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December 1991

JOE MONTANA AND SEGA TEAM UP FOR MORE GENESIS FOOTBALL, AND THIS TIME... IT TALKS!

Survey of Gridiron Games

CONTESTS!

VI[illegible]G-16 SYSTEM

FROM NEC

GET YOUR PICTURE

IN A COMIC SCENE

FROM ACCLAIM AND

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MAPS AND TIPS:

Nintendo's *Star Tropics, Part I*

Accolade's *Star Control*

12
0 74369 50080 8

THE FIRST GAME THAT TAKES 1500 YEARS TO SOLVE.

Somewhere there's a bull without horns.

Keeps underarm deodorant companies in business.

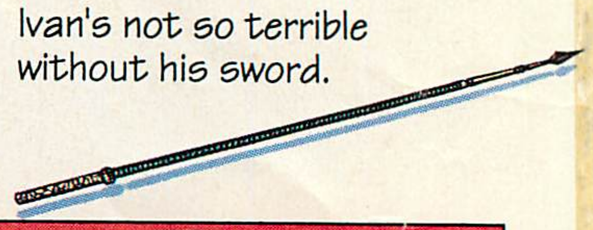
400 500 700

You'd be unhappy too if you'd been sitting indian style this long.

800 900 1100

Carmen Sandiego goes cruising.

Ivan's not so terrible without his sword.



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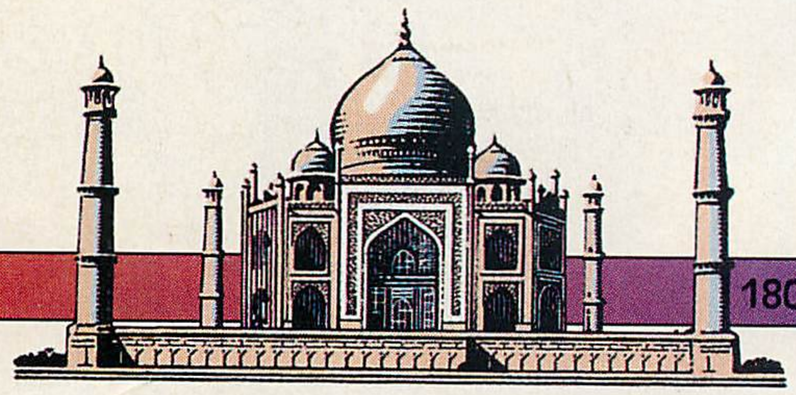
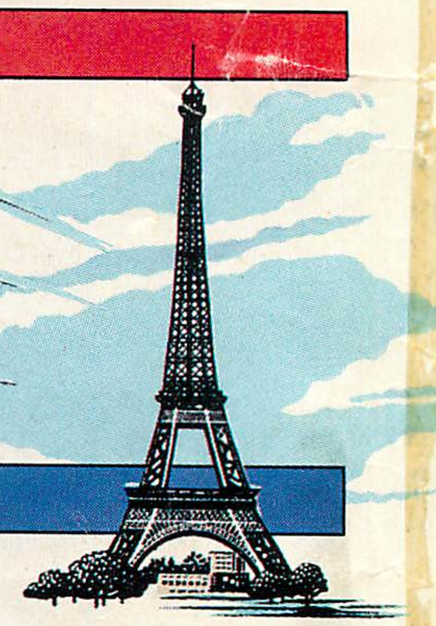


Spirit of ~~St. Louis~~ Sandiego



1600 1800 1900

But that may not be enough time to rescue history's priceless treasures from the grasp of the infamous Carmen Sandiego and her fifteen conniving cohorts. V.I.L.E. henchmen who trek through time pillaging for profit.

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Fortunately, you'll also have a Capture Robot in your arsenal to hunt down history's time bandits.

So pack your bags and report to headquarters. You're about to learn how to follow in the footsteps of history's greatest criminal.

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Now Available for the NES™

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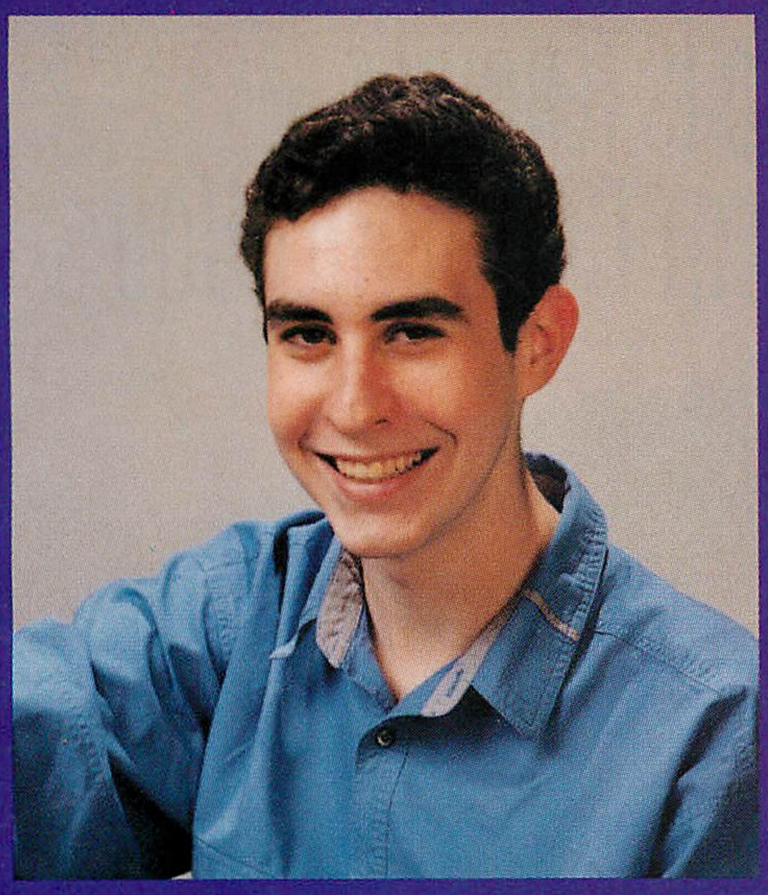

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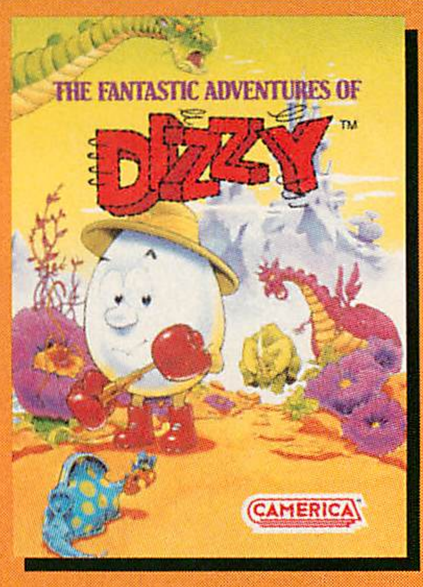

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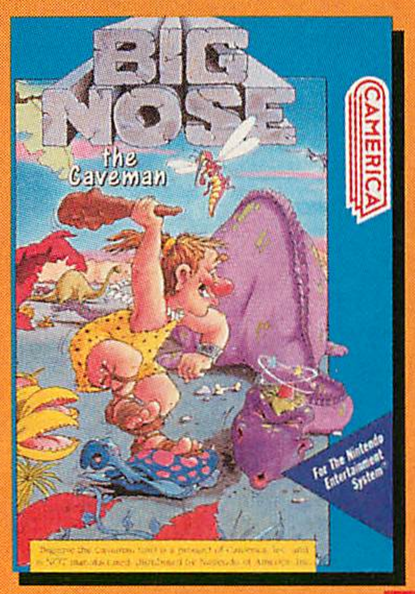

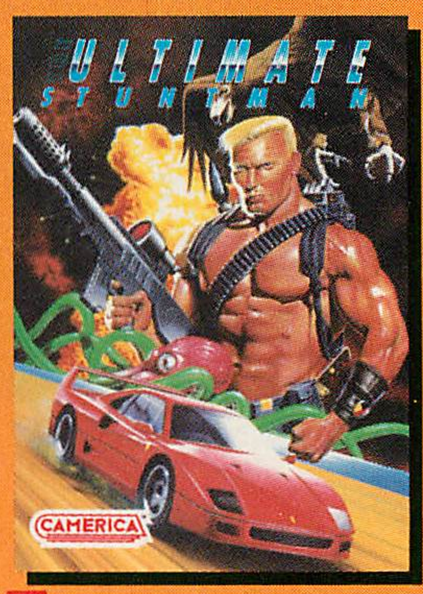

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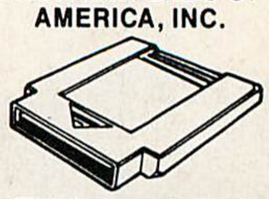

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Aye, matey. Pirates! is a Caribbean cruise that even the infamous tourist Bluebeard would find treacherous.

Negotiate for treasure maps and the hand of a beautiful maiden.

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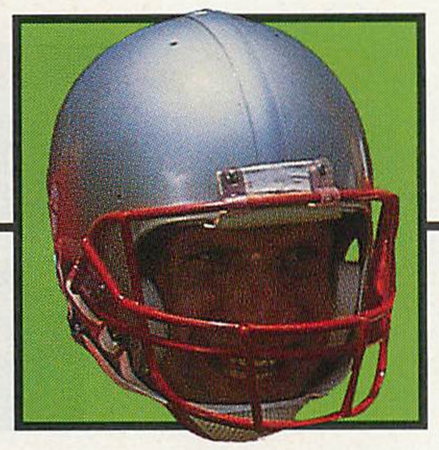
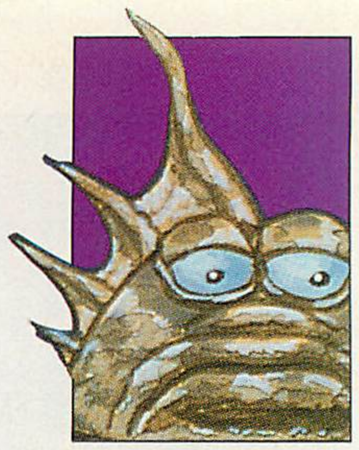
CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Joe Montana may be sitting on the sidelines this season, but he's back on the electronic gridiron. Turn to page 42 for a review of Sega's *Joe Montana II Sportstalk Football* for the Genesis.

Cover Photography: ©1991 Jay Silverman

Contents





DECEMBER 1991

FEATURES

69

THE 1991 BONK AWARDS

Prepare to butt heads again! Enter our random drawing and tell us who or what deserves to be "bonked." You could win a TurboExpress, TurboGrafx-16 and more!

79

THE WOLVERINE BERZERKER SMIRK CONTEST

Show us you best "Berzerker Rage" face and you could win a Nintendo Entertainment System, LJN's Wolverine *video game and other exciting prizes!*

80

STAR CONTROL PLAYER'S GUIDE

by Clayton Walnum

Help save the Alliance as our video-game strategist shows us how to conquer the "final frontier."

102

STAR TROPICS PLAYER'S GUIDE, PART I

by Clayton Walnum

In the first part of our player's guide, we'll take you on a tour of Coralcola and help you get past the first few levels of Star Tropics.

112

THE 1991 PIGSKIN PREVIEW

by Bill Kunkel and Arnie Katz

Another exciting year has gone by for electronic-gridiron entertainments. Join our pigskin experts for all the inside plays.

134

VG&CE'S ANNUAL GIFTS FOR GAMERS

by Joyce Worley and the VG&CE Editorial Staff

It's holiday gift-giving season again. We've compiled a list of some of the most useful electronic-gaming enhancements available, in order to help you decide on a gift for the gamer on your shopping list.

166

THE 1991 PHONE BOOK

by the VG&CE Editorial Staff

Trying to get ahold of your favorite electronic-gaming company? We've updated last year's list to keep you informed.

DEPARTMENTS

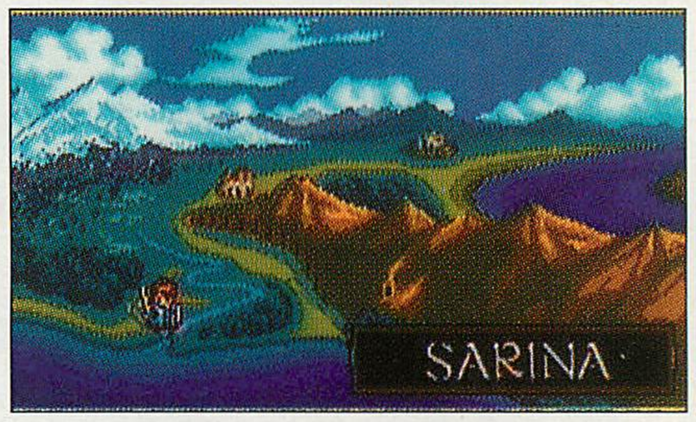
EDITOR'S LETTER 6
READER MAIL 10
TIP SHEET 16
NEWS BITS 22
EASTER EGG HUNT 32
GAMING ON THE GO 90
DESTINATION ARCADIA 122
FANDANGO 140
INSIDE GAMING 142
GAME DOCTOR 144
ADVERTISER INDEX 152
COMPUTER STRATEGIES 160

REVIEWS

42

VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS

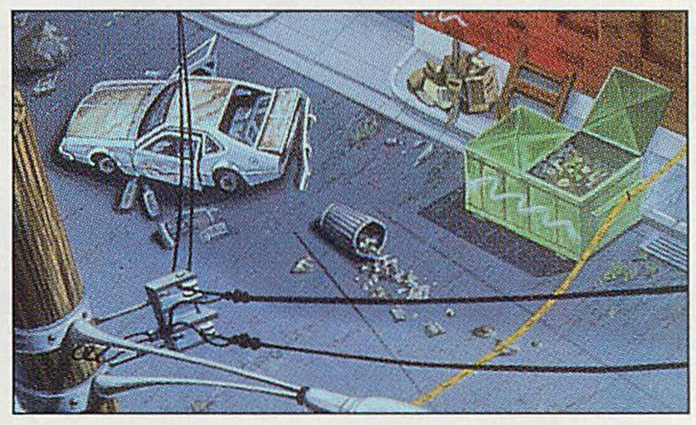
Joe Montana II Sportstalk Football, Ys III: Wanderers From Ys, Pool of Radiance, André Panza Kick Boxing, Shadow of the Beast, Ufouria—The Saga, Outrun, Quad Challenge, Davis Cup Tennis, Captain Planet and the Planeteers, Motor City Patrol, Fatal Rewind, Cadash, Mercs, Impossamole, DecapAttack, Uncharted Waters *and* Super Bases Loaded.



148

COMPUTER-GAME PREVIEWS

Ultima VII: The Black Gate, Police Quest 3: The Kindred, Wordtris, Martian Memorandum *and* Earl Weaver Baseball II.



150

COMPUTER-GAME REVIEWS

Castles, Medieval Warriors, B.A.T., Cybergenic Ranger: Secret of the Seventh Planet, The Many Faces of Go *and* Cyberblast.

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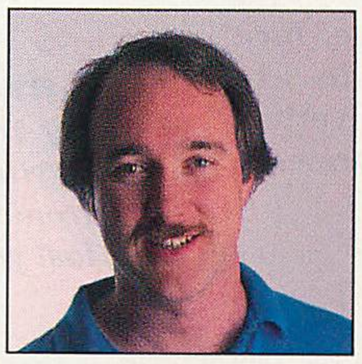
LETTER From the EDITOR

In my normal routine of preparing each issue of VG&CE, one task is writing this column. It gives me a chance to vent about the state of the magazine, the industry or just what's rattling around in my brain. Sometimes it's hard to come up with a good one; others it's quite simple. Hopefully, each issue I have you entranced with my writing, but I'd be happy to just have you read it.



The first thing that came to mind this month was the fact that this issue marks the end of VG&CE's third year of publishing. For that, I have to thank all the contributors over the last three years, as well as you readers. As always, we're looking to improve and grow, and your comments are always welcome. The address is at the lower-left of this page. We'd love to hear from you, good or bad.

The other subject starts with a newspaper article that came across my desk just this morning. The top story on the front of the September 27, 1991, *San Jose Mercury News* says, "Nintendo's Latest? Call it Living Room Lotto." The story details how Control Data is planning a test program involving 10,000 NESes and the Minnesota state lottery commission. How do the NES and a lottery get mentioned in the same story, you ask? Well, Nintendo was approached to have its NES hardware used as the driver behind in-home lotto-number selection.

According to the newspaper article, people will be able to set up an account and select their numbers for the week's drawing on their TV, using the NES and custom software. Any wins will be credited back to the account (though large wins would still need to be picked up in person).

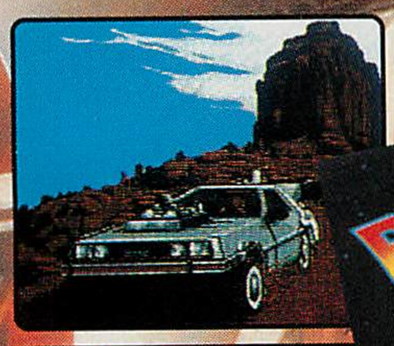
First of all, before I'm accused of slamming Nintendo here, I'm not. Nintendo has a right to work with third parties in an effort to sell machines. That's fine. And lest I be tagged as a puritan, I've done my share of gambling, both in state lottos and in Las Vegas. (Kids, don't try this at home; leave it for professional losers like myself.) I won't soon be quitting my VG&CE to make a living on a blackjack table.

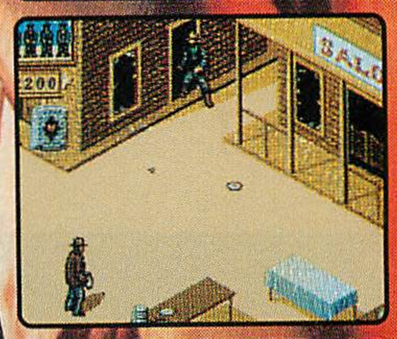
I find the concept of playing on account to be dangerous, because some don't know when to quit, though I don't know all the details at this point. However, I find it somewhat risky to juxtapose video games and gambling. Our industry is taking enough heat already over the issue of whether video games are becoming too risqué or violent—I don't subscribe to that, by the way, and will continue to defend electronic games as a great recreation. Something like this will only open the door for more extremists to take potshots, even if they aren't warranted.

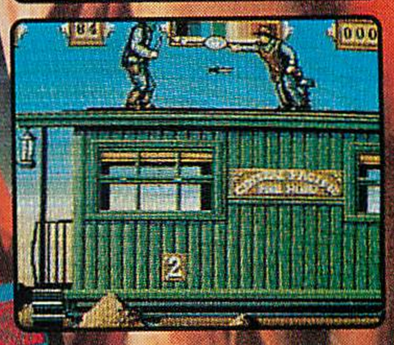
To change the subject, there's one more thing: Happy holidays.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

YOU'VE GOT 100 YEARS TO GO AND NO TIME TO LOSE.







Based on the box office smash, Back To the Future Part III takes you to 1885 for more shoot 'em up arcade action than fireworks in a campfire. Marty McFly must save Doc Brown and Clara from "Mad Dog" Buford and his band of black hats without becoming history before his time.

3-D graphics bring the Wild West to life with overhead views, side views and first person perspective. Use your quick-draw skills to score points in the Shooting Gallery. Sling pie trays at bad guy Buford and his thugs. And take control of a speeding trap-laden locomotive to help get the DeLorean up to speed and back to 1985.

The tombstone maker's getting an itchy chisel finger, so unless you want your future written in stone, you better move fast. Get Back To The Future Part III today!

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Play True Golf Classics with the Power of Polysys!

TRUE GOLF CLASSICS™

Step up to True Golf Classics. A breakthrough, 3-D golf simulation made possible with the power of Polysys. With 16-bit digitized graphics. A full, 360-degree view. And action so real, you'll never take your eye off the ball.

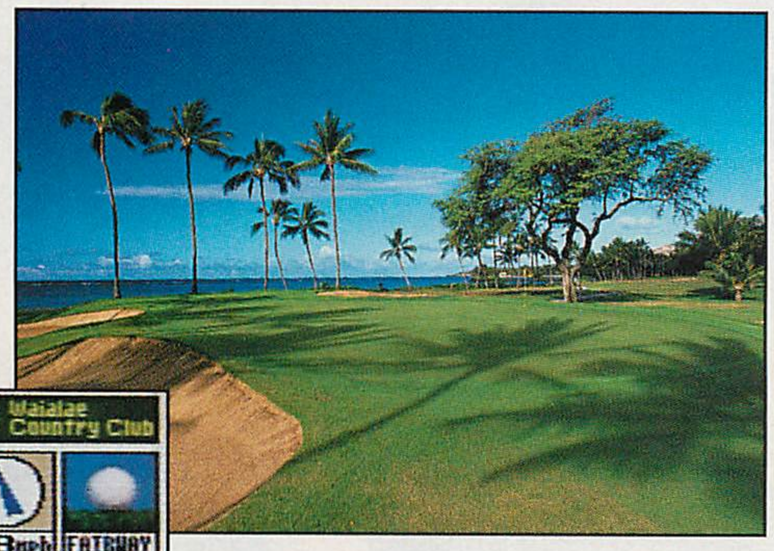
Take It On Tour.

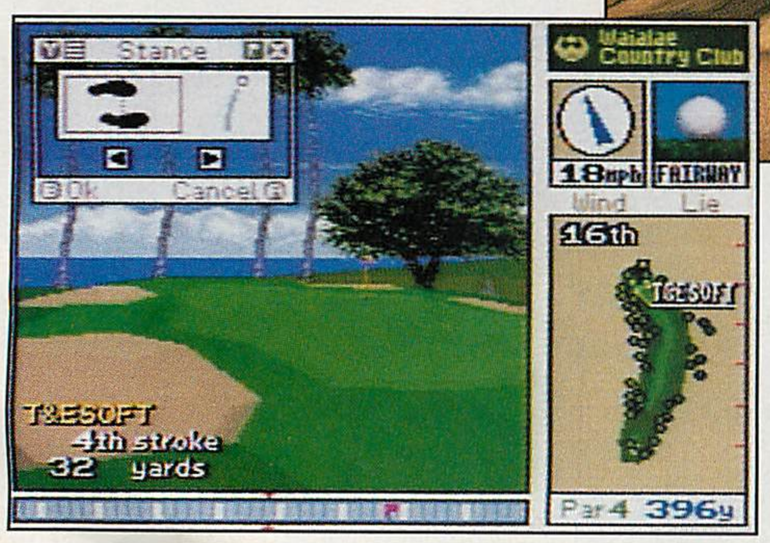
Forget those fantasy holes other games dream up. True Golf Classics takes you out to an actual PGA course: Waialae Country Club, home of the United Hawaiian Open.

Nothing Else Even Comes Close.

It takes a true stroke of genius to make a golf game this easy to learn yet so challenging to master.

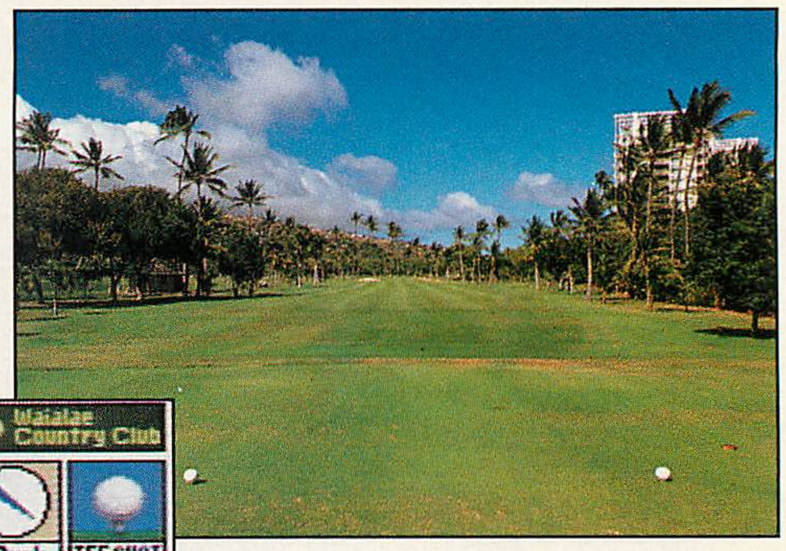
Greater Control: Hit big off the tees. Blast out of the bunkers. In True Golf Classics, every ball flies, and lies, just like it would in the real game.



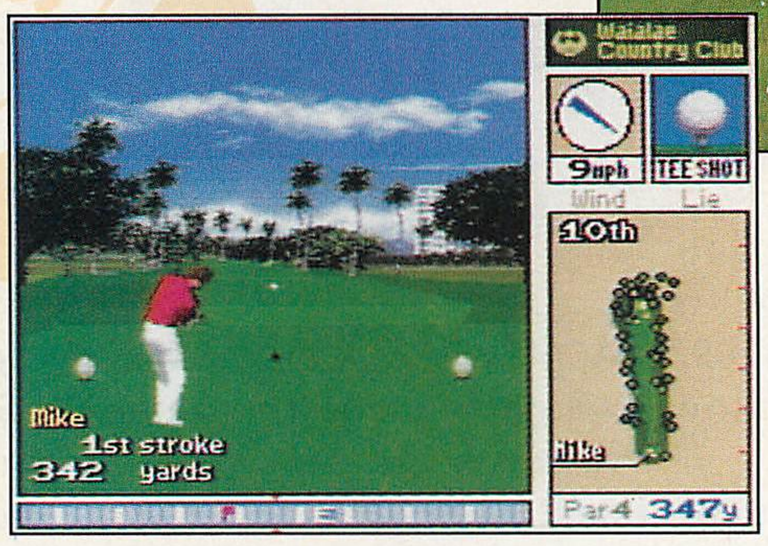


#16: The wind's in your face on this par 4 dogleg, so you'll need the right touch on the ball to get close to the pin.

Superior gameplay: Look at your shots from eye level or zoom up to the overhead view. Use the 3-D grid to get an accurate read on how the ball breaks on the greens. Want to see how much you've improved? True Golf Classics updates your handicap after each tournament round.

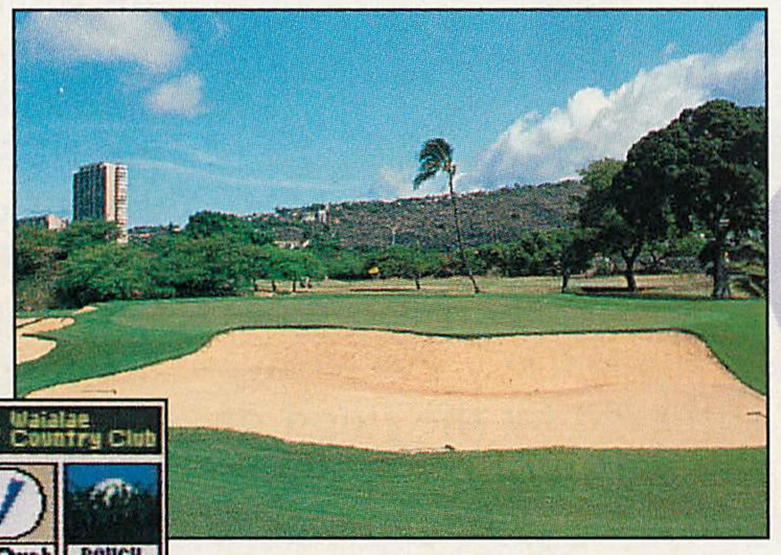


Topflight fun: No other golf game gives you this much. Full-color Course Guide helps you sharpen your game with inside tips from Waialae's head golf professional.



#10: Play it straight off the tee on this 347 yard par 4. Break out your driver to set up an easy approach shot.

#7: A tough par 3, with multiple bunkers and three-level green. You'll have to fine tune your stance to stay off the beach.



Official Waialae scorecard *includes* the course layout to help you map out your round. And the built-in Battery Backup tracks your stats and saves your game--so you can quit when you want and pick up where you left off.

True Golf Classics. It's true golf reality.
Down to a tee.

The Ultimate Reality
Win a week for two in Hawaii in the True Golf Classics Sweepstakes!*
(See the True Golf Classics package for more details.)

T&ESOFT™

TRUE GOLF CLASSICS™

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

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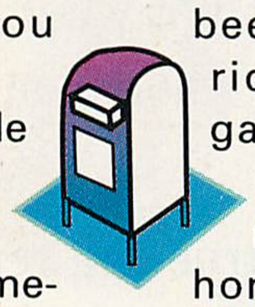
BRING BACK THE MAC

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to congratulate you on this magazine. I have been receiving VG&CE since April 1989, and have enjoyed the magazine more than any other.

When I got my first issue of VG&CE, I was pleased to discover that your magazine covered Macintosh. I happen to own a Mac IIcx. Then you stopped covering Mac, and I was discouraged. Somebody wrote a letter inquiring about why you were not covering Mac. You replied there was not enough software. Now I feel that there is enough software and that you should bring back the Mac.



I have seen reviews on arcade games in some other video-game magazines. I think it would be cool if you started something that gave tips and reviews on such games.

Thank you for your time, and keep up the good work.

—Kenny Royer
Cedar City, Utah

We still don't get a ton of Mac games in for review, unfortunately, but I think, in the coming months, you'll be seeing more, with some companies—primarily Sierra On-Line—jumping on the Mac bandwagon. It's still prevalent that the majority of games are released for the IBM PC and compatibles, then follow on other brands. However, many companies are seeing the market potential of the Mac for entertainment software, mainly due to the new lower-priced models.

Also, our Destination Arcadia *column regularly covers arcade games. This issue, on page 122, Donn Nauert takes a look at the new games that were shown at the ACME show. As far as arcade tips, if we get a request into our* Tip Sheet *column, we will certainly do our best to provide some assistance to you. This is* your *magazine!*

AH, THE OLD DAYS

Dear VG&CE:

Bingo! The October 1991 *Inside Gaming* column really nailed down the state of the industry. I've always been bothered by the flood of ridiculously unoriginal clone games and I was beginning to think that no one else even noticed. Oftentimes yet another horizontally scrolling shooter is released, disguised under a thin layer of fancy graphic trimmings, is hailed as the greatest new game to hit the market in years and raved over for its innovation. Yeesh. Most games these days are simply rehashes of *Scramble*, *Front Line*, *Karate Champ*, *Kung Fu Master* and *Tetris*. Some of these games are ten years old. Enough all ready!

One criticism though. The column gave the overall impression that the market is most definitely starting to get a bit stale; the hot new systems like the Super NES may be a step forward for audio-visual technology, but are completely unrelated to the development of new game concepts and ideas. I completely agree. But VG&CE's ratings don't seem to reflect this. Ninety-five percent of all reviews give fives or higher in the "overall" category. Now wait just a minute—if ten means "impossibly fun and playable," and one represents "total garbage," this means that almost all games reviewed are above average. So there are no rotten games out there? If anything, I'd say most games would fall in the lower half of the scale. At least this is what I've encountered after quite a few purchases.

I'm also not sure that the few categories used to determine a rating are sufficient. Even if another utterly playable and graphically wondrous *Super Mario* clone was released for the NES, I think that its complete lack of originality should be some sort of factor. A "concept/originality" rating perhaps?

Enough negative comments. I'm glad to see that VG&CE knows its gaming history and assumes that many of its readers do as well—as demonstrated by Arnie Katz citing *Tempest*, *Kaboom* and *Targ*. Those who never heard of anything before the NES are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to seeing the "big picture." There were *thousands* of video games written before Nintendo created its famous system, and naturally they have had quite an effect on modern electronic entertainment.

Keep up the excellent work.

—James Hague
Dallas, Texas

Arnie Katz, Joyce Worley and Bill Kunkel have all been video-game journalists for as long as there have been video games. You can count on their opinions to carry much truth. Glad you liked the Inside Gaming *column.*

On the subject of ratings, we've tried to come up with a quick at-a-

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.

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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

glance summary of a game's aspects. We've considered adding new categories, but have stuck with four—Sound/Music, Graphics, Playability and Overall—because they cover most of what players are looking for as the basic criteria in rating a game. A game like Blazing Lazers *(for the TG-16) isn't too original, but still rates high in the other categories. While no one wants to see the "same old, same old" all the time, there are times when even unoriginal concepts can be stunningly rendered.*

Keep in mind that our ratings are considering that a "10" is the best that machine can do. It wouldn't be fair to compare an NES game with an SNES game because the machines have different capabilities. A "10" on the SNES would be better than a "10" on the NES, but it wouldn't be fair to all NES owners to call a hot game like Battletoads *a "4" or "5" just because it could be done better on the SNES.*

All in all, though, we'd love to see some of the classic games brought to the latest machines. The editors pine for the day when Tempest *will be on a home machine.*

HOW DO THEY DO IT?

Dear VG&CE:

Congratulations on a great magazine. Keep up the good work.

I was wondering how Nintendo still manages to sell a reasonable amount of game cartridges. Not only that, but how has it kept its 8-bit system alive with all the "giant" 16-bit systems out there. I own a Genesis and I have owned an NES for over five years. C'mon video gamers. If you own an 8-bit and a 16-bit system, which system are you gonna think about first when you have around $50 and you want to buy a game? Is it going to be a 16-bit game with great graphics, good playability and stereo sound; or is it going to be a good, old 8-bit game? I am aware that you can buy two NES games with $50, but would you rather have: 1.) *Sonic* (if you own a Genesis), *Ninja Spirit* (if you own a TG-16), or 2.) *Wrestlemania* and *Ikari Warriors II*? What a joke!

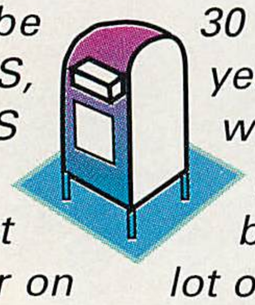
Sure, Nintendo has its own 16-bit system, but that's not the point. Nintendo's 16-bit system isn't going to save its 8-bit system. Remember, we are talking about Nintendo's 8-bit.

I know there isn't a chance in a million years that this letter is going to get printed, but if you guys want to edit it, go right ahead.

—Luiz Constantino
Bromont, Quebec, Canada

Wow, has it been a million years already? Here's your insightful letter.

The arguments you bring up are good ones, but you have to keep in mind that Nintendo has sold about 30 million NESes over the last six years, and not all of their owners will be buying another system right away. Even those who do buy other systems will have a lot of software selections to choose from for their 8-bit system. Just look through some of the ads in this magazine, and you'll see that the NES is still the hotbed of software. Heck, there are still lots of people who play with 2600s, Intellivisions and ColecoVisions, so keep that NES powered up.



MEGA MAN ROCKS!

Dear VG&CE:

I am a big video-game fan, and, although I only own a Nintendo Family Computer [the Famicom is the Japanese version of the NES], I like to keep informed on what's going on in other game systems. Brief commentary: It's true the gaming world is going 16-bit, but let's not forget the contribution of the 8-bits and the respect they deserve for revitalizing the gaming scene. When the 8-bits do go, they should go down with a bang, not a whimper. End of commentary; on with the rest of my letter.

My main intent in this letter is to complain. Don't worry—it's not about your magazine. I think VG&CE is most excellent! My complaint is directed toward Capcom.

Capcom is making a killing (in Japan, at least) with its most popular character: Rockman. He's had three Nintendo adventures (with a fourth coming up), and one Game Boy adventure called *Rockman World*. Just in case the name's not familiar, let me give you a background description. He's a blue-suited robot created by Dr. Light to stop the evil forces of Dr. Wily. That's right, gamers. Rockman is none other than the somewhat bland-sounding Mega Man. So just what is my complaint?

Why is Capcom (who is making a profit off Mega/Rockman) not giving him more exposure? What do I mean by exposure? Two things:

1.) An animated series. Imagine the impact of a well-drawn, well-written Mega/Rockman cartoon.

2.) An action-toy line. Wouldn't a Mega Man toy line look great?

In case you're wondering, I sent this letter to you instead of Capcom since more people are bound to see it if it gets published. Anyway, thanks for listening. I hope to see results soon.

—Jay Fournier
Manila, Phillipines

Yes, Jay, Mega Man is popular in North America also. With regard to an animated series, Mega Man is currently one of the featured characters on the "Captain N" cartoon on Saturday mornings, but we're not sure if it's available in your area or in the Phillipines at all. Check your local TV listings.

As far as a Mega Man toy line goes, Capcom says there are currently talks with some major toy companies, but it's still too early to say anything. Also, while the Mega Man series of games is very popular, it's quite possible that Mega Man stuffed toys aren't. Capcom notes that a Mega Man toy line isn't very likely to come about. However, Tradewest just announced that the Battletoads will soon be marketed as non-video-game toys, so keep an eye on a toy store near you.

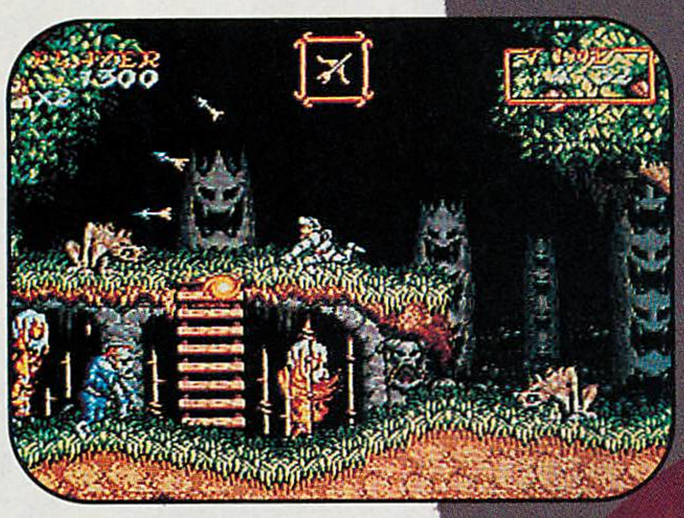
NOT THE WAY

TO PLAY THE HOTTEST ARCADE GAMES AT HOME.

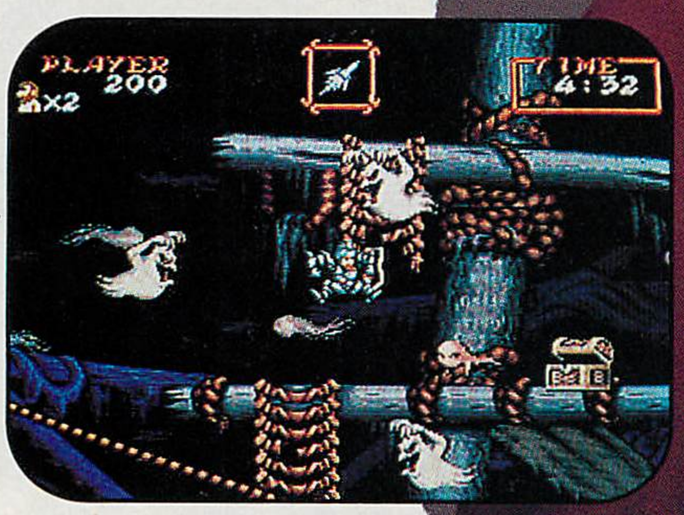
The arcade is still a way cool place to hang with your friends. But you can't always be there. You can however, play Capcom's new 16-bit games with 32,000 colors, smooth 3-D scrolling, and killer sound, while hanging out on the sofa at home. It's the next best thing to being there.

SUPER GHOULS 'N GHOSTS.

Three years ago, Sir Arthur rescued Princess Guinevere from the evil ruler of the Phantom Zone. Since then, he's acquired some very powerful weapons to defend his kingdom, in case it happens again. Well, it has. And this time, Sardius must be destroyed once and for all. It'll take every bit of magic you can conjure to escape the witches, ghosts and snapping skulls. But you can't stop until you complete your quest.



Skulls and zombies fall from the sky as the ground shifts around you—better watch your step.



Ghosts appear —and disappear on the haunted seas, use your haunted sickle and you may survive—without it, say goodbye!

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WAY

ARCADE GAMES AT HOME.

FINAL FIGHT.

The Mad Gear Gang has turned Metro City into a lousy place to live. Punks, wrestlers and swordsmen lurk in every alley, subway and behind every garbage can. They've even kidnapped Haggar's daughter Jessica. But Haggar, Cody and his friends aren't going to take it lying down.

You can help them by using every punch, throw and kick you've got to eliminate these madguys for good.

Cody's lethal flying kick is just one way to get rid of the Mad Gear Gang.

More Mad Gear Gangers await on the subway. Punch their lights out before Broadway. Or, you'll be underground forever.

U.N. SQUADRON.

Mercenaries have taken the entire country of Aslan hostage. Except for one tiny airfield they missed—headquarters of the U.N. Squadron—the best fighter planes in the world. To save the country, you'll fly the dogfight of your life, as enemy missiles and laser cannons hammer your F-20 Tigershark. Of course, you have lasers and bombs of your own. The freedom of millions depends on you, so strike hard and strike often.

At the oil refinery, the only way to slip away from enemy attack helicopters is to blitz 'em with cluster bombs.

Use your A-10A ground attack fighter's Mega Crush Weapon to dodge anti-aircraft missiles that appear from behind the trees.

CAPCOM USA

ARCADE SERIES

CIRCLE #106 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:

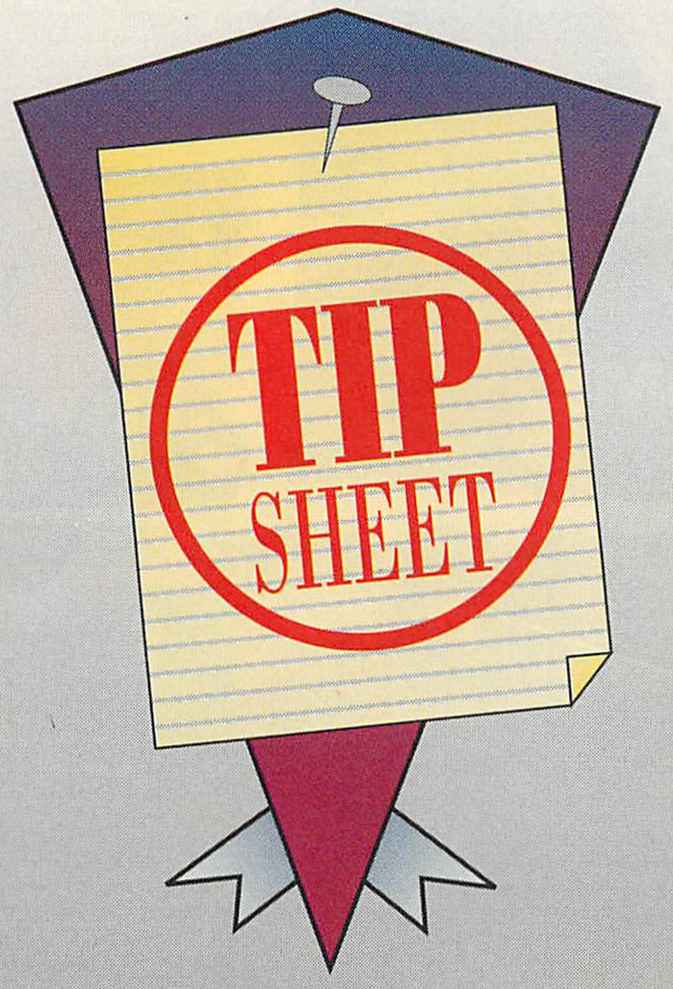
VG&CE,

9171 Wilshire Blvd.,

Suite 300

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: *Tip Sheet*



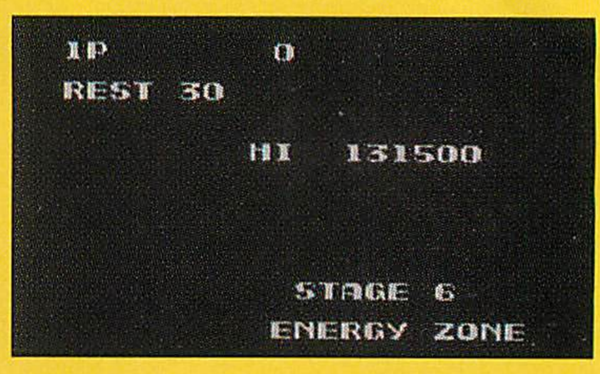
by Donn Nauert

I was told there was a way to get unlimited lives on the game *Contra*. Could you please help me? Also, on *Super Mario Bros. 3*, where do you find the third warp whistle?

—Brian Swoverland
Bristol, Indiana

I haven't heard of a way to get unlimited men, but there is a way to get 30 men at the start of Contra. *During the title screen, press U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, B, A,* ***START****. You have to be quick with this one because the title screen doesn't stay on the screen long.*

The third whistle in Super Mario Bros. 3 *can be found in World 2. As you're working your way to the castle, you should notice a rock in the upper right-hand corner. If you have a hammer, you can break the rock and enter another section with a Hammer Brother on it. Beat the Fire Brothers and you'll get the final whistle.*



I recently got *Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom*, and I'm having a hard time finding the pass into the town. Could you please help?

—Eric Simmons
Dothan, Alabama

The first thing you need to make sure you have is water, which can be found at the lake. Then go back to Percy and give him some water. Now go to the intersection of Spinach Heights and, instead of going right, go left to Melon Patch. Check the bush, then move to it. Give Prince Lettuce some water and talk to him. Now go to the passage in the fence and give all the veggies some water. You'll get a pass, at which time you want to go to the town. After the guard takes the pass, go back to Melon Patch and talk to everyone again. It's here that they'll tell you the guard will occasionally fall asleep on the job. Then you can sneak past him.

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Stranded on a deserted island by his arch enemies, Wolverine must now fight the battle of his life! Mutant powers, including regenerative healing abilities, an Adamantium skeleton and retractable razor sharp claws make Wolverine a terrifying adversary...but has he finally met his match against Sabretooth and the evil genius, Magneto? In the heat of battle, fellow X-Men® Havok™, Jubilee™ and Psylocke™ help even out the score.

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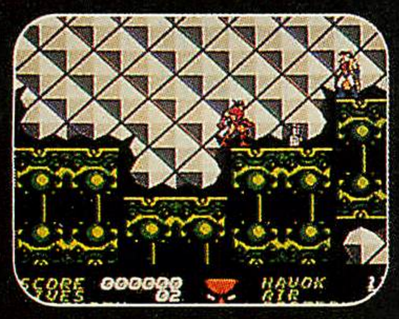
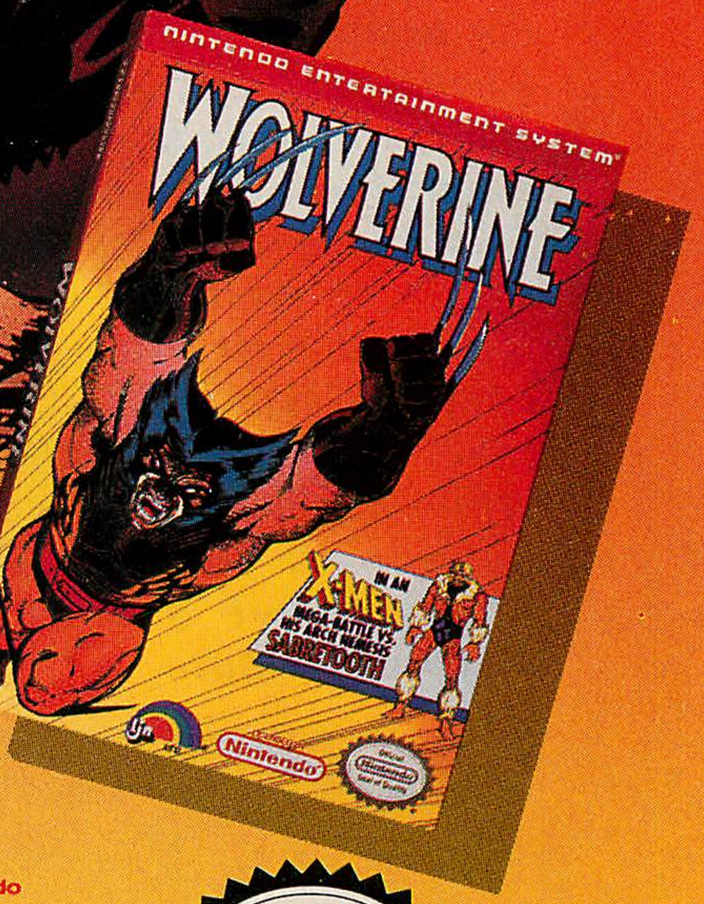


Psylocke's device enables you to call Havok when your energy is low.

Your aquatic skills keep the enemy at bay...until your air runs out.

Penetrate the impenetrable Fortress in your search for Sabretooth!

Don't be drawn in by Magneto's magnetic metal heads!



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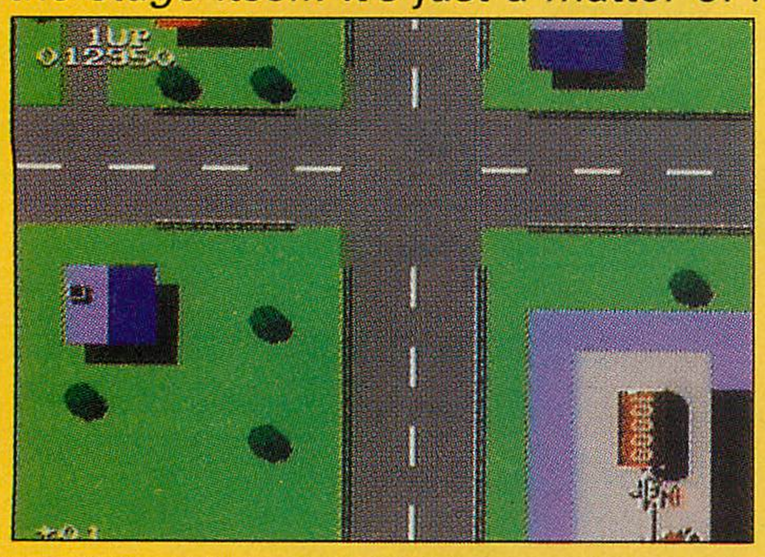
CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I'm having trouble with two games. The first is *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. I can get to the second gate, but I'm low on time. Is there a way to get more time?

The second is *Tiger Heli*. I can go through all the levels four times without reaching an end base. Is something wrong with the cart, or did I miss something?

—Pat Wheeler
Olathe, Kansas

For Ghosts 'n Goblins, *more time is allotted every time you pass a certain point within the stage itself. It's just a matter of moving quickly enough to reach the next point. By the way, there is a stage select for the game, if you're interested. During the title screen, press and hold R and then press B, B, B. Next press and hold U and press B, B, B. Then press and hold L and press B, B, B. Then press and hold D and press B, B, B. Finally, press* ***START*** *to reach the stage select.*



Tiger Heli *is one of those old games that didn't have an ending but just kept on playing, repeating the levels. To continue after you lose your last man, press A, B at the same time.*

I've been playing *Super Mario Brothers 3* for a year and I still can't find the anchor. Do you know where it may be?

—Ray Whitlock
Herington, Kansas

In order to find the anchor, you must collect a particular number of coins on a certain level in each world, and then exit. For example, in World 2-2 collect and exit with 30 coins, and a White Mushroom House will appear. This house contains the anchor. In World 4-2 collect and exit with 22 coins; in World 6-7 it'll take 78 coins for the White Mushroom House to appear. World 8 doesn't have a White Mushroom House.

I've finished the game *Y's—Book I and II*, but noticed the instruction booklet talked about some items that I haven't found. They are the Golden Vase and the Cape of the Holy Spirit. Could you tell me where to locate these items?

—Jack Warden
Atlanta, Georgia

To find the Golden Vase, you need to search the area around the lake outside of Minea. Look in the southwest corner. To find the cape, you must get to the Ice Park in Book II. As you're traveling down the stairs, after you go through the cave where you use the Mist, you'll notice an unusual blue spot to the right of the stairs. You can go to that area and walk through the wall to find another hidden treasure chest. This one contains the cape.

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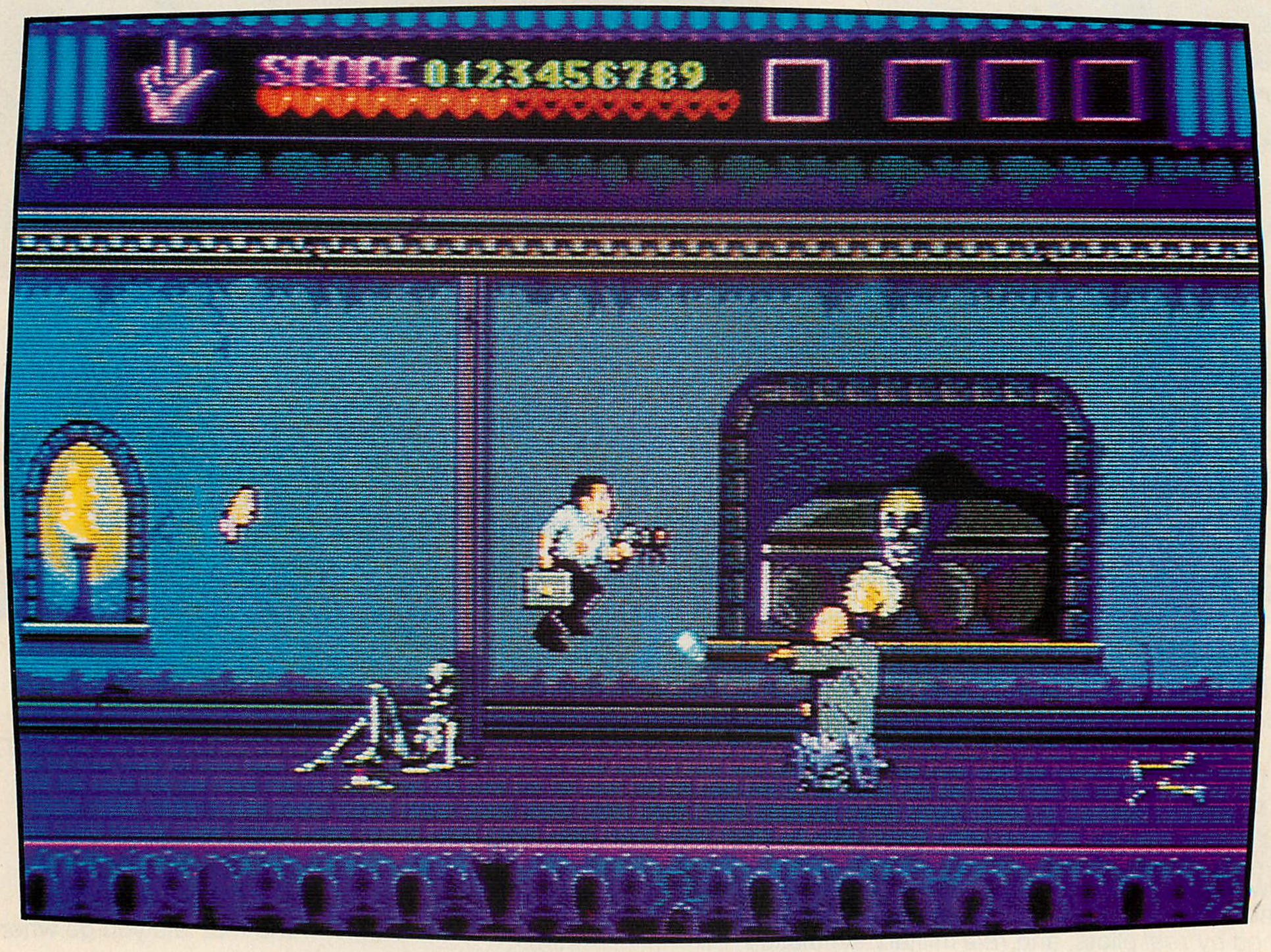
CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

JUST TRY TO BEAT

The Addams Family™



Fester's memory is shot. And so are you if you're not careful.

AT THEIR OWN GAME.

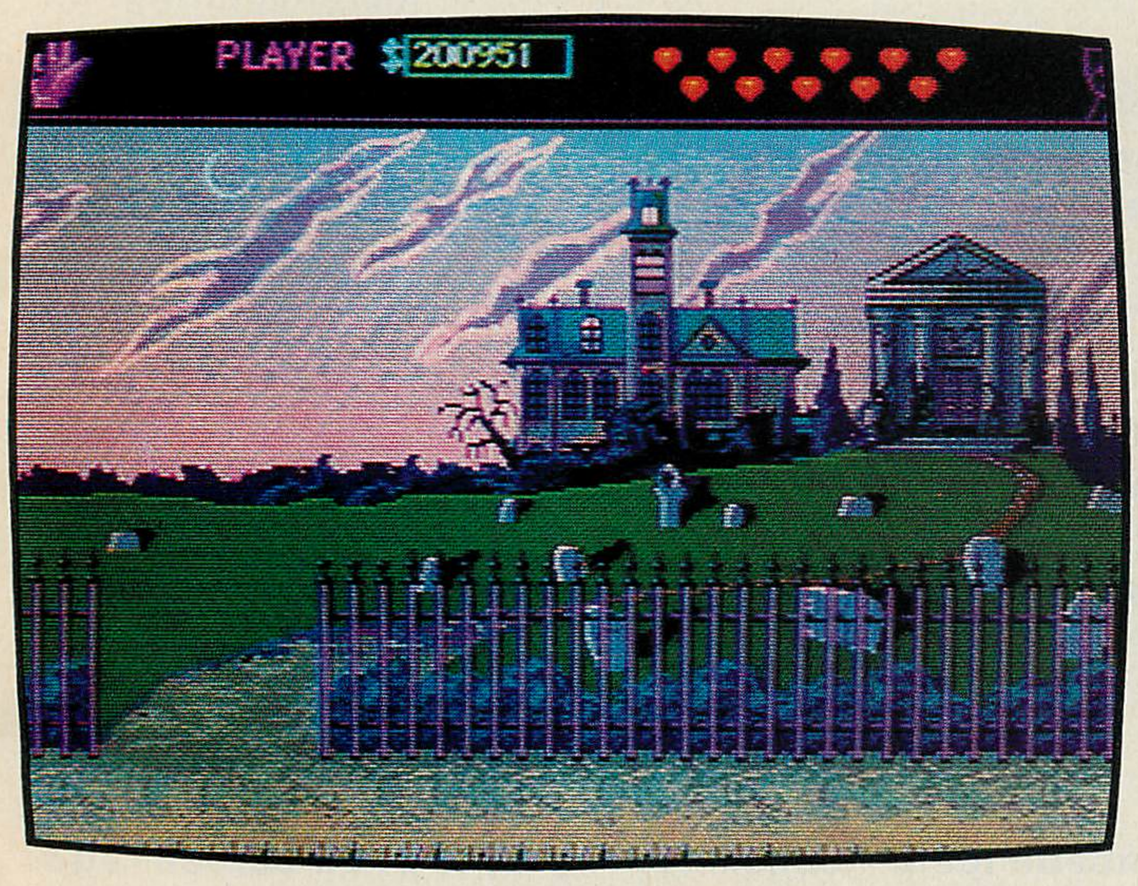
You're Tully. You're a lawyer. And you're a goofball. At least that's what the normal all-American family, the Addams Family, thinks.

Luckily Gomez thinks you're O.K. He'll give you part of his treasure, that is, if you can outwit his eccentric clan.

Get ready for surprises as you search through their sprawling 30-room mansion. Some family members will give you clues. Some won't! But don't expect Thing™ to lend you a hand, or Pugsley, for that matter. He's got a chemical arsenal waiting in his diabolical lab. It could be an explosive situation.

In this game, the stakes are high. Defeat Gomez and the treasure's yours. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. You might fit right in.

Gomez sharpened his sword. Fester loaded his shotgun. Thing even got a manicure. Let the games begin.



Now's the time to decide. If you want to play it safe, don't even go through the gate.

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FREE CD+G DISC

Free music CD + Graphics sample disc inside specially marked TurboGrafx-CD players.

TURBO 16 GRAFX™

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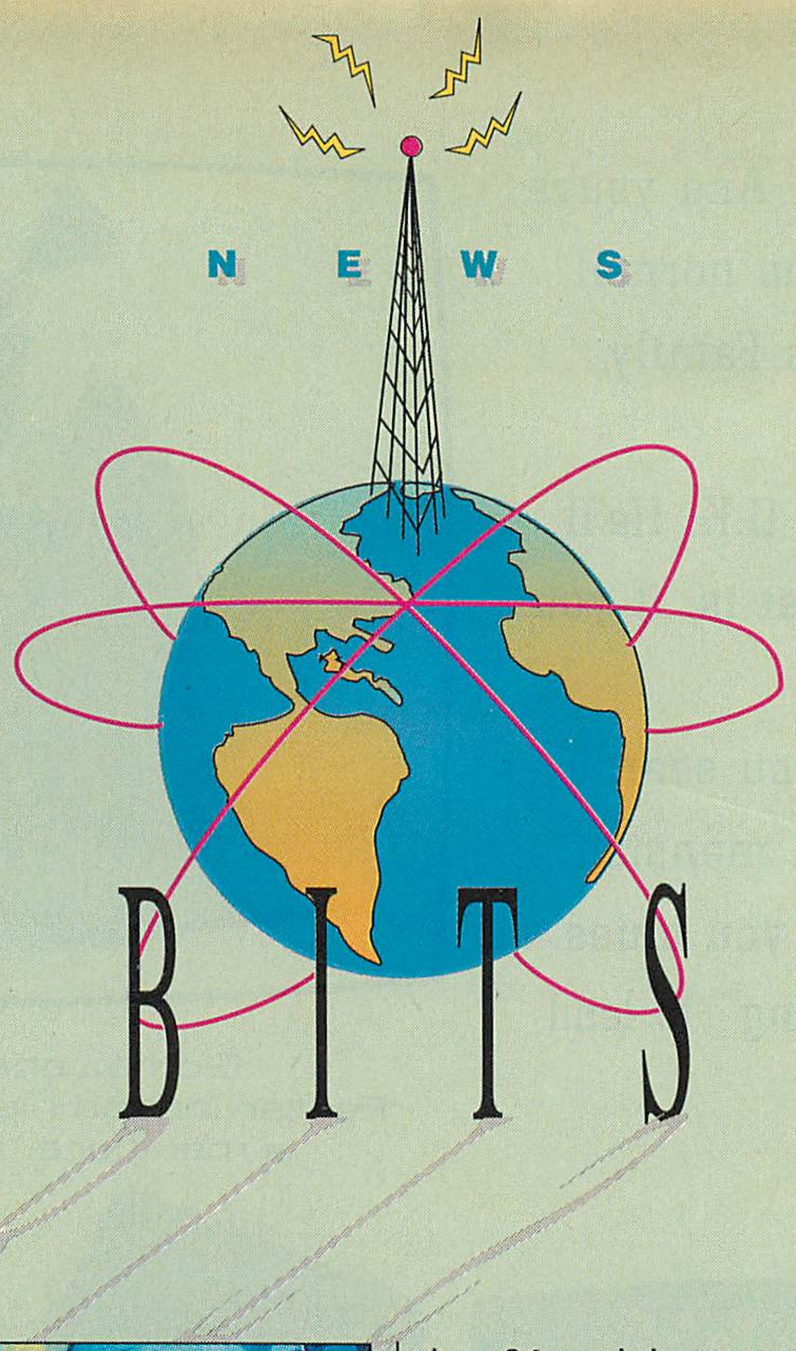
COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



Microllusions to Meet Mediagenic in Court

July 8, 1992, has been set as the date for Microllusions to meet Mediagenic-Activision in court. The game company is suing Mediagenic for $10 million in the Superior Court of the State of California.

A Microllusions spokesperson alleged "gross mismanagement of contracts" and further claimed that Mediagenic's poor handling of product distribution resulted in losses to Microllusions.

No statement has been forthcoming from Mediagenic as of this date.

Space Quest gets VGA Face-Lift

Sierra went back to the art department and came up with a new graphic treatment for *Space Quest I*. *Space Quest I VGA: The Sarien Encounter* (IBM PC) has

been thoroughly modernized, with new VGA graphics, full-stereo soundtrack, special sound effects and lots of new puzzles, plus more animations and a new point-and-click interface.

The game is available on five 3.5-inch or 5.25-inch disks, direct from Sierra.

The company also announced plans to update many of its classics, such as *Leisure Suit Larry*, *Police Quest I* and *Quest for Glory I*.

Lucasfilm and JVC Launch Star Wars Video Game

Scheduled to hit stores in November, Lucasfilm and JVC will be celebrating the NES release of *Star Wars* by offering free morning screenings of the hit movie.

The screenings will take place during the Christmas holidays, between December 21 and January 5, in ten selected cities. Tickets for the event will be available by calling (900) 933-R2D2. There is a maximum of two tickets per caller and kids under 12 must ask their parents to call for them.

First Independently Manufactured NES Cartridge Completed

Acclaim became the first independent licensee to manufacture their own NES cartridges this year, and the first game was completed at the end of the summer of 1991. *Smash TV*, a video game for play on the NES, was the first game completed. Up to this time, all NES-licensed software was manufactured by Nintendo, in Japan.

Rob Holmes, Acclaim's president, explained the significance of this: "With the flexibility domestic manufacturing provides, we are able to speed turnaround of products to market. As we expand the number of titles manufactured in the U.S., we hope to achieve additional cost economies in the future."

The manufacturing process was handled by Key Tronic Manufacturing, an Acclaim subcontractor.

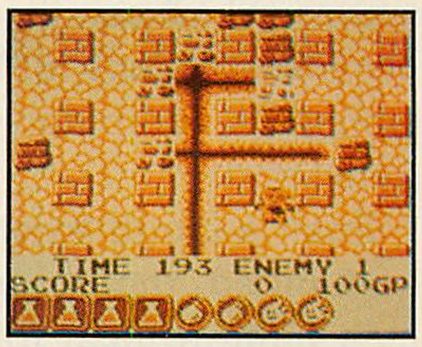
Company Takes Bow With Product for Atari XL/XE

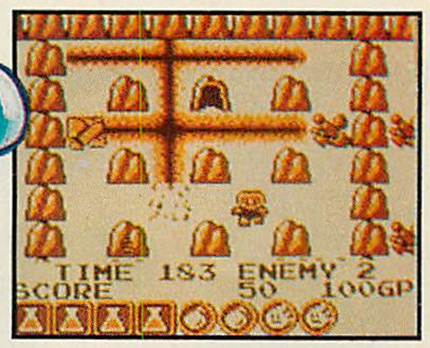
Old computers never die, they just develop faithful user groups. Aerion Software is debuting its first commercial product, *Fury: The Wrath of Taljun Cathu*, which features 100 rooms scattered through five worlds: Tree, Stone, Alien, Insect and Fire. The player's on-screen ego must defeat the "Keeper of the Key" found in each world, then unlock the door to the room containing the Guardian of Passage, in order to reach the next world. Objects encountered include treasure chests, coins and food, as well as many hostile creatures.

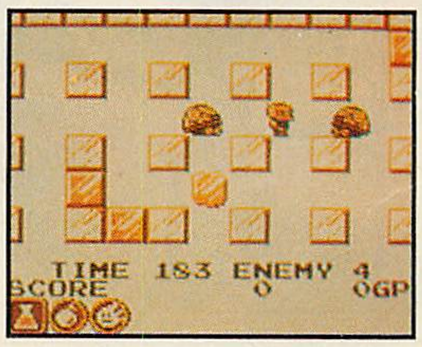
The game, scheduled for release for play on Atari ST, Amiga and IBM PC computers early in 1992, is now ready for the XL and can be ordered directly for $19.95.

Aerion Software
P.O. Box 1222 Riverdale Station
New York, NY 10471-1222

The Nuke Kid on the Block!







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OFFICIAL GAME LINK GAME PAK

Atomic Punk™

Get bombarded by three blockbuster games in one!

First, blast into action as Atomic Punk, crusader for the invaded world of Atomica. Buy and sell your weapons to build up an arsenal that's powerful enough to blow the raiding aliens right off the map!

Next, dive deep into the planet as Bomberman!

Atomic Punk's dad is reactivated to root out the enemies from the core of Atomica. Gather power-ups, bombs and more to make him an unstoppable force!

Finally, challenge your friends to an Atomic Punk showdown. Hook up two Game Boys with a Game Link cable and watch the sparks fly! Find out who's the most explosive kid in town with this 2-player action game!

HUDSON GROUP
HUDSON SOFT®

HUDSON SOFT USA, INC.
400 OYSTER POINT BLVD. SUITE 515
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080

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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Digital Camera Enters PC Picture

The Fotoman Digital Camera for computers is the latest innovation from Logitech, already well known for its mouse controllers and image scanners. The small camera takes 32 indoor or outdoor pictures, which can then be downloaded to any IBM PC-compatible computer with a serial port.

Small enough to shoot one-handed, the Fotoman has a built-in flash for inside shots and a filter to improve the quality of out-

door ones. The user can take instant gray scale photos for many applications, including illustrations for gaming newsletters and recording of high score screens. Fotoman requires a 286 computer with *Windows 3.0*, serial port, one megabyte of RAM and a graphics card (EGA or better). No digitizing board is needed. *Fototouch* software lets the computerist crop, enlarge and enhance Fotoman pictures.

Council Supports Multimedia Standards

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) has established the Multimedia PC Marketing Council to educate consumers about the emerging technology and to promote the Multimedia PC platform to independent software publishers.

The council has introduced the "MPC" trademark to identify hardware and software that follow its previously announced multimedia personal computer standards. According to a spokesperson for the Multimedia PC Marketing Council, the "MPC" trademark will be used much like the "VHS" designation in the videocassette field, to indicate plug-and-play user-compatibility.

Among the games that have received permission to carry the MPC symbol are: *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* (Brøderbund), *Battle Chess* (Interplay), *SimCity* (Maxis), *The Case of the Cautious Condor* (Tiger Media) and *Murder Makes Strange Dead-Fellows* (Tiger Media).

Spend an Afternoon With Sierra On-Line

Northern California is famous for majestic wonders like Yosemite National Park and the mighty Sequoias, but there is another sight of special interest to electronic gamers. Oakhurst, California, is home to the high-tech, creative compound of famous software publisher Sierra On-Line.

Kelli Spurgeon, the company's ebullient Community Affairs Coordinator, conducts tours of the center of the adventure-gaming universe at 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The two-hour event takes visitors into every phase of this dynamic operation, from design to marketing. A highlight is the opportunity to talk extensively with some of the men and women who create popular games, including the *King's Quest*, *Space Quest* and *Police Quest* series.

All it takes to arrange a tour is a call to Kelli Spurgeon at: (209) 683-4468, extension 515.

Guinness Book Is Multimedia Disc

The famous *Guinness Book of World Records* will shortly become a multimedia title from Unidisc. Compiled in association with Britannica Software, *The 1991 Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records* offers

7,000 records, embellished with 300 full-color illustrations and over 70 sound recordings.

"We cannot add sound to a book," says Donald McFarla, editor of *The Guinness Book of World Records*, "and it's wonderful to see the Guinness collection come alive with color and sound."

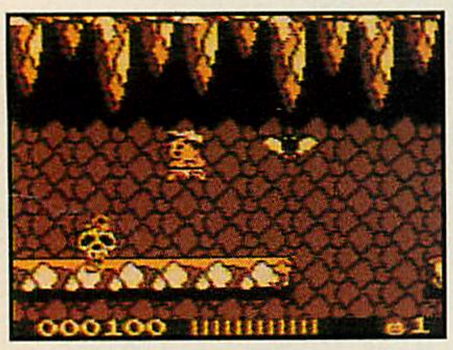
The Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records is available for IBM PC-compatible computers with two megabytes of RAM, a CD-ROM drive, VGA monitor and *Windows 3.0* or higher. A version for the Macintosh is also available. Both versions carry a suggested price of $149.

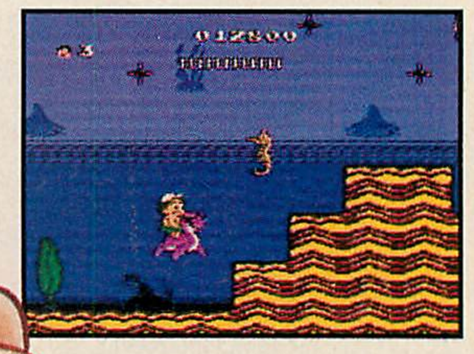
Lucasfilm Superheroes Defend Dynatron City

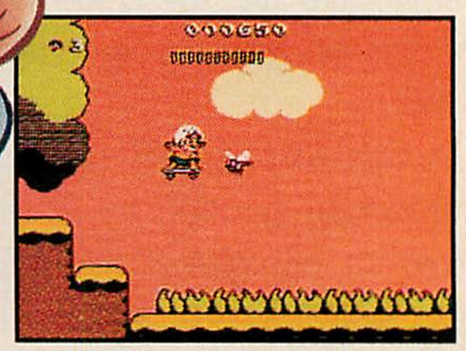
The company that gave the world Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, has a crew of superheroes set to make their debuts on television and as a video game. Lucasfilm's *Defenders of Dynatron City* is slated to be a DIC-produced, half-hour cartoon special on the Fox Children's Network early next year, as well as a cartridge for play on the NES.

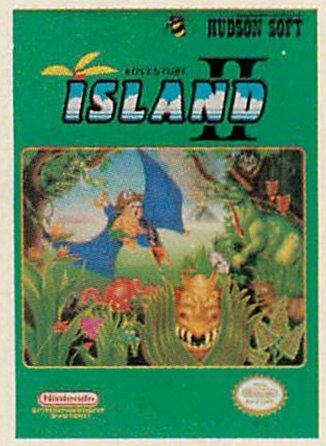
Gary Winnick, award-winning author of *Maniac Mansion*, created the *Defenders of Dynatron* video game. It introduces a team of six atomically altered adventurers who must save Dynatron City from the evil plots of Dr. Mayhem. A special soft drink turns an ape into Monkey Kid, but when inventor Dr. Melvin Myron tries it on himself, it warps him into his new identity of Dr. Mayhem. While Mayhem busily creates monsters like Atom Ed the Floating Head, Monkey Kid escapes with some Proto-Cola and splashes it on people to launch the Defenders of Dynatron team.

Master the Islands!









ADVENTURE ISLAND™

Princess Tina is lost and only Master Higgins can find her! Go thrashin' on your skateboard or ride powerful dinosaur steeds as you search through 8 wild and uncharted islands. You'll face poisonous spiders, spitting cobras and a host of guardian monsters that are just waiting for an intruder to snack on! Take off on the adventure of a lifetime in these action-packed games for the NES and Game Boy!

- Crack open hidden eggs for a massive bonus or super shortcut!
- Spectacular graphics and excellent game play highlight the action!

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CIRCLE #112 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Toolbox, Ms. Megawatt, Monkey Kid, Jet Headstrong, Buzzsaw Girl and Radium Dog must use their unique powers to thwart the nefarious designs of the brilliant villain.

EA Sweepstakes, Rebates Promote Products

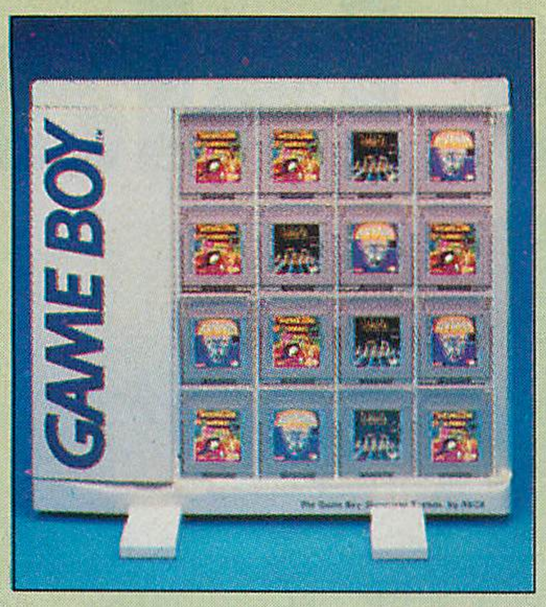
Electronic Arts' "Power to Play" promotion, which runs until January 1992, is packing coupons into the Power to Play product line. Over $750 of discount coupons are packed with the products, to provide savings on hardware accessories.

Additionally, $5 rebate checks are packed in 21 or more titles, good toward the purchase of software titles from seven of EA's affiliated label companies. Participants are: Electronic Arts, LucasArts, Mindcraft, New World, Strategic Simulations, Three-Sixty and UBI Soft.

In addition, EA is offering the "Ultimate Game Station" sweepstakes, to give ten winners a PC computer workstation. Gamers can enter the contest by filling in a coupon at any participating retailer. All entries must be submitted no later than January 1992.

Two Handy Peripherals for Game Boy

Two useful gadgets for the Game Boy are on their way to stores from ASCII Entertainment Software, Inc. The Showcase System displays 16 cartridges, while the Portable Carry-All DLX holds a dozen cartridges, the Game Boy unit and all the major peripherals. Both items retail for $17.99.



The styrene plastic Showcase System turns a game collection into a handsome display. It mounts on the wall or on a desk, and displays the 16 cartridges under protective clear doors. It also provides space to store documentation out of sight. The Showcase System comes with a set of labels for identifying each of the games.

The Portable Carry-All DLX features sturdy construction to keep the Game Boy, cartridges, connectors and peripherals safe during transport. It features an adjustable strap and built-in grip.

ASCII Entertainment
Software, Inc.
11105 Dana Circle
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 373-2072

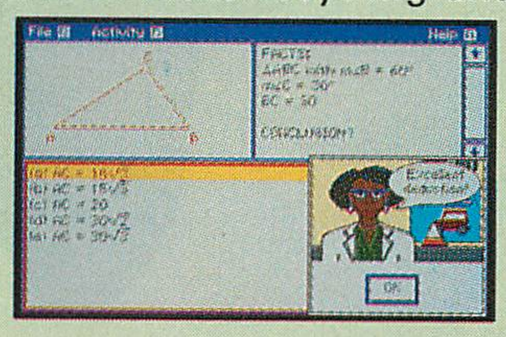
Educator's New Line Features VGA Fun

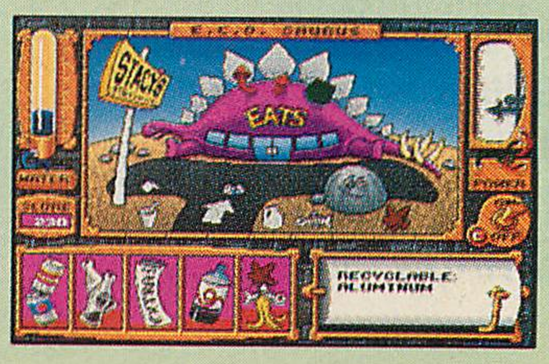
Davidson is pulling out all the stops to make their new line of educational games more entertaining, without sacrificing their teaching skills. The titles feature VGA graphics, animations, music and digitized speech and sound effects. Versions of some titles are also produced for play on 16-color, 512K RAM computers.

Headline Harry and the Great Paper Race has a unique concept: The player (age ten to adult) is a cub reporter taking orders from editor Headline Harry to develop stories based on historical events from 1950 to 1990. The gamer must travel around the U.S., sift through facts about actual events and extract the real news from the false leads, lying informants and tricks by competing reporters.

What's My Angle? teaches basic geometry for students 14 to adult, as the player experiments with shapes and solves problems with geometry. An on-disk golf game, *GeoGolf*, requires the student to use geometry to estimate the angles necessary to score a hole in one.

Finally, *Eco-Saurus* is an action-exploratory adventure for kids four to nine, that stresses recycling and conservation to help Zug the megasaurus rebuild his spaceship. Kids collect garbage, recycle waste and win points, while mastering basic reading skills, problem-solving and visual discrimination.





Disney Quiz Featured in Promotion

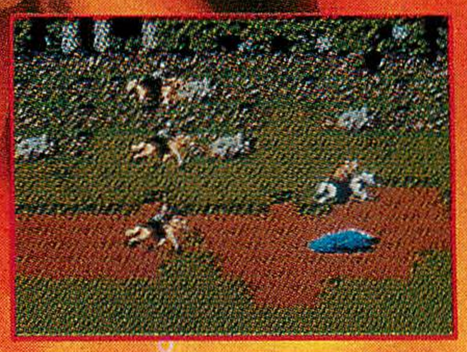
Walt Disney Computer Software's current promotion will test every entrant's game knowledge, in the "Disney Software Celebration" contest. Contestants must answer eight questions about Disney software, and all who succeed will be awarded a color poster featuring Disney games. The entrants are then part of a sweepstakes drawing for the grand-prize trip for four to the Walt Disney World Resort.

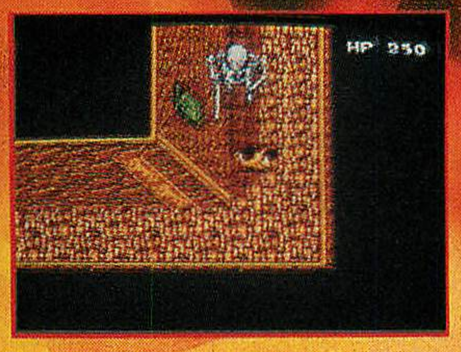
In addition to the grand prize, 25 first-prize winners will receive a complete library of Disney computer software, and 100 second placers will win *Fantasia* brass key chains.

To enter, fill out a counter card at a participating store. The contest is featured at Sears, Dayton, Leadmark, Shopko, ZCMI, Prangeway, American TV, Twin Value and Egghead stores. The contest ends February 15, 1992.

Digital Games Review Breaks 5,000-Reader Mark

The nonprofit, no-advertising electronic games review newsletter has superseded 5,000 in worldwide circulation. The electronic newsletter has been in existence for 16 months and has distributed 30 issues, with an average of one every





"A video game to match the movie hit!...It's almost like you're in the movie!" NINTENDO POWER–July, 1991

"You'll rob from the rich and give to the poor in this extremely detailed roleplaying adventure." GAMEPRO

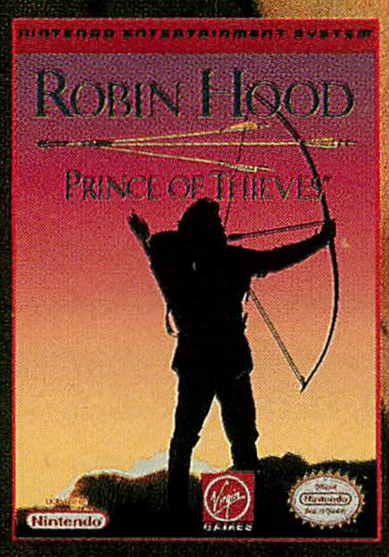
ROBIN HOOD™
PRINCE OF THIEVES

Live the Adventure! Become Robin Hood in the fantasy role-playing adventure of your life in a game that brings all the action of the block-buster movie to your very own NES™!

Lead your band of merry men through one dangerous mission after another as you search for the evil Sheriff of Nottingham through the ancient castles and treacherous forests of medieval Britain.

Show your courage and cunning as you rescue the lovely Maid Marian and free England from tyranny!

Virgin® GAMES



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CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

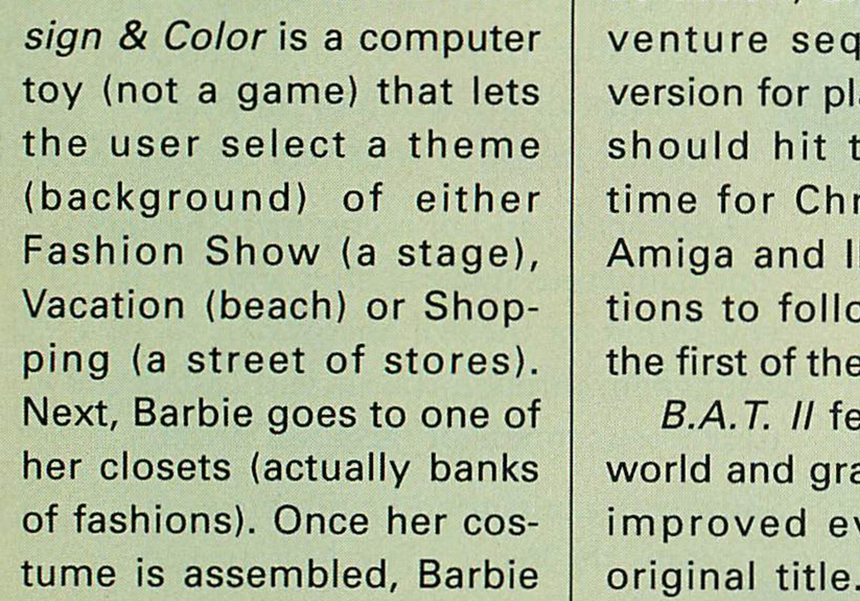
three weeks. Editorial coverage encompasses a wide spectrum of video-game titles for just about every current electronic-game system available, including Genesis, NES, Neo•Geo, Lynx, Game Boy and Game Gear.

In order to subscribe, readers must have access to FIDONET, AppleLink, BITNET or CSNET, or they must have a computer account on either CompuServe, MCI Mail or Delphi. Delphi users can read issues of the newsletter, which are posted in the VG&CE "World of Video Games" forum.

Digital Games Review
P.O. Box 4012
Menlo Park, CA 94026
(415) 966-1151

Barbie Moves to Computer-Land

Craft House Corporation targets little girls in a new computer program featuring Mattel's famous doll. *Barbie PC Fashion Design & Color* is a computer toy (not a game) that lets the user select a theme (background) of either Fashion Show (a stage), Vacation (beach) or Shopping (a street of stores). Next, Barbie goes to one of her closets (actually banks of fashions). Once her costume is assembled, Barbie appears in the background previously selected, then the user colors the scene and Barbie's clothing. The finished picture can be saved or printed out in black and white for hand coloring.



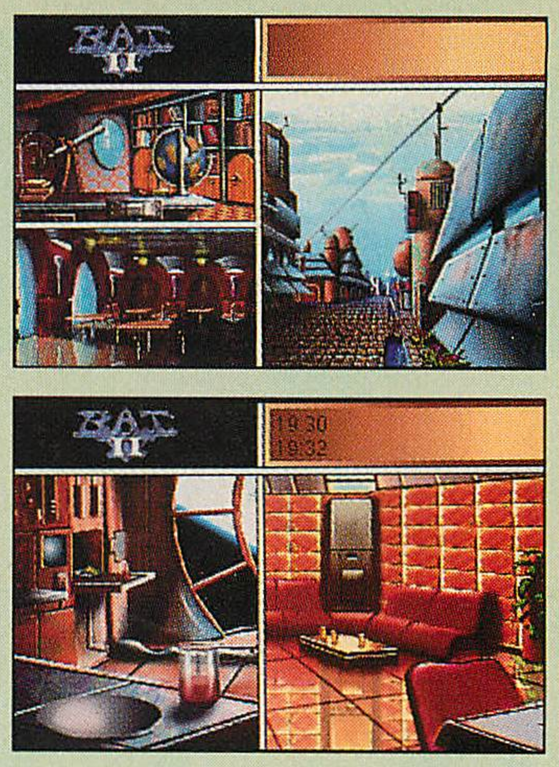
Craft House, the company that pioneered "Paint by Number" sets, is getting a lot of mileage out of computerized coloring books. In addition to the Barbie program, the company is also readying *Columbus Discovers America PC Coloring Program*, which displays ten scenes from Columbus' voyage, with educational captions, to be colored on screen.

Craft House Corp.
328 N. Westwood Ave.
Toledo, OH 43607
(419) 536-8351

B.A.T. Gets Sequel

UBI Soft is readying a sequel to its *B.A.T.* game; *B.A.T. II* (the current working title) will contain cyberpunk role-playing, as well as action, arcade and adventure sequences. The version for play on Atari ST should hit the stores in time for Christmas, with Amiga and IBM PC renditions to follow soon after the first of the year.

B.A.T. II features a new world and graphics that are improved even over the original title. There's also a better sound system, a 3-D modelized planet system and three races of intelligent inhabitants. Among the action games on board are four flight simulators, a car race, battles with gladiators and street fighters that can be fought either arcade-style or through strategy, and an on-disk arcade with three playable coin-op video game titles.



Top Coin-Ops of August 1991

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

Best Upright Videos

1. *Road Riot* by Atari
2. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
4. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
5. *Four Trax* by Atari
6. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
7. *The Simpsons* by Konami
8. *GP Rider* by Sega
9. *Space Gun* by Taito
10. *Time Traveler* by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Clutch Hitter* by Sega
3. *Burning Fight* by SNK
4. *Sengoku* by SNK
5. *Final Fight* by Capcom
6. *King of the Monsters* by SNK
7. *Raiden* by Fabtek
8. *Blue's Journey* by SNK
9. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
10. *Carrier Air Wing* by Capcom

Best New Videos

1. *Race Drivin' Panor* by Atari
2. *F-15* by MicroProse

Top 10 IBM PC/ Video Games for July 1991

The Software Publishers Association's hit list for July shows the best-selling IBM PC computer games and video games, based on sales by Babbages, CompUSA, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique.

Interplay's *Castles* built itself the number one spot on the computer list, and *Sonic the Hedgehog* (Sega, for the Genesis) is still rolling along in first place on the video-game list.

Top 10 IBM PC Games for July 1991

This Mo.	Last Mo.	Title	Publisher
1	*	*Castles*	Interplay
2	2	*Jetfighter II*	Velocity
3	*	*C. Yeager's AFT 2.0*	Electronic Arts
4	*	*Terminator*	Bethesda Softworks
5	3	*Wing Commander*	Origin
6	1	*King's Quest V*	Sierra On-Line
7	6	*Eye of the Beholder*	SSI
8	7	*SimCity*	Maxis
9	9	*Links*	Access
10	*	*Game Sampler*	Software Toolworks

* First month in the Top 10.

Top 10 Video Games for July 1991

This Mo.	Last Mo.	Title	Publ./System
1	1	*Sonic the Hedgehog*	Sega/Genesis
2	*	*Phantasy Star III*	Sega/Genesis
3	4	*Super Mario Land*	Nintendo/GB
4	*	*Might and Magic*	EA/Genesis
5	*	*Fantasia*	Sega/Genesis
6	3	*Battletoads*	Tradewest/NES
7	2	*Hardball!*	Accolade/Genesis
8	*	*Super Mario Bros. 3*	Nintendo/NES
9	6	*Lakers vs. Celtics*	EA/Genesis
10	5	*Batman*	Sunsoft/Genesis

* First month in the Top 10.

SHARPEN *Your Skills*

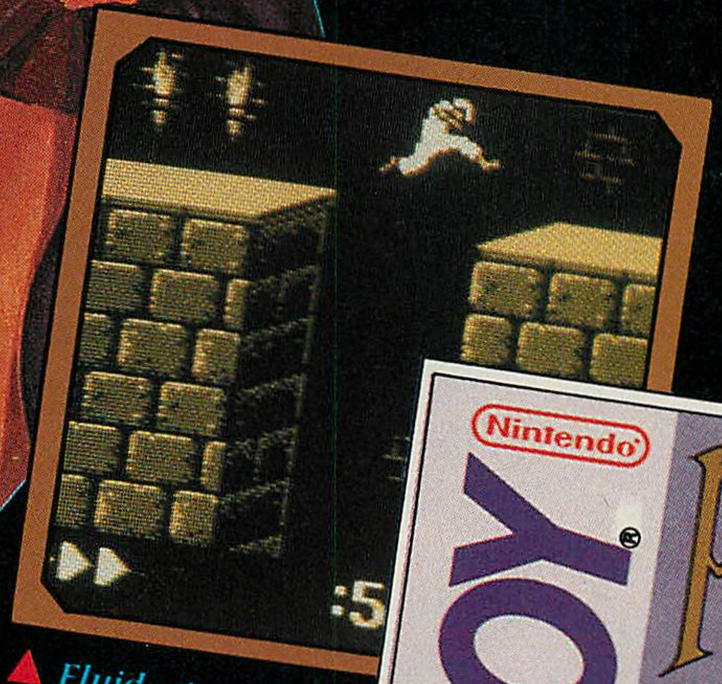
Can you hack it? As the imprisoned young adventurer who has just managed to escape your cell in the palace dungeons, you have only 60 minutes to make your way to the top of the palace and rescue the beautiful princess from a forced marriage with Jaffar the evil tyrant who has stolen her father's throne.

PRINCE OF PERSIA™ will plunge you into an exotic world of challenging puzzles and non-stop action, featuring the most fluid and realistic animation you've ever seen on your Game Boy®!

You may be swift and cunning enough to slash your way past palace guards and dodge trap doors... but how will you withstand the wicked sorcery of Jaffar?

▲ *Twelve levels with many different opponents of increasing difficulty.*

Movie-like storyline with intrigue, romance and surprising twists. ▶



▲ *Fluid, stunning animation and quick, responsive controls.*

▶ **"An unmitigated delight..."**
NIBBLE

▶ **"A tremendous achievement..."**
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

▶ **"Prince of Persia™ is the Star Wars of its field."**
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

"ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM OF THE YEAR" COMPUTER ENTERTAINER

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Enter The Konami Triple Sweeps and win tickets to a sports event you'll never forget!

Choose between a Trip for two to a 1993 professional hockey or basketball championship or the 1993 Indy 500.

IT'S CRUNCH TIME

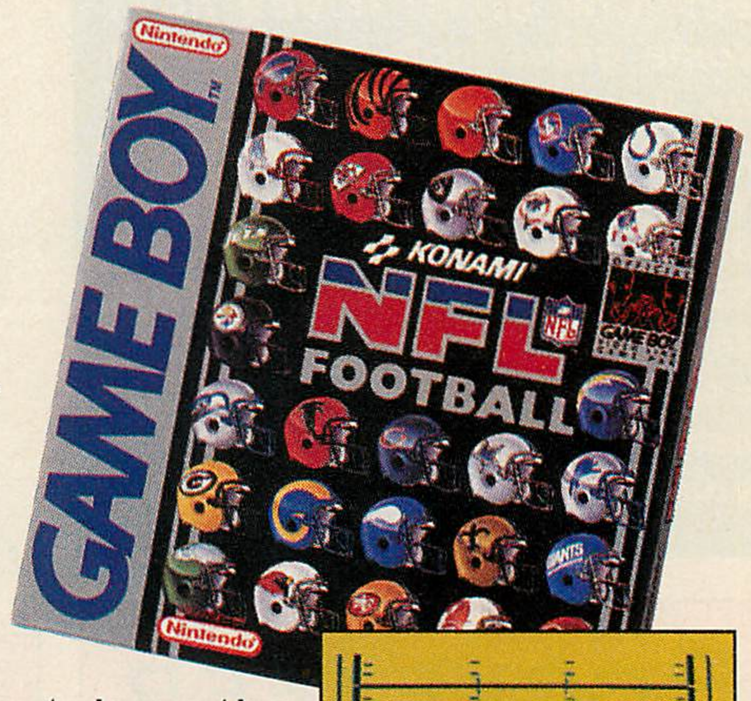
Lace up the cleats and pull down the helmet. You're about to get sandwiched by the most realistic assemblage of gridiron warriors this side of the Super Bowl.

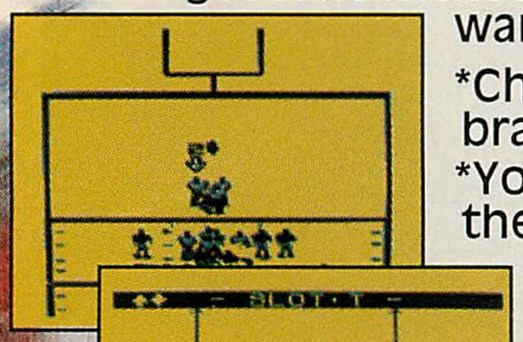
*Choose from 28 franchises in this 11 vs. 11 player brawlfest.

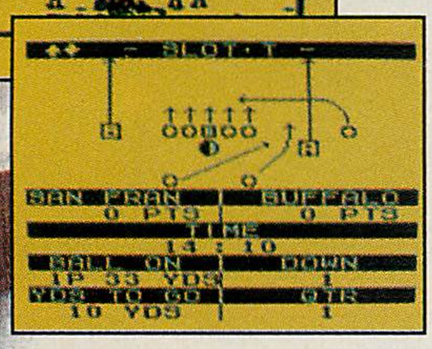
*You're in complete control when gunning for the goal posts. Use bootlegs, laterals, post patterns, and bombs to blow you over the adversary and into the end zone.

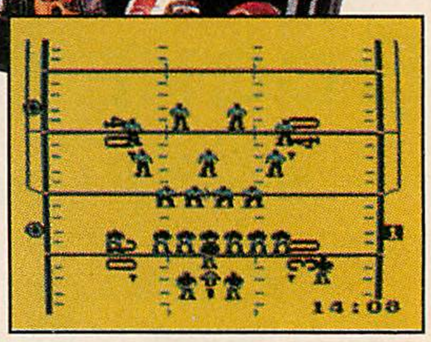
*Gut check football at its nastiest when you're on defense. Blitz, pick off passes, and cut down the quarterback.

*Use Game Link™ to take on a friend or play a competition crushing computer.









BUCKLE ON YOUR BLADES

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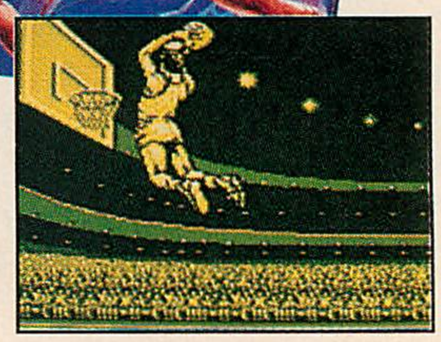

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CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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

ROCKETEER

(BANDAI FOR THE NES)

David Faught, of Walnut Grove, Missouri, has sent in codes for six levels of this game. Thanks, David.

Chapter 2: 490-629-312
Chapter 3: 435-765-818
Chapter 4: 775-454-215
Chapter 5: 318-469-417
Chapter 6: 040-473-312

PRINCESS TOMATO IN THE SALAD KINGDOM

(HUDSON SOFT FOR THE NES)

Mark Abella, of Sacramento, California, has come up with codes for eight levels, as well as the order in which to beat Minister Pumpkin.

Level 2: JQK23TQ
Level 3: D7476TBWN%D1
Level 4: N7H7D%BCD%D9
Level 5: Z%HFBCGJJPJ5DT6
Level 6: P8GBH-CCFGH1TGKM3
Level 7: NTWXZWZ2234MX76R2M
Level 8: ZBHC9LFHKLM6FQP-KD

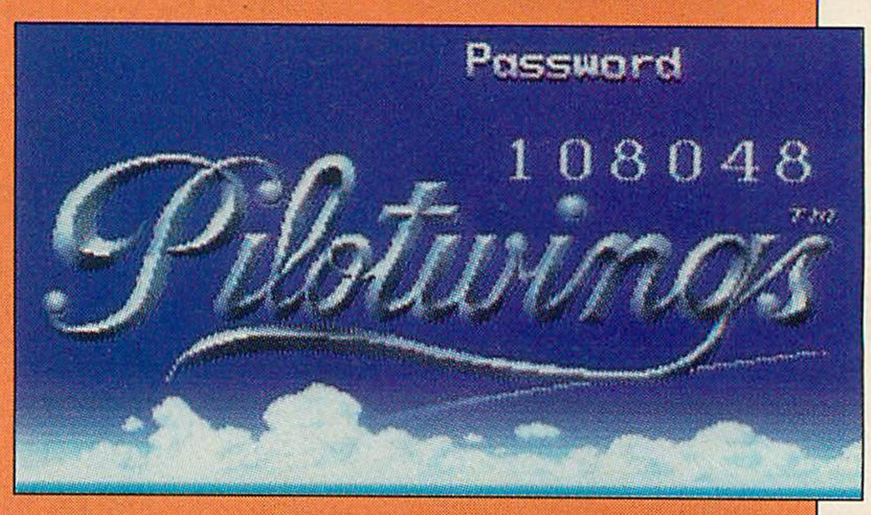
Use this order on Minister Pumpkin: stone, stone, scissors, paper, scissors, paper, paper then stone. Also, when fighting the eggplant in front of Minister Pumpkin's room, always face up. Thanks, Mark, for these great Easter eggs.

Pilotwings

(NINTENDO FOR THE SNES)

Here is a complete list of codes for this game:

Level 2: 985206
Level 3: 394391
Level 4: 520771
Level 5 (Heli): 108048
Level 6: 400718
Level 7: 773224
Level 8: 165411
Level 9: 760357



Faery Tale Adventure

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

Tim Smith, of Bay City, Michigan, wrote in to tell us how you can get a lot of extra items fast. First, save a game before opening a treasure chest, then open the treasure chest. Now save the game again and then restore the same game. You'll appear at the treasure chest, but this time it will be closed and filled with items again. You can repeat this as much as you like. Thanks, Tim, for the Easter egg.

continued on page 34

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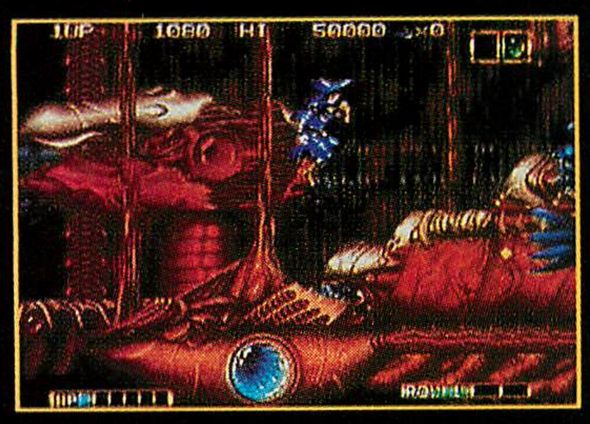
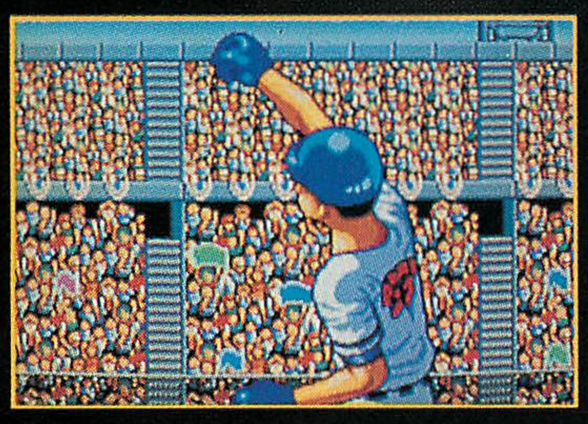
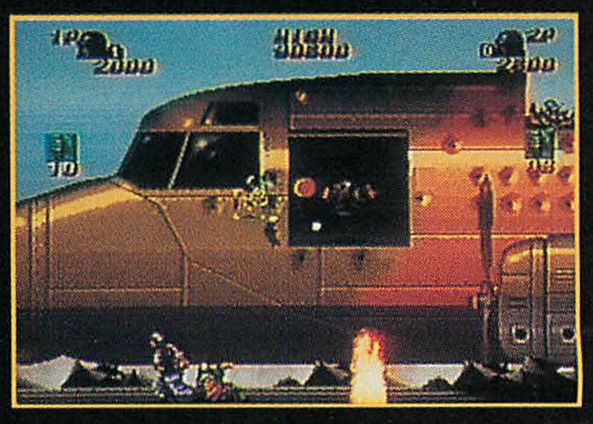


Magician Lord



Baseball Stars Professional



NAM-1975

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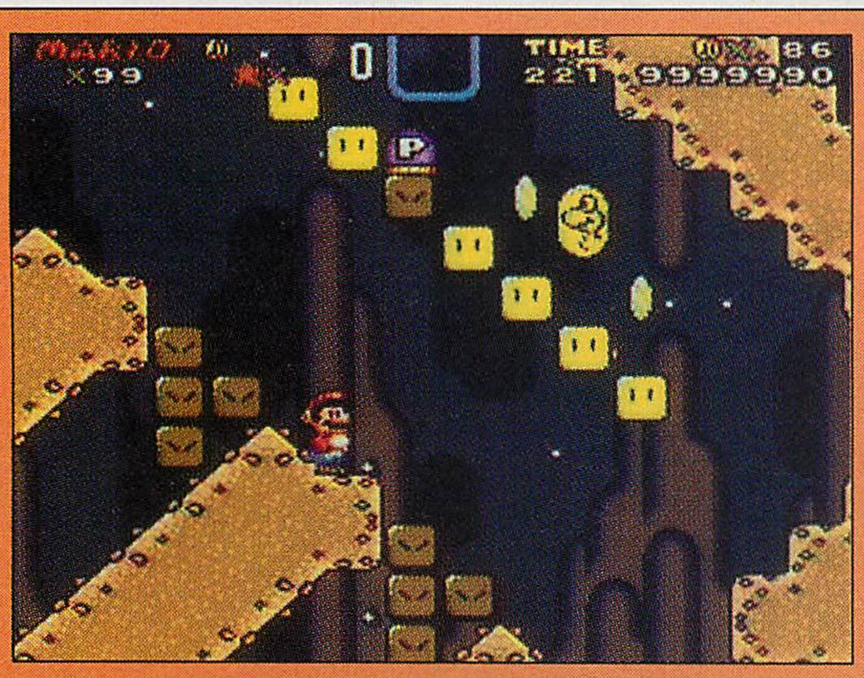
CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 32

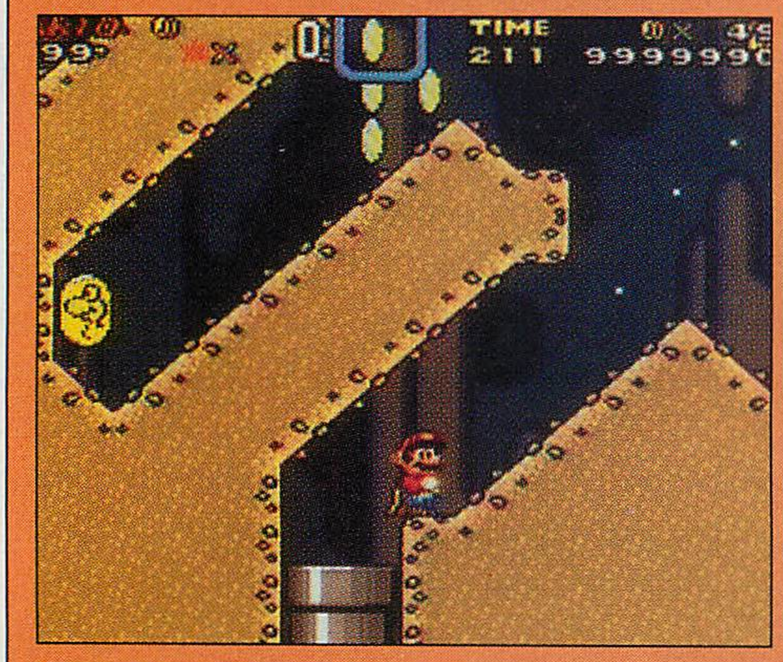


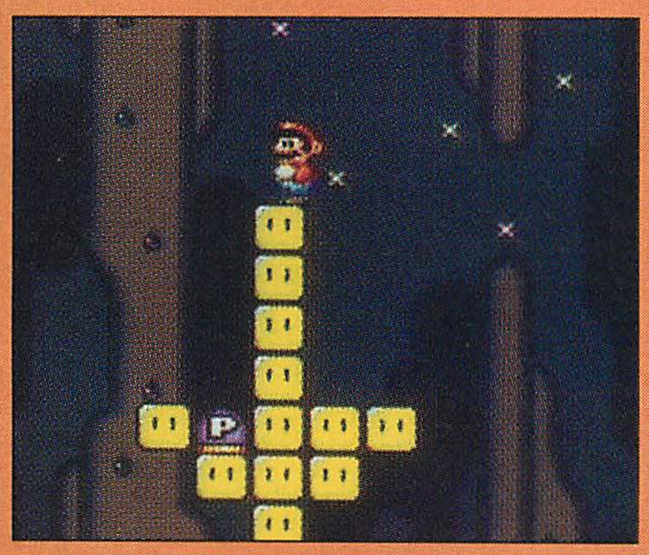
Super Mario World

(NINTENDO FOR THE SNES)

As you've probably discovered, there are a ton of places in *SMW* to fill up with 99 guys. Here are a couple of the quickest ways:

• Enter Chocolate Island 4, get the three 1-ups at the bottom of the third valley (it's much easier if you have all four Switch Palaces completed to fill in the color blocks). Continue to the right and get the P-Block in the first set of yellow blocks, as shown. When you activate the P-Block, enter the silver tube and hold the control pad to the left so that you drop on the P-Block on the yellow arrow. Carefully, count to five, jump off the arrow and glide to the right. If you timed it properly, the coins should change to blocks when you hit the row with the five 1-ups; if not, adjust your timing accordingly. If you go too far, the next row has a feather, which you can use to fly back up to the 1-ups.





The best thing about this egg is that you can go through the tube next to the 1-ups, move left and down the yellow blocks, wait for the mole to go by, then go a short distance to the left and repeat the trick over and over. If you've finished the level prior to this, you can hit **START** then **SELECT** to exit to the map screen right before the timer runs out without losing your current power.

• This trick not only lets you peak out your extra-guy count, but also enables you to boost your score to the maximum 9,999,990 points. Enter the Forest of Illusion 1, and cut the halfway ribbon. On the next platform is a changing power-up box; hit it and get the feather. Go back to the left one platform, then jump (holding the Y and B buttons), and hit the first wiggler. Without letting go of the buttons—sure, it will hurt your thumb a little, but it's worth it—glide through the air and hit the wiggler on the far left. Hit him near his tail and, without hitting ground, glide to the right and you should be able to see the first wiggler as he comes back into the screen in his original yellow form again. Hit him near his tail, and glide back to the left to hit the left-most yellow wiggler again. If you can stay in the air this whole time, bouncing back and forth between regenerated wigglers, you'll increment your score starting with points, then 1-Ups and points, then coins, 1-Ups and points—the symbols get pretty weird, as the picture shows. Before the timer runs out, you can likely max out your guys and score, but if you don't finish the level, you can enter right at the halfway point and do it again. Thanks to Rusel DeMaria and Zach Meston for that trick. (Look for more *Super Mario World* assistance from these two in their book, *Super Mario World Secrets*, published by Prima Publishing, at a bookstore near you.)

Tim Walker, of Worthington, Ohio, has found a way to reenter completed castles. If you stand on the map screen, move to a castle you've already finished and hit both L and R (the buttons on top of the controller); you'll enter the castle again. If you choose, you can also exit by hitting **START** then **SELECT**. Thanks, Tim.

continued on page 36

KICK BACK

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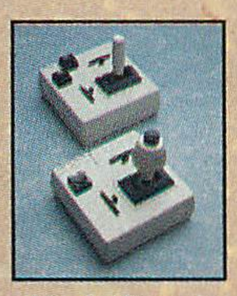
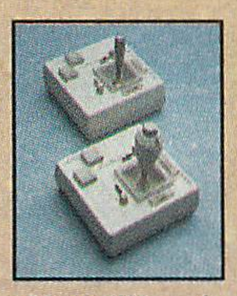
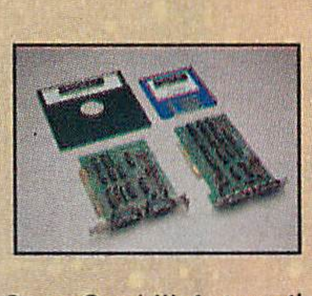


Mach I™ and Mach I Plus™



Mach II™ and Mach III™



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CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 34

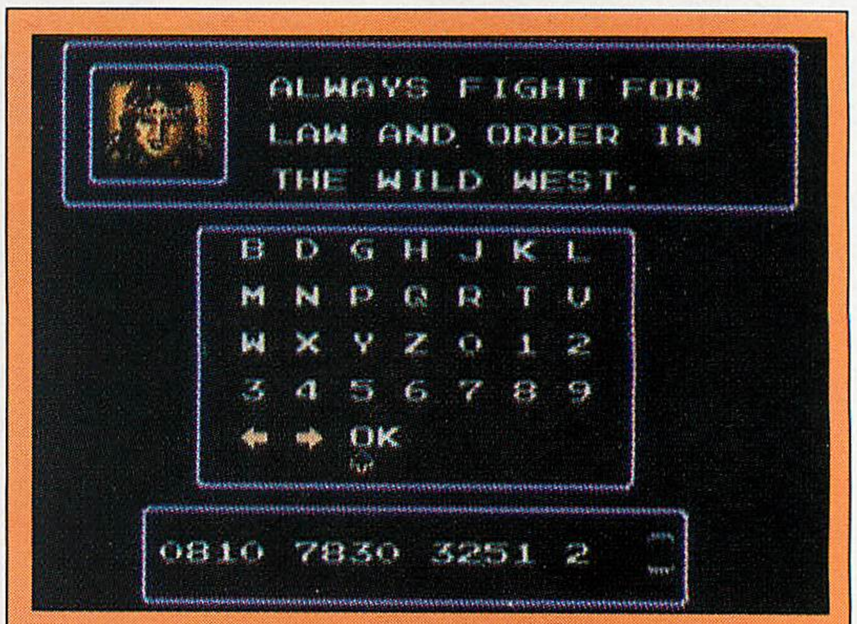
Y's—Book I and II

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

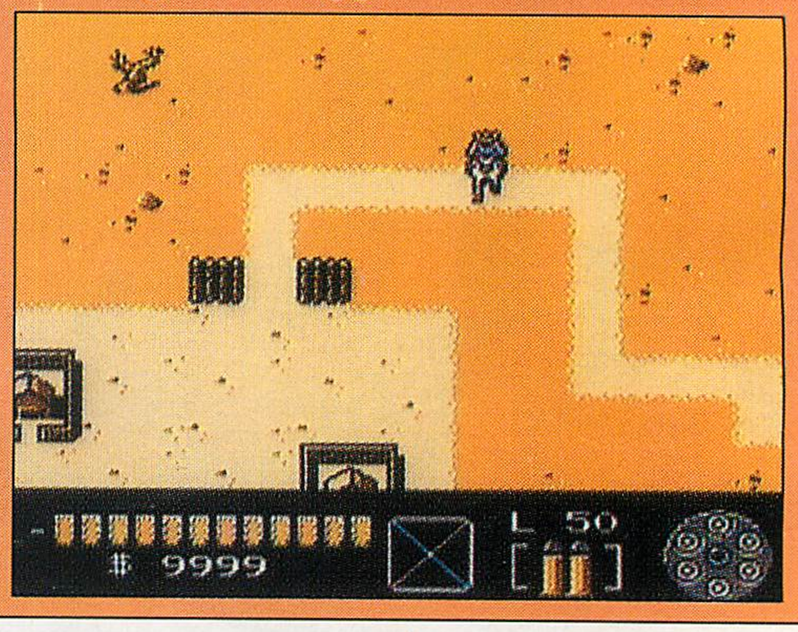
I know this is an older game, but the code deserves to be printed just based on the amount of time and effort it takes to get it. This code will start you off in Minea with *no* items, 99,999 experience points and 65,535 gold. Thanks to Mike Henry for this great Easter egg: *Q2eb/bbbCFjj/jjhghgh/ghghg/hghghgh/ghghghg/yQyQy-/QyQyQyQ/yQyQzPz-/PzA.

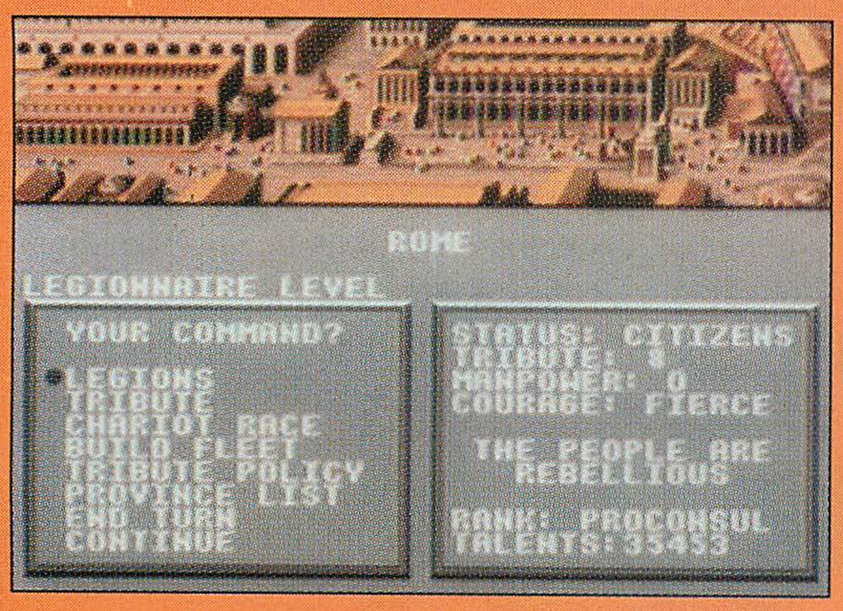
The Lone Ranger

(KONAMI FOR THE NES)



Skyler Wolfe, of Zanesville, Ohio, has come up with a code that will give you level select, $9,999, ten sticks of TNT, a long-barrel gun, 50 rounds of regular bullets and 50 rounds of silver bullets. Type in /0810 7830 3251 2/. (Note: the last three spaces in the code should remain blank.)Thanks, Skyler, for this outstanding Easter egg.

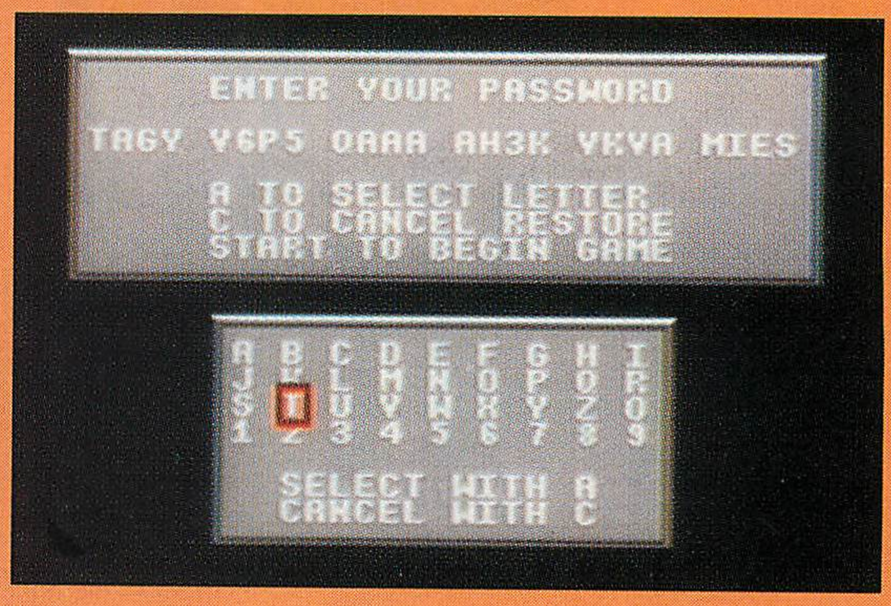




CENTURION DEFENDER OF ROME

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

To start the game at one of the most powerful levels with 11 consular legions and 35,000 talents, type in TAGY-V6P5-QAAA-AH3K-VKVA-MIES. Thanks to Brian Nichols, of Ocala, Florida, for this great Easter egg.



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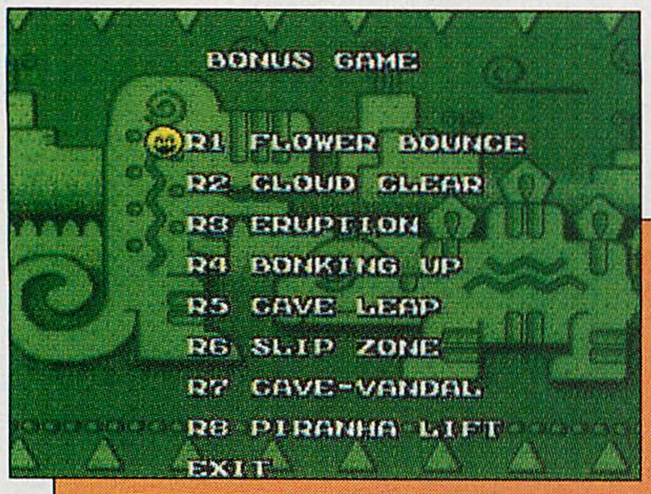
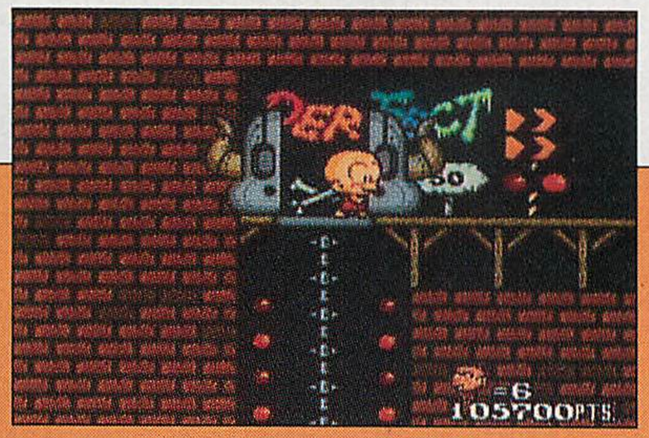
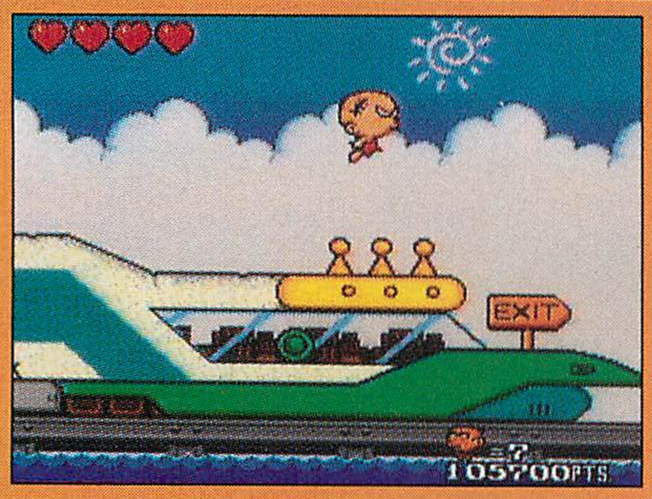
continued from page 36







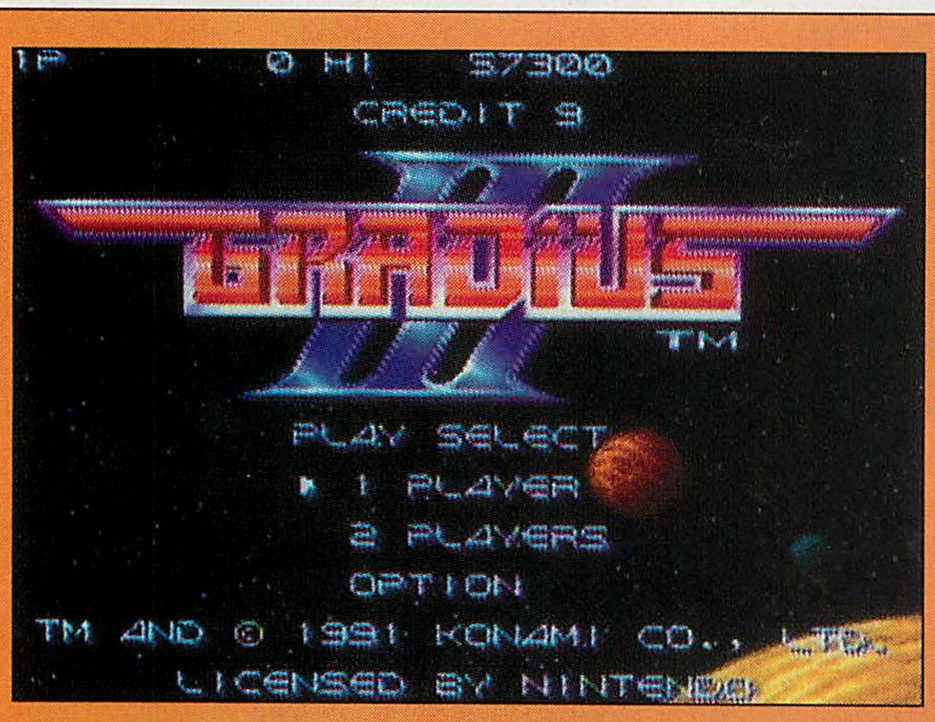
BONK'S REVENGE

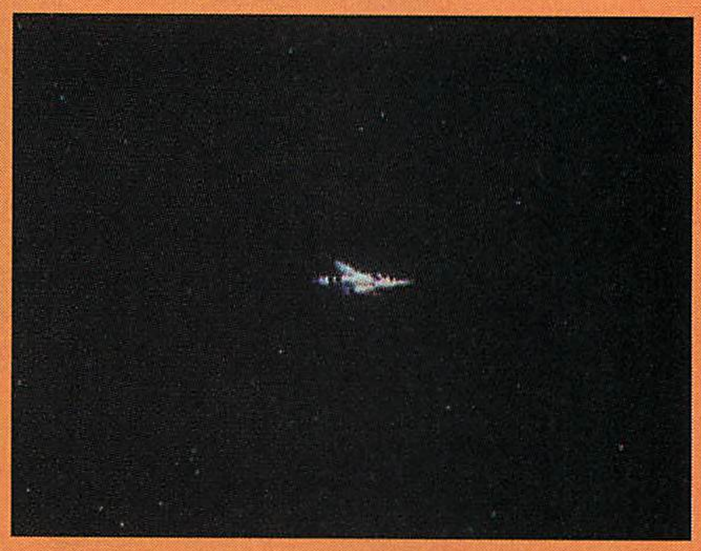
(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

Victor Ireland, of Redding, California, has found two eggs for this game. The first is a bonus stage select: Simply press and hold II and then press **RUN** during the mode select screen.

The next egg won't do much, but if you want to remove the word "Pause" from the screen, press **RUN** to pause the game, then press and hold I, II and **SELECT**.

Also, to warp a level ahead, you'll need to collect at least 50 happy faces.





Gradius III

(KONAMI FOR THE SNES)

There are quite a few Easter eggs that can be performed on this latest shooter:

• For extra credits, during the title screen, press the X button as quickly as you can. You should see the number of credits at the top go up. Press **START** before the title screen fades. If the title screen fades away, you've lost the credits and will have to repeat the egg.

• For a hidden Game Mode, during the option screen, press A as fast as you can. Make sure the cursor is on Game Level.

• For 30 extra ships, during the title screen, press and hold L and then press A, A, A, **START**.

• For full power-up, during play, press **START** to pause, then press U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, B, A and **START** to unpause. (Note: the L and R in this code refer to the top two buttons on the controller, not L and R on the pad.)

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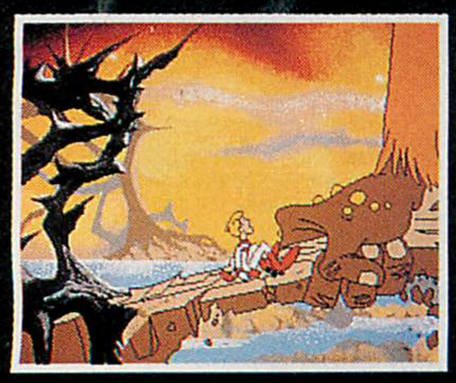

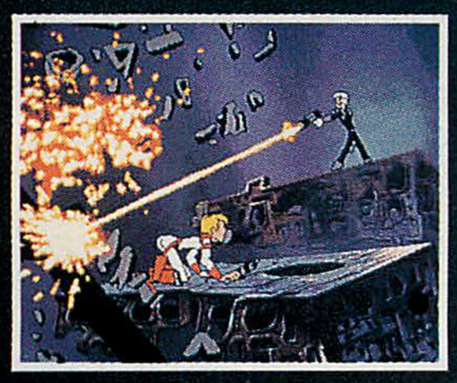

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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Joe Montana II Sportstalk Football

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

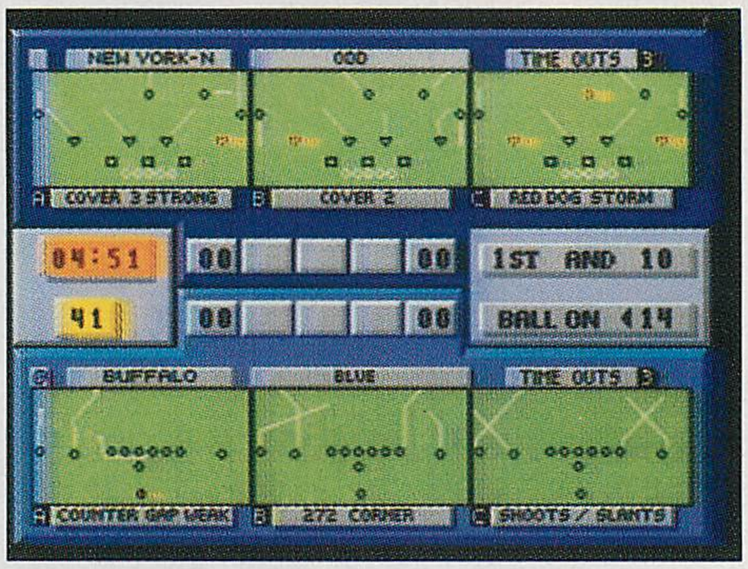
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC								8		
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL								8		

Joe Montana is back! No, not back on the field—back on the Genesis. Joe won't be sitting on the video-game sidelines this season. The much anticipated sequel actually comes as a surprise to Genesis owners, since no mention of the game has appeared on television or in print. Maybe Sega learned its lesson from all the holdups and problems it had with the original title.

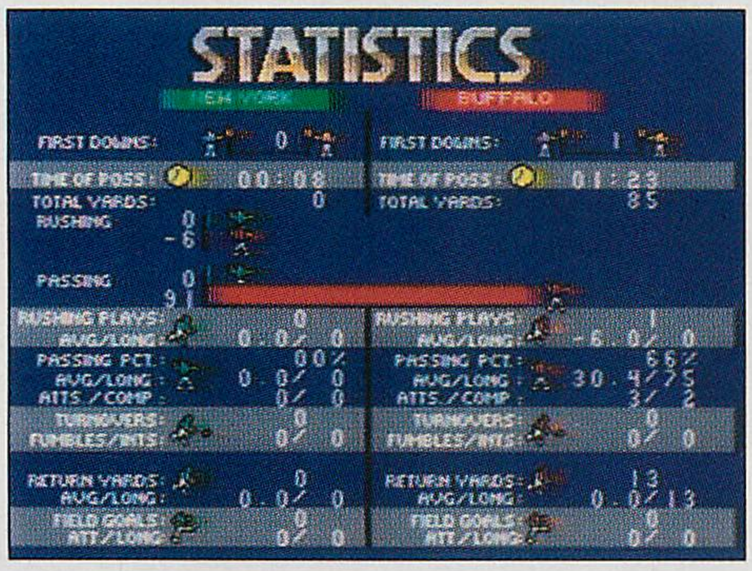
The most obvious difference between *Joe Montana Football* and *Sportstalk Football* is the obvious reason for why it's called *Sportstalk Football*—the digitized speech of play-by-play announcing, as if the gamer were watching a real match and hearing the calls from the announcer in the broadcast booth. In fact, the digitized speech is some of the cleanest that I've ever heard on the Genesis. Whenever I played *Sportstalk Football* and someone was in the adjacent room, I was usually asked what game was on TV. The inherent raspy-metallic audio that seems to afflict the Genesis is nowhere to be found here.

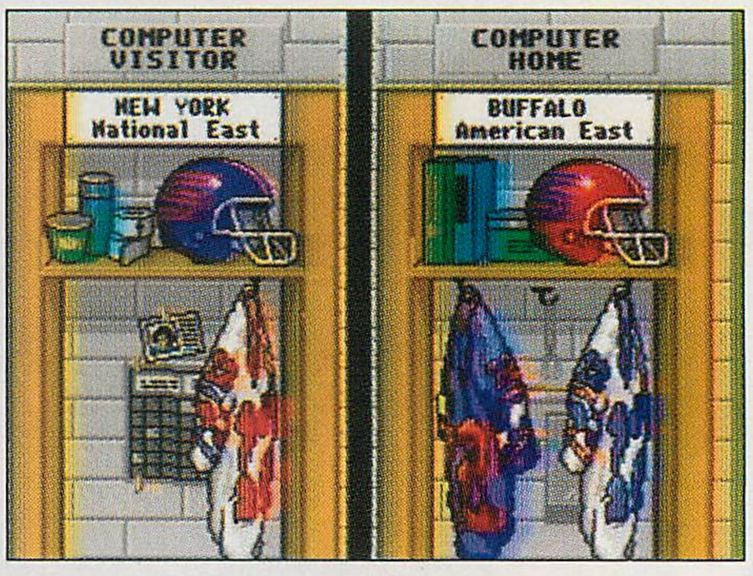
The only gripe that I had with the audio aspect of the game—and it is not necessarily a flaw but more a matter of taste—is after playing the game several times, the constant background spectator noise started to sound like television static. There are options to turn off the music and the speech, but none to eliminate the constant roar. I found myself leaving the speech option turned on, hoping that it might drown out the audience's noise. Lately, most manufacturers of the sports genre have been adding this sound effect feature to contribute to a game's sense of realism.

Sportstalk Football, like its predecessor, is not endorsed by the NFL or the NFL Players' Association. Owners of the original *JMF* will notice that a multitude of new features and options have been added. This time around there is a full 28-team lineup to choose from. When the gamer selects the teams to be fielded, both home and visitor uniforms are displayed simultaneously for both teams. Gamers can also customize a team with superstar players or create their own "dream team."

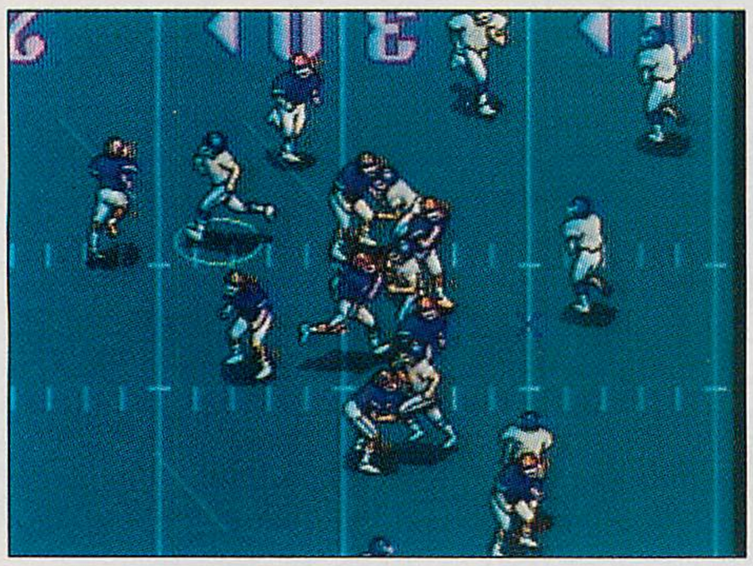


Graphically, *Sportstalk Football* is reminiscent of the first version of *JMF* that was scrapped for the current one. The game and playfield are presented in a horizontal, side-scrolling perspective. Character animation is smoother and much more detailed than in *Joe Montana Football*, though the on-field players still seem to glide across the field when taking a dive or being tackled.





One very impressive visual feature that *Sportstalk Football* has over other football titles for the Genesis is the zoom view select. By toggling zoom view on the game-select screen, a six-times zoom of the field will appear when the ball changes hands during a play. Gamers who thought scaling couldn't be done on the Genesis are in for a surprise.



Picking up where *Joe Montana Football* leaves off, *Sportstalk Football* has the highest degree of playability of any of the available football games for the Genesis.

Unlike the original game, there are only two game modes available: exhibition and league. Unfortunately, the gamer has no way of warming up or practicing before a match. It would have been nice if the two-

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minute play option from the original *Joe Montana Football* were incorporated into *Sportstalk Football*.

Choosing league play allows the gamer to start a new season or to continue a current one via a password. Game seasons consist of a 16-game schedule, randomly set by the computer. Depending on how good your team standings are, the team could advance into a two-round playoff series, which could eventually lead the team to the Sega Bowl.

There are three levels of game difficulty (beginner, normal and difficult), and game durations can be either 20, 40 or 60 minutes. In one-player mode, choosing beginner difficulty will allow you to see the play and the formation that the computer chooses. Normal difficulty will only let you see the formation used, while difficult will leave the player blind to what formation and play the computer chooses.

One major play feature that was introduced into *Sportstalk Football* is the use of a two-player cooperative mode. On offense, player 1 can control the quarterback before the pass and then switch to any other man afterwards. Player 2 has the ability to control any man other than the quarterback. Also, player 1 calls the formations and the plays during offense, while player 2 makes the calls during defense.

Sportstalk Football has more offensive plays and formations than *JMF*. There are now 41 offensive plays available, but only 18 defensive plays. Plays can also be "flip-flopped" to a mirror image, doubling the play choices available. An instant-replay feature is also available, allowing the gamer to view a play after it has been completed.

The kicking game has also been improved. A meter at the bottom of the playfield has been added, giving the player more flexibility in the direction and distance of the kick.

As is its predecessor, *Sportstalk Football* is an extremely complex game, probably even more so. The manual is filled with indispensable information that the average gamer will need before playing. There are many factors that can affect play, including the weather. Yet, with all of its intricacies, *Joe Montana II Sportstalk Football* proves to be the best football game available for the Genesis to date.

—Mike Davila

Sega of America
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Ys III: Wanderers From Ys

NEC

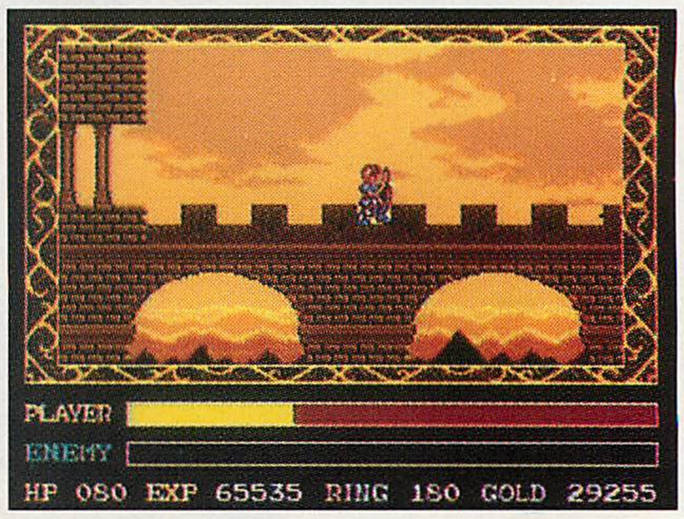
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

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

Ys III: Wanderers from Ys, the CD-ROM sequel to one of the hottest TurboGrafx-16 titles ever released, and member of one of the most prolific RPG series ever, is finally here! This title is one I have eagerly awaited—in fact, as soon as I finished the *Ys—Book I & II* CD, I was already visualizing where *Ys III* might take Adol, the adventurer/warrior. Turns out it takes Adol to Kenai, the land of his mentor, Dogi.

To find this out, I had to pop in the CD and sit through the best part of an *Ys* game on the TG-16: a cinematic sequence that, in this case, was the introduction. Right off the bat, *Ys III* delivers.

The introduction, outlining a fierce battle that took place in Kenai's past between a brave warrior and a huge, evil monster called Demanicus, is graphically *stunning*, and more colorful than *Ys I & II*. One drawback here, though: The narrator (actually, most of the speaking cast) in *Ys III*, unlike the first, sounds very stiff and unemotional, which is distracting, to say the least. The producers of the American version of this game should have spent more time and/or made a better effort to match



The producers of the American version of *Ys III* should have made a better effort to match the generally excellent quality of voice acting in the first *Ys* CD.

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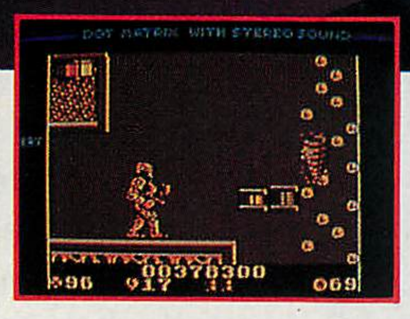

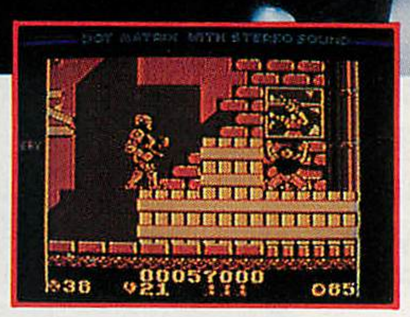

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The name of the game

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the generally excellent quality of voice acting in the first *Ys* CD.

After the intro finished, the game offered a choice of jumping right into one of five saved locations (of course, when you first get the game this is not an option, as you have no saved locations to jump into) or selecting the actual beginning of the game, another cinematic pigfest interspersed with full-screen animated pictures, dual-plane scrolling and wonderful music and sound effects.

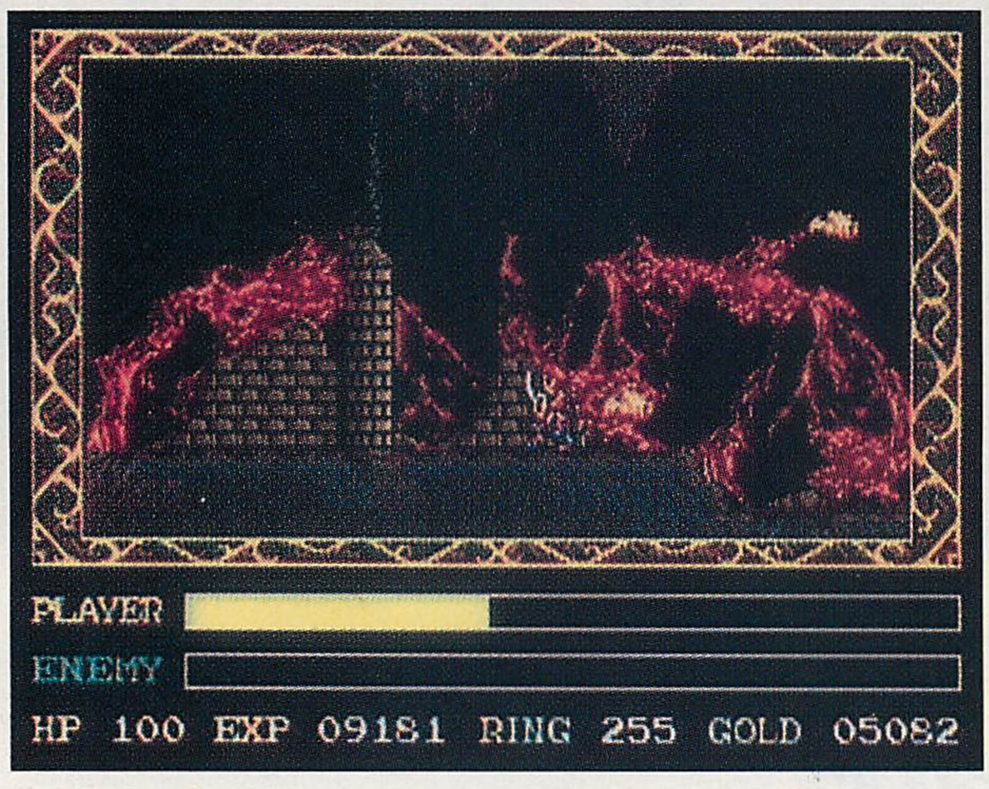
The first real surprise came when the *game* actually started. It was side perspective! Adol had gone, lest I say it...*arcade*! Introductions aside, at this point I had doubts. Would *Ys III* be reduced to a simple shooter?

Happily, the answer is no. While it's definitely even more arcade-like than its predecessors (to the dismay of die-hard RPG fans), the multiple quests you must accomplish, numerous items and weapons, and the characters you meet take it out of the realm of "normal" arcade-style games. Most of the areas have depth; that is, you can explore them in a number of directions, sometimes finding a secret passage or even a hidden nook that contains a treasure chest.

The object of your quest in Book III is to find out what evil King McGuire, Chester of Sarina and Merland the Magician (original, no?) are up to, and why the land of Kenai has been thrown into chaos.

During the game, you will traverse six distinct stages. Each stage has a number of different areas and numerous items to retrieve. For example, Valestine Castle has lava pits, a basement, a hidden passage area, a cathedral and a clock tower, to name only a few.

While most areas are visually interesting, some are outstanding. Alcaino Ruins and the clock tower of Valestine Castle are probably the best. The Alcaino Ruins stage has an erupting volcano in the background, with multilayered clouds rushing overhead that give the screen a wonderful amount of depth. Likewise, in the clock tower, clever use of color rotation gives the illusion of a room filled with dozens of huge moving gears. I only wish that the gears in the foreground, the ones that Adol travels on, were moving also.



While most areas of *Ys III* are visually interesting, some are outstanding.

Like the original *Ys*, most important items or areas are guarded by, to borrow an arcade-style term, a boss. In *Ys III*, I counted no less than 11 bosses and about 30 distinct goals to meet before the credits rolled.

The status window at the bottom of the screen remains pretty much unchanged from the previous versions of *Ys*. There are two horizontal bars that gauge the amount of hit points Adol and his opponents have. Below those there is a row of numbers, each labeled appropriately, that tell Adol's hit points, experience, ring power and gold. Magic power, like that used in *Ys Book II*, is not present in this game.

Hit points are restored either by medicine, special rings, leaving a stage to head back to the village or when resting at certain points in the game. Experience (and gold, for that matter—both are awarded simultaneously) is gained by diving head first into dungeons and successfully defeating monsters. Each monster has a certain point value. The more points Adol collects, the stronger he is. Ring power is necessary to power each of the six special rings. No ring power translates into no neat tricks from the rings you collect. Gold is necessary to buy weapons, armor and special items.

The music this time around is again straight off the CD, with talented musicians (including a great guitarist), although this time I disliked about a quarter of the selections. Either they didn't seem to match the area they were played in or they were just plain annoying. The soundtrack, while still fairly diverse, leans heavily toward rock. Another feature related to the music that I didn't appreciate was that, when there was a vocal sequence from the CD, the speaking was done over the top of the soundtrack (which was just turned down a bit). This made for muddled speech in parts, and forced me to turn up the stereo to catch what was being said, only to get blasted when the speaking was over.

So what *is* the verdict? Well, I found this journey to be significantly shorter and far easier than *Ys—Book I & II*, but I really enjoyed the diversity of the different stages and areas. I also enjoyed the general flow of the story line and the fact that the difficulty and learning curves were very smooth. As an actual RPG, *Ys*

continued on page 50

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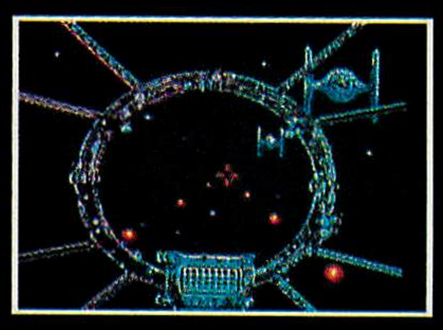

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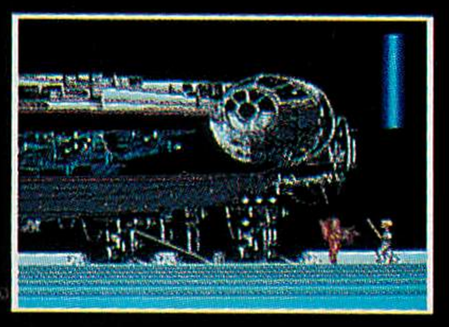

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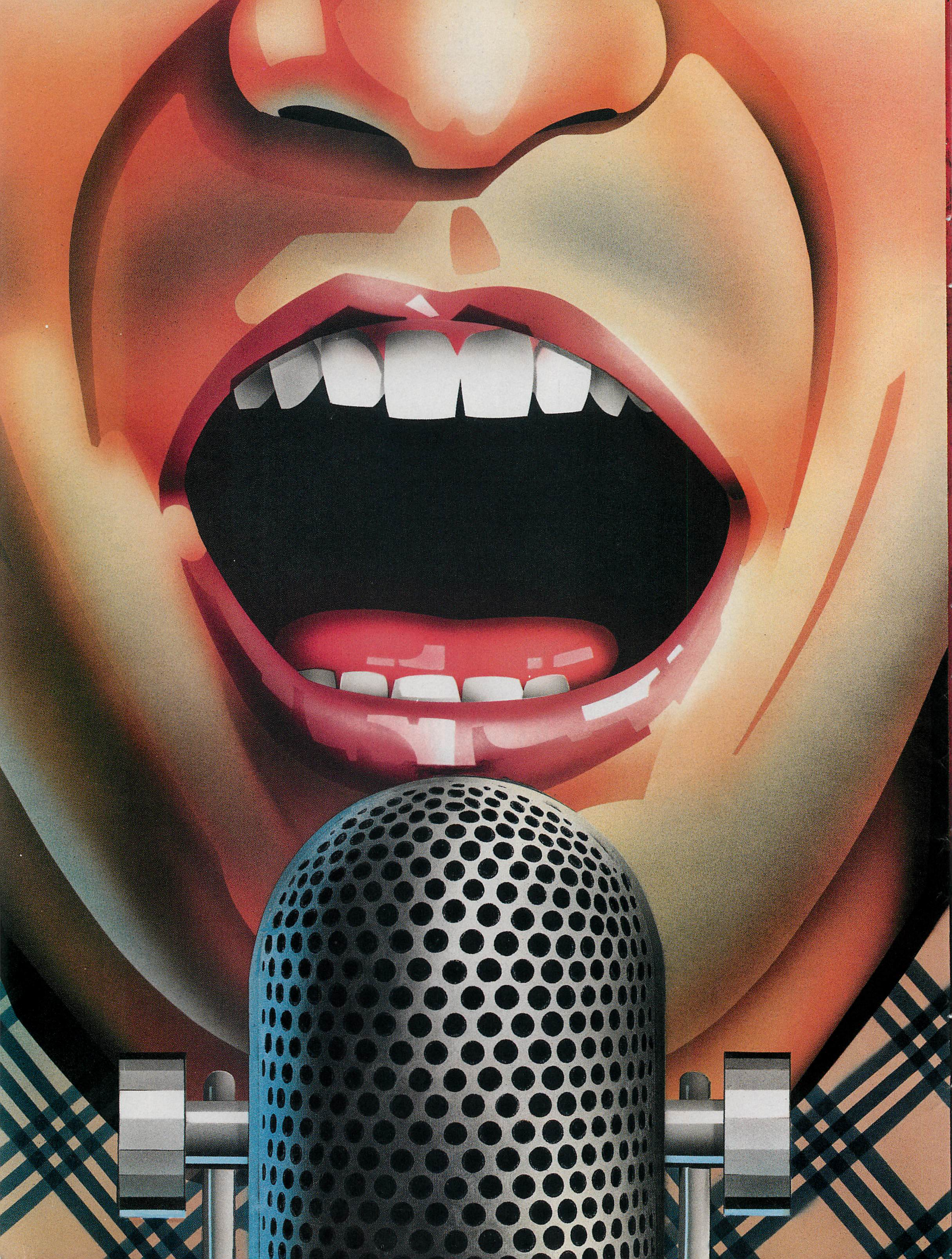

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So remember, if you want real football action, the name of the game is Joe Montana II Sportstalk Football. Anything else is all talk.

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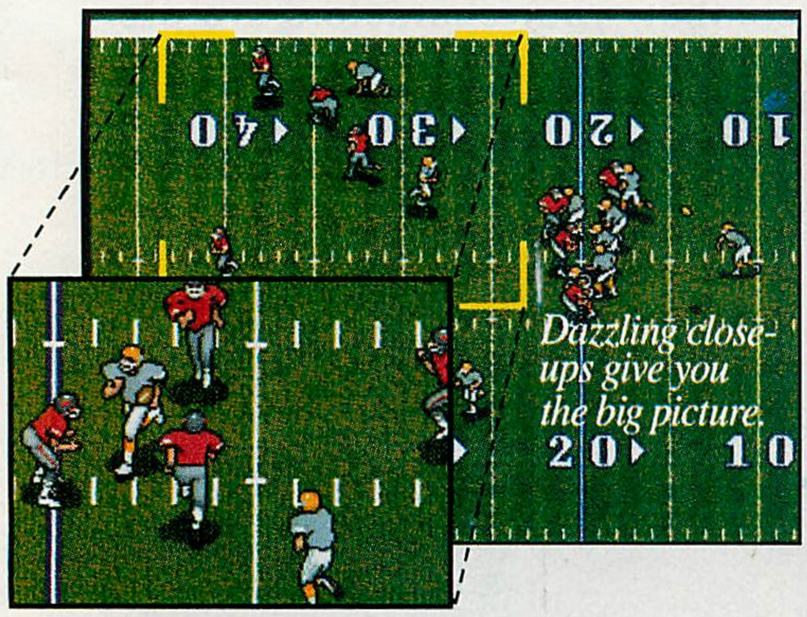

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continued from page 46

III fails miserably...but I don't think that the *Ys* series has ever wanted to be an "actual RPG." So, if judged as an action/adventure game, it is a winner—you'll be hard pressed to find better. And, as Adol and Dogi wander into the sunset in the closing sequence, you may, as I did, catch yourself wondering if they're wandering into *Ys IV*.

—Victor Ireland

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

Pool of Radiance

FCI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($69.95)

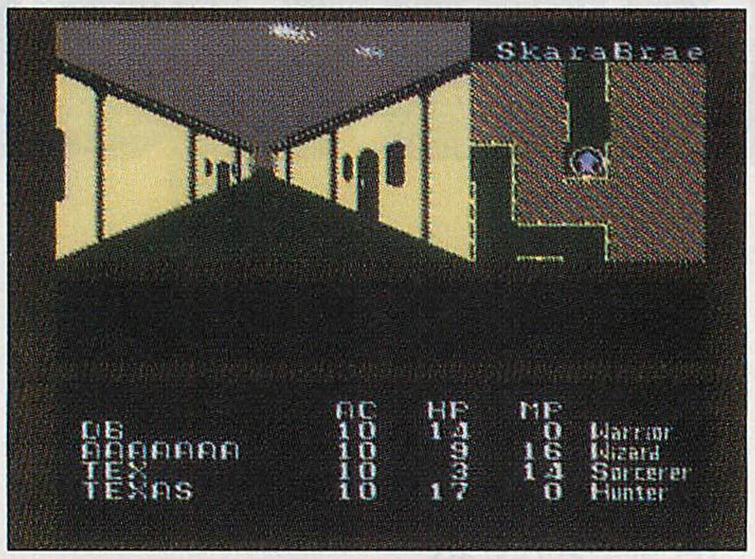
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

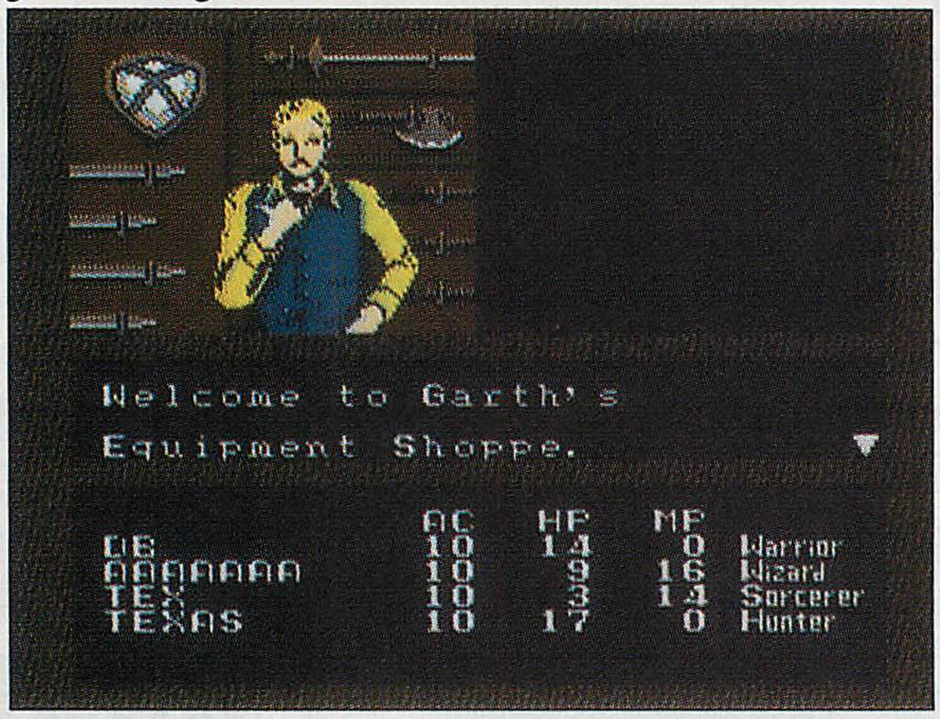
In yet another successful move from the computer world comes another Dungeons and Dragons video adventure, *Pool of Radiance*. If you can imagine taking all the intricate details involved with playing D&D by hand and automating them, you will have some idea of the scale and complexity involved here.

As a brave (and perhaps even a bit foolish) adventurer, you have been offered wealth and fame by the city council of New Phlan, in return for helping to clean out the evil hordes that threaten to overrun the city. It's not the gold and recognition that motivates you, of course, it's the principle of good versus evil, right? Either way, plan to have your hands full.

Most every detail is taken into account in creating as realistic a scenario as possible. I can't possibly cover everything in this limited space, but here are a few glimpses of what you can expect if you choose to take up the city's offer.

Character generation offers you the choice of four basic character types: fighter, magic user, cleric or thief. From these four, combination classes are also available—fighter/magic user, fighter/cleric, etc. These characters may be of six possible races, and either male or female, for a total of 21 possible choices.





The game play within *Pool of Radiance* requires patience and planning to make significant progress.

Next, your characters are "rolled," where stats and abilities are determined. Six characteristics (strength, dexterity, etc.), nine moral alignments (lawful good to chaotic evil), age, armor class, movement abilities—it's all here, folks, and more. Create five characters and name them, and you are ready to enter the city of Phlan to begin your adventure.

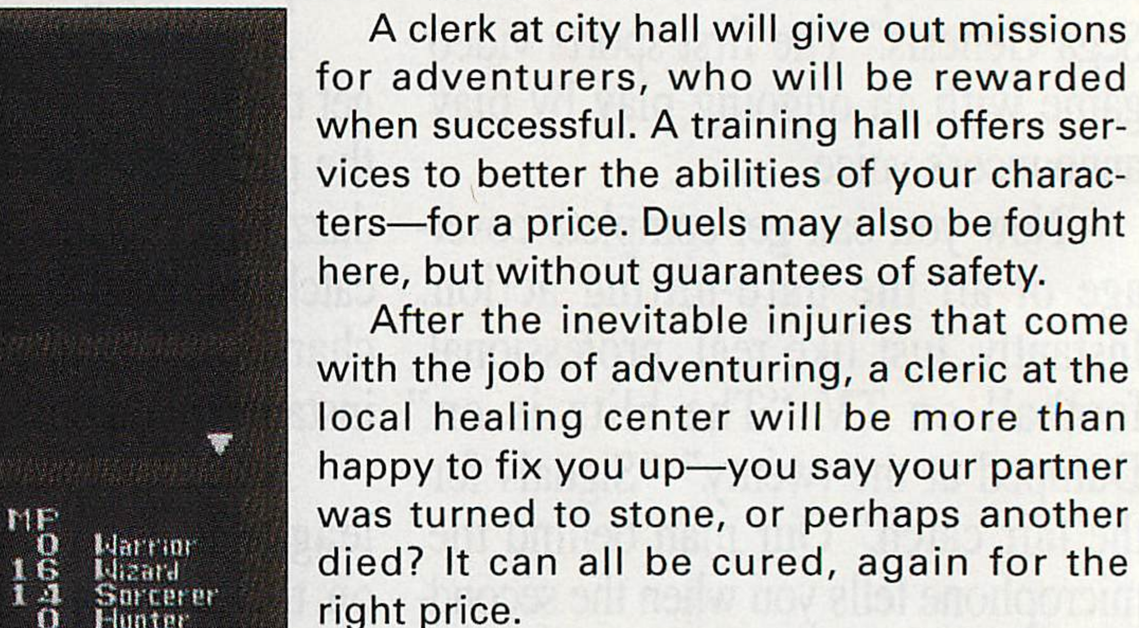
A guide by the name of Rolf will give a short tour of the city, introducing the more essential locations to you. Afterwards, you are on your own. At this point, I would highly recommend mapping anything and everything. Although a built-in map of the safe portion of the city is available and may be moved around within, the monster-infested areas must be mapped by hand if you are to stand any chance of success.

Each character is provided with some gold to begin with, so your next job will be to properly equip them with weapons and armor. Afterwards, you may choose to visit other areas of the city—taverns are a good place to pick up gossip, but also a good place to get your coin purse stolen or, even worse, become involved in a barroom brawl.

A clerk at city hall will give out missions for adventurers, who will be rewarded when successful. A training hall offers services to better the abilities of your characters—for a price. Duels may also be fought here, but without guarantees of safety.

After the inevitable injuries that come with the job of adventuring, a cleric at the local healing center will be more than happy to fix you up—you say your partner was turned to stone, or perhaps another died? It can all be cured, again for the right price.

In combat, your characters are presented from an overhead three-quarters



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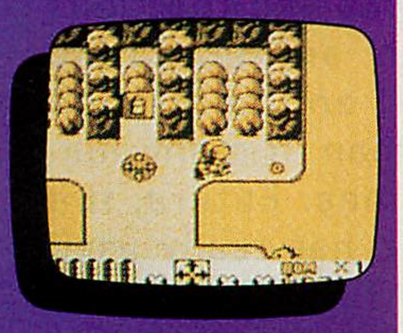

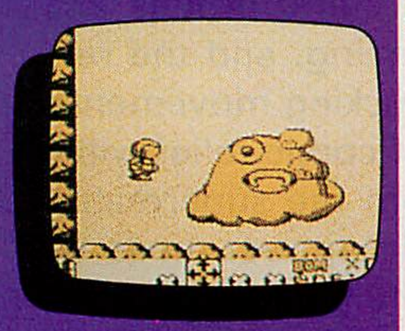

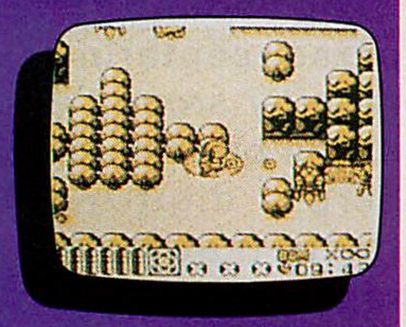

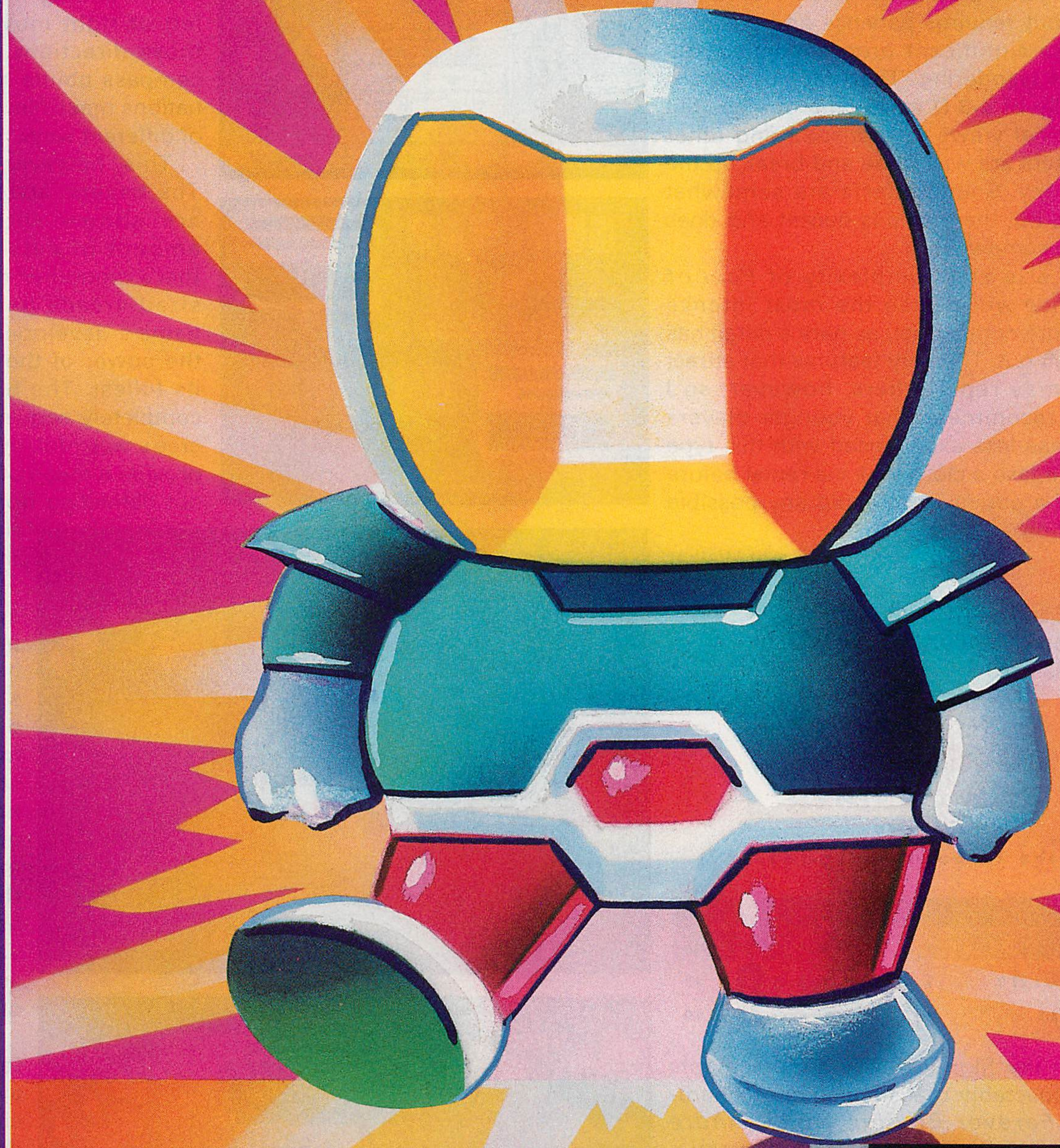

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view. Each character is controlled independently: You may determine movement, spell casting, aiming of weapons and attacking. An auto option is also available to let the computer run it all, if preferred. Remember that weapons must be equipped, and spells must be memorized before effective combat may take place. A battery backup allows a game to be saved, so, if worse comes to worst, just hit **RESET** to be placed in your last saved location.

The game play within this adventure is good, but requires patience and planning to make significant progress and avoid aimless wandering. The graphics consist primarily of a 3-D maze type of view, but occasional views of monsters and other characters are well done and break up the monotony. Sound effects are somewhat limited, but the music is decent and does change somewhat.

The size and complexity of *Pool of Radiance* will please the most intense adventure enthusiasts, as nary a detail has been left out. The very features that attract some may repel others, however; so I would recommend that younger players and those less experienced with this type of game take a close look via rental before making a purchase, to avoid any possible frustration.

—Brent Walker

FCI
150 E. 52nd St., 34th Floor
New York, NY 10022
(212) 753-8100

André Panza Kick Boxing

NEC

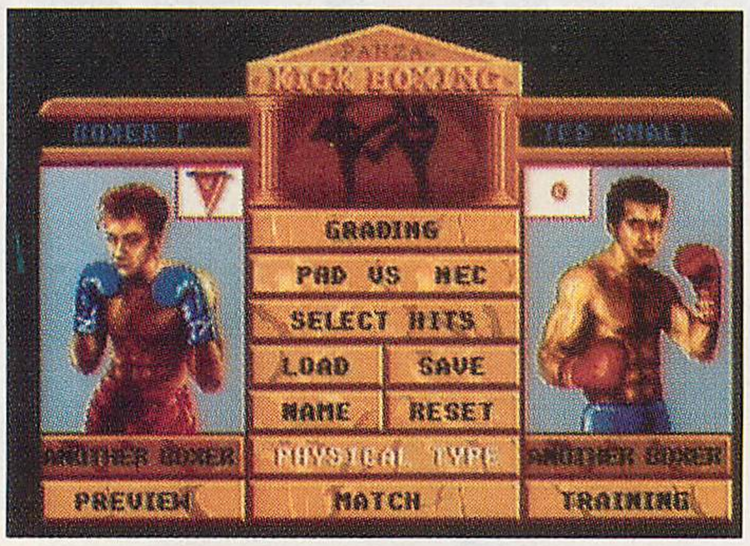
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($51.99)

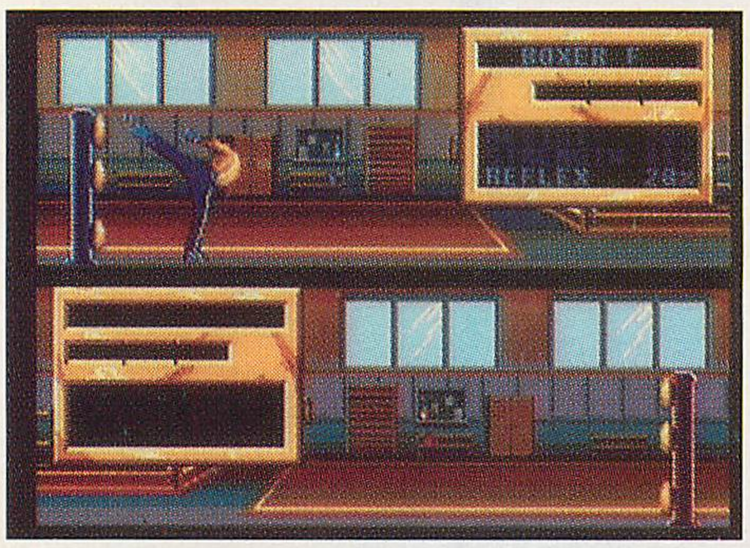
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

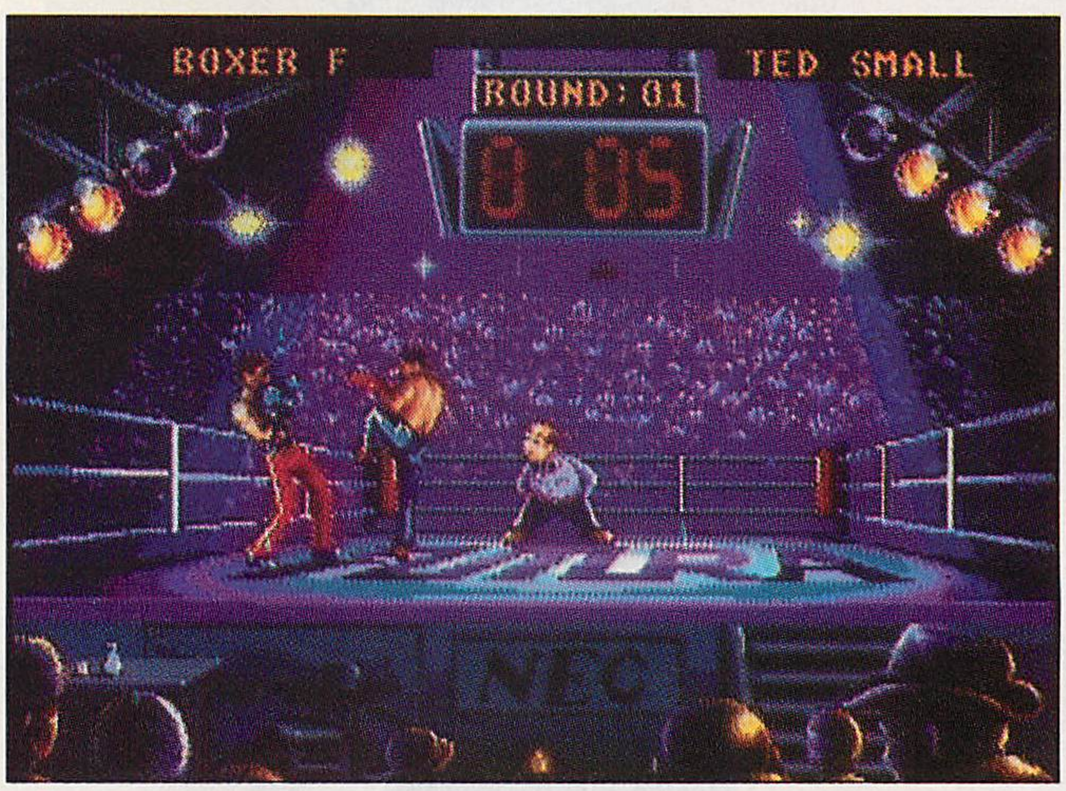
After the high-visibility endorsements and respectably realistic action of *Champions Forever Boxing*, NEC's *André Panza Kick Boxing* has a lot to prove. Everybody knows who George Foreman and Muhammad Ali are, but how many professional kick boxers can you name? One?—no, André Panza doesn't count. Do TurboGrafx owners really need another boxing game so soon, especially after *Champions* was such a hard-hitting success?

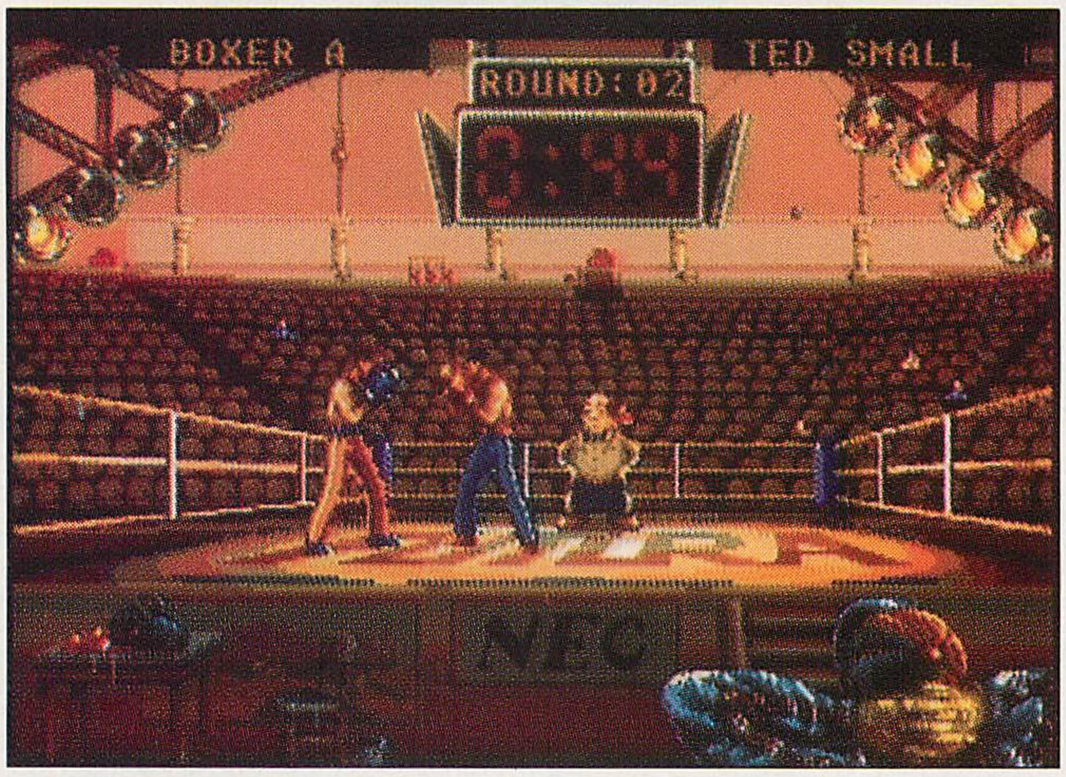
That's an easy one. The first game was obviously a diversion, the "one" in a devastating one-two punch that'll keep TG-16 owners in electronic-boxing rings through the year 2000.

André Panza Kick Boxing has some of the best character animation seen on the TG-16.









André Panza Kick Boxing gives the burgeoning sport a lot of credibility in the video-game marketplace. The ability to strike your opponents with your feet as well as your hands gives the combat scheme a lot more flexibility, a fact that the game exploits to the fullest by including more "moves" than just about any fighting game I've seen. Pointing the controller to the left or right moves your boxer in those directions, but all the other compass points and button combinations make him lash out in dozens of different ways.

This, however, is the best part: The boxers' attacks and reactions are shown with an incredible amount of detail and animation that's smoother than in many full-sized arcade games. Futura, the game's developer, has really used the power of the TurboGrafx-16 to its fullest. The boxers' moves are completely convincing, and the referee's watchful, ducking movements provide a touch of comic relief without detracting from the superrealistic appearances of the fighters.

The sound is sparse, centering primarily around a handful of painfully sharp digitized effects that make most of the hits sound like the breaking of wood... or bone. Not much music is heard, but the referee does have an interesting, vaguely European accent as he counts out a downed boxer.

I'm not going to let this game get away without criticizing its strangely designed "options" screen. The menus allow you to choose from eight different contenders and eight reigning title holders, with each one shown from the waist up. As you cycle through pictures of the dif-

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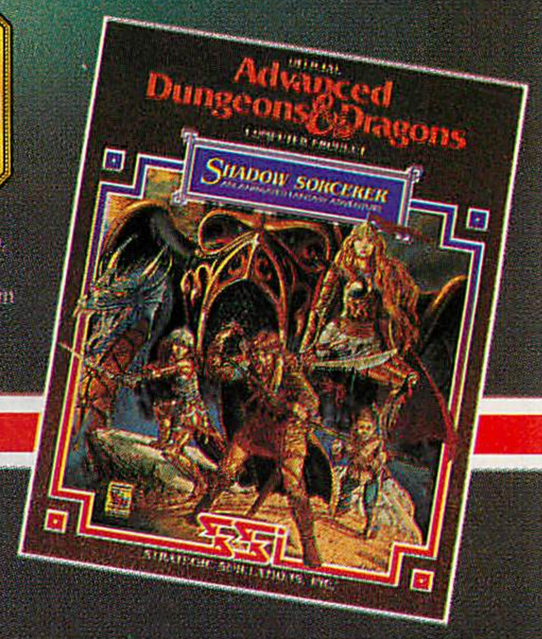


ferent fighters, only the heads change—they've all been pasted on the same body! This memory-saving quirk seems cheap and ill-conceived in the context of such a graphically impressive game, and it doesn't help that the "heads" bear uncanny resemblances to such notables as Kevin Costner, André the Giant, the late James Dean and even *Married...With Children*'s Al Bundy (Ed O'Neill).

Other flaws are equally trivial. Some of the more elaborate moves propel your boxer far forward from where he originally stood—often far enough to end up on top of your opponent, where neither one of you can land any blows. The way the two players overlap is a minor annoyance, but it's fairly easy to compensate for—and it comes in handy on occasion, allowing you to get in a few cheap shots while your opponent backs off.

As incredible as the game's graphics and game play may be, *André Panza Kick Boxing* doesn't really have a lot of depth, particularly in the one-player, work-your-way-up-to-the-title-bout mode. Many gamers will find it to be either frustrating or tedious, depending on whether or not you happen to own a TurboStick. (Owners of this full-sized joystick controller will have a distinct advantage, because it's easier to choose your moves with the stick than with the standard TurboPad, and the variable-speed auto-fire switches can be fine-tuned to rack up big totals in the game's "training" mode.)

On the other hand, I could play *André Panza Kick Boxing*'s two-player mode all night—and did so on several occasions during the preparation of this review. It's fun to go head-to-head with a fellow gamer and just sit and marvel at the tremendous variety of moves that the boxers are capable of.

The verdict? A fun game that's worth buying for the graphics alone—the character animation has to be seen to be believed.

—Chris Bieniek

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

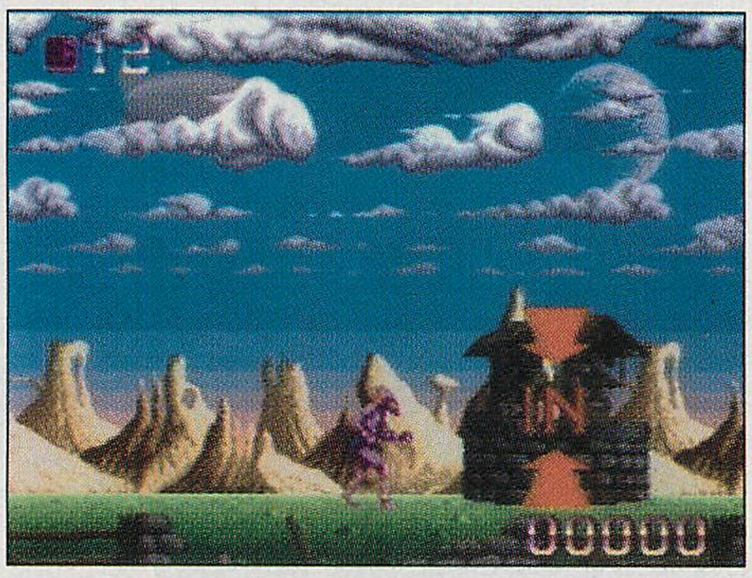
Shadow of the Beast

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

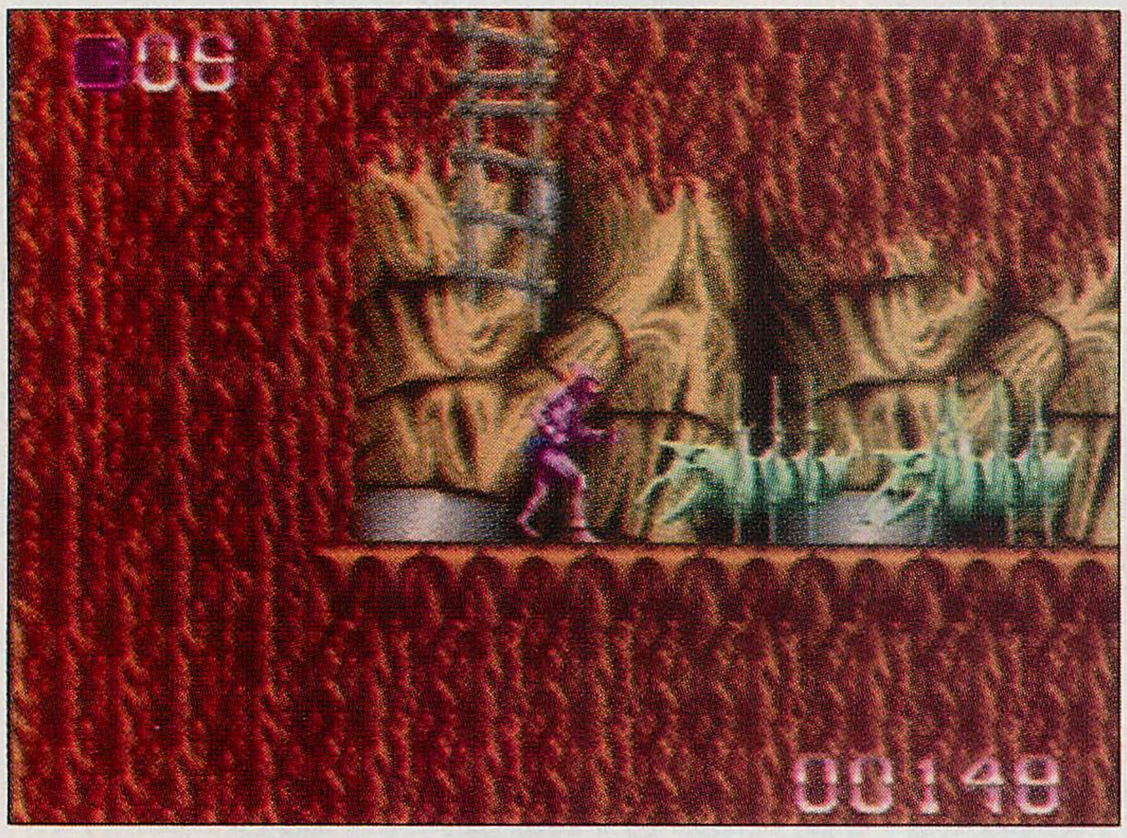
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

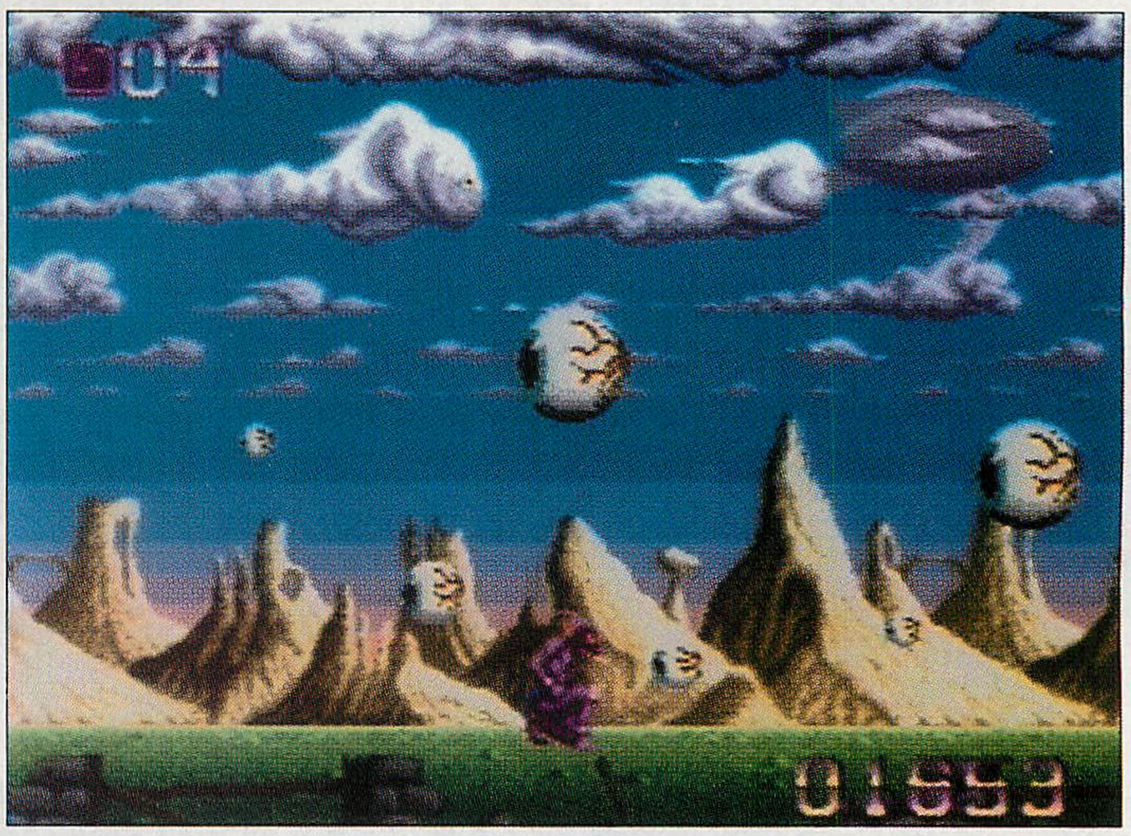
Shadow of the Beast is too tedious for all but the most masochistic joystick jockies.



In the world of floppy-based computer games, Psygnosis has a reputation for creating very beautiful but very difficult games. When *Shadow of the Beast* appeared on the Amiga, it was hailed as the most graphically astounding game ever seen on a computer screen. But perhaps standards are different in the video-game world. Multiplane scrolling may be novel to computer owners, but, to Genesis owners, it's common, and not by itself sufficient grounds to make a game a hit. Unfortunately, if you strip away *Shadow*'s graphic sizzle, you're left with a game that's overly tough and unforgiving, too tedious for all but the most masochistic joystick jockies.

In *SOTB*, you control an on-screen character who runs and climbs his way through a variety of





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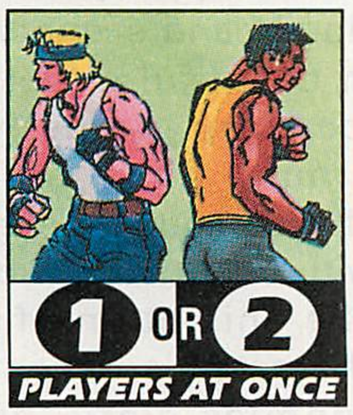

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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

aboveground and underground levels, searching for bosses and ways to unlock new areas. There are items (keys, potions, weapons and so on) hidden all over the game world, all of which must eventually be located and used correctly. As you run, you encounter hundreds of enemies, some of which can only be destroyed with certain weapons. The variety of enemies is fantastic, and often the key to defeating them lies more in careful timing and placement of your character than in your fast-flying punches and kicks.

Your strength is monitored by a gauge at the top of the screen. Contact with an enemy reduces your strength; with some enemies, the slightest touch is instantly fatal. When you've taken 20 minutes to reach that enemy, and with no other lives, no continues and no way to save your progress in the game, this is beyond frustrating—it's infuriating. Whatever the logic Psygnosis may have used in making players continually start this lengthy quest from the beginning every single time a game begins, it escapes this reviewer.

There are a few exciting aspects to *SOTB*. The game is partially nonlinear; you can backtrack through different levels (in fact, sometimes you *have* to) or tackle certain areas before you're properly equipped. Experimentation is required in order to determine which weapons are best used with which enemies, and how to trigger or prevent certain events. In general, though, a wrong guess is either harmful or deadly—all the more reason to give players a little slack. Incidentally, there are absolutely no options: It's one player, one life, no continues *anywhere* in the game, no passwords or saved games, no difficulty level, no way to change the assigned buttons, no level selection, no sound test, no *nuttin'*.

Overall, the game is graphically vivid and arcade-like, at times surprising and striking. The multiplane scrolling aboveground is superb: The ground appears solid, and the clouds and scenery scroll by in beautiful detail. In other locations (mostly underground and indoors), the effect is much more subdued, with only two layers at most. The animation of the main character is decent, but the enemies vary greatly in detail. Some of them are huge—but most of them are barely animated at all.

From an audio standpoint, the game is much less impressive. The music clearly doesn't take full advantage of the Genesis' sound capabilities. There are no digitized sound effects; in fact, the sound effects are hardly noticeable at all.

After all the prepublicity from my Amiga-playing buddies, I was expecting something far greater. *Shadow* will no doubt prove satisfyingly challenging for real arcade hotshots. But most players will probably get too tired of starting from scratch after their 20th game (which should be about half an hour after cracking the shrink wrap).

—Josh Mandel

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

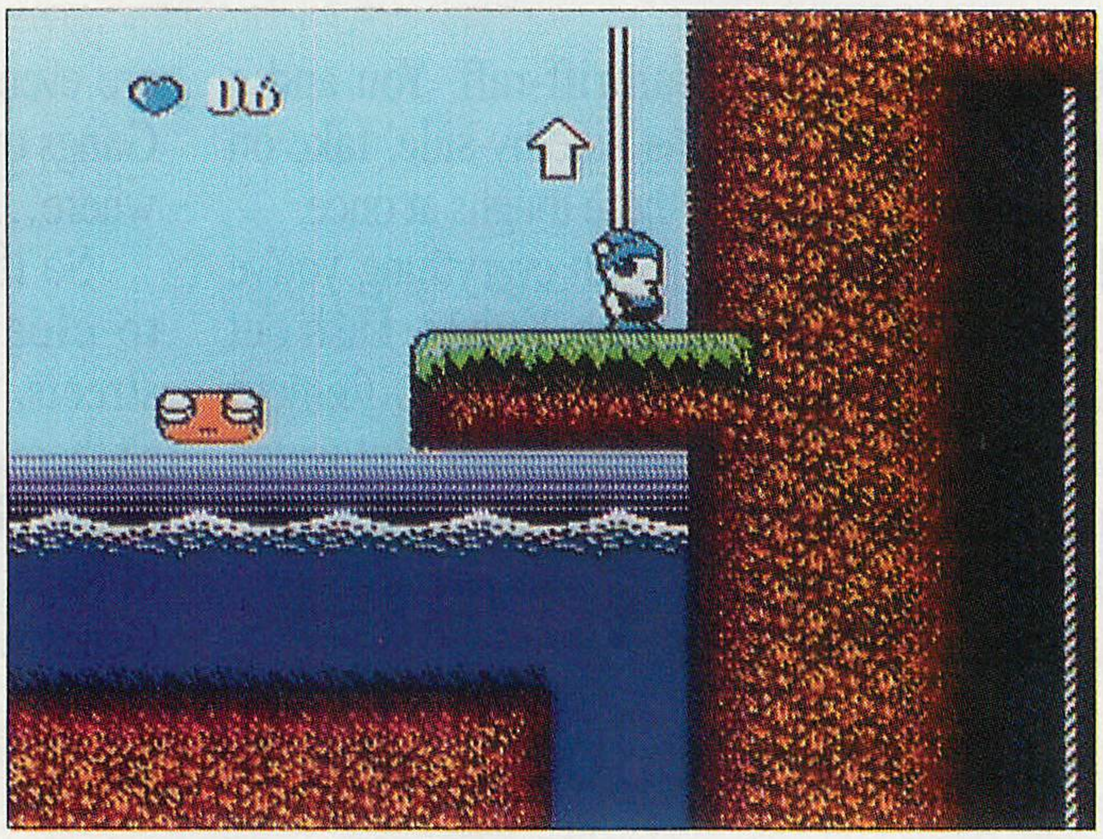
Ufouria—The Saga

SUNSOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($29.95)

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

Ufouria—The Saga has better sound effects and music than many 16-bit titles.



It's interesting to ponder the future of a generation of children who have grown up with the Nintendo Entertainment System, just as their parents never knew what life was like without a TV set. I mean, I know kids who have mastered *Super Mario Bros.* but are not yet old enough to know how to read the words of the Princess at the end of each level! I'm not saying that's a bad thing—I'm just fascinated by the evolution of video games that are specifically aimed at younger players.

Kids' games still require clean game play and simple story lines, but, in today's world, they also need to present a fair challenge—and that's where *Ufouria* comes in. It's a likable adventure, the story of a little character named Bop-Louie, who has lost three of his friends and sets out to find them in the far reaches of a strange and wonderful land. It all sounds innocuous enough, but accomplishing that goal is definitely a lot more difficult than it sounds.

As Bop-Louie wanders around and avoids pitfalls, he can look for treasure boxes

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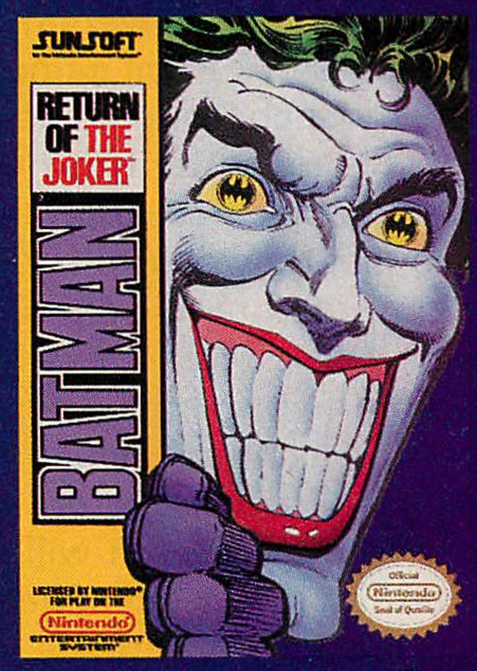

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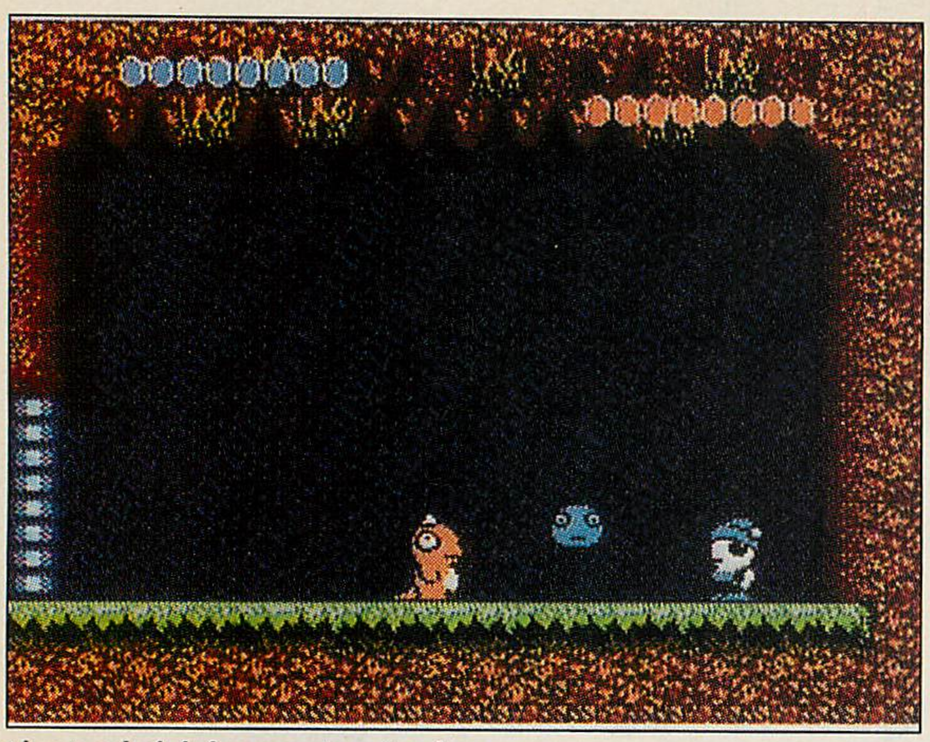
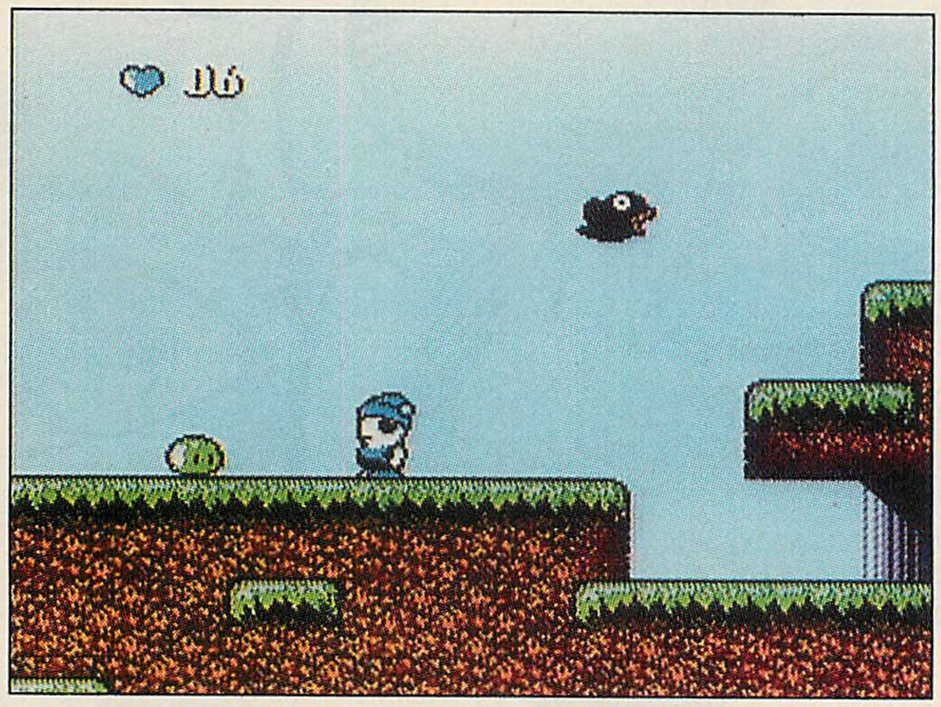


that yield important clues, items or power-up icons. When he does meet up with Gil, Shades or Freeon Leon, he'll be able to change into that character at any time and assume their strengths and weaknesses. The graphics are clean, colorful and well animated, but they're not exactly going to set the world on fire with their simple structure and relentlessly "cute" charm.



On the other hand, *Ufouria*'s great-sounding background music is a real treat. At times it's almost too dramatic: When Bop-Louie is reunited with the first of his missing friends, the accompanying fanfare would be more suitable for the flag raising at Iwo Jima than for the introduction of a video-game character who has regained his memory after being clobbered by a huge "smiley face"! But the tunes do keep your ears busy with some nice bass and percussion sounds, delivering more "bottom end" than many 16-bit games have offered.

The most challenging aspect of *Ufouria* is mastering your timing—remember, each character has different skills, which means that they all run at different speeds and jump differently. Other than that, the game's "adventure" qualities are pretty basic—perfect for the intended audience. Certain paths must be memorized because of the nonlinear structure of your quest, but a thorough search will quickly yield a map and a compass that help a great deal.

Occasionally, the game will also guide you with flashing arrows that tell you the best way to go as you move through certain areas. I'm pleased to report that these guidelines are not "red herrings"—if you ignore the arrows and head in a different direction, you'll usually end up in an area that won't let you progress until you've gone back to wherever the arrows told you to go in the first place.

The most challenging aspect of *Ufouria* is mastering your timing.

All things considered, you'll have to take the above number ratings with a grain of salt. With an "overall" rating of 6, these numbers reflect the fact that *Ufouria* is not the most challenging, most innovative or graphically impressive game of all time. But it's important to remember that the game was not meant to be any of those things. *Ufouria* was designed to be an entertaining, involving, nonviolent adventure for younger children—and in that light, it's a huge success.

—C.B.

Sunsoft
11165 Knott Ave.
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 891-4500

Outrun

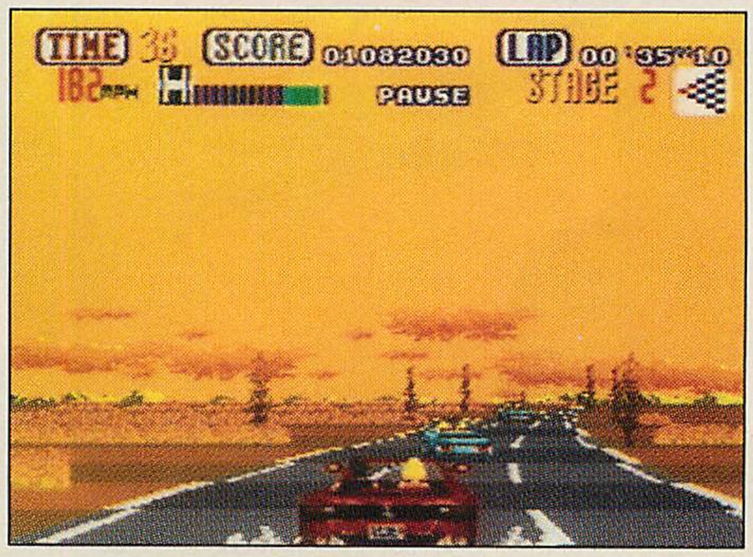
SEGA

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

It's time to take to the highways and put the pedal to the metal. *Outrun*, a long-time video-game favorite, has just appeared on the Sega Genesis, and street racing will never be the same again. In this one-player game, you race for the finish line, while avoiding other vehicles on the road, as well as obstacles by the sides. Since you can choose your own route to the finish line, it'll be a long time before you master every road configuration.

Previously available as a coin-op and in many computer formats, *Outrun* has made its way to the Genesis.



Before you even put the key in the ignition, *Outrun* lets you decide how you want to set up your control pad. While you always use the arrow pad to steer your car, you can map the brake, shift and accelerate functions to any of the buttons you like. This lets you set up the controls to match other racing games with which you may already be familiar.

On the options screen, you also can set the game's difficulty level; listen to the various pieces of background music, sound effects and voices; turn the background and sound effects on or off; and choose to have your speedometer read out in either miles per hour or kilometers per hour.

Once on the road, you must drive with care, taking turns as fast as possible, but not so fast that you spin off the road. If you hit an obsta-

continued on page 62

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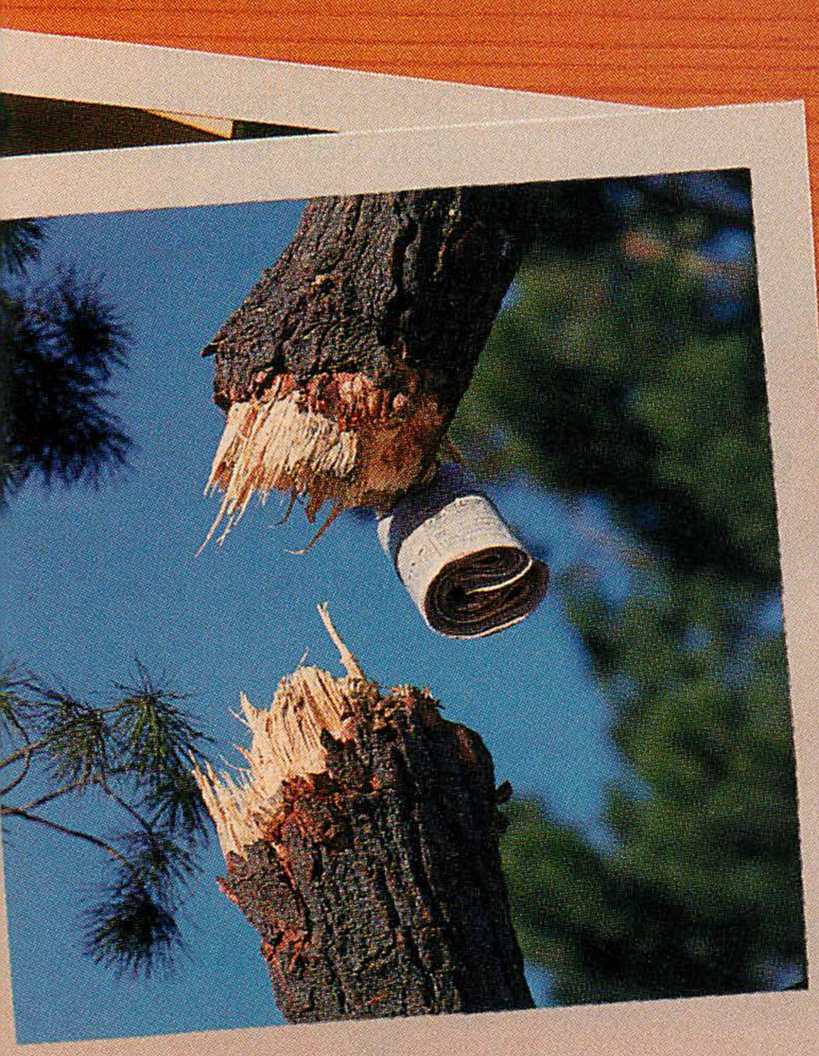
GAME BOY
PAPERBOY 2

New Paperboy.



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CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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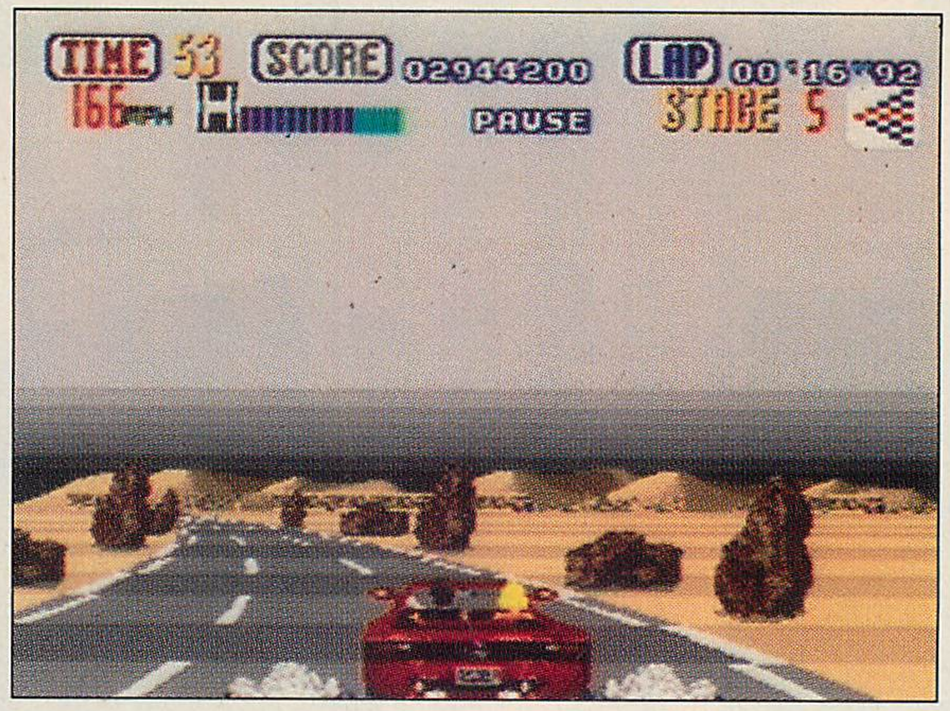
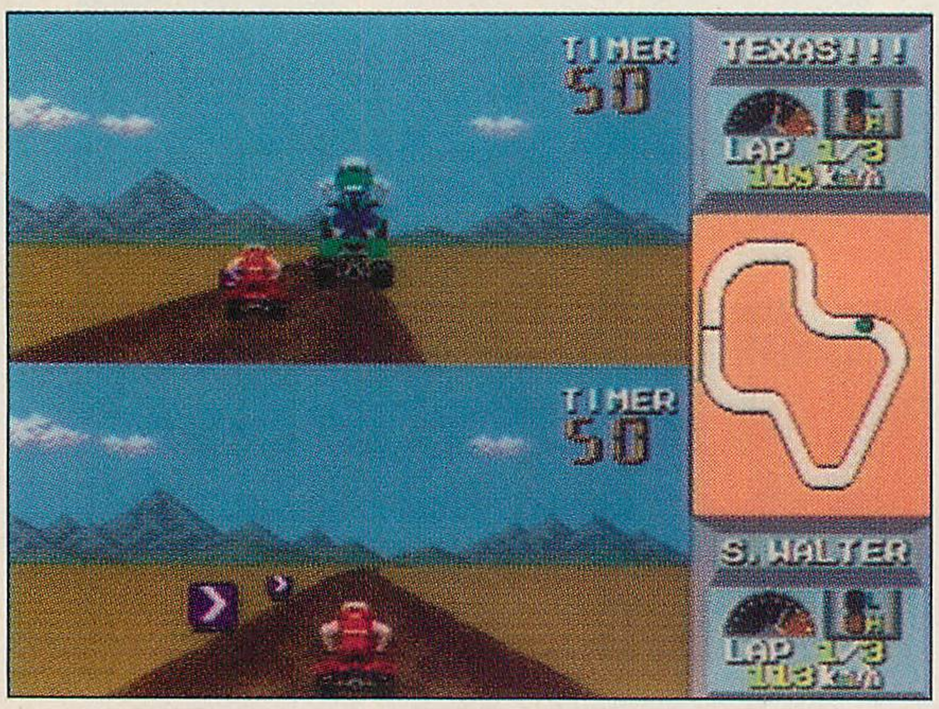


***Outrun's* graphics are shown in the usual first-person-type view, with the track flowing toward you.**

cle, your car will flip over, tossing its occupants into the air like rag dolls and causing you to lose valuable time. In addition, you must do your best to get past other vehicles on the highway. If you hit them, you'll spin out and lose even more time.

Each race is driven on a series of interconnected highways. At several places in the race, you come to forks in the road, from which you must pick a direction. There are many different routes to the finish line, with each route presenting its own challenges and background graphics. Allowing you to choose different routes through the race ensures that it'll be a long time before you've played the game out.

Outrun's graphics, shown in the usual first-person-type view, with the track flowing toward you, are cleanly rendered and reasonably well detailed. The five musical soundtracks are fun to listen to (even if one of them reminds me of the theme from *Love Boat*). The sound effects, including digitized voices, are snappy and well-suited to the game.



In *Quad Challenge*, gamers can choose from one of four vehicles.

Although *Outrun* features fewer game options than *Quad Challenge* (you can't choose between different cars, for example, or race against another player), its graphics are far superior, which, in my book, at least puts the two games on equal footing. Which you choose is a matter of taste, but, for my money, *Outrun* is the first across the finish line.

—Clayton Walnum
Sega of America
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Quad Challenge

NAMCO

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

Rev up those engines! In *Quad Challenge*, you take on the computer or another human player in a fight for the quad-racing championships of the USA. The tracks are challenging and the competition tough, but, if you can master your quad racer, you have a good chance of scooping up the winner's cup.

When you start the game, you choose from four different control configurations, letting you set up your control pad in a way that most suits you. All three buttons and the arrow pad are used to control your quad racer. The arrow pad, of course, acts as your steering wheel. The three buttons control acceleration, braking and shifting.

You choose your quad from among four vehicles. Some quads require manual shifting, which gives you greater control over your quad but requires more skill on the racetrack. Other quads come with automatic transmissions, which let you

continued on page 66

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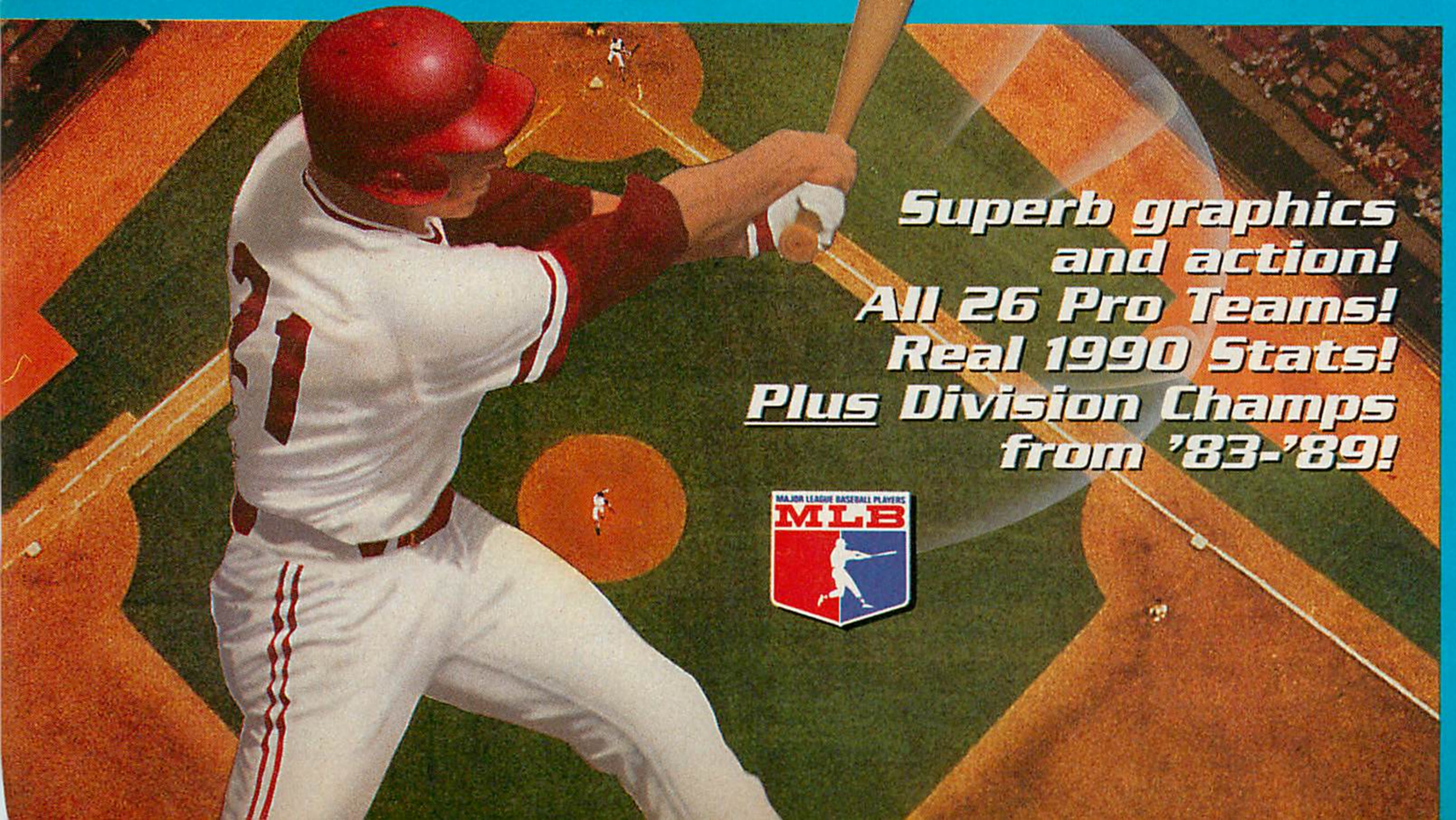

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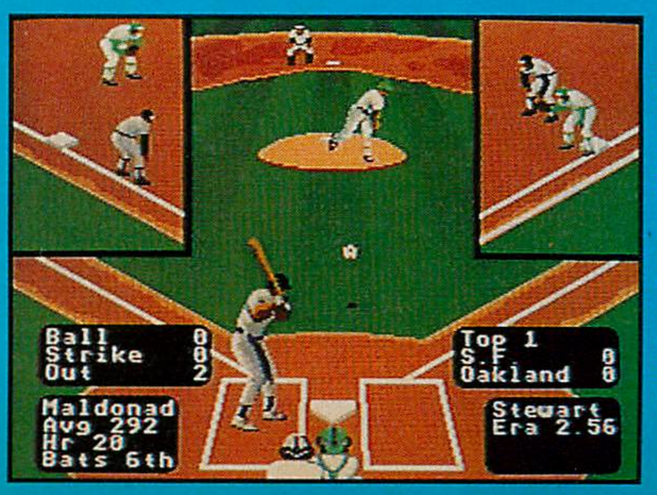

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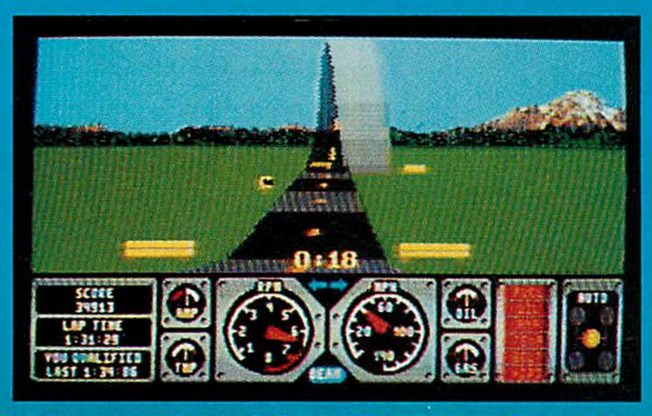

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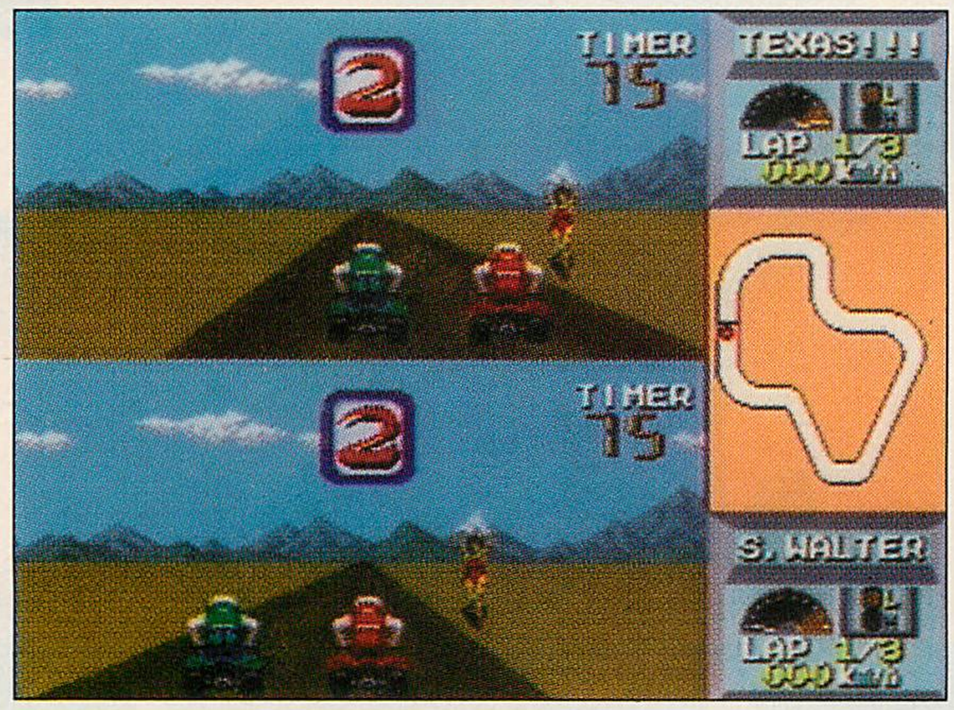
CIRCLE #132 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 62

concentrate on accelerating and steering rather than the precise shifting required to keep up the highest speed.

After choosing your control configuration and quad, you start the game by electing to play a practice race or to jump right into the competition. In the former choice, you can set the number of laps to race. Although you race against no opponent in the practice laps, you must keep up with the timer and get past the finish line before your time runs out.



If you already have race games in your Genesis collection, *Quad Challenge* will add little to your racing experiences.

In the competition mode, you challenge the other drivers in a breakneck race for the finish line. You still must keep an eye on the timer, though. If you drive too slowly, you're removed from the race, long before anyone reaches the finish line. As you scream around the track, you can slam into other racers and try to knock them from the road. Be careful around curves, though, or you'll spin out or crash, both of which waste valuable time.

Quad Challenge's graphics are unimpressive. The game is played in the usual first-person-type view, with the track flowing toward you. The track, racers and background scenery are rendered with a minimal amount of detail, at best. The wonderful graphics capabilities of the Genesis are wasted here. On the plus side, the musical soundtracks (there are several from which to choose) are lively and well composed. The sound effects, which include digitized voices, are also well done.

If you already have race games in your Genesis collection, this one will add little new to your racing experiences. But, if you don't yet own a Genesis racing game, *Quad Challenge* will probably keep you laying down rubber for many hours to come.

—C.W.

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Santa Clara, CA 95054-3013
(408) 496-3671

Davis Cup Tennis

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($51.99)

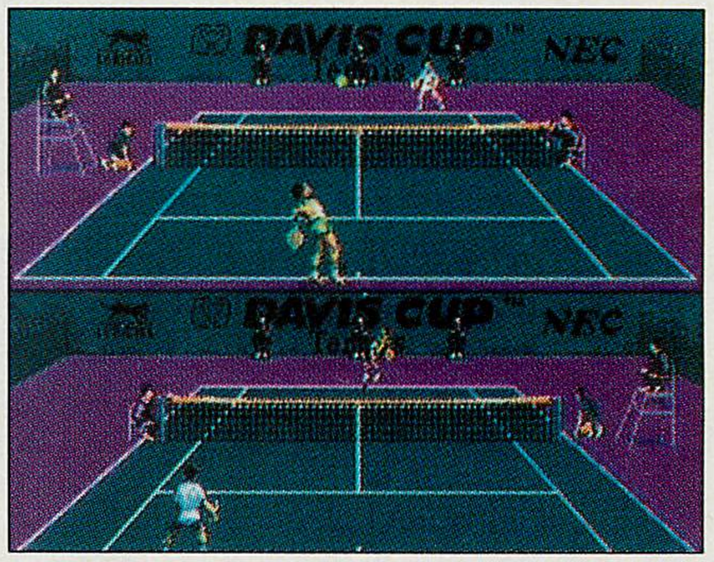
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Tennis anyone? Although I love getting out with a friend to knock the ball around for a couple of hours, when it's rainy outside, you are pretty much stuck. Unless, of course, you have *Davis Cup Tennis*.

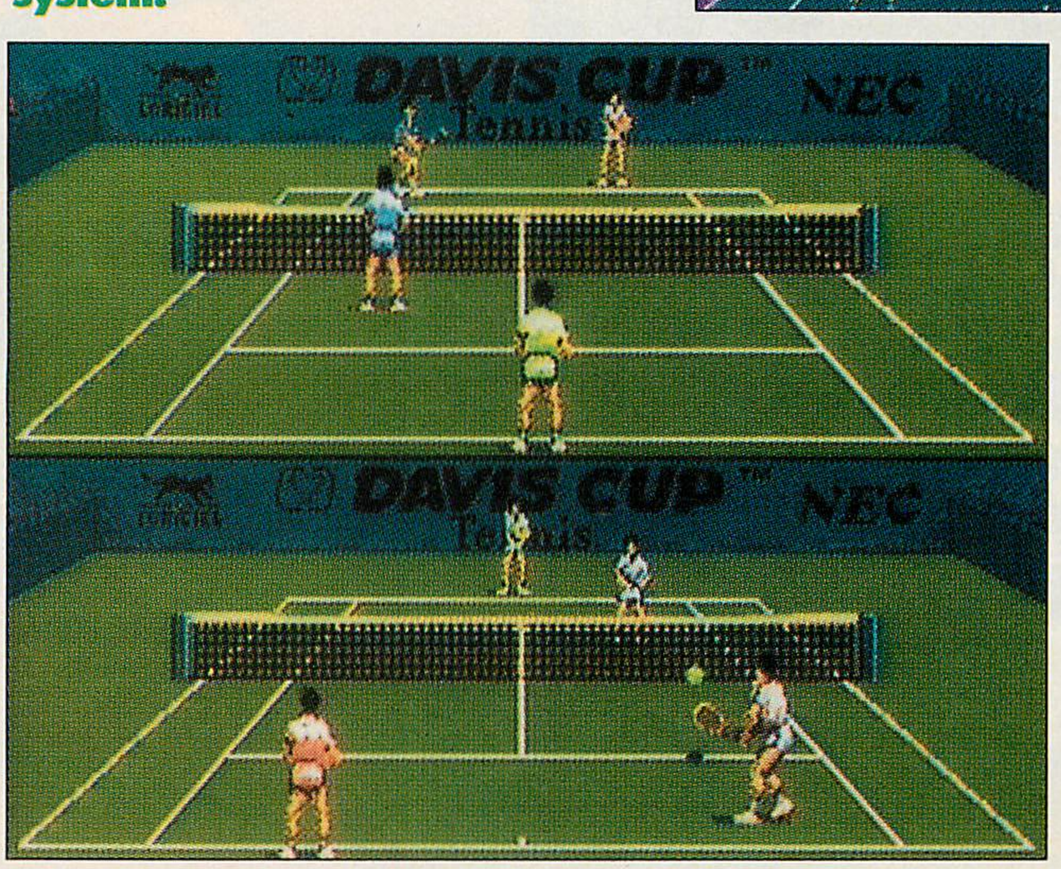
This is the best-looking tennis simulation I have seen to date on any system, with great game play to support it. Multiple play choices, multiple surfaces and multiple players—both computer and human—all contribute to make this a game you may want to keep playing even after the rain has stopped.

From one to four may compete either in singles or doubles matches. Matches may be exhibition, if you just feel like knocking the ball around a bit, or part of a tournament—the Davis Cup series or the championship series.

Need to work on that backhand a bit? Enter the training mode, where slams, lobs, forehands and backhands can be worked on as the ball machine sends ball after ball shooting to different portions of the court.

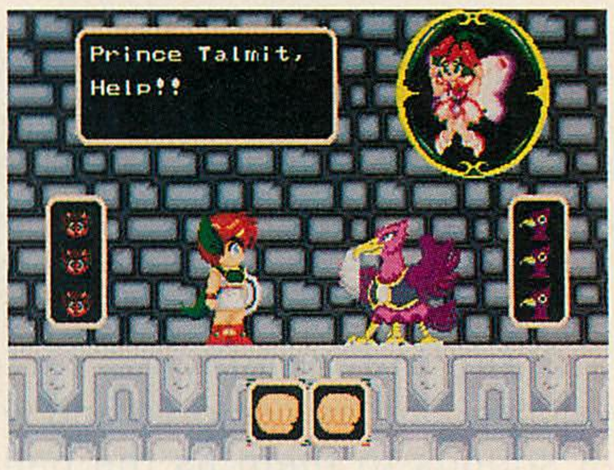


***Davis Cup Tennis* is one of the best-looking tennis simulations seen on any system.**



Some of the options available to customize the game to your skills or preferences include match lengths of one, three or five sets, four different game speeds to keep that action going at a comfortable pace and one of three selectable music backgrounds that play during game selection.

LEAP INTO ACTION!



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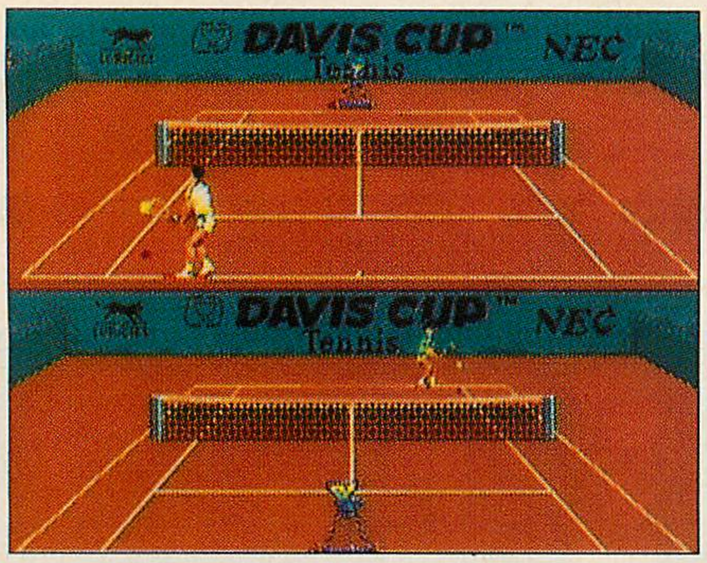
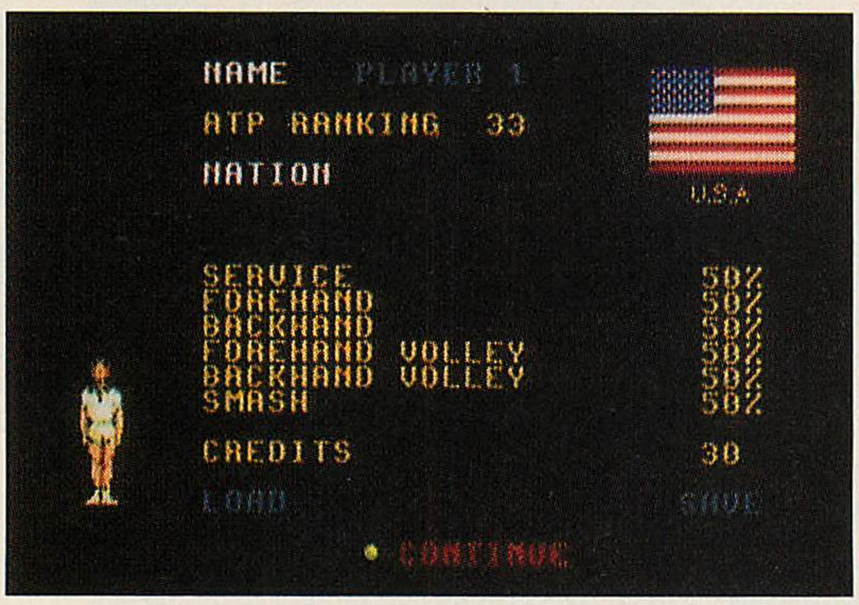
CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Gamers can go up against any one of the 32 existing players available in *Davis Cup Tennis*.



Once you have the basics configured to your liking, it's time to get your player's characteristics established. First, you name your player, then choose a nation that you want to represent. There are 16 nations to choose from, each represented by its respective flag.

Players have skill percentages for their service, forehand, backhand, volley and smash that may be adjusted up or down, along with some extra points to fill in where needed. Once you have established these abilities, choose one of the matches; then you will have the opportunity to either choose one of 32 computer opponents (two from each nation, with their appropriate ranking) or create an opponent from scratch.

While this may sound time consuming, it actually goes rather quickly, and a "save" feature will let you store your created characters, if you have the proper hardware with your TG-16.

If you choose to go up against one of the existing 32, players with first names like Jimmy, Stefan, Boris, John and Mats will be more than happy to greet you out on the court—after you have chosen a playing surface, of course. Clay, grass, hard and indoor playing surfaces are available, properly colored and with different sounds to them as the balls impact with their surfaces.

Finally, it's out to the courts. Your players shake hands and stand in silence as a brief segment of each nation's anthem is played. Believe me, it's all here.

One of the most important aspects to consider in this type of game is how well it controls. Like any game, it takes some time to get the feel for the moves and shots, but they soon become smoothly integrated into the game. A screen size option is available that lets you set the entire screen from a single player's viewpoint for the one-player matches (though it may be used for two) or split the screen for a more comfortable view when two or more players are involved.

The sound effects are very good, from the ball sounds and the music, to the distinctively British-sounding accent when the scores are announced. The graphics are also great—witness the rocking motions as your player waits for a serve or the twisting heads of the judges and ball boy as they follow the action.

If you are looking for the tennis game to have, *Davis Cup* wins in straight sets.

—B.W.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

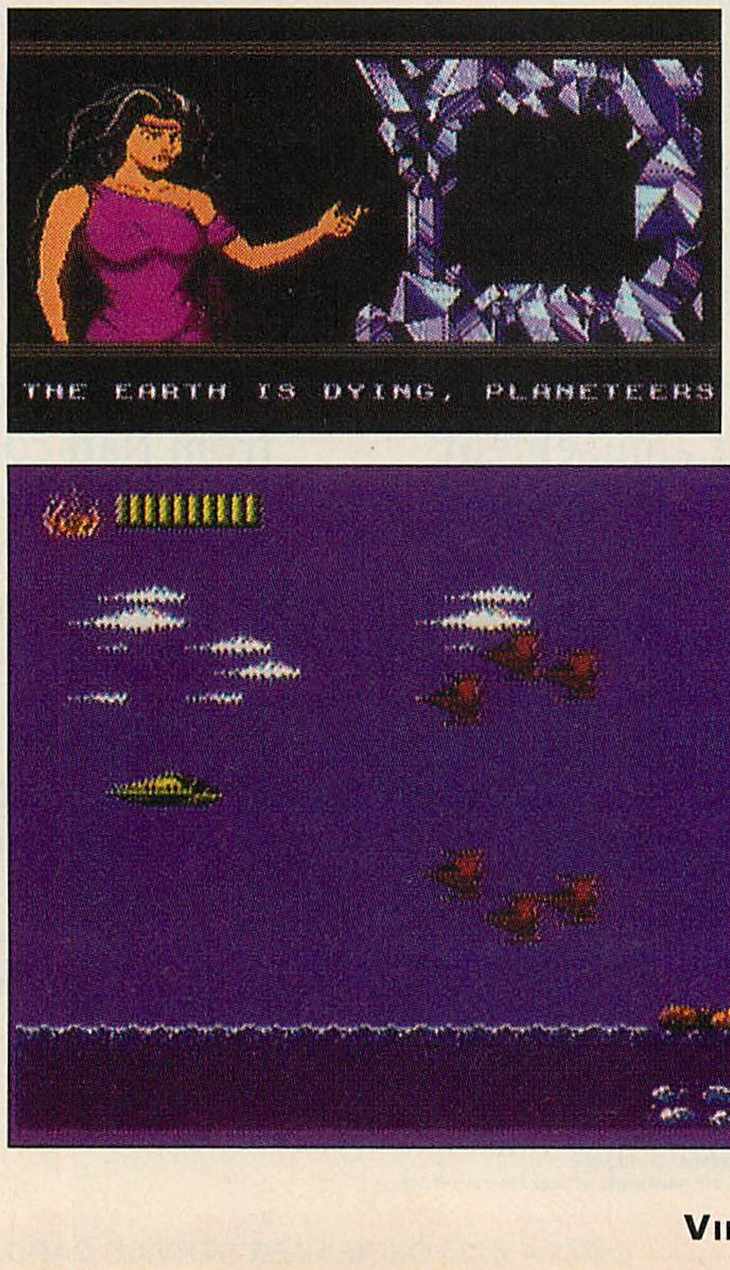
Captain Planet and the Planeteers

MINDSCAPE
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

You're probably thinking, "This game can't be *that* bad, can it?" Unfortunately, it is. Normally, a reviewer can find at least a few good things to say about a game (e.g., it's meant to appeal to a certain audience, it's easily playable, etc.). But—in all my sincerest honesty and reluctance to say this—I had the toughest time finding just one good thing about *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*. And it is unlikely that the version I reviewed was a crude prototype that will differ much from the final release.

Captain Planet and the Planeteers is based on the ecologically correct animated series.



Based upon the ecologically correct animated series, *Captain Planet* reduces the show's premise—that of an international group of preteens who globe-trot the world to stop those who would pollute it—into two basic scenarios. One is a scrolling shooter in which you try to control (more on this later) the kids' yellow airship over the ocean while enemy aircraft and gun turrets attack. Throughout the level, there are giant robot walkers (clearly an homage to the ones in the movie *The Empire Strikes Back*) that must be stopped by shooting at their legs.

The next setting takes place inside the enemy's giant stronghold, where

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Last year, you helped Bonk pick the dumbest of the dumb, the bogus and the bad, the unforgivable and the outrageous real-life characters and things that deserved to be "bonked." Some of your favorites were sleazy politicians, fickle movie stars, stupid TV shows, nasty newsmakers, dirty oil spills, dangerous drugs and gangs.

Now it's time to help our gnarly cave-dude decide who should be "bonked" this year. Tell us your nominees for the 1991 Bonk Awards and VG&CE will enter your name in a random drawing for an awesome TurboExpress portable or an excellent TurboGrafx-16 video-game system!

FIRST PRIZE: TurboExpress portable, TurboVision TV Tuner, *Bonk's Revenge*
SECOND PRIZE: TurboExpress portable, *Bonk's Revenge*
THIRD PRIZE: TurboGrafx-16 system, *Bonk's Revenge*

To enter, fill out a postcard with you name, address, age and phone number, along with the name of ONE famous person and ONE well-known thing that deserves to be "bonked" and mail it to:

GOOD LUCK!

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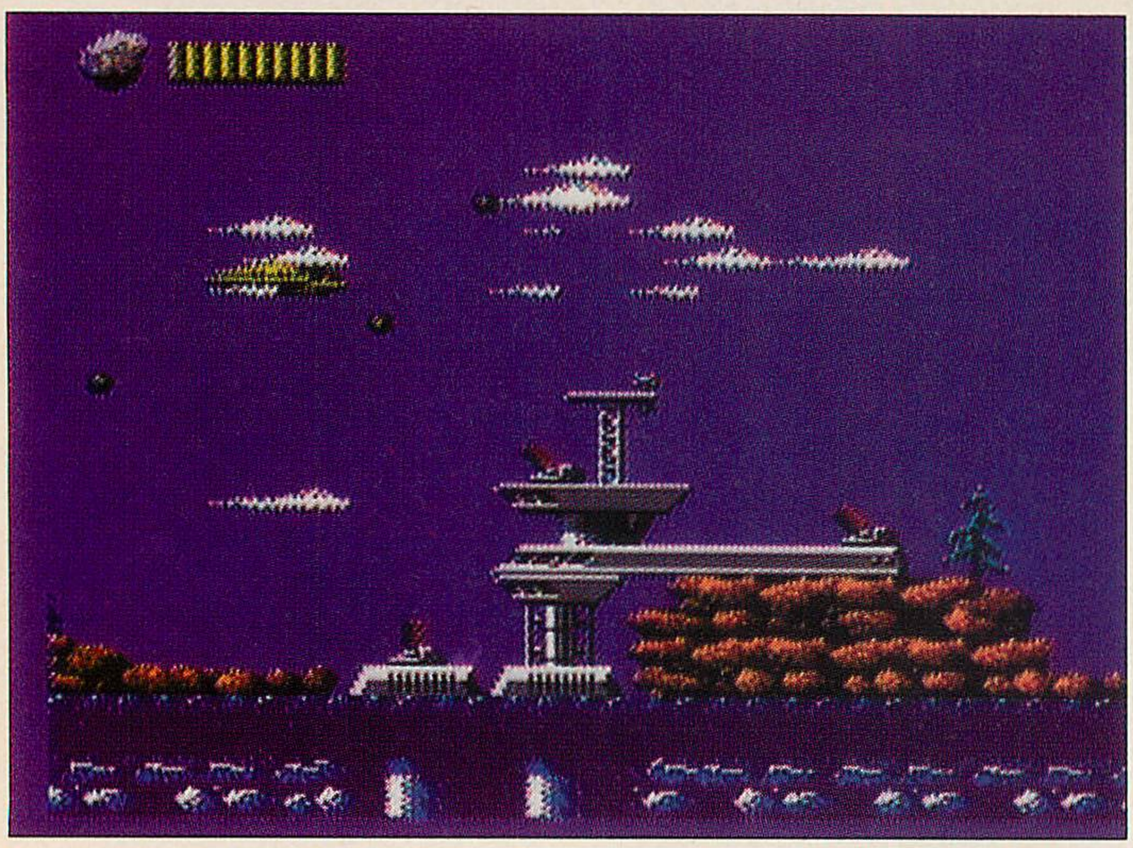
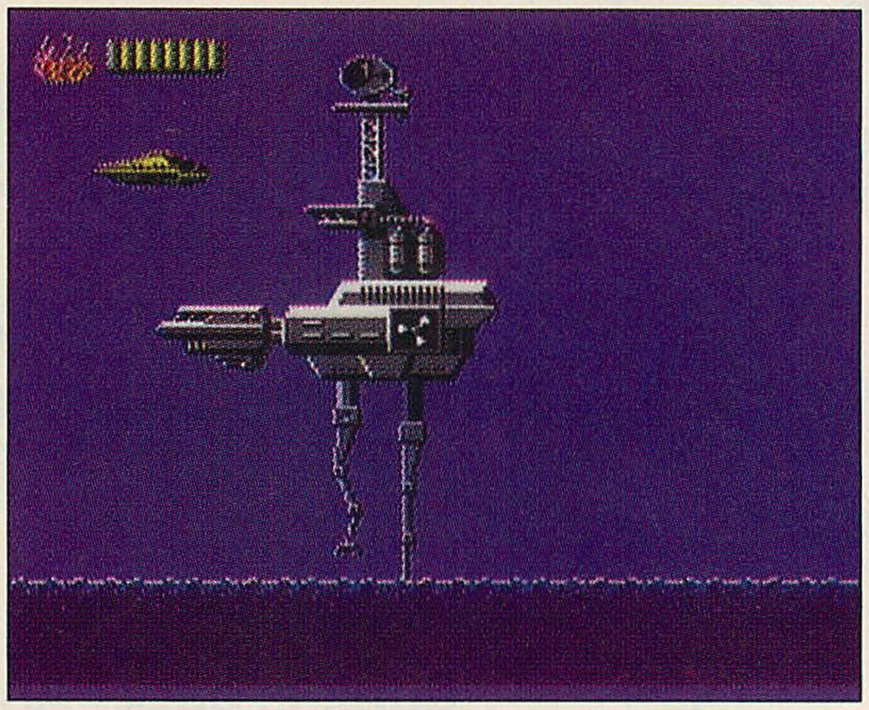
Attn: Bonk Awards

GOOD LUCK!

Winners will be announced in the April issue of VG&CE, along with a list of all the nasty people and things that you voted to face *Bonk's Revenge*.

Entries must be received by December 16, 1991. You may enter as many times as you wish. No purchase necessary to enter. Void where prohibited by law. Odds of winning will depend on the number of entries received. Taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of winners. There is no substitution of prizes, nor are they refundable, transferable for cash or redeemable for cash. An affidavit of eligibility and liability/publicity release will be required of prize winners. Employees of NEC, VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT and their affiliates are not eligible. No responsibility is assumed for entries not received by December 16, 1991, regardless of the reason, including delays in delivery.





you control Captain Planet on a mission to destroy the place. (You see, the kids each wear rings having the powers of one of the elements—earth, wind, air, fire and...heart?—that, when combined, bring forth the defender-of-the-Earth entity known as Captain Planet. But don't worry about this; it doesn't really matter in this game.)

Obviously, I am obligated to state what is wrong with *Captain Planet*. Here goes:

• *The airship and Captain Planet are difficult to control*—Their movements are extremely erratic, whether you are playing with standard control pads or an NES Advantage. In fact, the quicker you move the airship or Captain Planet in one direction (or change it), the more you'll lose control. Crashing the airship into the water, an island or other obstacle happens with amazing frequency when all you're trying to do is just dodge an incoming enemy.

• *Game features are nearly impossible to access*—The airship and Captain Planet have separate weapons (designated by earth, wind, fire, etc.) that can only be accessed by cycling through them with the control pad—while all on-screen action continues to move. Furthermore, because of *Captain Planet*'s first flaw above, retrieving power-ups before they quickly drop into the ocean is really difficult to do without fatally crashing.

• *Game play is primitive in both design and execution*—Flying enemies attack in simple linear formations, one wave after the other, making for predictable play. As further proof of poor design, objects flicker quite a lot.

• *Game play is uninteresting and dull*—Overall, the resulting challenge in *Captain Planet* is trying to avoid getting run into by enemies without losing control of your own ship or character. And it's a frustrating challenge, at that.

• *The music and sound effects are very, very bad*—No irreverence intended, but *Captain Planet* has some of the worst sound I have ever heard on the NES.

• *The graphics are just plain bad*—Especially the ones in the side-view shooter scenes. The Captain Planet graphics are better—but not by much.

There's nothing more to be said; but one has to ponder if companies do indeed make lots of money from cheaply and quickly produced games that capitalize on a licensed property. *Captain Planet* is simply an example of lousy execution.

—Howard H. Wen

Software Toolworks
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Motor City Patrol

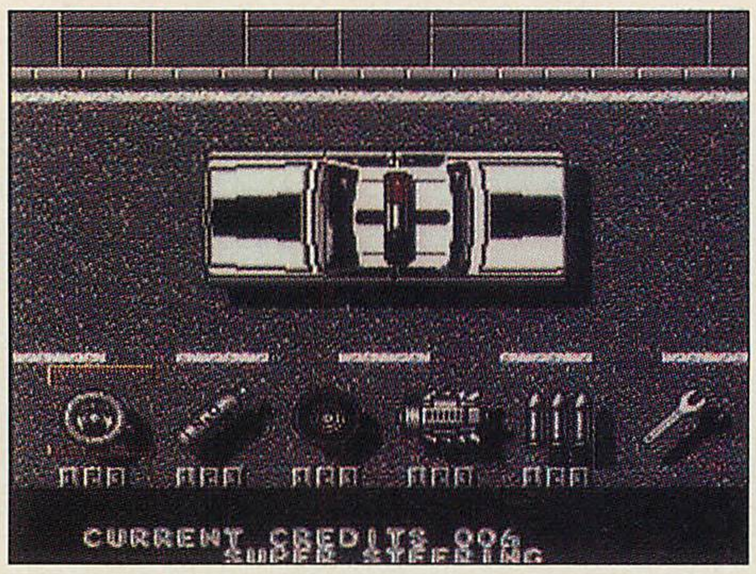
MATCHBOX

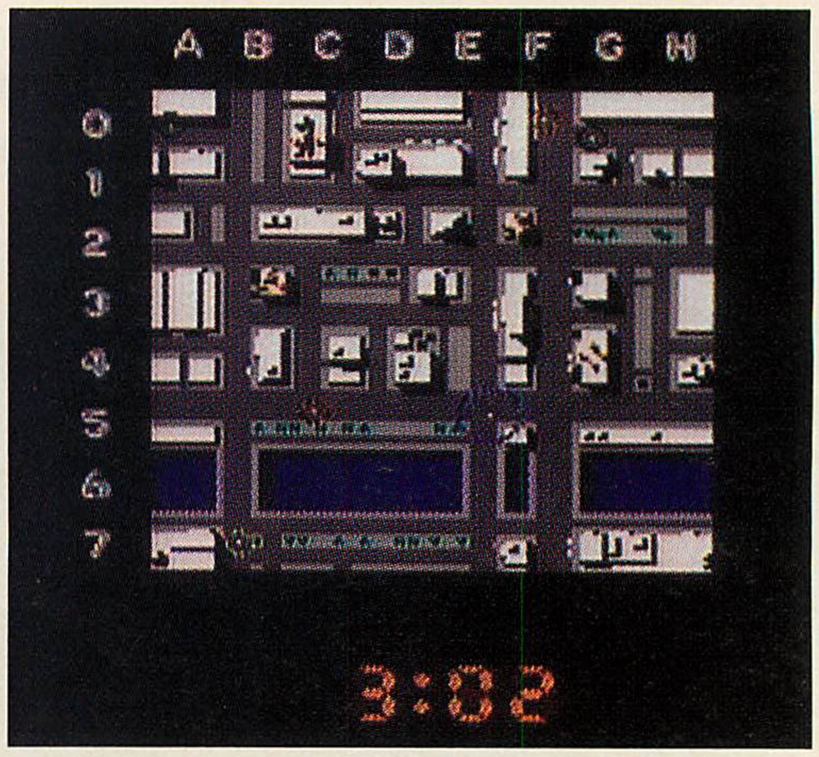
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

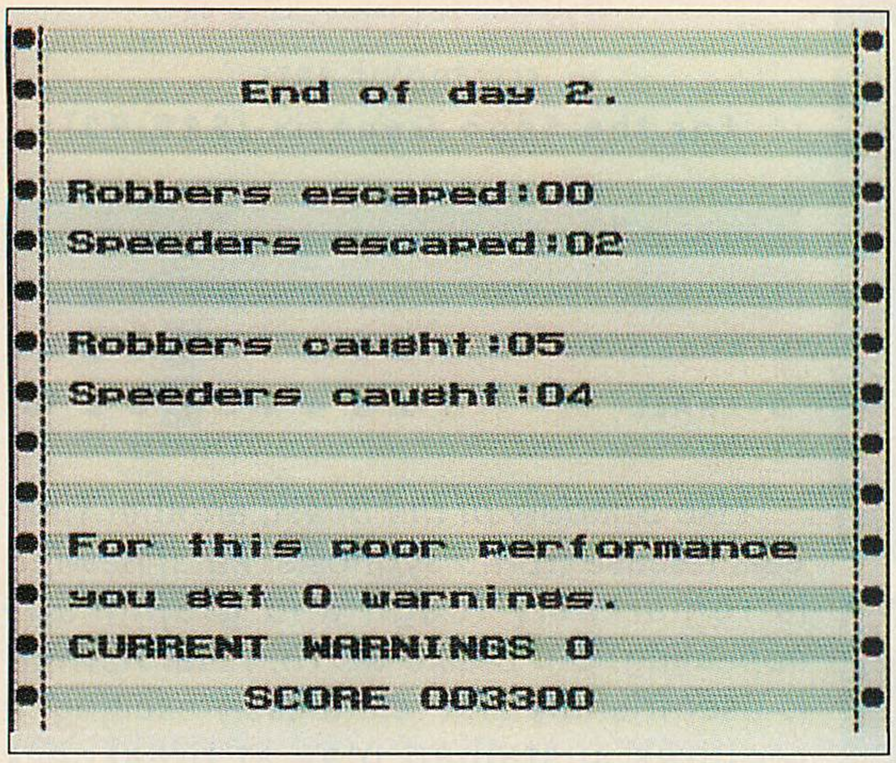
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

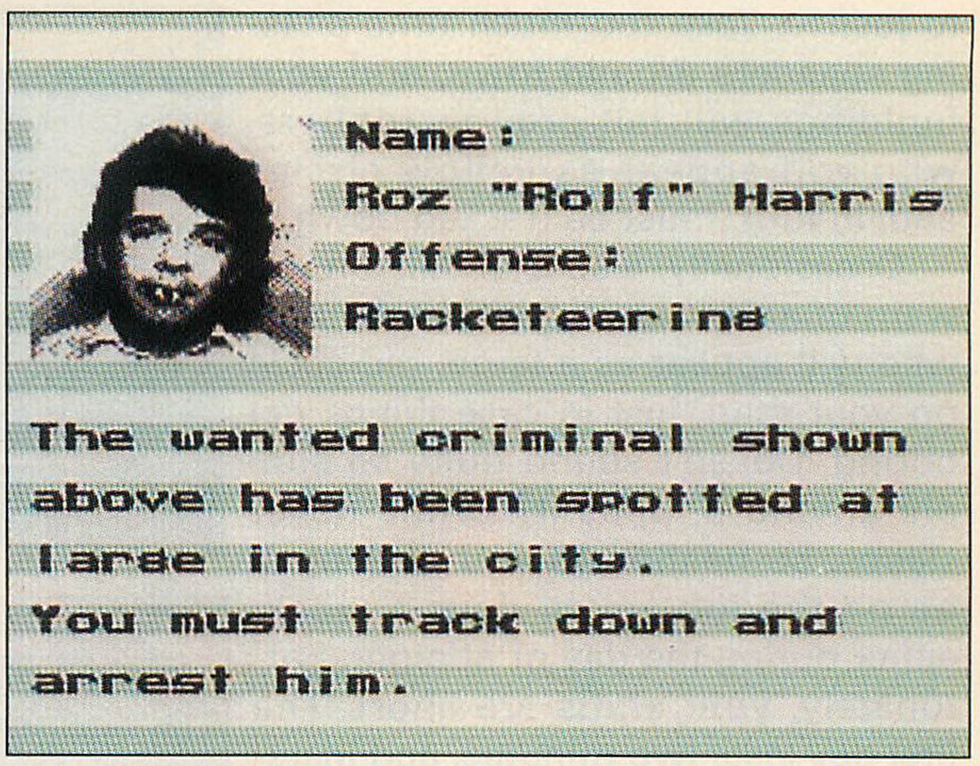
Just when you thought that every toy that could make the transition to a videogame format had done so, up pops something new. Remember those little cars that you played with all those years ago? (Okay, perhaps not *so* long ago for some of you.) In *Motor City Patrol*, Matchbox has taken these same cars and placed them on your video screen, where they

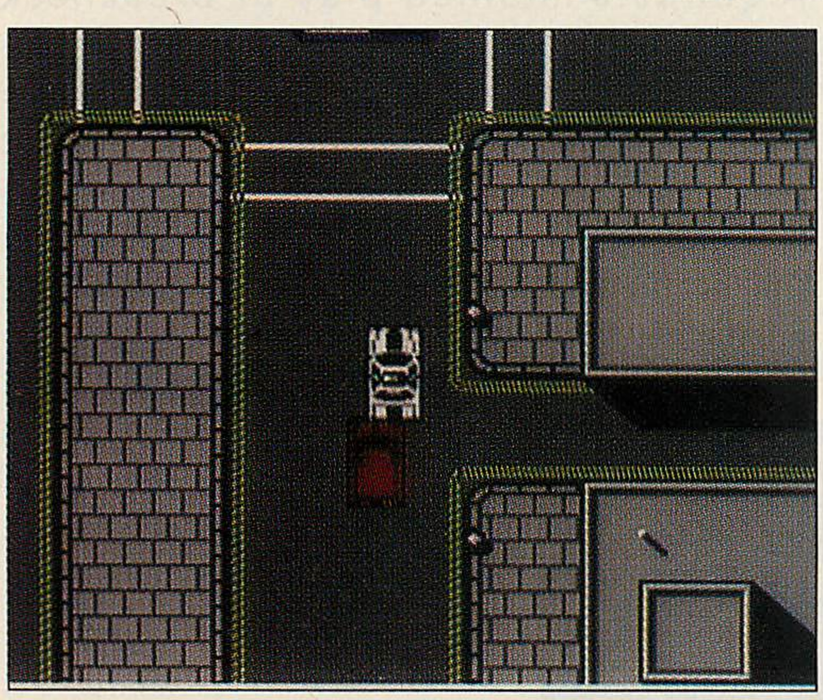
Motor City Patrol offers gamers a chance to play cops 'n' robbers on their NES.











can't be stepped on by your screaming mother or carried off by the dog.

Here is your chance to play cops 'n' robbers with video representations of these cars. As a police officer new to the area, your goal is to advance yourself by patrolling each of five areas of a large metropolitan city for a week at a time. If you can prove that you have the necessary skills to keep crime in control, you will get bumped over to another area, where your abilities must be even sharper in order to keep your job.

The way this works is as follows: Each portion of the city is represented by an overhead map that may be called up at any time, which shows the layout of the area as far as streets, buildings and the position of other cars within the neighborhood. When the week starts, you are only responsible for keeping your eyes upon a few buildings within the district, but, as the week progresses, your responsibilities and the length of your time on call increase.

It seems simple enough—just drive by the buildings occasionally, and keep an eye out for speeders or the occasional thief on your map.

Your average upstanding citizens will appear as small, black circles, but, if they get a little lead-footed and start speeding, their respective circles will turn red, which lets you know that it's time to bring them

As seen on Video Power TV show.

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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

to justice. Take too much time chasing speeders around town, and your buildings will fall prey to robbers, who will appear as yellow circles and, in turn, must be tracked down.

Occasionally, a special bulletin will warn of a serious criminal in the area who will appear as a large, red circle on your map, just in case things get boring. Doesn't sound quite so simple anymore, does it? Crime never sleeps, so neither do you. You must be on the job seven days a week, either during the day or at night. Fortunately, your shifts are short. The first day lasts two minutes, and increments one minute a day up to eight minutes. It may not sound very long, but wait 'til you hit the streets.

If you manage to capture a speeder, you get points added to your score. If you take out a thief or one of the major criminals, you get additional points, as well as merit points that can be used to repair or beef up your squad car between days. Steering, turbo, brakes, top speed, bullets and repairs all cost merit points to acquire.

On the flip side, if you let any of the aforementioned criminals escape, or if you arrest the innocent, you may receive warnings from your superiors—five warnings in a game and you are out of a job.

This game looks nice visually—both the daytime and nighttime views as you cruise through the city are crisp, and scroll smoothly by for the most part. The overhead views of the cars are acceptable as well. Sound effects consist primarily of a snatch of music when the map is displayed, engine whine during acceleration and, of course, your police siren. Nothing fancy, but it works.

While "cops and robbers" was fun as a kid and makes good TV fare, this game emulates neither. It seems to resemble more closely the day-to-day drudgery that many police actually go through, and without even the occasional doughnut shop to raid. The majority of playtime within the game is spent driving in endless circles patrolling your beat, constantly flipping to check your map and occasionally racing away to catch a speeder or other criminal—in other words, it's too much like work. Sure, there is strategy involved in keeping the streets free of criminals, but the enjoyment just wasn't there for me.

—B.W.

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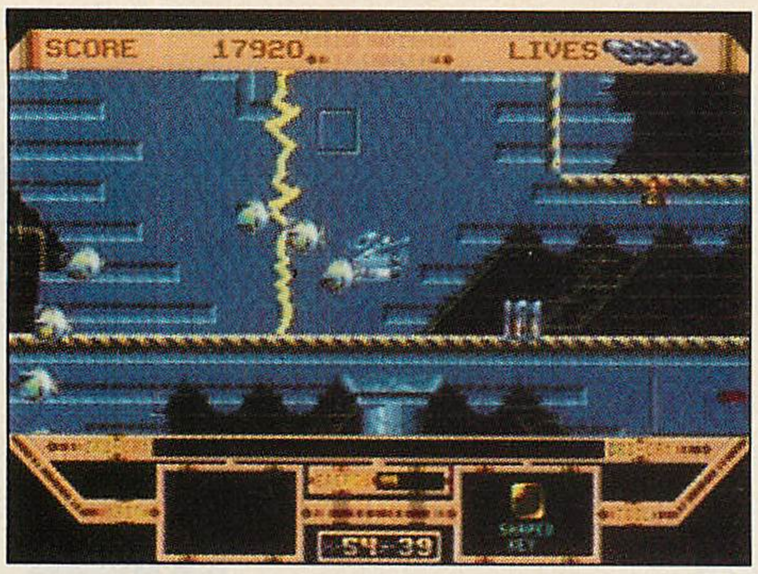
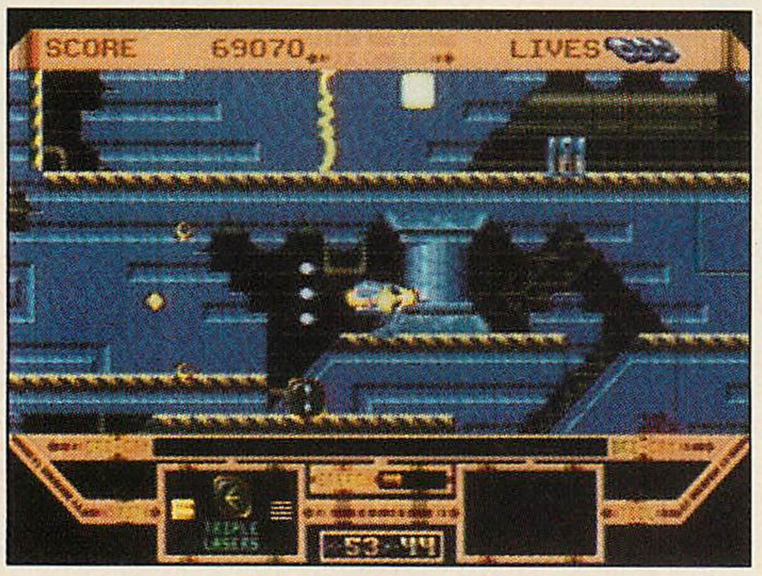
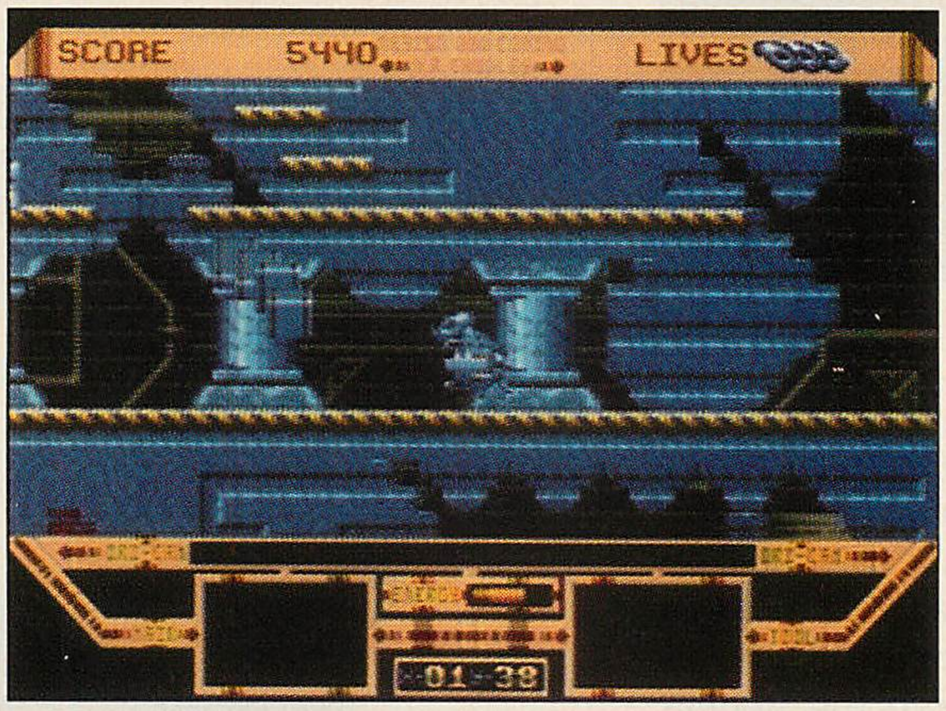
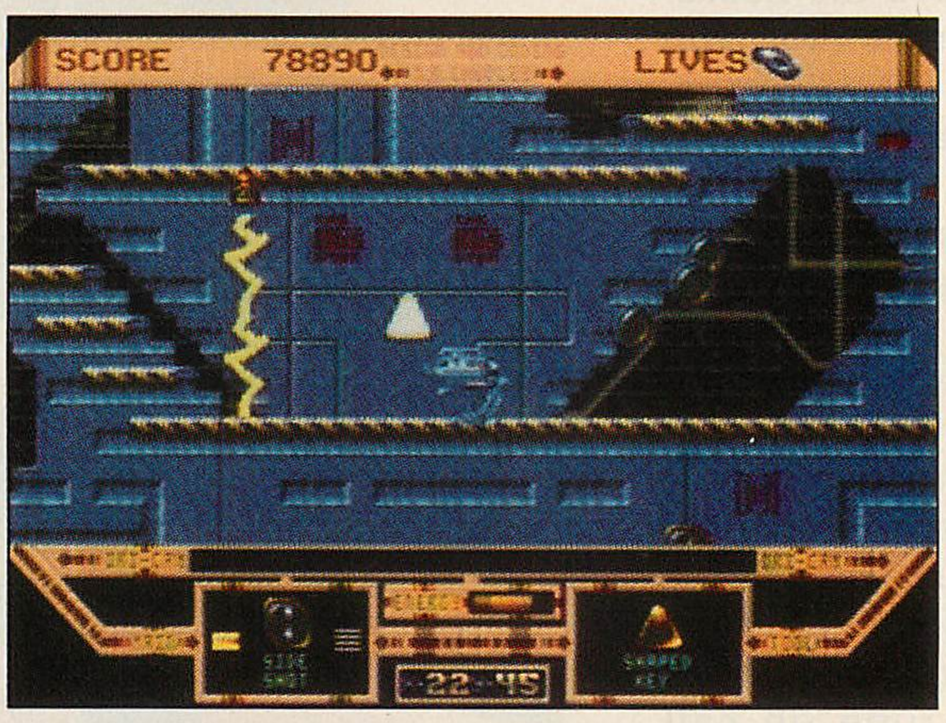








Like *Shadow of the Beast*, *Fatal Rewind* is remarkably tough and graphically appealing.

Fatal Rewind

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

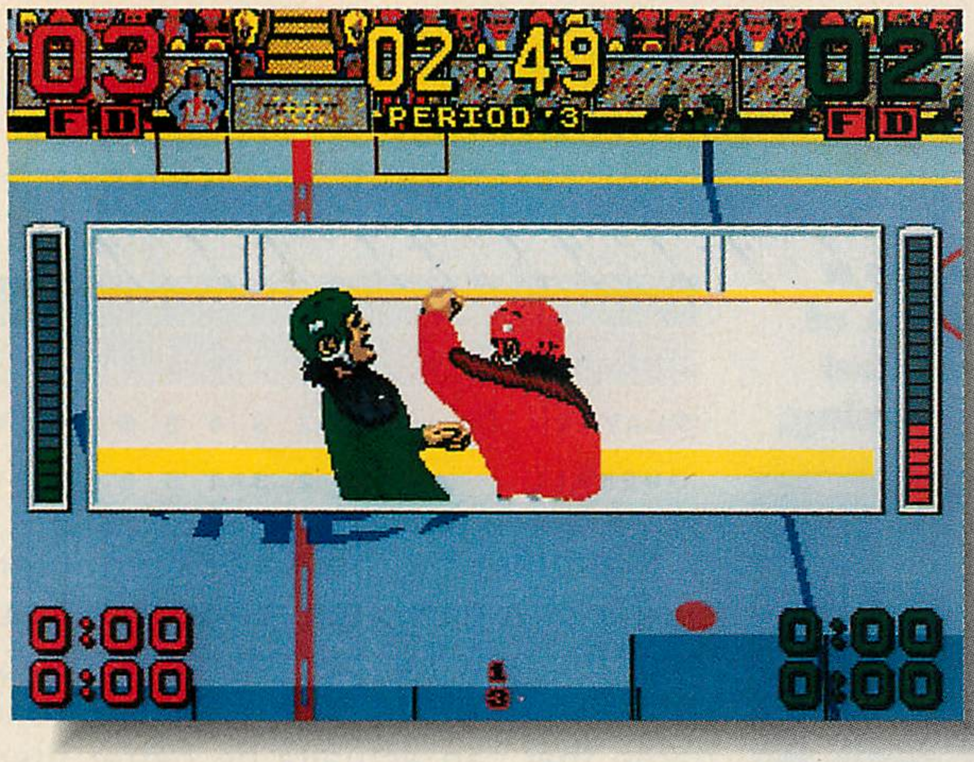
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Like *Shadow of the Beast*, another Genesis release from Psygnosis, *Fatal Rewind* is remarkably tough and graphically appealing. But unlike *SOTB*, *Fatal Rewind* is user-friendly and relentlessly exciting. It requires sustained play at breakneck speed, and gets frustrating enough to satisfy even those gamers who claim to have finished *Revenge of Shinobi* on their first play (do you believe them?).

Fatal Rewind is a game show in which the contestants are enemies of the state, surgically altered to give them cyborglike abilities: armor, ability to climb walls and so on. Then they're placed into the first of a dozen Pits of Death, complex platform mazes. The mazes contain tools, weapons and other items, carefully disguised to blend in with the terrain (a shot reveals them). The Pits are also populated with HALFs (Hostile Artificial Life Forms) that attack in droves, while a deadly liquid slowly fills the pit, destroying everything it touches. Contestants must locate keys, energy canisters, weapons and other items necessary for survival, while searching for an exit. Survive all 12 pits and the contestant is considered redeemed. (If this reminds you of *The Running Man*, you've caught on—the designer originally credited Stephen King as an influence in this game.)

Some of you may be saying, "What gives? This sounds exactly like *The Killing Game Show*." This *is The Killing Game Show*, renamed to avoid the word "killing" in the title of a game that is marketed primarily to kids.

The star feature of *Fatal Rewind* is the replay. When you've lost a life and begin a new one, you don't have to start from scratch. You can simply "fast forward" through what you did in the last life. As



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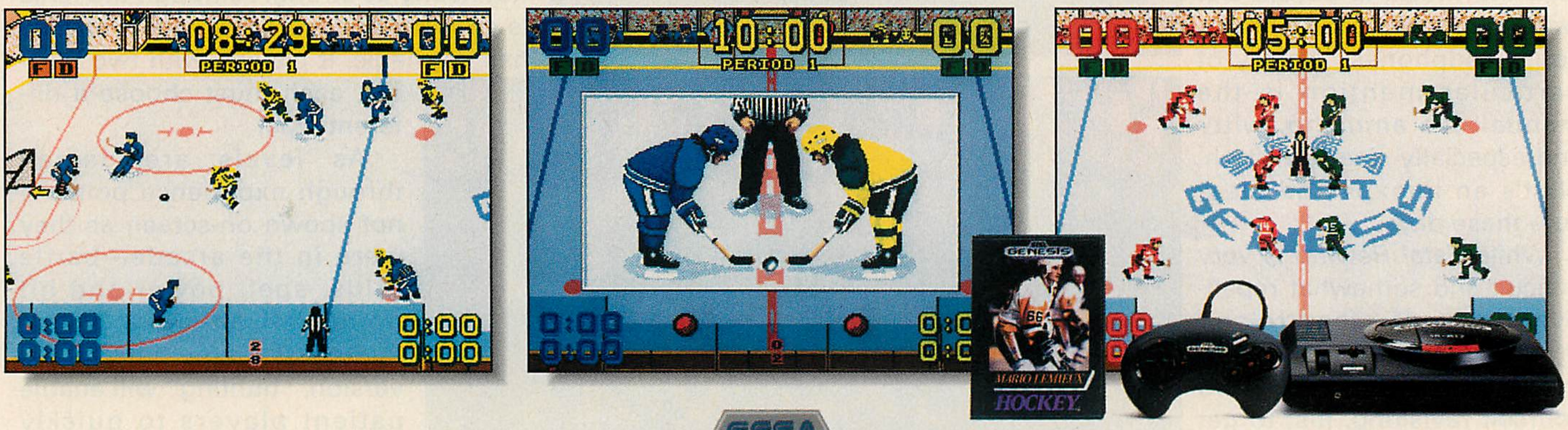
Even when you're not brawling, the action is fast and furious. Pass to an open winger for the give and go. Then break free at mid-ice to connect and slam home a 90 mph slap shot. Make dazzling kick and glove saves. And saves that send you sprawling across the ice. Pull from three sets of frontliners. You'll face everything the pros do as you battle your way to the top of a 16 league team. There's even 14 pages of stats to flip through after each period. Just to help you keep track of it all.

New, Mario Lemieux Hockey from Sega Genesis. If you're looking for real hockey action, nothing else packs quite the same wallop.



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CIRCLE #135 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

soon as you reach the point where you went astray, you resume control. This saves a ton of potentially tedious replaying; in fact, *Shadow of the Beast* could certainly have used this feature. Perhaps the game should've been called "Fatal Fast-Forward," since there's no rewind feature.

Each pit has a distinctive theme. Some pits appear as caves, some as ancient ruins or castles, some are high-tech. The hazards and obstacles work differently in each pit, and mastering them requires increasingly complex strategy. It's a safe bet that conquering each successive pit will easily take you twice as long as the pit preceding it.

Two players can play (alternating, not simultaneously), and you can configure the difficulty, number of lives and number of continues. Extra lives are awarded throughout the game, but I found no way to increase the number of continues. That doesn't mean it can't be done, though. There's a lot to be found in this game.

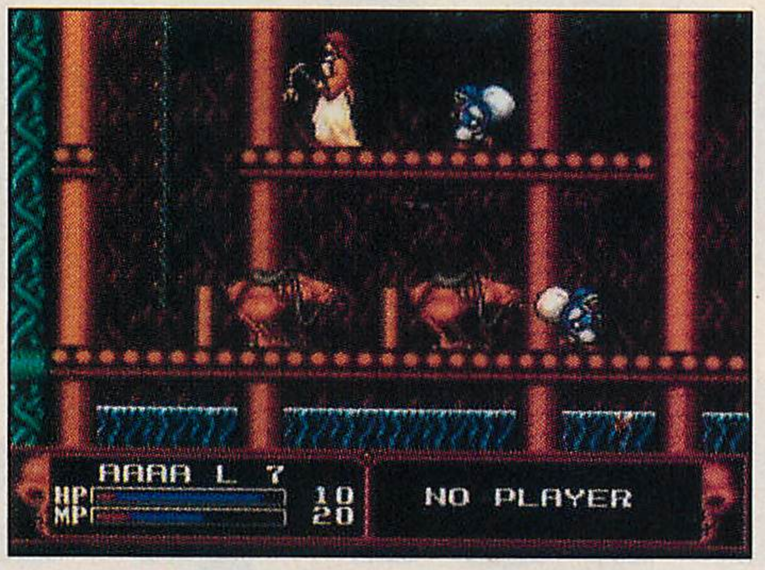
The graphics are quite good. Most pits have two scrolling levels, and the backgrounds are busy and intricate, which helps hide the weapons and tools. The animation is very fluid and fast, and a lot of attention has been paid to detail. For instance, watch the light dancing on the skeletons when they fire their submachine guns (yes, you read that right) and the way the HALFs spin and fly in formation. The screen is often filled with movement, and yet there's no flickering. The sound effects have a gratifying fireworks feel; the music is decent but won't send you scurrying for your headphones. Worthy of particular mention is the manual: It's amusing, witty and especially clearly written. That's an unexpected pleasure these days.

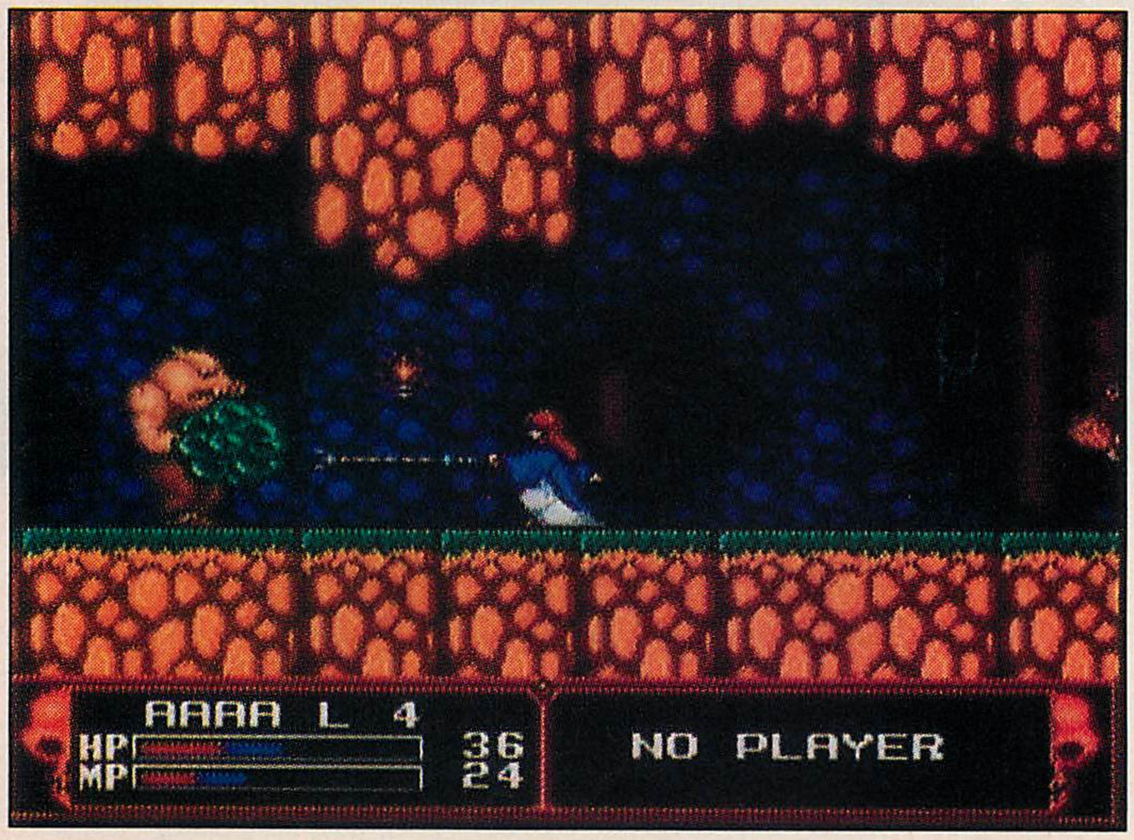
While *Fatal Rewind* is very difficult and somewhat repetitive, the replay feature and myriad details to discover help make it a game you'll find yourself revisiting, just to get a little bit further each time.

—J.M.

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

Originally released as a coin-op, *Cadash* was one of the "link-up" systems that allowed multiplayer gaming.





Cadash

WORKING DESIGNS
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

Many are the home or computer offspring of a game that strive to live up to what their arcade parents introduced, and with a wide mixture of results. Rare is the game that can actually be better than the original, but *Cadash* comes very close.

Originally released in the arcades one or two years ago, *Cadash* was another of the "link-up" systems, where more than one machine could be linked up to let multiplayer gaming take place. The arcade version boasted up to four-player participation; however, since no such link-up exists for the TG-16, play is limited to two players.

The story behind all of this is fairly simple: As one of four warriors summoned by the King of Deerzar, you must set forth through five continents and countless creatures in an effort to rescue the king's daughter from the evil demon Baarogue, who has kidnapped her. Bringing her back to the king's castle will bring peace back to the land and free it from Baarogue's terrors.

Choice of character type is simple. Either a fighter, mage, priest or ninja may be chosen, each with different abilities and handicaps. The fighter has high marks in the three ratings of strength, armor class and agility, but can use no magic. The mage and priest can use offensive and defensive magic respectively, but are easily injured and not nearly as strong. Although the ninja is stronger and extremely agile, he also has no magic. If playing with two players, each must choose a different type.

As levels are gained through experience points—not shown on-screen as they were in the arcade—battle skills, spell power and hit points all advance. Since there isn't a time limit in this version, "hunting" will enable patient players to quickly build up their character.

More powerful weapons, armor, healing herbs and other items are found in small villages scattered throughout the land, along with helpful

villagers eager to see your quest succeed. Chatting with them will give you clues to help you along. A night's stay in the local inn is an inexpensive way to refresh your character's hit/magic points as well.

While moving through these lands, the monsters will become increasingly difficult, as will the path to the next town and safety.

These paths vary from underground forests inhabited by gnomes to a hellish underground battle with a devil. The early boss critters are easy to dispatch, but patience and caution are necessary for the later areas.

The two-player option may seem to be an easy way to breeze through the areas, since you would think that two weapons swinging about would obviously be better than one; but, remember that it will take twice as long for each player to go up a level, since the experience points are being shared. Gold is much more plentiful, and even the more expensive items shouldn't require a tightly guarded purse. A continue option is not available in either one- or two-player mode, so once your character kicks off, you must begin completely over.

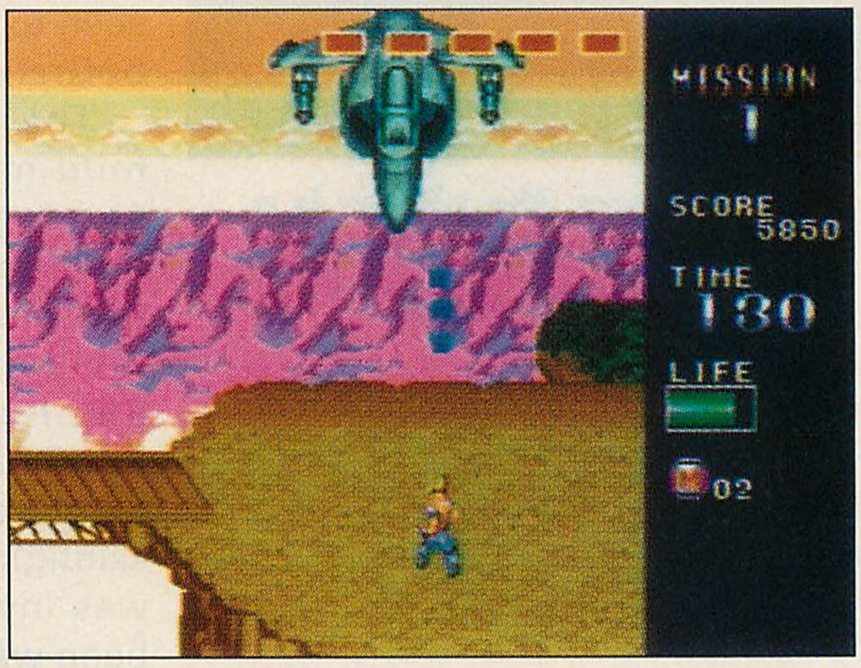
The graphics for *Cadash* are very well done, better than the arcade version, in my opinion. While they look slightly different, they are still a very good translation—very smooth and colorful. Action sometimes become a bit awkward with two players when trying to make jumps or quick dashes through an area, but these are minor problems. The music and sound effects are faithfully rendered and equally excellent.

The average player shouldn't have a great deal of trouble conquering *Cadash*, as the game seems easier than the original. Even after finishing it a few times, however, the challenge will remain for trying to finish it with one of the other three character types, as what was simple for one is often difficult for another.

Cadash is an easily understood and well-made game that will be a welcome addition to most players' collections.

—B.W.

Working Designs
1701 Clear Creek Road
Redding, CA 96001
(916) 243-3417



From the first stage right through to the last, *Mercs* features nonstop baddie-blasting.

Mercs

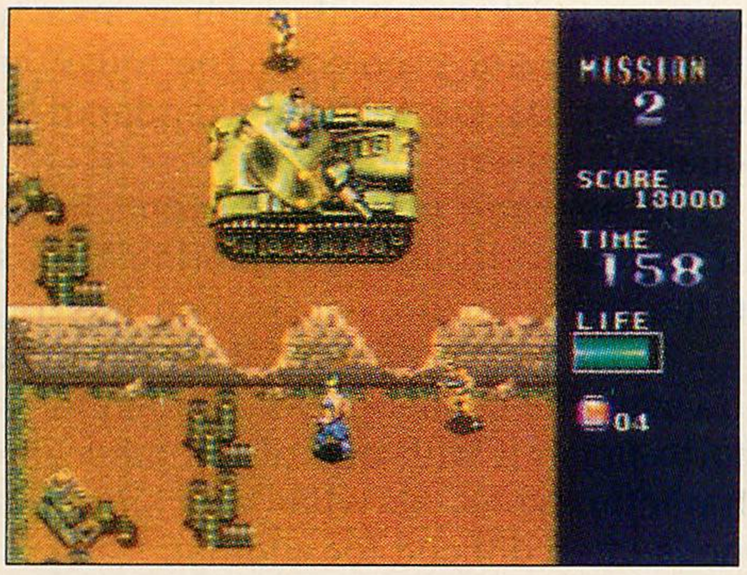
SEGA

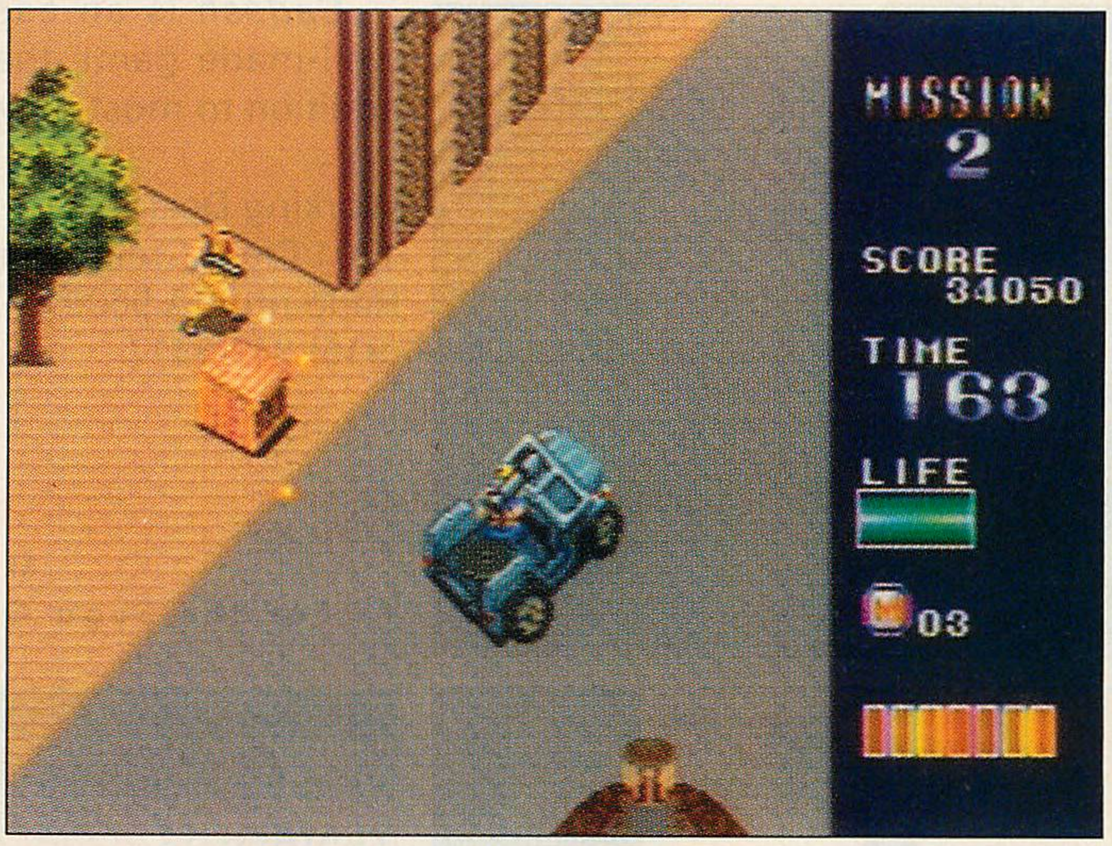
For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

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

In *Mercs*, a new shoot-'em-up from Sega, you play Zutura, a member of the Mercs Corp and a mercenary trained in antiterrorist tactics. Your assignment is to rescue the President of the United States, who was kidnapped on a diplomatic mission to central Africa.

From the first stage right through to the end of the game, *Mercs* features nonstop, baddie-blasting action that'll leave your trigger finger tingling. You'll battle your





In *Mercs*, the player is a mercenary assigned to rescue the President of the United States.

way through fortresses, rivers, swamps, military bases, jungles and more, all the while scooping up different types of weapons and power-ups. There seems to be a never-ending supply of enemy soldiers, so don't plan on taking any naps.

Luckily, weapons you'll find throughout each level make you a match for even the biggest, toughest armies. Weapons you'll pick up include single-shot rifles, fan-shot rifles, flamethrowers and devastating bombs that destroy everything on the screen. Most weapons and power-ups are hidden in crates, which, once you blow them up, reveal their prizes. Some power-ups increase your health, while others give your chosen weapon extra power.

Of course, your enemies, too, have a bevy of nasty killing devices. You'll face everything from foot soldiers and gun emplacements to tanks, helicopters, battleships and more. Hope your life insurance is paid up! Sometimes, so many bullets and explosions are flying about the screen that there's no way to escape unscathed. That's probably why you have eight continues, each of which resurrects you right where you lost your last life.

If you're fast on the trigger, you can sometimes take over a jeep, boat, tank or other enemy vehicle and use it against the owners. As long as you're riding in a vehicle, you can't be hit, although the vehicle takes on damage until it finally explodes, leaving you to your own devices once again. You can even take over certain gun emplacements, which allow you to give your enemies a lead shower from a temporarily safe vantage point.

A lot of shooters have come out lately, and, quite frankly, I doubt there's a market for them all. But if you're ready for just one more, *Mercs* will keep you blasting and grinning.

—C.W.

Sega of America
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Impossamole

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

Who's not *quite* as fast as a speeding bullet, *almost* as powerful as a locomotive and *might* be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound...if he got a good running start? No, not the Man of Steel, it's *Impossamole*, the closest thing I've seen to a real comic-book hero on the TurboGrafx-16.

The title character is the alter ego of mild-mannered Monty Mole, an unassuming little insectivore. The game includes a slick introductory sequence that shows how a flying saucer plucked Monty right out from under his beach umbrella and granted him less-than-formidable powers, which amount to little more than the ability to look good in a skintight costume with a cape. Heck, if he was invulnerable, the game would have been way too easy, right?

Gremlin, a British software developer, converted *Impossamole* from one of Europe's most popular computer titles, and the game's theme stands as a monument to Gremlin's sense of *humour*. Monty's a good-looking, charismatic character, and there are plenty of Disneyesque

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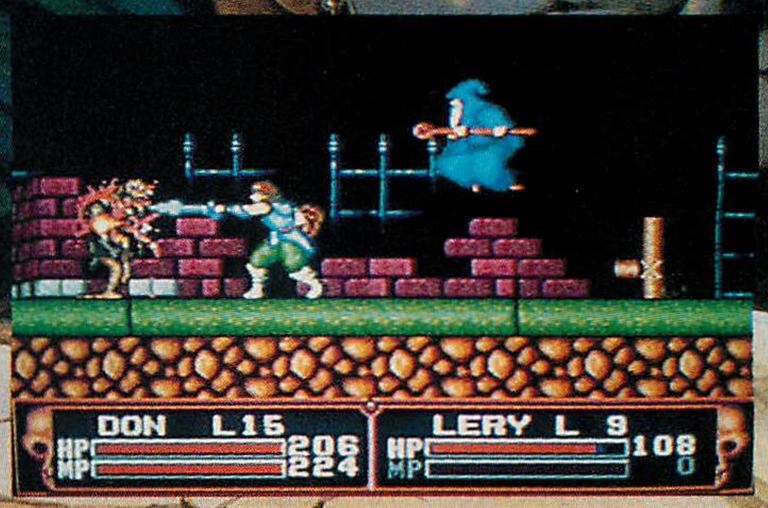
WORKING DESIGNS



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villains and obstacles that stand in his way. Character animation is handled well—I love the way Monty's eyes grow and he collapses to the ground with his tongue hanging out when he loses a life.

Unfortunately, there are a few weaknesses in the controls that make the game more challenging than it needs to be. Specifically, Monty seems to be able to kick his enemies before they actually come within his reach. This makes it extremely difficult to time your attacks precisely. When a bad guy is moving toward you, you'll have to lash out a split second *before* the creature looks like it's close enough to hit—otherwise it'll pass right through the area of the screen that's affected by Monty's kick and clobber you before you can back up and try to attack again.

Impossamole has a few weaknesses in the control system, making the game more challenging than necessary.

The "reminder notices" that flash during the game are another annoyance. Often, the words "Find the scroll, Monty" will partially obscure the action in the middle of the screen. They're more harmful than helpful.

Happily, *Impossamole* is blessed with gorgeous graphics and one of the best soundtracks I've heard in a TurboGrafx title (not including the CD games, that is.) The well-rendered, colorful visuals and pounding techno-sci-fi tunes are a perfect match for the game's exaggerated theme and facetious wit.

As enjoyable as this title is, I can't help thinking that Monty's exploits would have been much more interesting if our hero had been granted more impressive powers. He can't fly, he has to hit most of his enemies more than once before they're vanquished and he's *constantly* getting injured—often by simply running into harmless, stationary objects! The whole idea of a mole in superhero duds is pretty funny stuff—but Monty is almost as wimpy in his costume as he is without it, and that tends to make his mock-heroic crusade a bit frustrating for the player.

Still, a skilled gamer should be able to help *Impossamole* triumph over evil, and the game's password feature is helpful in this regard. If you can compensate for the flaws in the control scheme, you'll have a great time guiding the world's hairiest hero through this comical adventure.

—C.B.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

DecapAttack

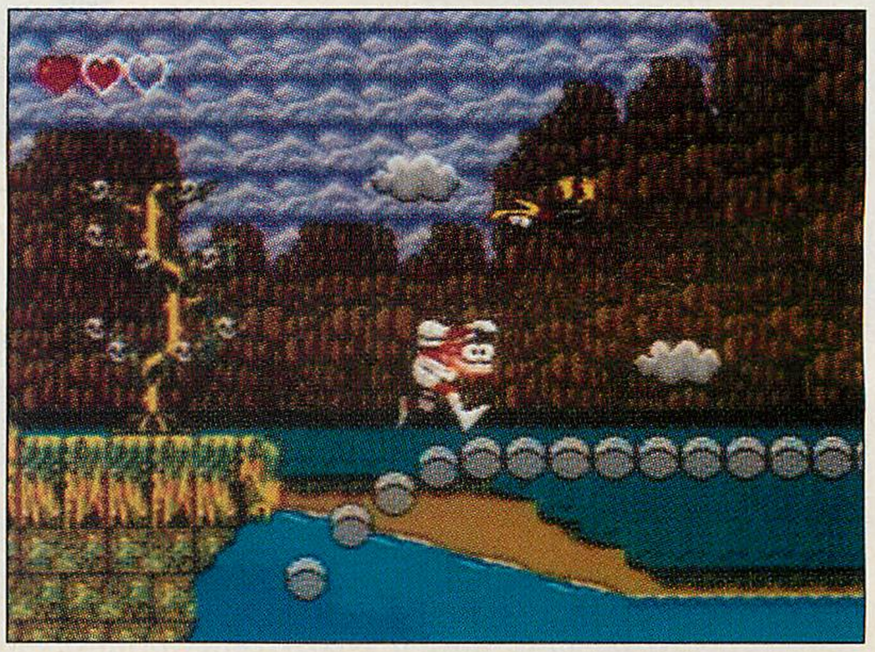
SEGA

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

Gamers beware 'cause Chuck D. Head is on the loose, and he's ready for a Decapattack. That's right, it sounds like Cadillac and rhymes with heart attack. This new little fellow is one of the strangest characters I've seen hit the video-game screen in a while. Chuck's a combination of various body parts sewn together, minus a head (sort of a headless Frankenstein's monster).

DecapAttack has one of the strangest and most intriguing characters to hit a video-game system.



continued on page 162

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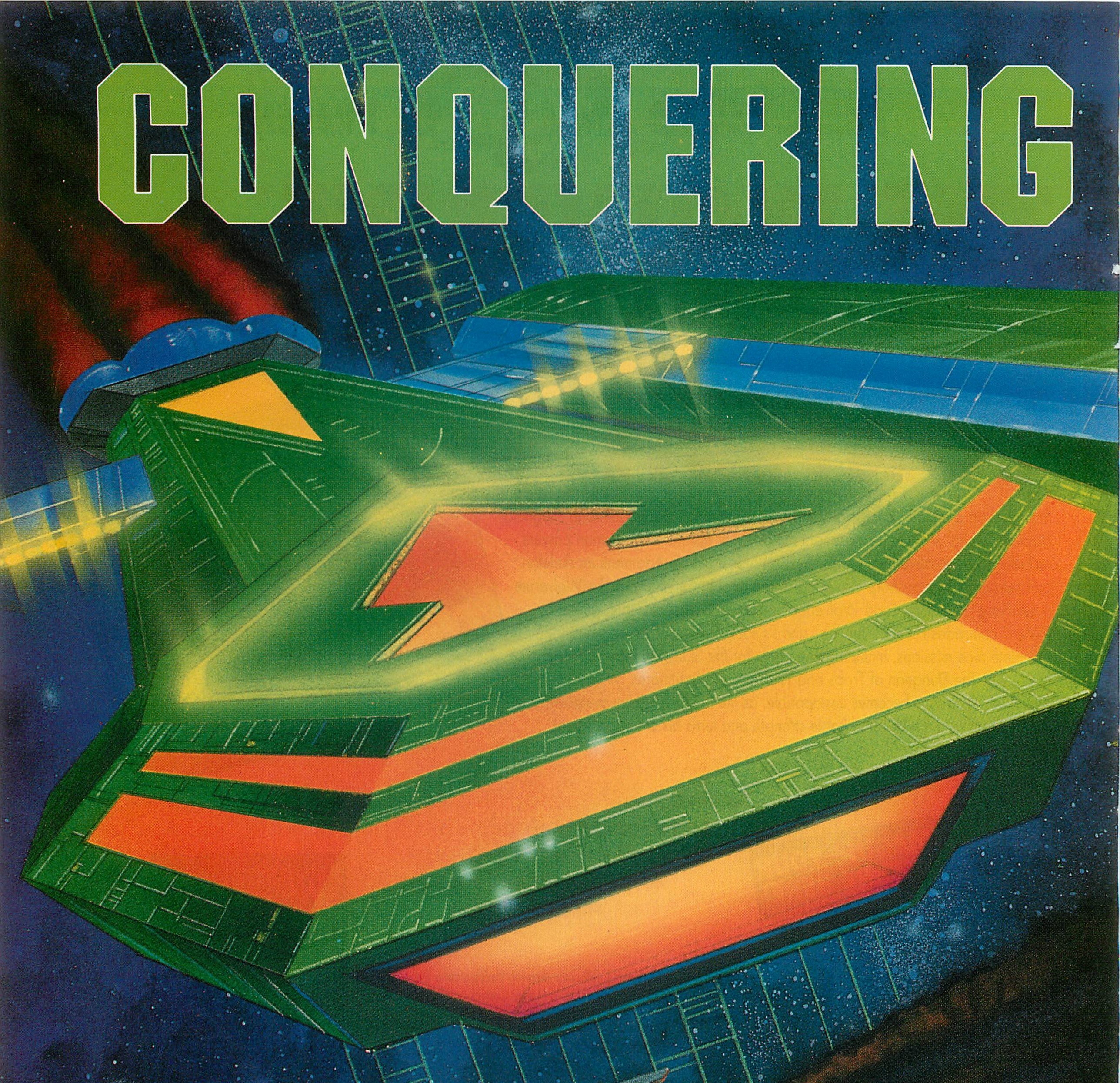
CONQUERING



FOR THE GENESIS

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

THE COSMOS

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO STAR CONTROL

One thing that's hard to come by in a world filled with Nintendos, Segas and TG-16s is a good strategy contest. Luckily, many computer strategy games are being ported over to video-game machines like the Sega Genesis. Games such as *Populous* and *Centurion* let Genesis owners get a sampling of the fare available to owners of full-scale computer systems, and give them a chance to play something other than shooters and level-oriented video games.

One of the top computer space-conquest games is *Star Control*, which has just appeared on the Genesis. In *Star Control*, you and the computer, or you and a friend, battle for superiority throughout the galaxy. Using over a dozen different types of starships, you spread your forces throughout a star system, building mines, establishing colonies and wiping out the enemy.

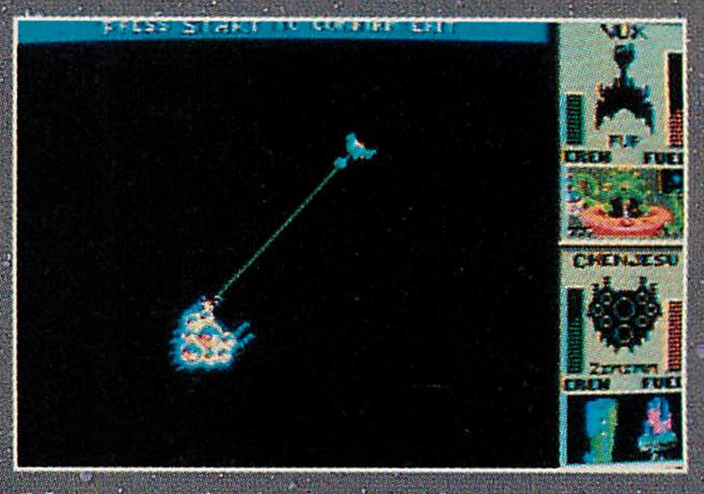
Although you can choose to play as either the Alliance or the Hierarchy, for the purposes of this strategy article we will assume you're playing as the Alliance, with the computer handing the Hierarchy's end of the galaxy. (This is the default setup for the game.) So, check your fuel supplies, charge up your weapons and buckle your seat belts. It's liable to be a bumpy ride!

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

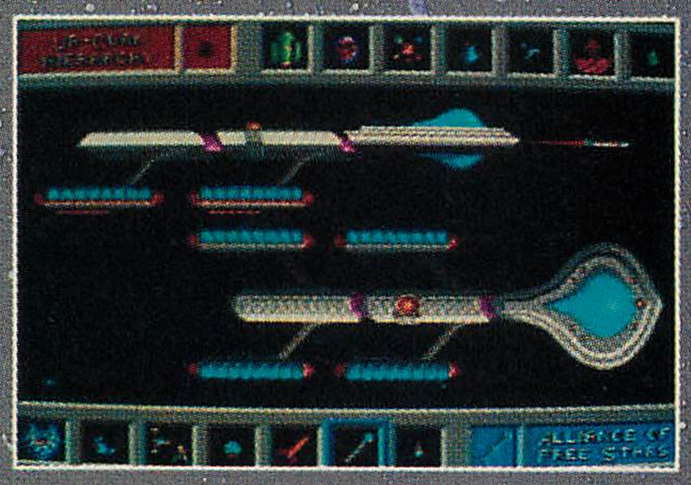
When you first play *Star Control*, choose the practice mode. Until you learn to handle the different starships, you'll have no chance against the computer's forces.

In practice mode, you fight a single ship. At the end of the battle, you get a new ship of the same type and start another battle. You can keep fighting until you've mastered the chosen ship, at which point you can select another ship combination and head back to battle.

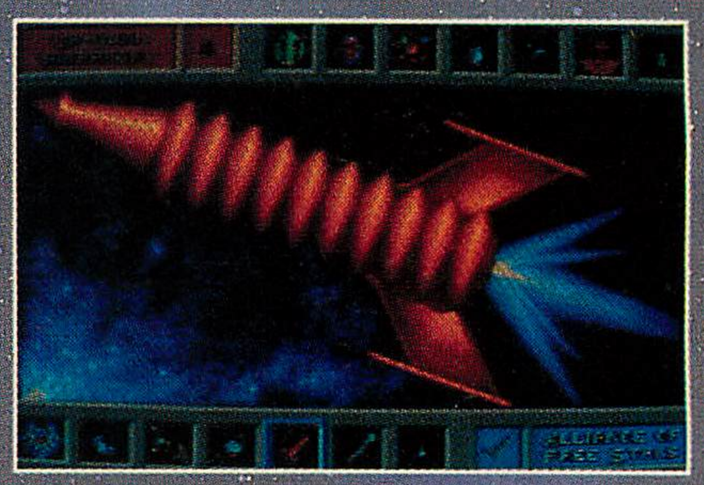
If you can't quite get the hang of a ship, set both sides to cyborg computer players. Then you can select ships for both sides and sit back and watch the computer battle it out. By watching the computer play, you can get some good insights into how to handle the various ships. And don't forget that you can set the computer's skill level. The higher the level, the better it plays.



After you've played in the practice mode for a while, try melee, where you and your opponent each get seven ships, one of each type, and battle until one of you is wiped out. To survive in melee, you must be an expert pilot. When you've mastered melee, you're ready for the full game.



The Earthling Cruiser is a slow and cumbersome vehicle. Its maneuverability is limited, but its long-range nuclear missiles can be devastating, even against a very superior enemy. As with the Shofixti Scouts, the Earthling Cruisers are inexpensive, and, as a result, are good for exploring early in the game or whenever funds are limited. In groups of two or three, they're almost unbeatable.



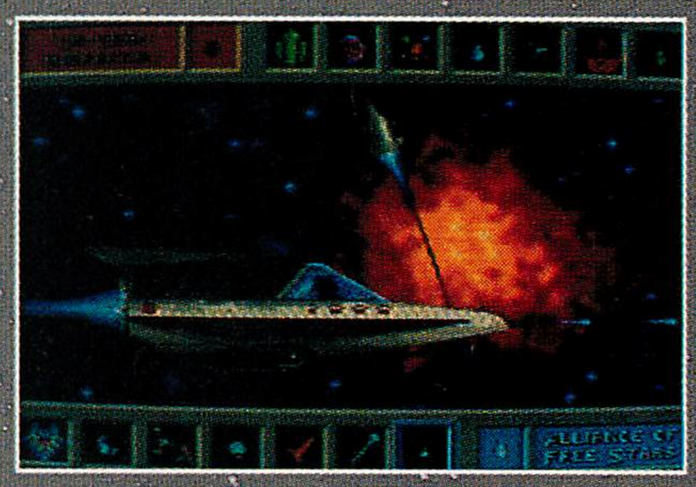
When close to an enemy ship, the Syreen Penetrator can lure the other ship's crew out into space, where they can be picked up by the battle's winner. The Penetrator also has a fairly long-range laser that can be used to blast crew members who refuse to leave the enemy ship.

These ships are good as a first line of attack, since they are very maneuverable, yet are still inexpensive. Also use them for exploring enemy territory.

By setting the computer gamer to cyborg, you can pick which ship the computer will fly in practice mode. Because you can also choose your own ship, this setting gives you the ability to try any combinations you like and to practice against ships with which you need practice.

When you're practicing, don't forget to access the starship's data bank and get information about each ship in the game.

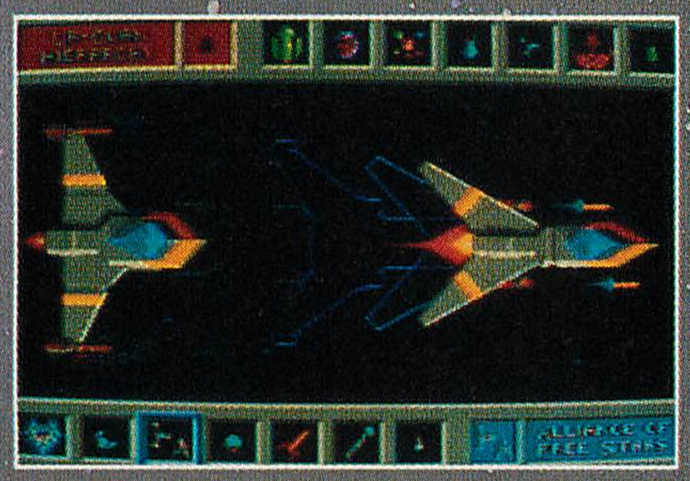
The information you can acquire might make the difference between returning home victorious or leaving your bones floating among the stars.



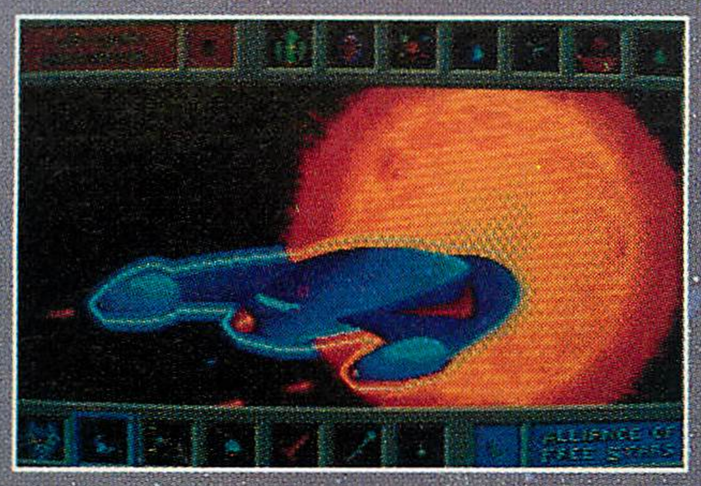
There are 14 ships in the game, each of which has its own capabilities and weaknesses. The Shofixti Scout is the weakest Alliance ship, but, because of its low cost, it's excellent for exploring, as well as starting new mines and colonies, especially at the beginning of a game, when there's little chance of an enemy attack.

This ship's laser can be effective against even some larger ships, if you can stay out of the way of the enemy ship's superior weaponry.

Due to its ability to teleport away from danger, the Arilou Skiff has strong defenses. However, keep in mind that, whenever you teleport, you risk the chance of appearing on top of some type of space junk. The Skiff can accelerate to full speed instantly and turn on the proverbial dime (not that you find much loose change floating in space), making it extremely hard to hit. It can also penetrate enemy fortresses, leaving the way open for your main attack force.



The Mmrnmhrm X-Form (try to pronounce that without getting your tongue stuck in your teeth!) is actually two ships in one. In its X-Wing shape, it can turn quickly, but can accelerate only slowly. In its Y-Wing form, it turns slowly, but can accelerate quickly. Moreover, in its X-Wing form, it can fire long-range missiles, which help you pick off enemies without getting within the range of their fire. In its X-Wing form, this ship boasts a strong laser gun, but you must be close to the enemy to use it, which, of course, means you're vulnerable to attack. The X-Wing can't tolerate much damage. Expert pilots of this vehicle must be deft at switching quickly between the two shapes at appropriate times.

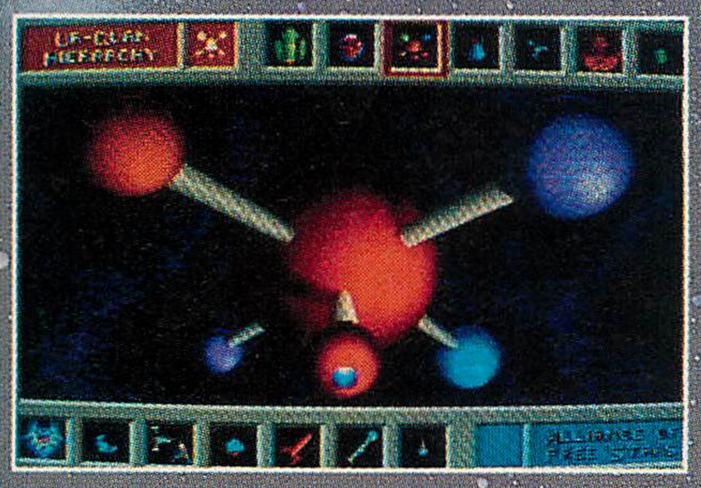


The Yehat Terminator is fast and maneuverable, featuring quick-fire missiles that can cover a wide area quickly. Its shields allow it to get in close for brief attacks, but this ship is best when used from medium range, when you don't have to drain your energy by using the shields too often. The closer you are to the enemy, the more damage your shots will do; so, you should stay as close as you can, while remaining out of range of fire, if possible.

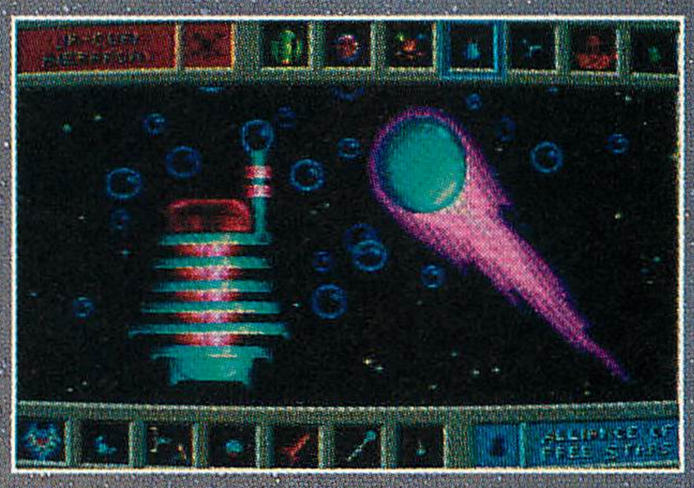
The pride of the Alliance fleet, the Chenjesu Broodhome is one powerful puppy. If you're a skilled pilot, you can take out just about any enemy vehicle with this space-bound leviathan. The Broodhome fires crystal shards that glide toward their target as long as you hold down the fire button. As soon as you release the fire button, the shards explode into many smaller shards, which, while they don't do as much damage as a direct hit with a full shard, are effective in picking off enemies little-by-little from a long distance.

The Broodhomes also feature strange weapons called DOGIs, which attach themselves to enemy vessels and suck away their energy, making it difficult for them to fire on you. The ranges of the shards and the DOGIs are virtually limitless, so you can smash your opponents from far away in space.

Though these ships are extremely expensive, you should build as many as you can. The only enemy vessel they have much trouble with is the Ur-Quan Dreadnought, which launches many small fighter pods that surround the Broodhome and blast it with lasers.



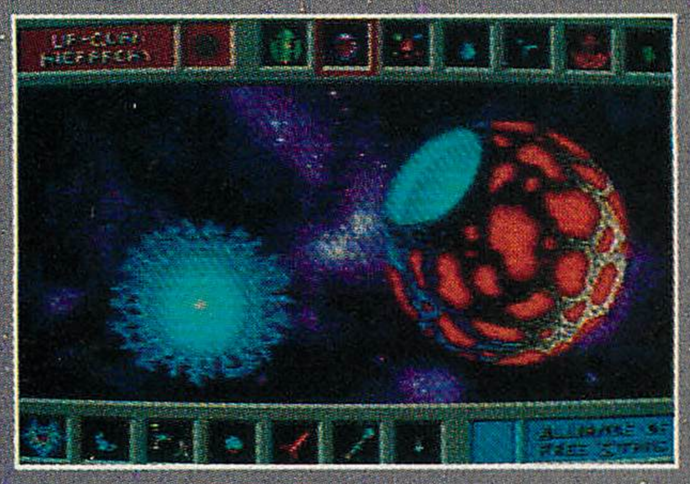
The infamous VUX Intruder is also a tough opponent, what with its savage optical laser beam and good maneuverability. Even your larger, more powerful ships will have trouble with this high-powered opponent. To be as safe as possible, take it on with a Broodhome.



The Androsynth Guardian, when in its normal form, releases bubbles that float toward your vessel and cause damage on contact. When it's in this form, your best bet is to fight with long-range weapons. But, whereas the bubbles are hard to avoid, when the Guardian collapses into its "comet" form, it's virtually unavoidable. The vessel can then streak toward you at unbelievable speeds, causing serious damage upon impact. Luckily, the Guardian can withstand little damage. If you can get it into your weapon's sight, you have a chance of defeating this tough opponent before it transforms your ship into space vapor.

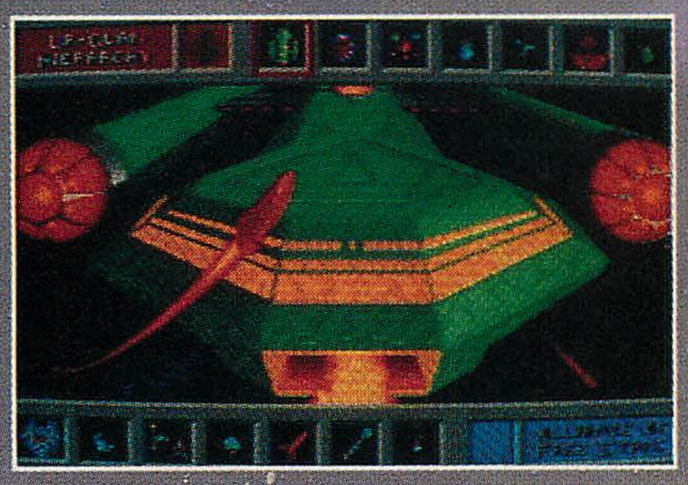
With its astounding dodging abilities, the Spathi Discriminator can be pretty tough to hit. Its missiles are accurate over a fairly long range, so, all in all, it's definitely a formidable opponent for all but your largest, strongest ships.

Assuming that you're playing the Alliance, the Hierarchy ships will do their best to remove you as a contender for the stars. The Umgah Drone is the Hierarchy's smallest ship. It's a fast mover that features an antimatter cone weapon that can quickly destroy even the toughest vessels. Luckily, the cone is a short-range weapon. Still, be careful when fighting this ship.

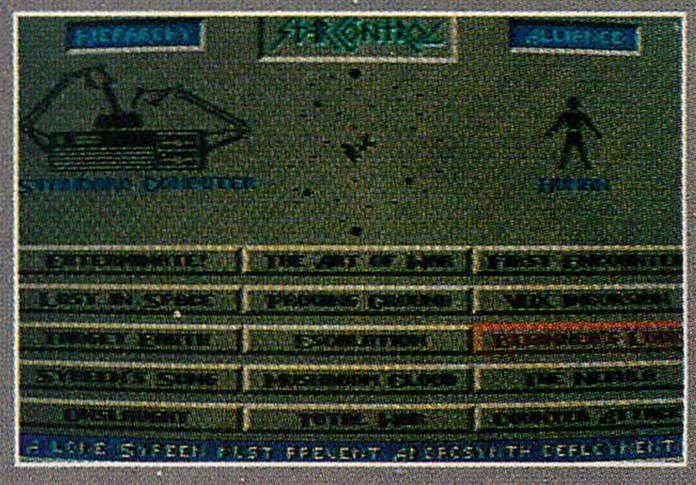


Next in size for the Hierarchy is the Ilwrath Avenger, whose cloaking device and Hellfire Blast weapon make it a most formidable enemy. You'll learn to dread running into this baby. Try to fight it from a distance, since its weapon is good only in close range. If you get caught in its Hellfire, though, be prepared to take on some serious damage.

The Mycon Podship stays as far away as possible from enemy craft. And it's no wonder that it should do so, since its plasmoid balls can track enemies over even the longest expanses of space. These crafts are nightmares in battle. You'll probably do best with two or three Earthling Cruisers, which can fire nuclear missiles from long range, or with Chenjesu Broodhomes, which can also attack from a long range. Whichever ship you choose, you'll constantly chase the Podship, trying to keep up with it. You'll rarely get in close.



The head honcho of the Hierarchy fleet is the Ur-Quan Dreadnought, which is as dangerous as it sounds. Described in the manual as "the single most devastating ship in known space," the Dreadnought launches fleets of small fighters that surround your ship and pick it to pieces. The Dreadnought also is equipped with long-range fusion bolts that can quickly turn most Alliance ships into floating space junk. Use a couple of Broodhomes against the Dreadnought, or else a gang of smaller, long-range fighters.

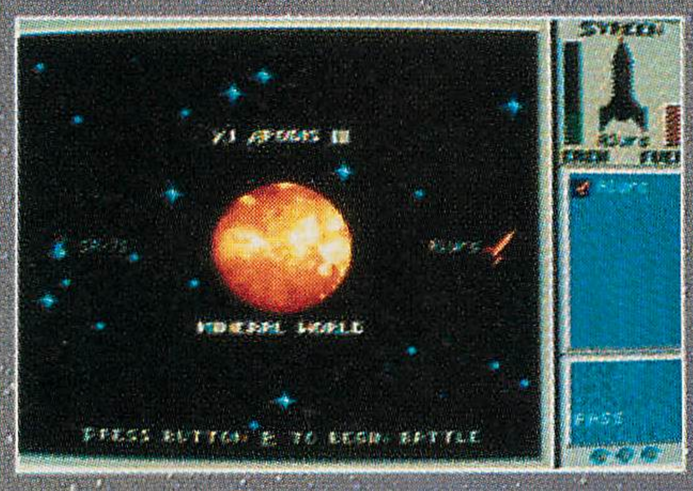


When you've got all the ships mastered, it's time to play a full game. Start with the Beginner's Luck scenario, in which you try to wipe out the enemy as quickly as possible. Because you don't have a starbase in this scenario, there's no point wasting time building mines.

For your first full games, keep the stars visible...

...because, without the stars, it's difficult to navigate your way through space.

In Beginner's Luck, move in to enemy territory right away, in order to battle the enemy before he can build new ships.



When you land on a star already occupied by the enemy, you'll move to the fight screen, which shows the forces about to enter into battle.

When fighting, you should try to avoid planets. A crash landing could be the end of your ship. At the very least, you'll take on some damage. However, if you do roam too close to a planet, try using its gravity to slingshot away at high speed.

It takes two turns for a ship to build a colony or a mine. Make sure you don't move a working ship prematurely. If you do, all work that was done is lost.

As your funds grow, buy bigger and better ships, but still concentrate on exploring new stars. You need many mines in order to finance a fleet of strong fighting ships. And you need extra colonies to supply crew members for your ships.

When you get a chance, destroy the enemy's starbase. This prevents him from building new ships.

When you can see the rotating starfield, you can get some idea of the shortest route to your destination.

Before starting a scenario, be sure to read its description, which gives you important background information.

After winning at Beginner's Luck, try the First Encounter scenario, which starts you off with a small force and a few stars. Before moving, study the rotating starfield. You may be able to avoid taking a dead-end route.

At first, use smaller, cheaper ships to explore, and settle as much as possible.

The more you explore, the more likely that you'll stumble upon a precursor relic, which will give your ship additional powers.

Once you destroy the enemy's starbase, all you need do is mop up the remaining hostile forces.

Learn to be a top-notch fighter-pilot, and you'll see this victory screen often.

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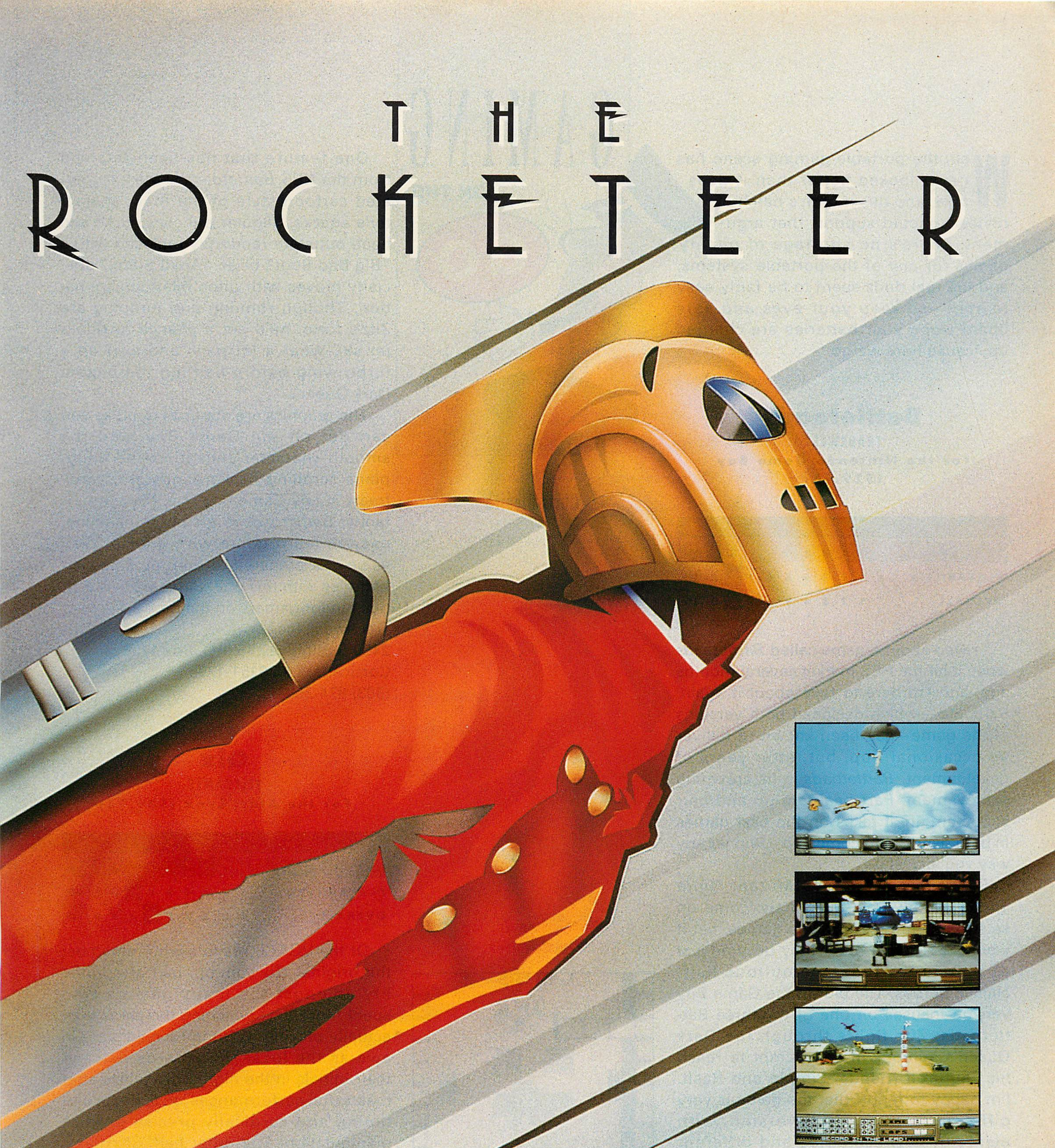
–Game Players Magazine

"AWESTRUCK!"
– Electronic Gaming Monthly

THE ROCKETEER



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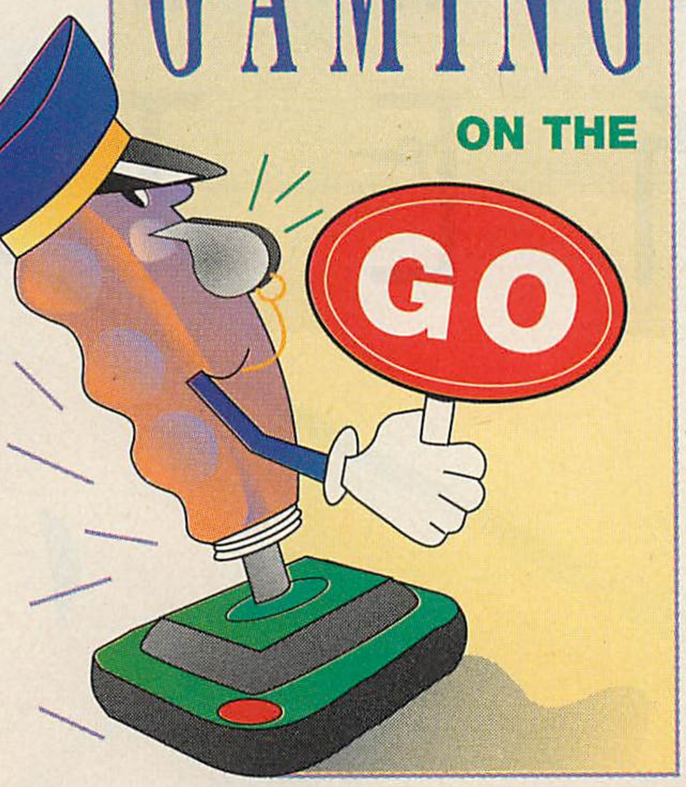
GAMING ON THE GO



by
Chris Bieniek

Well, the portable-gaming scene has never looked better than it does now, and this month's batch of reviews should support that argument. There's no shortage of quality games for any of the portable systems, and the real duds seem to be fairly easy to spot—so keep your eyes and ears open! Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Battletoads

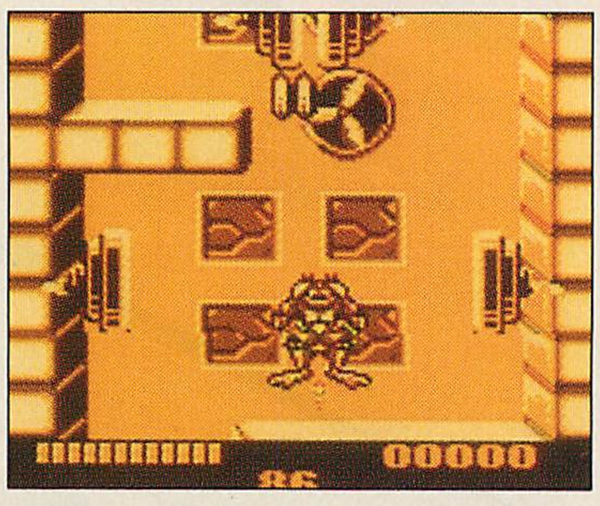
TRADEWEST
For the Nintendo Game Boy ($29.95)

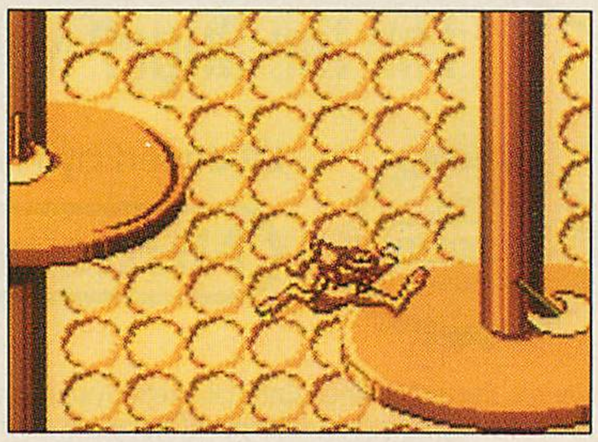
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

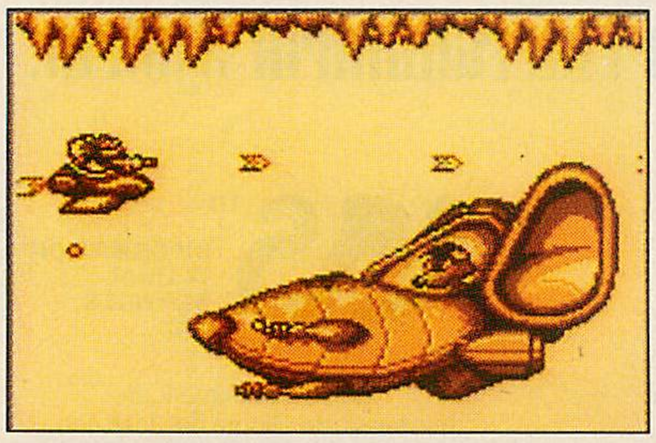
I raved about a game called *Battletoads* when it hit the NES market several months ago, and I'm here to rave about it again. Rare, Ltd.—which designed both versions of the game—has been known to deliver an occasional flop, but, after years of development, *Battletoads* is its crowning achievement. Part beat-'em-up and part shoot-'em-up, it takes on the best games in both genres and comes up a winner any way you look at it.

Obviously a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* parody, the 'toads have come on so strongly in their first two games that it wouldn't surprise me if they became just as popular as those ubiquitous half-shelled heroes. The plot of the Game Boy version focuses on one of the three Battletoads: Zitz fights through the Dark Queen's minions in an attempt to reach his captured friends, Pimple and Rash. I'm happy to report that the game is very different from the NES version, with plenty of new scenarios and different enemies.

Battletoads, by Tradewest.







One feature that has been retained from the NES *Battletoads* is the exaggerated cartoon style of the main character's attacks. Regular punches, kicks and head butts are randomly replaced with a "Big Bad Boot" or an "Anvil Slam," specialty moves with often hilarious animation. Though running and jumping are Zitz's forte, he'll get a chance to ride a jet ski, wear a jet pack and surf on a turbo wing before battling the buxom Dark Queen.

The graphics are about as good as you can get on the Game Boy, and the smooth character animation and multi-plane scrolling backgrounds are "rare" treats in any Game Boy title. Most importantly, *Battletoads* is a smooth-handling, easy-to-learn game with a lot of play value—be prepared to burn up some AA batteries with this one. *Battletoads* is serious fun for gamers on the go.

Tradewest, Inc.
2400 S. Highway 75, P.O. Box 1796
Corsicana, TX 75151-1796
(903) 874-2683

Qix

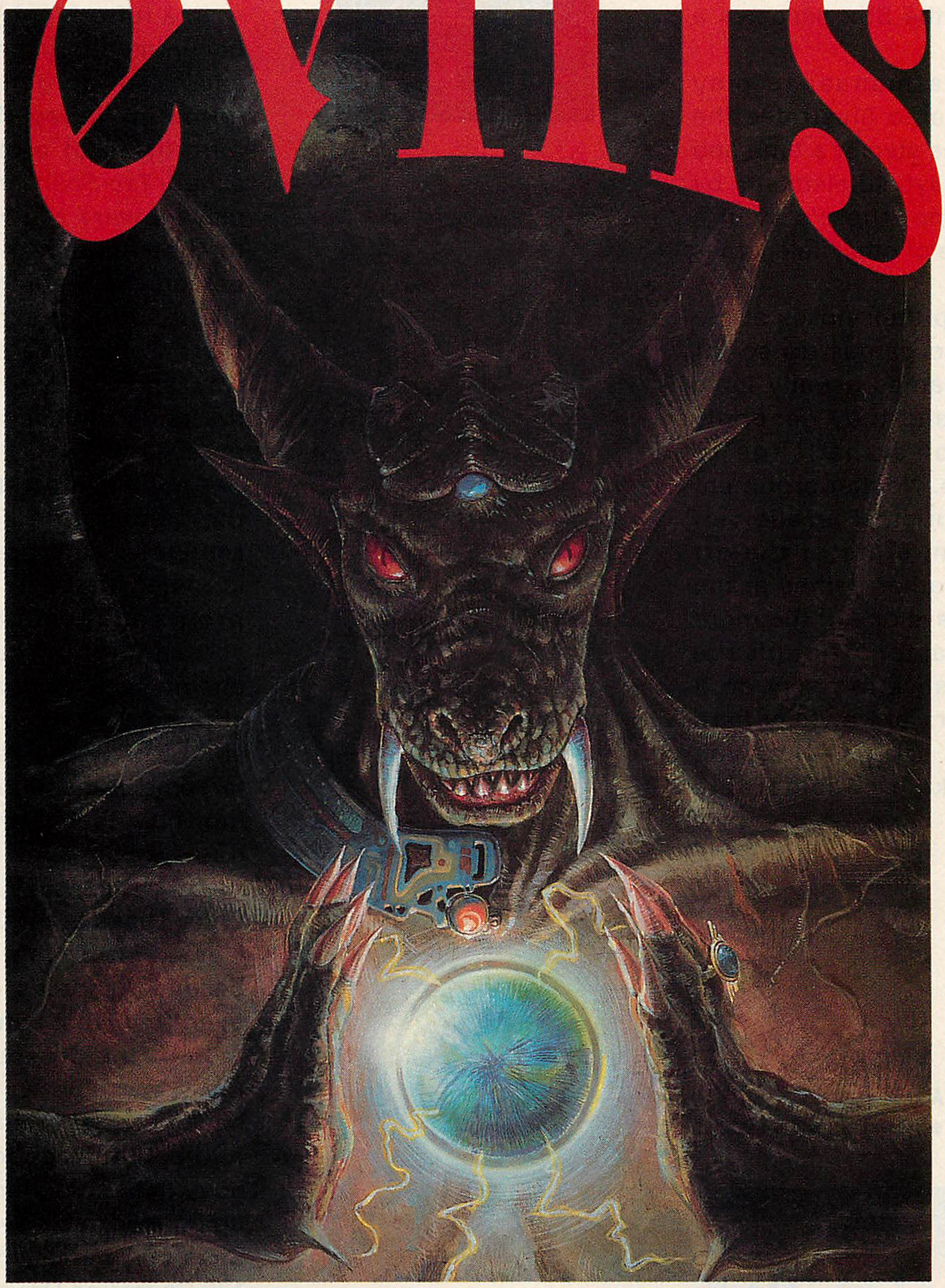
TELEGAMES
For the Atari Lynx ($39.95)

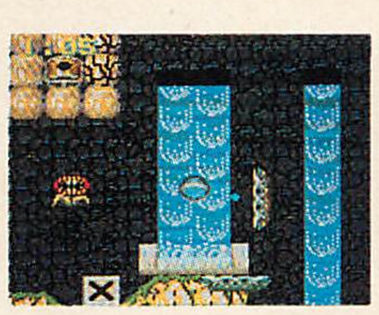
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

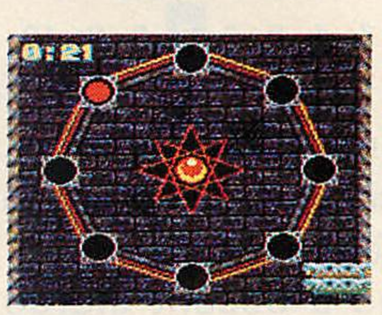
Of the VG&CE readers who remember the original *Qix* coin-op, half are probably amongst the many gamers who spent more time watching the game than actually playing it. Often I would stare in awe as the local *Qix* wizards notched their initials in the high-score tables after masterful performances of split-second timing and surgically precise joystick manipulation. The other half, of course, are the ones who were the *Qix* wizards themselves.

In a nutshell, *Qix* is a fast-moving strategy contest that involves drawing lines, or Stix, to outline and "claim" portions of the screen. While doing so, you must keep the cursor away from nasties like Sparx (twinkling adversaries that move along the edges of the unclaimed playfield space) and the Qix, a hypnotic,

Devilish







Breaking Up Is Hard To Do.

Especially when you're playing this game. If you think you've seen this one before, you're right. And wrong. You see, our game is much, much, more complicated, with monstrous enemies, high-tech UFO's, and walls and walls of blockades. So we gave you two paddles, offensive and defensive, just to even up the odds. But don't get us wrong. You'll like this game. You'll just have a devilish of a time getting through it alive.

SAGE'S CREATION

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multicolored helix that whirls around in seemingly random patterns. No diagonal movements are allowed, and if you stop drawing before you've connected to a wall or another line, the Stix becomes a burning fuse.

You won't need a manual to play *Qix*—an on-screen demo illustrates the object of the game one step at a time and identifies all of the playfield elements by name. After the demo, there's even a sneak peek at a couple of other Telegames titles for the Lynx.

Those who turn up their noses at the revival of older video games do so for two reasons: such games usually have primitive graphics, and they generally don't offer much of a challenge to today's jaded gamers. Neither argument applies to *Qix*—the original arcade version never relied on state-of-the-art graphics (relative to other games at the time), and it was always one of the more difficult titles to master. Though the game requires a joystick to really do it justice—and the Sparx are awfully hard to see on the small screen—the Lynx version of *Qix* packs a considerable punch.

Telegames, Inc.
222 W. First St.
Lancaster, TX 75146
(214) 227-0200

Qix, by Telegames.

Halley Wars

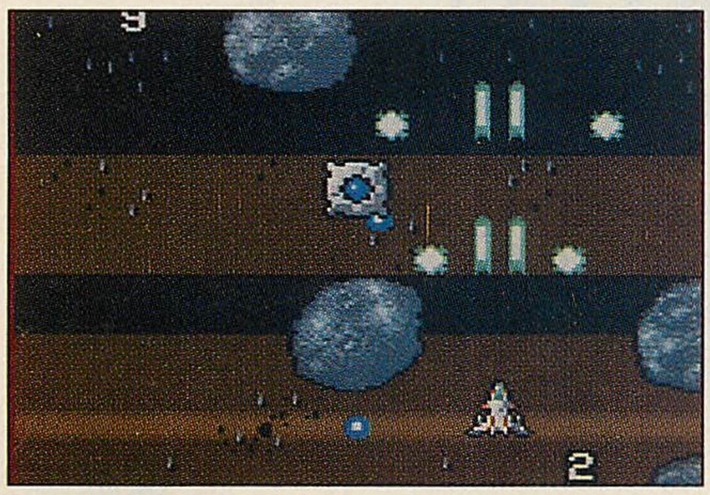
SEGA

For the Sega Game Gear ($34.95)

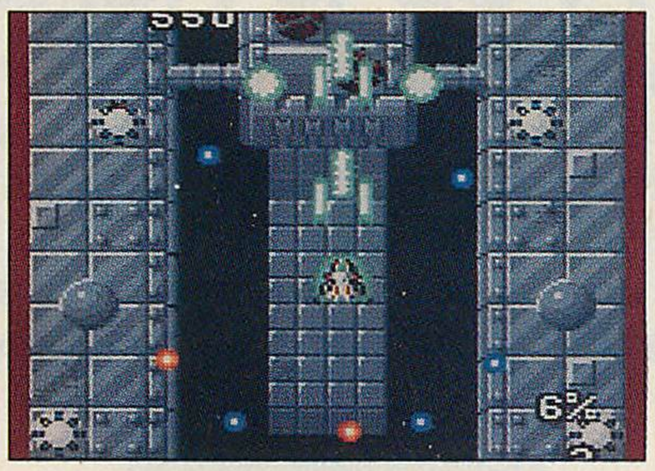
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

One of the first Game Gear shooters, *Halley Wars* is a vertically scrolling space adventure created by Taito.

Sharp graphics and a decent stereo soundtrack make the game's seven levels pretty enjoyable. Shooting at spaceships and picking up floating power-ups are not revolutionary concepts, but a clean design never hurt any game.



Halley Wars, by Sega.



In a refreshingly nostalgic (and possibly unintentional) nod to the roots of the shoot-'em-up genre, certain power-up items in *Halley Wars* evoke pleasant memories of a classic Sega coin-op called *Tac-Scan*. In that space contest, players were allowed to add "modules" to their main vehicle that would trail behind the leading ship in a triangular shape, adding extra firepower. *Halley Wars*' "explosive pods" work the same way, and this time you can even launch the pods themselves as superpowered missiles.

Another interesting feature concerns the game's title and story line, which centers around the idea that our planet is under attack by alien forces. As you progress through the game, an on-screen counter keeps track of all the enemy vehicles and projectiles that have slipped past your ship without being shot down. Any such attacks are registered as damage to the Earth—the glowing, blue-tailed comets are particularly dangerous—and when the damage meter reaches 100%, it's "game over" time. That's a fairly unique concept, and it makes the game more challenging, because it forces you to try to pick off *everything* that comes your way.

I like the deceptive simplicity of *Halley Wars*. The Game Gear will surely have better shooters than this one in the future, but it's good enough to keep you busy until something like *Gaiares* shows up on a portable system.

Sega of America, Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

The Viking Child

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

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

Step into the furry boots of Brian the Viking, and take a stroll from one end of Odin's World to the other. Armed with his

continued on page 96

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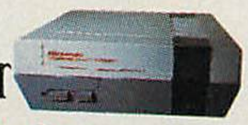
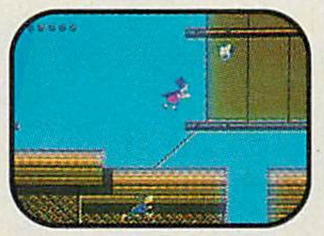
Gang way, man! It's Bartmania three ways for your  and ! Looking for some wild ? Then help save Springfield from the in for your NES.™ For Simpsons™ antics on the go, join as they

fight for their lives in run by . Look for Bart as ,



Homer has his hands full vacationing at the Krusty Sphinx but maybe Bartman can save the day in "Bart vs. the World" for your NES!

and in their all-new NES™ adventure . It's all-out mayhem around the from to as Burns and Smithers try to get rid of the Simpsons™ once and for all. Don't let that happen ... Save Springfield ...

Save the Simpsons™... Save the World ... Keep

KEEP BARTMANIA ALIVE!

Ironfist Burns has some special plans for his "happy campers" in "Escape from Camp Deadly" for Game Boy!

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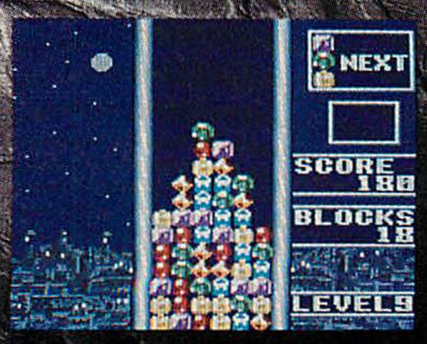
CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Joe Montana Is The Only QB

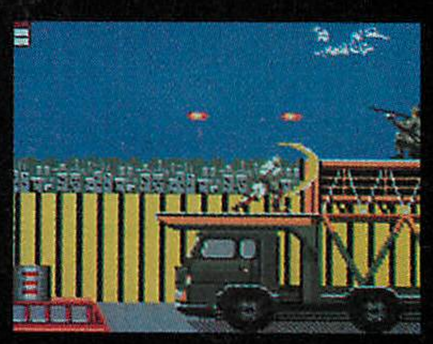
Pictured: Joe Montana Football*

Columns
(included with system)



Super Monaco

Shinobi



Castle of Illusion starring
Mickey Mouse

Slider

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CIRCLE #139 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 92

***Viking Child*, by Atari.**

trusty dagger, a lust for money and a thirst for revenge against the evil god who kidnapped his family, he'll fight through this scrolling adventure and "restore peace and joy to the Earth."

The Viking Child is a good example of a solid idea that somehow got saddled with all the wrong play mechanics. With such an evocative title, I expected much more than a slow-paced *Castlevania* clone with a sense of humor. I got a kick out of the gremlins who kick items off the shelves in the weapon shops, but the stone-faced proprietors are so solemn and devoid of personality that it takes all of the humor out of these wordless encounters. If Brian takes a big fall, you'll chuckle at the panicked expression on his face as he plummets to the earth with limbs spinning—but there's nothing funny about the beating he takes as he sits helplessly on the ground, trying to shake his head clear.

Sound effects are sparse and unrealistic. And, though there are some sharp-looking "boss" characters (they blow up with some crisp scaling effects when defeated), it's always a bad sign when the graphics on the "high score" and "password input" screens are better than the visuals in the game itself.

A year ago—when new Lynx software was as scarce as Nolan Ryan rookie cards—a game like *The Viking Child* might have done well. In the wake of quality titles like *Klax*, *A.P.B.* and *Turbo Sub*, the game's weaknesses stand out like a bull's-eye on a barn door. There's a decent game in here somewhere, but you'll need a lot of patience and a high tolerance for video-game cliches if you expect to find it.

Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000

FaceBall 2000

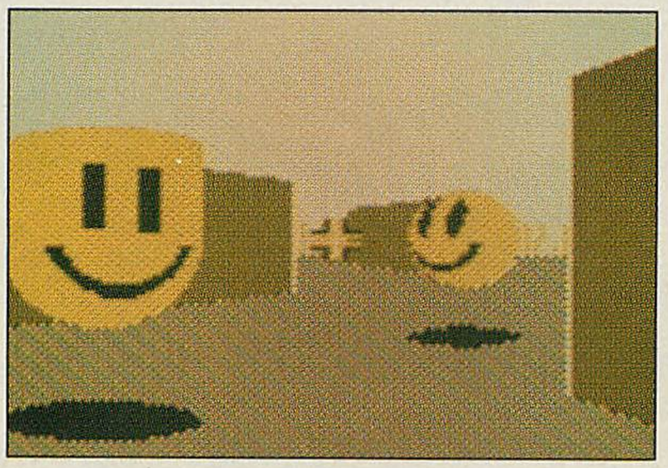
BULLET-PROOF
For the Nintendo Game Boy
($34.95)

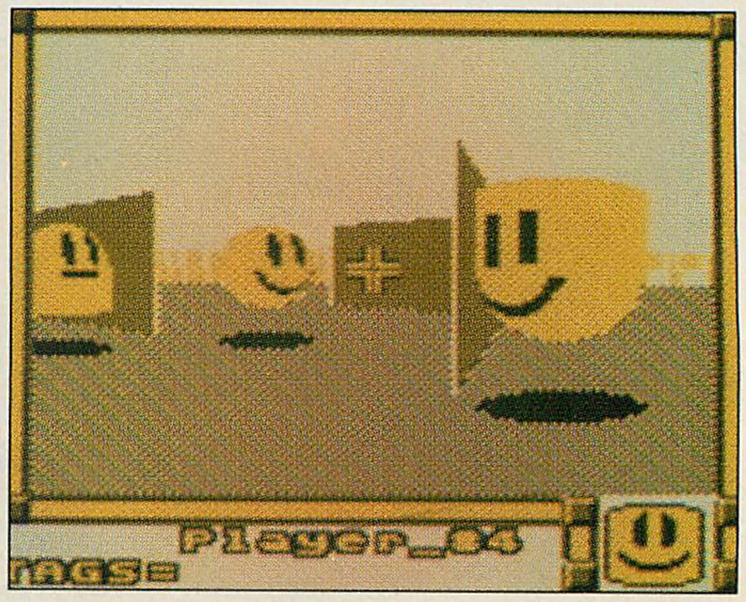
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

If you read Andy Eddy's *FaceBall 2000* article in last month's VG&CE, you know all about this little gem. A first-person maze battle between floating happy faces, this instant classic features supersmooth controls and plenty of options. It's actually two games in one: "CyberScape" challenges you to find the exit in a series of mazes, and "Arena" lets you shoot it out with other faces in a futuristic game of tag. Both games can take advantage of Nintendo's four-player adapter, for a Game Boy experience that can't be beat. The interaction between players can be intense—and often hilarious—when you start to lose yourself in the game.

The one thing in *FaceBall 2000* that everyone complains about is the way the walls in the distance can't be seen until you start to approach them. It's almost as if a thin fog has descended on the maze, limiting visibility. A long, dead-end hallway can look like it stretches to infinity, until you get close to the back wall. Still, this can be a plus if you're chasing down an opponent who hasn't looked at his map screen.

***FaceBall 2000*, by Bullet-Proof.**





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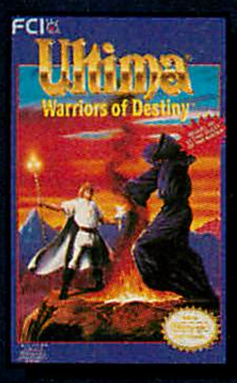
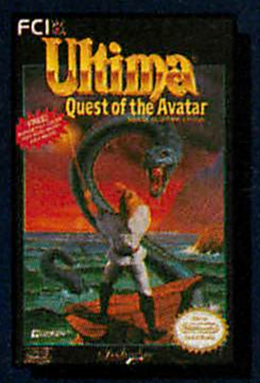


Ultima Warriors of Destiny



Ultima Quest of the Avatar

For GAME BOY® from FCI® Not Just Kid Stuff

Ultima Exodus

Ultima Runes of Virtue

For hints on Nintendo games, call FCI's hotline – (708) 968-0425

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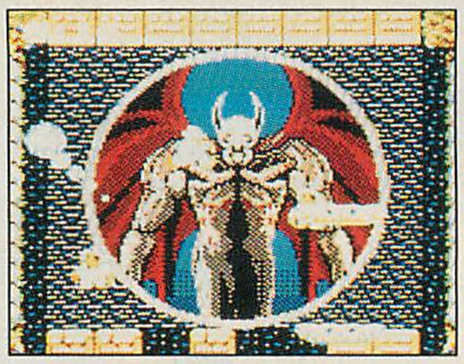
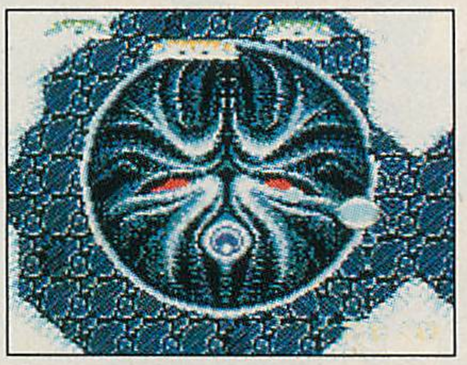
CIRCLE #140 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

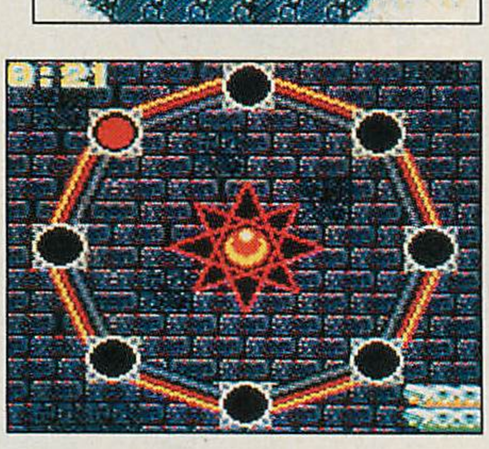
And I should point out that the movement of the maze walls on the screen is otherwise nicely done, as is the rotation of the Smiloid faces.

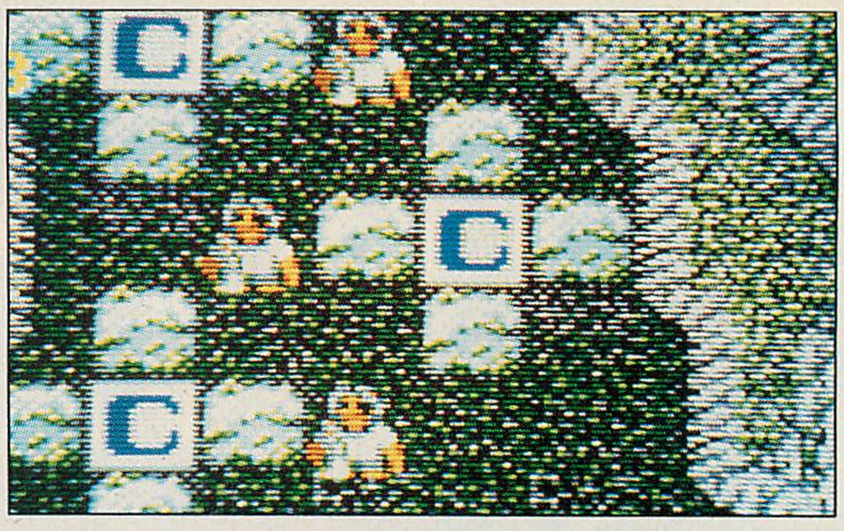
Bullet-Proof has a Super NES version of *FaceBall 2000* in development, and I'm sure it'll have nice colors and smooth animation. Yet, I doubt that it could be much more enjoyable than the Game Boy version, and I don't know if it will be possible, at first, for the Super NES to allow a four-player option. For me, the convenience of the Game Boy (and the availability of friends who own one) makes this the ultimate multiplayer game. Aside from the aforementioned fuzzy walls and a repetitive soundtrack, it's nearly perfect as a one-player game as well.

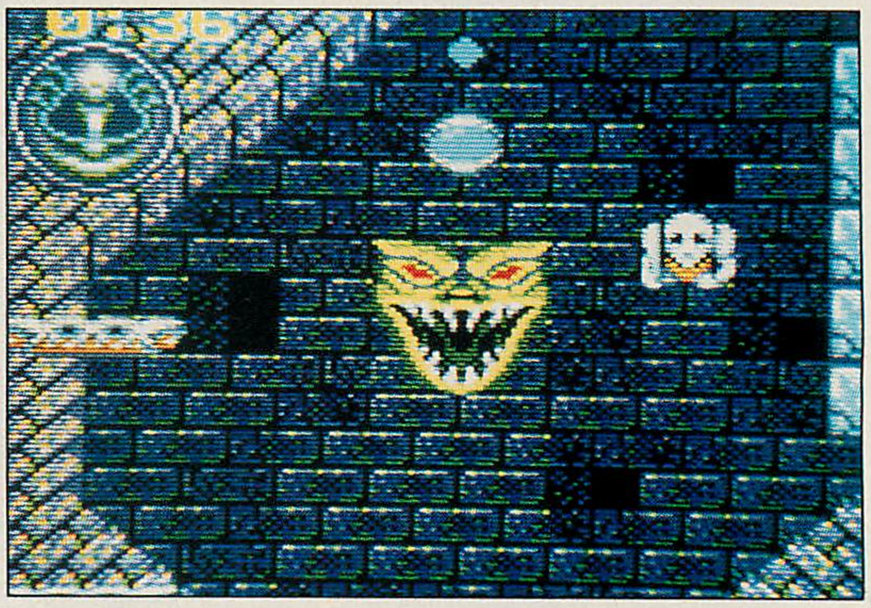
Bullet-Proof Software, Inc.
8337 154th Ave. NE
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 861-9200











***Devilish*, by Sage's Creation.**

Devilish

SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Game Gear ($34.95)

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

Okay, here's the formula: one part *Devil's Crush*, one part *Vanguard* and two parts *Arkanoid*. Throw in a couple of boss characters that show up in the *middle* of some levels instead of at the end, and sprinkle liberally with spooky, atmospheric music. Then mix it all together until the ingredients can't be individually recognized, and squeeze the whole shebang into a little black cartridge that kids can carry in their back pockets.

What sounds like an ugly, derivative mess is actually the recipe for *Devilish*, one of the most playable and exciting Game Gear releases to date. It starts out looking like a sixth-generation *Breakout* variant, but, when your ball and paddle break through the first set of blocks, the screen starts to scroll forward, and you must guide the ball through a series of creature-filled tunnels. Obstacles and power-ups are abundant, and you can configure the twin paddles four different ways. One of the paddles is always free to move around the screen in any direction, which helps a lot when you reach certain stages that include horizontal tunnels.

There's no excuse for the game's ludicrous plot—if you make it through the final Evil Temple stage, you'll learn that the "paddles" are really a prince and princess who had been trapped and mutated by the evil master Gamma! The cute penguins in the World of Ice stage also seem out of place amidst the game's zombies, pentagrams and winged demons. But these are minor quibbles. The biggest problem I had with *Devilish* was that I didn't want it to end! Great game—I'd love to see a version for the Genesis.

Sage's Creation, Inc.
12062 Valley View St., Suite 250
Garden Grove, CA 92645
(714) 893-0309

Along with the usual flow of Game Boy software, the powers-that-be have opened the floodgates for all the portable systems in anticipation of the upcoming holiday season. Next month, we'll cover a healthy number of games for the color portables, including the long-awaited Lynx version of one of Atari's most stunning coin-op titles. Let us know how you feel about the new, improved *Gaming on the Go*. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

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- Lots of ways to play - One to four players, Stroke, Match, and Tournament Play, or head-to-head against the Hal Pro.
- Each play mode has Amateur, Single and Professional difficulty levels, plus Handicap option.
- Practice mode lets you work on technique.
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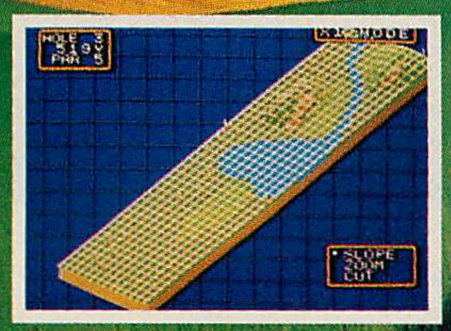
Bring your game up to par - play Hal's Hole in One Golf!



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CIRCLE #141 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

REALITY

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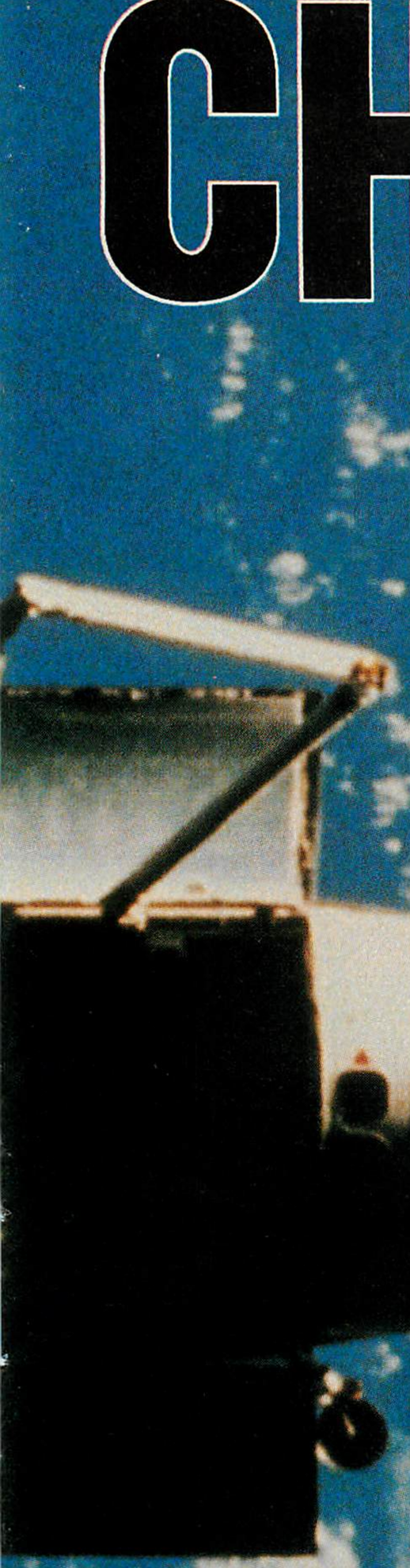
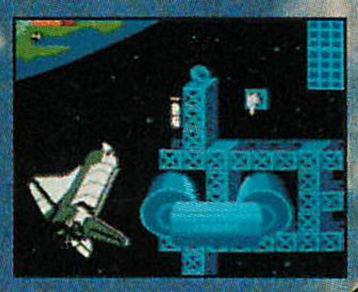
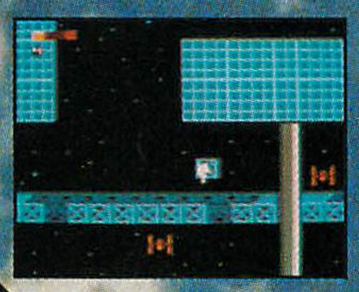


MISSION #1
LAUNCH SATELLITE

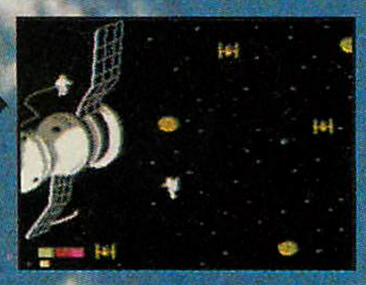
MISSIONS #2, #4 & #6
SPACE STATION CONSTRUCTION



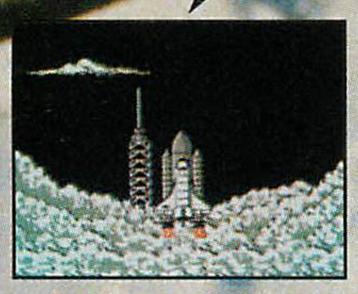


MISSION #3
REPAIR SATELLITE

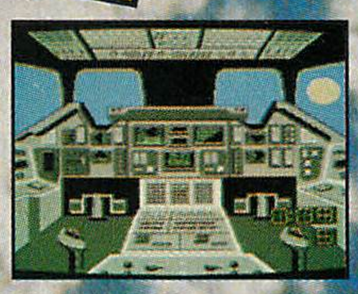
MISSION #5
RESCUE COSMONAUT



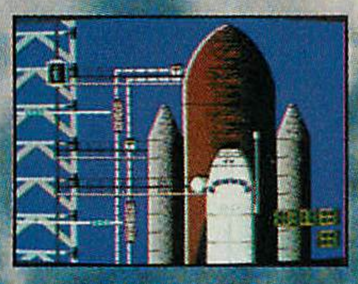
ORBITAL INSERTION



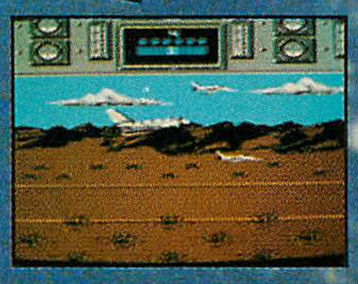
LIFT-OFF



REENTRY



FUEL & BOARD



LANDING

Shuttle Photo Credit: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

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CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

FOR THE

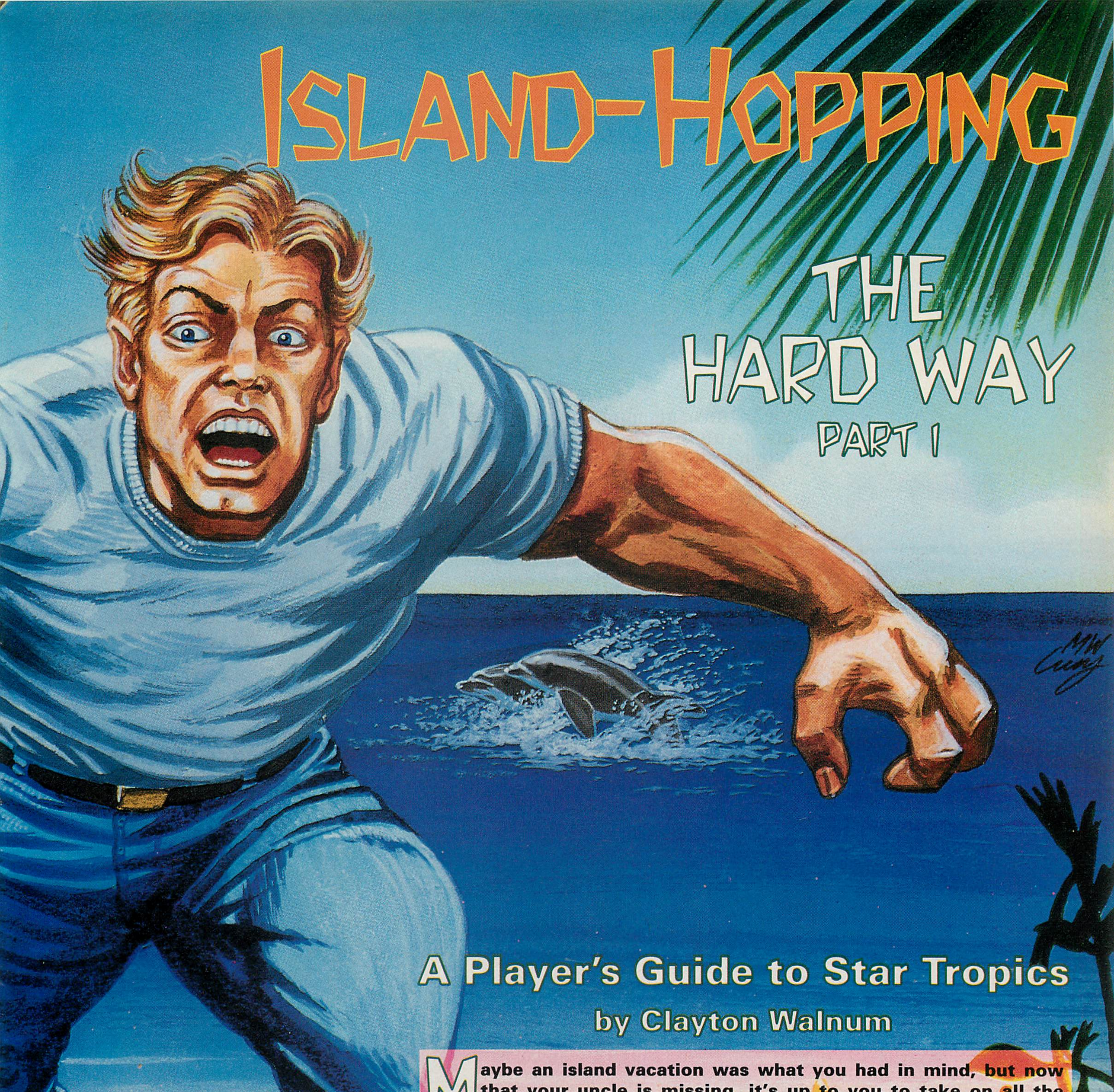
NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE CRESSY

ISLAND-HOPPING

THE HARD WAY

PART I



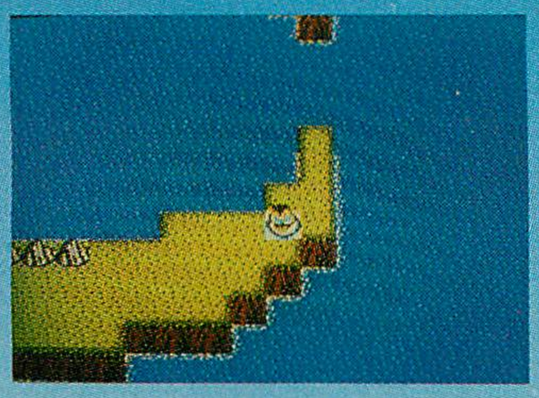
A Player's Guide to Star Tropics

by Clayton Walnum

Maybe an island vacation was what you had in mind, but now that your uncle is missing, it's up to you to take on all the tropical nasties and rescue your uncle from certain doom. Along the way, you'll meet all sorts of strange and wonderful creatures and folk. Of course, not everyone or everything (shudder) is friendly. You must be brave and strong if you ever hope to get out of this island-hopping adventure alive.

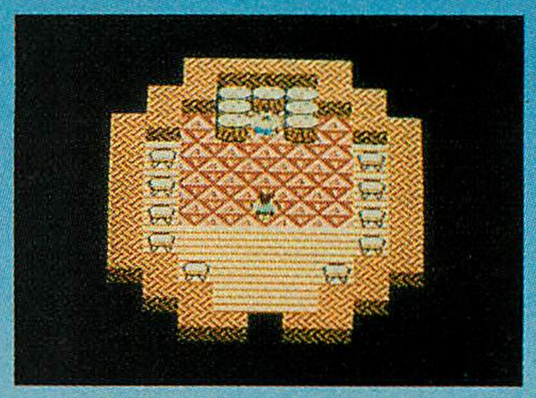
An appealing combination of role-playing and arcade action, *Star Tropics* is a sure winner. Come along with us on a tour of the first few levels. But remember, in the maps that follow, we reveal some surprises that might be more fun to discover on your own. If you're planning on playing *Star Tropics* soon, you might want to hold on to this article until you need help. If you just want to see whether *Star Tropics* will appeal to you, by all means, read on. Chances are, when you decide to buy the game, you'll have forgotten most of the clues we have here.

Next month, we'll continue with the *Star Tropics* player's guide. Don't miss it.

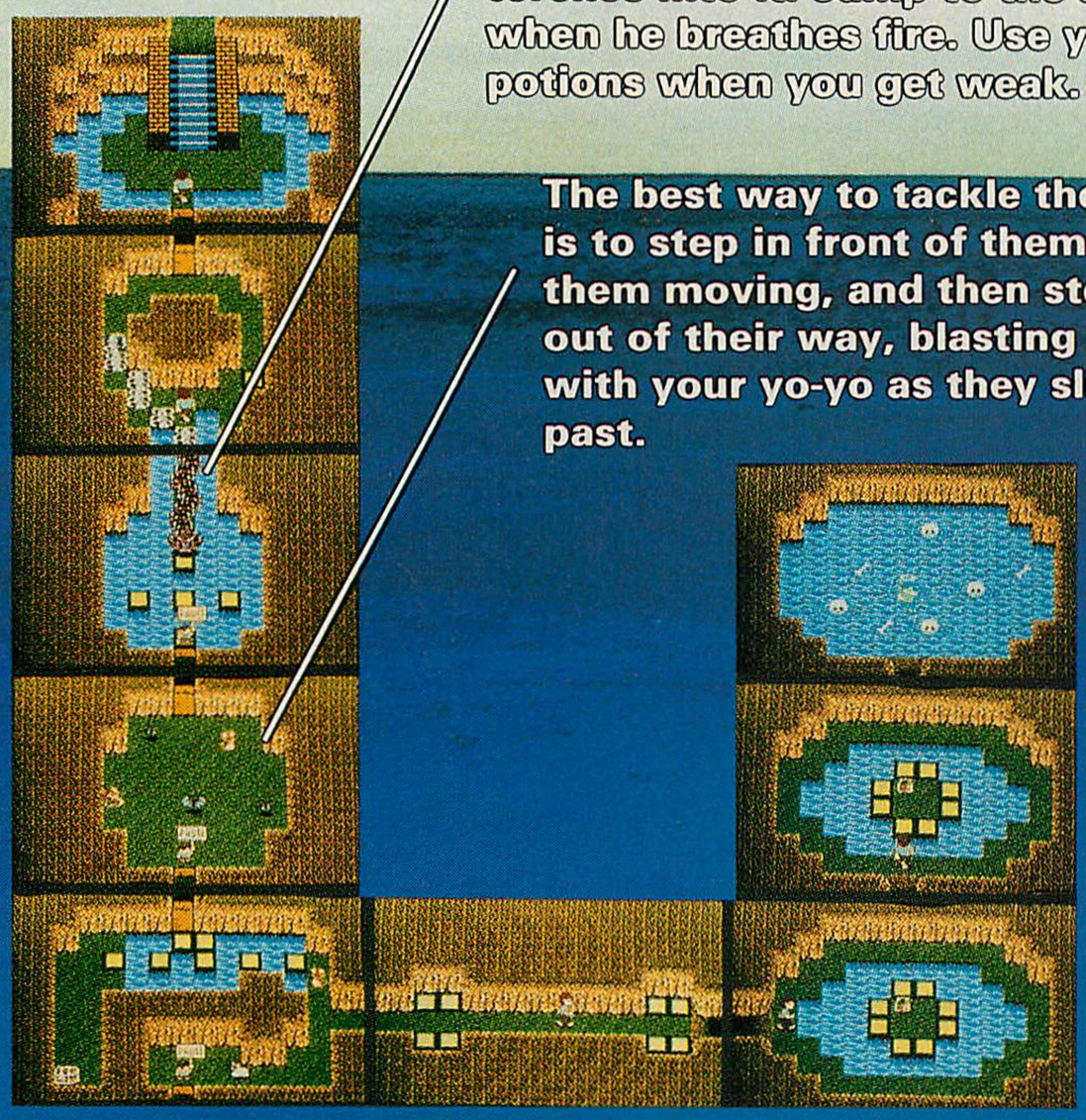


You start your adventure on the very tip of C Island.

This guard in Coralcola will let you by only after you've spoken to everyone in the village.



The chief of Coralcola has information about your uncle. He also has a strange weapon for you.



Yikes! It's a gigantic snake. When his mouth is open, you can throw torches into it. Jump to the side when he breathes fire. Use your potions when you get weak.

The best way to tackle the snakes is to step in front of them to get them moving, and then step back out of their way, blasting them with your yo-yo as they slither past.

Secret buttons in this room open the treasure chest, as well as the doors to the north and east. The snakes attack as soon as you step in front of them. Get them moving, and then quickly turn and fire.

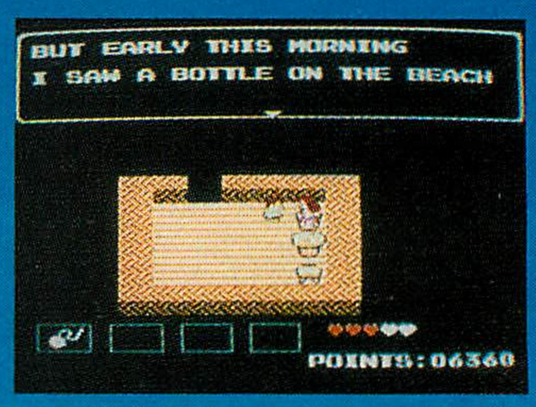
This room and the room to the north both contain valuable healing potions. But stay out of the third room to the north.

After making it through the tunnel, it's off to find the lab.

In the ocean, you'll meet a distressed dolphin. Being the nice person you are, you agree to find her lost baby.

You'll get some good advice inside the lighthouse.

This wacky island is loaded with secret passages through which Sub-C can float.

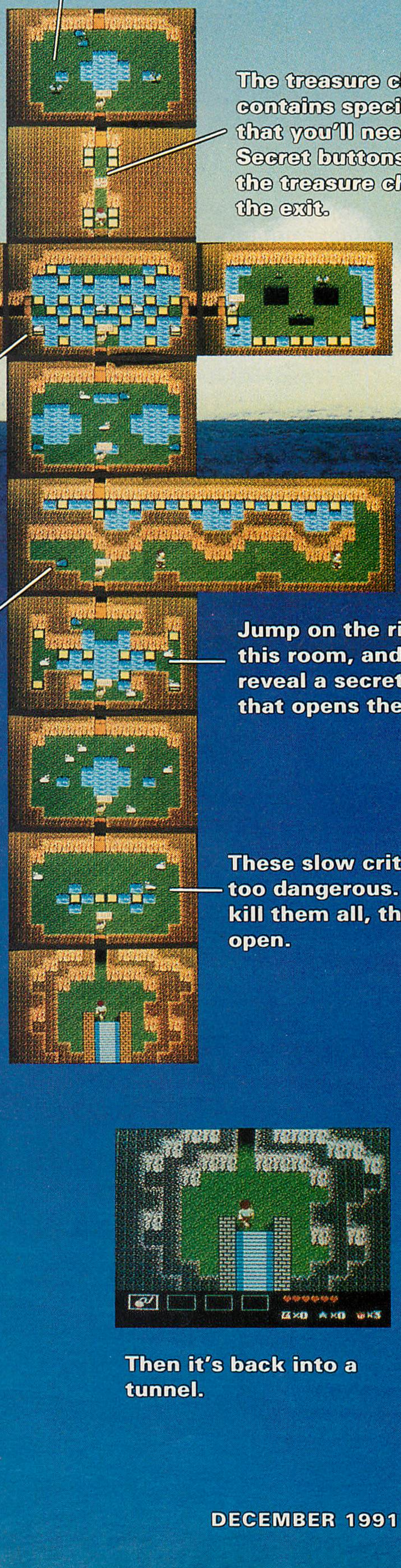


Hmmm. The lighthouse keeper's wife has some interesting information.

Remember to talk to everyone.

You'll be seeing the witch doctor a lot!

The bats are most vulnerable when they stop moving. That's when to close in and attack.



The treasure chest here contains special torches that you'll need later on. Secret buttons open both the treasure chest and the exit.

At the lab, you'll be given command of Sub-C and its robot helper, Nav-Com.

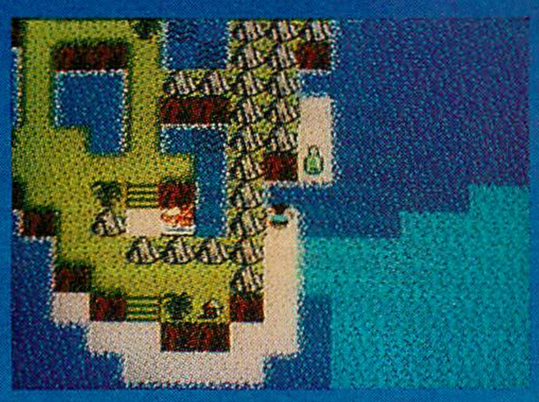
There are three hidden buttons in this room, but the rooms to the right and left contain nothing but trouble.

The rats are best attacked from the side.

Jump on the right tile in this room, and you'll reveal a secret button that opens the door.

These slow critters aren't too dangerous. After you kill them all, the door will open.

First stop on Lighthouse Island is...well...the lighthouse.



Sure enough. There's a bottle on the beach. But how can you get through the mountains? Try walking into them.

This big heart will add to your life. To get there, walk through a mountain.

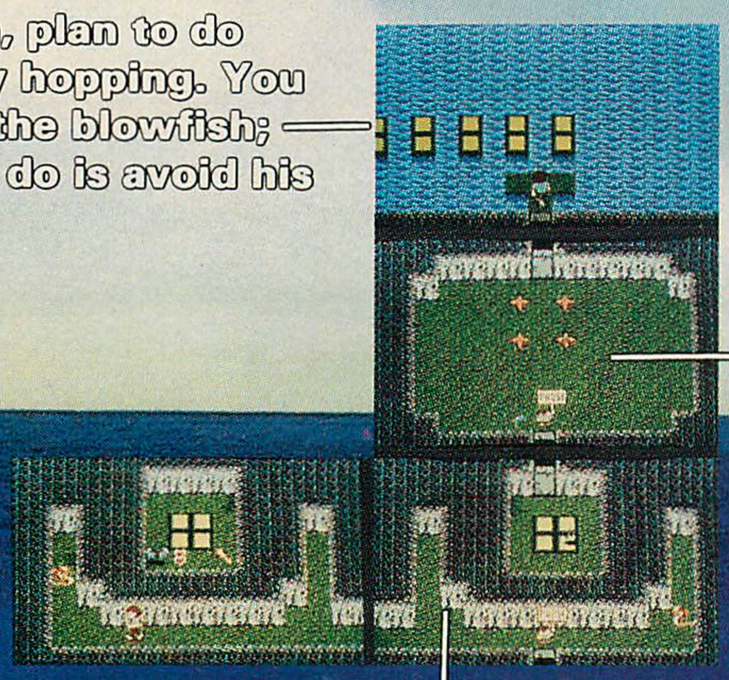
Then it's back into a tunnel.

The bat is great for fighting unpredictable bats. Guess that makes it a "bat's" bat.

This is the first place where swinging the bat will keep you out of trouble.

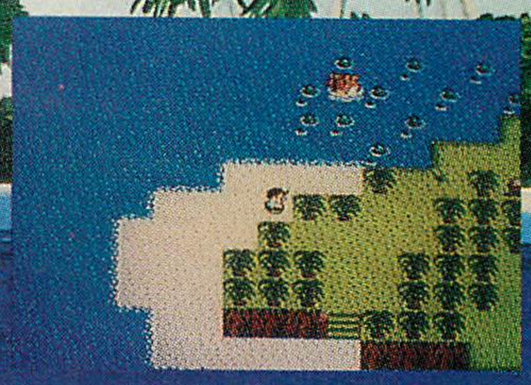
When crossing these narrow strips, watch out for sneak attacks. Quickly kill the creature that comes from the left, and then run to the next strip before the creature coming from the right can reach you.

In this area, plan to do some fancy hopping. You can't beat the blowfish; all you can do is avoid his fire.



As soon as you enter this room, run up into the middle of the starfish and smack them all at once with one swing of your bat.

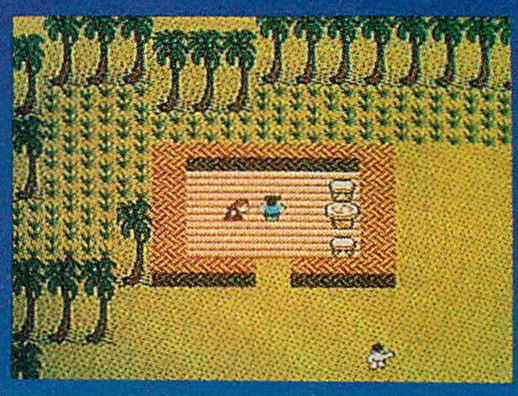
Look for dark patches on the floor of this long room. They indicate secret passages.



After a bad storm, you'll wash up onto the next island.

In a small hut, you can fill up your hearts by drinking healthful coconut milk.

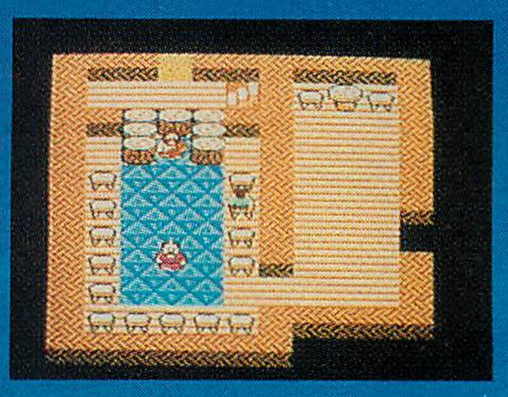
Then it's through another tunnel, in search of the village of Miracola.



When you make it to Miracola, talk to everyone.

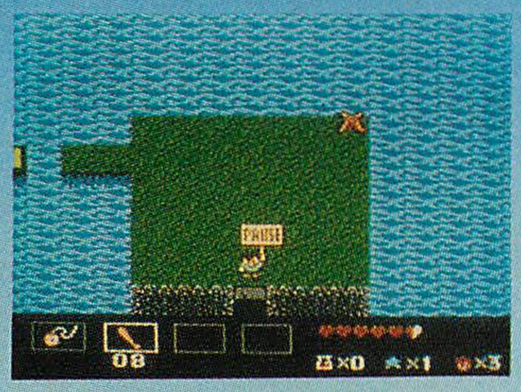
This island maze is easy to figure out.

Another swig of coconut milk will get you feeling proper.

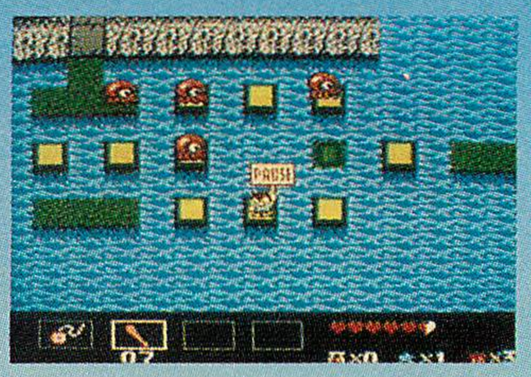


In this house, you'll be given your next mission. Notice the secret entrance on the north wall.

Kill all the bats, and the door will open.



Run over to the lower right corner, and wait for the starfish to stop in front of you. Then whack him with your bat.



Hitting switches and leaping from sinking tiles is only half the fun here. You must bop some octots, too.

Jump on the right block to turn on the lights. Then head to the north. The stairs in the west room don't go where you will want to go.

Stand still and let the dodo birds come to you. As long as you don't move into the room, the skeletons will leave you alone. When the dodos are dead, attack the skeletons from across the water. Although the skeletons can jump over the water, they will always pause before doing so.

Timing is everything here. Jump on the first tile just as it's coming up from underwater. Continue jumping nonstop until you get to the tile on the right, which will make a pair of hearts appear.

Keep jumping left and right to avoid Octo's shots. When he moves up close to the tiles, freeze him with the snowman doll, and then blast him with your yo-yo. You'll have to freeze him twice before you finish him off.

Follow these four rooms around counter clockwise, and you can get a bottle of healing potion.

Walk up to the treasure chest and obliterate the snake on the other side. Then open the chest by jumping on the two lower tiles. To get the contents of the chest without getting hit by the two other snakes, run up the aisle and jump as soon as the snakes attack.

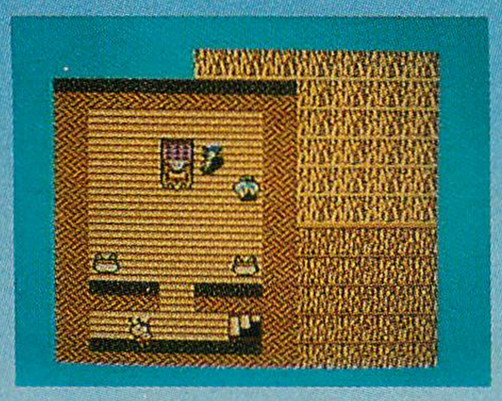
You'll find bolos in this room. Use the bolos on the flying monkeys in the next two rooms.

These dodo birds will make a beeline for you. Have your weapon ready.

After getting the potion, go through the secret tunnel on the east wall.

The free hearts here will boost your strength.

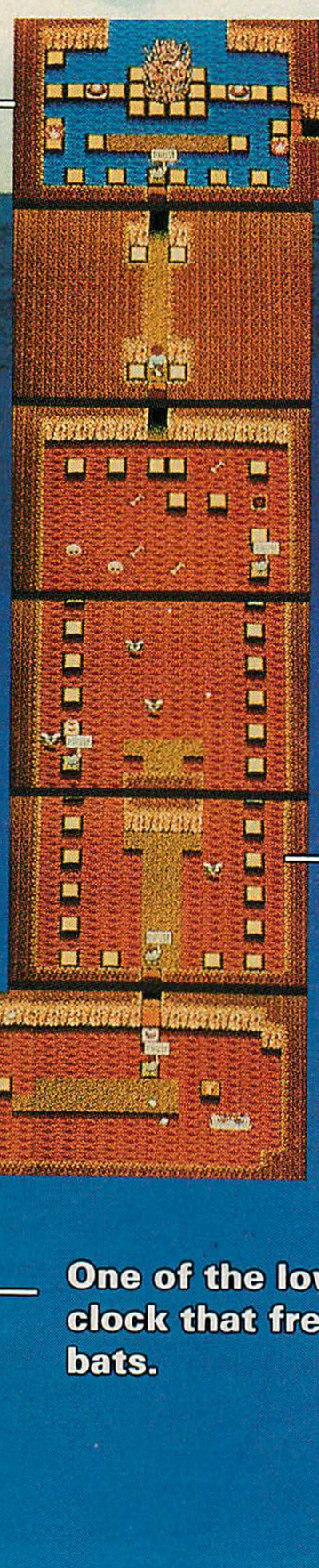
This treasure chest contains the snowman doll, with which you can freeze Octo, the next boss monster.



The chief's daughter Bananette cannot be awakened. It's up to you to find the right spell. If you do, the chief will fix the shipwrecked Sub-C.

The maze exit leads to your next tunnel.

You must be a fast hopper to uncover the two secret buttons that'll drop Magma into the lava. Keep trying. You can do it!



Keep moving in order to avoid mad muddy's fireballs. If you get close enough, you might be able to whack him with your yo-yo. Open the door with the secret button and then skedaddle.

Using nonstop jumping, go up the left side and grab the two hearts. Then go back to the right side and all the way up. As long as you keep jumping, you should be able to avoid damage. Forget the bolos that'll appear here. They're not worth the effort.

One of the lower tiles will reveal a clock that freezes or slows the bats.

Keep moving and you may be able to avoid the fire from the lava octots in the pool here. Grab the sign if you want, but you can lose lives as well as gain them.

The stairs lead down to the next level, where the action really gets hot.

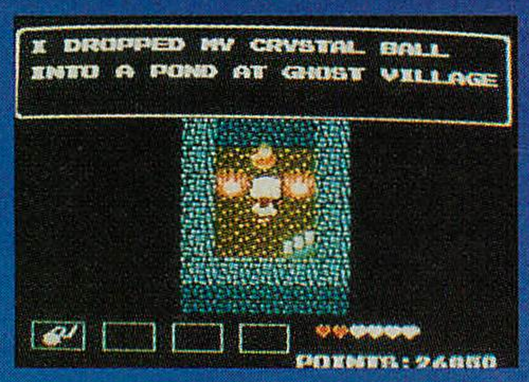
Jump as the first tile is rising from the water. Then keep jumping all the way to the exit.

The lights are out in this room. You'll have to watch where the creatures move so you know where it's safe to step.

To get past these snakes, run and jump, run and jump.

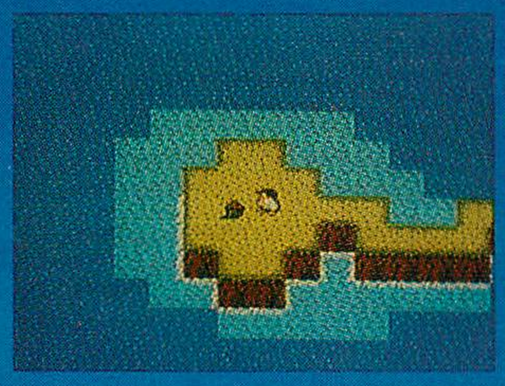
Make sure you don't miss this room. The treasure chest contains a valuable bottle of healing potion.

They let only women into Shecola. (Get it? *She*cola?)



If you can find this fortune teller's crystal ball, she can help you get into Shecola.

More secret mountain passes lead to another big heart and to your next challenge.



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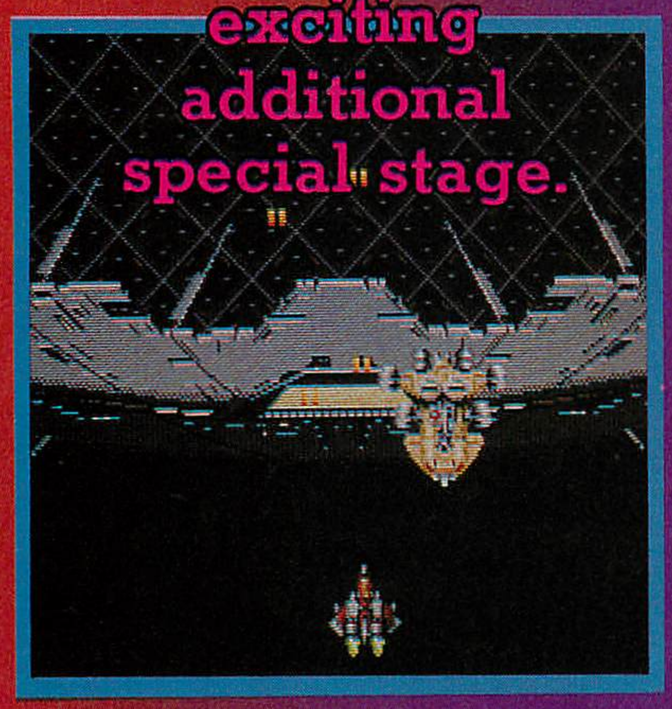

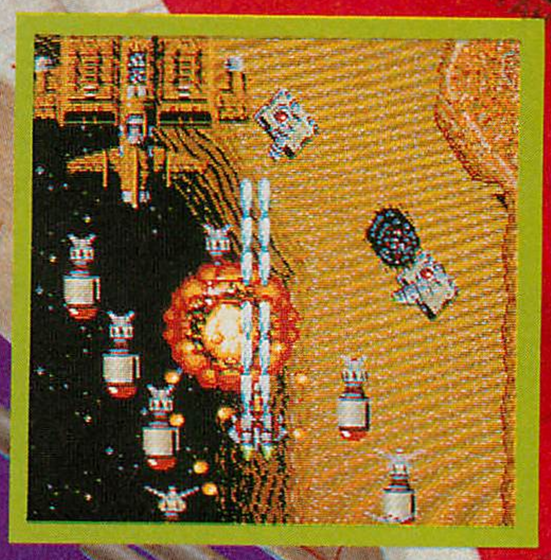

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VG&CE's

1991 PIGSKIN PREVIEW

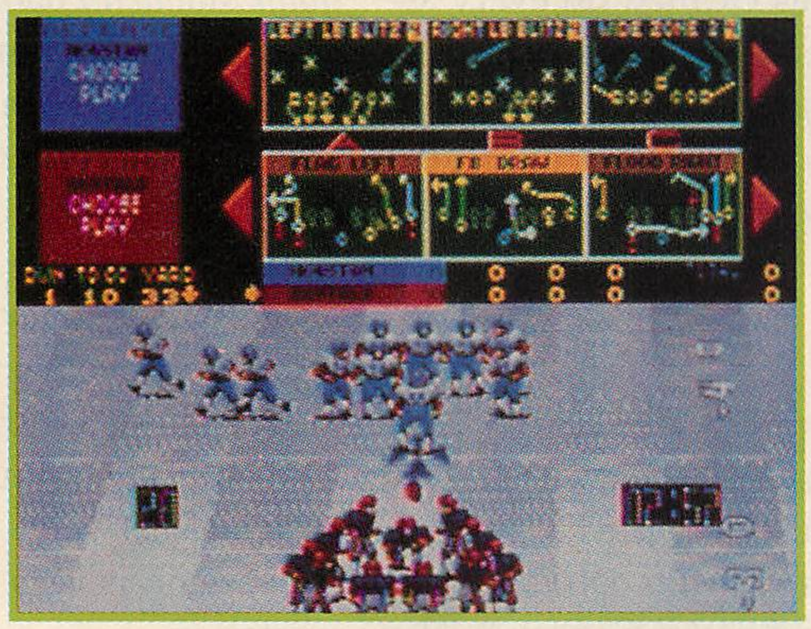
PRO AND COLLEGE FOOTBALL KICK OFF A NEW YEAR

ILLUSTRATED BY ALAN HUNTER

BY BILL KUNKEL AND ARNIE KATZ

FASHIONS IN ELECTRONIC FOOTball games change faster than those in a department store window. In the two decades that we have enjoyed on-screen football, there have been more changes in its direction than in a Rocket Ismael kickoff return.

The earliest football titles (see *The 1991 Footballography* for a listing of past and current ones) were absurdly simple. They had to be. None of the hardware could move enough players simultaneously to simulate line play. In fact, most of the early games were merely symbolic representations of the sport, with as few as three or four players per side, instead of the regulation 11.



Currently available for the Genesis and the NES, *John Madden Football*, by Electronic Arts, will be making its way to the Super NES with one- or two-player action and 29 teams to choose from.

Sports game designers yearned to get the full spectrum of game action into their creations. As computers grew more powerful, football games kept pace, with steadily increasing complexity.

Programs like *The World's Greatest Football Game* (Epyx) and *John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts) provided exhaustive—and exhausting—action-simulations of professional football. Both games included intricate modules for designing plays that paralyzed almost everyone who hadn't actually coached an NFL team!

This was realism gone wild. Publishers forgot playability in the competition to produce programs with voluminous playbooks and all the options available to the actual squads. It could easily take a player an hour just to set up a game of *John Madden* on the IBM PC system.

The big problem with the hypercomplex action games was that few players cared to memorize all the available formations, patterns and plays. The play-mechanics thus became the biggest barrier to the gamer's enjoyment. Only the most dedicated fans put in enough hours of study to attain a modicum of mastery.

If the computer version of *John Madden Football* was one of the most extreme examples of overcomplexity, the outstanding Genesis version has proven instrumental in reversing the trend. Although the cartridge brims with strategic possibilities, it isn't necessary for the video gamer to commit the various plays to memory or design them from scratch.

Most recent action-football games have followed in the footsteps of Park Place Productions' *John Madden Football*, as played on the Genesis, by throwing the emphasis back onto play execution, where it belongs. This much-honored video game has influenced virtually all computer and video pigskin programs released in the last year, and that influence will persist in the ones now in development.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

What's the best way for a game to show the gridiron? Designers have tried everything, except possibly looking up at the players from beneath a transparent field.

Primitive handhelds and early video-game carts, like Atari's *Football*, generally featured top-down, vertically oriented playfields with side-perspective players.

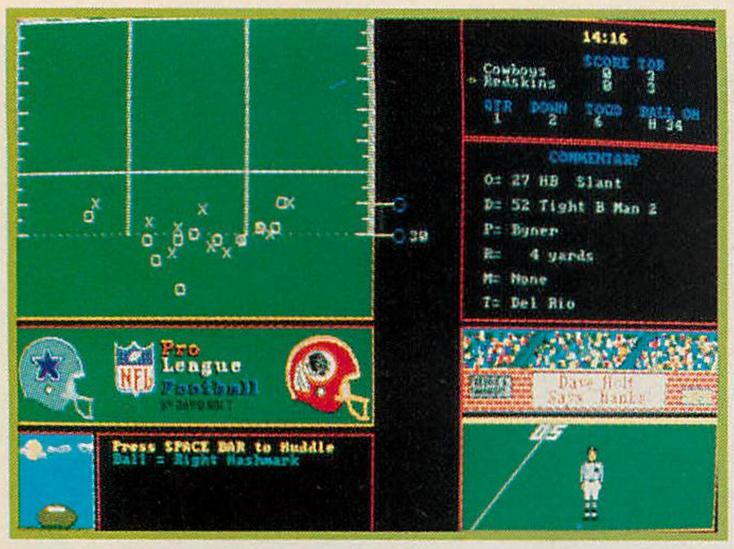
The incorporation of scrolling induced a switch to horizontal fields. A few used the same overhead vantage point as the vertical field titles, but angled side perspective soon became the standard for both statistical and action-electronic pigskin.

Although the angled side presentation gives a convincing illusion of three-dimensionality, it also creates some problems. Between ten and 14 players start each down on the line of scrimmage, with several more just a step or two away. All of them rush forward at the snap. Angled side perspective creates tremendous image overlapping. It can be hard to program, and it's no picnic for the armchair coach trying to distinguish individual players.

The latest innovation is the "from the goalpost" view of a vertically scrolling field as introduced in *Cyberball* (Tengen) and *John Madden Football*. It gives a good overall representation of the gridiron and causes almost no confusion, due to tightly packed clumps of players.

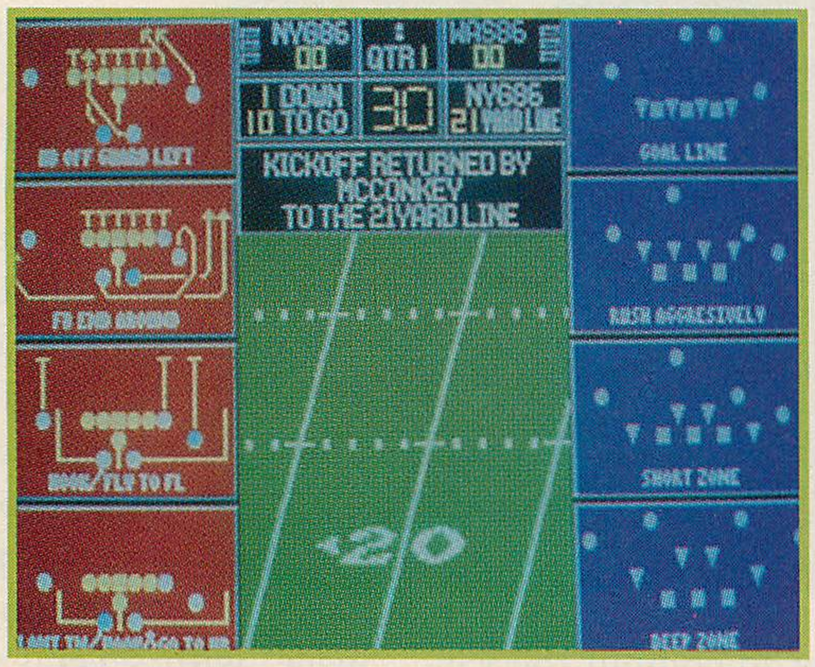
STATISTICAL SIMULATIONS

Two major titles in this category are getting face-lifts this winter. Both should reach stores in plenty of time for league and season-replay fans.



Pigskin enthusiasts will be able to download up-to-the-minute statistics during the NFL season with *NFL Pro League Football*.

NFL Pro League Football (Micro Sports for the IBM PC) is the latest, and best, version of Dave Holt's pro football simulations. It comes with a statistical compiler, a playbook that includes scouting reports, five years worth of pro teams and a rewritten rule book that is much more concise and understandable than the one it replaced.



MicroLeague Pro Football, by MLSA, has refined the 1990 program of the same name and plans to release a college league version of the title.

Animated graphics give players of *NFL Pro League Football* more to look at than the old X's and O's. Micro Sports plans to support the game with extra team and season disks.

One unusual aspect of *NFL Pro League Football* is its connection with the *USA Today* Sports Center. During the season, gamers can download up-to-the-minute statistics. These can be plugged into the program to allow users to simulate current games instead of the ones from the previous year. Expect to see handicappers pre-playing crucial match-ups before making wagers.

The publisher is also introducing a college football simulation this year. It is basically similar to the NFL game, with 50 top collegiate squads ready for play.

MicroLeague Pro Football (MLSA for the Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh) refines the 1990 program of the same name. The Ed Daniels-Jim Nangano team has cleaned up every aspect of this excellent simulation, resulting in a program that yields more accurate statistical results and is also easier and more fun to play. MLSA, too, plans a college version of its program.

All-out Action

Large, bit-mapped players are a prime attraction of *Mike Ditka Power Football* (Ballistic for the Genesis). The presentation is somewhat reminiscent of *John Madden Football*, though the images in the prototype submitted to VG&CE looked exceptionally crisp. The animated referee speaks with the voice of NFL veteran official Jim Tunney.

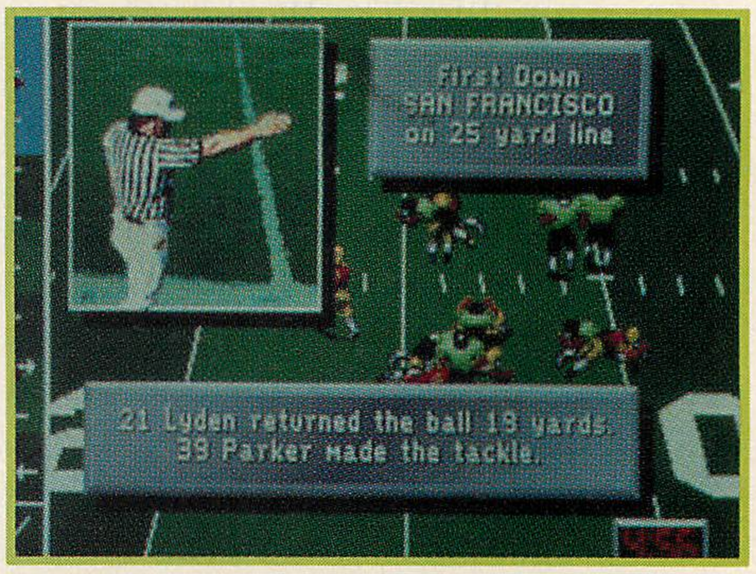
The game utilizes the franchises of the National Football League, but the rosters contain imaginary players. Most are close analogs of the real athletes, but the absence of the familiar stars (and scrubs) detracts from the realism.

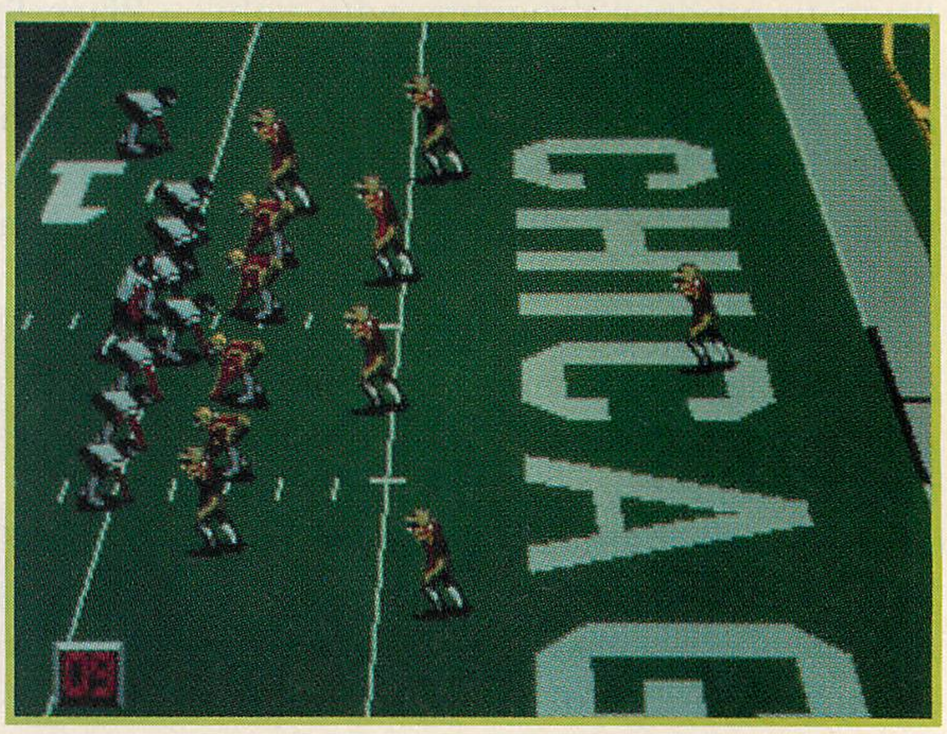
Passing is often the Waterloo of action football games. *Mike Ditka Power Football* addresses the problem by offering three different play-mechanics for aerials. The compu-coach can select from: freeze frame, in which action stops until the offense's coach picks a receiver; assist, which automatically moves the chosen target to the ball, if possible; and pro, for those who don't need such help.

Super NES owners won't have to wait long for a first-rate football cartridge. *John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts) has one- and two-player modes and contains 29 teams, including the infamous Madden All-Stars. With more than 200 possible plays, *John Madden Football* should satisfy any arcade football enthusiast.

Moving from the computer- to video-game conference without losing a step is *TV Sports: Football* (NEC for the TurboGrafx-16). Despite the use of imaginary players, it feels authentic, because it evokes the player's memories of watching football on television. Of course, the computer version does that more effectively, but the TurboGrafx-16 version is very solid in its video presentation.

Practice modes for passing and kicking help the novice player to become comfortable with the play-mechanics before trying them under competitive pressure. This is a wise provision, since these are the hardest things for most players to master in *TV Sports: Football*.





Mike Ditka Power Football, by Accolade, will offer gamers a choice of three different camera angles from which to view the plays.

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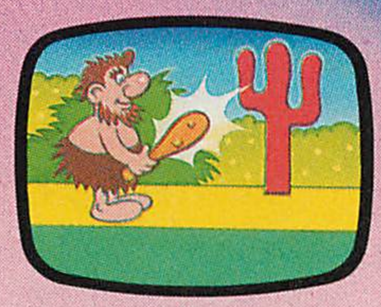

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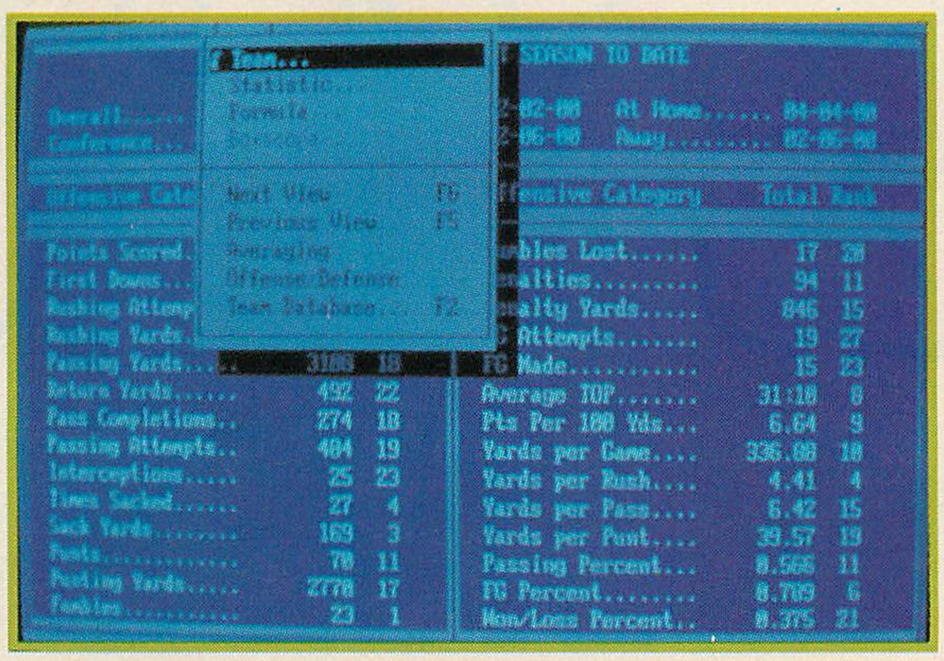
The gamer evaluates players according to four ability ratings: speed, strength, agility and ball handling. Teams can play an exhibition or participate in an eight-team, ten-game schedule, plus a championship. TurboTap owners can enjoy the unique experience of five-player football.

New Plays

Fantasy and rotisserie football is an excellent compromise for those who want a mathematically based game that doesn't take as much time or attention as a complete statistical-replay simulation. Such leagues already involve more than a million American football fanatics, and now there's a computer program that makes this type of game even more fun.

Fantasy Football (Franchise Football League for the IBM PC) has everything needed to organize such a league. Coaches can download weekly pro football stats via the America On-Line computer network. Users without modems can also receive the same information by fax or on a disk sent to them via Federal Express.

The Gold Sheet: Pro Football Analyst (Villa Crespo for the IBM PC) gives the average small bettor the same high-powered tools that big-time gamblers have at their command. This well-conceived handicapping aid, licensed by the best-known tip sheet in football, lets the player display up to 60 statistics, gives offensive and defensive team rankings for each stat category, facilitates "what if?" analyses and predicts game scores.



The Gold Sheet: Pro Football Analyst is designed for the gambler, displaying up to 60 statistics and offering defensive and offensive team rankings for each stat category.

Using statistics updated weekly, *The Gold Sheet: Pro Football Analyst* is the wagerer's best friend during the pro football season.

Tomorrow's Games

New technology always gives game design a shot in the arm. Expanded capabilities provide the opportunity for the games to incorporate new elements and improve upon what has already been done.

That's exactly the situation for 1992. The entire electronic-gaming industry is shifting into higher gear with new, powerful hardware. By this time next year, several new titles will exploit the improved technology to redefine state-of-the-art in electronic football.

Look for major new games, both action and simulation, for 16-bit video-game systems, IBM PC 386SX computers and the first generation of multimedia machines, including the Magnavox CDI and Commodore CDTV.

And watch for VG&CE's *1992 Football Preview* for all the exciting gridiron details.

THE 1991 FOOTBALLOGRAPHY

Computer Games

Mike Ditka Power Football (Accolade) Stunning visuals highlight this 256-color VGA simulation with an elevated end zone viewpoint—and three other alternative camera angles, as well. Replays shown from all angles with great digitized sound. Uses non-NFL teams, and offers players a create-your-own-team option.

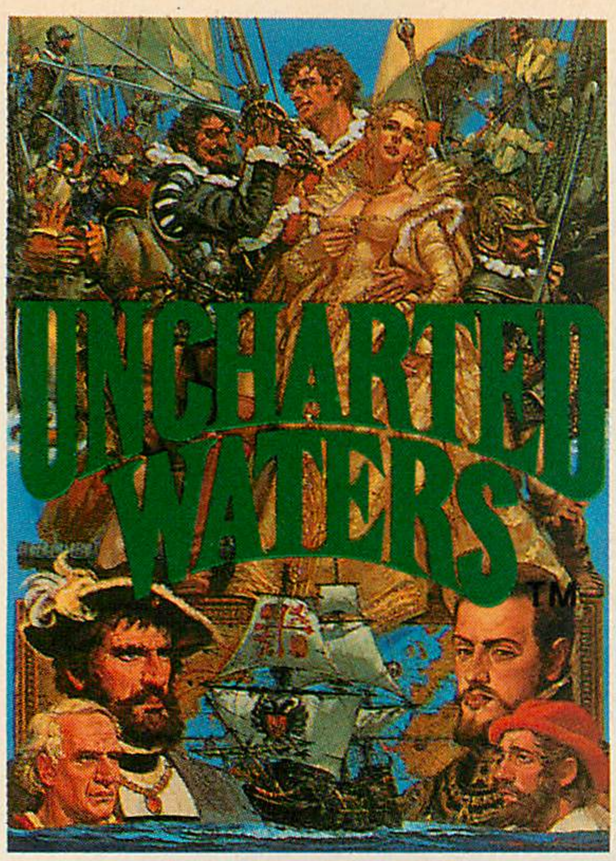
The Gold Sheet: Pro Football Analyst (Villa Crespo Software) Not actually a game, this stat and handicapping tool is a simple-to-use database. Display 60 stats by team or category, view offensive/defensive team rankings for each stat, devise prediction and trend formulas and "what if?" scenarios. Two seasons worth of stats are included, with more available.

Fantasy Football (Franchise Football League) Great utility for running a fantasy football league. Sets up draft, tracks lineups and tabulates weekly scoring. Includes complete NFL rosters.

Video Games

Quarterback Scramble (Accolade for the NES) Accolade's *4th & Inches* seems to have inspired this one- or two-player, in-the-stands, NES football game by Tokyo-based Pony Canyon. Six teams with full statistics (not real NFL teams), *QB Scramble*'s main innovation is the gamer's ability to freeze the action just before making a pass, in order to check out the status of both receivers.

John Madden Football (Electronic Arts for the Genesis) The greatest action-oriented electronic pigskin simulation ever produced. Ground-breaking graphics programming, by Park Place Productions, creates an incredibly realistic sense of moving *into* the field. The Genesis' three action buttons are also put to good use, especially on passing plays, isolating on each of three potential receivers. Does not use NFL teams and players, but uniforms on the 17 teams (including an "All-Madden" team) will be instantly recognizable to fans.



High seas adventure and intrigue guide you through the newest role-playing game from Koei. As a young Portuguese captain in 16th century Europe, you must rescue damsels in distress, accumulate massive amounts of wealth, and restore your family honor. As your sailing skill increases, others seek you out for more important and dangerous missions. Exploring UNCHARTED WATERS, you'll discover a motley crew of thugs, villains and scallywags in some of the world's most exotic ports. Your greatest adventure will be to rescue the King's beautiful daughter. Succeed, and his Royal Highness will reward you handsomely!

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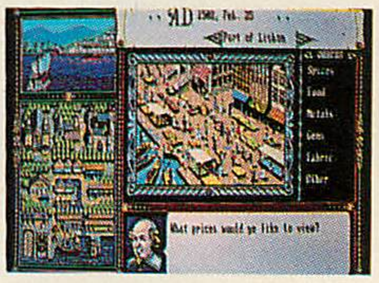
- 5 Meg Cartridge
- 128K RAM
- Battery Back-Up
- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play

PC Version
- 640K
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support

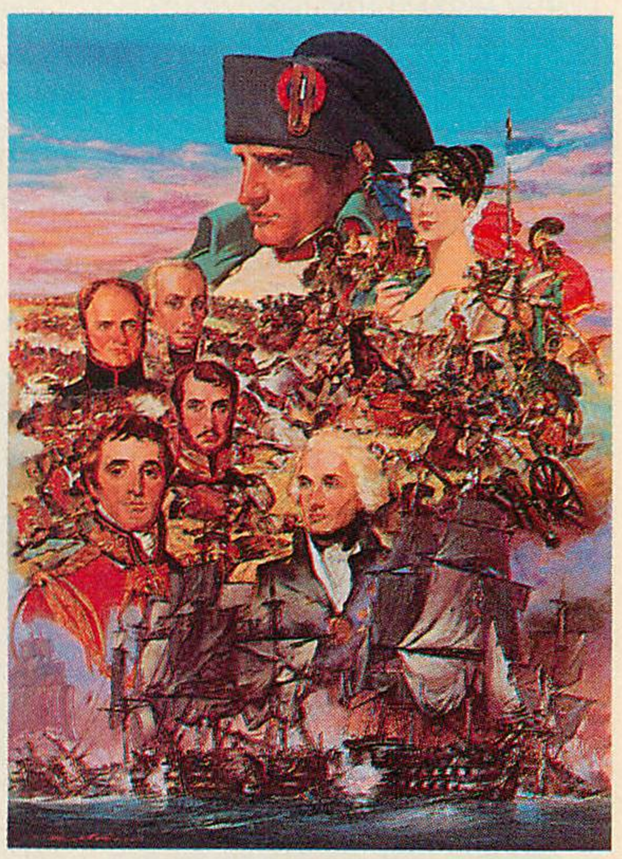


Real World Adventure.

NES Version
- 3 Meg Cartridge
- 128k RAM
- Battery Back-Up
- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play

PC Version
- 640k
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support

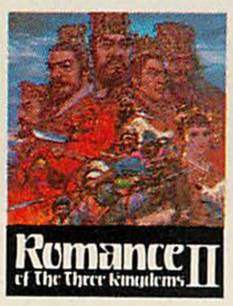
The battlefield becomes your passport to adventure and world domination as you assume the role of Napoleon Bonaparte. With the French revolution over, you must first gain control of France and then use your new power to conquer all of Europe. You must rule with fairness and diplomacy if you are to continue to build the empire you desire. As you become Master of those around you, men fall to their demise by your command and citizens flock to your side as you charge into battle. For, to play L'EMPEREUR, it is not enough to win a battle, you must also win the war!



L'EMPEREUR™

We Supply The Past, You Make The History

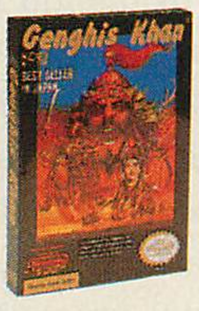
Romance of The Three Kingdoms



Romance of The Three Kingdoms II

Nobunaga's Ambition

Nobunaga's Ambition II



Genghis Khan

Bandit Kings Of Ancient China

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AdLib SOUND

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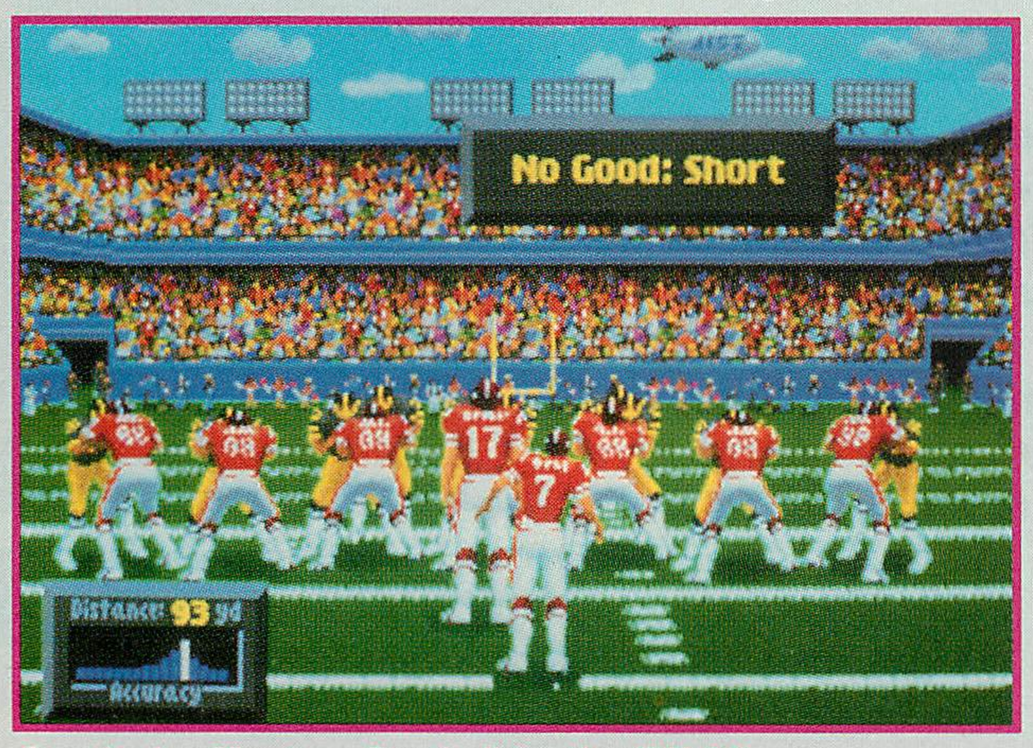
CIRCLE #145 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football* for the Super NES.

John Madden Football (Electronic Arts for the NES) NES version of the Genesis game, also by Park Place, reproduces a remarkable number of the features that delighted 16-bit fans. Almost 200 plays and 29 pro-level teams are included, with players rated on strength, speed and smarts, while defensive players are rated for the pop in their hits. Regular season and playoff modes.

John Madden Football (Electronic Arts for the SNES) The Super NES version offers the same basics as the Genesis version, but doesn't match the original in terms of visual impact. Also by Park Place.



Sega's *Joe Montana Football* for the IBM PC.

Joe Montana Football (Sega for the Genesis) Bizarre remake of *John Madden Football*, uses virtually the same visual presentation. At the last minute, Sega dumped the planned version of *Joe Montana* for the Genesis (a translation of *Hard Yardage* by Activision) and had Park Place do an instant-update. The results are mixed—it's a very good game, but it isn't nearly as good as *John Madden*.

Cyberball (Tengen for the Genesis) This slick adaptation of the Atari coin-op hit was upstaged by the appearance of *John Madden Football*, especially since it uses a similar elevated end zone perspective. *Cyberball* has the novelty value of playing football with variously powered robots, which adds considerable strategic spice to the game.

Cyberball (Jaleco for the NES) Solid graphics in this 8-bit version of the arcade hit, but the visual presentation is changed to the more traditional angled top-down with vertical scrolling.

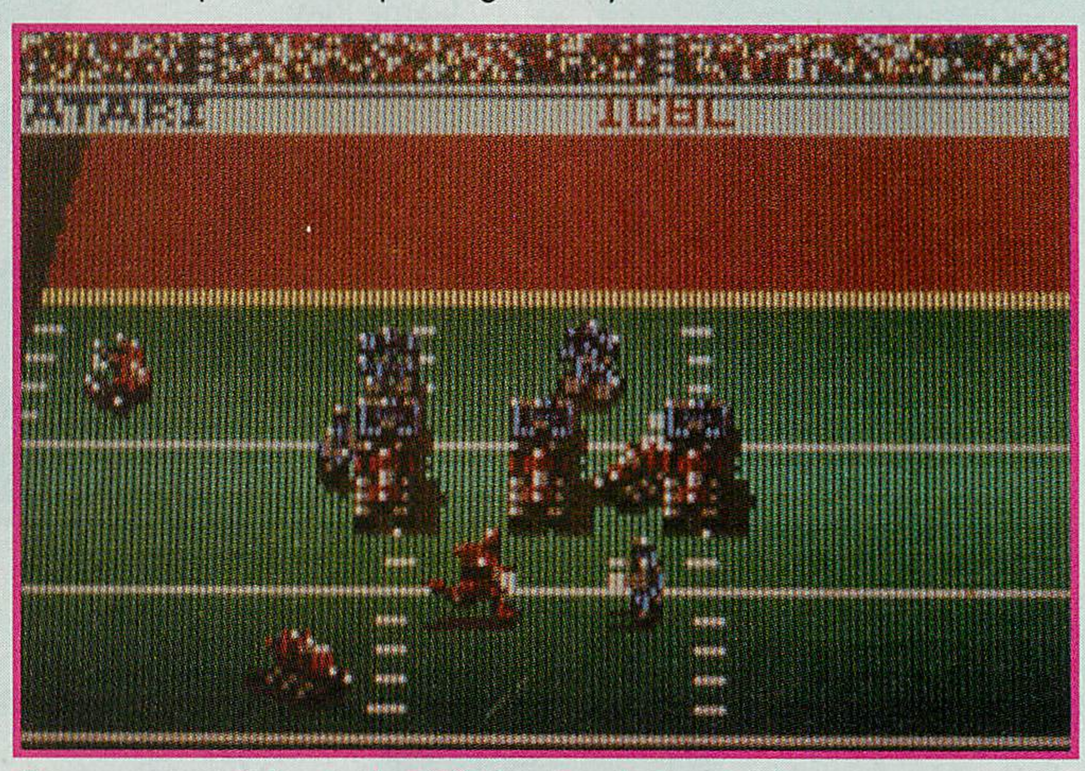
TV Sports: Football (Cinemaware for the TG-16) Football comes to the TG-16 with all the frills. Based on the popular computer game, also by Cinemaware, this is the first five-player, simultaneous-action gridiron simulation (via the TurboTap). Players are rated for ball-handling, speed, strength and agility in this excellent, angled top-down, vertically scrolling simulation.

NES Play Action Football (Nintendo for the NES) Nintendo tries its hand at recreating the football experience in this game scheduled for release sometime this year. One to four players.

Super Play Action Football (Nintendo for the SNES) The first Super NES pigskin simulation will be this 28-team, action-strategy game from the Big N. Three levels of competition: NFL, college and Pee Wee (why not Pop Warner?). Employs an extremely unusual visual presentation—an angled top-down diagonal perspective.

Tecmo Super Bowl (Tecmo for the NES) Upgraded version of *Tecmo Bowl* features all NFL teams and players, eight offensive plays, team stats and data, a strategy-only "Coach" mode, saved game results, 18-week season with weekly standings, substitutions and other excellent features. State-of-the-art in terms of "sit-down-and-play" 8-bit football.

Klash Bowl (Sofel for the NES) This game is only included because the cover illustration makes it look like future football—à la *Cyberball.* Rather, this is an excellent NES version of Spotlight's computer game *Speedball.*

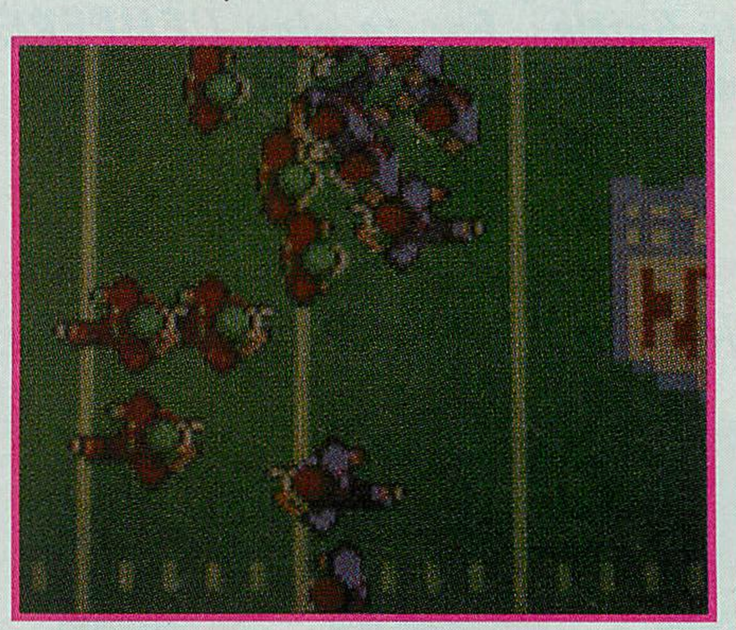


Tournament Cyberball 2072, by Atari, for the Lynx.

Handhelds

Play Action Football (Nintendo for the Game Boy) Top-down, vertically scrolling football action features solid monochrome visuals.

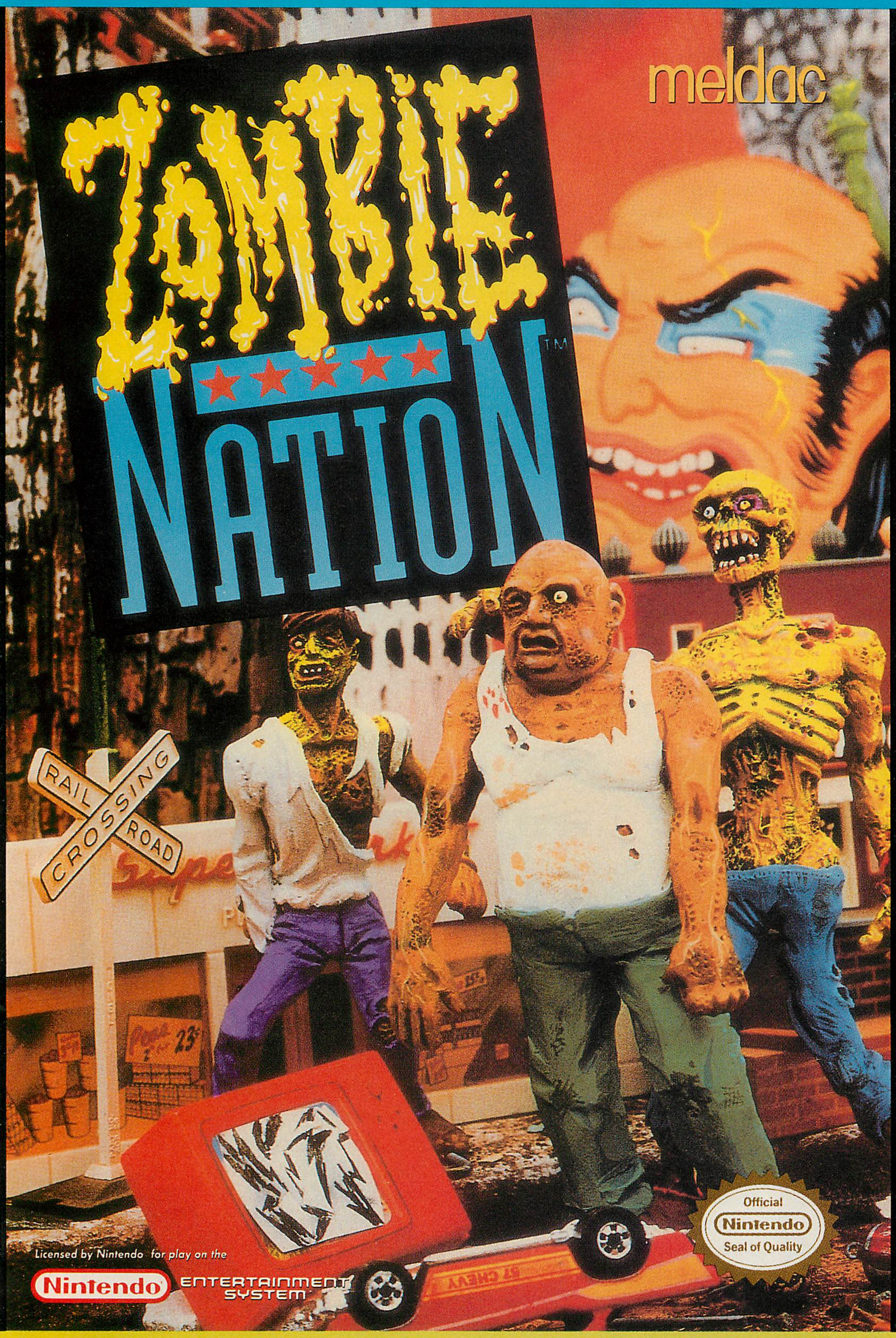
NFL Super Bowl Football (Atari for the Lynx) Action-strategy game scheduled for release soon. One to four players can compete.



NFL Super Bowl Football, by Atari, for the Lynx.

Tournament Cyberball 2072 (Atari for the Lynx) Lynx version of the popular robots-play-football game set almost a century from now. One to four players.

THE ZOMBIES ARE COMING!!!!



By I. C. GOOLS, Times Staff Writer

NEW YORK--What appeared to be a harmless meteorite crashing in the Nevada desert has turned out to be Darc Seed, an evil alien creature with horrible powers. By shooting strange rays, Darc Seed has turned the helpless nation into zombie slaves.

Mayor Heminhaw immediately called an emergency press conference where he read the following prepared statement. "I um, er,ah, I am doing everything, ah, er, humanly possible to see to it that ah, this situation er, um, this terrible situation ah, comes to a ah, ahem, a swift and , er, um, um, a swift and um, satisfactory close.

Ground Shaking NES Action

Zombie Nation is a ground shaking action/shooting game for the NES. The object of the game is to wreak total destruction on everything you see (it's a dark and dirty job, but somebody's got to do it). Meanwhile, you need to rescue as many zombie hostages as you can in order to gain enough strength for the ultimate showdown with Darc Seed (he's toast!).

Devastating Graphics and Pounding Sound

Zombie Nation's graphics are so devastatingly realistic you'll almost be tempted not to demolish them (yeah right!). And the relentlessly pounding sound effects will make you feel like you're right in the middle of the action hammering away at skyscrapers, mountains, and everything else that crosses your path. So don't just stand there like a Zombie, get your copy now!

Distributed by Meldac of America, Inc. 1801Century Park East Suite 2210, Los Angeles, CA. 90067 (213) 286-7040

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ZOMBIE NATION

CIRCLE #146 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Joe Montana Football, by Sega, for the IBM PC.

Tecmo Bowl (Tecmo for the Game Boy) Top-down vertically scrolling football action on the Game Boy. One or two players can compete.

Joe Montana Football (Sega for the Game Gear) Its visual presentation resembles *Hard Yardage* rather than the Genesis game of the same title. Angled top-down perspective with a horizontally scrolling field.

Other Electronic Football Games

Our list wouldn't be complete without games from last year's Footballography. For a detailed description of the following games, consult the October '90 issue of VG&CE.

Computer Game Football Titles

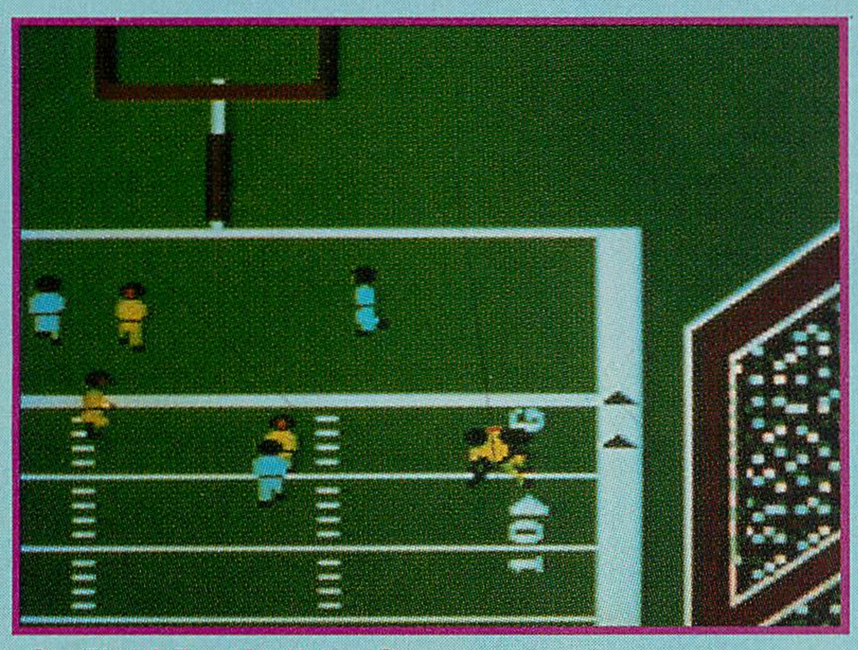
Star League Football
(Gamestar)

Cypher Bowl
(Artsci, Inc.)

Joe Montana Football
(Sega)

Computer Football
(SSI)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback
(Automated Simulations)



On-Field Football, by Gamestar.

Touchdown
(AKA *Touchdown Football*)
(Imagic)

On-Field Football
(Gamestar)

GFL Championship Football
(Gamestar)

Football
(Atari/cartridge)

Computer Football Strategy
(Avalon Hill)

The World's Greatest Football Game
(Epyx)

Super Bowl Sunday
(Avalon Hill)

Football
(subLogic)

Pure-Stat Football
(Software Simulations)

John Madden Football
(Electronic Arts)

TV Sports: Football
(Cinemaware)

Street Sports Football
(Epyx)

Street Football
(Capcom)

Brian Brinkmann's *PlayMaker Football*, by Brøderbund.

Mac Pro Football
(Avalon Hill)

Pro Football Facts & Predictions
(Intracorp)

3-IN-1 Football
(Lance Haffner Games)

4th & Inches
(Accolade)

Dream Team Fantasy Football
(MBI Software)

Grave Yardage
(Activision)

John Elway's Quarterback
(Melbourne House)

Monday Night Football
(Data East)

PlayMaker Football
(Brøderbund)

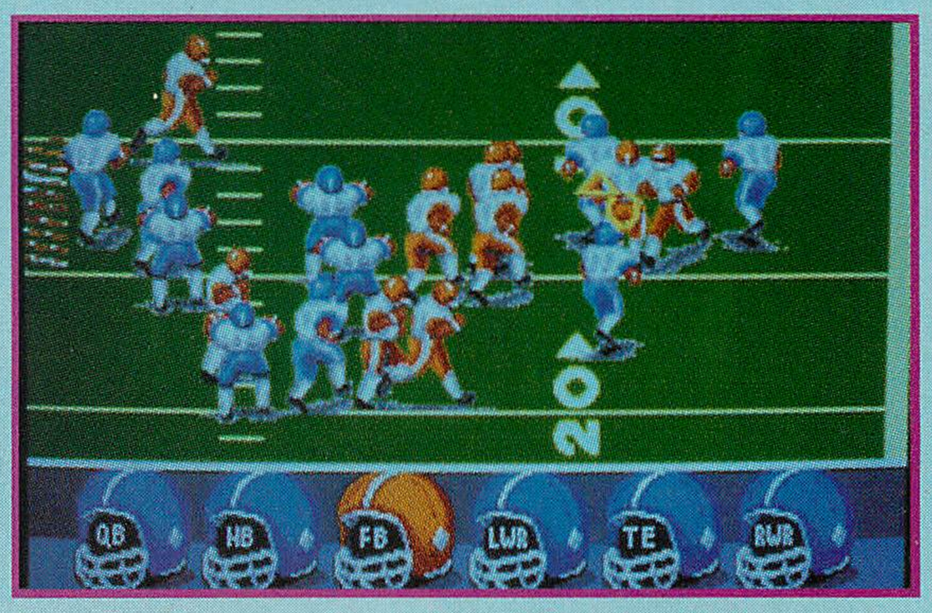
NFL Pro League Football
(Micro Sports, Inc.)

Cyberball
(Tengen)

MicroLeague Football
(MLSA)

Video Game Football Titles

Football
(Atari for the Atari 2600)



Data East's updated version of *Monday Night Football*.

Football
(Magnavox for the Odyssey²)

Football
(Bally/Bally Professional Arcade/Bally Home Arcade/Astrocade)

NFL Football
(Mattel for the Intellivision)

M-Network Football
(Mattel for the Atari 2600)

RealSports Football
(Atari for the Atari 2600 and 5200)

Super Action Football
(Coleco for ColecoVision)

10 Yard Fight
(Nintendo for the NES)

Great Football/Sports Pad Football
(Sega for the SMS)

John Elway's Quarterback
(Tradewest for the NES)

Tecmo Bowl
(Tecmo for the NES)

NFL
(LJN for the NES)

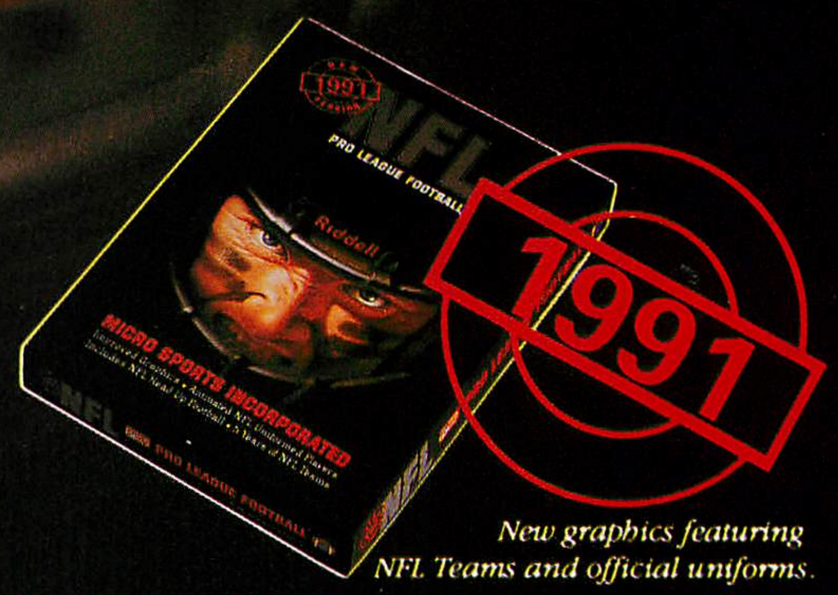
Mike Ditka's Big Play Football
(Accolade for the NES)

NO GUTS! NO GLORY!

NFL PRO LEAGUE FOOTBALL...
COMPUTER SIMULATION GAME

It's 4th and goal from your opponent's 2 yard line, you trail 20-17, time for one more play. Do you kick the field goal and go into overtime or do you call a 24 counter trap to your fullback. In the NFL there is only one way to look at it... No Guts! No Glory!

UPGRADES AVAILABLE



New graphics featuring NFL Teams and official uniforms.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL ALSO AVAILABLE

From league play, to head to head, to historical replays NFL Pro League Football features endless strategy, unrivaled graphics, an abundance of statistics, in a game so real, USA TODAY has used it to project the last 4 Super Bowls!

NFL Pro League Football features: Weather conditions, 2 billion play combinations, a league play feature that allows a coach not to be present to play, stats compiling, and 3 seasons of NFL teams (with player names and statistics). And just look at these print out options: Post Game Stats, Play by Play, League Standings, Season Stats and League Leaders, to name just a few!

IBM EGA/VGA Screen

NFL Pro League Football is available for IBM or Compatible Computers with EGA or VGA Graphics. Printer is optional.

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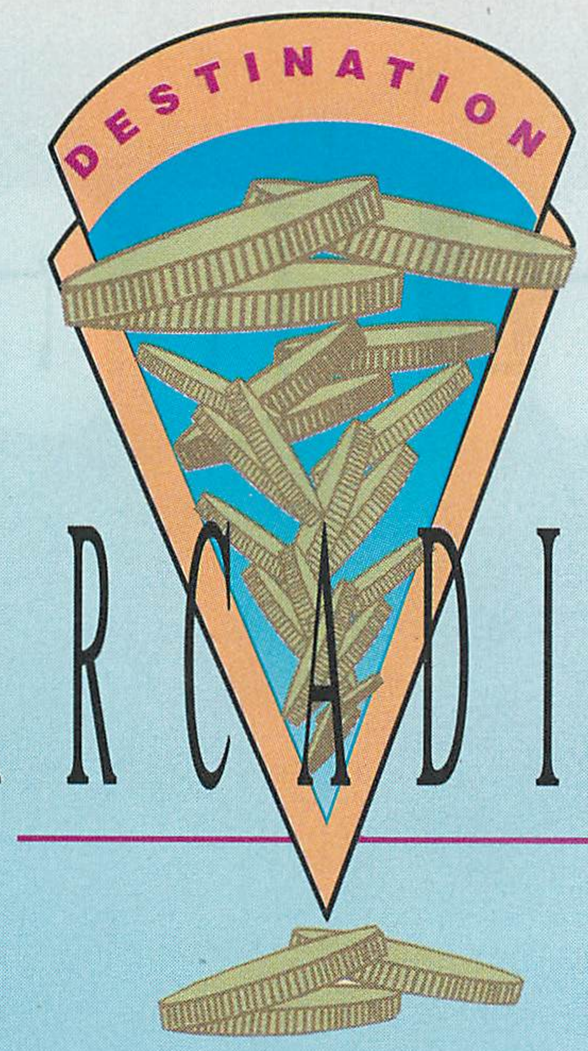


ARCADIA

WHAT'S COMING IN COIN-OP:

T·H·E AMOA R·E·P·O·R·T

BY DONN NAUERT

Everyone get plenty of quarters ready because, if the recent Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) show is any indication, you're gonna be spending a lot of time in the arcades.

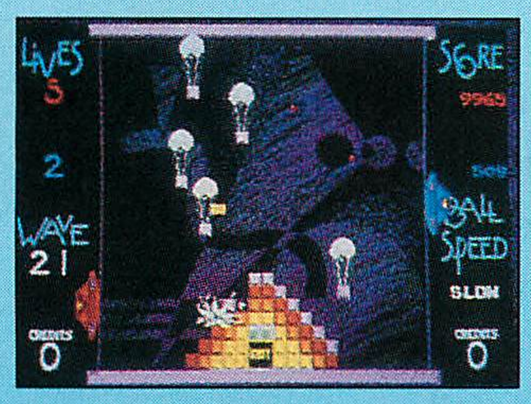
Usually these shows have one or two games that take the show, with plenty of also-rans. That's not the case this year. Every—and I mean every—company had, at worst, a very good game. This is without a doubt the best overall show that I've been to in the six years I have been attending them and since VG&CE started covering the coin-op side with the January 1990 issue.

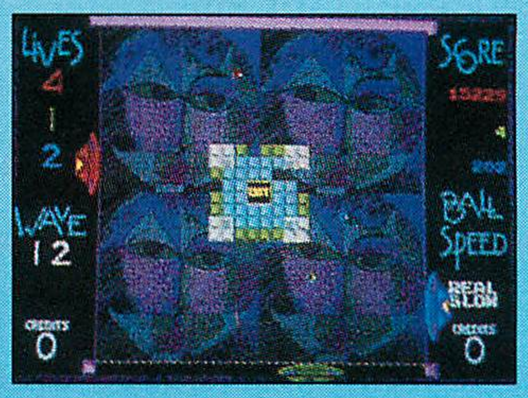
Without further ado, here's the play by play of every new game shown in Las Vegas.

American Technos

WWF WrestleFest

You knew it was only a matter of time before this game made it to the arcades, and American Technos got it. The game features two modes of play: a Tag Team Challenge and a Battle Royale. For authenticity, the game uses ten WWF superstars, including Hulk Hogan, Hawk of the Legion of Doom and Jake "The Snake" Roberts. Each wrestler comes equipped with his trademark moves and holds.





In *Off The Wall* gamers can compete head-to-head in a sudden death round.

American Sammy

Drift Out

Choose one of seven distinctly different cars as you battle through the six levels of this road-rally race game.

American Sammy's *Drift Out* is a top/down perspective race car competition.

Atari

Off the Wall

This game is best described as a *Break In*, as opposed to *Breakout*. With paddles on both sides of the screen, you must knock away the blocks in order to open the way to the exit. One to three players can battle it out through the 50 waves plus sudden-death bonus rounds.

***Steel Talons* might be best described as *Hard Drivin'* in a combat helicopter.**

Steel Talons

Polygon-filled graphics offer a realistic simulation of helicopter flight in a 360-degree universe. You can fly solo, with a friend or even battle them in a game that includes an altitude control on the seat, rotation controls at your feet and a joystick for firing shots and missiles. In the one- or two-player cooperative play, you must destroy tanks, helicopters, planes and enemy depots to advance levels. In the two-player competitive mode, you'll battle a friend in a helicopter dogfight or test your driving skills in a helicopter flying race through a canyon. Think of *Hard Drivin'* or *Race Drivin'* in combat helicopters.

Bally

The Party Zone Pinball

This happenin' pinball features a six-million-point "Eat,

Drink and be Merry" award, a song-select mode with Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze* creating the mood.

Betson Enterprises

Who Shot Johnny Rock?

From the company that brought you *Mad Dog McCree*, comes another great laser-disc gun game. You play a 1930s private eye who's been hired to solve the murder of Johnny Rock. You'll have to shoot it out in four different scenes (five, including Johnny's hideout) to get the clues that will help you solve the mystery.

Other than the scenario, the only noticeable difference between this game and *Mad Dog* was that you didn't have to tilt the gun down to reload, but you could buy extra ammo instead. A difficulty selector has also been added. Other than that, you still have the same great game play.

***Who Shot Johnny Rock?* has the same great game play as *Mad Dog McCree*.**

Capcom

Captain Commando

It's the year 2016. People of the universe had lived content lives until robberies, kidnappings and other crimes suddenly increased. That's when Captain Commando and his three valiant warriors decided to rid the universe of evil once and for all.

Data East

Batman

This pinball based on the movie features a one-million-point shot through the Bat Cave, a 15-million-point jackpot and a new dot-matrix score display that has four grades of shading. You'll have plenty of other shots as well, including a four-million-point shot into The Joker's grin.

Captain America and the Avengers

Select one of four Avengers (Captain America, Iron Man, Hawkeye or Vision) as you try to stop Red Skull from destroying the world. Other Marvel super-villains you'll face in the five stages of the game include Ultron, Mandarin and Grim Reaper.

Gottlieb

Class of 1812 Pinball

In this wacky reunion of the Class of 1812, players will go for Zomb's countdown bonus and Grover's one-million-point bonus. Other features include the 1812 Overture during multiball, an animated mechanical beating heart and chattering teeth synchronized to the music and speech.

Irem

Atomic Punk

This is a two- or four-player (depending on the type of kit the operator is using) *Bomberman*-type game. Players must bomb their way through 36 stages of play with hidden power-ups to increase the players' fighting ability.

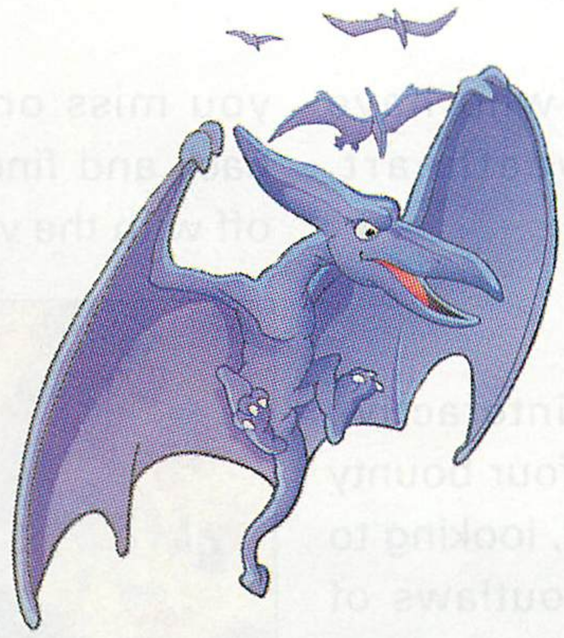
Jaleco

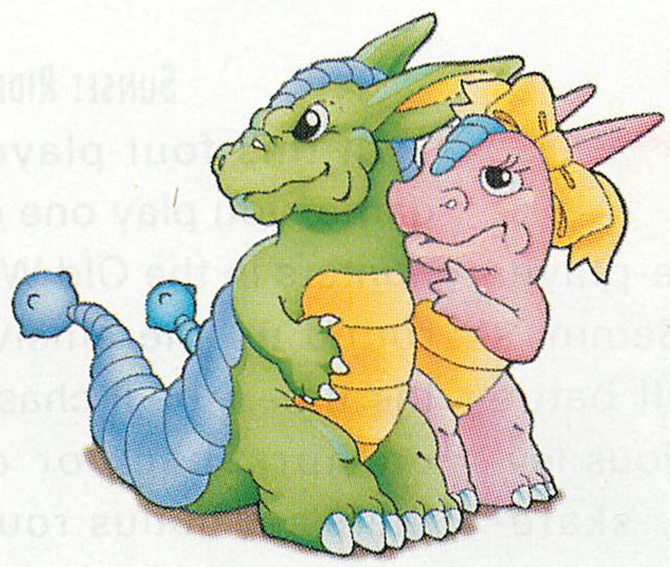
Avenging Spirit

As a ghost hero, you can enter the body of your enemy to battle other bad guys. Making your way through the six levels to rescue the kidnapped girl is the story line of this one.

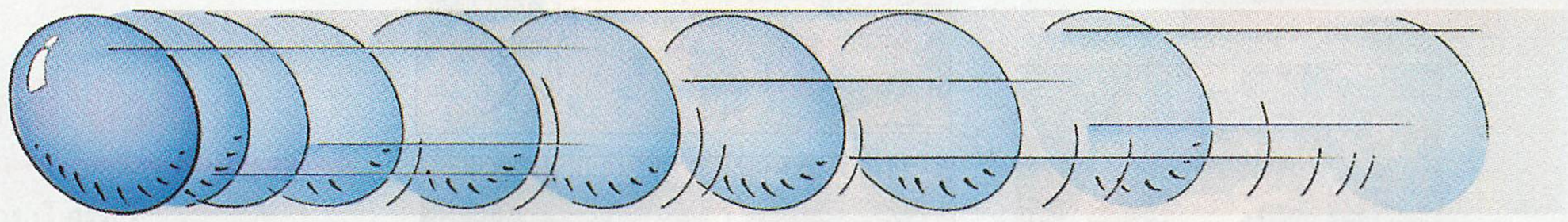
Gun Baron

Do you remember the old game from Atari called *Red Baron*? Well this game could be named *Red Baron '91*. At the controls of your red biplane, you'll battle jets, dodge missiles and, yes, even blast hot-air balloons. The only

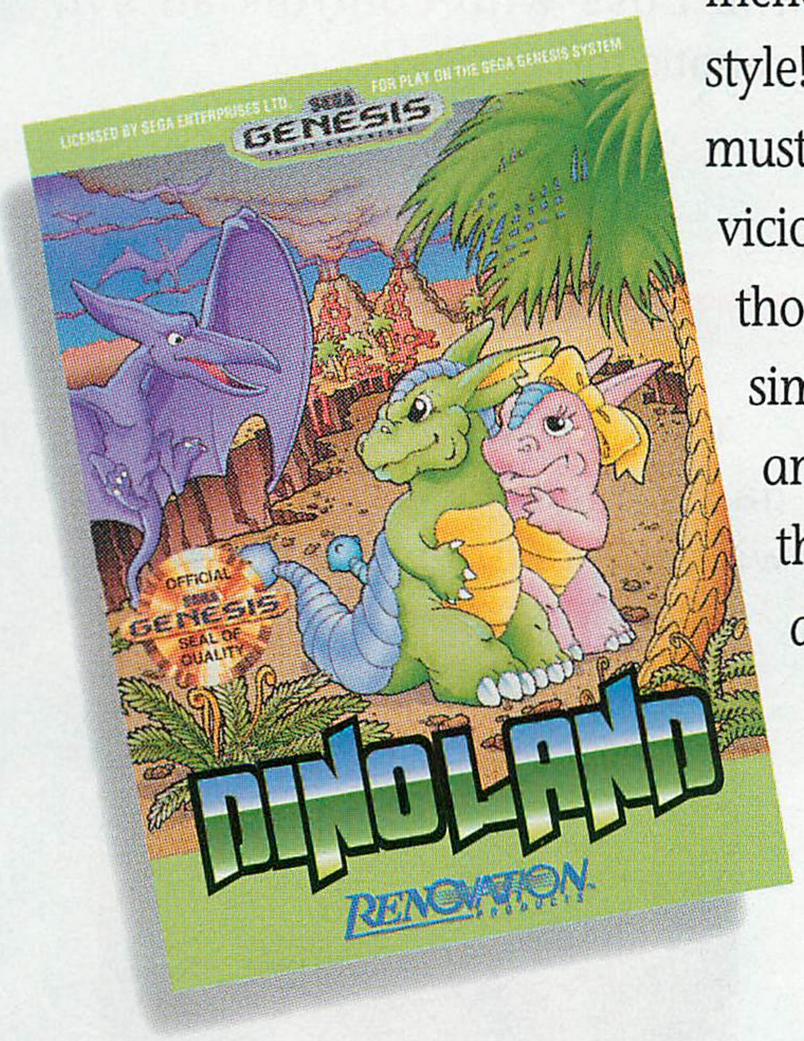


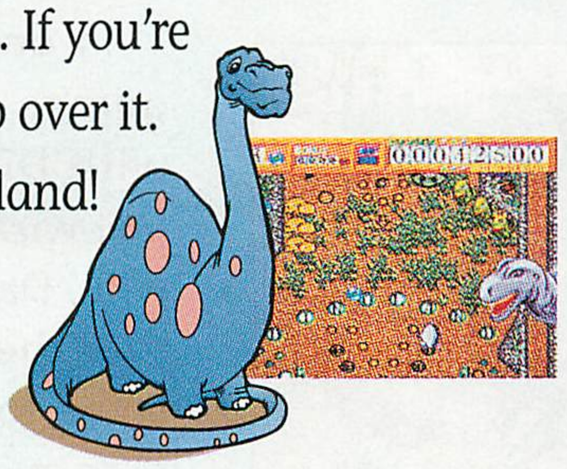


EVER PLAYED A PREHISTORIC PINBALL GAME?



Didn't think so. That's why Dinoland is such a crazy, zany game! Join DINO-Bunz and his friends on a wild, prehistoric adventure — pinball style! DINO's heroic adventures begin when he must protect his sweetheart, Meeshell, from gigantic, vicious and carnivorous dinosaurs. Not to mention those flying pterodactyl beasties! Dinoland is simple to play, yet filled with lots of pinball action and great scenery. If you're a dinosaur lover, then Dinoland will amuse you. If you're a pinball lover, then you'll flip over it. It's fun. It's different. It's Dinoland!





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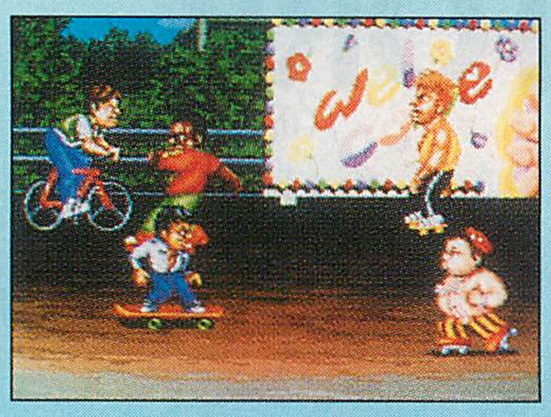
CIRCLE #148 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

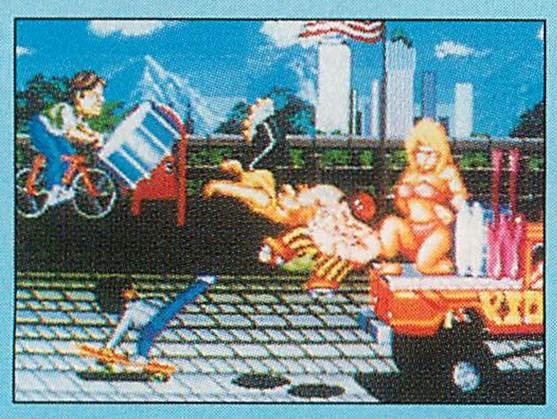
real difference is that you can't fly in 360 degrees.

Kaneko

B. Rap Boys

This is a two- or three-player rap version of American Sammy's *D.J. Boy*. The players will battle their way through the various levels on mountain bikes, skateboards and roller skates.





***B. Rap Boys* is a rap version of American Sammy's *D.J. Boy*.**

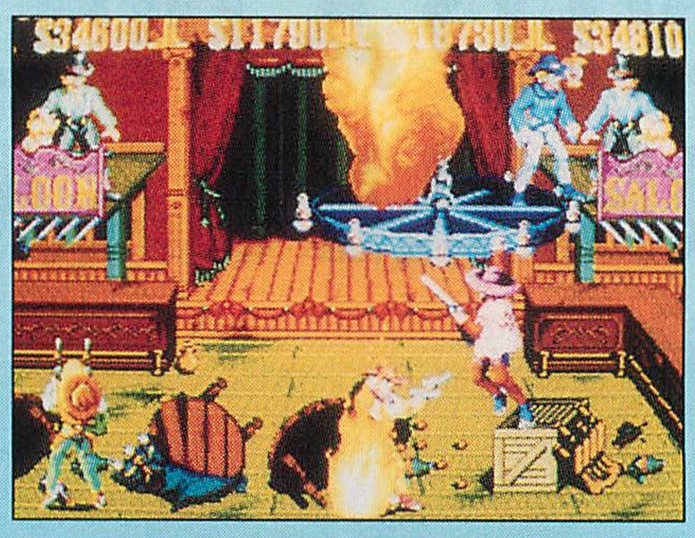
Konami

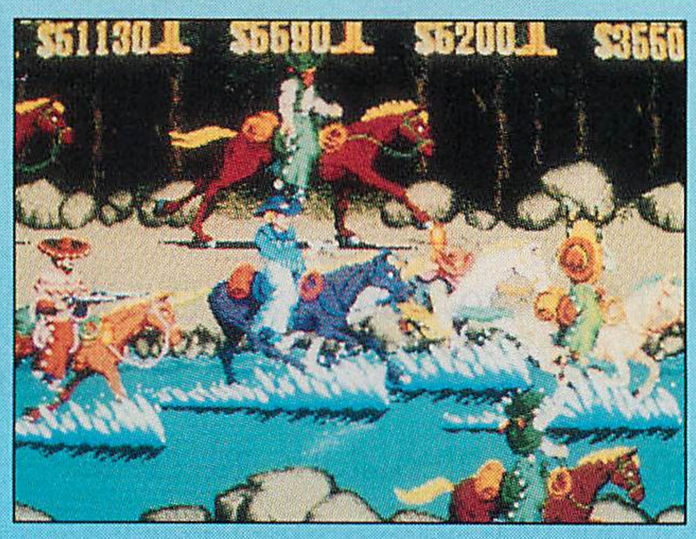
Vendetta

In this one- to four-player beat-'em-up, you play one of four members of the gang the Cobras, as you battle your rival, the Dead End Gang, who have kidnapped your sweetheart, Kute Kate.

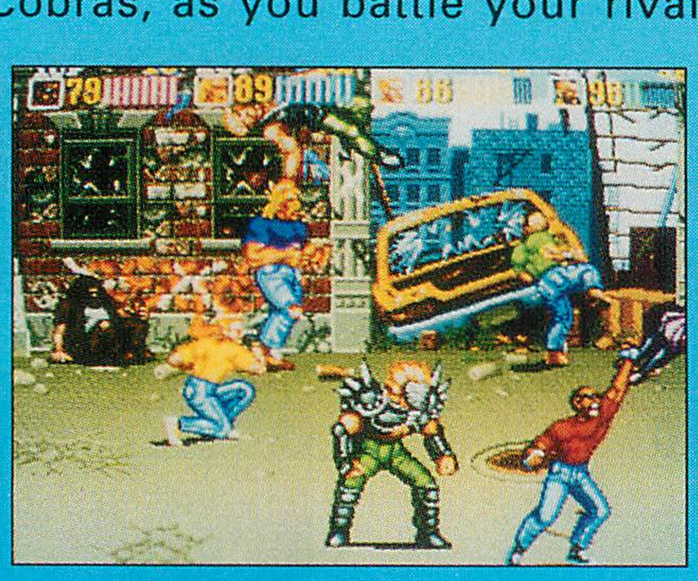
Sunset Riders

In this four-player interactive game, you play one of four bounty hunters in the Old West, looking to round up the elusive outlaws of the time. You'll chase the outlaws on horseback or on foot, and there's a bonus round to perfect your sharpshooting skills.





The Old West is the backdrop for Konami's *Sunset Riders*.

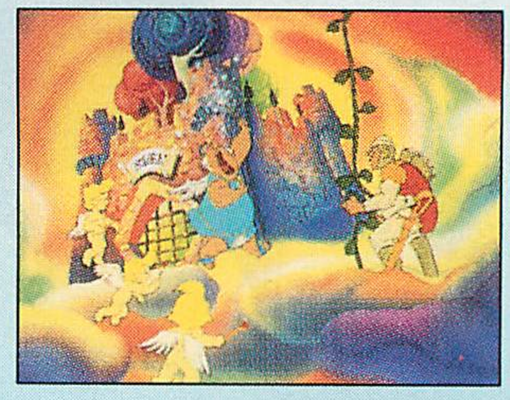


Konami's *Vendetta* is reminiscent of *Final Fight*.

Leland

Dragon's Lair II

In one of the most anticipated games to date, you're reunited with Dirk the Hapless when the evil wizard, Mordroc, kidnaps your wife, Daphne. The only problem is that the wiz is using a time machine to hop in and out of the future with the fair maiden. The game play is set up the same way as the original, but this time you must also find the special treasures hidden in each scenario. If you miss one, you'll have to go back and find it before you'll face off with the wizard.



Leland's *Dragon's Lair II* contains three man years of animation and art programmed into it.

McO'River

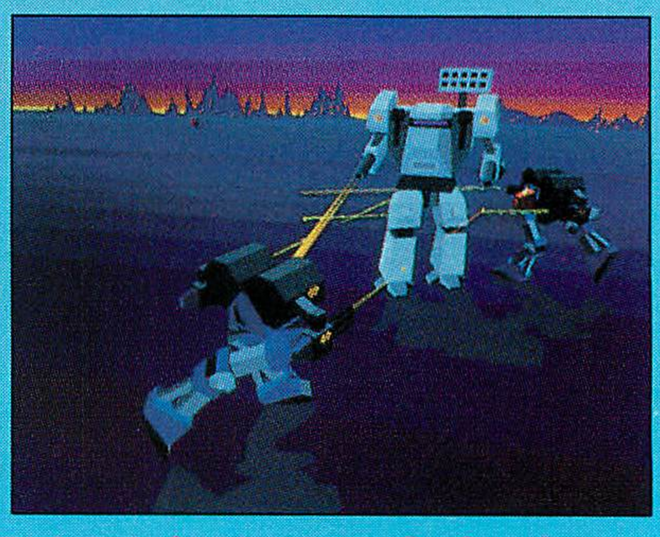
Turbo Force

This company is the American arm of Video Systems Co. of Japan, and their first arcade game is a two- or three-player shooter. In it, you battle to defeat the boss who controls an evil robotic force.

MicroProse

B.O.T.S.

This is one good-looking game. MicroProse has come up with a machine that looks and



***B.O.T.S.* is composed of polygon-filled graphics.**

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* Comical, but dangerous enemies! They may look harmless, but watch out!
* Dewey's strong point is his soccer skill! The more danger he faces, the more his power and the size of his soccer ball increases!

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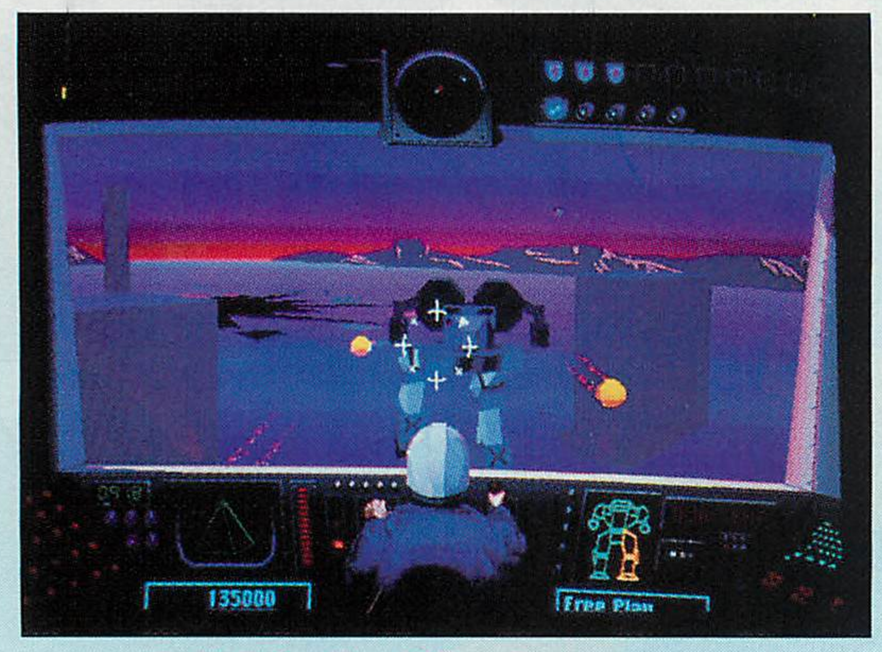


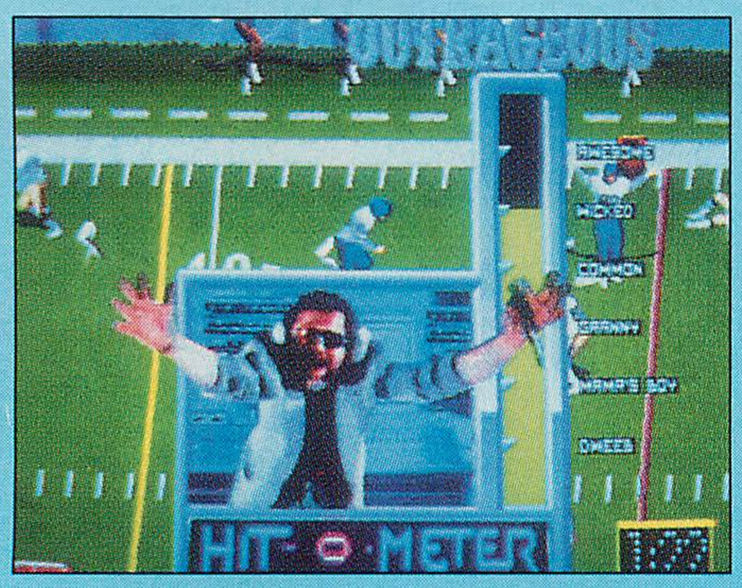
B.O.T.S., by MicroProse.

plays like a futuristic *Battlezone*, but it has polygon-filled graphics and is divided into stages.

Midway

Super High Impact

This is the sequel to *High Impact* and features the same digitized graphics, with a "Hit-O-Meter," *instant* replay, fighting mode and complete world-record standings.



Super High Impact will give players a password code for lifetime statistics and league play.

Namco

StarBlade

Sometimes the best games are rehashes of old themes. This game is similar to *Star Wars* in the fact that you have the same type of controller and cursor to blast the invading forces into oblivion before they can take over the universe. However, this is different in the fact that it uses polygon graphics to give it a great 3-D, realistic look and feel.

Nintendo

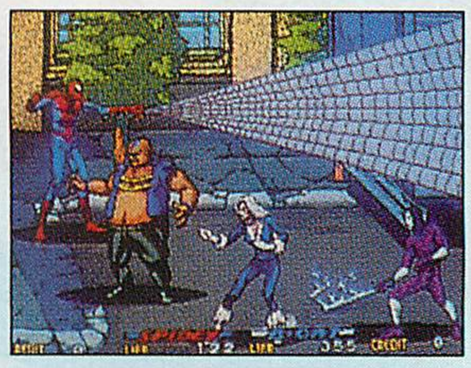
Nintendo's entry for the show was the new Super System, which is the arcade version of the Super NES. How did Nintendo handle the multibutton control situation? It just made an oversized SNES controller, about a foot long, and mounted it to the front of the cabinet. Simple. New games included *Super Mario World*, *F-Zero* and *Pilotwings*.

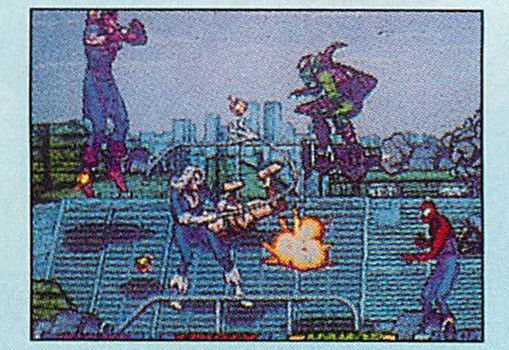
The latest lineup on the 8-bit PlayChoice System includes *Super Mario Bros. 3*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Tecmo Bowl*, *Fester's Quest*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game*, *Mario's Tournament Golf* and *Power Blade*.

Sega

Spider-Man, The Video Game

Characters from Marvel Comics are really popular right now, and Sega has taken advantage by releasing *Spider-Man*. When you go against six of Spidey's archenemies, you can select one of four superheroes, including Spider-Man, Sub-Mariner, Hawkeye or the Black Cat. The bad guys are Marvel classics such as Kingpin, Sandman, Scorpion, Green Goblin, Venom and the Lizard. The game is unique in that you can switch from character to character at any point in the game, which spans four chapters and 16 scenes.





In *Spider-Man*, Gamers can play the role of Spidey, Sub-Mariner, Hawkeye or the Black Cat.

D.D. Crew

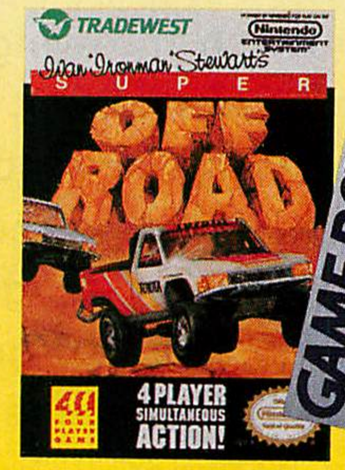
This is Sega's new beat-'em-up where you can play one of four characters that must battle through various scenarios in order to beat the boss of an evil terrorist syndicate, who is determined to rule the world.

Sega's *D.D. Crew* will permit up to four players to compete simultaneously.

SNK

Crossed Swords

In this one- to two-player game, you play a medieval swordsman who must overtake the palace in order to save the princess. This is



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a first-person-perspective game, which could be best described as a medieval *Punch-Out*.

SuperBaseball 2020

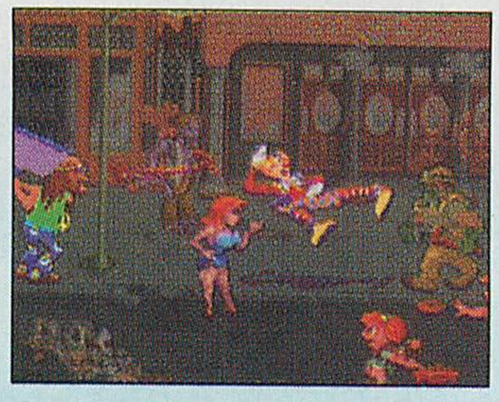
This futuristic baseball game features players dressed in full armor with enough throwing and hitting power to cause death.

Other Neo•Geo games include: *8 Man*, which is based on the cartoon; *Mutation-Nation*, a fighting beat-'em-up with mutated goons; *Robo Army*, a combat game; *The Last Resort*, a horizontal shooter; *Fatal Fury*, a hand-to-hand, street-fighting game; *Soccer Brawl*, a futuristic soccer game; and *Football Frenzy* rounds things out.

Strata

Ninja Clowns

Okay, ready for this one? Twisto, the evil clown overlord, has taken control of the city. Only the Ninja Clowns, with their bodies of rubber, can stop him from world domination.



Ninja Clowns, by Strata.

Rim Rockin' Basketball

It's five-on-five, full-court basketball with the official NBA rules and digitized player action.

Taito

Double Axle

Taito's latest entry into the video-game scene is a monster-truck road rally. In the sprint race, you must beat the other drivers to the finish line any way you can. In your way, you'll have volcanic rock showers, tornadoes and other obstacles to avoid before you can move on to the demolition derby. As you can guess, the one to destroy the most obstacles gets to move on.

A monster-truck road rally is the theme behind *Double Axle*.

Tecmo

Thunder Dragon

It's the 22nd century, and, due to the polluted environment, the human race has to look upward for new settlements. As a result, a peace treaty was signed banning all automated weapons of destruction—but a group of mad scientists known as "Cybermephists" is determined to destroy all earthbound intelligent life. That's where you come in.

Williams

Terminator 2

One of the most anxiously awaited movie sequels has spawned two of the most anxiously awaited coin-op pieces—the pinball and video game—in a long time. The pinball is a great game that features a unique swing-out cannon to take out the hunter-killers. The video game is equally impressive. This game is set up like *Operation Wolf*, but features digitized graphics of the actors in the movie and even offers actual film footage.

Well, that about does it for this year's AMOA. For you pinball wizards out there, circle March 27-29, 1992, on your calendar for the Second Annual IFPA World Pinball Championship, being held at the Ramada Inn Convention Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Call Doug Young at (414) 263-0233 for more information. Also, for those of you in the central Texas area, look for the ACME to make it to San Antonio March 15-17, 1992, at the San Antonio Convention Center. See y'all then.

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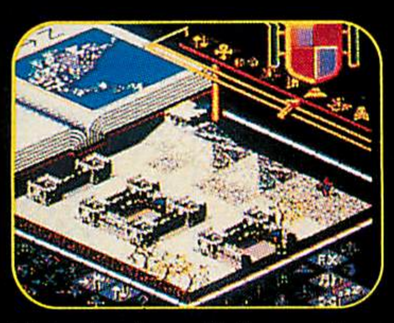

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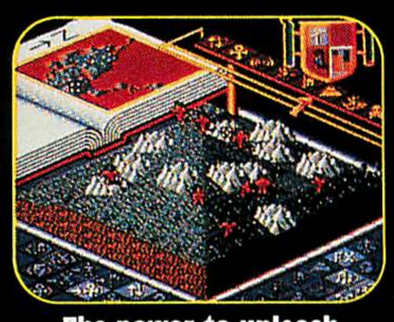
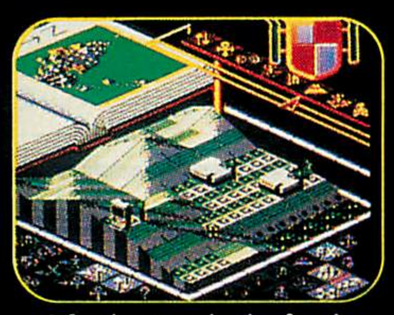


The power to unleash volcanoes, earthquakes and floods, all for the sake of goodness, is yours.



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VG&CE's Annual Gifts FOR Gamers

It's holiday gift-giving (and buying) season again. Every year, VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT's staff members compile their list of recommended items for computer users and video gamers. These are the best or the most useful, and the most entertaining enhancements to electronic play we've seen this year. Any one of them is perfect for the gamer on your shopping list!

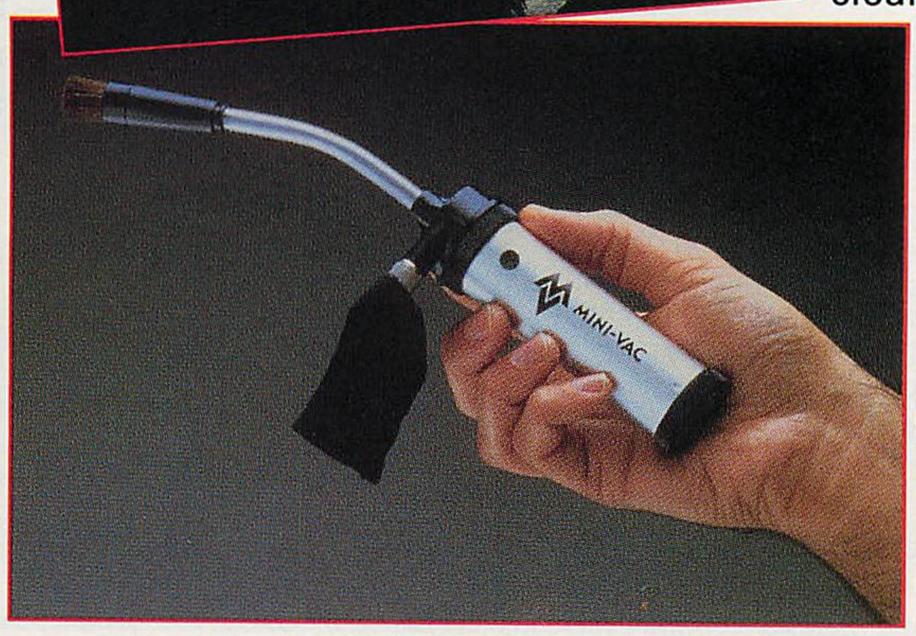
BY
JOYCE WORLEY
AND THE
VG&CE EDITORIAL STAFF

One thing every gamer wants to do is keep the treasures just like new.

• **Keep things safe**—Electronic media (game cards, cartridges and disks) take damage if temperatures get too high. Movie Melt Heat Sensors, 250 in a pack for $35, were designed for monitoring videocassette tapes, but work equally well with games. The small stickers (attach them to the media or game storage box) have a heat-sensitive dot that turns black at 125°. Get them from JB Enterprise Co., P.O. Box 1118, Santa Clara, UT 84321; (801) 628-6498.

Storzmore storage crates hold 24 video games or 46 CDs in an unslotted, lightweight, rolled steel box with a powder-coated paint finish. These modular units are mounted on rotating bases for ease of access or viewing, and they are made to be stacked. They retail for $35 to $45, or can be ordered from Western Manufacturing, 702 S. Third Ave., Marshalltown, IA 50158; (515) 752-5446.

Below: Statx Cleaner, by RTW International.
Right: Storzmore storage crates, by Western Manufacturing.
Below right: Mini-Vac, by Mini-Vac, Inc.



• **And clean**—Statx Cleaner is a dust-repellent, antistatic spray that cleans every high-tech product from TVs, VCRs, computers and video games, to monitors and microwaves. Developed for the aerospace industry, it is nonabrasive, quick to evaporate and leaves no residue. Citrus-scented, it's $7.99, available directly from RTW International Corp., 1110 Lake Cook Road, #150, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (708) 520-0007.

A most useful tool for cleaning hard-to-reach areas, the Mini-Vac comes with two interchangeable wands, two brushes and a cloth vacuum bag. This compact and portable vacuum cleaner sucks the debris from keyboards, computers, video games and all other household items that require a fine nozzle and delicate touch. It retails for around $20, or order from Mini-Vac, Inc., 217 S. Orange St., #4, Glendale, CA 91204; (818) 244-6777.

• **And working well**—Doc's AC Adapters for portables end the constant need for replacement batteries. Just plug in the adapter, and use regular electric current. They feature extra-long cords and sturdy plastic casings, to keep Game Boy, Game Gear, TurboExpress and Lynx portables playing with never a need for another battery. They retail for about $10 in most stores, or order them from Doc's Hi Tech Game Products, 4140 Gamer Road, Riverside, CA 92501; (714) 784-2710.

Doc's Fix-It kits for game systems keep things working well and even cure the video-game blues. Doc's Fix-A-Game revitalizes cartridges by giving them a thorough cleaning, using the solution, polishing wands and cleaning cards provided. Doc's Fix-A-System uses the Power-Up Cleaning Clip and Cleaning Cards to clean the games, then adds tools to clean Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 and Atari consoles. Doc's Fix-A-System Plus provides all the stuff a gamer needs to clean the cartridges and systems, as well as a manual on game system maintenance. Doc's Fix-A-Pad kit provides replacement buttons and pads, along with a specially designed screwdriver to do the work. The Fix-It systems range from around $6 to $10 in most stores, or order from Doc's Hi Tech (address above).

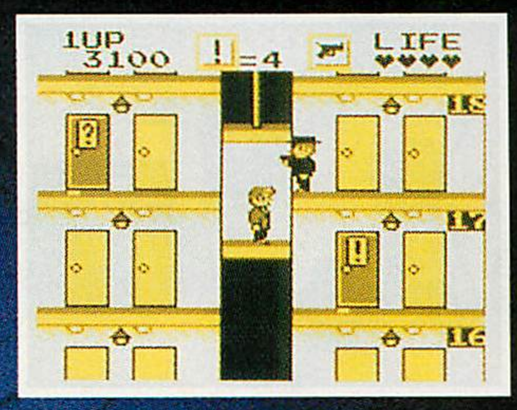
Escalating Excitement!

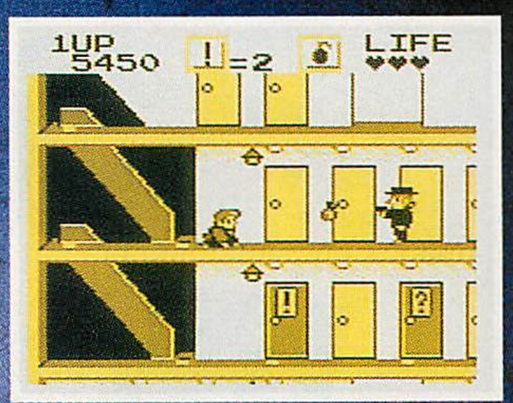
Good afternoon Agent 17. I appreciate your attendance at this meeting on such short notice. This mission is extremely urgent! We would have contacted Slick Macy or James Blonde but we didn't feel either of them could handle such an intense mission. We needed the best and you are our only hope.

The BGI has conceived an aggressive assault plan that greatly endangers our national security. They have loaded all their plans on computer disks which you must retreive. The building is well secured and heavily guarded. You'll have to find ways around the guards, guard dogs, alarm sensors, and some tough robots throughout the building. Using escalators, elevators, and secret chutes will prove to be effective escape routes in a tight squeeze. That's the "ups" and "downs" of the plan.

GAME BOY®

You'll have to be slick and quick to succeed in this top priority mission. If you let your mind drift, you and your overcoat will be taken to the cleaners for a permanent press. So, stay sharp! We're counting on you!





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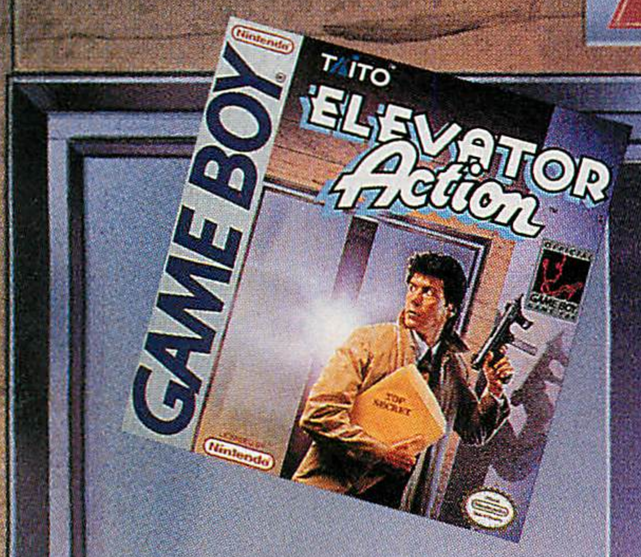

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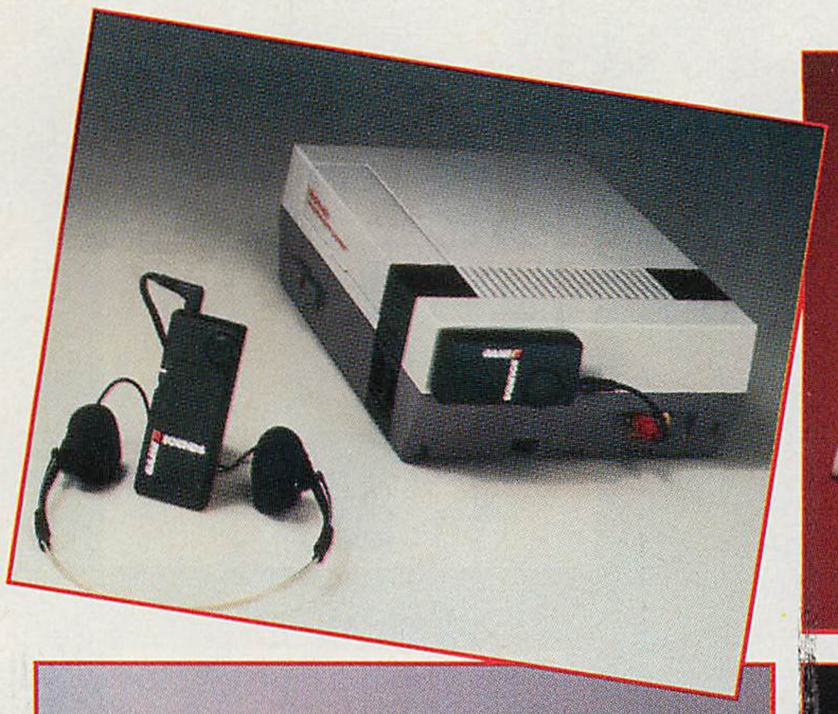

Top left: Light Wave's GameSounds. Top right: The Keyboard Organizer, by Curtis Manufacturing. Left and above: Logitech's Model 32 Handheld Scanner.

many editing tools. Used to add charts, photos or pictures to documents, the output is newspaper quality, and it's compatible with laser, dot-matrix and most other printers. It's $299 for IBM, $499 for Macintosh, from Logitech, 6505 Kaiser Drive, Fremont, CA 94555; (415) 795-8500.

The Covox Sound Master II is the sound board of preference for many computer professionals. It's supported by a very long list of game manufacturers, and is compatible with Ad Lib, Speech Thing, Voice Master, MIDI Maestro and the IBM speech card. It features expert music reproduction, digital sound recording and playback, speech synthesis, voice recognition, a MIDI interface and multimedia features. The Sound Master II comes complete with sound card, MIDI cables, speaker, PC sound adapter, headphone adapter and software. It works with IBM PC XT/AT 286, 386, 486 or compatibles with a minimum of 256K RAM, DOS 3.0 or higher. The cost is about $230 at most stores, or order directly from Covox, 675 Conger St., Eugene, OR 97402; (503) 342-1271.

Your friends will think you are a trendsetter if you upgrade the equipment to work even better.

Light Wave Technologies' GameSounds for the NES connects to the console and transmits digital audio for up to 20 feet. The game's audio comes through the players' headphones to keep the room quiet and cord free. The GameSounds system package includes headphones, transmitter, receiver, patch cord and Velcro for attachment, for $34.99; extra receivers to accommodate more players are $24.99 each. The receiver also doubles as a portable FM radio. Light Wave Technologies, 16595 W. Easton Ave., Prairie View, IL 60069; (708) 634-1700.

The Curtis Keyboard Organizer is a multifunction computer aid that wraps around the keyboard, including extended keyboards, then organizes the work area. It has eight slots for holding disks, compartments for pens, pencils, paper clips and a memo pad, storage for the mouse and even a space for the mouse pad. The plastic cover protects the keyboard when not in use, then converts to a copy holder. To top it off, there's a padded, full-length palm rest in front of the keyboard which will keep you playing longer. This handy gadget costs around $40, from Curtis Manufacturing Co., 30 Fitzgerald Drive, Jaffrey, NH 03452; (603) 532-4132.

A Logitech Model 32 Handheld Scanner is on the most-wanted list for every desktop publisher. It features gray scale conversion, stitching for full pages, smooth and sharpen functions for better images, brightness and contrast controls, and software that provides 256 levels of gray and

Game play becomes even more entrancing through special items that do some enhancing.

• **Game play enhancement**—Game Genie is the video-game enhancer that Nintendo couldn't stop, now available in the U.S. for its first holiday season. Not a controller, the enhancer grants the gamer wishes, such as: start on any level, more power, more speed, more weapons, infinite lives, higher jumps, harder punches and other special effects to customize most games for the NES. The user plugs the game cartridge into the Game Genie, plugs Game Genie into the console, then enters codes from the programming manual that comes with the gadget to create special on-screen effects. It's about $50 from most stores, or order from Lewis Galoob Toys, 500 Forbes Blvd. So., San Francisco, CA 94080; (415) 952-1678.

Game Genie, by Lewis Galoob Toys, is now available in the U.S. after a long legal battle.

Tri-Toys' TRI-1000 is the most unique NES or Genesis control pad to date. Along with the normal assortment of buttons and direction rosettes, the TRI-1000 has a rapid-fire button for repeat firepower. The most unusual feature is the auto-replay function that lets the gamer input a combination of up to nine different moves, then play all of them back in at the touch of one button. The input sequence can be repeated over and over in Cycle, or exe-

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cuted at a faster speed through the Shrink control. The third auto-replay function is Combine, which adds the input data to the direction rosettes, so the gamer can move and do the automatics simultaneously. It takes some getting used to in order to master the multiple control buttons, but it delivers fast, automatic action. Both the Sega and the NES version retail for $29.95, or order from Triton Toys, 6475 Camden Ave., Suite 201, San Jose, CA 95120; (408) 268-5527.

The Comrade is designed specifically for *Tetris, Welltris, Faces* and *Wordtris* players. It's a mouse-enabler for the game, to permit use of mouse or trackball and reduce the tired-finger/cramped-wrist syndrome. It works with any IBM PC mouse or trackball, and lets the user change mouse speed and sensitivity; it can even slow the games to make them easier to play. It's available for $19.95 from LightBulb Logic, P.O. Box 815984, Dallas, TX 75381; (214) 241-7033.

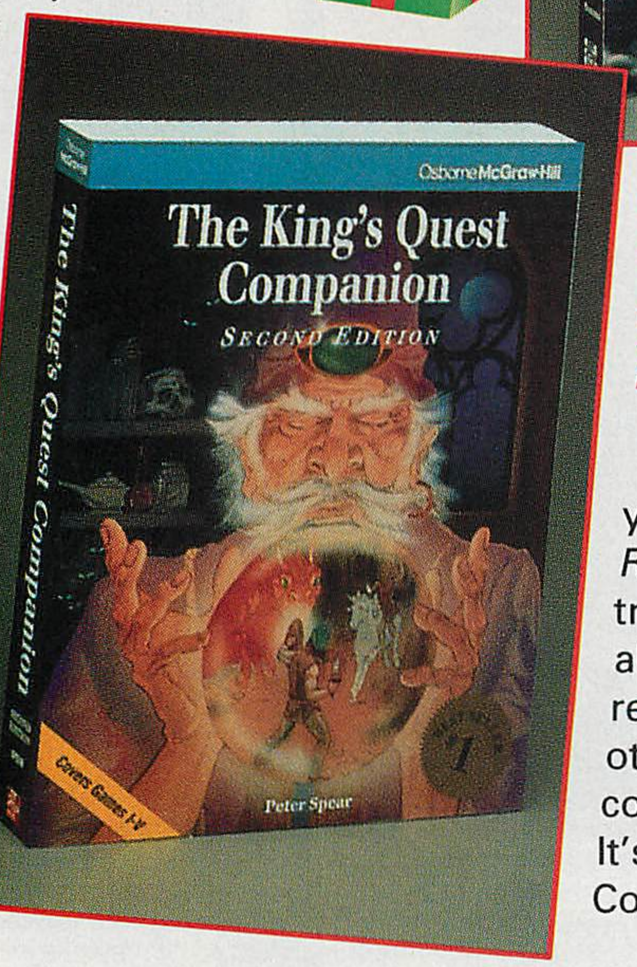
Logitech, a company already well-known for its excellent left- and right-handed mouse controllers, now has one just for the youngsters. Mouse for Kids is designed for small hands, and promises smooth reactions and great on-screen control. It retails for about $79, or contact Logitech (address above).

The Mouse for Kids, by Logitech, is designed specifically for children's smaller hands and fingers.

To play or not to play, those are the questions.

• **When the answer is no**—The kids may call you scrooge, but here's a gift for mom that can end those family feuds over video games. Time Out! is a video-game lock for Nintendo or Sega consoles that's easy to use. Just slide in the Time Out! device, turn the key, and kids can't play until it's removed. It sells for about $10 in many game stores, or order directly from Niche Technology, 862 Terrace Drive, Los Altos, CA 94024; (415) 948-4200.

• **When it's time to play**—Game hint books help kids or adults get a lot more fun out of the software. There's a terrific variety of these manuals available at most bookstores; they enhance play by explaining (and exploring) parts of the games that the user might not otherwise discover or conquer. Some of the best from Osborne/McGraw-Hill Books are *F-19 Stealth Air Combat* and *Falcon Air Combat: A Fighter Pilot's Guide*, both by Pete Bonanni, and complete guides to the MicroProse and Spectrum HoloByte programs. *The SimCity Planning Commission Handbook*, by Johnny Wilson, explores the dimensions of Maxis' award-winning program. Whether a beginner or a veteran, this book helps city builders get even more out of *SimCity* than ever before. *The King's Quest Companion, Second Edition*, by Peter Spear, is a step-by-step guide to all five Sierra *KQ* games, complete with maps, illustrations and lots of answers.



Two game hint books by Osborne/McGraw-Hill, *F-19 Stealth Air Combat* (above) and *The King's Quest Companion, Second Edition* (left).

Prima Publishing's *Lucasfilm Air Combat Strategies*, written by Rusel DeMaria and George Fontaine, is a guide to three bestsellers: *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain, Battlehawks 1942,* and *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe.* It includes strategy guides, mission maps, technical information and lots of tutorials.

Origin's *Quest for Clues, Volume 3*, edited by Shay Addams, is a guide through 20 adventure games and an equal number of role-playing titles. It has maps, tips and complete solutions to each.

Check your local bookstores for these and more, or call for ordering information: Osborne/McGraw-Hill (800) 227-0900, Prima Publishing (800) 255-8989 or Origin (800) 999-4939.

• **Even when it's time for work**—The computerist on your list should love the *Software Toolworks' Desk Reference*, which contains thousands of on-disk entries gleaned from encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, almanacs and other fact sources. Everything is cross-referenced and available for cut-and-paste transfer to other documents. This is a handy reference for every computer user who needs quick access to lots of facts. It's around $150, from Software Toolworks, 60 Leveroni Court, Novata, CA 94949; (415) 883-3000.

Dusk of the Gods

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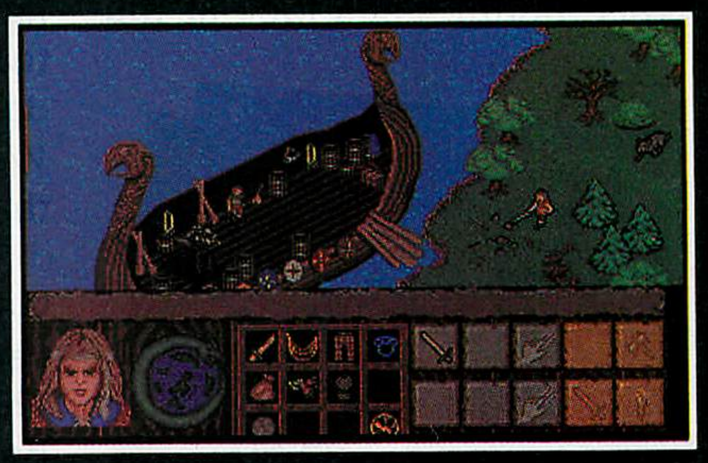

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HOW TO CONTACT GAMING FANDOM

by Arnie Katz

Electronic-gaming fandom got its start in the February 1991 VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. Less than a year later, there are at least 100 fanzines with a total readership that has grown into the thousands. Still, this is a new concept to many, and my mailbox is continuously flooded with basic questions about electronic-gaming fandom and how to become a part of it.

Electronic-gaming fandom is a loose association of knowledgeable and enthusiastic fans. The main activity is writing, publishing and reading fanzines, which are small-circulation, amateur journals. Fanzines print news, reviews, analyses, hints and lots of their editor's opinions. They are hobby ventures, and subscriptions scarcely pay for materials and postage. Besides paying cash, you can generally obtain fanzines by trading other fanzines, contributing written or drawn material or writing letters commenting on previous issues.

The best way to get in touch with fandom is to send for one or more of the fanzines I review each month in *Fandango.* A list of fanzines, with prices and addresses, is available from me (see sidebar) for those who want to try a lot of fanzines quickly.

And that's "Introduction to Fandom 101" for this month. Let's look at the fanzines!

ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

The final edition of the Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. It's a great way to start your own mailing list of possible subscribers. If you want your name and address included on the list, simply write and ask. In either case, here's the address: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

You can now get the fall Fanzine List from Arnie Katz (see address above), also available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope. It contains the names, addresses, prices and brief content descriptions of dozens of current electronic-gaming fanzines. If you want to get into this fast-growing hobby, send for the list, and try some sample copies of the ones that sound best.

World Gaming #1

Jeff and Curtis Vize, and Danny Tellers
950 Jasmine Court
Carlsbad, CA 92009
$1.50—Bimonthly
14 pages

The teenaged trio pays more attention to their fanzine's appearance than do most faneds (fanzine editors). Experience will teach them which color photographs don't reproduce well in monochrome, but *World Gaming* still looks more inviting than all-text fanzines.

WG should prove a good source of reviews and sneak peeks of foreign video games, which it hopes to make a specialty. This is a promising start, though the editors need to relax a little and abandon the pseudo-professional trappings, like masked reviewers.

Video Scope #5

Aaron Buckner
9471 Fallson Court
Blue Ash, OH 45252
$1.50—Monthly
12 pages

A three-page, company-by-company report on the Summer Consumer Electronic Show is the main attraction of this wide-spectrum video-gaming fanzine. Also included in the mix are good short reviews, a fairly extensive letters column, news briefs and an editorial by Aaron outlining the reasons he believes the Nintendo Super NES won't bury the other 16-bit systems.

Video Scope continues to improve with each issue. The editor writes reasonably well, and it's fun to watch him learn the editing ropes. Certainly, this is one fanzine that brims with opinions; you might not agree with them all, but there's sure lots of food for thought.

Power Play #1

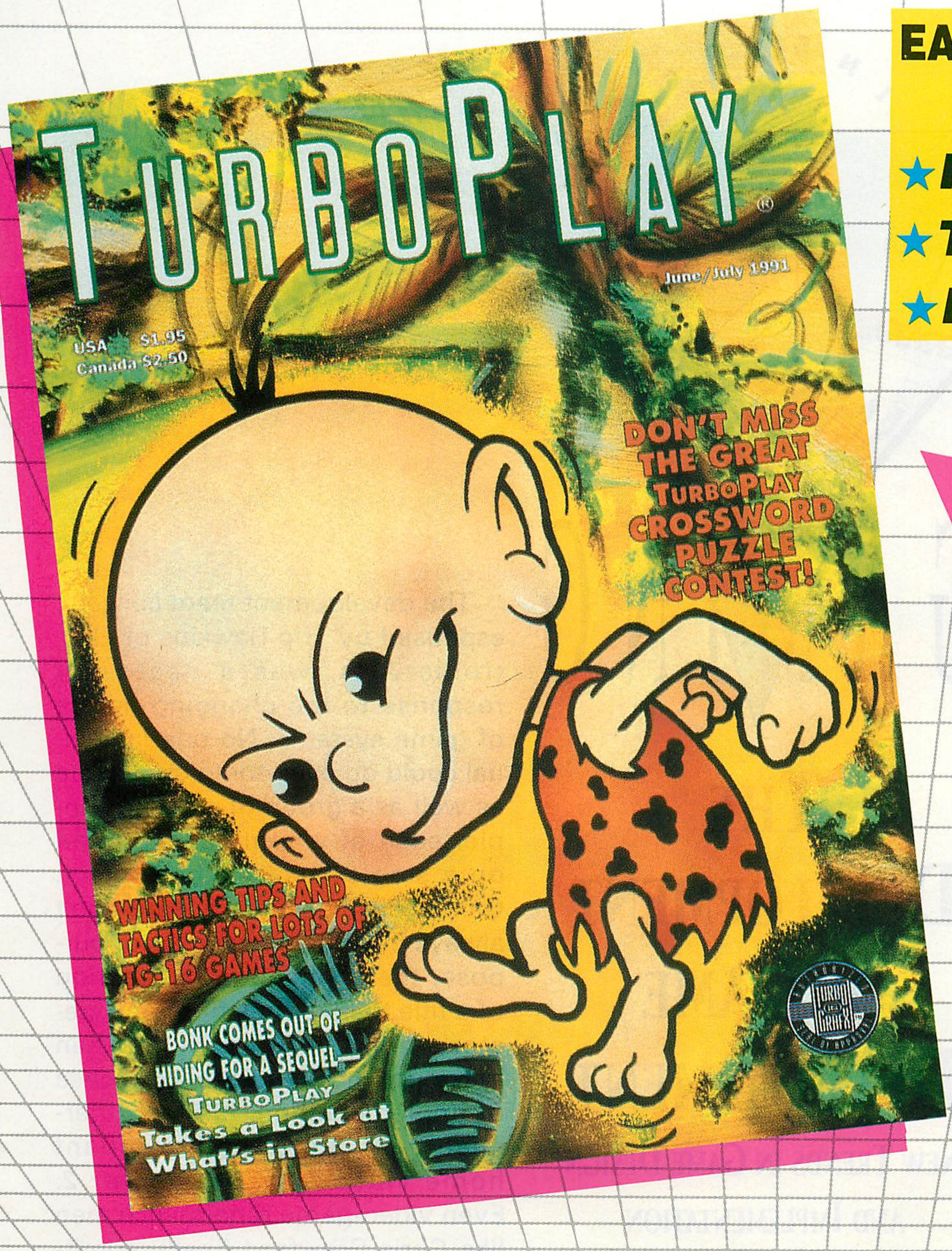
John Koufos
349 Sawmill Road
Brick, NJ 08724-1371
$1.50—Monthly
40 pages

Genesis owners are bound to enjoy this hefty fanzine devoted to Sega's 16-bit console. Even though there's a lot of white space to no special advantage, John gets a lot of material between the covers. The best features are the capsule dual reviews by the editor and Chris Ritzer and a series of long strategy pieces on popular Genesis titles. The guides to games like *Valis III*, *Strider* and *Golden Axe* are profusely illustrated with large, black-and-white playfields. The clarity isn't always good, but the idea of illustrating key points in this manner is excellent.

John's enthusiasm is one of his best traits, but it could be his undoing if he fully indulges his passion for large fanzines. His editorial speaks of 100-page issues, and this would probably be a mistake. More fine-tuning and tighter presentation would benefit this rising fanzine more than added bulk. It's already a good value.

MEGAGAMING

The biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," produced by Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley, contains news and commentary from a behind-the-scenes perspective. It features reviews of current fanzines and an advice column for novice (and experienced) fanzine editors. For a four-issue trial subscription, send $5 to *Megagaming*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.



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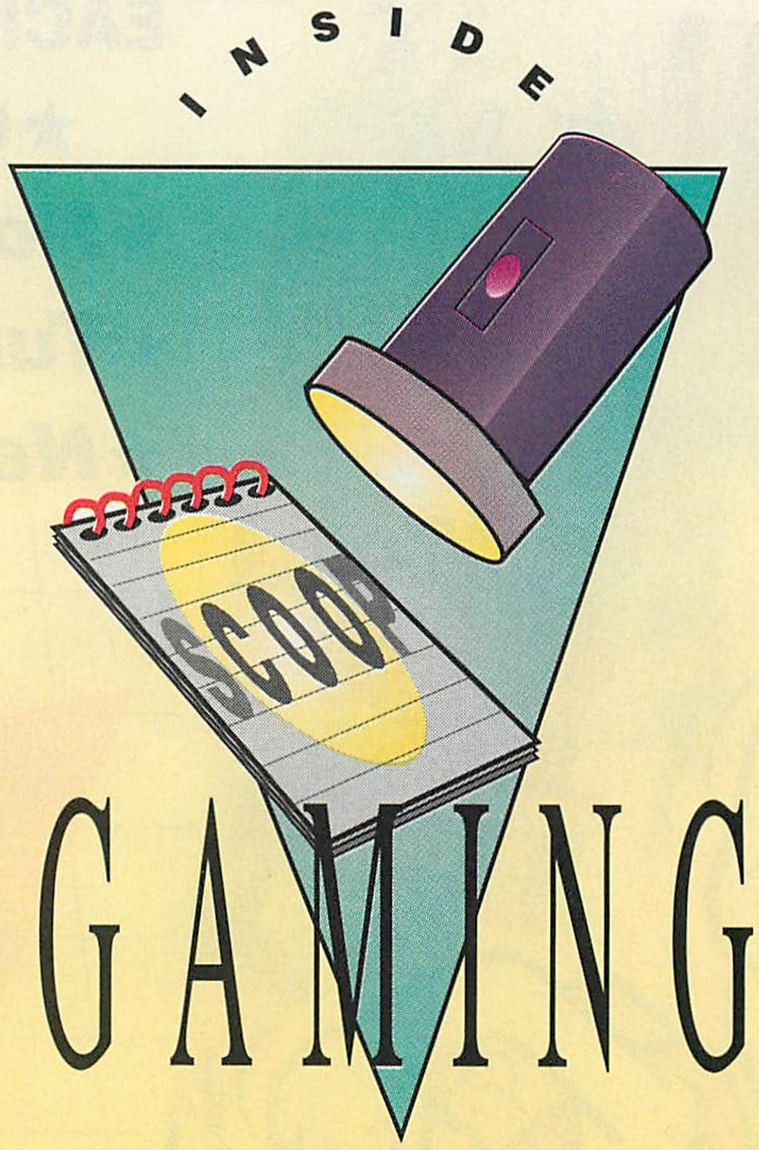


THE DEVELOPMENT OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

NEW TRENDS IN GAME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

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 month, Arnie discusses some significant changes in the way computer games are produced and examines potential impact on the hobby.

The 1978-1983 period was the age of the "auteur" in electronic gaming. Each game expressed the talents, vision and preferences of a single individual. With little more than minor creative assistance and perhaps some suggestions from sales and marketing, the game inventor took personal charge of everything from concept to copy protection, from the title page to the victory screen.

Generally, these people were game-interested programmers. Good games required wringing the most out of limited hardware, whether video console or home computer. The so-called magic tricksters—exceptionally facile programmers—excelled at making systems like the Atari 2600 do things that experts complacently claimed couldn't be done.

It was difficult to do much with the rudimentary sound and graphics, and the games couldn't have very complex play-mechanics or interfaces, either. Publishers figured that, once they put the programming into capable hands, the other aspects were secondary and would take care of themselves.

When 6502-based computers and second-generation video games (ColecoVision, Atari 7800, Commodore 64, Atari 800 family, Apple IIe/c) took over the field, the situation changed. The years 1984-1990 became the "Time of the Team." Groups of specialists pooled their contributions to produce games that exploited the hardware's sound, graphics, animation, memory and processor control capabilities.

The development team concept, espoused by Trip Hawkins of Electronic Arts, was a necessary response to the changing nature of game systems. No one individual could do everything on a game as well as a group of creative people, each of whom concentrated on a single facet of the project. Games developed by a team don't always have the singleness of purpose, the crystallized conception of a title that springs from one creator's mind, but they more than make up for it with the excellence of implementation. It's the difference between a really brilliant home video and *Terminator 2*. Even video-game renaissance men like Chris Crawford finally admitted, albeit reluctantly, that they couldn't handle the whole job the way games people did during the previous era.

The team approach helped the independent development houses flourish in the late 1980s. Publishers didn't want the burden of extensive in-house departments, so the independent houses got more and more of the work.

This, too, made sense, because it gave companies with diverse product lines much more flexibility. Even the best team is not equally facile at all game types and all formats. Ed Ringler's SporTime did great sports game work, while Brian Fargo's Interplay

repeatedly demonstrated the mastery of adventures and role-playing fantasies. A publisher could match development houses to the appropriate projects, instead of assigning work to anyone who looked idle around the office.

Because the idea of specialization had become so accepted by mid-decade, software publishers didn't hesitate to concoct ad hoc teams. A development house usually provided the core, but often designers, musicians, artists and other specialists augmented their efforts.

Now the methodology of game design and development is in the process of a new wave of change. A recent *Inside Gaming* column discussed the trend toward concentration in game publishing that has become a hallmark of electronic gaming in the 1990s. The bigger-is-better syndrome is not confined to publishers. Many of the same factors are having a similar effect on software development firms too.

As recently as a couple of years ago, each house represented the work of a single creative team, with perhaps a few extra programmers in the shop to expedite the work. The leading ones have become multi-team operations with an insatiable appetite for new business.

Competition for work has encouraged many of these companies to add staff and expand their range of services. In effect, the big development houses of 1991 are in much the same position as publishers with in-house development were ten years ago.

The major publishers love these super-developers, because they can handle huge projects as turnkey jobs. The bigger the publisher, the more likely it is to want to deal with larger suppliers. Administering projects that involve several separate individuals and groups takes time and attention. It is easier for a publisher with one or two projects in the works than it is for one with two dozen titles in the pipeline.

The more people a development house has on its payroll, the more intense its drive to scoop up every available job. Bringing in specialists costs money that would otherwise help pay the company's overhead. It's hard for the president of a big development house to justify paying an outsider to compose the music or write a design document, when there are people sitting around drinking sodas and playing games.

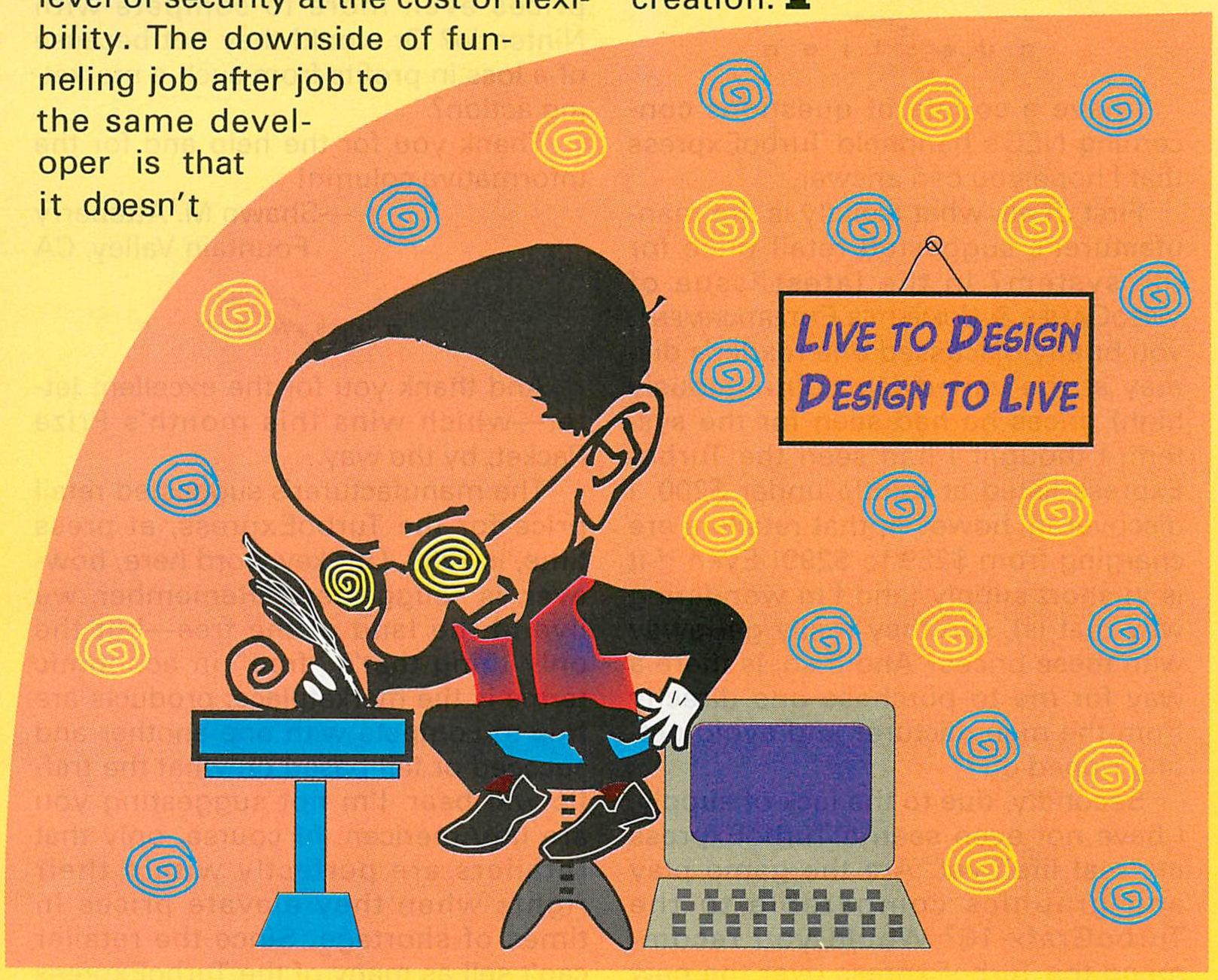
The sale of Distinctive Software, creators of *Test Drive* and many other well-known games, to Electronic Arts is also a harbinger of things to come. Publishers are vying to accumulate development power. Owning a development house outright guarantees that a desirable team will always be available when it's needed. "Why buy when you can rent?" is one of those adages that sounds great—until a game manufacturer finds that what it wants is already rented by a rival company.

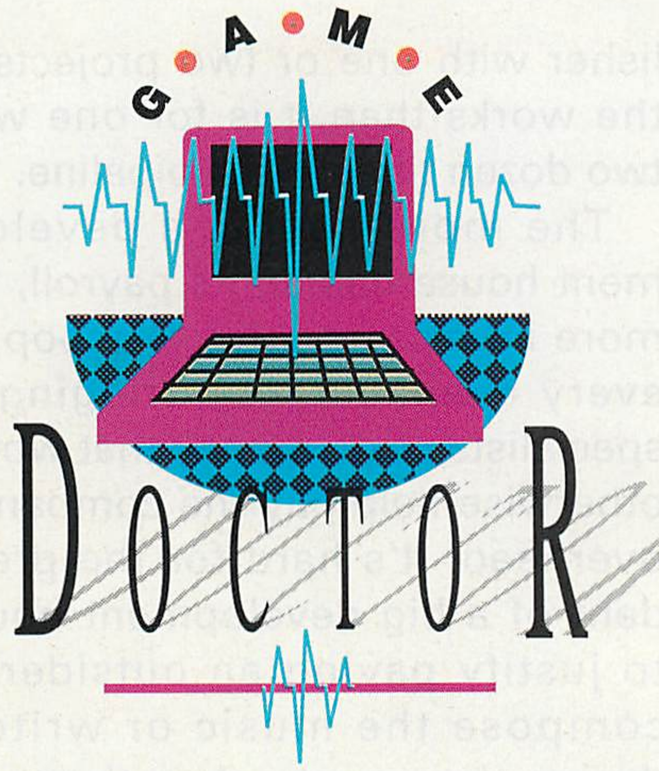
Publishers achieve this higher level of security at the cost of flexibility. The downside of funneling job after job to the same developer is that it doesn't always put the right team on the right job, or even the most appropriate people on the team.

The big advantage, besides keeping some of the best sources of game development solvent, is that the specialists often work together on a whole series of projects. Like a rock band, they get tighter and more efficient as a result of the constant interaction.

Is the day of the freelance specialist gone for good? Probably not, though they're going to have a much lower profile for the next year or so.

Multimedia entertainment takes more time and resources than either computer or video games. Given the high investment, it is not unreasonable that publishers will want to hedge their bets by enhancing existing design teams with hired guns specifically suited to the work at hand. I foresee the evolution of a system that will give the best of both worlds: the continuity and efficiency of a stable creative team, and the flash and panache of those who have shown excellence in one single area of game creation.





GAME DOCTOR AFTER THE BALL...

by the Game Doctor

Well, they're sweeping up the debris of our tenth-anniversary celebration here at *Game Doctor* Central. The TV cameras have all gone home—hope those of you who couldn't make the shindig in person at least caught us on the tube—and the floor is still littered with confetti! What is wrong with maintenance in this building anyway, Game Nurse? What's that? Oh, I see. Those are letters from my loyal patients. Well, then...er...never mind!

Anyway, there's another decade of the *Game Doctor* to begin, so I might as well get down to it.

question

How could I become a game counselor for Nintendo, Sega or NEC?

—Jay Brewer
Tuscumbia, AL

answer

As best I could gather, the various companies periodically advertise in the classified section of local newspapers. So your best bet would probably be to choose a system, practice up, then move to the Pacific Northwest, northern California or Chicago. Good luck!

question

I have a couple of questions concerning NEC's handheld TurboExpress that I hope you can answer.

First of all, what exactly is the manufacturer's suggested retail price for the system? In the latest issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, you briefly discussed one reader's dismay at the varied (and outrageously high) prices he had seen for the system. I thought I had seen the TurboExpress listed at a little under $200. I discovered, however, that retailers are charging from $259 to $299! Even if it is in short supply (and I'm wondering why that is), can they really get away with these prices? And if so, is there a way for me to purchase one directly from the manufacturer and avoid getting ripped off?

Secondly, due to the lack of supply, I have not even seen a TurboExpress in "real life" yet. Are the game play and graphics comparable to the TurboGrafx-16? Would you recommend the TurboExpress over the new Sega handheld? Also, is the Sega handheld comparable to the Sega Genesis?

Finally, do you think the impending release of the SNES will drop the price of the Sega Genesis? I have seen the system in my area drop to $149 with a rebate and $159 without one. Is it likely that the manufacturer will lower prices even more to compete with Nintendo? Or would they not because of a loss in profits from such a marketing action?

Thank you for the help and for the informative column!

—Shawn M. Atteberry
Fountain Valley, CA

answer

And thank you for the excellent letter—which wins this month's Prize Packet, by the way.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboExpress, at press time, is $299. Our key word here, however, is "suggested." Remember, we live in the land of the free—but the only thing that's "free" in economic terms is the marketplace; products are free to compete with one another and succeed or fail based on what the traffic will bear. I'm not suggesting you are un-American, of course, only that retailers are perfectly within their rights when they elevate prices in times of shortage. Since the retailer can't sell as many of the TurboExpress systems, he or she may charge more for them. This is free enterprise. It can also be called "price gouging," however, and remember that you, as a citizen of this noble land, have the right to remember and snub that particular retailer when the supply of product is more plentiful. As of now, NEC has no system set up to sell its own product. Sorry, but here's a crumb to soothe you: The shortage of TurboExpress systems was probably not the result of a secret conspiracy on the part of NEC, the Tri-Lateral Commission or even the Illuminati (though if it were, I wouldn't be able to say so). The company simply underestimated the number it could sell in the U.S. and then had problems getting them across the ocean.

The TurboExpress is virtually the same system as the TG-16. Whether you buy it or another handheld really depends on whether you want a portable source for playing TG-16 games or a totally new system. One problem has been reported by several patients, however. Because of the small screen size on the TurboExpress and the fact that the games were originally designed to be played on larger TV sets, some visual elements in the corners may sometimes be obscured.

The Sega Game Gear is not compatible with the Genesis. In terms of its sound and graphic quality, I'd put it somewhere between the SMS and the Genesis.

Finally, I don't see Sega dropping its Genesis price down any lower than $150, especially since the SNES will list for $40-$50 more than that price. Also, the number of SNES systems will be limited. That means that many customers will go into stores looking to buy one for the holidays, only to be informed that the store is all out. At that point, the customer may want to check out the Genesis, which we all know is a superb system. The customers are likely to be impressed by the graphics, kids will be delighted by the inclusion of *Sonic the Hedgehog* and a $50 price difference is significant enough that Sega should sell a lot of systems by year's end.

question

I own an NES and Genesis and plan to buy a Super NES (SNES). Before I buy one, I have some questions:

1. How much will the SNES cost?

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Megaman II	8/21
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Y's III	20/55

Genesis

Mega Drive Converter	16
688 Attack Sub	20/47
Abrams Battle Tank	12/32
After Burner II	15/29
Air Buster	15/32
Alien Storm	17/35
Arrow Flash	14/35
Batman	18/39
Bimini Run	14/32
Block Out	14/29
B. Douglas Boxing	10/27
Castle Of Illusion	17/35
Centurion	14/35
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Lynx

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2. Which game, if any, will be included with the SNES?

3. How much will the games cost?

4. I have heard of two Japanese systems called SuperGrafx and CoreGrafx. What kind of systems are these? Thanks for the help.

—Jeff Malmquist
Vista, CA

answer

Happy to be of assistance, Jeff. Your answers:

1. As you know, the prices of these game systems can vary from store to store. But because of the small number of SNES systems likely to be available in the U.S. this Christmas, and the predicted huge demand, I'd expect to pay pretty close to $200.

2. Current plans call for *Super Mario World* to be included with the system.

3. As always, software prices will vary depending on the expense involved in producing chips and parts for each game. Bear in mind, however, that the 16-bit systems have all announced plans to produce CD-based peripherals. Once past the initial cost of the CD drive, users should experience a *significant* drop in software prices at this point, since the cost of producing a CD is so much cheaper than the cost of ROM chips, plastic casings, etc. For the present, however, a rough estimate would place game prices for the SNES in the $40-$75 range.

4. This is somewhat confusing, so listen closely. As you probably know, the PC Engine was originally produced by NEC in Japan a year or so after the release of the NES. Subsequent to that, four variations of the basic PC Engine system were turned out. The CoreGrafx is the same system as the PC Engine, with some cosmetic redesigns. The ShuttleGrafx is the same system except it has no CD interface. The SuperGrafx is compatible with the basic system but has some extra chips that give it enhanced graphics, bit mapping capability, etc. Finally, there's the TurboGrafx-16, which is, of course, the American model. It has the CD interface but lacks the extra graphics chips of the SuperGrafx. The SuperGrafx has not been a major success and will never be introduced in this country.

question

I am relatively new to the computer gaming world and don't really know much about my computer. Our system is an IBM clone, with no capabilities for graphics and an amber monitor. A friend put *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* on my machine. The program works perfectly and is a lot of fun. We also tried to install some other games and only got the sound. I was wondering if I could buy some other games, but I would like to know what kind before wasting time.

—Mark Rennie
San Jose, CA

answer

It's quite simple Mark. Just check that little label in the corner of the software box cover where it lists all the sound and graphics boards the game supports. If you're uncertain, check with your friendly software shopkeeper, and tell him of your monochromic plight. It isn't possible to be sure from the information you provided, but you probably have a Hercules-compatible system, since that's about the lowest level of graphic support currently available on a PC.

The bad news is, fewer and fewer games bother to support CGA—the lowest level of color graphics on an IBM PC—much less Hercules and other monochrome standards. The reasoning is that VGA graphics are so cheap to install on a PC (a couple hundred bucks), almost anyone with an interest in playing games on their computer has already installed at least EGA and probably VGA, if not the new Super VGA. Companies also like to "encourage" users to beef up their systems, allowing the hardware folks to sell more hardware and the software publishers the opportunity to produce more impressive games.

question

What is the maximum number of megs the Genesis can handle? I always thought it was an eight-meg maximum, which is half the size of the CPU.

—Nathan Stehle
Milwaukee, WI

answer

The jury is still out on the maximum number of megabits the Genesis can handle (16? just a guess), but there is no rule that limits the number of megs to half the number that are in the CPU. I think you'll see a tendency to maximize the number of megs used to create 16-bit video-game software, especially on the Genesis, which has now been around long enough that programmers are able to make the most of four to eight bits. I mean, look at *Sonic the Hedgehog*! This is nowhere near a 12-meg game, but look at it go!

Once again, comparing specs out of context is one of the most pointless games we can play here in the electronic-gaming world. So many other issues come into play, such as compression routines, that you're still better off just playing state-of-the-art software on any given system and judging via your own senses!

Before we part company for this month, there are a couple of subjects I'd like to bring up. The first is a reminder that the Doc can't answer letters personally. I would love to, but between practices, yours truly gets as many as a hundred letters a week. It would take not only a Game Doctor and Game Nurse to answer them all, it would take a virtual Game Hospital. I try to hold onto any stamped, addressed letters that come in and, if anything interesting turns up around the office, I may mail out a sample fanzine or some other minor novelty, but the vast majority of them sit in my files, making me feel guilty and helpless. So c'mon, folks, you don't want the old Doc feeling guilty and helpless, do ya?

The second subject is the International Gaming Correspondents group we have talked about briefly in recent columns. Just send me your name and address with permission to print them and, as space allows, we'll run them here in the Game Doctor's personal space.

Names of the first members follow. Justin Lee (2674 Keller Blvd., St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada H4K 1L7) is 16 years old, and he owns an NES and Game Boy and plans on buying a Super NES. He likes RPGs, driving games and shoot-'em-ups!

Jay Brewer, who appeared in this issue's column (175 Milk Springs Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674) would like to exchange gaming chitchat.

Finally, Mitchell Krzyzek Jr. (22 Reardon Drive, Middletown, RI 02840-5249), who is 16, owns an NES, Genesis, TG-16 (with CD drive), Game Boy and a Lynx.

These people are all interested in exchanging letters with overseas gamers. We'll have more names for the club next time out. Meanwhile, if you're feeling out-of-sorts, play two RPGs, and write me in the morning. I'm off to the poolside! Aloha, my many gaming buds!

Remember, send those questions, comments and corrections to the *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

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COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

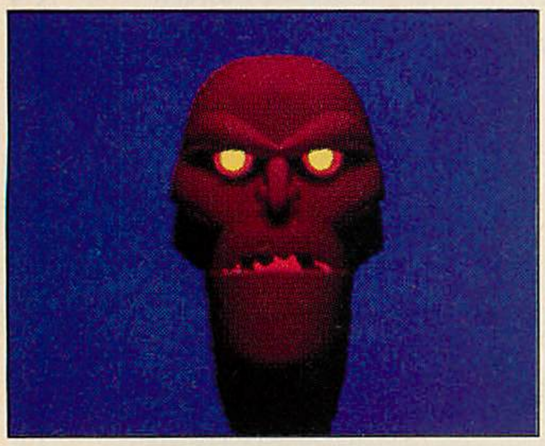
Starting this month and continuing, VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT *will take a sneak peek look at upcoming computer-game releases. Unlike video-game cartridge based software, the turnaround time for computer games is much shorter. In order to accommodate our readers with all the latest entertainment software, we've created this section to keep you informed.*

Ultima VII: The Black Gate

ORIGIN

Version Previewed: IBM PC

Richard (Lord British) Garriott celebrates the start of a new trilogy with a major upgrade of the *Ultima* play-system. The interface simplifies order entry to point-and-click without sacrificing any of the richness of earlier installments of the Britannia saga.



***Ultima VII* is likely to set new standards for RPG adventures.**

The graphics have gone full screen, eliminating the claustrophobic impression the old "letter box" layout produced. The artwork is the best yet, and the animations are more numerous and more complex.

The Black Gate introduces a major new villain, the Guardian, who will continue to oppose the Avatar in the next couple of *Ultima* titles. The player must prevent construction of the Black Gate, which would allow the Guardian to enter the world of Britannia

Ultima VII is likely to set new standards for role-playing fantasy adventures. Always a fine designer, Garriott has ascended to the very top of his profession.

—Arnie Katz

Origin Systems
P.O. Box 161750
Austin, TX 78716
(512) 328-0282

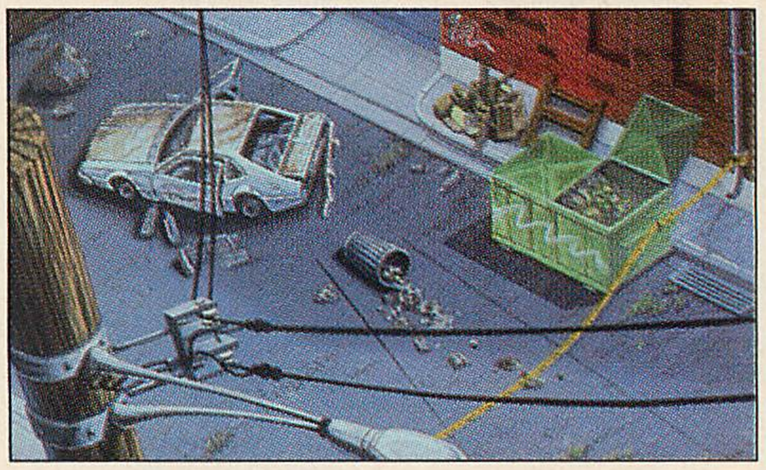
Police Quest 3: The Kindred

SIERRA ON-LINE

Version Previewed: IBM PC

Street-wise Jim Walsh has always had the knack for packing adventures with grimly realistic detail. Title by title, the former law enforcer has developed real mastery of the art of interactive storytelling. The third game in the *Police Quest* series junks the parser-driven interface in favor of an easygoing point-and-click system that puts the emphasis where it belongs: on the plot, characters and clues.

Multiperspective views inspired by *film noir* present a hard-hitting story of brutal murder and intricate conspiracy. The identikit module that the player uses to nail down the testimony of an eyewitness to the killing is so ingenious and entertaining that many will spend hours just building faces



***Police Quest 3* uses a new point-and-click interface.**

with it. Music by Jan Hammer fits this intense experience perfectly.

Police Quest 3 is a welcome respite from endless slay-the-dragon adventures. It would be a crime not to add it to your collection.

—A. K.

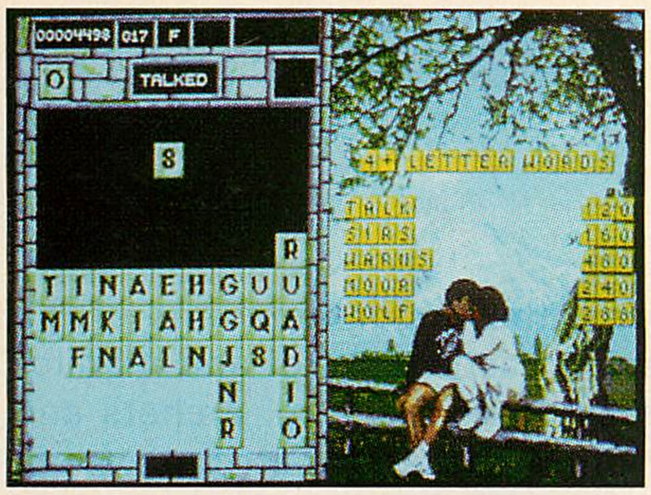
Sierra On-Line, Inc.
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

Wordtris

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Version Previewed: IBM PC

The best game of its type since *Tetris*, *Wordtris* combines concepts from the original falling-shapes contest with elements from nonelectronic word-building games such as Scrabble and Boggle. This time, instead of shapes, hats or facial components falling from the sky, it's individual letters, which the gamer must assemble into words of at least three letters. When a word is formed, the letter blocks that comprised it disappear and points are awarded. Words can be constructed vertically or horizontally, with the help of such player aids as



Wordtris looks like one of the year's best titles.

the mystery blocks, which contain only question marks and can be transformed into any letter that the gamer selects.

Minds will boggle at the thoroughness of the program's 30,000-word dictionary, which includes slang. *Wordtris* also looks to be one of those games that is exponentially more enjoyable when played by two gamers, who can exploit one another's set-ups or spoil potential big scores with the deft placement of a single letter. The game can also be played cooperatively or in tournament mode.

As with *Tetris*, the graphics are not outstanding; in fact, the game's single greatest weakness, based on the early edition tested, is its use of multiple fonts, some of which are simply too difficult to decipher. Otherwise, *Wordtris* looks like one of the year's most promising titles and an absolute must-have for word-building mavens or fans of the "Tris" series.

—Bill Kunkel

Spectrum HoloByte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
(415) 522-3584

Martian Memorandum

ACCESS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

The folks from Access, who recently gave us such state-of-the-art entertainment software as *LINKS*, *Crime Wave* and *Mean Streets*, are back. *Martian Memorandum*, the second entry in the science-fictional saga begun by last year's *Mean Streets*, is a cinematic pulse-pounder that finally gives PC gamers access to full-motion video sequences with synchronized, digitized speech.

Martian Memorandum reintroduces gamers to *Mean Streets*' star, Tex Murphy, the hard-boiled private eye whose tongue is often firmly in his cheek. Contacted on his Dick Tracy-like wrist Com Link, Murphy is informed that the daughter of Terra Form Corporation prez Marshall Alexander is missing and presumed kidnapped. This begins a multistage adventure that takes the player, as Murphy, from a smuggler's base in Central America to Dick Castro's sleazoid Martian casino.

Martian Memorandum offers some truly memorable characters and incredibly beautiful locations, but gamers will want to make sure their system has enough horsepower to deliver all of its audiovisual impact. A

Martian Memorandum, by Access, has over 24 megabytes of sound and graphics.

hard disk drive, 640K and 8 MHz are required to comprise the minimum configuration.

—B. K.

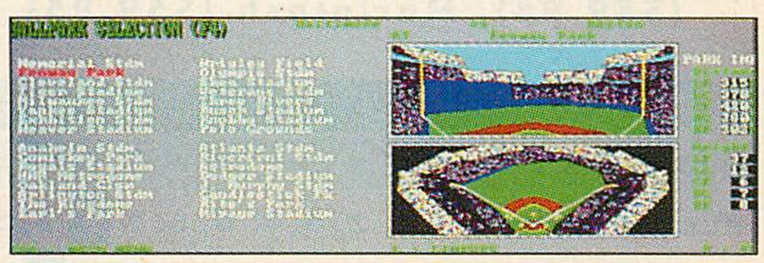
Access Software
4910 W. Amelia Earhart Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
(801) 359-2900

Earl Weaver Baseball II

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

Just as the original *Earl Weaver Baseball* (also designed by Eddie Dombrower) was the most ambitious



Gamers can set the on-the-field cameras to virtually any position in the stadium.

simulation of the national pastime to date, *Earl Weaver II* attempts to produce the ultimate in statistical simulation and audiovisual presentation. As with the first title, it doesn't quite deliver a game-winning grand slam, but easily scores several runners with a double to the right field corner.

The program comes with a league comprised of a quartet each of American and National League teams from a variety of eras, as well as an all-star squad from the old Negro league. There are also 32 stadiums—30 are contemporary or historical, while two are fantasy fields (if you use them, *they* will come).

The interface is intelligent and flexible, permitting such play options as one-pitch-per-at-bat play, insertion of the DH rule into any era and auto-strategy menus automatically displayed in every important game situation. Injuries can be disabled, pitching rotations established and starters can be designated as relievers. The game is almost literally choked with special features, including a radar gun to clock pitches, instant replays and a continuously updated box score.

Earl Weaver II is at its *most* ambitious, however, in simulating the game's visual presentation. Using the currently hot CAD (computer-aided design) technology, the user can set the on-the-field cameras to virtually any position in the stadium, allowing the gamer to watch the action anywhere, from behind the plate to an overhead display, courtesy of a passing blimp.

—B. K.

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

Castles

INTERPLAY

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95), Macintosh ($59.95)

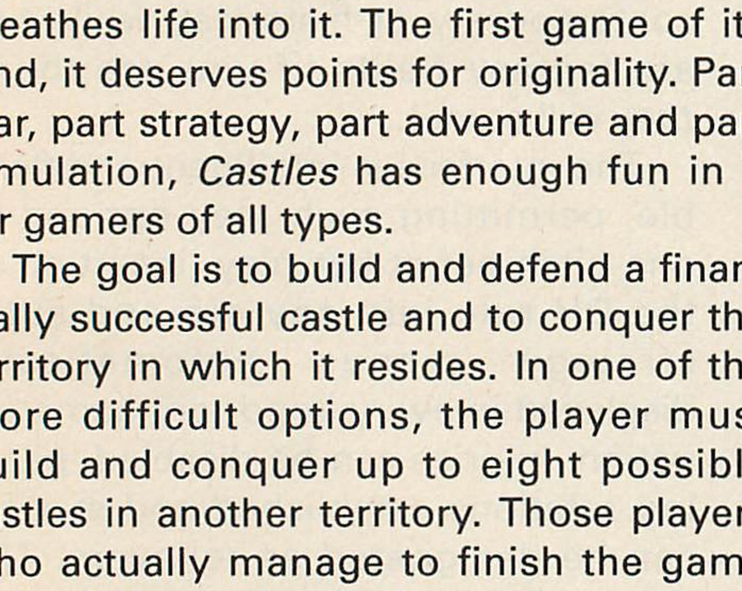
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Think hard enough and you can probably come up with at least a dozen games that involve castles in some way, or take place in and around castles. Most role-playing games have a castle somewhere on the game map, and contests that take place in dungeons also fit the mold because dungeons are the basements of castles. Yet, in all these games, castles are nothing more than window dressing, places in which events happen or objects reside—buildings that players must explore or conquer.

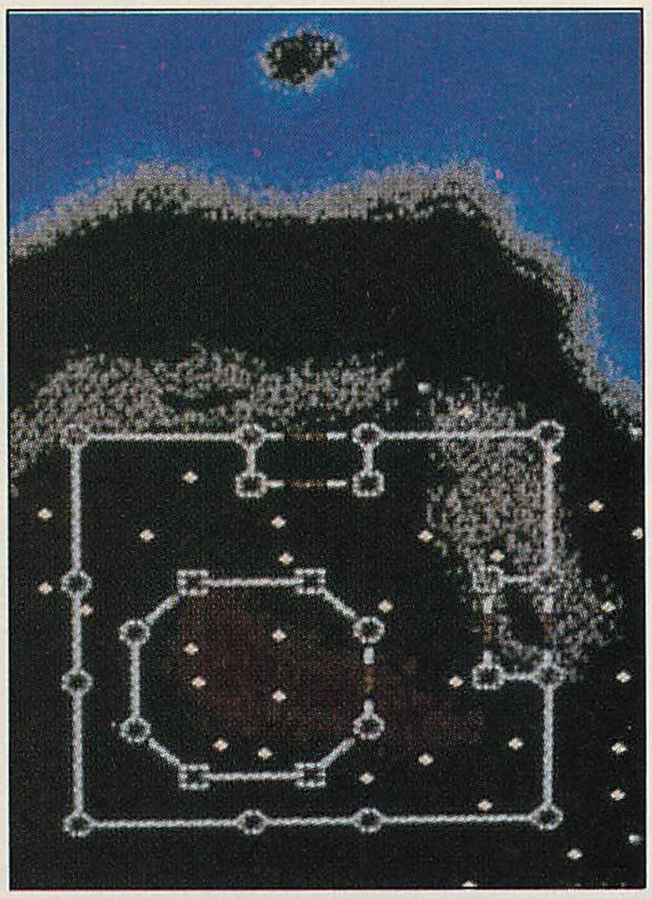
Castles from Interplay is the first game in which the castle itself is a major "character" in the game. The structure comes alive and the player is the force that breathes life into it. The first game of its kind, it deserves points for originality. Part war, part strategy, part adventure and part simulation, *Castles* has enough fun in it for gamers of all types.

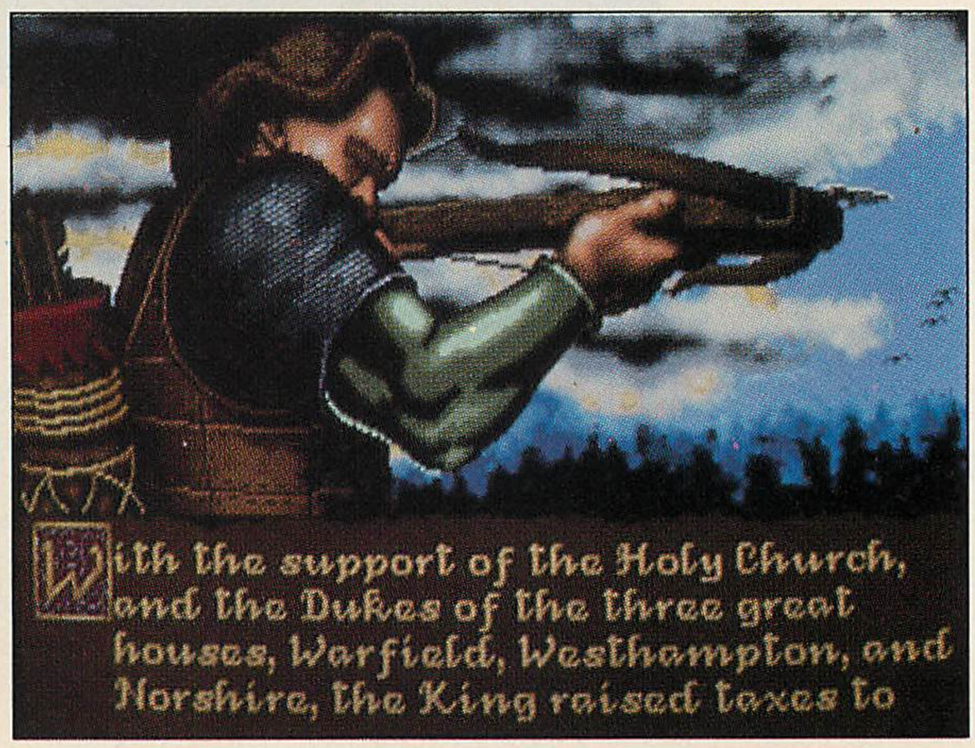
The goal is to build and defend a financially successful castle and to conquer the territory in which it resides. In one of the more difficult options, the player must build and conquer up to eight possible castles in another territory. Those players who actually manage to finish the game with eight castles will receive a special prize from Interplay for their endurance and gaming excellence. This is a tough challenge to meet.

The interface provides commands from menus and submenus that control all options. The main menu offers only a few choices, the major functions of the game: design castle; control and monitor laborers; levy taxes; control archers and infantry; purchase and distribute food; set game speed and ask for counsel. Players can also choose options to allow messengers to play in a realistic or fantasy setting, to set the difficulty level and to choose the number of castles in the campaign (one, three or eight). The controls and options are completely intuitive, but there is a tutorial contained in the manual.



Castles pulls together lots of familiar elements from war and strategy games, and then couples them with an interface tailored to castle designs.





It's not all strategy and planning, though. If you play the game with the messenger option turned on (highly recommended), many characters solicit the player, as the lord or lady of the castle. For example, one such petition came from a nun, to rid the woods of wolves that were terrorizing the animals and people. A graphic overhead view depicted a little wolf chasing a lamb across a field. These "cut-scenes" add atmosphere and help develop a story about the player/manager and owner of the castle and land. In the fantasy setting, monsters and Death himself enter the game. During and after construction of the castle, enemies test the troops, and success in these battles brings victory closer.

The graphics, sound effects and music are wonderful. Views of the structure from various angles, overhead views of the land surrounding the castle and story screens appear on the monitor. It is even fun just to watch the laborers build the keep, because they really do put it together from scratch. But, it isn't wise to observe without action for too long, because the workers may get tired or run out of supplies; then it takes double efforts to get the project back on track.

The music and sound effects were produced by George "The Fat Man" Sanger, a prolific musician whose work has been in many computer and video games over the past few years. Music is constant throughout the game, and it certainly brings the castle's creation and defense to life.

Castles pulls together lots of familiar elements from war and strategy

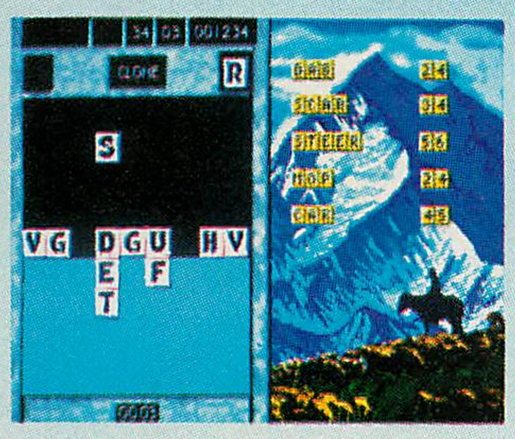
continued on page 154

WORDTRIS

Another Eastern block falls.

There's a new 'TRIS on the block. Its name is WORDTRIS. And if you love TETRIS, this latest fast-action, falling block, Soviet game will boggle your mind.

This time the falling pieces are letter blocks. Form them into words and score points. As each block falls, it pushes down the blocks below, producing an ever-changing kaleidoscope of letters where scoring opportunities appear - and vanish - at the blink of an eye.



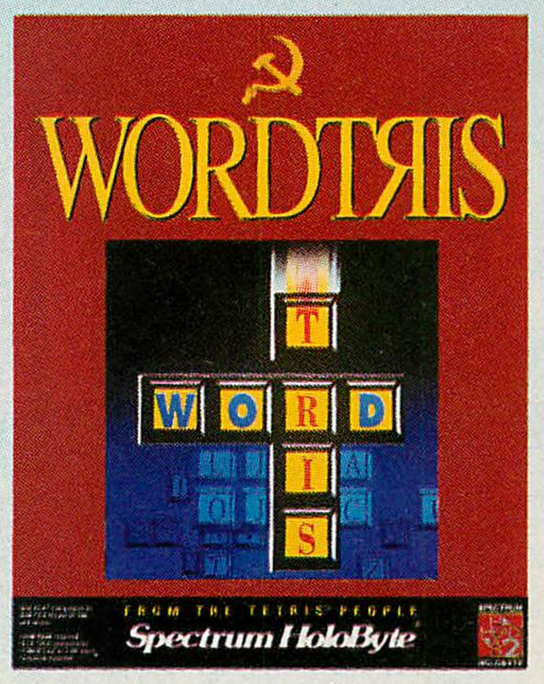
Go for XYLOPHONE if you dare.

Create words horizontally or vertically, but don't put all your E's in one BASKET. Because every time a word lines up, *poof!* those letters disappear, and the blocks below pop up to fill the spaces. So whenever you earn points you stir up the alphabet soup. And suddenly that falling M has no HOME to go to.

WORDTRIS keeps raining vowels and consonants until you've collected enough words to move to the next level, or the well fills up. Of course, each successive round ups the ante as the blocks fall ever faster. But you can choose your difficulty level to match your skills, and select from single player, cooperative, competitive, head-to-head or tournament modes. The built-in 30,000 word dictionary verifies even the most obscure word.

Set the difficulty level at 10 and you'll find WORDTRIS harder to keep up with than the changes in Eastern Europe.

WORDTRIS. Another great game from the TETRIS people.



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Capcom USA	13,14-15	106
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Irem	40-41	120
Koei	117	145
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MicroProse Software	19	109
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NTV Internation	127	149
NEC Technologies	20-21	110
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Ocean America	43,45	121,122
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Sage's Creation	91	138
Sega	48-49, 55,73	107, 127,135
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SNK	33	116
Software Toolworks	59,60-61	129,130
Spectrum HoloByte	151	157
Strategic Simulations	53	—
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Supremacy	173	169
Taito	135	153
T&E Soft	8-9	104
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Tengen	64-65	132
Totally Turbo	163	159
Tommo	169	163
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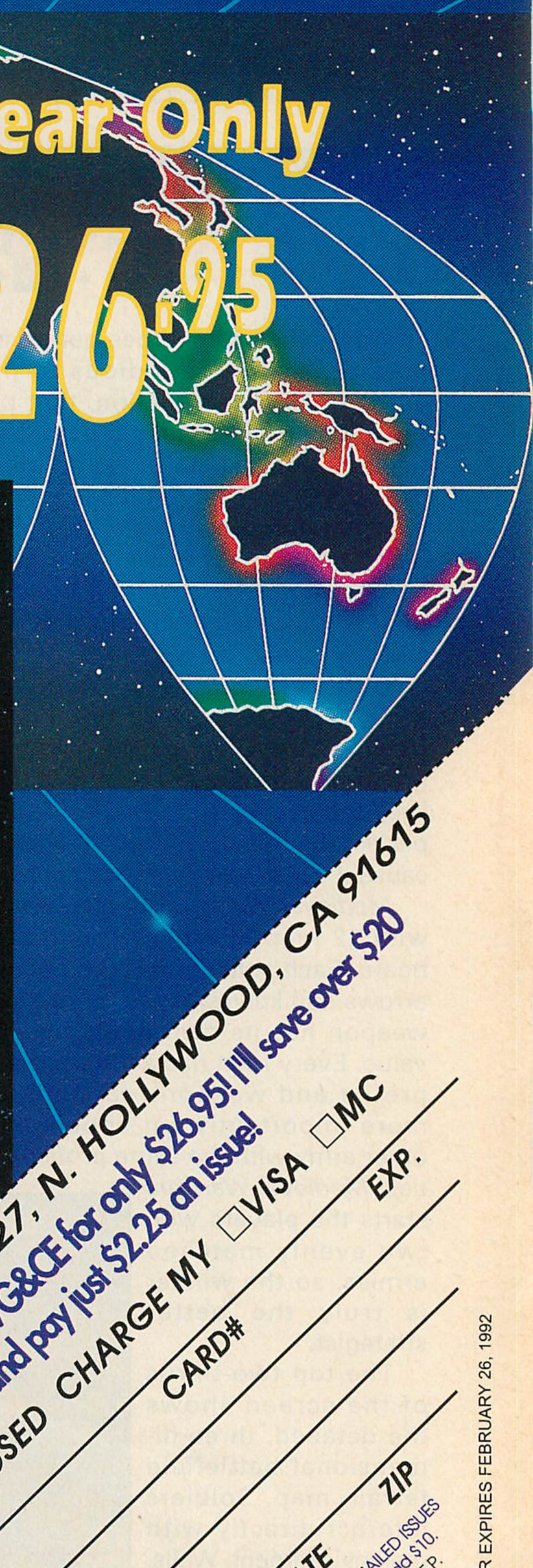

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continued from page 150

games, and then couples them with an interface tailored to castle design. The result is a game experience that is very rewarding.

—Russ Ceccola

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Medieval Warriors

MERIT SOFTWARE
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

War games sometimes get so mired in detail that they're tedious to play. An overly realistic simulation, that provides the number of horses and men that a particular soldier killed or some other such nonsense, may have a user-hostile interface that obscures the merits of the game. Sacrifice of fun for realism or detail should be punishable by requiring the designers to play their own games for hours on end with no break.

Fortunately, *Medieval Warriors* doesn't have that problem. Merit took a rather simple interface, then spiced it with colorful graphics and enough scenario variations to keep the game active. This battle contest is perfect for novices and veterans alike because the strategy gets back to basics.

Medieval Warriors supplies each player with 12 men to move around the game board. Each soldier has a number of axes, arrows and knives, plus a sword, and each weapon has its own range and damage value. Every man has a different statistical profile and weapons capabilities and, more importantly, an opponent on the other army with the same profile and abilities. *Medieval Warriors* starts the players with two evenly matched armies, so the winner is truly the better strategist.

Medieval Warriors is simple enough to keep gamers returning again and again, yet has enough variety to keep play interesting.

The top two-thirds of the screen shows the detailed, three-dimensional battlefield terrain map. Soldiers interact directly with the environment. Walls, trees, water and even dead bodies provide obstacles to movement. The control panel occupies the bottom third of the screen, with weapons and character statistics, the tactical grid map and attack controls.

It only takes about a minute to understand *Medieval Warriors*' interface. To select and move a warrior, just click on a soldier on the terrain map or on the tactical grid map, then click on a location on the terrain map. The soldier will move there if not blocked and if within his movement allowance. To attack, click on the weapon, a compass direction and the "attack" gadget.

The graphics look great and the character animation is attractive. Soldiers fling knives, draw the arrows on the bow and let them fly, clash swords and throw axes overhead.

An element of surprise enters the game via the terrain map. Because the map only displays a fifth of the entire game grid, only a portion of the opposing army may be visible until members of your own army move within range. There's also no knowledge of the statistics of the enemy warriors prior to the attack, and, by then, it may be too late.

The four terrain maps (Frontier Outpost, King's Bridge, Village Wall and Castle Keep) have very different layouts, and each of the four has scenarios with the soldiers disbursed differently. The best is Castle Keep because of the walls and obstacles, not unlike a shootout in the Old West. Other options let the compu-commander change the length of the game turn, give more weapons to each soldier, turn on double attack mode and set the computer opponent's difficulty. The game also supports play over a modem or null connector.

Unfortunately, there's no music, and even the sound effects are sparse; this makes solo play a bit tiresome after a game or two. Fortunately, a contest with another person via the phone lines adds excitement.

Although the purpose of the game is to pit two evenly matched armies against each other, an option to set up your own armies and scenarios would have been especially nice because the terrain map and interface are such a pleasure to use.

One major gripe with the game is that it centers the terrain map on the selected warrior. The quick screen shifts that make this happen are sometimes an annoyance.

It's a pity this screen shift isn't on a toggle switch or a double-click command on the mouse.

Medieval Warriors is simple enough to keep gamers returning again and again, yet has enough variety to keep play interesting. It's a good starting point for new war gamers, before they turn to more complicated titles. In fact, its simplicity is so engaging that some players may never want more complicated action after enjoying this.

—R. C.

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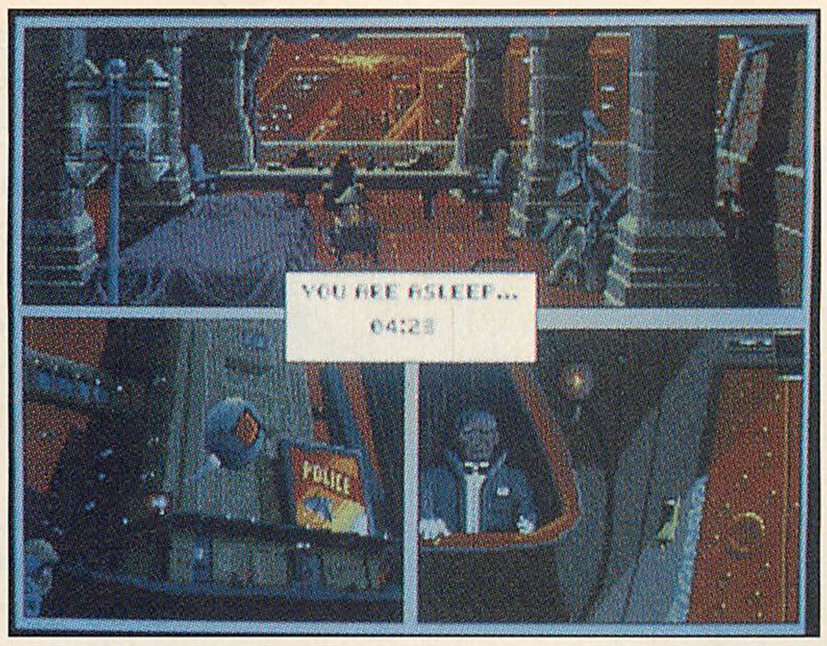


B.A.T.

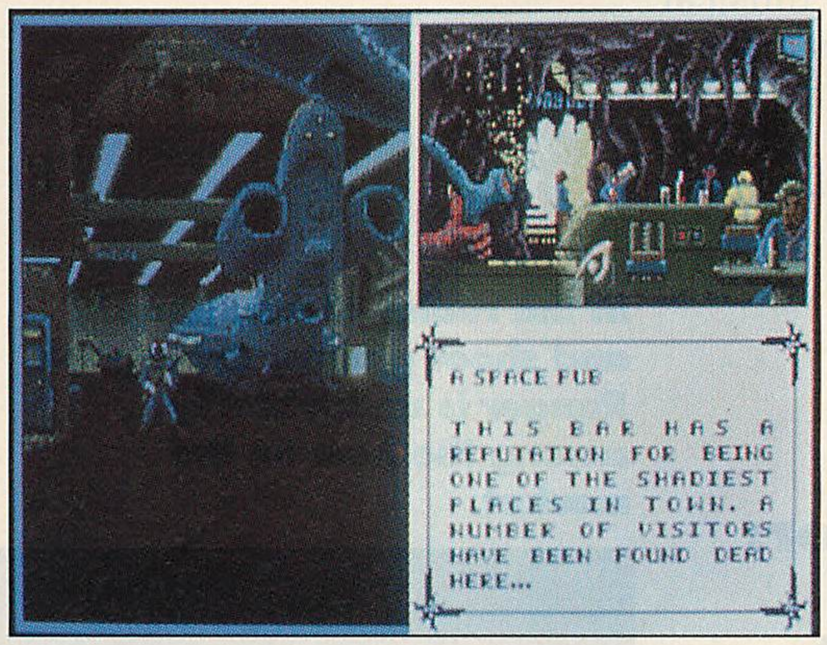
UBI SOFT
Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

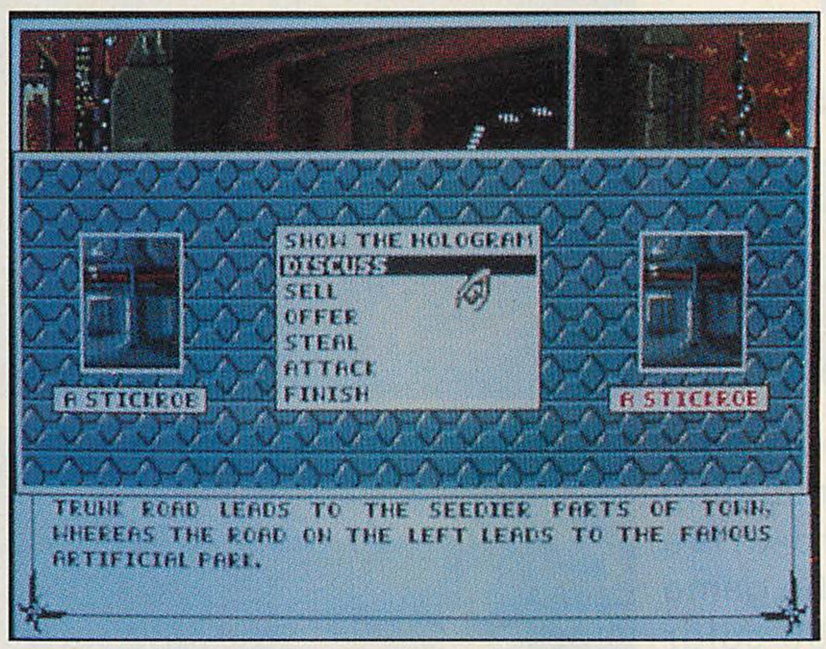
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

B.A.T., like several other familiar three-letter abbreviations, represents a secret organization of covert operatives that walk the line between politics and police work. As an agent, the player is a James Bond type, operating in a futuristic world of the 22nd century.

A suitable foil for our hero is provided in Vrangor, a deranged scientist whose plan is to blackmail the central government of Selenia for a deed of ownership to its largest city, Terrapolis. If the government does not comply within ten days, Vrangor, with the aid of his criminal accomplice Merigo, intends to reduce Selenia to galactic ash by detonating several hidden nuturobiogenic bombs.

The player character doesn't have the advantage of many Bond-style gadgets, but he does have B.O.B. (Bidirectional Organic Bioputer). This computer implant, located in the character's arm, monitors all his vital signs (e.g., level of injury, need for food, drink, etc.), tells the player when he is being followed and even regulates the character's heartbeat based on the activity he is involved in. The downside of B.O.B. is that it must be programmed properly to maximize its benefit. Although it's reasonably, the correct way to program B.O.B. is one of the puzzles the player must solve.





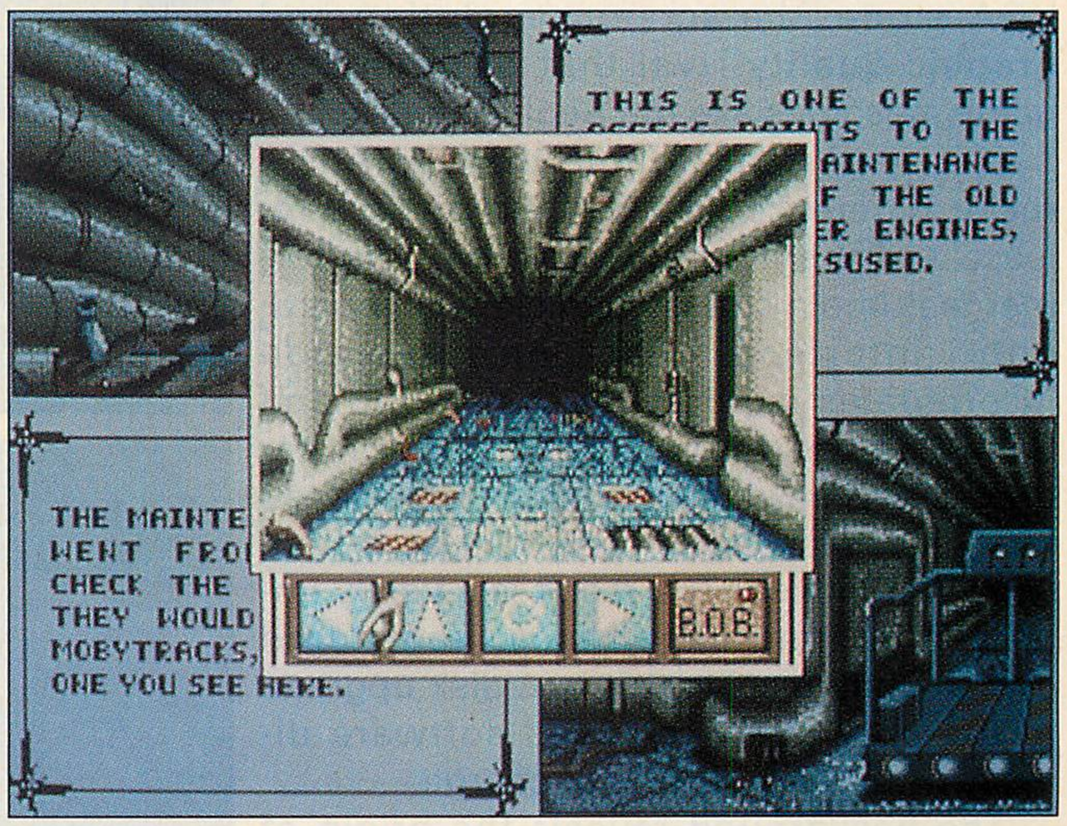
Solving puzzles is the order of the day for *B.A.T.*, since other elements of the game, such as combat, are disappointing. Virtually all role-playing games have some combat and, as a rule, players prefer something cerebral that requires strategy and forethought to succeed. However, in *B.A.T.* all combat is handled via an archaic arcade sequence, wherein players simply line up the crosshairs and push the fire button as rapidly as possible. This really doesn't have much player appeal.

Since the game really depends on the puzzles, it is unfortunate that they are somewhat drawn out and poorly written. Solving them is further complicated by the fact that the playing environment does not seem to have a consistent geographical reference, which makes mapping very difficult.

Finally, the game suffers from a severely limited parser. Essentially, players may only question NPCs about Vrangor, Merigo or Terrapolis. If dissatisfied with the initial response, the player may also bribe the NPC for further information. This avenue is only partially successful, and it is up to the player to determine when to utilize it.

The positive aspect of the interaction with NPCs is that some of them are more intricately modeled than is usually the case in role-playing games.

B.A.T., by UBI Soft, suffers from a severely limited parser.



There are two other semi-arcade sequences integral to the game. The first is a flight sequence in which the player must pilot a vehicle aptly named a "drag," and the second is a driving sequence involving

a "mobytrack." Neither of these ventures adds significantly to the game, other than as a change of pace. There is one bright spot in a game within the game called "Bizzy." Essentially, it's a memorization game much like "Simon," only one must recount a series of shapes instead of a series of colors. Completing the increasingly complicated progression is essential to finishing the game.

Although laborious at times, *B.A.T.* is not overly difficult, which may make it appealing to new players. It does boast some impressive graphics and a good musical score, and these attractive features make it stand out much more than its dubious play action.

—Ed Dille

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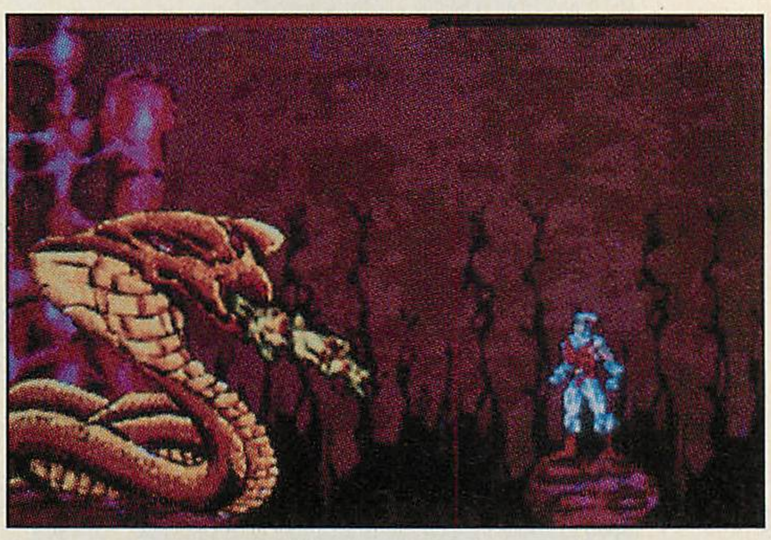
Cybergenic Ranger: Secret of the Seventh Planet

SYMTUS

Version: 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

In the realm of run, jump and shoot games, *Cybergenic Ranger* is undoubtedly among the best on the market.



The first impression of *Cybergenic Ranger* is one of a big game, consuming almost five megabytes of hard-drive space. The reason for this is that the game is very graphics intensive. In 256-color VGA mode, the screen resolution and graphic quality rival that of dedicated game machines like the Sega Genesis.

It is important to note that there is a major difference between the original release and the upgraded version. The former featured a clumsy and slow keyboard-only interface. The new version incorporates support for the Ad Lib and Sound Blaster cards, joystick control, improved keyboard reaction and game speed for nonjoystick owners, as well as an online hint function. The result is a vastly improved gaming experience. Registered owners may receive this one-disk upgrade to the previously released software directly from Symtus, free of charge.

The background reveals the origin of Micah (the player character) and his mission. The enclosed comic book delineates how Andrew Mason (Micah's father) launched his son and 12 pods, containing his latest scientific creations, into space to avoid their capture by unknown assailants that were attacking his ship, the Startreader. Micah was near death when found and could only be saved by the Cybergenic hardware enclosed in the pod with him. As such, he became the first Cybergenic Zone Ranger, setting out to avenge his father's death and to find the secret of the Regenerates—the mechanoid race that attacked the Startreader.

The action begins with Micah exploring the Startreader. This is just a warm-up area so the player can become familiar with the controls. The only objective is to move from the left to the right, shooting dead crew members to collect their gold orbs (which add to Micah's life energy). Running into the crew depletes life energy.

At the end of the level is a doorguard-robot. The doorway leads to a room with further information about Andrew Mason and the pods he launched.

Although everything refers to 12 pods, there is one panel in the comic book that shows a system malfunction on the launch of the 12th pod. This provides the only hint that there's not a 12th pod in the game.

Next, the player goes to Denges Moon for the saltshooter, the first of a series of weapon and ability upgrades the player obtains while searching out the pods.

Following Denges Moon, the gamer travels to Antrymite, an ice world in which one jumps from one ice floe to another, fighting along the way, until the end boss for the level is reached. Interestingly, this segment plays differently each time the game is booted, because the ice pattern is redrawn by a random world generator, so no set patterns exist. This simple feature vastly improves the replayability of this portion of the game.

Following this, the player progresses through five more worlds, the final one (Artica) containing three levels. The end bosses become increasingly difficult, and the final one, the "Mother Brain," can

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only be defeated with the Shard of Symtus (a secret weapon obtained on the world of Chrystillia). Each of the worlds is unique, both in terms of graphic representation and play challenge.

Cybergenic Ranger also incorporates a variable difficulty setting from one to five, which should accommodate players of all skill levels.

In the realm of run, jump and shoot games, *Cybergenic Ranger* is undoubtedly among the best on the market. This says a lot for Symtus' first venture into electronic entertainment.

—E. D.

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The Many Faces of Go

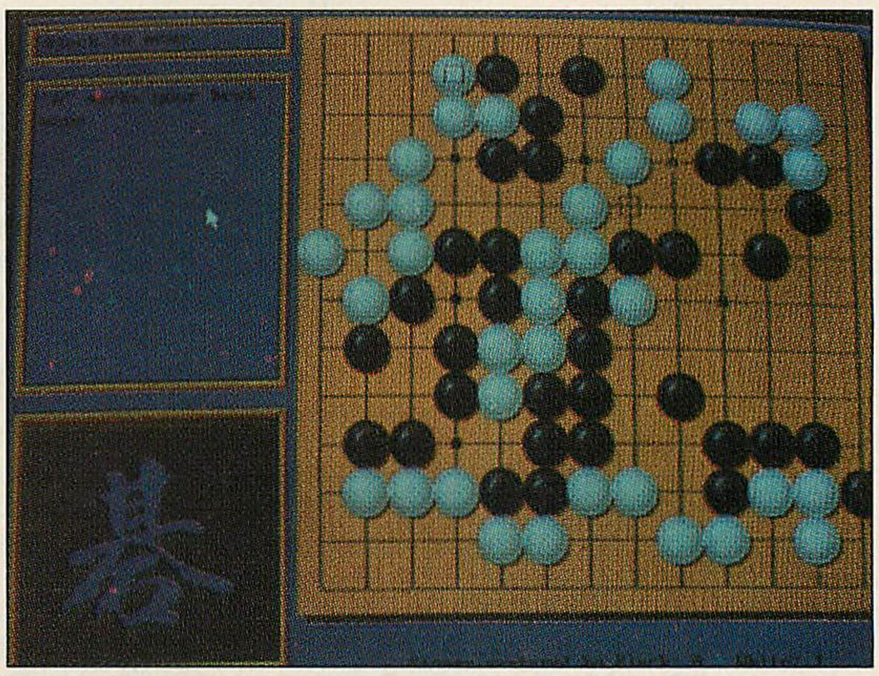
ISHI PRESS INTERNATIONAL
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

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

The world's oldest game meets modern high technology in Ishi Press' computer rendition, *The Many Faces of Go*. Probably predating chess by a millennium or two, the origins of go are variously ascribed to ancient Chinese emperors seeking ways to improve the mental capacity of weak-minded sons, or explained as having evolved from early divination techniques. The game was brought to Japan between 13 and 17 centuries ago, where it gained favor among the nobility and, later, among the warlords who believed its strategies and tactics offered valuable military lessons. It was not until this century, however, that it caught on to any extent in the West.

Perhaps its major difference from chess or checkers is that the object is not so much to deplete the enemy's forces as to gain territory. The board begins empty, or nearly so, with pieces added strategically as the game progresses. The winner is the player whose stones ultimately control the greatest area of the playing field.

The rules are simple and few enough, but the patterns of attack and defense take some time to become apparent, especially to inexperienced players. In some ways it seems too loose, or nebulous, to Western eyes. Considerably altered Westernized variations abound, with such familiar board games as Pente and Othello bearing a recognizable relationship, as does the pencil-and-paper game where players alternate in drawing lines between dots on a grid.



***The Many Faces of Go* has the added advantage of being effectively open-ended as to the levels one can achieve.**

Electronic gamers, however, will recognize at least one term from the game of go; when a player's stone or set of stones is in jeopardy, it is said to be in atari. This is usually announced, as a chess player announces "Check!"

The best way to learn go is to play, and the biggest difficulty for would-be players in the West is finding opponents. Ishi Press, California-based publisher of many books about go, designed their computerized version not only as an opponent, but also as a patient tutor.

In its capacity as opponent, it is formidable. In August it won the 1991 North American Computer Go Championship at the U.S. Go Congress, with five wins, no losses.

There are different sizes of playfields available, selectable at any odd number from 9 x 9 to 19 x 19. There is also a system of handicaps, in which the weaker player may have stones already placed on the board at the beginning of the game. The number of moves ahead the computer will examine may also be selected. The American Go Association ranks its strategy and tactics level at 15 kyu, the amateur rating which ranges from 35 kyu for the beginner to a one for an expert. Beyond that, amateur American master levels range from one to seven dan.

As well as providing setup directions, the manual contains rules and elementary strategy, plus a history of the game and some interesting details on the preparation of the computerized version. During regular play, the program is prepared to offer hints and substantial explanations at any time. In addition, the tutorial is always available for review.

Along with the basic game tutorial, there is a tutorial for josekis. A joseki is a standardized, logical sequence of moves in a corner of the game board, and any number of them familiar to the experienced player. Such sequences might be compared to gambits in chess, save that, presumably, neither side gains any undue advantage thereby. Moreover, there are several graded problems and example games for viewing and study, with additional disks of these available from the publisher.

Beginners shouldn't be intimidated. The game of go can readily become as ad-

dictive as any shoot-'em-up in only a short time. Go has the added advantage of being effectively open-ended as to the levels one can achieve. For the advanced go player, *The Many Faces of Go* offers a challenge, a study arena and maybe even an insight or two.

—Ross Chamberlain

Ishi Press International
76 Bonaventura Drive
San Jose, CA 95134
(408) 944-9900

Cyberblast

INNERPRISE
Versions: Amiga ($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

Cyberblast is an arcade-action contest with a very simple premise: avoid all enemies and destroy virtually everything that moves an eyelash.

The player takes the role of Darik Starr, something of a soldier of fortune. A rip in space appeared at Fastrax labs, and this rip threatens to engulf the known universe. The mission is to don a rather sophisticated spacesuit and enter Fastrax labs. The ultimate goal is to recover the control chip that can shut down the main computer, which is generating the rip in space.

There are, of course, complications. The rip in space has bred a huge variety of nasties, and these are now inhabiting the maze-like lab facilities. The most numerous are the drones, which can be destroyed with a single shot from a laser pistol. Drones are created by incubators, and these appear to be more and more prevalent deeper into the 64-level game. There are bubblers (they shoot bullets in eight directions), launchers (these fire grenades; they are deadly), super launchers (they also fire grenades, but the laser doesn't work on them), as well as a host of others.

To aid Darik Starr in his quest, there are weapon upgrades scattered around the lab. Zappers are smart bombs that destroy everything visible on the screen. Bombs destroy walls and enemies after a short time delay to allow the fighter to get clear. Grenades are similar, but don't provide the time delay. Powershots increase the laser's power for ten shots. There are also potions for extra energy, points, cures for poison (handy when Darik comes up against poison aliens) and extra time.

Cyberblast provides a bird's-eye view, from the top down. The screen shows the score, numbers of special weapons in Darik's possession, energy, speed and the time left for the current level. A depleted time allowance doesn't automatically cause Darik's death, but it does negate the bonus at the end of the level.

The Amiga version adds a split-screen, two-player simultaneous contest. In it, each player has his or her own speed,

Cyberblast's level of difficulty increases smoothly, but it starts out easy enough that even a novice can have some fun with the game.

shield strength and firepower, and these can increase and decrease independently of the other player during the game.

The on-screen alter ego is moved by mouse or keyboard (the latter is better). The screen scrolls smoothly to show new sections of the lab as Darik moves into them.

Cyberblast sports nicely shaded graphics and animation. The level of difficulty increases smoothly, but it starts out easy enough that even a novice can have some fun with the game. It is a long contest, and would have benefited from a "save game" feature, so that players wouldn't have to blast the entire way through every time.

The game is admittedly very similar to quite a few others—it really brings little that's new or original to the table. Still, it is a good contest, well-implemented with a handsome set of graphics. It's a pleasure to play, especially on the Mac. If you've been looking for a new, hot maze/shooting game for your collection, this one is definitely worth a look. And, if you're hunting for a good two-player action game for Amiga, you don't want to miss it.

—David Plotkin

Innerprise Software
128 Cockeysville Road
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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Be a Blazing Star in Hard Nova

ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version: IBM PC

Hard Nova casts the player as one of the best mercenaries in the Four Systems. Warfare among the members of these Four Systems creates jobs for mercenaries, and the player sees plenty of this action. But, in order to become a successful mercenary, a player must first develop character skills effectively and learn how to lead his or her party in combat.

The key to success is development of high skill ratings. In most situations, the first skill to improve is aptitude, since this determines the amount by which other skills can be improved. Characters with high rankings in aptitude will improve all their talents faster than those with inferior aptitudes.

An exception to this rule occurs if a character's combat ability prevents him or her from hitting at least a third of the time. This is especially true if other characters don't have any problem hitting. Those who don't have this problem advance faster and faster each time, leaving the poor-shooting character forever mediocre.

After improving a character's aptitude to its maximum, think about where this particular mercenary will be used throughout the game. If the character is not going to be in the landing parties, then concentrate on ship skills. If the character will be with the landing parties, then improve combat skills.

When working on combat ratings, concentrate on firearms skill. Most weapons found in the game are firearms. Don't worry about agility just yet. It is more important to shoot accurately than to shoot quickly; it wastes less ammo. Skill levels are gained only when the character hits a target, not by just shooting at it. Once firearms skill is near or at its maximum, work on fitness, so the on-screen characters can take more hits in combat.

The robomaze on Mastassini provides the best training ground to improve characters. Before tackling the maze, go to the weapons shop and purchase a close-combat weapon for every member of the party who doesn't already possess one. In most cases, a firearm in the maze is a waste of ammo. The only exception is when a character's close-combat skill is so low that it is nearly impossible to hit. If this is the situation, use a firearm until the character's close-combat skill can be improved.

The robomaze is also a good place to practice tactics. Strategies developed in the robomaze are vital in real combat.

Through trial (and sometimes error), determine how the party positions differ when the leader moves back one or two spaces. Switching positions can protect characters who have already taken a number of hits; just let other members of the party draw the fire, while keeping the weaker members in the background.

The best way to victory in any ground combat is to simply overwhelm the enemy. That doesn't mean that the party must be all-powerful, only that the party has to be stronger than the enemy it is currently fighting. To accomplish this, when a weak, inexperienced group first enters the maze, corner a single robot and let the party demolish it. This will improve everyone's standings. Once the characters become stronger, more enemies may be engaged without much harm coming to the party.

Success in *Hard Nova* depends on honing skills and increasing each party member's warring abilities. The above strategies will certainly accomplish this goal.

—John Schnyder

The Quest to be King in The Spirit of Excalibur

VIRGIN GAMES
Versions: Amiga, IBM PC

Spirit of Excalibur places the player in England just after King Arthur's death, in the role of King Constantine. Constantine is Arthur's chosen successor, and he must reunite the kingdom over the course of five different episodes. Each of these episodes contains a series of puzzles and challenges to be overcome with knights, magicians, priests and armies.

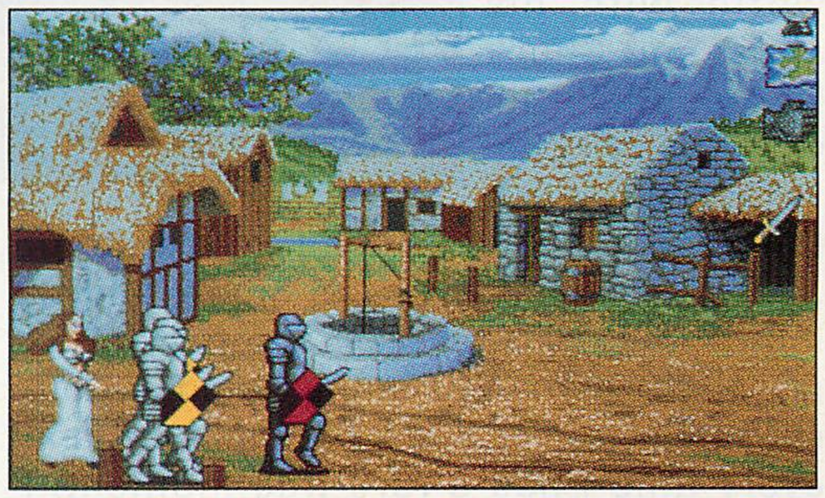
In order to choose whom to send on a quest, the player must look for clues in the instruction manual, as well as in the game itself. The manual provides hints about where to search for people and important objects. Study the booklet carefully for clues about which knight to choose for each quest. This guide definitely contains information that cannot be found in the game.

For example, in the second episode it is necessary to find Sir Lancelot. In order to start an effective search for him, the gamer must know two things that can be learned only from the manual: that Sir Bors is one of his strongest supporters and that Bors can be found at Glastonbury.

Throughout the game, King Constantine must continually improve relations with the nobles of England. Again, the best place to start is the manual. Read it, and make a list of characters that are friendly with King Constantine. When you need help, go to those characters first.

From episode to episode, constantly aim to improve relations with the nobles and to create new allies for the King. This is accomplished by some glad-handing and good deeds; send Knights of the Round Table as Constantine's envoys, to meet with the nobles and perform tasks for them.

At those times when there is no immediate use for a knight, send him to towns and other places in England to collect items that will be needed later in the game. On these collecting missions, the knight should carry some gold with him to buy things or to bribe townsfolk.



In most quests, knights should not be sent out in groups, because it can become difficult to separate them. However, it is a good idea to send several different warriors to the same place. This is done so that the knights needed to perform certain tasks won't be diverted by a maiden in distress or by enemies. The front-rank fighters may be diverted by such small tasks, but the important quest can be accomplished by those who follow. It is not always necessary to maneuver the men in this fashion, but, as a general rule, it should be done up to the point that the questing group finds its first clue.

Judicious handling of the knights, a chivalrous approach to damsels in distress and townsfolk with problems, and thoughtful assignments of warring parties will turn the hapless player into the most powerful monarch in England.

—J. S.

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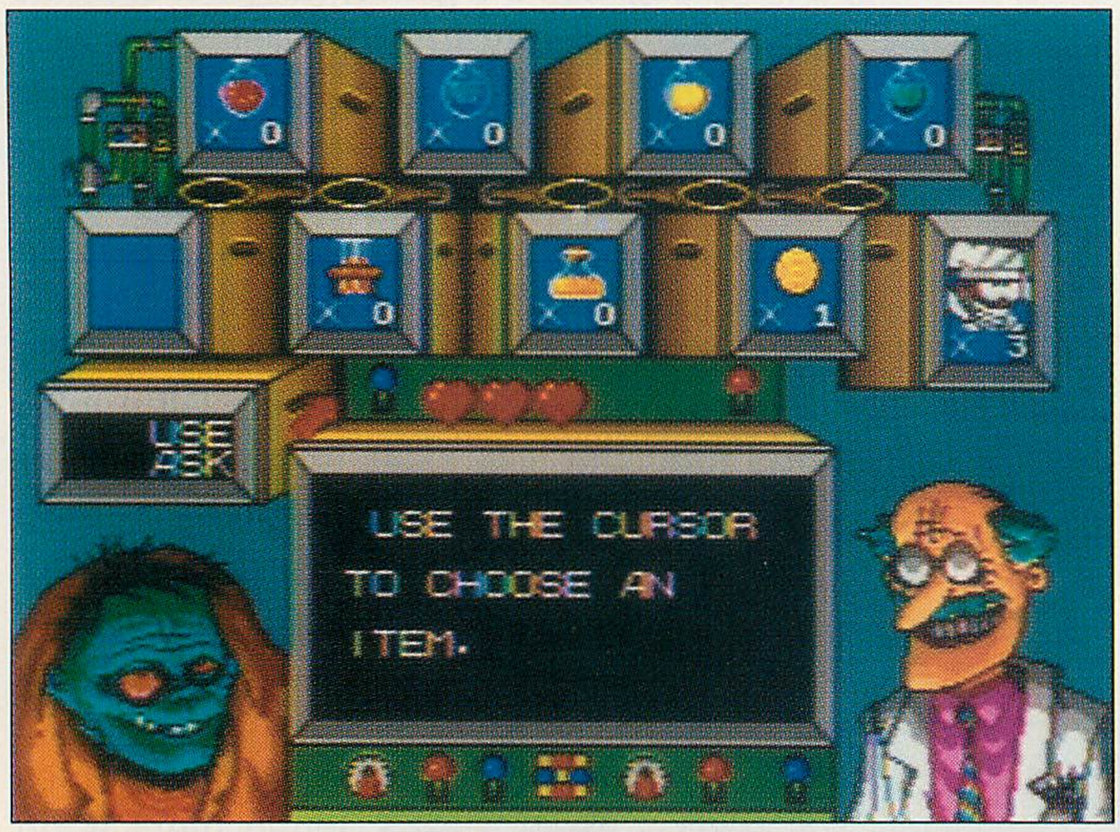

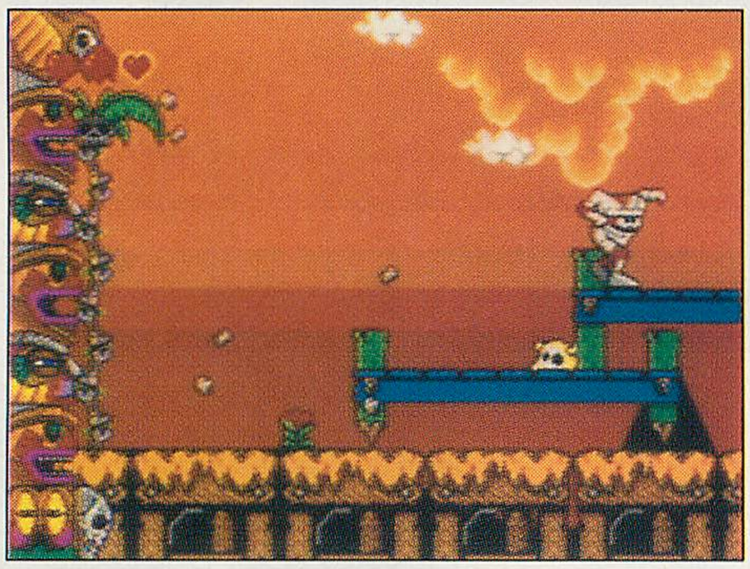

Here's the story line: An evil underworld villain by the name of Max D. Cap has emerged to conquer the surface world with his army, and Chuck D. Head is this world's only hope.

One of the first things that the gamer will notice about *DecapAttack* is the game's highly addicting degree of game play. The first time I played the game was at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show back in June, and every time I had a rare free moment, I found myself heading back to the Sega booth for more.

DecapAttack is broken up into seven different levels with three sections in each level, all of which have their own distinctive graphics and music. The player, as Chuck D. Head, traverses the screen both horizontally and vertically, while chomping and stomping on baddies. One of the most amusing things about the game is seeing Chuck's jaw come out his abdomen—remember he has no head—to take out the bad guy.

Hidden along the way in what look like statues, the gamer will find and collect up to six different potions, various power-ups, skulls (yes, Chuck does get a head—no pun intended—which can be used as a weapon), coins and other objects that are sometimes required to complete each level. At the end of the third section of each level, the gamer will encounter an end-boss that can most easily be defeated by using one of the potions. The potions will give Chuck a diversity of powers, all different, depending on the type selected. Some will wipe out all enemies in sight, some will make Chuck immune to all attacks, while others will increase Chuck's strength, speed and abilities.

DecapAttack is broken up into seven different levels, with three sections in each level.

In order to use one of the potions that Chuck has collected, the player must go to a secondary screen that looks like a mad scientist's laboratory hooked up with computer terminals. Using an on-screen pointer, the gamer can select or find out information about a certain potion. There is also an options screen at the start of the game that will allow the gamer to select the maximum number of lives (up to three) and the control-pad button combination for jump, punch and the lab-window select.

DecapAttack's graphics and sound live up to Sega's recent releases of high-quality games for the Genesis. The only gripe I had was that you can't turn off the background music while the game is in progress. Considering that the version of the game I reviewed was a preliminary, I hope that Sega eventually incorporates this feature into the final game.

DecapAttack is a fast-paced action game that picks up the slack where *Sonic* leaves off. The game never really achieves the play-speed and action that *Sonic* does, but then again, this isn't *Sonic*.

All in all, if you are a *Sonic the Hedgehog* aficionado, or at least a fan of that genre, you won't be disappointed with *DecapAttack*.

—M.D.

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Uncharted Waters

KOEI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($74.95)

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

Koei has carved a niche for itself in the NES market by sticking to one video-game genre, rather than spreading itself over several different categories. That might sound a bit chancy, but the usual Koei staple—historical war gaming—obviously has brought it success. In its newest title, *Uncharted Waters*, the company branches out from dry land into the sea.

You're the great-grandson of a former nobleman who died in a storm out at sea.

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Koei's *Uncharted Waters* places its emphasis on commerce more than war.

Since your great-grandfather's demise, your family's noble status has been stripped. Starting with one sailing ship, you set out to restore the family name by engaging in seafaring trade and commerce. It's the days of mercantilism in the 16th century, and you're a trader for Portugal.

After christening your ship, you outfit it by buying food, water and other supplies in town. Shipmates need to be hired in order to man things while out at sea. There are also shops you can go into to purchase information on trade routes and a pub to visit to hear the latest gossip. New ships are purchased at the shipyard, and it should be your goal to buy more ships to put together your own fleet.

Once everything is ready, you set sail on your maiden voyage. Navigation isn't really difficult to handle, but you do have to become used to catching the wind with your sails and reading its direction. Unfortunately, this is one spot where the real world intrudes into *Uncharted Waters*—once the wind dies, you're stuck out in the middle of the ocean. Otherwise, with the wind on your side, sailing is literally a breeze. Of course, other expected weather conditions, such as storms, pose more problems to you and your crew.

Upon docking at a destination port (anywhere from a nearby neighbor to some far-off foreign land), it's time to engage in international trade—where your profits are made. Any damaged ships of yours can be brought into the shipyard for repairs or modifications. You can even invest in the trade markets. But, depending on where you are, some investments and other activities aren't allowed unless you have the permission of the king. Getting that permission requires that you attain a higher social ranking.

Uncharted Waters features the trademark cut-and-dry play interface of Koei's. Anyone who's familiar with it knows that it's pretty simple to use, despite the moderate load of number points that must be dealt with. The game uses close-up shots of characters whom you interact with (another noticeable quality of Koei's game)—all exquisitely drawn as always, but the rest of the game's graphics look a little tired, even though they are brightly colored. Sound and music become annoying but are easily switched off with an option.

Though the emphasis this time is on commerce more than war, *Uncharted Waters* isn't too much of a deviation from Koei's other games, most of which have featured the importance of diplomacy, in fact. This type of video game, of course, is an acquired taste, but it is one worth the effort and, especially, one that can serve educational purposes as well.

—H.H.W.

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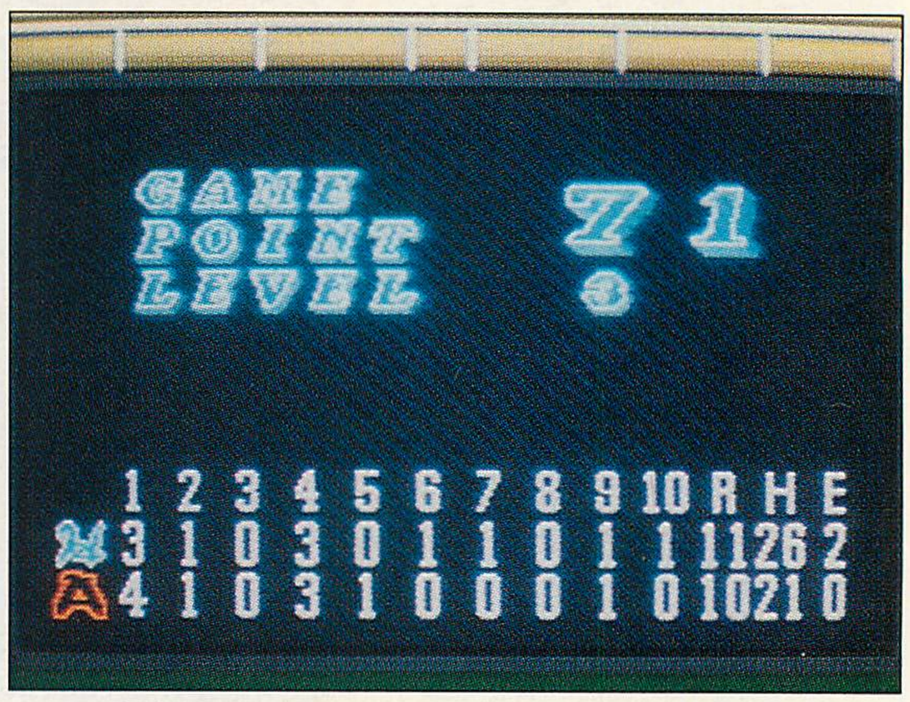
Super Bases Loaded

JALECO
For the Super NES ($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

Strike one! Strike two! Strike three...you're out! Most of us probably didn't expect it to take a long time for a baseball simulation to make its way to the SNES. As of this writing there are currently two available, and, by the time the SNES becomes obsolete, you can expect that number to be to the tenth power. After all, baseball is the most popular sport to be translated into video games.

Jaleco's endeavor might well be described as a true player's game. *Super Bases Loaded* relies on action more than a statistical foundation. Gamers have the standard choice of one- or two-player



options, plus "edit" and "watch" modes. The game's objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of play: You must attempt to play the perfect game, receiving a score of 100 points by beating a team with a rating of at least five. The player is rated in 13 categories: errors, runs forced by walks, caught stealing, over three runs an inning, etc. For every "bonehead" play, as the game states it, points will be deducted from the overall total.

The play-action is presented in two perspectives. When pitching or batting, the view is from behind the pitcher looking toward the batter. When the ball is hit or in play, a top down, over-the-field view is displayed.

There is a list of 13 teams to choose from, 12 of which are static or unmodifiable, and there is an additional team (appropriately called "edit team") that can be customized to suit individual needs. Team players' names, averages, left- or right-handed player and other player statistics/options can be modified.

Teams are not based on any real ball clubs and are all cutely named (Atlanta Amoebas, Boston Buzzards, Chicago Cyclops, just to name a few), with the exception of the modifiable edit team.

One major drawback to *Super Bases Loaded* is that there is no league or series play. After defeating several of the teams, I found it difficult to sit down to play another game without having something to strive for.

Graphically, *Super Bases Loaded* ranks pretty well among the current crop of SNES software. The animation is clean, and the player characters are well defined. There is a clear sense of depth when playing the game, and it is fairly easy to judge where the ball is in relation to the player, whether he is a batter or fielder. The only graphic imperfection was in the representation of the spectators in the stands. The crowd looked liked the static snow you see when a TV station goes off the air. C'mon guys; you can do better than that!

Jaleco's *Super Bases Loaded* is a hard-hitting, clear-cut baseball game.

Super Bases Loaded also has pretty good background music and a neat variety of digitized umpire calls and baseball-related sounds, such as the sound of a ball cracking against the bat or hitting the fence.

As a gamer, I found *Super Bases Loaded* a lot of fun to play, but, as a critic, I felt that so much more could have been done to make it a complete baseball experience. On the other hand, if you're looking for a hard-hitting, clear-cut baseball game, then *Super Bases Loaded* is for you.

—M.D.

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by the Editors of VG&CE

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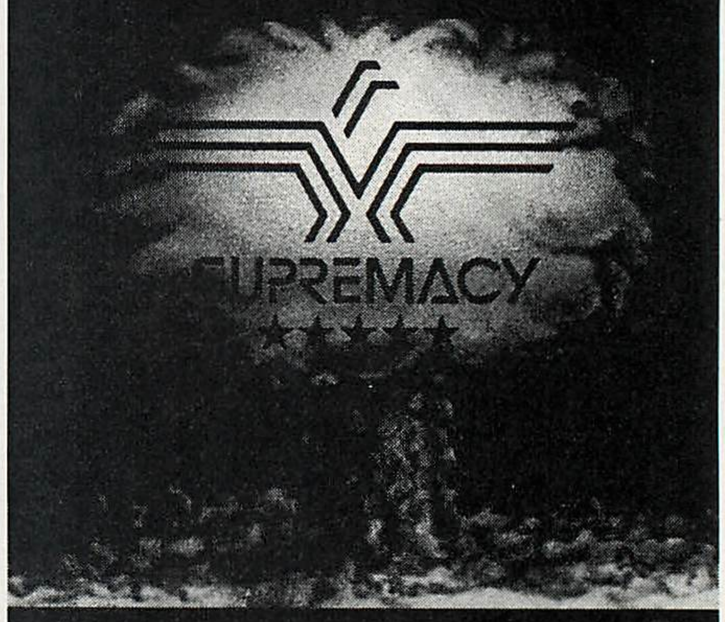

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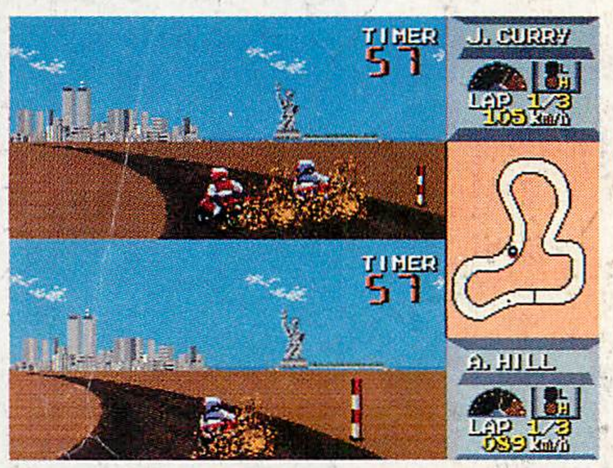

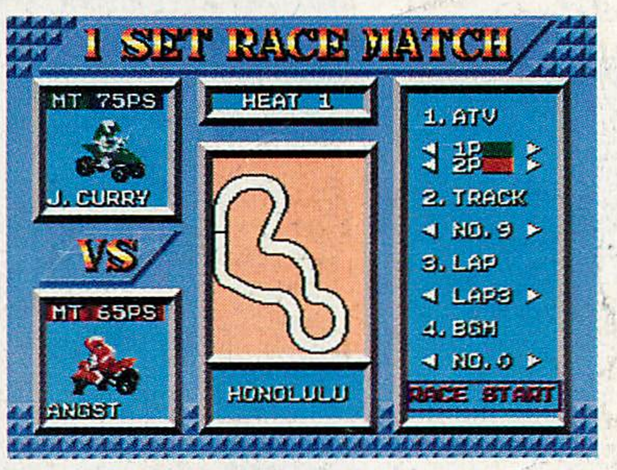

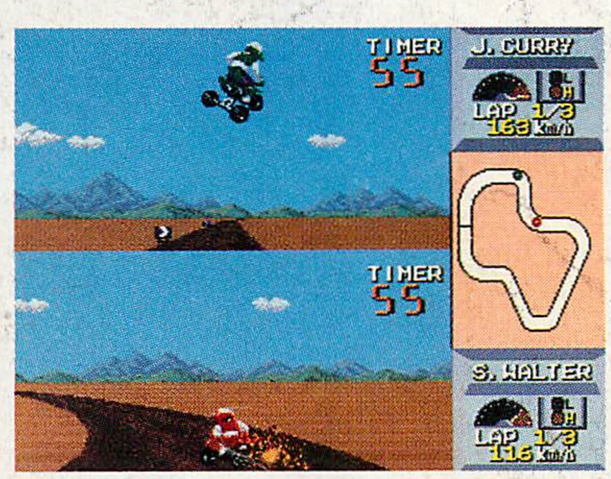

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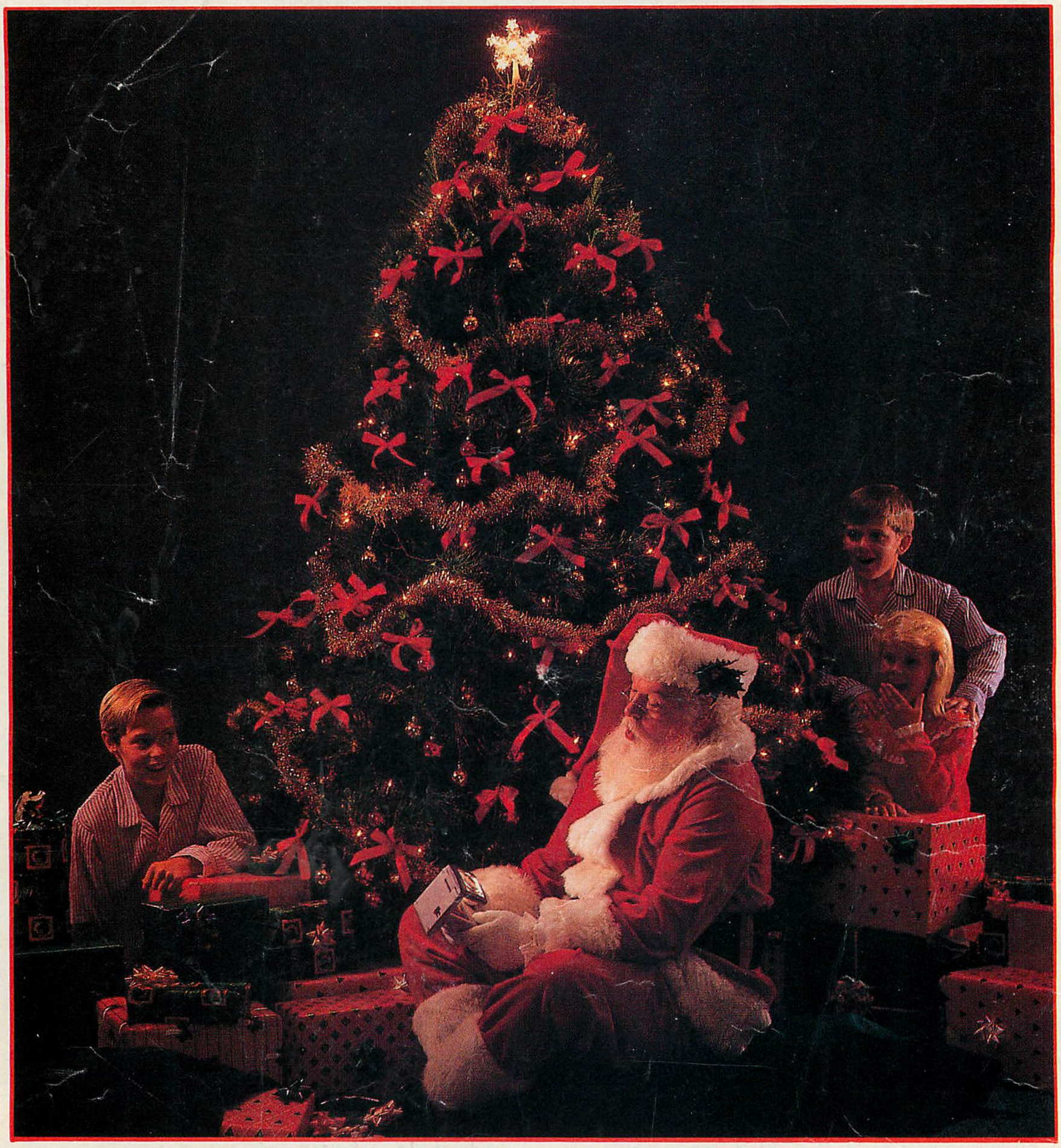

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