THE **OFFICIAL** DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

Dreamcast.

Dreamcast

ISSUE 03 JANUARY 2000 £4.99 www.dreamcastmag.co.uk

WORLD EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

IT'S A REVOLUTION IN REALISM!

CRAZY TAXI
OUR MAN PLAYTESTS THE FIRST DREAMCAST VERSION

WORMS ARMAGEDDON
THE ULTIMATE POST-PUB EXPERIENCE?

SOUL CALIBUR
WE TAKE THE MASTERPIECE ON TOUR

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SOLVE ALL YOUR DC PROBLEMS

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PLUS: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GETTING ONLINE AND WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE THERE

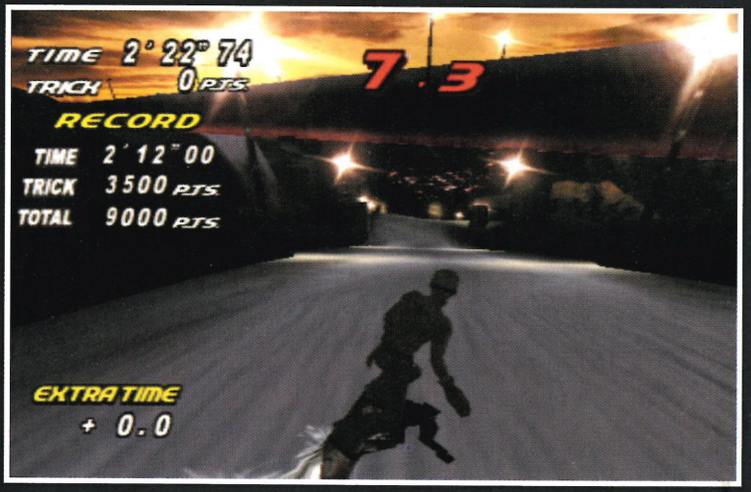
ON THIS MONTH'S CD

4 AWESOME PLAYABLE DEMOS! →

TOY COMMANDER (XMAS EDITION)

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

We're proud to present this exclusive Christmas demo of *Toy Commander* where you get to play Santa himself. This one-level playable demo sees you trying to recover five presents which have been stolen and hidden around the house by the wicked toys. Not only do you take control of the big beardy fella, you also have a truck and a fighter plane with which to destroy the nefarious playthings. You can't get this demo anywhere else, y'know – it's exclusive to owners of DreamOn.



SNOW SURFERS

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

Snow Surfers is the game that board fans have been waiting for. You step into the thermals of a sharp-shooting snowboarder, racing down treacherous slopes while performing death-defying tricks along the way. Anyway, this demo sees you choosing one of two boarders and trying out one of the game's tracks. It should give you a good idea of the skills needed to succeed in the real thing. Like, bogus, dude. Or something.

SUSUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing is the rip-roaring superbike game that has you duking it out over 12 tough tracks against the world's best riders. In the full game you have a choice of two bikes – the GSX-R750 and the GSX-R600 – in a variety of settings, but in this demo you're road-testing just one of them. The course supplied is Tobacco Road, one of Alstare's best tracks, and you can play either solo or against a friend.

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX FOR DC

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

It's the most realistic formula one sim out there, featuring all 16 circuits and 22 cars, all of which can be accurately fine-tuned. Every detail of last season has been painstakingly programmed in – even the position of the sun during each race is right. This demo enables you to try the time attack mode on three laps of the San Marino track, attempting to beat your own best times. Drivers available include those from five of the biggest teams: McLaren, Ferrari, Williams, Jordan and Benetton.

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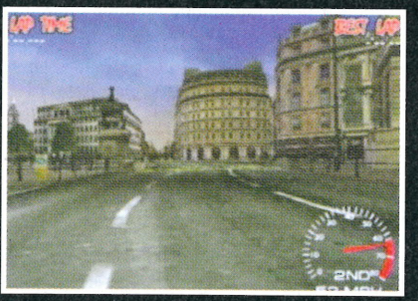
NESTLING ON THE COVER OF THIS COPY OF *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE* IS THE LATEST INSTALMENT OF DREAM ON. WHAT DO YOU GET? READ ON...

SEGA PREVIEW TRAILER

Dreamcast has some exciting titles coming to it in the year ahead, and here are some exclusive glimpses of three of the most hotly anticipaited: *Crazy Taxi*, *Zombie Revenge* and *Metropolis Street Racer*. *Crazy Taxi* is a conversion of the arcade classic where you play a badass cab driver risking life and limb (mainly everybody else's) to get your fares to their destinations quickly. *Zombie Revenge* sees you on a mission to destroy the legions of undead, armed with just a few weapons and your natural instincts for survival. *Metropolis Street Racer*, meanwhile, is the most eagerly awaited Dreamcast racer. After checking out this brief movie, flick to our exclusive preview of the game on page 8.



OTHER MOVIES

Besides the exclusive Sega preview above, we've also got three other movies to give you a taste of what's hot at the moment. *Evolution* is the first Dreamcast RPG to get a release over here, and is reviewed on page 78. *Sega Worldwide Soccer*, meanwhile (reviewed on page 92), will tempt all you football fans. Finally, *Soul Fighter* is the 3D hack 'em up that we reviewed last issue. All three games should be in the shops by the time you read this.

△ *Evolution*

△ *Soul Fighter*

△ *Sega Worldwide Soccer 2000*

IT'S OFFICIAL

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM

This morning I received a letter from an S Bryant in Yorkshire who wants to come round and teach me a thing or two about games. Mr Bryant complains that we've overrated *Soul Calibur*: "No game can be that good – especially on a console which has only just launched," he insists. He then goes on to tell us that because we're the official mag, then we must be biased: "I don't know why you bother rating games at all," he proclaims. "You might just as well give everything ten out of ten." Which suggests that it's about time I explained what it means to be the official Dreamcast magazine.

Obviously the main difference between ourselves and other, unofficial, titles is the most obvious one – that shiny disk thing on our front cover. As you know, we're the only Dreamcast magazine to carry a CD (or GD-ROM, as it's also known) month after month. This CD is wholly owned and produced by Sega and is distributed on all the official magazines throughout Europe.

The other big difference is that as the official magazine we get exclusive access to Dreamcast developers and we get all the news first. This month's mammoth *Metropolis Street Racer* feature (page 8) is testament to how well this works. No other magazine has been able to talk to the developers and reveal so much information about the game, or show off such incredible screenshots. Our *Crazy Taxi* preview (page 48) is another game that's packed with information no other magazine has access to. And we've got more fascinating facts to reveal about both titles next issue.

As far as reviews and scoring goes, I can assure you that *Official Dreamcast Magazine* is totally independent from Sega in this respect. In fact, in the contract between oureselves and Sega it states explicitly that Sega can have no influence over the scores we award to games. And we take our scoring very seriously – as you'd know if you listened to all the arguments in our office. In fact, we care so passionately about our scores that we've started a new section this issue where we get you to write in and offer your own comments about the games we've reviewed (see page 125).

What we can't do as the official magazine is review 'grey import' games. Some magazines review import versions and attempt to pass them off as UK releases, but there are often big differences between the Japanese or American games and those released over here, not least in terms of speed and speech effects. One Dreamcast magazine in particular is known to have reviewed a PC version of *Shadow Man*, but we got our hands on the first finished UK version of the game, and bring you the definitive review on page 84. Last month's exclusive *Soul Calibur* feature was the first review of the UK game, and we were the first to show UK screenshots.

So there you go, Mr Bryant, I hope we've cleared that up. If you still want to come and teach me a lesson, then I should warn you that I've got the meanest nunchukas in the office. Proceed at your peril. And by the way, if you don't believe what we've got to say about *Soul Calibur*, check out page 42 for the opinions of half the population of the South East. *Soul Calibur* is one game that nobody should miss out on.

All the best,
Mark Higham, Editor-in-ChieF

M.MOLYNEUX 1999
SOUL FIGHTER
魂
TM
Taka
piggyback
MINDSCAPE
ENTERTAINMENT

This image is composed from less than 1% of the gameplay in Soul Fighter.™ Heaven only knows what the other 99% is like.
Free-roaming, next generation Soul Fighter.™ Conceived for Dreamcast.™ Destined for greatness.

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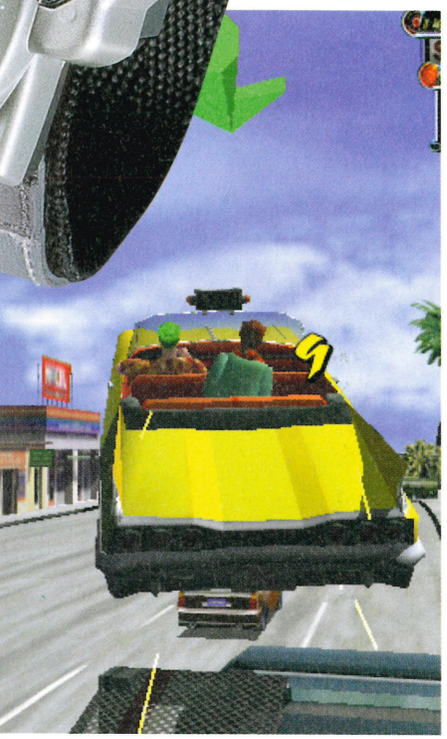

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Sega group.

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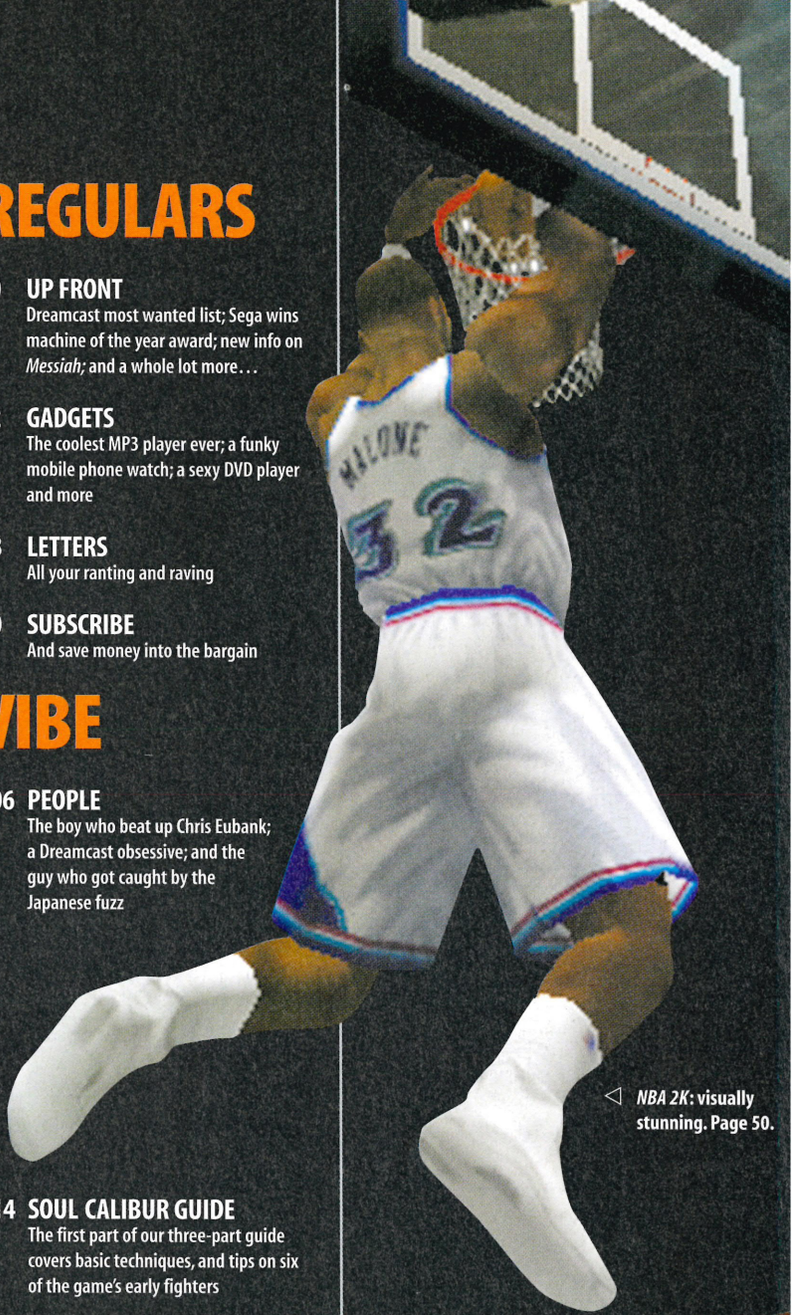

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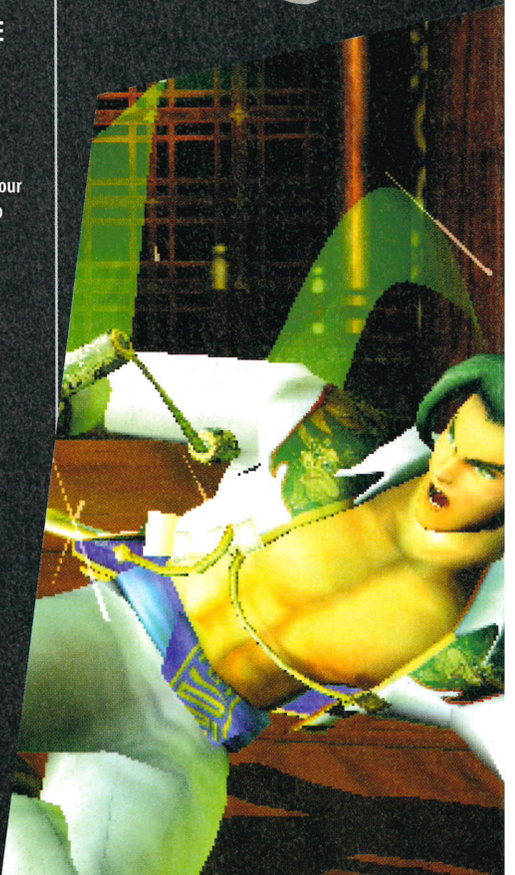
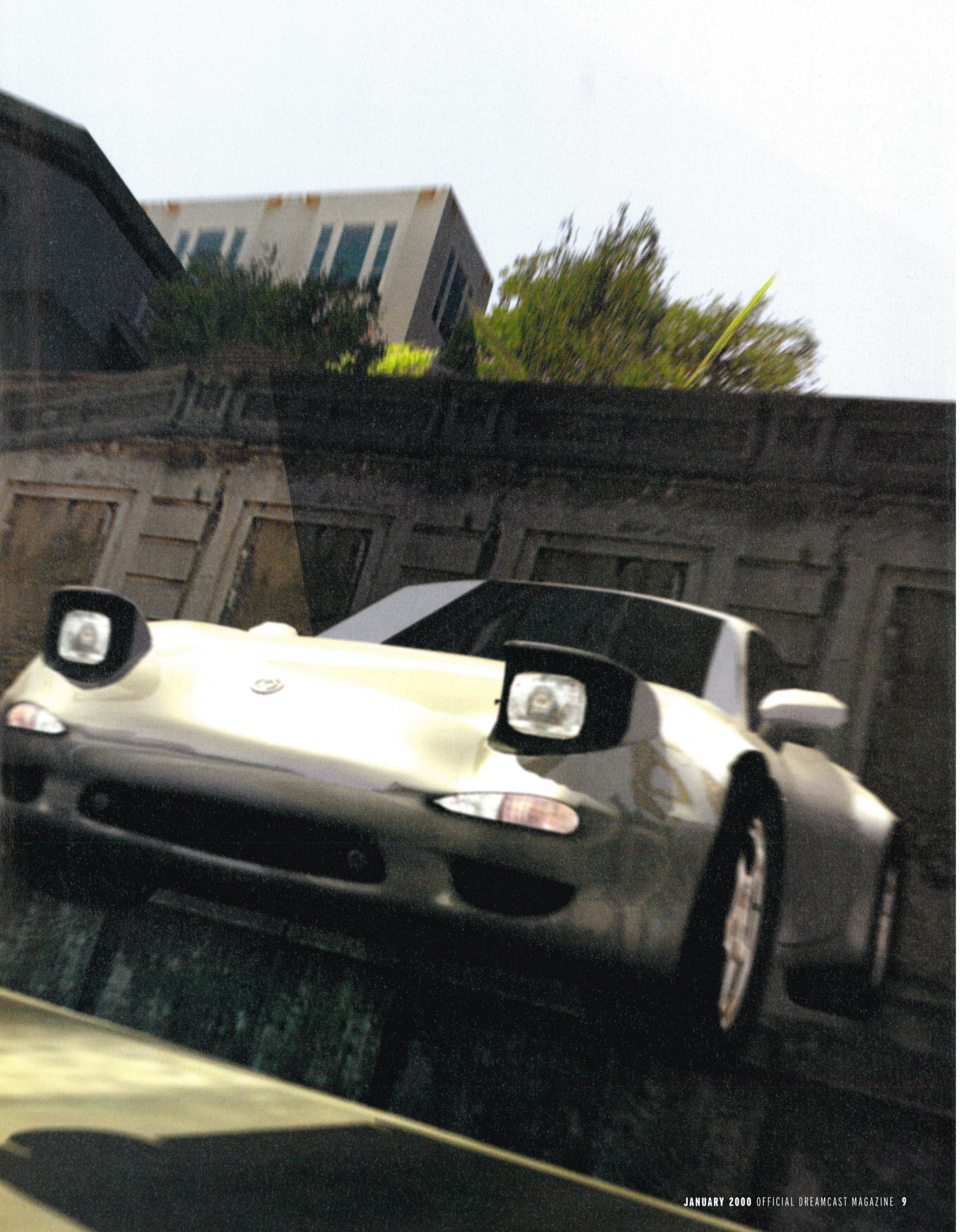
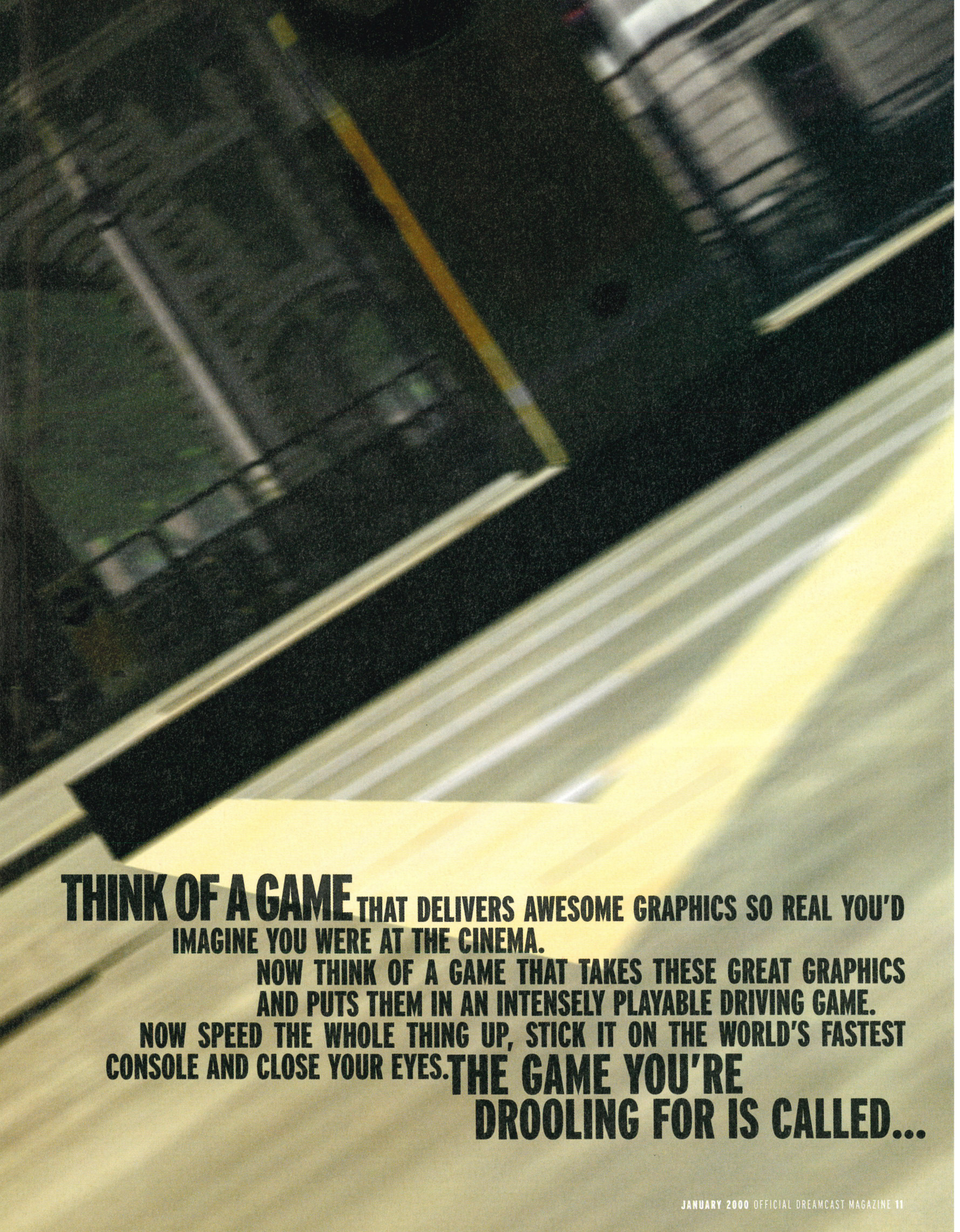


REVOLUTIONARY!

IN A COSY LITTLE OFFICE IN LIVERPOOL, 14 DEVELOPERS HAVE SPENT THE LAST TWO YEARS QUIETLY WORKING ON A GAME THAT'S SET TO ROCK THE INDUSTRY. IT'S A GAME THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT CONSOLES FOREVER. IT'S A GAME THAT WILL REPOSITION THE GOALPOSTS ON A NEW PLAYING FIELD...

ILLUSTRATION: BIZARRE CREATIONS





THINK OF A GAME THAT DELIVERS AWESOME GRAPHICS SO REAL YOU'D IMAGINE YOU WERE AT THE CINEMA.

NOW THINK OF A GAME THAT TAKES THESE GREAT GRAPHICS AND PUTS THEM IN AN INTENSELY PLAYABLE DRIVING GAME.

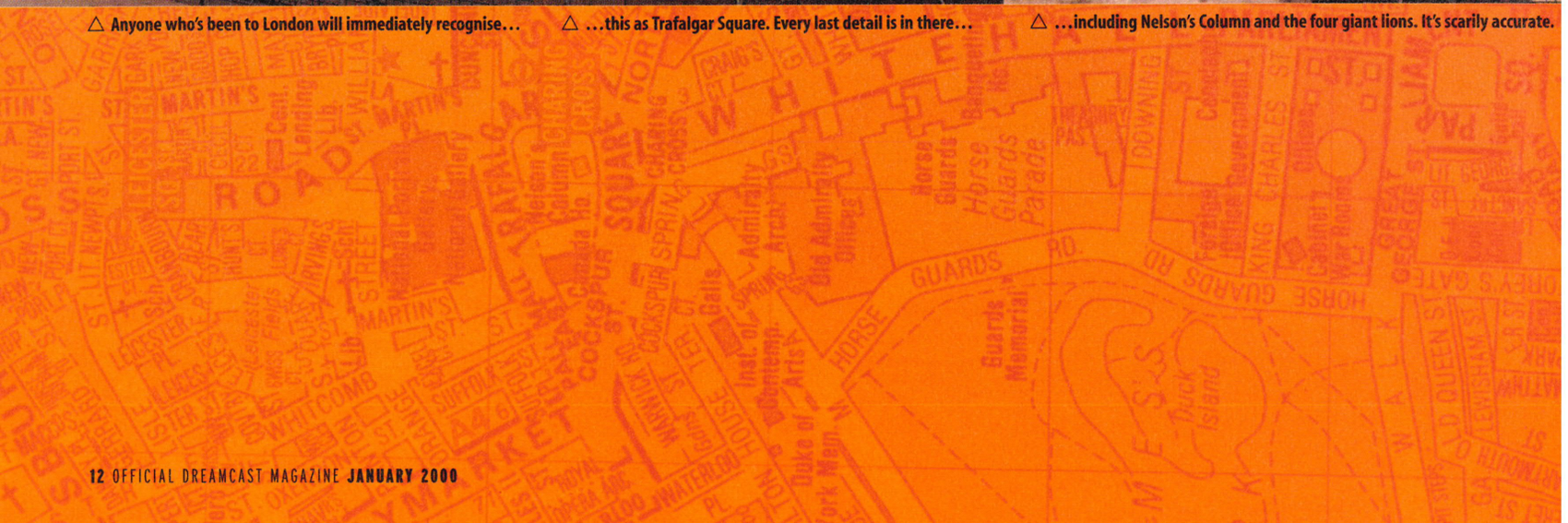
NOW SPEED THE WHOLE THING UP, STICK IT ON THE WORLD'S FASTEST CONSOLE AND CLOSE YOUR EYES. **THE GAME YOU'RE DROOLING FOR IS CALLED...**

METROPOLIS STREET

△ Anyone who's been to London will immediately recognise…

△ …this as Trafalgar Square. Every last detail is in there…

△ …including Nelson's Column and the four giant lions. It's scarily accurate.



RACER

DEVELOPER: **BIZARRE CREATIONS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
OUT: **APRIL**

ON THE CD

THE BIGGEST GAME EVER TO COME OUT OF THE UK CAN FINALLY BE REVEALED TO THE WORLD. **ED LOMAS** HAS THIS WORLD EXCLUSIVE REPORT ON THE RACING GAME OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

YOU'VE PROBABLY NOT seen much of *Metropolis Street Racer* before. Nobody has. Other than a few teaser screenshots and some early demos running at major video game trade events, the whole project has been kept securely under wraps since long before Dreamcast was even launched.

Official Dreamcast Magazine travelled to developer Bizarre Creations' Liverpool office for an exclusive first look at Sega Europe's biggest release of the year 2000 having seen little more of it than the average Dreamcast gamer. We weren't expecting to find one of the most ingenious and ambitious game projects ever undertaken, and we certainly weren't expecting to see something quite as exciting as we did. This is a title that revolutionises the age-old favourite – racing games.

We'd only been in Bizarre Creations' office for a few minutes when we got our first surprise of the day. While looking around, we spotted two monitors next to one another, one showing a photograph of a San Francisco street, the other showing video footage of what was clearly the same area. After playing and rewinding a short section of video a few times, the artist reached across his desk for a Dreamcast controller and proceeded to move the 'photograph' view ten feet down the road. It was in fact an early version of *Metropolis Street Racer*, and he was checking how each virtual building matched up to its real-life counterpart.

We'd been fooled: we had mistaken a videogame for a photograph – something it's been impossible to do until now. But it's not only the astoundingly realistic graphics that make *Metropolis Street Racer* one of the most promising games ever, as you're soon to discover.

A REVOLUTION IN REALISM

"We not just doing the 'Please select your car, please select your circuit' type rubbish", explained Martyn Chudley, Managing Director of Bizarre Creations. "We want it to be an experience – a racing

△ Next left for the Queen's pad. Can't miss it, mate.

△ Don't blink or you'll miss the sexy sportscars.

"EVERY BUILDING IS RIGHT, THE HEIGHTS ARE RIGHT, THE ROAD IS RIGHT... I'VE EVEN HAD TO MODEL PEOPLE'S GARDENS"

experience rather than a racing *game*".

Creating a new kind of racing *experience* takes time, and the Bizarre team have certainly put in the hours. While adding the finishing touches to their PlayStation hit *Formula 1 '97*, they started working with Sega to come up with an all-new title for an as yet unnamed console. After deciding to set it in three major cities – one from each of Dreamcast's main territories – they collected enough research material to accurately build large portions of each city in the finest detail.

Bizarre dispatched troops to Tokyo, San Francisco and London, where they took tens of thousands of photographs and shot hours of video footage of every last building in each of the chosen areas. Detailed maps and aerial photographs were also collected to ensure that everything could be replicated perfectly.

"I know that area of San Francisco better than I do Liverpool, and I've been living here for two years," complained Mark Sharratt, the 3D artist building the North American city. Picking out random photographs of houses from the stacks around him, he was able to point out each one's exact location on an aerial photograph of the city in a matter of seconds – something very few San Franciscan natives would be able to do, that's for sure.

"We start by scanning in the District Council Land Use contour maps and bringing them into *SoftImage* [a professional 3D modelling program], then drawing round them to get all the scales right," Mark explained. "Then I'll go and use the video, the photographs and the overheads to get everything the right shape."

After around three months' work on the Pacific Heights area of San Francisco (the hilly section made famous by hundreds of brilliant movie car chases, such as those in *The Rock* and *Dirty Harry*), Mark has a 3D wireframe model which contains all the streets and the majority of the area's buildings.

"As you can see, I've not rounded off all the kerb edges yet," he pointed out. "Once I've got the general layout right, I have to go into each set of crossroads and get all the heights right, so it's quite a process. On some of these roads we've added a few more details – rounded things off, like the kerb edges, and we've raised the kerb up 15 to 20 centimetres". Yes, Mark even took research photographs of the kerbs in San Francisco to make sure they were spot-on.

"Once we've got the streets done, we go in and start plonking the buildings around," Mark understated. But it can hardly be called 'plonking' when you're modelling each and every building in as much detail as Bizarre are.

"Every building is right, the heights are right, the road is right, the pavement's right, the walls… I've even had to model people's gardens, because not all the houses come right onto the pavement," he continued. "They're set back, so we've had to put the little hedges in, the little fences, and so on".

Mark works closely with Lee Carter, one of the texture artists at Bizarre Creations, to make sure they get everything exactly right. While in San Francisco, they took photographs of every building to be put in the game (we're not just talking one photograph of each here, either). One general reference photo of each building was taken, then multiple close-up pictures to be used as textures in the game itself; any special details such as doors or signs were photographed separately so they could also be reproduced accurately. As well as up to 20 photos of each building, pictures were taken of entire blocks to ensure the dimensions were just right.

"I scan in all the photographs, then remove the perspective in *Photoshop* [a 2D graphics package] to make them straight," Lee explained. "Then I remove the people, trees, wires and stuff from the pictures so they can be used as textures for the buildings".

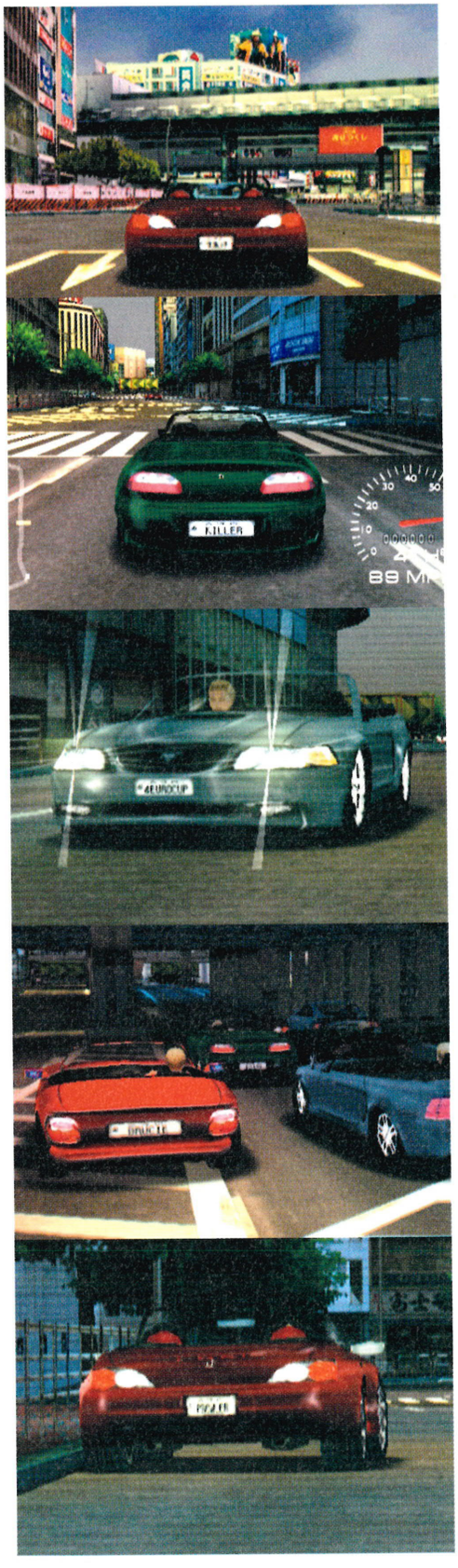
Lee even has an ingenious way of checking whether his textures will 'tile' properly in the game (ie fit together neatly when stuck repeatedly on the side of a building) – he makes them his PC's desktop

THE CITIES Metropolis Street Racer's *three cities each have three separate areas accurately mapped out*

LONDON, ENGLAND

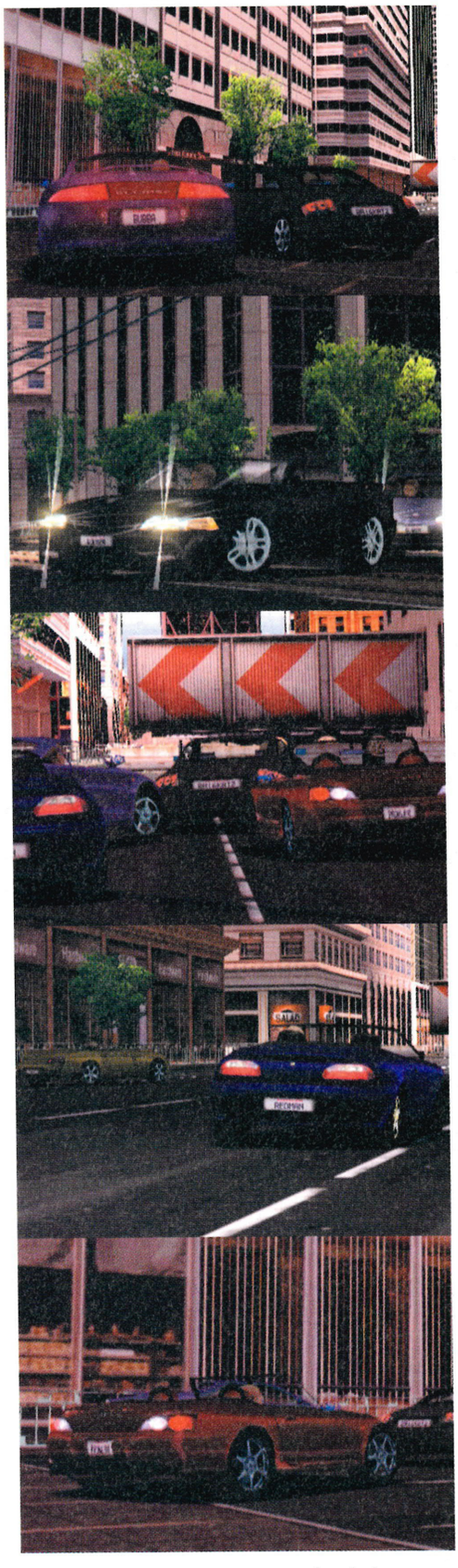
1 ▷ London's three in-game areas are very close to one another, as the city is relatively small. All of St. James's Park has been mapped, complete with Buckingham Palace and The Mall; so too has the area from Trafalgar Square to Piccadilly Circus, taking in Leicester Square on the way; and the Westminster section includes landmarks such as the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.

TOKYO, JAPAN

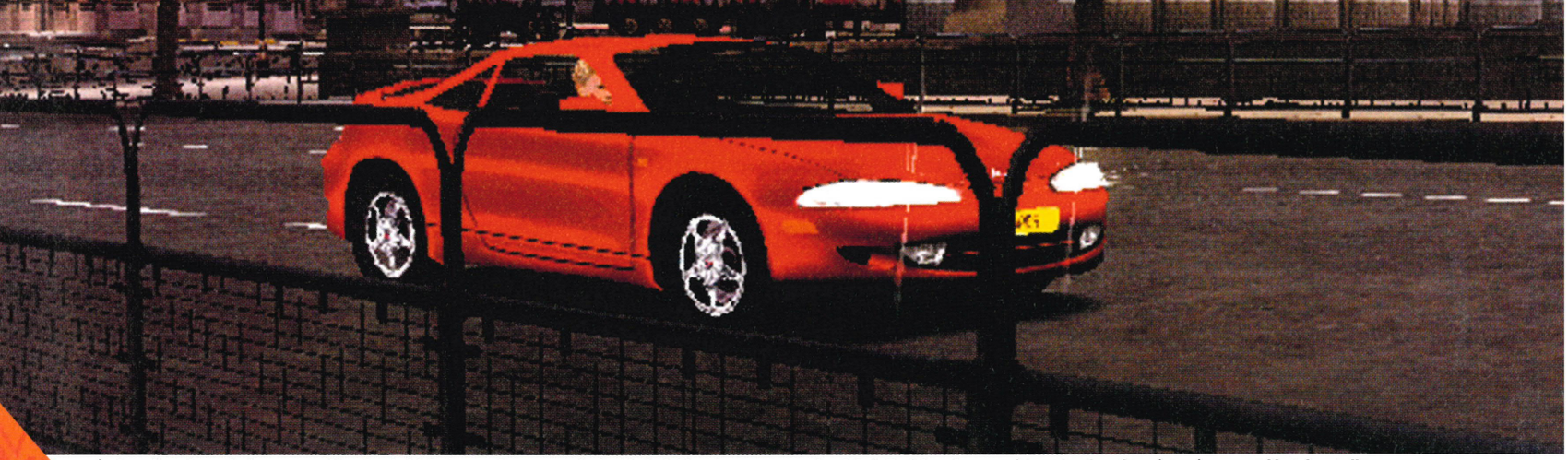


2 ▷ Tokyo is represented in the game by the three areas Shibuya, Shinjuku and Osakusa, the first two of which we featured in our report from Japan in issue 1. They feature both high-speed main roads and twisty backstreets for plenty of variety, while the Osakusa section has more traditional Japanese architecture than massive neon-covered skyscrapers.

SAN FRANCISCO, USA



3 ▷ In San Francisco, races are set around movie chase scene favourite Pacific Heights, the waterfront area known as Fisherman's Wharf and the section with the tallest buildings and criss-crossing tramlines, the Financial District. Artist Mark Sharratt describes the quieter parts of the city as "The Paris of America, lots of pretty little buildings and things".



△ Speeding through the streets of London in high-powered sportscars is the kind of thing dreams are made of. As is Trafalgar Square without hordes of tourists, pigeons and hot dog stalls.

pattern."That's why we've all got sad desktops," he admitted as he showed us his own pattern made from somebody's garden hedge.

VIRTUA CITY

This amount of detail is being put into every one of the nine areas in the game, three in each of the three cities. Each of these areas is around 1.5 miles square, and every last street and pathway within them has been modelled perfectly.

Working with entire areas rather than just a number of standard race circuits, Bizarre have had the chance to come up with multiple courses within each. Though it's not yet been decided exactly how many the final game will feature, expect it to be considerably more than seen in previous racing games.

You'll be able to race in each city at different times of the day, too, but again it's not going to work like every other driving game. When you first start the game you'll be asked to select your time zone from a map of the world. Once your Dreamcast knows where it is, it can use its internal clock to calculate the time of day in whatever country you're about to race: "Say your home city is London and you start racing in Tokyo at six o'clock one evening, it'll be two in the morning in Tokyo, so it'll be two in the morning in the game."

Using a custom-made tool called MetGP (or Metropolis Gameplay), the team can map out any route they want through the 3D model of a city and automatically have the unused streets blocked off.

Martyn: "The whole area has been built, but we're not making it like *Driver* [a recent PlayStation driving game] – we're not saying you can drive anywhere you want. Games have got to have structure, and our structure is circuit racing. That's what street racing's all about, and variety is the key. In the areas we've built, obstacles are placed over streets not yet available, so you can imagine we have a vast number of circuits."

TEAM TALK

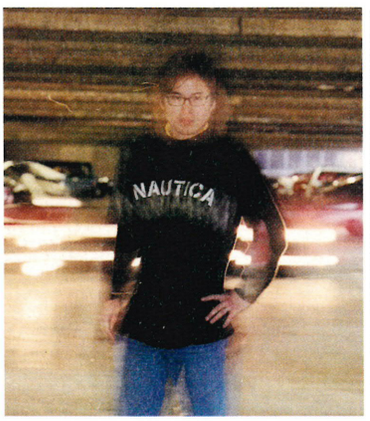
Though the managing director of the company, Martyn is very much a hands-on boss. He designed and programmed Bizarre Creations' first few games, including *Fatal Rewind* and *Wiz 'n Liz* for Megadrive, practically on his own, and worked on the excellent handling for the original *Formula 1* on PlayStation. As well as overseeing the *Metropolis Street Racer* project, he's working directly as part of the programming team.

"Martyn's doing the nice presentation-type stuff and car handling and stuff like that, Phil [Snape]'s doing MetGP and special effects, and I believe I'm doing everything else," commented modest Roger Perkins,

METROPOLIS STREET RACERS

The *MSR* team consists of 14 people in total, with two of those being very recent additions, but the core team of ten have been working on the title for two years now. Here's an introduction to a few of the people beavering away to make the game especially for you.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

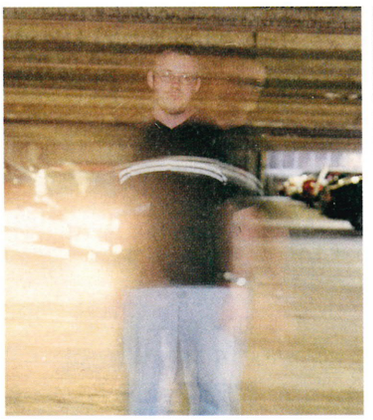


KATS SATO

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, SEGA

Kats has worked closely with Bizarre Creations since the start of the project, helping to choose which cities and cars should be included, then arranging the licences with the European, American and Japanese car companies involved.

"And I took some of the photos of Tokyo while on a business trip!", he added.



BRIAN WOODHOUSE

PRODUCER

As Producer, Liverpool FC fanatic Brian is in charge of keeping the *Metropolis Street Racer* project running smoothly and on time. This involves lots of planning, lots of meetings, lots of research, and lots of playing other racing games to "keep an eye on the competition".

Brian's also in charge of co-ordinating trips to the shops to buy snacks when the team has to work late.

MARTYN CHUDLEY

MANAGING DIRECTOR

As well as working on game design with the rest of the team, Martyn is coding the game system and the handling of the cars. He also looks scarily like Steve Buscemi, AKA Mr Pink in *Reservoir Dogs*.

"It's not rocket science – you put real physics in, then you put playability over the top", Martyn told us. Easy-peasy, this game programming lark.

"TECHNICALLY, AS WELL AS CREATIVELY, *METROPOLIS* IS BREAKING BOUNDARIES"

senior programmer on *Metropolis*. "Apart from the Artificial Intelligence – I forgot Dave [Al-Daini]."

"Walter [Lynsdale] does all the clever technical bits – the 3D engine-type stuff," added Martyn. "I'm putting all the game structure together, the handling, and all that sort of thing."

Though the work they're doing is intensely technical, the Bizarre team isn't made up of dull programming types. The atmosphere in the office is fun – 'witty' banter passes backwards and forwards all the time ("Phil's a bell-end", "Lee's got dangly bits in his bottom", and so on); the team play practical 'jokes' on one another (such as Roger adding entry points to Amiga 1200 program comments in Walter's source code. Ha ha! Those crazy programmers, eh?); and there's a cupboard stacked with bottles of pop, packets of crisps, sweets, and row upon row of every variety of Pot Noodle under the sun for late-night snacks.

The whole team, amazingly, consists of a good solid bunch of regular guys and gals who love videogames and love what they're doing, no matter what they might tell you. Even if only half the fun they're having making *Metropolis Street Racer* translates into the game itself, we're in for a good time.

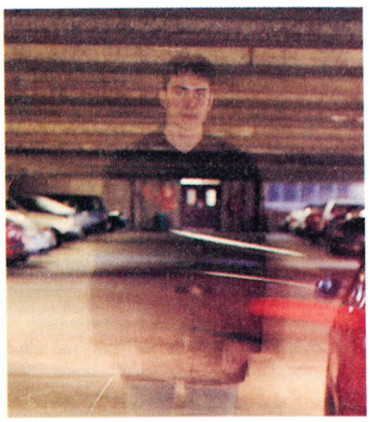
TECH SPECS

Technically as well as creatively, *Metropolis* is breaking boundaries. Walter Lynsdale, technical director at Bizarre, has helped to continually push Dreamcast to new levels, getting more 'triangles' running on-screen than ever before.

"A triangle is a three-sided polygon, but people quote polygon counts instead of triangle counts because 'polygon' is a flashier word than 'triangle'," he explained. "In the software *Quake* engine, a polygon is actually an arbitrusion non-convex shape, but on a 3D hardware machine like Dreamcast a polygon is a triangle." Don't worry, if you find this statement hard to follow – we don't understand a word of it either.

So how many 'triangles' is one car?

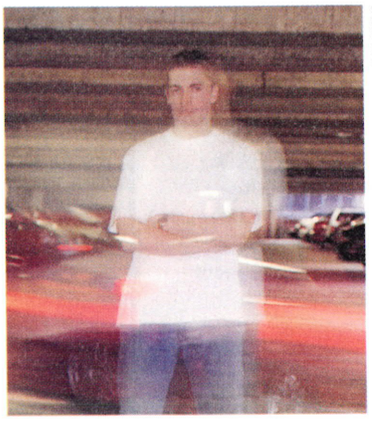
"Including the environment map, about 4,000," reckoned Walter. "That doesn't include the steering wheel [which weighs in at 220 triangles] or the driver [more than 600]".



WALTER LYNSDALE
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Walter's kind of like Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. He's a quiet fella capable of reeling off reams of techno-babble at unhumanly high speeds, and coming up with complex ways of getting more from Dreamcast.

"I haven't actually worked on *Metropolis* for quite a while now, for several months probably", Walter told us. "But I wrote the 3D engine originally and the car dynamics model".



ROGER PERKINS
SENIOR PROGRAMMER

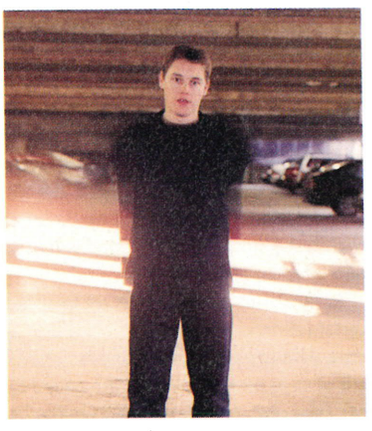
Roger is Bizarre's self-appointed jester, keeping the morale of the team up with a non-stop stream of insults. Roger previously worked on Bizarre's other up-and-coming Dreamcast game, *Furballs* (see issue 2 for a full preview), creating its 3D world editor called Tubby Custard.

"I'm now converting *MSR*'s graphics engine to make it faster, fixing things here and there. Stop it crashing, stuff like that", he explained, sensibly for once.

MARK SHARRATT
3D ARTIST

Ex-model Mark is, almost ironically, one of the artists working on the 3D city models. He's built most of San Francisco himself, right from the biggest of buildings down to the tiniest of details. *Metropolis* is Mark's first game project after leaving university.

"It'll be interesting to see the reactions of people who live in the areas, if they get to play the game and see their houses", said Mark wistfully.



JON DUGDALE
SENIOR ARTIST

Jon's worked at Bizarre Creations for five years, and has been involved with *Metropolis Street Racer* since the start. After producing the original prototype city, he's now finishing off two of the Tokyo areas, working on both the modelling and texturing of the city.

"After watching video footage of the area under construction, I try to replicate what I've just seen. This involves lots of swearing", Jon admitted.

△ Yes, Big Ben really does show the right time in London when you play *Metropolis*.

△ Note the tram power cables above the road.

△ Tokyo's main roads let you pick up speed.

△ The drivers in this version are only temporary.

△ San Francisco's office blocks are huge.

Metropolis Street Racer's ground-breaking technology has caught the eye of a number of top Japanese developers, with Yu Suzuki's *Shenmue* team having a running battle with Bizarre over who can get the most out of Dreamcast. But the Bizarre team are certain that there's plenty more yet to come in the future, as the advances they've made since the start of the project prove.

"It's all about cheating – games really are all about cheating," commented Martyn when asked about the technical side of *Metropolis*. "The way you make a fast 3D engine is not what you draw, it's what you don't draw. The best way to make it is to get all the polygons you can actually see on the screen, rather than processing the ones behind you or hidden behind other objects."

Every object in the game is set to appear at a certain distance – big objects are drawn all of the time, whereas smaller ones appear when they're just out of view, and the smallest are added closer to your car. This common method works better than ever in *Metropolis*, meaning you won't see things popping up out of nowhere as you drive around.

CRUISE CONTROL

Talking of driving, what about the cars? *Metropolis Street Racer* has a large selection of real-life sportscars to drive – the S2000, Ford Mustang, TVR, Mercedes SL, Jensen and many more are all included in typically accurate detail.

"There are hard top, soft top and top-down versions of all of them," artist and self-confessed car-hater Steve Heaney told us, "and there are four detail levels for each, so there are a lot of models."

Using brochures and schematics supplied by the car manufacturers themselves, Steve can create spot-on 3D models which are then given detailed black-and-white textures. Once in the game, you'll be able to choose from any of the paint colours available for your particular car in the real world.

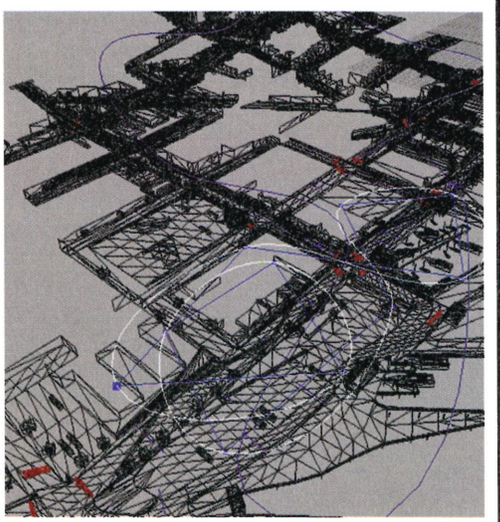
"The car you use within the game, it's *your* car," said Martyn cryptically. "You can't just collect cars, it's not a sticker book, it's like real life. You have to earn each car, so they really become *yours*."

The gameplay of *Metropolis Street Racer* is quite unlike that of any other racing game seen before – the way you race, the way you collect new circuits and features, the way you prove yourself at the game… it's all new – but we're keeping quiet about many of its most exciting features for now. The spectacular graphics and ground-breaking technology are only a very small part of *Metropolis Street Racer*'s complete *experience*.

We'll be bringing you exclusive updates on the game during its final months of development, and will be gracing *ODM*'s cover with an exclusive demo as soon as possible so you can all try it out for yourselves and see just why we're getting so excited about this truly earth-shattering game. In fact we'd advise you to put aside £40 now so you don't miss out on the racing event of 2000 when *Metropolis Street Racer* is released at Easter. You'll feel very stupid, if you do.

*• A dedicated **Metropolis Street Racer** web site is coming soon, but for now, keep an eye on **www.bizarrecreations.com***

"GAMES REALLY ARE ALL ABOUT CHEATING"



△ This picture of MetGP shows the path Phil's helicopter will take around San Franciscan airspace. The entire city can also be displayed with the textures in place. Clever stuff, eh?

IMPRESSIVE TOOL

Developed by programmer Phil Snape, MetGP is the tool used by Bizarre Creations to edit much of the way the game plays. Each aspect of every part of the game can be changed here – all the circuits, all the Artificial Intelligence settings, all the car dimensions and details right down to setting each gear ratio and wheel width. All these highly complex details are represented in MetGP in a way so simple even we could nearly understand it.

In the time we spent with Bizarre Creations, Phil added a helicopter and a high-flying jet plane to the San Francisco skies using MetGP. Once a model was built, he made a 'spline' (it's just a line really) around the sky for the chopper to follow, and off it flew, temporarily textured with a fast food restaurant's logo.

RE-VOLT™

Dreamcast.

Acclaim®

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HALLELUJAH!

Praise the lord! Top PC game *Messiah* is coming to Dreamcast

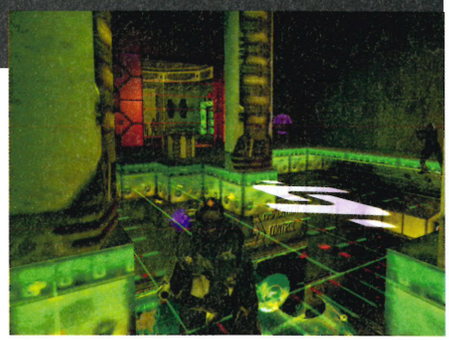
SHINY ENTERTAINMENT HAVE ANNOUNCED that their innovative action-adventure *Messiah*, which is expected to be one of the biggest-selling games on PC this Christmas, is coming to Dreamcast.

Messiah was actually one of the first titles to be announced for Dreamcast, but the developers later opted to concentrate on completing the PC version, while evaluating the performance – in terms of both sales and system power – of Sega's console. Now, with Dreamcast selling well, particularly in the States where the company is based, Shiny have given the project the green light.

"I have been really impressed with the graphic quality of some of the titles like *Soul Calibur*," said Shiny's enigmatic boss Dave Perry, speaking exclusively to *ODM*. "However, there is a distinct lack of games like *Messiah*".

He's not wrong there – there's nothing else quite like it anywhere. The stunning-looking 3D game sees you take the part of a chubby little cherub angel named Bob, sent by God to clean up the twisted, putrid, sleazy and infested world of the future.

◁ See him? That's you, that is. You little angel, you.



△ *Messiah* should look this good on Dreamcast.

Bob can fly, as you might expect, but he also has the power of possession, enabling you to enter the soul of any of the game's 40 characters, from people and animals to genetically engineered beings. You can then use their bodies and weapons to destroy the sinners who are determined to stop you from finding the ultimate sinner, Satan.

Perry, best known for *Earthworm Jim* and *MDK*, believes Shiny can get the maximum possible performance out of Dreamcast thanks to a new graphics system called tessellation technology, developed specifically for the game.

"The *Messiah* technology keeps the screen filled to the brim with polygons 100 per cent of the time," he explained. "That means that you are always seeing the maximum output that the machine can give. It also enables us to have lots of characters in the same area without slowdown, because they just share the polygons available."

The Laguna Beach-based development team will be working on the Dreamcast conversion in-house rather than farming it out to a third party. "It will be really fun working on a console with some real horsepower," said Perry.

The good new is that not only will we get to play *Messiah* on Dreamcast, we should also get an improved version of the game. "We will treat it [the PC version] like a giant playtest and listen to the comments," Perry told us. "The Dreamcast version should benefit from all that hindsight".

No release date for the Dreamcast version has been set, but we shouldn't have to wait too long. "We need to get the PC version wrapped, get some sleep and then work out how long it will take," said Perry, shortly before the PC version was due to be completed. "Our ballpark guess is three months."

Hopefully that should mean we'll see it here in the UK in late spring. As usual, we'll keep you up to date with developments.

GT READY FOR THIS

Sega take the covers off their hot new Japanese racer. Could it be a *Gran Turismo* killer?

△ **Hey, one day this GT car might be yours. Or even, yes, a Suzuki Cappuccino. Woohoo!**

FULL DETAILS HAVE EMERGED of *Sega GT: Homologation Special*, the awesome-looking racing game that many are describing as Sega's answer to the PlayStation's *Gran Turismo*.

Similar in structure to Sony's massively successful simulation, *Sega GT* is a circuit-based racer and features well in excess of 100 customisable cars, each with individual handling characteristics.

You begin the game with a simple Entry-class car with a maximum engine size of 1000cc, but can upgrade to a new model with cash earned from winning races. Cars in different categories (they're split into Entry, B, A and SA classes), plus new circuits and competitions, can be unlocked by passing driving tests.

Models from at least ten different manufacturers will be featured, including a McLaren F1 GTR, Toyota MR-S, Mazda RX-7 Type R, Mitsubishi FTO GPR, Nissan Skyline GT-R, Honda NSX Type S Zero and the rather less salubrious Suzuki Cappuccino. Several cars from the JGTC (All Japan GT Championship) are also included.

Options include Championship, Single Race and Time Trial modes, a Replay Booth and a Dual Race facility for split screen, two-player races. A tuning facility enables you to tweak engine, gear, suspension, brake, tyre and weight reduction settings.

Meanwhile, an Internet option enables you to log fastest lap times on a *Sega Rally 2*-style Web-based ranking board. Like *Buggy Heat*, you can swap 'ghost' data with other drivers, thus enabling off-line head-to-head racing against players from all over the world.

Sega GT: Homologation Special is due out on Dreamcast in Japan in February or March 2000. A European release date hasn't been confirmed but we expect to see it – possibly with different cars included and almost certainly without the suffix to the name – before the summer.

SHEN DUE SOON

Massive New Year surprise for Japanese Dreamcast owners

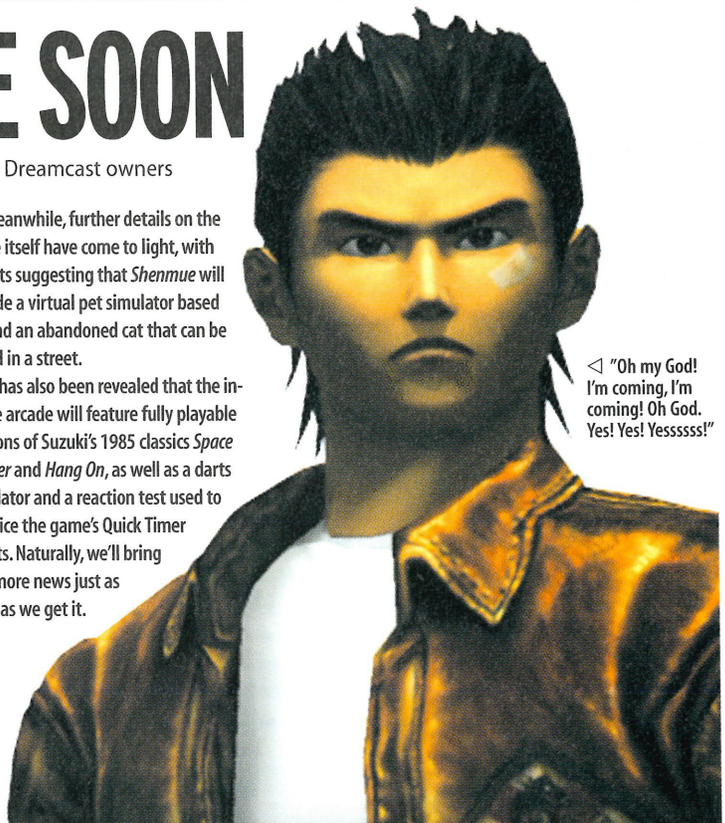
SEGA HAVE ANNOUNCED that *Shenmue Chapter 1: Yokosuka* will be launched at the end of the year in Japan, thus raising hopes that we'll see the game in the UK a little sooner than expected.

Having missed the original targets of August and October, the release date for the gorgeous-looking adventure was put back to the spring of next year to give Yu Suzuki and the AM2 team more time to complete the hugely ambitious project.

However, in a surprise move Sega set a final release date of Wednesday 29 December in Japan – news that sent shares in the company soaring by five per cent in a single day. Sadly, with the conversion expected to take some time, we're unlikely to see the game in Europe until well into the second half of 2000.

Meanwhile, further details on the game itself have come to light, with reports suggesting that *Shenmue* will include a virtual pet simulator based around an abandoned cat that can be found in a street.

It has also been revealed that the in-game arcade will feature fully playable versions of Suzuki's 1985 classics *Space Harrier* and *Hang On*, as well as a darts simulator and a reaction test used to practice the game's Quick Timer Events. Naturally, we'll bring you more news just as soon as we get it.



◁ **"Oh my God! I'm coming, I'm coming! Oh God. Yes! Yes! Yesssss!"**

GAMES NEWS

DRIVER FOR DC?

French games publisher Infogrames, who have swallowed up Ocean, Gremlin and Accolade in recent years, have bought out GT Interactive and its various development teams including Humongous, Cavedog and Reflections. The acquisition by the keen Dreamcast supporter, raises hopes that the hugely popular PlayStation and PC game *Driver* will be ported across to the Sega machine.

MUCH ACCLAIM

Prolific publishers Acclaim have announced release dates for loads of new titles. *Re-Volt*, which is reviewed on page 80, is now due on December 17, *Armada* on January 8 and *Tee Off* on January 29. *Furballs* and *South Park Rally* should follow in April and May respectively. Meanwhile, *South Park Chef's Luv Shack* (reviewed on page 91) and *Shadow Man* (page 84) should both be in stores now.

GREEN LIGHT FOR FIGHT

Following the prediction in last month's *ODM*, Crave have confirmed that they have acquired a license to produce games based on the Ultimate Fighting Championship. The five-year deal will see the company create titles based on full-contact, mixed martial arts sport across all gaming formats, with a Dreamcast release expected at the end of 2000.

EXTREME CLOSE UP

Norwegian developers Innerloop are producing an extreme sports-style game for Sega. The multiplayer DC title – quite literally called *Extreme Sports*, at this stage at least – will include mountain biking, parachuting, snowboarding and hang gliding. Unconfirmed rumours suggest that it also includes bungee-jumping – presumably as some kind of bonus level. Whatever, it's due out next Spring.

A DATE FOR ECCO

Sega Europe have set a release date for the radically re-worked DC version of Megadrive swim-a-thon *Ecco the Dolphin*. The new title, being developed by Hungarian team Appalosa, is due on these shores on April 7. Watch out for a full preview soon.

WATCH THIS!
NEW MOVIES ON VHS

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS - DIRECTOR'S CUT

OUT NOW • CERT 18 • £15.99

Just in case you've been on Mars, this is the one about four cheeky chappies who inadvertantly get mixed up with a whole load of East End dodgy dealers in an effort to pay back a half a million quid poker debt. The best British gangster film since *The Long Good Friday* is also available as a limited edition luxury poker set (£29.99) comprising a mock croc briefcase complete with poker chips, playing cards, the widescreen video and screenplay. Buy it. *CE*

IN DREAMS

OUT DEC 13 • CERT 18 • TO RENT

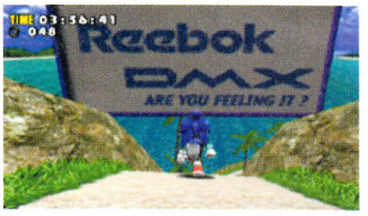
Claire (Annette Bening) is a children's book illustrator who is having really bad dreams about a serial killer with a penchant for red apples (Robert Downey Jr) and an evil deed that took place at the reservoir near where she lives. When her daughter is murdered, Claire realises that her nightmares aren't in fact dreams at all. But her hubby and psychiatrist think she's bonkers and cart her off. Of course, it's all true, and poor Claire is left to face the horror on her own. While not exactly Oscar fare, this is nevertheless, an above average chiller creepily crafted by director Neil Jordan. *CE*

DARKNESS FALLS

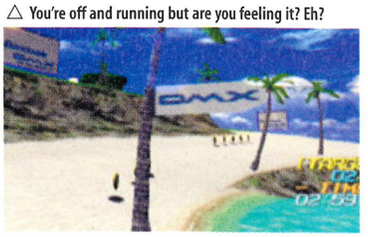
OUT DECEMBER 27 • CERT 15 • TO RENT

Sherilyn Fenn plays Sally, a rich, bored housewife married to a philandering big shot (Tim Dutton) who one day discovers that she's locked in her mansion with an uninvited guest. The intruder turns out to be John (Ray Winstone), a bumbling bore whom she met months ago at a dinner party and who's come to tell his particularly distressing story: something to do with his wife who's lying in a coma, and Sally's husband. Ooh-er. *CE*

△ Fancy a pair of these, do ya? Well you can grab £1,000 worth of Reebok gear if you win the Sonic Speed Challenge. Nice.



△ You're off and running but are you feeling it? Eh?



△ Yep, it's the Emerald Coast but not as we know it.

THE SONIC SPEED CHALLENGE IS GO!

Reckon you're the fastest Sonic player around? You'd better take that up with the rest of Europe

WITH THE DREAMCAST'S European launch an unprecedented success, Sega are now taking their gaming revolution a stage closer to their vision of 'up to six billion players', starting with an online gaming challenge for the 200,000+ Dreamcast owners across Europe.

And what better game to showcase than the most popular of the lot – top-selling launch title *Sonic Adventure*? Yep, the European Sonic Speed Challenge With Reebok DMX has begun.

Having kicked off on December 1, Dreamcast owners can now use their *Sonic Adventure* game disc to visit the online Sonic Homepage and download the challenge game to a Visual Memory unit. This gives access to a special version of the game's first zone, Emerald Coast, only this one's decorated with Reebok DMX logos. If you hadn't guessed from the extremely catchy name, Reebok are involved in all the festivities, and their DMX range of trainers are at the centre of it all.

It seems Sonic's nemesis, Dr Robotnik, has stolen five pairs of DMX running shoes and hidden them somewhere in the zone. The aim is simply to find all the pairs and race to the finish; save the time on to a VM unit and then upload it onto the homepage, to be placed on a ranking table against the rest of Europe.

You're free to take part as many times as you like, as it's clear that your first few attempts are just going to be spent locating the footwear. Only then can you plot the most efficient route from A to B and stand a chance in the rankings. With the whole of Europe involved though, don't expect to even appear in the rankings without some major practice.

So what's it all worth? Thanks to Reebok, quite a bit. First prize is £1,000 worth of Reebok sportswear (including DMX trainers, of course), plus a European Sonic Champion Dreamcast Pod. It's similar to the cabinets found in shops (as seen in our feature on page 42), only better – it's personalised with the winner's name!

Second, third and fourth place finalists are set to bag £250 worth of Reebok goodies, plus exclusive gold *Sonic* discs mounted inside glass frames. Contestants ranking fifth to tenth will receive a framed certificate and a pair of DMX trainers, and 11-50 placers will get an exclusive Sonic Speed Challenge T-shirt.

The tournament wraps up on Friday 14 January, so there's not much time to get yourself into the top ranking. To help though, Sega have offered *ODM* readers a few clues. You can discover the location of the first pair by going to Dreamarena. And one of the other pairs is very easy to find. So what more do you want? Someone to hold your hand? Get going!

Reebok DMX

GET GOING!

Downloading the Challenge from the Sonic Homepage is simple once you've set up your Dreamcast to go online. Simply load up *Sonic Adventure* and select Internet. Go to Updates and click on Events. Look for the DMX logo and click on it to be taken to the Minigame page. All the instructions you need are on site – just make sure you have enough free blocks on your VM.

TIP FOR THE TOP

We want *ODM* readers at the top of the Sonc Speed Challenge rankings, so here's a simple technique to help shave valuable seconds off your time. The trick? Just keep tapping the Spin Dash button when you're running in a straight line. You'll go loads faster than you will if you just run normally.

THE FIRST ONLINE DREAMCAST CHALLENGE! YOU CAN WIN...

1st PRIZE: **£1,000 of Reebok clothing plus a personalised European Sega Champion Dreamcast Pod.**

2nd, 3rd and 4th PRIZE: **£250 of Reebok clothing plus a mounted gold *Sonic* disc.**

5th-10th PLACE RUNNERS-UP: **Reebok DMX trainers and a framed certificate.**

11th-50th PLACE RUNNERS-UP: **Exclusive Sonic Speed Challenge T-Shirt.**

SEGA'S STRIKER ON TARGET

Arcade game to make home debut

GOOD NEWS FOR FOOTIE FANS. We can confirm that a Dreamcast version of the popular arcade game *Virtua Striker 2000* is to be released in late January, complete with new features. It will be the first of AM2's coin-op series to make it to a home platform.

Designed to be easy to pick up and play, the arcade game uses a simplistic control method and basic rules, although the home edition includes offsides, as well as yellow and red cards. It also features additional stadiums.

Aside from an arcade mode, options now include an International Cup mode in which 32 players can compete, plus Tournament, League and Ranking modes. There's also a Replay facility that enables you to save your best goals to a Visual Memory unit.

We hope to bring you a full review in the February issue, on sale Thursday 13 January.

△ Sadly *Virtua Striker 2000* only features international teams so, no, you won't be able to play as Leyton Orient.

CAPCOM-ING ATCHA

Top Japanese game developer goes Dreamcast crazy

△ *Marvel Vs Capcom*: Leading the way for Capcom.

△ *Plasma Sword* is coming too. Check-out page 52.

CAPCOM HAVE REAFFIRMED their commitment to DC by announcing a slew of new titles for the 128-bit console.

The Japanese coin-op and console game developer, responsible for some of the world's biggest-selling game franchises including the *StreetFighter* and *Resident Evil* series, is to release at least a dozen Dreamcast titles in the UK over the next 12 months. Nine of the games are due by the summer.

Already confirmed are *Marvel Vs Capcom* (*ODM*#2, 5/10), which is now due on Friday 17 December, plus *StreetFighter Alpha 3* (*ODM*#2, 8/10) and *Resident Evil 2* (previewed on page 56), which should both arrive in British stores sometime in January or February.

Following those, probably in late February or early March, will be *Plasma Sword*, the sequel to 3D beat 'em up *Star Gladiator*, and shoot 'em up *Giga Wing*.

StreetFighter III W Impact, the first series-3 *StreetFighter* game to appear on consoles, is tentatively scheduled for a March release in the UK, and will almost certainly include some online functionality. It should be followed by *Kikaioh Tech Romancer* within a month.

The keenly anticipated *SNK Vs Capcom* will also come to the UK, but not until next May at the earliest. The release date of *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* (see page 30) has still to be determined.

All the forthcoming Capcom titles, bar *Code: Veronica*, should be published in the UK by Virgin Interactive, recently bought-out by French publisher Titus.

GAMES NEWS

V-GOOD

Infogrames have confirmed that the highly rated PlayStation driving simulation *V-Rally 2* is coming to Dreamcast next summer. It's currently scheduled to appear in June. Expect to see much more on this in future issues of *ODM*. Meanwhile, a Dreamcast version of Infogrames' *Supreme Snowboarders*, soon to be released on PC, is now due in – gulp! – November 2000.

SOMETHING FISHY

Been wondering what has happened to the release of *Sega Bass Fishing* (*ODM*#1, 7/10)? Yep, us too. Sadly, it's been heavily delayed due to production problems and won't now be out in the UK until 2000. When it does land (in January, hopefully), the game will cost £54.99 including, of course, the supremely excellent, *Soul Calibur*-compatible fishing rod controller.

COMPOSITION TIME

Waka Factory have released a music creation program that enables you to compose, mix and play back music on your Dreamcast. The unimaginatively-titled *Dreamcast Sequencer*, which comes with over 2,500 sample sound files, is currently only available in Japan. There's no news yet on an official UK release but we'll keep you up to date.

RUN THE GAUNTLET

Midway have confirmed that Atari's arcade game *Gauntlet Legends*, an excellent 3D re-working of the classic 80s coin-op, is on its way to Dreamcast. No news yet on a release date for the four-player, fantasy-based action adventure, but we expect to see it in the first half of 2000.

GET ANIMATED

A free Windows-based utility that enables PC owners to create animations for the Dreamcast Visual Memory unit has appeared on the Internet. *Dream Animator* was originally only available with Japanese text but a full English version is now online, along with dozens of sample animations, at www.booyaka.com/games/vmu/. Those of you without access to a PC can download the animation (.VMI) files direct to a VM by logging on to the site with your Dreamcast.

HERE THIS!
MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

BECK
MIDNITE VULTURES
GEFFEN

This'll kill off the slacker image for good. Beck's newie sees him reinvented as a sexxed-up love god; like a cross between Barry White, Prince and R Kelly. Midnite Vultures, which features rapper Kool Keith and folkie Beth Orton, is stacked with party tunes that aren't afraid to get down and dirty. If you're already into Beck, you'll love it, and if not it should persuade you. Sod Will Smith – if you want to get jiggy over the Christmas period, this is the record for you. *SD*

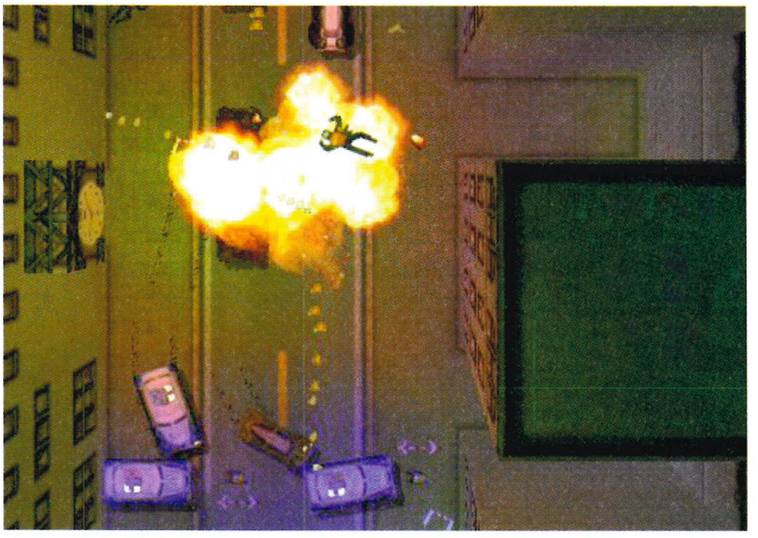
JOHN DIGWEED
GU14: HONG KONG
BOXED

Even the least virtuous of major record companies have given-up churning out crap Ibeefa compilations (for this year, at least). But, as Hastings-born Digweed proves with this deep, progressive and strictly non-cheesy, non-commercial two-disc set, *real* trance is far from dead. You have to be, er, in the right frame of mind to truly appreciate it, but this is one of the best trance collections of 1999, bettered only by Space, the previous release in the Global Underground series, mixed by Sasha. *WC*

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS
TILT
EPIC

The Broudie bunch return with the Three Lions thing now long forgotten (well, until Euro 2000 at least). The filtered disco sound of recent single Life's Too Short kicks off proceedings nicely. From then on, though, it's typical saccharine pop from the Seeds with a handful of tracks ripe to back car adverts. Not quite the dance-orientated album we were expecting, then, but still worth taping before you give it to your mum for Christmas. *WC*

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY



△ "Bleedin' heck, Brian. You were only supposed to blow the bloody doors off, man."

GTA COMING 2 DC

Grab a gun and a car and get ready for the joyride of your life

THE VIDEOGAME WORLD'S worst kept secret is out. *Grand Theft Auto 2* – which shot straight into the top ten sales chart when it was released on PC and PlayStation in October – *is* coming to Dreamcast.

Talk that the controversial top-down driving game-cum-adventure would be converted for Dreamcast has been circulating for months, but the publishers had always refused to comment officially. Rockstar Games finally made an announcement in November, and promised that the Dreamcast edition will closely resemble the PC version.

Set "three weeks in the future" in a huge, living and breathing American city, *GTA2* sees you playing a car-jacking deviant out to gain some cash and the respect of seven rival gangs.

Armed with a machine gun, flamethrower, rocket launcher or anything else you can lay your filthy mitts on, you 'borrow' various vehicles and help out with a series of tasks, from bank jobs and drug smuggling runs to assassinations.

Cause enough trouble, though, and you'll not only have to contend with the local police, but also the army, the FBI and, naturally enough, rival gangs.

Grand Theft Auto 2 is scheduled to appear on Dreamcast in April 2000. Watch out for a full preview in *ODM* in the next month or two.

△ Need a hand? Then take THIS!

NEED A HAND THERE MATE?

Then give us a phone call. We can help you out – guaranteed!

CAN'T PULL OFF THE stunts in *TrickStyle*? Keep getting your ass well and truly whupped at *Ready 2 Rumble*? Completely stuck in *Blue Stinger*? Can't win at *UEFA Striker*? Then it sounds like you need some help.

Well, we have some good news for you. *Official Dreamcast Magazine* has joined forces with InfoGenie to bring you a brand new telephone helpline.

This independent service offers support and tips & tricks on *all* Dreamcast game releases (not just those from Sega) and is open seven days a week from eight in the morning 'til eleven at night.

Call the number printed below, talk to the specially trained staff (yes, staff – this isn't an automated service, you know) and they'll do their very best to answer.

On the rare occasion they can't help, your query will be passed onto a support team who *guarantee* to find you an answer within 24 hours. Sorted.

• *Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling.*

THE OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE HELPLINE NUMBER IS 09064 664477
Open 7 days a week, 8am-11pm

WIN DWIGHT YORKE STUFF!

A SIGNED MAN UNITED SHIRT, TWO SIGNED FOOTBALLS AND FIVE COPIES OF INFOGRAMES' *UEFA STRIKER* UP FOR GRABS

Yes, to celebrate the release (finally!) of that more-than-half-decent Dreamcast football game *UEFA Striker* (*ODM* #1, 8/10), Infogrames have passed on some goodies to give away to you lot.

If your entry is first out of the metaphorical hat you'll win a Manchester United away shirt signed by none other than Mr Dwight Yorke – the top Premiership marksman who, of course, endorses the game.

Not only that, you'll also get a damn fine Mitre Maxima football, again signed by the Tobago-born striker, and a copy of *UEFA Striker*.

There's other prizes too. The reader drawn out second will be sent a signed Mitre football plus a copy of the game. Oh, and there's copies of the game ready and waiting here for three runners-up too. So what are you waiting for, eh? Eh?

To be in with a chance of winning the prizes, answer the dead simple question below and send it, along with your name, address and age, on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, to: Getting Shirty, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Friday 14 January 2000.

UEFA ★★★ STRIKER

QUESTION: **WHICH PREMIERSHIP SIDE DID DWIGHT YORKE PLAY FOR BEFORE JOINING MANCHESTER UNITED?**

Terms and conditions: Only entries completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions (available on request) apply. And all that. Does anyone read this bit?

The ten winners of our *Sonic: The Movie* competition in issue #1 are as follows: David Scoffin from Cornwall; Paul Smith, Taunton; James Lyons, Co. Durham; Russell Jones, Brighton; Ben Haddock, Selby; Jason Watts, Gwent; Paul Garforth, Barnsley; Darren Smith, Bath; Chris Jaggs, London and Craig Wilkinson, Cumbria. Congratulations! A copy of the video is on its way to all of you.

EIDOS GET KAIN-ED

Million-selling action adventure *Soul Reaver* coming soon to Dreamcast

△ *Soul Reaver*: not to be confused in any way with *Soul Calibur*. Or, indeed, *Soul Fighter*.

EIDOS HAVE ANNOUNCED that Crystal Dynamics' *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* will be released on Dreamcast in March.

The 3D action adventure game, which is set in a netherworld ruled by vampires, was released on PC and PlayStation in September. To date, it's sold over one million copies worldwide.

According to the company the Dreamcast edition will take full advantage of the 128-bit machine's power, running at twice the frame rate (50/60fps) of the PlayStation version, with higher resolution textures and new special effects.

"We are very excited about this title," said Jonathan Kemp, MD of Eidos. "The great success of *Soul Reaver* coupled with the advanced technology of Dreamcast is bound to make it a sure-fire winner."

Soul Reaver will be the third Dreamcast game published by Eidos. It follows Capcom's *Power Stone* (*ODM* #1, 8/10), and Core Design's *Fighting Force 2*, the latter of which is due out this month.

COME FLY THE DEADLY SKIES

Dreamcast's first combat flight sim ready to take off

Dreamcast owners will get their first taste of airborne combat action in February when Konami release their arcade-style flight simulation *Deadly Skies* (known as *Air Force Delta* outside Europe).

△ "Dagger dagger dagger!" etc.

Contracted by mercenaries, you're given a variety of objectives – from escorting convoys to seek-and-destroy missions with air-, sea- and land-based targets.

The game features over 30 different aircraft ranging from the "classic" (it says here) F-4 Phantom to state-of-the-art F-22. We'll be taking a closer look at the game in next month's issue of *ODM*.

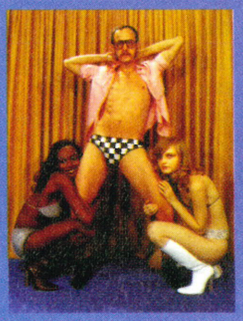
Meanwhile, Konami is to release a Dreamcast version of *Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix* in Japan next February. In the bizarre arcade game, you must follow on-screen moves and jump around on coloured shapes on the floor in time with the music. A dedicated controller will be sold as an optional extra.

Konami have yet to confirm that the game will be released in the UK but we'll keep you posted.

SEGA'S WACKY ADVERTS

No.1 in an occasional series

Fears are growing that the guys and gals at Sega France may be 'losing it' after this picture showed up in a French *Sega Rally 2* advertisement.



△ "You're sure we're getting paid for this, right?"

The photo, which appears in the French-language edition of *Max* magazine, is accompanied by the phrase "À défaut d'être Finlandais, soyez fin pilote".

Three people who work in and around the *ODM* offices claim to be fluent in French but none could work out what it means beyond something about Finland (a subtle reference to F1 champ Mika Hakkinen perhaps?) and, er, driving. Possibly.

If you know what the phrase means, please put us out of our misery by writing or emailing in at the usual address. Merci!

GAMES NEWS

WHAT'S THE RUSH?

Reports from America suggest that Midway is working on a Dreamcast edition of Atari's futuristic arcade driving game *San Francisco Rush 2049* with several enhanced features including six race tracks (with three variations of each) and four stunt tracks. Midway also hope to include a four-player split-screen mode and, possibly, online features. It is, however, unlikely to appear until late in 2000.

WACKY RACING TO DC

Details are sketchy (to say the least) but we can confirm that a Japanese developer is working on a Dreamcast title based on the cult cartoon show *Wacky Racers*. The game will be published by Infogrames sometime in the new year.

EVOLUTION EVOLVES

While Dreamcast owners in Europe are gearing up for the release of top role-playing game *Evolution* (see review on page 78), published over here by Ubi Soft, the game's developers Sting are preparing to launch the sequel in Japan this Christmas. *Evolution 2*, which looks pretty similar to the original, features a Tamagotchi-style VM mini game.

TV+DC?

Reports from Japan suggest that Fuji is planning to release a television with an integrated Dreamcast sometime next spring. The bad news? It's unlikely to be launched in Europe.

YOU'RE MY ZERO!

Infogrames have confirmed that *Slave Zero*, the 3D shooter which puts gamers in control of a "giant biomechanical war machine of the future" (ie a big robot) in huge cities, is due out in the UK on Friday 18 February.

FRESH SALOMON DEAL

Sega Europe have agreed to develop "joint marketing initiatives" with international ski and snowboard manufacturer Salomon. The announcement coincides with the release of *Snow Surfers* (*ODM* #2 , 6/10) which features products from the current winter collection of both Salomon and its clothing division Bonfire.

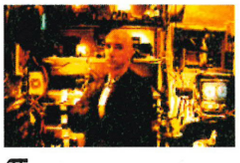
WATCH THIS!
NEW MOVIES ON DVD

THE MATRIX
OUT NOW • CERT 15 • £19.99

With more bells than a jester's hat, this DVD looks set to blow all others out of the snow this Christmas. Accompanying this gorgeously garbed special effects fest are over an hour of brilliant extras which look at concept and camera trickery from every conceivable angle. In addition there's also a huge stash of DVD-ROM features. The Red Pill/Blue Pill Choice enables you to either play the movie on your PC or access the 'secrets' of the Matrix ie: download the screenplay, ogle the best action scenes and so on. Excellent stuff. *CE*

HUMAN TRAFFIC
OUT NOW • CERT 18 • £19.99

The first movie to actually present a realistic take on the 90's club scene follows the exploits of a posse of Cardiff clubbers 'aving it large on the weekend. DJ Carl Cox cameos as a scary nightclub owner, Howard Marks offers his advice on spliff politics, and the music – which includes tracks from Fatboy Slim, the Chemical Brothers and Underworld – is supervised by the very emminent Pete Tong. Extraswise, there's a C.J. Bolland music video, cast & crew biogs and interviews, production notes and a musical image library. Safe as houses. *CE*



π
OUT NOW • CERT 15 • £19.99

One of the cleverest and coolest indie films for years (soundtrack courtesy of Roni Size, Massive Attack and Orbital) stars newcomer Sean Gullette as Max, a paranoid genius whose entire existence is geared to uncovering the numerical code that runs the stock market. Hounded by Wall Street heavies and a Kabbalah sect intent on discovering a secret code behind their ancient texts, Max finds his fragile world starting to fray. Special features include four deleted scenes with commentary, director Darren Aronofsky's commentary, a behind-the-scenes-montage and music video π^2. *CE*

PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAN TRENT**

△ Our roving reporter Tom Guise tries to get to grips with some unnaturally bulked-up men in a warehouse in west London. Nothing new there then.

YOU SMASHER

Tennis has never been big in the arcades, but that could all change as Sega serve up a Virtua slice of the action. **TOM GUISE** is on the baseline.

THE FLYER THAT accompanies *Virtua Tennis* heralds the coin-op as "The game the world has been waiting for!" Possibly a slight exaggeration, since few people knew it was coming, but it may well be the game you'll be waiting for a go on at your local arcade.

Sega's Virtua brand has a proven track record of taking game genres and revolutionising them. Racing, fighting, shooting and football have all been irreversibly pushed into the Virtua age, and *Tennis* is no less ground-breaking or brilliant.

The key to the Virtua games is that anyone can get into them easily, but there's always tons to master. *Tennis* follows this winning blueprint with a simple two-button control system – one for lob, one for smash. Just steer your player toward the ball and hit a button. That's about it. At least it is for the first couple of rallies.

After an investment of no more than two quid you'll be performing incredible back-hand passes, stunning volleys and devastating smash aces. It's just a matter of timing and joystick direction. Even serving is made easy with a power bar: hit it at max for a high-speed shot, hit it quickly for a cheeky over-the-net number. It's all very satisfying.

Of course, there is one other big sell to the Virtua games – incredible graphics. Tennis lives up to the reputation, recreating famous players to fantastic effect. There's eight to choose from, including Jim Courier, Mark Philippoussis and housewives' choice, Tim Henman. Your arcade-going housewife might get a shock though, as all the Virtua players seem to have been scoffing steroids.

Nonetheless they do look amazing – wiping their brows, clenching their fists in triumph, picking at their racket strings. It's most impressive during the pre-serve close-ups. Never has a tennis game looked so much like TV coverage.

While the characters are the focal point, the rest of the graphics are equally stunning. There's a range of genuine international courts to play through, and they're all staggeringly detailed. 3D umpires and ball boys decorate the arenas and there's even an animated (if somewhat flat) clapping crowd. When you see little touches like the chalk flicking off the line too, you can't fail to be impressed.

There is one aspect of the game that thankfully isn't true to life. Because of its arcade nature, a *Virtua Tennis* match is obviously shorter than a real one. Dropping the concept of sets, it's basically a case of first one to three games wins. In one-player mode this can still add up to quite lengthy sessions, but a human challenger can join in at any time. And like a climactic Wimbledon final, a good two-player game can hover tensely around match point for ages.

Sega have mentioned they're working on a Dreamcast tennis game to release around Wimbledon. It would make sense to assume *Virtua Tennis* could be that game, especially since it uses DC-compatible Naomi hardware.

However, while the basic format is fiendishly addictive, *Virtua Tennis* would need a few more features to make it a worthy home purchase. The option to set up full-length matches perhaps, or play doubles, custom create your own player or include female players like, say, Anna Kournikova, or… Anna Kournikova. That said, if she followed the beefed-up style of her male counterparts we could end up with Fatima Whitbread. And we wouldn't want that now, would we?

△ "That's it – he's done it!" Timmy Henman crashes out of Wimbledon, just as you'd expect.

VIRTUA TENNIS
DEVELOPER: **SEGA AM3**
FORMAT: **NAOMI-BASED ARCADE MACHINE**
COST: **USUALLY £1 A GO**
AVAILABILTY: **CURRENTLY ONLY IN MAJOR ARCADES. DUE FOR FULL RELEASE IN 2000.**
DUE ON DC: **UNCONFIRMED (POSSIBLY JUNE 2000)**

△ "And this year's winner is... the Sega Dreamcast!"

DREAMCAST NAMED "MACHINE OF THE YEAR"

Sega's baby scoops some top awards in the United States

AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE *Time Digital*, the sister publication of the internationally famous *Time Magazine*, has named the Dreamcast the 1999 Machine of the Year.

Sega's baby beat off strong opposition from other innovative new products including MP3 players, personal video recorders and DVD players to pick up the accolade, with the magazine citing the console's impressive technology and game library.

"We at Sega are honoured to have Sega Dreamcast hailed as the Machine of the Year by the respected editorial staff at *Time Digital* magazine," said Peter Moore, senior vice president of Sega of America. "Sega will continue to set new standards in gaming, especially via the online Dreamcast Network, which will further expand consumers' gameplay experience on Sega Dreamcast."

The *Time Digital* award follows several other accolades received by Sega in the United States, where over one million Dreamcasts have been sold since it was launched on September 9.

Popular Science magazine gave the Dreamcast a 'Best of What's New' award, while the Wall Street Journal recently stated that: "This Christmas, the Dreamcast is the only game [console] in town." Meanwhile, seven of the top ten best console games in CBS Television's annual Toy Test were Dreamcast titles.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Vote for the best up and coming Dreamcast games and grab a free VM!

There are a trillion and one (approx) Dreamcast games in development around the world, but which ones are getting you most excited? Let us know and, courtesy of Sega, you could blag a Visual Memory unit (worth £19.99) for absolutely nothing.

To cast your vote, simply email us at vote@dreamcastmag.co.uk. Please include, in order, a list of the FIVE games you're most looking forward to (with the most keenly anticipated at the top), along with your name, age and full postal address.

A couple of important rules: sorry, but you can only vote for games which have been *confirmed* as forthcoming Dreamcast releases. Also, only one entry from each reader will be accepted each calendar month; anyone submitting more will be cursed at in the office and disqualified from the competition. Forever. Note: for logistical reasons we can *only* accept votes by email.

There is no closing date as this is an on-going competition. We draw a winner from the virtual hat each and every month.

This month's lucky reader, chosen at random, is Paul O'Neill from Audenshaw, Manchester, who voted for *Crazy Taxi, Soul Calibur, Metropolis Street Racer, Resident Evil: Code Veronica* and *Zombie Revenge*. A Visual Memory unit is on its way, Paul.

Thanks to everyone else who voted. Please do keep 'em coming.

YOUR MOST WANTED

THE DREAMCAST GAMES WHICH YOU, THE READERS, SIMPLY CAN'T WAIT TO PLAY

1 SHENMUE (SEGA)

No surprise to find Yu Suzuki's revolutionary adventure (featured in issue #1) coming top – it actually gained almost twice the number of votes as the next game. *Shenmue* is now due out in Japan on Wednesday 29 December. No news on a UK release date yet, but we hope to see it late next summer.

2 RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA (EIDOS)

Yep, this Dreamcast-exclusive release from the multimillion-selling survival horror series has got us excited too. We hope to bring you a full hands-on playtest real soon. In the meantime, there's always *Resident Evil 2*, of course, and you can find a preview of that on page 56.

3 CRAZY TAXI (SEGA)

Squeezing between countless rows of serious, uninspired racers, AM3's madcap driving game hit arcades like a breath of fresh air. A good conversion with additional features should do well on Dreamcast, and save us lots of pound coins too. See page 48 for a first look.

4 METROPOLIS STREET RACER (SEGA)

Bizarre Creations' fab-looking city racer has been heavily delayed (it was originally intended to come out at the same time as Dreamcast), but the hold up obviously hasn't dented your enthusiasm for it. You can get the full low-down on the game in our extensive preview, starting on page 8.

5 SEGA GT (SEGA)

News on this broke just hours before our last issue went to press, so we only had chance to run a short news story; our headline 'Gran Turismo Killer' was probably enough to get everyone excited though. If this really is better than the classic PlayStation racer, we'll all be in for a treat. See page 21 for details.

6 DEAD OR ALIVE 2 (TBC)

Sure, the screenshots have had everyone salivating, but will Tecmo's beat 'em up out-do Soul Calibur? It's currently scheduled for release in Japan in February, but here in the UK we'll have to wait a while to find out. Watch out for the Naomi-based coin-op version in British arcades early next year.

7 HALF-LIFE (TBC)

Good call. If there's one PC game we desperately want to play on Dreamcast it's this *Quake*-clone, considered by many to be the best PC game around. Details are still sketchy on this release, but we may see it next summer, hopefully with full online support. We'll be following this one very closely.

8 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE (SEGA)

Developed by Sonic Team to be playable either online against others or as a standalone game, this latest instalment in the role-playing series has the potential to be absolutely huge. But we're going to have to be very, very, very patient. In the UK, we may not see it until – gulp! – 2001.

9 ZOMBIE REVENGE (SEGA)

Resident Evil-style zombie killing without the poncing about? *House Of The Dead 2* from a third-person perspective? *Dynamite Cop* with, er, gameplay? Whichever way you want to look at it, AM1's arcade monster is on its way to DC and it's looking great. Check it out for yourself on page 54.

10 WORMS ARMAGEDDON (HASBRO)

As popular as the *Worms* series is (and justifiably so), it's perhaps a little bit surprising to see *Armageddon* here, if only because it's not really a 'next-generation' title. The game is out in the shops now, so it'll be interesting to see how well it sells. You can find a full review on page 72.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

ROB WATTS
AGE: 25
OCCUPATION: outdoor ed student
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *V-Rally 2*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *F1 World Grand Prix For Dreamcast*
WOULD YOU SWAP YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? Yes!

IAN BERRY
AGE: 32
OCCUPATION: retail assistant manager
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: Erm, what's a PlayStation?
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: That thing with the swords!
WOULD YOU SWAP YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? What's that?

RUSS WALTON
AGE: 22
OCCUPATION: outdoor ed student
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *Gran Turismo*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *Ready 2 Rumble*
WOULD YOU SWAP YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? I think so, yeah!

TRISHA ELVEY
AGE: 22
OCCUPATION: student and ski instructor
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *Time Crisis*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: Not the fishing game – too fishy!
WOULD YOU SWAP YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? Of course!

△ The lava lamp was forgotten as our awestruck students gathered to worship their new god.

ZAPPED!

Will our household of outdoor fanatics swap their PlayStations for Dreamcast? Will the man who says games are for geeks be proved wrong? **DAN TRENT** makes the trip to Glasgow to find out…

BEYOND THE GRIM high-rise and tough reputation, Glasgow is a bustling and exciting city providing the gateway to some of the most rugged wilderness in Britain. No surprise then that this month's challengees are windswept outdoor types who spend much of their free time dangling from cliffs, tearing down mountains on bikes and, weather permitting, carving through the powder on skis or snowboards.

Inevitably the house is an Aladdin's cave of hardware and behind every door there lurks another canoe, snowboard or fearsome looking ice axe.

While housemates Russ, Trisha, Rob and Ian might seem the antithesis of the pasty-faced, agoraphobic gamer stereotype it turns out that, between them, they have two PlayStations and a substantial games collection. The arrival of Dreamcast was greeted with excitement and anticipation by all except Ian, Russ's boss and token games sceptic. "I prefer to live in the real world, thanks – computer games are all for spotty geeks who can't handle interacting with real people..." So speaketh Mr Berry, but what did the others think?

△ Outdoor clothes are the law in this house

After a quick blast through some of the games the initial excitement was giving way to nods of approval and a sense that things didn't look good for the PlayStations. "Very impressive," was Trisha's view. "It's like the PlayStation in that it's easy to pick up and play but several times better in the graphics and everything."

Even Ian was beginning to pick up interest as *Soul Calibur* was loaded up and the room filled with shouts of excitement and cries of dismay as on-screen blows were traded. Anna, round visiting Rob and determined not to be photographed, coyly picked up a control pad then proceeded to kick seven shades of brown stuff out of anyone game enough to try it on.

Impressed, Ian demanded a go and within seconds was rooted to the screen and hammering the buttons like a pro. A shaky start was soon forgotten and Maxi's nunchuka were landing blow after bone-crunching blow. As Maxi strutted his victory stuff Ian finally managed to turn away from the telly and acknowledge: "Actually, this is pretty good, I'm beginning to understand the appeal now." All well and good but was this two-console household prepared to take the plunge and go Dreamcast? Russ was impressed but not necessarily convinced: "With the games out at the moment, no. But if they bring out some different games then I might consider it. It needs some decent role-playing games and more driving games. I'm not really into the *F1* but I'd like to try *Sega Rally 2*."

Rob, on the other hand, had absolutely no doubts at all: "It's so much faster and smoother than the PlayStation and the fact that you can surf the Internet is superb, too. I would spend hours on that!"

We left the housemates to continue hammering out their differences on *Ready 2 Rumble* and make their decision in peace, but the scene on our return left redundant all questions about which way the axe would fall. The once-tidy living room was a mass of pizza boxes and empty beer cans and all furniture had been rearranged around the TV.

And at the centre of this scene of devastation? Dreamcast, the PlayStation lying forgotten in the corner. A decisive victory, then. But the final word should go to Ian: "I thought it was all a bit tragic till I actually played it but now I've seen the light!"

Calling all contestants… Have you got a friend who deserves to have us turning up on their doorstep when they least expect it? Someone who slags off your Dreamcast because they 'adore' their PlayStation or N64 so much? Want to really test your friend's resolve? Then drop us a line at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk with 'Doorstep Challenge' in the subject line, or write to Doorstep Challenge, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. To qualify, contestants must have a PlayStation in full working order (it's the first thing we'll be checking when we turn up) and a minimum of five games.

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THE PLAYLIST

DAN TRENT PICKS HIS PERSONAL FAVOURITE GAMES FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

1 F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX (SEGA, £39.99)
Petrol-heads will love the attention to detail and the '98 season events, but everyone can appreciate the super-slick graphics and straightforward structure. A hardcore simulator that doesn't alienate the more casual gamer. Superb. *(ODM #2, 8/10)*

2 SOUL CALIBUR (SEGA, £39.99)
The game everyone has been waiting for. Superlatives simply don't do it justice. This is simply the best fighting game ever seen on a console. Graphics that simply blow you away, and intuitive gameplay that just gets better and better. And you can play it with the fishing controller! *(ODM #2, 10/10)*

3 READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING (SEGA, £39.99)
One of the most enjoyable fighting games ever made. Even die-hard games sceptics are won over by the combination of amusing characters and bruising pugilism. Funny to watch even if you're not playing, this is one game that'll never end up at the bottom of the pile. *(ODM #1, 9/10)*

4 TOY COMMANDER (SEGA, £39.99)
Hugely inventive and totally involving game that's a little fiddly to pick up but once you do you won't look back. The open structure rewards experimentation and enables you to play at your own pace. Four-player deathmatch is entertaining, but very tricky. *(ODM #1, 8/10)*

5 SEGA BASS FISHING (SEGA, £59.99 WITH ROD)
It should never have escaped Japan. The most preposterous game to hit the console market, but somehow *Sega Bass Fishing* pulls it off. Limited gameplay notwithstanding, this game has to be seen to be believed. You can get yer hands on it in the New Year. *(ODM #1, 7/10)*

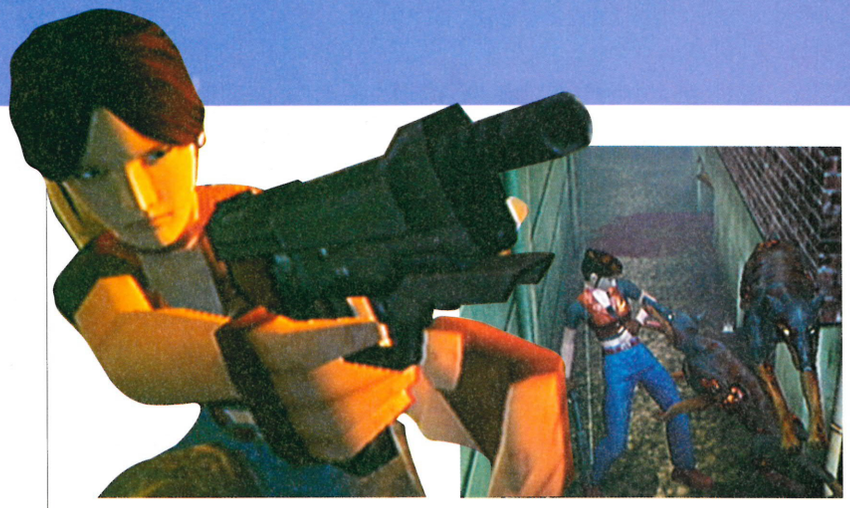
6 SONIC ADVENTURE (SEGA, £39.99)
The spiky one's latest outing is bigger, better and faster than ever before, and the ideal showcase for Dreamcast's awesome power. You may be along for the ride for much of the game, but for sheer exuberance *Sonic Adventure* is still hard to beat. *(ODM #0, 9/10)*

7 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 (SEGA, £39.99; £54.99 WITH GUN)
If you're sick of pumping pound coins into the arcade machine, then tool up with the light-gun and get busy at home. Not exactly cerebral, but hugely satisfying in its own gore-filled way, there's also added single-player depth with the training missions and original mode. *(ODM #1, 9/10)*

8 NBA SHOWTIME: NBA ON NBC (MIDWAY £39.99)
Not the biggest or most immersive game ever, but huge fun to play. As if basketball players weren't superhuman enough already, *NBA Showtime* rips up the laws of physics and lovingly ignores any known rules of basketball to serve up bucketloads of high-energy action. *(ODM #2, 6/10)*

9 NFL BLITZ 2000 (MIDWAY, £39.99)
Make the effort to understand how the sport works and you'll get hours of enjoyment from this over-the-top interpretation of the sport Americans like to call 'football'. You'll get your ass kicked the first few times, but stick at it and you'll find yourself addicted. *(ODM #1, 8/10)*

10 POWER STONE (EIDOS, £39.99)
One of the most inventive and fun-to-play beat 'em ups around. Beautifully detailed arenas, cute Manga-style graphics and lightning speed mean it looks great, and easy-to-pick-up controls and straightforward gameplay make it incredibly addictive. *(ODM #1, 8/10)*



CAPCOM UPDATES CV

New details released on *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*

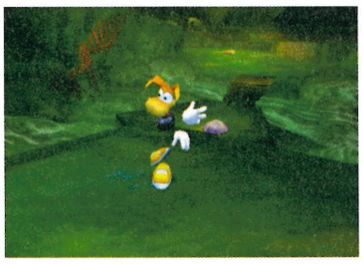
NEW DETAILS HAVE EMERGED on *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*, the latest game in the multimillion-selling survival horror series, which is due out exclusively on Dreamcast in 2000.

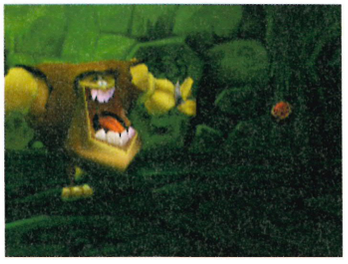
Capcom have revealed that Claire Redfield, the lead character in the highly anticipated 3D action-adventure, will be able to carry – and, yes, fire – two weapons at a time, raising the prospect of some serious John Woo-style gun-toting action.

The Japanese developers have also confirmed that Dreamcast's Visual Memory display will be used to show character status information including physical strength, a pulse diagram and weapon details; in previous versions on other platforms, you had to pause the game to access all the details.

Resident Evil Code: Veronica, is set in Europe three months after the events of *Resident Evil 2* (previewed on page 56), and will include a first-person perspective mode for the first time in the series. It's due to come out in Japan next February and will be supplied on two GD-ROMs.

A UK release date has yet to be announced but we hope to bring you a hands-on playtest in the next issue of *ODM*, out Thursday January 13.





△ Poor little Rayman hasn't got any legs but he may still give Sonic a run for his money. Ha ha.

RAYMAN 2 TAKE ON SONIC

FRENCH PUBLISHERS UBI SOFT have announced that their gorgeous-looking 3D platform game *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* will be released for Dreamcast in early spring with a previously unseen boss character plus additional levels.

The long-awaited follow-up to 1995's best-selling 2D platformer shot straight to the top of the Nintendo 64 sales charts when it was released in November, and has received excellent reviews on both N64 and PC.

The star of the game – who is set to feature in his own animated television series next year – is a wacky, versatile character who can jump, climb, swim and fly, despite being devoid of limbs.

In this sequel you must work through a series of puzzle-filled levels set in swampland, a forest, a jail, a ship and beyond, in order to save Rayman's cute friends from invading robot pirates. According to Ubi Soft the Dreamcast version will feature exclusive levels and run at a smooth 50/60 frames per second.

Rayman 2: The Great Escape is currently scheduled for release in March. Expect more news on the game in our next issue. In the meantime, check out the screenshots above – the first to be issued from the DC edition.

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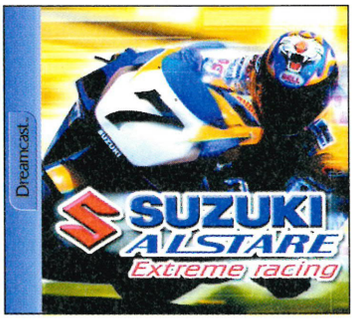

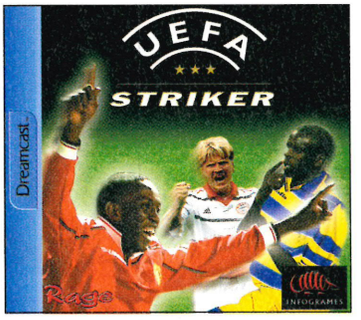

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WATCH THIS! HOT NET ACTION

URBAN 75

www.urban75.com

The revolution will not be televised, but there probably will be a website. And if there is, Urban 75 will surely be it. Coming straight outta Brixton, this award-winning, non profit-making underground culture site features eco-protest news, features on the rave scene, short stories, an excellent guide to drugs ("Just say know kids!"), some top photography and a load of stuff on Wales and Cardiff City (hey, no one's perfect). There are also various silly games and a hilarious idiot gallery compiled from the letters received by the site maintainer. Check it out. *WC*

00 HEAVEN

www.jamesbond.com

The release of *The World Is Not Enough* sees Bond mania once again sweeping the nation and now is as good a time as any to feature the rather excellent official site. Unsurprisingly, a large amount of the site is devoted to the new film and there is all the usual production guff plus some very nice animations that enable you to navigate your way around key locations like Q's workshop and Electra's bedroom. Best of all is Moneypenny's Rolodex which has all the gen, including film clips, on Bond's gadgets, women and opponents. *DT*

OLD SKOOL STARTS HERE!

www.classicgaming.com

The Dreamcast may well be the latest console and have graphics to blow your mind but popularity for old skool games is stronger than ever. Classicgaming.com is just the site for you if your idea of gaming heaven involves 2D, plinky plonky sound effects and pixels the size of houses. Catering for hardcore game anoraks as well as those who wouldn't know Chucky Egg from Pac-Man, this site has a game of the week, links to emulators of every persuasion and is all presented in a pleasingly down to earth style. *DT*

TOYS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS...

Yes, Christmas is upon us once again and it's time to have a look at some of the gifts you may want to consider for the gadget-obsessed gamer in your life

GP SIM-TECH GAME SEAT 2000

Got *F1 World Grand Prix*? Got your steering wheel? Missing that final ingredient? GP Sim-Tech's new Game Seat could be the answer! Designed to recreate the feeling of sitting in a racing car by putting your body at the correct angle for accurate steering control, the Game Seat is little more than a glorified bean bag but is extremely comfortable nonetheless. Lean into corners and the game seat leans with you, and as soon as you sit on it the chair automatically adjusts itself to your body for maximum comfort and slouch factor.

Price £54.95 from
GP Sim-Tech: 01273 380461

SAMSUNG MOTION YEPP

As the Internet music revolution gathers speed and portable MP3 players gain popularity, Samsung have announced the next logical step with their Motion Yepp, which enables you to not only listen to music but also watch the video on an LCD screen. No bigger than a conventional MP3 player, the YEPP is incredibly compact and has all the features you would expect from an MP3 player, such as voice recording and a removable Smart Media card. While we're sure Samsung's motives for producing the Motion Yepp were completely innocent, the potential for utilising the Yepp for more, er, saucy material didn't escape us.

Price £TBA from Samsung: 0800 521 652 / www.samsungelectronics.co.uk

PIONEER MS-DV1 DVD PLAYER

Everyone knows that DVD is the future of home cinema, and in the rush to do something that stands out from the anonymous black box crowd Pioneer bring us their MS-DV1. The player itself is housed in a stylishly minimalistic stainless steel case and has a neat 'head up display'-style digital display that can be mounted anywhere on or around the player itself. A built-in amp powers the five surround-sound speakers that deliver superb sound and floor-shaking bass through the giant sub-woofer. Neatest touch, however, is the remote control (below) which you can program to work with a host of other appliances through its touch-screen technology.

Price £1500 from Pioneer: 01753 789500 / www.pioneer.com

WATCH PHONE

The advances in mobile telecommunications over the last few years have been nothing short of incredible. Modern mobiles were the thing of science fiction little more than a decade ago, and the boundaries of what is possible are already being pushed with the launch of the first wrist-mounted 'watch phone'. It's already available in Korea, and Samsung claim that this is the future of mobile communication, as it enables you to be contactable whatever you are doing that involves the use of your hands... Weighing in at a mere 39 grammes, the watch phone is not short on features and manages to pack an awful lot into its compact body, like voice-activated dialling. Of course, there is the problem that without an earpiece you look like you're checking that your watch is still working every time you try to listen to what the other person is saying. Still cool though!

Price £TBA from Samsung: 0800 521 652 / www.samsungelectronics.co.uk

INFLATABLE RADIO

Conventional radios are all well and good, but they all look just a little bit dull. If you're after something a little more exciting and aren't too fussed about super-clear stereo sound, then this could well be the radio for you. Super-light (well, it is full of air!) and very reasonable at a shade under a tenner, the inflatable radio comes in a choice of colours and uses easily available AA batteries to power its FM receiver. Strangely, it isn't waterproof, which seems an oversight considering the otherwise beach-friendly construction, but it would certainly bring a touch of spice to any bathroom or kitchen – as long as you keep it away from the sink.

Price £9.99 from Innovations: 0870 908 7002 / www.innovations.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

WHO LOVES YA?

DREAMCAST-LOVING FRENCH FUNKSTERS KOJAK TAKE A BREAK FROM THEIR HECTIC TOUR TO TALK GAMES AND TUNES

FACED WITH DESCRIBING his band without reference to French origins or illustrious Gaelic contemporaries, Kojak's Gregoire does a convincing impression of never having been asked the question before. "I think you can describe Kojak as a fusion of three different backgrounds," he answers slowly. "But it is a mixture, not a patchwork. The funk is the root of all of our influences, and house is the new funk, so that's what makes our sound."

Kojak's other members, hip-hop producer DJ Vas and funk vocalist Jayhem, joined forces with technohead Gregoire a couple of years back. Since then they've won rave reviews for their superb debut album *Crime In The City* and blazed a trail throughout Europe with their superb live act.

While Kojak's love of music is obvious, they also happen to be into their videogames. Indeed, when asked whether he preferred to play live or record in the studio, Vas's response is immediate: "I prefer the studio, because my Dreamcast is in my studio!" Nice answer.

Kojak have yet to record a videogame soundtrack, but when asked what type of game they'd like to work on the answer is unanimous: "Fighting!"

Cool, soul-kissed house might not be the first choice for a beat 'em up but, hey, the effect could be interesting.

The ever-growing availability of music on the Internet, and the ease with which music can now be produced and distributed, is something Greg in particular has a strong interest in. "There is a good side in that everyone can do music and sell it on the Net," he offers. "But there is also the bad side: everyone is their own producer and there is no one there to say 'That part is good, but *that* needs changing.' No discipline!"

Best leave it to the experts, in other words.

Dan Trent

PHOTOGRAPHY: **CHRIS FLOYD**

"I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE WATCHING FOR VOYEURISTIC REASONS OR FOR THE GAMES"

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

THE BEST BIT

SHE GOT HER KIT OFF FOR A B-MOVIE, NOW SHE'S A PRESENTER ON THE CHANNEL 4 VIDEOGAMES SHOW *BITS*. EMILY BOOTH: A "NINETIES GIRL"

AFTER YEARS OF CHILDISH, patronising and insipid videogames shows, *Bits* has quickly established itself as eminently watchable (albeit through a drunken haze, for many, thanks to Channel 4's erratic late night/early morning scheduling). The secret? It's fun, up to date and informative, plus – and this really shouldn't be taken as given – it actually shows the bloody games.

It also happens to be presented by three girls, which, as the most recent recruit Emily Booth concedes, is probably bringing videogaming to a whole new audience. "A lot of the viewers are blokes, obviously," she tells us, "but I don't know if they're watching for voyeuristic reasons or for the games".

Not that it should bother the 23-year-old. Emily actually began her on-screen career (using the stage name Bouffante) in *Pervirella*, a saucy B-movie in which she revealed, well, a whole lot more than just a talent for acting. From that she went on to review erotic movies on Live TV, and landed a job on *Bits* – replacing The German One – in September '99 following a chance meeting at a party.

"For a while I was doing Live TV and *Bits*," she informs us over a drink at trendy Central London bar The Social. "Can you imagine it? I'd be sent 36 naughty films a month and two games every week, so it was like 'Let's stay in tonight, shall we?'"

It would be easy to assume that Emily has been employed just to sit around (or indeed lark around) looking pretty. Easy, that is, but wrong. Fact is, this media and film graduate knows her stuff. She's a bit of a veteran too, having cut her gaming teeth in arcades while growing up in trashy seaside town Hastings.

"I used to play loads of Defender," she says. "And there was a huge *StreetFighter II* scene around when I was about 18. I even had Chun-Li hair – two little bunches."

Emily has been impressed by Dreamcast ("It offers a good balance between console usability and the graphics of a PC"), and cites Acclaim's *TrickStyle* as her fave DC game.

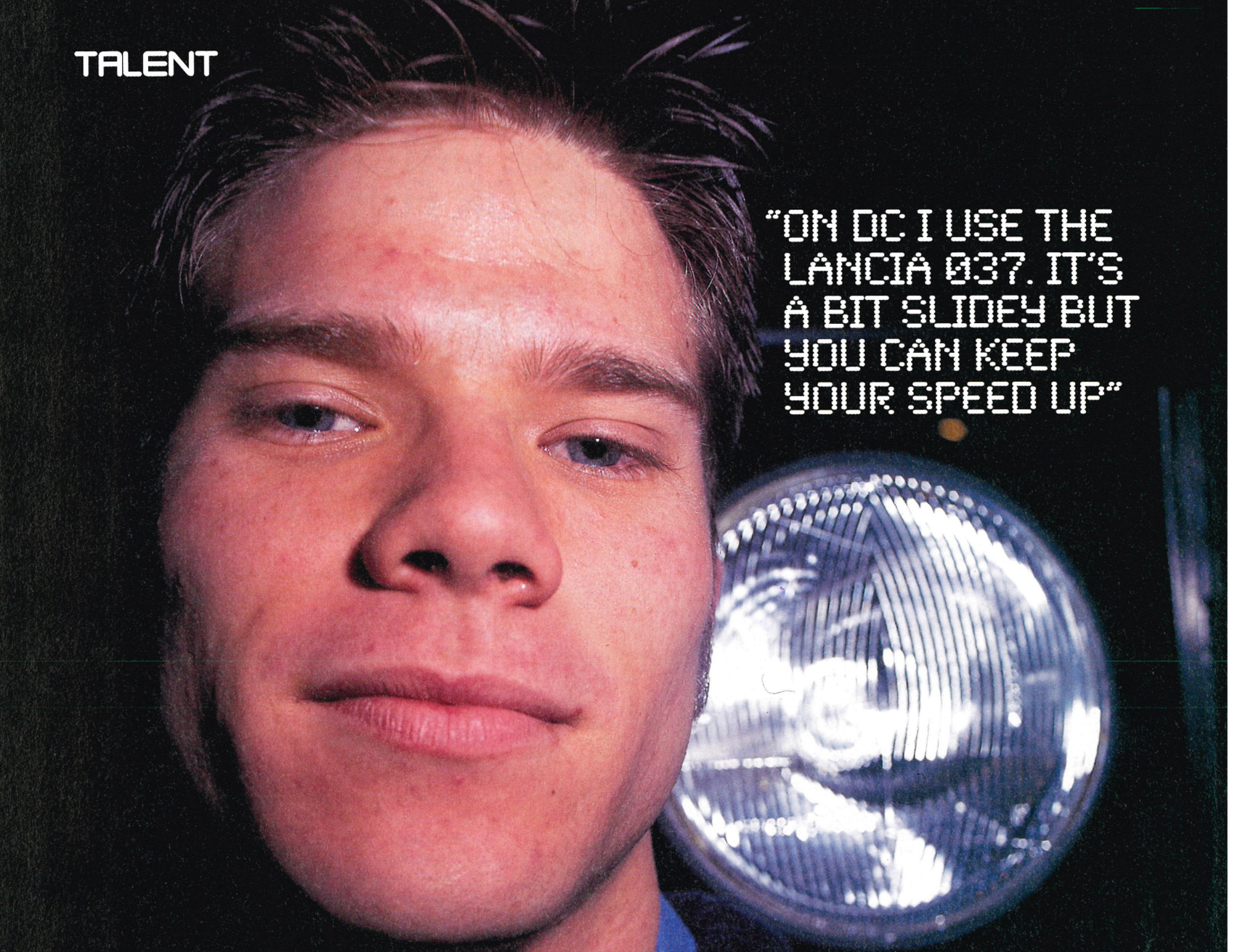
The game she really adores, though, is *Resident Evil 2* on PlayStation (due out on Dreamcast in January, previewed on page 56). "I got so addicted. It really puts you into the game. You know, gaming as a medium can be like films. You have to get involved, you have to care about your character to really put yourself in it and identify with it."

Now there's no stopping her. "But then again I really like button-bashing as well. I like games which give you an adrenalin rush, an instant hit. Instant gratification – what can I say? I'm a nineties girl".

Dominik Diamond eat your heart out.

Warren Chrismas

• *Watch out for a* Bits Tomb Raider *special on Channel 4 this Christmas. A new series of* Bits *is scheduled to begin in April.*



"ON DC I USE THE LANCIA 037. IT'S A BIT SLIDEY BUT YOU CAN KEEP YOUR SPEED UP"

RALLY GOOD

MEET THE GUY WHO'S OFFICIALLY BRITAIN'S BEST AT *SEGA RALLY 2* ON DREAMCAST. WELL, FOR THIS WEEK AT LEAST

WHILE THE DREAMCAST version of *Sega Rally 2* (*ODM* #1, 8/10) doesn't offer the online head-to-head racing we all hoped to see, the ability to upload fastest times onto a Web-based ranking board enables die-hard fans from all over Europe to compete against each other.

We caught up with one such fan, Ryan Derham, who stormed straight to the top of the rankings when he first logged on in late October. The 17-year-old has been practicing at home every day, sometimes *all* day, since he got the console, but his real experience comes from playing Sega's rally games in the arcades of Southampton.

"I can go faster in the arcades," he tells us. "My best time championship time there is 4.03 something. My best time on Dreamcast is 4.04."

If he knows his times to the nearest thousandth of a second off the top of his head – as you might expect from someone who readily admits to being "pretty obsessive" about the game – then he's not letting on. For the record, at the time of writing his fastest Arcade Championship time on Dreamcast is 4.04.605.

"In the arcade I use the 306 Maxi," he says, "but on DC I use the Lancia 037. The Maxi grips the road better; it doesn't slide, really. The 037 is a bit slidey, but you can keep your speed up most of the time."

He's not alone in using the four-gear 037 Rally – a glance at the rankings board reveals that this is the car of choice for most of the top-rated drivers do. It's no coincidence that it's a hidden bonus car in the game, given as a reward for those who win the tricky final season of the 10 Year Championship.

Predictably, Ryan's advice is to get hold of the 037 and, yes, practice a lot. "Loads of people have emailed me asking for tips," he tells us. "I got one the other day written in French and I haven't got a clue what he's on about."

Ironically, just two days after we spoke at the end of November, Ryan got knocked off the top of the European rankings… by a Frenchmen. For now, though, he remains the best British-based *Sega Rally 2* driver.

Think you're better? Then prove it.

Warren Chrismas

• *You can find The Official Sega Rally2 website and ranking board at www.segarally.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY**

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LETTERS

Welcome to the page where we unveil the hidden talents of the All Saints girls. In all their saintly glory. Oh no, hang on, that's next month. You'll just have to make do with these outpourings of bile and vitriol instead

BUGGERY BOLLOCKS

I have today bought your first issue of Dreamcast magazine for my son who, I might add, has a Dreamcast in my wardrobe waiting to be unwrapped on Christmas Day. To say I am very disappointed with your magazine is an understatement.

My six-year-old son has tonight asked me what 'bollocks' are. When questioned about this, he told me he had seen it on page 114 of your magazine, along with 'buggered', 'pissing' and 'pissed'.

Seeing as there is no warning on the front of your magazine to warn of its adult content, I did not see any harm in buying it for him, especially as he was drawn to the *Sonic* demo stuck to the front of the mag. I do not see any need for this language, especially in a magazine to which kids will be drawn.

I will certainly not be buying your magazine again, and I look forward to your comments on the need for this language in your magazine.

Trevor Ahrens, via email

Look at it this way, at least your son will be the most popular lad in the playground. I'm sorry to hear that you didn't enjoy the magazine. The biggest demographic of Dreamcast owners is in the 20-30 age range, so we're targetting the mag at these people. You'll find the best magazines on the newsstands all try to adopt the type of 'street' language appropriate to their reader demographic, particularly in games magazines.

I have no plans to tone down the magazine, as I don't believe we use bad language excessively or unnecessarily. What you're commenting on is certainly no worse than we hear and read every day. If you're trying to protect your six-year-old from such words I suggest *ODM* is the least of your problems.

PROMISES, PROMISES

Can you tell me why the PAL conversions of *Sega Rally 2* and *VF3* have borders? I thought this was a thing of the past. Also, where is the online play for *Sega Rally 2*, or any other title?

Mark Liapis, via email

On the borders front, most new games don't have borders. Early stuff like *Virtua Fighter 3* and *Sega Rally* have borders, but that was before developers sussed out how to get rid of them.

Online play for *Sega Rally* is anticipated for Easter. Other games already have online features (we went into detail on these in last issue – see opposite if you missed it). For anyone having trouble getting into this whole online business, turn to page 110 of this issue.

another games
worthy of a mention in
hallowed pages.

DON'T DO IT AGAIN!
The very first thing I read in ODM was the Editor's intro. He, he, he! You certainly know how to reduce your readership and offend the majority of game players. I actually happen to be one of those "myopic computer geeks who's totally obsessed with games". For your information Mark, the majority of gamers wear glasses, as do a lot of society.
At first I thought ODM would be different to other mags, perhaps even worth buying every month. It turns out it's another uninteresting read aimed at the casual gamer.
Unfortunately, you're going to sell really well, thanks to the cover CD.
Your mag isn't worthy to wipe the arse of an Otaku like myself. The problem with the industry is that there are more casual gamers than Otakus. This was due to Sony'

using
Faces'.

PlayStation. Eventually though, because of idiots like you encouraging these "my console impresses the ladies, do you want a go on *Virtua Fighter* for a five minute laugh before going down the booze" morons that plague the industry, the games market will eventually collapse in on itself.

One very pissed-off Otaku, Cambridge.

I take it you won't be turning to the fashion feature on page 104, then?

MISSING MODEM
Can you tell me why the import Dreamcast machine I own did not

CONTACT INFO: We want to hear from you. Address your letters to: Mailbox, Official Dreamcast Maga
letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk. And if that's not good enough for you, why not contribute to our re
button on the Dreamcast portal site) and follow the instructions.

42 OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE NOVEMBER 1999

OTAKU MY ARSE

That 'Otaku' from Cambridge – a joke, yeah? I thought this term meant 'super-hardcore gamer', not 'pretentious dickhead'. Firstly, Otaku don't write in to mags calling themselves Otaku, and secondly they certainly don't live in Cambridge. I have this mental image of a spoilt middle-class kid who gets his games bought for him, and because he has so many thinks he's an über-gamer. What a twat. I bet this is the kind of wanker who, if he liked football, would wear a Brazil '98 shirt. (Actually, no, he would have taken it back and got a France one, wouldn't he?).

Rob Franklin via email

After reading the letter from the anonymous Otaku in *ODM* #1, I felt I had to reply. I agree with him about the content of your magazine. I find it insulting that Sega have decided to disregard the hardcore gamers of yore. Your magazine is good and gets the job done, but you should try to cater for hardcore gamers. In the wake of the informative, funny, well-designed *Saturn Mag*, your magazine's fashion sections (what's that all about?) and oh-so-humourous little comments about drunken buffoons waddling home from the pub, curry in hand, ready to play some 'wicked-looking' videogames on their new lifestyle system, just makes me shudder.

Robert Dick, via email

Tell me, in what way have Sega "disregarded" the hardcore gamer? I'd be interested to hear anybody's suggestions about what they want to see in the mag. However, I believe we do cater for the hardcore gamer. Not only are our reviews and previews written by the best in the business, but we've also got the first news on everything Dreamcast-related, thanks to our official status.

There can be nothing more chafing to the ears than a self-proclaimed Otaku on his high horse. I refer of course to the one who appears to have a problem with the "casual gamer morons who plague the industry". I have a feeling I understand his problem. He has always been a geek, but in the past he could have claimed that, 'it's just because I like games and not skateboarding, isn't it?' Sadly, now games have become mainstream, he can no longer use this excuse and is shown up as the geek he is.

I am fed up with hardcore gamers protesting about the new 'casual' market. New customers have made the industry richer, meaning more funding for bigger games, and for consoles to become cheaper. One more thing: the Otaku are from Japan, and you are not one. Also, it is not 'Otakus', as Otaku is already plural. I fear you have made a pillock out of yourself.

Mo C, Heronsgate

AREN'T RETARDS CUTE?

We sent you an abusive email about two minutes ago. It was great. We used the 'F' word about 60 f**ng thousand times. There we go again. We're gonna buy Dreamcasts, open 'em up and urinate inside 'em cos we think they're so great.**

Is it possible to link a Dreamcast to a motorcycle and ride down the street while playing on it? Will we be able to get mobile telephone-sized Dreamcasts so we can access the WWW from just about anywhere? Have fun writing your magazine, and get as much swearing in as possible. And porn, porn, porn. Yeah, baby!

Paul Hubbard, via email

Shit! You've gone and revealed Sega's plans for 2000. They're also working on a Dreamcast you can link to the family pet – every time you deliver a blow to your opponent in *Ready 2 Rumble*, the family moggy gets electrocuted.

Sadly there are no plans to create a mobile phone-sized Dreamcast at the moment, but there is the NeoGeo pocket which should be compatible with some Dreamcast games, such as *King Of Fighters*.

GAME IDEA

I've got a great game idea: we get an attractive version of Patsy Palmer (Bianca from *EastEnders*) to stand at the top of a very tall tree. Then we use Ricky's magic hand to push her off.

The aim of the game is to make her hit every single branch on the way down, causing as much impact on her face as possible. When she reaches the bottom you must smack her back up so she can go through it all again until she looks like she does now.

Sexyamigo, Farnborough

Hmm. Do you by any chance have some have unresolved 'issues' involving *EastEnders*?

DC24U?

I read that Dreamcast 2 technology has been confirmed. The article spoke of "staggering" performance, but wouldn't be drawn on specifics.

Jas Sahota, via email

Don't believe everything you read. Sega of Japan are believed to be working on upgraded Dreamcasts to ensure the console stays ahead of the pack.

SHORT BUT SWEET

Keep your letters short and you're more likely to get a response in the magazine

In an extreme moment of boredom, I popped my currently useless *ODM* cover CD into my PC, and found there was some PC data on it!

There was a picture in TGA format, as well as three text files. So does that mean there could be pictures on other Dreamcast CDs?

Chris Turnbull, via email

Yep. This is deliberate. Some developers are putting PC artwork on their CDs when they've got the space. As far as the PC text files go, these are on all Dreamcast CDs – they contain boring copyright and trademark information.

I must congratulate Sega because the *Tremble Park* download had my friends and I gawping in amazement. It also made two other friends of mine rush out and buy a Dreamcast just on the strength of that!

Tony Chessman, via email

***Power Stone*, eh? What an amazing game, but it's *far* too easy. I completed it in four days!**

Ryan Mackster, via email

I've played *TrickStyle*, and I thought that it deserved much more than your 7/10 score. Personally, I did not find the structure rigid at all, and found that I could do whatever I wanted, even if I did not know what I was doing.

Ben Green, via email

Could you please tell me how much the calls cost to access the Internet on Dreamcast. Are they the same as PC (1p per min on weekends etc.), or are they more?

Dave Hunt, via email

Don't worry. The calls cost exactly the same as making a local phone call – for more details see page 110.

Can you tell me if the VM uses up its own battery supply when it's plugged into the joypad, or is it powered by Dreamcast?

David Hunter, Ayr, Scotland

When the VM unit is plugged into the controller, it's powered by Dreamcast, not by its own internal battery.

CONTACT INFO: We want to hear from you. Address your letters to: Mailbox, *ODM*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Alternatively, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk. And if that's not good enough for you, why not contribute to our regular online chat forum – simply point your Web browser at www.dreamcastmag.co.uk (or click on the ODM button on the Dreamcast portal site) and follow the instructions.

BACK ISSUES

MISSED AN ISSUE OF *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE*? WITH OUR HANDY BACK ISSUE SERVICE THERE'S NO NEED TO MISS OUT FOREVER

ISSUE #0

OCTOBER 1999

INSIDE: Special beginner's guide to Dreamcast; a look at more than 55 games coming soon for the new console; we explain the future for Nintendo and Sony; the *Grange Hill* gang check out DC games

REVIEWS: *Sega Rally 2*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Blue Stinger*

ON THE VIDEO: Our exclusive video features footage of 35 up and coming Dreamcast classics

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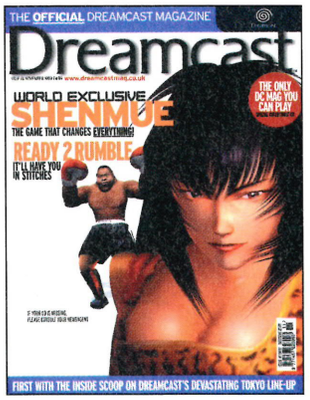

ISSUE #1

NOVEMBER 1999

INSIDE: Exclusive interview with gaming legend Yu Suzuki; special report from the Tokyo games show

REVIEWS: *Ready 2 Rumble*, *TrickStyle*, *PowerStone*, *Toy Commander*

ON THE CD: Playable demos of *Sonic Adventure* (the Emerald Coast level) and *Millennium Soldier Expendable*. Plus movies of *Toy Commander*, *Speed Devils* and *Buggy Heat*

PRICE: £5.99

ISSUE #2

DECEMBER 1999

INSIDE: Exclusive review of the UK release of *Soul Calibur*; the future for videogames; *House Of The Dead 2* player's guide

REVIEWS: *Soul Calibur*, *F1 World Grand Prix*, *Marvel Vs Capcom*, *Street Fighter Alpha 3*

ON THE CD: *Soul Calibur* movie, plus playable demos of *Dynamite Cop* and *Buggy Heat*. Plus movies of *F1 World Championship* and *NFL Blitz 2000*

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COMING NEXT MONTH

THE BLOOD ISSUE

"GRATUITOUSLY VIOLENT GAMES ARE LIKE A FORM OF PORNOGRAPHY. IF YOU'RE NOT AN OBSESSIVELY MASTURBATORY PORNO FREAK, YOU'LL GET BORED."

– Guy Miller, producer of Shadow Man

"THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE TRYING TO KILL COPS, AND WE'D RATHER THEY DID IT IN YOUR GAME THAN ON THE STREETS"

– NYPD officer

"WE'RE SEEING BOMBS, SEEING KIDS CLEAR AN ENTIRE BUILDING AND SEEING THEM LAUGH, CHEER AND MOCK. THAT'S STRAIGHT OUT OF VIDEOGAMES"

– David Grossman, campaigner

What are they all talking about? Next issue we're bringing you our special Blood issue, packed to the gills with the bloodiest and most violent games you've ever seen, plus interviews with the people who love and loathe them. Give it a go – if you think you're hard enough.

PLUS:

REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS

If all goes well, we'll be bringing you reviews of *Resident Evil 2*, *Fighting Force 2*, *Armada* and every other new Dreamcast release. We'll also be bringing you more updates on *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Crazy Taxi*, plus an exclusive preview of a very special up-and-coming Dreamcast blockbuster.

TIPS AND PLAYERS' GUIDES

Stuck on *Evolution*? Baffled by *UEFA Striker*? Struggling with *Sonic*? We've got all the answers in our expanded tips section next issue.

HOT CD ACTION!

ON THE CD

Is it a CD? Is it a GD-ROM? Whatever you want to call it, it's stuffed with demos and movies. For your delectation next month we present:

SWS 2000
PLAYABLE DEMO

RE-VOLT
PLAYABLE DEMO

DEADLY SKIES
MOVIE

CRAZY TAXI
MOVIE

RAYMAN 2
MOVIE

ON SALE THURSDAY 13 JANUARY

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SOUL SURVIVOR

We absolutely love Namco's beat 'em up *Soul Calibur*, but what does the public think? **WARREN CHRISMAS** took to the road to ask the man in the street… and the park… and the clifftop…

IF YOU READ OUR HUGE review of *Soul Calibur* in last month's issue of *ODM*, you'll know just what we think of Namco's extraordinary beat 'em up.

"The cast of warriors is pure class… it's the best-looking game you've ever seen… revolutionary in its mind-boggling amount of detail… it's got so much to it that you'll be playing for a very long time to come," wrote our man Ed.

"It's game of the year, no doubt about it," he added shortly before going for a very long lie down. Yep, we love it alright. So much so, in fact, that we awarded it a score of ten out of ten.

But it's not just us, the whole games industry has been talking about it for weeks. And, as we found out last issue, Kendo expert Keith Hazlewood loves it too.

But what, we thought, do you – the people who matter, the paying public, the man (and, indeed, woman) on the street – think of it? Does *Soul Calibur* really stand out from the crowd? Or does it just look like any other old beat 'em up?

A couple of weeks before the game hit the shelves, we took the game and a Dreamcast demo unit on a little tour to find out. "It's a game which needs to be played by everyone," wrote Ed last month. Well, hey, here's a couple of dozen people – that makes a damn good start.

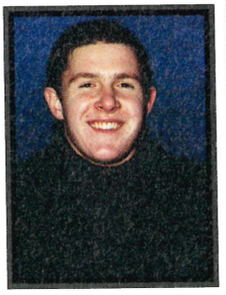
• *Namco's* Soul Calibur *(ODM #2, 10/10) is out now, priced £39.99.*

△ ***Soul Calibur*: as good as they come.**

VOX POP – ON THE CLIFFTOP

HEIDI, 26; MATT, 27

Hello. What the hell are you doing up here?
M: We've just come for a nice stroll along the top on our day off.
H: We thought we'd get a bit of exercise.
M: We want to practice jumping. Ha ha.
What do you do for a living?
H: I'm a jeweller.
M: I work for my own company in Brighton. We sell caviar, delicatessen, fine luxuries… [wibbles on about it for ages]
Do you play videogames?
M: I used to have a PlayStation and that was good fun. But I thought it was a bit anti-social playing at home all the time.
H: I haven't got the co-ordination!
Having now played it, what do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
M: I think it's brilliant. Absolutely bloody superb.
H: I think it's brutal.
M: Nah, I really enjoyed it. *Tekken 2* doesn't respond like that. It's nice and violent too.
What weapon would you use to kill someone in real life?
M: I'd push them off a cliff! [*ODM* rapidly backs away]



ANDY, 18

What do you do for a living?
I'm unemployed but I'm about to go travelling around the world.
Do you play videogames?
Yeah, on my Nintendo 64. I like racing games, mainly, and sports games.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
I think it's good. I don't usually like beat 'em ups cos I get a bit fed up with them. But I like the graphics and the way it moves, and there's more variety here.
When was the last time you were in a real fight?
Last week.
Really?
Yeah, on the rugby pitch.
How would you kill someone in real life?
I'd set my rugby team on 'em.

COLIN, 31

What do you do for a living?
I'm a labourer.
Do you play games at home?
Yes. On PC – stuff like *Civilization*, *Call To Power* and *Railroad Tycoon*.
Brain games, yeah?
Yeah, they last a bit longer.
What do you think of the game *Soul Calibur*?
I think it's excellent. The graphics are really good, it's easy to play, easy to pick up.
You'd spend time with this then?
Well, a few hours a night at least.
When were you last in a fight?
I was about 18, drunk and came out of a pub when these guys just set on me. I didn't do very well and all I remember is the bloody nose I got.
What weapon would you use to kill someone in real life?
Something messy like a bazooka.
And who would you kill?
That's easy, my mother-in-law. She's not nice and too nosy. I hate her, but my wife doesn't know how much.
She does now…

CHRIS, 24

Do you play videogames?
Not really, no. I don't have a PlayStation or anything.
Just what do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It's okay. It does seem similar to *StreetFighter* and *Tekken* games. I don't see anything that really makes it better. Not being able to jump around is quite good because you can't just jump out of the way and pussy out, but it seems like something they've taken out.
When was the last time you were in a fight?
When I was 15, maybe 16.
Did you win?
It didn't get that far. It was against, like, this tough guy at school. We got dragged apart. He pulled my hair, though, and I made sure everyone knew that he fought like a girl.
What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
The power of my mind.
What, like a Jedi Mind trick?
Yeah.
Who would you kill?
Val Kilmer. He's the deadly poison that creeps throughout the film industry. [carries on for some time]
Er, yeah, right.

▷

REGENTS PARK LONDON 14:58 HRS

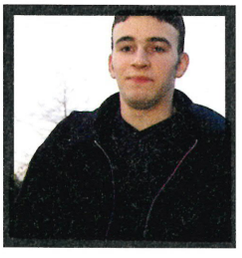
"IN TERMS OF GRAPHICS AND MOVEMENT AND EVERYTHING, IT'S A LOT BETTER THAN *TEKKEN 3*"

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN TRENT

VOX POP – IN LONDON TOWN

BEN, 19

What are you doing here?
I'm on my way to a job interview.
What do you do?
I'm an electrician.
Do you play videogames?
Occasionally, yeah, around other people's houses. I haven't got my own system or anything.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It's a good game, but I prefer more speedy games. I like driving games.
When was the last time you were in a real fight?
Cyprus, I suppose [points to hand in plaster]. That was all about two months ago.
If you wanted to kill someone in real life, what type of weapon would you use?
Probably a knife. As they say in that film: "Guns for show… er… er…" what is it? [wanders off, while trying to remember]



MARTIN, 19

What do you do for a living?
I sell mobile phones.
Do you play videogames much?
A bit, not much though. I've got a PlayStation at home. I've got *TOCA2* and *Tekken 3*. They're the only games I really play.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
Good game. I haven't had a chance to check out the moves, but in terms of graphics and movement and everything – it's a lot better than *Tekken 3*. I like that boxing game too [*Ready 2 Rumble*].
When was the last time you were in a real fight?
Oooh, about six months ago in a pub, just as I was leaving.
Did you win?
Yeah, I did actually.
If you wanted to kill someone in real life what weapon would you like to use?
That's a tough one. Erm… er… er… a lightsabre.

ALISON, 16 (right)

What do you do for a living?
I'm at college.
So what are you doing here?
Bunking off?
No, I've been to London Zoo. For a careers talk about animals and things.
Do you play videogames?
Sometimes… on a Nintendo 64.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It's good, yeah. Good fun.
When was the last time you were in a real fight?
Oooh, ages ago.
You've never had a ruck, have you?
[Silence]
What weapon would you use to kill someone?
An axe.
Why?
Dunno.

HETAL, 16

What are you doing here?
I've been to the Zoo with Alison.
Do you play videogames?
Sometimes. I used to own a Sega MegaDrive. I like fighting games, yeah.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
You what?
***Soul Calibur* – you know, the game you've just been playing.**
It's good, yeah, but I'm crap at it. I just got beaten twice.
When were you last in a fight?
Dunno. I don't think I've ever really been in one.
What would you use to kill someone in real life?
Whatever was around.
Oh, right. Thanks a lot.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

TELECOM TOWER LONDON 11:31 HRS

"I KICKED A BIT OF ASS, AND I'VE NEVER PLAYED IT BEFORE"

SPENCER, 29

What do you do for a living?
I'm a computer programmer.
What are you doing here?
I've come to eat in this café.
Do you play videogames at home?
Yeah. My next door neighbour's got a Nintendo 64. I'm seriously considering getting one of these [points to DC].
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It's superb, yeah. Better than games I've seen on PlayStation.
When was the last time you were in a fight?
When I was at school, probably about 12 years ago.
What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
Oh, er… definitely a firearm. Get it over with quickly.
Hmmm… where are you from?
South Africa! Ha ha.
We're saying nothing. Cheers.

PAUL, 37 (RIGHT)

What are you doing here?
I'm about to have a coffee.
What do you do for a living?
I work in E-commerce.
Do you play videogames at home?
Yeah, I play a lot of computer games, actually [he would do – he's a part-time games journo].
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
Very nice-looking graphics. It's glorious looking. It's similar to all the other fighting games though. The genre isn't really moving on much… [wibbles on for ten minutes].

You're not a fan of the genre, are you?
No.
When was the last time you were in a fight?
Back in 1977.
Did you win?
Yeah!
What type of weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
I'd probably talk them to death.

SAM, 27

What are you doing here?
Going to the Clipstone Café.
What do you do for a living?
I'm a website manager at Carlton, just around the corner.
Do you play videogames at home?
Sometimes, on a PlayStation. Just fighting games. I'm normally quite drunk when I do though. It's a post-pub thing.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It's great. I won!
When was the last time you were in a fight?
Earlier this year.
Really?
Yeah, someone assaulted me.
Whoops, sorry. What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
I'd probably kick them to death.

LUCY, 21

What are you doing here?
I'm on the way to work [points to Radio One's offices].
What do you do there?
I'm a freelance broadcast assistant.
Do you play videogames at home?
No, I don't.
What, you don't like them?
I do, but I haven't got around to buying one yet.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
It was really good. I kicked a bit of ass, and I've never played it before. I'm quite proud of myself.
Would you buy one?
Er… how much are they? Well, it's Christmas soon, so…
Hang on, you've got your tongue pierced, haven't you?
Yes.
Cool. Let's have a look. Mmm nice. Er, when was the last time you were in a fight?
I'm not really aggressive in real life. I'm all mouth. Ha ha.
What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
I'd use one I had in the game – the huge axe.
You're lovely. Can I have your phone numb… [Lucy suddenly rushes off to work].

VOX POP – ON THE ROADSIDE

JANE, 26

Well hello there. Are you from around here?
I live in Greenwich but I come from Preston originally.
Do you play videogames?
Not often. My nephew sometimes ropes me in on his PlayStation.
Have you played a beat 'em up before?
Yeah, something similar.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
You can really get into it. The characters seem quite spunky.
When was the last time you were in a fight?
What, a real one? It was probably with my nephew.
How old is he?
Nine. He's already got some good kung fu kicks though.
What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
Tea. [Eh?] Yeah, tea.
And who would you kill?
Baby Spice. She rubs me the wrong way. I'd throw my tea at her.
You're bonkers. Byeeee.

MARK, 26

What are you doing here?
I live down the road in Lewisham.
What do you do for a living?
I'm a designer.
Do you play computer games?
Yeah, mainly on my Mac at work. Stuff like *Carmageddon II* and, er… well…
And?
Tomb Raider.
Oh. How many beat 'em ups are there on the Mac?
Oh… very few.
Oh, so what do you think of *Soul Calibur*?
I thought it was alright. It's probably as good as *Tekken II* but I've seen it all before, you know? If I was going to buy a Dreamcast I'd probably get it though. I prefer *Ready 2 Rumble* for its comic quality. It's more instinctive.
What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
Er… a bazooka.
When was the last time you were in a real fight?
When I was 12, I guess.
Did you win?
Oh yeah. I kicked some prepubescent ass.

PHIL, 32

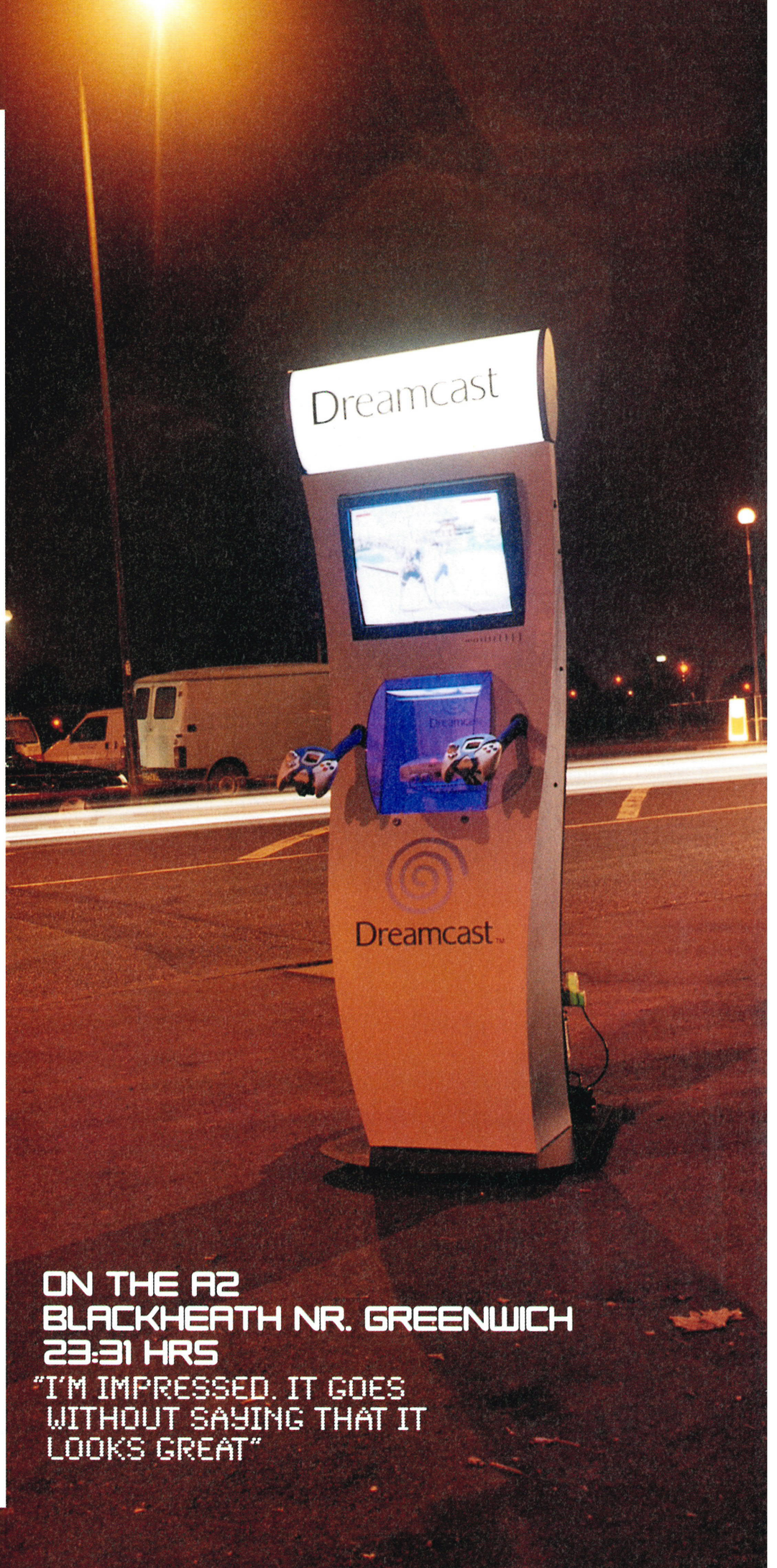
Hello. Do you play videogames?
Yes, some on PC, some on PlayStation and some on Nintendo 64. I like them on N64 the best – I like the graphics and playability.
Do you play beat 'em ups?
Sometimes, yeah. I've played a fair few number.
What do you think of the game *Soul Calibur*?
Excellent. I'm impressed. It goes without saying that it looks great. It's got an edge to it. There's no delay when you press a button.
When was the last time you were in a fight?
Ha ha. About three days ago [points to badly bruised and cut wrist].
How did that happen?
I don't want to go into it.
Oh. What weapon would you use if you wanted to kill someone in real life?
Something like a missile so I don't have to stand and watch it.
Who would you aim it at?
Bill Gates, cos he's a wanker.

JAMES, 30

Do you play videogames?
Yeah. I like strategy games, real-time strategy games and first-person shooters.
What's you're favourite game?
Currently it's *Unreal Tournament*, but I still like *GoldenEye*.
What do you think of *Soul Calibur* then?
It's definitely the best-looking beat 'em up I've seen, but it's not my genre, really.
What weapon would you use to kill someone in real life?
A sniper rifle. A Barraat 50-calibre.
That's a bit specific!
Well, you can kill an opponent from a mile away. It's in the PC game *Delta Force*.
Who would you kill?
I don't want to answer that. Ha ha. I'm not of a violent disposition.

• **Well, it looks as though *Soul Calibur* gets the thumbs up from both hardcore gamers and novices alike. But then this is about as good as games get right now.**

But what do you think? Write (to the usual address) and let us know what you make of *Soul Calibur* – game of the year or what?



ON THE A2
BLACKHEATH NR. GREENWICH
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"I'M IMPRESSED. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IT LOOKS GREAT"

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY**

£1,500 WORTH OF CARS TO BE WON!

BURN SOME RUBBER

Make like *Re-Volt* for real in our exclusive competition and you could be driving away with one of the coolest cars on the block!

SO YOU THOUGHT RADIO-CONTROLLED CARS were for kids? Think again. If you like the look of *Re-Volt* (reviewed on page 80) and fancy doing your own little re-enactment of a level of the game (the Natural History Museum has wised up, so it may have to be your cul-de-sac or the local Kwik-Save), here's your chance – and you won't even have to set foot in a model shop.

FIRST PRIZE

This awesome Tamiya one-tenth scale Subaru Impreza WRC, lovingly built and ready to rock and roll. Worth a staggering £280 and featuring a fully functioning petrol engine, four-wheel drive, independent suspension and even a disk brake, this little monster will accelerate to speeds of over 30mph before you know it, so you'd better make sure you've got plenty of space to get used to it before you try showing off.

SECOND AND THIRD PRIZES

Also cars from Tamiya, and these make use of high-powered electric motors and off-road tyres for off-piste fun. Kit is fully made up and includes chargers.

RUNNERS UP

For you we've got five weird and wonderful vehicles as featured in our Out Of Control feature on page 82.

If you are one of our lucky winners, you'll be crowned the terror of your neighbourhood and gain the envy of little kids everywhere, plus you'll be able to train up your reflexes for playing *Re-Volt* itself. As even a quick go on the game will prove, keeping one of these puppies going where you want it to go is no easy matter, but you'll soon get the hang of it and be making like a miniature Richard Burns in your own garden.

To win one of these great prizes, all you have to do is answer the following easy question:

QUESTION: COLIN McCRAE MADE HIS NAME IN A SUBARU BUT NOW DRIVES FOR WHICH WORKS TEAM?

Just answer the question, complete the coupon and post it (or a photocopy, or a postcard with all the information requested) to the address shown below.

ANSWER: .....

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Send your entry to: Re-Volt Competition, CDC001, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: Friday 21 January 2000.)

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

☐ Tick if under 18 years of age (this information is required so we do not mail inappropriate material to minors).

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Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules conditions and restrictions (available on request) apply. And all that. Phew!

CRAZY TAXI

Sega's silliest arcade racer is heading for home. **TOM GUISE** leaves his kebab on the kerb and hops a ride

BE A CABBIE? RII-I-IGHT. No offence to taxi drivers, but it's probably not up there with the most desirable careers ever. And would you really want to play a game about it? Well, gaming history has made hits out of delivering the papers and collecting garbage (trust us, it has). And thousands of arcade fans pumping their money into *Crazy Taxi* machines around the world seem to know what's good for them. Plain fact is, *Crazy Taxi* is one of the nuttiest, most addictive coin-ops Sega have produced in years. And come February it promises to be one of Dreamcast's premier vehicles. Besides, gaming's about doing stuff you wouldn't do in real life, right?

A GREAT JOB

Of course, *Crazy Taxi* spices up the occupation somewhat. Otherwise you'd spend most of the game hanging outside nightclubs offering abusive drunken tossers the chance to spew on your back seat for a tenner. For a start it's set in a quasi-San Francisco: sun, sea and loads of mad hills. You don't have to worry about traffic laws either – or any laws, in fact.

It's a simple job: pick up passengers and take them where they want to go before time runs out. Just like the genuine article, really. And with flashy home extras still to come, the Dreamcast version is already a spot-on version of the coin-op. To understand quite how gobsmacking that is though, you need a backstreet tour of what makes *Crazy Taxi* such a luxury ride.

CITY UNLIMITS

Ah, the city – it's so alive! And in the case of *Crazy Taxi* it really bloody is. The first thing you confront is loads of the population waving at you, shouting: "Taxi! Hey, taxi!" Drive up to one and they hop in your cab, barking out a destination. The cool thing is, all the characters have their own personality. Be it the vicar heading to the church, a granny off to the police station, or some flashy tourist with their handycam, they all natter from the word go. And in true cabbie style, your driver banters back.

There are four cabbies to choose from, each with their own (albeit subtle) driving nuances, set of wheels and attitude. Most of the conversation, mind you, takes place as you smash into other vehicles, leapfrog off steep drops and

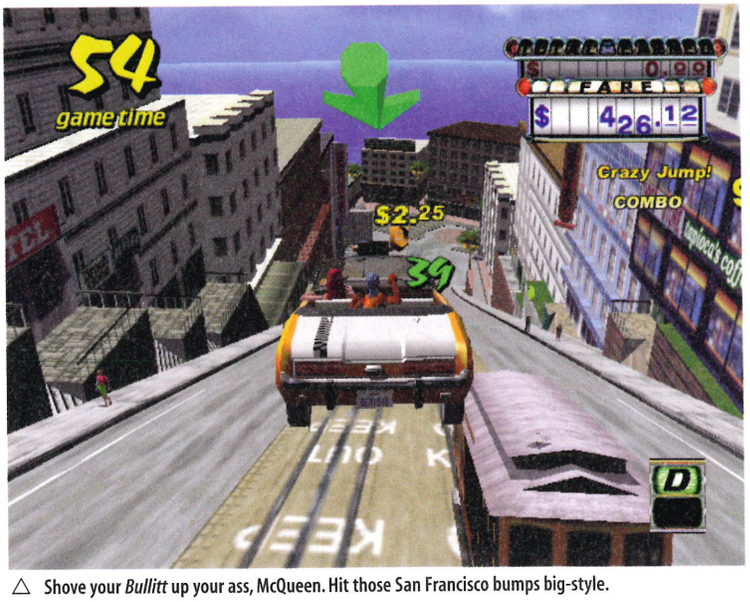
"FAST AND FUN... IT'S ALL YOU COULD ASK FROM AN ARCADE GAME"

△ Look for stuff to help your journey. A pick-up truck provides a helpful ramp and a Crazy Through!

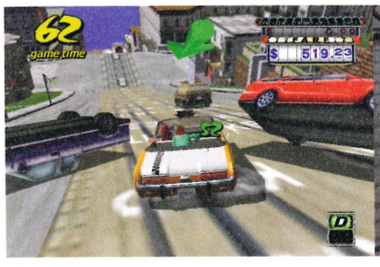
△ You don't have to stick to the roads. Hit the beach and hunt down Hasselhoff.

△ Or even take a dip in the ocean and pick up snorkellers. "Tower Records, mate? Hop in."

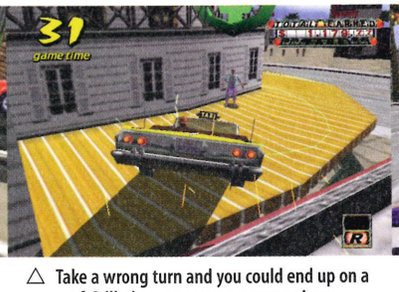
△ Nuff reespeck. Drop off your customers quickly for a cool sign-off and extra time.



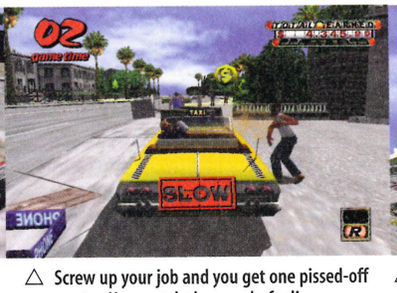
△ Shove your *Bullitt* up your ass, McQueen. Hit those San Francisco bumps big-style.



△ Caught in traffic? Aah, just ram the suckers out the way.



△ Take a wrong turn and you could end up on a roof. Still, there are punters everywhere.



△ Screw up your job and you get one pissed-off punter. Hey, watch the panels, fool!

△ Certainly clocking up your combo with that jump. Next stop the hospital.

"ENOUGH DEPTH TO GET YOU HIDEOUSLY HOOKED ON ALL-NIGHT TAXI DRIVING"

scrape along walls. What's amazing is how instantly your passenger reacts. "Your driving sucks!" they cry. Or "You've got to go that waaay!" while pointing furiously in the right direction.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Aside from squealing pedestrians barely avoiding your cab (but always just), there's heavy traffic to contend with. And as we've discovered on the Dreamcast version, the other cars behave totally realistically – stopping at red lights and even indicating before pulling away from the kerb. Plus you can smash them all out of the way. Hell, you can smash *everything* out of the way – even juggernauts. And there's nothing like seeing a truck jack-knife across a busy dual carriageway.

All this would be impressive in a fairly contained environment, but *Crazy Taxi* goes one better with a sprawling cityscape. From the highways, through downtown, to the beach front, there's a multitude of winding roads and towering buildings. You can shoot through underpasses, short-cut through multi-storey car parks, even hop off building tops. There are baseball stadiums, shopping malls, theatres and heliports. Pick up a brochure, you'll want to live there.

THE WHEEL DEAL

Fast and fun, with fancy graphics, it's all you could ask from an arcade game. But *Crazy Taxi*'s real spin comes from the fact that this isn't just decoration and fluffy dice, it's all part of the genius gameplay.

The smashing and leaping about? You're pulling special moves like Crazy Jumps or Crazy Drifts to scare extra tips out of your passengers. Rack these up in quick succession for big-scoring combos which help pull your cabbie rating towards the number one spot. The passenger reactions are all indicators to how well you're doing: speedy drop-offs get you time bonuses; there's even an incentive for not braking; pick up enough speed and your cab switches to a faster power drift-style handling.

And all that's just the arcade version. It's also everything the unfinished Dreamcast version is already. But while the basic game has enough depth to get you hideously hooked on all-night taxi driving, it's the extra features that could really make *Crazy Taxi* one of the hottest home deliveries ever. How it all starts clocking up is something we're going to keep tabs on next issue. Keep the meter running, we reckon it's worth the waiting time.

OUT: **FEBRUARY**
PUBLISHER: **SAGA**
DEVELOPER: **AM3**

STOP PRESS

So what are these DC extras? Well, we can exclusively reveal that there's going to be the now standard Original Mode, in this case spectacularly featuring a whole new city to race around.

Then there's the small factor of the enigmatically-named Crazy Box mode. This one's being kept under wraps right now, but let's just say it features all the gameplay techniques we've mentioned and then some. Oh and a whole bag of other stuff like balloons and a ski jump. Anyway, this is your stop, mate.

△ Exclusive first pic of the new city!

NBA 2K

If you're a dribbler, seek medical help. Alternatively, you could check out Sega's upcoming basketball sim. **STUART DREDGE** gets on court

BASKETBALL IS GREAT. It's a fast-paced end-to-end sport that produces pulsating matches filled with athleticism, fiendishly complex strategy, and moments of heart-stopping high drama. They know this over in America, where it's one of the big three national sports, and players get treated like gods.

In the UK, on the other hand, interest in the sport is restricted to a few hardcore Yankophiles, and our national league isn't exactly a glitz-fest.

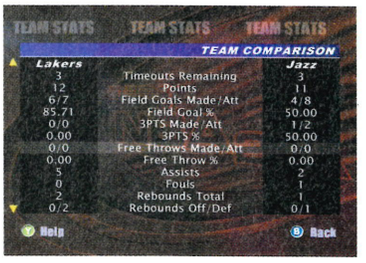
But here's some good news for you dunkers and dribblers out there. *NBA 2K* is the answer to your wildest dreams. This is the most realistic basketball game ever, and Sega have decided to release it in the UK early next year.

Whereas *NBA Showtime* was slanted towards fun, *NBA 2K* is a fully fledged simulation, complete with proper squads, all the nitty gritty rules, and far less tolerance of you dumping opponents on their arses. It's got everything you need to put you in the shoes of Shaquille O'Neal, except that you also get to control team selection and strategy and drafting, and all the other parts of basketball life.

There are two reasons why *NBA 2K* is a fantastic game. The first is the graphics, which will have your eyes popping out on stalks. It all looks real, y'see, in much the same way as *NFL 2K* does. The players have all been modelled on the real-life NBA guys, and they all move ultra-realistically. Okay, so games aren't quite yet up to looking just like real life, but you only have to squint a little bit to pretend you're watching a real match on television rather than playing a game. Not that you'd want to squint, of course – you'd get stuffed if you did – but you get the point.

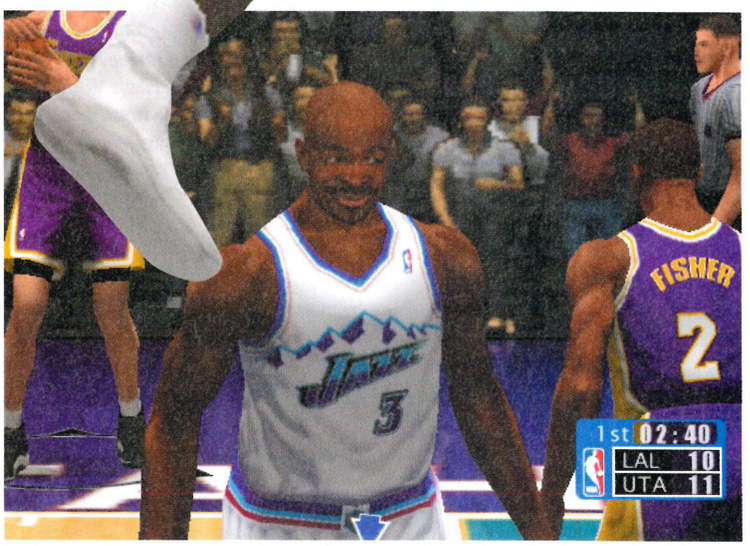
Everything about *NBA 2K*'s visuals is fantastic, from the players through to the atmospheric

△ Check out the playbook.



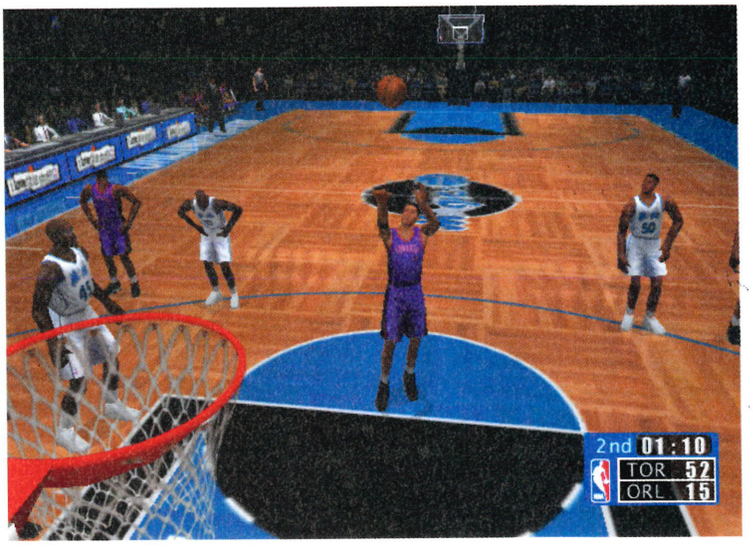
△ There are stats galore, if that's your bag.

△ Tip off – may the tallest man win.



△ After scoring, players get smug.

△ "I wish I was this much taller."



△ Getting the hang of free throws is essential.

"IT REALLY DOES LOOK AND FEEL LIKE THE REAL THING"

stadiums and crowds. We've never seen a basketball game that looked this good, basically, and it really shows off Dreamcast's capabilities.

Take the action replay option, for example. You get to zoom the camera around the court and watch the replay from any angle, and the view is just as gobsmacking close up as from far away. The first time we had a go we spent a good ten minutes whizzing round looking at players' ears and knees, just because it looked so good.

The second major impressive thing about *NBA 2K* is the sheer depth on offer. Admittedly, if you currently can't name more than one NBA team then it might intimidate you at first. However, basketball junkies have all the options they could ever wish for, and loads more to boot. When playing a season campaign, you get to control everything about the team in your quest to reach the playoffs. We haven't had a chance to get deep down into the strategic aspects yet, but it looks like you'll be able to tinker with exactly how your players act on court, setting up special plays etc.

As you'd expect from a hardcore US sports title, *NBA 2K* is stuffed with stats. During a game you can check on each player's efforts, as well as the team's overall performance. Each player in the game has been meticulously rated too, producing a truly realistic experience. From what we've seen, *NBA 2K* looks like being the sort of game that'll suck you into its depth, leaving you babbling incoherently about shot totals and rebound percentages at all hours of the day. Hell, playing this game for a few weeks would probably qualify you to coach a British team in the real world with your new-found grasp of on-court tactics. Maybe.

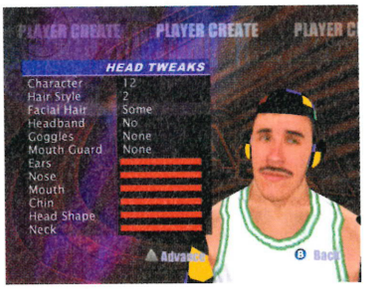
From what we've seen, the game itself is initially quite tough. Okay, very tough. We stepped onto the court oozing self-confidence, and promptly got murdered very messily by some small-fry console-controlled team. You can't just hack around the court chasing the ball; when you haven't got it, each of your players is marking someone. If you leave them free, in a split-second they'll have been passed the ball and will be dunking it while you flail around up-court.

You really need to think about what's going on around you, and that extends to when you've got the ball too, when patience is the key. *NBA 2K* is one of those games where you actually have to put some time into learning how to play well, but when you do it becomes extremely rewarding. With it being realistic, you don't get to do the sort of over-the-top space dunks that you can in *NBA Showtime*, but here you get as much reward from performing a well-worked play and leaving your man free under the basket.

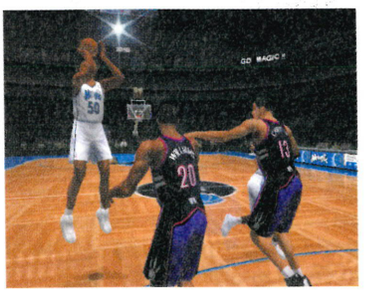
If we've got a concern, it's that we haven't seen any non-basketball fans last more than ten minutes before getting bored – it's definitely more for the hardcore dribblers out there. With a simulation like this, that's to be expected, but it'd be a shame if *NBA 2K* doesn't sell enough copies to make it worth Sega releasing it. In the US, gamers have predictably gone mad for it, along with sister product *NFL 2K*.

By all accounts, the PAL conversion is going smoothly, so *NBA 2K* should be hitting the shops pretty soon. We know it's a cliche, but it really does look and feel like the real thing. Rest assured, we'll be putting the final UK version through its paces as soon as we get our sweaty mitts on it.

OUT: **FEBRUARY**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**



△ Create your own ugly player.



△ Zoom in on replays.

△ As in a real game, play often bunches up around the three-point area.

PLASMA SWORD

It's not just us earthlings who spend all our time fighting, it's happening all over the universe, as **ED LOMAS** found out

△ Capcom fans'll recognise this sort of scene.

△ Finger-twisting combos are de rigeur.

△ The colour control's been set to 'eye burn'.

△ The graphics get to show off for attacks.

BEFORE CREATING the fantastic *Power Stone*, fighting game experts Capcom cut their 3D teeth with *Star Gladiator*, an intergalactic one-on-one battle starring a whole gang of comic book aliens. With *Star Gladiator*'s follow-up – *Plasma Sword* – hitting Dreamcast early next year, we spoke to Virgin Interactive's Capcom producer, Tony Byus, to get the inside story.

"*Plasma Sword* has far, far superior graphics to the PlayStation version of *Star Gladiator*, with some of the most amazing effects I've ever seen," claims Tony. "Some of the battles you can have are simply dazzling, with amazing special effects which are only possible on Dreamcast." The coin-op version, which didn't make it into many UK arcades, ran on what was basically an upgraded PlayStation, so we can expect another better-than-arcade-perfect home translation.

"Capcom have upped the frame rate and animation to make it silky smooth, as well as beefing up all of the effects so it now looks better than the arcade," confirms Tony.

△ Oooh! Ahhh! It's just like Guy Fawkes night.

The fighters come from all over the universe and, as such, vary wildly. There's a brain-headed dude who can grow to ten times his usual size then stomp on his opponents, a dinosaur with a skull-capped club, a flying hawk-man, a long-headed yo-yo freak, and plenty of all-new aliens to check out. We'll have more on these next issue.

The Dreamcast translation is certainly looking good so far, with the Japanese version just about finished already. While there's still not a definite UK release date, the beginning of February is looking likely. As producer Tony says:

"Work on the American and European versions has begun. Once the English text has been implemented for the American version, it takes approximately one month to create the PAL version."

As one of Capcom's more obscure titles, *Plasma Sword* isn't likely to be a massive Dreamcast hit, but it's another quality title to add to the console's collection of top-notch fighting games. With 22 playable characters, each with masses of moves and combos, combat fans have plenty to look forward to. *Star Gladiator*'s limiting Plasma Combo system has been redesigned (little buttons used to light up at the top of the screen as you key in sequences, with certain combos triggering super moves, turning fights into Major Morgan-style colour-matching games), and the all-new Plasma Revenge auto-counter system has been added.

If you're not a fighting nut, all this isn't going to mean anything to you and, to be brutally honest, it's not likely that *Plasma Sword* will either. This is a game for Capcom's loyal fans – the kind of people who will appreciate the game's intricacies and sci-fi coolness, rather than fairweather fighters. We'll have a full review in the next issue of *ODM* on sale Thursday 13 January, when we'll tell you exactly how well the finished game works.

OUT: **FEBRUARY**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INTERACTIVE**

▷ *Plasma Sword*: ol' blue eyes is back.

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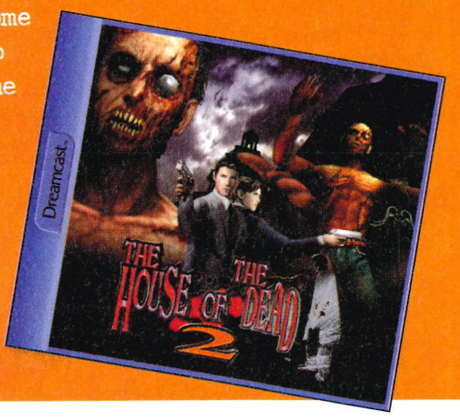

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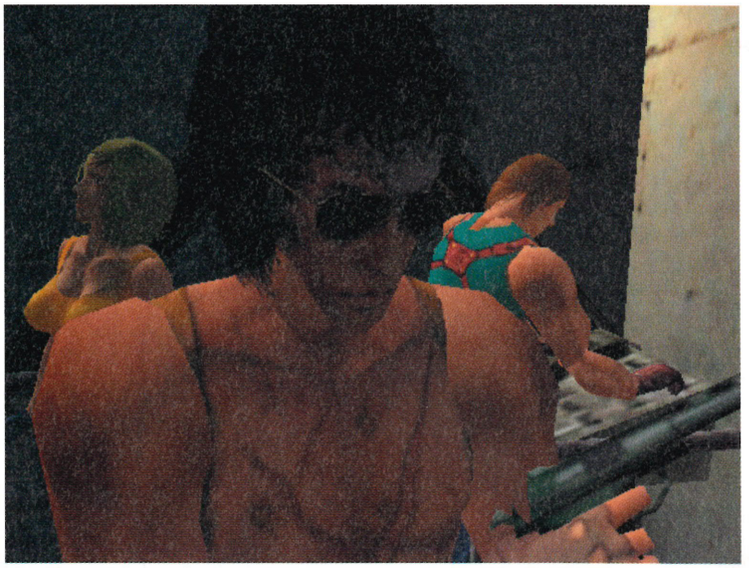
ZOMBIE REVENGE

Think you cleaned up *House Of The Dead 2*? Seems it had a freaky son locked in the attic. **TOM GUISE** gets ready for its anti-christening



△ Badly acted intermissions rival those of *Resident Evil*. And there's a blaxploitation kung fu hero too.

IMAGINE A *HOUSE OF THE DEAD* game that didn't require you to be a hotshot marksman. They already did. *Zombie Revenge* is the next chilling chapter in this bloody saga, but unlike its predecessor, this one doesn't use a light-gun. It's a fear-filled, fighting game. But before sufferers of bong eyes or the alcoholic shakes celebrate the chance to join the zombie war without the humiliation of actually having to aim, be warned: this is no walk in the park. Unless you're picturing a park filled with burning climbing frames and the evil, shambling ever-living.

Already proving supernaturally popular with arcade-goers, *Zombie Revenge* has all the palpitating pace you'd expect from a game of the dead, and is set to become a monster!

DEAD HARD

Anyone's who's played *Die Hard Arcade* will be familiar with the set-up of *Zombie Revenge*. No coincidence, then, that both games are the work of *House Of The Dead* creators Sega AM1. The idea is supernaturally simple – jog through a 3D environment, beating the evil out of the multitudes of zombies trying to feast on your flesh. There's only one fight button, but by using it in different ways, (eg, with the run button, or by holding it down for a few seconds) you can use an impressively wide range of combos, further boosted by picking up pipes, axes and drills.

House Of The Dead's gun fetishism hasn't been holstered for this creepshow either – there's a shoot button with plenty to get you tapping it. Shotguns, flame-throwers and machine-guns are available, with some even tastier pieces: duel hand guns, lasers and even a Desperado-style guitar case packing a meaty cannon. Targeting is automatic and any weapon can be charged up for a powerful blast.

TASTES FAMILIAR

Somewhere in history someone decided that zombies would roam burning streets, sewers and scary mansions. And those popular undead haunts are with us again.

There is a flimsy plot that strings the locations together. Three government agents have been sent to investigate how a top-secret military experiment has gone wrong, only to find the city overrun by the dead. Yeah, the story's older than the Queen Mother, but it's just as scary as her too. Comparisons with the similarly plotted *Resident Evil* series are obvious, as they were with the original *HOTD*. But *Zombie Revenge* doesn't get its thrills from cleverly crafted suspense and well-timed shocks; this is the *Aliens* of the corpse collective – a fast-paced carnage and unrelenting horror. It's zombie Vietnam.

△ Yep, the *House Of The Dead* does make a guest appearance. Well, where did you think the zombies would live?

▷ This is what happens to your body when you play games all day and don't eat up all your greens. No, not really.

△ The special effects are more than a tad impressive. Hope he's wearing rubber soles.

"DREAMCAST HANDLES IT ALL WITH LAZY EASE"

This double-barrelled action is what makes *Zombie Revenge* very much a Dreamcast game. Free and easy controls, coupled with realtime 3D environments, gruesome high-res textures and legions of corpses, put this game in a different league from the PlayStation-conceived *Resident Evil*.

Even when there are loads of zombies standing knee-deep in rippling sewage, crackling energy beams exploding everywhere, and a giant demon with weapons you can pull from its chest, Dreamcast handles it all with lazy ease. So if hundreds of rats come spewing from a sewage pipe, you know they're doing it just because they can.

MORE CHUNKS AND JELLY

It won't be long before we're all hardened to Dreamcast games being identical to arcade counterparts. *Zombie Revenge* makes some bold moves towards home-only features, and Sega are currently hard at work on these 'extras'. Original mode will offer new ways to play the standard game – you'll be able to play Bare Knuckle only (without the luxury of guns), or Gun mode which puts the emphasis on shooting.

There will also be a two-player versus mode. Yeah, snore away, but this is the key to a more entertaining feature – the *Zombie Revenge Character Raising Game*. Store characters inside your portable VM and nurture them Tamagotchi-style. By collecting food in the Original mode you can download fare to your portable storeroom: snacks like tuna, prime cuts of meat and spinach will affect future attack and defence skills.

There will also be two mini-games in which to train your fighter: *Zombie Fishing*, a kind of VM version of *Sega Bass Fishing*, in which you try to reel in zombies without snapping the line, and *Zombie Doubt*, a puzzle game which has you spotting the odd symbol on-screen. Simple stuff, but they'll add to the all-encompassing Dreamcast experience.

The pay-off for all these extra Dreamcast features is yet to come though. Aside from uploading your VM-trained fighters into your friend's Dreamcast, you'll also be able to send them online to the *Zombie Revenge* homepage or email them direct, so other players can try them out. The likelihood of battling other players online though, doesn't seem to be an option being considered.

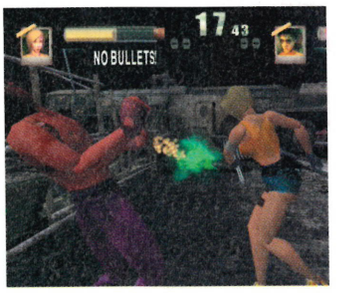
UNDYING FUN

Zombie Revenge has already proven itself as a satisfying arcade game that players will play to the bitter end and then move on. That's not a problem with a coin-op, but it's a big issue when it comes to a home game. Sega UK are already taking steps to extend the game by removing the unlimited credits and upping the difficulty from the Japanese version while retaining the original features. Add this to the blockbusting action and gore-ladened visuals, and Sega will have an impressive beast leaving the lab in February. If not, the only zombies getting revenge will be those *Resident Evil* ones when *Code: Veronica* surfaces from the sewer.

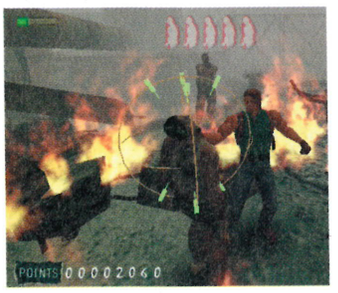
OUT: **FEBRUARY**
DEVELOPER: **AM1**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

△ Hit the brake lever damn it! Each level mini-mission must be completed in time.

△ Dat's dy dose. Subtle arcade-style hints aplenty. Clue: bash the red button lots.



△ The two-player Versus mode gives a much closer view of the action.



△ The auto-targeting system. When the sight goes red, shoot. Nice and easy eh?

△ Big mosquitoes round these parts.

RESIDENT EVIL 2

The classic gore-fest is now heading for a Dreamcast near you. **DAN TRENT** is left trembling behind the sofa

***RESIDENT EVIL 2* IS NOT A GAME** that lets you in gently. Within the first few seconds you're pitched into the middle of a street filled with *Thriller* video extras who most definitely are crawling in search of blood and will, no doubt about it, terrorise your neighbourhood. Yes, and it's up to you to stop them and put a halt to the deadly T-virus that is causing these mutations.

The first *Resident Evil* game was nothing short of a revelation. It was one of the first to make the most of cinematic themes and elements to conjure up a really spooky atmosphere. The eerie sounds and atmospheric visuals ensured that you were always on your toes, even when there wasn't anything scary on the screen. As the *Blair Witch Project* proves, what you don't show can be far more scary than what you do. This highly anticipated sequel was first seen on PlayStation, Where it was a massive hit. And then PC. And now, very soon, it will appear on Dreamcast.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Resident Evil 2 takes place some time after the first outing, and follows the fortunes of Leon Kennedy, a rookie cop on his first day in the job. On arrival in Racoon City, it becomes obvious that something is badly wrong – the deadly T-Virus, developed by the Umbrella organisation, has spread from the mansion of the first instalment and taken over the town, transforming the townsfolk into a moaning mass of flesh-hungry zombies. On the way Leon meets Claire Redfield, sister of *Resident Evil*'s Chris Redfield, who has come to town to find her missing brother.

Puzzle solving and strategy are all very well, and play a big part in the game, but when it comes down to it *Resident Evil* is best known for its gore. And for good reason. Well-aimed shotgun blasts can blow torsos clean off, and as you walk around you must pick your way over bodies and splash through pools of congealed blood – far from the good clean fun of *Pen Pen*, and all the better for it!

LIGHTS, CAMERA...

The cinematic feel of the *Resident Evil* series is one of the reasons the game is so immersive and

△ Solid nerves and a steady hand are good. Loads of shotgun cartridges are better though.

△ Zombie table manners leave a lot to be desired, although they never leave anything behind.

"IT'S ABOUT LURING YOU INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY"

atmospheric, so it's no surprise that classic Hollywood horror is one of the inspirations behind the game. As producer Shinji Mikami explains: "George Romero's *Zombie* trilogy is a major influence. We even managed to get him to direct our TV commercial here in Japan." He also explained how that influence reveals itself in the actual game: "We paid a lot of attention to enhancing the 'movie feel' by creating detailed background graphics, adjusting the camera angles and the cuts of the scenes to maximise a sense of suspense."

Virgin's Tony Byus, in charge of the UK conversion of the game, explains: "You might have cleared a corridor of zombies and run up and down it 20 times since. So you reckon you're safe and you stop paying attention, then something jumps out on you on your next pass. It's all about luring you into a false sense of security and then giving you a shock when you least expect it."

Resident Evil 2 has always been at the cutting edge, and in this area the Dreamcast version will not disappoint. It's amazing to think that a game that has been out for a fair amount of time on other platforms can still look impressive. But here, the higher resolution and greater power of Dreamcast plays its part, and the latest version is significantly smoother in terms of appearance and gameplay than any that have gone before. Clever use of sound also helps make *Resident Evil 2* the spooky experience it is, and if you have a decent telly with surround sound, you're really going to get the most out of playing this game. From the horrible squelching footsteps of the zombies, to the hollow ring of spent shell cases pinging off the walls onto the floor, this is a game that deserves to be played loud. Although if you're easily spooked, you won't be sleeping much afterwards.

YOU TAKE THE HIGH ROAD...

One of the cleverest aspects of the structure of *Resident Evil 2* is that from the off it gives you the choice of playing two completely different games. As the opening video explains, Leon and Claire are separated at the start of the game and arrange to meet each other at the police station. You can choose to play as either Leon or Claire. And while the first game follows the same structure for both characters, each starts with different abilities, and events are shaped according to how the game is played.

But there's more to it than that, as Tony explains: "The first time you play the game as Leon you'll come across a cabinet with a backpack and a machine-gun. If you take both items, then when you play the game as Claire neither item is there. The idea is that both characters' stories are taking place simultaneously, so what one character does has a direct effect on the other." In addition to this, completing the game within a given time and using the minimum number of saves unlocks a whole 'second scenario'. This can also be played as either Claire or Leon, and you're pitched against a whole new set of challenges. There'll also be a new set of time-based Extreme Battle missions to test your skills.

There's loads of new stuff included in the Dreamcast game to please *RE* fans while awaiting the release of *Codename: Veronica*, the third chapter in the story.

ODM will be bringing you an exclusive review in our next issue, on sale Thursday 13 January, but until then check out the exclusive screenshots here and stay frosty.

OUT: **JANUARY**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INT**

△ "Put those Smarties back, sonny!"

△ Chris Redfield returns in Extreme Battle.

△ Ada Wong is harder than Annie, despite her short skirt.

WAR

SUCCESS AT SNOOKER CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOU

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL, NOW ON DREAMCAST™. THE MO

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FORMULA FOUR

The racing season's over but the romance remains as Videosystems' *F1 World Grand Prix For Dreamcast* hits the shelves of the nation's stores. We asked four *ODM* readers how they found their first (official) Grand Prix burn-up. **STEVE OWEN** is your commentator

THE ROAR OF THE ENGINES, the heat of the track, the thighs of the beauties marking the starting grid… There's no sport sexier and more dynamic than Formula One, the most thrilling, fastest and most watched sporting season in the world.

On DC launch day we had Ubi Soft's *Monaco Grand Prix* to play: an impressive Formula One simulation, but missing the official licence to add the gravitas of the real drivers, teams and tracks.

F1 World Grand Prix, on the other hand, is all above board and licensed. As a consequence it enjoys the full driver and team line-up of the 1998 season, as well as all the right designs and typefaces so it looks just like a television broadcast. And, naturally, all the tracks have been accurately modelled.

The difficulty in creating a console game based on a real and complex sport is in deciding how challenging to make it. For the beginner, *F1 World Grand Prix* includes a novice mode. Like the arcade modes in many driving games, it keeps your car on the road and stops it from spinning off on every corner. But once you've conquered that you may want to move on to the accurate driving model, which is the real challenge here. While it might be possible to stay on the track, the real test is to do it as quickly as possible, and pick the right moment to overtake your opponents.

With realistic damage (as an option) and pit-stop strategy, *F1 World Grand Prix* is the nearest you're going to get to being Eddie Irvine in your living room. You'll have to provide your own glamorous babes, though.

ASTON VILLAIN

AGE: 26
OCCUPATION: designer
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* on N64. You just get caught up with it for hours."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "*Shenmue*. It strikes me as being *Zelda* for the new millennium. I hope it's not disappointing."

CHRIS LINCOLN

AGE: 27
OCCUPATION: management consultant
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Driver* on PlayStation. That's what real driving games should be like – how to make you feel like Steve McQueen."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "Predictable, sure, but I'd like a European edition of *Driver* – how to make you feel like The Professionals or the Flying Squad."

STEVE GRIFFITHS

AGE: 25
OCCUPATION: IT support engineer
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "Nothing in particular, as I like most of the ones I've played, but *NiGHTS: Into Dreams* and *Sonic Adventure* are my preferred games."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "Like the rest of the world, it's got to be *Shenmue*."

FAISSAL OTMANI

AGE: 21
OCCUPATION: layout artist
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Ready 2 Rumble*. It's gone straight in at number one as far as I'm concerned."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "Oh, I don't know. Anything. Typing Of The Dead?"

PHOTOGRAPHY: **TANYA CHALKIN** / STYLIST: **KIEIRAN M TOMES**

△ For instant thrills, the novice mode is arcade-slick. Thumbs up from our panel.

△ Tunnel vision at Monaco.

△ Watch a replay of how you messed up.

FRIDAY WARM-UP

After the photography session, we hop in a cab back to the *ODM* office. During the journey we ask if any of our foursome have played driving games or even Formula One racers before.

"I've got a PC as well," admits Faissal, "and I used to play *Grand Prix 2* on it all the time. It's getting on a bit now, but no game has ever come as close to recreating the sport. It's tough, but it's still really good fun to play."

"I'm more into arcade racing," says Aston. "I can't remember what it was called, but I did play some Formula One game on the PlayStation a few years ago."

Faissal: "Is that the one with Murray Walker commentating on it?"

Aston: "Yep, that's the one."

Faissal: "Then that'll be called *Formula One*, then."

Aston: "Right. Well, that was all right, but I'd normally go for, say, *Sega Rally 2* – something a bit faster and less, I don't know, serious."

"I'm more of an arcade racer fan too," says Steve. "Ones that are fairly easy to pick up and play. *Sega Rally* and *Rally 2* are cool."

Chris thought *Sega Rally 2* "looked excellent". But, he added, "The driving felt very remote. *Colin McRae Rally* on the PlayStation at least felt like you were driving the car, even if the graphics weren't that good."

SATURDAY QUALIFYING

Settled into the *ODM* testing room, we sit our friends in front of the game. The thump as the bass speaker kicks in, the pause, the sound of a CD spinning, and then… wham! Not *Club Tropicana*, but the inevitable soft rock that seemingly has to accompany the fast edit of a sports game's introductory video. Nevertheless, it does the job, as Faissal shifts forward in his chair in eager anticipation of the adrenalin to come.

"It certainly has an air of excitement about it," says Aston.

Faissal agrees: "Even though you'd never buy music like this in the shops – not admit to it, anyway – it makes you think about the sport. And even though this is rendered footage it feels like watching the Grand Prix on TV."

"Excellent footage," Aston enthuses. "It makes sure that you turn up the volume even more."

"THIS ISN'T AN ARCADE GAME. IT'S A SIM THAT'LL TAKE TIME TO LEARN"

– CHRIS

THE BIG RACE

Gawping aside, we thought it rather important that we got to playing the actual game. There's a shortage of four-player games on Dreamcast, and *F1 World Grand Prix* isn't going to change that. It's two-player split-screen only, so after a brief argument and a flurry of movement as the four of them make a grab for controllers, it turns out that Chris and Steve have managed to get their hands on the two that are actually plugged into the machine.

"I'D NORMALLY GO FOR *SEGA RALLY 2*. SOMETHING A BIT FASTER AND LESS SERIOUS"

– ASTON

A quick consensus, and it's off to Silverstone, home of the British Grand Prix. We opt to start things simply with a dry race, on novice difficulty level. We've only smuggled in a single steering wheel, so for the two-player game it's only fair we force both drivers to use the hand controllers.

Chris is clearly impressed: "It looks like an arcade game – excellent graphics, very smooth."

Aston: "There's plenty of detail around the track. I've seen a screenshot of Monaco and that looked amazing. Perhaps we can head off there later…"

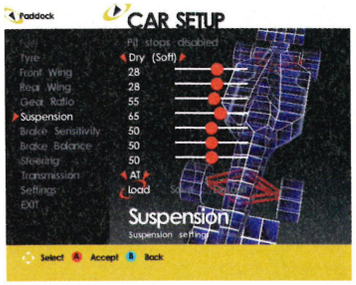
"Wait your turn," grins Chris, trying to power his way through the front runners, and successfully getting from sixth to first before the first corner… but then losing it by outbraking himself and sliding into the barrier.

Damage is turned off, but Steve looks pleased that he's got past Chris so soon, even though he's still only in third place.

"I like the small details," says Steve through clenched teeth as he just about makes the next corner. "Dirt and grass on tyres – well, Chris's tyres – track marks left in the dirt."

Faissal thinks it "looks fabulous. Better than anything I've seen on the other consoles…"

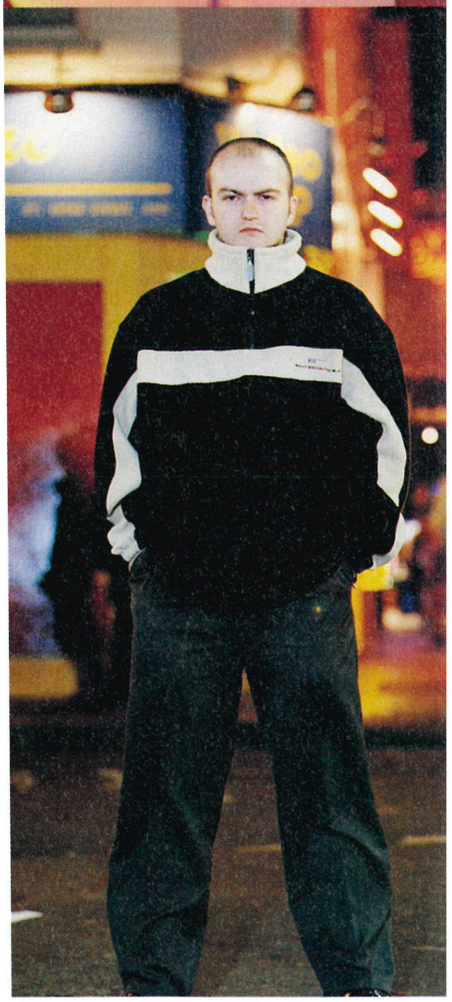
Something has caught Chris's eye, and he feels compelled to share it: "That's not right," he snaps. "Silverstone has a strong slope there. According to this game it's flat, but if you've ever



△ Tweak the car to your heart's content.

△ Overtake wisely. Or you're dogmeat.

△ It may look drop-dead gorgeous but lukewarm's warmer than the response it got from our lot.



been to the track you know what a hill that is, because you've got to walk it to get back to the car park."

We suggest that it might be like that because of the two-player split-screen, and that with only half a screen you wouldn't be able to see where you were going. Remembering the slope of the Au Rouge at Belgium's Spa Francochamps (sadly excluded from the 2000 season, it seems), we vow to check this next, in single-player.

Chris asks who's commentating (we have no idea), and is clearly unimpressed by it: "He just keeps saying the same thing, 'Try to get that place back. Try not to hit the cars.'"

We give Aston a chance at Spa – one lap with the controller, the other two with the steering wheel – to see what he thinks. Three laps (and confirmation that Au Rouge is indeed very steep) later: "The steering response is a bit hyperactive for my liking."

Steve and Chris agree, and Faissal takes over. This time, for a laugh, it's a wet race at Hockenheim in Germany. "This game is going to have a steep learning curve. All the controls are really sensitive. It's not a game to try playing after a few beers, no chance."

Steve finds controlling the car difficult, but, "I guess it's recreating the sport fairly accurately." He's also a tad concerned about some pop-up in the scenery: "Look, something resembling a digger just appeared at the side of the track. Also, the corners are drawn fairly angularly. I feel they could be smoother – we are talking Dreamcast here. But the rain effects are very good."

Faissal is more enthusiastic, pointing out that, "in the wet at Hockenheim the spray looks excellent and I really can't see where I'm going. Well, apart from that's another wall. Looks good."

"THIS IS THE NEAREST I'D GET TO A REAL RACE"

– FAISSAL

"With the steering wheel, at Spa, the control improved," Aston admits. "You can start to learn the game. If you touch the grass that's it, you're in it and going backwards. And this is on novice mode. Everyone else is suffering as well, apart from the CPU cars that are great to use for slowing down."

THE POST-RACE INTERVIEW

The tradition at a Grand Prix meeting is that the drivers have a moment to relax, get pissed up on champagne, and change baseball caps before being plonked down in front of the world's press. In our case, ITV couldn't make it, and the expense account wouldn't stretch to any Moët & Chandon, so we settled for a pint of Guinness and talking to the *ODM* dictaphone.

So, after all that, what did the guys think of the game? Well, Faissal thought it was, "something I could get into. As I said before, I've got a PC and I'm waiting for *Grand Prix 3* on that. The steering wheel on my PC is better than the Dreamcast one. [Er, yeah, well it was £130, so you'd hope it was better]. But all I'm saying is that I'd rather sit down and play a proper simulation. But if I didn't have a PC then I think this is probably the nearest I'd get to a real race."

Chris: "If you had the time to learn it and you used a steering wheel it would be a good game. If they were trying to make this an arcade game, they failed. This is a simulator that is going to take time to learn."

On the question of whether he would buy it, Aston isn't sure, eventually conceding: "Maybe on a wet weekend with nothing else to do and a fridge full of beer and no TV…"

Chris: "As a two-player game it's not that impressive, really. It would probably be better if you had two Dreamcasts linked up."

As for Steve: "It's not really my cup of tea, but then I'm an arcade racer fan. I think it would appeal to those who take their driving games a bit more seriously than me. You know, those simulator driving fans who buy £130 steering wheels in order to get the most from the game."

"I'M AN ARCADE RACER FAN. I LIKE 'EM EASY TO PICK UP AND PLAY"

– STEVE

• F1 World Grand Prix For Dreamcast *was reviewed last month. If you missed last issue see page 39.*

• *Next issue, four different readers will be playing another game, and making comments and suggesting improvements. If you'd like to participate, write to* ***Four Play, ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ,*** *or email us at* ***Fourplay@dreamcastmag. co.uk.***

REALITY BITES

AS THE LINE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY BLURS RAPIDLY, DO GAMES IMITATE LIFE, OR DOES LIFE IMITATE GAMES? **STEVE HILL** INVESTIGATES SOME UNLIKELY SCENARIOS

THE BEAUTY OF VIDEOGAMES is that they let us do things we wouldn't necessarily get away with in real life, whether because it's against the laws of physics, the laws of common decency, or simply the law. However, occasionally everyone wants to push the boundaries further, either through an innate desire for experimentation, a perverse urge to 'break' the game, or merely as an antidote to the sheer boredom some games induce. It's a habit that's been commonplace throughout the history of gaming, even as far back as text adventures, with many a teenager typing in some unlikely requests, only to be informed that the game didn't understand his torrent of foul and abusive language.

Clearly, the games industry has undergone some exponential advances in technology since then, culminating in the shiny beige box that currently nestles under your television. With games now offering vast, sprawling worlds to explore, as well as extremely accurate simulations of reality, the facility to tinker is even greater – as is the temptation. Although we're still some way from the laughable version of virtual reality as represented by acid-casualty film *The Lawnmower Man*, the day is nearing when on-screen actions will seamlessly mirror those of the outside world.

For now though, most games are flexible enough to let us piss about a bit, and basically see what we can get away with. Ultimately though, they're all limited, and, as these examples prove, life is often stranger than games…

IMAGE: **ALLSPORT**

FOOTBALL

GAME: ***UEFA STRIKER*** OR ***WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **SCORING WITH THE GOALKEEPER**

NOT EASY, AS IT INVOLVES sprinting the length of the pitch and evading the tackles of the entire opposing team before calmly beating your opposite number. We're made of pretty stern stuff here at *ODM* though, and managed it in both games, although *Worldwide Soccer 2000* was slightly trickier.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

Traditionally, keepers only become keepers because they can't play football. That's not to say there haven't been a few goals scored by the custodians of the onion bag over the years though, and the phenomenon has a rich heritage, stretching from Pat Jennings' seminal wind-assisted goal-kick, to the present day. In fact some have made a career of it, not least Paraguay's free-kick expert Jos-Luis Chilavert, who has netted no less than 12 league goals, not to mention a further four at international level. Closer to home, former Manchester United stalwart Peter Schmeichel could often be found in the opposition's box, once memorably sprinting the length of the pitch to volley an equaliser against Rotor Volvograd.

BEST REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Last season's medal for services above and beyond the call of duty has to go to Jimmy Glass, the keeper on loan from Bournemouth to Carlisle. On the final day of the season, Carlisle had to beat Plymouth in order to avoid relegation from the Football League. With the game tied at 1-1 and deep into stoppage time, Carlisle were awarded a corner.

Jimmy takes up the story: "Everyone was bombing towards the penalty area, so I looked over towards Nigel Pearson (Carlisle manager) and, to his credit, he waved me up – you know, 'Go!' I'm running up the pitch, and half the problem you've got when you run up the pitch as a goalkeeper is you want the corner taker to realise you're coming, because otherwise if he takes it and you're on the halfway line you're stuck. But luckily he realised – I mean, not many red jerseys running up the pitch on that day. The ball's come in the box, I've headed for the ball, realised I weren't going to get the header, and just kept going into the six-yard box. Basically it fell to me, fell to my right foot, and then just 'bosh!' really."

IMAGE: ACTION IMAGES

FOOTBALL

GAME: ***UEFA STRIKER*** OR ***WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **DELIBERATELY SCORING AN OWN GOAL**

NO PROBLEM IN either game – simply turn round and bury it past your bemused keeper.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

Scoring in your own net during a videogame might have limited repercussions, but in real life the implications are vast, undermining the entire ethos of competitive sport. Anyone found guilty would be punished, with a heavy fine and a possible life ban.

BEST REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Amazingly, it has happened as recently as 1998, during biannual South East Asian tournament the Tiger Cup. The match in question was the final group game between defending champions Thailand and Indonesia, a match in which victory would guarantee top spot and a subsequent semi-final in Hanoi against hosts Vietnam. Playing the host nation in the latter stages of a tournament is undesirable at the best of times. Add the fact that the game was scheduled to be played on Vietnam's National Day, throw in their supporters' reputation for extreme violence and intimidation, and the two teams' lack of enthusiasm becomes understandable, each preferring a more sedate semi-final against Singapore.

In the event, the game degenerated into a farce, with both teams attempting to put through their own net, and even defending the opposition goal. Thailand eventually won the game 3-2 courtesy of a last-minute own-goal by Indonesia, the Thai team having crucially given away possession late on.

Both Thailand and Indonesia were fined the maximum US$40,000 by the Asian Football Federation for failing to play to win the match. However, Thailand's deputy manager Kasem Chanyawong said they had no choice: "It may sound a lame excuse, but to play like that was the only option we had. We regret and apologise for any anguish our actions might have caused. However, I am sure that faced with similar conditions anyone would have taken the same route. Our team never had any intention to do bad deeds, but we had no choice in the matter and could do nothing better."

As it turned out, their fears of Vietnamese intimidation proved fully justified, as the team hotel was laid siege by rival fans, and their bus bombarded with bags of urine. Thailand lost the semi-final 3-0.

F1 RACING

GAME: ***F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **DRIVING THE WRONG WAY ROUND THE TRACK**

A SWIFT 180-DEGREE turn and you're away, weaving through the oncoming traffic in the most expensive game of 'chicken' yet conceived. With your foot to the pedal you can see the whites of your terrified opponents' eyes as they swerve to avoid the oncoming madman. Except, of course, it's not real. There can be few people who have ever played a formula one game and not tried this. In fact, it can often be more fun than the actual game itself, which like the sport it simulates is often little more than a procession of 200mph cigarette packets.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

If there are any Grand Prix drivers reading this, driving round the track the wrong way is not something we condone and should in no circumstances be attempted. It would certainly liven up a Sunday afternoon's viewing though, and would be worth it if only to hear Murray Walker's commentary. The man can almost induce a fit watching some men in helmets changing a tyre, so this unprecedented course of action would quite possibly bring about a seizure: "And! He's! Driving! The! Wrong! Way! I'm! Feeling! Unwell!"

CLOSEST REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Unsurprisingly, it has never happened in competitive formula one racing and, psychotic episodes notwithstanding, it probably never will. But in a sport where having a flange a millimetre over the regulation specification can result in disqualification, it's refreshing to learn that they haven't ignored the basics, and the rules governing the sport *do* cover such an unlikely occurrence. Article 90 of the 1999 FIA Formula One World Championship Sporting Regulations states: "Drivers are strictly forbidden to drive their car in the opposite direction to the race unless this is absolutely necessary in order to move the car from a dangerous position." No shit. Incidentally, Article 61 states: "The driver must drive the car alone and unaided." That's one joypad per person, then.

BASKETBALL

GAME: ***NBA SHOWTIME***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **SCORING IN YOUR OWN BASKET**

CAN'T BE DONE. Due to the pass-and-shoot nature of the game, a shot is automatically directed to the opponent's basket.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

Own goals in football are commonplace, and never more so than in this year's Premiership. A freak spate of early-season howlers has seen overpaid prima donnas roundly humiliated on a weekly basis, with Leicester City's Frank Sinclair even notching up at the wrong end in two consecutive games.

But basketball? For a normal man, it's hard enough to score at the right end. In football, the width of the goal is 7.32m, and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2.44m. Consider that the game is played with a ball with a circumference of not more than 70cm and not less than 68cm, and there is clearly some margin for error. However, in basketball, the target is a steel ring with a minimum inside diameter of 45cm and a maximum inside diameter of 45.7cm, with the top edge positioned horizontally 3.05 m above the floor. Bear in mind that the circumference of the ball shall be not less than 74.9cm and not more than 78cm, and the chances of an own basket are… you do the math.

The only way it's really going to happen is on purpose, and such an occurrence is catered for in the official 1988-2002 FIBA Rules, Main Changes. Article 29, Deliberately Scoring in Own Basket: "The action of a team deliberately scoring in its own basket is now a violation not a technical foul. No points can be scored and the ball is awarded out-of-bounds from the sideline, opposite the free-throw line. The situation regarding a team accidentally scoring in its own basket remains unchanged, two (2) points are awarded to the opposing captain."
That's cleared that up, then.

CLOSEST REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

Freak deflections aside, you'd have to be pretty confused to score in your own basket, although *ODM* Features Editor Warren Chrismas can remember a friend at school nearly doing it when he was disorientated (the friend, not Warren).

BOXING

GAME: ***READY 2 RUMBLE***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **BITING YOUR OPPONENT**

READY 2 RUMBLE **MIGHT** be a great game, but try as we might we couldn't manage to sink our boxer's teeth into the yielding flesh of his heavily perspiring opponent. It would be great though, and we look forward to the day when the Awesome Power Of Dreamcast delivers such a morbid spectacle.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

Biting is one of the many underhand tactics used in the world of boxing, and if seen by the referee should result in the disqualification of the offender.

CLOSEST REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

The most horrific real-life example occurred during the now-infamous Las Vegas bout between Evander Holyfield and convicted rapist, Mike Tyson, in June 1997. A renowned God-botherer, Holyfield has been quoted as saying: "I have learned that I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me." Unfortunately this strengthening didn't extend as far as his right ear, a chunk of which was ripped off by the gold-toothed Tyson, and spat onto the canvas, providing one of the most bizarre spectacles the world of boxing has ever witnessed.

Tyson lost out on the $30million purse and was banned from boxing for 15 months, but after the fight he was largely unrepentant, telling reporters: "He has a cut on his ear and he didn't want to fight. Regardless of what I did, he had been butting for two rounds. I addressed it in the ring, what else could I do?"

Almost as bizarre as the actual incident is the story of hotel worker Mitchell Libonati, who went into the ring after the fight and actually found the detached piece of ear on the canvas. He wrapped it in latex gloves and took it to Holyfield's dressing room, where he told the boxer's camp: "I have something he probably wants." Libonati described the ear as "not bloody, like a piece of sausage".

It might have been a shameful night for boxing, but it was a triumphant one for headline writers, the fight yielding such gems as WORLD CHOMP and SUCKER MUNCH from *The Sun*, perhaps bettered only by the *Philadelphia News*. Their verdict? PAY PER CHEW.

WRESTLING

GAME: ***WWF ATTITUDE***
IMPROPER GAMEPLAY: **ACCIDENTALLY KILLING YOURSELF**

WWF ATTITUDE **ISN'T** the greatest game on Dreamcast. In fact it's one of the worst. And while it's not quite bad enough to drive you to suicide, being able to kill yourself would come as a blessed relief. Not actually, you understand, but in the game. We've tried, but unfortunately the wrestlers are immortal, and all attempts to snap our wrestler's neck by leaping off the scenery proved futile.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENED IN REAL LIFE?

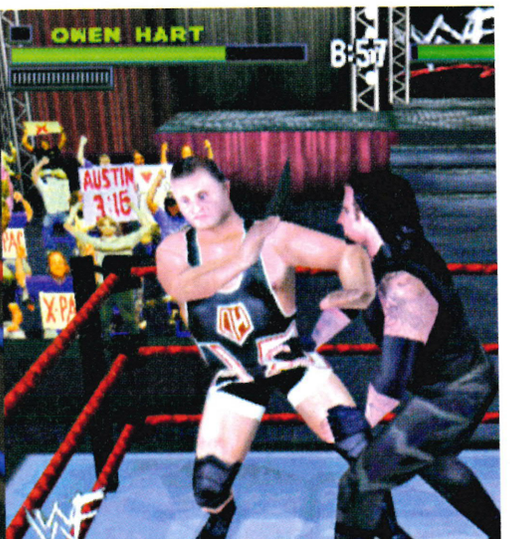
It would be tragic, but you can guarantee that within a few days the sick joke factory in the North of England would have come up with something.

CLOSEST REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

WWF wrestler Owen Hart tragically fell to his death during a Pay-Per-View event. Mancunian Andy Martin was an eye-witness, and explains what happened: "He was being lowered in by a cord from the roof, and the cord snapped, and basically he hit one of the posts. Do you know what I mean? The unluckiest man in the world! There's four posts on them rings, and he f**king hit his head on one – he landed head first on a post. Unlucky bastard! I mean, if he'd landed sort of on a flat surface he might have broke his neck, been in a wheelchair, but head first on a post, that's the end of you, innit? And the crowd cheered, thought it was a stunt. It was sort of black comedy in a way. It was funny, because the American public are that used to watching shit like that happen that they really, genuinely thought it was a stunt – until the f**ker didn't get up."

Wrestling expert Mark Madden says: "If wrestling takes away one thing from the tragedy that is Owen Hart's death, it's that perhaps wrestling can cut back on the unnecessary crap that puts performers at risk.

"Perhaps wrestling can eliminate stuff like performers abseiling from the roof, or diving from the tops of cages through tables, or doing triple-twist suicide dives from the ring to a cement floor. Frankly, it's a wonder more wrestlers haven't been seriously hurt or killed."



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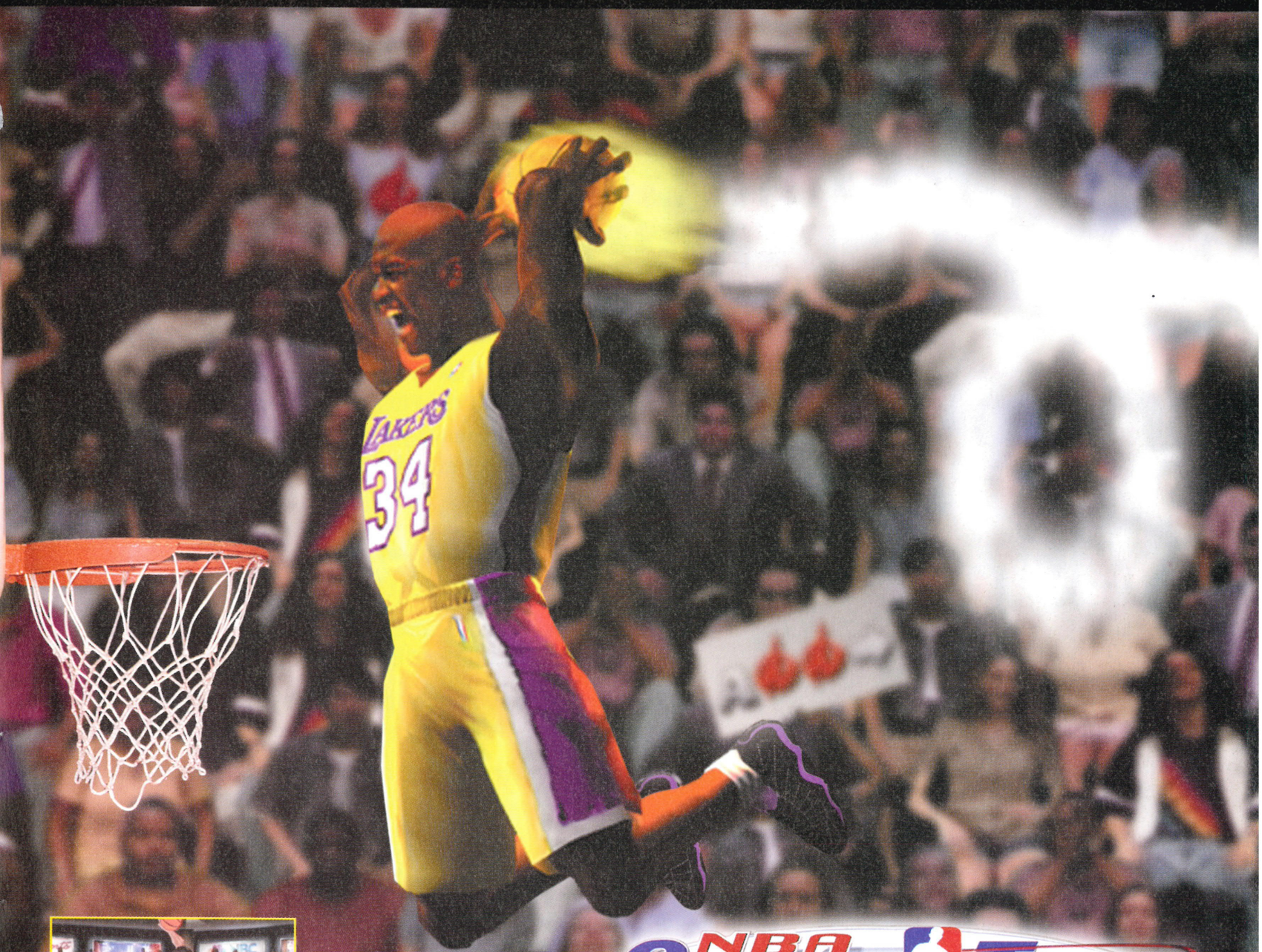

NBA SHOWTIME NBA ON NBC

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re:views

"OH I WISH IT COULD BE CHRISTMAS EVERY DAAAIYAAAY! WHERE THE TREES ARE SINGING AND THE BELLS BEGIN TO PLAAAIYAAAY. WOOOOOOAAAAAWOOH... HIC!"

CHRISTMAS IS COMING and the games is gettin' phat! Now that *Soul Calibur*'s hit the street – along with the jaws of people who've seen it running in shop windows – Dreamcast has truly arrived. With a steady – though slightly less rapid than we'd hoped – flow of titles being released, we've made it to the all-important festive season with plenty to keep everyone happy.

Certain types of games really come into their own during the holiday period, and in this issue we review a few such titles. Ubi Soft's *Evolution* is Dreamcast's first true role-playing game, an adventure which will keep you locked away in front of the TV with a bucket of Quality Street for whole days at a time.

House parties are also going to go with a gaming bang thanks to more games taking advantage of Dreamcast's four joypad ports. This issue, almost all the games we've reviewed enable up to four people to play at once, making them ideal modern-day replacements for 'classic' Christmas games such as charades, *Trivial Pursuit*, and that one where you have to roll a dice then dress up in big gloves and funny hat before eating a bar of chocolate with a knife and fork if you roll a six. Maybe that last one's a bit obscure to be classed as 'classic', but it's great fun nonetheless.

Worms Armageddon is a particularly good choice for parties, though it's important to make sure everyone playing understands the rules before hitting the alcohol, as we discovered when we organised a piss-up in a 'wormery' (clever, eh?) for our review of the game (starting on page 72). Okay, so the game's sense of humour may be even weaker than Hale and Pace's, but blowing your friend's prized worm to bits is always going to cause truly evil hysterics.

This month's releases mean more fun for the whole family – *Re-Volt* for anyone wanting to relive their childhood, *Tee Off* for the dads (they just *love* their golf games, do dads), and the moody, serial killer-based, swearing-packed adventure *Shadow Man* for the little 'uns – it'll keep them awake all night, screaming their little lungs out with unbound happiness.

Unfortunately though, there have been some more frustrating delays to big game releases. *Sega Bass Fishing* (*ODM* #1, 7/10) is now not going to make it to the UK in time for Christmas. Which is a great shame, because although only one person can play at a time it's the perfect novelty party game, what with its brilliant motion-sensitive rod controller. Make sure you leave a bit of cash left over after all your Chrimble shopping's been done so you can buy yourself a copy as soon as it's released in January.

But don't let a few little delays get you down. With the number of top-quality games already on sale, you simply can't fail to have a blast with Dreamcast this Christmas. And once we reach the new millennium, things are just going to keep on getting better and better.

Merry Christmas to you, one and all!

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE...

EVOLUTION (UBI SOFT)	78
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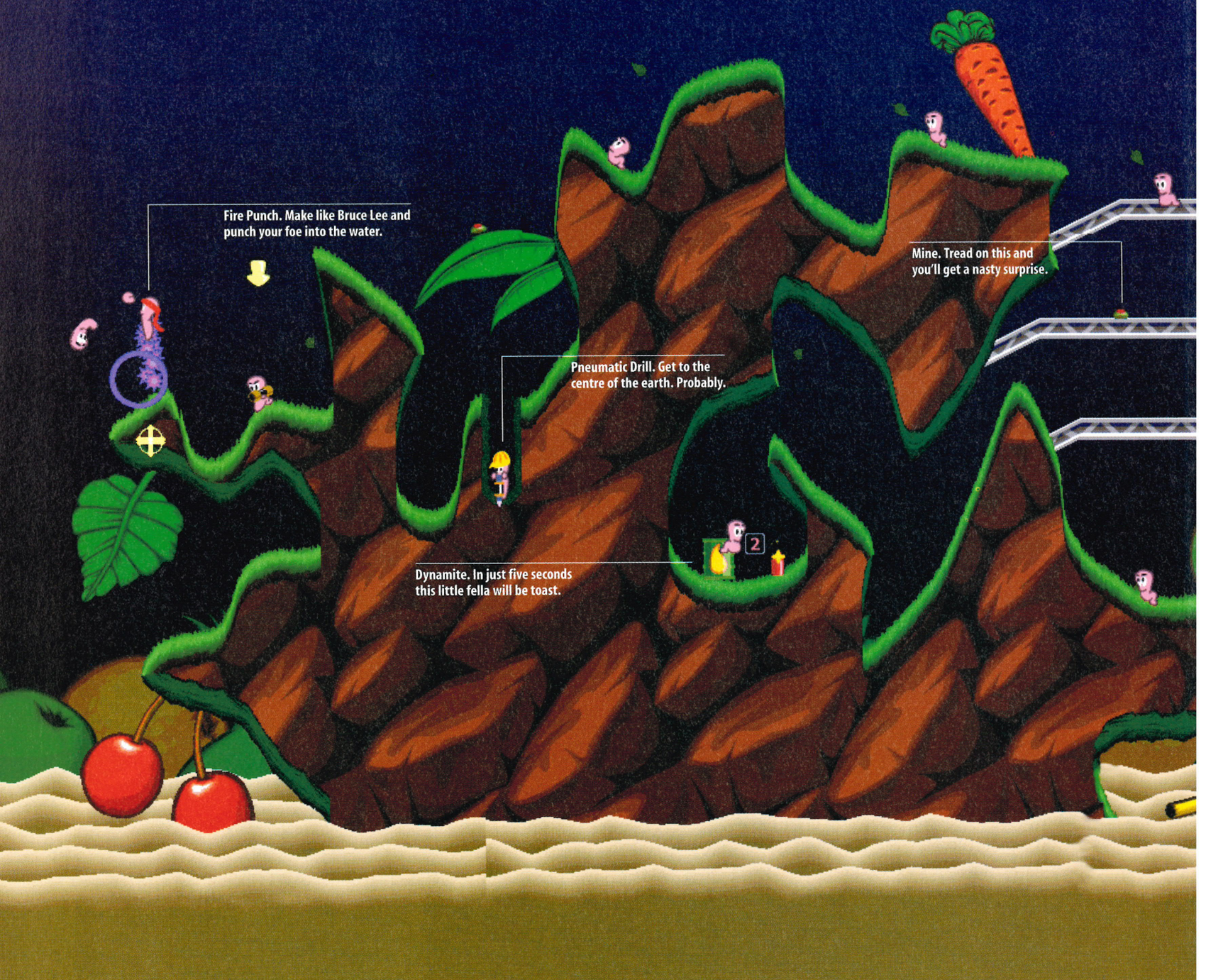
WORMS ARMAGEDDON (HASBRO)	72

ODM RATINGS

A guide to *Official Dreamcast Magazine*'s stringent scoring system. If we say a game is no good, then it ain't worth buying. If it is, it is. Simple, really

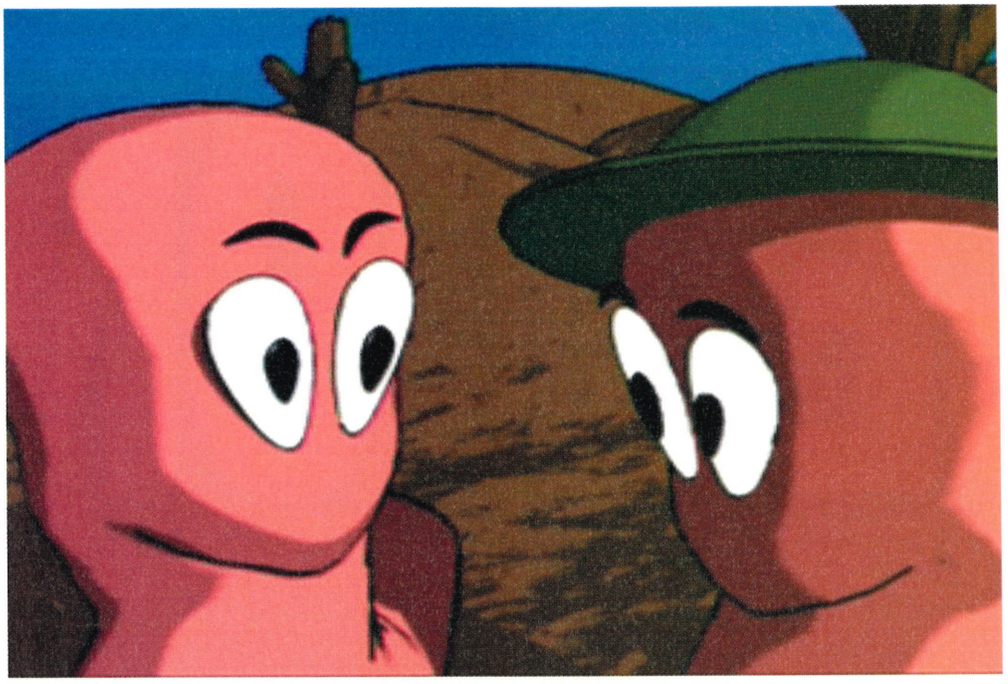
10 PERFECT! A GAME WHICH EVERYONE *MUST* OWN. 9 AN ESSENTIAL BUY. GET IT, GET IT, GET IT! 8 EXCELLENT STUFF. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. 7 A GREAT GAME WITH A MINOR PROBLEM OR TWO. 6 GOOD BUT WITH AT LEAST ONE MAJOR SHORTCOMING. 5 STRICTLY AVERAGE, RUN-OF-THE-MILL STUFF. 4 BELOW AVERAGE. PLAY BEFORE YOU BUY! 3 OH DEAR, OH DEAR. THIS REALLY ISN'T VERY GOOD. 2 THE GAMING EQUIVALENT OF LEYTON ORIENT. 1 NOT WORTH THE PLASTIC IT'S PRESSED ON!

WORMS AR


Fire Punch. Make like Bruce Lee and punch your foe into the water.
Pneumatic Drill. Get to the centre of the earth. Probably.
Mine. Tread on this and you'll get a nasty surprise.
Dynamite. In just five seconds this little fella will be toast.
2

MAGEDDON

It's the return of everybody's favourite psychotic invertebrates. **STUART DREDGE** takes cover



△ The cute, yet twisted, FMV sequences. Aw...

△ Ouch! Now that's gotta hurt, right?

△ Use this screen to set up your game scheme.

ARE TEAM 17 MAD? Dreamcast gives developers the chance to create full-on, stereoscopic, polygon-packed 3D masterpieces – the sort of games that'll have your jaw dropping like you're in an old-skool Warner Bros cartoon. With Dreamcast, developers can now let loose their imaginative instincts, unfettered by technological limitations. It's a far cry from the old days, when gaming technology could only cope with scrolly 2D games with platforms and stuff.

So what's this? A scrolly 2D game with platforms and stuff, that's what. Has nobody told Team 17 that we Dreamcast gamers have got used to being spoiled graphically? We want our games phat, not flat. Y'dig? But wait a minute, you can't write off *Worms Armageddon* that easily. It may look like *Lemmings*, but in terms of gameplay it's got as much to offer as the best Dreamcast titles. Read on without prejudice.

Unless you've only just started gaming, you've probably already heard of the *Worms* series. There've been a fair few versions across various platforms, and they've all been popular. The game is simple in concept. Teams of tooled-up worms do battle using a vast arsenal of weapons, which range from the obvious – shotguns, grenades and dynamite – to the absurd – exploding sheep, farting skunks and incendiary old women. Up to four teams can play at once, with each having up to four worms. The aim? To blow the living daylights out of each other until only one team has any worms left. The teams take it in turn to move around the landscape, launch attacks or build defences. And, as Johnny Ball might say, that's how *Worms* works.

We're going to be be blunt about this: *Worms Armageddon* works best as a multiplayer game. Yeah, there are several well-designed bits for solo players, but you won't fully appreciate its charms until you're embroiled in a no-prisoners-taken grudge match with three mates. That's not to say you shouldn't play it by yourself – practice makes perfect, after all – but you should have other players lined up before you buy it.

Still, the solo modes are pretty good. There's a training section which teaches you how to use the game's various weapons and tools. Complete enough of these and you unlock the solo Mission mode, which sees your team taking on a variety of special tasks. Then there's the Death Match mode where you shoot it out against progressively harder console-controlled teams.

SPEAK OUT

WE TALKED TO **MARTYN BROWN,** EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ON *WORMS ARMAGEDDON*

WHAT'S NEW IN THE DREAMCAST VERSION?
The DC version is pretty much authentic to the PC version in terms of features, but we've added a few tweaks and small additions, as you'd expect, including some nice rumble effects and VM support.

WHAT'S THE NAME OF YOUR WORMS TEAM/PLAYERS?
My worms are Spadge, Clagnut, Wilf and Bosnia.

WHICH OTHER DREAMCAST GAMES HAVE IMPRESSED YOU?
***Soul Calibur* is the best thing I've seen. I like *Ready 2 Rumble* as well.**

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?
Some peace and quiet, although I doubt if I'll get it.

All these solo modes are challenging, for sure, and if you complete them all you're well on your way to mastering the tactics needed to wipe out other human players. But the console teams are no match for unpredictable human opponents, so pretty soon you'll be wanting to pit your wits against your mates.

Anyway, on to the main game. If you're new to *Worms*, it'll take a while to get used to, and your first few games will probably see plenty of disastrously thrown grenades, misfired bazookas and comedy falls. Even if it's frustrating at first, it's well worth persevering: some weapons are easier to master than others.

And what weapons they are. The best thing about *Worms Armageddon* is the sheer variety of hurty stuff on offer. You might want to become a projectile master, hurling grenades from afar with pinpoint accuracy. You might prefer the way of the Ninja – swinging around levels dropping dynamite like a psychotic Spiderman. You might even go the way of 'the dark side' and hide worms where they can't be got at. The choice is yours.

Worms Armageddon is also that rare thing: a game that genuinely makes you laugh out loud with its humour. In this case it's often the outrageously over-the-top special weapons: the old woman and Sally Army are particular office faves. The worms themselves are fantastic little beasties – all wide eyes and comical squeaks. You get a choice of voicebanks for their speech, including Northern Tyke and Cockney Geezer. There are also foreign languages if you're a cosmopolitan type.

The other reason *Worms Armageddon* is such a good game is that although the basic concept is simple, it's got a helluva lot of depth. If you can round up four experts, games become complex strategic battles that seem to last for weeks. What's more, you never realise how fragile friendship can be until you've seen the reaction when you waste your mate's favourite worm. Disturbing real-life violence is never far away from a hard-fought game of *Armageddon*.

Worms Armageddon is an ace game, so why doesn't it score a perfect 10? Well, for a start there's the controller ▷

"EXPLODING SHEEP, FARTING SKUNKS AND INCENDIARY OLD WOMEN..."

△ Be warned: leaving your worms exposed is very risky

UP YOUR ARSENAL

As you play *Worms Armageddon*, you evolve sophisticated tactics based on your favourite weapons. As a result, aficionados tend to fall into one of several categories, depending on exactly how they like to polish off the opposition. Whatever your violent tastes, this game has a set of killing tools to suit you. Here's our guide to the different classes of *Worms* players – which one are you?

LONG-DISTANCE LOBBERS

The true Olympians of the Worms. These players can land grenades and cluster bombs bang on target, no matter where on the screen they are. Mastering projectile weapons takes time and practice, although a keen grasp of basic physics will probably accelerate the process. Lobbers all know it's not enough just to have a good aim: you need to use the fuse time and bounce attributes to create maximum damage.

EXPLOSIVE EXPERTS

These players follow the wham, bam, thank you ma'am school of thought, eschewing air-based weapons in favour of dynamite, mines, sheep or anything else that's ground-based, but highly incendiary. They always know to the centimetre how far they need to retreat after placing dynamite, and when they've got an old woman straining at the leash, they're a force to be feared.

KARATE KIDS

This is hardcore, as Jarvis Cocker would say if he'd ever played *Worms Armageddon*. Maybe he has. Anyway, Karate Kids don't bother with weapons at all, preferring to use the Fire Punch, Dragon Ball and Kamikaze moves to smack their opponents up. The Ninja Rope is another key component – once you've got the hang of it, the arena is your playground, while the other worms are history.

SHARPSHOOTERS

The John Waynes of Worms, using shotguns, uzis, miniguns and even bazookas to total the opposition. This kind of player is a crack shot, targeting any opposing worm foolish enough to stand in an exposed position. The shotgun in particular is a devastating weapon, especially when used in the game's advanced stages to kill off two enemies in one turn. Not so good when they haven't got line of sight though.

DARKSIDERS

Very frightening opponents. Rather than fight it out, Darksiders opt to bury their worms in the landscape, using complex combinations of blowtorching, pneumatic drills and girders to ensure that no-one can get near them. Make no mistake, this strategy is evil, especially if they start releasing airstrikes from the safety of their bunker. Use mole bombs, teleports and mines to flush them out.

ALL-ROUNDERS

Yeah, they do exist. Some jammy gits insist on learning every single weapon in the game, making them a fearsome force even when they're down to their last grenade. Don't worry though – to get to this level will have taken them months of isolated, curtains-drawn gameplay, so they probably haven't been out much. When faced with a master all-rounder, there's only one solution: gang up on them with all of the other players. Harsh, yes. But you know it makes sense.

CRAWLTHROUGH
GETTING LEGLESS

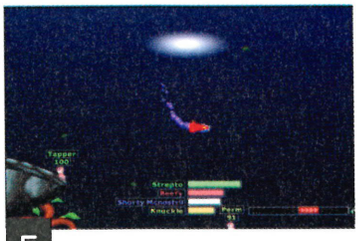
There are dozens of weapons to use in *Worms Armageddon*, enabling you to develop a strategy to suit. Here are our favourites...

1 ▽ Old Woman. She wanders towards the worms, mumbling inaudibly. After five seconds, she explodes. Fantastic.

2 ▽ Sally Army. This God-bothering weapon is a laugh. She plays a tambourine before – you guessed it – exploding.

3 ▽ Holy Hand Grenade. Not spectacular as such, but wait until you hear the full Hallelujah chorus. Good fun.

4 ▽ Super Sheep. The most powerful – and amusing – of the sheep weapons. Launch it, then guide it to its target.



5 ▷ Mole Bomb. For reasons unknown, this weapon sees moles leap out and burrow into the earth before exploding. Freaky.

△ **Mastering the Ninja Rope is essential.**

▷ problem. Even if you've got four human players you still all have to share one controller. According to Team 17, that's to avoid the hassles caused if you have, say, three players and two controllers. Even so, passing round the controller can be a real annoyance – as our all-night *Worms* test proved (see over).

The other minus points are largely cosmetic. For example, you can't choose a different voicebank for each team, as in some of the previous *Worms* games. It would also be nice if you could customise the game options more. You get a choice of several game 'schemes', which dictate which weapons you have, how long the game lasts and so on. While you can change the overall game settings, you can't edit the weapon settings for yourself. It's a small point, but it matters if you've played *Worms* before on other formats.

Despite these negatives, *Worms Armageddon* still has that addictive spark that's made the *Worms* series such a success. You might look at the screenshots and wonder whether it's making full use of Dreamcast's power, and you'd have a point. But that hardly matters considering the many hours of play you're likely to get out of it.

If you're already a fan of the series, this Dreamcast version won't disappoint. If you're a newcomer to the *Worms* canon, be warned: if you get hooked, you can kiss goodbye to your beauty sleep.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **HASBRO INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **TEAM 17**

VERDICT

POLISHED CONVERSION OF SMASH MULTIPLAYER GAME

UPPERS
Ideal for a group • Twisted humour • Huge strategic possibilities

DOWNERS
Sharing a controller between four sucks • More customisation would be nice

IN ONE HOUR We were crack shots with the grenade
WEBSITE www.worms.team17.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen, VGA-compatible

8
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

THE *ODM* ALL-NIGHTER

WIGGLE IT

We sent **STUART DREDGE** and **DAN TRENT** into the deep, dark depths of Finchley, North London, to conduct an all-night *Worms Armageddon* test. Twenty four hours later, we found this diary...

△ **Our testers prepare for action fuelled by... er, well, you can see.**

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE HAD in mind at all. The idea was to round up a group of friends, head to the pub for a couple of pints, and then attempt an all-night *Worms Armageddon* session. Simple enough, you'd think. However, once at the pub – a giant Firkin that used to be a church – one thing leads to another, and by closing time it's all gone a bit messy.

By now we should be back home kicking off the playtest, but instead the male members of our group are trying to lure a bunch of (female) performing arts students back to join the session. For some reason, the idea of playing *Worms* with a group of dribbling drunkards doesn't tempt the girls. Weird. But the delay means that by the time we get back to the designated games house it's already midnight.

Anyway, the plan is simple: play *Worms Armageddon* through the night, fuelled by a mixture of booze, bravado and bleary-eyed bloody mindedness. None of the four contestants – Callum, Val, Jordy and Monique – have ever played the game before, so it should be an interesting experience. They're being cheered on by mates Mark and Richard.

To keep everyone going we've been shopping: alcohol, Red Bull, nibbles and, dammit, even Pot Noodles for when things get really desperate. It's going to be a long night...

△ **"Wo-man! Me see wo-man!"**

△ **Sorry, we're fresh out of yoghurt.**

△ **Pre-worms, the night was spent discussing the tactical merits of the Mole Bomb. Until a load of performing arts students turned up.**

MIDNIGHT-1AM

One thing is immediately clear: *Worms* would be the ideal post-pub game – if only you remembered to explain how it works *before* going to the pub. We didn't. As a result, most players spend the first hour blowing themselves up, usually with the bazooka. "How does it work again?" asks Callum, seconds before blasting himself out of the game.

Jordy's having more success with the homing missiles, although to be fair the console's doing most of the work for him. Val, meanwhile, discovers the exploding sheep weapon, to widespread acclaim. No one is pissed enough to eat a Pot Noodle. Yet.

1AM-2AM

People are beginning to get to grips with it, but there's a problem: sharing one controller. "This is crap!" spits an enraged Monique. "Every time I have a go I almost knock over all the beer when I'm being passed the controller!"

Nevertheless, our players persist. The Skunk is the current fave weapon, more for its comedy farting noises than for any strategic advantage. It's become clear that in our tired and emotional state, using funny weapons is more important than actually trying to win.

2AM-3AM

Jordy is building a bridge. Why? "I'm an engineer," he explains. "I have a need to build." Fair enough, at least until someone points out that he's actually an accountant. "Get yerself a proper weapon," is the cry, and the bridge is doomed. Val has emerged as the most destructive player, with multi-kill dynamite massacres her speciality. The Pot Noodles remain un-eaten.

3AM-4AM

We've discovered the reason for Jordy's curious performance in the last three hours: he thinks he's been playing *Lemmings*. "How was I to know?" he protests, to widespread derision. Callum, meanwhile, is making the most of his homing pigeon weapon, dealing death to all and sundry.

None of us are focused enough to be considered an expert, but at least we're not blowing ourselves up. Much. Monique, however, remains unimpressed. "It's not actually all that interesting…" she complains.

△ **The performing arts students. We promised to put them in the mag. Sorry.**

4AM-5AM

It's carnage, and we don't mean the game. All the alcohol's been drunk, apart from half a bottle of whisky that no one's brave (or foolish) enough to polish off. Most of our guinea pigs are in semi-prone positions, and the game itself is by now made up of the odd lacklustre airstrike – the weapon which requires least effort, basically. It's been good, but it's time for bed.

The last thing we notice before collapsing is the sight of four empty Pot Noodle pots on the table. Strangely enough, nobody can remember eating them.

POSTSCRIPT

So, what conclusions can be drawn from the night's activities? Well, firstly there's the problem of sharing a controller. We don't mean to go on about it, but it's a real hassle, especially with a table full of beer bottles and un-opened Pot Noodles. Roll on infra-red controllers, we say.

Secondly, it's clear that *Worms* has definite post-pub pissed-up potential, but you need to master the basics while you're still sober. That said, the huge range of weapons on offer impressed our testers, especially the sillier ones – weapons, that is, not testers.

Worms Armageddon's humour definitely went down a storm, and several deaths would probably have received standing ovations – had our panel been able to stand, of course. It might still come a close second to *Ready 2 Rumble* in the post-pub hall of fame, but *Worms Armageddon* is nevertheless well worth the price of a few pints.

STEWED FOR WORMS

PLAYER 1

NAME: CALLUM
AGE: 35
OCCUPATION: SCULPTOR
DRINKING: LAGER, OF COURSE!
TEAM NAME: KIWI
WORM NAMES: HEMI, FITZY, DARKIE, TE KOOTI

PLAYER 2

NAME: VALERIE
AGE: 30
OCCUPATION: NHS MANAGER
DRINKING: WHISKY & GINGER
TEAM NAME: PAISLEY
WORM NAMES: POPE, ANTI-CHRIST, SURRENDER

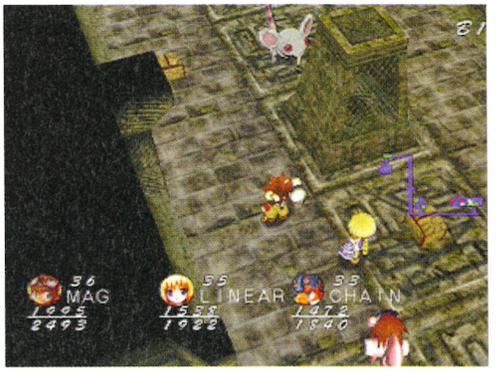
PLAYER 3

NAME: MONIQUE
AGE: 28
OCCUPATION: PRODUCTION MANAGER
DRINKING: VODKA & RED BULL
TEAM NAME: AUSSIE
WORM NAMES: BRUCE, SHEILA, KYLIE, JASON

PLAYER 4

NAME: JORDY
AGE: 27
OCCUPATION: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT
DRINKING: LAGER
TEAM NAME: ARSENAL
WORM NAMES: PETE, PLASTIC, PADDY, NICK

△ *Evolution's* characters are cute, even when they're angry.



△ *Evolution's* dungeons are crawling with monsters.

△ Mag's powerful quake spell totals the enemies.

EVOLUTION

If you're looking for a dose of sword and sorcery, this is the game for you. STUART DREDGE dusts down his spell book

PREPARE TO CAST AWAY your preconceptions. *Evolution* is part of a new breed of RPGs targetted at a mainstream audience rather than a niche bunch of anoraks. Yup, nowadays we just won't put up with crap graphics, over-complex user interfaces and risible blatherings about orcs, elves and silver swords of doom.

Sure, hardcore RPG nerds will probably tell you that it's all been downhill since *The Bard's Tale II* back in the Dark Ages, but stuff 'em. For the rest of us, games like *Evolution* are the way forward. As it's the first Dreamcast RPG to get a release over here, fans of the genre are bound to snap it up. However, it's been designed to be accessible enough to tempt plenty of other gamers too.

The plot revolves around youthful duo Mag Launcher and Linear Cannon. Mag is the acting head of a famous adventuring family while his father's away on a quest. The last time Mag heard from dad was three years ago in a letter delivered by Linear.

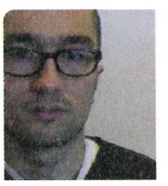
The letter asked Mag to look after her, and since then she's been his constant, if silent, companion. In order to pay off the Launcher family's huge debts, Mag and Linear have been going on quests for the local archeological society – mostly unsuccessfully. And this is where you come in.

Mag's home, Pannam Town, is surrounded by the mysterious ruins of an ancient civilisation. The bulk of *Evolution* sees you exploring the ruins slaying monsters, collecting treasure and avoiding traps – all the usual RPG things, in other words. There are initially five ruins to explore, each with a different theme: icy, volcanic, mossy and so on.

At the end of each one lurks an enormous boss. After it's been despatched, you return to Pannam to collect your reward, watch a cut-scene, and then set off on another quest. Besides Mag and Linear, you can also take along a third character to help out. There's Chain Gun, a hot-headed tomboy; Pepper Box, a gun-toting vamp and Gre Nade, the Launcher family butler. Each has their own attributes and special abilities.

Combat in *Evolution* takes place via an effective turn-based system: characters can move, put up their guard, attack, cast a spell or use a special item. As you progress, your characters gain more experience, enabling them to learn new spells and survive longer in battle. Items picked up along the way can be used, or sold for cash to buy better weapons.

You might think this all sounds a bit bog-standard, but there's more to *Evolution*. Running around the



SPEAK OUT

WE SWAPPED MAGIC POTIONS WITH UBI SOFT'S EUROPEAN PRODUCER **VINCENT MUNOZ** TO FIND OUT ABOUT *EVOLUTION*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR GAME?
It's accessible and absorbing, and the story is driven by you. I also like the way you can choose to avoid enemies when you want to get on with your mission.

WHO'S YOUR FAVE CHARACTER?
It's got to be Gre Nade, the butler. His amazing ability to defeat the nasties with spells delivered from a solid silver serving dish has to be seen to be believed!

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST HASSLE DURING CONVERSION?
The text translation is the most important job – it's vital to get it right. We didn't want it to be too childish, as it had to be credible as well as exciting.

HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS? BE HONEST.
Of course. From the age of eight upwards, I had a pointy hat and dabbled in a little wizardry.

"*EVOLUTION* SETS THE STANDARD FOR DREAMCAST RPGS TO COME"

"AN RPG NEEDS DEPTH AND THIS DOESN'T DISAPPOINT" **EVOLUTION**

△ **Wander around Pannam Town. Better get used to it, you'll be seeing a lot of it on your travels.**

traditional quest plot is an involving storyline centred around Mag's growing awareness of his family history and the mysteries of the ancient civilisation. There's also the interference of the decidedly dodgy Crown Prince Eugene, who wants to get jiggy with Linear.

But the mark of a classic RPG – no matter which era it's from – is that it gets you involved with the characters. *Evolution* does this, with every character feeling like a fully rounded personality rather than just a collection of zeroes and ones. This is partly down to the carefully crafted animation in the battle scenes, where every character has their own distinct style.

More than anything, though, it's the little touches that make *Evolution's* characters so endearing, and the game so absorbing as a result. It's the way Linear rubs her eyes after getting hit, or the way Gre runs like he's riding a pretend horse, or the way Pepper adjusts her eyepatch before shooting, or… well, you get the idea. If you're not absurdly attached to these little fellas after playing for an hour, you're probably the sort of person who kicks kittens for a laugh.

That said, *Evolution* is shot through with a twee streak that might put off some adult gamers, and its Japanese sense of humour doesn't always translate well. As for the Eugene/Linear storyline, it's anyone's guess what a Western audience will make of a 20-something royal trying to woo a pre-pubescent girl. The cultural differences don't ruin the game by any means, but it's something to bear in mind.

What's more important is that it has depth, and here *Evolution* doesn't disappoint. The levels are randomly generated every time you play, meaning, theoretically at least, no two games will ever play the same. In practice, one level is much like another, but it's a nice touch. It's not the most difficult game, but you won't breeze through it in a couple of days. Additionally, different characters give it a fair amount of repeat-play potential.

As we've said, hardcore RPG fans are likely to buy *Evolution* as soon as it comes out, whatever we say. However, it also has enough mainstream appeal to tempt the rest of us, and if you're looking for an introduction to the world of RPGs it's perfect. You won't be baffled with statistics and acronyms, and the difficulty level won't leave you floundering.

Put simply, *Evolution* sets the standard for Dreamcast role-playing games. With luck there'll be a few more where that came from.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **STING**

VERDICT

LAVISH RPG WITH MAINSTREAM APPEAL

UPPERS
Engrossing plot • Accessible interface • Loveable characters • No orcs

DOWNERS
Ruins can seem repetitive • A little easy for pro gamers • A bit twee

IN ONE HOUR We were charging through the first ruin
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.co.uk
CHECKOUT www.sting.co.jp For info on *Evolution 2* in Japanese, natch
MAX PLAYERS 1
VIDEO MODES 60Hz PAL

8
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

SPELLTHROUGH
PARTY OF FIVE

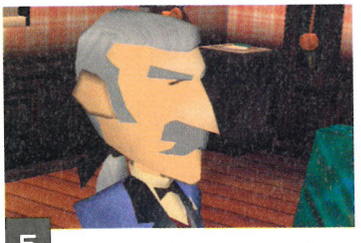
There are five characters to choose from in *Evolution*, with your party made up of Mag, Linear and one of three other character

1 ▽ **Mag Launcher. Gregarious would-be hero who's discovering his roots. Good fighting skills.**

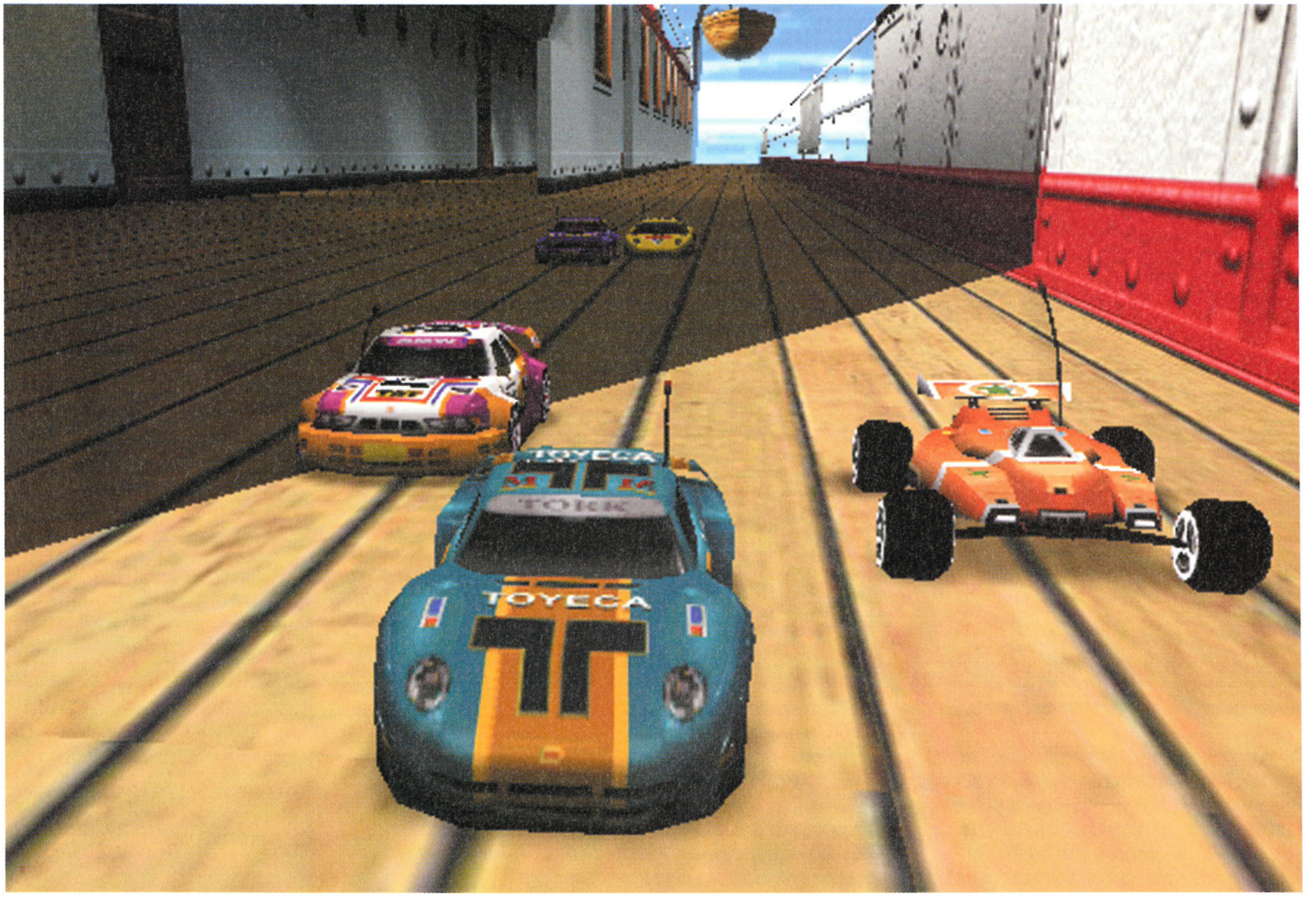
2 ▽ **Linear Cannon. Ultra-cute but silent heroine who's rubbish at fighting but has some useful healing spells.**

3 ▽ **Pepper Box. Basically, Jessica Rabbit crossed with Lara Croft. With added va-va-voom. Nice guns.**

4 ▽ **Chain Gun. Looks like a boy, is actually a girl, fights like a demon. A good all-rounder, then.**



5 ▷ **Gre Nade. The Launcher family butler, who's also a dab hand with a hunting gun. He's da bomb (geddit?).**



△ Get ready for carnage – these boys don't take prisoners.

RE-VOLT

Radio-controlled buggies coming atcha at a scale speed of 300mph! **DAN TRENT** is the raving maniac at the controls

"ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU INTERESTED LONG AFTER OTHER RACING GAMES HAVE LEFT YOU DRY"

ANYONE WHO'S EVER HAD A GO AT RACING radio-controlled cars knows exactly how fast and furious the activity is. At its peak, sports halls across the land were filled with the scream of tuned electric motors as spotty youths raced spotty middle-aged men with hi-tech buggies. Far removed from the £19.99, made-in-China special that was kaput by Boxing Day, these miniature missiles use formula one-style carbon-fibre chassis, and high-powered batteries that propel them to silly speeds, and demand razor-sharp reactions to drive them successfully.

Considering the similarities between the transmitters used to control the cars and the average analog joypad, the translation from the real thing to screen is a natural one. And while we've had radio-controlled helicopters in *RC Stuntcopter* and toy cars in *Toy Commander*, *Re-Volt* is one of the first big console games to make this translation. Already a successful franchise across several formats, *Re-Volt* takes *Toy Commander*'s toy's-eye view of the world and combines it with the comedy power-ups and pace of *Micro Machines*. Don't be fooled by the cute visuals and toy car theme though, because when it comes to the crunch *Re-Volt* is an out and out racer in the mould of *Speed Devils* or *Sega Rally 2*: just as tricky to master and just as addictive.

CAN YOU STAND THE PACE?

Taking place in a range of superbly realised environments ranging from quiet cul-de-sacs to ocean ▷

OUT OF CONTROL

We paid a visit to the Natural History Museum in London to re-enact the museum level from *Re-Volt*. We won't be invited back in a hurry...

THE NATURAL HISTORY Museum after hours is a spooky place. An imposing building by any standards, its huge galleries and majestic displays take on a new light when the crowds have gone home and the dinosaurs rule once again. The absurdity of the idea that we were about to race radio-controlled cars around this most grand of settings could only be matched by the sight of a dozen grown men striding purposefully across the great hall, each with a car, a transmitter and a determination to win.

In the name of research – and, more importantly, because we were allowed to – we were there to re-enact one of the most exciting levels of *Re-Volt* for real as well as see if the game's developers could be beaten at their own game. One of *Re-Volt*'s strongest points is the amazing amount of detail in the environments in which the miniaturised cars do battle. Some of the most entertaining of these are the museum levels which, while not based directly on the Natural History Museum, certainly show a lot of direct influences – you can swerve between the legs of giant skeletons and through galleries of artefacts.

Upon our arrival we were introduced to museum man Stuart, there to make sure the cars went where they were supposed to and that we didn't do too much damage to the priceless fossils. Reasoning that we were going to need as much space as possible, we headed for the central hall with its famous diplodocus skeleton, and set about the serious business of racing. Lined up against the development team from Acclaim's Croydon studio was a slightly depleted Dennis Publishing team (plus a couple of extremely fast mice, residents of the museum who knew all the short cuts).

Anarchy prevailed, however, and as drivers began to get to know their cars the once-peaceful museum was filled with the scream of electric motors and shouted expletives. An attempt to drive one of the cars down the grand staircase didn't go down at all well, so order was called and cars were assembled on the start line.

ANIMAL TRACKS

A simple oval around the dinosaur was agreed as the course, and the drivers took their places on the staircase. From the off it was immediately clear that this race had little to do with skill and everything to do with car choice. For a start, some of the smaller cars wouldn't even work unless the driver was standing a matter of inches away, and the bigger and faster ones moved so quickly that nobody could control them. Balor's big-wheeled Psycho was streaking away, but its tendency to spin like a break-dancer on every corner was proving troublesome. At least it could be made to go round the corners though. Simon's Rebound could be driven into walls to make it flip over and come back, but didn't steer at all, which was something of a disadvantage. High hopes rested on the chunky and funky Mad Bull, but a sudden loss of battery power left it living up to its name and careering out of control in ever increasing circles before someone managed to capture it. The long-suffering Stuart was now clearly going to have a sense of humour failure, and it was decided to call a halt, count our losses and head off to try out some other locations in the building.

Before long, and much to the relief of Stuart, batteries were fading and the cars were beginning to bear the scars of a hard evening. In the end it was impossible to pick a clear winner, mainly because nobody seemed to have actually completed a lap. And even if they had, the cars were so hopelessly ill-matched that it couldn't be considered a fair race. The overall winner though? Well, without doubt the mice had us all whupped.

• *Thanks to Stuart and Gwyneth at the Natural History Museum for allowing us to wreak havoc on the premises.*

If you have a few grand to throw on a party and fancy a venue that's just a little bit different, various areas of the Natural History Museum can be hired for private functions. Call 0207 938 8934 for details.

DRIVEN TO TEARS

BALOR KNIGHT

WHAT DO YOU DO? "PROGRAMMER ON *RE-VOLT*."
CAR OF CHOICE: "PSYCHO – THE ONE WITH THE BIG WHEELS."
BEST THING ABOUT IT: "IT HAD HUGE WHEELS AND IT COULD WHEELIE!"
WORST THING ABOUT IT: "IT WOULDN'T GO AROUND CORNERS."
FAVE TRACK IN THE GAME: "THE MUSEUM, OBVIOUSLY!"
FAVOURITE DINOSAUR? "HAS TO BE T REX!"

SIMON HARRISON

WHAT DO YOU DO? "LEAD DESIGNER ON *RE-VOLT*."
CAR OF CHOICE: "THE CAR THAT FLIPS OVER – REBOUND. IT'S LIKE ROTOR IN THE GAME!"
BEST THING ABOUT IT: "IT'S A BEAST! IT NEVER FLIPPED UP."
WORST THING ABOUT IT: "IT DIDN'T STEER."
FAVE TRACK IN THE GAME: "BOTANICAL GARDEN – I MADE IT!"
FAVOURITE DINOSAUR? "VELOCIRAPTOR."

GARI BIASILLO

WHAT DO YOU DO? "AI FOR *RE-VOLT*."
CAR OF CHOICE: "THE RED HERBIE CAR – BUG MANIAC."
BEST THING ABOUT IT: "IT COULD WHEELIE BETTER THAN BALOR'S!"
WORST THING ABOUT IT: "NOT ENOUGH TOP END!"
FAVE TRACK IN THE GAME: "THE SUPERMARKET."
FAVOURITE DINOSAUR? "STEGOSAURUS."

DAN EMERY

WHAT DO YOU DO? "DISC EDITOR, *PC ZONE*."
CAR OF CHOICE: "RACING CHAMP – THE BIG BLACK MUTHA."
BEST THING ABOUT IT: "IT HAD BATTERIES THAT WORKED AND IT COULD GO THREE FEET IN A STRAIGHT LINE."
WORST THING ABOUT IT: "IT WOULDN'T GO ANY FURTHER THAN THREE FEET."
FAVE TRACK IN THE GAME: "THE MUSEUM, OF COURSE!"
FAVOURITE DINOSAUR? "EDWARD HEATH."

△ On the start line and ready to go. Last one to slide between the dinosaur's legs is a scaredy cat.

VROOOOOM!

If the game doesn't grab you, maybe one of these will. We roadtest the best RC cars so that you don't have to

TAMIYA MAD BULL

COST: £155 (PLUS £60 BUILD CHARGE)
FEATURES: ELECTRIC, REAR-WHEEL DRIVE, WORKING SUSPENSION
SPEED: ★★★★
HANDLING: ★★★★
BATTERY LIFE: ★★
VIEW FROM THE WHEEL: "VERY FAST AND AGILE, AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'LL GET OVER ANYTHING. BATTERY RAN OUT QUICKLY, BUT IT IS RECHARGEABLE."
OVERALL: ★★★★

TAMIYA BAJA CHAMP

COST: £179 (PLUS £60 BUILD CHARGE)
FEATURES: ELECTRIC, FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE, INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION
SPEED: ★★★★
HANDLING: ★★★★★
BATTERY LIFE: ★★
VIEW FROM THE WHEEL: "SUPERB! SUPER-QUICK, AND REALLY GRIPPY THANKS TO THE FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE."
OVERALL: ★★★★★

ASAHI ZIGZAG

COST: £39.99
FEATURES: ELECTRIC POWER, GRIPPY TRACKS, "HYPER SPIN ACTION"
SPEED: (STRAIGHT LINE!) ★★★
HANDLING: ★
BATTERY LIFE: ★★★★
VIEW FROM THE WHEEL: "REALLY FAST… AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TRY TO TURN CORNERS. THE HANDLING IS, WELL, INTERESTING AS IT HAS A TENDENCY TO SHOOT SIDEWAYS RATHER THAN STEER. AN APT NAME!"
OVERALL: ★★

RIKO RAGING MONSTER

COST: £79.99
FEATURES: ELECTRIC POWER, FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE, MONSTER TYRES
SPEED: ★★
HANDLING: ★★★
BATTERY LIFE: ★★★★
VIEW FROM THE WHEEL: "REALLY SLOW BUT HANDLES QUITE WELL, AND YOU CAN HAVE FUN WITH IT – IF ANYONE PISSES YOU OFF YOU CAN DRIVE OVER THEM!"
OVERALL: ★★★

TYCO PSYCHO

COST: £99.99
FEATURES: ELECTRIC POWER, "UNSTOPPABLE GYRO FORCE STUNTS!", REALLY BIG WHEELS
SPEED: (STRAIGHT LINE) ★★★★
HANDLING: ★
BATTERY LIFE: ★★★ (RECHARGEABLE INCLUDED)
VIEW FROM THE WHEEL: "MOVES LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING AND IS LOTS OF FUN WITH ITS SPINS AND WHEELIES, BUT HOPELESS FOR STEERING AND RACING. AN INTERESTING NOVELTY."
OVERALL: ★★

• *All the cars are available from Hamleys, telephone 0207 494 2000.*

△ Wanna win one of these? Then turn to page 47 and take our compo for a spin.

△ Close racing is what *Re-Volt* is all about.

△ The icy floor at the supermarket tests your driving skill.

▷ liners, *Re-Volt* follows the accepted driving game format whereby you earn extra cars and tracks by successfully completing the championship challenges, the cars becoming progressively faster and the courses more complex as you progress. Nothing new there, then, although the addition of a track editor is welcome.

Races are won on a first-past-the-post basis, although how you achieve that is up to you. You can play it straight and get there through hard driving and skill, or you can blatantly cheat and use a variety of dirty tricks to nobble your opponents. Rest assured that the

SPEAK OUT

WE GET THE LOWDOWN ON *RE-VOLT* FROM **STEPHEN ROOT**, AUDIO DIRECTOR FOR ACCLAIM STUDIOS, LONDON

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
This title has great gameplay reminiscent of an arcade classic and the well-suited soundtrack brings the title to life, with various styles to appeal to a wide audience.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT DREAMCAST FOR YOU?
The challenge of a new console with 64 audio channels for simultaneous SFX, the playback of CD-quality music and built in DSP capabilities. The prospect of consoles becoming more evenly matched with current PC technology. Also the inclusion of a modem and the built-in four player-option is great.

WHICH ARE THE MOST INTERESTING GAMES YOU'VE SEEN FROM OTHER PEOPLE?
***Bass Fishing* with its own dedicated controller is great fun, and *TrickStyle* is fantastically smooth-running.**

△ **Ooh, look, a lovingly polished floor to skate around on.**

opposition will take every opportunity to fry your battery or send you spinning into the kerb.

CHARGE ME UP

If you've ever driven a radio-controlled car, the controls in *Re-Volt* will be very evocative; if you haven't, be prepared for a shock. These puppies handle nothing like their full-size counterparts, and *Re-Volt* is incredibly accurate in its interpretation of the razor-sharp responses and twitchy controls of the cars it's modelled on. In fact your first few attempts will probably leave you cursing and frustrated as you find yourself spinning through 180 degrees or flipping on to your roof. Again, if you spent your youth zipping your radio-controlled car about in the street, the speed with which kerbs and parked vehicles come up will also be familiar.

Car choice is critical, and it pays to make the most of the practice tracks to find out which cars suit which courses. For example, fast, lightweight cars are superb on grippy carpet surfaces, but completely hopeless where there's less grip, such as on polished or icy surfaces. As any given track can be comprised of several totally different surfaces, it pays to choose wisely. As a rule the heavier, four-wheel drive buggies tend to be the best all-rounders, if lacking in speed and acceleration.

TOYS AIN'T US

Once you've got the hang of the twitchy controls, *Re-Volt* is a real hoot. It moves with lightning speed and is incredibly addictive. The opponents are tough cookies and their AI is superb, although they're not perfect. They crash and make mistakes too, but are very quick to make the most of all the power-ups, and often deploy them at strategic moments. It adds a great random element that always keeps you on the edge of your seat. In a genre as crowded as racing games, it's the small details that make or break the game, and *Re-Volt* has these in abundance.

In summary, *Re-Volt* is an excellent little game, and if you crave a break from the realism-obsessed norm it deserves a place in your collection. Slight re-draw not withstanding, the graphics are super-sharp and the action fast and furious, and in the multiplayer mode it's one of the best drivers around. While it has a quirky outlook and some great details, it is a fairly formulaic racer, but there's enough to keep you interested long after other racing games have left you dry.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
DEVELOPER: **CRITERION**

• *Win one of the cars we took to the Natural History Museum – see page 47.*

VERDICT

A SPEEDY BARREL OF LAUGHS TO KEEP ANY RACING FAN HAPPY

UPPERS
Superb detail on the courses • Realistic car handling • Well-judged difficulty level

DOWNERS
Ultimately just another racing game • Twitchy controls can be frustrating • Only one championship mode

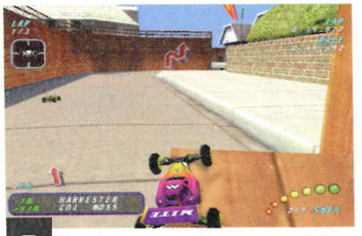
IN ONE HOUR We qualified in the first round of the championship with a time of 3:24:80
WEBSITE www.acclaim.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen PAL

7
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

DRIVETHROUGH
GET ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Re-Volt's miniature world can prove tricky if you don't know what you're doing. Follow our checklist to guarantee success…

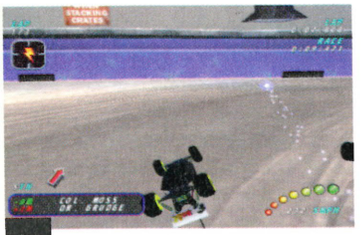
1 ▽ Car choice is a critical factor, and there are more than 30, from crazy-fast to just plain crazy.



2 ▽ Tracks are open in design and offer a wide choice of lines, so always look to see if there are any corners you can cut.

3 ▽ Now is not the time for fair play. Make sure you collect the power-ups and use them wisely…

4 ▽ …as a well-timed rocket here or an oil slick there can make the difference between being a champ or an also-ran.



5 ▷ Expect no quarter from the opposition – get in front and they'll do all they can to stop you.

△ At the very start of the game you must find your way up to the church at the top of the hill.

SHADOW MAN

A platform game with blood, guts and swearing? MARK HILL shouts profanities at the top of his voice and jumps to his own conclusions

THERE'S A TIME-HONOURED tradition in videogames that says every platform game will feature a disgustingly cute character bouncing around colourful surroundings, and that it will be innocent enough to make kids of all ages chuckle with delight. Failing that, it should at least have a scantily clad girl of such measurements as to delight kids of all ages in other ways. All praise *Shadow Man*, then, which, after breaking the mould on PC and Nintendo 64, arrives on Dreamcast to scare those damn kids into a slobbering heap. That's right, not only is the main character a scantily clad man, but also rainbows have been substituted by streaks of gore, and the bright blue and green backgrounds have turned to a muddy brown. This is a game strictly aimed at an older audience, the kind that enjoys having a shiver sent down their spine and can watch something like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* without hiding behind a pillow and crying out for their mother.

Not that *Shadow Man* is completely successful in creating this blood-dripping underworld and drawing you deep into its twisted atmosphere, but we'll get to that later. First you need to know what the hell it's about. And, as it's based on an American comic, the story is suitably bizarre.

VOODOO CHILE

You are Michael LeRoi, a hitman who winds up working for a voodoo priestess and is given the power to travel back and forth from the land of the living, or Liveside, to the land of the dead, or Deadside. LeRoi hasn't received this gift for any old reason though. He must use it to defeat five deceased serial killers led by none other than Jack the Ripper, who intend to take over the world of the living, unleashing their hellish reign and other such business. To stop them you must mow down enemies with machine-guns and shotguns on this side, and shoot magic voodoo weapons and devour souls on the other. Not forgetting, of course, the vast amounts of jumping

SPEAK OUT

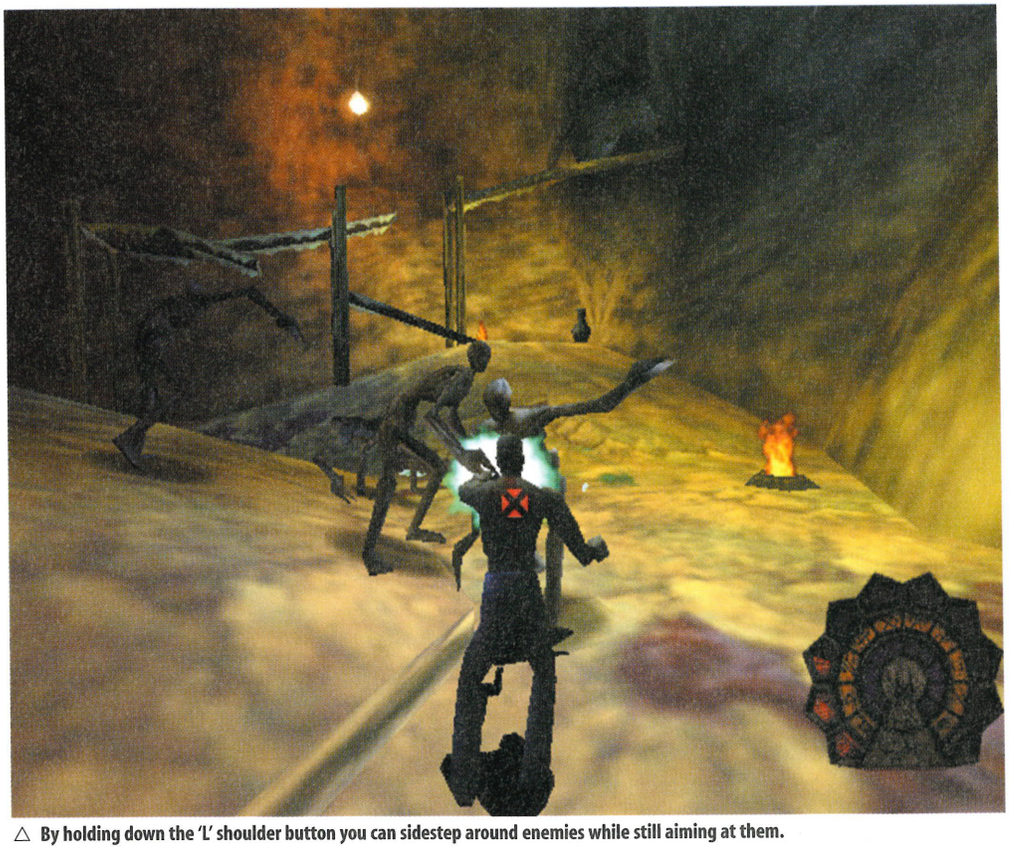
WE CORNERED **GUY MILLER**, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT ACCLAIM STUDIOS FOR HIS THOUGHTS ON *SHADOW MAN*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
Well, just about everything is the best. But then I would say that, wouldn't I? If I had to pick just one thing it would have to be the confrontation with the serial killer Avery Marx throughout the New York Tenement level. It's got everything – atmosphere, thrills, spills, canaries, dessicated corpses… A real *Silence Of The Lambs* beater.

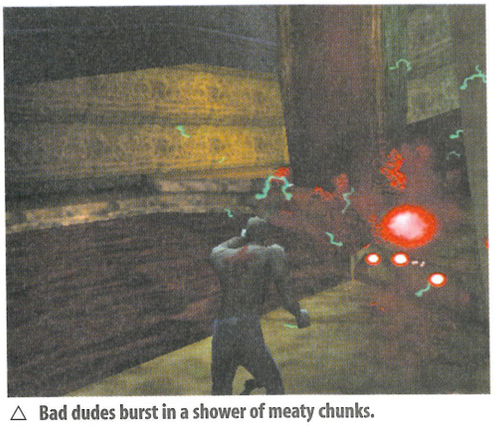
WHAT'S THE BEST DREAMCAST GAME YOU'VE SEEN FROM ANOTHER DEVELOPER?
***Shenmue* looks interesting from a pushing-out-the-boundaries point of view, and *Soul Calibur* looks good from a graphical point of view.**

WHAT DOES THE DREAMCAST VERSION OFFER OVER THE PC AND NINTENDO 64 VERSIONS?
I would say that graphically it's the best of the bunch by far.

WHAT'S AT THE TOP OF YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST?
Five spanking new Dreamcasts, courtesy of Sega, for my kids (hint).



△ By holding down the 'L' shoulder button you can sidestep around enemies while still aiming at them.



△ Bad dudes burst in a shower of meaty chunks.

△ This is Michael LeRoi before becoming Shadow Man.

"MAINTAINS A DREARY STYLE... NUMBING YOUR SENSES INTO TIRED INDIFFERENCE"

from platform to platform and the occasional cursing that lets us know how adult we all are.

No matter how much you dress it up, *Shadow Man* is a platform game first and foremost, with the consequent dying every time you miss a ledge, starting at the last designated point and doing it all again. And here lies its downfall. Despite the open-endedness of the massive levels, you end up running around a lot with nothing to do but collect some power-ups, jump, die, and run around from the beginning again. There might well be an epic horror story binding it all together, but after a few hours of doing the same thing you've forgotten all about it and, quite frankly, couldn't care less whether the Serial Killer Club took over the world or not.

It may be our cynical old selves, but why the land of the dead should be so overcrowded with moving platforms, steam engines and arse-nipping doors is completely beyond us.

NO ONE DOES THAT VOODOO LIKE YOU DO

The movement between Liveside and Deadside provides a certain variety of settings, but the overall feel remains similar throughout. Whether it's the New Orleans ghettos, a prison in Texas or the hellish underworld, the game maintains a minimalist and dreary style. And while it is consistent with the dark, brooding mood it tries to create, it ends up numbing your senses into tired indifference. There's very little detail, and very little reason to stop and have a look around in case you're missing something. It's as though the developers knocked over a bucket of brown paint and left the stains there for dramatic effect.

However, these are not quite as dramatic – nor as disturbing – as the recurring cries of pain and despair of women and children, echoed by the slabs of human flesh and rotting entrails that tastefully decorate the scenery along with meat hooks and deformed creatures.

As for these latter figures of joviality, there's not much fun to be had in blasting them to splattereens either, since they're devoid of life in every sense of the word. Shadow Man can hold a weapon in each hand and fire each independently, but shooting and killing soon becomes part of the running and jumping routine. While some will no doubt be attracted by the *Tomb Raider*-like qualities on offer, anyone who's had a look at Lara Croft's most recent attempt on PC and PlayStation will know that she's moved on from all this.

The adult approach is a very welcome breath of fresh (or in this case fetid) air, but it's unclear whether a cartoony genre such as the platform game is suited to it. What's the use of giving us mature content if the gameplay remains so superficial? There's no question that our interests would have been held longer and more convincingly if there'd been greater depth. What we get instead is a game we've all played before, but wearing a voodoo dress and with some cheap claret sprayed on the walls, and some real-life serial killers thrown in for shock value.

If you're the depressive type who finds the vibrant colours and sounds of *Sonic Adventure* offensive, then you might want to dip your senses into the shadows of *Shadow Man*. If you want a game that will scare the bejeesus out of you, wait for *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* to chill your blood with much more style.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM STUDIOS**

VERDICT

THE PLATFORM GAME GROWS UP. AND BECOMES A RIGHT OLD BORE

UPPERS
Dark and grisly settings • Swearing • Shadow Man is a cool super-hero

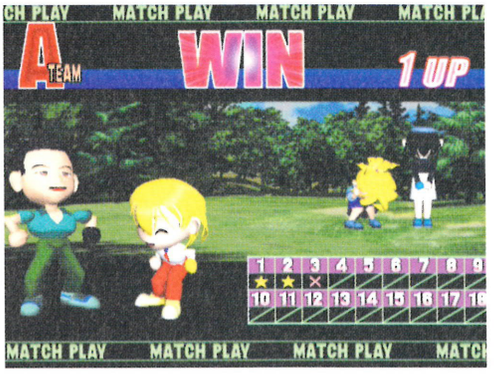
DOWNERS
Lots of running around • Puzzles almost non-existent • Visually flat

IN ONE HOUR We were beheading chickens and driving pins into a doll of the main character
WEBSITE www.acclaim.net/games/shadowman/
CHECK OUT The Shadow Man comics
MAX PLAYERS 1
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

6
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

△ The characters in *Tee Off* are all cute Japanese types. Bless...

△ Choose your golfer and which course to play on.



△ Celebrations on for the winners, desperation for the losers.

TEE OFF

There's more to golf than silly trousers. No, really, there must be. STUART DREDGE tries to convince himself.

THERE'S NO POINT IN BEATING about the bush: in the real world inhabited by real people, golf is a game played by idiots and watched by fools. Here in the easy-going UK it still ranks alongside cricket, polo and fox hunting as a sport that caters for pampered aristocrats and grasping social climbers.

Yet when it's time for the Ryder Cup or The Open, millions of us suddenly develop an interest in golf, even to the extent of sitting up all night watching live coverage of 'our boys' getting stuffed. This, despite the fact that most of us would be sent packing with a flea in our ear if we turned up at a real course wanting a game. Especially if we're female.

But that's a digression. Golf games bring the sport within reach of people like you and me – we can pay our 40 quid and enjoy a few rounds on some of the world's most famous courses. The trouble is that most golf games are almost as jaw-droppingly dull as the real thing, appealing to a limited number of golf geeks. They take it too seriously, y'see, creating 'realistic simulations' rather than games that are actually fun to play.

With that in mind, *Tee Off* is the golf game that doesn't just break the mould, it smashes it to smithereens. It chucks all the realistic conventions of golf sims out of the window and replaces them with shocking things like humour, fun and, most importantly, playability. Without wanting to over-exaggerate its appeal, *Tee Off* is as near as dammit a golf game for people who don't even like golf.

There are the characters, for a start. Rather than play as charisma-free virtual representations of the likes of Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods, you get to play as cutesy Japanese characters with big heads. There are 12 in all, although a lot of them have to be unlocked as you play through the game.

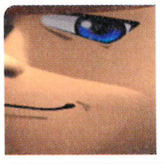
Each character has bags of personality too. They shout as they hit the ball, and each has a set of unique animations for the end of the hole, depending on whether they've shot a birdie, par or the dreaded bogey. Each character has different attributes too – some are stronger, while others hit more accurately, and so on. You'll quickly work out which one is your favourite and learn to love their quirky mannerisms.

As you'd expect, you can play the game in a variety of modes. Free Round enables you to pick one of the game's courses and play a round with up to four players. You can then choose exactly how you want it to work: Point Tourney, Stroke Play or one of the many Match Play modes – singles, best ball and even a threesome if you're a budding Nick Faldo. If nothing else, playing *Tee Off* certainly teaches you about all the different ways of playing golf.

World Tour sees you competing against canny console opponents on the world circuit, while G-Ball is a quite frankly bizarre game of croquet in space, which'll raise a laugh at first but won't really keep you hooked long-term. It's a nice idea though, but it's initially too hard to get into, and the visuals are just plain freaky.

Before each round, you can choose which clubs and

SPEAK OUT



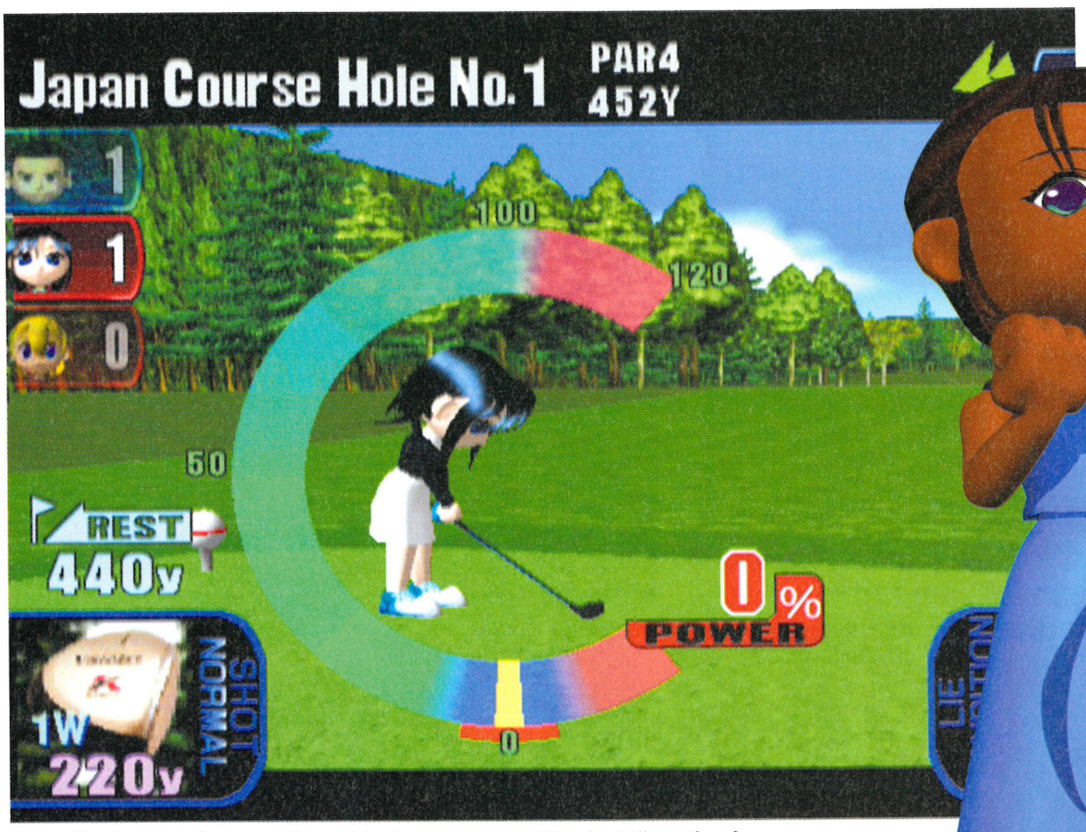
WE CAUGHT UP WITH **JAMES JOHNSON**, ACCLAIM PRODUCER OF *TEE OFF*, AT THE 19TH HOLE

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
A huge element of fun has been incorporated magnificently in what can also be taken as a serious golf game. The visuals and characters are absolutely gorgeous too.

WHAT'S THE BEST DREAMCAST GAME YOU'VE SEEN FROM ANOTHER DEVELOPER?
I would have to say *Soul Calibur* from Namco.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST 18-HOLE PITCH 'N PUTT SCORE?
Errm, last time I played I think it was about 70. Which is approximately 16 over par. I'm better off sticking to 'electronic' golf I think!

WHAT'S AT THE TOP OF YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST?
A busty blonde. Only joking. Hmm… maybe a new set of clubs would be a good idea.



△ *Tee Off*'s swing system is easy to understand, but less easy to master. It's a nice challenge though.

"IN THE REAL WORLD, GOLF IS PLAYED BY IDIOTS AND WATCHED BY FOOLS"

balls to use, although you can ride with the default options if you're not too sure. Once into the game you get a neat fly-by of each hole, giving you the chance to suss out possible dangers before playing them. From then on, it's pretty self-explanatory. For each shot, you choose a club and aim roughly where you want the ball to go, taking into account wind, of course – those pre-match beans are always a bad idea.

There are various tools to help you decide where to hit the ball – you can zoom in and out and whizz around to check the angles. Actually hitting the thing well takes a little practice. If you've ever played a golf game, you'll recognise the general idea. Clicking A brings up a circular power metre. Click once to start climbing, click again to set the power, and then as it goes down click once more to ensure a clean hit. It's complicated to explain, but obvious when you actually play it. You can even use the analogue pad to apply spin.

It's a good system, as you have to persevere to get good at it, but no matter how experienced you are there's always a chance of hitting a slice. Get it too wrong and the ball hops a few feet forward or spoons up into the air, so mistakes can be costly. Thankfully, on lower difficulty levels the console-controlled characters are just as likely to mis-hit a ball as you are, making for more nicely balanced matches.

And that's about it, really. *Tee Off* is simple to get into and addictive to play. Five courses might not sound like that many, but then PC owners often have to put up with just one or two, stumping up extra cash for add-on packs. It's fun to play on your own, but its real strength – as with so many Dreamcast titles – is as a chance to embarrass your mates or be embarrassed yourself. As a multiplayer experience *Tee Off* is a tour de force.

Bad points? For the most part, the music is horrendous, apart from one fantastic funky wah-wah track that sometimes kicks in when you're putting. The game hasn't got that much depth if you're playing alone, and the cutesy-pie nature of the characters might just serve to annoy you. But then again, it might not – these things really are subjective.

If you're looking for an ultra-realistic *Links*-alike, there's no question that *Tee Off* will disappoint you. Still, never mind, there'll probably be one along sometime next year. If, however, you wouldn't normally consider buying a golf game, this could well be the title to change your mind. It's almost enough to make you buy some checked trousers and step on to a real course. Almost, we said, almost.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **BOTTOM UP**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM**

VERDICT

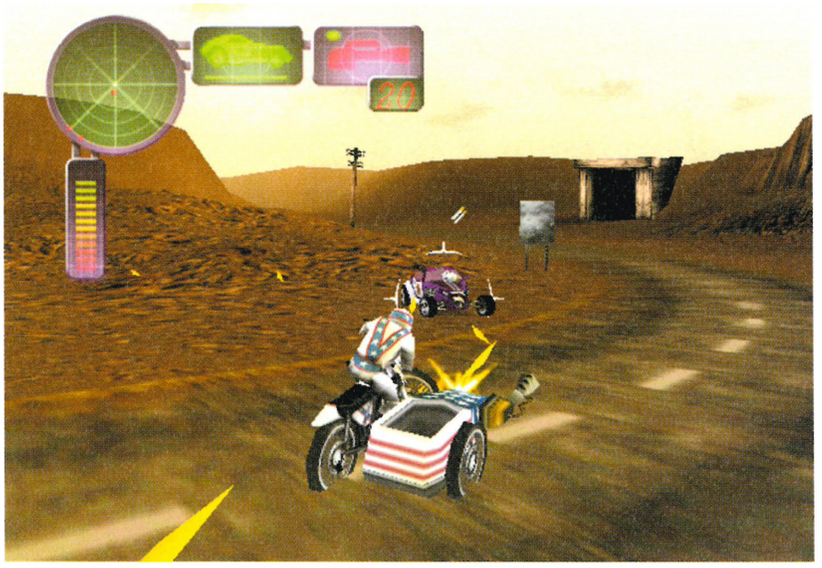
FINALLY! A GOLF GAME THAT'S ACTUALLY FUN

UPPERS
Easy to get into • Bags of character • Not much like real golf – far too entertaining

DOWNERS
Terrible music • Too cute for some • Won't appeal to hardcore golf fans

IN ONE HOUR We'd stopped triple bogeying
WEBSITE www.acclaim.com
CHECKOUT www.dailygolfjokes.com – a new golf joke every day! Oh yes.
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 60Hz

7
ODM RATING OUT OF 10



△ Look at the wheels – a perfect example of the way the vehicles 'glitch' into the scenery. Shame.

△ Impressive damage effects.

VIGILANTE 8 2ND OFFENSE

Driving, guns blazing, through Activision's '70s car combat game, **RICHIE SHOEMAKER** takes the law into his own hands.

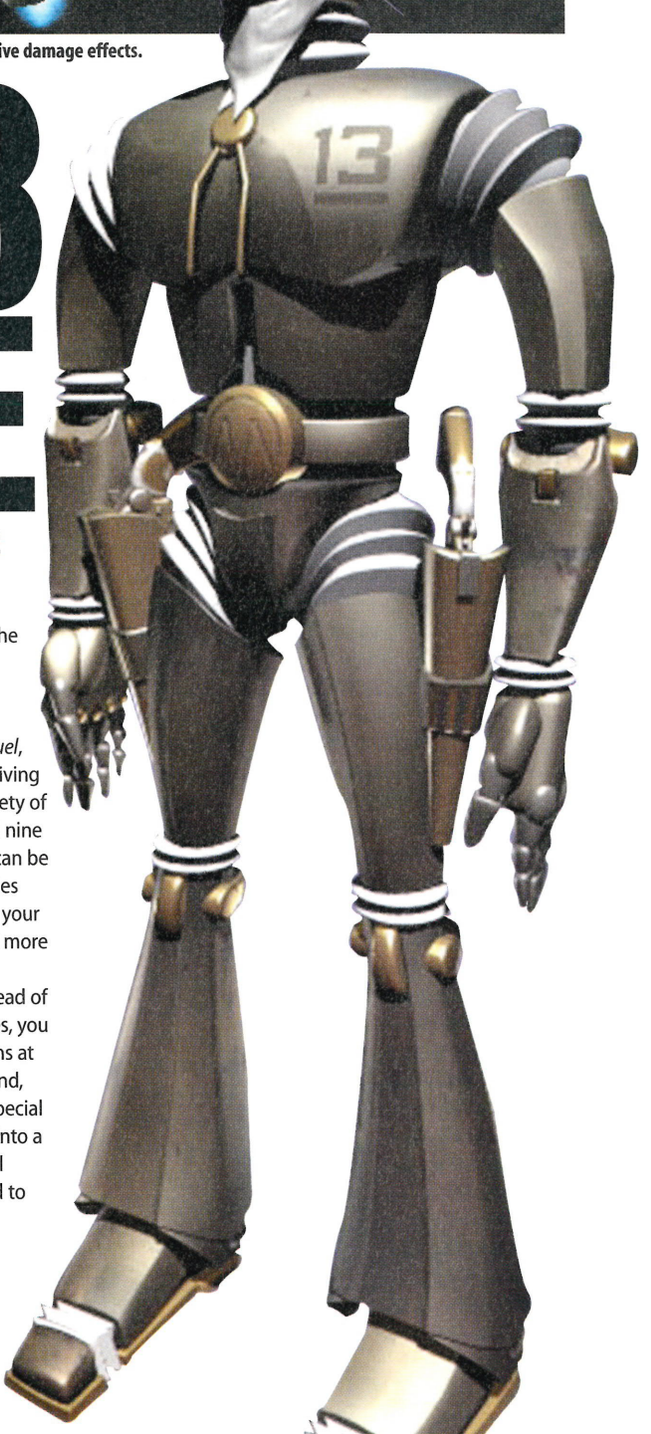
IF YOU HAPPEN to be the runt of the family litter, you'll no doubt have had to spend your formative years wearing the clothes your elders had long since grown out of. We talk, of course, of the humble cast-off: being given your brother's faded Slade T-shirt when you asked for The Smiths. Ending up with your sister's black Dunlop plimsolls – with the elastic across the front – when you clearly requested Nike Air Max. Then there was your sixteenth birthday when you sulked for a Megadrive and ended up with a second-hand Dragon 32*.

In most cases cast-offs are clearly hazardous. Games, though, are different. If a software developer decides that what the latest console needs is an updated version of their PlayStation hit, it stands to reason that a game designed for that machine, remade to work on something altogether superior like Dreamcast, is sure to end up a better game. That's the theory, anyway. In practise, graphically overhauled and with a few extra features packed in the boot, *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense* is basically an extended remix of what is widely regarded as the best auto-combat game on PlayStation. And what's good for the PlayStation must be good for the Dreamcast, surely? Well…

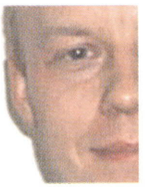
DREAMCAST-OFFS

Bypassing the abysmal plot (a mix of Spielberg's *Duel*, *Mad Max* and *Doctor Who*), *Vigilante 8*'s blend of driving and shooting is initially alluring. There's a wide variety of gameplay modes to choose from, eight arenas and nine vehicles to trash, and seven weapon systems that can be picked up and fired. Kill off your automotive enemies and it's on to the next geographical arena. Fulfil all your objectives and within a few hours you've unlocked more cars and special weapons.

Vigilante 8 is basically a beat 'em up in cars: instead of running around twatting sumo wrestlers with pipes, you pull doughnuts and fire off turret-mounted cannons at '70s-style muscle cars. Power-ups litter the levels and, bizarrely enough, each weapon has a number of special moves that can turn, say, a short-range ball of fire into a wall of licking flames – enough to deter any frontal assault. Unfortunately, constantly wheeling around to



"NOT REALLY THE GAME YOU BOUGHT A DREAMCAST FOR"



SPEAK OUT

ON THE ROAD WITH **PETER MORAWIEC**, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND LEAD DESIGNER AT LUXOFLUX CORP

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?

Personally I think it's the amount of depth *V8* offers. It's a fairly simple game to pick up – drive, shoot, destroy – but there are 101 ways to do it via countless tactics and combos of secret moves, 'whammies' and 'totals'. We've seen some master players pull some amazing feats we didn't even anticipate. The sharp Dreamcast graphics at 60fps aren't too shabby either.

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE VEHICLE IN THE GAME?

The hovering Palomino XIII is my favourite design; the Thunderbolt and the Chrono Stinger are about the most well-rounded cars in the game, and thus the easiest and most fun to drive for newbie vigilantes.

WHICH CAR WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO HAVE INCLUDED IN THE GAME?

A yellow school bus – a favourite from the original *V8* – was yanked out due to the increased censorship sparked by the Columbine shootings. Personally I would love to have a late '60s Skoda 100 for a bit of nostalgia, as I spent my first 18 years in Czechoslovakia, but it would be difficult to justify!

keep the enemy vehicle in your small firing arc just goes to prove that fixed weapons on fast-moving vehicles are not only unnecessary, but also ridiculous. Having said that, once you've mastered a few special moves the gameplay does open up, especially as you can upgrade your car with each enemy car you trash.

The go-anywhere arenas, ranging from Louisiana swamps to nuclear power plants, are certainly the best aspect of the game. If a building, tree or other object can't be destroyed by firing or crashing into it, it'll almost certainly have some purpose, either to give you access to some power-up or just to take you on a ride through some hidden area. The problem is that no matter which mission you're on, the aim is essentially the same – find a certain number of objects and destroy anything that gets in your way.

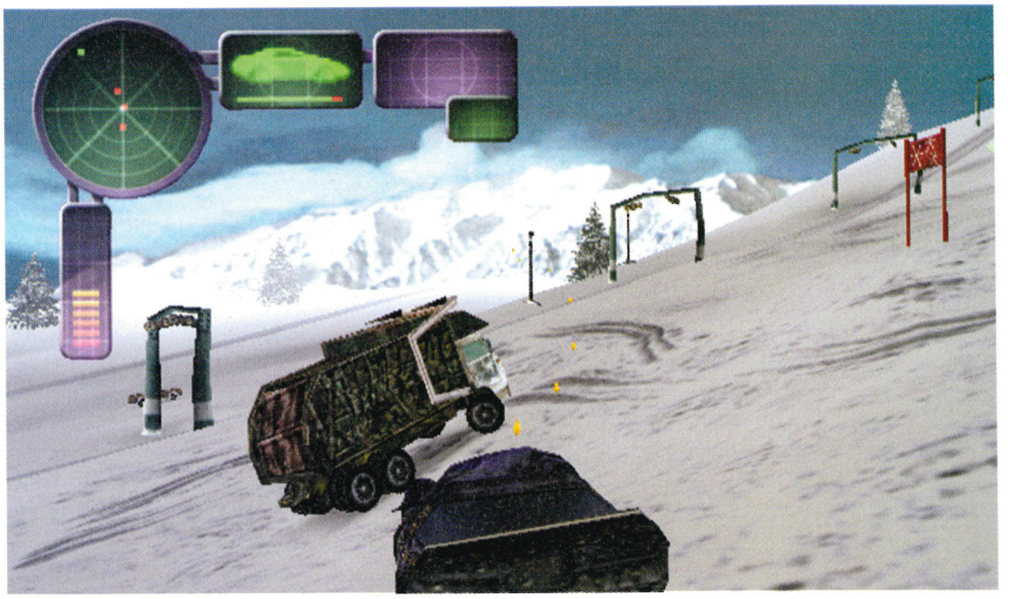
DRIVE AND GO

Graphically, *Vigilante 8* is fairly agreeable, but not as over the top as you'd expect or hope. Functional, bright and distinctive is about as much praise as can be lavished upon it. Parts of cars often glitch into the scenery, and details, both on the landscape and the vehicles, often aren't drawn until you move closer to them.

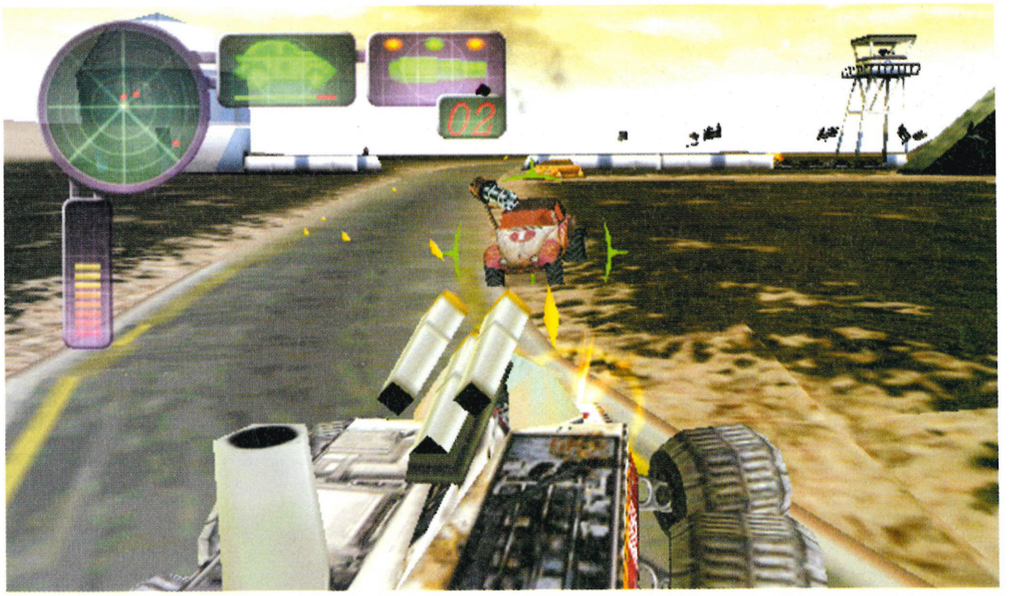
The real problems with the game are mostly down to gameplay. Although original and instantly accessible, *Vigilante 8* borders on the ridiculous. In a traditional beat 'em up the fun is in seeing your opponent's teeth fly across the screen; here, cars turning over in unrealistic fashion isn't quite the same.

Like most fighting games, of course, *Vigilante 8* improves as the number of people rubbing shoulders around the screen increases. The two-player quest and four-player team-play modes are probably the best multiplayer games, the former a two-player co-operative version of the single-player quest, the latter a two-on-two deathmatch. But, alas, good multiplayer options do not a great single-player game make. For all the weapons you can fire and scenery you can flatten, what makes games like this really fun is the ability to just ram other cars Destruction Derby-style, and in *Vigilante* doing so has no effect. There's too much emphasis on weapons, and very little on skilful driving.

With all the new features this version has over its older PlayStation brother, there's very little that improves the game, and the fact that this new version will also be appearing on the five-year-old console says as much. Fun to a point, and certainly a little different from the run-of-the-mill driving games, *Vigilante 8* is not really the game you bought a Dreamcast for.



△ **Drive into the ski lift and it takes you to the top of the mountain. Then you can ski your way down the luge track.**



△ **The forward-firing weapons are tricky; the auto-locking ones are perhaps too easy to use.**

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **LUXOFLUX**

** The Dragon 32 was one of the early 8-bit home computers. It was a bit like a Gameboy, but ten times bigger, twice as expensive and half as powerful. And Welsh.*

VERDICT

A GOOD IDEA POORLY IMPLEMENTED. OR IS THAT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?

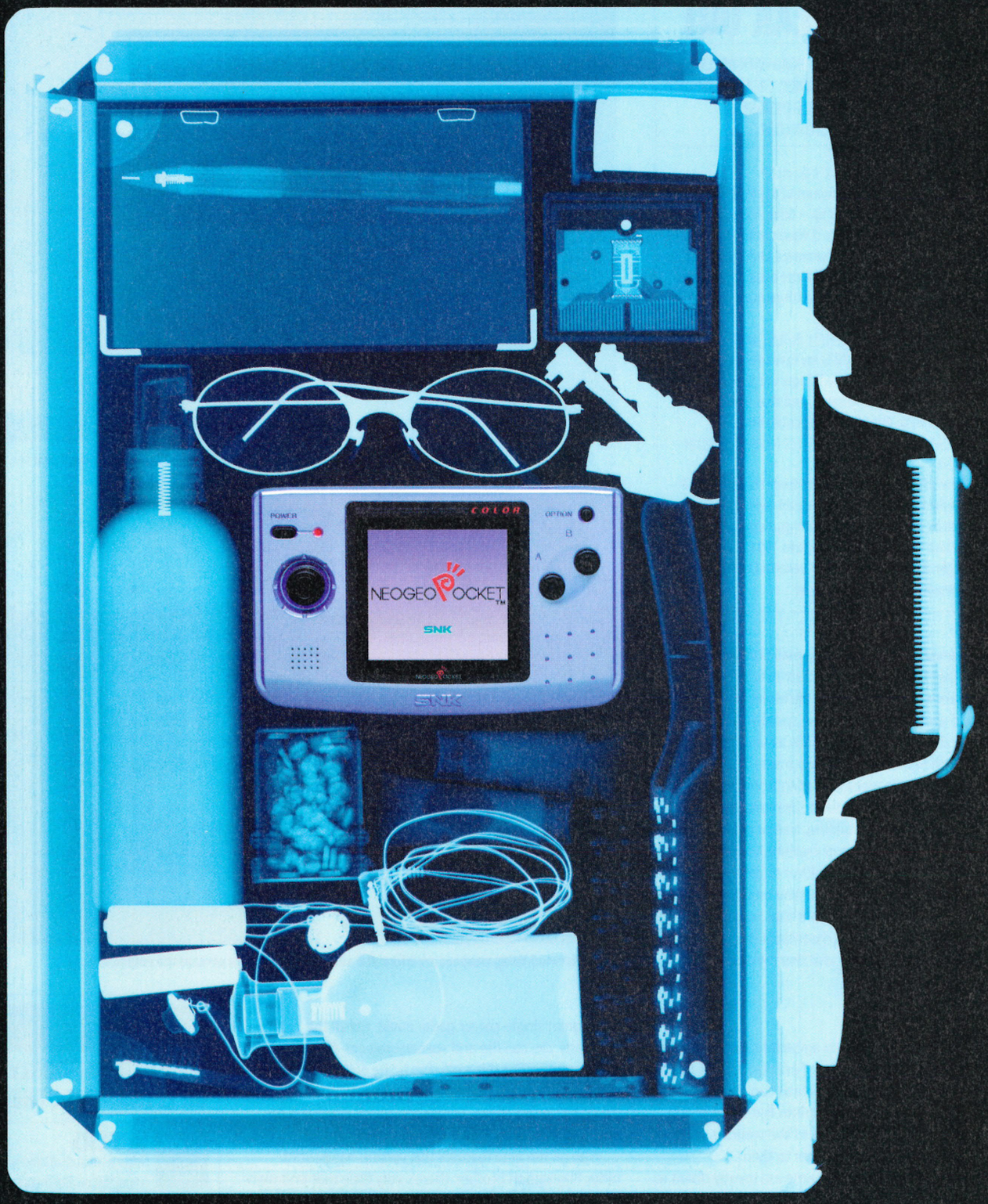
UPPERS
Original mixture of driving and combat • Great interactive environments

DOWNERS
Abysmal storyline • As a driving game, not enough variation • Hardly cutting-edge graphics

IN ONE HOUR Four of the eight maps mastered, but no extra cars unlocked
WEBSITE www.activision.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

5
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

get some colour in your life.



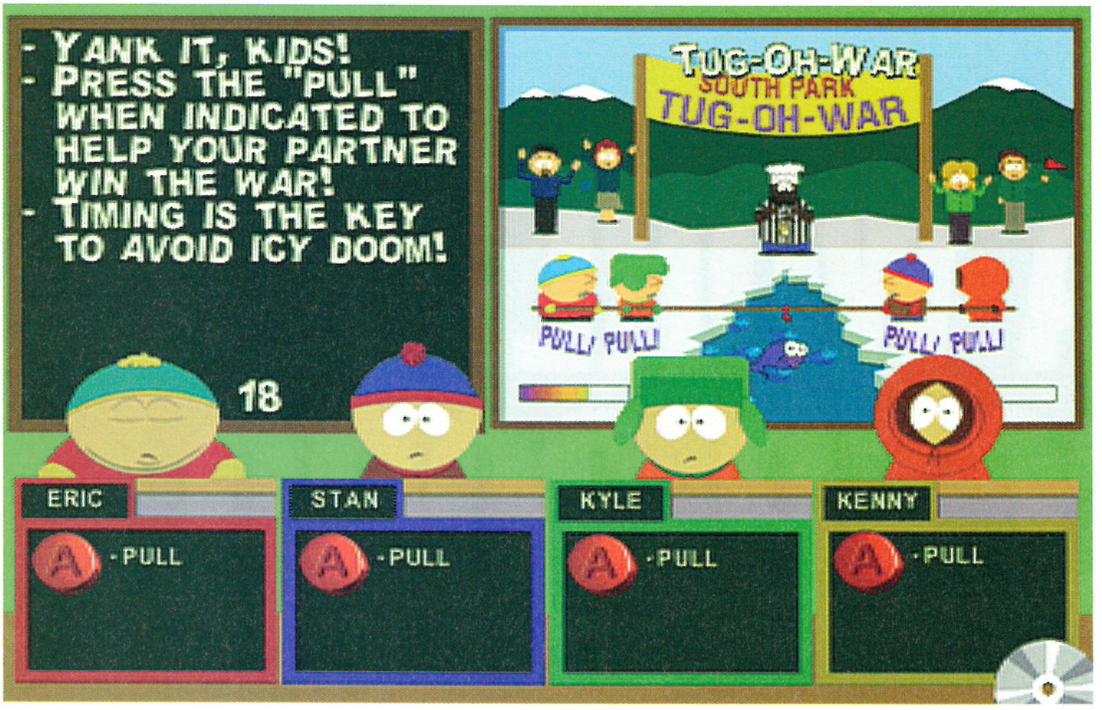
HEATHROW AIRPORT 16:44

40 hours continuous playtime. 18 hot titles. 16bit colour power. 6 cool cases. 1 machine. Zero alternative.

SNK

NEOGEO POCKET

NeoGeo £59.99 Games £24.99. Available at Electronics Boutique, Game, HMV, MVC, Dixons, Currys, @Jakarta, Beatties and all good independent retailers.



△ A potential big-fun big seller has turned out to be a pedestrian gaming experience.

SOUTH PARK: CHEF'S LUV SHACK

Oh my god! It's another *South Park* cash-in. **DAN TRENT** is the man in line for some sweet lovin'

IF EVER THERE WAS A TV SHOW that's ripe for a console spin-off, *South Park* is it. Sadly, however, experience shows that, rather than do something interesting and inventive with a concept, the accepted wisdom seems to be to knock up a hasty rehash of an existing game and get it on the shelves before anyone can shout "cash-in."

TRY AND STAY AWAKE, MMMMM-KAY

And so we turn to *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack*, in which our four foul-mouthed friends take part in a quiz show hosted by the gravel-voiced lurve machine himself. In addition to the basic quiz, the show incorporates a range of mini-games to liven up the proceedings. From the off it's designed as a multiplayer game, and can support up to four players depending on the number of control pads you have.

Graphically there's very little that can be said. As far as staying true to *South Park*'s low-rent ethos, it is authentic, and the game succeeds in looking just as, well, cheap as the genuine article. To be fair this is actually one of the game's strong points as, were it not for the unnecessarily long loading times, it creates the illusion of you playing a part in a real episode, and seeing the characters react to your input is great fun. A shame, then, that playing the game is such a pedestrian experience.

Question topics like Asses, Aliens and Anal Probes and Hippie Crap might seem amusing at first glance, but the reality turns out to be far more dull. Mini-games like Spank The Monkey and Asses In Space are the only real saving grace, gleefully subverting legends such as *Track And Field* and *Space Invaders*. It's just a pity you have to sit through the game show to play them.

QUIZ SHOWS SUCK!

When all's said and done then, *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack* is a lacklustre affair that, even at a few coppers under 30 quid, is simply too slow and tedious to merit putting the readies down for.

Any accusations that the *South Park* movie was an exercise in selling out were answered by its superbly offensive content, whereas the attempt to tone down *Chef's Luv Shack* to make it acceptable to the widest audience possible means it loses the very vulgarity that could have made it a hit.

Another tenner off the price and a hefty shot of gratuitously offensive content could have made *Chef's Love Shack* the bargain multiplayer it strives to be. Sadlythis is never more than a first-date fumble of a game.

PRICE: **£29.99**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN**

VERDICT

WILL LEAVE EVEN HARDCORE *SOUTH PARK* FANS COLD

UPPERS
Great mini-games • Fun for four people • Feels like you're in an episode...

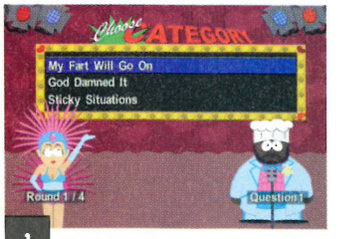
DOWNERS
...a very dull one • Not enough filth • Dull questions • Long loading times

IN ONE HOUR Chef's sweet lovin' was leaving us cold.
WEBSITE www.acclaim.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Bordered PAL

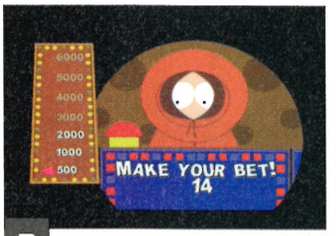
3
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

WALKTHROUGH
WANNA SEE THOSE FINGERS...

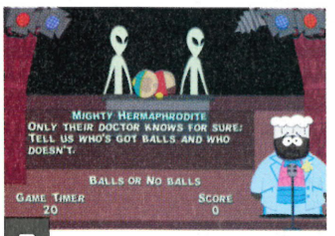
Success in *Chef's Love Shack* requires a lot of useless knowledge as well as plenty of gaming skill...



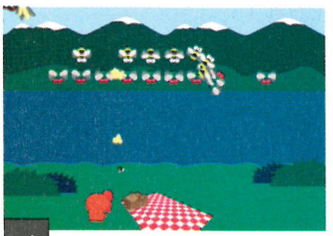
1 ▽ Don't be fooled by the fun-sounding categories, the questions you're asked are true pub quiz fare.



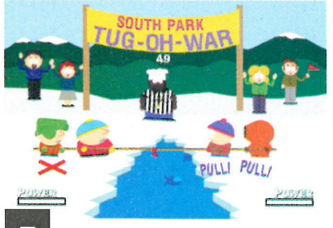
2 ▽ Oh, come on now, Kenny. You don't need to look so worried, you don't even get killed in the game.



3 ▽ Cartman gets the probe, but only if you manage to answer the questions correctly.



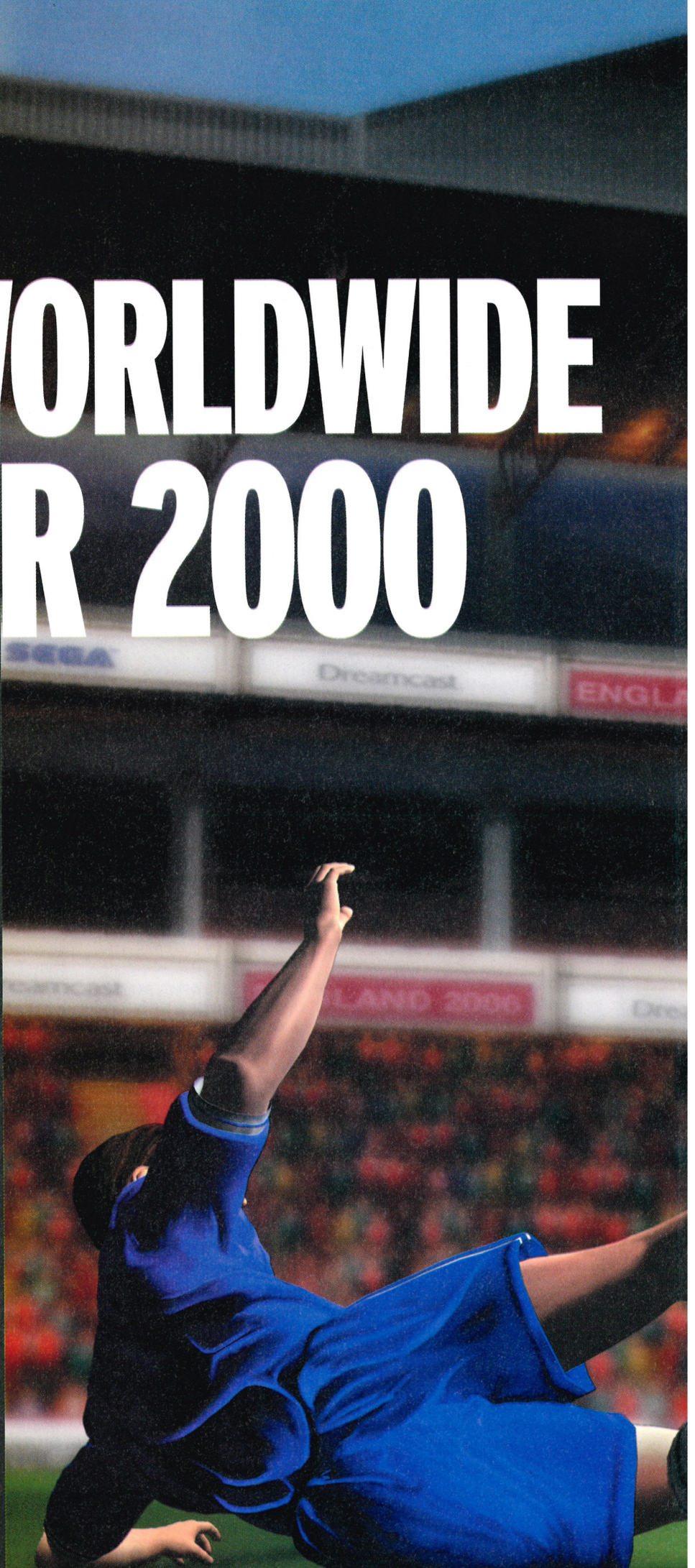
4 ▽ In this mini-game, the classic *Space Invaders* gets the *South Park* treatment.



5 ▷ You need to have fast-movin' fingers if you're going to stay out of the icy water.

SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000

As the second Dreamcast footie game to reach us makes it to the shelves, **STUART DREDGE** decides whether it deserves trophy honours or an early bath

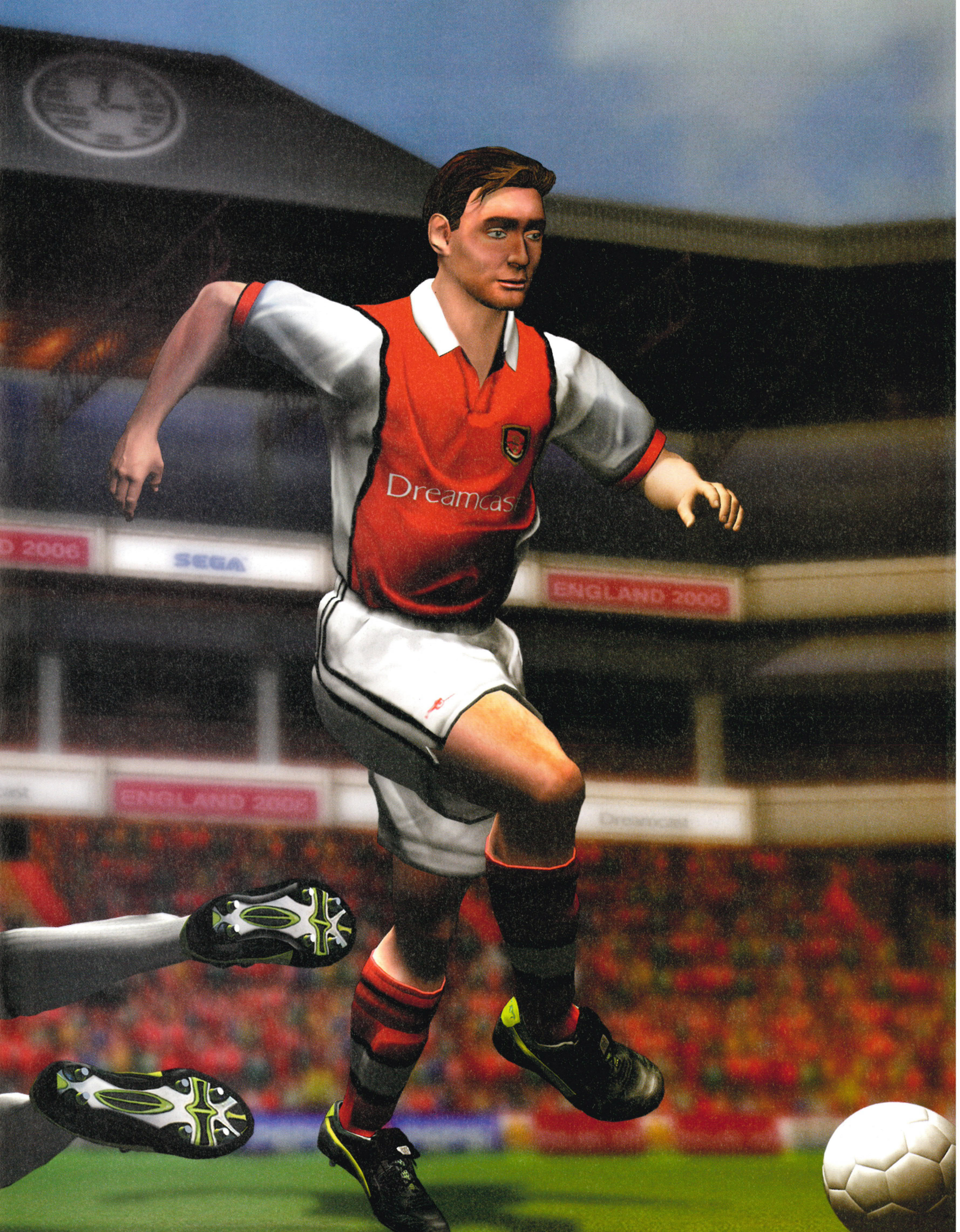


IF THERE'S ONE THING GUARANTEED to drive a console's success in the UK, it's a decent football game. And for any software publisher canny enough to tap into the national enthusiasm for the beautiful game, big bucks are the result – just ask Electronic Arts.

So far, we've only had one soccer title on Dreamcast – the talented yet flawed *UEFA Striker*. With EA still refusing to commit themselves to Sega's new system, that means the field is wide open for everyone else. *WWS2000* is the first of two official Sega titles to take the field, with *Virtua Striker 2000* also looming in the near future. No doubt there'll also be others.

Let's not beat about the bush. There are a lot of people very excited about the arrival of *Sega Worldwide Soccer 2000*. It's partly because footie games are currently thin on the ground, but there's also its semi-illustrious reputation. After all, the Saturn version of *Worldwide Soccer* is thought to be one of the better football efforts on any console.

First things first, though. The name is actually misleading. Rather than being worked on by the same team behind the Saturn game, *WWS2000* is the work of Silicon Dreams – the ▷


SEGA
ENGLAND 2006

△ The game features all the main international teams, as well as club sides from ten major leagues around the world.

△ Lining up the wall is crucial.

△ Tinker with your formation pre-match.

▷ team responsible for the *World League Soccer* franchise on other platforms.

Effectively, it's a conversion of those games, rather than a true follow-up to the original *WWS* – albeit with plenty more bells and whistles to take advantage of Dreamcast's extra power. Nevertheless, the *World League Soccer* games have tended to be more solid than spectacular – sounding a note of caution to us breathless Dreamcast owners.

As you'd expect, *WWS2000* comes with a host of options to mess around with before you even reach the pitch. The game features all the main international teams, as well as club sides from ten major leagues around the world. In addition to the big guns of England, Italy and Spain, there are the comparative minnows of the USA, Japan and even Scotland to choose from.

Here's a funny thing, though. The English and Scottish teams all have the correct player names, but the foreign clubs have near approximations: 'Maldeeny' at AC Milan, for example, 'Ronalldoe' at Inter and, most entertainingly, 'MucManamun' at Real Madrid. They all sound exactly the same when the commentator says them – clever touch, that – but football fans will be forgiven for wondering when this licensing madness will end. And there's no names editor to sort it out. Grr…

Besides friendly exhibition matches, you can compete in loads of different competitions. There are leagues and knock-out cups at both international and club level, and you can also create your own customised tournaments with as many teams as you want. It's even possible to mix clubs and countries. For example, you can finally see how Man United would fare against the likes of Brazil (clue: they'd get whupped).

ON ME 'EAD, SON

It's nice to have this level of customisation, but the way the competitions are presented isn't so good. Although you can view past results, there's no fixture list option, so you can't look ahead to see who you'll be playing next. It's not a crippling flaw, but it is irritating.

Before every match, you can take a peek at the opposition's team and edit your own formation, team line-up and marking strategy. It's not as complex as it could be – you can't choose dead-ball takers, for instance, or go into too much detail on individual player tactics. Furthermore, it's debatable how much your changes actually affect the match – playing a sweeper system doesn't feel different from a flat-back four, although that could be down to my sloppy defensive play rather than a major fault in the game itself.

To summarise, pre-match *WWS2000* doesn't look like it's going to set the world alight, but equally there are enough options to lift it above mediocrity. Still, it's what happens in the 90 minutes that counts. And at the end of the day (sorry, couldn't resist the footie cliché there) *WWS2000* will stand or fall on its on-field performance.

If you've been racing impatiently through the previous few paragraphs, you're probably desperate to find out how well the damn thing plays. The answer? Well, it's not as good as you're hoping, but it's not as bad as it could've been. Sorry to sit on the fence like that, but there you go.

Looks-wise, *WWS2000* is impressive, but not gobsmacking. The players are sharp and move like credible human beings rather than the constipated tailor's dummies that have blighted some football games in the past. When you get the chance to watch the game in action – or when the multi-angle highlights kick in – you can see a lot of work's gone into making the action look smooth and easy on the eye. Even so, this is a minor consideration. A classic football game is judged on its feel rather than its look, and it's here the first doubts begin to creep in…

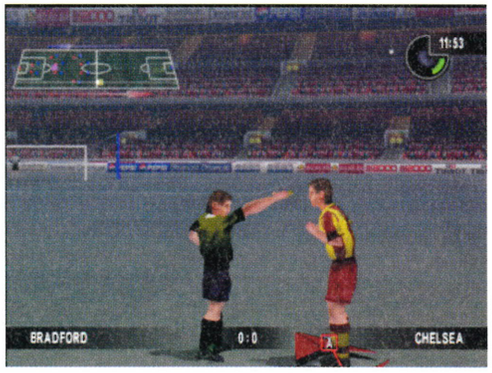
Y'see, the graphics might be the first thing you'll notice about *WWS2000*, but the second is guaranteed to be the speed. It's just not very fast. The players amble around the pitch like a bunch of pub players the morning after an enormous curry.

Admittedly, it makes the Everton team a pretty accurate representation of the real thing, but if you're a speed freak who's been hammering *FIFA 99* for the last year, you may find it too pedestrian for your liking. That's not to say *WWS2000*'s sedate pace is a major flaw, as it gives you more time and space to construct your flowing attacks. It's definitely something to bear in mind, though.

If you ever played competitive football as a youngster, you'll doubtless have been told many times that the ball travels faster than the man – just in case you were too thick to understand simple physics. As in life, so in virtual

"THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE VERY EXCITED ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF *SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000*"

△ It's best to face the attacker when defending.



△ "Who? Me? I never touched 'im ref!"

△ Tackling in the game can be problematic – a problem shared by Dreamcast-sponsored Arsenal.

"THE PLAYERS AMBLE ABOUT THE PITCH LIKE A BUNCH OF PUB PLAYERS AFTER A HUGE CURRY"

reality: all the best football games revolve around a quick and intuitive passing system. And in this respect, *WWS2000* doesn't disappoint.

GET STUCK IN THERE

Even in your first few games, you shouldn't have any problems stringing together some eye-catching moves, and it won't be long before you're zinging the ball around the pitch playing one-touch football like the great Liverpool sides of the 1980s. With a little practice, the world of brisk one-twos, canny through-balls and Beckham-quality crosses will be in your grasp. If there's one criticism, it's that passing is a bit ponderous if you're not playing one-touch football. C'est la vie.

Tackling is a bit more problematic. There's a slide tackle which'll strip away the ball if timed right, and land you in trouble if timed wrong. Then there's a 'foot out' tackle which'll usually send the other player flying while you stroll away with the ball. Finally, you can just run into the other player, and there's a good chance you'll come out with the goods.

Tackling isn't over-difficult in *WWS2000*, but it just doesn't feel right. Even when you execute a fair challenge, you're still effectively bundling your opponent off the ball. If this was real life, every match would see half the teams sent off, and Roy Keane would be lucky to stay on the pitch for more than five minutes.

WWS2000's goalkeepers are a mixed bag. Your keeper is pretty good – he comes off his line and dives at strikers' feet at a moment's notice, and he's not averse to the odd cat-like leap to palm away top-corner cannonballs. However, some of the weaker teams' keepers are quite simply rubbish – an unholy mixture of Dave Beasant, Massimo Taibi and David James.

It doesn't seem realistic – if you think about real life, some of the best keepers play for the worst teams – after all, they get plenty of practice. If you've hammered someone seven-nil, it takes the shine off it if four of the goals have squirmed through the goalie's bow legs.

The commentary is all right – it's no worse than any other football game, but no better either. Trevor Brooking mumbles away indecipherably, and occasionally the words lag behind the action, but otherwise it doesn't put you off too much. The day a game features commentary that actually adds to your enjoyment of the action will be a great one – until then, *WWS2000* is certainly no disgrace.

How about the opposition? There's a good range of teams in the game, but there's no way of adjusting the difficulty level except by playing as one of the best teams – not the best solution for all you Watford fans out there. Playing against the giants can bring you back to earth with a bump, as the skills you've been diligently developing get annihilated by the unstoppable ▷

SPEAK OUT

WE TALKED TO **DAVID RUTTER**, PRODUCER ON *SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR GAME?
For a start, there's a fantastic array of teams to choose from – more than 190 in fact. Players should also look out for the unique messages that are displayed on the VM unit during the game.

WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE DEVELOPING FOR DREAMCAST?
It's been interesting, mainly because this has been my first Dreamcast title. There've been one or two instances that have made it different as a result of having to follow Japanese guidelines.

WHO DO YOU SUPPORT?
I'm a big fan of Stevenage Borough!

ALAN SHEARER: A NATIONAL HERO OR A WHINGING WASHED-UP OLD GIT?
He's a quality player who's had a recent lean patch. Some may say he's lost his predatory eye, but goalscorers throughout the world occasionally have extended dodgy patches.

CLASSIC MATCHES REPLAYED *WWS 2000*-STYLE

ENGLAND VS ARGENTINA

WORLD CUP, 1998

MAIN AIM
To overturn the Argentinians without resorting to the dreaded penalty shoot-out. And preferably with a couple more wonder goals from the boy Owen.

SECONDARY AIM
To see how quickly we can get David Beckham trudging off the pitch for an early bath.

RESULT
4-2 to England.

HOW IT HAPPENED
Sticking with a pretty similar line-up to the one that took the field on that fateful night in St Etienne, England come out on top thanks to a slick ground passing game. Argentina may have taken the lead, but two goals in quick succession from Shearer quashed any thoughts of another upset. A brace of goals from Owen made the game safe, despite a late goal for Argentina by, er, 'Simyony'.

And Beckham? Well, he was off the pitch and in the bath inside 30 minutes. Nice hair, though.

BRAZIL VS FRANCE

WORLD CUP, 1998

MAIN AIM
To remove all memories of one of the most pathetic Brazilian performances ever witnessed, and to take the Jules Rimet trophy triumphantly back to Rio de Janeiro.

SECONDARY AIM
To make Ronaldo – sorry, 'Ronalldoe' – run like a slug whenever the ball comes near him.

RESULT
4-0 to Brazil.

HOW IT HAPPENED
France suffer an utter stuffing. Even with a blatantly off-form Ronaldo, the men in yellow swarm over the French, moving the ball around the pitch at the speed of light and strolling through the defence like a knife through hot, wussy butter.

With shots raining in on the bald French goalie from all angles, the only surprise is that Brazil's tally stays at four. Brazil play with exceptional skill, flair and speed. It's just like watching Barnsley.

BAYERN MUNICH V MAN UTD

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL, 1999

MAIN AIM
To take control of the crafty Bayern Munich team and humble the mighty Reds at the highest possible level, making United manager Alex Ferguson whine on live TV.

SECONDARY AIM
To let Man United have unlimited shots on goal in the last two minutes, and for the Bayern keeper to save them all.

RESULT
6-2 to Man Utd.

HOW IT HAPPENED
Bugger. Our plans to cause weeping in the streets of Surrey is scuppered early on when we realise that in the game's skill levels, Man Utd get nine and a half stars, while Bayern Munich only get a miserable three.

Unbelievable, but the match proceeds according to form, as the Red Devils dish out a drubbing to remember. By the last two minutes there's no need to let them pepper the goal with shots – they've been doing it all match.

△ As well as club teams you might be familiar with, teams from the USA are also included.

△ Tunisia always pull a big crowd.

△ You can even pit clubs against countries.

△ **Is it a penalty? Is the Fiorentina player about to take a dive (probably)? Why is Stam standing on one leg? Who cares?**

▷ attacking flair of a Brazil or a Man U. If you're looking for a challenge, *WWS2000* will certainly provide it, meaning that at least you'll get a good many hour's solo gameplay for your money.

By the time you're reading this, your eyes have almost certainly already strayed to the score at the end of this review. Why so low? The simple answer is that although it's a good game, it's just not exciting enough. And let's face it, football needs to be exciting. Otherwise it's, well, American Football, basically.

It's difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of the fun vacuum in *WWS2000*. Sure, the languorous pace of matches doesn't help matters, but it's more to do with the overall *feel* of the game.

Perhaps a football analogy will help explain it: it's like we're waiting for a Hoddle or a Gascoigne to step onto the field and set the game alight with pace, flair and creativity. Instead, in *WWS2000* we've been given a Jamie Redknapp: looks nice, sprays the ball about attractively, but ultimately is not quite international quality. There'll probably be angry letters from Liverpool fans, but there you have it.

To be fair, the more you play it, the less you notice its inadequacies – if you're into football, you'll almost certainly find a lot to enjoy in *WWS*. It seems harsh to compare it to games on other systems, but what Dreamcast-owning football fans want is a game that demonstrably wipes the floor with the likes of *FIFA*, and this just isn't it.

A more relevant comparison is with *UEFA Striker*, which scored an eight in its review. In the eyes of this reviewer, however, the two games are much of a muchness. Combine the best bits from both, and you'd have an ace game. Not that that helps. If you're into football, *WWS* is worth a punt – it's all right. Thing is, in our opinion, we deserve more than just 'all right'. Roll on *Virtua Striker 2000*.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SILICON DREAMS**

VERDICT

ABOVE-AVERAGE FOOTBALL SIM THAT COULD DO BETTER

UPPERS
Intuitive passing • Half-decent goalies, for a change • Plenty of teams

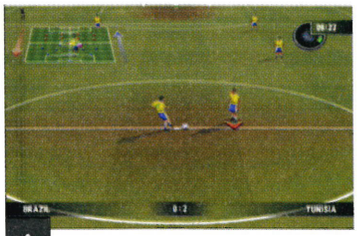
DOWNERS
Slow pace • Tackling's too strong • Overall lack of atmosphere

IN ONE HOUR We still couldn't beat Man United
WEBSITE www.sdreams.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS: 4
VIDEO MODES: Full-screen PAL

6
ODM RATING OUT OF 10

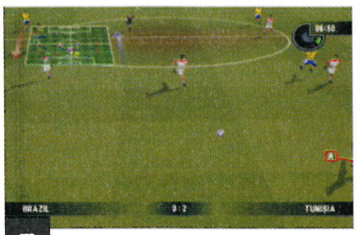
WALKTHROUGH
SMACK MY PITCH UP

Get some practice in, and sweeping the ball down the length of the pitch will become second nature. Check out this England move.

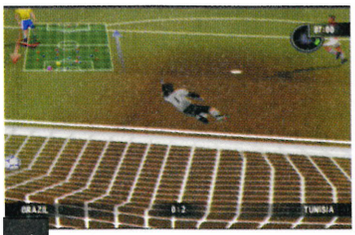


1 ▽ Keep a cool head when you get the ball. Players are quick to tackle, so this is the only time you'll have to plan your move.

2 ▽ Short ground passes are a good way to progress – after all, it's unheard of for Brazil to play the long-ball game.



3 ▽ Slip the ball behind the defence for strikers to run onto. It leaves defenders on the back foot so you can…



4 ▽ …hammer the ball into the back of the net. Be careful not to apply too much aftertouch, or it'll sail wide. Fool.

5 ▷ Celebrate your goal by watching the replays again and again from a variety of different camera angles.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY.**

REVIEWS ROUND-UP
DRINKING...

Yes, it's that time when we take our fearless review team out into the public arena, ply them with alcohol and see what they really think about the games reviewed this issue. This month's venue for the boozy banter is the Fishbowl in sunny Brighton

THE SOUTH COAST'S REPUTATION as one giant nursing home populated by blue rinse types living out their twilight years is well justified. Apart from Brighton. Maybe it's the town's huge university population, or maybe it's simply a last stand by those still with a spring in their step, but Brighton is packed with cool people all with that slightly smug look that comes from living the London life without actually having to live in London. The fact that people are willing to tolerate commuting into the capital is testament to the charms of Brighton, as is the number of people who come to visit and never go back. As Richard, manager of Fishbowl told us, there's nowhere quite like it in Britain.

And so to our venue for this month's discussion. Fishbowl is one of a varied chain of bars and pubs around Britain and takes its inspiration from its location spitting distance from the beach. Movie buffs may also recognise the alleyway just opposite the bar as the scene of Phil Daniels's and Leslie Ash's 'encounter' in the mod classic movie *Quadrophenia*.

Cosy and inviting, the bar's seaside theme extends to the décor, which is made up of shells and pebbles from the beach, and rather beautiful fish-shaped beer pumps. Offering the usual array of draught and bottled lagers, there's also an impressive range of flavoured vodkas, which apparently go down a storm with the locals.

Fishbowl's handy location next door to the cinema makes it an ideal pre-film pit-stop for a coffee or even a bite to eat. The menu is, unsurprisingly, fishy by nature, and predominantly Far Eastern in influence – absolutely delicious and won't stretch the old wallet too far – although as the evening goes on the emphasis shifts as the place fills up, so choose your time according to your mood. Quality tunes, a cosy atmosphere, good food and drink and friendly staff. What more could you ask for?

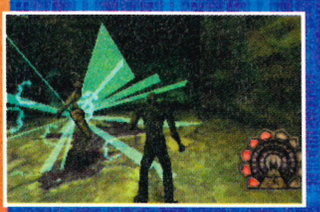
• Thanks to Fishbowl. The bar is open from 11am-11pm Monday to Saturday, and 12am-10.30pm Sunday. Phone 01273 777505 for details.

TEE OFF

REVIEWED ON PAGE 86

RE-VOLT

REVIEWED ON PAGE 80



SHADOW MAN

REVIEWED ON PAGE 84

WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000

REVIEWED ON PAGE 92

...& THINKING

△ ***Re-Volt*: good fun, but no podium position and a dousing of champagne.**

RE-VOLT

REVIEWED ON PAGE 80

Radio-controlled cars mean miniaturised motoring mayhem in this action-packed racing game. Twitchy handling requires razor-sharp reactions, and the action is far from clean, to which the various amusing power-ups attest. Do the panel rate it, or is *Re-Volt* simply child's play?

DAN: I really liked this, it's good fun and it's really fast-moving.

WARREN: But it's not as good as *Micro Machines*...

DAN: The racing's better.

ED: Bollocks! *Micro Machines* is one of the best driving games ever. It's because the handling in this is totally different. These are meant to feel like radio-controlled cars, and they do in that they really stick to the road too much.

STUART: Remote-controlled cars are a pain to drive, so they've got it really accurate!

ED: Yeah, but the thing that makes *Micro Machines* and driving games fun is the way the cars skid all over the place and bounce around, whereas these are just a bit too much of a pain to drive. Looks nice though.

WARREN: The vehicles all handle really differently, which is a good thing.

DAN: There's loads of different ones too, and some of them are really tricky. I've driven these things for real and I know what they're like to drive.

STUART: I've driven a real car!

ED: I'll tell you what they're like to drive for real. You drive forward for a bit, turn left, the servo gets stuck, and it whizzes off out of control under a car! Happened to me every goddamn time. And then they end up on their backs with the engines screaming till you go and pick 'em up.

STUART: I think it's a bit frustrating unless you know how to do it. If you're just getting into it, the difficulty level is a bit too high.

ED: I think it's alright, but its just an average kind of thing in the end. I don't see that anyone would be particularly happy buying it.

DAN: No, that's harsh.

WARREN: But the four-player mode is pants, it's jerky, it's...

ED: No, it's not that bad. It's a hell of a lot better than most four-player split-screen things, but granted we have been playing it on a big telly.

DAN: It's the same problem as *Toy Commander*, really: because of the scale, everyone just seems really small and difficult to spot.

WARREN: That's probably why *Micro Machines* works so well though, by keeping all the cars on one screen. Plus I quite like that whole catch-up thing.

ED: It would be nice if there were some more modes other than just the straight racing.

DAN: There is the Battle Tag bit.

ED: Yeah, but that's a bit rubbish, really. And that's where the problem of small cars comes in. In a race, even if you can't see your opponent you have a rough idea of where they are, but in the battle thing you have to find people. We had that when we had the battle in the supermarket, where there were three people battling it out at the meat freezer and one lost over by the checkouts.

STUART: It's not as if you can't live out your fantasies though, is it? I mean, you can buy a remote-controlled car and race it about for real for little more than the cost of the game.

ED: It would be nice if there was a little more craziness. It's not as if you can't go racing cars in the Natural History Museum, is it?

WARREN: Is there any interactivity in the courses?

ED: There are bouncing basketballs!

DAN: Er, not really.

WARREN: That's a shame. I mean, if you came round the corner and suddenly found that a car had moved or something, that would keep you on your toes. Just something different. You kind of expect interactive elements in something like this.

"IF YOU'RE JUST GETTING INTO IT, THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL IS A BIT TOO HIGH"

– STUART ON *RE-VOLT*

WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000

REVIEWED ON PAGE 92

The second footie game to reach us in as many months sees the respected *Worldwide Soccer* franchise coming to Dreamcast. Supporting four players and featuring straightforward controls, variable weather, and national and international teams, *Worldwide Soccer 2000* has the ingredients for success, but the proof is in the playing.

WARREN: It's not very good.

DAN: Tell us why, Warren!

WARREN: It's too slow. It's unresponsive. It doesn't look very good. It's not smooth. The goalie plays like a girl, and you can't run back and hassle him when he's trying to take a goal kick like you can in *ISS* on N64 – the greatest footie game ever made, by the way.

ED: No it's not, the PlayStation one...

WARREN: Nah, I prefer the N64 one, and this is nowhere near that. What did we give it?

STUART: Six.

WARREN: Hmm, I'd probably give it... less than that, anyway.

STUART: No, I'm going to stick up for it, because if you give it a chance it's actually not a bad game. If you get into it you can really have fun with it.

DAN: But it's just too slow! I was playing *FIFA* on PlayStation, and if you look at that the ball is just zinging around the pitch and it's really exciting to play, really fast-moving.

ED: The ball just doesn't move like a ball. Sometimes it moves like a balloon and other times it just stops dead like it's a bowling ball or something.

DAN: There are too many pauses between things happening, as well.

ED: And the animation is really not that great – like the ball sticking to people's feet, and then they pick it up and it sticks to their hands. Also, I think it's a real waste of the *Worldwide Soccer* name, cos I always used to really like that.

WARREN: So did I.

ED: I was number five in the Welsh team on the original! On the Saturn I used to play it all the time, and although it wasn't really in-depth or anything it was really arcadey.

WARREN: It had some really nice moves though.

ED: Yeah, just like *Virtua Striker*. You could do some really cool stuff. If you learned how to play it you could

"I THINK IT'S A REAL WASTE OF THE *WORLDWIDE SOCCER* NAME"

– ED ON *WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000*

△ ***Shadow Man*: not breaking new ground, and unlikely to attract new people to the genre.**

"A NICE BIT OF ACTION-ADVENTURE. AIN'T *TOMB RAIDER* THOUGH"

– WARREN ON *SHADOW MAN*

get some really exciting games, but I think it's a real shame that this is basically *World League Soccer* from PlayStation, which, although it started out as *Olympic Soccer* and was really ropy but got better, is still a waste of the *Worldwide Soccer* licence.

DAN: It's a shame, as good football games can be such a good laugh.

ED: *Virtua Striker 2* will be good.

STUART: I tell you what's a shame, and that is until *Virtua Striker* comes out we've had two football games and neither is decent – *UEFA* [*ODM* #1, 8/10] is alright but it could be better. I think people will buy them because they're into their football, but I reckon that at the moment those people are being sold short because there's nothing like *FIFA* yet.

WARREN: You can't talk yourself into liking it, but there are a few things that aren't too bad, like the commentary, for instance.

ED: Yeah, the commentary is good.

DAN: I really like the controls too – really intuitive and easy to pick up – and the system works well.

ED: I like the way you can put the curl on shots, and the through balls are good.

DAN: But ultimately there's just too much delay between hitting the button and the action happening on the screen.

WARREN: Don't forget the proper widescreen too. That's a great feature that should be more common these days.

STUART: Ultimately a bit of a disappointment though.

SHADOW MAN

REVIEWED ON PAGE 84

'Proper' RPGs have so far been conspicuous by their absence in Dreamcast's line-up of games. This dark and brooding take on the genre features hordes of undead, a spooky atmosphere and a murky, voodoo-drenched plot. It also has a lead character who swears!

STUART: It's got a really good sense of mood. The sounds and the atmosphere and everything do actually make it quite creepy.

ED: It put me in a mood. Ha ha.

WARREN: It's a nice bit of action-adventure, which we haven't seen much of yet. Ain't *Tomb Raider* though.

STUART: It is reminiscent though.

DAN: What, because it's dull?

ED: It does really look like an N64 game, which is because it is.

DAN: It doesn't look that great, does it?

ED: All the textures are the same. The thing with N64 is that you get all these really basic textures and they're just repeated everywhere, and a lot of it looks like that.

STUART: The sky looks nice though.

DAN: Yeah, but some of the characters look a bit ropy. That Irish snake thing with the skull and the top hat that looks like something off a Guns 'N' Roses cover. What's going on with that?!

WARREN: But they have loads of snakes in Ireland, don't they?

STUART: What, that wear top hats and that say "begorrah" ?

ED: I dunno. It's an adventure game, and everyone's been saying they want a decent adventure game. As the first real one we've had it's pretty cool, and if you play it past the first few boring bits it's not at all bad. If you've actually gone out and spent 40 quid on it you're going to make the effort too, and if that's what you're looking for you won't be disappointed.

DAN: Dreamcast is lacking something big and immersive like this, but then again *Shadow Man* isn't really breaking the mould and isn't going to attract a whole range of new people to the genre in the way that *Tomb Raider* did.

WARREN: So we don't think *Shadow Man* is going to be on the cover of *The Face* next month?

DAN: Er, no.

ED: The story bits are just too slow and dragged out. You don't really need that in an adventure either. You need bits to set atmosphere and the narrative, but you don't need to sit there watching it. You don't play games to sit there watching stuff, and I never got to the end of any of those bits, which has to be a bad sign.

TEE OFF

REVIEWED ON PAGE 86

Golf goes manga! In an attempt to shed the tartan kecks and pastel sweater image, the developers of *Tee Off* have given it a cutesy Japanese look while retaining a reasonably realistic style of play. Whether it's enough to convert our panel to the joys of the green remains to be seen.

DAN: I really like this!

WARREN: Yup, me too.

STUART: I don't know if it'll attract anyone who's into golf, but it'll attract everyone else, and they're the people who've got lives!

DAN: I reckon it's one of the best four-players we've seen yet.

WARREN: Although it does take a lot of time to go through.

ED: It's very simple too.

WARREN: The putting is good. It's quite challenging, whereas sometimes on these games it can be a bit easy. It's a bit like *Everybody's Golf* on PlayStation, which was really good.

DAN: I really like the look of it – really striking, and it gives the game a real identity.

ED: It's smooth, but you can't make out any shape on the greens, and when you put the aiming grid on it just looks flat.

STUART: It's dead easy to play.

WARREN: Fun for all the family!

DAN: It is!

WARREN: Don't print that, please!

STUART: There are more girl characters than there are boy characters, which makes a change.

WARREN: Yeah, I heard you like playing with young girls!

STUART: No comment. But, you know, usually it's ten blokes and then one girl character with no clothes...

DAN: Huh? In Golf?

WARREN: Stuart, you've had too much!

DAN: This game is good. Realistic golf is dull because real golf is dull, so it's good to see them trying to liven things up.

ED: But you get really into the detailed ones, making sure you've got the right club for the shot and all that.

DAN: Steady, you're only one step away from sky blue trousers and a Pringle V-neck sweater there.

STUART: And playing with Tarby in a weekend pro-celebrity tournament.

WARREN: There should be a gloating button there like *Ready 2 Rumble*, so you can put people off as they're about to take their shot, as it gets a little long-winded in four-player.

STUART: There should be a little American character who comes on and dances around on the green when you're about to take your final putt.

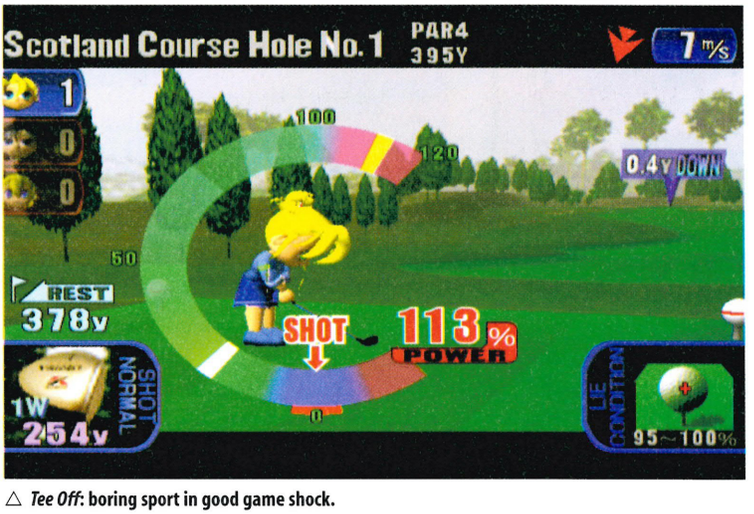
ED: It needs a peripheral. Get the rod...

WARREN: I wouldn't give it a huge score, but it's a lot of fun to play and you can't say fairer than that!

ED: I'm not sure if I would say go and buy it, but rent it for a weekend and get your mates round and cane it for a couple of days.

"I RECKON IT'S ONE OF THE BEST FOUR-PLAYERS WE'VE SEEN YET"

– DAN ON *TEE OFF*



△ ***Tee Off*: boring sport in good game shock.**

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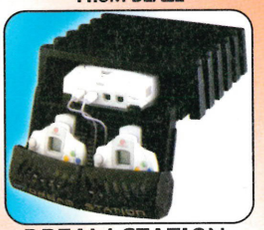

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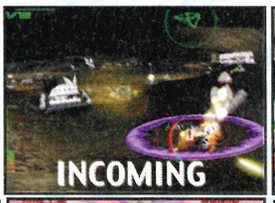

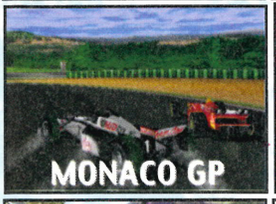

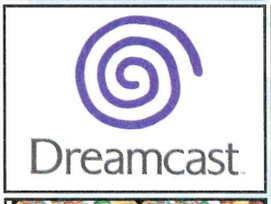

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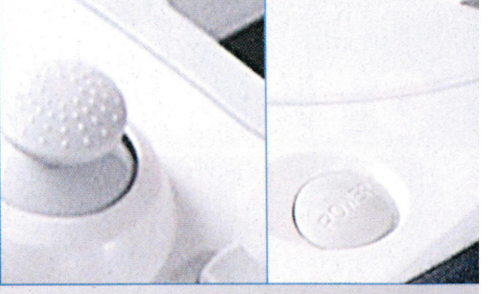

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WELCOME TO THE SECTION WHERE YOU DO ALL THE TALKING WHILE WE SIT BACK AND PUT OUR FEET UP. UNLEASH THOSE SORDID STORIES AND CONFOUNDING QUESTIONS...

PAGES 105 TO 130

MEET AN OBSESSIVE,

SOMEONE WHO'S HIT THE BIG TIME AND ANOTHER FOR WHOM LIFE SURE SEEMS TOUGH • GET THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS WHIZZING AROUND YOUR HEAD ABOUT GETTING ON TO THE NET VIA YOUR DC • TOP TIPS FOR *SOUL CALIBUR* AND *SEGA BASS FISHING* • WE FIRE QUESTIONS AT SEGA AND A DEVELOPER, AND OFFER ADVICE ON SOME OF YOUR GAMING WOES • YOUR VIEWS ON THE GAMES REVIEWED IN RECENT ISSUES OF *ODM* • FIVE DC OWNERS TALK TURKEY WITH ONE OF THE BODS FROM SEGA... IT'S ALL HERE IN BLACK AND WHITE (AND A FEW COLOURS TO LIVEN IT UP A BIT AND MAKE IT LOOK NICE). GO SEE... ▶

YOU KNOW LIFE'S TOUGH WHEN...

...YOU'RE NICKED BY THE JAPANESE POLICE

Dreamcast launch night, Japan. You're out dressed up as Doctor Robotnik. Suddenly the police take an interest in you. And to make matters worse, you bump into your boss. It was one helluva night for expat 'Mike'

"I WORK IN JAPAN, AND I GOT MY FIRST WHIFF of Dreamcast in July '98 when a lassie friend of mine dropped a demo machine round – she knew I'd been itching to get hold of one since before it was called the Katana. So we're sitting there, watching the little box, wishing she'd had the presence of mind to bring a few games with it – even *Incoming* would have done – when she says (in her best cutesy-Japanese-girls-can-get-anything-they-want-this-way voice): 'Have you ever thought that you look just like Doctor Robotnik from *Sonic Adventure*?'

"Now, I know I'm a chubster, but perfectly spherical with a dodgy tash? I seriously thought she was taking the rip, until she pulled out a huge, silly-looking suit of Doctor Robotnik for the Japanese DC launch. She asked if I'd be willing to get dressed up and do a promotional stint at one of the local chain stores. 'Well, anything for a free copy of *Godzilla Generations*,' I thought. Which in hindsight makes me a bit of a mug.

"I realised, though, that the store would be too small to get changed in, so I put on the costume at home – only to find I couldn't get into my friend's car! So she said she'd drive down to the store and let them know I'd be walking there.

"She drives off, and I head down the road. I get about 20 paces when a car pulls up and people start shouting. I take off the costume's head and find two of Japan's finest upholders of the law staring at me.

"I suppose I can't blame them for getting freaked. I mean, it was midnight, and the local 'drunk patrol' had come across a whole bunch of us dressed in huge foam suits, each of us sporting a giant gun of some sort – there were about six of us in the area that night.

"As I didn't have my alien registration card on me they arrested me on the spot – for a potentially serious offence. Then they discovered that I had almost nothing on under my costume, and I wouldn't fit in the squad car with the suit on.

So one policeman walked me back to the station while the other radioed ahead to prepare 'the room' for me.

"Thankfully the detention didn't last long – my friend and a shop staffer came into the police station half an hour later and casually asked: 'Have you seen a fat Englishman dressed as a mad professor?' I was quickly released, and given a nasty warning about the need to carry an appropriate card (which my friend had to get for me from my flat).

"Then, as I walked out of the station, I ran straight into my boss (I do have a day job), who was drunk and coming out of the next-door bar with his arms wrapped around a woman who 'must' have been his granddaughter (despite him seemingly trying to fish something out of her mouth with his tongue).

"She froze, and he looked up, straight into the eyes of one of his employees – ie me. Then he looked down at my costume and promptly hurled all over his partner.

"I made a hasty retreat and enjoyed what was left of the night, hassling the 60 people who were waiting at the store to get their hands on a Dreamcast...

"Cut to Monday morning the following week. My boss rolls into my office and comes out with: 'I think I saw a manager of mine dressed up like a Martian on Thursday night, but I'm not certain who it was.' (Bringing the company into disrepute could have got me the push, you know.) The only thing I could say in return was: 'You know, I think I saw my boss throwing up over one of the local chuu-zoku (local slang for junior high school 'working' girls) on Thursday night, but I could be wrong.' Without batting an eyelid, he comes back with: 'Ah, it seems that we were both seeing things that night.'

Needless to say he was more accommodating after that ."

"HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE?"

IF SEGA EVER DO DECIDE TO MAKE A SONIC MOVIE, HERE ARE *ODM*'S TOP FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 'PRO' LARD-ASSES WHO COULD FILL ROBOTNIK'S TROUSERS ON THE SILVER SCREEN...

5. Christopher Biggins – best known for panto appearances.
4. Russell Grant – best known for camp stargazing and his ropy Channel Five programmes (and that's saying something).
3. Bernard Manning – best known for being a stand-up wanker who cracks racist jokes.
2. Mohamed Al Fayed – best known for wanting a UK passport and spouting conspiracy theories about the death of Princess Diana.
1. John Prescott – best known for owning two Jaguars and running a piss-poor public transport policy.

IMAGE: LUMLEY

YOU KNOW YOU'RE OBSESSED WHEN...

...YOU CAN'T STOP PLAYING ON DEMO BOOTHS

You'll have seen them all over the place – Dreamcast gaming booths have been popping up the length and breadth of Britain. For one gamer, Mark Davis, they've been a little too popular

"LET'S BE BLUNT: I'm addicted to arcade machines. As soon as I see the flashing lights of an arcade, I go and get 20 sheets out of the cash machine and walk in. Racing games, fighting games, shoot 'em ups… you name it, I'll play it. I'll even resort to pinball if there's nothing else to play – and I hate pinball!

"Trouble is though that my 'habit' costs me a fair bit, so imagine my delight when I noticed these video gaming booths popping up all over my home town. I didn't know what the hell they were at first. But it didn't matter, because as soon as I saw the graphics and, more importantly, the lack of coinage required to play on the things, I was frothing at the mouth.

"*Virtua Fighter*, *Ready 2 Rumble*, *Sega Rally* – all for free. Okay, so you have to push past swarms of kids to get to the them, but it wasn't costing me a penny to play so I'd put up with anything. Well, almost anything.

"Because I become totally engrossed whenever I play, I tend to forget where I am and how long I've been there. I was out shopping with my girlfriend, Nicky, and my mates Andy and Jon, and had bought a stack of CDs and a new pair of trainers. Unfortunately I happened to come across a Dreamcast booth in a games store and, best of all, no one was using it.

"I made my excuses to Nicky and my mates by saying that I wanted to go to the newsagent, and that I'd meet them back at the car. I promptly sidled off to the booth as they headed off to the nearest clothes shop, and I got stuck into a game of *Ready 2 Rumble*.

"I must have been there for ages, beating seven shades out of my opponents, when I heard someone behind me shout. I glanced round to see Nicky with Andy and Jon in tow. They were none too pleased. I was 'informed' that they'd been sitting in the car waiting for me for nearly half an hour.

"Nicky then looked puzzled and asked me where all my shopping was. 'Oh shite,' I thought as I looked round, desperately trying to locate the bags containing my CDs and trainers. They'd been lifted – nearly a hundred pounds' worth of gear.

"Talk about a lack of sympathy. Both Nicky and my mates gave me a bollocking, saying that I was 'always playing on these things' and I deserved everything I got. They went off and I followed, feeling utterly gutted. Thoughts of calling the police crossed my mind, but I knew there was bugger-all point – the culprits would be long gone by now and, to be frank, the rozzers probably wouldn't give a toss anyway.

"We returned to my house and I sulked in the kitchen, supping on a lager or three. Then I heard music coming from the sitting room which sounded vaguely familiar. It was a track from one of the CDs I'd bought earlier in the day. Putting it down to the radio torturing my tormented soul, I carried on sulking. Then I heard a track from another CD I'd picked up earlier. Then in walked Nicky sporting a flashy pair of trainers which were a couple of sizes too big for her. The penny dropped as she smiled wickedly, and my mates piled in behind her clutching my CDs and laughing.

"Apparently the bastards had seen me skulking off to the booth, and were sick of me spending so much time on the Dreamcast, so they thought I should be taught a lesson. They'd come up, lifted my bags without me batting an eyelid, and then scarpered back to the car.

"I've subsequently steered clear of Dreamcast booths since then, and all and sundry are happy. What they don't know yet is that I bought a Dreamcast two days after they stitched me up. There goes that weekend trip to Paris, Nicky!"

IMAGE: LUMLEY

INTRODUCING THE DC BOOTH

THEY'RE OUT THERE, PREACHING TO THE UNCONVERTED…

It's a grand idea: take a Dreamcast and monitor, slap them in an arcade machine-like cabinet and, hey presto, you have the perfect tool for showing off the Dreamcast in all its glory. At the moment there are around 1,400 booths around the country, vying for your attention in stores like HMV, Game, Electronics Boutique and the local cinema. There was even one lurking at Glastonbury this year.

Sega have also stocked them up with a variety of games in order to give punters a good idea of what to expect from the system. Indeed, punter opinion generated from playing on the booths has proved invaluable to Sega. The fishy game *Sega Bass Fishing* was never going to land on these shores until the overwhelming reaction the game received at Party In The Park last July.

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YOU KNOW YOU'VE HIT THE BIG TIME WHEN...

...YOU GIVE CHRIS EUBANK A THRASHING

Seventeen-year-old Tom Arnold wasn't planning to go head to head with the barmy boxing star. Nor was he intending to win a Dreamcast. Or a top-notch scooter

"MY SISTER, WHO WORKS for the company behind Sega's advertising, had blagged some tickets for me and my mum to attend the Dreamcast launch at Tower Records. My mum works for *The Independent*, and wanted to go along to write about the launch. On the way, we popped into the Virgin Megastore on Tottenham Court Road at around 10.30pm. It was funny in hindsight, because I remember seeing this flashy new scooter sitting there, thinking that it looked rather nice and wondering who was going to win it. Then one of the organisers came up and said that you could win a Dreamcast if you put your name forward for a competition being held that night.

"I scribbled down my details, and they gave it to this woman who, no offense, I thought looked like a bit of a bimbo. I remember thinking that my entry wasn't going anywhere – she'd probably forget to register it properly. Thankfully I was wrong. They announced the eight people who had been drawn for the compo and my name was one of the last ones to be read out.

"The competition itself was based around competing against other players on a variety of Dreamcast games. There was a big crowd of about 200 people watching – some of my fellow players and their friends had come miles for the event, which I found rather bemusing.

"The competition kicked off with a bout of *Ready 2 Rumble*. To be honest, it wasn't hard to win though – I just bashed a few buttons and the guy went down. Meanwhile, I knew my mum wanted to go so I thought: 'I'll just lose the next round and then we'll be off.' Then I played someone else at *Virtua Fighter 3tb* and beat them as well. At which point the whole thing began to get exciting.

"I moved on to the next round, which was based around *Sega Rally 2*. At the beginning I couldn't actually work out which screen I was supposed to be looking at! And nor could the other player. Somehow though, I ended up 25 seconds ahead of him. Because the trailing car has a boost ability so you can catch up, he actually managed to regain lost ground and finished a second behind me.

"I was soon told that I was through to the final – a *Ready 2 Rumble* bout with Chris Eubank. It was odd that I met him that night, because I'd had a rugby match during the day and had damaged my leg – I usually go boxing in the evening, but couldn't because of the injury. So I missed my boxing session, but managed to meet Chris Eubank in the process.

"Anyway, there he was with a walking stick, satchel and jungle hat. He looked quite funny. We chatted for five minutes about school and boxing, and when it was time to play the game he told me: 'I've had some previous experience of this kind of fing, Tom.'

Then I was told that if I beat him I'd win the scooter. I couldn't believe it! I said to Eubank: 'Look, if you beat me at this, I'll be waiting for you in the car park.'

"So we played, and he made out like he was trying… but I don't know if he really was. The challenge was to get three knock-downs in any number of rounds. I beat him outright by bashing a few buttons again!

"All the cameras came out, and they got snaps of me getting the keys for the scooter and me in a boxing stance. People were cheering and clapping, and I felt like somebody who'd won the lottery. It's such a good bike. I also won a Dreamcast, and to be honest I would have been perfectly happy with just the console.

"Afterwards we went to see my sister, and I remember thinking: 'I've got to watch out for myself, because after such a stroke of good luck I'm bound to get run over.'

"At one point we were thinking about selling the scooter, because it's a tad powerful for someone of my age. We were told though that the bike is the 'Mercedes of scooters', and were advised to keep it. So at the moment I'm trying to get my CBT so I'll be licenced to ride it.

"My mum got a great story out of that fateful night, and I won't have to use public transport any more." *(Lucky git – Ed)*.

THAT SCOOTER

TOP OF THE RANGE, AND A DREAMCAST-DECORATED ONE-OFF

Considering Tom only went along for something to do because his leg was knackered, to walk off with a scooter is rather better than a smack in the face.

The bike itself is a top-notch Honda which boasts a 125cc engine, and should see Tom whizzing in and out of London's traffic faster than John Prescott using a police escort to get him through the rush hour. To make the scooter all the more special, it's been given a tasteful Dreamcast make-over to make it a real one-off. Now that's what we call a nice set of wheels.

IMAGE: LUMLEY

USING DREAMCAST ONLINE

DREAMCAST AIN'T JUST ABOUT PRETTY GAMES. WITH THE INTERNET NOW JUST A BUTTON-PUSH AWAY, MILLIONS OF GAMERS WILL SOON BE ONLINE. AND SO WILL YOU. **PHILIP WAND** GUIDES YOU DOWN THE SLIP ROAD TO THE SUPERHIGHWAY

POOR INTERNET. Like the Millennium Bug, cyberspace suffers from a rare affliction where everyone is constantly referring to it, demonising it and cursing its existence, yet nobody ever takes time to explain what it actually *is*. You can't see it, touch it or go to a fancy dress party as it, so it's kind of uncanny and inexplicable and just *there*. And if that's the case, it must be awfully bad...

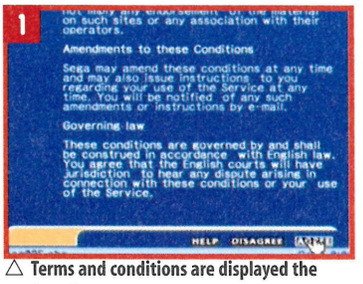
But it isn't. In reality the Internet is just the mother and father of all computer networks, stretching from one side of the planet to the other. Sure, the technical paraphernalia behind it is on the elaborate side, but the basic idea is as easy as pie. If you can understand the concept of two people having a long-distance conversation on the telephone, you can understand how the Net works.

If one computer wants to talk to another, it simply 'dials' the unique sequence of numbers assigned to the other machine then waits for a response. When you send email, you contact the address of your mail server and drop off your messages. When you visit pages or 'surf' on the Web, you contact the computer that holds the page you want to view then, well, view it.

Getting online is not so straightforward. Home computers need all manner of hardware, software and various bolt-on bits and pieces just to get them halfway prepared. They then require the help of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide the final link, and countless different programs to perform the simplest of online tasks – checking email, chatting with other people, and so on.

And that's where Dreamcast has a significant advantage. It's the first console ever to come fully Internet-ready out of the box, meaning there's no need to worry about new hardware or software, or choosing an ISP. You don't even have to think about getting an email address, because you get to choose one when you register. And of course it's much, much cheaper than the average PC.

Sega have even set up a special online area, called the Dreamarena, dedicated to you and other Dreamcast owners. Known as a portal, it acts as a launch pad to all other locations on the Net, provides links to popular destinations, and enables like-minded people to chat. If you're a Dreamcast owner, consider it your new home.



△ Terms and conditions are displayed the first time you connect.

△ Then you register for your unique Dreamarena username and password.

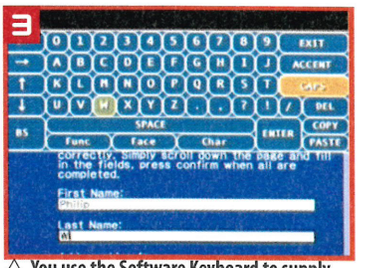
REGISTERING

Before you get started here, make sure you've connected your Dreamcast to a phone socket using the cable supplied. Then simply insert the DreamKey GD-ROM and power up. If you're not sure how to do it, read through the section of the DreamKey user guide, 'Connecting The Dreamcast To A Telephone Line'.

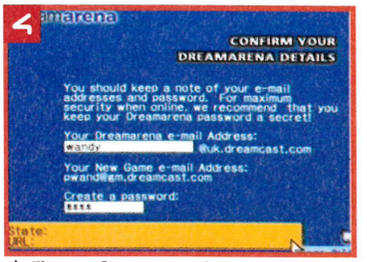
1 Press the Start button, then select Register Me from the main menu by pressing the A button on the main controller. Acknowledge UK as your country, then select Forward to accept the default modem set-up options. Now sit on your hands and wait while you're hooked up to the Dreamarena registration area. If at any time you need to change something, press the B button to take you back a step.

2 To start the registration process proper, agree to the terms and conditions by moving the pointer to Agree at the bottom of the page then pressing the A button. To scroll the page down, use the controller's analog thumb pad. Next you're presented with a screen telling you you're about to register for a unique Dreamarena username. Click Register to move on.

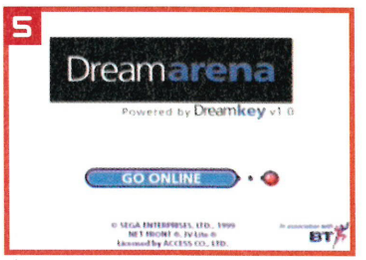
3 You now use the Software Keyboard to supply your details. Use the controller to move the cursor up to the top field. As you hover over the blank strip, the cursor will change to a pencil, meaning you're able to enter info. Click the A button to bring up the Software Keyboard. Press the X button to finish, or select Enter. Now give your details as prompted.



△ You use the Software Keyboard to supply your details.



△ Then confirm your new Dreamarena email address.



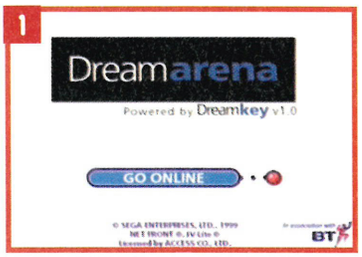
△ With the registration complete you can now go online.

4 Once you've filled in the form and confirmed your details, you see a screen telling you your new Dreamarena email address. You can either accept the default value assigned to you by the system (usually a combination of your first and last names), or you can supply your own. Either way, make a note of it, and also the New Game email address shown below it.

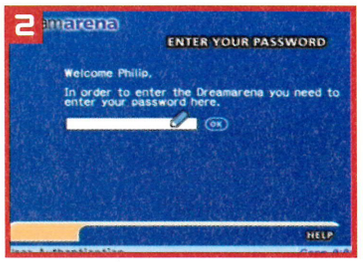
5 Once you've completed all the necessary steps in the registration process, next time you restart your Dreamcast you'll see a new button enabling you to Go Online. That's it, you're done!

Once you've registered to use Dreamarena and have your two new email addresses, you won't need to supply the information again when logging on.

However, there may come a time when you want to remove your details altogether. To do this, connect to the Dreamarena as usual, then press the Left trigger on the controller. Choose Options from the pop-up menu, then choose the Modem item in the left margin. Choose AT Set-up and Delete Network Memory. Now simply turn off the Dreamcast. The next time you log on, you'll need to re-register as before.



△ With registration out of the way, getting online is as simple as clicking a button.



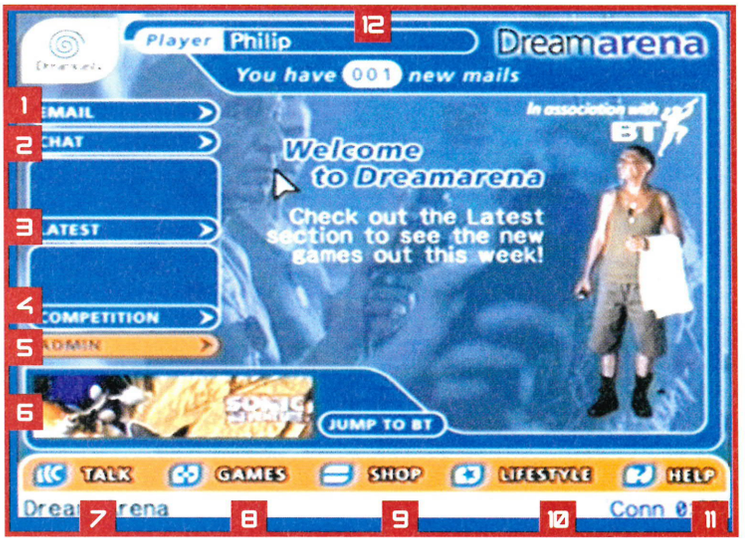
△ Supply your password in order to gain access to the Dreamarena main page.

GOING ONLINE

After completing the registration process, no doubt you'll want to get straight back online to see what the big Internet fuss is all about. So let's hit the Dreamarena and check our electronic mailbox.

1 First switch on your Dreamcast, remembering to press all the controller buttons impatiently while the DreamKey disc loads up. Select the Go Online button when it appears, then exit from the memory card screen (unless you want to swap the active card). You should now find the unit connects directly to Sega Provider, and you're then asked to enter your password.

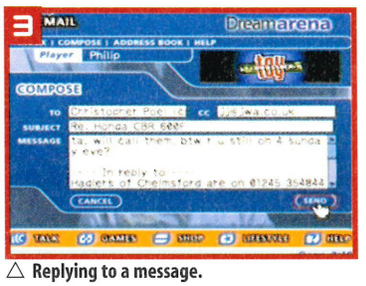
2 The Dreamarena homepage is the jump point from which you can visit all other areas of the Dreamarena and also move on to Web pages.



1 CHECK, READ OR COMPOSE EMAIL
2 VISIT THE DREAMARENA CHAT ROOMS
3 READ THE LATEST DREAMCAST NEWS
4 REGULAR DREAMCAST COMPETITION
5 ADMINISTRATION AREA
6 ADVERTISEMENT
7 USER FORUMS
8 ALL ABOUT DREAMCAST GAMES
9 BUY STUFF ONLINE
10 LINKS TO ITEMS OF INTEREST
11 HELP ON USING DREAMARENA
12 NUMBER OF UNREAD MESSAGES

△ Your Dreamarena mailbox.

△ Reading a new message.



△ Replying to a message.

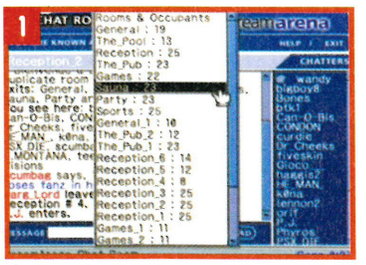
EMAIL

Since the mailbox is most people's first port of call, we'll head over there now. Move the cursor to choose the Email command, and press the A button on the controller.

1 You should now see the Dreamarena Inbox appear on your screen. In the columns, left to right, you'll see a gold star if the message is new to you, a checkbox enabling you to select particular mails for deletion, the author, the date it was sent, and its subject (title, in other words). To read a message, move the cursor over the From field and click.

2 After you've clicked on a message, you're able to read it and see a much more detailed overview of it, and also buttons giving you the chance to reply, or forward it (send it on to an address other than the sender's). Let's send a reply email back, so hit the Reply button.

3 You'll now see a box where you can type a response to the email. Once you're done, press Send to dispatch the message, or Cancel to quit back to your mailbox.



△ The main room of the Chat areas.

△ We've now moved on to the Games room.

CHAT

After you've got to grips with sending and receiving mail, you'll probably want to have a nose around the Dreamarena Chat area, where other Dreamcast owners gather for live online discussion. It can get a bit busy, and you may also be offended at some of the things people say… so let's get straight in there.

1 Once you've joined, you'll find yourself in one of the many Reception areas. These are gathering places for all the people who've just joined in – you can see all their names listed in the right-hand column. It's now a good idea to move to another area by clicking on a room name at the top of the page. You'll see the cursor change to the image of a page when you hover over the names, which lets you know it's a drop-down list.

2 After you've selected a room, the screen changes and you're now among new friends. Click the text field at the very bottom of the screen to say something – the screen then automatically refreshes to show you what you've just said.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Getting online with Dreamcast is a fairly straightforward affair, but that doesn't mean you won't have a few questions. Here we attempt to smooth your furrowed brow by answering some of the more common ones.

DOES DREAMCAST USE AN INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER?
Yes. Sega has partnered British Telecom to provide pan-European Internet access. The ISP partnership is known as Sega Provider.

CAN I USE MY OWN ISP?
No. At the moment, the only way of connecting your Dreamcast to the Internet is via Sega Provider. There are rumours of enabling users to connect via their existing ISP, but these are only rumours.

HOW MUCH DOES IT ALL COST?
Hardly anything. The service itself is free in that you don't pay any subscription charges. You do, however, have to pay for the cost of a local call to Sega Provider. If you're online at the weekend, it'll cost you around 60p per hour.

CAN I STILL CONNECT IF I'VE GOT ISDN?
Yes. You can plug Dreamcast in to the analog port on your ISDN terminal adaptor, but you're limited to the internal modem speed of 33.6Kbps.

IS THERE A TIME LIMIT OR ANY USAGE PENALTIES?
No. You can use Dreamarena as often as you wish, and for as long as you like.

CAN I ACCESS NEWSGROUPS?
No. Dreamarena does not enable direct access to Usenet (newsgroups, for instance). You can, however, read and post messages via the Web at www.deja.com.

CAN I CHANGE MY NAME?
Yes. Choose the red Admin button from the main page of the Dreamarena. Here you will find various options to add a new user to the system (your partner or a friend, for example), delete a user or modify one. Hit the Modify button and you can change your address, password, personal details or Dreamarena nickname.

WILL I CONTINUE TO RECEIVE EMAILS WHEN MY DREAMCAST IS SWITCHED OFF?
Yes. In exactly the same way as it would with a home computer, the Dreamarena mail server keeps going 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year round. It continues to receive and store your messages while you're away, enabling you to retrieve them when you come back.

CAN I VIEW AND SEND EMAIL ATTACHMENTS?
No, you can't currently view attached files.

DO I GET TECHNICAL SUPPORT?
Yes. Sega's Customer Services number is 0845 609 0090. Calls are charged at local rate. Or for general Internet support, call 09066 544544, , for which calls cost 60p per minute.

CAN I GET BANNED FROM DREAMARENA?
Yes. Users who are persistently abusive in the Dreamarena chat rooms are likely to find themselves banned. It doesn't mean you're being watched, more that you should resist the urge to be offensive.

TROUBLESHOOTER

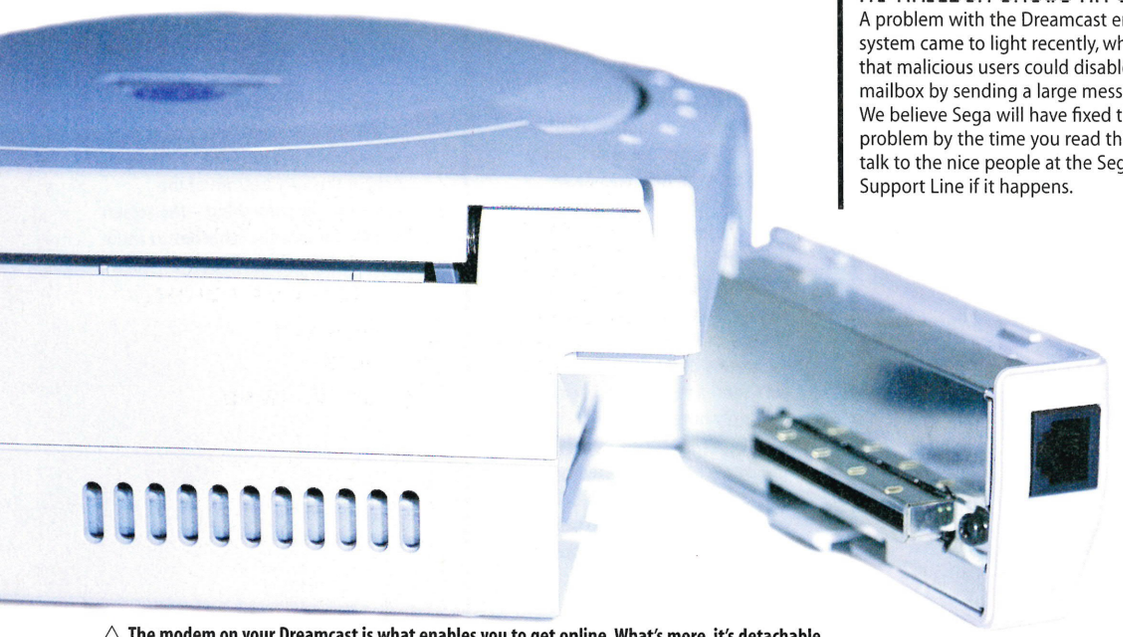
Although Dreamcast was designed to get you online with the minimum of fuss, there are always times when things go wrong. Let's take a look at some of the more common points raised with Sega Internet Technical Support…

WHEN I TRY TO CONNECT, NOTHING HAPPENS.
Check your Dreamcast is plugged in and connected to a phone socket with the cable supplied. Make sure you're using the correct options in the modem set-up screen. If all else fails, get the supplier to check your unit for you.

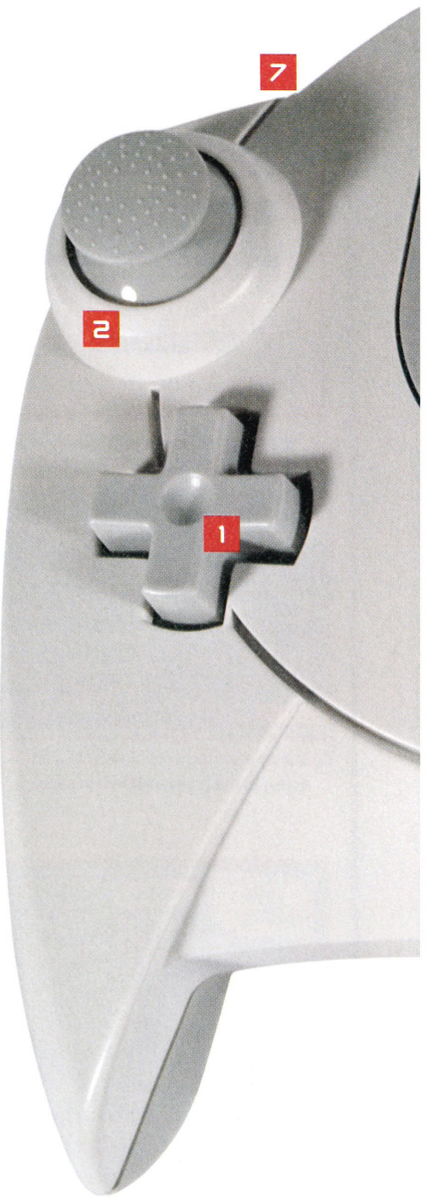
THE LINES ARE ALWAYS BUSY. WHAT'S WRONG?
At the launch of Dreamcast, Sega and BT underestimated the demand for the console by a huge margin. Put simply, this meant that many users found it extremely difficult – if not impossible – to connect to the Dreamarena and go online. Now, though, there are thousands more lines available, and engaged tones mean you've just been unlucky. Try again in five minutes time and you should find you can get on.

I KEEP GETTING DISCONNECTED.
As with any telephone line, there's a chance that external interference – for example from an electrical storm or passing Ducati – causes the signal to be lost and the line to be dropped. If this keeps on happening, you need to contact your telecom provider (Cable & Wireless, for instance) and take up the matter with them. There is also a small chance that your Dreamcast's internal modem is defective.

MY MAILBOX SHOWS AN ERROR.
A problem with the Dreamcast email system came to light recently, which was that malicious users could disable another mailbox by sending a large message to it. We believe Sega will have fixed the problem by the time you read this, but do talk to the nice people at the Sega Internet Support Line if it happens.



△ **The modem on your Dreamcast is what enables you to get online. What's more, it's detachable, meaning you can upgrade it when new ones (faster ones, in other words) become available.**



NAVIGATION GUIDE

THE CONTROLLER
Using your Dreamcast online is much easier than playing a game. For starters, everything happens at your own pace, and most of the time you're given ample opportunity to decide what to do and where to go. The controller buttons and pads have a variety of functions depending on where you are and what you're doing. For example, the Left trigger brings up a special menu while browsing a Web page, but toggles upper and lower case in the Software Keyboard.

1 ANALOG THUMB PAD
Scrolls a page up and down. You can also scroll by moving the bars down the far right-hand edge of each page.

2 DIRECTIONAL PAD
You use this to move the cursor around the screen, and to select different characters within the Software Keyboard.

3 A BUTTON
REGULAR USE
Selects or confirms an action.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Selects a character beneath the cursor.

4 B BUTTON
REGULAR USE
De-selects or cancels an action.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Backspace (delete).

5 X BUTTON
REGULAR USE
Not used.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Quits the Software Keyboard.

6 Y BUTTON
REGULAR USE
Not used.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Selects the period (.) character.

7 LEFT TRIGGER
REGULAR USE
Options menu.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Toggles upper and lower case.

8 RIGHT TRIGGER
REGULAR USE
Options menu.
SOFTWARE KEYBOARD
Toggles accented characters.

X & DIRECTIONAL LEFT
Moves back to the last Web page you visited.

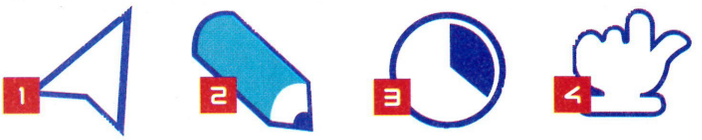
X & DIRECTIONAL RIGHT
Moves forward to the previous Web page you visited.

X & DIRECTIONAL UP
Quick scrolls up.

X & DIRECTIONAL DOWN
Quick scrolls down.

A, B, X, Y, START
Held simultaneously these reset and return you to the DreamKey title screen.

THE CURSOR



You use the cursor to push buttons and so on. To move it, use the directional controller – *not* the analog thumb pad. The cursor changes to reflect options, shown below…

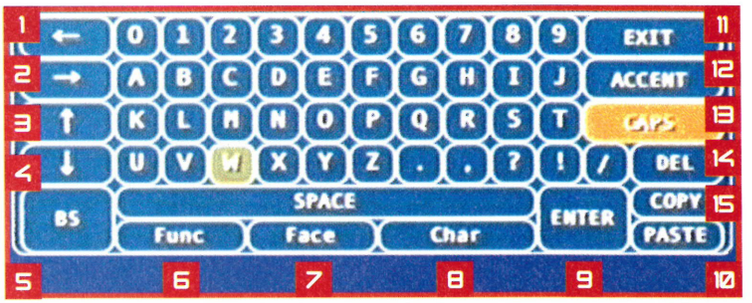
1 NORMAL. The standard cursor.

2 PENCIL. Shown whenever you move the normal pointer over a form field or another area where user input is required. Clicking the A button when the pencil cursor is shown brings up the Software Keyboard (see below).

3 WAIT. Shown when your Dreamcast is busy with a task, such as downloading information from a Web page, or checking your email.

4 SELECTION. If you hover your cursor over a button or link, the selection pointer shows you that you can click the A button in order to press the button or visit the link.

THE SOFTWARE KEYBOARD



Unless you've treated yourself to a Dreamcast keyboard (around £20 from your nearest games store), you'll have to learn the ways of the Software Keyboard, a graphical panel that overlays the screen whenever you need to enter letters and numbers.

To use it, you move the cursor with the directional pad on the controller, and press the A button to select characters one by one.

Although it may look a little daunting, it's actually no more complicated than the average calculator, and just takes a little bit of getting used to. The obvious downsides are that it's as clumsy as it is slow, and the keys are presented alphabetically rather than in the standard QWERTY keyboard layout.

If you want to get the most from the Software Keyboard and don't want to blow 20 spuds on the 'solid' version, read the following quick guide…

1. MOVE CURSOR LEFT
2. MOVE CURSOR RIGHT
3. UPPER CASE
4. LOWER CASE
5. BACKSPACE
6. VIEW FUNCTION KEYS
7. VIEW EMOTICON MENU
8. VIEW SPECIAL SYMBOLS
9. ENTER KEY
10. PASTE FROM CLIPBOARD
11. FINISHED WITH KEYBOARD
12. SELECT ACCENTED CHARACTER
13. CAPS LOCK
14. DELETE
15. COPY TO CLIPBOARD

• Next month we explore the weird and wonderful world of the Web and examine Dreamarena and its various spin-offs. We also take a look at the online features of Dreamcast games and, yes, even explain the parental lock. So make sure you're back here on Thursday 13 January.

GET TO GRIPS WITH SOUL CALIBUR

THERE'S SO MUCH DEPTH TO NAMCO'S AMAZING BEAT 'EM UP THAT WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY DO IT JUSTICE IN JUST ONE ISSUE. SO WE'RE DOING IT IN THREE.

HERE'S THE FIRST PART OF THE *ODM* GUIDE TO *SOUL CALIBUR*, TAKING IN BASIC TECHNIQUES AND A FEW TIPS ON SIX OF THE GAME'S EARLY FIGHTERS

FIGHTING BASICS 1

These tips are more for novice fighters, and some of them can be applied to most beat 'em ups. For *Soul Calibur* newbies, it's essential to master these simple tactics if you ever want to progress to the level where you can call yourself an expert.

1 GUARDING
As with most beat 'em ups, you won't get a significant way into the game unless you've learned to guard effectively. Don't forget that when you're not moving you're automatically guarding. Guarding is one of the ways you can tell an expert from a button basher.

2 GUARD IMPACT
As soon as you see your foe coming towards you with a slash, press forward and the guard button. Not only do you block the blow, you also push them back into a stagger, leaving them vulnerable to a counter-attack.

3 GUARD PARRY
Not quite the same as a Guard Impact, but it still offers you the chance to give your foe a nasty surprise. When they're attacking, press back and guard. You parry the blow and step to the side, leaving you wide open to execute a side throw. Nice.

FIGHTING BASICS 2

1 8-WAY RUNNING
Soul Calibur's eight-way run system is something you have to get to grips with, as not only does it enable you to get out of trouble, but there are a number of moves that you can't do without it. Tap the joypad in the desired direction, and then hold it the same way.

2 SOUL CHARGE
Soul Charging is strangely reminiscent of *Ready 2 Rumble*, and the effect is much the same. It enables you to fire up your special moves to do more damage, and if your opponent is guarding it increases the length of his stagger. Hold A+B+K, then kick arse.

3 SPIRIT CHARGE
Spirit Charging is even more powerful than a Soul Charge, although it does leave you vulnerable to meaty hits while you charge up. Hold down A+B+K, then hit the guard button. The sign that you're ready is when you start glowing gold.

FIGHTING BASICS 3

1 THROWS
A well-timed throw can be critical, and if you've sorted your guard parry and eight-way run techniques you have plenty of opportunities. Never try to get a throw – getting in close can be risky. Each character has their own throws, but start with the generic Guard + A or Guard + B manoeuvres.

2 RECOVERING
If your defences are breached, it's vital to get back on your feet and on the attack as quickly as possible. Learn to use the guard button, particularly when you've been knocked into the air. Also, when you've hit the deck, hammer the guard button to recover fast.

3 AIR CONTROL
Being juggled by your opponent is bloody irritating, and it can slash your energy bar drastically. To avoid it, learn to use air control – where while airborne, you hold the direction you wish to fall. Make sure you don't fall out of the ring though.

VOLDO

If you believe some people, Voldo is the best all-round character in the game. He might not be the fight meister his devotees claim, but he's still pretty useful.

FIGHTING BASICS

1 Voldo has the most moves of all the *Soul Calibur* characters, so you'd better make use of them. Variety is the key. If you can learn a good range of moves, Voldo is a character with devastating potential, as your opponents won't know what's coming next.

2 However, like every character in the game, Voldo isn't without his weaknesses. When he's on the attack, certain moves leave him wide open for a well-timed counter-attack. If you haven't learned which ones, you're likely to get duffed up on an embarrassingly regular basis.

3 One problem with Voldo is that you can ring yourself out if you get too enthusiastic. A couple of his best moves – the Blind Dive and the Mantis Fire Dance – will see you hurtling over the edge if your opponent dodges. Always be aware of your position in the ring.

SPECIAL MOVES

1 **FREAK ROLL**
QCB, X+Y
The Freak roll looks good, as you tumble along the ground battering your foe. The QCB puts you in Voldo's 'Blind Stance', which is useful for various other moves. You can repeat this as often as your opponent's stupidity allows.

2 **BLIND DIVE**
While crouching down / forward + X + Y
One of Voldo's most powerful manoeuvres, as it can take out your enemy from a long distance. The longer you hold X and Y, the more powerful it is. However, if you launch it too close to the ring edge you'll topple off.

3 **INSANE FREAK**
Forward, forward+Y+X+A, B
Voldo executes a weird somersault before ending with a standing drop kick. Be warned: Insane Freak can be stopped with a quick A-button flurry from your foe.

IVY

Ivy is another character who's tough to learn but rewarding if you take the time. Beginners don't tend to play her, but in expert hands she can be devastating.

FIGHTING BASICS

1 If you're going to win with Ivy, it's best to play to her strengths. She's not so hot up close, but she's got some punishing long-distance moves using her whip. It's a good idea to keep your distance and attempt to pick off your foe with calculated attacks.

2 Then again, if you do end up fighting a close-range battle, all's not lost. Ivy's got a good range of kicks that can knock your opponent off their feet, or at least hurt them for long enough to enable you to make your escape to a safe distance. Good for ring-outs.

3 Don't be fooled into thinking that Ivy is a fast character to play, she's not. Try to dance around your opponent too much and you're likely to end up splattered all over the ring. With Ivy, the key is to keep your opponent moving while you pick them off.

SPECIAL MOVES

1 **EYE OF MADNESS**
Down / forward + X + Y
This one rocks. Ivy lays down her whip, then pulls it back fast, flipping your opponent high in the air. Be warned: it can be sidestepped, but otherwise this is a powerful move that also makes your foe look a bit of a fool.

2 **EMBRACE OF LUST**
Forward, forward + Y + B
Use this at a long range, but make sure you hold down the Y and B buttons rather than just tapping them. Ivy's whip shoots out and wraps up your opponent. Close up, follow it up with a throw.

3 **FEAR'S VOID**
Down + Y + B
This one requires a lot of accuracy, but although it's not exactly the most powerful move in Ivy's repertoire it's one worth learning to execute properly. She plants her sword in the ground, and her whip pops up under the enemy's feet.

EXTRA MOVES

Yeah, yeah, we know that giving only three special moves for each character isn't that much help. So here are some more for you to try at home. And remember that many of these moves can be combined together to form devastating strings

VOLDO

EVIL BOW
Down + X + Y
PRAYING MANTIS
X + Y
WEB WEAVER
Back + X + B
DEATH ROSE
X + B
SHAME AND BLAME GORE
Forward + X + Y
HELL CHOP
Back + B

IVY

POISON IVY
Down / back + Y
DARKSIDE
Back, back + Y
DIVING RAVEN
Back, back + B
RAZOR'S BITE
Down / back + X + Y
CRUCIFIXION
Back, back + A + B
GOD WHISPER
Up / forward + A + B, A

KILIK

PHOENIX ROAR
X + Y
RISING BO FEINT
Y + B
HEAVEN MONUMENT
QCF + X + Y
TRICKY BO
Down / forward + X + Y
DIRTY BO
Down / back + X + Y
CLOUD KICK
Back, back + B

SOPHITIA

CATHARSIS STREAM
Back + A, A, A
ANGEL FALL
Up / forward + B, Y
REPRISAL TRIAL
Forward, forward + B + K, A, B
GAEA SHAKE
Up + X + Y
ANGEL'S ASSAULT
Up + B, B
ANGEL'S SPRING
QCF, B

BEAT THE BASHERS

Ever heard of button bashers? They're the gamers who, while playing beat 'em ups, just hammer any button at random. We've all done it, and when they beat you it can be really frustrating. Here's how to show 'em who's boss.

1. If they hammer the X and Y buttons, they pepper you with slashes. Keep blocking until you figure out the frequency of their blows, then use a quick guard parry, nip round the side and twat them.

2. Keep on the move, and use the eight-way run to your advantage. As the blows keep coming in, simply sidestep them, leaving the basher wide open to be thrown. Move backwards and forwards too, keeping out of range when necessary.

3. Tempt them towards the edge of the arena – most bashers are so focused on hitting buttons that they forget where they are. All you have to do then is select a suitable move to knock them off their feet and Bob's yer uncle.

• *If all else fails, just punch them really hard in the neck. Not in the game – in real life! Then storm off in a huff. Always works for us.*

KILIK

Kilik is one of *Soul Calibur*'s heart-throbs, complete with a dangerous-looking rod that can transfix enemies. One of the most popular characters for experts and newbies alike.

FIGHTING BASICS

1. Kilik's lightning speed is his best attribute, so make the most of it. With him you can dance around your opponents, making them look as sluggish as Arsenal's defence. His moves are also fast, enabling him to beat slower opponents to the punch. Use this.

2. Kilik's basic moves don't actually cause a lot of damage, so combos are more important than ever. Luckily it's fairly easy to string together a decent combo when playing as Kilik, and his speed means that your opponent is left reeling, wondering what hit them.

3. He may be speedy, but he ain't heavy. Kilik is one of the lightest characters in the game, so he's more vulnerable than most to being juggled. Learn the various ways of escaping in mid-air, particularly the air control manoeuvre. Better still, don't get caught by uppercuts!

SPECIAL MOVES

1. **RAGING PHOENIX**
Right + X + X + X
This is a pretty basic combo, and you've probably done it by accident already. Nevertheless, the Raging Phoenix is an excellent string that's quick to initiate and does a fair amount of damage. It's also useful to employ when your opponent is charging at you.

2. **YIN AND YANG**
QCB + Y
This move is spectacular. Kilik whirls round and slams his rod – which is by now flaming orange – down on the head of your opponent. Not only is this move unblockable, it's also one of the most satisfying special moves in the game. Watch 'em crumple.

3. **BITING PHOENIX**
Forward + X + Y
Another good long-range move, which hits your opponent five times and then knocks them back. Like the Raging Phoenix, this is often best used when your foe is charging towards you, particularly if they're one of the bigger characters. Can be used repeatedly.

SOPHITIA

Sophitia may look angelic, but she's quite capable of dumping even the most scary opponent on their arse if you play her with skill. No wonder she's popular.

FIGHTING BASICS

1. You wouldn't think it to look at her, but Sophitia is a decent close-range fighter; she's not bad from a distance either. Stay close to your opponent, hitting them with quick attacks to keep them on the back foot.

2. A lot of Sophitia's moves are 'linear' – they attack in a straight line ahead of her. Against experienced human players this makes it relatively easy for them to dodge to the side and clout her one. Try to vary your attacks.

3. Sophitia's got an ace way of advancing towards her opponent that involves using a QCF. It's a quick way to get in close, and you can dodge under many attacks. Hit Y as you finish, and she executes a nifty stabbing move.

SPECIAL MOVES

1. **REPRISAL ANGEL**
Forward, forward + Y + B, X, Y
If you're looking for a vicious combo, this isn't a bad one to begin with. Sophitia starts with a crunching blow with the shield, before following up with a slash and an enormous uppercut, sending your foe high into the air.

2. **ANGEL STROKE**
Up / back + B, X, Y
With Sophitia, often the key to success is in executing speedy combos like this one. After a somersault knee and a slash, she executes a hefty uppercut that, if you're near to the edge of the ring, sends your foe tumbling out.

3. **TEMPERANCE BRINGER**
Y + B, Y, X
Another smart combo – you can discover more of these off your own back. With the Temperance Bringer, you need to tap the X key almost immediately after Y. Unsurprisingly, it's another move ending with an uppercut.

MITSURUGI

Alongside Voldo, Mitsurugi is one of the most popular characters in *Soul Calibur*, and is one of the best to use when you're starting out. Here's why…

FIGHTING BASICS

1 If we're talking about all-round skills, Mitsurugi is probably one of the most balanced characters in the game. Thus you've got the freedom to develop your own strategy – long-range or close-up – without being hampered by your fighter's limitations.

2 That said, Mitsurugi has some devilish attacks that can be unleashed from afar that not only give your opponent a good whupping, but also leave you positioned perfectly to dump them on the floor with a well-chosen throw from the front or side.

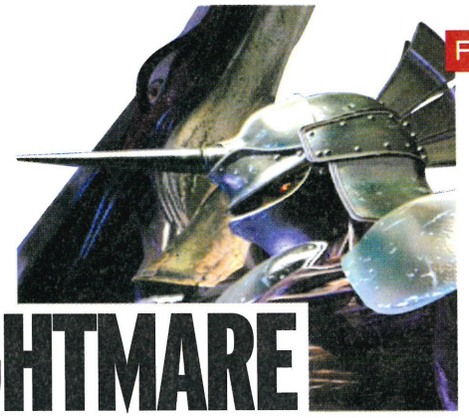
3 Like Kilik, Mitsurugi's basic moves aren't the most powerful in the world, so you need to learn plenty of strings and combos. Experiment with the moves to see which ones go together well – his speed means that it shouldn't be difficult to find some suitable strings.

SPECIAL MOVES

1 **HEAVEN DANCE**
Forward, forward + Y, Y
An excellent double uppercut. It can be blocked, of course, but if not it sends your foe crashing to the ground, minus a significant proportion of their energy bar. Can be outgunned with a quick punch, however.

2 **STEEL SLICER**
X + Y
Simple to do, but this move is a devastating weapon, especially when combined with other juggling moves. For example, hit your foe with one of these, followed by a quick Heaven Dance. They won't know what happened to them.

3 **PATH OF DAMNATION**
Back + X + Y, X + Y
This rocks. The first combination makes Mitsurugi sheath his sword, which you might think a foolish move until you see what happens next. Hold down X and Y, then watch the fireworks. Takes ages, but it's worth it.



NIGHTMARE

What if you want to play one of the big fellas? Well, Nightmare is probably the best to start out with. He looks scary, and his bite's every bit as bad as his bark.

FIGHTING BASICS

1 The main thing to watch out for with Nightmare is his lack of speed. Most of his best moves take some time to carry out, and he's not the nippiest of characters. Beware of quick counter-attacks, and make sure you don't leave yourself wide open for a kicking.

2 Nightmare's long reach means he can execute throws from a little further away than normal. Learn his range, and every so often you can frustrate your foe by grappling when they least expect it. Dodge round the side for an awesome suplex.

3 For the ultimate in sneaky tactics, Nightmare has a stabbing move (forward + Y) that not only connects from a big distance, but also sends the other character tumbling back several feet. If they're anywhere near the edge of the ring this is guaranteed to get a ring-out.

SPECIAL MOVES

1 **EARTH DIVIDE**
QCF + Y
One of the most satisfyingly spectacular moves in the game, we reckon. Nightmare draws back his sword, then charges up and delivers an absolutely enormous slash that can't be blocked. Takes ages to pull off, but it's worth it.

2 **FATAL DIVE**
Back, back + Y, Y
A good leaping attack that's got a good chance of doing some serious damage. Nightmare brings his sword swiping down on his opponent's head, before whipping it up again. Guaranteed to bring tears to any man's eyes.

3 **BUSTER GROUNDER**
Y, down + X
An overhead slash followed by a horizontal sweep that knocks them headlong. The trick here is to hold down X, which charges up the move. Once again, if you're anywhere near the edge your opponent may be propelled out of the ring.

EXTRA MOVES

MITSURUGI

HEAVEN CANNON
Down / forward + Y

SAMURAI THRUST
QCF + Y

BULLET CUTTER
Back, B, Y

PHOENIX TAIL
Forward, forward, A+ B

AUTUMN REQUIEM
Y + B

PARTING THRUST
Back, Y + B

NIGHTMARE

DRILLING THRUST
Down / back + Y

SLEDGEHAMMER
Forward, forward + X + Y

DROP KICK
Forward, forward + Y + B

JADE CRACKER
Forward + Y

DARK SOUL IMPACT
Down / forward + X + Y

SKY SPLITTER
Down / forward + Y

Okay, so that's the basic stuff out of the way. Next issue (on sale Thursday 13 January) we'll have five more fighters, as well as more advanced fighting tips. We're also interested in hearing your best tactics and strategies. Just email us at the usual address, with 'Soul Calibur tips' as the subject heading. Cheers.

SHORT & SWEET

TRICKSTYLE

Enter the options screen and choose the 'cheats' selection

CITYBEACONS
Win everything.

TEAROUND
Always win.

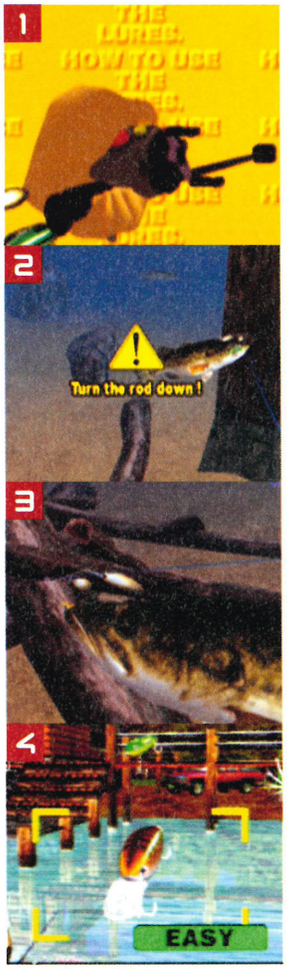
IWISH
Infinite time.

TRAVOLTA
Power-up moves.

INFLATEDEGO
Big heads.

GET TO GRIPS WITH SEGA BASS FISHING

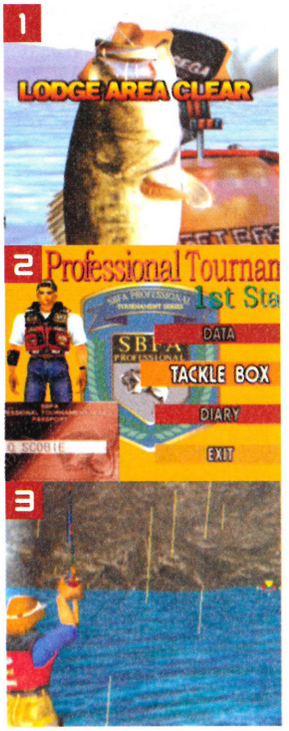
THIS IS THE ONLY GAME WHERE YOU CAN ACTUALLY DANGLE YOUR TACKLE OVER A PUBLIC LAKE AND NOT GET ARRESTED. THIS IS SEGA BASS FISHING RIPPED APART, RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST SCALE



BEGINNER'S TIPS

Before you get started, there are a few things you need to know. The most annoying thing is finding something out *after* you've failed.

1. **HOLD YOUR FIRE**
Remember that the controller is sensitive to natural movements. To make the game easier to play and more fun, don't resort to using the fire buttons.
2. **USE IT, DON'T LOSE IT**
Always follow the on-screen instructions during the game. The last thing you want is for your line to break and to lose that whopper you were about to catch.
3. **EVERY SECOND COUNTS**
Before tackling the game's tougher levels, read the guides on these here pages. You can save those vital seconds which go so quickly in the later levels.
4. **EASY DOES IT**
Try to make the lure move with natural movements. This way the fish won't get scared. If you jerk the rod like a mad man they won't come anywhere near you.



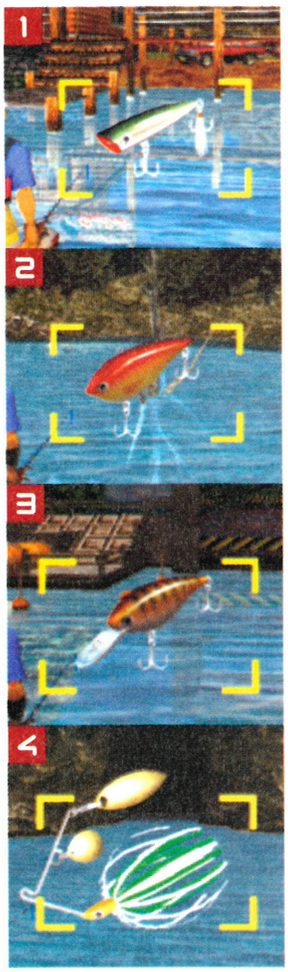
GAMING MODES

Don't think this is just a straight port of its arcade counterpart; this game has a lot more scope, boasting five additional levels and loads more lures.

1. **ARCADE MODE**
This mode is more of a quick thrill. Each level has a different target weight to catch, and it's all timed. The key here is to work out where all the fish are (which we've done for you).
2. **ORIGINAL MODE**
There are five rounds in this mode, each comprised of three different stages (morning, midday and evening). In this mode you're up against 50 other players and your aim is to complete the set tasks in at least tenth place to qualify, and earn an extra bonus for winning the competition.
3. **PRACTICE MODE**
Practice makes perfect, and this is the best place to do it. Each level you've played in the game (including the bonus stages) is here, and you can choose the weather and time settings.

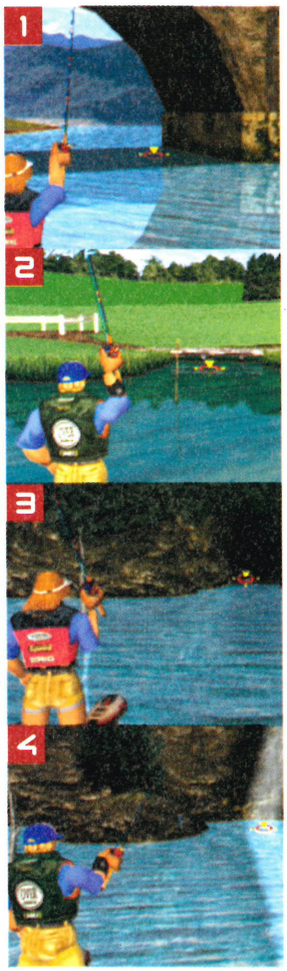
ARCADE MODE STAGES

1. **LODGE LEVEL**
This is probably the easiest level for getting a bite, but don't expect a super-bass; most of these fish are pretty average. The best place to fish is between the two platforms.
2. **CAPE LEVEL**
You can find a couple of big 'uns here, but to do so it's best to stay away from the bank. Try to look on the far left-hand side further out in the lake.
3. **INLET LEVEL**
There are two floodgates here. Most of the fish are hanging around the right-hand gate.
4. **PALACE LEVEL**
This stage is pretty tough, and there are only two fish in the lake. When you spot one, don't be too hyperactive with the lure – wave it in front of the bass's face subtly, and if you're lucky it will take a bite at it.



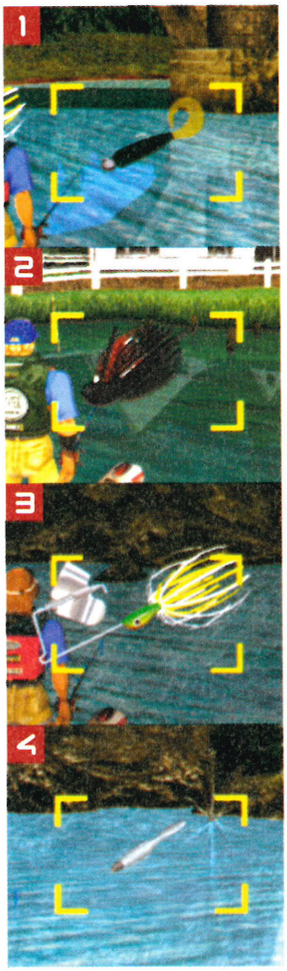
BEST ARCADE LURES

1. **POPPER**
Although only available later on in the stage, this one works best as the bass aren't afraid to surface. To work this lure, jerk the rod around on the surface of the water while reeling it in.
2. **VIBRATION**
The Vibration lure can be used in all depths, so it's ideal for this level as the bass are in the middle and bottom of the lake. Reel in the lure at a steady pace in order to create a rattling sound.
3. **DEEP CRANK**
This lure is pretty easy to use, but the bigger fish go for it because of its large size. Moving the lure in a reel-and-stop action, go along at a steady pace while tapping items at the bottom of the lake.
4. **SPINNER BAIT**
Probably the best lure in the game, so don't be afraid to try it out on all other levels. It can be used in any condition, and the bigger bass love it. To make this one work at its best, reel it in at a constant speed.



ORIGINAL MODE STAGES

1. **BRIDGE LEVEL**
This level is pretty deserted, so unless you're in practice mode you'll be wasting your time by trying to find something worth catching here. The few fish that do inhabit this level are around the second girder from the right.
2. **REED LEVEL**
Fish are dotted around everywhere here. To attract their attention, use a brightly coloured lure which doesn't blend in with the surrounding reeds too much.
3. **CAVE LEVEL**
You should be able to find some huge fish here. The best place to look for them is in front of the entrance to the cave.
4. **FALLS LEVEL**
One of the prettiest levels in the game, and also the toughest. To get past it use a heavy lure and search deep down at the bottom of the lake, near the second waterfall from the left. You need patience and skill to beat this level.



BEST ORIGINAL LURES

1. **GRUB**
Move the lure up and down to attract the bass. Effective when near bridge girders, water gates and other structures. Try changing the colours of this lure to attract different types of bass.
2. **RUBBER JIG**
Reel this one in slowly, and try to tap a rock or stick at the bottom of the lake. This is effective in the reedier areas.
3. **BUZZ BAIT**
Similar to the spinner bait, except that it's made for skimming the surface of the lake. Works best in shallow water.
4. **PADDLE TAIL**
Designed for use at the bottom of the lake, and because of its shape it sinks to the bottom quicker than other lures. To use it, slowly drag it along the bottom of the lake.

SECRETS

1. **FEMALE CHARACTER**
To be the female in arcade mode, press A+B during the level selection screen.
2. **EXTRA PRACTICE LEVELS**
To unlock three new practice levels, complete the game in arcade mode once.
3. **SPECIAL LURES**
At different parts of the various modes, you earn extra lures. Usually it's a good idea to try these out as soon as you're rewarded with them. This can be especially handy when you're finding things a little slow.
4. **DIFFERENT COLOURED LURES**
In Consumer mode, during the lure selection screen press UP to change the colour of your lure. This comes in useful at different points throughout the game, especially in the darker areas and with uninterested fish.

SHORT & SWEET

DREAMCAST SYSTEM

RESET INTERNET CONNECTION

If your console freezes while in the middle of a download, or even if it's just taking too long, you can reset the Internet connection and start again. Simply press all four buttons and START. Don't worry, it won't damage your console's internal memory.

RESET INTERNAL MEMORY

If you want to reset your Dreamcast's internal RAM, first insert the Web Browser GD-ROM into your console, then plug a single controller into port B and hold buttons B and X while turning on the system. If you keep holding them until the Web Browser's log-in screen appears, the internal memory will be reset. It's a useful thing to do if you get disconnected while registering.

SPEED DEVILS

ALL CARS/TRACKS

While playing, press B, right, B, right, up, B and then up.

INFINITE NITROS

While playing, press down, up, down, up, A, X and then A.

SKIP CURRENT CLASS

While playing, press down, right, down, right, A, X and then A.

EXTRA MONEY

While playing, press A, right, A, right, up, B and then A.

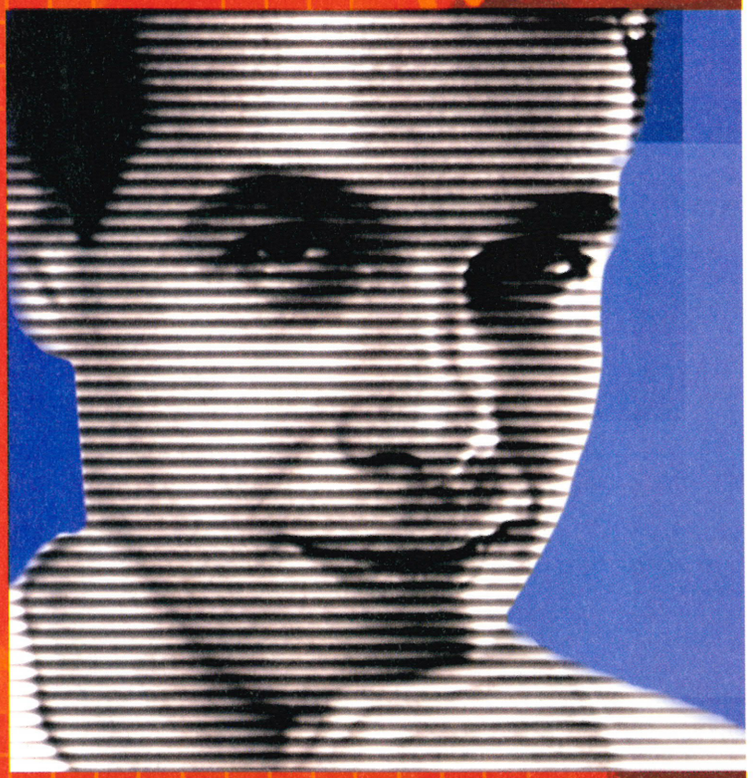
AERO WINGS

UNLOCK FIVE OR SIX-JET FORMATION MODE

Complete the first eight Sky Mission Attack missions successfully and you get the chance to fly a five or six-jet formation in Free Flight mode.

UNLOCK EVERYTHING

At the main start-up screen, once the game has loaded, push both triggers. You hear a message from the announcer to confirm the cheat has worked, and from then on you have access to everything within the game.



IN THE HOT SEAT

WITH DAVID CHOMARD

ANOTHER ONE OF DREAMCAST'S MAJOR DEVELOPERS IS INTERVIEWED BY *ODM* READERS TO FIND OUT HOW THE COMPANY'S GAMES ARE MADE, AND WHAT TO EXPECT AROUND THE CORNER

No Cliché probably aren't a company you'd have heard before the release of the excellent *Toy Commander* (*ODM* #1, 8/10), but the new name hides plenty of existing talent. Originally formed as Adeline, the company had some huge successes – commercially and critically – on PC (see Going Soft panel opposite). Based in Lyon, France, Adeline were bought by Sega in July 1997, and changed their name to No Cliché to reflect the company's change of focus.

Now dedicated to Dreamcast development, the 22-strong team is starting to work on their next project. We passed on your questions to the charming David Chomard, executive producer of *Toy Commander*.

"NON" TO SPORTS

Toy Commander really stands out as an original title in the mass of launch games and upcoming titles. How did you get the support from Sega and your sponsors, when the reality is that a sports sim or me-too product is likely to sell better to the masses?

Nathan Baseley, via email

DC: When Sega created No Cliché, the main purpose was to have original games developed in Europe especially for the European market. Sega understood that importing Japanese titles to Europe was not always the best solution to fit European players' expectations. That's why they created the '1.5 parties' – European developers that are sponsored by Sega to develop European games.

We are the extreme of the concept, as we are the only 100 per cent-owned development studio in Europe. As we always made original games in the past, we did not want to create a classical game, and that's what Sega expected. So Sega were very enthusiastic when we came up with the idea of *Toy Commander*.

HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE

What options for online support will you have in future games? Do you think developers should be doing more to get online stuff into their games?

Ian Railton, Lincoln

DC: We did not have time to implement an online multiplayer mode in *Toy Commander*, but we really hoped that we could. However, the next game will definitely include multiplayer online mode. I am convinced that the future of gaming is in multiplayer games (online or split-screen). The pleasure of playing against or with other players cannot be compared with the fun of competing against an artificial intelligence. I hope that a lot of Dreamcast developers will take the opportunity to offer a new dimension of gaming to players.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

I heard a rumour that *Toy Commander* was the first Dreamcast game to be developed in Europe with funding from Sega of Japan. Why was this?

Dave Coles, Pensford

DC: In a few words, No Cliché is a subsidiary of Sega France, but Sega Japan owns the rights to all our games. That's why the cost of development is borne by Sega Japan.

PIXAR PERFECT

When you created *Toy Commander* did you run into any legal trouble from the people who made *Toy Story*?

James Wilson, via email

DC: We tried to avoid any comparison with the film *Toy Story*. Except for the fact that you play with toys, the comparison is very limited. Therefore I cannot see any legal trouble from Pixar.

THINK BIG

Was *Toy Story* an influence for *Toy Commander*? Or *Micro Machines*? Or is it just an idea that you'd been, er, toying with for some time?

Hugo Daniels, St Albans

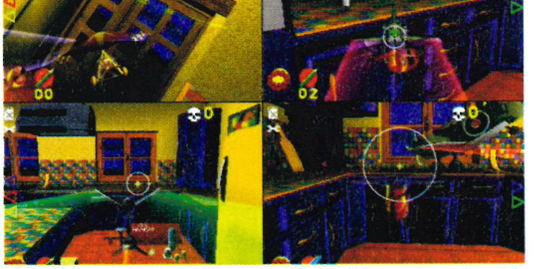
DC: We are big fans of *Micro Machines*, and it's true that we took it as a reference of a good game with small cars. However, the original idea comes from Didier Chanfray, our artistic director, and Frederick Raynal, our creative director.

The basic idea was to fly small planes and fight in a house. Then the idea of having

"THE FUTURE OF GAMING IS IN MULTIPLAYER GAMES"

– NO CLICHÉ'S DAVID CHOMARD

△ Santa: forget reindeer, drive him with a jet pack…



△ …in the Xmas level of *Toy Commander* on this month's CD (see p3).

plenty of small missions with different styles of gameplay and vehicles was added. Finally, the storyline of the rebellion of toys was added.

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

When Sega bought your company, did you already have the idea for *Toy Commander*, or did it come afterwards?

Louise Hammond, Brighton

DC: Sega acquired the team, and then we thought about what we could do on a new console with very powerful specifications. As we were not limited in the design by technical issues, we could have a huge environment with a lot of detailed items in it. So the idea of being something very small in a very big environment came up, and the game concept came just after.

BALANCING ACT

With so many different vehicles and aircraft, was it difficult to balance their strengths and weaknesses? Surely some craft must be more powerful than others, and preferred because of it?.

Harry Patel, Wolverhampton

DC: Each vehicle in the game has its own specs: max speed, turn, brake, life points, fuel consumption etc. It may not be obvious when you play the game in single-player mode, but it becomes very clear when you play deathmatch.

If you choose a tank, for example, it's slow but can take a lot of damage. The basic rules were as follows: if a vehicle is fast, it consumes fuel faster and is weaker; if a vehicle is slow, it resists damage better. For the weapons, all the vehicles that you drive are equipped with the same standard weapons, so the only difference is the level of upgrade that you have.

In fact the main difference between vehicles is their type. Each has its strengths and weaknesses – the cars can sneak and hide in small spaces, but they have trouble targeting flying enemies; the planes can go anywhere but are constantly moving, which makes targeting enemies more difficult; the helicopters can precisely target an enemy as they can stop in the air, but they have trouble following a moving target; the tanks can bear a lot of damage, but are an easy target as they are very slow.

SEASONS GREETINGS

I've heard a rumour about a special Christmas level. Are you planning on doing more of this type of thing?

Anthony Godfrey, via email

DC: Yes, we put together a special Christmas mission of *Toy Commander*. It will be on the DreamOn4 demo CD [covermounted on this issue of *ODM*]. The mission is exclusive for this demo, and includes Santa Claus with a jet-pack that you can drive. He must strike back against the other toys to find all the Christmas presents spread in the room, then bring them back to the Christmas tree. He then has the help of one jeep and one fighting plane. This is a fun mission with lots of exploration and fighting.

It's possible that we may do more of this kind of thing, as with our game engine it's quite easy to put together a mission in a few days. Why not an Easter mission?

WORK QUICKER

What's next for No Cliché? How long will we have to wait for the next game?

Jason James, Kidderminster

DC: We've already started the development of the next game, which will be completely different from *Toy Commander*. It's a horror-adventure game called Agartha (working title) with never-seen-before features that should make it a very original title. I cannot tell you much at this stage, but check it out when it's officially announced next year.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

How long does it take to develop a game, and how many game ideas get rejected before you pursue one that works? Do many games get abandoned midway through development?

Alan Tugwell, via email

DC: Basically, it takes between 18 months and two years with 15 to 20 people to develop a good game that stands out from the crowd. Usually we propose a game concept to Sega to be validated, then we work on production until the end, whatever happens during the development. If something goes wrong during the production, we have to react to correct the direction or fix the problem. In addition, it is very difficult to judge a game when it's in alpha or beta, because there are so many changes and modifications at the end of a production that a crappy game can suddenly become a mega-hit, and vice versa.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

ODM: If any of our readers are interested in becoming a games developer, what should be their first step?

DC: There are many ways, but there are two main ones. The first is to start on your own with a bunch of friends and make a small game or demo, then show it to development studios. The game will prove your value, even if it's just one level of a 2D game; it will show your skills (graphics, design, programming) and your motivation. The other way is to have a very strong skill in a specific field – 3D engines, physics, character animation, low polygon modelling, music etc. Studios are always looking for people who are immediately operational, even if they have just graduated.

YOU GOTTA LOVE

Apart from your own games, what has most impressed you on Dreamcast?

Sarah Cavin, Leicester

DC: In terms of graphics, *Soul Calibur* is definitively the reference; for gameplay, *Power Stone* is so deep; *Ready 2 Rumble* is the best for a quick game with a friend.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What do you think will be the most important addition to Dreamcast – hardware or software – in 2000?

Kevin Unwick, Plymouth

DC: I can't wait to play *Shenmue*! I've only played demos of it at game shows, but everything is just perfect – graphics, puzzles, action-adventure… It should really be the killer app on Dreamcast.

EXPAND AND CONQUER

You're not the largest development team in the world, but after the success of *Toy Commander* will you expand and possibly develop more than one game at a time?

Oli Younger, Watford

DC: Currently there are 22 employees at No Cliché. It is true that with the current team we cannot develop more than one game (plus the game concept of the next one). If *Toy Commander* is successful we may increase the staff to be able to have two games in parallel, but we don't want to grow too fast to remain a human-sized company. We think this is the best way to keep creating quality games – with a small team of highly motivated people.

TALK TO AM3

Next month we'll be printing the answers to the questions you sent us to put to Bizarre Creations, developers of the excellent *Metropolis Street Racer*.

The following issue we'll be talking to The AM3 team in Japan responsible for *Crazy Taxi*. If you want us to put questions to them on your behalf about the game or developing games on Dreamcast, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk, or write to Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

NO PROBLEM

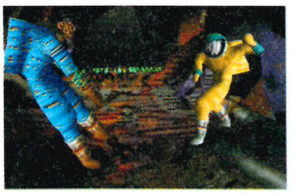
No Cliché isn't the most prolific developer in the world. *Toy Commander* is the only title they've published under this brand name, although the company had great success on PC publishing under the Adeline name.

Four games, then, and all of them instant hits and long-term classics.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE

Possibly one of the most bizarre action adventures ever made, *Little Big Adventure* originally appeared on PC in October '94, with a PlayStation version released in March 1997.

Using isometric graphics, it was one of the first PC games to run at a high resolution known as SVGA (640x480). The game sold more than half a million copies.



TIME COMMANDO

Released at the end of '96, *Time Commando* also featured some first-time technological advances. This time it was hugely impressive character animation in full 3D, super-imposed over perfectly pre-rendered locations.

The game looked stunning, and cemented Adeline's position as one of the most important developers in Europe.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2

Three years after the release of the original, *LBA2* finally appeared to wide critical acclaim. While the start of the game looked too similar to the original, when you stepped outside the internal isometric levels you were transported into a full 3D world. Most welcome was the addition of some sub-games, including a superb car chase.

TOY COMMANDER

One of Dreamcast's launch titles, *Toy Commander* has won plaudits for its exquisite single-player game, one of the most original ever seen on a console. We reviewed the game in issue one of *ODM*, where it was awarded 8 out of 10. The verdict: "Rich in detail, and involving, it's more than just a kid's game."

IN THE HOT SEAT WITH SEGA

EVERY MONTH WE GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK DIRECTLY TO SEGA. SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS AND WE'LL PUT THEM TO THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WORLD'S GREATEST CONSOLE

CALL SEGA

Sega have set up three phone line services to cover all your Dreamcast queries:

CONSUMER SERVICE LINE
08456 090090
Call this number if you have a technical problem with your console, or questions about when and where you can buy products.
Cost: local call rates.

INTERNET SUPPORT LINE
09066 544544
For questions about DC's online facilities, including the DreamKey software and connection problems.
Cost: 60p per minute.

HINTS & TIPS LINE
09067 532222
Hints, tips and solutions for any of Sega's Dreamcast titles.
Cost: 75p per minute.

If you're under 18, ask permission from whoever pays the phone bill before calling, or you'll be for it.

DREAM IN COLOUR?

When will coloured pads and VMs be available in the UK?

Calum Forsyth, via email

We have no plans just yet, as we first need to make sure we sell through the existing stock of white peripherals. Once they've all sold, then we'll start to look at limited edition items.

WISHING ON A STAR

Will there be any *Star Trek* games coming out on Dreamcast? If so, when?

A McMaster, via email

I've heard that Interplay and Activision are both looking at *Star Trek* games for Dreamcast, so look out next year!

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Will there be an add-on so that people can access audio and video files on the Internet?

Paul Albiston, vie email

The current DreamKey browser CD offers compatibility with JavaScript, Macromedia Flash, AV files, ADX files, WAV files, MIDI files and MPEG Sofdec, so you can use some sounds and video. Later versions of DreamKey may boast more features.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

I hear that a microphone is being released with the game *Seaman* in Japan. If it ever comes out over here, will we be able to use it to talk to people over the Internet as well?

Ricky Milburn, Leicester

The microphone is one of the more innovative peripherals being developed for Dreamcast. I'm hoping that after the release of *Seaman* in Japan other developers will look into new ways of using the microphone. We may even see voice recognition word processing packages in the future.

POWER TOOLS

When the VM is plugged into the Dreamcast, does it use up its own power supply or does it use the Dreamcast's?

David Hunter, Ayr

An easy one. When Dreamcast is switched on, it supplies power to all VM units connected to it.

A BUG'S LIFE

I know we can download extra levels and patches from the Internet, but will this mean that games get released with bugs because the programmers know they can put a patch online?

Nathan Baseley, via email

No. All games still have to pass the same quality control tests before they are released.

CAUGHT IN THE NET

Can I use other ISPs such as Freeserve?

Sophie McCormick, via email

No. The DreamKey disc enables you to access our Internet service for free, and all your calls are charged at local rate.

LIFE BEGINS AT 60

Is there any chance of making a 60Hz option mandatory in all games converted for the European market? I can't see why not.

Robbie Donald, via email

We actively encourage all developers to include the 60Hz option in their games, and most will. However, we can't force third parties into it.

A TURN-OFF

Can you still receive email when your Dreamcast is switched off?

Wayne Thompson, via email

Yes. Your emails will be collected in your Inbox. [See part one of our guide to using Dreamcast online, page 110.]

MISSION: POSSIBLE

Will there be a *Final Fantasy* game coming to Dreamcast?

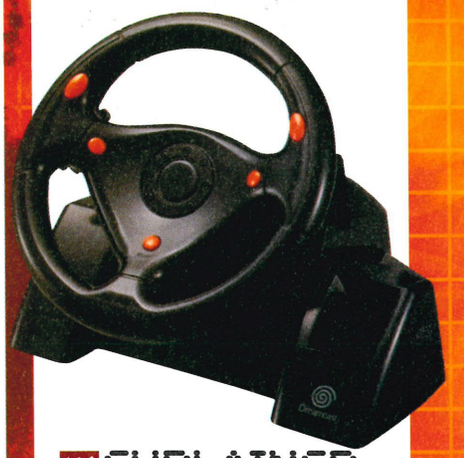
Our entire readership, via email

Nothing is impossible!

WRITE TO US

Want to get something off your chest or get the official response to a query that's been bothering you for ages? What are you waiting for, then? Get writing. Address your letters to:

Sega Q&A, ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Alternatively, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk using the subject heading 'Sega Q&A'.



EXPLAINED

PERIPHERAL PLAYTEST

Every issue, we test a Dreamcast accessory, telling you what it's about, which games work with it and whether it's worth buying. This month: the official Sega Race Controller.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

You can't have failed to notice the large number of driving games out on Dreamcast – we're truly spoiled for choice. There are the visceral arcade thrills of *Sega Rally 2*, the absorbing strategic battles of *F1 World Grand Prix*, and the cheeky remote-controlled action of *Re-Volt* (reviewed on page 76), not to mention *Speed Devils*, *Tokyo Highway Battle*, *Buggy Heat* and *Monaco GP Racing*. If you're a budding Eddie Irvine, you're probably a happy bunny right now.

So, for driving nuts, here is perhaps the ultimate peripheral. Sega's Race Controller features fully analog steering, as well as two analog paddles on the back of the wheel (brake and accelerate) and four front-mounted buttons. It's not overly complicated to set up, as it simply plugs into your Dreamcast console like any normal controller.

The wheel works with pretty much every driving game around. We picked up a random sample: *Sega Rally 2*, *F1 World Grand Prix* and *Re-Volt*, and all three worked fine. Okay, so it's no great hardship playing any of these games with the bog-standard controller, but once you've tried your hand at the wheel you won't want to go back. Not only does it feel more realistic, you also have greater control over your vehicle's movements. Admittedly it's a bit pricy if you're not a hardcore driving games fan, but if you are then it's damn near an essential purchase.

• The official Race Controller should be in the shops now, priced £44.99. Be warned, though: they're being snapped up fast, so you may have to do some hunting around.

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Godzilla Generations
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Hydro Thunder
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In Nippon Budokan
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Marvel vs Capcom
Metropolitan Highway
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Sega Rally 2
Seventh Cross
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Sonic Adventure
Soul Calibur
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SALVATION IS AT HAND WITH

TIPS Q&A

WELCOME TO OUR NEW GAMES Q&A PAGE WHERE WE SOLVE THOSE NIGGLING PROBLEMS THAT HAVE BEEN DRIVING YOU BONKERS

AEROWINGS

I heard that there's a way to play as a flying Dolphin in *Aerowings*. Is this true?

Ben Austin, S London

It certainly is. Each time you finish an air attack mode you're awarded a new aircraft. Finish the eighth mission and you're rewarded with the Dolphin.

HYDRO THUNDER

How do you get the extra tracks and boats in *Hydro Thunder*?

Owen McBride, Birmingham

To earn the medium boats and tracks, finish in the top three on the easy courses; finish in the top two on the medium courses to get the hard ones; and come first in all these to get the first bonus track and vehicles. Win this to get the next, and so on.

△ ***Hydro Thunder*: win extra boats and tracks.**

MARVEL VS CAPCOM

Could you tell me how to pull off Ryu's Raging Demon and Morrigan's level three super in *Marvel Vs Capcom*?

Damon Horsefield, via email

No problem, Damon. In Akuma mode, simply hit LP,LP,F,LK,HP to pull off the Raging Demon. With Morrigan, hit LP,MK,B,MP,HK. Hope these help.

Is there any way to save the secret characters to your VM unit?

Colin Todd, via email

If you play through Arcade mode without losing a character you're challenged by a secret character before the last fight. Who challenges you depends on how many Variable Cross and Hyper Combo finishes you do. Win this fight and that character is saved to your VM unit.

△ ***Marvel Vs Capcom*: save characters to VM.**

MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD

I just bought this fantastic game and am a bit of a novice. My favourite characters are Liu Kang and Sub-Zero. Could you give me a couple of Fatalities, please?

Sean Lawrence, via email

Okay here are the Fatalities for those characters...
Liu Kang: Dragon Morph (half-screen) F,F,F,D,HK+BL+LK, Screen Shot (close) F,D,D,U,HP
Sub-Zero:Headrip (close) F,B,F,D,HP+BL +RN, Ice Smash (outside sweep) B,B,D,B,HP.

How can I play as Goro in *Mortal Kombat Gold*?

Dom Quanter, Hampshire

Highlight Hidden on the character select screen and press the L and R triggers. Keep these held down and press Up, Left and A to select Goro.

TRICKSTYLE

I keep on coming across these sun-like globes which hover around my character for a bit then disappear. I can't work out what they do. Can you please help me?

Ryan Song, via email

What these globes do is enable your rider's signature stunt for a limited time only. If you hold the L trigger and press B you can pull off a spectacular stunt.

SONIC ADVENTURE

How do I get into the Lost World action stage with Knuckles? I've reached the forest, but I can't get the temple to open.

Kyle Roberts, via email

On the platform above the forest you can find a gold icon. Place it on the temple's gold pedestal. Head left from here and follow the path to find a stone entrance in the undergrowth. Dig on the patch of earth to find the silver icon. Place this on its pedestal to open the level.

I heard that SuperSonic is in the game but I didn't find him during Sonic's Quest. Can you put me out of my misery?

Daniel Plantin, Surrey

Not to worry, Daniel. Once you've finished the game with all the other characters, you earn SuperSonic. With him you can fight and defeat the final version of Chaos. Good luck.

I can't seem to find any power-up items for Amy in *Sonic Adventure*. Do any actually exist, or am I just looking in the wrong places?

John Howat, via email

On the Egg Carrier, you come across a hammer game. Simply jump on to it and hit the heads that pop up in order to win. Beat Robotnik's score to get the first item, and then beat your score for the second.

△ ***Sonic*: where's SuperSonic, then?**

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

Can you help me to beat Magician?

Matthew Boydill, via email

When Magician fires at you, shoot his leg and then the fireballs. He then rushes at you. Fire at his exposed thigh and you should repel his attack. When he flies high into the air, quickly shoot him and then concentrate on his fireballs. Repeat and he's soon dead.

In the intro there are scenes from the first *HOTD*. Is there a playable version of it hidden in the game?

Aryud Worra, London

Not that we know of. However, it does appear to be a very popular rumour.

CONTACT INFO

We want to help you with your gaming problems. Write to us at: Tips, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Or email us at tips@dreamcastmag.co.uk

ARE YOU UP TO IT?

Do you consider yourself to be a true gaming pro? Here's where you can prove your worth with our challenges.

You can enter of the challenges below. Simply play the given game with a camera at the ready, and when you get your score quickly take a photo of the screen and post it, along with your name, address and score to: High Scores, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

THE CHALLENGES

SONIC ADVENTURE

FASTEST TIME, WINDY VALLEY WITH SONIC

Race through this treacherous level using any short cuts you can find, and take a photo of the final result screen showing your time.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

HIGHEST SCORE, ARCADE MODE

Blast your way through this fantastic game and take a photo of the final ranking screen where you're given your score. Here's a handy tip: shoot the bad guys in the head, because you get more points.

MARVEL VS CAPCOM

MOST WINS, SURVIVAL MODE

Use any characters you like to brawl your way through this challenge. The only rule is: no easy mode! Take a photo of the leader board.

CHATBACK

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO VOICE YOUR OPINIONS ON ANY GAME REVIEWED IN THE PAST FEW ISSUES OF OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE. IF YOU WANNA SING ITS PRAISES OR SLAG IT OFF, THAT'S FINE, WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

△ *Sega Rally 2*: were we a bit hard on it?

SEGA RALLY 2

REVIEWED: Issue #0, score: 8/10
WHAT WE SAID: "*Sega Rally 2* is undeniably technically superb."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

"I was surprised to see *Sega Rally 2* score so low, it's clearly one of the best racers ever. How many games do you know that have this level of realism and run at 60 frames per second? I think I've made my point."

Maani Safa, Herts

"Although this game did not get a perfect score, it was still the game that made me buy a Dreamcast. Slick visuals and addictive gameplay have never come in a better package!"

Rabab, via email

"If *Sega Rally 2* had smoother graphics I would have argued with your score, but it doesn't. I was worried that your scores would be biased because you're official, but they seem perfectly realistic."

Naeem Taidi, Stevenage

COMMENT: Eight out of ten is a very respectable score. If the game had network play or an improved frame rate included as an option, then it would have received a higher mark.

△ *Soul Calibur*: a star is born.

SOUL CALIBUR

REVIEWED: Issue #2, score: 10/10
WHAT WE SAID: "Game of the year, no doubt about it."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

"Your claim that *Soul Calibur* is the best game of the year could well be true. The original *Soul Edge* was a classic, and the graphics and level of reality in *Soul Calibur* make *Virtua Fighter 3tb* look somewhat dated."

Ramin Berait, Cardiff

"This game is everything a gamer wants. A true classic. Even after beating Mission Battle mode in a weekend this game has enough to keep you playing well into the millennium, and maybe even the next!"

Louis Vafa, Bournemouth

"I can't think of much to say about this game apart from *bloody excellent*! When I bought it I couldn't wait to get my paws on it. It's games like this that make me proud to own a Dreamcast."

Kousak, via email

COMMENT: So it's a big thumbs-up all round for one of the greatest beat 'em ups of all time. A game with true depth, it will keep you occupied for a long time.

Check out part one of our two-part *Soul Calibur* guide, page 114.

△ *Sega Bass Fishing*: doesn't have 'legs'.

SEGA BASS FISHING

REVIEWED: Issue #1, score: 7/10
WHAT WE SAID: "It's a decent game, but never has the idea of try before you buy been more important."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

"On the day I bought *Sega Bass Fishing* I agreed with your score of 7/10 – I even thought it should have been higher. Now I feel that the game has lost all appeal unless it's brought out at a party. If I was to give it a score now it would be more like 5/10."

Gaby Fleming, Oxford

"Thanks for the advice in your *Sega Bass* review! I went out and rented the game from my local video store and found that after a few days I started to loose interest in this novelty title. If it wasn't for you I'd be stuck with something I don't want to play any more. Thanks."

Kelly Moore, London

COMMENT: We've had a lot of letters similar to this one. *Sega Bass Fishing* was designed for play in the arcades, it wasn't created as an in-depth home simulator. Remember though, we did tell you this in the review.

△ *Ready 2 Rumble*: it's a knockout.

READY 2 RUMBLE

REVIEWED: Issue #1, score: 9/10
WHAT WE SAID: "Brilliant multiplayer fun."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

"This looks great but it's way too easy. I stuck it on hard straight away, and pretty soon I got my fighter up to 100 per cent in nearly everything. It wasn't long until I had every single character at that level."

Rob Franklin, via email.

"Definitely one of the most entertaining games in a while. From the intro to the end of the game it was a major laugh. The game isn't that tough to beat, but as it has a two-player mode it will last for quite a while."

Jennifer Cox, East London

'I can't see what the hype of this game is all about. Boxing titles have never appealed to me and they never will. Trying to make the character funny looking or realistically moving isn't going to make me buy a game. Nine out of ten? You're mad!

Anon, via email

COMMENT: Well, Mr Anon, I bet you're glad you kept your anonymity, as you are probably the only person in Britain to think *Ready 2 Rumble* sucks. It isn't the kind of game you'll still be playing in six months' time, but it's fun to play, and for many Dreamcast newbies it's their first game.

Send your comments to: Chatback, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Alternatively, email them to: letters.dreamcast@dennis.co.uk with 'Chatback' in the subject line.

△ ALISON TURNER, 29, SEGA UK'S HEAD OF MARKETING

Ten years of experience in the games industry. Claim to fame: launching Dreamcast. Claim to shame: launching the Philips CDi. Ouch.

△ JOSE CARDOSO, 21, WEB DEVELOPER FOR GENTIA SOFTWARE

Kicked off with a Spectrum, then settled on an Amiga. Eventually turned to the dark side and bought a PlayStation. Thankfully he recently coughed up for a Dreamcast.

△ DAVE BROOKS, 21, IT MANAGER

First up was the Atari VCS, then Atari 800, then moved on to the Commodore 64. Things got blurry after the age of 14 "when I started drinking". Remembers that he does own a Dreamcast though.

FRIEND OR FOE?

FIVE DREAMCAST OWNERS GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH A TOP SEGA BOD – ARE THEY HAPPY WITH THEIR £199.99 INVESTMENT AND SEGA'S PLANS FOR DREAMCAST'S FUTURE? READ ON…

ODM: Dreamcast – happy with it?

STEPHEN: Very happy with it. It's about time a new games machine turned up. The software overall is pretty good. I was slightly disappointed with a few of the games but that's probably down to my own tastes. I didn't find *Sega Rally* that impressive, and I was also disappointed with the *Virtua Fighter* conversion to PAL. Overall though, I'm very pleased with it. *House Of The Dead 2* looks cracking.

JOSE: I've owned a Dreamcast since October 16 and so far I've been impressed by the power and the quality of the console. Despite a few niggles such as the initial connection problems

△ GARY JONATHAN, 28, RUNS HIS OWN WEBSITE DESIGN COMPANY, POINT BLANK DESIGN
Started playing games on the Commodore 64. Has subsequently owned "shitloads" of consoles, including Dreamcast.

△ STEPHEN GODFROY, 26, EDITOR, WH SMITH ON-LINE GAMES AND WWW.GAMESPARADISE.COM
Began playing games on the BBC Model B, then got a 3DO. Has owned every console under the sun since, including Dreamcast.

△ MARK KITELEY, 28, SOLICITOR
Started off his gaming life with an Atari VCS. Then hopped on to MegaDrive and has ended up with Dreamcast.

to Dreamarena, a slower UK spec modem, some poor PAL conversions etc, I think the console has restored some of Sega's damaged reputation.

MARK: I think the console is great; the games are fantastic. I had an import a few months ago which I sold to pay for a UK one. I bought *Power Stone* this week, which is probably the best ad for the console so far. It looks superb, plays well and uses the VM unit properly. I think the best thing about Dreamcast though is that it has a crack at something a little different – Sega need games like *Power Stone* if it's going to keep the interest high in the media.

DAVE: The gaming side of the console seems spectacular to me. It's launched with some great titles, there's some even better ones just a couple of weeks away (*House Of The Dead 2* and *Soul Calibur*) and some total jaw droppers on the horizon (*D2* and *Shenmue*). I honestly think that this console will have a long lifetime.

NET GAINS

ODM: What about the Internet side?

DAVE: I was a little disappointed with the hitches at the beginning, but I'm just looking forward to having a go on the multiplayer games.

JOSE: My only concern is that when everyone is playing networked games the 33.6K modem won't be quick enough. If it's anything like the PC it won't be.

STEPHEN: I would have thought, though, because the modem is upgradeable, that when a multiplayer game like *Half-Life* comes out it will be packaged with an upgradeable modem – like *HOD2* coming with a light-gun.

DAVE: I've also read rumours that Dreamcast already has a new graphics chip in Japan, and there's talk of DVD and Zip drives.

ALISON: There are lots of rumours out there, and I don't have anything substantiated. Just remember that Dreamcast is an evolutionary product. It's not just static, it's built to be upgradeable in the future.

MARK: When are we actually going to see the multiplaying side of Dreamcast? Stuff like *Sega Rally* online, for instance?

ALISON: There's something I want to tell everyone about but I can't yet. The important thing to realise is that you don't want to launch full network gaming until you've got the right products in place or else you'll let everyone down – people will be disappointed. We've got something in the pipeline for early next year that I think you'll be happy about.

MARK: What about the kind of ▷

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

downloads we can expect from Dreamarena in the future?

GARY: You can get the Halloween downloads for *Sonic Adventure* already. I suggested on the message boards that they should put Anne Robinson's face on one – Anna Robotnix.

ALISON: You have to realise that Dreamcast was the first to launch with a network and a modem. Right now there are lots of downloadable elements and online capabilities. We've got the Worldwide Sonic Challenge, and also the Christmas downloads for *Sonic Adventure*. We're also about to announce the Sonic Christmas Challenge, a competition you can only enter through Dreamcast Arena, and it has a massive prize – and I mean massive.

MEMORY LANE

ODM: How are people getting on with the VM unit?

DAVE: I filled up an entire unit with one of those creatures from *Sonic Adventure*.

ALISON: Ahhh…

DAVE: I played it for ages.

ALISON: Did it die?

DAVE: No, it's still alive.

GARY: You should have brought it along, and we could have connected them!

ALISON: Has anyone done that yet?

DAVE: No, but then at the moment I don't know anyone else who's got one.

ALISON: Then maybe we should do something like start a dating club on the Internet for VMs!

Everyone laughs.

STEPHEN: Seriously though, I think the VM has worked well. I like the fact it's got a bit of personality to it. It's very distinctive and makes the DC package more mainstream and branded. It's a good step to take.

JOSE: As for consoles moving into the mainstream in general, Sony made quite a good move when they put their machines in clubs and stuff like that. It got exposure and coverage. It's something that Sega seem to want to do, rather than merely restrict their marketing to hardcore gamers.

GARY: Sony helped the entire games industry that way.

MARK: Yes, they made it less of a closet industry.

ALISON: I think we recognise that, and that's why we got a partnership with MTV and we're sponsoring their Lick tour. We've just signed Paul Oakenfold and are sponsoring his current Perfecto tour. We recognise there are groups of people out there who we can reach through music and clubs, but we don't want to be exclusive, we want to open it up to everyone. Dreamcast isn't just for people who are very cool and go to the right clubs.

> "DREAMCAST IS ABOUT SOCIAL GAMING, ABOUT BEING INCLUSIVE AND HAVING FUN"
>
> – ALISON TURNER

STEPHEN: Does that mean we'll start seeing ads in *Good Housekeeping*?

ALISON: Or in *Hello!* "And today's Celebrity Dreamcast Player is… one of the Spice Girls!"

ODM: So what kind of impact has Dreamcast made on the market and the 'mainstream'?

ALISON: They've sold through so quickly – 63,000 in four days. That's one of the indicators that has shown that the machine is not just being bought by the core gamer group of 16-24-year-olds who go out and buy consoles, it's much wider.

When I stood by the counter at HMV on launch night it was scary. One man came in and bought a console, games and a keyboard. He said the console was for him and the kids, and the keyboard was for his wife so she could go online. It's introduced a wider group of people to consoles.

ODM: We've had OAPs phoning us enquiring about the console because it's the cheapest way to get on the Internet. Were you expecting that kind of response?

MARK: They just like the Robbie Williams song!

ALISON: No, it doesn't surprise us at all. The whole brand and positioning of Dreamcast is about social gaming, about being inclusive, and having fun. With its Internet capabilities, Dreamcast automatically becomes a wider, more appealing activity. It's not like some consoles which are insular and 'on your own'.

ODM: What about the female gamer market? We were looking for girls to come along for this discussion but, as you can see, the blokes were the ones who stepped forward.

ALISON: I don't know how many female gamers make up the 63,000 people who bought Dreamcast. As soon as they start registering we will, but I assume because of the marketing, the Net access and the social angle etc, that

there will be a higher percentage of girls than with other consoles. We have to be realistic though, it's a new console. The first people who are going to buy new consoles are young, enthusiastic gamers, who tend to be men; the female market will come later.

STEPHEN: I agree. It's still early days. We're talking about the future, but the machine has done fantastically well already. I think people are so opinionated and concerned about the machine because we hope that it delivers on our expectations for gaming as a whole, because gaming is part of our culture, and Dreamcast is moving it forward. So I believe the balance between female/male ownership of consoles will move forward with it. Sega are taking the baton and running with it. And good luck to them.

ODM: The media seems to have embraced the console. Were Sega surprised by their reaction?

ALISON: It's been phenomenal. It wasn't like that with the Philips CDi! Around launch time of Dreamcast the press uptake was amazing – programmes you'd never expect to see it on, like, *The Money Programme*.

DAVE: And *Watchdog*.

Everyone laughs.

ALISON: It was on every major TV show and radio station. They're interested in Dreamcast's Internet capabilities, and the Net is a hot issue right now because of all these people earning millions from their online businesses. People get that.

STEPHEN: But there were quite a few pessimists around before the launch, doubting the console, and it really did cheese me off. They didn't give it a chance.

GARY: They were so defeatist.

ODM: So what's next for Dreamcast before and after Christmas?

ALISON: We've obviously done the ads for the launch, and we're currently airing the commercials for the likes of *Soul Calibur* and *Sega Rally*. After Christmas we'll see a real focus on the Internet and email side of Dreamcast. The story right now though is very much about software – the games side of things.

SOFT-HEARTED

ODM: So what does everyone feel are the keys to the Dreamcast's future success?

MARK: Games!

STEPHEN: Yeah, the software is very important. As Alison said, their tactic for the next round of marketing will be focused on software. I think *Soul Calibur* is a fantastic game to keep up their sleeve, and so is *House Of The Dead 2* with the light-gun. Judging from these kinds of top titles, Sega's success is going to continue. I just hope that when they do shift the marketing on to the online gaming aspects the online capabilities are up to scratch. I'm fully confident though.

GARY: My only problem with the games available at launch was that they were all very 'arcade' – very quick-fix. I played them non-stop for a week and a half, but now the console is just sitting on my bedroom floor. What I really want in the future is an RPG.

JOSE: Yeah, something like *Final Fantasy VII*.

ALISON: There are games coming out like that. We've got *Shenmue* which is stunning, and *Evolution* [see review on page 74]. *MSR* is also looking pretty nice. *Ecco The Dolphin* is another one people are talking about. I love *Crazy Taxi* as well, it's so much fun. So there are more and more games coming.

ODM: Finally, for those who remember their gaming history, have Sega now buried the memory of the Saturn console?

STEPHEN: Totally. Sega have got their hopes riding on Dreamcast, and it seems everyone's upbeat and wants to see it succeed.

ALISON: We can't be complacent about our success though, because there is a window of opportunity for us. We can really do a good job and we can work with everyone to make it better. The important thing is that we've got to keep people going back to Dreamarena, we've got to keep people buying games and playing them, and we've got to keep delivering.

"THE GAMES AVAILABLE AT LAUNCH WERE ALL VERY 'ARCADE' - VERY QUICK-FIX"

– GARY JONATHAN

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And a happy New Year, of course.
See you in the next millennium

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HIDDEN COMPO: In which county is Beachy Head? Mark entries 'Hidden Compo' and mail them to the usual address by Monday 20 December. Last month's winner is Mark Howells of Lincoln, who wins a funky VM unit.

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