trying to do when we made *Tomb Raider*. *Galleon* is a much more story-based game centered around a buccaneering sea captain called Rhama Sabrier. He and his crew sail the world, getting caught up in adventures and the unwelcome attentions of mythical beasts. The story is very strong and extremely well integrated into the game. I think the control system's much better too. *Galleon* is an analogue game, and has been right from the start. We wanted to retain the smooth animation we'd achieved in *TR*, but lose the cumbersome control problems that we'd introduced as a result. We've also eliminated the camera problems that people always complain about.

How did you arrive at the concept for Galleon and what were your initial objectives?
We wanted to do something stylistically different after *Tomb Raider*. I mean Lara could jump extraordinarily high, but all in all, it was trying to stay pretty realistic in style.

Galleon is a rebellion against those kinds of constraints; with very exaggerated movement, characters and locations. We wanted to do something like the old Ray Harryhausen films: Sinbad, Jason and the Argonauts, Clash of the Titans. Then we sat down and thought about what sort of system we'd need for that kind of game, and realised it would have to be able to do absolutely anything. And it can.

Our fighting and movement is based on those fabulous fly-by-wire Kung Fu films that The Matrix has made so popular. We've added personality to the characters, with some very nice full-body and facial animation. Plus each island has lots of different things to do on them; which will keep people occupied in-between fighting the giant Harryhausen monsters.

What are your ambitions for the future of Confounding Factor?
It's one step at a time as far as I'm concerned. We aren't interested in any large expansion – we're just going to concentrate on finishing *Galleon*, then we'll see what happens ■

www.dc-uk.co.uk On the Net

"*Galleon* is a much stronger stab at what we were trying to do **when we made *Tomb Raider***"

COLIN MALLORY

He's been in the industry for 45 years, he collects fish and distributes Sega coin-ops in the UK. Mr Mallory, we salute you

PROFILE

- **Name:** Colin Mallory
- **History:** In 1954, at the age of 14, Colin began his career in coin-ops at Battersea Park Funfair, where he worked part-time for a company named Ruffler & Walker Ltd. Nowadays he's Managing Director of UK Sega Sales at Deith Leisure, where he's worked for the past 23 years. Deith is responsible for sales and distribution of Sega coin-ops throughout the United Kingdom.

Few people in today's arcade industry have been there as long as Sega. Colin Mallory is one of them. Now MD of Sales at Deith leisure – a wholly owned subsidiary of Sega Amusements – Mallory met the owner of a Battersea Funfair arcade at a boxing club in the early '50s and was offered a job. 45 years later, he now ensures that arcade operators throughout the UK stock Sega games. He's forgotten more about coin-ops than most of us will ever know. So what were arcade games like half a century ago? Predictably, that's the first question we put to him.

What was the business like when you started at Battersea Park Funfair?
Most games in our centre were wall machines which returned the coin when you got a winner or gave you a Players cigarette. In the coming years, jukeboxes and pinball's played a major part, and the operation of fruit machines started, but this was a very grey area. Controversies in those days were many, with unlicensed machines being operated in strange places like greengrocer shops.

Are there any moments in the business you would rather forget?
When Corton Beach bought Deith Leisure and eventually went into receivership. That cost me a considerable amount of money, so it's one I would really like to forget.

How has the business changed over the last five years, and how has this affected Deith?
Technology has changed the business dramatically, particularly in the videogame market. Many large operators have become the sole suppliers of machines to public houses, and through acquisitions they've taken smaller operators out of the business. The only plus was the opening of family entertainment centres, like Sega World and Namco Wonderland. Deith was able to take advantage of these changes and continued to grow through these years.

Which have been your favourite Sega games over the years?
Daytona 1 was the most revolutionary driving game of its time and sales were at an all-time high. Close behind comes *Sega Rally*. Sega has produced many good games, but these two will always stand out.

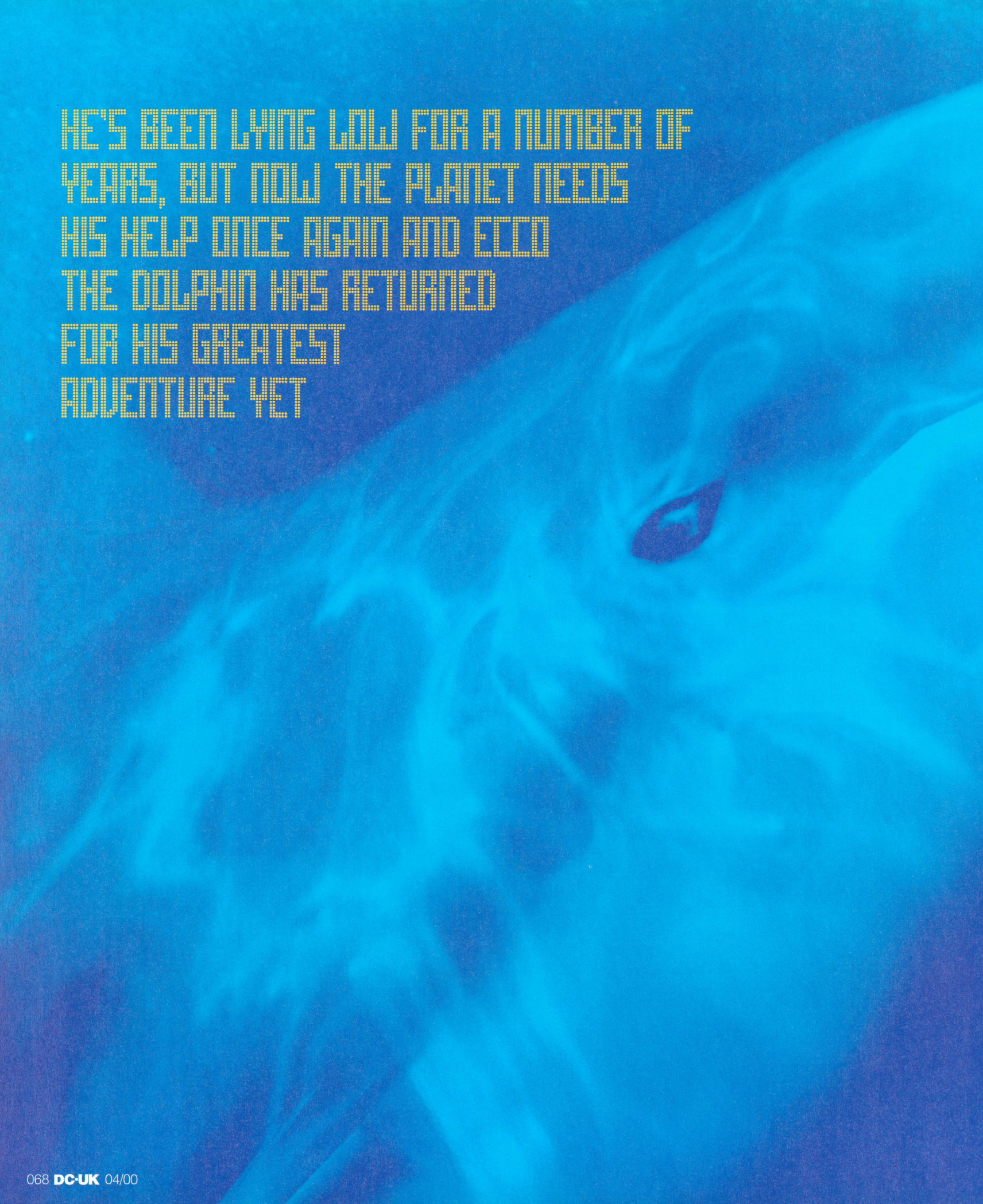
How is the arcade business today? Where is the money being made? Where is it being lost?
Never before has disposable income been under so much pressure in the leisure market. The arcade business is finding it hard to get its share of the leisure pound. There are some arcades doing extremely well, but many have closed down in the last few years; arcades that have not reinvested in new equipment are suffering. Also there's a lack of visitors at resorts; it's more expensive to spend a fortnight in somewhere like Great Yarmouth than on the Costa Brava.

Has Naomi had a big impact on the arcade business? Which games have been popular?
Naomi has had a tremendous impact; its pricing structure is acceptable, the graphic quality exceptional and cabinet design futuristic. Games like *The House of the Dead 2* and *Virtua Tennis* have been very successful sales wise. The latter in particular is played by all ages and earning high income in many different locations.

What do you do at the weekends to escape the arcade business?
I live on the coast and have a large pond of 35 Koi carp. Every weekend I attend to the fish. I'm also an avid collector and visit antique fairs all over the country. I'm probably one of the largest collectors of whisky in the South of England. All this, together with my garden, which I love, keeps me busy ■

"The **arcade business** is finding it hard to **get its share of the leisure pound**"

Photography: **Nick Wilson**


HE'S BEEN LYING LOW FOR A NUMBER OF
YEARS, BUT NOW THE PLANET NEEDS
HIS HELP ONCE AGAIN AND ECCO
THE DOLPHIN HAS RETURNED
FOR HIS GREATEST
ADVENTURE YET

WELCOME TO WATER WORLD

WORDS: LEE HART

At the last count, two thirds of the Earth's surface was covered by water and with the ecological nightmare of global warming looming over us, this figure will increase as sea levels rise and claim even more of our precious land. While this is undoubtedly a horrific prospect, there are a couple of advantages to the problem: firstly, the whole of East Anglia would be entirely flooded and lost forever like some kind of yokel Atlantis, and secondly, there will be more water for our lovely sea-dwelling friends to swim around in.

Ironically, considering the benefits global warming would pose for him and his kind, that 'green' dolphin known as Ecco is trying his level best to prevent it in his new ecological adventure, *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future*. Sega's aquatic mascot has been fighting to preserve the planet since 1993 when he first swam porpoisefully (sorry) onto Mega Drive (see page 073), and now he has returned for a Dreamcast quest that aims to attract a new generation of underwater explorers.

"FOR LONG STRETCHES YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF JUST SWIMMING AROUND ENJOYING THE SCENERY, PRACTISING YOUR ACROBATIC SKILLS"

Defender of the Future is set at a time of peace and harmony when man and nature exist in unity. This utopia is disrupted when an evil force creates a vortex to travel back in time with the intention of changing the course of history. As Ecco you must journey into the past and back to the future on a hazardous mission to prevent the invaders' heinous plans and defend our beautiful planet.

The adventure is divided into a number of different worlds and within each there are several environments to explore (there's a massive 32 levels in all). The first world is Crystal Bay, a picturesque island with coral reefs, underground caves, tunnel mazes and lakes. The other realms take you from the lost city of Atlantis to underwater mining plants polluting the atmosphere, villages of mutant dolphins and a final confrontation with the queen of the malignant alien force.

As with its predecessors, Ecco's new title is a refreshingly unconventional alternative to the videogame norm. While beat 'em ups, racing games and shoot 'em ups have been the dominant genres since the birth of videogames, there has to be room for innovative, unorthodox games that provide a different kind of interactive experience, and the *Ecco* games are a perfect example of this. Unfortunately, because of its offbeat gameplay, there's a danger *Defender of the Future* may get lost amid the hordes of instant-appeal, arcade-oriented titles on the Dreamcast market. Which would be a terrible shame.

Admittedly, though, the passive nature of *Ecco* probably won't appeal to every type of gamer out there. Although there is a story to uncover, puzzles to solve and battles to fight, the game could hardly be described as a hyperkinetic action-fest. Instead, it's a slow-burner; more of an experience than a normal videogame. For long stretches you'll find yourself just swimming around enjoying the scenery (it would take around 30 hours to explore the whole world of the game), practising your acrobatic skills and popping up to the surface for a nosey around.

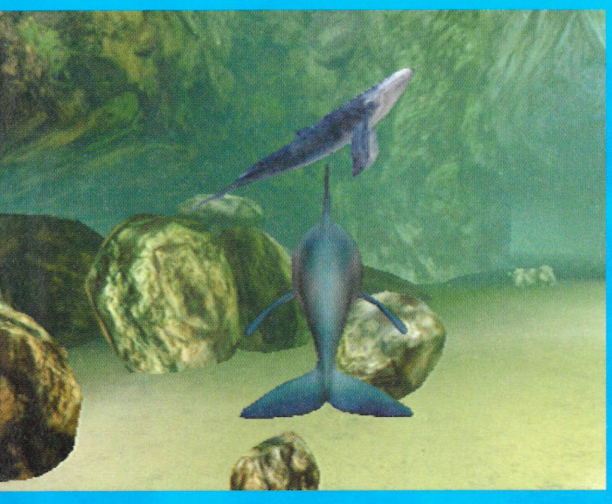
One area where *Ecco* will have universal appeal is in its magnificent visuals. It seems every new game that comes into the office causes us to declare, "These are the best graphics ever!" We thought *Sonic Adventure* could not be improved upon, then *Soul Calibur* came along and blew our socks off; *Shenmue*'s arrival set a new benchmark, one that was matched almost immediately by the glorious *Code: Veronica*. *Defender of the Future* is right up there with the best lookers on Dreamcast and contains the most impressive underwater world yet seen in a videogame. The superbly detailed and animated aquatic creatures, and the beautifully diverse seascapes will take your breath away. Anyone who has been afraid to go back in the water since watching Jaws can play this game and experience a wholly convincing world beneath the waves, without even having to get their feet wet ■

In the following pages we explore the depths of Ecco's seaworld and analyse its unique gameplay. So, don a metaphorical snorkel and wetsuit and join us for a swim around one of Dreamcast's most anticipated releases

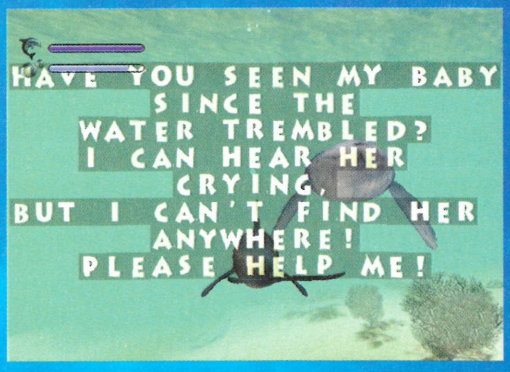
SONAR SO GOOD

An integral part of *Defender of the Future* is communication: from learning new skills to discovering mission objectives and uncovering plot points, every aspect of the gameplay revolves around conversing with fellow sea creatures. At the beginning of the game you'll be able to use your sonar to chat to fellow dolphins and join in their fish catching games (charge into the fishies to catch them in your teeth), and natter to a sperm whale and her baby who encourages you to practise your fancy leaping skills.

These examples are cunning in-game training sequences that help you get used to controlling *Ecco* and once you've mastered the art of being a dolphin you can go and explore Crystal Bay and take the first tentative strokes into the adventure. Along the sea wall at the right of the bay is the Gate to Atlantis. If you swim past the gate a rockslide occurs and this event is the catalyst for the game's first puzzle, which we call Whale Rescue.



The basis of this puzzle is sonar communication. 1) Firstly, head over to the mother sperm whale and she tells you her baby is missing and asks for your help. Go to the rockslide and have a word with the poor little mite who is well and truly trapped. You won't achieve anything by working alone, so find the dolphin leader and he'll call a couple of fellow dolphins to form a rescue posse. 2) Swim to the rockslide, charge into the bottom rock and you will start a chain reaction that brings the whole lot down, resulting in a handy gap allowing the baby to escape. Follow him back to his mum and he'll tell you of a way into Atlantis from the coral reef area. Accompany him to the reef and you can swim through to the next level ■



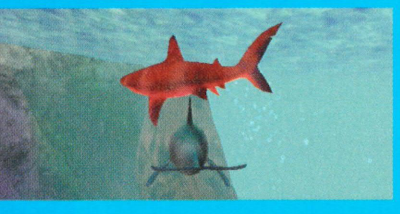
01 Shark fights sort the men from the boys. Ram into them near the surface and observe the comedy moment of a fearsome Great White being propelled out of the water while yelping like a big girl's blouse
02 Jaws 5: This Time It's Personal, starring Ecco and Bruce the shark
03 Later on in the game you'll come across a village of mutant dolphins who have evolved into a species who can breathe underwater. As you can see, they don't take kindly to Ecco's sudden appearance

"ATTEMPTING TO COMMUNICATE WITH SHARKS ONLY ALERTS THEM TO YOUR PRESENCE AND PROMPTS THEM TO BEGIN HUNTING YOU DOWN"

DEEP FIGHTER

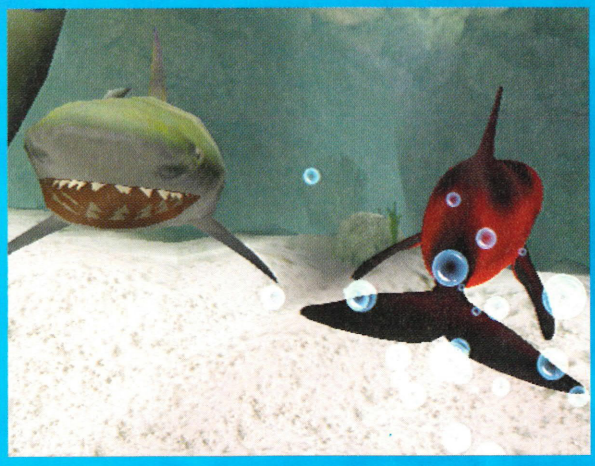
So, you've reached the second level and all thanks to the power of sonar, but in the coral reef area you'll soon discover that, while dolphins and whales may be perfectly receptive to your incessant talking, if you try and chat with mean old sharks you're going to have a fight on your hands. As if those big, psychopathic fish need any encouragement to take a bite out of something, actually attempting to communicate with sharks only alerts them to your presence and prompts them to begin hunting you down.

01



When sharks attack there's a Jaws-style swelling of foreboding music and you must charge out of the way sharpish to avoid getting mauled. It's not just sharks, though; the oceans are full of things that will bite or sting you given half the chance. Octopuses, jellyfish, rays and eels are all up for a scrap and there's also plenty of plant-life that will deplete your health if you swim too close.

02



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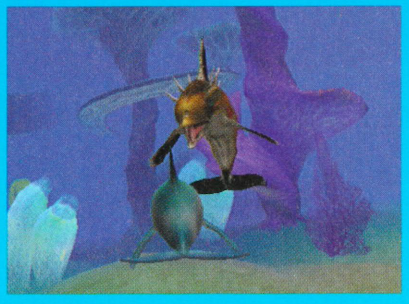


Ecco isn't an innocent abroad however, oh no, not this bottlenosed bruiser. He may look permanently cheerful but, as in his previous adventures, the dolphin is perfectly capable of mixing it when he has to. Using the charge move you can smash into the various sea predators and drain their energy. Naturally this will provoke them into retaliation but if you keep avoiding their attacks and ramming them, even the hardest creatures with the sharpest teeth can be dispatched.

Should you be on the receiving end of a tear-up, health can be replenished by eating various fish swimming around minding their own business. But be sure to keep a mental note of which fish equal tasty food because some of them are poisonous and cost you precious health ■

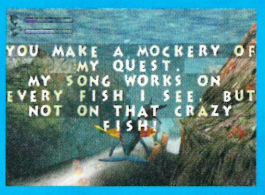
01

ECCO'S WATER MUSIC

As with the earlier *Ecco* titles, there are numerous extra abilities for the mammal to collect, ranging from power-ups such as Extra Strength, Extra Health, Extra Air and Invisibility (which are available as pick-up items on most levels) to the more substantial songs of the ocean. There are four of these ditties to collect – fish, shark, ray and turtle songs – and it's essential to learn them in order to progress through later stages of the game.

The fish song can be added to your inventory in the sharks' lair area of the coral reef. You'll see a dolphin chasing madly after a rainbow-coloured fish without getting close to catching it. 1) You can show him how it's done by joining in the chase, boosting after the fish and catching it in your jaws. 2) The dolphin is stunned by your successful catch and informs you that his fish song works on all of them except this specific 'crazy fish'. 3) He then offers to teach you the fish song in exchange for you releasing his fishy nemesis and allowing him to continue his obsessive pursuit ■

02



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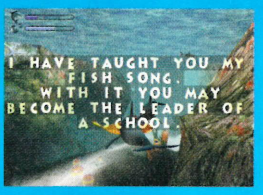
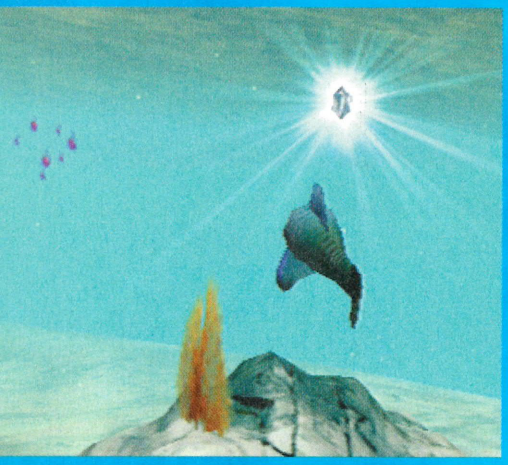
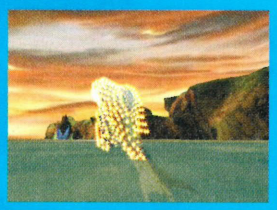
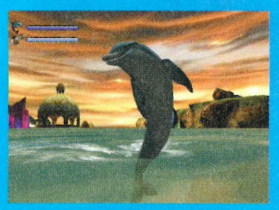




TRANSFORMERS (DOLPHINS IN DISGUISE)

Shapeshifters will be pleased to know that Ecco has retained the morphing talent that served him so well in previous adventures. This ability allows him to transform into numerous different sea-dwellers and it's a vital talent because several levels can only be accessed by morphing into a different form. For example, it's necessary to change into a fish to enter the Atlantis 3000 level. Once you're through to the lost city, just head up to the surface and bid farewell to your pathetic fishy body as the automatic transformation sequence turns Ecco back into his loveable dolphin form ■





HOT DOLPHIN ACTION

Despite the largely cerebral nature of the gameplay, *Defender of the Future* is not all puzzling, exploring, singing and morphing. There are plenty of action sequences to increase the excitement; including boss encounters and a cool stealth sequence á là *Metal Gear Solid* where you have to activate an alarm in a security compound to distract a guard, enabling you to rush through a door moments before it closes.

Another of our favourite action sequences is the eel chase. On this level a gigantic electric eel lurks in a tunnel, which you'll discover to your fatal cost if you try and enter it. To get past him in one piece you have to use a bit of nous. 1) Before going into the tunnel, collect the Invisibility power-up. 2) This will render you unseen just long enough to swim past the eel's cave, but when the invisibility wears off he will spot you in an instant, and so begins a frantic race to the end of the tunnel. 3) The eel fires bolts of electricity which (obviously) must be avoided and, in your haste to get away, it's imperative to keep an eye on your oxygen level and go up to the surface at an opportune moment. 4) Dodging the electricity not only keeps you healthy, but has the added advantage of the misfires opening up further passages of the tunnel to aid your escape. Just keep charging along and you'll be able to maintain your lead, burst through the exit and watch the tunnel close satisfyingly on your pursuer ■

04

01

02

03

ECCO FROM THE PAST

OKAY, SO IT SOUNDED LIKE A BAD IDEA. DOLPHIN + ROBERT MILES-STYLED SOUNDTRACK + A DISTINCT LACK OF DEATH OR RACING = FINANCIAL SUICIDE AND LARGE AMOUNTS OF EGG ON FACE. AH, BUT IN THE WACKY WORLD OF COMPUTER GAMES ANYTHING CAN (AND USUALLY WILL) HAPPEN

01

02

Ecco the Dolphin belly-flopped onto an unsuspecting Mega Drive audience at the tail end of 1993 and, bucking all conventional trends, was a remarkable success, with current sales standing at well over a million.

Controlling a dolphin through 30 levels, the game took the arcade/adventure mould and warped it into a frightening shape. Animation and control of Ecco was impressive for its day and despite a certain lack of opportunity for level design (water, water and, ahem, more water), the game actually appealed to the masses in such a way that it appeared (although just for a moment) that the future of games could swerve horrifically into the glitzy arena of loveable mammals, kindness and tranquillity... all washed down (or should that be up) with an Aphex Twin soundtrack.

"ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE WILL BE JUST AS ORIGINAL, ATMOSPHERIC AND INGENIOUS AS THE GAME THAT STARTED IT ALL"

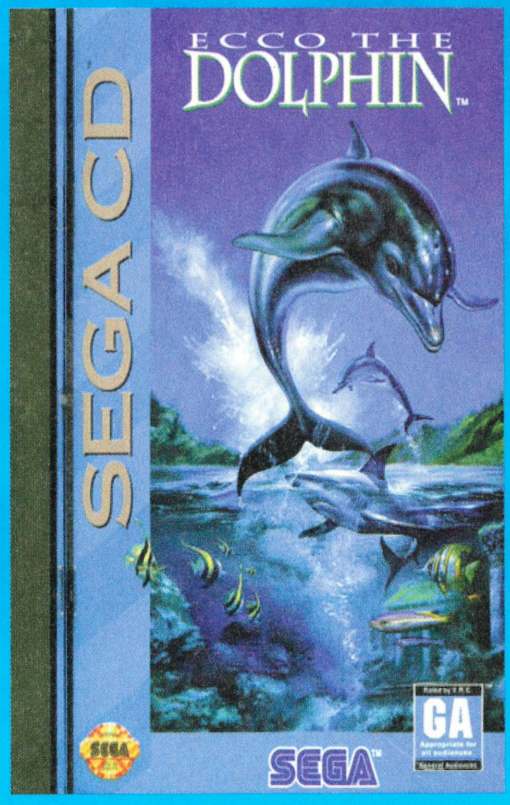
The bubble deflated slightly, though, and the inevitable sequel that appeared in the following year was more of the same, albeit with a much-requested semi-3D racing bonus stage, and the Mega CD, Game Gear and PC versions did little for our ageing mammal. As Sega tried to rope in younger gamers, it used the parent-pleasing *Ecco* in a further Mega Drive game (*Ecco Jr*) and in a module for the Sega 'mini console' the Pico.

Even the game's developer, Appaloosa, fell on rocky ground. Attempts to bring Ecco to the 32X failed and the ill-fated humming bird sim (no, honestly) *Kolibri* wasn't going to improve matters. With the Saturn, though, all eyes turned on Appaloosa once again and the particular fuel for that fire was sparked by a video from Japan that clearly showed an impressive 20 second FMV sequence of a rendered dolphin.

As stirring as this video clearly was, something clearly wasn't adding up correctly and the only original title you may remember from Appaloosa during those grey years was *Three Dirty Dwarves* – an instantly forgettable sideways scrolling beat 'em up.

But the new millennium brings a new beginning for our tuna boat-fearing chum and the obviously talented Appaloosa, as his new Dreamcast incarnation *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future* is just as original, atmospheric and ingenious as the game that started it all ■

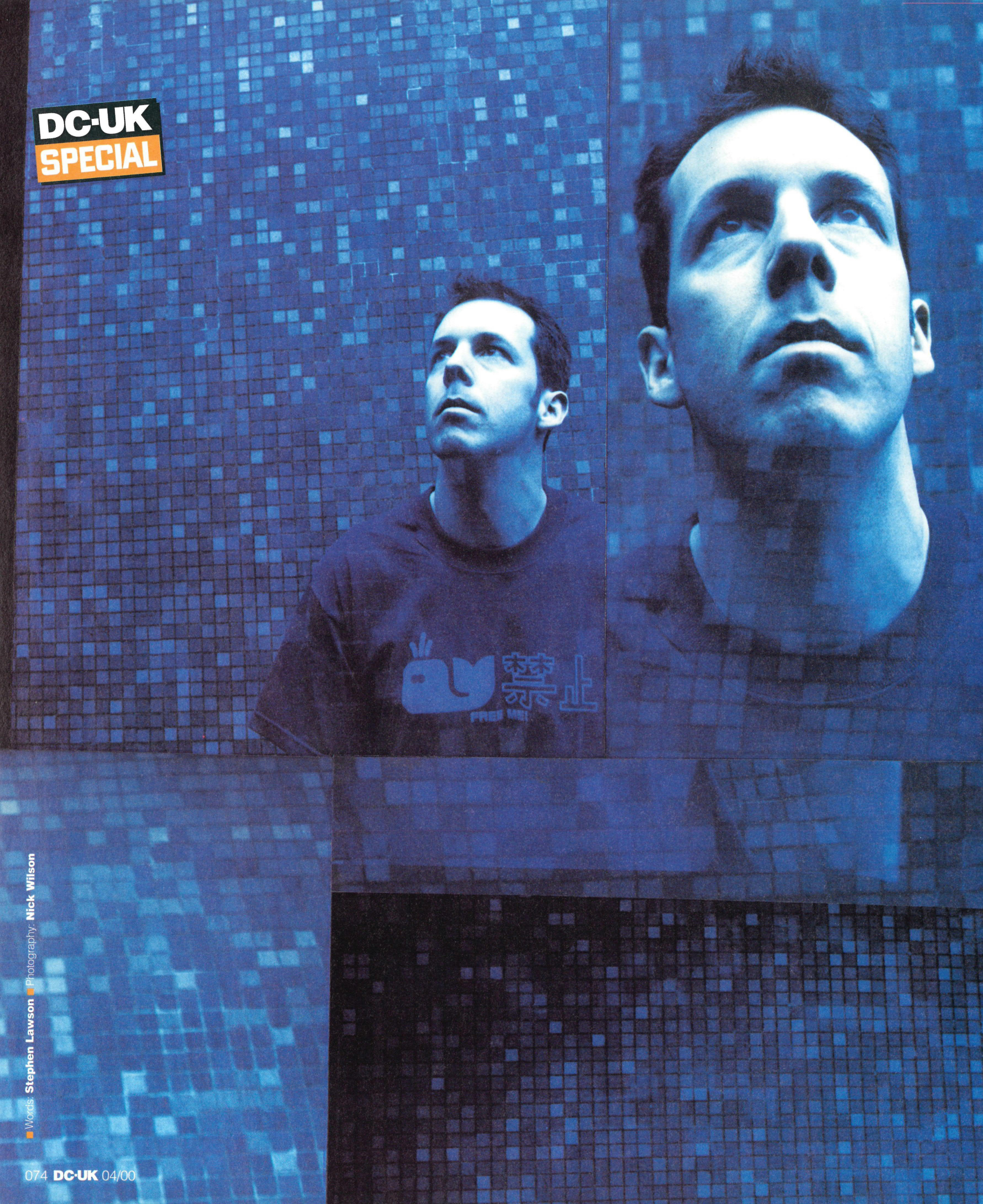
03



01 Ecco's inaugural appearance on Mega Drive was a breath of fresh air in an era of countless 2D shoot 'em ups and fighting games

02 *Ecco the Dolphin*'s classic side-on view makes a welcome reappearance in *Defender of the Future*'s maze-like Dark Caves levels

03 The *Ecco* sequel was also released on Sega's Mega CD debacle, which sold about as well as CJD-infected beef



Words: **Stephen Lawson** ■ Photography: **Nick Wilson**

DAVID JONES
VS ECCO THE DOLPHIN

In our quest for a dolphin expert we never expected to find a designer T-shirt-wearing conservationist – or an attempted military cover-up by the Pentagon...

The word conservation may stir up images of dreadlocked men with dogs on strings, hysterical protesters in motorboats, and dingy roadside caravan sites full of gaudily-painted mobile homes, but the true face of ecology is very different from the media stereotypes.

We must admit, though, on our way to meet David Jones at the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, we're wondering what awaits us. As open-minded people, we're loathe to admit it, but we're half-expecting a drafty shed and a team of volunteers in Arran sweaters.

Our preconceptions are blown away, however, when we enter the Society's reception, greeted by a well-groomed girl in fashionable dress. As we wait for David in the lobby we're impressed by a display of covers from a magazine produced by WDCS. David appears from behind a partition at the opposite side of the office and welcomes us over.

Despite the gruesome weather, he agrees to an outdoors location for his photo shoot. David even suggests he wear one of a range of T-shirts created for WDCS by designers such as Michiko Koshino, Red or Dead and Moschino – available to order from the Society's Website. (It seems modern conservation is more open-armed multimedia than raised-fist militancy). We agree on a shirt and set off through Bath in the rain.

An hour later, we're drying off in the games room as David dives into Ecco's world. "The movement's good," he says as he coaxes jumps and flips from the dolphin. "It's very realistic – though the swimming is quite frantic. Dolphins can swim fast, but they wouldn't spend all day speeding around like that."

As he elicits chirps from Ecco's beak, David is impressed by the sound effects: "It's quite eerie. It's refreshing to have a game that's not drilling into you," referring as much to the moments of silence as the cetaceans' calls and noisy spurts of movement.

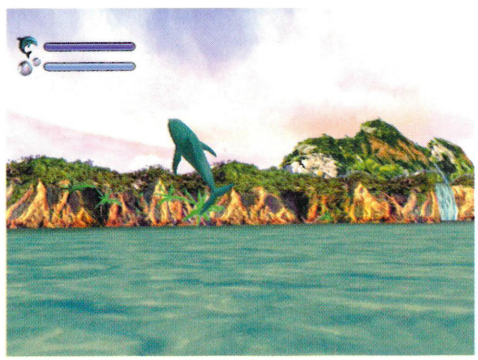
Not surprisingly, the message and pace of *Ecco* appeals to the Society's ecological bent: "It would be easy to jazz up a game like this, with Ecco jumping through hoops, etc, but the developers have captured the atmosphere of the dolphin's natural habitat. This allows people to experience dolphins without having to put them in a tank."

In the Pumping Station level, as Ecco swims past mines, David is reminded of the US and Russian militaries' use of dolphins in combat. "We made the news a couple of years ago when somebody

> "Dolphins have been **used by the military** to patrol harbours against divers"

from the Pentagon tried to 'get into' our Website – we believe to obtain a report we were about to publish on the export of military dolphins," he says. "All they had to do was wait a week until we published worldwide over the Net, but they seemed a little keen to read it first." So what are military dolphins used for? "They have been used to patrol harbour inlets against enemy divers and to place and retrieve mines and missiles underwater. The report exposed the trade of ex-military dolphins out of the old Soviet Union for use in dolphinariums, a practice we continue to campaign against."

As David places the controller on the table we ask him what his overall impressions of *Ecco* are. "It captures the experience very well – the sound, the eeriness. The graphics and the camera angles are particularly good. I think the developers have done a lot of research. It's quite a unique game. It's positive; dolphins in their own environment, doing things for the better." We're sure Appaloosa, a company that has pioneered the ecological adventure genre single-handedly since the original *Ecco* on Mega Drive, would be glad to hear that ■



PROFILE

■ David Jones is Systems Manager at the WDCS (Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society). He oversees supporter services and IT development within the Society. The WDCS is the largest organisation of its kind in the world and is dedicated to the protection of cetaceans and their environment. If you're interested in whale and dolphin conservation, the WDCS can be contacted on 01225 334511. The charity's Website can be viewed at www.wdcs.org.

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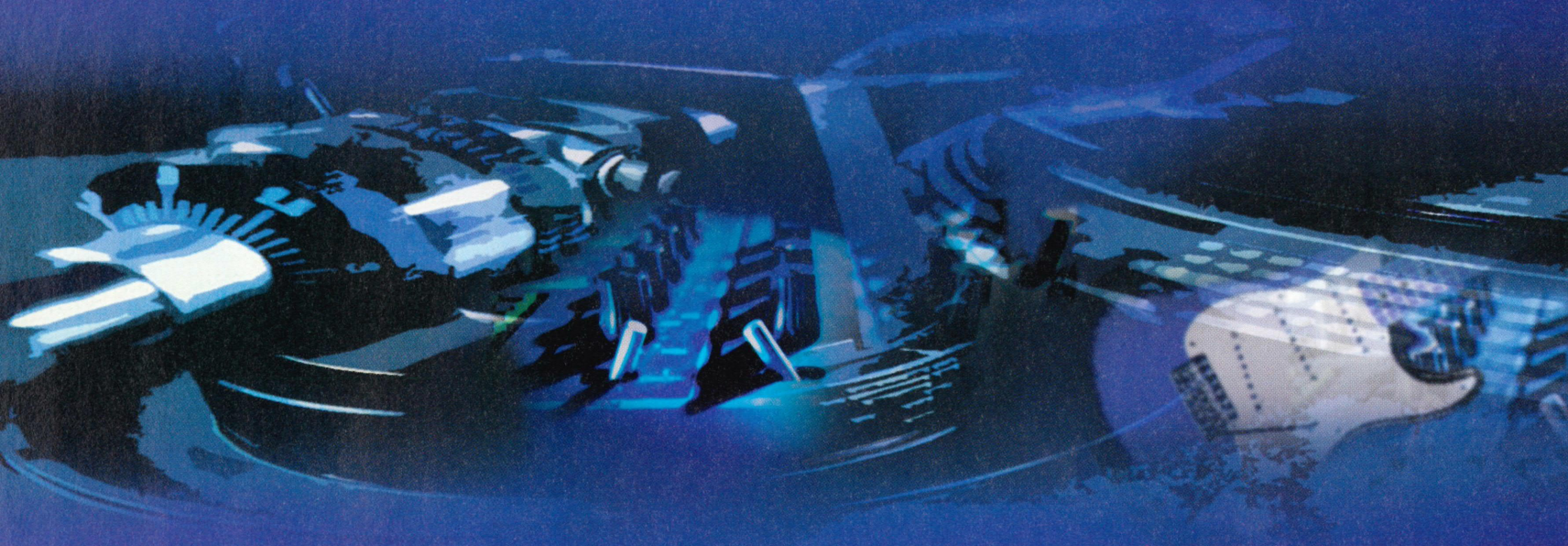

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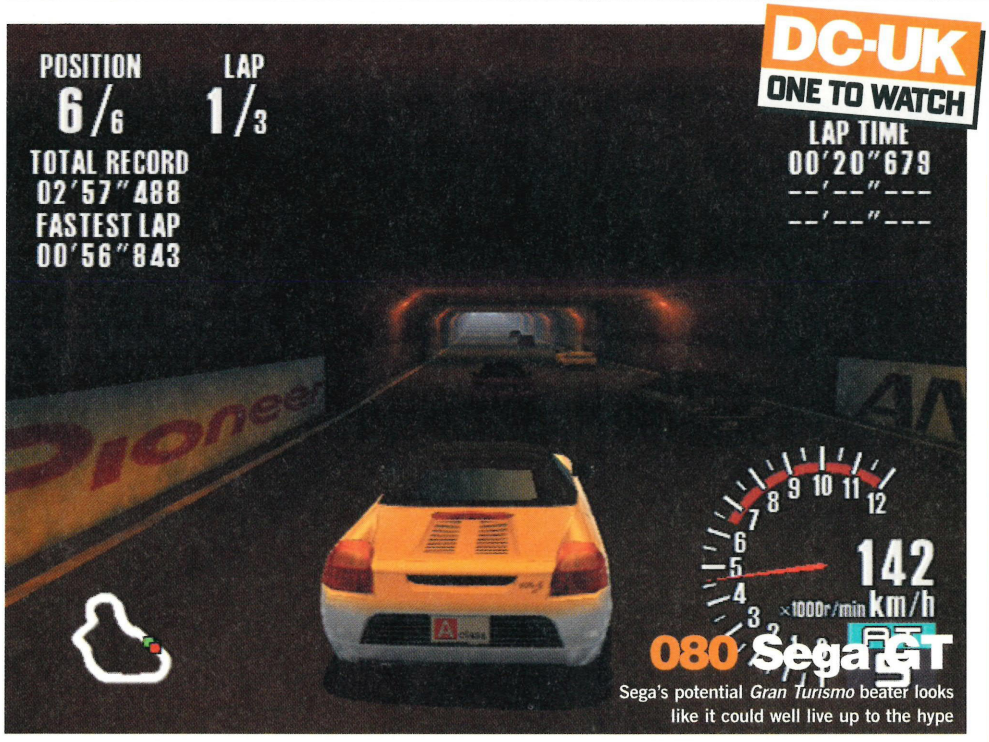


DC-UK ONE TO WATCH

Sega's potential *Gran Turismo* beater looks like it could well live up to the hype

PREVIEWS #08 04.00

Every month at **DC-UK** we do our best to bring you the latest, exclusive previews of games due to grace your Dreamcast. Anything less would be a travesty, frankly.

080 *Sega GT* It promises to be the greatest racing game on Dreamcast – possibly one of the best ever. And now we've played it, we can give you a better appreciation of why we're so eager for *Sega GT*'s PAL release

084 *Space Channel 5* The only game that's guaranteed to turn your Dreamcast into a pulsating, grooving inter-planetary mobile disco unit, *Space Channel 5*, enters Earth's atmosphere

086 *Furfighters* During our recent trip to Bizarre Creations in Liverpool, we turned down a wholesome scouse luncheon in order to get a shot on this exciting and hairy shoot 'em up/action/adventure-type game

088 *Nightmare Creatures 2* The hit PlayStation monster-killer is back. We ask the developers, "What haunts your damaged psyches?"

090 *4 Wheel Thunder* The latest in Midway's *Thunder* series of racing games puts you behind the wheel of four-wheeled behemoths that go like the clappers

092 *The Nomad Soul* It's been out on PC, it's French and features David Bowie. But it's not all bad: this is the first game in which the player can experience full sex

094 *Sword of the Berserk* Mutant viruses, maniacal giant sword-wielding mayhem – it's all in a day's work for Guts, hero of this pretty Japanese hack 'em up

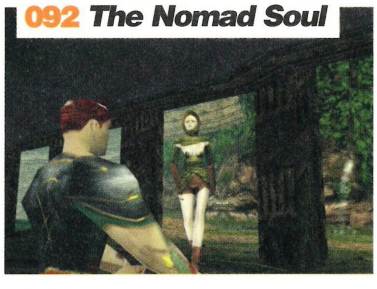
096 *Tech Romancer*

097 *Dragon's Blood*

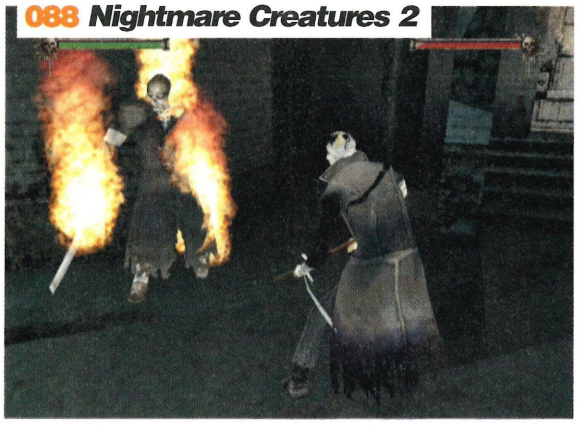
086 *Furfighters*

090 *4 Wheel Thunder*

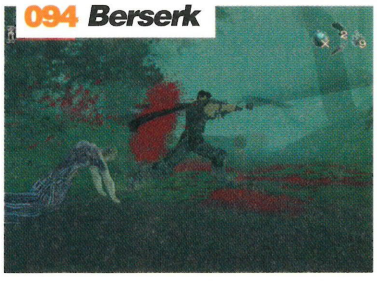
092 *The Nomad Soul*



088 *Nightmare Creatures 2*



094 *Berserk*



084 *Space Channel 5*

Imagine *PaRappa the Rapper* in 3D with sex appeal and dancing aliens. Crazy stuff...

FIRSTCONTACT

SEGA GT

DC-UK ONE TO WATCH

It's hot in Japan. We've played it. And we've answered The Big Question

We know what you want. We could spew forth all manner of details and info about the game's framerate, licenced car list, track style and options but, at the end of the day, the question on everyone's lips is "Is *Sega GT* is as good as *Gran Turismo 2*." Well prepare yourself for disappointment, because it's not. The Japanese import version we've been caressing lovingly for the past seven days is great to play and looks outstanding, but – and we'll only say this once more – it's not *Gran Turismo 2*. Now, can we get on with the preview? Thank you.

First impressions? Easy. Load the game up and, neatly side-stepping the mountain of Japanese text, head straight for Single Race. Here, there are three rounds (Easy, Medium and Hard) and each one throws up a list of tracks and a small selection of cars to choose from. Choose a car (any car) from the list, pick the first track at the top and you're off...

> "The feel of the car is more akin to the **arcade rush of *Sega Rally 2***"

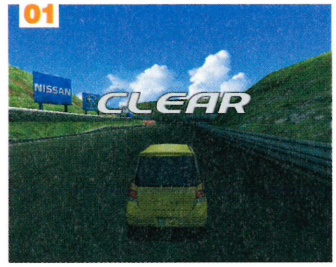
Get into the game and after the initially-dazzling graphics have become slightly more commonplace, the first thing you realise is that the handling isn't actually all that realistic. Oh, it's okay. Fine even, but the feel of the cars is much more akin to the pure arcade rush of *Sega Rally 2* than the tempered authenticity of *Gran Turismo*. In short, you have to alter your expectations – you have to just enjoy *Sega GT* for what it is rather than go in expecting an accurate simulation of the Honda NSX or Nissan Skyline's handling.

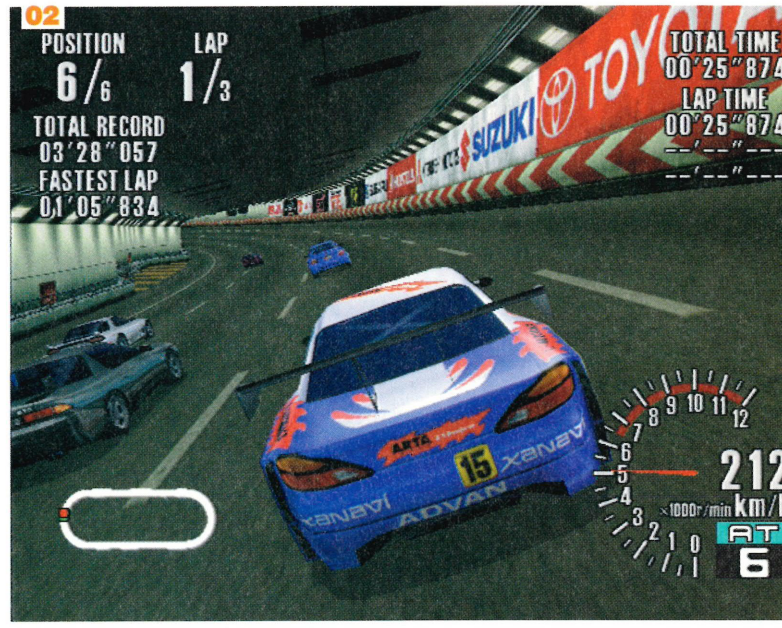
So what is it? It's *Sega GT Homologation Special* (before you ask, 'homologation' means being very similar to something but having a different casing), it's 136 cars, 12 tracks and countless licences, options and car advancements. It's 30 frames per second and contains every single graphical trick in the Dreamcast book. It's very good and coming to Europe this Summer.

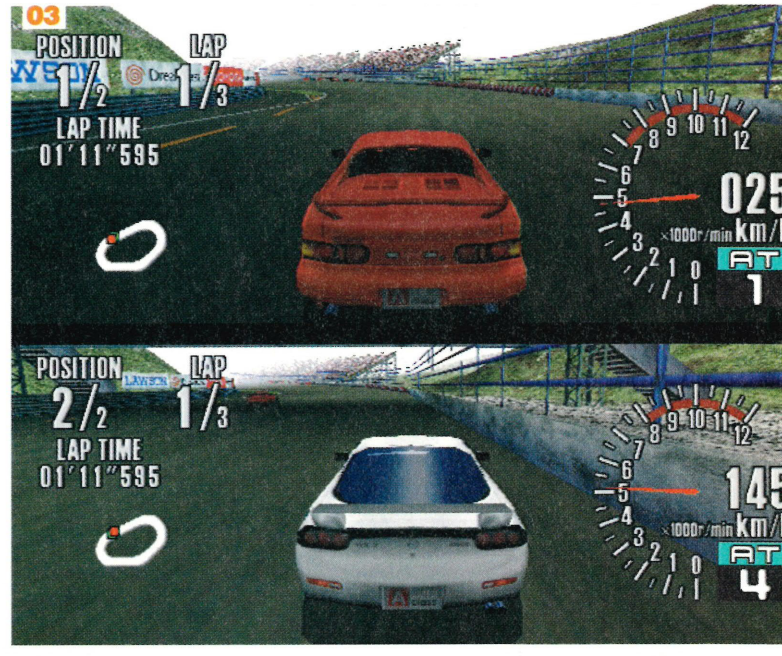
Two years in development, the game is the brainchild of Takeshi Nimura (a member of the *Sonic Team* who worked on the classic Saturn game *NiGHTS*) and Hideshi Tatsuno (responsible for the wrestling game *Giant Gram*) and shows obvious influences from a certain popular PlayStation driving game. Released in Japan on February 17, the instant success of *Sega GT* earned it the coveted first place in the all-format charts (selling nearly 100,000 in its first week) and a very respectable 33/40 from the ever-critical Famitsu Weekly magazine.

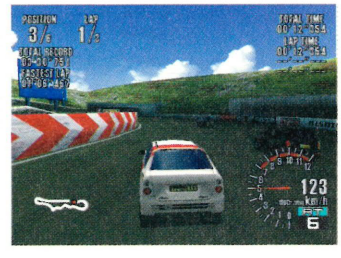
You only really need to take a look at an in-game screenshot to tell that *Sega GT* is a *Gran Turismo* clone. The graphical design and choice of cars alone reveal that. Probe a bit deeper, though, and you're given a few more clues.

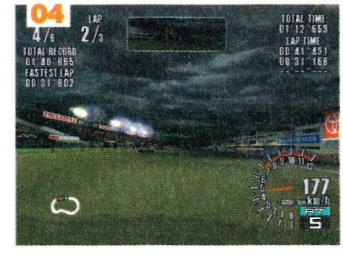
All the usual suspects lurk in the game selection menu: the Championship and Single Race modes speak for themselves and little explanation is needed for Time Attack, Replay Booth and Dual Race. For the latter you can engage in a normal twoplayer battle, or download saved cars from the VM unit for a more interesting racing challenge. As we've mentioned before, the Single Race mode will no doubt be the first port of call for most of you, if only to sample a delicious ▶











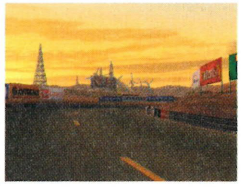
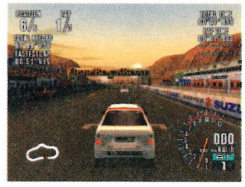
01 It's a dull shot, admittedly, but it's what you get when you complete the painfully difficult licences
02 The lighting on the cars is superb. The reflections change and ripple through the metal when you drive from the sunshine into the depths of a darkly-lit tunnel
03 The twoplayer mode does keep up the framerate, but the fogging is atrocious
04 Looks good, doesn't it? And so it damn well should. Two years in development on the finest console around... you'd expect the best and that's almost what you've got

NINE-COURSE FEAST

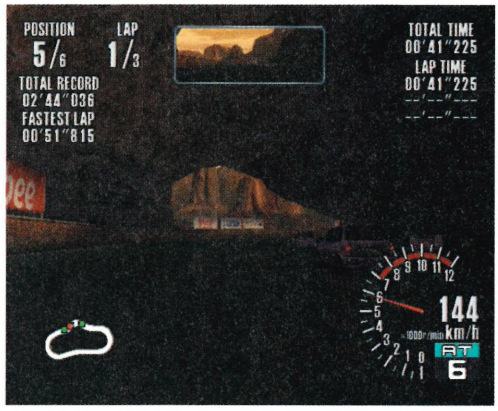
The Single Race mode will be the first haunt for most of us, as it offers the quickest and easiest way to play most of the cars and a good selection of the tracks. Here's a breakdown of the best nine of them (the last three are over the page)

Deep Rock Road

With a wide track and gentle curves, Deep Rock Road provides a friendly introduction to the game.

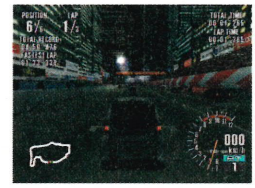



Look out for: One of the best examples of the powerful graphics engine, as you drive effortlessly through these huge and detailed cliffs.



Night Section A

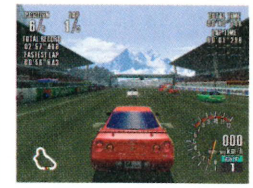
One of the most graphically-impressive in the game, with absolutely no drop in the framerate.



Look out for: The main street of the city, with its massive skyscrapers and billboards; it's an explosion of neon and light.

Snowy Mountain

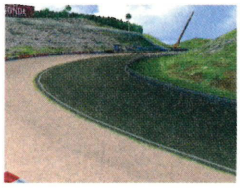
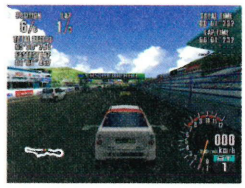
Another course jostling for the Best Graphics trophy. Huge mountains and hair-raising moments.



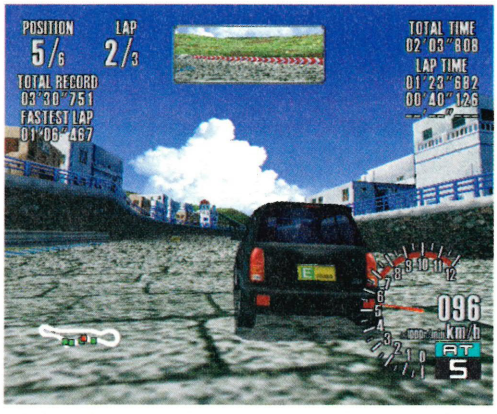
Look out for: Just after the first gentle left-hander, the road dramatically narrows to this minute entrance to a long, straight tunnel.

Sky Peak Hill

A great track for improving on your cornering, as there are some beautiful chicanes.

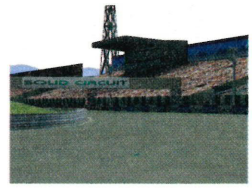



Look out for: Cast an eye up and to the left as you drive over these cobbled streets to view the hugely-detailed Arabic town above you.

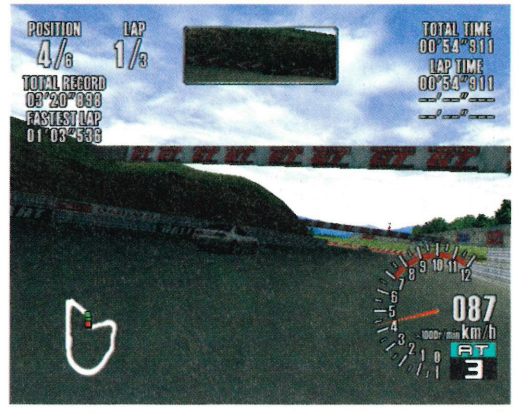


Solid Circuit

A deceptive track. You'll power through most of it absolutely fine, but hit this right-hander...

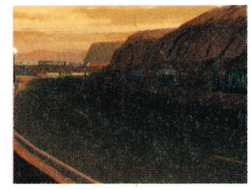
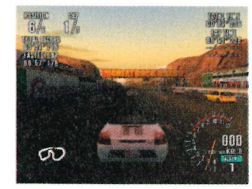


Look out for: ...and the troubles begin. Ease into it gently, though, and it's incredibly rewarding to sweep effortlessly through.

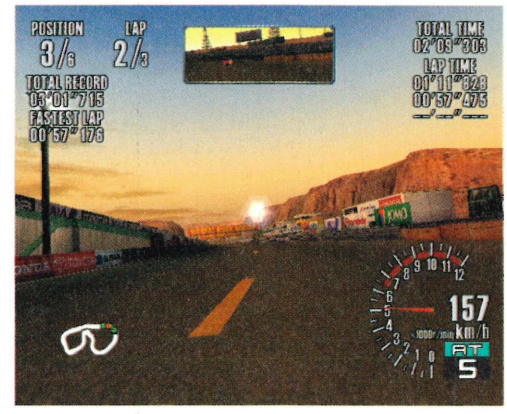


Great Rock Road

Essentially, this is a longer, more difficult extension of Deep Rock Road.

Look out for: The last left-hander of the track, as it's a glorious, smooth bend that should allow you a sneaky jump on a couple of slower drivers.



FIRSTCONTACT

01 One of the better chicanes of the game which, sadly, doesn't look half as good in this grab as it does when you're thundering through it at 90 mph
02 Dark, very dark. But there is a light at the end of it. The tunnel, that is
03 With lighting effects dripping off of every bulb, each moment of the game is a delightful work of art to be framed and loved
04 More twoplayer action and much more shameful fogging

▶ morsel of those graphics.

Dip a nervous toe into the freezing depths of the Championship mode, though, and you're soon swallowed up by a staggering array of option screens. To compete in any of the Championship races you first have to – and get this – successfully complete a number of licences. Although they are much simpler than the start/stop time limits of *Gran Turismo 2* (all you have to do is complete one lap of a track), the time boundaries imposed upon you by *Sega GT*'s licence tests are hair-removing in their cruelty.

Soon, though, you will pass the more elementary of the licences and you can start to race. You begin the game with a basic amount of credit and a small stable of cars. Pick a vehicle, enter a few races and, victory assured, the cash gently rolls in. You won't have the money to buy anything decent for quite some time, so tuning is your only real option.

The hard-earned credits you gain from successful races will be well-spent on customising your vehicle. This option comes in six fruity flavours (Engine, Drive Train, Suspension, Brake, Tyre and Weight Reduction) and, even if you know absolutely nothing about car mechanics, you'll soon be able to customise your engine for an extra slice of horsepower where it matters most.

Driving is a strange experience. You choose between Grip or Slide options, but Grip is slightly too sticky and Slide is laughable, as at first it's almost impossible to keep the car on the track. Get the hang of the basics, though, and you'll soon be flying around the circuits.

Some decent scores from the Japanese press and a bubbling excitement from the American Internet sites cannot disguise that *Sega GT* has a long way to go before a robust spot has been made for it in our affections. This (being a preview and all) is about as far as we can go with *Sega GT* at present. There's a lot of game tucked away here and, when a fully-translated PAL version arrives with us, then, and only then, will a full verdict be delivered. Until that day the jury is most definitely out on *Sega GT* ■

"American Internet sites cannot disguise that **Sega GT has a long way to go** before a spot has been made for it in our affections"

FINEPOINTS

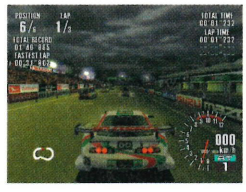
- **Publisher:** Sega of Japan
- **Developer:** In-house
- **Origin:** Japan
- **Vrrrr:** Oooooooooom
- **ETA:** Summer

NINE-COURSE FEAST

And these are the last three...

Night Ground

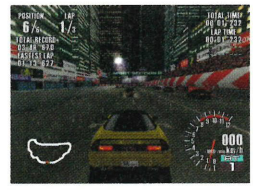
A very bizarre and short track that's low on thrills, but requires a definite cautious driving style.



Look out for: The lighting is stunning. From your piercing headlamps to the subtle street-lighting and tracing from the brake lights.

Night Section B

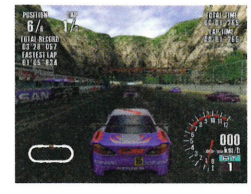
The more advanced version of the night track. Enjoys lulling you into a false sense of security, before...



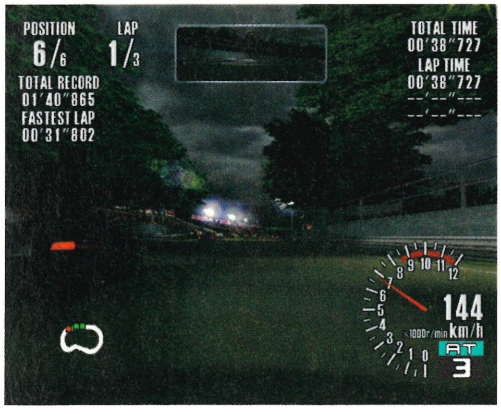
Look out for: ...slamming you into six horrific corners at the end of the track. Be wary and very, very easy on your accelerator.

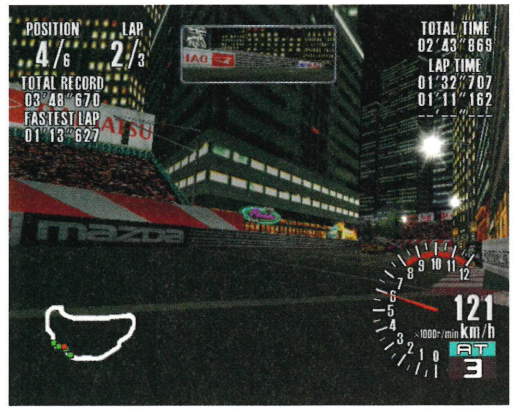
Sprint Zone

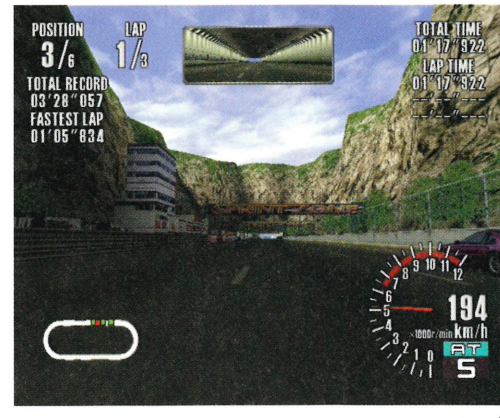
Pointless unless you have a car with some muscle, as you'll hardly ever take your finger off the gas.

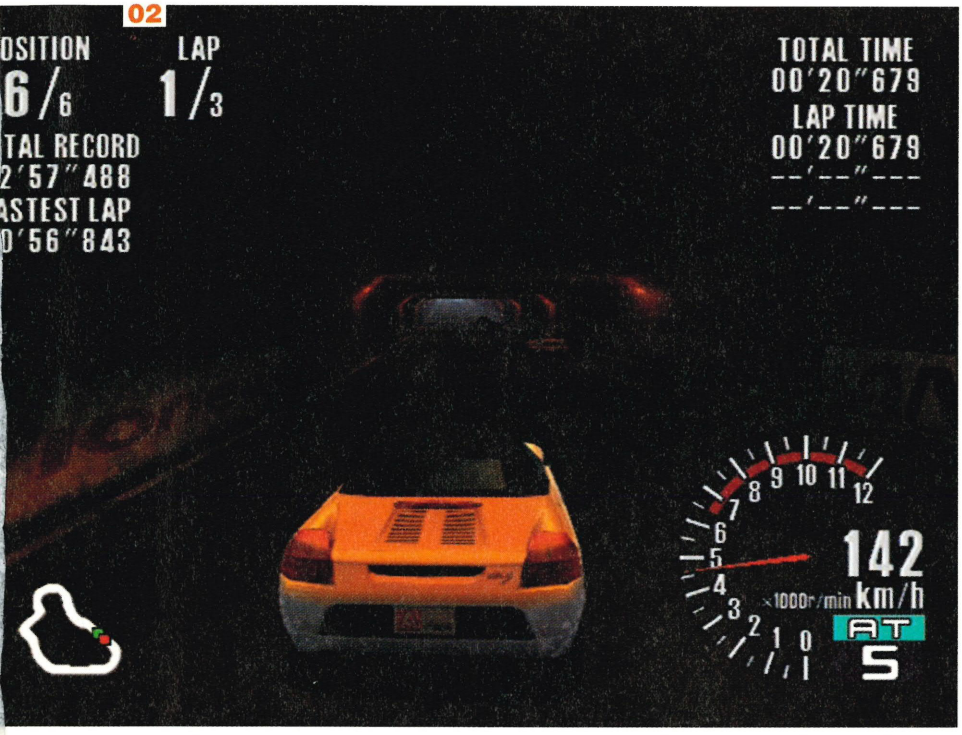


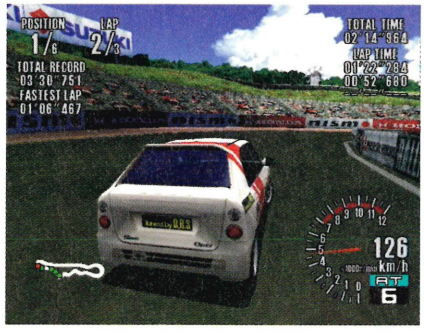
Look out for: The perfect example of the game's draw distance, as here you can almost see the whole length of the track.

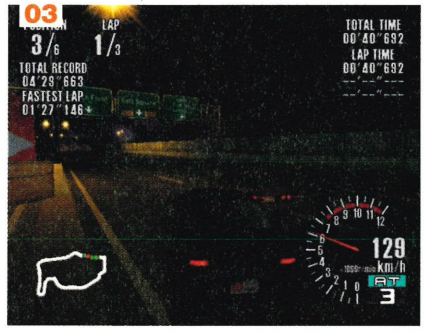


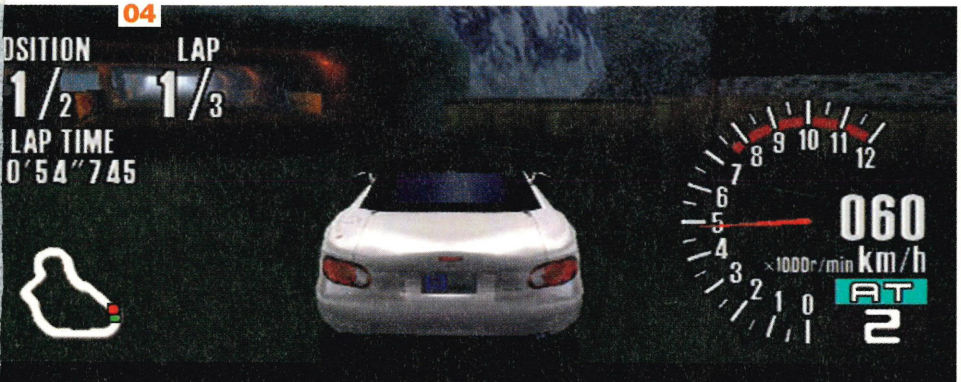


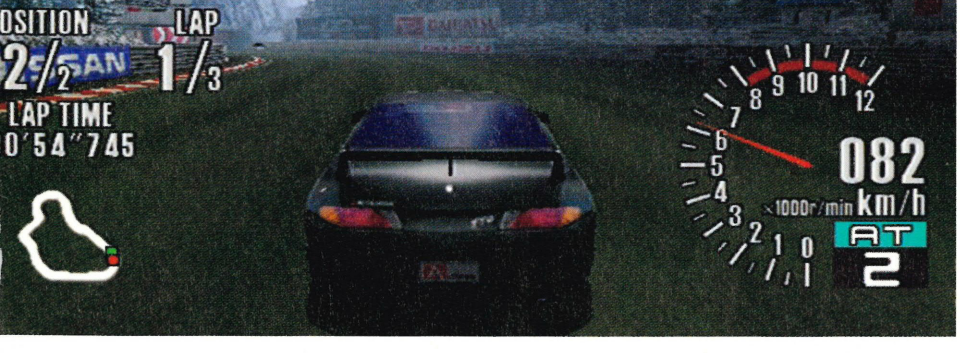












THE CAR'S THE STAR

Okay, so there are only 136 of them and you don't get to choose from some of those sexy European sporty models (although Sega may well change this for the Europe release), there's still some darned fine motors to choose from.

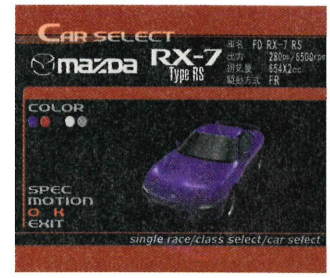
Split out over ten manufacturers, there's obviously a little wheat/chaff separation to be done, so here's a guideline to some of the best cars to look out for.

Nissan Skyline

Maybe it's only us, but we love driving with this car. Its throaty engine and slick powersliding makes it one of the most exciting cars in the game.

Mazda RX-7

This wee Mazda isn't amazingly fast, but the car's superior handling makes it absolutely ideal for sticking to the course on the bendier tracks.

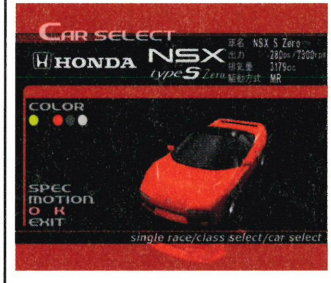


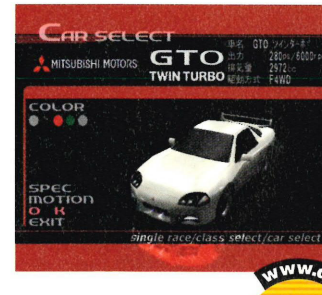
Honda NSX

More solid and predictable then the Skyline, the NSX is cheap and certainly cheerful.

Mitsubishi GTO-Twin Turbo

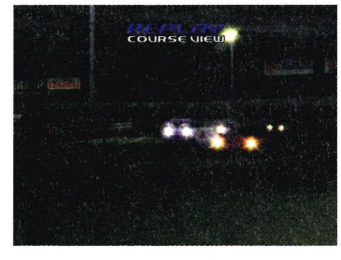
Clocking up nearly 3,000 cc, the GTO is a beast in most of its forms, but it's a killer here.

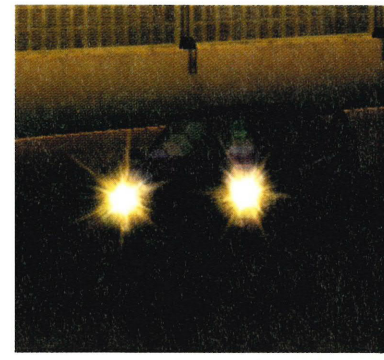


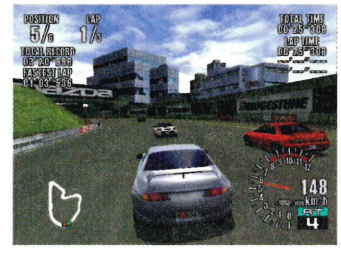


For an exhaustive (ho ho) guide to every car in the game see our Website: **www.dc-uk.co.uk**

On the Net www.dc-uk.co.uk







www.dc-uk.co.uk

Click on our Website for the definitive guide to Sega GT's cars

NEWSIGHTING

SPACE CHANNEL 5

DC-UK ONE TO WATCH

Pink hair and orange PVC combine to make the grooviest game on Dreamcast

Dancing games have been the hottest things in Japanese arcades for over a year – they're the easiest way for shy lads to work up the courage to ask a girl for a change. But the coolest dancing game ever is a Dreamcast exclusive, and to compensate for the lack of female onlookers in the average suburban bedroom, it stars the sexiest videogame character since Ms Pac Man wowed the world almost 20 years ago.

Space Channel 5 looks like a '50s sci-fi movie set in a colourful cartoon world, in which a pink-haired girl (dressed in the kind of miniskirt that carries a mandatory five-year sentence in some US states) grooves and gyrates in time to a funky soundtrack. She is Ulala, presenter of a space TV show called Ulala's Swingin' Report, and her mission is to show the alien Moroliens just how funky a human being can get.

Of course, the Moroliens are pretty mean dancers themselves, so Ulala must prove her body-popping credentials by matching the cosmic funksters, move for move. By way of incentive, the aliens have taken hapless earthlings as their hostages – failure to bust the correct move will result in a sticky end for our startlingly proportioned heroine and the rest of the world alike.

Basically, it's one of those games in which you have to memorise a sequence of button presses and repeat them in time to the music, but where *Space Channel 5* scores over the likes of *Um Jammer Lammy* is in its ease of use. You'll never find yourself stumbling to remember where the next button is, because you only have to use the d-pad. Even better, you don't have to watch the move sequence, because all the commands are spoken or sung by your current dance-off opponents.

The whole thing is presented as a giant, flowing music video, and the intuitive controls have been designed to allow you to admire the game's visual splendour without missing a beat. (The dance routines do get more complicated the further you progress, though). For those still unconvinced by the game's brilliance, there's a rival reporter called Pudding, and Michael Jackson pops up later on.

We're certainly looking forward to the Westernised edition, although we're keeping our fingers crossed that nobody mucks about with the fantastic J-pop soundtrack. Getting to hear it all is reason enough to play through to the end, not to mention the chance to see if Jacko can party as convincingly as Ulala ■

01 Ulala skips her funky stuff
02 The backing dancers are hardly the kids from Fame, but at least they can keep time
03 The evil Moroliens show Ulala the importance of colour-coordination
04 It's all in the hips. Although it helps if you've got a knicker-skimming skirt on
05 And this bit resembles that Run DMC/Jason Nevins video of It's Like That. Uncanny, isn't it?

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Sega
- **Developer:** In-house
- **Origin:** Japan
- **The rhythm's:** gonna get you
- **ETA:** Spring

> "Her mission is to show the alien Moroliens **just how funky a human being can get**"

04

05

www.spacechannel5.com

Buy the game, the CD and the book – but only if you live in Japan

LANDINGSOON

FURFIGHTERS

DC-UK ONE TO WATCH

Bizarre Creation's shaggy shoot 'em up grows more alluring by the day

Okay, our visit to Bizarre Creations was supposed to be for *Metropolis Street Racer* (see page 056), but when the team invited us to play their other forthcoming title we couldn't turn them down. Originally known as *Furballs*, this promising upstart was recently inflicted with a last-minute name change for reasons we can't go into involving an obscure cartoon character and a large multinational company with many lawyers.

Anyway, for those who missed the update last month, *Furfighters* is a thirdperson shoot 'em up that combines blasting with exploration and puzzle solving. You have six characters at your disposal, each with their own strengths and weaknesses, and you can use transporter bubbles placed throughout each level to change between them. This swapping process is a necessary activity in order to solve certain puzzles or access sections of the level that can only be reached by, say, a tiny character (Chang the panda) or one that can jump to high platforms (Bungalow the kangaroo).

The first thing we thought when we saw the game in action was that it reminded us of Rare games – cute characters, a vast cartoony world, humorous dialogue, etc. The open-plan game design is very reminiscent of *Banjo-Kazooie*. There are six hubs to get through, each with three levels and a boss to defeat, so there's a lot of exploration and scope for finding different ways to complete the game. Oh, and the control system (which uses the four colour buttons for movement and stick for looking around) is pure *GoldenEye*.

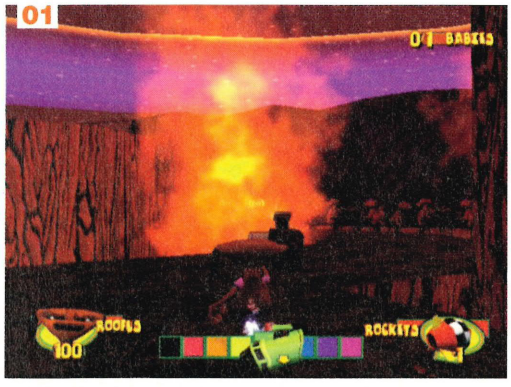
However, having played the game for a couple of hours it's clear there is a very singular sense of humour at work here. For a start, your fluffy characters can call on a massive range of weapons – from riot guns and rocket launchers to flame throwers and triple grenade launchers. The baddies too, are imaginatively sick, combining James Bond with Wildlife on One to produce machine gun-toting polar bears, peacocks with rocket launchers, and homicidal crocodiles. The pièce de résistance is the game's arch baddie General Viggo, a huge white cat that continually strokes a small bald man resting in its lap.

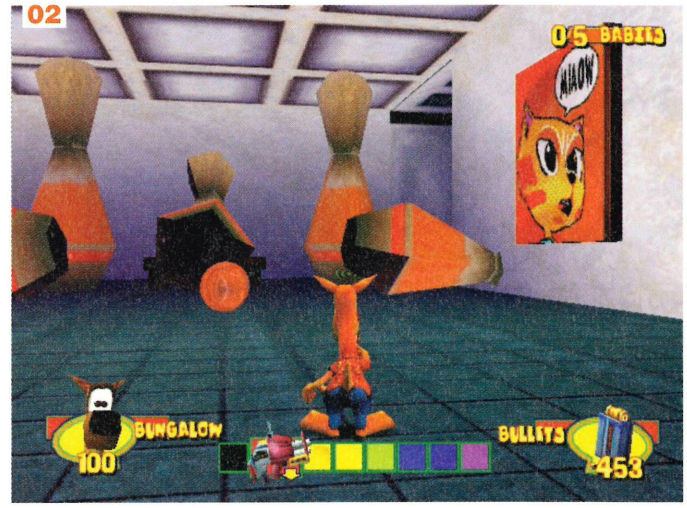
As for level design, the team seems to have combined 2001, Hellraiser, Jurassic Park and a dozen Disney films to come up with the hub worlds. Visit New Quack City, a '30s US metropolis, or the Meer Space Station, populated by meerkats, or Dinosaur Land, a subterranean kingdom where evolved dinosaurs have formed a kind of '50s sci-fi utopia – they're all as mad as each other. Each is populated with its own non-player characters (who can aid in your quest), and is filled with mini-games to add variety. You can also drive vehicles and operate machinery.

And there's more. But as with *MSR*, we're sworn to secrecy. We wish we could tell you about the fantastic extra game mode. But we can't. In any case, there should already be enough fluffy thrills here to get you excited ■

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Acclaim
- **Developer:** Bizarre Creations
- **Origin:** UK
- **Fur:** your eyes only
- **ETA:** March

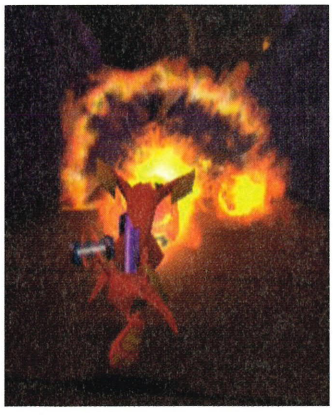




"You can call on a **massive range of weapons**, including rocket launchers and **flame throwers**"

01 During the game, the Furfighters have to go to hell. Except it's not called hell because Sega don't want to scare the kiddies. It's called 'The Bad Place'
02 Bungalow the kangaroo contemplates some huge skittles in giant dinosaur land. We can't believe we're writing this
03 "Eye of newt, tongue of frog… I'll stay away from French cooking in future"
04 Dogs in pith helmets. With guns. Seriously, how can this game fail?
05 Smart bomb = terrible mess

04



05

www.catbox.com

Home to the Lake Area Furry Friends. Check their photos – crazy

FIRSTCONTACT

NIGHTMARE CREATURES II

DC-UK ONE TO WATCH

Here's a creepy action/adventure that could put the wind up *Shadow Man*

For those who arrived late, a quick re-cap on the original *Nightmare Creatures*: Victorian London, 3D hack 'em up, loads of monsters, kill them, use the sword! Slash their rotten heads! Evil sorcerer, army of zombies, terrifying plot, ultimate showdown between good and evil. Good wins on penalties... And relax.

Nightmare Creatures II picks up the action 100 years later. It's now the 1930s and Adam Crowley, the sorcerer from the first title – whose name sounds not unlike Aleister Crowley, a real-life occultist of that time – is back, determined to re-animate another legion of undead monsters so he can kill everyone and take over the world (no-one explains why he'd want to rule a world filled with monsters and the decaying corpses of six billion people, but there you go).

Unfortunately for him, an occult enthusiast named Wallace, who Crowley kidnapped to perform experiments on, has escaped from a loony bin and now wants revenge. Only he can save the world from Crowley's plan. As long as he can remove that damn straitjacket.

So yes, it's a 3D action/adventure with lots of monster hacking. But those expecting a rehash of the original are going to be in for a surprise. For a start, the fighting system has been totally overhauled to give the player more intuitive and dynamic control over the action. There's also more exploration and more puzzles, with loads of objects (dynamite, bolt-cutters, crowbars) to pick up and use on... doors and stuff, probably. In this sequel you'll find there is also a lot more to do physically. Wallace, unlike the heroes of the first game, can climb ladders, swim and grab ledges, opening up a much more diverse and multi-layered game world.

As for monsters, there are around 20 different sorts in the game including a vicious zombie with a chainsaw, and an unspeakable creature that uses a ribcage on the end of a chain as its main weapon. To hit back at these maniacs you get a range of weapons and strange bonus items like a jar of satanic flies that when released, will fly into the mouth of a monster and blow him up from the inside. The team sites Evil Dead and the films of Tim Burton as major influences. They have, perhaps, watched too much.

> "There's a zombie with a chainsaw, and a creature that uses a **ribcage on a chain** as a weapon"

Finally, the enemy AI has also been improved, so that the gooey foe react with real senses. Cut a zombie's head off, for example, and he'll still chase you – it's just he can't see you, so he'll probably run comically into a lamppost.

We like the sound of this game a lot. It has gore. It has exploration. It has monsters. If the fighting system works (and Kalisto has promised it will), this could be a diverting slab of digital violence ■

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Konami
- **Developer:** Kalisto
- **Origin:** France
- **Put a:** Spell on You
- **ETA:** Spring

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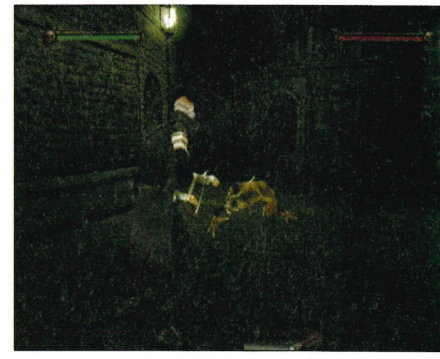
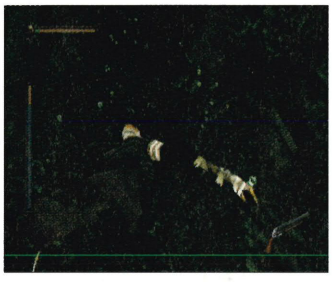
02



03

01 Wallace does not make the world's most attractive hero
02 Maggots the size of baguettes. A fisherman's dream
03 The game's dark, seedy setting is reminiscent of *Shadow Man* and *Soul Reaver*. It scares us
04 Covered from head to foot in bandages, the zombie's fire-eating display was always going to end in stark tragedy
05 Undead chainsaw wielder. Isn't that a Napalm Death song?



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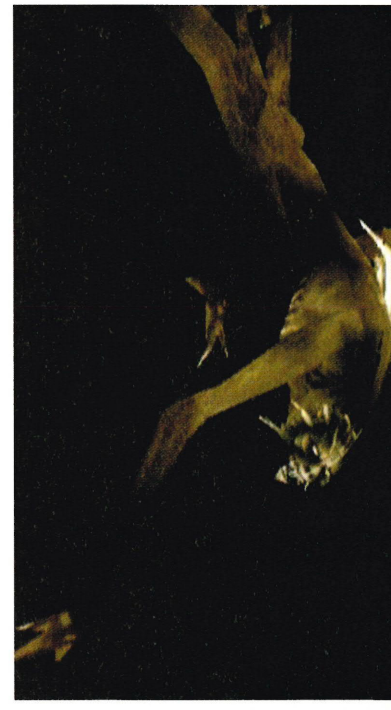


www.kalisto.com

Up-to-date and informative home of *Nightmare Creatures*' developer

FIRSTCONTACT

4 WHEEL THUNDER

Gargantuan pick-up trucks with wheels as big as houses. Whoever told you size didn't matter was lying

Fittingly, for a game based on one of America's fastest-growing sports watched by fat blokes in baseball caps and string vests, the designers of *4 Wheel Thunder* did their research by playing arcade games and watching monster truck videos.

Featuring gigantic pick-up trucks and off-road sports cars the size of buses, *4 Wheel Thunder* takes the handling of a rally game onto tight indoor tracks and lengthy outdoor circuits. We saw an early version of the game a few months back, and while it looked like an above average racer then, there are some important gameplay refinements in the 95 percent complete preview disc we played recently. The most significant change is the addition of blue and red power-ups, bestowing a handy four or nine seconds of turbo boost power, just like in the game's stablemate *Hydro Thunder*. The speed has been increased significantly, making the long and short cut-riddled tracks seem less like hard work.

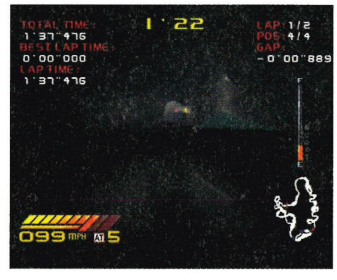
What's really surprising is the fact that such an obviously American kind of game was actually developed in France, home of the 2CV. Project manager Emmanuel Nouaille doesn't see the culture divide as a problem though, and is pleased with the way things have gone so far: "It was an interesting technical challenge to have vehicles of very different sizes racing together, and it's visually exciting to see them react according to the various terrain they come across."

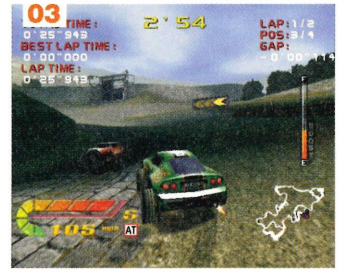
Visually exciting indeed, as crisp graphics and endless horizons are a feature of *4 Wheel Thunder*. However, it's the quality of the gameplay that matters most in a driving game, and we'll see whether *Thunder* can improve on *Sega Rally 2* when we take it for a test drive in next month's review. Make sure you're there ■

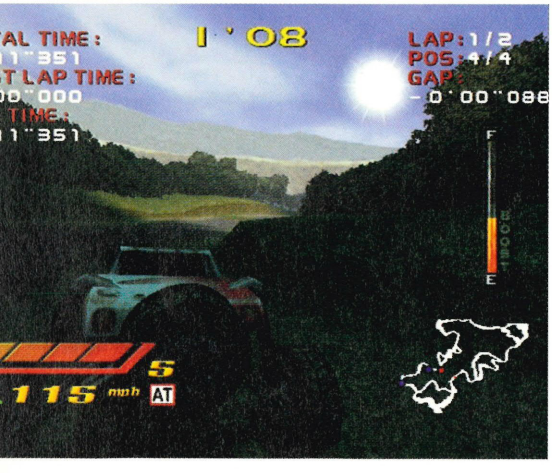
01 The firstperson view gives a fine impression of speed
02 You certainly need those boost icons if you're going to pull off dangerous overtaking moves like this
03 Tapping the handbrake results in a powerslide, but it's not as fluid as *Sega Rally*
04 Face a likely looking hill, fire up the boost and take a leap for a short cut

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Midway
- **Developer:** Kalisto
- **Origin:** France
- **Eat my:** trucks
- **ETA:** Spring







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IN THE NEW ISSUE OF...

"I was the one who said: 'Come on, let him blow up the cow!'"

George Clooney

Come hell and hot weather: on the set of Three Kings.

Michael Mann blows the whistle on **The Insider** and **A Clockwork Orange** returns.

PLUS!

The best guide to the rest of the year's releases in our 2000 preview...

ON SALE NOW

FIRSTCONTACT

THE NOMAD SOUL

The PC to DC conveyor belt continues with a sci-fi inspired adventure featuring David Bowie

***Shenmue* is currently causing a mass outbreak of jaw-dropping-to-floor disease with its superlative 'living, breathing world within a videogame' concept, but, unfortunately, it'll be a while yet before Sega's blockbuster is translated and ready for Western consumption. Until Yu Suzuki's masterpiece arrives you can console yourselves with another game that offers an ambitious alternative reality; although on a somewhat less realistic (and expensive) scale.**

The Nomad Soul is set in a parallel universe in a sprawling metropolis called Omikron, and the game begins with the player transferring their soul into the body of a police detective named Kayl who is suspected of murdering his partner. The immediate task is to investigate your colleague's death but the investigation takes you deep into the seedy underbelly of Omikron and a battle against pure evil in the shape of Astaroth – the satanic figure who is Omikron's malevolent heart of darkness. The ultimate quest is not only to save your own soul but to rescue the soul of Omikron itself.

The Blade Runner-esque futuristic city is impressively interactive. You're completely free to wander around checking out buildings, riding in anti-gravity vehicles and chatting to passers-by. It's a totally convincing society with hover cars flying past and people walking the neon streets; going about their daily business irrespective of what you're up to.

In a similar way to *Shenmue*, gameplay involves a mixture of adventure and RPG elements interspersed with various action scenes. While the basis of the gameplay is to follow the investigation through to its conclusion and find a way out of Omikron, there are plenty of action sequences to provide added excitement. Acting almost like sub-games within the main storyline are fighting sequences and shoot 'em up exchanges. The 3D scraps appear to be pretty basic and only come into play during boss encounters, while the shoot-outs are played from a firstperson perspective and take place against various criminals who try and halt your progress.

The Nomad Soul also contains a gameplay attribute that seems to be all the rage in games at the moment, namely, body swapping. *Messiah*, and the soon to be released on Dreamcast, *Maken X*, both utilise a feature where your soul can transfer from one playable character to another, but in *Nomad* it has been given the fancy title of 'virtual reincarnation'. If the character you inhabit dies, your soul is transferred to the first person who touches the cadaver. You then have to adapt to the particular strengths and weaknesses of whichever character is playing host to your soul.

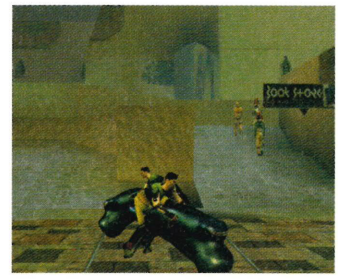
One feature we're not quite so sure about is the appearance of David Bowie in the role of Boz the Virtual Being. Followers of the Thin White Duke's oeuvre will be pleased to hear he's recorded a new batch of songs for inclusion in the game, while non-fans will just be hoping the gameplay is better than its Bowie-fied soundtrack ■

01 To travel around Omikron you have to select a destination and call up futuristic taxis known as 'sliders'
02 David 'I used to be popular' Bowie turns up playing with a virtual band in several bars across the city
03 At Kayl's apartment you can engage in a spot of rumpy-pumpy with his missus, as well as practising your fighting moves against a holographic trainer
04 During shoot 'em up sequences the game switches to a firstperson view for *Doom*-style antics
05 Communication is vitally important in *The Nomad Soul*, and messages relayed to you often provide clues as to your next course of action

> "The Blade Runner -esque **futuristic** city is impressively **interactive**"

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Eidos
- **Developer:** Quantric Dream
- **Origin:** France
- **Soul:** 2 Soul
- **ETA:** May



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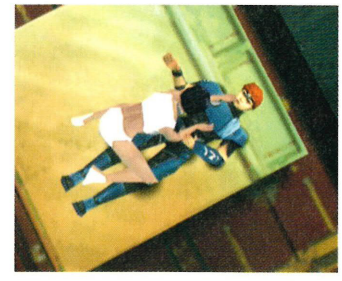

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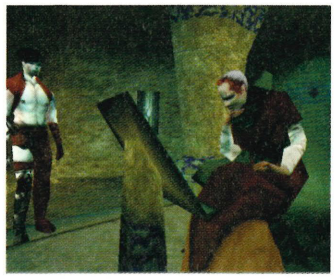
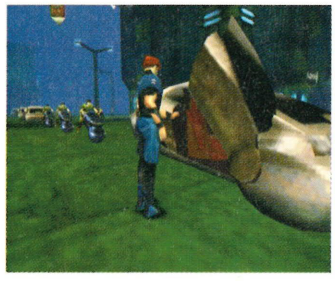
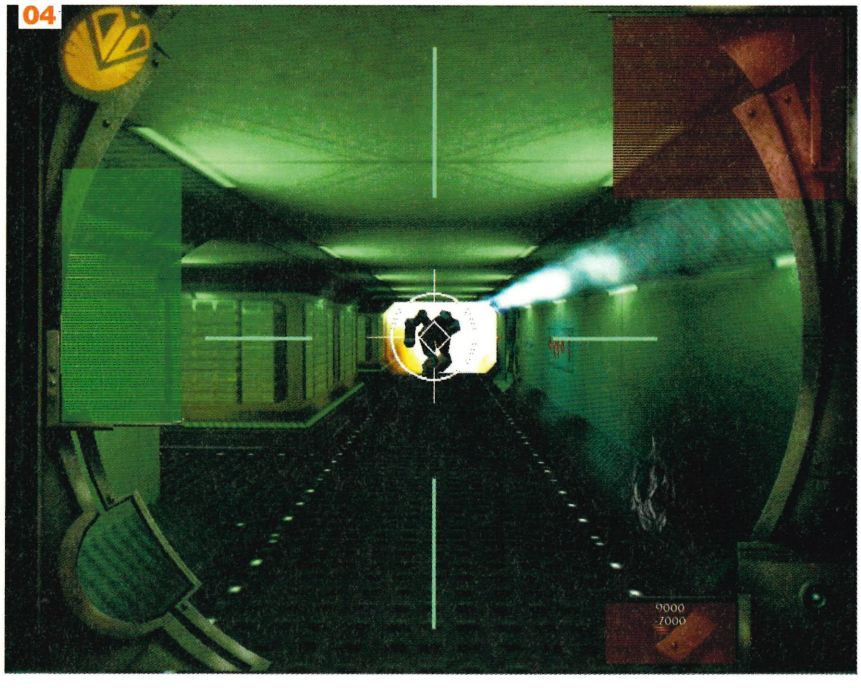






"It's necessary to **switch bodies** to take advantage of characters"

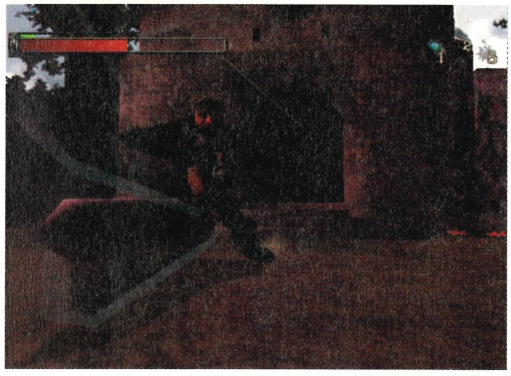
www.davidbowie.com

Home of the Thin White Duke with access to Bowienet Web community

LANDINGSOON

SWORD OF THE BERSERK

Here comes the most fun you've had with a giant sword-wielding man since *Final Fantasy VII*



01 This is one of the most bloodthirsty games we've seen. The villagers might be innocent, but they've been taken over by the Mandrago virus, so it's alright to hack them up
02 When hero Guts gets peeved, his eyes burn red and special moves like this will become available
03 Fights in these cramped city streets really convey the sense of the environment, as your sword clangs against stone walls
04 Quick timer events will add a welcome break from the steady onslaught of knights and freaks
05 Now here's a real moral dilemma: Should you slaughter the old dears, even if they are hideously disfigured?

Viruses. What are they all about? Especially mutant viruses. One minute you could be walking down the shop for a pint of milk; the next, the number 48 bus ploughs into the glass front of the video store, and freakishly disfigured passengers are shuffling towards you with arms outstretched, groans and saliva trickling from their fetid lips.

Okay, so real-life mutagens aren't quite as commonplace or extreme as that, but in the murky recesses of your average Japanese game designer's brain, it seems sinister viruses live large. Case in point: *Sword of the Berserk: Guts' Rage*, a hack 'em up based on a Nipponese comic series set in a medieval Europe complete with knights, fairies – and a virus called 'Mandragora'. This affliction transforms villagers into angry freaks, and it's your job, as hero Guts, to slay the unwitting townies, track the virus to its source and wipe it out. With a large sword.

As well as his mighty chopper, Guts is armed with an infinite supply of throwing knives, and a limited stash of gunshots and bombs with which to smite the poorly peasants. But the real fun comes when Guts' rage meter soars into the red and our hero goes 'berserk', unlocking new, more powerful moves. The whole screen is infused with crimson and Guts' eyes burn scarlet, with a motion-blurred glow trailing after his demonic peepers.

Gameplay is your basic slash 'em up fair, harking back to '80s coin-ops like *Golden Axe* and Namco's gorefest *Splatterhouse*. The graphics, however, are decidedly next-gen; the world of *Berserk* is beautifully rendered, with textures that look hand-drawn, attractive sparks when your sword connects with walls and other solid surfaces, and huge globs and sprays of blood when it comes into contact with flesh and bone. Less impressive, though, are the lengthy cut-scenes that interfere with the action to move the plot forward; *Berserk*'s gameplay may be too simple to merit such interruptions.

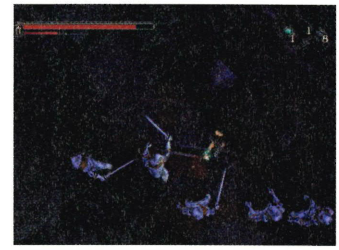
Berserk was a hit when it was released in Japan last year, and if hack 'em up fans who were disappointed by *Soul Fighter* take to it, *Guts' Rage* could have a similar impact when it lands on these shores ■

FINEPOINTS
- **Publisher:** Eidos Interactive
- **Developer:** Yukes
- **Origin:** Japan
- **The eyes:** have it
- **ETA:** Spring

"Gameplay harks back to '80s coin-ops such as *Golden Axe* and *Splatterhouse*"

www.berserk.com
Site containing lots of jokes. None about slaying innocent villagers.

01



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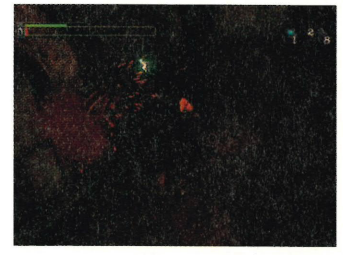


"The world of *Berserk* is **beautifully rendered** with textures that look hand-drawn"

FIRSTCONTACT

TECH ROMANCER

Effeminate New Romantic robots scrapping over a macho mech? Sadly, *Tech Romancer* is not that game

Although the title *Tech Romancer* may sound like some kind of weirdo robot dating game, one look at the name of the developer should persuade you otherwise. Yes, it's Capcom, and, yes, it's a fighting game. Seemingly, not a week goes by without Capcom producing yet another addition to Dreamcast's ever-expanding beat 'em up canon – they've already given us the 3D brawling madness of *Power Stone*, two games from the *Street Fighter* franchise and the superhero action of *Marvel Vs Capcom*, to name but a few – and their latest entry into the genre utilises that most Japanese of obsessions: big mech robots knocking the hell out of each other.

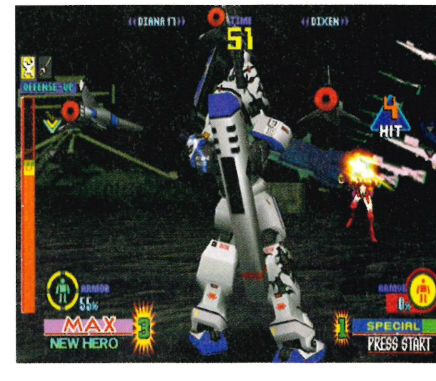
As a fully 3D beat 'em up, *Tech Romancer* cannot bear comparison to the stylistic refinements of *Soul Calibur*, but it's certainly accomplished and has some nice touches that should help it stand out in the overcrowded fighting market. In terms of gameplay modes, *Tech Romancer*'s singleplayer game is boosted by *Power Stone*-like rewards upon completion: secret characters, art galleries and – best of all – VM mini-games can be unlocked by finishing the game with each available character. The Story mode is even more impressive and is among the best of its type we've seen. Each mech has its own manga-style narrative that is gradually revealed through cut-scenes as you progress. The stories unfold in a non-linear way as you're given the option of which branch of the yarn to follow, and the direction taken also determines which metal mother you fight next.

The fighting action itself is enlivened by pick-up items appearing in the arena during battle. These range from power-up weapons to health capsules, and you can stockpile five objects at a time and use them at your leisure, adding a nice tactical edge to the gameplay. Fighting with the giant anime-influenced mechs rather than the usual martial artists also adds variety because the use of armour, missiles and lasers mean you have to approach the game in a very different way to the Dragon-Punching antics of some titles in the genre.

For beat 'em up fans and connoisseurs of pugilistic robots, *Tech Romancer* will be mana from heaven. Less obsessive fight fans might take a bit more persuading, but the game's original facets will certainly broaden its appeal beyond tech-heads and mistaken Mills & Boon fans ■

FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Virgin Interactive
- **Developer:** Capcom
- **Origin:** Japan
- **These are:** the droids you're looking for
- **ETA:** Spring



01 Branson's balloon antics come a cropper once more. The bearded fool never considered the likelihood of being attacked by a 100ft laser-firing mech
02 Dixen has a large pink weapon. Thankfully, it's a lightsabre. Cheeky
03 As is the norm in the beat 'em up genre, size matters. Bigger robots are slow but powerful, while the more humanoid droids aren't quite as hard but are far more athletic

DRAGON'S BLOOD

Treyarch's goblin-slashing adventure cuts a swathe through the dev forest, on its way towards a Spring release

The latest 3D adventure to try its luck on Dreamcast has more than a touch of Dungeons & Dragons about it. Pixies, elves and talking pig-men abound in Crave's ever-improving *Dragon's Blood*.

We've been playing around with a virtually finished copy of the game, and it certainly looks the part. Your choice of male or female adventurer has a richly detailed environment to cavort in, and plenty of the aforementioned pig-men to hack and slash. The opening level takes place in a kind of elfin tree-top domain, which is basically just a large practice arena to introduce you to the game's simple controls.

Pressing the attack button repeatedly produces a sequence of stabbing moves, but once the pig-men start to enlist the help of their smarter orc mates, you need to start combining the basic stuff with the block button to avoid taking more damage than you can dish out. Certain enemies drop magic potions, which can be used to boost ordinary attacks by combining them with vicious sword swipes. It's quite satisfying, and certainly very bloody. The blows really sound and feel like they're chopping through solid pixie flesh. Massacre the little people!

Dragon's Blood is showing a lot of potential, although if we have one major issue with the version we've had in the office, it's the way the camera doesn't always point where you need it to, particularly in the heat of a battle against multiple foes. A lock-on feature, like in *Rayman 2*, would make life a lot less stressful. Apart from that, the game seems to have what it takes. *Golden Axe* meets AD&D? If pointy-eared tree creatures and men with gigantic claymores are two of your favourite things, look out for our *Dragon's Blood* review. Right here. Soon ■

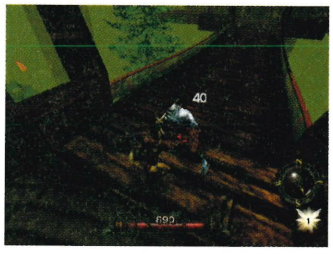
FINEPOINTS

- **Publisher:** Crave
- **Developer:** Treyarch
- **Origin:** US
- **Makin':** bacon
- **ETA:** April

01 Dispensing justice to an imp foolish enough to want some
02 The view into the distance is often very impressive and free from pop-up
03 Dismembering friendly tree folk is fun but unproductive

01

"The **sword blows** really sound and feel like they're **chopping through solid pixie flesh**"



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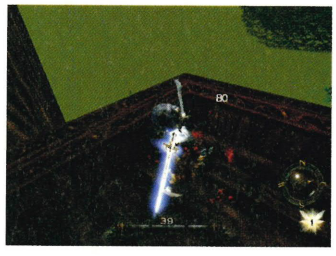

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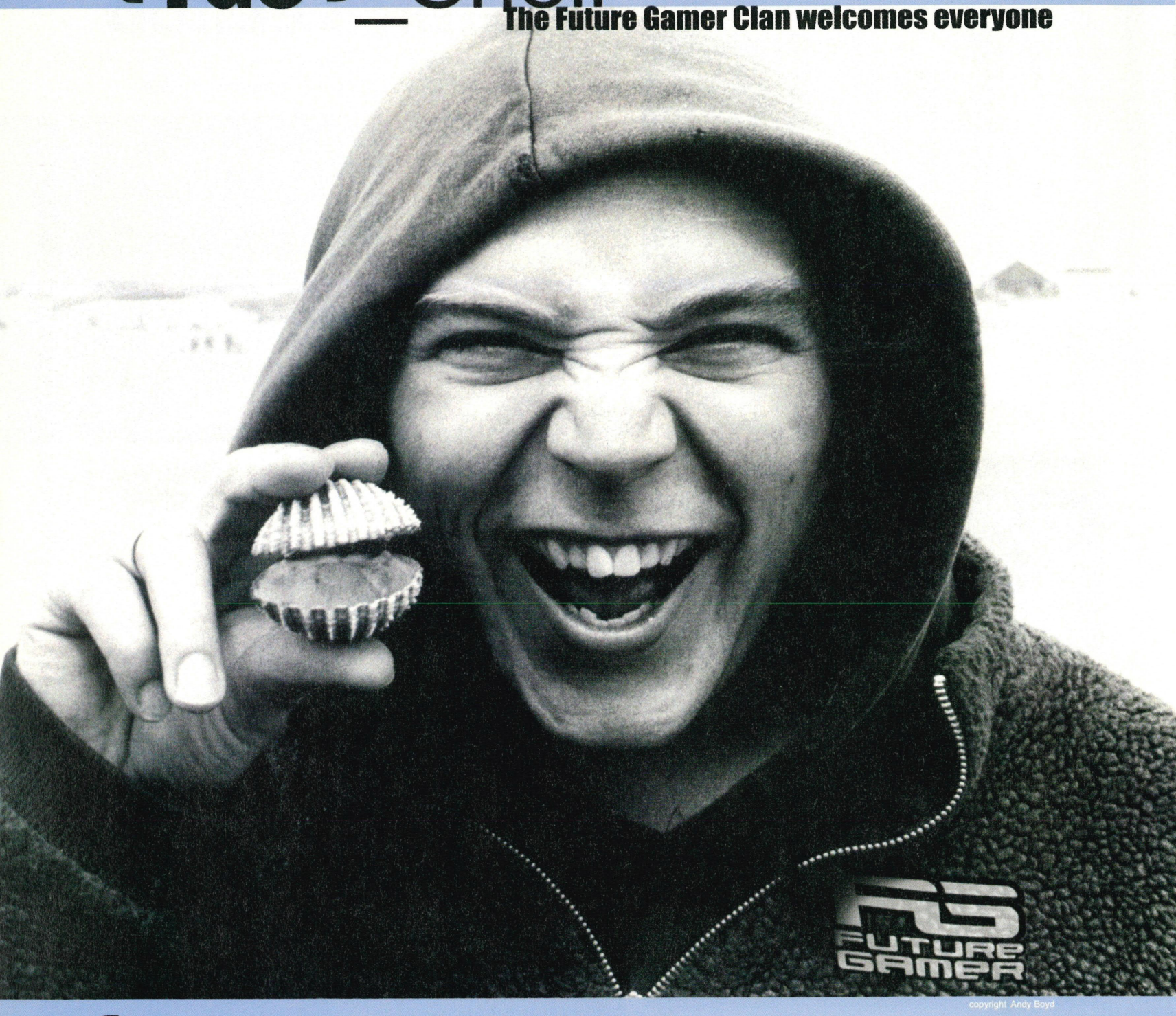
[FGC]_Shell

The Future Gamer Clan welcomes everyone



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[Future Gamer's readers are so impressed with the quality of this free weekly email games magazine, they've set up their own dedicated clan. However, you might just want to read the magazine.

www.futuregamer.com]

DC-WORLD

FOR EVERYTHING DREAMCAST

HINTS OF THE MONTH

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PLAYER'S GUIDE

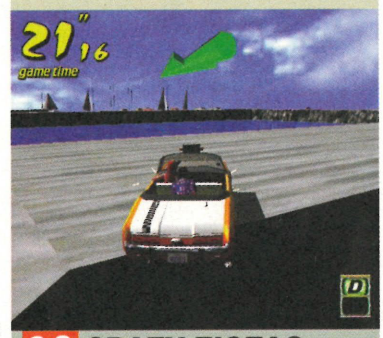
CRAZY TAXI: BONUS MISSION TIPS

Crazy Taxi, surely, is the game that just keeps on giving. As well as two massive cities to hurtle around in the main games, you'll find a variety of entertaining (and, more often than not, incredibly hard) challenges to keep you occupied in the Crazy Box mode. Last month we covered the basic missions – this month, we'll regale you with tips for the bonus missions, themselves acquired by completing three challenges in a row (horizontally or vertically). The bonus challenges are the toughest of the bunch, and should only be attempted by true *Crazy Taxi* veterans. Good luck!

1-S CRAZY BOWLING

Things get immediately tricky with Crazy Bowling, which, despite being damn hard, is ridiculously addictive. There's absolutely no margin for error here; the aim of the game is to knock down all the pins (getting a strike each time) and if you leave even one standing, you lose. So, mastery of the Crazy Drift is paramount, as you'll have to use this to get every last pin. The best technique, we've found, is to head straight for one side of each pin triangle, then, timing things correctly, Crazy Drift so that your flank hits the pins side-on, effectively broadsiding them. This should also line you up for the next pins. Oh, and beware the sidings, as it's all too easy to get trapped in them, and getting out is a seconds-wasting nightmare.

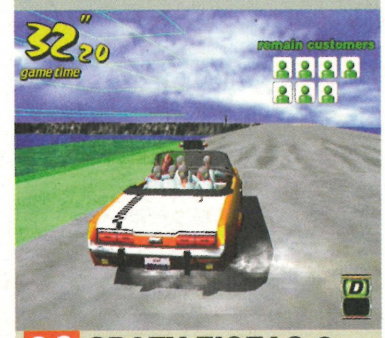
Difficulty: 8/10



2-S CRAZY ZIGZAG

Though it sounds daunting, Crazy Zigzag isn't that difficult (relatively speaking) as long as you're calm and your timing's right. Again, the only way to pass this test is to ensure you have Yoda-like control of the Crazy Drift. Each corner is a right angle, so it's helpful to remember that stopping a Crazy Drift allows you to drive on in the direction in which you terminated the Drift. Therefore, the best way to succeed is to 'clip' each corner – that is, Crazy Drift over the gap at the intersection of each bend, leaping slightly over the space below (under which, of course, is the deep blue sea), thus shooting straight ahead on the next strip of road. Bear in mind that the road is very narrow (about twice the width of your taxi) making room for error negligible.

Difficulty: 9/10



3-S CRAZY ZIGZAG 2

Crazy Zigzag, however, is like the sweet light of heaven compared to this, as Crazy Zigzag 2 is nothing other than the pure distillation of evil. Running along the same lines as its predecessor, you now have to ferry seven passengers to drop-off points on the narrow ocean-bound freeway. However, the green stop zone where you must drop each passenger off overlaps the sea, giving you a tiny space in which to stop. The only way to

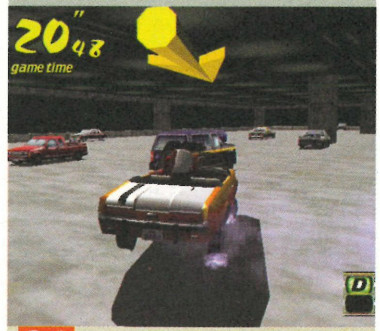
complete this is to Crazy Drift and brake into each zone, with your flank parallel with the road edge, so that you're facing directly ahead along the next strip of road. The only hint here is that practice makes perfect – and the 29-second time limit is so harsh it's untrue. Complete this and you are a true *Crazy Taxi* master. Or mistress.

Difficulty: 10/10

S-1 CRAZY THROUGH

Compared with Crazy Zigzag 2, Crazy Through is still difficult, but much more fun, so it comes as a breath of fresh air. A Crazy Through is a near-miss with other traffic – so, all you have to do is zip past closely, or between, the heavy traffic on the road. As long as you drive safely, the 30-combo threshold (ie, drive between cars 30 times) is easily achievable. However, make full contact with a car (crashing, basically) cleans the slate, meaning that you have to start over again. And all the while, the clock is ticking down. The best tactic is to maintain a fairly direct course, with traffic going in the same direction as you – it's too risky to try it with oncoming vehicles. The safe option, in this case, is invariably the best. Trust us on this.

Difficulty: 6/10



S-2 CRAZY PARKING

The object here is to negotiate a busy and cluttered multi-storey car park. Not so difficult, you might think; the taxi is indestructible, so you can just barge through the opposition. Well, the 25-second time limit suggests otherwise, and the trick here is to Crazy Drift off each ramp to the next level – that is, perform a Crazy jump – so, with a bit of luck, you'll miss some traffic and parked cars, and end up being able to cut diagonally across each floor. You will have to be pretty agile, though, as the multitude of parked cars requires a little deftness and agility to negotiate, but even if you don't leave a technically flawless performance behind you, it's possible to get your passenger to his destination with perhaps a second or two to spare.

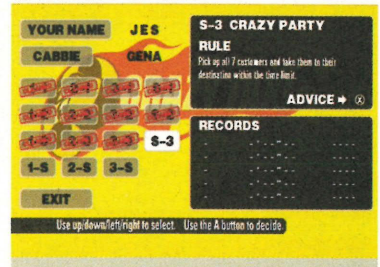
Difficulty: 8/10

S-3 CRAZY PARTY

Along with Crazy Zigzag 2, Crazy Party is the suppurating heart of darkness behind *Crazy Taxi*'s superficially cheery facade. The seven customers are dotted around in increasingly infuriating positions, and the 140-second time limit isn't quite as generous as you'd think. The customers can be found in the following positions: one to the left of where you start; one to the right of where you start; one almost directly behind where you start, in the middle of the cluster of cars; one each on the two raised areas (beware the spiral ramps); and two ahead of where you start, on the raised area over the ramp. The final stretch to the drop-off point is treacherous – it's twisty, turny and narrow, so be careful in your haste to drop off your fares. Nasty.

Difficulty: 10/10

CRAZY BOX



CRAZY ATTACK

There's a seventh *Crazy Taxi* bonus mission called Crazy Attack, which is only opened up once you've completed all six main bonus missions. The object of this mini-game is to make a complete circuit (counter-clockwise) of the Arcade city within a four-minute time limit. The traffic density is extremely high and to have any chance of succeeding you need to do an almost faultless lap, Crazy Dashing all the way. Once you beat this final stage you're rewarded with a comedy push bike which can be accessed at the cabbie selection screen. So it's worth all the hours of frustration. No, really ■

PLAYER'S GUIDE

VIRTUA STRIKER VER. 2000.1: EXTRA TIME

Last month's free DC-TIPS supplement included a brief guide to this quirky footie game, but if you're still having trouble getting to grips with *Striker*'s peculiarities, here's a final training session.

01 FORMATION

With its roots as a pound-grabbing arcade monster, *Virtua Striker 2000* forsakes in-depth tactical tinkering for instant set up and go appeal. However, budding George Grahams will still manage to make astute use of its limited options in this department. Formation-wise, it's best to pick one favourite and stick with it. This allows you to become familiar with exactly where your players will be positioned and how you can build attacks. When playing a basic 4-4-2, for example, it's easy to switch the ball to your fullbacks and start an attack down the wing with little fear of interception. Change to a wing-back system, however, and you'll find that you need to modify your outlet strategy. In light of the less than intelligent passing system, it's vital to know where your players are at all times.

02 STYLE

Offensive, Normal or Defensive. Self-explanatory really. Other than acting as a personal reflection on how the game should be played, the best way to utilise this option is to try and balance it carefully against your opponent's formation and style. If Scotland's finest choose to play 3-6-1 and Defensive then there's no point in choosing anything other than offensive in return. You won't get caught out at the back due to the lack of opposing strikers, but you will have enough bodies in the box to penetrate their Braveheart defence. The only exception to this general rule is when playing Brazil. The samba kings always play offensively so it's best to meet fire with fire.

03 PASSING

To say the system is inaccurate at times is like saying Kevin Keegan can be overly optimistic. A diagonal ball to an unmarked player on the wing will often roll out for a throw-in. This is why it's important to have a mental image of where your players are likely to be (see Formation). As a starting guide, though, there are a couple of relatively easy ways to retain possession. First, switching the ball across your goalmouth to the opposite fullback may be the cardinal sin you were told as a kid never to commit, but in Sega's reckless world it's a stylish and remarkably fail-safe way of starting an attack. Secondly, once a fullback has the ball in some space, you should concentrate on playing it down the line (ie, straightforward down one of the wings). After two or three passes you'll be about 40 yards out from the opposing goal. Again, abandon conventional wisdom and simply play a straight pass either along the floor or in the air, and sprint after it. Even if you have loads of ground to make up, more times than not the defender will foolishly run in the wrong direction leaving you in a position to cross.

Surprisingly for such an arcade-style game, it's also possible to pull off a one-two move in *Virtua Striker*. For the basic manoeuvre, simply press the Short Pass button and then quickly press it again before the ball reaches the target player – he will then kick it back with his first touch. You can also use this system to develop other first-touch moves, using the Short Pass and then Long Pass, or the Short Pass and then Shoot. Experiment.

04 SKILLFUL DEFENDING

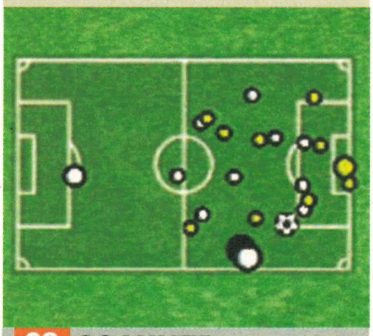
One of the first skills to master should be clearing the ball once you've won it back. First, avoid the temptation to turn straight around – you'll probably just get tackled. Instead, select one of three far safer options: 1) Pass the ball square to a supporting defender who can then either clear or switch it to the other wing to set up a counter attack. 2) Turn diagonally towards your goal then direct a Long Pass into centre field. Your midfielder can then try and get a flick-on to turn defence into attack. 3) Turn around gradually. Instead of flipping 180 degrees directly, run in a gentle arc away from the chasing opponent; they will usually commit themselves to the tackle leaving you to bend your run around them and clear the ball.

A As the last man, run towards your own goal
B Bend your run in a gentle arc
C And clear the ball comfortably upfield

05 CROSSING

Switch on Match of the Day and you'll see pundits marvelling at how David Beckham doesn't need to beat his man to cross the ball; he only needs to create a yard of space to whip it in. Well, the *Virtua Striker 2000* players are all perfectly adept at this skill. There are four simple methods for getting in a cross: 1) Having knocked the ball down the wing into open space start, pounding the Long Pass button *before* reaching it to put in a first-touch, pin-point cross. 2) If you don't have time to put a first-touch cross in, utilise the gradual turn described earlier to turn out and away from the defender – ie, towards the touchline and your own goal – before putting in a diagonal cross to your opponent's back post (remember you don't have to be facing in the direction you wish to kick – if you're facing the wrong way, simply press the d-pad in the direction you want the ball to go in while pressing the pass button). 3) If your player isn't first to the ball then stand off the defender and slide tackle him when he turns around, before hitting the Long Pass as soon as you get to your feet. 4) From a throw-in

near your opponent's area use Short Pass to throw to a team-mate's feet, then whip around the marking defender and quickly get the ball across. When a cross is executed successfully from this position, nine times out of ten it will result in a goal.



06 SCANNER

This monstrosity of the footie videogame world is of use in one solitary situation. When setting up a crossing opportunity down the wing, it can be used to see who will reach that optimistic through-ball first. You may then have a vital few seconds to decide whether to cross the ball immediately or try and dodge the inevitable incoming defender. However, even this isn't too accurate as players you want to pass to have a habit of turning, mid-run, and legging it off in the opposite direction. Plus, trying to watch both the pitch and the scanner is usually counter productive – unless you're an expert mental juggler you'll tend to miss vital elements of both displays.

07 BASIC GOALSCORING

As pointed out in the DC-TIPS supplement last month, the easiest way to score is from a cross put into the box from either wing using the Long Pass button. Make sure you also press the d-pad in the direction you want to cross or your idiot player may well just kick it out of play. As soon as the ball is in the air, continuously tap the Shoot button and you're almost guaranteed to score with a header or volley (plus, if your striker is facing away from the goal you may even get an awesome overhead kick).

Another successful method is to run from the left or right corner of the box diagonally toward the goal, then hit a shot at medium strength. The goalkeeper will usually parry the ball away and if you're playing with more than one striker, your other predator will be there to tap in the rebound.

Alternatively, if you are making a down-the-centre run directly at the keeper, don't blast it or the shot will go straight into his arms. Instead, power up the shot and press Up or Down to angle it towards the left or right corner of the net. This is the closest you'll get to aftertouch in the game. By the way, it's also possible to chip the goalie, which is a stylish way to finish. Check out Extended Play on page 107 for a guide on how to perform this move ■

A Attack the box diagonally and unleash a strike from the edge of the area
B If it doesn't go in, the keeper will parry it...
C And the ball will drop nicely to your striker

TOP SECRETS

VIRTUA STRIKER, CRAZY TAXI, ZOMBIE REVENGE, SOUL REAVER

VIRTUA STRIKER 2 VER. 2000.1

Publisher: Sega
Reviewed: Issue 06

MVP YUKICHAN

To play as the insanely named MVP Yukichan team, highlight Yugoslavia, USA, Korea and Italy, pressing Start after each. Yukichan will then appear in the top-left corner of the team selection screen and you can pick them with A.

FC SEGA

To unlock the FC Sega team, go into Arcade mode and press Start on the following teams: France, Chile, South Africa, England, Germany, and Argentina. The FC Sega icon will appear above the second column of teams, select it to play with them. Beat the Arcade mode with FC Sega (you can continue as many times as required) and they will be permanently available in the non-Arcade modes under a new menu called SP.

MVP ROYAL GENKI

To unlock MVP Royal Genki (a team of cute alien), use the code to access MVP Yukichan, then highlight MVP, hold down Start and press A.

Extra Teams

Upset at not being able to play as popular holiday destination Greece? To rectify this you'll have to finish Ranking mode, putting in a good performance while you're at it. The fifth game you play should then be a 'special match'. Beat the team you face in this game and they are yours for the keeping. As a rough guide, you'll need to have at least 50 per cent possession and score at least more than one goal per game. As well as Greece; Uruguay, Russia, Sweden and Portugal can all be unlocked using the same method.

EXTRA STADIUMS

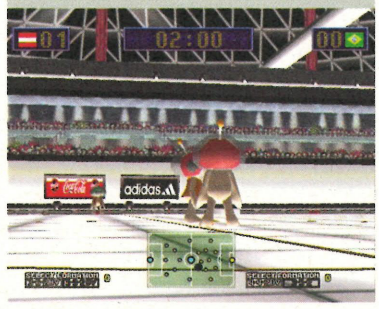
To access some nice big stadiums, all you need to do is complete Arcade mode twice and win the International Cup. Simple.

TWO SECRET STADIUMS

Once you've unlocked the extra stadiums you'll be able to access a couple of hidden grounds:

1) Enter Match Play mode and select two teams. Highlight the Sun Paragon stadium, Arcadia Hill stadium, Guild Fend stadium, Crystal Ball stadium, Central Square Garden, Triumph stadium or Harvest stadium. Hold the Start button then press A to select secret stadium one.

2) Highlight the Diva Geo stadium, Maestro Colosseum or Saint Globe stadium, hold Start and press A to play in the second secret stadium.



CRAZY TAXI

Publisher: Sega
Reviewed: Issue 07

ANOTHER DAY MODE

Press the right trigger at the driver select screen, then squeeze and hold the right trigger again while you select your crazy cabbie. The words 'Another Day' should appear on the screen, followed by a blast from a car horn. This will change the game slightly, adding new fare locations and alternative starting positions.

NO ARROWS

This code allows you to play without the arrow markers pointing you in the right direction. Press and hold the right trigger + Start before the driver select screen appears. If the code is successful, the message 'No Arrows' will appear.

NO DESTINATION MARKERS

To switch off the green destination markers that appear around your targets just press and hold the left trigger and Start before the driver select screen comes up. If you did it correctly, the message 'No Destination Mark' will appear.

EXPERT MODE

For the real pros. To switch off both Destination Markers and Arrows, press and hold left trigger and Start, and right trigger and Start before the driver select screen appears.

SECRET PUSH BIKE

Quickly press L, R, L, R, L, R at the driver selection screen, then highlight a character, hold both triggers then press A and Left on the d-pad.

Alternatively, complete all 16 Crazy Box games to unlock the secret push bike for each character.

CHANGE CAMERA AND SPEEDOMETER

Plug a controller into port 3 and begin a game in Original or Arcade mode. Now if you press the Start button on that controller you can toggle to a firstperson view by pressing B (you can switch back to normal view with A), get an alternate viewing angle with Y, or tap X five times to bring up a speedometer display.

ZOMBIE REVENGE

Publisher: Sega
Reviewed: Issue 05

CHEATS

Accumulate points in the VM mini-game to unlock Eternal Life, Area Select, Free Continue and Free Time Limit cheat options in Original mode.

ALTERNATE COSTUME

Highlight a character, then hold Start and press B, X, or Y.

CHANGE BLOOD COLOUR

Beat the game in Arcade mode, then go to the option window and you should see a new option entitled, Blood Colours.

FREE PLAY IN ARCADE MODE

Beat all three Original modes to enable Free Play in Arcade mode, giving you unlimited continues.

LEVEL SELECT IN FIGHTING MODE

In Fighting mode hold Start while

choosing a character to select a different level.

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Reviewed: Issue 07

ALL ABILITIES
Pause the game. Hold both triggers and press Up, Up, Down, Right, Right, Left, B, Right, Left, Down. The following abilities will now be yours: Constrict, Force Projectile, Phase, Swimming, Wall Climb, Wall Crawl. You naughty vampire.

AERIAL REAVER
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press A, Right, Up, Up, Y, Left, Left Right, Up.

FIRE REAVER
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Down, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, B, Right, Down.

KAIN REAVER
Pause game. Hold both triggers and then press A, B, Right, Y, Left, Left, Right, Up.

MAXIMUM HEALTH UPGRADE
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Right, B, Down, Up, Down, Up.

MAXIMUM MAGIC UPGRADE
Pause game. Hold both triggers and then press Y, Right, Down, Right, Up, Y, Left.

RESTORE HEALTH
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Down, B, Up, Left, Up, Left.

RESTORE MAGIC
Pause game. Hold both triggers and then press Right, Right, Left, Y, Right, Down.

UPGRADE HEALTH TO NEXT LEVEL
Pause game. Hold both triggers, and press Right, A, Left, Y, Up, Down.

OPEN ALL WARP GATES
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Up, Up, Down, Right, Right, Left, B, Right, Left, Down.

FORCE GLYPH
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Down, Left, Y, Down, Up.

SOUND GLYPH
Pause game. Hold both triggers and then press Right, Right, Down, B, Up, Up Down.

STONE GLYPH
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Down, B, Up, Left, Down, Right, Right.

SUNLIGHT GLYPH
Pause game. Hold both triggers and press Left, B, Left, Right, Right, Up, Up, Left.

WATER GLYPH
Pause game. Hold the left and right triggers and then press Down, B, Up, Down, Right.

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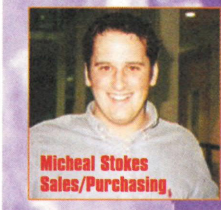

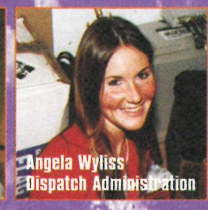

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EXTENDED PLAY

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR GAMES WITH DC-UK

With the average Dreamcast game costing £40, the last thing you want is to be bored with them all after two days. Luckily, though, even the most mindless arcade bash 'em up will contain hidden depths that may only become obvious after weeks of play.

Which is where Extended Play comes in. Each month we'll go through the top games with a fine tooth comb, squeezing all the game play goodness out of them as though they were ripe melons, and passing on the info to you. And to ensure you're pushing the game, and yourself, to the limits, we'll also be setting you regular challenges – beat our scores and you'll get your name in our Extended Play hall of fame. It's time to reveal your gaming genius to the world...

VIRTUA STRIKER 2 VER. 2000.1

THE LOWDOWN

> Being a footie title, *Virtua Striker 2 ver. 2000.1* will last longest in twoplayer mode, but even the limited oneplayer options offer some lastability. Your first aim should be to finish the Arcade mode without continues – this will open up FC Sega and put a shiny Trophy next to your name in the high score table. After that, completing Ranking Mode several times will open up five new teams (see Top Secrets) and should keep you entertained for a while. However, it's the battle to score the most stylish goal that will keep you plugging away at the game for weeks on end. Here are a few pointers to get you started. You can practice all of these by selecting Vs Mode and playing alone, which will keep opponent interference to a minimum. Okay, it's cheating but no-one need ever know this is how you learnt your dazzling striking skills.

GREAT GOALS

> To achieve a decent rating (at least 350) you need a combination of skill, luck, and an understanding of the way in which the scores are calculated. There are certain set moves which the game likes, such as first-time crosses, side-stepping past defenders and curling shots. As an example, a 35 yard shot which curls towards the top corner scores over 100 points more than a straight shot. Strangely, goals which go in off of the post or cross-bar seem to score much better than 'clean' ones. Those Japanese and their antics eh? To get you started, here are four relatively failsafe ways to score highly:

ZIG-ZAG

> As you enter the opposition's half, play a diagonal pass forward to the other side of the pitch. Return this back to the original side with a first-time pass (ie, press pass before the ball arrives at the first player). Repeat this until you are in a position to get a cross in. If you manage to score this way then you can expect to be looking at up to 450 points.

CHIPS

> *Virtua Striker 2 ver.2000.1* does contain a subtle amount of aftertouch. From about 35 yards out, build the shot power while pulling back on the d-pad (ie, the opposite direction to the goal). This should lob the keeper. The move can also be modified and used from six yards out. Only use the slightest amount of power to stub the ball over the line. Such moves can net you between 200-300 points. However, the real bigshots will lob the keeper from a diagonal angle and reap the extra benefits.

OVERHEAD KICKS

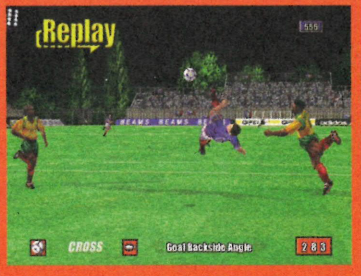
> Put simply, an overhead kick scores much more than a header or volley. They can also hurt your back, but polygon players don't worry about things like that. Anyway, the key to pulling one off is the placement of the cross. You need to play the ball slightly behind the shooting player. As a rough guide, try crossing the ball parallel with the edge of the 18 yard box. You might need to double back on yourself to get such a cross in. When you do manage it, and it's pretty simple once you've done it once, then you're looking at over 400 to start with.

'THE MOVE'

> Win a throw-in within 20 yards of the goal. Press Short Pass. Return first time (ie, press Pass again before the ball reaches the player receiving the throw. Thus completing a volleyed one-two). Press Long Pass. Frantically hammer the shoot button. Celebrate loudly. If done correctly, and this is very rare, you have pulled off the *Virtua Striker* equivalent of the multiple-hit combo and are well and truly in the money. Well, you get some points anyway.

Finally, try to combine the above tactics. For instance, a first-time pass, cross and overhead kick will score very handsomely indeed. Failing that, lie ■

THE CHALLENGE



> SCORE A BEAUTIFUL GOAL

We've managed 555 points with a breathtaking overhead kick, but goals worth 600-plus have been recorded. Send us a photo of your goal's score together with the team and goal type (Pass, Freekick, Cross, etc) ■

SOUL CALIBUR

THE LOWDOWN

> Namco's showpiece beat 'em up offers a much more structured and in-depth singleplayer game than most titles of it's ilk. To get the most out of the Arcade mode, you'll want to complete it with each of the initially available characters to unlock seven hidden fighters. Then, complete Arcade with all them to get Edge Master, and finally, complete it with Xianhua in her third costume (purchased through Mission mode) to unlock Inferno.

The excellent Mission mode is much more extensive. Here, for every mission you complete, you get points which you can use to buy pictures from the art gallery. There are over 200 pics to get, most of them opening up new features to the game including secret missions, costumes and arenas (we've listed all of these in DC-UK 04).

And once you've done that, have a go at the following tasks, then enter one of our *Soul Calibur* challenges. Go on. You know you want that T-shirt...

TIME ATTACK

> First up is Time Attack. You know what this is about: you have to battle your way through on a normal setting in the quickest time possible. There are two main tactics to remember: always go in for the attack – many precious seconds are lost if you wait for the enemy to come to you; make use of the 'out of the ring' moves, such as kicks and upward hitting attacks. Storming into the fight and kicking a character out of the ring before his energy has been worn even half way down is an excellent time saving tactic. Check the Challenge box below to see our best time so far.

ARCADE MODE

> This is like Time Attack but a little easier. Set the rounds per stage to one in the options screen and set the difficulty to easy. Now try and complete the game as quickly as you can. We've managed it in a pretty respectable 01'02"32.

SURVIVAL MODE

> Beat 'em up veterans should be familiar with this option also. In one-round matches you have to dispose of each character as they come – the main problem being limited life refill at the end of each match.

Without trying too hard we managed to muster up 32 wins on our first attempt. Once you become a dab hand at predicting attack patterns, that number should shoot up. Check out the Challenge box for what you should be aiming to beat.

TEAM BATTLE

> Try this one: set the number of combatants per team to eight, choose your best character (or at least the one you want to use for this challenge) and try to beat all eight of your opponents by using only that fighter. We can do it on easy to hard difficulty, though we've yet to do it on very hard or ultra hard.

MISSION MODE

> This is probably the hardest task of the lot, possible only for *Soul Calibur* masters. Complete all the missions with a perfect 1/1 rating. Go on try it. Bet you can't ■

THE CHALLENGE

> TIME ATTACK
Send in proof of your best time (a photo of the screen will do the trick). Our fastest is 01'02"32.

Or:

> SURVIVAL MODE
Again, send photographic proof of your highest number of wins. We managed 48 in the course of writing this article ■

OVER TO YOU...

Next month we'll start running high score tables for *Virtua Striker* and *Soul Calibur*, as well as offering some new challenges.

To get your name in the mag, just rack up the required score and send proof of your achievement – in the form of a photo of the screen – together with your name, address and email/phone number to the address printed on the right. We'll accept digital photos, polaroids or normal photos, and you can scan them and email them to us if you like. Don't send us any VMs at the moment; if we require them, we'll contact you. The top score in each challenge will win a **DC-UK** T-shirt ■

Send proof of your high scores to the addresses below :

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ASK AUNTIE ESTHER

HAVING PROBLEMS? AUNTIE WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE ADVICE YOU NEED

> Is there an option in *Virtua Striker 2* that allows the removal of the Radar and Team formations from the bottom of the screen (ie, Offensive-Normal-Defensive 4-3-3 DV)?
Simon Williams
No, you're stuck with them, I'm afraid.

> Is there going to be a digital camera? And the Dreamkey Demo Disc and the Internet Disc says Volume 1 – does this mean that there will be other volumes at a later date?
Ben Brooks
The answer is yes to both questions. Sega has just unveiled a new Dreamcast digital camera in Japan (haven't you been checking the Website? Slapped wrists, young man. Think yourself lucky you can read the full story in DC-Express), and that should be making a debut in the UK later this year – fingers crossed. Sega will also be upgrading its Internet service regularly, with the next new version of the Dreamkey disc distributed free of charge to us lucky Dreamcast owners very soon.

> Do you know if Sega or anybody else has plans to release a music making game (like *Music 2000* on PS) for Dreamcast? Also, is there any news on when *GP500* by Team17 might see the light of day?
Dave Potter
Well Konami's Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix *and* Pop 'n' Music 3 *are both available on import, although they're not, strictly speaking, music creation titles. As for a DC version of* Music, *we have a feeling that you may be in luck before the year is out. A very good feeling indeed. Stay tuned to this frequency for more info in the near future...*

Are *Fighting Vipers 2* and *Daytona 2* coming to Dreamcast? Also, any news on *Climax Landers*?
James Hutchfull
Daytona 2 *is highly likely, but Sega will probably wait until* Sega GT *has had a good run in Japanese shops. As for* Landers, *the game is set to be released in the US at the end of March, so a UK release shouldn't be far behind. I've heard nothing about a* Fighting Vipers *conversion so far. Sorry.*

> Will *Crazy Taxi* have a mode where you can just drive around with no time limit? Like a practice route?
Mark Malekpour
There's no practice mode as such, but you can set the time limit to ten minutes in the arcade mode, which will give you, erm, ten minutes to have a nice drive around.

> I was wondering if you could tell me if *Team Fortress 2* is coming to Dreamcast some time soon? Also, do you know when the DVD and zip drive are coming out?
James Stewart
Well, Half-Life *was recently confirmed for Dreamcast release later this year and there has been talk of* Team Fortress *coming across too – perhaps as part of Sega's online gaming push. The rumours are so vague, however, we're not sure if that means* Team Fortress 1 *or* 2. *As soon as we hear more, it'll go in DC-Express.*

As for the DVD and Zip drive, Sega Europe has not mentioned a release date. It won't be until much later in the year.

> Do you know if a follow up to the Saturn game *Shining Force 3* is in development or if it is likely to be some time in the future? I would really like to know because it was my favourite Saturn RPG.
R McMilla
Sega has not let on about any plans to bring the excellent Shining Force *series over to Dreamcast. However,* Phantasy Star Online *and* Eternal Arcadia *are both on the way from Sega, while Gamearts'* Grandia 2 *is slated for a Japanese release later in the year. Plus, there's also* Shenmue *and* Baldur's Gate *to look forward to, so you won't exactly be starved of RPG action this year.*

> Could you tell me if you know anything about these larger capacity memory cards? I've heard that you can get thirdparty ones already, but will they be reliable?
Stephen Warn
Action Replay has just announced a high capacity 16x memory card which will be available from March for £39.99. And there's no reason to suspect the device of being anything other than reliable.

> Can you tell me when the following are coming out, if ever: *Virtua Cop 3, Max Payne, SpikeOut*
Steven Chan
Virtua Cop 2 *is down for release in Japan in March and should be coming over here soon (I think you're getting a little ahead of yourself with* Virtua Cop 3, *though, my love).* Spike Out *has not been mentioned among Sega of Japan's forthcoming releases, which is a shame because we felt it was a much more entertaining scrolling beat 'em up than* Zombie Revenge. *Finally,* Max Payne *appears to have slipped a few times and now has the dreaded acronym TBA permanently attached to it. Ick.*

> 1) Do you know if any future Dreamkeys will support MP3 play (not necessarily off the Net)?
2) Now that Namco is doing DC games, will it be releasing any of its *Museum* series?
3) Would it be at all possible to mount a cover GD-ROM with game saves, or VM animations and so on, rather than just a couple of demos and videos of future releases?
Brian Jones
1) I've only recently heard a rumour that Sega of Japan has begun developing a new VM unit which will be able to store and play MP3 files. Expect more details soon.
2) Highly, highly unlikely. As the games on the Museum *series were pretty much faultless ports of the coin-op originals, there's probably little point in converting them to a new more powerful format.*
3) In theory it would be possible to cover mount a GD-ROM with VM saves and animations. You never know what the future may hold...

"WILL CRAZY TAXI HAVE A MODE WHERE YOU CAN DRIVE AROUND WITH NO TIME LIMIT?"
Mark Malekpour

"IF YOU PLAYED CODE VERONICA RIGHT THROUGH, IT WOULD TAKE YOU 16 HOURS"

■ **Auntie Esther**

> I played *House of the Dead 2* the other day, and thought it was great – now I'm ready and raring to get a gun-game. My only disappointment is the lack of Internet play. I've heard that *Quake 3* and *Half Life* are coming out, but haven't been able to find anyone who knows whether this is confirmed, and when they are due to be launched.

My dilemma is that games don't come cheap. Therefore, I don't want to go out and spend £55 on *HOTD2* and Gun pack if the likes of *Quake* are going to be released in a few weeks. At the same time, I don't want to be waiting forever to relieve my need for a shooting game.

What do you reckon?

Donna L Jenkins

Quake 3 *and* Half Life *are both confirmed for Dreamcast release, but they won't be out for a while in the UK. If you do buy* House of the Dead 2 *in the meantime (which offers completely different gameplay to those first person shooters, of course), you will then be able to use the gun with other titles, including the forthcoming* Virtua Cop 2. *They're all great games. And I have to say it makes for a refreshing change to find a fellow female with a taste for heavy artillery.*

> D2. When?

Damian Tankard

Ask politely and I might tell you. Oh all right, then, Summer seems like a safe bet. Remember to bring Mrs Manners with you next time.

> 1. Is it possible to download the VM animator and use it on the DC?
> 2. When will the software that allows you to program VM games be released?
> 3. When is Sega going to release coloured joypads, VMs, etc?
> 4. Why don't you put VM animations/games on your Web page?

W O'Leary

1. You can go to **www.booyaka.com**, *or alternatively try* **www.vmu.org.uk** *which is aimed at Brit dreamcast owners and is run by* **DC-UK** *readers, which means it's dead, dead good.*
2. See either of the above for info.
3. Sega in Japan has released several 'novelty' machines and peripherals. Sega Europe has announced no plans to do likewise, but we're bound to see a few before the end of the year.
4. We're working on it right now

> Is there any chance of a decent football management game for the DC, perhaps *Championship Manager*?

Paul Gratto

Eidos has revealed no plans to bring Championship Manager *to Dreamcast, and Infogrames wouldn't let on about a possible DC translation of the* Premiere Manager *series. Sega has produced a football management game in Japan called* Let's Make A Professional Soccer Team, *but we doubt that will make it to the UK. We're pretty sure a footie management game will eventually appear – possibly at the start of the next season...*

> How many hours of gameplay are in *Code Veronica*? And how many confirmed cars are there in *Sega GT*?

Ally Whyte

If you played Code Veronica *right through from beginning to end, making no mistakes and solving all the puzzles instantaneously, it would take you 16 hours. Under similar conditions,* Resident Evil 2 *would have taken about five. As for* Sega GT, *there are over a hundred confirmed cars.*

> A workmate of mine owns a PC and he is often sent video junk mail, but when he sends it on to me, all I receive is his email address with no pictures. So what's going on? He reckons Dreamcast can only handle letters and not actual video footage. Is this true?

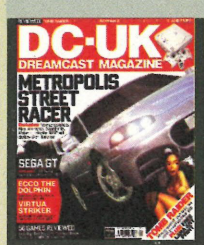
David Bate

Well he's sort of right and wrong. Dreamcast can play MPEG footage from the Internet, but because DC has no cache memory to download movie files to, it can't receive them via email. Exactly what sort of movies is he sending you, anyway? Actually, don't answer that – I'm quite prudish.

> Are there plans for a Dreamcast-only episode of *Tomb Raider* or is Core just going to do conversions?

Richard Kilroy

Core hasn't disclosed anything yet – they'll probably wait and see how successful Last Revelation *is before they begin work on another Dreamcast title. It is known, however that Eidos – Core's publisher – is stepping up its commitment to Sega's machines with at least eight games in the pipeline. However, a DC-exclusive outing is unlikely – it just doesn't make financial sense to put all your eggs in one basket these days. Unless that basket has a global installed-user base of 70 million, like a certain five-year-old console...* ■



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// DREAMCAST HARDWARE INFO

> PROCESSOR 200MHz Hitachi SH-4. It's a Reduced Instruction Set (RISC) design, which makes it a lot more powerful than a 200MHz Intel Pentium would be. Because of their high power, both the SH-4 and PowerVR chips are linked to a cooling system that's connected to a fan on the console. So don't cover the vent!

> GRAPHIC CHIP Power VR 2DC (codenamed CLX-1), capable of up to four million polygons per second. Performance is nearer to three million when all the available effects are switched on. There's also texture compression built in, which means that highly detailed surfaces can be drawn in games. Although it's related to a PC graphics card, it isn't upgradable.

> STORAGE Unique Yamaha 1000Mb GD-ROM drive, making the discs currently pirate-proof. Runs at 12 times standard CD speed.

> AUDIO Yamaha's AICA audio chip features 64 sound channels, complete with in-built support for samples and surround sound effects.

> MEMORY Dreamcast is piled high with Random Access Memory (RAM), with 16Mb for game data, 8Mb for graphics data, and 2Mb for Audio. That's as much as PlayStation and PlayStation2 have when added together.

> VIDEO OUTPUT Standard resolution for Dreamcast is the highest available on current televisions: 640x480. This is delivered at either 50 or 60 frames per second, which is why things move so smoothly compared to older consoles.

> MODEM European Dreamcast's ship with a 33.6kbps modem, which roughly means that it can communicate on the Internet at around 0.003Mb per second. So, not much. American Dreamcasts come with a faster 56 kbps modem and we reckon the European version should have been specified the same. There is a fix, however.

The DC modem is upgradable, which you do simply by pulling it off the side of the machine (go on, have a go, we know you're dying to), and slapping a new one on. If we're lucky, future versions could include a cable modem, which would be capable of much faster speeds – as in 0.3Mb per second – so long as you're connected to a cable network, of course.

COINING IT

OFFROAD THUNDER, GUNBIRD 2 AND NAMCO'S NEW CABINET

OFFROAD THUNDER

Developer: Midway
Release: Out now

Dreamcast owners who have succumbed to the watery delights of Hydro Thunder will be pleased to know that the local arcade is now playing host to a land-based offshoot of Midway's thunderous franchise entitled, Offroad Thunder. Although not particularly well-known outside of the hallowed environs of the arcades (never having been the subject of home conversions) this is actually the fourth in the Offroad series, and has wisely taken advantage of the Thunder cachet to boost its appeal.

Despite the chasm of one being liquid and the other solid, *Hydro* and *Offroad* actually have a great deal in common. They both utilise wild and crazy racing action on spiralling courses with gravity-defying jumps, hidden short cuts and interactive scenery. They also share the same collectible power-ups: blue nitros for a speed boost and red nitros for a super speed boost.

Offroad Thunder's races take place across eight tracks encompassing a variety of different terrains, including beach, alpine, dirt, desert, etc. The most enjoyable course is the uniquely-named Carnie O'Chaos, which takes place on a carnival site and involves launching your vehicle through burning rings of fire and mowing down malevolent clowns (or was that a dream?). There are eight selectable vehicles (plus four secret ones to unlock) and these range from humungous monster trucks to jeeps and nippy dune buggies.

Although the oneplayer game is extremely enjoyable, *Offroad Thunder* really bursts into life in multiplayer. As well as basic twoplayer races there are two additional modes for competing against your mates. Demolition Derby, unsurprisingly, involves smashing into the opposition to try and force them out of the race. Snag the Flag is a more subtle game in which you're part of a four-man team aiming to collect the flag and cross the finish line before the other team can nick it off you.

Overall, *Offroad Thunder* is another quality Midway coin-op and a suitably dry partner to the celebrated *Hydro*. A Dreamcast conversion is under way and, as a Naomi title, the port will be pretty staightforward so we can probably expect to see *Offroad Thunder* skidding onto DC by the end of the year ■

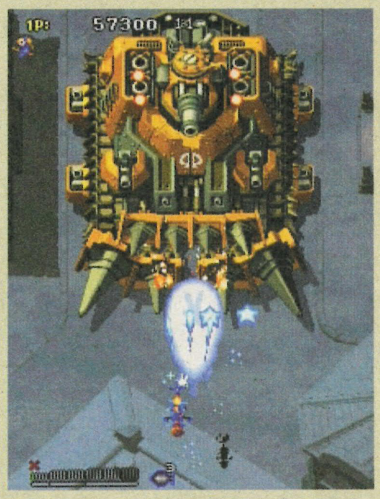
GUNBIRD 2

Developer: Psykio
Release: Out now

Having already used DC to resuscitate the 2D beat 'em up, Capcom is attempting to do the same for the olde scrolling shoot 'em up genre. *Giga Wing* has already been ported over from the coin-op and will be released in the UK next month, while two further 2D blasters – *Mars Matrix* and *Magic Great Battle* – are coming to the arcade and should end up on Dreamcast, as well. The prolific company's next subject for conversion is *Gunbird 2*.

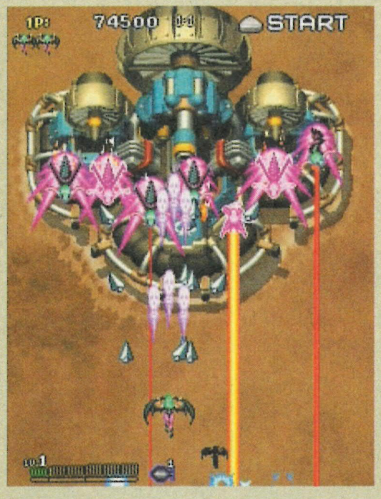
The original *Gunbird* was released on coin-op four years ago and was followed by a popular Saturn conversion. This sequel hit the arcades last year and with the Dreamcast version imminent in Japan we decided to check it out.

Marion and Morrigan, the protagonists of the first *Gunbird*, have been retained and you must take to the skies and blast the bejesus out of a constant stream of adversaries. *Gunbird 2* utilises the classic, tried-and-tested 2D shoot 'em up formula: power-ups



can be collected to upgrade your weapon; as you progress, the screen fills with so many enemies that you can barely move without bumping into one; and at the end of each stage you take on a gigantic boss with a glaringly obvious Achilles heel that must be targeted.

Despite doing nothing new, *Gunbird 2* is enjoyable old skool fun and for fans of the genre the Dreamcast release will be an extremely welcome one ■



NEW NAMCO ARCADE CABINET

Namco has officially announced a new general purpose arcade cabinet called Cyber Lead II which has internal slots for both Naomi technology (similar to Dreamcast) and a System 12 board (similar to PlayStation). It also features a Slot Link system enabling users to load and save data between their home consoles and the arcade machine using Dreamcast VM units and PlayStation Memory Cards. In a press release, Namco of Japan confirmed plans to release the Cyber Lead II to the Japanese market in March, and, in addition to its unique dual-compatibility, the cabinet will also feature a high resolution monitor.

The first two games for the cabinet will be *New Japan Pro Wrestling: Toukon Retsuden 4 Arcade Edition* (Naomi) and *Super World Stadium 2000* (System 12). The former is an arcade port of Tomy's Dreamcast wrestler, *Toukon Retsuden 4*, which is an extremely popular grappling title in Japan. Players will be able use their VMs to download wrestlers they created in the Dreamcast version of *Toukon Retsuden* and fight with the very same fat blokes in the arcades.

Both titles will be released by Namco itself in March, and with the company's recent commitment to release at least two Dreamcast titles a year, we can expect to see a high level of interaction between Namco's arcade games and DC conversions in the future.

To finish on an extremely exciting note, Japanese coin-op site Amusement Graffiti – which has just been proven correct regarding Namco's plans to release *Toukon Retsuden 4* in the arcades – continues to list *Soul Calibur 2* for a summer Naomi release. There's been no official word from Namco on this, but we certainly wouldn't be surprised to see a *Soul Calibur* sequel hitting the arcades later this year, followed by a Dreamcast port soon after. Keep your fingers and toes crossed ■

NOT THE SAME CABLE

DC-UK'S REGULAR DELVE INTO THE SHADOWY WORLD OF IMPORT GAMING

NHL 2K

Developer: BlackBox Games **Release:** TBC

The US sports games released on Dreamcast so far have been of an exceptional standard. *NFL 2K* and *NBA 2K* have both, arguably, been the finest videogame representations of American football and basketball ever seen on any format, and now *NHL 2K* is here to try and do the same for ice hockey. Although not a widely popular spectator sport in Britain, ice hockey games have always been well received in Blighty over the years; probably due to their fast arcade action and comedy fighting interludes. Thankfully, *NHL 2K* doesn't dispense with these staples of ice hockey gaming but, instead, mixes them with a teaspoon full of realism to produce a satisfying 128bit update of the classic ice hockey formula.

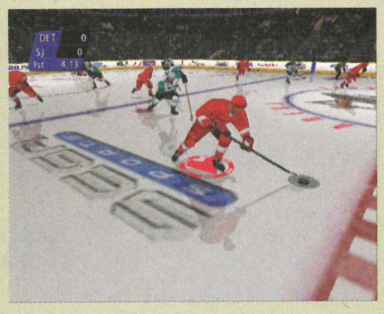
Of course, the biggest improvement over the classic *NHL* games on MegaDrive and SNES is in graphical quality. While not quite up to the standard of the superlative visuals found in its *NBA* and *NFL* cousins, *NHL 2K* looks incredibly realistic. The reflections and shadows on the ice are fantastically realised. An especially impressive feature is the way the rink is scarred by skate marks left behind by the players, and, at the end of a game, the ice is a roughed-up pattern of grooves and swirls.

The plexiglass barrier around the arena is also hugely impressive: bending and wobbling as you bodycheck an opponent into it, and even displaying a web of cracks if you smack the puck at it. The motion-captured players are totally convincing in their appearance and movement; their team uniforms have been painstakingly recreated and, more importantly, they cover the ground with realistic speed and fluidity.

The hockey action itself is a successful combination of the slick playability found in *NHL* games of yesteryear and the kind of realism afforded by improved technology and three dimensions. As a true ice hockey simulation, *NHL 2K* runs at a speed more in keeping with the, admittedly quick, sport rather than the ludicrously breakneck speeds employed by 2D hockey games. This balanced pace affords the game a much more tactical edge meaning gameplay is more than skating full-pelt from one end of the rink to the other and scoring incessant solo goals. Instead, you have to think carefully about your plays and pass the puck around to create openings.

When you do break through for a shot on goal you'll discover that scoring is also much trickier than in previous hockey games. The angle of the analogue pad determines the direction

01 One-on-ones with the 'keeper do not guarantee goals. Instead, they usually result in point blank saves
02 Long-range shots are extremely tricky to score from. Just try to direction them into the bottom corners
03 From this position the best bet is to square it to a team-mate for a strike on goal



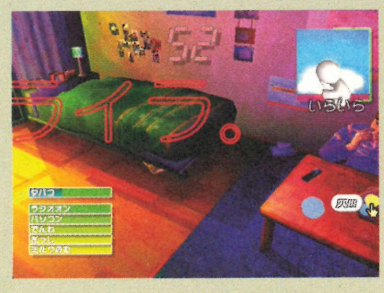
and height of the shot and the longer you hold down Shoot the more powerful the strike will be. But no matter how well struck and directed your shot is, the goalie will invariably save it. To begin with this is extremely frustrating with the scoreboard remaining stuck on zero, but with a little bit of perseverance, you'll soon discover a few effective scoring methods – such as squaring it across the face of the goal to a team-mate and dummying the keeper before shooting into the gap he leaves at the side.

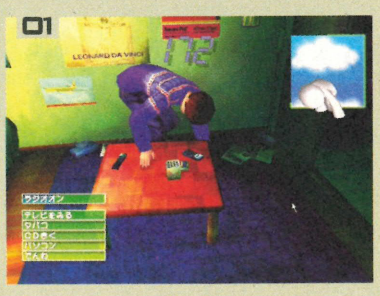
Where *NHL 2K* falls down is in its presentation. Unusually for an American release, little thought has been given to the game's user interface and options. The set-up screen looks as if it was cobbled together during a lunch-hour and the number of basic options missing is disappointing: you can't check a team's line-up before selecting them, there's no practice mode and, incredibly, you can't even customise the joypad controls. In-game preferences are equally shallow with coaching options limited to how offensive or defensive your team plays, there are no timeouts, no icon-based passing and only a few options to regulate which of the rules to keep or discard.

Despite its presentational limitations, once you get out onto the ice *NHL 2K* delivers in spades, with an extremely enjoyable game of ice hockey. It may not be the generational leap in quality offered by the *NBA* and *NFL 2K*s but it certainly puts EAs *NHL* games in their place ■

ROOMMANIA #203

Developer: Sega **UK Release:** Spring 2000





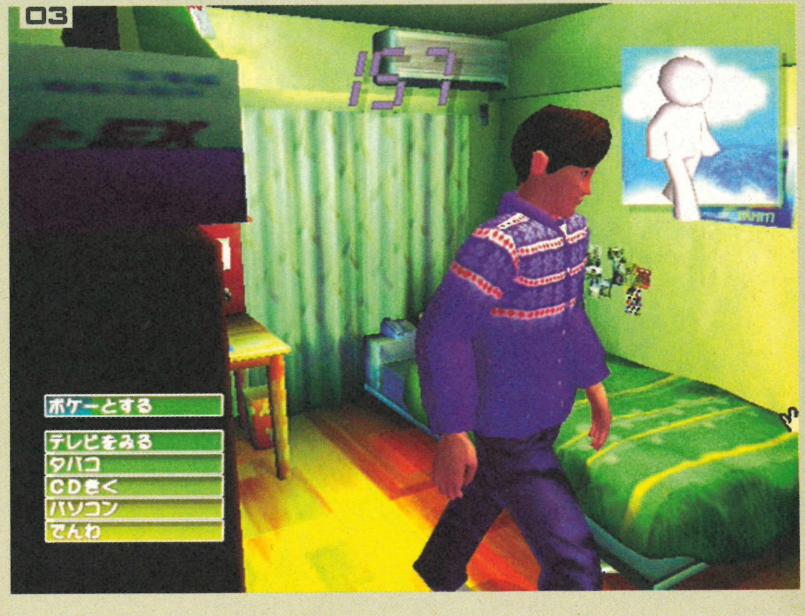
01 The little figure in the corner copies every move Neji makes, which means he can take a slash and you don't have to watch

02 He loves his fags and his Italian artists, does our Neji. We don't have a clue what the option box says, though one of them is a health bar

03 Clearly bored, Neji takes a hike. The number at the top is the time you've got left. You get 180 seconds, twice a day – lucky you

Un terms of general weirdness, *Roommania #203* is up there with the likes of *Seaman*. Upon starting your game, you're presented with a tiny bedroom, in which resides a young Japanese man with appalling taste in pullovers. You can pan the view from side to side using a little cursor, change the camera position, zoom in on interesting objects and throw little coloured balls at things. And that's it.

A comprehensive knowledge of Japanese would reveal that the man is Neji Taihei, and you are a disembodied voyeur who visits him twice a day. As far as we can tell, the aim of the game appears to be to influence Neji's meaningless life by influencing events using those balls of light, but – apart from locking him out of the flat by mistake – we'll be damned if we can figure out how it's done. It's now Saturday night, we've chucked thousands of balls at him, and Neji is currently looking extremely depressed, is slumped in a corner, chain-smoking, as the radio plays Japanese love songs. We fear for his future ■



NOT THE SAME CABLE

DC-UK'S REGULAR DELVE INTO THE SHADOWY WORLD OF IMPORT GAMING

ESSENTIAL INFO

> TO PLAY IMPORT GAMES, YOU NEED TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT TO ACCESS THEM

> **DO YOU OWN:** A Japanese or American Dreamcast, or an add-on device that allows you to play games from either country?
> **WHY THIS IS NECESSARY:** Have you heard of the term 'territorial lockout'? In essence, this is a feature within the European Dreamcast that prevents games from NTSC regions from running. All consoles – from the antiquated Mega Drive, to the ageing PlayStation – have this nasty trick hidden in their metaphorical sleeves. Sega, like other videogame giants, is loathe to condone the existence of the import scene.
To get around this, you either need an NTSC machine, or an add-on device that fools the Dreamcast into thinking that it can play any game. Which, of course, it actually can. The latter does not exist yet but, traditionally, thirdparty manufacturers tend to start working on these add-ons after the launch of a new console.

> **DO YOU OWN:** A TV capable of displaying an NTSC signal?
> **WHY THIS IS NECESSARY:** Before you rush out to buy an NTSC Dreamcast, you should take a long, hard look at your TV. Is it a dual-format model, capable of displaying both NTSC and PAL signals? If it's more then four years old, the chances are that it isn't. If it's a low-budget portable, it's also unlikely to fit the required bill. The best way to find out is to ask the manufacturer. If it's a PAL-only model, you'll need to buy a new TV. Plug an NTSC Dreamcast into it and, at best, you'll get a grainy, stretched and, above all, visually unpleasant black-and-white picture. At worst, you'll get a mess of rolling lines.

> **DO YOU OWN:** A step-down transformer, and either a SCART or S-video cable?
> **WHY THESE ARE NECESSARY:** If you buy an NTSC Dreamcast, the retailer in question will prompt you into buying these, too. It's a good idea to consent to both. Japan and the US use different voltages to the UK, and plugging your Dreamcast straight into the mains will kill it forever. A 'step down', as they are known, regulates the voltage to a DC-friendly level.

A SCART or S-video cable is needed to link your TV and Dreamcast. If your TV is happy with NTSC signals, you will have sockets for one or both on top-range models. Generally, people argue that SCART offers a better quality of image, so opt for that if you have it. Some would even argue that bronze, silver or gold-plated versions of these – costing anything from £20 to £60 – offer an even better standard of picture. But do you really want to take things that seriously?

TIME STALKERS

Developer: Climax Entertainment **Release:** May

So far Dreamcast has been starved of RPGs like an errant child who's had his sweeties confiscated. While a couple of godawful role playing games have skulked onto the Japanese market (and there's no chance of them being inflicted upon us Westerners), the only title to appear on our shores so far is the distinctly average *Evolution*.

Now, Climax Entertainment – developer of *Land Stalker* for the MegaDrive and *Dark Saviour* on the Saturn – has translated its Japanese RPG, *Climax Landers* (oo-er) into English and retitled it *Time Stalkers*. But, to be brutally frank, they really needn't have bothered.

You play as Sword, an adventurer who gets caught up in a timewarp and transported to a strange vortex where different worlds from different eras have somehow been jumbled together. It's your job as the hero to solve the mystery and return everything to its proper place and time.

Gameplay is archetypal RPG fare. Explore a dungeon, fight numerous turn-based battles, collect the rewards of cash and additional skills, watch a plot-enhancing cut-scene, move onto another dungeon and continue the process ad infinitum. In this case familiarity breeds contempt as the quest is dull and uninvolving. There's a dearth of items to collect, the puzzles aren't puzzling and, with such little depth, the game can be finished in around ten hours – criminal for an RPG.

Only role playing obsessives suffering extreme withdrawal symptoms need consider *Time Stalkers*. Everyone else would be wise to wait for *Shenmue*'s Western appearance ■

PROJECT K IMPORT TOP TEN

The ten best-selling import games at Project K this month

1	> SEGA GT	Publisher: Sega Genre: Racing
2	> BIOHAZARD: CODE VERONICA	Publisher: Capcom Genre: Survival horror
3	> CRAZY TAXI	Publisher: Sega Genre: Drive 'em up
4	> SHENMUE	Publisher: Sega Genre: RPG/Adventure
5	> VIRTUAL ON	Publisher: Sega Genre: Mech shoot 'em up
6	> STREET FIGHTER 3 W IMPACT	Publisher: Capcom Genre: 2D beat 'em up
7	> SPACE CHANNEL 5	Publisher: Sega Genre: Dance 'em up
8	> VIRTUA STRIKER 2	Publisher: Sega Genre: Football
9	> SOUL CALIBUR	Publisher: Sega Genre: Beat 'em up
10	> ZOMBIE REVENGE	Publisher: Sega Genre: Shoot/beat 'em up

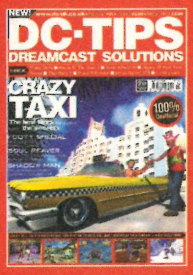
Charts supplied courtesy of Project K. Call to order: 0208 508 1328
For Project K and other import companies, see classifieds

TOP FIVE MOST REQUESTED GAMES

Project K customers' most anticipated releases

1	DEAD OR ALIVE 2	Publisher: Sega Genre: Beat 'em up
2	METROPOLIS STREET RACER	Publisher: Sega Genre: Racing
3	POWER STONE 2	Publisher: Capcom Genre: Beat 'em up
4	MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	Publisher: Capcom Genre: 2D beat 'em up
5	CARRIER	Publisher: Jaleco Genre: Adventure

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ON THE INCREASE



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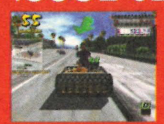
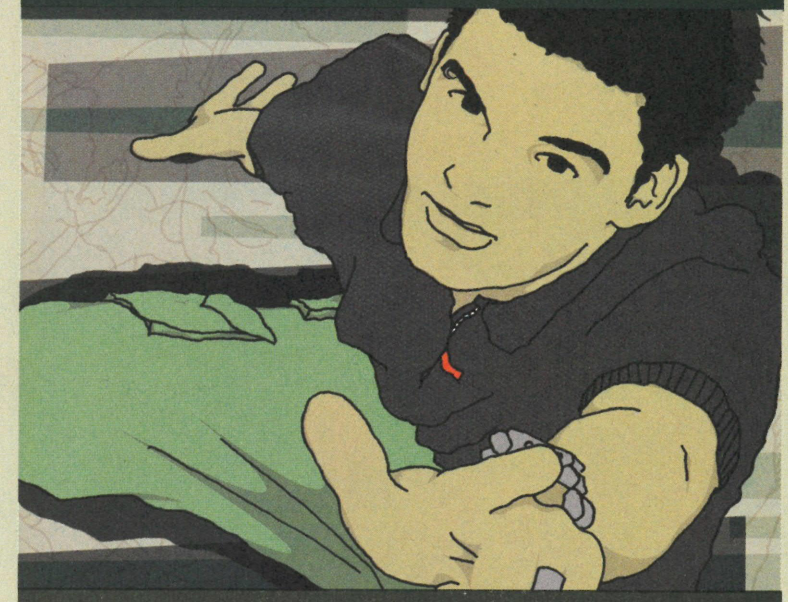
DC-TIPS
DREAMCAST SOLUTIONS



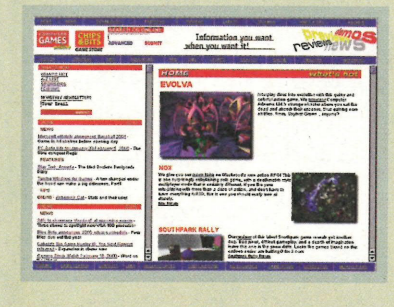
SURF'S UP SPECIAL
PART TWO



// WEB WEAVING THE DREAMKEY WAY

Last month we gave you some hints to help your home page to look as good on Dreamcast as it does on a Mac or PC. This month we have two more pages of tips and a closing tutorial on how to create a Web page on page 118. Get weaving...

// FRAMES



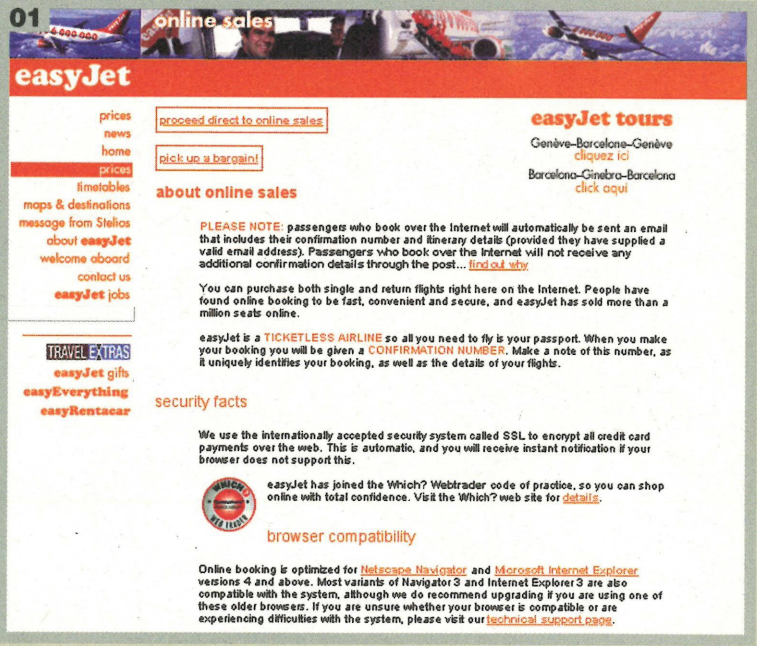
> Dreamkey does support frames, but we'd recommend you try to avoid them where possible because of the way the browser handles page scrolling. On a non-frames Website, the page will scroll as soon as the cursor is moved off the bottom of the screen. With frames, only the 'active' frame, or the one the cursor is over, will scroll. So if you have a navigation frame placed at the bottom of the page, the user will have to click and drag on the content frame's tiny scroll bar to move it.

// JAVASCRIPT

> Dreamkey has what Sega describes euphemistically as 'partial' support for Javascript, which is the programming language that lets you add extra functionality to Web pages. In practice this means the simpler functions will work, such as link messages within the status bar.

Unfortunately, one of the most popular uses of Javascript – to perform image swapping when the user moves their pointer over an image (called rollovers) – doesn't work on Dreamkey.

01



You can, however, replicate the effect with Flash, assuming you have access to the development software.

There is no support at all for the full version of Java, so downloadable applets, etc, will not work.

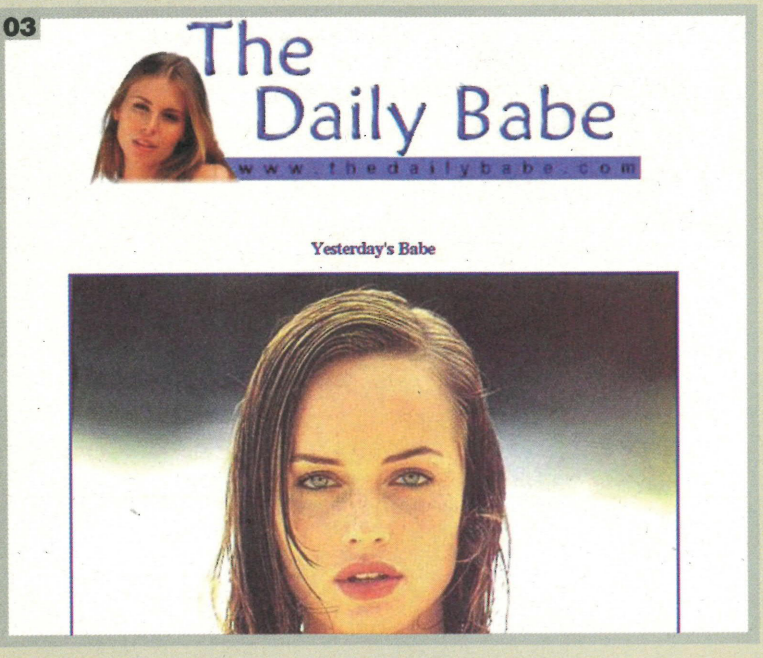
// FLASH

> One of the best features of Dreamkey is the built-in support for Flash, a powerful tool which is becoming more common as a way to make Websites more animated and interactive. The support is for Flash version 3, however, which has now been superceded on PC and Mac, but it's better than nothing. Flash is good for creating lively menus. Its strengths – that is creating simple, geometric animated shapes and text – tie in nicely with what looks good on a TV screen.

There are drawbacks, though. The Flash development tool is not cheap, although you might be able to find second-hand copies of version 3 for a reasonable price, now that version 4 is available. The framerate of complex Flash movies will also slow to a crawl on Dreamkey, so, as with regular pages, keeping things simple will give the best results. Building an entire site with Flash is certainly possible, and has the bonus that you won't get any problems with stray text or page elements because everything is contained within the movie.

02

03



// DOWNLOAD TIMES

> Download times are something to keep an eye on when designing for Dreamcast. The standard for computer modems is generally 56k per second, and while students and office workers can make use of much faster network connections, Dreamcast has a slower 33.6k modem. So large pages and images will take proportionately longer to download. This means you have to really take page weight – the combined file size of your HTML page and all the images within it – into account.

Try to keep page weights under 50kb, and, if possible, don't let your images get above 20kb each at the absolute maximum. 10kb is better, and if you use optimised GIFs you can have decent quality images that are just a handful of bytes each. Because every Dreamcast user has the same hardware, you can test download times much more effectively than on a computer. If you get bored waiting for your page to load, chances are everyone else will.

// FINAL THOUGHTS

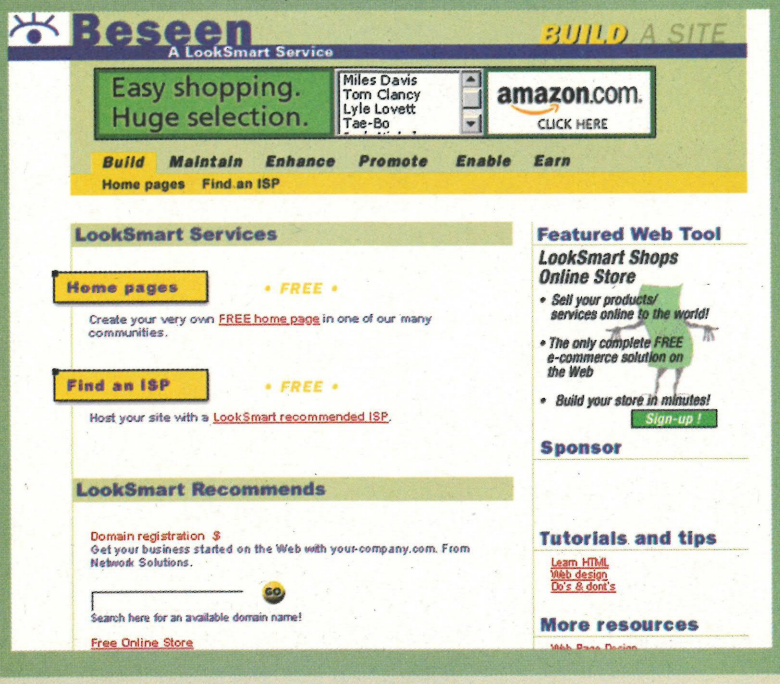
> The best thing about Dreamkey is that it's universal. That is, all European Dreamcast users have the same browser. So if a site works on your screen, it's going to work for everyone. And when Sega upgrades Dreamkey, it will make the new browser available to all Dreamcast owners free of charge, so you'll be able to make use of any new features straight away.

The main problems stem from the limitations of using the television as a high quality display, because it isn't one, at least not yet. But designing your site to work well on Dreamcast does force you to do things properly, and plan and test your pages at every stage of development. This can only be a good thing, because we all know how many awful Websites are out there. ▶

01 Easyjet's site uses rollover buttons in the left-hand frame to great effect **02** Goldie's Website is a stunning example of Flash technology **03 & 04** Sites with big graphics like these can take ages to download, especially on Dreamcast. In some cases, such as The Daily Babe it's worth the wait, though

04

// WEBSITES – THE EASY WAY



If you're a complete dunce when it comes to computers there is a way you can sneak a Website onto the Internet using just your Dreamcast and a lot of patience. The optional keyboard helps as well.

There are loads of automated Websites out there that let newcomers create their own homepages without any knowledge of HTML. Only a select few will work through Dreamkey, but the best we've found is at **www.beseen.com**. You'll have to disable content filtering first, though (check your Dreamkey instructions). The site doesn't have any adult content, but Sega has been very sneaky and locked it out.

Once you've registered on the site you can start making your own homepage, using the many page templates they provide. You are limited in what you can do through your Dreamcast, as it's not possible to upload your own images and it can be very laborious if you want to add a lot of text without a keyboard. But you are able to choose colour schemes and backgrounds, and add extra features such as hit counters and guest books.

We're not going to pretend that the result will be a masterpiece of Web design, but if you're desperate for your own homepage, then it's as good a start as any. Check out our attempt, created entirely by Dreamcast, at **http//: home.beseen.com/technology/dcuk** ■

SURF'S UP SPECIAL
PART TWO:
WEB WEAVING THE DREAMKEY WAY

A SITE IS BORN

No matter how large or small your Website is, if you're doing it properly, the development process you'll follow is going to look something like this. Below we're developing a new section for arrgh (the anally retentive retro games home) that's going to cover handheld consoles including Neo Geo Pocket and the Dreamcast VM ■

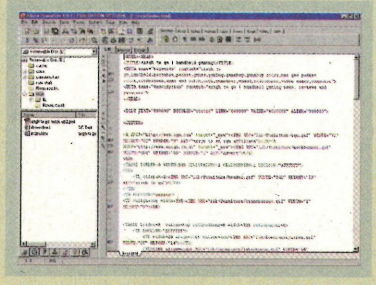
THINK

What is your site about? Who's going to read it? How often is it going to update? Where is the content going to come from? You'll often end up with pages of notes and sketches before you even touch a computer.

DESIGN

Mock up your site in a graphics package so you can shove page elements around without getting delayed in HTML. We're using Photoshop, but Paintshop Pro will do. A tip for mocking up HTML text is to turn anti-aliasing off when adding to your design. 10pt is size 1, 12pt is size 2, etc.

BUILD



You will need to put together a sample HTML homepage to get a better feel for how the site is going to fit together. It doesn't matter if the text is garbage at this point in the process as long as everything ends up in the right place. Shareware page editors such as Homesite (available from **www.allaire.com**) allow you to preview your code and check it for any errors.

TEST

Check what you've done in your PC or Mac browser of choice to make sure everything is working as you intended. It's much easier to fix bugs here because you're working from local files, and you can check your HTML source to catch glitches.

TEST AGAIN

Upload your content to your Web space and check the prototype site through Dreamkey. Inevitably, something will come out looking not quite right. So far, on our page we have images with tiny, hard to read text and some colour bleeding on the little console icons we've used. Make a note of what's going wrong with your page, and how you might go about fixing it.

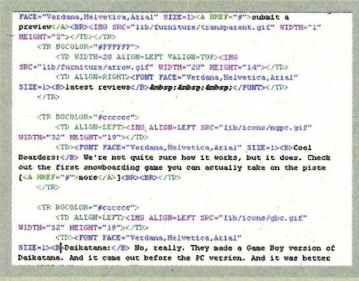
TWEAK

Now it's time to go back over your design, sorting out the problems you found on your first test. Here we're going to swap those troublesome text images for live text so they will be readable on Dreamkey, and rework the console icons to eliminate the colour bleeding that has taken place.

MORE TESTING

Upload again, and use Dreamkey to see if your changes have had the desired effect. This is the most tedious part, because, unlike Mac and PC users, it's not possible for you to store pages locally on your Dreamcast to test them. Now repeat the last two steps until you're happy with your design.

CONTENT



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HEIGHT="1"></TD></TR>
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SRC="lib/furniture/arrow.gif" WIDTH="20" HEIGHT="14"></TD>
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SIZE=1><B>latest reviews</B>   </FONT></TD>
    </TR>

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WIDTH="32" HEIGHT="19"></TD>
        <TD><FONT FACE="Verdana,Helvetica,Arial" SIZE=1><B>Cool
Boarders:</B> We're not quite sure how it works, but it does. Check
out the first snowboarding game you can actually take on the piste
(<A HREF="#">more</A>)<BR><BR></TD>
    </TR>

    <TR BGCOLOR="#cccccc">
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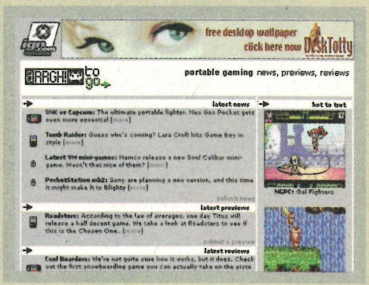
WIDTH="32" HEIGHT="19"></TD>
        <TD><FONT FACE="Verdana,Helvetica,Arial"
SIZE=1><B>Daikatana:</B> No, really. They made a Game Boy version of
Daikatana. And it came out before the PC version. And it was better
```

Now you've got the page designs sorted out, you can go ahead and enter some real content. Remember that people lose concentration if faced with a lot of text on screen – so try to keep your pages short where possible.

FINAL TEST



Yup, you're testing again. Go back to your computer browser, as well as Dreamkey, to make sure everything is working nicely. Test on both Netscape and Internet Explorer, and Mac and PC if possible. Check your download times too, especially on Dreamcast.

HAPPY

Congratulations, you have created a fully functional, Dreamcast-friendly Website. The next challenge is getting people to visit it. A mention in **DC-UK** won't hurt, so get writing in and we'll print the best. Check out arrgh togo for yourself at **www.arrgh.demon.co.uk/togo/** ■

01 Homesite is a shareware page editor available from **www.allaire.com**. Web page editors like this allow you to preview your HTML and check pages for errors

SURF'S UP SPECIAL

DC-UK'S MONTHLY SITE UPDATE – THE POLLS AND THE COMPETITIONS

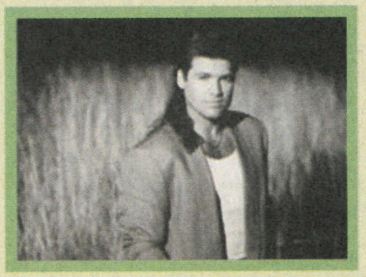
// POLLS

Games, shops, pop

> It's been a funny old month Website-wise. There we were with our brand new spanking polls (What do you think of *Virtua Striker*? What game do you want to play in the Scottish Games Championship? What was the worst band of the '90s?) and you'd all been voting like maniacs when halfway through the month something hideous happened. Our technical support person referred to it as 'data leakage'. Brrrrrr. Anyway, you didn't seem to notice, or mind, that much, and went back and voted again. So the results are as follows: *Virtua Striker*: 70 per cent of you thought it was "utter crap", while 15 per cent of you thought it was "a bit too arcadey" (that was us being technical). Eleven per cent thought it was the "best football game ever". And a total of four per cent of you considered "Monkey tennis" to be a sensible answer to this perturbing question. Fools.

Worst band of the '90s: We'll probably come to blows over this one, because the entire team were convinced that Billy Ray Cyrus, with his mullet and his cowboy boots, singing the pile of utter toss that was Achy Breaky Heart would effortlessly seize the top spot, but to our disbelief he was found near the bottom with a measley seven per cent. The man practically invented line dancing, for God's sake. Second gripe was that 25 per cent of you saw fit to vote Take That in as the very worst band of the '90s, which again, is utter twaddle. They can't be anywhere near as awful as Peter Andre and his shiny silicon boobs, Robson and Jerome and their whiny Geordie cover versions, Boys II Men and their short trouser suits and, goddamn you all, Celine Dion and her French Canadian twitterings. We were stunned.

On the other hand, the games you'd most like to play at the Scottish Games Championship were pretty much as we expected. 32 per cent of you are gagging to have a go on *Crazy Taxi*, wheras a mere five per cent of you can be arsed to put Sonic through his Reebok-footed paces again. Don't blame you. *Shadow Man* was at the bottom with just one per cent, rather oddly, but since the Billy Ray Cyrus debacle we've ceased to be surprised by anything you lot do.



Next month, as ever, we've got three new polls for you to ponder over. And they are as follows: What is the best pancake filling (we like to be topical)? What would you like to see more of on the **DC-UK** Website? Which animal do you find most underrated in Dreamcast games? ■

// COMPETITION

Win a subscription

> This month we gave you a chance to win one of three 12-month subscriptions to **DC-UK** by sending in reviews of the games that you've played so far for Dreamcast, and we were overwhelmed by the response. We've put the winning three up on the Website, so if you're unsure whether you've won or not, take a look.

And from March, we're starting a new competition, but having run out of subscriptions, we're offering you the chance to win one of our snazzy T-shirts in return for your game cheats and tips, so get emailing and we'll post the best ones up on the Website ■

// SITES FOR SORE EYES

HOP ABOARD OUR INTERNET HOT AIR BALLOON AS WE DRIFT ABOVE THE CYBER LANDSCAPE, QUAFFING CHAMPAGNE AND OCCASIONALLY CRASH-LANDING IN A FIELD OF WEBSITE BRILLIANCE

MR SWIRLY HEAD (www.mrswirlyhead.free-online.co.uk) – Check out a plethora of Mr Swirly Heads. Or you can even create one of your own! Magic. But you kind of need to be a student to appreciate it.

SLANG ONLINE (www.geezerdemon.co.uk/index.html) – Top notch site dedicated to the language of the cheeky cockney sparrah. Would you Adam and Eve it. Our favourite slang phrase of the month? Harry Big Button.

EVERYBODY LOVES SUNSHINE (everybodylovessunshine.com) – A Flash-heavy site inspired by Goldie's soundtrack of the recent gangland thriller – there's loads of cool samples and it looks smashing.

// READER SITES

YOU DESIGN 'EM, WE PUBLICISE 'EM

GAME SWAP (www.gameswapshop.co.uk) – Designed for gameplayers in the UK who are looking for new games but can't necessarily afford to go out and spend up to £50 for a new one.

SEGA WEEKLY (www.sega_ukweekly.co.uk) – We subscribe to the newsletter! If that isn't enough of an advert, Matt Wood's site is updated regularly, has loads of info and reviews and is packed with screenshots

Do you have your own Website? Is it more than just a banner that reads 'Vernon's Dreamcast Universe' followed by a news headline declaring, 'Dreamcast released at last!' and a couple of short reviews of UK launch games? If so, send us the URL and we may just print it – anything non-Dreamcast related is always very welcome, too.

// ESSENTIAL INFO

A quick guide to the most common Internet terms...

BROWSER The software that runs on your Dreamcast and allows you to access the World Wide Web.

ECOMMERCE A catch-all term referring to the business possibilities offered by the Internet. Online shopping is the most obvious example.

HTML HTML is a set of commands that tells a browser how to display a Web page – what size to make the text, where to put the picture, and so on.

HTTP Hypertext Transfer Protocol – the standard by which browsers request information from a server, via a URL.

HYPERLINK By using hyperlinks, a Web page can be connected to other parts of that page or to any other on the Web. The reader simply clicks on the link to be taken to that information.

LATENCY The bane of Internet gamers, latency refers to the time it takes for information to travel from another computer to your Dreamcast.

MODEM A device which allows one computer to connect to another via a phone line, translating data to and from electronic impulses that are sent through the line.

SEARCH ENGINE By connecting to a search engine, you can quickly and easily find the Websites you're interested in. For example, yahoo.com is a popular search engine.

URL Stands for Uniform Resource Locator, this address specifies exactly where a specific page or other piece of information can be found on the Web.

WWW Stands for World Wide Web. It allows information to be stored as Web pages, which are normally organised into Websites, which are in turn stored on specific Web servers ■

Been to any good sites recently?
You send 'em, and we'll print 'em

EMAIL: dcuk@futurenet.co.uk
FAX: 01225 822744
WRITE:
DC-UK
Future Publishing PLC,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

POWERED DOWN

THIS MONTH, IT'S OUR CLAIRE'S TURN TO TELL YOU WHAT WE DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT WATCHING

TEAM DIARY

February. Not famous for being a good month, it being cold, two months after Christmas, and far too many months away from Summer. So it came as a nice surprise when it started so well, with the best team in the world (Bristol Rovers, of course) finding themselves with a very good chance of promotion to the first division, and the hope of a Valentine's card from someone other than my Dad ■

02/02/00 Being in a new job is hard, but the people here at **DC-UK** have been very accommodating. Yesterday, for instance, I only received a minor beating from Stephen for putting a comma in the wrong place. A major improvement on the quotation mark incident that happened in my first week. And they tell me not to be silly when I ask them if it will always be my turn to buy the drinks. Of course they'll buy the drinks eventually, they say. They've even promised to tell me where the toilets are soon. I feel as if I am really beginning to make friends.

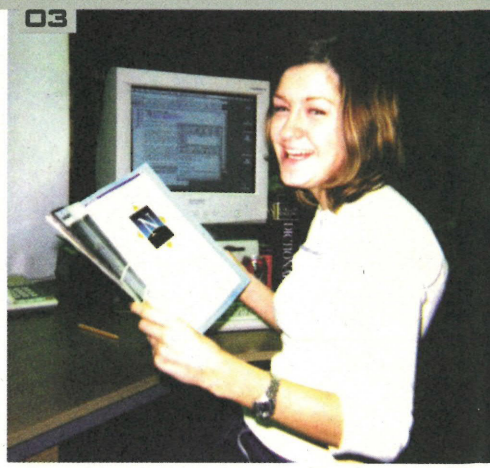
04/02/00 Peace. The first full week after deadline is blissfully quiet. The trouble with that is by the end of the month it's going to be complete madness trying to make the next deadline. Still, as my desk is next to the games room, I am entertained by the ridiculous comments coming from Karl, Stephen, Lee and Keith whle they play *Virtua Striker* every lunchtime.

10/02/00 The early editions of issue 07 arrived. My first issue, hurrah. I must admit I got very sentimental and teary-eyed when I saw my name in print (next step: lights), then went home and got the piss taken out of me by friends who cried with laughter at my photo at the front of the mag. I also realised too late that some joker had written my scariest movie as being Jaws.

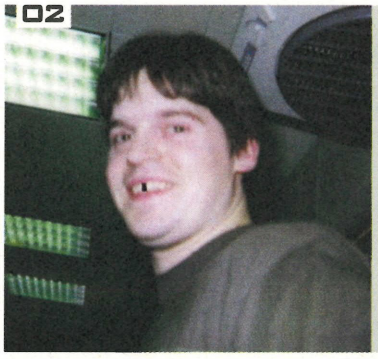
12/02/00 Bugger. At the weekend Bristol Rovers drew with Scunthorpe. Even worse, Bristol City won. Chris (a part-time Bristol City supporter) took great pleasure in telling me that this is the start of Rovers decline and City's ascent. My arse it is.

14/02/00 Valentine's day. I received one card! Thanks, Dad. Esther received two dozen roses from a mystery admirer (which is a lie, but she made me promise to write it). Chris mourned the fact that his brand new bed hasn't arrived in time for some lucky lady to try it out on Valentine's night – his words not mine. And Karl tried to send his Valentine's card by courier because he had forgotten all about it. Apart from that it was all quite quiet.

18/02/00 Today, inexplicably, the conversation turned to vegetables. It started amicably enough with Keith declaring, "Broccoli is in another league." And ended in a ferocious argument about the merits of potatoes, and a personal tirade of abuse aimed at Esther because of her vegetable eating habits. Stephen got himself in a huge sulk because he prefers parsnips and no-one would listen to his reasons why. Esther kept mumbling, "I like jacket potatoes" to anyone close enough to hear, and Lee started the whole thing off again by controversially stating that "peas are genius." My favourite vegetable, though, is Karl. He's so sweet, you just want to boil him. Clearly, by the tone of the conversation, it's been a very long week indeed, and Friday has arrived none to soon.



22/02/00 When Stephen walked into the office this morning, there was silence for about two seconds. Then all hell broke loose. Stephen, you see, had styled his hair in a new and radical way. And it was this style that the art boys



01 A familiar scene in the office as Stephen beats Claire after finding a fault in her work. The rotter
02 Stephen's 'Dumb and Dumber' look failed to impress the ladies. Squeal like a pig, boy!
03 Teary-eyed and sentimental or squinty-eyed and mental? The jury is still out
04 Another busy day over for Karl and Lee, they relax and unwind by trying to beat the crap out of each other at footie

STEPHEN LAWSON'S COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT HIP-HOP COLUMN

This has been a good month for hip-hop. I've seen Mos Def on prime-time TV, and in the local HMV I've been impressed by the number of albums by Pharoahe Monch and Mos himself on prominent display. Also, Puff Daddy's star may be on the wane, following that pathetic gun incident in a New York nightclub. When it comes to music, I'd much rather listen to something original and, most of all, soulful. That's why to me Puffy represents all that is rotten in hip-hop. Trust me, and track down any of this month's selections for a refreshing blast of creativity ■

RIPSHOP

> Versus

Familiar message from Rawkus, the NY label which was described as the Def Jam of the '90s. On 'Versus' Ripshop berate pop rappers who look more like models than b.boys. The sounds are quite familiar too, reminiscent of Black Moon.

Things kick off on 'Crabfakers', when the MC's style and power shines over a low-down, dirty bass ground into the dust by a harsh, distorted synth loop. Bring the noise!

'Transmitt' is the last track on the 12 and features Mr Eon and Mighty Mi of High and Mighty. It's a solid enough effort; production-wise standard High and Mighty stuff. The fact that it's the weakest track bodes well for Ripshop's own efforts.

Hot wax? 🔥🔥🔥🔥

THE CREATORS

> Hard Margin

This homegrown production duo have been plugging away at their forthcoming debut LP for some time now, and rumour has it they've lined up an impressive cast of US rappers.

Well, here's the proof: man of the moment Mos Def and his rap compadre Talib Kweli trading rhymes over a choice cut of British beats. Tasty, but it's the B side's 'No Love'

featuring FT's lethargic yet solid flow that makes my mouth water.

Hot wax? 🔥🔥🔥

found absolutely hysterical. The rest of us didn't know what they found so funny for about five minutes, though – because they couldn't speak through their howls of laughter. I feel sorry for boys. I really do. There isn't much they can do with their hair in the way of styles, as it is. At least Stephen was trying, bless him. You can see for yourselves what he looks like. We think he looks like Jim Carrey's character in Dumb and Dumber. There were other people we thought he looked like, but they were too unkind to print.

24/02/00 In the endeavour to continually improve on perfection, we have made a few changes to this issue, which we hope you like. But these changes didn't come easily. Oh no. Due to the impending court case, I am unable to let you know what happened to Stephen when he questioned authority (Keith) about our policy on giving **DC-UK** Recommendations to games. But life goes on (Stephen's might not) and as I am typing this, Karl and Lee are meandering to the games room to start up another game of *Virtua Striker*. Our magazine may have got a facelift, but some things never change ■

VARIOUS ARTISTS

> **Twilight of the Gods**

'Twilight' is a sequel to a legendary UK track called 'Fingerprints of the Gods', which featured, among others, one Roots Manuva who has since gone on to find fame with Leftfield. Why its producer Skitz hasn't found similar acclaim is a mystery to me because his production is exceptional. 'Twilight' follows the same formula as its predecessor and features four MCs rhyming over Skitz's beats which shift mood and key to suit each rapper. Brilliant.

Hot wax? 🔥🔥🔥🔥

TEAM BATTLE MODE

WHO IS DC-UK'S GREATEST GAMES PLAYER? THIS MONTH, LEE SLASHES HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE TABLE

The aim of this exercise is to discover which member of the team is the best gamer. Each month, six of us will compete at a game, with the winner receiving five points and the loser getting zilch. This month – *Soul Calibur*.

First, it was decided that we would all choose which character we wanted to play as, so long as we stuck with that fighter till the end of the competition. Next, the draw was made and the results of the quarter finals were as follows:

QUARTER FINALS

Christian (Sophitia) **2 – 1** (Kilik) **Keith**
Stephen (Mitsurugi) **2 – 0** (Nightmare) **Karl**
Lee (Mitsurugi) **2 – 0** (Kilik) **Esther**

LOSERS' PLAY-OFF

Karl (Nightmare) **2 – 0** (Kilik) **Esther**
After their humiliating 2-0 defeats in the quarter finals, Karl and Team Girl representative Auntie Esther (Claire and Auntie will take turns each month to even the numbers) battled it out for the title of Greatest Loser. Karl fended off Kilik's pole easily with Nightmare's giant blade. So Karl beats a girl to become Greatest Loser. What a proud moment.

SEMIFINALS

Christian (Sophitia) **2 – 0** (Kilik) **Keith**
Unlike Esther and Karl, Keith actually won a bout in the quarter finals, and so went through to fight Christian again in the semis. Oh the irony. This time there was no respite from Sophitia's blade, however. "I drew him into a false sense of security, then pummelled his ass," said Chris. "You're fired!" replied Keith.

Lee (Mitsurugi) **2 – 0** (Mitsurugi) **Stephen**
There was a palpable sense of tension as arch rivals Lee and Stephen faced the almost-inevitable grudge match neither had been looking forward to.

After dominating the early exchanges, Stephen lurched forward with a mighty chop. The blow missed by a mile and Lee replied with a series of slashes and swipes. First bout to Lee, then.

Halfway through the second round, Stephen's face crumpled into a hideous mask of frustration. Lee was on form. Stephen was a big girl's blouse.

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Keith (Kilik) **2 – 0** (Mitsurugi) **Stephen**
Just when we thought Stephen's shame couldn't be greater, Keith 'I got through on points' Stuart struck with the most ferocious stick action this side of a Ron Jeremy movie. Still in girl's blouse mode, Stephen was defeated twice without reply, as Keith notched up his first Perfect of the contest.

FINAL

Lee (Mitsurugi) **2 – 0** (Sophitia) **Christian**
We must admit that outsider Christian's place in the final was something of a surprise. He hasn't played many games since joining us from PlayStation Power, so we half-expected him to sit motionless in front of the TV, staring at the smooth bodies and pretty colours. Although he did put up a couple of impressive scraps against Keith on his way to the competition's conclusion.

Sadly, the final was an anti-climax, as Lee's Mitsurugi proved too powerful for Chris's Sophitia, felling her with a few choice power moves.

CONCLUSION

So Laughing Boy Lawson is dethroned, and Hart "gains his rightful place at the summit" (his words, not ours). We may have expected Lee to win, playing as his old favourite Mitsurugi, but the surprise package was Christian, who leaps up the chart ■

LEAGUE TABLE

POS	NAME	PTS
01	**Lee** 'Mighty Chopper' **Hart**	8
02	**Stephen** 'Limp blade' **Lawson**	7
03	**Keith** 'Inadequate Stick' **Stuart**	7
04	**Christian** 'Lovely Lady' **Day**	5
05	**Karl** 'Having a Nightmare' **Jaques**	3
06	**Team** 'Soppy Mare' **Girl**	0

NEXT MONTH'S BATTLE: SEGA GT

Next issue...

Furfighters

Exclusive review! We get the **first full play** of Bizarre's **fantastic** comic book adventure. Plus...

Exclusive!

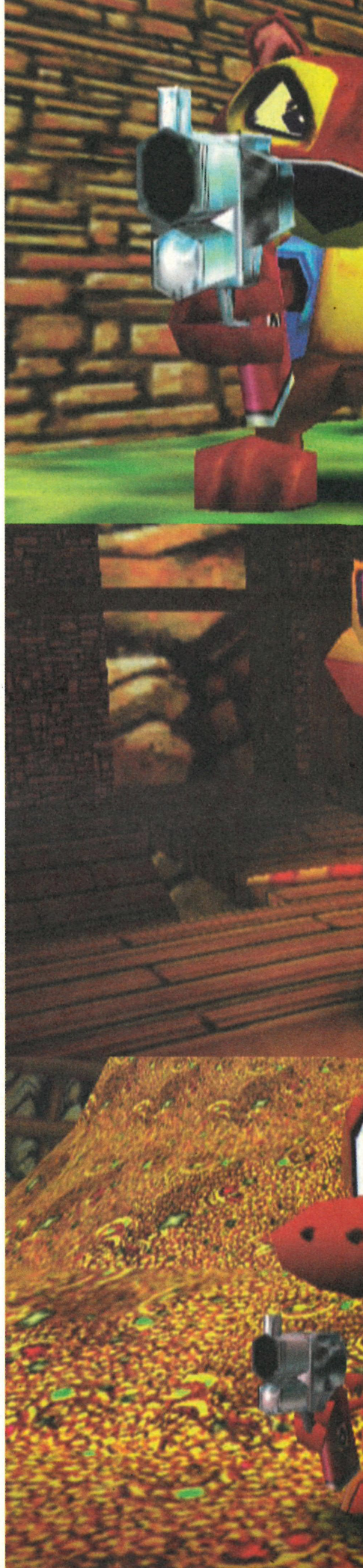
Furfighters Demo Disc

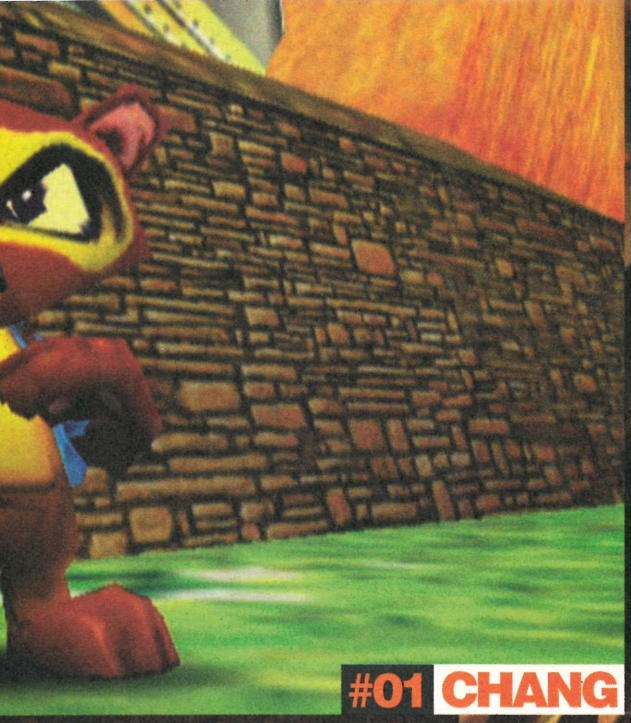
Try the game yourself! We have an awesome playable demo **just for DC-UK readers!**

Plus: *MDK2*, *Tech Romancer*, *Space Channel Five*, *Toy Story 2*, *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Dragon's Blood*, *GTA2*, online gaming news and so, so, so much more

DC-UK
DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

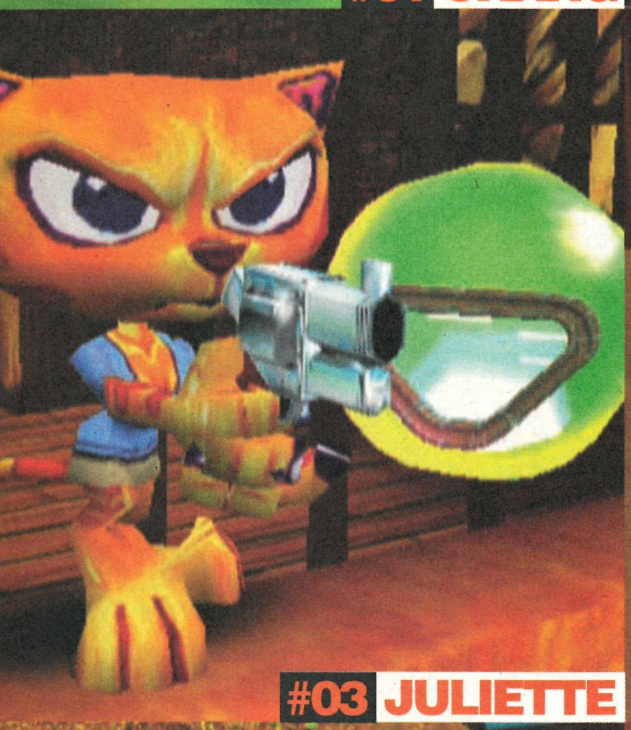
The Sega Dreamcast source
Release **#08** boarding **Thursday March 16**



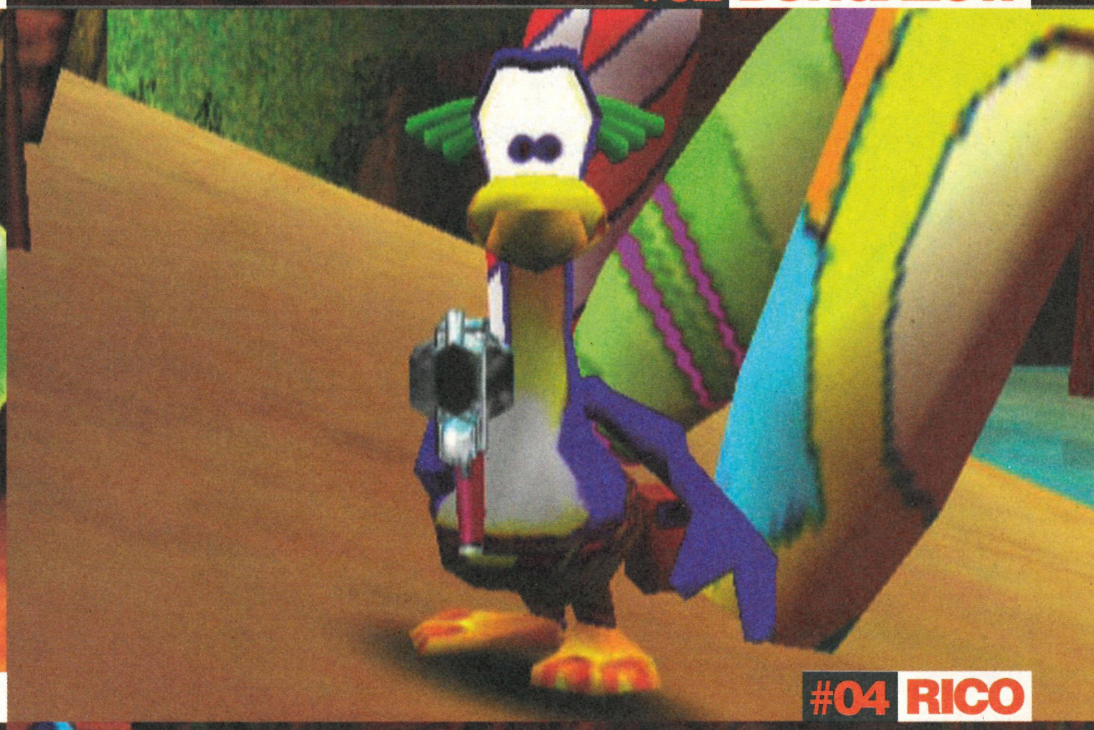


#01 CHANG

#02 BUNGALOW



#03 JULIETTE



#04 RICO

#05 TWEEK

#06 ROOFUS

REVIEW LISTINGS

NERVOUS ABOUT PARTING WITH YOUR HARD-EARNED CASH? LET **DC-UK** HELP YOU MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS

EVOLUTION

The first RPG for Dreamcast has some nice touches – randomly-generated mazes for example – but it's hardly one of the best examples of its genre. In fact it's plainly average; simply not evolutionary enough. **5/10**

Issue 05 | Players: One
Publisher: Ubi Soft | Extras: None

ARMADA

Armada plays very much like the classic coin-op *Sinistar*; you simply point and shoot at the hordes of enemy craft. It sounds simple and it is, but it's also one of the most polished and playable shot 'em ups we've seen. **8/10**

Issue 06 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Acclaim | Extras: None

FIGHTING FORCE 2

Like *Double Dragon* and *Streets of Rage* (two games which no doubt inspired it) *Fighting Force 2* is fun and simple to pick up. However, as you might expect, it's too linear and simplistic for most modern gamers. **7/10**

Issue 05 | Players: One
Publisher: Eidos | Extras: 60Hz

BUGGY HEAT

Buggy Heat has quite a few original features (for example, the Internet high-score table), but it's not one of the greatest racing games we've played. Although, for fans of the genre it's probably worth investigation. **6/10**

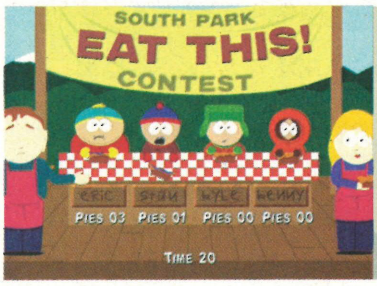
Issue 03 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Sega | Extras: 60Hz, Internet

F1 GRAND PRIX

Fans of the Formula One genre will have little to grumble about with *F1 World Grand Prix*. As far as sims go, it's one of the best on any platform. It's marred only by some slow-down and an imperfect twoplayer game. **7/10**

Issue 03 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Video System | Extras: Vibration, wheel

CHEF'S LUV SHACK



The South Park quiz show is a laugh a minute and the mini-games (based on classic videogames) add some much needed longevity. In fourplayer it's hilarious, but despite the mini-games, it won't keep you busy for long. **6/10**

Issue 05 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Acclaim | Extras: None

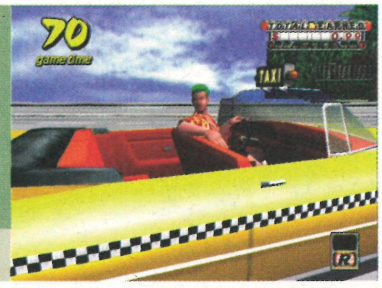
HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

THOTD2 was great in the arcades and it's just as good on Dreamcast. Sega's scary shoot 'em up now comes with a special mode, featuring new weapons and power-ups. This is what all lightgun games should be like. **8/10**

Issue 01 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Sega | Extras: Lightgun

CRAZY TAXI

As soon as you start playing this frenetic game you'll be hooked. Its concept is simple yet intoxicating, the handling of the taxis is spot on, and the mini-games are superb. The only drawback might be its short life span. **9/10**



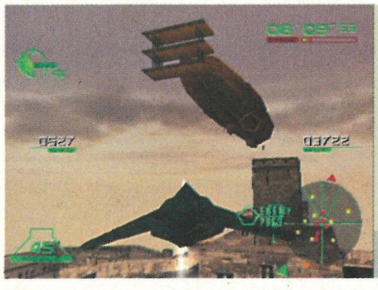
Issue 07 | Players: One
Publisher: Sega | Extras: None

HYDRO THUNDER

Publishers seem eager to flood the Dreamcast market with racing games, and, as it happens, *Hydro Thunder* is a decent variation on the usual race-based speed antics. It's fast and fun but may prove a bit shallow for some. **7/10**

Issue 03 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Midway | Extras: Vibration

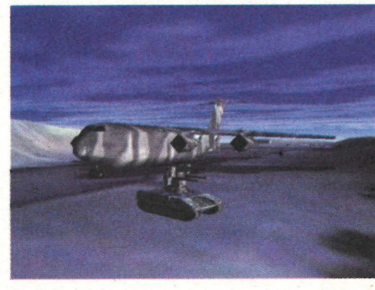
DEADLY SKIES



In this thrilling flight shoot 'em up you play as a kind of Top Gun for hire, carrying out a series of nicely designed missions. Although the aircraft are well-modelled, flight lacks realism and there are too few chances to dogfight. **6/10**

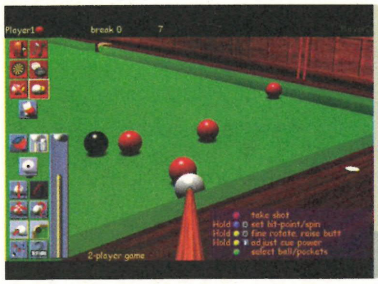
Issue 07 | Players: One
Publisher: Konami | Extras: None

INCOMING



With the exception of *UEFA Striker*, Rage has seemed content to rehash PC titles for DC. *Incoming* is similar to *Expendable*, in that it looks great and is fun for a while, but at the end of the day it lacks depth. **5/10**

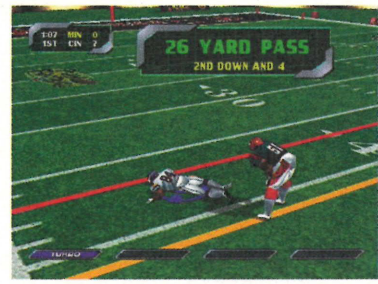
Issue 01 | Players: One
Publisher: Infogrames | Extras: None



JIMMY WHITE'S 2

As with all games of its ilk, *Jimmy White's* can't match playing pool down the boozer, but it is a rather good game. However, the loading times are poor, and the joypad isn't as user-friendly as the mouse in the PC version. **6/10**

- **Issue 03**
- Publisher: Virgin
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None



NFL BLITZ

NFL Blitz should do the same for gridiron as *Ready 2 Rumble* did for boxing; its arcade appeal will convert even those who can't stand to watch the sport on TV. Ideal for anyone who's into instant sports fun. **8/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Midway
- Players: One to four
- Extras: Vibration, 60Hz

MARVEL VS CAPCOM

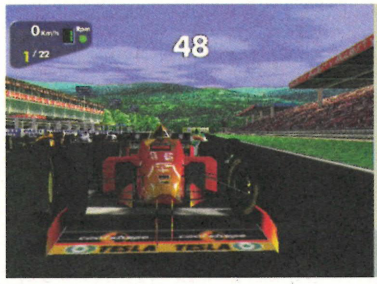
Okay, so you get to play as your Saturday morning cartoon heroes, as well as some of Capcom's legendary fighters, but next to the likes of *Soul Calibur*, or *Street Fighter Alpha 3*, *MVC* looks and feels dated. **6/10**

- **Issue 03**
- Publisher: Virgin
- Players: One to two
- Extras: 60Hz

POWER STONE

When *Power Stone* first touched down at **DC-UK**, productivity hit an all-time low. The 3D arenas look impressive, the characters are smooth and chunky, and the freedom of movement propelled the genre light years ahead. **9/10**

- **Issue 02**
- Publisher: Eidos
- Players: One to two
- Extras: VM games



MONACO GP

While it may not be the most realistic Formula One simulation to have graced the world of videogames (it doesn't hold the official licence, for example), *Monaco Grand Prix* is a decent take on the F1 racing genre. **6/10**

- **Issue 02**
- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None

READY 2 RUMBLE

One of the best Dreamcast beat 'em ups and the greatest boxing game since Nintendo's *Punch out!!* series, *R2R* is one of the funniest and most enjoyable games around. Brilliant in twoplayer with an excellent training mode. **8/10**

- **Issue 02**
- Publisher: Midway
- Players: One to two
- Extras: 60Hz

MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD

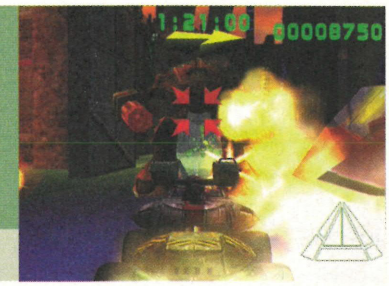
Midway's insanely gory beat 'em up is back, this time on Dreamcast, and yes, it's more of the same old, same old. It might be a bit dated compared to *Soul Calibur* and *Power Stone*, but fans will still get a kick out of this. **5/10**

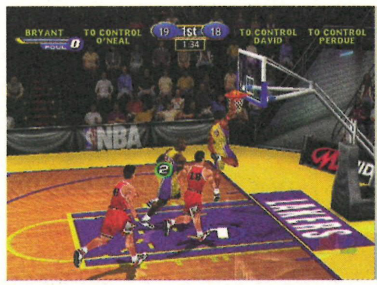
- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Midway
- Players: One to two
- Extras: Vibration, 60Hz

RED DOG

Initially, the set-up can be a bit fiddly, but *Red Dog* is easily the best shoot 'em up on Dreamcast – an essential purchase for fans of the genre. It also has one of the best multiplayer games on DC. **8/10**

- **Issue 07**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to four
- Extras: 60Hz

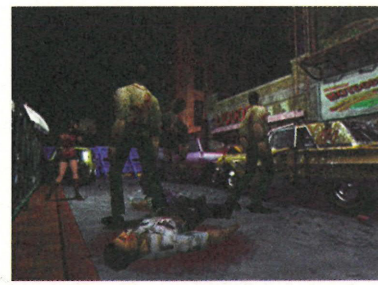




NBA SHOWTIME

Although it lacks any oneplayer longevity, *NBA Showtime* is fantastic in fourplayer. In fact, our lunchtimes have been spent 'slam dunkin' the funk', getting 'nothing but nylon' and the like. In fourplayer this is a treat. **6/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Midway
- Players: One to four
- Extras: None



RESIDENT EVIL 2

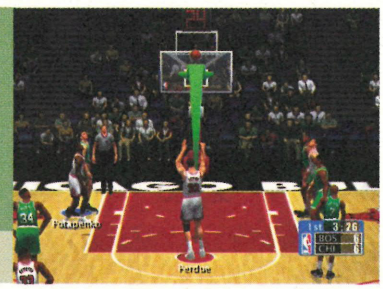
Although it offers no improvements over the PC game it is a port of, *Resident Evil 2* is still as tense, enjoyable and involving as it was in 1998. Of course, it's not *Code: Veronica*, but it's still worth a look. **7/10**

- **Issue 06**
- Publisher: Virgin
- Players: One
- Extras: VM screen

NBA 2K

The accuracy with which the NBA has been captured is mind-boggling. The players and the courts have been painstakingly modelled on their real-life counterparts and the playability is just as impressive. **8/10**

- **Issue 07**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to four
- Extras: 60Hz



RE-VOLT REVOLUTION

Far from being a *Micro Machines*/*Mario Kart* clone, *Re-Volt* injects a healthy dose of originality into the novelty racer genre. It's let down by the confusing tracks, and handling which is too tricky for most Sunday drivers. **7/10**

- **Issue 05**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to four
- Extras: None

REVIEW LISTINGS

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SONIC ADVENTURE

Sonic has everybody's favourite hog whizzing about in a giant, 3D world with familiar gameplay and items scattered around the landscape. It's an enjoyable game with pleasing RPG elements thrown in the mix. **9/10**

- **Issue 01**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One
- Extras: VM games

SEGA BASS FISHING

Fishing without the cold, wet weather, no sign of a bite all day, and worst of all, sea sickness. *Sega Bass Fishing* is innovative and great fun. Unfortunately, the good times peter out quicker than we would have liked. **7/10**

- **Issue 03**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One
- Extras: Fishing rod

SOUL CALIBUR

It's so simple: you have to own a copy of *Soul Calibur*. Buy it right now, invite your sad, old PlayStation-owning, Dreamcast-sceptical mates round, stick it on and watch them squirm. This is one incredible game. **10/10**

- **Issue 03**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to two
- Extras: Vibration

SEGA RALLY 2

Our review of *SR2* caused quite a stir among the game's loyal fans on the Internet. The conversion from arcade to home is a good one and there are loads of new options and extras. It's just not quite the classic we hoped for. **7/10**

- **Issue 01**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None

SOUL FIGHTER

Soul Fighter resorts to the kind of gameplay last seen in classic arcade titles like *Golden Axe* – without any of the charm or flair of those games. After just one level you'll be bored to tears. Approach with caution. **4/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Mindscape
- Players: One
- Extras: None

SHADOW MAN

Based on a comic series about voodoo warriors and serial killers, *Shadow Man* is Dreamcast's first great 3D adventure. It's like *Tomb Raider* meets *Legend Of Zelda* in your worst nightmare. Without the wet bed sheets. **9/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Acclaim
- Players: One
- Extras: None

SOUL REAVER

This game is so immense you could spend days exploring it, and still not have been everywhere. *Soul Reaver* looks great and has a cracking attack system. It does have faults, but it's still a damn fine adventure game. **9/10**

- **Issue 07**
- Publisher: Eidos
- Players: One
- Extras: None

SLAVE ZERO

The storyline here is irrelevant; your task is to kill everything in *Slave Zero's* future fantasy world. Its problems lie in the fact it gets difficult too quickly and is in grave danger of becoming repetitive and frustrating. **6/10**

- **Issue 07**
- Publisher: Infogrames
- Players: One to four
- Extras: None

SPEED DEVILS

Speed Devils is a pretty original racing game featuring many additions to the genre, including the ability to place bets on races. The arcade mode lacks depth, but the best lies in the detailed championship mode. **7/10**

- **Issue 02**
- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Players: One to two
- Extras: VM radar

SNOW SURFERS

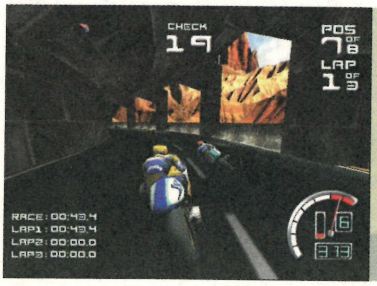
Snow Surfers is one of the worst examples of the rash of snowboarding games that publishers are keen to ram down the throats of youths. Don't be fooled, though, and remember: a wise eskimo never eats yellow snow. **3/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Sega
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None

SF ALPHA 3

Unless you are too accustomed to 3D fighting to be bothered with a 2D beat 'em up, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* comes highly recommended. Capcom's all-stars have never played so beautifully or looked so good on console. **8/10**

- **Issue 04**
- Publisher: Virgin
- Players: One to two
- Extras: None



SUZUKI ALSTARE

From the company that brought you the wonderful *TrickStyle*, *Suzuki Alstare* is a real disappointment. There's nothing to break up the monotony of the courses and the pop-up is some of the worst we have seen. **5/10**

Issue 03 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Ubi Soft | Extras: None

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB

"The Muhammed Ali of fighting games", we called it. *VF3tb* is arguably the best fighter in the arcades. It may lack stunning visuals, but *VF3tb* is a bare bones fighter that's geared towards quick, responsive attacks. **7/10**

Issue 01 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Sega | Extras: 60Hz

TEE OFF GOLF

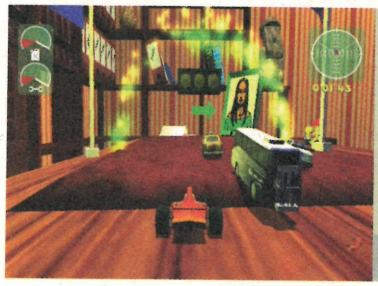
Developed by some of the team who created *Everybody's Golf* on the PlayStation, *Tee Off* is a worthy successor to its 32bit daddy. Golf is enjoyable once again, but *Tee Off* lacks a little excitement. **7/10**

Issue 06 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Acclaim | Extras: Vibration

VIRTUA STRIKER 2

We've been spoiled for choice when it comes to football titles, but while *Virtua Striker 2* sure looks pretty it just isn't the beautiful game of lore. The lack of control is, as Alan Hansen would probably put it, "shocking". **6/10**

Issue 06 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Sega | Extras: 60Hz



TOY COMMANDER

Reminisce on your childhood with this unusual and innovative game from No Cliché. You can play with a selection of over 30 toys, such as helicopters, cars and tanks. It's like a huge, 3D version of *Micro Machines*. **7/10**

Issue 02 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Sega | Extras: None

WORLDWIDE SOCCER

Despite its lack of pace, *Worldwide Soccer 2000* is an enjoyable game of football and with its passing/shooting system it has an excellent basis for improvements. Not quite as good as *UEFA* but it's pretty close. **7/10**

Issue 05 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Sega | Extras: None

TRICKSTYLE

Criterion has done a sterling job of creating a unique future sport sim. The boarders' movements are ultra-realistic and based on real physics. It looks amazing, and it's a thrill to race through the city streets. **9/10**

Issue 01 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Acclaim | Extras: None

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

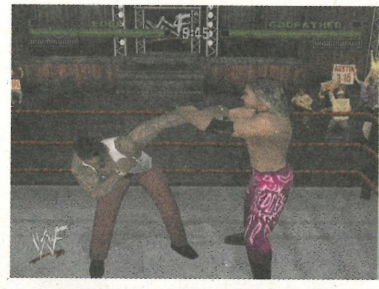
Worms Armageddon is one of the most satisfying and addictive games we've played. The range of weapons is impressive, with arms such as the Concrete Donkey and Sally Army Woman providing hilarious results. **8/10**

Issue 05 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Hasbro | Extras: None

UEFA STRIKER

After a marathon session with *UEFA Striker* our resident football nut Lee emerged from the games room, sweat dripping from his brow, declaring, "It's good." He always has been a man of understatement – it's great. **8/10**

Issue 02 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Infogrames | Extras: 60Hz



WWF ATTITUDE

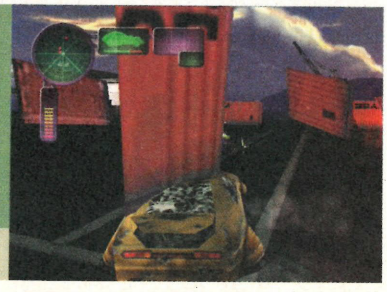
When Esther was told to review a game featuring a bunch of fat lads in tights and trunks, she was unimpressed. After creating a freakish duo she called Caspar and Keith, however, she quickly came round to *WWF*'s charms. **6/10**

Issue 04 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Acclaim | Extras: None

VIGILANTE 8

Within seconds of booting up *Vigilante 8: Second Offense* the words "This is a 128bit game?" form incredulously on your lips. The graphics are appaling and the gameplay is repetitive and dull. Don't waste your cash. **3/10**

Issue 06 | Players: One to four
Publisher: Activision | Extras: Vibration, 60Hz



ZOMBIE REVENGE

At **DC-UK** we enjoy mutilating zombies as much as the next person, but placed in this all-too-familiar setting, the joy of zombie-death quickly loses its appeal. It's a shame because *Zombie Revenge* looks stunning. **6/10**

Issue 06 | Players: One to two
Publisher: Sega | Extras: VM game

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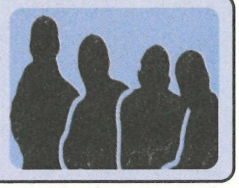

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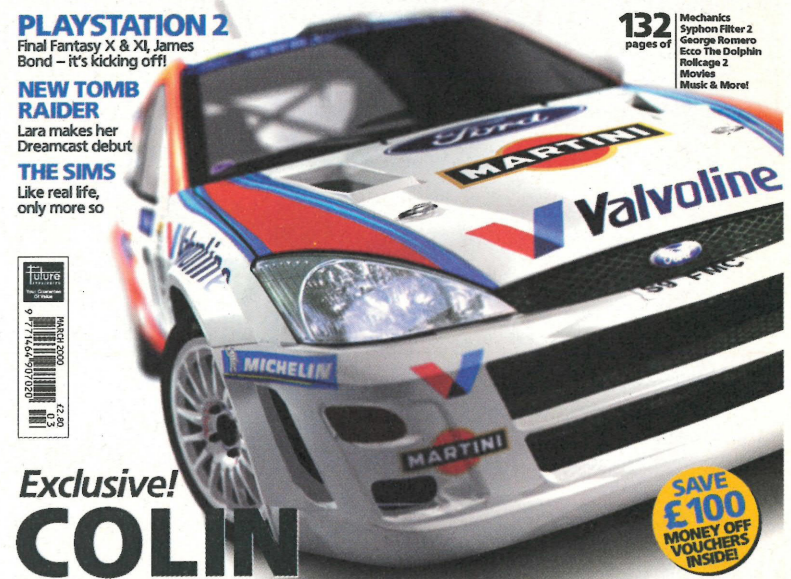

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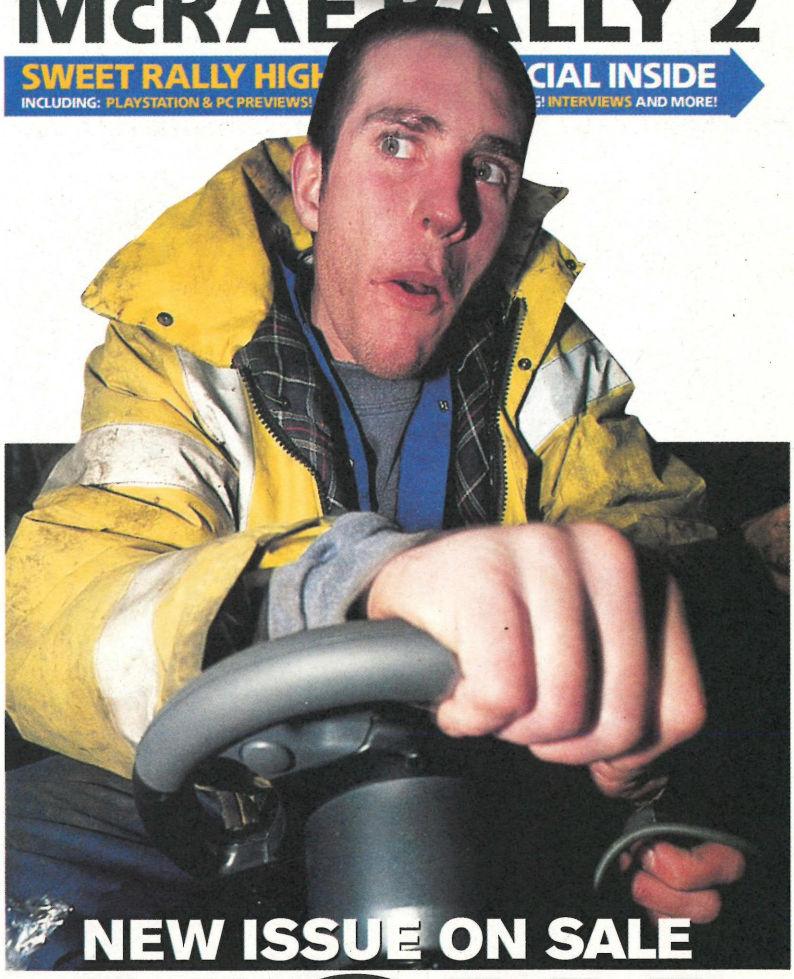

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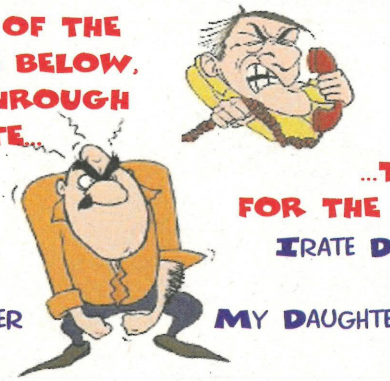

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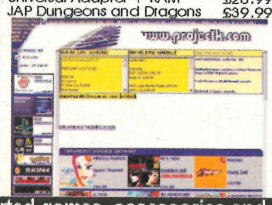

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PS 2 IMPORTS

Japanese PlayStation.2

Japanese PS2	March
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Dual Shock 2 Joypad	March
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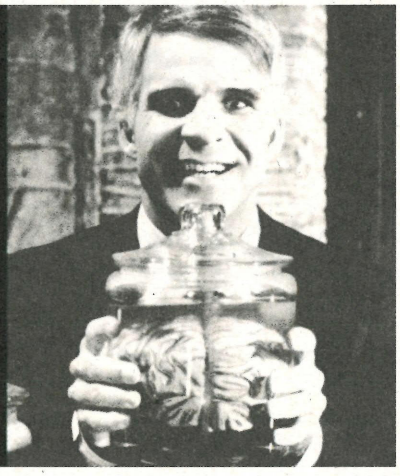
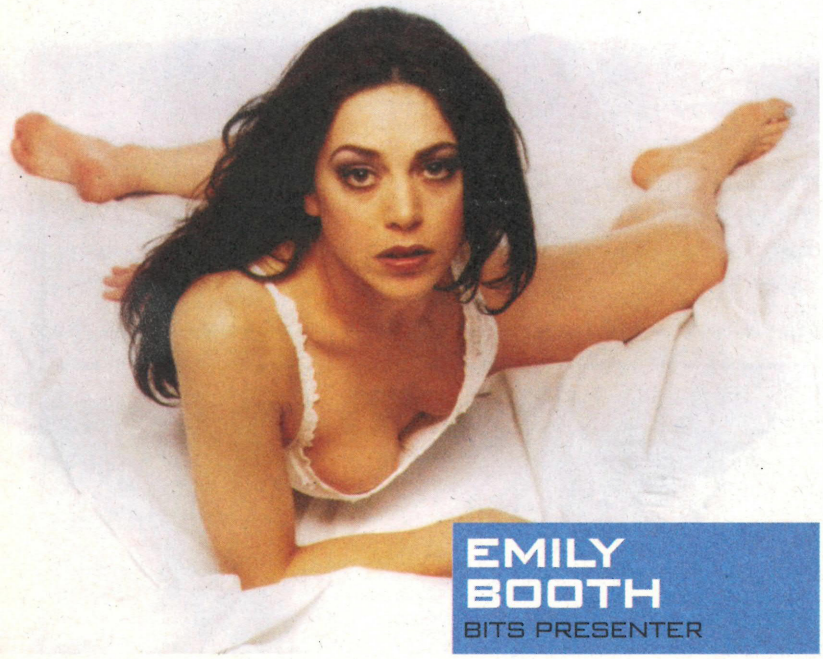
Brain in a jar



Entertaining yourself as a disembodied brain would be a tough job – unless you had five Dreamcast games with you, that is...



EMILY BOOTH
BITS PRESENTER

Emily Booth explains her job as "the replacement gadget girl on Bits". She was discovered from the depths and depravity of L!ve TV, where she'd been presenting a show called Blue Reivew. As you might guess, considering the nature of L!ve TV, this was less Matisse and more suburban housewife. Unbelieveably, she actually got paid to watch 36 blue movies a week, and review them. Fun? "I loved it – though, obviously, anyone would be exhausted watching all of them, so I just skimmed through most." Obviously.

Bits, as any insomniac would tell you, is Channel 4's late-night gaming programme, which is currently being presented by our Emily, another Emily and Aleks, who review all the latest games across all the formats, plus dole out cheats, and keep you up-to-date on news. It's fast-paced, original, non-girlie and totally devoid of any seriousness whatsoever. Gamesmaster it isn't. Thank the Lord.

"It's a small set-up," Emily told us, "Just five or so on the crew and us three mentalist girlies, so in the end, when we're still filming at 3 O'clock in the morning, wired on Redbull, we all kind of get a bit cranky and will do anything in front of the camera just to get the shots in the can. Then we think, 'Shit – people will actually see me wearing those Y-fronts and tights with comedy goggles on my head...' We definitely have a laugh."

This series, they're getting excited about PlayStation2, but have promised us that they'll be covering loads of Dreamcast releases, as well as having a special feature on online gaming when it starts off this Spring. And what tickles Emily's fancy in the near future? "I'm definitely looking forward to *Tomb Raider* – that's exactly what we need!" ■

TrickStyle
"Aesthetics and atmosphere are very important in a game to me, as I like them to be cinematic. *Trickstyle* is just too damn cool to ignore, but it's also beautifully fluid with a real sense of movement to it."

Soul Calibur
"The speed of the moves, wickedly lavish locations and complete head-spinningly 3D action makes for two very sore thumbs."

Crazy Taxi
"I've yet to see teenagers copping off in the back seat – or throwing up – at least those make up most of my cabbie memories!"

Shenmue
"I can't wait for *Shenmue* – it seems so detailed, with realistic intelligent interactive AI. Plus, it looks completely revolutionary."

Metropolis Street Racer
"I practically wet my pants when I saw this. Again the graphic's superiority has sold it. The accuracy is phenomenal."

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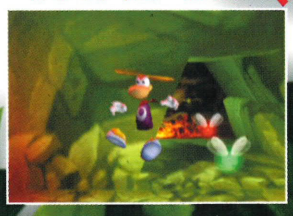

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NEW!

issue two

Essential Selection

STICKS AND MICE

New PC gamer range revealed!

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JOYTECH®

Welcome

A mere month has past since the first issue of *Essential Selection* and, in the time-honoured fashion of magazines, we're now ready for issue two. In this issue, we thought we'd start with explaining a few common questions that have been flowing our way.

What are you? *Essential Selection* is written, designed and produced by a frighteningly-talented group of humans. In a darkened room. Somewhere far, far away.

Tell me more about Joytech? Of course. They're on of the leading third party manufacturers of computer and console peripherals (source: Chart Track Annual 1999 report). Ranging from joypads to mice to completely original gear like the Manchester United Memory Shirt Card and the Einstein Smart Card. We like their gear, they liked our idea for a free mag for you lot and the two of us now work together in perfect harmony.

What have you got for the second issue? Ah, glad you mentioned that. There's loads of news about Joytech's latest gear and, for all you Manchester United fans out there (and I believe there's a few of you), we have a fantastic compo where you actually get the chance to win a hospitality trip to Old Trafford in the next season.

Come on you Reds, eh?

News

IN THE SHOPS NOW!

MANCHESTER UNITED SHIRT CARDS AND SMART CARDS HIT THE SHELVES!

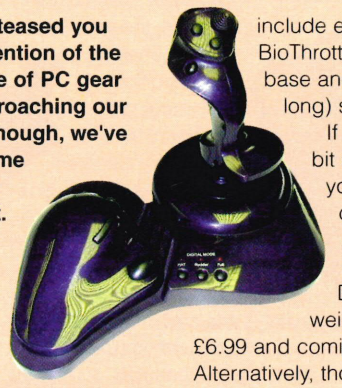
A breakthrough in peripheral design, two of the most original PlayStation™ compatible storage systems were launched this month. The Manchester United Shirt Card is a completely unique design for Memory Cards, as it's moulded into the shape of one of four Manchester United player shirts – Beckham, Giggs, Yorke or Keane.

Also released this month is the biggest progression in PlayStation Memory Cards ever… the Joytech Smart Card. Shaped, and the same thickness, as a credit card, the Smart Card can store up to 15 blocks of PlayStation™ memory and comes with its own free adaptor. Available in three great designs (Einstein, Jordan and an original image), they are, as the story says, in the shops now.

PC RANGE READY TO LAUNCH!

NEW JOYSTICKS AND MICE ON THEIR WAY

Last month we teased you with a brief mention of the stunning range of PC gear that was rapidly approaching our shores. This issue, though, we've got the facts and some drop-dead gorgeous pictures to go with it. Here's what you lucky PC owners can expect.



To start with, there's a choice of two fantastic mice (in a choice of three transparent colour systems), one with a scrolling navigational button (£9.99) and one without (£5.99) – and both of them come with a free game!

Moving swiftly on, we come to the common ground of the PC joystick. There's a choice of two, here, and the cheapest and easiest to use has to be the Ultima 500. If, on the other hand, you're older and wiser with a PC, then you might want to take a look at the Ultima 2000 (£29.99) – the Ultima 1000 and 2000 shown here. Added features include eight buttons, rudder, BioThrottle, metal weighted base and a useful (and very long) seven feet of cable.

If you prefer something a bit different, try spreading your fingers over a console-style joypad. Again, there's two to choose from, with the Digital Controller weighing in at an amazing £6.99 and coming in two colours. Alternatively, though, you might want to plump for the oh so friendly' USB Controller, which has the obvious advantage (if you have a USB port) of being able to plug straight in and play. The USB Controller is Digital *and* Analogue and will cost £9.99.

Continuing on, the Official Jordan Racing Wheel has been confirmed. With all the top specs of the PlayStation™ wheel, you can expect no finer racing experience for the wealth of top driving games on PC. Cost? A very appealing £39.99 to you, mate.

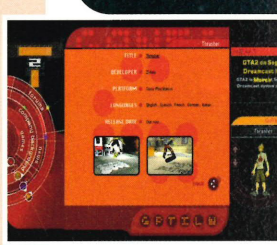
Lastly, the ideal present must surely be a bit of everything, so Joytech are launching an Essential Selection Pack for PC. Included are high-quality speakers, headphones, a USB mouse, four-button joystick and six-button controller. All colour-coordinated and a steal at £29.99.

Web Site of the Month

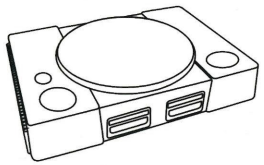
www.take2games.com

Easily one of the most attractive sites we've found on the Net, darned fast too. Pick your region (US or Europe) and then sedately cruise through info, screenshots and artwork of the top range of Take 2 games.

Some gems we found included *Thrasher* and *GTA 2* for PlayStation, *Wild Metal* for Dreamcast and *Rollcage 2* for PC. Fine games, fine site.



www.joytech.net EssentialSelection

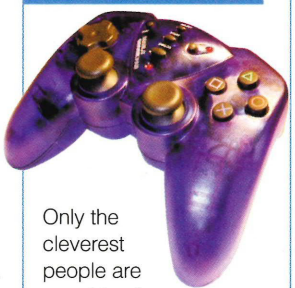


Playstation

Light Guns

Need a gun for *Point Blank 2*? Joytech arguably produce two of the best arcade games for PlayStation™ gamers. For the real arcade and professional experience, the Real Arcade Gun (SRP: £34.99) is king. For the penny conscious, Joytech haven't made any cuts in style or quality with the all-new Sharp Shooter (SRP: £9.99).

Analogue Jolt Controller £9.99



Only the cleverest people are capable of producing a top joypad with all the functions you'd expect of an expensive one for the superb wallet-friendly price of under 10 quid!

The Analogue Jolt Controller has Analogue and Digital control, a turbo button, two metres of cable and will be available in three gorgeous colours – blue, red and black. Join the queue around now, 'cos it's released this month!

Airpad £19.99

Welcome to the future of joypads, the wonderful Airpad. Thanks to the boffins who created its intelligent motion sensitive engineering, you move the character/car/whatever you're playing as on-screen by actually tilting the pad in the direction you wish to go in.

A genuine advancement in controller design, it even has interchangeable faceplates in a wide range of funky colours and designs.

The Official Jordan Racing Wheel £34.99

Designed with the joint powers of Joytech's experienced team and engineers from Jordan themselves, there isn't a more realistic steering wheel on the market.

With a completely realistic feel and bargain new price, there isn't a better and cheaper way to play the massive selection of top PlayStation™ driving games.

Analogue Controller £19.99

If you think that there's only one level of joypad shock, then you obviously haven't tried the Joytech Analogue Controller, as this beauty features some of the strongest Dual Force Feedback ever felt. All the usual features are there, but extras include six metres of cable and a choice of four colours.

MultiTap £14.99

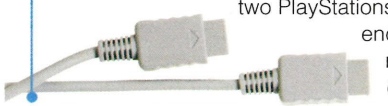
Sports, driving and puzzle games will now open up into a whole different gaming experience with this versatile MultiTap, as you can link up for up to five players simultaneously.

Mouse £12.99

For serious gaming (*Railroad Tycoon 2*, for example), the Mouse comes into its own. Designed for the strategy and simulation enthusiast in mind, this Mouse comes with two metres of cable and a free mousemat.

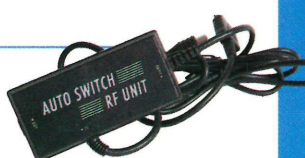
Link Cable £3.99

For the very best in multi-player gaming, the Link Cable offers you (with two TVs, two PlayStations™ and two copies of a compatible game) endless possibilities as you link up the machines. Best link up games? Look for *Command & Conquer* and *Wipeout 2097*.



RF Unit £5.99

Connects the aerial socket and PlayStation™ into one box, to avoid switching over every time the machine's turned on. Also comes with Audio output for stereo and video output (including GunCon™) connection.



Controller Extension Cable £3.99

A bargain way to get a very useful extra two metres on your favourite joypad.

RGB Scart Cable £3.99

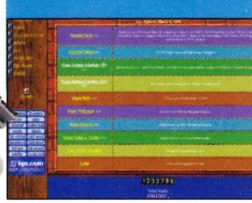
Guaranteed to give you the best-looking graphics on your TV.

PlayStation® Site of the Month

magicbox.come.to

Although Magic Box covers the whole spectrum of videogaming (from PlayStation 2™ to Gameboy™), it has to be one of the best sites for news and info. From scores from the local mags to charts, news and reviews, there is no finer way of keeping track with what's happening abroad.

If you're fond of buying imports, there's a ton of release dates for Japan and America and there's even a section full up of game-related wallpaper.



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MEMORY CARDS

You need to know, when saving your games, that everything's going to run smoother than a polished sledge, so (thankfully) all of Joytech's cards are guaranteed for up to 10,000 saves.

1 Mb Memory Card £4.99
The standard Memory Card comes in seventeen different colours and is guaranteed for up to 10,000 re-saves.

1 Mb Official Jordan Grand Prix Memory Card £4.99
For something a bit more racy, zoom out with the Official Jordan Memory Card.

2 Mb Memory Card £8.99
Twice the power of a standard Memory Card, the 2 Mb edition offers great Joytech value.

4 Mb Memory Card £14.99
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8Mb Memory Card £17.99
120 Blocks of Memory for 120 game saves. Available in Grey, Clear and Blue.

360 Block Memory Card £19.99
Feeling the pinch with the standard Memory available? Bedroom cluttered with discarded Cards? The beast is the one for you, with a breath-taking 360 blocks of memory – 24 times the power of a standard Card.

840 Block Memory Card £24.99
For professional gamers, the colossal 56Mb Card offers game storage never seen before. Using the very latest compression techniques, this card has the storage capacity of an unbelievable 56 Memory Cards.

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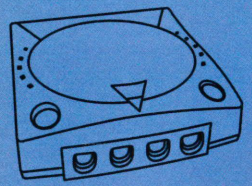
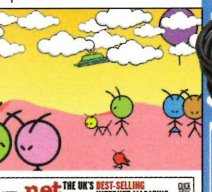


Dreamcast™

Dreamcast® Site of the Month

www.dcuk.co.uk

Not only is DC-UK the finest Dreamcast™ mag available, but their site is also excellent and perfectly Dreamcast™ friendly – everything's accessed through an incredibly simple interface. Get through the title page and you'll be rewarded with an archive of every published preview and review, a top load of news and the all-important DC-UK poll – this month... animals and pancakes.



Official Jordan Racing Wheel £49.99

Now available for Dreamcast! This Jordan Wheel is the perfect peripheral for all driving games, especially *Crazy Taxi*. Designed in conjunction with Jordan engineers, there truly is no finer driving experience.

Controller Plus £19.99

Out now, this impressive new triple-toned six-button pad is perfect for any game, but especially the 2D beat 'em ups that thrive on this button layout – *Street Fighter Alpha 3*, for example. Compatible with all visual and non-visual memory systems and Jolt Packs, it's the perfect controller for any game.

9mm Enforcer Arcade Gun £29.99

House of the Dead 2 may be one of the best shoot 'em ups ever, but you'll need the best gun to get the most out of the game. The Enforcer's deadly accurate, with pixel-perfect targeting, foot pedal reloading and for pros, auto reloading and auto-fire.

Advanced Jolt Pack £17.99

Feel every punch and kick with this powerful Jolt Pack. Available in two different colours, the Pack also features a 1 Mb Memory Card for game storage.

The standard Jolt Pack (without Memory Card) is available for £9.99.

Memory Cards £12.99

Save your games in style with these triple-toned Dreamcast Memory Cards. The best way to save your Dreamcast™ games, they're battery-free and available in 1 Mb (200 pages) and 4 Mb (800 pages – £17.99). Both Cards are guaranteed for an amazing 10,000 saves!

RGB Scart Cable £7.99

The Scart Cable will guarantee you the best possible picture from your TV.

AV Cable £7.99

Stick the sound straight from the Dreamcast™ into your stereo with this essential AV Cable.

Controller Extension Cable £7.99

A superb two metre extension cable for any joypad controller.

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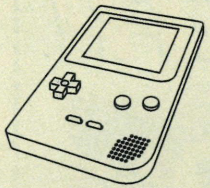

Gameboy™

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The ultimate Game Boy™ junkie needs this essential kit, comprising of a rechargeable battery, and AC Adapter/charger. There's also a Joystick attachment, Mag Light and stereo speaker system for fantastic gaming on the move.

Converting your Gameboy™ into the ultimate portable arcade, this system will let you play the best games in the very best way.

Sound Box

£4.99

For big game stereo sounds, experience Joytech's Color Game Boy Sound Box that requires only 2 AAA batteries to operate – just watch who you sit next to on the train, eh?

Battery Pack/Adaptor

£14.99

Gaming on the move requires powerful battery back-up and this ingenious Battery Pack and Adaptor gives 10 hours of gameplay for each charge. Now at the reduced price, this is the best bargain ever!

Link Cable

£5.99

More and more Gameboy™ games are link-up compatible and this brilliant 1.8 metre cable means you're able to play against your mates without having to sit on their laps to do it.

Dual Light Magnifier

£4.99

The perfect accessory for those dimly lit gaming sessions with a twin illumination system providing 80% more magnification than the standard Gameboy™ screen. Available in different colours and operates with 2 AA batteries.

Soft Pocket Pouch £5.99

If you're screen gets scratched, then you've had it, so this pouch (which also has space for a Game Pak and accessories) is the ideal way to protect your most prized possession.

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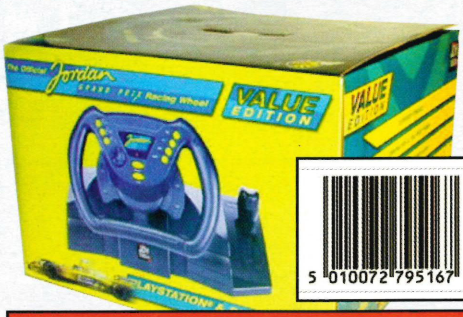
WF 013

SAVE A FIVER!

The ultimate Jordan racing experience is now available at even better value from Woolworths with the Jordan Grand Prix Value Racing Wheel. Both Jordan & Joytech have designed this wheel to play excellently with all Formula 1, Rally, or extreme racing games, with the added bonus of extreme force feedback.

£5 off the Jordan Grand Prix Value Racing Wheel. Simply take this voucher to any Woolworths store and when you buy the Jordan Grand Prix Value Racing Wheel priced £29.99 you will receive £5 off.



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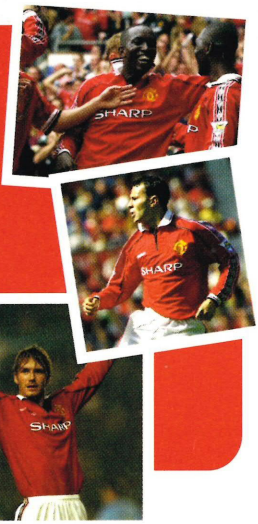

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