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January 1991

MARIO

Makes the Leap From Video-Game Cartoon to Full-Color Comic Book

MAPS AND TIPS:

Nintendo's *Final Fantasy*, Part I

JOHN MADDEN

Makes His Video-Game Debut on the Genesis!
Reviews of Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football* and Many More Video and Computer Games Inside!

It's Cold Outside—But We'll Show You the Best Indoor Winter Sports for Electronic Gamers

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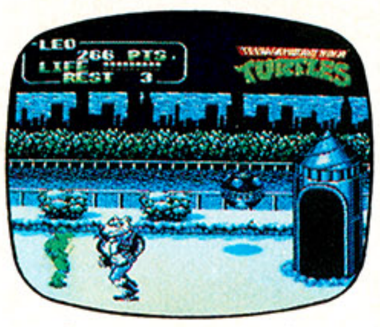
The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Have Mutated Again.



Strong new enemies like Tora the Polar Beast will frost your shell.

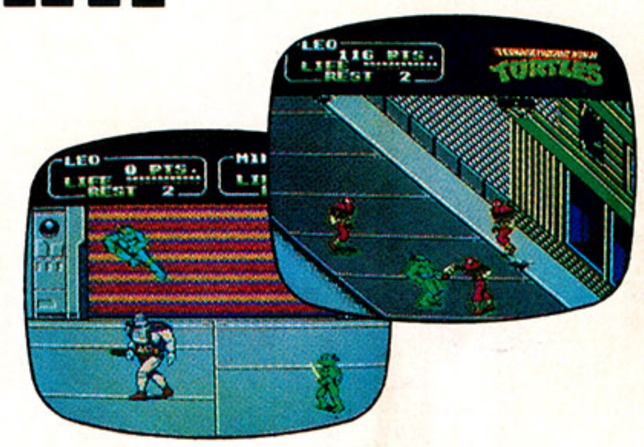
Only this time it's no accident. As Ultra® transforms your favorite arcade game into a hard hitting new adventure for the Nintendo Entertainment System®.

With eight original arcade levels, plus two never before seen shell squashing stages and a ton of new enemies, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles® II—The Arcade Game™ is unlike any sewer war the turtles have ever fought in.

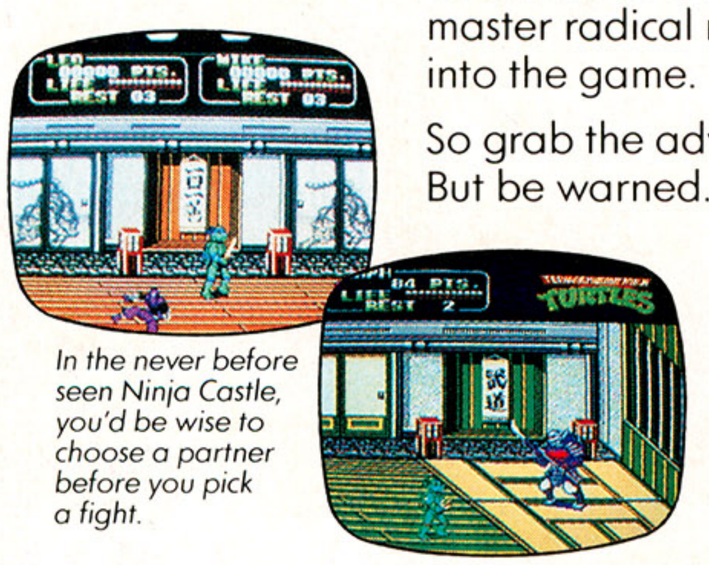
Fortunately two can play at this game, double teaming Shredder's 700 Foot Soldiers who will fight you every step of the way—from the Central Park Snow Route to the stone cold Rock 'N Roll Quarry.

Of course to crush invincible enemies like Tora and Shogun, you must master radical new attack moves which Splinter has programmed into the game.

So grab the adventure that's hotter than a radioactive meltdown. But be warned. You might turn green, grow a shell and suddenly start craving jumbo pizzas with extra pepperonis.



Radical new attack moves really punch up the arcade-style graphics.



In the never before seen Ninja Castle, you'd be wise to choose a partner before you pick a fight.

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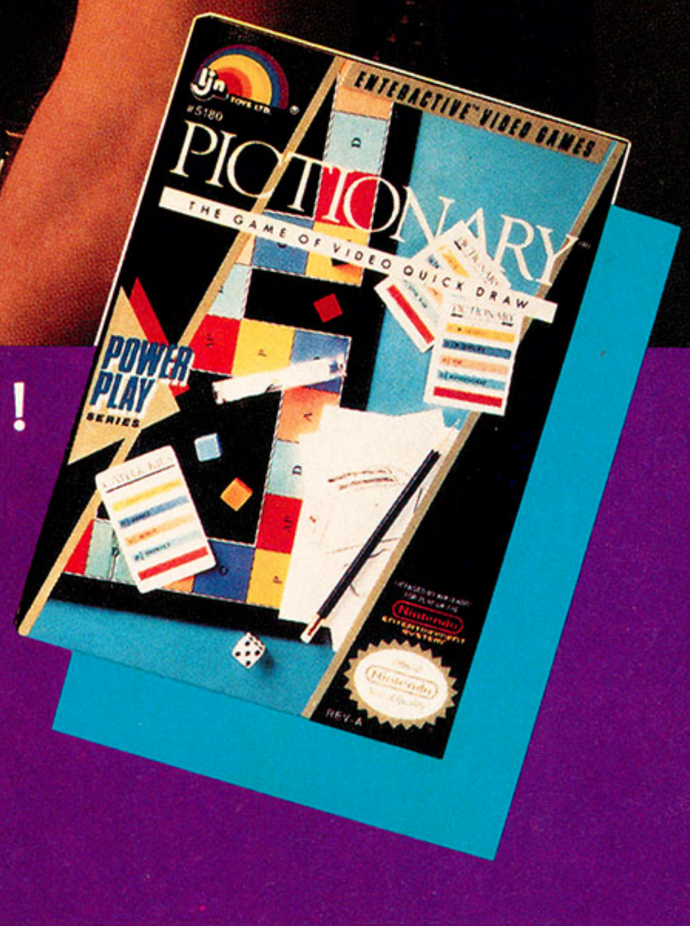
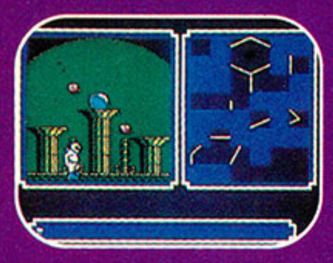
Most videomaniacs will want to hog Pictionary all to themselves for the arcade action. Others might choose to play the electronic version of the legendary board game. Better yet, everyone can join in on the fast-paced, video quick-draw super arcade action together. So, get ready for Pictionary like it's never been played before.





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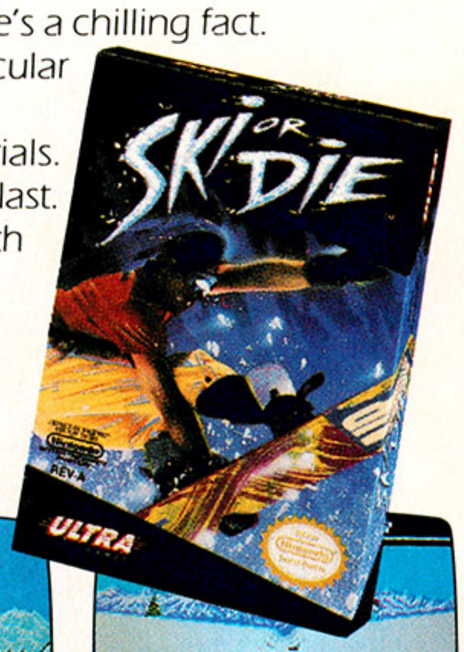
CHILL OR BE CHILLED

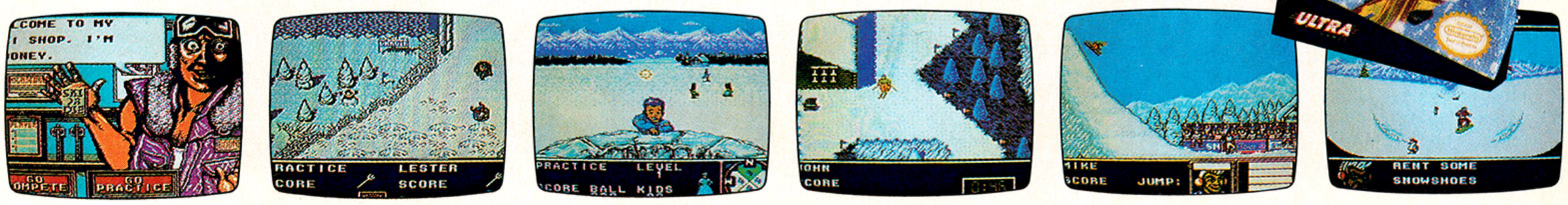
Like, ever been board to death, dude? Well here's a chilling fact. Ultra's® Ski or Die™ for Nintendo® puts you and five buddies in the middle of a gnarly, yet nasty snow sport spectacular where it's survival of the fastest. And the raddest. And the baddest.

Weave your way through a log-jammed chute in the Snowboard Half Pipe. Jump and jive in the Acro Aerials. Test your slope slicing skill when you do the Downhill Blitz. Play a frosty version of dodgeball called the Snowball Blast. And join a rubberized race of nerves in the Inner Tube Thrash. But beware! This Winter Wonderland is crawlin' with unnatural hazards like punk penguins, chain saw toting rabbits and bodacious polar bears.

If you're not iced by Iglooheads or lowlife Lester, try blinding the judges with your brilliant backflips, ollies, hand plants and daffies. Hot-dog it in competition or polish your act in practice. Just try to stay alive through the wild tubular warfare. Or your snowboard career will be frozen in time.

ULTRA® GAMES





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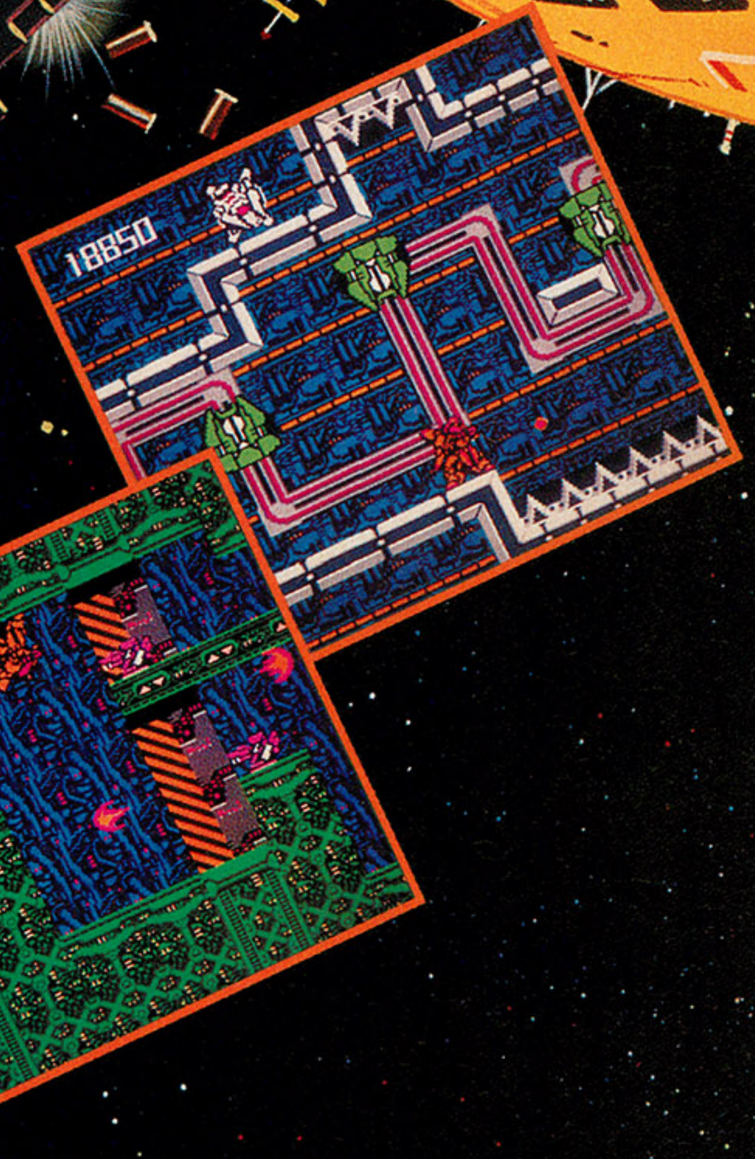
METAL STORM™



YOU'LL FLIP OVER IT!

All across the cosmos, top gamers like yourself have been flippin' out over Metal-Storm's "Gravity Flip" feature. Together with such never-before-seen game features as dual scrolling and "breathing" enemies. "Gravity Flip" will leave you wondering just which way is up.

So arm yourself to the teeth with state-of-the-art power-ups:

- Bullet deflecting "Shield Force"
- LaserGun energizing "Power Beam"
- Metamorphising "Gravity Fireball"

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JE PUBLISHER'S REPRESENTATIVES
Address all inquiries:
11150 West Olympic Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90064
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Fax: (213) 479-3290

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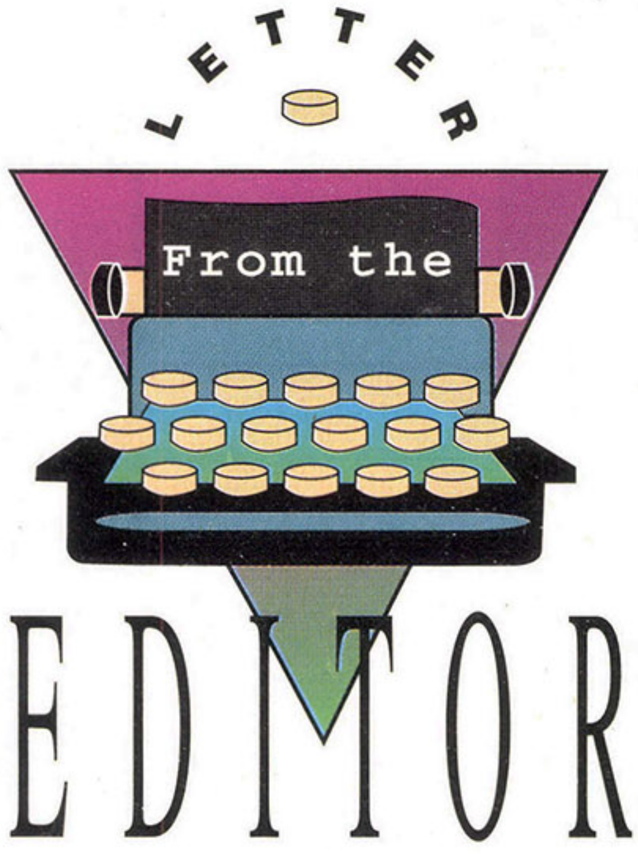
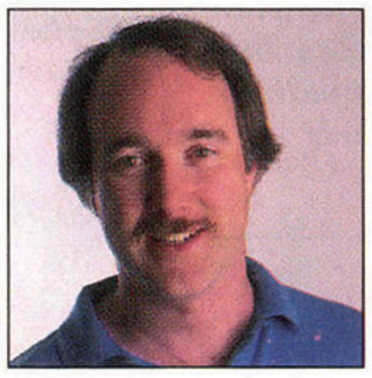


It's no secret that at times I find Nintendo's way of doing business underhanded. A glance at certain issues of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT makes that very clear—and I'm not ashamed of it. Of late, Nintendo's attitude has been one of arrogance. "If you don't like my rules, you can't play the game.

For example, after my tirade against Nintendo's *Dr. Mario* game for its use of pills as playing pieces, I received a copy of the game from Nintendo's PR firm—or at least the box...empty. Guess I deserved that one somewhat. Oh, well.



Witness recent lawsuits against Lewis Galoob Toys and Camerica for U.S. and Canadian sales (respectively) of the Game Genie, the "video-game enhancer." Representatives from Galoob insist that Nintendo at one time offered to "support" the product. Three days later, Nintendo took Galoob to court over the Game Genie.

It makes you wonder, if indeed this incident took place as it was relayed to me, what was going through the minds of Nintendo's executives and what would cause them to be so vindictive?

Having spent a good deal of time messing with the Game Genie, I find some of Nintendo's legal arguments a bit tenuous. For instance, how would the Game Genie affect the ability to market a game sequel? Though the Game Genie does allow you to change parameters, such as what level you start at and how many lives you have, this won't create a new goal in the game—if your task is to rescue the princess, she'll still be there at the end waiting for you.

What I find most exciting about the Game Genie is the aid it brings to those gamers whose abilities are below what the average game are designed for. For instance, my seven-year-old daughter gets far more enjoyment—read: less frustration—on *Super Mario Bros. 3* using the Game Genie than under "normal" game play circumstances.

The other example I can use is the anecdote Camerica's president, Dave Harding, relayed to me on my visit. He told of getting a letter from the father of a handicapped 21-year-old, who explained how his son had heard of the Game Genie and badly wanted one to bring game play to a level that was less strenuous. Due to his handicap, his reaction time was not good enough to let him get full satisfaction out of most games.

Harding took it upon himself to send a Game Genie to this lad as a gift, and the result was as expected: Using the device to alter his cartridges' parameters brought newfound enjoyment from his games.

I'm sure Nintendo's lawyers will cringe at this story; but after all, isn't that why Nintendo creates video games—to be *fun* for the player?

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

Cover: John Madden is a flamboyant figure in football, and now he's making an appearance, thanks to Electronic Arts, on the Sega Genesis. Turn to page 36 for the first peek at this hot cartridge.

Cover Art: Alan Hunter

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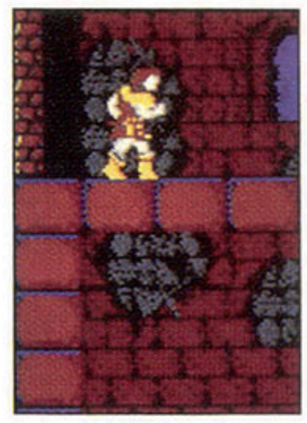

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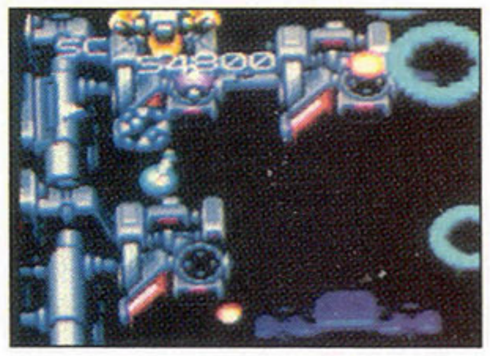

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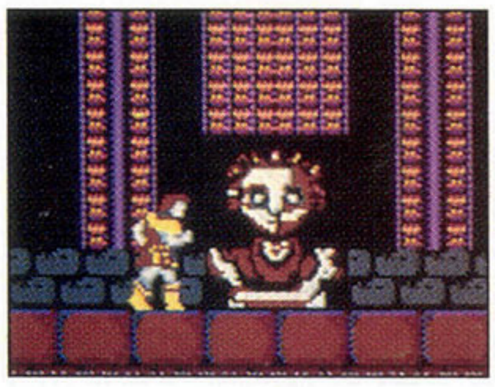

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Get ready for non-stop thrills and the hottest graphics around. **With 20 areas and 200 levels!** You've never played anything like it.

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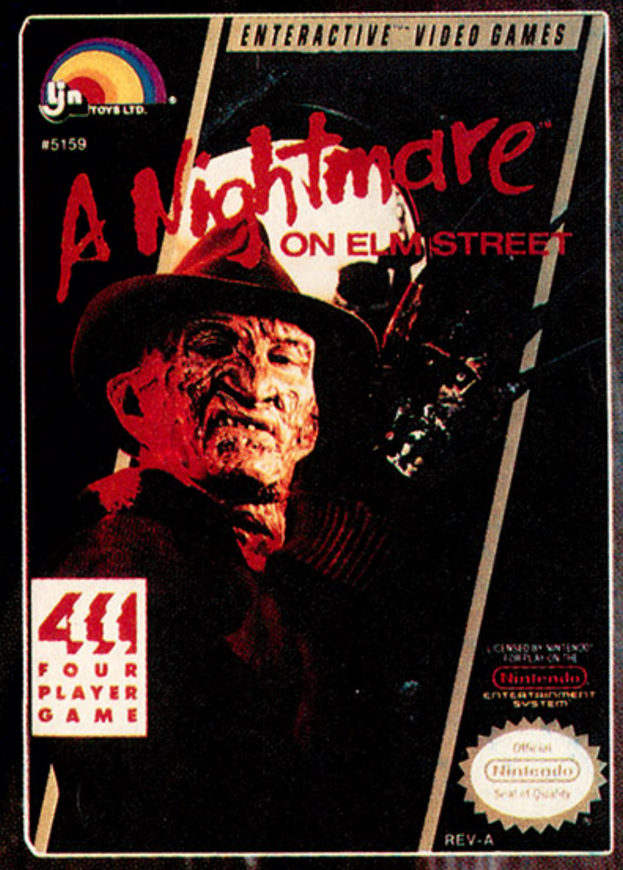
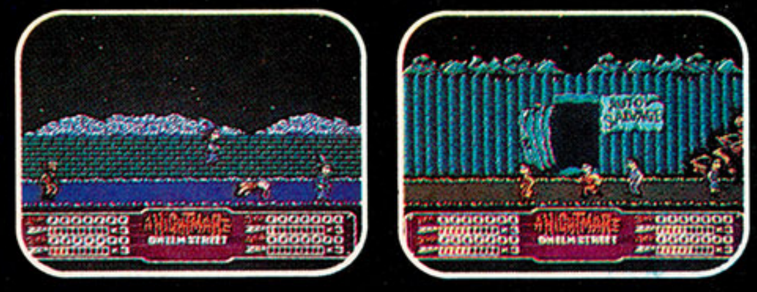
NIGHTMARE ON YOUR STREET.



A Nightmare™ ON ELM STREET

If you go to sleep dreaming about video games--*don't*. Freddy's™ back and he's taken on a terrifying new form. You and your friends must search the neighborhood for Freddy's bones. When you enter the fateful house on Elm Street, you'll confront monsters and spooks that would give even Freddy a fright!

But, beware. The farther you go, the deeper in trouble you get. Until, at last, you face the most feared horror legend of all time... Freddy Krueger™ himself! Will you be the one to put an end to Freddy's reign of terror? Dream on.



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Welcome to Maniac Mansion! Heh-heh-heh-heh!!!

Once you go in, you may never come out!

The weirdest house on the block!

"Dr. Fred should chill out."

A game of life or death.

THE Family CHANNEL

Watch the Maniac Mansion TV Show on The Family Channel

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Maniac Mansion®

JALECO™

Why is there a chainsaw in the kitchen?

And a scalpel-wielding doctor with an attitude? And a cheerleader held captive in the basement?

Just your average day in Maniac Mansion®! Totally weird! Definitely wacky! It's the first game for your Nintendo Entertainment System® that combines the challenge of a mystery with the off-the-wall humor Americans love.

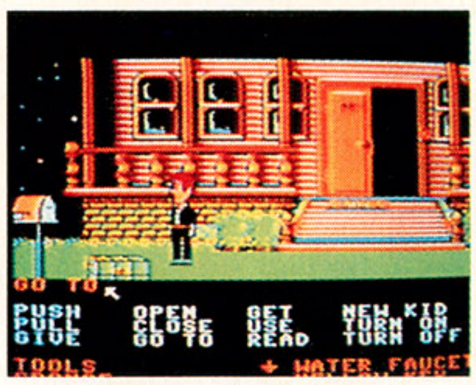
Your goal – rescue the cheerleader and keep the mad doctor from taking over the world. There are over 50 rooms to search for clues. A cast of dangerous characters to avoid. And five completely different endings. It's even based on the original from LucasFilm Games.

You pick three of seven teenagers to go inside to solve the mystery. Who you pick determines the course of the game.

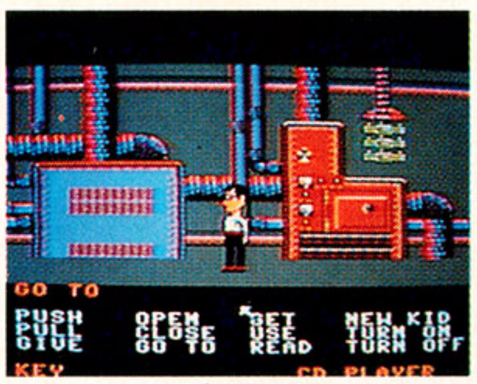
Want to take a break? No problem. Maniac Mansion's battery back-up always saves your place.

Maniac Mansion is different every time – sometimes scary... sometimes silly... but always a challenge... the kind of a game that will keep you up nights trying to figure it out – or afraid to fall asleep!

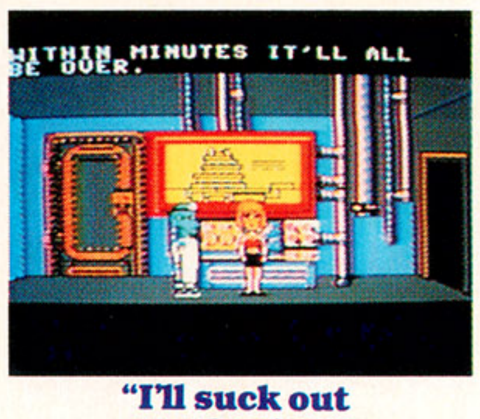
The secret lab.



This box is ticking!



Listen!
A nuclear reactor!

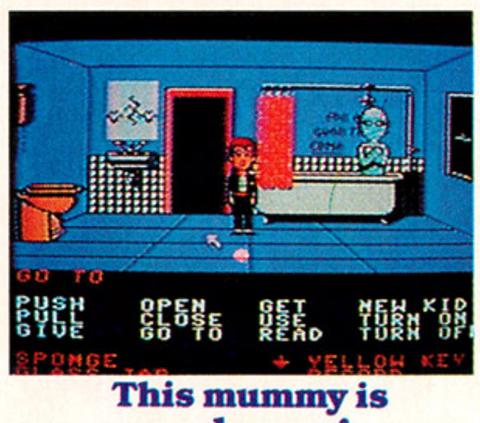


"I'll suck out your brains!"

The Tentacle is hungry!

Don't get Weird Ed's hamster mad.

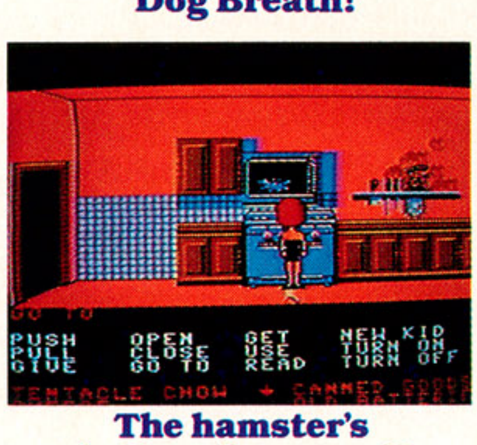
Into the dungeon, Dog Breath!



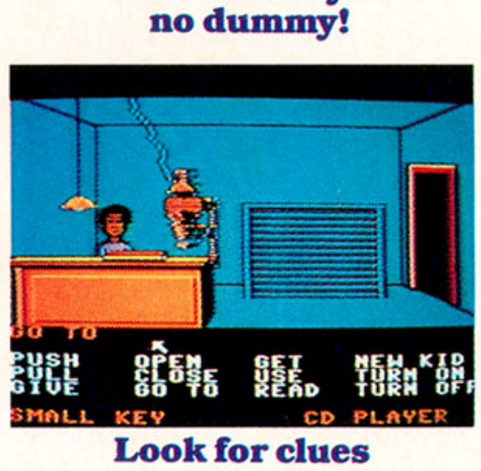
This mummy is no dummy!

"Nurse Edna, you are U-G-L-Y."

A chainsaw in the kitchen!?



The hamster's in the microwave!!



Look for clues on the film.

The mystery has just begun.

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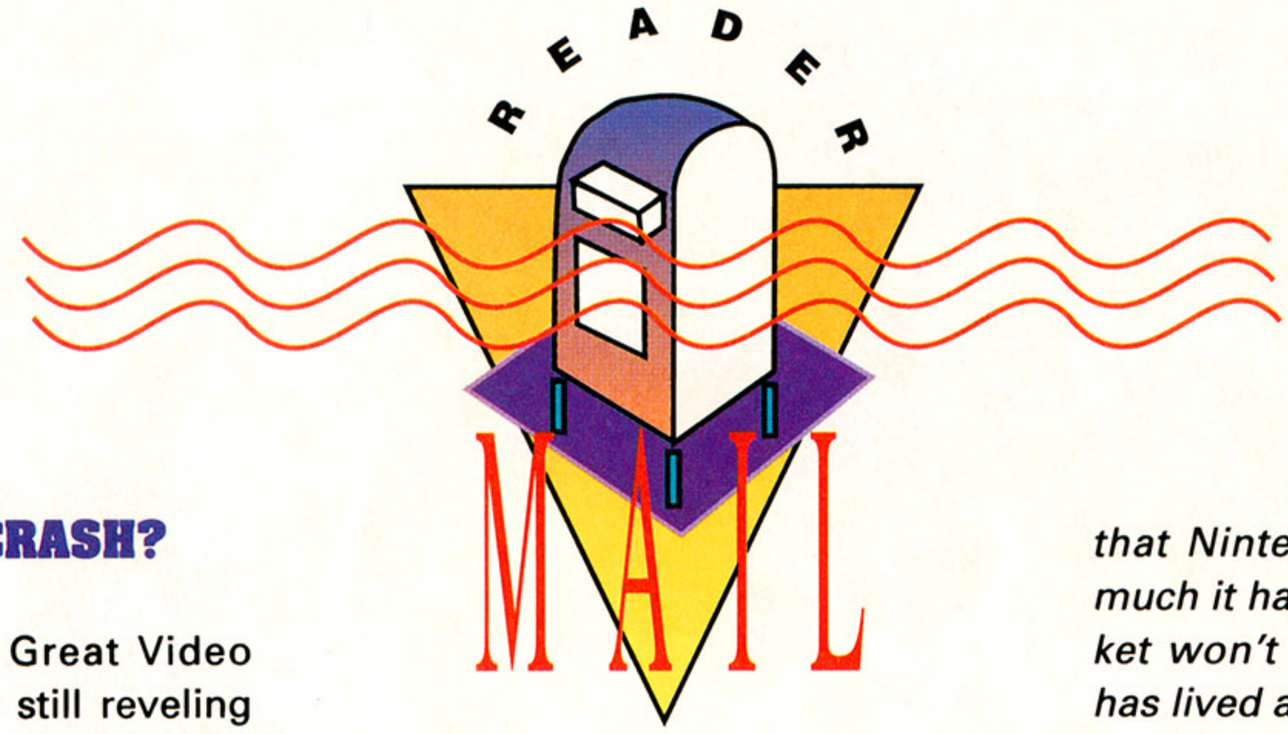
CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



CRASH...WHAT CRASH?

Dear VG&CE:

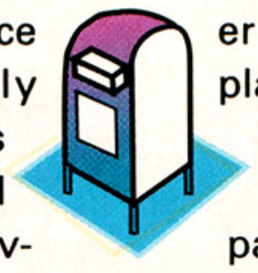
As a survivor of the Great Video Game Crash of '84, I am still reveling in the industry's renaissance. I would confidently have bet the wife and kids (that's okay—I have neither) against its resurrection so soon after the devastating game glut that literally buried the hobby in the local landfill. As a survivor of the Great Video Game Crash of '84, however, I am also deeply concerned. History is repeating itself, I'm afraid; it's déjà vu time.

The early-'80s game scene was corrupted and ultimately destroyed by a slew of third-party software companies that had no desire to produce a decent game—and probably couldn't if their collective lives depended on it—but instead sucked the life force out of a thriving industry. Those profit parasites proceeded to saturate the market with so much high-priced dog dirt that the consumer simply said, "Forget it!" and walked away with insulted intelligence and wounded wallet.

This, I fear, is poised to happen again. Even with the controversial constraints and "stamp-of-approval" policies enforced by the console gods, we are still seeing some truly horrendous product hit the store shelves. I'm certain we can all think of too many new games we've seen that wouldn't even be worth renting. Whoops, did I say "renting"? Yes, I'm afraid that concept has added a new wrinkle to the '90s game scene, one that may also expedite its demise.

Let's face it, no one but the eccentric millionaire will blindly shell out $50-plus on every cartridge that hits the stores if the opportunity exists to rent the game for mere pocket change. In the typical (yet unintentional) "bite-the-hand-that-feeds-you" injustice, a gamer may rent a game and in one evening "conquer" it or at least explore it sufficiently (thanks in large part to the "cheat codes" outlined in the gaming publications), return it and never play it again. I would bet the wife and kids (again) that a very small percentage of cartridge sales are the direct result of rentals.

The bottom line is, we need consistently higher quality games! I believe I speak for the gaming community when I say that I would be none the sadder if I never had to throw another Ninja Star or miss the chance to play *Son of Super Mario Brothers' Third Cousins, Twice-Removed, Part 27*! I am, however, fully prepared to spend $50-plus on a quality game—one that will keep me coming back for more—the likes of which have become fewer and farther between.



Hey Nintendo! Hey Sega! Hey NEC! Wake up! Your stamp of approval needs some fresh ink, its significance has faded. The store shelves are bursting with mediocre to abysmal games that are not selling. Retailers were leery enough to re-enter the market in the late '80s. If they should get burned again, let's not count on another "forgive and forget."

Read your history books, game gods, and write your programs wisely. If the industry should fall again—and its sights are locked-on—there may be no third chance.

—William Simpson
Los Angeles, California

There's not much that we can comment on in this letter, William, as you have taken the situation and put it in a nutshell. You and I both agree that the video-game market is headed for another disaster—and all the claims that Nintendo makes regarding how much it has done to revitalize the market won't keep it at the high level it has lived at these past few years.

What can be done about it? It's likely that as this issue hits the stands, some companies will be dropping out of the game market, at least here in the U. S., where they've had a harder time competing. This "survival of the fittest" situation will naturally weed out the weaker players. We also believe that high-cost software will ring a death knell, and prices must be trimmed to what the average family will pay. Fifty bucks is a big chunk, and we're hitting a crossroads between the desire for blockbuster games and the sour taste of the accompanying high price tag.

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT *hates to make long-range predictions, but it's our estimate that things will go down before they go up again, as has happened in the industry in the last couple of years. Perhaps too many players are gloating over recent victories, instead of looking out behind them. Only time will tell.*

DR. NINTENDO

Dear VG&CE:

I wanted to respond to your editorial regarding Nintendo's *Dr. Mario* in the October 1990 issue of VG&CE so that you'll have a clearer understanding of the game's theme.

Dr. Mario is merely a twist on a common premise: good triumphing over evil. In this case, Nintendo designed a visually appealing game that allows the player the chance to be

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

THE PUNISHER

MACHINE GUNS

ROCKET LAUNCHERS

6 STREET TOUGH LEVELS

THE NES GAME

HE WHO LIVES... WHO LIVES WINS

M-16s

SUPER ARCADE ACTION

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

a hero by pitting vitamins against menacing viruses that have escaped from a lab experiment.

Moreover, *Dr. Mario* was created solely as a whimsical form of entertainment. The packaging, characters and instruction booklet underscore the game's entertaining premise and establish clearly that the capsules are vitamins used to eradicate a dangerous virus in a laboratory setting. In addition, it is made clear that the vitamins are dispensed by a doctor in a controlled setting.

We hope that you now better understand the concepts behind the creation of this engaging, constructive and nonviolent game for our players.

—Bill White
Director, Advertising/Public Relations
Nintendo of America
Redmond, Washington

Andy Eddy responds: Thanks for your letter, Bill. Frankly, I didn't think that Nintendo would ever respond to some of the issues that have been raised in VG&CE.

While your letter tries to clarify your company's view of its game, I still stand pat on my assessment. And in all honestly, we've had calls and letters on both sides of the fence. Some readers thought I overreacted; others felt my opinion was right on the money.

In my view, the bottom line is that people are sick and tired of drug abuse—as evidenced by the voting in our Bonk Awards (see page 20). Dr. Mario *simply takes liberty with drugs, whether good or bad, and the fact is it didn't have to be designed that way at all.*

As a parent, it's my fear that some kids won't be able to discriminate between good pills and bad pills and will "play" with their family medicine chest. I feel that Dr. Mario *supports children pretending to be a doctor and dispensing pills—vitamin or otherwise. After all, Mario was previously a laborer in other games, but suddenly has tossed on a smock and become a doctor.*

Bill, we have to remember that kids are quite impressionable; and, according to your own company's figures, about 69% of NES players are under 18. In addition, there's an NES in an estimated one out of every four U.S. households. That's quite a substantial quantity of our youth who are getting a lot of "learning" from your company's products.

As I said in my editorial, it wasn't necessary to make the playfield a pill bottle or the pieces you move around in the shape of capsules. The themes of these games are fantastic enough as to allow lots of latitude in game design. I stand behind my opinion that Dr. Mario *goes over the line and takes a risk that I wasn't happy with.*

5200 JOYSTICKS ON THE WALL, 5200 JOYSTICKS...

Dear VG&CE:

You recently printed a letter from Seth King. Seth asked if you knew of a source where he could purchase games and controllers for the Atari 5200. Good news! Telegames USA carries 5200 titles and controllers, new and factory-sealed. It also carries over 100 titles for the Colecovision and a few dozen for the Intellivision. (They also sell the Colecovision system, roller controller, super action controllers and driving module.)

Also, games for the Atari 7800 are being sold direct by Atari, and it is making all the new titles available as they are released, including *Klax*, *ElectroCop* and *Ikari Warriors*.

—Dennis Chimelis
Bellport, New York

Dear VG&CE:

I am writing in response to a letter written by Seth King in the October '90 issue. I have over 30 games (and peripherals) for the 5200, as well as the system itself, which I have been trying to sell for some time. This leads me to believe that there are many gamers out there who are trying to buy or sell video games, but cannot locate the appropriate buyer or seller.

My suggestion is this: Why not institute a reader's exchange page where gamers can advertise what they are interested in buying or selling?

I, for one, would greatly appreciate something like that, as I have not found any interested parties for my merchandise.

—Richard Devorin
Elmhurst, New York

A tip of the cap to you guys, and I'm sure that Seth thanks you too!

As for Richard's idea of creating a "classified ad" section in VG&CE: *The main problem with this concept is that the magazine has a long lead time, meaning it would be some time before a person's ad would be read.* VG&CE *is looking into offering an instantaneous classified ad service through the "World of Video Games" on DELPHI. We will pass the word on when we finalize the details.*

SEGA ADDITIONS?

Dear VG&CE:

I am a loyal Genesis owner and just recently looked at another gaming magazine. I saw an illustration of a CD-ROM for the Genesis system and also a handheld Sega portable. Will U.S. shores see these additions to the Sega line?

—Ryan Hogan
Laguna Niguel, California

Lots of video gamers are hot for information on these two products, but, unfortunately, there isn't much to tell—yet. Sega of America representatives are looking at these Japanese products and trying to fit them into the American scheme, so we'll likely see these products in the near future.

Currently, there have been no firm announcements on a U.S. release of either product, though a Sega rep told us that the Genesis CD-ROM won't be here any sooner than 1992. The Game Gear, the Sega color portable you spoke about, has just been released in Japan and is reportedly quite nice, with an optional TV tuner not unlike the one that's available for NEC's TurboExpress. For the time being, we'll just have to sit tight and await the arrival of these innovations to our shores.

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1 AND 2 PLAYER
HEAD-TO-HEAD TEAM ACTION!

Acclaim™

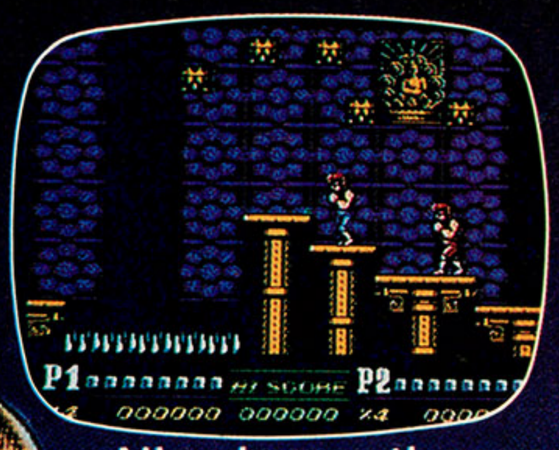
PRESENTS

双截龍

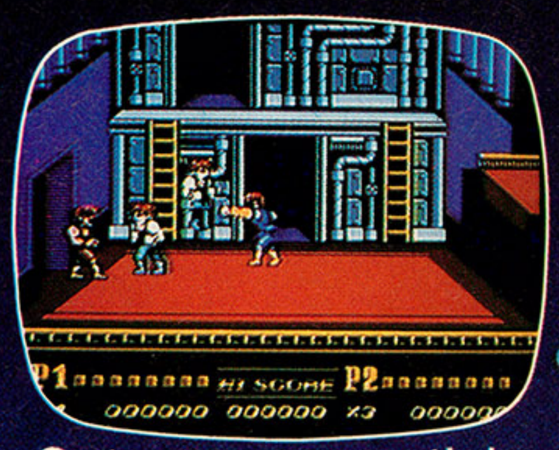
DOUBLE DRAGON™ II

The Revenge

SAVE $10.00 with mail-in rebate



Nine larger than life missions!



Outrageous martial arts moves like the "Cyclone Spin Kick"!

THE ARCADE SMASH IS NOW PLAYING ON NES®!

DOUBLE DRAGON II: THE REVENGE™
$10 REBATE

To receive your $10 rebate, complete this certificate and mail it together with (A) the UPC symbol from an Acclaim **Double Dragon II: The Revenge** package (for play on the Nintendo Entertainment System®) and (B) your original cash register receipt showing the store name, date of sale and your circled purchase price to:

DOUBLE DRAGON II: THE REVENGE REBATE OFFER
P.O. BOX 8580
WESTBURY, NY 11592

Orders must be received by January 31, 1991. Receipts dated prior to October 21, 1990 are not eligible for rebate.

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Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

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Additional terms: Limit one rebate per household or address. This certificate cannot be reproduced. Offer good in USA only and void where prohibited, taxed or restricted by law. Not responsible for lost, delayed or misdirected mail. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

CRASH & BOOM

BY MAXINE NAYLOR & CATHY DUNN

©1990 MAXINE NAYLOR/CATHY DUNN

US MAIL

WAY COOL! MY CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM AUNT THELMA!

WOW, HEADSPLITTIN' ACTION... KICK BUTT... BETTER DAYS, LOSER!

BOOM

BANG

LIKE WHOA, DUDE... A REAL LIVE VULCAN!

PATHETIC LITTLE EARTH CREATURE.

A VULCAN!?! HOW UTTERLY INSULTING! I'M SORCERER BOOM FROM THE WORLD OF PIXELS & BITS. YOU'VE BLASTED ME INTO REALITY (YECH) AND NOW I'VE GOT TO GET BACK. STAND CLEAR!

HEY!... WAIT DUDE!

W-WHERE ARE WE?

OOPS! YOU'VE SLIPPED INTO THE 2-BIT DIMENSION OF VIDEO WORLD. THE LAST HUMAN WHO ENTERED WAS DONN NAUERT... AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!

YIKES! BARKING BATS! IF THEY CATCH YOU THEY'LL SQUIRT ON YOUR LEG... QUICK, RUN BEHIND THE ROCK!

AHHH!... IT'S ONE OF THOSE MONSTEROUS END DUDES! HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET PAST HIM?

I'M HUNGRY!

LEVEL 1

DUH!... SILLY SORCERER THINKS HE'S PASSED ME...WAIT TILL HE SEES HIS PRIZE!

UH, DUH. GEE, THANKS— JELLY-FILLED... MY FAVORITES!

IT'S ONLY THE DROOLING DEMON... DONUTS ARE ALWAYS THE WAY TO A DEMON'S HEART!

MMM...WHAT A BABE!

MY PRINCE CHARMING, YOU'VE WON THE HAND OF THE FAIR PRINCESS!

OH NO!! IT'S THE PIMPERLY PRINCESS OF PUGSVILLE!!

MORE LIKE PRUNECESS! NO WAY, DOG BREATH!... I'M GOING TO BARF!... BOOM!! GET ME OUT OF THIS MESS!

TO BE CONTINUED...

Over 18,000 years ago many of the men in China dedicated their life to the study of philosophy. And then applied it to a war to end all wars.

The country was plagued by a bandit hoarde known as the Yellow Scarves. Who amassed a power no one had yet to conquer. Fact is, no one could assemble a force strong enough to destroy them.

In Destiny of an Emperor, your challenge is to change the course of history forever. For the good of China. And the world.

This full scale, role playing adventure game for the Nintendo System will put you deep in the throes of that war.

The action is as real as it gets thanks to the discovery of authentic documents detailing the era.

Characteristics of 180 warlords have been simulated based on the renowned text of Sanquozhi Yanyi.

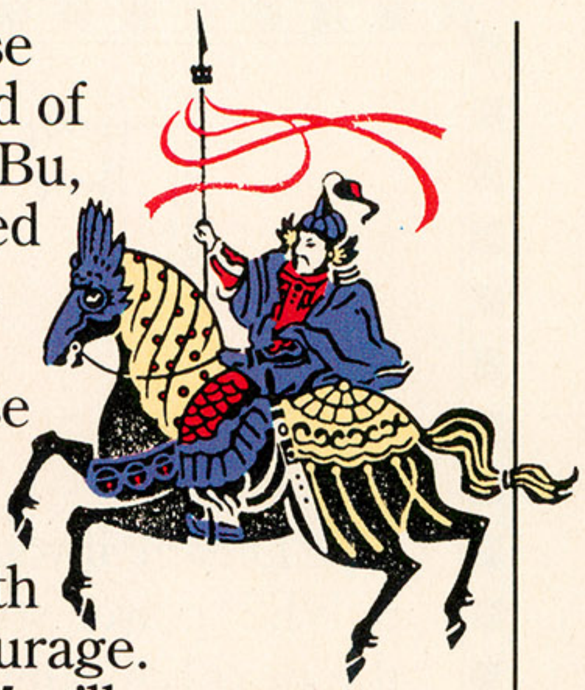
Even 20th century strategists are destined to spend hours, even days on each game. And when you take a break to philosophize on your next action (if you can pull yourself away) you

Conquering this game will take you centuries.

can actually save up to three histories exactly where you've left off.

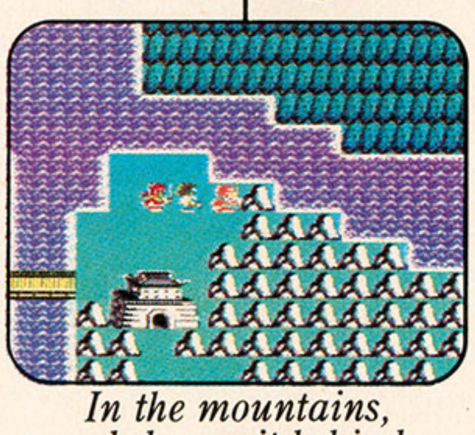
You can put yourself in the place of Liu Bei, dedicated to raising an army for the restoration of the dynasty. Or Guan Yu, an exceptionally skilled warrior, match for a thousand soldiers and worshipped as a god.

But no matter who you are, it will be hard to win the war against Zhang Jao, the deadly leader of the Yellow Scarve rebels and founder of the Tai Ping sect. Not to mention the most feared Chinese warlord of all, Lu Bu, destined to be a traitor because of his great strength and courage.



You'll use every strategic cell in your brain to fulfill your constant requirements for weapons, food and manpower. You'll give important commands that could mean your life, and the life of your armies. And in true Chinese tradition, you'll engage in battle again and again to defend your honor. An honor certified by an oath signed in blood.

When all is said and done, there will be room for only one Emperor. Whether or not that will be you is your destiny alone.



In the mountains, rebels await behind every tree.

CAPCOM® USA

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CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

IF YOU FIGURE THIS READY FOR

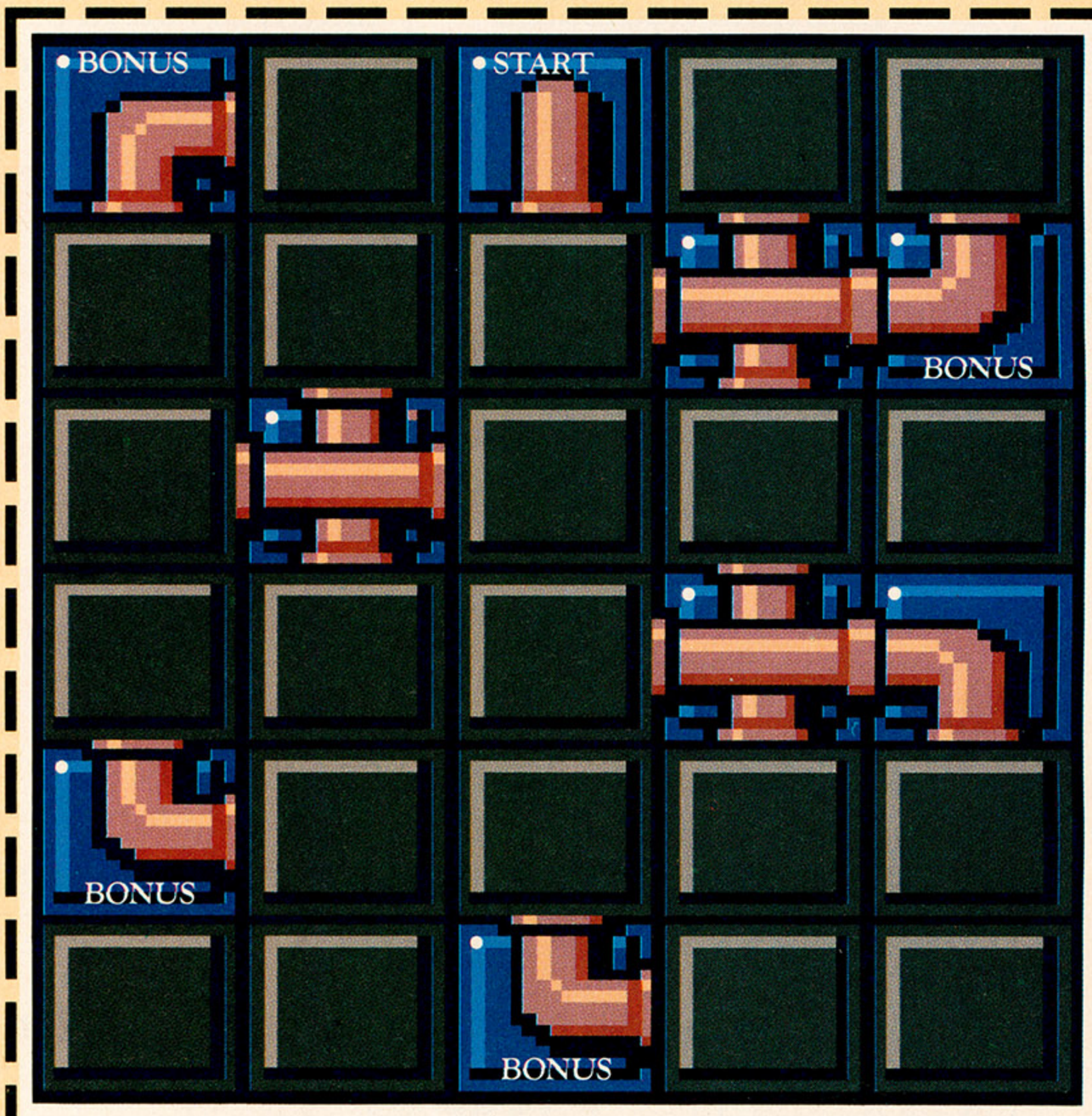
Pipe Dream. If you're a Game Boy™ or NES® player, you're looking at the next big thing. Because it all comes down to you vs. a whole warehouse full of plumbing parts. And the forces of chaos. But you've got four powerful weapons. Your right hand. Your left hand. Your right brain. And your left brain.

In the real game, this slimy green stuff called flooz starts flowing through the pipes. To stay ahead of it, you have to build the most radical pipeline you can dream up. And that's exactly what you have to do with this puzzle.

Start where it says START, and put each of the nine pipes in an empty square. Make sure every little white dot stays in the top left corner, or your entry won't count. Some pieces have two straight pipes crossing each other. The flooz always flows straight across these pipes and out the opposite side. If you can make your pipeline loop around so the flooz crosses through one of these pieces twice, you'll score bonus points.

(Hint: To get the highest score, you don't have to connect all nine pieces to every pipe on the grid.)

So if this sounds like



PIPE DREAM CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone_____ My score is_____

$1000 BONUS PRIZE! Answer question 1 or 2 to qualify. (Optional)

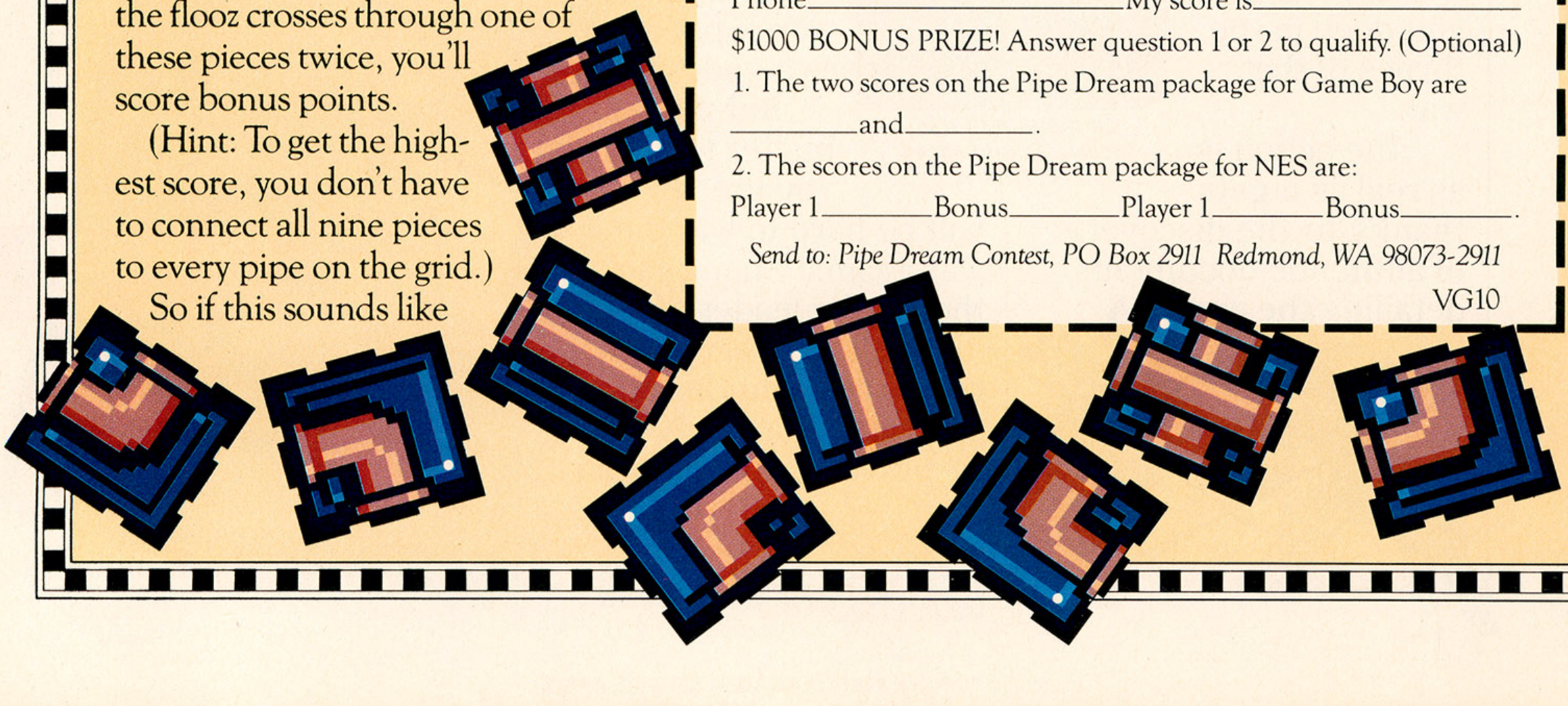
1. The two scores on the Pipe Dream package for Game Boy are _____ and _____.

2. The scores on the Pipe Dream package for NES are:

Player 1_____ Bonus_____ Player 1_____ Bonus_____.

Send to: Pipe Dream Contest, PO Box 2911 Redmond, WA 98073-2911

VG10



OUT, YOU MIGHT BE PIPE DREAM.™

your kind of game, try it now. Then go down to your Nintendo dealer, and see what it's like for real. When you've got nine million gallons of flooz breathing down your neck. And gaining.

HOW TO ENTER:

Cut the puzzle pieces out of this magazine and paste them in the right places on the grid. Or make a copy and work with that. Then send in the puzzle and the completed form to us.

All entries must be received by January 31, 1991.

HOW TO TOTAL YOUR SCORE

Add 100 points: For every square the flooz flows through. Don't count the starting piece. Count all the pieces you place, and all the pieces that you use on the grid.

500 point bonus: For each place the flooz crosses itself in a cross pipe. (Plus the basic 100 points for the square.)

500 point bonus: For each piece marked "BONUS" the flooz flows through. (Plus the basic 100 points.)

Subtract 100 points: For every piece you don't use, including the pieces you cut out, and the pieces that are already on the grid.

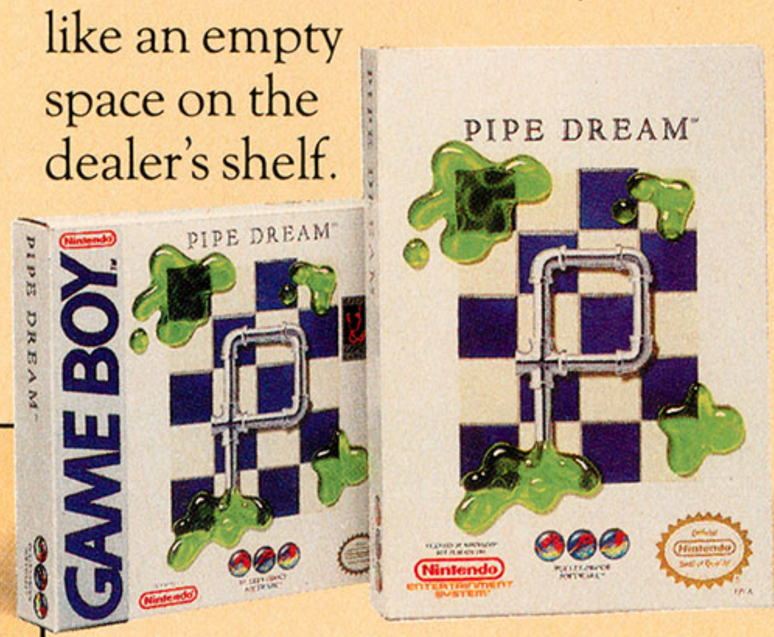
If you figure out the highest score, you win. In case of a tie, winners will be decided by random drawing.

IMPORTANT: Write your score on the back of the envelope. Unscored or incorrectly scored entries will be disqualified.

GRAND PRIZE– A TRIP TO NINTENDO!

If you're one of our three Grand Prize winners, you'll get a trip to Seattle for 4 days and 3 nights. Your prize includes round trip airfare for two, and hotel accommodations. You'll get the grand tour of Nintendo. Meet Nintendo Game Counselors. Talk some hard-core NES with them. You'll even have lunch at Cafe Mario℠ where all the Nintendo people eat. And a dinner at the Space Needle in your honor.

So, if you want to see how intense Pipe Dream really is, head on down to your Nintendo dealer. When you get there, this is what the packages look like. But you better get there soon. Or they'll look like an empty space on the dealer's shelf.



2ND PRIZE (25)

FREE BPS GAME OF YOUR CHOICE. AND A BULLET-PROOF SOFTWARE T-SHIRT!

3RD PRIZE (75) – FREE BPS T-SHIRT!

BONUS PRIZE – $1,000!

Enter our $1,000 drawing, too! Answer one bonus question on the entry form and you could win. Here's how: On the back of the Pipe Dream package, there are pictures of two screens with scores on them. Include the scores from either the NES or Game Boy box on the entry coupon.

OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES (No Purchase Necessary) *One entry per person, please. All entries must be received no later than January 31, 1991. No responsibility is assumed for lost, stolen, or misdirected mail. In the event of a tie, winners will be chosen by random drawing, on or about February 5, 1991. Regardless of score, BONUS PRIZE will be determined by random drawing from all entries that answer Bonus question. It is not necessary to answer this question to qualify for Grand, Second, or Third Prize awards. Winners will be notified by mail. By acceptance of their prizes, winners consent to use of their names, photographs, or other likenesses for the purpose of advertising or promotion on behalf of Bullet-Proof Software (BPS) without further compensation. Chances of winning are determined by the total number of entries received. Limit one prize per household. No substitution of prizes is permitted. All prizes will be awarded. A list of winners will be available after February 5, 1991 by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Pipe Dream Winners, 8337 154th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052. BPS will arrange air travel and hotel accommodation for each Grand Prize winner and his or her guest. BPS will also provide $300 spending money, lunch at Cafe Mario, and dinner at the Space Needle. All other expenses are responsibility of game winner. Approximate value of each Grand Prize: $2,500. Grand Prize excursion dates will be determined by BPS. If the winner is under 18, they must be accompanied by their parent or guardian. Any guest under the age of 14 must provide written parental consent and release. Some restrictions apply. Contest not open to employees of BPS, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Nintendo of America Inc., their affiliates, agencies, or their immediate families. This contest is void in Canada and elsewhere where prohibited by law. This contest is subject to all federal, state, and local taxes and regulations. Taxes and fees are sole responsibility of winners.*

BULLET-PROOF SOFTWARE™

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

CONTEST WINNER

The response was overwhelming! We received over 5,000 postcards in response to our request to "help Bonk bonk the bad guys." The nominations were outstanding. We asked you to vote for the person and thing that most deserved to be bonked. The contest was so exciting that it was talked about everywhere—newspapers, MTV, *everywhere*! When it came right down to it, Saddam Hussein (1,529 votes), President of Iraq, who initiated the attack on Kuwait, and drugs (with 1,130 votes) were the majority choice for "bonkees." (Good choices, folks.)

Of course, we had a wild TurboGrafx™-16 giveaway tied to the balloting. We told you we'd announce the winners in this issue, and here they are.

FIRST PRIZE:

(TurboGrafx-16 system, TurboGrafx-CD Player, *Bonk's Adventure*)

Tim Allen
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

SECOND PRIZE:

(TurboGrafx-16 system, TurboStick, *Bonk's Adventure*)

Jason Goulding
Oak Park, Illinois

THIRD PRIZE:

(TurboGrafx-16 system, *Bonk's Adventure*)

Michael Gladstone
Los Altos, California

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks go to all the readers who sent in their nominations. Keep reading VG&CE for more sweepstakes like this one! Winners read VG&CE!

GET A CLUE.

PUZZLE

Is to baffle and disturb mentally. To confuse, confound, bewilder and befuddle you. Are you up for this type of challenge? Can you put such pieces within this game together? Figure out this SNK Role Playing Game. A shield, a necklace, pendants and rings. These are possessions you'll want to bring. Visit the towns and GET A CLUE. This will help to get you through. Tornel and Stom will test your strength. When you finally meet Draygon, you've travelled at great length. There's just one way to clear your doubt, call SNK to figure this game out. Here's one more hook, fill this out and I'll send the book.

SNK

1-800-PLAY SNK

SNK Corporation of America, 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, California 94086, (408) 736-8844

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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

SNK **FREE** SNK

Please send me your free strategy guide for:
Crystalis

GAME TITLE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

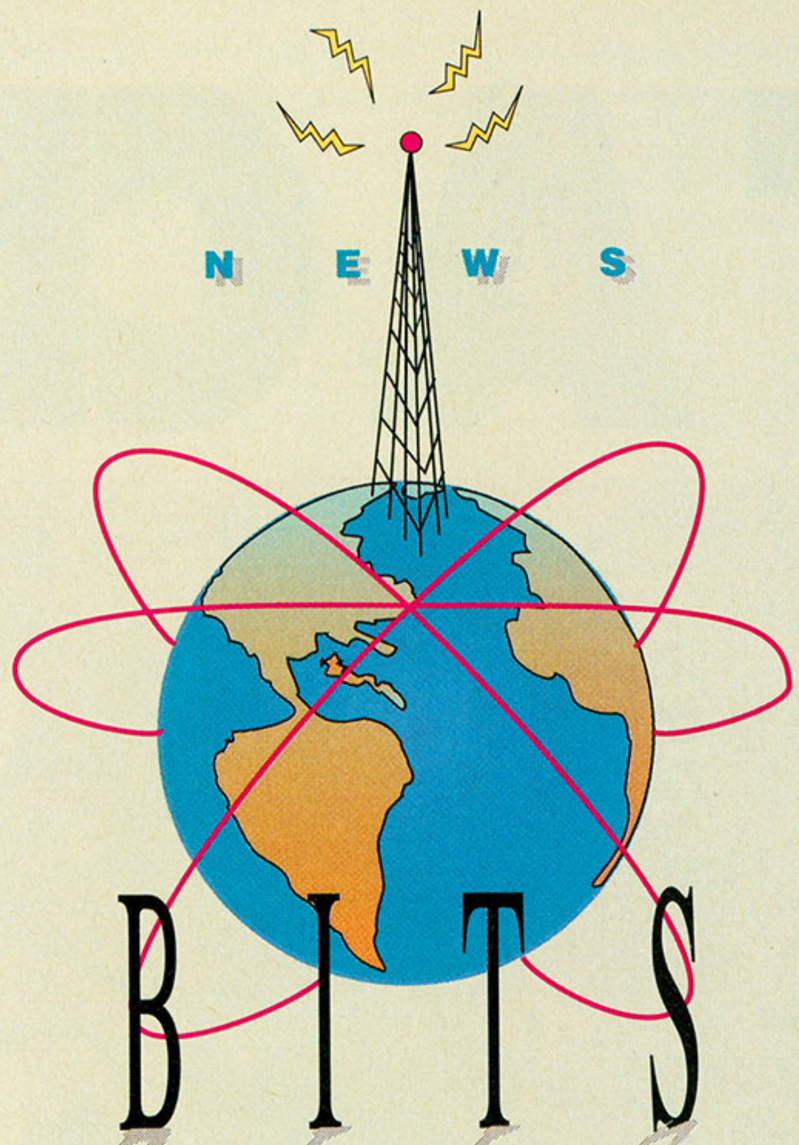
PHONE _____

SNK

SNK Corporation of America, 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, California 94086, (408) 736-8844

COMPILED BY

JOYCE WORLEY



VG&CE Readers Bonk Hussein

Over 3,000 VG&CE readers responded to the survey sponsored by NEC that ran in the September issue of VG&CE. The campaign asked kids to send in postcards with their nominees for the 1990 Bonk Awards, citing individuals and things for dumb, outrageous and unforgivable behavior.

The "winner," by an overwhelming margin, was Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein; over 1,500 voters named him the person who most deserves to be "bonked." Drugs and drug dealers came in second place, with about 1,000 nominations.

Other targets were alcohol and smoking (about 500 votes each) and personalities with bad behavior, including Libyan leader Kaddafi, Donald Trump (for his publicly aired problems), Pete Rose (gambling on baseball), Roseanne Barr (bad singing and all-around bad behavior), Exxon (for the Alaskan oil spill) and gangs.

Grant Schneider, NEC vice-president, expressed surprise at the responses: "We might have assumed that kids would want to bonk things like homework. It's encouraging to see that their awareness and concern regarding world affairs is very high."

The verb "to bonk" comes from *Bonk's Adventure* (by NEC for play on TurboGrafx-16). The hero, Bonk, uses his head to bang enemies. "Bonk has become a sort of contemporary vigilante for good," explained Schneider.

CD Update

Sierra On-Line will release a series of interactive, multimedia software in Japan for play on the Fujitsu FM-Townes CD-ROM computer. The first game available in the Island Nation will be *Mixed-Up Mother Goose,* to be followed by other interactive multimedia entertainments in 1991.

Mixed-Up Mother Goose features high-resolution 256-color graphics with painted backgrounds, complex animation and digitized voices in Japanese and English.

In other CD news, Activision released *The Manhole* (formerly available only for Macintosh) for use on IBM-compatible CD-ROM players. This is a point-and-click exploration that sends players either up a bean stalk to the sky or down the manhole to the underworld. The new version has full-color scenes and animated characters that speak with digitized voices, plus a music soundtrack with original songs for specific scenes.

Activision's *Cosmic Osmo* is now available for Macintosh CD-ROM. It contains over 100 megabytes of code and music, which, according to company spokespersons, makes it the largest entertainment-software product available in the U.S. It uses point-and-click technology to rocket with Osmo through a mythical solar system with seven separate worlds. Numerous games are embedded, as well as 20 original songs and a music soundtrack that runs simultaneously with game play. It features simulated 3-D graphics and animated characters.

Test Drive III Gets Extra Disks; Drivers Get Shades

Accolade is preparing extra car and scenery disks to go with *Test Drive III: The Passion.* The first disk contains additional exclusive cars and scenic roadways and should be on retailer's shelves by the time you read this issue.

Test Drive III: The Passion, designed by Tom Loughry (*Steel Thunder, Gunboat River Combat Simulation)* simulates the 225-mph Chevrolet CERV III, the 378-horsepower Pinnafarina Mythos and the $185,000 Lamborghini Diablo. The program uses a combination of polygon-fills, bit-mapping and digitized vehicle interiors to create such details as oncoming and cross traffic, tunnels, stop lights and signs. The scenery contains lakes with boats, rivers, waterfalls, train crossings, bridges and buildings. It also features day and night driving, which calls for drivers to use their headlights, and inclement weather that requires use of the windshield wipers.

As a further inducement to purchase the game, Accolade is providing dealers with free, custom-designed four-color *Test Drive III* Dashboard SunShades to give to consumers who purchase the product.

Three-Sixty Harpoons New Version

Three-Sixty Software has a new version of *Harpoon* (the company's blockbuster naval simulation). The new upgrade, titled *Harpoon v1.2,* is said to use less memory, run smoother and add features to the original. It's available in three configurations: on two 3½-inch 720Kb floppies; on one 5¼-inch 1.2MB floppy and three 5¼-inch 360Kb floppies; or on five 5¼-inch 360Kb floppies.

To get the upgrade, return the original program disks with $5 in American funds ($10 in Canada), and indicate the format desired.

Neo•Geo Goes to Market

SNK has opened an office specifically for sales of the company's home videogame system, the Neo•Geo. The new headquarters for SNK Entertainment is located in Torrance, California. (See the September issue of VG&CE for information about the new console.) The home

No BrAiN no GaiN

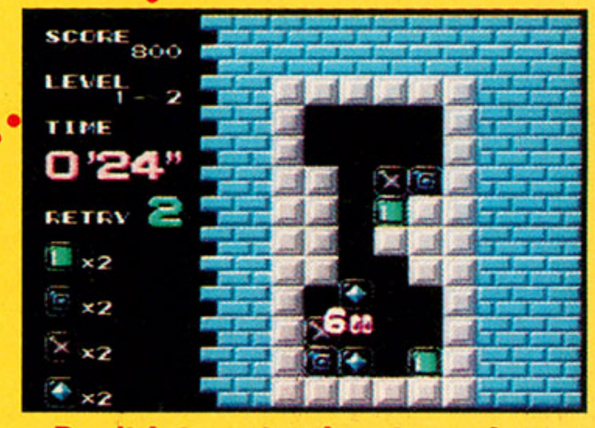
Had enough of ninja swordfights on Planet Zark? Wondering why it's always up to *you* to defend the universe against foreign terrorists with bad breath and giant radioactive amoebas?

Reclaim your brain! Get Puzznic™
— it's the fast-paced puzzle that'll give your mind a heavy duty workout.

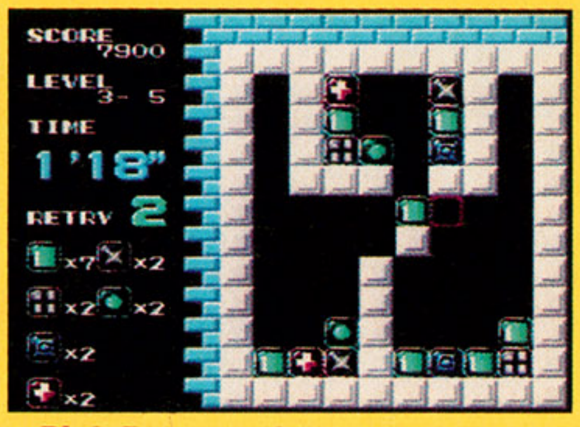
Puzznic seems easy — move and match geometric shapes to wipe out all the puzzle pieces. Trouble is, you've got to match the shapes in just the right order — or you won't blast one puzzle and get to the next. Rack up bonus points for matching multiples — if you're really fast, you can beat the clock and start some chain reaction action. And when you finish the first 160 puzzles, the fun's not over. You also get Gravnic,™ the *bonus game* that lets you play against gravity.

So dump the fake stun gun. You've got a few more hours before the universe goes terminal. Pump up your brain cells with Puzznic. When you pop back into those ninja pajamas, you might just have a fighting chance.

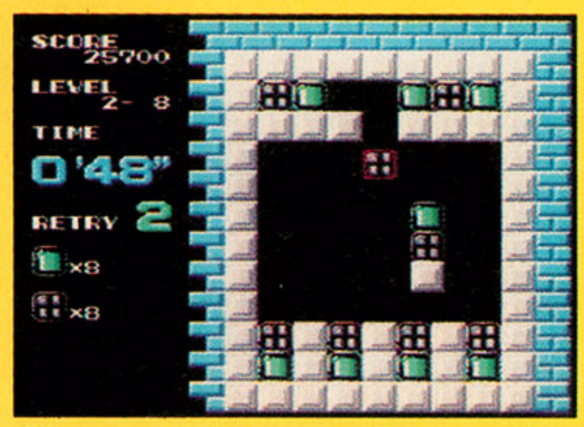
Actual Nintendo Entertainment System® screens shown.



Don't let nasty elevator cubes squeeze you into a corner!



Pick Password to resume your game after each completed level.



Plan carefully or you'll be caught with extra shapes.

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entertainment unit was first released in Japan for home rental.

The company is expected to announce their marketing plans and strategies for the new home entertainment unit within a few weeks. Currently, the price for the unit is approximately $500, and game cartridges will cost about $225 each.

Books to Feature Video-Game Characters

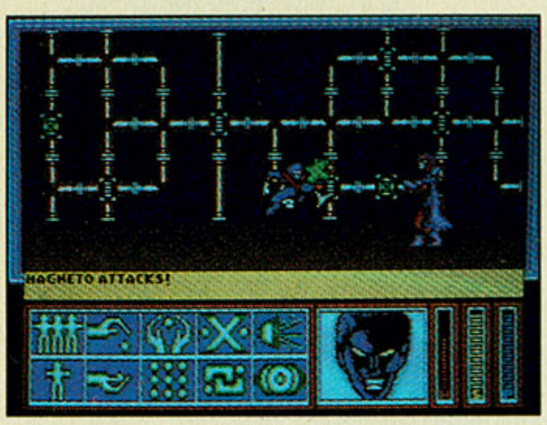
Scholastic's "Worlds of Power" book series is getting a couple of top-star video games from Konami and its wholly owned subsidiary, Ultra Software. *Metal Gear* and *Simon's Quest* will both become books, written by Seth Godin and a panel of children.

"Konami Mom" (the company's parenting expert) likes the idea. "Video games are a terrific source of inspiration for a child's imagination. It's a safe place to explore new worlds, challenge critical thinking skills and become comfortable with electronic information." She went on to say, "These books help parents and teachers see new ways of using video games to motivate our kids to use traditional learning skills. Many kids find reading dull and uninteresting, and by offering books they can relate to, such as their favorite video-game characters, we can rekindle their appreciation for the written word."

The *Simon's Quest* book sends Simon Belmont and a 14-year-old boy to battle Count Dracula. Similarly, *Metal Gear* is based on the video-game's storyline. It allows readers to role play as agent Justin Halley in a mission to save the world. Both books contain suggested reading lists of related classics to motivate additional reading.

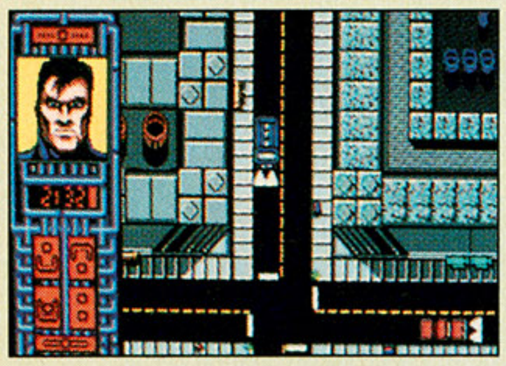
MicroProse and Medalist Bundle Up for Holidays

MicroProse has combined three of its top-sellers into a land, sea and air trilogy of simulations. The packet contains *Airborne Ranger, Pirates!* and *Gunship,* and is available for IBM PC, Commodore 64 and Amiga com-



puters. *Airborne Ranger* sends one soldier behind enemy lines in a strategy/arcade contest; *Pirates!* features adventure on the 17th century Spanish Main; and *Gunship* puts the player in the cockpit of an army attack helicopter.

Medalist packaged up their Marvel Comic-inspired titles, *X-Men, The Punisher* and *Dr. Doom's Revenge* into one bundle, playable on IBM PC. *X-Men: Madness in Murderworld* features six of the superheroes in a Murderworld funhouse. *The Punisher* is a war-hero-turned-vigilante battling the mob. The third title sends Spider-Man and Captain America to stop the launch of a nuclear missile aimed at New York City. The Commodore 64 triple-pack substitutes *The Amazing Spider-Man,* in which Spidey battles Mysterio, for *The Punisher.*



Each of the packets would be worth over $100 if the games were sold individually.

"Go for the Gold Club" Revived

Due to its overwhelming success, Medalist is reviving the "Go for the Gold Frequent Buyer's Club." This year's club has the same incentives as last year and some special offers to current members.

Specially marked Medalist products contain medallions to collect, which are redeemable for prizes such as sweatshirts, T-shirts, hats, patches, posters and more. If a friend buys a Medalist game and names a current member as the person who advised him to join, that member gets a bonus medallion. When any member redeems medallions, he or she is automatically entered in a quarterly sweepstakes for prizes such as sound boards, jackets and software.

"Go for the Gold Club" members also receive a club newsletter with new product information, promotions and special offers.

Living Walls for Aladdin's Castles

There's something new coming to most Aladdin's Castles. Many of the well-known gaming arcades are featuring high-tech media walls to add even more excitement to the lively surroundings. Minataur Promotions Enterprises (Chicago, Illinois; [312] 222-0262) is installing *Channel M Videowall Networks* in 50 Aladdin's Castle Video Arcades.

The videowalls utilize the Philips Super Projector, which beams a montage of images onto a bank of TV screens. Channel M then delivers a program of MTV, news, music and videos. The entertainment is to be interspersed with 30-second ads for games and other products of interest to arcaders.

The Philips Super Projector, created by Philips Corp. Vidiwall Division (Paramus, New Jersey), divides one picture into four quadrants, then projects four separate pictures simultaneously, or any combination thereof. The total viewing area is 82 inches (diagonal) and offers such special effects as solarization, mirroring, freeze-frame, digitalization and colorization. The programming is controlled by a built-in computer, and the sound is accompanied by a stereo sound system with 30-watts-per-channel output.

EA Giving Golf with PS/2 Computers

Electronic Arts' *PGA Tour Golf* is currently packed with the new Personal System/2 (PS/2) IBM computers. The giveaway will continue through January 15, 1991, as part of IBM's Christmas promotion.

The golf game features 60 well-known professional golfers, and the Tournament Player's Courses at Sawgrass, Avenel and the PGA West Stadium course.

Top Coin-Ops of September 1990

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, from an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *G-LOC* by Sega
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *Four Trax* by Atari
5. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
6. *Smash TV* by Williams
7. *Pigskin* by Midway
8. *Off Road* by Leland
9. *Final Lap* by Atari
10. *2-Dude Off Road* by Leland

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. Neo•Geo by SNK
3. *Combatribes* by American Technos
4. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
5. *Thunder Jaws* by Atari
6. *Thunder Fox* by Taito
7. *Rai Den* by Fabtek
8. *Cadash* by Taito
9. *Hydra* by Atari
10. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland

Best New Uprights

1. *Moonwalker* by Sega
2. *Top Landing* by Taito
3. *WGP* by Taito
4. *Pig Out* by Leland
5. *Vs. Dr. Mario* by Nintendo

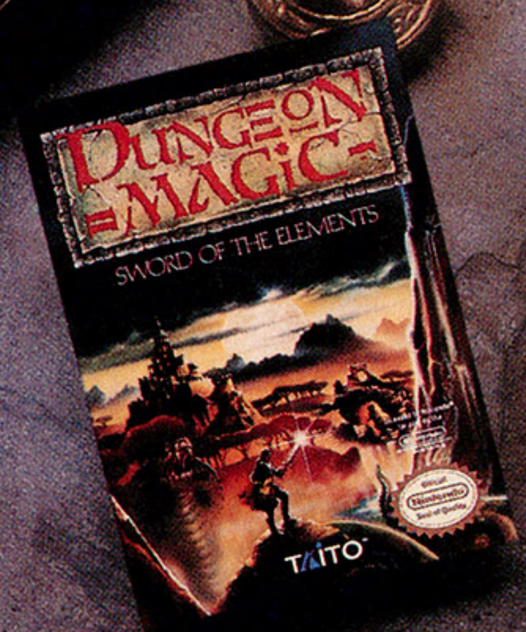
Legend Added to Medalist Team

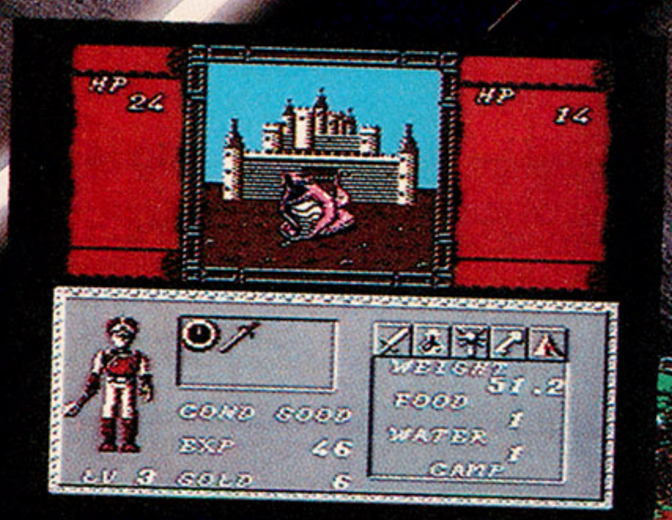
Legend software company (formerly Gameworks) is the latest addition to the Microprose Medalist International

A Game So True-to-Life,
You Don't Just Play It.
You Live It!

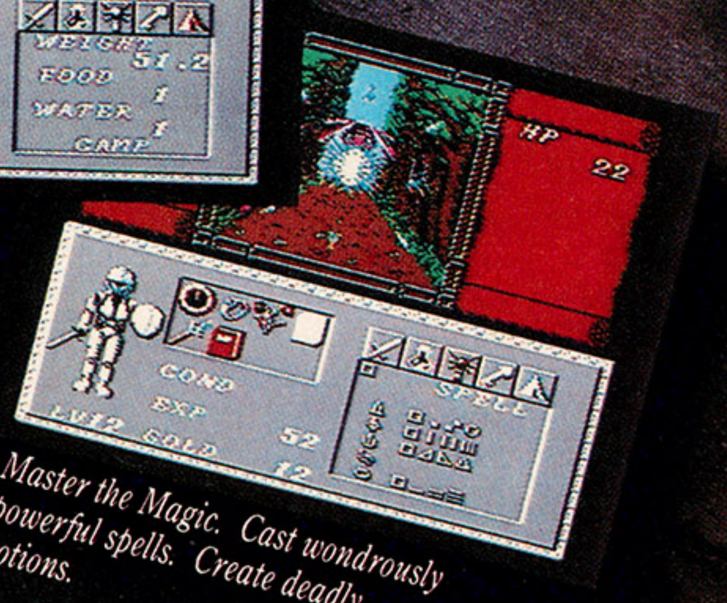
DUNGEON MAGIC

Finally, a fantasy role-playing adventure that makes you a part of the action.

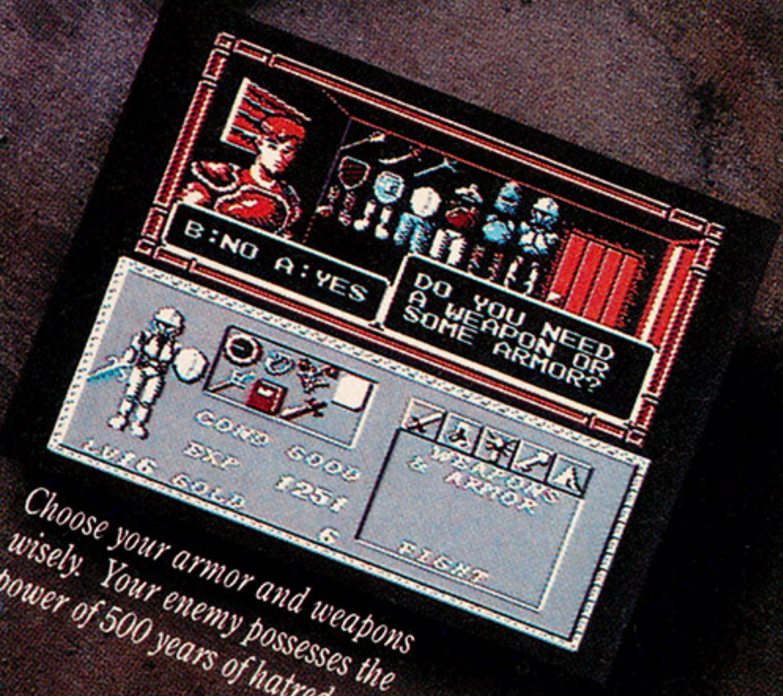




Beware of the serpant's bite. It is deadly. And you are vulnerable.



Master the Magic. Cast wondrously powerful spells. Create deadly potions.



Choose your armor and weapons wisely. Your enemy possesses the power of 500 years of hatred and evil.

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Market Division, joining Paragon and Mindcraft software companies. *Spellcasting 101: Sorcerers Get All the Girls* (designed by Steve Meretzky [*Hitchhikers Guide, Leather Goddesses*]) and *Time Quest* will be the first titles released from this new partnership.

Legend's earlier games were *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels* and *Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur*. Robert Bates, founder of the company, remarks: "Our games are puzzle-oriented, story intensive, funny and fun. These games will appeal to a significant portion of MicroProse's existing market as well as both experienced and novice computer users."

MicroProse's vice-president of marketing, Gerry Blair adds, "We are excited to have Legend join our team of high-quality entertainment software for personal computers."

EA Helps Gamers "Save on Sony"

Electronic Arts and Sony banded together in a five-month, nationwide promotion that will enable gamers to buy Sony products at unusually low prices.

With the purchase of one featured EA title, participating retailers offer a Sony Walkman for $15; with two featured titles, a Sony Watchman for $85; with three titles, a Sony Discman CD player for $120.

IBM titles featured in the promotion include: *Populous, Stormovik, John Madden Football, Centurion, Lakers vs. Celtics, Bards Tale III* and *Starflight 2.* Amiga titles featured are *Budokan, Powermonger, Deluxe Paint III* and *Deluxe Video III, Populous, 688 Attack Sub, The Immortal* and *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0.* The promotion will finish on March 1, 1991.

The Magic Candle Lights NES

American Sammy Corporation inked a contract with Mindcraft Software Inc. to develop and publish a version of *The Magic Candle* for the Nintendo Entertainment System.

In *The Magic Candle*, the gamer role plays through towns, villages and castles, meets up with dozens of monsters and casts magic spells.

Mike Yamamoto, American Sammy's president, states, "It was a truly historic event for us—we had been trying to obtain this title for months!"

The Magic Candle will be available for the NES in the Fall of 1991. The game is available from Mindcraft for play on Apple, Commodore 64 and IBM PC computers.

Williams Gambles on Riverboat

The latest pinball machine from Williams Electronics takes gaming back to the colorful era of life on the Mississippi. *Riverboat Gambler* features a gloriously gaudy backglass painting and play action based on casino games such as roulette, blackjack, slots and five-card poker.

Consecutive loop shots lead to the slots and multiball, skill shots set up the player for roulette, then a control panel offers a choice of red, black, green or pass. Gold stars give an extra ball, and the backglass win-meter keeps track of the jackpot, which can exceed nine million points.

Heat Sensors Monitor Temps for Software

Dix Frampton, president of J B Enterprise Co. (Logan, Utah; [801] 753-6950), designed a product for video-rental stores that turns out to be equally valuable for computer-software users. The Movie Melt Heat Sensor is a heat-detection label to be affixed to rental movies. It is also useful to gamers to stick on software (or on the storage box that holds disks or cartridges). It features a sensor that changes colors at 125°, the temperature at which media begins to decay.

The stickers sell for $42 per box of 250 labels.

Crimefighter Searches for Pirates

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) has a program to help smash piracy. *SPAudit* (created by Softguard Systems of San Francisco) searches the hard drives of computers, then prepares a printout listing the names of applications as well as how many copies of each were found. Users cross-check the list with their purchase records to determine which are authorized and which are, in fact, illegal copies.

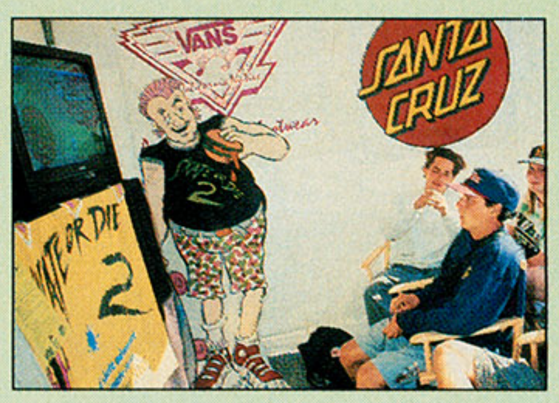
This crimefighter currently works on IBM PC computers, and a Macintosh version will be available early in 1991. SPA received over 10,000 requests from corporations that wish to check their internal software practices.

SPAudit and the Software Self Audit Kit (which contains recommended steps for checking the business, plus suggested corporate policies, a memorandum to employees and information about the law) are available free to corporations. Request the two items in a letter (on corporate stationery) to SPA Self Audit Kit, 1101 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 901, Washington, D.C. 20036.

EA Sponsors Skateboard Competition

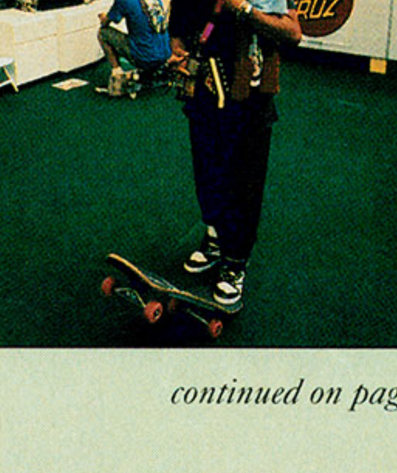
Electronic Arts sponsored the National Skateboard Association's Back to the City Streets and Freestyle Pro Skateboard Competition. The event took place in San Francisco at the Youth Expo '90.

"We feel it's important that we put something back into skateboarding," says Bing Gordon, Electronic Arts' vice-president of marketing. "Today's skate scene has inspired some of our artists to put out their best. Without the lifestyle skaters have created, we wouldn't have the opportunity to make some great games."



Almost a hundred skateboarders competed in the three-day event, doing wheelies, rail stalls, 360s and other tricky maneuvers. Top purses were $8,000 for the best street-style skater and $2,000 for freestyle.

Besides the pro competition for cash and prizes, Electronic Arts gave video thrashers the chance to show their stuff on the Double Trouble



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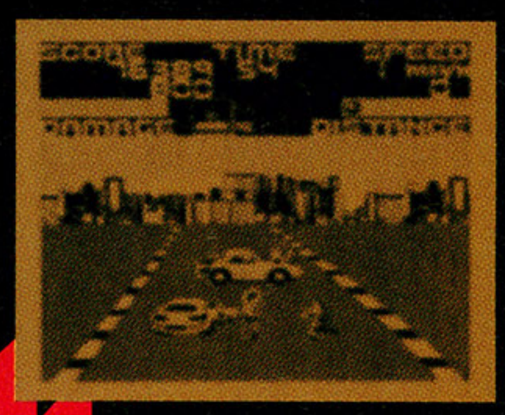
NICE GUYS FINISH BASHED.

*When HQ radios you the bad guy's stats, you hit turbo boost and feel your eyes in the back of your head. But don't just follow that car, **bash it.** Or smash it. Just do what it takes to rid the road of the fastest, nastiest thugs alive.*

trash-compact their cars. After all, these guys didn't make the Most Wanted on account of a few dozen parking tickets! If you don't stop them in time, they're gone for good. And you're just spinning your wheels. And smelling the rubber.

Think it sounds easy? Think again. Living at 178 m.p.h. is no piece of cake. You've got five missions and hundreds of miles of screaming, twisting, 3D L.A. highways to master, and plenty of innocent drivers to avoid. What's worse, criminals don't stop until you practically

Check your stats and blast off!



Catch him. Book him. And keep him off the road.

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Please Allow 4-6 Weeks For Delivery.

"I OPERATE ALONE ...the D.O.A. Punks are out to stop me, but I've got orders to bring them in or drop 'em dead.

To entice their cooperation, my VMAX TWIN-TURBO Interceptor is equipped with **APACHE** Side-Mounted cannons and **PULSE** long range nuclear torpedoes.

Packing a **.95 Auto-Mag,** designed for internal explosion of human targets and a **TONARI** snare gun... I play to win."

– TECHNOCOP

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16 BIT GRAPHICS

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SEGA® GENESIS®
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

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BUY ONE OF THESE,

Just buy a TurboGrafx™-16 system and you'll not only get Keith Courage in Alpha Zones,™ games worth up to $70 totally free. How can we be so generous? See your dealer for

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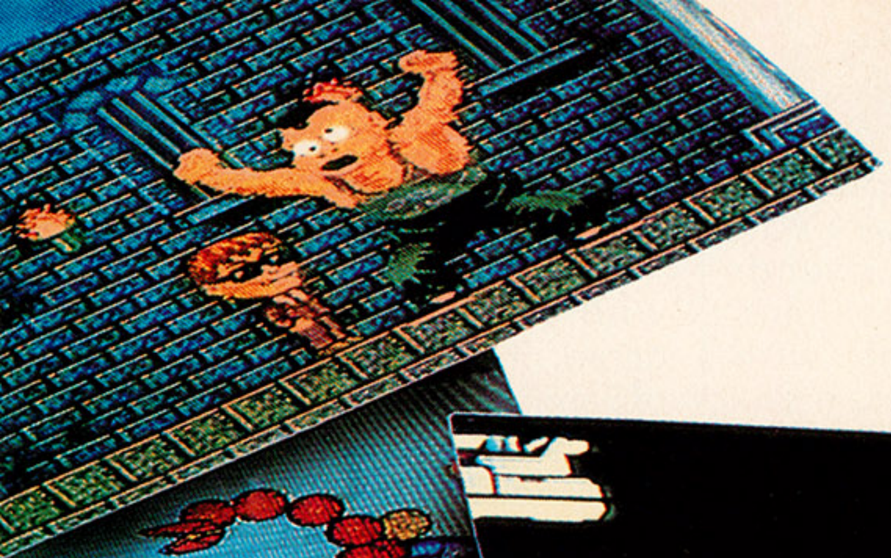

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ramp in *Skate or Die 2: The Search for Double Trouble.* Those who excelled at Electronic Arts' NES cartridge won skateboards and T-shirts.

In a related story, world-

class skateboard pros Bod Boyle, of Santa Cruz Skateboards, and Omar Hassan, of Blockhead Skateboards, visited San Francisco Children's Hospital on August 31, thanks to Electronic Arts. The pair delighted the kids by demonstrating their mastery of the skateboard. They also demonstrated EA's *Skate or Die 2: The Search for Double Trouble.* The visit took place in conjunction with the software publisher's support of San Francisco Youth Expo '90.

The two star thrashers signed autographs and challenged the kids with the new NES cartridge using a Nintendo Entertainment System donated to the hospital. *Skate or Die 2* is, of course, the sequel to 1989's NES hit (1.2 million copies), *Skate or Die.*

Sierra Turns to Europe

October 1 signaled a big change in the European operation of leading software publisher Sierra On-Line, Inc. (Coarsegold, California). The company assumed direct responsibility for the distribution of products under the Sierra and Dynamix labels through a new subsidiary, Sierra Limited U.K. Previously, Activision U.K. distributed Sierra's line of adventure and action games. Sierra will court the continental market with versions of some of its bestsellers translated into French, Spanish and German.

According to Sierra President Ken Williams, the new unit is based in the London suburb of Reading. Sierra Limited U.K. maintains a full-staffed customer-service line to answer questions about the company's products. "We feel that, by opening Sierra Limited, we can further serve and support our British and European customers," Williams explains.

TurboGrafx-16 Fans Buy Big

Research developed by NEC Technologies shows that the median TurboGrafx-16 owner averages more than one new game a month for the popular home video-game system. This translates into annual spending of $500-$600 per console. The study, conducted by Fairfield Research, involved interviews with more than 750 video gamers.

"The average owner has purchased 13 software packages since we introduced the Turbo Grafx-16 system last October," says Keith Schaefer, senior vice-president. "According to our research, that's more than twice the number of software titles being purchased by Sega Genesis owners over a similar time period."

Buck Rogers Gets Clues

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI) has completed a cluebook for *Buck Rogers Countdown to Doomsday.* The booklet contains detailed maps for the entire game, including locations of all major events in the adventure, combat tips, lists of all the opponents showing their strengths and weaknesses, plus explanations of all skills and how they are best utilized.

Buck Rogers Countdown to Doomsday is set in the 25th century. The gamer puts together teams of warriors, engineers, rogues and medics recruited from Earth, Mars, Venus or Mercury, or genetically engineered. The game system is based on the *AD&D* gold-box products, but features some enhancements. Tactical combat commands are easier and presented on one menu. The game features 256-color VGA graphics, Ad Lib soundboard support, tactical and spaceship combat with boarding capabilities, many 25th century weapons and over 40 available skills. It's available for play on Amiga, Commodore 64 and IBM PC computers.

The cluebook, as well as the game, can be ordered from Electronic Arts Distribution at (800) 245-4525. The cluebook retails for $12.95.

Nintendo Fights Video-Game Rentals

Nintendo won the first round against Blockbuster Video in the U.S. District Court of New Jersey. Blockbuster Video consented to a preliminary injunction days after Nintendo brought suit against the video-rental chain to cease and desist reproduction or distribution of Nintendo instruction manuals. Nintendo alleged that the manuals were being photocopied without authorization, and distributed to consumers with NES cartridge rentals.

According to Lynn Hvalsoe, Nintendo's attorney, this is just the beginning. "We understand that video-rental outlets across the country may be photocopying NES game instruction manuals. We intend to stop this illegal practice. This lawsuit is the first of those which Nintendo will commence to stop this illegal practice."

Nintendo may have won the battle and lost the war. In 1990, the company lobbied Congress to pass a law banning video-game rentals. They argued that rental of NES software cuts into sales, and that Nintendo cartridges should not be exempt from any bill banning computer-software rental. (The House and Senate Committees have already agreed on a wording of a bill to ban PC-software rentals, but it specifically excludes cartridge-based software that cannot be copied during ordinary use.)

Tengen Speaks Out for Rentals

In an exclusive interview with VG&CE, Dan Zan Elderen, chief operating officer of Tengen, explained why his company disagrees with Nintendo's anti-rental stance. "I don't believe [Nintendo's] argument is valid; we don't believe rentals will cut into sales. A strong product will be purchased if it's enjoyable. Well-conceived, well-designed games are playable for hundreds of hours. A weak and unappealing game will be affected, but we don't think that is necessarily wrong. When you are spending $40-$50 a pop, you can't afford to buy just everything that's on the market.

"We've done extensive research, and we have found that kids don't depend on inside sources, such as *Nintendo Power*, to decide what to buy. They look to outside sources, such as independent reviews in magazines such as VG&CE. They also depend heavily on word of mouth from friends and especially they depend on trying it out.

"Tengen considers the rental stores to be viable retail channels. They have high traffic, and it makes a lot of sense for people to be able to try a product before they decide to buy it."

Apple Introduces MacClassic, Others

Apple Computer has introduced a new version of the original Macintosh that's scheduled to sell for around $700. Specs on the new computer were not available to VG&CE at press time, but industry watchers expect the Macintosh Classic to be similar to the SE.

Apple also unveiled two color units. The Macintosh LC is expected to retail for around $2,500, roughly 50% of the price of its cheapest color computer. The second, higher-end machine, the Macintosh SI, will sell for about $3,700, replacing the CX.

The new computers were introduced simultaneously in 121 countries on October 15, 1990, taking the wraps off a tight net of security that kept details of the new processors under wraps.

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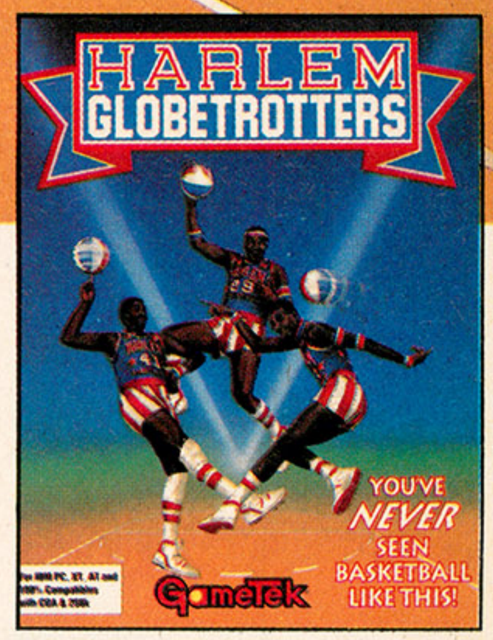

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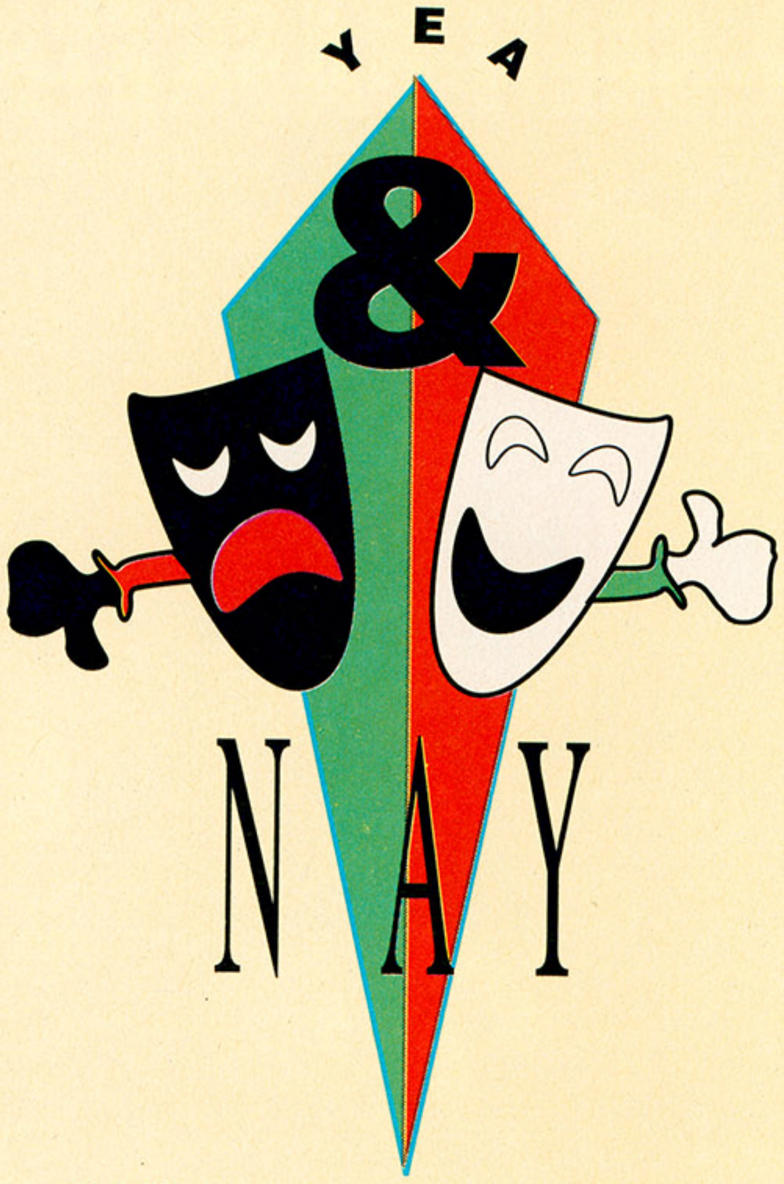
CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Yea & Nay *is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do.*

If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay.** *Let's hear how you feel!*



YEA

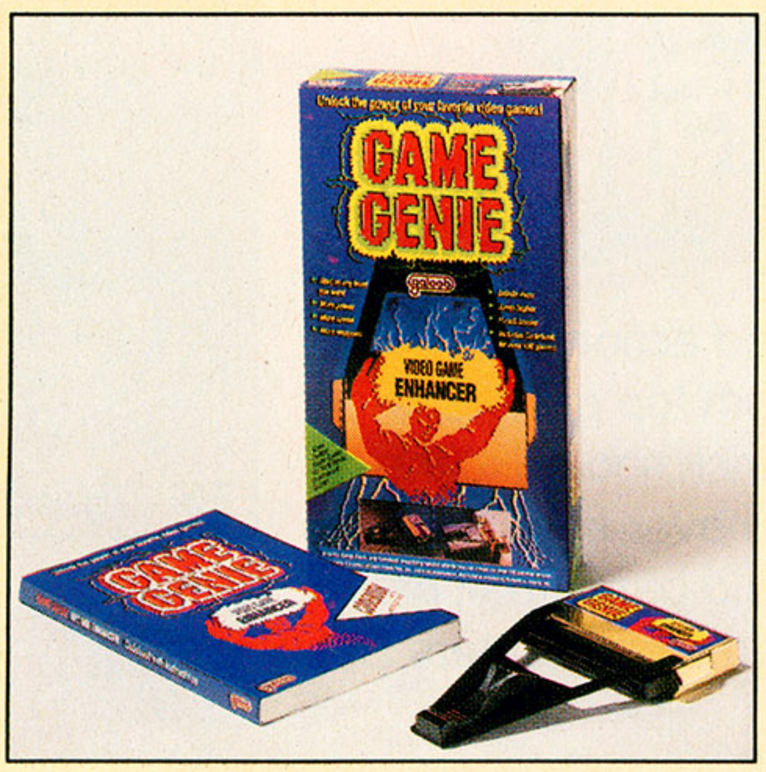
In light of all the announced products that never end up hitting the market, vaporware and product-release delays, it's refreshing that the TurboExpress, NEC's portable version of the TurboGrafx-16, was released as scheduled. Though a bit pricey for most gamers' wallets, we still stand by our assessment that the TurboExpress is a fantastic addition to the TG-16 line. Sure puts the Game Boy in a different light, wouldn't you say?

NAY

We have to give a body slam to Sega for letting the Genesis users down. We've gotten many letters and calls from gamers who are wondering where some of the long-advertised titles are. Cartridges like *Spider-Man* and *Dick Tracy* have been advertised as far back as the July and September issues of VG&CE, respectively, though as of this writing (mid-October), neither game has hit store shelves.

Furthermore, it has come to our attention that Sega has used a picture in an ad of a scene later cut from the game. This has the potential of being a serious misrepresentation of the facts—indeed, it came to our attention when some gamers were wondering where the scenery represented by the picture (in this case, the *Super Monaco GP* ad in the September VG&CE) was on their game. We realize that products change and ads must be planned well in advance, but more care should be taken in the future.

NAY



Well, Nintendo is at it again. Word has reached us that, despite the little note we put in our *Reader Mail* section in the December 1990 issue of VG&CE, Nintendo is now taking legal action against Camerica over the Game Genie. Guess it was bound to happen.

As we reported in the last issue, Camerica has been selling the Game Genie through various stores in Canada. Nintendo is taking a similar action against Camerica as the one it took against Lewis Galoob Toys (the company with distribution rights for the Game Genie in the United States) in 1990.

Finally, as of this writing, Galoob's appeal of the restraining order by Nintendo against U.S. sales of the device hasn't been decided on by the judges involved (see *Yea & Nay*, September 1990, VG&CE). We'll have more details in future issues as these two cases evolve.

OLYMPIC DECATHLON COMPETITION

Carl Lewis

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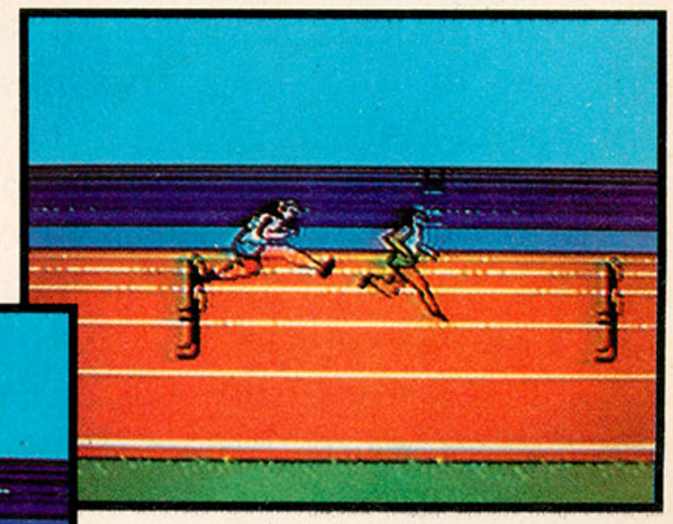
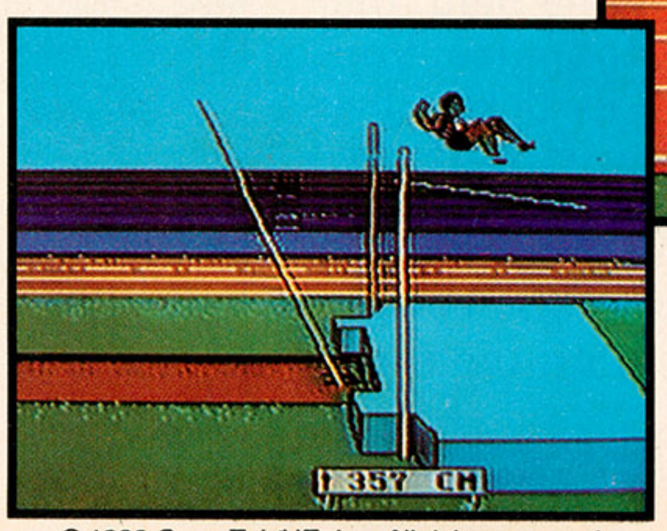




Screens shown are from the IBM version.

CIRCLE #115 ON

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

John Madden Football

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Some video sports contests concentrate more on the action than the important strategic elements of the game. Not so with Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football*, which combines strategy with thrills and spills—enough strategy, in fact, that it almost qualifies as a simulation. As video coach, you can choose from many offensive and defensive plays, each with its own strengths and weaknesses when measured against the opponent's choices.

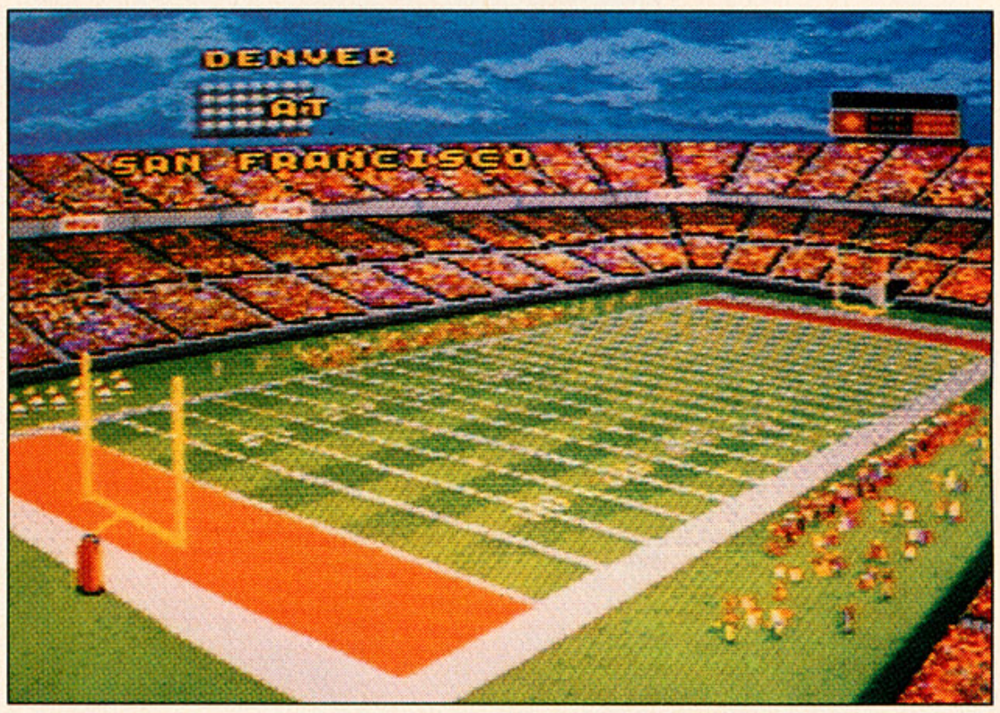
Before charging onto the field, you must select your options from the game setup screen. The season mode menu offers a regular season, playoffs or sudden death (the first team to score wins). The regular season selection eliminates weather conditions from the play, while in the playoffs, you may have to deal with snow, rain or mud.

After setting the season mode, you choose your team and the opposing team from over 16 selections, including Denver, Houston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Miami, New England, Kansas City and the Madden All-Stars. Finally, you can select a five-minute or 15-minute quarter.

Then it's on to the field for the kickoff. The visiting team always kicks first, so if you're playing on the home field, the kickoff is automatic. Otherwise, you must perform the kickoff by poking the control button exactly when the on-screen kicking-strength meter reaches its maximum readout.

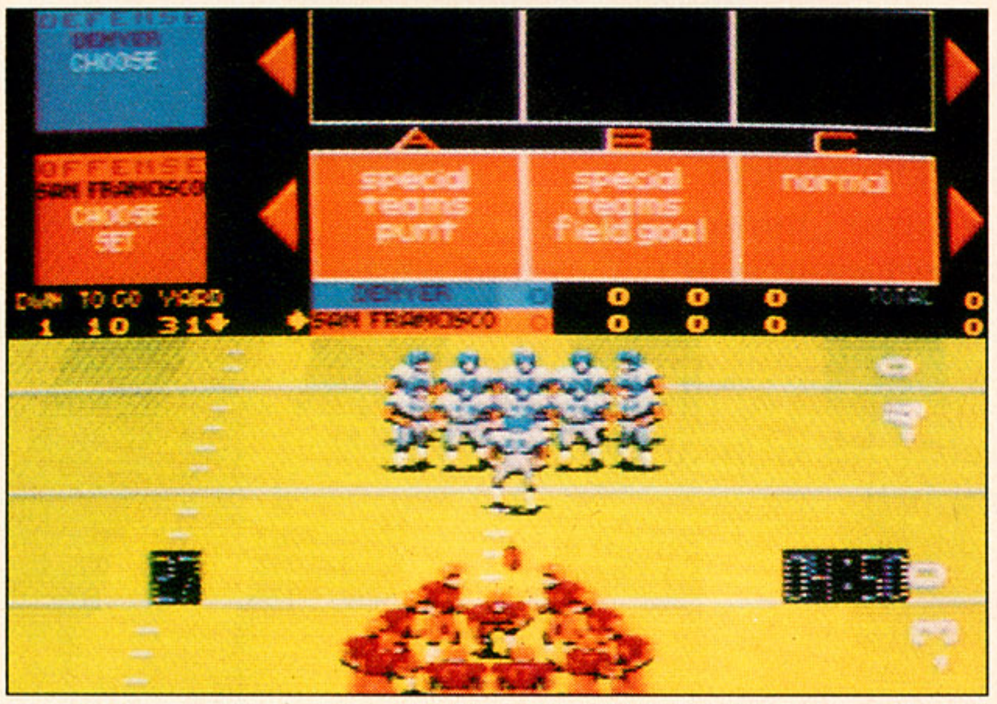
When the ball is in play, you control the man who's standing on the four-arrow symbol. If he has the ball, you must maneuver him through the defense's lines. If any member of the opposing team touches your man, he'll be tackled. If you don't want the responsibility of getting the ball past the defensive lines, you can sit back and let the computer control your man.

In fact, if you like, you can play the game completely from a strategic point of view by simply selecting the plays and formations and letting the computer run them for you. When playing offense, you can select your set (the players who will run the play), your formation (how the players will line up) and your play (what the players will actually do once the ball is in play). You can choose from six sets, five formations and six plays for each formation, giving you a wide range of strategic possibilities.



Electronic Arts has hit the Genesis market with some strong video-game releases, the latest being *John Madden Football*.

When playing defense, you once again select a formation, set and play. Five defensive formations, three defensive sets and six defensive plays are available. As usual, you can take control of the player yourself or let the computer do the dirty work, acting out the plays you've selected.



If you elect to manually control your player, you have several types of moves at your disposal. When playing defense, you can dive for a tackle. Offensively, try spinning to

continued on page 42

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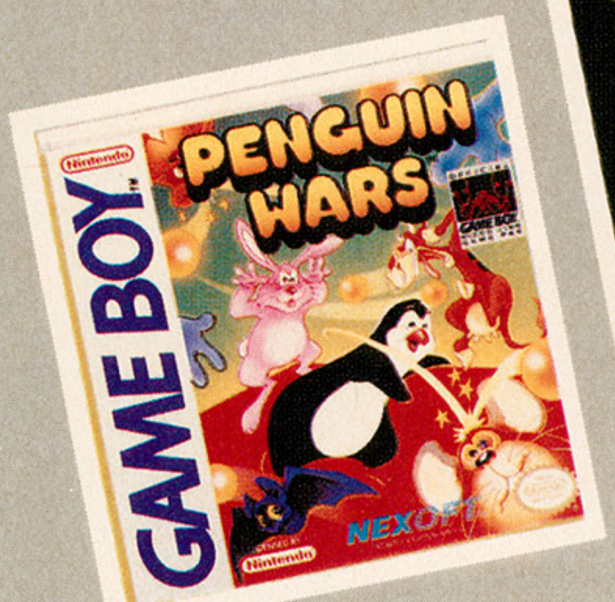

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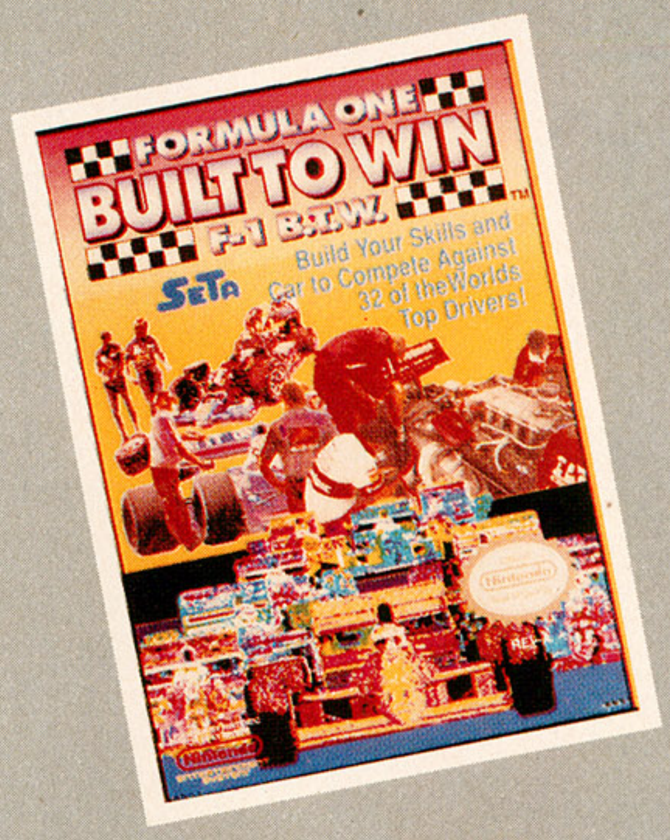

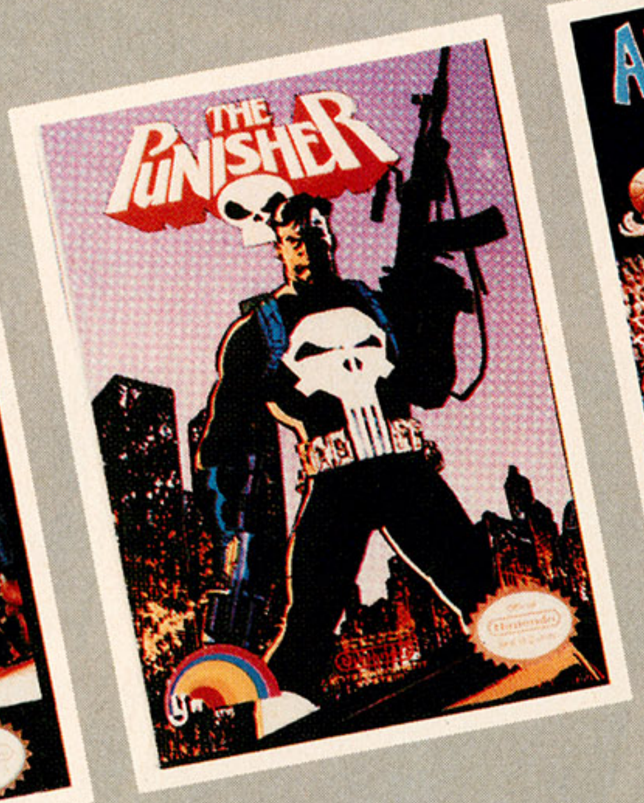

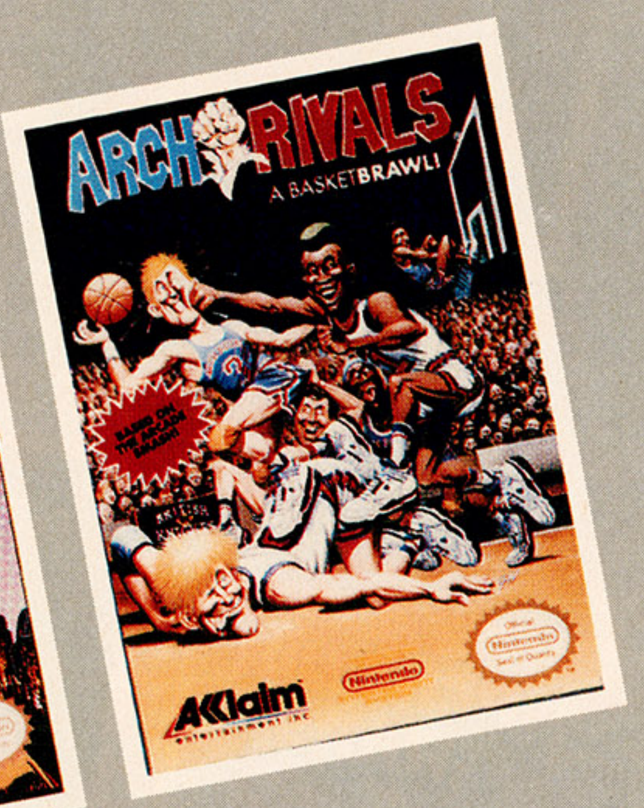

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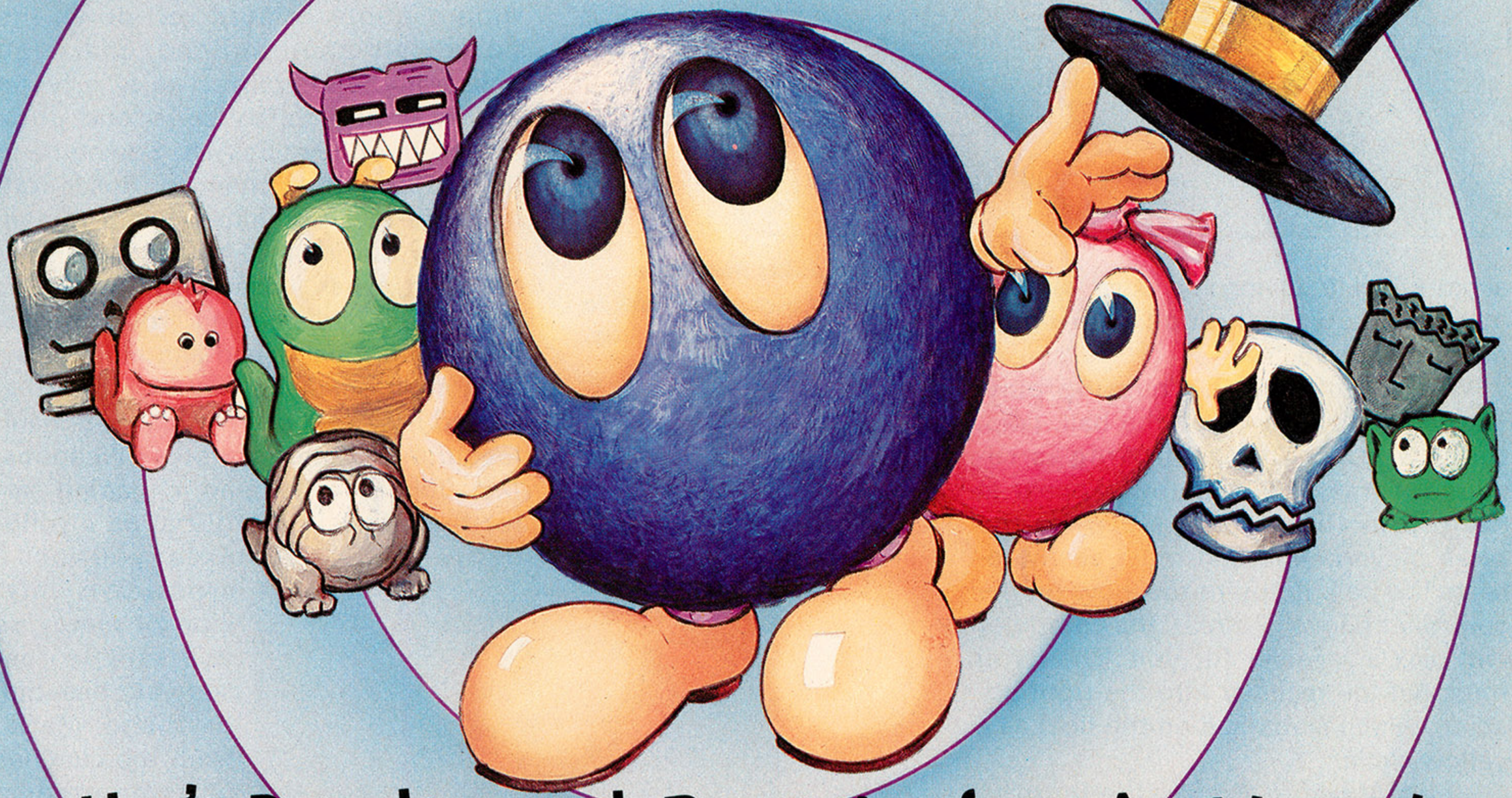
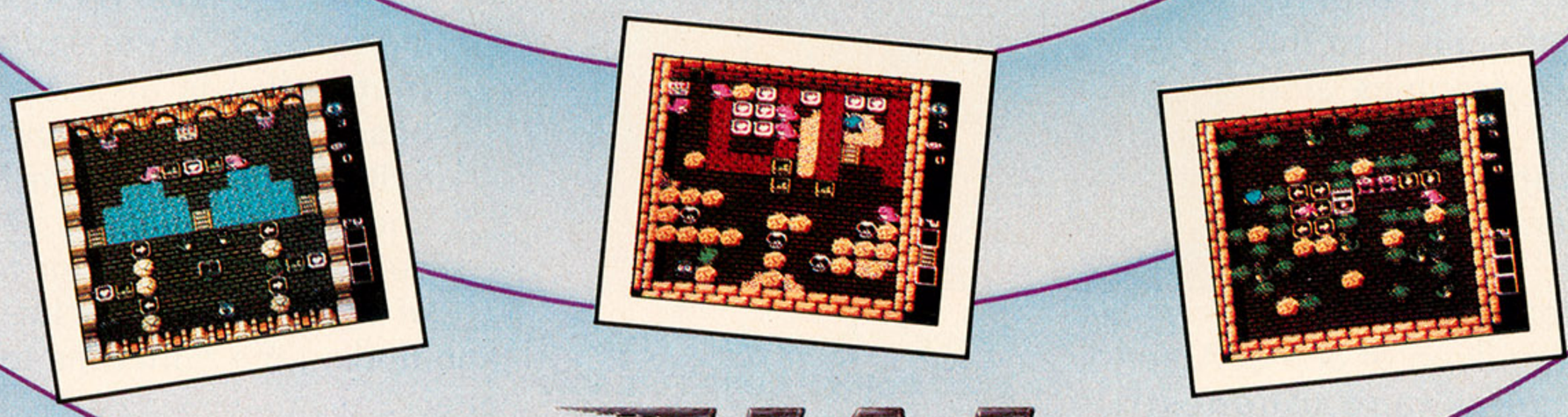
LOLO 2



He's Back and Ready for Action!

Our hero Lolo has charmed, enchanted, and confounded puzzle-loving game players around the world with his unfailing courage and plucky persistence–and now he's off for his second quest! Join forces with Lolo and his faithful sidekick Lala for another journey full of puzzles and pitfalls. Praised by players, critics and educators alike, the Lolo series teaches logical thinking and patience without sacrificing the fun! Improved graphics, increased difficulty, and new tricks and techniques will keep you guessing through every fun-filled moment. A game for mental giants of all ages. *Available March, 1990.*



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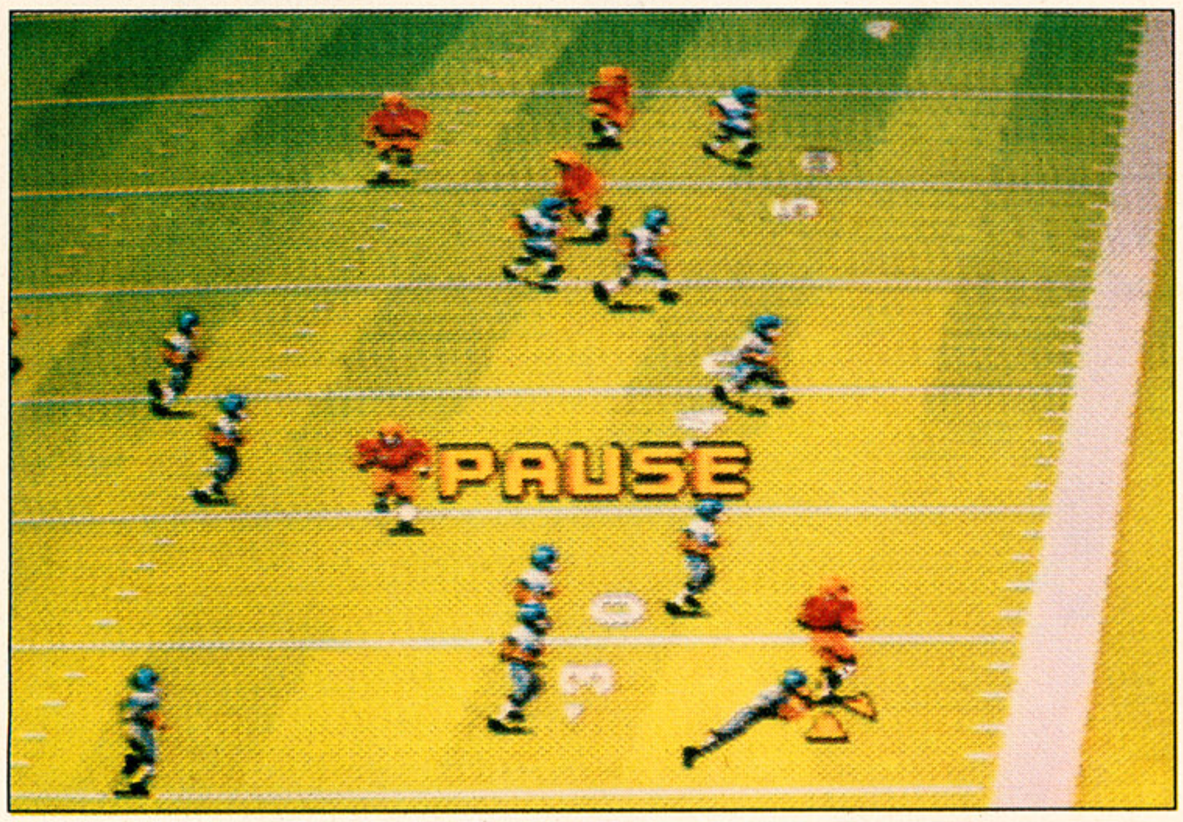


avoid a tackle, diving for extra yardage or trying to blast through your opponent's defensive line.

When you control a passing play, you really have to be on the ball. (Yep, that's a pun.) Quick thinking is required: Three small windows appear at the top of the screen, showing the three players who can most easily receive the ball. If you're too slow on the controller (Quick! Think!), the computer will pick a receiver for you. Then you must get the receiver into the right position, which is marked on the field as a yellow circle.

John Madden Football's lengthy manual is loaded with football jargon, which makes it difficult to understand if you're not up on all the pigskin lingo. However, the glossary in the back supplies explanations for most of the terms employed.

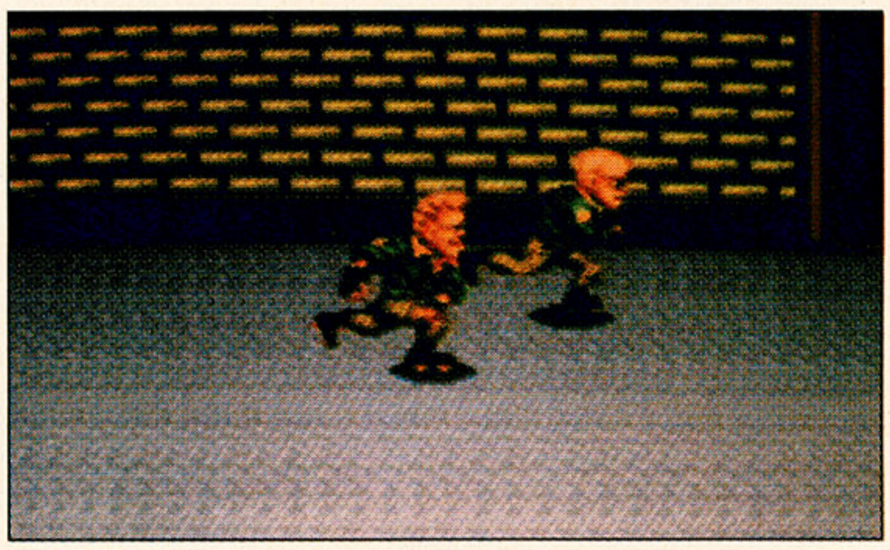
The music is nothing special, but the sound effects—cheering crowds, digitized voices and the agonized grunts of the players—add a lot of realism to the simulation. The graphics also are well-done, showing the playing field from various perspectives, depending upon the current play.

John Madden Football is a fine electronic rendition of one of America's most popular (and toughest!) sports. Even video aficionados not into sports will get a kick out of it.

—Clayton Walnum

Electronic Arts
P.O. Box 7578
San Mateo, CA 94403-7578
(800) 245-4525

All of *John Madden Football's* elements add to the realism the game has, which includes cheering crowds and the agonized grunts of the players.



Brought from the arcades to your home, Kaneko's *D.J. Boy* is a challenging, engaging cart for the Genesis.

D.J. Boy

KANEKO SEISAKUSHO
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

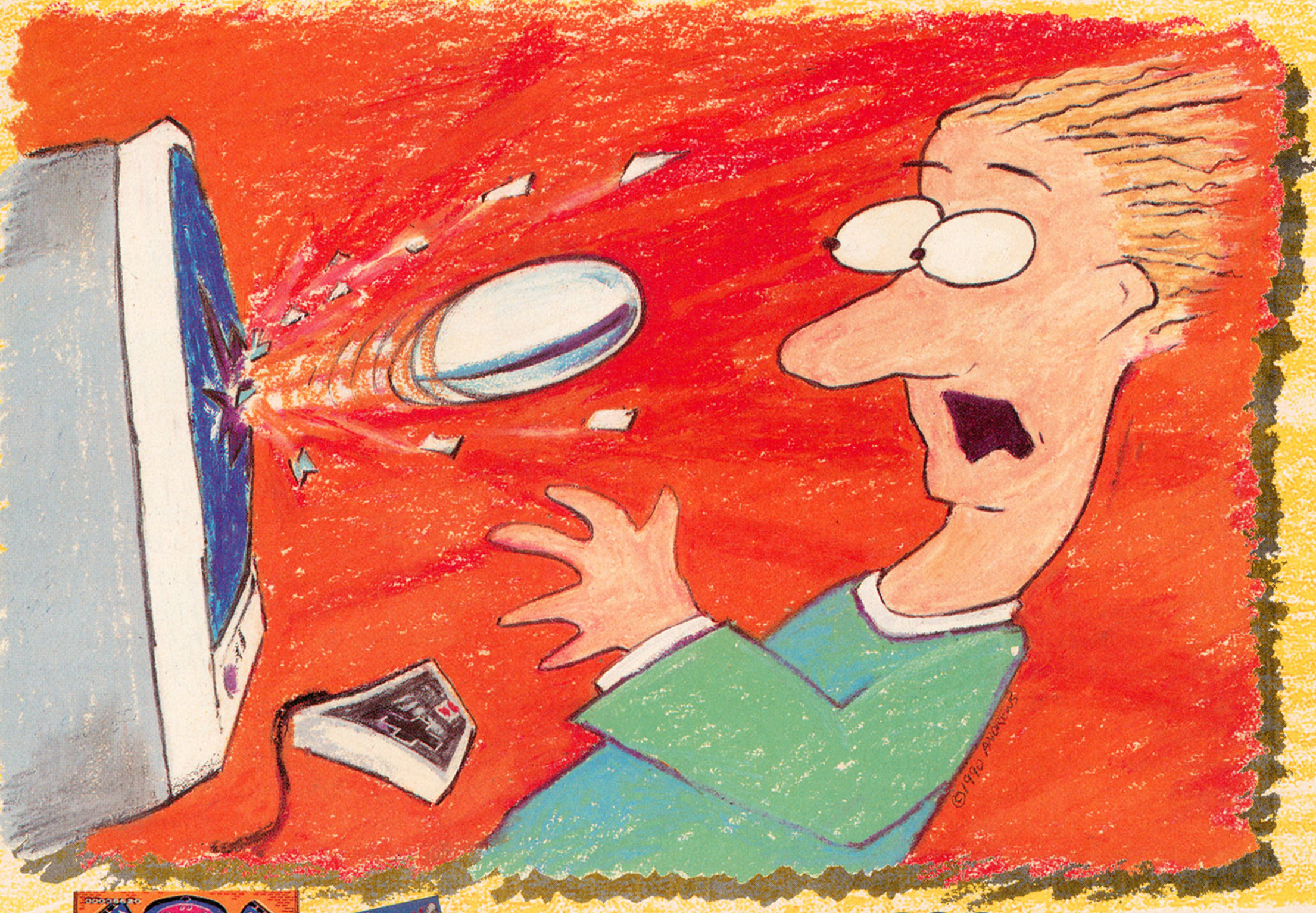
Back in the good old days, roller-skating was a wonderful, peaceful little pastime. Couples would roll down the boardwalk hand-in-hand, charming passersby, and waitresses at drive-in diners would deftly swirl and glide among the Chevy BelAirs. Sometime in the 1970s, all that changed. Roller-skating, instead of remaining just a romantic fancy, turned into a rough-and-tumble sport, where roller-derby daredevils showed off by careening around pedestrians with great speed and little regard for human existence.

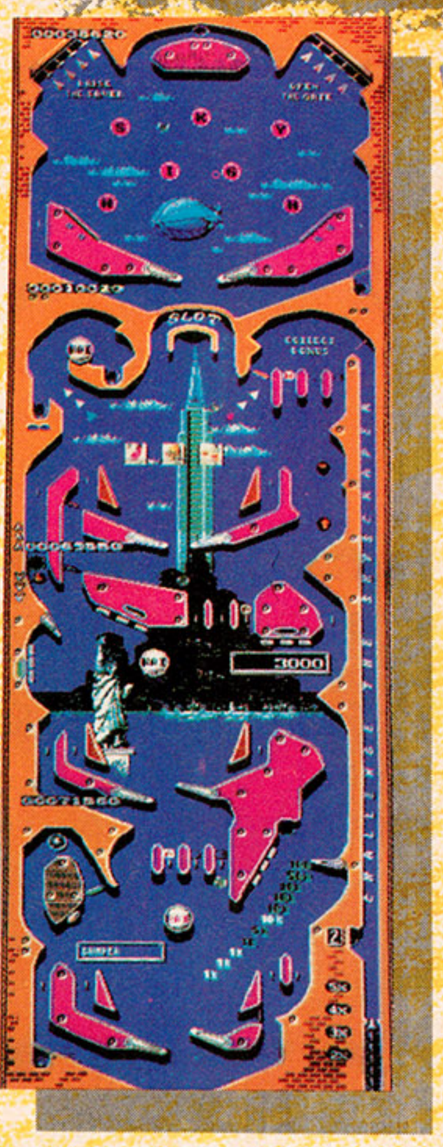
And now we have the ultimate manifestation of roller skates as weapons: *D.J. Boy*, a challenging, engaging cart for the Genesis. As brutal as a roller derby, *D.J. Boy* takes you on a crosstown mission of mercy as you seek to rescue your beautiful girlfriend, Maria, from the clutches of an enormous, powerful street punk. As you see her being spirited away, you don your skates and take off in pursuit—shades of *Double Dragon*!

Unfortunately, you're not the only one on wheels. Between you and the girl are level upon level of skating ruffians. At the end of each level (naturally) is an ultra-tough bad boss. These musclebound freaks inevitably have a much longer "lifeline" than yours, so you'll need to develop a strategy for tackling each of them, usually a lot of dodging and finding the right time to sneak in an attack.

Every time you successfully defeat an opponent (if you want, you can simply evade some of them), one or more coins rolls out of his or her pocket. If you're quick enough, you can sweep it or them up. Certain skaters also have hamburgers that restore your lifeline. In

COMIN' AT YA!





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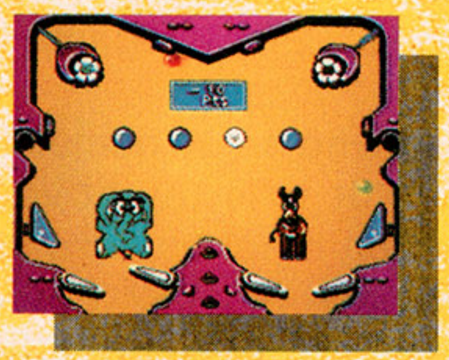
The pinball game of the '50s meets the technology of the '90s! ROLLERBALL brings you two exciting new games in one. SKYSCRAPER—A four-screen, vertical-scrolling pinball tour-de-force guaranteed to challenge any player, beginner or pinball wizard! MATCHPLAY—Fast-paced head-to-head competition with a few twists you've never seen before! The electronic pinball game with true pinball flipper feel and ball action! The only thing it won't do is TILT!



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From the makers of REVENGE OF THE 'GATOR

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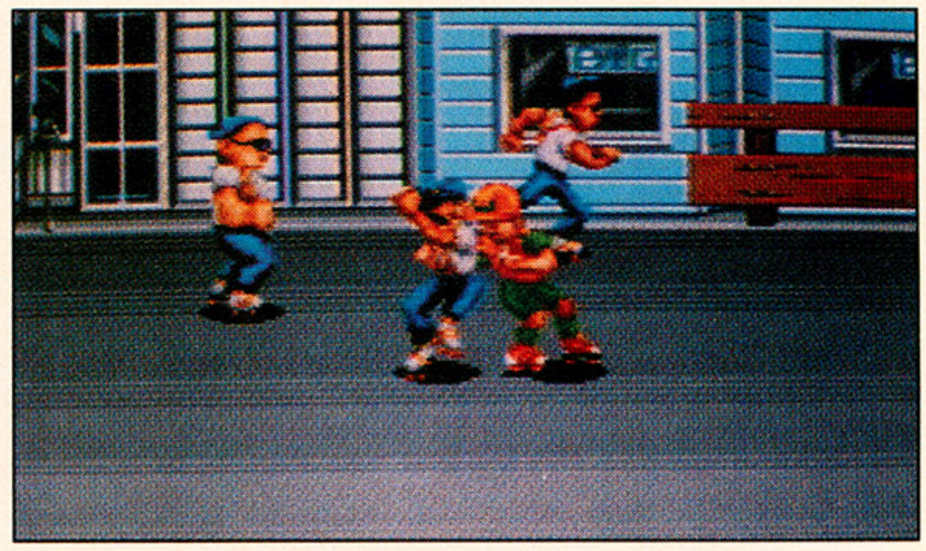
between each level, you make a quick stop at an item shop. The shops are stocked with various objects and enhancements, such as quicker skates, greater punching ability, restoration of your lifeline and expensive mystery items. It's to your advantage to kill as many enemies as possible so you'll have enough cash to buy out the store.

D.J. Boy is a single-player game only. Other than choosing an easy or normal difficulty level—and the easy level isn't much easier than normal—the only options are sound and music tests. Then, after a brief slide-show introduction setting up the plot, the game begins.

Similar to *Double Dragon*, *D.J. Boy* mixes martial-arts action with the fast pace of roller-skating and the constant onslaught of enemies.



There isn't much to complain about. The graphics are bright and colorful, which is something Genesis games have lacked somewhat in the past. The figures (new ones are added each level) are very large, detailed, carefully shaded and extremely well-animated. The backgrounds, also different from level to level, are just a bit more simple than you might expect, but they scroll beautifully in several levels. Each level also brings new obstacles, and because the game scrolls rapidly, you'll need to make some frantic adjustments in strategy.

The music and sound effects aren't noteworthy, but they're bouncy and lively and perfectly in step with the game's personality. The game play is solid; there are enough interesting offensive moves that it takes a while to learn to apply them effectively, but not so many moves that the game becomes frustrating.

For those who enjoy games like *Double Dragon*, or who might've enjoyed *Last Battle* had it not been so stiffly animated, slow and flat, *D.J. Boy* is clearly a superior game. It's more difficult than most Genesis games, and certain details have been changed from the Japanese version for what's perceived as a more tasteful American sensibility. That's a shame, because the Japanese version has a few truly comical turns that I'll miss in the American version.

—Joshua Mandel

Kaneko Seisakusho Company
2421 205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 320-7167

Conquest of the Crystal Palace

ASMIK
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

To get an idea of what *Conquest of the Crystal Palace* has in store, consider Kergen, the towering, scowling figure who appears on the game box (and in television commercials, by the time you read this.) He's ominous enough to serve as the last "boss" character in any arcade adventure. Yet, he's nothing more than the boss of Level 2 in *Conquest*. By the time you reach the true "big boss" (the gruesome King Zaras, whose appearance defies description), you will have experienced one of the year's best NES games.

As the brave Prince Farron, you'll jump and slash your way through Zaras' goons with the help of your dog, Zap. If your sword isn't enough to defeat some of the tougher creatures, just summon Zap and let him finish them off. And if you can obtain a certain item, you'll be able to send Zap into a frenzy of pouncing and jaw-snapping, a whirlwind of rabid aggression that really comes in handy when you're in a jam. Sic 'em, boy!

By the time you get to the gruesome King Zaras in Asmik's *Conquest of the Crystal Palace*, you will have experienced one of the year's best NES games.

Conquest of the Crystal Palace has some wonderful background music, good enough to be noticeable, but not overpowering enough to be annoying. It isn't just that the quality of the sound is good—although that's certainly true—it's the composition of the melodies that makes the music great. Pick a level, and I can whistle the

J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Lord of the Rings™ Vol. I

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–Video Games & Computer Entertainment

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–Computer Gaming World

Combining the best elements of role-playing and graphic adventures, The Lord of the Rings, Vol. I uses stunning full screen, top-down, 256 color VGA graphics, smooth four directional scrolling, digitized sound, an easy to use point-and-click icon interface, and an off-line paragraph system to bring the depth of the true Tolkien experience to life via the computer.

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–Info Magazine

Interplay Productions presents the first role-playing computer game encompassing the epic fantasy world of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. Players journey through a world inhabited by hobbits, elves, dwarves, and wizards, falling in and out of the clutches of wolves, wargs, trolls, orcs, and ghosts, all the while protecting the one true ring from falling into the grasp of the evil Lord Sauron and his Dark Riders.

IBM screens pictured.

Interplay™

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To order The Lord Of the Rings, Vol. I, call 1-800-969-GAME. Available on MS-DOS for $54.95. Amiga coming soon.

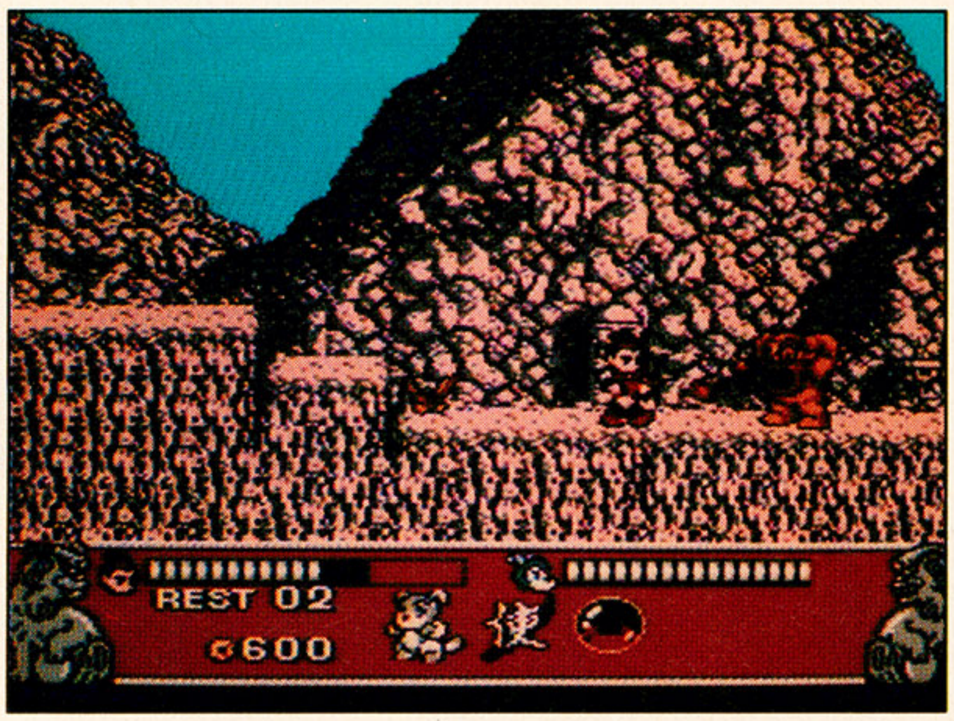
The program is published with the cooperation of the Tolkien Estate and their publishers, George Allen & Unwin (publishers) Ltd. The plot of The Lord of the Rings, the characters of the Hobbits, and the other characters from The Lord of the Rings are © George Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd. 1966 1974 1978 1985 © 1990 Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. MS-DOS is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

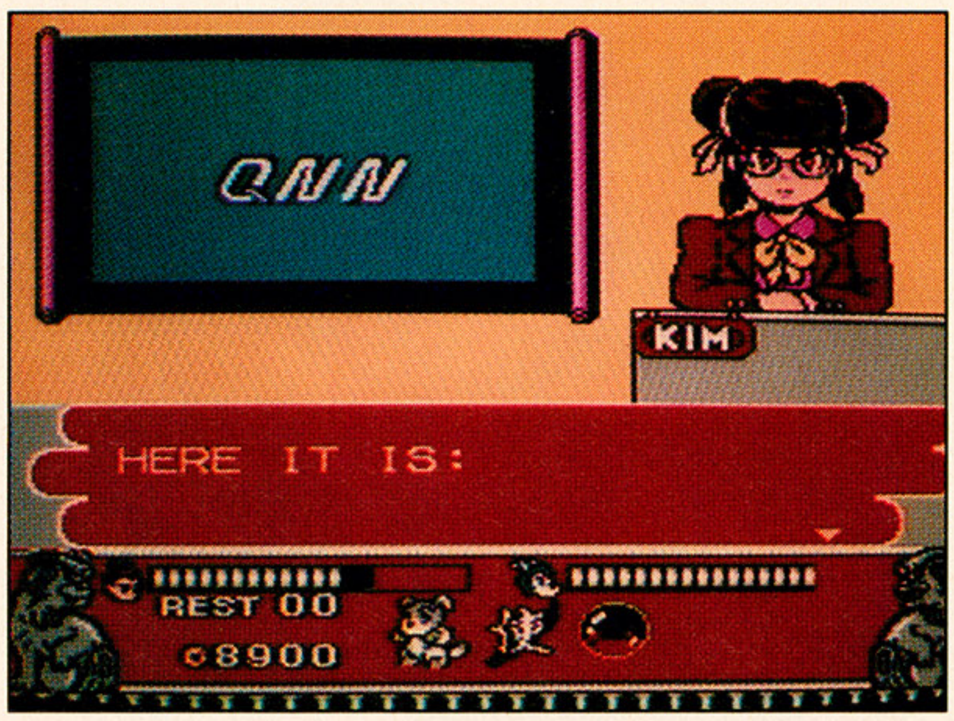
theme that plays during that particular scenario. That type of "hook" is rare in a video game. The graphics are also nicely done, with detailed backgrounds and well-defined characters.

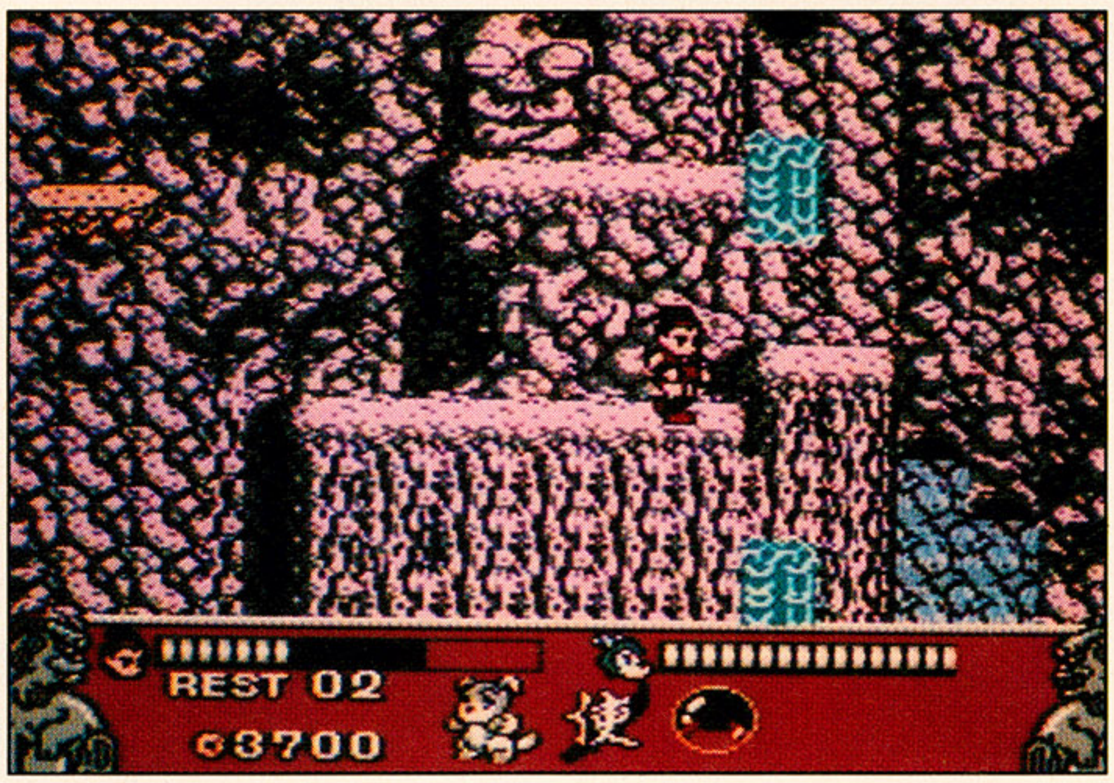
Your enemies are a mixed bag of flying nasties, jumping swordsmen, vicious plants, floating eyeballs and hulking stone creatures. Each one attacks differently, and combat is complicated by other distractions like flying arrows, bouncing boulders and sliding hands that grab Farron's feet and try to pull him into the bottomless pits that permeate the Palace.

Conquest of the Crystal Palace combines the charisma of Super Mario Bros. with the intensity of Ninja Gaiden.



And then there's Kim, the beautiful girl who appears at various points in the game to sell Farron different weapons and power-up items. She's the most schizophrenic video-game character in recent memory. In addition to her shopkeeper persona, she also stands in front of a blackboard to explain the functions of the more powerful weapons in her shop and sits behind a desk as an anchorperson to read otherworldly reports from such places as the "Lair of Hungry Ghosts News Bureau," for one. If you make a lot of purchases in her shop, she smiles and calls you a "big spender" or even "good-looking"—but if you try to buy items you can't afford, watch out! For proof of her mental instability, look no further than Level 4, where she stands calmly in the middle of a furious, blazing inferno and welcomes the Prince with a hearty and heartfelt "Hi!"





Kim's unpredictable nature notwithstanding, Prince Farron has one heck of an exciting time as he attempts to conquer the Crystal Palace, and so will you. There's something special about this game that I just can't put my finger on. It's probably the rich, moody atmosphere that keeps me coming back for more. Some gamers may not appreciate the balance between cartoonish characters and serious scenarios, but I like the way *Conquest* combines the charisma of *Super Mario Bros.* with the intensity of *Ninja Gaiden*. The result is a fun game that's hard to put down.

—Chris Bieniek

Asmik Corporation of America
50 North La Cienega Blvd., Suite 214
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(213) 854-9774

Ultimate Basketball

AMERICAN SAMMY
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

After one look at American Sammy's *Ultimate Basketball*, I became convinced that there's some sort of video-game admiration society between the designers of this game, Vic Tokai's *All-Pro Basketball* and Jaleco's *Hoops*. Jaleco denies it and it makes sense that the similarities between its game and Vic Tokai's could be the result of one imitating the other. But it's obvious that *Ultimate Basketball* has some *very* close ties to *All-Pro*, right down to the intermission screens and musical themes, which are similar enough to seem like they're from the same game.

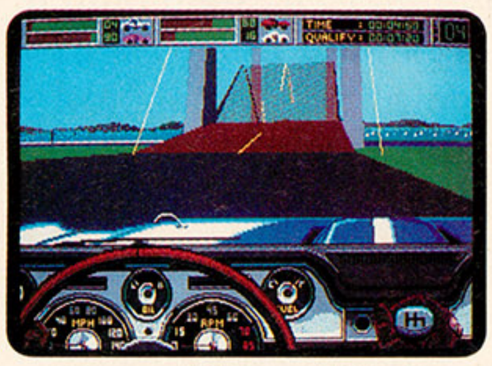
The link between these titles is not a drawback; in fact, *Ultimate Basketball* is much improved. It's as if the designers of *All-Pro* learned a lot from that game and decided to fix any mistakes they may have made the first time around. The court is shown from the side now, and there are numerous graphic surprises that are strikingly well-done. The constant improvement in the overall quality of NES games seems to have pushed this game ahead of the pack.

ALL THE FUN OF REAL STUNT RACING WITHOUT THE BRUISES

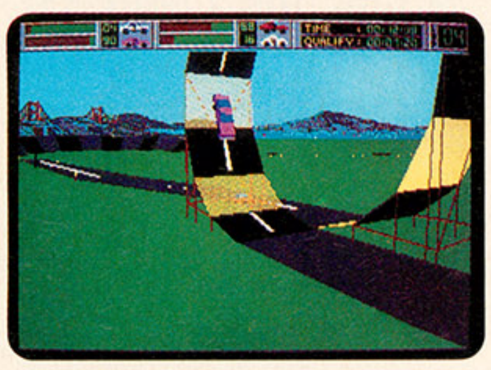
Road etiquette? Forget it!

Get ready for the wildest, most daring stunt driving experience this side of Hollywood. Slip behind the wheel of this classic '66 Shelby Mustang and buckle up for chills and thrills. You'll soon be zipping through the loop-the-loop, twisting through a corkscrew jump, and flying over death-defying ramps.

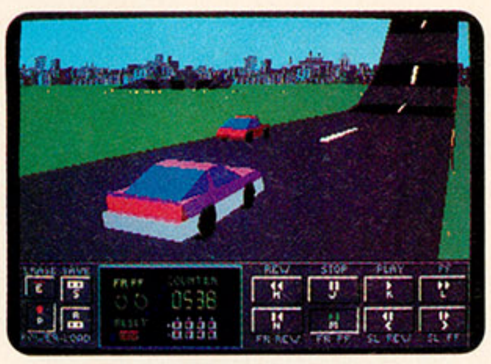
To add to the frenzy, there are other aggressive competitors trying to nudge you off the road, cut you off at a jump, and generally damage your Shelby beyond repair. The excitement escalates as you advance in level of difficulty and take on more challenging courses. With five pre-designed courses and a "construction editor" which allows you to create your own, you'll never tire of the thrill of the chase.



Down shift and hit the gas! You'll need plenty of speed to clear that open drawbridge!



You can almost feel the gut-wrenching G-forces from the loop.



The recorder mode plays back the action from numerous camera sites.

And when you're ready for the big thrill, hook up head-to-head and race against a buddy on another computer.

Multiple view perspectives allow you to see from any angle. Recap all the excitement with the video instant replay. In VCR mode you can rewind, fast forward, pause and view frame by frame. For those sequences you want to review at a later date, save to disk and load them as you desire.

With amazingly realistic 3-D graphics and true-to-life sounds, Stunt Driver delivers all the action of real stunt driving. Everything, that is, but the bruises. So grab your helmet and race to your favorite retailer to be first at the starting line for Stunt Driver!

Available for IBM in CGA, EGA, VGA/MCGA and Tandy.

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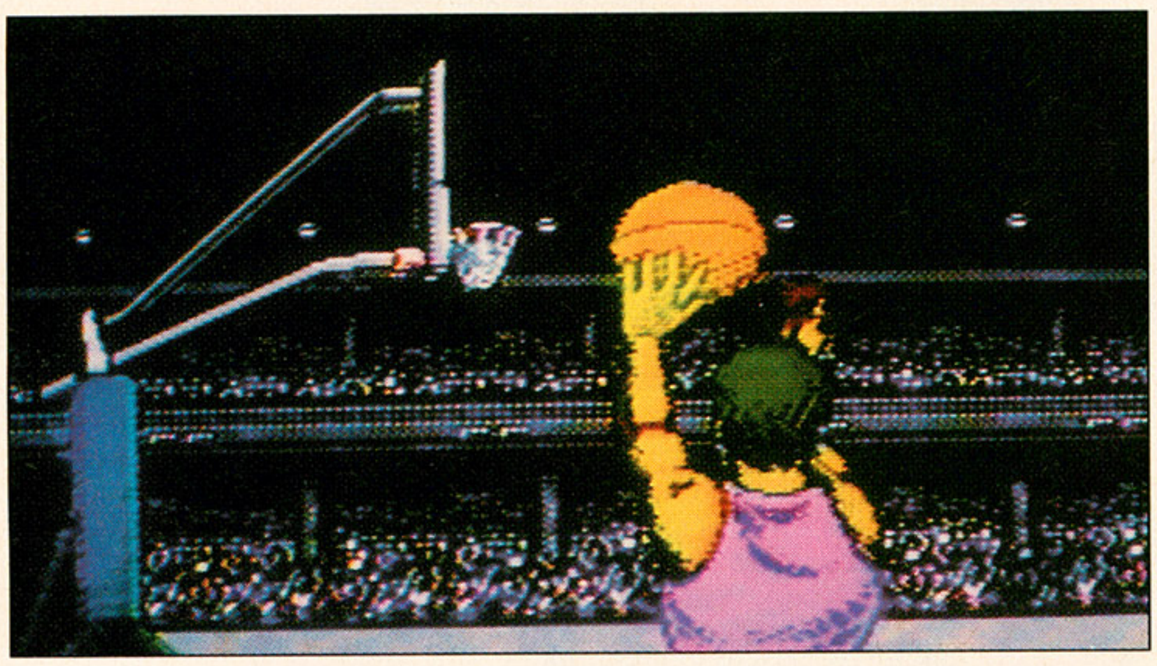
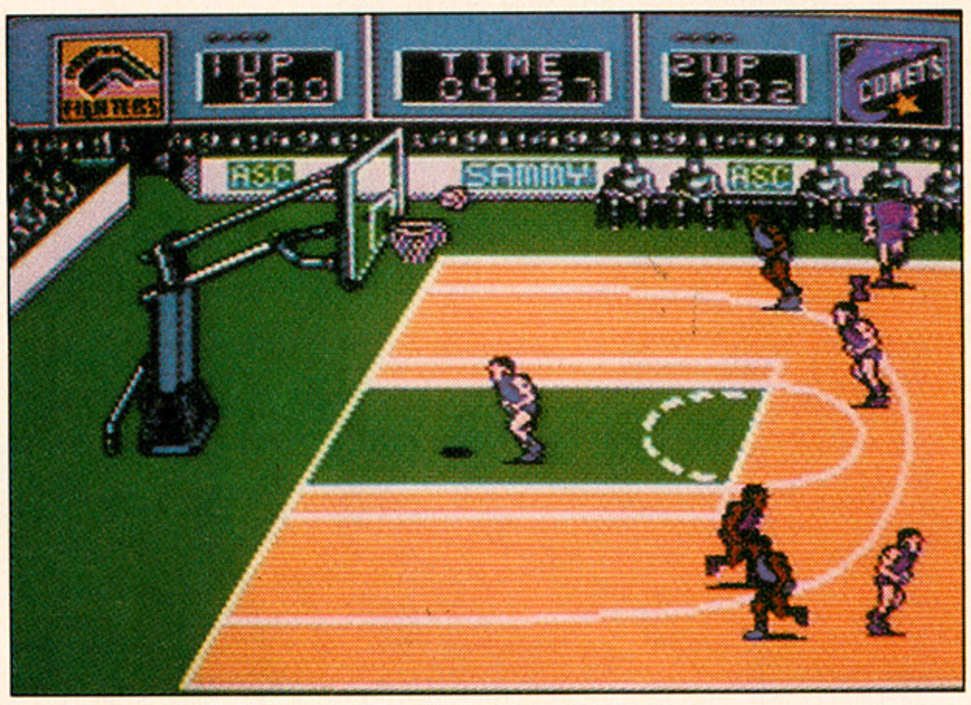
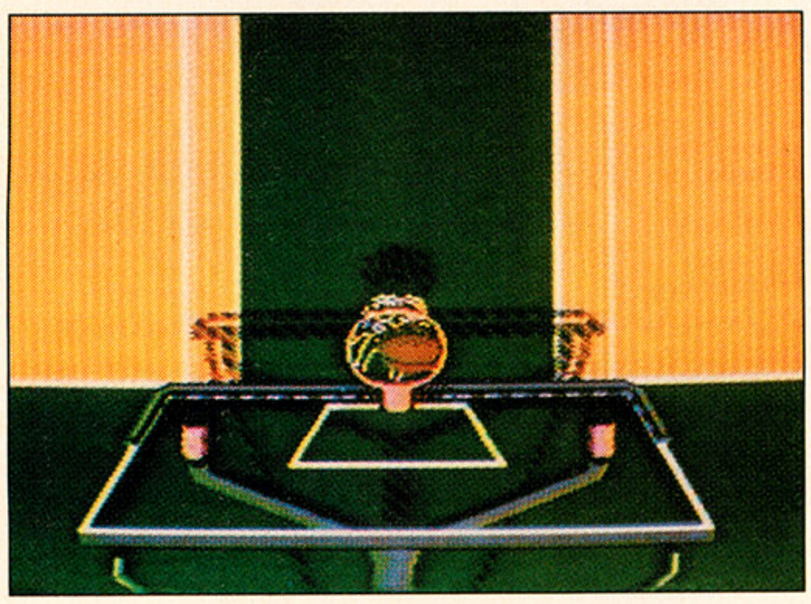
Seven teams make up the *Ultimate Basketball* league, and you can participate in a championship tournament if you don't mind the lack of a "continue" password. One or two players can challenge the computer, or two players can compete against each other. Some of the teams specialize in certain skills, and these strengths can be adjusted during the game by using the fully detailed player substitution menus to shuffle the lineups and replace tired players.

Game play is brisk and realistic, with most of the rules of professional roundball left intact. The number of fouls called seems high, but it's only because previous basketball video games had fewer fouls per game than the real-life average. Best of all, the full-screen animation that shows close-ups of free throws, slam-dunks and three-pointers is magnificent, rivaling some 16-bit basketball titles.



There's an innovative "extra" that makes the detailed, full-color slam-dunk sequences even more remarkable: a "shot meter" requires you to press the "B" button at a specific instant in order to put the ball in. If you attempt to block your opponent's shot in one of these close-ups, you can extend your reach by pressing that same button. It's a nice change from the similar (but non-interactive) scenes in earlier cartridges.





Many will consider American Sammy's *Ultimate Basketball* the best basketball simulation to date for the NES.

The biggest problem with *Ultimate Basketball* is distressingly common in sports video games (and it's one of my editor's pet peeves): The computer is just too tough for the casual player to beat. Granted, it shouldn't be easy to trounce the computer in a one-player contest...but *Ultimate Basketball* allows you to set a difficulty level, and the NES can beat the pants off many players at the easiest setting. The high-speed action is primarily responsible for this imbalance; some players can actually outrace the ball. When you're trying to inbound the ball after you've given up a basket, it's not uncommon for an opposing player to chase after your pass and catch up to it, snatching it out of the air from behind before it can reach your teammate! It is possible to defeat the computer, though: Near the end of a game, computer-controlled players will slow down and miss free throws just like anybody else, and some will even foul out.

There are a couple of minor omissions that keep *Ultimate Basketball* from truly living up to its title. But I consider it to be the best basketball simulation currently available for the NES.

—C. B.

American Sammy Corporation
2421 205th St., Suite D-104
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 320-7167

MegaMan 3

CAPCOM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

This third entry in the popular *MegaMan* series from Capcom isn't going to set records for originality, graphics or

continued on page 53

CROSS TRAINING CAVEMAN STYLE!

Dino-Vaulting "Me do Dino Vault so bully Gronk no call me cave-girl no more. Also hope Crudla watch me - she one cave-babe!" - Vincent

Sabertooth Tiger Race "Race not easy. Hungry sabertooth chase me. But me use competitor as shield. Better him - cat food than me kitty litter." - Glunk

Clubbing "Me love bashing - have best club. Cavemen head only thing harder than club. But hard to aim with head. So use club." - Gronk

Mate Toss "Me know best way to handle mate - by feet. Grab mate by feet and spin, spin, spin - then let go. Make world record." - Crudla

Dino Race "Me best dino jockey. Before race, tell dino he no win, me make dino steaks for dinner - and he guest of honor. He run good." - Ugha

Firestarting "Firestarting easy. Rub sticks make spark. Me make big fire - stay warm. Too warm - fire burn clothes. Then me learn firestopping." - Thag

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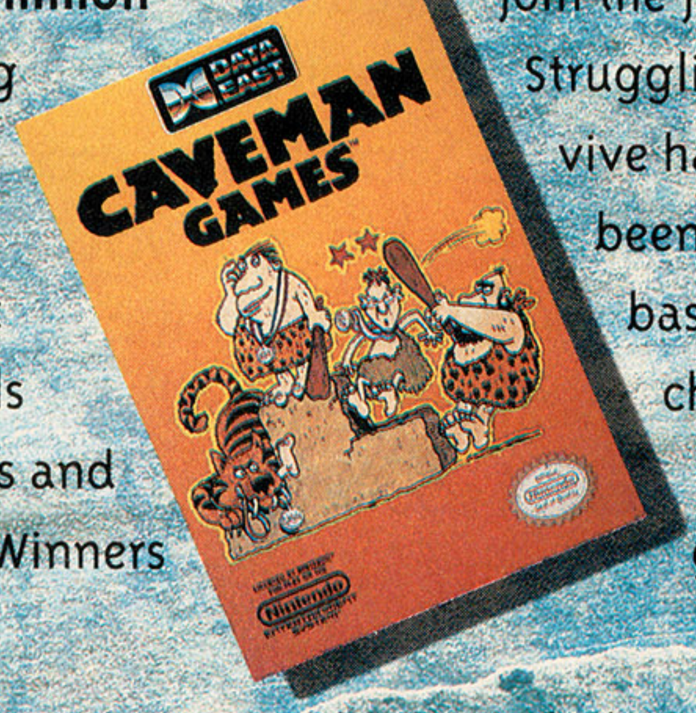

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GENESI
WHAT NIN

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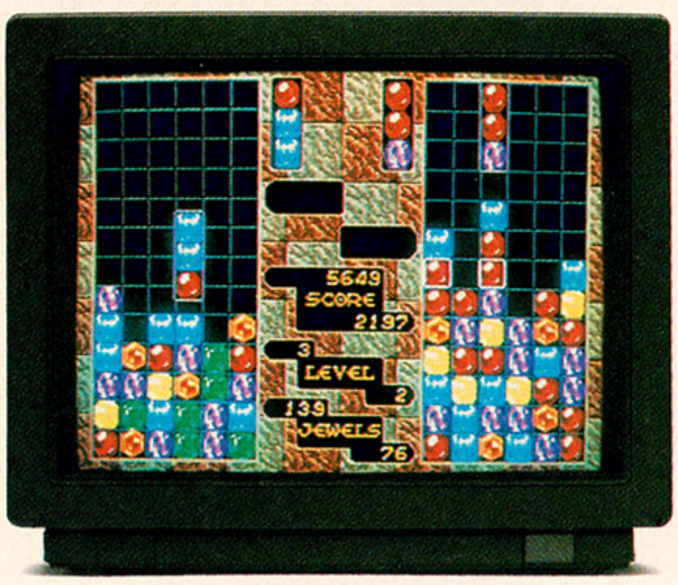
Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™

E-SWAT™

ADVENTURE GAMES:

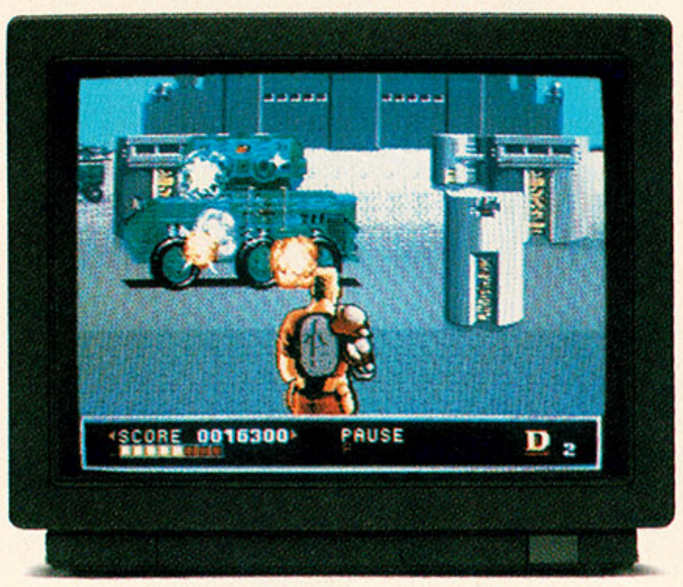
The Sword of Vermilion™

STRATEGY GAMES:



Columns™

ACTION GAMES:



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Get the hottest new video games going. Arcade, sports, adventure, strategy and action hits available only on the 16-bit Genesis System by Sega.™

Today's latest blockbuster arcade hits like Super Monaco GP.™ Climb into the cockpit of the world's fastest Grand Prix machines as you race wheel to wheel through the streets at over two-hundred miles per hour. Or take on the evil villain Mr. Big in Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™ as you use dance-kicks, hat-tricks and finally transform into a powerful robot that does it all. Or become a Cybercop in E-SWAT™ and clean up the city besieged by mad terrorists.

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Football,™ check out the defense, make the call, fake a pass and scramble for a touchdown. Or force your opponent to move inside your left hook and nail him with an uppercut that puts him on the mat in James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing.™ Or in Pat Riley Basketball,™ get the ball with seven seconds left in the game, drive the length of the court, slam-dunk and draw the foul which you make to break the tie.

In The Sword of Vermilion,™ make your way through 14 towns and 14 mazes in this adventure thriller where encounters with the evil demons are played in real time on the hand controller. And dazzle your friends with your skills on the puzzle game Columns.™ Or become the ultimate commando warrior in Dynamite Duke™ as you blast the enemy from an over-your-shoulder first person view.

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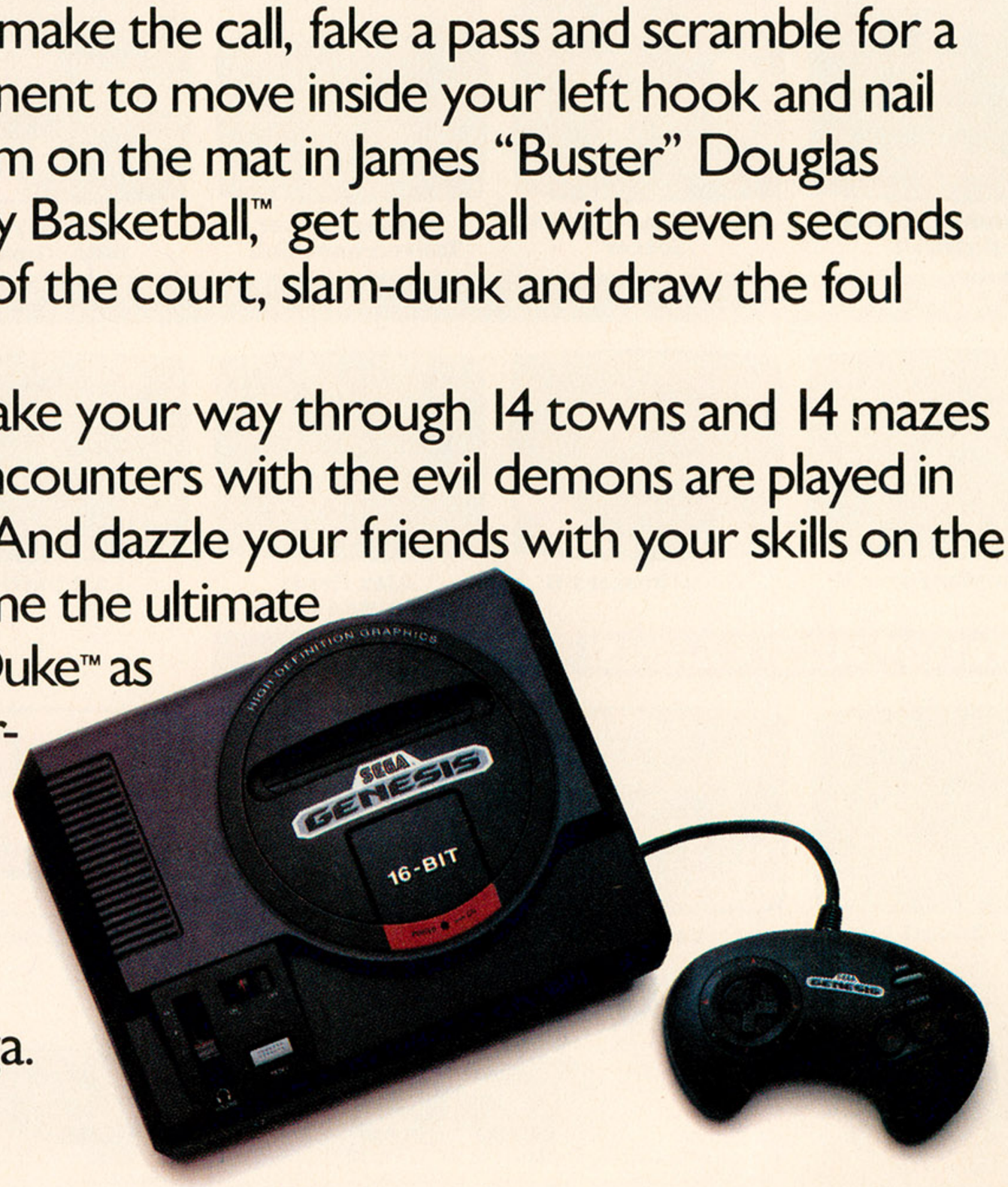

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GENESIS DOES IT ALL.

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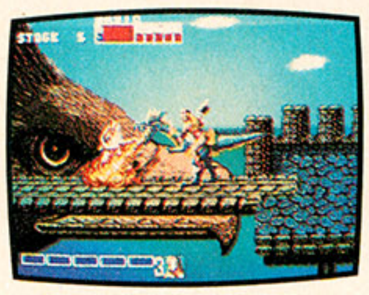
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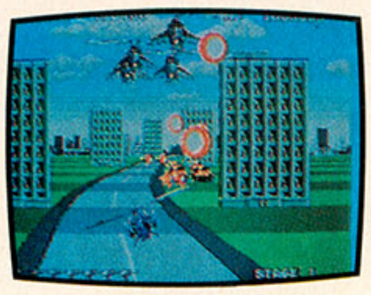
Super Hang-On™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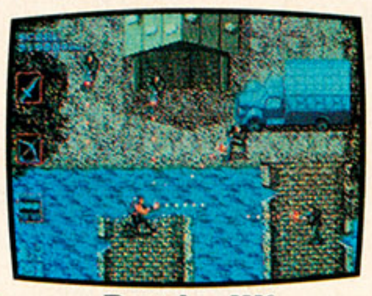
Cyberball™

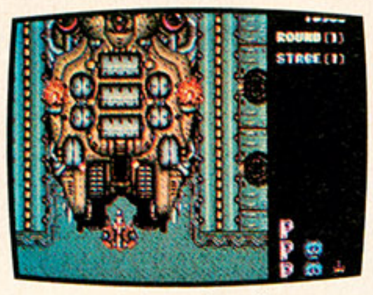
Strider™

Altered Beast™

Ghouls 'n Ghosts™

The Revenge of Shinobi™


Rambo III®



Truxton™

Forgotten Worlds™

MUSIC VIDEO:

ADVENTURE GAMES:

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E-S.W.A.T. City Under Siege™

Afterburner II™

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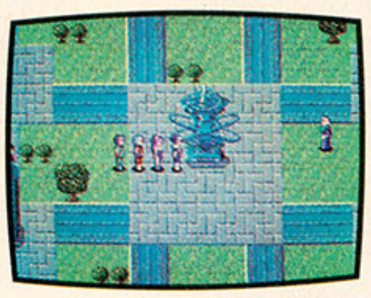
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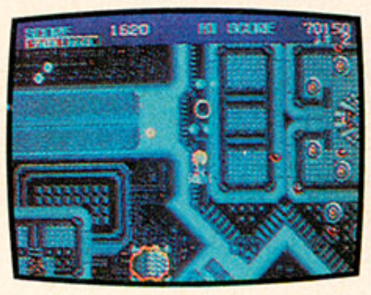
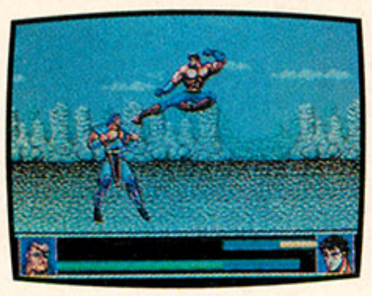
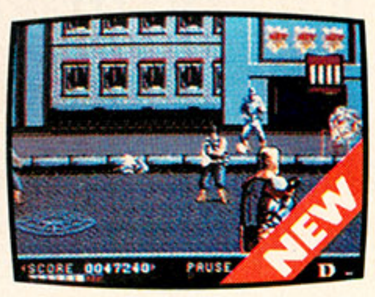

Thunder Force II™

Ghostbusters II™

Alex Kidd: Enchanted Castle™


Last Battle™

Mystic Defender™



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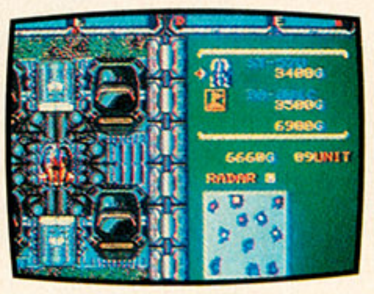
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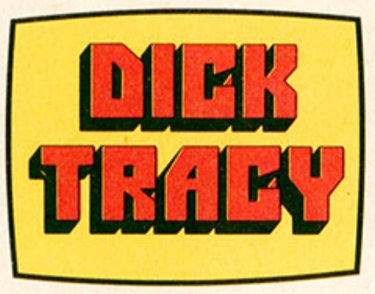

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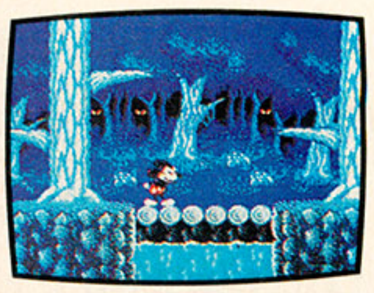
The Castle of Illusion™ Starring Mickey Mouse

SEGA™ GENESIS™

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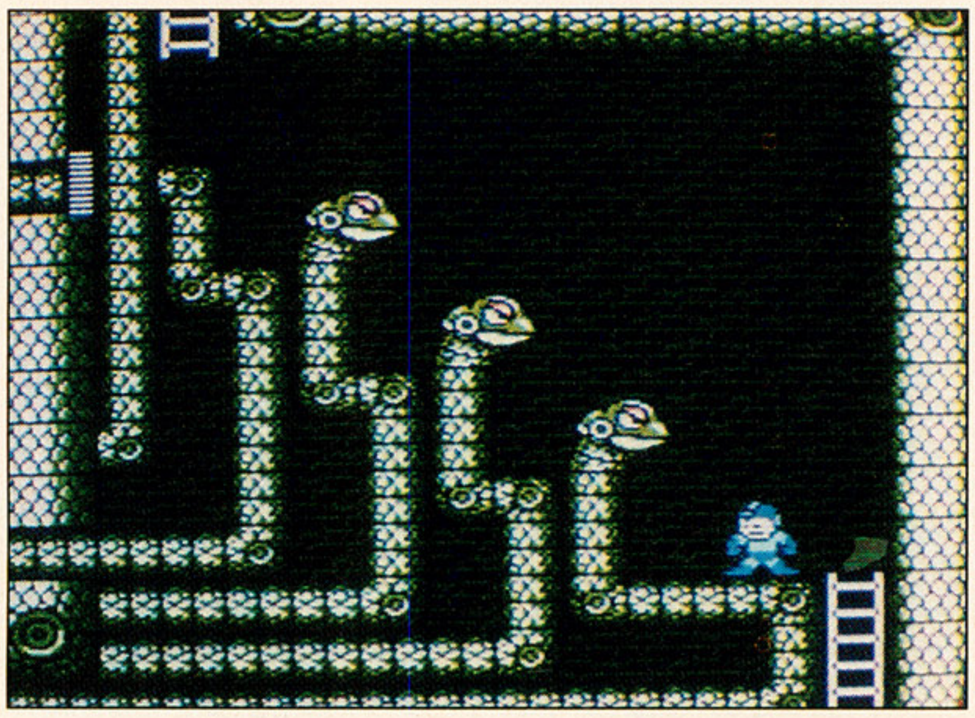
continued from page 48



game play, but it stands on its own as a clever, enjoyable game—cute and cartoonish but full of devilish little twists. No experience with the previous two games is required, though it might help you succeed in the strange, robotic world of MegaMan.

The manual devotes all of two short paragraphs to the plot, most of which will probably not make much sense if you're not caught up on the history of the earlier *MegaMan* cartridges. The overall "peace-keeping" plot (kinda laughable, given the game's subtext of "destroy everything that moves") is in its final stage. However, there are still eight energy crystals needed for the Great Peacekeeping Machine. Unfortunately, those crystals are located in the heart of each of eight mechanized mining planets. Your mission is to recover those crystals, which means destroying (or avoiding where possible) the automated defenses.

Naturally, there's one major robot to take out at the end of each of the eight levels. Each boss robot has its own particular specialty (Needle Man, Snake Man, Spark Man, Magnet Man, etc.).

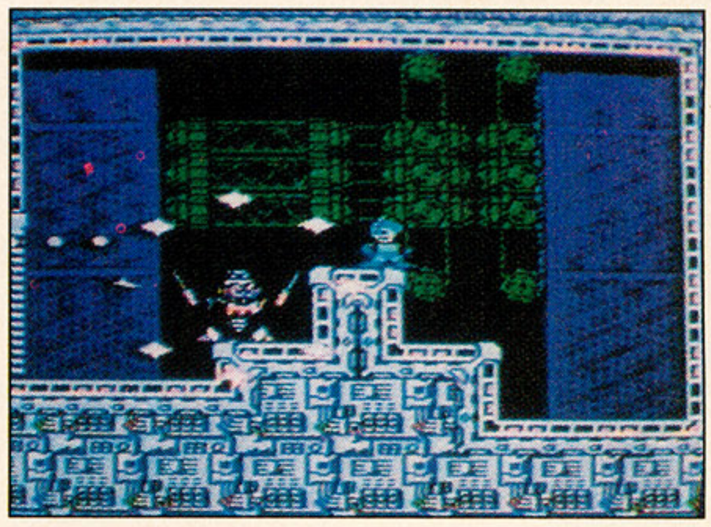
Of course, you're no ordinary videogame hero—you can do more than just run, shoot and jump. You've got the able assistance of Rush, the robot dog. Rush can be called up from your selection screen, and when you signal him, you can choose one of three "forms" for him to take: a springboard (to jump to otherwise inaccessible areas), a submarine (to allow you to move underwater), or a jet (so you can fly). Rush's AI (artificial intelligence) allows him to sense when you're done with him, so he vanishes till next time.

Another major advantage comes from your ability to assimilate the powers of the boss robots as you destroy them. Thus, by the time you reach the final boss, you'll have an armada of seven powerful weapons as well as Rush and your basic cannon. All these weapons have to be kept powered-up, of course, so you'll need to collect the various energy tanks and pellets found along the way.

Every time you annihilate one of the master robots, you'll gain a password. This will allow you to start the game with one or more of the levels already finished. One of the nice points of the game is that you can choose to start at any level you care to; they're not rated as far as difficulty goes. In fact, they're *all* fairly equal in challenge.

Capcom's *MegaMan 3* is a nifty sequel that has the usual amount of intricate puzzles, enemies and other obstacles.

There's really a wealth of clever obstacles in this game, various routes to take and alternate ways of avoiding or dealing with each problem. That's what makes this game so much fun, despite the unimpressive



graphics. In fact, the situations change so rapidly and so frequently that you don't have time to become bored with any of them or bothered by the lack of splashy graphics.

MegaMan 3 is really a nifty little game, a very familiar breed executed with more than the usual amount of well-devised puzzles and obstacles. It should serve you well, even if you've never played a *MegaMan* game before. In fact, if this game serves as your introduction to the series, you may just find yourself running back to see what the others are all about.

—J. M.

Capcom USA
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

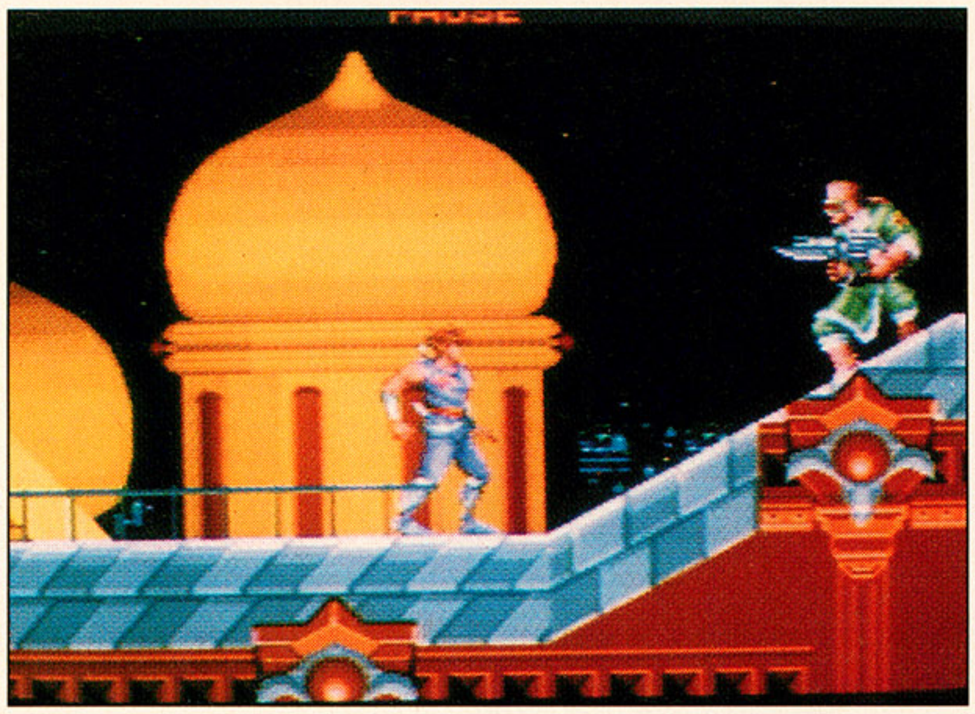
Strider

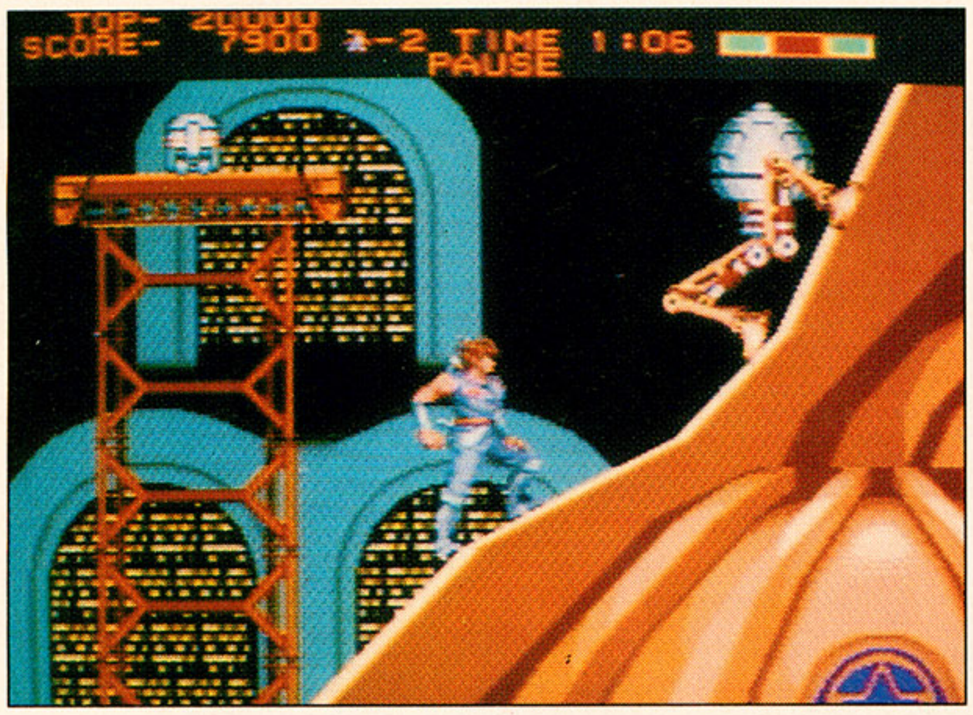
SEGA

For the Sega Genesis ($72.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

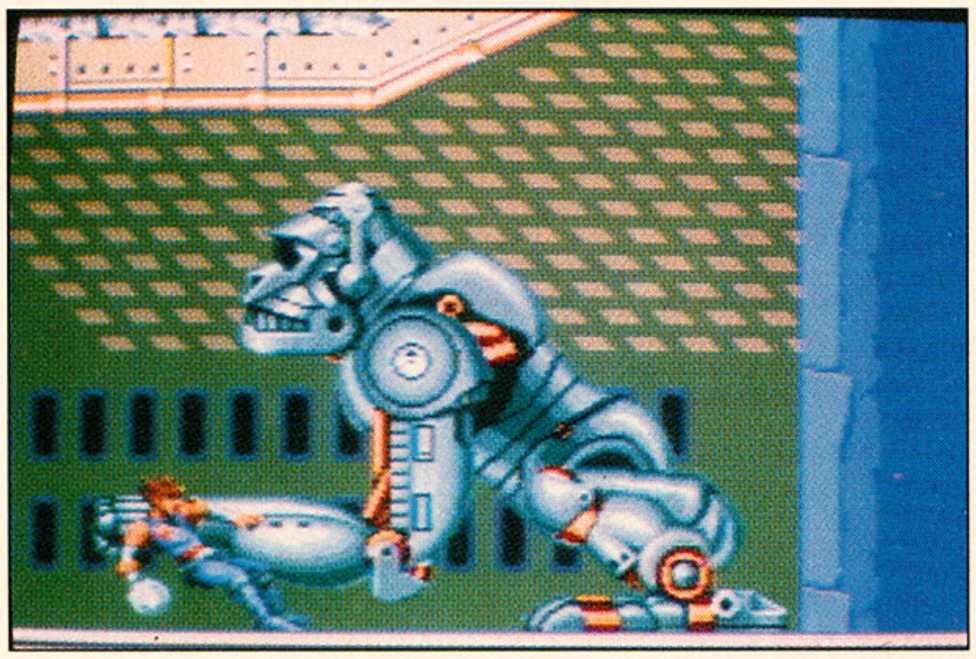
Strider has got to be one of the most eagerly anticipated Genesis carts put out. This is due to its popularity in the arcades and its promise to be one of the biggest Genesis carts to date: eight megabits (one megabyte) of code. That's not much by computer standards; today's computer games can reach up to ten megabytes or more and CD-ROM games many times that amount. But in the cart world, eight megabits is an incredible amount, and *Strider* takes full advantage of it, because it's an astounding game. The pace of the game play, the thundering sound effects and the bold, brilliant graphics make *Strider* truly an arcade-quality game.





The game's setting—immaterial, as in any pure action game—is Earth in the year 2048. The planet is besieged by the forces of Meio, the Grand Master of an alien world, who devastates Earth's population. Meanwhile, on the remote island of Moralos, one lone Strider (a defender of justice), Hiryu, is assigned the task of defeating Meio. To do so, he'll have to travel through areas where Meio's forces have set up shop: Kazafu, Siberia, the Amazon, Ballog (a flying fortress) and, finally, the space station where Meio resides.

Hiryu's chief weapon is a plasma sword, and he can wield it numerous ways. This takes practice to master, but it's fairly intuitive. Hiryu can climb at almost any angle, run, jump, do cartwheels, slide low (a very effective move) and hang off of walls, girders and so on. There are over a dozen power-up items found in containers throughout the game, including sword power-ups, life-line extenders, drone robots (including a cool robotic panther) for alternate offense and defense, extra lives, invincibility and much more.



Each of the five stages are nonlinear and bizarrely designed, forcing you to explore thoroughly in order to find your way through. The foes are immense and plentiful, requiring a lot of strategy combined with lightning-fast reflexes in order to defeat them. Moreover, the variety of enemies, their individual attack patterns and the pace at which you encounter them is dizzying. You're on a timer, so you don't have the luxury of standing around and formulating a strategy (unless you hit the pause button, but then you can't observe their attack patterns).

A major portion of the game's appeal is in its graphics. Everything is big and splashy; the bosses, for instance, are often half the size of the screen, yet fully animated and without a hint of flicker anywhere. The game scrolls in every conceivable direction in multiple layers, and at times you'll find yourself simply amazed with the complexity of the scenery. I particularly enjoyed racing down a steep hill from a very dramatic and astonishingly realistic angle, with villages visible in the distance. And as we video-game freaks often say to each other, "It blowed up *real* good!"

As one of the most anxiously awaited cartridges for the Genesis, *Strider* lives up to its billing as a hot eight-megabit action contest.

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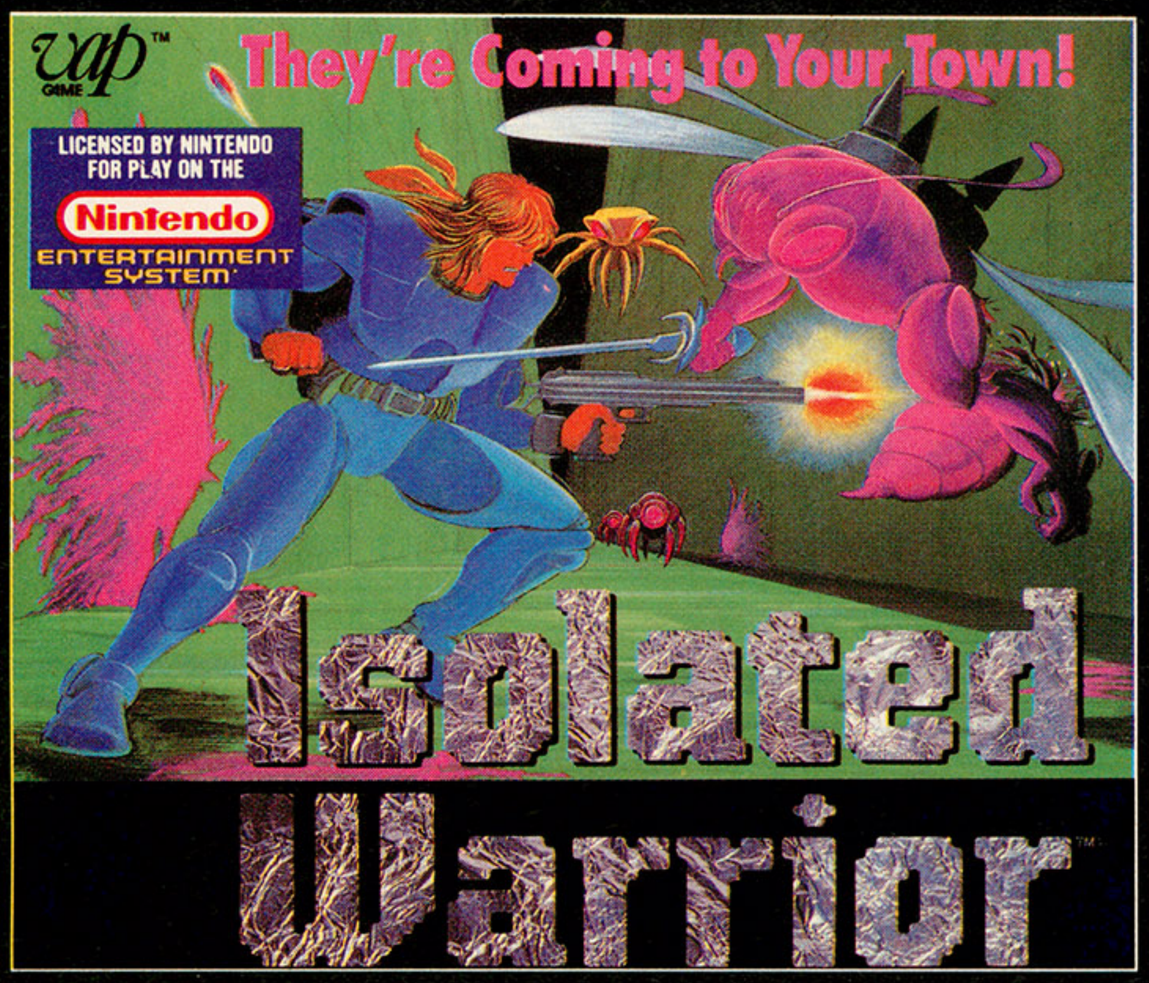
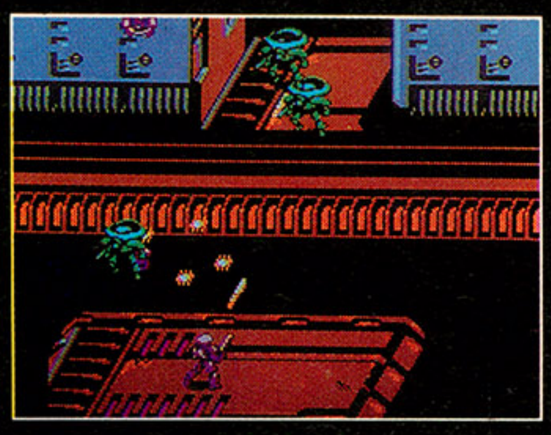
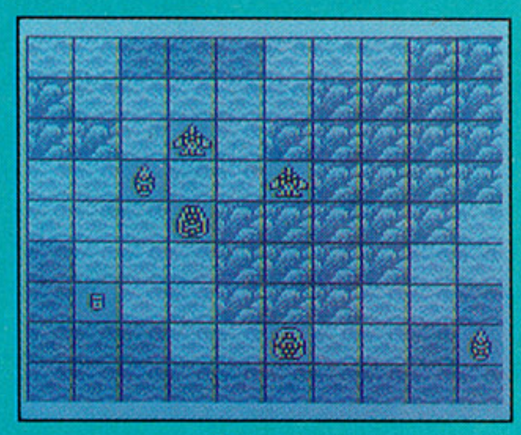
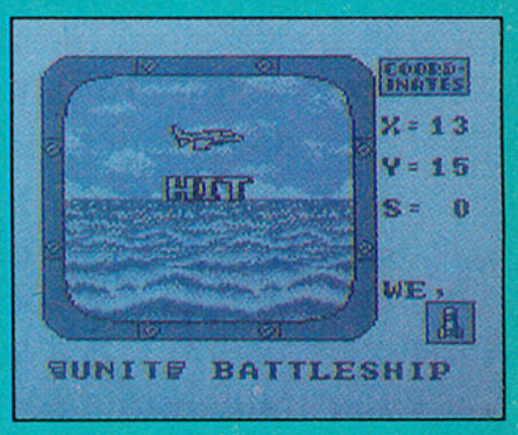


Isolated Warrior is a high-speed, uniquely developed game based on a 3-D concept that features over 40 types of enemy creatures, realistic graphics and explosive sound effects! Become Max Maverick, alone warrior, who must defeat the awesome creatures that attack his highly civilized planet!



Power Mission simulates a realistic sea battle against a powerful enemy force. Select and deploy one of seven fleets and then destroy the enemy using radar, missiles and various weapons. Power Mission has 10 stages and the enemy gets stronger and stronger. Prepare yourself for this challenging, strategic, Game Boy game!





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The sound is excellent, and the sword makes an especially realistic clang. You get a limited number of continues, and you can configure the difficulty of the game and the number of lives you start off with. The manual is exceptional: It suggests strategies for many specific situations, so if you're truly dedicated, you may want to explore the game on your own before turning to the back pages for a peek.

All in all, *Strider* is a very successful achievement. It provides dazzling graphics, challenging and addictive game play and plenty of strategies and terrain to explore. *Strider* has just about everything a hard-core video gamer could possibly be looking for.

—J. M.

Sega of America
573 Forbes Blvd.
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(800) USA-SEGA

Sinistron

IGS

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

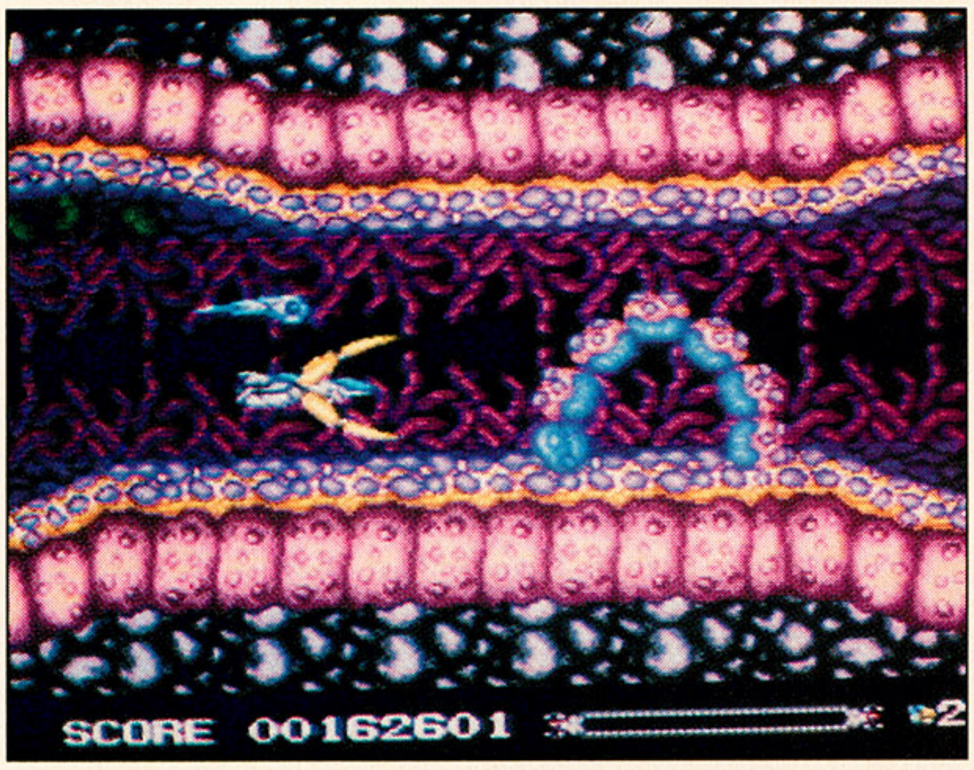
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS							■			
PLAYABILITY						■				
OVERALL						■				

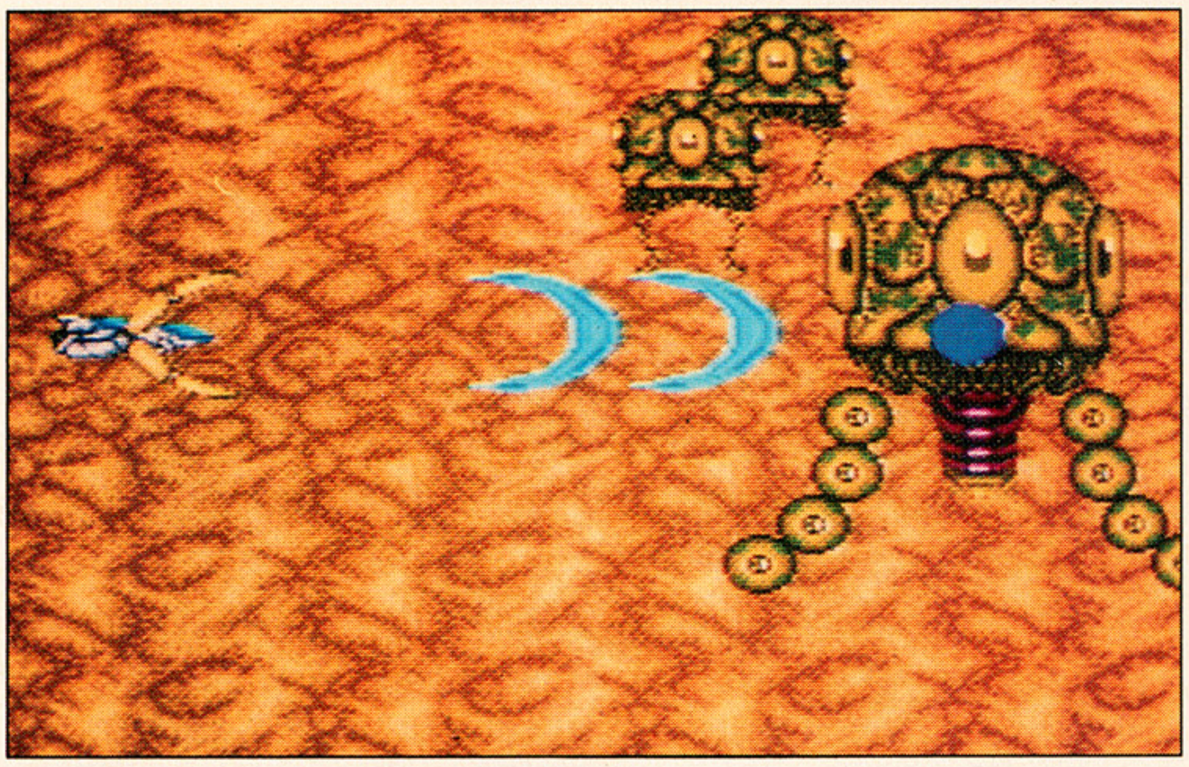
With a plot that reads like an EC Comics "Weird Science" storyline, *Sinistron* brings aliens, artillery and arcade action into your living room. (Just don't let Mom know about the "sea of mucus" in Stage 5, "Liquid Organs." It's hard to get that stuff out of the carpet.)

It seems that a gargantuan mass of biomorphic material has been advancing on our solar system, devouring Pluto on a course that leads straight to our own beloved planet. Fortunately, 33rd-century surveillance technology has given our leaders enough time to send out a squadron of cybernaut fighters to dispatch this massive...er, mass. Just think, if that ion storm hadn't wiped out the rest of your fleet, you wouldn't have had to fly out and face Sinistron alone!

But this is no time for wishful thinking. Your standard-issue blasters won't get you very far, so you'll have to keep an eye out for power-up items, like the plasma droids that hover near your ship or the weapon capsules. The capsules allow you to upgrade to one of

IGS' *Sinistron* sends you into battle against a massive, biomorphic material that has been advancing on your solar system.





three types of weaponry; namely, the Vulcan flame cannon, the crystal-pulse laser and the heat-seeking CHAOS missiles. Each of these weapons has a different method of attack, and each one can cover a wider area if you open up the ramming shield jaws that protect your ship's cockpit from harm. But this practice leaves you vulnerable to frontal attacks, so use it sparingly!

If that's not enough firepower for you, there's always the HyperSonic blast, a powerful wave of pure energy that circles your ship for an instant, disintegrating everything it touches. But it, too, comes at a price. To activate it, you must hold the "attack" button down while the power banks are energized. When the power meter at the bottom of the screen shows a full charge, releasing the button fires the blast. Unfortunately, you can't fire your weapons while the power banks are

continued on page 60

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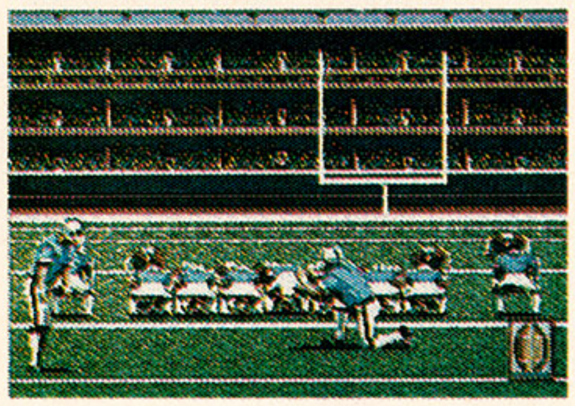

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continued from page 56

charging up, so many space jockeys (myself included) will never use this option.

You can also pick up "speed modules" that increase your ship's maneuverability. I never thought I'd have this complaint about a video game, but the speed modules make the fighter almost *too* responsive. When your on-screen vehicle obeys the slightest control-pad command with an immediate reaction, a degree of realism is sacrificed. You get no sense of the size or weight of your fighter. Despite a background story that would seem to indicate that there's a person inside the ship, it moves with the immediacy of a tiny insect. Even in the weightless expanse of space, a vehicle shouldn't be able to change direction so quickly. Well, perhaps in the 33rd century.

The game's learning curve is an important issue as well—it's not as much a "curve" as it is a "brick wall." I coasted through the first three levels in less than a day, but it took over a week before I became skilled enough to reach the end of Level 4. (There are six stages in all.) The "boss" characters at the end of each level reflect the difficulty of the areas they inhabit; the first two were sitting ducks, the third was defeated with a simple trick—and then the Level 4 boss pinned me to the wall before sizzling my posterior with a flash of laser light. Yow!

Though the looks and sounds are definitely above average, the game play is curiously flat. Arcade addicts with calloused thumbs probably won't care about anything but the vivid colors and exciting music, not to mention the challenge of the later levels. But if scrolling shoot-'em-ups are going to be as commonplace on the TurboGrafx-16 as they are on the Sega Genesis, then *Sinistron* will have to face a lot of competition.

—C. B.

Information Global Services, Inc.
80 South Lake Ave., Suite 526
Pasadena, CA 91101
(818) 440-0626

Castle of Illusion

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**

What sort of game would you expect from *Castle of Illusion* when you found out that it stars Disney's hero Mickey Mouse? A game easy enough for little children? Plenty of simple, appealing cartoon graphics? A light-weight run-and-jump, good for an afternoon of mindless entertainment?

Wrong on all counts. *Castle of Illusion* is, quite plainly, one of the most fabulous run-and-jump games ever created. The game play is derivative of the *Mario* series, but with plenty of imaginative twists and attention to detail that elevate the game to an entirely new level.

The backgrounds and animation are nothing short of breathtaking—they make the graphics of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* seem sickly by comparison. The attention to detail is unmatched. The music is perfectly in line with the spirit of the game. Imagine stepping into the Disney archives and exploring all the wild and ingenious worlds. That's what it's like to play *Castle of Illusion*.

While frolicking in the woods, Mickey and Minnie are terri-

fied by a sudden burst of lightning. From out of the sky swoops Mizrabel, an evil witch, who picks up Minnie and flies away. To rescue Minnie, you'll need to have the seven gems of the rainbow. The gems are contained within five worlds, each behind its own door in the Castle of Illusion.

Mickey's got a few tricks up his sleeve. He can throw objects at enemies. He can bounce on them to make them disappear. He can leap, swim and run. Throughout his travels, he'll find objects to throw, Mouseketeer ears (extra lives), stars (extra power for his life line) and bags of marbles to throw. There are other objects found only in certain areas. For example, in the Toyland sequence, there are arrows that flip the level topsy-turvy...very disorienting! Mickey starts the game off with three lives, and you can continue a new game from where you left off a total of four times.

The five levels are beautifully drawn and imaginatively conceived in classic Disney style. One of the areas in the Enchanted Forest level, for example, is reminiscent of *Fantasia*: Mickey leaps from leaf to leaf as they bounce gently and drift from side to side amidst a multilevel background of dewy spider webs and tree branches.

Another level is straight out of *Babes In Toyland*: Toy soldiers, tin airplanes and jack-in-the-boxes populate vast arrays of doll houses with giant scenery (sort of like the *It's a Small World* ride at Disney theme parks). There's a land of cake and candy, a shelf of towering books and jars, a magnificent castle and more. Everything's done in delicately shaded colors and with lots of ambient animation to bring it all to life.

Mickey himself is especially cute and detailed. All of his actions (this is the great old-style Mickey from the early-to-mid-'30s cartoons) are wonderfully animated—note, for instance, the way he sways comically when standing near the edge of whatever he's standing on and the way his legs move when he jumps. The ending sequence is just as impressive as the rest of the game.

Each level has the inevitable "Big Bad Guy." These guys are *tough*, no two ways about it. In fact, the whole game is definitely too tough for little children, though they'll no doubt be entranced by the simple storytelling and vivid pictures. You can choose between practice, normal and hard modes and configure the joystick to your liking.

It's terrific that a classic character as well-loved as Mickey Mouse should be worked into a game that deserves classic status itself. *Castle of Illusion* is recommended for everybody without exception.

—J. M.

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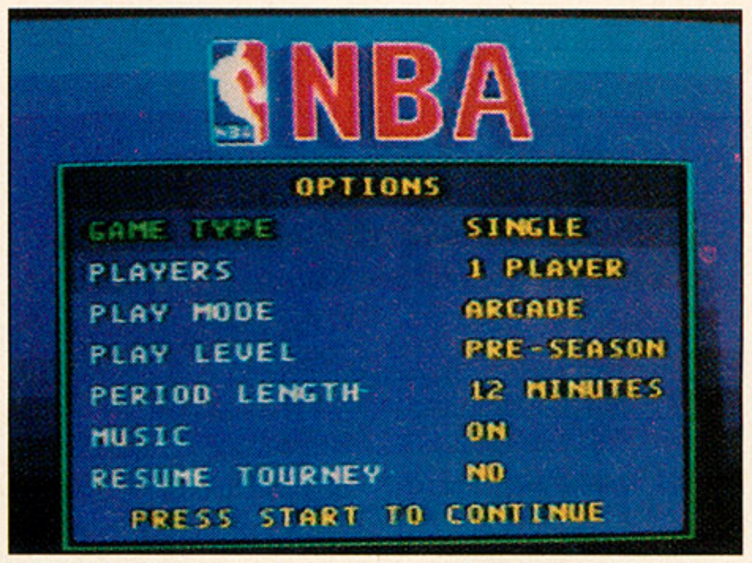
Bringing its successful computer-game titles over to the Genesis has proven satisfying, as with *Lakers Vs. Celtics and the NBA Playoffs*.



Lakers Vs. Celtics and the NBA Playoffs

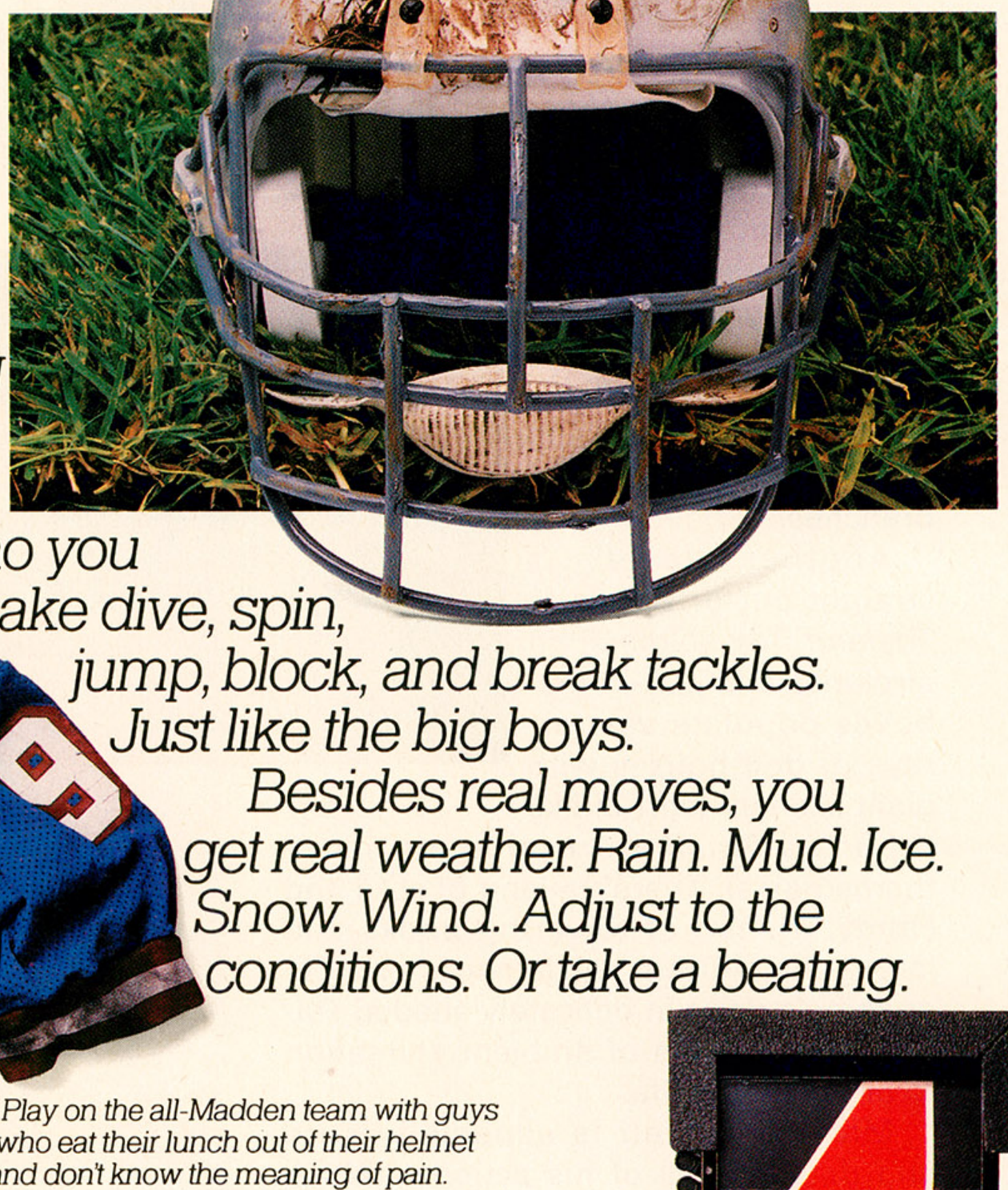
ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Electronic Arts only recently climbed aboard the video-game fun-train by porting a few of their more popular computer titles over to the Sega Genesis. They've already met with great success. Not surprising, considering games like *Populous* and *Zany Golf* are not only popular, but also original and fun. Now, sports fans will be pleased to learn that Electronic Arts has released *Lakers Vs. Celtics and the NBA Playoffs* for the Genesis. Although not complex enough to rate as an actual simulation, *Lakers Vs. Celtics* plays a pretty hot game of basketball.

continued on page 65

THE BIGGEST HIT IN FOOTBALL.



So you want a Genesis® game with real impact?
Play John Madden Football.™
A game as big and tough as the man himself. Seventeen teams.
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Each one blitzing and scrambling its way to Super Sunday. Each one packed with pro caliber players who you make dive, spin, jump, block, and break tackles. Just like the big boys.
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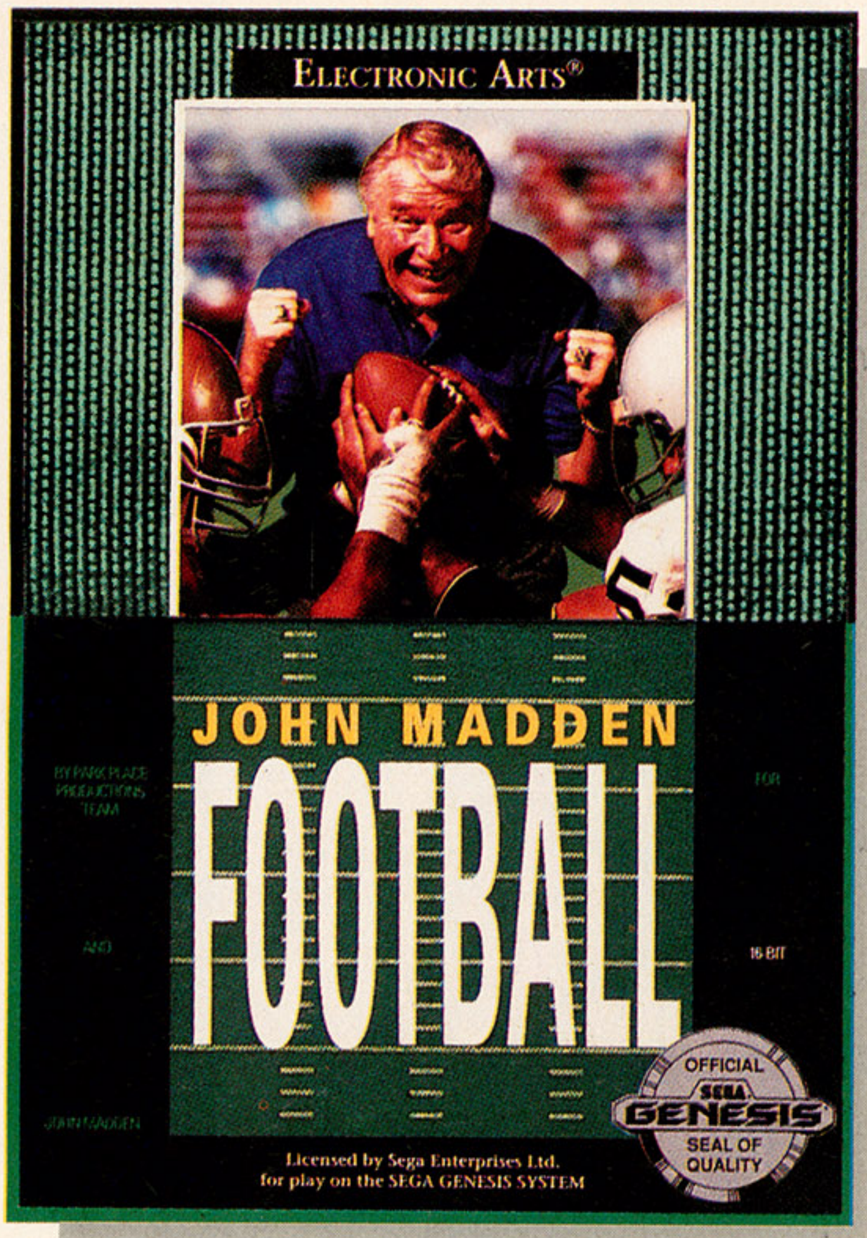
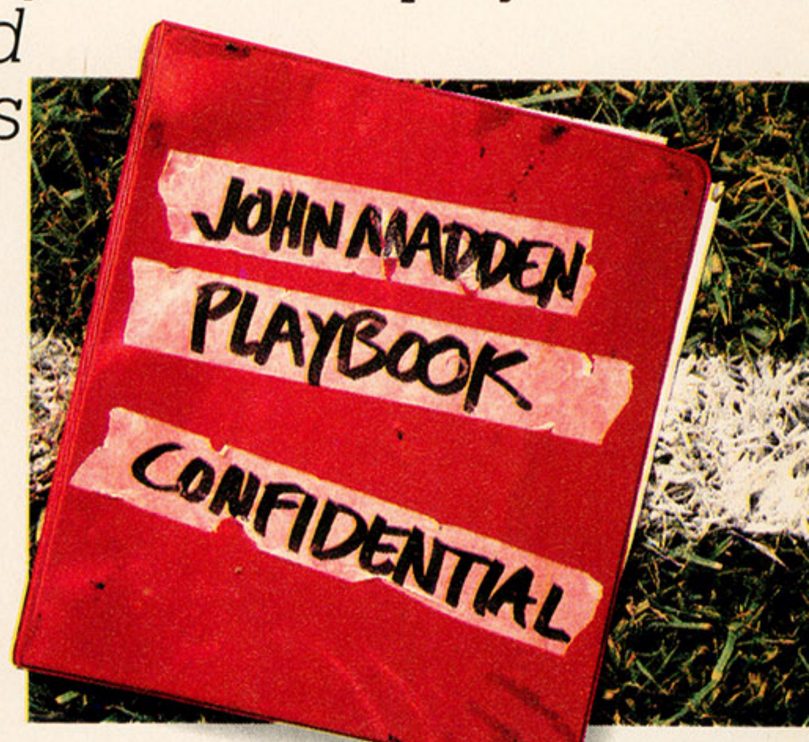
Play on the all-Madden team with guys who eat their lunch out of their helmet and don't know the meaning of pain. It's real mud and guts football.

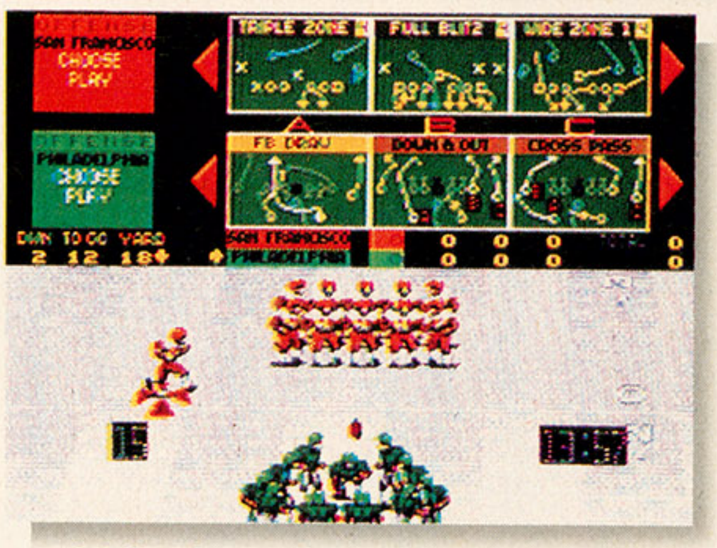
It's fourth down and you could boom one deep. Or take your chances, fake the punt, and go for it. What a total kick.



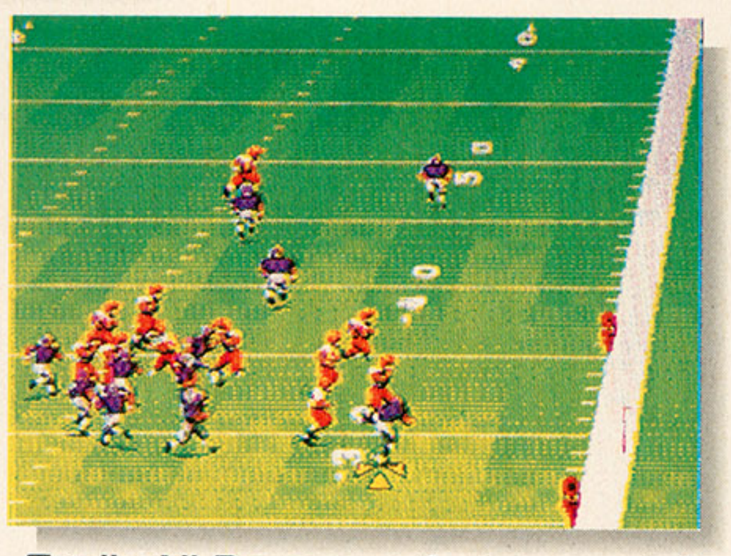
You can call more than 100 real plays, too, for complete, easy on-screen play calling. Pages ripped right out of Madden's play-book. Even audibles.

So everything's true to the game itself. Bone-jarring sounds of the trenches. Animation that will flatten you. Intense pressure. And half-time highlights and stats.





Make the right call from over 100 different plays. Keep the weather in mind and you'll put the game on ice.



Totally All-Pro moves that you control. Including spins, dives, jumps, and an end zone touchdown dance.

Now it can be Super Sunday any day of the week.

All the players have real attributes. You get guys with better hands. Guys who are faster. Even special short yardage units.

As the big man himself says, "Some guys aren't mudders. Some guys can't hold a block on grass. That's real football. That's in the game." Think you can find a harder hitting football game? Get real.

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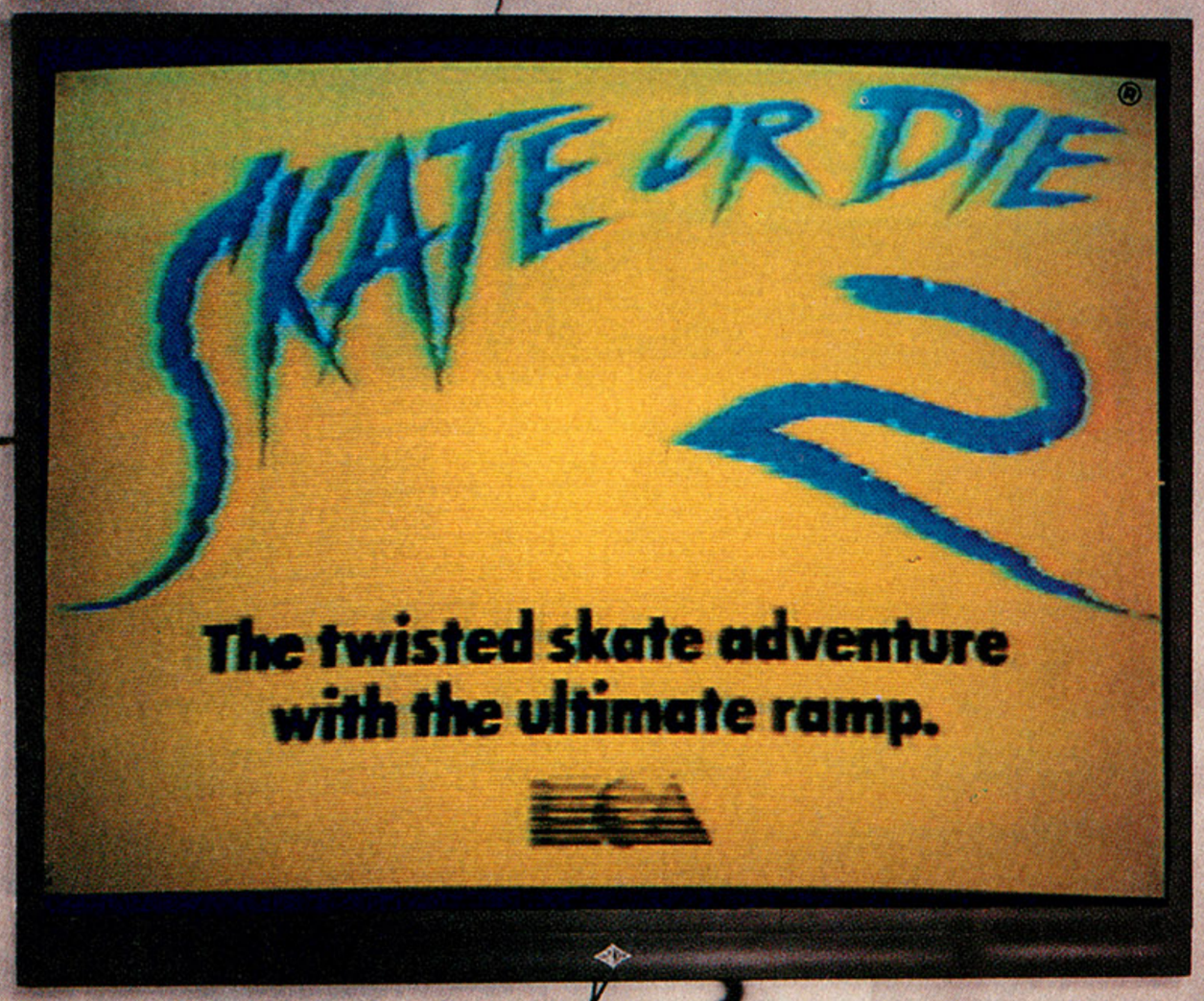

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SLAM HOMEBOY PUNKS ON THE RAMP ANYTIME

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RESCUE THE TORRID BABE

RAD TRICKS

LEARN

continued from page 61

You begin by setting your game options. You may elect to play a single game against another player or against the computer, or you can take on the computer in a full tournament. Other options include: play mode (arcade or simulation), which sets whether or not your players will tire; play level (preseason, regular game or showtime), which determines how aggressive your players will be; period length (two, five, eight or 12 minutes); and music that can be turned on or off.

Once you have the game options set up, you can choose your teams from among ten selections, including, of course, the Lakers and the Celtics, as well as All-Stars West and All-Stars East.

Each team is made up of five players. On the player statistics screen, you can view the statistics for any player on either of the chosen teams. You can also swap players, which allows you to experiment with different lineups.

After all that is out of the way (it doesn't take long, especially if you don't bother to study all the statistics), the game begins. When playing offense, you control the player with the ball—dribbling, passing and shooting. Several types of shots are available, depending on how you activate the "A" button. All the rules of play apply, including penalties for going "back court" or for "charging."

When playing defense, you control the player with the black shoes, which is the player closest to the opponent carrying the ball. You can switch control between players by pressing the "B" button. But don't crowd the player with the ball, or you'll be called for a foul, giving your opponent two foul shots.

In addition to the music, *Lakers Vs. Celtics* employs some interesting sound effects. These sound effects include the ball bouncing off the rim of the basket, the referee's whistle and the referee's digitized voice as he calls out penalties. Conspicuously missing, however, are the cheers of the fans whenever a team scores.

EA's *Lakers Vs. Celtics* features funky music and well-rendered graphics to support the hard-court action.

All in all, this is another fine title from Electronic Arts, with top-notch music (electronic funk that'll almost certainly have you tapping your foot) and well-rendered graphics with smooth, convincing animation. Whether you're a

hoop expert or a couch-and-TV jock, you'll have a ball with this well-done sports contest. Who knows? Maybe someday you'll make it to the Genesis big leagues.

—C. W.

Electronic Arts
P.O. Box 7578
San Mateo, CA 94403-7578
(800) 245-4525

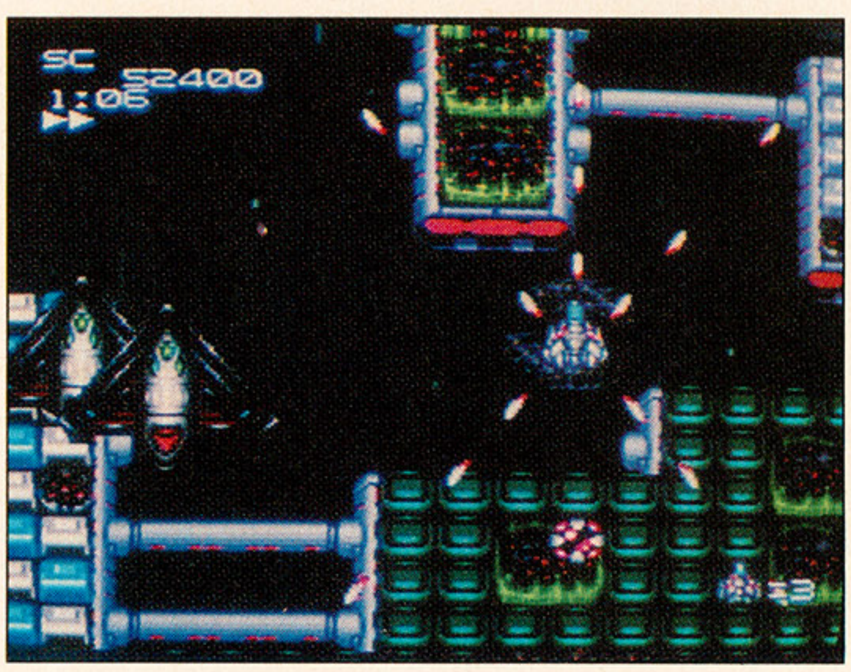
Super Star Soldier

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

NEC's *Super Star Soldier*, for the TurboGrafx-16, is a blastathon with scorching action for die-hard arcadiacs.



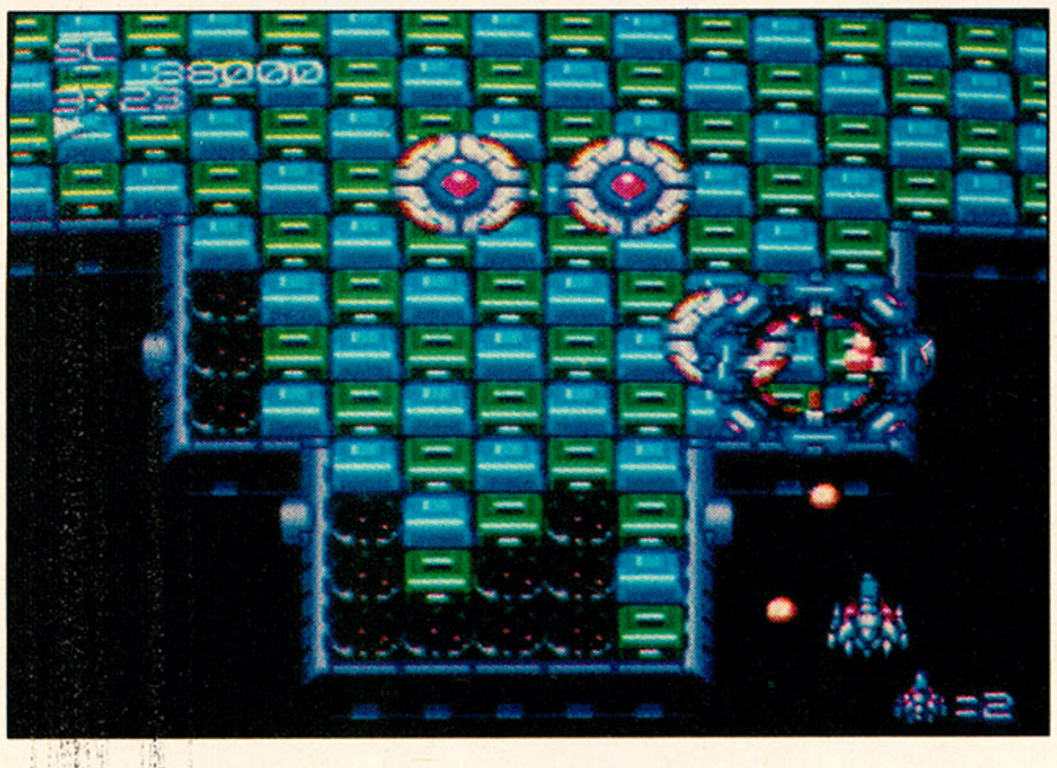
Yow! Push the button to the plastic, and get geared up for one of the fastest shooters this side of the Milky Way. *Super Star Soldier* for the TurboGrafx-16 is an outer-space bangfest with more fancy weapons and alien invaders than a copy of *Galaga* with a thyroid problem. The odds are good that the scorching action will have your eyes crossed before the end of the first level.

In other words, you're going to need a loose

and lethal trigger finger to beat this baby. As you pilot your ship over the vertically scrolling outer space scenes and alien landscapes, dozens of enemy craft will do their utmost to atomize you into planet fodder.

At times, there's so much action on the screen that it's difficult to locate your own ship, which can get lost in the confusion of rockets, bullets, attackers and shrapnel streaking across the screen. Luckily, as you fight, weapon icons, which give your ship extra powers, are released. The weapons they provide help you keep up with the enemy barrage.

Similar to last year's *Blazing Lazers*, *Super Star Soldier* is a relentless shooter that will have your careening around the screen.

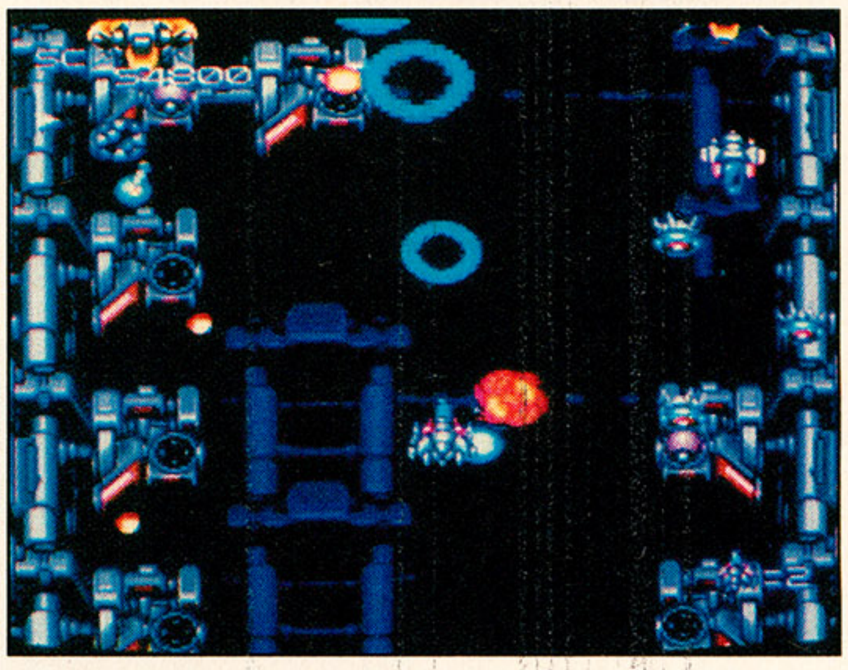


Some of these weapons include a bubble shield that circles your ship, protecting it from enemy attack; a flame gun that fries any enemies stupid enough to wander into its path; a blue wave gun that covers the screen with circles of blue energy; side missiles that attach to the side of your ship, allowing you to ram into your enemies; and smart missiles that hunt down approaching alien craft.

The power of a weapon is determined by the number of weapon icons you've picked up. For example, the blue wave weapon starts off as only a single beam of energy circles. After catching a second blue-wave icon, the wave fires in two directions. The next icon will give you a double forward beam. Increase the strength again, and it'll fire in three directions. Finally, grab another blue-wave icon, and you end up with a quadruple beam powerful enough to cover almost the entire screen.

If you leave an icon on the screen long enough, it may start cycling through the different colors, giving you a chance to grab, or increase the power of, your favorite weapon. The longer you wait, though, the closer to the bottom of the vertically scrolling screen it gets.

Once your weapon is at full strength, additional icons act as "pows," wiping out everything on the screen in one gigantic explosion. (Neat graphics!) Keeping your favorite weapon can be



tricky with all those different weapon icons flying around. Also, when you get hit, your weapon strength is decreased.

As I said, there are times in *Super Star Soldier* when the screen is literally filled with moving objects. Thank the stars that the wise men at NEC granted us turbofire. You won't have to numb your trigger finger, jabbing the fire button a thousand times a second. Just hold down the button for continuous shooting.

You can use turbofire in any one of three modes of play. In the regular game, you play until your lives are used up. In the two-minute and five-minute games, your galactic fight is timed, forcing you to gather points as quickly as you can.

Although some of the weapon effects are dazzling, the background graphics and the enemy characters in *Super Star Soldier* are not particularly extraordinary. The TurboGrafx-16 is certainly capable of much more detail. Still, so much is going on in this game, you won't have time to notice the backgrounds anyway!

If you're looking for a hot-action shooter for your TurboGrafx-16, *Super Star Soldier* is a decent choice. It's not particularly original and offers little new to the genre—but it sure will keep you sweating.

—Clayton Walnum

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CLNAV

The Immortal

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Programmer Will Harvey has always been known for his innovative yet slightly quirky creations. Eight years ago, he pounded out *Music Construction Set* on his Apple computer—an icon-driven music composition program that became the pioneer of today's MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) software. After this, he founded Sandcastle Productions and then developed *Zany Golf*, a surrealistic take on miniature golf. It's still too soon to tell if *Zany Golf* has had an influence on mini-putting courses as well. In the meantime, Harvey's latest product is his company's first for the NES, *The Immortal*.

At first glance, *The Immortal* seems to be standard stuff, and, compared to Harvey's first two works, it is. That is, if you size it up against similar games on home computers. On the NES, however, this narrative-backed adventure is unique, unlike others in its genre.

You're cast as the protégé of the wizard Mordamir, who has disappeared in the Labyrinth of Eternity beneath the ancient city of Erinoch. This great city was destroyed over 1,000 years ago by the fire of a dragon who still dwells under the city's ruins. Trekking into the passageways and rooms of the Labyrinth in your search for Mordamir, you'll encounter hostile goblins and trolls dwelling in these areas. Other deadly pests like bats and shadow creatures will also impede your attempts to find a way out of any one of the six levels in the Labyrinth of Eternity.

Yet, things don't seem right. Messages from Mordamir mention someone named Dunric, whom he refers to as his student. Dunric is supposedly accompanied by a fighter, Erek. Who are these people, and why does Mordamir say Dunric is his faithful student when you thought that *you* were? And what's Mordamir doing getting himself lost in the Labyrinth of Eternity anyway?

***The Immortal*, from Electronic Arts, was created by the same programming group that made last year's *Zany Golf*, which explains the quality look and playability the game contains.**

That's part of the mystery behind *The Immortal*. Solving these questions and others to come will involve surviving the perils of each level that make up the labyrinth and figuring out a way to enter the next one. All items found can—and should—be picked up, as the instruction booklet emphasizes. Nothing can harm you if your character merely picks something up. Using these items in the wrong place and/or at the wrong time, well, that's another matter. Items are stored in your pack and are used to help you get out of a predicament or the level you are presently trapped in. Taking a nap on a bed of straw and making note of your dreams will also clue you in to useful hints.

When you come face-to-face with a monster, the scene switches over to a combat screen. Your character and your opponent fight it out by swinging weapons to strike blows at one another. The more times either one of you attacks, the higher your fatigue level goes up, limiting attack strength. Dodging blows will lower this indicator. The one whose vitality gauge drains completely due to hits will lose his life.

A complete step-by-step rundown is provided for going through the first level of *The Immortal*. *The Codex of the Serpent*, a journal left behind by Mordamir, details characters you'll come across and gives some sage advice. This book is placed in the back of the instruction booklet.

The adventure puzzle-solving aspect of *The Immortal* is middleweight in terms of difficulty. But the arcade challenge more than makes up for this with its high frustration level. Avoiding the floor slime and getting rid of pesky bats can be difficult to accomplish, for example. As a nice touch, everything is backed up by an effective score written by well-known computer-music composer Rob Hubbard.

For Will Harvey and Sandcastle Productions, *The Immortal* is no doubt a fine addition to their brief list of titles. For Electronic Arts it solidifies its standing with the NES.

—Howard H. Wen

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Magician

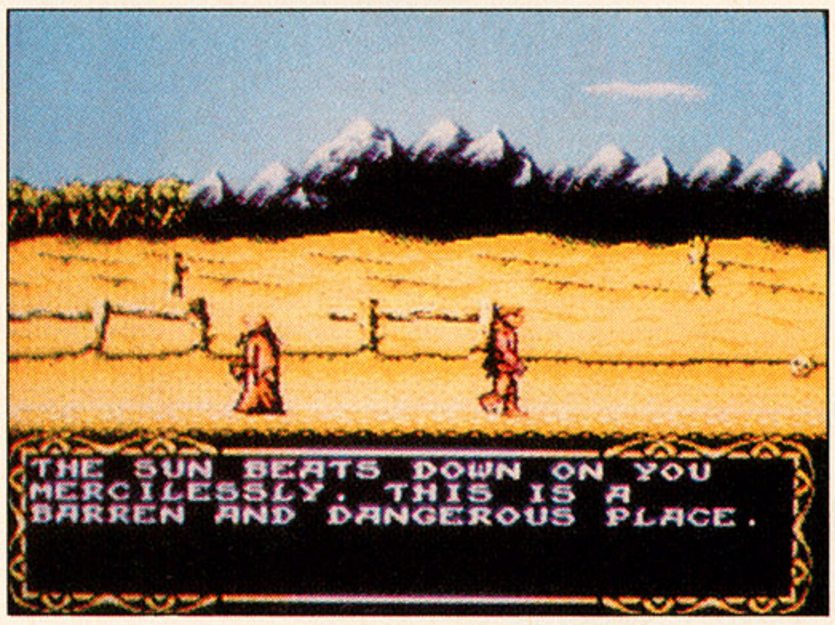
TAXAN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

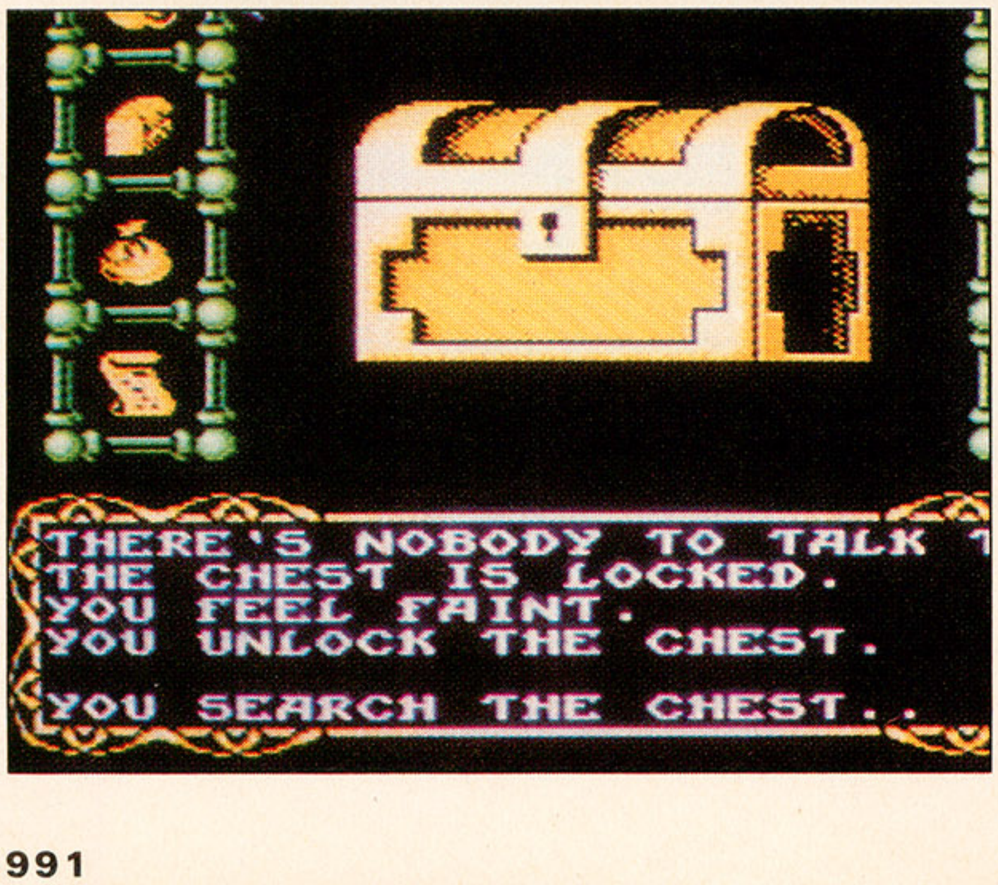
The setting for *Magician*, Merlwood, like virtually all mythical lands from a nonexistent time, is a peaceful country with picturesque landscapes suitable for postcard pictures. Wizards and magicians maintained the delicate balance of things in this utopia. Then one day, one of these magicians, Abadon, decided he was tired of being nice and went about defeating all his wizard colleagues. His goal was simple: complete rule over Merlwood and its people. No more Mr. Nice Guy, Abadon and his PR firm stressed.

Meanwhile, to the west, in the village of Serenna, teenager Paul sets out for Merlwood to find and defeat Abadon, and thus liberate the country. You see, Paul is the only magician other than Abadon who's left. Well, almost. Even though he's Merlwood's last and only hope, he's also just an apprentice. So what are his chances of success—or just surviving? Pretty good actually. After all, you are Paul, and everyone knows that, despite great (supposedly) odds against you, Abadon hardly stands a chance challenging the average NES gamer.



Your adventure is a long journey that will be filled with numerous battles as you seek the ingredients to make the ultimate potion, a concoction of the four elements: earth, air, fire and water. Using it is the only way to bring down Abadon.

You'll traverse through the beautiful world of Merlwood, which is broken up into eight different environments. In Serenna, your hometown, you first outfit yourself with weapons, food, spells and other supplies. Rumors can be heard at any of the pubs, where you can stop off for a drink of ale. These clues foretell events that you will come across. Speak to townspeople walking on the street, and several will offer advice. A few might even give you valuable and helpful gifts. Chatting with anybody you come across will increase your "mana"—points that determine the power and ability you have to use spells.



Magician allows the player to build spells by selecting specific combinations of runes. Spells may also be bought in a store, or someone may tell you how to build them with your runes. Depending on the type, these spells function as weapons, shields and superhuman powers. They are cast by selecting them from the backpack screen.

This screen also displays an inventory window that lists all accumulated weapons and supplies such as food, keys and potions. Also shown are mana, health, water, food and other pertinent levels. When any decrease, proper means should be undertaken to increase them. For example, when the food level decreases, Paul should consume more food to bring this number back up.

Magician bills itself as a role-playing game, but it is only so in terms of its spell-casting and health-level aspects. To its benefit, it's more of an action game. Mapping abilities aren't necessary here, and most of the puzzles presented can be figured out with a reasonable amount of intuition. Much of the difficulty lies in defeating the enemies. *Magician* is a worthwhile journey to undertake.

—H. H. W.

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161 Nortech Parkway
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Orb-3D

HI-TECH EXPRESSIONS
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

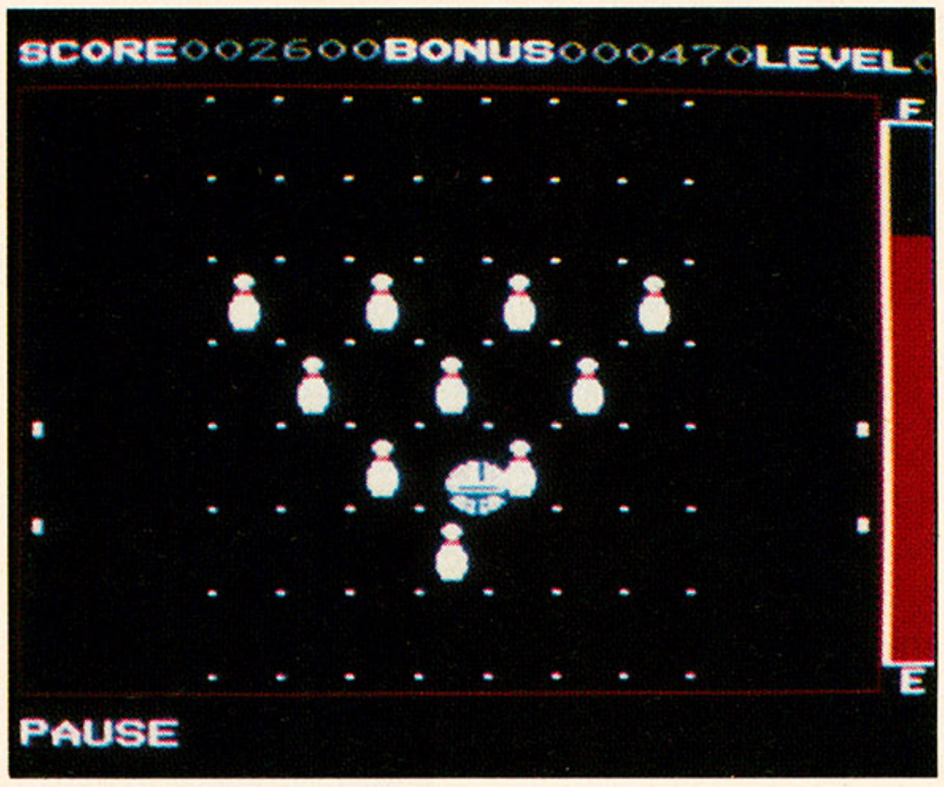
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

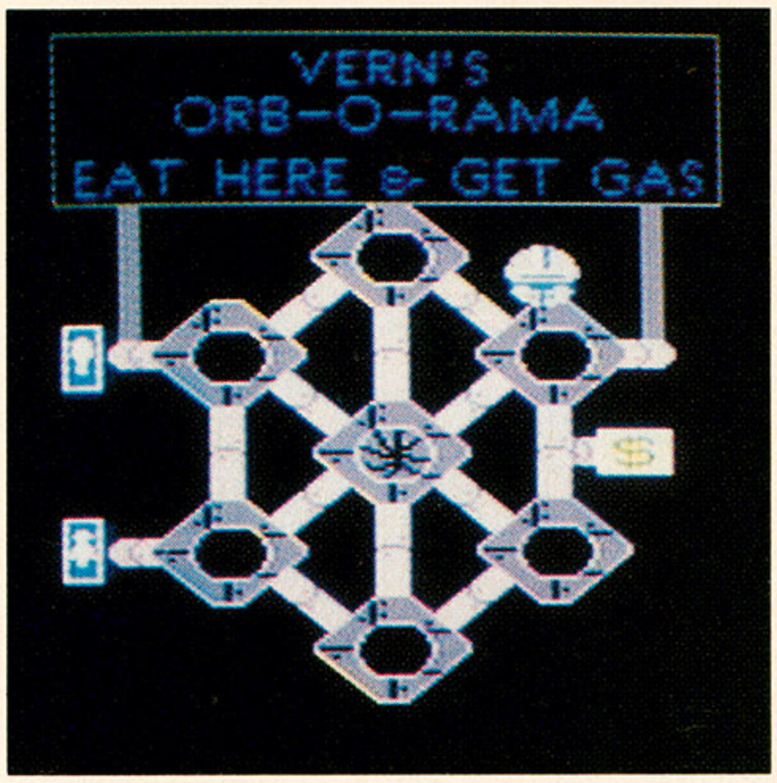
In the early days, the few 3-D games that were out for the NES, such as *World Runner*, utilized the standard blue-red tinted glasses. Akin to watching camp 3-D movies like *Creature From the Black Lagoon*, the overall effect was colorless and left something more to be desired. Breaking new ground in this area of NES gaming is *Orb-3D*, the first NES title to implement 3-D images without sacrificing the original colors of the game screen.

Hi-Tech Expressions touts its 3-D effect as "GrenoVision." In brief, it's the same technique used two years ago during the SuperBowl half time show and the Tournament of Roses Parade. The right lens of the cardboard glasses is tinted dark while the left is much lighter. If you're not wearing these glasses, images on the television screen don't appear distorted—they look normal. Putting on the dark-light tinted glasses will produce a 3-D effect with color intact, for the most part. This process is not to be confused with the liquid crystal "shutter" glasses that were used on the 3-D accessory for the Sega Master System. Though not as technically superior to this elaborate hardware peripheral, *Orb-3D*'s GrenoVision works both effectively and economically.

Onto the plot behind *Orb-3D*: The evil space wizard Krohn has been sucking up space stations, starships and planets in a remote part of the universe, using a black hole that he controls. As pilot of the *Millennium Orb*, your assignment is to find and defeat Krohn, but 30 intergalactic chambers have been set up to keep you away from him. In each chamber there are sets of targets that must all be knocked down.

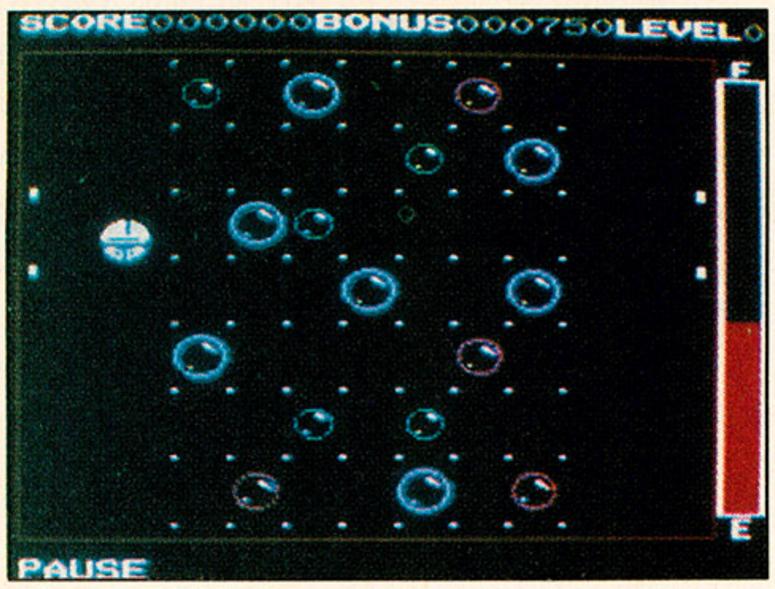
You knock targets down by manipulating the trajectory of the *Orb* so that it hits these targets. Force fields along the sides need to be maneuvered vertically to keep the *Orb* within the confines of the chamber. "English" can be applied to ricochet the *Orb* in a different angle. If the *Orb* should go by the force fields, the ship's fuel level will lower drastically. The game ends when all fuel has been burned up.



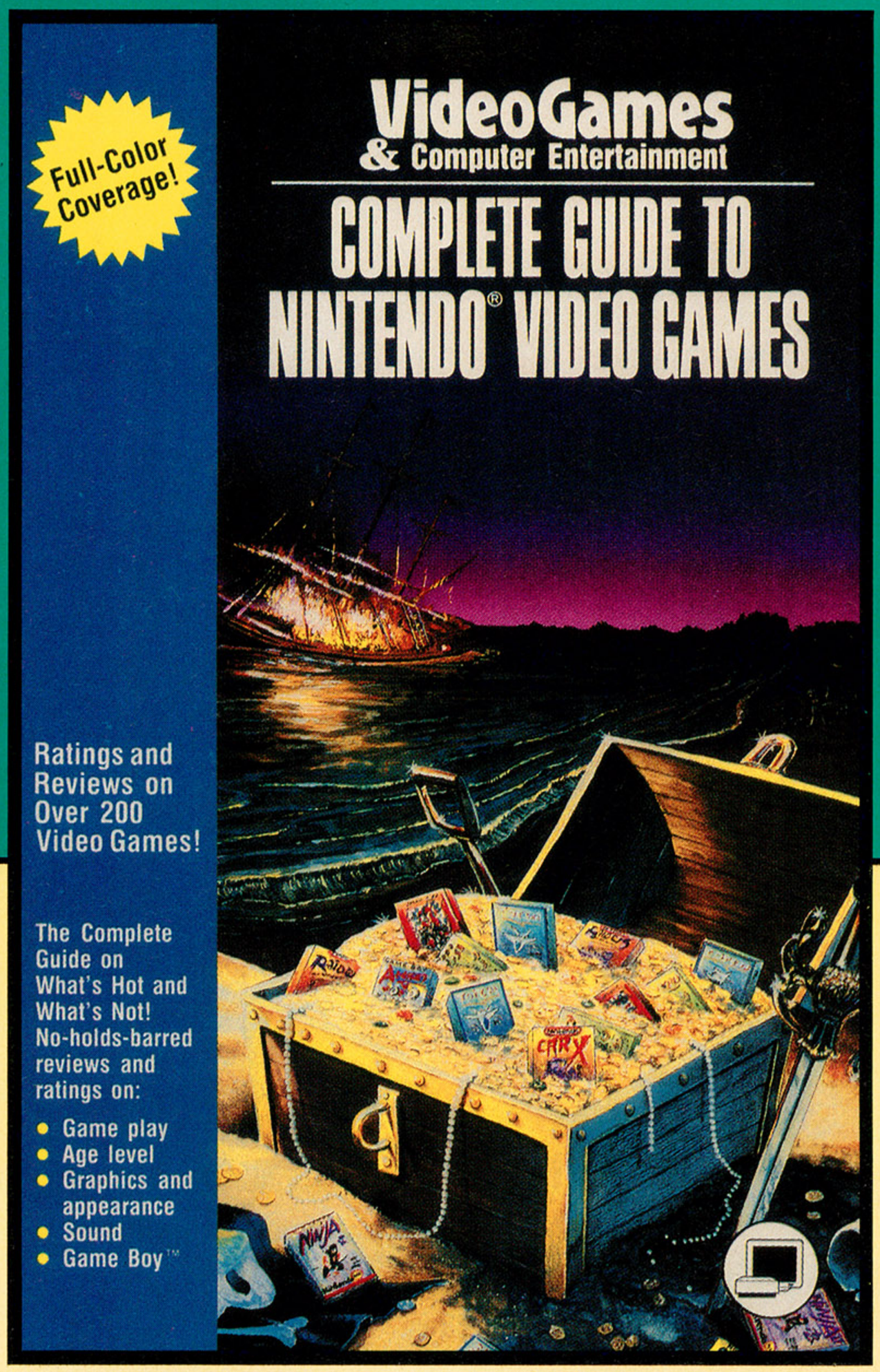


To refuel the *Orb,* you have to make a trip to Vern's Orb-O-Rama, an interstellar fuel station and restaurant (its billboard advertises "Eat Here & Get Gas"). You replenish the Orb's fuel level by diving the ship in and out of the station's docking bays. All fuel-ups must be paid with credit earned from clearing the chambers. However, going for fuel too often will cause the length of the force fields to shorten.

The targets in the chambers consist of objects like bubbles, bowling pins and the eyeballs of a giant cat, believe it or not. Some of these must be struck down in a certain way—from behind, in a required combination or hit several times, for instance. Complicating things further, there are space pirates that have to be avoided as they steal your *Orb*'s fuel supply.



***Orb-3D*, by Hi-Tech Expressions, breaks new ground in NES gaming with its use of the GrenoVision process that lets you "see" 3-D with special glasses or play without them normally.**



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Problems arise when playing the chamber screens themselves. Applying "English" to the *Orb* isn't as easy as the instruction booklet might lead you to believe. Often, the *Orb* will simply slip by the force field in your attempt to ricochet it, no matter how close you believe you came into contact with it.

The 3-D effect works well in the game's title screen but is not as impressive during actual game play. Though the instructions clearly state that the ability to see 3-D varies among different people, most everyone I tested the game on found similar results. Also, eye strain tends to develop even after short periods of play. You can play just as well without the glasses, but, minus its 3-D gimmickry, *Orb-3D* fails to stand on its own.

—H. H. W.

Hi-Tech Expressions
584 Broadway, Suite 509
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The California Raisins: The Grape Escape

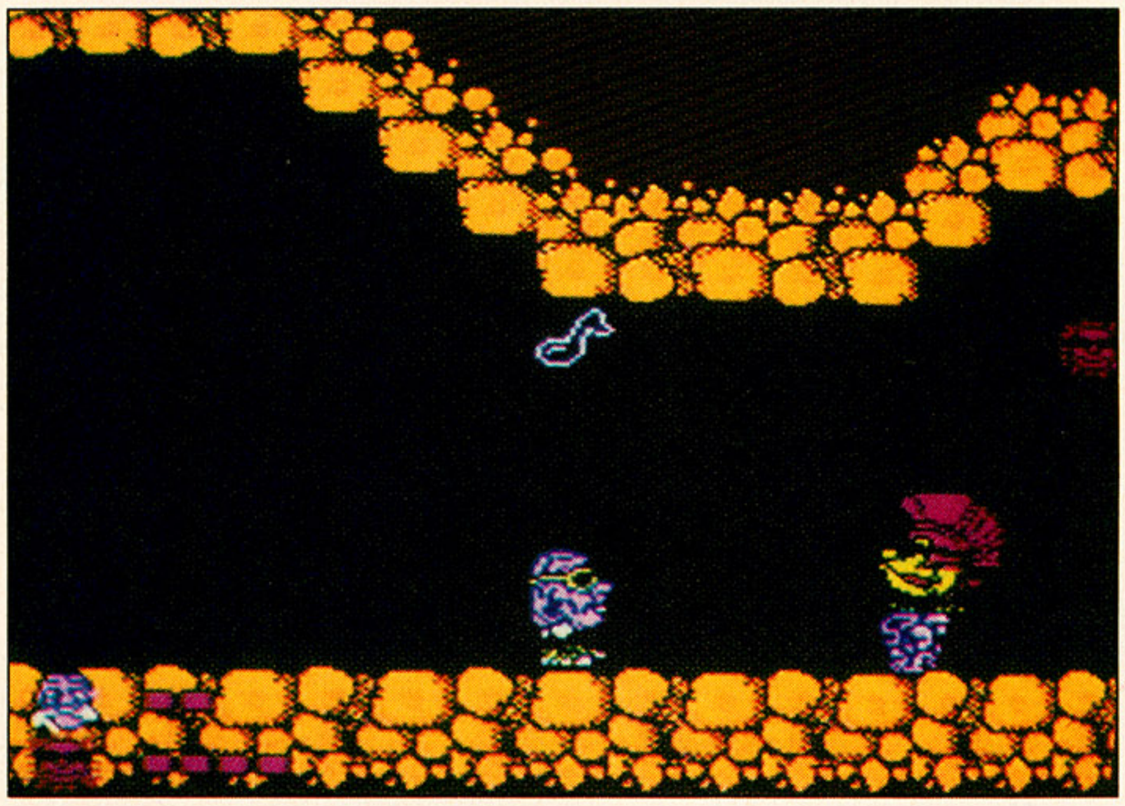
CAPCOM

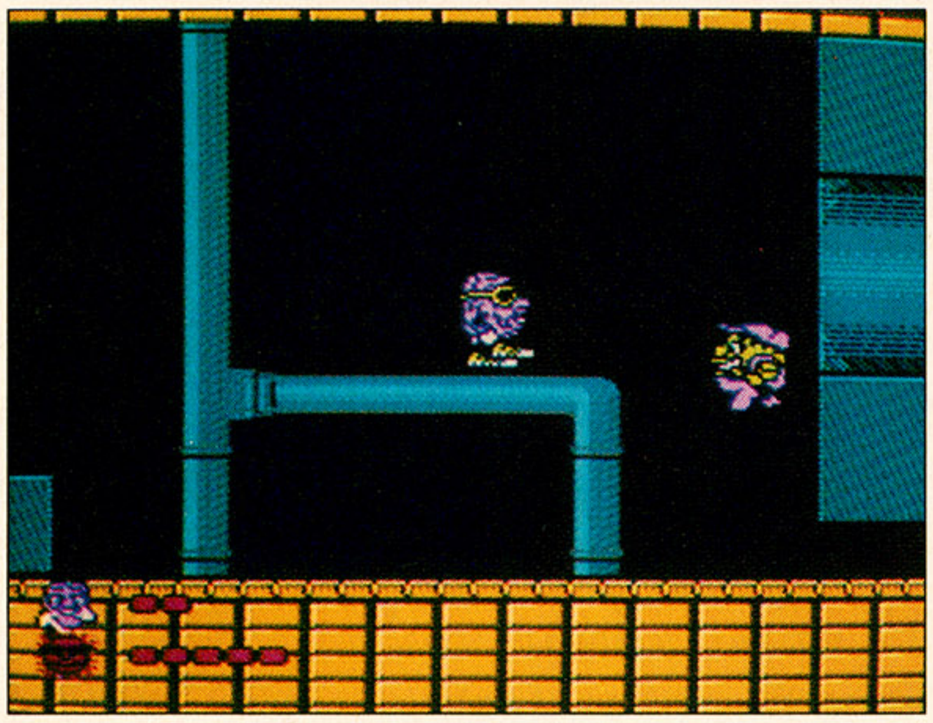
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Just in case you haven't had your fill of games based purely on marketing ideas, the California Raisins are now offering their second game: *The California Raisins: The Grape Escape*. While the Raisins are certainly cute, this cuteness has been wearing off for years. It's a lot easier taking them in doses of 30 seconds every once in a while, but whether they're good for hours of challenge and enjoyment is debatable. They made a great commercial or two, but the raisins themselves have no discernible character...and neither does their game. It's nonviolent, non-offensive arcade entertainment at its most bland.

We find the Raisins preparing for their next gig. But the Wild Bunch, renegade fruit that they are, have stolen the Raisins' music. You, as one of the California Raisins, must traverse four different intricate areas in search of your music. Along the way, you'll collect notes (both black and gold). At the end of your journey is the worst of the whole Bunch, Alexander the Grape. You will have to contend with him—not to mention beat him—to retrieve the music, rescue the gig and win the game.





As you make your way through the levels, enemy raisins abound. They bounce on you, fly around you and try to look cooler than you do. You, on the other hand, are a nice lil' raisin, armed with nothing but the ability to walk, jump and hurl handfuls of grape jelly at your opponents. (I suppose that was less violent than a cannon and grapeshot.)

Sometimes shooting an opponent leaves something valuable behind (a bit of extra life for your life bar, for instance). Notes—parts of your music—can be found here and there but are sometimes invisible until you throw some jelly on them.

There have been some pretty wild premises for video games, but Capcom working the California Raisins into its latest, *The Grape Escape*, is perhaps the wildest.

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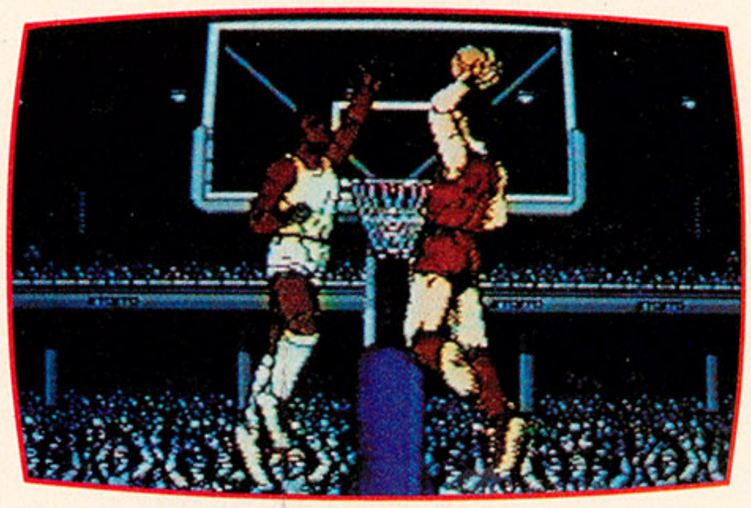
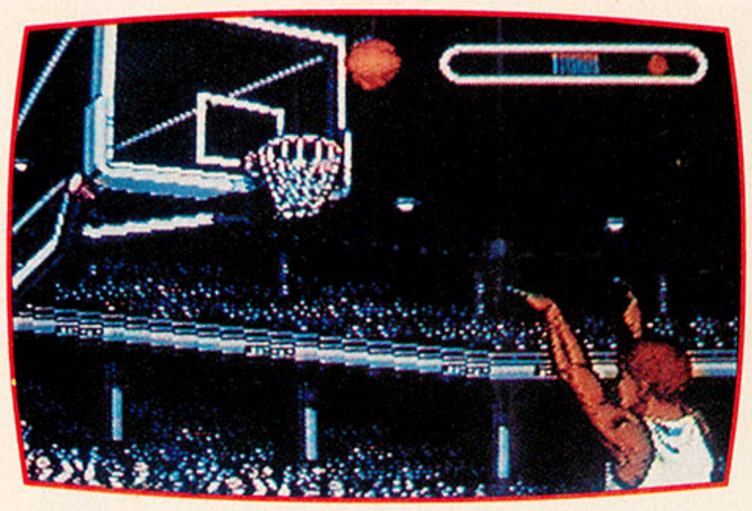
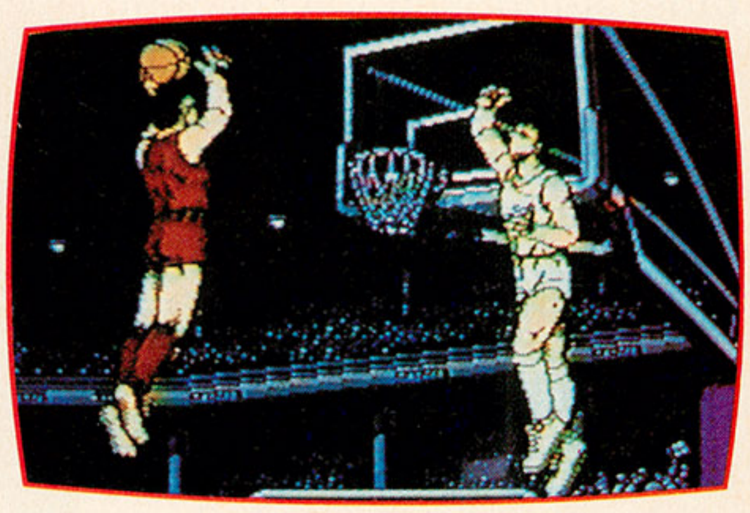


Zoom into the action



Be a part of the action–not just a spectator



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Pick your starting line-up

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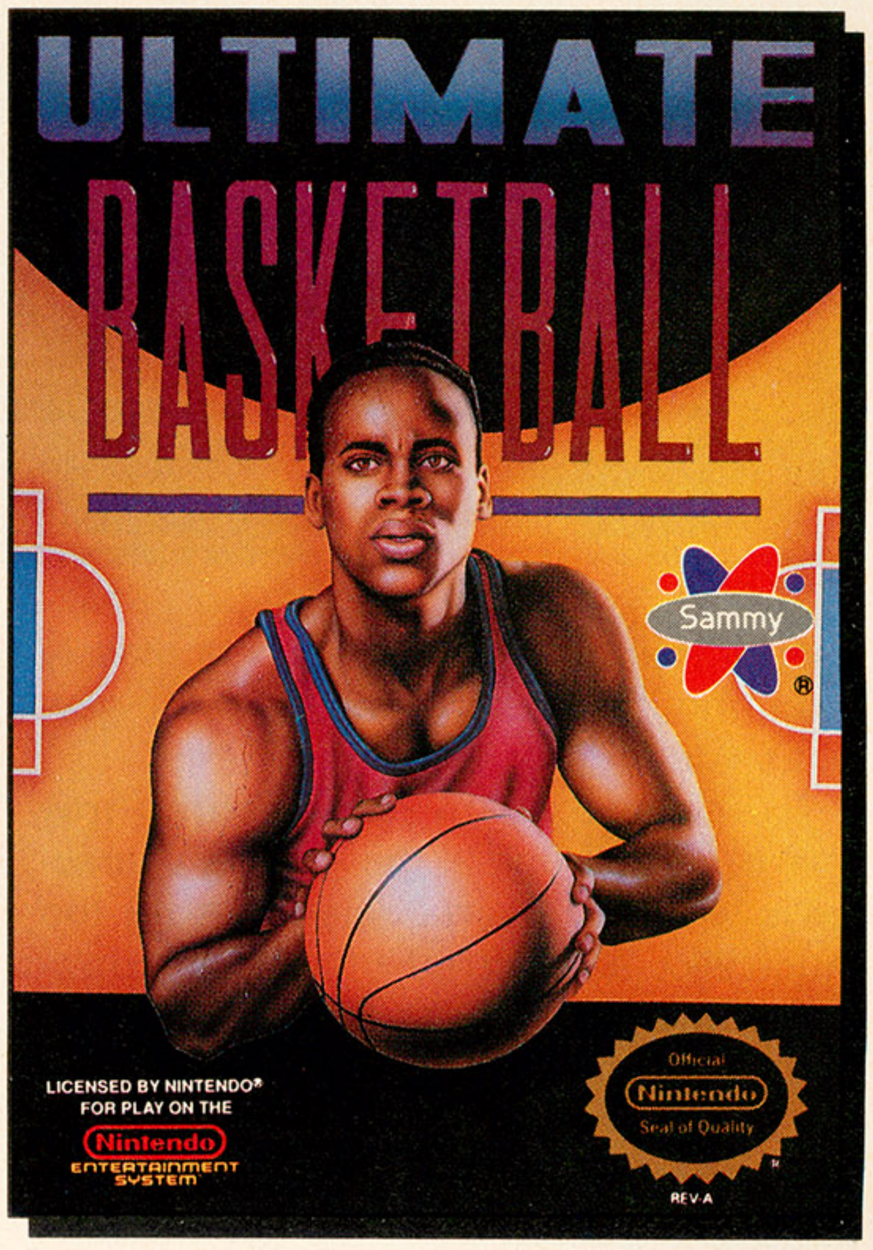

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Each level ends with a particularly difficult member of the Bunch, and when you defeat him, you get one of four golden notes. Collect all four notes, and then go on to face Alexander. This is truly a lesson in learning to deal with the wrath of grapes.

Stylistically, the game has little to recommend it. The characters are tiny and crudely drawn, giving the game a real childish, amateurish appearance. The entire world, while adequately varied with mazes, secret squares, shortcuts and little extra-credit bonuses, is also barely drawn, as if it were created mostly with lines and fill patterns rather than the trees, pipes, bricks and other supposed background scenery. A game doesn't stand or fall purely on the graphics, but these graphics are sad enough to detract from the experience.

The music is better. Thankfully, the *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* theme doesn't run through all four levels, otherwise the game would have been intolerable—it does run endlessly throughout the entire first level, however, as you might expect.

Grape and raisin jokes aside (how many did *you* find?), the game's character is woefully overfamiliar, playing too much like a hundred other run-jump-and-throw games, with little personality. The graphics are third-rate. It may be too cute for adults and too hard for children, meaning there *is* a fairly difficult game in there, nonviolent too. But it seems as if it's been rushed to market without thought for what people who buy games *really* want: interesting characters, new situations and experiences and cool pictures. None of the above apply here. What this game lacks is a grape with appeal.

—J. M.

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Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

Taking off on the latest rage of strategy games, IGS' *Tricky Kick* brings its brain-busting angle to the TurboGrafx-16.

Tricky Kick

IGS

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($48.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

With games such as *Klax* and *Tetris* proving to be popular, several companies have decided to bring out their own puzzling creations. *Tricky Kick* is one such game. While not really similar to the aforementioned hits, it's based upon an idea that may be familiar to some—moving and positioning objects in such a way that one may be knocked into the other, thus removing them from the playfield.

The story behind *Tricky Kick* takes place long before written history, in a time when the world was full of creatures such as elves and fairies. A forest called "Meril" was a special place where young Oberon lived, friend to all the forest creatures. Unfortunately, an evil sorceress named Kymera found the forest and was overcome with jealousy at its beauty. In her rage, she put a curse upon Oberon and his offspring—they were doomed to be lost in a maze-like world full of awful creatures. They could not escape until they destroyed all of the creatures within the maze.

Fortunately, Oberon's family was blessed with a special, powerful kick known as—you guessed it!—tricky kick. This kick gave them the ability to clear their path of all obstructions and to slam their enemies together with such force that they would be destroyed. As an Oberon, it is your quest to dispel the curse upon the family name.

While the story is only based upon the one character, Oberon, there are actually six different scenarios based upon the same game scheme. The differences are in the appearance of the backgrounds and in the objects that must be

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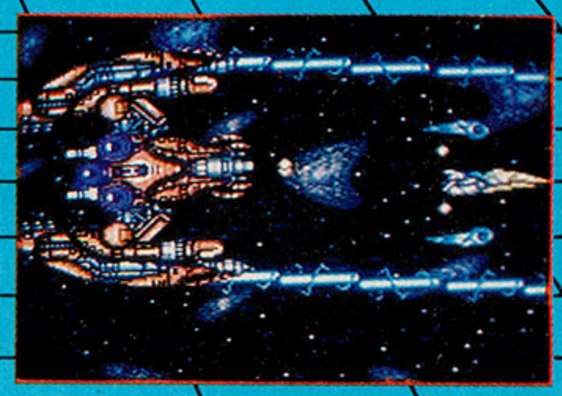

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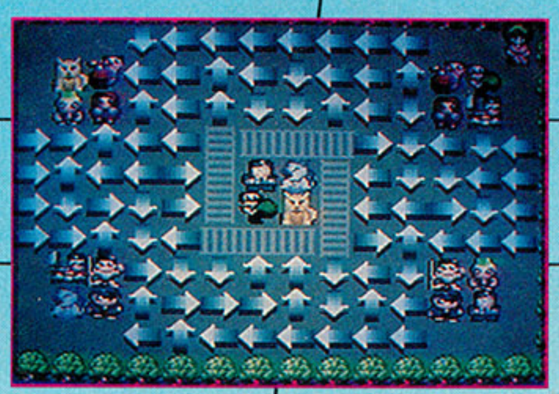

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destroyed. Each character has ten rounds to clear, but they don't have to be done sequentially—you may clear three for one character and then jump to a different scenario to work if you get stuck. All 60 must be cleared before you may advance, however. Advance? Yes, after the first 60, there is another set of 60 that is yours to conquer. The second 60 is accessible by typing in a given password, but *only* after you've beaten the first 60.

Each character's scenario begins with a short graphic storyline, after which it's time to get your brain in gear. Control of your character is simple; movement is along standard lines. One button is used to kick an object, and the other button is used to recall your last move (a handy option, believe me). The greater part of a round will probably consist of staring at the screen, trying to figure out what to kick first, where to kick it and looking ahead as much as possible to try and predict the outcome of each movement. Don't waste too much time, however. There is a time limit for each screen, and your score is partially based upon the time remaining when a round is completed. The lower levels of a scenario must be completed before the higher ones may be attempted, but a password feature is available so that progress made will not be lost.

The object of each round is to move matching figures into a position so that they may be kicked at one another, at which point they will slam into each other and disappear. Players must be careful not to trap objects in corners or put more than two together, or the objects then become impossible to move. While this may sound fairly easy, it is much more difficult when seen. Strategy and thinking ahead are the key, and even then, mistakes often require starting a round over completely. (This can be done at any time by hitting **RUN**.)

The game's visuals and audio are okay. The graphics and sound aren't the backbone of the game—playability is. The challenge of some of the puzzles contained within *Tricky Kick* will keep most people busy for quite some time. If you are looking for puzzle-solving challenge, this game provides it in a nice package—difficult, but nice. With 160 rounds, even the most experienced puzzle masters will find some challenge.

—Brent Walker

IGS
80 South Lake Ave., Suite 526
Pasadena, CA 91101
(818) 440-0626

Atomic Robo-Kid

TRECO
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

I thought I was bored with shoot-'em-ups. I mean, how many of these things do we need? How many alien invaders must we vaporize before everyone agrees that enough is enough already, time for something new?

So, when I loaded up *Atomic Robo-Kid*, I heaved a sigh and prepared for

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Battle Map

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2) What famous gang defeated the evil minister Gao Qiu and restored peace to the Song Empire?
(a) Hole in the Wall Gang (b) Bandit Kings of Ancient China (c) Gang of Four
3) What was the epic describing the power struggle at the end of China's second Han Dynasty called?
(a) Romance of the Three Kingdoms (b) I Ching (c) Godzilla
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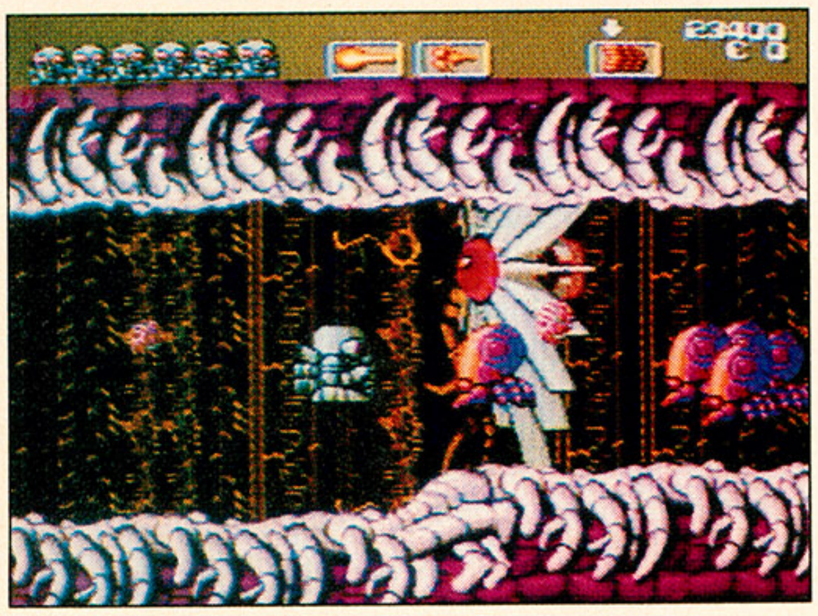


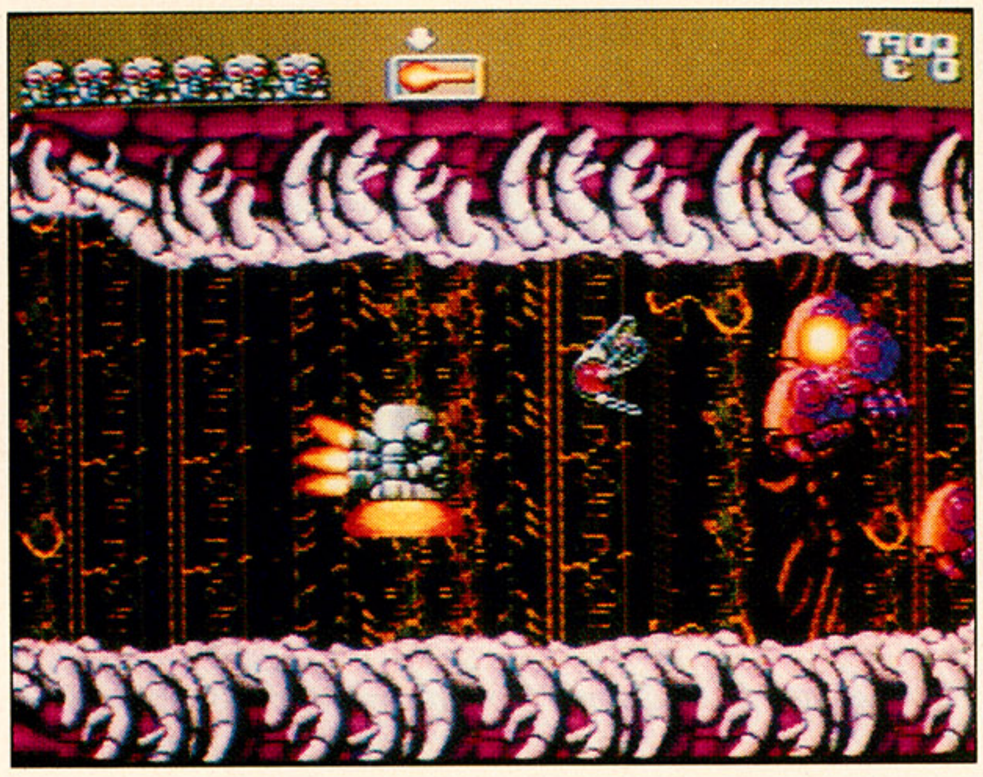
boredom on a par with watching reruns of *The Love Boat*. Another scrolling trek through blastathonland. Sigh. But to my surprise, I found that even though *Atomic Robo-Kid* is a shooter, it's also somewhat of a puzzle game. Having a lightning-like trigger finger is a plus, of course, but finding the right moves to get past obstacles and defeat enemies is also a large part of the challenge. What's more, the game doesn't employ the forced scrolling that's so typical of shooters. You can move forward (and backward) at will, planning your shots and maneuvering for the maximum advantage.

In addition, not all levels are in the usual horizontal or vertical strip orientations. A level (or "act" as they call them) may be a small room with a single enemy firing from behind some sort of obstacle.

Many types of enemies and obstacles grace the corridors and rooms of *Atomic Robo-Kid*, although they are not as varied as in some shooters. Some enemies zip through the air, firing like demons. Other enemies are permanently affixed to the walls and ceilings. Even the walls themselves may hide secrets. For example, some stone blocks can be disintegrated by your laser fire, revealing hidden passages.

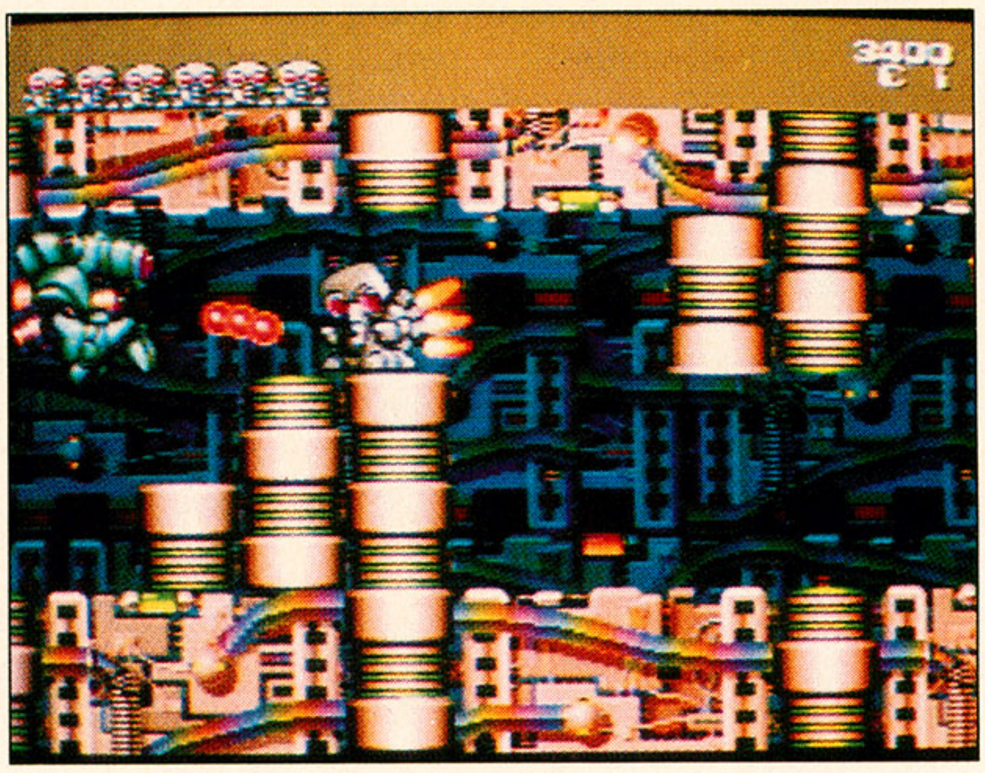
When shot, certain enemies release icons that you can scoop up to get additional weapons. Any weapons you grab are shown at the top of the screen and are available any time by pressing the "B" button on your controller. Unfortunately, when you get shot, you lose the weapon you're using—great incentive to stay out of trouble!

Weapons include a basic laser, a fire blaster, missiles and three-way lasers. Certain weapons are more effective in some areas than others. For example, the three-way laser is terrific for creaming enemies above or below your forward line of fire.



On most levels the graphics are outstanding, taking full advantage of Genesis' simulated three-dimensional displays. A few boss creatures are really extraordinary, huge, detailed machines with twisting arms and blinking lights. As good as the graphics are, the music is a major disappointment. The word "cheesy" comes to mind.

Most of the graphics in Treco's *Atomic Robo-Kid* take full advantage of the Genesis' capabilities.



In summary, *Atomic Robo-Kid*, with its top-notch graphics and captivating game play, is a shoot-'em-up worth your attention. It offers little that's new, but manages to combine several

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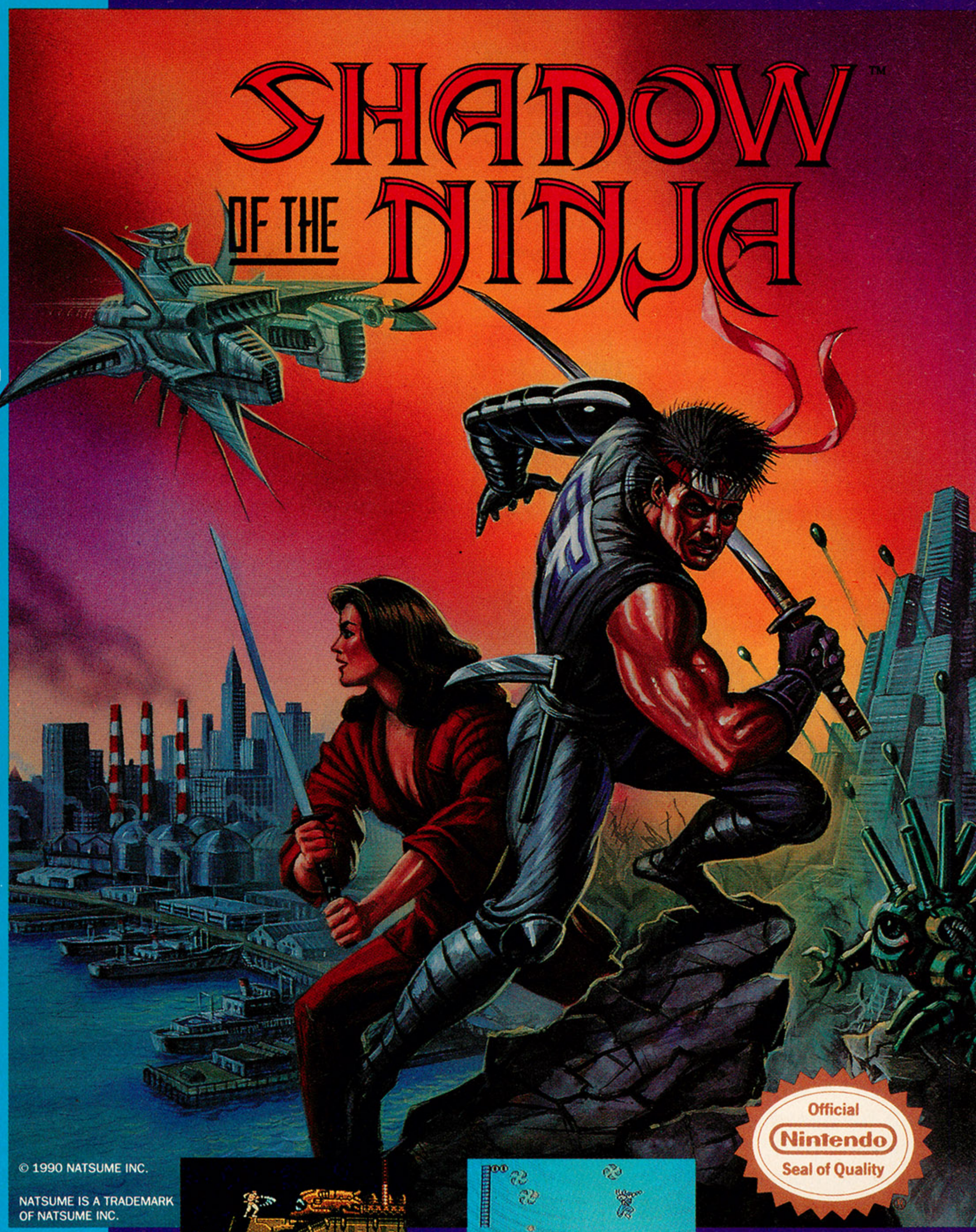

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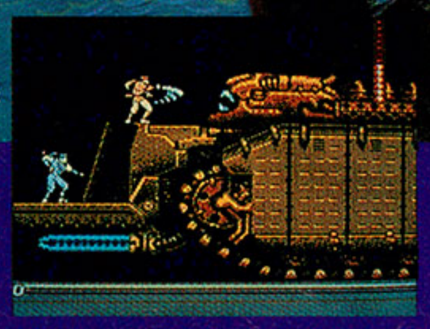

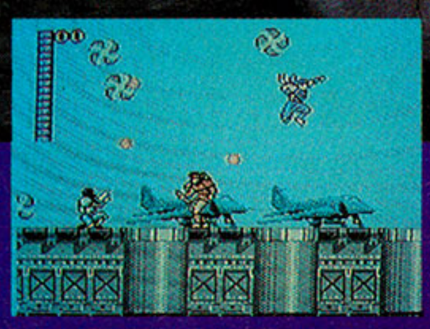

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themes to form a game that's not run-of-the-mill.

—C. W.

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Hatris

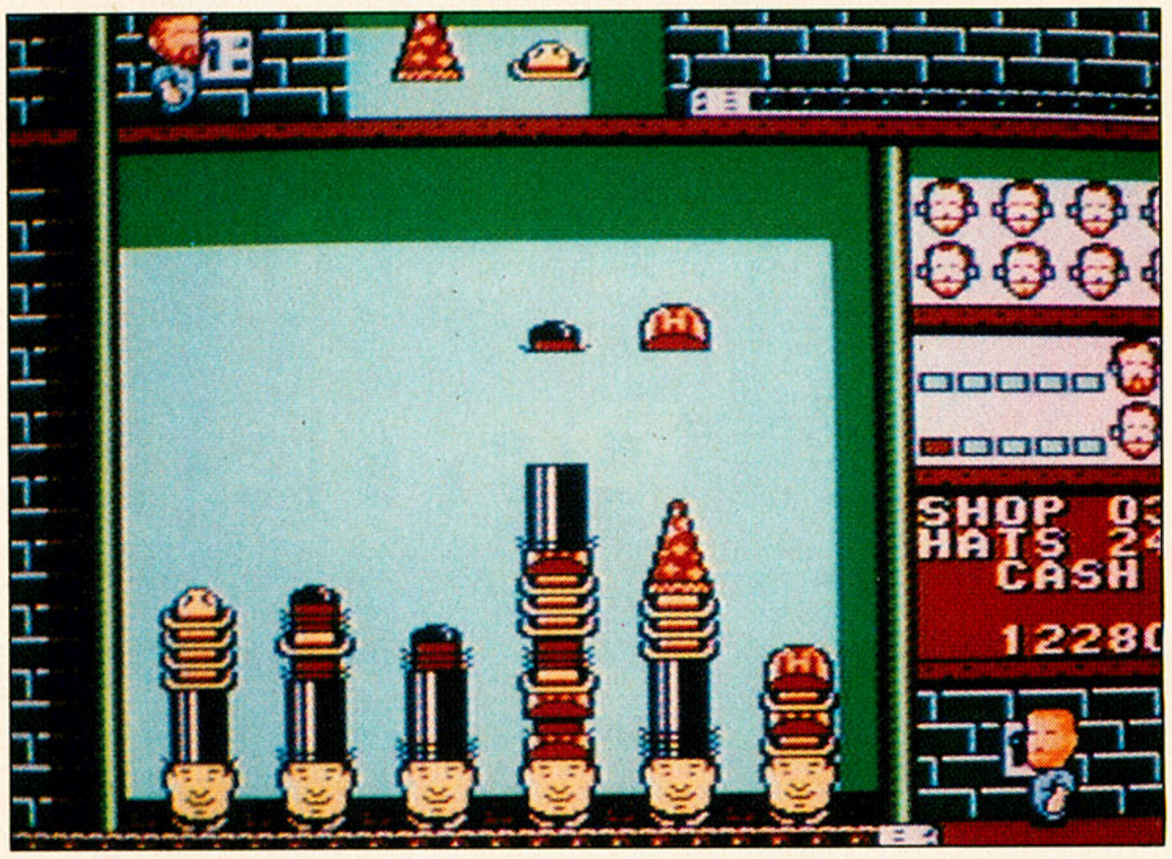
BULLET-PROOF SOFTWARE
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

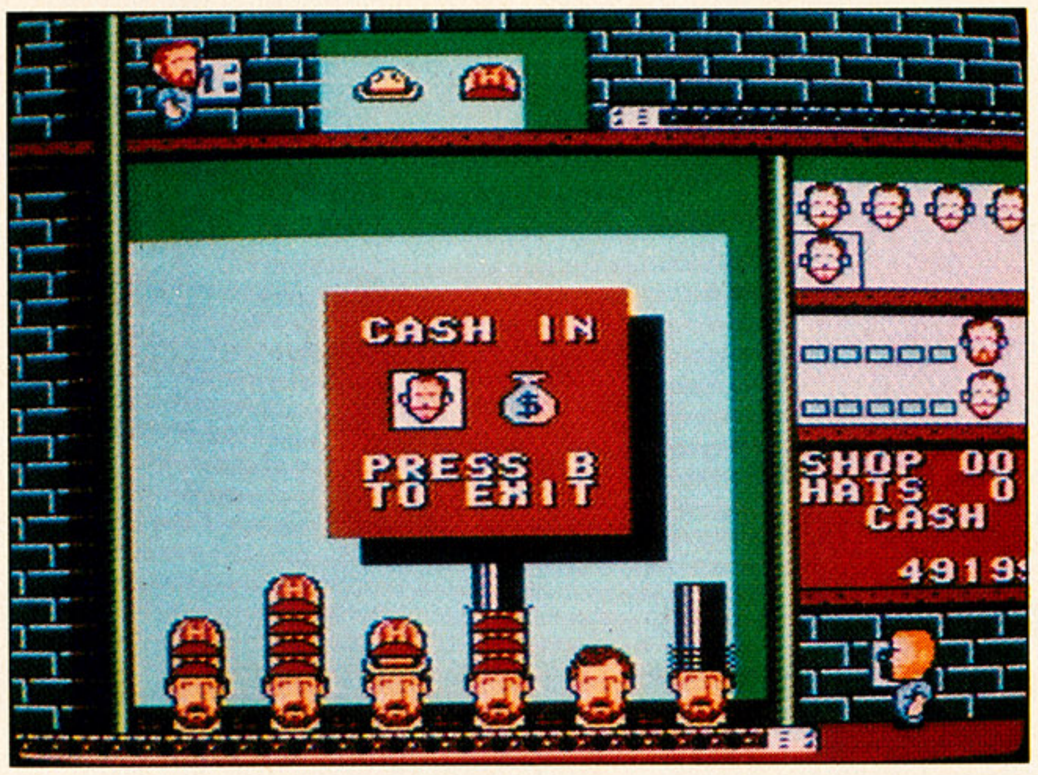
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Ever since the release of *Tetris* a couple of years ago, Soviet programmers Alexey Pajitnov and Vladimir Pokhilko have been riding high on the subsequent success of this innovative game. Their follow-up, *Welltris*, was merely a 3-D sequel to the original *Tetris*, somewhat complicating a concept that was praised for its simplicity. Now there's *Hatris*, their fourth "*-tris*" title. In *Tetris* and *Welltris*, the object of these games involved the manipulating and stacking of geometric squares or cubes. With *Hatris*, Pajitnov and Pokhilko don't really stretch this basic idea far: This time you stack hats.

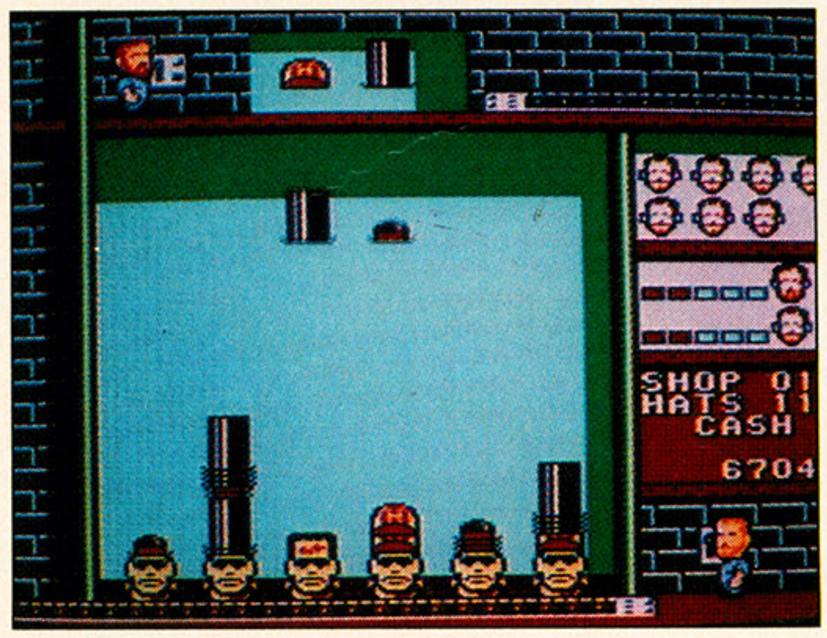
The setting is a hat shop. A pair of hats drop from the top of the screen and must be stacked on two of the six heads below. As the game progresses, the object is to stack hats onto others of the same type. The places of the two falling hats can be swapped, if necessary. If five in a row are stacked in this way, the hats will automatically be removed and points awarded to your score as cash earned from a "sale." Points are doubled when two stacks of five hats are formed at once, which is referred to as a "hatris."

The hats that drop are a random combination of any two of six hat types: a top hat, baseball cap, cowboy hat, bowler, wizard's hat or royal crown. A window indicates what hats will be descending after you stack the present pair, but you're never sure what combination the upcoming hats will be. Like its predecessor *Tetris*, the object of *Hatris* sounds easier than it really is. With the random hat pairs,





Bullet-Proof Software has brought yet another one of Alexey Pajitnov's puzzling creations to the NES with *Hatris*.



many times you'll be forced to stack hats that are not alike atop one another. This causes the hats to pile up quickly, and if a stack of hats reaches the top of the screen, the game ends.

The idea is to keep these piles as low as possible by stacking five of the same in a row. Do this successfully 25 times, and you'll be advanced to the next stage, where the hats fall faster. Finishing ten stages will take you to the next shop. Not only does the speed increase even more here but the combination and number of hat types does too. Ten stages and six shops are available, any

A CLUE TO THE SIZE OF YOUR ENEMIES IN OUR NEW GAME.

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one of which may be selected to start the game.

In what has to be one of the oddest displays of video narcissism, on-screen alter egos of Pajitnov and Pokhilko are available to help you out. The creators of *Hatris* are depicted as cartoony caricatures. Stacking five certain kinds of hats five times will earn you a "helper," represented as the face of either Pajitnov or Pokhilko. Using one of your Pajitnov helpers will enable you to make Alexey Pajitnov remove up to five hats, thus, lowering hat piles. Vladimir Pokhilko will switch around the places of two piles of your choice.

Stage- and shop-selection functions are similar to the level choices that can be made on *Tetris*. Graphics are substantial—without being too flashy nor overly simplistic. In addition, subtle niceties have been added to keep the pace of the game going. The heads change into a different face after every completed stage. An option has been provided that will accelerate the speed of all the stage and shop levels, heightening the difficulty for expert players.

Though *Hatris* doesn't look at all like *Tetris*, its game play—switching and stacking descending objects—will remind you of it. Of course, there will probably never be a worthy successor to *Tetris*; *Hatris* definitely isn't it. Alexey Pajitnov and Vladimir Pokhilko have not created anything really original here. But what they have done is made a unique wrinkle to the basic premise behind *Tetris*—and a very playable one at that too.

—H. H. W.

Bullet-Proof Software
8337 154th Ave., N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 861-9200

Veigues Tactical Gladiator

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

If the current crop of space-based video games is any indication, the world of the future will be a deadly place to live. As Veigues, you have been given a formidable, but familiar task—save all of mankind.

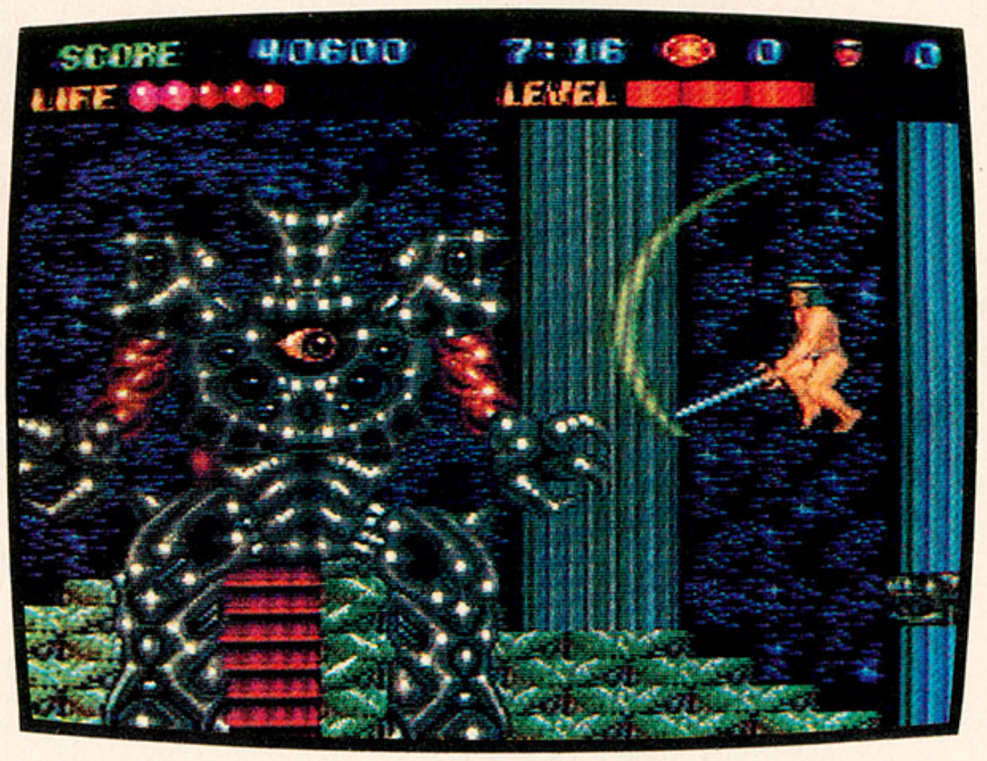
In 2321 AD, in this futuristic world, the Earth was invaded by mysterious aliens who appeared from the depths of the cosmos. Entire populations were wiped out, and the Federation's army was *whupped*! It is now 2324, and scientists have gained a glimpse into the alien's technology thanks to a weapon that has been captured. They have managed to outfit you with the Veigues fighting machine, with which you must launch a counterattack in an effort to defeat the aliens.

Veigues is represented by a large robotic character of sorts, not unlike the Transformer type you may be familiar with. Although your robot doesn't turn into a toaster or some other such nifty device, he is equipped with a few powerful weapons. On one hand (your left one), you have a "field punch," a punch in the direction that you are facing that does moderate damage if you manage to connect. There are six different levels for this weapon, and each increase improves the range of your punch. The second weapon is basically a "beam gun" that allows you to shoot to the right or left, again depending upon your direction.

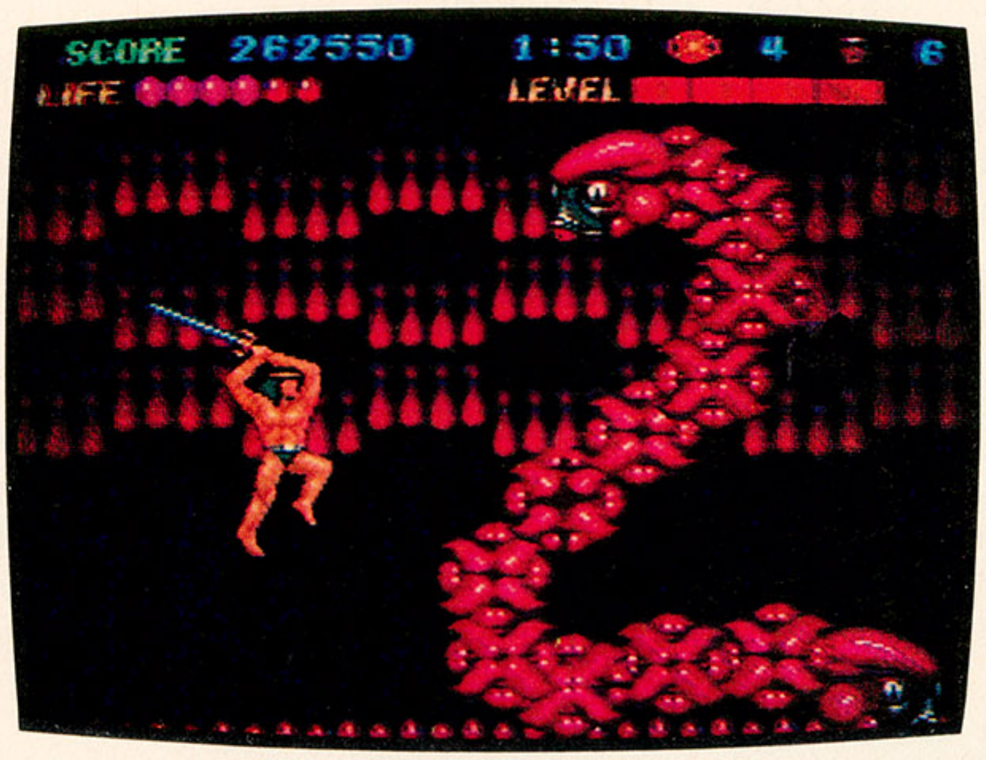
Though the premise of saving all of mankind in a video game is nothing new, NEC's treatment in *Veigues Tactical Gladiator*, that of being a Transformer-like robot with varied weaponry, is pretty fresh.

AND IF YOU THINK YOU STAND A CHANCE, YOU'RE CLUELESS.

Evil rules the land. Destruction is everywhere. You're Prince Sirius. You know there's only one way to bring peace to your kingdom. Fight like there's no



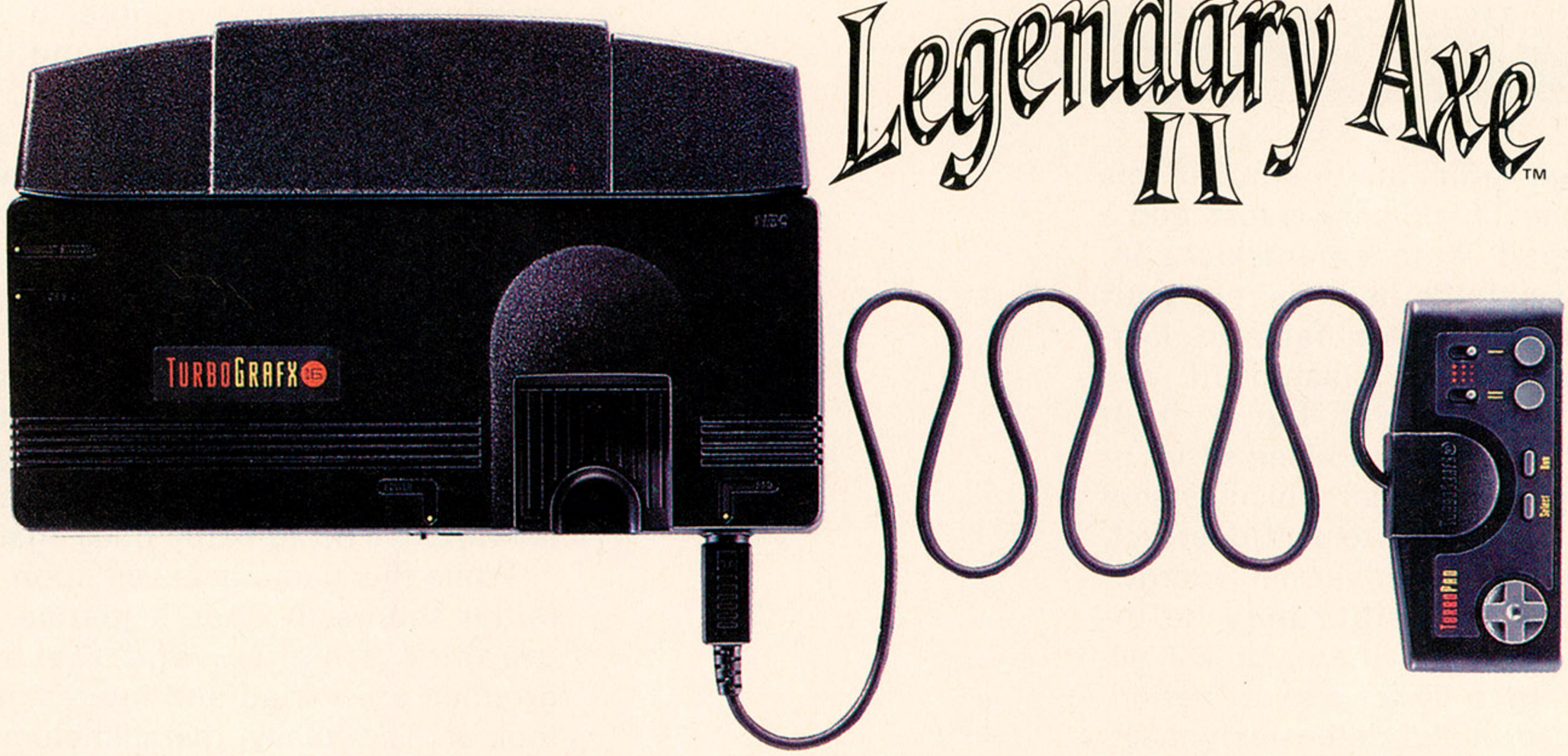
tomorrow. But you must face the most formidable opponents you've ever seen. Like this mega boss that the evil Prince Zach actually hides inside. Swing



quickly or become chopped liver.

Down in the Crypts of slime, you'll find a serious serpent. His fangs can give you the kiss of death. In this game, the bosses are bigger and more vicious than ever before. One word of advice: Walk softly and carry a big axe.

Legendary Axe II™



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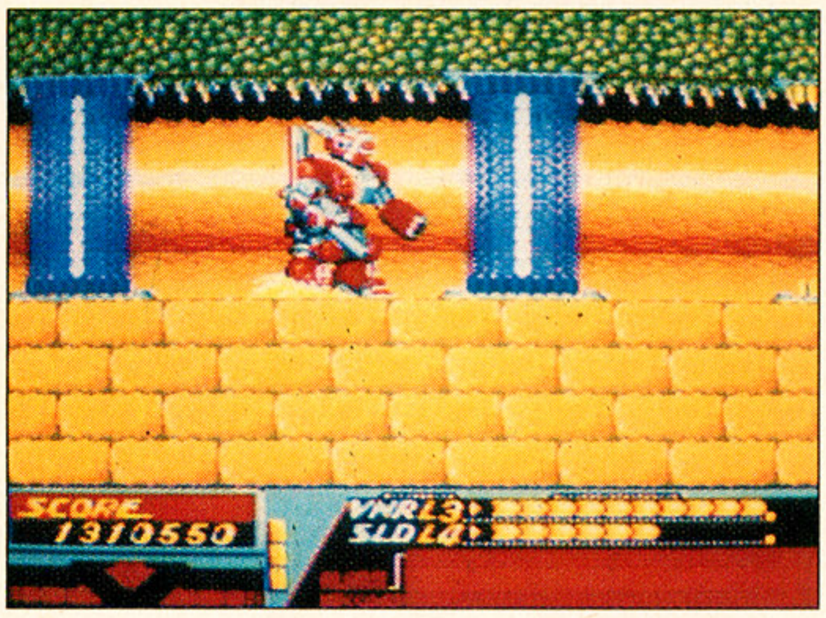
NEC

There are six different types of guns, varying from laser to plasma and differing in their destructive strengths. They are given automatically between rounds and can't be dropped or lost. An "energy vulcan gun" is also strapped to your chest, which may be aimed in any direction. This weapon is particularly useful for wiping out enemies that move along at ground level. There are only three power levels for this weapon.

For defensive measures, "shield packs" are available that will absorb a hit and slowly recharge themselves over time. Up to six packs may be accumulated at any one time and are only used up when damage pushes



the damage indicator to zero. If this happens, that shield pack is lost, and a fully charged replacement kicks in. Once your shields have failed, your body armament is vulnerable to damage. If your head is blasted off, you may continue to fight, but without your radar. You may also lose either or both of your arms, after which system damage causes you to self-destruct. By building up your "vernier energy" power, jumping ability may be increased to the point where you will actually be able to fly for a short period, which is also useful defensively. Lastly, you are impervious to damage when changing direction, and while it may sound strange, it may be the only way to make it through some areas alive.

Your mission is simple—make it through ten different areas in order to reach the enemy's headquarters and defeat them. Your battles will take place in many different locals. Be prepared to dodge flying fireballs, wade through lakes and jump over blistering lava pools, all the while trying to blast the aliens and dodge their returning

The later rounds in *Veigues Tactical Gladiator* will keep you bouncing on your robotic toes.

fire. Your enemies will come from the sky, land, water and from any direction. The "3-D Searching Radar Window" will indicate the direction your next attack will be from, as long as your head is intact. The "Alarm Message Window" is helpful in indicating injury status and other enemy energy sources, as well as displaying the area that Veigues is currently traveling through. Two bar graphs display your remaining shield and vernier energy, both of which recharge at different speeds.

When an area is completed, several things take place. You are awarded bonus points for shield strength remaining and for the number of enemies wiped out in that round. This last statistic is very important. The number of power units that are used to build up your abilities is directly proportional to the number of enemy dead. If you sandbag through a round, don't expect many units! If it's applicable, a better beam gun is provided, and you are given the opportunity to increase the power of any of your weapons or your vernier (jumping) ability or rebuild your shields. Afterward, it's off to battle once again!

While this game is based upon a familiar theme, it does it justice. The graphics are nice, and the backgrounds are varied and interesting to look at. The heavy, metallic clumping of your feet as they hit the ground is great, as are other sound effects. While a two-player option would have been nice, as well as a continue feature, the game play makes *Veigues* a solid, fun game. The first couple of rounds are fairly easy, but don't worry; later rounds will keep you bouncing on your robotic toes.

—B. W.

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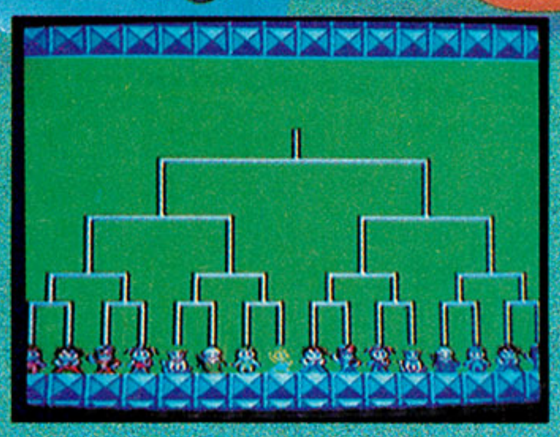

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CIRCLE #137 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

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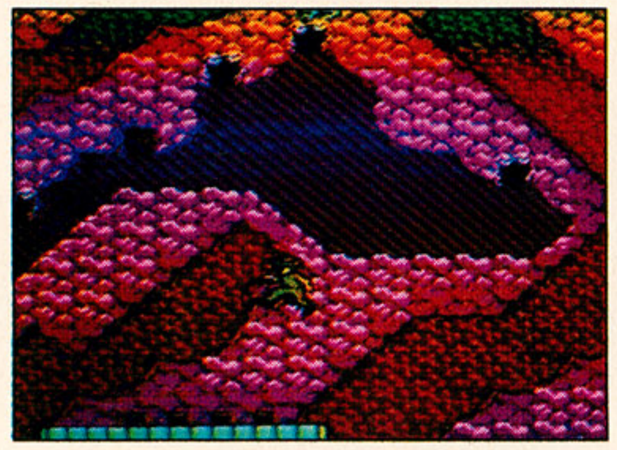
Attn: *Tip Sheet*

by Donn Nauert



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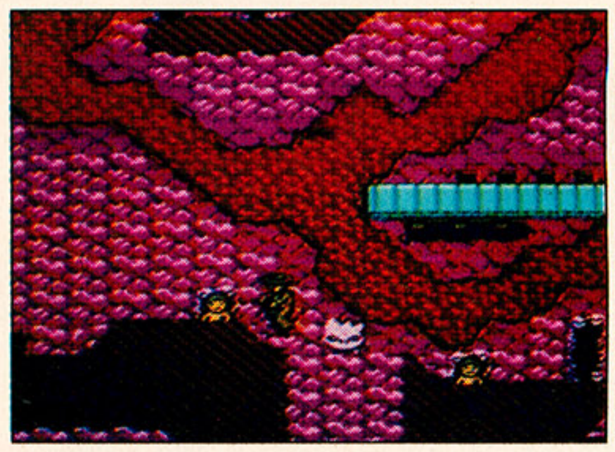

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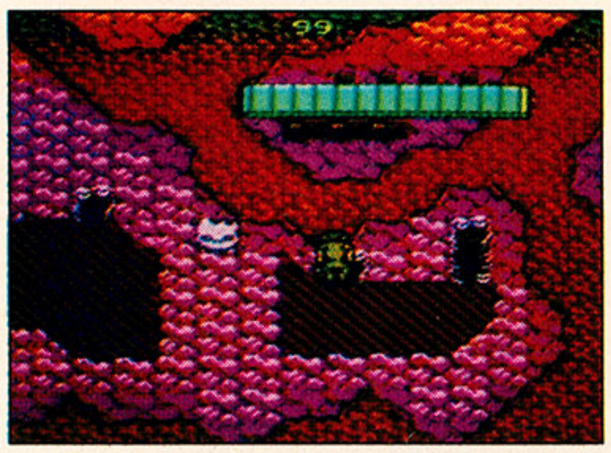

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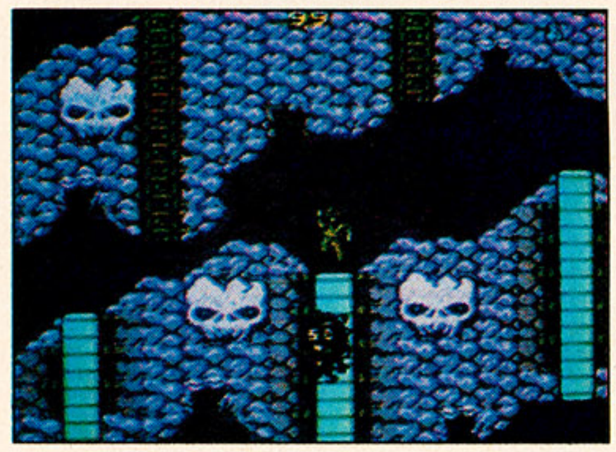

4

***You can warp ahead and get extra men easily in Mindscape's* Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.**

I purchased the Mindscape version of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, for the NES, about six months ago and haven't seen the end. Have you got any Easter eggs, tips or secret password screens for this game?

—Diego de Fuentes Ceballos
Col. Bosques de la Herradura,
Mexico

There are no passwords for Indy *but there are secret warps that will take you to various waves, even as high as Wave 9. To get to the door that will warp you there, enter the hidden door found in Wave 1 (throw a bomb against the wall where the arrow is pointing). This will take you to Wave S2. From there, work your way to the spot indicated by the photo marked* ***1****, and make a jump diagonally down and left to the conveyor belt. Once you're on the conveyor belt, you can either make a jump to the right (this will allow you to get all the children for a 10,000-point bonus) or you can jump to the left (which is the easier jump of the two). Then, shoot the skull to expose a ring and throw a bomb to get rid of the spikes. You'll then have a clear path to the door to Wave 9.*

The most important thing to remember on this wave (S2) is to collect all of the map pieces. Of the 26 maps you need for Wave 10, 25 can be found in Wave S2. The last one is found in Wave 9. When you get to Wave 9 you can gain a lot of extra men because of the way the conveyor belts are set up. Try to get all three Thuggee guards going up the same belt, and whip them as shown in photo ***4****. This is something that can be done repeatedly. But be careful:* Do not get 128 men, *or your game automatically resets. This is an unfortunate bug in the game.*

As soon as you enter the door completing Wave 9, you'll be shown a map. Copy this map. It will lead you to

continued on page 90

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?

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G.A.T. QUESTION #1

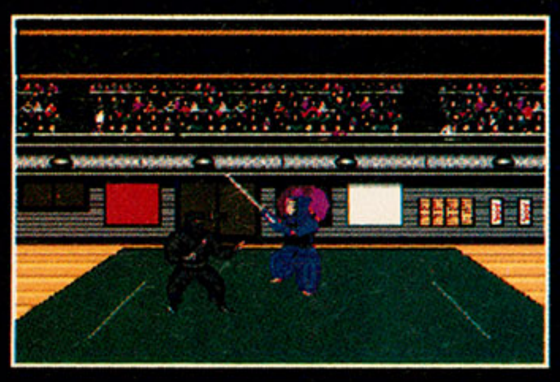
Q: IN POPULOUS,™ WHICH DISASTER *CAN'T* YOU UNLEASH:

A. Catastrophic earthquakes
B. Erupting volcanoes
C. Whopping great cataclysmic floods
D. Oozing, pestilential swamps
E. World-wide acne epidemic

G.A.T. QUESTION #2

Q: BUDOKAN THE MARTIAL SPIRIT™ FEATURES KARATE, BO, NUNCHAKU, AND KENDO. EACH MARTIAL ART HAS OVER ___ UNIQUE MOVES:

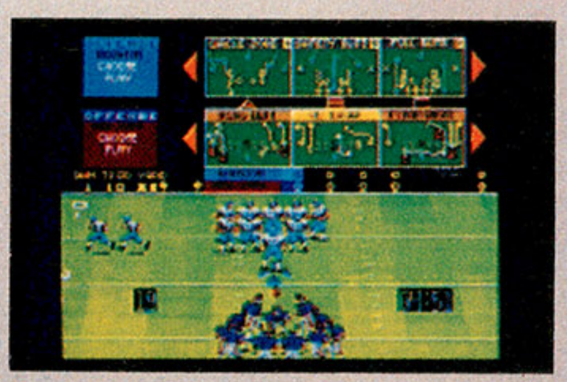
A. 10
B. $E = mc^2$
C. 16
D. π
E. 25



G.A.T. QUESTION #3

Q: IN JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL,™ THE ONLY THING YOU *CAN'T* MAKE YOUR PLAYERS DO IS:

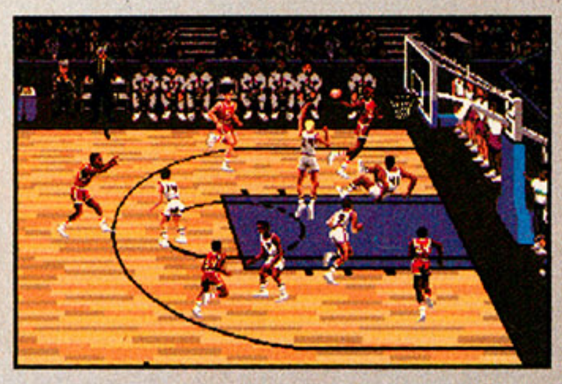
A. Call 100 different pro plays from John Madden's playbook
B. Hit hard, hit often, hit mean
C. Sell popcorn at the game
D. Dive, spin, jump, break tackles, and call audibles
E. Tough it out in the mud or snow to win Super Sunday



G.A.T. QUESTION #4

Q: IN LAKERS VS. CELTICS AND THE NBA® PLAYOFFS,™ YOU CAN MASTER:

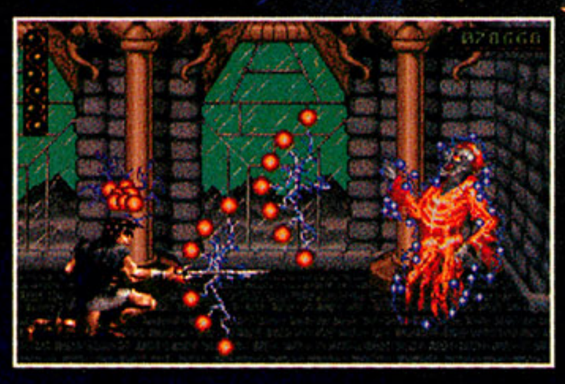
A. Michael Jordan's awesome air reverse slam
B. Charles Barkley's monstrous gorilla dunk
C. Isiah Thomas' slashing drive and finger-roll
D. Clyde the Glide's ferocious tomahawk jam
E. All of the above



G.A.T. QUESTION #5

Q: THE ___ IS THE CENTRAL WEAPON IN SWORD OF SODAN™:

A. Enchanted sword
B. Killer parakeet
C. Industrial strength chainsaw
D. Small to medium-sized thermonuclear device
E. Rubber chicken



G.A.T. QUESTION #6

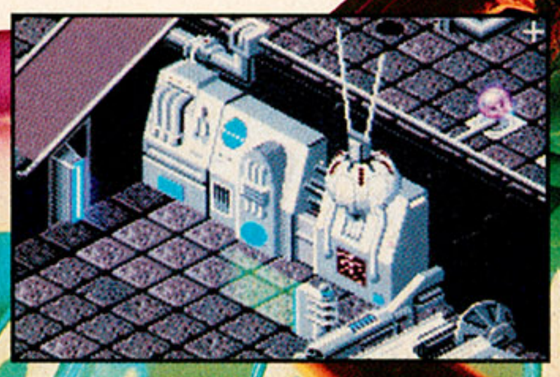
Q: BATTLE SQUADRON™ IS:

A. An underwater chess game requiring wit and a large lung capacity
B. Two Sopwith Camels and a Messerschmidt fighting a horde of locusts
C. A World War II simulation with genuine film footage
D. A rapid-fire space combat game with bodacious graphics
E. None of the above

G.A.T. QUESTION #7

Q: IN ZANY GOLF,™ PLAYERS OVERCOME OBSTACLES LIKE:

A. Land mines, hot dogs, and swamp shrews
B. Lasers, hamburgers, and moving holes
C. Gravity, relativity, and math anxiety
D. Terrorists, aliens, and dingo smugglers
E. Adolescence, socialization, and genetic inheritance



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continued from page 86

the hidden door to Wave 11 (there are 12 waves in the game). There are six different rooms in Wave 10, but with 127 men, I'm sure you will be able to find your way.

In *Ghostbusters* for the Sega Genesis, I've found it impossible to defeat the boss ghost in the final case, "Deep Hole." Can you please give me some tips on how to defeat the boss ghost?

—James Lee
Lincolnwood, Illinois

Obviously, you want to try to get to the final case with as many continues as possible. One of the first things you want to do is get as much money as you can by entering the play area and opening the chest, exiting the playfield, then re-entering. The chest will return unopened, and you'll obtain more cash.

To defeat the final boss, "Janna," use the three-way, wait for her to stop flashing, then begin firing so that the center shot hits just below the heart. When she eventually throws the heart, you can move back a little to avoid it by walking or ducking underneath it. Resume firing, but this time shoot for the face. Janna will then throw a dagger at you. All you have to do is duck down, wait for the dagger to return and start firing on the heart again. Repeat this sequence until the headpiece begins to float and one of her arms falls off. At this point, the headpiece will float back and forth on the screen, throwing daggers at you along the way. Hopefully, you've used your three-way wisely and will have some energy left to use the three-way on the skull at the top of the headpiece, which is the target this time. After defeating the second Janna, you'll receive the Storms' Calm and the game will end.

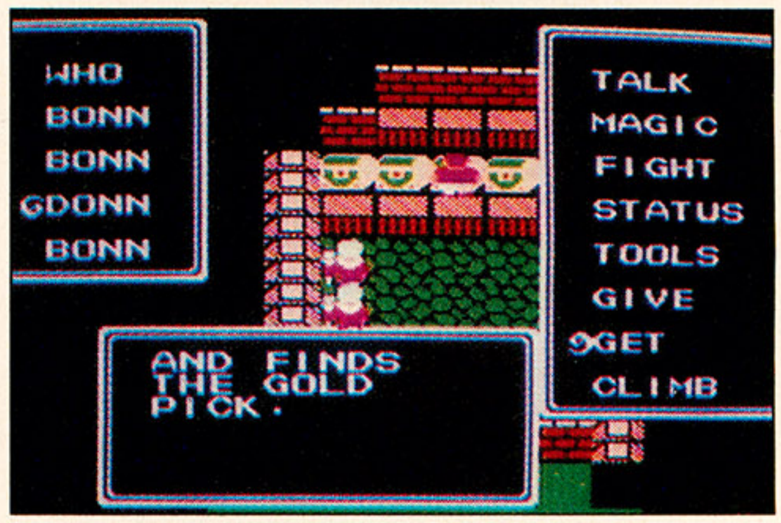
Defeating the final boss ghost in Sega's Ghostbusters *isn't as hard as it first appears.*

I'm having trouble with the FCI game *Ultima Exodus* for the NES—trouble with a capital "T." I want to ask where the mysterious town called Dawn is, where the silver and gold picks are and what do the picks do? I'm also having trouble locating all the marks and cards. This is probably the toughest game I've played so far. I hope you can solve this puzzling game and answer my questions.

—Joe Vongdaraxay
Marlboro, Tennessee

The clue telling you the exact location of Dawn is in Lord British's castle. If you go behind the door with the guard in front of it, you'll eventually find a man standing in a pool of lava (the red stuff). If you have the Mark of Fire, you can walk across the lava and talk to the man. The location is seven steps west and 35 steps south from Lord British's castle. Once you get to that location, press the "B" button repeatedly until you have two new *(or no) moons showing.*

The silver and gold picks are used to obtain the mystic sword and the mystic armor. The silver pick can be found in a treasure chest on the eighth floor in the Cave of Death, which is due north of Lord British's castle. The gold pick can be found behind the counter of the guild shop in the town of Dawn. You'll have



FCI's Ultima Exodus is an intricate game, but it's not impossible to beat if you discover all the clues you need.

to use the command "GET," but if you're caught "stealing" the chest, the guards will come after you. It'll help to have plenty of Sands of Time with you for this one.

The mystic sword and armor can both be found on two tiny (and separate) islands in the ocean. And, yes, you can use the picks as many times as you need until you find the mystic items. All the marks can be found on the eighth floor of the caves, though some can be found on floors higher than that.

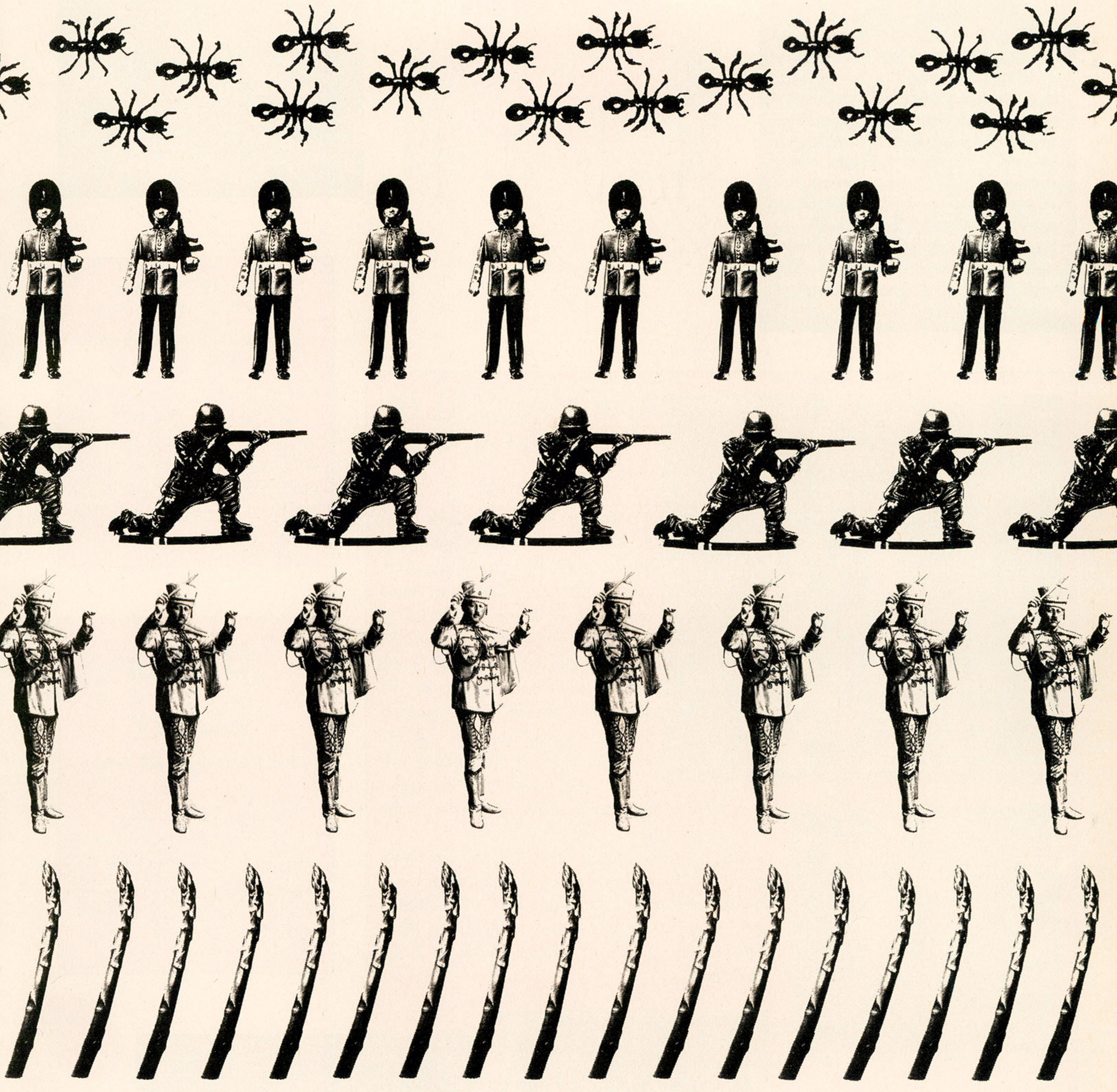
The easiest one to get to is the Mark of the King; you can find that one on the first floor of the Cave of Gold as well as on the eighth floor, along with the Mark of Fire. The Mark of Fire can also be found in the Cave of Sol, not too far from the Mark of the Snake. This is also the only *place where you can find the Mark of the Snake—both are on the eighth floor. You must have the Mark of the Snake (and the Silver Horn) to get by the giant serpent guarding the entrance to Exodus's castle.*

The Mark of Force can be found on the eighth floor of the Cave of Fire and Cave of Fools. You need this mark to walk over the blue force fields, which look like water. The cards can be found in the Shrines of Ambrosia. Once in a shrine, at the counter next to the priest, pray and you'll receive one of the four cards. The cards are used to defeat Exodus himself.

Good luck!

YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT THIS GAME?

YOU AND WHAT ARMY?



TURBO 16 GRAFX™

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CIRCLE #139 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

EASTER EGG HUNT

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

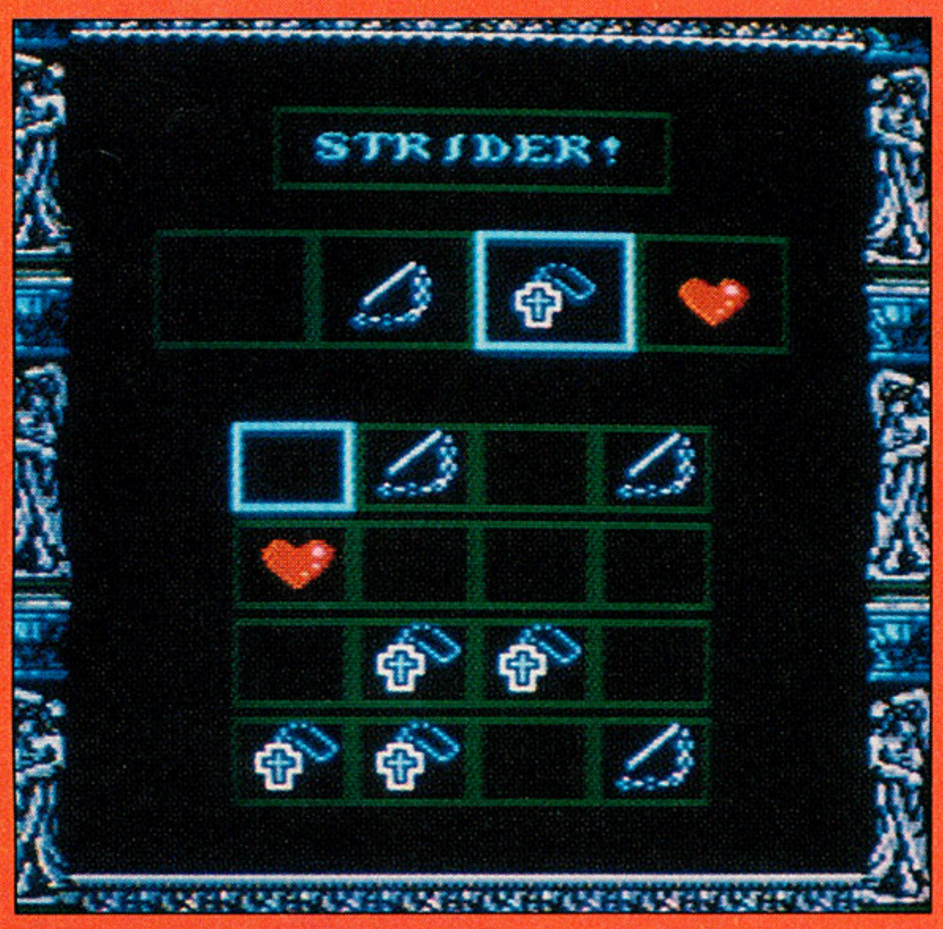
Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

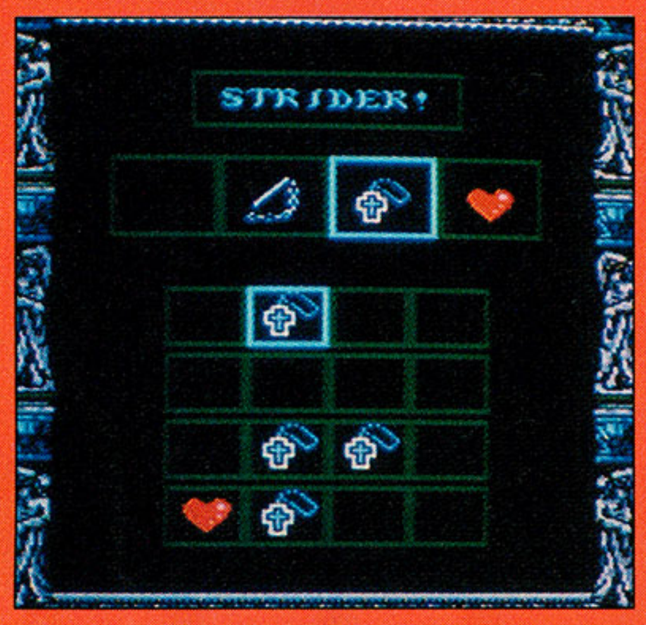
Castlevania III

KONAMI FOR THE NES

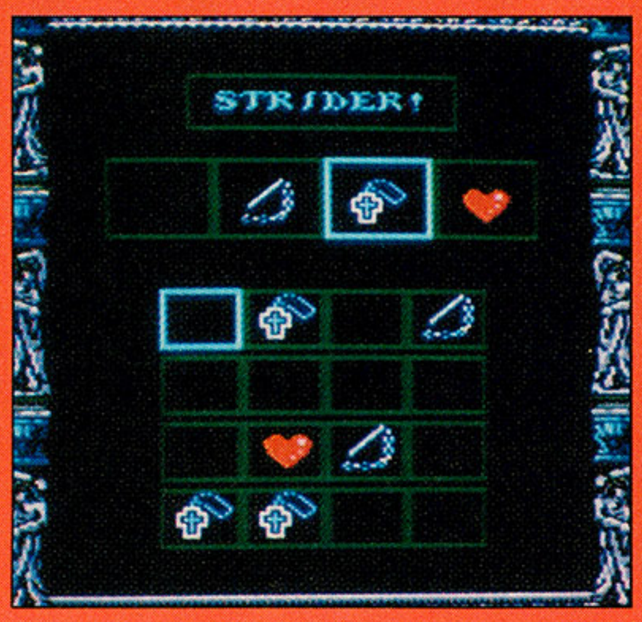


Strider Prime, of Daly City, California, sent in these passwords for the latest game in the *Castlevania* series. For all three of these codes you must enter "STRIDER!" as your name for them to work. To reach the pirate, enter a whip in the second and fourth spaces on the first line at the top. On the second line enter a heart in the first space. Place a cross in the second and third spaces on the third line, crosses in the first and second space and a whip in the fourth space on the final line.

For the witch, enter a cross in the second space and a whip in the fourth space of the first line. Leave the second line blank. For the third line, place a heart in the second space and a whip in the third. Put crosses in the first and second spaces of the fourth line.



To reach Dracula, enter a cross in the second space on the first line. Then leave the second line blank, and enter crosses in the second and third spaces of the third line. On the fourth line enter a heart in the first space and a cross in the second space to finish the game.



S.C.I.

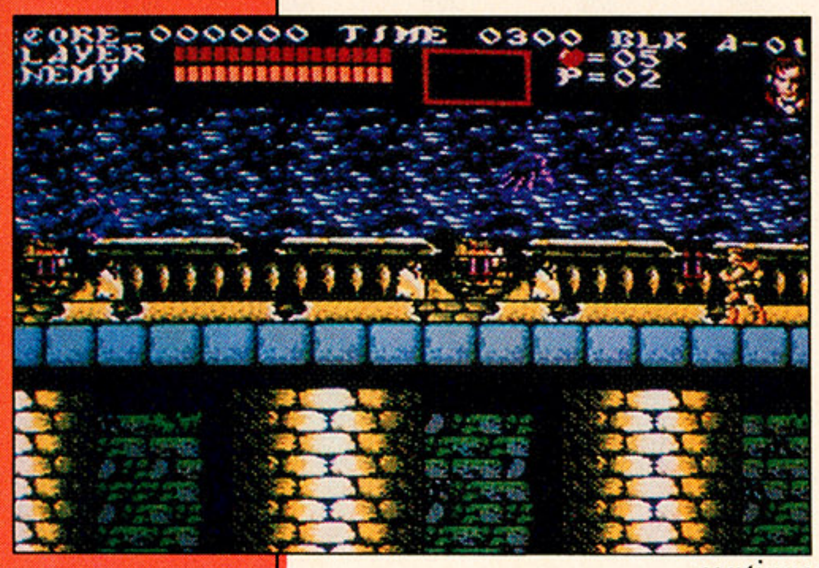
FOR THE TAITO ARCADE GAME

Get 90 points—no more and no less—then let your time run out, and don't continue your game. You'll automatically receive a score of 76,543,210 points.

Shadow Dancer

FOR THE SEGA ARCADE GAME

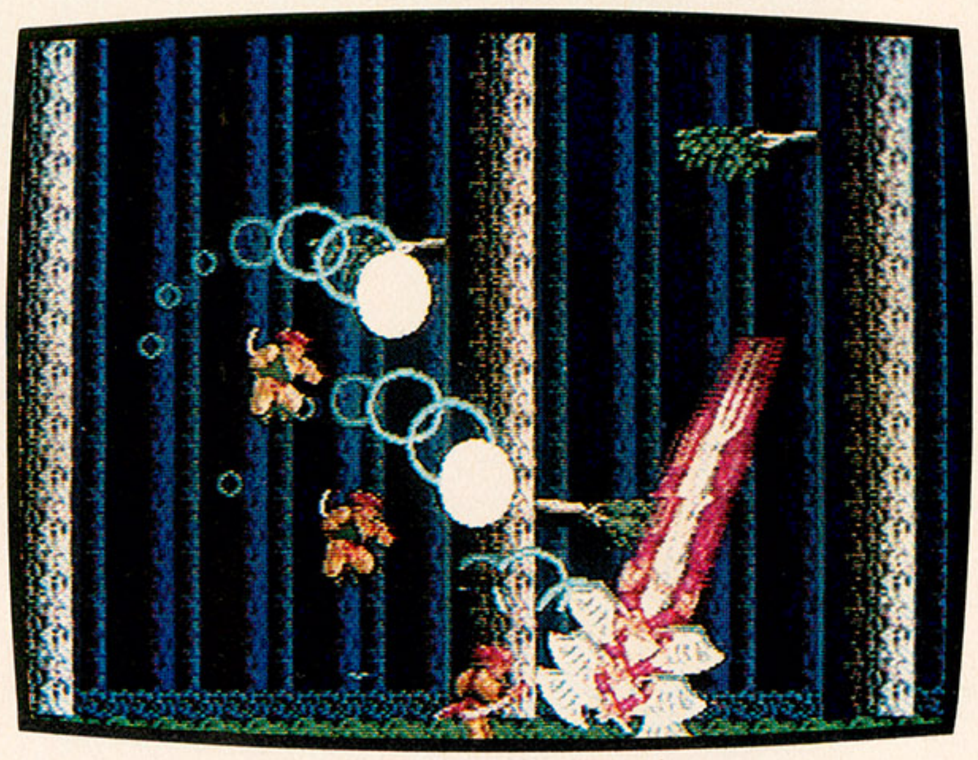
In Shinobi, if you can clear a stage using your sword, you will receive 20,000 bonus points, but Shadow Dancer will give you 100,000 bonus points.



continued on page 94

AN ARMY OF NINJA SPIRITS WOULD BE YOUR BEST BET.

Right before your very eyes, your father has been murdered. You must seek revenge. You're Moonlight, the avenging Ninja.

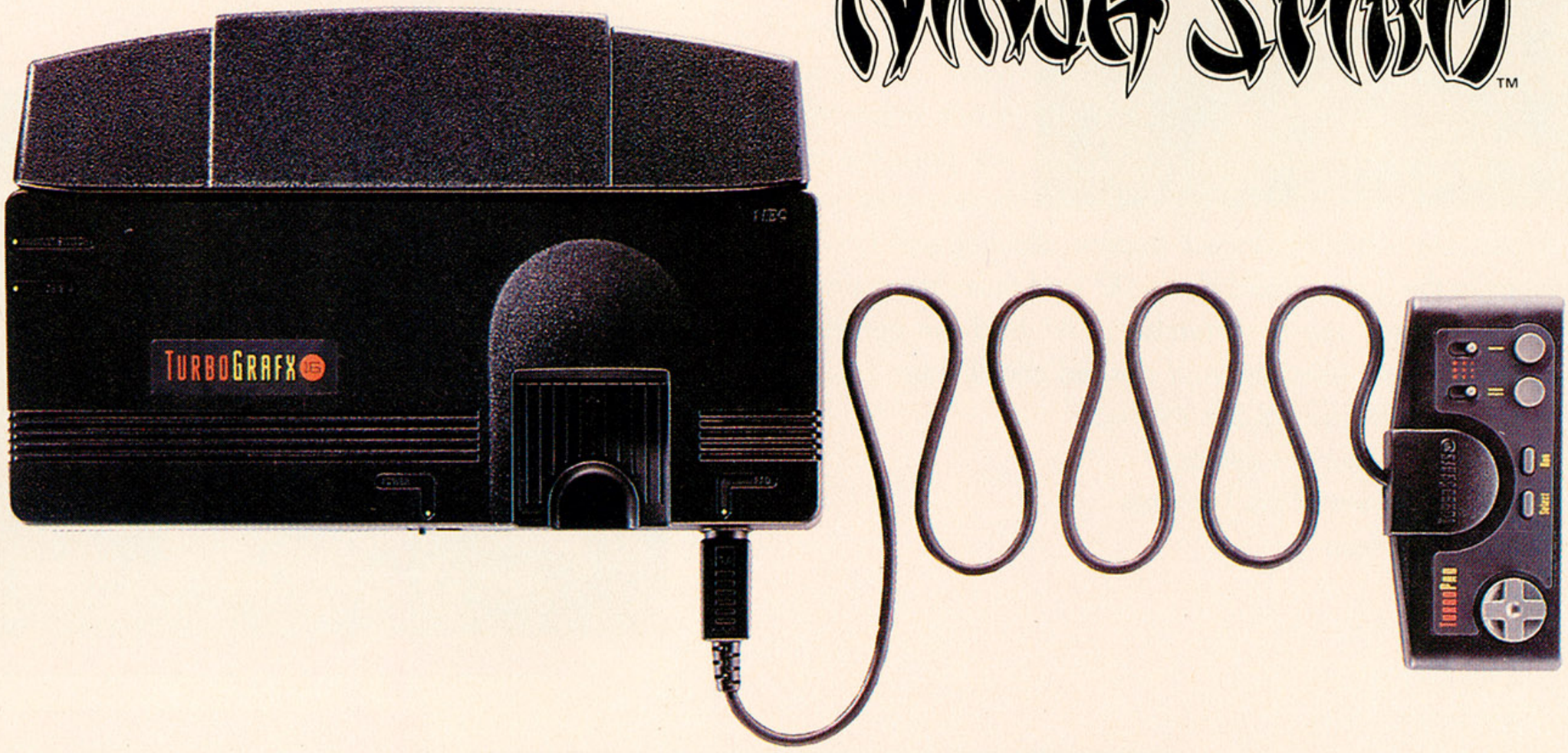


You can't fight the dark side alone. You need help from Ninja spirits to defeat the evil that awaits. Avoid the Two-axed ogre, or you're sliced bologna.

When you meet Asura the Guardian Diety of the Temple, jump, slash, and swing like a madman. He's the long arms of the law.

You won't get far without an army of Ninja spirits at your side. Remember: It's up to the dead to keep you alive.

Ninja Spirit™



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Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboGrafx-16 system is $159.99.

CIRCLE #140 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

TURBO 16 GRAFX™
NEC

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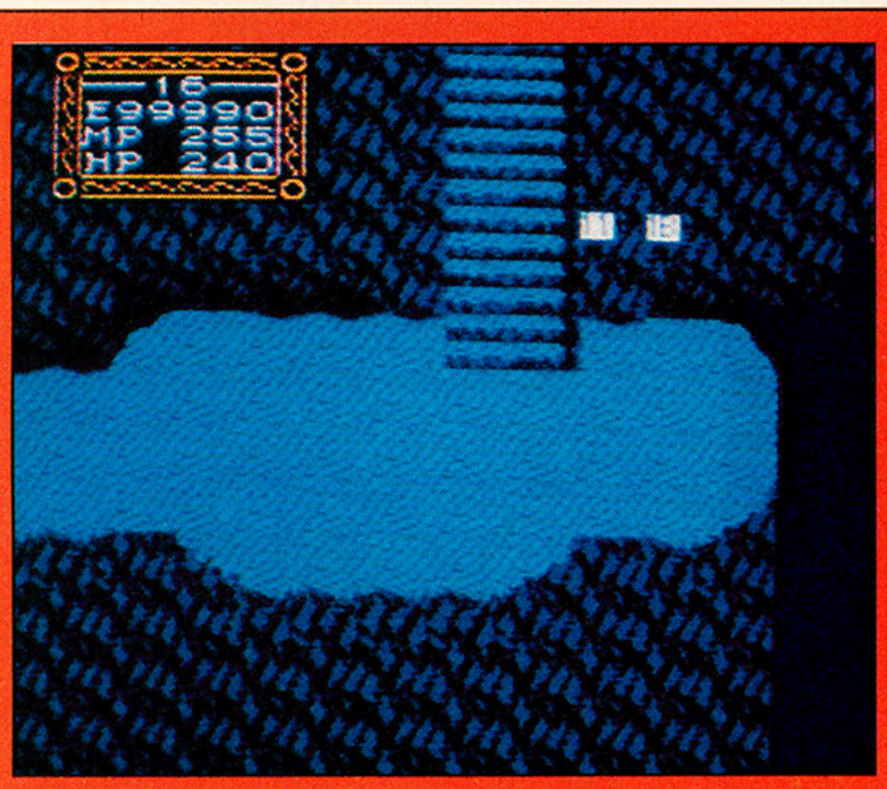
Military Madness

NEC FOR THE TG-16

Here's an Easter egg, sent in by Michael Sweda of Tucson, Arizona, that will allow you to switch sides with the computer. He says to do the following. First choose one-player continue during the game-select mode, press and hold SELECT and press the I button, then type in the level you would like to play. To have the computer play both sides: Choose two-player continue, press and hold SELECT, press the I button, then enter the password for the level you would like to play. Be warned that the computer will not show you how to beat a particular level, but it can provide some valuable hints in planning a strategy.



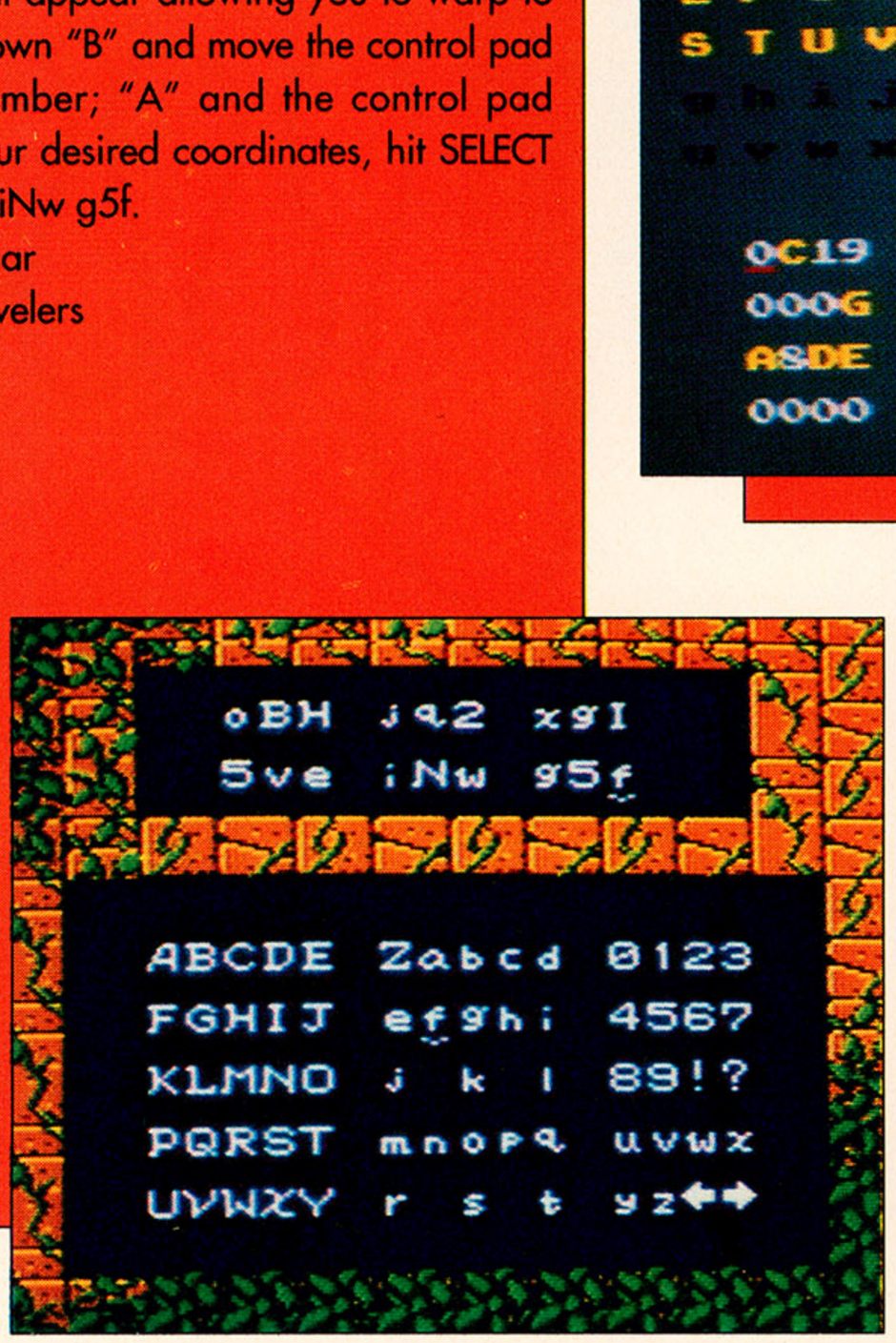
Willow

CAPCOM FOR THE NES

David Cable sent in this egg that will allow you to start the game at Level 16 near Nockmaar. More important, if you press the SELECT button once you get to a game screen, two white blocks will appear allowing you to warp to various locations in the game. (Hold down "B" and move the control pad up and down to change the first number; "A" and the control pad changes the second. After selecting your desired coordinates, hit SELECT to warp.) The code is: oBH jq2 xgl 5ve iNw g5f.

Input: 0,18 for the gates of Nockmaar
A, 9 for the Tavern of the Travelers
F, 19 for Tir Asleen
13,F for Dew
1A, E for Newlyn
13, 3 for Po's house
8, 3 for Twins Tower
C, 10 for Thunder Cabin
18, 1B for Abang's Room
0,13 for Bavmorda's Guard
11,1B for Bavmorda

You can also experiment with other locations, but be warned that some will cause garbage to be displayed on the screen and may lock up your NES. If this occurs, simply restart the game by turning the power off, then back on again.



Super Monaco GP

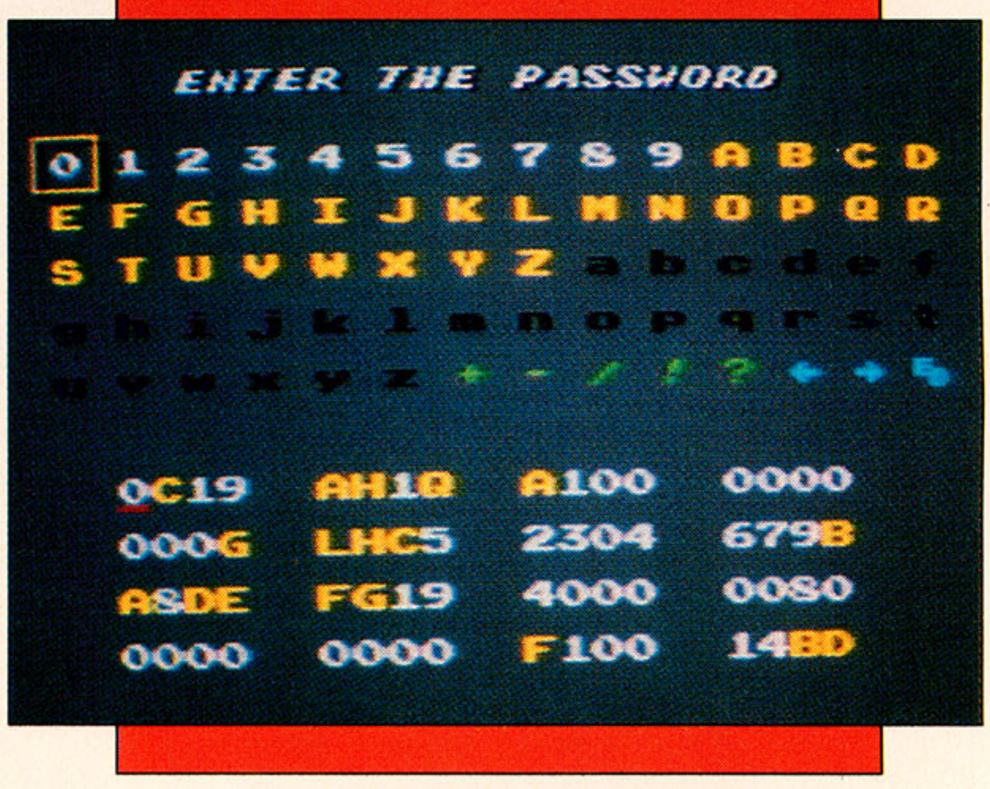
SEGA FOR THE GENESIS

Enter this password to begin the 16th race with Madonna:

0C19 AH1Q A100 000 000G LHC5
2304 679B A8DE FG19 4000 0080
0000 0000 F100 14BD

For Madonna Race #1 of the third season, input:

4000 0000 0000 0000 0000 GGD5
3627 B14C FA89 E000 0000 000I
0000 0000 G3000 FA0F



G-LOC

FOR THE SEGA ARCADE GAME

Get the points of two kills for the same target by first locking-on to an enemy, destroying it with your guns, then launching a missile that will basically "destroy" the explosion from the first kill.

continued on page 96

ARCH RIVALS®, IT'S A REAL BASKETBRAWL!

THE ARCADE SMASH FOR YOUR NES®

Get ready for an outrageous basketbrawl. It's slam dunkin' full court action with a twist. If you can't block your opponent's shot—knock his block off. But with Arch Rivals you still need real B-ball skills to win—like passing, shooting and sinking those 3-point shots.

So if you're ready for some "in your face" head-to-head arcade action, get Arch Rivals...where breaking the rules is the rule!

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Licensed by Nintendo for play on the Nintendo Entertainment System®

Acclaim entertainment, inc.
Masters of the Game™

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 94

Cyberball

TENGEN FOR THE GENESIS

Here are the passwords for the San Francisco Hitmen. The passwords include the whole season (from the second to the 19th week) and an "ending" code. These codes were sent in by Strider Prime, of Daly City, California.

2nd week - UBBB B7VV LFVX
3rd week - UVBB BXVX LFOX
4th week - UXBB BFVI LFCX
5th week - UIBB BXIS OF8I
6th week - ULBB B5PS OF98
7th week - UKBB B5PS OFMI
8th week - UMBB B5PS OFAX
9th week - UOBB B5PS OF81
10th week - UFBB B5PS OFNX
11th week - UCBB B5PS OFLI
12th week - U7BB B5PS OFSX
13th week - U4BB B5PS OFRI
14th week - URBB B5PS OFHX
15th week - UTBB B5PS OFFI
16th week - U8BB B5PS OFBI
17th week - UZBB B5PS OFDI - Playoff Series
18th week - UUBB B5PS OFII - Playoff Series
19th week - U5BB B5PS OF3X - Playoff Series
Ending - UJBB B5PS OF4I

Bubble Bobble

FOR THE ROMSTAR ARCADE GAME

Here are some great Easter eggs for the arcade classic. All three of the eggs below should be done on the Player 1 controls:

Let the demo screen repeat twice, and without any credits in the machine, during the title screen, press the one-player button, Jump, Bubble, Left, Right, Jump and the one-player button. This will give you *Super Bubble Bobble*.

To return to the original game, during the title screen press Bubble, Jump, Bubble, Jump, Bubble, Jump, Right and One Player. This will also open a secret room that will allow you to warp to Rounds 20, 30 and 50 by going through a silver door and Round 72 by going through the gold door.

During the title screen, press Left, Jump, One Player, Left, Bubble, One Player to get an awesome array of firepower.

Ninja Spirit

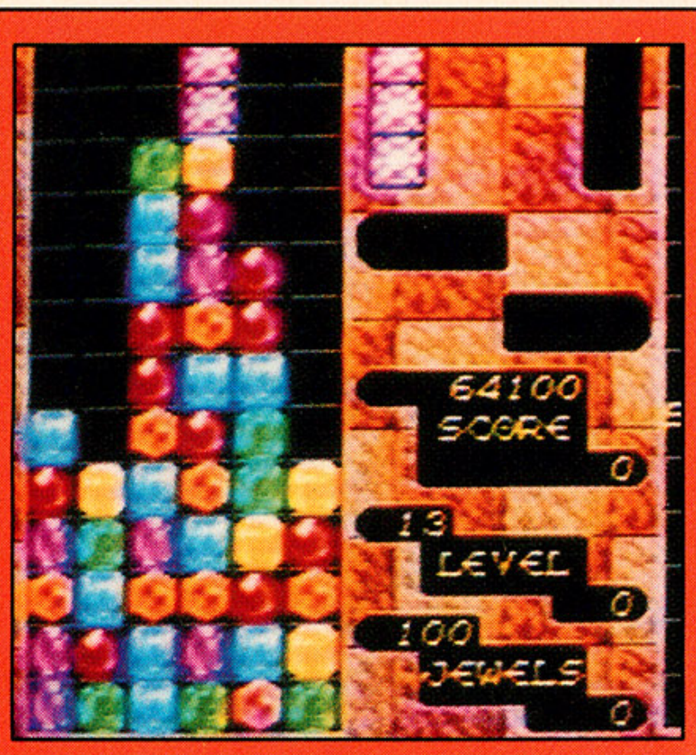
NEC FOR THE TG-16

For a stage select, during the title screen, press II, I, II, II, I, II, SELECT and then RUN. You'll see the stage select at the bottom. You can also select up to Stage 3, but for Stages 4, 5 and 6, you must press and hold the SELECT button as you flip through the stages.

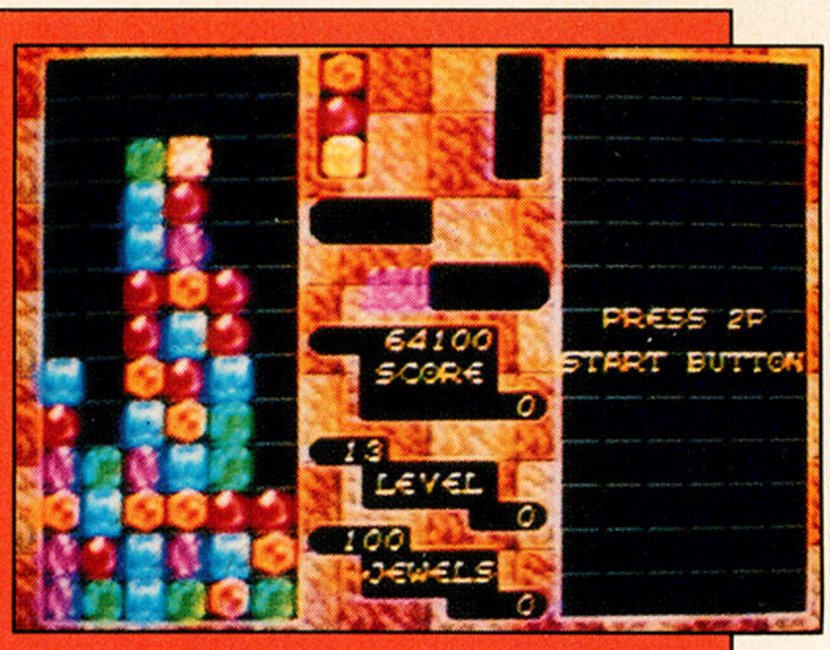
To see a special message, press either I, II, II, I, SELECT, RUN, or I, II, II, I, SELECT, II, I, I, II.

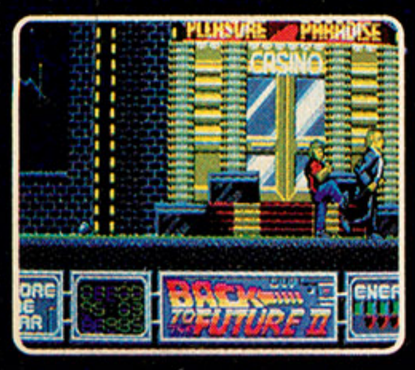
Columns

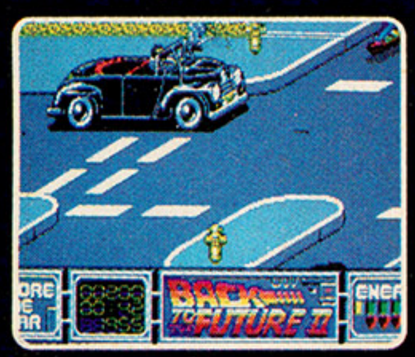
SEGA FOR THE GENESIS

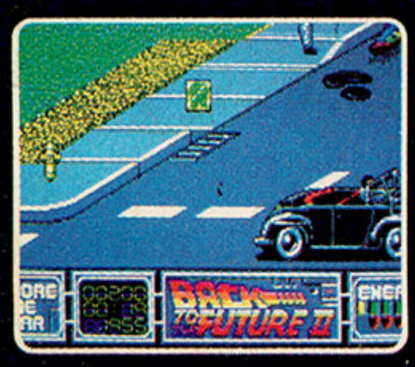


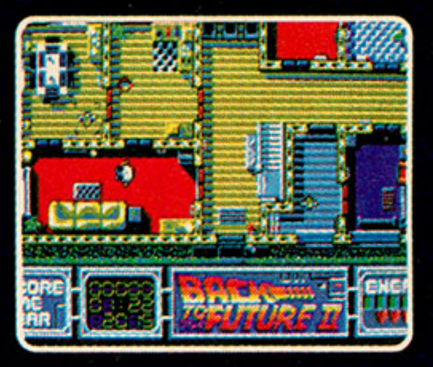
In the game Columns, if you successfully score enough jewels, a magic colored jewel will appear. If a column is about to reach the top and a colored jewel appears, place the colored jewel on top of the column, making sure part of the colored jewel is off the screen. If any match is made, the jewels disappear, but any part of the magic jewel that was off the screen will still be usable, allowing you to clear more jewels. The magic jewels will appear after you have cleared 100, 250, 450 and 700 jewels.











THIS GAME IS RATED X.

Xciting adventure! Xceptional graphics! Xcellent sound!

Konami™ and Image Works™ bring the xhilarating big screen xperience of Back to the Future II™ to your home computer—and the entire family.

As Marty McFly, you must trek through time to retrieve the sports almanac or else your yet-to-be youngsters will be doomed to a frightful future. Each of the five time warped levels recreates key scenes from the hit movie in authentic detail. You'll have to keep your son out of the slammer. Race through dangerous Hill Valley and recover your DeLorean. And that's just the beginning. We've packed your mission with unrelenting oafs and obstacles including Biff, Griff and their gang of muscle-bound melon heads. But don't rely on your martial arts moves alone. Because during the frenzied flight through time, strategy comes into play as you try to rescue Jennifer and attempt to solve the baffling high school dance puzzle.

So grab a tub of hot buttered popcorn and take the fun of the film to its xtreme. Get Back to the Future II today!

Free inside every package! Genuine Back to the Future II sports cap like the one Marty wore in the movie!

Available on Amiga, MS DOS and compatibles, Tandy and Commodore 64/128.

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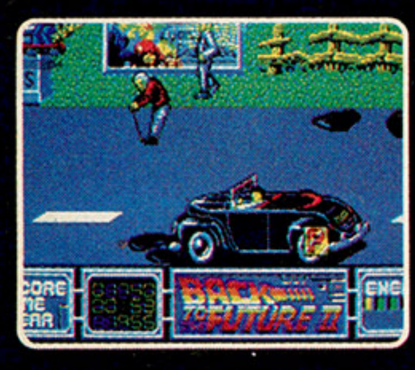

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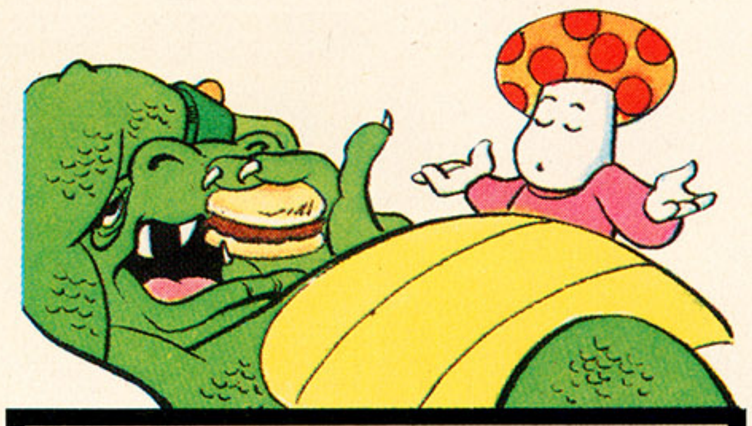
CIRCLE #167 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

MARIO



JOSH: *Rick! Look out!*

RICK: *Yahh!!*

JOSH: *You gotta hit them from above, like this! You ought to play your Game Boy more, instead of hanging around with girls.*

RICK: *How about instead of homework?*

—FROM *GAME BOY*, NO. 1, PUBLISHED BY VALIANT

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in Four-Color

BY H. HOWARD MEN

LAND

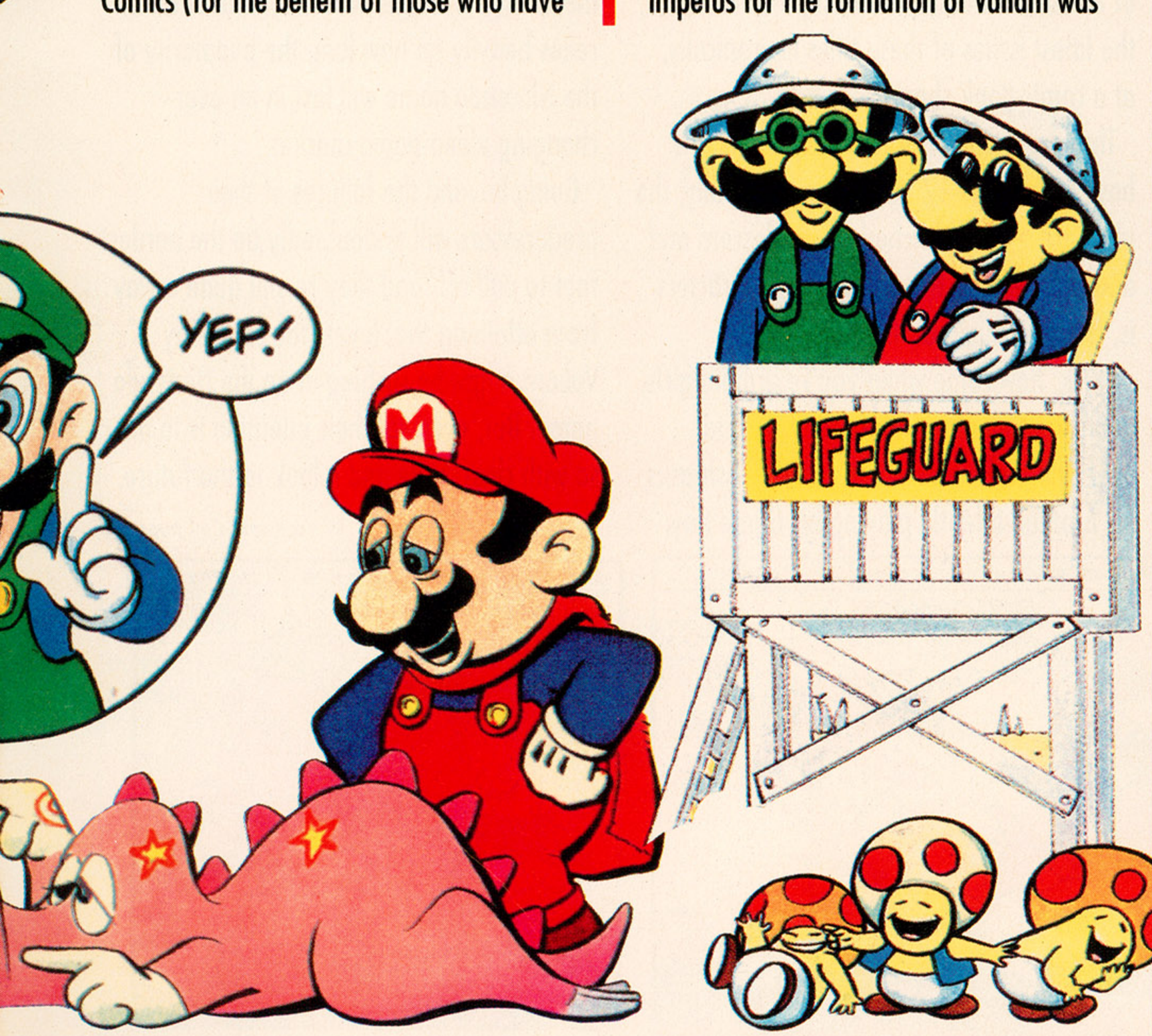
Used to be when you wanted to read a "Nintendo comic" you would pick up the latest issue of *Nintendo Power* and check out the adventures of Nintendo spokesman Howard Phillips and his sidekick Nester, the ineffectual kid who was always the subject of physical abuse and humiliation. Nowadays, you can also select from a mini-library of comic books based on NES characters. Published by Valiant, these titles are headed by Jim Shooter—better known as Marvel Comics' editor-in-chief from 1977 to 1987. Marvel Comics (for the benefit of those who have lived in a cave for the last couple of decades) is the largest comic-book publisher and distributor in the nation, along with its worthy competitor DC Comics. The Incredible Hulk, Captain America, Spider-Man and the X-Men are just a few of the notables within Marvel's corral.

In 1987 Shooter left his prominent position with Marvel. After freelancing for several months, he returned early last year to helm Voyager Communications' new comic-book division, Valiant. The impetus for the formation of Valiant was producing comic books for mass-media markets, something that greatly appealed to him.

"The comic-book industry has become collector-oriented," laments Shooter. He's not entirely wrong about this. A majority of comic-book titles are sold only through the more than 4,000 comic book stores in North America. Many buyers are collectors, who often purchase numerous titles on the assumption that certain issues will be "worth something" someday. Early issues of popular titles and books written by a known writer and/or illustrated by a famous artist can indeed fetch a high sell-back price.

The likelihood of this happening, however, is as chancy as speculating on the stock market. Like other hobby-collecting businesses, the comic-book industry over the years has become more directed toward a specific buying audience, the members of whom are often referred to as "fanboys." In addition—and this particularly irks Shooter—a few publishers have stimulated this speculation by limiting the circulation number and distribution of their titles.

The solution to all of this? Market comic books to the mass media, the way it was done throughout the '30s and '60s, the "Golden" and "Silver Age" of the comics industry, respectively. To accomplish this, and to do it easily right off, Valiant elected to produce comic books based on



properties already familiar to a large number of the buying public. Yet the subject they picked hasn't fared well historically in the comic-book format.

Video games as comic books aren't new. In the early 1980s, DC Comics launched *Atari Force* after special, pocket-sized editions of the book distributed in boxes of new Atari 2600 games received positive response. That enthusiasm carried over into the monthly comic but waned after a couple of months. A little over a year later, the adventures of the spacefaring *Atari Force* unceremoniously came to a close. Even more inauspicious was *The Adventures of Bayou Billy*, published by Archie Comics, the same folks who bring you the plethora of books detailing the lives of Archie Andrews, Jughead and their pals. Based on Konami's NES game, this book with a pseudo-Cajun theme lasted only a few issues.

Yet Shooter is undeterred. So much so that Valiant is producing four monthly comic titles and a bimonthly, 64-page compilation book of illustrated stories, all of which are based on characters from NES games. The books are the expected *Super Mario Bros.* and *The Legend of Zelda*, as well as *Captain N: The Game Master*, which can also be seen as an animated series on NBC's Saturday morning lineup. The most absurd title of the four is *Game Boy*, which centers around the characters from the *Super Mario Land* game coming to life in the "real world" through Game Boys.

All four of these titles (each costs $1.95 an issue) come printed on heavy bond paper with glossy cardboard covers. This unconventional look was chosen to overcome the stigma that comic books suffer from; specifically, Shooter states, the misconception that comics are printed on pulpy paper with ink that runs off on your fingers. These NES-related titles bearing the "Official Nintendo Licensed Product" seal, are physically more like books than comics.

It takes less than 16 weeks to complete one issue from a finished script. Many of the creative talents involved with the work are comic-book veterans. Bob Layton, Art Nichols and inker Terry Austin are a few of the names longtime comic-book fans will probably recognize.

In keeping with their goal of opening up comics to the mass market, Valiant's video-game-related titles can usually be found at outlets where NES products and merchandise are sold. But despite the company's intention of mass distribution, the best place to find the latest issues of these titles is, ironically, at a comic-book shop.

The target audience for these books are boys in the 6-to-12 age group. Naturally, the plots are a bit farfetched for adolescent and adult tastes, and the dialogue of characters is, frankly, stupid at times.

"Rick, how come when you're around girls, you forget all about video games...and everything else you usually like?" Josh asks his brother, intently playing his Game Boy.

"Look at those excellent babes!" Rick responds as he leers over his sunglasses.

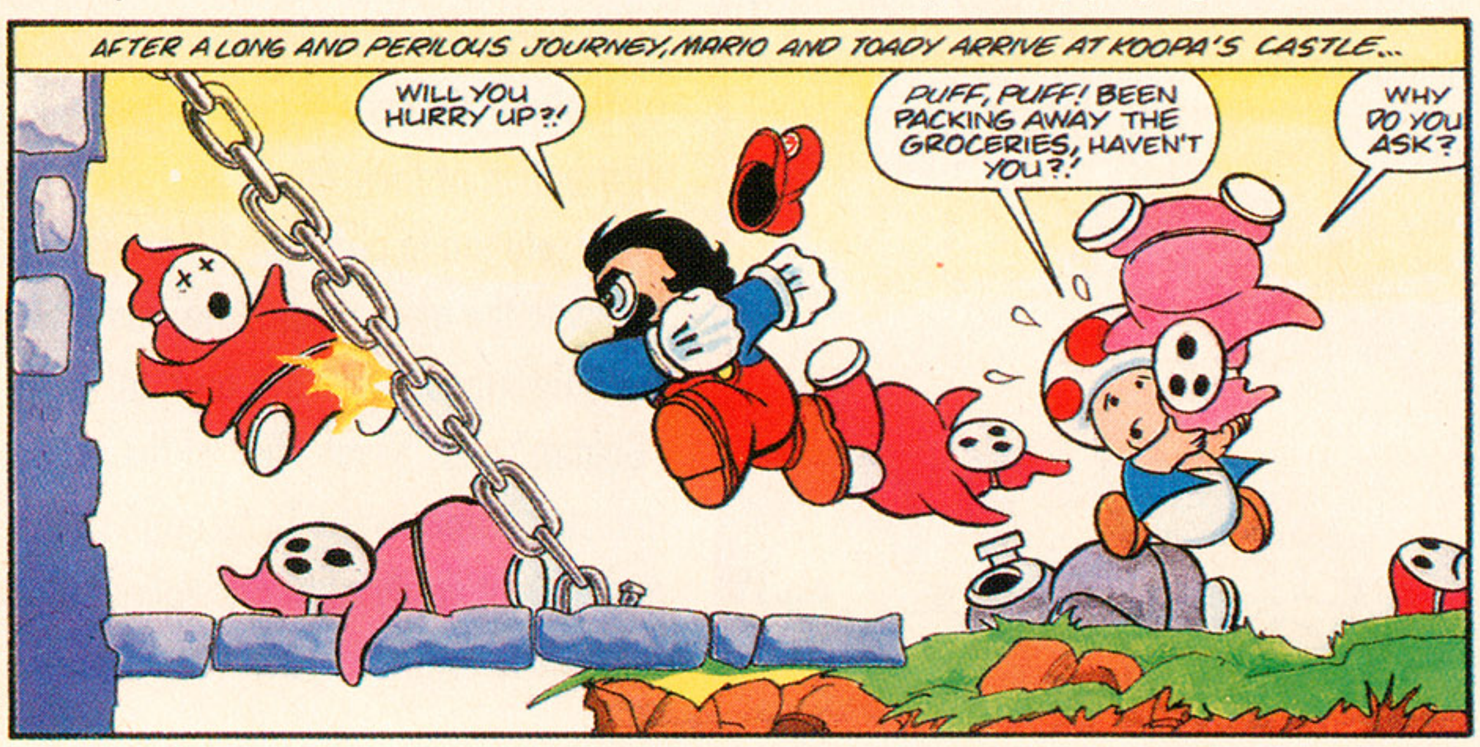
A "Game Over" screen indicates the conclusion of every story to reinforce the overall video-game theme.

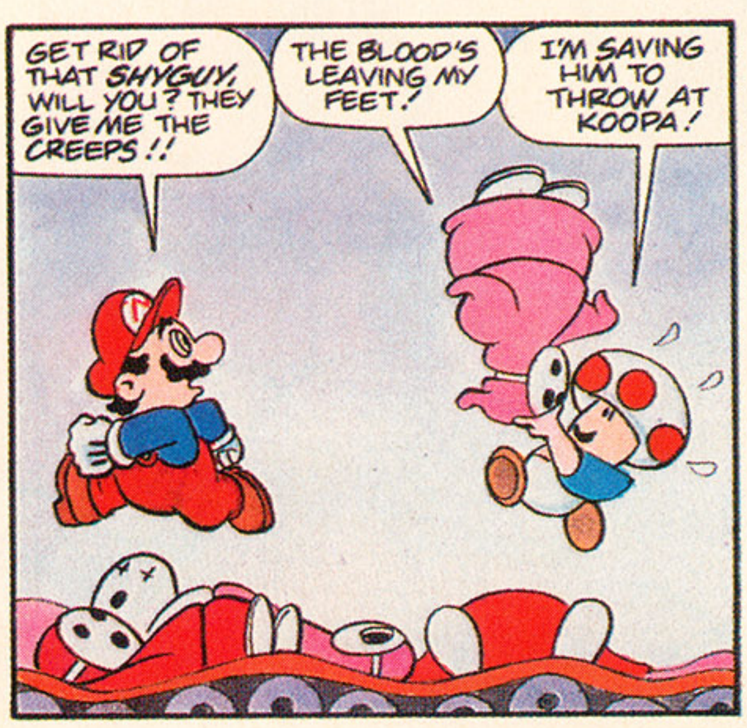
As for the future, Valiant has no plans to expand its list of Nintendo comics, although Shooter reveals he would like to investigate the possibility of developing quarterly titles. There are also projects outside of the Nintendo realm that the relatively new comic company is working on. Valiant purchased rights to the Western Publishing Company's characters, many of which were popular during the 1950s, such as Magnus Robot Fighter 4000 A.D. Characters and concepts based on TV and film properties, like *Lost in Space*, have been acquired for four-color translation as well.

For the time being, original concepts aren't on Valiant's agenda, and it remains to be seen whether the new comics company can help to "mainstream" the comic-book medium as a whole. After all, their success relies heavily on how long the popularity of the Nintendo name will last in an ever-changing video-game market.

Going beyond the failures of their predecessors will undoubtedly be the hardest feat to pull off, and they're still quite a way from attaining that level. You could say Valiant might be cashing in on the Nintendo name. But, even so, their intention is to do so with class, style and a look to the future.

continued on page 102

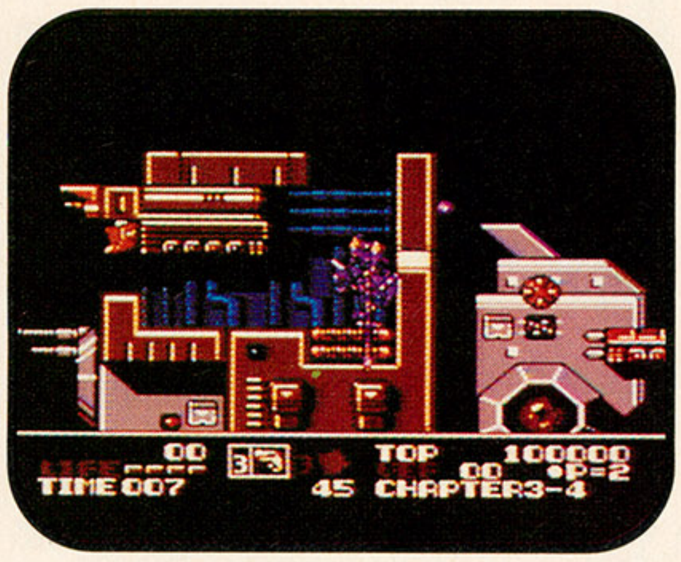




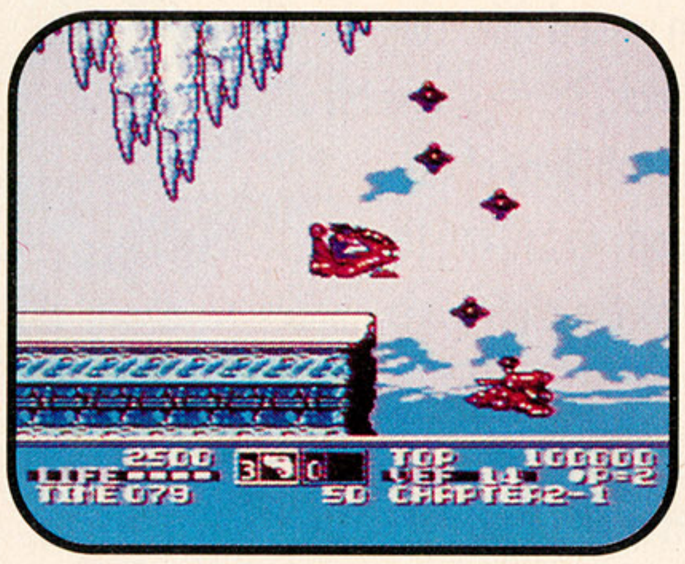
Run, Jump, Stab & Seize!

Official Nintendo® Seal of Quality

Huge Bosses stretch so large they can't fit on one screen!



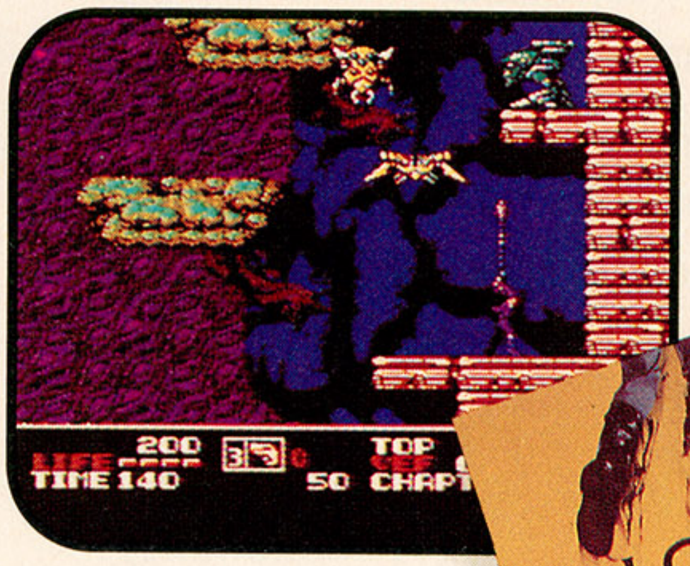
Seize enemy vehicles, including a hovercraft!

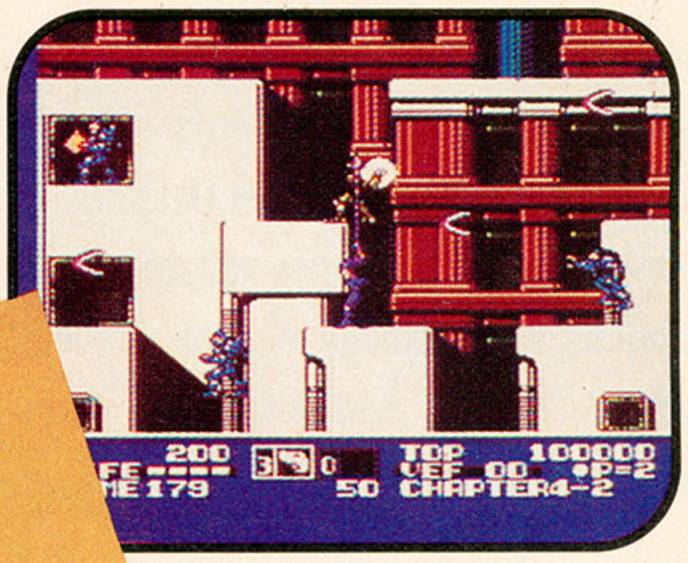


Power-up a complete arsenal including the awesome Wave!

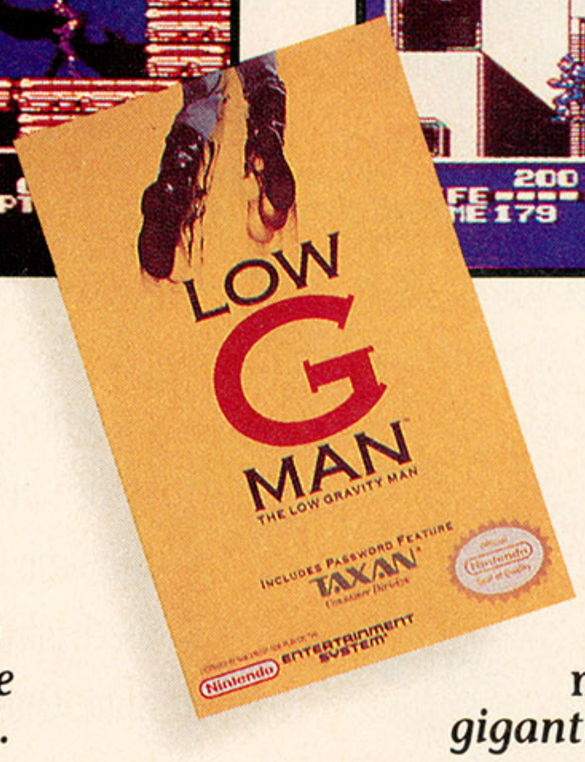
Use jumping skills to climb giant cliffs & tall towers.

Stab enemy Robots & Aliens with the armor-piercing spear!





You get all this plus much, much more!



Do You Have the Strength to Save the Countries of United Earth from War-Crazed Reprogrammed Robots?

The lives of trillions depend on you – Low G Man, the most skillful warrior alive. If you can handle the responsibility, you'll have a deadly armor-piercing spear, an electro-magnetic disruptor pistol and a *super-human jump (up to 1¾ screens)*!

If You Fail, You & Your Buds are Dust!

So don't. But just in case you'll have infinite continue & a password. You'll get rapid action, detailed scrolling backgrounds, lots of surprises, infectious music, heavy power-ups, multiple levels, and *gigantic Bosses*.

Are You Worthy of the Prestigious Title "Low G Man"?

Everyone can play Low G Man, but only a few can master the skills to save the CUE.

If you're ready for a game that gives you everything and only asks for your extreme concentration, then watch for Low G Man.

TAXAN
Consumer Division

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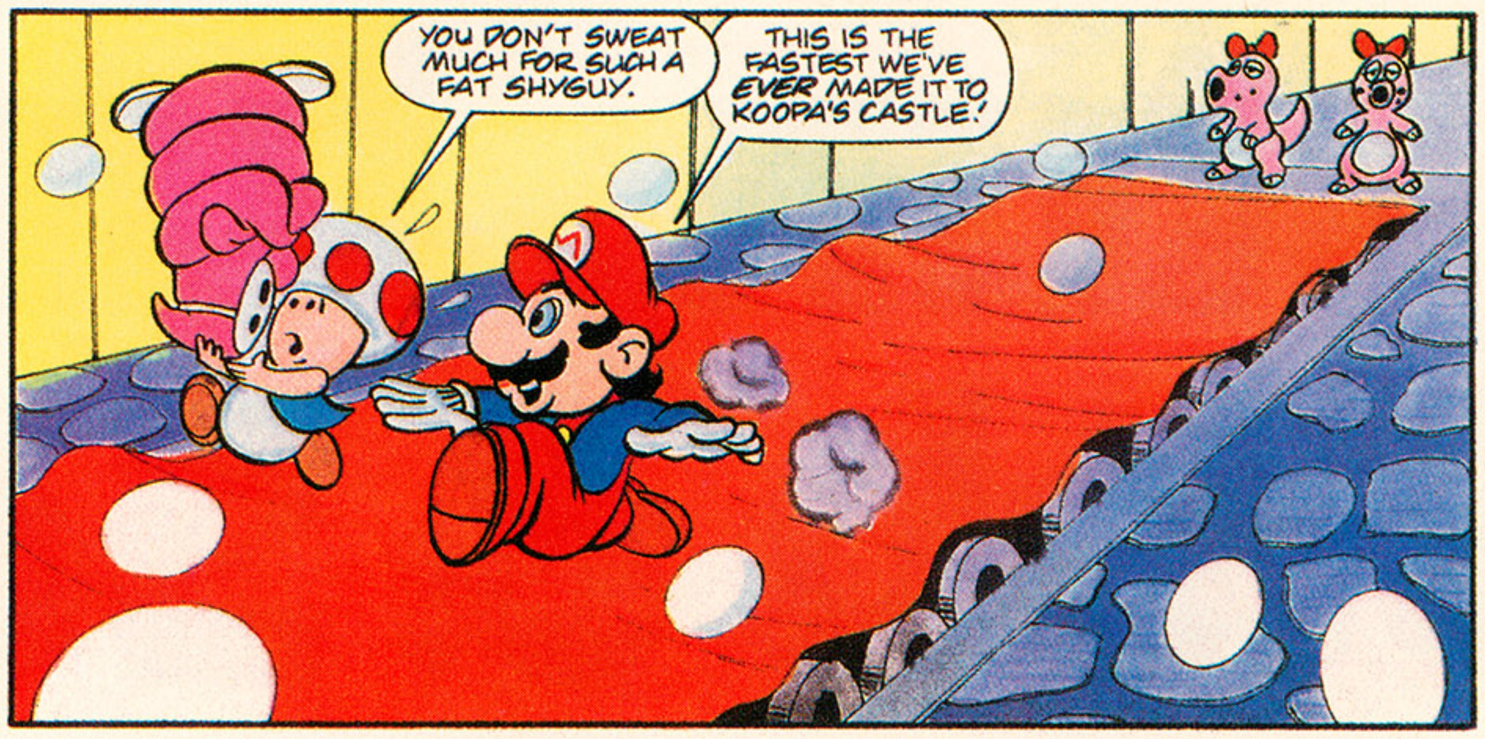
CIRCLE #141 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 100

NINTENDO COMICS AT A GLANCE

A rundown of the five Nintendo comic books published by Valiant:



CAPTAIN N: THE GAME MASTER

($1.95/monthly)

Northridge, California, resident Kevin Keene is the best NES player in the world. So good that the high schooler and his faithful dog, Duke, get sucked into the game screen and teleported to the imaginatively named world of Videoland. Here, characters from NES games like *Metroid* and *Kid Icarus* live under the dominion of Princess Lana.

Mother Brain from the *Metroid* world has united enemy characters from other video-game worlds into a league that threatens to dethrone Lana. Naturally, Videoland's only hope is the cocky Kevin. Armed with a modified NES Zapper and a control pad for a utility belt, the self-assured kid always foils the plans of Mother Brain, much to her chagrin.

One installment of this series manages to give a primer in psychology and yet another variation on the tired "body-switching" story plot, all in one issue. Kevin, Lana, Icarus and Duke are all miniaturized in a spaceship and injected into Mother Brain's brain. During their "fantastic voyage," they encounter Mother Brain's id, battle evil counterparts of themselves and are aided by a personification of Mother Brain's good side. Later in the book, Kevin shows off the capabilities of his weapons to the reader—such as the plot-convenient **PAUSE** button that's always within reach on his utility belt. The final adventure is the classic boy-switches-brains-with-his-pet-dog story, which details all the inane pratfalls that occur as Kevin occupies Buck's body and vice versa.

GAME BOY

($1.95/monthly)

Herman Smirch is such a bitter, resentful man, bums on the street refuse his spare change. He shoplifts Game Boys from the electronics store he works at in the mall. One day he becomes mesmerized playing a Game Boy, and the enemy characters from *Super Mario Land,* led by Tatanga, come to life and burst forth from the portable game system. Don't ask how. It all has something to do with "psychic probes," "contact points," "dimensional voids" and other such gibberish. Herman cannot believe what he's seeing. "You seem rather improbable to me, giant!" Tatanga's right-hand man, Pionpi, retorts profoundly.

With the kidnapped Princess Daisy by his side, Tatanga decides to conquer the world. Enter Josh and his perpetually girl-ogling bro, Rick. Josh manages to summon Mario with his Game Boy, and the three of them set out to stop Tatanga's horde. New York City residents uncharacteristically panic as Tatanga invades the World Trade Center, further adding to the implausibility of the plot.

At the final showdown in the Windows of the World restaurant, Rick initially stops his brother from helping Mario. "We could get killed...! What would Mom say?"

Josh responds with a bold, "She'd say don't let your team down!"

Later issues have Tatanga's army hijacking not only a passenger airliner but one of the space shuttles and crashlanding it at Disney World's "It's a Small World" attraction.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

($1.95/monthly)

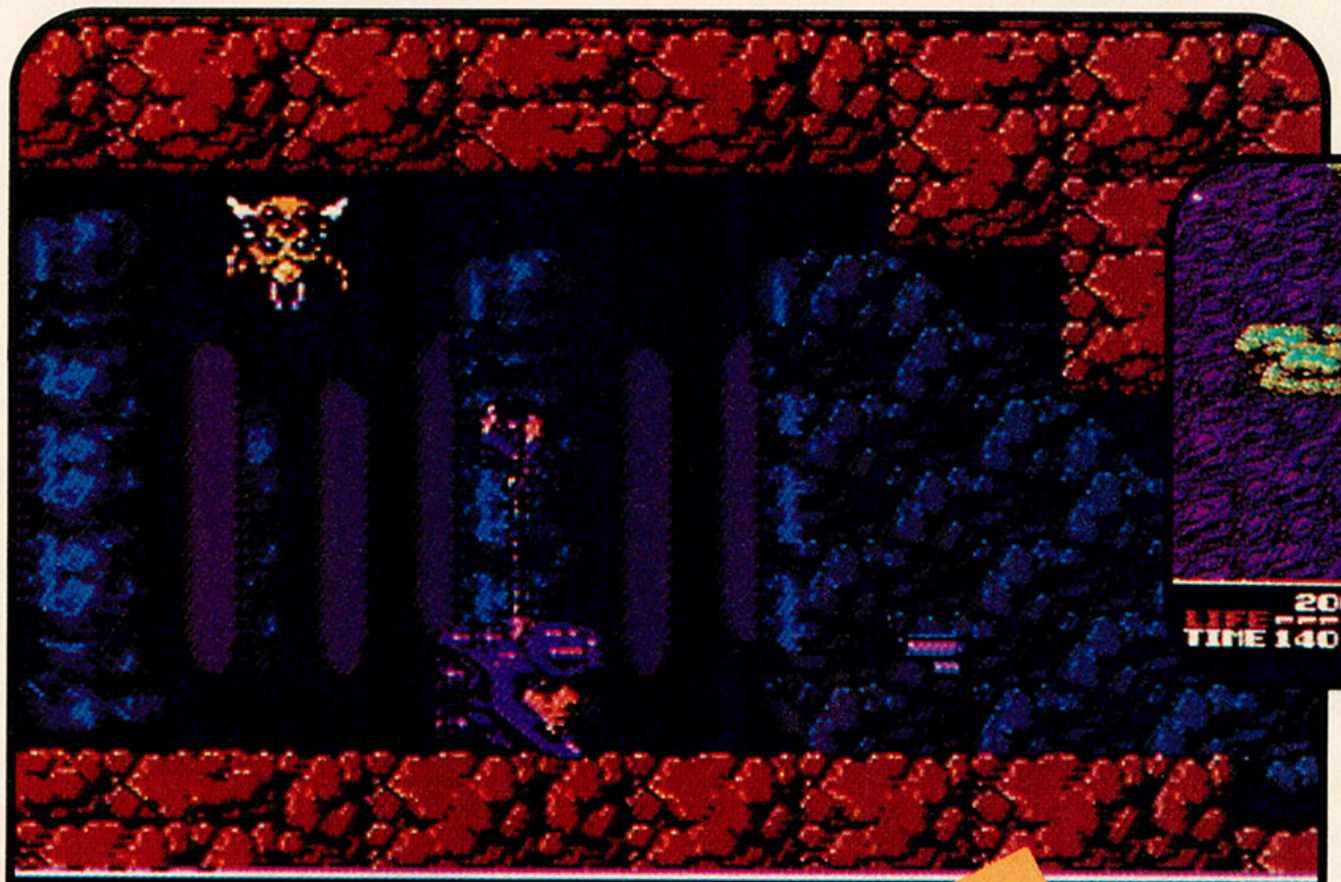
Based on the popular NES games, this title

Stab!

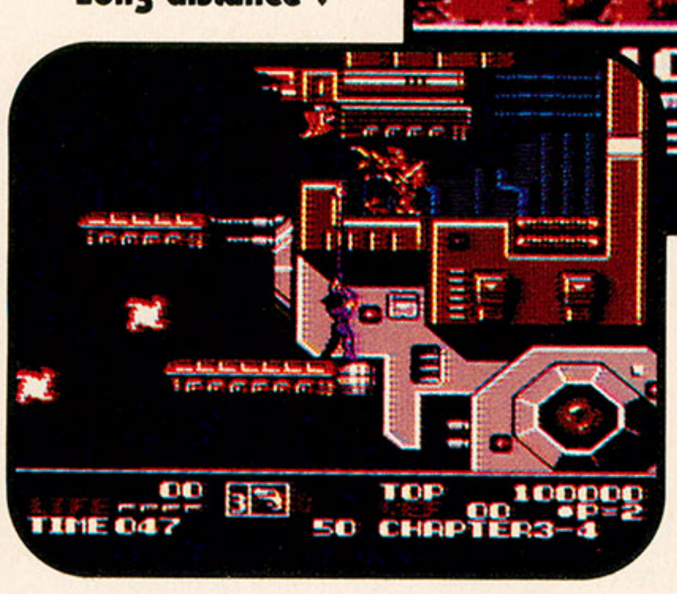
Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

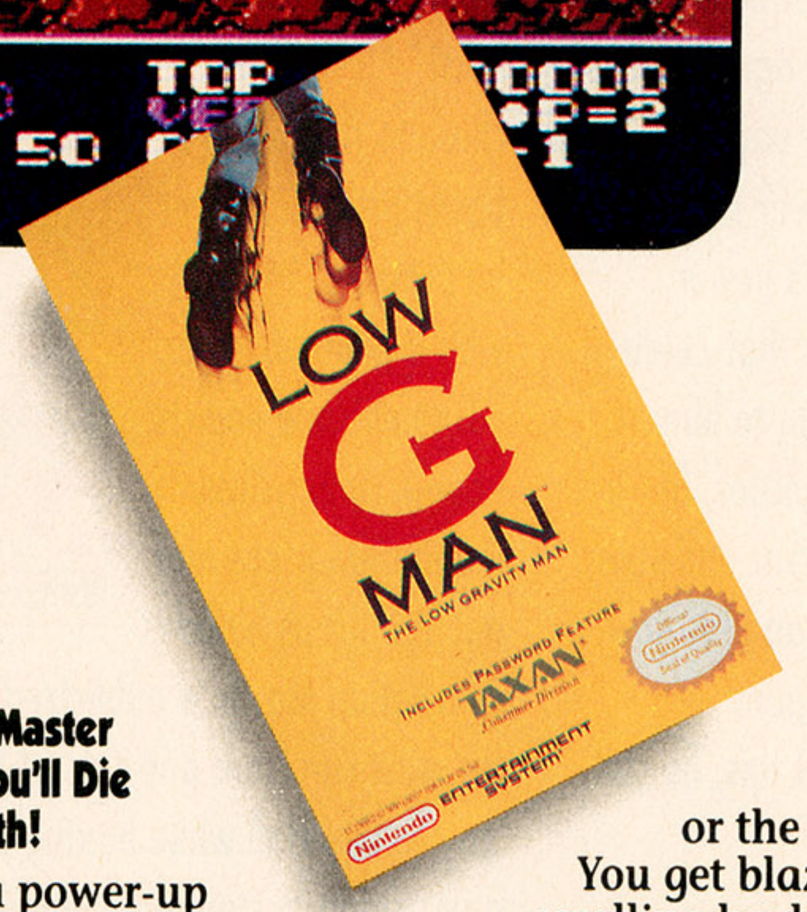
Stab a frozen ForceFace to gain the powerful Wave!

The spear really helps when climbing the mighty cliffs!



Power-up your spear to attack "Long-distance"!





Do You Have the Intense Concentration Required to Save the Countries of United Earth from War-Crazed Robots?

The lives of trillions depend on you – Low G Man, the most incredible warrior alive. If you are to succeed in your near impossible quest, you must master the deadly armor-piercing spear, an electro-magnetic disruptor pistol and a *super-human jump (up to 1¾ screens)*!

If You Don't Master the Spear, You'll Die a Quick Death!

After you power-up your anti-gravity back-pack you can blast from above: *WAY ABOVE*! Stab or use one of your many acquired weapons: a Boomerang, Fireball, Bomb, or the *awesome Wave*!

You get blazing action, detailed scrolling backgrounds, multiple levels, heavy power-ups, infectious music, *infinite continue* & *password*.

Are You Worthy of "Low G Man"?

Everyone can play Low G Man, but only a few can master it.

If you're ready for a game that gives you everything and only asks for your extreme concentration, then watch for Low G Man.

TAXAN
Consumer Division

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CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

presents the adventures of Link and Princess Zelda, battling against the dark power of swine-faced Ganon. To rule the land of Hyrule, Ganon must attain all three of the mysterious triforces—glowing pyramid things that hover in midair. Link possesses the triforce of courage within him, Zelda is the keeper of the triforce of wisdom and Ganon already has the triforce of power. During tense moments, Link and Zelda accidentally fall into one another's arms quite often—a much overused plot situation in this book, but any romance is rudely interrupted by enemies who have a score to settle.

At one time, Link steals the triforce of power from Ganon and uses it against him. Ganon's underlings then serve under his command, and he begins to wear stylish, hooded robes. But the triforce's power corrupts him, and he demands that Zelda turn over the triforce of wisdom to him. A battle with Ganon and Zelda ensues, but it isn't until Link looks into a mirror and sees his nose changed into a snout and his new dental deformities, that he forgoes the triforce of power. Despite all of this, he still doesn't get a kiss from Zelda.

NINTENDO COMICS SYSTEM

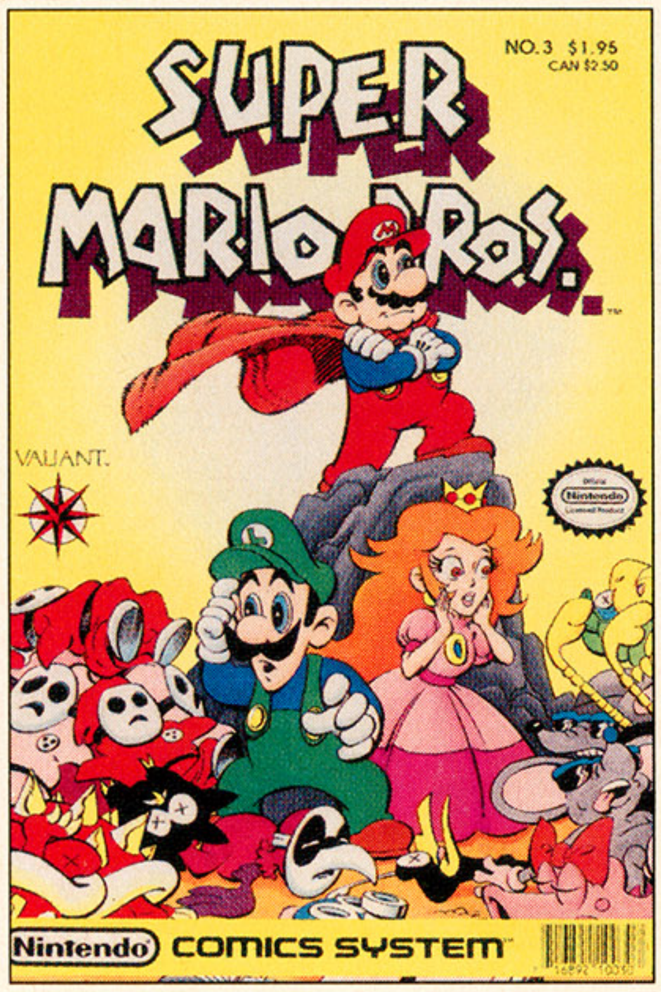
($4.95/bimonthly)

This 64-page, larger-size book is basically a compilation of short adventures about the characters from the other regular titles. A few original series are presented, such as *Punch Out!!*, which details the boxing career of a pint-sized Rocky Balboa clone, Little Mac. His trainer, former heavyweight Doc Lewis, is always on hand to dispense thoughtful words of wisdom.

"Nobody is born the best. Practice and training make you the best!" "It's a hard climb to the top! It's a battle just to survive!" he preaches to Mac with a pointed finger.

One episode depicts young, upper-class Manhattan preps and debutantes as hellions who set up Mac in a publicized street fight. He must run from one side of the city all the way to City Hall while boxing a hundred guys trying to stop him. Sounds better as the premise for a video game than a story.

Vonnie simply adores Mac, but boyfriend Reg doesn't, so he bribes Super Macho Man to put Mac out of commission in the permanent sense. Happily, everything turns out okay, and Doc puts in a few diatribes.



SUPER MARIO BROS.

($1.95/monthly)

Of course, what would a line of finely produced Nintendo comic books be if there wasn't a title covering the life and times of famed Italian plumber Mario and his lanky sibling Luigi? The action in this comic takes place in the colorful world of the Mushroom Kingdom, populated by midget fungi humanoids known simply as the Mushroom People. Their ruler is the easily agitated Mushroom King. Daughter Princess Toadstool—like all good little princesses—usually requires salvation from the mean, green lizard King Bowser Koopa. Mario, Luigi and mushroom dude Toad are always happy to oblige.

This book combines the elements from all three *Super Mario Bros.* games, though sometimes it fudges a few details for the sake of continuity and plot. In between adventures there are ads for non-products like "Koopa-Kola" and "Koopatone" "greening" lotion.

Presumably geared toward a very young audience, stories with goofy "kiddie" plots are featured. One such tale tells of the hindrances King Koopa's daughter Wendy encounters while intercepting Mario out at sea with an arsenal of heavy artillery. But Stanley the Fish keeps getting into her gunsights, propositioning her. When Wendy turns her weapons on him, the Lothario's huge girlfriend, Bertha, clobbers her in a jealous fit. Now that's comedy. You can almost hear the laugh track as you read.

"I do not know thee, but I have known of thee, since the times when it all began..."

Ten years ago, Wizardry set the standards in FRP. Now, after two million copies have been sold and 25 international awards have been won, Bane of the Cosmic Forge raises and redefines those standards. This new Wizardry, the truest simulation ever of Fantasy Role Playing, will push your computer, your mind and your sense of adventure to their very limits.

True FRP Simulation!

Like a true game master, Bane of the Cosmic Forge rolls the dice, consults its charts and applies the rules. From the 400 items of armor and weaponry researched for authenticity – right down to their weights – to the realistic combat structure – incorporating Primary and Secondary attack – everything, absolutely everything, is calculated.

Full-Color, Animated Graphics!

You'll see swords swinging before your eyes; creatures of all shapes and forms will move before you; spells coming from your magician will swirl through the air. You'll walk under gargoyle-laden arches and watch candles flicker in their sconces. Your PC's internal speaker will play all of these digitized sounds without any add-on hardware . . . swords swinging, monsters venting their anger and spells letting fly.

Uncompromising Variety!

- 11 Races
- 14 Professions with Ranks
- Dozens of Weaponry, Physical and Academia skills
- Multiple Fighting and Parry Modes
- Ranged, Primary and Secondary Weapons
- Six spellbooks, 462 spell combinations
- Multiple Armor Classes

Artificial Intelligence!

Find the ancient and cryptic dwellers who can aid you in your quest. Talk to them as you would your friends – in sentences. Only through the power of the latest in programming technology could the full dimensions of conversation this real be possible.

SIR-TECH

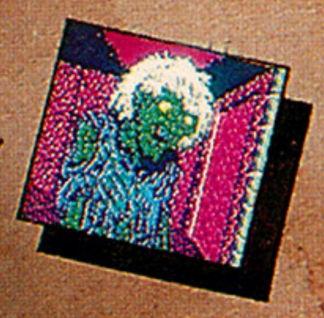
P.O. Box 245, Ogdensburg, New York 13669
(315) 393-6633

CIRCLE #178 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

ENTER THE WORLD OF SWORDS & SERPENTS

Come with us deep into the Serpent's dungeon... Many have gone before you; few have returned. And none have defeated the evil Serpent that has brought terror to your village for centuries.

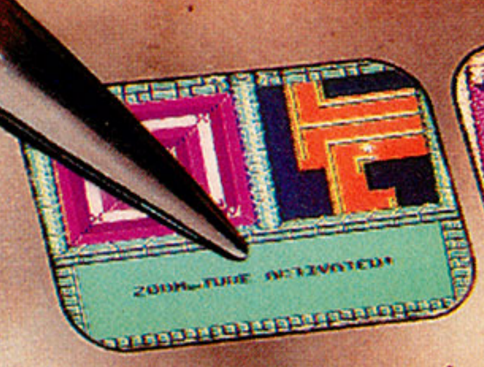
Take courage; you won't be alone. In this role-playing game, you create an unlikely band of adventurers - a thief, a wizard, a mystic and a warrior - each with special powers.

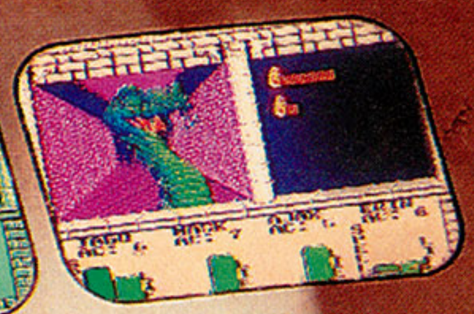


But the vile inhabitants of the dungeon have their own mysterious powers, too. Step by step, you'll explore the depths...

411 FOUR PLAYER GAME

gaining strength, experience, weapons, spells and armour.





Down you'll go-through 16 levels of adventure-each one packed with fabulous treasures, demons and dangerous monsters-

you'll even discover the secrets of the Zoom Tubes.

Until, at last, you confront the evil Serpent, coiled and writhing, waiting to strike.

Will you finally end his reign of terror... or just be another one of his victims?

Acclaim™ entertainment, inc

Masters of the Game™

Licensed by Nintendo for play on the Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

PLAYING THE

LEGENDS

LIVING·THE·HEROIC·LIFE

by Joyce Worley

Computer gaming has a sense of immediacy that is unmatched by any other interactive entertainment. Through the wonders of technology it is now possible to experience things that might otherwise be beyond our abilities. Millions have flown through cloudless skies, thanks to flight simulators. Military encounters are relived bloodlessly by countless war gamers. Simulated sports arenas house the efforts of thousands of armchair athletes. Both real-life history and make-believe fantasy come to life on computer, through interactive simulations that put computerists in the middle of the action.

Computers can also bring to life legends and myths that are part of our cultural background. This year's releases include games based on some of the world's most enduring heroes.

ILLUSTRATION BY LINDA HEARD

Frodo Lives...Again and Again

Tolkien's world continues to enchant readers year after year. Middle Earth, with its population of men, elves, dwarfs, wizards and hobbits, is the root-mythos that mothered an entire genre of play experience. Were it not for Tolkien, the game of Dungeons & Dragons would never have been created; and without D&D, it is safe to assume most role-playing games could not exist.

Interplay Productions is creating a trilogy of games based on the Lord of the Rings.

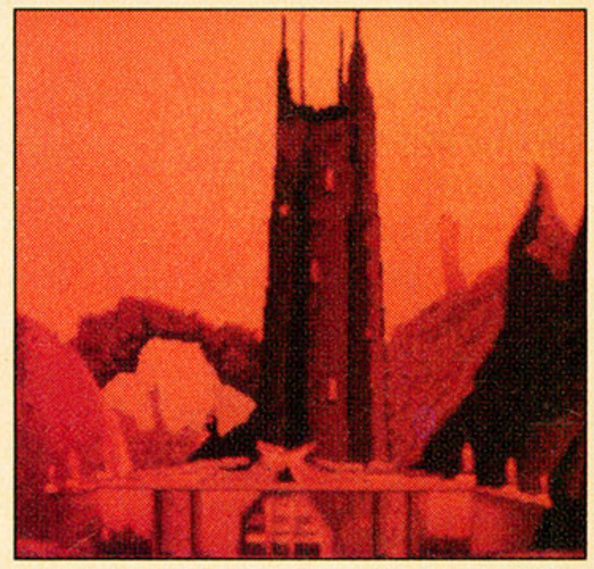
Tolkien's Middle Earth has been explored through stories and games since it was first published in England nearly 50 years ago, and it is still fertile ground for adventurers. No less than three new computer games are currently on retailers' shelves, for gamers to try to bear part of Frodo's burden. These new efforts are follow-ups to Melbourne House's *War in Middle Earth*, which was released in 1989 but is still getting lots of play from Hobbit-loving computer gamers.

Interplay Productions is working on a trilogy of games based on the three great books. *Lord of the Rings, Vol. I* (for IBM PC and Amiga) uses full screen, top-down VGA graphics and features digitized sound and a point-and-click interface to maneuver players through the seven-map world of Middle Earth. The gamer starts the adventure as Frodo, then recruits characters to join the fellowship; it is not necessary to confine membership to the nine characters Tolkien wrote about.

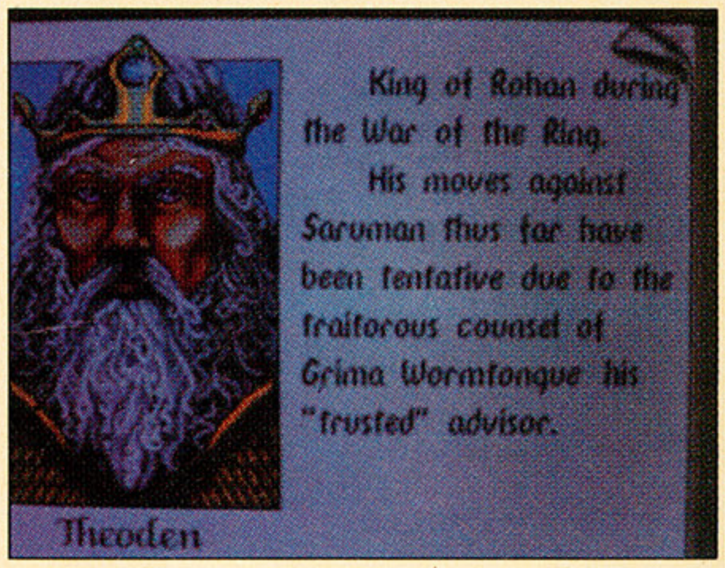
The game primarily features exploration and information gathering but also involves combat with the orcs, wargs, dark riders and other monsters. Within each map area, there are a series of mini-quests and adventures to complete before advancing to the next area. The game follows the book fairly closely and ends just before the conclusion of Book 1 of the trilogy. Interplay plans to follow up with *The Lord of the Rings, Vol. 2* sometime next year.

Spinnaker's *Riders of Rohan* is straight out of the second volume of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Two Towers*. It begins when Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli race after the band of orcs that captured the two hobbits Merry and Pippin. The player, using the heroes, has to convince Theoden, King of Rohan, to mobilize; only then can the Riders of Rohan march against Saruman. Players duel, man the bow against orcs and pit Gandalf against Black Riders in magical tests.

Outstanding graphics and large-scale animations are what you'll find in Spinnaker's Riders of Rohan.



Riders of Rohan brings to life many of Tolkien's characters. Among the people (and other species) the player meets are Theoden, Grima Wormtongue, Saruman, Treebeard, Erkenbrand and Eomer. The gamer can reenact events as they happened in the books or strike a new path and rewrite the story.



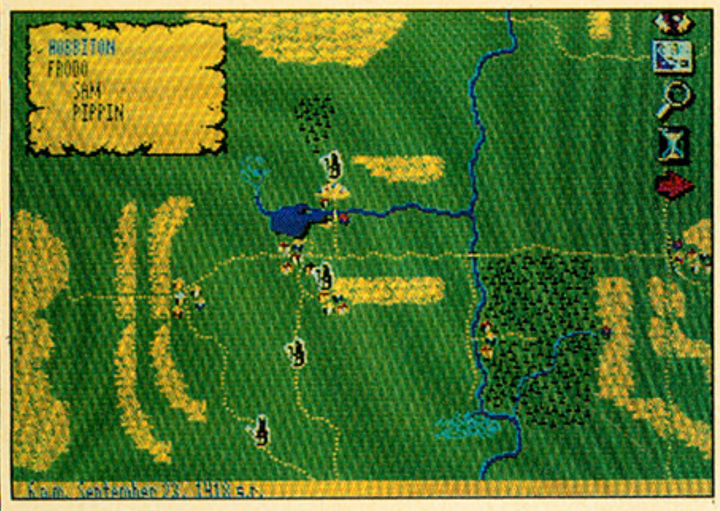
The graphics are outstanding. Large-scale animations bring the characters to life, and the embedded tactical war game features real-time combat. There are no guarantees here that the heroes can win the day, but with a little help from the computerist, the Fellowship will endure.

The Round Table on the Squared Screen

Arthurian drama has spawned many games. There are no fewer than three new titles this winter to join the Knights of the Round Table already on disk.

Conquests of Camelot (Sierra) was created by writer Christy Marx and artist Peter Ledger. Both dipped their pens in love when crafting this tale of the Quest for the Grail; the game is panoramic and faithful to the legends. It leads the search for the grail from Camelot to Jerusalem, using some of the most outstanding graphics yet seen on-screen. Combat sequences include battles using the great sword Excalibur and jolting horseback jousts. Be prepared, the gamer must maintain both physical and spiritual strength if the on-screen surrogate is to succeed.

Conquests of Camelot features a haunting soundtrack written by Mark Siebert. The music, based on 10th-century instruments, is a perfect medieval accompaniment to the action.



Tolkien's trilogy is captured in Melbourne House's War in Middle Earth.

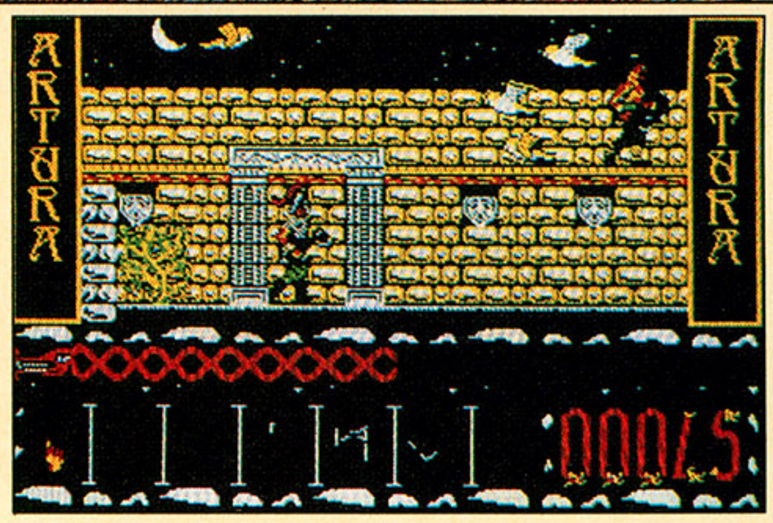
Sierra On-Line's Conquests of Camelot is a carefully crafted game that details the search for the Holy Grail using Sierra's inimitable game-authoring system and some of the most fabulous images to come out of a computer game in recent time.

Mastertronic's *Spirit of Excalibur*, created by Synergistic Software, combines features of fantasy role-playing with adventure and combat simulations. After Arthur's death, England is plagued by black knights, saxons, magicians and giants. The gamer selects a hero, then maneuvers him through Britain. Peasants, warriors, nobles, bandits, lords, wizards and clerics provide plenty of interaction, and outcomes differ depending on which knight is chosen.

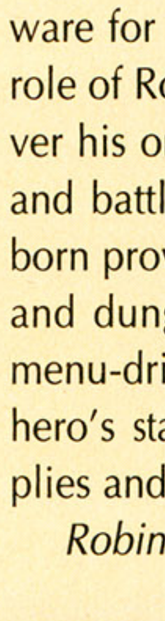
Combat situations let the player maneuver troops and try different strategies. The gamer can depend on the character attributes to determine the outcomes or switch to arcade-style action, then control his/her knights in swordplay. The stunning graphics depict first-person perspectives of the countryside, towns and castles and overhead views of battlefields. *Spirit of Excalibur* is available for play on Apple IIgs, Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and Macintosh computers.

Mastertronic's Arcadia division created *Artura*, an action adventure that first appeared in 1989 for the Atari ST. New versions for the Amiga, Commodore 64 and IBM PC are now on retailer's shelves. This game takes the user back in time to Britain in the persona of Artura, son of Pendragon. It is loosely based on the Arthur mythos, but makes many cosmetic changes. Nimue, the apprentice to Merdyn the mage, has been kidnapped by Morgause, Artura's evil half-sister. The player must man Artura through a maze, battle Morgause's minions, evade the traps and seek runes that give special magical powers.

Artura doesn't actually involve the famous Knights of the Round Table we all read about in school. But it has a good flavor of the era and some nice action to keep your joystick jiggling.



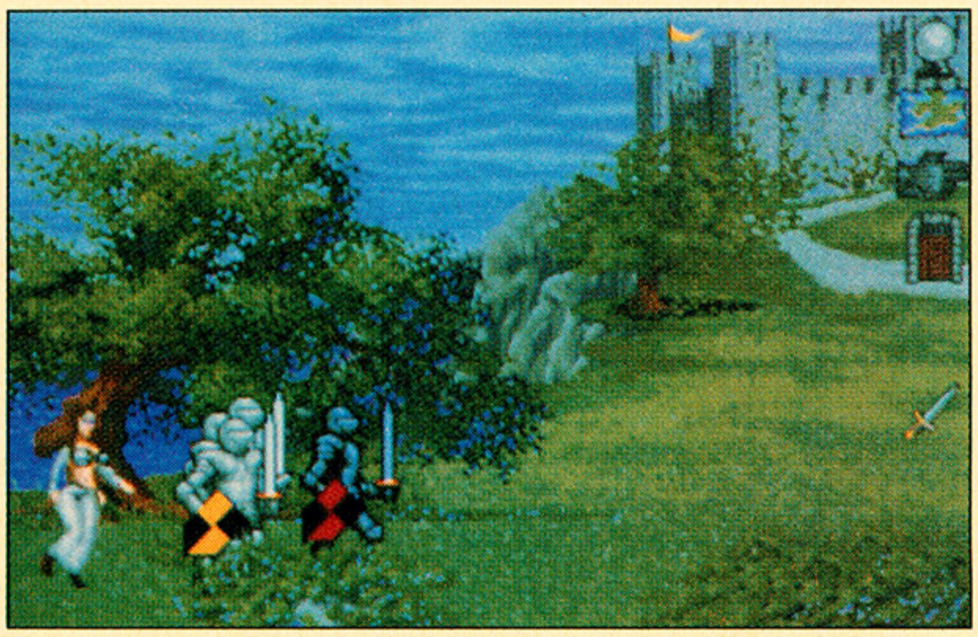
A new version of Mastertronic's Artura, which first made its presence known on the Atari ST in 1989, harkens back to the days of the Round Table.



Legends of Literature

The Adventures of Robin Hood by Sculptured Software for Mastertronic's Arcadia Division lets the gamer take the role of Robin, Little John, Will Scarlet or Friar Tuck, then maneuver his or her on-screen hero through England. Archery contests and battles with the Sheriff of Nottingham and Sir Guy of Gisborn provide arcade-style action as the player explores the forest and dungeons in an effort to rescue Maid Marion. It features menu-driven choices, and players must constantly monitor the hero's status records, which track his strength, fatigue level, supplies and food.

Robin Hood, soon to be available for play on the Nintendo Entertainment System, takes some liberties with the well-known legend. But it promises a bow-man's holiday.



Spirit of Excalibur, **Mastertronic's fantasy role-playing game, takes place after King Arthur's death, offering plenty of opportunities for interaction between your on-screen character and the various inhabitants of the area you travel through.**

Mastertronic also looked to the world of letters for inspiration for *Wonderland*. Based on Lewis Carroll's legendary *Alice in Wonderland*, the illustrated text adventure was created by Magnetic Scrolls (developer of *The Pawn*). It features a new graphic interface, multiple windows, pull-down menus, online hints, self-mapping and the famous Magnetic Scrolls parser.

The gamer takes on the part of Alice, then explores Wonderland to meet the well-known characters created by Carroll. All of the familiar situations and people are here: the royal gardeners, the Queen of Hearts, the Duchess and the baby pig, the caterpillar on the mushroom, the March Hare, the dormouse, the Mad Hatter and the White Rabbit. Challenging puzzles and puns abound in this over-sized game for Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC computers.

RENOVATION™ PRODUCTS

SEGA™ GENESIS™
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

LICENSED BY
SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD.
FOR PLAY ON THE
SEGA GENESIS SYSTEM.

Granada™

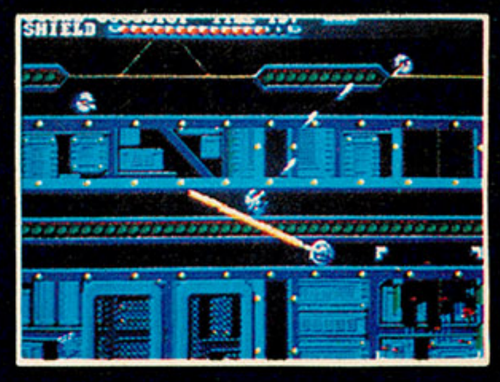
The Super Strategic Defense Initiative of the 1990's banned inter-continental ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads. Now the year is 2016. Weapons today are limited to super strategic mobile weapons.

Enter Granada. Hypertek-Cannon Tank. (HCT).

Firepower as we know it today is all but abandoned with Granada. Granada uses shields and radar to create its defense mechanism. Offensive firepower is provided by the most awesome array of weaponry ever assembled on a battlefield. These include multi-directional interceptors, long-range homing missiles, and a device designed to totally obliterate all opposing forces.

You will command Granada through the peaceful streets of Tobora. Battle the giant flying battleship Astarsha, and Valsic, another HCT.

If you enjoy fast paced action-packed thrills . . . you'll love the feel and sound of Granada.



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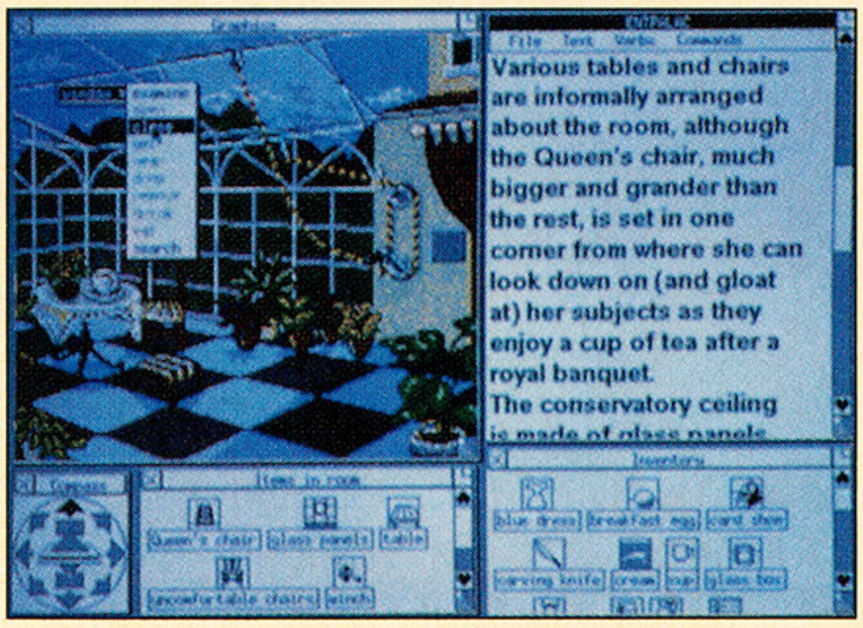
CIRCLE #144 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland **is brought to the computer-game screen by Mastertronic, through its** Wonderland **illustrated text adventure.**

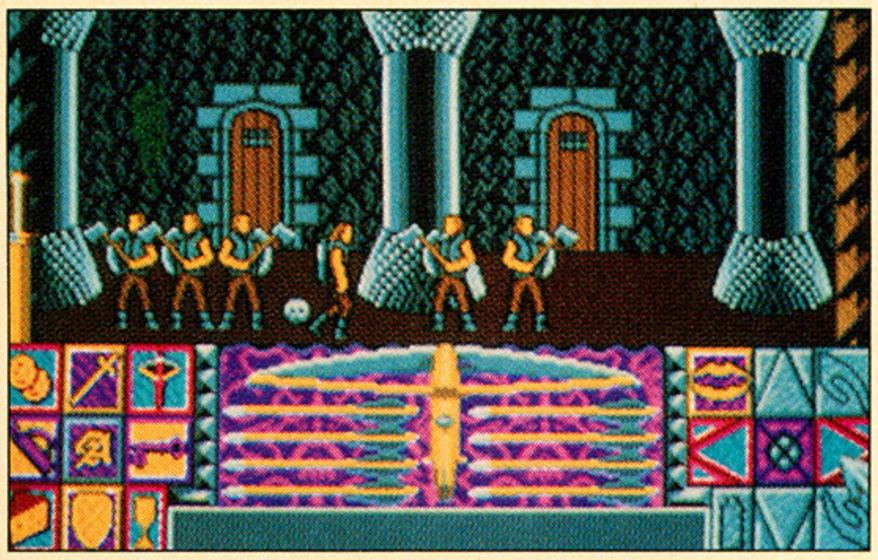


Only a few computer dramas have featured heroic women. Brøderbund's *Joan of Arc: Siege & the Sword* draws on the legend of the Maid of Orleans for sword-clanking adventures in the French countryside. It plays a little loose with history: The game sets Joan on a quest for the throne, something the maiden never sought. But it's rousing; in addition to the swordplay, it features hand-to-hand combat, castle wall-scaling while dodging rocks and boiling oil and a chance to dispense justice once the throne is attained. It's currently available for Amiga and IBM PC machines.

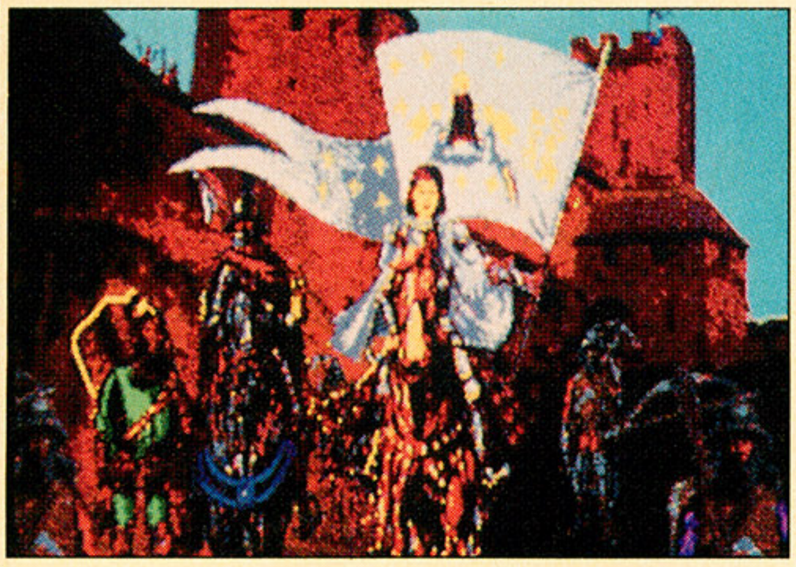
It's Not All Fiction

Real-life heroes also provide grist for gaming. Electronic Zoo looked to 14th-century Switzerland for *The Legend of William Tell.* As Tell, the gamer mans a crossbow in a quest to rescue a kidnapped son and free Switzerland from Austrian conquerors.

The Legend of William Tell is a graphic adventure that explores mountains, forests, towns and buildings. Along the way the gamer meets knights, monks, peasants, wolves and wild animals and gathers food, and drink, weapons and valuable prizes. Weapons include short and long swords, axes, morning stars, staffs and maces, in addition to three different crossbows. The choice of bows actually makes a difference in the outcome, since they each have different strengths and weaknesses. *The Legend of William Tell* is available for Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC computers.

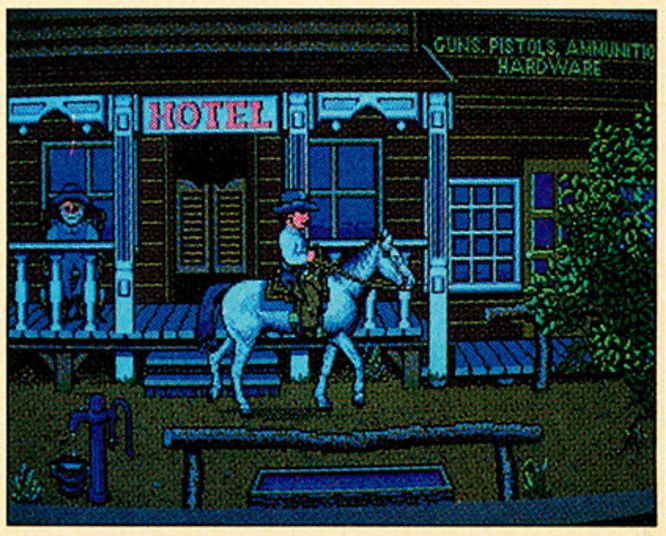


A relative newcomer to the computer-game world, Electronic Zoo re-creates the classic archery story as a graphic adventure in The Legend of William Tell.

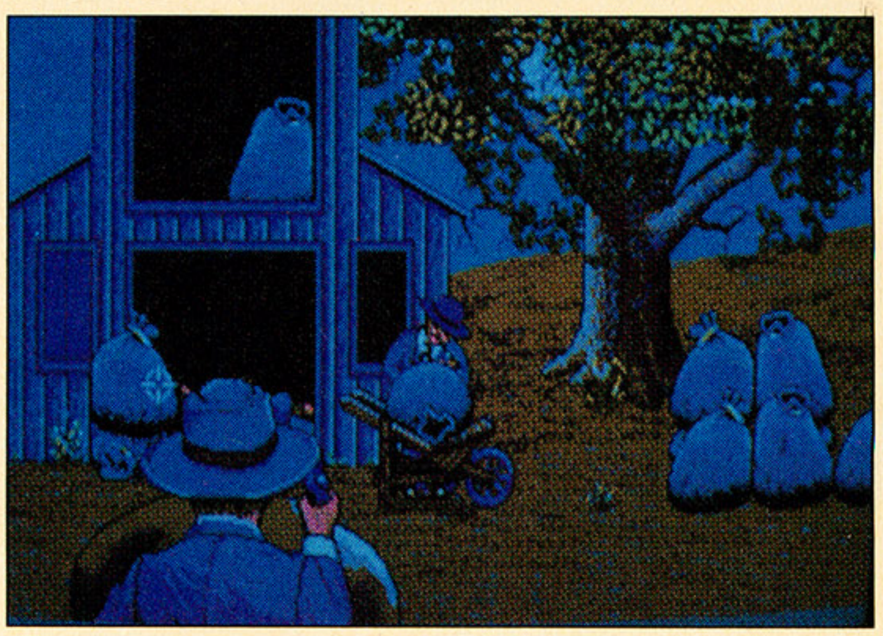


Brøderbund retells the tale of the Maid of Orleans in Joan of Arc: Siege & the Sword.

Not all legends are heroic. Ocean Software's *Billy the Kid* is an action-strategy contest based loosely on the life of America's favorite boy bandit. The player takes the role of either Billy or Sheriff Pat Garrett.



In this version of the story, they both love the same woman, and the showdown is a barrel-blazing gunfight between the two ex-friends. But before Billy faces the inevitable clash with Garrett, there's a bank robbery, a train heist and a barroom brawl, not to mention an encounter with a card shark.



Ocean's Billy the Kid **portrays a different form of legend, that of theWild West's infamous boy bandit.**

The Western drama is depicted in beautiful drawings that evoke cowboy movies of yesteryear and is made for the Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC.

The Undying Story

Designers will continue to draw on legends and history for inspiration in the future, so gamers can look forward to even more involvement with epic stories that everyone knows and loves. It's a unique opportunity to experience on the gaming level sagas that once we could only read about. But as gamers will agree, there's no better way to bring a legend to life than to become part of it.

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This 256-color, true-to-life golf simulator gives you unprecedented 3D graphics…so realistic—*so advanced*—you'll think you're on the course.

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And you'll experience all the sounds of a real tournament…from commentary…to caddy's remarks…to the swoosh of the swing…click of the drive ….and bloop of the ball in the water.

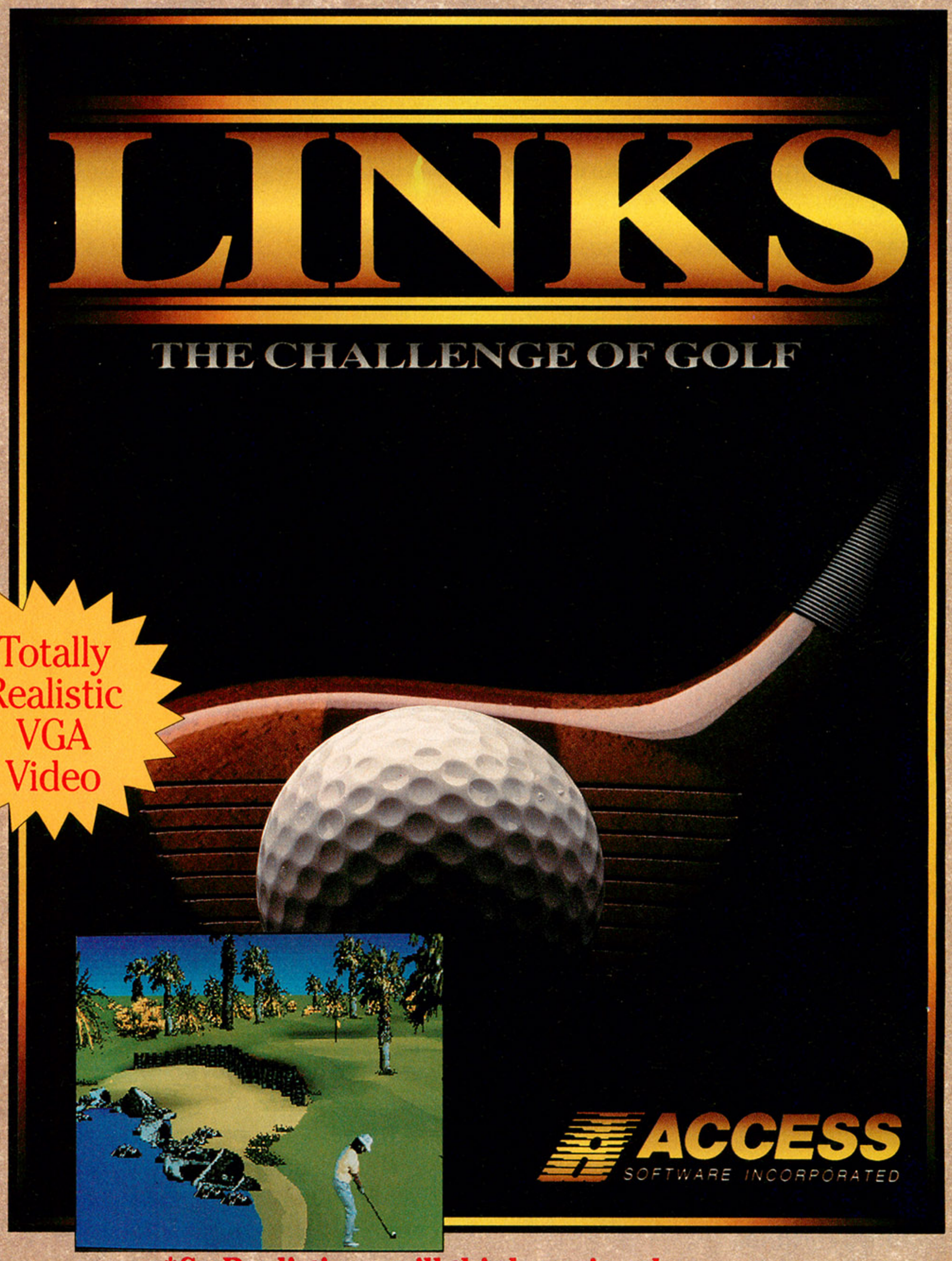
LINKS also includes a practice area for driving, chipping and putting.

3D Terrain

LINKS is brought to you by *Access Software*… the same fanatics for accuracy and realism who gave you World Class Leader Board Golf—*and the graphics are unbelievably realistic.* Gone are square-edged screens that look like Lego blocks. With *LINKS,* hills actually look like hills, trees look like trees, water looks like water. (And, yes, golfers even look like golfers.) In fact, *LINKS* uses graphics technology so advanced that a VGA system is absolutely required for play.

Experience the next generation of golf simulators. Reserve a Tee Time with *LINKS.*

We guarantee you'll absolutely *love* it—or your money back!



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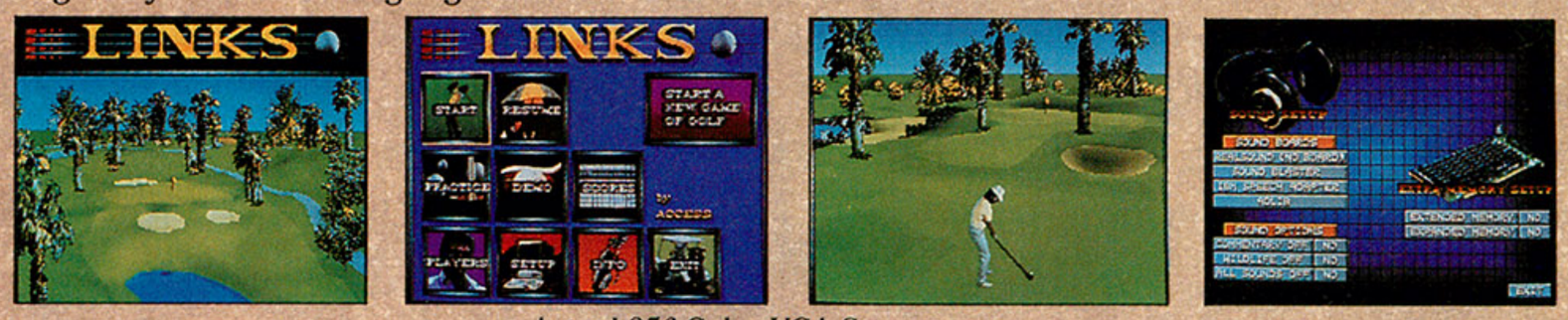

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Is Gaming an International Language?

by Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This time, he discusses the impact of imported software.

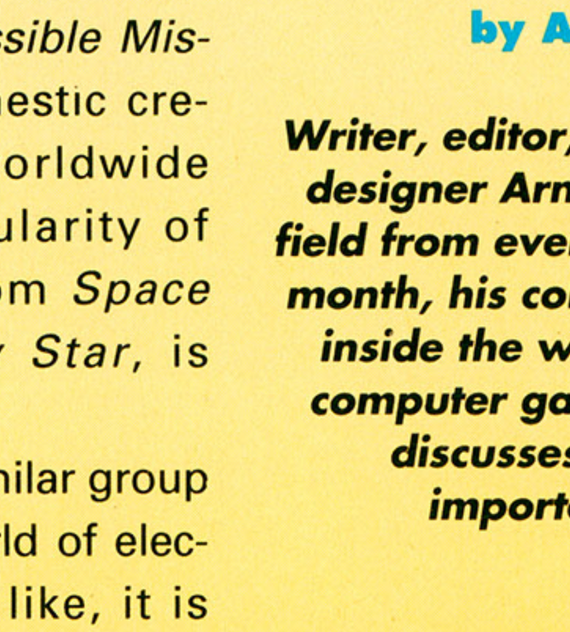
I'm no software chauvinist, but isn't it time the American electronic-gaming industry rethought the role of imported software? Our game screens would be much duller without *Tetris*, *Super Mario Brothers, Populous* and other foreign-designed titles, but the hobby might be healthier without the dozens of other video and computer games that have flooded the U.S. market in the last four years.

Musicians and music lovers often boast that melody is an international language. They claim it communicates feelings, images and even ideas in a way that cuts across national boundaries and barriers of language and culture.

Maybe so.

Electronic gaming, like music, is a nonverbal interaction. It's tempting to claim the same universality and surely there is evidence to support the contention. *Defender of the Crown* and *Impossible Mission*, to name two domestic creations, have scored worldwide success, and the popularity of overseas software, from *Space Invaders* to *Phantasy Star*, is incontrovertible.

Before the SPA or a similar group declares "one happy world of electronic gaming" or the like, it is important to examine the rest of the picture. Examination of *all* the evidence leads to the conclusion that electronic gaming is an international language, but not a completely cohesive one. In other words, it sometimes transcends cultures and sometimes doesn't.



In that sense, electronic gaming may be more like English than music. Anyone who has visited the United Kingdom knows that words have different meanings on each side of the Atlantic. One example: the cowling over a car engine is a "hood" here and a "bonnet" there. An old quip proclaims the U.S. and U.K. are "two peoples divided by a common language."

Failure to understand that games, like wine, don't always travel well has caused big problems for computer- and video-game publishers. Large-scale marketing of European computer games in 1989 created a field-wide depression. Overemphasis on titles from the Pacific Rim are doing the same to the video-game sector today.

I have complete admiration for the skill of American designers, programmers and other implementation specialists. I don't think the failure to transcend culture is soley a question of quality. Ubi Soft and Infogrames in France, Ocean in the United Kingdom and New Frontier in Hungary are examples of groups that often equal and occasionally surpass their American counterparts.

So, it's not that designers and developers in other lands can't do games as well as we can. It's more that they frequently approach the challenge of creating a new electronic game from another perspective and with different goals than would a U.S. design team.

This is the cultural barrier to which I referred in last month's column about Japanese video games. A British game-design team does a product based on their experience in the field and expectations for the target market. A British game must be oriented around play-action, provide a lot of gaming for the price and sell through quickly before pirated copies pollute the market. The U.K. gamer doesn't want a lot of costly frills like detailed documentation, ornate maps and posters, or other items routinely included with top-of-the-line U.S. titles.

Unfortunately, when a British-produced game hits America, it generally reflects the lessons learned in the U.K. Similarly, Japanese designer/developers create games based on their experience in Japan. The glitch is that these lessons are only partially

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adaptable to the needs of gameplayers from different cultures.

Game content also presents problems. American popular culture can spread throughout the world, but people outside our country won't always share an understanding of the subtle nuances of pop culture. A U.S.-based design house faces this type of problem when it tries to export a game to other countries. Just as a Japanese entertainment company faces a similar problem with its exports. There is, however, one major difference. A Japanese company is often attempting to interpret American pop culture to Americans. By contrast, our game makers are more likely to be presenting American pop culture to foreigners.

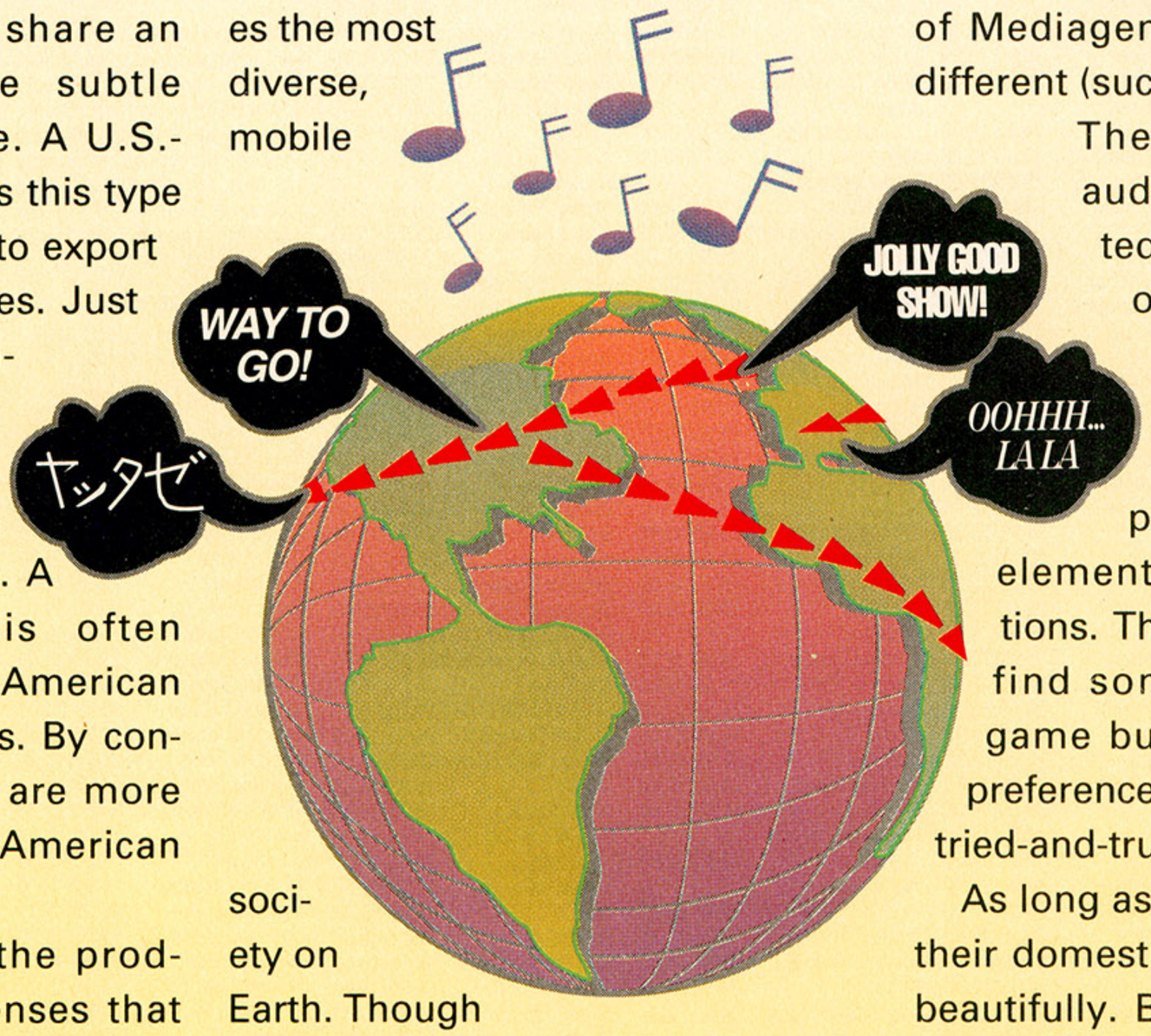
Check out some of the products based on U.S. licenses that have been done abroad. I won't unfairly single out one or two of the many ludicrous examples, but I think we can all agree that many games are little more than a set of graphics tied to a license, grafted to the same old scrolling side-perspective, jump-and-shoot play mechanics.

This raises the issue of repetitiveness. Often foreign software seems to be another helping of the "Same Old Thing" with small improvements in graphics and sound.

These British, Japanese and Europeans aren't stupid, so why do they stay in the same narrow trench of creativity? Don't look at me for a definitive answer, but I have a little theory:

It has been awhile since anyone called the United States "the Great Melting Pot" without an embarrassed smile. The sons and daughters of immigrants put up barricades to keep newer arrivals from crossing the borders to merge with American culture.

Despite the modern outbreak of xenophobia, the United States encompasses the most diverse, mobile society on Earth. Though our heterogeneous society causes strife from time to time, it has some definite advantages over more homogeneous ones.



A British design group returns to the *Impossible Mission* template, because that's what most U.K. gamers want. As long as folks will pay for *Impossible Mission* clones, other folks will produce them. There's nothing wrong with that either. It's called satisfying the demands of the market.

Why don't U.S. development groups fall into similar ruts? Individual teams do. When that happens, however, the U.S. market *forces* them to either try something new or get a day job. Other companies with fresh ideas move in to claim a share of the gaming public's attention and dollars.

The rise and fall of Infocom is a perfect illustration. Infocom wanted to keep producing text adventures, but American gamers became jaded with the format. They started buying ever-smaller quantities of each new Infocom title until sales sank low enough to persuade the company, now part of Mediagenic, to try something different (such as *Battletech*).

The American gaming audience is not committed to one or two types of games. Our designers have learned to keep searching for new and innovative play-mechanics, game elements and victory conditions. There is less impetus to find something fresh when game buyers express a clear preference for more of the same tried-and-true formats.

As long as designers stay within their domestic markets, this works beautifully. But when a U.S. company takes a game to England or a Japanese outfit brings one here, the conditions under which the product was designed do not necessarily fit the environment in which it must be sold.

So final responsibility for making the international software community work for the benefit of gamers everywhere falls squarely on our U.S. publishers. They control the number and type of games imported to this country.

They don't always take this responsibility seriously enough. In search of a solid bottom line for the current fiscal year, they ignore the effect a surplus of inappropriate product has on potential market growth. U.S. gamers want and need the best games the world's software developers can produce. And the keyword, if our electronic-gaming hobby is to thrive in the 1990s, is assuredly "best."

INTENSE!

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Reviews of Recent Electronic-Gaming Fanzines

by Arnie Katz

Beginning this month, VG&CE welcomes another column, *Fandango*, to its pages. Thanks to the great response Arnie Katz has received from his call for reader-created fanzines, each issue Arnie will review some of the submissions he's received.

Tech Trek #1

Edited by Tom Hiley
3508 Mountain Lane
Birmingham, AL 35213.
No stated frequency or price
Computer-printed
Nine pages

The editor and his staff of three offer reviews of games for the Genesis (*Forgotten Worlds, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*), NES (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Ultima*) and home computers (*Wasteland*). A short piece on role-playing games and a page of video-game tips fill out the issue.

The reviewers, who should be credited at the end of each piece, do a good job of describing the game, but *Tech Trek* suffers the usual first-issue birth pangs. Time has a way of curing such flaws, however, and the content is reasonably interesting.

Sega Scope #3

Edited by Adam Query
125 Hunting Hill Drive
Mt. Airy, NC
Quarterly—$1.50 per issue
12 pages

This 14-year-old fanzine editor really knows his Sega Genesis! Query is an extremely strong fan of the 16-bit system, as his caustic editorial about the Neo•Geo clearly shows, and his *Sega Scope* is best when Query goes with his strength: concentrating on his favorite system, as he does in "Mega Tips: Mini Bosses," which offers ideas for defeating three of the peskiest foes in the Genesis catalog.

Sega Scope has some features you won't find in every fanzine. These include a classified-ad section, an address list of video-game publishers and a vanity board where readers can post their Sega Genesis achievements.

A one-page article on the future direction of video gaming should spark comments from readers. Query discusses the strategies of Sega, NEC and Nintendo, though he neglects to take into account the fact that companies target different audiences.

Comic books and children's television shows may be the ideal way to bring the NES (and Super Famicom SFX) to the notice of likely buyers, but there may be better ways to reach those most likely to buy one of the two rival 16-bit consoles, like ads on MTV, for example.

The Hard Rock Arcade #1

Frank Eva
7570 S. Manor Ave.
Oak Creek, WI 53154
Frequent—No price listed (send $1 for a sample)
12 pages.

Family amusement centers aren't what they once were, but arcades still furnish a surprising number of the designs that grace home systems, examples range from *Double Dragon* to *Strider.* Editor Frank Eva has decided to devote his fanzine to coverage of the coin-snatchers. *The Hard Rock Arcade* is a "must have" for fans of this type of electronic gaming.

Eva, who has written reviews for various magazines, is one of the best writers to hit electronic-gaming fandom. The 12 pages, in neat three-column layout, are packed with news and reviews that communicate a lot in an entertaining manner.

Frank covers home translations for the Amiga and Genesis as well as commercial coin-ops, so there's plenty of meaty material even for those who don't feed a lot of quarters into those hungry coin slots. In just one issue, *Hard Rock Arcade* has vaulted into the "top five" of electronic-gaming fanzines. I have only a couple of small suggestions: Justify the right-hand margins of each column, and print a colophon with editorial information.

Arena #1

Ralph Barbagallo
3 Village Way
North Andover, MA 01945
Frequent—$1 per issue
Eight pages

The first issue covers the full range of video and computer gaming with news, short articles and plenty of sophisticated tips. The explanation of Sega's 8-bit future, the update on the TurboGrafx-16 and a release schedule for Lynx software are features sure to interest most readers, as are the sections of video-game reviews and hints. Editor Barbagallo evidences a solid command of the English language as well as the subject matter, though the format of future issues will, hopefully, make better use of the space.

Barbagallo adds something I'd like to see in more fanzines: personal information about the editor. In this case, a short history of his own involvement with electronic gaming. Since fanzines are a medium of *personal* expression, a bit of biography about the people behind the pages is always highly interesting to this reader. *Arena* looks like an up-and-comer; send for a sample, and get in on the ground floor.

Attention Fanzine Readers

If you want to see sample copies of many of the top current fanzines—or if you're a fanzine publisher looking for names for a mailing list—VideoGames & Computer Entertainment can help you. The Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyone can be included on the list by writing to us. In either case, the address is Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

The first Fanzine Readers List, with over 100 active names, is currently available. A new one, with every name re-qualified, will be ready for distribution in early January, so get those names to me as quickly as possible.

Also, a sample copy of *Megagaming*, the biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," is available for $1 from Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NY 89107). Each issue contains news, previews, fanzine critiques, a forum for fan-oriented questions, columns and more.

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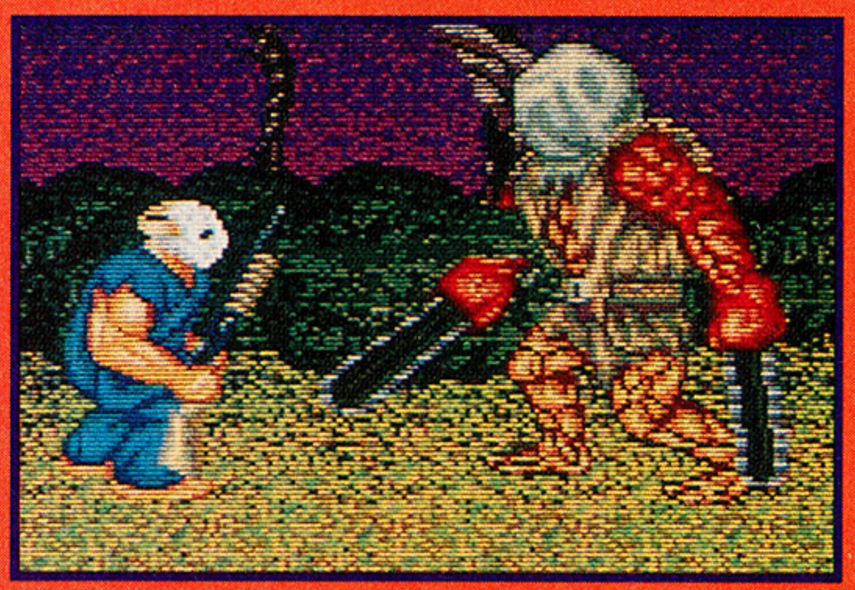

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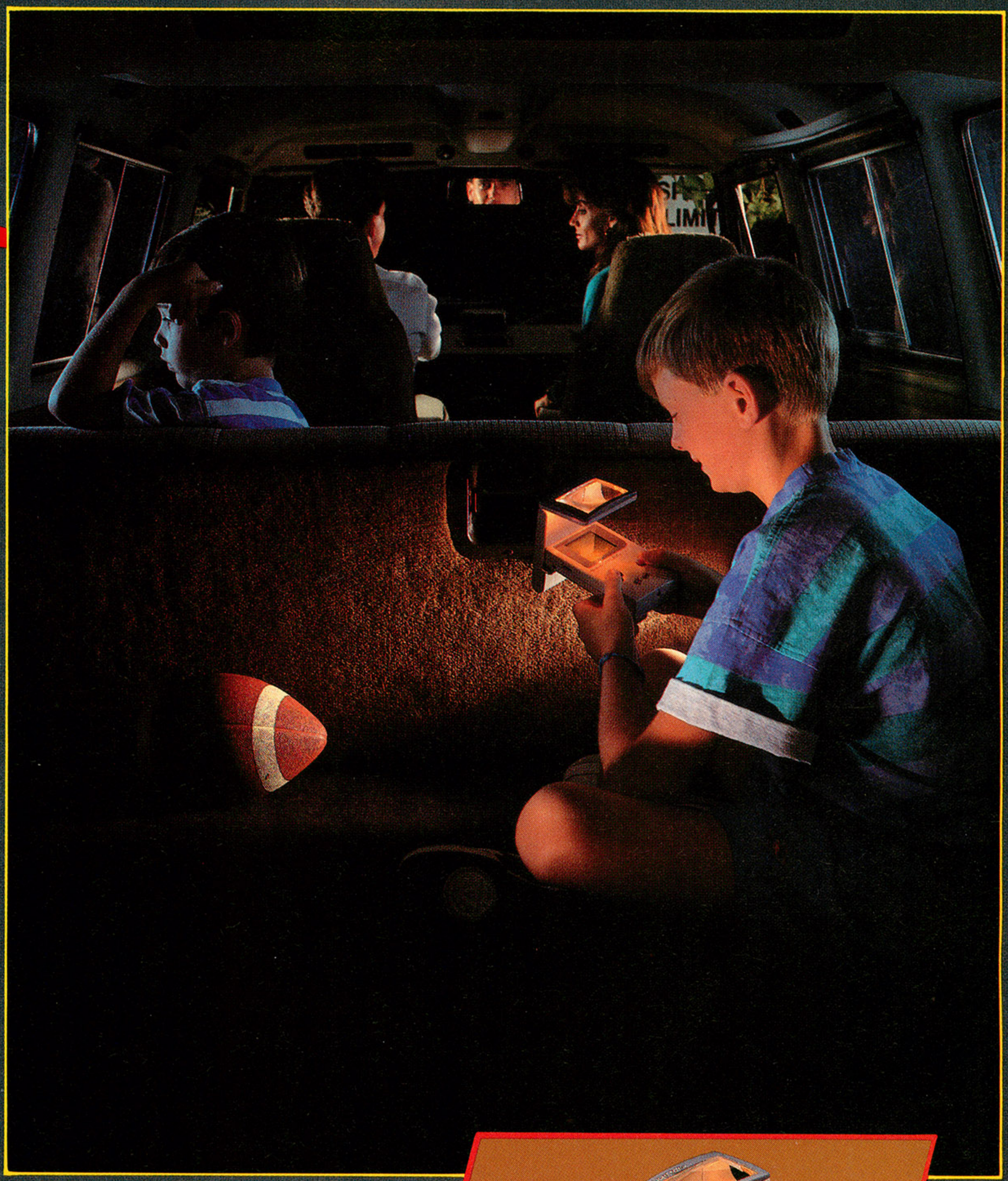

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LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

Final Fantasy

by CLAYTON WALNUM

FOR THE

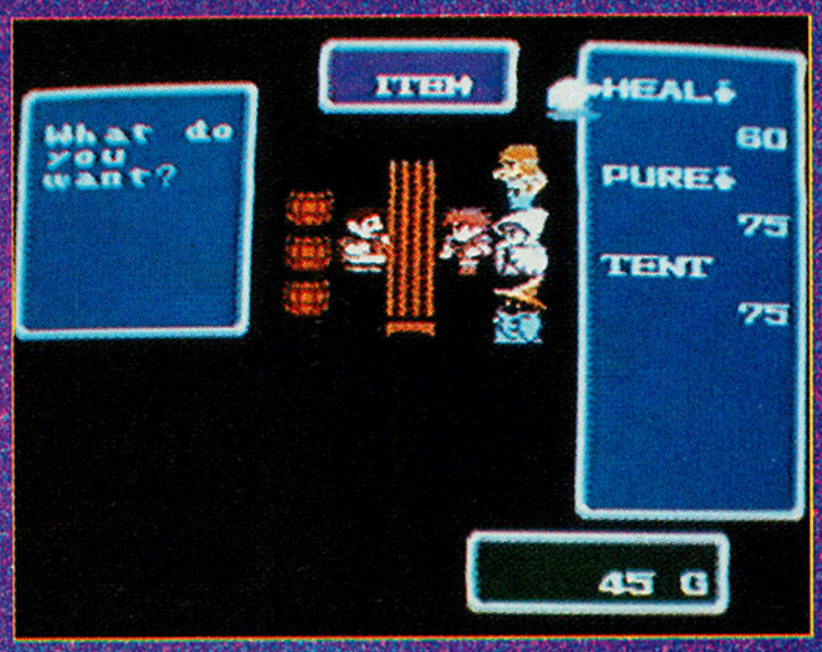
NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Nintendo's new role-playing adventure, *Final Fantasy*, has already climbed well up onto the bestsellers list. That's not surprising, considering how popular RPGs are and how good a game *Final Fantasy* is. As soon as you open the package and see the colorful 80-page strategy guide, you know that this game is a quality product. However, the guide covers only the first half of the game, leaving the rest for the adventurer to figure out for himself.

VG&CE to the rescue! We'll tell you all you need to know to complete this epic fantasy, and we'll supply a few extra hints that'll make your quest for the light of the orbs a little easier.

This month we have a bunch of general tips. Use them to increase your adventuring savvy in preparation for the tough challenges to come. At the end of this article, we'll give you a quick look at Part 2 of *Final Fantasy*, which we'll finish up next month. Stay tuned!

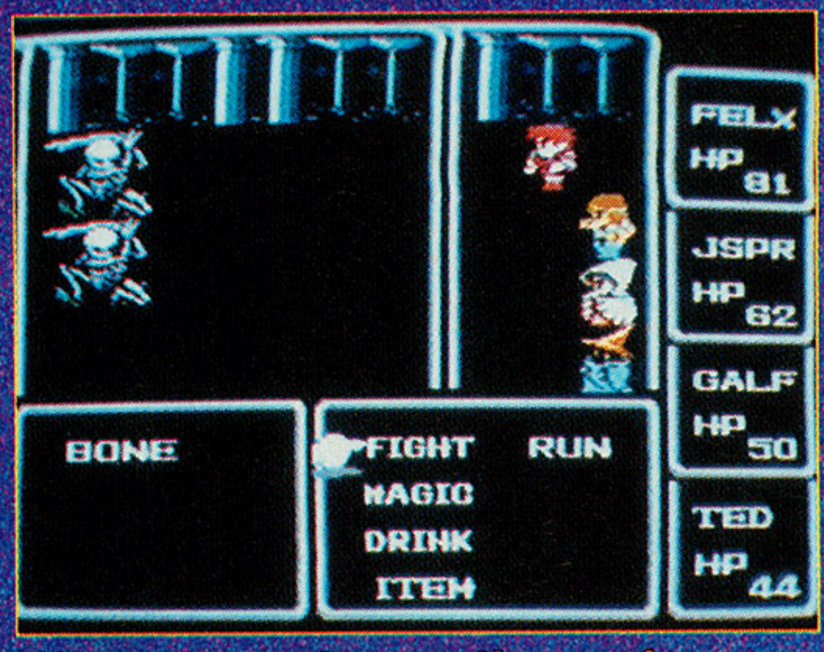
ILLUSTRATION BY CATHY RUNDELL DUNN



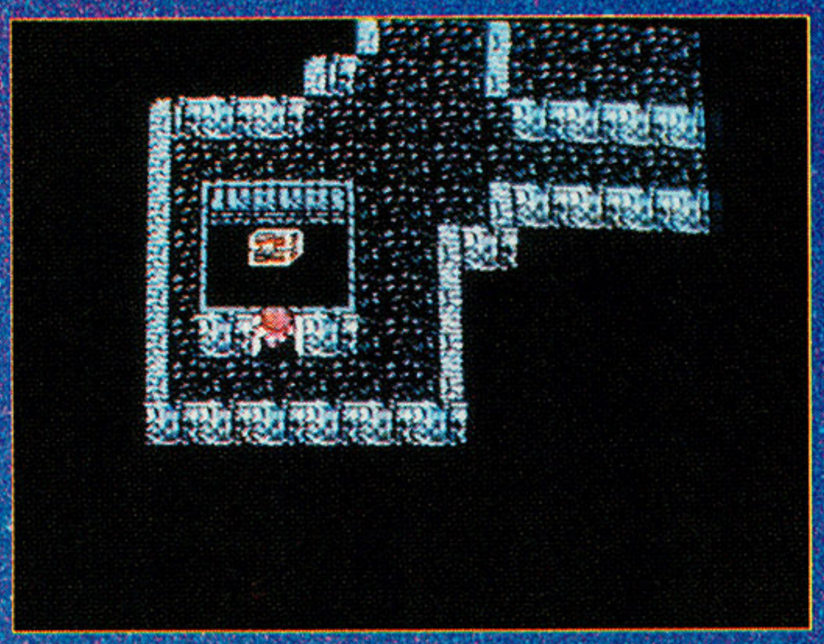
When buying spells, read the descriptions in your game manual so that you buy the most effective spells for your characters.

Never go far from a town without heal and pure potions, as well as a tent, cabin or house.

When you encounter a new monster, look him up on your monster reference sheet. Some spells are more effective than others against particular enemies.



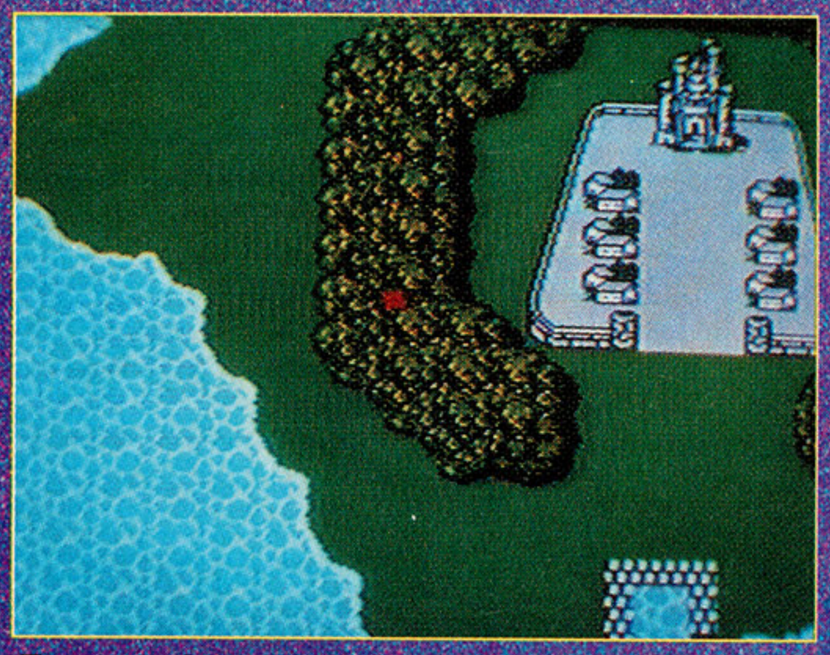
When you enter castles and caves, be prepared to confront new species of monsters.



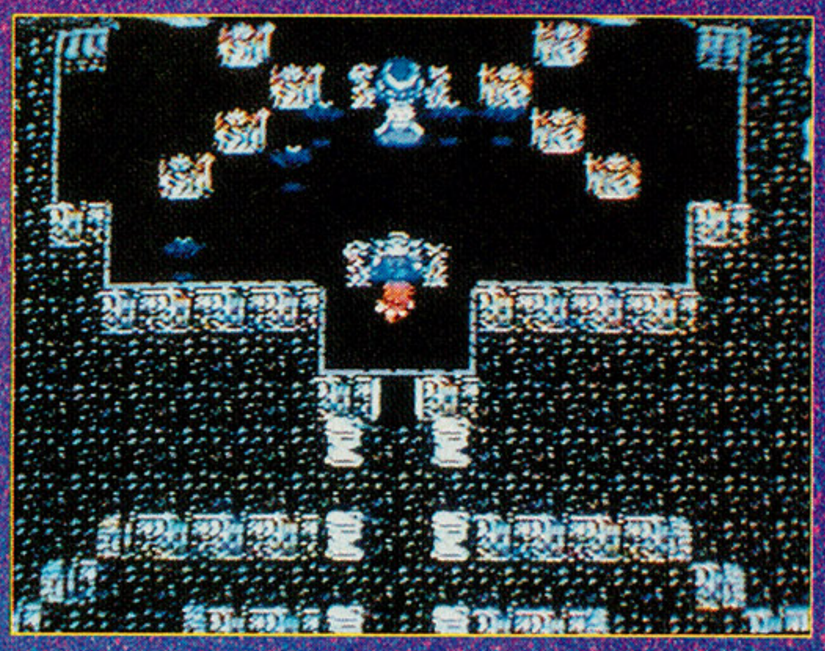
When exploring castles, caves and other locations, be sure to check every room and open every treasure chest. Some contain important items, like high-powered weapons and stronger armor.

When trying to get to a location quickly, use the run command often. Not only will this speed your travels, it'll also keep your characters strong. Remember, however, that you can't always run; sometimes you must stand and fight.

Building experience points is an important part of advancing in the game. As you build them, stay near a town. That way you can get back quickly when you need to get healed or want to save your game.

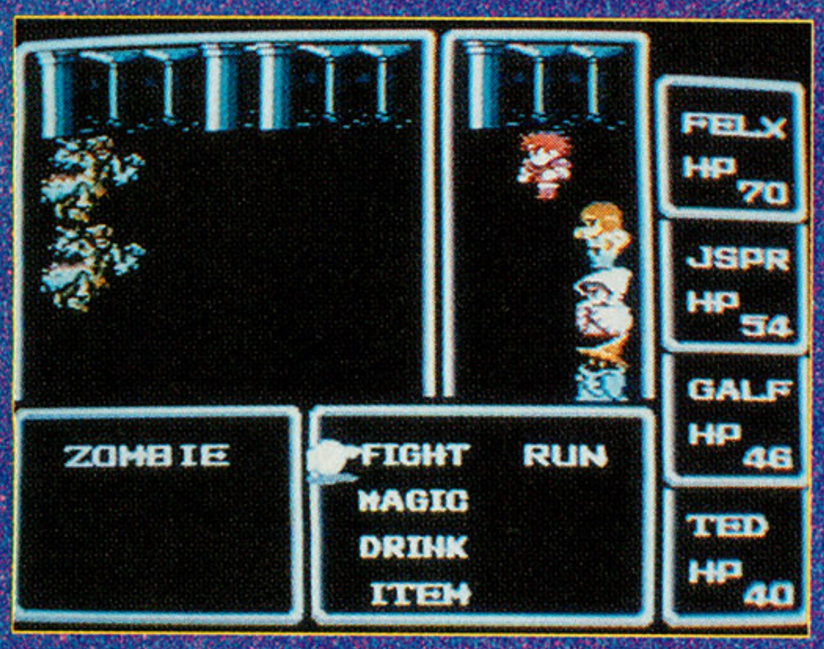


Remember that your characters attack in a different order each time there's a battle. It's difficult to plan a fail-safe strategy. Don't depend on the order of attack.



Before taking on a boss enemy, be sure you have attained enough strength. Also, make sure you have recently saved your game.

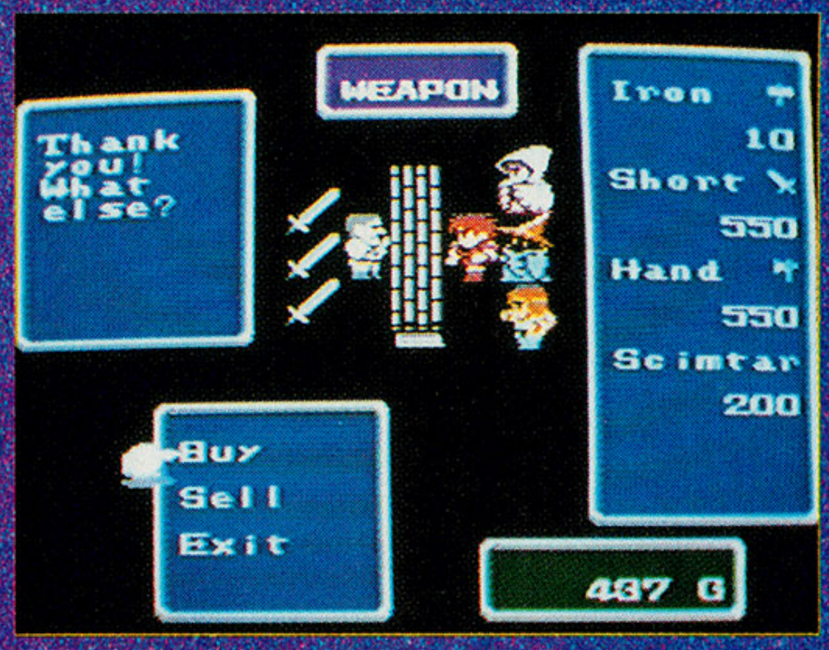
Refer to the status screen often to check your supplies and keep track of your players' attributes.



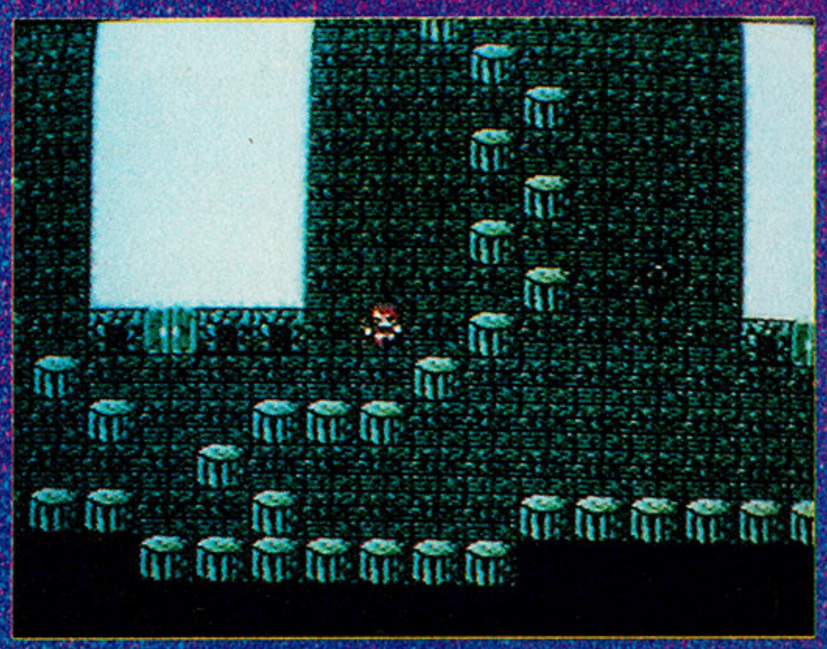
Although white mages and wizards can usually use only defensive types of spells, their "harm" spells are effective against all varieties of the evil undead—zombies, ghosts, vampires and mummies, among others.

As you travel from area to area, always be prepared to meet different kinds of enemies.

By pressing the "B" and SELECT buttons, you can get an overhead-view map of *Final Fantasy*'s world. Use this map frequently to keep track of where you are.

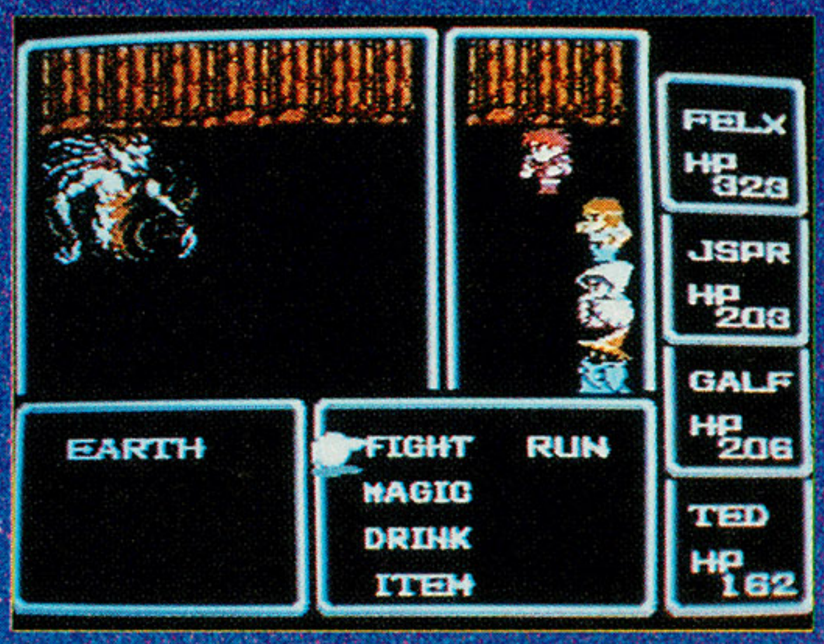


Different weapon shops carry different equipment. Use the weapons chart that came with your game to choose the best weapons for your characters.



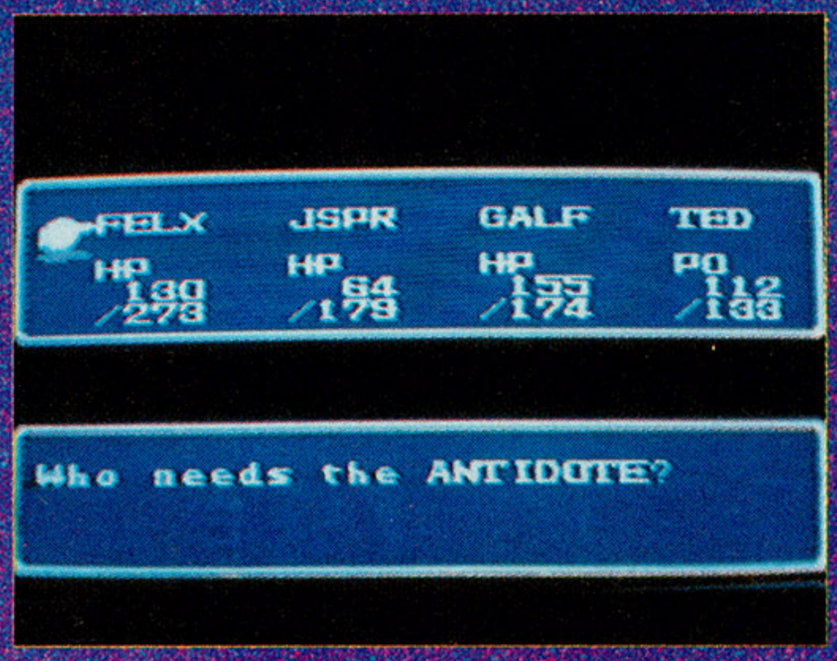
Remember that the deeper you go into a dungeon, the harder it will be to get out. You need to save enough strength to make the long journey back to the surface.

Some enemies, such as these wizards, are very intelligent and are difficult to run from.

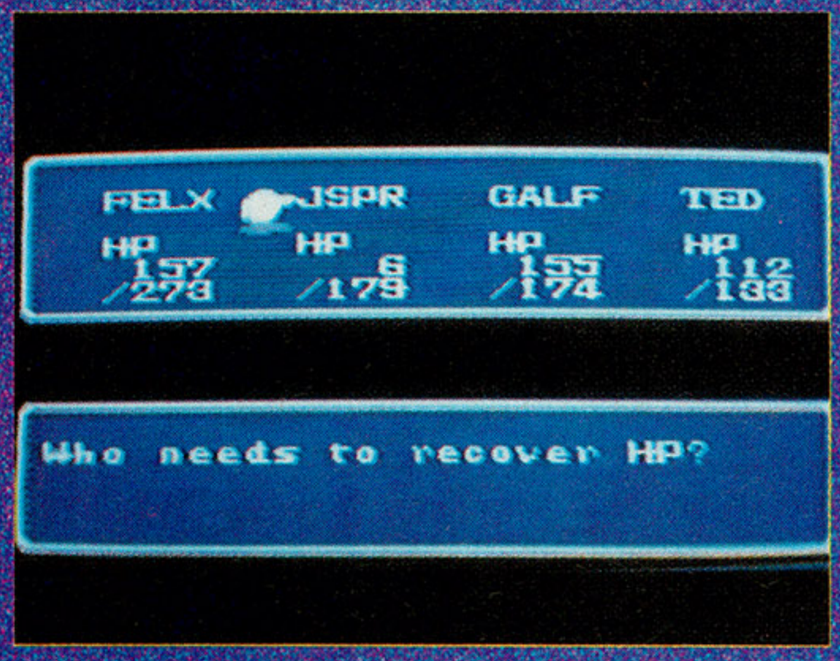


As your experience level increases, you should come across tougher monsters to fight. They are worth higher amounts of experience points and gold.

Some monsters have devastating powers, such as the ability to stun your characters. Wipe out the dangerous creatures first, before they get a chance to cripple an important party member.

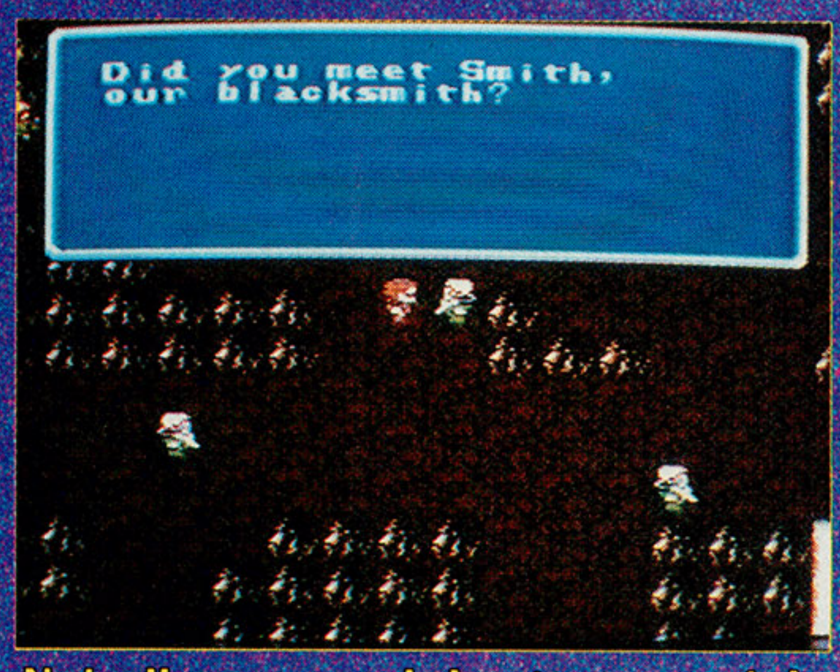


When a character is poisoned, he constantly loses life force. Use a "pure" spell or the antidote as soon as possible.



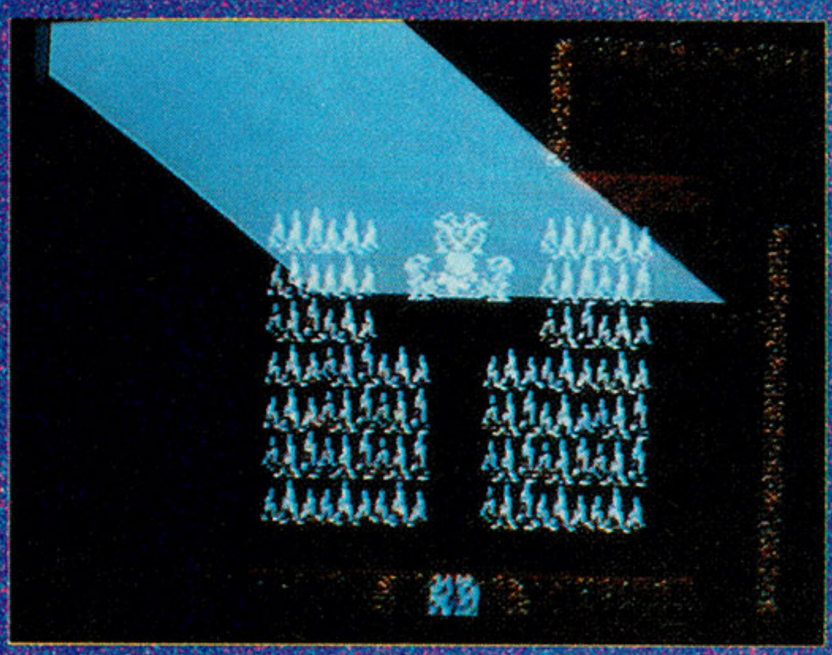
Don't let any of your characters' hit points get too low. Heal them often, especially before traveling someplace dangerous.

If when you try to open a treasure chest you are told, "Can't hold anymore," go to your status screens and see if there's something you can drop in order to make room for the new item.

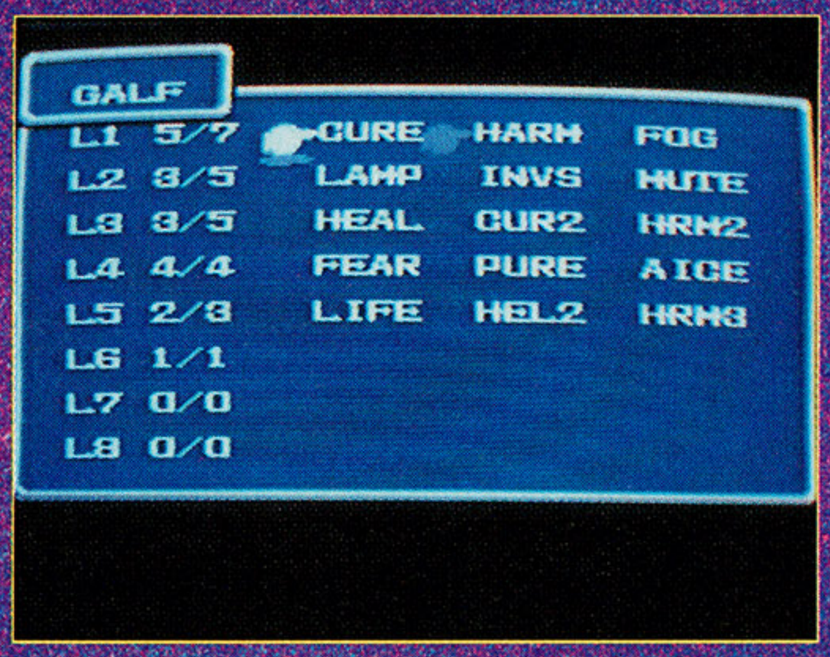


Not all caves and dungeons contain bad guys. These dwarves have a lot of important information.

The bosses, just like other enemies, are resistant to some forms of attack and prone to others.

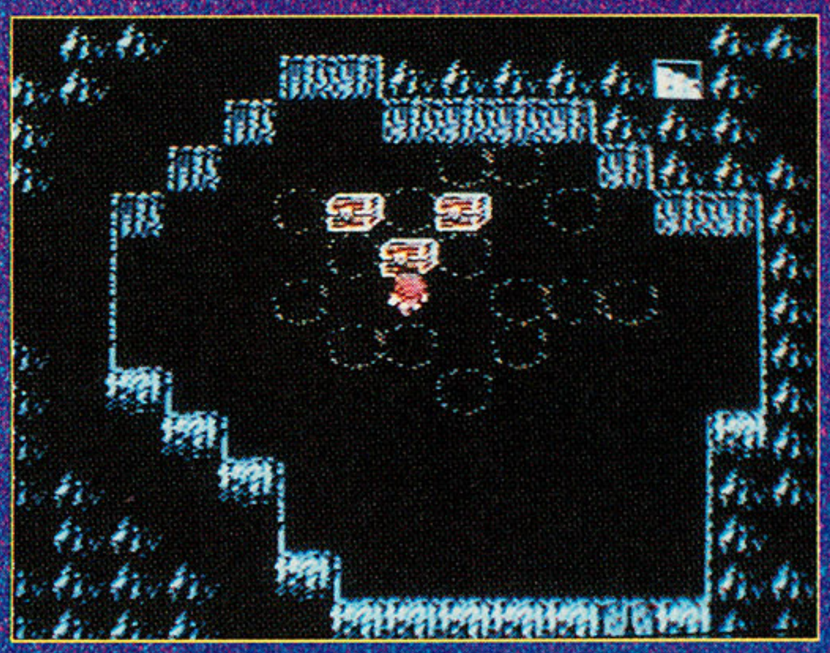


When you bring light back into a globe, you'll be teleported out of the dungeon. What a great shortcut!

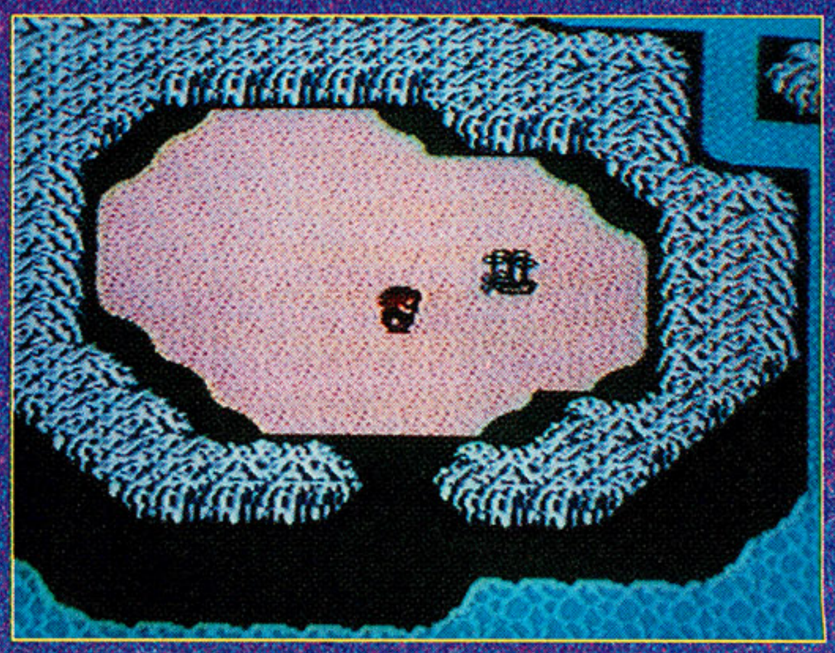


When you have many spells, take time to choose among them wisely.

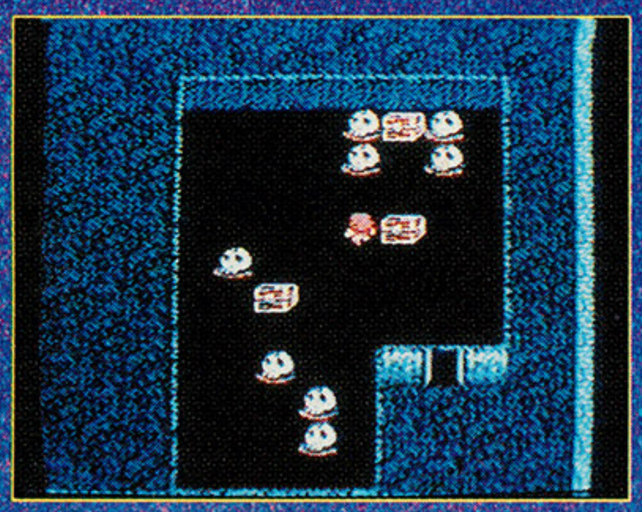
Some towns have hidden pathways that lead to special places.



Within these strange transporter circles is the floater.

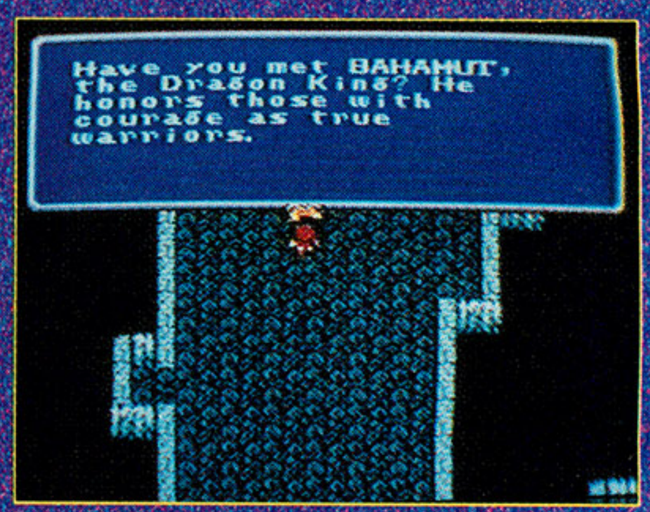


Using the floater, you'll find the airship in this desert.



Inside the caverns are many treasure chests.

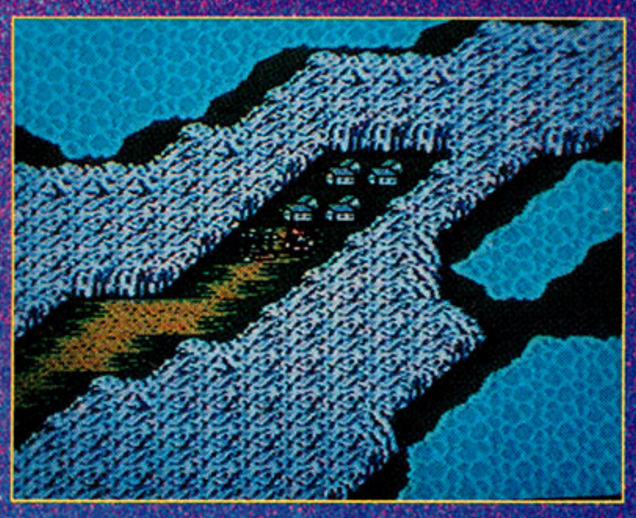
Talk to all the dragons. Some have a tale to tell.



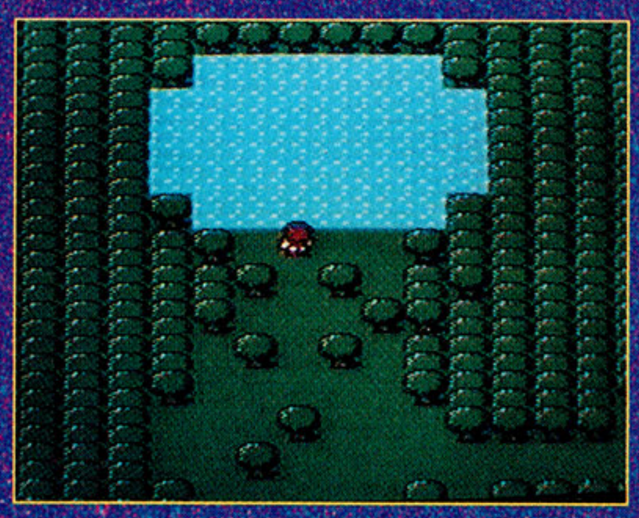
Ah! It seems that the dragon king, Bahamut, has something important to give to warriors who can prove their bravery. Next month we'll discover the answer to this mystery.

One hidden path leads to this group of wise men, who have a lot to say.

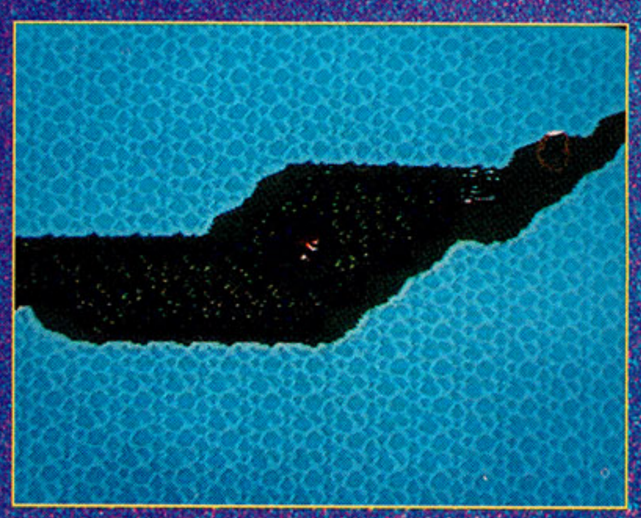
Come to this screen often and sell items you don't need.



After getting the airship, this town in the north should be your next stop.



In the town you'll find this strange pool with a secret.



A group of islands to the west of the city with the pool houses a race of friendly dragons.

Next month we'll also meet some new creatures...

...and locate the last bosses. Until then, keep adventuring!

Advice From the Silicon Sage

by the Game Doctor

Another full office, I see. Yes, I *know* I moved to Las Vegas to relax and semi-retire, but you see how it is. First one old patient, then another showed up on my doorstep and, well, I never have been able to say "no" to a sick ROM cartridge. Then I installed those slots and poker machines in the waiting room, and things went *completely* insane!

Still, the only way I'm going to get to the Jacuzzi today is by clearing out some of these Qs, so let's get on with it.

question

I have some questions about coin-op machines. I want to know what kind of microprocessors and graphics processors are used in machines like *Out Run* and *S.T.U.N. Runner* and how the creators make these kinds of games. I'm a programmer and I'm truly interested in this information. Can you tell me where I can get magazines and books about developing professional games or other, related information?

—Armando Rodriguez M.
Mexico D.F.

answer

The single advantage that coin-ops have traditionally possessed over video- and computer-game systems is their flexibility. Once a game's concept has been sufficiently developed, the manufacturer can determine the type of technological presentation that suits a particular game. At that point, the hardware system best able to support this particular software can be custom assembled.

These days, however, the realities of a sluggish market have forced arcade operators to become much more dependent on kit technology, in which the arcade owner buys game systems and supplemental software rather than a series of individual games. When a title has begun to lose its steam, the owner can buy new software, some accompanying cabinet art and, voilà!, he has a new coin-op at a cost of hundreds, rather than thousands, of dollars.

Some coin-ops are run by humble home computers, like the Amiga, and their software operates much like home computer games. Other popular arcade hardware systems include Capcom's CPS and SNK's Neo•Geo (the Neo•Geo MVS25-4 can run up to four games in a single cabinet).

Coin-ops still use special equipment, of course. Williams' *Smash TV* employs 32-bit technology. State-of-the-art joysticks, controllers and special high-resolution monitors have been commonplace for over a decade.

The coin-op industry has been extremely reluctant to reveal the specifics of its game design and programming processes. Even trade magazines like *RePlay* contain precious little in terms of technological insight. The design and programming process is, however, quite similar to the video- and computer-entertainment industry's. All games begin with a concept, go to storyboards and are then assigned to a programming team.

question

I own a C-128D computer, and I have a few responses for reader's past questions. First of all, the V-MAX! problem could also lie in the software. Copy protection through V-MAX! is indeed a pain, but it has to be done because of pirates. And there are a *lot* of them out there.

Also, Paul Kowalski was wondering why the Atari and C-64/128 don't have high-quality graphics. I don't know about Atari, but, in my opinion, the Commodores *do* have high-quality graphics. If you can, Doc, pick up *TV Sports: Football*, the *Three Stooges* or just about any game for the C-64. The high quality especially shows in *TV Sports: Football.*

One reason Paul might think the Commodores don't have high-quality graphics is because of the 16-color limit. I'll note, though, that a new C-128 80-column program has the equal of an Amiga's high-res screen. (It's a painting program, *IPaint.*) But I have a question: Why do most companies ignore the 128/128D? I'll admit, I'm using 64 mode to type this, but with a RAM expansion unit, a 128 can have one meg of RAM! Plus, get a hard drive and you have about six megs total. I know, I know: "At that cost, why not buy an IBM or Amiga?" A reason I stuck with the 128 is because of the number of games available, the GEOS Operating System, the SID chip, the graphics chip...the list is almost endless!

—Paul McAleer
Berwyn, Illinois

answer

I hate to get into these discussions, Paul, because people become so emotionally attached to their computers and video-game systems that they interpret any slighting of their system as a personal insult. The fact is, however, that "high-quality graphics" is a meaningless term. The key question is: Compared to what? Compared to the Atari 2600, the C-64/128 *does* have high-quality graphics; compared to the Amiga, a VGA IBM PC system or the Sega Genesis, it doesn't. That 16-color limitation is a killer and the reason why C-64 graphics simply aren't as good as those on 16-bit systems. Certainly the games you mention look great, but the Amiga versions look and sound a lot better.

As to why nobody produces games for the C-128, it's simple: No sane publisher is going to produce a Commodore game that excludes the C-64 market. The number of users with the sophisticated C-128 configuration you describe wouldn't pay to have the documentation written, I'm afraid. Little enough software is being produced for the C-64, after all, because it is a dying market; imagine how publishers look at the C-128!

Hope I didn't bring you down, Paul. It's great that you love your computer and are getting the most out of it, but if the reason you're sticking with it is for "the number of games available," you'd better start thinking about IBM PC. There will probably be more game titles released for IBM PC computers this month than will be released for the C-64/128 this year.

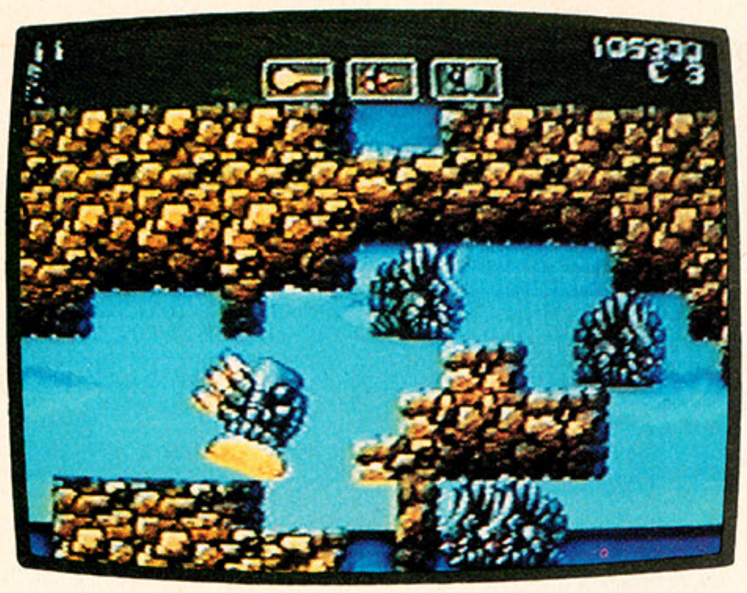
By the way, I loved the computer art on your envelope. And speaking of super envelope art, our next questioner wins the all-time *Game Doc* award for Most Attractive Envelope. Great stuff, you guys!

question

I understand that the TurboGrafx-16 is only able to paint one page of background. However, I've noticed on games like *R-Type*, *Darius* and *Download* (for the PC Engine) that there are two or more moving backgrounds.

continued on page 135

17 COMPANIES HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO DISPLAY THIS SEAL.



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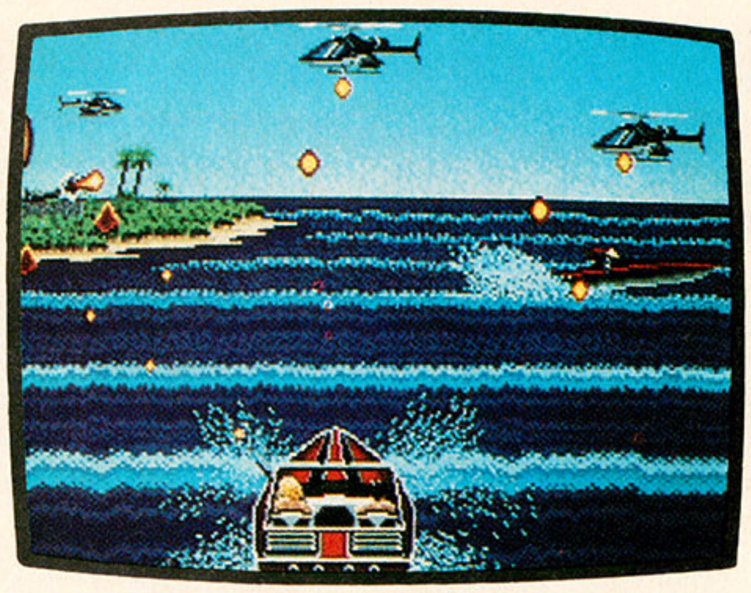

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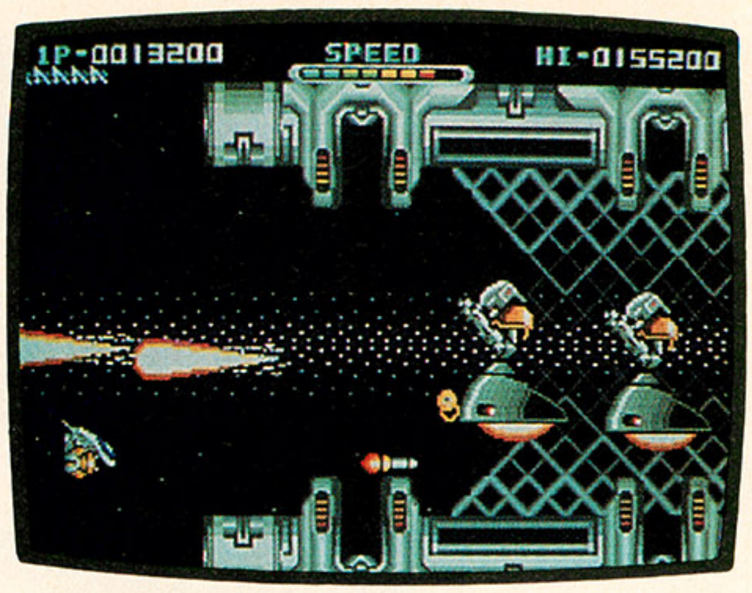
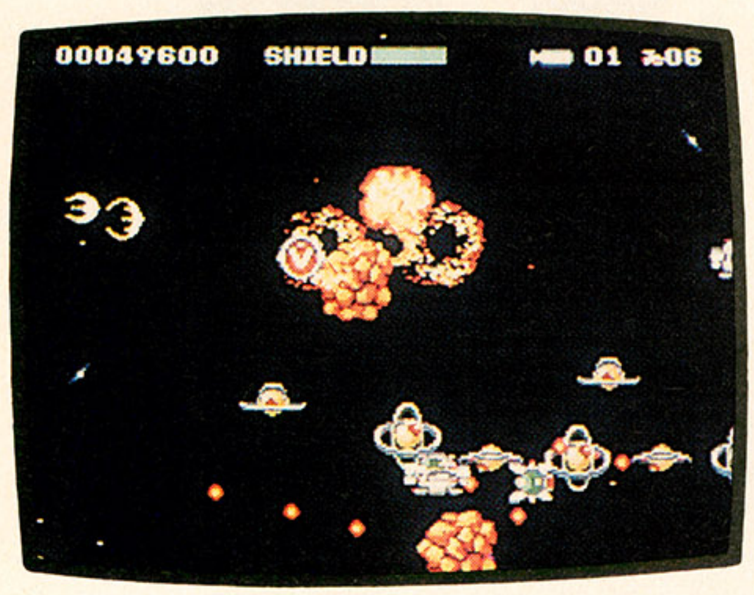
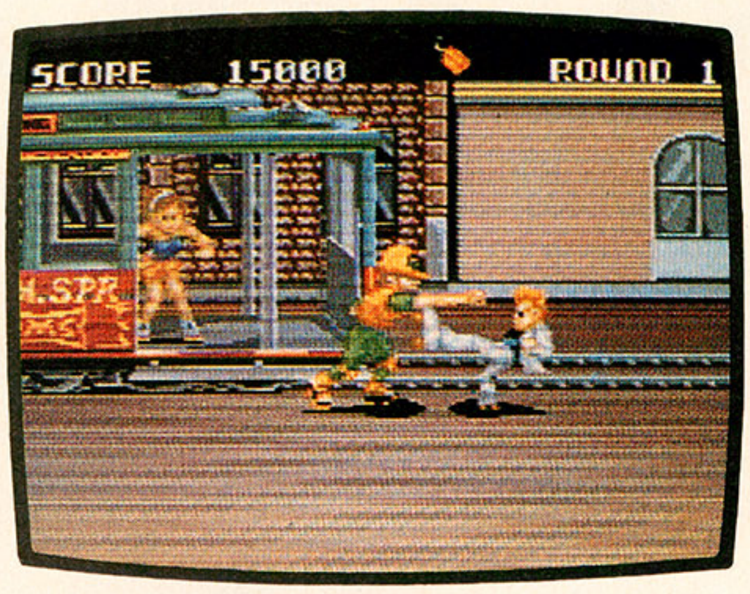


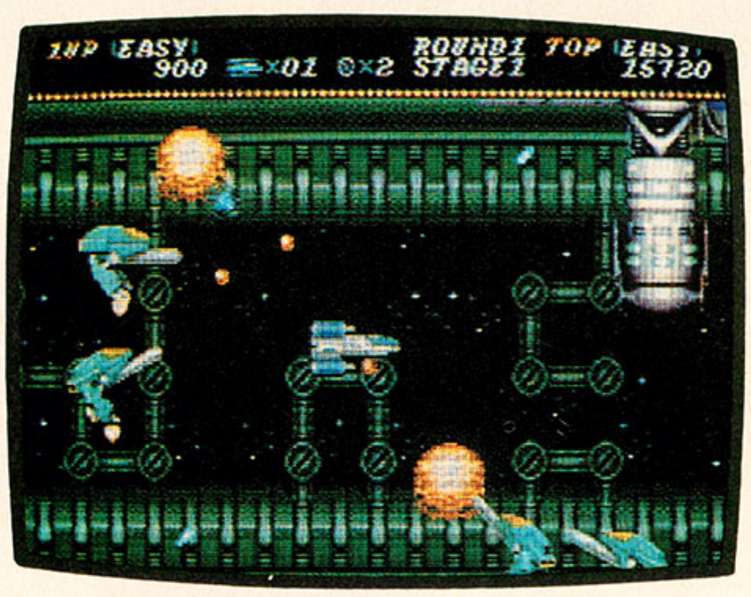
RENOVATION PRODUCTS Whip Rush™
A horizontal and vertical scrolling game where you operate a mighty jet fighter and challenge seven stages of shooting scenes.



INTV CORPORATION Curse™
An intense shooter as you fly an attack craft through alien hazards to reach the ultimate goal—the quest of the Solar Grail!



KANEKO DJ Boy™
Rollerskate to action and win the ultimate street fight challenge.



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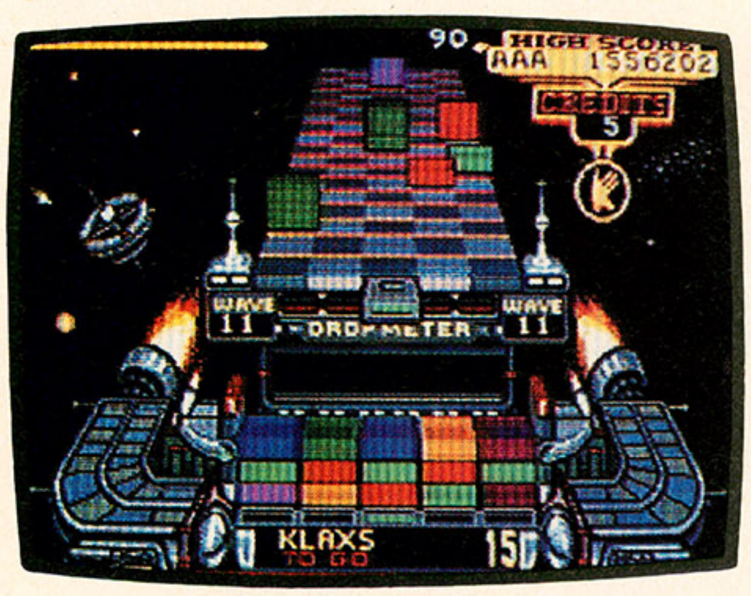
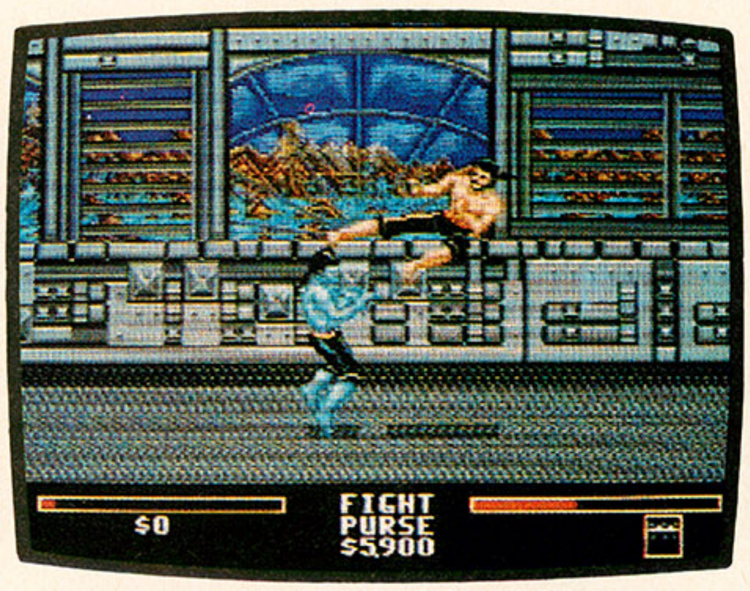
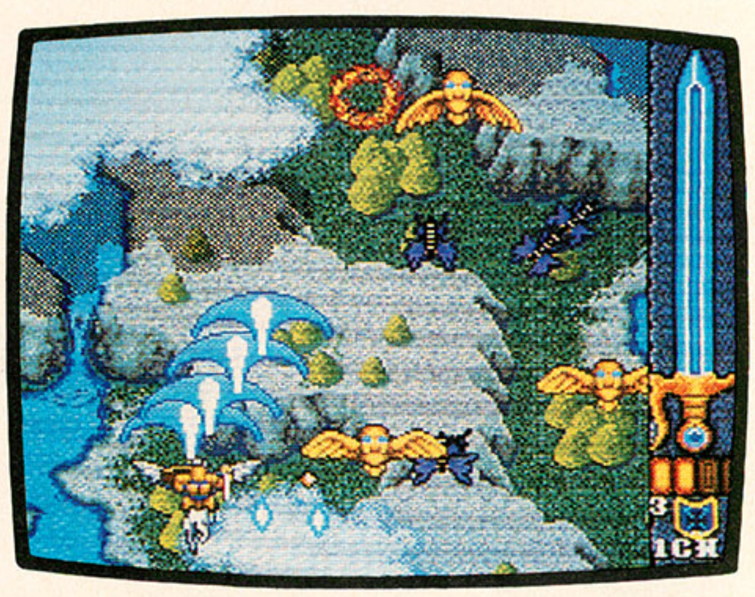
Shoot or die in this horizontal scrolling shooting game.



TENGEN Klax™
Move fast and think faster in this strategic video challenge. Catch and arrange color tiles coming down conveyer belt—this is a scream!



ACTIVISION Mondu's Fight Palace™
Role playing fun, hit music and great sound effects for 1 or 2 players—outrageous!



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Apollo challenges enemies to rescue Artemis in this arcade classic with vivid graphics and animation.

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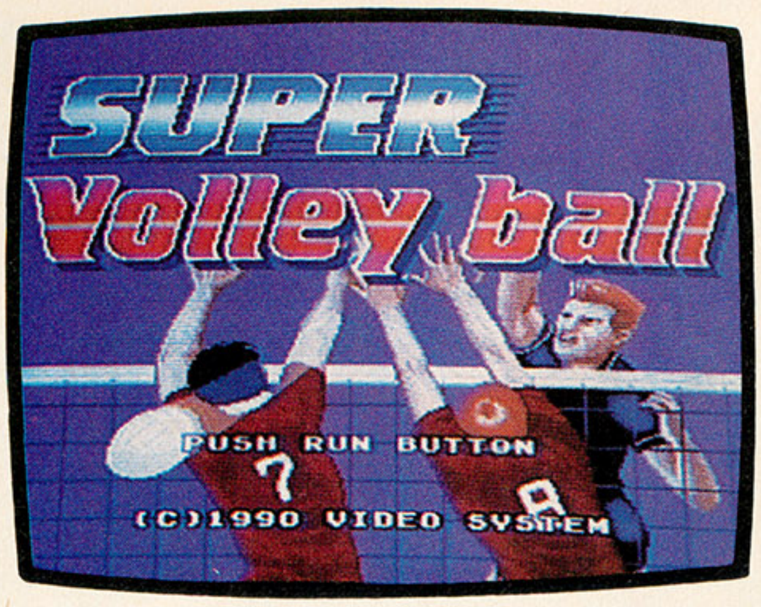
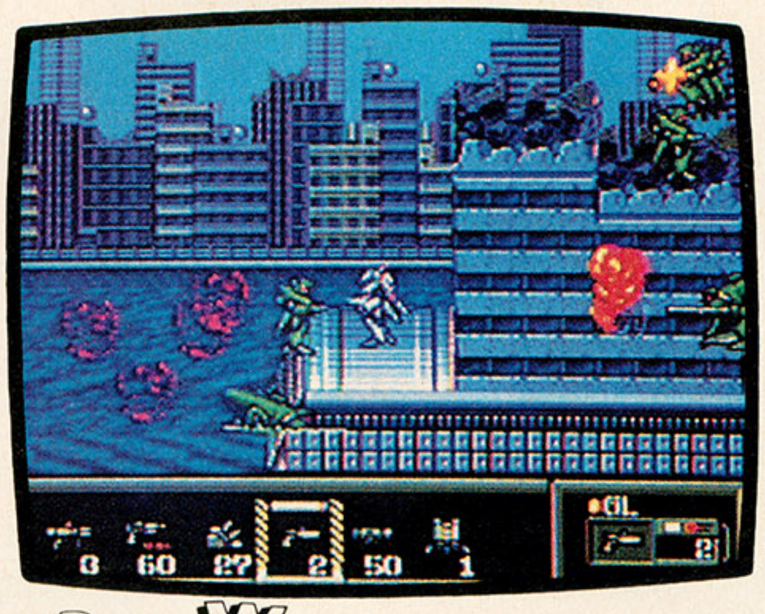
And now seventeen renowned software companies from around the world have joined Sega Genesis in our "commitment



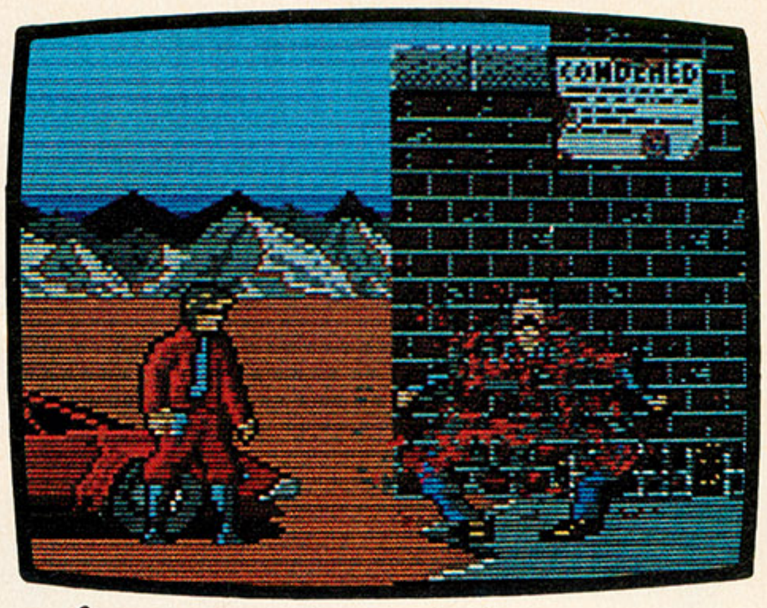
VIDEO SYSTEM **Super Volleyball™**

Total volleyball action that puts you in the game. Go for the spike—this is tournament play at its best!



DREAMWORKS **Target Earth™**

In this action space-fantasy game, Earth is under attack from an invading cyborg armada. Your mission is to protect the planet at all costs—Good Luck!



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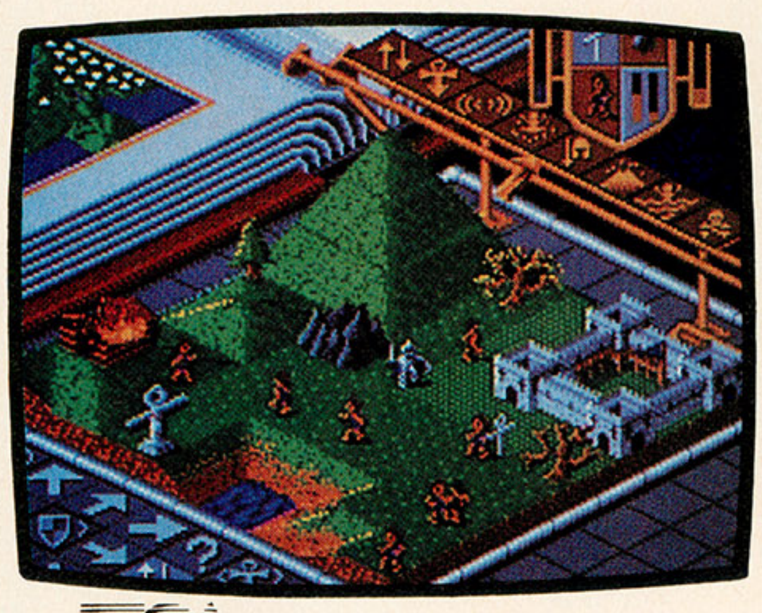

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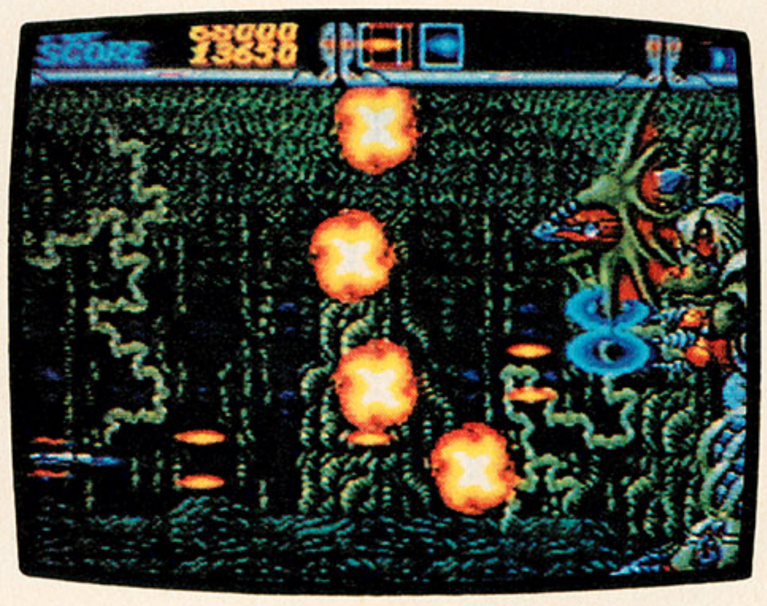
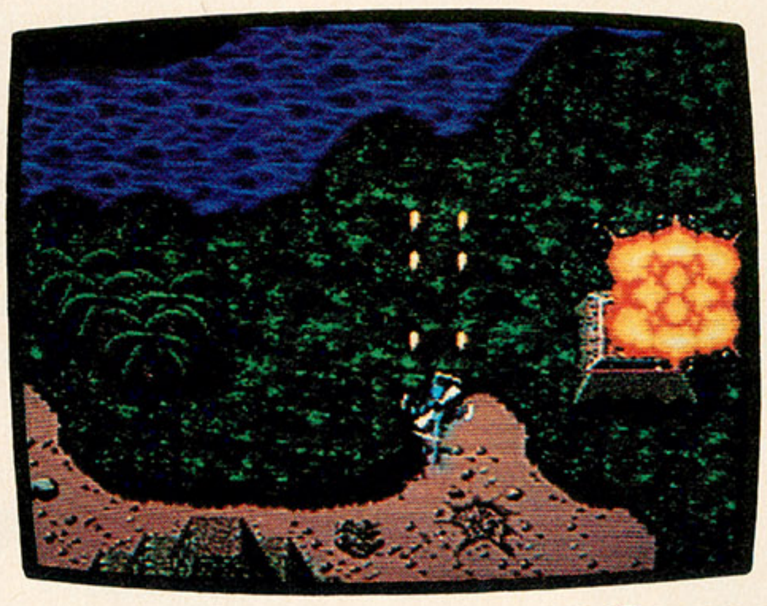


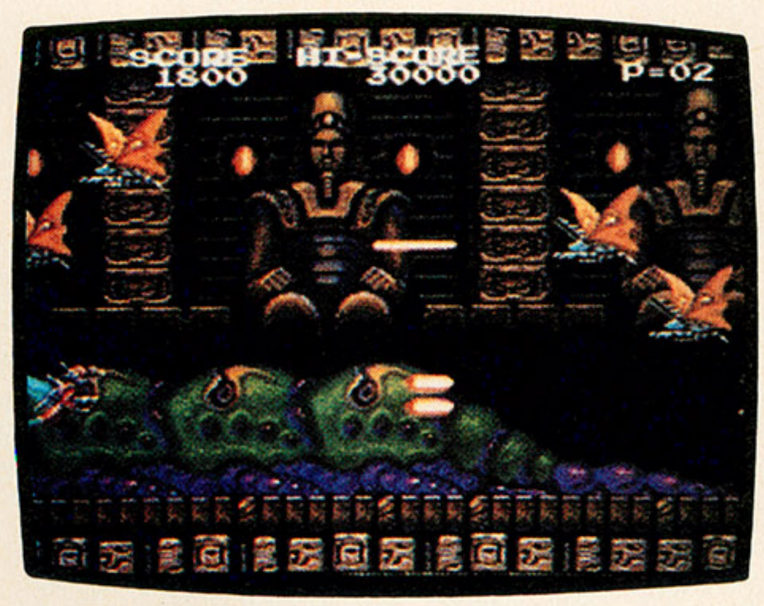
Technosoft **Thunderforce III™**

Rush into a world of perpetual motion and experience the line scroll function for the first time ever.



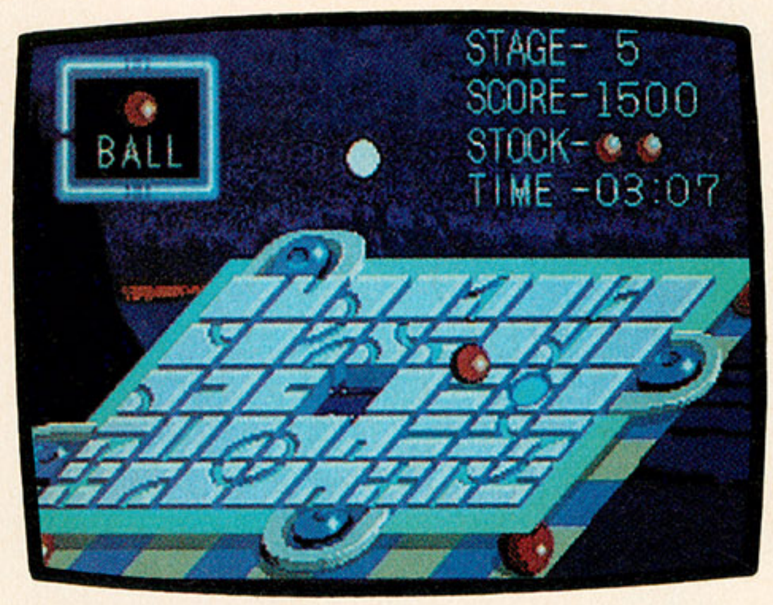
KYUGO TRADING CO., LTD. **Cross Fire™**

A shooting action game featuring helicopters in death-defying combat!



SAGES CREATION **Insector X™**

Destroy insect worlds full of danger in this intense shooting game based upon the arcade hit.



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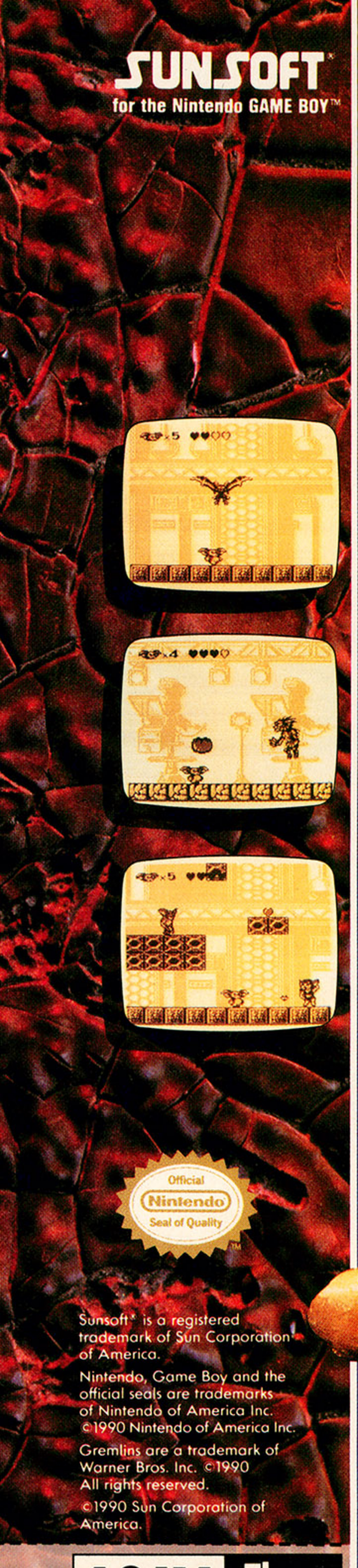

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continued from page 130

It is most astounding, in the game *Download*, when you enter into the computers. How is this done?

Also, how do they make stars sparkle (*Blazing Lazers, Galaga '90, R-Type,* etc.) and lights seem to flash (*Alien Crush, Galaga '90, R-Type,* etc.)?

—Richie Check
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

answer

The wizards at NES tell me that the multiple-background effect is achieved by using raster-scan interrupts. You set the interrupt and then change the scrolling (i.e., change what you see from that point on). The TurboGrafx-16 can run so many sprites on a scan line that this effect is apparently pretty simple to accomplish, as long as it doesn't exceed 16 sprites per scan line.

The flashing effect is, according to the same engineers, done by "rewriting the palette RAM on a time basis." And thanks again for the great envelope art!

question

I have always wanted a CD-ROM drive for my Macintosh IIcx [but] my mom says she will not buy me one until they can read and write to the CD in the drive. Could you please tell me if there is a CD drive that can read and write to a CD and, if so, how much it costs?

—Matt Ross
El Cajon, California

answer

Boy, those moms out there are *sharp* ! Time was, most moms thought ROM was an alcoholic drink that you mixed with cola!

Sorry, Matt, as far as the Doc knows, the current CD drives use CD-ROM technology and ROM means "read only memory." So while they can *read* the CD, they can't *write* to it. CD-I, however, which is the next CD format we'll be hearing about, is *Interactive* CD and does allow users to do neat things like replace the on-screen player-character with a digitized photograph of themselves.

question

I never bothered [with] U.S. game magazines because they were too expensive compared to the European ones, but since I got the Game Boy, I must say that U.S. mags are best on Game Boy info.

I would like to comment on the handheld console war that is about to explode this year. Most people who will buy a handheld console already own a computer (I own an Atari ST) or a home console. They will mainly be using the handheld console where their TV/monitor-based system can't be used; in the bus, train, at school or work—and all places in between. I don't think that people want to spend too much on a handheld console because they already spent [so much] to get their home [system]. That's why the Game Boy is such a success. And with its long battery life, it's way ahead of the Lynx or NEC's TurboExpress.

The Game Boy's limited graphics are its strong point! Let me explain: It has forced game designers to concentrate on sheer playability rather than just flashy graphics, as I have seen so often on my ST. No doubt the high-res color handhelds will have to cope with many games that rely mainly on flashy graphics.

I don't know what the point is with the Prize Packet winner department, but if I win then I'll go for some Game Boy games!

—Jay Lee
Netherlands

answer

You make an excellent point, Jay, and I couldn't agree with you more. The limited graphic capabilities of the Game Boy compel designers to stress what we old-timers used to call play value. So many of today's games are based on a conquer-the-game mentality that play value has almost become an antiquated notion. The reason you play a game like *Super Mario Bros.* is to conquer it; i.e., to kill all the monsters and bosses, collect all the goodies and get to the end of each scenario. In the old days, we played games because they were *fun*, not out of some compulsive need to defeat each and every new program. The experience of playing the game was sufficient to bring us back, and, as a result, I find myself enjoying the better Game Boy titles (*Tetris, Kwirk,* etc.) more than most of the newer NES games.

Great to hear from a Netherlands gamer, Jay. Yours is one of the countries I have always wanted to visit. Write again and keep us posted on developments in your part of the world. To encourage you, this month's *Game Doctor* Prize Packet is on its way. No, it doesn't include software—just game-related goodies like buttons, T-shirts, etc.—but I hope you'll like it anyway.

question

I'd like to take issue with your response to the letter sent by Paul J. Kowalski in which you stated that the Genesis "blows away" comparable Amiga graphics. I'm not an Amiga owner, but I am an admirer of the machine's power, and it can outdo anything the Genesis or TurboGrafx-16 can produce.

The Genesis can produce a display of 320x224 pixels, while the Amiga can display 640x400 pixels, with up to 4096 colors in HAM (hold and modify) mode. Also, the Amiga can be called a "dedicated" graphics machine, since it has special processor chips to help with graphics and take some of the load off the CPU. Anyone who has seen such terrific games as *It Came From the Desert* and *Lords of the Rising Sun* (both Cinemaware) on the Amiga will realize that it is far superior to the Genesis.

—Eugene Kuzinski
Pittsford, New York

answer

I'll admit that "blows away" was perhaps too strong a description to use in comparing the systems, Eugene, but the fact is, when playing action-oriented arcade games, I find the Genesis outdoes the Amiga pretty consistently. Sure, the Amiga has loads of neat capabilities, but the fact is that many Amiga games—especially arcade-style titles—are ST ports that don't take advantage of those superior capabilities.

The Cinemaware titles you mention represent acknowledged state-of-the-art on the Amiga, but I see darned few Amiga games that compare to the best Sega Genesis/MegaDrive titles (*Revenge of Shinobi, Rambo III, Super Monaco GP, Batman, Afterburner II,* etc.). In fact, my biggest disappointment concerning the Amiga, aside from Commodore's apparent inability to market it successfully in this country, is the mediocre quality of most of its action games. When I'm looking for an intense, arcade-type experience, I'll take the Genesis or even the TurboGrafx-16. I don't care what the specs say; I know what I like.

question

Why is everyone on you? You are the supreme gamemaster. You had a question in the September '90 issue about the coin-op *Space Invaders*. In the thick [of battle], if you destroy all the scrambling critters except for those on the bottom two rows, a big explosion occurs.

So, the Tele-Genesis modem looks good, but is it? No word has come about game compatibility.

—Brian Watts
Blue Springs, Missouri

answer

Why is everyone "on" the sainted Game Doc? Heaven only knows, Brian. Expressing an opinion can be a dangerous thing, since there are bound to be folks out there with opposing viewpoints. But that's what we're here for, so I make it a practice of running the

continued on page 179

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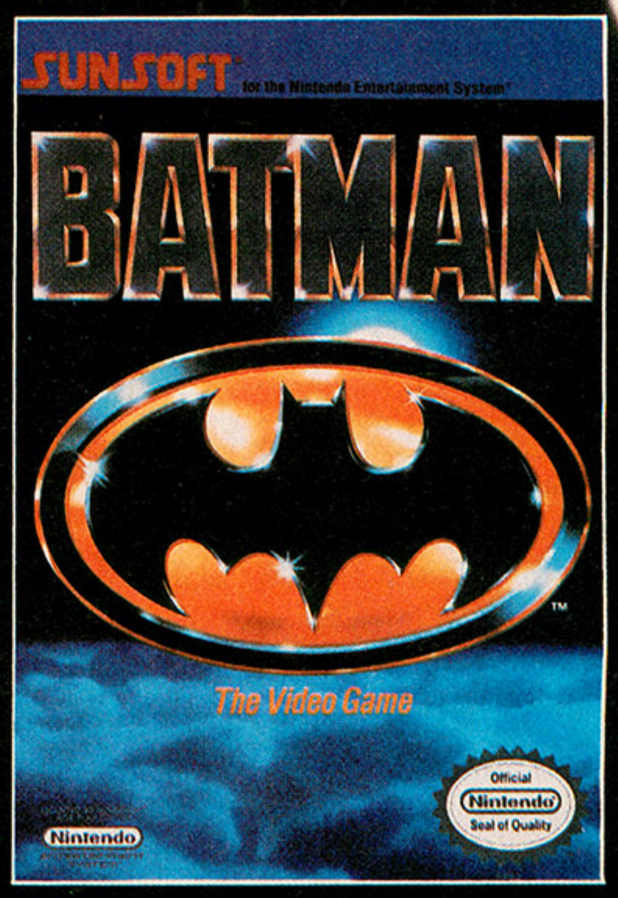

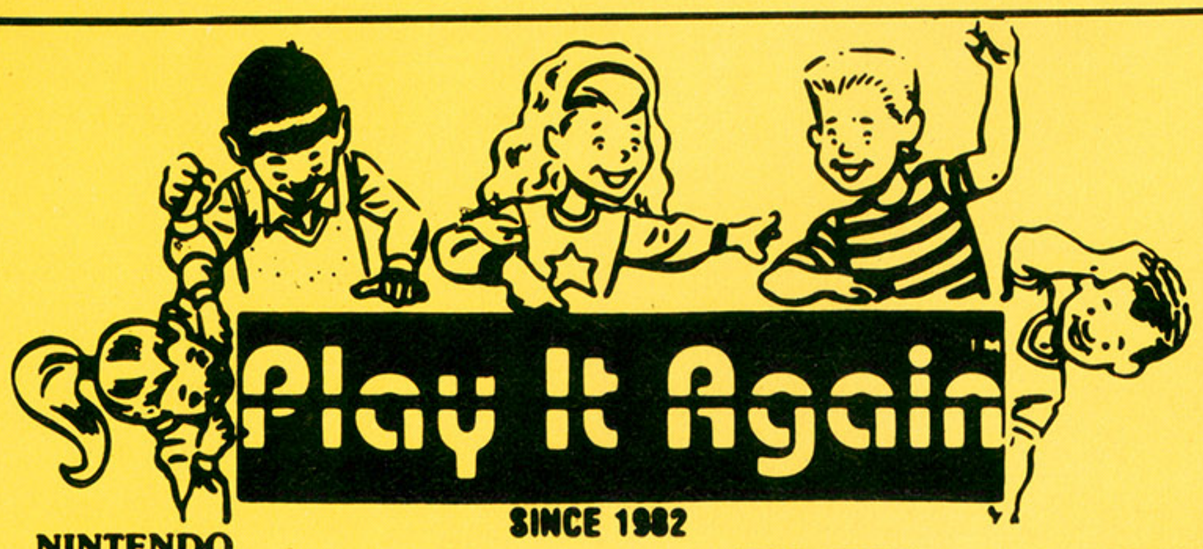

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CIRCLE #151 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Wonderful World of Winter Sports

by

Bill Kunkel

and

Joyce Worley

THE FROST IS ON THE PUMPKIN. GREAT BLANKETS OF SNOW COVER PREVIOUSLY GREEN HILLS. TIME TO DIG OUT THE WINTER CLOTHES, DUST OFF THE HOCKEY STICKS AND WAX THOSE SKIS. ALL SIGNS SAY THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SOME ELECTRONIC WINTER GAMING. HOCKEY, SKIING, SNOWBOARDING AND OTHER COLD-WEATHER DIVERSIONS CAN BE EVEN MORE ENTERTAINING IN COMPUTER- AND VIDEO-GAME FORM THAN THEY ARE IN REAL LIFE, AND THE PLAYING CONDITIONS ARE INVARIABLY MORE COMFORTABLE.

SKIING FANATICS HAVE TO SPEND A WHOLE DAY SWOOSHING UP AND DOWN BITTERLY COLD SLOPES BEFORE THEY GET TO CUDDLE IN FRONT OF A ROARING FIREPLACE AND SIP HOT COCOA; ELECTRONIC SKI MAVENS CAN DO ALL OF THIS SIMULTANEOUSLY *SANS* THE BITTER COLD. HOCKEY PLAYERS HAVE TO SPEND 60 MINUTES BODYCHECKING, HIGHSTICKING AND ON-ICE SLAM DANCING, AFTER WHICH THERE'S A VISIT TO THE DENTIST AND THEN, *FINALLY*, THEY GET TO GUM DOWN A JUICY STEAK. HOCKEY SIMULATION DEVOTEES, HOWEVER, CAN HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON WHEN THEY GET HUNGRY, THEN ENJOY DINNER—WITH A FULL SET OF TEETH!

YES, THERE ARE DEFINITE ADVANTAGES TO WINTER GAME SIMULATIONS OVER THE REAL THING. FUN IN THE SNOW IS EVEN MORE ENJOYABLE WHEN THE ENTHUSIAST IS COMFORTABLE IN A WARM LIVING ROOM.

Games for Slope-Heads

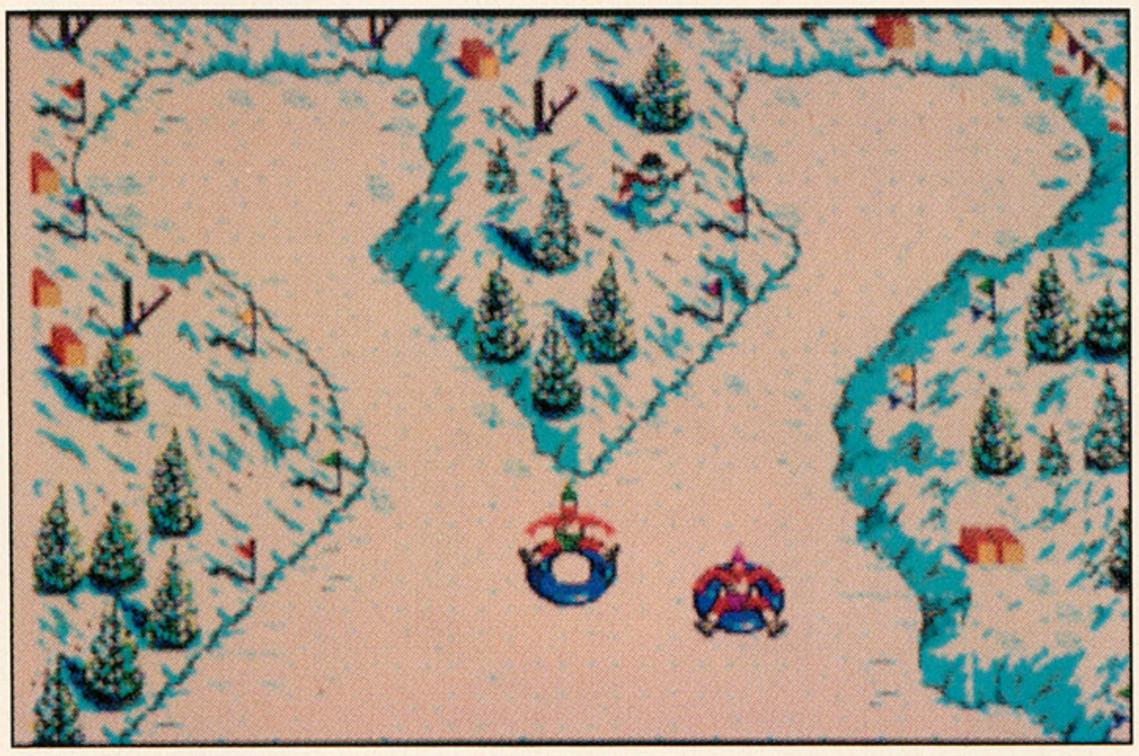
The earliest winter sport simulation was skiing, and, with the possible exception of ice hockey, it remains the strongest category in the winter sports genre. Atari produced a version of the sport for its 2600 VCS, as did Magnavox for Odyssey^2 and Mattel for Intellivision. Skiing has traditionally been presented from a downward, vertically scrolling point of view. Gamers are generally able to move the on-screen athlete left or right and increase or decrease speed by manipulating the joystick.

XOR Corp revised this conventional presentation recently in the Macintosh simulation *MacSki* for the Mac Plus, SE, SE/30, II-IIfx and Portable (with one MB of memory required for black and white and 2MB required for color). *MacSki* gives armchair slope-heads 20 different courses, including an option to design a dream run; ski selection; visibility and weather conditions. This program includes 256 weather configurations and a difficulty-select option. As the surrogate skiers race downhill, they must avoid various obstacles, including snowmen, penguins, igloos and snow bunnies.

Alternative presentations, if less frequently seen, include the first-person or pseudo-first-person viewpoints. A first-person skiing game attempts to present exactly what the user would see while zipping down a slope. This type of presentation is extremely rare but was attempted back in the early '80s by Amiga. This is the same company that later produced the Amiga computer and sold it to Commodore.

Amiga broke into the business with software and a novelty controller for the Atari 2600 called The Joyboard. The Joyboard was designed for use with surfing and skiing games, and users actually stood on the controller's flat surface and shifted their weight left, right, forward or backward in order to produce the desired on-screen effect. The tips of the player's skis appeared on-screen to help the gamer steer.

Pseudo-first person presentation uses a similar point of view but employs a surrogate on-screen skier. This type of skiing simulation was attempted most successfully in the Brøderbund release *Downhill Challenge*, by Microids, for the Amiga, Apple IIgs, Atari ST, C-64 and IBM PC computers. This program makes extremely effective use of moving backgrounds to create the impression that one is streaking down the icy slopes. *Downhill Challenge* includes four events: the downhill, slalom, giant slalom and jumping, with a choice of courses in each category.



Electronic Arts' *Ski or Die* (Konami will also be bringing out an NES version).

The newest entry into the skiing sweepstakes, *Ski or Die*, uses a variety of visual presentations on its five snowy events. Created by Michael Kosaka (a co-designer on *Skate or Die)*, Nana Chambers and Michael Abbot, *Ski or Die* takes an approach reminiscent of *Skate or Die*, even going so far as to reprise Rodney and Lester—the infamous father-and-son tag team who terrorized gamers in the earlier skateboarding simulation.

Only two of *Ski or Die*'s quintet of events actually involve skiing: Downhill Blitz and Acro Aerials. Downhill Blitz is a mutant version of the classic downhill, in which the gamer skies over chalet roofs as well as the slopes. Acro Aerials is a ski-jump competition rendered in side perspective.

Other events are Snowball Blast, a first-person perspective snowball fight; Innertube Thrash, a two-man downhill joust conducted on tire inner tubes; and Snowboard Half-Pipe, a snowboarding event rendered in pseudo-first-person perspective.

continued on page 142

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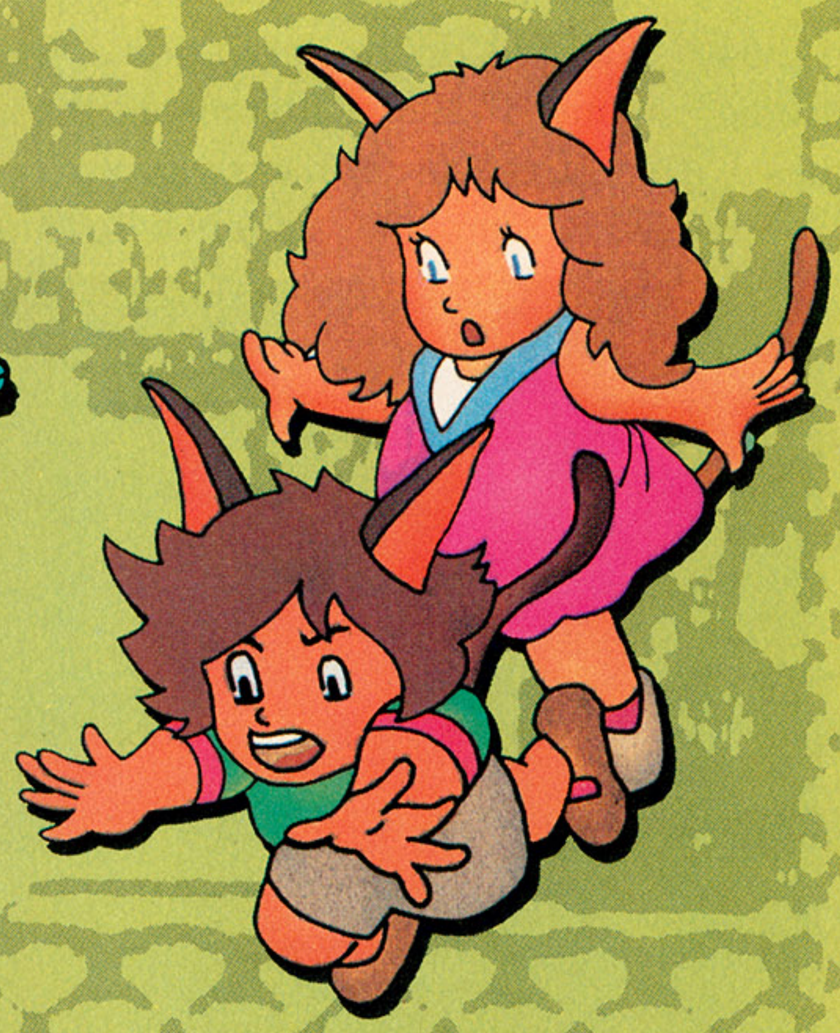

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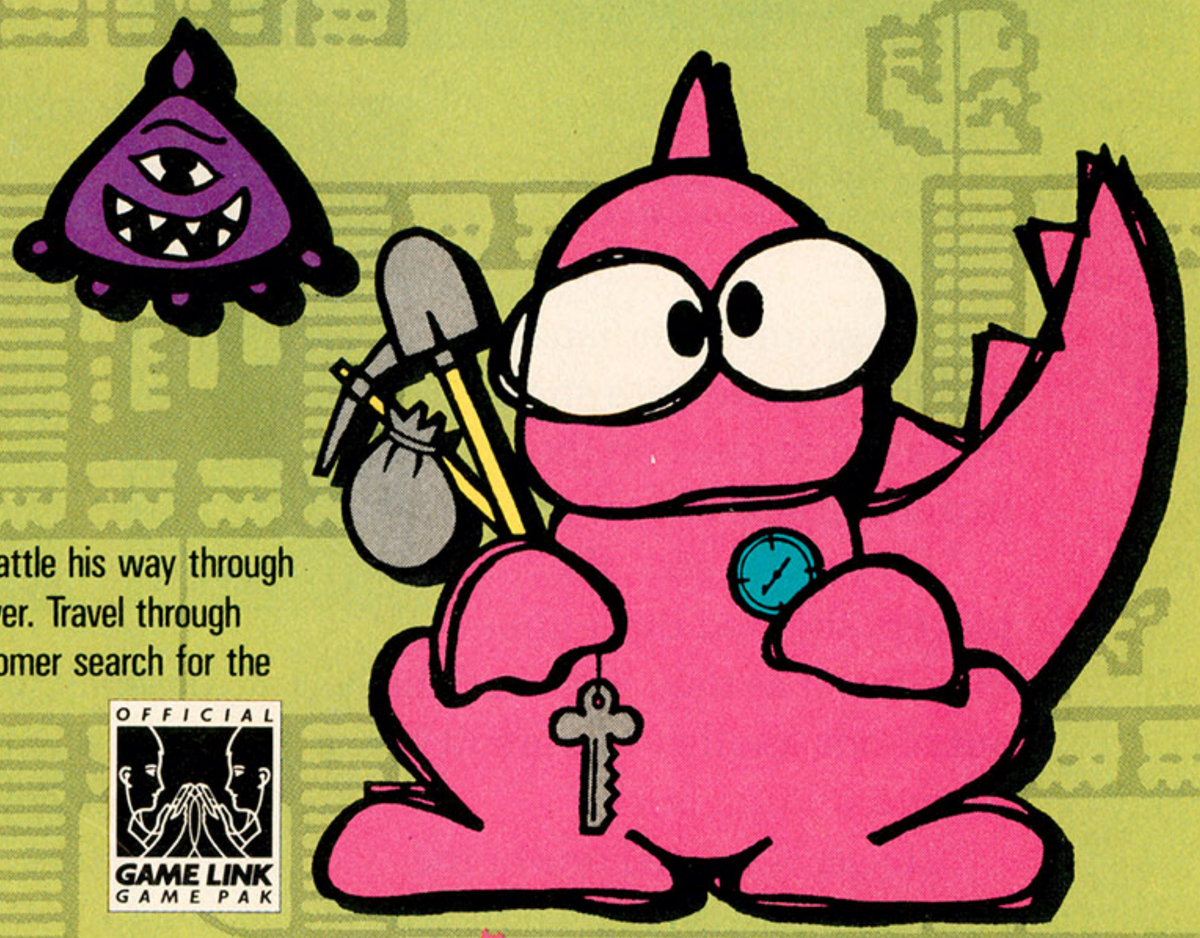

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continued from page 139

Ski or Die is published for the C-64 and IBM PC computers by Electronic Arts, while the NES version comes from Konami.

The Anthologies

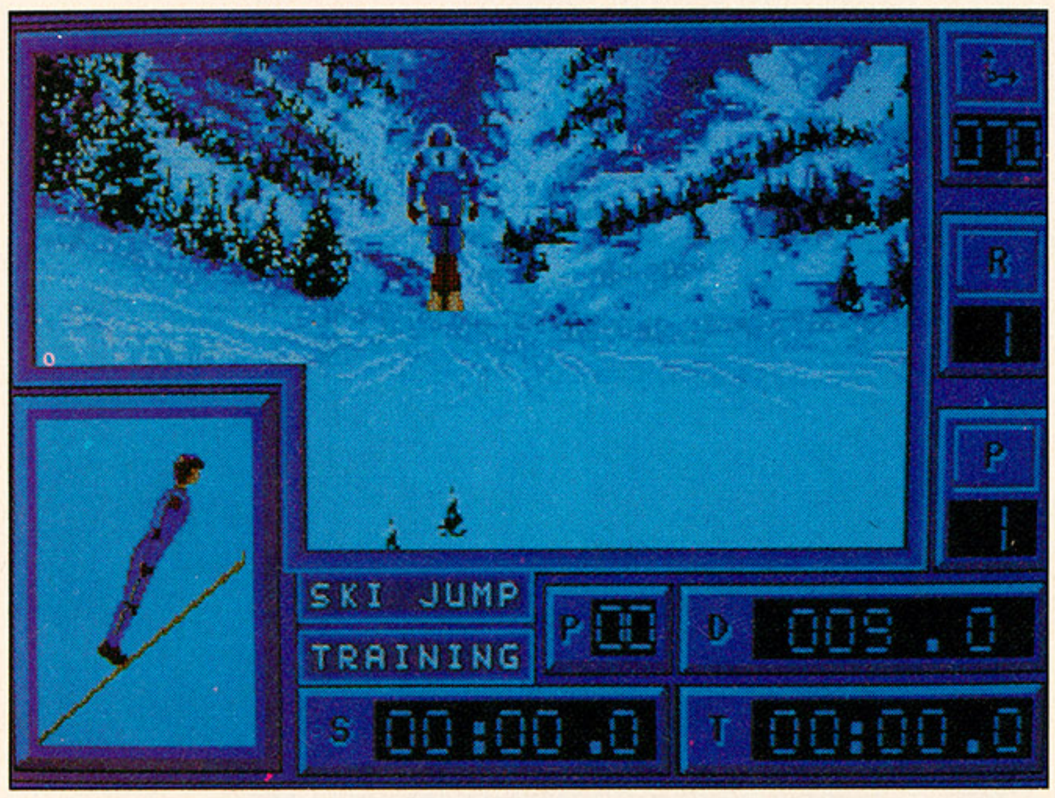
The most popular winter sports titles have shared *Ski or Die*'s anthology format, starting with Epyx's superb collection of cold-weather sports, *Winter Games*. Ski Jumping, Biathalon Skiing, Hot Dog Skiing, Bobsledding and a pair of ice skating events comprise that collection, which employs a variety of perspectives in the presentation of its six events. Ski Jumping, Biathalon and Hot Dogging are all rendered in side-view format, while Bobsledding uses a pseudo-first-person perspective.

Epyx returned to the snow-sport anthology format with *The Games: Winter Edition*, published to coincide with the '88 Olympics. This compilation includes downhill skiing, slalom, luge, figure skating, ski jump, cross country skiing and oval-track speed skating, rendered largely in angled side-perspective.

Other winter-game collections put in appearances over the years, such as Tynesoft's *Winter Challenge*, but few are still available through conventional retail outlets. Epyx, however, recently released a boxed set of four of its most popular anthologies: *Winter Games*, *World Games*, *Summer Games II* and *California Games*.

The Puck Stops Here

The origins of hockey are shrouded in some mystery. Even historians of the sports disagree, for example, on the derivation of the name. The story that makes the most sense concerns an early group of white Canadian settlers who came upon a group of Indians playing a game with sticks and a crude puck on the frozen surface of a river.



TOP: *DOWNHILL CHALLENGE* BY BRØDERBUND

BOTTOM: THE FIGURE SKATING EVENT FROM EPYX'S *THE GAMES: WINTER EDITION*.

"*Ho-gee*! *Ho-gee*!" the players shouted throughout the contest as they whacked the heck out of one another in pursuit of the elusive, sliding puck.

"*Ho-gee*?" mused one of the palefaced observers. "Look, fellows, the natives are playing a fascinating game!"

"Really?" asked another onlooker. "Looks like fun. What's it called?"

"They seem to call it '*Ho-gee*,'" he guessed. Then, when the action paused on the ice, he called out to the players: "*Ho-gee*?"

"*HO-GEE*!" the Indians shouted back. "*HO-GEE*!"

"Well," said the early sports analyst, "that cinches it! This game is called *Ho-gee*!"

The name eventually evolved into "hockey," as it's known today. Only later did those colonists discover that the Indians did *not* call their game *Ho-gee*. It seems that "*ho-gee*" was the Indian term for: "It hurts!"

The nice thing about electronic ice hockey is that it *doesn't* hurt. Perhaps one's thumb can get a little sore, but there's no need for pads or reconstructive dental work.

Early video-game versions of the sport included Al Miller's excellent *Ice Hockey* (Activision) for the Atari 2600, a two-on-two, top-down simulation, and Mattel's impressive *NHL Hockey* for the Intellivision. The latter was the first electronic version of the world's fastest team sport and the first hockey simulation rendered in angled side-perspective.

Hockey continues to be a strong gaming category, though not in the same ballpark as baseball, basketball or football. For quite a while, there were very few hockey simulations available on computer. *Hockey*, from Thorn-EMI, was a ROM cartridge for the Atari 400/800 computers, and Advantage/Artworx released a pair

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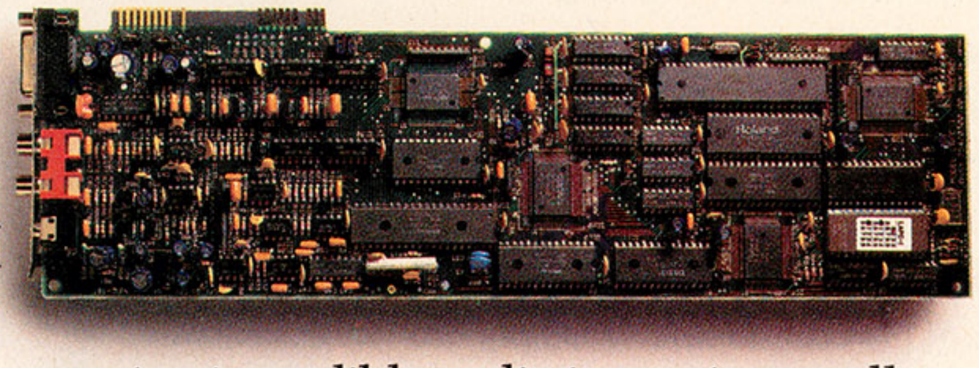

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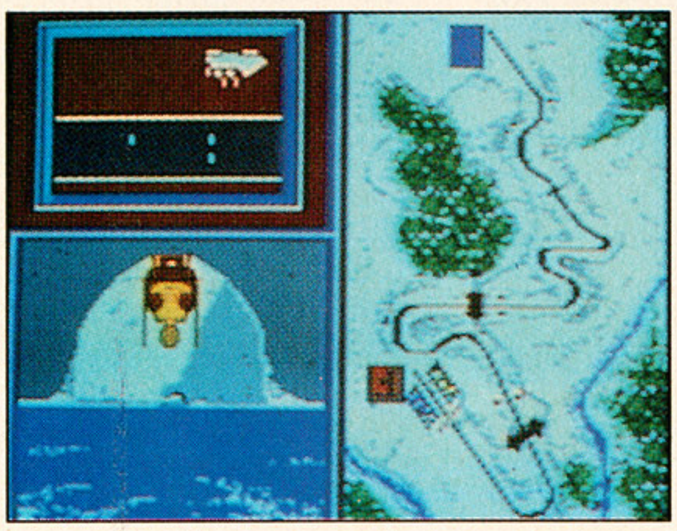
of generic games, *International Hockey* and *Slapshot*, for the Commodore 64.

The first major hockey simulation on computer, SportTime's *Superstar Ice Hockey*, by Ed Ringler, continues to be the premiere game of its type to this day. This angled side-view simulation combines action and strategy in a supremely compelling mix. From an action perspective, users elect to control either the center or the goalie. Coaching options include substitutions and strategy input. In addition, users can play simulations of entire seasons and add general manager to their list of credits, making trades, drafting rookies and even sending the team to training camp between seasons.

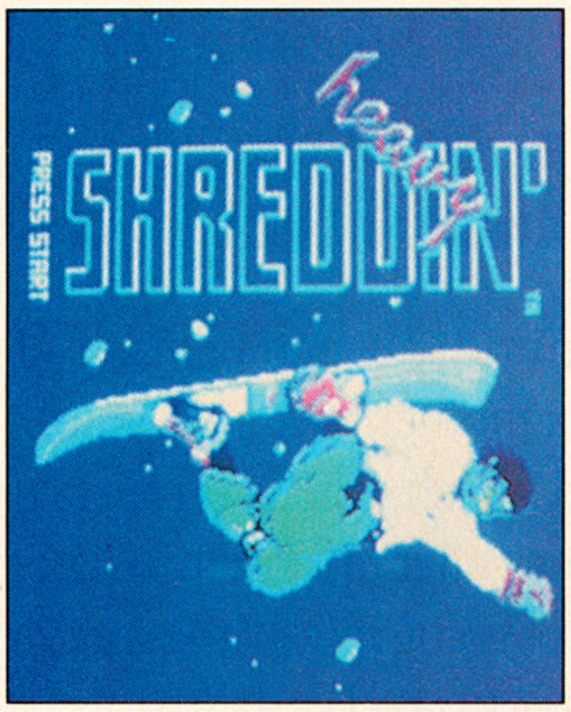
Superstar Ice Hockey was produced for the C-64 and IBM PC, but a persistent industry rumor maintains that a spectacular new Amiga version of the game already exists and is currently being bid on by several major publishers, though neither Ringler nor the publishers involved would confirm it. However, several reliable sources insist they have already seen the game and that it is magnificent. Stay tuned for further details.

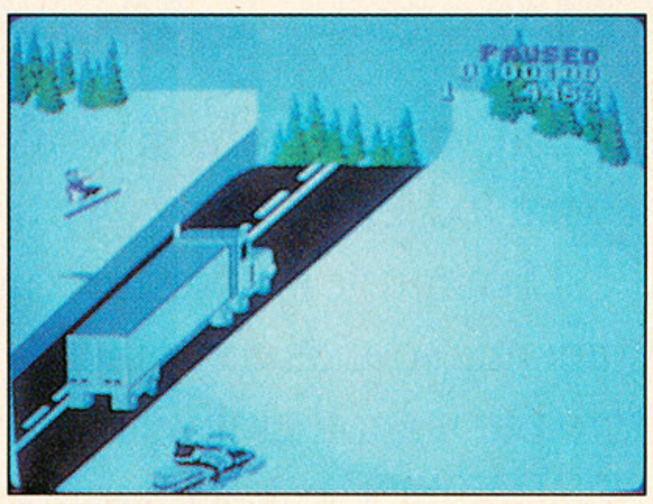
Perhaps the most popular electronic-hockey contest is Konami's *Blades of Steel*, the first on-ice simulation that includes fighting as part of the game. Modeled somewhat after the same publisher's basketball classic, *Double Dribble*, *Blades of Steel* makes use of multiple viewpoints or camera angles; the viewpoint or angle evoked depends on the situation the player is in.

The game includes penalty shots, multiple difficulty levels and access to all on-ice players, in addition to the previously mentioned fisticuffs. When the action gets too hot, two opponents square off, drop the gloves and attempt to clean one another's clock, and the loser takes a trip to the penalty box. *Blades of Steel* is available for Amiga, C-64 and IBM PC in addition to its best-selling NES version, all from Konami.



Clockwise from top left: Nintendo's *Ice Hockey* cartridge for the NES, Artworx's *Slapshot* and the hot dog skiing and bobsledding events from Epyx's original *Winter Games*.





Other ice-hockey entries include *Wayne Gretzky Hockey*, a superb top-down simulation from Bethesda Software available for the Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh and IBM PC. This excellent program has been criticized because of its tiny player graphics, but if small skaters don't bother you, this is one of the strongest hockey games available.

MindSpan Corp.'s *Face Off* (Gamestar), on the other hand, uses large on-screen characters in a steeply angled side-perspective version of rink action. *Face Off* stresses the violent side of the sport and is reminiscent of *Blades of Steel*, using multiple camera angles and featuring special fighting sequences. It is available on the C-64 and IBM PC computers.

Heavy Shreddin', by Parker Brothers, is snowboarding for the NES video-game system.

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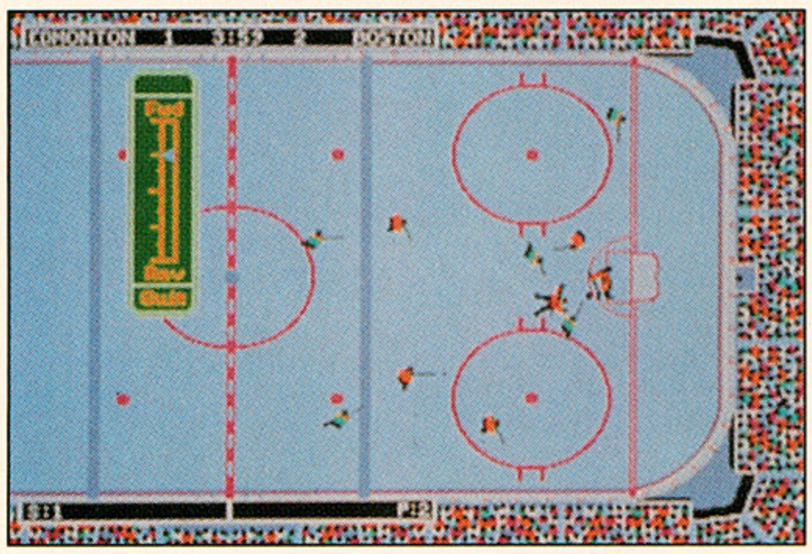
LEFT: BETHESDA SOFTWARE BRINGS THE "GREAT ONE" TO THE COMPUTER IN *WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY*.

BOTTOM: KONAMI COMPUTERIZES ITS *BLADES OF STEEL*.



ODDS & ENDS

One of the newest cold-weather recreations is snowboarding, a game that you'll find in one of the modules in *Ski or Die*. Gamers who prefer an even stronger emphasis on this particular activity should check out Parker Brothers' *Heavy Shreddin'* for the NES.

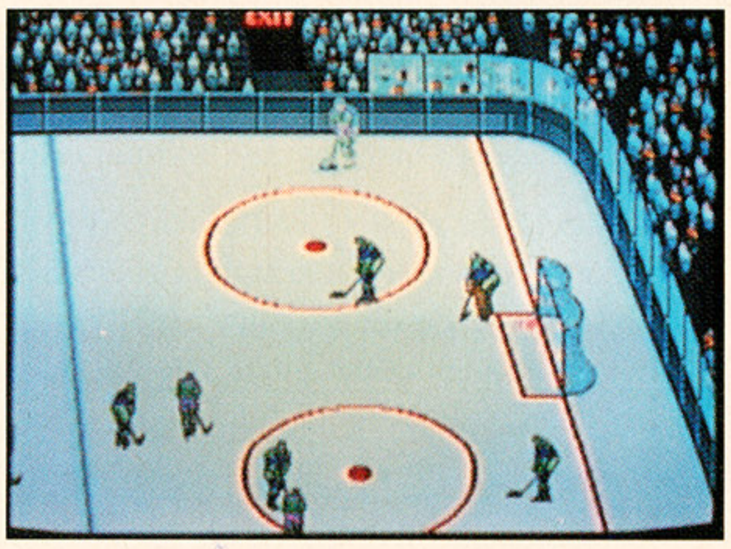
This snowboarding simulation takes players down the slopes in a variety of events: slalom, downhill, half-pipe, mogul and backwoods. Endorsed by *International Snowboard* magazine, *Heavy Shreddin'* employs a three-quarters perspective of the snowboarder, the mountains and the various obstacles along the way. There are jumps over waterfalls, chalets, trees, ice, rocks, logs, boulders, rivers, gates and other dangerous objects. The game even offers a trail-selection feature that includes a map.

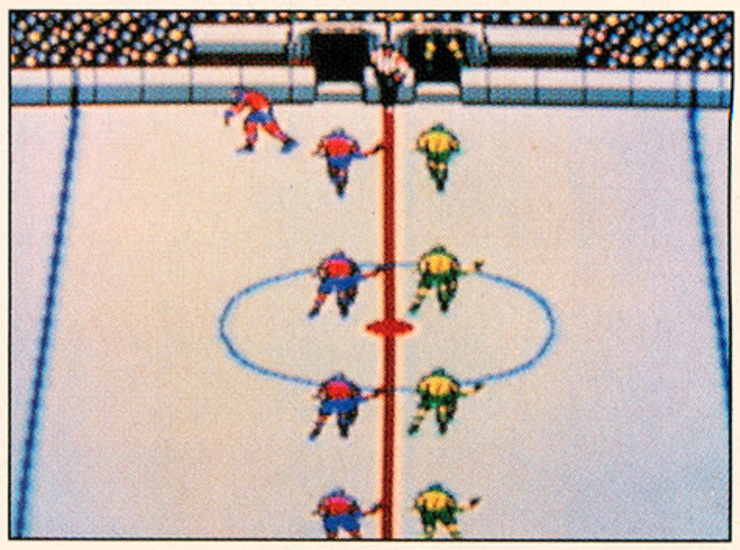
Several innovative play mechanics offer an unusual degree of realism. Players can mule kick, for example, in order to escape deep crevices and even use hand plants in order to reestablish control over a freaked-out snowboard.

Finally, for the less athletically inclined, there are other simulated snowbound activities. Witness *Arctic Antics*, the third installment in the *Spy vs. Spy* series by Jim Nangano. Sold as part of Epyx's Maxx Out Series, *Arctic Antics* sees those ancient enemies the White Spy and the Black Spy doing battle across a frozen landscape full of polar bears and booby traps.

If there is an activity that people enjoy doing in the snow, it has probably been re-created in electronic form. Of course, we've yet to see an ice-fishing simulation, but there will probably be half a dozen available by next Christmas.

In the meantime, get rid of those thermal long johns, chuck the ski parkas and forget those goofy-looking wool caps. Stoke up the fireplace, brew some hot chocolate and fire up your computer or video-game system—'cause baby, it's *cold* outside!





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New Toys on Game Boys

BY

MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

There are dry periods when there's very little in the way of new games landing on my desk, and then there are what I call "monsoon" periods where I end up with piles of game cards raining down on me like...well, *rain*. Fortunately for you Game Boy owners, it's been monsoon season of late. At this moment I am faced with no less than 15 Game Boy titles to review, a few of which are already available as I write this. Most of the remaining ones should be on store shelves by the time this sees print.

To all of you Lynx owners: no reviews this issue. Sorry, but it's the dry season for the Lynx this month. Hopefully, next month I'll have something for you too.

Ghostbusters II

Activision for the Game Boy

The Ghostbusters, having essentially put themselves out of business after saving New York from the ravages of the spooks unleashed by the spirit Zool some years ago, must now reband and once again come to the rescue of the city. The evil spirit Vigo has kidnapped poor Dana's baby, Oscar, with the intent

Ghostbusters II ***for the Game Boy***

of keeping house in the tot—in other words, *possession*. As a side effect of Vigo's activities, there are ghosts *bustin'* loose all over New York City. The Ghostbusters must capture all the spirits loosed by Vigo, then try to defeat Vigo himself and, in the process, save little Oscar.

Ghostbusters II is a multidirectionally scrolling game with an overhead view in which you, controlling a pair of 'Busters, must clear each level of ghosts. There's a time limit working against you, and if you fail to capture all of the ghosties before it runs out, they all turn into nasty "Spinning Token Ghosts," which are very difficult to deal with. Naturally, you have all the tools of the ghostbusting trade at your disposal, including proton packs and spirit traps.

Interestingly enough, you simultaneously control a team of *two* 'Busters in the game. More accurately, you control the "Beamer," the Ghostbuster with the proton pack—does that make him the "Pack-Man"?—who zaps and freezes the ghosts. The second guy, the "Trapper" operates the traps. He more or less just follows the Beamer around and sets off the traps when you tell him to. The tricky part is that you don't really have any control over the Trapper. He just sort of tags along (under computer control). You have to be careful how you maneuver your Beamer so that the Trapper will be in position to get the ghosts. One wrong move and one or both of you risk getting "slimed." Too much slime will put a permanent end to your 'busting days.

I have only a few gripes with this game. The first is the lack of control over the Trapper. The second is that you only get to use two of the 'Busters, not the whole team. Oh, the other members are present, but they just stand around and hand you stuff. When a character meets his "slime limit," it would have been nice to be able to "replace" him with one of the other 'Busters.

Finally, the graphics are not so hot. Once again, adult characters are rendered like children, with diminutive bodies and oversized heads. Also bothersome is that your way is frequently blocked by such ridiculous barriers as overturned chairs that you absolutely *cannot* cross! Would a dining room chair stop *you?*

Other than those niggling things, *Ghostbusters II* succeeds for the most part and even manages a fair rendition of the *Ghostbusters* theme over the opening titles. Who ya gonna call?

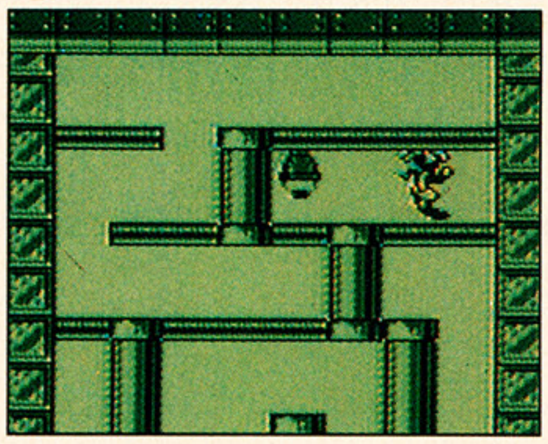
The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle

Kemco/Seika for the Game Boy

That Wascal Wabbit comes to your Game Boy screen seeking to rescue Honey Bunny from the Crazy Castle, avoiding the clutches of Yosemite Sam, Wile E. Coyote and...Sylvester the Cat and Daffy Duck?!

This is a side-view contest that scrolls both vertically and horizontally to show each room of the castle. To complete a level, Bugs must collect all of the carrots present. Once he's accomplished that, it's off to the next of the 60 levels. Although he's not armed and must usually avoid his enemies, Bugs *can* strike back, using a one-shot boxing glove or pushing or dropping crates, buckets, safes and ten-ton weights at or on his enemies. Bugs can also achieve short-term invisibility and invincibility by drinking bottles of Magic Carrot Juice.

With simple but clear graphics, and relatively uncomplicated controls, this is an easy-to-learn and -play game. Easy because passwords allow you to restart just about anywhere.



Kemco/Seika brings the puzzle fun of **The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle** ***to the Game Boy***

Each room is a different puzzle, and sometimes it takes many attempts to figure out how to clear one. Some puzzles may be far too difficult for exceptionally young players, but most children (and adults) should have fun with it.

Even though I like this game as a game, I *do* have to complain about the quality of the adaptation. When you buy a game based upon a known commodity, such as Bugs Bunny, you expect some-

thing of that commodity to make it into the game. Sadly, this is not the case with *Crazy Castle*, which is incredibly "tame" for a product based upon Looney Tunes characters famous for their rowdy antics. Judging by his actions (mostly ducking his enemies) Bugs could be *any* character. There's nothing distinctly *Bugsian* about the game at all.

I also question the logic of using characters like Sylvester the Cat as enemies. The Tazmanian Devil I'd accept, but Sylvester?! Also, the fact that the game puts multiples of characters like Sylvester on the screen is annoying because you find yourself wondering where all these phony Sylvesters are coming from. We all know there's only *one* Sylvester—right?

And, finally, *once again* the object of the game is to rescue some (apparently) defenseless female character. This continues to be an unwelcome element, one that could and *would* have been easily avoided had someone made the decision to make this game an accurate adaptation of the style of the classic Warner Bros. cartoons. Bugs has been described as an "inoffensive little guy who's unbeatable when he's riled." There should have been lots of riling and classic Bugs' famous retribution, not *this* lame premise.

Shanghai

HAL America for the Game Boy

Ever play mah-jonng? No? Neither had I, until I played *Shanghai*. This is one of the most ancient of games, one whose history can be traced back thousands of years.

In the game you are confronted by a pattern of 144 tiles, layered from one to five thick, in which the object is to locate matching tiles (same type or "suit") on left and/or right borders of the levels. When two such tiles are matched up, they are removed. The ultimate goal is to remove all of the tiles and thus "slay the dragon."

Simple, yes? Difficult, definitely. *Shanghai* adds a few new twists to this old game, such as various starting tile patterns, the ability to take back moves and the "ultimate challenge" that puts all of the tiles face down and forces you to play a memory game as you search for matching tiles! The tiles can be displayed with either their traditional Chinese markings or with Western letters and numbers. (For the record, I prefer the traditional markings.)

The interface is simple. Pressing the joypad moves a hand around the screen. Point at a tile and press "A" to select it, press it again to select a matching tile, then press it a final time to remove both. The "B" button releases the last tile you selected. Pressing **SELECT** brings up a menu that lets you change levels via password, select from one of three pieces of background music (no "no music" option though) or even get a hint from the game itself. The sure way to know the game is over is to ask for a hint and have the Game Boy snicker at you because you have no possible moves left.

Shanghai may be one of the oldest games in the world and may seem awfully sedate in a field best known for its flashy effects and violent action, but it is nonetheless an intriguing and fascinating contest that will challenge anyone who likes a good mental puzzle.

Gargoyle's Quest

Capcom for the Game Boy

An army of Destroyers has invaded your world and kidnapped the King of the Ghoul Realm. (Ooh, a kidnapping, what an original idea. At least it's not a female who's been nabbed this time!) You are Firebrand, the last (as usual) of the Guardian Gargoyles, and it's your mission to destroy the Destroyers and reach the dimension portal that leads back to your home world, where you will undertake your quest to save the King.

In spite of a cliché-ridden storyline, *Gargoyle's Quest* is a surprisingly good game with first-rate graphics. Admittedly, I haven't had the time to get very far into the game, but it looks like it has more depth than average and combines a scrolling (all directions) action contest with an overhead quasi-"quest" mode.

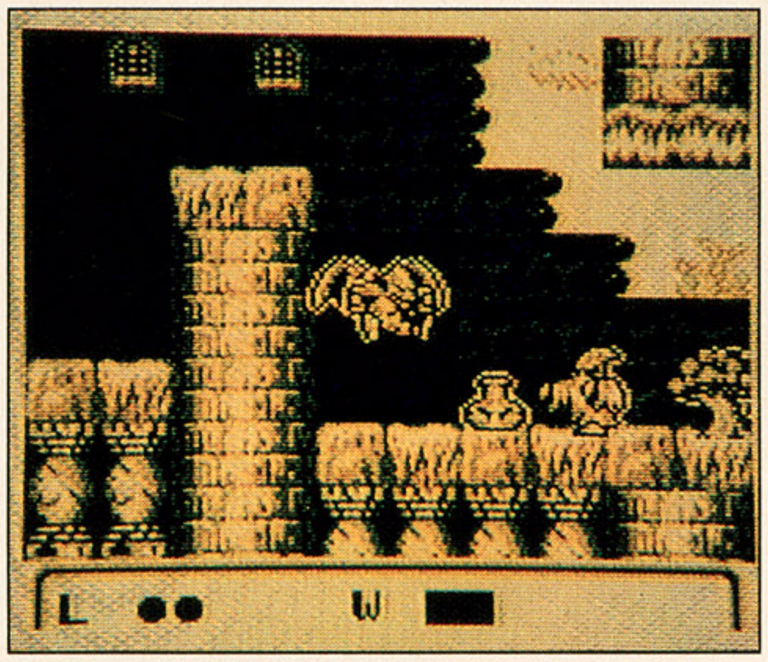
In the action contest you can make Firebrand walk, try to fly (he's pretty inept at first and can only hover for a moment before plummeting) and climb. Destroy enemies whilst avoiding both their deadly clutches and the dangers of the well-drawn scenery. In the quest mode you're free to explore and can call up a menu of actions that allow you to "talk," "use" and "check."

As I stated before, the graphics in this contest are top-notch and stand as a shining example of how good a Game Boy title can look. The characters are nicely drawn, and the backgrounds are excellent, particularly in the action mode. Not only that, but this game is one of the few titles I've seen on the Game Boy that has graphics capable of giving a correct "mood" to the setting, and the pseudo-medieval background music adds to this mood immensely.

Unfortunately, there's a digital razor blade hidden in this candied apple; namely, the game is, at the start, devilishly difficult to make any headway in. The first frustration is that you start the game in quest mode but are pretty much forced to stand by dumbly while several men rush in to explain the situation to you. There seems to be no way to skip this, and you waste time seeing it each and every game you play.

Once these men are (thankfully) murdered you are free to move around. You can try out the quest-mode commands, but there appears to be nothing in the room of worth or interest, so you exit. You now find yourself in the action contest and proceed to tear your hair out as you struggle to make headway toward the dimension portal. I'm not certain which is harder, overcoming Firebrand's deficiencies or controlling your temper at not being *able* to overcome those deficiencies. Adding to the aggravation, every time Firebrand drops dead, he restarts at the beginning of the level.

Gargoyle's Quest looks like a must-have in many ways, but whether or not you'll enjoy it may hinge entirely on your ability to make enough headway into the game so that you won't feel like stomping the game card into plastic and silicon slivers.



***Showing its ability to make quality adventures for the NES or the Game Boy, Capcom has another winner on its hands with* Gargoyle's Quest.**

Mercenary Force

Meldac for Game Boy

This unique variation on the tried-and-true "shooting game" category owes as much to the movie *The Seven Samurai* as it does to *Space Invaders*. Instead of a starship zinging back and forth blasting hordes of aliens, you control a group of mercenaries who march through horizontally scrolling counties and towns fighting invaders. The setting

continued on page 152

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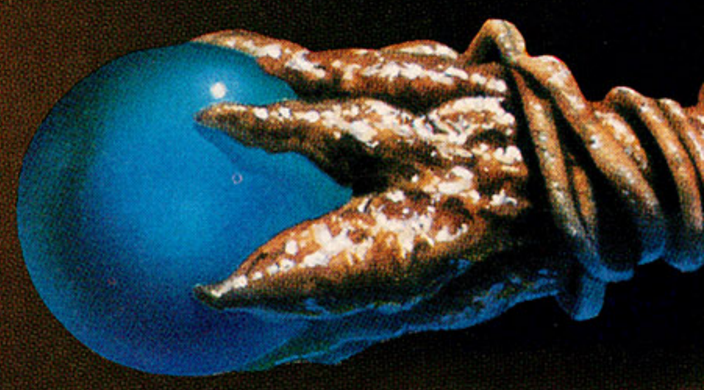
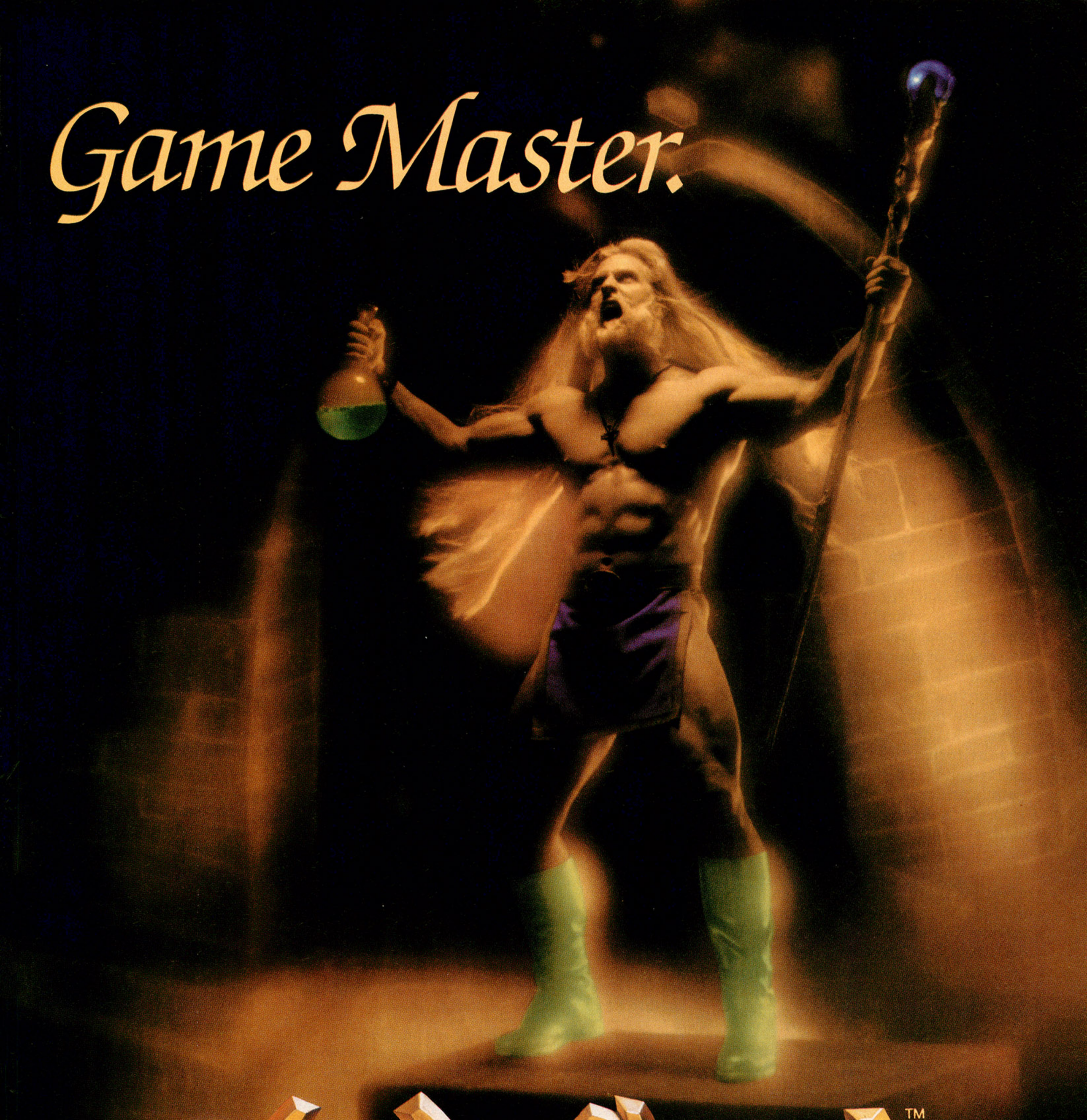


Game Master.



continued from page 149

is feudal Japan, where the Shogun Tokugawa has sent you (the mercenaries) to fight off the armies that the Lord of Darkness has loosed upon the land.

This game does not start you off with one character, but allows you to "hire" those you can afford. There are five character classes to choose from, each with his/her price and distinctive weapons and attack patterns. A samurai costs more than a servant, but less than a monk. Who can you afford?

If you pick up the coins left in the wake of fallen enemies, you can buy supplies to perk up your party and hire more mercenaries when one of more of your current party dies an honorable death. There are also temples where you can meet fortune tellers and Daibutsus who can give your team more energy or even resurrect a dead warrior!

Although the type of mercenaries you hire are important, how you *use* them is even more so. You have within your power the ability to choose which character will lead the group, and, more important, you can change which formation the team uses at any time. There are several different formation patterns, allowing you to adjust the position and firing of your team to match the terrain and make mincemeat of your current enemies. In addition, you can make your current formation leader transform him/herself into a powerful and deadly "spirit warrior."

The graphics and sound are not state-of-the-art, and one wishes that the characters were a little better defined on the combat screen, but this has little effect on the game as a whole. Ultimately, *Mercenary Force* succeeds because it's a fun and challenging game, and, with the ability to buy supplies and hire new mercenaries, it's one of those rare video games that lives up to its name. This truly is a mercenary contest.

Amazing Penguin

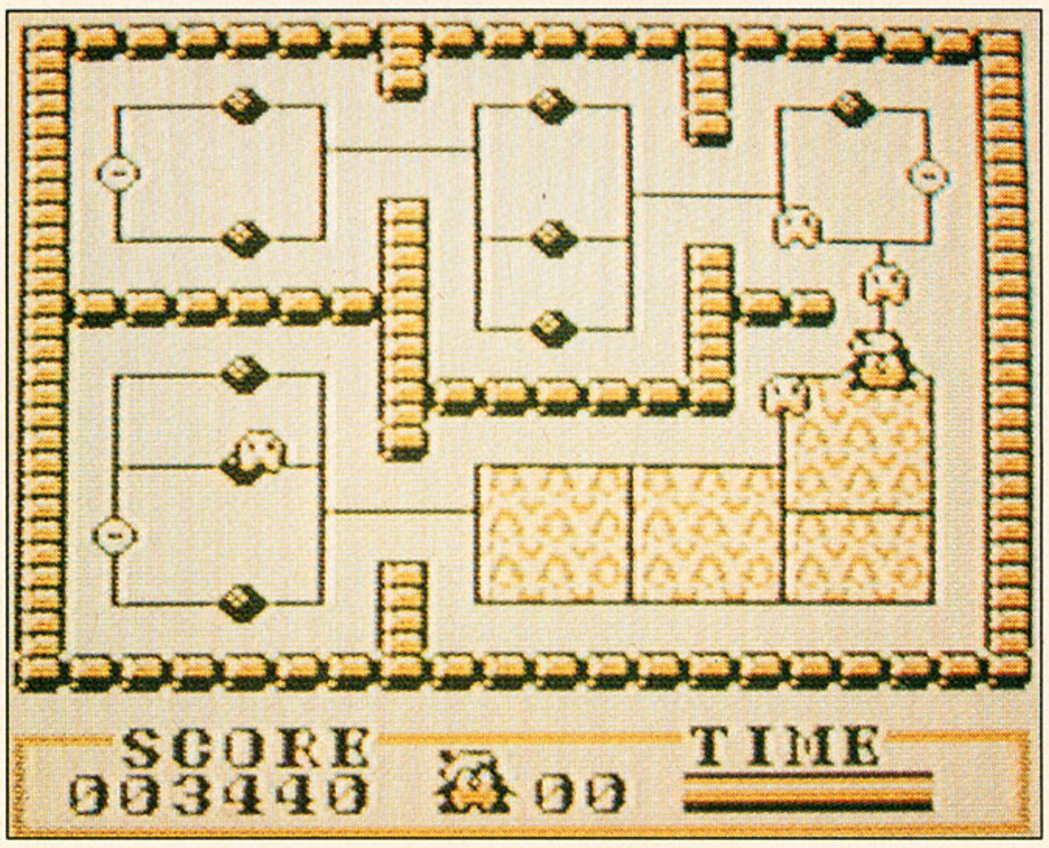
Natsume for Game Boy

Penguins seem very popular in video games these days, quite a change since the Walter Lantz studio created Chilly Willy just because there were no cartoon penguins at the time and Lantz wanted one. These days it's hard to imagine a video-game system without at least *one* penguin title. It's usually even harder to imagine what penguins could possibly have to do with the contests in these games, which rarely involve ice floes, seals, killer whales and holes in the ozone layer. (Okay, okay, so the classic *Pengo* did have ice cubes.)

Once I ignored the lack of penguin relevance I quickly discovered that *Amazing Penguin* was astoundingly addictive. Sure, the graphics are beyond simplistic; okay, the music is hokey; and, yeah, the "halftime" animations are more tiresome than amusing, but this is a *fun* game. The object is simple: You are a penguin who must remove all of the "seals" (no, not the kind that swim) that hold down a series of panels, allowing the panel sections to flip over. There's a time limit, and a bunch of weird enemies (like pencils, erasers and so forth). You and your enemies can only move on the borders of the panels. Your enemies make you into penguin pâté on contact, so be careful. Fortunately, you're not entirely helpless. Black seals on the panels can be kicked at enemies, which will throw them off the screen. Other seals, when broken, cause enemies to reverse direction.

Some levels are several screens wide and/or tall and oftentimes maddeningly difficult to complete. Fortunately, there's password access for restarting in the same part of the game.

There *is* one problem with the graphics. Given the annoying limitations of the Game Boy screen, it's very easy to just plain not see an enemy closing in on you. On more occasions than I'd like to recall, I've been surprised to find my penguin had been "gotten" by some itty-bitty pest who'd avoided my detection by sneaking under a spot of glare on the screen. Not fair!



Revealing itself to be an astoundingly addictive game, Natsume's* Amazing Penguin *requires you to guide your penguin through maze after maze of weird enemies in a race against the clock.

Revenge of the 'Gator

HAL America for the Game Boy

Dear Game Doc,
Help! I keep seeing 'gators! They're everywhere! 'Gators on the floor, 'gators on the wall, 'gators eatin' and spitting out my pinballs! 'Gators! 'Gators! 'GATORS!!!

Oops, sorry. Just realized I hadn't looked up from *Revenge of the 'Gator* for a few hours. False alarm. Heh-heh. Never mind.

In case you haven't caught on yet, this is a pinball simulator with an alligator motif. There are some eight screens of "machine" to play in, including the main areas and the bonus targets. The object is simple: Keep each ball in play for as long as possible, and try to rack up enough points for bonus games and balls. There are 'gator targets, 'gator ball traps—heck, there's even one hungry 'gator who gulps down each ball that you lose.

Revenge of the 'Gator won't win any prizes for revolutionary graphics and sound, but both are more than adequate for the game at hand and fun in their own way. For instance, the title sequence features three little 'gators dancing a buck and wing, which kind of sets the tone for this weird contest.

Deficiencies? A few. First, although the multi-screen display allows for a complex pinball-machine simulation, the sudden transitions from one screen to another (no scrolling) can be confusing. Also, when the ball really gets zipping, you plain can't see it! Of course, the greatest sin, from a pinball fan's point of view, is that you can't use "english" on the machine, those gentle nudges used to help the ball along in real pinball. It drives you crazy to see the ball heading for certain doom and know you're unable to do anything. Even *Video Pinball* on the Atari 2600 (way back in the Mesozoic age of video games) allowed this. How can you call it real pinball if you can't "tilt" the machine?

That's it for this time out. Next issue we'll steal gold in Bandai's **Hyper Lode Runner**, *bury alien invaders alive in Meldac's* **Heiankyo Alien** *and punch some lights out with Activision's* **Championship Boxing**, *all for the Game Boy. For Lynx owners, there will also be a review of* **Paperboy**...*and any other Lynx titles I can get my hands on between now and then.*

Gotta go. So many games, so little time!

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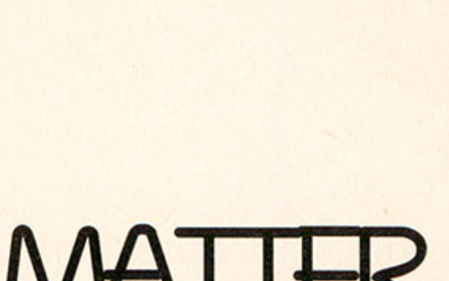
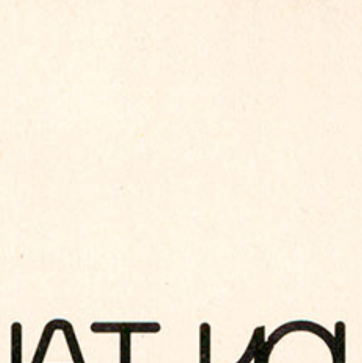
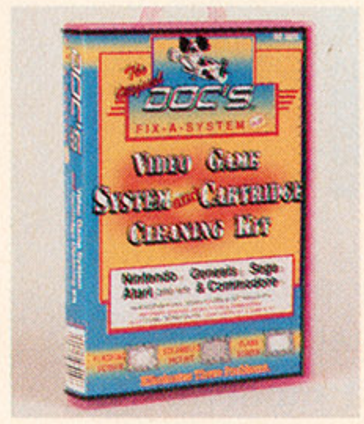


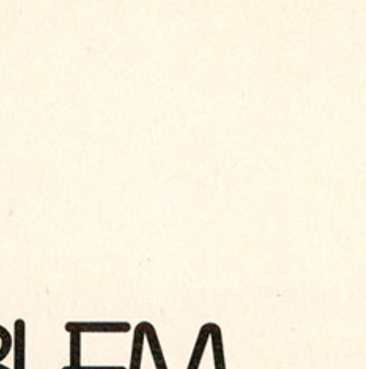
"FLASHITIS" "SCRAMBLITIS" "BLANKITIS"



FIX-A-GAME



FIX-A-SYSTEM PLUS



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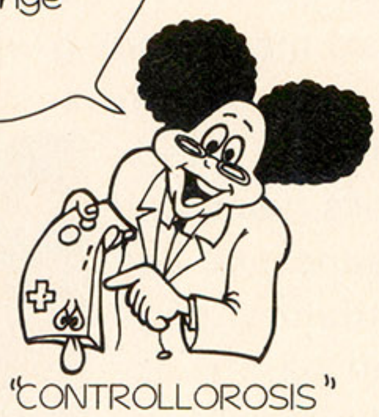

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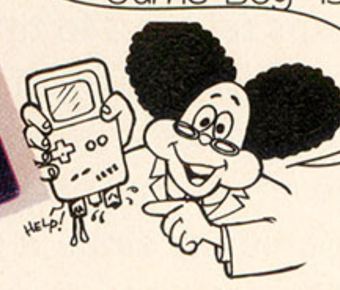

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CIRCLE #157 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

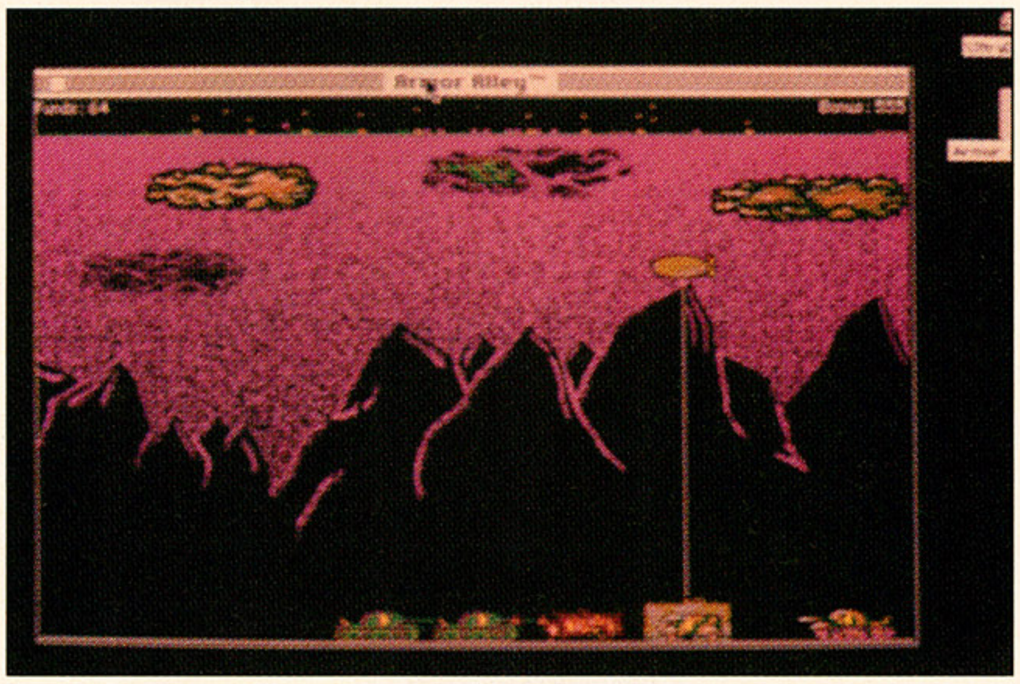
Armor Alley

THREE-SIXTY SOFTWARE
Versions: IBM PC ($39.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Armor Alley is a horizontally scrolling action-strategy combat game that can be played by up to four players via modem. The game is, essentially, a "capture the flag" contest in which one army starts at the left end of the landscape, and the opposition sets out from the right side. The two forces then advance on one another, and the last man standing wins.

Each army comprises helicopters, ground forces (made up of tanks, vans and missile launchers) and troops (infantry, engineers and paratroopers). At the conclusion of each successful scenario, funds are allocated to buy more troops and equipment.



Three-Sixty's *Armor Alley* puts you behind the stick of a military helicopter in a "capture the flag" scenario.

Each army has a base and landing pad at its end of the field. New equipment and troops teleport to this pad, which is also used by the helicopter to refuel, rearm or repair damage.

The helicopter is the most important vehicle in *Armor Alley*'s arsenal, since it is under the gamer's direct control. Choppers are equipped with smart missiles, bombs and a Vulcan machine gun. At higher play levels, you can add napalm and dumb missiles (which do not automatically seek out a target, as do the smart variety).

Armor Alley is presented in a straight side-perspective, with free-access horizontal scrolling. The player controls his or her helicopter by manipulating the on-screen flag, or cursor, in the desired direction. The farther the flag is from the copter, the faster the aircraft moves.

Weapons launch through the keyboard. Ground installations include anti-aircraft guns, barrage balloons, bases and bunkers. Barrage balloons are tethered to the bunkers, which also house infantry troops. The balloons move up and down in sequence, and helicopters must fly over them; the mooring lines of enemy balloons can crash a chopper.

Unfortunately, *Armor Alley* is not as much fun as it should be. While reminiscent of *Choplifter*, it doesn't have nearly as much play value as that revered classic, despite all its strategic trimmings. The barrage balloons are a tedious element; it requires no special skill to avoid them, but it sure is tiresome.

Graphics are *extremely* small, and the game is afflicted with several annoying bugs: The program periodically goes into demo mode instead of beginning a new game, and the machine gun frequently jams, using all its ammo in a single burst.

Perhaps the most annoying flaw is that the two armies are not affected by their own weapons. White army copters are invulnerable to white barrage balloons, for example, and white army bombs, missiles and gunfire have no effect on the rest of the white convoy. This is taking the concept of friendly fire too far, especially for a game that is otherwise fairly realistic.

The modem-play feature is a great idea, however, and the thrill of multiplayer combat may compensate for the game's weaknesses.

—Bill Kunkel

Three-Sixty Software
2105 Bascom Ave., Suite 290
Campbell, CA 95008
(408) 879-9144

Star Control

ACCOLADE
Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Playing more these days, but enjoying it less? Does it seem like most of today's games are full of sound and fury that sig-

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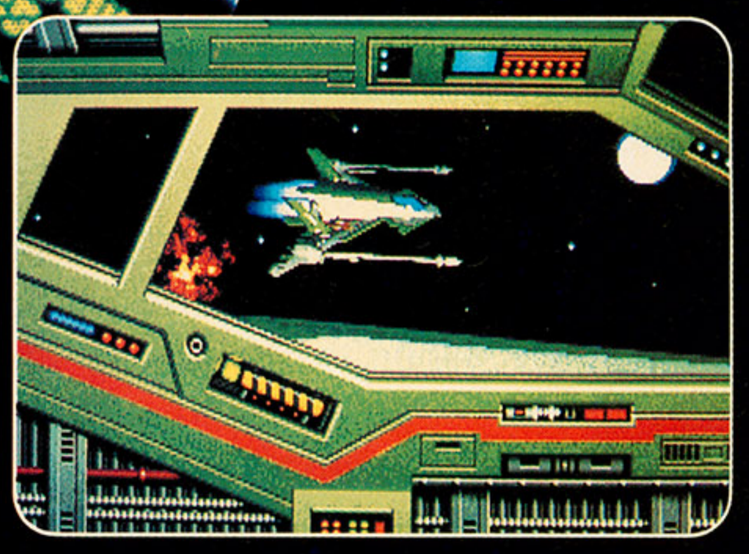

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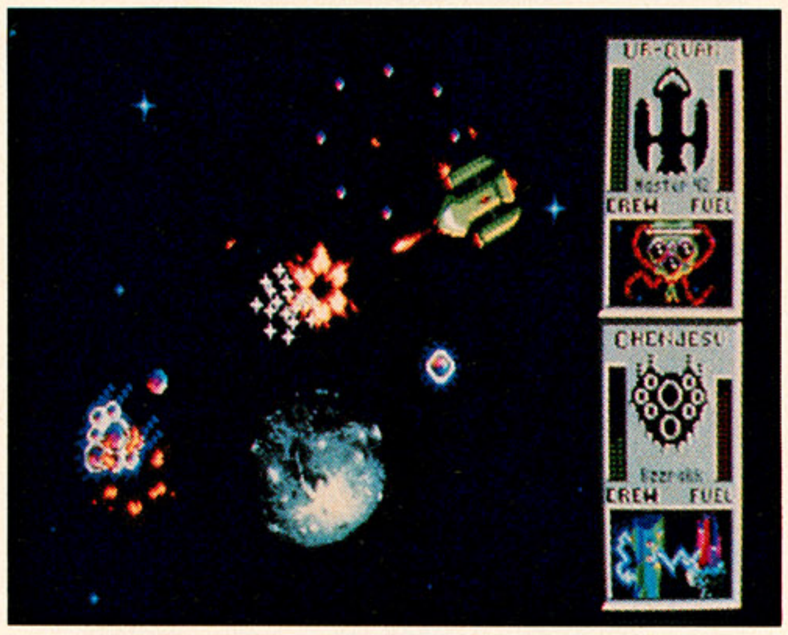
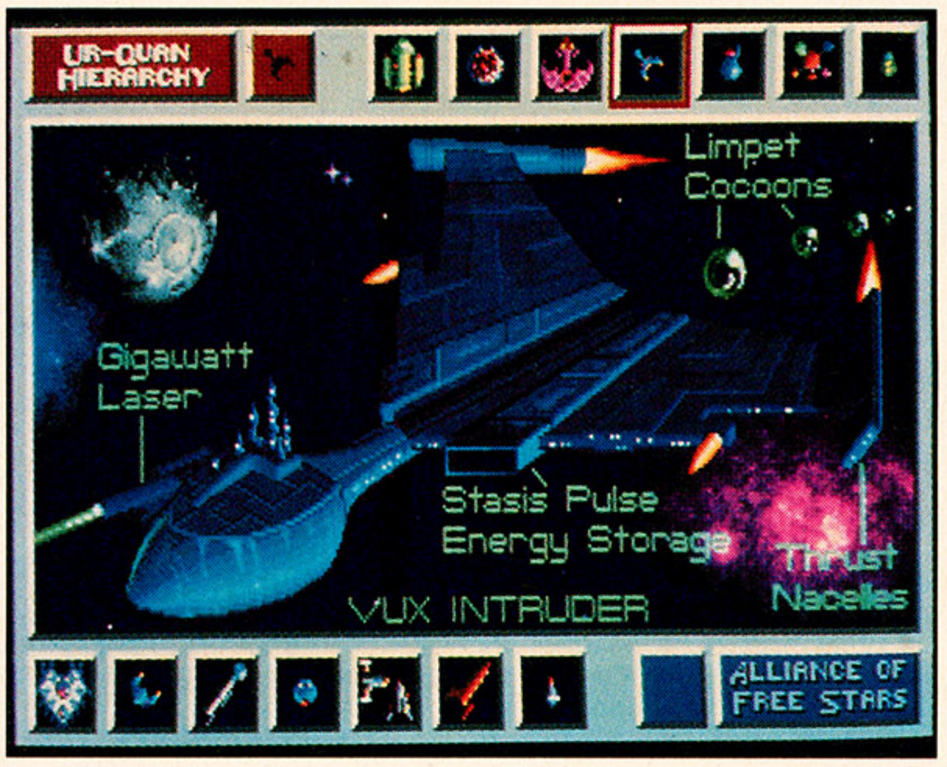
nify nothing? Do you yearn for the days of 2K programs with more play value than contemporary multi-megabyte epics?

Step right up and try your joystick on *Star Control*, a delightful throwback to the days when play value was maximized (because sound and graphics were so minimized). Better still, *Star Control* combines its neo-classical values with current audio-visual excellence to produce one of the most satisfying and compelling entertainments of the year.



Star Control, an intergalactic battle game by Accolade, is a modern descendant of the first computer game, M.I.T.'s Space War.



Star Control is a modern descendant of the very first computer game, Steve Russell's *Space War*, a program created at M.I.T. way back in 1962. Two great intergalactic forces, the Alliance (which includes Earth) and the Ur-Quan Hierarchy, face off in this one- or two-player contest by Paul Reiche III and Fred Ford. The user(s) controls either fleet and plays either the full-game action-strategy version or sticks to the arcade-style melee, which consists exclusively of space combat. Other player settings include Cyborg and Psytron settings. The Cyborg mode allows the user to input all strategic decisions while the computer handles combat; in the Psytron setting, the user controls combat while the computer determines strategy.

The full game allows players to develop resources, build colonies, purchase ships, fortify starbases and move their forces through space. When two opposing ships occupy the same sector of space, those two craft face off in a melee. This process continues until one side has wiped out the other.

In the melee mode, each side has seven ships. Each of these ships has specific strengths and weaknesses. Some are fast, some are slow; some have long-range weapons, others can only strike from close quarters. Additionally, each ship has a special secondary weapon: The Yehat craft has an impenetrable force shield; the Shofixti Scout has a kamikaze-like "Glory" weapon that allows it to self-destruct and, perhaps, take the enemy with it in the conflagration.

Even the arcade-style melee mode offers players rich strategic options. The player must become familiar with every feature of the 14 different ship types and learn which match-ups are most desirable. For example, when facing a lethal close-range craft like the Vux Intruder, an Earthling Cruiser makes a good opponent because of its ability to launch nuclear missiles across vast stretches of space. It is the nature of the game's combat situations that guarantees *Star Control* will remain playable for weeks, as opposed to just days.

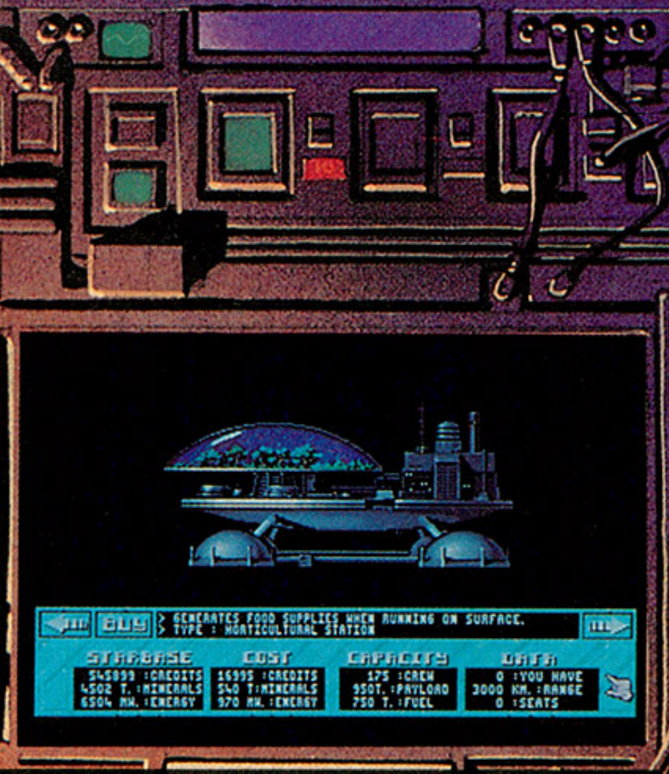
Star Control's sole weak spot is the poor layout of the keyboard control system, which uses a series of horizontally aligned keys rather than a rosette-type configuration. *Star Control* really requires a joystick for maximum enjoyment, but the joystick option is only available in the standard mode; when playing in the Psytron setting, for example, there is no joystick option.

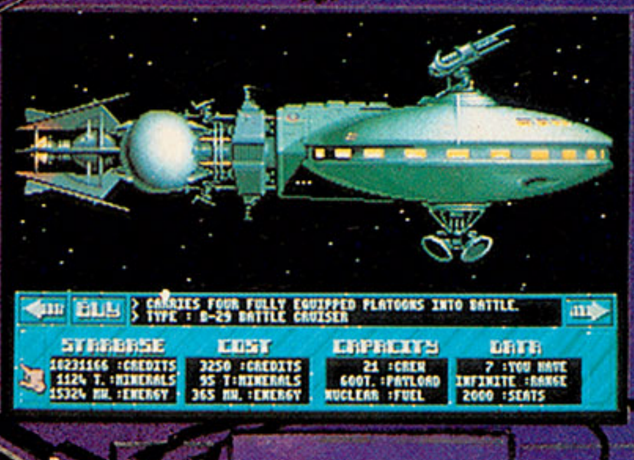
All in all, *Star Control* is a superb game and a great value as well. Bring back neo-classicism!

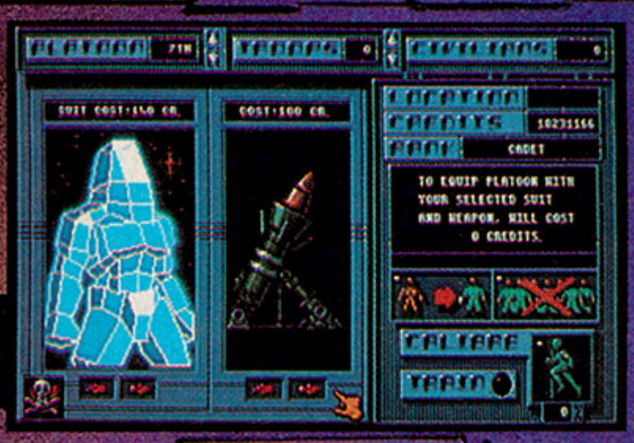
—B. K.

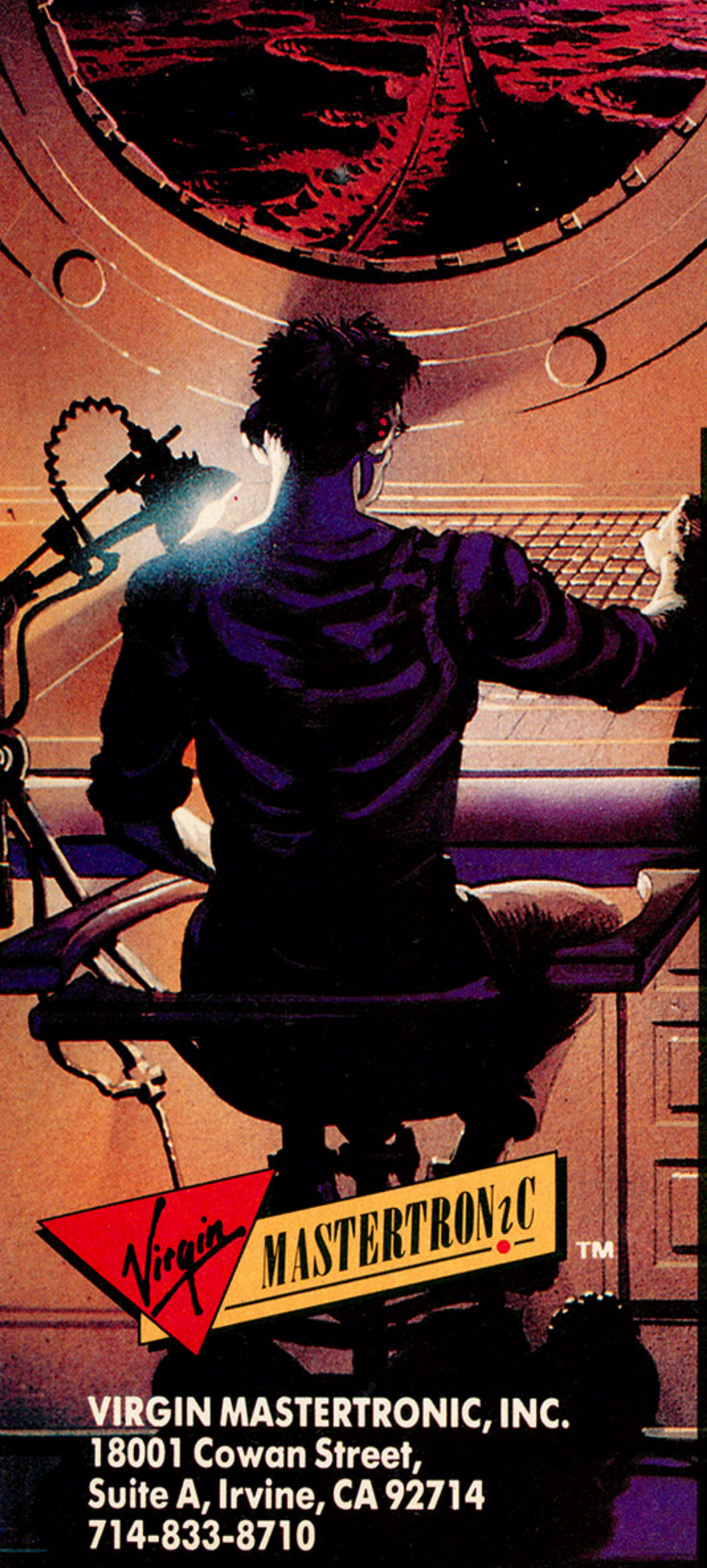
Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 296-8400

OVERLORD™







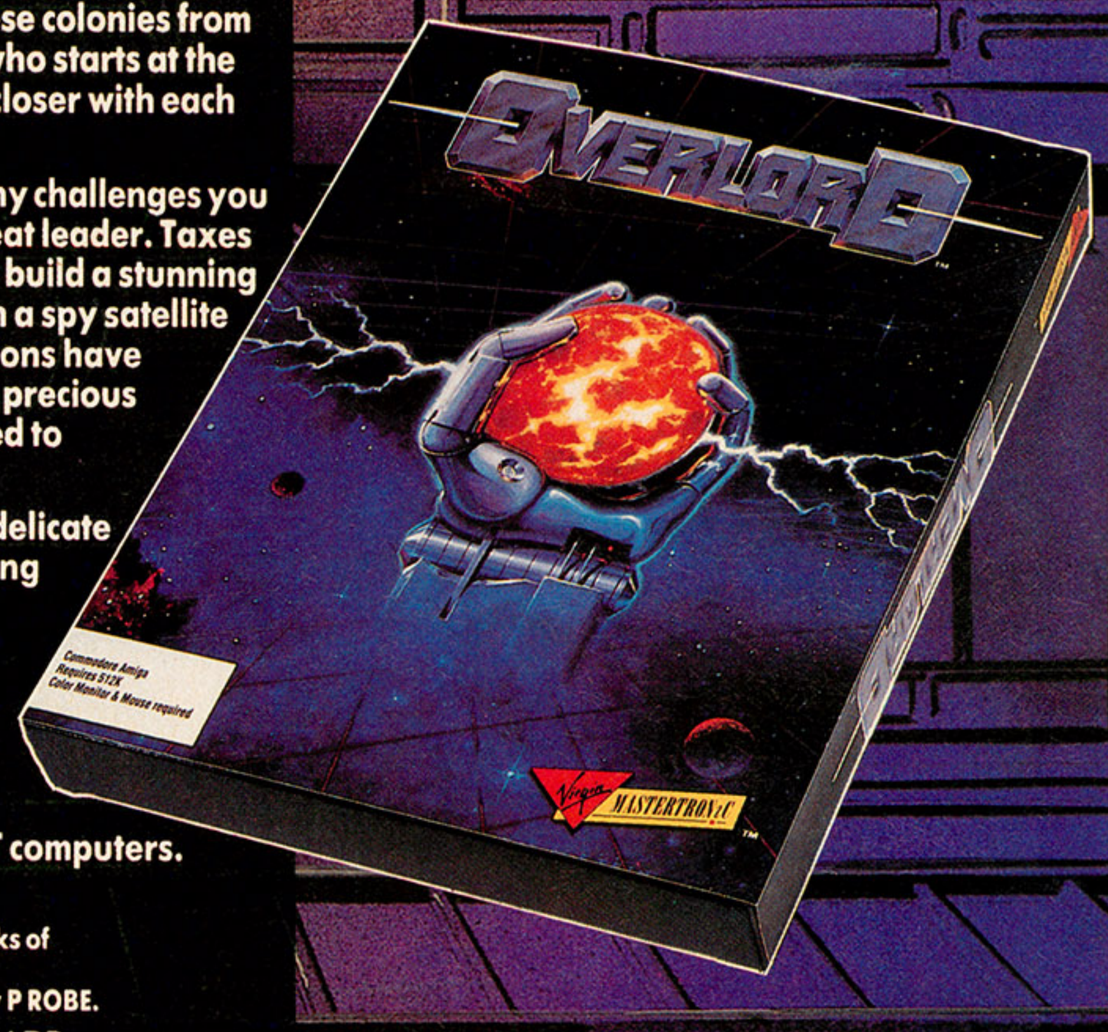


Imagine, if you will, a universe that holds only a small group of planets. Each planet, a barren shell waiting to be given life. Imagine further, that within this universe there exists the forces of good and evil.

Having only a single Starbase to work from, you set out in ships of your own design, and use them to colonize the barren planets. You must also recruit, train, feed and arm a galactic force to protect these colonies from the evil clutches of your unseen foe, who starts at the other end of the universe, but draws closer with each passing heartbeat.

Strategies are needed to meet the many challenges you will face as you strive to become a great leader. Taxes have to be imposed to raise money to build a stunning array of equipment... all the way from a spy satellite to a hydroponic plant. Mining operations have to be set up and maintained to obtain precious minerals. Farms need to be established to feed your growing populous.

Even while you are establishing that delicate balance called life, an evil and scheming dictator is gazing malevolently at the whole universe with greedy eyes. He schemes to conquer and control. Confrontation is unavoidable.



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Wings

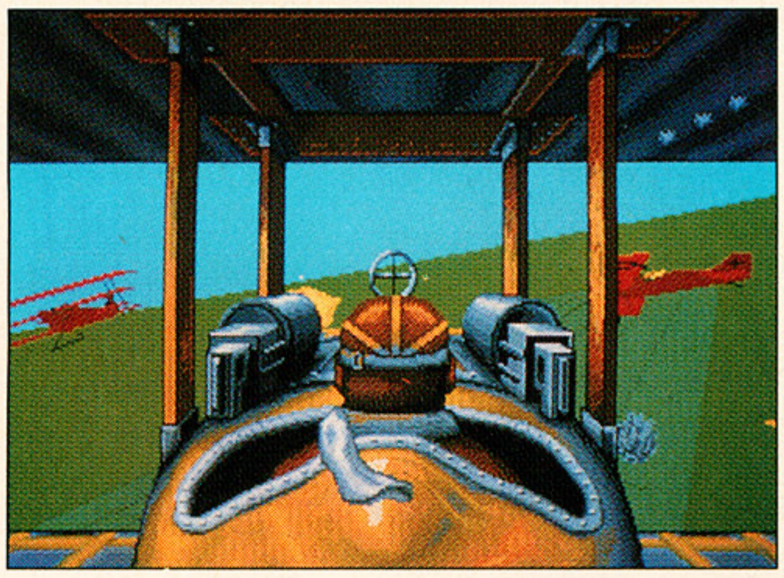
CINEMAWARE

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

There's little romance about real war, especially World War I. Millions of confused, ill-prepared men hunkered in disease-ridden trenches until some misguided general sent them over the top to meet death in the form of barbed wire, machine guns and pounding artillery.

Ironically, the same war produced one of the most enduring, romantic military legends of the gunpowder era: the daring young men in their flying machines. Air-



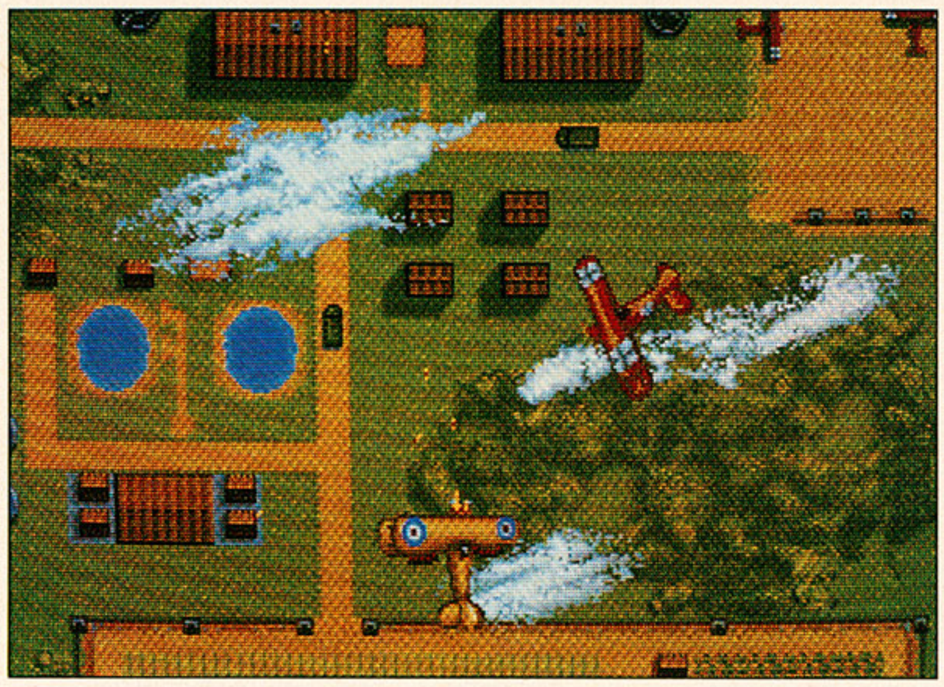
planes were still a novelty at the start of war. The flimsy bi- and tri-winged wooden birds lacked the range and firepower of today's fighters and bombers, and bombing wasn't much practiced until right at the end of the conflict. The aviators developed their own chivalric code as they contested for air superiority over the stagnant battlefields.

Wings, designed by the estimable John Cutter, is not a traditional flight simulator. It communicates the feel of aerial combat, but not the authentic details usually found in a realistic representation of flight. The player controls everything with simple joystick movements in all three types of missions: strafing, bombing and flying.

Wings is also distinguished from conventional flight simulators by the perspectives in which it presents the action. Missions that emphasize aerobatics put the gamer directly behind the pilot and show the scenery from a first-person viewpoint. The bombing runs are top-down, however, and the strafing raids show the plane and its targets from an angled overhead vantage point.

What makes *Wings* special is its role-playing aspects. The user runs the 56th Aerosquadron from early 1916 to the end of the war. Individual pilots have an anticipated lifespan of only two weeks of combat, so the goal is not to guide a single flyer through all of *Wings'* numerous missions, but to bring the entire formation through World War I. This reduces the player's ability to identify with any one pilot, because it's hard to become attached to a character who probably won't be around for the next game-month. On the other hand, *Wings* lets the armchair

Cinemaware's *Wings* isn't a traditional flight simulator, but concentrates instead on simple control, aerobatics and its role-playing aspects.



squadron commander experience the pressures, crises and triumphs of Europe's skies like no other program.

It will be headline news when a Cinemaware game fails to offer outstanding graphics and stirring sound; *Wings* is no exception to the Cinemaware standard. The music has precisely the anthem-style quality appropriate to these daring exploits.

Wings offers little new in the way of play action. The bombing, strafing and dogfight scenarios are enhanced treatments of contests that have existed since the dawn of electronic gaming. What makes *Wings* an entertaining play experience is the way these familiar elements are woven into an engrossing, role-playing action-adventure.

—Arnie Katz

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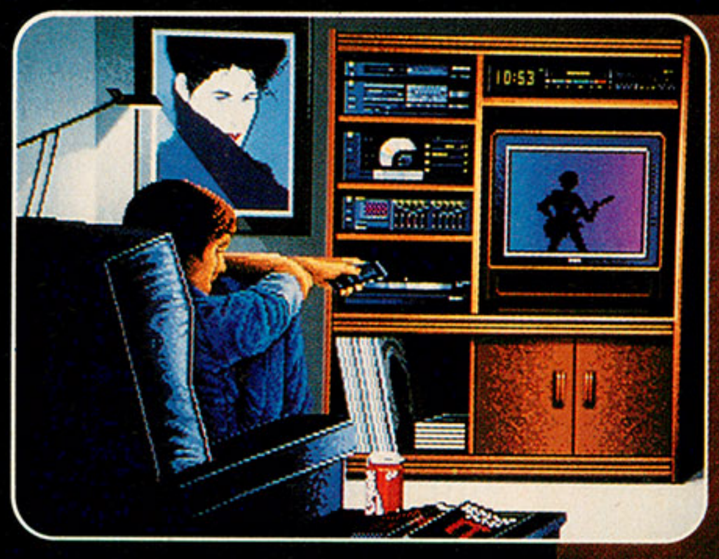

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Battles of Napoleon: A Construction Set

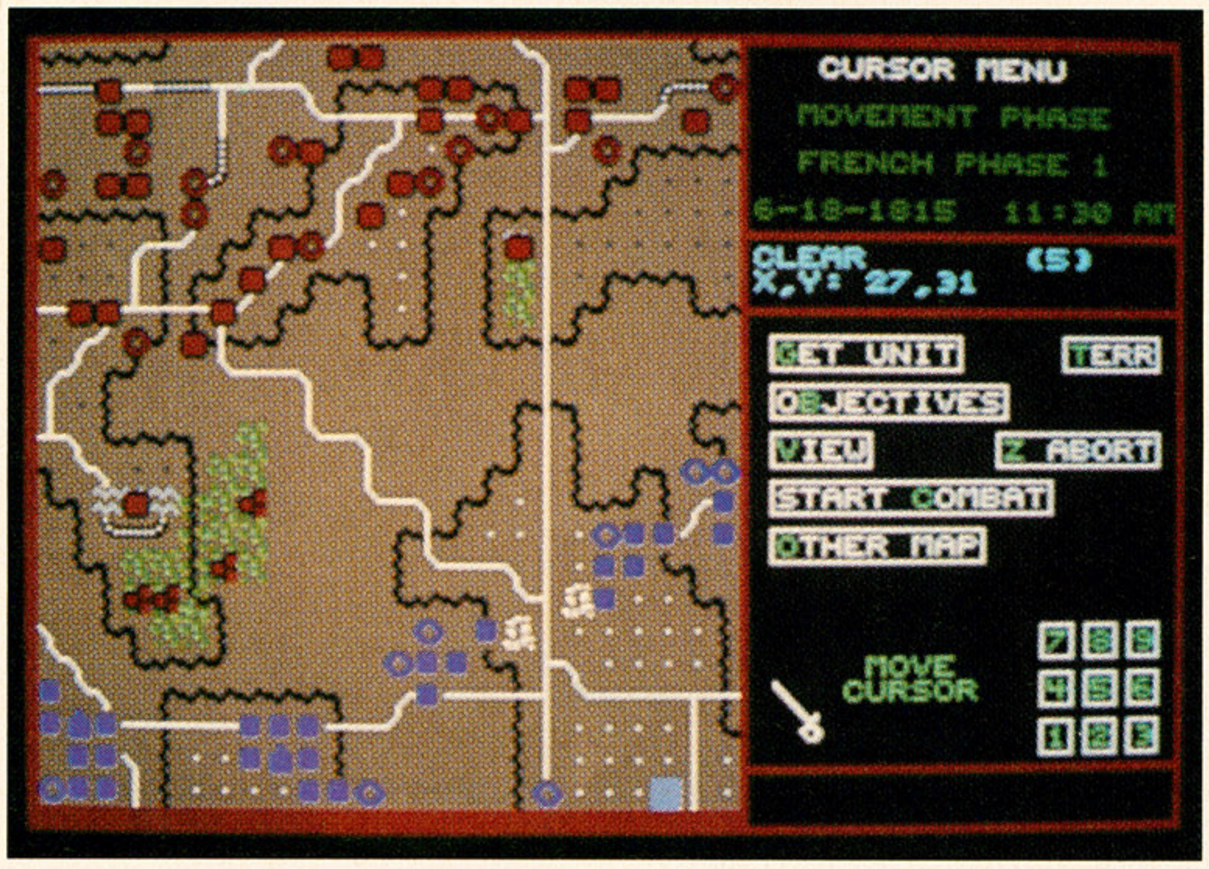
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC.
Versions: Apple II ($39.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC										
GRAPHICS					■					
PLAYABILITY								■		
OVERALL							■			

SSI's *Battles of Napoleon* is a well-organized, serious study of Napoleonic tactics, though it allows the player to create his own scenarios to test the principals of combat.

Aficionados of the Napoleonic age rejoice! At last there is a serious study of Napoleonic warfare for the computer. Strategic Simulation's *Battles of Napoleon* can turn greenhorns into veterans of Napoleonic tactics and does so without the heavy hand of an educational offering. The decisive engagements of the period (Auerstädt, Borodino, Quatre Bras and Waterloo) are included. The player may also utilize a powerful editor function to modify the orders of battle for each of these engagements or design entirely new scenarios to test the principles of war.

Mouse support and an extremely friendly pull-down menu interface are welcome additions over prior releases. As expected from SSI, the documentation is thorough and well organized without being overly cumbersome. A separate manual for the system editor clearly delineates effects like terrain, casualty and disruption modifiers, which aren't always so obvious. The two manuals combined are less than 80 pages and should be considered essential reading, despite the abbreviated quick-start procedure.



Unfortunately, the graphic standard used by SSI shows little improvement over its earliest war games. Essentially, the player views the two-dimensional battlefield from a top-down perspective. Each square represents 100 yards. Terrain features such as streams, forests and ridges appear topographically, but subtle changes in elevation are not apparent without utilizing the "line of sight" option for each unit. In prior releases this frequently led to difficulty when coordinating attacks. Some elements of an attack could not direct their fire once they reached the objective. This release allows players to retract movement when these line-of-sight anomalies occur. Nevertheless, a more advanced graphic presentation, such as the three-dimensional display used in the *Universal Military Simulator* might have worked better.

Each game turn represents 30 minutes of action and is comprised of 25 separate phases! Simplistically, these phases encompass fire, movement, retreat and resupply. On a more subtle level, the interaction of disruption, efficiency, fatigue and morale is particularly fascinating.

Units routing near the center of attack can have disastrous effect on other friendly units in the area and potentially disrupt the entire effort. This feature, combined with the manner in which unit leaders impact the flow of events, graphically illustrates the delicacy and finesse required of true tacticians. The famed massed-column tactics of the French Army will not carry the day.

The most successful tactical innovation contained in *Battles of Napoleon* is the way cavalry units are manipulated. Though they are traditionally employed as harassing elements on the enemy's flanks, this program allows players to designate a target unit for their cavalry despite initial separation. Once selected, the cavalry charges the targeted unit. They might be met by enemy cavalry enroute, if the enemy had the foresight to place any cavalry in a counter-charge mode. Secondarily, they might be spotted in time for the targeted unit to form a square, which nulli-

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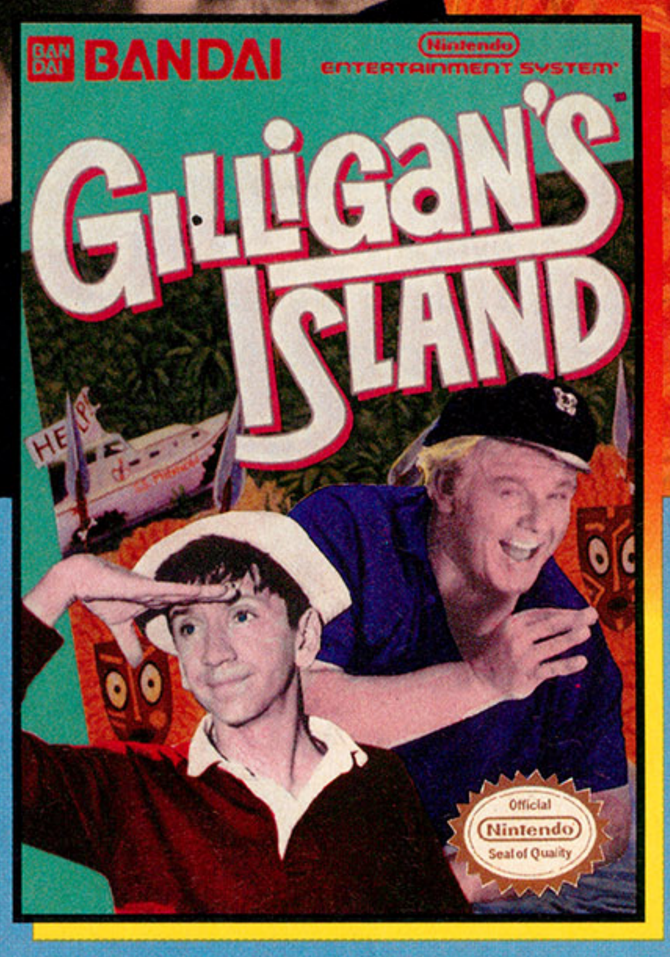

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wise engaged, cavalry usually completely routs the targeted unit for the remainder of the battle.

Battles of Napoleon succeeds because, in addition to providing a wealth of detail, it forces players to realize their lack of omnipotence. It precludes excessive control by heavy-handed tacticians and illustrates the folly of micro-management. It is a war game that respects the premise on which it was formed and the limitations of the men it portrays.

—Ed Dille

Strategic Simulations Inc.
675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 737-6800

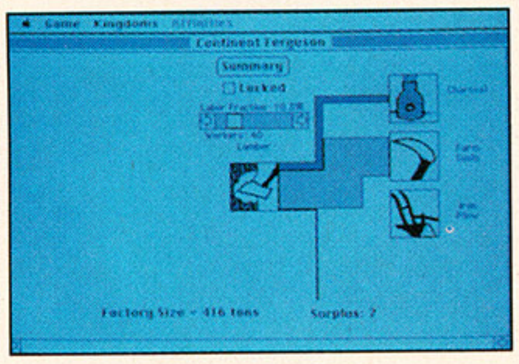
Guns & Butter

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS
Versions: IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

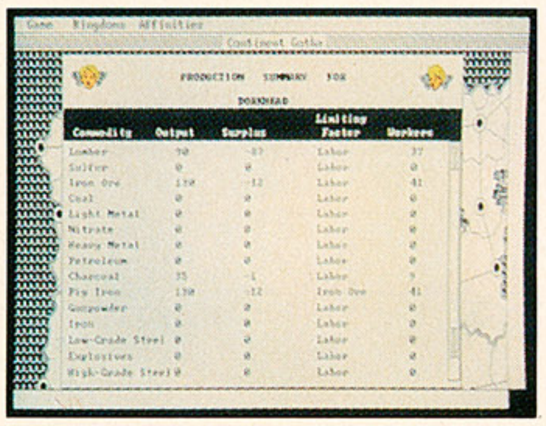
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

The classic dilemma faced by all countries is how to balance the competing need of feeding people with that of providing for the national defense. Well-known designer Chris Crawford tackles this interesting subject with his recent release, *Guns & Butter*. The game was completed over a year ago, but its release was delayed due to the recent buyout of Mindscape, the game's original producer, by Software Toolworks, the current publisher.

Guns & Butter is basically an exercise



in managing resources. The player must optimize his available work pool to accomplish the most with the workers in his kingdom. Producing lots of food and weaponry is the main goal, but accomplishing this



Chris Crawford has been one of the most reliable game designers, and *Guns & Butter*, by Software Toolworks, is another successful chapter in his career.

requires many different intermediate materials. For example, iron ore is used to produce pig iron, which in turn can be used to produce either farm tools or swords.

As the player's kingdom grows in size, it can use efficient processes for even higher quality food and weaponry. In all, five different levels of both food-producing tools and weaponry can be developed. But since each requires a wider array of basic components and a larger base number of workers to be effective, it may take quite a while to get to the upper end of highly effective tanks and tractors.

After workers are assigned, troop movement and combat for the turn is executed. Combat results are figured according to simple, predefined formulas that favor the larger force and troop movement over roads. The produce-and-move cycle is carried out over and over until one kingdom takes over the entire continent or all the other kingdoms surrender.

Three levels of play are available. The beginner level takes place on a very small continent with a single opposing kingdom and only has the first two levels of food and weaponry. The intermediate level approximately doubles the land area, adds two additional opponents, extra food and weaponry and a slightly more detailed economic model. In addition to its population, each province now has forest, desert and mountains. The more of each type, the fewer workers required to produce the raw materials found in each setting.

The advanced setting adds several factors to make the game even more interesting. This time the continent is large enough for seven players, and the economic model uses all five levels of food and weaponry. Most interesting is the addition of diplomacy and alliances.

At the start of a turn, each player has the chance to propose and join in military alliances. These allow all workers in the alliance to be put in one big pool, and therefore they are able to produce more united than they could separately. The only drawback is that only the target of the alliance can be attacked during that turn, so these combines should not be entered hastily.

The simple graphics in *Guns & Butter* use black and white exclusively. While the different elements are fairly easy to recognize, even a little color would have greatly

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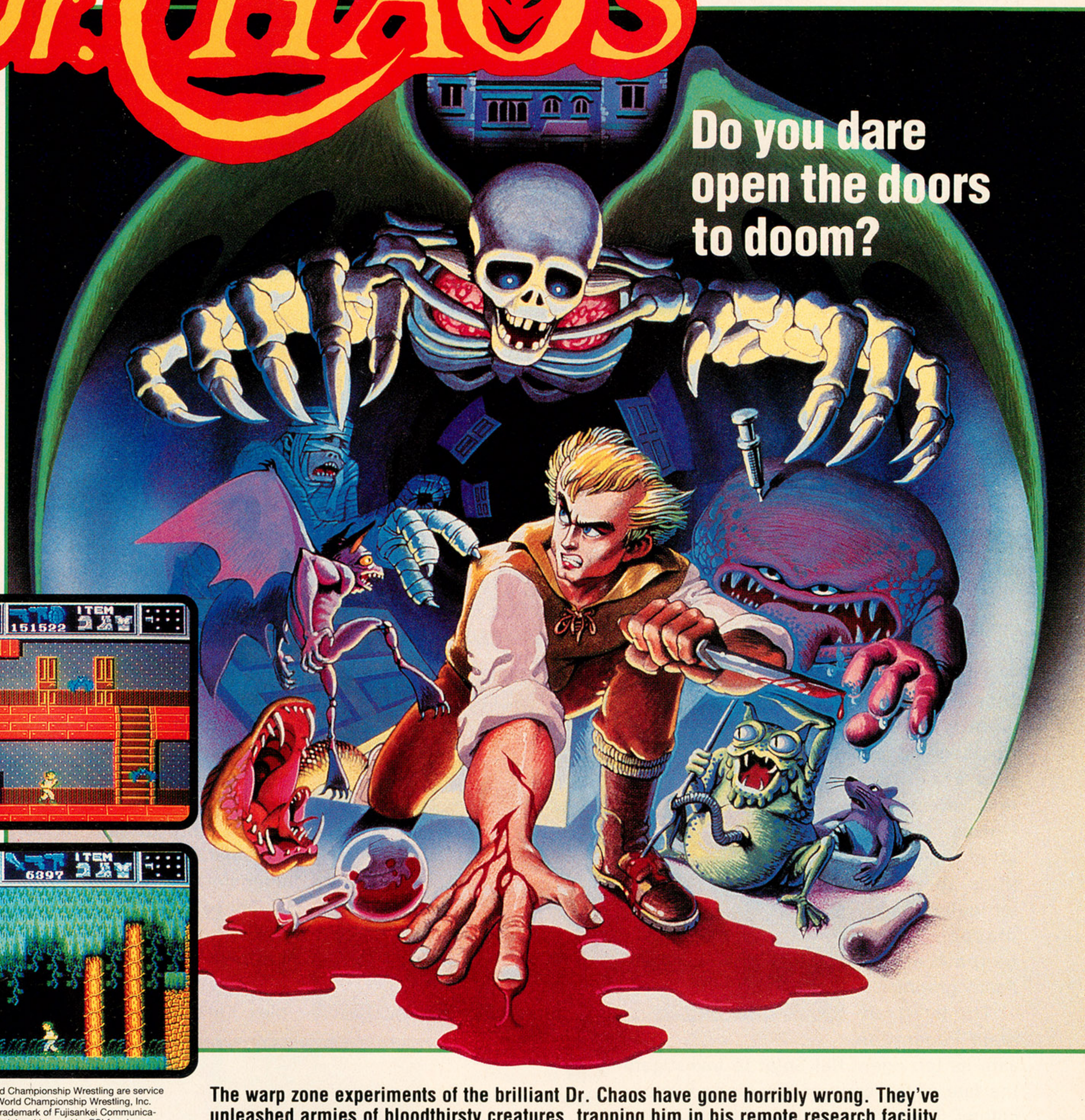

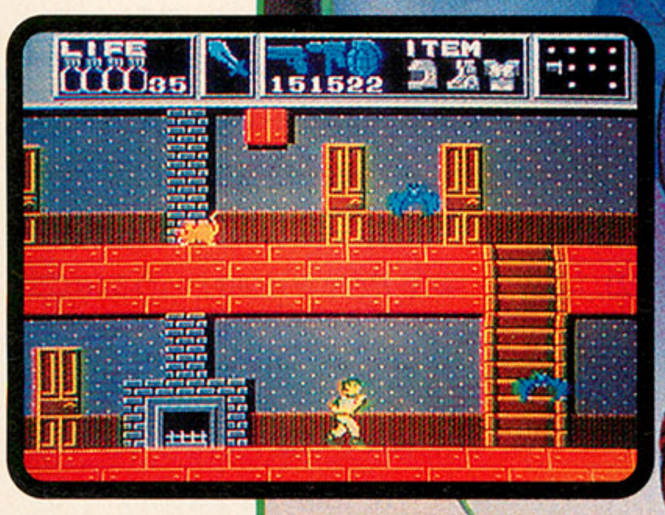

The warp zone experiments of the brilliant Dr. Chaos have gone horribly wrong. They've unleashed armies of bloodthirsty creatures, trapping him in his remote research facility. Now only his brother Michael can rescue him.

To succeed, Michael must brave a haunted house filled with vicious monsters. Can he fight his way through dangerous passageways? Track down the concealed weapons? Find the secret vials of strength? And assemble the only weapon powerful enough to defeat the ultimate beast, Canbarian?

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enhanced the game. The mouse is utilized to change settings and plan troop movements. While the keyboard can simulate the mouse, it is much more difficult to use.

Guns & Butter is truly a Chris Crawford product. While it is difficult to learn how to play the game, the underlying mechanics can be grasped with some effort. It has that certain factor that keeps the player coming back for just one more try at conquering the world. Anyone who can overlook the game's rather plain graphics is in for a fun time.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Software Toolworks
60 Leveroni Court
Novato, CA 94949
(415) 883-3000

Infestation

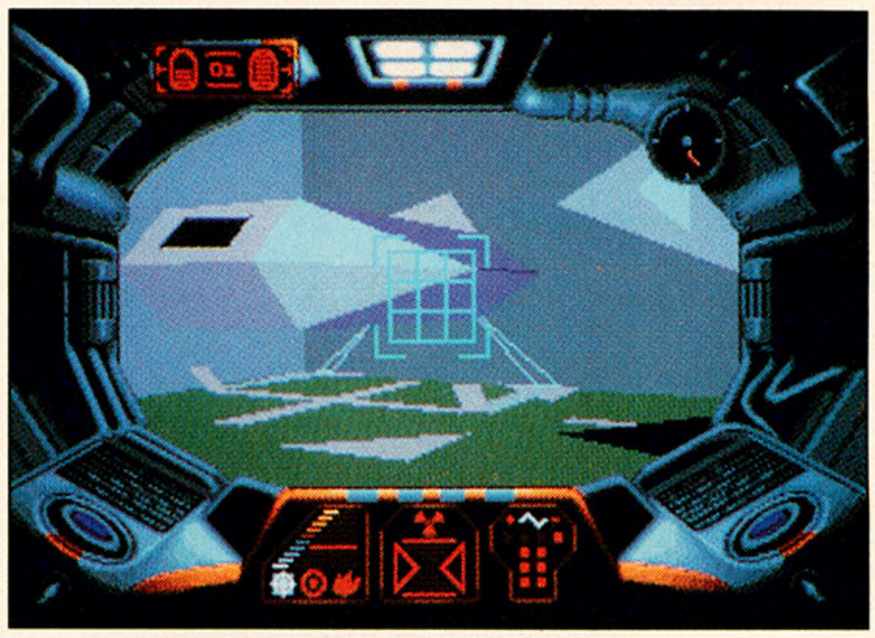
PSYGNOSIS
Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

The latest from the graphic wizards at Psygnosis is an action-adventure title, *Infestation.* Unlike some other Psygnosis titles, there's an intriguing, highly playable game beneath all the flashy graphics.

The Interplanetary Federation sent its top agent Kal Solar to investigate the fate of the crew of the Alpha II space colony. The crew is believed to have met an alien intelligence from the planet whose moon they orbit. A transcript of the final transmission from Alpha II is included in the documentation.

Kal Solar is dropped onto the surface of Xelos, the moon where Alpha II is located, with only his power suit and a pulse rifle to combat the assorted nasties in the game. As Kal Solar, the gamer must search the surface of the moon for an entrance to the Alpha II complex while avoiding the antlike creatures and now-hostile sentry robots that roam the moon's surface.

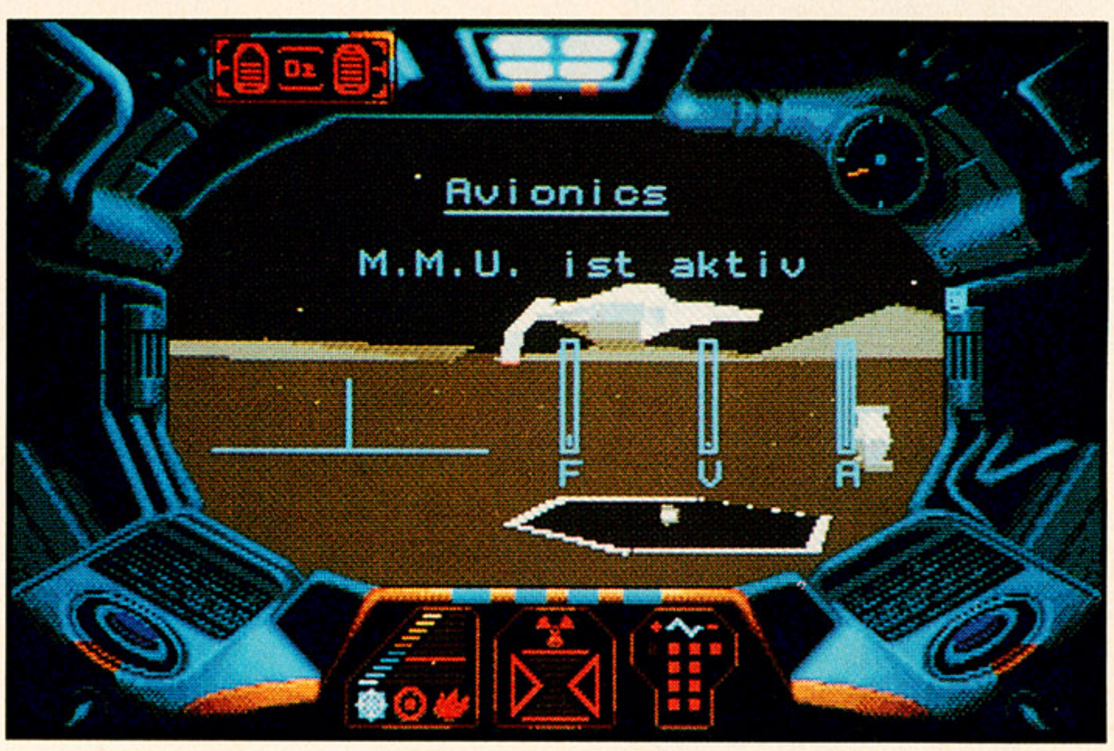


Once inside the multileveled complex, Kal must locate eggs laid by the alien. The only way to destroy the eggs is to expose them to cyanide gas, which causes them to decompose rapidly. Computer terminals on each level provide a map of that sector and mark each egg's location.

When all the eggs are exterminated, Kal must rig the station's reactor to overload and destroy the planet, then work his way back to the moon's surface to be picked up. If he fails in his mission, the eggs hatch to form a deadly army that will ultimately overrun the universe.

There are several ways to move throughout the complex. Lifts transport Kal between levels, while shuttles move rapidly on the same level. Inside the complex, Kal occasionally encounters the huge

Psygnosis has a reputation for lavish graphics, and its latest effort, *Infestation*, is no different, but the game is a solid product that's highly playable.



guardian robots: large faces with eyes that emit deadly photons. Kal's power suit provides partial protection from the deadly rays. Some eggs are hidden in the ventilation tunnels, and certain areas of the complex can only be reached through the tunnels. Repair robots that deliver fatal electric shocks when touched lurk within these tunnels.

Cartridges of cyanide gas are scattered throughout the complex along with other useful items, such as a compass that links into the station's computer for navigation information, refills for the suit's power, oxygen and food supplies. The suit's oxygen and power supplies go quickly, so Kal should only use them when necessary—for traveling through irradiated areas and after exposing the eggs to the cyanide gas. The pulse rifle only functions with the power on and the helmet's visor down.

Infestation uses the polygon-fill graphics technique that has become so popular recently. But like most Psygnosis titles, *Infestation* takes this technique and runs with it. Unlike most polygon-fill art that represents an open doorway with a black rectangle, *Infestation* shows the contents of the room. The display is surprisingly quick and smooth, possessing only minor glitches.

As far as the audio goes, *Infestation* uses sparse sound effects with no background music. This actually enhances the feeling of being alone in the complex; the only sound heard is Kal's breathing.

This adventure is a welcome addition to any collection of action-adventure games. Although it is fairly easy to get killed in the beginning, once computerists get the hang of the system, they should be able to play *Infestation* to its conclusion. Once again, Psygnosis provides a visually stunning game. This time the game play lives up to the graphics.

—Michael Holda

Psygnosis
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Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf & Course Design

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Classic sports simulations differ from other genres in that designers cannot alter the basic game itself. Each new disk within a given sport must provide new chrome to entice players to upgrade from their prior favorite. On some occasions the extra features are worth it; other times they are not. Fortunately for lovers of golf both on and off the fairway, *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf & Course Design* delivers.

With the Golden Bear behind it, along with a high-quality design, Accolade's *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf & Course Design* is bound to be popular.

As the title implies, the program actually contains two separate and distinct functions. It is possible to play *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf* without ever accessing the *Course Design* feature, but to do so would be a terrible mistake. It contains a fully functioning graphics editor that allows re-creation of one's favorite holes in loving detail.

Players begin with a topographical plot of land in one of three basic settings: mountain, parkland or seascape. Using an overhead display and any form of point-and-click device, 18 holes can be roughed out in a matter of minutes. What players do is essentially plot the centerline of each hole, including doglegs and

continued on page 170

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offset greens, as applicable. Along the way, a handy display provides length and current par for the hole being plotted, as well as a cumulative for the course up to that point.

The *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf & Course Design* manual is beautifully produced and organized and includes an entire section on how the Golden Bear approaches course design. Nicklaus pops up periodically with hints and tips as the design progresses.

Each hole is then individualized, as players edit greens, roughs and fairways, add bunkers, water, trees and rocks or even houses. The course may be sculpted through raising and lowering elevation to create the undulating effect desired. Players also place tees and can include up to five pin placements, which are randomly selected each time the hole is played.

Both broad- and fine-pixel brushes are included in the editor so players can achieve extraordinary detail if they desire. All of the objects in the graphic library can be modified, such as adding an autumn hue to trees or creating entirely new objects. Furthermore, while editing the hole, one can select any location and observe a three-dimensional 360-degree perspective from that point. These tools are so comprehensive that the player can use scorecards from local courses (from Sawgrass to a favorite par 3) to bring them home in under an hour. If a detail is missed or the course is subsequently altered, it can be reedited at any moment. Now that's an interactive environment!

In addition to user-generated courses and add-on disks, the game comes with Murfield Village and the Bear's Track, a course Nicklaus designed particularly for this release.

A combination of up to four human/computer players compete in regular or "skins" play. The skill levels of the computer opponents are varied, and both genders are represented. The mechanics of play are familiar—players time their stroke and wrist snap on a sliding power bar until one reaches the green. Here, an optional topographical grid makes reading the greens much easier. The grid is a welcome addition, and its presence does nothing to detract from the illusion.

Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf's greatest attribute is its humility. It's nice to see the Golden Bear duff one now and then. It makes him—and the simulation—much more human.

Is this game the ultimate golf experience, as the title proclaims? Well, it may not be a hole-in-one, but it's a solid eagle. To reach the pinnacle, true tournament play needs to be included. Also, instead of defaulting to the internal speaker after the opening theme, the product would benefit from background sound and speech synthesis/crowd noise.

The strengths of *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Game & Course Design* far outweigh any shortcomings. It's a must-buy for any avid computer golfer.

—E. D.

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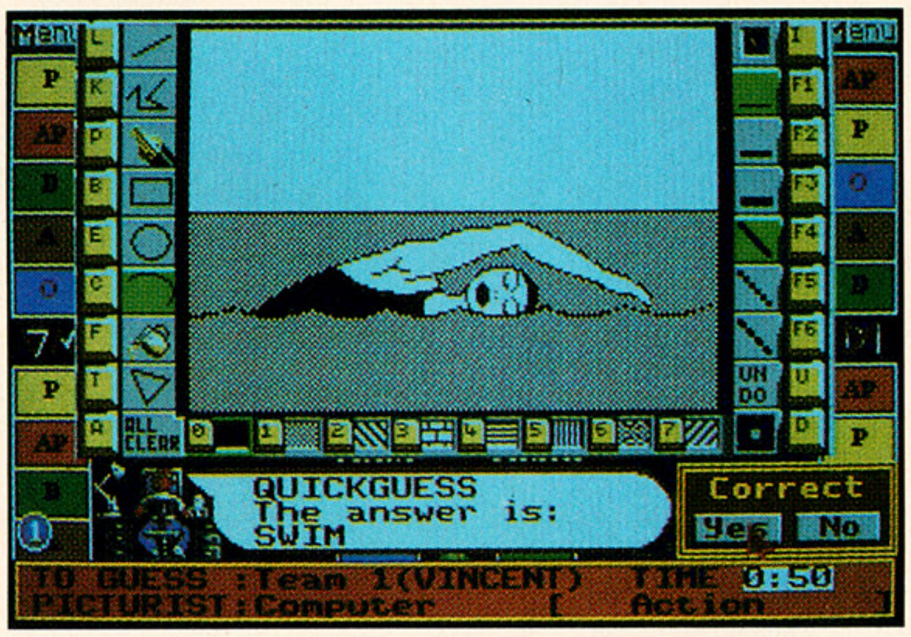


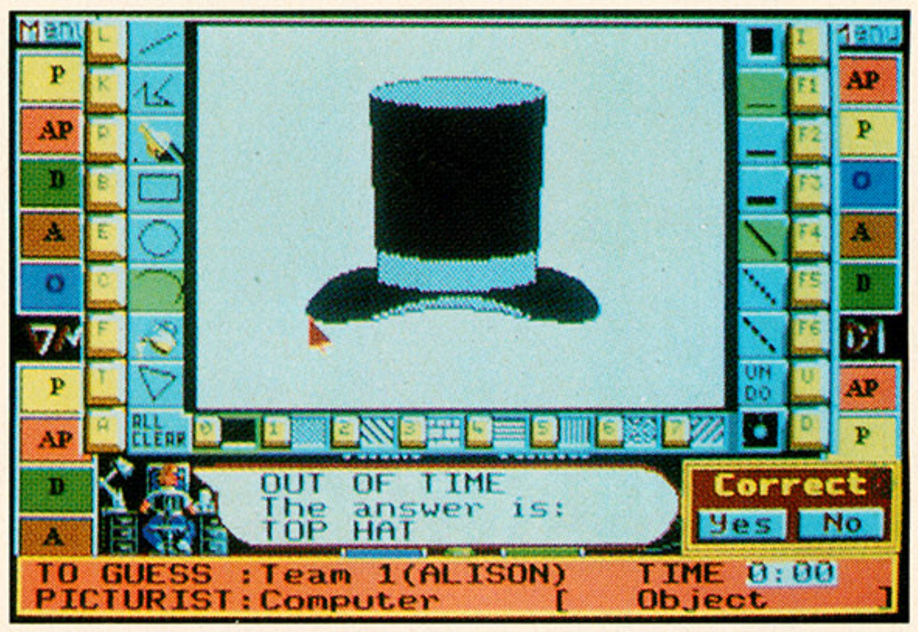
Brøderbund has released the popular drawing board game, *Pictionary*, to let computer gamers try their hand at giving picture clues on-screen.

Pictionary

BRØDERBUND
Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Brøderbund's computer version of the best-selling home game *Pictionary* is played much like charades. Instead of acting out words, however, players



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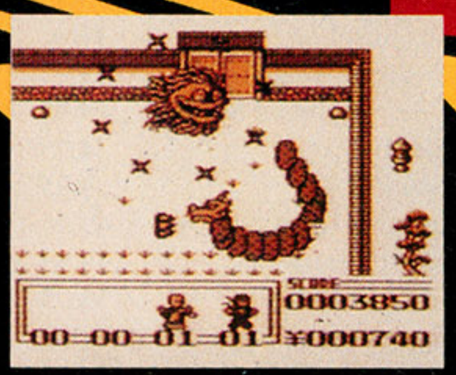

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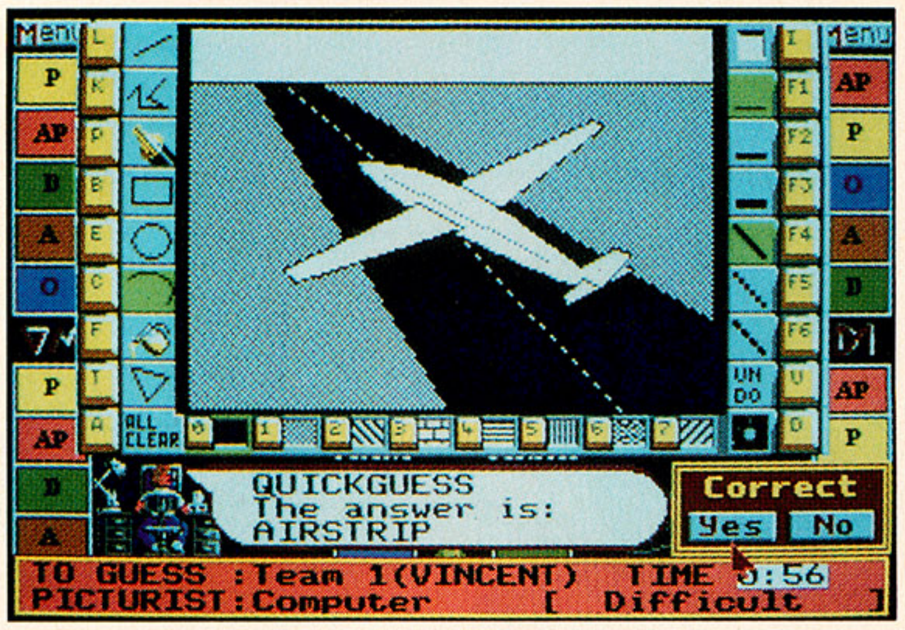
sketch their clues for their teammates. Played by one to four players or teams, the computer version offers the added option of having the PC draw the clues if desired.

Players or teams have 60 seconds to guess the word, or the turn is forfeited. A successful guess allows players to roll the dice and move along the board in an effort to reach the final square.

Pictionary is fun to watch. The graphics are very colorful, and the animation of the rolling dice and the smoking artist are very effective. The computer's clue drawing is also a treat: The brush takes on an interesting, ghostlike motion as it paints the clues.

Pictionary is fun to watch, with colorful graphics and effective animation to support this computerized version of the board game.



The problem with *Pictionary* lies in its practicality over the board game. Although the computerized artist draws quite well, it is almost *too* detailed. It takes quite a while to draw something recognizable. The artificial intelligence lacks human resourcefulness and imagination, elongating the game artificially with the painstaking and time-consuming sketches completed by the computer.

The on-disk drawing interface used by the players is very complex, almost too much so. Gamers cannot be effective at clue-drawing until they spend a bit of time learning the system. They have to determine what each icon does before they can master technique. This PC translation of the paper-and-pencil game may be enjoyable for anyone who prefers playing board games on computer, or for someone who wants to play solo. But it brings very little extra to the party.

Except for watching the computerized artist, there is little reason for playing *Pictionary* on disk. Personally, I prefer the good, old-fashioned board game.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

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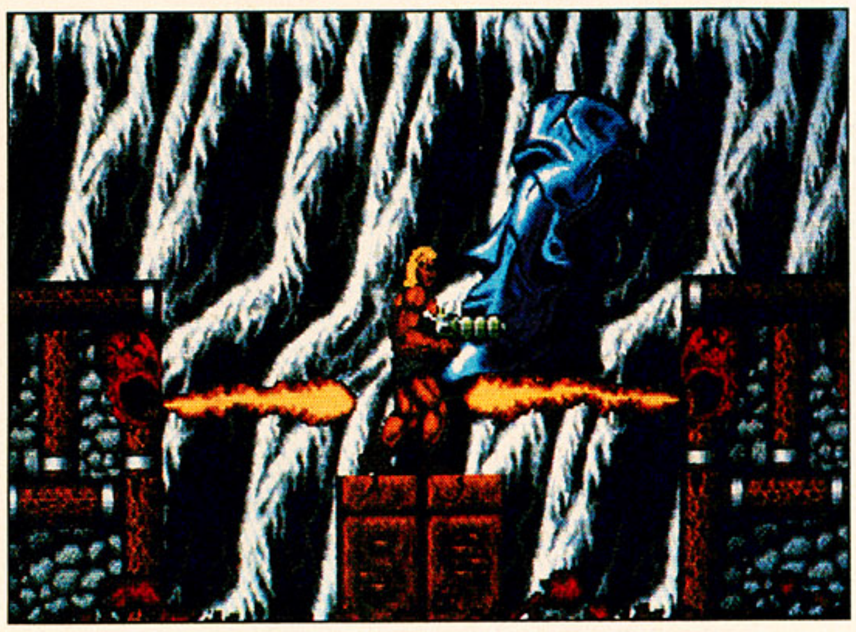
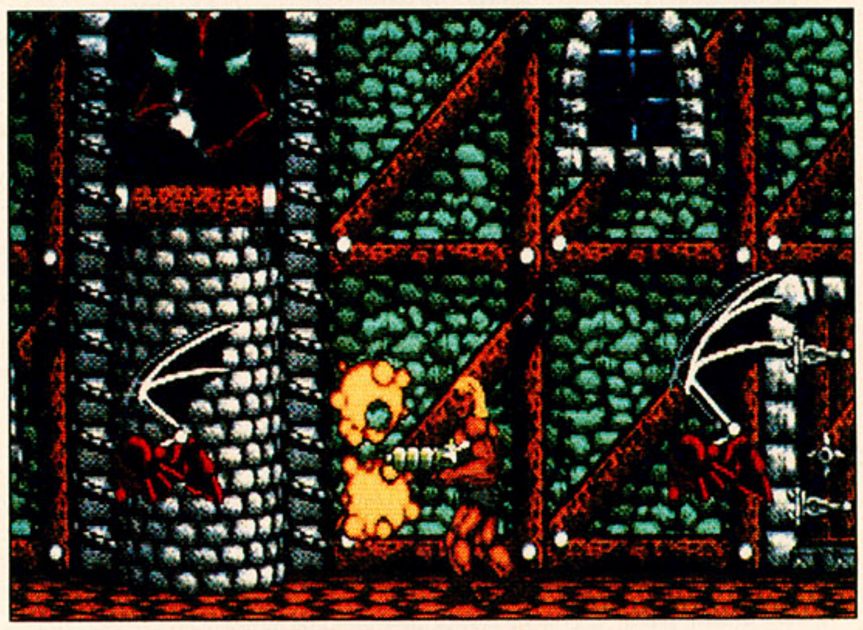
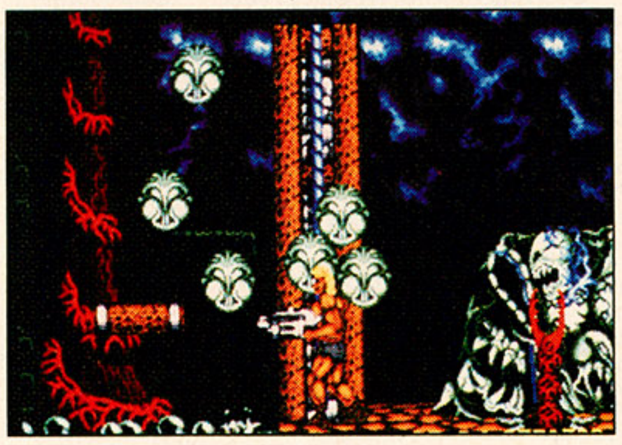


hit from Maryland's Innerprise Software, has a simple premise: Shoot everything that moves or attacks, and blast everything that looks like it came from a low-budget sci-fi movie. The story behind the game is that the player must wipe out all traces of a disease that ravaged the land and mutated animals and people.

The character pictured on the box and starring in the game is a rugged, muscle-bound guy drawn by renowned artist Dorian Vallejo. Control of this hero is easy. The screens show the character from the side as he jumps, ducks and plunders his way through the four levels of game play. There are six weapons for the champion

Innerprise's *The Plague* has a simple premise: Shoot everything that moves or attacks, and blast everything that looks like it came from a low-budget science-fiction film.





to use, and they appear in the areas where they are most needed.

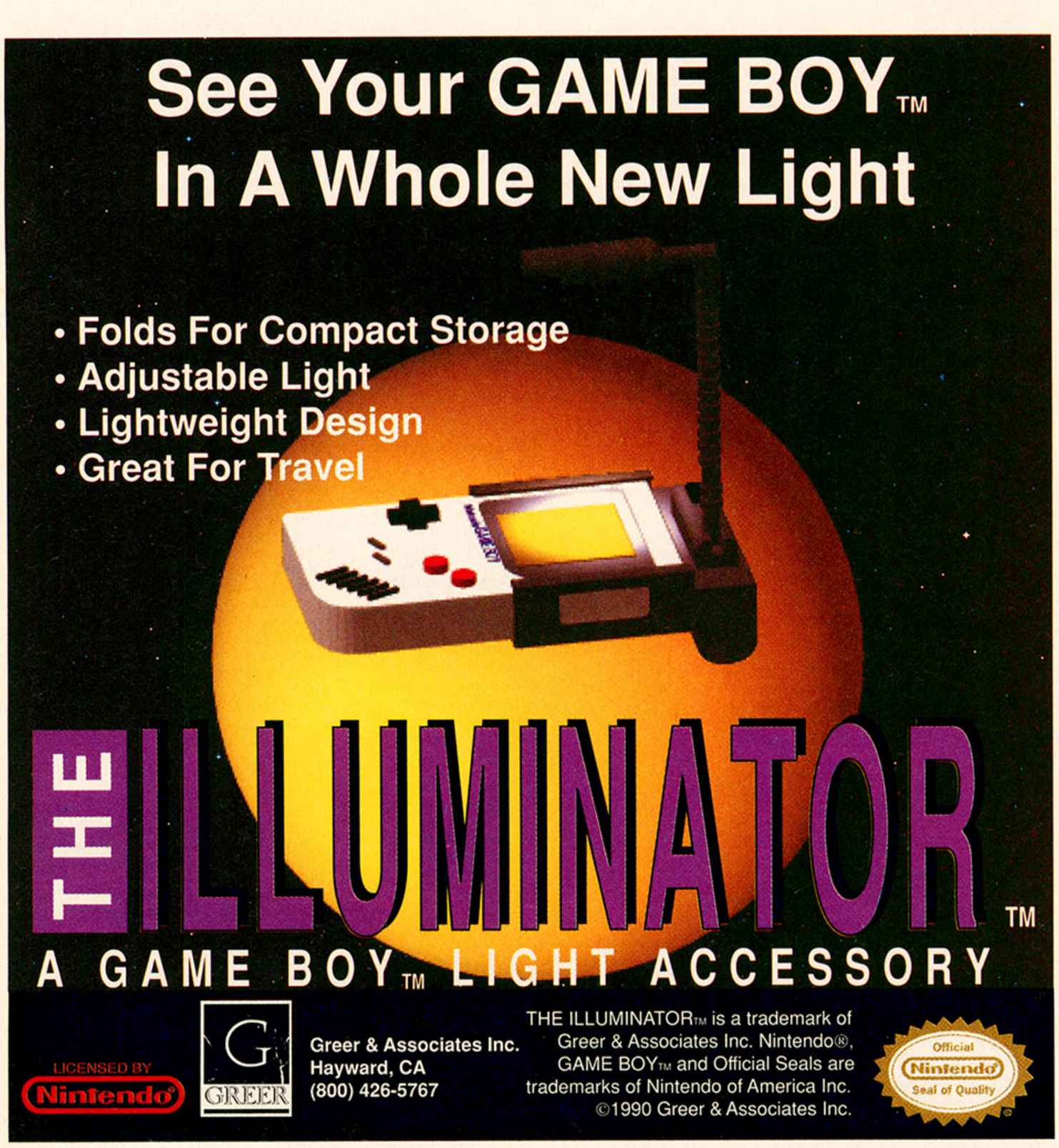
Graphics are excellent in *The Plague.* Many monsters can appear on-screen at once without slowing the game—movements are fluid, and the colors are brilliant.

Either sound effects or music (but not both) play throughout the game. You'll find it's necessary to hear the sound effects until you get used to the levels. After that the player will probably prefer to listen to the music instead. Both make full use of the Amiga's capabilities.

Higher levels are very difficult, but not impossible, and the boss creatures at the end of each level are particularly nasty. It takes a while to finish the game, but it maintains a high level of fun along the way. Lastly, the player with the highest score gets to sign in with a built-in paint utility for the vanity screen, which is saved to disk.

The Plague is easily the finest and fastest large-sprite arcade game available

continued on page 182



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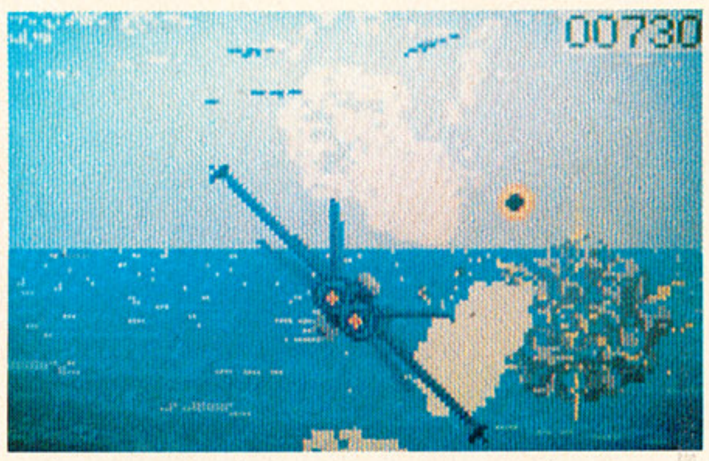

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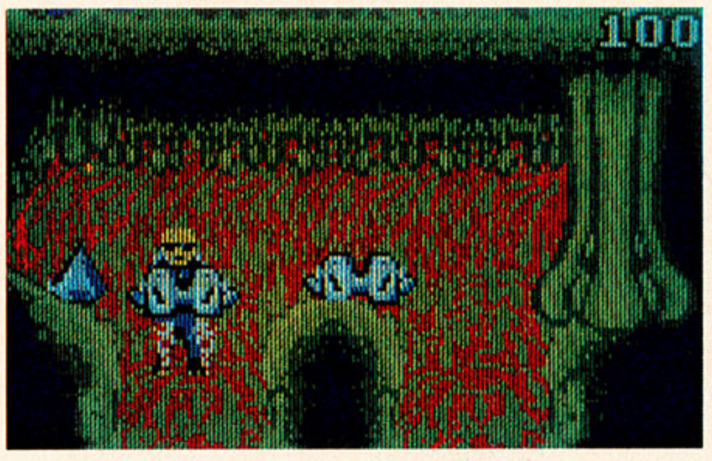
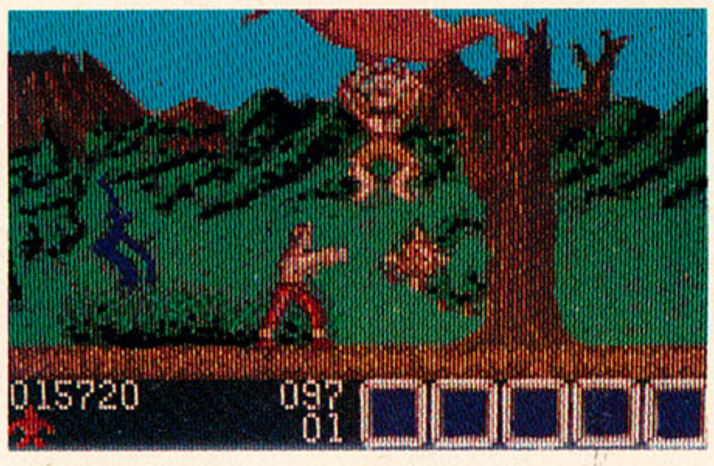
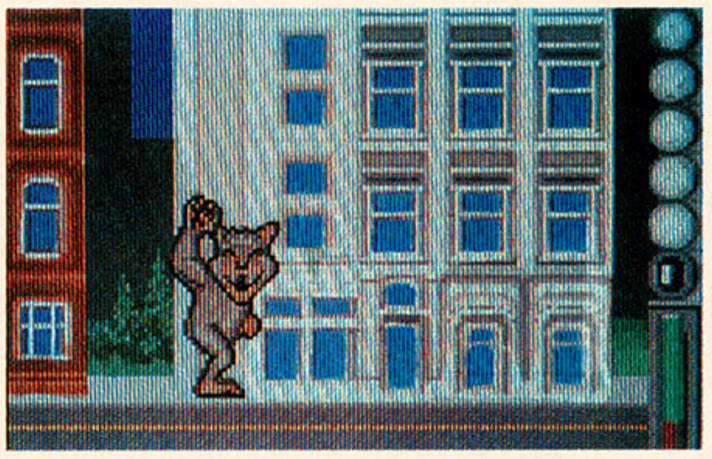


After dinner, you can always battle maggots, blood-flies and drools in the dangerous 8 player game – **SLIME WORLD.**

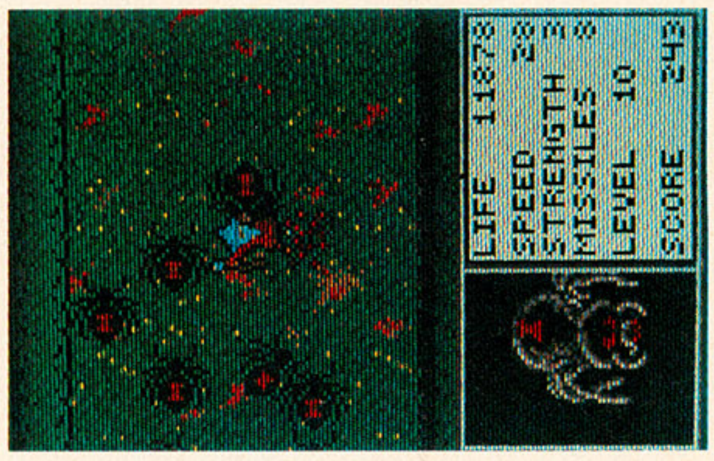


RYGAR, *the 2 player arcade hit that pits you against ferocious beasts, hideous demons or worse, your best friend.*

PAPERBOY. *Fling papers at non-subscribers, race your bicycle on people's lawns — in other words, the ultimate afterschool job.*



RAMPAGE. *Become a 60 ft. beast, demolish buildings and eat tanks as an army attempts to destroy you. Up to 4 players can take part in the destruction.*



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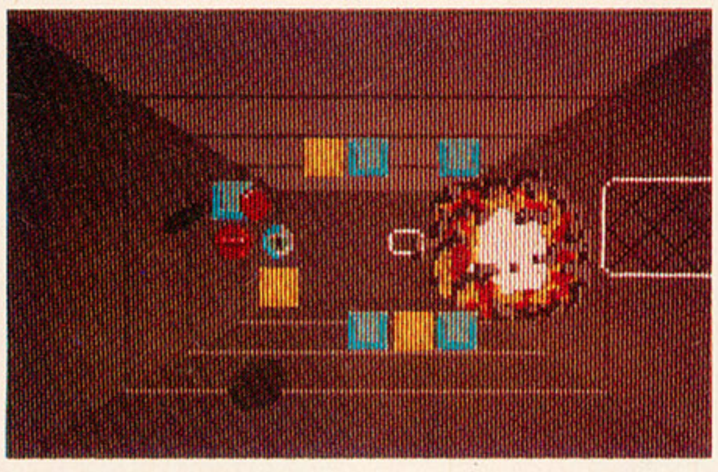
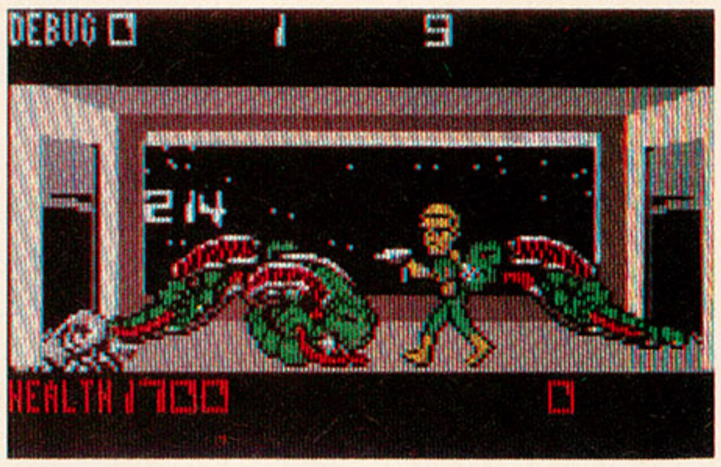
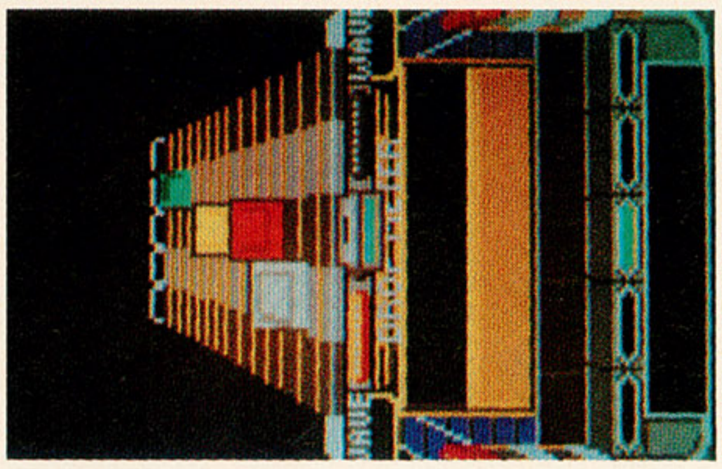


ROBO SQUASH. *The ultimate paddle game. The goal is to squash the enemy and line up four globes in a row to win. But be careful, three splats and you're out.*

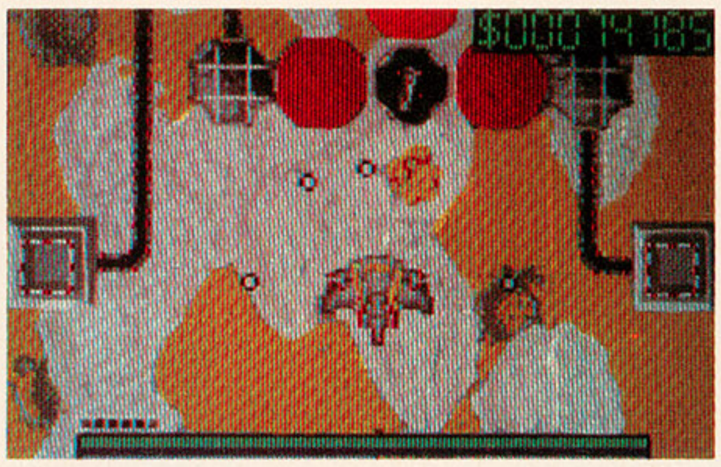


XENOPHOBE. *Trapped in a space station, you must destroy the aliens. Side-scrolling adventure for up to 4 players.*

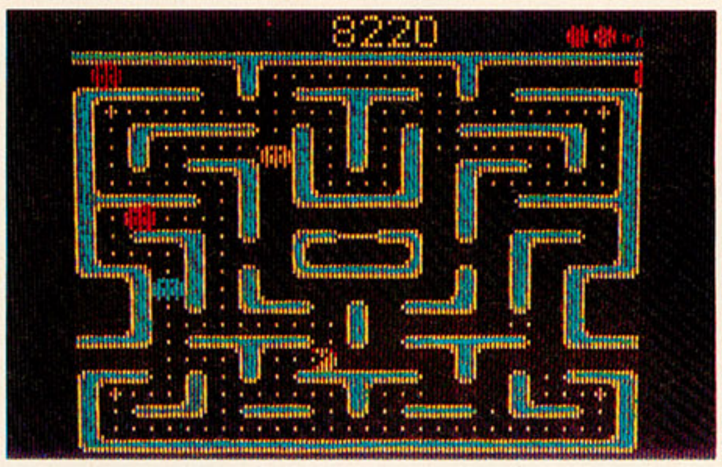


KLAX. *Maneuver your platform. Catch the falling bricks. Stack 'em for points. And try to do it all before your dad asks to borrow it.*

ROAD BLASTER. *Drive and avoid mines, exploding towers and enemy vehicles for points and make it through 50 levels. Great to play in the back of the car.*



It's a galactic shoot out between you and aliens in the 4 player game **ZARLOR MERCENARY.** *Your only hope is to kill them all or break for lunch.*



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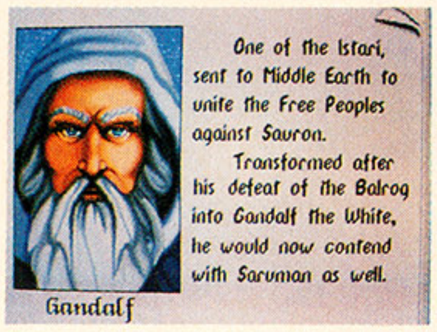

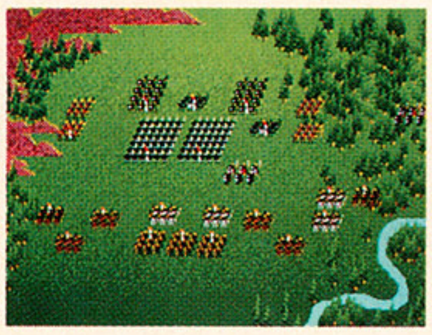

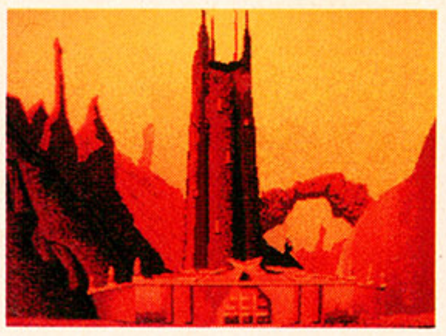

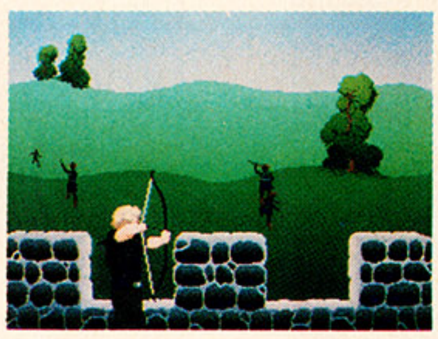

System Requirements: IBM PC, true IBM compatibles. DOS 2.1 or higher. 512K RAM, MCGA, VGA, EGA or Tandy graphics card. 5.25" and 3.5" disks available. Amiga and Atari STE. Mouse optional. Ad Lib card support.

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CIRCLE #168 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 135

best letters that hit my desk, whether they agree with me or disagree.

Actually, the number of folks with complaints, corrections or disagreements represent a small percentage of my overall mail, but those letters are appreciated just as much, and sometimes more, than fan letters. Fan letters are nice, too, however.

As for the Genesis modem, its use in Japan has been limited to banking functions. Sega of America is determined not to release it in the States until there is a solid base of software to make use of it.

And thanks for the *Space Invaders* info, to you and *all* the readers who were good enough to explain the process to me. Now if only I can find a working *SI* machine to test the theory.

question

Is it true that both Nintendo and NEC have 32-bit machines in the making?

—Jae Keh
Rivervale, New Jersey

answer

While it is possible that either or both of those companies have some sort of 32-bit system prototype in development, the reality of the marketplace dictates that we aren't likely to see them in the immediate future. Nintendo is finally getting ready to unveil its SFX machine (a/k/a the Super Famicom) in the United States, and it would be suicidal for them to then announce yet *another* technological upgrade. NEC could perhaps make the jump more easily, but we haven't heard so much as a peep indicating that it will do so in the forseeable future. And, although you didn't mention them, Sega also steadfastly denies that they are making a 32-bit system.

Besides, most of the games we've seen so far for the 16-bit systems are just better-looking and -sounding versions of the same games that we've been playing for years on the 8-bit machines. Then there's the fact that home video-game systems are already beginning to run up against the brick wall of existing TV technology.

Until HDTV (High Definition television) comes along, video-game graphics will only go so far before they exceed the ability of the TV set to generate the detailed images the system can create.

question

I'm the type of person who enjoys playing two-player games such as *Double Dragon.* I was wondering why there are no simultaneous two-player games for the Apple IIc?

—Phil Meier
Watertown, Wisconsin

answer

Two-player games have become something of a rarity on *all* computer systems. This probably stems from the fact that computer gamers overwhelmingly play solitaire. Most computers are set up at work stations designed for use by one person, as opposed to video games, which connect to the family television and therefore invite multiplayer participation. Also, the lack of sprites on the Apple II series computers may make it difficult to produce more than one player-maneuverable character on-screen at any time.

question

I would like to know why when people speak of the Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 systems they refer to them as "16 bitters" even though the TG-16 is not a 16-bit system. I would also like to know why there is a "16" at the end of TurboGrafx-16. Is it to trick people into thinking it's a 16-bit system? [Finally], how can I find out the sales of both systems so I may see which is doing better in sales?

—Steven Everett
Lenoir City, Tennessee

answer

While it's true that the TurboGrafx-16 doesn't use a 16-bit CPU, it *does* employ a 16-bit *graphics* processor, hence the title. The sales figures on these systems are closely guarded information but as of press time, the Genesis seems to be enjoying a significant sales lead over the TG-16.

Q & A QUICKIES

• To the various readers who wondered if Genesis cartridges contain both English and Japanese text, the answer is yes, most, if not all of them, do. Which explains why Joe Sou of Bellflower, California, gets his text for *Forgotten Worlds* in Japanese on his Mega Drive system. With this system, the same ROM boards can be used on the American and Japanese systems. We've even heard that some of our more adventurous readers have managed to evoke the Japanese text on their American game systems.

• Patrick C. Williams of Woodbridge, Virginia, has read that VG&CE readers with computers and modems can reach us online. This is true; VG&CE can be found on DELPHI, and any messages for yours truly can be sent through Delphi electronic mail to user ID SUBWAY.

As usual, we have many more Qs than space to answer them. Please remember that the Doc isn't staffed to provide personal answers to your questions, even if you enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. So just send along your questions, comments and corrections, and we'll all hope for the best, okay? Send your letters to *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. Until next month, stay healthy and may all your gaming troubles be little ones!

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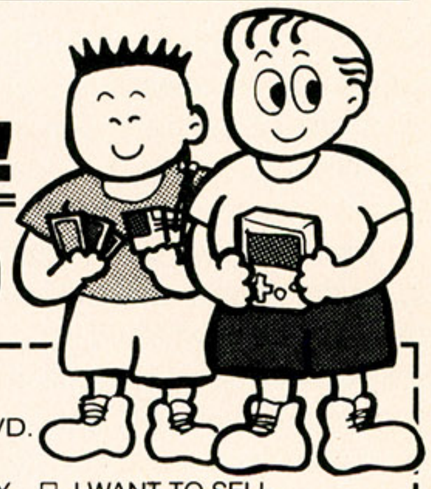

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continued from page 174

and should keep the gamer busy blasting baddies for many frantic hours.

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Hoyle's Book of Games, Volume 2: Solitaire

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SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
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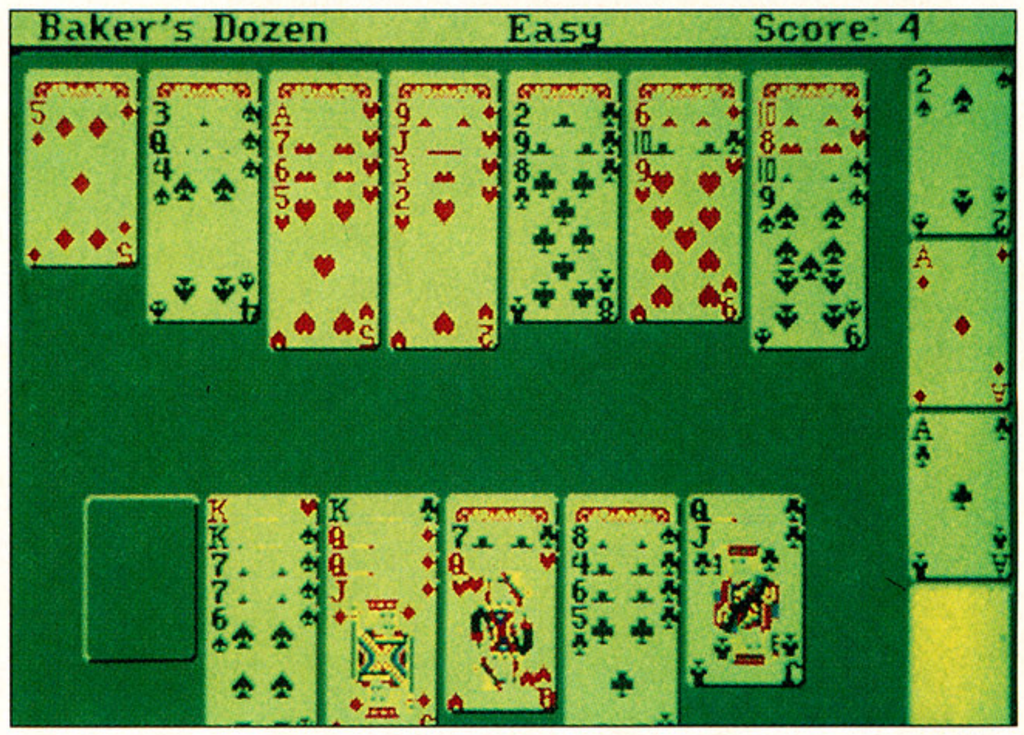
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

The copy on the box cover calls designer/programmer Warren Schwader "the ace of electronic card games." Whether you think this is corporate hype or truth in advertising, it is on the record that Schwader is the author of such outstanding compu-card titles as *Hi-Res Cribbage* and *Hoyle's Book of Games, Volume 1*.

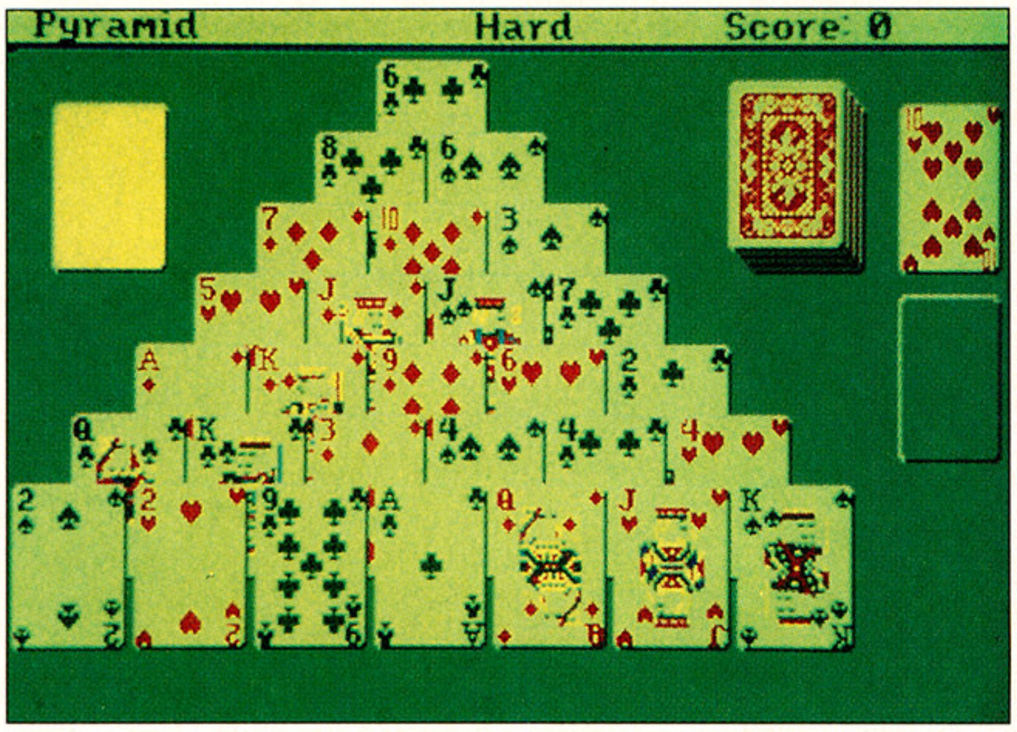
Doctor Deck is back with a new collection. This time it's a selection of 28 versions of solitaire. There are the familiar Klondike and Pyramid, plus some more esoteric solo challenges like Nestor and Spiderette.

The rules for each variation, well-written by Bridget McKenna, are offered in the printed documentation and through a pull-down menu on-screen. The electronic presentation is especially good. It divides the rules for each game into nuggets of information that can be quickly assimilated. The user clicks on a section once he or she grasps its meaning; doing so either summons the next section or aborts the teaching process.

The user selects the version and difficulty level with the mouse or arrow keys, depending on system configuration. The user controls the actual play through the keyboard, joystick or mouse. The latter's point-and-click methodology is probably the most natural in a game of this type. When he completes a round of solitaire, the gamer can choose to quit the program,



***Hoyle's Book of Games, Volume 2: Solitaire,* released by Sierra On-Line, doesn't try to dazzle with special features and eye-popping effects but is simply an excellent card anthology.**



play another round by the same rules or pick a new version.

The art team, which included James Larsen and Jerry Moor, as well as the designer himself, deserves credit for the easy-to-read card images and brisk animation. The overall graphic approach diverges significantly from the one taken by many rival programs in the last two years.

Hoyle's Book of Games, Volume 2: Solitaire doesn't try to dazzle with tons of special features and eye-popping special effects. It avoids the "splashy stuff" that some card sharks find annoying over the course of a long play session in favor of extreme user-friendliness and hassle-free operation. While there's enough animation of the cards during the deal and in the execution of the computerist's commands to maintain interest, you never get a feeling that some glitzy routine is holding up the pace of play.

Rob Atesalp's music is good, especially during the betting sequence. A pull-down menu lets the user mute the sound and music if desired.

Hoyle's Book of Games, Volume 2: Solitaire is an excellent card anthology for one-player fun. Its quality is worthy of its famous name. What more could a card fancier want?

—A. K.

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Winning a Bride for the Prince of Persia

BRØDERBUND
Versions: Amiga, IBM PC

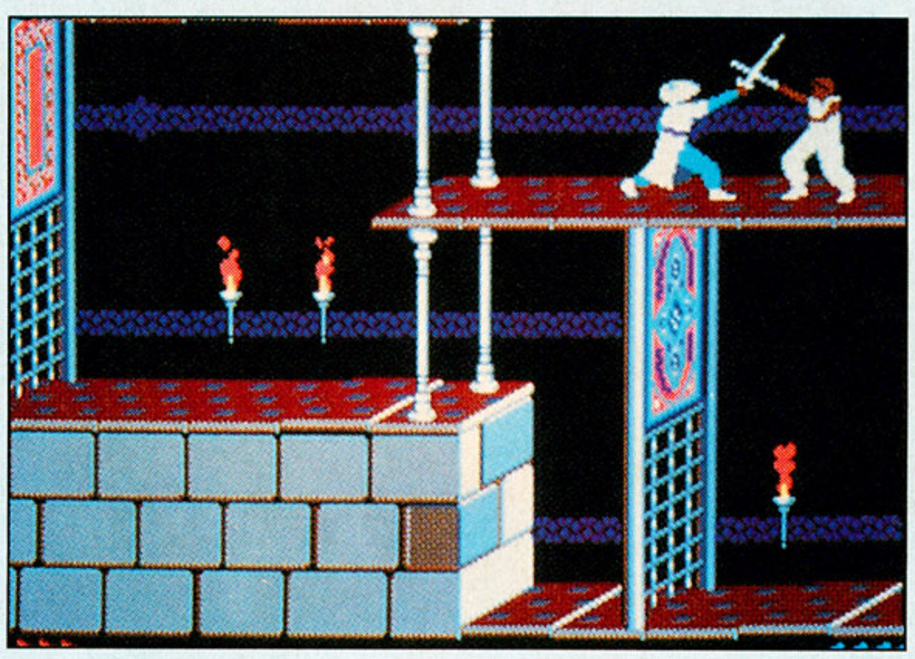
Jordan Mechner, author of the award-winning computer game, *Karateka*, brings another challenging action-adventure, *Prince of Persia,* to questing gamers everywhere. This time, the evil Grand Vizier Jaffar has imprisoned the Sultan's daughter high atop the palace and threatens to kill her in one hour if she does not consent to marry him. Trapped in the lowest dungeons of the palace, players must battle their way through the puzzle-ridden maze of rooms in an effort to rescue the lovely princess before the sands of time expire.

Once *Prince of Persia* begins, the player should concentrate on practicing the moves until they become second nature. When jumping up to or down from a ledge, remember to *hold* the button down until the adventurer reaches safe ground above or has ground below his feet to fall on. When trying to jump a chasm, always use the careful walk mode to step right to the edge before instituting the jump move.

After you have made it into the air, always press the button, just in case you don't make it to the other side. This will cause the adventurer to grab the edge on the other side. Next, press up on the stick to climb to safety. Remember not to release the button until our hero climbs to safe ground.

At the onset, your character has no weapons, and it's necessary to find the sword quickly in order to proceed against the Sultan's guards. On this first level, immediately head left until the sword is obtained. Once you have it, return to the right to face your first adversary.

Brøderbund's *Prince of Persia* takes the player on a mission to save the Sultan's daughter, who has only an hour to survive the imprisonment of her captors.



Sword fighting is challenging and takes a bit of practice. The guards on the first two levels are not that smart, which allows the player a chance to get used to the maneuvers. Start by pressing up to draw the sword and stand still. The enemy will advance on his own. Swing the sword to get an idea of exactly how far the thrust reaches. The *second* the enemy steps within this range, hit the button. Once hit, the enemy will retreat outside this range temporarily. Continue in this manner until the guard is killed.

In the upper levels, the guards move in and swing at the same time, rendering this strategy obsolete. To counter this, once the guard swings, press up on the stick to block his thrust and immediately hit the button to retaliate with a jab of your own. This tricky maneuver is the best way to destroy the enemy.

While exploring the dungeon, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. One is to always walk with a light foot. If a floor board looks slightly different from the rest, it's probably a trap. To check this, jump up and down and watch the board. If it moves, it is a collapsing floorboard and you should leap over it.

Other boards open gates that allow players to move on. The trick to remember here is that a gate-opening floorboard is not always located near the associated gate. If you come upon a gate that is closed, try backtracking to earlier rooms, keeping a close eye on the floor for a board that may have been missed.

Another good strategy is to drink all potions in the first few games and take notes on their effects. For example, all blue potions take away one energy block, while

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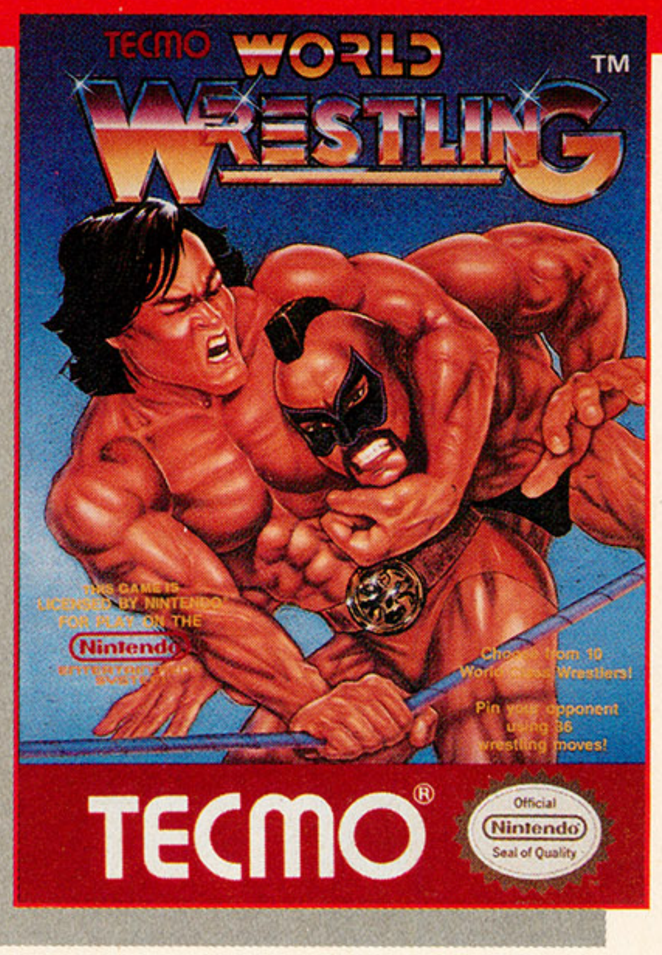

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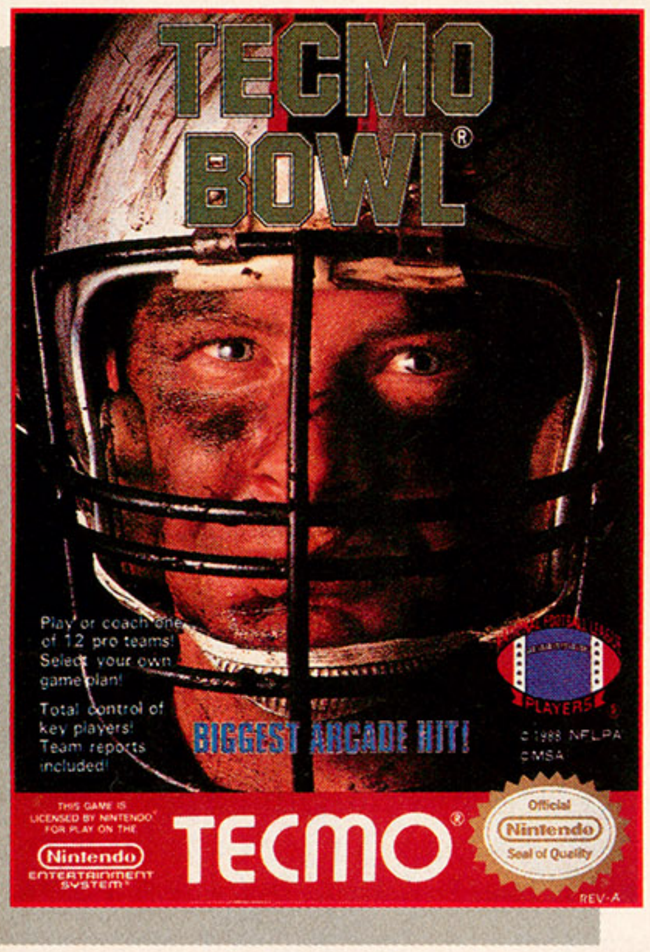

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all red ones add one. The rest of them are for you to figure out.

Finally, if you should come across a locked door or a section that seems to have no solution, try backtracking, carefully checking each room along the way. Oftentimes, there will be a ledge overhead that was missed the first time, or even a collapsing floorboard that was jumped over when it should have been knocked out and climbed down instead. The general rule here is leave no stone unturned.

After all, a Sultan's daughter is a terrible thing to waste!

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Whipping Through the Housecleaning in Castlevania

KONAMI
Versions: Amiga, Commodore 64, IBM PC

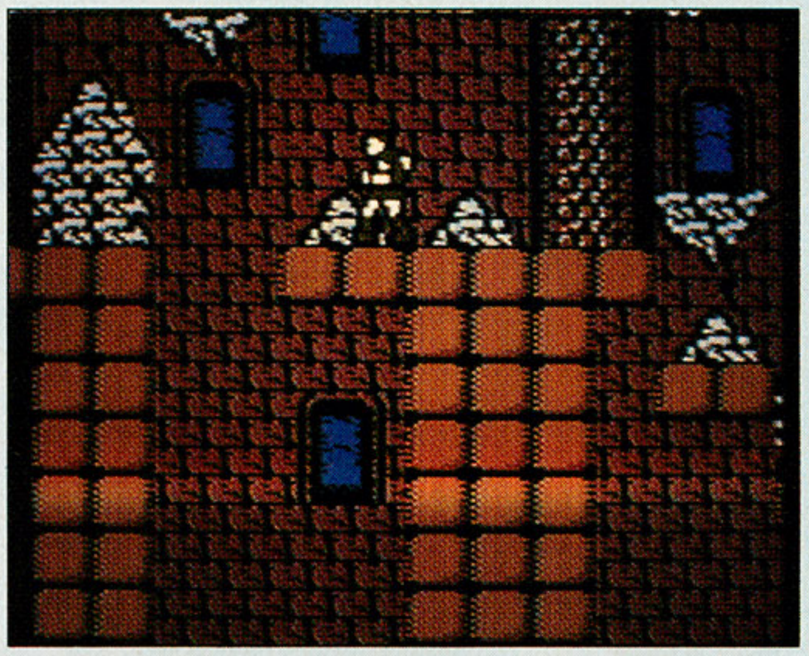
The player assumes the role of the infamous vampire killer in Konami's computer version of the popular NES hit *Castlevania*. The mission: Infiltrate the lair of the deadly nightstalker, defeat his legion of ghouls and make way to the castle's tower to face the Count himself!

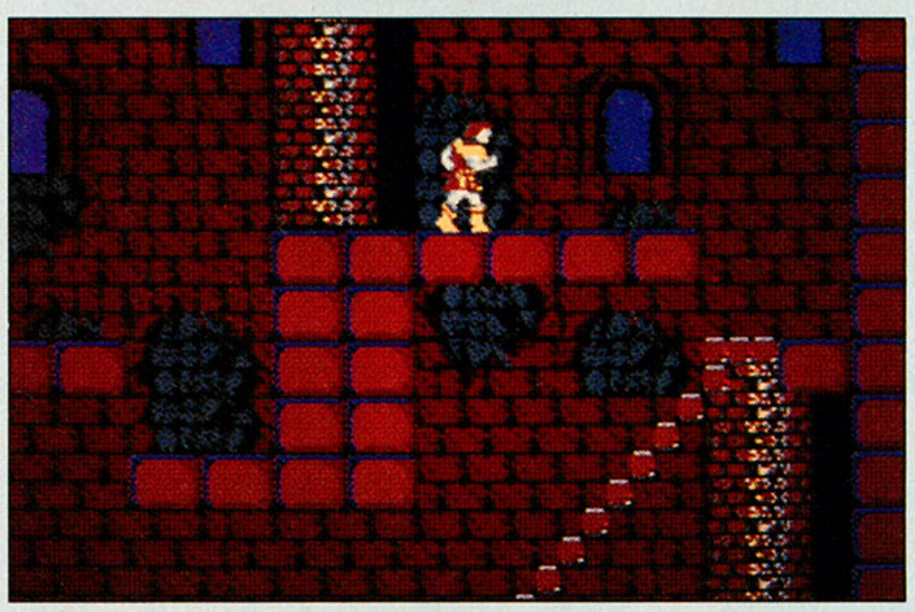
The secret to success in Castlevania is to leave no stone unturned. Valuable treasure and important weapons are often found in the most unlikely places. As you walk along, whip anything that's on the wall or along the floor. This includes plant pots, candles, stones and even brick walls. There's frequently a candle hanging high on a wall or above a staircase. This almost always hides something valuable. Get to these by jumping up and whipping as you pass by.

Keep on the move. If our hero hangs around in any one place too long, demons close in faster and faster from both directions. To keep from stopping, learn to jump and whip those high objects or enemies as you run along. This takes some practice to get the timing right, but it really pays off.

It's very important to learn to use the weapons available. The whip is extremely effective if used correctly. Remember to strike out at anything in an attempt to find the morning stars. This item will increase the effectiveness of the whip a great deal. It is also a good idea to build up hearts early so that once a special weapon is obtained, it can be used at will.

The dagger fires straight across and, aside from being faster than the whip, offers no other advantages. The axe is a good weapon to have when fighting objects that attack from the air. Keep in mind that the axe flies upward quite a bit before heading forward and is therefore not a good choice against ground enemies. The boomerang is the best weapon for the ground ghoulies, since it can take out any number of them at once and returns to nail anything it may have missed on the first pass.





Most enemies encountered in Castlevania are destroyed with a single crack of the whip. Others take two or even three shots to go down. These tougher ghouls include the knights, the Medusa heads, axeman and any other ghoul worth over 1,000 points.

When dealing with these beasties, it's best to attack from a distance. Try to position our hero on a platform below the enemy. This way, you can jump up, throw the specialty item and land out of the way of the enemy attack.

Continue in this fashion until the creature is destroyed Should a room not contain any platforms, remember to attack with a specialty weapon and get as much distance as possible. Use the whip only as a last resort (if the special item runs out). It's not powerful enough to kill these creatures quickly.

At the end of the major stages, our hero is confronted with a boss ghoul who must be vanquished before the player may proceed. When battling these creatures, there are two things to keep in mind. First, use any special weapon you have acquired. Each does considerably more damage than the whip. The gamer can tell when he or she has hurt the enemy by a beep that sounds every time one is hit in the right spot. Second, observe the enemies' flying pattern and look for where they dive up or down. In other words, look for safe zones where you may move and attack from without being rammed. This is important, since direct contact with a high-ranking ghoul can be very hazardous to one's health!

—F. T., Jr.

Konami has brought the strategy of its successful NES game to computers with *Castlevania*, which will land you in a battle against the evil Count Dracula.

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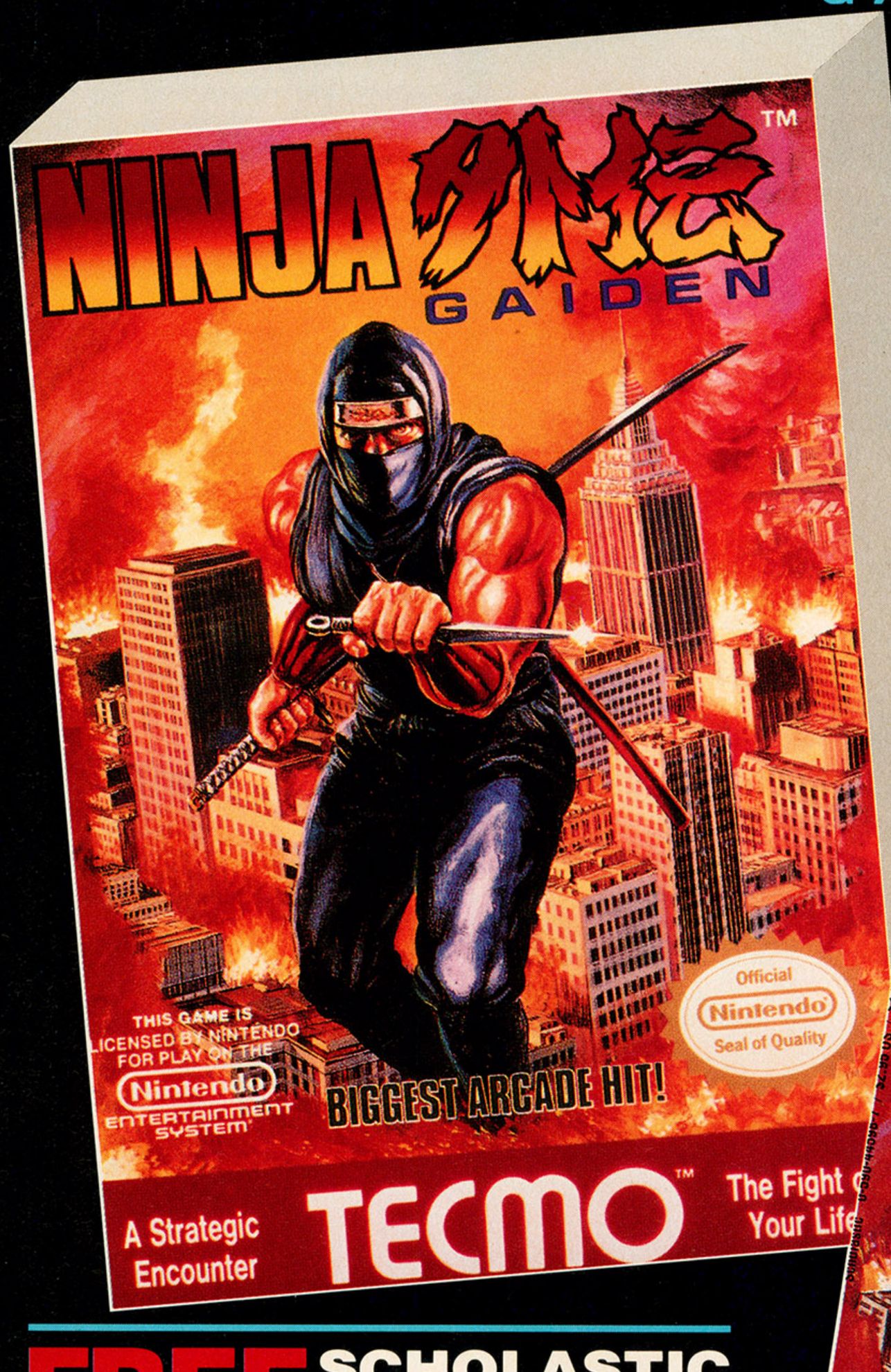

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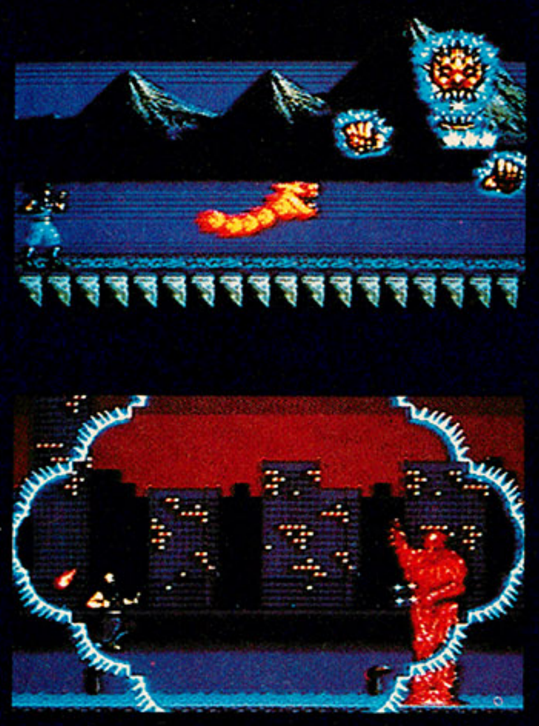

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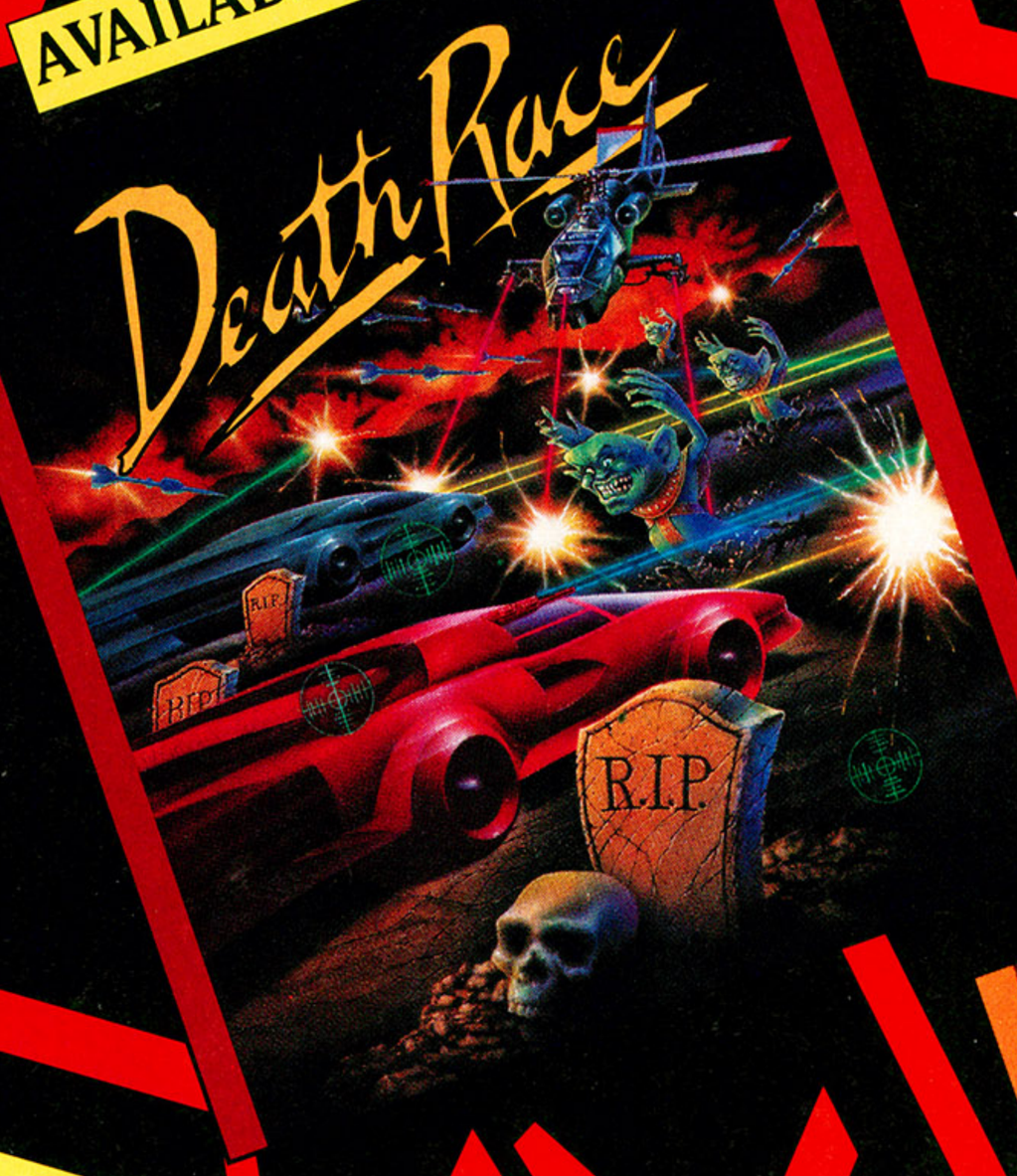

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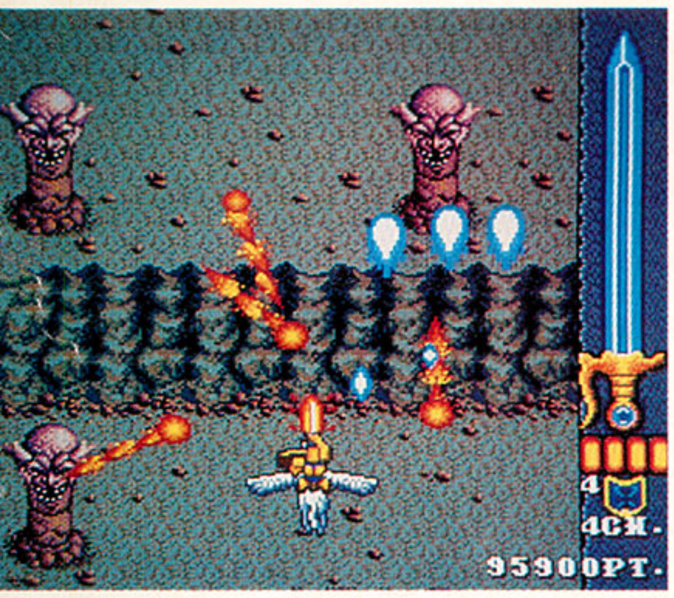

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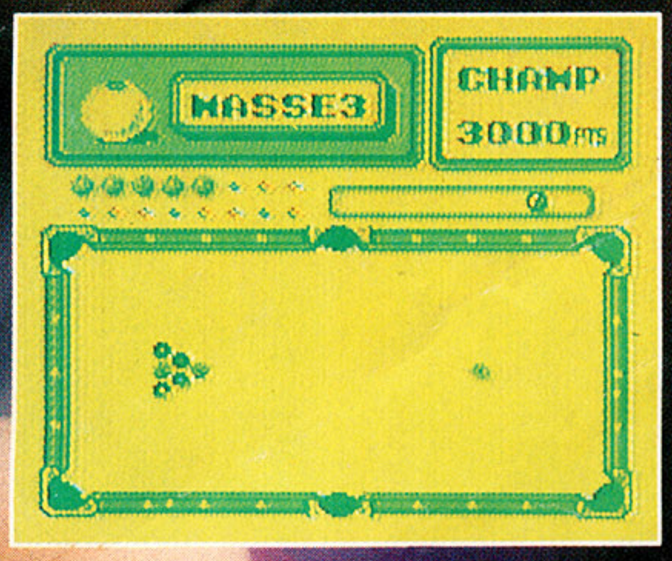

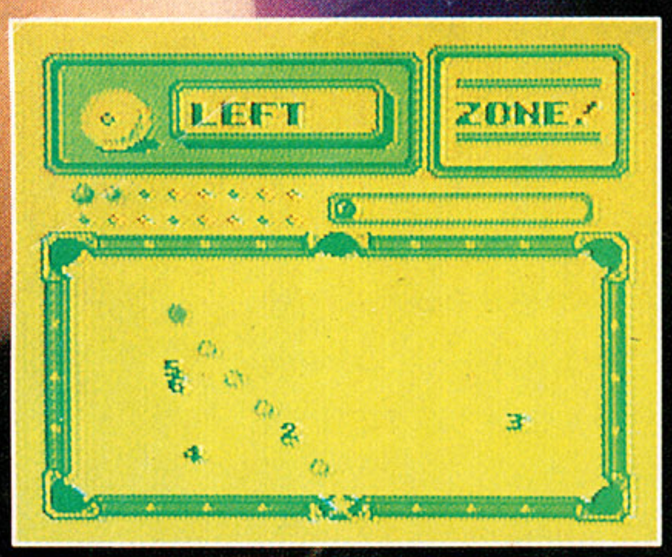

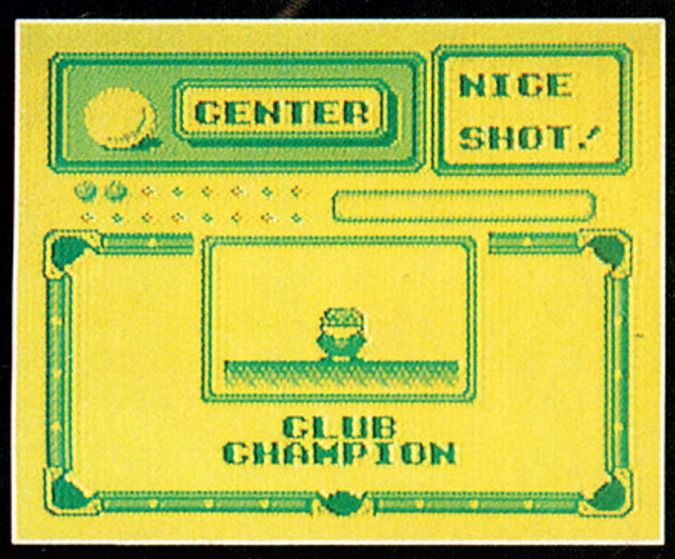

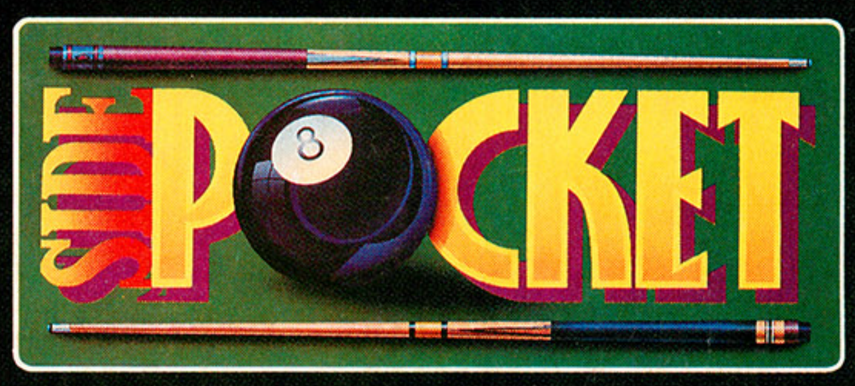

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