GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 3 - ISSUE

Playmates
Pe
Interactive Entertainment

SKELETON WARRIORS & EWJ2 - FROM TOYS TO MULTI-PLATFORM POWER!

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE!
PLAYSTATION: NBA JAM TE • WWF WRESTLEMANIA • SPACE GRIFFON
OFF WORLD EXTREME • ZERO DIVIDE **SATURN:** THUNDERSTRIKE 2
VIRTUA COP • WING ARMS • RAYEARTH • LAYER SECTION **3DO:** D's
BLADEFORCE **32X:** PRIMAL RAGE • SOULSTAR **SNES:** MEGA MAN X3
SPAWN **GENESIS:** GARFIELD • SPOT **VIRTUAL BOY:** 6 GAMES REVIEWED!
PLUS: EXCLUSIVES YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE,
THE IMPORT RPG SPECIAL, THE REAL DEAL ON THE NEW M2,
AND A BUNCH OF OTHER STUFF WE DON'T HAVE ROOM FOR

0 74851 08381 9

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For strength, speed, and that healthy reptilian glow.

EDITORIAL ZONE

We now return you to our regularly scheduled Ed Zone. Welcome, to the November issue of GameFan... proofread about a thousand times.

GameFan has always been a publication with a rather large focus on the Japanese gaming scene. A glance into one of the chat groups on the net might lead you to believe this is due to the fact that we somehow have an interest in boosting the sales of import games. On the contrary, we're hoping (and are helping to facilitate) the American game scene catches up (and on), so you don't have to track down the imports. It's our job to keep you up to date on a worldwide scale.

The reason we are so adamant about the Japanese scene is because the industry there is not only more diversified, but adheres to a higher standard. Japanese games are packaged like someone cares about the people buying them. Amazing color art can be found throughout, along with either stickers, a special sleeve, a tiny music CD, or even the occasional collector pin.

Additionally, within weeks of a game's release, if it's worthy, an arranged music CD follows, featuring both arranged and original tracks from the game. Take Panzer Dragoon, for instance. The music CD is incredible, easily eclipsing most of the ca-ca on your local FM dial. Andromeda hired the London Philharmonic to perform the title track. Game music is an industry unto itself in Japan. Fighting games especially get major retail exposure. Darkstalkers, SF2, Virtua Fighter, and Samurai Shodown characters are available in detailed garage kits, action figures, plush toys, key chains, etc. in many shops throughout Tokyo. Imagine walking into a novelty store and picking up a perfect hand painted Killer Instinct, DKC, MK, or Street Fighter character.

The industry in Japan is broader in every sense of the word. I have a hard time believing that a similar market would not thrive in the US. To make matters worse, much of the time, by the time a Japanese game reaches you, it's been edited for American consumption. This can severely damage a game's motif. The most well-publicized example of this was '93's Sonic CD. The masterful techno soundtrack was replaced with elevator music resulting in an unbalanced blend of action and audio. In Japan, no particular category is overlooked based on projected sales figures, as is the case currently in the US. Take RPG's for instance. Unless prospective buyers can project earth-shatter-ing numbers they will continue to avoid them and opt for the cheaper, more mainstream titles. I realize that lengthy translations are quite an endeavor, and it's a lot easier to buy a releasable product you can get into the marketplace quickly. But someone has got to be willing to invest the time and money to bring us the games we deserve. I believe that responsibility lies greatly with the manufacturer. SOA has not a single RPG on the market for the Saturn, after stating that now, with the advent of 32-bit hardware, the market would open up allowing them to re-affirm what helped bring them to fame in the first place: RPG's, namely Phantasy Star. There are already three great RPG's out in Japan that currently aren't even being worked on here... Why? Arc the Lad for the PlayStation's another example. Where is it? In order for gaming to become a truly universal pastime things are going to have to change. Are we to live and die by the flight sim, 3-D shooter, and racing game forever? I sure hope not.

If and when things do change, I think it's time that, in the instance a game's soundtrack or general theme is changed, both versions should be offered on one disc. Many of the games you own, and will buy in the future, are mere shells of what they once were. Most recently, Gran Chaser, now titled Cyber Speedway, a sci-fi racing game designed by Syd Mead, and programmed by the masters at SOJ's Nextech, was stripped of its very fitting futuristic soundtrack. It was replaced with a mixture of grunge and pseudo-country complete with... singing? Ouch. It's like painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa. Buyers of that game will never know what a cool game that once was, and that's just not right. This, and this alone, is why we cover the import game scene so vigorously. So the next time you're on the net and some bonehead chimes in with NASTY LIT-TLE RUMORS, tell them to get a life and start worryin' about stuff that matters. Now, enough of my chatter, on with the magazine, there's important stuff in here that demands your immediate attention... Games!

PS. I've been receiving a bit of mail regarding the rating system in Viewpoint. Here's how it breaks down... 95-100%=A, 90-94%=A-, 85-89%=B+, 80-84%=B, 75-79%=C+, 70-74%=C, 65-69%=D+, 60-64%=D, 55-59%=F. Anything lower is too hurtin' to mention. A middle number is the degree, an 80% is barely a B title while an 83% is closer to a B+.
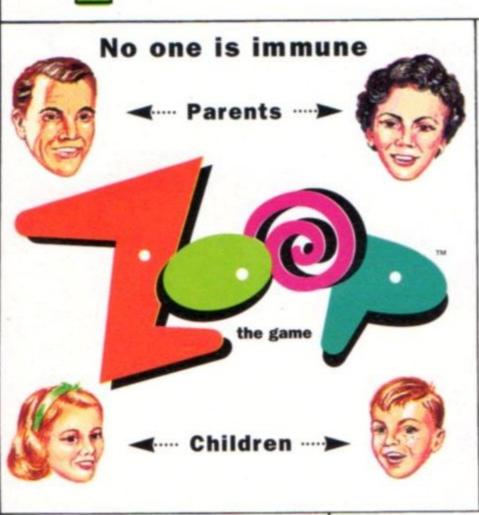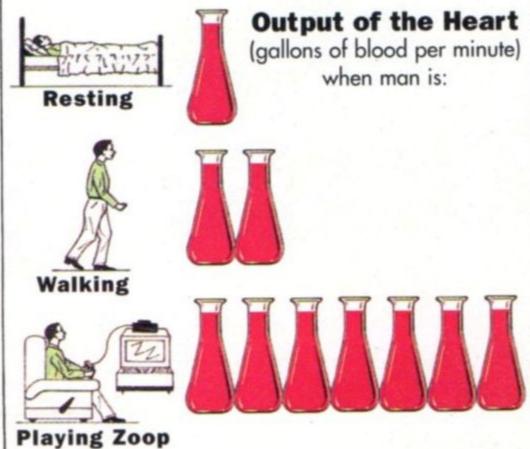
The flying is so realistic,
it'll actually create

a sonic

boom.
(In your shorts.)

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KIDS TO ADULTS
K·A
AGES 6+

CONTENTS

YEAR OF THE WORM?
Holy Cow! Jim's back in his wackiest adventure ever! (and on TV, too!) Read all about it!
PAGE 87, 92, 98

SKELETON WARRIORS
GFs first look at Neversoft/Playmate's incredible new 3-D side scrolling adventure for the Saturn.
PAGE 52

COVER STORY

Skeleton Warriors and Earthworm Jim 2 pair up for one spectacular cover! (with a little help from our cherished artist Terry W.) Both games are so cool we had to tear the cover in half!

GAMEFAN Original Art
By:
Terry Wolfinger

OFF WORLD INTERCEPTOR
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WWF
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MARVEL SUPERHEROES
PAGE 116

TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. Killer Instinct - SNES
2. DKC - SNES
3. Chrono Trigger - SNES
4. Final Fantasy 3 - SNES
5. Daytona USA - Saturn
6. Virtua Fighter - Saturn
7. MK3 - Arcade
8. Panzer Dragoon - Saturn
9. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
10. NBA JAM T.E. - SNES

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Killer Instinct 2 - Ultra 64
2. MK3 - SNES
3. DKC2 - SNES
4. Tekken - PlayStation
5. MK3 - PlayStation
6. Virtua Fighter 2 - Saturn
7. Yoshi's Island - SNES
8. StarFox 2 - SNES
9. EWJ2 - SNES
10. Final Fantasy 7 - Ultra 64

DEVELOPERS' TOP TEN

THIS MONTH'S GUEST DEVELOPER:
Robb Alvey,
senior producer, Virgin Interactive Entertainment
(Robb produced Aladdin, Jungle Book, Lion King, 7th Guest, and Spot Goes To Hollywood.)

1. Robotron - classic arcade
2. Street Fighter Alpha - arcade
3. Virtua Fighter Remix - Saturn
4. Viewpoint - Neo•Geo
5. Super Smash TV - SNES
6. Thunder Force III - Genesis
7. Mappy - classic arcade
8. Rayman - PlayStation
9. Virtua Cop - Saturn
10. Mr. Do - Neo•Geo

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. Ray Earth - Saturn
2. Steamgear Mash - Saturn
3. Golden Axe The Duel - Saturn
4. Clockwork Knight 2 - Saturn
5. EWJ 2 - Genesis
6. Wing Arms - Saturn
7. Toy Story - Genesis
8. Spawn - SNES
9. WWF Wrestlemania - PlayStation
10. Off World Int. Extreme - Saturn

1. Yoshi's Island - SNES
2. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
3. Resident Evil - PlayStation
4. KOF '95- Neo Geo
5. Loaded - PlayStation
6. Slam n Jam 95 - 3DO
7. Marvel Superheros - Arcade
9. Dracula X - SNES
8. Tekken 2 - Arcade
10. Clockwork Knight 2 - Saturn

1. Resident Evil - PlayStation
2. Overkill - PlayStation
3. Tekken 2 - Arcade
4. Yoshi's Island- SNES
5. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
6. Darkstalkers - PlayStation
7. Mario Clash - Virtual Boy
8. Chrono Trigger - SNES
9. EWJ 2 - SNES
10. Sega Rally - Saturn

1. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
2. Yoshi's Island - SNES
3. Tekken 2 - Arcade
4. Wipeout - PlayStation
5. Chrono Trigger - SNES
6. WWF Wrestlemania - PlayStation
7. EWJ2 - SNES
8. Rayman - PlayStation
9. DKC 2 - SNES
10. Sega Rally - Saturn

1. Killer Instinct - SNES
2. Yoshi's Island - SNES
3. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
4. KOF '95 - Neo Geo
5. Jumping Flash - PlayStation
6. Tekken 2 - Arcade
7. WWF Wrestlemania - PlayStation
8. Rayman - PlayStation
9. D's Diner - Saturn
10. Super Street Fighter 2 / SNES

1. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
2. Tekken 2 - Arcade
3. Layer Section - Saturn
4. Philosoma - PlayStation
5. Resident Evil - PlayStation
6. Sonic Wings 3 - Neo Geo
7. Yoshi's Island - SNES
8. KOF '95 - Neo Geo
9. FirePro: Gai Den - Saturn
10. Twinbee Yaho - Saturn/PlayStation

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAME FAN TOP TEN 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
Your choice of a core SNES, GENESIS, or GAME GEAR.

Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize:
A FREE year of Diehard Game Fan! The best magazine in the Universe!

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations
to last month's winners:
First Prize:
Michele Piper Brooklyn. NY
Second Prize:
Michael Duong Garden Grove, CA
Third Prize:
Roberto Martinez Cabazon, CA

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: M2's HARDWARE ENGINEERS

3DO's much-anticipated, 64-bit hardware upgrade is on the brink of exploding onto the game scene. Code-named M2, the unit is rumored to be scheduled for an April '96 launch as both an all-new stand-alone system and an upgrade to the current 3DO machine (which was originally code-named Opera and is still referred to as Opera by the majority of the development community).

3DO won't comment yet on price, release date, or software due to ongoing negotiations with its hardware and software partners, but 3DO invited GameFan to a highly-secured conference room in its ultra top-secret M2 building for an exclusive interview with the company's lead hardware engineers: senior VP of hardware engineering and operations Toby Farrand, VP and fellow John Sell, VP and fellow David Needle, and VP and fellow RJ Mical.

Toby and John have extensive engineering backgrounds and were responsible for the PowerPC/Power Mac line at Apple before coming to 3DO; they have led the entire M2 hardware engineering effort. RJ and Dave are two of the most famous hardware engineers in the world, having the Opera, the Lynx, and the Amiga to their credit. They are currently working on a top-secret hardware project related to M2. Tuesday Uhland, associate corporate communications (i.e. publicist extraordinaire), was kind enough to set up this interview and answer "no comment" or yell out "patent alert!" when necessary.

"Our firehose is twice as big as theirs." --R.J. Mical on M2 vs. NU64

DNN
DIEHARD NEWS NETWORK

Origins of Opera
GF: How did Opera originally come about?
RJ: Well, when Epyx announced they were going to sell the handheld system we had created (code-named the "Handy") to Atari, we fought that move with all the might that the two of us had combined, and were unsuccessful in dissuading them from that course of action. We threatened that if they did it, we'd leave, and they did it, and we left. The day after we left, the very next day, we got together with our boss of many years standing, Dave Morse. The three of us sat down in a restaurant and said, "Well what are we going to do now?" And, in classic Silicon Valley style, we sketched out on napkins what would turn out to be the 3DO system. That was probably around mid-September of '89.
DN: The first video prototype was made in my living room, with him sitting on the floor with a PC, writing the first assembler for the arm code, in standard garage engineering style.
RJ: By the time we got together with Trip, which was autumn '90, we were NTG (New Technologies Group), the company where we ended up creating the Opera technology. Originally it was Dave Morse, Dave, and I, but by the time we started talking to Trip we were probably about 7 or 8 strong.
GF: You were already going down the path of creating Opera before you had even spoken to Trip once?
DN: Not the same path that 3DO was on. We

were on the path for the software and hardware architecture, and the machine that Opera would be, with some modifications, as installed by the people who came after us.

M2's Development Team
GF: What were some things that differed about M2's development from Opera's development?
TF: When NTG started, they had to make a different set of trade-offs, in terms of technology choices; they weren't as tightly targeted as we were able to be with M2. With M2, we had the benefit of already seeing what we did right, and what could have been better about the first generation of hardware. With M2, we've picked the world's best process technology. NTG couldn't take advantage of something like that because they didn't have a partnership. With M2 we could go to IBM and say "We're in partnership with Matsushita, we already have a presence in the marketplace, in some communities we're a household name, and we want to use your technology with something really spectacular: the

PowerPC. This will put you on the map in the consumer electronics craze, and gee, if you'll only let us use your world-class manufacturing technology and allow us to shape a PowerPC device to our specific requirements, then we can have a deal here." See, you can't do that when you're a consulting company that doesn't have a partnership all worked out. What NTG did, that nobody else did, was recognize that the 8-bit Nintendos of the day and 16-bit Segas just coming out can only take you so far, but man technology can take you a lot farther than that...it was a quantum leap beyond 6502's and 68,000's. Just the idea of doing something like that was the origin of NTG. Now, everybody and their mother's trying to get into this market-

place, and you really have to be willing to push the technology envelope. So, as a consequence, we've got a much larger team of people working on the hardware. The scale of engineering is, well.... The core chip of the Opera, which used to be several chips, after four generations of optimization is now one chip and about 600,000 transistors, and the core of an M2 chip has 2.8 million transistors. This is the world's best process technology.
GF: How many engineers worked on Opera, and how many developed M2?
TF: Well, if you're in my group, and you're not working on M2, then you're not in my group. My group is around 75 people, whereas Opera was about 25 at its peak. That doesn't include tools people, software people, etc.
RJ: Studio 3DO is very important to the release of M2 because they're developing ten M2 titles right now, some of which will be launched with the system. They are sort of our "test beds" right in-house for what we have to do with the development environment and the tools. We didn't have that in-house software time when Opera was first developed.
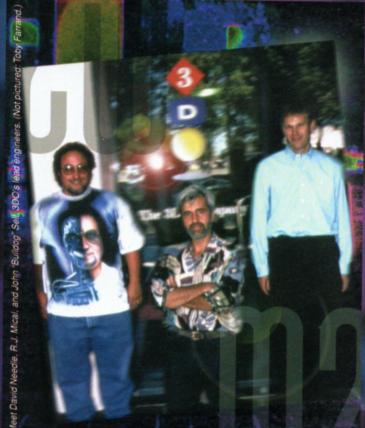
Lessons Learned
GF: What did you learn from developing Opera that has helped you in developing M2?
TF: It's eye-opening to me the ways you can achieve low cost that companies such as Apple aren't doing. Continuously throughout the Opera experience, we found certain things we'll do again, and certain things we won't.
RJ: We were less cost conscious with the original system than we are now with M2. M2 is designed not only to be powerful, but to be as inexpensive as possible so it can be within the reach of most consumers. Another big shortcoming with Opera was there wasn't a huge body of software available for it at launch. This time, we know for sure we'll have a lot of titles because *we're doing them*, plus we have all these other partners who

Meet David Needle, R.J. Mical, and John 'Bulldog' Sell, 3DO's lead engineers. (Not pictured: Toby Farrand.)

Photos by: Matt Taylor

M2 can map 640x480 FMV onto objects, then twist, distort, and morph them in real time!

FMV graphics by: 3DO 'Hardware Guys'

are working on software.
TF: You may not remember this [of course we do! -Ed.] but Opera came out at $699. This won't happen with M2. Cost is a really fanatical thing with M2, and if you look at the logic board of M2 it's actually simpler than Opera.
JS: It took us and our partners a long time to learn how to develop for Opera, but now we have all that knowledge, so we're able to go into the second generation much faster and create software which really takes advantage of the system that much earlier in the product's life

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Super Hocus Pocus Giveaway

First Prize!
The winner will receive a free game console of his or her choice. That's ANY game console - PlayStation, Saturn, 3DO, Jaguar or 32X

Second Prize!
Second prize will win a free GameFan T-Shirt, the game of his/her choice and a one year subscription to GameFan.

Third Prize!
Third prize will win a Game Fan T-Shirt and a one year subscription to GameFan.

Send in your codes... good, bad, or ugly. We'll look em' over and choose one grand prize winner each month. Codes cannot come from a previously published US magazine. Winners will be drawn each month and displayed here in Hocus Pocus, the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a sub. will receive a one year extension.)

CONGRATULATIONS!

To this month's winners:
First Prize:
Howard Seo La Crescenta, CA.
Second Prize:
Mark Buchs Akron, OH.
Third Prize:
Christopher Friedberg Bensalem, PA.

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:
Hocus Pocus
5137 Clareton Dr. Suite 210
Agoura Hills Ca. 91301

Kirby's Avalanche / SNES:
Extra options, menus.

To acquire some more options, press and hold B, A, X, and Y on controller 2 at the title screen. Then, reset the game holding the first four and the other two buttons. When the game resets, release the buttons and go to the options screen. Check under "Special Custom" and there will be more options available.

-Peter Gibson, Edmundston, N.B., Canada.
Mario Tennis / VBoy: Play a super hard singles game.

At the title screen, push L, L, R, L, R and select. You should hear a noise if the code worked. Now you can play a special singles game
-Peter Petrone, Hazler,

NBA Jam: TE / PSX:
Hidden Features.

Enter all of these codes on the "Tonight's Matchup" screen.
BIG HEAD MODE: Triangle, Square, X, Circle and keep on repeating.
HUGE HEAD MODE: Triangle, Circle, X, Square and keep on repeating.
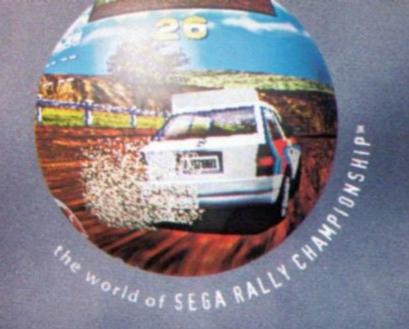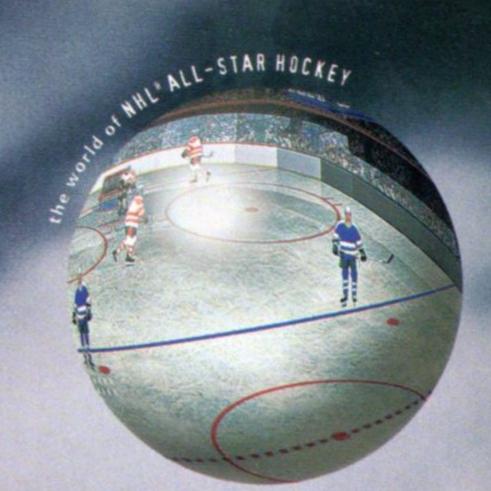
POWERUP DEFENSE: Right, Up, Down, Right, Down, Up.
MAX POWER: Right, Right, Left, Right, X, X, Right.
QUICK HANDS: Left, Left, Left, Left, Circle, Right.
POWERUP 3-POINT: Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Down, Up.
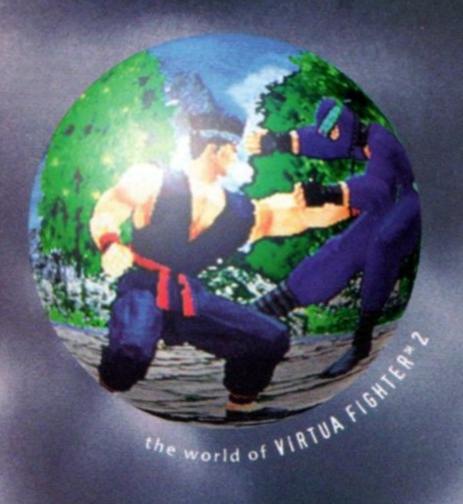
RAINBOW SHOTS: Up, Down, Up, Down, Right, Up, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Down.

BABY MODE: Square, Circle... keep repeating until the game starts.
-Mark Buchs, Akron, OH.

Megaman 7 / SNES: Ghouls N' Ghosts music while playing.

On the boss select screen, if Shade Man has not been defeated yet, place the cursor on him. While holding B, press Y and START simultaneously. Now Shade Man's stage will feature the background music from Stage 1 of Dai Makaimura [Super Ghouls N' Ghosts].

-Davin A. Erickson, Huntington Beach, CA.

King Of Fighters '95 / Neo: Play as the bosses.

When asked if you want to edit teams, enter YES. After you enter yes, when choosing characters, hold the start button and push Up+B, Right+C, Left+A and Down+D. If you have done the code correctly, the bosses will appear at the middle of the screen and you can now choose them as playable characters!

-Howard Seo, La Crescenta, CA.

BUG! / Saturn: Level skipping codes.

At the start/options screen, enter B, A, B, Y, Down, Right, A, L, Down. You should now hear a "YIP!" sound if you did the code correctly. Now, when you've started a game, hold the L button and press UP on the pad to

Killer Instinct / SNES
EYEDOL CODE. (All codes must be inputted at the VS. screen)

At the character select screen pick Cinder. Then on the VS. screen hold right, then push quick punch, quick kick, fierce punch, medium kick, medium punch, fierce kick.

SPEED CODE
(All codes must be inputted at the VS. screen)
There are 4 speed codes:
1. Hold right and all 3 punch buttons for hyper speed.
2. Hold right and all 3 kick buttons for hyper slow mode.
3. Hold left and all 3 punch buttons for medium speed.
4. Hold left and all 3 kick buttons for medium slow mode.

COMBO BREAKER ANY BUTTON.
At the VS. screen hold down and start.

RANDOM SELECT
Hold up and start at the character select screen.

Note: The Speed code will work in a 1 player game. But, in order for the codes to work in a 2 player game, both players must do the same codes at the same time. The only exception to that rule is for combo breakers.

BONUS GAME

Zero Divide / PSX: Play a hidden game of Phalanx.
To play an entire game of Phalanx (Yes... the old SNES game!), simply hold down START and SELECT on the second controller while the game initially loads. Try and get a HIGH SCORE for something cool... possibly a new character (hint, hint).

skip forward one level, or DOWN to skip backwards.

-Christopher Friedburg, Bensalem, PA.

X-Men Codes

X-MEN 2 / Genesis
99 men at start.
To give yourself 99 lives, pause the game anywhere and then press down and C at the same time. Then press Up, Left, Up, Right, Right and C.

-Buddy Ibarra, Newbury Park, CA.

WOLVERINE / Genesis
Use these codes to begin at any stage in Wolverine:
Adamantium Rage:
Level 2 - MARIKO
Level 3 - SILVER FOX
Level 4 - DEPARTMENT H
Level 5 - MADRIPOOR
Level 6 - ASANO
Level 7 - THE HUDSONS
-Bryan Lee, Tappan, NY.

"JUST MOWIN' DUDES DOWN

'TIL THAT ORANGE MEANY WAXED ME."
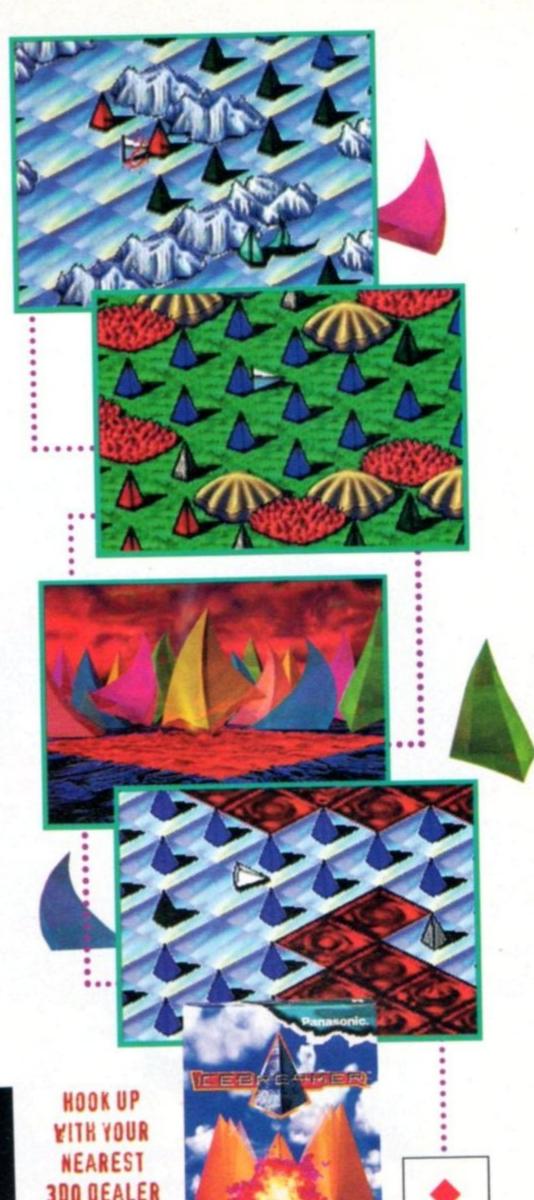
An Experience from the REAL 3DO Zone™, Lovie "The Worm", OH
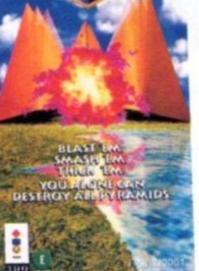
ICEBREAKER

"Orange Meany? I don't think so. These bad boys are downright nasty! The dude took two to the chest, split in half and kept on rockin'. What'z a guy to do? I mean we're talkin' thumbs on fire. My heart's pounding and I'm drippin' sweat. But I'm addicted. I'm clearin' this board. 150 levels, monster tunes and screamin' pyramids. I'm goin' full-tilt, baby! See ya on the grid." ■

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WOLFINGER'S WALL!

HEY, HEY, KIDDIES! WELCOME TO "THE WALL"! YOUR WALL! WHERE ALL YOU ASPIRING ARTISTS GET TO HAVE YOUR WORK PLASTERED FOR ALL TO SEE. THIS MONTH I RECEIVED SO MUCH POWERFUL ART! IT'S JUST TOO AMAZING! SO MUCH SO THAT WE HAVE THE FIRST 6-WAY TIE IN G.F. HISTORY! THE WINNERS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMEFAN AND A G.F. T-SHIRT. KEEP THAT ART COMING, 'CAUSE WE'RE HERE TO STAY!

WINNER! WINNER! Now this is a cool concept. Not only can Jason Kearns of Hanson, KY draw, but he's also psychic!

WOW! Feel the power! This great art comes from Athony Ewing of Brooklyn, NY. A very justifiable win for you and Chun Li!

Michael Vega of Bakersfield, CA, your AMAZING Cham-Cham render has also put you in the Winners' Circle. Great colors and love that hair!

The envelope, and the art within! Both are incredible, and both come to us from Boa Ngo of Ontario, Canada. Beautiful pencil work, Man. Keep it up!

This unique entry comes to us from Edwin Rodriguez of Altadena, CA. Very stylish!

Kudos as well to the prolific Joel "Lefty" Ruidera, the young aspiring airbush artist from Glendale, CA. Your shading is nicely done and ya gotta love the subject matter.

Congrats go to Joe Dickerson (AKA "The Anime Bandit") of Morreno Valley, CA, for his awesome comic-like pages in the ever popular anime style.

Okarsak(?) of unknown origins has painted this aggressive bit of Virtua Fighter lifestyle. Thanx.

This BRRRR-illiant envelope of one of the cool Killer Instinct characters was drawn by Ian Clyde of Manchester, MA. The warm against cool color scheme works quite well.

"HEY...now that's a combo!" or "Cammy reveals her secret weapon(s)!" Well I'm sure Matt Burns of Stevens, PA can tell you what's on his mind.

This very clean SFA picture comes to us from Peter Woytkow of Mundare, Alberta, Canada. Nice tight drawing.

Nathan Green of Altamonte Springs, FL shows us that it is not wise to spill beer on a hedgehog. Get 'im, Guile!

This Iron Soldier drawing was brought to you by Steven Dabbraccio of Maspeth, NY. "Good job, Dude!"

Bob Moussari the "Night Warriors" fan from Alpharetta, GA draws his fave, Jon Talbain. Oh yeah!

Koiwu Beyan of LA, CA sends us this Marvelous drawing of those mighty Xmen. Cooooool.

Looks like Sean Anderson of Ontario, Canada wants a job. He's drawn this cover of our mag w/ VF2 the "yellow" edition.

"I knew it! It was a toupee!" Thanks goes to Ivan Stamatov of Ontario, Canada. "Bloody Good!"

Jen Seng of Westborough, MA does it again with this artful scene of Guile Love. Boy, you've really got these characters down. Nice shadin', too.

"THE LUCKY ONES ARE DEAD."

An Experience from the REAL 3DO Zone™, Dave "Bungee Boy", PA

D
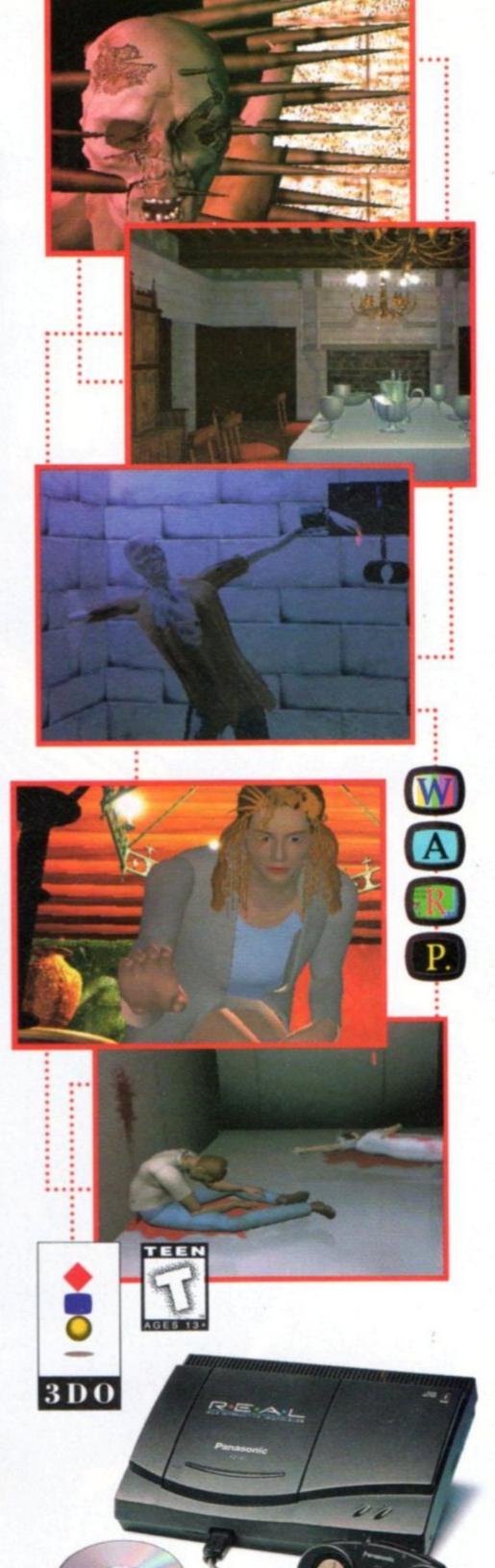
"Laura's not so lucky—she's got to live the nightmare. And I'm living it with her. We have to find out why her father went berserk and blew away a hospital full of patients. Or how to escape the moving wall of spikes that's poised an eyelash away from her face. The lifeless bodies littering this place aren't giving any answers. Graphics and sound so terrifying I got my back to the wall and the doors propped shut. No sleep tonight. See you on the other side."

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VIEWPOINT

EARTHWORM JIM 2 (GENESIS) GAME OF THE MONTH!

SKID   E. STORM   NICK ROX   K. LEE   S. QUAN   STALKER   TAKUHI

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality

I'm not one for any type of sports game, but Jam TE comes close enough to the realm of action games to be playable, and i've gotta say... it's pretty darn fun. No PlayStation owner should be without this, easily the best Jam on the planet. Going beyond even the arcade version with larger players, better scaling, the best FMV ever seen and amazing flame effects, TE is a testament to the system's power.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	8	7	8	**90**

Absolutely unbelievable. This game totally blows away the arcade game. Although I'm not the biggest fan of sports games, NBA Jam: TE on the PlayStation is such a blast to play and is so addictive that I just couldn't ignore it. With graphics that eclipses the coin-op game, tons of cool codes, great sound and perfect control, NBA Jam: TE on the PlayStation is by far the best version to date. Buy it.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	8	8	**92**

The programmers at Iguana have gone above and beyond the call of duty with this latest incarnation of the all too familiar Jam. It can't be easy having to keep recreating this thing, making it worth owning time after time. Amazingly so, however, they have done just that. How? By making it better than the coin-op! The PS hardware loves this game. Mammoth head's are back in style!

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	8	8	8	**90**

NBA JAM TE
PLAYSTATION
ACCLAIM · CD
ARCADE

Although I'm not the biggest fan of Doom-style 3-D corridor games, Space Griffon has enough uniqueness and quality for me to recommend it. The constantly changing storyline and RPG like feel of SG were just too cool. The graphics are O.K. and there is no music to be heard anywhere, but other than that, there's a lot to like about Space Griffon. Not Bad.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	8	4	8	**80**

As one of the first PlayStation games released last year, Space Griffon was an impressive game - we'd never seen 3-D like this before. Unfortunately, you probably HAVE seen 3-D like this in the form of Jumping Flash! or Kileak... and it's better. Now all Griffon has to rely on is it's gameplay and a cool plot. Though the going often gets tedious, clanking around through never-ending dull gray metal, the storyline constantly keeps you intrigued. If you have a LOT of time on your hands, I'd recommend Griffon.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	8	5	7	**78**

Space Griffon brings excellent role playing elements to the 3D action corridor category. Whie it may be a tad scarse on action for the Doom set, it will certainly make those in search of an intelligent 3D adventure very happy Sony gamers. The three dimensional effects are pulled of very nicely for a first gen CD. The ability to transform on the fly is a great idea, and the immense size of each structure gives the game a great feel. I think a sequel is in order. P.S. Atlus... great translation!

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	8	5	9	**80**

SPACE GRIFFON
PLAYSTATION
ATLUS · CD
3-D ADVENTURE

Wow! I thought NBA Jam was wacky and overdone but this game goes to heights unknown. When all is said and done, games are supposed to be about fun and that's where WWF Wrestlemania excels. That WWF Wrestlemania is yet another perfect arcade translation on the PlayStation isn't even the point. This is one of those games you're happy when you're playing and wishing you were home when you're not.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	9	9	10	**93**

Perfection... Plain and simple. It looks like the good people at Sculptured cut no corners in making their superb version of Wrestlemania on the PlayStation! Every frame of animation, every sound sample and every tiny detail was taken into consideration and beautifully reproduced in 32-bit glory. It's overblown, exaggerated design is a priceless spoof on the circus-like atmosphere of pro-wrestling. I guarantee you'll like Wrestlemania: even if you disdain wrestling. It's total in-one-ear-and-out-the-other excitement!

G	C	P	M	O	
10	9	9	8	9	**89**

Looking for a game that reaches out and grabs you by the short n' curly's? Well, here it is. The weirdness of the WWF combined with the best elents found in todays fighters makes for one hostile good time! Not only are the graphics 100% arcade quality, but beside the loading, so is everything else. The PS is capable of PERFECT arcade translations, that's a fact. WWFW is a gas!

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	9	9	**90**

WRESTLEMANIA
PLAYSTATION
ACCLAIM · CD
WRESTLING

What's with all the flight sims lately? I suppose if you're going to take the time necessary to do one right, I could live with it, but that is obviously not the case with Blackfire. Anyone with the patience to live through this game's learning curve should recieve a medal. And what's with the hard rock soundtrack? The texture mapping is OK, but heavy re-draw abounds as you look from your single point of view. The Saturn deserves better.

G	C	P	M	O	
5	5	5	5	5	**59**

Let it be known that Blackfire is for hard-core chopper game masters only. Blackfire is very enjoyable once you get used to the controls and learn the on-screen prompts. I'm giving this game an 80 based on how much fun it is after you get a good deal of experience with the control. That's generous considering the non-impressive 3-D and other flaws in this game. Fans of Comanche on the PC and other games like it will probably love Blackfire: assuming they're ace chopper pilots!

G	C	P	M	O	
6	6	8	6	6	**80**

I've got a couple problems with BlackFire, the painted on skyline coupled with the annoying redraw, and the unforgiveable lack of camera angles. It's the cockpit or nuthin' in this fair at best chopper sim. I want to see my chopper, not a fake instrument panel. There's only one way to reach your target in BF, and that's by avoiding the enemy. If you engage, no matter how many you kill, they keep coming. The fighting is totally unbalanced. You basically run the whole time or die. Not fun.

G	C	P	M	O	
6	5	6	5	6	**65**

BLACKFIRE
SATURN
SEGA · CD
FLIGHT SIM

I have never seen a post-1985 video game this framey in my LIFE. Dark Legends must literally run at 10 fps. It's odd, because the arcade game was extremely smooth and playable while the Saturn version lacks sound effects and is virtually unplayable due to the frame rate. There are some cool concepts and characters here and the music is somewhat cool, but I strongly recommend you stay away from this one and get Golden Axe: The Duel instead!

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	7	5	7	**70**

DL is a decent arcade fighting game that is unfortunately spoiled by choppy animation and control. This game has a lot of good points in its favor (nice graphics, cool moves, awesome voice, great characters, etc.) but as a whole, it doesn't gel properly. Its really too bad, because if this game didn't have such awkward gameplay and frame ridden graphics, it would've been one of the better fighters out there.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	7	8	8	**75**

The problem with fighting games is that you have to get nearly everything perfect to make a game worth playing. Dark Legend has good graphics, awesome music, and cool character design, but its hard to appreciate any of that with the slow, framey movement and a few hard-to-do moves. Close, but not quite. I'll wait for Golden Axe: The Duel.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	7	7	7	7	**74**
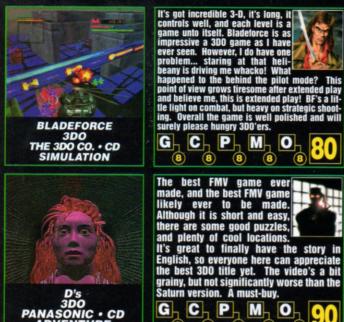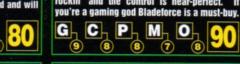
DARK LEGENDS
SATURN
DATA EAST · CD
FIGHTING

BLADEFORCE — 3DO
THE 3DO CO. · CD — SIMULATION

It's got incredible 3-D, it's long, it controls well, and each level is a game unto itself. Bladeforce is as impressive a 3DO game as I have ever seen. However, I do have one problem... staring at that heli-beany is driving me whacko! What happened to the behind the pilot mode? This point of view grows tiresome after extended play and believe me, this is extended play! BF's a little light on combat, but heavy on strategic shooting. Overall the game is well polished and will surely please hungry 3DO'ers.
G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — 80

Bladeforce is undoubtedly the second-best 3DO game ever (I prefer D's), combining shooting, puzzlish and Doom-style gameplay, but this lofty designation is marred by the game's absurdly advanced difficulty. C'mon, four lives for an entire eight-level game? Right... The graphics are unbelievable for the 3DO, the music is rockin' and the control is near-perfect. If you're a gaming god Bladeforce is a must-buy.
G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — 90

I generally love shooters of any kind, provided that they play well. In Bladeforce, the gameplay is there but the difficulty is way off. You're given a scant 4 lives for 8 massive stages - each taking at least half an hour to complete (assuming you're trying to avoid damage). The concept is definitely there and the 3D effects are very impressive. Bladeforce is a shining example of the 3DO's graphic power, unfortunately few people will ever see much of it.
G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — 79

D's — 3DO
PANASONIC · CD — ADVENTURE

The best FMV game ever made, and the best FMV game likely ever to be made. Although it is short and easy, there are some good puzzles, and plenty of cool locations. It's great to finally have the story in English, so everyone here can appreciate the best 3DO title yet. The video's a bit grainy, but not significantly worse than the Saturn version. A must-buy.
G 8 · C na · P na · M 9 · O 9 — 90

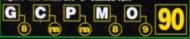The best full-motion title ever, and the first game to actually scare me... and now you too can experience it in English! Though it'll all be over in a couple of hours, D's is a game you just have to buy. The game's CG force, haunting, ominous music coupled with a climactic storyline are so thoroughly refreshing and original I'd actually buy a 3DO simply to play this game. Try not to play D's alone...
G 9 · C na · P na · M 9 · O 9 — 95

Lola... LO-LA! D's Diner is, without a doubt, the most spooky game ever made. I normally detest FMV games with all the passion in my soul, yet I was floored by how cool D's Diner was! There are plenty of areas to explore and tons of riddles to figure out. Thankfully Acclaim saw fit to leave all of the plot twists and super demented sequences unchanged. It's a short trek through the dark side, a journey you'll never forget... Try to figure out what the 'D' stands for!
G 8 · C na · P na · M 9 · O 9 — 90

PRIMAL RAGE — 32X
SEGA · 16 MEG — FIGHTING

Although the 32X is only in charge of the character graphics, while the Genesis provides the backgrounds, this remains a solid port of the arcade in terms of gameplay. The animation is near perfect and that's what was missing from the two 16-bit versions. If only Sega would have blessed the 32X with a better sound chip... If you can live with the smaller dino and the wacky tunes buy your 32X this game.
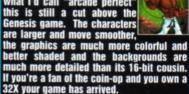**G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 8 · O 8 — 80**

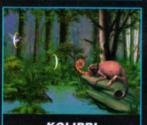Okay, this version is significantly better than the Genesis... if it hadn't been I'd have ripped it to chunks. TWI didn't spend quite the time on some of the backgrounds it could have, but the sprites are bigger, crisper, and more colorful, and certain backgrounds are an amazing 85+% of the arcade quality. However, why is there still bits of gore missing? Rage arcade fans will think this is the best version until 3DO, but I for one will stick with other, better-playing fighters.
G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 8 — 80

What a difference 32-bit makes. Although PR on the 32X is not what I'd call "arcade perfect" this is still a cut above the Genesis version. The characters are larger and move smoother, the graphics are much more colorful and better shaded and the backgrounds are much more detailed than its 16-bit cousin. If you're a fan of the coin-op and you own a 32X your game has arrived.
G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — 88

KOLIBRI — 32X
SEGA · 24 MEG — SIMULATION

Kolibri is great in many ways. The visuals are outstanding, the animation is fluid, the soundtrack is good, and the game itself surpasses Ecco by lending more action to the adventure. What Kolibri lacks are big effects, and diversity. This aside, it is still one of the top four 32X games out there, taking its place beside Virtua, WWF, and Chaotix. If you own a 32X and liked Ecco or Bio-hazard Battle, Kolibri should be at the top of your list.
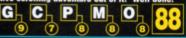**G 9 · C 8 · P 7 · M 8 · O 8 — 85**

Good 32X games are rare, so starved 32X owners will want to snap this one up. It has stunning visuals, and pretty good sound, and lots of good shooting action. On the downside, it's quite short, and bosses are totally absent. But it's by far the best shooter on the 32X, and one of its 3 best games. Give it an extra 5 points if you were a big Ecco fan.
G 9 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 8 — 86

Kolibri is one of the best games out this year, and is by far my favorite 32X game to date. Who would have thought we'd see a shooter/adventure starring a hummingbird? The graphics in Kolibri have to be seen in motion to be fully appreciated. It's a color & parallax fiesta! Equally impressive was the audio buffet of excellent sound FX and BGM. What a cool idea it was to take a shooter and make a completely alternative scrolling adventure out of it! Well done.
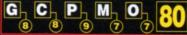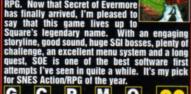**G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — 88**

SECRET OF EVERMORE — SNES
SQUARE · 24 MEG — RPG

It's no surprise. Square's Secret of Evermore was destined to be a good game. Just look at the reference material. I say SOE's good because I feel it lacks the high drama found in import RPG's. I also missed the Japanese art. The art in Evermore is very good, it's just aimed at the American palette. The game definitely ecco's Square quality and for that reason I consider it a success, especially for the first time out. It's promising just seeing a well-made US RPG. SOE is definetely worthy of a sequel.
G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — 80

I'm a big fan of Japanese RPG's, so I was a bit skeptical when I first heard that SquareSoft of America was going to develop an action RPG. Now that Secret of Evermore has finally arrived, I'm pleased to say that this game lives up to Square's legendary name. With an engaging storyline, good sound, huge SGI bosses, plenty of challenge, an excellent menu system and a long quest, SOE is one of the best software first attempts I've seen in quite a while. It's my pick for SNES Action/RPG of the year.
G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 9 — 86

I honestly didn't expect Evermore to be this good. While I could never love an American spawned RPG the way I do Final Fantasy I can like it alot, and indeed, I do. Besides the rather odd storyline SOE is a well designed and executed RPG. The team at Square U.S. is to be commended. Now they have power in two time zones!
G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 6 · O 7 — 80

FINAL FIGHT 3 — SNES
CAPCOM · MEG — ACTION

Playing Final Fight 3 actually hurts. It's been a long time since I lumbered about with a poorly animated character punching the other poorly animated characters that walked in my path. Not only does the original smoke this turd in terms of gameplay, it does in music and sound effects too. A fond farewell this is not. It's more a kick in the head.
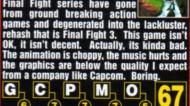**G 6 · C 5 · P 6 · M 6 · O 4 — 55**

Alas, Capcom has once again disappointed me with a thoroughly mediocre Final Fight sequel. Technically, FF3 seems worse than its predecessors - extensive flickering and slowdown prevail. The art is totally average, the animation is Final Fight framey, and the tunes are standard Capcom SNES stuff. The addition of SFII-ish moves, supers and the return of Guy is keen, but the endless repetition becomes almost unbearable. I think this genre can still work if handled correctly... let's hope the next Final Fight will be better.
G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 5 — 77

Well, I can name about 10 other Capcom titles I would like to see on the SNES before this game. For some unknown reason, the Final Fight series have gone from ground breaking action games and degenerated into the lackluster rehash that is Final Fight 3. This game isn't OK, it isn't decent. Actually, its kinda bad. The animation is choppy, the music hurts and the graphics are below the quality I expect from a company like Capcom. Boring.
G 6 · C 7 · P 7 · M 7 · O 5 — 67

It's time for the world's second over-dose on Shiny brand insanity: EWJ2! There's just too much to rave about in this game... EWJ2 is one of the greatest overall designs and game-play engines ever (mainly because it's SO diverse!). Nick Jones has absolutely outdone himself. The graphics on the SNES out do the Sega's this time and how they crammed in all those fantastic tunes will remain a mystery. I wonder if the sea breeze in Laguna contains some sort of force?

| G | C | P | M | O | **94** |
| 10 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | |

Shiny has done it once again. Earth Worm Jim 2 captures the essence of a great game...Fun. Although I must give this game credit for having killer graphics, awesome sound samples, fantastic control, innovative game design and a sense of humor that'll have you falling off your chair, it is a blast to play from beginning to end. With games like KI, DKC2, Yoshi's Island and now EWJ 2 appearing this fall, it looks like the SNES is going to have one last (and well deserved) hurrah before the new systems supplant it.

| G | C | P | M | O | **97** |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | | |

If it wasn't for Yoshi's Island this would be platform game of the year, period. I am very pleased that this isn't just "more levels of Jim" but there are actual play mechanic improvements. I can't get over the creativity of 'Shiny'; the extent of weirdness in this game can't even be matched by 4 a.m. writing binges in the offices of GameFan. Nonstop humor, nonstop puzzles, precise jumping, swinging, bosses...the whole package you loved last year, but only bigger, better, more, and Tommy T. Round 1, fight!

| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| | | | | | |

**EARTHWORM JIM 2
SNES
PLAYMATES • 32 MEG
ACTION PLATFORM**

What gets me about Vectorman is not only the groundbreaking special effects and the sheer size of the game. Vectorman is as deep as it is long, delivering a mega-dose of vertical and horizontal platforming. Vectorman himself is one of the coolest "feeling" characters I've ever played and the control is pinpoint accurate. The only thing I wish V-Man had is more enemies. While the ones in there are good, I'd love to have seen more.

| G | C | P | M | O | **92** |
| 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | |

It's hard to get excited about a 16-bit game these days, but if any Genesis game will turn your head, it's Vectorman. There are cool graphic effects, from sun flares to background-embedded FMV, that you've probably never seen on the Genesis before, and the standard graphics are quality as well. The play control is good solid stuff, with lots of fast-paced shooting action. Even if you've moved on, it's worth pulling out the ol' Genesis to give this one a shot.

| G | C | P | M | O | **90** |
| 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 | |

Vectorman is not only the most original platformer of the year, next to Jim, but also the years best in the area of special effects. Blue Sky has the Genesis doing just about everything it can, effects-wise, in one game. From the great new character himself to the excellent game design and fresh play control, VMan FEELS new from start to finish. It's pretty, yes, but alas' it kicks ass too!

| G | C | P | M | O | **90** |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | |

**VECTORMAN
GENESIS
SEGA • 24 MEG
ACTION PLATFORM**

I love this game. I personally feel that EWJ2 outperforms its predecessor in almost everyway imaginable. The animation is smoother, the game is much more balanced and diverse, the graphics are better and this game has even more personality. Those crazy guys at Shiny made a game that is even wackier and funnier than the first EWJ. I just want to know one thing! How are they going to top this game? Amazing!

| G | C | P | M | O | **97** |
| 9 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 | |

"Tender!" EWJ 2 once again sets the standard, except this time... for crazed gameplay! I never imagined killing a big maggot, or being beaten by an old lady, or hoisting pigs... well, you get the picture. On top of all this, Shiny has once again brainwashed the Genesis into thinking it can sound good and managed to both challenge and amuse simultaneously, even in the wake of the 32-bit powers.

| G | C | P | M | O | **93** |
| 10 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | |

Shiny's gone way past groovy to downright tender with EWJ2. Not only does the new Jim play every bit as good as the first, it's packed with a ton of diversity (perhaps the most ever) and insanely funny stuff. The animation is easily the best ever on Genesis, and the art is once again, genious. The EWJ2 soundtrack is a jolly ensemble of both classical, and classic Jim tunes and fits the game like a bloody glove. The samples too, are crispy. Wow!

| G | C | P | M | O | **98** |
| 9 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | |

**EARTHWORM JIM 2
GENESIS
PLAYMATES • 32 MEG
ACTION PLATFORM**

GAME OF THE MONTH

The PlayStation is the most powerful 3-D game system available, and nowhere is that powerful 3-D better demonstrated than in Zero Divide. With graphics that trounce Tekken, smooth animation, good music, spectacular polygon characters and VF inspired play mechanics, Zero Divide is one of the best 3-D fighting games of all time. I also liked the innovative little extras like dangling off the side of the ring and the transparent limb effect. The voice in this game hurts, but other than that, ZD kicks ass.

| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | |

I have never seen such polygon power at home before - Zero Divide's 3-D environment is the best I've ever seen at home. Unfortunately, this is added to Virtua Fighter gameplay and the - gulp - block button! If you can get around the insanely difficult combos and VF control, you have an unbelievable display of PlayStation brilliance. And hey... it's two games in one! Tiny Phalanx rocks!

| G | C | P | M | O | **92** |
| 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 | |

I got sick of Toshinden in about 5 hours, but after an entire month I still haven't lost interest in Zero. Though Virtua Fighter haters will hate this too, people who can adjust to a block button will find this to be one of the best designed, programmed, and tweaked fighting games yet. As you can't even get to the last boss until you've completely mastered this game, it has a ton of value as well. Add the cool replay feature and the awesome Phalanx code, and this game is definitely a must-buy.

| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| 9 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 7 | |

**GEN'32
ZERO DIVIDE
PLAYSTATION
ZOOM • CD
FIGHTING**

Yes! I knew shooters were coming back... big time. Other than its grating music, Layer Section is a perfect example of what a 2-D scrolling shooter should be - its blazing color, non-stop parallax, hyper-spritage and amazing pseudo-3-D effects, LS is unquestionably one of the best Saturn games. All I wanted was more weaponry, a bomb and a few more continues.

| G | C | P | M | O | **89** |
| 8 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 5 | |

Sigh... remember when games like Layer Section made up, like, 20% of all games released on home systems? The shooter has died here, but it's still a respected art form in Japan, and this one is a masterpiece. Nothing new or innovative in the play department, just solid shooting action, phenomenal backgrounds, lots of variety, and cool bosses. You really have to turn your Saturn on its side, though, or play as it as a side-scroller.

| G | C | P | M | O | **93** |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 8 | |

The top view shooter lay dormant, a mere memory amidst the US gaming scene. Meanwhile, back in Japan however, the category continues to thrive. Layer Section, although merely a beefed up version of shooters gone by, is packed with visual stimuli and a great Zuntata sound track. LS will tide me over until Darius Gaiden eats up the category later this year.

| G | C | P | M | O | **80** |
| 8 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 | |

**GEN'32
LAYER SECTION
SATURN
TAITO • CD
SHOOTER**

How can a game based on a girl's comic be this fantastic? Rayearth has by the far the best graphics I have ever seen in an RPG along with the best production values. Hours of voice, huge maze-like areas, breathtaking townscapes, and the best art on the planet make this the RPG experience you don't want to miss. I'm shocked it wasn't parallel produced. Is SOA totally asleep at the wheel or what? Get on with it man!

| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | |

Saturn force! Rayearth is THE best Saturn game, without any question. Eye-piercing art, beautiful music, perfect control and, surprisingly, a lengthy quest come together for absolute joy. The only glaring flaw that comes to mind is the fact that you can't skip the voiced conversations... non-Japanese speakers may find this particularly annoying. If you buy import games, make SURE you get Rayearth and give it a chance. The beginning is extremely voice-heavy, but if you can get past that, glory is yours. You can tell Sega took their time with this one... let's hope they do a sequel!

| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| 10 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | |

Dazzling graphics, tons of animation, a cute storyline, and lots of surprises make Rayearth the benchmark by which future 32-bit action-RPG's will be j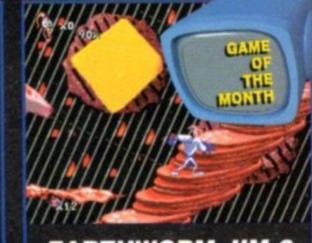udged. If you have the patience to sit through quite a bit of un-fast-forwardable Japanese voice, then you must pick this up as an import. Far and away the best of the first run of Saturn RPG's. Finally, a Saturn game that doesn't have a rushed-out feel to it.
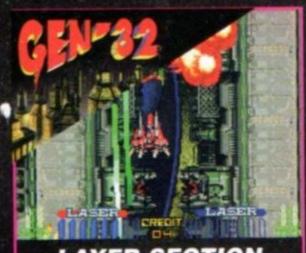
| G | C | P | M | O | **95** |
| | | | | | |

**GEN'32
RAYEARTH
SATURN
SOJ • CD
RPG**

Hit pedestrians, outrun police cars and get gunned down in a drive-by shooting. Finally, a game that shows what L.A.'s really like.
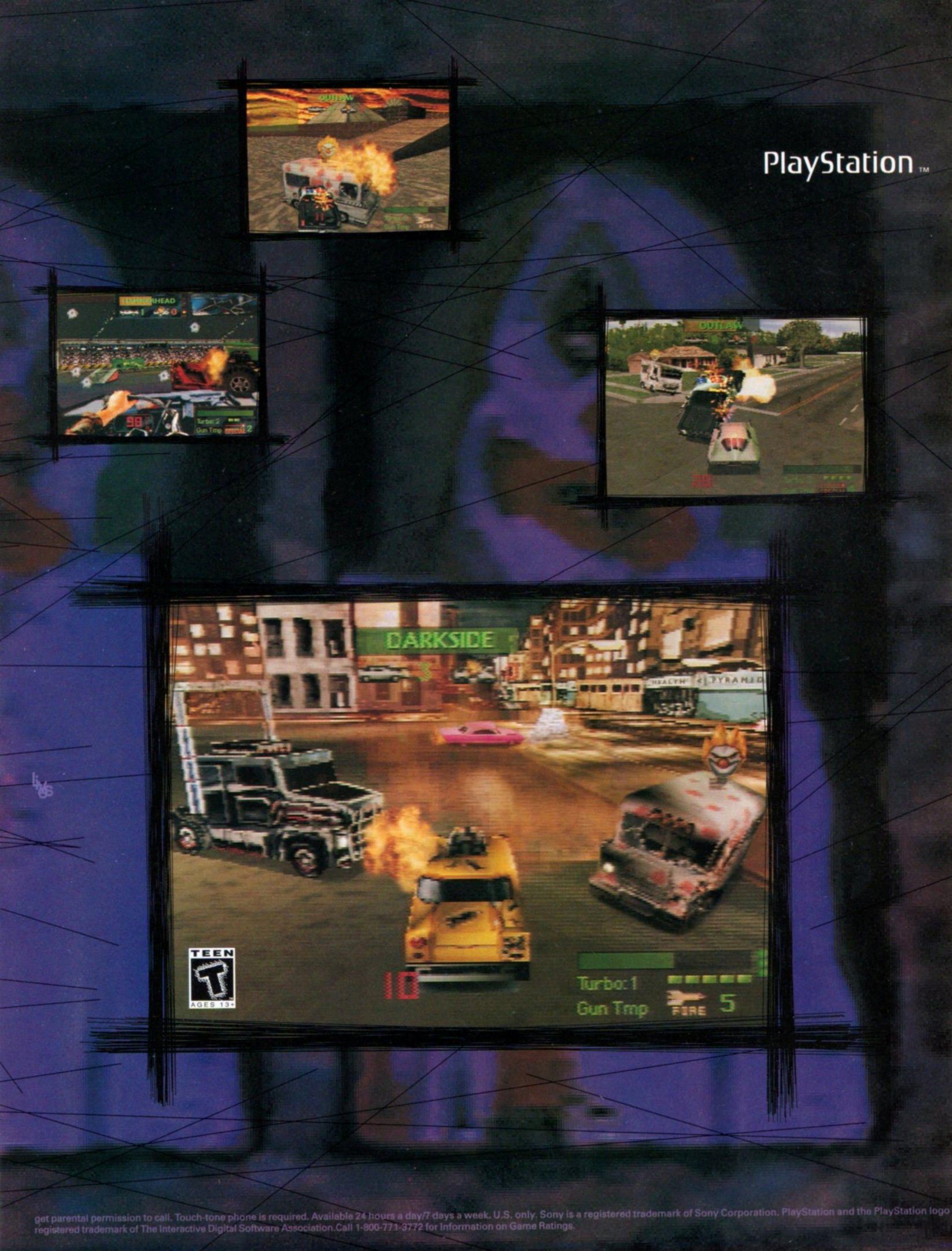
Los Angeles, 2010 A.D. The lights, the glamour, the armor-piercing bullets. Welcome to the apocalypse. Or as we like to call it, TWISTED METAL.™ Only on Sony® PlayStation.™ Play with yourself, or against a friend. Your mission? Hunt or be hunted by 12 deadly vehicles, including one with a psychotic clown who wants to splatter you with flaming ice cream cones. Suburbia will never be the same. And thanks to the Sony PlayStation's superfast ultra realistic gameplay, you can use impressive 360° moves, say, while shredding sod in someone's front yard as you dodge heat-seeking missiles. Or just have fun watching yourself explode in glorious 3-D. Oh, one more thing. Look out for that cute little doggie crossing the street. Oops, too late.

PlayStation ™

Toy Story

DISNEY AND PIXAR TEAM UP TO BRING YOU A FILM UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE!

Since the beginning of time (that might be a bit of an exaggeration), or at least as long as I can remember, Disney has captured audiences around the world with animated films touching on themes of love, friendship, triumph, courage, and the basic qualities of the human spirit. They have also been a leading influence in pioneering the techniques of animation; bringing to life characters and settings that will forever hold value in all our hearts.

Disney animators are constantly challenging themselves to bring animation to the next level. And now, with the combined efforts of Disney innovators and the wizardry of Pixar, the Northern California-based production company, the two have created a film unlike anything ever seen before. Welcome now the magic of Toy Story.

The film, created entirely on high-end computers, revolves around a child's toys who have lives of their own when no one's around. The stars of the show are, of course, toys. Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks), a talking pull-string cowboy, and Buzz Lightyear (voiced by Tim Allen), a futuristic space action hero, lead an all-star cast of toys. The ensemble includes our old friend (you know we all had one) Mr. Potato-Head, and, you guessed it, Slinky Dog.

The story goes something like this: Woody feels threatened by Buzz's recent arrival as the newest and coolest toy. As the former top toy, Woody conspires to get rid of Buzz. But Woody's plans backfire and the two toys wind up lost in the outside world: the human world. Relying solely on each other, the unlikely duo must put aside their differences in order to survive. Together, Buzz and Woody take off on an adventure that will bring them to such wacky places as Pizza Planet, a fast food arcade; then into the grasp of Sid. Sid is a twisted neighborhood kid, known for dismembering toys and reassembling them into grotesque combinations.

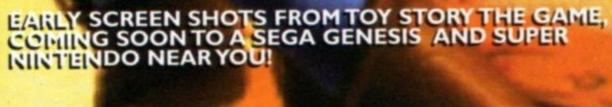Animators were chosen for this project based on their unique touch for character-based animation and originality. Director John Lasseter explains: "We're storytellers who happen to use computers. Story and characters come first and that is what drives everything we do."

Throughout the production, the Pixar Team created an unmatched "digital backlot" — an incredible database of thousands of proprietary digital models, textures and images which were used to create characters and scenes.

The film opens this Thanksgiving, and if you're as jazzed about this whole deal as I am, you might be wondering, "What about a game?" What, you think our pals at Disney Interactive would let us down? This is Disney we're talking about, so expect to see that equivalent wizardry to hit your Genesis and Super NES with a simultaneous release with the film.
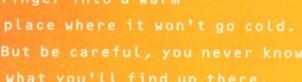
-Jace Fury

EARLY SCREEN SHOTS FROM TOY STORY THE GAME, COMING SOON TO A SEGA GENESIS AND SUPER NINTENDO NEAR YOU!

ger finger warm, need it!

crawling down your throat if you don't watch your back in Centipede[5] and Millipede[6]. Don't pull out yet. There are millions of Aliens in Galaga[7], Galaxian[8] and Space Invaders[9] who would love to catch you with your guard down. And they're waiting with open mouths. So warm up your f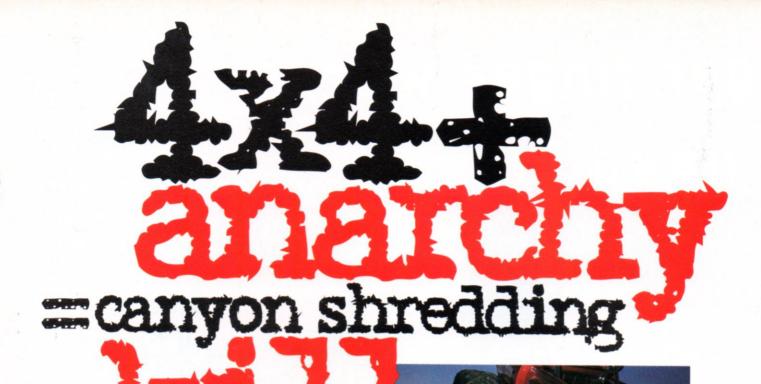inger and be ready to come out smoking. And if you find that your finger has gotten sticky, that's a bonus. You'll get a better grip on the trigger and a better chance of surviving the Arcade Classics. Now available in 2-in-1 game paks for Game Boy® and Super Game Boy®.

play it loud

Nintendo®

LONE SOLDIER

Let me preface this preview by saying that, on the whole, I really dislike European games - terrifying, heinous memories of James Pond, Zool and all that other candy-colored, Amiga platform offal that was so heavily featured on the 16-bit systems come to mind. To this day I am mentally scarred by such atrocities. With the advent of 32-bit, however, Europe seems to have made a 360° turnaround. The recent ECTS, from which Kid Fan returned with the unbelievably awesome game you see here, Lone Soldier, was overflowing with incredible software... really!

Though our alpha version of Soldier had only three out of a total of fifty stages of 3-D testosterone-gushin' mayhem, I can safely say that LS will easily turn out to be one of the top PlayStation games so far. You take control of this bandoleered commando dude totin' MASSIVE firepower, including a sub-machine gun, grenades, a flame-thrower and a bazooka... and just UNLOAD on everything in sight, be it enemy foot soldiers, ravenous attack dogs, tanks, helicopters... whatever. That's basically the gameplay... you can walk in any direction and attack. Such a simple game system rarely works well, yet the developers of Lone Soldier sure got it right!

The level of detail in Soldier is astonishing... you can set trees on fire with your flame-thrower, detonate gas cans which stay ablaze, hear the agonized death-throes of soldiers trapped inside burning tanks, and watch snipers strapped to harnesses sway in the breeze after you've blown them away. The enemy's fire can even take out your opponents if you dodge in time. The polygonal environment is also extremely impressive, with literally zero pop-up, even when standing on a log bridge over a ravine (which you can see down into) with what seems like miles of terrain visible ahead. The three levels on our preview disc were all rocky no-man's-land type locales, but the final game will feature jungle, desert, and nighttime areas. We'll feature much coverage on Lone Soldier until its 4th Qtr. release, so get that trigger-finger ready and prepare for some true 32-bit Euro force! - Nick Rox

NICK ROX

Fifty stages of 3-D testosterone-gushin' mayhem!

MAMMOTH HEADS!

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - IGUANA

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - PLAYSTATION

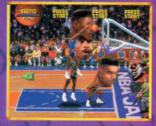# OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

K. Lee - Wow!

I do believe we have finally come to a point where games can be even better at home than they are in the arcade. NBA JAM: TE on the PlayStation features better graphics, sound and gameplay than Midway's own coin-op game...no joke!
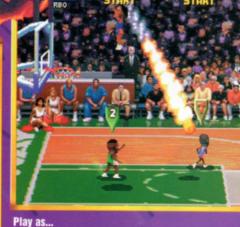
As good as these screen shots look, the game is even more powerful in motion. All the digitized players are extremely colorful and animate just as smoothly as they do in the arcade. Where they beat the arcade game hands down, is not in the shoes, but in the scaling. Players scale in and out so seamlessly, sometimes its hard to see that they are doing so at all. The floor line scrolls just as smoothly as it does in the coin-op and the digitized crowd is as active, and animate as smoothly as most lead characters! One last note on the visuals, the flames used on the ball when a player is "On Fire!" are without a doubt, the most impressive flames I have ever seen in a video game, bar none. Touch the screen and you'll burn your fingers....how do those Iguana's do it?

One thing that has always separated NBA JAM from its competition is sound and music. The PlayStation version actually sets new stan-dards. There are actually more samples in the PS JAM than in the coin-op. From the grunts of the players to the cheering crowd to the familiar "Boom-Shaka-Laka!" and "Oh My!" it's all in there, and then some. Additionally the red-book audio that surrounds the action is fantastic.

This game has all the players, jams, and cool features of the arcade game, but there are some gameplay options not found in the coin-op. Among other things, there are 5 different game speeds, 8 different button configurations, an autosave feature, 4 player-tap compatibility and more.

What it all comes down to is this. NBA JAM:TE on the PlayStation is not only the best home translation of the arcade game, it's the best version of the game on the face of the planet. All the editors at GF were equally in awe of the quality and raw power of this game. All this in a first generation PlayStation game! Don't think about it, don't ponder it, don't consider it, just buy it!- K.LEE
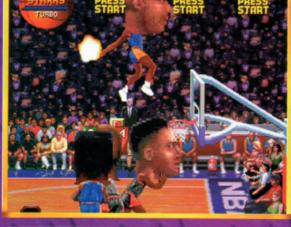
Play as...

BIG HEAD or BABY PLAYERS

32

PlayStation

DEVELOPER -	PANTHER
PUBLISHER -	ATLUS
FORMAT -	CD
# OF PLAYERS -	1
DIFFICULTY -	INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE -	TBA

K. LEE
Space Griffon VF-9 has the unique qualities that many 3-D corridor games are lacking.

SPACE GRIFFON VF-9

Space Griffon VF-9 was one of the first 3-D corridor games to hit the Japanese PlayStation. Now, thanks to Atlus, SG will be available on our shores as well. With smooth 3-D scaling, a huge quest, a great story, and solid role-playing elements, *Space Griffon VF-9* has the unique qualities that many 3-D corridor games are lacking.

SG's RPG feel is the feature that appealed to me the most. The key to doing well in this game is scooting about the corridors paying close attention to your map display and communiqué from members of your team. You must find chambers containing valuable items like key cards and weapon and health upgrades.

Your Griffon transforms into three different positions: Cruise, for high speed maneuvering (you cannot attack in cruise), Assault, a mid position for medium speed and weapon deployment, and Combat, the slow fully erect position of mass destruction. Each time you transform the contorting is accompanied by great sound effects, and your perspective changes accordingly... very cool. Similar to a traditional RPG, *Space Griffon* rewards tactical thinking and patience. I particularly liked the way your teammates direct you on what to do and where to go. Atlus thankfully did a great job in finding good voice actors.

The 3-D graphics in SG are entirely monochromatic and convey an impressive feeling of depth and realism, with proportionately tiny catwalks overhead and doors below made for the human form. The texture mapping is also detailed and ultra-color laden. I did notice that the texture mapped walls warped a bit at close range but not enough to deter gameplay. Overall, the designers did a good job of creating a realistic 3-D environment with a futuris-

tic look.

There are 2 things I don't like about *Space Griffon*. You can't skip the animated communication sequences and there is no music during gameplay. My first gripe annoys me only slightly. The transmissions from your teammates provide you with important info, so I can forgive that. On the other hand, I prefer music while I'm playing. E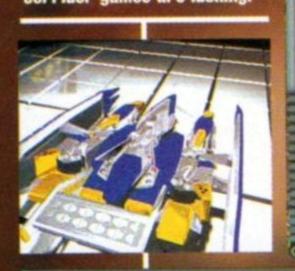ven if the designers are trying to create a realistic feel (which is the case here), I still think at least some music should be made available. A mood-establishing soundtrack is critically important to any game, especially RPG's such as SG. A fitting soundtrack is one of the traits that made games like *Robotica* on the Saturn so great. Oh well, I guess you can't have it all.

Overall, *Space Griffon VF-9* is a solid first-generation PlayStation title. It has cool 3-D, a strong story that unfolds throughout, and is very long. Compared to it's competition SG is among of the best of the available corridor adventures. With so many look-alike and play-alike games out there, it's refreshing to see that there are unique games like SG coming down the pipeline.
-K.LEE

MODES & MISSIONS

CRUISE MODE

COMBAT MODE

ASSAULT MODE

"HAMLET" - Level 8 Power production and supply area. Power storage area. The mainstay of power for HAMLET is produced and supplied in this level.

OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR EXTREME

E. STORM
"A 4 wheel Fantasia." Crystal goes the extra mile.

OK, let's pretend that this is the first incarnation of Off World Interceptor, and proceed from there. I find no need to drudge up how much better Extreme is. Of course I could... oh what the heck! OWI Extreme rips the 3DO a new crack! It's not only a whole lot nicer to look at, but plays about a zillion times better. Could the PS controller by ASCII I was using have anything to do with that? Whaddaya, kiddin'? Of course it does.

The 3DO will go down in history as the only piece of hardware actually held back by its controller. For those of you whom have recently purchased a Sony PS (congrats by the way), OWI was one of the most highly anticipated 3DO releases but fell just a tad short. The bosses were insanely difficult and the 3DO had just a lil' difficulty with the hordes of sprites and fast 3-D gameplay. The PS, on the other hand, revels in it and so, CD has re-worked the game to take advantage of the PS's willingness and come up with one high powered racing combat game.

To start things off, a cheeseoid FMV movie complete with on board hecklers is provided. As well as setting up the story, this provides the player with plenty of time to grab some Frito's and a nice tall glass of DP on ice. From there it's on to either a two player competitive romp, story mode, or the arcade mode. The action on OWIE is pure 3-D kill or

be killed. As you dart across the huge playfields in search of money and power-ups you'll engage in non-stop battle. Each area is laced with vehicles which, if not properly dealt with, will swarm all over you and eventually blow you to bits. To thwart them, the designers have built in some very cool Bond-like accessories. Blasters will take care of enemies behind you while missiles and lasers will deal with those in your path. Additionally, air attacks can be called in to nuke the entire area, or nitro's can be fired to get you out of tight situations. These items, however, must be used sparingly because they don't come free, except for your stock laser. In between levels you can visit the shop (which is presented in true PS form) and stock up on what you think you'll need. Don't shoot the whole roll though, pick what you can up during the levels. You need to save as much as possible for a new ride. For about a half million bucks you can purchase one gnarly four wheel drive death dealer, and they don't take American Express.

Graphically OWIE delivers priority overnight with some of the best textures I've yet seen on the PS. Say good-bye to those tiles you're so used to seeing and hello to actual textures. The sky is even in 3-D and moves briskly towards you, helping deliver the visual feast on Extreme's menu. CD didn't forget about the tunes, either, and have graciously included a host of non-funky drivin' tunes. So there you have it. All that's left now is to strap yourself in.
-E. Storm

Options & Play modes

Learn the basics in **training mode.**

Play the levels in whatever order you choose in **arcade mode.**

Save progress with passwords available only in **story mode.**

Challenge a friend in the vertically split vs mode.

Stock up on missiles, mines, and extra men...

Upgrade your death dealer or buy a new one.

Scorch 7

Silt Sorrow

Atlantia Point

Bastion

Las Lunas

PlayStation

THE STALKER
"Got a PlayStation? You Gotta' Get Loaded!!"

LOADED

Prepare yourself for *Loaded*, possibly the most psychopathic video game in history. Set in a galactic prison located in the deepest, darkest reaches of space, *Loaded* is a lesson in survival and brutality.

In this game, you assume the role of one of six demented prisoners in pursuit of personal freedom. The man who condemned you to this hellish incarceration facility (only to set you loose) is Fat Ugly Boy. The dastardly FUB plans to hold entire planets for ransom with his new physics-defying weapon. Before that, however, he needs to prove to himself that he has what it takes to defeat anyone: so YOU are to be his lethal sparring partner in a game of death.

With its awesome zooming-on-command overhead playfields, which are completely 3-D, *Loaded* introduces a revolutionary action/shooting engine to the PS - the first of it's kind. This is a major shot in the arm for the category.

Your character walks through each claustrophobic level, blasting apart enemies in an revelry of blood and violence. When you kill an enemy, either by gunfire or special weapon, they splatter into a spurting pile, leaving behind a grizzly puddle in the shape of a human figure... K-A it ain't!

Gameplay aside, *Loaded* features some of the most incredible graphics yet seen on the PlayStation. The warping 3-D environments are not only highly detailed, but light source shaded masterfully, with brilliant transparent colors. Equally astounding is the sound in *Loaded*, highlighted by dramatic voice samples (mostly grunts and screams) and booming, reverberating stereo sound effects.

Particulars on strategic elements and the like will follow in future issues, as *Loaded* is still in mid-development. If solid play mechanics and scenarios ensue, we're certainly looking at one of the years best.

The programmers at Gremlin are truly out-doing themselves... Look for more on *Loaded* in the months to come.

-The Stalker

Zoom In

SPECIAL WEAPONS Warp The Play Field

Zoom Out

Screw the Prime Directive. If it's on radar, it's toast.

Intense, 3D texture-mapped terrains of reflex-assaulting canyons and tunnels. Dramamine™ cocktails, anyone?

Scream through 20 different rounds of nonstop destruction. Remember, the more you kill, the better you feel.

Featuring new Save Game option, cookie-tossing 360° barrel roll capabilities, and life-saving power-ups.

Forget about that intergalactic brotherhood **crap**. 'Cause with **Total Eclipse Turbo**™, the space-combat simulation for the Sony® PlayStation™, there ain't a heapin' helpin' of hospitality for light years. And with all those **squid-faced** aliens stopping in to party, you're gonna have to fire up your wicked welcome wagon and get this **32-bit** block party blazing.

"It's the most impressive PlayStation game yet"
Next Generation

"A carnage-filled crunch fest" Die Hard Game Fan

"The most realistic crashes we've ever seen"
Game Players

"This is stock car racing on steroids"
Electronic Gaming Monthly

WRESTLEMANIA

SPECIAL MOVES

DOINK

BAM BAM BIGELOW

RAZOR RAMON

YOKOZUNA

THE UNDERTAKER

SHAWN MICHAELS

LEX LUGER

BRET "HITMAN" HART

2X DAMAGE!

If you've been to the arcade recently, it's hard to miss Williams' new high powered *WWF Wrestlemania* coin-op. Not long ago I'd've never dreamt of playing such a game at home, but today it's a reality. No, you don't need a 500 dollar super gun and a 2000 dollar Jamma board. All you need is a Sony PlayStation, the system that is quickly proving itself the leader in the 32-bit console race.

WWF Wrestlemania takes the wacky antics of the World Wrestling Federation and combines them with wild exaggerated fighting-game play mechanics to produce a fast and furious, all-out brawl. The biggest stars from the WWF take to the canvas with an arsenal of moves including secret hidden power
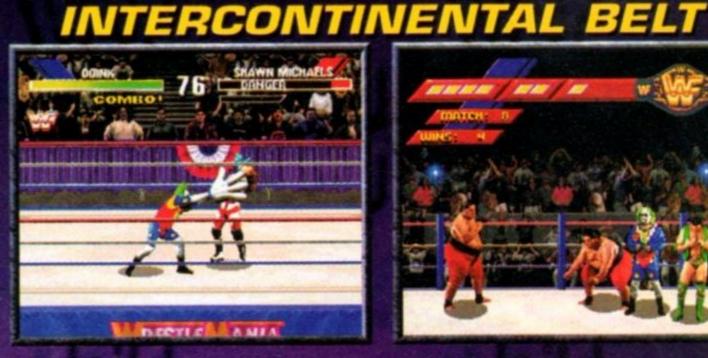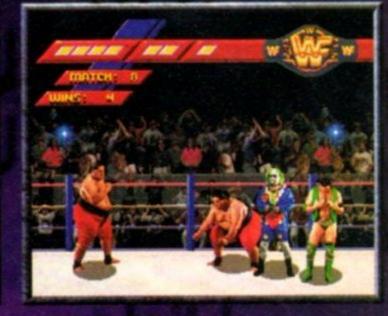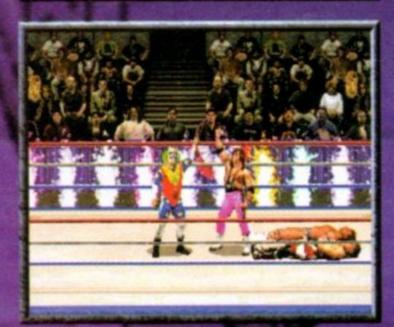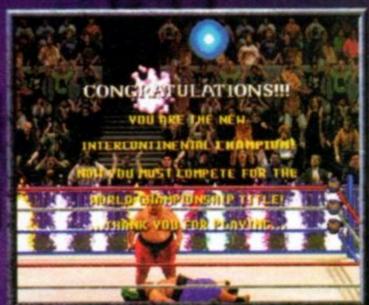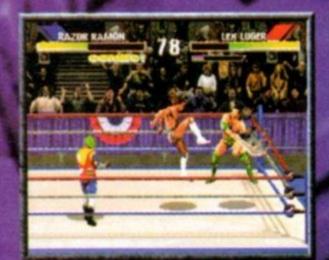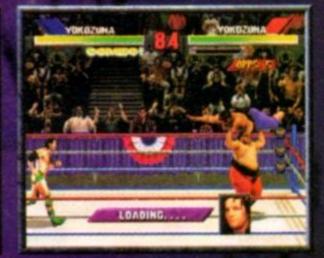
WWF TITLE BELT
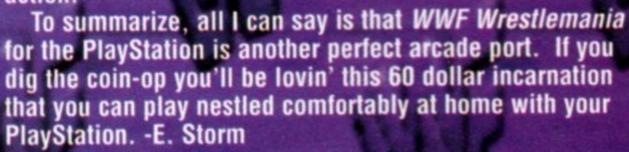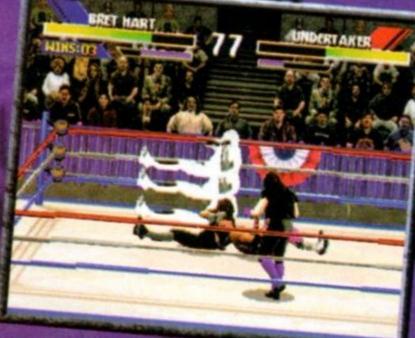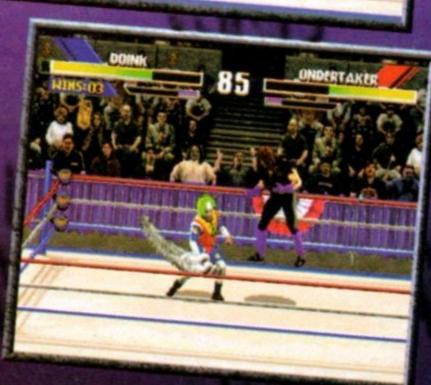
moves, like the Undertaker's throwing of wild demons.

The gameplay in *WWFW* is extremely fast and responsive, something you wouldn't expect from a wrestling game. The digitized characters not only look 100% perfect but animate almost better than they do in real life. Yokozuna, for instance, is quite the nimble sumo in *WWFW*. He'll grab and spin you in a millisecond, has a wicked arsenal of punches, and likes nothing more than flying off the turnbuckle, butt first (and a colossus butt it is). You can play solo, and go for the IC or WWF belt or, play with a friend in either cooperative or vs. play.
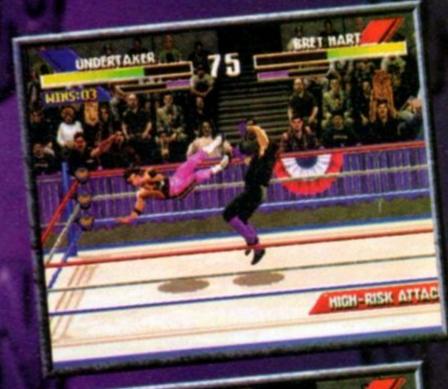
The sound effects and music that accompany the action is a blarin' success, as is the ringside commentary. Vince McMahon's mouth moves just as fast as the action.

To summarize, all I can say is that *WWF Wrestlemania* for the PlayStation is another perfect arcade port. If you dig the coin-op you'll be lovin' this 60 dollar incarnation that you can play nestled comfortably at home with your PlayStation. -E. Storm

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RESIDENT EVIL

TAKUHI
FORGET FOXHUNT, CAPCOM'S FINALLY BACK WITH SOMETHING TRULY NEW...

Although the advance copy we received has but one of four characters, one of five areas, and only one level of play, there is no doubt in my mind that *Resident Evil* will be one of the most eagerly anticipated titles of 1996. It has the look of eye-candy computer titles like *Alone in the Dark* or *7th Guest*, but *Resident Evil* dominates this fledgling genre with its 100% pure, homogenized, vitamin-enriched Capcom play control.

That's a very fortunate thing, because to make it out of *Resident Evil*'s beast-infested, trap-laden mansion (complete with graveyard, garden, and surrounding buildings) you're going to need to be a *very* good shot. With weapons ranging from axes to bazookas, you can blow zombies' arms off, pump shots into a dead tarantula to burst its baby-filled womb, and crush the heads of fallen zombies who feign death to lure you closer.

Capcom didn't skimp on the blood, bile, or cerebral juices either. I was especially fond of the zombies that dig right into your neck when you're alive, and then fall to their knees to graze on your intestines after your death. Don't expect rave reviews from the 700 Club on this one.

This solid family fun is amplified by excellent play control. Though literally every room has a different angle of perspective, I've had no trouble with aiming at any target, even those zippy little crows. Ah, the crows. It's like shooting at special skeet that screams when hit and explodes in a flurry of blood, feathers and cartilage, flapping pathetically all the way down. It sounds depraved, sure, but if you try and don't enjoy *Resident Evil*, there is something *seriously* wrong with you. So until early next year, when this innovative masterpiece will finally hit store shelves, look at the pictures... and drool.

-TAKUHI

AGILE WARRIOR

PlayStation

Here's an early glimpse of Virgin's new flight sim/shooting game, *Agile Warrior: F111X*.

Agile Warrior: F111X employs simple fire-and-forget play mechanics, an array of weaponry, and you can toggle your point of view between three perspectives. The action takes place over diverse texture-mapped locales that, at the moment, suffer from a bad case of redraw. Hopefully, this will be corrected to some extent.

In many ways, AW may be considered something like a cross between *Ace Combat* and *Blue Lightning*, at least in terms of gameplay. Something AW has that the aforementioned do not is a network option allowing multiple players to get in on the action, and some pretty heavy on screen carnage.

Surprisingly, AW features a realistic storyline highlighting scenarios that could actually happen, an example being the segment where India and Pakistan are on the brink of a biological/nuclear weapons exchange, and you must destroy their weapons of mass destruction before they can be used.

This will hopefully be a promising entry in the PS flight sim department, a category headed the way of the corridor shooter... They have to be masterworks to make the grade. We'll bring you a review as soon as Black-Ops buttons it up.

-The Stalker

DEVELOPER	BLACK OPS
PUBLISHER	VIRGIN
FORMAT	CD
PLAYERS	NETWORKABLE
DIFFICULTY	N/A
AVAILABLE	TBA

THE STALKER
THE PS FINALLY GETS A MULTI-PLAYER FLIGHT SIMULATION GAME.

MISSION BREAKDOWN

SAUDI ARABIA

RAYMAN

Breaking into the Next Generation!

For more information call: 1-800-Ubi-Soft
Come visit us on the Net: http://www.ubisoft.com
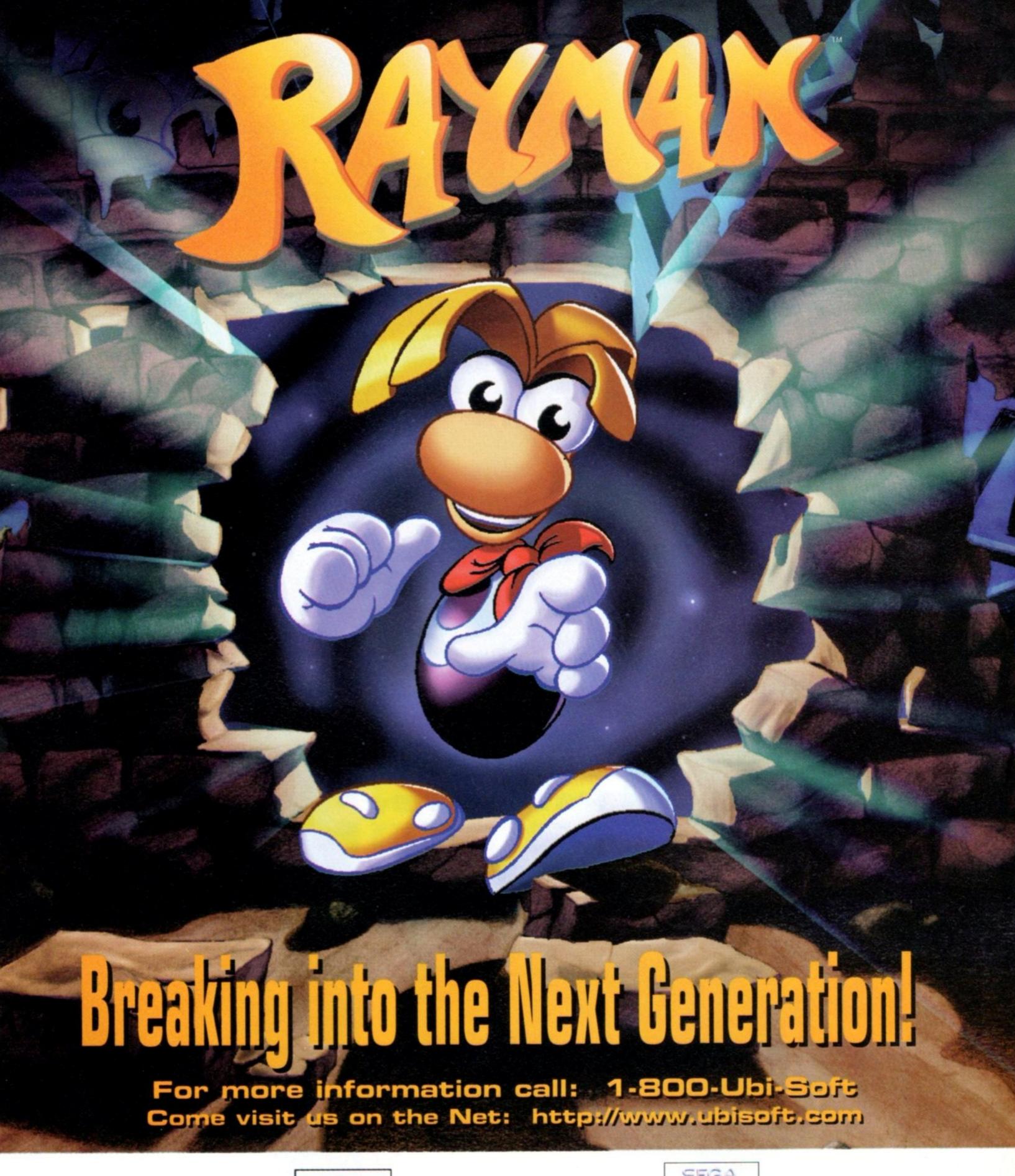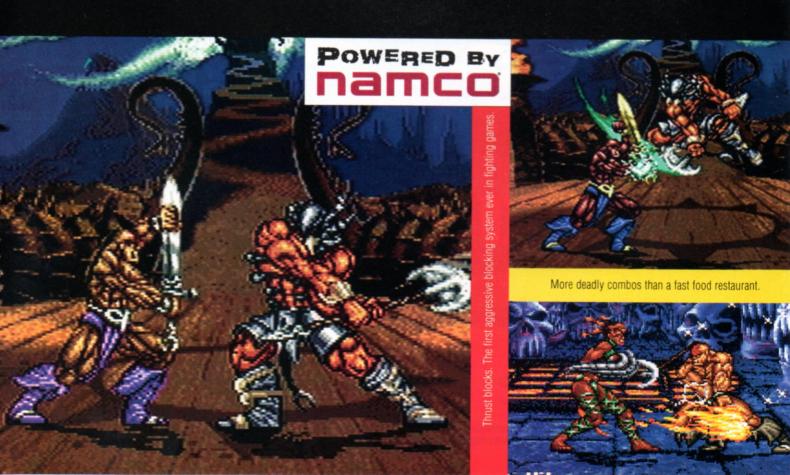
WE WERE WARNED HEADS
NEW GAME DIDN'T REDEFINE THE

POWERED BY
namco

Thrust blocks. The first aggressive blocking system ever in fighting games.

More deadly combos than a fast food restaurant.

WOULD ROLL IF OUR
ENTIRE FIGHTING GAME GENRE.

HOW APPROPRIATE.

When revolutionizing the world of fighting games, it's good to have such encouragement from the guys in the corner offices. Introducing WeaponLord. Combat with a cutting edge. WeaponLord features weapon-to-weapon combat in classic medieval tradition, with all kinds of combos that disembowel, decapitate and dismember. Plus a fighting system that's more advanced than those in most arcades, not to mention the first aggressive blocking system ever. Play it and see for yourself. WeaponLord truly redefines the genre. Which makes us glad we stuck our necks out in the first place.

CRITICOM™

TAKAHARA

Here's the first look at Vic Tokai's new (and first) entry into the ever growing 3-D polygon based fighting category, *Criticom*.

As with *Toshinden*, *Tekken*, *VF2*, and *Zero Divide*, *Criticom* features detailed texture mapped environments and characters. *Criticom* also features full sweeping 360 degree camera angles, intense rendered FMV cinemas, and of course, a detailed story behind each and every combatant. The early CD we tested was devoid of any actual play mechanics but you can already begin to see where the developers are going. The animation and locales themselves look very promising and the characters seem to have a wide range of diversity. *Criticom* is being developed for both the Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn and is expected to hit stores sometime early next year. We'll keep you up to date on *Criticom's* progress as it develops. Now that Vic Tokai has entered the 32-bit wars with their own in-house development, I wonder if *Golgo-13* will re-enter the game arena. I sure missed him on 16-bit.

-Takahara

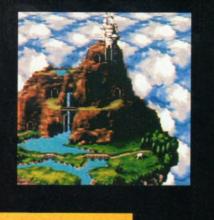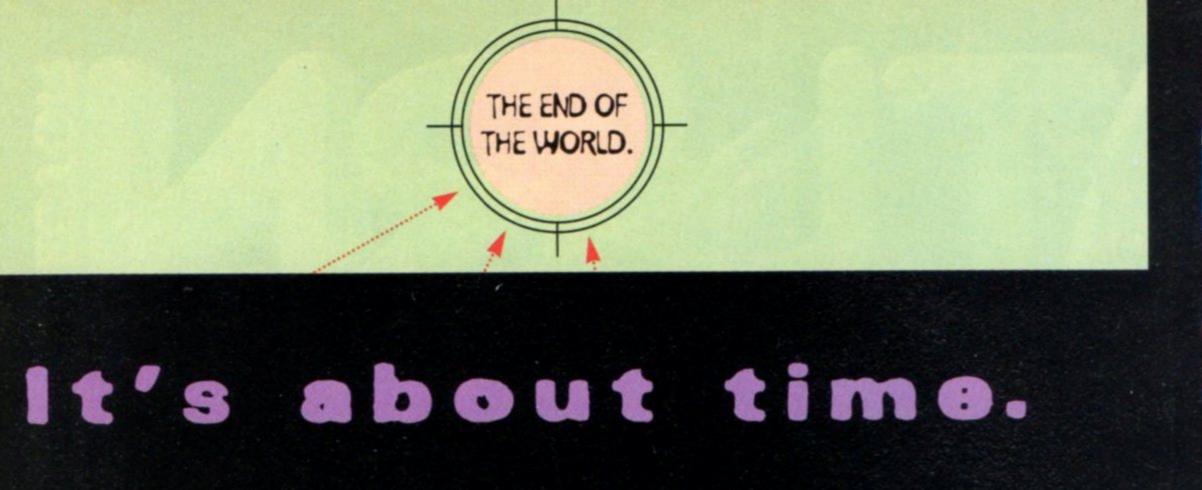WEB OF CONFUSION!

SMASHING TWO HEADS
IS BETTER THAN ONE!

THE JURY BELIEVES IN
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT!

THE VERDICT IS NO MERCY!

PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW.

MARVEL COMICS Venom® Spider-Man®

SEPARATION ANXIETY™

NO SYMPATHY
FOR THE SYMBIOTE!

VENOM® AND SPIDER-MAN®
BURY THE DIGGERS!

FIVE
TIMES
THE
CARNAGE!

Venom® has been violently split from his living costume, spawning five deadly alien Symbiotes. In fierce two-player action, Venom joins forces with arch-enemy, Spider-Man®, to face the new strain of evil brought to life by chilling computer-rendered graphics. Between the merciless Jury and awesome allies like Ghost Rider and Daredevil, Venom's out to part his Symbiote offspring from their newfound life!

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Chrono Trigger. Sci-fi fantasy meets time travel. From the creators of the acclaimed Final Fantasy® series. Character designs by Akira Toriyama. 32 megs, 10 endings, 70-plus hours of game play.

COVER STORY

Skeleton Warriors

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER	NEVERSOFT
PUBLISHER	PLAYMATES
FORMAT	CD
# OF PLAYERS	1
DIFFICULTY	NA
AVAILABLE	NOVEMBER

E. STORM
BAD TO THE BONE!
(I HATE THAT SONG)

ENERGIZE YOUR SWORD!

As a collector of action figures I must tell you, the first time I saw the Skeleton Warriors, in all of their plastic splendor, I thought to myself, these characters really need to be in a game. The first out-of-the-package incarnation I saw of the crew, however, was the cheaply drawn and animated Saturday morning cartoon. From there I figured all was lost, but alas, my prayers (I never actually prayed) have been answered. Here's the first look at Playmates' Skeleton Warriors for the Sega Saturn, the reigning champ of 2-D. Skeleton Warriors is being developed by little known ('til now) Woodland Hills developer, Neversoft. Where they came from I don't know. Where they're headed, however, is to a lofty place among the industry's best. If only magazines could move you'd see the brilliant animation of the rendered characters and the realistic 3-D line scrolling environments. In addition to these glaring aspects, your character moves between two planes on the playfield and the game is packed with inspired SGI cinemas. Still more stand-out features include gruesome rendered enemies like tarantulas, big meaty

monsters, gobs of visual effects, huge explosions, and to tie it all together a pulsating Tommy Tallarico soundtrack. The minute I saw this game in motion after Sega's third-party game day, I said to myself, "November cover." Skeleton Warriors is, as you can see, still in development. But, due to the short lead time needed to bring CD's to market, you should be playing it by November. 'Til then we'll keep you up to date on the game's progress and bring you more on Neversoft. Until then, this might be a good time to scope out some action figures...-E. Storm

EXPERIENCE REALISTIC 3-DEEP GAMEPLAY!

VIRTUA COP

TAKUHI

Virtua Cop, the gun game for people who thought they hated gun games, is finally coming home. Though the version we have required you to play with the regular control pad and the cursor, once Sega's so-bright-orange-it'll-make-your-eyes-bleed gun comes out, Virtua Cop should have no difficulty replicating the arcade.
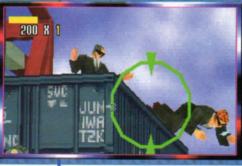
Virtua Cop is the closest AM2's come to a perfect arcade translation. I say that having not yet played Rally or VF2, but trust me, this as close as it gets without nailing the bullseye. Saturn Virtua Cop easily manipulates a great many texture-mapped polygon characters with speed and grace, making the not so old Saturn VF look almost primitive. Things are indeed moving fast in terms of overseas development.

If you haven't played Virtua Cop, you're missing out on one of this year's best coin-ops. There's nothing like walking up to a Virtua Cop machine, plunking in your 2 bucks to play a two player game, and alone with a gun in each hand, shooting hundreds of people (well, polygon people).

So, if you want to feel the thrill of real police work (i.e., killing 300+ people and taking down an entire criminal syndicate in under half an hour), without any of the messy repercussions, this is the only gun game worth a second look. Virtua Cop is set to come out by year's end, and my trigger finger's already starting to itch… -

-Takuhi

THE GHEN WAR

A race of aliens known as the "Ghen" has landed on our own planet as intergalactic refugees. They were retreating from certain annihilation at the hands of the Bo-Kyat, a ruthless alien super power. In exchange for the temporary refuge, the Ghen offered the human race access to their own super-advanced technologies. The seemingly friendly Ghen later offered to help the humans find some much needed resources.

The Sunstar probe was dispatched to the outer parts of the solar system to look for minerals. With a mixed Ghen/Human crew, the Sunstar sent a small probe ship down to the surface of Titan, Saturn's most hospitable moon (Titan and Saturn... how subtle!). On Titan, the Ghen explorers suddenly abandoned the small group of humans, who were subsequently attacked - to their astonishment - by a clan of Ghen militants! The stunned humans managed to contact

AREA 2

AREA 3

THE STALKER

their HQ, but communications to Earth had been cut off. Central Command had learned of Ghen aggression in volcanic regions on the surface of Mars (Deja vu, Sega!), and the small human detachment on Titan was the only party that could be contacted. Deciding they must stop the Ghen before they reach their goal (you'll find that out later), the group of three humans and a man-droid sets off for Mars.

So it begins. In *The Ghen Wars*, you take command of a small mech and do battle with the Ghen. *The Ghen Wars* offers totally free (X/Y/Z) movement, unlike so many other 3-D blasting games. Your mech can run, jump (and hover), and blast away at the enemy using its built-in

cannons or any of several smart weapons. As you negotiate the deep valleys, your path is recorded on an on-screen map so you don't backtrack or go off course. The game basically necessitates a sweep and clearing of every area before you can move on.

The Ghen Wars features smooth 3-D movement in all directions (even up and down) brought to life with texture mapped terrain and enemies. Although it's far from production, *The Ghen Wars* may just turn out to be that one 3-D shooting game to break the mold and set the standard. In addition to the nice graphics, it sounds hauntingly real, with its bizarre techno/thriller music and it plays very well. For the first time, I'm truly looking forward to the release of a 3-D shooting game! Be sure to check for more coverage on this game at a later date.
-The Stalker

BLACK FIRE

"Missile, missile… Pull up! PULL UP!!" That's the last thing you heard before an enemy chopper blew you out of the ashen-gray skies with a heat-seeking Sidewinder missile. Your copilot, giddy with fear, alerted you to the danger too late: your mind was on the sprawling enemy base sitting in the middle of your missile-lock crosshairs. You've crashed. You have failed. The terrorist forces of The Consortium have won the battle. It's just not your day.

The above experience comes from Black Fire, Sega's first Saturn chopper-combat game. In Black Fire, you and your copilot must pinpoint enemy targets located by spy satellites and destroy them.

All you have to complete this all-but-insurmountable task is your ultra-advanced Black Fire attack helicopter, your skills as a pilot and the deadliest ordinance the US Army has to offer.

Not too long ago, the very same developers of Black Fire (Nova Logic) made a similar, hyper cool game entitled Comanche for the PC. Much to my enjoyment, Black Fire looks, feels and plays just like its ancestral title. Using all eight of the Saturn controller's buttons (instead of a two-button joystick and a whole keyboard), you have com-

plete three-dimensional, non-confined control of your ship. Sliding and pitching to avoid enemy fire, you must maneuver your ship into position to take out the pre-designated strategic targets. These will include troop facilities, stolen weapons and command bunkers. Only the most advanced pilots will survive this highly difficult game. (Tip: Find geographic safe spots when you can. You can use them to sit idle and blow the enemy away at long ranges using missiles. Don't ever attack too many enemies at once!)

The action explodes in front of you over a fully three-dimensional texture-mapped playing field. You'll see the screen explode with dozens of sprites at a time from multiple viewpoints. There's some pretty bad re-draw happening but you'll have little time to notice.

As the action draws you into the game, the gameplay is further enhanced by tons of well acted voice samples and a very impressive soundtrack.

This game's inherent difficulty and re-draw problems may be drawbacks for some, but I highly recommend this title to those chopper-sim freaks out there who adore a tough game. It's far too addicting to pass up!

-The Stalker

DARK LEGEND

It's many hundreds of years ago, and the throne of China is up for grabs. As one of 10 wacky warriors of legend, it's your chance to put your fighting skills to the test and change the flow of history forever. The warriors are visually an eccentric bunch, but tend to encompass pretty traditional fighting styles and moves. A few new twists are provided, though, such as Xian Wu #5's ability to throw unpredictably hopping frogs and skittering crabs, and Gong, an old man who has a giant, blue, four-armed beast behind him to protect him from danger and slay his foes.

The control borrows heavily from Street Fighter II, with weak, medium, and strong kicks and punches taking full advantage of the Saturn's 6-button pad. Special moves are usually easy to do, but there are some infuriating exceptions, such as trying to do fireball motions at the peak of a jump — it just doesn't work. Another interesting addition was the ability to do new special moves when you've lost your weapon, a rather pointless inclusion considering that your weapon breaks nary one round in a thousand. Still, the control is tight and full of cool combos, especially in the beefed up Saturn mode.

Visually, Dark Legend is quite impressive. The backgrounds, which inconsistently range from blah to excellent, can be quite beautiful. The animation is about par, but the special moves look excellent, with great fire effects and such. The music is wonderful, spanning a wide variety of styles, but always fast-paced and with a traditional Asian touch.

I really enjoyed Dark Legend when I received the Beta version, assuming that such flaws as its slow movement and horrendous "framiness" would be fixed. You can imagine my surprise when I got the final version and found it to be identical! There's really no excuse for that flaw, especially considering how smooth and fast Golden Axe: The Duel moves. The sad thing is that, through the slow speed and awkwardness, you can see the potential for a great fighting game that will never be.

Dark Legend, the first ST-V to Saturn translation, has all the elements of a good fighting game, but fails to put them together as masterfully as it should. If you're aching for a 2-D fighter on the Saturn, this will surely satisfy, but patiently waiting for Golden Axe: The Duel and X-Men may prove to be the wiser choice.
- Takuhi

ZOOM!

Takuhi
Data East's Dark Legends is a solid fighting game among fierce competition

OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR EXTREME

P PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER	CRYSTAL DYN.
PUBLISHER	CRYSTAL DYN.
FORMAT	CD
# OF PLAYERS	1-2
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE	OCTOBER

E. STORM
WHO'S THE KID?

Lock n' Load your Saturn and prepare for four wheel mortal combat. Crystal Dynamics, the trendsetters in 32-bit home entertainment, are ready to empower your Saturn with some high speed roastin' action.

Those of you who waited for the Saturn in lieu of buying a 3DO should be pleased to know that Off World Interceptor Extreme on the Saturn destroys the 3DO game. Not that it was bad, this one's just really smashing!

Choose the story mode and enjoy some high quality cheeseoid FMV (it's actually kinda' cool), complete with built-in heckling, on your way through missions containing three grueling courses per area plus a big burly boss, or go for the arcade mode and feel free to assault any of the five planets. You can also kill a friend in the battle mode... ain't that nice?

The 3-D in OWIE is fast, furious, and wildly fun, especially after a couple of buggy upgrades. These little buggers jump around, fire all sorts of offensive weapons, and just basically kick butt. The control is surprisingly responsive for such a wild ride, and even when the screen is loaded with sprites (which is nearly always), there's not a tad of slowdown. Extreme includes a Ridge Racer-type cockpit mode not found in the original that can further add to the intensity, along with a scrolling sky (nice touch), some nice fog, better balance, and bigger, badder, better gameplay.

Visually, as you can see, Crystal has left nothing to chance. Face it, this game just looks cool. The vehicles look and act like little monsters and the texture mapping, while not quite as good as the PlayStation version's, is still a cut above what we're used to seeing.

I gotta tell you, Crystal's got it goin' on here in the early going. Act-plat fans will soon be lovin' GEX, action/strategy fans will soon meet The Horde, shooting fans can fly the unfriendly skies in Total Eclipse or the phenom Solar Eclipse, and for those of you who like mega-doses of pure goo-splattering overhead action there's the upcoming Blood Omen Legacy of Kain. If I had 'em all here right now I'd fake sick and hit the road. Oh well, I've got OWIE now, so I guess I'll get back to it. Happy trails! -E. Storm

THUNDERSTRIKE 2

OBSERVE, FIRST AS I BLOW THE ENEMY OUT OF HIS TANK, AND THEN, FOLLOW HIM IN HIS FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. THE FOURTH SHOT IS FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT (RIGHT BEFORE I ROASTED HIM).

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER -	CORE DESIGN
PUBLISHER -	US GOLD
FORMAT -	CD
# OF PLAYERS -	1
DIFFICULTY -	NA
AVAILABLE -	NOVEMBER

Think you've played a good helicopter sim? Maybe so, by today's standards, but today's standards are about to change! Core's *Thunderhawk* for the Saturn incorporates the best 3-D engine imaginable for the Saturn. That aside, the gameplay in *Thunderhawk* is beyond anything that came before it.

While enjoying a ride in the cockpit, the player enjoys a full continuing, sweeping 180 degree view. It's like *really* looking right and left. It doesn't switch... it flows. From behind the chopper you can do the same thing, except with full 360 degree movement that is again, ultra smooth. But it doesn't end there - not even. For the first time ever in a chopper sim, once you lock on to a target, you can hit a button and view yourself from its perspective! Sound cool? It gets better. Say you blow up a tank. The guy driving it pops out and runs for his life. First of all, the tiny dude is texture mapped, I couldn't believe that. Now as he's running across the level, if you lock on to him you can see what he sees as he's running! Until of course, you smoke him. Now that's ingenuity! To top it all off *Thunderhawk* features detailed texture mapped towers, vehicles, terrain, and aircraft, as well as some of the meatiest explosions yet seen in such a title. Core is no doubt on its way to setting the standards once again, as they did on Sega CD.

I guarantee that developers will be after this Saturn engine once they see this baby fly. It makes what's out there look kinda', well, archaic.

I can hardly wait for *Thunderhawk* to hit the streets, which could be as soon as October. Whether chopper sims. are your thing or not, this is one that is sure to have universal appeal. Everything about it is new, and that my friends is what progress is all about. -E. Storm

VIRTUA COCKPIT!

E. STORM
THE MASTERS AT CORE ARE AT IT AGAIN.

59

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER	SEGA JAPAN
PUBLISHER	SOA
FORMAT	CD
# OF PLAYERS	1
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE	NOVEMBER

E. STORM
I NEVER, EVER, LEAVE MY WINGMAN.

WINGARMS
華麗なる撃墜王

Here's a game that I'm especially happy to see making the jump from Japan to the United states: Sega's *Wing Arms*. Patterned after the coin-op *Wing Wars*, *Wing Arms* is pure WW2 dog fighting rapture. The Saturn version brings to the game gorgeous texture mapping, a truly remarkable SG intro and a thumping wartime soundtrack. The amount of planes you can pick from along with the detailed, lengthy mission ops, combine to make this not only the most thorough, but best game of its kind, surpassing even the mighty Ace Combat.

What I personally love about this game is the realistic nature of each series of dogfights. Planes fly in clusters and often break formation to take you on solo. Also, when using guns to assault an enemy, a mere nick will only produce a realistic stream of smoke. You must either bombard them with gun fire or be a wicked shot with a missile to down an enemy. Additionally, they can lock on you, too. If this happens (or should I say when this happens), the adrenaline really starts to flow. The awesome controls at your disposal allow smooth aerial loops and spins, making getting away as much fun as going in for the kill! For the most dramatic results, choose your chase cam to view all this splendor. A cockpit view is available, but tends to limit your view and cause a bit of claustrophobia.

What puzzles me is why *Wing Arms* is not set for US release until later this year, when it came out in Japan weeks ago. Surely, no tweaking is necessary or would be welcome here. Nevertheless, when it does fly into stores, nab one! *Wing Arms* is now the aerial warfare game to beat. -E. Storm

Build it. And they will come. Then you can kill them.
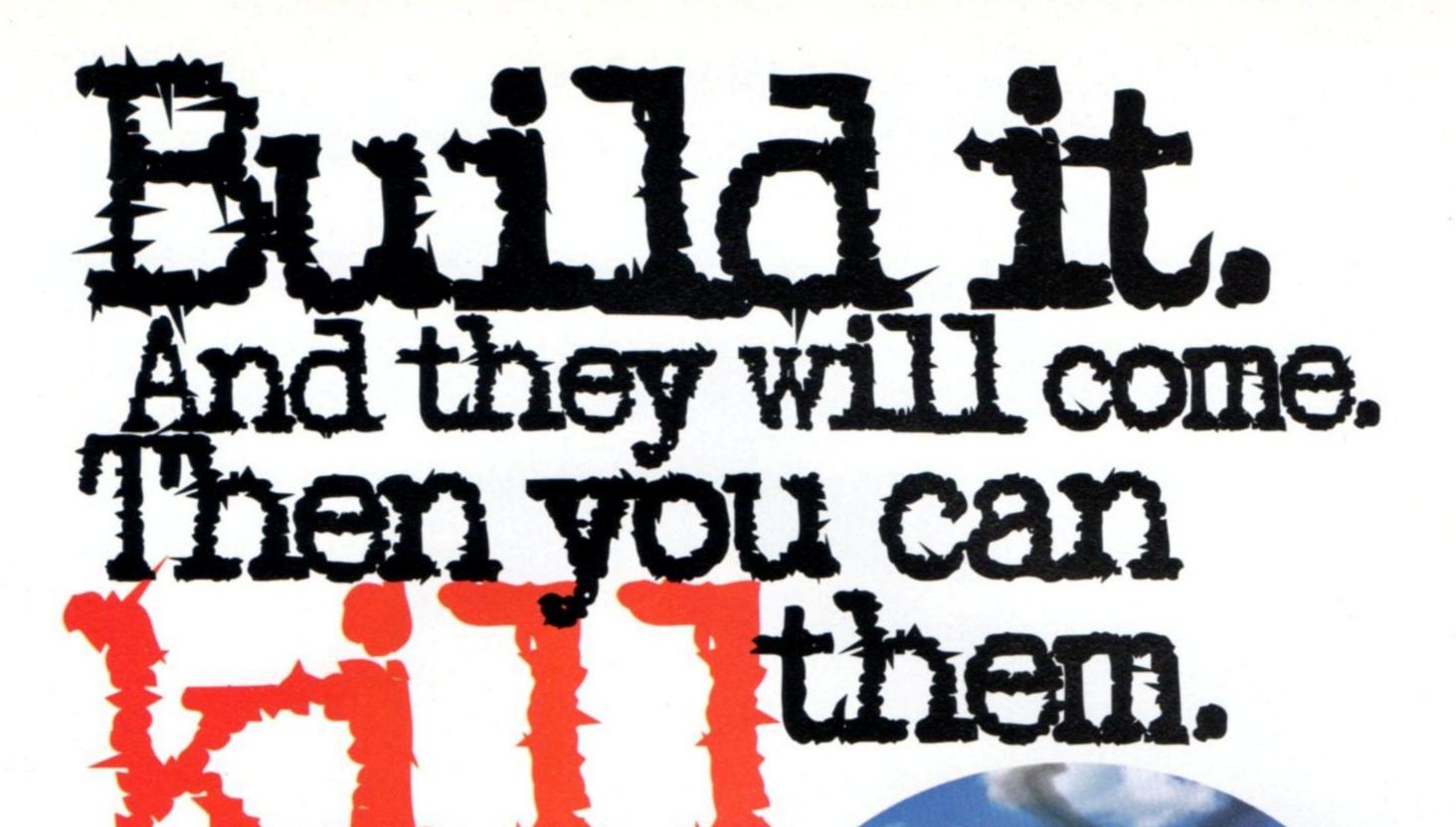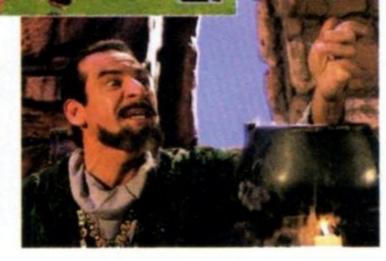
Critically acclaimed by everyone and their grandmother. Maybe it's the cool 3D characters or texture-mapped backgrounds. Maybe not.

You're overrun by mobs of ravenous Hordlings, each blessed with huge, colon-blasting appetites.

35 minutes of video explains how piss-boy Chauncey saves the King and is rewarded with the old man's Grimthwacker (It's a sword).

Forget about fields of dreams. With **The Horde**, it's more like little slaughter-house on the prairie. See, we've injected arcade-style, **belly-slitting** fun into that sleepy-ass commune you call home. And between digging **death pits** and hiring archers, enjoy some serious, gut-popping swordplay. 'Cause man, these neighbors really **bite!**
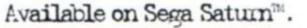
Available on Sega Saturn™.

KIDS TO ADULTS
K•A

OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY

(Game Pro 3DO™ review.)

THE HORDE™

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

TOMB RAIDER

What would a trip to Europe be without dropping in on our buddies at Core? Not only do they produce some of the finest software around, but they're just the coolest bunch of blokes in all of gaming. Cheers, mates!

The lil' gem you're looking at here is merely one of my personal most anticipated games ever, *Tomb Raider*. Why, you ask? Well, first of all have a look at Lara Cruz... is she hot or what? It's high time a stylin' babe like LC starred in a video game, don't ya think?

Lara's an archeologist/mercenary hired by a multi-billion dollar arms manufacturer to recover a number of legendary artifacts from ancient sites throughout the world. It goes deeper than that but we'll get to that later. I want to tell you about this game!

In *Tomb Raider*, Lara moves about in a complete 3-D 360 degree environment. But not the way your used to ala soon-to-be-relics like *Doom*. As she makes her way through each perilous locale she can run, jump, and hang, as well as shoot her way out of just about any situation. For instance, she'll run and jump to a ledge only to find a pack of blood-thirsty wolves nipping at her feet. While hanging, she'll pull out the old pistol, pump 'em full of lead, and then pull herself up. I guess you'd have to call this a 3-D action/plat-form/adventure/shooting/role playing game. Besides the fantastic gameplay, the adventure is surrounded with some of the most bril' rendered FMV we've ever seen (check out the sequences on this page) and super fluid animation. Look for Lara's Saturn debut sometime early next year. Until then, we'll keep you posted on this and all of Core's great looking Saturn and PS games. Here's hoping Chuck emerges on the Saturn... or Wonderdog. C'mon, Jeremy, pleeeaaase? -E. Storm
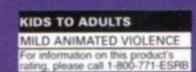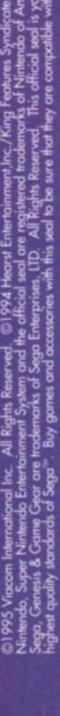
cycle. There wasn't a lot of development knowledge carryover from 16-bit to 32-bit, but there's going to be a *lot* of carryover from 32-bit to 64-bit.

TF: M2 is so close to Opera, in terms of fundamentals, that it took longer for one of our hardware engineers to walk across the parking lot than it took for him to port the kernel of an Opera program onto M2. M2 is very stable. Usually, you'd assume it would take months to port a program.

GF: *How did you see 3DO's technology changing when you first created it?*

RJ: We made sure the basic system was very solid, but we knew we couldn't anticipate everything that would happen in the future. So we

"The review copies are on the way." --Tuesday Uhland, 3DO publicist

included all these different attachment-ready ports that could connect to modems, MIDI keyboards, stuff like that so if the product ended up migrating into that kind of marketplace....

GF: *And that never really happened...*

RJ: Yet.

TF: If we hadn't included the expansion port, we wouldn't be able to do M2.

GF: *In retrospect, are you happy with Opera, or do you think to yourself "If only we'd done this our games could have had twice as much parallax" or whatever?*

JS: Obviously we've found all kinds of things that could have been better and we're doing them all in M2.

DN: Opera is by no means perfect. Christmas comes and schedules must be met and a product must be done, and we had limited money and we made mistakes. Life goes on, and M2 will be better.

M2: Multimedia or Games?

GF: *Opera was initially touted as a multimedia machine (and not specifically a game machine) which played all kinds of CD products, from edutainment to sports to action to 3-D, etc. Especially during the early going, there was a perception among gamers that because both the hardware and software was trying to be too diverse and meet too many needs, it was too weak in certain game-specific areas such as platform games. Was there a specific philosophy with Opera's hardware development to make it multimedia-friendly?*

DN: In the beginning of Opera there wasn't any specific connection to multimedia stuff, but here's a CD machine with good, proper 16-bit CD audio output, and has a CD player as its input, and has a frame buffer with memory and video graphic capability... surprise, we can play audio CD's, photo CD's, and video CD's. So there was that aspect of yes, it's multimedia. Part of what went wrong was people touted it as multimedia. Nothing was missing from the original design to make it multimedia, but we did hesitate to add anything to make it multimedia; for example we didn't want to make it Philips CD-I.

TF: As far as positioning the product is concerned, there was a certain element of not wanting to be just a game machine, and part of that was the initial price point, and we were going in new places - that marketplace hadn't been defined yet. We tried then to justify the price point, and then we decided, "Let's not justify the price point, let's change the price point and focus on something people really care about, extremely fast games with lots of video and audio." It took us a while to get there, but we did. The thing that will drive the sales initially of M2 will be cool games... and then, there may be a few other [multimedia] things our developers will do as well.

RJ: I was always surprised it took us so long to

come up with our *Gex* and our *Soccer Kid*. I was astonished no developer in the beginning said, "I'll do one of those just because," but instead all the developers had these huge grand ideas about what they could do with the system, and no one wanted to do the old-style games, and they overlooked the fact that there are many consumers who love that boring old junk... ME for instance! It took them a while to get around to it, but they did. And if the multimedia concept includes the sense that 3DO is not a game system that would sit off in a corner with the kiddies but would instead be an entertainment console that would be plugged right into the main TV and all members of the family would play it, that much I feel we accomplished very well.

M2 Tech Details

GF: *Please tell us about the most important technical aspects of M2 which will positively affect games.*

TF: M2 is going to make real 3-D interaction possible in a legitimate fashion. None of the machines today really create a complete environment. With some of the competitive machines, the objects and polygons look flat.

JS: For instance, on M2 you can have a light source reflecting off an object and as the object moves the reflections change. The M2 hardware supports that, and while you can do anything in software, if it's too slow it doesn't happen in real time.

TF: You can theoretically do gouraud shading on any platform, but if you're trying to sustain 30 frames per second animation, you have to do it in hardware, which M2 does.

JS: Another example is mip-mapping, which means when you zoom in close to an object or move farther away, or look at it edge on, it doesn't distort or pixelate like it does on other systems... it has a real rounded, correct look.

RJ: The M2 team built those capabilities - the mip-mapping, the filtering, the Z-buffering - this is a collection of words that might not mean much to readers, but the end result is how realistic it is, how graphic it is. At the same time, M2's hardware team had some hard-core game designers who helped keep the balance and make sure it wasn't too heavily weighted toward fun or theory, but it reached that happy medium so it's just a real powerful machine.

GF: *How much is M2 like an SGI machine or a high-powered computer?*

JS: We didn't just do these things the way that they're done on a high-end workstation, because if we did, it would still cost as much as a high-end workstation. We didn't cheat either, we came up with new and unique ways of doing mathematically the exact same thing, but with fewer steps... and using the best technology possible to do it.

TF: To give you an example, a graphics workstation can do all its floating-point calculations in 64-bit. Well, the fact is for graphics, you don't have to go to that length. You don't need a 64-bit data path to gain the benefits of floating-point, you can get away with 32-bit and a have a much simpler CPU. But actually, our CPU can do 32-bit floating point arithmetic, which is perfectly fine for graphics, and it can sustain a floating-point processing rate which is faster than a Pentium.

JS: If you just say we're doing 32 instead of 64, you wouldn't get the same correct mathematical result. But we've analyzed the number and amount of steps for each calculation, and the graphics chip uses the exact number of bits it needs to at each stage, so we don't waste any bits, and we don't have any errors.

TF: All the other machines currently on the market don't do floating-point but do fixed-point arithmetic, which is far less accurate and creates all kinds of headaches in software.

JS: With fixed-point, when things go past you there's an odd effect where they go in and out and they're not completely there all the time; it's a mathematical quirk.

GF: *Not to trivialize all this, but the other new systems often have problems with "pop-up," where graphic chunks just pop into view in certain racing games. Is floating-point relevant to that problem?*

JS: Floating point numbers are nice and contained, like when you get to infinity, they don't roll back around. If you have a fixed-point number that's at infinity and very large, and you add one to it, it becomes a tiny number.

TF: Therefore the other systems don't have the horsepower to process their entire database for their race track, so they have to do some software tricks to determine what objects are likely to be in view, based on the player's position, and they have to throw away as many objects as possible because they don't have the horsepower.

JS: We have a hardware Z-buffer which keeps track of where, and how near and far away from you everything is, so the hardware can render things and decide what should be there and what shouldn't.

RJ: In the end, every system is finite: we haven't created an infinitely powerful machine here. There's always further to go. But here's another thing. On other systems, you can go down a dark tunnel and far away objects start to come into existence because they become lighter as you get closer. We can do that easily and add things like weather effects. But in addition to dark/light, on M2 we can use video/movie-making type techniques by having distant objects out of focus, just like it would be in a movie where objects that are far away from the camera are just a blur, and as you get closer the blur forms into the actual object, giving the player a feeling like you're in there with a real camera. Consumers probably wouldn't even notice it, they would probably just get that extra feel of realism because this is so subliminal.

GF: *Can the M2 do real-time anti-aliasing?*

RJ: (after some discussion) The answer is yes. (laughs) There are two kinds of anti aliasing. There's one, where you're taking an image and putting it against the background and you want to softly feather the edges of the image so it doesn't look like it was pasted on the background but looks like it's really part of the scene... yes, we can do that. There's another kind, where the internal image itself moves around and bends in three dimensions and you see it from different angles, edge-on views and stuff, so it gets close to distortion, that sort of anti-aliasing would allow the image to remain nice and smooth no matter how close or far away you are... can we do that? Yes. So the answer is a simple yes.

DN: Can you do the golf club?

RJ: You mean where you're far away from a golf club and it doesn't flicker in and out of existence? Yes.

DN: Cool!

RJ: Or the car antennae is another example, where a single pixel car antennae sticks up in the air. With less powerful systems, that pixel would flicker in and out of existence as you got closer, but with ours it doesn't, it just remains soft and smooth.

JS: We've already said mip-mapping, texturing, and rotation don't cost you performance by themselves... some kinds of anti-aliasing won't cost any performances, other types bring up the trade-off again.

GF: *What about M2's sound hardware, is it more sophisticated than Saturn or PlayStation?*

RJ: The Opera's sound hardware is actually better than the PSX!

JS: M2 is a substantial advance over Opera. M2 has 32 channels, and it's four times faster.

GF: *What part of Opera is actually used when an M2 is attached, other than the CD drive?*

TF: The exact configuration of the M2 upgrade accelerator will vary from hardware company to hardware company, so some may choose to use more of Opera's functions, and some may choose to use less. This wouldn't affect game-

play, but might affect things like disc access and loading time.

How Would M2 Handle VF?
GF: Looking at some of the most popular games on other platforms, how could they be better on M2?
DN: If you look at a Virtua Fighter game, the characters are created out of a bunch of polygons, and it looks like a bunch of polygons, it's all flat. But with that same number of polygons, maybe even fewer polygons, we can have an object that looks rounded and bumpy and much more realistic because we shade the polygons. So instead of each joining edge where two polygons meet there's a line, you don't see that line at all, you see a smooth curved surface.
RJ: In the latest incarnation of that series, Virtua Fighter 2, they have some textures and colors and lighting and stuff, but nevertheless, if you look at it closely - and this is arcade game where they should have been willing to throw a lot of money at it to make it look as good as possible - when the fighters get close together so their arms and bodies become intertwined, you can see it breaks up. It looks cheap and horrible, and you'd expect they'd be willing to invest whatever into the arcade system, but they didn't, and we do. The M2 will deliver that higher level of performance.
JS: If you look at the cars in Daytona, when you go around a turn, it looks like the back end of the car almost disjoints itself a pixel from the front half. That's because of the lack of filtering and mip-mapping and the smooth 3-D curves, so on M2, instead of jumping over a pixel on the screen, we'd shade part of some pixels and part of other pixels and it would look real.

Polygon Power
GF: M2 is said to display 3/4 million polygons per second. Are we talking 750,000 mip-mapped, gouraud-shaded, texture-mapped polygons per second at 60 frames per second, or flat-shaded, low-res polys at 15 fps?
TF: Your performance will vary depending on the size of the polygons. If you've got 750,000 polygons that are the size of the screen, you eventually can't handle it... but why would you want to? It depends on the size and complexity of the polygons.
JS: You can do 750,000 small polygons, and you want to do small ones to make things look curved and 3-D and realistic. What people will tend to do is create more objects and use smaller polygons to make things more real.
GF: So 750,000 is not a misleading number? It's not a number that theoretically the M2 can do, but won't actually happen in a game?
TF: You can do that in a real game. Again, the numbers are going to vary, down to an order of half of that. If a game has very complicated artificial intelligence and you're plotting what competing characters are doing, you're going to spend more of the machine's resources on that than graphics. It's a trade-off for the developer. The M2 provides a set of resources - we can decode MPEG, we can do 3-D graphics, we can do processing, we can do audio - and that's part of the task of the developer, figuring out, "What gives me the effect I want? Where do I spend these resources?" What we try to do is create the most powerful tools possible so that in as few instances as possible the developer runs up against the limitations of the machine.
JS: For example, the PlayStation and Saturn can do textures, but when they do it they run way slower than when they're not. Our rendering speed doesn't change if we're doing textures, or if we're doing mip-mapping. It may change with the size, but that's a complex interaction. The reason it doesn't change with the texturing is we have a special RAM for the textures inside the ASIC, so we don't have to use main memory to do it. Another thing is light-sourcing. A lot of games for other systems use a pre-lit database: the light-sourcing is already

there. We can actually make the light-sourcing calculations on the fly, but that takes away from the general CPU performance of M2.
GF: So the M2 has a whole shopping list of features from which the developer can choose, some which impact performance, some which don't.
JS: Right. We use a new kind of memory, synchronous memory, which gives us 12 times the RAM speed of either our current hardware or the competitors'. So when you do these things on M2 it doesn't have to slow down.
RJ: Another way to gauge M2's performance is we can push around 100,000,000 pixels around the display per second, and that's a whole lot of graphic information.

Next Gen FMV
GF: Tell us about M2's FMV/MPEG capabilities.
TF: The demo you saw was real MPEG being decoded in real time onto a sphere with a light source shining onto it with a glistening effect... just that simple sphere with the MPEG on it, you can't put that on any of the current platforms. We can decode multiple streams of MPEG simultaneously, and we can decode streams that are four times the resolution and very close to MPEG 2 quality.
GF: So how high-quality is the video exactly, compared to say VHS or LaserDisc?
TF: I would say in the high-resolution, 640x480 mode it's better than NTSC [LaserDisc]. The frame buffer has two modes it can work in, 640x480 or 320x240.
JS: Also, the application can render it at any size it wants... you can have 640x480 on a postage stamp window.
GF: In actual games/applications, will we be seeing high-res mode or will there be more frequent use of the low-res mode?
TF: The developer has to decide what portion of the data rate coming off the disc they want to dedicate to video stream.
DN: Even in the low-res mode we're still better than Opera because of the filtering method... this is very close to NTSC, but not quite, but can you tell the difference in games? Not really.
JS: Fast-moving games will tend toward the lower-resolution mode, while games where you're just walking along and/or pointing and clicking (such as Myst) will probably use the high-res mode. The other overriding factor is memory space. It takes memory to store textures, and if you're working in the higher resolution mode, you want some high-res textures to go with it.
RJ: It's fortuitous that John mentions Myst, because imagine the interactivity of Doom and the graphical beauty of Myst, that's what M2's going to be able to do. Back to something to the display resolutions, they're all configurable, and my guess is we'll see a lot of games in the 320x480 mode. Horizontally, television is very forgiving... it's very naturally soft, so 640 is not that much of an improvement over 320. But vertically, you can see the steps on television, so a lot of games will double up the resolution vertically to get the most smooth-looking image, but they won't spend the RAM and the processing power to get the extra resolution horizontally.
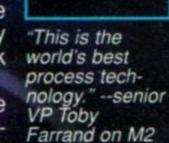
2-D vs. 3-D on M2
GF: With all the emphasis on 3-D, how much attention will be paid to 2-D games on M2? Was there anything done in hardware to make 2-D games better than they were on Opera?
DN: M2's 2-D games will be significantly better than Opera. Opera had some deficiencies there, and M2 doesn't have those deficiencies. It will be way better relative to Opera... and we'll beat everyone else as well.
RJ: Plus we have some support built into the system that we give to developers, that will make it very easy for them to develop 2-D games on the M2 system. They can think 2-D, and we've got the support in place; they don't have to do all the work they do in 3-D land.
JS: Obviously 12 times the memory bandwidth performance allows you to do much more on M2. If you can afford to use the high-res mode... we have some video output modes which will be useful for 2-D games.

"This is the world's best process technology." --senior VP Toby Farrand on M2

DN: In Opera, you had to send everything to the hardware, which slowed down the CPU, so even if you did 2-D, you still had to do a lot of cell engine stuff, even though you didn't need it. On Opera, because we didn't think there would be a lot of 2-D games, we didn't allow the engine to run in the "shortcut" mode, so to speak. We learned from our mistake, and with M2, we don't have to send the tons of stuff you normally associate with 3-D, you can send fewer things, which again makes the CPU run faster.
GF: So that would translate into what in game play terms... more sprites, more scrolls?
DN: Just more stuff, however you want to put it.
GF: One example was that Super Street Fighter II Turbo on the 3DO didn't have the parallax multi-scrolling of the arcade or even the previous SNES and Genesis versions of the game. Is this the type of thing that will be corrected on M2?
DN: Yes....
JS: And actually the Z-Buffering, which at first we think of as a 3-D tool, would fix that problem. Many of M2's features can be applied to both 3-D and 2-D.
RJ: Imagine Gex done on M2. Graphically Gex is very beautiful on Opera, and it would have that much more beauty, broader color space, softer, smoother animations, more anti-aliasing - blending objects into the backgrounds - stuff like that. Even though you're in 2-D land you can use these capabilities to add a 3-D feel where, instead of a flat appearance, you can add some depth to the buildings the lizard is crawling on. This gives it a three-dimensional quality without actually turning it into a 3-D game.

M2 vs. NU64
GF: How do you think M2 stacks up to the competition, most specifically the Ultra 64?
JS: It's hard to say because the Ultra 64 is not out... But the more smooth, curved, lit, 3-D types of things you're doing, the faster the M2 is compared to the Ultra 64. This is partially because of the kinds of memory the U64 uses. For Gex's and those types of games the Ultra is fine. It can do true 3-D, absolutely, but it just goes slower.
RJ: Plus every report I've heard is that Ultra is cartridge-based and won't have a CD drive. To create the kind of experience you'd get from an M2 game, in a cartridge-based system, the software's going to cost you $1,000 or $2,000 per copy.
JS: They just won't have the quality of M2. In

John "Bulldog" Sell loses all self control and attacks Needle, recognizing an alien from Jovian air space. R.J. attempts to knock them both out.

65

BLADE FORCE

NICK ROX
The best 3DO game so far! (but too hard)

I am not a big fan of the 3DO; I can think of no game for the system that I actually wanted to sit down with and play. Until now. Though obscenely hard and at times rather tedious, Bladeforce is unquestionably the best 3DO game yet, both technically and in game design.

From what I could gather from the bizarre, yet beautiful CG intro, the year is 2110, and the place is a futuristic city called MegaGrid. You're a vigilante out to capture various bad guys like a corrupt lawyer, the leader of a religious cult named (I'm not EVEN kidding) Reverend Bee-atch, and a no-good electrical tycoon that forces his hapless "customers" to pay exorbitant prices for their energy. Hey, wouldn't you risk your life trying to bring these heinous criminals to justice?

To aid you in your search, a scientist called Dr. Gruber has designed the "Helipak," a high-tech beanie designed to maneuver in all directions... just be careful not to raise your arms too high, OK?

The game's objective sounds simple enough: Destroy the boss in each of the eight labyrinthine zones. You can actually fly directly to the boss in each level, but you won't be able to defeat him until you destroy various locations such as power plants, ammo dumps and generators, which weaken the enemy drones and the lower the boss' life bar. By taking out generators, force fields will dissipate, allowing you to power-up your machine gun and reach out-of-the-way, but completely necessary power-ups like health, extra missiles and fuel. Your fuel runs out fairly quickly, and when I first began playing the game, I frequently forgot all about it and plummeted to a great many fiery deaths. Because of the insane design choice of giving you a paltry four lives to play with and no continues, you have to take the game slowly, inching your way around corners to spot enemies before they spot you and remembering where fuel and health cubes are located in the massive zones. I desperately wanted to go careening at breakneck speeds through the beautifully texture-mapped locales, but this just isn't to be if you want to get anywhere in the game.

The graphics are doubtless the best ever seen on the 3DO. Two issues ago, Slasher Quan said you'd think your 3DO suddenly morphed into an M2... I wouldn't go that far, but you wouldn't be surprised if someone told you Bladeforce was a PlayStation game. The 3DO employs its fog-depth effects and Jumping Flash!-style "popping" textures (the partially fog-shrouded polygons are there, but the textures pop into place as you near them) to hide redraw very well, and the screen moves at a relatively impressive 24 frames per second. There are also a number of animated textures, like running water, force fields and advertisements for the criminals you're hunting down. According to Studio 3DO, the 3-D effect is so realistic that some people are said to get motion-sickness from playing the game! On the graphic down-side, the first few levels look disturbingly alike; only around the fourth do they radically change.

Bladeforce's hard rockin' soundtrack fits the game very well, but, since each level takes literally anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour and a half to complete, it can get incredibly tiresome. The sound effects are good enough, though nothing special, and the voice-overs during the FMV sequences are extremely well-acted.

If you own a 3DO, you simply must own Bladeforce. Be warned, however: The game is so hard that you may end up totally frustrated with it. Even if you save your game, you continue with whatever amount of lives you had left, and you'll find yourself dying quite a bit. The only other slight faults I found with the game were that picking up items is often pretty hard - you'll seem to fly right into a health cube yet you don't collect it... sometimes it takes a few passes to obtain the simplest of items. Also, the earlier versions we received of the game had helicopter-dude in the middle of the screen, rather than just the top of his robo-beanie. This new design choice occasionally prevents you from seeing what's going on in the lower portion of the screen... I wonder why your character wasn't made transparent or something?

At any rate, Bladeforce has given me faith that the 3DO actually can produce a quality game playing experience... Just imagine what these programmers could do on the M2!
- NICK ROX

MISSION 1

PICK UP FOR STRONGER WEAPONS

RESOURCES

THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES, BUT THESE ARE NEEDED TO BEAT YOUR ENEMIES. GOOD LUCK

- POWER PLANT SOURCE - MAKES ENEMIES WEAKER
- AMMO DUMP SOURCE - MAKES ENEMIES SLOWER
- GENERATOR SOURCE - ENEMIES EASIER TO ATTACK
- HEALTH - INCREASES YOUR OVERALL HEALTH
- FUEL - INCREASES YOUR HELIPAK FUEL
- WEAPONS CHARGER PAKS - GET THEM ALL!!!

MISSION 2

MISSION 2 STEEL MEDUSA

FINANCE ARM OF THE PITT CRIME FAMILY (BANK ROBBER) YOU MUST CLOSE HER ACCOUNT

Pitt Power Company
PAY UP...
...OR ELSE

MATTRIX BANK

MISSION 3

RECON MAPS

USE YOUR ON-BOARD MAPPER TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY. OUR INFORMATION TELLS US TO TAKE OUT THE ZONES IN THIS ORDER - BLUE, GREEN, YELLOW, RED.

HERE IS THE ENTRANCE TO MEDUSA'S HIDEOUT. TO MAKE IT EASIER, TAKE OUT THE 15 POWER SOURCES ALONG THE WAY.

AMMO

OPTIONS

SELECT CONTROL PAD

- N DIVE
- S CLIMB
- W ROTATE
- E ROTATE
- A GUN
- B THRUST
- C SPECIAL
- P PAUSE
- X SELECT
- SL OR SR SLIDE
- SL AND SR BACK

MAIN OPTIONS

- SELECT CONTROLLER
- SELECT INTERFACE
- SFX - MUSIC BALANCE
- VIEW HIGH-SCORES
- START NEW GAME
- LOAD SAVED GAME
- DELETE SAVED GAME

USE DPAD TO MOVE A BUTTON TO SELECT

SELECT INTERFACE

RADAR   STATUS

USE DPAD TO MOVE - A BUTTON TO SELECT

SFX/MUSIC BALANCE

MUSIC   SFX

Warp's depraved horror story, D's, (aka D no Shokutaku) has finally been announced for an American released. I have yet to hear the final English translation, but I'm confident that Panasonic will have no problem recreating in English the intensely twisted fable the made D's Dinner Table the best 3DO game yet.

Since most of you are probably familiar with D's from our extensive coverage in past issues (full review of the Saturn version last month, and everything said about that applies here too), we're going to give you the second part of the Game Fan strategy guide that began in Volume 3, Issue 6. These two guides together will guide you through the entire game, so instead of using them to zip through D's, you'll probably just want to save them for when you get stuck. There are some tough puzzles, and reading the solutions here sure beats calling some 1-900 number.

This guide picks up where the last one left off, with the knight dead and the stained glass window and puzzle of the constellations still blocking your progress.

This guide will get you from there to the final confrontation with your father, or the "other self" that he's been turned into by our as-of-yet unidentified antagonist, "D." But what you do as you face your father down is your choice entirely. You have a few different options, and the one you pick will determine your ending, so think carefully before you act.

The fate of your father, yourself, and the remaining hostages are in your hands. Pick wisely...

To solve the constellation puzzle, go upstairs (jimmy your way in with the sword), slide the level to the appropriate constellation symbol, memorize the color of the stars, and punch that button in the corresponding statue. Too much trouble? Try light blue for Aquarius and green for Sagittarius.

You're almost done. Blow out the stained glass window, and head upstairs to hear some shocking secrets, and then attempt the final puzzle. You have to get both holes in the gears lined up over the ruby, nothing trial and error can't handle. Then the final stairway is revealed.

Time for the final confrontation. The toughest decision of young Laura's life awaits...

MAP OF THE REVOLVING ROOM

ALONE IN THE DARK 2

Everyone's favorite chubby, bespectacled, dickey-wearing private eye is back, and locked in a supernatural tale of pirate yore. As Edward Carnby, you must rescue a kidnapped little girl, avenge an old friend, and destroy One-Eyed Jack, the heart of the wackiest-dressed cult ever to grace the 3DO.

Alone in the Dark 2 encompasses everything that made the original a revolutionary game: plentiful perspectives, original play mechanics, and lots of clever puzzle-solving. Unfortunately, the elements that wounded the 3DO version are also back. The perspective changes are slow, but not quite as slow as the frame-by-frame action. Carnby's limited repertoire of headbutts and kicks just take way too long to deliver, and aiming a gun can be a tedious and imprecise task.

Alone in the Dark 2 is also very difficult. You start out with next to nothing, against a well-armed army. Without the ability to see ahead of you until the perspective shifts, or the control to fight effectively, you won't have much of a chance. Your best tactic is to save often and keep trying.

There's a lot to like in AITD2, such as awesome theme music and plenty of cool puzzles. It does have some scary parts (though in this one, they try to be a bit more weird-scary than the shock-scary stuff in the original), but it's hard to enjoy the atmosphere when you're struggling with the control.

The inefficient play mechanics were annoying in the first one, but because of the increased amount of action in AITD2, they now border on infuriating. It's a pity that the clever puzzles and exotic locales of AITD2 can't be fully enjoyed because of the poor play mechanics. I can only hope that the same mistakes are not repeated on the upcoming Saturn and PlayStation versions. Until then, *Alone* fans who own a 3DO, but not a PC, will have to muster a lot of patience to get the most out of *Alone in the Dark 2*. – Takuhi

REVIEW

3DO

DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD
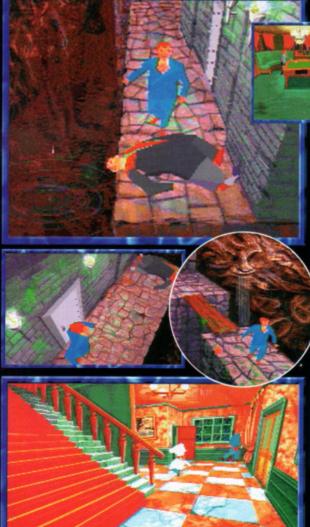
OF PLAYERS - 1
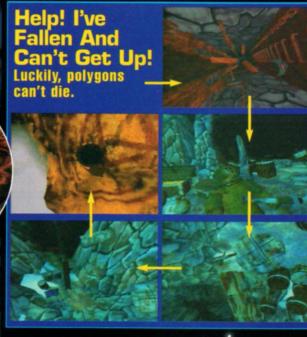
DIFFICULTY - HARD

AVAILABLE - NOW

TAKUHI
Unfortunately, there's more to computer translations than just porting over the graphics.

Help! I've Fallen And Can't Get Up!
Luckily, polygons can't die.
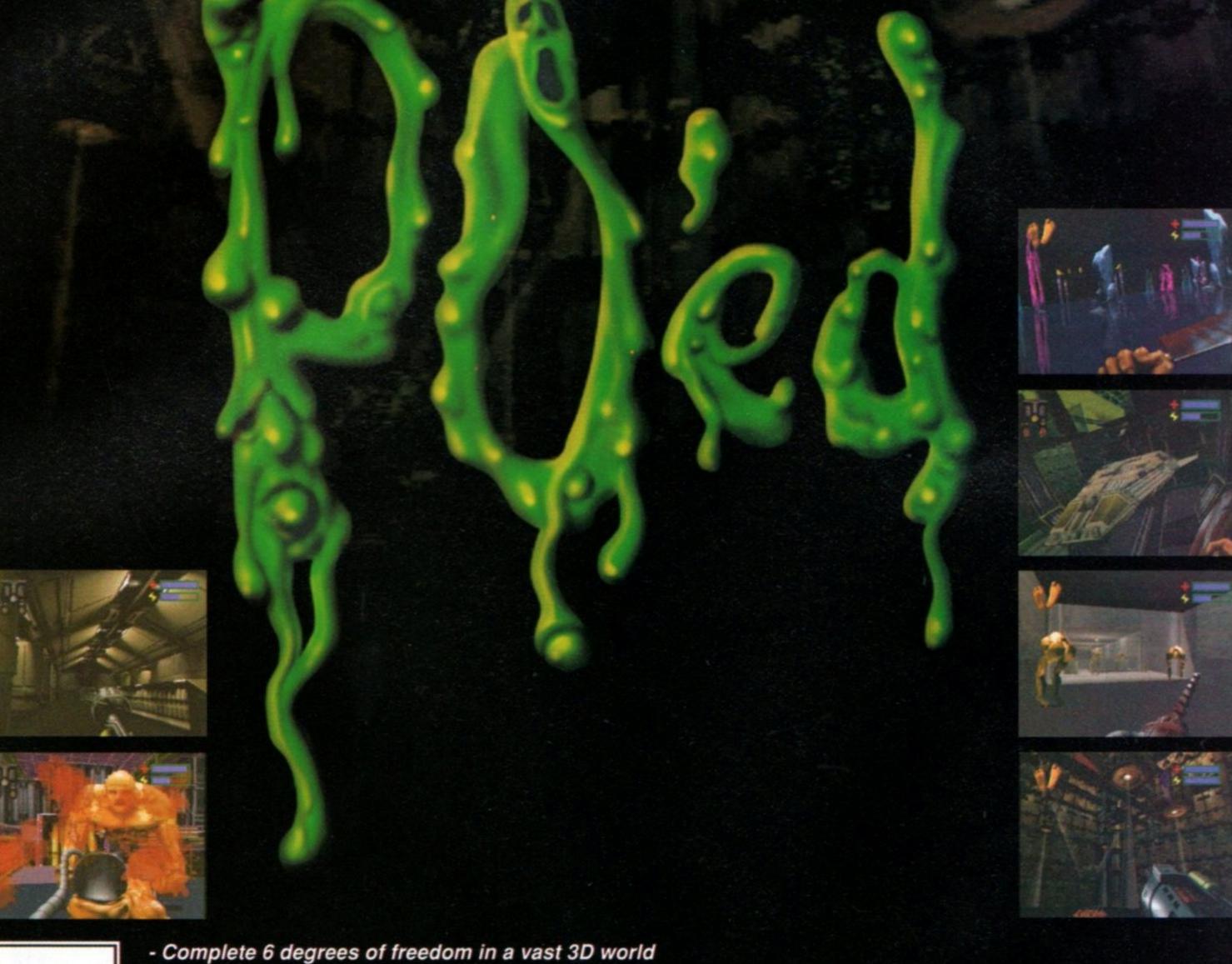
DON'T GET MAD, GET PO'ED!

Your ship has been overrun by aliens. Your comrades-in-arms have been captured.
And your souffle has been ruined. What do you do?
Grab your jetpack and rocket launcher and fry those suckers!
Pushing the bounds of 3DO technology, PO'ed injects you into a fully-rendered
three-dimensional world and presents the most exciting and fast-paced first person
gaming experience available for home videogame players.

PO'ed
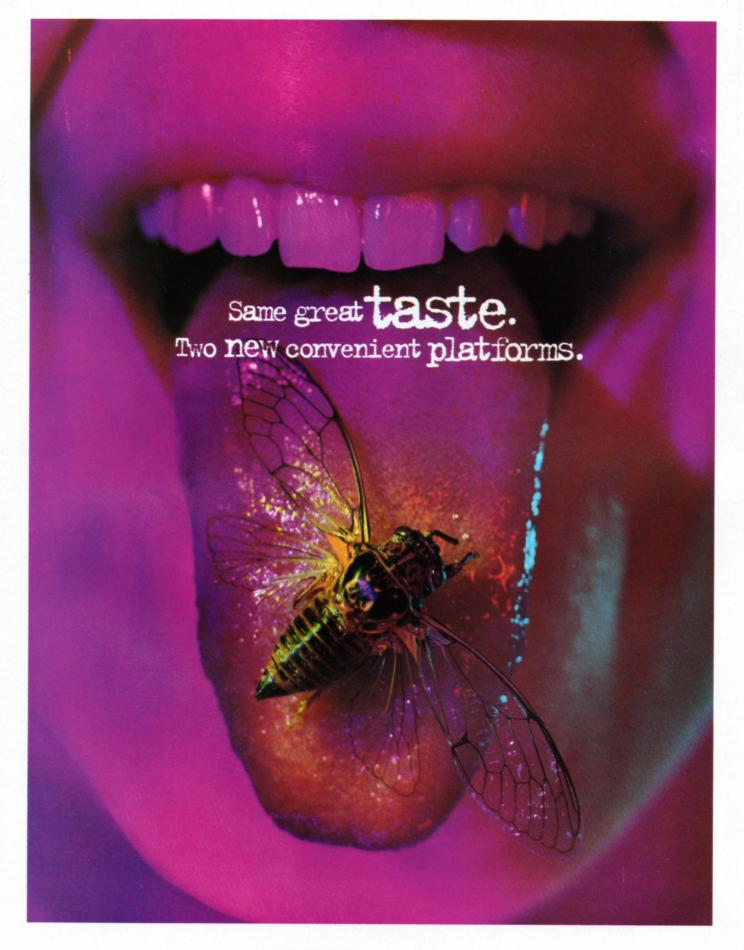
- *Complete 6 degrees of freedom in a vast 3D world*
- *Extremely fast-paced seat-of-your-pants action*
- *10 terrifying and truly ugly monsters*
- *Multiple weapons of destruction and gore to choose from, including "Missile-cam"*
- *Non-linear level connection of over 25 different, beautifully, texture-mapped,*
  exotic alien environments
- *True physical motion modeling for smooth and intuitive controls*

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3DO

ANY CHANNEL

Same great taste.
Two new convenient platforms.

PRIMAL RAGE

E. STORM
I MAY KEEP MY 32X
AFTER ALL!

Everyone's in a frenzy 'bout the home release of Atari Game's Primal Rage. This one-on-one prehistoric battle royale has all the makin's of an arcade-to-home-console hit: big nasty characters, lots of blood and gore, and a combo system that's easy to pick up. Then of course there's the whole dinosaur thing. Since JP made more than a small country in theaters, it seems the whole world has discovered Dinosaurs. I've loved 'em since the first grade. These monsters were actually here before us, hangin' out, eatin' people. Now a distant memory, they seem right at home in movies and video games where they can't do any real damage. Maybe I should write about the game now, huh?

For those unfamiliar with PR all you really need to know besides the obvious is that it uses a very unique control mechanism. Un-characteristically, you hold the buttons while producing each move. This takes some getting used to, especially on a six-button Sega pad. Imagine holding X, Y, & B, and executing a move, than quickly shifting to Y, B, & A. It can get pretty tricky. The moves do come out easily, though, and a training game is featured to get you started.

Visually, PR is a rich commodity to start with. Stop motion animated models look good anywhere you put them, but comparatively speaking, the 32X produces considerably smaller sprites than the coin-op, and the music's pretty hurtin'. Otherwise, this is a faithful translation. The characters and humans are accomplished via the 32X, while the backgrounds and music are handled by the Genesis. Nuff said there.

If you really want a dose of Primal power it's time to invest in a next-gen system, but if you possess a 32X, this is a tempting title indeed. While not every bit the splendor of the coin-op it takes its strange place between 16 & 32-bit... in the 32X zone. -E. Storm

FINISH IT!

Kolibri
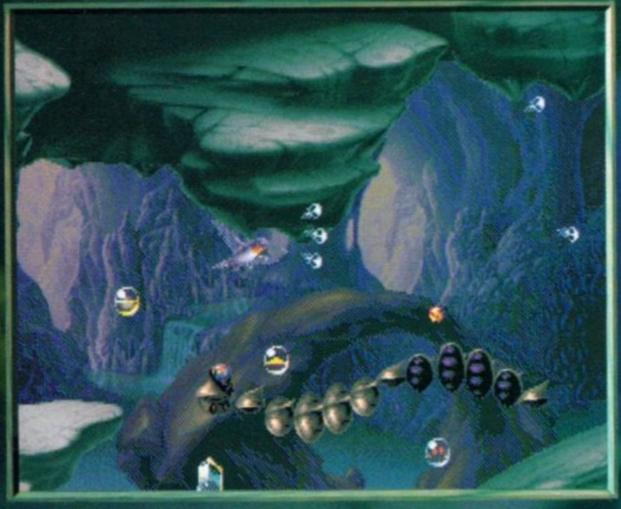
Ah, the power of evolution. The never-ending natural competition for resources has pitted hummingbirds against wasps in an all out war for pollen. It seems as if the tide had been tipped and the wasps were about to conquer, but the unpredictable power of evolution intervened... Thus we have Kolibri - a hummingbird who has evolved with machine guns, fireballs, and heat-seeking lasers.

Well, that's my best guess at Kolibri's plot. I don't know the real story, but since it's from the people who brought us Ecco, I'm willing to bet the words "harmony," "ecosystem," and "balance" are all well represented. However, if you're expecting Ecco III, you'll be surprised to find that there's not a scrap of text in this game, just lavish shooting action with a touch of Ecco-esque puzzle-solving. That's about all that'll surprise Ecco fans, though...

Just as Ecco did to the Genesis, Kolibri taxes the 32X's color palette to the maximum, creating luscious flower patches, dazzling waterfalls, and beautifully shaded savannahs. The up-to-4 layers of parallax (which scroll both vertically and horizontally) are amazing — sure to elicit a gasp even from those accustomed to such next generation fare as Astal and Rayman. Another bit of Ecco nostalgia is presented by the new-age soundtrack, which is complete with sampled bird chirping and jungle noises... Excellent quality (if you're into that sort of thing), especially considering 32X's feeble FM synth.
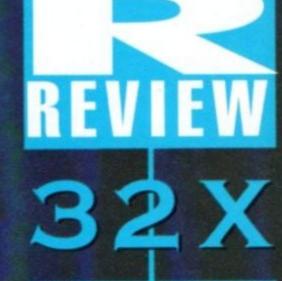
Your hummingbird sprite is beautifully animated, and changes color (to match actual hummingbird species) with each new weapon you get. Other than that, the sprites are disappointing. With a few exceptions, your enemies are tiny, and bosses are nowhere to be seen. Though Ecco had more impressive enemies, Kolibri's well thought-out play control far surpasses Ecco's twitchy feel. You can turn Kolibri forwards or backwards at any time, but by holding down the fire button can lock yourself in one direction. Like real hummingbirds, you even have the ability to dart from one side of the screen to the other in a sudden burst of speed.

If there's a flaw with Kolibri, it's its length, or lack thereof. The 15 levels are easily surmountable, especially with the aid of a generous password system that saves your status not only at the beginning of levels, but at the mid-points as well. Luckily, the difficulty is adjustable, and the hard level will present a physical and mental challenge for anyone. But that certainly doesn't

TAKUHI
The best Eastern European-made hummingbird-based shooting game available on the 32X! And I mean it!

change the fact that there are basically only 5 or 6 different-looking locations.

Kolibri is the ultimate rainy day game — short but very sweet, with the most impressive 32X graphics yet. I don't know what those wacky Eastern Europeans' secret is, but if Sega is smart, they'll fly back down to Hungary, lock the whole lot of 'em in a room with a Saturn development system, and not let 'em out 'til they've woven that Ecco/Kolibri magic on the 32X's beefier brother. Now *that* will be a wonder to behold.
-TAKUHI

WRESTLEMANIA

E. STORM
I CAN'T BELIEVE I LIKE A WRESTLING GAME, MUST BE THE UNDERTAKER.

I am the last guy you'd ever want to review a wrestling game. I watch the soap-opera-like antics of the WWF playing to sold-out audiences, and often wonder what the world is coming to. It's the only place where the first guy who rolls into a casket is deemed the loser, and direct head blows produce nary a nick on the recipient's face. The WWF is little more than a rough-and-tumble sitcom. Funny how I watch each episode all the way through, as I often do infomercials during sleepless nights. Perhaps I should seek help. But the people love it, so the games began. After many megs of sleep-inducing software, someone has finally figured it out and made a game that matches the craziness that is the WWF. So here I am.

WWF Wrestlemania's strongest feature is its exaggeration on the theme. Everything is wild in this game. The Undertaker can send forth demons to gnaw your bones or induce electric shocks, Yokozuna can spin you like rag doll, and Bam Bam can set you a flamin'. Now this is more like it! Unlike the lock-'em-up-and-tap-wildly games of the past, WWFW has a true fighting game feel... You do moves ala SF2/MK-ish controls.

Aside from this, the digitized graphics are the best of the blue screen, and the commentary and soundtrack are frantic to say the least. 32X owners will be glad to know that this version is quite faithful to the coin-op. Besides the smaller sprite size and some irrevocable audio, this is a great translation. Its two player vs. or cooperative gameplay gives it long legs and there's eight infamous wrestling superstars to choose from, each with his own hidden move.

There's no question in my mind that this is the best wrestling game ever developed, so if you are so compelled, do not hesitate to check it out. It's not every day you get to control a 6ft. 4in., 568 lb. sumo. -E. Storm

THE UNDERTAKER HURLS PUNISHING DEMONS AT HIS OPPONENTS.

RAZOR RAMON SHAKES DOINK LIKE A RUG.

YOKOZUNA SPINS BRET LIKE A RAG DOLL.

Character Bios

RAZOR RAMON
FROM: MIAMI, FLORIDA
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 7 IN.
WEIGHT: 287 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: TAKE A LOOK AT THE BAD GUY.

UNDERTAKER
FROM: DEATH VALLEY
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 10 IN.
WEIGHT: 328 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: REST IN PEACE.

YOKOZUNA
FROM: TOKYO, JAPAN
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 4 IN.
WEIGHT: 568 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: BANZAI FLY.

SHAWN MICHAELS
FROM: SAN ANTONIO, TX
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 1 IN.
WEIGHT: 235 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: I'M THE GREATEST THING GOING ON GOD'S GREEN EARTH.

BAM BAM BIGELOW
FROM: ASBURY PARK, NJ
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 4 IN.
WEIGHT: 390 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: I'M THE BEAST FROM THE EAST!

HITMAN HART
FROM: CALGARY
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 1 IN.
WEIGHT: 235 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: I'M THE EXCELLENCE OF EXECUTION.

LEX LUGER
FROM: ATLANTA, GA
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 5 IN.
WEIGHT: 275 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: LEX LUGER IS THE ALL AMERICAN HERO.

DOINK
FROM: THE CIRCUS
HEIGHT: 6 FT.
WEIGHT: 243 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE: LIFE'S A JOKE!

Now You Can
Eat Dirt
On The Road.

The world's first two-fisted worm hits the road. EARTHWORM JIM™, winner of DIE-HARD GAME FAN'S GAME OF THE YEAR and ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY'S GAME OF THE YEAR has wormed his way onto GAME BOY and GAME GEAR™. This is the tightest conversion from a 16 BIT to a hand-held ever. Now the head swinging, blaze blastin' action is totally mobile. SO YOU CAN EAT DIRT EVERYWHERE YOU GO.

trust no one. play it yourself.

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ShiNY ENTERTAINMENT™

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KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+

GAME GEAR™

Playmates
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SOUL STAR

Now here's a shooter with some muscle (and we all know the 32X needs all the muscle it can get), Core's *SoulStar*. If you played SS on the Sega CD you already know how cool it is. Now, imagine it had thousands of colors, more detail, and smoother scaling. You'd have one rockin' 32X shooter. We could only get a few shots from the singular level on our ROM but more will definitely follow in the months ahead. As for a release date, well, that's kind of tricky. Let's just say it's coming soon for now. We'll keep you up to date. -Takahara

TAKAHARA
CAN CORE DO FOR THE 32X WHAT THEY DID FOR THE SEGA CD?

T-MEK
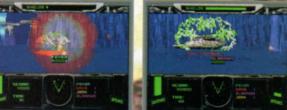
TAKAHARA
THIS GAME NEEDS A BIG SHOT OF COLOR..
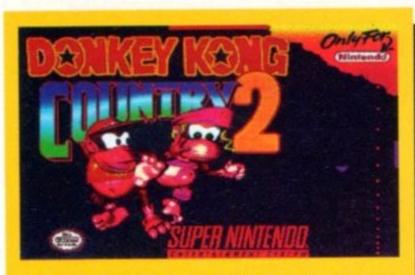
Right after the Atari logo fades away (yes, this is an Atari game) you're greeted by a nice lookin' photo, followed by the usual story and then, well, *T-Mek*. *T-Mek* is a 3-D drivin' shooter that features impressive scaling but, at the same time, just about the worst color I have ever seen. As you can see, many of the backgrounds are a shocking one color. We can only hope that things brighten up a little before the game is finished. We'll have a review as soon as that happens. The potential is here for a cool game, let's hope the designers make it so. -Takahara

SPAWN

NOW YOU GET TO SLAY ALL THOSE DEMONS YOU'VE BEEN READING ABOUT!

OVERTKILL: I'M SORRY MY MEN WEREN'T MUCH OF A CHALLENGE TO YOU.

THUG: DO WHAT THE MAN PAID US FOR. BRING' IM DOWN!

E. STORM
I'M LOVIN' THIS GAME AND PRAYING FOR MORE IMAGE COMICS TO MAKE THE JUMP... LIKE THE MAXX!

This one had to happen. A high level government operative is sold out by his best friend, who later marries his wife, sells out to the dark one himself, and ends up locked in his own perpetual hell. C'mon, that's got video game written all over it. And so it is. Acclaim's Spawn for the Super NES is on the way, and a PlayStation version isn't far behind.

Spawn is set among traditional side-scrolling levels with a nice mix of vertical elements, a full-fledged comic book storyline, and more play mechanics than you can shake a controller at.

Visually, well, the first thing you see after the Acclaim logo is Todd McFarlane. With Todd behind the art, you can imagine it's perfect. The backgrounds, however, are not as spectacular in the early going, but do get better as you move from the real world into Malebolgia's evil, twisted world, where you are greeted by a parallax-scrolling sky and huge fire-filled caverns.

The gameplay in Spawn, while diverse, could stand some polishing before the game goes Alpha. In the standard Final Fight-like stages the action is brimming, with enough moves for two characters. Spawn can perform SF2-like energy blasts, fly and spin, attack with a chain to deliver pain, drag-on punch, slide, and of course, punch and kick. Special moves eat up Spawn's life which constantly ticks down towards his actual death. Read the comic on that one. It's in the vertical sequences where Spawn needs some tweaking. At certain points you must jump, glide into walls (see Actraiser 2), and spring off. Timing problems occur as Spawn's legs bend slightly before each jump, lending a moment of delay to his assent. This makes these areas extremely tough. In fact, everywhere you need to jump, you currently notice this delay. Besides this flaw, which could be inherent of the yet-unfinished version previewed, Spawn controls very well.

If you're a fan of the comic, you can look forward to meeting The Violator, Overkill, Badrock, Angela (ggrrrr), the Clown, and maybe even Malebolgia himself, if you have the true power.

What'll sell this game is its diversity, interesting characters, and the great storyline. Let's face it, Spawn is on his way to legendary status. Will Spawn be amid the best of the year for the SNES? At this point it's hard to say. Spawn certainly shows signs of greatness, so lets hope the final version mirrors the comic's superior qualities. I doubt Mr. McFarlane would have it any other way. -E. Storm

THESE CONS ARE THE BEST EATS I'VE HAD IN A LONG TIME!

FIGHT!

VIOLATOR: ANOTHER TIME, SPAWN, ANOTHER TIME!

SPAWN: GUESS WHAT, MURDERER? ONLY A HEART OF EVIL CAN SERVE AS A GATEWAY

SPAWN: I HOPE THIS HURTS.

K. Lee

Evermore is my pick for SNES action/RPG. of the year.

Here's a short cut to get to the vulcano boss; go through the left tube.

...then, turn left at the second water junction.

...now, go up left then down.

,,,keep on going straight down...

...and you will fall in this hole.

step on the secret switch...

...and voila, the door to the boss will be opened.

Go through the right tube, and don't veer off of the main path.

SECRET of EVERMORE™

The Secret of Evermore marks an impressive first effort for SquareSoft's fledgling "US-1" programming staff. This action/RPG combines a great storyline, a well designed command interface, good sound and music and a sublime combination of hand drawn art and SGI graphics.

The most important aspects of any action/RPG are its storyline and dialogue. The more I played SOE, the more I became immersed in the game's plot twists, sub-plots and character developments. Secret of Evermore is a game that makes one feel involved in the story, instead of just being along for the ride. I didn't like SOE's corny references to fictional B-rate movies (i.e.: Now I know how "Dandy" Don Carlisle felt in "Sink, Boat, Sink") but other than that, the dialogue is well written.

Similar to Secret of Mana, SOE uses rotating rings for all commands. All the spells, stats, armor and weapons are accessible via their own respective rings. Although this command interface can be confusing at first, it becomes second nature the more you play the game. This arrangement also makes it quick and easy to access the item or information you need. It's a great system.

In games, the proof is usually in the playing and Secret of Evermore plays very well. Similar to Mana, SOE has a percentage attack bar that can also be charged up past 100% for an extra super-charged hit. This can be particularly useful against bosses. SOE's bosses are huge, well-designed and usually hard to defeat, so any attack advantage you can get comes in very handy.

I classify the sound and music in Secret of Evermore as good, but not great. In certain parts of the game, you'll hear crickets chirping and various ambient sound effects in the background, while in other sections, only music is used. Although the results are impressive, I still prefer the sound in Secret of Mana and Final Fantasy III.

The graphics in SOE blend SGI images with traditional art so well that sometimes it's hard to tell what is what. The animation is smooth and the locales are huge and well designed. The overall look is clean and detailed, but it's clearly not up to the high standards of Square's latest Japanese RPG offerings: Seiken Densetsu 3 (Mana 2) and Romancing Saga 3.

As impressive as Secret of Evermore is, what's even more impressive is that this is probably just a small taste of bigger and better things in the future. SquareSoft's US-1 development staff has not only produced (in their first try, no less) a game that is truly worthy of the SquareSoft legacy, but one that I also consider the SNES Action/RPG game of the year.
- K.LEE

Uh, Sir. We have a visitor.

Later in he game your dog will ...

Sir. We have tor.

go through a little change.

Mega Man X3 offers several exciting new features, but is mostly what you'd expect: another great chapter in the classic series with all-new villains and levels.

The main attraction is the ability to play as either X or Zero.

You start the game in a mini-story mode where you're able to swap between the two characters. Then, you must defeat the requisite eight robots before you regain Zero's services for the final legs of the game. Zero is a 100% unique sprite with his own gun, which can be charged to unleash several different blast shots, including an ultra cool ray sword. No, Zero can't use the enemy weapons. Mega Man can, but if he dies once you can't use him again until the next game.

The X series has traditionally offered more and more "paths" and secret areas. You often must return several times to a stage piecing together items like heart tanks and bonus weapon/armor power-ups. MMX3 is no exception, and there are many new facets to this theme. For instance, a teleporter (which appears in several different stages) can zap you into a self-destruction level where you must get out before the timer expires a la *Metroid/Bionic Commando*.

MMX3 has great music and graphics, and there are more scrolls than in any X game yet. However, despite the much-touted CX4 chip, the game does have a touch of slow down. This could be inherent of our yet unfinished preview copy. We'll have to wait for the final to be sure. In my opinion, MM7 is the ultimate MM game to date, but MMX3 is looking mighty promising. Stay tuned for a review as soon as X3 is completed.   -Slasher Quan

SLASHER QUAN
Play as X or Zero in this solid update on a classic platform series.

Final Fight 3

The Slam Master Mayor himself, Mike Haggar, returns in Final Fight III to save Metro City from a new type of gang. With the destruction of the Mad Gear gang, the Skull Cross Gang quickly rises to power and has its sights set on owning Metro City. To deal with the Skull Cross, Haggar calls upon his old friend Guy and two new allies, Lucia and Dean. Lucia is a tough girl who has the same Whirlwind Kick as Chun Li, while Dean is like a bionic Guile, using electricity and cheap grab attacks.

Among the new features of this game are the ability to take multiple paths and also to break more background objects. I found that the multiple paths option was only slightly different from taking the normal route and offered no other reward except for the different backgrounds you fought in. The ability to break more background objects adds diversity, but loses its appeal when you see how badly the destruction is animated.

Other new features include a two-player game where the computer acts as your partner, and the incorporation of "special" and "super" attacks. These attacks are like those found in the Street Fighter and Darkstalker series. Special attacks are done by a series of controller motions, and can be performed once your super meter is fully charged. Truly skilled players will learn to do combos that incorporate the super and special attacks which, if done correctly, can take off up to three quarters of an opponent's life.

Even with all its "new" features, Final Fight III still lags behind other games like the Streets of Rage series. For example, every character only has one or two special moves, while Streets of Rage characters have up to four. There are never more than six characters on screen in Final Fight III, which makes the game very easy to beat. Streets of Rage had up to eight which made the game a lot more challenging and fun for two players.

Final Fight III isn't even visually impressive. Most of the characters are small and poorly animated and the backgrounds are quite a let down. It's a shame that Capcom didn't include cameo appearances from other Capcom characters, like they did in Final Fight II. Oh, and yes, the game does slow down when and if you can get more than five characters on screen.

When Final Fight first hit the arcades almost a decade ago, it sparked countless imitations. But the industry has since progressed beyond the standard walk and punch design. To appease today's players, such a title would need some sort of innovation and Final Fight III offers none.

FF3 can only be recommended for fans of the original who are dying to play as either Guy or Haggar. If a tough and fun beat 'em up is what you're looking for, you'll still need to look up Axel, Blaze, and Wolf.
– E. Suzuki

E. SUZUKI
DEJA VU?

He's Back!

The world's most notorious worm has returned. Earthworm Jim is making his second appearance on the SNES in EWJ2. This game not only pushes the graphic and sound envelopes even further than the first game, but it also features fresh ideas, that warped Shiny sense of humor and, most importantly, it's insanely fun to play. From the millisecond you turn the game on to the moment you set the controller down, EWJ2 is non-stop glee for you and me.

If there is one thing David Perry and the entire Shiny crew should have, it's pride in knowing that they produce some of the most distinctive games on the market; this with a mere four titles under their belts. The ideas and concepts utilized in EWJ2 are so novel and executed so well that the play mechanics, obstacles and events you encounter in just one level of *Jim 2* could sustain an entire game. Of all the levels in this game, the first ("Nothing but Tangerines") has the most traditional (if you can call any aspect of an EWJ game "traditional") "Jim" look and feel to it. Here, you will encounter shotgun-bearing aliens, a motorized chair you must pilot to dodge falling little ol' ladies and of course, a Pig Chute. In Level 2 ("Lorenzen's Soil") you must create your own level by shooting away the dirt around you, and carving a path as you ascend, only to meet a maggot on a unicycle! You'll never play this level the same way twice. There's also an amazingly good isometric shooting level called "The Flyin' King" in which you must bounce a floating bomb to the end of the level and detonate it to send the oh-so snot-laden Major Mucus to his demise. This is but a small sample of the conceptual brilliance that is EWJ2. I wonder if Shiny can continue to conjure up the same volume of new ideas for their future projects. Their first two games (three if you count the extra levels found in EWJ:SE on the Sega CD) seem to contain every idea conceivable in an action game. One thing's for sure, I can't wait to see what these guys think up next.

NEW MOVES

Parachute

Snot Swing

K. Lee
Jim 2 is the funniest game I've ever played in my life.

LOOK, NEW WEAPONS

Plasma Blaster

Homing Missles

Plasma Cannon

Three Way

Bubble Blaster

Big 'Ol Gun

If I had a dime for every time I chuckled while playing this game, wealth would be synonymous with K.Lee. There were times that I shook so hard with peals of side-splitting laughter, I thought I would truly die. Take Jim's guns for example..., his "homing" gun actually fires little houses that lock on to the enemy target. Another gun fires harmless bubbles, and then there's my favorite, the big mama plasma gun... I won't ruin it for you, you'll have to see for yourself what this "all-obliterating" bazooka does. In Level 5 ("The Villi People"), Jim takes on the form of a blind cave salamander swimming around in some unknown creature's intestines, blasting everything in sight. Then, out of nowhere, the "Sala-Jim-ster" arrives on the set of a game show to compete for money and fabulous prizes... this game is wacky!

As good as the graphics and sound were in Jim 1, 2 has even better visual and aural excellence. As expected, the animation is as incredible and hilarious as ever. If Saturday morning cartoons were as smooth, I'd watch them every week. EWJ2 once again sets the standard for traditionally drawn background art, with astounding attention to detail. The music is total Jim, ranging from absurdly fruit-ridden polka to familiar Tallarico platformer tunes. What I really love about the sound, however, is the multitude of hilarious samples. Every screech, grunt, cry, smack, crash, and bang in Jim makes it sound as if the Saturn's PCM board was stealthily tucked inside the cartridge. In a project with as much mirth and hilarity as Jim 2, there's a big danger of overstepping the bounds of "amusing" into the dangerous world of corniness. Other than Jim's lame standing jog, this title is genuinely funny throughout. As the 16-bit era slowly (and stubbornly) draws to an end, it's a blessing that we continue to see great SNES games like Earthworm Jim 2 when so many developers are turning solely to 32-bit, which is a true shame... Programmers are still discovering tricks and new ways to utilize 16-bit. It's too bad that all this is being realized at a time when 32 and 64-bit systems are in the limelight. I just hope that 32-bit systems reach their full potential before their replacements arrive, and if anyone can do that, it's Shiny.

K.LEE

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ANYTHING BUT TANGERINES

LORENZEN'S SOIL

PUPPY LOVE 1

THE VILLI PEOPLE

THE FLYIN' KING

PUPPY LOVE 2

UDDERLY ABDUCTED

INFLATED HEAD

ISO 9000

PUPPY LOVE 3

LEVEL ATE

SEE JIM RUN, RUN JIM RUN

SEGA SECTOR

TAKUHI
THE GENESIS' FINAL TRI-
UMPH.   THIS SHOULD BE
THE NOMAD PACK-IN...

It's hard to believe that six years after its birth, the Genesis still manages to impress me once in a while. There's no one thing that stands out about *Vectorman* more than the others - it has cool effects, perfect animation, excellent backgrounds, and good use of color - things that are a rare find individually, much less all together in one game.

In *Vectorman*, like in *Ballz* (though it seems somehow grievously wrong to even mention them in the same sentence), every body part of every character is its own sprite, moving individually to simulate incredible animation. This works brilliantly, making for flawless animation on the characters, and giving the game a very fluid feel. Other tricks are used throughout to simulate scaling, rotation, a neat lens flare effect, and all sorts of cool tricks. There's even a simulated lighting effect, as the radiance of your bullets shine back at you. Not since *Contra: Hard Corps* has a Genesis title had so many stunning effects. *Vectorman* is even impressive musically, at least by Genesis standards. Realizing that the Genesis just can't do good samples, the composers exploited the tinny bass of the Genny's FM synth to make a good techno soundtrack, accompanied by solid sound effects.

And how are the play mechanics? It's as if the staff of Blue Sky abducted me from my room one night, downloaded from my brain a list of all the things I'm incredibly sick of seeing in action-platform titles, and then (just for the heck of it, ya know?) performed various vivisection experiments on me. I mean, how else can you explain the fact that this game has absolutely none of my act-plat pet peeves (and the fact that I now have a third nipple)? For one thing, the game has

absolutely no bottomless pits, and I doubt there's a carbon-based lifeform alive anywhere who'll miss those. And dang, it's good to have an act-plat where you can finally shoot stuff. Jumping on enemies was a good idea for the first 4,000 games that used it, but I find it's gotten just a bit stale. And you know how in games, sometimes, you have to jump up to a platform high above you, and sometimes there's an enemy there you couldn't even *see*, and he *kills* you? In *Vectorman*, he's the one who dies. About time, I say.

And of course, there are tons of little surprises. Power-ups give you a variety of guns, multiplier icons multiply everything you get (points, health, time) by a certain amount, and Yoshi-like morphs that rearrange the spheres that make up *Vectorman* into little cars, fish, drills, and even bombs. Using these in the right places is the key to little 1-up bonuses and such.

Not that everything about *Vectorman* is perfect. I thought the little 3-D-ish overhead rounds that broke up the action with a driving game, or whatever, tended not to be as much fun as they could have been. Other than that, though, I'm hard pressed to find flaws in this one.

I'm glad *Vectorman* could be the last farewell for my Genesis, and the maiden voyage for my Nomad. It truly is one of the few Genesis titles worthy of the honor.

-Takuhi

DAY **10**

DAY **10**   DAY **11**

★X9   0:44 x3 363290

★X9   0:56 x2 362480

★X9   1:35 359370

x3

★★★★★   5:29 419180

★X6   7:31 x3 414610

★★★★★   7:34 416870

★★★★★   6:44 417410

★X6   4:46 456180

★★★★   3:49 473440

★★★★   3:25 474010

★★★★   1:57 479420

  6:21 x2 547080

★★★   2:38 538530

  1:29 x3 543280

R REVIEW

SEGA GENESIS
LEADER OF THE 16-BIT VIDEO REVOLUTION

DEVELOPER - SHINY

PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES

FORMAT - 24 MEG CART.

 # OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

E. STORM
DEAD PUPPIES, COWS, PIZZA, AND SNOTS MAKE IT GREAT.

It's a fact. Earthworm Jim is on a non-stop roll. As we assumed, after our first worm encounter, the masses have embraced good ol' Jim and he's become the new sensation. High quality action figures are hangin' on hooks nationwide and a quality Saturday morning cartoon is on the tube. Jim's road to stardom, however, began with a game, and so, it is there where he will ultimately always be judged. Today, I'm playing the judge, so why don't you be the jury and we'll take a look at Earthworm Jim 2.

My guess is you're expecting more of the same with maybe a spattering of new characters, moves, and idles thrown in. Such thinking is udder nonsense! The fun-filled Shiny offices, nestled on the So. Cal. shores of Laguna Beach are too wacky for that business, and so have instead created a game bursting with comedy and an unparalleled amount of diversity. Platform frolic you will, but you'll also see and do things I'm quite sure you've never imagined.

Case in point, Level One: Anything but Tangerines... So you're hoppin' about usin' Snot for the first time and lovin' it, checkin' out the new gun... yeah, everything feels great. Mid-level you'll need to cross a lil' pond but suddenly, you're stopped dead in your tracks by Bob and #4. How will you appease them? Easy! Just grab one of those snortin' pigs, drop him on the old slide, and no worries, they're handled. As you journey on, you'll recall the motorized stair chair the old bag used in *Gremlins* that eventually vaulted her into pain's way. Why? Well, because you get to ride one while dodging, you got it, plummeting old ladies! Catch one and she'll smash you with her parasol, "FRESH!" After this madness you're nowhere near done and extremely intrigued. How 'bout a gun so big and bad it annihilates everything in sight and knocks Jim on his butt (does Jim have a butt?), and then of course, more pigs. After the hilarious level finale, just as you begin to anticipate Level 2, say hello to a couple of talking cows. Please don't hit the button, they just want to tell you what a fine job you've done. And so begins Jim 2.

From there, Jim's off to carve his own level out of Lorenzen's Soil (talk to me about red ants and babies, would ya), juggle soft lil' puppies that splatter ever so gently when missed in three levels of Puppy Love, become a Blind Cave Salamander, push a bomb through an isometric shooter (a really good one), avoiding flyin' cows, inflate his head and try to avoid Evil's deadly spit wads, hoist and carry cows into barns (in constant danger of alien abduction), some of which have lit fuses, experience a lawyer's nightmare brought to life in Iso 9000 (DP loves attorneys), and believe it or not, traverse a level made of forks (yes, the kind you eat with) amongst a barbecue

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grill of sizzlin' patties, while avoiding a worm's worst nightmare... salt. Yes, it's true, all this fun filled wackiness can be yours, and if you've got the sense God gave a worm, it will be this November. It is also true that I have created the longest run-on sentence in history, but I need to say a lot in as little space as possible so we can squeeze some shots into this layout.

YOU'LL BE CARVIN', SNOT'N, FLOATIN', & CLIMBIN', BUT YOU CAN'T CALL A CAB 'TIL THE MAGGOT'S DEAD!

INSIDE EVERY WORM LIES A BLIND CAVE SALAMANDER

The tunes in Jim 2 can only be categorized one way... peculiar. I'll say nothing more, other than they are orchestrated extremely well. Again, Shiny has managed to squeak every drop out of the Genesis hardware. The voice and sound effects are also fine and dandy, especially when Jim says "tender..." You'll see (actually, I guess you'll hear).

What more can I say? (Well, a lot, but why? I'm sure you get the point) Jim 2 is one fantastic game, as expected. Shiny has delivered a fitting sequel which smartly adds to the wackiness that is Jim, while completely consuming the player with non-stop freshness that lasts all day. From here, Jim will move on to the Saturn and PlayStation, and eventually, maybe even the Ultra. There's a little surprise up in Shiny's attic... Another time maybe. -E. Storm

TAKUHI
AN INTERESTING CONCEPT. BUT DOES IT WORK?

It was only a few years ago that video game licensers, desperate for something new, discovered the untapped gold mine of lemon-lime soft drink mascots. The devastating failure of Fido Dido (remember? Sprite's old mascot?) was predictable, but the success of Virgin's Cool Spot was not. Featuring backgrounds that put most SNES games to shame, solid level design, and previously unmatched animation, Cool Spot was one of 1993's biggest surprise hits.

Spot's finally back, but can post-Dave Perry Virgin still do wonders with 7-Up's corporate mascot? Instead of following in the original's footsteps with another action platform title, Virgin attempted something quite a bit different, with a 3-D isometric perspective. Isometricity (if that's even a word) is a tough thing to do, and even tougher to do well. But Virgin's Spot Goes to Hollywood plays as good as it looks. Once you get used to the standard isometric control scheme (press up to go up-right, left to go up-left, etc.), you'll find you have no problems judging the placement of platforms or making complex jumps.
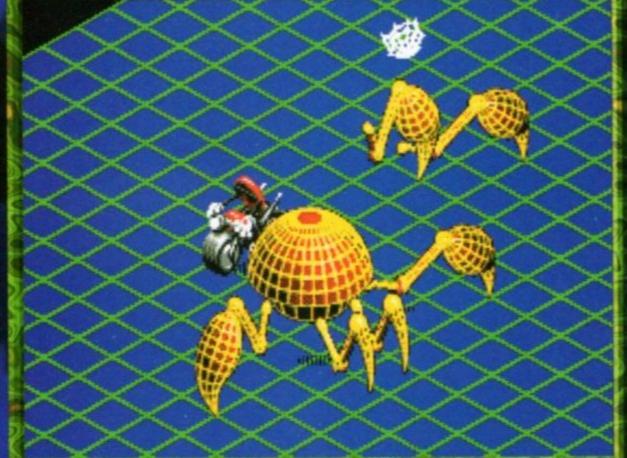
Each level has 3 different parts (which you choose the order of), and span a wide variety of movie-themed sets, from ghost-infested Haunted Houses to Indiana Jones type mine-cart adventures. Like the original, the priority is not so much fast action as it is tracking down a percentage of the Spots lost in each stage, and then making it out alive. And despite Spot's cute little idles (I love the cellular phone) and vocal effects, this game is quite difficult. A password feature helps, but since it remembers how many lives you had when you requested the password, you'll still have to use it wisely.
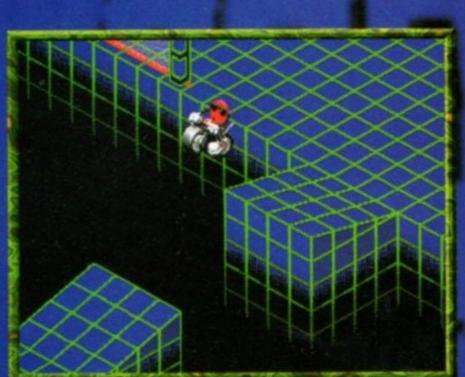
With an original perspective that is in many ways an improvement on Sega's legendary Landstalker, Spot Goes to Hollywood proves that the Genesis still has some new tricks up its sleeve. Still, it's hard to get excited about the 16-bit Spots when the 32-bit versions are right around the corner. Then again, the Nomad paints an entirely new picture, doesn't it? Spot Goes to Hollywood is definitely a title to keep your eye on.

-TAKUHI

WWF WRESTLEMANIA

WWF

THE STALKER
WWF WRESTLEMANIA ON THE GENESIS... THE NEXT BEST THING TO THE ARCADE VERSION!

Get set for Wrestlemania! Following up on the hit arcade title of the same name, WWF Wrestlemania brings arcade grappling insanity to your Genesis. In Wrestlemania, you choose from eight exciting combatants and quest for the WWF Intercontinental Title or the more coveted WWF World Championship.

Fans of the arcade game will be thrilled to know that all of the features that made the arcade game a smash are here. There's the full host of normal moves, and the same combo system and super moves, which when performed seal an opponent's fate. You can hook 'em up with the CPU or go toe-to-toe with a friend (the same character vs. same character feature made it in there, too!). It's

all in here, with a minimal loss of color, and sprite size. The music is very good for a Genesis cart and the action is full of speech (Vince McMahon blabs on as usual). You even hear the same sampled nasty grunts and crunches found in the coin-op.

WWF Wrestlemania on the PS and Williams' proprietary arcade hardware features some of the best digitized graphics ever. They're represented well here, given the system's limitations, and allow the original feel of the game to come through. Admittedly however, having the PS and 32X versions at arm's length made it hard to play the 16-bitter.

Even if you don't care for real pro-wrestling (is that an oxymoron?), you shouldn't overlook Williams' latest. WWFW is as much a fighter as a wrestler and therefore palatable to a wider variety of player. To say the least, this is the best wrestling game available for the Genesis and if it's any consolation, this version buries the SNES game in every category. Believe it or not, Yokozuna and Bam Bam Bigelow didn't even make it into the SNES game.

I now prefer my wrestling games have things like combo systems and clowns, cause' hey, it's what America is watching!

-The Stalker
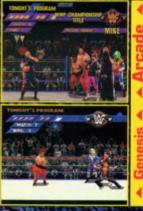
The big difference between the two is graphic detail and in the WWF Championship Title Fight mode ...notice the number of opponents.

		BAM BAM BIGELOW	HITMAN HART	LEX LUGER	RAZOR RAMON	YOKOZUNA	UNDERTAKER
POWER	POWER	POWER	POWER	POWER	POWER	POWER	POWER
SPEED	SPEED	SPEED	SPEED	SPEED	SPEED	SPEED	SPEED
AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY	AGILITY
RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY	RECVRY

Just in time to eat his way on to the Nomad, here's that famous fat cat of yesteryear, Garfield. Much to my surprise (one would expect pure kiddy fare here), Garfield is actually a pretty serious platformer. If anything, it's definitely not the entry level difficulty game that you would expect, given the age group that may flock to it. The first boss in fact, is as tedious and difficult as ever a first boss has been. We intended to review Garfield this month, but given the time it may take to completely dissect (time is tight in these insane months), we'll have to put it off until next month. If it's released in the meantime, buyer beware, I see a wolf in sheep's clothing. -Takahara

TAKAHARA
MY GARFIELD PHONE BROKE.

P PREVIEW

MUTANT DOOM TROOPERS CHRONICLES

SEGA GENESIS
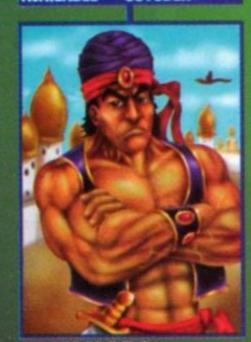
DEVELOPER	ADRENALIN
PUBLISHER	PLAYMATES
FORMAT	16 MEG CART.
# OF PLAYERS	1 - 2
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE	OCTOBER

Now that the Nomad's coming out, 16-bit's taken on a whole new look. I thought I'd be saying good-bye to my beloved 16-bit titles but more seem to just keep coming. Lucky for me, because so far 32-bit is merely a pile of 3-D, something I can live without. Playmates' latest offering is a dandy little two player platform shooter in the vein of "Midnite Resistance." Based on the popular TV cartoon "Mutant Chronicles," this formidable game features rendered characters, two player action, and a generous dose of platforming. There's even some spurting goo for those of you who like it messy. The music leaves something to be desired, but otherwise this looks like a game worthy of your attention. We'll have a review in the December issue. -Takahara

TAKAHARA
THEY'VE BEEN BUSY OVER AT PLAYMATES.

R REVIEW

GAME GEAR

EARTHWORM JIM

DEVELOPER -	EUROCOM
PUBLISHER -	PLAYMATES
FORMAT -	4 MEG CART.
# OF PLAYERS -	1
DIFFICULTY -	MEDIUM
AVAILABLE -	TBA

Groovy!

Get set for the first wave of Shiny on the go! The new GG version of EWJ delivers much of the the same excitement found in the 16-bit games. Thankfully, little was changed in the conversion from console to portable. You'll find that the gameplay is almost exactly the same (but, of course, things can get a little tricky with the Game Gear's testy controls).

There are some small (yet nagging) problems with the graphics (i.e. a deficit in the scrolling department), but I'd say that the overall visual caliber of this game very, very high. Despite the small screen, the characters are all drawn very well, brought to life by some of the best animation I've ever seen on the Game Gear. Even the vivid death sequences are incredibly well drawn and animated. However, the graphic highlight of this game is the awesome 3-D "Andy Asteroids" stage, reproduced with great attention to realism.

EWJ's second main strongpoint is its aural power. The tunes in EWJ comprise the best music I've ever heard the Game Gear produce! The original scores are all there, and amazingly enough, the only major sounds missing are the booming reports and voice samples.

You have to pick this game up if you're a Game Gear-owning Jim fan. It's probably going to be one of the last great Game Gear games. Just think: next month we'll be playing Earthworm Jim 2 on the Nomad! Life on the go just keeps gettin' better.
-The Stalker

R REVIEW

GAME BOY

EARTHWORM JIM

DEVELOPER -	EUROCOM
PUBLISHER -	PLAYMATES
FORMAT -	4 MEG CART.
# OF PLAYERS -	1
DIFFICULTY -	MEDIUM
AVAILABLE -	TBA

It seems these days people just can't get enough of Earthworm Jim. He's landed himself a spot in the Saturday morning cartoon lineup, a killer toy line, and has successfully delievered his zany antics in a soon-to-be-released sequel to the oh-so-cool EWJ for the Genesis and Super Nes. But Jim fans... there's more. Slap me around and call me Susan, it's Jim on the Gameboy!

First off, let me say that this is in no way some lame half-baked translation. It plays and feels every bit like the Genesis and Super Nes versions, although at times the control does seem a little stiff. True, it might not carry the same visual appeal as its older brothers but remember we are talking about the Gameboy (nothing personal, guys at the big N).

All the ultra-cool stages have been done to near perfection, including Jim's high paced race against Psycrow in the space warp and who could forget booger bungee-jumping with Major Mucus. And all this excitement on the Gameboy! Who'd've thunk it?
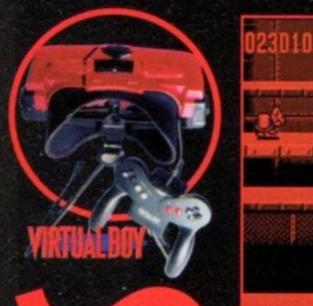
Remember gamers, October means portable power with Earthworm Jim on the Gameboy and Gamegear.
-Jace Fury

×3   100%   ×983

VIRTUAL BOY VIEWPOINTS

Mario Clash

023010
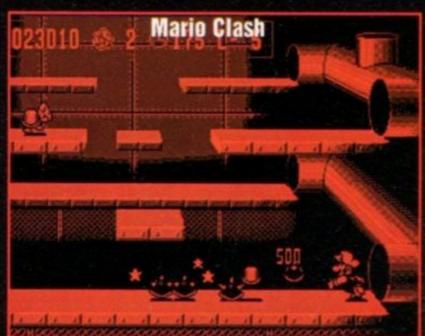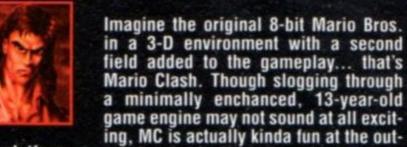
Mario Smash was the first Virtual Boy game I ever experienced and to this day can hold my attention for hours. The three dimensional effect is carried out extremely well, allowing you to perfectly time throws back and forth across the two planes. MC is big on both platform action and strategy, and its stationary playfield provides a good stomping ground for first time users. MS's only drawback is diversity as there are only minor changes throughout the game.
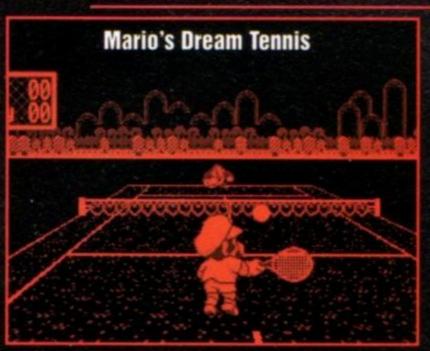
G	C	P	M	O	75
8	9	6	6	6	

Imagine the original 8-bit Mario Bros. in a 3-D environment with a second field added to the gameplay... that's Mario Clash. Though slogging through a minimally enchanced, 13-year-old game engine may not sound at all exciting, MC is actually kinda fun at the outset, but gradually gets more and more tedious as you progress- scenery changes rarely and new play mechanics and/or play situations are almost nonexistant. When the newly-retitled Warioland VB is released, Clash will seem like a joke... that's the platformer to look out for.

G	C	P	M	O	72
7	8	7	6	7	

Mario's Dream Tennis

00 00

While not a particularly loaded Tennis game when it comes to options (it's strictly one player action) Mario's Tennis is a great playing and fantastic looking game. The environments are simply a joy to play on, and the control is dead on. Anyone can pick up this tennis game and instantly dial in the controls. I'll tell you one thing, once you've played tennis in 3-D it's hard to imagine playing any other way. Now bring on a game with actual players!

G	C	P	M	O	85
9	9	8	8	8	

I've never been a fan of any type of sports game, but this game truly held my attention and was... well, uh... fun. Really fun, in fact. The actiony feel and ultra-simple play controls suited me perfectly, and the line-scrolling courts are truly a thing of beauty - playing games in 3-D is gonna be pure joy. If Mario's Tennis had a link-up option, it could easily be the best VB game so far. Even so, Red Alarm just barely beats it... what a pack-in!

G	C	P	M	O	82
9	9	6	6	6	

Red Alarm

SCORE 013300

Oh yah, here's the one game you just gotta' have. It would be enough just having an average shooter to go along with these stunning 3D vector graphics, but instead you get a great shooter complete with varying terrain, huge twisting levels, and entire rooms to slay bosses. Three camera angles plus voice and bgm combine to equal 3D shooting power. Imagine a textured game in a similar vein. You did buy one of these, right?

G	C	P	M	O	90
9	9	8	10	9	

For me, the one and only reason to buy a Virtual Boy so far is Red Alarm. This is literally one of the best games I've ever played... and it's not only a lauch title... it's by T&E Soft! How did T&E, one of the most hurtin' developers on the face of the planet, get the power to create this masterpiece? No matter - you'll forget all about where the game came from (and quite possibly everything else around you, for that matter) when you begin to play it. The actual gameplay is very StarFox, but you can turn around and go back, stop, or fly in reverse... all in gorgeous 3-D vector environments. If there is one fault with Red Alarm, it's that the difficulty is set way too high... but hey, there's always easy mode, right?

G	C	P	M	O	95
9	9	10	7	9	

Teleroboxer

Telero boxer... now here's a game I can live without. Fans of Punch-out may be mildly amused by the similar style action and OK 3D, but this is not what I'm looking for in a virtual experience. The complicated controls coupled with the insane pace made me nuts. A VF style game in 3D is needed for the VB

G	C	P	M	O	65
7	6	6	7	7	

In my opinion, Teleroboxer is the second-worst of the VB launch titles behind Galactic Pinball. Technically the game is rather impressive, with these huge, multi-jointed robotic 3-D dudes smacking your eyes with their non-pixelly scaling fists, but the control and game design is a step beyond pain. Even if you have the year or so time it requires to get used to the double-pad control, or if you're a Nintendo boxing game freak like Kid Fan, the game proceeds at such a breakneck speed as to make actual playing impossible. I dunno... maybe I just suck at games.

G	C	P	M	O	68
8	6	7	7	8	

Galactic Pinball

SCORE 100,189,000
LUCK x5

Galactic Pinball, while somewhat amusing at first, never really goes anywhere spectacular. Most of the levels are devoid of any real entertainment. On the positive side, the 3D effects are very impressive and the areas are each very creative but more "stuff" is needed to make pinball an event. I suppose if you love pinball you'll enjoy, otherwise, pass.

G	C	P	M	O	60
7	7	6	6	6	

I don't like pinball, (though I may enjoy the EXTREMELY rare Devil's Crush) and even in true 3-D it does absolutely nothing for me. The designers attempted to create some gameplay that justifies a three-dimensional environment, like bonus stages in which you have to destroy incoming asteroids, but on the whole, I recommend strongly that you do not go anywhere near Galactic Pinball

G	C	P	M	O	60
7	6	6	6	7	

Vertical Force

SCORE

Here's another most own game. Vertical Force takes some getting used to with its multi level game play (you ascend and descend constantly)but once you do, you'll be hooked. Welcome to parallax heaven. This is as original a shooter I've seen in many moons. While it's hard it's not impossible. Learning how to deal with everything in 3D is half the fun here, the great graphics and music is the other half. Do not miss this one!

G	C	P	M	O	85
9	8	7	8	8	

Another great but hard shooter is Hudson Softs first VR Boy game, Vertical Force. While VF doesn't pack the power of Red Alarm, it's easily one of the best initial offerings. Once you master the tricky play mechanics I'm sure you'll find that not only is the 3D effect stunning but that you're playing a really good shooter. Big mecha bosses and wave after wave of lil' enemies scaling about in firey red is quite the sight.

G	C	P	M	O	80
9	8	7	7	8	

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality

DRAGON BALL Z

Ultimate Battle 22

The Dragonball Z series of "Super Butoden" fighting games on the SNES has been fair to middling at best, with the second edition easily the leader of the pack. Though they were not the greatest fighters, I loved them 'cause I'm a Dragonball FREAK. Happily, Bandai has updated the game engine and given the animation and backgrounds a serious overhaul for the PlayStation incarnation of the Super Butoden series, Ultimate Battle 22.

The "22" in the title refers to the amount of selectable characters. This would be a scant four characters short of the fighting game with the most players so far, KOF'95, if not for the code (see below) that upgrades Ultimate Battle 22 to Ultimate Battle 27, effectively making DBZ the most-populated fighter ever. Luckily, many of the characters have exactly the same moves... mainly because several of them are actually the same person. There are four incarnations of the main character: Songoku, alone - young Goku, Super Goku, Super Saiyan 3 Goku, and the character featured in the latest DBZ theatrical release "Gekitotsu no Fusion," Gogeta.

Most fighters attacks' are done with identical motions - probably to cater to young children. The actual game system is somewhat changed from the 16-bit versions - the game no longer goes split screen - it just scales WAY out. If you haven't already noticed, all the backgrounds in the game are in total 3-D. Some are extremely boring, while other are quite impressive - Trunks' ruined city, or the Tenkaichi-Budokai backdrop, for instance. The actual fighting is based around a punch button, a kick button, a fireball button (no kidding!) and the L and R dash buttons. To play effectively, you simply have to release your massive special attacks, block or reverse the enemies', run away and charge your power back up, then repeat. though obviously not the greatest fight system, it does fit the DBZ storyline, in which most battles are fought with massive bursts of planet-shattering energy and hand-to-hand combat so fast it can't even be seen. Each character does have close-up SFII-style moves, but you honestly hardly ever use them.

The graphics are fairly good... but, as I've said before, many of the backgrounds are SERIOUSLY lacking in visual power. Though they never pixelize or break up, they're just so BORING. Why waste your powerful polygonal background engine on a field of grass or cliff scene? The best part of DBZ's visuals is the character animation— all of it was done by actual animators from the TV show's staff. It's about 150% smoother than the 16-bit versions, but still not up to par with the latest Capcom and SNK fighters... but then, what is? The before- and after-game cinemas, also done by TV animators, are entirely voiced by the actual actors from the DBZ TV series, as are the in-game wails and special moves. While on the subject of sound, let me briefly mention the BGM... it is depressingly run-of-the-mill, non-descript fighting game music, with a couple of somewhat-memorable tracks but nothing at all exciting.

Unfortunately, I would recommend Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22 only to Dragonball fans... there are no particularly exciting technical feats to be found here and the game itself is almost painfully average. After recently experiencing the despair of the 10-year-old Dragonball series concluding, must the point be rammed home with this slipshod offering? I can only hope the Saturn version will be better.
- Nick Rox

Play as the hidden characters in Ultimate Battle 22!

To play as young Songoku, Kame Sennin, Mr.Satan and Super Saiyan 3 Songoku and Gogeta, enter the following code at the title screen on pad one: Up, Triangle, Down, X, Left, L1, Right, R1. You'll hear a tone, and the game will load intro FMV for each new fighter. The title screen will now change to read "Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 27!"

ZERO DIVIDE

Quick, name the last really good fighting game developed by a tiny development company with no money or fighting game experience. Can't think of any? Yeah, me neither. So I don't blame you for being suspicious about Zero Divide. But tiny little Zoom evidently doesn't need a lot of cash or experience to create the best original home 3-D fighting game yet. Zero Divide is a testament to the ingenuity of its programmers and the power of the PlayStation.

While some people might be turned off by the Virtua Fighter rip-off play mechanics (basic moves are nearly identical to Virtua Fighter motions, but the combos do get far more advanced in Zero Divide), people who can get over the existence of a block button will love the tight control. Unlike past PlayStation fighting games, the mostly-tapping motions are easily executable on the PlayStation's stiff controller, and the amount of moves and combos per character is excellent. A few new concepts have been added in, such as juggling and... well, not much else.

But, while it lacks original play mechanics, Zero Divide has a mood like no other. Brilliantly texture-mapped and Gouraud-shaded characters fill the screen (two Taus are too big to even fit on the screen!), and they animate beautifully. The characters themselves are great, ranging from a standard Akira-esque hero, Zero, to Tau, a giant 4-legged scorpion, encompassing a wide variety of abilities and fighting styles. Even more impressive are the backgrounds; from a dinosaur-infested Hollywood, to a floating platform surrounded by the grey carcasses of fallen mechs, whales, and airplanes. Zero Divide's insane, random mood is an invigorating change of pace. In what other game can you do anything even close to fighting a pink and purple, drill-based life form in front of huge, distorted circuit boards?
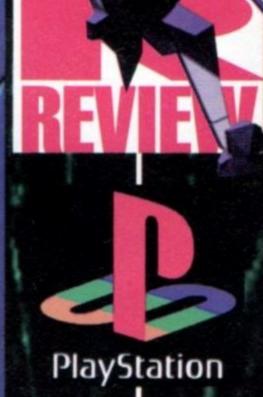
There's even a cool storyline (and hey, isn't that why we play fighting games?). You see, a mysterious figure has called together the world's greatest fighters to compete to see who's the world champion! No, ha ha, just kidding. Zero Divide actually has a new story. It's the near future, and the entire world is hooked up to international public computer networks. One day, a mysterious new data library called "XTAL Tower" appeared on the network, and contained within was said to be all of the national security secrets of all the world's superpowers. The information will go public in a few days, the hackers responsible claimed. A few days later, to the surprise of the world, the representatives of the affected nations were sent invitations to play a little game in XTAL Tower, to try to stop the release of their secrets. And so into XTAL Tower you go...

It's not just an original storyline, it's actually deeply woven into the game. The ultra-annoying voice of XTAL himself greets you when you begin the game and taunts you throughout, and if you beat the game but fail to make it to XTAL, your ending reward is an authentic-sounding hacker ethics speech about why information must be free. Very cool stuff.

io

ZERO

TAKUHI

The best original home 3-D fighting game yet!

REPLAY #00 01/01 ●:SKIP X:EXIT ■:SLOW ▶:PAUSE

PRESS START BUTTON!

REPLAY #02 03/04 ●:SKIP X:EXIT ■:SLOW ▶:PAUSE

(continued) While the taunting of XTAL adds to the atmosphere, it's without a doubt the most broken voice I've ever heard in a game. The taunts in English, provided by a very obviously non-native speaker, are dripping with inappropriate enthusiasm and sarcasm. They're hilarious the first time you play, but a few minutes later I was ready to fly to Japan and beat the guy to death with an aluminum baseball bat. Fortunately, you can turn his mid-match taunts off, but his pre- and post-match announcements remain. They're tolerable, if only barely. The music, in sharp contrast, is of excellent quality. The music genres range widely from heavy techno to piano medleys, but most memorable of all is the low-budget porn movie music of Io's stage (you know, wah-wah stuff). And let me tell you, it's the best damn low-budget porn movie style music I've ever heard.

The game's chock full of options, but most impressive of all is the extensive replay menu. You can save replays of any match, on your memory card (permanently, if you choose) and watch them later, with a variety of viewpoints. To fully appreciate Zero Divide's incredible graphics, you have to play on Free Camera mode, and carefully examine the textures and backgrounds in detail.

Detail is something Zero Divide has in abundance. Every character has logos and such imprinted upon them, and every stage has something written in the background. Every character also has some sort of skeleton, which you can see bits and pieces of by destroying specific parts of their anatomy. Best of all, when the 2nd player picks the same fighter, he gets not only a different color, but a different unit design! The 2nd player Draco has different feet, a different head, and a spiked tail, for example. And while the regular Zero is Gouraud-shaded, the 2nd player Zero is all solid texture mapped polygons. Beating the game once allows you to choose from 8 different colors per character, and beating it on hard without continuing allows you to use a record 16 colors. And each character has their own enjoyable little details, like Nereid's constant drooling and Wild3's ejected shell casings.

DRACO

There's a lot more to fighting games than in most genres. In addition to good play control, graphics, and sound, a fighting game needs good artificial intelligence. AI is something even multi-billion dollar companies have trouble with, and past attempts by small third-party companies have been laughable at best. Good AI needs to be fair: No using techniques that a skilled player couldn't pull off. With good AI you should be able to increase the difficulty simply by increasing the computer's intelligence. It's cheap to make the game harder by just having later enemies do more damage, or making you do less. And good AI should be smart... not easily beatable with a few simple or repetitive motions.

Creating good AI is a difficult task. Toshinden opponents were a cinch, until the bosses, who did ridiculous amounts of damage. Tekken and Virtua Fighter had opponents who were easily beatable by using simple, repetitive techniques. Even Street Fighter AI cheated; later enemies do more damage, and the computer abuses its power by pulling off impossible techniques — charge moves without charging, for example. And how many cheap-o third-party fighting titles can you beat by using only jump kicks or only throws? <shiver> Memories of Tattoo Assassins, Way of the Warrior, Rise of the Robots, Fight for Life, the entire MK series, and Irem's miserable Street Combat flood my mind... and that's barely scratching the surface.

But Zoom, tiny little Zoom, does an impeccable job once again. The AI is smart, well rounded, and tough. When the computer wins — and it will win — it wins fair. No impossible moves, or extra damage are

WILD3

EOS

TAU

NEREID:
"KILLER & CRAZY,
FRESH & BLOOD"

used, and if there's any little trick to beating computer-controlled foes easily, it's escaped me so far. With this ultra-solid programming in place, the game manages to be very challenging without being overly frustrating— a perfect combination. Excepting musicians, this game was done by a total of SIX people, by a company who's never even done a fighting game before, much less a 3-D game. Their accomplishment is astounding, pulling them from the vast sea of countless, unnoticed tiny third-party companies, and propelling them into the big leagues. All that's keeping them from being in Namco, Sega, SNK and Capcom's league is a lack of an original gameplay concept. If they can get that last key element in their next title... I shudder at the thought.
-Takuhi

CYGNUS

PLAY AS ZULU!

To play as the boss Zulu, simply beat the game with every character. The easiest way to do this is to set the difficulty to Easy and the timer on 30, hit the enemy once, and run away until the clock runs out. After beating the game with each character, you'll hear XTAL say "Wow!" You can now play as Zulu, a character very similar to Zero. Oh... don't forget to save your accomplishment to the memory card!
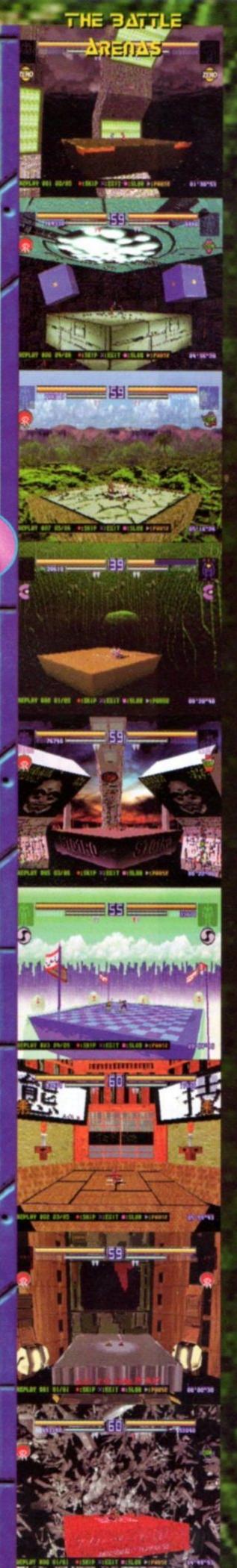
MULTIPLE COLORS

To select multiple colors for any character, beat the game. Now, hold down Select in combination with directions on the pad and any of the eight buttons to select a total of 16 colors per character! Pictured below is a mere eight of Zero's palettes. Eight of the sixteen choices alter the entire body model of the character, not just the color... experiment!

BARON FIREBIRD

JAILBREAKER BULLNOI

HAYATE

HO YING-LONG

BLAZING TORNADO

A Powerbomb! The Frankensteiner! Piledrivers! Such hyper wrestling excitement can only be the work of one company: Human Entertainment.

Human, as you may recall, was responsible for the classic Fire Pro Wrestling series of rasslin' titles on the Super Famicom. They just recently published a Fire Pro Special and a Women's Fire Pro Special, both on the SFC. Sadly, none of the many Fire Pro titles made it over to the states. Now, the masters of mayhem have finally stepped into the 32-bit squared circle.

Taking nothing away from the awesome Super Famicom versions, Fire Pro Gaiden features some off the best graphics ever seen in a home wrestling game. Each character's trademark finishing move is shown from an extreme close-up view for maximum effect. The characters are bright and detailed and the intermissions are of arcade caliber. FPG:BT's music and voice is redbook audio, hence, can't be beat.

Fire Pro Gaiden: Blazing Tornado is the first Fire Pro game to feature truly high-quality graphics and sound, but the basic, no-frills feel of the original SFC games comes right on through the Saturn without a problem. You lock up, try to overpower your opponent, and then do something nasty to him. You can test yourself in an all-out endurence match against an onslaught of different opponents, compete with the CPU or a friend in a 4-on-4 elimination match, or just set your sights on capturing the HWF [Heroic Wrestling Federation] Heavyweight Championship.

Body slams, clotheslines, knee drops and lariats are all in here, as are all of the other traditional wrestling moves. However, in true Fire Pro fashion, you also have a wide array of deadly and exotic moves at your disposal. These moves take a bit more skill to perform, and they usually require that the wrestler doing them has much more energy than his opponent. Some of the coolest of these special moves are the Frankensteiner (named after its inventor, Scott Steiner), the Moon Sault Press (perfected by the aerial greats like Tiger Mask and The Great Muta), and the horrifiyingly brutal Thunder-Fire Powerbomb, mastered by the great Atsushi Onita. Never before has a wrestling game featured such depth and such a well-researched host of moves. In a further stroke of genius, Human added a feature allowing you to reach into the crowd for folding chairs, bottles and even ringside tables! All of these items can be used repeatedly on your opponent with devastating results.

Of course, buying the rights to the names of every major wrestling federation's trademark stars and their moves would cost an astronomical amount, so Human improvises a bit, just stretching the rules of copyright. Instead of using actual wrestlers and their copyrighted "special" moves, all Fire Pro games feature made up wrestlers with extreme likenesses to certain real wrestlers, while sporting differently-named (yet perfectly identical) special moves. All's fair in love, war and wrestling, I suppose.

Wrestling fans will adore Fire Pro Gaiden, (should it make it's way stateside) while wrestling mutants (such as myself) will simply have to lock themselves away for weeks with nothing but food, water and this game. It's the best high-end game of its genre, at least until New Japan Pro Wrestling hits the PlayStation.

I'll be sure to keep you posted...

-The Stalker
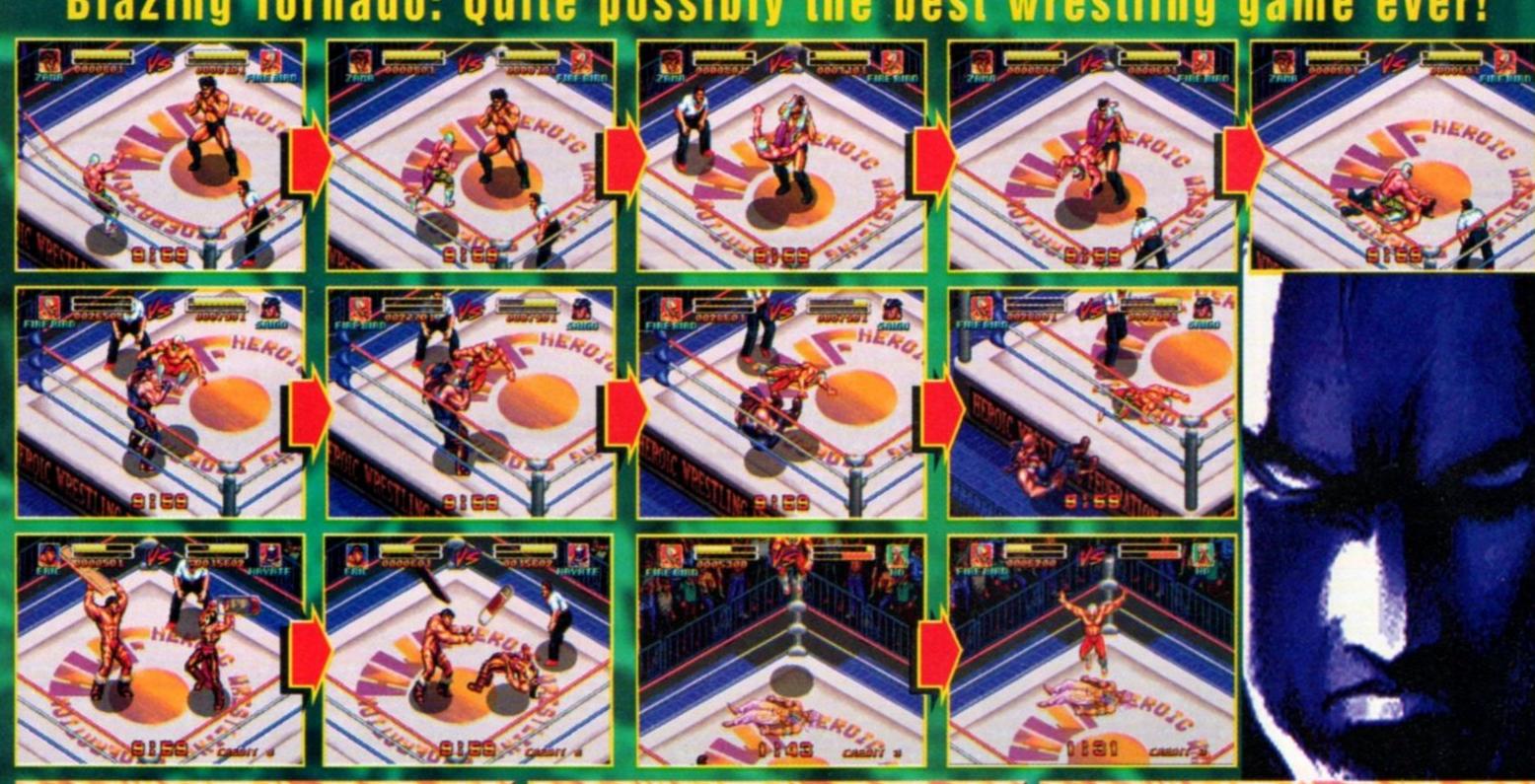
THE STALKER
Antonio Inoki himself couldn't have made a better wrestling game.

WOLF McSCHNEIDER

ERIC STARBACK

DAIZIRO ZAMA

JOHN BANTLIN SAIG

Blazing Tornado: Quite possibly the best wrestling game ever!

After Taito's last shooting excursion in pain, Zeitgeist, I was not expecting Layer Section to be this good. Despite the somewhat pornographic title, LS (A translation of the Japan-only arcade shooter Ray Force) is almost exactly what I expected of a 2-D shooter taken to the next level... powerful 32-bit effects, much parallax, and plain ol' shootin' tastiness.

For me, LS was lacking in two important areas, yet more than sufficiently blazing in others. One was the conspicuous lack of firepower. You are equipped with a regular cannon which can be powered up six times, and à first in 2-D shooters— the lock-on laser. This laser can be powered up three times, and with each increase in force you can lock-on to more enemies. This weapon is necessary to advance in the game - all of the enemies on the ground can only be destroyed with a lock-on blast. You can even lock on to "enemies" miles below you in deep space - massive battleships and tiny drones that exist only to provide you with target practice and a few bonus points. Layer Section consists of seven rounds, each named more oddly than the last - "Red Power to Pierce Through," "The End of Deep Layer," or the decidedly Freudian "Fissure of Consciousness." The modes of play in LS were extremely well thought-out, offering a

Raiden Project-like letterboxed mode and full-screen mode, in which you have to set your TV on its side to play normally. You can flip your controls to play Layer Section as a side-scroller, but this can get confusing, especially if you're used to playing it upright.

The effects in Layer Section are certainly beautiful, but

LAYER SECTION

NICK ROX
HIGH POWERED 2-D SHOOTING COMES TO THE SATURN.

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 4

LEVEL 5

LEVEL 6

nothing a Saturn owner hasn't seen before. The Clockwork Knight games' "2.5-D" is far more impressive than the line-scrolling and pseudo-3-D towers, skyscrapers and elevator shafts in LS, but the original arcade game is indeed a year old. You'll find up to five layers of parallax, transparent clouds, rippling lakes and floating islands that crash to the ground far below if you destroy the cables that anchor them. Oddly, some of the parallax in Section was rather pixelly, as if it had been scaled in... at the very least you expect it to do SOMETHING— but no, it just... well, behaves like parallax. Odd. Don't get me wrong, the game is so gorgeous that you simply can't take it all in if you're playing. You have to watch it being played to fully appreciate the mastery of Taito's artists... you don't just scroll up, you go cavorting throughout space, whirlin' and ducking through small holes in a gigantic steel lattice, quickly jaunting through a line-scrolling asteroid populated by a massive, multi-sectioned R-Type-style battleship, at which point you'll fight a boss with rapidly scaling transparent galaxies flying up at the screen... and all this in the first level. Another supremely cool feature of Layer Section is the transitions between stages - there are no breaks. You'll scale all the way down to a planet surface, break through the clouds, descend into a massive canyon, and enter an underground city... all with no black screen, "Now Loading" or anything to annoy.

Now for the worst part of LS... the music. E.Storm sure loves it, but I cannot STAND the ersatz 80's/disco/wannabe techno soundtrack. A couple of the tunes, especially the boss music, were actually quite good... but for the most part, I was left wailing with disenchantment whenever a particularly grating refrain popped up. It's odd - Taito's sound team Zuntata used to be amazing. Remember Ninja Warriors? Now THAT was music... The sound effects, on the other hand, were quite good, including a "female" computer announcing power-ups and extremely meaty explosions.

No Saturn owner should be without Layer Section. Hopefully Taito will bring it out here - it is a testament to the system's 2-D magnificence and is an excellent, nostalgic return to the glory days of shooting. My only gripes were the aforementioned lack of weapons and the music, as well as the extremely mysterious fact that the Saturn Mode features LESS effects, like line-scrolling and less parallax, than the Arcade Mode. I suppose Taito got lazy, as I'm sure the game had to literally be programmed twice— once for each mode. A bomb would have helped as well... as would a few more continues. Still, you cannot go wrong with Taito's latest home product... I now wait anxiously for Darius Gaiden. - Nick Rox

E. Storm's SATURN Previews

Here's the latest from Japan!

GOLDEN AXE: THE DUEL
I'll review it next month.

GUARDIAN HEROES

It looks like Treasure will once again, set the standard in the action game category. In GH you jump in & out of 3-deep side scrolling playfields. The scaling is insane and the bosses... massive! Action-role playing never looked so good! Guardian Heroes is due out in Japan later this year. I'm sure SOA will follow with a U.S. release soon after.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
Besides having to use parallax in place of the 3-D BG's, VF2 looks incredible! (release: Dec. US & Jpn.)

X-MEN
Capcom's X-Men comes to the Saturn (in Japan) this fall. I'm expecting a perfect transla-tion. Read all about it, next issue.

STEAMGEAR MASH
In Takara's SGM you'll fly, swim, and blast your way through six levels of iso-bliss, all with amazing rendered sprites! I'll review SGM next issue!

TOSHINDEN
I don't know if it's such a good idea releasing Toshinden on the Saturn. But I'm glad they are! Now Saturn users will get a shot at the 3-D fighter that started it all! As you can see, they've got a way to go, as the detail looks nowhere near the level of the PlayStation's. The shots pictured here are way early, so we'll just have to wait and see. The Saturn version will also feature one new character, Cupido.

Magic Knight RAYEARTH

Magic Knight Rayearth is not only easily the best of the first wave of Saturn RPGs (the flood doesn't start again until November), it's quite possibly the most impressive 32-bit game yet. The secret to Rayearth's success is Sega's bold and unusual decision to throw away all the tempting rendering techniques, texture-mapping, Gouraud-shading, whatever, and instead funnel over a year's worth of development time and a truckload of money into just making a standard action RPG that has dazzling graphics, beautifully illustrated locales, innovating dungeon design, an excellent soundtrack, tons of original animation, all sorts of cute little options, and no repetition.

Magic Knight Rayearth is the story of three young women summoned from a junior high school field trip in Japan to an alternate dimension, Sephiro, where they're treated as legendary heroes and charged with the task of rescuing the princess that holds that world together. All of the heroes and villains from the girls' manga by Clamp and the TV series are in the game, complete with their actual voice actors. And unlike Blue Seed, which was just one original, insignificant episode of the Blue Seed series, Magic Knight Rayearth follows the plot of the entire comic and TV series.

Rayearth's graphics are nothing short of astounding. The only other game in this league is Arc the Lad, but that game's beautifully painted, non-interactive background tapestries look a lot less stunning when compared to the dozens of fully-interactive, graphically-stunning

Art by CLAMP

TAKUHI
"Astounding!"

Hikaru Shido

Umi Ryuzaki

Fuu Hououji

when compared to the dozens of fully-interactive, graphically-stunning locations in Rayearth. You don't just look at gorgeous backdrops in this one, you're there, running through the stunningly realistic flames of burning mansions, swimming through the freezing locked deep within a glacial dungeon, and walking through misty forests dodging lightning bolts whose near misses set trees aflame. You've never seen this level of graphic detail in any previous game, guaranteed. Every town has its own mood and theme, and every house in every town is drawn to scale, with their own individual layouts and furnishings. The dungeons and forests are in constant motion and awash with color; realistic-looking sunbeams poke through dungeon roots and fade away as overhead clouds block them, storms gradually develop and intensify, and will-o'-the-wisps float aimlessly through dark forests. Everything about the game is full of detail, color, and motion, and the programmers almost never repeat the same floor texture, parallax background, or special effect.

With this level of detail, I expected the game to end about five hours after it began. To my surprise, the game lasted a good fifteen hours. That's not up to the standards of epic RPGs like Final Fantasy or Phantasy Star, but for a game that's literally one breath-taking scene after another, it's definitely not bad, and a good 35% improvement over Arc the Lad.

The music is excellent. It doesn't match Arc's stunning soundtrack, but for PCM, is definitely and achievement. The video is exceptional - a big surprise considering how cheap the animation in the TV series is. The video is all made-for-Saturn exclusive footage (except for the intro), and unlike in Blue Seed, is liberally sprinkled throughout. As if all of thus wasn't enough, Sega kept on programming... This game has tons of little bonuses, such as the ultra-cute diary entries and pictures that each party member creates at the end of each of the 50+ days of your quest. There are also all sorts of cute, wacky comments you get when you investigate things. Depending on which character you use, you can get a braniac "Mr. Wizard" perspective from Fuu, a quick-and-dirty explanation from "simple" Hikaru, or an excited hyperspasm from Umi ("My god! It's WONDERFUL! What a HUGE oven!"). The text is a cute little bonus that'll probably be lost on import buyers, but the accompanying facial expressions are amusing enough themselves.

The game's sole flaw, is, to be terse, (a rare treat in one of MY reviews!), that it's aimed at 12-year-old girls. That certainly doesn't mean the game's a total walk-through-- some of the dungeons and puzzles will challenge you mentally (After all, statistics indicate that your average Japanese seventh-grader has had about 3,000 more hours of schooling than your average American

この 超プリティでナイスバディな
カルディナさまの踊りになぁ！

med. school graduate), but you definitely shouldn't expect anything even close to a physical challenge. And if ultra high-pitched anime girl voices give you seizures, well -- don't wait for a sale -- stock up on Phenobarbital NOW.

Despite simplistic play mechanics and a total lack of challenge, Rayearth has all the drama, animation, special effects, and exotic scenery you could ever hope for. This is probably the first Sega release that doesn't have a rushed-to-the-market feel to it, and stands as one of the few titles that will be judged as classics when we look back and remember 32-bit's first year. If there was just one more Rayearth for every twenty over-hyped attempts at a 3-D polygon game, or FMV adventure, or whatever, the 32-bit world would be a far more pleasant place.

- Takuhi

SECRET of MANA 2

しかしマナの減少にともない、魔法の力が次第に落ちり、
魔法から徐々に、魔空寒さが
都内へと導入し始めている―

I'd like to go on record and officially state that Square is SCAR-ING me. Last year they had but two releases - one, of course, the highest power in RPGs, Final Fantasy VI, and the other a well-conceived but poorly executed pile o' pap called Live-A-Live. In the first half of this year alone they had two blazing examples of video game mastery, Chrono Trigger and Front Mission... and FOUR more games are coming. A total of six A+ titles in one year classifies as "scary" in my book.

The first of these games is the long-awaited sequel to 1993's lickable-yet-flawed Secret of Mana, Secret of Mana 2. I'm happy to report that the massive problem that plagued the first game, your party members wandering off, getting stuck, and generally being rather annoying, has been more or less solved. Your companions now stay closer to you, allowing less chance to get stranded behind some rocky outcropping... and if they DO happen to stray you can leave them behind. Worry not, however, for as soon as they're off the screen they'll come happily bounding to your side. The spell system has also been radically altered to give it more of a traditional RPG feel. When you use magic, you choose a target enemy, the screen halts, and the magic hits. Unfortunately, you can't avoid or block the enemy's magic, but this welcome change has made spells infinitely more useful and easier to invoke.

Thousands of years have passed since the first Mana adventure. The peace brought by the three heroes of old is finally at an end, and (surprise!) magic is fading from the world. The six lands of Forthena, Althena, Wendel, the Beast Kingdom, Naba'al and Laurent are at war. All are searching for the legendary Mana Sword, sealed away in the forbidden Holy Palace, to

DURAN
of Forthena, Kingdom of Grass

ビーストキング ANGELA
獣人王と… of Althena, Kingdom of Magic
その母も…

KEVIN
of the Beast Kingdom

defeat the others. Each player character hails from one of these six kingdoms, and depending on which three you choose, the entire outcome of the game changes. Another keen feature of Mana 2 is the class-change system. You can choose to be either good or evil, and the decision reflects upon your appearance, the way people treat you, and your magical abilities.

I've gone on too long for a preview and I haven't even mentioned the rapture-laden graphics featuring polygonal spell effects, gradual darkening from day to night, the finest 16-bit art ever seen, and the best music (at the very least technically) on the SNES. I'll be back with a review of the Japanese version of Mana 2, Seiken Densetsu 3, next month, and hopefully I'll have some info on an American release. Sadly, this game might not come out here for quite a while (if at all!) due to the mediocrity that is Evermore, but I'll keep you posted... - Nick Rox

HAWKEYE
of the Desert Stronghold Nabata'al

CHARLOTTE
of Holy City Wendel

RIES3
of Laurent, Kingdom of Wind

Nick Rox & Takuhi's JAPAN NOW
Import RPG Special

Dragon Quest VI

The game that could easily be the greatest RPG ever made, the mighty 32-meg *Dragon Quest VI: The Illusionary Lands*, finally has a release date... December 9th. As always, the staff includes the literary master Yuji Horii, the brilliant classical composer Koichi Sugiyama and the god of manga, Akira Toriyama. No details on storyline have been released, but we do know that DQVI is the last game in the "Celestial" trilogy and will utilize DQIII's class-change system. We'll have a review on DQVI as soon as it's released and, hopefully, info on an American release next month! - Nick Rox

Romancing Sa•Ga 3

One of the greatest travesties of our generation was that no one ever even tried to translate and release Square's brilliant *Romancing Sa•Ga* series in Japanese Square fans' eyes. Second only to the *Final Fantasy* series in Japanese Square fans' eyes. Each game in the *Romancing Saga* series has allowed players to start *Final Fantasy*-esque quests with one of 8 characters scattered throughout the game's world. New to *RomaSaga 3* are the ability to change classes, the option to teach techniques between party members, and battles with a party of 5 fighting at once. - Takuhi

The Creation of Heaven & Earth

The incredibly powerful force behind such SNES masterpieces as *Actraiser*, *SoulBlazer* and *Illusion of Gaia*, Quintet, are back with a 32-meg Action RPG called *Tenchi Sozo*, or *The Creation of Heaven & Earth*. Featuring much CG power, never-before-seen fractal, polygonal, and double Mode 7 effects, this time-travelling tale of the planet's birth is due out in October; we'll have a review in our January issue. - Nick Rox

Tactics Ogre

Tactics Ogre was originally planned to be the first isometric strategy game on the Super Famicom, but a rash of bad luck (culminating with the death of the game's producer) delayed it nearly two years. Though it's lost the honor of being first to *Front Mission*, *Tactics Ogre* is still looking revolutionary, with cool fantasy settings, lots of options, and a wide variety of characters. - Takuhi

Gun Hazard

Coming out a mere nine months after its predecessor, *Front Mission*, *Gun Hazard* is a 24-meg action/simulation/RPG from Square, due in late November. Taking place in the same timeframe as *Front Mission* but having little storyline connection, *Gun Hazard* will combine *Cybernator*-style mech action combat with an RPG's depth, items, shops and storyline and a strategy game's unit placement and isometric maps. - Nick Rox

Tales of Phantasia

Namco's upcoming RPG *Tales of Phantasia* will turn out to be the largest 16-bit game ever made, clocking in at an insane 48-megs. Why? Because 16-meg alone of ToP is voice! There's a voice for each character during battles and key story scenes... as well as a THEME SONG. Yes, an entire theme song... not a 10-second *Clayfighters* snippet, but a full-length theme. ToP also features gorgeously detailed graphics and character designs by a top manga artist. We'll have more on *Phantasia* as it develops. - Nick Rox

Tengai Makyo Zero

The *Tengai Makyo* series has always been known (well, in Japan, at least) for long quests, good storylines, and great music and intermissions. But what's far more interesting in this SuFami prequel to the PC Engine series is the hardware contained within the cartridge. In addition to the up-to-100-meg board created specifically for this game, there's a CLOCK, synchronized to real time. This clock controls the passage of seasons, the cycle of night and day, and other annual events in the game world, EVEN AFTER THE GAME IS TURNED OFF. For example, some towns in the game have festivals only once a year, and if you're not playing just then, you'll miss it. A possibly very cool, but *definitely* insane concept. - Takuhi

Bakumatsu Korinden Oni

The sixth game in the *Oni* series (the first five were on GameBoy, strangely enough, and last year's *Kijin Korinden Oni* hurt BAD) is a graphially astounding 32-meg SuFami cart due out before year's end. Featuring a heavily Japanese-y (Heck, the hero's named Yamatomaru!) storyline and a unique battle system, BKO looks to be one of the few non-Enix or Square RPG's worth looking into. We'll have a review on Oni as soon as the game's available. - Nick Rox

Ayer's Adventure

A stunning-looking combination of polygon and conventionally-drawn graphics could make *Ayer's Adventure* the best 3-D perspective RPG yet. You and your party travel through the dragon-infested dungeons of medieval England (uh-huh...), casting spells and doing all sorts of other RPG stuff. Instead of blocking the full screen, perspective-shifting battle environments with menus, you must remember your commands and deliver them via the controller. For instance, A is attack, B is block and C is magic. With character designs by *The Five Star Stories'* Mamoru Nagano, you know *Ayer's Adventure* will kick butt. By the way, these screens are mockups. - Takuhi

| Platform: Saturn | | Publisher: Sega |
| Release Date: '95 | **Dragon Force** | Developer: Sega |

Choose your main character from eight different heroes, and then build an army of over one hundred characters to go to war for your hero's homeland. You can buy items, learn special techniques, and then fight actual, graphically displayed 100-on-100 battles replete with line-scrolling backgrounds. Incredible battle visuals and the huge amount of characters will make this Sega's big year-end strategy/RPG title. - Takuhi

| Platform: Saturn | | Publisher: Sega |
| Release Date: 12/95 | **Dark Savior** | Developer: Climax |

Nowadays, you just can't sell a company on a game without at least one "new system," usually written in very fruity English. Climax's futuristic fantasy-based (kind of like *Shadowrun*, but weirder) *Landstalker* follow-up has not one but three wacky new systems. First, we have the Hyperion Perspective System, which means it's, well, like *Landstalker*. Second, the Parallel Scenario System, which means it's non-linear and has many different paths and endings. Finally, there's the Bounty Capture System, which you can use to transform into the monsters you capture along your quest. Best of all, it's only 2 months away! - Takuhi

| Platform: Saturn | | Publisher: Sega |
| Release Date: '96 | **Legend of Thor** | Developer: Ancient |

Many felt last year's *Story of Thor/Beyond Oasis* lacked the power to be considered a 16-bit Sega classic, but I loved it. All it needed was a longer quest, more elementals and better music, and that's just what it's getting! ...Well, I dunno about the music, but LoT adds two new elementals: Brass and Aerle. Brass is a metal-plated attack condor, and Aerle is the elemental of Wind. These join Efreet, the spirit of fire, Dytto, the spirit of water, Shade, the shadow elemental, and the plant spirit Bau. It remains to be seen how the new elementals will be used in gameplay. Thor doesn't come out until next year, but we'll have more ASAP! - Nick Rox

| Platform: Saturn/PS | | Publisher: Yanoman |
| Release Date: 11/95 | **Feda: Remake!** | Developer: Max |

Feda is basically the same game as the Super Famicom strategy/RPG released late last year, but has been spruced up with all sorts of 32-bittedness. In addition to arranged music and new, voice-acted intros and intermissions, you also have two new characters, a clearer storyline, and faster-paced battles. Especially considering that nobody ever played the Super Famicom game on this side of the Pacific, *Shining Force* fans should give *Feda* a chance. - Takuhi

| Platform: PlayStation | | Publisher: SCE |
| Release Date: '95 | **Beyond the Beyond** | Developer: Camelot |

The PlayStation branch of Sonic Software Planning, Camelot, is currently finishing up the first true RPG for the PlayStation. With plenty o' *Clockwork Knight*-style "2.5-D," character designs by the creator of the popular manga "Papua of the South Seas" and unbelievable battle sequences, *BeyoBeyo* is guaranteed to be awesome. *Beyond the Beyond* also has three "new systems," the "Vitality Point System," the "Active Play System" and the "Reality Battle System," in accordance with the unwritten law of Japanese hit RPG's. - Nick Rox

| Platform: PlayStation | | Publisher: Konami |
| Release Date: '95 | **Genso Suikoden** | Developer: Konami |
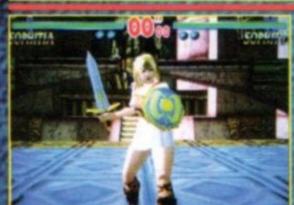
Genso's been pushed back so many times! For about a week there, it was supposed to come out in September. Alas, it was pushed back to '95/Unknown once again. But hey, I'll let Konami take their time with this one... what other RPG has 108 party members? Yup, that's right... 108 individual characters! Though most fights in GS take place in a polygonal, *Breath of Fire*-style isometric view, there are strategic battles in which you can use all 108 characters... wacky! We'll keep you updated on this 32-bit force, so keep looking to the pages of GAME-FAN for all the latest RPG news! - Nick Rox

Namco's Soul Edge

It's unknown what hardware Namco's new 3-D weapon fighter SE runs on, but I'd say the PlayStation-derived System 11 based on the transparencies. We'll have more on this sure-fire power next month!

Japan Now Arcade Update

Sega's Fighting Vipers
Fighting Vipers, Sega's and AM2's first 3-D fighter since VF1 has enclosed rings, breakable armor and in-game instant replays. We'll have more on FV next issue.

PLAYER SELECT

Megaman hits the arcades!
Yes! You heard me right... Megaman is making his CPS2 arcade debut later this year in (Japanese title) Rockman: the Power Battle. In this 2-player simul. title you can choose Protoman, Megaman or newcomer Bass. We'll have more on Megaman soon!

Sega's Virtual On
Sega currently has Virtual On, a cross between Cyber Sled and Virtua Fighter, making the rounds at Japanese test sites for release later this year. The first Model 2 game by AM3 since Rally, VO features mech-to-mech combat with much explosive weaponry in 3-D arenas.

MARVEL
SUPER HEROES

Hot at the arcade test sites right now is Capcom's *Marvel Super Heroes*, the much-anticipated update/sequel to *X-Men*. Hosting a variety of new features including many all-new characters, new combos, unbelievable backgrounds, and a new story, this is MUCH more than a simple upgrade.

Although it's not stated on the title screen, Japanese literature has confirmed that the story is based on the Marvel Infinity Gauntlet comic book mini-series. We can infer from a game standpoint that your mission is to fight against everyone to save the universe from either the Infinity Gems (the most powerful force in the universe), or from the would-be god Thanos (we don't know if he's in the game yet). According to the comic's story, he who holds all six Infinity gems becomes a god.

Marvel fans should take note that in addition to *Marvel Super Heroes*, Capcom is also working on *Thanos' Quest* for the SNES. My bet is that like last year's *X-Men* duo release (the arcade fighting game and the SNES side-scroller), this year's batch of Marvel games will again tell the same story, but from different game perspectives. What this means to all you lucky Infinity fans is that there is room for at least two sequels, since *Thanos' Quest* was the first in the series of comics.

In addition to an all-new story, six "new" (i.e. never been in a Capcom fighting game) characters join the four who have returned from *X-Men*. The *X-Men* characters are Wolverine, Psylocke, and bosses Magneto and Juggernaut. The old characters use the same animation frames from *X-Men*, but have at least one new move. Among the new characters are The Hulk, Spiderman, Captain America, Iron Man, Shuma-Gorath, and Blackheart. In gameplay terms, all the new characters seem somewhat modeled after characters from previous Capcom fighting games. For example, Captain America is a lot like Cyclops from *X-Men*, and the Hulk is close to Victor from the *DarkStalkers* series.

Shuma Gorath could loosely be called a cross between Blanka and Silver Samurai, since he has a ball attack and he hits you like the Samurai's Ninja stars. Darkheart seems modeled after the ultra cheap Sentinel, with his multiple projectile attacks and extremely large size.

Marvel's basic gameplay model is still very much rooted in *X-Men*, but there are several new features and improvements. For one, you can now two-in-one a normal move into another normal move IN THE AIR. This is along the lines of the "chain combos" (Capcom's terminology, not ours) first introduced in *DarkStalkers*, only now it can be done entirely in the air for a juggle combo... no, this has never been done before in any fighting game. Other elements are classic *X-Men*, such as the Super meter, the ability to super jump, the one-button (with certain characters) projectiles... Many elements remain which will appeal mostly to beginning fighters, and those who just love to see super heroic moves which automatically produce 15+ hit combos with one move.

Marvel Super Heroes also builds on the same graphic style of *X-Men*, but adds more animation frames as well as far richer backgrounds. The new animations are absolutely superb, every bit as good as the old animation (or better). The music wasn't done at press time, but most everyone's sound effects and voice were in the game. If you liked to hear Cyclops say "Gene Splice!" you'll just love Captain America's cry of "Stars & Stripes♥!"

The version of *Marvel Super Heroes* we tested was said to be about 80% complete, which means that graphics and characters are pretty much final. Hopefully, though, Capcom will balance/tweak this game very well for the final release (better than they did with the last *X-Men*). With awesome new features like Infinity Gem powers and the new air combos, *Marvel Super Heroes* seems destined to follow the same path as *X-Men*. As Capcom of Japan's slogan so aptly (?) states, Try Next... -E. Suzuki

ARCADE

DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
FORMAT	CPS2
# OF PLAYERS	1- 2
DIFFICULTY	ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE	NOVEMBER

THE INFINITY GEM SYSTEM

Possibly created as a means to incorporate the Infinity Gauntlet's gem storyline into gameplay, the Infinity Gem System allows for power-ups to take place literally in the middle of a round. There are six Infinity Gems which can restore life, grant extra speed, give you armor to absorb damage, make you inflict more damage, and more. Will collecting all six gems turn you into a god? Is this the end goal of the game? Find out when the game's released.

SPEED UP   **LIFE RECOVER**

POWER UP   **SUPER ARMOR**

117

THIS WAY TO...

GAMEFAN SPORTS

Dracula X

Castlevania

The Hunt Continues

MADDEN NFL '96

SNES & GENESIS REVIEWS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

FIFA SOCCER '96
(SNES & GENESIS)

NBA LIVE '96
(SNES & GENESIS)

NHL ALL-STAR HOCKEY
(SATURN)

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL

COMES TO U.S. SATURN!

GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

NBA '96 LIVE

After last year's impressive new gameplay engine it was hard to imagine how EA could improve on their game, but... they did.

EA has added a ton of new features to last year's game, including both of the expansion teams, diving for loose balls, and even the ability to create a player. The new slam dunks and one on one moves are great ways to show off, but the addition of diving for a loose ball actually adds to the gameplay, and realism. The Create Player feature is quickly becoming a standard in all EA games and fortunately NBA Live now has it. Finally I can play ball with O'Neil and Barkley (who don't appear standard in the game due to exclusive licenses with other game companies).

Beyond the gameplay additions, EA has also added a ton of new animation. While the perspective looks the same, any fan of the original game will instantly notice new animation for tip dunks, diving, different blocks, and the all-new dunks. All of these animations add up to more realism, and thus, more fun.

Last year, NBA Live for the SNES dominate its Genesis counterpart. The SNES version had better graphics, and superior control over the Genesis cartridge. But in NBA Live '96, EA has narrowed the gap between the two games bringing them closer in both categories. The SNES still has slightly better control than the Genesis version.

NBA Live is a great game that deserves your attention. EA started the whole thing years ago, knowing that a name alone can't win fans; you have to make a solid playing game. EA has done just that with its NBA Live series.

–E. Suzuki

MADDEN 96
NFL

The annual football war has begun again. This year, it looks like Madden will take the prize, as a training camp mode and better control help it to beat out Sega's NFL game.

This year's list of new features include laterals, customizable penalties, and the famous Training Camp mode. In addition to the lateral pass, EA has also added 20 new offensive and defensive plays and the ability to make fair catches. Although the extra gameplay features aren't used too often in a regular game, the extra touches like kneeling catches, and players stretching their arms out for extra yardage after being tackled make up for it. The training camp is the best new addition to Madden '96 and helps to set it above its competition. After you create your character, instead of just filling in numbers for stats, the player must physically prove himself by doing several tests during training camp. You'll maneuver your new character through cones, catch a variety of passes, and evade tacklers.

Visually, the gameplay perspective has remained the same, but EA has added new rendered animation sequences for added realism. Details like logos in the end zones, animated pylons, and kneeling catches really help give players that "in the game" feeling.

The SNES version of Madden isn't quite the game the Genesis version is. This is mainly due to the stiff controls.

Madden '96 features great gameplay, as well as a ton of great new features. Now if only EA would add a playbook editor.   -E. Suzuki
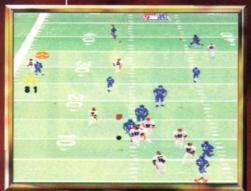
New Feature! Practice Mode!

SELECT OPTION
Chelsea
3-5-2
EA SPORTS

FIFA SOCCER '96
COPYRIGHT 1995 ELECTRONIC ARTS INC.

GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

EA SPORTS

Always setting new standards in excellence, FIFA Soccer '96 continues the tradition by adding better graphics and vastly improved control.

This year's list of new features include a new practice mode, Fast Dribble, and the famous star indicators. The practice mode works great for beginner players who want to learn the game. Advanced players can also use the practice mode, for mastering the art of scoring and the give-and-go technique. The Fast Dribble works great, and allows a player to really open up the field on a breakaway. But the best thing about this year's version of FIFA Soccer is that the game is faster and has better control.

The graphics in FIFA Soccer '96 have also been enhanced. The characters are now SGI-rendered and have a more life-like feel. Although the characters are small, if you look closely enough, you will be able to see a character's animation for whichever shot they do. This helps to counteract an opponent who is either about to shoot the ball or slide tackle an opponent.

The SNES version isn't quite as good as the Genesis version, with its slightly sluggish control and slower game speed. The graphics are nearly identical. If you have a choice, choose the Genesis game.

One key feature FIFA still needs is an outline box of the field. This would allow you to see all the players on screen and therefore make it easier to set up plays with friends. While the passing arrows do help to show players where they are passing, the point is almost lost because if the person you are passing to is off the screen, you don't know if he's covered.

EA has improved the gameplay and come up with another winner. Any fan of the original FIFA will find '96 a perfect game to add to their collection. With its new graphics, added gameplay elements, and new training mode, beginner and expert players alike will find FIFA '96 a worthy sequel.
- E. Suzuki

World Series BASEBALL

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SOJ/SS
PUBLISHER - SEGA SPORTS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

VIEWPOINT

CAL CAVALIER
No questions asked, World Series is everything I could have hoped for. Sega didn't tamper with the near-perfect Greatest Nine, and a near-perfect U.S. version is the result. I was especially impressed with the no-chop announcer voice. WSB is one of THE reasons to buy a Saturn.

OVERALL: 97%
Graphics..................9
Audio......................9
Control....................9
Play Mech. 9
Originality...............10

CHIP (no last name)
Sega Sports has taken Japans Greatest Nine and transformed it in to a first class, completely stocked, Baseball game. World Series Baseball for the Saturn is far and away the best baseball I've ever played, on any system. The multiple camera angles and authentic gameplay, coupled with realistic sounds of the game create an atmosphere of ultimate sports realism. 32-bit sports have arrived!

OVERALL: 95%
Graphics..................9
Audio......................8
Control..................10
Play Mech. 9
Originality...............8

My favorite baseball game on the face of the planet, Greatest Nine for the Saturn, has ALREADY been Americanized much sooner than originally anticipated... hyper joytime! If you remember my import review back in August (97%) you know this game was, in almost every aspect, a thoroughly well-crafted and innovative, if not revolutionary, product. Right up front, the answer to the $64,000 question is: No, Sega didn't screw with it. For U.S. baseball fans, this truly is the game to get; basically everything's intact from the Japanese version, but now there are real U.S. teams and a great ENGLISH voice announcer.

The first major innovation in WSB (gosh, it's hard not to accidentally call the game Greatest Nine) is the multiple camera angles and how well they are incorporated into the fluid, extremely playable 3-D environment. You can choose Low, Medium, High, Chase, or Random (which, of course, cycles through the other four at random). How well do the camera angles work? Just think about Daytona... that's right, four completely different viewpoints, each with its own advantages and disadvantages, and all worth selecting depending on your personal preferences, your mood, etc. This game has a 110% silky smooth feel to it. Sure, maybe one could argue the graphics aren't as spectacular as say Crystal Dynamics' 3-D Baseball (which I have yet to play), but given a choice I would certainly take WSB's smooth visuals over more detailed and technically advanced, but less fluid and herky-jerky graphics.
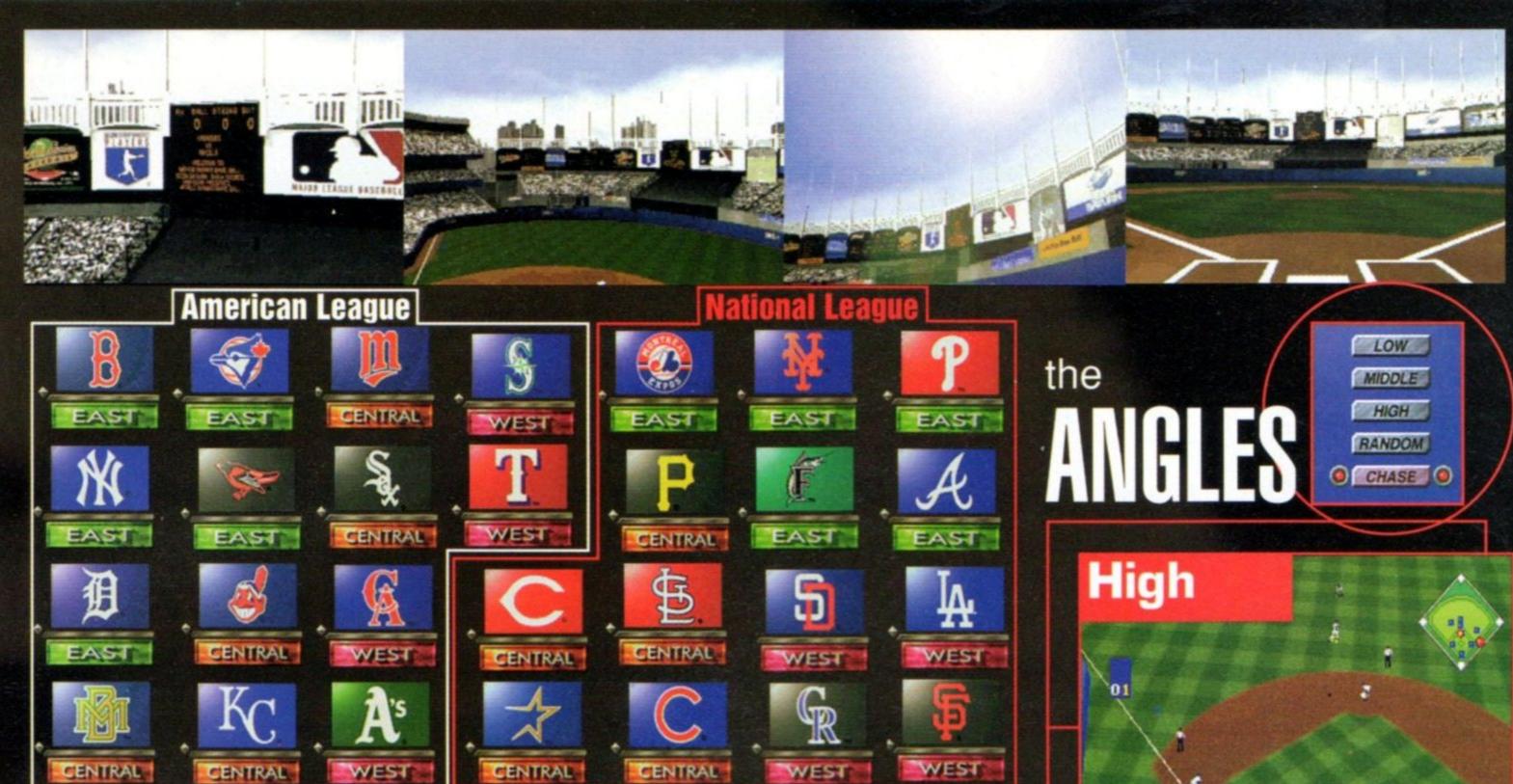
Complementing the graphics is without a doubt the best announcer voice ever in a U.S. sports game. No choppiness here, the voice is perfect and never skips at all as it calls the action just like a good play-by-play man. There are certainly areas where refinement needs to take place (for instance, cut-off throws aren't called so you end up hearing "the throw to home" twice in a row). Overall though this proves that 32-bit CD sports games can be VERY close to watching and listening

American League

National League

LOW
MIDDLE
HIGH
RANDOM
CHASE

High

Middle

EXHIBITION

WIN F.iley, C
SAVE
LOSS Maddux, C

PLAY OFFS

to sports games on TV. The only thing I miss from the Japanese version is the six selectable dialects -- wouldn't it be keen if you could choose an Al Michaels-type OR a Chris Berman-type?
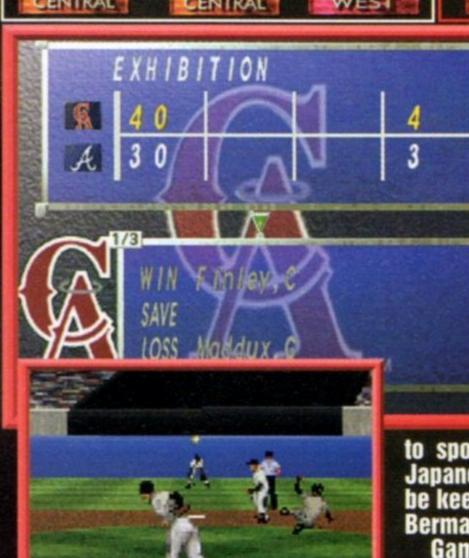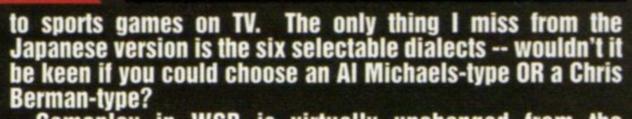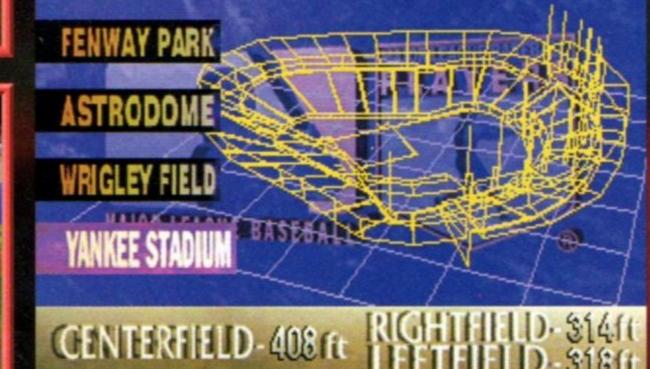
Gameplay in WSB is virtually unchanged from the Japanese version. There's only one case where I wish Sega HAD tweaked the controls: tapping C dives, and holding C jumps for the ball. Cause for confusion? Poor design? Absolutely. Otherwise, you'll be hard-pressed to find any flaws with the gameplay.
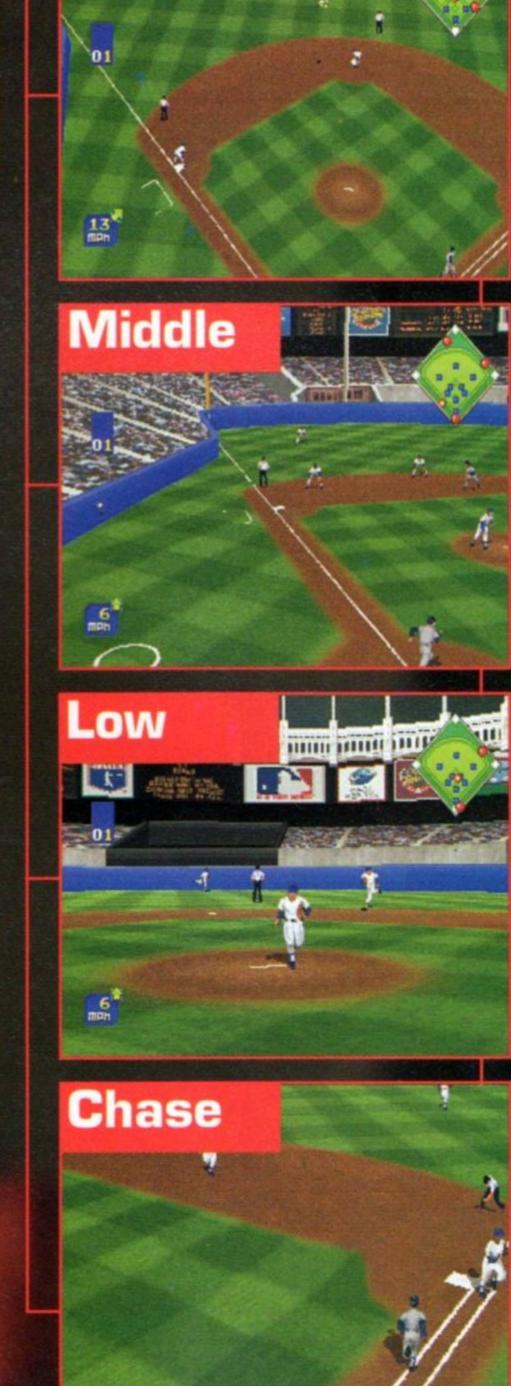
WSB is as complete a baseball package as you'll find anywhere. There's the full complement of season mode options. The only thing missing is a roster edit mode, but personally I didn't miss it. World Series is the game to beat.
-Cal Cavalier

Low

Chase

SELECT STADIUM

FENWAY PARK

ASTRODOME

WRIGLEY FIELD

YANKEE STADIUM

CENTERFIELD - 408 ft

RIGHTFIELD - 314 ft
LEFTFIELD - 318 ft

GAMEFAN SPORTS

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

REVIEW
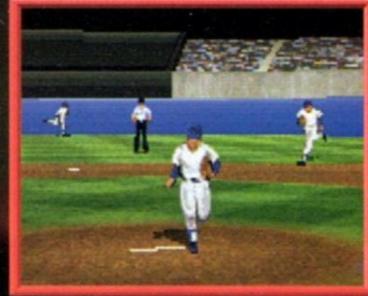
SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA SPORTS

PUBLISHER - SEGA SPORTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

VIEWPOINT

CAL CAVALIER

I was very excited when I heard All-Star was coming out so soon after the Saturn's launch. Now, I wish Sega had spent more time on it. There's some solid gameplay here but the all-too-first-generation graphics with the pixelization aplenty bother me. The hockey realism and refined interface of NHL '96 for the 16-bit systems is lacking on this first 32-bit attempt; I'll wait and see what else comes down the pipe for the Saturn.

OVERALL: 71%

Graphics..............6
Audio..................7
Control................7
Play Mech...........6
Originality............8

CHIP

NHL All Star Hockey has everything, I mean everything a hockey enthusiast could ever wish for in terms of both options and gameplay. But to be honest, I was expecting the gameplay to be just a bit smoother. This aside, it's hard to find fault with NHL A-S-H. Multiple camera angles, stunning (and informative) FMV, options up the gazoo, and great play control make it the best home Hockey game yet... There's a PS game however that, well... you'll see.

OVERALL: 89%

Graphics..............8
Audio..................9
Control................9
Play Mech...........8
Originality............7

SEGA SPORTS NHL ALL-STAR HOCKEY

First-generation software on a new system often ends up being either the most revolutionary thing you've ever seen, or too ambitious without proper execution. The latter is how I'd describe *NHL All-Star Hockey* on the Saturn.

All-Star is almost a prototype for what a great 32-bit hockey game could be. The first, and most obvious element that makes me wince and mumble a big "Not quite" is the graphics. The 3-D perspective and scaling character sprites are a good idea, but the sprites seem pixely and flat (and not just up close). Often, you feel like you're playing with cardboard cutouts. There are NINE different selectable camera angles for which Sega Sports should be complimented, but many of them seem pretty useless for actual gameplay and have some glaring flaw (such as: not being able to see far enough down the ice to see who has the puck). The remaining views that are, in my opinion, useful (such as the Medium Zone Cam), still don't communicate the action as effectively as they could have, mainly due to the ill-defined sprites.

Don't read the above as, "*All-Star*'s graphics bite." Read it as, "*All-Star*'s graphics are great by today's standards, but are nowhere near the full potential of 32-bit." I can't say what could have been done better, but to offer an example, *NHL Face-Off* by Sony for the PlayStation is clearly, in every aspect, a graphically superior hockey game which offers a next-generation visual environment and interface which (hopefully) will not impede gameplay but rather strengthen the gameplay's potential, like a new system's first hockey game should.

Once you get into it, *All-Star* is certainly not a bad hockey game. It's at least decent and offers full NHL teams and rosters, season modes, and a variety of shots on offense and checks/maneuvers on defense. The problem is, the game feels a bit more like a pachinko machine than hockey... skating just doesn't feel realistic, and scoring seems more based on randomness than maneuvering and shot alignment. However, getting into *All-Star* takes some doing. Just to bring up the "Loading" screen requires literally four or five presses of the Start button, if you suffer the misfortune of accidentally allowing the demo mode to begin. And loading itself, while not as unbearable as, say, most Sega CD games, is significant enough to annoy me and is certainly longer than most recent 32-bit CD games.

All-Star has a few other nice features you should consider. The overall hockey setting is very well-executed with great FMV sequences, okay background organs, and a good announcer's voice (though it gets choppy when it cuts from pre-recorded sentences to separated words, such as "Hello again hockey fans, and welcome to the <chop> Kiel Center <chop> where it's the <chop> St. Louis Blues <chop> taking on the <chop> New Jersey Devils").

For hockey fans who want a Saturn hockey game right now and don't mind many rough edges, well, I won't stand in your way. But for those who really want a GREAT hockey game for Saturn, I can virtually assure you that someone, somewhere will make a Saturn hockey game significantly better than this one within the next 6-12 months. -Cal Cavalier

DEVILS 0
PANTHERS 1   2:00

SEGA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

THE STANLEY CUP

THE CONN SMYTHE TROPHY

TROPHY

THE ART ROSS TROPHY

THE VEZINA TROPHY

CANADIENS
PLAYER CARDS

SENATORS
PLAYER CARDS

BLACKHAWKS
PLAYER CARDS

DALLAS STARS
PLAYER CARDS

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS
PLAYER CARDS

WINNIPEG JETS
PLAYER CARDS

EDMONTON OILERS
PLAYER CARDS
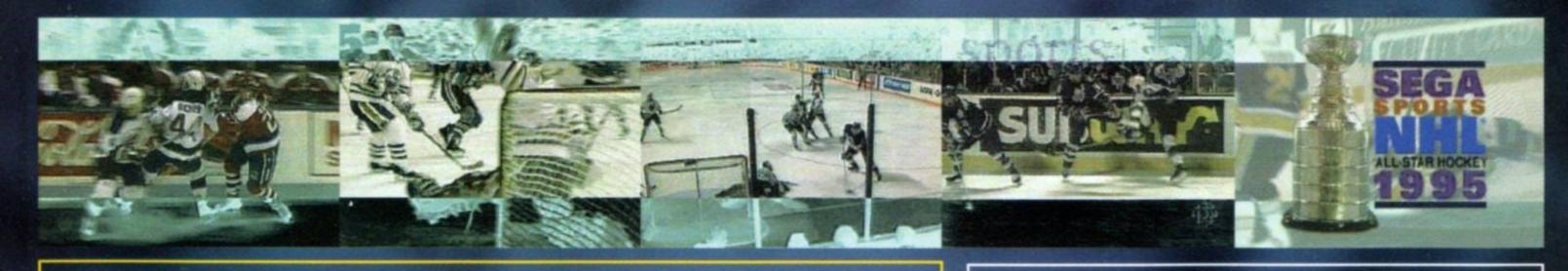
CAMERA ANGLES GALORE!!
You want 9 different viewpoints? With NHL '96 you got it!

Low Rail Cam

Medium Rail Cam

High Rail Cam

Low Zone Cam

Medium Zone Cam

High Zone Cam

Low TV Cam

Medium TV Cam

High TV Cam
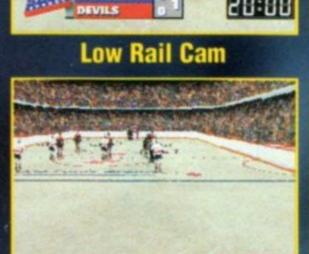
TOUR THE NHL HALL OF FAME AND GET A FIRST HAND LOOK AT HOW STOP MOTION CAPTURING IS DONE AT SEGA

19 BOBBY CARPENTER
INTERFERENCE 2:00

POWER PLAY

10 COREY MILLEN
ROUGHING 2:00
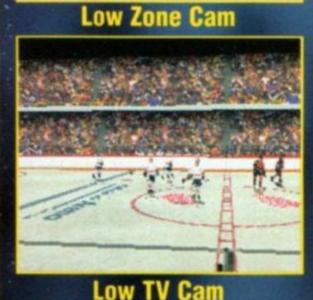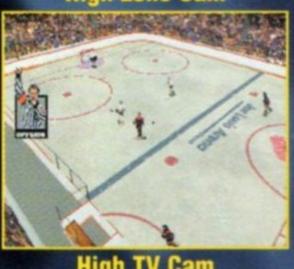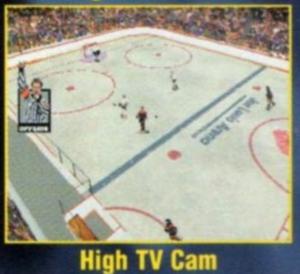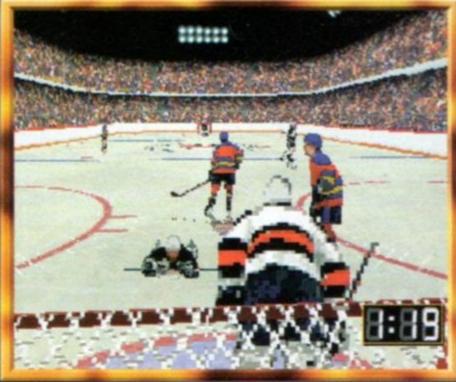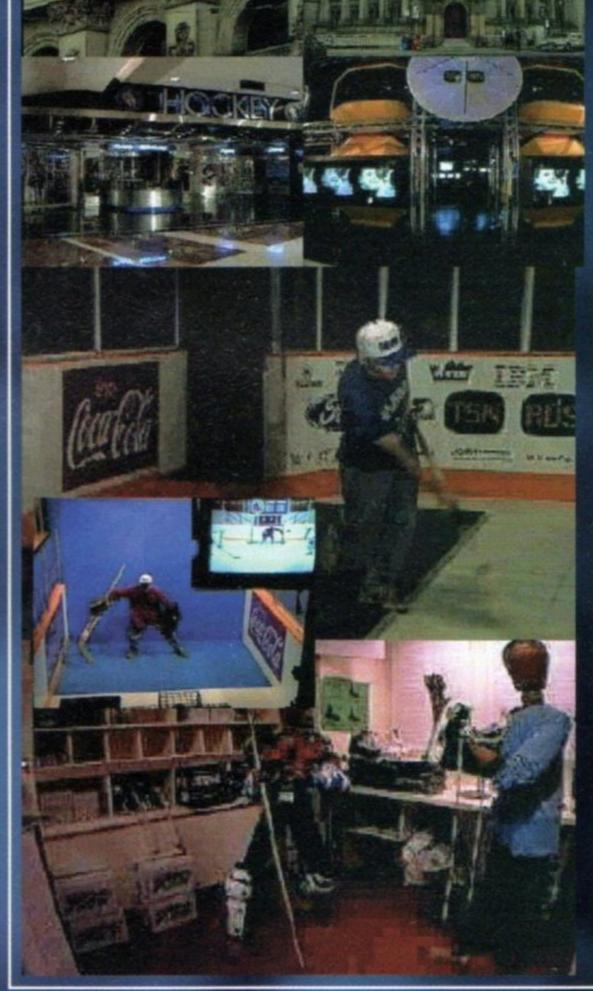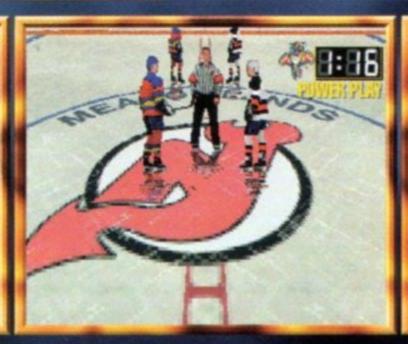
any case, I've also heard they're only going to have two megabytes of memory, and they could change that, but...

RJ: The only things we know about the Ultra are what come out of the rumor mill, but if you want to talk about the PSX, M2's performance POUNDS it!

JS: One specific thing though is our CPU's floating-point performance is several times the Ultra's floating point performance; we pretty much know that. Separate from Nintendo and SGI, the MIPS' specs are just that level.

GF: Inside the halls of 3DO, employees have said the NU64 isn't really 64-bit. Any comments?

RJ: From what I understand, there's some part of it that's 64-bit, but it's the old trick. One piece of the silicon is 64-bit, but the main data buses are only 32-bit, or something like that. Based on the available information, I think it's not a 64-bit machine.

JS: The one thing that is 64-bit inside the processor are the address registers that are used to address things in memory, but having 64-bit registers is useless when 32 bits can address four gigabytes of memory, and the machine only has two megabytes of memory. So having 64-bit address registers doesn't in any way help the quality of the games, and Nintendo is trying to get as much marketing advantage out of it as they can. The Ultra 64 is using a more off-the-shelf processor. In our case, we had a custom processor made specifically for M2.

RJ: A way you can think about it is there's the graphics engines and silicon that mixes together the paint, but then finally you've got to get that paint out to the display, and the last step to get it to the display is to send it through a firehose. A 32-bit firehose is one thing, our firehose is twice as big as theirs. You can get that much extra data out to the display, and no matter how you compute it, I believe Nintendo's claims are misleading.

JS: From what we know, M2 is at least twice the performance of Ultra 64.

M2: Mystery Controller

GF: The Opera's controller lacked diagonals, only had five main action buttons in a time when six-buttons plus was already the standard, and frankly, in our opinion, was a substandard controller for playing video games. What happened there and what will be different with the M2 controller?

DN: The Opera controller was totally a choice of our manufacturing partners.

RJ: We did have some input, we said, "Please make a good controller."

GF: Was everything about Opera's controller determined by the hardware partners, including the button configuration?

RJ: The number of buttons was us.

GF: Why wasn't the original Opera controller at least three over three buttons?

DN: We had specifications for that, it could have been so... there were many things we wanted, such as the headphone jack and the volume control. We had a lot of initial input, but in the end the manufacturers decided what they wanted for cost reasons.

TU: We can't comment about the M2 controller right now, but stay tuned.

The State of M2

GF: How far along is the M2 hardware, and what's left to be done on it if anything?

JS: The M2 chip set is finalized, and develop-

Top-left: the current M2 chip. Top-right: the streamlined Opera chip. Bottom: a dime.

ers know exactly what they're going to get. There will be no changes to the technology.

GF: Most 3rd party companies are working on PS and SS games, and those who aren't are doing NU64 games. Since most companies have allocated all of their R&D resources, who will be left to do M2 games?

TU: We learned a lot from the launch of Opera. There are ten M2 titles in development in-house right now. Development systems were sent out to a core group of developers back in July, giving them a head start. We're unable to announce 3rd party company names at this time.

GF: It's generally thought that developers have an easier time making games for the PS than the SS. Since M2 is theoretically more advanced than the SS and PS combined, what are you doing to help developers meet the challenges of M2?

DN: There's two things. One, we're way ahead on the tools curve, because we already have all the Opera tools, and since a lot of the M2's OS (operating system) is a grope away from Opera, the M2 tools are also a grope away from Opera. So a lot of the bugs and difficulties with the tools have been worked out; the tools are now better and more mature. The second thing is the graphical architecture of M2 is much more like an industry standard style of graphics, whereas Opera's graphics were more of a specialized thing. In Opera, I used four-sided cels, so the numbers you had to send to Opera were not the standard three-sided polygons that the entire graphics world knows how to use. The four-sided object could contain the entire image, and the numbers you'd send to it - the slopes, the vertices, the edges - were different characteristics than the industry is used to, so the developers had to learn a new graphics technique, in addition to working with weird tools. With M2 we've changed to the three-sided polygonal graphics, so people familiar with the industry standard already know how to do M2 stuff. So again, with M2 the graphics aren't as oddball, and the tools are already there.

GF: How SGI-based is the M2 development environment?

DN: From what I've seen, the development system is still on a Mac, and the artists are using SGI's to create the original art, which they then port over to our system because the art creation tools don't exist on Macintosh.

Origins of the Bulldog

GF: Where did the names and code-names 3DO, Opera, Bulldog, and M2 come from?

DN: When we were at NTG developing this thing, Opera went through many different code-names - Tiger, something else, then Nickel, and then Opera, which RJ didn't like but he wasn't around, so too bad. The reason for Opera was because we were going back and forth to EA a whole lot, doing our own negotiations with Trip, and Trip wanted to be absolutely certain that no one would have a clue what we were doing. So I picked Opera, because that way I could tell people as I walked in and out of EA that we were working on a CD music title. I doubt this fooled anybody. We were singing "West Side Story" in the lobby and people would laugh... Bulldog is because of John. John is our bulldog. He grabs onto your ankle and explains to you what he needs to explain to you, whether you like it or not. Whether or not your bladder is about to

burst and the blood is rushing to your ears, no matter how loud the bathroom is calling to you, John must explain this to you. John is a brilliant guy, and those who know him understand he's spectacularly brilliant, and he just won't let go.

JS: RJ actually named Bulldog and bought this stuffed bulldog which is sitting in my cube right now.

DN: It comes with a crowbar to fend off the bulldog.

TU: Trip changed the codename to M2.

DN: Trip also named the company, and the reason for the name 3DO is the high popularity of words that end in the letter O, such as audio, video, stereo. Our cafeteria is called Eatio, go figure.

John "Bulldog" Sell poses next to his namesake. Shortly after the photo was taken, Needle beat him to a bloody pulp before returning to the Jovian mothership.

GF: Any idea what the final name for M2 will be?

TU: Not yet.

DN: Maybe "The Video Game Player Formerly Known As Bulldog."

GF: Personally I like Interactive Multiplayer 2, just kidding. Do you expect any legal entanglements with a possible M3?

DN: Yes, well there is an extremely serious issue where M2 is the name of the father of one of our employees, who is in fact M3. [Their initials are all M. -Ed.] He has graciously allowed us to do M2, but we will have to seriously think the negotiations through and decide whether or not we want to pay him any money, or chocolate as is often the case.

The Future

GF: How long will the "bit" arms race continue? Indefinitely?

RJ: Everyone wants a holodeck.

JS: No one's ever had too much.

GF: Well we certainly haven't, but there gets to a point where the human eye can only distinguish so many colors and so many frames of animation, and you run into the limits of today's television sets, right?

DN: It goes past just the video....

GF: Are you referring to some sort of device which attaches to the hardware that enhances the experience?

DN: Many people forget that teleportation is not just from a starship down to a planet's surface; you can teleport lots of smaller stuff also. Instead of video, you can have on the floor of your living room the teleported object which comes from the main database back in Wyoming.

RJ: In a recent "Scientific American" article they talk about this new electron technology. At the core of every computer there are bits which are either zeroes or ones; well, they've got these devices that can capture a single electron, and depending on whether or not it's captured one, it can designate whether it's a zero or a one. So in the future they're going to be able to design circuits which work at the electron level. Compared with what we're doing today, it's a 40 foot trailer compared with your fingernail - the level of advancement in that technology alone is mind-boggling. Twenty years from now, home entertainment systems will be electron-based.

GF: RJ and Dave, you have once again blown my mind. Teleporting electrons. Wow. Thanks to everyone for your time, and best of luck in the future.
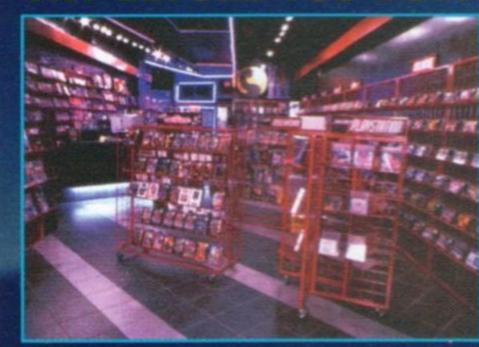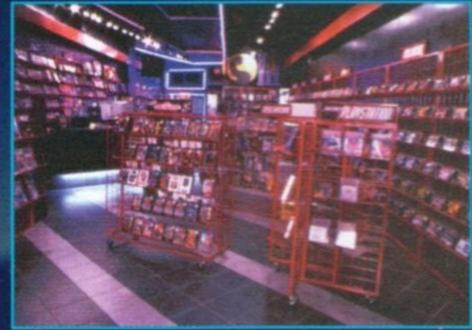
DN: Wait, leave the tape running! We'll be able to find out what anyone says in here...[CLICK!]

Bigger than a mini-computer, this is the original prototype of Opera. It barely survived a first-class flight (it got its own seat) to Japan when 3DO was first negotiating with Matsushita. Today it sits in a plastic trophy case in Eatio.

Nick Rox's PLAYSTATION PREVIEWS

SFII: the Animated Movie

Wait... don't get excited! SF2: the Animated Movie is primarily a database and FMV adventure game. The only fighting you can do is between a Monitor Cyborg and Ryu. SFIITAM comes out in '95.

Ridge Racer Revolution

Yes! Ridge Racer with more tracks! RRR, due out in '95, will feature a currently unknown number of extra tracks, several of which will be exclusive to the PlayStation. Revolution also has much better 3-D, a rear-view mirror and effects such as lens flares. We'll have more on Namco's RRR soon!

Kileak 2: Reason in Madness

The sequel to Sony Music entertainment's rather mediocre Kileak the Blood will likely be out in early '96. KTB2 now has outdoor scenes and a more involved plot. We'll keep you posted on this one...

Twinbee Miracle

Yet another Konami PlayStation RPG, Twinbee Miracle is one of the Twinbee 10th Anniversary games coming out next year. With gorgeous graphics and a DQ-like battle system, TM is a sure-fire power CD.

Snatcher

The best digital comic-style game of all time, Konami's Snatcher, is on its way to the PlayStation. This version promises much improved graphics and sound... need I say more? Snatcher's due sometime in '95.

TRACY
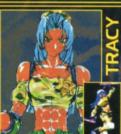
Though VERY early in development with only two character models fully textured and two stages completed, Battle Arena Toshinden 2 already looks light years better than its predecessor. TSD2 will feature 2 new characters: Tracy, a Tonfa-wielding girl and a mysterious sickle fighter called Chaos. All eight fighters return, and you can now choose the last boss Gaia from the outset. Gaia no longer wears his armor or helmet, and has long grey hair. Other character changes include giving Fo a hat, Run Go a life jacket, Sofia an even MORE shredded outfit and Kayin now has body armor. TSD2 is said to use light-sourcing in new, dramatic ways nobody has ever seen, such as clouds passing over the sun. We'll be back with more info on Toshinden 2 as soon as possible!

CHAOS

- Nick Rox

ECTS

Total NBA '96 (PS) Avail. Dec.
SCE's new PS BB game features the most realistic gameplay environment ever in a sports sim. The polygon characters and sweeping 30 fps produces near-TV quality visuals.

Cyberspeed (PS) Avail. Nov.
Mindscape's futuristic driver in which you're tethered to the track, Cyberspeed looked promising.

Revolution X
The first PS gun game, Acclaims *Revolution X*, has you saving Steve and the dudes from Aerosmith from the evil N.O.N. Aerosmith tunes drive the action home. (Avail. Oct.)

Sega Rally (Saturn)
Sega Rally continues to amaze us every time we see it. The version demo'ed at ECTS, though early, proved once and for all that *Rally* will smoke *Daytona*. (Available Dec. U.S.)

Rock n' Roll Racing (PS)
Don't get excited. It's just a demo. Look for actual shots in the near future. (TBA)
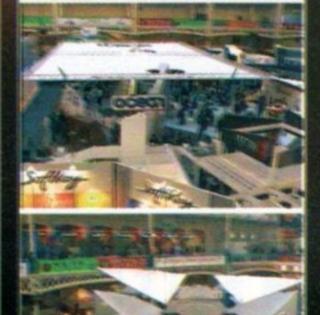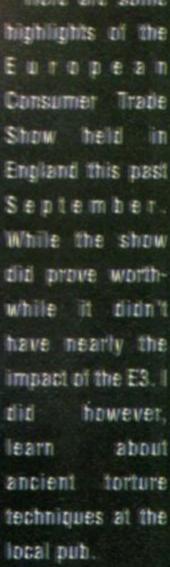
Alien Trilogy (PS)
I want it, I want it, I want it. Acclaim's *Alien Trilogy* will have Alien fans glued to the screen, guaranteed. (Avail. Nov. U.S.)
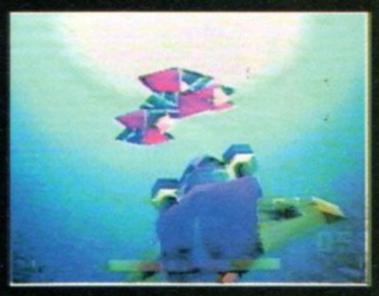
Fade to Black (PS)
Here's the game that everyone's yappin' about. The sequel to Flashback is indeed a masterpiece. It's due out (US) in November.

VR Golf (PS)
Finally, a golf game with smooth scaling and multiple camera angles. Interplay's *VR Golf* debuts early next year.

Zero 5 (Jag)
Atari's 360 degree poly shooter, *Zero 5*, looked wickedly promising. But the question is, as always... when?

A Major Sega/SNK Deal?

This month we start off with a whole slew of Sega news. Word on the streets in Tokyo is that Sega (Japan) and SNK (Japan) are negotiating cross-platform licensing. Under the terms of the potential venture, SNK would be able to release current or future Sega games on the Neo•Geo, and likewise Sega would be able to release current or future Neo•Geo games on the Saturn. This deal is still under consideration; stay tuned.

...AND a major Sega/M2 Deal?...

Next up is a rumored (and I do mean rumored, this one sounds way out there) long-term arrangement between Sega and Matsushita (the parent company of Panasonic, the first and most widely-recognized manufacturer of 3DO hardware). Sources have hinted that the big M wants to outright BUY Sega of Japan. If this occurs, Matsushita would restructure Sega into a 100% dedicated software developer. Matsushita would then somehow merge Sega's hardware line-up with 3DO's future product plans, i.e. M2 would in some capacity represent Sega's next hardware platform both for home and the arcades. Some critics feel that Sega has confused the market with two below-expectations systems (the Sega CD and the 32X) and the lukewarm response to those two platforms has impeded initial success of Saturn. Streamlining all of Sega's technology into the 3DO line would theoretically be the solution, if this deal is real. Again, this is a rumor, we will update you if it develops.

...AND 2 New Sega Systems?!

Lockheed Martin, a NASA contractor and makers of Sega's Model 1 and Model 2 arcade hardware, is rumored to have started work on a new home platform, Saturn 2, and new arcade hardware, Model 3. Saturn 2 is said to be a brand new, stand-alone, 64-bit machine. The unit is rumored to use Lockheed Martin's R3D/100 graphics chip set which includes a graphics processor and a geometry processor both on one chip. The Saturn 2 is rumored to be scheduled for release sometime in the 4th quarter of '96. Obviously, if Sega has Saturn 2 in development but is also talking to Matsushita, many factors are up in the air.

Turning to the arcade, Sega's Model 3 hardware, which will be debuted in *Virtua Fighter 3*, is said to have a Power PC processor designed by Hitachi. It will use Lockheed Martin's R3D/1000 chip, which is capable of rendering 750,000 texture-mapped polygons with every feature (gouraud shading, etc.) known to mankind. Rumor has it that Sega wants the Model 3 to produce at least five million texture-mapped polygons at 60 frames per second, but since the hardware has to be finished by the end of this year, Lockheed Martin doesn't know if this will be possible. Supposedly, Lockheed is internally targeting three million polys, and that will most likely be the final number.

M2: D-Day Is Coming

Here are a list of some of the most current games planned for the M2: *Descent 2*, *Clay Fighter III*, *Mortal Kombat 3*, *Realms of Valor*, *Disruptor 7*, *Top Gun*, *Return Fire 2*, *Road Rash*, *Iron Blood*, *Wing Commander IV*, *Madden*, *NHL*, and *FIFA Soccer*. Other possibilities include Midway's *War Gods* (which is now rumored to be using the M2 hardware for the

arcade version), the sequel to *D's Diner* (which is now in real-time 3-D), *Alien Trilogy*, and possibly *The Crow* by Acclaim. The M2's release date is still said to be very close to the Ultra 64's this April '96.

Final NU64 Plans at Shoshinkai...

At the Nintendo Shoshinkai show in Makuhari Japan this November 24th through the 26th, Nintendo will be formally unveiling the Japanese Ultra 64, now entitled Nintendo64 (the Japanese Ultra was originally going to be called Ultra Famicom, but due to copyright entanglements with a company who already had the word "Ultra" trademarked, Nintendo was forced to change the name). At the show will be the Nintendo64 itself, the Bulky Drive, and the Ultra controller. Over 100 Ultra units will be on display, and over 10 playable games will also be on hand. We expect (or are hoping) to see: *Killer Instinct 2*, *Top Gun*, *Ultra Mario Bros.*, *Final Fantasy 7*, and *Mario Kart 2*. Also at the Shoshinkai, Nintendo will be GIVING AWAY 100 Ultra 64 units along with 300 game paks (supposedly comprised of the first three NU64 games available at launch).

By the way, the Ultra controller (detailed last issue) which will debut at the Shoshinkai has one more feature we forgot to mention: On the back of the controller there is a port for the Ultra 64 Memory Card. Yes, the memory card goes in the controller, not the system, as was previously expected. Of course, we'll be there with cameras a-blazin'.

More NU64 Games

Here's a quick rundown of other Ultra games currently in development. Nintendo's next *Zelda* sequel, which as of six months ago was still destined for the SNES, has been upgraded to NU64 status and is currently 50% complete. Shigeru Miyamoto felt it wiser to spend the extra time bringing Zelda to the Ultra, since by the time it would be complete, everyone would be clamoring for the 64-bit system. The good news here is that concept, design, and game layout are already complete. All that has to be done is to create NU64 game graphics... that should be finished by May of '96, putting the game out in the summer, as reported previously right here. Also in the works is the sequel to *F-Zero*, which will be available with the launch of Ultra 64. According to a friend of mine at Rare, concept and design have begun on *Ultra Donkey Kong*. Programming should start sometime early next year, and the game should be released in '97.

Virgin has confirmed to me their first NU64 project is *Stacker*, a puzzle game slated for release next summer. Enix is another company who is said to be making Ultra games; their first title is supposedly a 3-D action/RPG being made by Quintet, the same team that brought us *SoulBlazer*. Another big announcement is the official confirmation that LucasArts has begun work on a NU64-exclusive game entitled *Shadows of the Empire*. This action game is based on the *Star Wars* series, but it features new characters and a whole new story. The most shocking news is that George Lucas is reportedly supervising the development; *Shadows* should be out in the 3rd quarter of '96.

EA Buys Probe

A source returning from the recent ECTS in England informed me that the hot rumor going around was that Electronic Arts had bought Probe (developer of MK for the Genesis, *Aliens*, *Primal* 32X and about a billion other titles) for 50 million pounds ($80 million U.S.). I imagine Probe would begin M2 development immediately.

Capcom Updates

Last month we reported that according to a very knowledgeable source, *Street Fighter III* will appear exclusively on the Ultra 64 for one year. Well, a Capcom U.S.A. representative called to emphatically deny this and state (without mentioning any specifics) that Capcom would not lock itself into just one platform for SF III because it would cut into profit potential, and SF III would appear on "multiple" platforms. We now have two extremely conflicting reports on the subject, both according to reliable sources; which is the truth? Although no one knows for sure when SF III will be released in the arcades, it seems like an impending event that draws closer with every month. Keep it right here, gang, we'll (hopefully) get to the bottom of this mess...

Also, in some sad Capcom news, Capcom of Japan recently laid off 200 employs due to cash flow problems. People at Capcom have hinted that with all of the overstocking of product at their main warehouses (mainly comprised of too many copies of the various SF2's for home systems), the company needed to cut costs to recover from its losses. We certainly wish Capcom the best of luck and a speedy turnaround to any problems. Nothing a 32-bit *Ghouls and Ghosts* wouldn't cure I'm sure.

On a brighter note, Capcom will bring *Toshinden 2* to arcades everywhere this November under the Capcom name. Don't expect Capcom to release the home versions however - (Takara/Sony/whoever will be responsible for the PS version which releases in Japan this December and in the U.S. in the 2nd quarter of '96).

Sony News

Recently, Olaf Olafsson, Sony North America's president, resigned from office. First Steve, now Olaf. Sony's obviously experiencing some growing pains, cause a-growin' they are. The PlayStation sold 100,000 units the day it released! In reaction to our Steve Race interview, (he resigned just days later, maybe we shouldn't have coaxed him to dance in the fountain) we have received many letters in rebuttal to Steve's take on *MotorToon* (see The Postmeister). We'll send your messages along and perhaps this great game will be reconsidered. Well, that about wraps it up for November. Stay tuned to Other Stuff in the months ahead, things are starting to heat up.
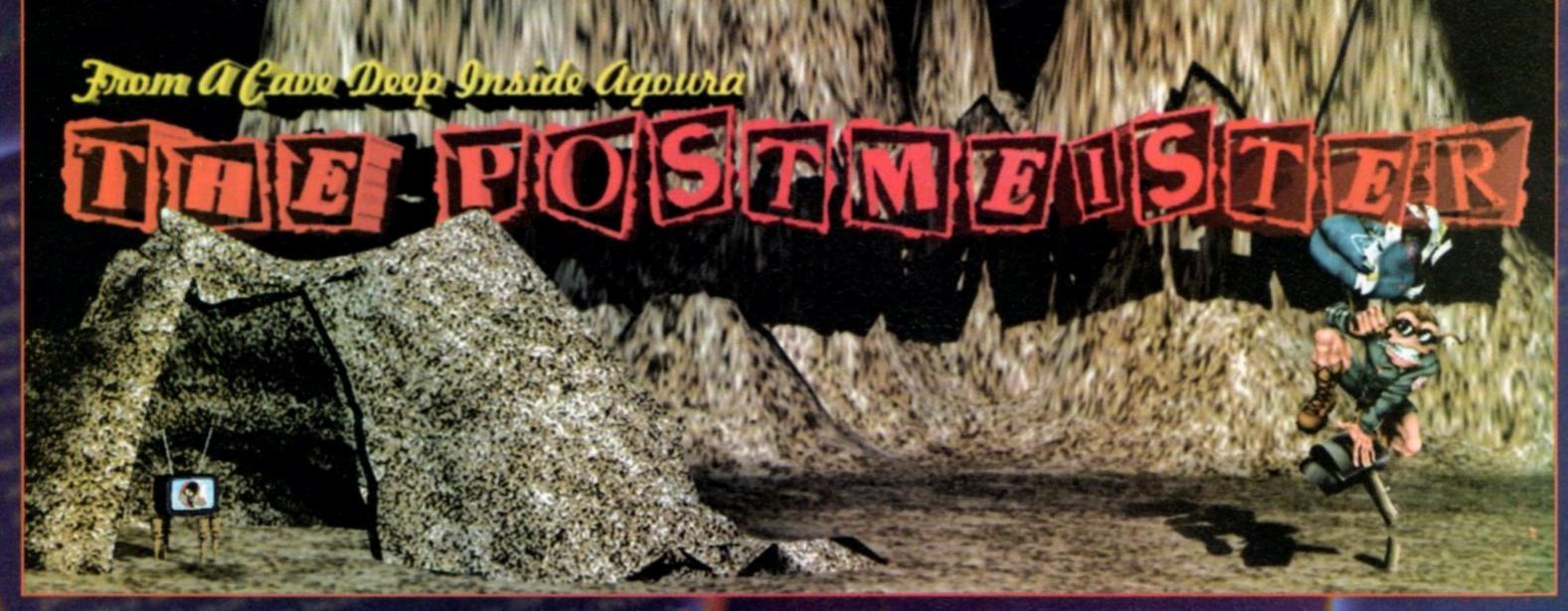
Dear Postmeister,

I am writing in reply to the interview you guys conducted with Steve Race, President of SCEA. I really liked it until I got to the part where he explains why they were failing to released *Motor Toon* in the U.S. He said that the game was "juvenile," and there were some mechanics that "don't make a lot of sense to the American mentality." Who does he think he is to judge the American mentality? It is people like him that prevent us from getting those great Japanese carts that we deserve...
(Derrick Kaufman, Lombard, IL)

Dear Postmeister,

Please direct this letter to Steve Race: president of Sony Computer Entertainment of America.

After reading the September issue of GameFan, I was compelled to say something because you seem to want to know what your customers are thinking... I am a 21 year old who has put my PlayStation on reserve two days ago. I'm personally choosing to purchase it because I believe your system is a viable alternative to Sega and Nintendo, who have developed, over the years, distasteful habits. After reading the reviews for *Battle Arena Toshinden*, I realized that you're starting to fall into that pit as well. THIS NONSENSE MUST STOP...
(Marcus Jones, Bronx, NY)

Dear Postmeister,

I've already pre-purchased my PlayStation and have the utmost respect for Sony. Remarks made by SCEA President Steve Race, however, have me concerned that Sony may have usurped Nintendo just so they can take their infamous place on the censorship throne. The difference is Sony's brand of censorship is totally unnecessary!

When I learned that *Battle Arena Toshinden*'s voices had been changed, I practically took a fit. I've endured dozens of butchered games for the Super Nintendo... And all these atrocities were committed in the name of "doing the best to satisfy the tastes of North American gamers." Now Steve Race has adopted that same mandate and plans to make "changes" to *Jumping Flash* next...
(Khari Taylor, Brampton, Ontario)

Wow! It seems that Steve Race's comments have crystallized a lot of the dissatisfaction towards American game changes, and we've received a pile of letters on that issue this month. First off, let me apologize to the writers of those last three letters for editing their letters down so much. I wish I could print every word of every letter we got on that matter, but we have nowhere near enough space for that.

Improving games is one thing, like putting the arranged soundtrack in Toshinden, but the word "Americanization" seems to draw nothing but disdain from our readers, and everyone here at Game Fan. Luckily, the changes to Jumping Flash were subtle - just a bit less voice and a bit more difficulty. I can only hope future Sony releases will fare that well... As you may have heard, Steve Race has parted ways with SCEA, so let's hope that his replacement gives this matter a LOT of thought.

We must also remember that Sony is definitely not alone in their shame! Once people hear the new soundtrack to Sega's Cyber Speedway (formerly known as Gran Chaser),.. I don't even want to think about how much mail I"l get...

Dear Posty,

What a great day this has been! I've finally managed to get my hands on the latest issue of Gamefan (August '95), and, lo and behold, it's chock full o' Saturn codes, reviews, and best of all, previews, like those two pages of bliss, 38 & 39. But the real reason for my happiness is the 6 games on those pages in the categories of RPG, Action RPG, and Strategy RPG! This is too good to be true! You mean *Shining Wisdom*, *Riglord Saga*, *Dragon Force*, *Lunar*, *Rayearth*, and *Legend of Thor* are all being developed at the same time? Does that mean my BURNING desire for RPG's will finally be quenched?

And all the 3-D stuff coming out too... *Hang On GP*, and *Gran Chaser*, and, uh, *King of the Mountain Pass Spirits* (uh... yeah.), just to name a few, are proving that the Saturn can do excellent 3-D, just like I knew it could... But the amount of 3-D stuff coming out for Saturn seems to be tiny compared to the landslide of very impressive 3-D stuff for PlayStation. I don't understand this. I know that Saturn is (unfortunately) inferior to PlayStation in terms of displayed polygons/sec, but developers act like it's a Genesis and can't handle polygons at all. What's going on? Is it that these wimps are afraid to even try good 3-D on the Saturn? Or are they afraid that Saturn's gonna flop? (Perish the thought... I just spent $400 on this thing!)

One last question: Is this new Nomad handheld by Sega going to be essentially a Genesis, or is it going to be a 16-bit system that's compatible with Genesis titles, but has greater capabilities? Please tell me this is a new and improved system with backwards compatibility! This meager 64-color palette isn't hitting the spot anymore!!!
(Sean "Maverick" Butler, Cleveland, OH)

You missed a few on the RPG count, Sean! Don't forget Hudson's *Tengai Makyoh Gaiden: The 4th Revelation*, Climax's futuristic Landstalker-type game, *Dark Savior*, Sega's *Aya's Adventure* (previously titled *Sega Adventure*), Yanoman's Shining Force-like *Feda: Emblem of Justice Remake*, Treasure's not-really-an-RPG-but-still-cool *Guardian Heroes*, Konami's Digital Comic, *Snatcher*, Crystal Dynamics' *Legacy of Kain*, Strategy RPG *Master of Monsters: The Golden Ring*, Jaleco's *Fantajic Adventure* (yes, Fanta-Jic), Pai's age-of-exploration-themed *Daibohken: Saint Elmo's Fire*, and a host of 3-D RPG's including *Faradoon*, *Arena*, and Atlus' *Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner*. Most promising of all is Sega's *Fantasy Earth*... Or is it *Phantasy Earth*? Still no confirmation. To say that Sega's aiming for the RPG market would not be an understatement. In fact, their new Japanese ad campaign declares them to be "The RPG King." Unfortunately, the only RPG's announced for US release are *Riglord Saga* (retitled *Mysteria: Lands of Lore*), and Crystal's *Legacy of Kain*. Sega'll probably pick up *Legend of Thor*, and maybe Working Designs will bring us *Rayearth* and *Lunar*, but that's not for sure.

The 3-D thing is pretty simple... The PlayStation specializes in 3-D, so developers tend to make their 3-D products on the PS, and their 2-D on the Saturn. Though there might not be much coming in terms of quantity, the quality is looking much better. *Sega Rally* looks phenomenal, a 500% improvement over *Daytona*. Core's doing some neat trick with Saturn 3-D, too, and Game Arts has a mech-type 3-D game on the way.

As for the Nomad, nope, it's just a Genesis with a screen. But imagine, any Genesis title, anywhere... Who'll notice a lack of colors on a small passive-matrix screen, anyway?

Dear Postmeister,
First let me congratulate you for your excellent work on your magazine. Second, I'm planning on buying an Ultra 64 and I was wondering if there was going to be a lot of RPG's available in the near future. As for the Super NES, do Square and Enix have any plans for 1996? Is *Secret of Mana 2* and *Romancing Saga 3* (or the other 2 *Sagas*) going to make it to the US? When will *Secret of Evermore* or *Breath of Fire 2* be available? And finally, will Enix's *Creation of Heaven and Earth* ever make it to the U.S.? Well, thanks for your time and keep up the good work on your excellent magazine!
(James Baker, Denver, CO)

Mixed news on the RPG front, as always. Final Fantasy and Zelda will be coming for the Ultra-64, but other than that, we have no titles we can announce... but you can bet that Enix is hard at work trying to show up Square. Mana 2 will be coming here, but not 'til next year. Enix doesn't want to take too much attention away from Evermore. The Romancing Saga series, beautiful epics, each and every one of 'em, complete with Square graphics, Square music, and Square stories, seems destined to waste away in Japan. Maybe we'll stick that into next month's RPG special, just so you know what you're missing. 3's coming in Japan on 11/11, BTW. Evermore and Breath of Fire 2 should be out around the time you read this. Enix's Creation of Heaven and Earth, called Tenchi Sozo in Japan, and to be called "Genesis" here, is on target for an early '96 release, also look for Dragon Warrior 5 (DQ6 in Japan) next year.

Quick Answers:

"So," asked no less than 7 different readers this month, "is G-Craft really a part of Square?" Well, not really. The connection is this: Square formed G-Craft as an independent company, retains a sizeable amount of ownership of them, and gave them their first job. However, they're free to develop games for whomever they wish. They have no rights to any Square games, not even Front Mission (which they made), and could not bring Square games to other platforms. However, they've learned from the best, and their first two creations, Front Mission and Arc the Lad, show serious future potential. Front Mission: Gun Hazard is being developed (under Square supervision) by a new company, Omiya.

What about Ultra Killer Instinct? Ah, if I had a nickel for every time I was asked that one, why, I'd have... um... 35 cents. Okay, well, anyway, NO! There will be no Killer Instinct 1 for the Ultra! It's an SNES exclusive. And, believe it or not, there are no plans to release Killer 2 to the arcades. As of right now, it'll be an Ultra exclusive.

Another common Ultra question... How come we said 100,000 polygons/second in earlier issues, but 600,000 now? Simply put, the 100,000 was the target figure Nintendo aimed at when first developing the hardware, 2 years ago. 600,000 is the performance mark of the final system.

We've had a couple questions about the new Saturn operating system. People are wondering if this is an attachment you have to buy, something that is only in newly made Saturns, or something that is put on the games themselves, and loaded into the hardware from there. The correct answer? None of the above. It's actually just something for development systems, that developers can use to make far better 3-D, and do it easier. Check out Sega Rally for the first example of its power. But the point is, it's not something any hardware owners will have to worry about.

Brian Justin of Sunderland, MD, asks what's up with Ultra Doom. In short, it's an original Doom game, not a translation of 1 or 2 on the PC, and will be a launch title for the American Ultra.

Aaron Louvorn Harris (Mobile, AL) wants to know why he can't find the often-featured-in-Game-Fan Skeleton Krew anywhere. Unfortunately, US Gold didn't have as much confidence in the game as we did, and produced super limited quantities, which sold out fast. If you want to find one, you'll probably have to check outside of mainstream retail channels, such as mail order or specialty stores. It's worth the hassle, believe me.

To Daniel Kardell, writing a 3-pager all the way from Uppsala, Sweden, I wish I had the space to print your whole nove... er, letter, which we all enjoyed greatly. I can't tell you if Virtua Striker is Saturn bound, but a very similar-looking ST-V Soccer game is coming for the Saturn, as is Sega International Victory Goal, which should have all the real Euro-players you're looking for.

Jamason Finn (Seminole, FL) asked about the final Neo*Geo CD release plans. After many changes, SNK will now be releasing a single-speed (Ugh! Single!) drive for $399, in November or December. Look for maybe, hopefully, possibly (Dare I dream?) King of Fighters '95 as the pack-in.

Also, "Genan," you can play PlayStation game CD's on regular CD players to hear the music, but only if it's actually recorded on the CD, and not streamed (as is often the case).

Chris Davis (Livermore, CA) wants to know how Street Fighter Alpha and Street Fighter: the Movie are doing in the arcades. While SF:TM sinks fast, Alpha is currently #1, proving conclusively that there is justice in the world.

To Angel Ruedaflores, of Flagstaff, Arizona, the Bulky Drive (for Ultra) has a capacity of 130 megabytes, or 1040 megabits (cartridge games are measured in megabits).

That's all for this month, I wish I had the space and time to answer all of your questions... I really appreciate all the kind words, especially the understanding and condolences about the September issue incident. Keep writing, all, I'll see ya next month.

Write to me or I'll gun your President!
The PoStMan!
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