ZD SOFTBANK ZIFF-DAVIS

THE PREMIER MAGAZINE OF GAMING NEWS, ADVANCE PREVIEWS AND ACCURATE REVIEWS

INTELLIGENT GAMER™

Nintendo[64] • Saturn • PlayStation • M2 • Arcade • PC • Internet

Over 35 Reviews and Previews including:

- NBA Hang Time
- Virtual On
- Dark Savior
- Command & Conquer: Red Alert and more!

Plus the Most Up-to-Date 1997 Games Release List

8 ISSUE

JANUARY 1997
$4.99 USA
$6.50 CANADA

01>
0 70992 37356 7

Dragon Force

SONY'S PLAYSTATION EXPO '96-'97 ■ BUYING IMPORT GAMES ■ NINTENDO'S 64DD ADD-ON

■ Revelations: Persona ■ Sonic 3D Blast ■ Albert Odyssey
■ Magic Knight Rayearth ■ Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey
■ Bug Too! ■ NBA in the Zone ■ Virtua Cop 2
■ Twisted Metal 2: World Tour

Last-Minute Update:

Shoshinkai '96

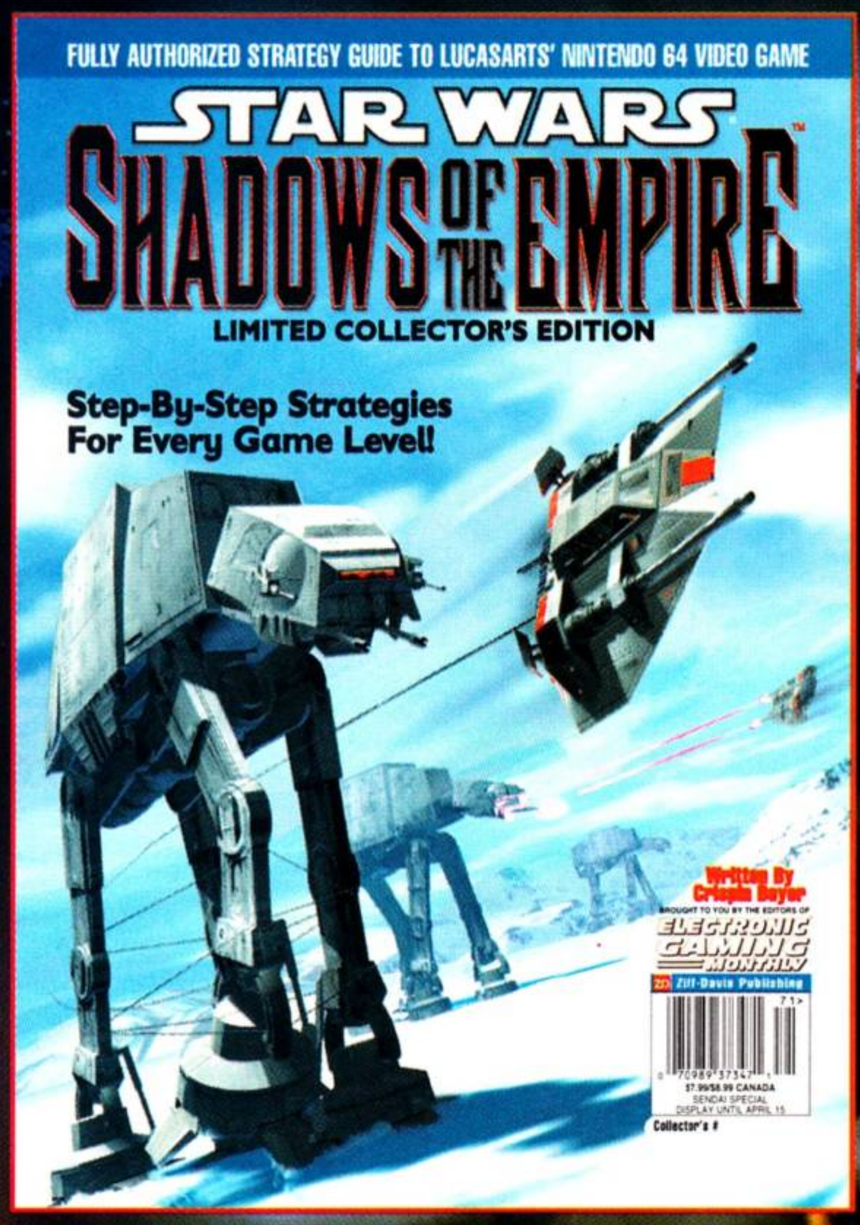
The Latest News from Nintendo's Annual Game Exhibition in Japan

The World of Magic Comes Alive In Working Designs' New Strategy Epic

THE ONLY MUST-HAVE STRATEGY MAGAZINE

BEHIND-THE-SCENES GAME ART! PLUS PLAYING TIPS FROM THE GAME DEVELOPERS!

GAME BUSTING TIPS!



Take a behind-the-screens journey into the most anticipated *Star Wars* project this year, Shadows of the Empire, for the Nintendo[64] game system! If you love *Star Wars* and want to see everything hidden in the Shadows game, this is the magazine for you!

ALL CHALLENGE POINTS REVEALED!

HOW TO DEFEAT EVERY CUNNING LEVEL BOSS!

EVERYTHING YOU MUST KNOW!

Available At:
Target WalMart K mart Electronics Boutique
Crown Books Barnes & Noble Waldenbooks B. Dalton

KONAMI XXL SPORTS SERIES™

NBA

SOME PLAY AT A HIGHER LEVEL

HIGHER RESOLUTION GRAPHICS

18 DIFFERENT DUNK SHOTS

FULL SEASON AND PLAYOFF MODES

STAMINA FACTOR

348 NBA PLAYERS

SUBSTITUTIONS

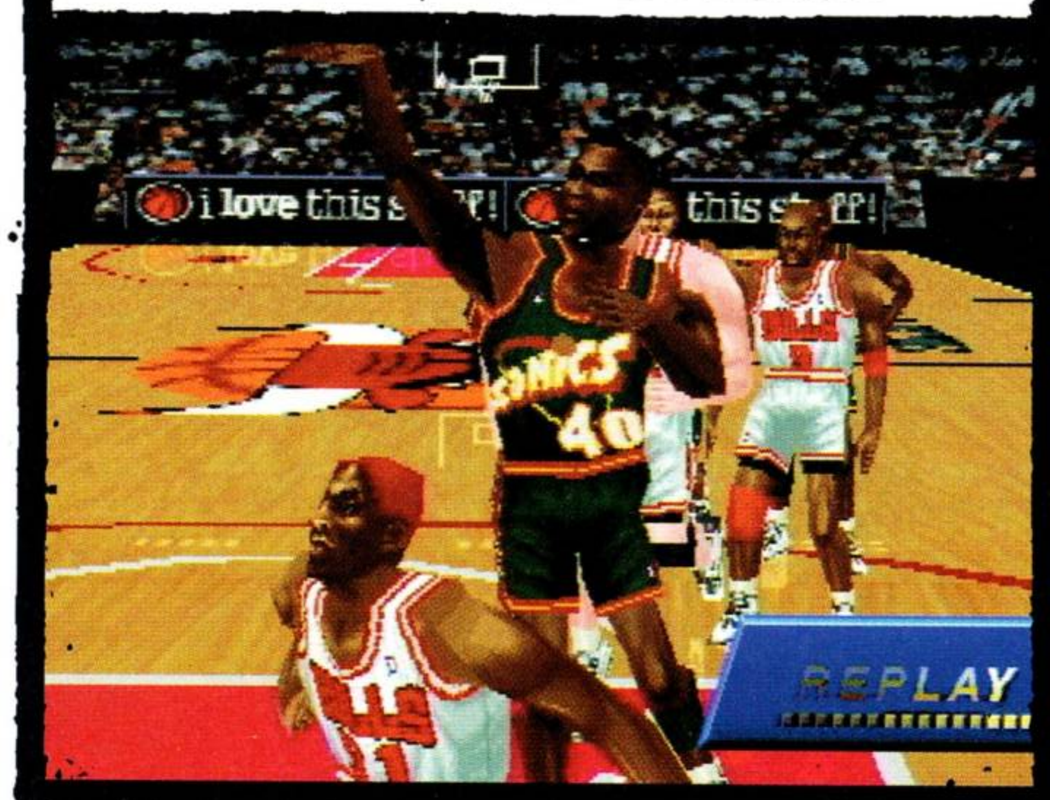
PUMP FAKES

FOULS

CREATE YOUR OWN PLAYER

NO TRADING LIMITS

FULL 12-MAN ROSTERS



"NBA IN THE ZONE 2"

ALL 29 NBA TEAMS

INTUITIVE CROWD REACTIONS

POST PLAYS

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

OFFICIAL NBA LICENSED PRODUCT

PlayStation

www.konami.com

KONAMI®

The NBA and individual NBA Team identifications used on or in this product are trademarks, copyrighted designs and other forms of intellectual property of NBA Properties, Inc., and the respective member teams and may not be used, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of NBA Properties, Inc. © 1996 NBA Properties, Inc. All rights reserved.
KONAMI SPORTS SERIES™ is a trademark of Konami (America) Inc. Konami is a registered trademark of Konami Co., Ltd. All rights reserved © 1996 Konami (America) Inc. PlayStation™ and the PlayStation™ logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

id: anthology

THE LOST GAMES. THE RECENT HITS. THE BOOK. THE LIMITED EDITION COLLECTIBLES.

Catholic
Protestant
Jewish
Hindu
Other X

Id Anthology™ ©1996 Id Software, Inc. Published by Id Software, Inc. Distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. All trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

www.idsoftware.com

Distributed by
GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com

Bring On The RPGs

With our cover story being Dragon Force, the wonderful new simulation-RPG by Working Designs, perhaps now would be a good time to talk about the current RPG situation in the U.S., which is, well, slow to say the least.

As many of you are well aware, some of the biggest and best RPGs released in Japan have never made their way to the U.S., for various (completely unacceptable) reasons. The most notorious of course is what many agree as one of the best RPGs ever created, Square's Final Fantasy V. Released in 1992, this 16 Megabit wonder (at the time it was the largest Super Famicom game available) was scheduled to be released in the U.S. under the title of "Final Fantasy Extreme" because the game was considered to be extremely tough compared to the rest of the series (it wasn't tough, it was just complex—but to bonehead company bigwigs, that means it's too much for the fickle-minded American consumer). Anyway, the game went through various stages of development but never made it here, ultimately being canned (along with the sequel to Secret of Mana) so Square could instead work on the American-made Secret of Evermore, which remains one of the poorest excuses for an action-RPG ever. This infuriated RPGers to no end, causing a number of letter-writing campaigns (*EGM²* even tried to ignite one in their RPG special a year or two ago) that all ended up failing. Afterward, the Super NES went on to see its share of RPGs, but in comparison to what was released in Japan, the U.S. got maybe 5 percent of the amount of good RPGs released over there.

Now, the Super NES is well on its way to retirement, and the next-generation wars are beginning to heat up, and yet still, after all this time, after all the demands from gamers (according to a recent survey, RPGs are second in popularity only to fighting games in the U.S.), we're still not getting hardly any role-playing games ported from Japan. What I want to know is WHY. Yes, we know that generally it takes a long time to translate the huge amounts of text associated with RPGs, and sometimes that results in slightly inflated development costs, but still—if sales figures from recent RPGs are any indication, then this "harrowing" process should be well worth it for the end result. Look at Super Mario RPG—the game did tremendously well when it was released in May and as of this writing (November) it's still on retail top-10 lists nationwide. Even Beyond the Beyond, one of the weakest RPGs we've seen in quite some time, was spotted on several top-10 lists during the first few weeks of its release in September.

So if RPGs are in such demand, why aren't we seeing more of them here? If it weren't for Working Designs, who picked up the rights to several popular Japanese RPGs for the Saturn, and Konami, who are porting their two great epics from Japan, Suikoden and Vandal Hearts to the PlayStation, we'd have virtually nothing coming our way in the next few months. Sure we'll see Final Fantasy VII but—and I'll take a LOT of heat for saying this but those who have been with the series from the beginning know it's true—the series pales in comparison to what it was in the late years of the Famicom and the early years of the Super Famicom. Other than that, we have a few first-party games from Sega (which are quite good, but too few and far between), and so far one from Sony (the other, Arc the Lad, was cancelled), and we're left with enough good role-players to last perhaps a month out of the entire year.

Now that I've vented (it felt good, really), I suppose the only thing left to do is to say to those game companies who have the opportunity to bring over RPGs from Japan—do it! So many gamers here will never have the satisfaction of having played great games like Dragon Quest V and VI, Final Fantasy V, the Romancing Saga series, Fire Emblem, and Tactics Ogre, and if game companies don't wake up now and start porting more 32-Bit RPGs, yet another generation of great games will go unnoticed because of lazy programmers or unknowledgeable marketing people. Frankly, this industry just doesn't need that.

—John Ricciardi, Senior Editor

INTELLIGENT GAMER

January, 1997

Volume 1, Number 8

A ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY PERIODICAL

Publisher	*Jonathan Lane*
Editorial Director	*Joe Funk*
Creative Director	*Michael Stassus*
Senior Editor	*John Ricciardi*
Managing Editor	*Dean Hager*
Associate Editor	*Kraig Kujawa*
Contributing Editors	*Sergei Aish, Peter Bartholow, Kelly Bradley, Steve Kent, Brian Goss, Mark MacDonald, Brian Osserman, Lee Saito*
Foreign Correspondent	*Akira Kishimoto*
Senior Art Director	*Rey Ledda*
Art Director	*John W. Ritter*
Managing Copy Editor	*Jennifer Whitesides*
Senior Copy Editor	*Dan Peluso*
Copy Editors	*Jo-El Damen, Mark Eleveld*
Production Director	*Marc Camron*
Pre-Press Manager	*Dave McCracken*
Assoc. Pre-Press Manager	*Jack Copley*
Advertising Coordinator	*Mike Darling*
Network Manager	*Pam Schneider*
Assoc. Client Serv. Specialist	*Mark LeFebvre*
Single-Copy Sales Director	*Joan McInerney*
Advertising and Marketing Advertising Inquiries Contact:	*Sendai Media Group 1920 Highland Avenue Lombard, IL 60148 telephone: 630•916•7222 fax: 630•916•7227*
Assoc. Publisher (also East Coast)	*Jennie Parker*
Account Executive	*Marc Callison*
District Sales Manager Northwest	*Jon Yoffie 135 Main Street, 15th floor San Francisco, CA 94105*
District Sales Manager Southwest	*Karen Landon 11766 Wilshire BLVD., Ste. 1550 Los Angeles, CA 90025*
Marketing Coordinator	*Amy Dellos*
Consumer Media Group President	*J. Scott Briggs*
Executive Director, Research	*Randy Cohen*
Business Manager	*Cynthia Mason*
Creative Services Manager	*Terri Rawson*
Assistant to the President	*Francesca Koe*
Special Thanks	*Marty Chinn, Chris Johnston, David Zdyrko, Victor Ireland, and the New York Yankees!!!*

INTELLIGENT GAMER (ISSN #1088-6737) is published monthly by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Single issue rates: $4.99. The Canadian GST registration number is 14049 6720 RT. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Without limiting the rights under copyrights reserved herein, no part of this publication be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written approval of the publisher. © 1996, Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturer's change and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. INTELLIGENT GAMER is a trademark of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. TM and © for all other products and the characters contained therein are owned by the respective trademark and copyright holders. Good-bye everyone... We'll be back soon... PRINTED IN THE USA.

NFL™

Offensive Coordinator.

A back-breaking,

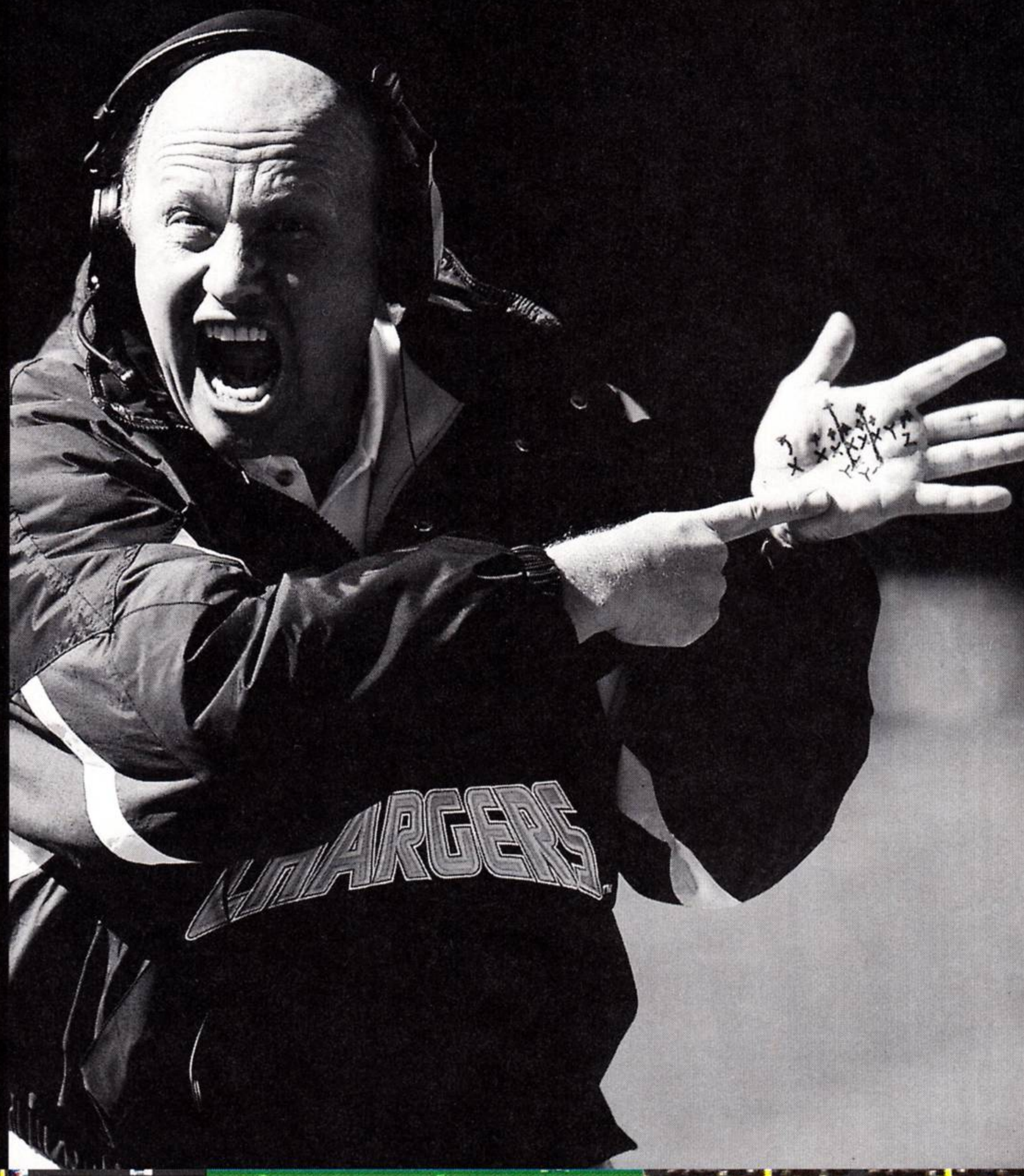
pressure-filled,

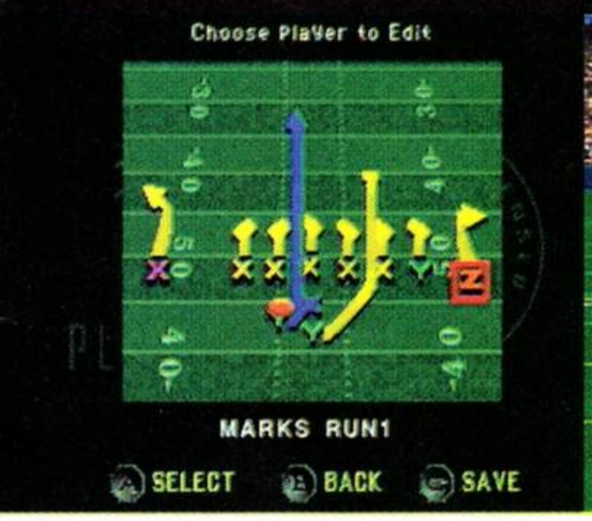
tension-soaked,

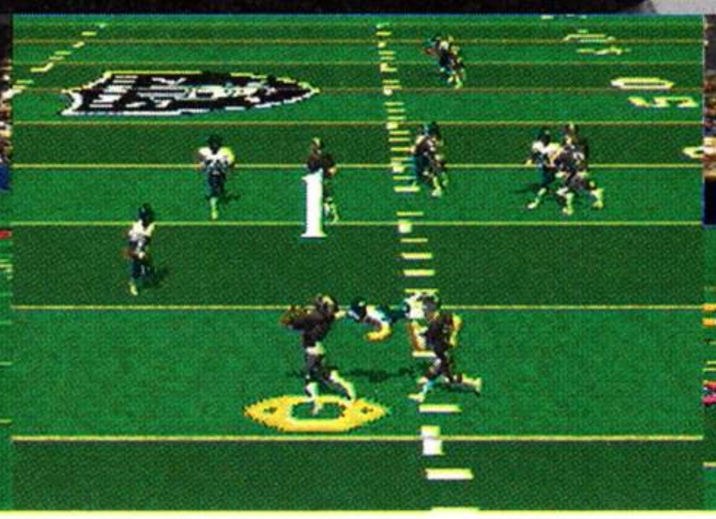
utterly frustrating and

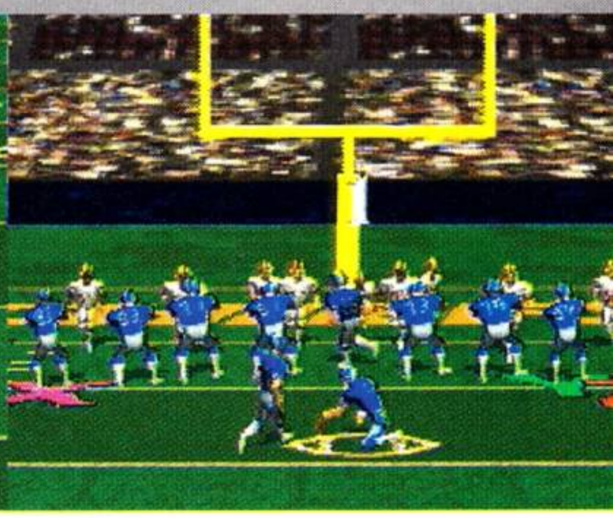
entirely thankless job.

And it's all yours.









NFL '97's exclusive Play Editor feature lets you design your own plays and run them with any offense in the NFL.
So you're offensive coordinator, you're head coach, you're in charge of all 1,500 NFL players. Now all you need is the game.
Sega Sports™ NFL '97. Play football like real football players play football. Only on Sega Saturn.™

NFL'97

SEGA SPORTS™

www.sega.com

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1 TO 8 PLAYERS

1 to 2 player game unless used with 6player adaptor

SEGA SATURN OFFICIAL SEGA EXCLUSIVE

PLAYERS INC

OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCT NFL

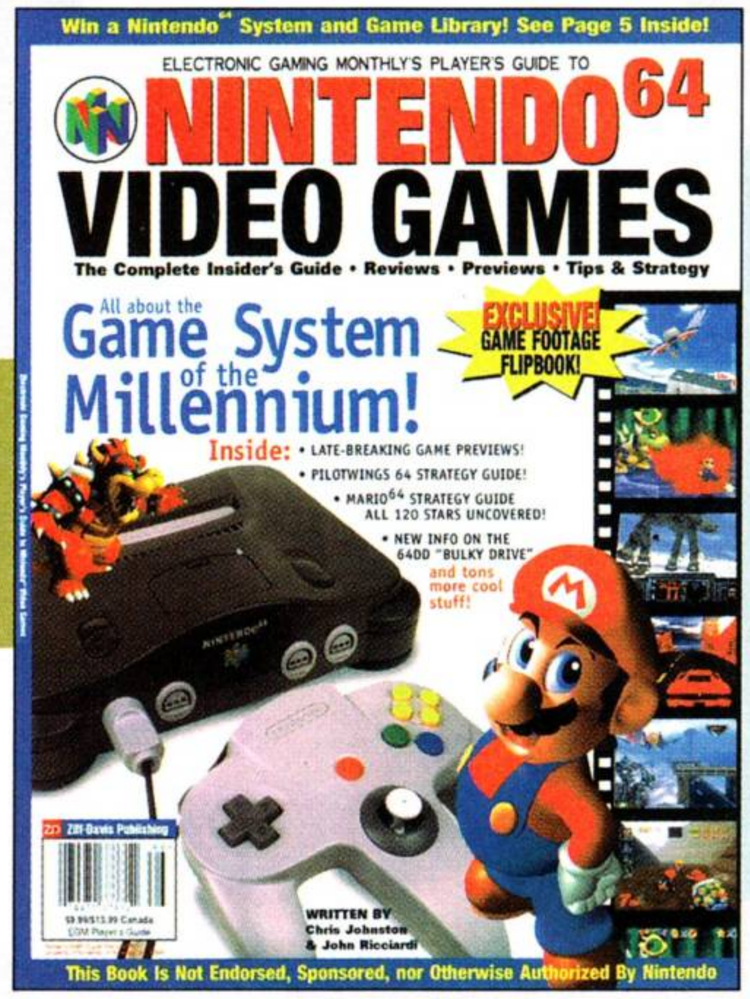
Sega is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Sega Saturn and Sega Sports are trademarks of SEGA. ©1996 SEGA, P.O. Box 8097, Redwood City, CA 94063. All rights reserved.
NFL team names, logos, helmet designs and uniform designs are registered trademarks of the team indicated. NFL and Super Bowl are registered trademarks of the NFL. Sega is officially licensed by NFL Properties, Inc. Sega is licensed by NFL Players ©1996 PLAYERS INC.

Available at Newsstands Everywhere!

Inside The Nintendo64

It's Finally Here!

Electronic Gaming Monthly's Player's Guide to Nintendo64 Video Games is the most complete and up-to-date guide available for Nintendo64 fans, with extensive game coverage, hot information and tons of cool previews!



Get yours today!

Whether you plan on purchasing a Nintendo64 the first day it hits the streets or if you plan to wait and see what the system will offer, this is the book for you!

PLUS you get a 32-page game-busting walk-through for Super Mario64 and a complete strategy guide to PilotWings 64, as well as a chance to win a Nintendo64 system and games by entering our exclusive N64 contest inside! Get yours today!

SOFTBANK ZIFF-DAVIS

ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING

CHAIRMAN AND CEO	*Eric Hippeau*
President, U.S. Publications	*Ronni Sonnenberg*
President, Interactive Media and Development Group	*Jeffrey Ballowe*
President, International Media Group	*J.B. Holston III*
President, Computer Intelligence/Infocorp	*Bob Brown*
President, Training and Support Publishing Group	*William Rosenthal*
Vice President, Chief Financial Officer	*Timothy O'Brien*
Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary	*J. Malcolm Morris*
Vice President, Human Resources	*Rayna Brown*
Vice President, Planning	*Darryl Otte*
Vice President, Production	*Roger Herrmann*
Vice President, Controller	*Mark Moyer*
Treasurer	*Thomas L. Wright*

U.S. PUBLICATIONS GROUP

President, U.S. Publications	*Ronni Sonnenberg*
President, Business Media Group	*Claude Sheer*
President, Consumer Media Group	*J. Scott Briggs*
Senior Vice President, Circulation	*Baird Davis*
Senior Vice President, Consumer Advertising	*Lawrence C. Burstein*
Vice President, Business Manager	*Tom McGrade*
Vice President, Marketing Services	*Jim Manning*
Vice President, Central Advertising Sales	*Bob Bader*
Vice President, Product Testing	*Mark Van Name*
Vice President, Circulation Services	*James F. Ramaley*
Vice President	*Don Byrnes*
Vice President	*Al DiGuido*
Vice President	*Daniel Farber*
Vice President	*Michael Miller*
Vice President	*Daniel Rosenweig*
Vice President	*Paul Somerson*
Executive Director, Licensing	*Gertrud Borchardt*
Director, ZD Labs	*Bob Kane*
Director, Benchmark Operation	*Bill Catchings*
Ziff-Davis Magazine Network Vice President/ Managing Director	*Joe Gillespie*
Executive Director	*Alicia Saribalis*
Marketing Director	*Mike Perkowski*
Directors	*Ken Beach, Michael Bird, Jeff Bruce, Kelly Lowman, Debbie Moss, Julie Tuttle, Melinda Maginn*

INTERACTIVE MEDIA AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

President	*Jeffrey Ballowe*
Executive Vice President	*David Shnaider*
Vice President, Business Development	*Tom Thompson*
Vice President, General Manager ZD Net	*James Savage*
Vice President, ZDTV	*Richard Fisher*
Vice President, Creative Services	*Herbert Stern*
Vice President, Research	*Elda Vale*
Editorial Director, New Products	*Bill Machrone*
Group Business Manager	*Jocelyn Grayson*
Director, Public Relations	*Gregory Jarboe*

Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, A SOFTBANK Company

CONTENTS

ISSUE 08 JANUARY 1997

44 Feature Review:
Dragon Force
Working Designs lets loose one of the most enjoyable strategy games ever to hit a home game system.

22 Overseas Feature:
PlayStation Expo '96-'97
Get the lowdown on what's up and coming for the PlayStation as *IG* travels to the PlayStation Expo in Japan.

26 Consumer Feature:
Buying Import Games
Ever wonder what it'd be like to get your hands on all of the hot games that never hit the U.S? Read here to learn how.

14 News Update:
Shoshinkai '96
Get the lowdown on Zelda 64, the 64DD and more from our last-minute update on Nintendo's Shoshinkai Show!

Previews

26 NBA Hang Time
32 Dark Savior
34 Command & Conquer
36 Magic Knight Rayearth
38 Albert Odyssey: Legend of Eldean
40 Test Drive: Off-Road
41 Scud: The Disposable Assassin

Reviews at a Glance

78 A summary of the ratings given to games reviewed in past issues of *IG*, plus five new minireviews.

06 Editorial
12 Communications
14 News
28 New Releases
80 Nostalgia

Reviews

48 Twisted Metal 2: World Tour
50 Virtual On
52 Ten Pin Alley
53 Virtua Cop 2
54 NBA In The Zone
55 Daytona USA: Championship Circuit Edition
56 Revelations: Persona
57 Psychic Force
58 NFL '97
59 Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey
60 Tunnel B1
61 Virtual Pool
62 Sonic 3D Blast
63 Robotron X
64 FIFA 97
65 Bug Too!
66 C&C: Red Alert
68 MK Trilogy
70 NBA Jam Extreme
71 Area 51
72 Project: X2
74 Langrisser III
75 Sexy Parodius
76 TokiMemo Puzzle Ball

This month's cover comes to us courtesy of Working Designs/SEGA of Japan.

ig

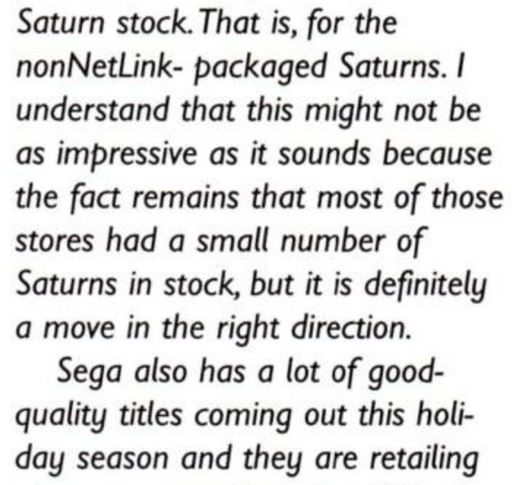
Hey! It's a new year!

First of all, I would like to commend the editors of your fine mag, as it is without a doubt one of the few magazines that is written by true gamers. What Intelligent Gamer *lacks in size, it makes up for it with well-written and unbiased editorials, previews and reviews.*

I personally own all three major "next-gen" systems. I must say that while I enjoy all three, I have a particular liking for my Saturn. The reason for this is that I am a huge fan of Sega's arcade titles and a devoted fan of the RPGs brought over to us by Working Designs. The reason that I am writing this letter is to ask you your opinion on the latest industry "belief" that the Saturn is dying and that 1997 will be the Saturn's last hurrah in the U.S.

While the Saturn's future does seem in jeopardy, I feel that there is still time for Sega to save it. First of all, the three-game pack-in deal has given some new life to Saturn sales. I haven't conducted a full nationwide study, but from polling about a dozen retailers, I have found that in the first four days of the special pack-in deal, most places sold out of their entire Saturn stock. That is, for the nonNetLink- packaged Saturns. I understand that this might not be as impressive as it sounds because the fact remains that most of those stores had a small number of Saturns in stock, but it is definitely a move in the right direction.

Sega also has a lot of good-quality titles coming out this holiday season and they are retailing at very reasonable prices. Virtual On, Virtua Cop 2, Daytona CCE and Sonic 3D Blast are all selling for $49.99. That's their MSRP, so you can find them for even less at discount outlets. Sega only needs to learn how to market games more effectively; they seem to be going at this with their guns blazing as MTV is currently being bombarded with Sega ads and a Sega infomercial, but some people see this as a last-ditch effort for a dying system. It does show though, that if Sega's going down, they'll go fighting.



Will the NetLink be Sega's guiding light, or will it cap their doom?

What will either be Sega's ace in the hole or their nail in the coffin, so to speak, is the NetLink. While there currently is very little advertising for it, and there are no games for use with it, Sega claims that they plan to launch a huge campaign for it in early 1997. Sega has also said that they plan to showcase its use for playing games. If they do this and there are enough games that support the NetLink, it might really take off. Of course, all this depends on Sega.

I really believe that this war is not over. Sega is losing, but I believe that they have some fight left in them. They are still strong in Japan, and with games like FIGHTER'S MEGAMiX and the other AM2 surprise game, they have a chance to reclaim the lead in Japan over the PlayStation. Their chances of winning the war in the U.S. may be slim to none, but they do have what it takes to make a run for it. The only question is whether or not they'll actually do what it takes.

Dave Zdyrko
Via the Internet

[Ed.: Boy oh boy, I could go on for several hours about this one, but for space reasons, I'll try to stay focused. Everyone is a little disappointed with Sega of America. They've got no one to blame for the mess they're in but themselves. They've got some great games, but their marketing efforts are weak compared to Sony's. And some of their decisions are questionable. Why release Daytona CCE when it's not even finished yet in Japan? And why not make it compatible with the NetLink? Why bother releasing terrible sports games like NFL '97 when the opposition has shown such a vast superiority in that department? Well, Sega's never been heralded for making wise decisions (releasing the 32X and surprise launching the Saturn were probably two of the worst maneuvers in gaming history), but to say that they're dying might be a bit premature. They've got a bit of traditional, and great games on the way. Assuming they start releasing games that work with the NetLink, the unit could really take off. If we sound a bit harsh, forgive us, but as staunch supporters of Sega and the Saturn, it's a bit disappointing to be confronted with the reality that the system is only doing about a 10th as well as it could be. Hopefully that'll all change before it's too late.]

IG OVERSEAS FEATURE

IG's Akira Kishimoto reports on the awesome first annual

TOKYO GAME SHOW

IG was on hand to check out the very first Tokyo Game Show, held in Makuhari, Tokyo from Aug. 22 to 25. The show was sponsored by CESA, the Computer Entertainment Software Association, a group devoted to promoting the growth of video-game in the entertainment field. Some of the distinguished members of this group include the producers of Konami, Enix, Square, Capcom and Namco, to name a few. In fact, most of the major software developers in Japan are members of the group, with the only notable exception being the major companies who have their own hardware platforms (namely Nintendo, Sega and Sony). Formerly the most trade show in Japan for consumer interactive was the mid-annual Consumer Software Group (CSG) show, but like CES, its popularity waned and now a new force in trade show has emerged (just like E3 did here in the United States).

The show was held at a place called Tokyo Big Sight, which is a new convention complex near the heart of Tokyo, near Sega's Joypolis amusement complex. Over 100,000 people were in attendance, with huge crowds lined up outside the entrance before the show opened on the first day, just getting tickets, which sold for roughly ¥1,000, meant waiting in line for nearly an hour, and there were scalpers selling tickets on the street for about double to triple the normal rate. Seeing how bad the situation was outside, you can probably imagine just how hectic it was inside the convention center.

Even with all the madness, you didn't find any one complaining, with 67 hardware and software companies on the floor showcasing over 350 titles for the Saturn, PlayStation, Nintendo 64, and Windows and Mac platforms. Of all the platforms there, the one with the most games was the PlayStation, with over 160 games. Admittedly, the amount of Nintendo 64 software titles was limited (in total, between Nintendo 64 and Super Famicom, there were less than 50 games), but the games that companies did show were looking quite impressive.

NINTENDO 64

The absence of Nintendo at the show certainly left an impact on many people. Sega and Sony Computer Entertainment, which not part of the CESA group, did at least have their own booth showing of upcoming titles. A strong Nintendo presence at the show might have gone a long way in reassuring gamers that Nintendo is still strong and is going to continue releasing the market-leading software that Japanese (and U.S., for that matter) gamers have come to expect from them. With them in the industry do make that Nintendo is deeply holding all until their own show, the annual Shoshinkai exhibition held in November, the average game player may not. Likewise, it might not have been so bad if there were more third-party games on display, but even those were limited, or there were only about 12 or 15 N64 games at the show.

KONAMI SHOWS OFF N64 GAMES

Konami had five never-before-seen Nintendo 64 games to wow the crowds with: Goeman 5 (Legend of the Mystical Ninja in the U.S.), Ninja Powerful Pro Baseball 4 (Baseball with super-deformed players), Ninja J-League Perfect Striker (Sequel to Fighting 11, one of the best soccer games ever made), Ninja Golf Tournament '97 (Golf... yawn) and Mahjong Master (zzz...). The three games shown here were the most impressive. U.S. release anyone?

Goemon 5's the latest in the Mystical Ninja game series.

Powerful Pro-4 continues the Japanese brand of 3D play.

Konami's Soccer is only their second polygon game in Japan.

INTELLIGENT GAMER 11•96

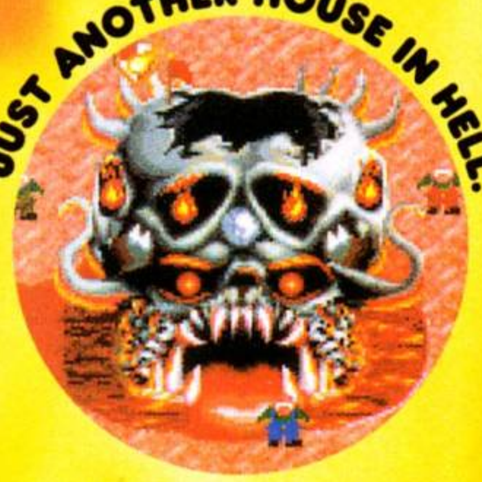
Dan Bender wants to know why there's such a lack of information on the M2, which wasn't shown at the Tokyo Game Show this year. Frankly, so do we.

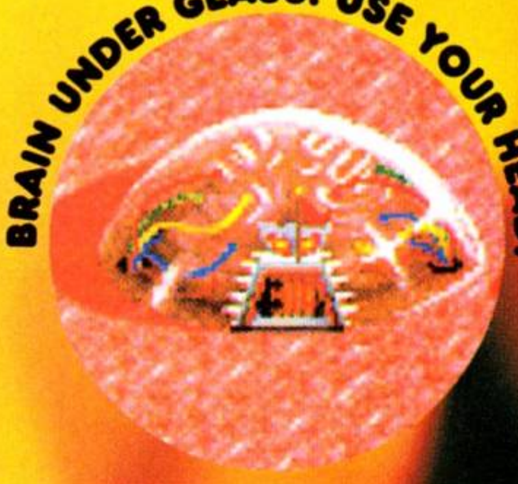
Sega should've spent more time with NFL '97 before releasing it to a market where games like Madden 97 and GameDay '97 are eating up the competition.

I enjoyed your informative review of the Tokyo Game Show in your last issue. It was very well-formatted and provided all the information that the well-informed gamer needs. I do have a couple of questions. First, I was under the impression that Matsushita was FINALLY going to have some M2 prototypes available to PLAY (as in fully interactive) for the Japanese show. Since it wasn't mentioned in your article, I assume it didn't happen. Do you have any insight on this? Also, what is this rumor of a 64-Bit PlayStation II being available by the end of '97? Great mag!!

Dan Bender
Via the Internet

[Ed.: Matsushita has been relatively quiet in regard to the M2 lately, but sources close to *IG* say the machine will surface sometime in early '97, but not necessarily in the form that most expect. Make of that what you will. As for the PlayStation II, well, eventually there will be a more advanced piece of gaming hardware from Sony, but currently there is no need to release new hardware, as it would only cut into Sony's very prosperous 32-Bit sales. Maybe more toward the end of the century we'll see something new.]





BLOW UP COWS, EAT GOLDFISH, THEN GO TO HELL.

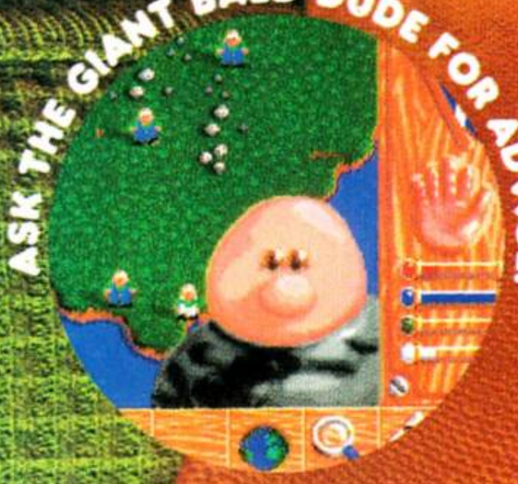
This is the bizarre world of Baldies. A world that you build and where lunacy reigns. The idea? Destroy the nasty little hairy guys before they destroy you–the Baldies. 15 devilishly clever weapons, 100 intense levels, hidden and bonus rounds, hot action graphics in five weird worlds (hell included). And it's the only multi-player, extended-play game with a chrome dome crew. Warning: May cause permanent hair loss.

Baldies™

TOTALLY DEMENTED ACTION FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK.

PLAY in ONLINE
http://www.inngames.com

CD ROM
Both DOS and Windows® 95 included.



Panasonic®
Interactive Media
http://www.panasonic.com/cool/

©1996 Panasonic Interactive Media Company. Baldies is a registered trademark of Creative Edge Software Limited. INN is a copyright of the ImagiNation Network™. Windows 95 is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

I originally was going to write my congressman to discuss some of my political concerns, but decided this was far more important. First, it seems like there's some confusion as to what Sony's slogan "Enos Lives" means. I think it's fairly obvious. All you have to do is spell Enos backward and you get SonE. Get it? All they're doing is substituting the "y" with an "E" as in "You are not ready (with a red E)."" Or you can rearrange the letters even further to come up with SonE's Evil, which I'm sure Sega and Nintendo would agree on. I expect a Nintendo 64 for unlocking this mystery.

As to why 32-Bit hasn't reached the sales level of 16-Bit: It hasn't been around as long. The argument that video game consoles have had a decreasing shelf life isn't really true when you consider that the Atari, Intellivision and ColecoVision were not in existence nearly as long as the NES, Master System, Genesis or SNES.

Concerning the Nintendo 64, I have to admit I was skeptical about it at first. But that changed as soon as I was able to try it at the local toy and electronic stores. People level a number of criticisms at it but I don't know if the arguments against it are justified. The games have proven to be better than anything available for the 32-Bit systems, and I don't feel the extra 10 to 15 dollars you pay for the games is bad at all when you get higher-quality games.

The CDs vs. carts debate is relevant as far as memory available for RPGs and things like voice and full-motion video. But look at how many people complain about FMV. Hopefully the Bulky Drive will take care of the other problems.

You have to remember that the N64, while being the last of the next-generation systems, is the first 64-Bit. This puts Sony and Sega in the risky position of alienating their fans by introducing a new system.

Well, thanks for your time.

Erin Hoffman
St. Paul, MN

[Ed.: We appreciate all the hard work you put into solving the mystery of the Enos, and because of that, we'll make sure not to tell you that we've known that for months. As for the 32-Bit vs. 16-Bit issue, you need to also realize that the next-gen systems haven't yet reached the mass-market selling point that the 16-Bit systems did ($150 or cheaper). Give them another year or so, and someone's bound to hit it. Otherwise, thanks for your comments.]

Many gamers, like Erin Hoffman, had their doubts about the N64 totally erased once they got the chance to try out the games. Now, if only Nintendo could start cranking out more games faster...

What's up with the Saturn and its lack of RPGs? Since day one of owning the machine, I have dreamed of the day I would see some really amazing RPGs on the system. I read in an interview with Yu Suzuki in one of those OTHER mags that Sega was going to really concentrate on RPGs now because they realized that's what was lacking on the Genesis and why the Super Famicom did so well in Japan. Well, now the Saturn is out and yet another Sega machine is lacking in RPGs. What I would like to know is, does Sega ever plan on REALLY changing this "policy" and bringing out some RPGs in the U.S.?

Chris Noel
Via the Internet

[Ed.: Sega did in fact state that they were going to concentrate on RPGs, but that was in Japan. Over there, there are many very cool Saturn RPGs out, with new ones being released each month (and a whole slew of them hitting in November and December), but here in the States, Sega seems to be spending more time worrying about other genres of games, ones that they aren't nearly as proficient in, than they are on their Japanese RPGs. Fortunately, Working Designs has picked up a few of the big-name RPGs from Japan, but there are so many there now, and WD is so understaffed, that if someone else capable doesn't start porting more Japanese RPGs, we may end up never seeing some truly amazing games. And it's safe to say that after we missed so many great Super Famicom RPGs, most gamers don't want to be faced with the situation of having to import to get the games they want again.]

Sega's RPG scene is not as bright as they may have foretold that it would be, but fortunately, things aren't too grim. Dark Savior (left), the isometric "Landstalker-ish" action-RPG by Sega, should be out by the time you're reading this, and the gorgeous 32-Bit LUNAR (right) is due sometime in mid-1997.

As I write this letter, the annual Nintendo Shoshinkai Expo has just ended with not that many surprises. I was thrilled to hear about Zelda and Yoshi finally getting the spotlight in the land of the N64, but I am curious as to what Nintendo is planning on doing with the 64DD once it is finished. I mean, will third-party developers support it, or will they go the way of the CD, and make all of their games for the Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn? I feel that even though the 64DD does not have the kind of storage that a CD has, it will still be a viable medium in the video game industry. The idea of being able to write to a game is limitless, with so many different combinations, developers could have a field day with it. Anyway back to the question, how is Nintendo going to lure companies to the 64DD if they are so happy with CD technology? I mean doesn't Nintendo think that this DD may become another 32X? Any info that you can give me would be greatly appreciated.

Anthony "Mob Boss" Parisi
Staten Island, NY

[Ed.: The industry seems to have mixed views on the 64DD at the moment, but we don't think Nintendo would've chosen the readable/writable format if they didn't have some creative uses planned for it. As always, they were pretty quiet about it at Shoshinkai, but as it nears release (sometime in '97), you can be sure that more details will be available regarding **Nintendo's innovative new add-on. As for third parties, not one third-party game has been announced for it yet, but the fact that it will make for easier, cheaper game production should be as good a sign as any that third parties will flock to develop games for it. Check back around E3 for more info.]**

Will the free controller bundled with Mario Kart 64 in Japan include the "Jolt Pack" or will it be sold separately? If so, for how much? Also, any idea what NOA's plans for MK64 are for North America? Will we get to see that black-and-grey controller?

Joe Talladira
Via the Internet

[Ed.: The "Vibrator" or "Jolt" Pak (call it what you will—you can be sure it won't be called either of those names in America) won't be compatible with Mario Kart 64. The first two games to utilize its unique functions are Blast Corps and StarFox 64, both due for release in the first half of 1997. As for the extra controller with Mario Kart 64, Nintendo hasn't made any official announcement regarding it, but it's always a possibility. Sadly, other than the look, the controller is no different than the controllers already available for the N64.]

ig

Send your comments, concepts and theories to:
IG Communications

by e-mail at
igdean@aol.com
subject line: Communications

or by snail mail at
1920 Highland Avenue
Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148

You blasted your way through an onslaught of undead marines and hell-spawned hordes in Doom.

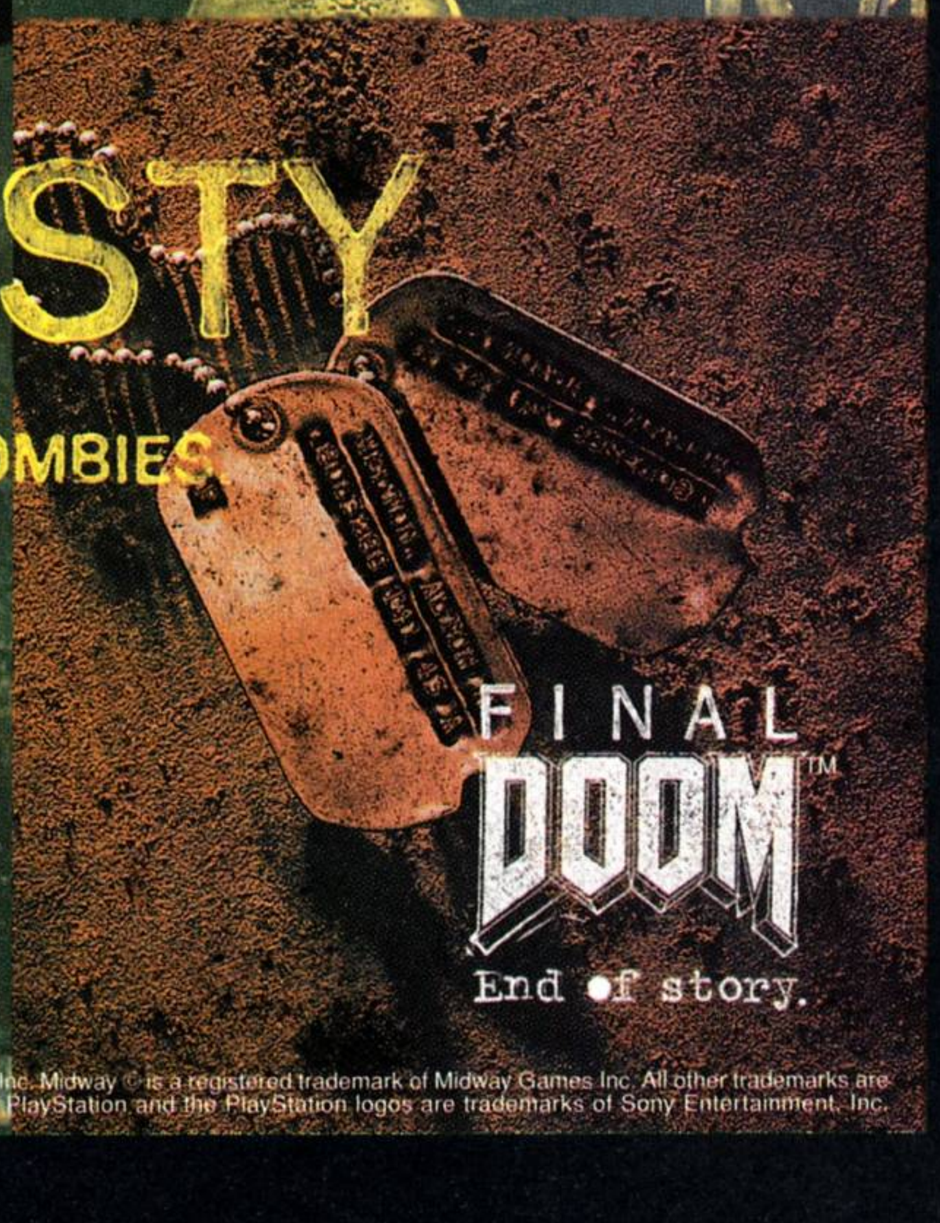
Now you can rest, right? Wrong.

Seems flesh-eating mutants have the mortality rate of a cockroach and are alive and kicking in Final Doom- the last of the legendary Doom products.

It's 30 new levels complete with all new stories (Evilution & The Plutonia Experiment), new frighteningly realistic graphics and ~~XXX~~ pulse pounding music. It's time to finish what you started.

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST TURN INTO BLOODTHIRSTY MUTANT ZOMBIES

5.56



FINAL DOOM™

End of story.

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MIDWAY id SOFTWARE PlayStation™

Now available on Sony PlayStation

Final DOOM™ © 1996 id Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Midway Home Entertainment Inc. Under license from id Software, Inc. Midway © is a registered trademark of Midway Games Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment America for use with the PlayStation Game Console. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Entertainment, Inc.

The Legend of Zelda 64 is back and looks amazing since its last appearance in the brief video clip from the 1995 Shoshinkai Show.

Nintendo unveils the 64DD to an eager audience and old-time favorites Link and Yoshi return with a bang at

Shoshinkai '96

Finally, after months of talk and speculation, Nintendo's N64 optical disk drive, the 64DD, was shown in prototype form.

Just one day before we went to press with this issue, Nintendo held their annual Shoshinkai/Famicom Space World Exhibition (now known as Nintendo 64 Space World) in Chiba, Japan. Of course, *IG* was on hand to check out all the happenings, and we decided to sacrifice two pages of news to offer you the very first info on Nintendo's "show of shows" (don't worry—it's much more interesting than the news would've been anyway). It should be noted that Nintendo of America's Howard Lincoln opened the show with the announcement that Nintendo has sold 750,000 Nintendo 64s in the U.S. alone as of Nov. 22—quite an impressive feat.

THE 64DD

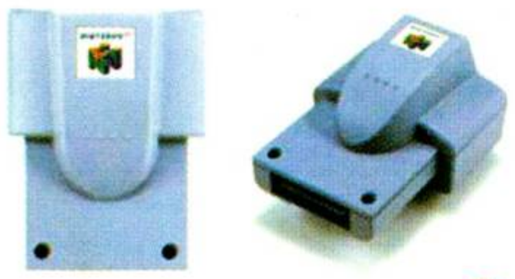
The big news of the show was obviously Nintendo's new 64DD (Disk Drive) add-on for the Nintendo 64. Although no definite price point was announced, and the unit was only on display behind glass (there were no playable games), it is expected to be released before the end of 1997 in Japan for under $200 (probably about $150). Boasting transfer rates of about 790 KB/second (roughly equivalent to a 6X CD-ROM drive), the 64DD will play unique readable/writable 64-Megabyte disks, the first of which was announced at the show—none other than The Legend of Zelda 64 (which is said to be the sequel to Zelda II: The Adventure of Link—yes!). For what it's worth, Mario 64 seemed to be running off of the 64DD with minimal (if any) access, although it was hard to tell if the game was actually running off the unit or not (you never know...).

FIRST-PARTY GAMES

Zelda 64 was shown on video and looked quite impressive, with the taller, older Link from Zelda II in a completely 3-D environment, much like that of Super Mario 64. What was shown was limited, but it looked fantastic. Although not confirmed as of press time, it's said that Zelda 64 will actually come on both DD disk AND cartridge, as the system's unique structure will allow for Cart/DD games to be created with ease. If so, that could make for some pretty interesting possibilities, but we'll reserve further insight until we have more details.

Nintendo's second-most highlighted game was the absolutely beautiful 2-D platform game, Yoshi's Island 64. Not many expected the game to be at the show, but there it was on video tape and it looked incredible, with completely rendered graphics, eye-popping animation and awesome effects. From the video shown, there was no sign of Mario in the game—just the dino himself, Yoshi.

The three playable Nintendo games were Mario Kart 64 (which will be out in Japan by the time you read this), StarFox 64 (a lot like the original, but with enhanced graphics and a new Battle Mode) and Blast

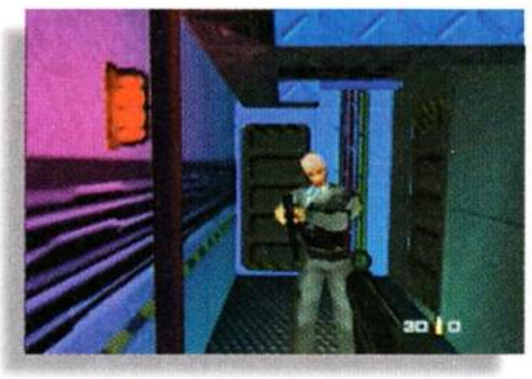


Nintendo's new "Vibrator Pak" will bring the once-thought-to-be arcade-only sensation of force feedback into the home.

Howard Lincoln opened the show with the announcement that Nintendo has sold 750,000 Nintendo 64s in the U.S. alone as of Nov. 22.

Yoshi's Island 64, shown for the first time anywhere in the world, was easily the best-looking Nintendo 64 game at the show.

Mario Kart 64 (top), and StarFox 64 (above) were two of the playable games at the show, and both were mighty impressive.



Blast Corps (top) by Rare is great for fans of destruction. Konami's Perfect Striker (above) is one of the best-looking soccer games yet.

GoldenEye 007 (top) and Kirby's Air Ride (above) were both shown on video tape and are expected to be playable at E3 in June.

Dozer (to be called Blast Corps in America), the latter two of which utilize Nintendo's new "Vibrator Pak," which was also introduced for the first time at the show. This unique little pak fits into the back of the N64 controller (where Controller Paks go) and adds a new level of excitement to the games customized for it, as it allows for force-feedback, just like in many arcade games (an example of force feedback would be when the steering wheel jolts and spins when you crash your car in Arcade Daytona USA). Whether or not this will become popular is yet to be seen, but you have to give creativity points to Nintendo for that one...

The remaining Nintendo-made games shown on tape were GoldenEye 007, Kirby's Air Ride, Mission: Impossible and (surprise!) Mother 3 (the sequel to EarthBound in the USA). Nintendo also announced a new 128-Meg cartridge adventure game based on Japan's popular Jungle Emperor character, due out in early 1998. To end the Nintendo coverage with a small-but-solid rumor—keep your eyes and ears out for mention of Nintendo's oft-talked about "Internet strategy" in the coming months, as well as a satellite device in Japan, most likely an N64 version of their popular Satellaview system for the Super Famicom. Remember—you heard it here first! Not from some silly Q-guy.. (just kidding Quartermann...).

THIRD-PARTY GAMES

Seta, one of Nintendo's most active N64 third-party licensees, was showing off their new racing game, Rev Limit, as well as their other titles, including Wild Choppers and a new version of Shogi (oh no) that comes with a modem built into the cartridge for—you guessed it—networked Shogi! Well, at least the idea has merit, although it would probably be way too costly to manufacture a high-speed modem into the game cartridge for a more demanding game like, say, Mario Kart 64.

Konami showed off their four big winter titles (the same four that were at the Tokyo Game Show—Soccer, Baseball, Mahjong and Golf), although Ganbare Goemon 5 was mysteriously absent from the floor.

Acclaim was showing off Turok: Dinosaur Hunter (which looks considerably improved from the last time we played it), and Kemco had Blade and Barrel (Ultra Combat in the USA). Imagineer had a new soccer game and the N64's first RPG, as well as their previously announced titles, and Enix had the adorable Wonder Project J2, as well as a new action game, developed by Treasure (Contra III, Gunstar Heroes, Castlevania 4) called Yuke Yuke!! Trouble Makers.

Finally, Victor Interactive showed off Mission: Impossible, Hudson had their 3-D fighter, Duel Heroes, and GameBank had Hexen 64. Overall, there were over 35 games on display for the Nintendo 64, some obviously more notable than others, but many of them showed extreme promise, proving once again that perhaps Nintendo isn't crazy for going with the said-to-be archaic cartridge format.

We'd love to say there were some surprise announcements, but since we only had time to report on the first day of the show, we've got to end it here. Stay tuned for more N64 coverage in the future!!

Shoshinkai's Notable Titles

Acclaim Japan
- Turok: Dinosaur Hunter

EA/Victor
- J-League Live 64 (FIFA 64)

Enix
- Wonder Project J2
- Yuke Yuke!! Trouble Makers

Epoch
- Doraemon 64

Game Bank
- Hexen 64
- Macross (Robotech)

Hudson
- Duel Heroes
- Power League 64
- Soccer 64

Imagineer
- Eruteiru (RPG)
- J-League Soccer 64
- Pro Baseball King
- Multi-Racing Championship

Kemco
- Blade and Barrel

Konami
- J-League Perfect Striker
- Ganbare Goemon 5
- Powerful Pro Baseball 4

Nihon System Supply
- Chameleon Twist

Seta
- Rev Limit
- St. Andrews Golf
- Wild Choppers

Nintendo Co., Ltd.
- Blast Corps
- GoldenEye 007
- Jungle Emperor Leo
- Kirby's Air Ride
- Legend of Zelda 64 (64DD)
- Mario Kart 64
- Mother 3
- Star Fox 64
- Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire
- Yoshi's Island 64

Victor Interactive
- Mission: Impossible

DEATH
IS IN THE AIR.

WHEN YOU'RE A WEAPONS MANUFACTURER, PEACE CAN PUT YOU OUT OF BUSINESS. SO TO GET PROFITS BACK UP, YOU'VE GOT TO INCITE - AND SURVIVE - THE MOST GRUELING BATTLES ON LAND AND UNDERWATER.

PLENTY OF DIFFERENT MISSIONS, EACH WITH A COMPLETELY NEW STORYLINE, OBJECTIVE, AND OPPONENTS.

YOUR SLAMBIRD COMES WITH DIFFERENT FEATURES OPTIMIZED FOR BOTH LAND AND UNDERWATER ENVIRONMENTS.

SCAVENGER

GT Interactive Software

www.gtinteractive.com

PC CD-ROM

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PART OF BUY 2 GET 1 FREE GAME THERAPY PROMOTION

Amok™ © 1996 Scavenger, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created and published by Scavenger, Inc. Distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. All trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

T*HQ A.K.A.

The biggest news is that T*HQ has substantially strengthened its ties with Electronic Arts, Disney and LucasArts

Sega hopes to cheaply bring the wide world of the World Wide Web to homes all across America with their new Sega Saturn NetLink.

What has been announced is that while T*HQ will still publish games for the Game Boy, Super NES and Genesis, it will also expand its operation to include games for the PlayStation, Saturn, N64, PC and even Mac games. Over the next few months, the company will launch several PlayStation and Saturn games, including translations of the popular Japanese kickboxing game Fighting Illusion—K-1 Grand Prix and an Americanized translation of a Japanese professional wrestling game.

The biggest news, however, is that T*HQ has substantially strengthened its ties with Electronic Arts, Disney and LucasArts. Last year, T*HQ published the Game Boy versions of Electronic Arts' most popular sports titles, but starting next year it will handle the 16-Bit versions of Madden, FIFA Soccer, NBA Live and NHL Hockey.

Last year, T*HQ published the Disney game Pocahontas for the Game Boy, but next year they're expanding their Disney line. While T*HQ will publish a Game Boy version of The Hunchback of Notre Dame, it will also launch two 16-Bit Disney games, the Genesis version of Pinocchio and a Super NES version of the PC game Timon and Pumbaa.

T*HQ is also rereleasing the LucasArts classics Super Empire Strikes Back and Super Return of the Jedi to capitalize on the debut of the remastered *Star Wars* motion pictures. (Nintendo is handling the re-release of Super Star Wars.)

Destruction Derby, Psygnosis' killer (well, it looked nice anyway) PS racer, will now be coming to the Saturn as well.

T*HQ's newest relationship is with Sony's renegade publishing partner Psygnosis. T*HQ plans to publish Saturn versions of such Psygnosis PlayStation titles as Destruction Derby, Krazy Ivan, Assault Rigs and Adidas Power Soccer.

Most people know the company as T*HQ, but its original name was Toy Headquarters. Though T*HQ abandoned the toy industry years ago to focus on publishing games for the Game Boy and 16-Bit consoles, its listing on the New York Stock Exchange remained "TOYH," a listing more befitting a toy manufacturer than a video game publisher. Unsatisfied with that listing, the company's executives have decided to change their name. So far, no one seems to know what the new name will be.

Sega Gets Connected

In late October, Sega released the NetLink, a modem that plugs into the cartridge slot of the Saturn game console. (NetLink is not the first modem for a game console. There was a modem for the Atari 2600.)

NetLink's Internet access is currently limited. NetLink connects to a Web site called NetLink City from which users can access 225 Internet sites. At this time, NetLink does not handle video files, but according to Sega spokespeople, audio and video upgrades will be released.

Sega has released a keyboard adapter that allows users to attach a PC keyboard to their Saturn. The adapter retails for $19.99. Sega has also released a Saturn mouse that sells for $24.99. A Saturn online system, complete with black keyboard, Saturn, NetLink, telephone cables and Sega Rally is retailing for $449.99

In an effort to make parents more comfortable with their children cruising the Internet, Sega has equipped NetLink with a parental control that allows them to sensor the kinds of files and sites their children can access. Media coverage of pornography on the Internet has made many adults nervous about letting their children have 'Net access.

Sega plans to release 100,000 NetLinks in the United States this holiday season, to retail at $199. The NetLink includes a 28.8 bps modem.

Sega has released a different version of the NetLink in Japan. The Japanese version has a 14.4 bps modem and a card slot that allows users to use special Sega debit cards to create internet accounts.

NetLink connects to a Web site called NetLink City from which users can access 225 Internet sites.

GAMING TV AVAILABLE

As the first TV released in America dedicated solely to video gaming, Samsung's 13" $349 GXTV hit the shelves in October to brisk sales. The unique TV sports a plethora of features including a 21-watt three-piece speaker system, stereo and surround sound capabilities, multiple A/V input jacks, remote control and a 13" low-emission monitor.

GRETZKY 3-D HOCKEY. WE CHANGED THE RULES.

HOOKING

SLASHING

THE GREAT ONE

NINTENDO 64

THE KING OF THE ICE. NUMBER 99. NOW WAYNE GRETZKY HAS A NEW TITLE: VIDEO GAME DESIGNER. THE PLAYER WHO IS HOCKEY HAS DESIGNED THE ULTIMATE GAME. SHOW YOUR RESPECT BY GETTING GRETZKY 3-D HOCKEY TODAY. **ONLY ON NINTENDO 64.**

The NHLPA & NHL Present WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY

WWW.GRETZKY.COM

KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NHLPA

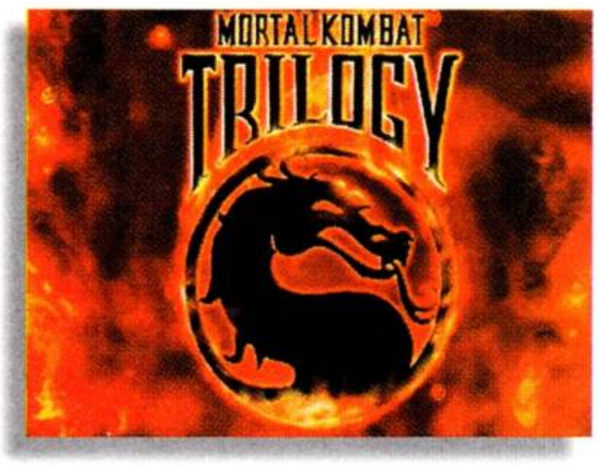
MIDWAY

©1996 Atari Games Corporation. All rights reserved. THE NHLPA & NHL PRESENT WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3-D HOCKEY is a trademark of Wayne D. Gretzky and the National Hockey League Players' Association, excluding the word NHL. NHL, National Hockey League, the NHL Shield, and the Stanley Cup are registered trademarks of the National Hockey League. All NHL logos and marks and team logos and marks depicted herein are the property of the NHL and the respective teams and may not be reproduced without the prior written consent of NHL Enterprises, L.P. ©1996 NHL. Used under license by Atari Games Corporation. Officially licensed by the National Hockey League. © 1996 NHLPA.™ and ® designate trademarks of the National Hockey League Players' Association and are used, under license, by Atari Games Corporation. Officially Licensed Product of the National Hockey League Players' Association. Midway® is a registered trademark of Midway Games Inc. Used by permission. Nintendo, Nintendo 64 and the 3-D 'N' logo are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc. ©1996 Nintendo of America Inc. Licensed by Nintendo.

IG Shorts ■ KONAMI DUMPING SEGA?:

Although there are no confirmed reports yet, and Konami officials are declining comment, rumors are strong that major game publisher Konami of America is dropping all future development on Saturn once their current crop of planned games hit stores. And speaking of planned games, Policenauts, the awesome digital comic/adventure game from Konami, was cancelled for the Saturn. ■ **SOUL EDGE TO GET NAME CHANGE FOR U.S. RELEASE:** According to sources within Namco, Soul Edge, the popular weapon-wielding fighting game coming to the PlayStation, will be getting a name change to Soul Blade for the U.S. market, due to legal reasons regarding the use of the word "Edge." ■ **ARC THE LAD CANCELLED:** According to sources close to Sony Computer Entertainment, Arc The Lad, Sony's short-but-sweet simulation-RPG that was originally due to hit late 1996, has been shelved indefinitely due to an unstable development team that was subject to many people moving in and moving out, causing for a difficult conversion process. Additionally, Sony's great-looking three-fourths view RPG, Popolo Crois, won't be making the trip overseas either, although their next big Japanese RPG, Wild Arms, looks like it just might make it over here if Sony can keep their development teams in order. After the horror that was Beyond the Beyond (one of the slowest, most boring RPGs ever), almost anything will do for starved RPG fans... ■ **THE ULTIMATE VIDEO GAME WEB SITE LAUNCHES:** Barring any unforeseen technical delays or acts of God, the world's best new video game Web site, VideoGameSpot, will be online by the time you read this, at http://www.videogamespot.com. Whether it be news, previews or reviews you're looking for, you'll find it all at VideoGameSpot. Now you'll no longer have to listen to stories about imaginary game hardware and "world exclusive" news bits spawned from newswire press releases like those other Web sites... ■ **RAPID NOTES:** RJ Mical, the co-inventor of the Atari Lynx hand-held game system and the 3DO Multiplayer, has been named president of Prolific Publishing, the company that published Return Fire. Interestingly, Mical's voice was featured in Return Fire. He was the voice of the laughing skull that appeared after players were killed.

HOT Top 5



Top 15 Arcade Games

1. **Die Hard Arcade** Sega
2. **Tekken 2** Namco
3. **Metal Slug** SNK
4. **Golden Tee 3D Golf** Incredible Technologies
5. **Bust-A-Move Again** Taito
6. **Soul Edge Ver. 2** Namco
7. **Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo** Capcom
8. **Ninja Masters** SNK
9. **Striker 1995** Worldwide Video
10. **Dungeons & Dragons '96** Capcom
11. **Street Fighter Alpha 2** Capcom
12. **Ultimate MK3** Midway
13. **Run & Gun 2** Konami
14. **Raiden DX** Fabtek
15. **Hide the Salami** Fractal Technologies

Courtesy of *Replay Magazine*, October 1996

Current Release Top 15

1. **MK Trilogy** Midway / Nintendo 64
2. **Tomb Raider** Eidos / PlayStation
3. **Wave Race 64** Nintendo / Nintendo 64
4. **NHL Face Off '97** Sony CEA / PlayStation
5. **NHL 97** EA Sports / PlayStation
6. **Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey** Midway / Nintendo 64
7. **Virtua Cop 2** Sega / Saturn
8. **MK Trilogy** Midway / PlayStation
9. **Virtual On** Sega / Saturn
10. **Twisted Metal 2** Sony CEA / PlayStation
11. **Legacy of Kain** Activision / PlayStation
12. **WipeOut XL** Sony CEA / PlayStation
13. **Soviet Strike** Electronic Arts / PlayStation
14. **Tetris Attack** Nintendo / Super NES
15. **Madden NFL 97** EA Sports / PlayStation

Top 15 From Japan

1. **Arc The Lad II** Sony CEI / PlayStation
2. **Namco Museum Vol. 4** Namco / PlayStation
3. **Samurai Shodown III** SNK / Saturn
4. **Pocket Monsters** Nintendo / Game Boy
5. **Riglord Saga II** Sega / Saturn
6. **Arc The Lad** Sony CEI / PlayStation
7. **WipeOut XL** Sony CEI / PS
8. **LUNAR: Silver Star Story** Kadokawa Shoten / Saturn
9. **Vandal Hearts** Konami / PlayStation
10. **Star Gladiator** Capcom / PlayStation
11. **Aubrid Force** Bandai / PlayStation
12. **Picross 2** Nintendo / Game Boy
13. **Ogre Battle** Riverhill Soft / Saturn
14. **The Tower: Bonus Edition** Open Book / PlayStation
15. **Sakura Taisen** Sega / Saturn

IG's Editors' Personal Top 15

1. **NBA Hang Time** Midway / Nintendo 64
2. **Wave Race 64** Nintendo / Nintendo 64
3. **Tomb Raider** Eidos / PlayStation
4. **Virtual On** Sega / Saturn
5. **Virtua Cop 2** Sega / Saturn
6. **C&C: Red Alert** Westwood / PC
7. **Dragon Force** Working Designs / Saturn
8. **NFL GameDay '97** Sony CEA / PlayStation
9. **Suikoden** Konami / PlayStation
10. **Madden NFL 97** EA / PlayStation
11. **Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey** Midway / Nintendo 64
12. **NHL Face Off '97** Sony CEA / PlayStation
13. **You Don't Know Jack 2** Berkeley / PC
14. **Daytona USA: CCE** Sega / Saturn
15. **Tetris Attack** Nintendo / Super NES

AT THE END OF YOUR ROPE?
VideoGameSpot is here for you. We are your guide to the eye-popping world of video games. Our multi-step online-program of reviews, previews, video demos, hints and cheats on all of the latest video games and console platforms gives you the information you so desperately need. We'll challenge you with our contests, motivate you with thousands of dollars in prizes and let you share your feelings in our reader review center. VideoGameSpot will put you in control.
videogamespot
www.videogamespot.com

Namco's lineup included the PlayStation port of the tremendously successful arcade fighter, Soul Edge, as well as the latest addition to the Museum series, Volume 4.

PlayStation Expo '96~'97

IG reports from Sony's main PlayStation event in Japan

This year's PlayStation Expo was held at the Makuhari Messe in Japan from Nov. 1 to Nov. 4, to show off all the hot new PlayStation software and hardware that will be arriving in the coming months, as well as some recently released titles. There were 53 different companies on hand with over 170 games on display.

SONY

Getting right into the games, the first company worth taking a look at was, of course, Sony Computer Entertainment. Sony had many games on display, but honestly, not many of them were worth mentioning besides the "Yoge" (foreign) games that we've already been fortunate enough to play, like Formula 1 and WipeOut XL. However, Sony's major surprise at the show was definitely a sweet one—the company debuted their new (surprise) analog control pad for the PlayStation.

Modeled somewhat like a cross between Sega's and Nintendo's analog pads, Sony's offers not one, but TWO analog thumbpads, which should make for some pretty interesting control setups in future games. No announcement was made as to when the controller will be released or how much it will cost, but most reports speculate availability to be sometime around early 1997.

Otherwise, Sony had some interesting RPGs on display, including Arc The Lad II (the U.S. still hasn't seen Arc I, and now it looks as if we never will), and the graphically impressive Wild Arms, which has a good chance of making it to the United States. Additionally, their two unique new titles certainly are, well, unique, but they simply don't seem to be the kind of titles that will appeal to American gamers. One is called Depth, and the other is called Parappa the Rappa, and both involve the player using music (either in the form of creating it by arranging techno sounds in Depth, or by tapping to it in order to perform feats that will impress a young girl, in Parappa the Rappa). Eh, nice, but for the western market? I don't think so. Credit should go to Sony, however, for at least being a little creative.

NAMCO

Namco, Sony's most valuable third party (save maybe Square) had an impressive lineup of new games at the show. Obviously, the game grabbing the most attention was their upcoming fighter ported directly from the PlayStation-based System 11 arcade hardware, Soul Edge. To be known as Soul Blade in the U.S. (for legal reasons), Soul Edge takes the masterful fighting game-play of Tekken 2 and adds the art of weapon-fighting to the mix, making for a unique new game. Unique to the home version, the characters will now have new outfits (designed by Japanese gamers through a special contest in Japan), and a choice of weapons, instead of just one like in the arcade game (although the weapons each character can choose will all be similar).

The Namco game grabbing the most attention was their upcoming System 11-based fighter, Soul Edge.

Also on display from Namco was their newest racer in the "Ridge Racer" series, the PS-exclusive Rage Racer, an all-new game developed by the arcade Rave Racer team, with new cars, new tracks, a Grand Prix mode and better gameplay techniques. Sadly however, there is no longer a link option like there was in the previous two Ridge Racer games (for two-player full-screen play).

For light-gun fans, an early version of Namco's Time Crisis was playable. If the version there was any indication of what the finished version will be like, fans of the arcade game will not be disappointed. The

PlayStation's New Analog Control Pad

Perhaps the biggest announcement at the PlayStation Expo, Sony Computer Entertainment unveiled their new analog control pad for the PlayStation to the public for the first time. The controller, which comes in three different colors, has not one, but TWO analog thumbpads, as well as a unique new mechanism that allows for vibration to come from the pad when certain actions are performed on screen (sort of like force feedback). Unfortunately, no price and/or release date for the new controller was announced, but expect it to launch with a game that will successfully exploit its features.

one major difference from the arcade version was the lack of a foot pedal, which is compensated for by a special button on the side of the gun. By pressing the button, the player can look around corners and open fire on the enemies, and then reload by releasing the button.

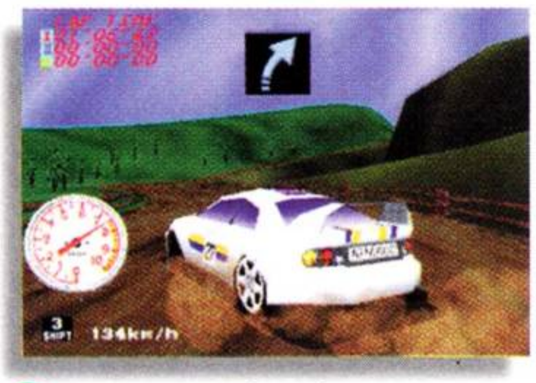
The other Namco games on hand were an early version of the upcoming sequel to Ace Combat (Air Combat in the USA), Ace Combat 2, with many more selectable planes, new missions and improved graphics, and Namco Museum Vol. 4, which contains more of Namco's arcade classics, including Pac-Land, Ordyne and Assault.

SQUARE

Square, while having a presence at the show, only had one game available to actually play, Final Fantasy VII. The game has been delayed until Jan. 31, 1997 in Japan, and will now be three CDs huge, instead of the previously planned two CDs. Although not much more of the game was shown off since the Tobal No. 1 demo CD, Square did add a few more summoning spells to the battle action to show off the game's incredible graphics. Some of the new call spells included Titan (earthquake), Ifrit (fire attack) and Ramuh (thunder and lightning attack). The game is slated to come to the USA sometime in mid-1997.

Square's major announcement at the show however, was that they formed a new brand name called Aques (which, notice, uses only letters from the word "Square," as well as the trademark red triangle that Square is known for). Aques will deal in games that do not fit in the RPG, simulation or fighting genre. Three Aques games have already been announced, but they were only viewable on a demo tape at Square's booth. The three games, Super Live Stadium (baseball), Grand Champion's Rally (racing) and Pro-Logic Mah-Jong Hai-Shin (yawn), all looked decent (well, except for Mah-Jong...), but they were too early to make any finite judgments.

Finally, Square announced that their new 3-D fighter, Bushido Blade, was delayed from December until March, as the game was not yet ready for final release.

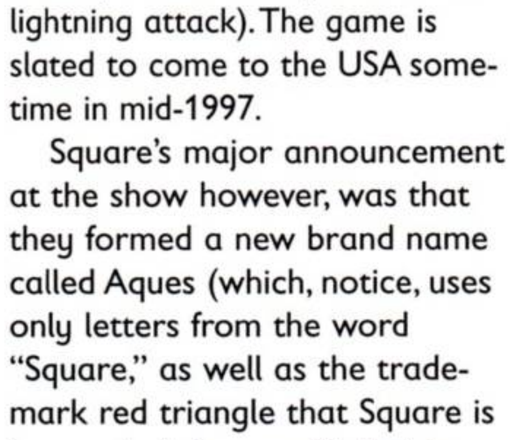


Square's new brand name, Aques, showed three new games, including Super Live Stadium (top) and Grand Champion's Rally (above).

KONAMI

Konami had a few impressive games on display, including several new additions to the Parodius series, including Forever With Me and Paro Wars, not to mention the hot 2-D shooter, Sexy Parodius (reviewed in this issue). The latest addition to their insanely successful (in Japan) soccer series was on display for the PS as well, J-League Winning Eleven '97, and it looked like it might just give Sega's Worldwide Soccer '97 a run for its money. Oh, and of course Tokimeki Memorial stuff was all over the place, but that's another story...

However, sports, Parodius and teenage chicks aside, easily the most anticipated Konami game in years was on display in limited form—Metal Gear Solid. Designed by the same creator as Snatcher and Policenauts, MG Solid is shaping up to be one of the PlayStation's huge hits, along the lines of Resident Evil and Final Fantasy VII. The limited screens show amazing 3-D graphics and are overall pretty dark, like the past two games in the series.



Final Fantasy VII (above), is moving along and may just make its Jan. release date. Konami's Metal Gear Solid (right) looks awesome.

CAPCOM

Capcom's presence at the show was a disappointment. The headline game for the show was Rockman 8: Metal Heroes (Mega Man 8). Sure, it's one of the most successful names in gaming history, but it's beginning to get a little repetitive. At least the new one allows for the use of the regular weapon and special weapon simultaneously. More gamers were interested in Bio Hazard 2 (Resident Evil 2) but unfortunately, not much new info was released on the game.

OTHER STUFF

In addition to the aforementioned major publishers, there were some other choice hits at the show. Takara announced the latest in the Toshinden saga (not sure if this is a blessing or a curse), aptly named Toshinden 3. The press material stated that the game would have over 30 characters, as well as walls and ceilings to add to the gameplay. Koei, makers of such strategy hits as the Romance of the Three Kingdoms series and the P.T.O. games, announced their first fighting game, Sangoku Musou, which features (whaddya know) characters from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms series. Finally, Taito showed off Ray Storm, the 2-D shooting sequel to the popular arcade shooter of a couple years ago, Ray Force. The game is ported from PlayStation-based hardware, so expect a near-perfect conversion when the game is released. Hopefully, someone will pick up the game and release it in the U.S. as well (probably Acclaim, who has been doing all of Taito's recent games).

Overall, the PlayStation Expo was a pretty big success, with plenty of new title announcements and of course, the highlight of the show, Sony's new controller. With such a strong lineup in the U.S., and major support turning up overseas, it looks as if Sony is going to be the main opposition for the mighty Nintendo 64 when the big gaming wars start to kick in next year.

ig

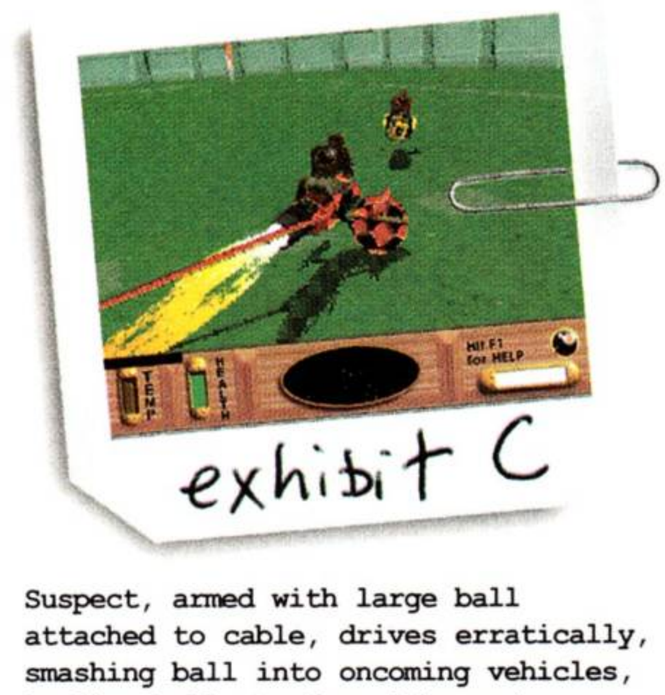
The Bandicoot Has Two Faces

Crash Bandicoot, recently released in Japan, was given a slight facelift to make him more appealing to the Japanese market. The U.S. Crash (left) looks a bit more nuts than his ditsy-looking Japanese counterpart (right).

SEGASOFT™ Developed by ©1996 SegaSoft Inc. All rights reserved. SegaSoft and the SegaSoft logo are trademarks of SegaSoft Inc. Rocket Science, the Rocket

Suspect erects "clothesline" between two pylons, knocks oncoming driver off his vehicle, steals said vehicle, then runs over driver repeatedly with it. Claims he was participating in a "friendly" game of "Rocket War."

Suspect drives at speeds in excess of 100 mph over speed limit, cutting off other drivers, endangering drivers by running them into walls and pylons. On the street, this is known as "Rocket Racing."



Suspect, armed with large ball attached to cable, drives erratically, smashing ball into oncoming vehicles, hurling ball at other drivers in an attempt to score points during illegal, unsanctioned game of "Rocket Ball."

Rocket Jockey™

ROCKETS AND JOCKEYS.

A BAD COMBINATION.

FOR A FREE WINDOWS '95 DEMO OR TO ORDER ROCKET JOCKEY DIRECT, CALL 1.888.SEGASOFT

WWW.SEGASOFT.COM

Science logo, Rocket Jockey and the Rocket Jockey logo are trademarks of Rocket Science Games, Inc. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

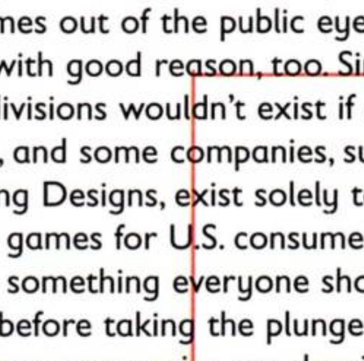
Z to N and the Art of Game Importing

The holidays are over and now the typical enthusiast is about to be thrown into game purgatory—that is, the other 11 months of the year. In the Christmas-minded capitalist society of America, gamers are forced into one of three actions during this painful period: 1) catch up, 2) collect classics or 3) import.

After exhausting the first two options, many opt for door #3, behind which games are published all year round, only to discover that it's not all that easy to enter. Rather than leaving our faithful readers in the dark, *IG* is here to provide what these gamers truly need: the import gaming guide.

It may be easy enough to gain access to import music CDs in record stores across the country, but U.S. game companies have gone to greater lengths to keep importing video games out of the public eye. They've done so with good reason, too. Simply put, the U.S. divisions wouldn't exist if everyone imported, and some companies, such as Working Designs, exist solely to port Japanese games for U.S. consumers.

This is something everyone should consider before taking the plunge. Importing games, these companies are deprived of their only motivation to bring games over to North America in the future. That being said, some games may never come out over here, and in the fast-paced world of electronic entertainment, patience is "not" a virtue.



American game companies have gone to greater lengths to keep importing video games out of the public eye.

Having gotten past this mild dilemma, gamers then face a far greater obstacle—lockout. Lockout is the evil force that prevents gamers from playing import games on domestic game systems, created explicitly for the reasons mentioned above. Luckily, these lockouts can usually be overcome, though, with a little engineering.

Before tampering with any game system, another warning should be issued here. Do so at your own risk and with full knowledge that operating on your game system will immediately void any and all warranties. Now on with the program.

The PlayStation is the most difficult system yet to get through. If it wasn't so frustrating for us, we might be tempted to compliment Sony on doing such a fine job of locking us out.

Still, we have triumphed and there's a way around it. The easiest way is to mail in the PlayStation to someone who can install a chip. What the chip does is carry a North American boot code that tells the PlayStation to boot no matter what disc is in the drive.

Sony is very unhappy about these chips because in addition to allowing honest gamers like us to boot our original Japanese games, it also allows bootlegs to run on the system. Thus, Sony has filed suit with a few entrepreneurs and the outcome of this is yet to be seen.

A second method exists for early PlayStation adopters. The early systems sold in the U.S. and in Japan are able to swap games. Simply go to the audio menu, drop in an American game, tape down the door sensor (upper-right corner), wait for the disc to stop spinning, insert Japanese disc, exit the menu, and load normally.

If that's not a mouthful enough, this swapping method often results in botched CD audio tracks and is completely unavailable to newer PlayStation owners. A memory card slot inserted cartridge has been promised from dealers to be the safest and easiest solution, but as of this writing it is still unavailable.

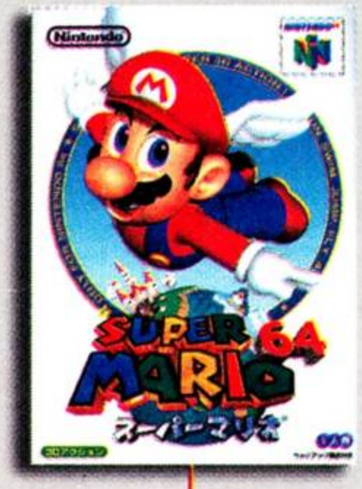
If it wasn't so frustrating for us, we might be tempted to compliment Sony on doing such a fine job of locking us out.

The Top Five Most Talked About Imports of 1996

Saturn fans have a slightly easier time. In addition to being able to mail their systems off to have a professional switch installed, the Pro Action Replay has been available for quite some time. Having trouble finding the PAR? Not to worry, the in-store version known as the Game Shark works too: just hold down X-Y-Z while turning on the machine. Isn't it nice to have such great undocumented features?

For Nintendo 64, the modification may sound familiar. Like its ancestor, the Super NES, two placement of two plastic pegs inside the cart slot are all that prevent importers from enjoying their hobby. The plastic is pretty thick this time, though, so a well heated flathead screwdriver with a lot of patience will be needed to remove the two pegs. Alternatively, a 4.5mm gamebit driver can be ordered from many electronic stores. Take the system apart and the black plastic tray in the cart slot can be removed altogether. Either method will remove any and all lockouts between the Japanese and North American Nintendo 64s.

Phew. So after all that work, you're finally ready to play imported games. Now for the bad news. Most import games cost more than domestic games do. For Saturn, prices start around $60. For PlayStation, the prices hover around $80, and for the N64, prices are upward of $100. And guess what? These are the good prices that can only be had via mail order and the Internet.



1

SUPER MARIO 64
Thousands of gamers just couldn't wait the additional three months to play one of the best games of all time.

2

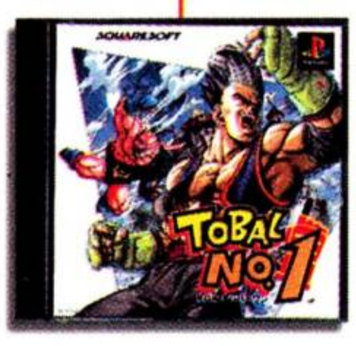
TEKKEN 2
Namco's unusually long conversion times made for the perfect excuse to import this fighting masterpiece.

3

STREET FIGHTER ZERO
As the first home Street Fighter game in many months, SF Zero (Alpha) sold many copies before coming to the U.S.

4

TOBAL NO. 1
Five words:
Final Fantasy VII Demo Disc.
Of course, Tobal No. 1 isn't bad...



5

SATURN BOMBERMAN
With no U.S. release in the foreseeable future, bomber-freaks couldn't pass up the opportunity to go ten-player.

Conveniently walk into any store and the price goes up even higher to cover the company's added overhead expenses.

If you've gotten past the hardware problems and the cost factor, there's one final obstacle—language. The Japanese language may not matter for the majority of shooters, platformers and fighters. In fact, some of these games have completely English text in the option screens anyway (which makes us whine even more about the translation taking so long).

But for role-playing games, the language barrier is especially heartbreaking. Those who know a little Japanese will get the general gist of what to do but may still miss out on much of the cultural references and in-jokes. Those who don't know Japanese are left trying to pick up clues from context with the frustration that the game wasn't written in English. This can be terrible when the game is actually good!

So there you have it. If you've made it to the end of this article, you have one more weapon with which to battle those boring summer months. Consider the options carefully before making any rash decisions. Is the game coming out here? How long will the wait be? Will it be frustrating to play in Japanese? Once you've decided, pick a reliable store to get games from and have fun. You've just entered the final stage of becoming a game addict. ig

Conveniently walk into any store and the price goes up even higher to cover the company's added overhead expenses.

If you've gotten past the hardware problems and the cost factor, there's one final obstacle—language.

nintendo 64

RECENT RELEASES

Cruis'n USA [Nintendo]
Killer Instinct Gold [Nintendo]
Mortal Kombat Trilogy [Williams]
Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire [Nintendo]
Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey [Williams]

ANNOUNCED TITLES FOR 1997

Blast Corps [Nintendo]
Body Harvest [Nintendo]
Buggie Boogie [Nintendo]
Creator [Nintendo]
Dark Rift [Vic Tokai]
Doom 64 [Williams]
F-ZERO 64 [Nintendo]
FIFA Soccer 97 [Electronic Arts]
Freak Boy [Virgin]
GoldenEye 007 [Nintendo]
Ken Griffey Jr. 64 [Nintendo]
Kirby's Air Ride [Nintendo]
The Legend of Zelda 64 [Nintendo/64DD]
Mario Kart 64 [Nintendo]
Mission: Impossible [Ocean]
Rev Limit [Seta]
Robotech: Crystal Dreams [Philips]
Robotron X [Williams]
Silicon Valley [BMG Interactive]
StarFox 64 [Nintendo]
Super Mario RPG 2 [Nintendo/64DD]
Tetrisphere [Nintendo]
Top Gear Rally [Kemco]
Top Gun: A New Adventure [Spectrum Holobyte]
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter [Acclaim]
Ultra Combat [GT Interactive]
Ultra Descent [Interplay]
War Gods [Williams]
Wet Corpse [Vic Tokai]
Yoshi's Island 64 [Nintendo]

playstation

RECENT RELEASES

4X4 Gears & Guts [ASC]
Area 51 [Williams]
BallBlazer Champions [LucasArts]
Batman Forever [Acclaim]
Bedlam [GT Interactive]
Blast Chamber [Activision]
Bubsy 3-D [Accolade]
Chronicles of the Sword [Psygnosis]
Contra: Legacy of War [Konami]
Command & Conquer [Virgin]
Cyber Gladiators [Sierra On-Line]
Daredevil Derby [Mindscape]
Darknet [ASC]
Dark Forces [LucasArts]
Deando Goes to George's [Party Corp.]
Deadly Skies [JVC]
Destruction Derby 2 [Psygnosis]
Disruptor [Universal]
Dragonheart [Acclaim]
FIFA Soccer 97 [Electronic Arts]
Formula One [Sony CEA]
Grid Runner [Virgin]
Hyper 3-D Pinball [Virgin]
HyperBlade [Activision]
Incredible Hulk [Eidos]
Jet Moto [Sony CEA]
Jimmy Johnson Football '97 [Konami]
Killing Time [Acclaim]
King's Field II [ASCII]
Legacy of Kain [Activision]
Magic: The Gathering [Acclaim]
Major Damage [Capcom]
MVP College Football '96 [Data East]
NASCAR [Sierra On-Line]
NBA Hang Time [GT Interactive]
NBA In the Zone 2 [Konami]
NBA Jam Extreme [Acclaim]
NFL GameDay '97 [Sony CEA]
NHL 97 [Electronic Arts]
NHL Face Off '97 [Sony CEA]
NHL Open Ice [GT Interactive]
Oblivion [Eidos]
Onside Soccer II [American Technos]
Pandemonium [Crystal Dynamics]
Perfect Weapon [ASC]
Pitball [Accolade]
Project: X2 [Acclaim]
Rebel Assault 2 [LucasArts]
Rebel Moon [GT Interactive]
Re-loaded [Interplay]
Revelations [Atlus]
Ridge Racer Revolution [Namco]
Robotron X [Midway]
Rocket Jockey [Rocket Science Games]
Soviet Strike [Electronic Arts]
Space Jam [Acclaim]
Star Gladiator [Capcom]
Star Fighter [Acclaim]
Star Winder [Mindscape]
Steel Harbinger [Mindscape]
S.T.O.R.M. [American Softworks]
Street Fighter Alpha 2 [Capcom]
Street Racer [UBI Soft]
Suikoden [Konami]
Syndicate Wars [Electronic Arts]
Tempest X [Interplay]
Ten Pin Alley [ASC]
The Adventures of Lomax in Lemmingland [Psygnosis]
Tobal No. 1 [Sony CEA]
Tomb Raider [Eidos]
Tunnel B-1 [Acclaim]
Twisted Metal 2: World Tour [Sony CEA]
VMX Racing [Playmates]
Viper [Ocean]
VR Pool [Interplay]
Wing Commander IV [Origin/EA]
WipeOut XL [Sony CEA]
World Martial Arts Corp. [Bandai Multimedia]
WWF: In Your House [Acclaim]

JANUARY 1997

Battlesport [Acclaim]
Demon Driver [Philips Media]
Golden Nugget [Virgin]
Hard Boiled [GT Interactive]
Herc's Adventures [LucasArts]
Killing Time [Acclaim]
Magic the Gathering [Acclaim]
Metal Jacket [Electronic Arts]
Mortal Kombat 2 [Acclaim]
Test Drive: Off Road [Accolade]
The 11th Hour [Virgin]
Shining Sword [American Laser Games]
Soul Edge [Namco]
Wargods [Midway]
Wing Commander IV [Origin]

FIRST QUARTER 1997

Aaron Vs. Ruth [Mindscape]
Alien Striker [Atlus]
Ark of Time [Koei]
Athanor [Psygnosis]
Batman Forever: The Arcade Game [Konami]
Battlestations [Electronic Arts]
Broken Helix [Konami]
Burning Road [Playmates]
Castle of the Damned [Tecmo]
Codename: Tenka [Psygnosis]
Crypt Killer [Konami]
Deathdrome [Viacom New Media]
Discworld II: Missing Presumed...!? [Psygnosis]
Fatal Fury Real Bout [Sony CE]
Hexen [GT Interactive]
Iron & Blood: Ravenloft [Acclaim]
Island of Dr. Moreau [Psygnosis]
Jack Nicklaus Golf [Accolade]

This list is compiled from various sources including company releases and retail store guides. As such, all titles and dates are subject to change.

new releases

K-1 Super Kick Boxer [T•HQ]
Kumite: The Fighter's Edge [Konami]
League of Pain [Psygnosis]
Legends Football '97 [Accolade]
Lethal Enforcers 1&2 [Konami]
Marvel Super Heroes [Capcom]
Mega Man 8 [Capcom]
Mickey Thompson Virt Moto X [Playmates]
Monster Rancher [Tecmo]
Monster Truck Rally [Psygnosis]
MTV's Aeon Flux [Viacom New Media]
MTV's Slamscape [Viacom New Media]
Near Death [Atlus]
Peak Performance [Atlus]
Power Piggs [Titus]
Revelations: Persona [Atlus]
Shining Sword [American Laser Games]
Sign of Sun [Koei]
Soul Edge [Namco]
Speed King [Konami]
Spider [BMG Interactive]
Star Control III [Accolade]
Suikoden [Konami]
Tecmo Thoroughbred Derby [Tecmo]
The City of Lost Children [Psygnosis]
The Divide: Enemies Within [Viacom New Media]
VR Baseball [Interplay]
Werewolf: The Apocalypse [Capcom]

ANNOUNCED TITLES

Air Combat 2 [Namco]*
Aliens vs. Predator [FOX Interactive]
Breath of Fire III [Capcom]
Castlevania: The Bloodletting [Konami]
Carnage Heart [Sony CEA]
Final Fantasy IV [Square]
HardBall 6 [Accolade]
Mega Man Neo [Capcom]
Mega Man X4 [Capcom]
Namco Museum Vol. 3 [Namco]
Namco Museum Vol. 4 [Namco]
NBA Shootout '97 [Sony CEA]
Pitfall 3-D [Activision]
Quake [GT Interactive]
Rayman II [UBI Soft]
Red Asphalt [Interplay]
Resident Evil 2 [Capcom]
Rune Master [Koei]
Scorcher [Scavenger]
Sentient [Psygnosis]
Soul Master [Koei]
Strange Golf [Mindscape]
Surreal [American Softworks]
Vandal Hearts [Konami]
Zero Divide 2 [ZOOM]
Zork: Nemesis [Activision]

RECENT RELEASES

4X4 Gears & Guts [American Softworks]
Area 51 [Williams]
Andretti Racing [Electronic Arts]
Area 51 [Williams]
Armed [Interplay]
Battlestations [Electronic Arts]
Big Bass World Champ [HOT-B]
Bedlam [GT Interactive]
Big Bass World Champ [HOT-B]
Black Dawn [Virgin]
Blazing Dragons [Mindscape]
Broken Helix [Konami]
Bug Too! [Sega of America]
Contra: Legacy of War [Konami]
Crypt Killer [Konami]
Darknet [American Softworks]
Dark Savior [Sega of America]
Daytona USA: Championship Circuit Edition [Sega of America]
Dead or Alive [Tecmo]
Deadly Skies [JVC]
Die Hard Trilogy [FOX Interactive]
Doom [GT Interactive]
Deathdrome [Viacom New Media]
Descent [Interplay]
Die Hard Trilogy [FOX Interactive]
Doom [GT Interactive]
Dragon Force [Working Designs]
Extreme Pinball [Electronic Arts]
FIFA Soccer '97 [EA Sports]
Fighting Vipers [Sega of America]
Grid Runner [Virgin]
Herc's Adventures [LucasArts]
Highway 2000 [Natsume]
Hyper 3-D Pinball [Virgin]
HyperBlade [Activision]
Hexen [GT Interactive]
Incredible Hulk [Eidos]
Iron & Blood [Take 2]
Jack Nicklaus Golf [Accolade]
Legends Football '97 [Accolade]
Loaded [Interplay]
MechWarrior 2 [Activision]
MLBPA Bottom of the 9th [Konami]
Oblivion [Eidos]
Powerslave [Playmates]
Major Damage [Capcom]
NFL '97 [Sega of America]
NFL Legends Football '97 [Accolade]
NHL 97 [Electronic Arts]
NHL Open Ice [GT Interactive]
PGA Tour '97 [Electronic Arts]
Policenauts [Konami]
Project Overkill [Konami]
P.T.O. 2 [Koei]

Raw Pursuit [JVC]
Return Fire [Time Warner]
Robo Pit [T*HQ]
S.T.O.R.M. [American Softworks]
Scorcher [GT Interactive]
Soviet Strike [Electronic Arts]
Street Racer [UBI Soft]
Shredfest [Electronic Arts]
Sonic 3D Blast [Sega of America]
Spot Goes to Hollywood [Virgin]
Tempest 2000 [Interplay]
The Lost Vikings 2 [Interplay]
The Sacred Pools [Sega of America]
Three Dirty Dwarves [Sega of America]
Tomb Raider [Eidos Interactive]
Varuna's Forces [JVC]
Virtua On [Sega of America]
VR Golf [Interplay]
VR Soccer [Interplay]
Water World [Ocean]
World Wide Soccer 97 [Sega of America]

JANUARY 1997

Battlesport [Acclaim]
Command & Conquer [Virgin]
Bedlam [GT Interactive]
Descent [Interplay]
Dragon's Lair 2 [Readysoft]
Extreme Pinball [Electronic Arts]
Killing Time [Acclaim]
MANX T.T. [Sega of America]
VR Pool [Interplay]

FIRST QUARTER 1997

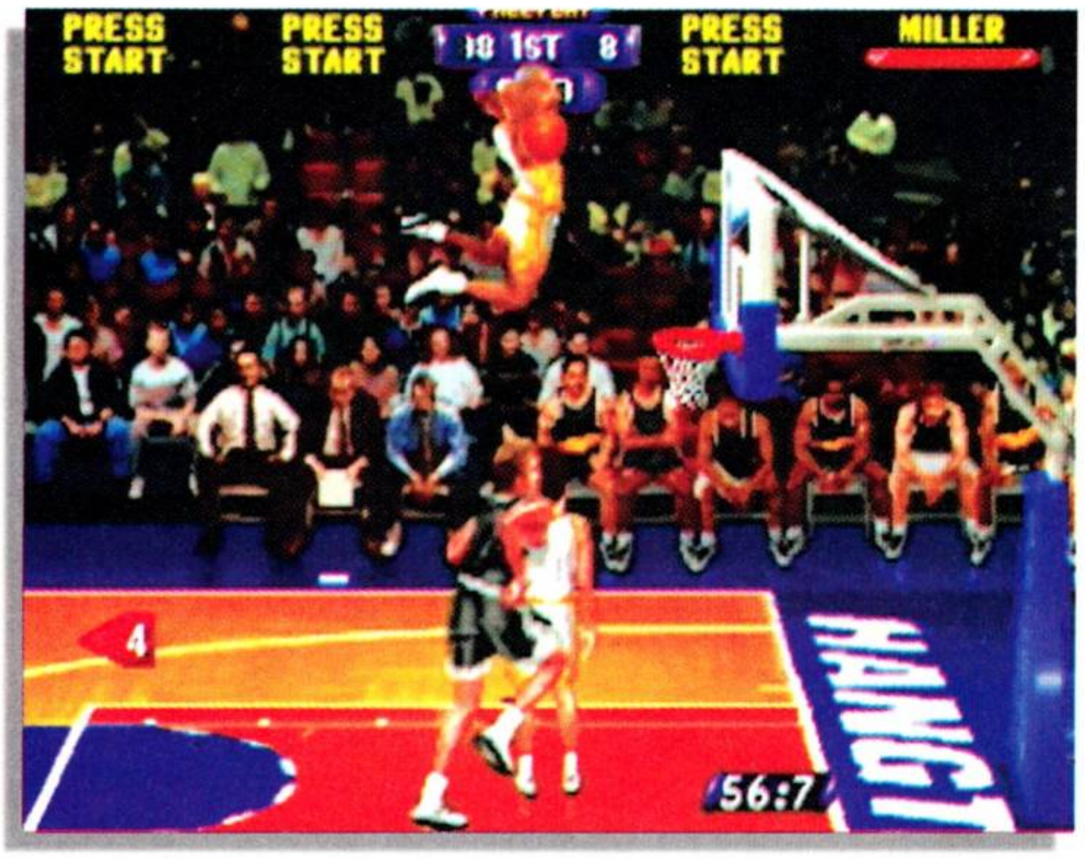
Bubsy 3D [Accolade]
Independence Day [FOX Interactive]
Magic Knight Rayearth [Working Designs]
Manx TT: Super Bike [Sega of America]
Mega Man 8 [Capcom]
NBA Live '97 [Electronic Arts]
Re-Loaded [Interplay]
Sacred Pools [Sega of America]
VR Baseball [Interplay]
Zork: Nemesis [Activision]

ANNOUNCED TITLES

Burn Cycle [Philips]
Castlevania: The Bloodletting [Konami]
Criticom 2 [Vic Tokai]
Burn Cycle [Philips]
Heart of Darkness [Virgin]
Kumite: The Fighter's Edge [Konami]
Lunar: Director's Cut [Working Designs]
Marvel Super Heroes [Capcom]
MechWarrior 2 [Activision]
Mega Man X4 [Capcom]
Project Overkill [Konami]
Quake [Sega of America]
Revelations: Devil Summoner [Atlus]
Soviet Strike [Electronic Arts]
Syndicate Wars [Electronic Arts]
TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '97 [American Softworks]
VR Basketball '96 [Interplay]
Werewolf: The Apocalypse [Capcom]
Wild Nines [Interplay]

* *Working Title*

Midway's NBA Hang Time looks to be one of the most entertaining action sports games out there. Even with just an incomplete preview version, the editors of *IG* were immediately addicted.



NBA Hang Time

Midway prepares to slam home yet another arcade conversion for the Nintendo 64

Publisher: Midway

Platform: Nintendo 64

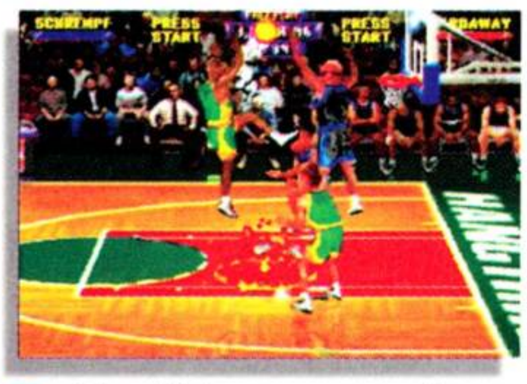
Format: 64 Megabit Cartridge

Developer: Midway

Release: 1st Quarter '97

It's hard to believe, but even after all of the years that have passed since NBA Jam exploded onto the arcade scene, a worthy home translation never followed. Many 16-Bit and 32-Bit versions have been tried, but for one reason or another, they never quite captured the look or the exciting feel of the arcade.

Now NBA Hang Time isn't NBA Jam, but it's the closest thing to the game since it's a sequel to the popular sports coin-op. It's also a lot better. By judging from this early look of the Midway translation in progress, it's probably also the closest console replica of this brand of high-flying two-on-two basketball yet.



A lot of little easter eggs and other nifty codes are in the game including the now selectable "Big Head" mode (top).

We weren't kidding about the chicken head (top). A nice array of statistics is displayed during halftime so you can see who pulled their weight (above).

The Nintendo 64 is well-known for its highly publicized 3-D capabilities, its prowess in doing 2-D graphics may have been overlooked. Hang Time's sprite-based graphics look nearly perfect at this stage of development.

The large and well-animated players scale, look and move just like their arcade counterparts.

For those of you who haven't seen or played NBA Hang Time in the arcade, imagine a full-sized basketball court. Instead of 10 players competing on the wooden surface, there are only four. These two teams of two consist of players from their real NBA teams. If you choose Houston for example, you may select two of the players from the Houston Rockets—even the bad players (though it wouldn't be a good idea to select them). Each player is rated in six categories: speed, power, shooting, dunks, steals and blocks. This is in addition to their height and weight which play big roles in the game. There are no rules in this fast-paced basketball game —you can shove players down (how effectively is determined by your power rating), go out of bounds, and in some situations, you can even goaltend.

Realism is playfully thrown away as much of the gameplay is consumed by making spectacular dunks that even Michael Jordan would be envious of. Players can also get "on fire" if they make three shots in a row without the opponent scoring in that duration. When this phenomena happens, just about any shot by the inflamed player will sink no matter how outrageous, and the basketball becomes a smoking ball of fire.

To accompany the high-octane gameplay, a "showtime" announcer describes the action in a frantic tone. Over-the-top quips such as "Boom-shaka-laka-ding-dong" are to be expected when a spectacular dunk is made, while a missed shot will be enthusiastically chided.

Hang Time is most fun with multiple players, and excels because it supports four players, thanks to the N64's four controller ports. This, of course, allows many different multiplayer combinations including two players taking on the computer as teammates, or playing against one another.

Custom basketball characters can be made through a nifty Create a Player feature, which can in turn be saved onto a controller pak. This option is well conceived, as there are plenty of characteristics to edit. The most enjoyable is picking your player's head from an extensive selection of mug shots that includes everything from a chicken head to a Roseanne Barr look-alike.

Although the Nintendo 64 is well-known for its 3-D capabilities, its prowess in doing 2-D graphics may have been overlooked.

With Wayne Gretzky Hockey already in stores, and the impressive NBA Hang Time waiting in the wings, Midway looks like they are well on their way to being one of the premier N64 game manufacturers. ig

they never attack in hor... seen in ...

when a ...ums. ...h a ...een ...ur

his e... by the lightnin... 's way.

no early ... prospec... secret c... rife the ... to appe... of *Doo*... were ... had trou... order to ...

"The Vanguard of a terrifying new level of immersive technology."

— COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

"...by far the most addictive, multiplayer action game we've ever played."

Quake's greatest addition ... levels ... feature some form... whic... If you...

— PC MAGAZINE

...urious as it ever was in *Doom*, but much harder. In fact, if ... be disappointed th... shots in...

"Quake overwhelms the senses."

— USA TODAY

full registered version in stores now.

...gameplay, *Total Mania* is ... on the bigger levels there's mo... ...ing than robot-shooting, which, let's fa...

"Quake is the most satisfying first-person action game of all time."

that you can target an enemy robot and fire at it ... because these can be sold ... ct back ... credits. ... terra... *Total* ... emph... add a...

— BOOT MAGAZINE

PC CD-ROM

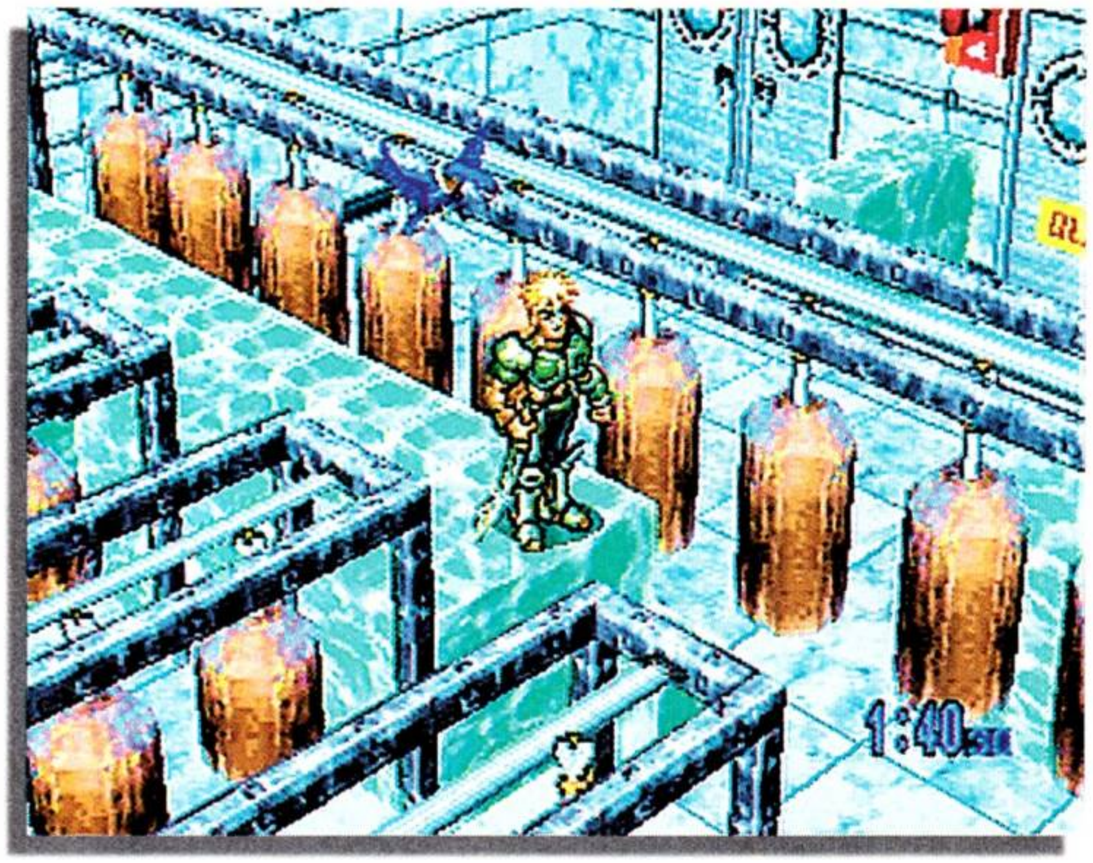
www.idsoftware.com

Distributed by
GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com

QUAKE

Quake™ ©1996 Id Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Published by Id Software, Inc. Distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. MS-DOS® is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

Dark Savior is the work of Climax, Japan's famed development house that created the now-legendary Sega Genesis action-RPG, Landstalker. DS is similar to LS in overall look and play mechanics.



Dark Savior

Sega puts the finishing touches on Climax's unique isometric action-RPG

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Climax

Release: Now Available

Dark Savior's isometric viewpoint coupled with the ability to manipulate the camera makes for an interesting twist in gameplay. Use of the camera is essential while playing the game.

Despite the development delays that stalled Dark Savior's Japanese release until late August, Sega of America seems to be wasting no time in translating the game for U.S. audiences. Currently on track for an early December release, Sega has good reason to be excited about Dark Savior. The impressive ACT/RPG, exclusive to the Saturn, will be a valuable weapon in the hardware wars come this holiday season.

Using the new "Parallel Scenario System," Dark Savior breaks new ground in the areas of story line and replayability. Players assume the identity of Garian, a tough bounty hunter with a mysterious past, escorting the infamous criminal Bilan to prison. However, Bilan escapes aboard a ship in transit, and what happens next can alter the whole course of the quest. Depending on how soon the player can reach Bilan in the first few minutes of the game, the characters you will meet, the dungeons you must solve and indeed the majority of the overall story line can shift dramatically into any of three "parallel" plots.

Playing Dark Savior in any of these different scenarios is close to playing an entirely new game, resulting in a huge boost to the replay value of the title. All of the stories are complex and involving, with corrupt officials, underground resistance movements, and even an unfolding love story. Anyone familiar with Climax's previous hit Landstalker should instantly recognize the similarities in Dark Savior. The three-fourths isometric view employed in the Genesis game returns, only this time with all the locations completely rendered in polygons. Although this results in some occasional slowdown and flicker in some of the more graphically intense scenes in the game, the benefits far outweigh these small drawbacks.

Players are now able to adjust their view, zooming the camera in or out, left or right in order to orient themselves to their surroundings. It may not sound like much, but to anyone who's played Landstalker, it is a godsend. Locating exactly where a platform or object is located is no longer a matter of falling flat on your face a hundred times—simply zoom out,

Dark Savior may have jumped onto the 3-D bandwagon, but unlike so many other titles, it did so with a purpose.

spin the view around and you can see everything. This new freedom is also incorporated into many of the game's puzzle elements, provoking more thought than button-smashing challenges. Dark Savior may have jumped onto the 3-D bandwagon, but unlike so many other titles, it did so with a good purpose.

Unlike Landstalker,

An interesting story line goes along with the lengthy, multiple scenario ("parallels," as they're called) quest.

combat is rare in Dark Savior. A new fighting system, where the player and challenger battle one-on-one in a best two-out-of-three match, does not have the complexity or control that is expected nowadays. As such, combat can sometimes be a nice diversion, but doesn't live up to the better platformer or puzzle aspects of the game.

Unfortunately, action-RPGs have not been easy to find on any of the next-generation game machines. With nothing on the horizon for the N64 other than a distant Zelda game, and virtually nothing on the PlayStation, games like Dark Savior easily pronounce the Saturn as the system of choice for any fan of this quite often neglected genre.

ig

Since our last preview, Dark Savior's text has been vastly improved. Sega of America is certainly improving in that department...

KONAMI

PROJECT OVERKILL™

"One of the longest, toughest, most violent shooters ever."
GameFan

©1996 Konami of America Inc. Project Overkill is a trademark of Konami Co. Ltd. PlayStation™ and the PlayStation™ logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.

PlayStation™

MATURE M AGES 17+

www.konami.com

"Overkill is not only finely tuned and balanced, but a godsend for those fond of 40+ levels of blasting carnage."
GameFan

"A must for lovers of challenging, violent games."
EGM

"Hot rendered graphics, crazy transparencies, burnin' music. Another fine Konami effort."
GameFan

"Overkill offers hours of blood-drenched fun, and there's plenty of replayability...hundreds of hidden areas."
PS Extreme

Westwood hopes that PlayStation owners will be as enthusiastic about their war game as the PC crowd was. It should do well, considering the lack of original games currently on the console market.

Command & Conquer

Westwood sets out to conquer the PlayStation with their popular PC strategy game

Publisher: Westwood

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Double CD-ROM

Developer: Westwood

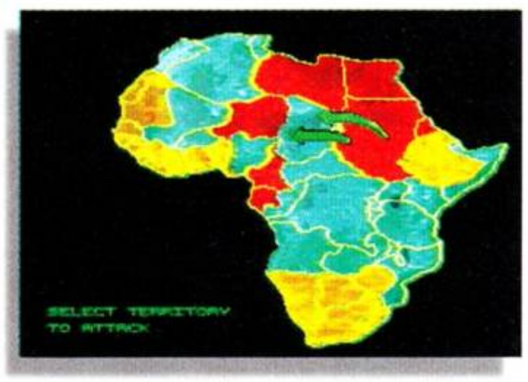
Release: Now Available

Command & Conquer took the IBM market by storm by offering an addictive mix of futuristic strategy and action. After climbing to the top of nearly every PC game sales chart, the only territory left to conquer is that of the console market, a world starved of games in this genre.

Command & Conquer is essentially a strategy game that plays like an action game. Herzog Zwei on the Genesis and Military Madness on the TurboGrafx-16 are the closest cousins to this sparse genre, and not coincidentally, they were big hits during their time.

In most war games, there is traditionally a designated "bad" side that you must defeat by using the "good" side. This doesn't necessarily hold true in Command & Conquer, however, as it really doesn't matter since you can play as either of them, thus turning that side into the one you're rooting for. C&C includes two disks: One is the GDI disk (Global Defense Initiative) and the other is the Brotherhood of NOD. The disc that you boot becomes the faction that you control. Each side contains its own missions and story line, and makes C&C two independently separate games. For example, if you play GDI, your mission will be to stop the development of the NOD nuclear warhead, whereas if you play as NOD, you have to protect it.

The action in C&C can get fast, furious...and congested. It's scenes like these that make you want to use a mouse for more precise control of your units.



Command & Conquer's game presentation looks fantastic with excellent 3-D-rendered, full-motion video sequences (left). C&C's mission structure is not linear and will allow you to choose which territory to crush (right).

C&C revolves around a mysterious element called Tiberium, which is popping up all over the Earth. It also is the sole source of money during battle, requiring fields of it to be harvested in order to fund your war effort. In most missions your goal is to quickly harvest as much Tiberium as possible through the use of helpless Harvesters, thus allowing you to overpower your enemy with a vast array of vehicles. The trick is to keep the supply of money flowing by keeping your defenseless Harvesters from being obliterated. The odds are often stacked against you, and the opposing side is usually established in the battlefield with an immense army, thereby forcing you to rely on strategy more than brute force.

The key to winning each mission usually depends on knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each vehicle.

Although a good portion of the game relies on reflexes, the key to winning each mission usually depends on knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each enemy vehicle in comparison to your own. This is no simple task as there are a variety of weapons available, ranging from simple infantry to Mammoth Tanks which slowly regenerate their armor. Some vehicles such as NOD Bikes are nearly harmless by themselves, but are lethal in groups. There are also quirky units such as Commandos and Engineers that can change the balance of the battle within seconds. The matchup possibilities are endless, especially when different types of units are brought together to form a battle group.

Graphically, C&C is a 2-D game that uses prerendered sprites to give it a somewhat 3-D feel. The carnage is fantastically violent—vehicles display damage, buildings erupt in smoke and soldiers are crushed underneath tank treads.

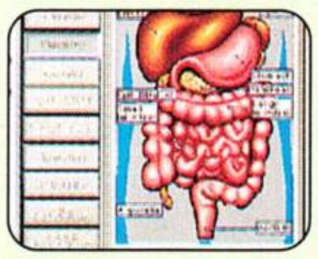
There is still reason for concern in this early development stage, though. Game control looks like it might be a problem without a mouse. The PS pad is simply too sluggish a control for this type of game.

C&C may very well end up being a sleeper hit as it delivers a game that is currently unlike any other on the PlayStation. ig

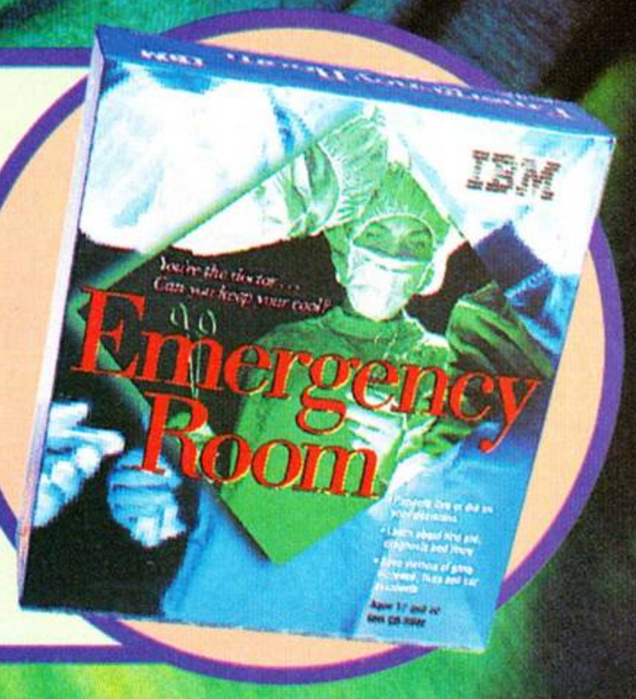
YOU DON'T NEED GUTS TO PLAY THIS GAME, YOU JUST GOTTA KNOW WHERE TO PUT 'EM.

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Want to play doctor? Here's your chance to diagnose, treat and, hopefully, discharge a healthy, living patient. *CD ROM Today* calls *Emergency Room* "a fast-paced, realistic medical adventure." Be prepared to face over 400 possible cases—from hangnails to gunshot wounds. All brought to life by over 30 minutes of digital video, a Hollywood cast and 1,500 photo-realistic 3-D graphics. Lives are hanging in the balance, so rush to your local software dealer. Code Blue. Or visit www.pc.ibm.com/multimedia.



IBM



IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. ©1996 IBM Corp. All rights reserved.

With intensely beautiful two-dimensional graphics (Amen), Magic Knight Rayearth is one of the best-looking action-RPGs ever to grace a game system. If only there were more games like this...

Magic Knight Rayearth

Another masterful action-RPG is about to hit the Saturn, thanks to Working Designs

Publisher: Working Designs

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sega Enterprises

Release: 1st Quarter '97

Since Working Designs announced that they would be bringing Sega's Magic Knight Rayearth to the U.S., it has become their most anticipated title aside of the new Saturn version of LUNAR: The Silver Star. Now, after over a half year's worth of delays (mainly thanks to the TV series that keeps getting cancelled over and over), the game's translation is finally under way again, and *IG* has the world's first English screens from the game.

Magic Knight Rayearth is an action-RPG based on the popular Japanese manga from CLAMP, a group of four quite creative ladies from Japan.

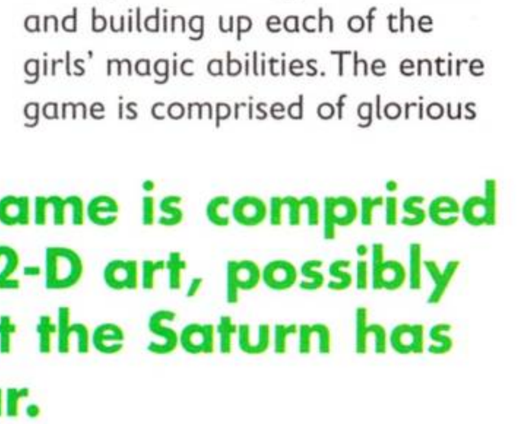
As with all good stories, there is a wicked villain behind the mess of events going on in the land of Zephyr, who goes by the name of Zagalt. He's the man responsible for capturing princess Emerald.

The entire game is comprised of glorious 2-D art, possibly the best that the Saturn has seen thus far.

The story takes place in modern-day Tokyo, as a bunch of schools are on a Social Studies field trip visiting Tokyo Tower. The three main characters of the game, Hikaru, Umi and Fuu are all on this trip, and after running into each other while trying to catch Hikaru's puppy, they all get blinded by a bright light and suddenly find themselves falling from the sky in an entirely new land.

When they land, the girls learn of their destinies as the legendary Magic Knights from their guide, an old (but young-looking) magician named Clef. He tells them about how they were summoned to Zephyr by the land's princess, Emerald, who was captured by the evil Zagalt, thus throwing the land into a state of chaos and disorder, and potential destruction. Obviously, their goal is to fulfill their destinies as the Magic Knights and save the princess, as well as the land, from Zagalt.

The game takes place in an overhead view similar to The Legend of Zelda. All action takes place right there on screen, also like Zelda, and there is no experience building necessary—character development comes in the form of finding different types of items and building up each of the girls' magic abilities. The entire game is comprised of glorious 2-D art, possibly the best the Saturn has seen thus far, and the animation is fantastic. In addition to the in-game animation, there are frequent breaks for full-screen, fully animated anime sequences that bring the story to life.



Fighting takes place right on the play environment, similar to Zelda or Legend of Oasis (or most action-RPGs, actually). Each of the girls has her own unique weapon.

Based on the popular anime from Japan, MKR tells the story of three young girls, led by Hikaru Shidou (shown here) who get thrown into another dimension.

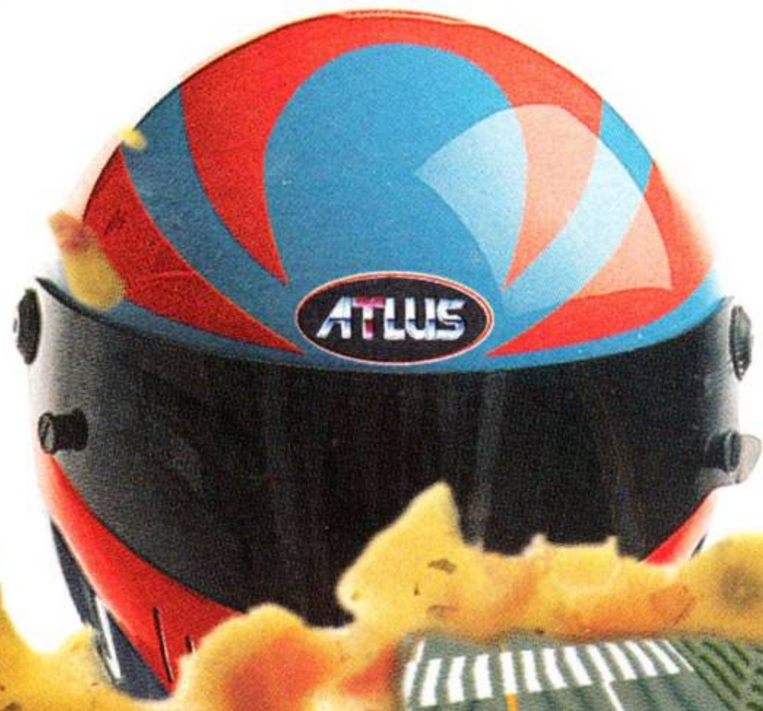
As far as sounds are concerned, well, the music is brilliant and adds to the game's atmosphere in ways unimaginable—this editor played through the import version of MKR when it came out in August 1995, and it instantly became one of my all-time favorite games because of the immense atmosphere conveyed by the characters' personalities and the game's graphics and music.

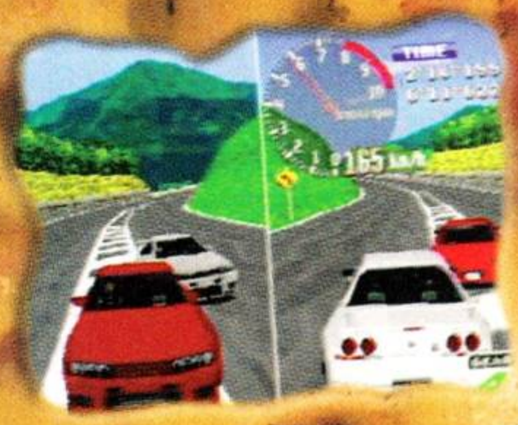
Oh, and also—there are TONS of voice sequences throughout the game. The first part of the game takes a good hour or two just because of all the voice they put into the beginning. Definitely one of the benefits of playing on a CD.

Overall, Rayearth is shaping up to be the biggest Saturn action-RPG ever, assuming there are no more unforeseen delays in the translation process. Waiting this long must hurt, but believe us—it's worth it.

ig

BLOW DOORS OR BLOW CHOW!





FEATURES:

- 25+ cars to choose from
- Race in either direction on 5 different tracks
- Includes original Pikes Peak Hill Climb
- 12 different camera angles
- Build and design your own tracks using the first-of-it's-kind track editor
- Design your own car, tires, suspension, color and more!
- 1 or 2 player action

PEAK PERFORMANCE™

ATLUS

PIKES PEAK INTERNATIONAL HILL CLIMB

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

© 1996 Atlus Corp., LTD. Peak Performance is a trademark of Atlus Corp., LTD. All Rights Reserved. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information. Photo by Bucher.

As if the RPG genre wasn't niche enough, there are actually those out there who prefer a true RPG to an action or a sim one. For those people, Albert Odyssey will fit the bill quite nicely.

Albert Odyssey
Legend of Eldean

Working Designs prepares to unleash the Saturn's first traditional RPG

The main in-game graphics in Albert Odyssey don't necessarily scream 32-Bit, but character animation is good, and the graphical effects are a treat to watch, not only in the overhead scenes but in battle scenes as well. Oh, and the music...ohh, the music. If only all games sounded this good.

Publisher: Working Designs

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sunsoft

Release: 1st Quarter '97

Traditional menu-driven battles take place in a from-the-side viewpoint reminiscent of the Final Fantasy series. As you can see here, spell effects can be awesome.

Now that Dragon Force is finally out of the way, Working Designs (how many times have we heard that name already in this issue??) is setting their sights on their next scheduled Saturn RPG project, Albert Odyssey: Legend of Eldean.

Albert Odyssey is the first traditional-style RPG scheduled to be released on the Saturn. It's pretty sad that the system has been out for well over a year now without any true role-playing games for it, but alas, the problem will soon be gone, as Albert Odyssey is as traditional an RPG as they come.

Originally intended to be a Super Famicom game, Albert Odyssey was cancelled more than halfway through development and then ported to the Saturn where the game was then completed and released in Japan as Albert Odyssey Gaiden (side-story).

The game features artwork from Kubooka-san, the artist who did the art for LUNAR: The Silver Star.

The story line goes a little something like this (please note—this is taken directly from press materials): Long ago, when the beast wars raged, a heroic figure known only as Albert rose to conquer the monster tribes and negotiate a tenuous peace between the humans and beasts. Now, hundreds of years later, the beasts are stirring up trouble once again, and breaking the truce. Watching the growing terror from his small village, a young boy on the verge of manhood (make of that what you will) begins his odyssey to defeat the powers of darkness and return peace to his homeland once again.

Getting back to reality, Albert Odyssey features amazing artwork from Kubooka-san, the famous artist who did the art for LUNAR: The Silver Star.

As if the Japanese version wasn't nice enough, the American version will have an additional two to three minutes of completely original animation, with art directed by Kubooka-san himself.

Gameplay-wise, Albert Odyssey promises over 35 hours of solid RPGing, with huge lands to explore and nicely detailed battle sequences. In the early preview version we played, the load times before and after each battle were fairly long, but WD promises that the final U.S. version will have decreased load times throughout, as well as some other nice enhancements.

Musically, Albert Odyssey is a gem, with one of the best RPG soundtracks to date, and possibly the best on the Saturn thus far (save perhaps Magic Knight Rayearth, another WD game). The sound effects are nice too, and complement the game's atmosphere well.

With such an early version of the game (fully in Japanese, no less), it's difficult to give a more thorough preview of this promising title, but judging by Working Designs' past judgment in porting over RPGs, we'd say it's a safe bet that Albert Odyssey will be well worth checking out when it hits this spring.

ig

The overworld structure in Albert Odyssey is almost identical to the one in Final Fantasy III. WD plans to improve the "3-D-ness" of the map by adding depth to objects like hills and trees.

With an awesome amount of selectable cars and excellent environments, Merit Studios' Total Drivin' has the potential to race in and become a surprise hit on the PlayStation.

Total Drivin'

Merit Studios' new racing game appears to have the total package

Publisher: Merit Studios

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Merit Studios

Release: 1st Quarter '97

Racing games generally fall into two distinctively different categories—games that try to be simulators, like EA's Need for Speed, and pure arcade-action games, like Namco's Ridge Racer and its sequels. Total Drivin', the brainchild of Andrew Perella and Andrew Richards (who wrote Pete Sampras' Tennis for the Genesis) appears to lean heavily toward the latter, while maintaining many key elements of a realistic racing simulation.

One thing that Need for Speed had was a realistic physics model. Look at most other racing games, and you'll find that collisions are generic—hit a car, lose an amount of speed depending on the speeds of the cars involved in the collision, and that's about it. In Total Drivin', not only can you spin your opponents around, but the actual environment will play a factor. Ride up on that embankment, and pretty soon you're driving on two wheels...or worse, the roof of your car! For example, if you manage to be unfortunate enough to have your car fall into the ocean, you'll see your car fly into the water, then slowly sink, costing you quite a bit of valuable time.

Thankfully, a two-player split-screen mode is one of the features in the game (top). Many camera angles are available—here friends, is one of 'em (above).

Total Drivin' also features multiple types of racing. There are at least three classes at this stage of completion, from the Dakar Rally class where you drive 4x4s across the desert, to the high-speed Sports Class on asphalt, to the insane Rally class, where you take those sports cars out to get a little muddy! Each class has its own subset of the 24 available cars to choose from, as well as several different tracks to choose from. Tracks range from the purely fantastic island, where you'll race on a track with an active volcano on it, to the Moscow and Hong Kong tracks, both based around real geographic data and interesting landmarks in the area.

Total Drivin's unique and realistic driving environments surely look to be one of its strengths.

In Total Drivin', not only can you spin your opponents around, but the actual environment will play a factor.

You'll also be able to play this game multiplayer, both as a link cable game and as a split-screen racing racing game for those who don't have two PlayStations. At the moment, two-player split screen mode more or less evenly slices the frame rate in half, but we expect Merit to optimize it to the point where it will run around the same speed as the one-player mode, which is targeted for a smooth 30 frames per second.

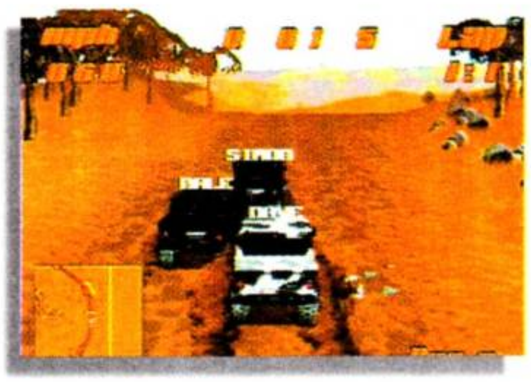
Graphics were stunning on the videotape that Merit sent us—the horizon was far in the distance, minimizing pop-up, and the frame rate was still high. Lighting effects didn't appear to be fully implemented (in addition, the car had no shadow), but Merit has put in a nice glass effect where you can see the light reflecting off of the car's windows. The final version of the game will feature multiple light sources, however, and will also allow the player to race the courses at night, with proper lightsourcing from street lights and storefront windows. Weather will also play a factor in the final version, with the environment including mundane storms that merely bring rain or snow to full-blown twisters skittering through the track.

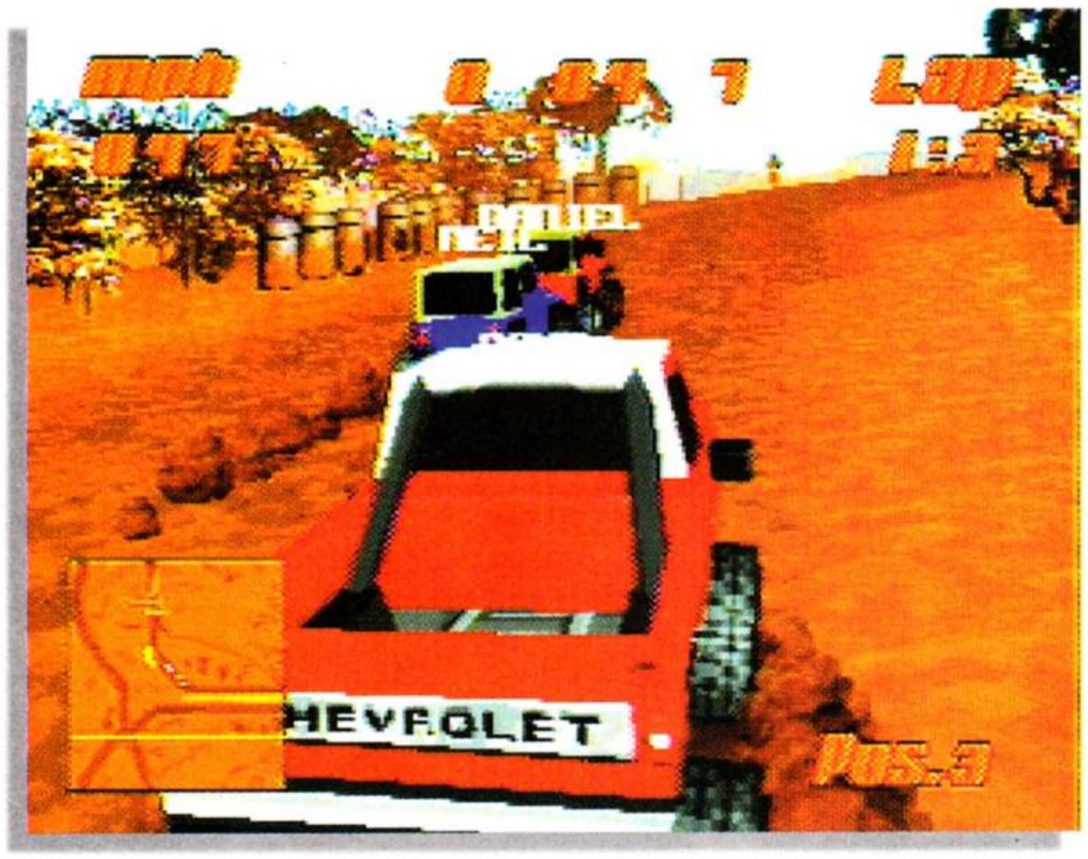
Overall, Total Drivin' seems like just the cure for PlayStation owners jealous of Sega Rally—it looks to provide much of the same wild and fun off-roading action, but with some interesting enhancements and some, umm, liberties with reality. Keep an eye out for this one—it's scheduled to hit store shelves early next year.

ig

If you get bored with racing, just take your cool car to the beach and pick up babes.

In an unexpected turn of events, the latest Test Drive won't feature pretty-boy racing cars like Ferraris, but instead will offer down-and-dirty off-road vehicles such as the rugged Hummer.





Test Drive: Off-Road

Accolade gets down and dirty in the latest entry to the Test Drive franchise

Publisher: Accolade

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Elite

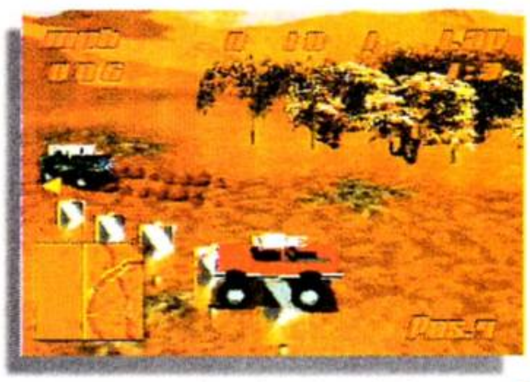
Release: January '97

For those of you who have played computers way back in the mid-'80s, you probably remember the original Test Drive. After two sequels, however, Accolade's popular franchise began to wither, superseded by superior products from other companies such as EA's The Need for Speed. After a long absence, Test Drive finally makes its triumphant return on the next-generation systems, only with a twist—no more sports cars and paved roads, since Test Drive: Off-Road is purely four-wheel drive action.

Test Drive: Off-Road features four vehicles: the Jeep Wrangler, the Land Rover Defender 90, the Chevy Z-71, and, of course, everyone's favorite—the Hummer. Each vehicle will have its own handling characteristics, as well as the actual dashboard from the real deal for the in-car view. In addition, six other vehicles will be selectable via code, from the monster truck to the Baja bug. Cars will also take damage in collisions.

Control is pretty simple—you've got your accelerator, brake, reverse, and a hand brake, which is great for kicking the rear of the vehicle out to initiate a slide. This is great for getting yourself around those tight corners and looks incredibly cool as your truck kicks up a rooster tail of dust.

Multiple tracks feature mud, sand, and snow—the version we saw has 12 different tracks, but the developers promise more will be added. All the tracks will feature hills to launch your vehicle, as well as other, more unepected obstacles such as a downed passenger jet in one level.



Test Drive can be played via link cable or as a split screen, as pictured here (top). Multiple camera views are available, like this third-person perspective (above).

In one-player mode, there are several different gameplay options. You can play a single race for a quick game, or you can try the two circuits, which will either feature racing vehicles similar to yours or against a pack of mixed vehicles. In one game mode, you'll compete for points as a team with other vehicles of the same type and color against another team, two from each team at a time.

Test Drive: Off-Road features several tracks from Gravity Kills, in addition to the competent in-house music. Off Road also features running commentary, and unique engine sounds for each vehicle.

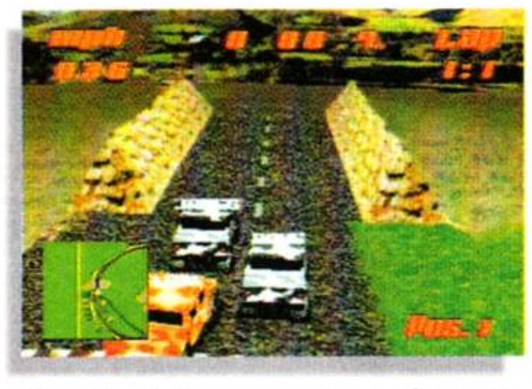
Test Drive makes its triumphant return on next-generation systems with a twist—no more sports cars and paved roads.

Some of Test Drive: Off-Road's best strengths will lie in its realism, wealth of racing options and multiplayer features.

One of the best features of the game will be the two-player mode, which can be played either split-screen or on two PlayStations via a link cable. A nice touch is the ability to choose different paint jobs for each vehicle to avoid any confusion even if both players are using the same type of vehicle.

After the success of racing titles such as Sega Rally, it's good to see other companies are attempting to re-create the rugged thrill of off-road racing. We can only hope that the final version of Test Drive: Off-Road will deliver a solid, exciting racing game on all counts—so far, it looks like Accolade is on the right track.

ig



As you might expect, an off-road game is going to have some rugged courses with horrid weather such as this snow course (left). Driving lanes can get congested as the wide courses often become narrow in some spots (right).

It's a tough call, but this scene in Scud could be compared to The Terminator meets Monty Python while under the influence of dangerous hallucinogenic drugs. Scud encounters unparalleled weirdness.

Scud

Scud: The Disposable Assassin takes aim in SegaSoft's unique shooter

Publisher: SegaSoft

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: SegaSoft

Release: 1st Quarter '97

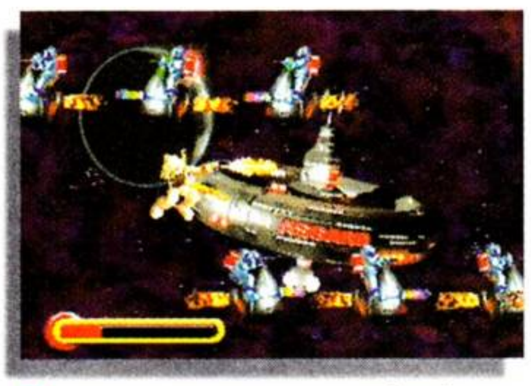
SegaSoft's new action game follows Rob Schrab's long-running alternative comic, *Scud: the Disposable Assassin*. This odd-but-lovable robotic assassin-for-hire must blast through a number of adventures, assassinating battalions of mutants, robots and humans in order to stay alive.

Scud, originally purchased from a giant vending machine for the sole purpose of assassinating an evil mutant named Jeff, realizes that he will die upon completion of his "hit." To save himself, Scud only wounds Jeff, putting her (yes it's a girl) in the hospital indefinitely. Scud, now able to live since he didn't finish his deadly task, must freelance as an assassin to pay Jeff's hospital bills. Later, much to his dismay, Scud learns Jeff has recovered, killed her doctors and is now hellbent on hunting him down.

The killing takes on a southwestern flair when Scud must search the far corners of a sun-drenched desert to take on several different members of the Grittites gang.

While this new SegaSoft title follows the story line of the comic series closely, it is not an exact outline. Fans of the popular alternative comic series will have an advantage only because they will understand the weird storyline a little better than others who are unfamiliar with the series.

While Scud may look like the average platform shooter there are a few features that make it a little more unique than average. First off, the game offers several styles of play, consisting of a traditional side-scrolling mode or first-person with a light gun. Additionally, players can team up by using the game pad and the light gun at the same time. The player with the game pad can freeze opponents so the other player may blast them. Still, another set of options lets gamers play as Scud or his sidekick Drywall or both at the same time. For an all-out blood fest, two-player light-gun play is also available.



Missions are not just confined to Earth. Here Scud opens a six-pack of whoop-ass on some bad boys.

Scud appears as a tall, lanky lad sporting nothing but two oblong saucers for eyes on an otherwise blank face.

Graphically, Scud offers an eclectic blend of colorful 3-D-rendered villains of all shapes and forms against modest, hand-modeled, rendered backgrounds.

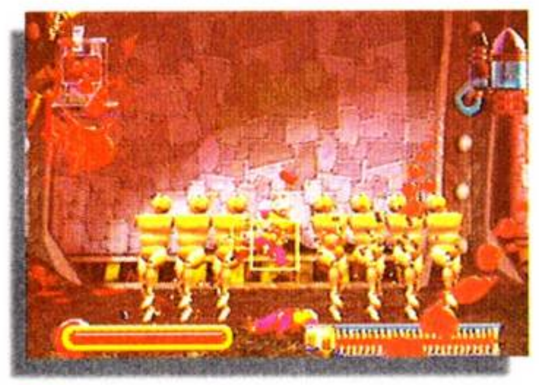
The game's music would be best described as psychedelic organ interwoven with a bit of country guitar twang. It complements the game's pseudo-surrealistic image well.

Scud appears as a tall, lanky lad sporting nothing but two oblong saucers for eyes on an otherwise blank face. Creator Rob Schrab commented that he thought Scud would be a welcome departure, since kids will better identify with a hero who is more like a kid himself than some kind of dark, muscle-bound crusader who lurks in the shadows. Whether that is true or not is yet to be seen.

When played as a shooter or a side-scroller, Scud's primary mission is to shoot every living organism that he encounters. Players can even shoot innocent bystanders without penalty. SegaSoft makes no bones about the high level of violence in the game. In fact, they admit it's one of the primary selling points. It's pure unadulterated killing.

To offset the seemingly single-track objective of the game, players will also need to pay attention to health and ammo meters as well as a level indicator. Staying away from Jeff is important as well. Yet, even with these "strategy" elements, this Scud is purely a non-cerebral kill everything free-for-all.

At this stage of completion, Scud looks like it is a shoo-in as one of the most...interesting titles on the market when it arrives on shelves. With its unique use of both a light gun and a game pad, Scud may forge new ground with its variety of multiplayer control options. ig



These rebellious mannequins enjoy doing the can-can as a prebattle warm-up.

Guns don't kill robots.

Cyber Troopers with napalm bombs kill robots.

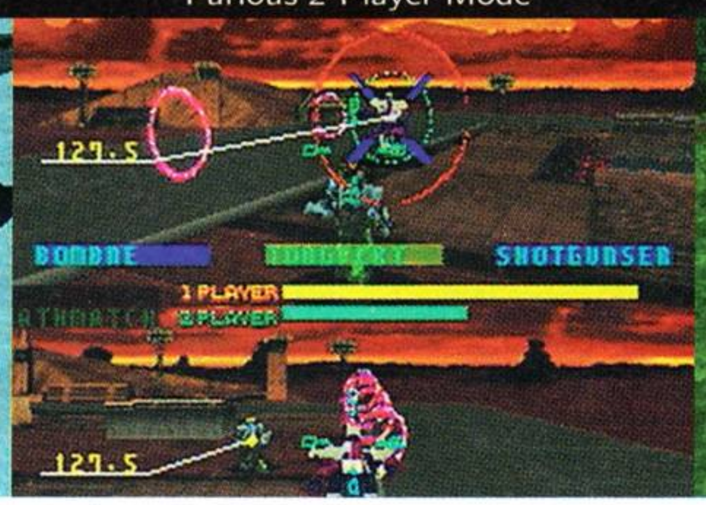
Sega is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Sega, Saturn and Virtual On are trademarks of Sega. © 1995 SEGA. P.O. Box 8097, Redwood City, CA 94063. All rights reserved.

Kill On The Fly

Ten Post-Modern Arenas

Furious 2-Player Mode

Full 360° Motion



You've got a battalion of cyborg centurions. They've got an arsenal of death-dealing weapons. They're on a rampage, hell-bent on your annihilation. And they prefer to kill at close range, with a certain in-your-face intimacy. It's warp-speed 3D mechanized combat at its absolute ugliest. And Sega Saturn's multiple processors give it all the adrenaline-pumping, gut-wrenching action of the arcade version.

VIRTUAL ON™
CYBER TROOPERS

Only On

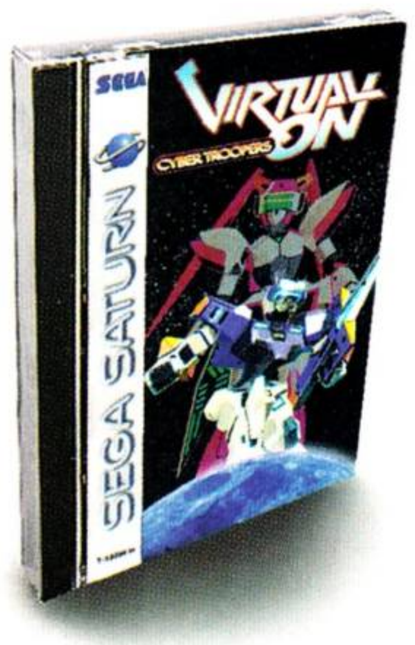
SEGA SATURN™

www.sega.com

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1 OR 2 PLAYERS

SEGA SATURN OFFICIAL SEGA MAGAZINE EXCLUSIVE



Virtua Cop™ 2. Twice as lethal.

There's shooting. And then there's slaughter.
Virtua Cop™ 2 is faster, deeper, more challenging, and more fatally engaging than its predecessor.
And, like its predecessor, it was an arcade smash hit before being brought, faithfully translated,
to the powerful multi-processor Saturn.
For the full arcade experience and maximum mayhem, don't pack anything less than the
optional Stunner™ arcade gun. It's just what your trigger finger itches for.

VIRTUA COP 2™

Only On

SEGA SATURN™

www.sega.com

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1 OR 2 PLAYERS

SEGA SATURN OFFICIAL SEGA MAGAZINE EXCLUSIVE

STUNNER™

Sega is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Sega Saturn, Stunner, and Virtua Cop are trademarks of Sega. ©1996 SEGA, P.O. Box 8097, Redwood City, CA 94063. All rights reserved.

Dragon Force may be one of the few Sega Enterprises epics that made it to the States, but it's easily one of the best. A near-perfect mix of strategy and role-playing will draw in fans of both genres.

Dragon Force

Strategy and role-playing blend perfectly in Working Designs' epic new title

Publisher: Working Designs

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sega Enterprises

Release: Now Available

Working Designs has built quite a reputation for bringing quality games across the Pacific, and their latest title, Dragon Force for the Saturn, is a perfect example of this. All the elements that made the strategy-RPG a hit for Sega of Japan have been skillfully translated just in time for the holiday season; Dragon Force was worth the wait.

The game begins with the land of Legendra in a time of great turmoil. Fears are growing that the legendary villain Madruk, who ages ago was put into a deep sleep by a sacred dragon, is slowly regaining power and soon will return to wreak havoc upon the world. Compounding these fears, the tyrant Goldark has declared war upon the other seven countries of Legendra and thrown the entire continent into a state of panic. Only if one leader can step forth and unite the warring nations, bringing together the eight warriors of the Dragon Force, is there hope of defeating the evil Madruk and bringing peace to the land.

As a strategy-RPG, Dragon Force does an excellent job of developing this story line. The player can assume the role of any of the eight nations' leaders, each with his or her own perspectives on the unfolding plot with several minor sub-plots all their own (not to mention just the right amount of that patented Working Designs humor). Although the basic story of uniting the kingdom and finding the eight warriors of the Dragon Force never changes, the variety and personality in the characters and stories of each nation is remarkable. It makes replaying the game not only a viable option, but almost a necessity. This is not a game most people will feel finished with after only beating it once.

However, the story line is not as prominent in the overall game as in other sim-RPGs, such as in Sega's Shining Force series. The plot keeps things interesting and moving along, but the main focus here is on strategy. Legendra is dotted with castles, towers and other fortresses all interconnected by a web of roads. Depending on their size, the castles provide their forces with a replenishing supply of men and also give an advantage in repelling an invading army. Because of their strategic importance, gaining and holding onto castles is an essential aspect of Dragon Force. Armies of 10 different classes—Soldier, Calvary, Mage, Samurai, Archer, Monk, Harpy, Beast, Dragon and Zombie—can be lead into battle, each possessing its own style of attack and different strengths and weaknesses.

For example, archers and mages can launch arrows and fireballs at the enemy from a distance, but are poor fighters in hand-to-hand combat. The abilities of each class and how they perform against the other classes is extremely important in battle. Using monks might mean certain defeat against a force of dragons while it could also lead

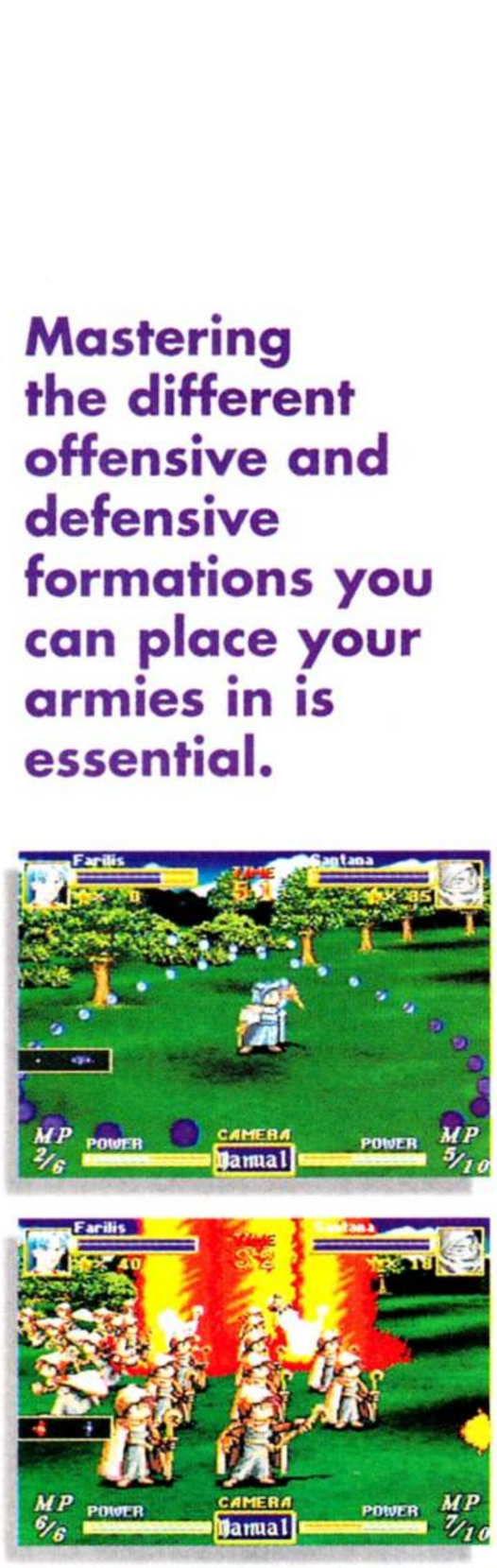
Depending on the class of your army, battle can be affected for better or for worse by acts or forms of nature, such as desert sandstorms or forest and mountain terrain.

The ability of each class and how they perform against the other classes is extremely important in battle.

Up to 200 characters (!) can be on screen at once during battle sequences. The animations of the characters are nice, and the drama is purposely overdone a bit.

Throughout the game, the story unfolds via cut scenes that are very nicely drawn, in traditional Japanese anime style. Additionally, there's a fair amount of voice acting in the game, and thank God, it's pretty good.

Mastering the different offensive and defensive formations you can place your armies in is essential.



There are many different magic spell effects in Dragon Force, and the visual displays associated with each are refreshing and stimulating. (I can't believe I just said that...)

to easy victory over the same number of zombies.

In addition, not only does who is fighting count, but where they are fighting as well. Legendra contains many environments, each affecting the performance of the armies. For example, you may want to lure the enemy into a forest, where your army of samurai feel right at home and enjoy a significant attack bonus, or place your archers on mountains where they are most effective. All of these positive and negative bonuses can get quite confusing, but thankfully the instruction booklet contains invaluable reference charts for quick and easy access.

Despite the importance of armies, however, battles are ultimately won and lost based on the commanding generals—no battle is over until one of the generals is killed or retreats. You may still have 50 armies,

An Interview With Working Designs

IG recently had the chance to conduct a quick, five-question interview with Victor Ireland, president of Working Designs, just after he and his team finished working on Dragon Force. What follows are the words of a man who has been known to always tell it like it is...

IG: What made you choose Dragon Force for translation?

Victor: We first saw it back in June of 1995, and fell in LOVE with the visuals of the battles, as well as the variety of combat fields and spells. We were certain that Sega of America would take it for themselves, but were thrilled when SoJ, knowing our specialty was translating large, complicated RPGs, let us license it.

IG: Dragon Force was originally scheduled for a July release. Were there any unexpected problems with the game? What accounted for the delays?

VI: Lots. Many. Tons. Due to the fact that the project was large, and much of the programming group had broken up and moved about to other projects, we received some incomplete data, and didn't know until the very last minute (July/August—the original date). We found that the files we had been given to translate were from a version far before the final, and therefore nearly all the text we had done for the story was unusable. We also had a LOT more to translate, to the tune of about 700 percent more text than we had done to that point. Using a little detective work and wizardry, we finally got all the files we needed and salvaged what we could of the original translated version. We then set about translating the mountain of text we didn't have until August. That took until the middle of October. We then did intensive testing for about four weeks, rendering virtually all our staff brain dead. But, there was no choice, with eight different scenarios with different text and different situations, it was a monster task. And, since I'm every bit the perfectionist I'm rumored to be, it didn't go until it was right.

IG: As a Saturn developer, how do you feel about the Saturn's current position in the U.S. market and its chances for the future?

VI: Of course I'd like it to be better, but to be fair, SEGA seems to have finally gotten a clue about marketing here. The latest ads and promotions are more focused and compelling (not the anti-this or that ones—the ones just after those). I think it's hilariously sad that the PlayStation is considered to have better games, when in most of the magazine awards for 1996, SEGA ties or beats Sony (and Nintendo, but that's pretty easy when they only have a few game categories with ANY games to begin with) in "Best of Genre" type awards. That tells me that the PlayStation machine runs on a fair amount of hype (can you say "Crash Bandicoot?"), which is ironic, since SEGA used to do that better than anyone. If SEGA can continue to build on what they've started this Christmas, they've got a good chance of closing the gap with Sony.

IG: Currently, Working Designs is only working on Saturn titles. Are there any plans in the future to work on other systems such as the PlayStation or Nintendo 64?

VI: N64 is out because of the cartridge media. We're not billionaires, and we're not insane. You have to be one of those to do a cart and make money consistently for a long period of time on a (expensive) cart-based system. I like the technology of the graphics hardware, though.

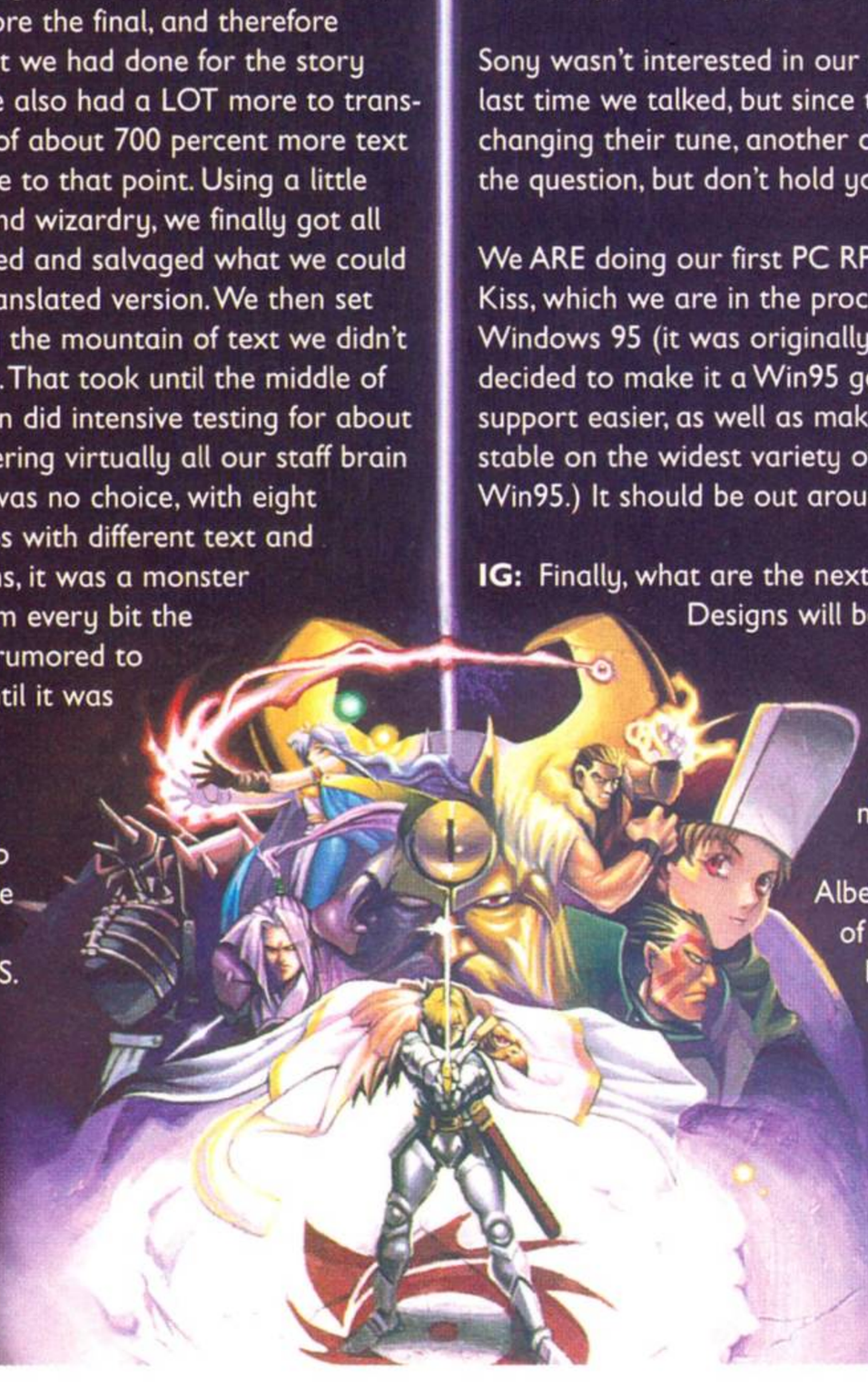
Sony wasn't interested in our RPG skills at all last time we talked, but since they seem to be changing their tune, another chance isn't out of the question, but don't hold your breath.

We ARE doing our first PC RPG, called Serpent's Kiss, which we are in the process of updating to Windows 95 (it was originally DOS only, but we decided to make it a Win95 game to make tech support easier, as well as making the game more stable on the widest variety of machines that run Win95.) It should be out around April '97.

IG: Finally, what are the next games Working Designs will be working on?

VI: This is what's in the que (announced) at the moment:

Albert Odyssey: Legend of Eldean (Saturn)
Magic Knight Rayearth (Saturn)
Serpent's Kiss (PC)
LUNAR: Silver Star Story (Saturn)



Before each battle, opposing generals verbally go at it with each other before attempting to rip their opposition's hearts out (fun!).

ranks, corpses sailing into the air in its wake, does the same thing all those other fancy polygon games do—but it's good!

Although some sound effects are overused and at times seem a bit muffled, the soundtrack couldn't be more appropriate. It's like you have a full orchestra as you launch into battle. The CD has a wealth of great songs, all psyching you up for blood and conquest.

Dragon Force is strategy role-playing at its best. With graphics and sound perfectly tailored to fit the deep and addictive gameplay, Dragon Force has enough appeal to put a smile on the face of any Sega Saturn owner. ig

Each of the seven different generals (from each of the countries) carries with him or her a different story, which is in fact just a branch of the overall big picture.

All the variables allow a great deal of freedom for the player to develop strategies, and there is no single recipe for success.

Maps of the entire continent of Legendra, as well as the local play areas, set the stage for the gameplay in Dragon Force.

but if your general dies, the battle is lost.

Generals come in all sorts of different classes just as armies do, all with their own unique kinds of magic. Each general can lead anywhere from one to 100 armies; when they win a battle, generals earn a promotion which allows them to command 10 more armies. If they lose, generals may be captured and convinced to join the opposition. As such, mastering the various offensive and defensive formations you can place your armies in is essential. You must protect your own commanding officer while at the same time trying to take out the enemies.

Learning all of the various aspects of Dragon Force from army abilities, to geographic variables, to knowing your generals may seem daunting and complicated. Indeed it is. Ultimately it pays off with deep and rewarding gameplay. All the variables allow the player a great deal of freedom in developing strategies, and there is no single, easy recipe for success. Indeed, using your brain to overcome a superior force is one of the most satisfying parts of the game.

Great sound and graphics complement Dragon Force's superb play. Because it uses 2-D sprites, many may look at screenshots and wonder how such graphics could be perceived as impressive. The answer? Volume, volume, VOLUME! Battles of up to *two hundred* of those sprites take place, all independently moving, scaling in and out along with the battlefield.

Battles of up to 200 sprites take place, all independently moving and scaling in and out.

This isn't one of those strategy games where a huge battle takes place and all you see are the results—you get to watch the entire tide of battle, start to finish, from preset, computer-controlled or manually maneuverable camera positions. Watching dozens and dozens of armies mash together out for blood, or seeing a powerful spell tear its way through the enemy

During the game, you can retrieve statistical information about basically anyone or anything on the map. Attempting to go into battle before assessing an opponent's strengths and weaknesses is a foolish move. Know your enemy.

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Great anime character designs.
+ Spell effects and battles will not disappoint.

SOUNDS: A-

+ Perfectly suited and stirring symphonic music.
+/- So-so sound effects.

GAMEPLAY: A

+ Deep and involving play aplenty.
+ Addictive quality slightly below crack/cocaine (but better for you!)

LASTING POWER: A-

+ Sub-quests and variety in each of the stories make it perhaps the most replayable Saturn game to date.

OVERALL A

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

IMAGE ENHANCE

SCAN: 032

THERMAL READING	74°
ENDOCRINE ANALYSIS	44/33
SECTOR COORDINATES	P7/D8
AMMO COUNT	1458
ALIEN HOSTILES	15.0
ALIEN CASUALTIES	0.0
SURVIVAL PROBABILITY	UNKNOWN

3-001-A
PRIORITY RELEASE FLASH:

RE: HOSTILE ALIEN OUTBREAK AT AREA 51.

SITUATION HAS ESCALATED DANGEROUSLY. POSSIBLE ALIEN OUTBREAK IMMINENT. UPGRADE STATUS TO CONDITION CRITICAL. BE ADVISED, COMMAND HQ HAS AUTHORIZED THE RELEASE OF THE FOLLOWING ASSAULT CLASS WEAPONS FROM SECTION K: THE SEGA STUNNER FOR THE SEGA SATURN; THE KONAMI JUSTIFIER AND THE A51 PATRIOT FROM INTERACT FOR PSX.

WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED USAGE IS FORBIDDEN UNDER ARTICLE 33-B OF THE SECRET WEAPONS ACT.

TRUST NO ONE.

THE #1 ARCADE GAME SHOWS YOU WHAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WON'T.

Area 51™ ©1995 Atari Games Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed by Mesa Logic, Inc. Converted by Tantalus and Perfect Entertainment Ltd. Distributed by Midway Home Entertainment Inc. Midway® Home Entertainment Inc. is a registered trademark of Midway Games Inc. Used by permission. Licensed by Sega™ Enterprises, Ltd. for play on the Sega Saturn™ System. Sega, Sega Saturn and Stunner are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. All rights reserved. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment America for use with the PlayStation game console. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment. Inc. Justifier® is a registered trademark of Konami of America Inc. Konami® is a registered trademark of Konami Co. Ltd. Used by permission. ©1996 InterAct, Inc. Patriot A-51 is a trademark of InterAct Accessories Inc.

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM ™

PlayStation ™

AREA 51™

MIDWAY®

THE SECRET'S OUT.

Twisted Metal 2: World Tour is an excellent follow-up to an already entertaining game. By combining challenging new gameplay elements and upgraded graphics, TM2 has turned out to be a sure hit.

Twisted Metal 2: World Tour

The sequel to Sony's demonic demolition derby sets its sights on world domination

Publisher: Sony CEA

Platform: Sony PlayStation

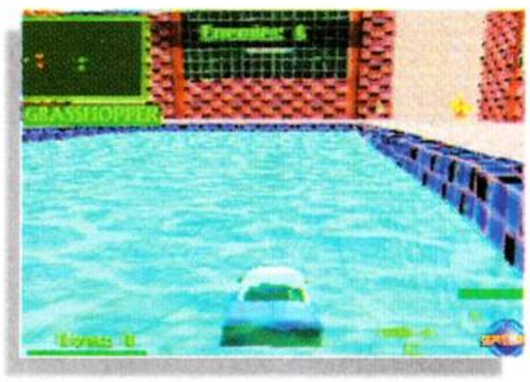
Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: SingleTrac

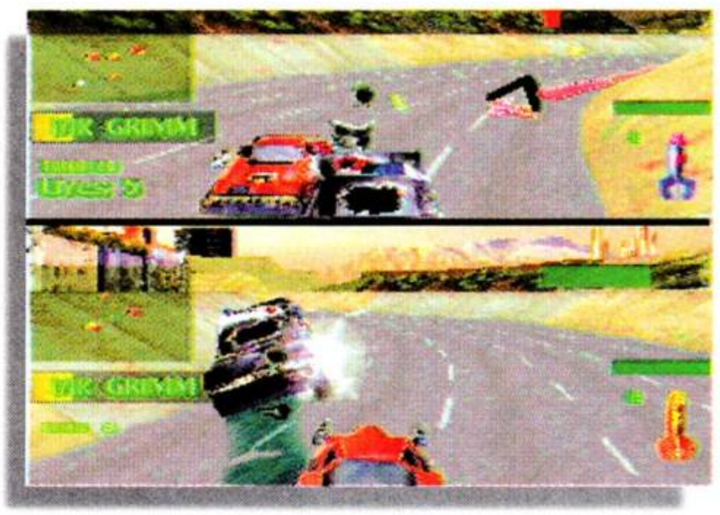
Release: Now Available

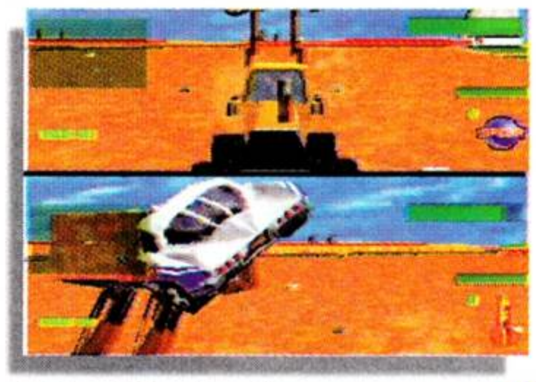
When a band gets popular in one country, the next step is to go on a World Tour. Similarly, the same holds true for the sequel to one of Sony's most surprisingly successful driving action games of last year.

Twisted Metal pitted several armed-to-the-teeth (literally in some cases) vehicles against one another in a demonic brand of a demolition derby. If you were good enough to survive, you would progress to the next "derby" in another venue. The sequel is very similar but contains considerably more depth than the original in addition to its aesthetic improvements.



Mr. Slam is one of the more colorful combatants in the game (left). This picture of the car in a pool provides a good illustration of the improved graphics in Twisted Metal in addition to the more creative level layout (right).





Twisted Metal 2 offers two different styles of two-player games that include the standard "head-to-head" matchup and a cooperative mode.

SingleTrac clearly tried to diversify gameplay by adding several different types of attacks not in the original.

SingleTrac clearly tried to diversify Twisted Metal 2's gameplay by adding several different types of attacks that weren't available in the original. Many of the old weapons such as Power and Homing missiles are in TM2, but the newer attacks and how they are executed play a large part in its improved gameplay. Some of these new weapons consist of high-arching napalm blasts which engulf the impact area in flames, and a nifty remote bomb that can be dropped and detonated at any time. Additionally, many of the weapons from the original game come "standard" in your vehicle, but must be activated by Street Fighter-like button combinations. Other "standard" weapons include a rear missile and a shield. This secondary way to launch weapons is a little complicated, but allows for more technique.

There are many selectable vehicles, consisting of entirely new designs and older TM cars with new abilities. Newcomers include Mr. Slam, a construction vehicle all too eager to pick your vehicle up and crazily bash it into the ground, and Axel, a Herculean specimen that manually turns two mammoth wheels to drive about and crush his competition.

One of the biggest improvements is that the arenas are more detailed and interactive. For example, in Paris, you can level the Eiffel Tower, and drive within its ruins; while in Iceland, the icy battlefield begins melting away into the ocean as the battle heats up.

Graphically, the game has been improved substantially. The 3-D cars are much more detailed, and the carnage effects such as explosions and flames are convincing. The music is also more fitting to each level's surroundings, for the most part.

With better graphics, improved gameplay and the same great attitude, Twisted Metal's World Tour is definitely one worth attending.

ig

GRAPHICS: A-
+ Excellent 3-D rendered vehicles and backgrounds.
+ Weapon effects such as explosions and wreckage look fabulous.

SOUNDS: B
+ The music is much better than the previous version...
- But it certainly isn't anything special.

GAMEPLAY: A-
+ A uniquely addicting action game.
+ Well-designed battlefields spanning the globe.

LASTING POWER: A-
+ The two-player mode makes for some interesting and fun duels.
+ Two-player cooperative mode adds a new edge to the action.

OVERALL A-

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Proof That Demons Do Exist

In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

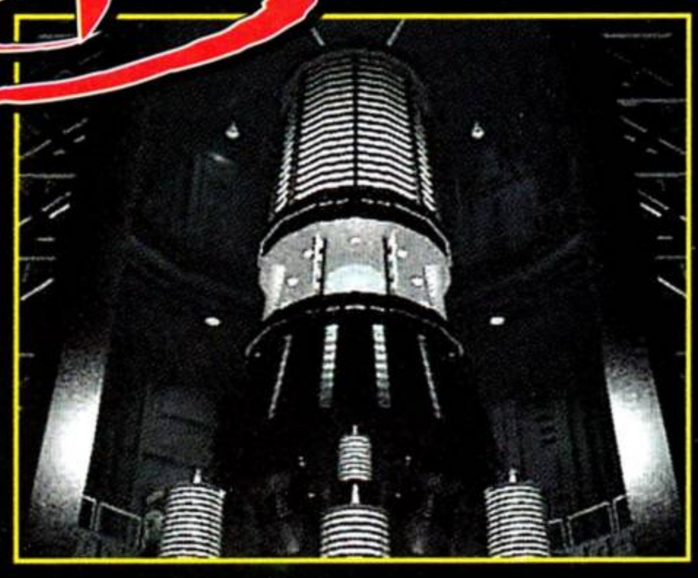
You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

Special Features

- Based on the ultra-popular, mega-hit, Megami Tensei series: first time to hit US shores
- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
- Over 300 different monsters to do battle with
- Morph any member of your party into a more powerful source known as "Persona"
- Fight your way to one of many endings

Persona

Use your "Persona"



http://www.atlus.com

ATLUS®

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

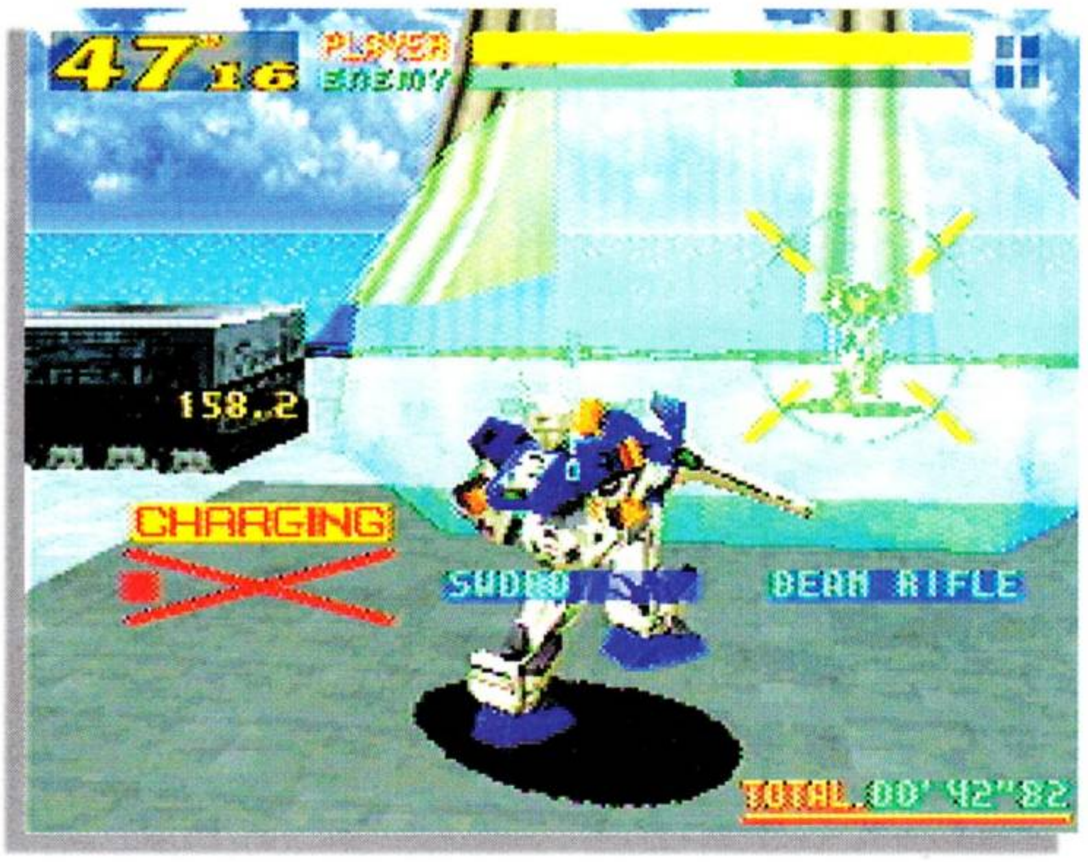
Persona™ is the first chapter of the
REVELATIONS™
SERIES

RPG

PlayStation™

© 1996 Atlus Co., LTD. Persona, Revelations Series are trademarks of Atlus Co., LTD. All Rights Reserved. PlayStation, the PlayStation logo, and the PS logo are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.
Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

Virtual On is the latest AM3 arcade port (AM3 did Sega Rally last year), and is one of the most impressive Saturn titles available to date. Perhaps the only downside to VO's release is that there is no NetLink option for modem play.



Virtual On

Sega's latest AM3 arcade port takes mechanized robot battle to new heights

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: AM3/CRI

Release: Now Available

When people talk about Sega arcade games, most of the time, it's AM2 that is the center of attention. After all, when you have a division that created games like Virtua Racing, Daytona USA, Virtua Fighter and Virtua Cop, you're sure to find yourself in the spotlight. But while the lion's share of the hype surrounds Sega's AM2 division, people are starting to notice that AM2 is not the only division that can create a compelling arcade experience.

If you weren't convinced that AM3 was a force to be reckoned with after Sega Rally, Virtual On will probably go a long way toward changing your mind. The premise is simple enough—put two giant robots in an enclosed arena, and let them duke it out. It's a simple formula, put to good use by earlier titles like Cyber Sled, but VO takes the "tanks in a big arena"-type game to the next level, with an unmatched depth of gameplay.

Virtual On takes the "tanks in a big arena"-type game to the next level, with an unmatched depth of play.

In Virtual On, you're definitely not piloting tanks, although the arcade control scheme is strongly reminiscent of Atari's classic Battlezone, with two big pistol-grip joysticks to control your character—one of eight huge robots, bristling with powerful weapons. Each mech also has a different balance of speed, armor and weaponry, so you're bound to find one that meshes well with your playing style.

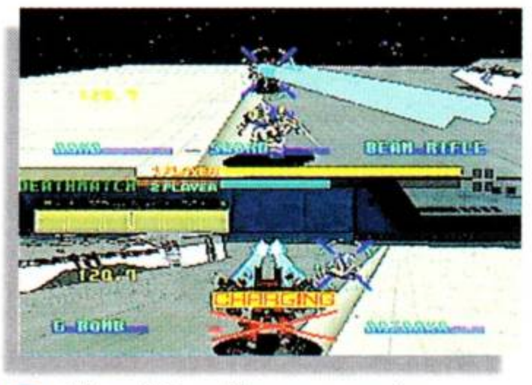
Virtual On's impressive intro sequence utilizes the new True Motion compression scheme (Duck), which allows for much crisper, cleaner video.

For example, VR Temjin is an all-around mech with no great weaknesses, and a bomb that neutralizes enemy shots. VR Raiden is a slow, heavily armored tank with legs that possesses the ability to turn the tide of a fight with one blast of its mighty lasers. Most of the other mechs are based on the Temjin and Raiden chassis, but don't be fooled—every mech is different enough that you'll have to adopt completely different strategies, depending on who you play as and who your opponent is.

Each of the "Virtuaroids" has three weapons—a left weapon, a right weapon and a center weapon that combines the strengths of the two.

Unfortunately, twin sticks don't come standard with the Saturn, so you'll probably be playing with control pads (although a twin stick is available via mail order from Sega). You won't be disappointed with the control pad's performance, though—if you're an arcade veteran, a few games, and you'll be trashing the opposition in no time. At first glance, the control is simple enough—each mech can move in any direction, rotate, jump, fire one of three weapons (which have limited ammo/charge that replenishes with time) and can dash for an extra burst of speed.

What isn't immediately obvious is the fact that AM3 has implemented many features which previously were only included in things like fighting games—the concept of cancelling a move, for example. Each attack, dash or jump has a recovery time associated with it, so if you can predict when an opponent will land from a jump



Virtual On offers two modes of spilt-screen two-player play, vertical and horizontal.

The different mechs (err, sorry—Virtuaroids) each has its own unique special attacks, some more powerful or useful than others. Attacks range from aerial bombs to swords to cute little pink hearts (we're not kidding).

or stop from a dash, you can dish out some serious hurt if your timing and aim are good. But, to counter, your opponent can cancel their dash or jump, playing havoc with your ability to predict their moves.

"So," you may be thinking, "I know all that—how does it stack up against the arcade game?" Well, the arcade game was based around the Model 2 hardware, which has powered nearly all of the recent Sega arcade titles. As such, it would be unrealistic to expect a perfect translation...but, amazingly, CRI, who ported the game to the Saturn, have really delivered the goods. Despite a lower resolution and frame rate, the Saturn version of Virtual On is almost entirely faithful to the arcade game, missing only some elevated terrain on Belgdor's forest stage in the game's one-player mode.

Two-player mode, despite a reduction in detail and a flattening of all the stages, handles quite well—after all, the real fun of a game like this is in taking your friends out. Unfortunately, no link cable or NetLink option is available, but the split-screen mode can be divided either horizontally or vertically, depending on your preference. A modem version of the game will be available in Japan sometime in December—we can only hope that Sega will be wise enough to offer a NetLink version here in the States soon afterwards, as two-player full-screen VO would simply rock at home.

Although Virtual On is a natural progression in the genre rather than a totally revolutionary game, the strides made in gameplay make this game one to get, especially if you have a lot of friends over to toast. Once you start climbing the learning curve, you'll be able to appreciate all the little gameplay touches that make this game fantastic.

Two-player mode, despite a flattening of all of the stages, handles quite well.

ig

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Characters are very detailed, right down to the moving parts.
- Looks great, but it'd look better with some more effects like light-sourcing.

SOUNDS: A

+ Excellent tunes, and crisp, clean voices right out of the arcade game.

GAMEPLAY: A

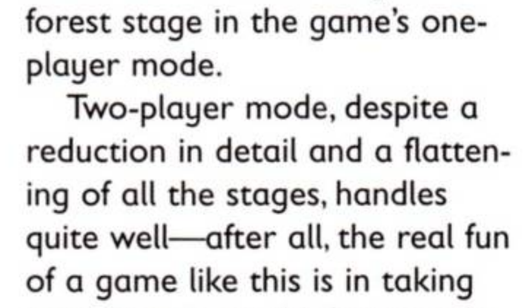
+ Fast and furious action will make you sweat.
+ Lots of subtleties make this more than a Cyber Sled clone.

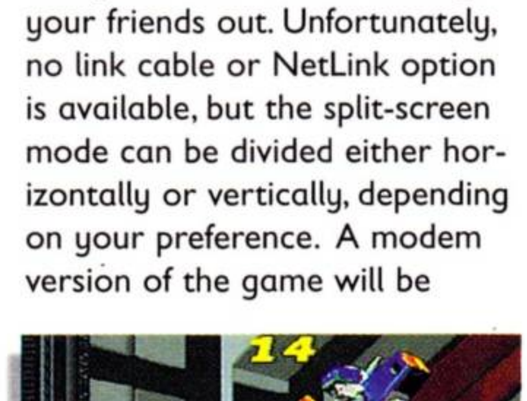
LASTING POWER: A-

+ The two-player mode is where it's at...
+ ...but the one-player game is somewhat limiting.

OVERALL: A

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED





There are eight Virtuaroids (there's that name again) selectable from the start, plus hidden characters.

KONAMI.

IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU SURVIVED WITHOUT IT.

JUSTIFIER®

SPECIFICATIONS

COMPATIBLE WITH ALL SONY PLAYSTATION GAMES
• KONAMI'S LETHAL ENFORCERS I & II™
• KONAMI'S CRYPT KILLER™
• DIE HARD TRILOGY™
• PROJECT HORNED OWL™
• AREA 51™
WEIGHT: 7 OUNCES
RANGE: 5-7 FEET
SIZE: 8 INCHES FROM NOSE TO BUTT

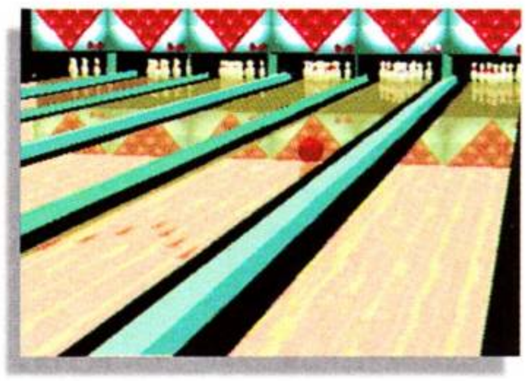
THE LICENSED GUN FOR THE SONY PLAYSTATION.

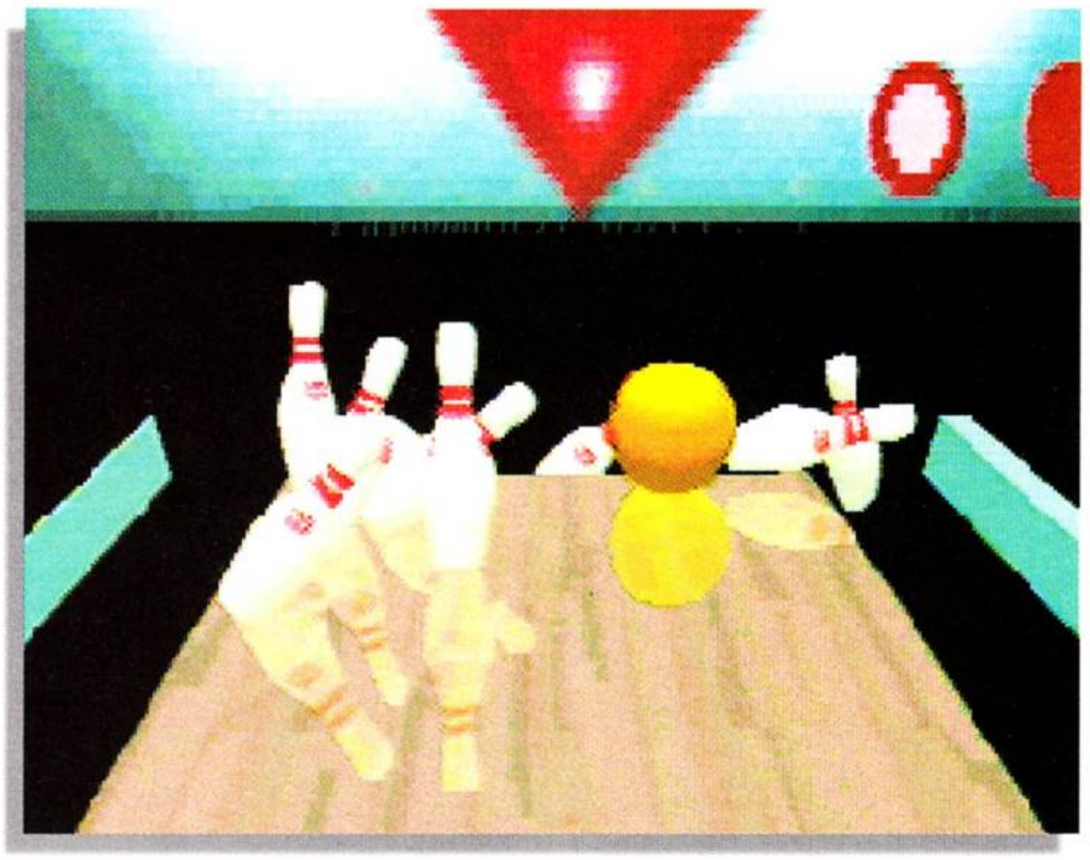
PROJECT HORNED OWL is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. © 1996 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 1996 MOVIC. DIE HARD TRILOGY™ & © 1996 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. AREA 51™ © 1995 Atari Games Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed by Mesa Logic, Inc. MIDWAY® is a registered trademark of Midway Games Inc. Used by permission. Konami® and JUSTIFIER® are registered trademarks, and CRYPT KILLER™ and LETHAL ENFORCERS I & II™ are trademarks of Konami Co. Ltd. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment America for use with the PlayStation game console. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 1996 Konami of America, Inc. All rights reserved.

PlayStation™

WWW.KONAMI.COM

Bowling has long been one of the forgotten sports in video gaming. ASC's delivers a realistic bowling title that wonderfully takes advantage of the cheesy perception that people often have of this sport.





Ten Pin Alley

ASC picks up a spare with their strikingly funny PlayStation bowling sim

Publisher: ASC Games

Platform: Sony PlayStation

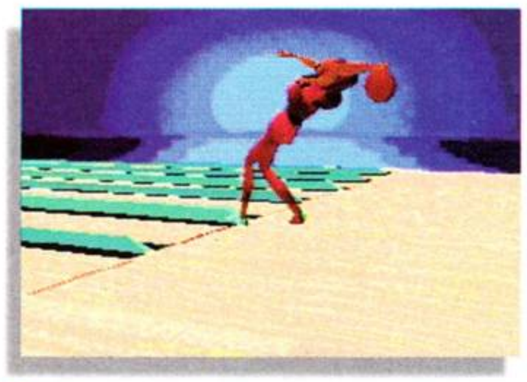
Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: ASC Games

Release: Now Available

Recently PlayStation games have been pouring in, most notably in the areas of 3-D fighters and racers. While it's unlikely that Ten Pin Alley is guaranteed commercial success with a game such as this, it does provide players an experience previously ignored on 32-Bit console systems.

Destined for party gaming success, Ten Pin Alley lets up to six players bowl in either competitive or team play, in addition to a single-player tournament mode. Open play lets up to six players bowl against one another, while team play lets them form teams of up to three players, including computer players. The actual bowling is similar to golf game mechanics. Players select the desired target, the bowler's position, and finally adjust power and release through "charge-up" meters. Failure to release or hit any pins often times results in a groan from the character, while strikes are followed by equally enthusiastic responses.



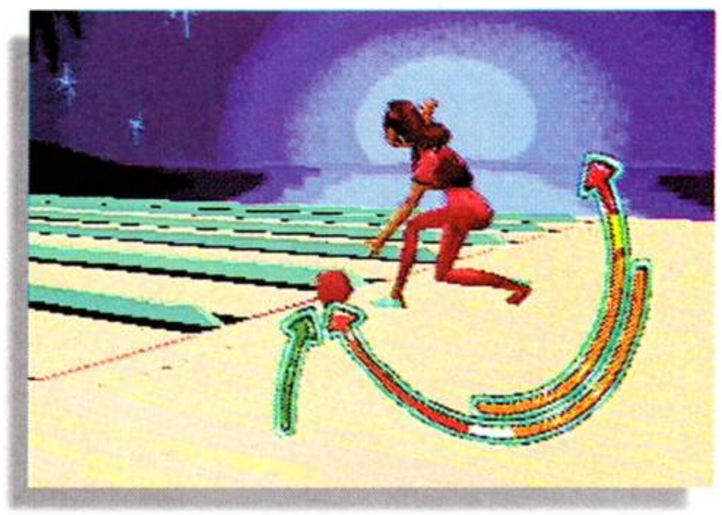
Funny things happen when things go wrong. Here, we decided not to release the bowling ball. Ouch.

Customization is the key to Ten Pin's long-term play. Players can tweak attributes that affect both play and aesthetics. The selection of characters allows players to choose profiles ranging from the depths of nerdom to the height of bowling cool. Each of the 12 builds is equipped with a set of bowling stats that include power, accuracy, and spin. Power and accuracy are immediately the most essential traits, but spin ability becomes more important as players master the game's mechanics. In addition to these stats, players may define their character's ball type and weight, affecting how the ball reacts on the lane. Because of this detail, strikes won't be easy since figuring out the effects of the stats and variables takes an ample amount of play time.

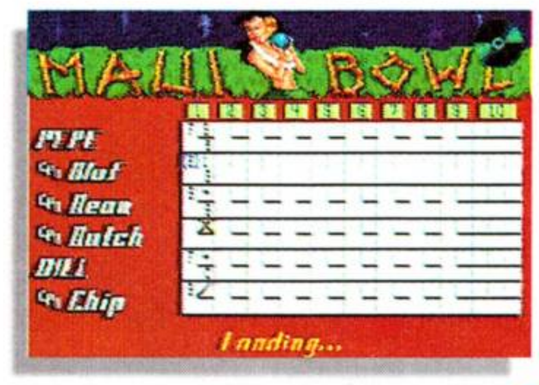
Physics models are key to simulation realism. While seemingly trivial to a bowling game, the excellent physics model in Ten Pin accurately creates the game's feel and difficulty. Pins bounce, spin and wobble after collision while friction, power and spin dictate where the ball is going.

Ten Pin Alley uses textured 3-D graphics, complete with reflections and camera movement, but it doesn't stack up particularly well in the sound department. The burbling of cheesy music in a bowling alley is realistic, but listening to it quickly becomes tiresome.

Ten Pin Alley is a great bowling title that excels in its capacity as a multiplayer game. While the sounds and graphics aren't superb, the fun gameplay more than makes up for it. ig



The selection of characters allows players to choose profiles ranging from nerdom to the height of bowling cool.



Ten Pin uses a control mechanism not unlike many golf games (top). Up to six players can play at once, with the game keeping detailed score of the action (above).

One of the pleasant aspects of Ten Pin are the different quirky-themed bowling lanes.

GRAPHICS: B

+ Appropriately cheesy characters and settings.
+ Good 3-D graphics and realistic reflections.

SOUNDS: C

+ Authentic bowling sounds.
- Music becomes tiresome very quickly.

GAMEPLAY: B

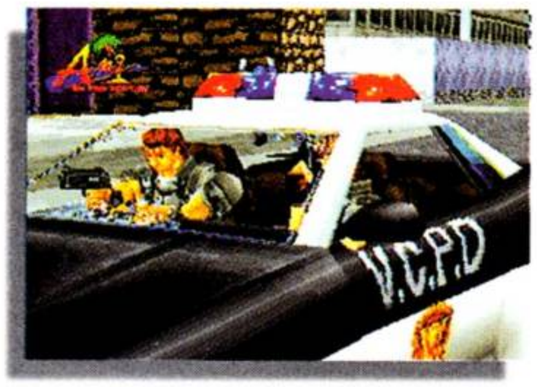
+ A realistic simulation and physics model.
+ Character selection is a good feature.
- The game has a steep learning curve.

LASTING POWER: B+

+ An excellent multiplayer party game.
+ Multiple play modes keep things exciting.
- Gets boring as a single-player game.

OVERALL B

RECOMMENDED



Sega continues to impress us with excellent conversions of their most popular and powerful arcade games. Virtua Cop 2 is almost arcade-perfect except for a little detail loss.

Virtua Cop 2

Sega reloads and fires another fine arcade conversion to the Saturn

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sega/AM2

Release: Now Available

When the original Virtua Cop came out, it revived interest in the classic point-and-shoot light gun game with its impressive graphics and fast action. But to many gamers, it seemed too much like an exercise in memorization, with bad guy after bad guy popping out from behind crates and what-not in what seemed like a ridiculous training exercise. (Besides, how many people CAN hide behind an oil drum, anyway?) That's not to say Virtua Cop is a bad game—on the contrary, it's one of Sega's better arcade titles. Unfortunately, it just lacked that spark that made it a truly compelling experience.

Enter its sequel, Virtua Cop 2. Surprisingly faithful to its arcade counterpart, Virtua Cop 2 has all of the elements that made the original great, but also throws in something uncommon in the genre—inspired level design. Amazingly, AM2 has managed to add enough polish to the game that it feels like being inside a hyper-violent John Woo movie, with its insanely high body count and high-energy stunt sequences.

Gameplay is, for the most part, unchanged from the original. If it's got a targeting crosshair around it, shoot it before it shoots you. Aim off-screen to reload your gun. Don't shoot innocents no matter how tempting it may be. Weapons are hidden inside breakable objects—they're actually pretty few and far between...the weapons that is. Nearly everything that you think should break in this game does if you shoot it (although

Ohhhhh! Scary all-powerful ninja!! I wonder if he's ever seen the scene from *Indiana Jones* when Indy caps the fancy karate boy.

some invulnerable indoor plants in the second level, do, paradoxically, stop bullets).

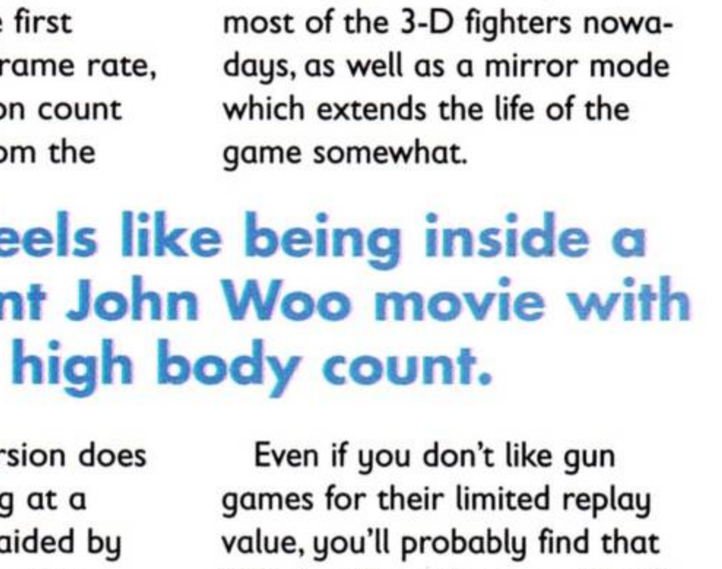
Graphics have been polished considerably from the first game. Although the frame rate, resolution, and polygon count have been reduced from the arcade, the Saturn version does look very nice, running at a brisk frame rate and aided by better-looking textures than the first game. Still intact are all the realtime intro and ending sequences, plus a new rendered "attract" sequence.

The game feels like being inside a hyper-violent John Woo movie with its insanely high body count.

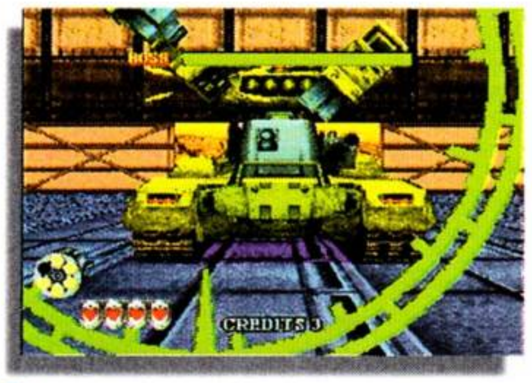
From the first level, the action picks up and refuses to let off. Called in to foil a jewelry heist, you and an optional partner arrive at the jewelry store, then pursue the fleeing criminals through the streets of Virtual City to their hideout. Cars act the way they do in movies—shoot them up (especially the tires!) and they flip and go up in a satisfying explosion. The other levels are similarly exciting, as terrorists kidnap the mayor and hold him hostage on a cruise ship in the second level, and a hijacking on the subway provides the impetus for the third level. Despite the fact that the bad guys still pop up in the same places, this game has much better replay value than the original because of the fact that every level has a two-way path in the middle of it, including a Saturn-only path on the third level. Added bonuses are the inclusion of a "big-head" mode, just like most of the 3-D fighters nowadays, as well as a mirror mode which extends the life of the game somewhat.

Even if you don't like gun games for their limited replay value, you'll probably find that VC2 is still worth a rent. But if you're a fan of the genre, blasting scores of terrorists doesn't get any better than this.

ig



Fast-paced car chase scenes like this are what make Virtua Cop 2 so much more impressive than its predecessor and other competing light gun titles.



Large bosses like this one are what you have to look forward to at the end of each level.

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Amazingly faithful translation from the arcade.
- Don't expect to see lots of effects like light sourcing.

SOUNDS: B+

+ Crystal-clear voices and sound effects.
+/- Music is just a little bit above average.

GAMEPLAY: A

+ Well thought out and exciting levels set this above similar efforts.
+ Much more action packed than the original.

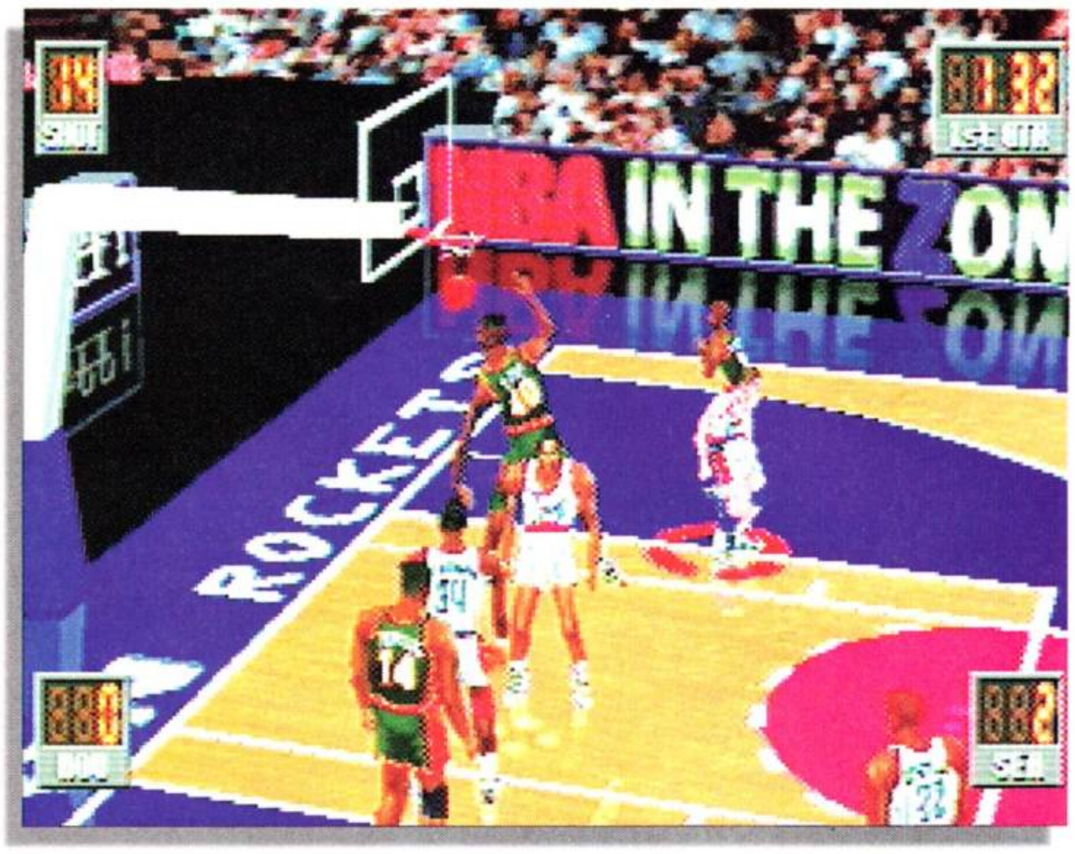
LASTING POWER: B+

+ Multiple paths through each level add longevity to the game.
- Bad guys come out in pre-defined patterns.

OVERALL A-

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Konami's sequel to In the Zone is close to a slam dunk when it comes to delivering a fast-paced arcade game, but doesn't score well as an accurate simulation of NBA basketball.



NBA In The Zone 2

Konami's ITZ sequel will satisfy arcade action lovers, but not simulation fans

Publisher: Konami

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Konami

Release: Now Available

When Konami released NBA in The Zone it graphically outclassed every basketball game ever made on a console system. What it lacked in options and simulation features, it delivered in arcade action and eye-popping aesthetics. With In The Zone 2, it appears that Konami is not satisfied with keeping ITZ confined to a strict arcade-action title, as the biggest improvements arguably lie in the newly added season play and its features.

NBA In The Zone's arcade-oriented gameplay hasn't changed a bit. The gameplay is essentially the same run-and-gun action prevalent in the first edition of the game, and certainly won't stand up as a simulation of the sport by any means. For example, offensively, the computer players usually stand around and wait for you to make a one-on-one move. Once in a while your teammates will occasionally help you by setting a "pick" or a screen, but it's pretty much you against the defender—there is no half-court offense here. Also, the ball physics in the game are a bit flawed. During many long bounce passes, and even some short ones, the ball seems to float sluggishly across the screen defying gravity. Despite this, the bottom line is that although the game is not very realistic, and has some flaws, it is still fun. In The Zone 2 has the same entertaining appeal that games such as Double Dribble and Run and Gun (other Konami basketball games, coincidentally) possess.

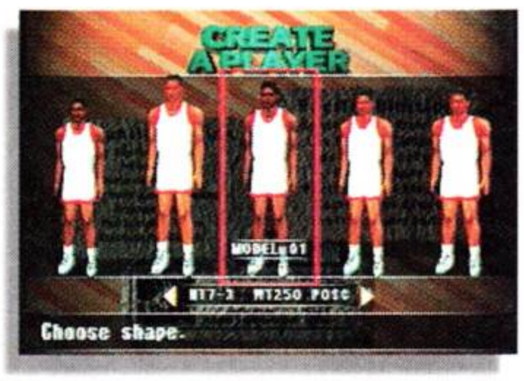
Graphically, as expected, In The Zone 2 excels. The 3-D rendered basketball players look simply fabulous, shaping up to be the best-looking basketball player replicas to grace a video game thus far. Every detail has been given attention to—each player has their face texture-mapped onto their polygonal head, and the motion-captured player animation is nearly flawless. There are an impressive variety of dunks, jumps and other animations that make the action on-court very convincing.

The audio is considerably less impressive than the graphics, but that isn't too much to be ashamed of. Most of the sounds during the game consist of an incredibly harsh sound made when the ball is dribbled on the court, shoes squeaking, and an announcer that rattles off the score after a bucket is made. As with most sports games, the audio complements the game, but doesn't really enhance it.

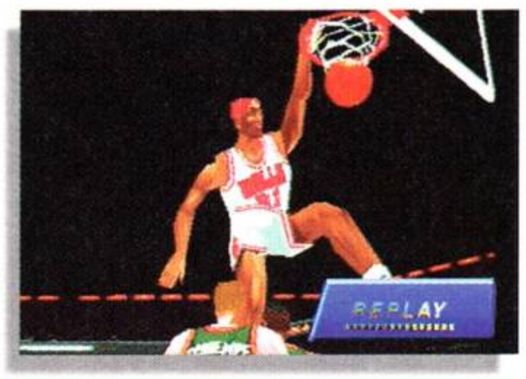
As aforementioned, In The Zone 2 has had a feature facelift, adding many of the things that come standard with almost any sports game these days. Season play is now an option, but as an added bonus, you can create and trade players. The amount of statistical tracking is not overwhelming, but it is an improvement over the original.

As an action game, In The Zone 2 is a very good title, but if you are looking for a basketball simulation, you might want to look elsewhere.

ig



In The Zone 2's Create A Player feature is one of the best new additions to the game.



In The Zone's 3-D rendered players look stunning as shown by Dennis Rodman's high-flying slam (top). In addition to looking good, the players also animate well (above).

The 3-D rendered players look simply fabulous, possibly the best basketball player replicas ever to grace a video game.

GRAPHICS: A

+ The best 3-D modeled b-ball players to date.
+ A variety of smooth, realistic movements and animation.

SOUNDS: B-

+/- Nothing fabulous in this department, but that's about par for the course for most console sports games, it seems.

GAMEPLAY: B

+ As an action game, this title can run with the best of them.
- ..but as a simulation, it doesn't stand a chance.

LASTING POWER: B+

+ The two-player mode will surely keep this title fresh for a long time.
+ Newly added season mode is definitely welcome.

OVERALL: B

RECOMMENDED

Daytona USA is back, not as a sequel, but as another Sega "remix" of sorts. While the game does sport many improvements, true arcade fans are still going to have to head to the arcade for the real Daytona experience...

Daytona USA Championship Circuit Edition

Sega's latest Saturn "remix" could've used a few extra months in the garage

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sega/AM3

Release: Now Available

Stock car racing is as American as you can get. Sega's version of the sport provided for an insanely fun multiplayer experience, with weekend drivers attempting to rub the guy in the next seat into the outside wall. One of the things that made Daytona USA such a great game was the skill required to steer the car through the more extreme turns. Sure, you could drop your speed to avoid contact with the wall, but the best way around most of the corners was a controlled four-wheel drift. Drifting was a risk, though, as a car skidding around the corner would flip end over end even if it only scratched the wall.

So many Daytona fans, ourselves included, were ecstatic when Sega announced a new version of their modern classic. Although the Saturn version was essentially faithful to the arcade original, it lacked any sort of multiplayer mode, and suffered from lackluster graphics compared to the original. arcade. Imagine our delight when we saw that the frame rate was much improved and that a two-player split-screen mode had been implemented—no more jaunts to the arcade, right?

Powersliding, while still an important part of the game, is a lot more exaggerated in the new Championship Circuit Edition of Daytona USA. Arcade fans may balk.

Unfortunately, although Daytona USA: CCE is improved in almost every way from the original Saturn version, Sega decided to monkey around with the one thing that they got right the first time—the gameplay. The best way that I can describe it is that it's been "dumbed down." This basically means that the entire risk-versus-reward factor that I described above has basically been tossed out the window.

Car handling has been changed subtly—where the car in the original version could take a turn without having to slow down, you'll now have to either find the perfect line or brake. Powersliding seems easier to do as well as recover from, and worst of all, it's hard to crash. In the arcade, running into a slow-moving CPU car was enough to send your car airborne Now, you practically have to steer left into a right turn to wreck the car. The end result? It's easier for beginners to get into, but old-school arcade vets will be disappointed.

To its credit, however, the game's graphics are substantially better in most cases. The tracks have new textures, which makes the scenery look nicer, but inexplicably makes the track itself look cartoony. However, the two-player mode suffers a bit, as the track pops in much sooner, there are no computer cars to speak of, and the game tends to slow down on the more complicated tracks. The two new tracks, although not as well designed as the arcade originals, are still fun to drive on.

Those who are new to Daytona may find this game a worthwhile addition to their collection, as it is still a decent racer. But for the arcade junkies, it looks like you'll still need to leave the house for the real Daytona experience.

Sega decided to monkey around with the one thing that they got right the first time—gameplay.

The spectacular crashes from the original Daytona USA are still intact (top). The new two-player head-to-head mode adds replay value, but there are no other cars on the road...(above)

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Frame rate is much improved, but drawing horizon isn't much better.
- Significant loss of detail and some slowdown.

SOUNDS: A-

+ Engines give out a throaty roar and the sounds are good.
+/- Fans of old Daytona music won't like that the vocals are gone.

GAMEPLAY: B-

- Why did Sega mess with something not broken???
+ Despite my wailing, the game still plays OK...

LASTING POWER: B

+ Five tracks, lots of cars. At least you won't run out of things to do.
+ The two-player mode helps the game's longevity.

OVERALL B+

RECOMMENDED

Revelations: Persona is the latest in the highly successful Shin Megami Tensei series from Japan. The Saturn MegaTen game, Devil Summoner, has been put on indefinite hold so Persona could be released first for the PlayStation.

Revelations: Persona

Atlus stalls Devil Summoner and brings us another game in the MegaTen series

Publisher: Atlus

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Atlus

Release: Now Available

Originally the latest in the immensely popular "Megami Tensei" series in Japan, Persona is not the kind of RPG western gamers are used to. Although the basic elements should be familiar to any RPG fan, the style, story line and overall feel of Persona is strange, to say the least, and at times bordering on surreal.

Persona's plot revolves around a group of high school students with supernatural powers trying to stop a plague of demons that mysteriously began to ravage their town. This unique story line, which goes on to address such deep issues as insanity and corruption, is one of this title's strongest points.

Despite the great story line, the focus is on combat, and as a result, it is far more complex than is typical for the genre. In addition to the usual options, players can set their party formation, decide how to distribute extra ability points when a character gains a level, and must master using and building personas. Personas are the inner spirits of the characters; any character can have one persona equipped at a time which, depending on his or her level, they can call forth to perform a variety of spells. For example, one persona may specialize in ice magic while another might contain healing spells.

With a deep story line and very non-commercial aspects, Persona is definitely appealing to adults.

How you acquire new personas is another part of what makes the game so unique. You actually talk to the monsters and try to persuade them to help you. Depending on the methods you employ, the monsters may give you their "card," which, combined with others, can be used to build new personas and give your party access to new magic. On the other hand, saying the wrong thing might anger the monsters, causing them to fight with increased vigor. All of this conversation with the enemies, while interesting and often humorous, is time consuming, making encounters unusually long.

Graphically, Persona switches between three different perspectives throughout the game—a polygon-rendered overhead overworld map of the city, a first-person perspective for the dungeons, and a three-fourths isometric view for the fighting and story elements of the game. Detailed graphics and little extras, such as an automap feature for the dungeons, make each of these modes enjoyable.

Creepy music, along with voice samples that bring the characters to life and tons of other sound effects build Persona's mood. Additionally, dungeons have ambient sounds well-suited to the environment such as the chatter of students in the high school, or an occasional dog barking.

Although it's doubtful Persona will appeal to others, RPG fans now have reason to celebrate—finally there are some solid RPGs for the PlayStation.

The gameplay system in Persona is very complex, and the battles take up a good portion of the game. Fortunately, the battle system is user-friendly, and aesthetically appealing.

The focus is on combat, and as a result, it is far more complex than is typical for the RPG genre.

GRAPHICS: B+
- \+ Good animation, spell effects and cut scenes.
- \+ Variety of monsters and locals keeps things fresh.

SOUNDS: A
- \+ Impressive use of voices throughout the game.
- \+ Sound effects add a welcome eerie realism.

GAMEPLAY: A-
- \+ Combat system is deep and complex.
- \+ Original and enjoyable persona creation.
- \+ Several "mini-games" spice things up.

LASTING POWER: B+
- \+ A long and involving quest...
- \- ...But a majority of it is spent in combat scenes.

OVERALL B+

RECOMMENDED

Taito's Psychic Force delivers nice 3-D graphics, although not quite as nice as Namco's Tekken 2 or Capcom's Star Gladiator. However, unique gameplay and a heavy Japanese feel add to the game.

Psychic Force

Taito's fighter breaks the mold and offers a fresh and unique brawler

Publisher: Acclaim

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Taito

Release: Now Available

There's certainly been no shortage of fighters these days. Basically, they all fall into two categories: the 2-D fighters with flat planes to fight on, and 3-D fighters with rings and/or cages that limit the fighting area.

A direct port from the PlayStation-based arcade game, Taito's Psychic Force is one of the few fighting games to break the mold and offer something unique. Sure, it's a fighting game—two players in an enclosed space, with punches, kicks and special moves at your disposal—but what makes Psychic Force totally different from anything else out there, however, is the fact that the 3-D characters fly around the inside of a cube, rather than being earthbound like every other fighting game.

There are eight characters to choose from in Psychic Force (with an additional boss character selectable via code). Each character draws his or her power from a different source. For example, Genma is a traditional Japanese mystic, Gates is an armored cyborg, Wendy can call upon the power of the wind and Brad has control over all things magnetic.

Graphically, the game is definitely above average—all of the backgrounds are very good looking, complete with 3-D features and interesting scenery. There's also a nice anime intro, and anime fans and game purists will be happy to note that unlike many U.S. game companies that butcher Japanese games, Acclaim has decided to subtitle the game, leaving the original Japanese voices intact. The sound is also very good in this game—*IG* admits to being Zuntata (the Taito sound team) fans, and the soundtrack is certainly faithful to their style.

The control scheme is somewhat like Virtua Fighter, with a block button, a light attack button and a strong attack button. At a long range, your attacks will come out in the form of projectiles, and when close in, you can do Virtua Fighter-style "PPPK" combos.

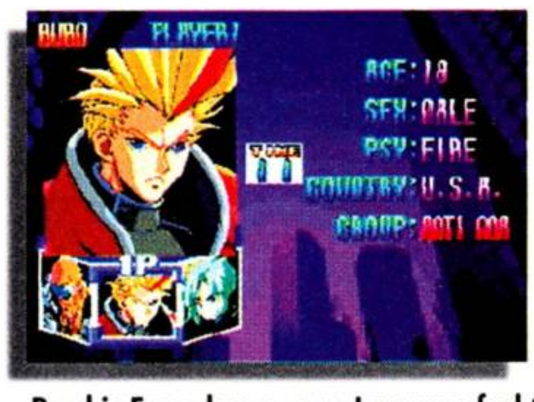
All of the special moves in this game are performed with similar motions, so once you learn one character, you'll be able to execute moves for just about all of the characters, in general. What is interesting, however, is that because of the free-floating nature of the game, a "toward-toward" move doesn't have to be performed toward your opponent—two taps in any direction will do. All special moves drain your psychic power, which slowly regenerates, unless you hold all three buttons to quickly charge your gauge (leaving yourself vulnerable to attack in the process).

At first, gameplay is quite frustrating, as the walls of the cube are far from inert—you'll take damage every time you're slammed into them, and getting flattened against the wall will also leave you open to another attack, which usually means you can kiss a good portion of your lifebar goodbye. You can, however, block anything by spinning the stick and pressing guard to activate a shield. This, however, drains your psychic energy, so you won't be able to block all day.

After you get the hang of it, dodging energy bolts and retaliating with a full-screen barrage of your own will become second nature. Unfortunately, although the game is quite innovative, in the long run it lacks some strategic depth. If you're tired of the standard cookie-cutter fighting game, however, you should take a look at this one—it's still good for a few quick rounds, and you'll have no problem teaching others how to play Psychic Force.

Taito's Psychic Force is one of the few fighting games to break the mold and offer something unique.

Ahh, flying and fighting...what more could any action fan ask for? I mean, besides the Power Rangers...



Psychic Force has a very Japanese feel to it, complete with full-blown Japanese animation sequences (which are subtitled in the final English version—something that will make import purists very happy) and the usual dose of heavy-hitting fighting gameplay found in most 3-D fighters these days.

GRAPHICS: B+

+ Very sharp backgrounds and detailed characters.
- Weapons effects look nice, but get blocky at close range.

SOUNDS: A-

+ Excellent music to beat people by.
+ Anime fans will be glad that the voices are intact.

GAMEPLAY: B

+ Very fast and intense gameplay.
- Until you get the hang of blocking, you'll get pasted against the walls.

LASTING POWER: B-

+ If you're a weekend gamer, you'll pick this game up quickly.
- Unfortunately, that means that long-term gameplay has been compromised.

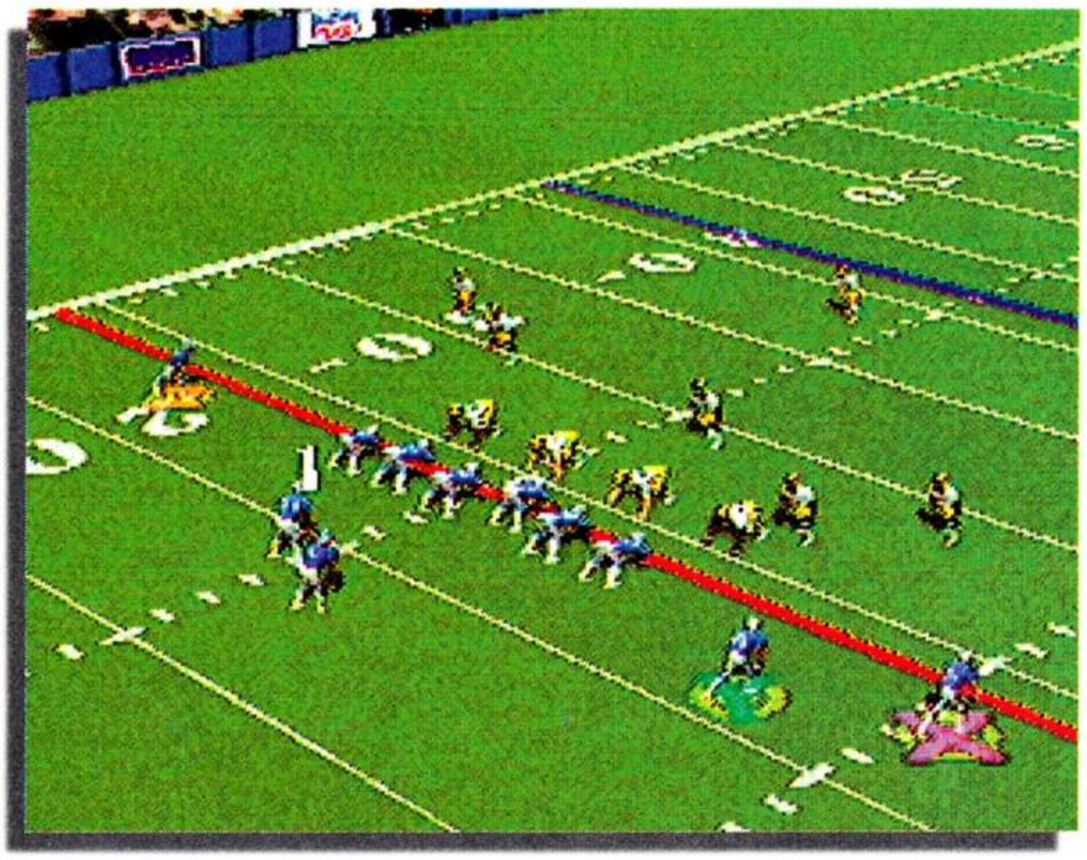
OVERALL B

RECOMMENDED

After a long, mysterious wait, Sega has finally launched a football game for the sports-starved Saturn. Unfortunately, after playing it, it seems they should have waited even longer.

NFL '97

Sega's long-awaited football game ...maybe they should have punted



Publisher: Sega of America
Platform: Sega Saturn
Format: Single CD-ROM
Developer: Gametek
Release: Now Available

When you consider that the Sega Sports line of software helped carry the 16-Bit Genesis to glory, it's a little surprising that Sega hasn't brought out many of their 32-Bit sports titles sooner.

The horrible thing is that after spending many grueling hours with this game, it is pretty apparent that Sega probably should have waited even longer to release NFL '97, which is one of the worst 32-Bit football games on the market.

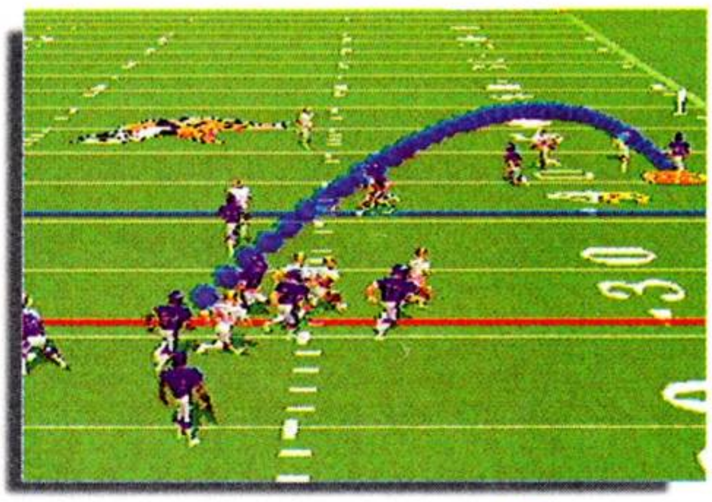
The problems with this title are visible right off the bat. The graphics, quite simply, are a mess. They look unforgivably 16-Bitish, with no hint of sophistication or innovation. The football players are very low color and unconvincing with the only positive feature being that you can see the players' individual jersey numbers on their backs. The stadiums are also unimpressive. The football field looks fine, but none of the real stadiums are available, which is fast becoming a standard in the industry. Instead, you pick from the type of stadium you want to play in such as an open-air or a domed one—yawn. Furthermore, the play-call screen looks absolutely atrocious. The graphics are so messy that you have to concentrate to see the diagram of each play against each of the dithered turf backdrops. The whole aesthetic presentation of the game is horribly flawed from top to bottom.

To be completely blunt, NFL '97s playcall screen looks like a cluttered mess (left). The best feature in this game by far is the custom playbook editor, which is a rare feature for console sports games(right). Now if it were only more fun when you ran those plays.

Gameplay doesn't get a whole lot better. Control is a very important aspect of sports games, and is also a failure of NFL '97. Control is overly sluggish, choppy and unprecise–the players just don't move correctly. It feels as if they're trying to run through wet cement.

There are still a few diamonds in the rough, so to speak. NFL '97 features a play editor which is very rare in console games. It isn't too sophisticated, but it is useful, enabling you to create entirely new playbooks. Included with the game are customized default playbooks for many of the teams. For example, the Houston Oilers have an "H-Back" formation, which they use a lot in real life, whereas the 49ers have a "West Coast" formation which features many crossing routes. Why is there a college "Veer" formation in the Patriots' playbook though?

You simply don't need a concluding paragraph to tell you that it wasn't a good idea to ship this game. Sega should've (and could've) done better. ig



Although it looks like some sort of odd laser beam, this blue line is actually a strange feature that shows the trajectory of the ball. Nice, but not too practical (top).

Sega should have waited longer to release NFL '97, one of the worst 32-Bit football games on the market.

GRAPHICS: D+
- Just about every aesthetic aspect of this game has numerous problems plaguing it. GameDay and Madden look much better.

SOUNDS: B-
+/- Loading screen music isn't bad, but it doesn't sound like sports music.
- The PA announcer sounds like he's speaking from a tunnel.

GAMEPLAY: C-
+ Shoddy game control and flawed execution don't make this too fun to play.

LASTING POWER: D+
+ Full-season mode is available, and a few other nice features remain...
- ..but if the game is no fun to play, these features aren't worth much.

OVERALL C-

BELOW AVERAGE

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey is the first sports title for the Nintendo 64, and a very impressive one at that, with amazing graphics and high-speed gameplay ported almost perfectly from the arcade.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey

Midway brings Atari Games' hit arcade coin-op home as the first N64 sports title

Publisher: Midway

Platform: Nintendo 64

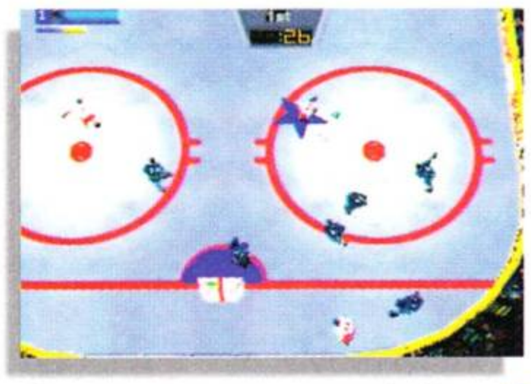
Format: 64 Megabit Cartridge

Developer: Atari Games

Release: Now Available

A slew of new hockey games have been released for the various game systems over the last few months, and the latest one to make it onto the home ice is the first-ever Nintendo 64 sports title, Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey by Midway.

Based on the powerful 3DFX-based arcade game of the same name, Gretzky Hockey is highly reminiscent of Midway's popular NBA Jam series of games, with fast-paced, high-scoring arcade action. In addition to the three-on-three gameplay of the arcade, the home version of the game allows for a more realistic game of hockey, with four-on-four or five-on-five hockey in the new Simulation mode, complete with penalties, line changes, the best fight sequences in any hockey game ever and full-season play.



There are seven camera angles in Gretzky Hockey, but for the overall best view for making good setups, the overhead perspective is by far the one to play with.

As an arcade game, Gretzky is fantastic, but as a sim it falls short in more than a few areas.

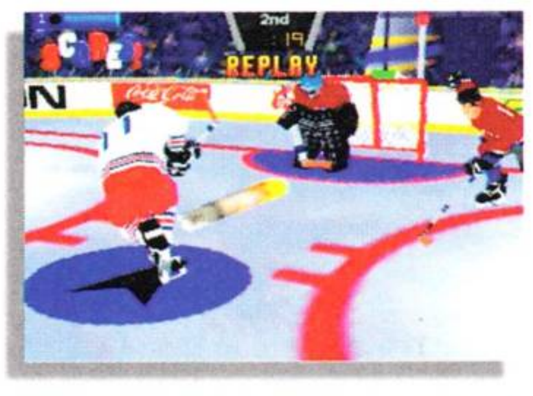
Graphically, WG3DH is a major treat. Other than some minor things missing from the arcade game (center-ice scoreboard, real player faces textured onto the skaters and obviously better resolution), the game is a virtual carbon copy of its already amazing arcade counterpart. Player animation is flicker-free and smooth as silk, and movements are very true-to-life.

The sounds are very nicely done and complement the gameplay moreso than any hockey game since Ice Hockey for the NES (still the best!). The announcer is crystal-clear and rarely gets repetitive, and when the action heats up, you can sense the excitement in the tone of his voice. The crowd gets into the action too, which is nice for a change.

Gameplay-wise, it's tough to judge WG3DH. As an arcade game, it's fantastic—definitely "A" caliber. However, as a simulation, it falls short in more than a few areas. For one, there is no stat tracking throughout a season. The only saved stats are your personal stats (not your team's—just YOU). Secondly, changing lines is a pain in the butt, as you'll have to go to the subscreen (by pressing Start) and manually set the option on to change lines, even when you choose for automatic line changes in the pregame setup. Hello? What's the point of auto-changes if it's not automatic?

Add to that the fact that defense isn't overly spectacular—the game makes up for a lack of defensive AI by allowing the CPU to steal the puck way too frequently. Finally, you don't change directions after each period, and the offsides rule is misused (you'll get called for offsides as soon as the puck crosses the blue line regardless of whether or not your player touches it—which is wrong). In its favor, Gretzky is the only hockey game to date that shortens penalty times if you're only playing five- or 10-minute periods.

Sim gripes aside, WG3DH is an enormously fun arcade-style hockey game, and as long as you don't come in expecting an EA-style sim, you should be pleasantly surprised at how it successfully re-creates the genuine excitement of hockey.



There are two modes of play in WG3DH—Arcade and Simulation. The Arcade mode offers some, well, interesting bonuses for taking tremendously hard shots...

GRAPHICS: A-
+ Easily the best graphics in a home sports game yet.
- Not as nice as the 3DFX arcade game, with lower res and minor slowdown.

SOUNDS: A-
+ Great announcer livens up the onscreen action.
+ Good overall sound effects and a lively crowd.

GAMEPLAY: B+
+ If you're an arcade-style fan, this game is for YOU.
- If you're looking for a sim, you may want to look elsewhere.

LASTING POWER: A
+ With up to four-player action, you can't possibly go wrong.
+/- There are several season modes, although they probably won't appeal much to sim fans.

OVERALL B+

RECOMMENDED

Tunnel B1 is an interesting title, to say the least, when you consider all of the different genres that it has thrown together in this melting pot of a game. We think it worked out pretty well.

Tunnel B1

Acclaim has dug up a winner with this Doom-like driving game

Publisher: Acclaim

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Ocean/Neon

Release: Now Available

It's kind of hard to describe Tunnel B1, really. At first glance, it looks like a racing game, which it can be... sometimes. Or it may look like a Doom clone to you, which it, again, can be...or perhaps it's more like Descent...with its mission-based levels. Again, sure, but it doesn't really play a whole lot like Descent either. Tunnel B1 isn't terribly innovative all by itself, but it manages to be convincing through an interesting synergy of all of the above games.

You pilot a heavily armed vehicle through the courses, which are constructed like canals, or perhaps a futuristic highway. Each level has at least one primary/secondary mission pair associated with it, with later stages having two or three primary objectives. Mission types are generally pretty basic—get from point A to point B before time runs out, destroy an enemy, or destroy all of the reactors and escape the level. Reactors are color coded—destroy all of the reactors of one color, and it will open all doors of that color, often with a time limit before the doors close again.

There are very few moving enemies in Tunnel B1. This blue vehicle is one of the few that you will encounter (top). Destroy these to open doors (above).

Your craft is armed with several weapons. The most basic is the machine gun. Later, your craft will be equipped with other weapons that have a limited supply of ammunition like grenades, which are great for blowing through doors, rockets, which are powerful, unguided projectiles, and the laser, which cuts quickly through enemy armor.

Enemies are generally immobile, with a few exceptions. The turrets and mortars that fire at you are pretty nasty though, so you'll have to find shield energy and weapons frequently. Weapons can be picked up when an enemy drops them after being vaporized, or in containers scattered about the level.

The graphics are excellent, with nice light-sourcing, and translucent-colored haloes around light sources. Enemies explode very satisfyingly, again, with bountiful translucency effects. Despite all this, the game manages to crank out a decent frame rate, although it does slow down a tad when things get heated. The audio is extremely nice, as well. The soundtrack has a driving, martial beat that would be right at home in a Hollywood action flick. The aforementioned explosions are fairly substantial as well. If you have a stereo hooked up to your PlayStation, you'll probably want to turn it up. Saving your game requires a memory card, and you'll only be able to do so at the end of each level.

Tunnel B1 is worth checking out if you've ever wondered what Doom on a racetrack would feel like.

Hello. I'm a crate. Nice to meet you. I hold weapons and things that you really want.

Overall, Tunnel B1 delivers a satisfying high-speed blast-a-thon. Its excellent aesthetics truly complement its above-average gameplay, making it worth investigating if you've wondered what Doom on a racetrack would feel like. ig

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Beautiful light-sourcing and translucency effects.
- Frame rate gets a tad choppy when a lot of things are happening.

SOUNDS: A-

+ Music is fantastic and sets the mood well.
+/- Sound effects are just a tad above average.

GAMEPLAY: B+

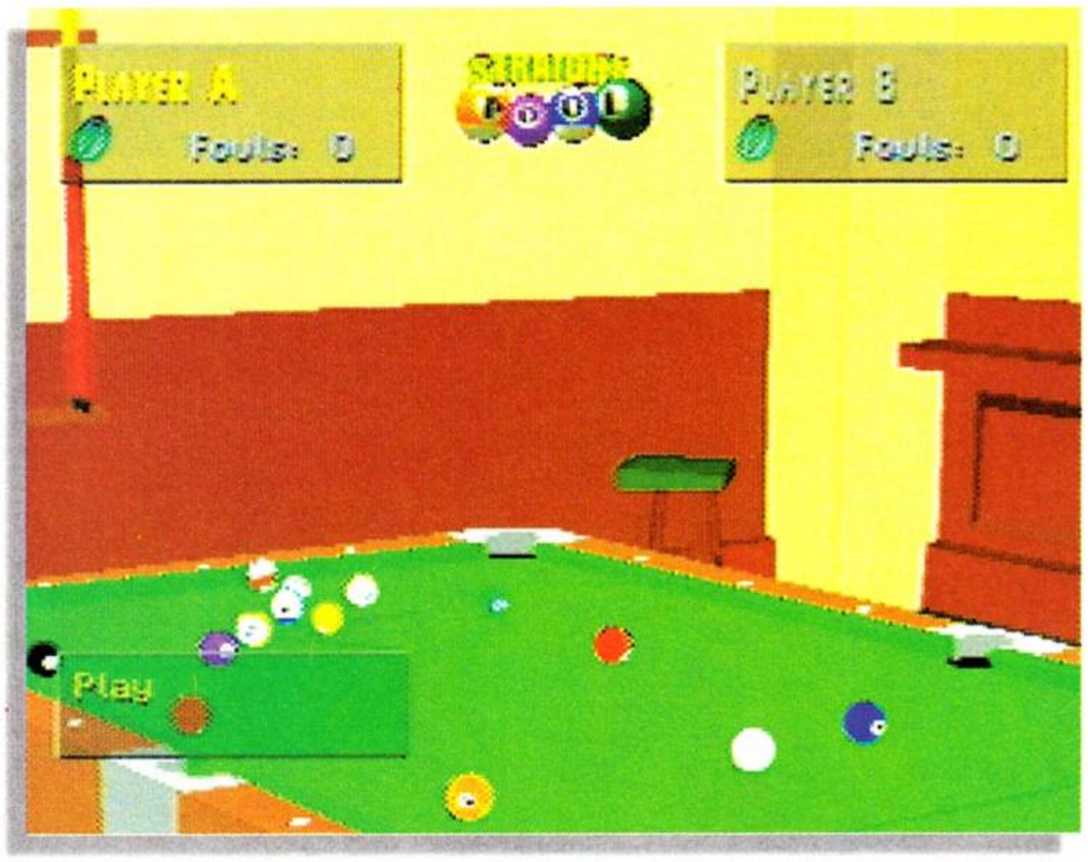
+ An interesting blend of many genres.
- Gets a bit repetitive once you get to the later levels.

LASTING POWER: B+

+ Difficulty curve is good, with later levels being very challenging.
- If you're persistent you can "cheat" by using the memory card.

OVERALL B+

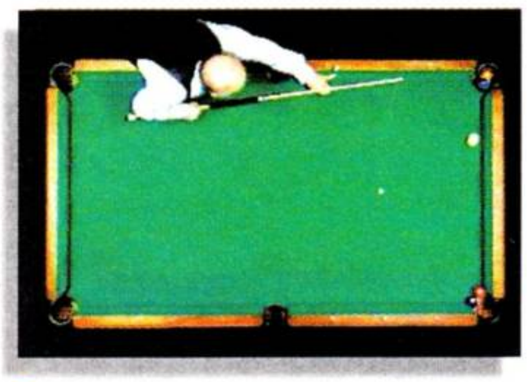
RECOMMENDED

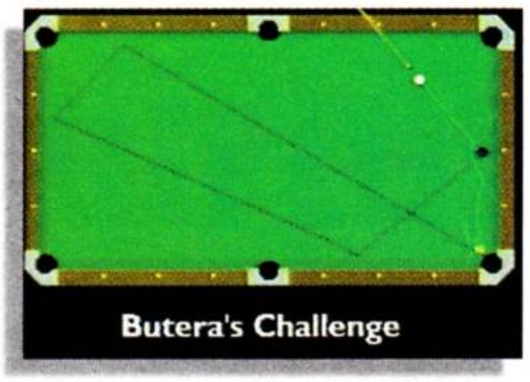


Up until now most pool games on console systems were usually very basic and low on realism and options. Virtual Pool changes all of that but falls short in other areas.

Virtual Pool

Interplay delivers a realistic, but sluggish PlayStation pool simulation





Nifty full-motion-video sequences help demonstrate both trick shots and regular shots. After watching the video, you can then watch the shots carried out on the 3-D-rendered tables (top).

Publisher: Interplay

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: VR Sports

Release: Now Available

Interplay introduced Virtual Pool for the PC nearly two years ago and it rapidly became one of the best-selling PC titles. Touted as one of the most realistic pool simulators, Interplay now takes on the task of porting Virtual Pool to the PlayStation, hoping to have similar success.

Virtual Pool comes loaded with options. Players are given the ability to choose from different types of games including general, rotation, straight, 8-ball and 9-ball pool styles. Players unfamiliar with the different styles can touch up on their knowledge by watching a series of FMV clips explaining everything from the history of pool to how to make complex trickshots. Single players can choose between nine different opponents of varying skill levels or simply practice freestyle. Other options will go so far as to suggest shots or have the computer project the path of the ball before you hit it.

The most impressive aspect of Interplay's Virtual Pool is the attention to detail and realism.

The most impressive aspect of Virtual Pool is attention to detail and realism. Most importantly, the physics in the game react just as they would in a real game of pool. Additionally, the ability to change the angle of the cue stick or the position at which the cue ball is hit is a welcome element that is overlooked in most pool games. Unfortunately, controlling all of these actions is quite a chore.

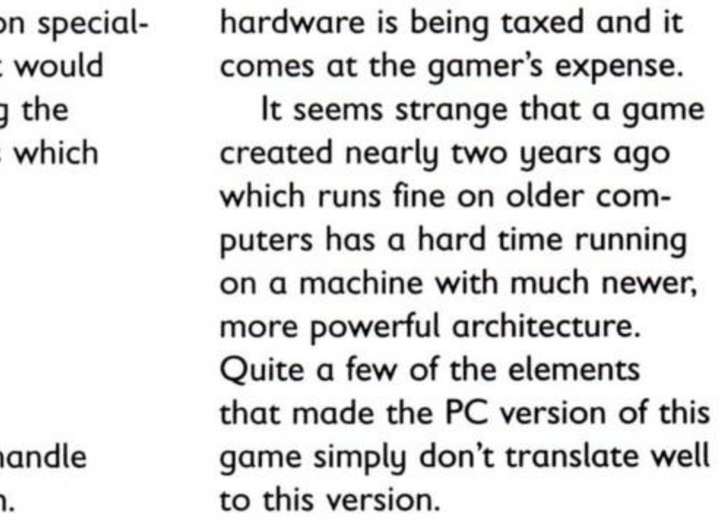
On the PC, players had a keyboard and a mouse to control the action, but very few PlayStation gamers will have that luxury. Instead, most will be confined to a gamepad which can get downright tedious.

Since the PlayStation specializes in 3-D graphics, it would seem that reproducing the solid-shaded polygons which even a weak PC can handle wouldn't be a problem. Unfortunately, this isn't the case as the frame rate can be horrendously slow, especially when the game has just begun and most of the balls are still on the table. There is an option to turn off the backgrounds which helps speed things up, but this doesn't cure all of the game's sluggish ills. Another speed-related problem is the time it takes the computer to think out a shot. Even when playing against the easiest opponent it can take as long as 20 seconds for it to execute a shot. This time is dramatically increased as the difficulty of the computer opponent is increased. Be it bad programming or the lack of processing power, it's obvious the PS hardware is being taxed and it comes at the gamer's expense.

It seems strange that a game created nearly two years ago which runs fine on older computers has a hard time running on a machine with much newer, more powerful architecture. Quite a few of the elements that made the PC version of this game simply don't translate well to this version.

If you're a pool fan, Virtual Pool is probably a good purchase, all things considered. But if you do pick it up, be sure to grab a PS mouse too.

ig



Many shooting aides and skill levels are available so almost anyone can compete on the game. Here you can see the trajectory of the ball before it is hit.

GRAPHICS: C
- Low-color polygons are very unimpressive...
- ..especially when they run at a low frame rate.

SOUNDS: B
+ Realistic sound effects when balls hit, clank, etc.
+/- Lyrical soundtracks are very hit or miss, depending on your musical tastes.

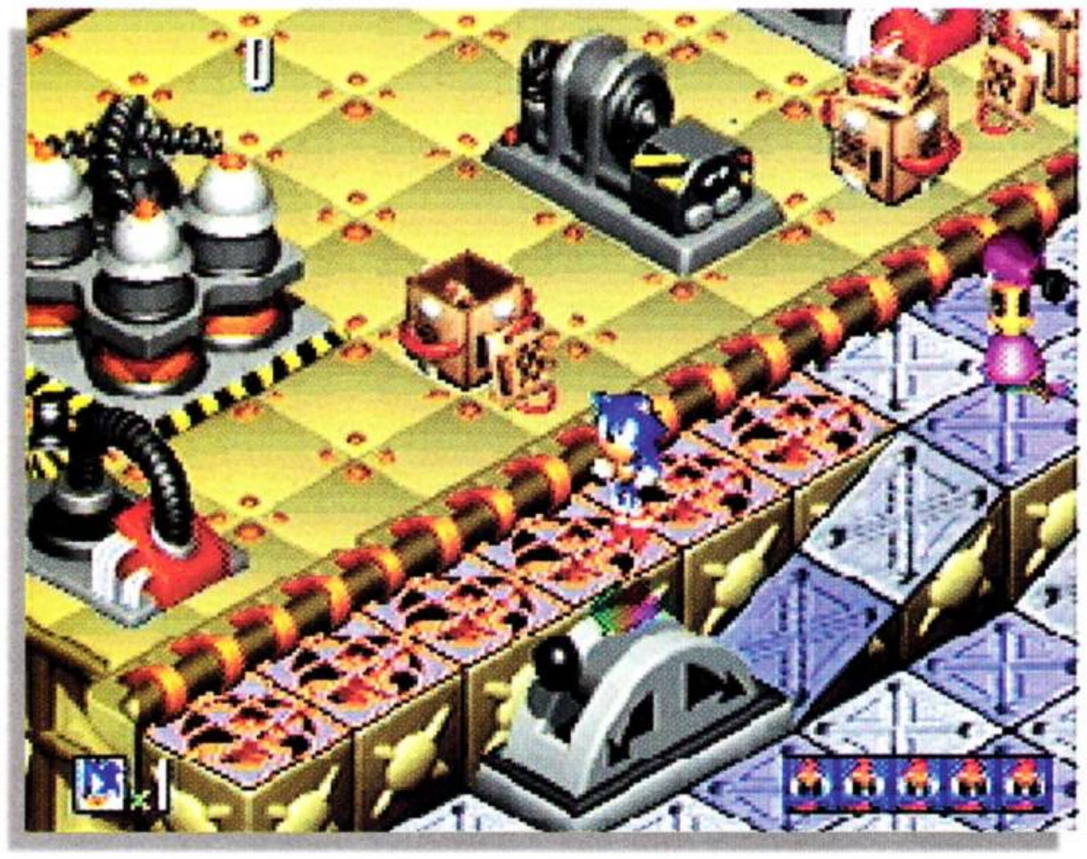
GAMEPLAY: B-
+ A very realistic simulation of a game of pool, with great learning tools.
- Gameplay is very hampered without a PlayStation mouse.

LASTING POWER: B-
- If you play the hardest opponent, the game will last forever waiting for the computer to think.

OVERALL B-

AVERAGE

Why Sega decided to wait so long to bring their beloved mascot to their struggling 32-Bit platform is beyond reason, but he's finally here. Although it isn't a stunning game, it is a fun one.



Sonic 3D Blast

Sega's mascot finally finds his way to the Saturn. Better late than never...

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Traveler's Tales

Release: Now Available

At long last, Sega's lovable mascot has made his appearance on the Saturn, and the only question remaining is whether anyone still cares. The answer is better found on an individual basis, as it all depends on your point of view. As far as Sega is concerned, that perspective is an isometric one. It's odd then that when prerendered sprites are thrown in, the game more closely resembles Nintendo's Super Mario RPG than it does Sonic.

Looking like a Super NES game probably isn't what proponents of the polygon revolution were hoping for. To make matters worse, the game doesn't take advantage of the Saturn's 2-D power either, instead teetering precariously between the two extremes. It's a position of compromise, making for an easy target to be compared to the full plunge Nintendo's mascot has taken into the third dimension.

A little open-mindedness might pay off, though, since in the least 3D Blast is like no Sonic game before it. Playing more like an action-oriented quest than a platformer, Sonic abandons his usual hit-and-run heroics and is instead forced to lead his animal friends to the stages' exit portals.

The task isn't an easy one, since slamming into any of the level's obstacles will not only cause Sonic's rings to scatter, but will also send the birds wandering aimlessly on until they are revisited by their hedgehog rescuer. If Sonic can hang onto them long enough, they can be safely dunked into the section's end portal, allowing him to search for the others or explore the rest of the huge sections.

Robotnik returns in a new form after each stage to wreak havoc on the blue blur.

Bursting through barriers and finding hidden paths will be a necessity to see all of a level which is a larger amount of depth in the Sonic universe. Along the way, Knuckles and Tails make cameo appearances and, for a 50-ring fee, will transport Sonic into the game's incredible reprise of Sonic 2's halfpipe bonus rounds. The exciting bonus rounds contrast nicely with the game's otherwise lax pace and would probably be enough to keep coming back for even without the goal of collecting chaos emeralds.

The whole package is nicely polished and gives Genesis Sonic lovers a reason to upgrade.

Bonus rounds are just one enhancement the Saturn gets over its Genesis counterpart. More than just adding a slick coat of paint, the Saturn version has all kinds of animation in its backgrounds such as trees that sway in the breeze and the monkeys who climb them. Special effects include translucent water and weather effects that include fog and rain. The music benefits most from the hardware, with the CD player providing new age, techno and even piano bar tunes so that each level's theme has a matching soundtrack. Sound effects get the deluxe Sonic treatment as well.

The whole package is nicely polished and finally gives Genny Sonic lovers an excuse to upgrade. Those looking for the next level of traditional Sonic might be better off checking out NiGHTS or waiting for Sonic X-Treme.

ig

The roller coaster-like loops and twists that personify Sonic games are here in 3-D fashion (top). The 3-D bonus levels add a welcome change of pace (above).

GRAPHICS: B+

+ Special effects and animation obliterate the Genesis version.
- There's not much in the way of revolutionary graphics here.

SOUNDS: B

+ Sounds are appropriate and slightly upgraded from 16-Bit versions.
- Large levels force the music to be repeated and can become tiring.

GAMEPLAY: B+

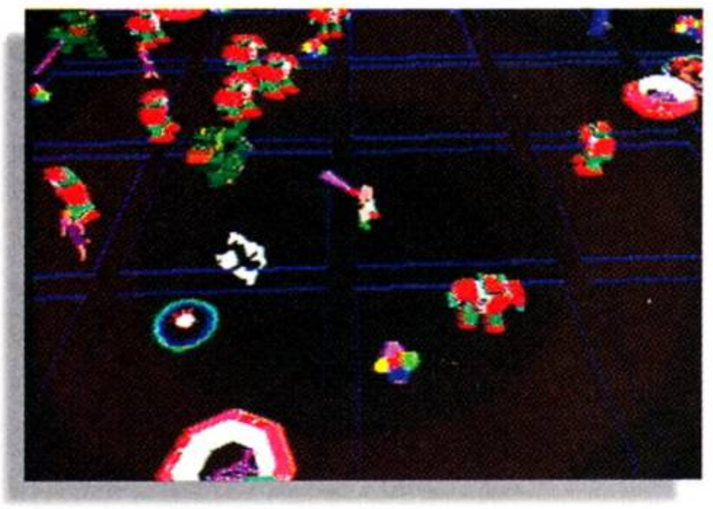
+ The control is fairly tight for an isometric game.
+ Power-ups and hidden areas add depth to the Sonic series.

LASTING POWER: B+

+ Large levels take a lot of time to explore.
+ Unlike the last two Sonic games, there's enough challenge in this one.

OVERALL B+

RECOMMENDED



While Williams did a good job of revamping the aesthetics of this action-packed classic, there aren't enough new elements to keep gamers coming back for more.

Robotron X

The fastest-paced arcade classic gets new life on the PlayStation

Publisher: Williams

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Williams

Release: Now Available

Ever since Tempest 2000 arrived on the Jaguar and was showered with hordes of awards and good reviews, it seems like every company is attempting to cash in on their cache of successful, classic arcade games. And why shouldn't they? If people liked these games so much when the graphics and sound weren't so pleasing, it seems like a given that they will enjoy them again.

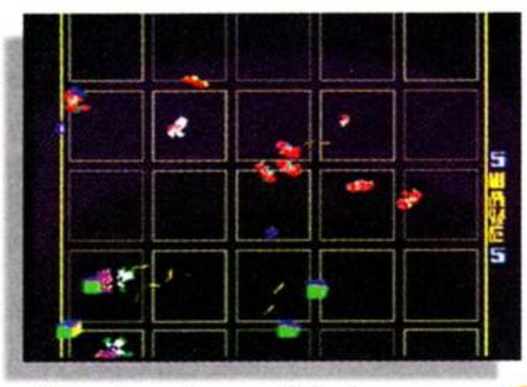
Robotron was one of the first seriously intense games that appeared in arcades. You controled a character in a small arena. This arena was filled with a large variety of creatures including indestructible robots, big-brained oddities and small red robots to name a few. Everything on the screen had one purpose—to kill you. Plus, there were inanimate objects that acted as mines that served the purpose of killing you, too. The only thing that wasn't out to blow you to bits were members of your family that walked around the arena aimlessly, hoping to be rescued.

Robotron X faithfully re-creates and enhances this hectic experience by shamelessly following the same formula Jeff Minter did when he re-created the highly successful Tempest 2000. So what are the ingredients of this formula? First, the graphics have been entirely polygon-rendered. Next, the music contains several technotracks (where did they get that idea?) and lastly, a slew of new power-ups and features have been added.

With all of this aesthetic and audible spice added, Robotron X still plays just like the arcade. By using the joypad and PlayStation's four-button configuration, the game mirrors the arcade's dual joystick control system perfectly. There haven't been many major gameplay changes. The goal is still to kill and dodge like a maniac, finishing levels only by reaching a high body count.

Most differences are things added to Robotron that complement the gameplay. Many new enemies have been added, and to add some balance and variety, a few new weapons and defensive measures can be picked up along the way. Your weapon can be upgraded into several different firing patterns including a rear and a three-way frontal gun. Shields and extra men can also be found in the arenas.

The goal is still to kill and dodge like a maniac, finishing levels only by reaching a high body count.



Killing bees is one of the bonus levels in Robotron (top). The top view is much like the one in the original arcade (above).

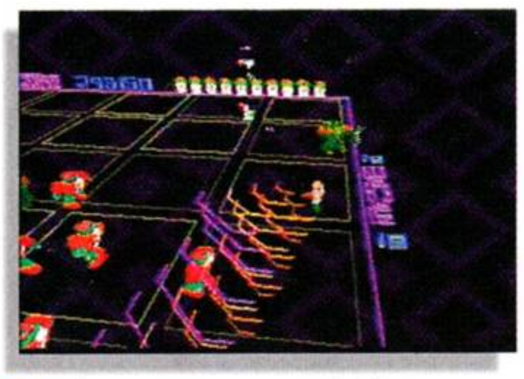
Robotron's graphics, as aforementioned are entirely 3-D. With that comes some fancy effects, particularly the shattering of the robots as you kill them with your laser. Sometimes the game's frame rate slows down a bit during the carnage, but never enough to ruin the gameplay. To view the action, two camera options are available, consisting of the bird's-eye view from the arcade and a "smart" camera that provides a three-fourths perspective while it follows you around the playfield.

The music consists of several technotracks, each of which is selectable through the options screen. It works pretty well with Robotron, especially because of the fast pace of the game. We've heard better soundtracks in games like WipeOut XL, but this one is certainly above average.

But, somehow, even with all of these improvements, Robotron X isn't quite as good as we had hoped. It isn't the caliber of a Tempest X or 2000, but those are lofty expectations. The graphics look good, and the music is fine, but there just haven't been enough gameplay improvements to keep the long-term play of this game high or to make it as fun as perhaps it could have been.

Although Williams has done a fine job in upgrading the sound and graphics, not enough has been added to make this game a great title in this day and age. Perhaps Robotron's time has simply passed us by.

ig



There are some weird effects as demonstrated by the weird screen pattern and wide gun being fired.

GRAPHICS: B

+ Nice 3-D versions of the former arcade characters.
- More special effects could have been used.

SOUNDS: B

+ Pretty good techno music.
+/- Sounds are adequate, but not great.

GAMEPLAY: B

+ If you really loved Robotron, then you will like this game.
- If you're just looking for an action game, others will better serve you.

LASTING POWER: B-

+ There are a lot of levels.
+/- If you like Robotron, then you won't mind a bunch of repetitive levels.

OVERALL B

RECOMMENDED

While indoor arena soccer play is a nice addition to the FIFA series, it is not enough to carry the game over some of the more serious problems it has in the gameplay department.

FIFA 97

The latest version of EA's successful soccer series stumbles onto the field

Publisher: EA Sports

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: EA Canada

Release: Now Available

As the most popular soccer series ever, FIFA Soccer brings a familiar name and a successful 16-Bit performance track record to the 32-Bit soccer arena for its second PlayStation release. The question is: Can FIFA dominate in the next-generation market, amongst heavy competition, as it did in the 16-Bit era?

If success were dependent on the amount of options packed into a game, FIFA 97 would have nothing to worry about. With 250 international teams to choose from and current statistics on 4,200 players from across the globe, finding or creating your favorite club could be a very long process.

Stat lovers will have their hands full dealing with the game's 250 teams and 4,200 players.

In addition to the teams and players, practically everything else that could be adjusted or changed in a soccer game can be in FIFA: formations, weather, language, announcers, music, skill level and even indoor/outdoor play, which is a new feature this year.

The 3-D-rendered polygonal players are well done and look okay if not a little awkward in the shoulder and upper-arm area. Multiple-light sourcing, shadows, stadium detail and overall graphic quality are good throughout and are certainly not the main problem found with the game.

While some enthusiasts may consider the voluminous amount of teams, players and options a bonus, critics will see it as overkill and a little ironic considering the other areas of the game (mainly player control) that could have benefitted from the same amount of detail. In short, all the options in the world can't make up for the slow, unresponsive gameplay which is the main problem. On-screen players seem sluggish to react to input from the controller, making defensive and offensive maneuvering very frustrating. Some moves such as the slide-tackle seem to happen in slow-motion while the opposing player (operating in realtime) happily runs by on his way to your goal. The overall game speed is very slow unless played in the faster-paced Arcade mode and even then it's still tough to control the players.

Another AI oddity occurs while playing the one-player mode. While the human player has the ball, the computer's primary defensive player will often match the movements of the ball handler producing an unnatural mimicking, thus ruining the game's realism appeal.

It seems in their attempts to be all things to everyone, FIFA's programmers overlooked the most important element—gameplay. It's unusual for EA to produce a sports sim that isn't top-notch in every aspect, but everyone is entitled to an occasional blunder. With much better games like Worldwide Soccer '97 on the market, FIFA's dominance seems gone.

ig

If success were dependent on the amount of options packed into a game, FIFA 97 would have nothing to worry about.

Eight camera angles including ball-cam and the extreme tower-cam may be a bit much, but surprisingly most are functional during play.

GRAPHICS: B

+ Motion-capture technology used in the animation of the players is a plus.
+ Stadiums and indoor arenas all look good.

SOUNDS: B

+ Three separate announcers provide loads of witty commentary.
+ Music is a heavy mixture of guitar-based metal and kickin' P-funk.

GAMEPLAY: C-

- Player control is slightly slower than it should be making fast arcade-like action impossible.
+ Mastering tough moves can make play more entertaining.

LASTING POWER: B-

+ Eight-player capabilities and heavy options keep things interesting.

OVERALL C+

AVERAGE

Bug! was moderately impressive when it was launched shortly after the Saturn back in the dawn of 32-Bit gaming, but now, the graphics are as stale as the gameplay.

Bug Too!

Sega's insectoid hero fails to impress on his platform game redux

Some of the ingame graphics are fairly nice to look at, although screen shots do a great job of concealing the pop-up and redraw problems found in the game.

Publisher: Sega of America

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Real Time Assoc.

Release: Now Available

Almost a year and a half after the first Bug! release, the sequel falls short on delivering much beyond the original. With Sega compiling a long list of hit franchises this season, Bug Too! seems to be the one sequel to skip.

Once the game begins, little improvements can be seen everywhere. At the selection screen, Bug can be selected along with his new acting colleagues, Superfly and Maggot. The game screen has an extra layer of scrolling background to give it a little more realism and a foreground that consists of polygons. Unfortunately, the polygons aren't very complex, consisting mostly of bland and repetitive textures.

The lacking graphics are easy enough to ignore as players spend their first couple hours trying to get the control down. It's pretty much just like the last game in this respect. Some gamers grew accustomed to it while others never overcame their frustrations.

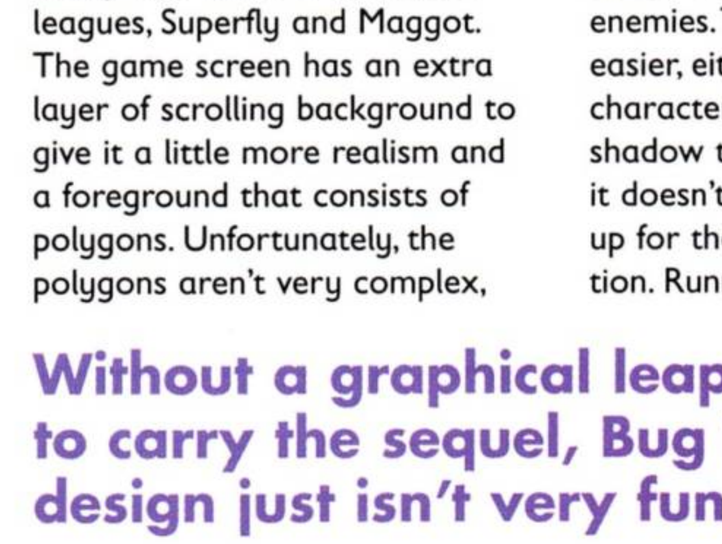
The heart of the problem seems to be in the moving into and out of the screen. It's as if the levels are mapped along a tightly confined checkerboard, only allowing the characters to stand in one square at a time. This restricted movement is compounded by the need to change directions in order to dodge obstacles or pounce on enemies. The pouncing isn't any easier, either. Although the characters now have a tiny shadow to help with the aiming, it doesn't help enough to make up for the troubling hit detection. Running into enemies from the sides allows them to be walked through as if they were ghosts, making it a pain even to jump on those intended only for bouncing to reach new heights.

Without a graphical leap or novelty to carry the sequel, Bug Too!'s linear design just isn't very fun to explore.

Unquestionably, playing Bug Too! requires a great deal of time and patience. Masters of the game's control will be happy to find a run button that makes traversing the large levels easier than it had been in the first game. That isn't without it's price though, since some of the courses will require a little backtracking. It seems like Bug Too!'s level designer was more ambitious than the game concept allowed. Switches can be found throughout levels that must be set off properly in order to get into new areas of a level. This is a great gameplay element that seems weighed down with making a linear game.

Maybe that's part of what makes the game seem a little boring. Without a graphical leap or novelty to carry the sequel, Bug Too!'s linear level design just isn't very fun to explore. The concept of making a game of 3-D maze-like paths seems very appealing, but the execution just doesn't cut it.

Fans of the first game should try paying Bug Too! a visit, since it essentially offers the same kind of challenge as the first game did. With large and difficult levels coupled with minor improvements, Bug Too! will probably only satisfy gamers that liked what we thought was originally a very mediocre platform game.



The main thing that made the original Bug! game so unique was the ability to not only walk left and right, but in and out of the screen as well. Sadly, there's not much new in the sequel.

GRAPHICS: C
+ A nice variety of enemies that employ a variety of interesting effects.
- Boring texture maps are reused all too often.

SOUNDS: C
+ Each character has a variety of voice samples.
- Music is grating as the tracks repeat through the huge levels.

GAMEPLAY: C
- Difficult controls take some time to get used to.
- Confusing levels make it hard to figure out jumps.

LASTING POWER: B
+ Like the first Bug!, this game is huge.
- Even though there are three characters, they all have the same moves.

OVERALL C

AVERAGE

Westwood again shows why they are in the top echelon of PC game companies, with Red Alert being yet another outstanding entry in the action-simulation genre.

Command & Conquer Red Alert

Westwood releases another alarmingly good PC action war simulation

Publisher: Virgin

Platform: PC

Format: Double CD-ROM

Developer: Westwood

Release: Now Available

Started originally as a quick add-on in the same vein as Command & Conquer's "Covert Ops" mission disc, Red Alert, like many Westwood projects before it, became a monster all its own. After being delayed numerous times all while being shrouded in secrecy, there's reason for the PC world to be alarmed, as Red Alert has shaped up to be one of the best computer games ever.

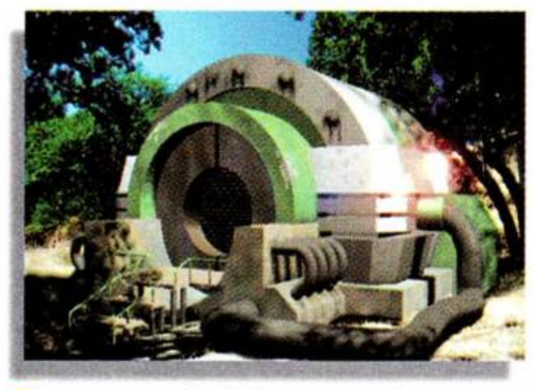
If you haven't heard of Command & Conquer, chances are you live in a cave somewhere near the North Pole, or you're new to computer gaming. C&C helped revolutionize real-time war simulations with one of the most brilliant blends of action, strategy and pure fun. As an added bonus, it ended up becoming one of the best multi-player games over networks, and in particular the Internet. Having said that, it's very clear that Red Alert, the next to carry the C&C torch, had a tough act to follow. The good news is that it lives up to every bit of its advanced billing.

George Lucas would be proud (or might want to sue), as C&C is taking the same story-telling master plan that *Star Wars* is following: Tell a good story, and then make its sequel a prequel that explains the original story that the audience loved so much. Red Alert takes place in an alternate world in the period of time spanning World War II and beyond. Instead of Hitler wanting to rule the world, Stalin takes his place as the aggressive leader in this "alternate reality." This sets up the major warring powers in Red Alert to consist of the Allies and the Soviets, instead of GDI and NOD which were the combatants in C&C. RA promises to answer many of the questions involving C&C's world including how Kane came into power, and why GDI and NOD were formed.

There's reason for the PC world to be alarmed, as Red Alert has shaped up to be one of the best computer games ever.

Like all Westwood games, the 3-D-rendered cutscenes are fantastic, unfortunately there is a little too much on-screen acting, which wouldn't be too horrible if the actors were convincing. Nevertheless, the FMV adequately moves the game's plot along as each mission is completed or failed.

Red Alert's gameplay is much similar to C&C's, but is actually much better due to the variety of units. It's not so easy to explain since Red Alert contains so many different types of missions. Basically, most orders tell you to obliterate the opposing side. Usually this is achieved by creating a large base which is capable of producing a variety of weapons. To fund your war effort, you must initially buy Ore Collectors (and enough units to defend them) to harvest gold and diamonds. These are then refined to give you money, allowing you to buy units, buildings and anything else you need. Some missions are now timed, while others have you doing various simple tasks like killing spies on the run or blowing up bridges, not to mention some puzzle-like indoor missions where you infiltrate buildings.



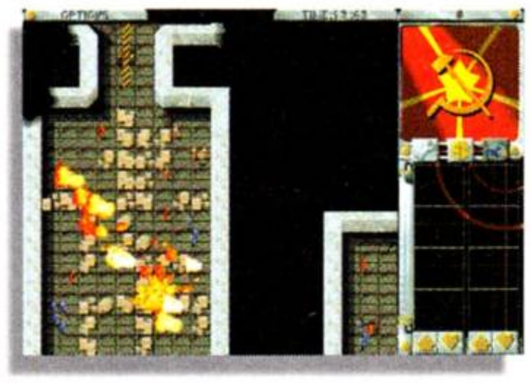
Westwood's full-motion-video is some of the best in the business, and they certainly use this strength to make Red Alert's story seem real. To the left is the Chronosphere, an Allied secret weapon. On the right? Great lookin' bombs.

The Soviets have a big advantage in air power, and they're using it as they hammer the Allied base (above). Destroyers are confronting Soviet submarines (top).

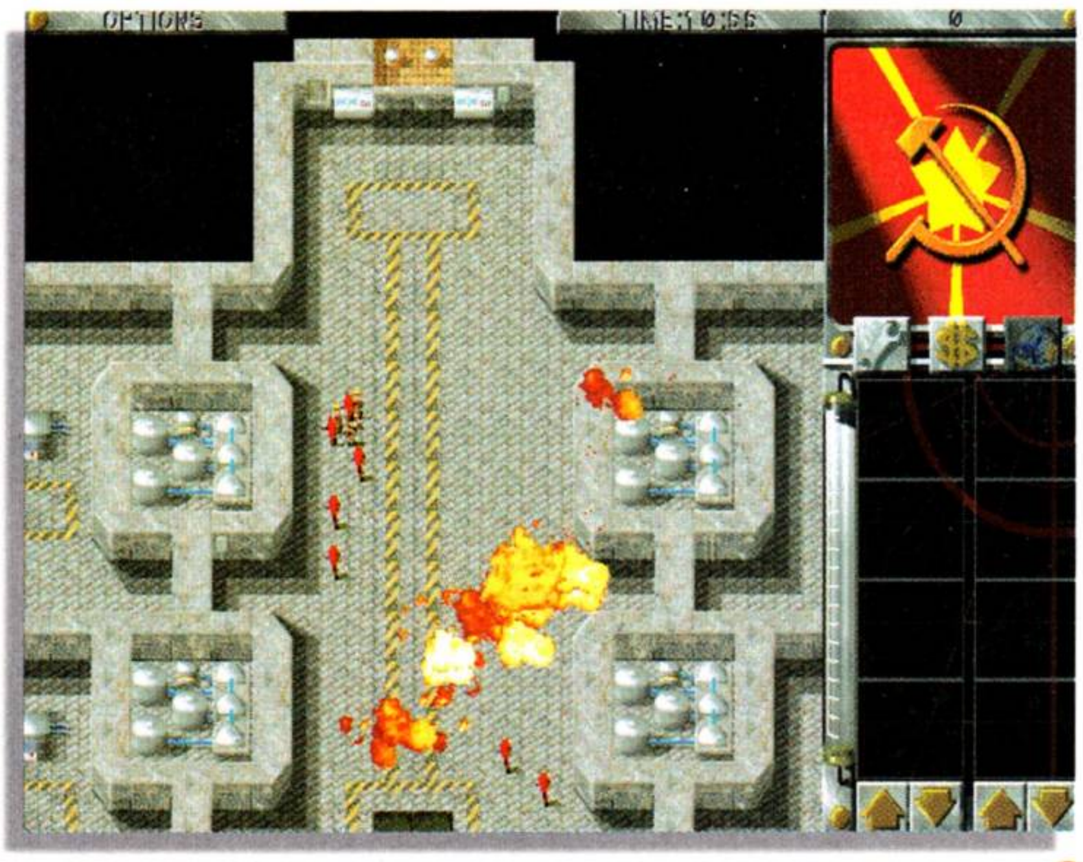
Sea battles are one of the biggest enhancements over the old Command & Conquer. Here a water transport is being hammered by submarines.

Blowing up bridges, and then having the ability to repair them adds an extra strategic element to the game. It is also the focus of several missions throughout.

The battlefield is now waged on three fronts: land, sea and air. Sure, C&C had aerial Orcas, but they barely scratched the surface of aerial tactics. In RA, a wealth of planes and boats are available, with each side specializing in one or the other. The Soviets have bombers, Yaks and Apaches to name a few, with one of the niftier techniques available to them being the ability to drop paratroopers or parachute bombs as planes zoom over bases. Allies have gunboats and destroyers as their main aquatic vessels, with the latter being very powerful. Because there is such a diverse selection of weapons, Red Alert isn't as much a game where strength solely resided in numbers like C&C often did (although that also sure as hell helps). Units are more effective when used in specialized groups, thus covering each other's weaknesses. For example, guard dogs (Soviet side only) are excellent for ripping apart infantry, but you can't just send them anywhere without armor backup, or the Allies are liable to run over your fighting canines with their tanks. If this happens, you can destroy the tanks by reporting the tank drivers to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals..err, no. Anyway, naval units should be moved in battle groups to insure that nasty Soviet subs won't single-handedly wipe out the entire fleet.



Additionally, a new influx of informational weapons dramatically influence Red Alert's gameplay. Spies can infiltrate buildings, Global Positioning Satellites can be launched in orbit (GPS) to reveal the entire battlefield, and the "black shroud" can be manually generated via a mobile generator to "black out" areas of the map,



Something entirely different to the C&C series of games, and similar to Warcraft 2 are "indoor" missions. Although they are an interesting diversion, some gamers might not like the puzzle-like style of gameplay.

taking away your opponent's sight. These types of weapons demand much more cunning, especially in multiplayer games.

The graphics in Red Alert are improved to an extent. In DOS mode, they look somewhat blocky since the game is forced into a low resolution. However, In the Win 95, SVGA mode, the high-resolution does wonders for the graphics, making them look substantially sharper and crisper. More importantly, you can see much more of the screen at once, making the deployment of units much easier (although maps can be four times bigger now). Small units such as guard dogs and infantry can sometimes be a bit hard to see, but it's not too much of a problem. The 3-D-rendered vehicles and buildings look very realistic and are well detailed—something that is becoming a bit of a trademark for Westwood.

Guard dogs are excellent for ripping apart infantry, but you can't just send them anywhere without armor backup.

Audibly, RA has a variety of fast-paced soundtracks, and a bunch of digitized voices that give your units character as they obediently reply "Affirmative!," "I agree!" or even the spy's credo—"For King and Country!"

The artificial intelligence has progressed, but still plays dumb here and there. The computer protects its ore collectors (primitive versions of Harvesters) more vigorously, and launches some pretty scathing attacks on your bases and vehicles. It becomes second nature to see a naval transport drop heavy tanks off at the one place where your base is least defended. The computer will also harass you with harvester attacks of its own.

In the end, even though all of these missions and story line are great, Red Alert's mark will probably be made in the burgeoning multiplayer arena. By using RA's direct Internet connection, two people can play each other, while the game supports up to eight players via network play. There is also a very welcome "skirmish" mode which simulates a two-player game. The computer is your opponent, but unlike in the game, it builds bases much like a human player would. This is a good way to practice different battle techniques before throwing yourself in the unforgiving and vicious world of Internet multiplayer gaming.

Red Alert is a good example of how sequels should be done. Not only is this title better than its predecessor, it far surpasses it, and any of its competition of course. Blizzard may have to say something about this when Warcraft III hits...

ig

This "Gap Generator" creates a high altitude cloud that prevents the enemy from seeing your units.

GRAPHICS: A

+ High-resolution mode a very good improvement.
+ 3-D-rendered vehicles and cutscenes are wonderful.

SOUNDS: A

+ Great, fast-paced music.
+ More sounds than the original during gameplay.

GAMEPLAY: A+

+ More strategic gameplay than the first.
+ A large variety of different types of missions.

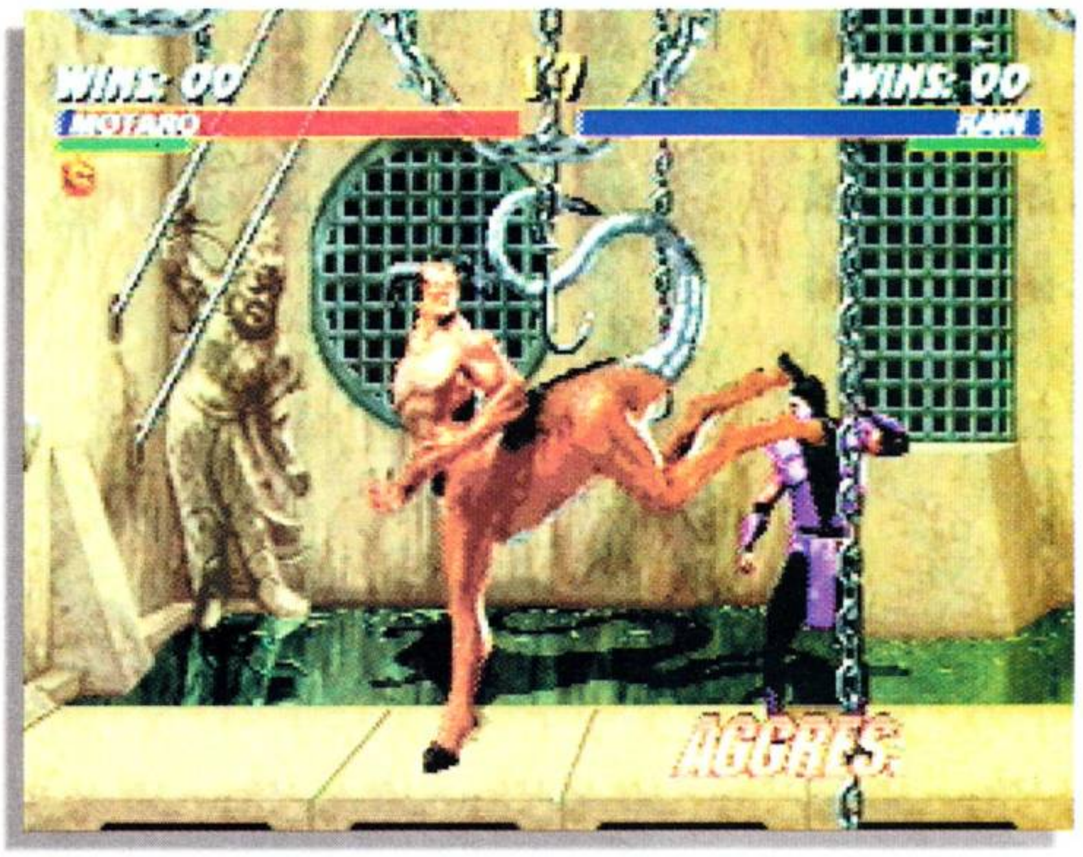
LASTING POWER: A+

+ The various multiplayer modes will keep this game in the CD-ROM drive.
+ Two sides with many different missions for each different faction.

OVERALL: A

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Midway's concept of bringing characters back from all three Mortal Kombat games into one home-exclusive title was a novel one. Unfortunately, this resulted in a very unbalanced game.



MK Trilogy

Midway's unique compilation of MKs past and present is a bittersweet one

Publisher: Midway

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Avalanche

Release: Now Available

Mortal Kombat Trilogy marks the fifth incarnation of the popular MK series. Unlike the previous entries, this one was the first to be made exclusively for home console systems.

MKT takes elements from Mortal Kombat 1 and 2, and combines them with the gameplay, characters and backgrounds of Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3. New to this series is the "Aggressor" meter that builds up as you receive damage, and even faster if your opponent blocks. When the meter is full, for a limited time, your opponent will receive more damage from each hit taken.

At the beginning of the game, there are 32 characters available on screen to select from. Older versions of some characters can be obtained by pressing select on the control pad when highlighting them. These characters include MK1 Rayden, MK1 Kano, MK2 Jax and MK2 Kung Lao. Each character retains their moves from their respective origin, with a few characters gaining or losing certain moves. Most notable is Johnny Cage's missing split punch, and the addition of a torpedo move to MK2's Kung Lao.

The PlayStation version of MK Trilogy has more characters than the N64 version (top).

By taking three different games and combining them into one, MK Trilogy has created a problem with character balance.

By taking three different games and combining them into one, MK Trilogy has created a problem with character balance. On the good side, Avalanche has done some creative programming to improve the annoying load times which hurt MK3 on the PS. The infamously long Shang Tsung loading times have been rectified by having players pick four characters to morph into before the battle begins, freeing up some memory.

For the record, the PS version of MKT wins hands down over the N64 version. It contains sharper graphics, more animation, more colors, better quality music and sound effects and seven more characters.

If you don't mind some gameplay imbalances, most Kombat fans should be pleased with MK Trilogy. The game is jam-packed with characters, secrets, moves and options, as well as the ability to pit old favorites against new ones. Just don't expect to be totally blown away.

ig

Brutalities are pretty brutal. I bet you needed a stupid caption to tell you that (top). Everyone loves it when the clouds open up and start raining bones (above).

GRAPHICS: B

+ Clean, digitized characters (although not as large as the N64 ones).
- Although true to the arcade, the animation is weak by today's standards.

SOUNDS: B

+/- Although a "Trilogy," music is taken only from Ultimate MK3.
+/- Clear but unvaried voices and good sound effects.

GAMEPLAY: C-

- Gameplay is just not balanced enough.
- Computer AI is cheap.
+ Control is responsive.

LASTING POWER: C+

+ Plenty of characters and secrets to keep you busy.
+ All of the fatalities, animalities, brutalities, etc. are fun to watch.

OVERALL C

AVERAGE

Get Your FIX!

Craving...

...the best video game mag on the planet!

Pick up a copy of EGM on the newsstand today!

NBA Jam Extreme was a failed attempt of Acclaim's to break into the arcade industry. Unfortunately, the game looks like it will draw the same fate on the Sony PlayStation.

NBA JAM Extreme

The only thing extreme about Acclaim's latest roundball title is the load time

Publisher: Acclaim

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Sculptured Software

Release: Now Available

Like is normally the case for popular titles such as Street Fighter 2 or Mortal Kombat, the NBA Jam brand name has been milked for every drop that it's worth. Extreme, the only Jam arcade game not made by Williams was easily the worst of all of them. As a result, expectations of the Sony PlayStation conversion can't really be too high. Unfortunately, this version of the game turned out to be a bad conversion of a game.

NBA Jam Extreme could easily be renamed Virtua Jam. By incorporating the use of 3-D polygonal graphics, Acclaim was able to add a free-floating camera to present the action. The gameplay is similar to the other Jam games and uses the standard shoot, jump and turbo buttons. The only addition is a new "Extreme" turbo button, which gives players an even bigger boost. All the other popular arcade options are intact, such as celebrity players and big head mode.

The visual and audio aspects of Extreme are on opposite ends. While Extreme uses a nice, floating 3-D camera, it needs to be fine-tuned at times to keep as many players visible on the screen at the same time. The graphics tend to be dark and low-colored, which can make it hard to tell who each player is on the court. Audio is very impressive. Marv Albert provides the commentary, which seems a bit out of place at times. Additionally, all the chants, screams and taunts have been adopted from the arcade, making Extreme the best Jam from an audio standpoint.

What made the previous Jam games such a success in the arcade was the speed and intensity of the gameplay. Extreme's players move and react extremely fast...perhaps too fast. At some points you simply can't keep up with what's going on, and that's not good.

What isn't fast is the loading time, which is simply atrocious! After inserting the CD, over a minute and a half goes by before you get to the title screen. The wait isn't over there, however, as the loading time between team selection to final tipoff is an additional two minutes. It's a fact of CD-ROM technology that games will have to load, but Extreme's load time is unacceptable.

When you add it all together, you get a title that really doesn't play like NBA Jam, and will disappoint fans of the series. All the awesome dunks, secret codes and a new added sense of humor don't matter as it doesn't control or play as smoothly as previous NBA Jams and the extreme load times really hinder the flawed action. Interested gamers will be better served waiting for the marvelous looking NBA Hang Time.

ig

This load screen is so prevalent in the game, we only thought it would be fair to give it a screenshot (top).

It's a fact of CD-ROM technology that games will have to load, but Extreme's load time is unacceptable.

After making three successive shots players become "smokin'" which enables them to do dunks like these (top). Almost all of the NBA players are in Extreme (above).

GRAPHICS: B-

+/- The 3-D graphics are novel, but don't improve the game in any way.
- Dark graphics make it hard to distinguish things.

SOUNDS: B+

+ Marv Albert delivers great commentary.
+ Plenty of rah-rah chants and other music.

GAMEPLAY: C-

- Players move too fast on the screen.
- Horrendous load time hinders the action.

LASTING POWER: B-

+ Sports games generally have a long play life.
- Load time and other bad features won't beckon you to play Extreme often.

OVERALL C

AVERAGE

It would have been much better for Midway to release Area 51 on the home systems about a year ago. Even then it wouldn't be that impressive.

Area 51

This top-secret military base might have been better off left unfound

Publisher: Midway

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Midway

Release: Now Available

Light gun games have evolved a great deal ever since arcade and game systems alike have been geared more toward 3-D graphics. And because of this, Area 51 simply looks and plays like a relic whose time has long since passed it by.

To be fair, Area 51 was a fairly popular game when it arrived in arcades. As the name implies, your mission takes place in Area 51, the mysterious military base in Nevada. An alien probe landed and was taken to the secret installation, where all the aliens went nuts and took over the place. You play a member of the "STAAR" task force (I refuse to explain the cheesy acronym), whose mission it is to detonate the nuclear reactor in Area 51, thus eradicating those alien vermin. Sound fun? No.

Spooled, prerendered full-motion video provides the backdrop for the game, giving it a pseudo 3-D effect. The renderings are competently made, but because of the low-quality video coupled with the very few colors, blotches of color mar the screen, ruining the 3-D effect by making it look like poor video.

On top of the video are very low-color, poorly drawn sprites, which wouldn't be half as bad if there were more of them. Almost every creature you kill looks just like the other, only dressed in a different colored uniform. Kill the purple alien, then the green one. Oh, don't miss that other purple one. Whoa Nellie, it's an orange one! It's like killing a bunch of mutant clones who have a small wardrobe. Perhaps if you had brought along some Gap shirts for these poor unfashionable chaps to wear, that would please them and you wouldn't have to go through this bloody ordeal. Enough about that.

Almost every creature you kill looks just like the other, only dressed in a different colored uniform.

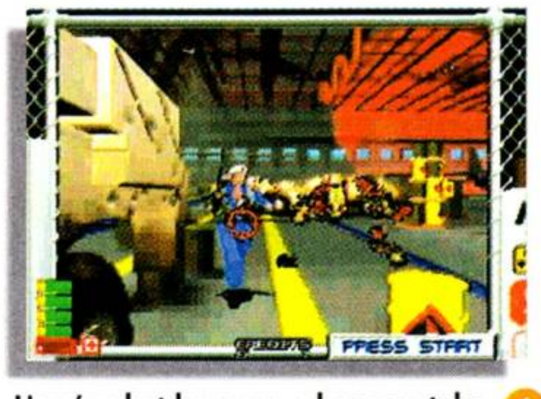
Anyway, because the backgrounds are FMV, there is very little interaction with them. The only other things you can shoot besides the baddies are explosive barrels, windows and small ammunition boxes. If you accidentally shoot your own team members who pop in occasionally, all it does is put an ugly blue "X" over them. Boring.

The level design is a bit better. Area 51 will have you running in and out of hangars, on a wild jeep ride and inside the bowels of the top-secret installation. But no matter how far you go, there are very little changes regarding who you shoot and who's shooting at you. The whole problem with the game is that it's so repetitive that it will put you to sleep.

The sound and music is pretty mediocre, which is usually par for the course in many light-gun games. Soft music is played throughout gameplay, with most of the sounds consisting of your gunfire, and the repetitious screams of the aliens.

If you're looking for a Saturn light gun game, you should look to Virtua Cop 2. We'd only recommend Area 51 if you already have Sega's two premier gun games, and are dying for another title to justify that light-gun purchase.

ig



Here's what happens when you take a "hit" in Area 51 (top). Much of Area 51 involves you running around hangars and shooting people like a postal worker (above).

The thing floating in the background is one of the end-level Bosses. This scene is one of the hardest, and more entertaining parts of the game.

GRAPHICS: C-
- \+ Well-rendered FMV.
- \- Poor video quality ruins the effect.
- \- Repetitious enemies.

SOUNDS: B-
- +/- The sound and music is par for the course for a light-gun game.

GAMEPLAY: C-
- \+ Well, it works as a point-and-shoot game...
- \- ...but then again, so does Duck Hunt.

LASTING POWER: C-
- \+ The nature of gun games typically allows for long-lasting gameplay...
- \- ..but that gameplay gets repetitive right from the beginning.

OVERALL C-

BELOW AVERAGE

Team 17's graphically impressive shooter is simply beautiful, but lacks the gameplay to make Project: X2 the worthwhile title that it really should have been. Such is life.

Project: X2

Project: X2's good looks are wasted on a game with little personality

Publisher: Acclaim

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Team 17

Release: Now Available

Once a flourishing genre on 16-Bit systems, shooters have seen a huge decline since Street Fighter II and its clones took over the gaming world. Shooters have been devoid of attention that they rightfully deserve nowadays, because companies feel the power and capabilities of new systems have left the genre in the dust. Unfortunately, what's left are fading memories of games that once were.

Team 17 is known around Amiga gaming circles, having created some of the best games for that system, including the original Project: X in 1992. The game received rave reviews despite a high degree of difficulty. Since then, their biggest hit has been Worms, which has appeared on just about every home system thus far. When it came time to give Project: X a 32-Bit sequel, Team 17 decided to utilize the PlayStation.

These top-view sequences add some variety to Project: X2, which is primarily a side-scrolling game.

Row after row of creatively impaired enemies appear with no new attack patterns or strategy.

One of the most dangerous enemies in shooters—those damned Iguana-looking robots (top). Project: X2 specializes in messy explosions (above).

Spread across the game's 11 levels are a mess of enemies that appear in droves from every possible angle. That's not bad, since a shooter needs a smorgasbord of enemies to be blasted. The problem lies in the fact that too many times there are vertical rows of enemies that take more than one hit to kill. At that point, the game becomes downright silly. If you have a bomb, you can blast all of the enemies on the screen. If not, you either have to avoid the ships altogether or just frown and take the damage.

After a while, this becomes very repetitive. Row after row of creatively impaired enemies appear with no new attack pattern or strategy. Thankfully, you have a life bar, instead of the annoying "one hit and you're dead" syndrome, but even this small consolation doesn't detract from the fact that after a while, the game gets very frustrating.

Project: X2 shifts from horizontal to vertical scroll, or vice versa, during play. This creates some interesting changes in gameplay, but nothing shocking. The speed of the game never reaches a fever pitch—each level moves along at about the same pace. Project: X2 is pretty impressive for a 2-D PlayStation game, though, as there are dozens of enemies on screen with no slowdown, even with two players simultaneously shooting their big guns.

What's disappointing about Project: X2 is that behind the attractive graphics, there's very little compelling gameplay. Sure, it's fun to hold down the fire button and do nothing more than wipe out everyone, but that's not enough. Team 17 had some great ideas, but without the gameplay, this could-be classic misses the mark. ig

GRAPHICS: A-

+ Great rendered ships and enemies give the game a futuristic look.
+/- Lots of effects with zero slowdown, but sometimes they block your view of the action.

SOUNDS: B-

+ Decent techno soundtrack accompanies the amazing graphics.

GAMEPLAY: D

- Barrage of enemies that are too hard to defeat and easily kill you. More based on avoiding enemies than shooting them.

LASTING POWER: A-

+ Levels are nice and long and have lots to blast.
- After playing through once, what's the point of playing again?

OVERALL C

BELOW AVERAGE

FORGET THE REST, PLAY WITH THE BEST!

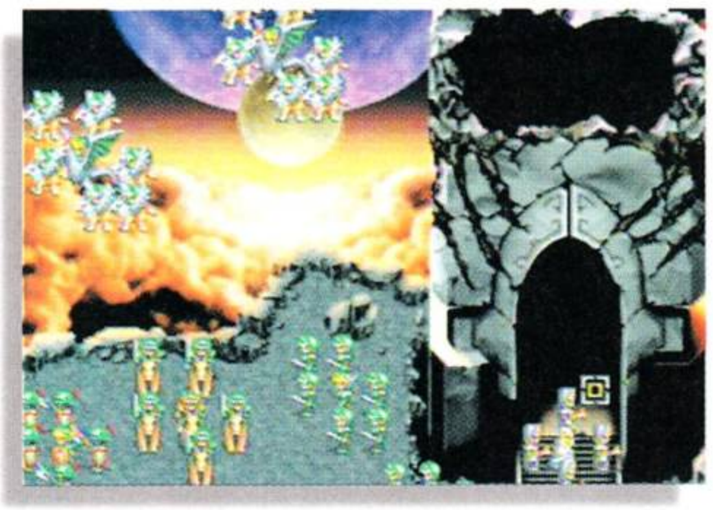
EGM²

Your complete source of tips, tricks and strategy written by hardcore gamers!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
PICK UP A COPY ON NEWSSTANDS TODAY!

AVAILABLE NOW AT NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE

Langrisser III is the latest in the popular Japanese war strategy-simulation series that started as Warsong in America, but only continued overseas.



Langrisser III

Masaya's latest Langrisser entry provides massive depth for avid Warsong fans

Publisher: NCS/Masaya

Platform: Sega Saturn

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: NCS/Masaya

Release: Now (Japan)

If you are a console wargame fanatic, you probably remember Warsong for the Genesis. That simple-yet-brilliant game was loved by older gamers and ignored by Sega's "target audience" and, as such, flopped badly in the U.S. Fortunately, the Japanese original, titled "Langrisser," enjoyed considerable popularity at home and spawned a number of sequels on several video game systems.

Like its predecessors, Langrisser III is a square-based wargame, although the old Warsong engine has undergone a number of significant revisions. You control a party of characters who act like commanders to their troop units. This time, however, the commander and his/her troops fight as one—in order to compensate for the inability to control each troop individually, Langrisser III gives you several troop formations—square, horizontal line, vertical line, etc. Combined with the semi-realtime gameplay (unlike the strictly turn-based previous games), the game conveys the feel of commanding troops on a real battlefield rather well. Yet another innovation is an additional layer of command—before each battle you have an option to manually position your troop units on the actual battlefield in order to inflict maximum damage on the enemy commander (or to avoid him inflicting maximum damage on you). The battles themselves...well, let's just say that the idea of having panoramic 3-D battles was great, but the execution will leave you largely unimpressed. Fortunately, the game gives you an option of switching the said scenes off, which saves a lot of time. The rest of the game looks good if not overly impressive by today's standards—the maps are huge, colorful and detailed with some nice parallax thrown in. As you would expect of a medieval war sim, there are plenty of spells to master, items to equip and secrets to discover to spice up the gameplay even further.

Another noticeable feature of the game is the amount of conversation scenes before, during and after each scenario. However, the best part is that the story isn't just superfluous filler, but is subtly influenced by your actions throughout the game. There is also a question of individual endings for each member of your party—use him or her unwisely and you'll get something along the lines of "was experimenting with powerful destructive magic and was disfigured in an accidental explosion."

Will Langrisser III ever come to these shores? Nothing is confirmed at this point, but if the upcoming Dragon Force sells well, someone might give this one a chance.

ig

The best part is that the story isn't just superfluous filler, but is influenced by your actions throughout the game.

Whoever does the art for Langrisser (we'd love to say we know his exact name, but uh, we don't), is one hell of an artist. Perhaps he'll paint our portraits...

Strategy fans will have a blast with Langrisser's deep, involving gameplay. Sadly, you better be bilingual.

GRAPHICS: B-
+ Large, detailed maps.
- Lackluster 3-D battle scenes.
- The 16-Bit look may be a turnoff for the casual gamer.

SOUNDS: B+
+ Catchy tunes will appeal to Warsong old-timers.

GAMEPLAY: B+
+ The new engine works well while preserving the spirit of earlier games.
- Enemy AI could have been better.

LASTING POWER: A
+ As if 34 scenarios isn't enough, you get several hidden ones, multiple endings and many other secrets to discover.

OVERALL A-

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Take a good look, because if you don't import Sexy Parodius, you'll never see it in the U.S. In fact, once our editor sees that we printed this,you may never see us again in the U.S. either.

Sexy Parodius

Konami bares it all in their new satirical shooter for the PlayStation

Publisher: Konami

Platform: Sony PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Konami

Release: Now (Japan)

American shooter fans are being cheated. Since the release of Gradius III on the SNES, Konami has been turning down U.S. ports of each new sequel to the classic series. Meanwhile, Japanese gamers landed three Parodius games on the Super Famicom, and a disc collecting the first two on the Saturn and the PlayStation.

The latest sequel isn't likely to change that trend, either. A great Konami shooter would probably be eagerly swallowed up by shooter-hungry Americans, but the problem has more to do with the parody than Gradius. The title may be a bit overstated, but Sexy Parodius has just enough sexual undertones to knock it into a PG-13 rating and out of reach of American hands.

Specifically, successfully completed missions reveal drawings of nude anime girls. To complete these levels, players choose from eight characters that range from the Gradius ship to an angelic pig. Each has different animations and power-ups.

For the most part, gameplay doesn't really evolve throughout the Parodius series. Shoot the various objects and gather other items such as the power-ups and bells. Collect enough and characters become so powerful as to appear invincible. Overconfidence will only bring a quick death, though, as the screen fills with activity and leaves the player at an inopportune time to have to start collecting all over again.

Each of the game's levels is packed with original creatures to shoot down. Planes of silky smooth parallax fall behind the action with beautiful, hand-drawn backgrounds. The screen never runs low on sprites either, as there are enough snowflakes, bullets and smoke puffs to make Tempest 2000 fans glee with delight.

The only real flaw in Sexy Parodius is that there isn't much new here. The course of the scrolling stages creates just as much déjà vu as the game's familiar bosses. Most of the cute power-ups can be found in previous Parodius games as well as most of the music. The other problem that has plagued the series is that of its unlimited supply of continues. Shooter fans can easily finish and shelve the game in a half hour.

With these flaws accepted, Sexy Parodius is still Konami's best shooter. Fans that haven't yet gotten their fill from the series, shouldn't hesitate—give this one a try.

ig

It's clear that the Japanese programmers have their priorities straight as demonstrated by their fond regard for protecting the genitals.

This toilet-headed boss is rumored to be one of the next villains in an upcoming *Batman* movie (top). Here you select which character you will do battle with (above).

Sexy Parodius has just enough sexual undertones to knock it into a PG-13 rating and out of the USA.

There are no life-and-death struggles more exciting than those against a cob of corn.

GRAPHICS: A

+ Incredible 2-D art and animation fills the screen.
+ There is no slowdown anywhere in the game.

SOUNDS: A-

+ The music is great and highly appropriate for this series of games.
+ Sound effects are well-placed and never muffled.

GAMEPLAY: B+

+ The same great gameplay Gradius fans have known and loved for years.
+ The power-ups are extremely cool.

LASTING POWER: B-

+ Two-player simultaneous mode adds to the shelf-life.
– It is hard to resist the unlimited continues.

OVERALL B-

AVERAGE

Each of the girls has special animations when they perform huge combos (usually seven hits or more) on their opponents. One of the girls even turns into a huge mech robot!

TokiMemo Puzzle Ball

When a dating sim from Japan becomes this popular, it's time to start worrying

Publisher: Konami

Platform: Saturn/PlayStation

Format: Single CD-ROM

Developer: Konami

Release: Now (Japan Only)

Using the theme from their Japanese hit dating simulator, Tokimeki Memorial, Konami breathes life into another puzzle game. More than just an excuse to use the name, though, the Toki theme is an integral part of the puzzle game.

In many ways, Toki is most similar to Capcom's Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo. Both games rely heavily on the personalities of the characters, giving each a distinct personality for the players to identify with. Toki goes a step further, though, by giving each of the characters a dialog as well as distinct attack style.

Rather than just frowning or smiling as so many puzzle game characters do during play, Toki's characters each react in their own way. One is a complete showoff and likes to brag. Another is a shy little girl who acts apologetic as she tries to play her friendly game. During the game, the player can pick which character to have stand in the tall, rectangular box that makes up the game's playing field on either side of the screen.

The music isn't quite so pleasant, though, as the same tune persists through all but the boss levels. The music isn't bad for the first 15 minutes or so, but afterward it gets repetitious. On the other hand, the voice samples are of high quality and there are lots of them.

Toki's gameplay is fairly simple. Balls with happy faces fall in pairs from the sky. Connect three of the same color in a horizontal or vertical row and they disappear. Place them next to the smaller balls, and the small ones grow into big ones. Connect them next to the Pac-Man-shaped balls, and the Pac-Man-like character chomps a row of pieces. When the smaller balls grow into bigger ones, they often connect three of the same color again, and then change yet another row of small pieces into large ones. This can result in massive combos that can clear an entire screen. Opponents are left defenseless as they're buried under the avalanche of pieces that fall on their side as a result.

Much of Tokimeki Memorial Taisen Pazurudama's (the full Japanese title, mind you...) appeal is in the game's much-adored female characters.

If you're in a losing situation, you'll not only know it by the huge pile of balls (heh) on your side, but from the animation of your female character in the background as she struggles to keep from losing.

Opponents are left defenseless as they're buried under the avalanche of pieces that fall on their side...

These combos are what quickly become both the source of fun and frustration in the game. A few unlucky pieces will leave the player to be pummeled by pile after pile of pieces from the other character's attacks. At the same time, the combos can be so easily achieved by accident that the most unskilled players can be on the giving end of the pummeling, which can be maddening.

This is the game's tragic flaw and what leaves it to be just another puzzle game. For the true puzzle fan, there's really no such thing as a bad puzzler though, but it's safe to say that more people will be satisfied with Capcom's upcoming Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo.

ig

GRAPHICS: B+

+ The animated characters are the game's highlight.
- Backgrounds are boring and become covered by brick walls.

SOUNDS: B-

+ There are a lot of high-quality voice samples...
- But the little music present gets old very quickly.

GAMEPLAY: B

+ The huge combos are a lot of fun to set up and see executed on opponents.
- Without its Tokimeki theme, the game seems mostly generic in play.

LASTING POWER: B

+ There are three difficulty levels.
- The game doesn't cry out to be replayed once the character animations have gotten old.

OVERALL B

RECOMMENDED

THE BEST SYSTEM DEMANDS THE BEST MAG!

P.S.X.™

THE #1 UNOFFICIAL PLAYSTATION PUBLICA

THE MAKING OF CRASH BANDICOO

P.S.X.

100% PLAYSTATION COVERAGE

NCAA GAME BREAKER

COLLEGE FOOTBALL AT ITS FINEST

TEKKEN 2 STRATEGY GUIDE

•SUPER SECRET COMBOS•
•A DEDICATED TRICK SECTION•

Killer First Looks!

- Street Fighter Alpha 2
- Twisted Metal 2
- Dark Forces
- Power Soccer
- Discworld 2
- Soviet Strike

DUKE NUKEM 3D

MK TRILOGY

JIMMY JOHNSON '97

STRATEGIES on the toughest titles.

INTERVIEWS with gaming's top personalities.

PREVIEWS that expose hot, new games.

REVIEWS that tell it straight.

TRICKS to blow your mind.

NEWS hot off the press.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! BUY THE BEST 100% PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE NOW!

AVAILABLE NOW AT NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE!

A summary of the ratings given to games reviewed in past issues of *IG*.

ALSO NEW THIS MONTH

You Don't Know Jack Vol.2 — Graphics: B- | Sounds: A+ | Gameplay: A | Lasting Power: A | **Overall: A**

This satirical and cutting-edge pseudo gameshow is a blast with several people. With outstanding wit, humor conveyed by a sarcastic announcer coupled with ingenious questions, this is one of the most entertaining computer trivia games ever.

Tomb Raider (PC) — Graphics: A | Sounds: B | Gameplay: A+ | Lasting Power: A | **Overall: A+**

A great combination of action and adventure, Eidos' Tomb Raider is one of the best games for PC. The game will last you a long time, and if you have a 3-D accelerator card, the aesthetics will simply blow you away.

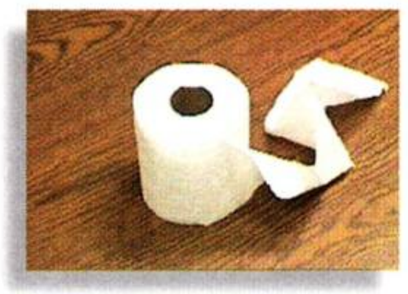
Pro Pinball (PS) — Graphics: B | Sounds: C+ | Gameplay: C+ | Lasting Power: C- | **Overall: C**

Pro Pinball could have been really good, but it has a few bad flaws. First, the pinball doesn't even look like a pinball, which is a big drawback. Next, there aren't enough pinball boards, making the game very repetitious after little play time.

Hardcore 4X4 (SAT) — Graphics: B | Sounds: C | Gameplay: C+ | Lasting Power: C | **Overall: C+**

Hardcore 4X4 aims high in the sparse off-road racing category but falls short due to a slow frame rate and a general lack of racing excitement. On the flipside, individual 4-wheel drive vehicle physics and motion were done quite well.

Toilet Paper (ZD) — Graphics: C+ | Sounds: F | Gameplay: B | Lasting Power: A+ | **Overall: B-**



This paper from heaven helps us get through each day, particularly during deadline. It's a good-sized roll, so it has decent lasting power, but it's not much to look at, so don't expect great graphics. Overall, a good wipe.

IG REVIEWS

Nintendo 64

	Graphics	Sounds	Gameplay	Lasting Power	Overall
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	B+	B-	B-	B	**B**
PilotWings 64	A+	B+	A-	A-	**A-**
Saikyo Habu Shogi	D	C	A	B	**B**
Super Mario 64	A+	A	A+	A+	**A+**
Wave Race 64	A+	B+	A+	A+	**A+**

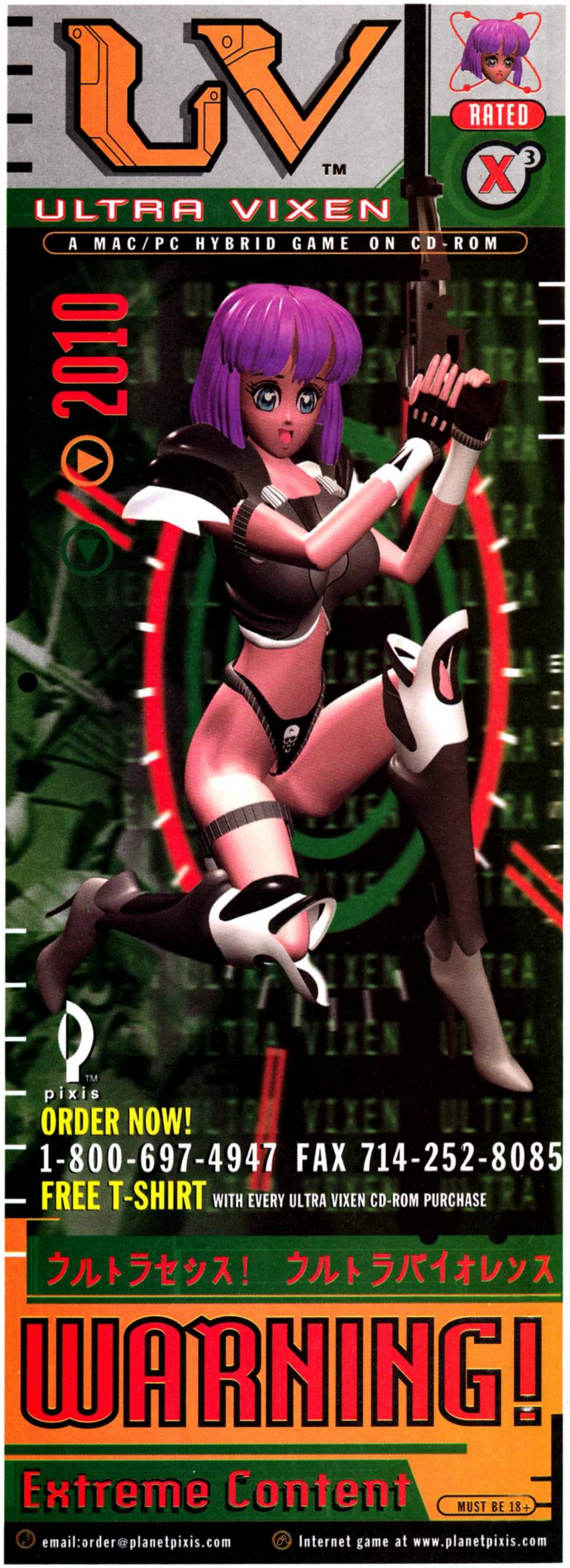
PlayStation

	Graphics	Sounds	Gameplay	Lasting Power	Overall
The Adventures of Lomax	A-	A-	B+	B+	**B+**
Andretti Racing	A-	A-	A	A-	**A-**
Beyond the Beyond	C+	B-	C+	B+	**B-**
Black Dawn	B+	A	B	B+	**B+**
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	B	B	B-	C-	**C**
Bogey: Dead 6	B+	C-	B	C	**B**
Bubsy 3D	D	C-	D	C-	**D**
Bust-A-Move 2: Arcade Ed.	B	B+	A-	A	**B+**
Casper	C+	B	B	B	**B**
ChoroQ	B-	B	B+	A-	**B+**
Contra: Legacy of War	A-	B+	B	B+	**B+**
Crash Bandicoot	A	B-	C-	B	**B-**
Dare Devil Derby	C+	B	C	C	**C+**
DarkStalkers	A	B+	B+	A-	**A-**
Destruction Derby 2	A-	B+	B	B-	**B**
Die Hard Trilogy	A-	B	A-	A-	**A-**
Disruptor	A-	B+	B+	B	**B+**
Double Dragon	B-	C+	C-	D	**C**
The Final Round	A	B	A+	B	**A-**
Floating Runner	B-	B+	D	C	**C-**
Formula 1	B+	B+	A-	A	**B+**
Galaxian 3	B+	B-	B-	D	**C+**
Goal Storm	B	B+	A-	A-	**B+**
Horned Owl	B	B	B+	B	**B**
International Track & Field	A	B	C	B-	**B**
Irem Arcade Classics	D	C	B-	C	**C+**
Johnny Bazookatone	B+	A-	A-	B	**B+**
Jumping Flash! 2	A	A-	B+	B-	**B+**
Killing Zone	C+	B-	C-	C	**C-**
King's Field	B-	C-	D-	C-	**C**
King's Field II	C+	A-	C-	B	**C+**
Krazy Ivan	A-	B-	B+	C	**B**
Madden NFL '97	B+	B	A	A	**A-**
MLB Pennant Race	B	B+	B-	B+	**B**
Motor Toon Grand Prix 2	B+	B+	A	A	**A-**
MYST	C-	D+	D+	B-	**D+**
Namco Museum Vol. 2	C-	D	A-	A-	**B+**
Namco Museum Vol. 3	C-	D	A	A-	**B+**
NASCAR Racing	C	B+	C+	C+	**C+**
NBA Live 97	A	B+	A	A+	**A**
NBA Shootout	A	A-	A	A	**A**
NCAA Gamebreaker	B	B	B+	B+	**B+**
NHL Face Off '97	A-	A	A	A	**A**
NHL 97	A	B+	A	A+	**A**
Olympic Soccer	C+	B+	A	B	**B**
Olympic Summer Games	C	C+	A-	B	**C+**
Pandemonium!	A	A	B+	B	**A-**
Perfect Weapon	A-	A-	B-	B+	**B**
Pitball	B-	B	B+	A-	**A**
Power Move Pro Wrestling	B+	C+	A-	B+	**B+**
Project Overkill	B-	B-	C-	B	**C+**
The Raven Project	B+	B	C-	D+	**C-**
Resident Evil	B	B	B-	B+	**B**
Return Fire	A-	A+	B-	B+	**A-**
Ridge Racer Revolution	A-	A	A-	A-	**A-**
RoboPit	B	C	C+	B	**C+**
Samurai Shodown III: Blades of Blood	C+	A-	D+	C+	**C-**
Soviet Strike	B	B-	B+	B+	**B+**
Spot Goes to Hollywood	B-	C+	D+	C+	**C-**
Street Racer	B-	C	C	C+	**C+**
Suikoden	B+	A+	A	A+	**A**
Star Gladiator	A-	B	B+	B+	**B+**
Starwinder	D+	C	D+	D+	**D+**
Street Fighter Alpha 2	B	B+	A-	A-	**A-**
Street Fighter Alpha	C+	B-	A-	A-	**B**
Tekken 2	A	A+	A+	A+	**A+**
Tempest X	A	A	A	A	**A**
Tetris X	D	C-	D	D	**D**

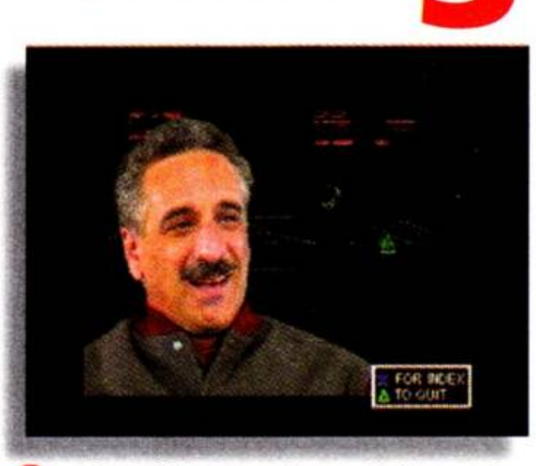
	Graphics	Sounds	Gameplay	Lasting Power	Overall
Time Commando	B+	B+	B-	C	**B-**
TNN Motorsports Hardcore 4x4	B	C+	C+	C	**C+**
Tobal No. 1	B	B	B+	B+	**B+**
Tokyo Highway Battle	B-	B-	B-	C	**C+**
Tomb Raider	A	A	A+	A	**A+**
Toshinden 2	A-	A-	A-	A-	**A-**
Triple Play 97	B+	A-	A-	A-	**A-**
2 Xtreme	C+	B	A	B	**B+**
VR Golf	B+	B	A	B+	**B+**
VR Soccer '96	B+	B-	C-	B-	**C**
WipeOut XL	A	A-	A	A	**A**
Worms	C+	C+	A+	A+	**B+**
Saturn					
Baku-Baku	B-	C+	B+	B+	**B-**
Battle Arena Toshinden URA	B-	B-	C-	C	**C-**
Darius 2	B-	A	B	B+	**B**
Decathlete	A	B+	C+	C+	**B**
Earthworm Jim 2	B+	A-	B+	A-	**B+**
F1 Challenge	C+	B	B+	B+	**B+**
Fighting Vipers	A-	B+	A-	B+	**A-**
Golden Axe	B+	C+	B-	B+	**B-**
Guardian Heroes	B+	A-	B+	A	**A-**
Hyper 3D Pinball	C-	C	C-	A-	**C+**
Iron Storm	B	C+	A-	A-	**B+**
Johnny Bazookatone	B+	A-	A-	B	**B+**
King of Fighters '95	A-	B	A-	A	**A-**
The Legend of Oasis	A	A	A+	A-	**A**
Madden NFL '97	B	B	A	A	**B+**
MegaMan X3	B-	B+	B+	C+	**B**
Metal Black	B	A-	B+	B-	**B+**
Mortal Kombat II	B-	C+	C	B-	**B-**
mr. Bones	B	B	C	C	**C+**
NiGHTS	A	A+	B+	B-	**A-**
NightWarriors	A	A-	A+	A	**A**
PGA Tour '97	B+	B-	B	B+	**B**
Saturn Bomberman	B+	B+	A	A	**A-**
Shining Wisdom	C+	B-	B+	B	**B-**
Skeleton Warriors	A	A-	C-	C+	**B**
Soviet Strike	B	B-	B+	B+	**B+**
Street Fighter Alpha 2	A-	B	A	A	**A**
3D Baseball	B	B-	C	C	**C+**
Three Dity Dwarves	A-	B+	B+	B-	**B+**
TNN Motorsports Hardcore 4x4	B	C+	C+	C	**C+**
Tomb Raider	A	A-	A+	A	**A+**
Victory Goal '96	A	B	A	A	**A**
Virtua Fighter Kids	A	A	B+	B-	**B+**
WipeOut	B-	A-	A	B-	**B**
World Series II	B+	B+	A-	A	**A-**
Worldwide Soccer '97	A+	B+	A+	A	**A+**
Worms	C+	C+	A+	A+	**B+**
X-Men: COTA	A	B+	B+	A-	**B+**

IG RATINGS:

A+:	Revolutionary
A / A-:	Highly Recommended
B+ / B-:	Recommended
B- / C+ / C:	Average
C- / D+ / D:	Below Average
D- / F:	Poor



Atari's Swan Song



Ed Rothberg explains all the myths and quirks of Battlezone.

How fitting that in a time when the great empire of Atari has finally fallen after repeated failure, Midway releases a pack that is an outstanding tribute to their wonderful successes. Seeming to be a farewell salute, Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection, contains nothing but Atari classics that single-handedly launched genres, not to mention hundreds of spin-offs.

Six games are included in this compilation CD, which are selectable via a graphical menu that contains full 3-D replicas of each coin-up machine (below). Maybe you have heard of some of the games that make up this title: Asteroids, Battlezone, Centipede, Missile Command, Super Breakout and Tempest?

The selection screen features 3-D-rendered arcade machines in a circular pattern. When you select one, a 3-D-rendered segue brings you to the game.

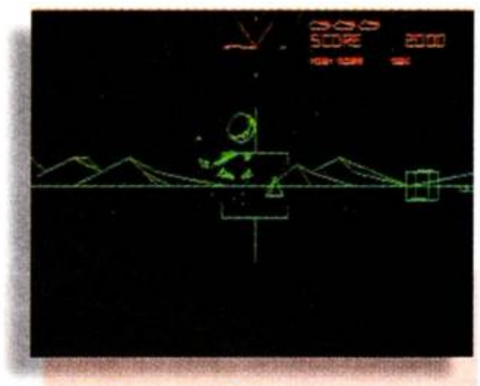
Instead of reprogramming the games, leaving the possibility of slightly altering the gameplay in any way, Midway chose instead to have the CD run the games through an arcade emulator. This way, everything is exact, leaving no changes between the home and the arcade, except of course, the controller. Even the then-famous bugs in each game still work and flaw (or accentuate) the gameplay like they did in the golden years.

What makes Midway's compilation pack so special is that they brilliantly dig deeper into the nostalgic value of these games by interviewing and chronicling events that involve them. Each game has a multimedia index attached to it that contains fascinating full-motion video interviews (above) with the game's designers in addition to still pictures. This wealth of information alone is well worth the purchase of the title.

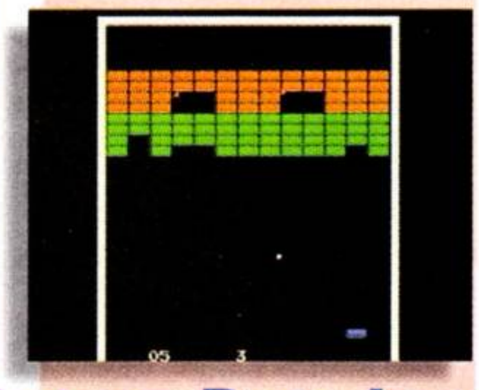
Where else could you learn that a special version of Battlezone was being developed, but then scratched for the U.S. military? How about the true story behind the Tempest bug that would give you 10 dollars of free credits? Other interesting tidbits included are: Why Asteroids' vector monitor would "fritz" out occasionally, how Tempest's unreliable construction had boards unsoldering themselves, why there was no ending in Missile Command to show the futility of a nuclear war, and the story behind the mysterious grasshopper in Centipede.

Midway's Arcade Compilation is a model to show how these sorts of titles should be produced. Nostalgia is not only the act of replaying a game, but is also the story and the memories associated with it. This title is the first to deliver on both fronts so perfectly, and for that, should be commended.

ig

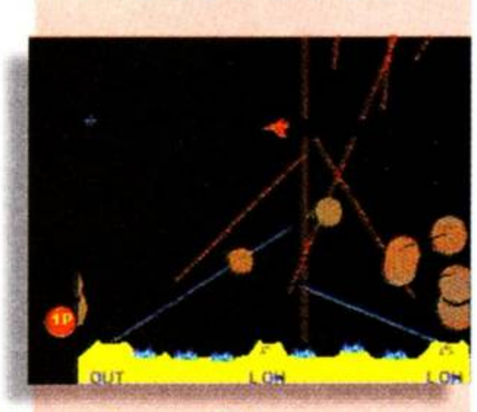


Battlezone



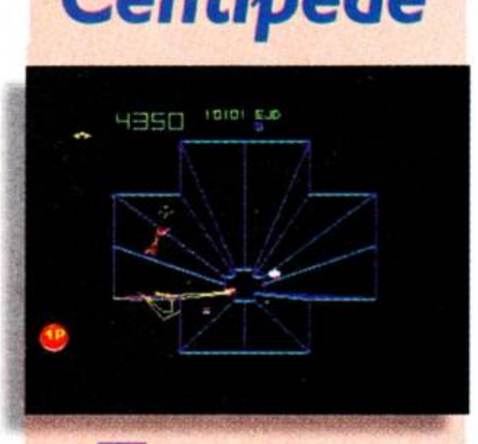
Super Breakout

Asteroids



Missile Command

Centipede



Tempest

Midway's compilation salutes the people that launched an industry

Next Month

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

February 1997

FEATURE STORY

The *EGM* editors are back from Nintendo's Shoshinkai Trade Show. Watch for a special feature blowing out all of the new N64 releases like StarFox 64 and more.

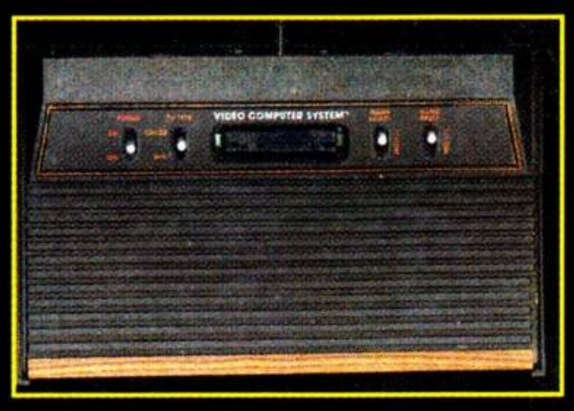
The *EGM* editors are in the air flying to Japan to gather the latest game info from Nintendo's Shoshinkai Show. Watch for a special feature that lists all of the details about their new disc drive. Also, don't miss the most

Don't buy a game until you see the ONLY unbiased reviews in the industry.

extensive coverage on all the new N64 games including Zelda, StarFox 64, Mario Kart 64 and more. As usual, you'll find this exclusive information and news only in *EGM* and months before everybody else.

As for previews, our editors have been working hard on getting the latest exclusive information on Resident Evil 2, Soul Edge, Final Fantasy VII and Clay Fighter 3.

If that wasn't enough, our Review Crew is already tearing into Command & Conquer. Next issue, they'll tell you if it lives up to its excellent PC reputation.



The Atari 2600 started it all. Don't miss our look back on the golden days of video games.

EGM²

Tips, Tricks and Strategies from real gamers to real gamers

February 1997

YEAR-END SPECIAL

The lines between computer and video games are blurring more and more. Luckily for us great games like Command & Conquer are coming and *EGM²* can't wait to get their hands on these hot crossovers.

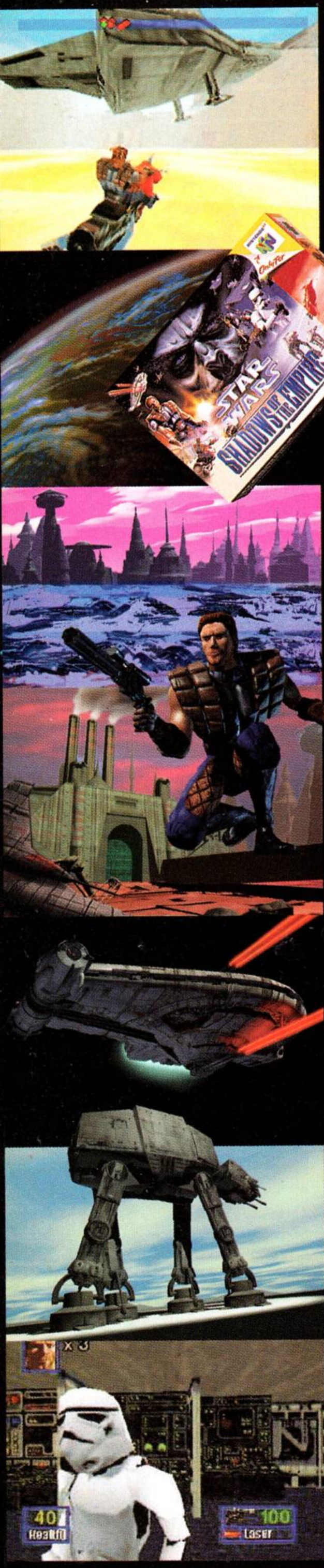
N64 hits home in a big way as games like Shadows continue to burn up charts. Look for an all-out blowout.

For February, the crew is working round the clock with a bunch of surprises and new features. Some of these will include the first multi-person controller reviews by the REAL gamers.

Also, look for up-close and personal interviews featuring strategies from many of the industry's top games and designers themselves. In addition, there will be maps, tricks, tips and strategies with a more personal feel and input involving different playing styles and ways to play better on many of today's games.

The *EGM²* Crew digs in next month to get hands-on reviews of the latest gear.

Featured in this next issue will be a great assortment of games from 16-Bit titles like DKC3, to RPGs like Shokoden, to the mega release of 64-Bit titles from Nintendo. Also, expect to see tons of PS and Saturn coverage in the blowout *EGM²* style.



Evil may rule the galaxy,

but with N64®, you've got

the universe under your thumb...

literally.

Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire.™

The only saga on any screen

with the firepower to create

full-motion 360-degree freedom,

battle after battle,

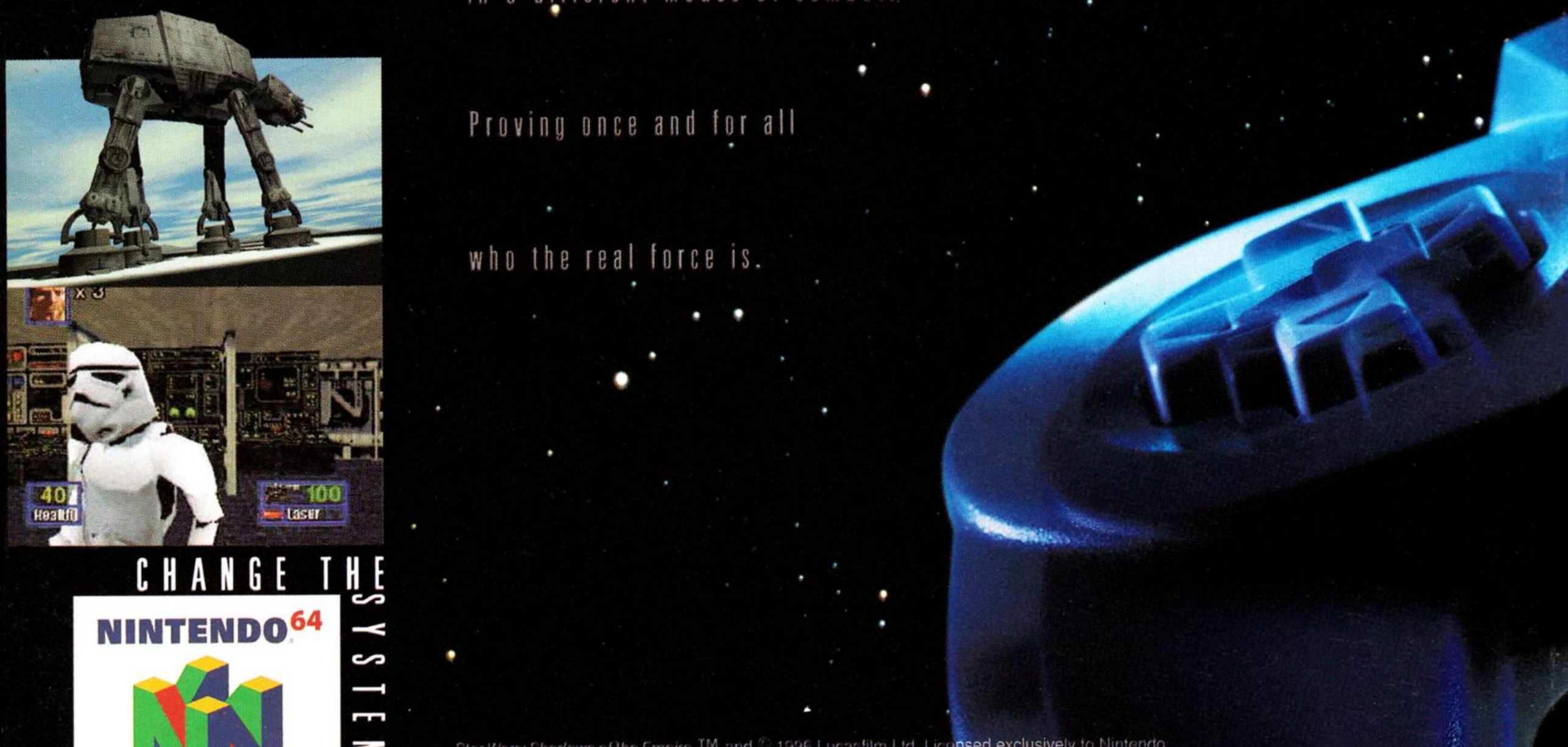
in 5 different modes of combat.

Proving once and for all

who the real force is.

CHANGE THE SYSTEM™

NINTENDO 64



Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire ™ and © 1996 Lucasfilm Ltd. Licensed exclusively to Nintendo.
™ and © are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc. © 1996 Nintendo of America Inc.

They'll be armed with the dark side of the Force.

Fortunately, you've got a rotating thumb.

AOL@keyword:NOA
www.nintendo.com

TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

KONAMI

CONTRA®

legacy of war™

PREPARE FOR THE MOST EXPLOSIVE CONTRA EVER!

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation™ ™

3-D GLASSES INCLUDED WITH PLAYSTATION VERSION

www.konami.com

Contra® and Konami® are registered trademarks of Konami Co., Ltd. Legacy of War™ is a trademark of Konami (America) Inc. © 1996 Konami Co., Ltd. All rights Reserved. © 1996 Konami (America) Inc. All rights Reserved.
PlayStation™ and the PlayStation™ logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Sega Saturn™ is a trademark of Sega Enterprises. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.