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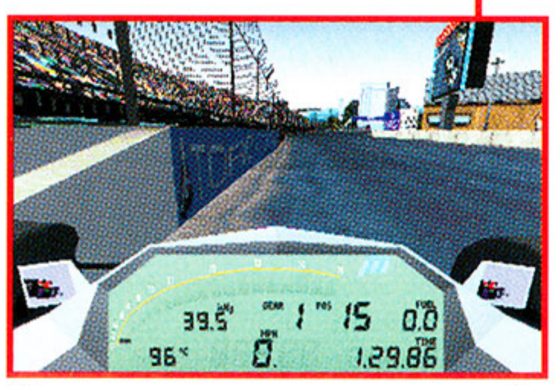

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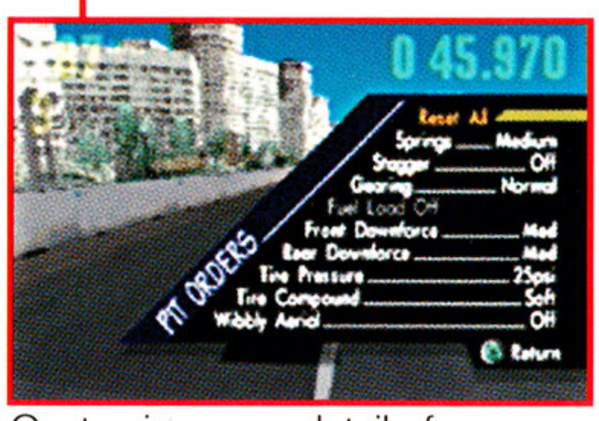

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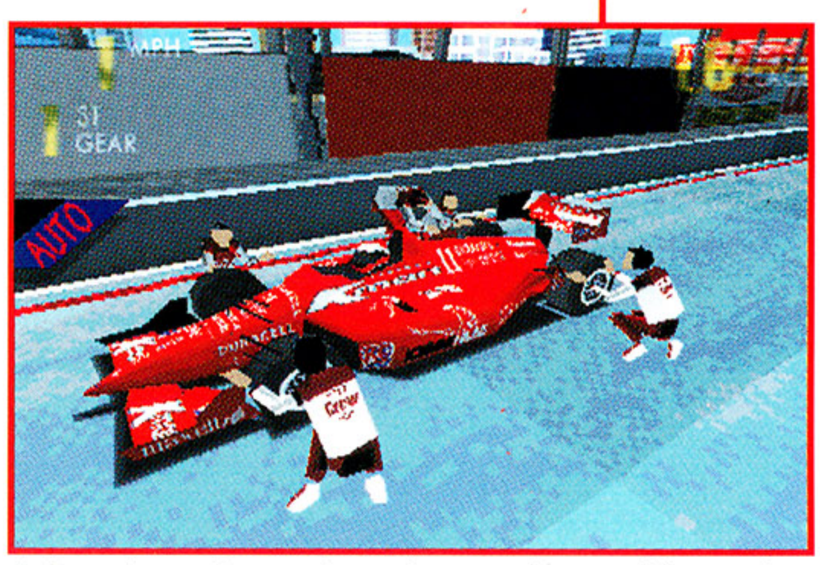

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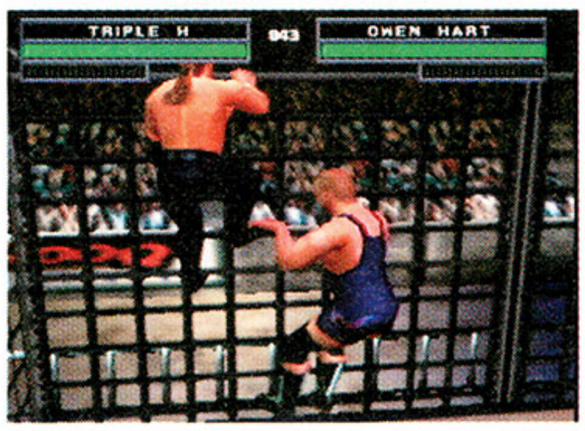

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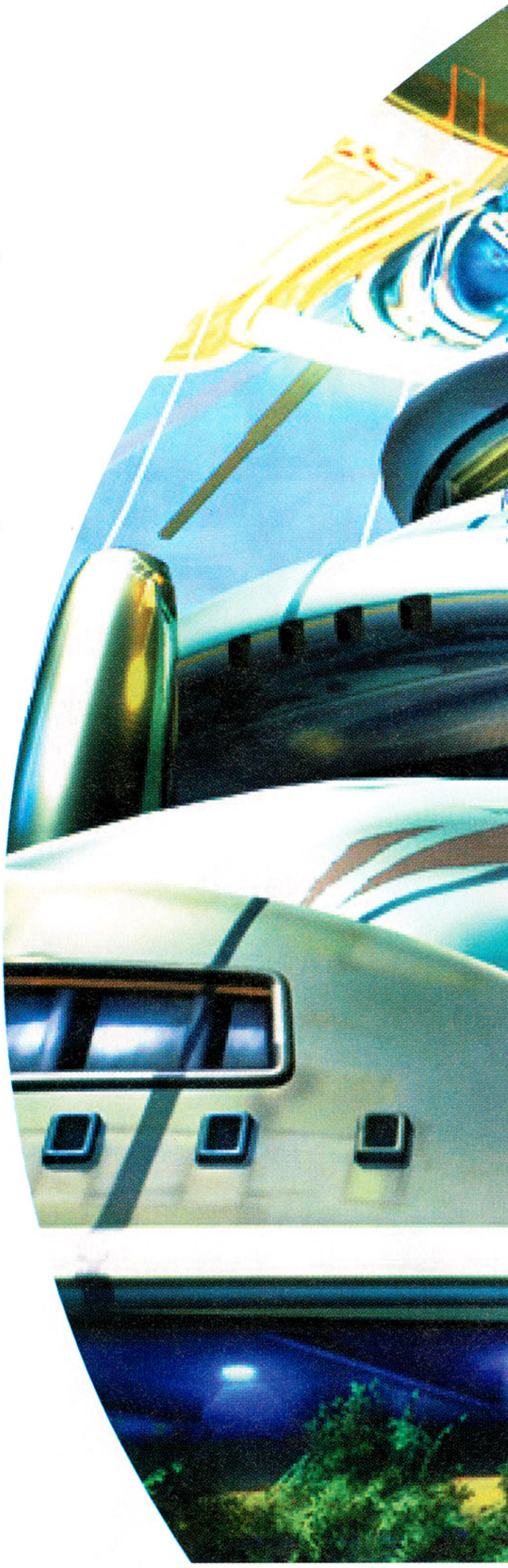

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N64

Bust-A-Move 2
Mike Piazza's StrikeZone
Mission: Impossible
Mortal Kombat 4

SATURN

Burning Rangers

PLAYSTATION

Adidas Power Soccer
Azure Dreams
Cardinal Syn
Fox Sports Soccer
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Road Rash 3D
Sentinel Returns
Tomba!
Vigilante 8
VR Baseball '99

PC

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What ever happened to Intellivision?

Mortal Kombat 4

Hardware

Stuff

Vigilante 8

Road Rash 3D

Published in the United States of America. **Game Buyer** (ISSN 1091-1685) (USPS 006-037) is published monthly by Imagine Media, Inc. ; 150 North Hill Drive; Brisbane, CA, 94005. Periodicals postage paid in Brisbane, CA and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: one year (12 issues) U.S. $20. Canada: $34. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #128220688). Foreign: $44. CPC Int'l Pub Mail # 1195492. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Game Buyer**, P.O. Box 50117, Boulder, Co, 80328-0117. In order to get into the perfect 'Game Designer' mode, I'd ingested several bottles of murky liquids, several cigarettes of questionable legality and topped it off with lots of Trucker's Helper. Then, I put an old Pink Floyd album on the stereo (I think it was Umma Gumma) and turned the volume to 'Earbleed'. Now I was ready to create the perfect video game! Heh, heh, heh... Entire contents copyright 1998, Imagine Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is strictly prohibited — Imagine Media, Inc is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in **Game Buyer**. All letters received are assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise. We reserve the right to edit such letters for reasons of space or clarity. Welcome to Game Buyer. Thanks a lot, Adlo...

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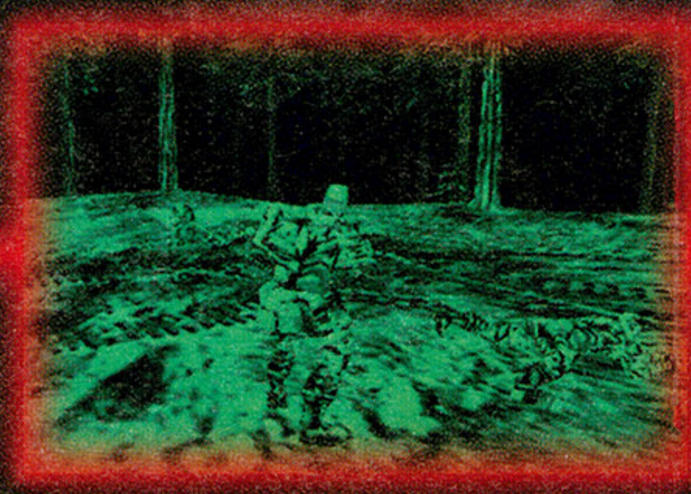

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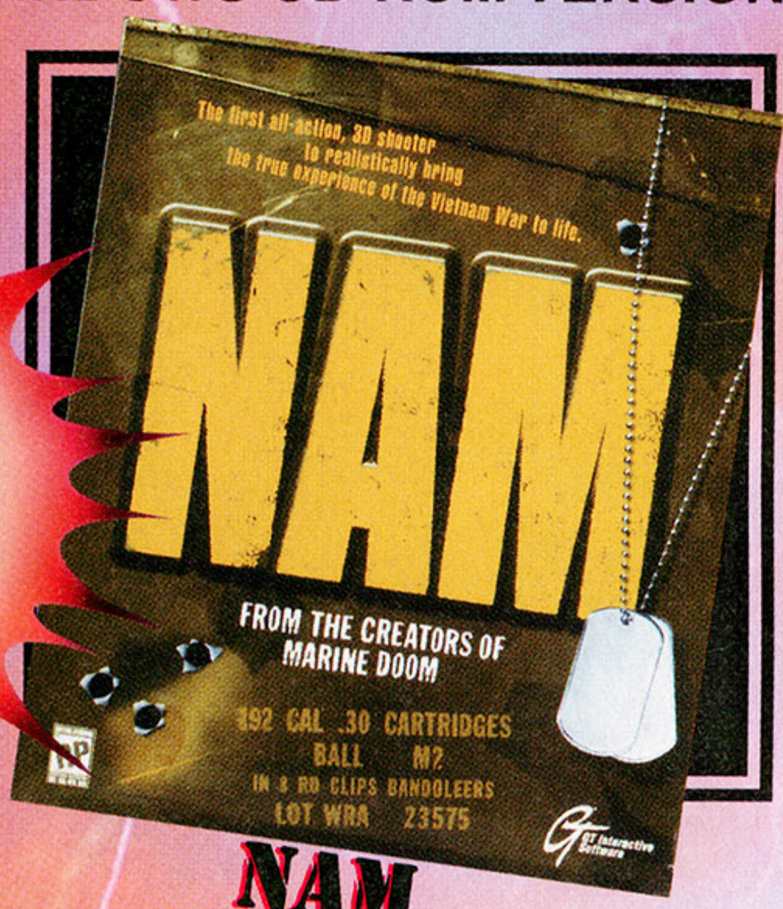

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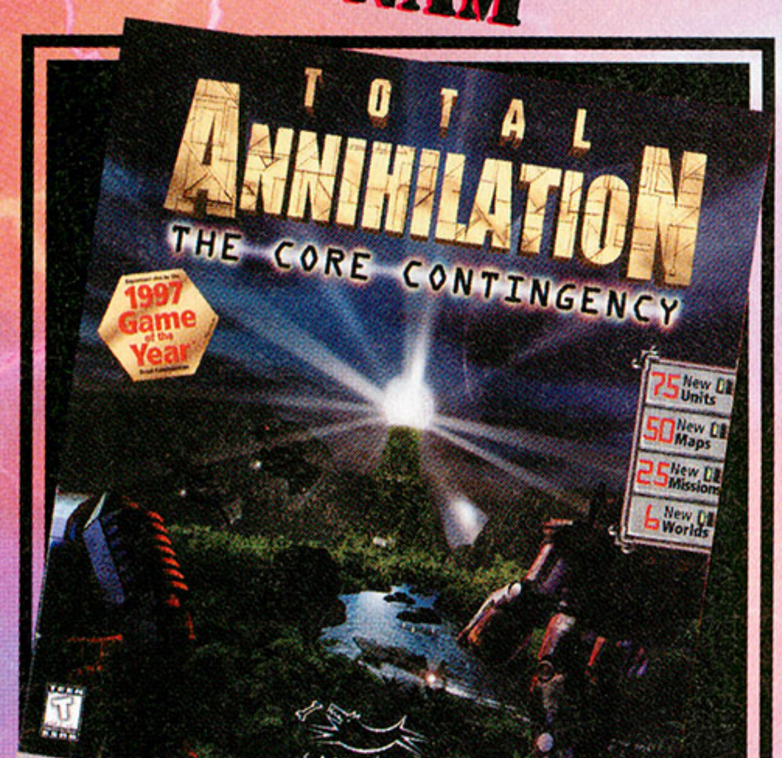

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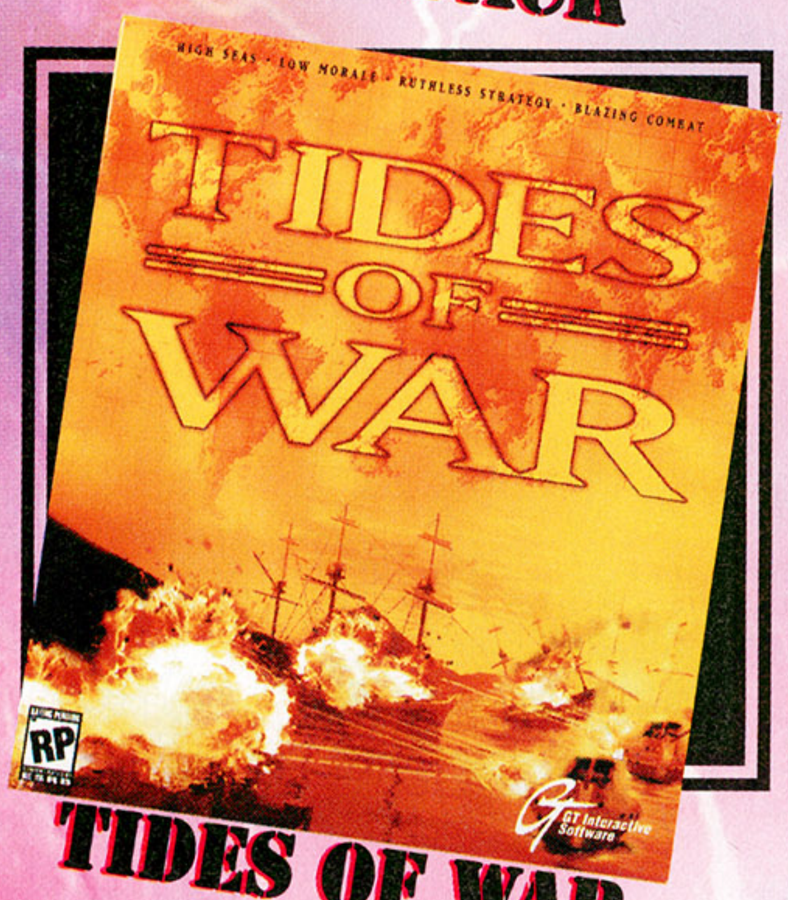

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REVIEWS

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Game Buyer's review system is designed to be the most accurate, informative and entertaining - to provide you with a powerful resource, a totally accurate buyer's guide. No more guesswork, no more reliance on the biased opinion of one reviewer, but rather, a scientific, well considered and evenly opinioned masterpiece. We don't even stop at simple game reviews. Where appropriate, we'll talk about prequels, development teams, even cheats to get you started. This is just the beginning.

You'll also notice that the balance between N64, PlayStation, PC and Saturn will shift from month to month - and there's a very simple reason: We intend to review every game, regardless of format. This month, we bring you Burning Rangers and, when Sega releases Dreamcast, we'll be reviewing games on that system too, so fear not, gentle Sega fans, we'll be taking good care of you.

You'll also notice, scattered among our news and previews, the occasional hand held review, including Game.Com and Game Boy systems. When color Game Boy arrives later this year, you can expect to see more of those, and possibly bigger reviews. And we still want more input. Let us know what you want to see in reviews that you don't see now. We'll consider any good ideas and you'll see a lot of evolution over the coming months. Without any further ado, let's get on with it!

RATING STAMPS

GOTTA HAVE IT! — Unreservedly reccomended. You can buy this without any fear of it sucking.

BUY IT! — Go ahead, buy it! this is a great game. You'll have fun. It's worth the money.

THINK ABOUT IT! — Read the review carefully. This may be worth it. Weigh the pros and cons.

DON'T BUY IT! — By all means read why, but this game sucks, so you may as well forget it.

FORGET ABOUT IT — The nadir of suckage. A festering boil on the butt-cheeks of gaming.

Info box — Check at a glance who made this game, for which machine, when it's available and all that good stuff. Game Buyer is all about information.

P.I.G. — Or Predicted Interest Graph if you prefer. We consider many factors for this: The ease of play, longevity of game, the result is a year-long graph indicating the life span of a game.

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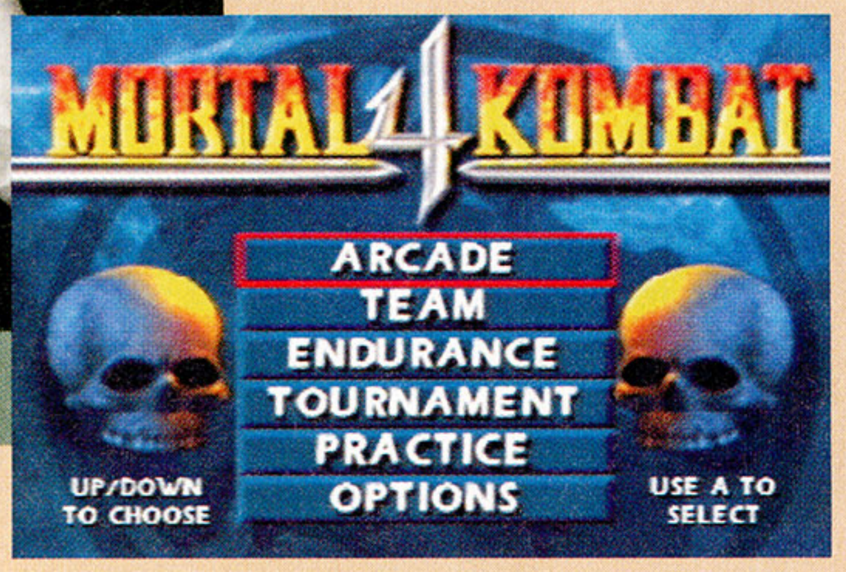
Game System — It's pretty darned important to know which machine the review is based on - so we made it simple - see at a glance which format the game is running on.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

Mortal Kombat 4's new polygonal 3D engine is a perfect match for Nintendo 64's hardware, but is the game really all that different from its predecessors?

All the old classics from the series are back in three glorious dimensions!

System: Nintendo 64
Price: $59.99
Genre: Fighting
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: M (Mature)
Recommended: Rumble pak
Publisher: Midway home Ent.
Developer: Eurocomm
Web: www.midway.com



MK4 features five different playing modes.

THE 3D DIFFERENCE

Using a strafe button, players can slide in and out of 3D, but Mortal Kombat 4 still plays as if it were entirely in 2D. The reason for this is because most of the time, battles never shift into the third dimension, despite the fact that they can. Polygonal or not, the action generally takes place in a very 2D-like setting. In fact, other than the game's useless sidestep feature, the only 3D camera pans occur when a fatality or special move is being performed. Still, the game's polygonal engine actually runs faster than the game ever did in 2D, and as we said before, it uses N64's hardware much better.

Just as the **Street Fighter** franchise has spawned sequel after sequel over the years, so has **Mortal Kombat**. The brainchild of Ed Boon and John Tobias, the **Mortal Kombat** series is best known for its excessive gore and gruesome fatalities.

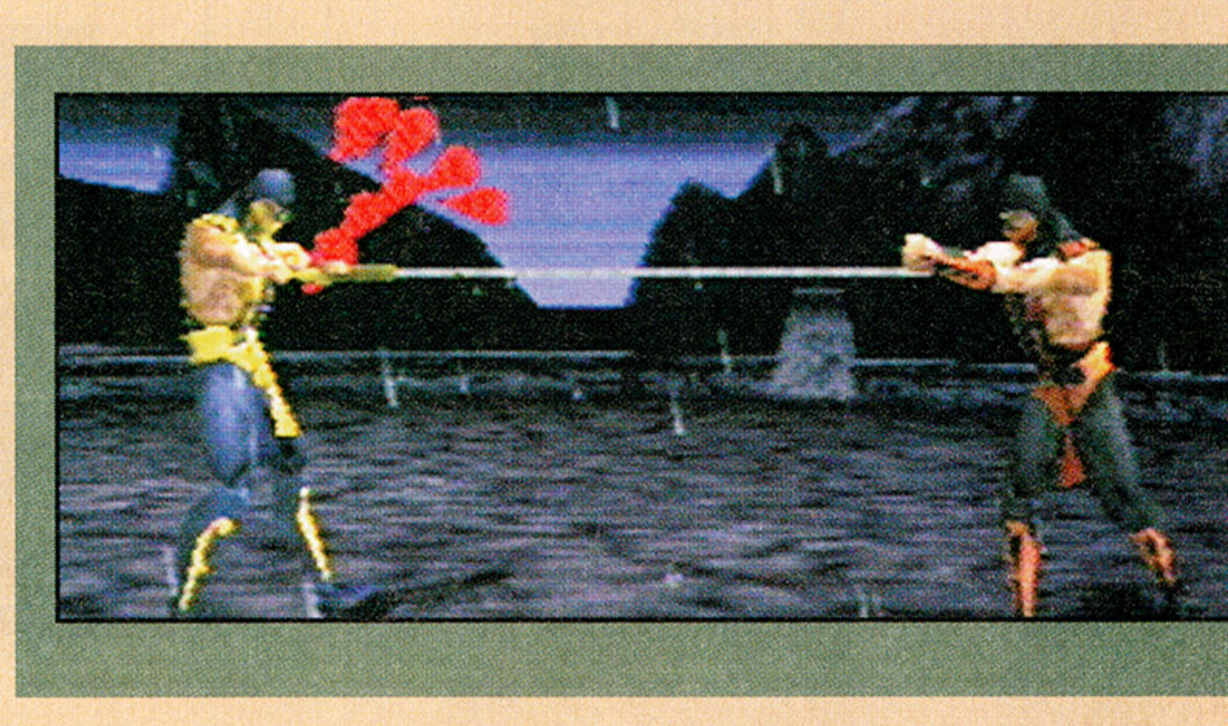
Mortal Kombat 4, Midway's latest in the series, is significantly different from previous incarnations of the fighter because it is now in full, polygonal 3D. This means that fighters no longer look flat and animate poorly. It also means that battlefields and arenas now have depth to them and fights aren't limited to one dimension. And because Nintendo 64 is the perfect console for such a game, it also means that **MK4** shines brilliantly on the system for a port that's even better than its arcade counterpart.

Mortal Kombat 4 continues along the same storyline (or lack thereof) that has infested the series since its inception. This time, mortals and immortals alike are fighting to save the Earth from the evil powers of fallen elder god, Shinnok, who has managed to escape from his prison in the Netherealm, to which he was banished by thunder god Raiden thousands of years ago. There you have it, all the workings of a major motion picture. Let's face it, this series will never be remembered for its compelling storyline. Thankfully, the FMV

continued on page 14

There are several modes of difficulty, from novice to natural born killer.

Players can select a team battle, in which their team battles with another player's five.



The jump to 3D

Midway has spared no expense tranforming the characters to 3D; all of the fighters in the game are beautifully texture-mapped 3D polygonal models, sporting flawless animation.

Long range projectiles play a huge part in Mortal Kombat 4.

MK4 features extensive particle effects, which add visual flair to the game.

continued from page 14

cutscenes (PlayStation version) of **Mortal Kombat Mythologies** is not repeated in **MK4**. The storyline is now highlighting with real-time cutscenes a la **StarFox** and **Goldeneye**. Developer Eurocom, utilizing **MK4**'s 16MB cartridge, has sampled most of the arcade's voiceovers, so fighters actually talk, as opposed to reading text.

A selection of more than 15 fighters make up the dangerous cast in **Mortal Kombat 4**. Regulars like Raiden, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Liu Kang and Johnny Cage are all back, rendered and texture-mapped in full 3D. There are also characters that the series has acquired over the years, like Quan Chi and Shinnok. In addition, the Nintendo 64 version of the game features exclusive hidden fighters that weren't in the arcade, like Goro and Meat, both of which are playable. Also, Eurocom, working closely with Midway, has included special codes to enhance players with different outfits. For example, Johnny Cage can be fitted with a tuxedo using one particular cheat.

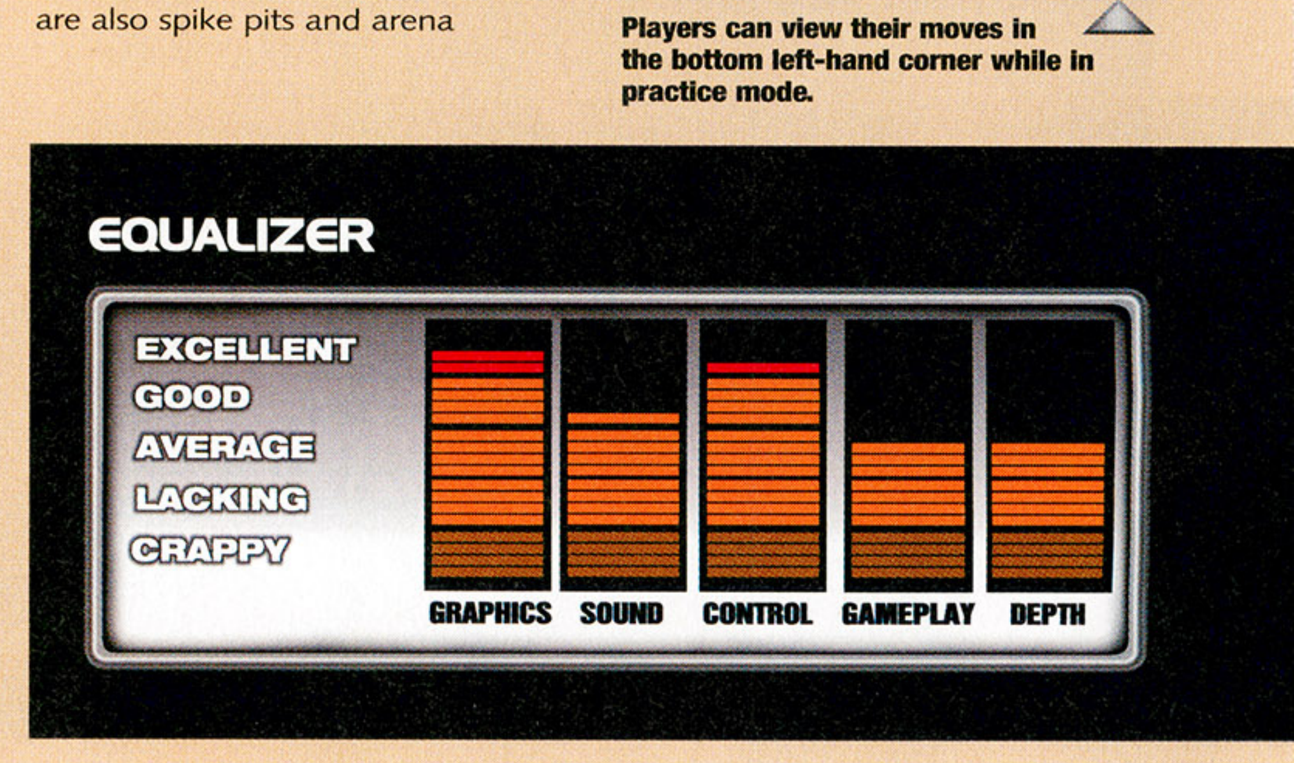
Gamers expecting a totally new gaming experience with **Mortal Kombat 4**, though, are bound to be in for a rude awakening. While the graphics engine has changed considerably, the game's fighting mechanics remain, more or less, the same. **MK4** utilizes Midway's unique fighting formula: fast action with emphasis on projectile-based weapons, easy combos and lots of blood. Each fighter can only perform a small range of unique attacks. Raiden, for example, can teleport, shoot lightning bolts, spin in a torpedo at opponents and brandish his special weapon. Reptile has five attacks. In addition to each fighter's regular arsenal of attacks, there are, of course, the series' trademark fatalities, of which each fighter has four. Character fatalities are gory to the point of being comical. Body parts explode in tiny pieces, splattering the screen with blood; heads roll, bodies are ripped in half, burned alive, frozen and broken apart, gnawed on, crushed, cracked and twisted, eaten alive - if it involves dying painfully, chances are it's represented in a fatality somewhere. Why watching an opponent's head break apart in a shower of brains and blood is so satisfying we're not sure, but it is, and we'd be lying if we said otherwise. The game's 3D environments are interactive, too. Players can be hurled into fan blades, whereupon they will be torn to pieces. There are also spike pits and arena

Each fighter can only perfom a small range of unique tricks and each has four fatalities

In practice mode, players can view their fighter's move list.

In practice mode, players can select their favorite character, opponent and arena.

Players can view their moves in the bottom left-hand corner while in practice mode.



Gore factor

The fatalities in Mortal Kombat 4 are excessively bloody to the point of being ridiculous, but players will love every juicy minute of it. Exploding body parts and a pulp-splattering mess are, of course, an MK trademark and the 3D makeover never looked so realistic.

weapons, like rocks and boulders, which can be picked up and thrown at an opponent. The problem with the game's fast and furious gameplay style, though, is that it all quickly wears thin, especially when stacked up against fighters like **Tekken 3**, that not only deliver more moves, but a more advanced fighting engine as well. But the biggest gripe we have with the way the game plays is that nothing has changed. The same old moves, the same old characters and the same old pace have been repackaged once again for **MK4** and it's a shame, because the graphics engine deserves so much more.

The biggest gripe we have is that nothing has changed

The development team has sacrificed nothing with the port to Nintendo 64. **Mortal Kombat 4** looks just as good with a blazing, steady framerate at all times. In fact, Eurocom has actually enhanced the game for its home conversion, implementing new light-sourcing effects that weren't in the arcade, a slew of exclusive codes and characters and even a new arena or two. Whereas Nintendo 64 simply wasn't cut out for the 2D **MK** games of old and it showed with sloppy animation, **Mortal Kombat 4**'s 3D polygonal engine never glitches on the system. And despite the fact they characters are now polygonal, they look more realistic than they ever have, thanks to clever texture-mapping and well-designed 3D models. Also the game's particle effects, mainly on projectiles and explosions, look stunning, adding that much more visual flair to a fight. The only problem we have with the game's look is the animation for fighters, which is smooth, but entirely stiff and robotic.

Mortal Kombat 4 is, in our opinion, the best game of the franchise and Nintendo 64's best fighter, but the game is not perfect. Sure, the game has a whole new 3D look, but underneath all that, it's still just **Mortal Kombat**. At the risk of sounding redundant, it boils down to this: fans of the series will no doubt love the game, but if you never liked it before, you still won't.

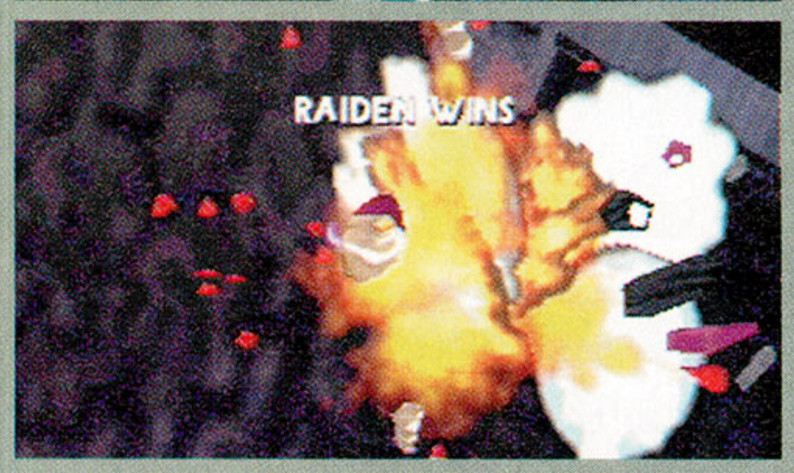
The fighting action is quick and brutal as ever.

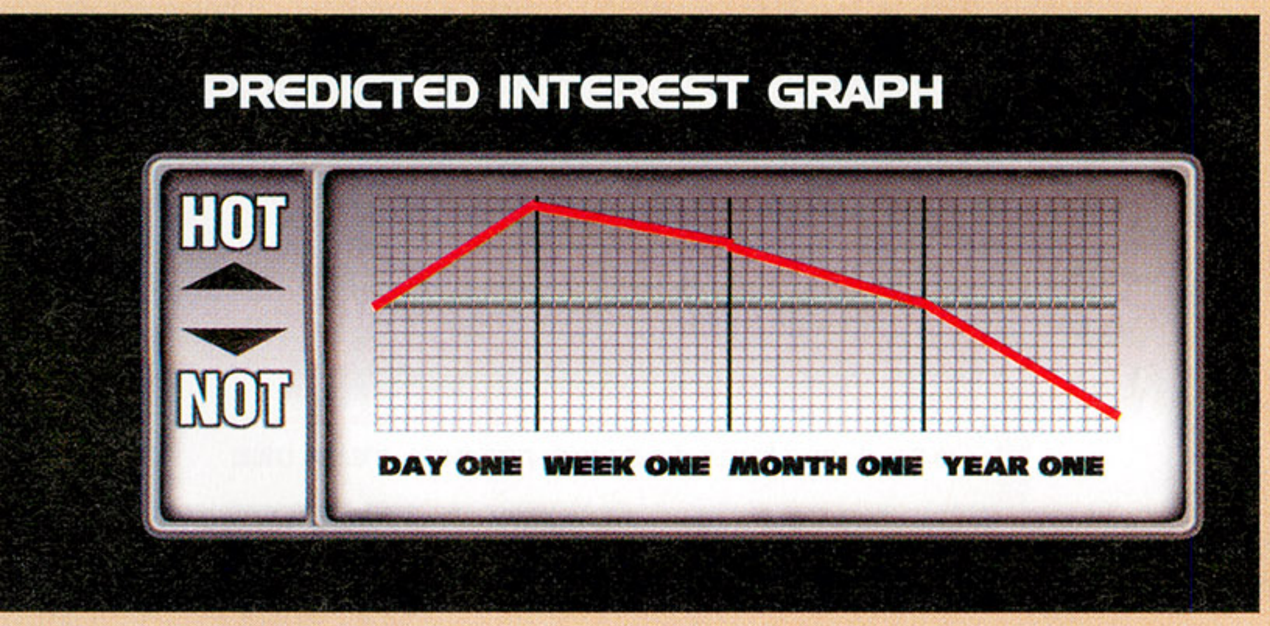
BUY IT!

★★★★☆

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DEATH

Fatality! Raiden picks up an opponent and electrocutes them to death in a bloody explosion. The Mortal Kombat series has literally thought of every conceivable way someone can be killed.





REVIEW

MIKE PIAZZA'S StrikeZone

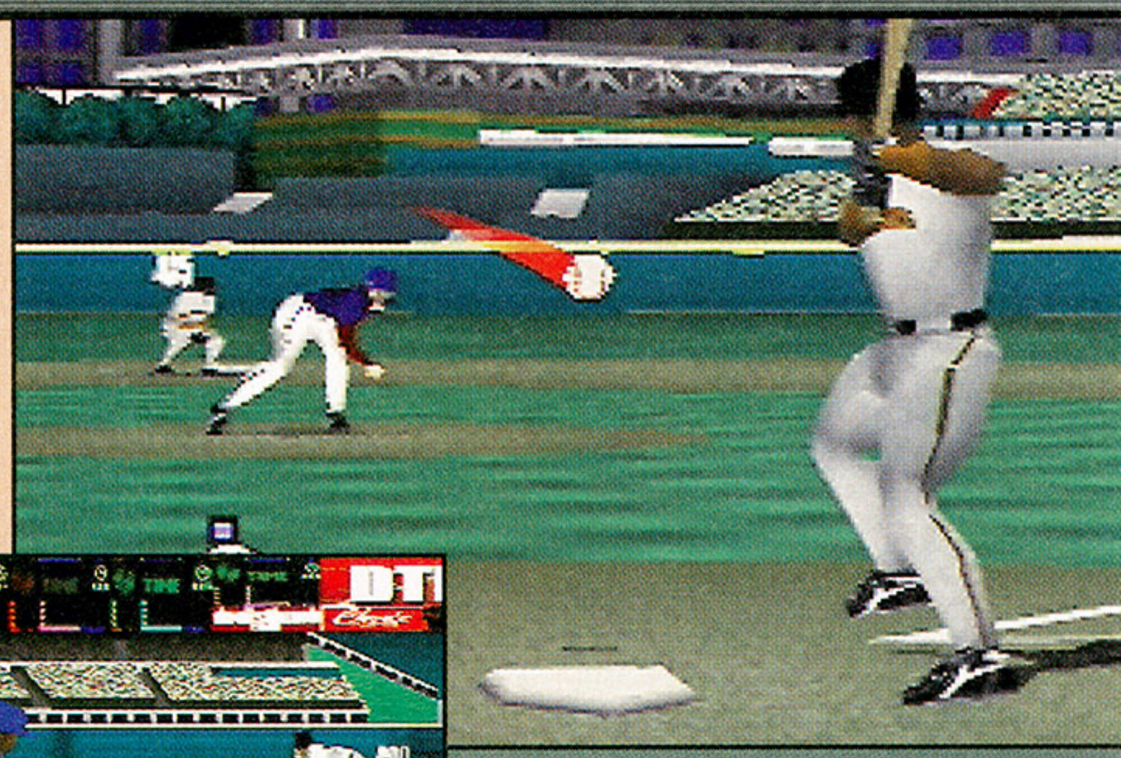
Considering the atrocious graphics and dismal gameplay in **Mike Piazza's StrikeZone**, perhaps StrikeOut would have been a more appropriate name.

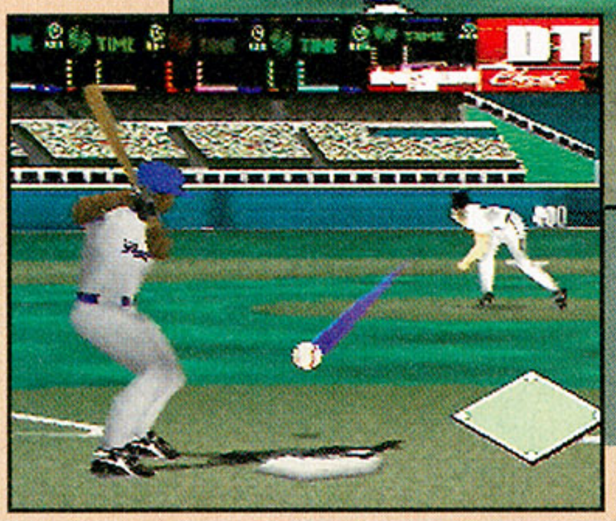
Following Acclaim's **All Star Baseball '99** and Nintendo's **Major League Baseball Featuring Ken Griffey Jr., Mike Piazza's StrikeZone** can only be classified as the biggest N64 disappointment of 1998.

Visually, **StrikeZone** is the epitome of bad N64 graphics. The players are so blurry and lacking in detail that they look more like gelatinous blobs than actual people. Despite the stadiums' 'vaseline smeared on glass' hazy appearance, they are at least decent facsimiles of real structures. There seems to be a number of missing frames in the play animations because nothing is ever smooth.

StrikeZone is so badly designed that even though the game is playable, the gameplay experience offers only a modicum of enjoyment. The batter/pitcher interface is the most perplexing design flaw, with its offset camera angle that makes it nearly impossible to determine if a pitch is a strike or ball.

Mike Piazza's StrikeZone is supposed to be an arcade style game (as the 900 feet homers in simulation mode attest to), but imbuing the game with a 'wacky' nature does not make it fun. **StrikeZone** isn't baseball, it's blasphemy.





Mike Piazza's StrikeZone features the most abysmal batter/pitcher interface in recent memory. Forget precision pitch placement, the red streak means strike and the blue streaks means ball.

System: Nintendo 64
Price: $54.99
Genre: Sports
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Controller pack
Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: Devil's Thumb Ent.
Web: www.gtgames.com

HEAD TO HEAD

ALL STAR BASEBALL '99
PUBLISHER:
Acclaim Sports
DEVELOPER: Iguana Ent.

Comparing All Star Baseball '99 to Mike Piazza's StrikeZone is like to comparing a Mercedes to a Yugo. ASB '99 is a beautiful game that follows through with satisfying gameplay and a seemingly endless array of features and options. Considering that there isn't any real price difference between this Mercedes and Yugo, picking up ASB '99 is a no brainer.

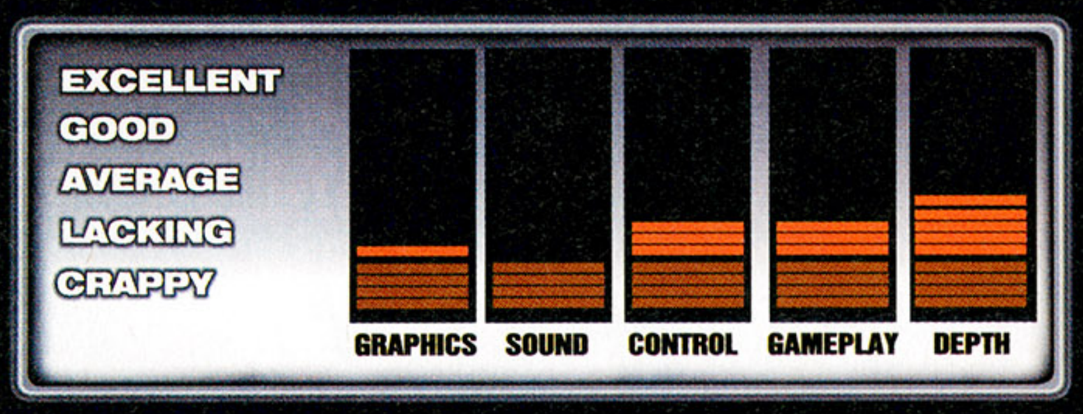
ALL STAR BASEBALL '99
★★★★

The use of colorful 'fire trails' make it easier to track the ball during play, but feels like a flashback to a Fox televised hockey game.

DON'T BUY IT!
★★

The horrid graphics make the players look like the result of some heinous cloning experiment gone wrong.

EQUALIZER



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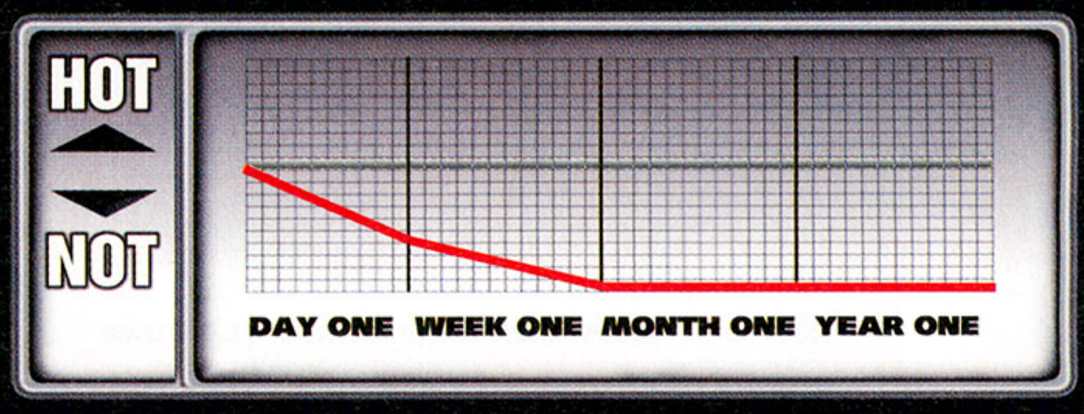

CHOPPER ATTACK

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You'd get court-martialed in the military for such destructive behavior. But if you want to complete seven of the most brutal military missions ever, you'll do whatever it takes. As for the bonus level, they don't make dog tags for nothing.

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www.midway.com

NINTENDO 64

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

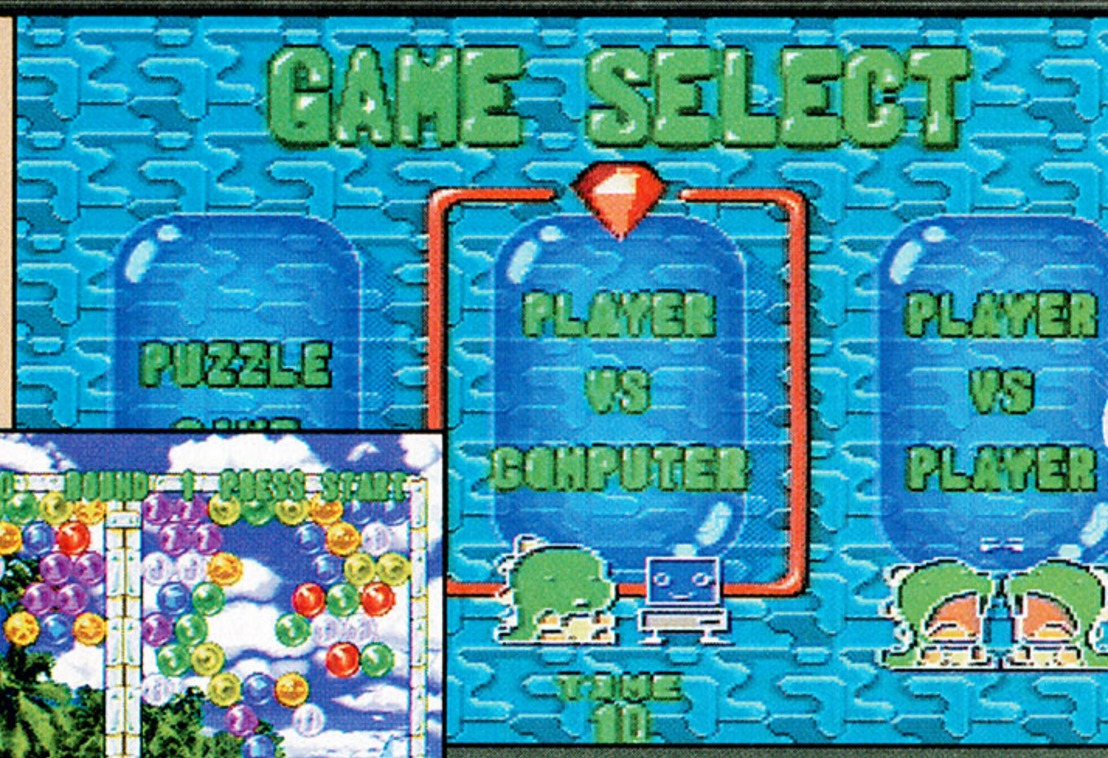
REVIEW

BUST-A-MOVE 2: Arcade Edition

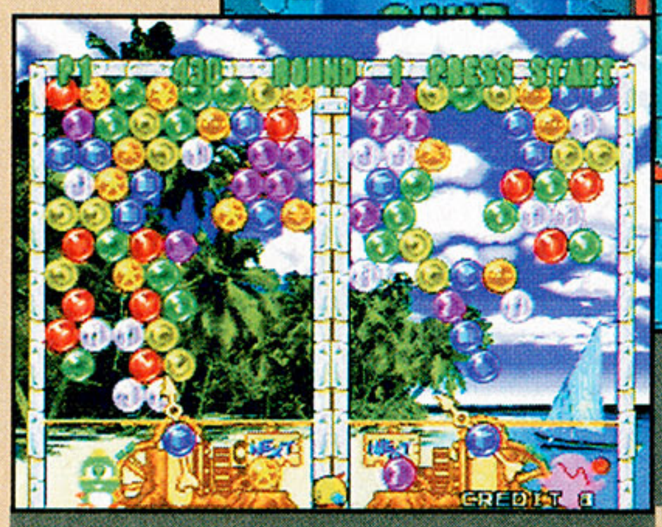
One of the most addicting console puzzlers finally makes its move to the N64 and life is sweet once again.

Really good puzzle games have a certain knack for getting under your skin and planting their hooks in for the long run. The classic arcade port, **Bust-A-Move 2** is no different and still remains one of the best puzzle games for one or two players. Similar in concept to games like **Tetris**, the entire **Bust-A-Move** series is based on the premise of linking together three or more of the same colored bubbles in order to clear them from the board. Accuracy in shots as well as fancy angles make the game challenging and hectic at times, but that's all just part of the incredible fun. The best way to play **Bust-A-Move 2** is against a friend. Unpredictable and entirely addicting, you'll find yourself anchored to the couch with your opponent for hours.

While absolutely nothing within the game has been changed from either the Saturn or PlayStation versions, the N64 port manages to squeeze in all the wacky character visuals, backgrounds, as well as unbearably cutesy sound bytes for each character. It's a like Hello Kitty on steroids, but it perfectly compliments the gameplay. With an incredibly fun puzzle formula and a cast of frighteningly cute characters, any N64 owner would benefit from adding this title to their library of games. You don't want to be caught without it.



The cast of character feature two classic figures in gaming, the super deformed dinos, Bub and Bob.



Keep linking up three of the same colored balloons and your opponent gets buried!

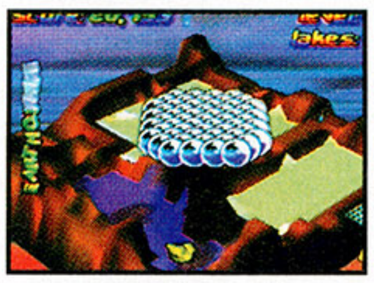
System: Nintendo 64
Price: $49.99
Genre: Puzzle
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Strong Thumbs
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Taito
Web: www.acclaimation.com

HEAD TO HEAD

WETRIX
PUBLISHER: N64
SYSTEM: Ocean

The most recently released puzzle game on the N64 was Wetrix, which incorporated some innovative features, including play on a 3D, diagonal plane and introduced new ideas in puzzle playing on a console system. The premise of the game is to keep as much water on the board by setting up enough walls and avoiding some of the game's pitfalls, like earthquakes and bombs.

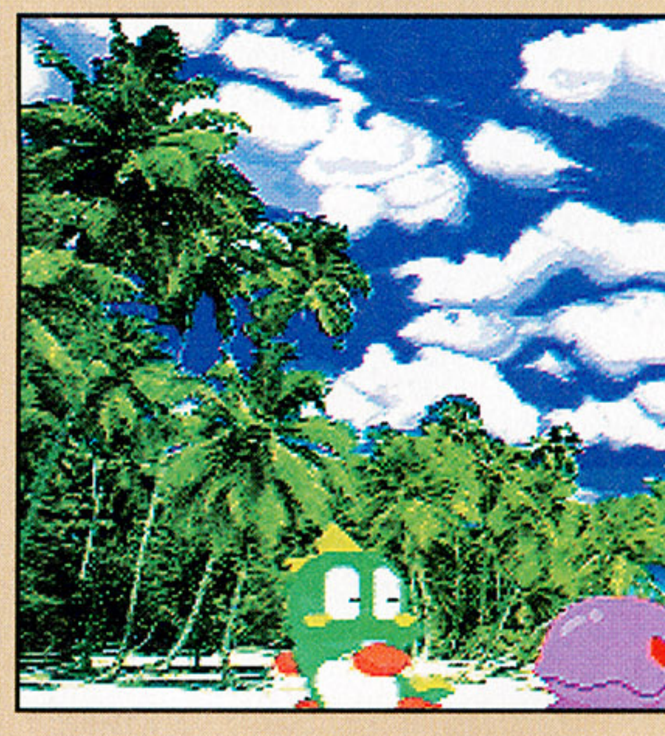
WETRIX
★★★★★



Puzzle mode gives you the opportunity to choose one of several paths to beat the game mode and receive a cutesy ending.

GOTTA HAVE IT!
★★★★★

The upbeat music and bright colors make this game a good choice for family gaming and children.



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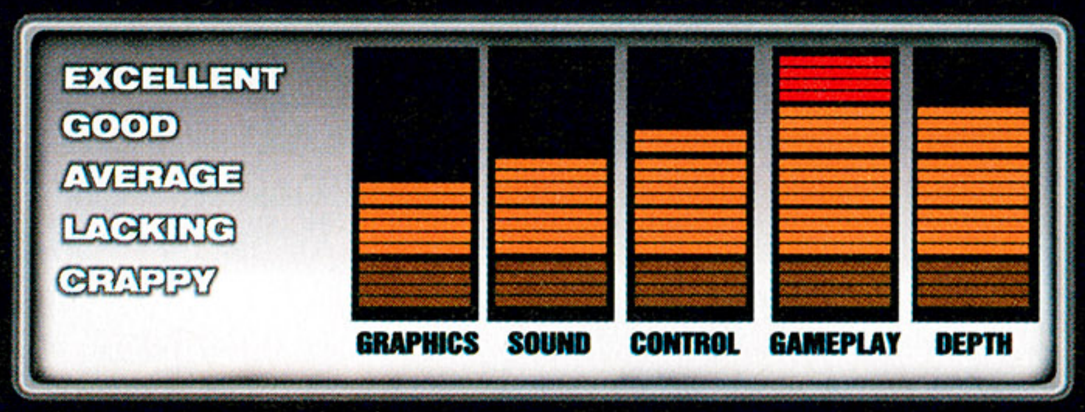

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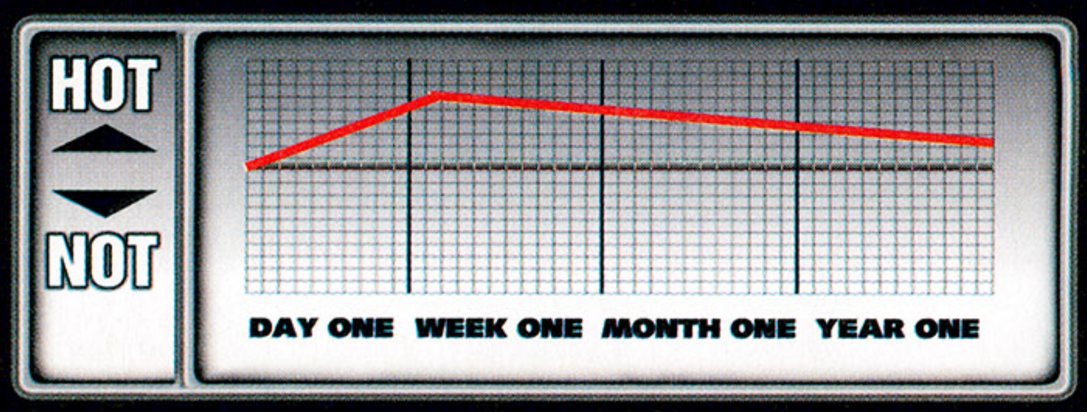

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– Q64

"Incredibly sweet graphics."
– EGM

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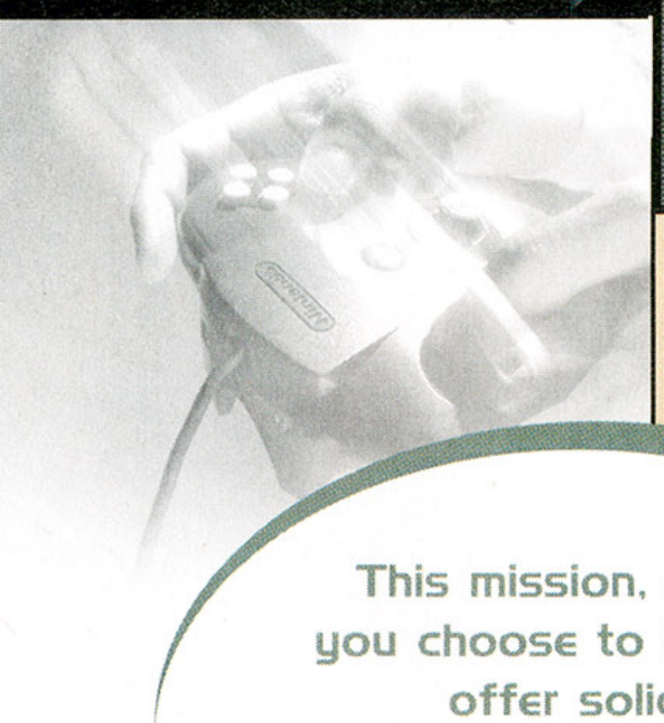
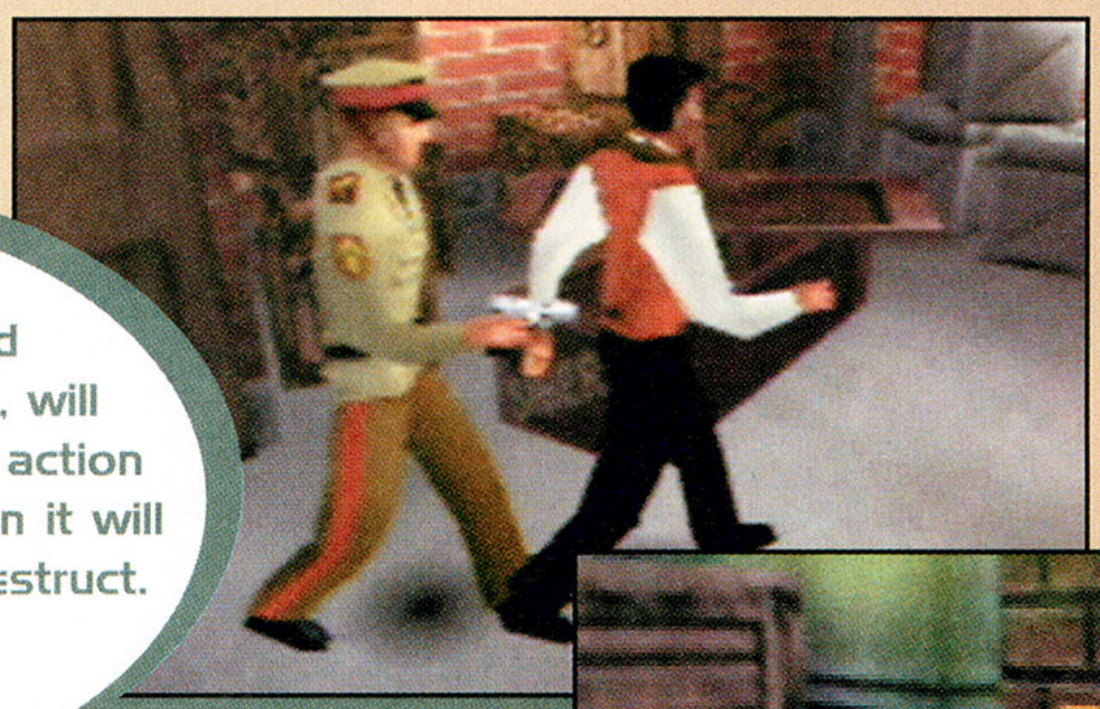
REVIEW

MISSION: Impossible



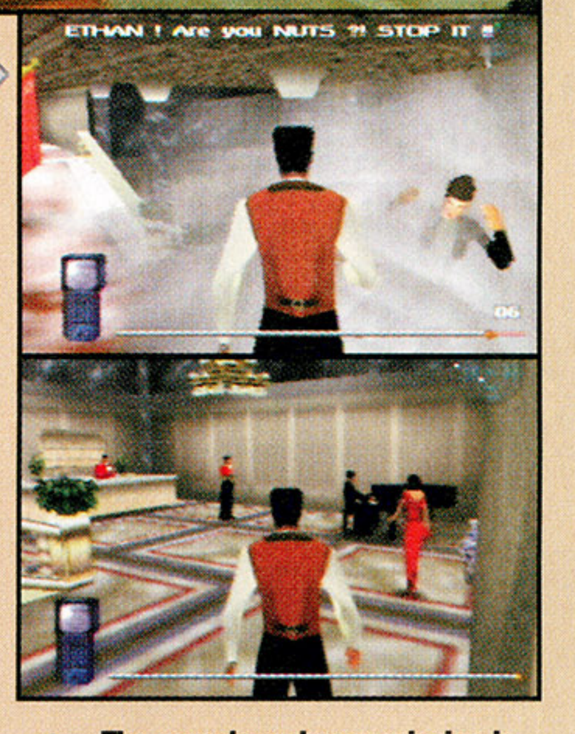
This mission, should you choose to buy it, will offer solid spy action for a few days. Then it will self-destruct.



Even the tiniest mistake can result in a failed mission and you will have to start all over again.

Each mission is introduced with a real-time cutscene, complete with narration and the obligatory self-destructing messages.

Once you've finished all the missions, the only thing left to do is try out things you wouldn't really want to do in real life, like spraying your partner with a fire extinguisher.



The game's embassy mission is loosely based on the movie. That woman in red is trouble, by the way.

Three years in the making, **Mission: Impossible** finally arrives on N64. Developed partially by Ocean and later taken over by Infogrames in France, the game presents itself as a spy sim with objective driven missions in a third-person perspective.

Players take on the role of IMF (Impossible Mission Force) agent Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise's character in the movie) and explore five complex missions spanning a total of 20 levels. The objectives are always different and increasingly difficult. For example, in one mission, Ethan must use explosive gum to escape a holding cell, knock out a guard, 'steal' his fingerprints, sabotage security cameras by spraying paint on them, and escape through the infirmary by posing as a patient. Before each level, players are given a list of objectives and every major mission is preceded by a full real-time cinema briefing in the style of the TV series ('This tape will now self-destruct... '). It is then up to the player to find out exactly how to fulfill the tasks.

Graphically, **Mission: Impossible** is a mixed bag. The outdoor missions in the very beginning look atrociously bad, with lots of fog, low framerates, dithered colors and very little detail. Thankfully, the visuals improve once the action moves indoors. While not as meticulously constructed as **GoldenEye**'s levels, Ocean managed to come up with interesting settings that ring true to the franchise. The motion-captured character animation is smooth and, apart from a few delayed reactions, convincingly life-like.

Mission: Impossible's controls and framerate are far too erratic for a pure action game

Utilizing a changing over-head 3D view for navigation purposes and a zoomed-in first-person view for shooting, **Mission: Impossible** often looks like a cross between **Goldeneye** and **Shadows of The Empire**. But where those two games mainly focused on action, **Mission: Impossible** is much more

System: Nintendo 64
Price: $59.99
Genre: Adventure
Players: 1
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Rumble Pak
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Infogrames
Web: www.ocean.com

HEAD TO HEAD

GOLDENEYE 007
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
SYSTEM: N64

Last year, Nintendo released the Rare-developed first-person shooter Goldeneye, which went on to become one of the most popular games on the system. Compared to Mission: Impossible, GoldenEye is superior in almost every aspect: More detailed backgrounds, smoother character animation, better music and much more intuitive controls. Finally, GoldenEye has plenty of replay value thanks to its excellent multiplayer mode -- an area where Mission: Impossible is severely lacking. Overall, GoldenEye is the spy sim of choice, but give Mission a try if you already own Rare's masterpiece.

GOLDENEYE 007
★★★★★

Almost in time for the video release (on Mars)

Many movie to game conversions suffer from a lack of originality and gameplay problems. Luckily, Mission: Impossible (the game) makes a lot more sense than the Tom Cruise movie and comes up with a number of innovations that make it stand out from the glut of bad movie games. But is that enough?

Sometimes a spy's gotta do what a spy's gotta do.

gadget and puzzle driven. A wise choice, as it turns out - **Mission: Impossible**'s controls and framerate are far too erratic for a pure action game and would have only led to frustration.

So rather than mowing down one enemy after the other, players will actually have to think and use plenty of gadgets, including a field scanner, night view glasses, nausea powder, smoke generators, bio suits, the famous face maker, a dart gun, sleeper darts, or gas injectors. In addition, Ethan is able to slip into a plethora of disguises and outfits, from an icestorm suit and smoking jacket to the face mask and uniform of an ambassador's aide.

Unfortunately, what could have been a potentially stunning transformation scene with Ethan pulling a mask over his face turns out to be an disappointing, dithered fade effect.Nevertheless, assuming other characters' identities to access new areas and tinkering with the latest IMF gadgets should be every spy thriller fan's dream, and in that respect, the game delivers the goods.

But when compared to similarly themed games, such as **GoldenEye** or even Konami's **Metal Gear Solid, Mission: Impossible** looks hopelessly dated and hardly offers any replay value at all. Despite the choice of two difficulty modes, experienced gamers will be able to play through the whole game in a weekend. Since it's all about puzzle solving and any items you own at the outset of a mission are predetermined by the game, there is little incentive to go back into the game and look for secrets.

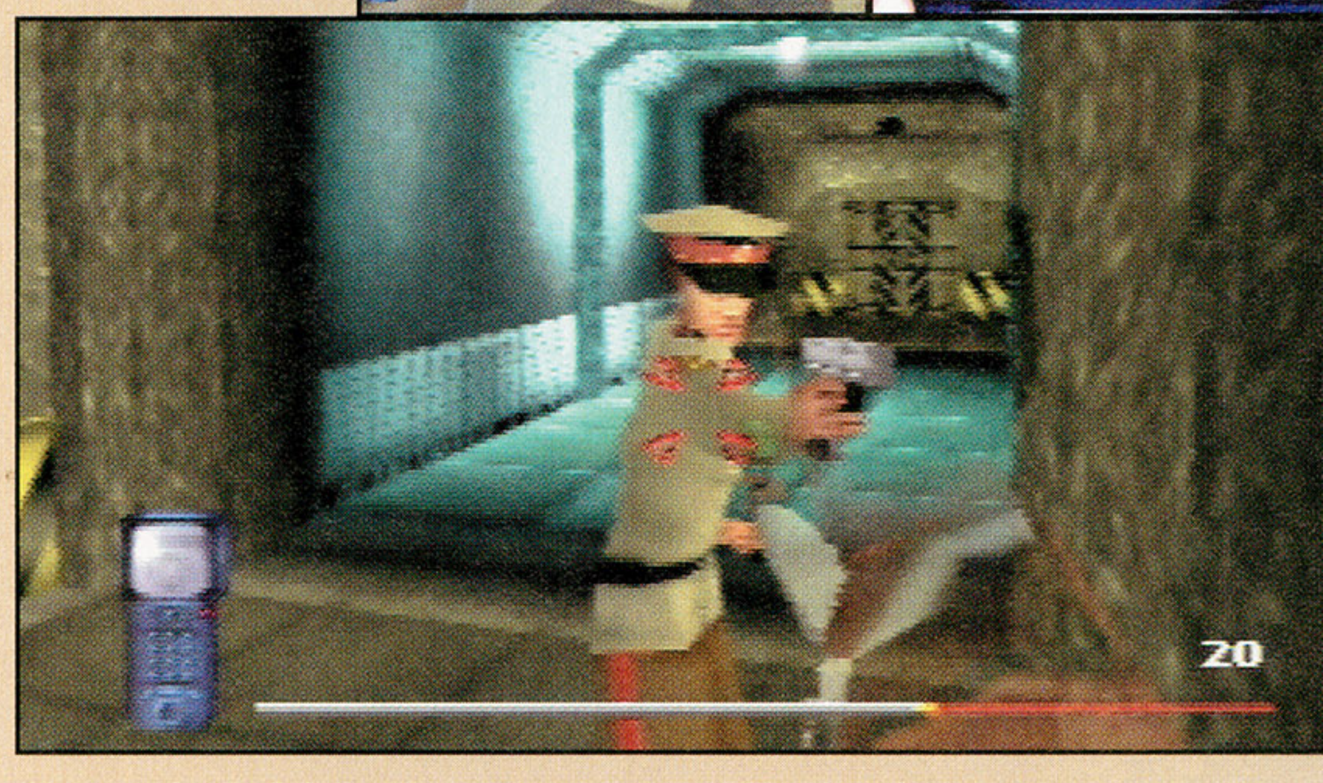
In the end, **Mission: Impossible** is still an interesting, above-average movie conversion that adequately conveys the feel of the movie. However, like **Shadows of the Empire, Mission: Impossible** lives off the strength of its license and won't be remembered for well balanced gameplay and long-term fun.

THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

In smaller rooms, the camera views the action from a fixed position and simply pans to follow Ethan.

Your communicator knows every mission objective, stores everything and can be accessed at any time. You can also look at the functions of your gadgets.



When pressing the R-Button, the camera zooms in and Ethan turns transparent. This enables better aiming and shooting and works quite well.

GAME FACTS

The story behind the development of **Mission: Impossible** is as convoluted as the plot of the Tom Cruise movie. Shortly after Nintendo's announcement of the US N64, Ocean begins principal design work on **Mission** at its San Jose office. As hype builds around the game, one of the few 'grown-up' titles planned for the console, Mission quickly becomes one of the most anticipated titles for the console, only rivaled by **Robotech: Crystal Dreams**, which at press time is still MIA.

About a year later, Ocean shows an early, unplayable version of the game to the press and presents an ambitious concept of a fully interactive spy thriller. Months pass without much progress, the game misses the movie's release date. French publisher Infogrames acquires Ocean and the project almost breaks down when key members of the design team quit. Infogrames moves the whole project to its France office. Disturbing terms like 'salvage' and 're-work' begin to surround Mission's development. In the meantime, Rare and Nintendo release **Goldeneye**, which proves quite similar in concept, despite a different viewpoint. Infogrames implements as many changes as possible to make the game different from the Rare hit. Only months before the game's release, hype builds up again as readers of game magazines are spoiled with more hi-res SGI renders, the only images Infogrames supplies to the press from the start of the project to the day the game goes beta. When real gameplay screens finally surface, many N64 owners complain that the game looks nothing like the pictures they have been fed for so long. In June '98, **Mission: Impossible** finally hits the streets - not a bad game, but a far cry from the original, all too ambitious project.

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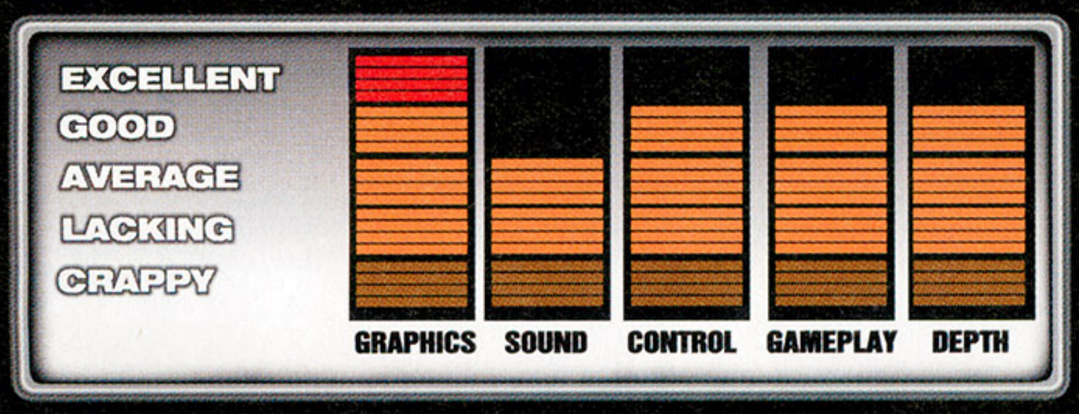

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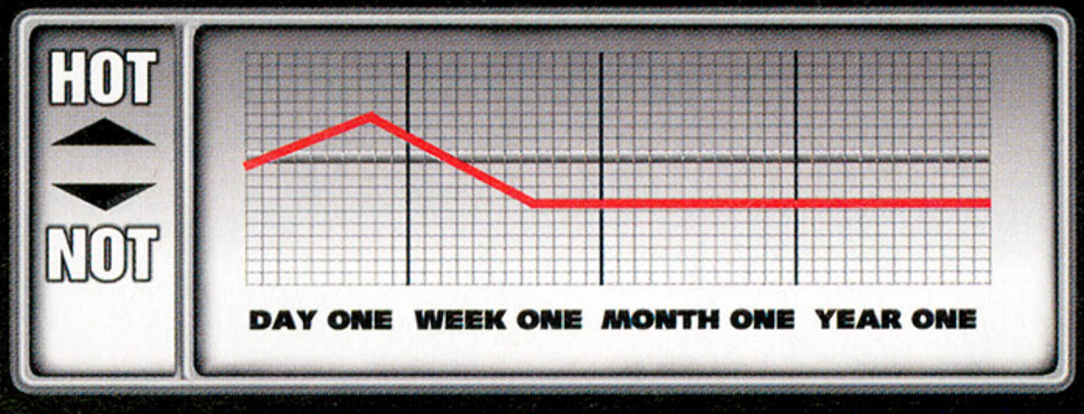

The Wreckage

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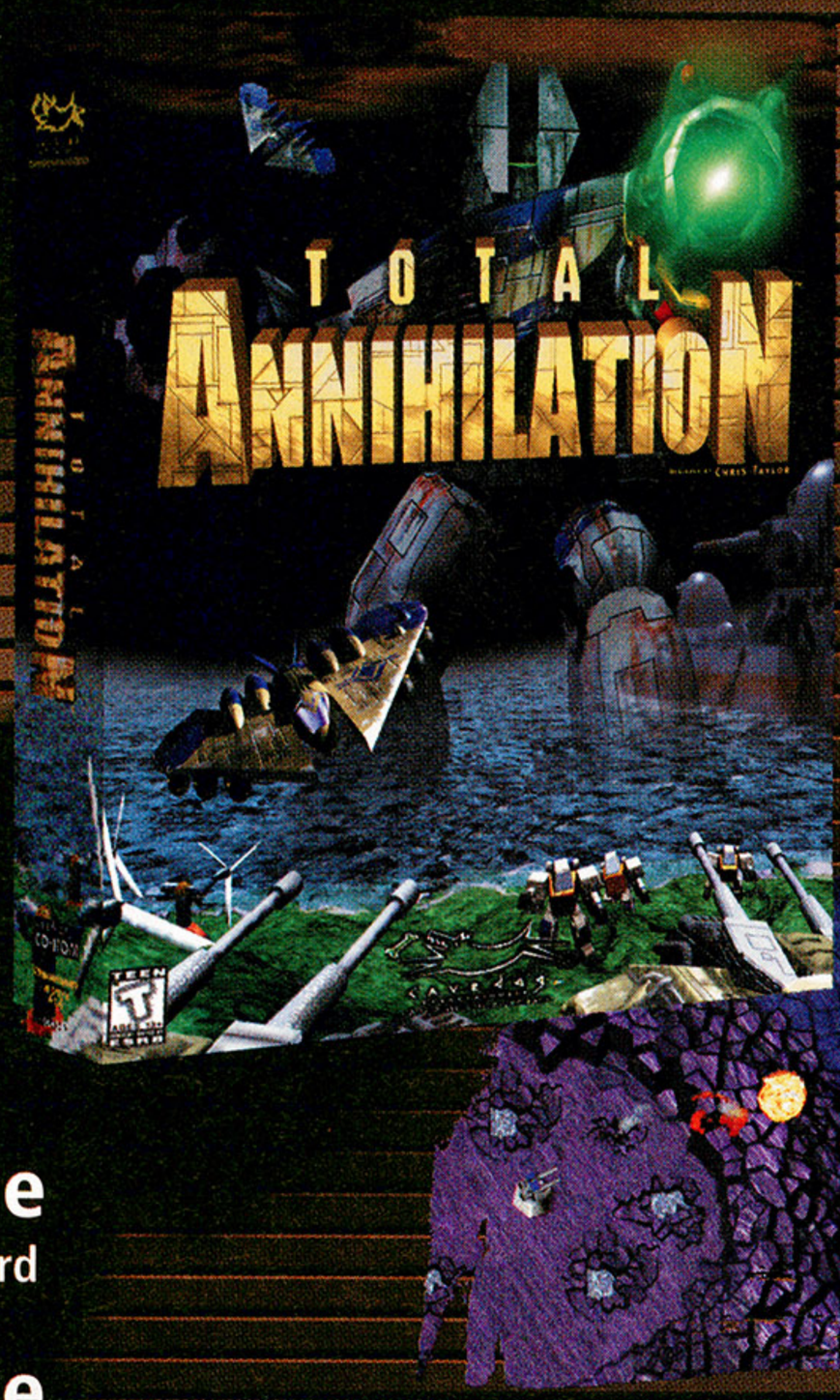

Game of the Year
–GameSpot Editors

Game of the Year
–GameSpot Reader's Choice Awards

Best Real-Time Strategy Game
–PC Gamer On-Line, Reader's Choice Award

Best Real-Time Strategy Game
–Adrenaline Vault

Best Real-Time Strategy Game
–Ultra Game Player's magazine

TEEN
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25 New Missions
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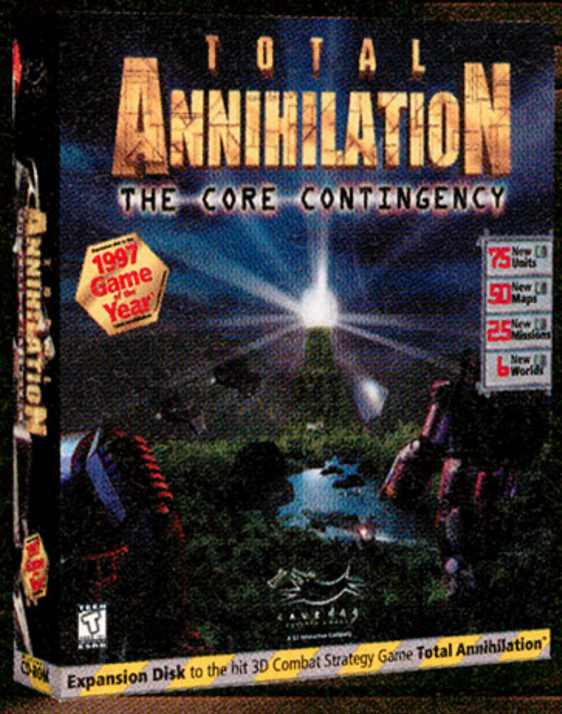

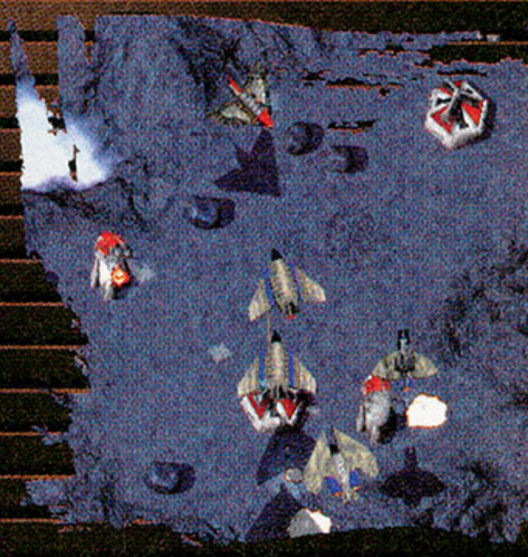

STRATEGY IS EVERYTHING

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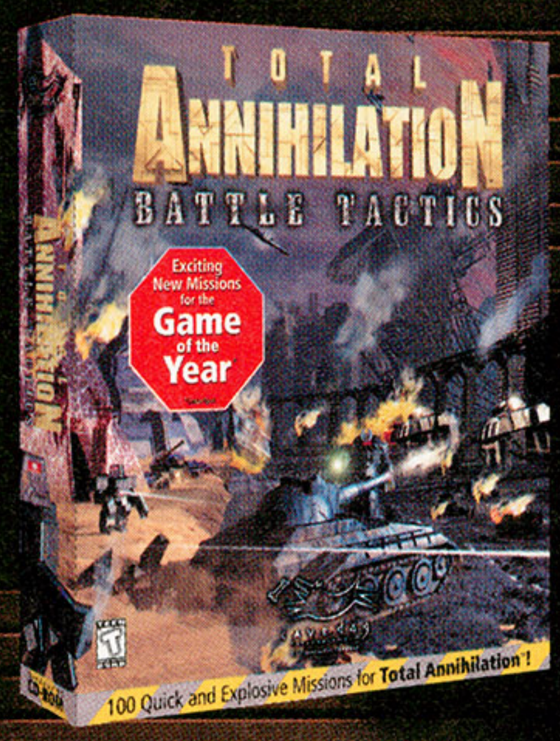
Dive right into a new batch of quick missions for the world's most explosive strategy game! Total Annihilation: Battle Tactics features smaller, quicker battles to satisfy that nagging Total Annihilation fix. Blast through 100 rapid-fire ambushes where the action is fast and furious. New maps provide fresh opportunity for ambush. Varying degrees of difficulty give new Total Annihilation players a chance to learn the ropes while offering advanced players a new challenge.



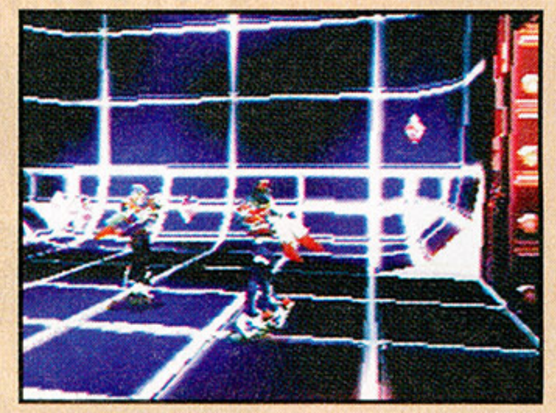
*Computer Game Entertainment

BURNING Rangers

Sega proves that there's still a reason to own a Saturn system with the innovative and compelling Burning Rangers.

The storyline in Burning Rangers unfolds in cheesy anime video clips. The real attraction is the gameplay.

Pick your character from two of the most glamorous Burning Rangers. They both have the same abilities, though.



The training sessions teach you the basics, but you still need skill to survive.

PEDIGREE

NIGHTS: Into Dreams
PUBLISHER: Sega
DEVELOPER: Sonic Team

Sonic Team's first Saturn game was also the system's most unique. In fact, it's so unique that it's difficult to explain the game in so few words. But if you take a little bit Sonic the Hedgehog, and mix in a little bit Pilotwings, you can get a basic idea of how the game works. Though 90 percent of the gameplay was stuck on a 2D rail, Nights: Into Dreams utilized a very powerful 3D graphics engine. When Sonic Team went out to create its next big Saturn title, it built it on this engine. The result is Burning Rangers, another Sonic Team game that's as stunning to look at as it is to play.

NIGHTS
★★★★★

It's no secret that the output of Saturn games is slowing to a mere trickle. Though it's an unfortunate situation, the plus side is that it pretty much guarantees the games that eventually get released will be something special. And this is most certainly the case with **Burning Rangers**, one of the final games to be available for the system.

Burning Rangers is the third Saturn game from Sega's Sonic Team, the Japanese developers who brought **Sonic the Hedgehog** to life and, more recently, the group responsible for the outstanding Saturn title **Nights: Into Dreams**. And, like **Nights, Burning Rangers** is a unique game that takes 3D platformers in a totally new direction.

In its most basic form, **Burning Rangers** is a futuristic firefighting game. Because the game is not quite the normal design, an extensive training exercise is offered at the beginning of the game. After selecting your character from two of the Burning Rangers, you enter a holodeck of sorts, where you learn all the techniques of the game, which includes jumps, flips, climbing on ledges, and utilizing the weaponry to douse the flames. The tutorial offers a good taste of what's to come, but it's a mere sliver of the awesome gameplay in **Burning Rangers.**

As you wander through each of the buildings, you need to keep an eye on the fire

Throughout the game, you must traverse through flame-engulfed warehouses and rescue trapped workers. The problem is, your transporter device requires power per use. The only way to acquire these gems is to put out the fire with your weapon, which converts the flame's energy into concentrated units - crystals. These crystals also fuel your suit's shield. Take a hit, and you lose all your crystals. Take another hit, and it's game over, man.

As you wander through each of the buildings, you need to keep an eye on the fire as well as where to go next. Thankfully, a voice navigation system is in place that keeps you in constant

System: Saturn
Price: $49.99
Genre: 3D Platform
Players: 1
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Analog control pad
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Web: www.sega.com

Anyone feel a backdraft?

The basic premise surrounding the game is that the player assumes the role of one of the team members of the Burning Rangers. The team members wear futuristic exoskeletons that contain everything from a jet pack to fire fighting equipment, as they fight fires and rescue victims trapped in blazing buildings.

One of the coolest features is watching a replay of your game after each level, from different camera angles.

contact with the command base, and throughout the game you'll constantly hear your teammates inform you what to do and where to go. The voice acting is a little exaggerated, but it suits the game's theme well.

Burning Rangers is a beautiful game, but it isn't perfect. The graphics are certainly some of the best seen on the Saturn, but walls tend to flicker and disappear briefly, and the camera sometimes doesn't know which direction to go when the action gets too intense. But other than that, **Burning Rangers** is another classic title on the waning system.

There's really no question about it. If you still play your Saturn, you might as well give it some fresh meat, and **Burning Rangers** is as fresh as they come, for any system.

Throughout the levels, you'll find trapped survivors who need your help.

You'll find doors that can only be opened by switches in other rooms.

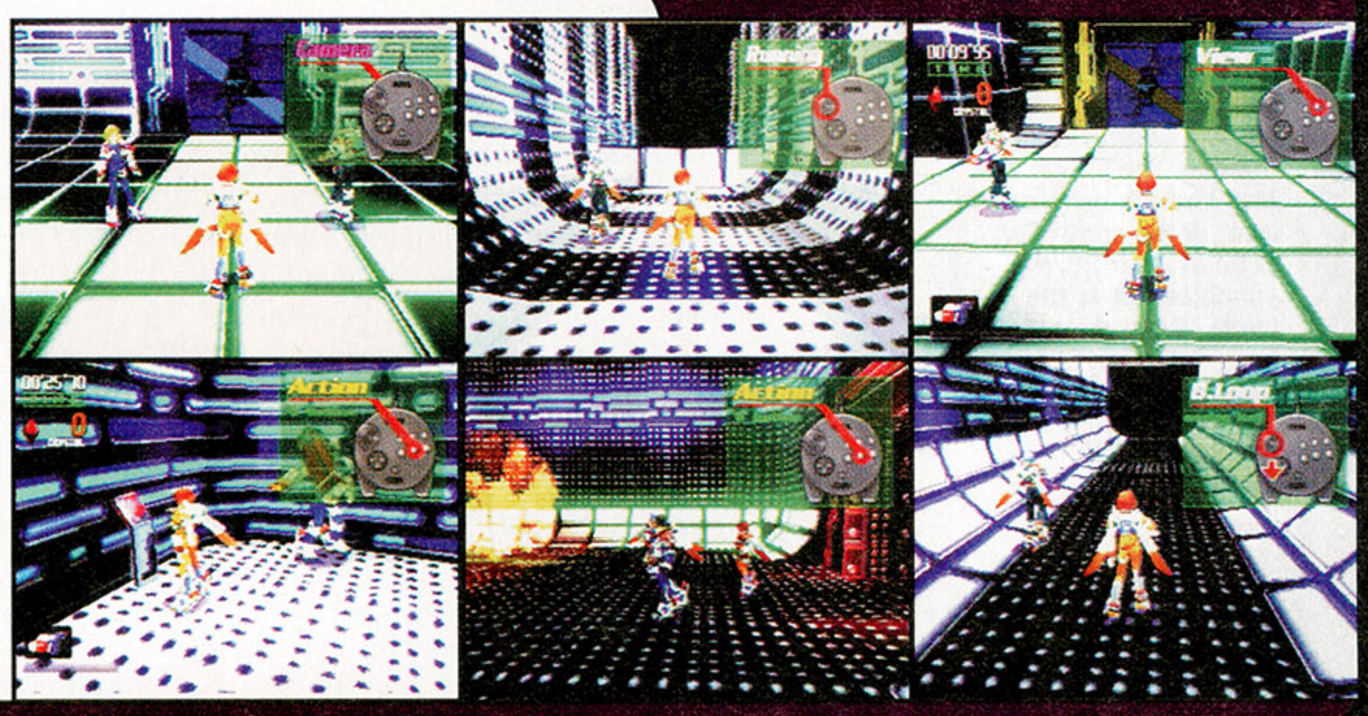
The Saturn can hammer out some mean fire effects.

If you see a glowing red wall, you better get ready to jump—those backdrafts can be nasty.

Like in most 3D platform games, you have many abilities, like climbing up on ledges.

BURNING RANGERS TRAINING

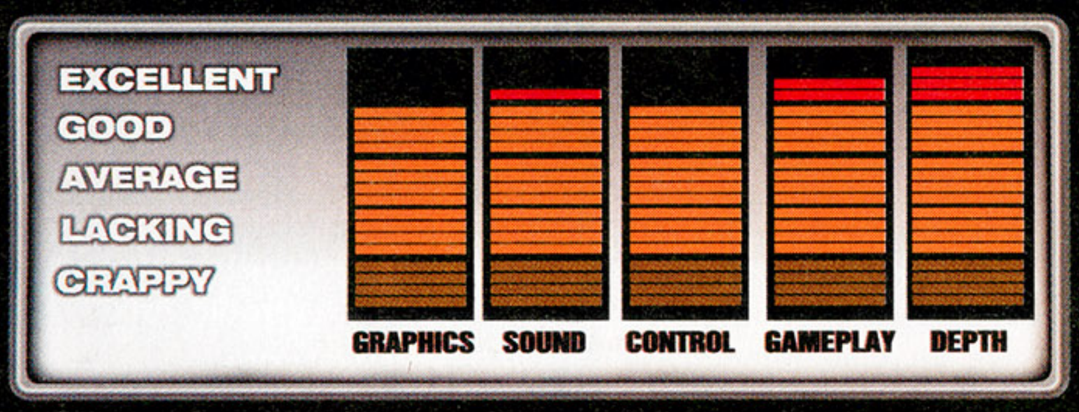
Before you can head out into the action, you need to learn the ropes. The Burning Rangers team will put you through a lengthy 'boot camp' so you know what to do in the game. They'll teach you how to use the camera, jumpsuit, firepower and more - just don't forget your training when you're in the middle of the real action.



BUY IT!

★★★★☆

EQUALIZER



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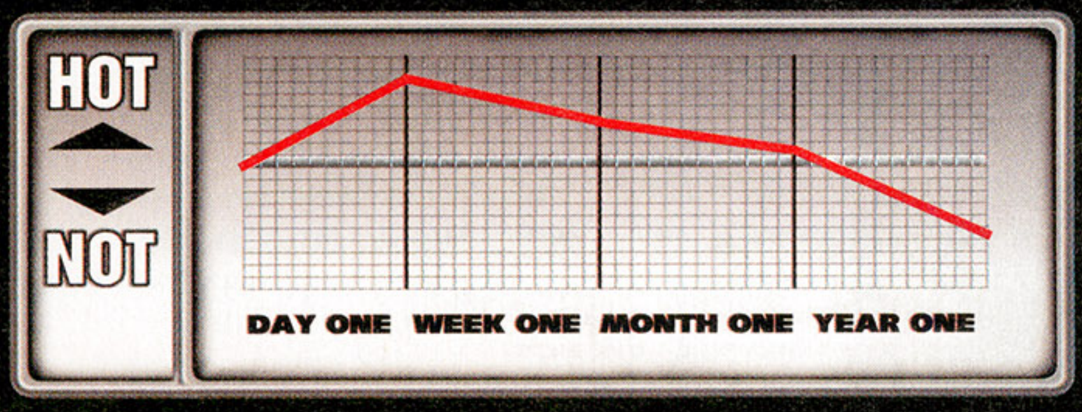
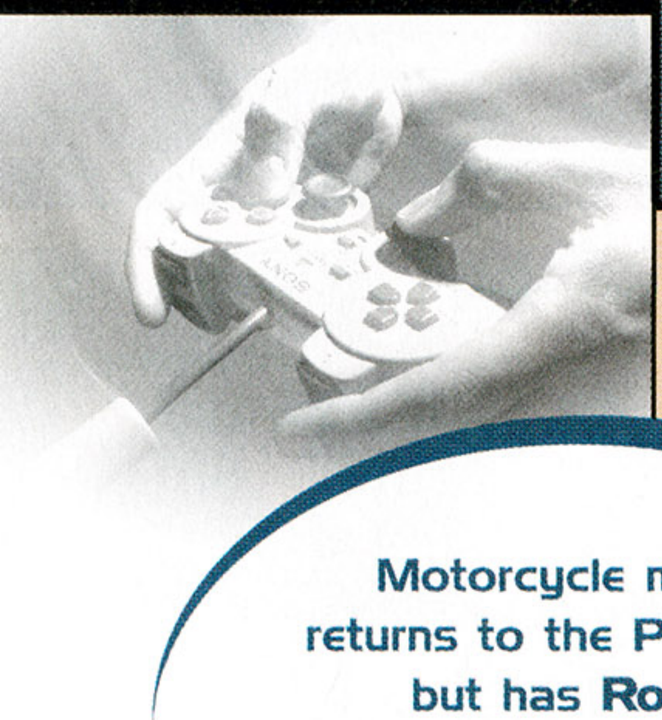


REVIEW

ROAD RASH 3D



Motorcycle mayhem returns to the Playstation, but has Road Rash 3D improved with age? Well, yes and no...

Do everything right, avoid the bad guys and you could end up here.

Get ready to say 'Good bye' to your front teeth!

FLASHBACK

ROAD RASH

The original Road Rash first appeared on the Genesis and then it spread to just about every system known to man. It was on the 3DO. the Game Gear and the PlayStation. The first PlayStation version still compares favorably to Road Rash 3D. In fact, it does some things better, like the controls used for fighting. The punch and kick buttons were on the front of the controller; in Road Rash 3D, the punch button is the Circle key and multiple button combos are required for the kicks. Not exactly what we'd call progress...

Sequels are everywhere nowadays. It seems that just about every film coming out of Hollywood lately has a Roman numeral after it. The sad part is that most of these films should never have been made. Most are just rehashes of the original plot, designed to separate the masses from their money. The same kind of thing is going on in the gaming community, as well.

Road Rash is no stranger to the world of sequels. It's been released many times for just about every system out there. And now it's hit the polygon Big Time, with **Road Rash 3D** for the PlayStation. Is it fun? Well, uh... what's not fun about driving fast bikes and hitting people on their heads with lead pipes? So, yeah, it's fun. Is it a game you need to have? Well... let's think about that for a minute.

The obvious difference between **Road Rash** and **Road Rash 3D** is that all the objects are now made of polygons, giving the characters and their bikes, etc, a much more realistic look. Cars and mailboxes have a much more solid look when you crash into them. Bikes look so much more convincing as they tumble through the air, right before landing on your head. Is this a good thing? Well, OK, we'd have to say 'Yes'.

What's not fun about driving fast bikes and hitting people on their heads with lead pipes?

The next big difference is in the new motorcycle physics model, which makes the bikes behave more like bikes in the real world, with low, leaning turns, slide outs, and wheelstands. Aren't these a little bit harder to control than the original bikes? Well, yes, but once you get the hang of them, they're actually a sweeter ride, so that's another good thing.

The third big difference is in the tracks you race on. There are more of them. In fact, there are more than

If the mailboxes and slow moving cars don't get you, the Man surely will. There goes your insurance.

System: PlayStation
Price: $49.99
Genre: Racing
Players: 1 to 6 (sequentially)
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Bad attitude
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Web: www.ea.com

Gentlemen, choose your weapons

Just getting to the finish line first isn't what Road Rash 3D is all about. The game offers many different weapons for putting the hurt on your competition. You can choose from the simple bare knuckle punch to the more exotic, like two by fours, lead pipes and nunchuks. This is what driving a bike is all about.

Ahh... those few peaceful moments right before the face plant...

Stop in the woods and these hippy chicks appear out of nowhere and start dancing... weird... really weird.

The designers didn't forget about the urban environments.

150 kilometers of interconnected roadway on which to race, broken up into tracks that get longer and harder as you progress from level to level. Is this good? Considering that the original PlayStation **Road Rash** had only a few tracks that didn't get much longer no matter what, we'd have to give this the thumbs up, too. That's another good thing...

Fourth, there's the music. The first **Road Rash** contained only a few good tunes from great bands, while the rest of the songs were from unknowns or loser bands (anyone remember Candlebox? We didn't think so...). **Road Rash 3D** has improved on this score, somewhat. Some of the bands featured in **RR3D** are: Sugar Ray, The Merman, and CIV. Of course, there are also a few bands that, uh... aren't as well known: Kid Rock, and Tea Party. Oh, well, the music still kicks, so that's a good thing.

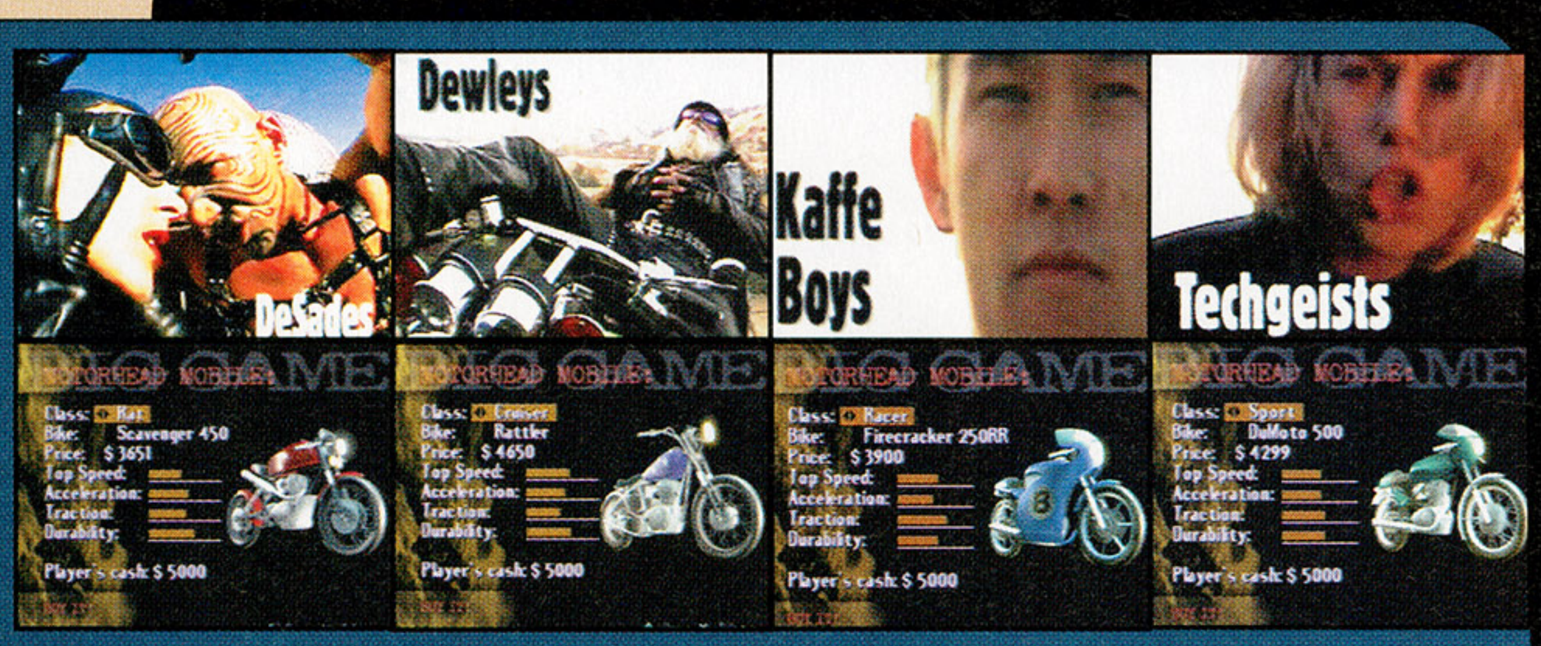
So with all these good things, why is there still an air of caution in this review? Well, the answer to that is simple: This game ain't perfect and here's why:

First of all, there's the matter of control. The original Playstation **Road Rash** had all the fighting buttons on the index finger buttons. **Road Rash 3D** has taken two of those buttons and used them to change from a rear view and a zoomed forward view. Both of these views are unnecessary and extremely dangerous. If you use either of them, you will crash! No ifs, ands, or buts. What were the designers thinking?

Secondly, the game ending videos in the first **Road Rash** were funny as hell. They perfectly illustrated how you ended the last race. The Police vids were especially gratifying, with their displays of Gestapo-like power and disregard for biker scum. The current videos, available only in the Big Game mode, are all flash and style, with lots of MTV-like cinematics and very little storyline or humor. Come on, guys, every game needs a little comic relief!

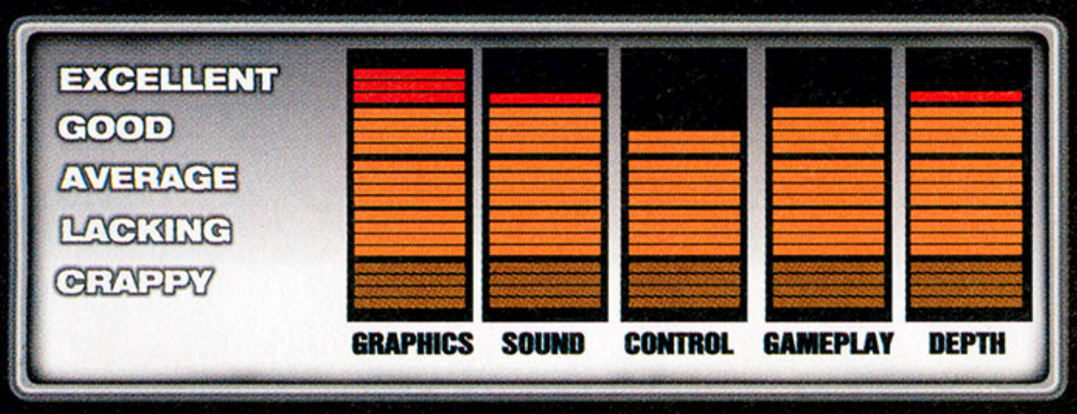
Granted, there are a lot more good things in **Road Rash 3D** than bad things, but if you already have a copy of the original PlayStation game, is **Road Rash 3D** worth buying? Well, to be honest, we have to say 'Yes'. The game is a hell of a lot of fun and, with its miles of tracks and different bikes, it should hold your interest for quite some time.

THE GANG'S ALL HERE!



In the original Road Rash for the PlayStation, players got to choose which lowlife scum biker they wanted to be. The choices ran from the merely psychotic to the downright deranged. All that's changed in Road Rash 3D, where the gamer gets to choose which gang he'd like to be affiliated with. The choices are just as diverse. You can be a Techgeist, who are yuppy scum from Hell that cruise on flashy sports bikes, a DeSades, who are into S&M and favor grungy rat bikes, a Dewley, who are more like your parents' branch of the Hell's Angels, who like to ride big Harleys, or join the Kaffe Boys, who are evidently an Oriental gang that favors street racing bikes. Whatever your lifestyle, there's a gang of loathsome scum for you!

EQUALIZER



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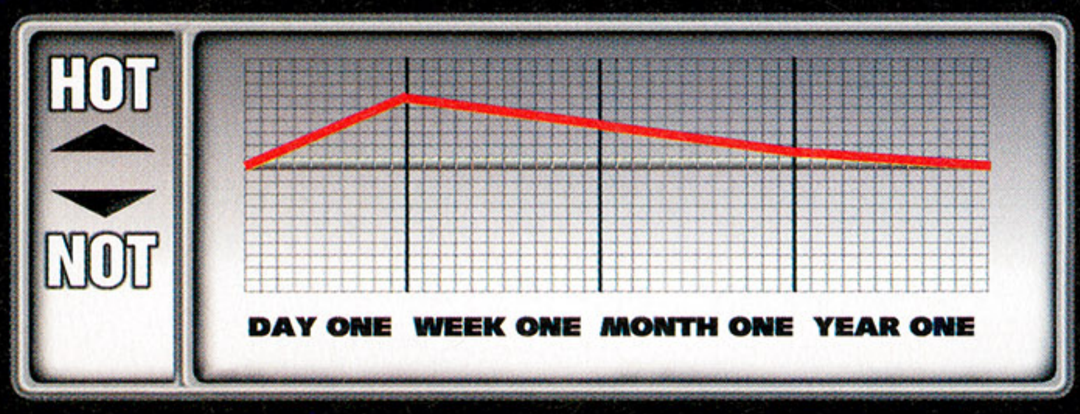

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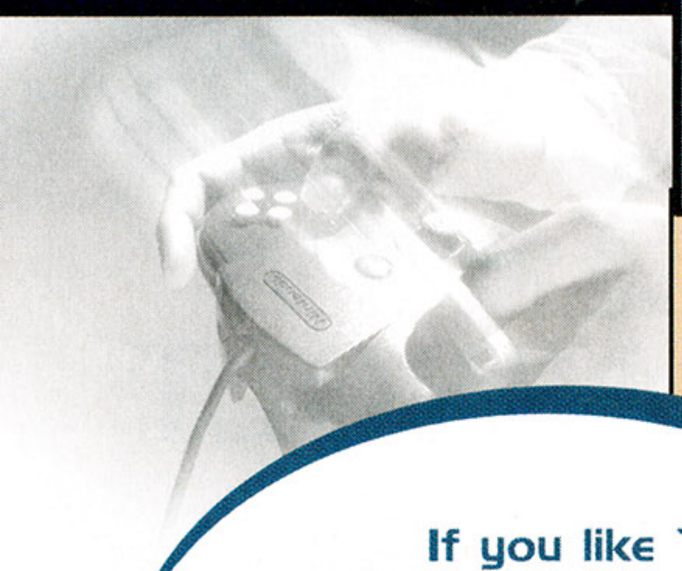
REVIEW

VIGILANTE 8



If you like '70s music, afros, muscle cars and fender bending automobile combat, Activision's Vigilante 8 is going to make you get out your platform shoes and dance.

Activision's **Interstate 76** was a hugely popular combat racing game with '70s flair that was released for the PC in 1997. **Vigilante 8** is the PlayStation improved version of the game, and you won't believe what a difference a year makes.

First off, **Vigilante 8** is all action, all the time. Lightning fast (for a CD based console) loading times get you immediately into the action. By the time you start to accelerate, you're already being targeted by enemy vehicles. From that point on, it's kill or be killed.

Combat driving games are nothing new, but the retro hip 1970s atmosphere definitely sets **Vigilante 8** apart from others of its kind. The tone is set immediately by the intro video, which, for a change, is actually worth watching. **Vigilante 8** is a world of muscle cars, big hair, lots of leather and grooving tunes.

Each character you can choose from has his or her own unique '70s persona that makes you wonder why disco ever went out of style. Take John Torque, he's a one time Vegas hustler on a mission. Samuel L. Jackson must have been thinking about this guy when he did his part in Pulp Fiction. Torque's afro is huge, his polyester styling, and his car stereo are the best money can buy. Each character in the game has their own style, from the kind of machine they drive, to how they dress and what kind of special weapon they use, which range from Torque's Bass Quake, to Boogie's Disco Inferno. The individuality of each character is enough to keep you playing, but fortunately for gamers, the gameplay itself is outstanding as well.

Players can choose from several different play modes. Arcade puts you straight into the action with up to four opponents to duke it out with. As much fun as Arcade mode is, it's **Vigilante 8**'s mission-based Quest mode that will keep you playing for hours and hours.

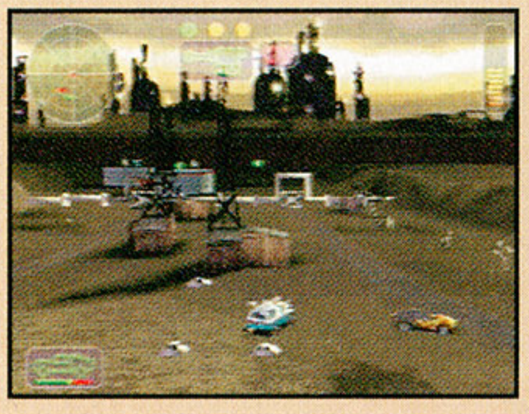
Big hair and bigger stereos are the order of the day in Vigilante 8.

Rolling boulders damage your car, but you can set them in motion against your opponents as well.

Each character has a unique quest path to follow that's determined by their back story and personality. Loki is an ex-test pilot and wants to get back in the cockpit. As part of his quest, he goes from level to level trying to

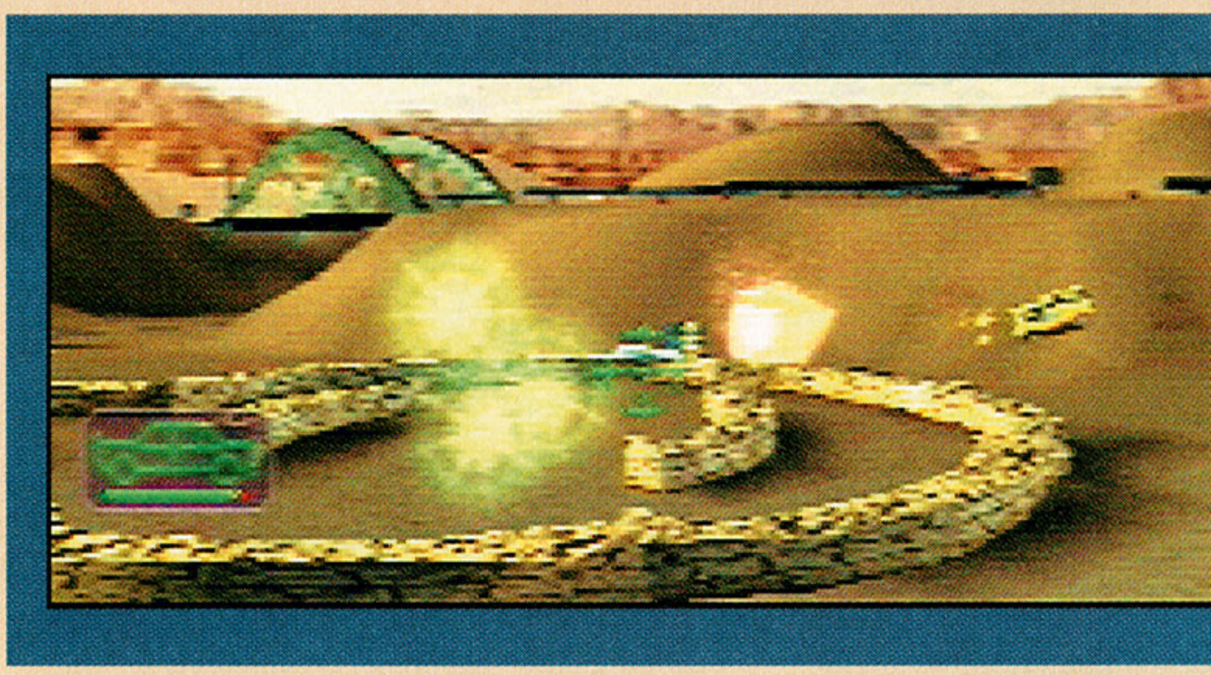
continued on page 32

System: PlayStation
Price: $59.99
Genre: Racing/Combat
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Platform shoes
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision
Web: www.activision.com



Each level has richly detailed backgrounds and interactive environments for you to enjoy briefly before destroying them.

Each car has a distinctive look and paint job. As you take damage, your car begins to take on the look of scrap metal.



HEAD TO HEAD

TWISTED METAL
PUBLISHER: Sony
SYSTEM: PlayStation

Sony's Twisted Metal is an obvious inspiration for Vigilante 8. Twisted Metal and its sequel, Twisted Metal 2, have a heavier emphasis on destroying opponents to progress. By being the last vehicle standing, you win. While the action is just as furious, Twisted Metal tends to get tedious a bit quickly, as it lacks the mission based objectives and story lines that keeps Vigilante 8 interesting.

TWISTED METAL
★★★★

Special weapon warfare

Each auto has a unique special weapon based on the character doing the driving. John Torque's Bass Quake is guaranteed to do serious damage to any drivers on the road. Mastering the special weapons, and preventing your opponents from using special weapons, is key to getting through a level with minimal damage.

Water physics in the canals are delightfully realistic, impeding or assisting your progress depending on whether you're traveling against or with the water.

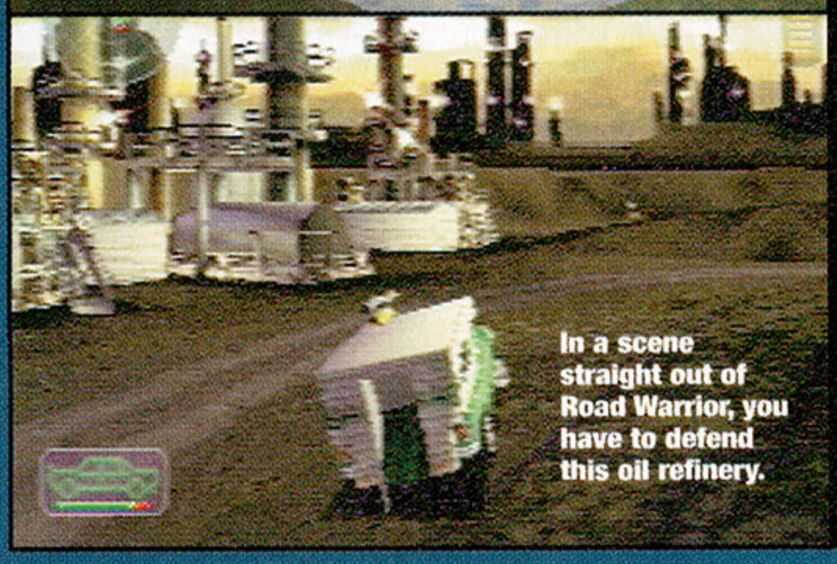
Who'd guess the '70's looked so good?

Vigilante 8 sports some of the best graphics and highest frame rates for a PlayStation game released this year. Backgrounds are richly detailed, with oil fields and city scapes rising beyond the action, providing a tremendous sense of location and atmosphere. The cars themselves are also unique in everything from body design and paint job to weapon mounts as you collect the power up weapons scattered about the levels.

For first person driving fans, Vigilante 8 has a cockpit view.

Auto-targeting weapons let you fire on enemies behind you.

You will catch lots of air.



In a scene straight out of Road Warrior, you have to defend this oil refinery.

Spectacular rain effects and explosions are some of the nicest seen in any PlayStation game.

continued from page 30

score a new plane. By succeeding at each character's quest, you unlock additional characters and arenas that you can play in arcade mode, or better yet, in two player mode.

Vigilante 8 supports two player split screen gaming, either competitive one on one or cooperative against opponents. The problem with so many two player modes is that the game's framerate drops to barely tolerable levels. Not so with **Vigilante 8**. Even with explosions, lens flare and rockets flying, the framerate is persistently good, which makes for a very enjoyable two player experience.

MULTIPLAYER AUTO ANNIHILATION

Two player split screen combat or cooperative play is one of Vigilante 8's best features. Make sure you have two pads.

The background music in Vigilante 8 is a perfect, cheesy '70s set

Graphically, **Vigilante 8** is one of the nicest looking games to come out this year. Each platform's terrain is distinct and highly detailed. The environments themselves contain dozens of interactive structures like oil wells, air planes, windmills, and buildings that can be shot and sustain damage. The vehicles themselves are also very detailed. As each vehicle takes damage, different panels sag, bend or fall off. Glass windows first crack, then shatter. Effects like smoke and explosions are also great looking, while the lighting is simply superb.

Most games have quite a bit or work put into sounds and music, but few games' sound design is as effective as **Vigilante 8**'s. The background music is a perfect, cheesy '70s set that just feels right. Engine noise, explosions, launching rockets and voices also sound great. This game virtually demands a powerful subwoofer to complete the '70s experience.

The combination of great sounds, impressive graphics, and great gameplay would make **Vigilante 8** a good game, but all the extra touches in the character and level design make it an outstanding one. Playing it with Sony's new dual shock analog pad ratchets up the experience one more notch, and suddenly, **Vigilante 8** becomes one of the Gotta Have It games that keeps gamers playing all night long.

Hitting the slopes takes on an all new meaning when you can light up the ski lodge with your rockets.

GOTTA HAVE IT! ★★★★★

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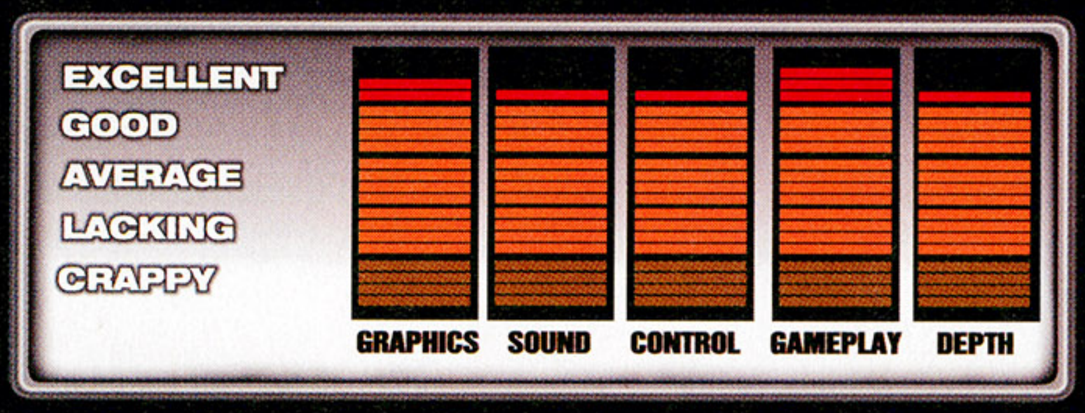

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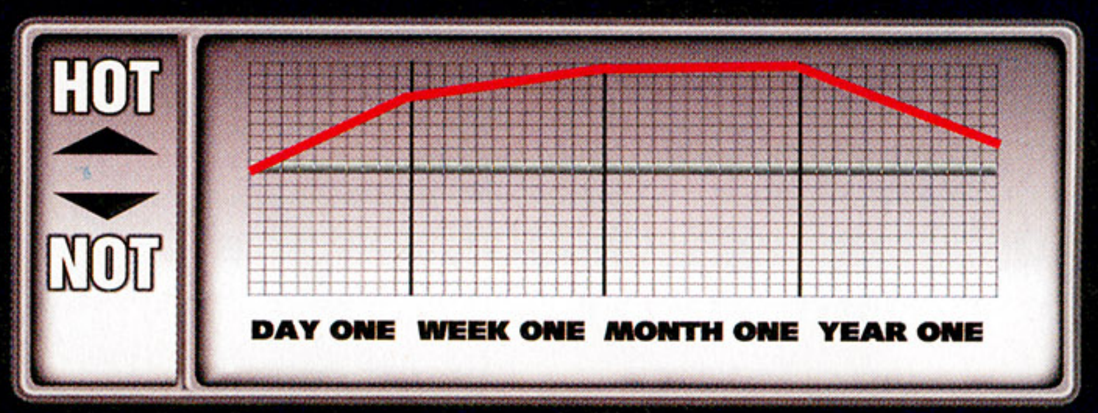

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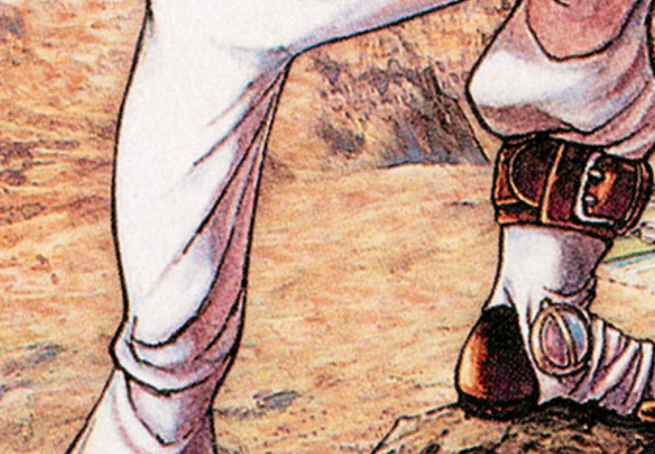

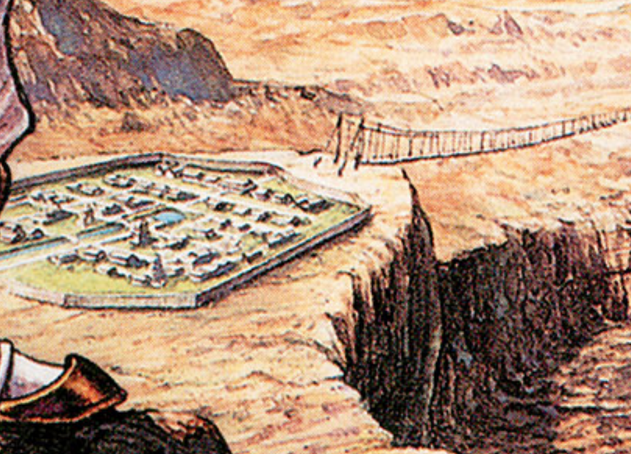

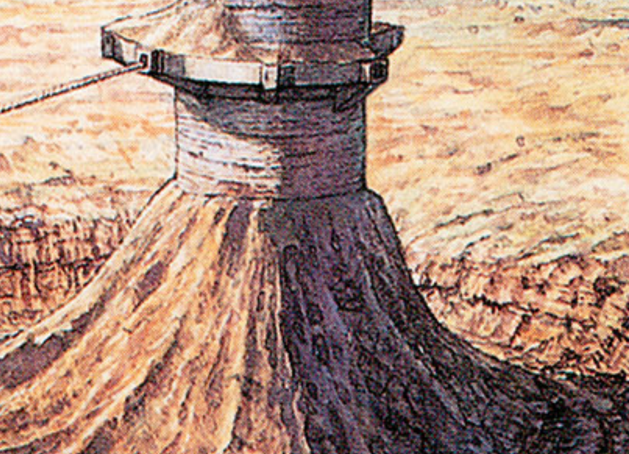

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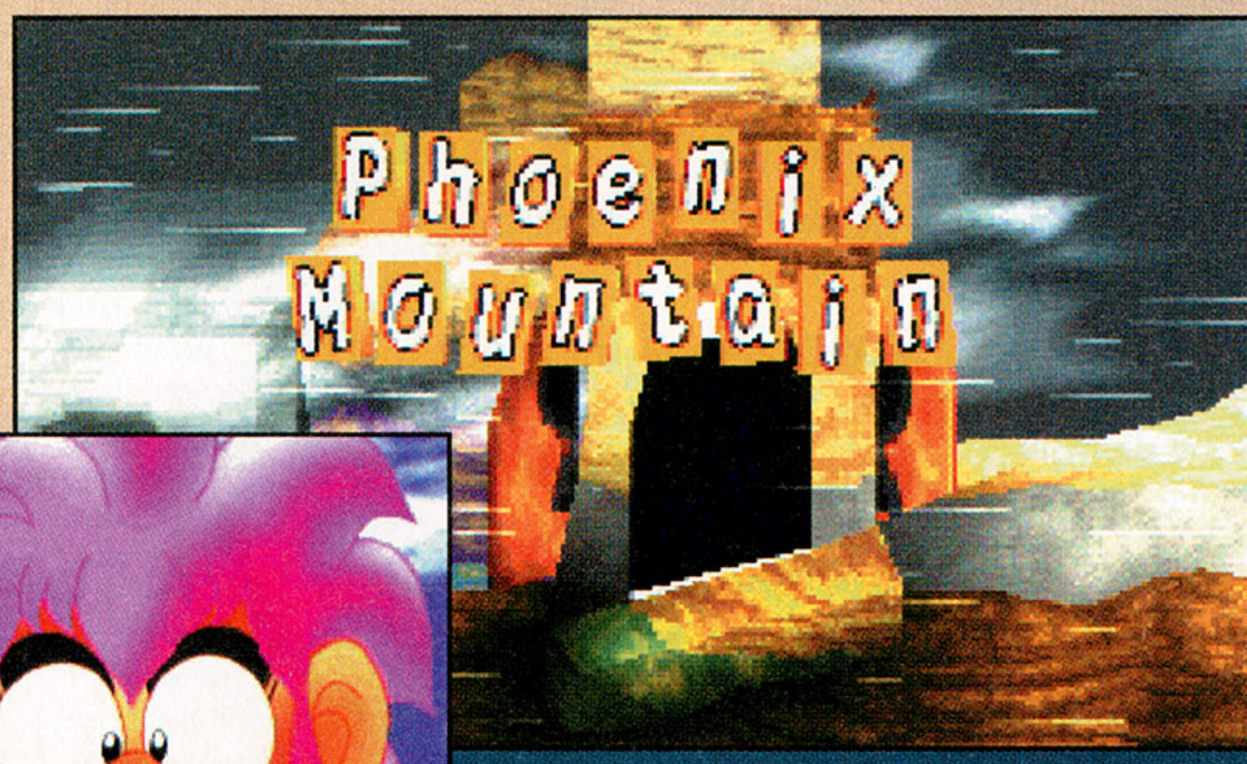
REVIEW

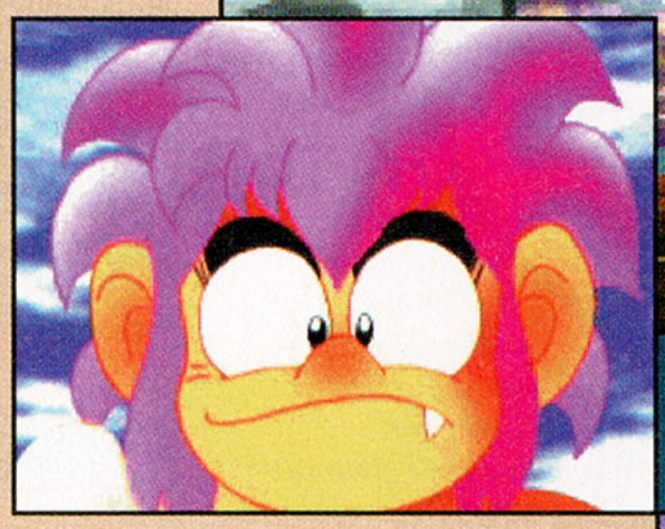
TOMBA

SCEA's deceptively simple Tomba proves to be more akin to a bizarre action RPG than a mere pig-bashing platformer.

With a resurgence of niche gamer interest in 2D-ish platformers (**Klonoa, Pandemonium**, etc.), SCEA's **Tomba** makes its own solid entry into the genre with a few new tricks to make it stand out from the pack. Apart from the bizarre premise of the game, **Tomba** combines elements from the action, platform and RPG genres in a way that involves the player in a long adventure, filled with loads of character interaction, endless sub-quests and several nasty areas requiring above average coordination skills. The result is sometimes addicting, loads frustrating, but always intriguing.

Throughout **Tomba**, you'll acquire numerous weapons and equipment to solve countless missions. You're awarded 'AP' points when you initially uncover a specific quest, like finding lost items for a town citizen, and then you'll gain even more when you successfully solve the problem. But, in no way is the game strictly linear. You'll be given multiple tasks all at once and often you'll need to return to a previously visited area in order to complete many of the quests.





Nobody ever said Tomba was all about great graphics, which is a good thing.

Tomba is able to hop on certain adjacent walls and rotate the plane of play, which opens up a lot of the playing areas for more exploration.

Odd enemies and even stranger items keep the gameplay interesting and a tad bit wacky throughout.

Visually, **Tomba** is certainly nothing marvelous. 2D sprite characters move around in a pseudo-3D environment, wherein Tomba can climb walls behind him on the screen or in front of him.

While not a great graphic achievement, **Tomba** does successfully place major RPG elements in a platformer and creates a great sense of depth in an otherwise straightforward genre. And above all, it's damn fun.

BUY IT!

★★★★☆

FLASHBACK

BONK'S ADVENTURES
SYSTEM: Turbo Grafx-16
PUBLISHER: NEC

One of the more memorable prehistorically themed platformers is the Turbo Grafx's Bonk series. Similar to Tomba in dress and appetite, Bonk served as much more of a straightforward platformer and required little exploration or character interaction (nix completely on the latter). The point of the game was to go about bonking enemy dinos with the main character's immense cranium and to occasionally powerup by eating huge slabs of meat in order to save the land from a gigantic evil dinosaur overlord. 'Nuff said. Stranger things have happened and Tomba seems to be a very distant side-scrolling cousin.

System: PlayStation
Price: $39.99
Genre: Action
Players: 1
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Pork Rinds
Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Whoopee Camp
Web: www.playstation.com

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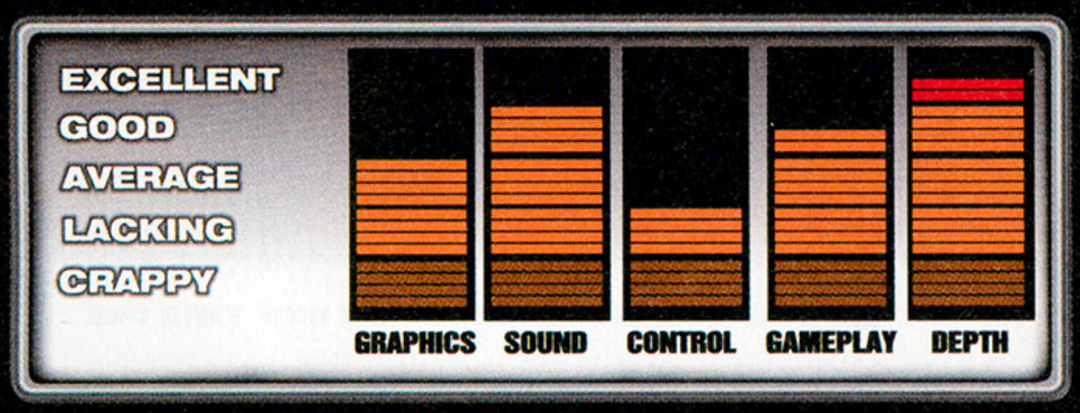

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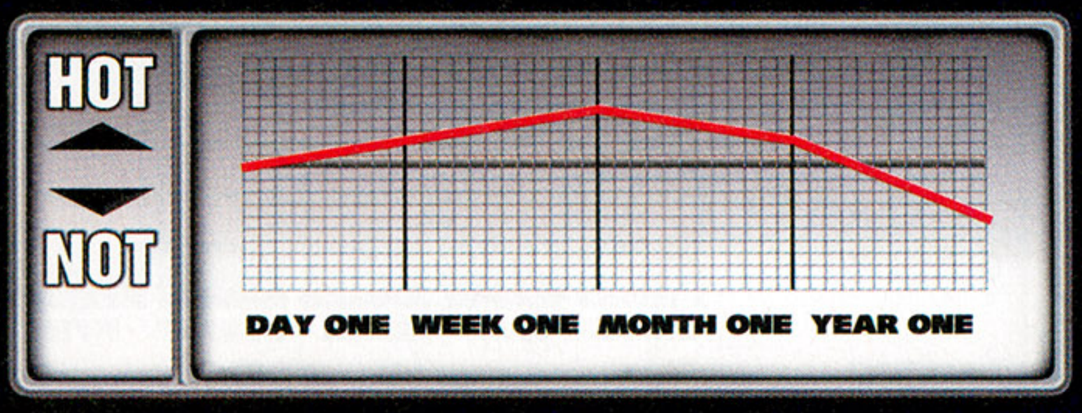


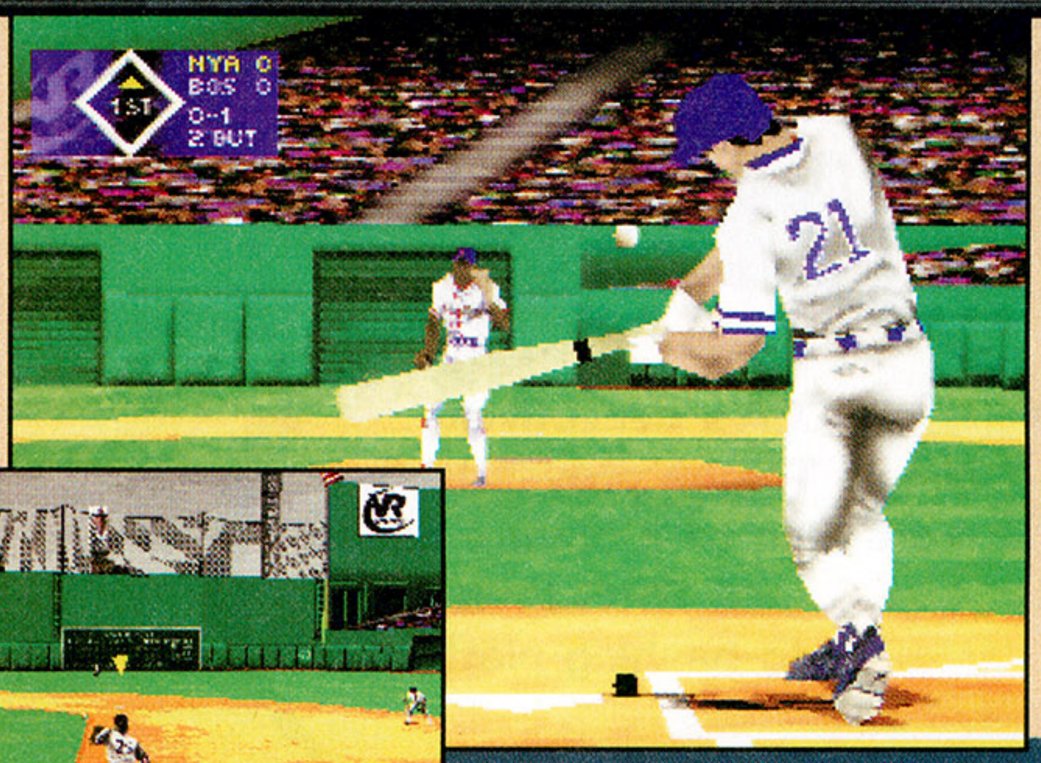
REVIEW

VR BASEBALL '99

VR Baseball may not be the prettiest looking baseball game available, but VR Sports focused its efforts on where it counts - the gameplay.

If **VR Baseball '99** was relying on its graphics to distinguish itself against its competition, then it's managed to distinguish itself in a very negative way. Everything from the dull color palette, to the unattractive textures, to the overall grainy low resolution of the game combine to deliver a visual experience that seems closer to a first generation PlayStation title than the cutting edge. The upshot is that despite appearances, the players move fluidly and play animations are realistic and appropriate - something that **VR Baseball**'s competitors are not always consistent on.

For sound, VR Sports has dispensed with the obligatory game commentary and has instead focused on the ambient sounds of a real life ball park. The effect is convincing, but some gamers may find the effect a bit sparse for their tastes.



The major complaint about VR Baseball '99 is the way it looks. The upside is that the players move smoothly and play animations are realistic and appropriate.

VR Baseball '99 is a surprisingly good game when it comes to actual gameplay. The developers made sure that the game plays and feels like real baseball. The split second reaction times inherent to the sport are nicely translated into the game. **VR Baseball '99** offers solid gameplay with few irritations. Fans will find that there is plenty of enjoyable replay value.

Gamers willing to forgo some graphics in exchange for gameplay should definitely give **VR Baseball '99** a look.

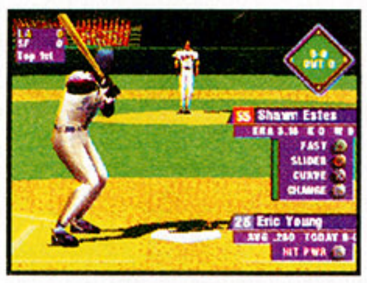
System:	PlayStation
Price:	$39.99
Genre:	Sports
Players:	1 or 2
ESRB rating:	E (Everyone)
Recommended:	Hot dogs, Beer
Publisher:	VR Sports
Developer:	VR Sports
Web:	www.vrsports.com

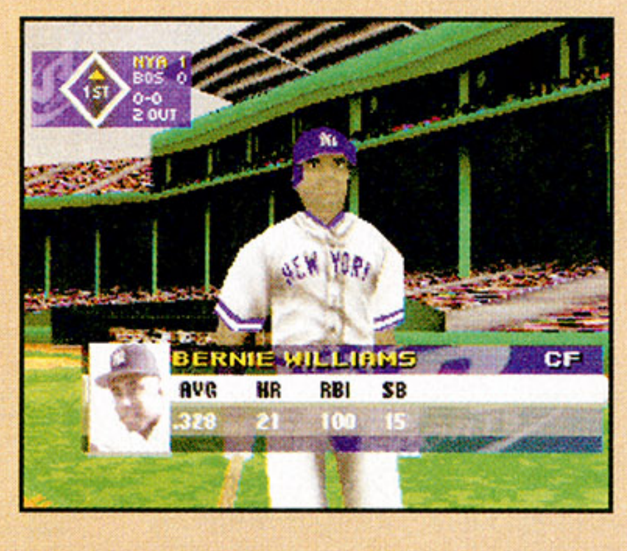
HEAD TO HEAD

MLB '99
PUBLISHER: Sony
SYSTEM: Sony Int. Studios

VR Baseball '99 actually compares quite favorably to MLB '99, due to its better tuned engine and balanced gameplay, but MLB offers superior control in aspects like defensive positioning and the all important batter/pitcher interface. MLB '99 offers the more complete package, which makes it the game of choice for baseball fans on the PlayStation.

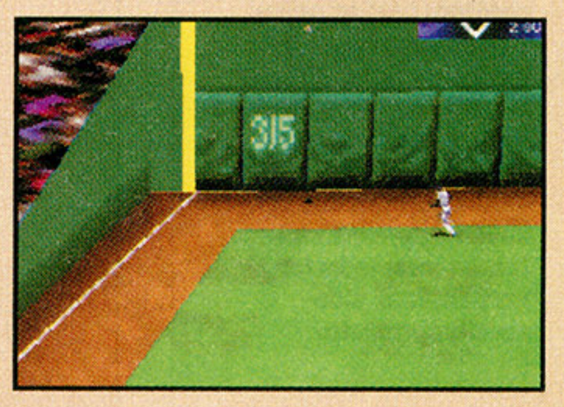
MLB '99
★★★★





Just ignore the horrendous textures and grainy graphics while you make the play on the line drive off the wall.

VR Baseball '99 possesses the Players licenses, in addition to the League license, so every fan favorite is included.



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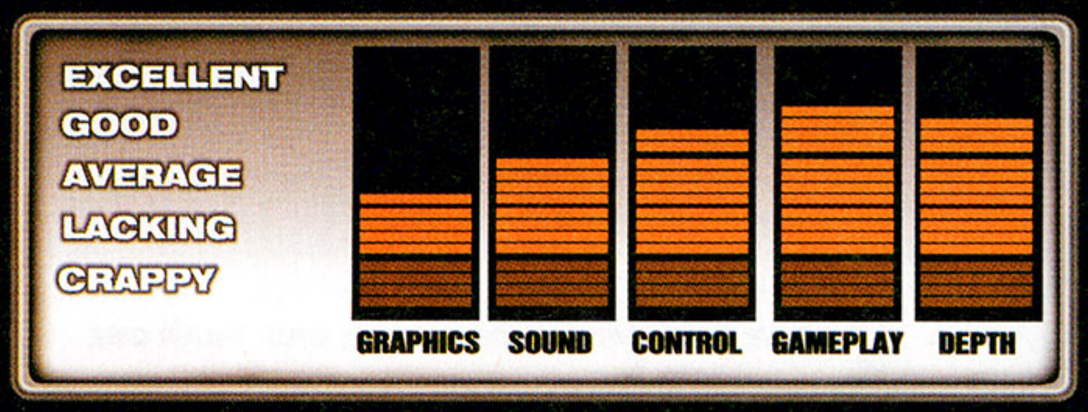

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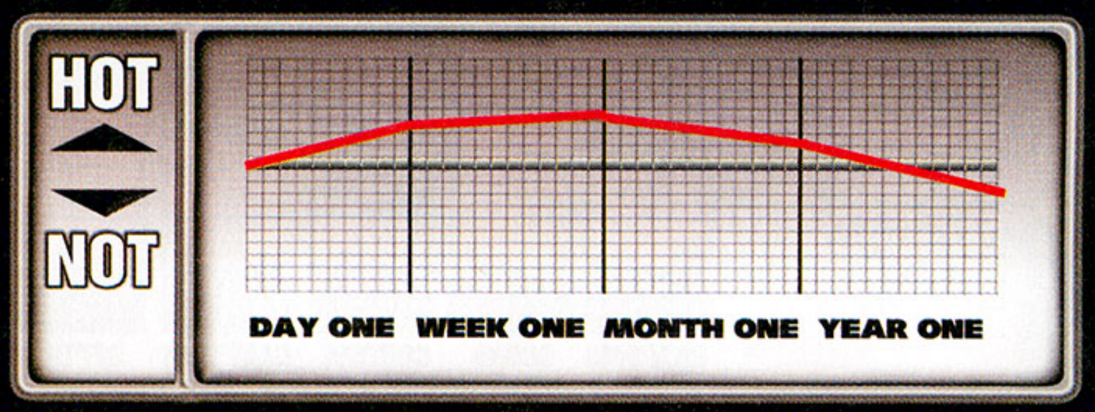

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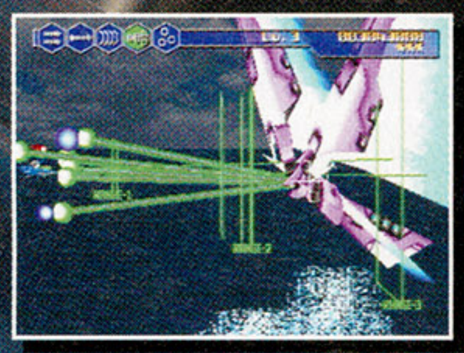

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SENTINEL Returns

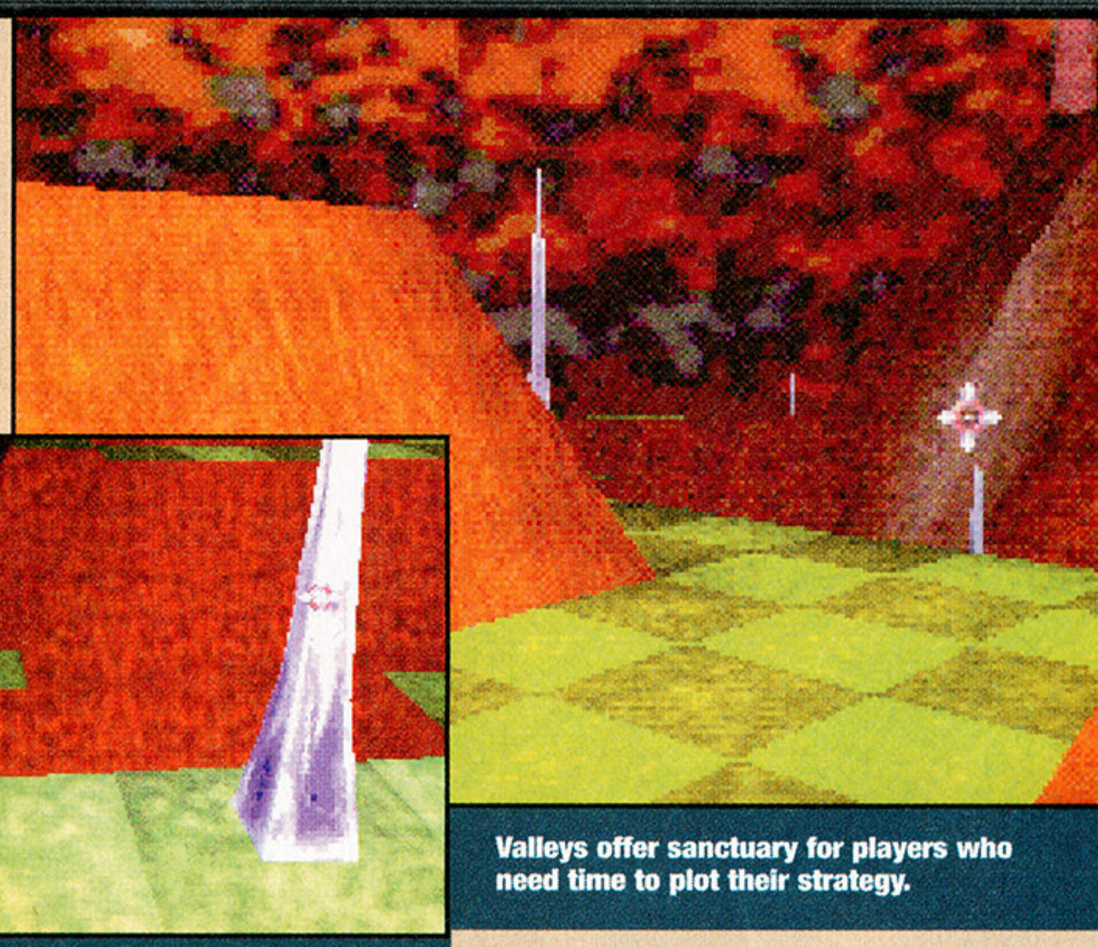
Psygnosis does to strategy games what Capcom did to action with Resident Evil, but is the game good enough to be just as successful?

Geoff Crammond's classic game, **The Sentinel**, finally gets remade, with dark visuals reminiscent of the work of Adam Jones and Fred Stuhr, the folks responsible for music videos such as Tool's **Sober**. The remake remains faithful to the original concept, which plays well on the Playstation, since it handles the 3D playing field much better than the old Spectrum computers.

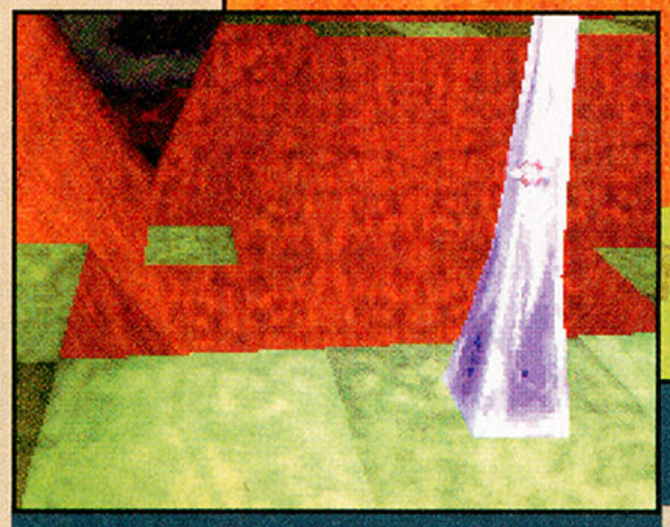
The premise of the game is simple. You move from square to square on a limited field, all the while avoiding the gaze of the ominous Sentinel. You don't just move as in 3D platform games; instead, you must absorb enough energy to produce a copy of yourself on a nearby square and transfer your essence from the current body to the next. If it sounds a little surreal, it is. And to add to the eeriness is a musical score composed by horror director John Carpenter.

Playing the game can become very unnerving. Once the Sentinel gets you in his gaze, he begins to absorb your power, and once it's gone, the game ends. The sound cues and dark atmosphere create a sense of urgency that can hasten your strategy and get you killed.

The game has enormous replay value. **SR** has the suspense of a good horror film, the addictiveness of a good puzzle game, and gameplay that brings you back for more.



Valleys offer sanctuary for players who need time to plot their strategy.



Absorbing objects called 'trees' gives the player more energy to move.

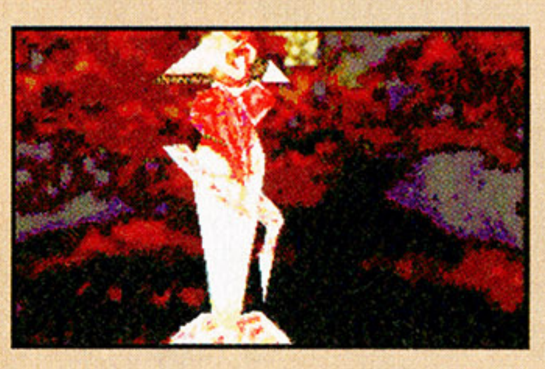
System: PlayStation
Price: $49.99
Genre: Strategy
Players: 1
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Mouse
Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Hookstone
Web: www.psygnosis.com

FLASHBACK

THE SENTINEL
PUBLISHER: Firebird
SYSTEM: Commodore 64/Amiga, Spectrum

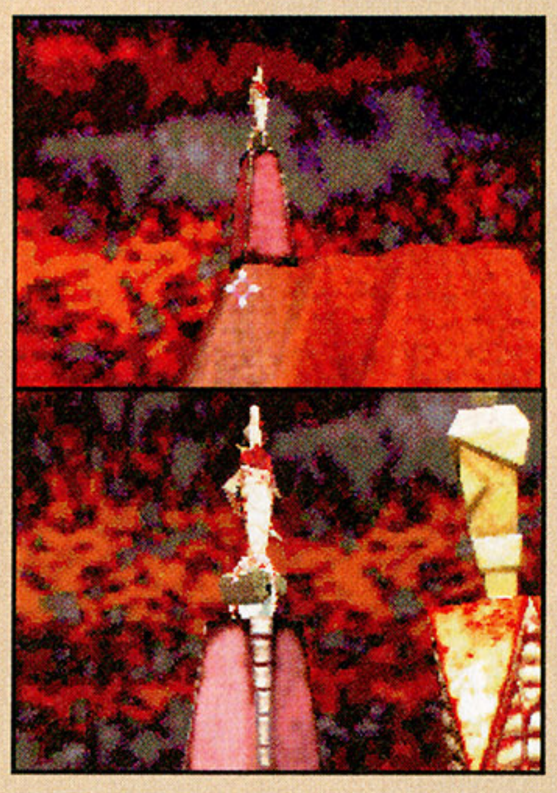
The original game, The Sentinel, was released in 1986 by Firebird Software for the Commodore 64 and Spectrum line of computers, and was considered one of the first successful 3D polygon games. It eventually was ported to the Commodore Amiga, even though the 8-bit versions were considered far superior. The game's programmer, Geoff Crammond, was also responsible for another classic hit, Stunt Car Racer, which was released by Firebird as well for the Commodore 64 and Commodore Amiga in 1989.

In order to win, players must move up the level and quickly absorb the Sentinel before he turns around.



BUY IT!

The Sentinel stands high atop the game grid with a watchful eye for intruders.



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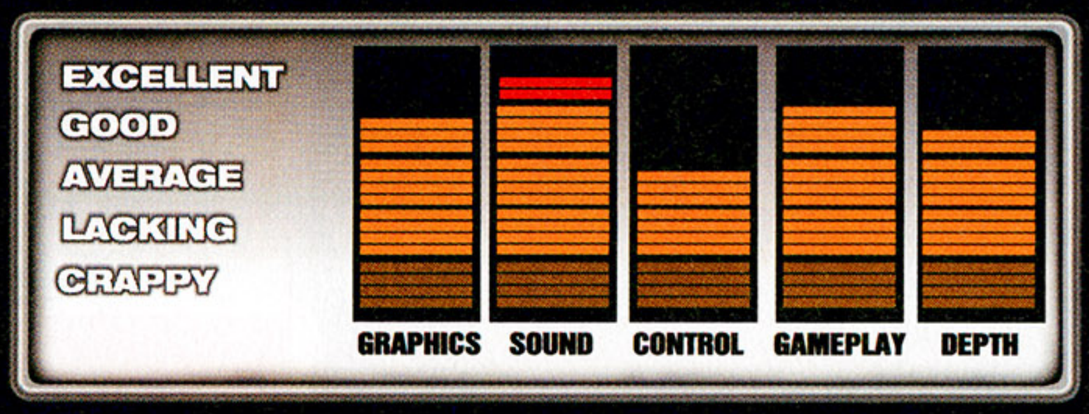

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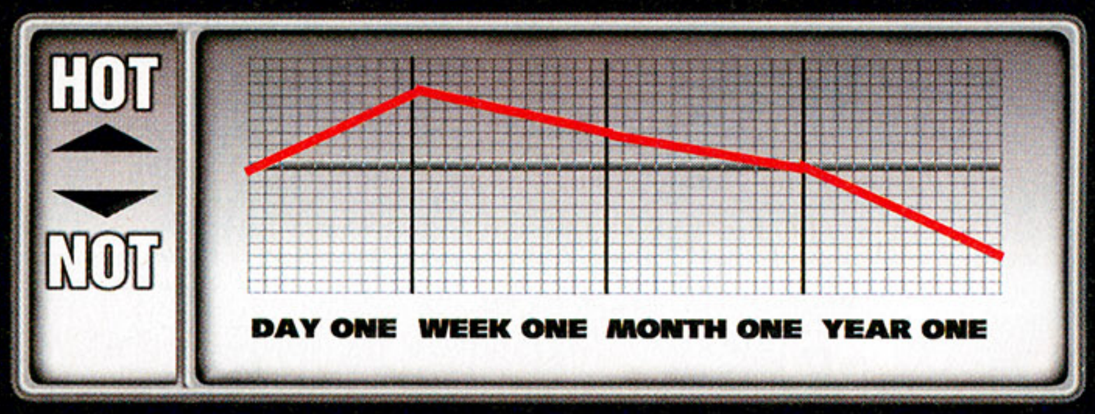

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REVIEW

N20: Nitrous Oxide

> The tube is full of bugs. The bugs must be destroyed, to make some gas or something. Brain off, rapid fire on, and there goes a whole evening.

Now we're not saying that **N20** is derivative of, or even similar to, **Tempest**. What we are saying is that it's a complete rip-off of **Tempest**, albeit a technologically superior one. **N20: Nitrous Oxide** has a couple of features that make it unique, but largely, you race through tunnels, clinging to the inside wall, blasting things out of your way and picking up extra weapons. The addition of a time limit adds a frantic boost to the pace of the game, made all the more frightening by the fact that the time limit is linked to the destruction of bad guys. If you don't kill enough, the time literally passes faster.

Add to that a two player split screen mode and **N20** seems to have all the elements of a classic shooter. Piled on top of that is a soundtrack by the Crystal Method, one of the leading techno bands on earth. So how could they go wrong? Well, you can have too much of a good thing.

N20 is just too much. The graphics are overpowering and confusing, even when you get used to all the light and action on screen, it's still messy. A little clearer, and this might have been a classic.

Graphics like these make you wonder what the designers have in their water cooler.

Drive and shoot, drive and shoot. That's basically the whole game.

System: PlayStation
Price: $44.98
Genre: Shooter
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Dual Shock controller
Publisher: Fox Interactive
Developer: Gremlin
Web: www.foxinteractive.com

ALTERNATIVELY

Interplay's Tempest 3000 is the only real alternative, although some people have pointed out that the repetitive nature of the game may prove irritating to younger players. And boy, these games are repetitive. Old school blaster fans will love it, since it's all about high score, hang the level progression. Fat bonuses, big points. REO Speedwagon, Journey. Man, I'm old...

Back in the late '60s, people would pay good money to stand in a dark hall and check out graphics like these behind a band.

Don't let the spiders catch you. Blast them and keep on moving! Ack... spiders...

The explosions in N20: Nitrous Oxide are things of wonder; huge, bright and gloriously noisy!

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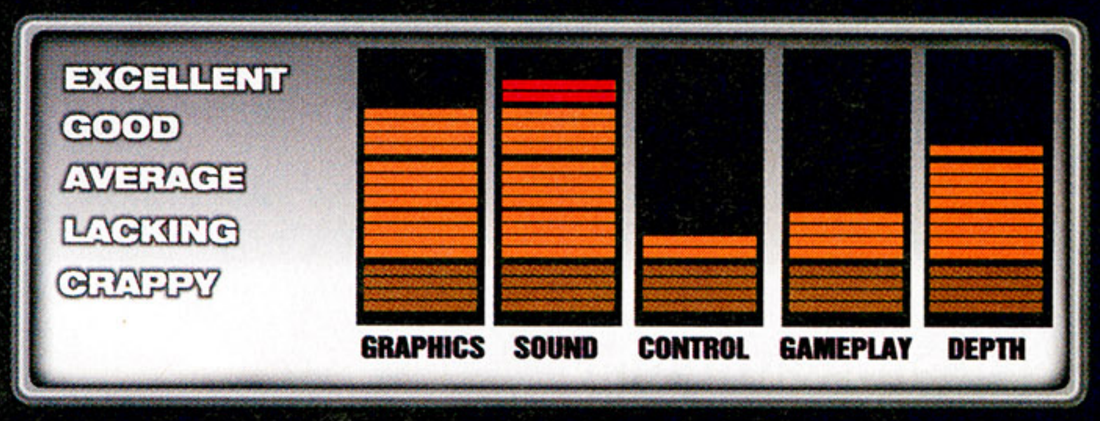

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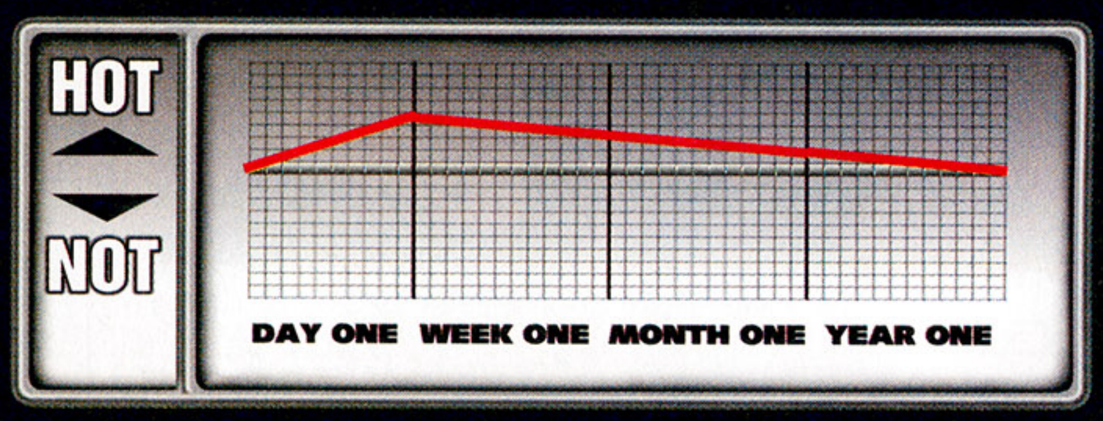

S.C.A.R.S

Hairdoo ala Turbo

Acute Retinal Burning (just an excuse to wear rad shades)

Lock-Jaw

Wears "standard issue" race gear 24 hours a day

Dislocated shoulder

Blistered Raw Nub

S.C.A.R.S Elbow (Tendonitis)

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NINTENDO 64

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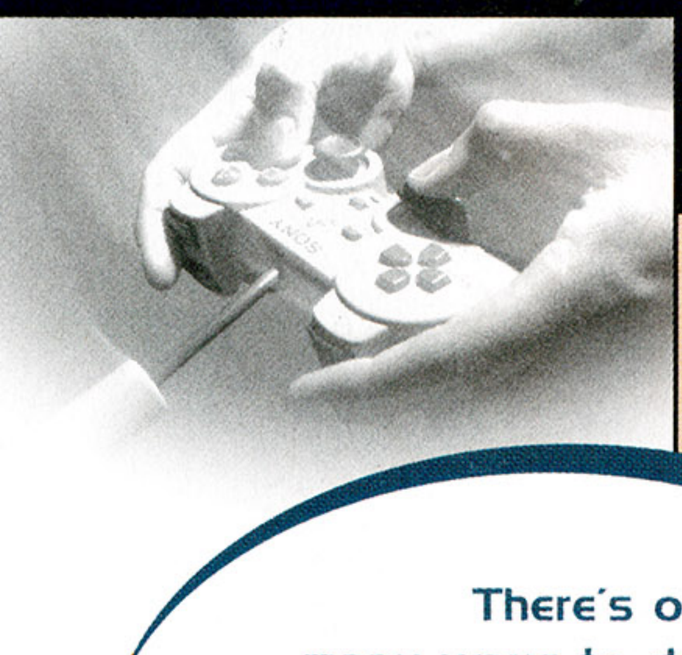
REVIEW

CARDINAL SYN



There's only so many ways to do a fighting game - and Cardinal Syn is one of them. Come back, War Gods, all is forgiven.

There are, it seems, only three types of fighting game. There are the slick, 3D polygonal fighters, best exemplified by **Tekken** and **Virtua Fighter**. Then there are the colorful 2D anime-style beat 'em ups - such as **Street Fighter** or **Fatal Fury**. And then there are American fighting games.

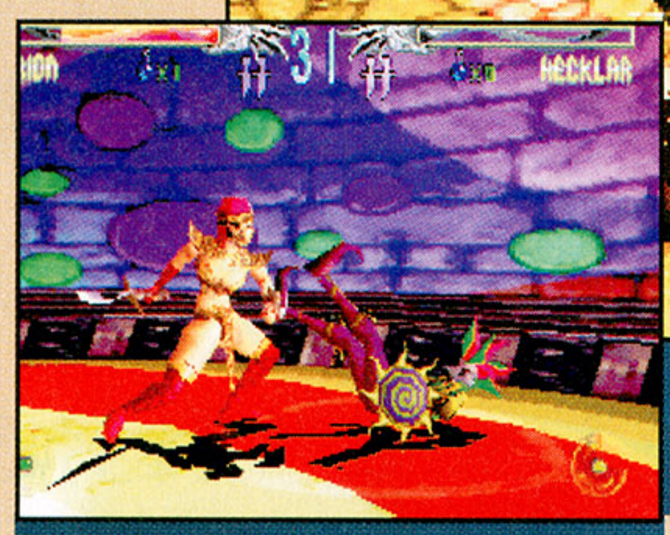
We can't make TVs, we can't make stereos and we can't make fighting games.

Sure, we can fill 'em with violence. **Cardinal Syn** is a visceral experience indeed. Blood pumps in ample quantities, spines are pulled out like zippers. And yes, we can make pretty graphics, the characters look brooding/fierce/sexy where applicable. The animation can be ropey. And we can do sound effects like you read about, but we can't do fighting games.

This is the Kronos team's umpteenth attempt at the genre, and admittedly the company is getting better, but they're too busy 'borrowing' ideas from other games, instead of coming up with some of their own.

Spinning blades, minecarts, lava and arrows can all sap your energy during a fight and it's possible to lure enemies into the path of such obstacles. Sadly, the 3D movement of your fighter is far from graceful, and it can be tough to avoid certain perils.

Each character can move backward and forward with grace and speed, move 'em in 3D however, and suddenly it's like Louie Anderson on valium.



Interaction with background objects does make the game more challenging.

Character design is grandiose, but humorless. Everyone says, 'Aaargh!' or 'Grrraaah!'

Backgrounds are varied and often impressive. This circus is hardly fun for the family.

Plot: Mighty sword of, magic, the end is nigh... snore...

System: PlayStation
Price: $49.99
Genre: Fighter
Players: 1 or 2
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Dual Shock
Publisher: Sony
Developer: Kronos

KRONOS KREATES

Just to give you an idea what sort of guys Kronos is staffed with, here's the intro from its website: In Greek mythology, the first god, Uranus (Heaven) mated with Gaea (Earth). From this union of heaven and earth, Kronos, the youngest and most powerful of the Titans, was born. It is from this supreme union that Kronos Digital Entertainment, Inc. derived its name. Committed to our chosen epithet and its significance should be mentioned that, 'We don't do cutsie, hoppy, jumpy, bunny, rainbow collecting kinda crap,' Stan Liu, President and CEO. Obviously,our games are not meant for those of delicate constitution or the faint of heart.

THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

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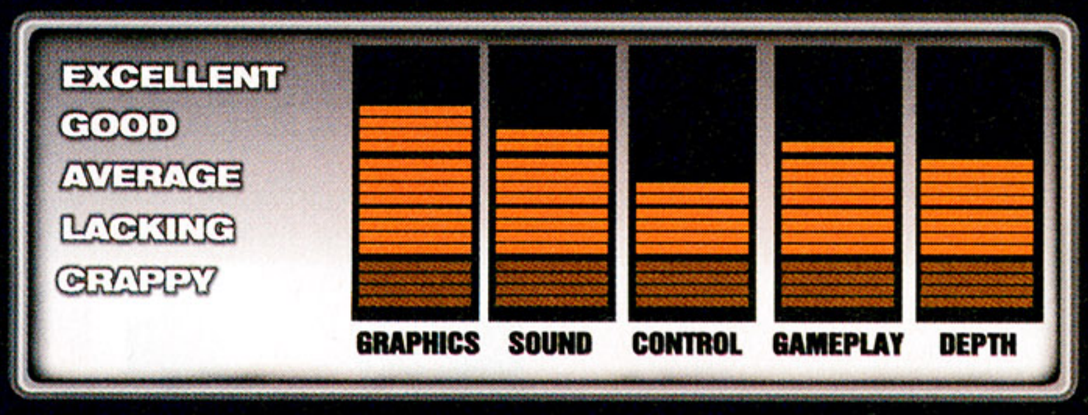

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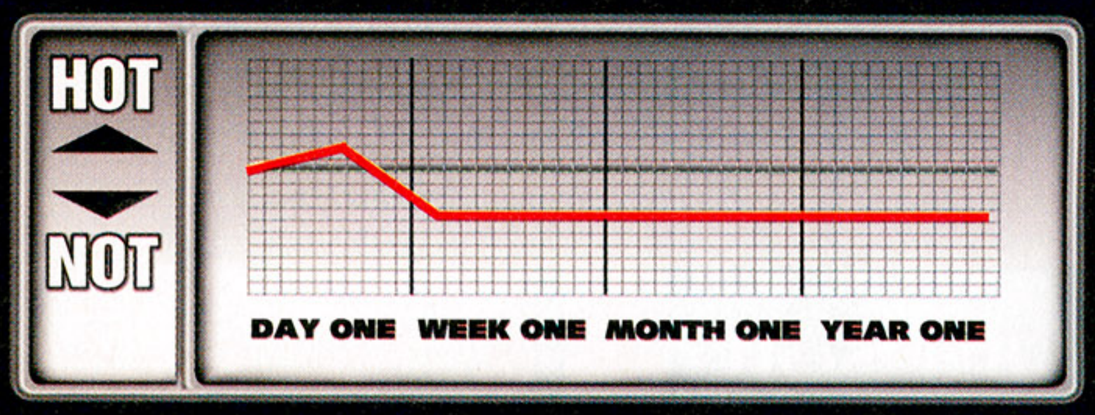


REVIEW

JERSEY DEVIL

After a long delay and a successful bid by SCEA, Jersey Devil finally resurfaces as Sony's answer to Gex: Enter the Gecko in the 3D platform genre.

Jersey Devil was set to release around this time last year, but quietly disappeared after rumors of the developers' lean finances interrupted the game's progress. The game finally found a home in the hands of SCEA, who paid out enough dough to let the programmers finish the game. Now, **Jersey Devil** is finally on store shelves with a new camera system, a slightly different interface and a restructured design.

You control the character of Jersey Devil, who is seeking revenge against the mad scientist who had captured him as a baby.

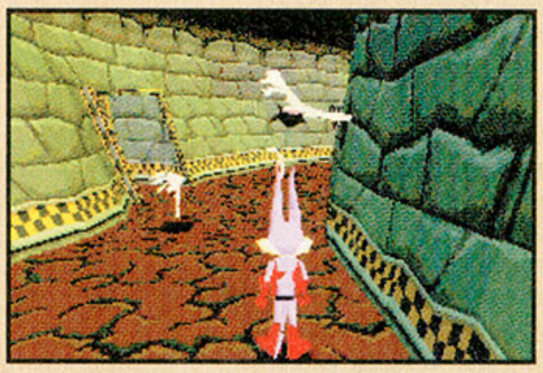
Not only is Jersey Devil responsible for thousands of cattle mutilations, but this picture also shows that he's responsible for most of today's convenience store robberies.

System: PlayStation
Price: $39.99
Genre: Platformer
Players: 1
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Analog Controller
Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Behaviour
Web: www.sony.com

It's nothing new, but gameplay and character are more important than storyline and **JD** delivers a modest amount of both.

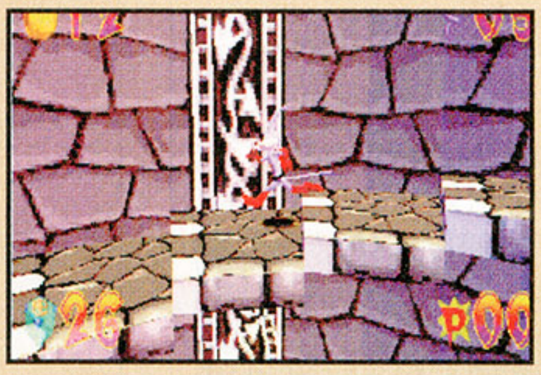
The majority of levels consist of knocking enemies around and not much else, but the analog controller makes control more precise and fluid. The game does have some problems in terms of collision detection, but aside from this, the game's strength lies in its camera system, which, though still a bit clunky from time to time, controls incredibly well and is less intrusive than in previous 3D platformers.

Overall, **Jersey Devil** is nothing short of a good, basic platformer, with smooth controls, a solid camera system and enough gameplay for the money. The game definitely warrants a long, hard look.



Each stage has two levels contained within for you to unlock at different points in the game, making it very reminiscent of Gex 2.

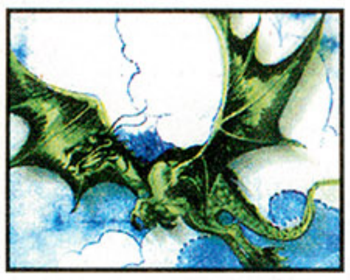
Levels have a real cartoonish feel, but their actual layout is a little awkward at times.



The simplicity of controls make this game a perfect choice for younger gamers and those new to the genre.

WHAT'S A JERSEY DEVIL?

An old folktale stemming from historical, not factual, sightings of a beast with the head of a ram, the body of a lion and the claws of a dragon in the area that is now the state of New Jersey spawned the legend of the Jersey Devil. The creature was responsible for slaughtering scores of livestock and leaving long trails of hoofprints up and down the Jersey coast during the 1700's and 1800's. Rumors and stories ranged from it being born to a blasphemous mother to its roots in the bowels of hell.



THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

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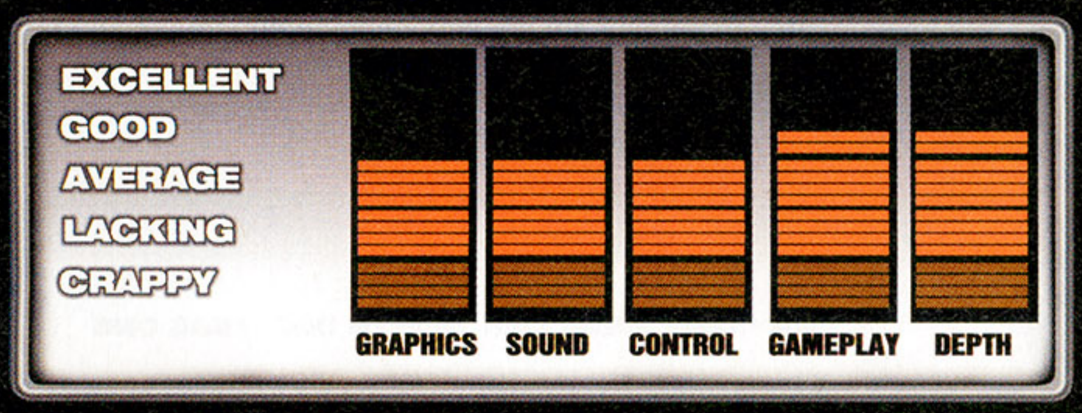

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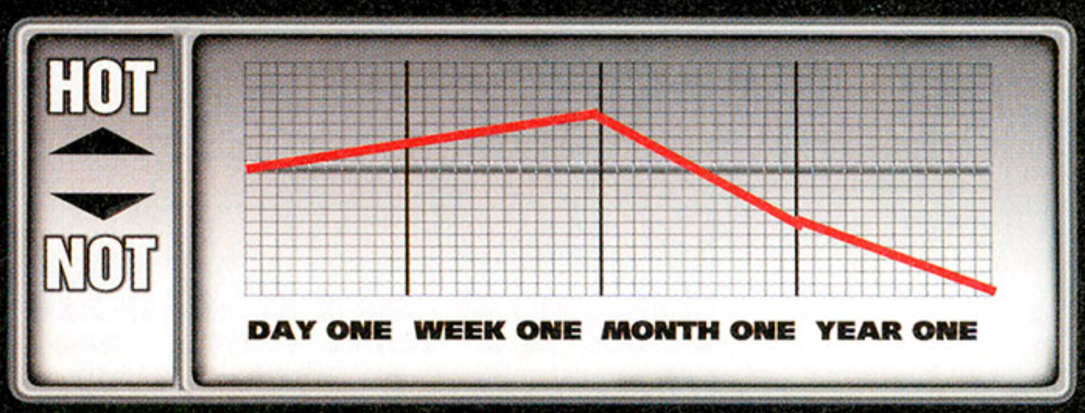


REVIEW

ADIDAS Power Soccer '98

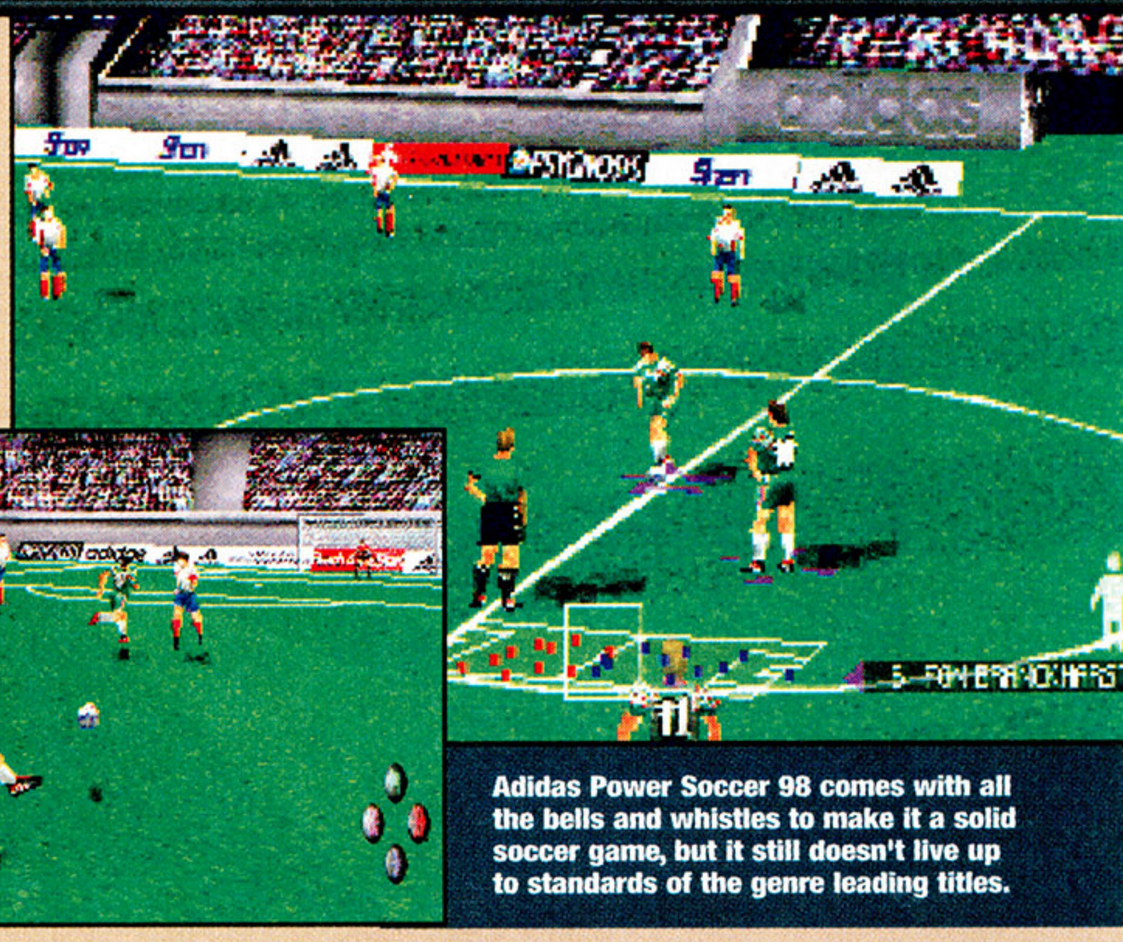
In between all the Adidas commercials that infest the game, Adidas Power Soccer 98 is actually a competent soccer simulation at an attractive price.

The number of soccer games available for console systems and PCs has reached a zenith and there are only a few titles that really distinguish themselves. On the PlayStation, the game to beat is **World Cup '98**, and though **Adidas Power Soccer 98** makes a valiant effort, it ultimately comes up short in refinement and gameplay.

In terms of sheer gameplay features, **APS 98** comes to the table ready to deal. 400+ teams, 30+ stadiums, 60+ special moves, 350 motion captured animations, and an extensive 10,000 player database make for an almost endless array of game scenarios.

APS 98 offers an impressive amount of control over the players. The main area of complaint is in the immediacy of reactions when commands are input via a controller. While it's not completely horrible, **APS 98** doesn't communicate the sensation of instant reaction to game situations that the best soccer games have.

Truthfully, most PlayStation owners are going to find everything they want in **World Cup '98**, but considering **APS 98**'s low price point, its solid gameplay, and plethora of features, it is definitely worth checking out.



Adidas Power Soccer 98 comes with all the bells and whistles to make it a solid soccer game, but it still doesn't live up to standards of the genre leading titles.

System: PlayStation
Price: $29.99
Genre: Sports
Players: 1 to 4
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Memory card
Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Shen
Web: www.psygnosis.com

HEAD TO HEAD

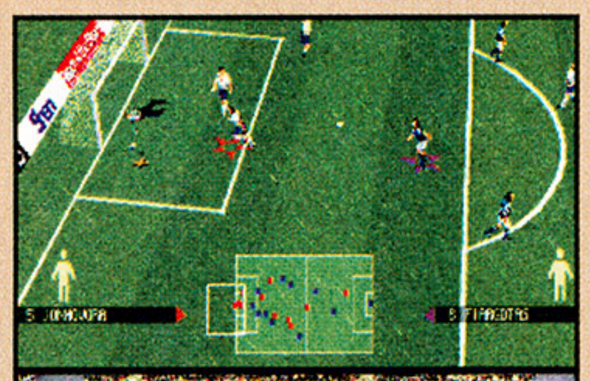
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
SYSTEM: PlayStation

The first Adidas Power Soccer is remembered more for its Arcade mode. Players could administer kicks to an opponent's head, pull down opponents by their shirts, and saying that the ball had an extreme physics model is putting it mildly. Special actions were accompanied by smoke and sparkle effects, and the flaming goalkeepers were especially memorable.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

There over 60 unique special moves that the players can perform and the moves can be linked together for combo plays.

Adidas Power Soccer 98 features over 400 different teams and 34 fully rendered stadiums, but in reality few players will explore the differences between every team and locale.



THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

The level of detail in the game's graphics is admirable and everything is nicely animated, but the 3D polygonal players are still a little blocky and not quite up to par with the best soccer games.

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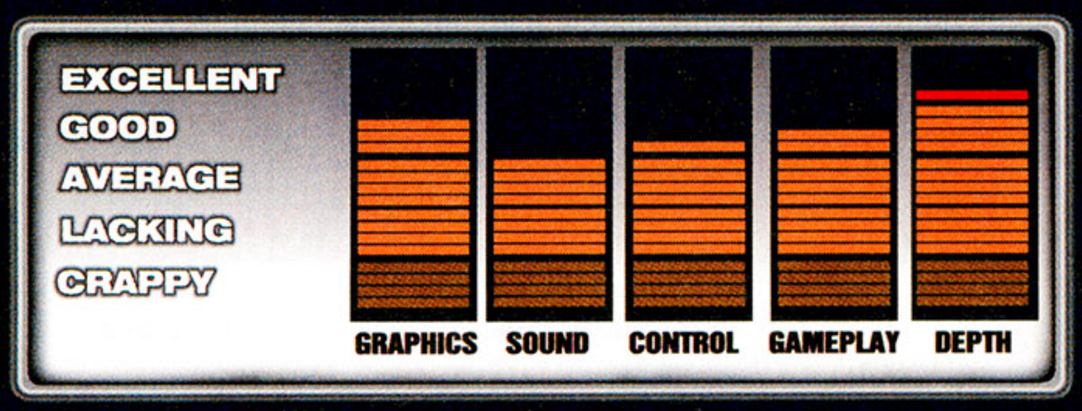

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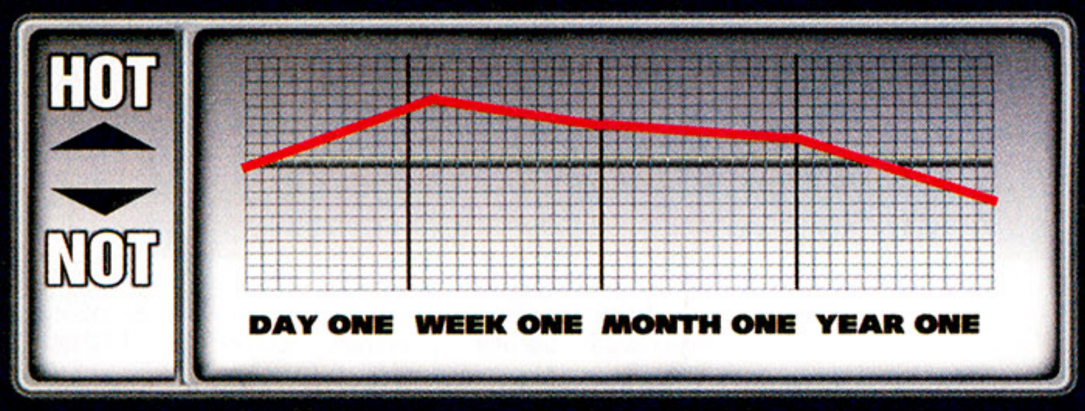
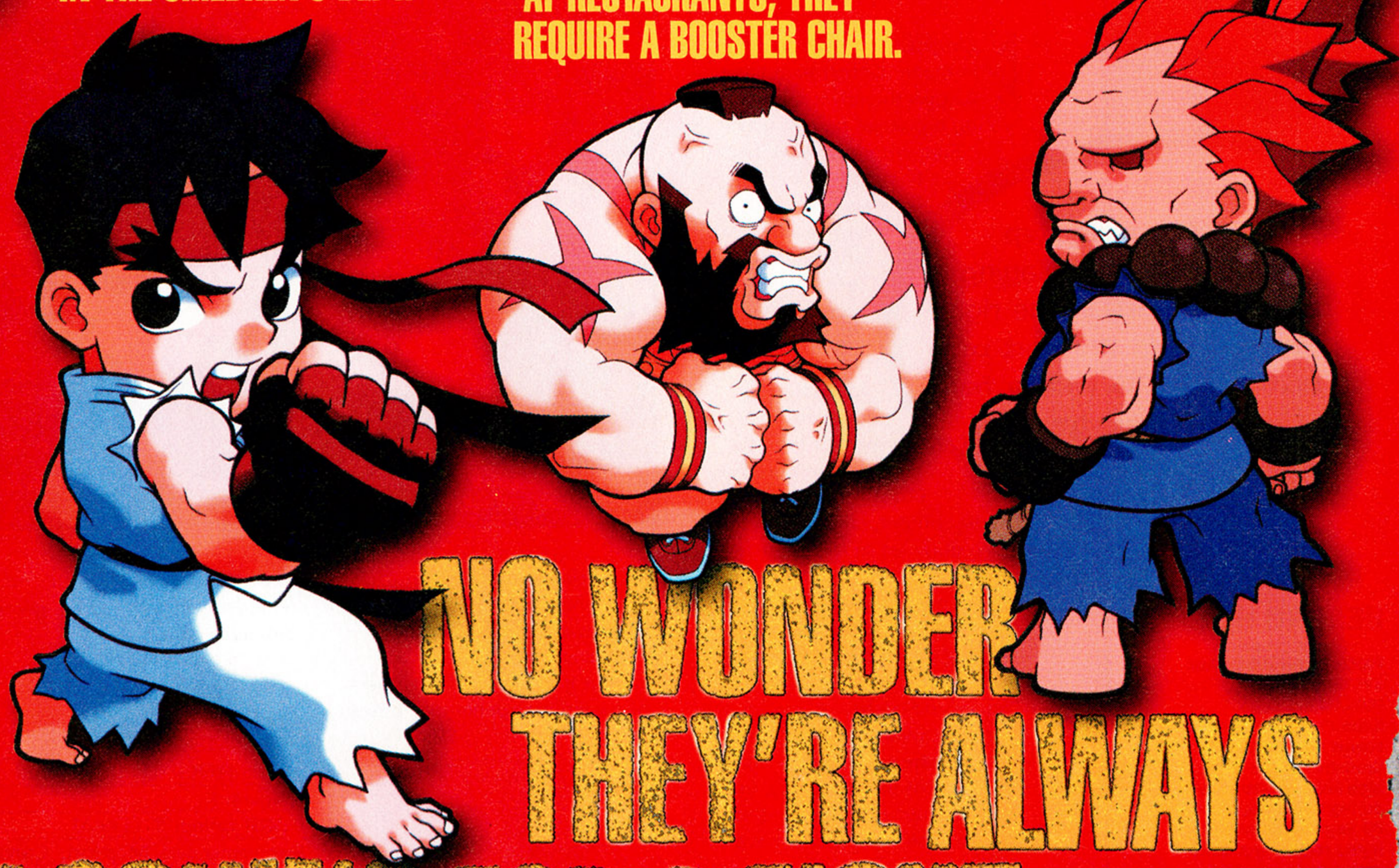


WORTH 20 FIGHTERS EDGE POINTS!

THEY CAN ONLY FIND PANTS IN THE CHILDREN'S DEPT.

AT RESTAURANTS, THEY REQUIRE A BOOSTER CHAIR.

THEY CAN'T REACH THE GAS PEDAL.



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BEFORE YOU LAY CLAIM TO HAVING THE BEST FIGHTING GAMES, YOU'D BETTER HAVE THE BEST FIGHTERS. WE DO.

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REVIEW

GRANSTREAM SAGA

THQ's next step into the role-playing realm continues in the right direction with the port of a textbook RPG with a few innovative touches.

From the looks on these sourpusses' faces, we guess it's safe to say that life isn't all beer and skittles in RPG-land.

Originally released by Sony in Japan, **Granstream Saga** follows the adventures of a young orphaned hero, named Eon, who must save his floating continent from sinking by using magic and an unusual arm brace called a scepter. In doing so, Eon meets up with two love interests who determine which of the two endings you'll receive. But beyond the thematic content, **Granstream**'s main draw lies in the game's innovative combat system. All battles are conducted in a real-time setting with all manner of fighting game-type moves like counterattacks, defending, super-moves and dashes. A reward system also awards skilled fighters.

Granstream fails in some key elements of the gameplay. In spite 60 frames per second of motion, the movements have a slow feel which threatens to bore a segment of gamers. Another strange feature in the game are the faceless onscreen characters, which inevitably appear expressionless and often bland.

Granstream Saga should make a good choice for gamers interested in experiencing a fresh new approach to RPGs. It's no **Final Fantasy VII**, but the game is definitely worth a play.

BUY IT!

★★★★☆

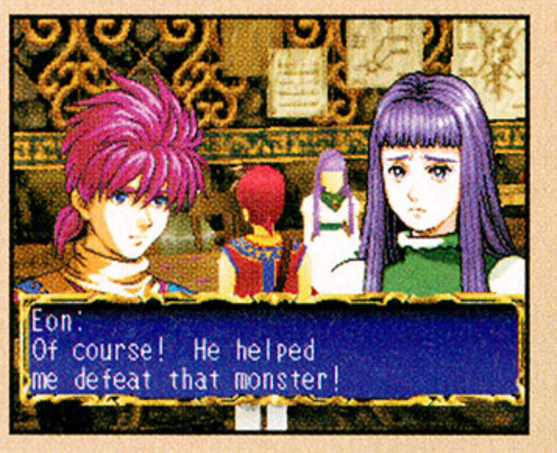
System: PlayStation
Price: $49.99
Genre: RPG
Players: 1
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Memory Card
Publisher: T•Hq
Developer: Shade/SCEI
Web: www.thq.com

HEAD TO HEAD

PANZER DRAGOON SAGA
SYSTEM: Saturn
PUBLISHER: Sega
Saturn's last great RPG seems most similar to Granstream due to the high level of interactivity during battle sequences. PD Saga featured aerial fights requiring a three gauge power system, a precise amount of good timing, knowing your enemy's weakness, as well as a host of other options to consider during combat. PD Saga etches a new high watermark for all future RPGs.

PANZER DRAGOON SAGA
★★★★★

The unique fighting system in Granstream Saga offers much more interaction than the garden variety RPG.



Important characters are given large hand-drawn head shots which somewhat make up for their featureless ingame counterparts.

Eon's scepter plays an important role for solving puzzles, acquiring items and surviving the game.

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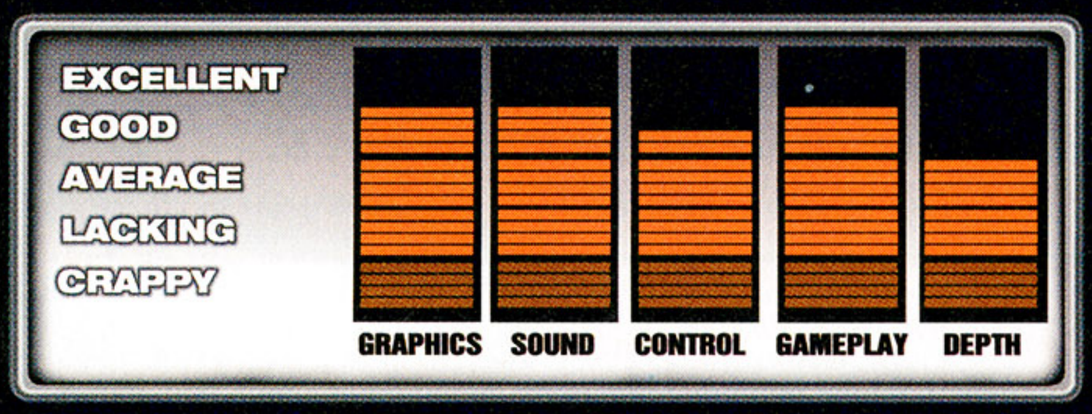

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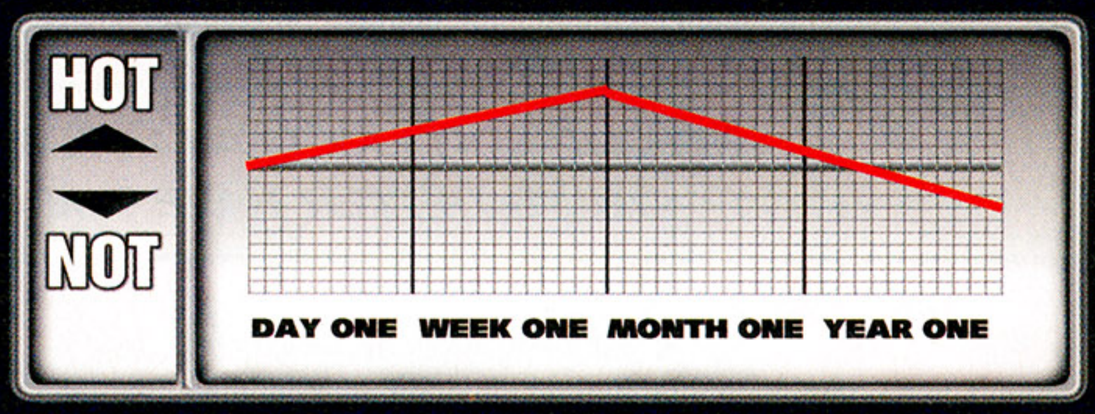

REVIEW

AZURE DREAMS

With its high replay value and strategy elements, Konami's Azure Dreams manages to take the RPG genre in a slightly different and unique direction.

Azure Dreams requires a bit more strategy then most other RPGs, so be prepared. Finding and breeding monster familiars, ala Tecmo's **Monster Rancher**, is only one aspect of the game. Players will have to manage every aspect of your party, including fighting formations and equipment. It may all seem daunting at first, but players are given helpful explanations as they progress through the game. After mastering the general elements, the game becomes pretty straightforward and plays like any other standard RPG out there. Combat is turn-based, but you can move freely around the fighting area and attack your opponent from different angles.

If there was something bad that could be said about **Azure Dreams**, it would have to be about the graphics. Because the level's are randomly generated, it was not possible to include as much detail as pre-rendered backgrounds normally contain. Characters also look a little bit too pixely.

In the end, **Azure Dreams** may not surpass **Suikoden** or **Vandal Hearts**, but if you are a fan of the genre and looking for a new game to conquer, then give **Azure Dreams** a try.

When talking to other characters, you're often given choices of what to say to them.

The levels found in the tower are all randomly generated and will be different each time you enter. Talk about increasing the replay value!

System: PlayStation
Price: $49.99
Genre: RPG
Players: 1
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Ascii Grip Controller
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Web: www.konami.com

FLASHBACK

SUIKODEN
PUBLISHER: Konami
SYSTEM: PlayStation

Even though Suikoden was only the first RPG that Konami released for the PlayStation, it quickly became one of the most popular RPGs to grace the console system. The large number of characters that you could have join your party and the deep and involving storyline made for an RPG experience that some may argue is even better than Final Fantasy VII. So far, no Konami title has been able to touch Suikoden, but Azure Dreams does get decently close.

THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

If you happen to lose all your health in the tower, then you will be magically transported back to your home, but without your supplies. You will then need to repurchase any equipment and monster eggs you may need and reenter the tower.

There is a holding area in the back of your house that can store up to four different monster familiars. Choosing the best familiar to accompany you is part of the challenge.

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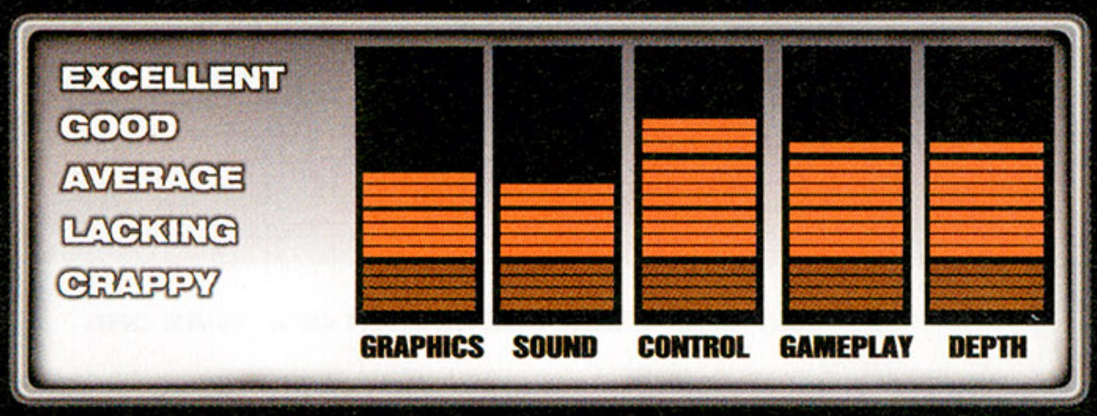

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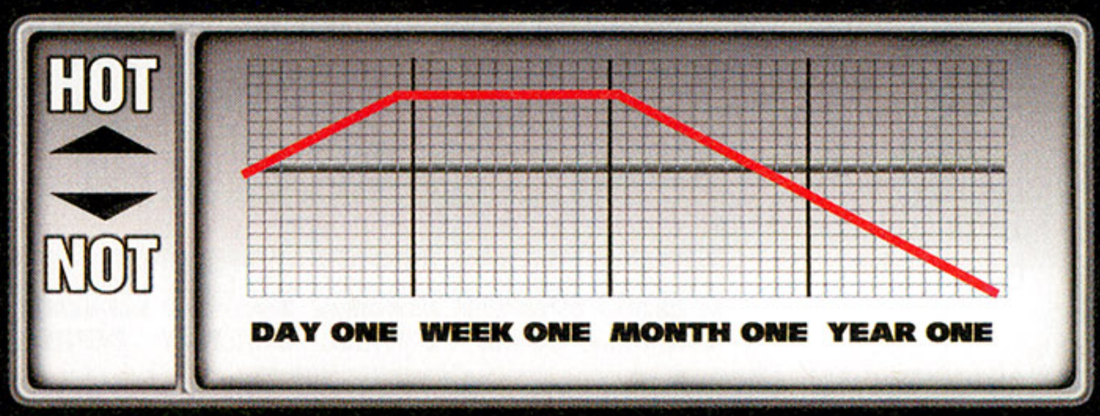


REVIEW

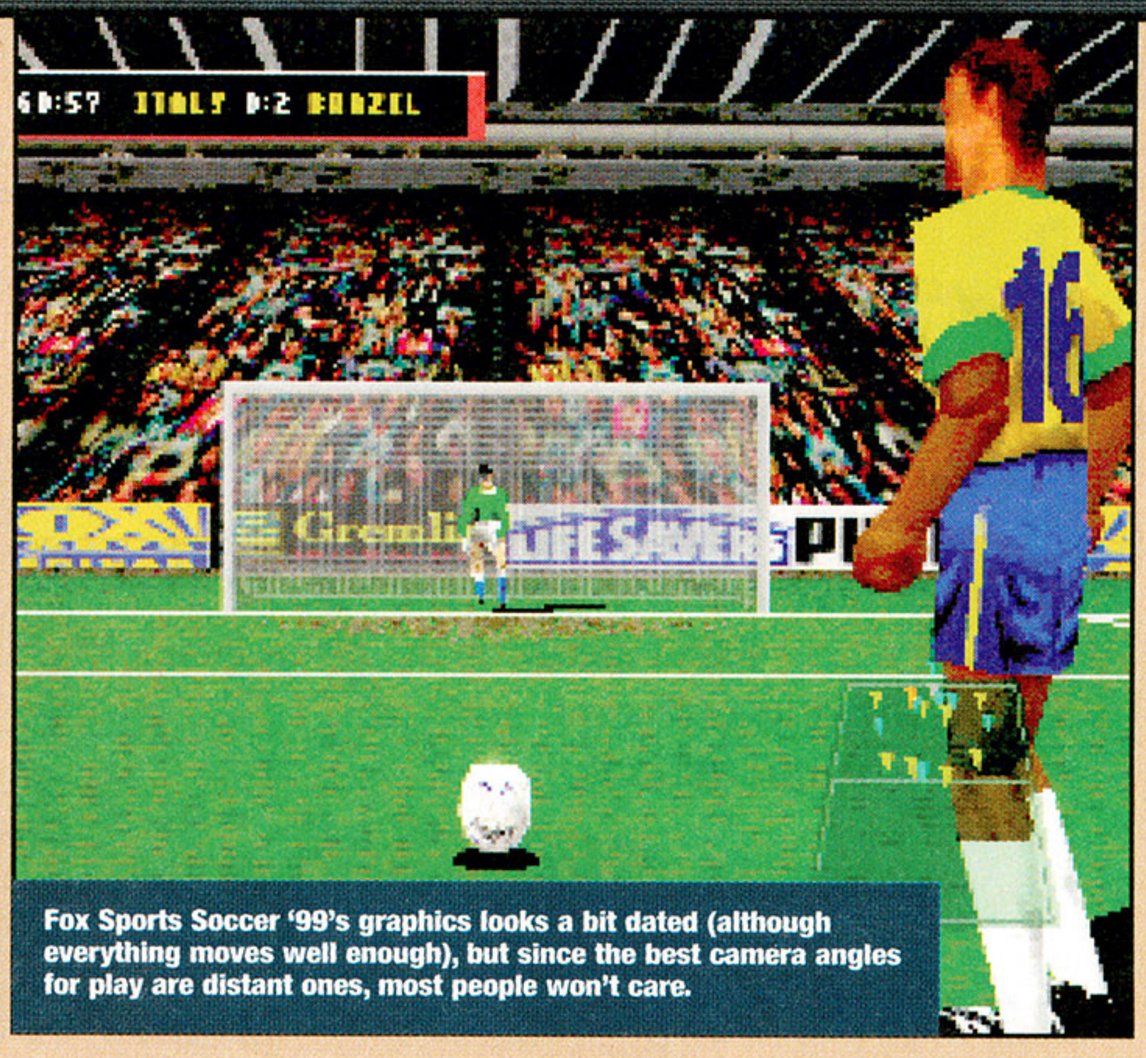
FOX SPORTS Soccer '99

Fox stumbles a bit with its initial foray into the sports genre with a soccer game that is simple and fun, but ultimately lacking in staying power.

Just about every game publishing house these days is setting up a sports game division and Fox Interactive is no exception, bringing over **Actua Soccer** from Europe as one of its initial offerings. **Actua Soccer** is only a mildly popular Soccer game in Europe and despite some tune ups to the gameplay engine, the retitled **Fox Sports Soccer '99** hasn't escaped the realm of mediocrity. The gameplay is definitely geared towards the casual (or very young) gamer. There is little effort to recreate the feel or strategic nuances of real life soccer. The up and down the field tempo of the game is more reminiscent of hockey, which isn't all bad, as it makes for simple, breezy fun, but the lack of depth diminishes the enjoyment life span of the title.

The graphics in **Fox Sports Soccer '99** are on the grainy side, with players that move too stiffly. The game resembles first generation PlayStation efforts more than the latest and greatest to grace the platform. The commentary is competently done, and the available Spanish commentary is simply a blast. We don't know what's being said, but we really like the intensity of the Spanish speaking announcer.

Fox Sports is in an unenviable position with its soccer game. The most satisfying soccer experience for PlayStation owners is **World Cup '98** and the solid **Adidas Power Soccer 98** sells for about $15 less than **FSS '99**. We'll see what Fox Sports can come up with next, but for this year and this game, we'll pass.



Fox Sports Soccer '99's graphics looks a bit dated (although everything moves well enough), but since the best camera angles for play are distant ones, most people won't care.

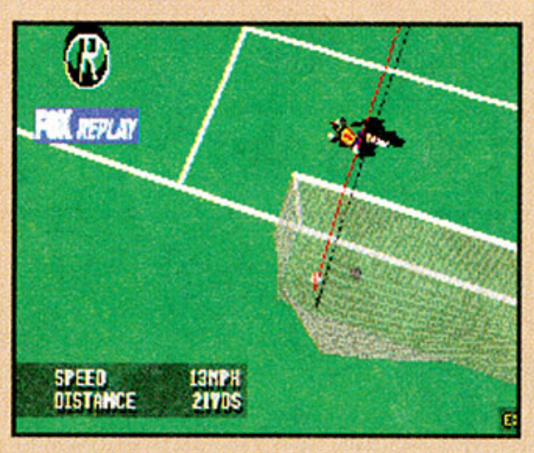
System: PlayStation
Price: $44.98
Genre: Sports
Players: 1 to 4
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Memory card
Publisher: Fox Sports Int.
Developer: Gremlin Int.
Web: www.foxinteractive.com

HEAD TO HEAD

ADIDAS WORLD CUP '98
PUBLISHER: EA Sports
SYSTEM: PlayStation

World Cup '98 is a much more complete soccer simulation. It boasts graphics and gameplay that can only be considered cutting edge. FSS '99 may feature more teams and stadiums, but that is where its list of advantages end. Other consoles may possess superior soccer games, but on the PlayStation World Cup '98 is the cream of the crop.

WORLD CUP '98
★★★★

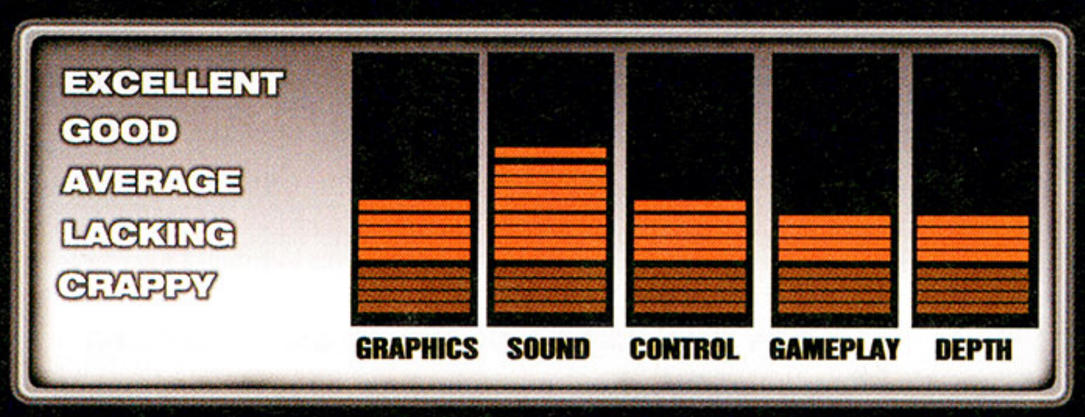


FSS '99 is the only soccer game that offers commentary in two languages. We prefer the more passionate Spanish commentary.

128 selectable teams, 24 unique stadiums and diverse weather settings make for a nice variety of matches.

DON'T BUY IT!
★★☆☆☆

EQUALIZER



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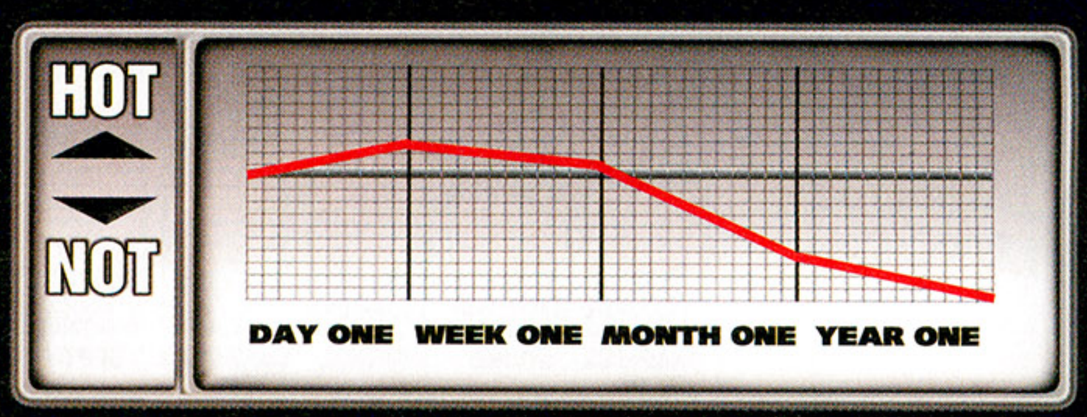

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or your classic love story,
depending on your aim.

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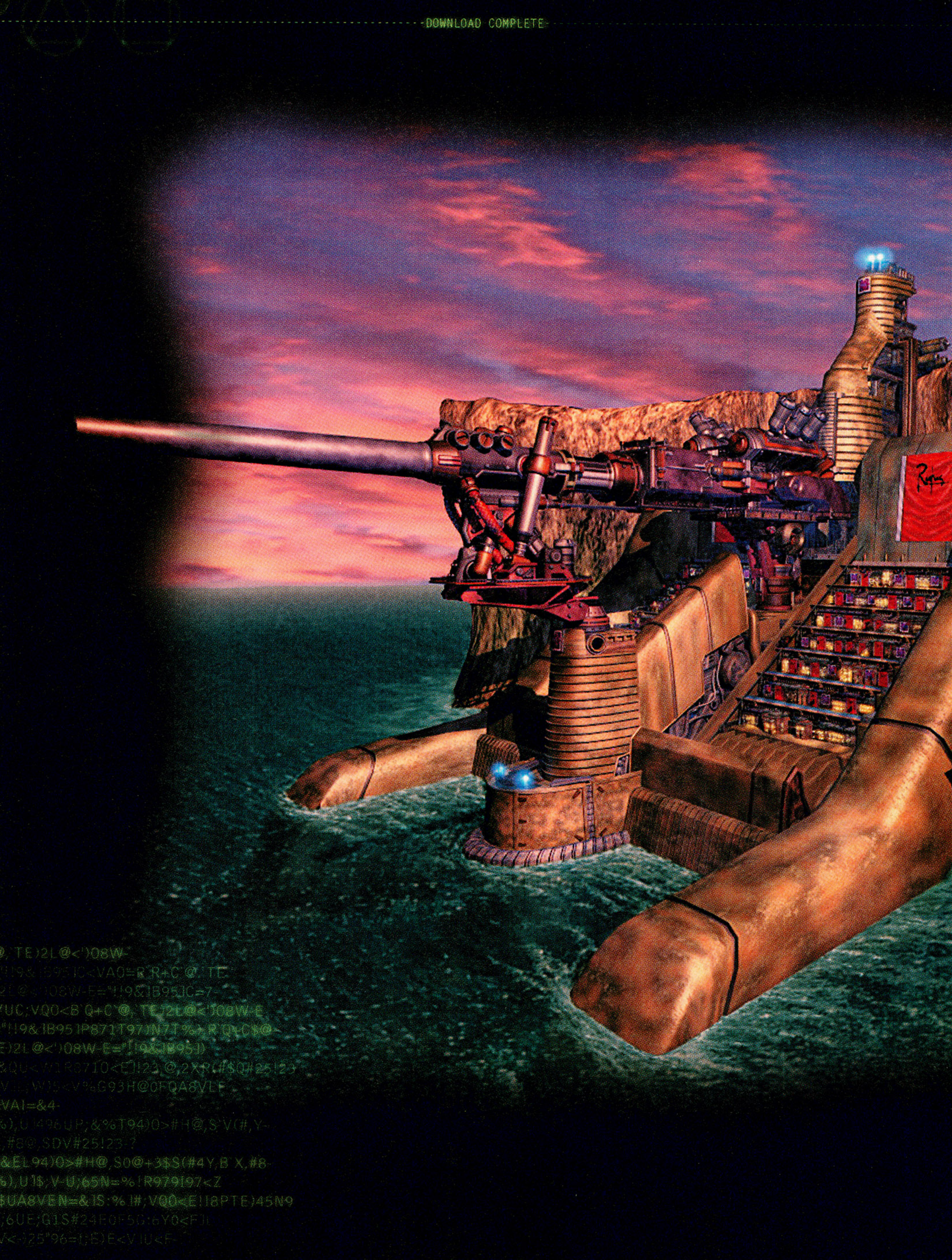
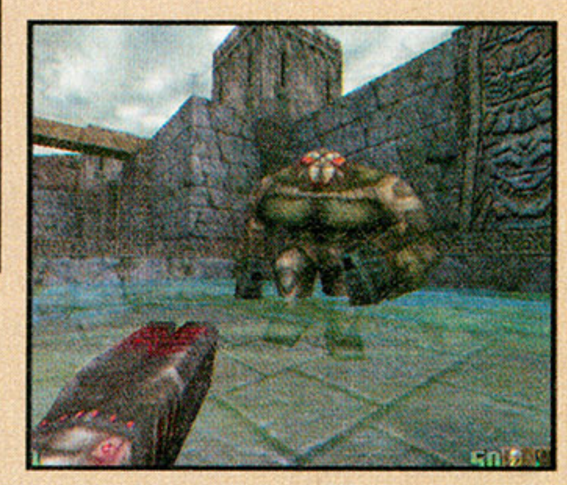


UNREAL

Every now and then, along comes a game that raises the stakes for every other in the genre. **Unreal** is just such a game.

If I were you, I would simply keep running and never look back. Either that or ask for a priest.



The weapon you have is puny, but can be charged up, just like the laser cannon in Irem's R-Type.

Enemy figures take damage differently, depending on which part of their body you shoot.

Unreal has been a long time coming. As a matter of fact, this game has been delayed almost as often as a Nintendo title, which is appropriate, since it shares a lot of other console characteristics. **Unreal**, for example, is the first 3D shooter since **Disruptor** (a game that appeared on PlayStation from Universal Interactive) to integrate the action with some sort of cohesive plot. Naturally, this gives **Unreal** a huge and immediate advantage as a one player game.

As a multi player game, it's pretty hard to find any sort of fault here. The use of level design, weapons and strategy makes this one of the more engrossing and addictive multi-player shooters, certainly superior in this respect to **Quake 2**. But multi-player games are, by their very nature, always fun. The simple act of beating a friend or a stranger in an evenly balanced match makes for good sport. So multiplayer isn't always the best benchmark.

Unreal's true advantages are in technical performance and tight design. With a fast enough machine, **Unreal** looks better than any other PC game before it, even without 3D acceleration. This has one of the most sophisticated software engines ever written, allowing for incredible lighting and fractal effects. As a result, the landscapes and interiors look much, much better than **Quake**'s, but still with plenty of visual reference to both **Turok** and **Quake 2**.

Unreal looks better than any other PC game before it, even without 3D acceleration

The level design is fantastic. One of the things to look out for is 'Unrealscript'. This is basically a design tool that let the game's creators include cool stuff like earthquakes, falling masonry and moveable objects. For the first time, you can alter the landscape to suit your requirements - moving a crate to reach a previously unattainable height.

The weapons are not desperately original, but the twin firing modes are.There are two fire but-

HEAD TO HEAD

QUAKE 2
PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: ID
PRICE: $49.99

It's the most obvious possible comparison, and one that will be made time and time again, but Quake 2 is Unreal's only true rival. In terms of graphics, Quake 2 has been left a long way behind, but what about gameplay? The guys at ID certainly know what they're doing, but the one player adventure is often a little linear and irritating. It's also been said that it's far too easy.

Unreal isn't a tough game, but it is huge. There are vast secret areas that can be explored for fun, or you can simply take a fast route through the level. The bosses seem better designed too, requiring the perfect balance of brains and brawn to defeat them.

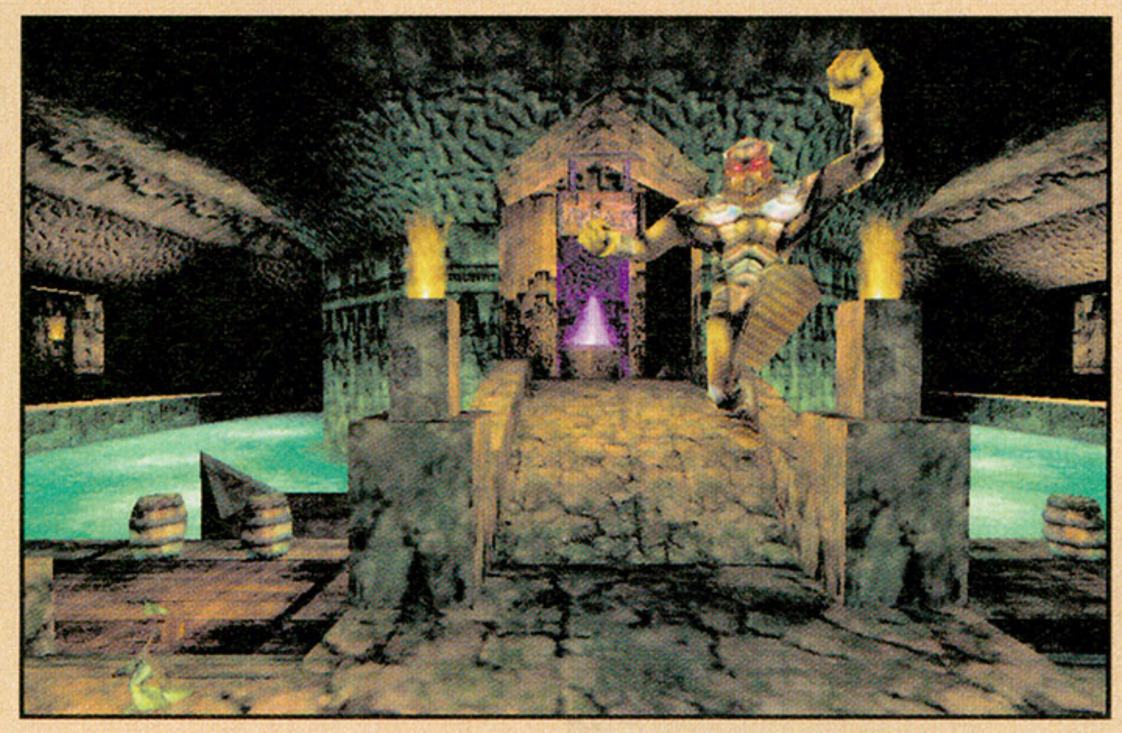
Unreal is much better at everything the two share in common. It's as simple as that.

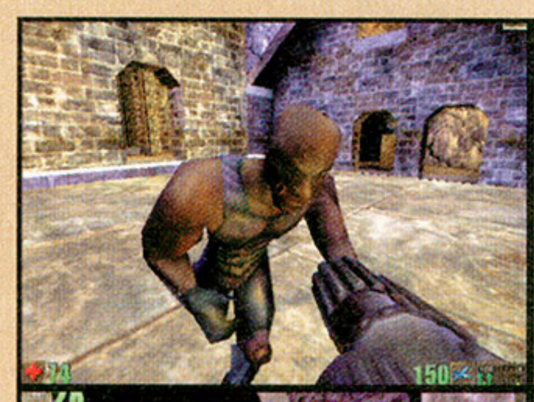
QUAKE 2
★★★★★

System: PC
Price: 49.99
Genre: First Person Shooter
Players: 1 to 8
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: 3D card
Publisher: GT Interactive
Developer: Epic Megagames
Web: www.gtinteractive.com

Minimum Requirements

Pentium 133 (166 recommended) • Windows 95 • Direct X 5 • 32MB RAM • 300MB of uncompressed disk space • 3D card recommended (Power VR/3Dfx)



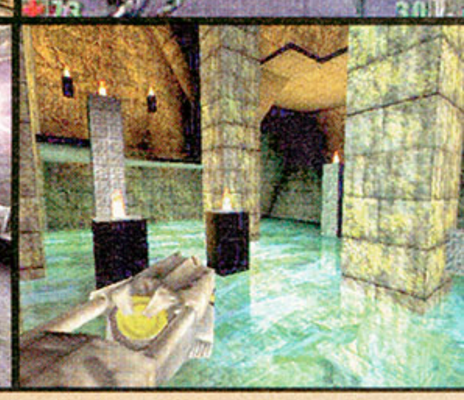


Incredibly detailed characters add a lot to the proceedings, and you can even make out their facial expressions. Certainly better than 'skins' found in Quake 2.

Your opponents don't just stand around to take a beating, they can actually power themselves up. This can be very distressing when they don armor just when you think you're winning.

The range of textures means that no two levels look completely alike. Quake's biggest problem was the overwhelming similarity between stages. This deja vu has been addressed in Unreal.

Fogging, liquid and lighting fill game areas with gloom, doom and danger. The organic look of Unreal has yet to be matched by any other first person game.



The enemy AI is such that you can trick them into fighting each other, just by starting a firefight.

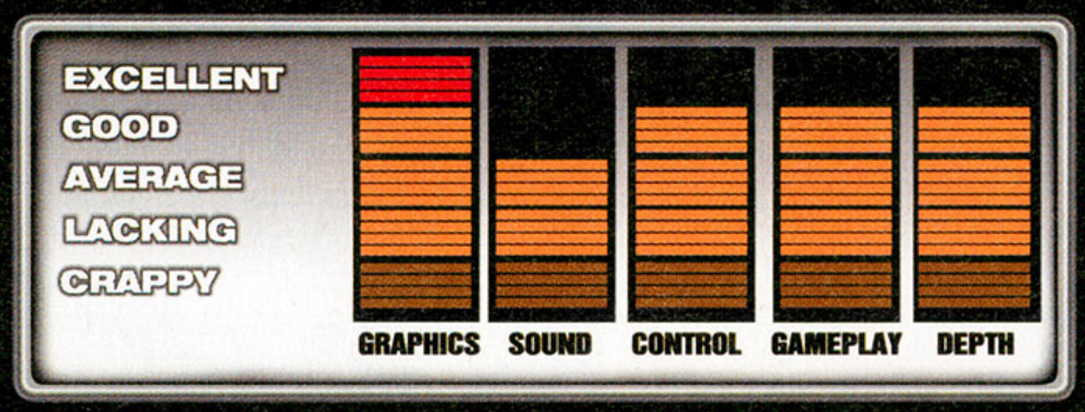
tons for each weapon, radically affecting the way they operate. The first fire button usually activates a conventional fire mode, but the second is invariably more time consuming - and more powerful, rather like the charging mode in R-Type. Weapons selection is incredibly important and can be prioritized in the useful (but annoying) control menu. And that menu is the only thing wrong with the game. PC programmers seem to take great joy in creating the most obscure and irritating options menus possible.

Puzzles, plotlines and surprises await you, and for the first time, we can recommend a first person shooter as a truly epic single player game. Perhaps the greatest accolade we can award **Unreal** is the fact that it had to be deleted from our PCs so we could actually get the magazine out on time. Trite, cliched, but true. **Unreal** is the best of its kind and is a completely essential purchase.

FIRST THERE WAS NOTHING...

...then there was light. Unreal has lots and lots of the stuff. Lens flare, dynamic lighting, shadows, the lot.

EQUALIZER



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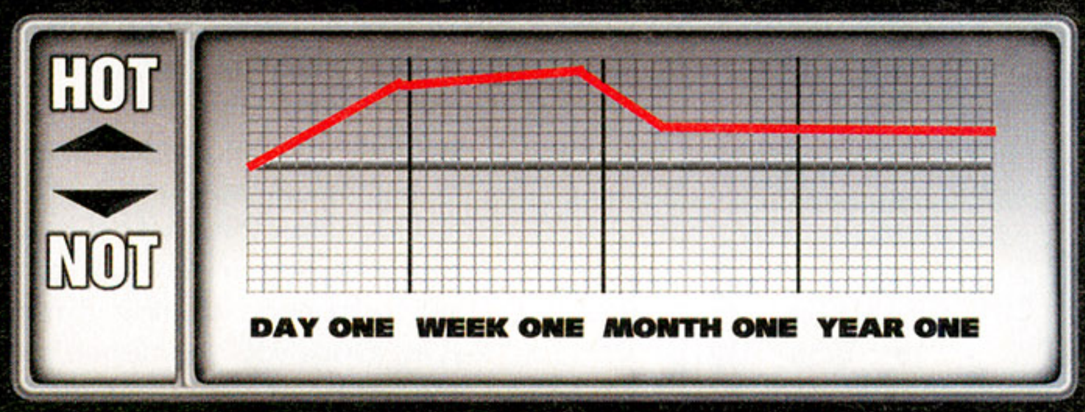
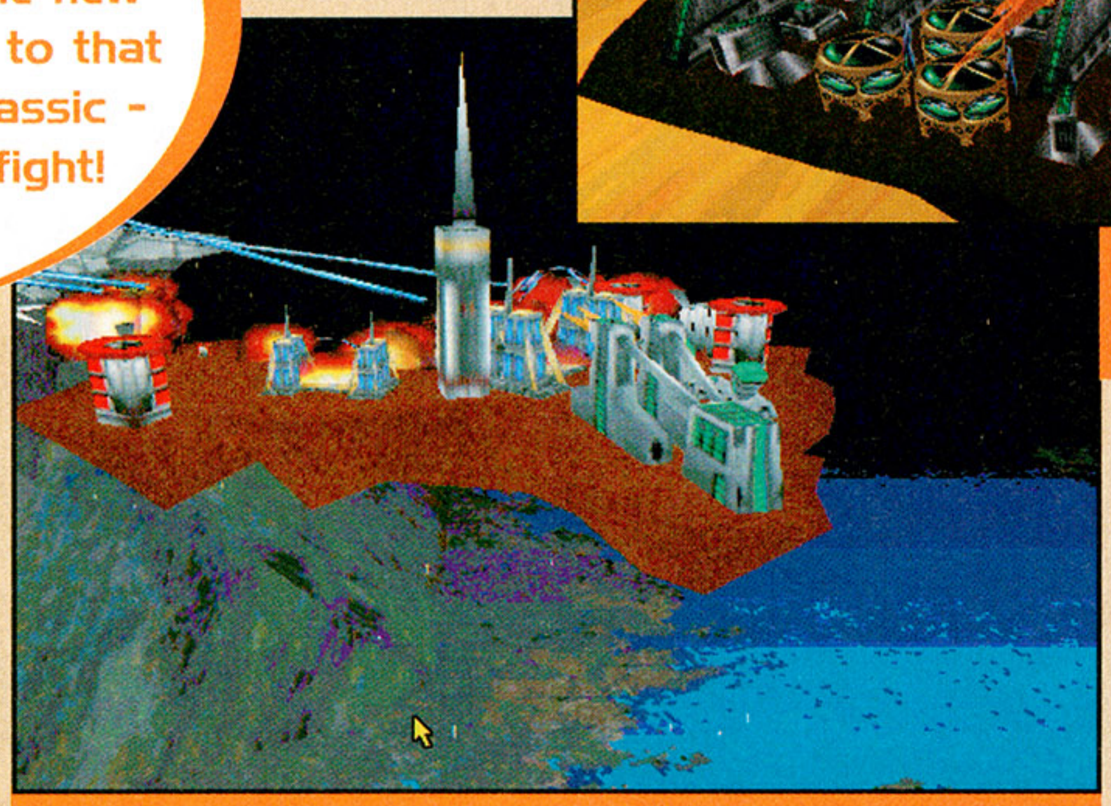


STRATOSPHERE: Conquest of the Skies

Stratosphere: Conquest Of The Skies brings a whole new dimension to that neighborhood classic - the rock fight!

Your flying mountain can be loaded with all sorts of stuff.



Combat can take place in the heat of day or the dark of night.

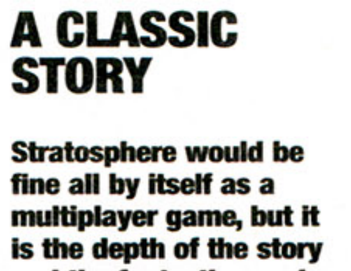
REQUIRES

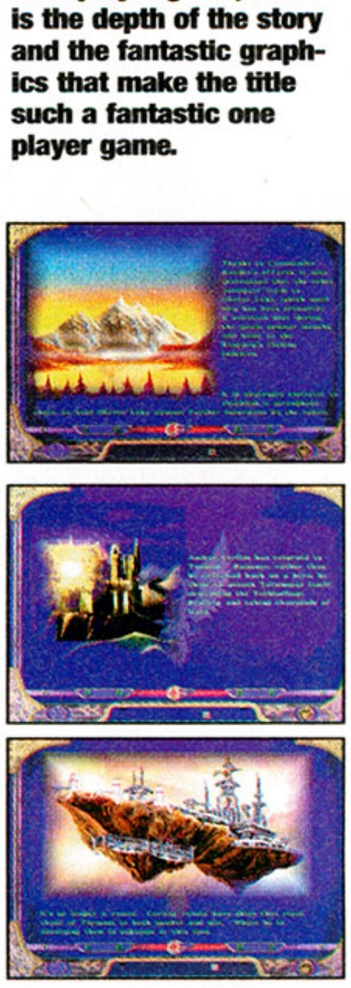
MINIMUM
Pentium 133
Windows 95
DirectX Version 5
4X CD drive
32 MB Ram
28.8 Modem

RECOMMENDED
Pentium 166 MMX
3D accelerator card

A CLASSIC STORY

Stratosphere would be fine all by itself as a multiplayer game, but it is the depth of the story and the fantastic graphics that make the title such a fantastic one player game.





A long time ago, in a galaxy right here, there was an artist named Roger Dean, who became famous for painting album covers that depicted strange, alien lizards sitting on floating islands of rock. Well, Ripcord Games has gone old Deano one better by kicking the galactic geckos off their floating islands and bolting a bunch of guns, rocket engines, and armor plating to 'em. The result is **Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies** and this game is more fun than a rock fight!

The fun here is two fold. First of all, you get to design your own flying fortress and load it up with all kinds of good stuff: rocket engines, atomic power plants, shield generators, laser cannons, armor plating and even a good, old fashioned battering ram or two. Once you've finished building the beast, you can take it out on a test flight to see how she handles. Once you've got it where you want it, you're ready for combat.

Once you've finished building the beast, take it out on a test flight

Stratosphere is a mission-based game that can be played against pre-ordained enemy ships or in customized scenarios, but the rock fight really heats up when you go against three of your friends online. This online mode allows you to play team against team or just have a good old fashioned melee.

The material that makes all these wonderful flying islands possible is called floatstone, and collecting more and more of it to build bigger and badder forts is the key to the game. There are two possible ways of accumulating the lighter-than-air stuff: find a rich vein of it somewhere, or (this is where the fun starts) blow your enemies to kingdom come and collect the stuff from the

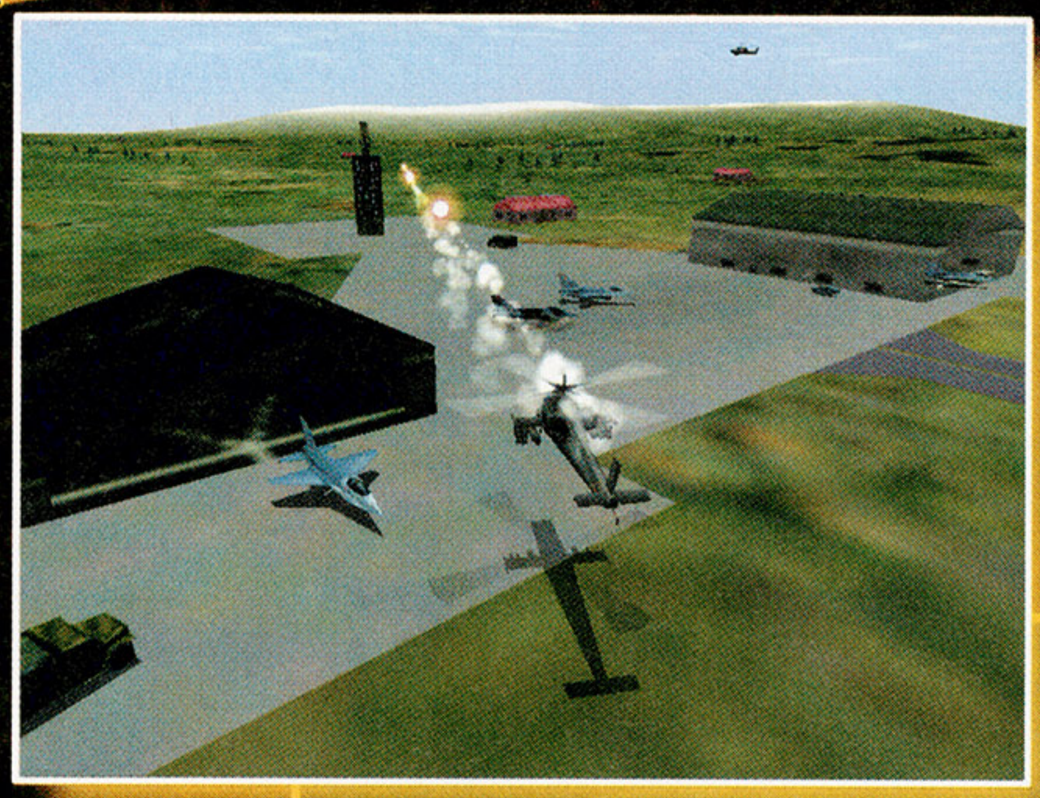
continued on page 57

Ship designs can be as individual as, well... individuals.

System: PC
Price: $49.99
Genre: Strategy/Action
Players: 1 to 4
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: 3D accel. card
Publisher: Ripcord
Developer: Kodiak International
Web: www.ripcordgames.com

TEAM APACHE

HELICOPTER COMBAT



- Top-notch 3D graphics showcase cities, scorched terrain, real-time lighting effects, and the AH-64A Apache combat helicopter.
- Test your combat skills in two full campaigns and 18 stand alone missions; mission editor provided for extended gameplay.
- Interactive flight environment registers turbulence from explosions, blasts, and other aircraft - support for force feedback joysticks included!
- Manage your team of ace pilots! Options include skill ratings, fatigue and morale management, recruitment, and courts martial.
- Training mode with instructor feedback, adjustable difficulty settings, and easy/advanced flight models will get you in the air fast.
- Supports both head-to-head and cooperative multiplayer for dogfights over the internet, on a local network, or modem to modem against your buddy.

Armed to the teeth and dressed to kill!

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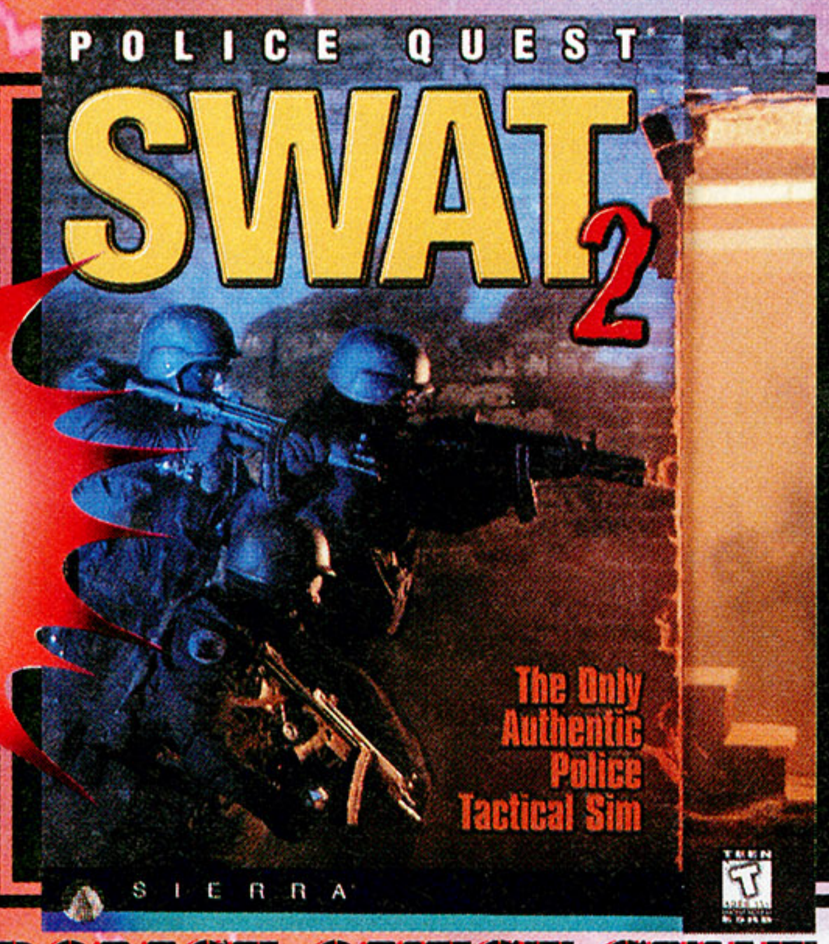

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Caution: This is habit-forming

The first time a gamer gets his hands on Stratosphere, a strange thing happens. Soon, the usually noisy, rambunctious gamer becomes a solitary, withdrawn creature, who is prone to mumbling phrases like, 'More power. I need more generators', or 'Rams? I'll show you rams!' to him or herself for days.

continued from page 54

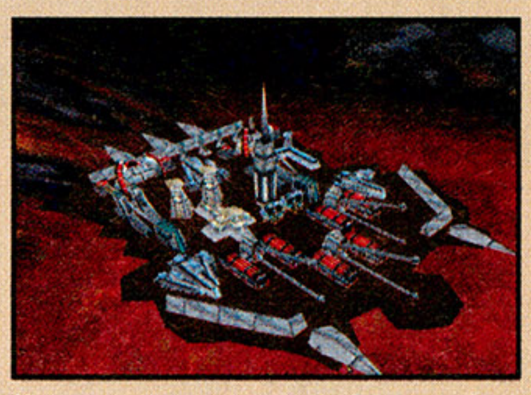
wreckage of their ships.

Stratosphere satisfies on many different levels, so it's sure to appeal to a broad base of gamers. Strategy types will love tinkering on and testing their creations, trying for the ultimate Death Star... I mean, Rock, while action gamers will get their kicks in the fast moving gunfights. The graphics are beautiful and the interface is intuitive. The music is fantastic, more than a little along the lines of Bernard Hermann's science fiction movie work, while the sound effects are certainly adequate.

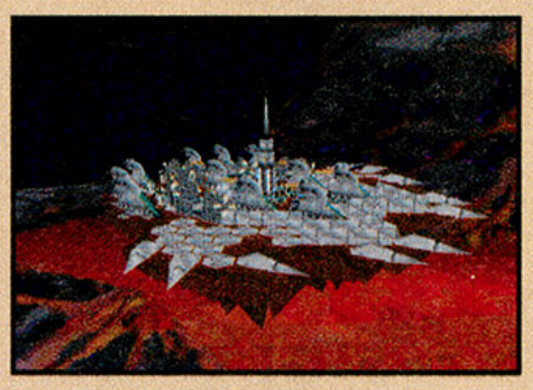
Stratosphere is one game that every gamer should at least try. We're willing to bet that more than a few will find a space for it in their libraries.

TONS OF WEAPONS

No matter what style of fighting you prefer, from the 'Ben Hur' style of ramming your opponent, to the 'Star Wars' stand off and blast 'em technique, Stratosphere offers a wide range of weapons and accessories to accommodate you. You can get everything from wind-powered generators to the latest in force fields and laser cannon. Bring your checkbook.



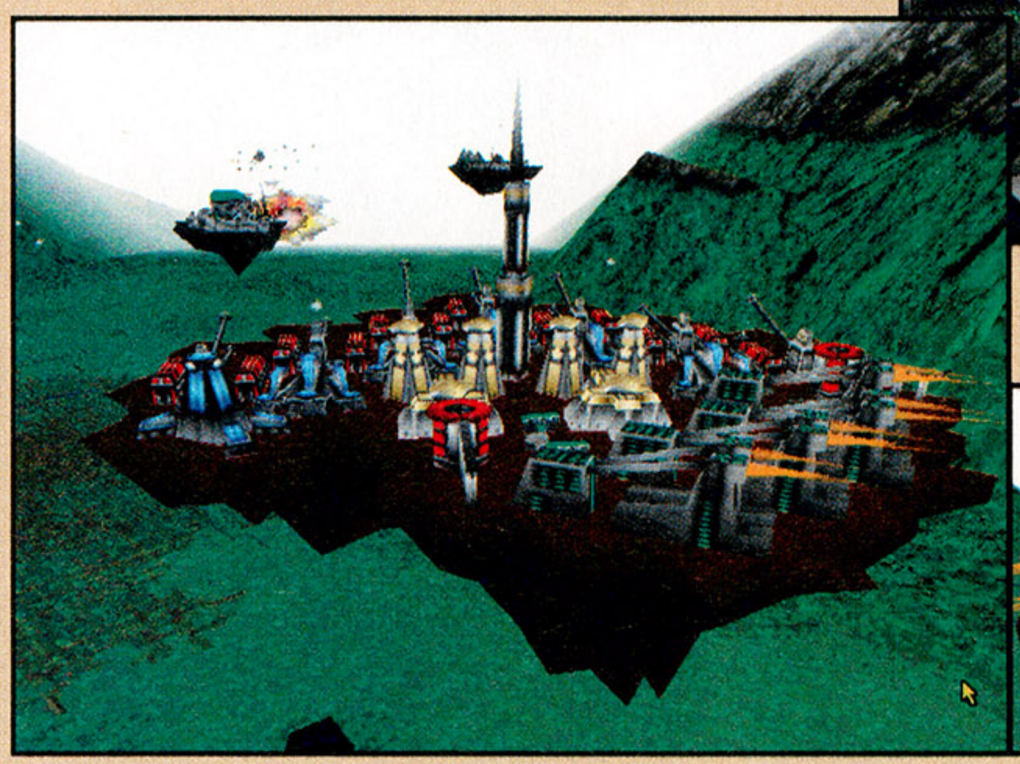
You can put up a bunch of armored walls for protection...



...or you can fortify the very ground itself. Decisions, decisions.

The landscape really gives you the impression of flying.

There's nothing like scoring a hit in hot pursuit. Despite the large size of even the smallest class of floating islands, there's never a problem with handling, unless, of course, you designed the damn thing wrong. Then all bets are off!



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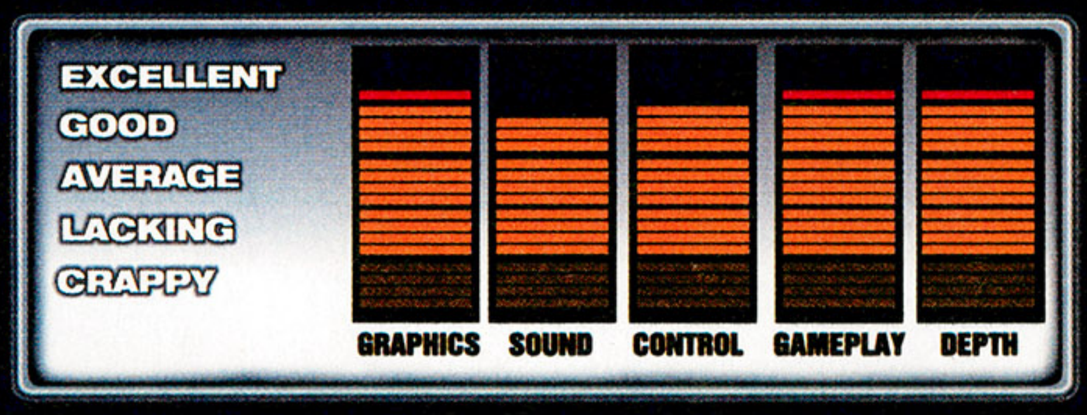

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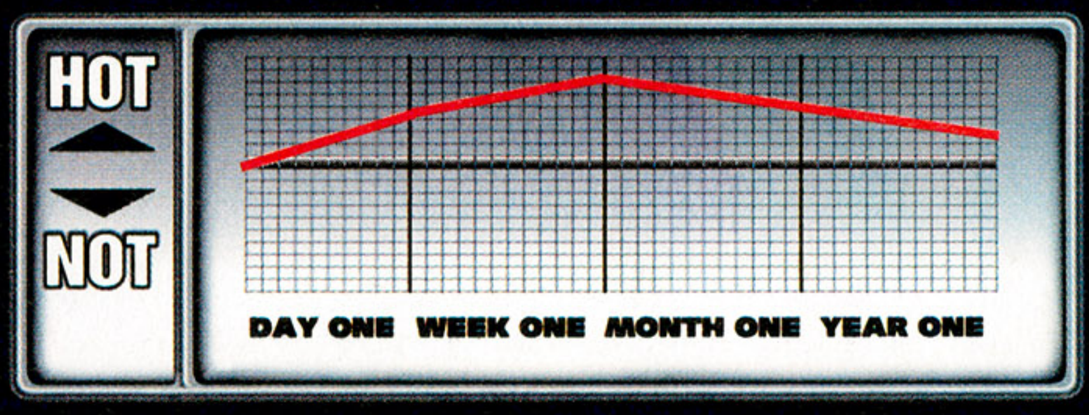

ALLISON
IS HAVING
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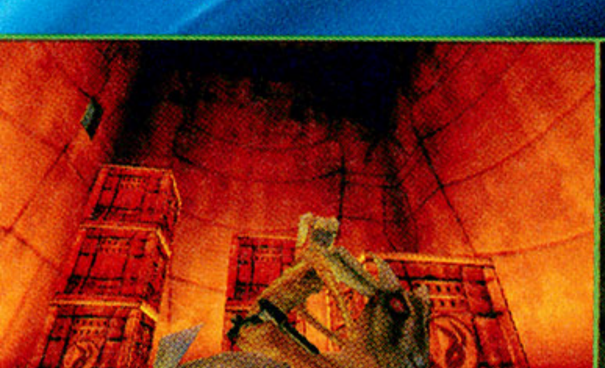

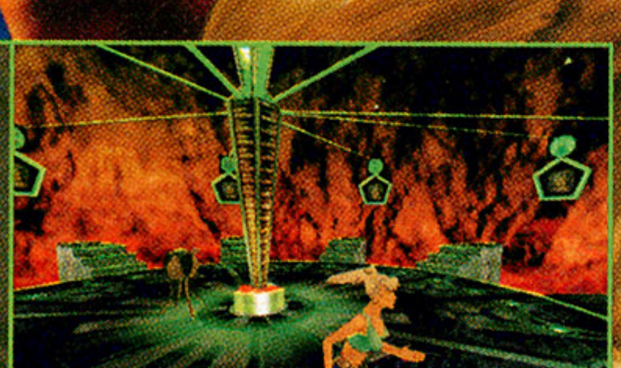

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REVIEW

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Trophy Hunter

WizardWorks heads for the mountains with a bunch of guns, some beer and its latest hunting sim.

No one expected **Deer Hunter** to be a success. But, after more than four months at the top of the sales charts, a sequel was inevitable. This is it.

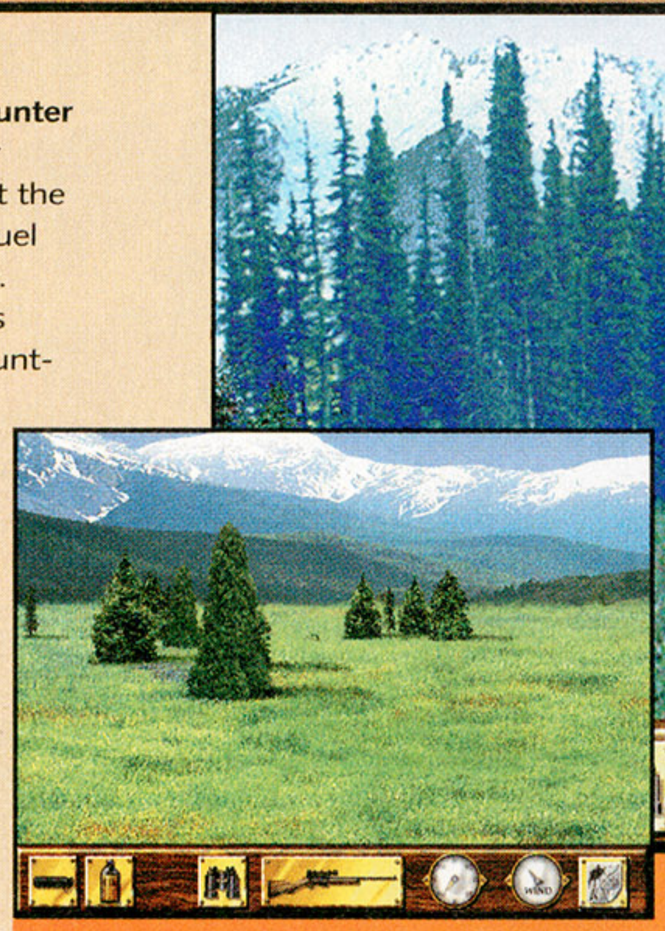
The major change is that instead of hunting deer, you can now stalk and kill four types of game: elk, moose, ram, or bear.

The format of the game is basically the same as **Deer Hunter**, although the options are expanded. First you choose what you want to take into the field — from binoculars to cover scent to bear bait. You also choose your weapon: .30-06 rifle, shotgun, compound bow, muzzle loader or revolver.

Once you're outfitted, you head to a map screen. You click around this screen until you see signs of game — droppings, footprints (even blood if you've wounded something earlier). Then, you click the 'hunt' button and are taken to a 360° view. You can't move forward here, but can pan all around. Now, you wait for game to appear and take your best shot. If you miss, chances are you'll frighten the animal away; if you hit it, you may only wound it, necessitating tracking it down until you can finish the job.

Overall, the experience of **Trophy Hunter** is better than **Deer Hunter**. The interaction between the map and the hunt seems more realistic (if an animal heads north from the hunting screen, you can usually find it by heading north on the map), and the game is slightly harder — especially if you choose a weapon without a sight, or one that takes while to reload. The animal AI also definitely seems improved.

The price — $20 — is right, but should you get this? If you like fishing games or hunting, you'll like it, no question. If not, the slow pace and pretty meager pay-off (kill a big moose and you get to see its head in your trophy room) probably aren't worth it.



The terrain encompasses meadows, forest, and snowy hilltops.

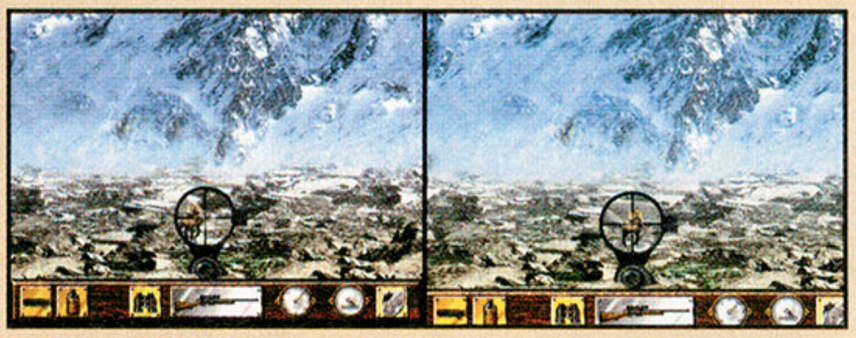
Don't like to hunt? Trophy Hunter won't change your mind, but it is a fun, mindless game.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Pentium 75
Windows 95
16 MB RAM minimum
60 MB HD space
Mouse Required
CD-ROM Drive Required

System: PC
Price: $49.95
Genre: Hunting
Players: 1
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Whiskey, bullets
Publisher: Wizardworks
Developer: Sunstorm Int.

After a long wait, it's pretty exciting when you get an animal in your sights.



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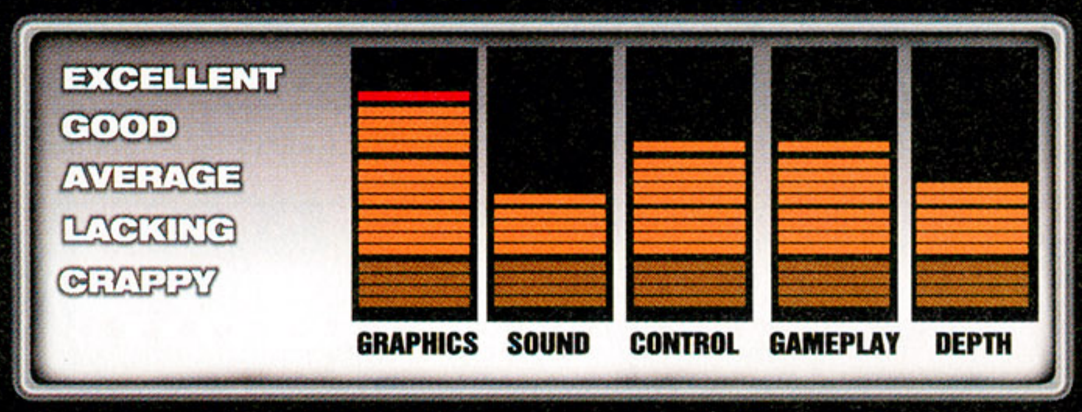

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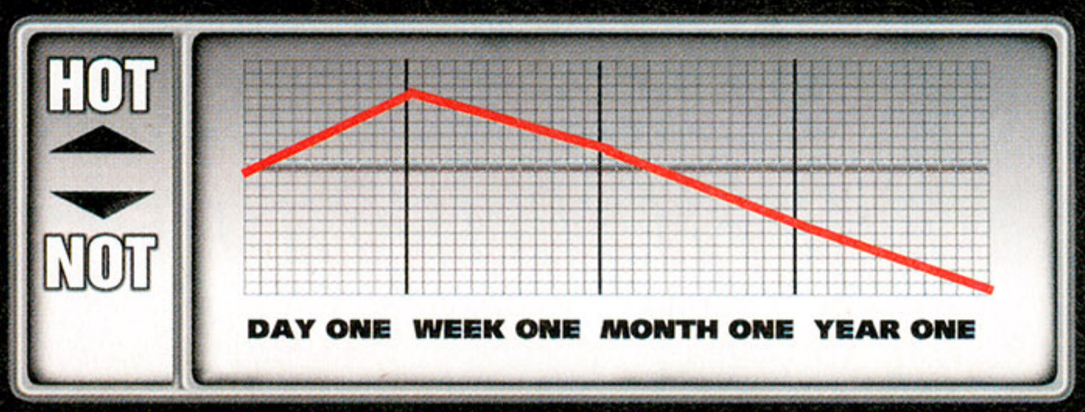

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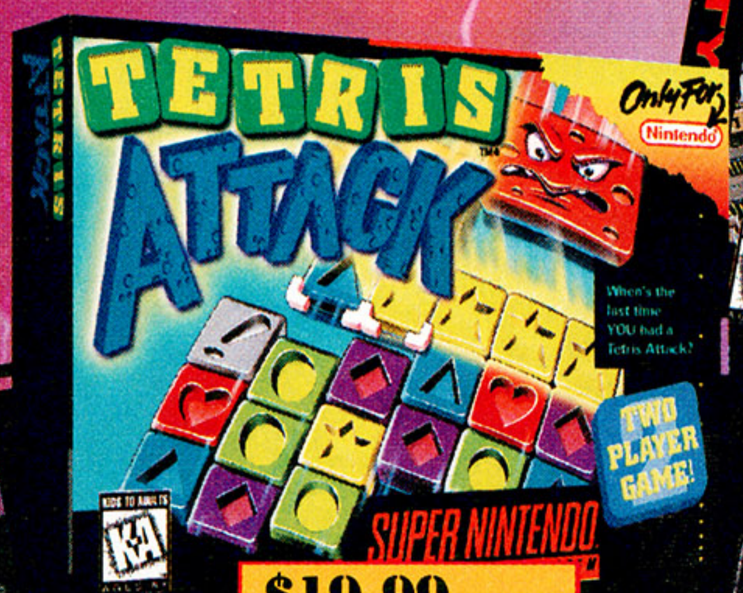

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REVIEW

PANZER Commander

SSI turns back the clock with Panzer Commander, but who wants to drive a Sherman when an M1-A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank is available?

Gamers whose idea of fun is proving conclusively that the Germans could have won the Battle of the Bulge if they'd just had 40 more Panzerkampf-wagons are gonna love **Panzer Commander**.

This historical recreation of the armored campaigns of WWII has enough depth and detail to keep any WWII fan (fan?) busy for days.

The only question is, with all of the excellent modern tank sims available, how many gamers are gonna put out the bucks to take the trip to yesteryear?

Panzer Commander is a good, solid game. The graphics are solid, the control is near flawless and the gameplay certainly has enough depth, but unless you're really interested in the second World War, there are other, more modern tank sims out there.

That is the quandary that surrounds **Panzer Commander**: how many gamers today really give a damn about WWII, when more recent headlines have been full of conflicts in the Middle East? Why drive a tank that has to stop to shoot straight, when you can blast the hell out of an Iraqi tank a mile away while screaming across the desert at 60 mph?

Panzer Commander is a good, solid tank simulation and is worth a look by any gamer, but gamers accustomed to the lightning pace of today's armored warfare should definitely think about this one.

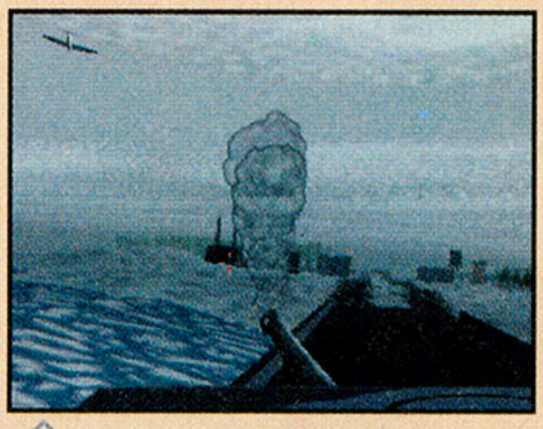
The gun sight screen seems a bit archaic compared to today's infrared laser sights.

Panzer Commander features some particularly anemic artillery explosions.

REQUIRES

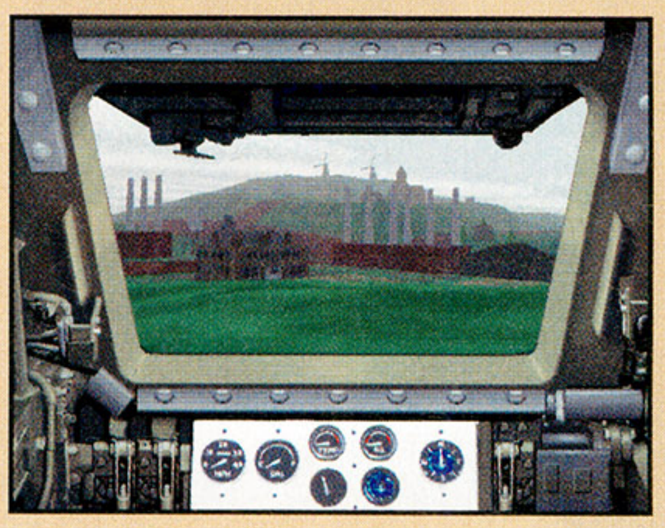
MINIMUM
Pentium 133
Windows 95
16 MB RAM minimum
100 MB HD space
Mouse Required
4X CD-ROM Drive

RECOMMENDED
Pentium 166
32 MB RAM
8X CD-ROM Drive
3D accelerator card



Air strikes have always been a concern of tankers. Thank God the A-10 hadn't been developed yet!

System: PC
Price: $49.95
Genre: Simulation
Players: 1 to 6
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended:
Urge to rule world
Publisher: SSI
Developer: Ultimation
Web: www.ssionline.com



The scenery tends to be mostly of the 'square and blocky' variety, but buildings do blow up real good.

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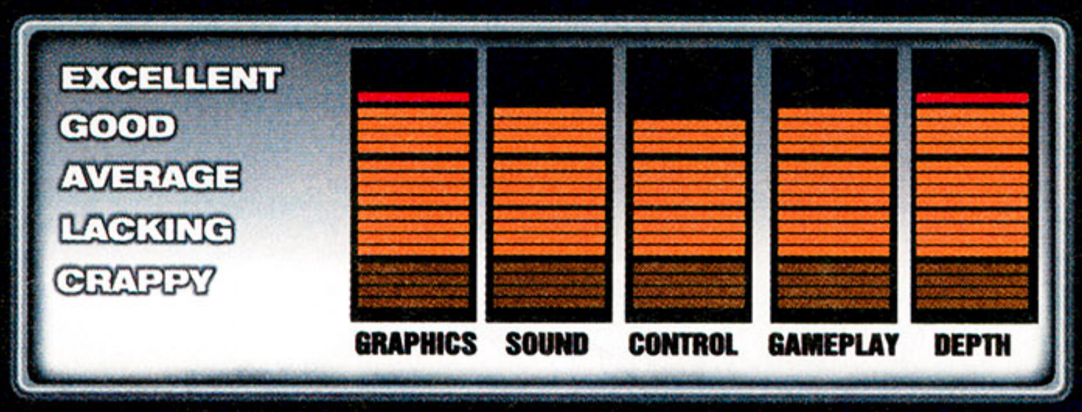

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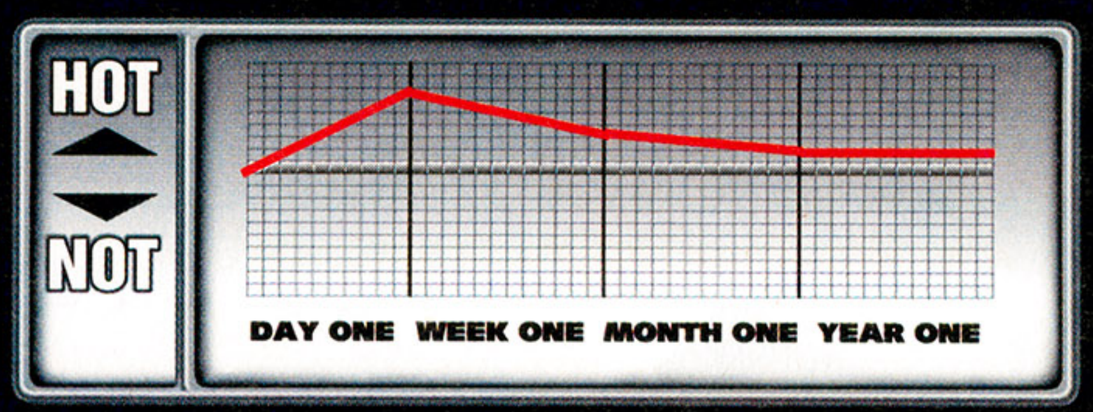

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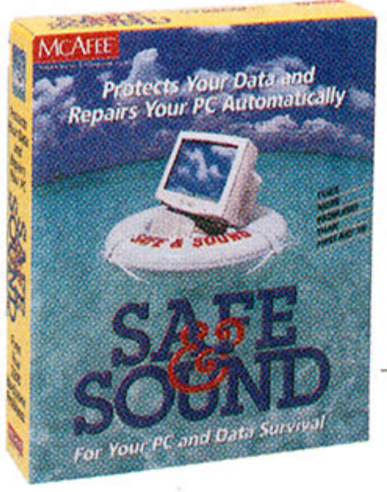

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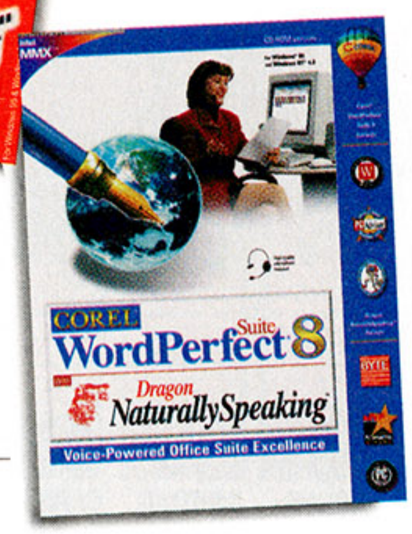

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REVIEW

SOLDIERS At war

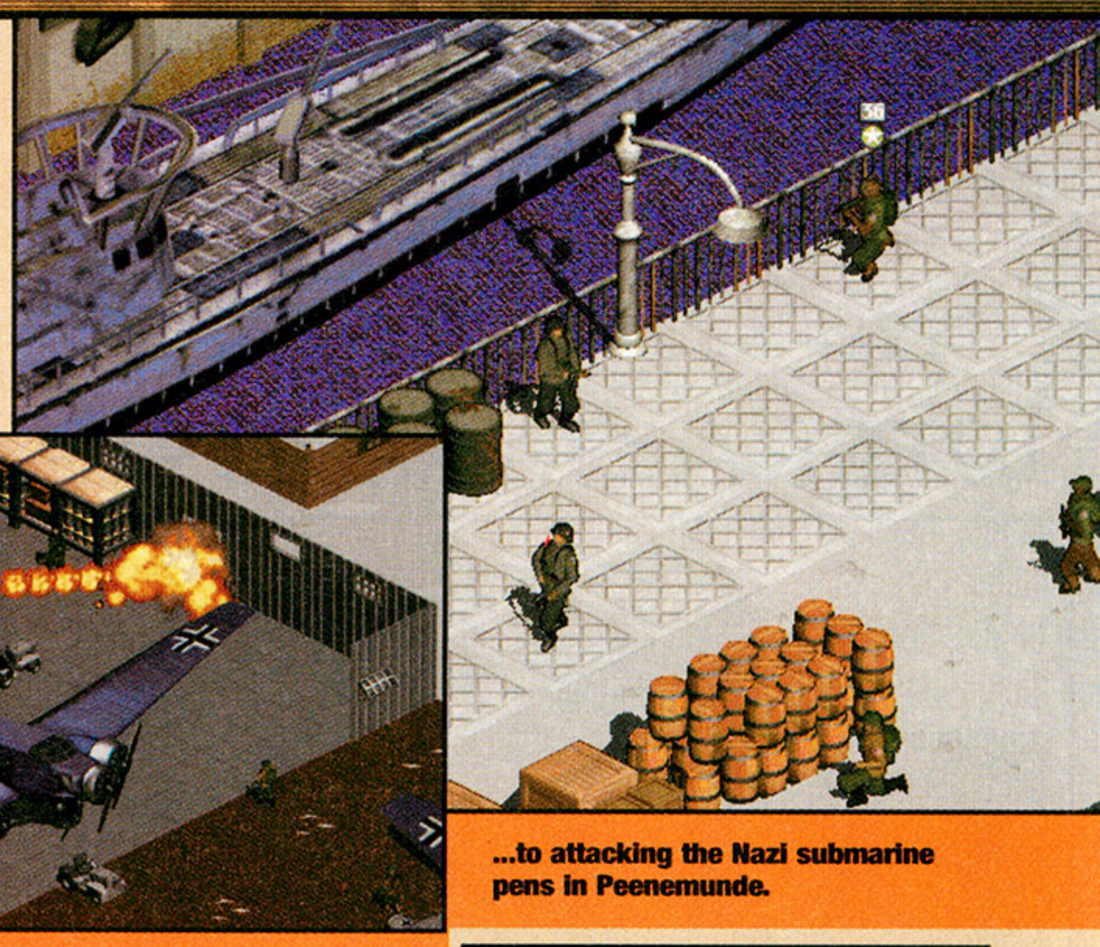
Soldiers at War comes from a company known in the past for its board games. Unfortunately, that was then and this is now.

A long time ago, there was a company known as SSI, that created board games. And not just any board games; these things could take weeks or months to finish. Hell, it could take days just to complete one move. SSI's newest PC game, **Soldiers At War**, actually kind of captures the feel of those old board games, but somehow that isn't quite a good thing. Players control a squad of soldiers fighting their way through WWII, on a turn by turn basis. Movement and combat are controlled by how many action points each soldier has available to it. The player makes his move, and then the PC (or your fellow gamers) makes its move, while a repetitive and annoying 'Hidden Movement' screen flashes on your monitor. Then the combat is resolved and the whole thing starts over again.

The graphics aren't anything to write home about (the scenario introductions, given by the commander of your company, resemble the old **Clutch Cargo** cartoons) and the sound effects, while good, tend to get a bit repetitious with extended play.

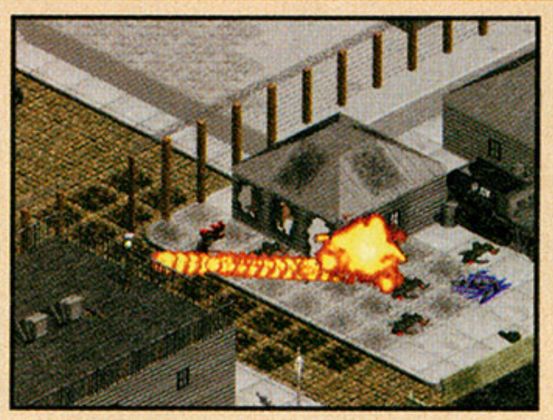
The gameplay itself, based on a turn by turn system, is what actually gives the game its 'old time' feel, and sadly, is also why the game feels so slow. Your soldiers' movements and actions are limited by the number of action points they possess, and while this was fine for the board game era, players used to the more fluid feel of modern strategy games may become frustrated.

Soldiers At War isn't a bad game, by any means. It just plays like a game whose time has come... and gone.

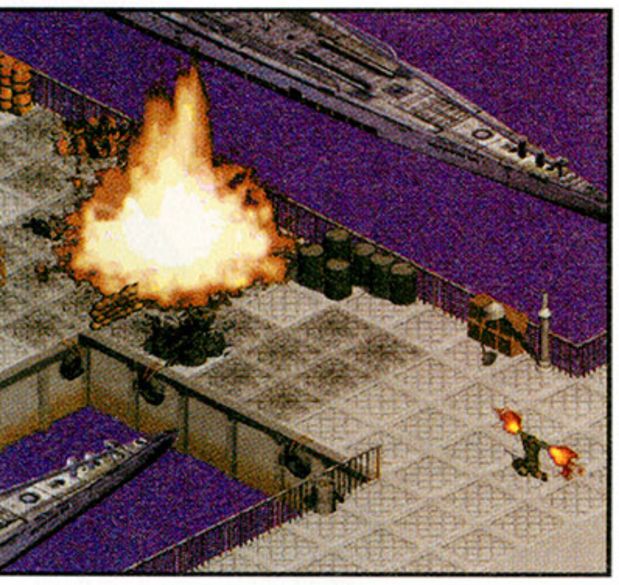


...to attacking the Nazi submarine pens in Peenemunde.

The action ranges from fighting for control of an enemy airport...



Players can equip their guys with all types of weapons, including flame throwers.



Both sides have access to all manner of artillery and armored support.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Pentium 120
Windows 95
16 MB of RAM
4x CD-Rom drive
175 MB HD space

RECOMMENDED
32 MB of RAM
8x CD-Rom drive
DirectX 5
DirectPlay network adapter for multiplayer game

System: PC
Price: $29.95
Genre: Strategy
Players: 1 to 4
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: Time machine
Publisher: SSI
Developer: Random Games
Web: www.ssionline.com

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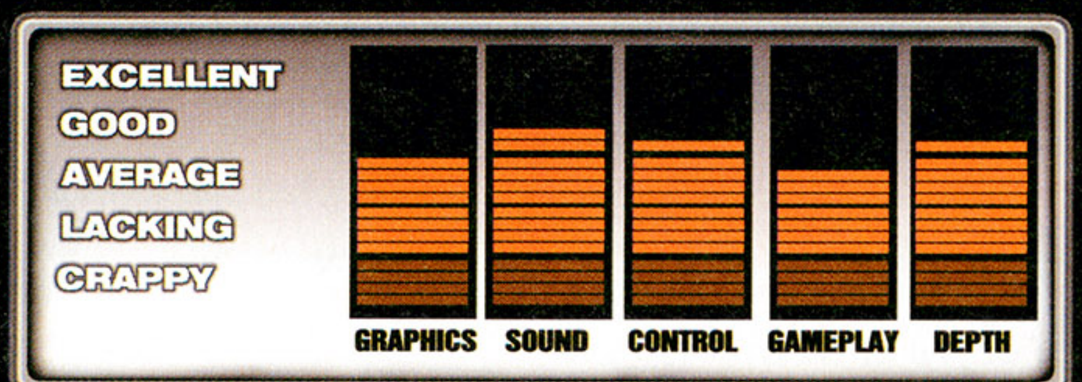

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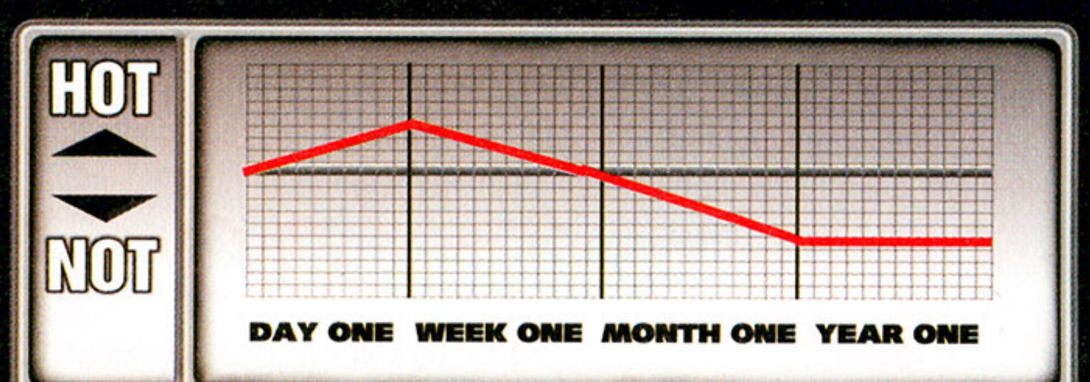


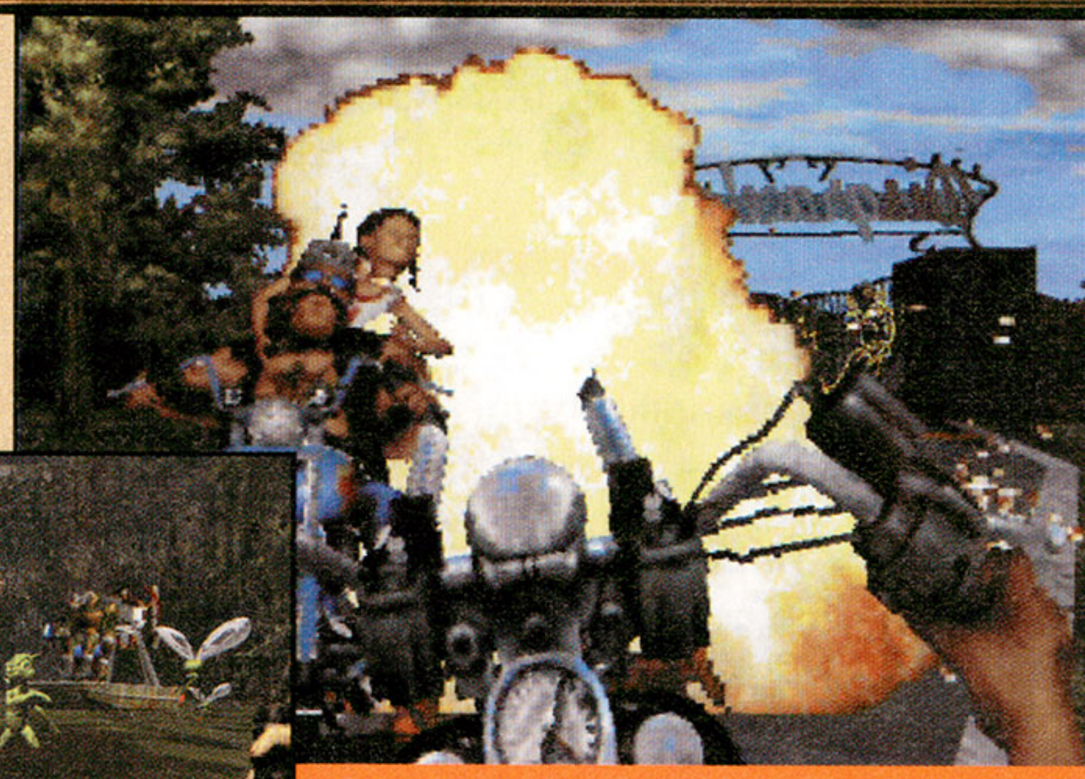
REVIEW

REDNECK RAMPAGE Rides Again

Why did Xatrix use the centuries old Build engine for this game? If not for the crummy graphics, Redneck Rampage Rides Again would have been a winner.

UFOs, cheap whiskey, farts, and double-barreled shotguns - what more could a gamer ask for? Not much, but in the case of **Redneck Rampage Rides Again**, all the sick humor in the world can't save a game cursed with long out-dated graphics. The sequel begins with the UFO carrying Leonard and Bubba crashing in the desert. From there, you must blast your way back home to Hickston, and fight all sorts of bad guys, including aliens, jack-o-lopes, and the nasty cheerleader Daisy Mae.

This is possibly the only game that can hold a candle to the humor from **Duke Nukem 3D**. Running low on health? Sip some of that cheap whiskey, and then puke your guts out. One great sequence has you coming across Daisy Mae and one of the Biker Boys in a compromising situation. Needless to say, they are none too pleased about being interrupted. The humor is all-encompassing, from the character's dialogue to the pictures hanging on the walls (which clearly show an appreciation for those fine Troma films).



Taking control of the wicked motorcycle and swamp buggy are two great features of the game.

Unfortunately, the graphics are way outdated. If a more recent engine would have been used for the graphics, this game would rock. Make no mistake, **Redneck Rampage Rides Again** is a fun game. However, it isn't worth paying fifty bucks for - pass on this one.

System: PC
Price: $49.95
Genre: Action
Players: 1 to 6
ESRB rating: M (Mature)
Recommended: Moonshine
Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Xatrix Ent.
Web: www.interplay.com

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Pentium 90
DOS 5.0
16MB RAM
220MB Available Hard Drive Space
1MB SVGA Video Card
Sound Blaster or Compatible Sound Card
2X CD-ROM Drive

RECOMMENDED
Pentium 133
32MB RAM
4X CD-ROM Drive

Jack-o-lopes and chicken crossbows... what could be more fun?

As this screen shows, the graphics vary a great deal. Some objects appear crisp, while others are blurred. If only they would have used a newer engine.

The designers did do a nice job of establishing a variety environments, from military installations to old riverboats.

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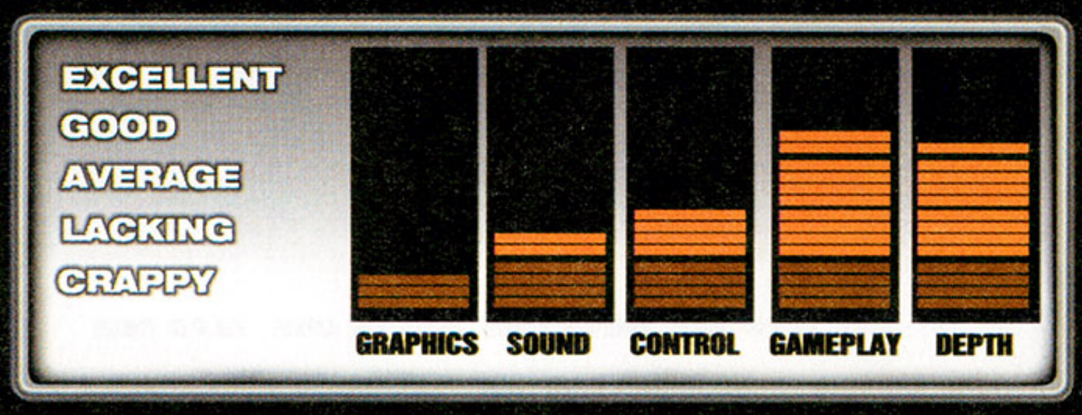

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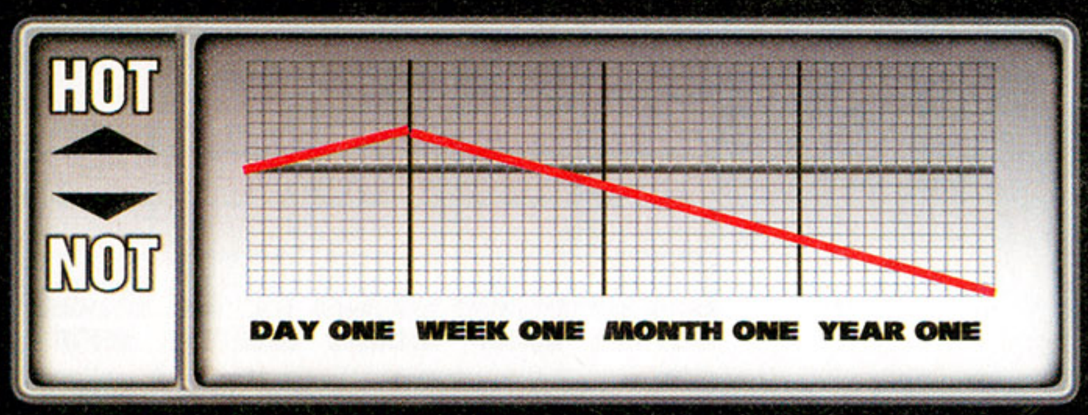


INDUSTRY GIANT

Finally, gamers get a chance to play the role of a corporate sleazeball in **Industry Giant**, which delivers addictive gameplay that is sure to appeal to strategy fans.

Industry Giant is a corporate simulation, catered to hard-core sim fans who have a lust for complexity.

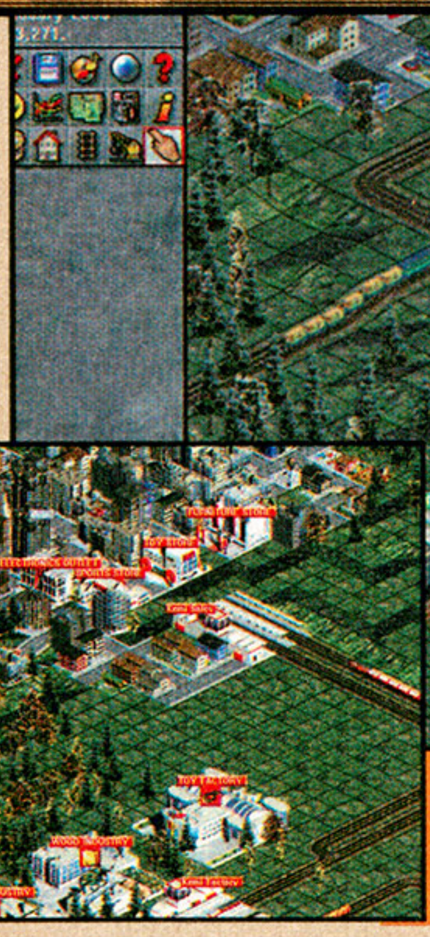
In order to succeed in the game, players must seek out strong markets and manufacture goods, such as toys or sporting goods.

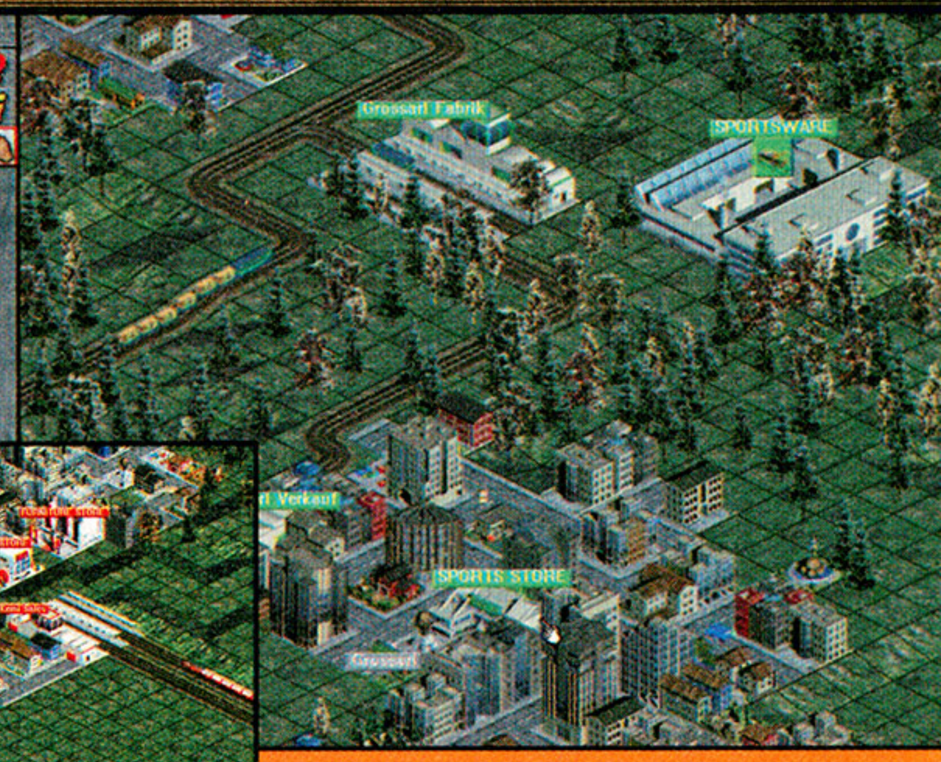
Creating production facilities and retail stores is only part of the action. In order to keep the flow of goods consistent, gamers will have to build and manage a transportation network, advertise, and regulate pricing. The game gives you total control on where to build your facilities, in much the same way as games like **SimCity**, requiring players to plot out where they intend to build on a terrain map. At any time throughout the game, players can gauge their success with a statistics option that can display growth charts for annual profit and revenue. Players will have to keep tabs on opponents as much as possible, seeking out and exploiting weak markets.

The graphics in the game are very polished. The interface consists of a scrolling isometric map and a sidebar with a series of icons representing game actions. Each option has a piece of artwork to liven up the GUI, and the city map presents a great deal of data through its animation and title bars. The music, too, is very fitting. At times, its humorously upbeat rhythm sounds like the factory theme used in the Looney Tunes.

Interactive Magic is one of the few companies capable of pulling off such a complex game.

Industry Giant is an enjoyable game with plenty of replay value. No self-respecting Donald Trump could afford to live without it.





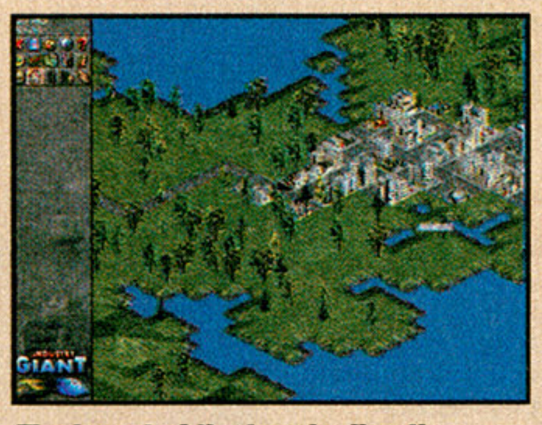
If all goes well, a player can watch his industry grow to a multimillion dollar conglomerate in Industry Giant.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Windows 95
Direct X Compatible
Pentium 90
16MB RAM
SVGA Video Card
Sound Card
4X CD-ROM Drive

RECOMMENDED
Pentium 133
32MB RAM

Product lines must be reintroduced from year to year, or consumers will go to the competition.

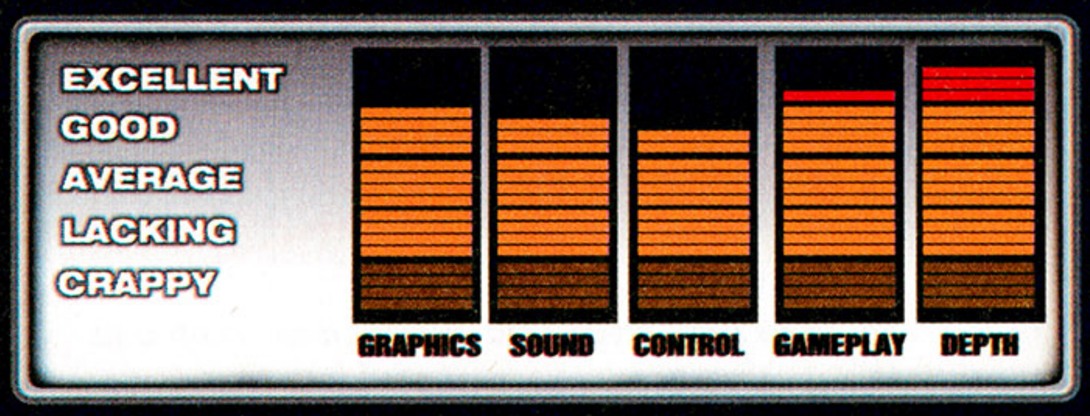


The layout of the terrain directly effects how well products can be distributed to retail.

System: **PC**
Price: **$29.95**
Genre: **Strategy**
Players: **1**
ESRB rating: **E (Everyone)**
Recommended:
Wall Street Journal
Publisher: **Interactive Magic**
Developer: **Jo Woods Prod.**
Web: **www.imagicgames.com**

BUY IT!

EQUALIZER



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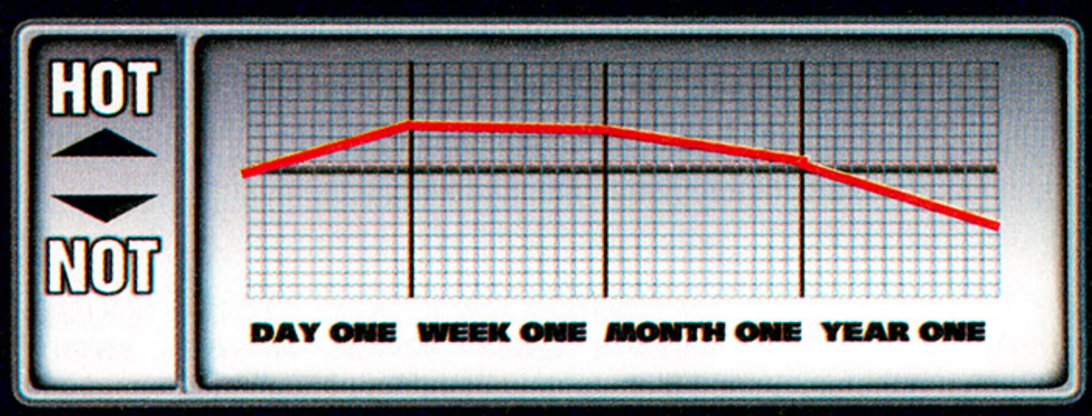

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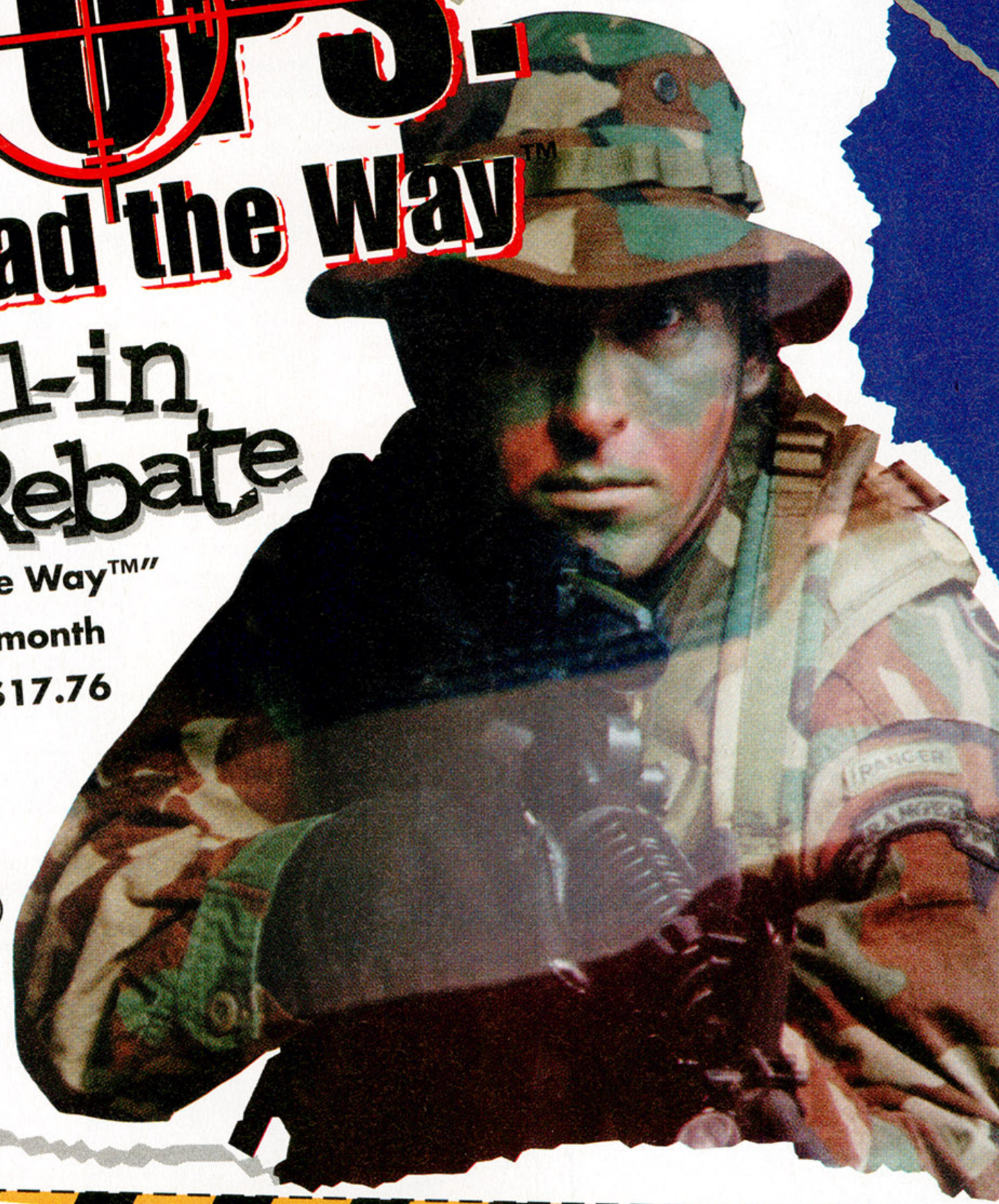

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REVIEW

WORLD CUP '98

EA Sports scores with a visually impressive PC soccer game that follows through with sweet gameplay.

The PC version of **World Cup '98** has arrived and raised the bar once again - from good to great.

The graphics in **World Cup '98** are as good as they get. The players are beautifully detailed, and their animations are superb. The gameplay speed is an adjustable, but at any speed the game often resembles a game on television.

This incarnation allows the player to recreate the World Cup tournament taking place in France this summer. There are 32 teams (plus eight bonus historical teams) and all ten World Cup stadiums are recreated. The gameplay is seamless, with **WC '98** offering excellent control over individual players, although it should be noted that a Game Pad controller is practically essential for the optimum play experience. Multiplayer mode is always an essential component of PC games and **World Cup '98** delivers, with the ability for up to eight players to play on two PCs, or up to a staggering 20 players to play on eight PCs via a network. Get this game.

World Cup '98 shows that in terms of pure graphics firepower, a 3D accelerated PC leaves the current generation of consoles in the dust.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
100Mhz Pentium
Windows 95
DirectX 5
16MB RAM
15MB Hard Drive Space
Sound Card (DirectX 5 Compatible)
1MB PCI Video Card (Hi Color Capable)
4X CD-ROM Drive

RECOMMENDED
166Mhz Pentium
32MB RAM
100MB+ Hard Drive Space
3D Graphics Accelerator
8X CD-ROM Drive

System: PC
Price: $49.99
Genre: Sports
Players: 1 to 20
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Game pad
Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Web: www.easports.com

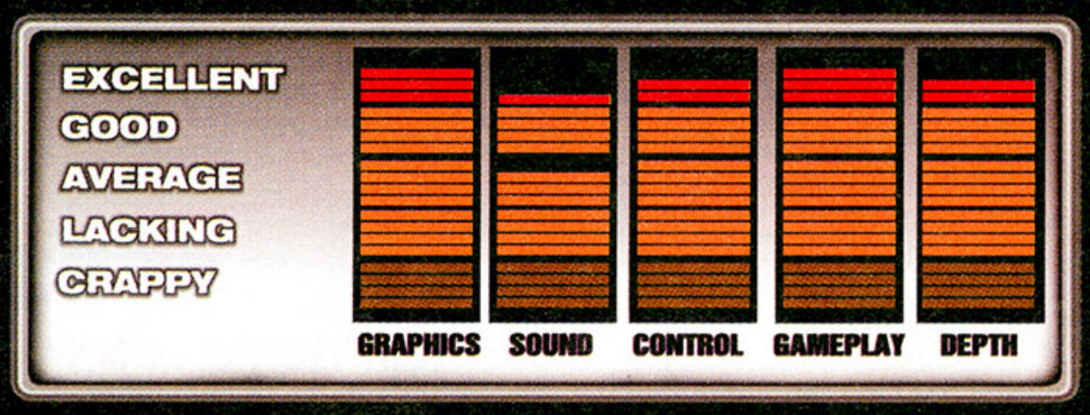
The real teams, the real players, and all ten French stadiums are included for the most authentic World Cup recreation available.

GOTTA HAVE IT!

★★★★★

The game offers superb control over individual players who can perform moves like headers, scissor kicks, and bicycle kicks.

EQUALIZER



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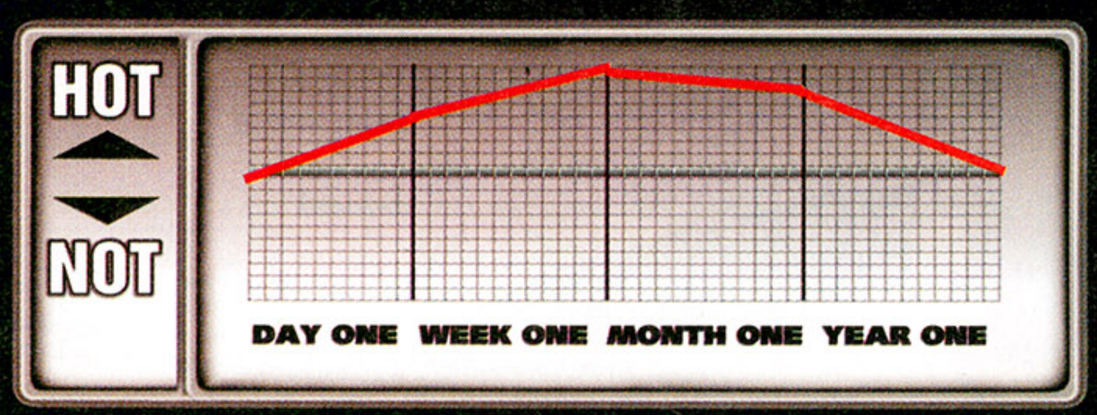


REVIEW

EXTREME TACTICS

Media Station's much hyped real-time strategy game finally makes its debut, but falls just short of expectations.

Magazines and web sites have been heavily hyping the release of Media Arts' **Extreme Tactics.** While it is not quite the masterpiece it was intended to be, it does introduce enough new features to catch the attention of die hard strategy fans.

The game has a lot in common with **Total Annihilation**. However, its rudimentary interface makes it hard to navigate units across the battle map. Popular features, like the ability to lasso units, are intact, but hardly as easy to perform as in other strategy games.

The individual unit AI can be configured from within an editor, enabling players to select aggression levels and organize objectives, or tell units to retreat if they are too damaged.

Unfortunately, the graphics are not quite as good as the gameplay. The backgrounds are blotchy and look like poorly rendered JPEGs. The unit art and animation is a bit better, but looks like paper cutouts rather than 3D objects. Despite the average graphics, the sound and music pull through in spades.

While the game makes many attempts to be like **Total Annihilation**, it does present some unique ideas. It isn't the greatest example of the genre, but it is worth a look.

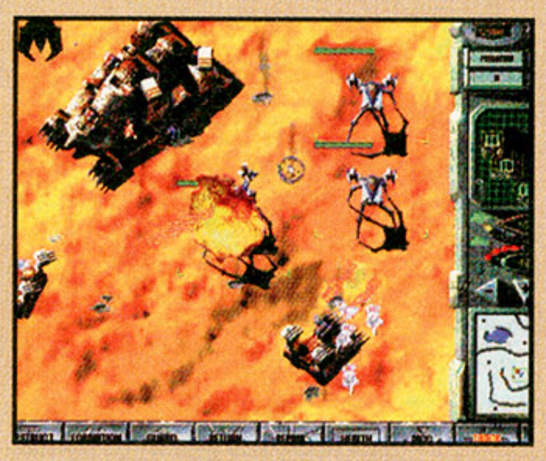
Extreme Tactics offers numerous gameplay modes, such as a multiplayer, scenario, and quick skirmish.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Pentium 90
Windows 95
16MB RAM
30MB Hard Drive Space
SVGA monitor
Direct Draw compatible
4X CD-ROM Drive

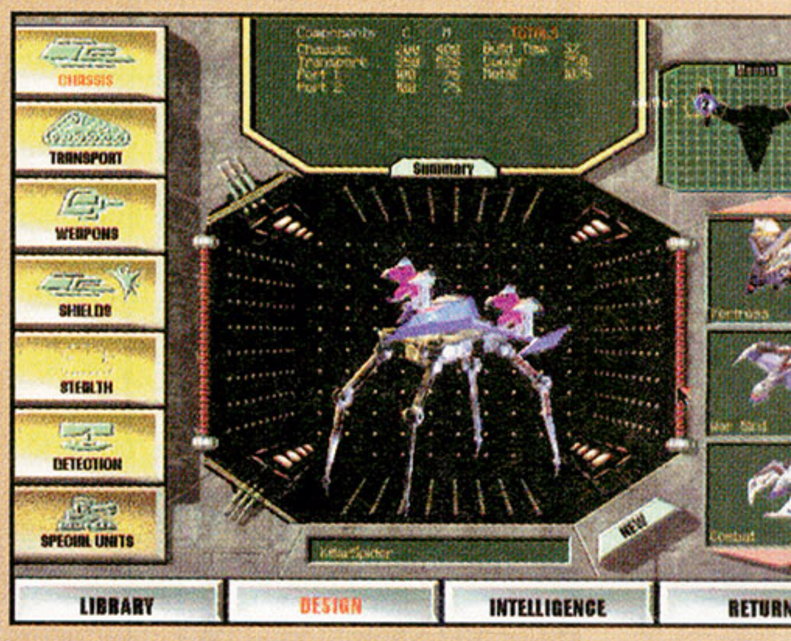
RECOMMENDED
Pentium 120
32MB RAM

System: PC
Price: $59.99
Genre: Real-time Strategy
Players: 1 to 8
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Modem
Publisher: Piranha Int.
Developer: Media Station
Web: www.piranhainteractive.com



As usual, the terrain varies from desert climates to arctic regions. Too bad they don't look very good.

The real fun is creating groups of machines that work so well together that they can survive an entire game without human intervention.



The design center is where you tweak the intelligence of a particular unit. Players can easily spend most of their time here.

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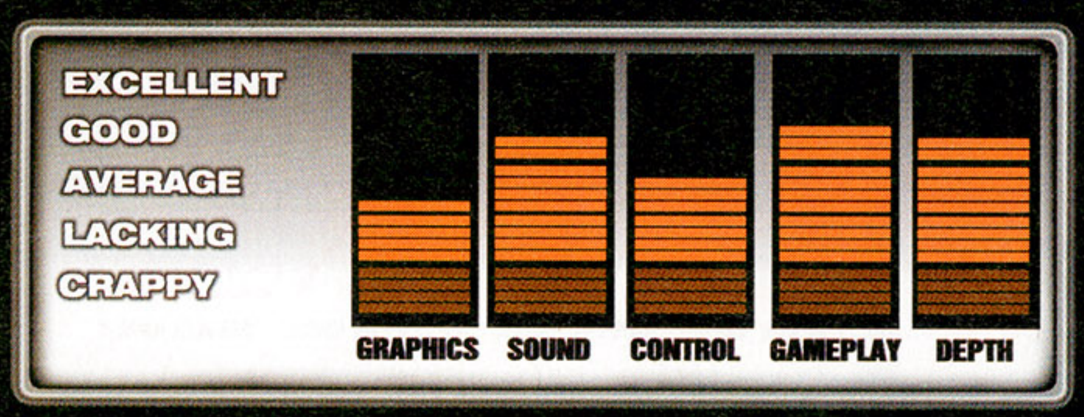

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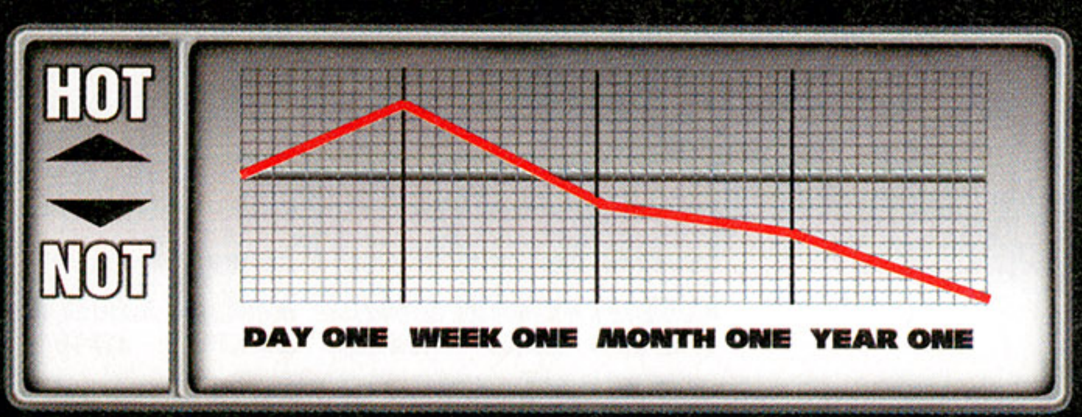


REVIEW

FLESH FEAST

If you have a strong stomach and are not easily frustrated, you can have a lot of fun sending the undead to their final rest.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM
Windows 95
Pentium 133
16 MB Ram
65 MB hard drive space
4X CD-ROM drive
2MB video card (DirectX capable)
DirectX type sound card

RECOMMENDED
Pentium 200
32 MB Ram
Direct3D Accelerator
8X CD drive

Zombies have overrun Nasat Island, and you're in charge of cleaning up the mess. You'll guide three teams of agents through 14 missions set in diverse locations such as a graveyard, airport, sports complex, etc. as you try to squelch the spread of these vile creatures. There are two playing modes in **Flesh Feast**. Direct mode lets you control the fate of each individual character when moving and fighting. Strategic mode limits you to a point and click method of directing your team. Either way, the goal is to dispatch the zombies quickly, while saving as many innocents as possible and keeping your team alive. This proves to be quite a chore, as your teammates prove impotent when left to defend themselves. You'll spend most of your time trying to pull their fat out of the fire, usually to no avail.

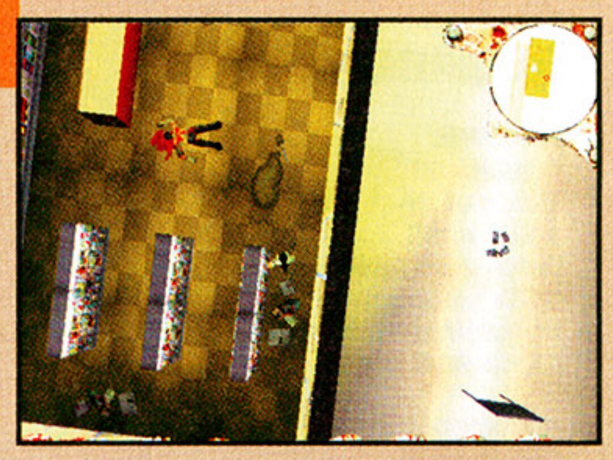
The accelerated graphics are basic, but mostly well done. In software though, things get much uglier, and the control suffers as the frame rate takes a major hit. The music and sounds do a good job of pulling you into the game.

Games featuring zombies have been done much better on the PC (try **Resident Evil** or even the ancient **Alone in the Dark** series, for examples), but for a quick adrenaline rush, **Flesh Feast**'s over-the-top gore and large selection of weapons should satisfy the zombie hunter in you.

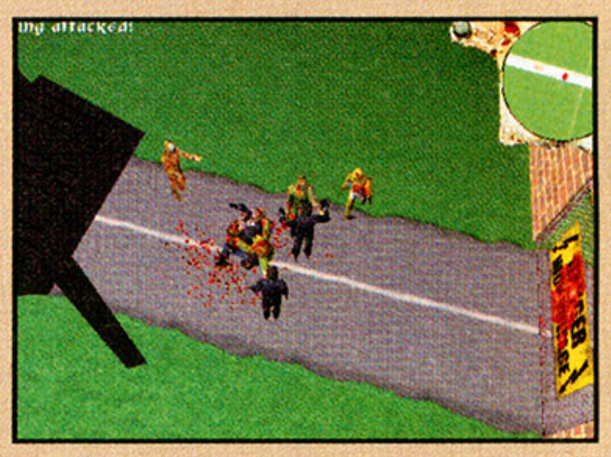
System: PC
Price: $49.99
Genre: Action
Players: 1 to 8
ESRB rating: M (Mature)
Recommended: 3D accel. card
Publisher: SegaSoft
Developer: Ingames Int.
Web: www.fleshfeast.com

While it may not have the sex appeal of a sawed-off shotgun, this wooden log is quite sufficient for crushing the heads of your attackers.

Here's where you select which area you want to clear out.



This is no time to browse the bookshelves, as this poor innocent found out the hard way.



This is a common occurrence when you start a mission: too many zombies and not enough firepower to deal with them.

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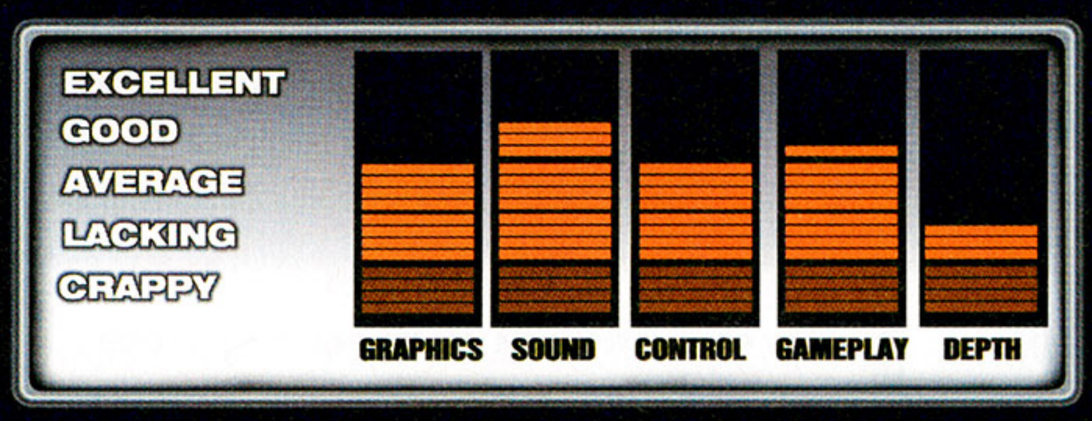

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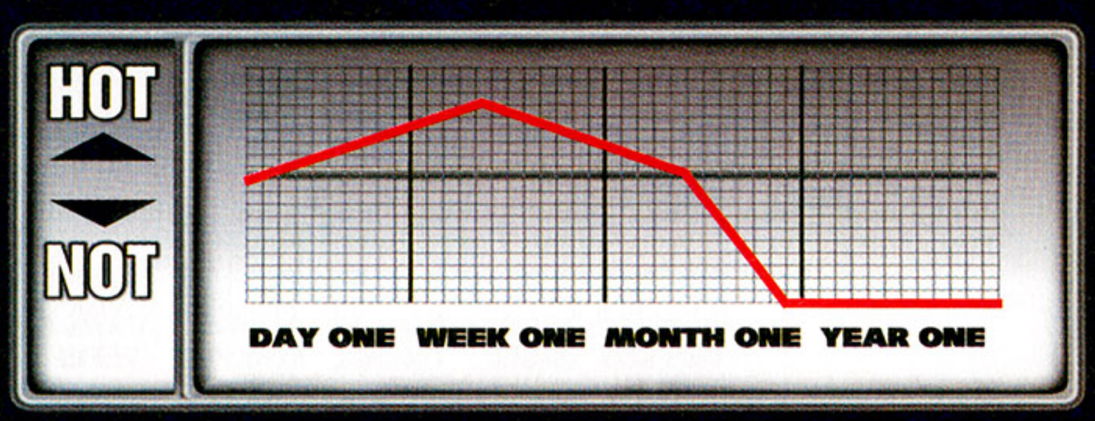
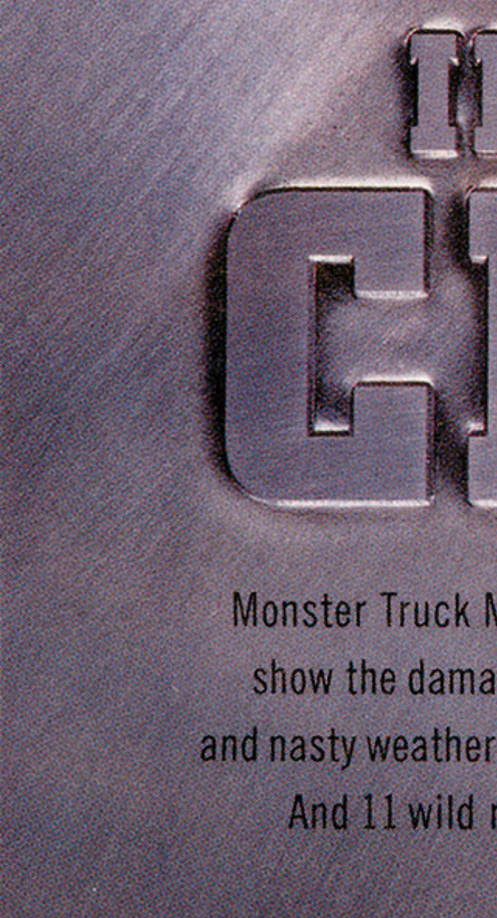


Microsoft®

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, CRUSH 'EM.

Monster Truck Madness® 2 is here, with more ground-pounding, trash-talking fun than the original. Featuring 20 trucks that show the damage you dish out, including four new WCW™ and nWo™ WrestleTrucks like "Hollywood" Hogan. Risky night racing and nasty weather options. Thumping force-feedback support. The Summit Rumble, an outrageous multiplayer game of "king of the hill." And 11 wild new tracks. Get your free demo and start crushing the competition at **www.microsoft.com/games/MTM2**



MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 2

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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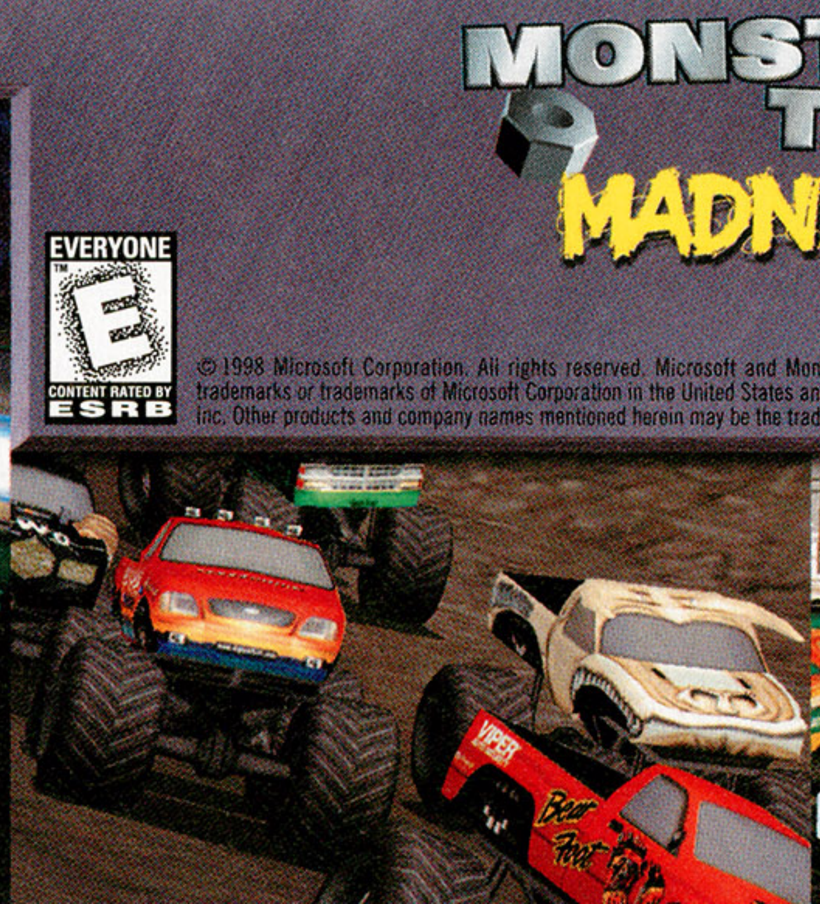
TRI

INTERNET GAMING ZONE
play it on zone.com



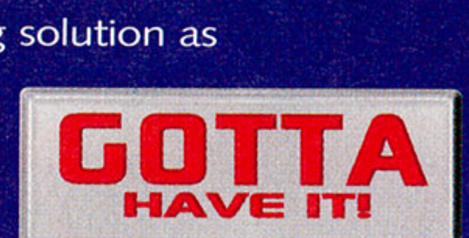
HARDCORE HARDWARE

If you're like most gamers, buying hardware means less money to spend on software. To keep you from blowing your dough on poor peripherals, Hardcore Hardware considers only two things when we review a product: how much do you get for your money, and how good is the out of box experience. So when we say, 'Gotta Have It,' we really mean it.

Ultra Game Machine FX6/400

PRODUCT: Ultra Game Machine FX6/400 **COMPANY:** Comtrade
SYSTEM: PC **PRICE:** $2025 www.comtrade.com

Gaming PCs just don't get much better than this. The Comtrade Ultra Game Machine FX6/400 lives up to its name, sporting a 400 MHz Pentium II processor, 64MB of Ram, an 8.4 Gig hard drive, Creative Labs PC-DVD x2 drive, SoundBlaster AWE 64 sound card, Aztech 56k modem, keyboard, mouse, Microsoft Sidewinder 3D Pro joystick, an ATI All in Wonder AGP card for 2D display and a Diamond Monster 3D II Voodoo II card for 3D acceleration. All that horse power looks brilliant on the included Mega Image 17 inch monitor and sounds sweet on the Eastern AX-4106 powered speakers and subwoofer setup. The Ultra Game Machine also includes the Intel Game Pak for those seeking instant gratification. But what is perhaps most impressive about this system is the price. At $2025, you will not find a less expensive machine that provides as complete a gaming solution as the Ultra Game Machine. Figure in all this power and Comtrade's exceptional customer support and you've got the hottest game machine on the market.

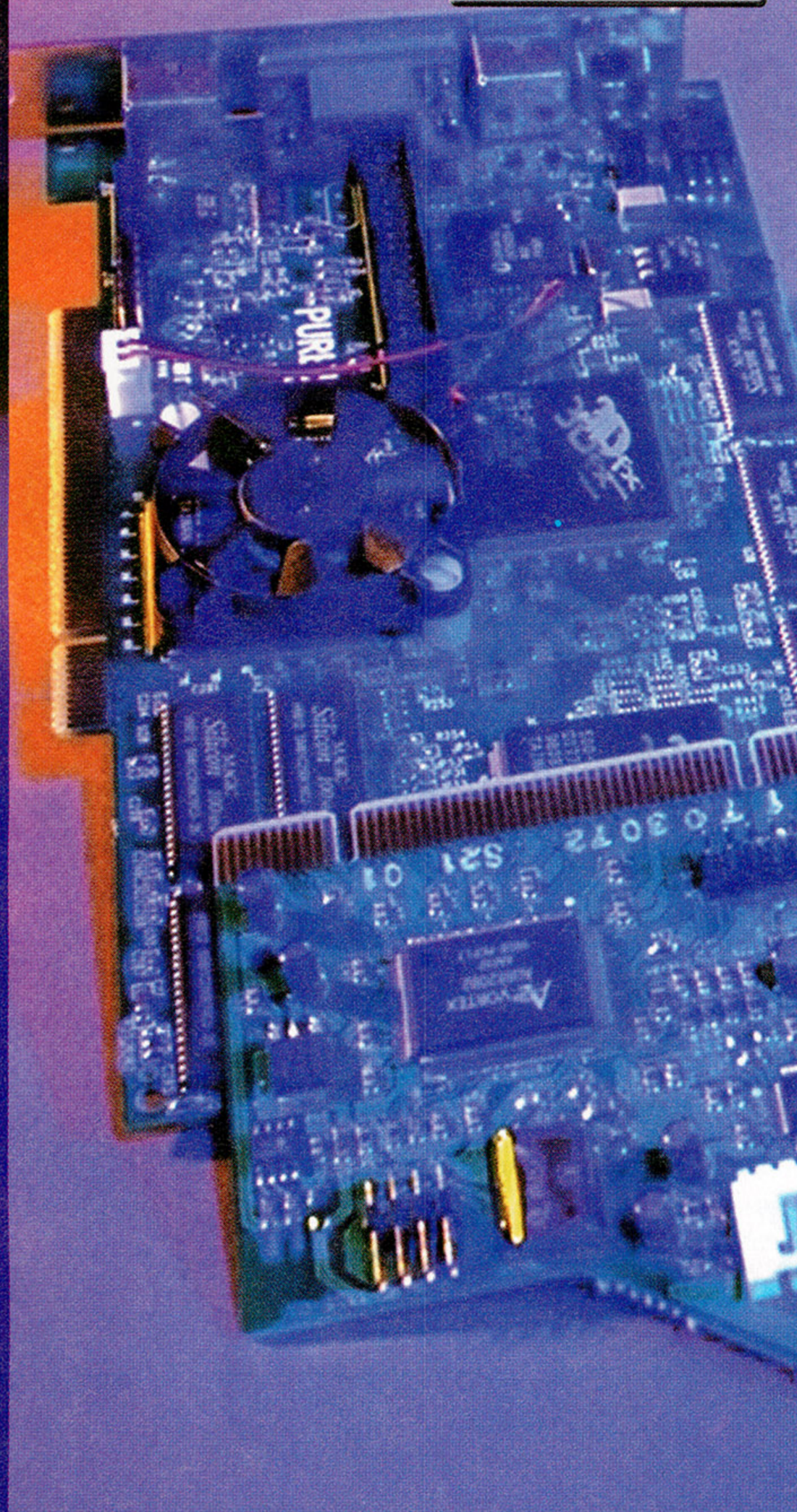


Pure 3D 2

PRODUCT: Pure 3D 2
COMPANY: Canopus
SYSTEM: PC
PRICE: $300
www.pure3d.com

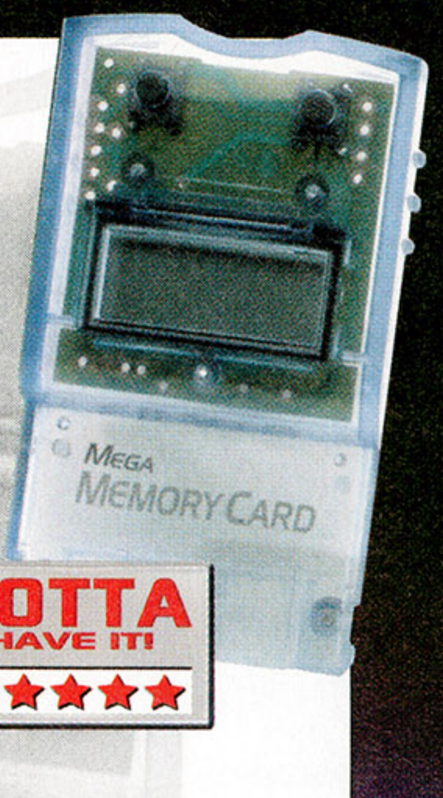
The efficiently designed Canopus Pure 3D 2 is the fastest Voodoo 2 board on the market, boasting 12MB of RAM, a TV output jack and an on-board cooling fan. Typical of most Voodoo 2 cards, it's able to run **Quake 2** at 800x600 at better than 55 frames per second (on a Pentium 2 333.) For real speed, two Pure 3D 2 cards hooked together provide support for 1024x768 and faster framerates.

BUY IT!



Mega Memory Card

Performance' Mega Memory Card sets new standards with excellent reliability and innovative features. The Mega Memory Card holds up to 360 memory blocks , 24 times more than a standard card. The LCD screen displays exactly which page of the card you're on, and which of the 24 pages has data stored in it. Two buttons allow you to switch between pages, an improvement over the gamepad-based switching of many cards.



GOTTA HAVE IT!

PRODUCT: Mega Memory Card
COMPANY: Performance
SYSTEM: PlayStation
PRICE: $39.95
www.interact-acc.com

Turtle Beach Montego

PRODUCT: Montego **COMPANY:** Turtle Beach
SYSTEM: PC **PRICE:** $120 **www.tbeach.com**

With PCI sound cards becoming the norm, there's confusion over which card to buy, but the Turtle Beach Montego is currently the best soundcard on the market. Powered by Aureal's Vortex1 chip, the Montego supports DirectSound, DirectSound3D and A3D API's, allowing it to handle many of the CPU intensive audio tasks that bog down your machine. With the Montego installed, your computer can spend more cycles processing graphics, resulting in higher framerates. The board also offers full SoundBlaster emulation so all of your old DOS games will still run just fine.

GOTTA HAVE IT!

Flight System

PRODUCT: Flight System
COMPANY: Thrustmaster
SYSTEM: PC
PRICE: $149.95
www.thrustmaster.com

Thrustmaster's Flight System is the all in one solution for keyboard pilots everywhere. In one box you'll find three of Thrustmaster's top peripherals, the Attack Throttle, Top Gun Joystick and the Elite Rudder Pedals. Each piece by itself is worthy of the Buy It stamp, featuring excellently designed components, sturdy construction, good workmanship and ergonomics, and stable, easy to use software. Put together in one box with a free copy of **Sierra Pro Pilot**, and you've got a great cockpit setup and the next best thing to owning a Cessna. The only issue holding this package back is that it's available only through CompUSA.

BUY IT!

★★★★☆

Ultra Racer 64

The Nintendo 64 has a huge variety of racing games, and now Performance has introduced a new steering device they hope console racers will adopt as their controller of choice. The Ultra Racer 64 is a very odd looking steering pad, with an analog dial for driving control and a trigger for brake and acceleration. For games that require nothing more than steering and throttle, the Ultra Racer 64 works beautifully, but for other driving games, like **Extreme G,** that use the camera or shoulder buttons, the Ultra Racer 64 is a bit clumsy. Bottom line, if you're driving **Cruisin USA** or **Top Gear Rally**, you'll like this pad.

PRODUCT: Ultra Racer 64
COMPANY: Performance
SYSTEM: Nintendo 64
PRICE: $29.95
www.interact-acc.com

THINK ABOUT IT!

★★★☆☆

Pionex 640029

PRODUCT: Pionex 640029 **COMPANY:** Pionex
SYSTEM: PC **PRICE:** $2090 www.pionex.com

BUY IT!

You may not know the name, but the Pionex 640029 is a fast, low cost PC that any gamer could use as the foundation of a dream system. The 640029 comes with a 400 MHz Pentium II processor, a fast 100 MHz system bus and 100 MHz memory, 12 GB hard drive, 56k modem, audio card, Advent speakers, a 17 inch monitor, microphone, keyboard, mouse and a second generation DVD drive with hardware MPEG2 playback. The PII 400 processor, 100MHz bus and DVD drive makes the 640029 a very forward looking platform. All you have to do is add a 3D accelerator and you're set to game until the end of the century.

CD Wet Suit 12

So you're heading over to your chum's home to play some games and you want to bring along a few of your own. You can either juggle a stack of jewel cases or load those CDs into a caddie like Kensington's CD Wetsuit. The CD Wetsuit holds 12 discs, but comes in 24 and 36 disc variations. The CD Wetsuit's colorful neoprene case isn't just another pretty surface, it's durable and lightweight for easy toting. The CD sleeves are also high tech, with soft cloth liners that will remove lint and dust from your discs.

PRODUCT: CD Wetsuit
COMPANY: Kensington
SYSTEM: CD
PRICE: $9.95
www.kensington.com

THINK ABOUT IT!

MAILBOX

You've got questions... We've got the answers!

WRITE TO US!

Got a question you want answered? Got a beef with our reviews? Bored, lonely and just need someone to talk to? Drop us a line, send us a picture, but just communicate, gosh-darn it! Mailbox is your forum for what's on your mind - your chance to vent, explain or explode. The letters in this second issue are still from Ultra Gameplayers readers and (almost) live from the Internet. You can send your mail by snail-mail, carried in the bag of some disgruntled postal worker (possibly Sinbad, as seen in Jingle All The Way). Better yet, send it by email, and then we don't have to re-type it.

Send mail to:
Game Buyer Mailbox,
Imagine Media
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA, 94005
or email to:
editor@gamebuyer.com

NO CLUE

Ever since I first laid eyes on that old Sega game, **Altered Beast**, my dream has been to be a part of the creative team behind games. I plan on going to college and majoring in computer sciences and eventually, work for such companies like Iguana, SquareSoft, Capcom, Nintendo, etc., but I've run into a couple of kinks in plan, the first of which being I have no idea how to break into the gaming industry. The majority of the articles I read suggest becoming a game tester, but I'm not up for punching a wall or jumping into a pit for eight hours straight, or at least I don't think so. Secondly, SquareSoft, the company that I love the most, seems to be pumping great titles from its Japanese headquarters rather than its American headquarters, which makes me think that I have to move abroad to become part of such a great team. Also, what kind of education do I need? I've heard about Digipen in Canada, but is that the only place at which I can learn how to write code? I would appreciate if you would respond and help me out with my dilemma. Thank you for your time.

Roland New
rolandnew@juno.com

GB: Digipen in Canada is the most obvious solution to your problem. It's fast becoming a respected institution with a pretty wide range of courses available, including 3D graphics and programming. To get in, you have to meet their requirements and they are tough. If you want to approach it from a different angle and you think you're up to it, try submitting designs or demos directly to software companies. They don't often accept unsolicited materials, but if you're lucky... oh, and as a last resort, you could try entering the annual Enix game design contest, run from their website at www.enix.co.jp. And good luck.

Shaun Harrier claims that he beat Final Fantasy VII in 24 hours. Sure, we believe him...

AD MAD

The ads for **NASCAR '98** piss me off. They talk about tracks and drivers that are not in the game, like Darlington, the track, and Richard Petty. I am an avid NASCAR racing fan and there is no such thing as a new scuff, from the quote 'I'm in a groove with new scuffs'. Scuffs are tires that are worn down tires that still work pretty good. Plus, the game is totally fake. If you want NASCAR realism, buy **NASCAR** for the PlayStation by Papryus. Or buy **NASCAR RACING 2**. The only good thing about **NASCAR '98** is the two player mode, but otherwise the game is just **Andretti Racing** with a slight upgrade in graphics and minus the Indy cars.
Ryan Freitas
JEANANDERSEN@prodigy.net

GB: That's the problem with simulation - striking the balance between realism and playability - someone is always going to be upset. Since a console or computer can't replicate every experience, even the most detailed simulation is going to be filled with compromise. And that two player mode is fun, but your comments do draw attention to a glaring fact - that **Indy** and **NASCAR** are virtually identical.

BAD ENDING

You think the endings for **Saga Frontier** are bad? Look at the ending for **Shinobi** all the way back on the Sega Master System. That game was a pain in the neck, and when you finally got all the way though the game and kill the last guy, the screen goes blank, and the the message Game Over' pops up and it tells you your score. Which, by the way, is the exact same thing that happened when you died. Needless to say, that game was never played again.

What's all this about games like **Saga Frontier** taking 40 hours to get through with a character? I got through it in a little under 20 and had no trouble with it. Same with **FF7** - that took me an entire 24 hours of play to beat. Of course, getting all my characters stats to max by getting infinite sources is gonna take a while, though. ;)
Shaun 'Archaeo' Harrier
archaeo@hotmail.com

GB: There should always be a reward for finishing a game.

How can Senators raise the hue and cry about violence in videogames when this scary woman is on TV?

Super Mario 64's ending took on almost mythical proportions, when people heard that Yoshi was hiding atop the castle. This reward gives people an impetus to finish and enjoy the whole game. And, of course, the times we give for completion of a game are estimates based on the average player's skill. If you beat it faster, then give yourself a pat on the back because you're a hero.

FOUR PLAY

You want a new thread? Well, I got four:
1.After reading that somewhat depressing click on NGO, I realized that I have more faith in Sega than Nintendo at this moment in time. I mean, assuming Sega's new one can come even close to a model 3, they might beat Nintendo at its own 'quality over quantity' game with arcade ports alone. Question is, have you noticed N64 owners begin to jump ship yet? I wonder if the N64 'community' (I have NO other word.) will shatter and fragment as bad as the Saturn one did.
2.Does anyone else see what Bill Gates is planning to do? Is anyone else sick?
3.Who (in your opinion) starts the majority of the 'flame wars' ? N64, PSX, or Saturn owners?
4.Don't those people who buy all that Lara Croft 'merchandise' scare you?
Lukas
sasami123@juno.com

GB: N64 owners are a very loyal bunch and they're unlikely to jump ship. As for Bill Gates, I think he's awesome, and I'm not just saying that because I think he's listening. Nope. As for flame wars, they're not console specific, they're butthole specific. Flame wars are started by sad people with too much time on their hands. And yes, too much Lara will make you go blind.

SCARY WOMAN

NO! Tell me it's not true! Yesterday, I heard that the voice of Claire Redfield from **Resident Evil 2** was done by Alyson Court, that scary clown lady from the TV show '**The Big Comfy Couch**'! I was also told that Alyson Court also was the voice behind **X-Men**'s Jubilee, and Lidia, of **BeetleJuice** fame (the animated TV show). Is this true? I just can't bear hearing this any longer!
Ned
ED82085@aol.com

GB: Well, Ned, we here at Game Buyer think you're strange and twisted, but after a bunch of careful research, and the usual bribes and glad-handing, we did find out that you're absolutely correct! Alyson Court has not only worked as the voice behind Jubilee in **The X-Men** cartoon, Lydia from **Beetlejuice** and Amber from **The Silver Surfer**, but she was also the voice of Claire Redfield in **Resident Evil 2**. Kinda makes you think twice about wanting to sit on that big couch now, doesn't it?

X FILES

I would like to know if Atari is still a successful company. I heard somewhere that Atari was making a new system, now known as the Project X. I wonder if somehow the Project X could become the leading system on the market? Will your magazine cover Project X? I was also wondering if There was going to be a new Color Game boy come out?
Chelsea D. Savage
AerisXII@AOL.com

GB: Project X is being designed and marketed by a company called VM Labs, which does indeed have many ex-Atari guys, specifically Jaguar hardware people. Atari Games is a separate company, still producing excellent arcade games, including San Francisco Rush.

NEEDS A FIX

I need answers to important questions. My Sony was sent to Georgia to be repaired, because it would freeze and skip constantly. I didn't have a Sony Licensed RF Switch, or Controller (I did have a Sony Licensed controller, just the second one wasn't). They told me that the GameShark and my Unlicensed Memory Card were big probs, along with the Switch, and that I should get Sony Licensed Switches, Controllers, and Cards. What should I do? (This would be good to print for people who may be having the same problems).
Elia 'Fatman' Ajram
gead@mail.pcfl.net

GB: Hmmm. From what we know about PlayStations, the problem lies with overheating. To blame the problems on third party devices seems trite, given that the voltages involved in using these devices are the same as official units. The real problem lies with the PlayStation's build-up of heat over extended playing time. However, do remember that any interior modifications to your PlayStation will invalidate your warranty, and the same thing theoretically applies to exterior devices manufactured by parties other than Sony.

NAME THAT TUNE

Do you remember the **Final Fantasy** commercial, where they're showing FMVs from the game and a voiceover is talking about the game and there's like this symphony orchestra playing and people singing an opera or something in the background? I need to know what the name of that music is and what it's about. I need this music.
Joe Ibarra
San Juan, TX

GB: Well, Joe, we asked around the office and we asked around on the Internet and we got a whole bunch of different answers. In order to save you time and our sanity, we'll just give you all the answers we got and let you take it from there. Some people thought it was the music from the game. This was the most popular answer. Other people, well, make that one other person, keeps insisting that the music was from **Gotterdammerung** by Richard Wagner, and just as soon as we get that horned helmet away from him, we're pretty sure the singing will stop.

5-STAR LETTER

THE KATANA KID

Have you seen any game movies or playable demos on the Sega Katana? Do you know how serious Microsoft is on putting Sega back on top? Is Microsoft planning on providing software for the Katana?
Louis Pelletier
Mad Town, ME

GB: By the time you read this letter, we'll have seen Katana (now known as the Dreamcast) at long last. Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll find lots of news on Sega's awesome new machine, but already the Dreamcast is starting to pick up momentum. People are genuinely excited about this machine. Microsoft will be providing the operating system for the machine (basically a programming environment that will be invisible to players) and there's no reason why Microsoft shouldn't be making games for the unit. But remember, the Dreamcast's success will have virtually nothing to do with Microsoft - since the company is simply supplying a piece of software, like any other vendor. The success of the Dreamcast will have everything to do with pricing and games. Marketing will help, but hard lessons have been learned over the last twenty years - games and price and performance are the real battles. We'll have to see.

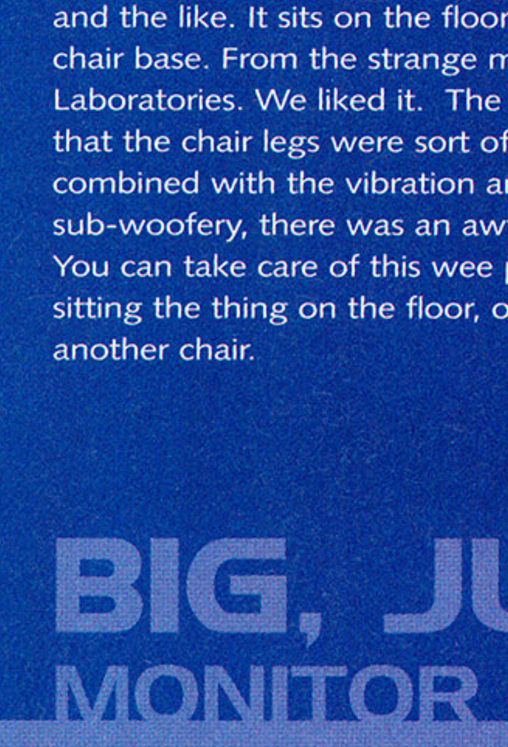
THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN

Intensor

Perhaps the most bizarre device available for gamers is the Intensor chair. A seat with built in speakers and sub-woofers that cause a combination of deep, rich, involving game sounds, and rectal massage. Firmly packed stools can be loosened, and colonic deposits can be a thing of the past. Just jokes; this cool device is an expensively enjoyable alternative to Rumble Packs and the like. It sits on the floor or on an optional chair base. From the strange minds at BSG Laboratories. We liked it. The only real criticism is that the chair legs were sort of flimsy and when combined with the vibration and general sub-woofery, there was an awful lot of motion. You can take care of this wee problem by simply sitting the thing on the floor, or even on another chair.

BIG, JUICY MONITOR TIME

Pioneer has just unveiled the brilliant, the fantastic, the prohibitively expensive PDP-V401, a 40 inch monitor/TV combo. The main panel is only four inches thick, and Pioneer supplies a wall mounting kit so you can act like you're from the future. It's the best thing ever. If Pioneer would send us one, we'd send them back our souls in a small bottle. Or at least give them excellent advice on the state of videogaming today. Yeah, that'll work...



PlayStation Threadz

Not content with dominating the world of video games, Sony is trying to accomplish the same feat in the fashion stakes. Introducing PlayStation Threadz and Accessories - killer klothes for kool kidz. Or something. The range of clothing encompasses the realms of sport, fashion and 'casu-al-wear' and it's actually not bad - if you don't mind having the PlayStation logo all over the place. Here's our fave articles:

ZIP POLO SHIRT

Here we see a relaxed fit, perfect for a game of Chukka, or simply relaxing at the Lido. Detailing includes a chrome zipper and jacquard collar. Stylish, yet understated.

MESH SHORTS AND TANK TOP

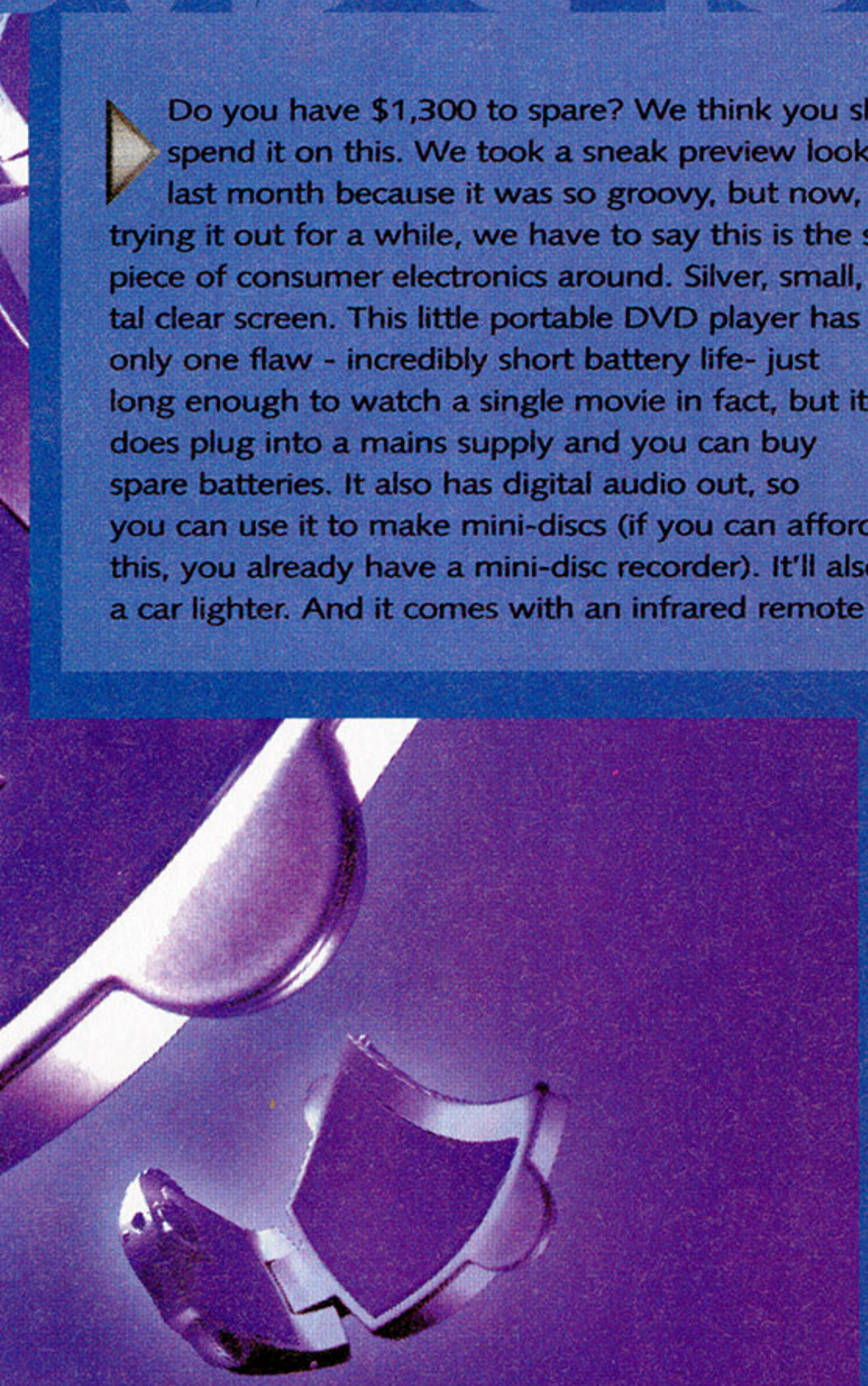
Take yo mad skillz to the hole with this phat gear. All crazy wit' tha stoopid juice on court, or just for cold-lamping it wit' yo homies. Etc. Or, in English, these com-fortable clothes are great for playing bas-ketball or hanging out with your friends.

GAMES, ISN'T THERE?

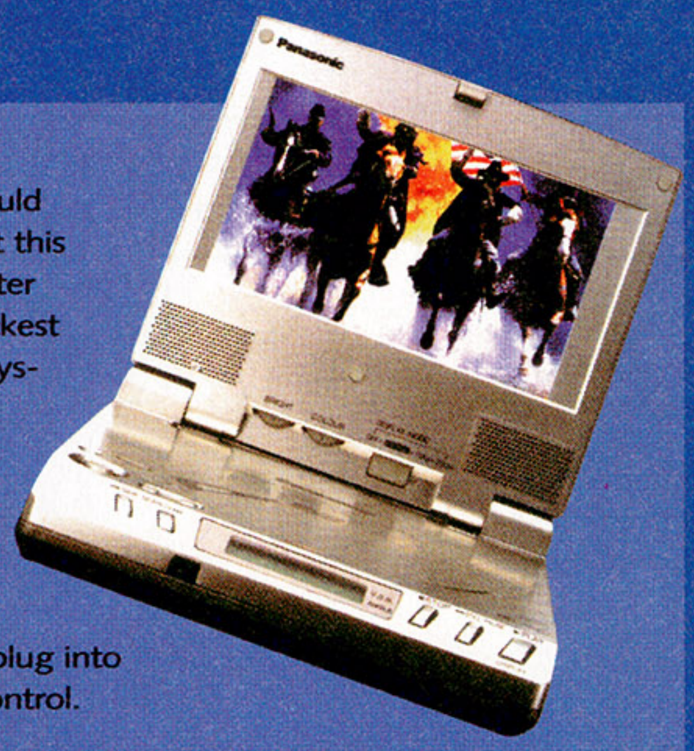
PROJECTIONS FOR PROJECT X

Thompson Electronics and Toshiba have both signed on the dotted line to produce DVD players using Project X technology. This snore-filled announcement means practically nothing for gamers, but does mean that their DVD players will be more 'flexible' in future.

DVD LIFE



Do you have $1,300 to spare? We think you should spend it on this. We took a sneak preview look at this last month because it was so groovy, but now, after trying it out for a while, we have to say this is the slickest piece of consumer electronics around. Silver, small, crystal clear screen. This little portable DVD player has only one flaw - incredibly short battery life- just long enough to watch a single movie in fact, but it does plug into a mains supply and you can buy spare batteries. It also has digital audio out, so you can use it to make mini-discs (if you can afford this, you already have a mini-disc recorder). It'll also plug into a car lighter. And it comes with an infrared remote control.



INDUSTRIAL DVD

So, you have kids, and they keep breaking your DVD player? An unlikely scenario admittedly, but maybe you work in a store, and you want to play a looping DVD without the machine overheating or going on the fritz. Pioneer has the answer in the shape of the DVD-V7200. This one even has a mouse interface to customize options and will run virtually any DVD/Video CD/MPEG format. And it costs less than $1000. But it still doesn't record.

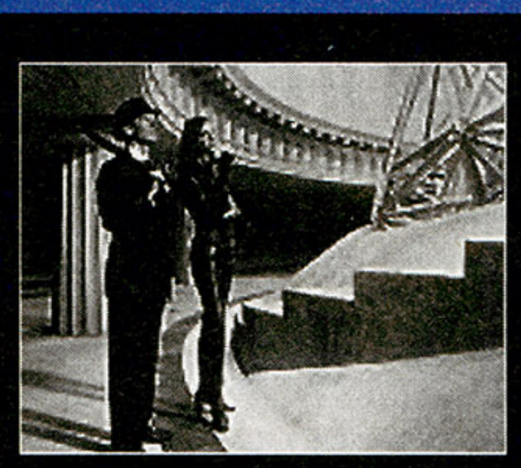
PARAPPA THE RAPPER HAT

Word. True Parappa fans simply must have this hat. Also, if you want to meet attractive ladies, it actually works. While snowboarding this winter, two girls asked me where I got my hat. I told them it was a gift from Puff Daddy.

COOL BOARDERS 2 LONG SLEEVE 2

If your feeling radical, but you're too cold to shred some gnarly pipes, then chill out with this delightfully trendy **Cool Boarders** shirt. It'scool to the max... apparently. Get some.

HATZ, SHIRTZ, ZTUFF



The Avengers

THE AVENGERS

John Steed and Emma Peel may not be immediately familiar names to the readers of this magazine, but your parents, especially if they're British, will be more than familiar with them. Why? Because they're the leading protagonists from the ancient TV show, The Avengers, now making its big screen debut and starring Uma Thurman and Ralph Feinnes in the leading roles. The movie is based on a Sixties detective show, part of the inspiration for laff-riot Austin Powers and part of a growing retro trend that has included movies like The Saint. This one though has a huge advantage in the form of Mr. Sean Connery, who plays a maniac bent on destroying the Earth using the very forces of nature. This means he gets to say stuff like, 'I shall shlay anyone who getsh in my path. I shall shtrike them down with lightning and shtun them with showersh!' Good deal.

The avengers

INCOMING

All the news, previews and reviews that are fit to print - and then some...

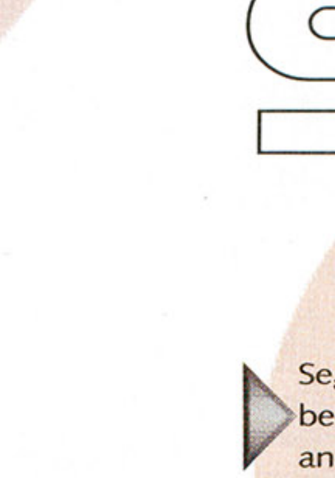
Sega's Katana Becomes Dreamcast

Sega's next generation console, codenamed Katana, has been officially named and unveiled. It's called Dreamcast and at the moment, represents the cutting edge of console technology. Here's what we know so far:

Hardware

•CPU: Hitachi 128 bit graphics engine with an on-board RISC processor SH4 (operating frequency of 200MHz 360 MIPS/1.4FLOPS)

- Sega is quick to point out that this version of the SH-4 performs floating point operations four times faster than an Intel Pentium II. Even with the usual exaggeration, this is still a mighty fast processor, especially since it doesn't have to do too much in polygonal games.



•Graphics Chip: NEC PowerVR2 (rendering capacity: over 3 million polygons per second). NEC's chip is a fantastic unit, easily comparable to 3DFX's Voodoo 2 technology and it can handle virtually any 3D task thrown at it.

•Sound Processor: Yamaha Super Intelligent Sound Processor (simultaneously articulates 64 sounds).

- This is almost overpowered - you simply don't need that much sound technology on a console.

•Operating System: Customized OS using Windows CE as its base (Supports Direct X)

•Main Memory: 16MByte (64Mbit SD-RAM x 2)

•CD-ROM Drive: 12-speed (Maximum).

- This is co-developed by Sega and Yamaha to provide more storage and faster access than conventional CD drives. Many will be disappointed, though, that the Dreamcast doesn't have DVD as standard. Costs have to be kept down and the CD drive is one of the most expensive components.

•On-board Modem: 33.6 Kbps modem

•Controllers: Red, Yellow, Blue, and Gray

•Visual Memory (sold separately): A liquid-crystal display PDA for game data backup and data exchange.

•Console Dimensions: 7 7/16" X 7 11/16" X 3"

•Weight: 4.4lbs (heavy!)

Controllers

The controllers, designed by ALPS, are reminiscent of N64 pads. The four surface mounted fire buttons seem inadequate for fighting games, but the shoulder buttons will alleviate any potential problems. The pads are almost as large as the console itself and the inclusion of an LCD screen allows a variety of as yet undecided features to be implemented, but could include secret play selection in football games, as an example.

The pads come in four colors while digital and analog controls are supported. The controllers also accept 'VMS' cards. This stands for Virtual Memory System, referring to the fact that these business card-sized memory cards also have a built-in LCD screen. This same design can be seen in the as yet ill-defined Personal Digital Assistant device (see picture).

Modem

The Dreamcast will be sold with a built-in 33.6 modem,

more than adequate for point to point network gaming (you direct dial a friend to play a death match, for example), but perhaps a tad slow for Internet play. The inclusion of the Microsoft OS means that web browsing and email are certainly possible. A mouse and keyboard would be valuable additions, for gameplay and productivity. This is the first console with any real chance of becoming the core of a computer system.

Sega's Internet plans remain shrouded in mystery, but Dreamcast will probably be pitched as a games machine first and foremost. This Modem is perhaps the most important feature on the machine and it should change the way that console gaming is perceived and enjoyed.

Software

Still the big unknown. What we do know is that development specs are out there, along with development kits. The Hitachi SH-4 and Power VR chipset mean that it's super-simple to port PC games over to the machine. That will be a very important factor in the US, reducing development costs for the machine to virtually zero. In fact, for games like **Quake** or **Unreal**, it would be foolish not to do the translation.

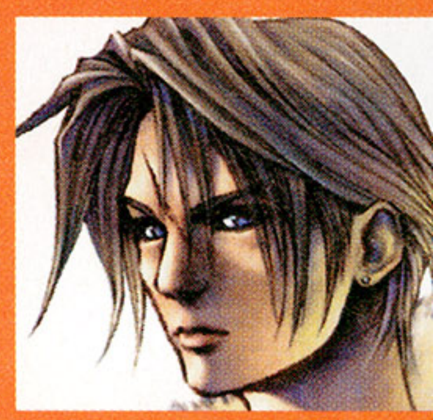
Japanese games are likely to be very different. The Japanese coders aren't quite so dependent on the C language and they certainly don't have the bad habits built up from years of PC programming. The Japanese will be more likely to program machine code and, as a result, their games may tend to look different, if not better.

It's pretty safe to say that Sega will be bringing the best of its arcade titles to the machine, such as **Virtua Fighter 3, SCUD Race** and **House Of The Dead**. The hardware on the Dreamcast is very different to Sega's Model 3, but more than capable of good-looking translations.

Final Fantasy VIII Unveiled

On May 15th, Tomoyuki Takechi, the President of Square, and Hironobu Sakaguchi, the Vice President of Square, held a giant press conference in Japan to spill the beans on their latest epic adventure, **Final Fantasy VIII**. Besides a question and answer session, a ten minute trailer for the game was shown.

The trailer started with the lead character, Squall LeonHart, on a ship sailing through the sea. He looks up from the map he is reading and we are treated to several flashback images. Then, as the music swells, cut after cut of gorgeous cinematics, as well as a tiny bit of gameplay, are shown. It finally ends with the new logo on screen. Those lucky enough to arrange a meeting with Squaresoft at E3 in Atlanta were treated to the exact same trailer. Needless to say, **FFVIII** was definitely one of the biggest highlights of the entire show.



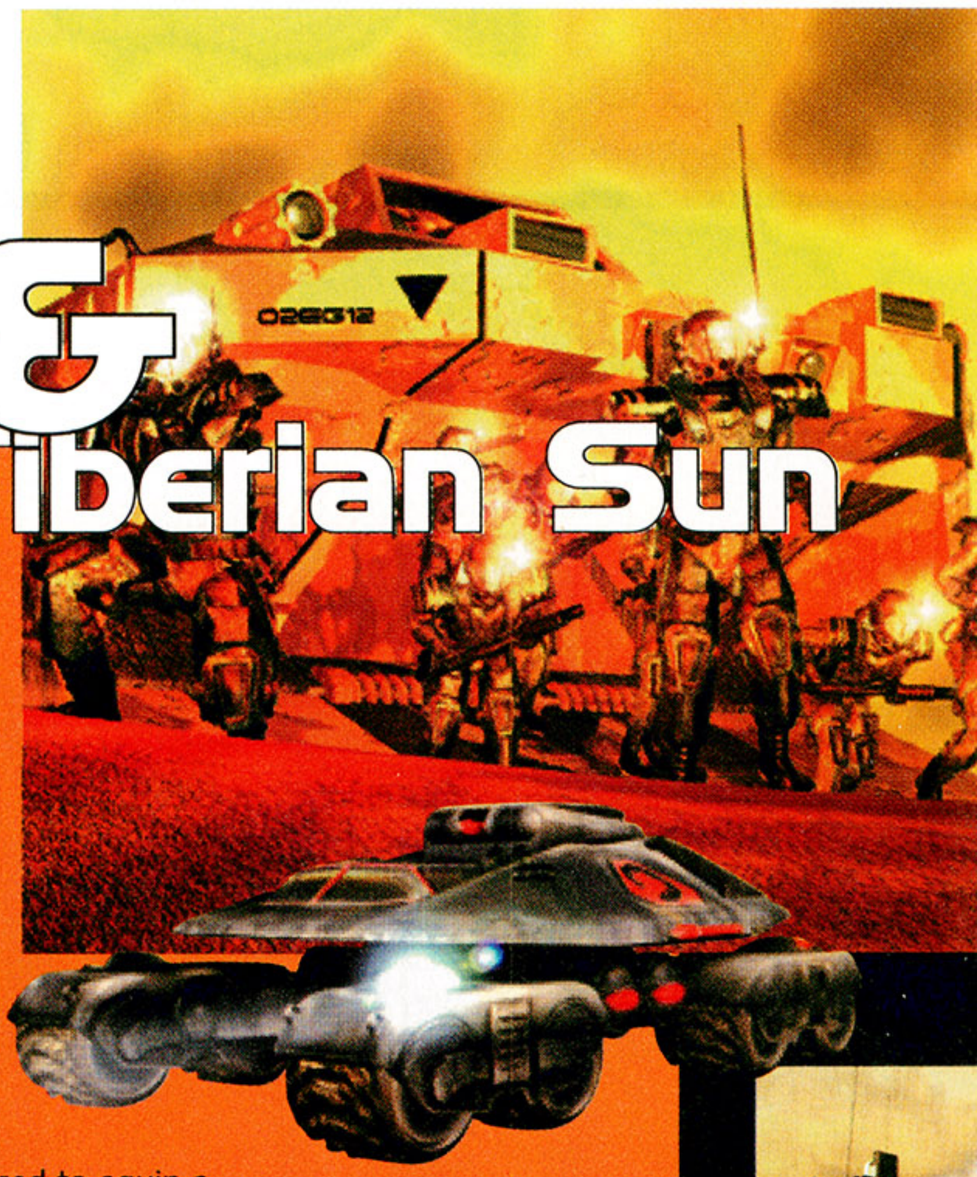
Sakaguchi, who also acts as executive producer for the game, said this about the theme, 'There are lots of elements in the game, but one of the members of the development team, Tetsuya Nomura, the character designer, is saying that the theme is love.' Indeed, from the screen shots we have seen, this **Final Fantasy** appears to have gotten rid of the dark look that plagued the previous installment in the series and opted for a much lighter look - much more fitting to a possible romance saga. The romantic interest hasn't been announced yet, but we have seen a brunette woman prominently featured in a few of the screenshots. We have also seen a second character in the story named Laguna Loire. It is thought that Loire lives in a different world than Leonhart, but at some point in the story their paths will inevitably cross.

It's also to be noted that the large weapon that Squall carries over his shoulder in some of the character shots has been revealed to be a 'gunblade.' Japanese press speculated as to what kind of weapon it might be, but Square quelled rumors by confirming that the gunblade is a firearm weapon that unsheaths a large blade when discharged.

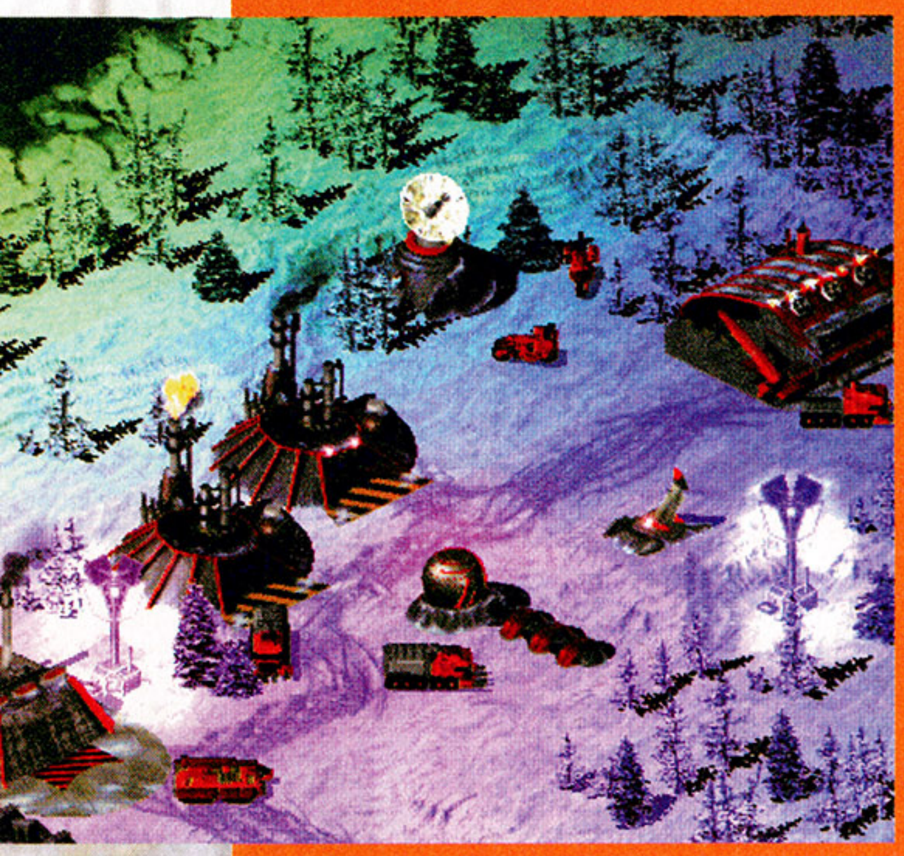
The graphics engine has been re-done for this new

continued on page 95

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun



System: PC
Publisher: Westwood Studios
Release Date: 4th Quarter



Capitalizing on the **C&C** Universe that Westwood began with the original **Command & Conquer** in the early 90's, **Tiberian Sun** will give the gamer the chance to rejoin the world of real-time strategy when it releases this winter. Featuring a brand new game engine enabling what Westwood is calling 'dynamic 3D terrain, realistic physics and a fully reactive environment,' **Tiberian Sun** is promised to equip a whole host of new technological innovations. What this means for players is highly diversified landscapes which affect the game in a markedly more responsive way and a much more interactive relationship with the environment surrounding your troops. Bombs and explosions will leave indentations on the terrain, which you must take into consideration.

Westwood has also improved the interface and controls within the game in an attempt to make commanding troops an intuitive and much more fluid task. With much more attention to strategy and content, a good degree of focus will be on the the game's storyline, which carries over from the last chapter in the **C&C** series, featuring both the GDI (Global Defense Initiative) and the NOD in a global skirmish for planetary control. Themes linking this latest title to earlier installations in the series should heighten the immersion, bringing back plots featuring Kane, the NOD leader presumed dead from the original game, as well as providing more backstory on the omnipresence of Tiberium in the **C&C** world.

Notes

Activision's high profile **Apocalypse** has finally come out of hiding after dropping off the face of the Earth last year. It has been announced that the design team at Neversoft has taken over the project and it will be released late this year. One of changes that have been made since the original design spec include the fact that you now control Bruce Willis' character directly instead of being his sidekick.

Dave Perry's experimental PlayStation game **RC Copter** has finally found a home with Midway Entertainment. The game uses complicated physics models to accurately simulate what it's like to fly a remote control helicopter.

Radical Entertainment is working on a game featuring none other than the amazing Jackie Chan. The game, titled **Jackie Chan: Stunt Master,** will feature motion capture of the martial artist in a variety of different styles and will be published by Midway.

Sony expects to have sold over 50 million PlayStations in the world by the second quarter of next year. Already the user base is an astonishing 32 million and Sony has predicted a mind blowing 18 million in the next year.

Ascii has dropped the revolutionary **RPG Maker** and **Fighter Maker** titles from its US release lists. This is disappointing because these would have been the first games of their kind to grace American consoles. Sob.

Psygnosis in legal tug-o-war

Psygnosis is facing a five million dollar lawsuit from developer Perfect Entertainment over a royalty dispute. Perfect Entertainment developed the first two **Discworld** games, based on the world featured in the Terry Pratchett book series, for Psygnosis and feels that they didn't get all of the royalties due to them. Psygnosis has sued Perfect right back and claims that Perfect had no right to sign with GT Interactive for their next installment. Quite the soap opera.

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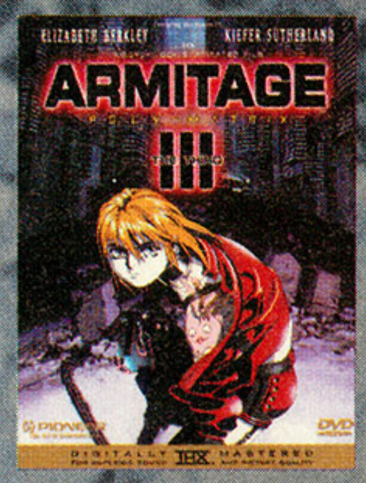
The Daughter of Darkness
Science Fiction Drama - Approx. 60 min. running time.
5.1 Dolby Digital Surround Sound for both English and Japanese Soundtracks! Also features the extensive Tenchi Muyo Encyclopedia with detailed descriptions and interconnected links describing the characters, the people, the technology, and the organizations in the Tenchi Muyo Universe.

Dragon Ball Z
Uncut Movies
Martial Arts Adventure - The original uncut Dragon Ball Z available in North America for the first time on optical disk, in both English and Japanese! DVD Menus include lots of extras including edited footage from the TV series, TV episode descriptions, and more. Original Mono format preserved for Japanese language version.
Dead Zone - Approx. 45 min. running time.
Tree of Might - Approx. 60 min. running time.
The World's Strongest - Approx. 60 min. running time.

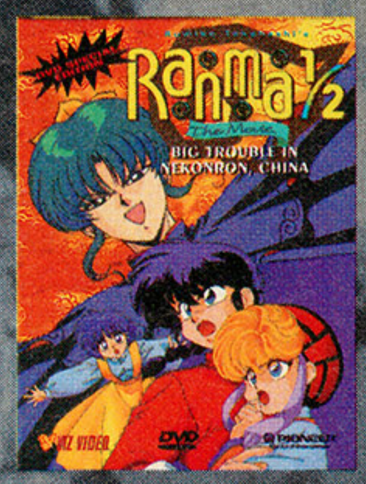
DVD Co-productions with Viz Communications - Available exclusively from Pioneer Entertainment:

Night Warriors
Darkstalker's Revenge
Martial Arts Drama - Approx. 80 min. running time each. Darkstalker's Anime! Based upon the hit game for the Sega Saturn and the arcades, this gorgeously animated film captures the spirit of the video game and transforms it into a fast paced adventure graced with character designs by Shuko Murase (Street Fighter II - the Animated Movie).
Night Warriors - Alpha (contains VHS volumes 1 & 2)
Available August 25, 1998
Night Warriors - Omega (contains VHS volumes 3 & 4)
Available November 24, 1998

Armitage the Third:
Polymatrix - The Movie
Science Fiction Thriller
Approx. 90 min. running time.
5.1 Dolby Digital Surround Sound (No Japanese Soundtracks) Featuring the voice talent of Elizabeth Berkley (Show Girls), and Keifer Sutherland (Flatliners) and sound effects by Frank Serafine (Hunt for Red October).



Green Legend Ran
Uncut Trilogy
Science Fiction Adventure -
Approx. 140 min. running time.
Dual layer DVD! The uncut version of the popular movie as seen on the Sci-Fi Channel.
Hi-Fi Stereo Sound.



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Ranma 1/2 Movie #2 - Nihao my Concubine
Available September 29, 1998

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Armitage III ©. 1997 AIC • Pioneer LDC, Inc. • Pioneer Entertainment (USA)LP Dragon Ball Z ©. 1997 BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION Licensed by FUNimation Productions, Inc. Ranma 1/2 ©. 1991 Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan • Kitty Film • Fuji TV Night Warriors ©. 1998 Capcom/Amuse • Licensed by Capcom

RPGs Battle onto the Playstation

Kartia

PUBLISHER: Atlus
RELEASE DATE: August

Much in the same vein as other strategy RPGs on the PlayStation, like **Final Fantasy Tactics** and **Ogre Battle**, Atlus is following up **Tactics Ogre** with a very promising **FF Tactics**-esque **Kartia**. Centered around the mysterious powers of a magic deck of cards called Kartia, the world has finally returned to a peaceful state after decades of war. But things begin getting out of hand with the abuse of Kartia's powers, quickly setting the story of the game in motion.

All combat takes place on a battlefield, a la **FF Tactics/Shining Force**, and success relies heavily on the use of Phantoms who participate in the battle and do most of the fighting for your party. **Kartia** also includes multiple endings, full CG rendered cutscenes and impressive magic spells. But the most innovative feature within the game is the ability for the player to swap items and fight against friends by using your saves from a memory card. The game is a result of a group effort by Amano Yoshitaka (character designer for the **Final Fantasy** series) and Coji Okada, (creator of the **Persona**, **Soul Hackers** and **Megami Tensei** series) and has sold over 120,000 units in Japan already. **Kartia** should find a nice place on the store shelves amongst the recent crop of successful strategy RPG titles in the US market when it releases this August.

Lunar: The SilverStar Story

PUBLISHER: Working Designs
RELEASE DATE: September/October

One of the titles in the classic RPG series from the16-bit format, **Lunar: the Silver Star Story** is finally making its way over from the Saturn to the PlayStation, courtesy of Working Designs. Working in tandem with the Japanese developers of the **Lunar** series, Game Arts, the game features fully updated graphics, brand new animated cinemas, a new soundtrack, as well as some story changes to please fans of the previous version.

The game follows the adventures of a young dreamer named Alex, whose world is suddenly thrown into chaos when the land is threatened by a power hungry magic emperor who kidnaps Alex's childhood sweetheart. The storyline is pure RPG, but the translation and text are sure to be flawless. A fan favorite, **Lunar: TSS** will finally be available to the masses when it is released this fall.

Boss Does the N64

Boss Game Studios, the developer of **Top Gear Rally**, has once again teamed up with Midway to bring out two new N64 titles, **Twisted Edge Snowboarding** and **GT Rally**.

Like Nintendo's **1080, Twisted Edge** is set to offer at least six tracks, each with multiple paths and varying terrain. Boss Game's VP of Product Development, Colin Gordon, told Game Buyer that he is convinced that **Twisted Edge** will be the most controllable snowboarding game on any system, with flares and stalls, and the ability to gain more speed by pulling off stunts. **Twisted Edge** will feature multiple racers on the track, as well.

The tentatively titled **GT Rally**, is Boss Game's take on **Gran Turismo** (PS). Boss promises better visuals than the Sony racer with specular highlights, environment mapping and cars from all over the world. Expect a reworked version of Boss Game's impressive **Top Gear Rally** engine.

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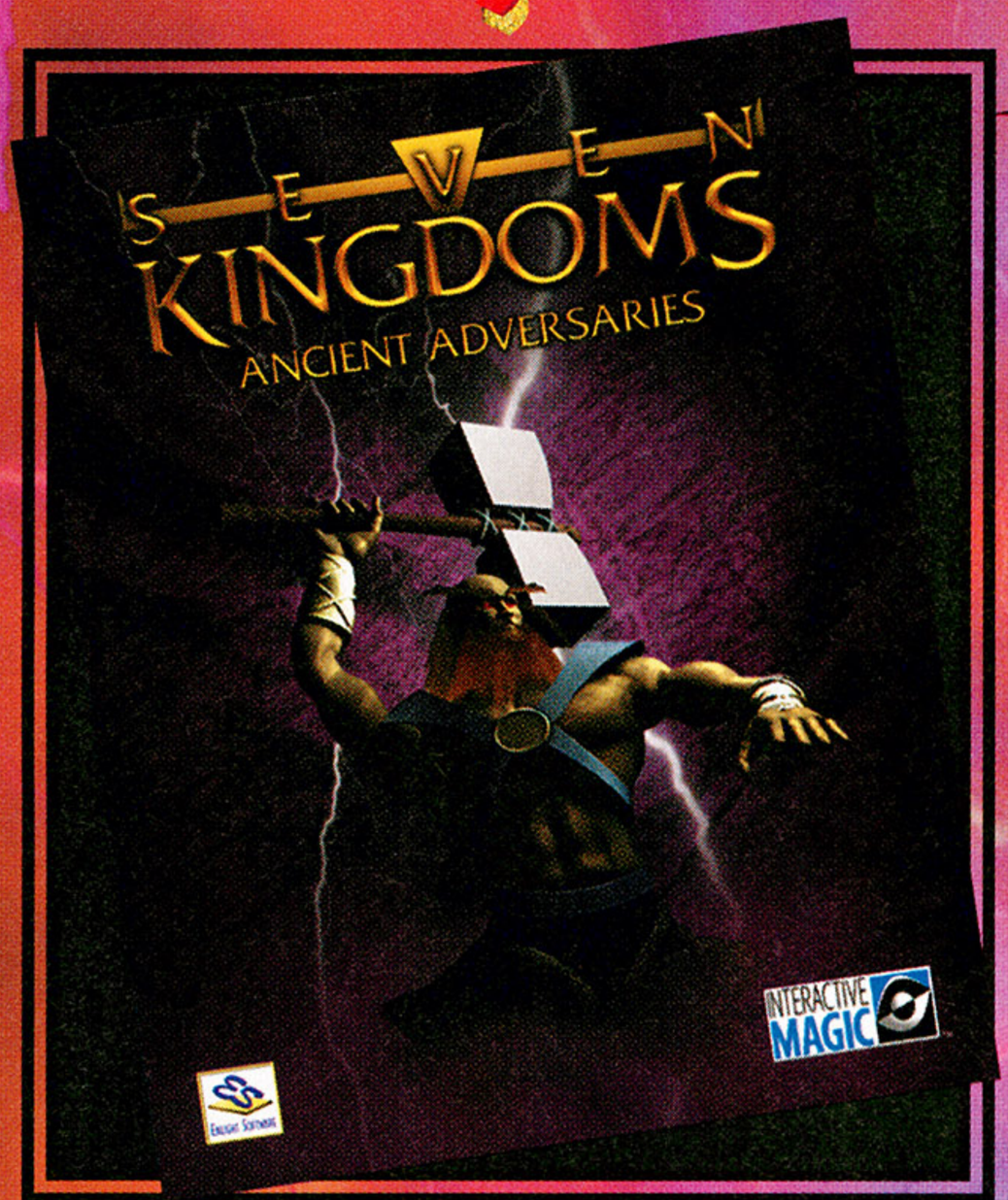

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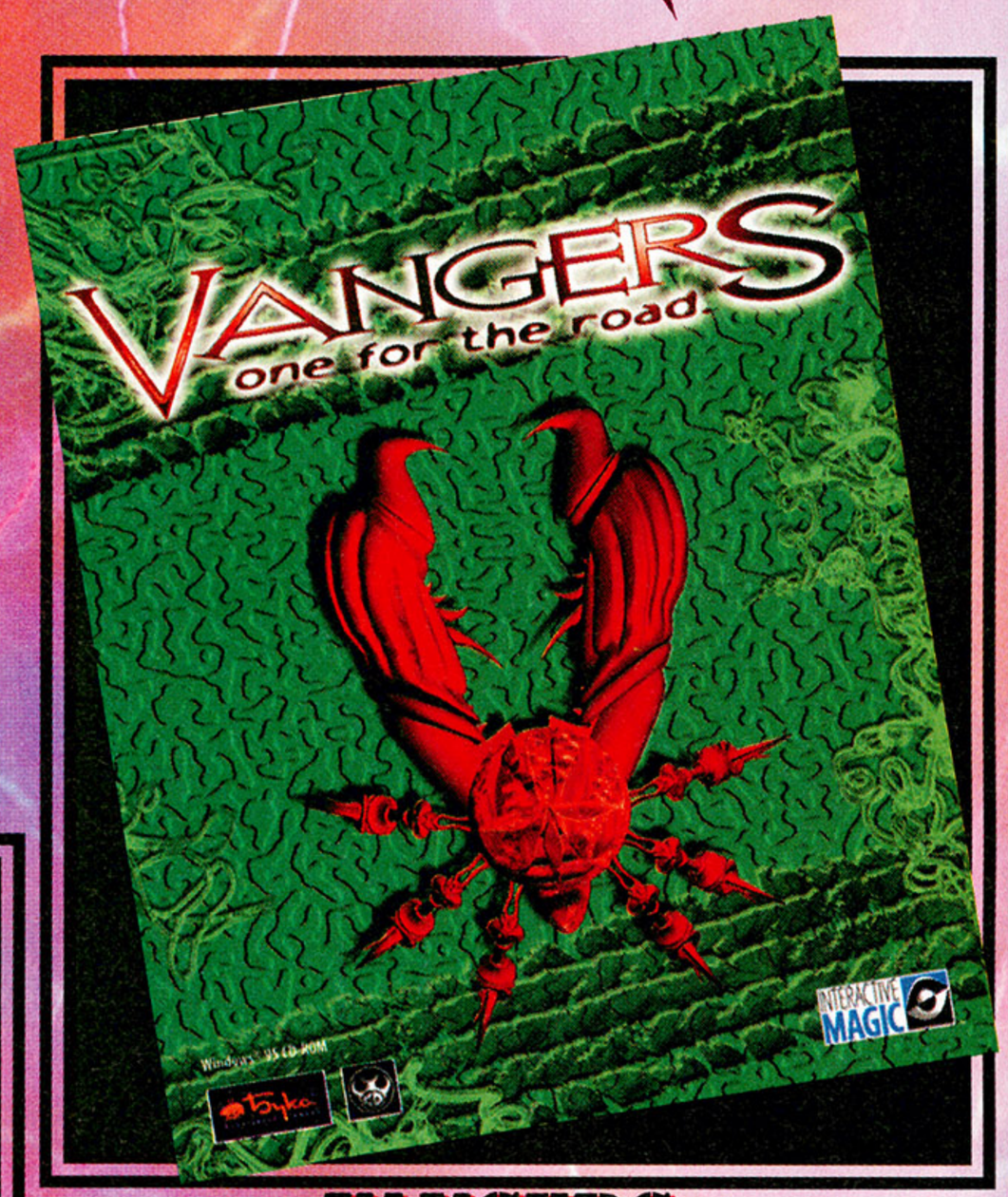

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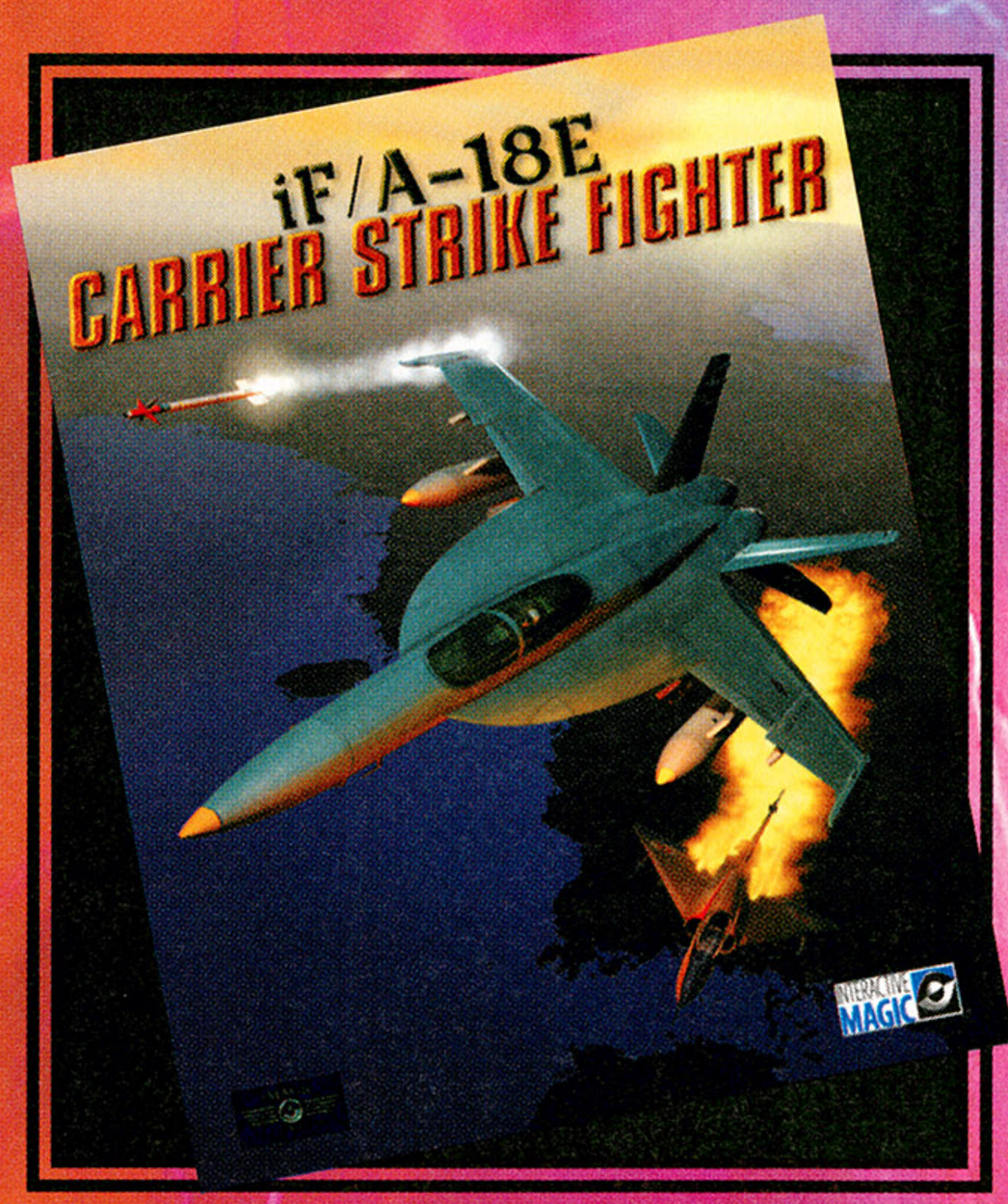

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Heart of Darkness

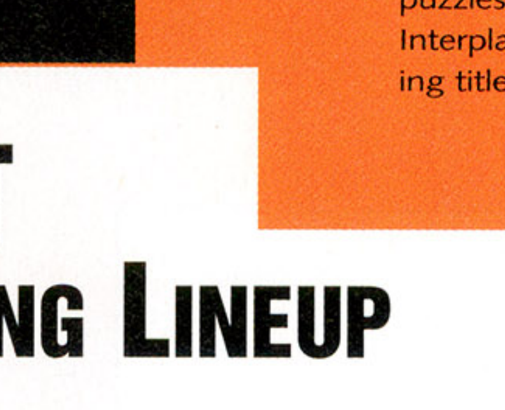
System: PC, Playstation
Publisher: Interplay
Release Date: Fall '98

Interplay's much anticipated, intermittently appearing action-adventure title, **Heart of Darkness**, is finally making its presence known once again. After wallowing in apparent obscurity for years, the game has resurfaced with impressive screenshots and some serious gameplay to boot. Most similar to GT Interactive's successful **Abe's Oddysee** or the 16-bit classic, **Flashback, Heart of Darkness** promises to be much more plot driven in its focus, but will pack in quite a bit of action, enemies and even puzzles. Interaction with other characters is a must, as your main objective at the start is to locate your missing dog named Whisky. But, as with every intensely involving game, you'll run into numerous other missions and subquests along the way to retrieving your pup, until finally you're up against the Prince of Darkness. Or at least that's the crux of **HoD**.

Surrounded by a lot of hype early on in its development, **Heart of Darkness** features all hand drawn screens with intricately detailed characters, but remains mainly a sidescrolling affair. Packed with puzzles, various weaponry and even character interaction, Interplay is betting that this is definitely one of the most promising titles to look for when it releases later this year.

Ubi Soft
Broadening Lineup

European publisher, Ubi Soft, has pulled out all the stops to proved one of the most diverse N64 lineups for the coming year. This fall, the company will begin the N64 assault with Argonaut's much hyped insect shooter, **Buck Bumble**, and the anticipated platformer sequel, **Rayman 2**. Rather than restricting players to certain pathways, both games will be set in complete 3D environments with the ability to go anywhere, anytime.



Later this year, Ubi Soft will then finally unveil the N64 version of **Tonic Trouble**, a very French take on the 3D platform genre, and the first tennis sim to hit the console, **All-Star Tennis '99**. Developed by Smart Dog, **All-Star** will feature plenty of professional players.

In the racing arena, Ubi is offering the sequel to **F1 Racing Simulation**, and the highly original Vivid Image racer, **S.C.A.R.S**. While F1 concentrates mainly on realism in racing, **S.C.A.R.S.** focuses on multiplayer mayhem, with animal-based battle vehicles and explosvie arcade-style racing. This should be one hell of a year for both Ubi Soft and N64 owners.

Nintendo Acquires
StarCraft license

Nintendo has inked a deal with Blizzard Entertainment to co-publish an N64-exclusive version of the acclaimed **StarCraft**. NOA Chairman, Howard Lincoln commented: 'We're thrilled to be bringing one of today's hottest PC game titles to N64 fans across the country, as well as strengthening the appeal of N64 to older game players in the 18-plus demographic.'

Both Nintendo and Blizzard have confirmed that **StarCraft 64** will contain similar multiplayer options to the PC original, but it is unlikely that the developers would opt for a split-screen option, except for in co-op modes, but it has been confirmed that the game will be appearing on cartridge and not on the 64DD as widely speculated. **StarCraft 64** will be co-branded by Nintendo and Blizzard, is slated for release next year.

The Best RPGs Are Yet to Come

Square, Nintendo, and Enix `square´ off

Beginning this fall, some amazing RPGs will be unveiled in Japan for Nintendo 64 and PlayStation. These are none other than **Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Star Ocean Second Story, Dragon Quest VII**, and **Final Fantasy VIII**. All three of these games have popularity of mammoth proportions, and are considered to be cash cows for Nintendo, Enix, and Square, respectively.

The first of these gems to be released will be Legend of **Zelda: Ocarina of Time** for the N64. Originally slated for an April release in Japan, it was pushed back to a fall release so that 'players would be satisfied with the results,' and for the development staff 'to strive for perfection.' This comes as no surprise, since Nintendo has been traditionally late with all of its first-party software.

Approximately five weeks after Nintendo revealed this delay, Enix then announced that it would release its long-awaited PlayStation RPG **Dragon Quest VII** in the Summer of 1999. At the last official press conference held March 13, 1997, Yuuji Horii (creator of the **Dragon Quest** series) commented that the reason for the lateness of its release was attributed to 'an increase in content' and 'development delays.'

Not too long after Enix's announcement, Square stated that it would release its PlayStation RPG **Final Fantasy VIII** this winter, by March 1999 at the latest. **Final Fantasy VII** earned Square high praise, selling over 3.6 million titles in Japan alone and winning the Computer Entertainment Software Association prize. For more info on **FFVIII,** check out the big story on page 93.

The Nikkei Industry Newspaper reported that 'it will take 20 to 70 hours to complete **Final Fantasy VIII**, ' that it 'cost $227,272,720 to develop,' but 'will probably sell four million copies.' Square commented that this was just 'Nikkei's opinion' and that they had 'no comment at this time.'

So what does this all mean for the consumer? Lots of exciting games to look forward to! Nintendo will do its best to not disappoint N64 fans, and while Enix and Square will be doing the same for PlayStation gamers, there will definitely be an air of competition between the two to win over game buyers. 1999 will most certainly be the battle of the RPGs!

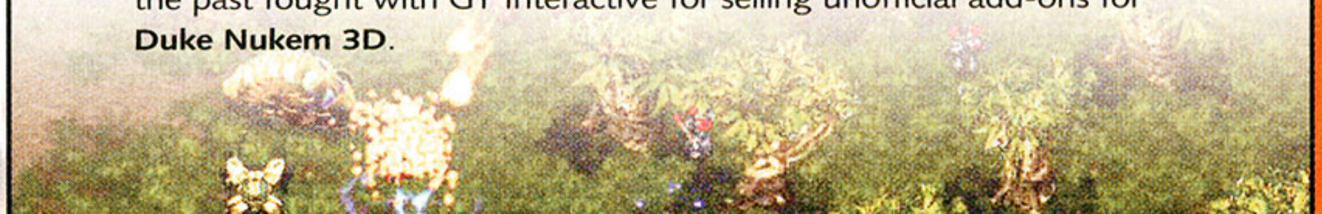
BLIZZARD'S LEGAL WOES

Though **Starcraft** is burning up the PC game sales charts, the game's creator, Blizzard Entertainment, has lately been spending more time in a courtroom than at the bank.

Blizzard has been slapped with a lawsuit accusing the company of illegally snooping through gamers' Windows registries and transmitting personal data about the users across its online gaming service, Battle.net. The suit was filed in California by a non-profit group concerned with consumer rights.

The alleged snooping occurred on Battle.net, Blizzard's free online gaming service, whenever the software detected multiple instances of a game using the same serial number, a possible indicator of software piracy. Blizzard declined to comment on lawsuits in progress, but earlier it had issued a statement admitting to collecting name and e-mail info from customers unable to log onto Battle.net because of serial number conflicts.

In an unrelated lawsuit, Blizzard also filed to block another publisher, Microstar, from selling a level pack containing some 50 extra **Starcraft** levels created with the in-game level editor. Microstar has in the past fought with GT Interactive for selling unofficial add-ons for **Duke Nukem 3D**.



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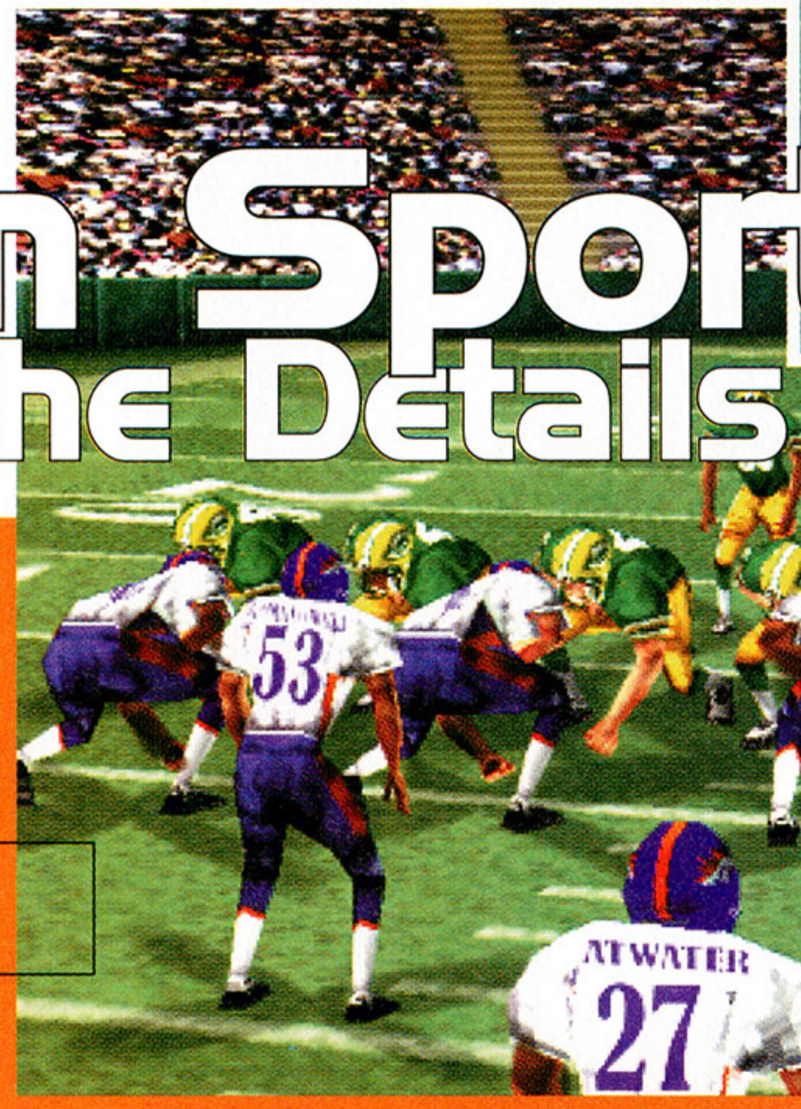
Acclaim Sports Sweats the Details



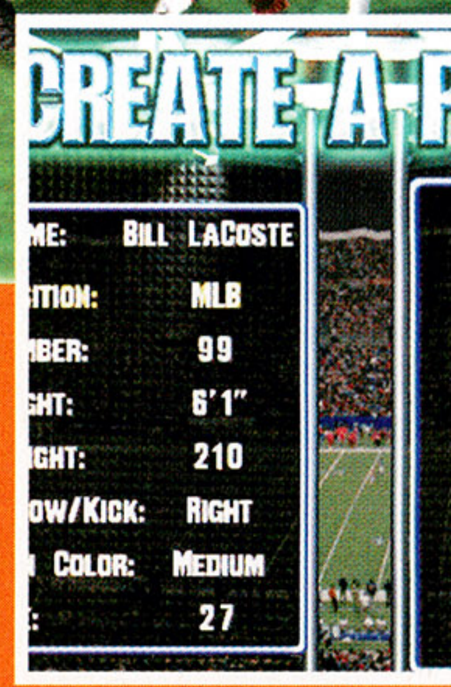
NFL Quarterback Club `99

Publisher: Acclaim Sports
Release Date: Nov. '98

Despite the success of **NFL Quarterback Club '98**, the game had a number of technical and gameplay flaws that diminished it when compared to football games on competitive platforms like **Gameday '98**. Lucky for Acclaim, the only football competition to be had on the N64 was the similarly flawed **Madden 64**.

For **NFL Quarterback Club '99**, Acclaim Sports has set its sights on creating a game devoid of any of the flaws exhibited in **NFL QBC '98**. A brand new 3D engine promises high resolution characters like last year's game, but the players will be more realistic in appearance and move much more smoothly and naturally. There are even 250 all new player animations that depict specific celebrations, like Merton Hank's chicken dance and Terrell Davis' salute. The accompanying screenshots of **QBC '99** are very early, but the game already displays a marked improvement over the last incarnation.

The developers are paying particular attention to the computer AI in **NFL QBC '99**. New York Jets Offensive Coordinator Charlie Weis has been brought in as a consultant to insure that **QBC '99** reflects the most realistic offensive and defensive game strategy of any football game. There are 30 team specific playbooks, but players can go in and customize the playbooks by borrowing favorite plays from other teams. Expect the game sometime in November.



NBA Jam `99

Publisher: Acclaim Sports
Release Date: Fall '98

The title of Acclaim Sports' basketball entry may change before the game is actually released this fall. Regardless of what the final name of the game may be, **NBA Jam '99** utilizes the **All Star Baseball** game engine, the graphics are cutting edge and of the highest quality. Acclaim brought in Minnesota Timberwolves' star Stephon Marbury to motion capture over 500 different moves so the high-res graphics should move as well as they look.

Gamers will be able to play **NBA Jam '99** in five modes: Shoot Out, Exhibition, Season, Custom Season and Playoff. The game features all 29 NBA teams and their respective arenas. Superior computer AI, over 300 players, unique signature moves, free throw routines, and a Create-A-Player mode all make this THE hoops game to watch for on the N64 later this year.

Even more details

On the heels of its impressive **All Star Baseball '99**, Acclaim Sports is hard at work developing a football and basketball game of similar quality for the Nintendo 64. With sales of over 900,000 units, **NFL Quarterback Club '98** proved to be the best selling N64 sports game last year, but its sequel looks to build on that success with better graphics and improved gameplay.

The most intriguing feature in **NFL Quarterback Club '99** looks to be the all new Analog Passing System. Instead of pass receivers being assigned a specific button, the new system simply requires the user to intuitively point in the direction of the desired receiver in order to deliver a pass. In addition, expect a 'Total Management System' to be included to the game as well.

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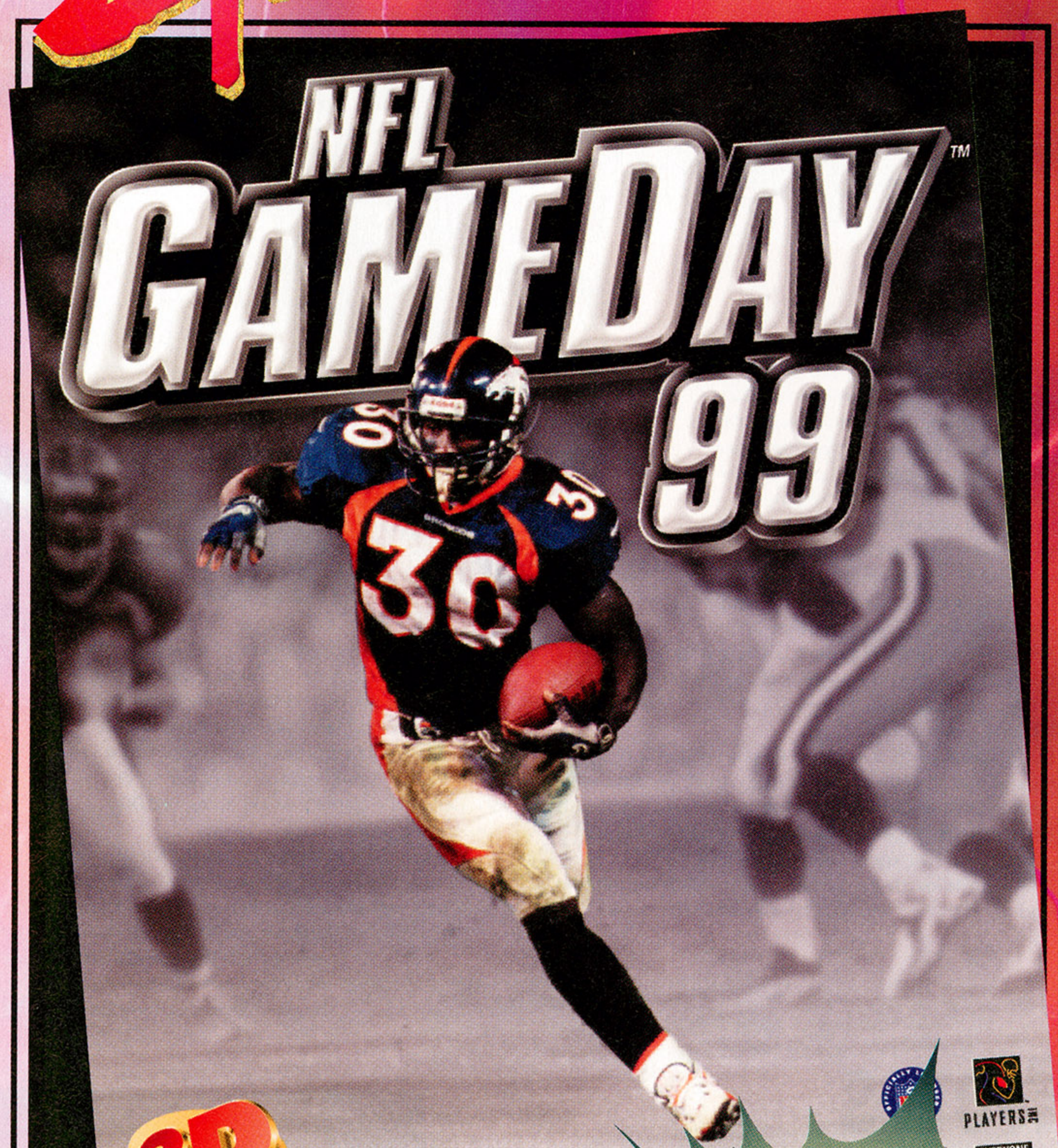

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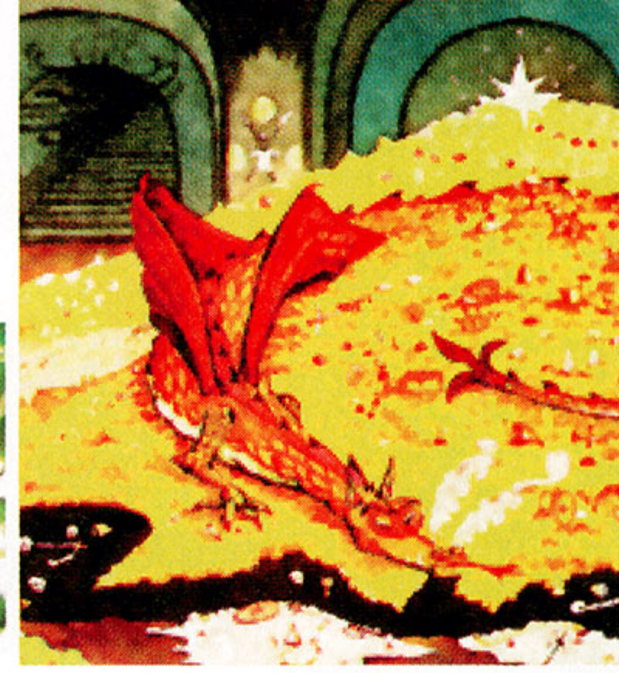
Middle Earth Goes Online



Take a decades old fantasy classic, turn it into an Internet roleplaying game, time its release with an impending live action Hollywood flick, and you just might have a profitable online game. That's the game plan at Sierra, where its Yosemite Entertainment division is making **Middle-earth**, an online-only RPG that will uproot the literary realms of J.R.R. Tolkien and open them up to Internet gamers yearning to point, click and kill.

Design lead on the project is Stephen Nichols, who's spent the last couple of years building and maintaining Sierra's other online RPG, The Realm. Development is being handled by the division of Sierra that traces its roots to the little Oakhurst, CA, company, founded by Ken and Roberta Williams in their kitchen two decades ago.

But **Middle-earth** is not The Realm version 2.0; the new game is aimed directly at EA's controversial, yet financially successful, **Ultima Online**, and will go head-to-head with two other similar projects still in development - Sony's **EverQuest** and Microsoft's **Asheron's Call**.

The **Middle-earth** game itself will have an isometric viewpoint, with two levels of zoom rather than one. Players can take on the role of elves, dwarves, humans or, of course, hobbits. Player-killing will be allowed, but controlled by flags. Turn off player-killing, and your character should be safe from the hordes. Sierra hopes to support 10,000 simultaneous users per server, modeling the game's world across 20,000 separate regions.

It's too early in development to show anything but concept art at this point and an open beta test isn't planned until the summer of 1999. Sierra itself doesn't see the game going to market any earlier than the turn of the century, but in the meantime, would-be virtual hobbits can begin sharpening their swords.

Notes

GT Interactive has picked up the publishing rights to Legend Entertainment's **Wheel of Time**. The game, a 3D roleplaying game based on the popular series of fantasy novels from Robert Jordan, is built on the **Unreal** engine, licensed from Epic. **Wheel of Time** is due in early 1999.

The smaller online gaming networks are forming new partnerships and pooling content in order to keep momentum going. Kesmai's Gamestorm and SegaSoft's Heat.net have signed an agreement allowing access to each other's online content. Similarly Kesmai has signed a deal to bring fourteen Engage Games Online titles to the Gamestorm service.

Microprose has canceled **Star Trek: First Contact**, a first-person shooter based on the **Star Trek** film. The game was aimed to be a first-person shooter pitting the player against swarms of Borg, and was being developed using Epic's **Unreal** engine. Microprose said it chose instead to focus on its current **Star Trek** titles, including **Klingon Honor Guard**, which also uses the **Unreal** engine.

Bandai Plans US Release of Gundam

The Japanese publisher and toy manufacturer told GameBuyer that it may release its first N64 fighter, **Super Robot Spirits**, in the United States under the name **Super Robot Battle**. The robot genre in Japan has always been popular, but the US has rarely seen such titles.

The game, which features some of the characters from the popular Japanese anime series, **Gundam**, pits up to two players against each other in **Tekken**-style 3D fights. **Super Robot Battle** promises weapon-based special moves and fast, Gouraud-shaded mech characters. If everything works out, American N64 gamers will hopefull be able to play the game before Christmas this year.

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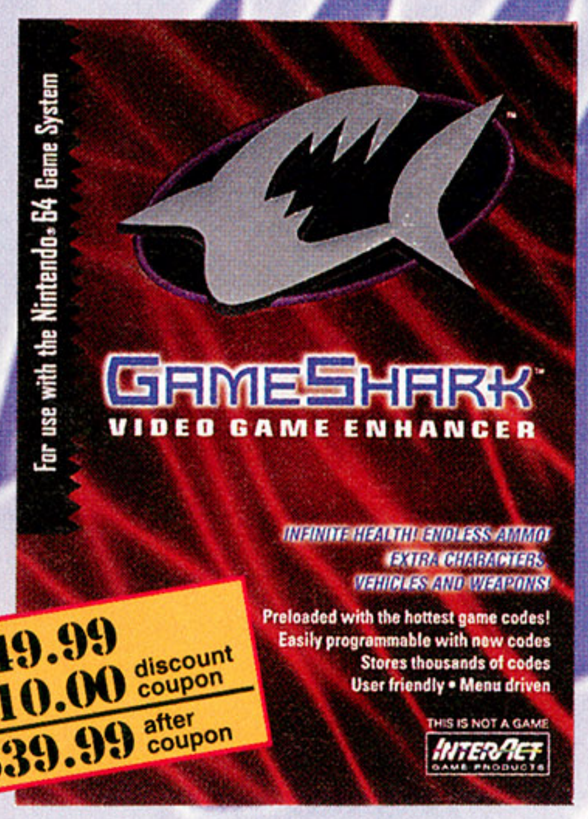

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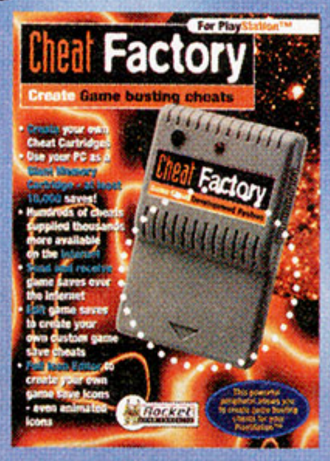

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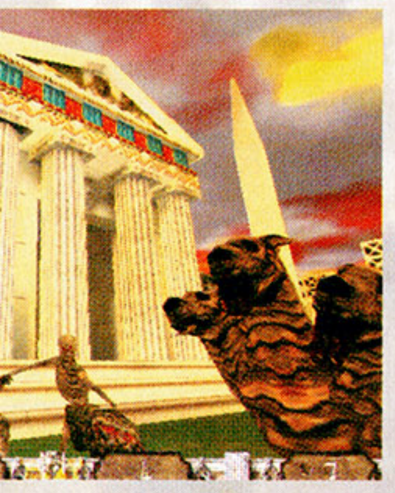
Daikatana

System: PC
Publisher: Eidos
Release Date: September

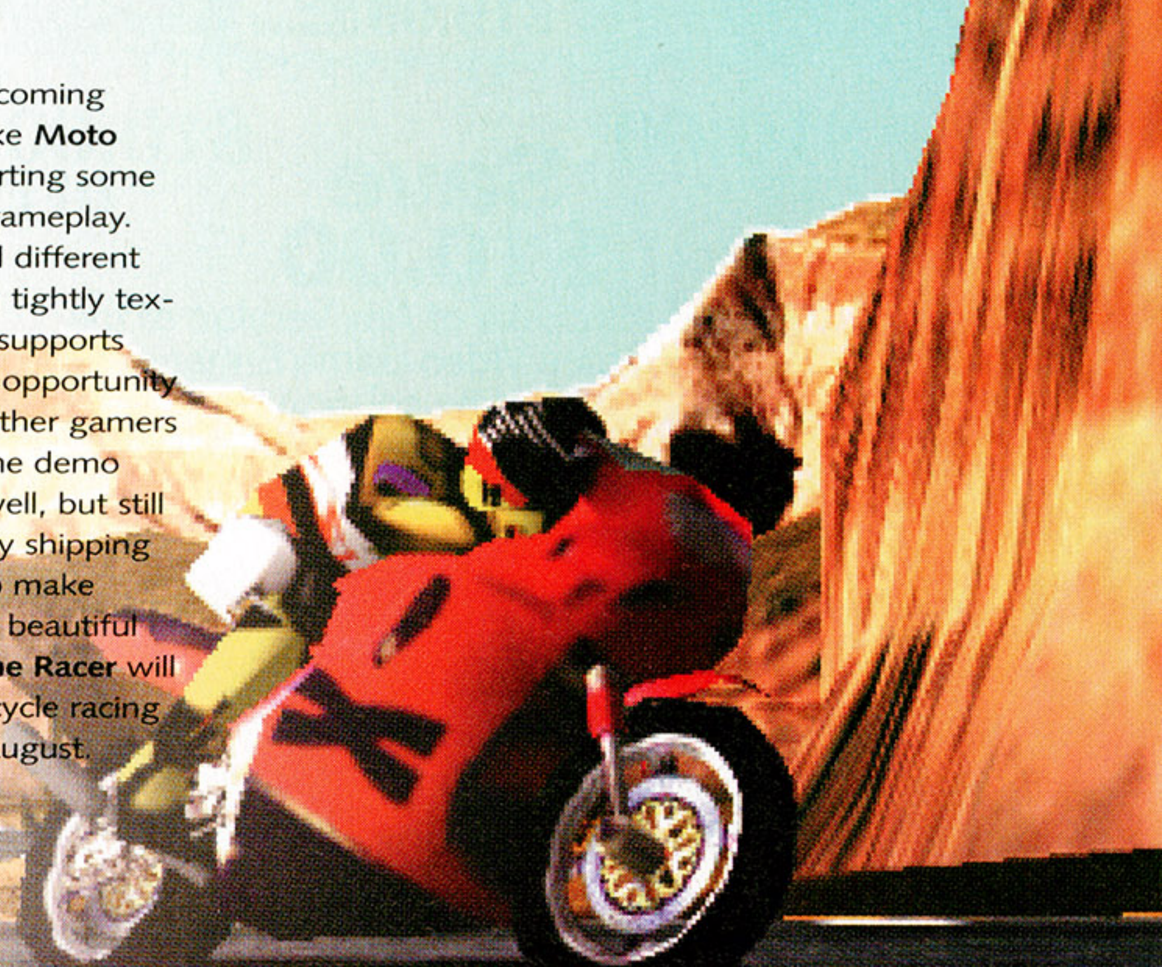
John Romero's upstart company, Ion Storm, has been toiling away on perfecting the first person shooter, **Daikatana**, for over a year now. What it's been hoping to achieve is something between an action-intensive shooter and a role-playing adventure, and it appears that things are coming together before its projected release. With an emphasis on both storyline and weaponry, **Daikatana** spins the tale of a mythical sword and its ability to manipulate time. The effect of a greedy villain's misuse of the sword's power to steal a great scientist's cure for AIDS and reap millions of dollars for himself motivates several different adventurers to begin their own search for Daikatana.

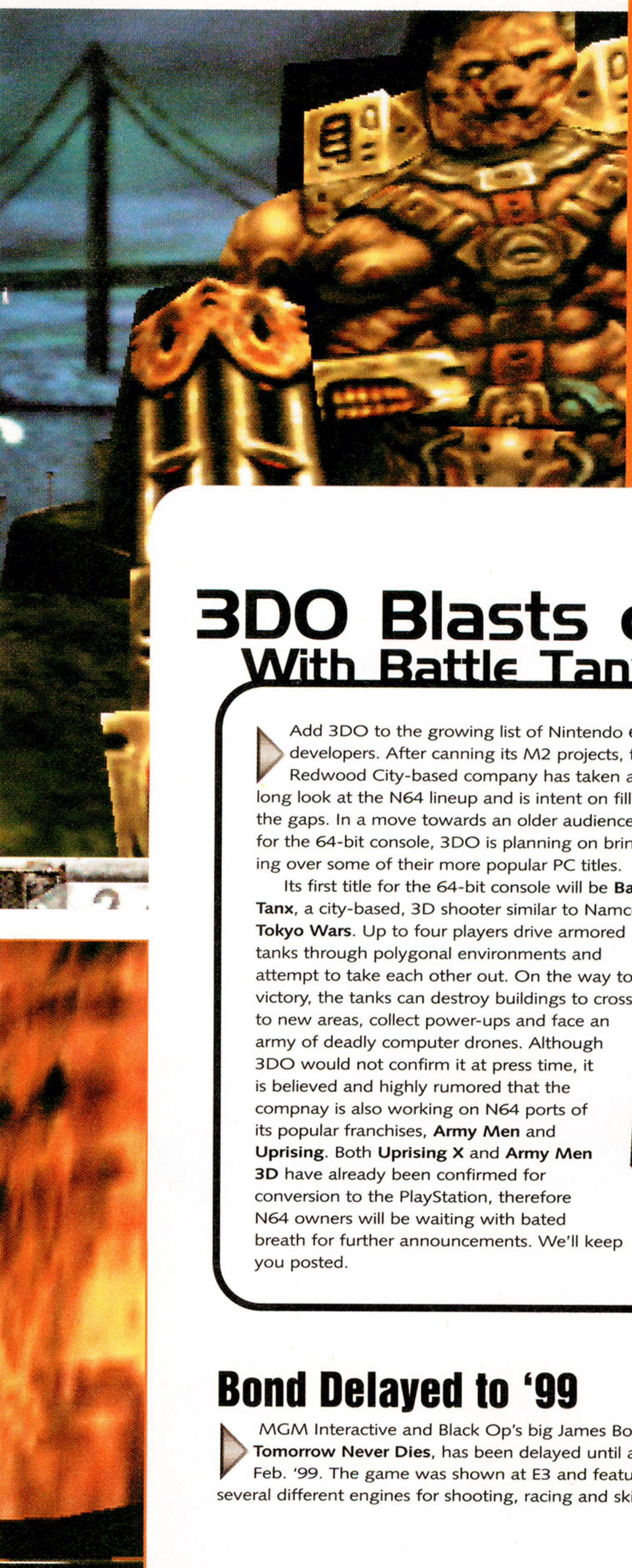


Throughout the game, you'll be able to use a variety of weapons, each with their own deadly possibilities, specific to the time period you're travelling in and to each character. Weapons, such as the Hand of Zeus, which acts like a gauntlet that fires five different bolts of electricity through everything in sight or the Daikatana, itself, which increases in power depending on how many enemies you kill. Along with the customizable features of allocating experience points to different attributes, **Daikatana** promises to have a lot to offer the action player looking for a little more depth. Hopefully, Ion Storm and Eidos will make **Daikatana** as good a game as it has potential when it releases this September.

Redline Racer

One of the more visually striking racers coming to the PC in the coming months is UbiSoft's **Redline Racer**. Competing with other titles like **Moto Racer**, the game takes full advantage of its 3Dfx support by sporting some of the prettiest, smoothest graphics around during fast arcade-style gameplay. Running at a high frame rate of 60fps, **Redline Racer** includes several different types of bikes to race (including the obligatory secret vehicles) on ten tightly textured tracks. The game also supports internet play, giving you the opportunity to go up against friends or other gamers across the world. Thus far, the demo version of **Redline** handles well, but still has some kinks to iron out by shipping time. But if UbiSoft is able to make gameplay equal the insanely beautiful graphics of the game, **Redline Racer** will be an incredibly solid motorcycle racing title. Expect it sometime in August.





3DO Blasts off With Battle Tanx

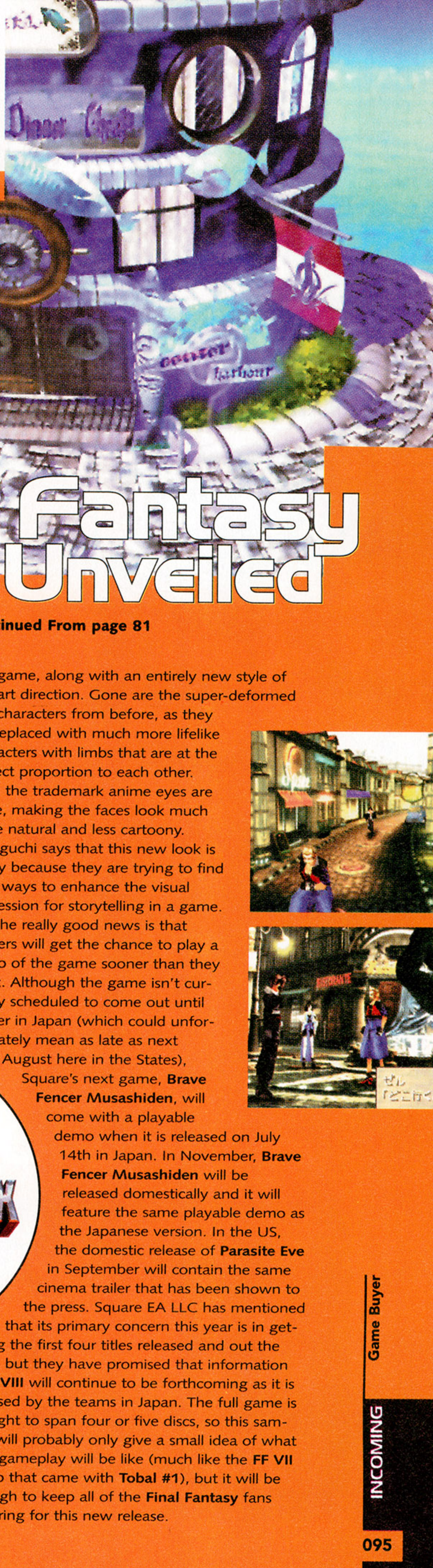
Add 3DO to the growing list of Nintendo 64 developers. After canning its M2 projects, the Redwood City-based company has taken a long look at the N64 lineup and is intent on filling the gaps. In a move towards an older audience for the 64-bit console, 3DO is planning on bringing over some of their more popular PC titles.

Its first title for the 64-bit console will be **Battle Tanx**, a city-based, 3D shooter similar to Namco's **Tokyo Wars**. Up to four players drive armored tanks through polygonal environments and attempt to take each other out. On the way to victory, the tanks can destroy buildings to cross to new areas, collect power-ups and face an army of deadly computer drones. Although 3DO would not confirm it at press time, it is believed and highly rumored that the compnay is also working on N64 ports of its popular franchises, **Army Men** and **Uprising**. Both **Uprising X** and **Army Men 3D** have already been confirmed for conversion to the PlayStation, therefore N64 owners will be waiting with bated breath for further announcements. We'll keep you posted.

BATTLETANX

Bond Delayed to '99

MGM Interactive and Black Op's big James Bond title, **Tomorrow Never Dies**, has been delayed until at least Feb. '99. The game was shown at E3 and features several different engines for shooting, racing and skiing.



Final Fantasy VIII Unveiled

continued From page 81

game, along with an entirely new style of art direction. Gone are the super-deformed characters from before, as they are replaced with much more lifelike characters with limbs that are at the correct proportion to each other. Even the trademark anime eyes are gone, making the faces look much more natural and less cartoony. Sakaguchi says that this new look is partly because they are trying to find new ways to enhance the visual expression for storytelling in a game.

The really good news is that gamers will get the chance to play a demo of the game sooner than they think. Although the game isn't currently scheduled to come out until winter in Japan (which could unfortunately mean as late as next August here in the States), Square's next game, **Brave Fencer Musashiden**, will come with a playable demo when it is released on July 14th in Japan. In November, **Brave Fencer Musashiden** will be released domestically and it will feature the same playable demo as the Japanese version. In the US, the domestic release of **Parasite Eve** in September will contain the same cinema trailer that has been shown to the press. Square EA LLC has mentioned that its primary concern this year is in getting the first four titles released and out the door, but they have promised that information of **FFVIII** will continue to be forthcoming as it is released by the teams in Japan. The full game is thought to span four or five discs, so this sampler will probably only give a small idea of what final gameplay will be like (much like the **FF VII** demo that came with **Tobal #1**), but it will be enough to keep all of the **Final Fantasy** fans slavering for this new release.

Release List

Like everything in this industry, all titles and dates are completely subject to change at the developer or publisher's whimsy or necessity. Unfortunately, some titles may even be cancelled altogether. Hey guys, we don't make the games, we just rate 'em.

PlayStation Releases

JULY

Bushido Blade 2	Sony CE
Carmageddon	Interplay
Constructor	Acclaim Ent.
N2O	Fox Interactive
NFL Xtreme	Sony CE
Redline	Accolade
Romance of Three Kingdoms V	Koei
Tomba!	Sony CE
Tomorrow Never Dies	MGM Interactive
Turbo Prop Racing	SCEA
WWF Warzone	Acclaim Ent.

AUGUST

Alien Vs. Predator	Fox Interactive
Battleship	Hasbro Interactive
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	T•Hq
C The Contra Adventure	Konami
C&C: Retaliation	Westwood
Kartia	Atlus
Ninja	Eidos
Ninja	EIDOS Interactive
Psybadek	Psygnosis
Redneck Rampage 2	Crave Ent.
Sentinel 2	Psygnosis
Sentinel 2	Psygnosis
Shadowman	Acclaim
Shadowman	Acclaim Ent.
Tecmo Super Bowl 2	Tecmo
The Unholy War	Crystal Dynamics

SEPTEMBER

Carom Shot	ASCII
Cool Boarders 3	SCEA
Darkstalkers 3	Caom
Dead Unity	THQ
Duke Nukem: A Time to Kill	GT Interactive
Fifth Element	Activision
Joe Blow	Sir Tech
Kula World	Psygnosis
Madden NFL 99	EA
NBA Jam '98	Acclaim Ent.
NCAA Football '99	EA
NFL Blitz	Midway Home Ent.
Populous 3	Electronic Arts
Poy Poy 2	Konami
Rayman 2	UbiSoft
Return Fire II	MGM Interactive
Rival Schools	Capcom
Roscoe McQueen	Psygnosis
S.C.A.R.S.	UbiSoft
Small Soldier	EA
Spyro the Dragon	SCEA
Tiger Woods 99	EA
Wild 9	Interplay

Q3

Army Men	Cyclone Studios
Deception II	Tecmo
Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay
Gallop Racer	Tecmo
Heart of Darkness	Interplay
LAPD 2100	EA
Star Con	Accolade
Wild 9	Interplay

OCTOBER

Elmo's Magical Tour	Alpha Software
F1 Racing Sim 2	UbiSoft
Heavy Gear	Activision
LoK: Soul Reaver	Crystal Dynamics
Lunar: Silver Star	Working Designs
Medi-Evil	SCEA
Metal Gear Solid	Konami
ODT	Psygnosis
Pro 18 World Open	Psygnosis
Respect, Inc.	Psygnosis
Soldnerschild	Koei
SpeedTribes	T•Hq
Tenchu	Activision
ThrillKill	Virgin Interactive

NOVEMBER

Akuji The Heartless	Crystal Dynamics
Apocalypse	Activision
Colony Wars: Vendetta	Psygnosis
Dead in the Water	ASC Games
Enigma	Koei
Jeff Gordon Racing	ASC Games
Monkey Hero	Take 2 Interactive
Psybadek	Psygnosis
Shao Lin	T•Hq
Superman	Titus

DECEMBER

Croc II	Fox Interactive
Slipgroove	Shaba Games

Q4

Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive
AC: Phantasma	ASCII

The Top 10

(Ranked on Units Sold March, 1998) • **Not in Top 10 Last Month • Source: NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service

LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER
9	1	1080 Snowboarding	Nintendo
1	2	Yoshi's Story	Nintendo
2	3	Goldeneye 007	Nintendo
**	4	Rampage World Tour	Midway
4	5	Super Mario 64	Nintendo
3	6	Mario Kart 64	Nintendo
5	7	WCW vs. NWO: WT	THQ
7	8	Wave Race 64	Nintendo
**	9	NBA Courtside: Kobe Bryant	Nintendo
**	10	Cruisin' USA	Nintendo

The Top 10
Best Selling PC Titles

LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER
3	1	Starcraft (CD W'95)	Sierra On-line
1	2	Deer Hunter	Wizardworks
9	3	Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Head Games
5	4	Titanic: AOOT	Cyberflix
2	5	Deer Hunter: ES	Wizardworks
4	6	MYST (CD WIN)	Broderbund
6	7	Star Wars Rebellion	LucasArts
7	8	Trophy Bass	Sierra Sports
**	9	Police Quest 5: SWAT	Sierra Online
**	10	NASCAR 2	Papyrus

Ranked on Units Sold March, 1998 • **Not in Top 10 Last Month
• Source: The NPD Group - SofTrends

The Top 10
Best Selling PSX Titles

LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER
**	1	Tekken 3	Namco
**	2	Ned For Speed III	EA
2	3	Triple Play '99	EA
8	4	Tomb Raider	Eidos
1	5	Resident Evil 2	Capcom
5	6	WCW Nitro	THQ
3	7	Crash Bandicoot	SCEA
4	8	NBA Shoot Out '98	SCEA
**	9	MLB '99	SCEA
7	10	NASCAR '98	EA

Ranked on Units Sold March, 1998 • **Not in Top 10 Last Month
• Source: NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service

Generation Vol. 2	Capcom
Generations Vol. 1	Capcom
Critical Blow	Bandai
Dragon Seed	Jaleco
G-Shock	Konami
Kensei Sacred Fist	Konami
Messiah	Interplay
Oddworld: Exodus	GT Interactive
Rogue Trip	GT Interactive
Shadow Madness	Crave
Silent Hill	Konami
Star Ocean 2	Enix
Streak	GT Interactive
Tail Concerto	Bandai
Tales of Destiny	Namco
Tomb Raider 3	Eidos
Uprising X	Cyclone Studios
VR Football '99	VR Sports

N64 Releases

JULY

Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway Home Ent.
Cruis'n World	Nintendo
Mission Impossible	Ocean
Robotech: Crystal Dreams	Take 2 Interactive
Superman 64	Titus
World Grand Prix	Video System
WWF Warzone	Acclaim Ent.

AUGUST

Bomberman Hero	Nintendo
Caesar's Palace	Crave Ent.
Deadly Arts	Konami
F-Zero X	Konami
Flying Dragon 64	Natsume
Gex 64	Midway Home Ent.
Turok 2	Acclaim Ent.

SEPTEMBER

Buck Bumble	UbiSoft
Madden NFL '99	EA
NBA Jam '98	Acclaim Ent.
NFL Blitz	Midway Home Ent.
Rayman 2	UbiSoft
S.C.A.R.S.	UbiSoft
SimCopter 64	Maxis
Spacestation: Silicon Valley	Take 2
Tonic Trouble	Ubi Soft
Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Midway Home Ent.

Q3

Bust-A-Move 3	Acclaim
Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay
Space Circus	Ocean/Infogrames

OCTOBER

Cruis'n World	Nintendo
Extreme-G 2	Acclaim
F1 Racing Sim 2	UbiSoft
Fox Sports College Hoops '99	Fox Sports
Knife Edge	Microwares/Kemco
Twelve Tales: Conker 64	Rare
VR Pool 64	Crave Ent.

NOVEMBER

Charlie's Blast Challenge	Microwares
Zelda: Ocarina of Time	Nintendo
Milo's Astro Lanes	Natsume
NBA Jam '99	Acclaim
Rats: Operation Scratch	Mindscape
Roadsters' 96	Titus
Rush 2	Midway Home Ent.
WCW Nitro	THQ
WipeOut 64	Psygnosis

DECEMBER

In-Fisherman Bass Hunter 64	Take 2 Interactive
Quake II	Activision

Q4

Castlevania	Konami
Fighting Force 64	Eidos
Legend of the River King 64	Natsume
Survivor Day One	Konami

PC Releases

JULY

Civilization II Multiplayer Gold	Microprose
Falcon 4.0	Microprose
MIA	GT Interactive
Red Jack: Revenge/Brethen	T•Hq
Redline	Accolade
Unreal Level Editor	GT Interactive
Vigilance	Sega Soft

AUGUST

10-Six	Sega Soft
Baldur's Gate	Interplay
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	T•Hq
C&C Tiberian Sun	Westwood Studios
Grim Fandango	LucasArts
Redline Racer	UbiSoft
Stratosphere	Panasonic Interactive
The Unholy War	Crystal Dynamics
Unreal Add-on	GT Interactive

SEPTEMBER

Baldurs Gate	Interplay
Chaos	UbiSoft
Daikatana	EIDOS Interactive
H.E.D.Z.	Hasbro Interactive
Tides of War	GT Interactive
Tonic Trouble	UbiSoft

Q3

A.I. Alien Intelligence	Interplay
Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay
Gangsters	Eidos
Heart of Darkness	Interplay
Heretic II	Activision
Malkari	Interactive Magic
Road to Moscow	Interactive Magic
Spearhead	Interactive Magic
Thief: The Dark Project	Eidos
Ultra Fighters	Interactive Magic
VR Baseball 2000	VR Sports
Warzone 2100	Eidos

OCTOBER

Automobili Lam borghini	Titus
Fallout 2	Interplay
Speed Busters	UbiSoft
SpeedTribes	T•Hq
Vulcan Fury	Interplay

NOVEMBER

F1 Racing Sim 2	UbiSoft
Rayman 2	UbiSoft
S.C.A.R.S.	UbiSoft
Sanitarium	ASC Games

DECEMBER

Star Trek: Starfleet Command	Interplay
Uprising X	The 3DO Company

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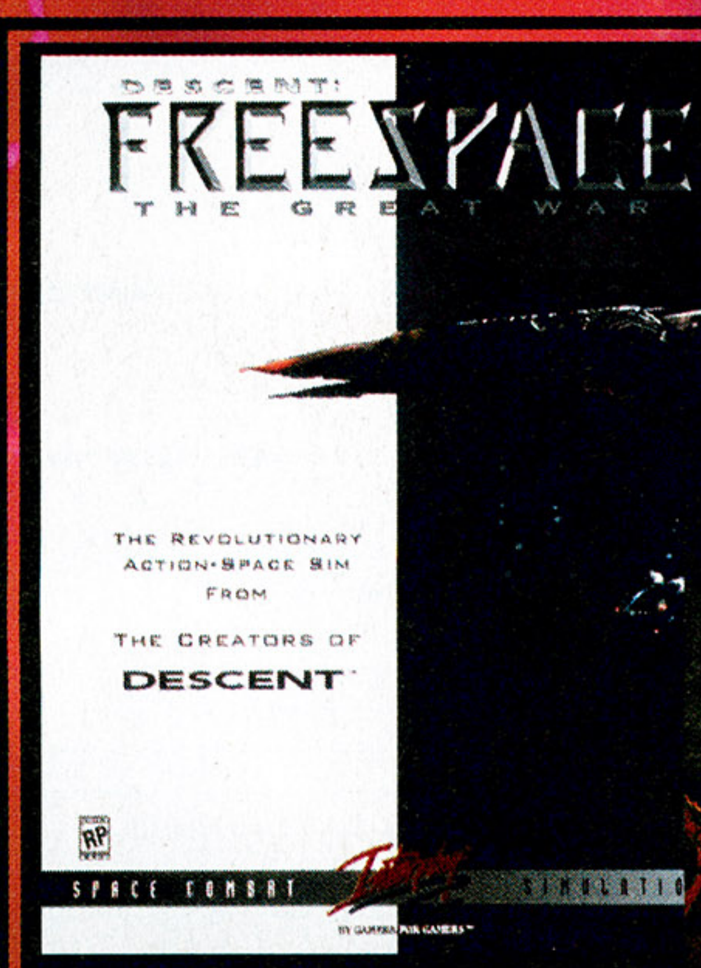
WINDOWS CD-ROM VERSIONS

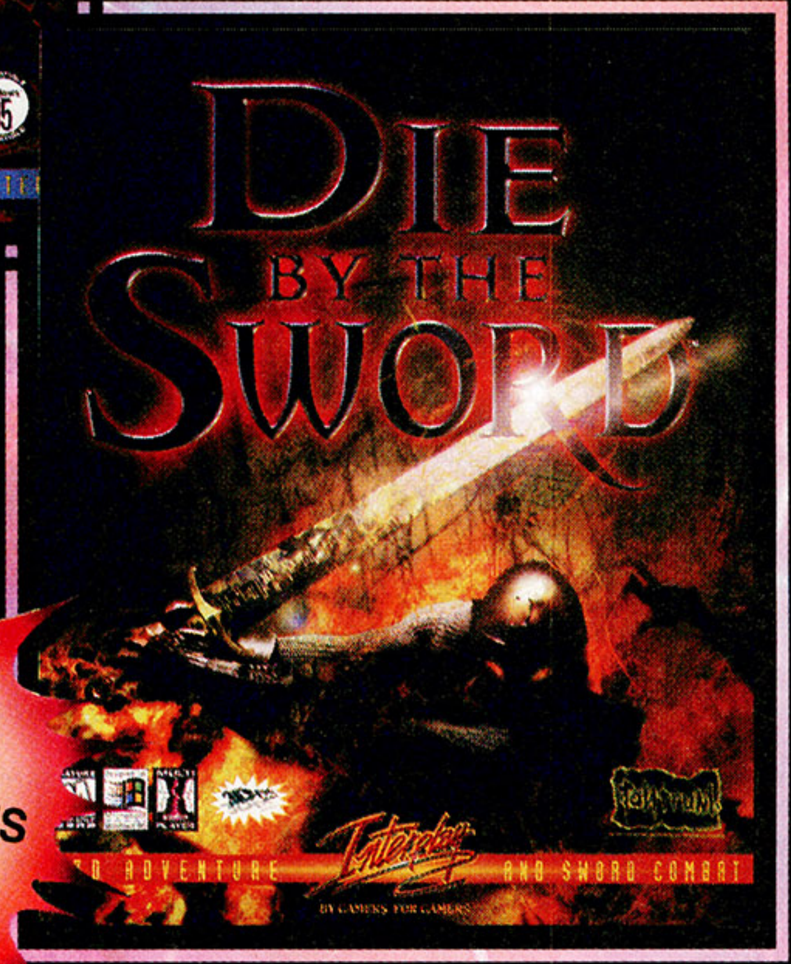


FREESPACE

JETFIGHTER FULL BURN

MAX 2

REDNECK RAMPAGE RIDES AGAIN



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NINTENDO 64

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Aerofighters Assault	Video System USA	01/98	Good looking arcade-type flight sim with Sci-Fi elements.	★★★
AeroGauge	ASCII Ent.	07/98	Tired of waiting for **F Zero X**? Take **Aerogauge** for a spin.	★★★
All-Star Baseball '99	Acclaim Sports	07/98	Beautiful baseball game. It doesn't get any better than this on N64.	★★★★
Automobili Lamborghini	Titus	01/98	A Lamborghini racer that is sound, but uninspiring.	★★★
Banjo Kazooie	Nintendo	07/98	Standard Nintendo 3D platform fare, but then, that's EXCELLENT.	★★★★★
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway Home	07/98	Well done, but uninspired, fighting game is too simplistic for hardcore fighting game fans.	★★★
Blast Corps	Nintendo	05/97	Nintendo finally satisfies your appetite for destruction.	★★★★
Bomberman 64	Nintendo	12/97	HudsonSoft classic gets the 64-bit treatment.	★★★★
Chopper Attack	Midway Home	07/98	Entertaining mission-based chopper game undermined by poor control and graphics.	★★★
Clay Fighter 63 1/3	Interplay	11/97	Ho-hum fighter with clay figures. Yawn.	★★
Cruisin' USA	Nintendo	01/97	This game is an accident waiting to happen.	★★
Dark Rift	Vic Tokai	06/97	A great-looking, but not-so-refreshing fighting experience.	★★★★
Diddy Kong Racing	Nintendo	12/97	Rare does **Mario Kart** one better with planes and cars.	★★★★★
Doom 64	Midway	04/97	Evil comes to the N64 — and it's really cool!	★★★★
Duke Nukem 64	GT Interactive	11/97	The Duke puts in an appearance on Nintendo's console.	★★★★
Extreme G	Acclaim	12/97	Futuristic weapon-filled racer.	★★★★
F1 Pole Position	Ubi Soft	10/97	The first (and only) Formula 1 style game on the N64.	★★★★
FIFA 64	Electronic Arts	06/97	Not the best team on the pitch.	★★★
FIFA: Road to the World Cup 64	Electronic Arts	01/98	EA does **FIFA** right this time.	★★★★
Fighter's Destiny	Ocean	03/98	Unique fighter with lots of depth.	★★★★
Forsaken 64	Acclaim Ent.	07/98	A beautiful first person shooter in the **Descent** gameplay style.	★★★★
Goldeneye 007	Nintendo	10/97	007 action in one of the best console first person shooters ever.	★★★★★
Hexen	GTI	07/97	**Hexen** rears its ugly head on the Nintendo 64.	★★★★
International Superstar Soccer	Konami	07/97	The best soccer game. Period.	★★★★★
Jeopardy	Gametek	04/98	Alex Trebek on your N64.	★★★
Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball	Nintendo	07/98	Simplistic gameplay will appeal to kids, but will be found lacking by everyone else.	★★★
Killer Instinct Gold	Nintendo	01/97	If you're a fan of **Killer Instinct**, you won't be disappointed; others beware.	★★★★
Mace: The Dark Age	Midway	11/97	Goth fighter with plenty of gore.	★★★
Madden 64	Electronic Arts	12/97	**Madden 64** is the same exact game as **Madden '98**, without the NFL license.	★★★★
Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	03/97	Cutesy racer featuring Nintendo mascot.	★★★★
Mischief Makers	Nintendo	12/97	One of those odd titles that tends to create a small dedicated audience among gamers.	★★★★
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Williams	12/96	The first fighter on the N64 is nothing new.	★★★★
Multi Racing Championship	Ocean	11/97	**Multi Racing Championship** is a fast blast racer.	★★★★
Mystical Ninja	Konami	04/98	Evil opera stars abound in wacky **Mario**-esqe action RPG.	★★★★
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	Konami	04/98	Exciting winter sports made boring.	★★★
NBA Courtside	Nintendo	07/98	Surprisingly good basketball game featuring a superior computer AI.	★★★★
NBA In The Zone 64	Konami	04/98	The game that just keeps trying... and not doing so well.	★★★
NHL Breakaway 64	Acclaim Sports	05/98	The only hockey game in town on N64 for serious sports gamers.	★★★★
NFL Quarterback Club 64	Acclaim	12/97	One of the best football games for the N64.	★★★★
PilotWings 64	Nintendo	10/96	The N64's hang-gliding, rocket-pack, and gyro-copter flying game.	★★★★★
Quake 64	Midway	04/98	**Quake** gets the Nintendo treatment, and boy, it looks pretty.	★★★★
Quest 64	T•Hq	07/98	3D RPG with emphasis on adventure. Pretty, but predictable.	★★★★
Rampage World Tour	Midway	03/98	**Rampage** resurrected for the N64	★★★
Robotron 64	Crave	02/98	Psychedelic shooting fun gets the 64-bit treatment.	★★★★
San Francisco Rush	Midway	12/97	Big air racing through the streets of San Francisco.	★★★★★

NINTENDO 64 CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Star Wars: SOTE	Nintendo	01/97	The Empire doesn't strike out, but Nintendo reveals a dark side.	★★★
Snowboard Kids	Atlus	04/98	Snowboarding game with cute kiddy riders.	★★★★
Starfox 64	Nintendo	07/97	Fox McCloud is back, and ready to rumble!	★★★★
Super Mario 64	Nintendo	10/96	Is **Mario** alone worth the price of a new system? You betcha!	★★★★★
Tetrisphere	Nintendo	10/97	**Tetris** gets the spheroid treatment.	★★★★
Top Gear Rally	Midway	11/97	Rally sim for the diehard racer in you.	★★★★
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	Acclaim	04/97	The first anti-aliased bloodbath ever.	★★★★
War Gods	Williams Ent.	06/97	The fighting game that proves there is no god...	★★
WaveRace 64	Nintendo	12/96	**WaveRace 64** is an adrenaline-pumping, jet skiing good time.	★★★★★
Wayne Gretzky 3D Hockey 64	Williams	02/97	Mediocre hockey for your Nintendo.	★★★★
Wayne Gretzky 3D Hockey '98	Midway	02/98	**Gretzky** fails again.	★★★
Wetrix	Infogrames Ent.	07/98	A rare example of a fresh idea for the puzzle genre. Addictive.	★★★★★
World Cup '98	EA Sports	07/98	Solid recreation of the world's premeire sporting event.	★★★★
Yoshi's Story	Nintendo	03/98	Cutesy platformer from Nintendo is quick and easy.	★★★★
1080° Snowboarding	Nintendo	07/98	The next best thing to face planting it on the slopes for real.	★★★★★

PC

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Adrenix	Playmates Int. Ent.	06/98	**Descent** clone that doesn't have the graphics to match **Forsaken**.	★★★
Alien Earth	Playmates Int. Ent.	05/98	Aliens have enslaved the Earth. Play this PC game to save mankind.	★★★★
Ara NGC 6397	H+a	07/98	Shooter with attractive graphics that's marred by horrible game design.	★
Arcades Greatest Hits 2	Midway	02/98	**Moon Patrol, Burgertime, Root Beer Tapper, Spy Hunter** and **Blaster**.	★★★★
Armored Fist 2: M1A2 Abrams	NovaLogic	12/97	An M1A2 Abrams tank shooter with sim aspects.	★★★★
Army Men	The 3DO Company	07/98	A cute concept that doesn't follow through with satisfying gameplay.	★★★
Atomic Bomberman	Interplay	09/97	The little bombers come to the PC.	★★★★
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	Fujitsu Interactive	07/98	A mediocre fighting game that fared better on console than PC.	★★★
Battlezone	Activision	07/98	An innovative real-time strategy/action update to the arcade classic.	★★★★
Blade Runner	Virgin	02/98	The classic movie becomes a classic graphic adventure.	★★★★★
Burnout Championship Drag Racing	Bethesda Softworks	07/98	Tons of adjustments makes for a satisfying amount of depth.	★★★★★
C & C Red Alert	Virgin	12/96	**Command & Conquer**, but better.	★★★★★
C & C: Red Alert Aftermath	Virgin	12/97	The standard bearer real-time strategy game.	★★★★★
C & C Red Alert, Counterstrike	Virgin	06/97	**Red Alert**'s first official add-on expansion.	★★★★
Carmageddon	Interplay	08/97	It's **Deathrace 2000** on the PC with gore galore!	★★★★★

SUPER MARIO 64

NINTENDO
RETRO REVIEW

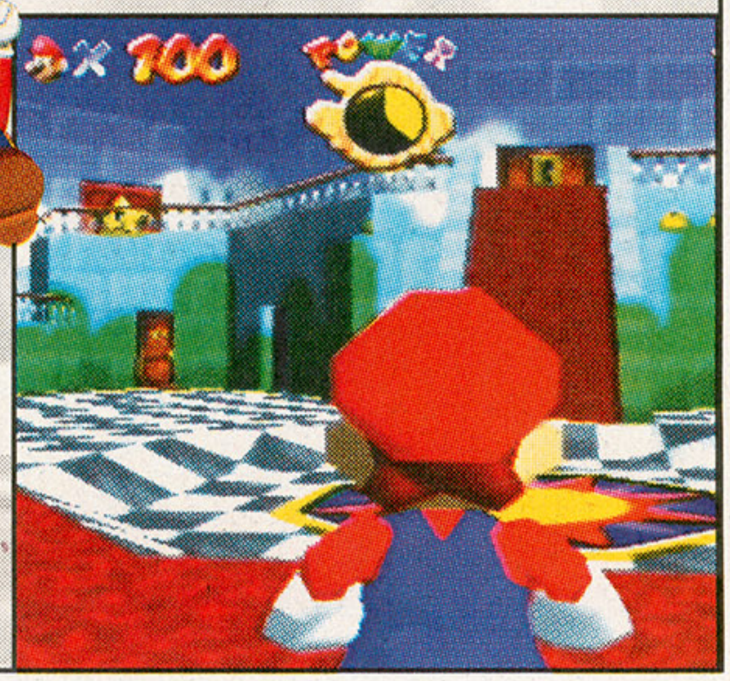
PUB. Nintendo • DEV. Nintendo • PLAYERS. 1 • RATING. ★★★★★ • PRICE. $49.99

Nothing easier than reviewing **Super Mario 64**, no matter when. Taking a look back at this two year old masterpiece is kinda weird, since it still has much better graphics than most of the new Nintendo 64 stuff. Shigeru Miyamoto's masterpiece still looks brand new. Some have argued that **Banjo Kazooie** is bigger and better, but it still pales in terms of sheer design.

Super Mario 64 is an adventure that teaches as you play. Each puzzle is accompanied by a solution; frustration only builds when your skills are inadequate. Mario, now rendered in 3D, never had so much personality. He lives and breathes in this game and is much easier to identify with.

Super Mario 64 is as much experience as it is gameplay. Fun can be had simply wandering through the environments. Mario speaks now, too, adding yet another dimension to the most popular character since Mickey Mouse. If you don't own this, you should. If you don't own a Nintendo 64, you should buy one to play this. It's arguably the best game ever made.

GOTTA HAVE IT! ★★★★★



PC CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
CART Precision Racing	Microsoft	02/98	**CART Precision Racing** is Microsoft's officially licensed Indy car simulator.	★★★★
CART Racing	Sierra Online	02/98	Cart racer officially licensed by Championship Auto Racing Teams.	★★★★
Circle of Blood	Virgin Int.	12/96	In this game, Paris means intrigue, mystery and some really bad jokes.	★★★★
Close Combat	Microsoft	12/97	Command Axis or Allied forces fighting through Germany.	★★★★
Comanche 3	NovaLogic	07/97	Helicopter combat flight sim.	★★★★
Cyber Gladiators	Sierra	02/97	This could be the best 3D PC fighting game ever!	★★★★
Dark Earth	Microprose	01/98	A gothic, decaying world needs you to save it in this decadent adventure.	★★★★
Deadlock II: Shrine Wars	Accolade	05/98	Strategic planetary conquest is back and better than before.	★★★★
Diablo	Blizzard	03/97	An addictive dungeon hack-and-slasher with style.	★★★★
Die By The Sword	Interplay	06/98	A gratuitous PC hack fest - highly recommended.	★★★★★
Extreme Assault	Blue Byte	10/97	A futuristic attack helicopter sim.	★★★★
F1 Racing Simulator	Ubi Soft	03/98	Excellent F1 sim with loads of options.	★★★★★
Final Fantasy VII	Eidos Int.	07/98	One of the best RPGs ever loses nothing in its port to PC.	★★★★★
Fire Fight	Electronic Arts	10/96	A hell of a top down shooter.	★★★★
Forsaken	Acclaim Ent.	07/98	Superior shooter action, and its far prettier than the console versions.	★★★★
G-Nome	7th Level	04/97	Multiple races, loads of mechs and hijackings make for a rockin' good time.	★★★★
Graduation	Mixx	11/97	The player is a homeroom teacher in charge of five young ladies. Hmm.....	★★★★
Grand Theft Auto	ASC Games	04/98	Law-breaking fun with a top down perspective.	★★★★
Greg Norman Golf	Grolier	10/96	More golf for your PC.	★★★★
Hardball 6	Accolade	07/98	Gameplay flaws mar an otherwise adequate PC baseball game.	★★★
Heavy Gear	Activision	03/98	The game **MechWarrior** fans have been waiting for.	★★★★★
Hexen 2	Activision	12/97	Medieval first person shooter with id's mind blowing **Quake** engine.	★★★★
High Heat Baseball '99	The 3DO Company	07/98	2D sprites give **High Heat** a dated look, but the gameplay is superior.	★★★
iF-22	Interactive Soft	10/97	Technical snafus undermine a realistic and competent flight-sim.	★★★
iM1A2 Abrams	Interact. Magic	07/97	Gamers looking for an arcade-type tank simulation should look elsewhere.	★★★★
Jedi Knight	LucasArts	12/97	The first person/third person shooter that gives you the force!	★★★★★
Journeyman Project 3: Legacy of Time	Broderbund	04/98	Aliens, aritfacts and lost cities in a gorgeous graphic adventure.	★★★★★
Lose Your Marbles	SegaSoft	11/97	The game that claims to be more fun than **Tetris**. So, is it? Almost!	★★★★
M1 Tank Platoon II	Microprose	07/98	Challenging tank simulation looks great, but may be too difficult for novices.	★★★★
Madden '97	EA Sports	12/96	**Madden** shines on the PC.	★★★★
Mageslayer	GT Interactive	12/97	**Gauntlet**-like, top-down shooter with medieval attitude.	★★★★
Magic: The Gathering	Spectrum Holo.	06/97	The computerized version of **Magic** plays remarkably well.	★★★★
Magic: The Gathering Battlemage	Acclaim	05/97	Acclaim's first entry into the real-time strategy genre comes as a disappointment.	★★★
Master of Orion 2	Microprose	03/97	Bigger and better than the first one? Well, mostly bigger.	★★★★

CARMAGEDDON

PC RETRO REVIEW

PUB. Interplay • DEV. SCI • PLAYERS. 1-8 • RATING. ★★★★★ • PRICE. $49.99

Although video games are often too violent, sometimes you can take things so far that they become funny. **Carmageddon** is one such game.

In concept, the game is an homage to cult-movie **Death Race 2000**, featuring lots of spikey cars mowing down innocent pedestrians. Beneath the immediate surge of blood and viscera however, is a finely honed race game, with plenty of depth and playability.

There are many vehicles to choose from, each driven by a suitably ill-tempered driver, and each with its own balance of strengths and weaknesses. Finding out which vehicle suits your style of play best is half the battle. Very few racing games are enjoyable in one player mode - this is one of the very rare exceptions.

In multiplayer mode though, the race to the finish line is tempered by the need to kill as many passers-by as humanly (or inhumanly) possible. This is a classic that deserved greater recognition and was sadly eclipsed by the **Quake**-style first person shooters.

GOTTA HAVE IT! ★★★★★

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...

INTELLIVISION

Wow! It was a strange feeling. The very first Next generation console had arrived, in the shape of Mattel's insanely expensive and highly ambitious Intellivision.

Intellivision popped up very much as Mattel's reaction to Atari. The US toy giant saw that there was money to be made, and that Atari sales were hurting toy and action figure sales.

Mattel worked with General Electric to produce a superior machine to compete with well-established Atari. In those early days, the console industry had yet to mature, and Mattel thought that the secret of success was offering more options, including education and computing. As we have since discovered, the real secret is offering lots of hot games. Mattel would soon realize this.

The machine's price was its only limiting factor, the (primitive) 16 bit processor ensured that the console was clearly superior to Atari's and the built in joypad controllers made the unit look sleek and sophisticated (even though it had fake wood on the sides).

The early video games market was a complete mess. Nobody really knew how to keep control of intellectual properties, and so anyone with the money could manufacture games for Intellivision. And they did. Coleco, Activision, Imagic - everyone got in on the act. As a result, the Intellivision gained a huge library of games. But alas, the Coleco and the more successful Atari 2600 all made dents in Mattel's ego and profits. The machine simply died. No catclysm, just a sad fade to grey.

Keyboard Chaos

Intellivision made an awful lot of add-ons for its machine, but one that it was practically forced to make was a keyboard. At the start of the Intellivision's lifespan, it was marketed as more than just a games machine, but rather as the center of an ever evolving computer system. When users complained that the computing features never showed up, Intellivision rushed to put out a keyboard.

The first attempt was a massive, expensive unit with a built-in tape deck. You had to seat your whole Intellivision inside the system. It was codenamed 'Blue Whale', and also known as 'Intelliputer'. A more appropriate name would have been 'Moby Dick' with Mattel taking on the role of Captain Ahab. To appease the Feds, Mattel sold it through mail order, taking a big loss on each unit sold.

Later, a cheaper, more practical unit was released, but Mattel was forced to buy back all the units it had sold to angry consumers. Eventually the whole idea simply collapsed, and many of the keyboards were used by Intellivision developers to write software for the stand alone console.

Intellivoice at last

The most famous, and arguably succesful add-on for the Intellivision was the Intellivoice module. This technology was, at the time, pretty cutting-edge stuff and used General Instruments Orator chip do do the hard work.

Although modern speech synths can make any word from a catalog of noises

My First Intellivision

My first Intellivision experience was actually quite late into the machine's lifespan. The voice module was already available. The first game I actually played on Intellivision was B-17 Bomber. The opening voice on the machine announced the title in a thick Texan drawl, 'Bee-Seventeehn Bohm-err' and so not only did I get to hear speech synthesis, I got to hear it in an accent.

Intellivision 2,3 and 4!

Although you may only have heard of one Intellivision console, four were actually developed. The only one to truly see the light of day was the Intellivision 2. This was a cheaper, cuter and tighter version of the original. Some players found that certain Coleco-published games wouldn't work on the new machine. This was a deliberate ploy designed to ruin the publishing model for rival companies.

The Intellivision III was supposed to include speech synthesis and better graphics, but politics ensured that it never appeared. The Intellivison IV featured a 16-bit processor, but it too was doomed to failure.

called phonemes, Intellivision had to use sampled speech from cartridges, but had 16k of built in words to pad out the vocabulary, including the immortal phrase, 'Mattel Electronics Presents'.

To handle all the voice recording, Mattel actually built a state of the art recording facility. Ironic when you consider the terrible sample quality. They may as well have recorded the voices in a toilet.

Although the idea was popular, the extra cost to the consumer was not, and Intellivoice eventually failed, having sold only a few hundred thousand units. Later attempts were made to incorporate the voice technology directly into the next Intellivision console, the Intellivision III.

PlayCable

If you think the idea of playing games from a network is new, you should remember the Intellivision PlayCable add-on. This device, built by General Instruments' Jerrold division (the company that makes those cable boxes with wooden panels that overheat), allowed Intellivison players to download games and play them from an on-screen menu. The unit proved popular in the limited territories that it was released in, but a combination of technical problems (you could only use older, sub-8k games on the machine) and bandwidth restrictions (cable companies found that MTV was more popular) ended the unit's short, but initially promising lifespan.

PC

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
MDK	Playmates	05/97	A revolutionary game to Murder, Die, Kill for...	★★★★★
Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	01/97	Hired guns and giant robots add up to tons of fun!	★★★★
Mechwarrior 2: The Titanium Trilogy	Activision	07/98	Collection of classic mech games offers a lot of gameplay for the money.	★★★★
Microsoft Monster Truck Madness 2	Microsoft	07/98	Competent, but uninspired monster truck racing - needs more mayhem.	★★★
Might & Magic VI	The 3DO Company	07/98	Well done RPG that marks the resurgence of the genre on PCs.	★★★★
Moto Racer	EA	09/97	Breathtaking off road and on road motorcycle racing.	★★★★★
Myth: The Fallen Lords	Bungie	01/98	Ground breaking medieval real-time strategy.	★★★★★
NBA Live '97	EA Sports	03/97	EA's commitment to the PC continues with another champion.	★★★★
NBA Live '98	Electronic Arts	01/98	3D accelerated basketball for your PC.	★★★★
NHL '97	Electronic Arts	12/96	The most revolutionary hockey game of '96.	★★★★
NHL Powerplay	Virgin	10/96	While **PowerPlay** for the PC can't compare with console hockey, it is a solid effort.	★★★★
Of Light & Darkness	Interplay	07/98	Point and click adventure in the **Myst** vein, but better done.	★★★★
Outwars	Microsoft	07/98	Jet packs give an intriguing twist to the standard action/shooter gameplay.	★★★
Pax Imperia: Eminent Domain	THQ	11/97	Galactic conquest at its best!	★★★★
Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf	Incredible Tech.	05/98	The arcade hit makes a seamless port to PC.	★★★★
Pod	Ubi Soft	05/97	Wicked fast racer.	★★★★
Postal	Ripcord	12/97	The top down shooter that takes social disfunction to a fun new level.	★★★★
Princess Maker 2	Ignite	09/97	Raise the princess of your dreams... Oh, just play it already...	★★★★★
Quake	id Software	10/96	The most highly anticipated shooter of '96.	★★★★
Quake II	Activision	02/98	Hot sequel to one of the best first person shooters ever.	★★★★★
Quake Mission Pack No. 1	Activision	06/97	New **Quake** levels officially approved by ID Software.	★★★★★
Rally Championship	Virgin Int.	06/97	Not from Sega, not as pretty, but maybe more satisfying.	★★★★
Realms of The Haunting	Interplay	04/97	One part **Resident Evil** plus one part **Doom** equals a surprisingly good adventure.	★★★★
Red Baron II	Sierra Online	02/98	Biplane dogfighting in the skies over Europe.	★★★★
Riven	Acclaim	03/98	Point and click adventure makes it's way to PlayStation	★★★★
Rocket Jockey	SegaSoft	02/97	Wedge a rocket between your legs for the ride of your life!	★★★★

TEN HEROES

For every bad game, there's a good one. Actually, that's not quite true. There are far more bad games than good ones. These are ten of the best, and if you want to argue, then log on to www.gamebuyer.net and tell us which you think should have made the Top Ten. Otherwise, it's our word against yours, OK?

10. Resident Evil
Capcom redefined console adventure games with this tense, scary and satisfying epic. Only the cheesy voice-overs detract from an otherwise perfect product.

9. Quake 2
The ultimate first-person shooter - may be outclassed graphically by the upcoming **Unreal**, but nothing can match the visceral, bloody quality of the multi-player game.

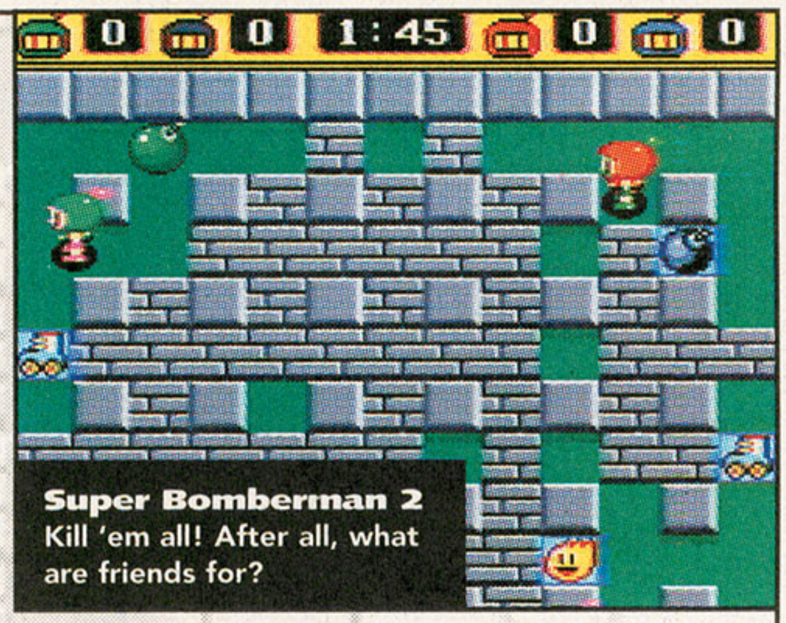
8. Pac Man
OK, so you walk around a maze eating dots and saying, 'Wacca-wacca', but there's always room for **Pac Man**.

7. Virtua Fighter 3
Sega's finest hour. A simulation of martial arts rather than an out-and-out arcade game. Sadly, the high cost of the coin-ops meant it had limited distribution in the US.

6. Tekken 3
The polar opposite of **Virtua Fighter 3** - this has less in the graphic department, but lots more in the fun zone. **Tekken 3** is all about violence, mayhem and slick, slick design.

5. Gran Turismo
Sony just released this, and you read the review in the last issue of this magazine. Suffice to say that this is the best home racing game ever made.

4. Defender
The grandaddy of modern shooters, which is still strangely addictive after all these years. The complicated controls used to be the height of sophistication - now they're the height of intuitive control. One of the few true classics.



Super Bomberman 2
Kill 'em all! After all, what are friends for?

3. Super Bomberman 2
SNES only and the greatest interpretation of the **Bomberman** legend. Blow up your friends (four of 'em) and enjoy your life while you end theirs.

2. Tetris
Simplistic, both graphically and conceptually, **Tetris** is best described as a kinetic jigsaw puzzle, like real-time **Connect Four**. Unrivalled in the addiction stakes.

1. Super Mario 64
Arguably the pinnacle of game design. This game has everything, including the most glorious graphics on the Nintendo 64.

PC

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Sabre Ace: Conflict over Korea	Virgin	01/98	Hyper-realistic combat in the skies over Korea.	★★★★
Screamers 2	Virgin	12/96	Screaming racer.	★★★★
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	07/98	Standard first person shooter fare that works better on the PC than it did on console.	★★★
Space Bar	SegaSoft	10/97	Heavy Metal meets Sam Spade.	★★★★
Spec Ops	Ripcord Games	07/98	Control Special Forces troops on covert operations.	★★★★
StarCraft	Blizzard Ent.	07/98	Much anticipated sci fi follow up to **WarCraft II** succeeds brilliantly.	★★★★★
Star Fleet Academy	Interplay	11/97	Join Starfleet! See the Universe! Violate the Prime Directive!	★★★★★
Star Trek Generations	Microprose	08/97	Generic **Star Trek** movie license game.	★★★
Star Wars Rebellion	LucasArts	06/98	Hidden somewhere within the horrible control interface is a decent game.	★★
Sub Culture	Ubi Soft	12/97	Undersea adventure with beautiful environments and challenging missions.	★★★★
Swarm	Reflexive Ent.	07/98	Retro-type shooter will appeal mostly to gamers feeling nostalgic.	★★★
Takeru: Letter of the Law	Software Sculpt.	07/98	More movie watching than gameplay. Cliffhanger ending is infuriating.	★★
Terminator Skynet	Bethesda Soft	01/97	**Terminator: SkyNET** is going to give **Quake** a run for its money.	★★★★
The Elder Scroll: Daggerfall	Bethesda Soft	12/96	A complete world to explore from the comfort of your own home.	★★★★
Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	12/97	Real-time warfare you won't want to miss!	★★★★★
Triple Play '97	EA Sports	11/96	The best arcade baseball game of '96 on the PC.	★★★
Twinsen's Odyssey	Activision	10/97	An imaginative adventure with extraordinary game play.	★★★★★
Ultim@te Race Pro	Microprose	06/98	Jaw-dropping graphics go along with superior racing fun.	★★★★
Uprising	3DO	12/97	A rule breaking combo of first-person action and real-time strategy.	★★★★★
Virtua Fighter PC	Sega	11/96	Sega's most valuable property on a PC near you.	★★★★
WarGames	MGM Interactive	07/98	Another real-time strategy game that isn't innovative enough to distinguish itself.	★★★
Wing Commander Prophecy	Electronic Arts	02/98	The latest in the **Wing Commander** series (and it's much better now!)	★★★★
Witchaven II	Capstone	10/96	A cross between **Might and Magic** and **Doom**.	★★★★
Worms 2	Microprose	02/98	Cute worms are back for more wormicide.	★★★★★
X-Com Apocalypse	Microprose	10/97	More turn-based strategy and combat!	★★★★
X-Men: Ravagers of Apocalypse	Wizard Works	12/97	**Quake** add-on that puts you in the world of the X-Men.	★★★★
X-Wing Vs. Tie Fighter	LucasArts	07/97	The force is strong in this one!	★★★★★
Z	Virgin	11/96	Killed all your robots? Don't worry, we'll make more.	★★★★
Zork: Grand Inquisitor	Activision	01/98	All the puzzles, humor and twisted notions that make **Zork** great, again.	★★★★

PLAYSTATION

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Ace Combat 2	Namco	08/97	Fighter plane games don't get any better than this!	★★★★★
AD&D: Iron & Blood	Acclaim	12/96	Smelly fighting game with an inadequate license.	★★
All Star Baseball '97	Acclaim	07/97	The Big Hurt does...	★★★
Alundra	Working Designs	01/98	**Alundra** is almost a dead ringer for a 32-bit version of Landstalker.	★★★★★
Andretti Racing	Electronic Arts	11/96	An excellent racing sim.	★★★★
Arcades Greatest Hits 2	Midway	02/98	**Moon Patrol, Burgertime, Root Beer Tapper, Spy Hunter** and **Blaster.**	★★★★
Armored Core	SCEA	12/97	Any fan of giant robot anime will want to climb into this game.	★★★★★
Atari Collection 2	Midway	04/98	**Paperboy, Road Blasters, Marble Madness, Millipede, Gauntlet** and **Crystal Castles.**	★★★★
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	02/98	'Why no, officer, I don't know how many people I killed.'	★★★★
Ballblazer Champions	Lucas Arts	06/97	Update of LucasArts classic just barely makes the grade.	★★★
Battle Arena Toshinden 3	Playmates	06/97	Fighter with lots of new perks with some old pesky quirks.	★★★★
Battlestations	Electronic Arts	05/97	Yet another reason to say, 'You sank my battleship!'	★★★★
Beast Wars: Transformers	Hasbro	04/98	**Transformer** series gets a game.... Whoopee...	★★★
Beyond the Beyond	SCEA	10/96	The first true RPG for the PlayStation.	★★★
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway Home	07/98	**War Gods** clone with most of the crappiness taken out.	★★★
Black Dawn	Virgin	12/96	An excellent flight sim/shooter with loads of options, and exceptional play mechanics.	★★★★
Blast Chamber	Activision	12/96	Flawed, but entertaining, multiplayer game.	★★★
Blasto	Sony	06/98	Uninspired game design adds nothing to the genre.	★★
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	Crystal Dyn.	12/96	Sharp fangs and a sharper sword — Kain's bite is deep and consuming.	★★★★

PLAYSTATION

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Bloody Roar	Sony	05/98	Freaky, disturbing mutant animals in a fight to the death.	★★★★
Brahma Force	Jaleco	06/97	This ain't **Kileak**, that's for sure.	★★★★
Bravo Air Race	THQ	10/97	Airplane racer on tracks... Gimme a break.	★★
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	05/98	Old school graphics don't hold back the old school RPG gameplay.	★★★★★
Broken Helix	Konami	07/97	A cross between **Doom** and **Resident Evil.**	★★★★
Broken Sword: SOTT	THQ	02/98	A graphic adventure features all that makes the genre good and bad at the same time.	★★★
Bubsy 3D	Accolade	12/96	Cartoonish looking 3D platformer.	★★★
Bug Riders	GT Int.	12/97	A racing game with giant flying bugs.	★★
Bushido Blade	SCEA	11/97	Trailblazing, weapon-based fighting game.	★★★★★
Caesar's Palace	Interplay	12/97	Blackjack, craps, roulette, three slot machines, and baccarat, but no poker!	★★★
Cardinal Syn	Sony	06/98	Everything you could ask for in a fighting game - besides the fun.	★★
Carnage Heart	SCEA	03/97	Warning! You may be too stupid to play this game! Programmer needed.	★★★★
CART World Series	SCEA	12/97	A racing experience that will appeal more to real race fans than gamers.	★★★★
Castlevania: SOTN	Konami	11/97	Gameplay is, as ever, the main attraction of **Castlevania**, and it has it in spades.	★★★★★
Clock Tower	ASCII Ent.	11/97	Now here's a scary game. Run away from a guy with BIG scissors!	★★★★
Codename: Tenka	Psygnosis	03/97	The PlayStation's answer to **Quake.**	★★★★
Colony Wars	Psygnosis	12/97	The space flight sim that really puts you in the cockpit.	★★★★★
C & C: Red Alert	Virgin	12/97	The standard bearer real-time strategy game.	★★★★★
Contra: Legacy of War	Konami	01/97	Sometimes 3D just ain't what it's cracked up to be.	★★
Cool Boarders	SCEA	02/97	A little light on the realism, but fun snowboarding just the same.	★★★★
Cool Boarders 2	SCEA	12/97	Takes a good snowboarding formula and makes it better.	★★★★
Courier Crisis	GT Int.	12/97	A really bad bike messenger game... really bad.	★
Crash Bandicoot	SCEA	10/96	The PlayStation platformer mascot's debut.	★★★★
Crash Bandicoot 2	SCEA	12/97	Sony's mascot makes an encore appearance.	★★★★★
Critical Depth	GT Int.	12/97	**Twisted Metal** underwater.	★★★★
Croc	Fox Int.	10/97	**Mario 64**-esque platformer.	★★★★
Darklight Conflict	Electronic Arts	10/97	Could have been great, but still better than **Wing Commander 4.**	★★★
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	05/98	The best fighting game to come along in quite a while.	★★★★★
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos Int.	06/98	Slow gameplay, unforgiving control. Basically, **Tomb Raider** gone wrong.	★★
Descent Maximum	Interplay	05/97	**Descent** taken to the maximum...	★★★★
Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	12/96	Outstanding sequel of a destruction derby game.	★★★★
Diablo	Electronic Arts	06/98	The PC mega hit makes the journey to PlayStation unscathed.	★★★★
Die Hard Trilogy	Fox Int.	10/96	Thee times the action! Three times the explosions! A zillion times the blood.	★★★
Discworld 2	Psygnosis	10/97	Terry Pratchett's **Discworld** universe, with all the series' wacky characters.	★★★★
Disruptor	Universal	12/96	First person shooter with psionic attitude.	★★★★★
Dragonball GT: Final Bout	Bandai	02/98	Anime fighter makes it stateside.	★★★
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	GT Int.	05/98	**Duke Nukem** never looked better... Oops. Yes, he has.	★★★
Dynasty Warriors	KOEI	09/97	Weapon-based fighter set in ancient China.	★★★★
Einhander	Sony	06/98	Classic shooter gameplay that won't make you go blind.	★★★★
Excalibur 2555 A.D.	Sirtech	01/98	Try to find King Arthur's stolen sword in the 3D adventure.	★★
Fantastic 4	Acclaim	10/97	Mr. Fantastic would be embarrassed.	★
Felony 11-79	ASCII Ent.	10/97	Run down pedestrians, drive through buildings, crash into cop cars and have fun.	★★★★
FIFA '97	EA Sports	01/97	Stinker of a striker game.	★★★
FIFA 98	EA Sports	02/98	Once again, the best soccer game available.	★★★★
Fighting Force	Eidos	12/97	A button mashing take on **Final Fight** from Eidos and Core.	★★★★
Final Doom	Williams	11/96	It's like **Doom** except... What am I saying? It is **Doom**!	★★★★
Final Fantasy Tactics	SCEA	01/98	Squaresoft's strategy oriented RPG.	★★★★
Final Fantasy VII	SCEA	10/97	Squaresoft's four disc landmark RPG.	★★★★★
Formula 1	Psygnosis	12/96	When it comes to racing, **F1** has the winning formula.	★★★★★
Formula 1 Championship Edition	Psygnosis	12/97	Everything you could want in an F1 racing game.	★★★★
Forsaken	Acclaim Ent.	07/98	Cutting edge graphics give new life to generic corridor shooter play.	★★★★
Frogger	Hasbro Int.	12/97	This frog would have been better off barbecued.	★

PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
G-Police	Psygnosis	11/97	Stunning 3D graphics, amazing gameplay - go for a flight with the G!	★★★★★
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Midway	04/98	Our favorite green lizard is back with more attitude.	★★★★
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	01/98	One of the most original shooters for the PlayStation with an anime inspiration.	★★★★
Goal Storm '97	Konami	05/97	The game that **FIFA** should have been.	★★★★
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	10/97	A combination of both on- and off-road racing in one package.	★★★★
Gran Turismo	Sony	07/98	Serious contender for the ' best racing game of all time' title.	★★★★★
Hercules	Virgin Int.	10/97	Adventure based on Disney **Hercules** movie.	★★★★
Hot Shots Golf	Sony	04/98	A surprisingly fun golf game featuring big-headed characters.	★★★★
Independence Day	Fox Int.	04/97	A wannabe flight sim with a movie license to kill.	★★★
Intelligent Qube	SCEA	12/97	A puzzle game so good, it makes us forget what we ever saw in **Tetris**.	★★★★
Jeremy McGrath SuperCross '98	Acclaim Ent.	07/98	Lousy graphics and control undermine a potentially good game.	★★
Jet Moto	SCEA	01/97	It's no **WaveRace 64**, but **Jet Moto** goes where its Nintendo rival can't.	★★★★
Jet Moto 2	SCEA	12/97	More expansion disc than sequel, still a hell of a hoverbike racer!	★★★★
Jimmy Johnson VR Football '98	Interplay	12/97	It's not that **VR Football** is bad, it's just not quite up to par with the big boys.	★★★
Judge Dredd	Activision	05/98	Dredd-ful light gun shooter complements the bad movie.	★★
Kings Field II	ASCII Ent.	01/97	An RPG for the masses.	★★★★
Klonoa	Namco	03/98	Strange, but fun adventure platform game.	★★★★
Lethal Enforcers I & II	Konami	08/97	**Lethal Enforcers I & II** in one place - hope you like light gun games.	★★
Lode Runner	Natsume	02/98	'80s classic gets a face lift.	★★★
Lost World	Electronic Arts	11/97	OK, **The Lost World** is pretty - really pretty. It also blows - really blows.	★★
Machine Hunter	MGM Int.	08/97	Top down, 360-degree shooting mayhem.	★★★★
Madden '97	EA Sports	11/96	The champ comes back after a season on the injured reserve list.	★★★★
Madden '98	EA Sports	11/97	One of the better **Maddens** in years.	★★★★
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	12/97	Marvel characters duke it out in this 2D fighter.	★★★★
Maximum Force	Midway	11/97	By the team that developed **Area 51 - Maximum Force** is the same game.	★★★
Mechwarrior 2	Activision	04/97	New missions and a new look take Mech combat to the next level.	★★★★
Mega Man 8	Capcom	05/97	**Mega Man 8** - the best 2D platformer on a 32-bit system since **Guardian Heroes**.	★★★★
Mega Man X4	Capcom	11/97	**Mega Man X4** is level after level of traditional 2D shooting.	★★★
Micro Machines V3	Midway	04/98	Mini cars and trucks race on household surfaces... Too Cool.	★★★★
MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero	Midway	12/97	Clumsy attempt at an action game based on **Mortal Kombat**.	★★
MLB '98	SCEA	10/97	One heck of a good baseball game.	★★★★
MLB '99	Sony	07/98	Best baseball game on PlayStation, but still needs tweaking to be great.	★★★★
MLB Pennant Race	SCEA	12/96	The game is 'too little, too late'.	★★★
Monopoly	Hasbro Int.	05/98	For some reason the board game has been turned into a videogame.	★★
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	12/97	Raise monsters, make 'em fight, have a good time.	★★★★★
Motortoon Grand Prix	SCEA	11/96	A must own cartoony racer with style.	★★★★
Namco Museum, Vol. 4	Namco	07/97	The Return of Ishtar, Assault, Ordyne, Pac-Land, and The Genji and The Heike Clans.	★★★
Namco Museum Vol. 5	Namco	12/97	Collection including **Dragon Spirit, Pac Mania**.	★★★
Nanotek Warrior	Virgin	04/97	A good case for re-inventing the wheel, or the shooter anyway.	★★★★
NASCAR '98	EA Sports	11/97	You might be a NASCAR fan, and if you are, this is the perfect game for you.	★★★
NBA Fastbreak '98	Midway	01/98	Average playing basketball game brought to you by Midway.	★★★
NBA In The Zone '98	Konami	02/98	Ho-hum basketball game tries it again.	★★★
NBA In the Zone 2	Konami	01/97	A definite must buy, and one of the best sports games of 1997.	★★★★
NBA Live '97	Electronic Arts	12/96	EA's jump to polygons actually a step back?	★★★
NBA Live '98	Electronic Arts	12/97	**Live '98** is a great HOCKEY engine ruined by pesky basketball players and rules.	★★★★
NBA Shootout '97	SCEA	05/97	This year, it's got game, the best NBA sim available.	★★★★
NBA Shootout '98	Sony	05/98	One of the best basketball games around, but still far from perfect.	★★★★
NCAA Football '98	EA Sports	10/97	The first 32-bit college football game.	★★★★
NCAA Gamebreaker	SCEA	11/96	From the developers of **NFL Gameday** comes the first 32-bit college football game.	★★★★
NCAA Gamebreaker '98	SCEA	01/98	What can we say about a game that just does everything right?	★★★★★
NCAA March Madness	EA Sports	04/98	Uses the **NBA Live '97** engine, but good gameplay saves it.	★★★★
Need for Speed II	Electronic Arts	06/97	Exotic cars, decent game play and graphics.	★★★

got guns?

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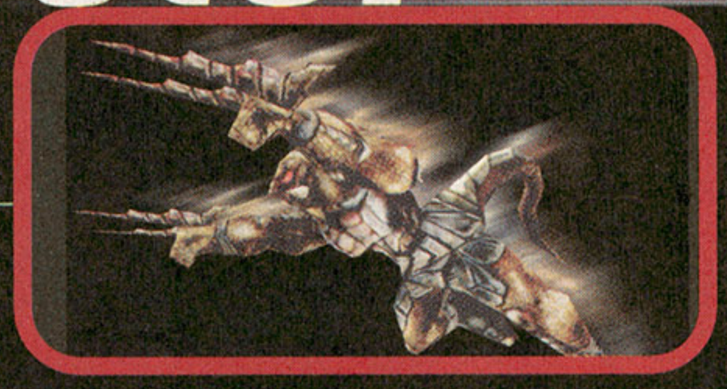

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PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Need For Speed III ,	Electronic Arts	06/98	Gameplay worthy of the series' best seller status is finally added.	★★★★★
Need for Speed V-Rally	Electronic Arts	12/97	A bland auto zoom-zoomer you won't want from Santa.	★★★
Newman/Hass Racing	Psygnosis	04/98	A yawn of a dull time racing F1.	★★★
NFL Gameday '97	SCEA	02/97	The best football game ever made gets even better!	★★★★★
NFL Gameday '98	SCEA	11/97	The best football game ever made gets even better! And better still!	★★★★★
NFL Quarterback Club '97	Acclaim	11/96	**QBC '97** finds the right combination for victory.	★★★★
NHL '97	Electronic Arts	12/96	Yet another adequate hockey game.	★★★
NHL '98	EA	12/97	The only hockey game better than being there.	★★★★★
NHL Breakaway '98	Acclaim	12/97	**Breakaway '98** is a good hockey game, not great, but very playable.	★★★★
NHL Face Off '97	SCEA	12/96	Entertaining hockey experience.	★★★
NHL Face Off '98	SCEA	12/97	**Face Off** was 97's PlayStation hockey game of the year, for '98, it's gotten better.	★★★★
NHL Powerplay '98	Virgin Int.	09/97	One of the best hockey games available.	★★★★
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	12/97	Third person action title with werewolves and scary monsters - oh yeah.	★★★★
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	11/97	The latest excellent episode in the **Strike** series.	★★★★
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	GT Interactive	11/97	Outstanding 2D platformer in the tradition of **Flashback**.	★★★★
One	ASC Games	02/98	Action packed shooter that is both great and flawed.	★★★★
Overblood	Electronic Arts	06/97	**OverBlood** has the gameplay, but lacks any compelling excitement to back it up.	★★★
Pandemonium	Crystal Dyn.	12/96	Wacky 2 1/2D platformer.	★★★★
Pandemonium 2	Midway	12/97	The sequel to 96 sleeper hit captures the hearts of 2 1/2D platform fans once again.	★★★★
Parappa the Rapper	SCEA	10/97	Rap away your troubles and cares in this quixotic title from Sony.	★★★★★
Peak Performance	Atlus	07/97	Blending standard street racing with a touch of rally action.	★★★★
Perfect Weapon	ASC Games	12/96	Fighting game or action game, this attempt at genre mixing is far from perfect.	★★
Persona	Atlus	02/97	All the right RPG elements are there, but never come together.	★★★
PGA '98	Electronic Arts	12/97	**PGA '98** is the best golf game available on the Playstation.	★★★★
Pitball	Accolade	12/96	Odd futuristic ball game.	★★★★
Pitfall 3D	Activision	05/98	Pitfall Harry has aged gracefully, but isn't as fun as he used to be.	★★★★
Point Blank	Namco	02/98	Light gun action that requires the GunCon.	★★★★
Porsche Challenge	SCEA	10/97	This looks a heck of a lot better than it actually is, but you do get to race a Porsche.	★★★
Powerboat Racing	Interplay	05/98	Speed boat racing game with a few quirks, but plenty of fun.	★★★★
Powerslave	Playmates	06/97	Add **Doom**-style gameplay to alien folklore, and you've got **Powerslave**.	★★★★
Poy Poy	Konami	08/97	Incredible multiplayer game!	★★★★
Project Horned Owl	SCEA	10/96	It's nice to look at, but PlayStation's first lightgun shooter misses its mark.	★★★
Psychic Force	Acclaim	02/97	You don't need to be a psychic to know this game isn't destined for greatness.	★★★
Puzzle Fighter	Capcom	12/96	More proof that great games don't have to be technological wonders.	★★★★★
Rage Racer	Namco	04/97	**Rage Racer** takes the scenic route, but is it the same old road?	★★★★
Rally Cross	SCEA	05/97	Finally, an off-road racer that really takes off!	★★★★
Rampage World Tour	Midway	01/98	Update of the arcade classic.	★★
Rascal	Psygnosis	06/98	A bad character plus bad control equals a platform nightmare.	★★
Raystorm	Working Design	08/97	Truly superior fast paced shooter.	★★★★
Raytracer	THQ	02/98	Flashy racer that leaves you wanting more.	★★★
Reboot	Electronic Arts	5/98	The cartoon gets an "Episode Zero" game that reveals the origin of it all!	★★★★
Red Asphalt	Interplay	12/97	Blast and run down opponents in this futuristic racer.	★★★★
Reel Fishing	Natsume	12/97	It's a fishing game, just like the title says.	★★★
ReLoaded	Interplay	02/97	Surprise! Gratuitous violence and gore can be boring.	★★★
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	02/98	The granddaddy of all 3D adventures spawns the perfect brood.	★★★★★
Resident Evil: Director's Cut	Campcom	12/97	The game that set the horror standard tries it again.	★★★★★
Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	10/96	Ridge Racing is still fun, but it's running out of gas.	★★★★
Rush Hour	Psygnosis	06/97	A different approach to racing games provides some much needed variety.	★★★★
Saga Frontier	Sony	06/98	Why bother with multiple storylines when one isn't all that fun?	★★
San Francisco Rush	Midway Home Ent.	07/98	No where near the greatness of the N64 game. A disappointment.	★★
Sentient	Psygnosis	06/97	Ow! My head hurts. I had to play a largely text-driven adventure game all night.	★★★
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	02/98	Fantastic graphics, brilliant special effects, and lots of lens flare, but that's all.	★★★

PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Shipwreckers	Psygnosis	12/97	A refreshing, top down action game.	★★★★
Skullmonkeys	Electronic Arts	03/98	Claymation looking platformer is pretty, but unsatisfying.	★★★
Soul Blade	Namco	02/97	Flashy sword-based fighter - not to be missed.	★★★★
Soviet Strike	EA	12/96	Classic gameplay and 32-bit presentation make a killer game.	★★★★★
Spawn	SCEA	01/98	Comic book antihero goes from bad movie to worse game.	★
Speed Racer	Jaleco	05/98	A better racing game than a **Speed Racer** game.	★★★
Spider	BMG Int.	03/97	The game with eight legs and a rocket launcher.	★★★
Spot Goes to Hollywood	Virgin	11/96	Does anyone like a soda game that's lukewarm and flat?	★★
Stackers	Tecmo	11/97	A competent challenge for fans of the puzzle genre.	★★★
Star Gladiator	Capcom	11/96	The cosmic crowd in **Star Gladiator** takes 3D fighting to the outer limits.	★★★★
Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi	Lucas Arts	01/98	Great license, decent graphics, mediocre fighting game.	★★
Steel Reign	SCEA	11/97	Futuristic tank shooter.	★★★★
Street Fighter Collection	Capcom	11/97	**Super Street Fighter, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo**, and **SF Alpha 2 Gold**.	★★★★
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	11/97	Another **Street Fighter** game, but oh, so good!	★★★★★
Street Racer	Ubi Soft	12/96	It's cute. It's funny. It's the lighter side of 32-bit gaming.	★★★
Suikoden	Konami	12/96	Konami gets back into RPGs in a big way.	★★★★★
Swagman	Eidos	08/97	Bland adventure game.	★★★
Syndicate Wars	Electronic Arts	09/97	The problem with **Syndicate Wars** is it was designed for the PC, not the PlayStation.	★★★
Tail of the Sun	SCEA	07/97	Just another 'caveman building a tusk tower' kind of a game.	★★★★
Tekken 3	Namco	07/98	Another classic fighting game conversion takes its place in the series.	★★★★★
Ten Pin Alley	ASC Games	02/97	It's just like bowling...	★★★★
Tennis Arena	Ubi Soft	03/98	Advanced **Pong** on grass.	★★★★
Test Drive 4	Accolade	12/97	The best roadracer on the PlayStation and a darn fun game.	★★★★
Test Drive Off Road	Accolade	06/97	Down and dirty off road racing.	★★★★
The City of Lost Children	Psygnosis	05/97	Bringing the magic of a special movie to the PlayStation.	★★★★
Theme Hospital	Electronic Arts	06/98	Design and manage your own hospital in Bullfrog's interesting sim.	★★★★
Thunder Truck Rally	Psygnosis	05/97	Most off-road fans will find something here to like.	★★★
Tiger Shark	GT Int.	03/97	Going down? This submerged shooter ain't no **Aquanaut's Holiday**.	★★★
Time Commando	Activision	12/96	It's said that Time will tell, but in this game, it just groans.	★★
Time Crisis	Namco	11/97	Namco's outstanding gun game, but you have to have the GunCon...	★★★★
Tobal No. 1	SCEA	11/96	**Tobal No. 1** brings an entire new element to the fighting game genre.	★★★★★
Tokyo Highway Battle	Jaleco	12/96	The game that proves that speeding can be fun and profitable.	★★★★
Tomb Raider	EIDOS	12/96	If the game doesn't blow you away, she just might.	★★★★★
Tomb Raider 2	EIDOS	12/97	She's bad, she's back and you know you want to play with her.	★★★★★
Treasures of the Deep	Namco	10/97	Underwater combat not to be missed.	★★★★
Triple Play '98	Electronic Arts	06/97	There is currently no baseball game close to the overall solidity of **Triple Play '98**.	★★★★
Triple Play '99	EA Sports	05/98	Despite some flaws, one of the best baseball games on PlayStation.	★★★★
Twisted Metal 2	SCEA	01/97	Lots of violence, weapons and outrageous autos.	★★★★
Vandal Hearts	Konami	04/97	A turn-based strategy game wrapped in a neat RPG package.	★★★★
Virtual Pool	Interplay	02/97	Play pool at home instead of in a bar.	★★★
VMX Racing	Playmates	06/97	Average dirt bike racing game.	★★★
VR Baseball '97	Interplay	05/97	Interplay's bid for the title comes up a couple of frames short.	★★★★
VR Golf	VR Sports	12/96	**VR Golf** is a definite for golf fans that don't have access to a PC.	★★★★
Vs.	THQ	12/97	A collection of stereotypes that happen to fight one another.	★★
Warcraft II: The Dark Saga	Electronic Arts	09/97	One of the best PC games of all time is okay on the PlayStation.	★★★
WCW Nitro	THQ	02/98	Wrestling action for the die hard fan.	★★★
WCW Vs. The World	THQ	06/97	**WCW** is a solid game that will appeal to wrestling fans.	★★★★
Wild Arms	Capcom	06/97	**Wild Arms** is the RPG to play if you already spent two weeks with **FF7**.	★★★★★
Wing Commander IV	Electronic Arts	05/97	Fans of the series won't be disappointed, but everyone else will.	★★★
WipEout XL	Psygnosis	11/96	Futuristic racing never looked so good!	★★★★★
World Cup '98	EA Sports	07/98	Repackaged FIFA game with most (but not all) of the flaws corrected.	★★★★
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	03/98	Hmm... A bad 2D fighting game....	★★

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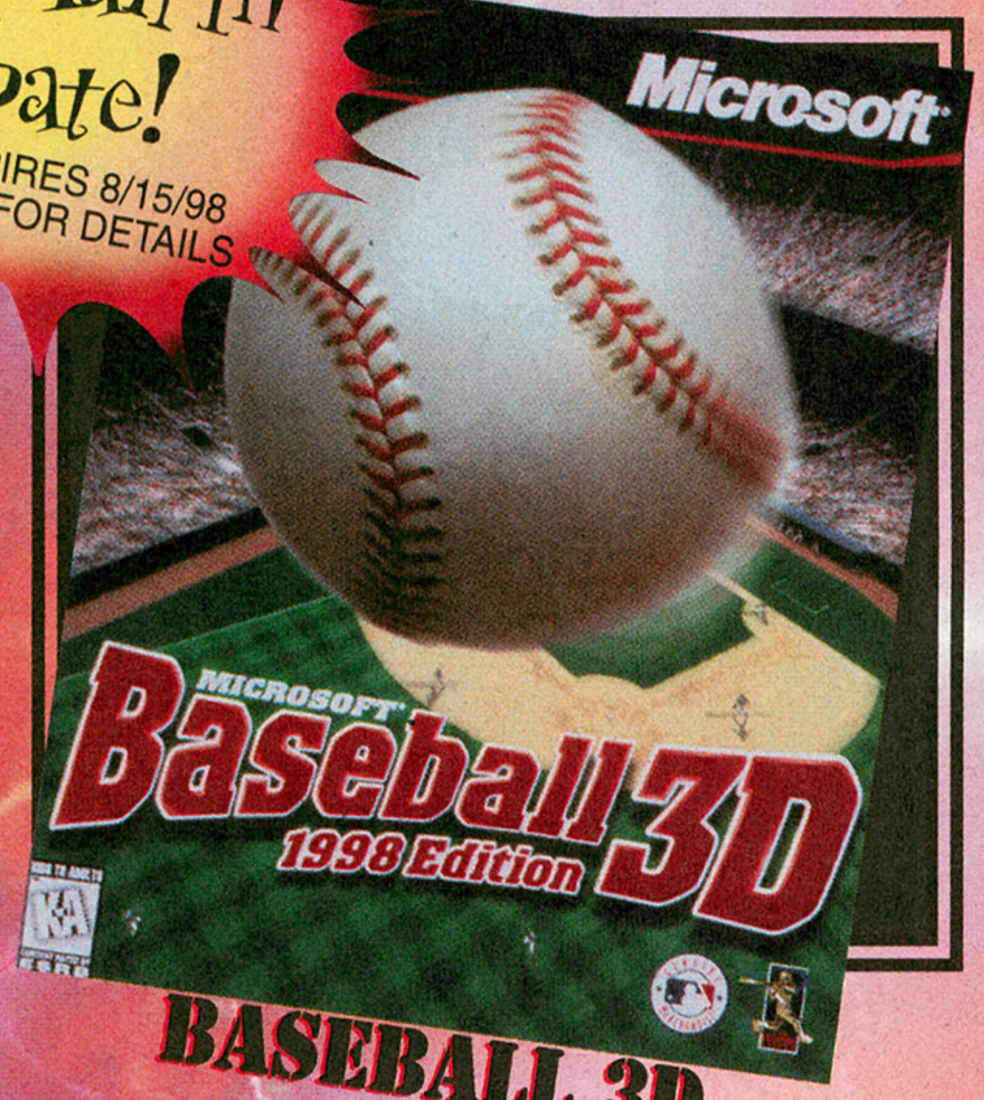

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PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Xevious 3D/G	Namco	08/97	Well, it's **Xevious** in 3D (don't know what the G is for...).	★★★
X-Men vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	07/98	Another in the long line of Street Fighter variants. Unbalanced, but fun.	★★★
2Xtreme	SCEA	01/97	A sequel that's just 2 little 2 late.	★★★
3D Baseball	Crystal Dyn.	11/96	Not be the best baseball game on the market, but still good.	★★★★

SATURN

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Albert Odyssey	Working Designs	09/97	Outstanding Japanese RPG.	★★★★
Amok	Sega	04/97	A good, solid game, but it could have been much more.	★★★
Area 51	Williams	02/97	If shooting freaks from outer space is your thing...	★★★
Bug Too!	Sega	02/97	The only cure for **Bug Too**'s sad gameplay may be Raid.	★★
Bust A Move 3	Natsume	12/97	Bubble popping puzzle game you simply must play.	★★★★
Command & Conquer	Westwood	04/97	**C&C** marks the return of real time strategy for home consoles.	★★★★
Crimewave	Eidos	02/97	Like shooting, driving and donuts? Here's your game.	★★★
Crypt Killer	Konami	06/97	**Crypt Killer** is like a shooting gallery at the country fair.	★★★
Dark Savior	Sega	02/97	The first truly great RPG on the Saturn.	★★★★
Daytona USA CCE	Sega	01/97	Calling this game 'Daytona Remix' would have been closer to the truth.	★★★★
Decathlete	Sega	10/96	Sega raises the bar for track and field games.	★★★★
Die Hard Arcade	Sega	04/97	Arcade perfect, arcade short.	★★★★
Dragon Force	Working Designs	02/97	The perfect console strategy game.	★★★★
Duke Nukem 3D	Sega	12/97	The best console conversion of the **Duke Nukem 3D** experience.	★★★★
Enemy Zero	Sega	02/98	Fly for the Emperor!	★★★★
Fighters Megamix	Sega	03/97	**Fighting Vipers** & **Virtua Fighter**. A fighting game fan's dream come true.	★★★★★
Fighting Vipers	Sega	12/96	The fully loaded model of the Cadillac of fighting games.	★★★★★
Grid Runner	Activision	12/96	A futuristic blend of Tag and Capture the Flag.	★★★★
Herc's Adventures	Lucas Arts	10/97	A top-down action adventure based on the mythological exploits of Hercules.	★★★
Hexen	GT Interactive	03/97	Attention, wizards and warriors, your game is here.	★★★★
House of the Dead	Sega	06/98	Not much to look at, but light gun fun in Sega's classic style.	★★★★
Last Bronx	Sega	01/98	Brutal fighting from the masters at Sega.	★★★★
Lunacy	Atlas	05/97	**Lunacy** plays like a movie - a mixed blessing at best.	★★★
Machinehead	Eidos	12/96	An average first person shooter.	★★★
Manx TT	Sega	09/97	Outstanding motorcycle racing game on the Isle of Mann.	★★★★
Mass Destruction	ASC Games	12/97	**Mass Destruction** plays just like it reads. Top down tank action.	★★★★
Mr. Bones	Sega	12/96	One of the most bizarre platformers ever.	★★★★
NFL '97 `	Sega	02/97	Looking for a quality football game? This ain't it...	★★
Nights	Sega	10/96	In an industry when anything can happen, 'anything' just did.	★★★★★
Ogre Battle	Atlus	09/97	**Ogre Battle** offers nothing new to the RPG/strategy genre.	★★★
Panzer Draggon Saga	Sega	05/98	The classic Saturn shooter is turned into a beautiful RPG.	★★★★★
Saturn Bomberman	Sega	10/97	As **Bomberman** games go, this is probably the best since **Super Bomberman 2.**	★★★★
Scorcher	Sega	06/97	Scavenger's second Saturn title looks more like a tombstone than a milestone.	★★★★
Scud	SegaSoft	05/97	Based on the popular underground comic book series.	★★★
Sega Ages Vol. 1	Sega	08/97	**Space Harrier, Afterburner 2**, and **Outrun**	★★★★
Sega Touring Car Championship	Sega	01/98	Home conversion of Sega arcade racer.	★★★
Shining the Holy Ark	Sega	08/97	The best **Phantasy Star** RPG yet.	★★★★
Sky Target	Sega	09/97	**Sky Target** fails to live up to expectations.	★★★
Sonic 3D Blast	Sega	01/97	A less than dramatic 32-bit debut for gaming's favorite hedgehog.	★★★★
Sonic Jam	Sega	11/97	**Sonic 1, 2** and **3** on the Saturn.	★★★★★
Sonic R	Sega	01/98	Funky racer featuring Sega's blue hedgehog.	★★★★
Steep Slope Sliders	Sega	01/98	Fun and exciting snowboarding for the Saturn.	★★★★
Street Fighter Alpha 2	Capcom	11/96	The latest version of **Street Fighter** is the best ever.	★★★★
Three Dirty Dwarves	Sega Soft	11/96	Difficult, but fun update to the classic puzzle/platformer.	★★★★

SATURN CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Toshinden URA	Sega	02/97	Apparently, **URA** really stands for Ugly, Repetitive, and Awful.	★★
Virtua Cop 2	Sega	01/97	Excellent console translation of arcade lightgun game.	★★★★
Virtua Fighter Kids	Sega	11/96	A fighting game with cute kiddie characters that packs punch.	★★★★
Virtual On	Sega	01/97	Console conversion of arcade game. Giant robots duke it out...	★★★★
Virtual Open Tennis	Acclaim	10/96	Tennis to play when it's raining.	★★★
Winter Heat	Sega	04/98	Suprisingly good winter sports for your Satum	★★★★
World Series Baseball '98	EA Canada	09/97	The most detailed baseball game you can play!	★★★★★
World Series Baseball II	Sega	11/96	The best baseball game of '96.	★★★★★
Worldwide Soccer '97	Sega	12/96	The sports game of '96. Soccer fans have gotta love it!	★★★★★

THE TOP TEN WEIRD GAMES

As rampant as the copycat school of game design is these days , there is always the occasional game that defies pigeonholing (or even description, for that matter). Although being a 'weird game' doesn't necessarily guarantee that a game will be good, it is often an oasis in a desert of first person shooters, fighting games, and platformers.

Compared to the early days of videogames, the weird game is becoming more and more a rare commodity. Who can forget the likes of BurgerTime, Mega Man Soccer, Q-bert, or even Frogger? Still, weird games aren't dead by any means. A close look at the following Top Ten reveals that there's always an outlet for a deranged game designing mind.

1 - Tail of the Sun

Kill giant mammoths, propagate your tribe, and build a tower of animal bones so you can reach the sun. We think you win when you discover fire.

2 - Mr. Bones

Basically a 2D platform game, but the star is a blues playing skeleton. The high point is playing a blues guitar solo in a graveyard.

3 - Princess Maker 2

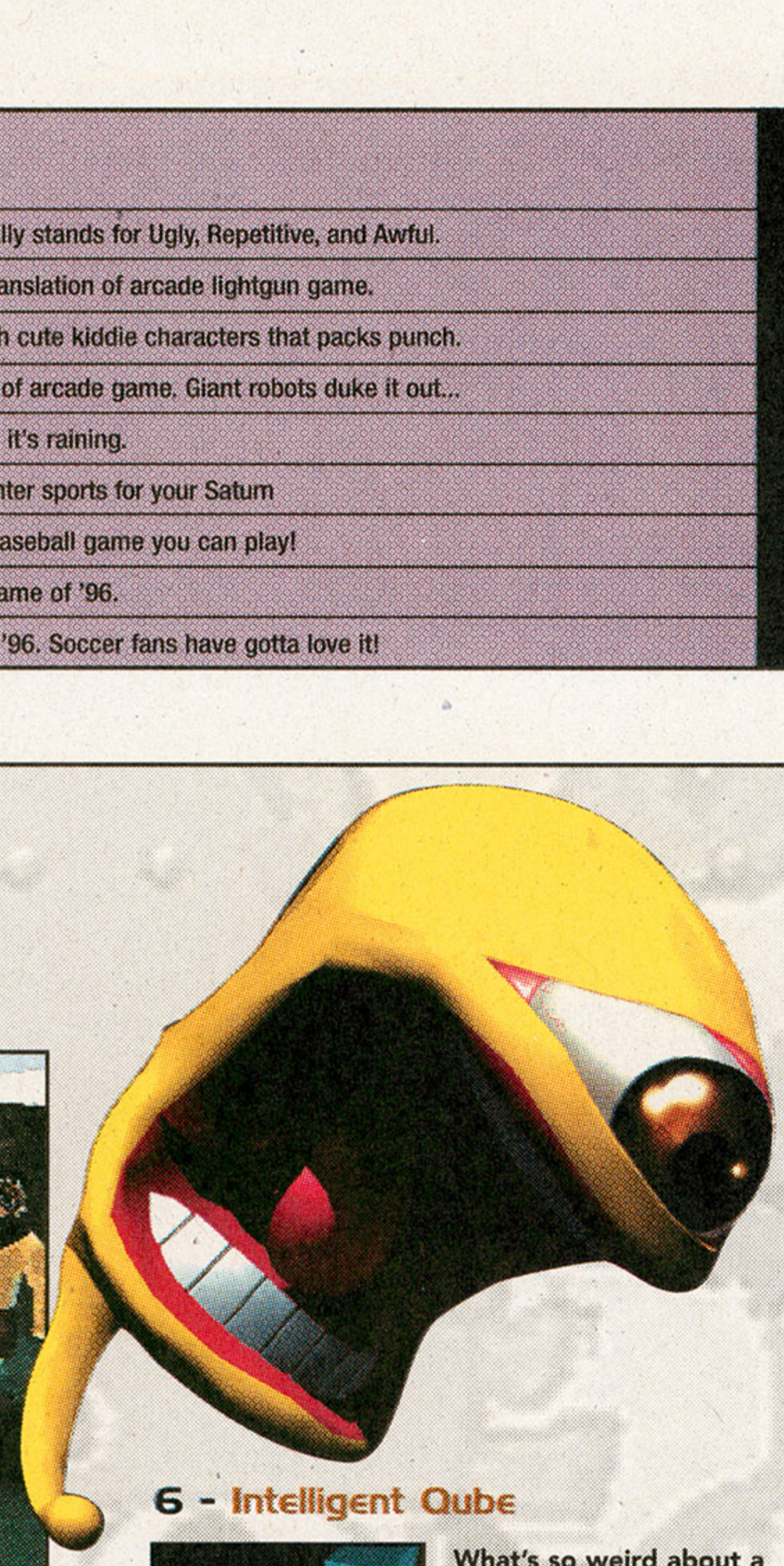
You're responsible for the upbringing of a girl. Do it right and she could become Queen; do it wrong and she could become a prostitute.

4 - Poy Poy

Crazy multiplayer combat in the Super Bomberman mode. The combatants hit each other with everything ranging from logs to bombs.

5 - PaRappa the Rapper

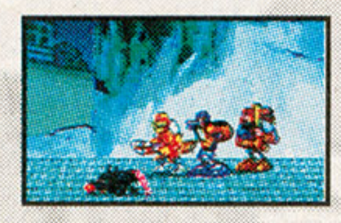
A rapping game? PaRappa succeeds because of its endearing characters, irresistibly catchy soundtrack, and surrealistic art design.



6 - Intelligent Qube

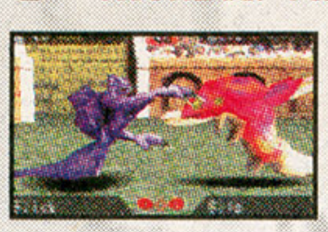
What's so weird about a puzzle game? Quickly find a way to destroy the cubes or face death by crushing or a drop into a dark abyss.

7 - Three Dirty Dwarves



Any game that features three dirty dwarves as the lead protagonists has to be considered weird.

8 - Monster Rancher



Monster Rancher requires the player to raise a monster and turn him into a championship fighter.

9 - Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

Oddworld featured an innovative communication system, but the really weird part of the game was the lead character.

10 - Worms 2

You've got to love any game that features heavily armed worms intent on each other's destruction.

Nintendo's E3 Showstealers

Perfect Dark; Twelve Tales: Conker 64, Jet Force Gemini

System: N64
Publisher: Rare
Release Date: 1999

Behind closed doors at the Nintendo booth at E3, the company unveiled an early playable version of Rare's latest shooter, **Perfect Dark.** Modeled on a slightly modified version **Goldeneye** engine, this first person shooter places you in the role of a glamorous secret operative named Joanna Dark, who must fight her way through a long series of missions in order to complete her assignment. Nintendo and Rare promise that this game will be tougher and pack in a lot more variety in the way of weapons, enemies, secrets and obstacles than **Goldeneye**, while allowing the player to traverse multiple landscapes on various vehicles. Incorporating a multi-player mode, as well as more than a few gorgeous cinemas, **Perfect Dark** nicely showcased the less cuddly side of Rare's development team.

But also at the show were achingly cute examples of other Rare titles, such as **Jet Force Gemini**, a 3D action/adventure, and **Twelve Tales: Conker 64**, a platformer. **JFG** features the ability to switch between three separate characters, each possessing varying abilities to fire an arsenal of gun-type weapons. The option to participate in cooperative two player mode, as well as specialized four-player deathmatches somewhat contradict the hyper-cuteness of the characters. Meanwhile, **Twelve Tales** was prominently displayed at the booth. The opportunity to play as either Conker, the lovable squirrel whose gameplay is supposedly 'action-based', or Berri, the chipmunk whose emphasis is on strategy, will hopefully separate it from **Banjo** once the final product ships.

Nintendo Portables Make a Splash

On prominent display at the Nintendo booth was yet another upgrade in the Game Boy line, the Game Boy Color. Approximately the same width and height as the Pocket Game Boy, the color version was dressed to impress with a color reflective screen displaying bright primary colors and multiple layering of shades. When the handheld unit launches in the fall, its debut will be accompanied by six compatible titles not yet announced and will retail for $80.

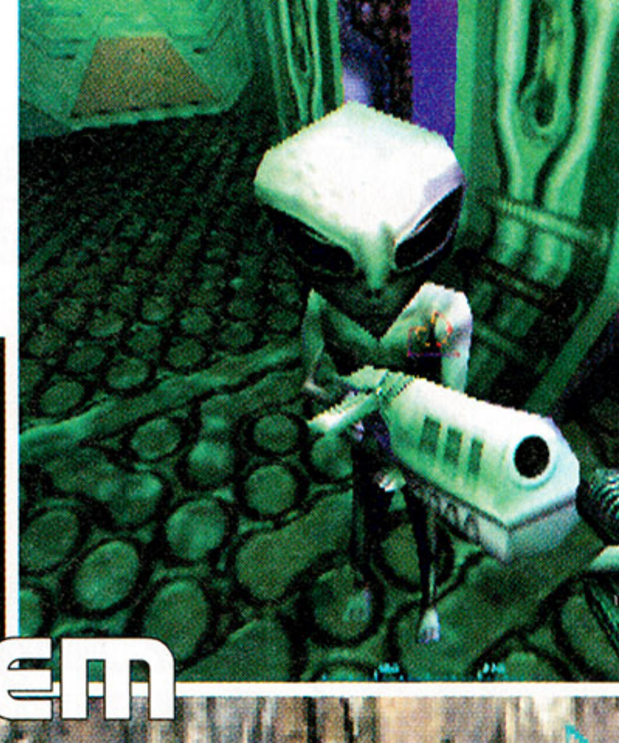
E3 also began a rush for **Pokemon** goodies to promote the upcoming Game Boy release of the title. A key-chain-sized, Tamagotchi-type Pokemon was also fiercely promoted as a virtual pet that reacts to movement and actually depends on its owner's physical attention to reach its full, 'happy' potential. Look for the **Pokemon** Game Boy title and the **Pokemon Pikachu** handheld unit to launch this fall.

Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Zelda was Nintendo's main show-stealer, with playable versions at multiple stands motivating hordes of people to stand in line for just a glimpse. Controls were tight, the camera system was intuitive and graphics disappointed no one. With a set release date of November 23rd, Nintendo hopes to capture the Christmas market with the game. Packed onto the largest N64 cart to date (256 megabits), the only real contender at the show with **Zelda** was **Metal Gear Solid**, but in the role-playing genre, **Zelda** was king.

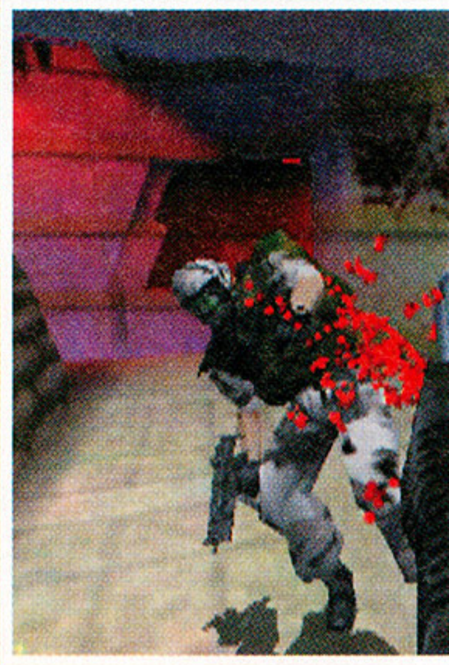
E3 Continued

First Person Shooter Mayhem



One of the biggest trends at E3 was the inclusion of first person shooters in almost every company's lineup. Of course, with such a huge showing of titles in a specific genre, there are bound to be winners and losers, but with the high level of quality present at the show, there were more winners than losers. Leading the pack were a few surprise stunners, such as Fox Interactive's **Aliens Vs. Predator**, which was featured in a deathmatch contest over the span of the show and allowed the player to assume the role of either a marine, an Alien, or even a Predator. Each species wields their own special types of weapons and possess unique abilities (Aliens can scale walls and ceilings, Predators can cloak themselves with invisibility shields) that certainly mixed up the typically standard gameplay of most corridor shooters. Look for **Alien Vs. Predator** later this year.

Another shooter with potential to wow gamers is Sierra's **Half-Life**. Designed by a team of artists and programmers responsible for some of the most successful first person shooters in gaming history, **Half-Life** pits you and two other characters against an alternate universe filled with bizarre creatures ready to destroy you without a second thought. The game's use of incredibly high polygon counts for enemies and allies makes the animations and graphics tip the high end of the scale, while gameplay promises to provide a deep, immersive experience with a good amount of strategy required for survival. **Half-Life** should be out within the coming weeks and looks as if it may be one to watch for.



Microprose's **XCOM Alliance** also holds a high amount of promise in the category by utilizing the **Unreal** engine to give fans of the series a glimpse beyond the strategy emphasis of previous games. Fifteen missions across gorgeous 3D landscapes set the mood, while the player is able to view the game through any one of four different **XCOM** team members in the game. Look for it later this year.

N64 Attracts More Support

The U.S. market for the N64 has been surprisingly successful and key developers and publishers in the States have been taking notice. Along with Eidos' announcement to publish **Fighting Force 64** (September) for the system, Activision has also jumped on the cartridge wagon by unveiling its plans to bring popular titles, **Quake II** (September) and **Nightmare Creatures** (First Quarter '99) to the N64 audience. Konami's long awaited **Castlevania** (First Quarter '99) finally made its 3D debut behind closed doors at E3, as well as Capcom's ultimate decision to publish and distribute Gametek's much delayed **Robotech: Crystal Dreams** (Winter '98). In opposition to lagging Japanese sales, the US seems to be the real support base for the N64 and US owners will reap the rewards in the coming year.

Project X Comes Our of the Closet

VM Labs recently revealed the cornerstone for its Project X. The entire plan hinges around the simple fact that the chip will be built into a host of DVD players from major manufacturers (similar to the way that VCR Plus is in many VCRs). The cost to consumers is expected to be around the same cost as a standard DVD player, though there will be a number of options OEM manufacturers can choose to put in. Also the option for video telephony with a video camera is also something that VM Labs is planning to include. Exactly which manufacturers VM Labs is working with for development of titles has not yet been revealed. The systems are set to launch early in 1999.

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Japan Journal

Tail Concerto

SYSTEM: PlayStation
PUBLISHER: Bandai
RELEASED: April '98
PRICE: ¥5,800 ($44)

Despite whatever problems it has had in the past, Bandai is starting to make good games. The first title to prove this was **Z Gundam**, and the second just might be **Tail Concerto**. With its police-dirigibles and floating island cities, this Hayao Miyazaki-esque title is quite an interesting game.

The story centers around a humanoid police dog named Waffle. A group known as the Black Cat Group is stirring up trouble in Waffle's island of Prelly. Your mission is to capture these cats using the long, flexible arms of your 'Police Robo,' and stuff them in a tank on your back, just like in **Ghostbusters**.

The Police Robo can also fire bubbles that encase your enemies and temporarily paralyze them. Your Robo's arms can be flapped like wings to fly for short distances if you repeatedly hit the jump button. The arms also grab onto ledges to keep you from falling.

There are eight islands altogether, each with its own variety of areas. You can't go to many of the areas unless you finish certain tasks, like in the **Mario** series. While the camera can be difficult to use, and all of the dialogue and subtitles are in Japanese, the gameplay is fun and quirky.

Speed Power Gunbike

SYSTEM: PlayStation
PUBLISHER: Sony Music Ent.
RELEASED: April '98
PRICE: ¥5,800 ($44)

Sony Music Entertainment has had some notable titles, namely **Kowloon's Gate** and **Tenchu. Speed Power Gunbike** is unfortunately not one of them. Billed as a Cyclone motorcycle-mecha from the Japanese **Mospeada** anime (the third part of **Robotech** in the US), the game has lots of problems.

First is control. The controls for the gunbike stick, and the transformations between Robot, Rally, and Bike modes are choppy. If you realize that you've gone down a dead end alley, it's a chore to turn your gunbike around.

Second is attacking. In order to use your gun, you must physically stop and be in Robot Mode, hold down the circle and triangle, and let go to fire. In the time it takes you to do this, a mobile enemy would be long gone.

The insufferably long cinemas, lack of a map, crap graphics, and even crappier gameplay put this on our crap list.

VAMPIRE SAVIOR

SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: Capcom
RELEASED: April '98
PRICE: ¥5,800 ($44)

Next to the **Street Fighter** series, Capcom's Vampire series (**Darkstalkers, Night Warriors**) is the best known and most fun to play. Although **Vampire Savior** will be ported to PlayStation, Saturn's version has an advantage with the help of the 4 MB cartridge.

All 14 characters from **Vampire Hunter** are back, with an additional four characters. The biggest difference in this title compared to its earlier predecessors is what is called Dark Force. When you press the same strength Punch and Kick (and your special gauge is at least '1'), you and your opponent are whisked to an alternate universe where you are temporarily given special powers. **Vampire Savior** is a beautiful port, and an excellent game. 'Nuff said.

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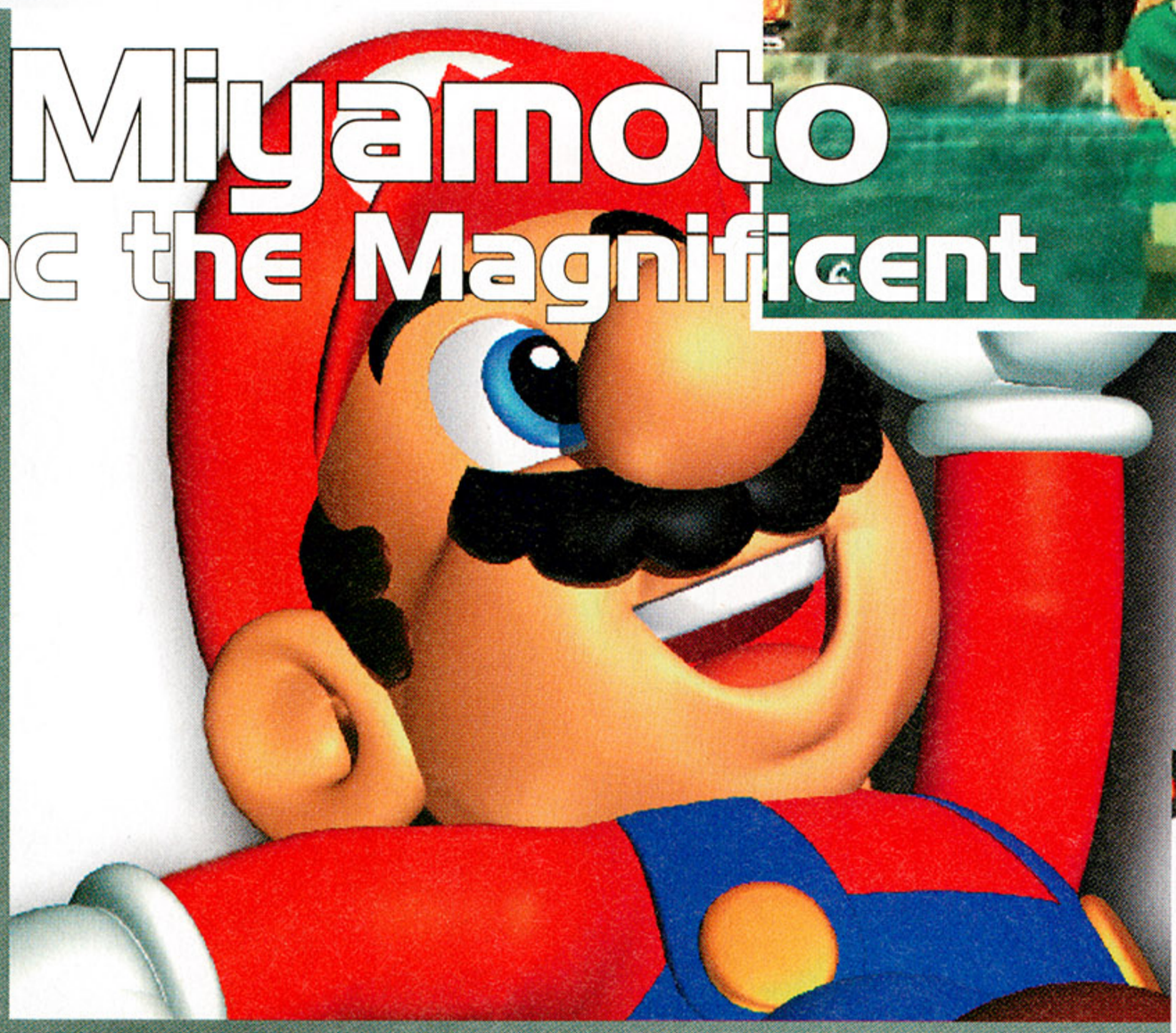
Shigeru Miyamoto Plays Carnac the Magnificent

Famed Nintendo developer predicts Future of gaming

In a recent interview with Shigeru Miyamoto, he revealed his predictions for the future of gaming. He believes that normal distribution channels will be replaced by a network, in which game buyers can purchase their software via satellite over a telephone circuit by an ISDN-like motherboard. Miyamoto felt that 'five or six years ago, this type of idea would have only been a dream, but it will soon be realized.' He forecasted that if future network technology is refined, then traditional distribution methods will disappear.



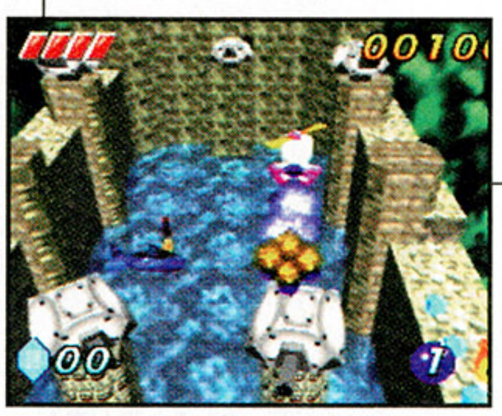
The Nintendo strategy has apparently been to make games as great looking as possible and to think things out while making the game. He gives credence to the fact that 'It's of the utmost importance to abide by this when making games,' and 'It's easy to forget this, but it's necessary when coming up with new games.'

Miyamoto sees that games will go the international route, emphasizing that Japanese developers 'should recognize that there is an international market out there. This is important for Nintendo, as well as the rest of the industry. In this way, those overseas can come to understand our culture.'

The evolution of consoles will depend on 'the developers' flair for inventions,' according to Miyamoto. Games will evolve depending on these inventions. 'Of course, one would think that progressions would be made in the future anyway,' but 'unfortunately, new inventions are few and far between.' He feels that graphical evolution will be conceived on a different level, such as how the N64 can be linked with the Game Boy.

Shigeru Miyamoto's predictions will probably come true, as his foresight and vision have brought Nintendo from **Donkey Kong** to **Zelda 64**.

Bomberman Hero



System: Nintendo 64
Publisher: Hudson
Released Date: April '98
Price: ¥6,800 ($51)

Hudson's **Bomberman** series is as cute and as lovable as a license can get. Although Hudson has made its series popular as a **Poy Poy** type of game, they have broken the mold and gone in an entirely different direction - a platformer! **Bomberman Hero** will probably do for the Nintendo 64 what **Crash Bandicoot** did for the PlayStation.

Unlike previous **Bomberman** titles, there is no multiplayer mode, and the game is pure platform excitement. One of the title's more interesting features are the powered gear add-ons to Bomberman's character. These include the Bomber Marine (submarine), Bomber Copter, Bomber Jet, and Bomber Slider (something like a snowboard).

The only complaint is that sometimes the bombs are a bit difficult to target on your opponents. Besides that, **Bomberman Hero** is a lot of fun to play, and has lots of wacky, zany bosses and levels.

GunGriffon II

System: Saturn
Publisher: Game Arts/ESP
Released Date: April '98
Price: ¥6,800 ($51)

Developed by Game Arts and published by Entertainment Software Publishing, **GunGriffon II** is the latest mecha-shooter for the Saturn. The title has four modes: Scenario, Exercise, VS. Battle, and Survival. Scenario is a story mode that involves many missions. The animation in **GunGriffon II** isn't crisp, and the controls may take a bit of getting used to. It is a definite improvement over the first **GunGriffon**, but it still has a way to go. This mech shooter is passable, but not great.

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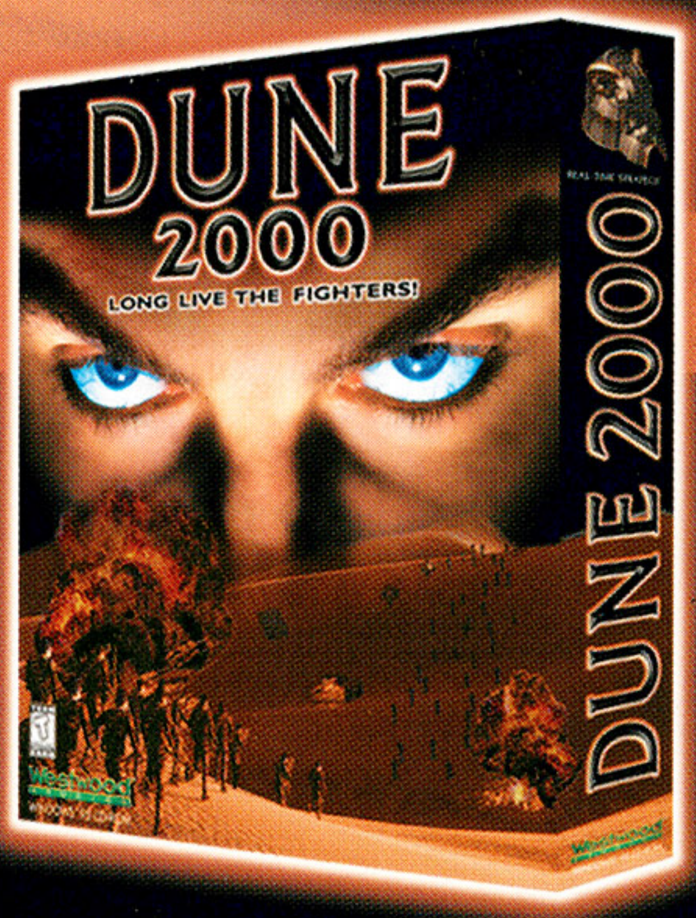

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