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ISSUE 1
NOV 99

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 CARMAGEDDON 2 • FINAL FANTASY VIII • WILD METAL COUNTRY • COLONY WARS • VERDE ANTES • SILICON VALLEY



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01

THE MONSTER AWAKENS

NOVEMBER 1998



GAME BOY





TUROK[®]

SEEDS OF EVIL™

Acclaim[®]

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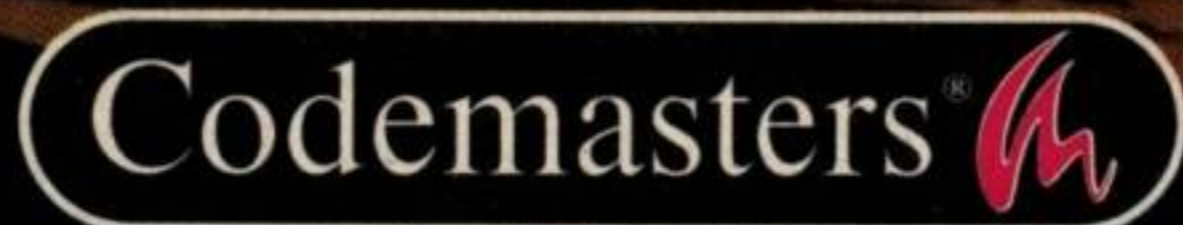


TM

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PlayStation® version supports

DUAL SHOCK

ALPHA REPORT

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030

Interstate '82

Strap on your machine guns and put the pedal of your DeLorean to the metal in the sequel to *Interstate '76*.



046

Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

Discover why *Turok* was a mere stroll in the Jurassic Park, as we unveil the blood and guts-drenched sequel...



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Sonic Adventure

Sweet dreams might be created by this, but it's the iconic blue hedgehog who'll be making the Dreamcast a reality.



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Tomb Raider III

The exploits of Ms Lara Croft have enthralled us all in two adventures. Now prepare for even more high jinks...



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Metal Gear Solid

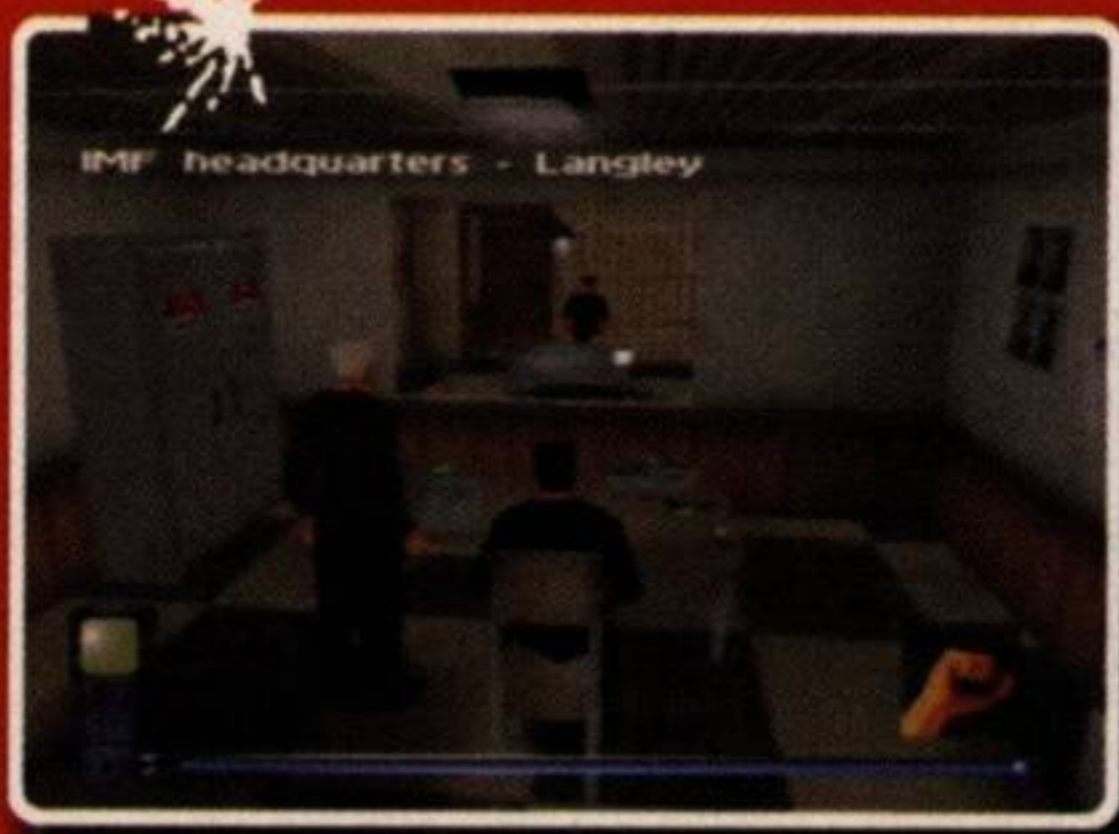
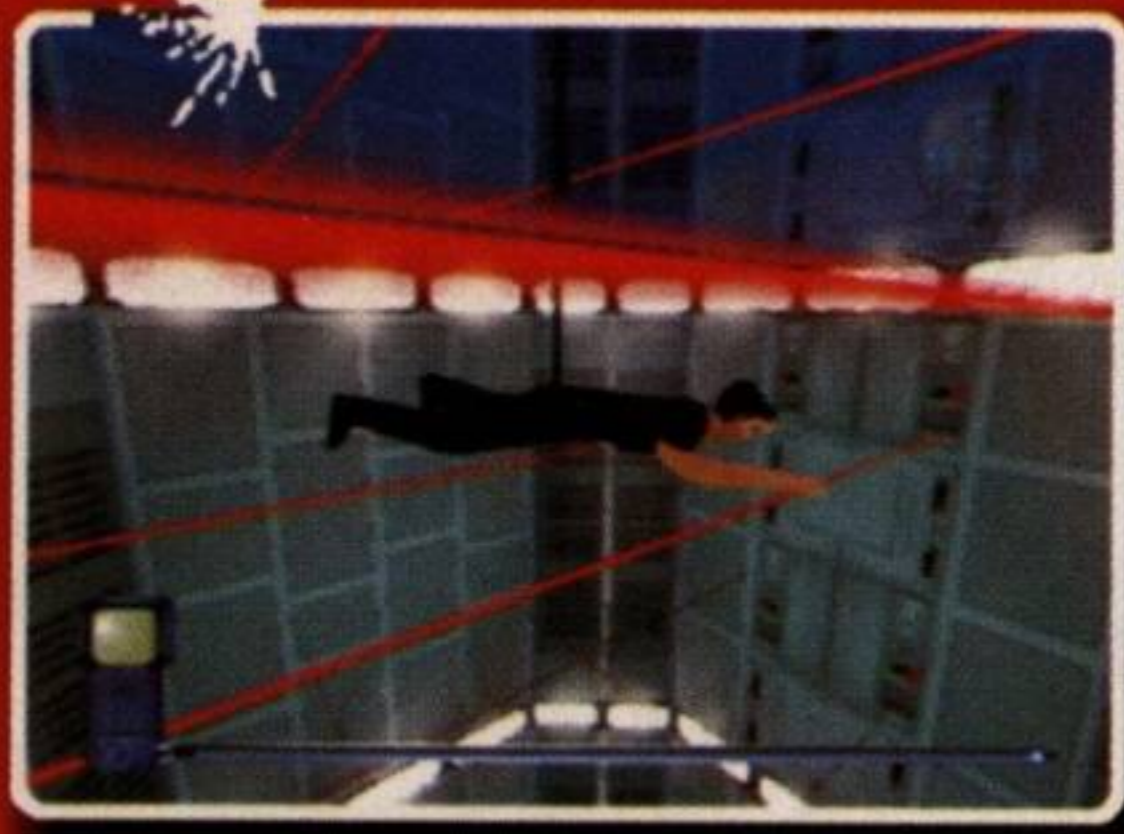
Voted Game of the Show at E3 this Konami hit heads up a Foreign Office packed with a host of massive reviews.



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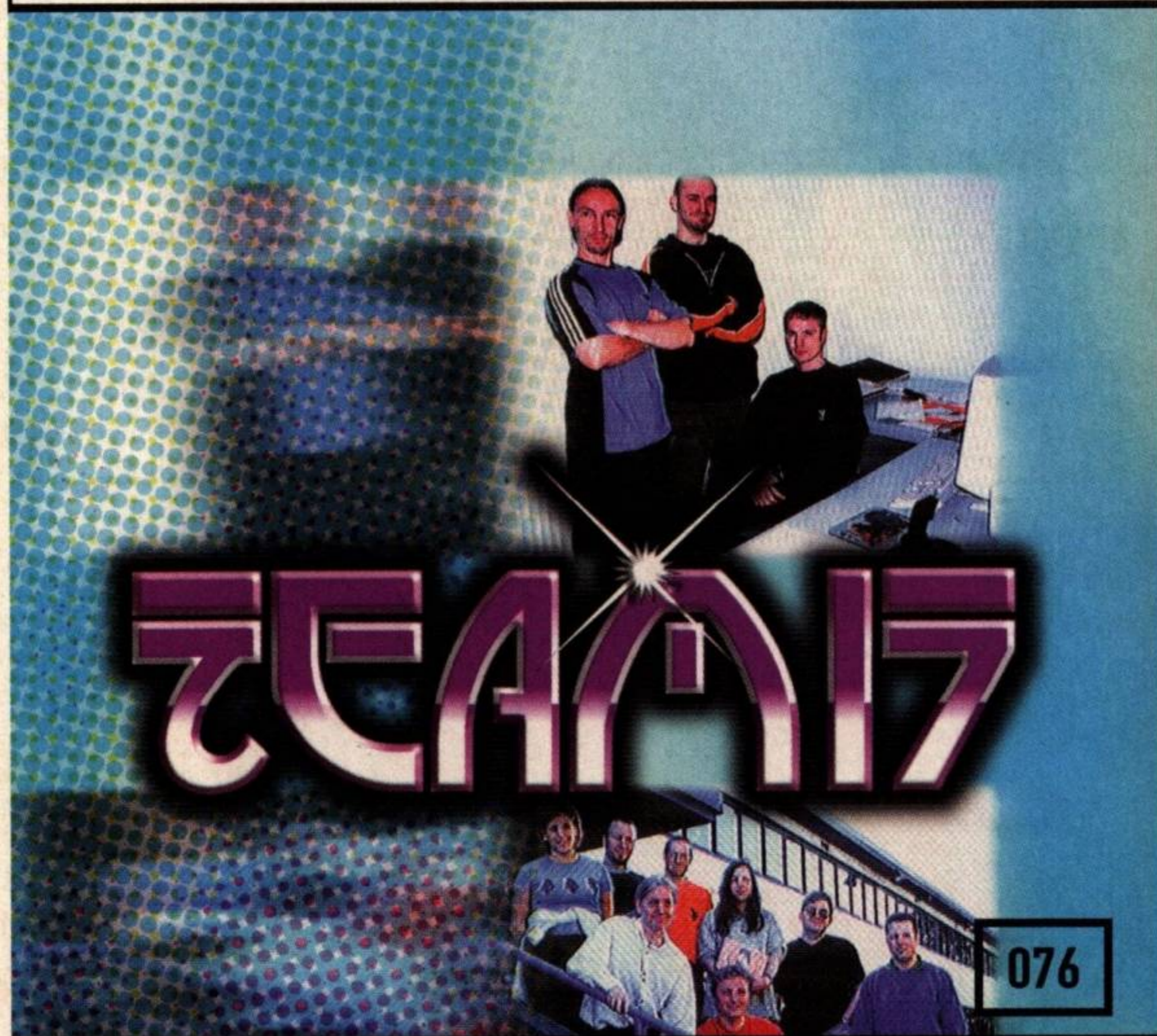
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TOKYO GAME SHOW REPORT

Sega showing off the Dreamcast to the public for the first time was reason enough for us to attend, but wait until you see what else Tokyo had in store...

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With its Japanese launch imminent, the Dreamcast is considered by many to be Sega's last stand. Find out more in our in-depth special report...

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Exclusive to Total CONTROL, the *Worms* veterans reveal their new and forthcoming releases for next year and the next millennium.

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LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Total CONTROL delves into the incestuous worlds of film and games to ask the question: Will interactive entertainment ever usurp the cinematic experience?



YOU AND WHOSE ARMY?



BIG GAME. BAD ATTITUDE.

SMALL SOLDIERS THE MOVIE INVADERS CINEMAS FROM OCTOBER 23RD



THOSE IN CONTROL

JUSTIN



The video games industry is as exciting as it's ever been, with triple-A titles on existing formats becoming increasingly commonplace and the next generation of super consoles looming just over the horizon. In a couple of months time we'll be running our first batch of Dreamcast game reviews – almost a full year before the console is released in Europe. The buzz surrounding Sega's new box of tricks is spreading throughout the entire industry and beyond, as more and more third party developers

pledge their support and confirm that they are developing software for the most powerful games console the world has ever seen. Power is one thing, but software support is another, and a console without plenty of quality software will inevitably fail, however impressive its specifications are. With well over 50 third party games already confirmed for the Dreamcast, however, I'm pleased to say that it doesn't look like that's a mistake Sega will be making twice.

NICK



As fast as the technology evolves in this industry (was it only three years ago that the PlayStation was cutting edge technology?), the software evolves equally as quickly. An obvious statement to make, but one worth pondering for a while. The difference between the two sides is the same as the difference between science and art.

As processors get faster and graphics become more real and developers become accustomed to working with the new technologies, we are finding games that are no longer driven by polygon counts and the like, but by the imagination. A few recent examples spring to mind: *Final Fantasy VII*, *Mario 64* and *Metal Gear Solid*. Could these games have reached the status of an art form already? *FF VII* and *MGS* both have a strong narrative and deal with issues and themes that wouldn't be out of place on a cinema screen. *Mario 64*, on the other hand, deals with concepts in a more abstract fashion.

CLIFF



While Sega's new Dreamcast super console is certainly a great leap forward in console technology, I'm not sure that it represents the future of interactive home entertainment. With the announcement this week of Motorola's partnership with VM Labs, the future is looking bright for media processor-based set top boxes running DVD games and movies. The awesome processing power inside these machines could do more to revolutionise the computer games industry than the PlayStation and the

Voodoo card put together. With the advances in 3D graphics already in the pipeline, the next year or so should see some remarkable things. Alongside this, the introduction of interactive digital TV via satellite and cable could also boost the popularity and technical sophistication of on-line multiplayer gaming. Some developers are already talking about thousand-player games within the next few years. How's that for a Deathmatch?

WILL



Sony's contribution to the computer game industry is well known. They have successfully managed to redefine the legacy left by Sega and Nintendo by proving that computer games can be an equally worthwhile past-time for adults as they are for kids. But is this necessarily the case? It remains to be seen whether Sony have actually made video games cool, or only the PlayStation. One thing is sure, the adult market is there, and Sega are going to have a lot on their hands when attempting to pull Sony's

userbase over to their side of the fence – especially after the failure of the Saturn. A strong advertising campaign is needed soon, before Sony start their PlayStation 2 build-up. Early indications are good, though, with an impressive display of companies already signed up and an equally good software line-up. If it starts selling well it could really take off, but personally I'd feel a lot safer if I were in Sony's camp.

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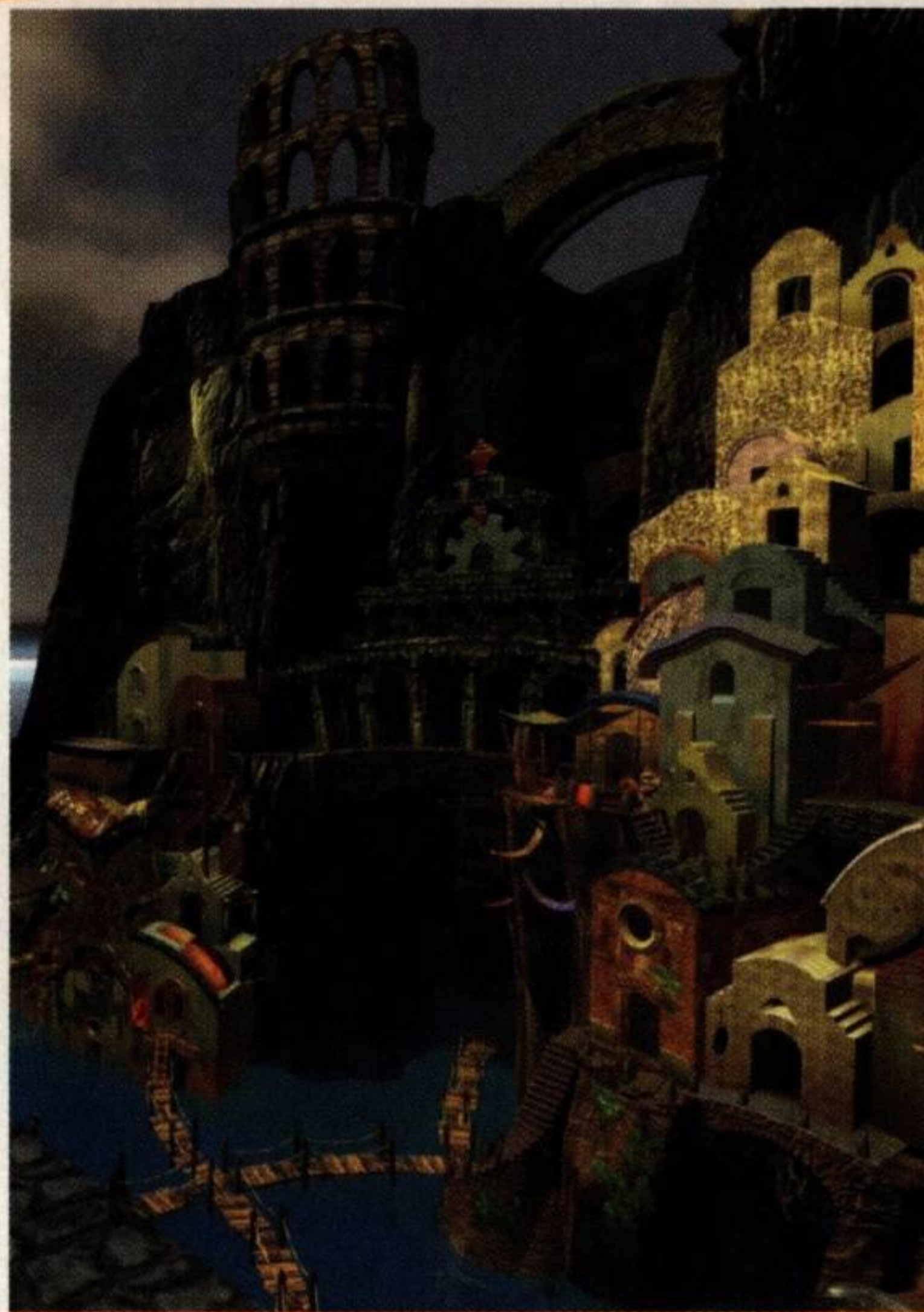
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No. of Nights	no less than 30
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Accommodation	Reah Outskirts
Meal Basis	none
No. of Nights	no less than 30
Depart from	all good games retailers 21/7
Return travel	you'll be lucky
Accommodation	Reah Port
Meal Basis	you are the breakfast
No. of Nights	no less than 30
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REPORTAGE

Total CONTROL BEGINS ITS LAUNCH ISSUE WITH EXCLUSIVE INFORMATION ON THE BLACKBIRD PROJECT FROM MOTOROLA; PLUS MORE ON SEGA'S DREAMCAST, AN IN-DEPTH REPORT ON EUROPE'S FIRST VIDEO GAME DEDICATED TV CHANNEL AND THE LOW-DOWN ON ALL THE LATEST MULTI-FORMAT GAMING NEWS.

VM LABS' PEDIGREE

Although VM Labs had been extremely secretive about the technical specifications of the Project X processor, they finally unveiled the device in May of this year. The company was founded in 1994 from a strong gaming background. Richard Miller, the Chairman and CEO of VM Labs, is a veteran of Atari, where he helped design the ill-fated 64-bit Jaguar games console. Nicholas Lefevre, Vice President of business and legal affairs, previously worked with Commodore, Atari, Sega and many other hardware and software companies, while Vice President of third party development, Bill Rehbock was VP of research and development and technical support at Sony Computer Entertainment America. Despite his intimate knowledge of Sony's forthcoming PlayStation 2 console, he chose to work on VM Labs Project X instead – which must say something about the relative merits of the two systems.



This could be a case for Mulder and Scully. The VM Labs Project X chip was unveiled in May



SUPERSONIC BLACKBIRD

A newly announced partnership deal between two high-tech companies shows the way forward for interactive entertainment in the next millennium. Far in advance of any current console or home computer, the Blackbird project from Motorola, incorporating the revolutionary Project X media processor from VM Labs, could be the future of computer gaming.

It's not every day that a new technology emerges which could totally revolutionise home entertainment, but a quiet press release on the Internet could be the first sign of just such an event. Giant electronics manufacturers Motorola, who make the processors found in Macintosh computers (amongst other things), have announced a partnership deal with VM Labs to use that company's revolutionary Project X technology in their next generation Blackbird hardware format.

Project X is a super-powerful 128 bit RISC-chip processor capable of over 1,500 MIPS, reputedly faster than a

hypothetical 1000MHz Pentium II, and with graphics capabilities superior to even second generation PC graphics accelerators. The technical specifications of the device are truly impressive. It can easily perform functions impossible on other formats, such as real-time ray-

tracing, Gouraud and Phong shading, Alpha blending with 256 levels of transparency, and supports the use of sixteen million colours and many different drawing primitives rather than the simple polygons used by other hardware systems.

Project X represents the first wave of a new generation of devices called Media Processors, which have the potential to revolutionise the home entertainment industry over the next few years. The games potential of the Project X system should come as no surprise. Richard Miller,

PROJECT X REPRESENTS THE FIRST WAVE OF A NEW GENERATION OF DEVICES CALLED MEDIA PROCESSORS, WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO REVOLUTIONISE THE HOME ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

CEO of VM Labs, comes from Atari, and many other people working on the system have backgrounds in games hardware.

The Motorola Blackbird hardware architecture combines the processing power of Project X with an embedded communications engine for

TECHNICAL SPEC: According to information published by Motorola, the key hardware features of the Blackbird platform are as follows:

Main processors:

PowerPCTM MPC860 SAR running at 54 MHz.

Project X 128-bit RISC Media Processor

Memory Subsystem:

72-Pin 60 ns DRAM SIMM (32 MBytes max)

80-Pin 90 ns FLASH SIMM (8 MBytes max)

Up to 2 MBytes Flash Boot ROM

8 KBytes NVRAM

Audio: Complete DolbyTM AC3 Outputs

Networking: DAVIC A0 Network Interface Module

Graphics and Video Subsystem:

MPEG2 Transport Demultiplexer

MPEG Audio/Video Decoder

PAL/NTSC compatibility

Digital Video Encoder

Control inputs:

Consumer IR

IR Blaster

Front Panel Buttons

Input/Output Features:

10BaseT Ethernet

IEEE1394 Firewire (2)

RS-232 Serial Ports (2)

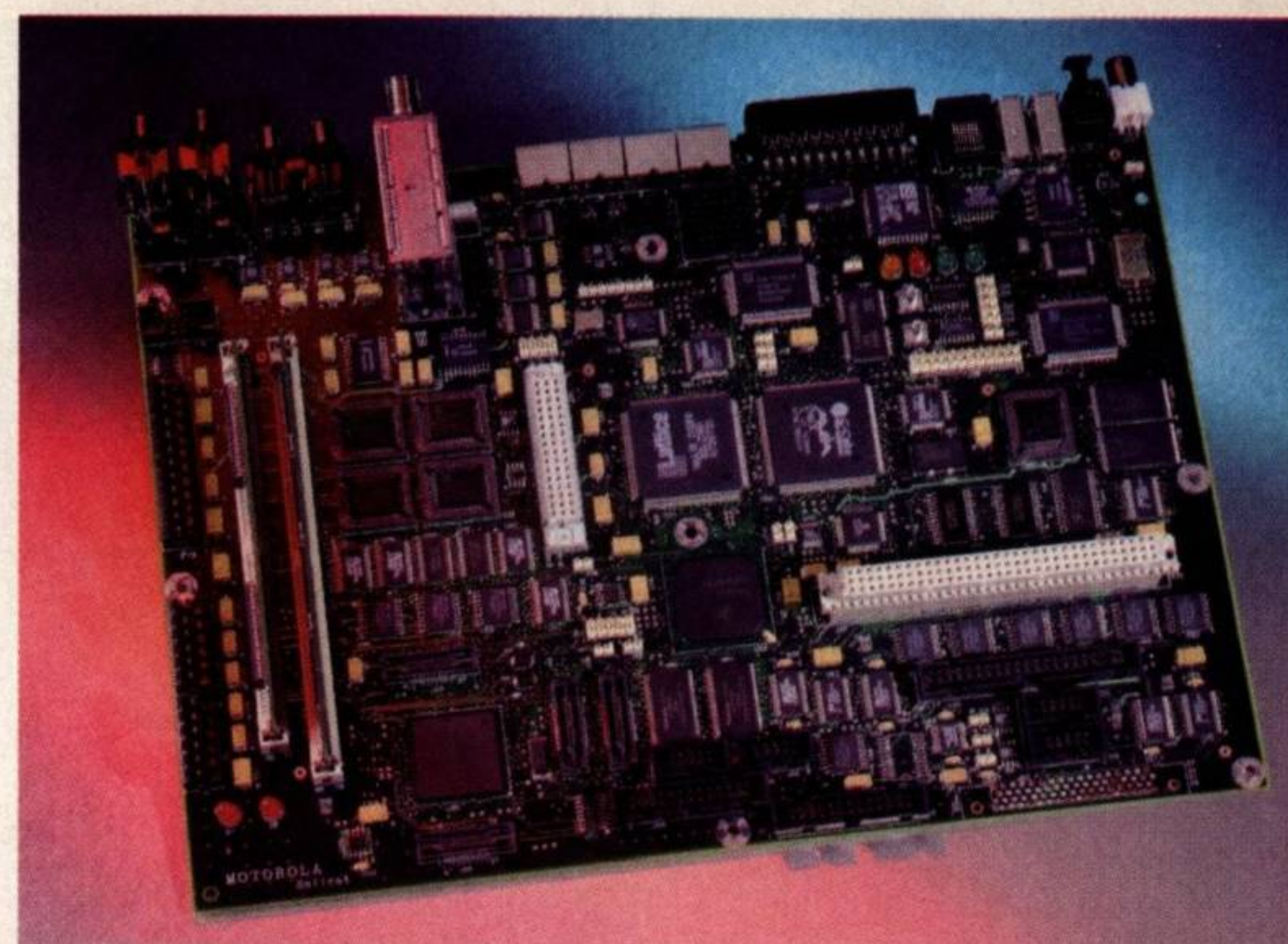
S-Video IN / OUT

IEC-958 S/PDIF

PCMCIA (1)

Antenna / RF IN

Channel 3/4 RF Out



This impressive collection of small black things is the main circuit board of the Blackbird. 3D graphics power without add-on accelerator cards

unparalleled interactive capability, around forty megabytes of memory, and is controlled by a 54Mhz PowerPC CPU as used in high-end Macintosh computers. The software running all of this advanced technology includes a real-time operating system, full Java support, an HTML-based Internet engine and broadband networking support. The Blackbird is capable of

automatically downloading new software and updates, adapting and reconfiguring itself to new formats as they appear.

Potential uses for the new hardware format include far more than just set-top DVD-based entertainment units. Proposed applications include such diverse ideas as in-car navigation systems, hotel booking and registration

systems, and even karaoke machines. In a move which should ensure widespread support for the new format, Motorola are providing a development kit for the format to third party manufacturers of software and hardware applications. Support for the system has already been confirmed by Dolby Labs and the working group responsible for the MPEG graphics formats. **TC**

SOUTH PARK FOR CHRISTMAS?

Cue the usual "You killed Kenny!" high jinx...

Aclaim, having announced at E3 that they'll be bringing a first-person shooter based on the hugely successful *South Park* series to the N64, have recently hinted that the game will be in the shops before Christmas. Though this will be initially limited to America, we can expect it over here early next year. Players will take on the roles of one of the four South Park bad-asses – Kyle, Stan, Cartman or Kenny – in one of the more surreal stories ever to grace the show.

A very big, scary comet is approaching the Earth, but – fortunately – it's not on a collision course. Unfortunately, it seems to be making the local South Park turkeys revolt by refusing to get eaten, painting their faces Braveheart blue and generally going a bit mad. It's up to you to stop these overgrown chickens from causing too much trouble. Luckily for you, you are armed with a host of gadgets, from cow launchers and fart dolls to 'auto-egg'ers that use live sniper chickens. The plot thickens when you discover that Cartman's mum has been kidnapped by aliens and

Skuzzlebutt is out of control, so you'll have your hands full turning things back to normal. (Normal? In South Park?)

South Park will use the same graphics engine as that seen in Acclaim's spectacular *Turok 2*, and will feature all of the characters that feature regularly in the show, along with hundreds of hilarious sound bites to totally immerse you in the South Park world. There will also be a four player mode with five different styles of play, including capture the flag and the enticing 'Kick the Baby' mode... hmmm. **TC**



EA ARE THE LAW

SOFTWARE GIANTS ELECTRONIC ARTS MAY BE TAKEN TO COURT FOLLOWING AN ACCUSATION OF INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE BY GERMAN PUBLISHERS, TOPWARE. TOPWARE CLAIM THAT EA RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE

INCLUSION OF BACK CATALOGUE TITLES INTO THEIR EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL *GOLD GAMES* SERIES. THEY WENT ON TO SUGGEST THAT THIS IS BEING USED IN ELECTRONIC ARTS' OWN FORTHCOMING PC CD-ROM COMPILATION SERIES.



Does regular exposure to Europe's first ever television channel devoted to video games induce erratic shopping habits in viewers? Concerned citizens are demanding answers...



GAME ONE LAUNCHES

Europe's first TV channel dedicated to video games launches at ECTS

Monday 7th September saw the launch of Europe's first ever television channel completely dedicated to video games. Available only in France at the moment, Game One is a bilingual channel with French and English being the two languages supported. To receive the channel viewers will need a special decoding box that plugs into a digital TV.

The channel is a result of a partnership between Canal +, the French TV station, and Infogrames, the French powerhouse games publishers. It is

rumoured that Canal + have invested £2 million with a £4 million marketing spend.

Game One is a 24 hour channel and it offers a range of programming, from games news to specialist game features and also programmes on the subjects on the periphery of the video games, such as music and films. The six regular programmes are as follows: News, Game Play, Top, Level One, Focus and Warzone.

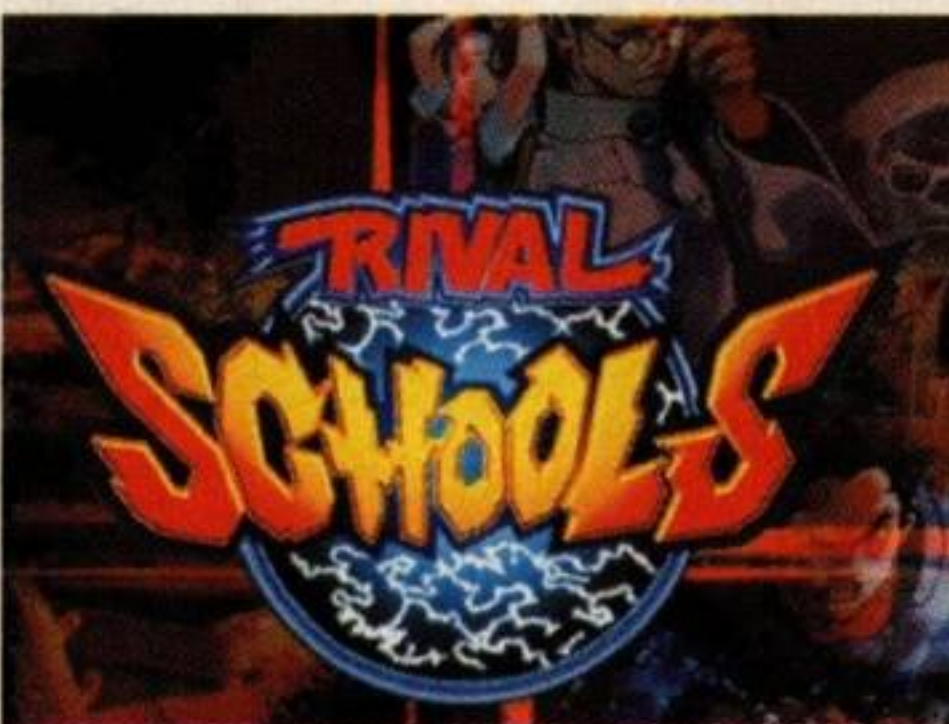
Considering the lack of success that UK television has had with the magazine format of video game TV shows, Game One has its work cut out. However, Managing Director of the channel,

Nathalie Coste-Cerdan says that, "In France we haven't had the same experience with games TV shows as you have had in the UK. There are many games shows on Canal + with a high audience. A lot depends on how the way it is programmed I think. There is a growing need for information about games and we think it is the right time to launch the channel."

There are plans to launch the channel in the UK if and when the channel is a success on the other side of 'La Manche'. Watch out video game magazines, your days are numbered...? **TC**



Capcom have announced their support for the Dreamcast, and games will include an all-new version of *Resident Evil*



CAPCOM AND CONQUER:

Europe awaits new Capcom operation

Capcom Entertainment, one of the biggest software companies on the planet, with sales of over 40 million units in their impressive 19-year history, have recently established a new European HQ in London. From here they will manage the new Capcom Eurosoft department of their global network. Capcom's many successes to date include *Mega Man*, *Darkstalkers* and the incredibly

popular *Street Fighter* series, which became the first game ever to receive a full-feature length film conversion. Further developments are rife with the recent announcement that *Resident Evil* will be making an appearance on the Sega Dreamcast. Scheduled to ship shortly after the Japanese launch, the game will feature an entirely new adventure and is currently known as '*Bio-Hazard Code: Veronica*' in

Japan. This news is good for both the consumer and Sega, and begins Capcom's commitment to the new console. The *Resident Evil* series has sold a phenomenal 10 million copies worldwide, and the new game may help Sega break into Sony's solid user base. With the new Eurosoft operation we should expect to be seeing it shortly after the European launch of the Dreamcast next year. **TC**



An Adventure of Epic Proportions



Holy Magic Century



The First RPG **EVER** For The Nintendo 64



GALLEON FOR DREAMCAST
CONFOUNDING FACTOR, THE TEAM BEHIND THE ORIGINAL
TOMB RAIDER, HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR LATEST
GAME, *GALLEON*, IS ALMOST A CERTAINTY FOR
DREAMCAST. A POSSIBLE RELEASE DATE OF LATE 1999
HAS BEEN PENCILLED IN AND THE COMPANY ARE

CURRENTLY IN TALKS WITH SEGA ABOUT THE EXCITING
PROPOSITION. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A
DREAMCAST VERSION OF *GALLEON*, A SPOKESPERSON FOR
CONFOUNDING FACTOR SAID, "IT IS 95 PERCENT CERTAIN
THAT IT WILL HAPPEN."

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

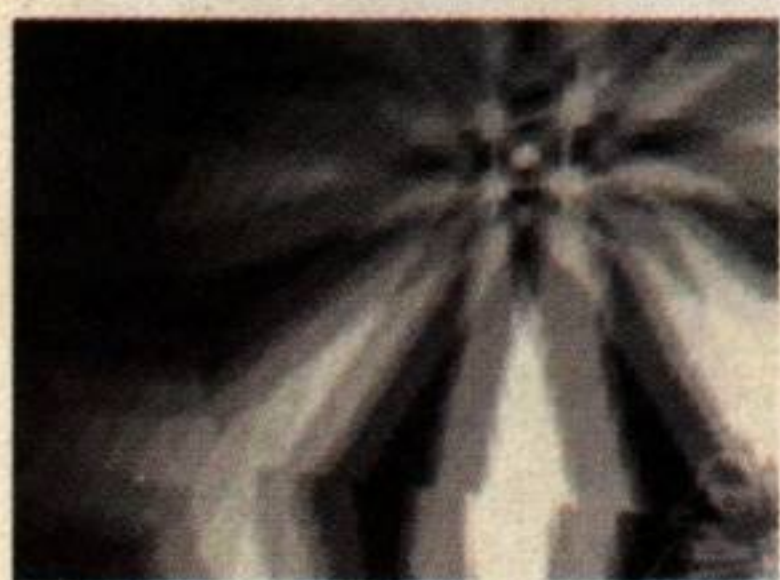
Codemasters get funky with the PlayStation sequencer



your own samples or can be edited with the help of an editing suite that allows you to alter things like attack rate, frequency and apply all manner of effects. The idea is that the talented amongst you should be able to make any sound you wish.

Also included is a rather natty little video sequencer. This works in the same way as the music sequencer, with a library of 3D objects and effects you can use. You can also edit these to your heart's content. If you want, though, you can set *Music* to automatically produce a video to go along with your musical masterpiece.

Just from looking at Beta code, *Music* is an impressive piece of software already which should see a whole new surge of interest in the PlayStation. We'll have a full review next issue. **TC**



Potential DJs will soon be able to sample a wide range of music on the PlayStation thanks to those funky types at Codemasters

After *Fluid* showed that the PlayStation was capable of being a multimedia platform, Codemasters have announced *Music*, a music and video sequencer for the PlayStation. The title is looking about as accomplished as is possible with Sony's CD-based machine, featuring 16 track sequencing for both music and video.

Individual samples can be loaded from the CD and then placed into a sequencer and arranged to make a track. Even more variety is added by giving you the option to use and edit one of hundreds of individual samples. These can be either arranged to make



The announcement that Rare's follow-up to *Goldeneye* is expected to ship next summer is welcome news



UPDATE: PERFECT DARK

The excitement for Rare's follow-up to *Goldeneye* is mounting. A showing of the game at the recent ECTS had journos earmarking the game as the big one for N64 next year. These recently released screenshots show just how promising the game looks – it is rumoured to utilise the N64's 4MB expansion pak and run in hi-res mode. For those of you

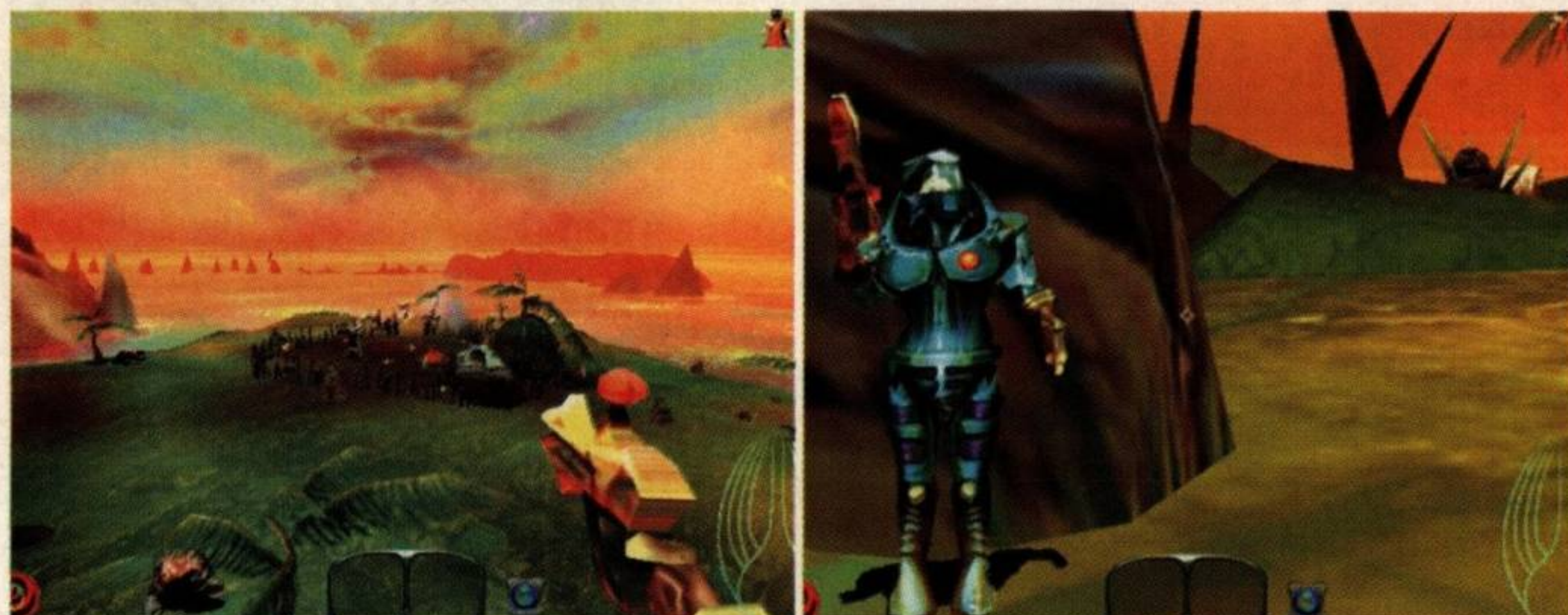
who are unaware of the plot, it concerns a certain Joanna Dark and her mission to infiltrate and uncover the shady dealings of a mega-corporation of the future. Rare promise better enemy AI and a faster engine as some of the improvements over the original *Goldeneye* game.

Perfect Dark is expected to ship sometime next summer. We wait with baited breath. **TC**

YOU'VE SWITCHED YOUR TARGETING COMPUTER OFF...

LUCASARTS' 'STAR WARS TAKE' ON THE RTS GENRE, *FORCE COMMANDER*, HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL 'LATE 1999'. RUMOURS HAVE IT THAT THE COMPANY HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WITH TECHNOLOGY, STAFF AND THE FACT THAT THE GAME IS TO BE REWRITTEN TO INCLUDE ELEMENTS FROM THE NEW STAR WARS FILM. HOWEVER, TOM SARRIS OF LUCASARTS QUASHED

THESE RUMOURS BY SAYING THAT THEY WERE, "ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE." FOR RUMOURS SURROUNDING THE SETTING OF THE TITLE, HE RESPONDED: "TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, *FORCE COMMANDER* WILL STILL BE A CLASSIC STAR WARS TITLE. THERE ARE NO PLANS TO INCLUDE EPISODE ONE ELEMENTS IN *FORCE COMMANDER*." SO THERE.



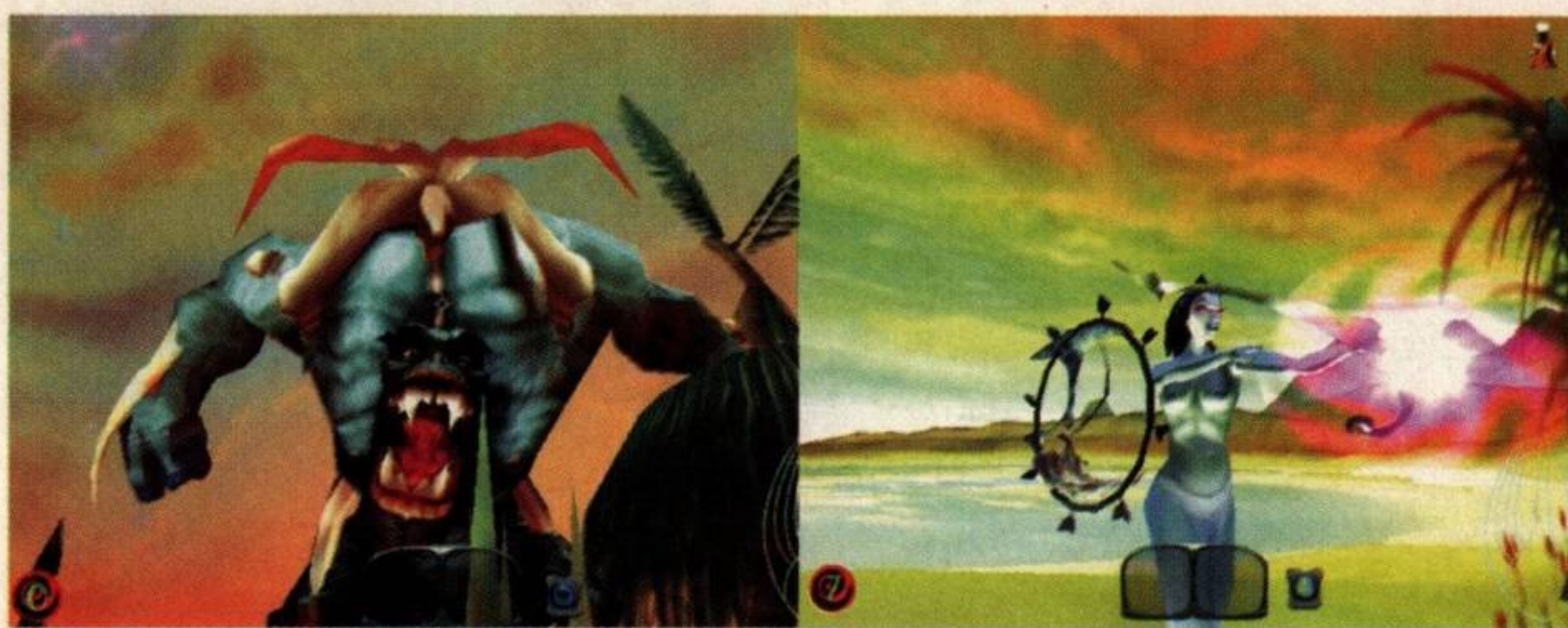
UPDATE:FEE-FI-FOE-FUM

Smell the blood of Interplay's Giants

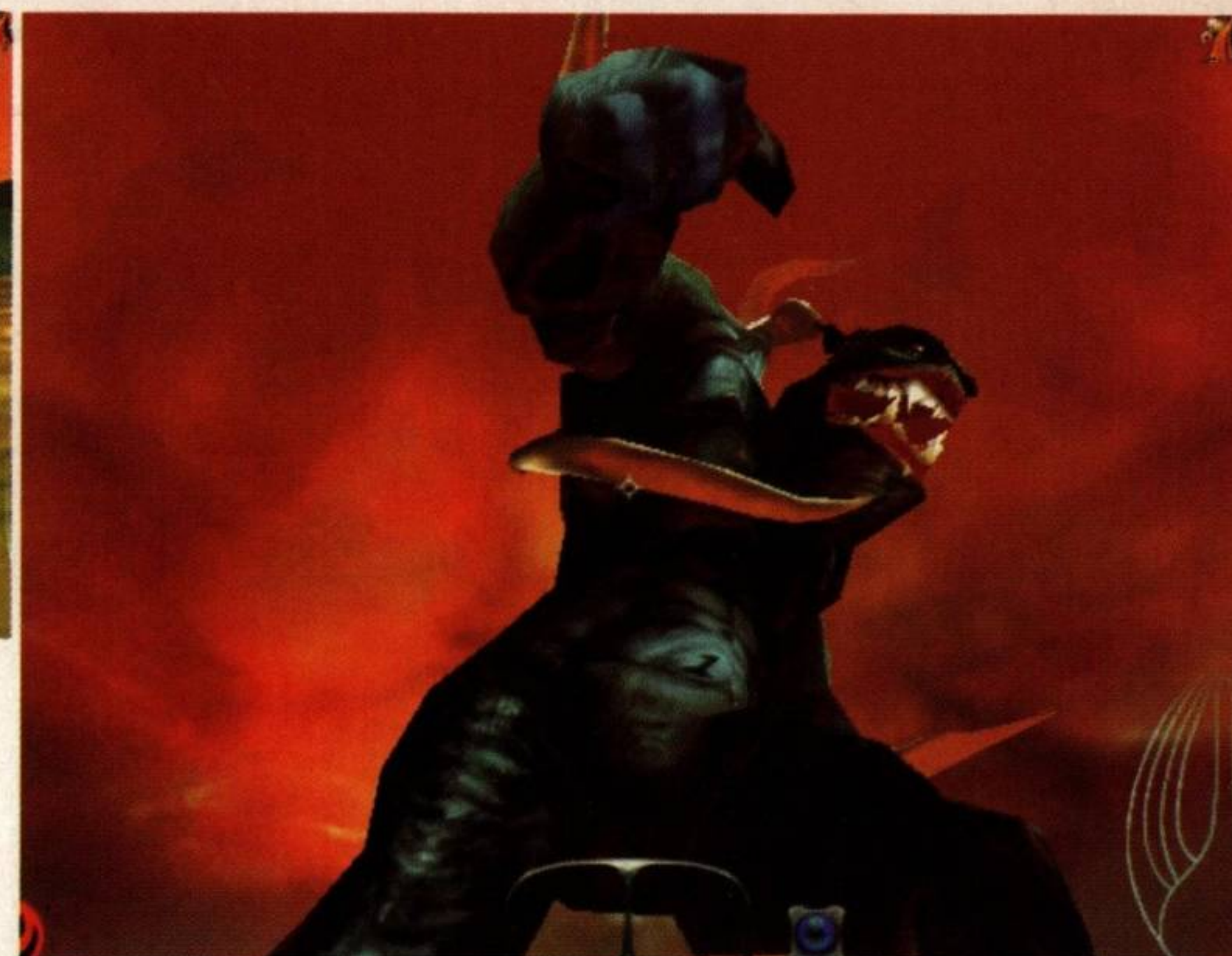
Giants, from MDK developers, Planet Moon Studios, is hard to describe. The game basically sets up an environment with three main, and extremely distinctive, races and then pits them against each other in a fight for survival. Kind of... Players can choose to be the Sea Reapers, who represent magic and elemental forces; the Meccaryn, who have technology at their disposal; or the giant Kabuto (from where the

game's name arises) – a huge beast originally created by the Sea Reapers to defend themselves but which has outgrown them and gone it alone.

Other creatures inhabit the islands of the world in which *Giants* is set. The Smarties are a timid local race who present ever-improving gifts to any other character who will protect or feed them, and exploitation of these and other indigenous wildlife will affect each of the character's strengths and weaknesses.



Giants from Interplay will be a multiplayer action game playable in real-time 3D



"We really let our imaginations run wild when we began to put the story and game design together," said Nick Bruty, Planet Moon Studios' President. "We feel that we've encompassed all the important elements of gameplay, from creating complicated strategies that must consider two opponents and the challenge of diverse terrain, to the extreme intensity and action of the heat of battle."

Giants is a multiplayer action game played in real-time 3D. A switchable first and third-person floating camera allows a changing perspective to enhance various styles of play. Levels will be presented by up to 40 islands to conquer with an increasing number of features in later levels. Choice of character determines view, size, number of characters and style of play.

This three-way battle between the forces of magic, technology and brute savagery is scheduled to hit retail shelves Spring 1999. **TC**

THE RULES

1. Employees of Rapide Publishing and participating companies are strictly forbidden from entering.
2. Multiple entries will be thrown in the bin – it's as simple as that.
3. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entries should reach us no later than 11/12/98.

The address for entries is: Total CONTROL, Rapide Publishing, 1 Roman Court, 48 New North Road, Exeter, EX4 4EP. And don't forget to include your name and address somewhere on your entry.

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MINI FFVIII

SONY HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT SQUARE'S NEW RPG WILL BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE PDA - SONY'S MEMORY CARD/PORTABLE GAME PERIPHERAL. NO SPECIFIC DETAILS HAVE BEEN RELEASED AS YET, BUT JUDGING FROM THE POPULARITY OF *POKÉMON* GAMES IN JAPAN, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THIS IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN.

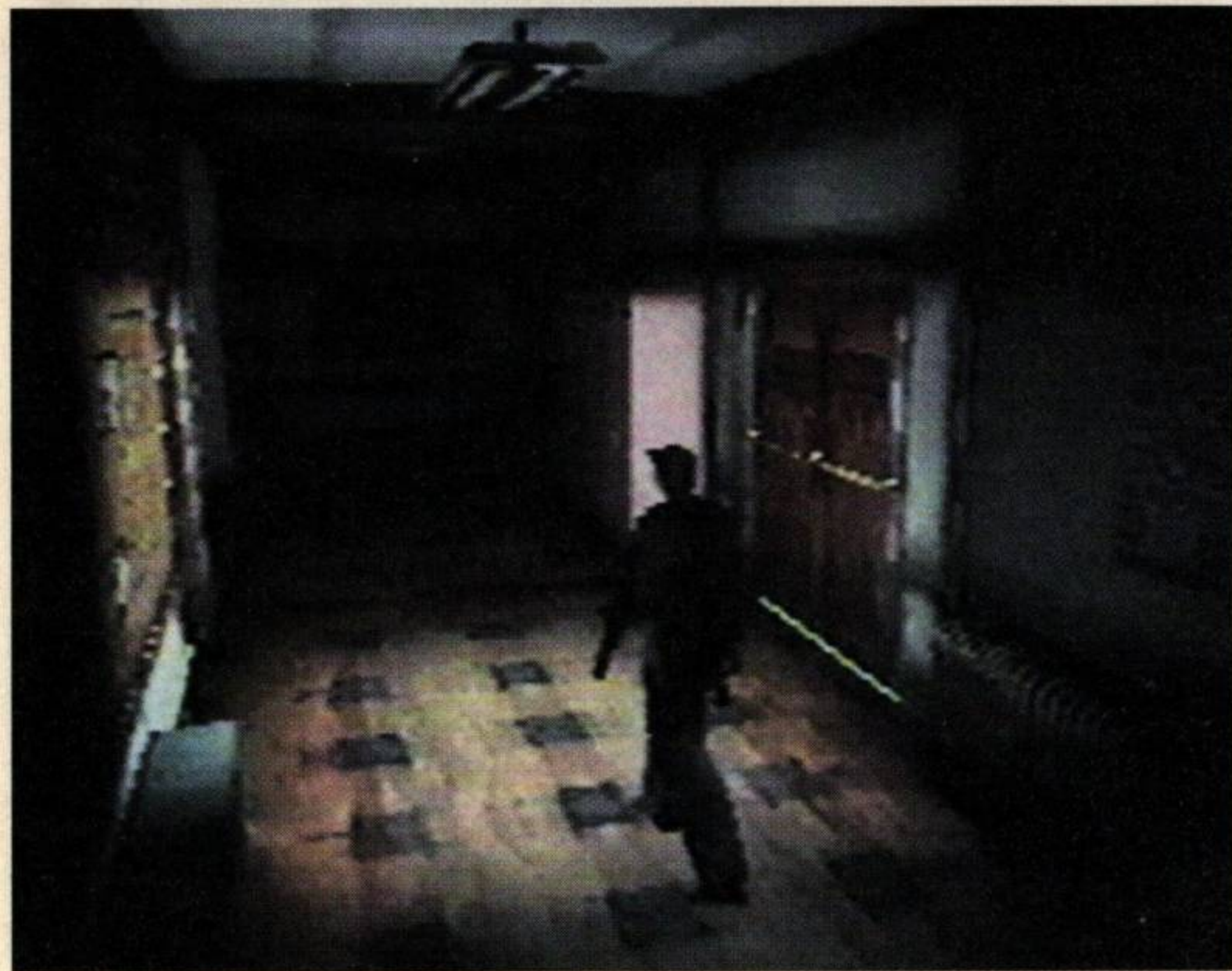
TUROK 2 IN BLACK

AFTER NINTENDO'S OWN GOLD CARTRIDGE *ZELDA* PROMOTION, ACCLAIM ARE FOLLOWING SUIT WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GAME WILL COME ON A BLACK CARTRIDGE. DETAILS OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN A BLACK COPY ARE NOT KNOWN YET, BUT A PRE-ORDER IS LIKELY.

IT'S QUIET. A BIT TOO QUIET...

Get ready to shout about Konami's *Silent Hill*

Konami are the latest software publishers to try their hand at the horror genre with *Silent Hill*. The game is set in a sleepy town where things start to go bump in the

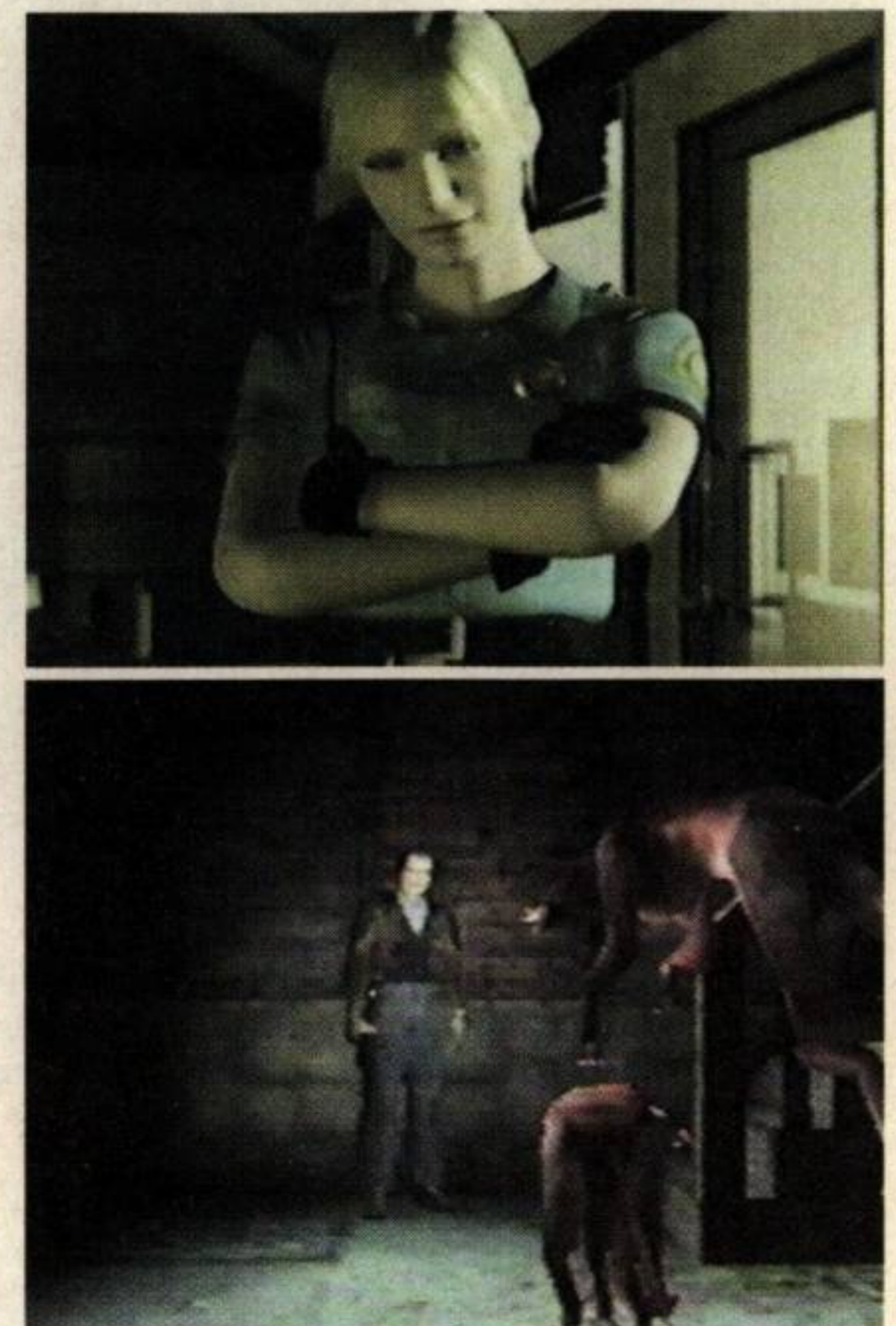


Why does anyone in a horror flick always head for the darkest corner?

night. The theme is therefore reminiscent of Capcom's *Resident Evil*, but with two main differences. Firstly, a cosmetic one - everything is drawn in polygons. This allows the programmers to use some wonderfully cinematic camera movements which enhance the atmosphere considerably. The other difference is that the horror side of it is unmistakably darker than that of *Resident Evil's* almost (in comparison) comic book-style shocks. Indeed, the game has courted controversy in Japan, with scenes where you have to shoot wandering, possessed babies. It is unlikely that these scenes will make it into the US and European versions.

Another amazing aspect to the game are the FMV cut scenes. This is the best work yet seen in the area of SGI animation, and you'd have to look twice to see that the computer generated characters aren't real! The detail goes right down to the capturing of facial expressions and movement of clothes.

As for gameplay, it is exploration and story-based, with a strong



narrative. You play a father who, after a car crash, discovers that his daughter is missing. You head to the nearest town, Silent Hill, to try and find her and discover the horrific goings on. And so the adventure begins...

Silent Hill is due for a release in the first half of 1999. Until then we'll keep you posted on what could be one of the games of the year. **TC**

HIRED GUNS

Psygnosis chose their San Francisco offices as the location to announce a new title for their 1999 line-up. Developed by Devil's Thumb Entertainment, *Hired Guns* is a remake of their 1993 Amiga and PC hit, and uses the very latest in 3D first-person technology. Using the highly acclaimed *Unreal* game engine, *Hired Guns* puts you in control of a squad of four highly skilled mercenaries, and by ingenious use of a split-screen control interface allows you to see through the eyes of each one simultaneously. This approach allows the gameplay to make full use of complex but realistic team tactics and the varied skills of each member of the team.

The game is set in the distant future, so naturally there is a devastating array of futuristic weapons available to the team, including a tractor-beam grappling gun, a powerful sniper rifle with zoom sight, and a light sabre-like power hacksaw. There are at least sixteen different weapons, many of them with multiple functions. The settings for the action are a series of stunningly designed levels which make full use of the *Unreal* engine's superb lighting effects. Clever graphical tricks make the levels look even bigger and more complex than they actually are.

When it comes to multiplayer on-line gaming, *Hired Guns'* unique team-tactics format allows for some interesting permutations on the usual deathmatch bloodbath. Up to eight players can take part in specially written multiplayer arenas designed to strike a balance between tactics and carnage. *Hired Guns* is due for release in the spring of next year. **TC**



PC FLIGHT SIM SCENE HEATS UP

With several PC flight sims due to be released onto the market in the forthcoming months - including the rather tasty *Total Air War* - Digital Integration are planning on entering the dogfight with their upcoming title, *F/A-18E Super Hornet*. While it's quite common for all flight sims to boast of unparalleled realism and depth, Digital Integration's latest sounds genuinely impressive. Alongside the super-smooth 3D accelerated graphics and the latest realistic flight model, the gameplay features a fully active virtual cockpit (so the buttons in your cockpit can be selected with the mouse), an unlimited amount of missions from the mission generator, an easy to use mission designer and a dynamic campaign mode in both the Barents Sea and Indian Ocean war-zones.

Digital Integration's previous experience includes *Apache Longbow*, *Hind* and *F16 Fighting Falcon*, so they aren't exactly novices in the genre. *F/A-18E Super Hornet* is set for a winter launch and should be featured in Issue 2 of *Total CONTROL*. **TC**



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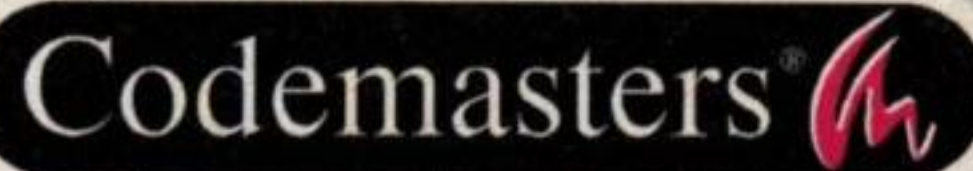
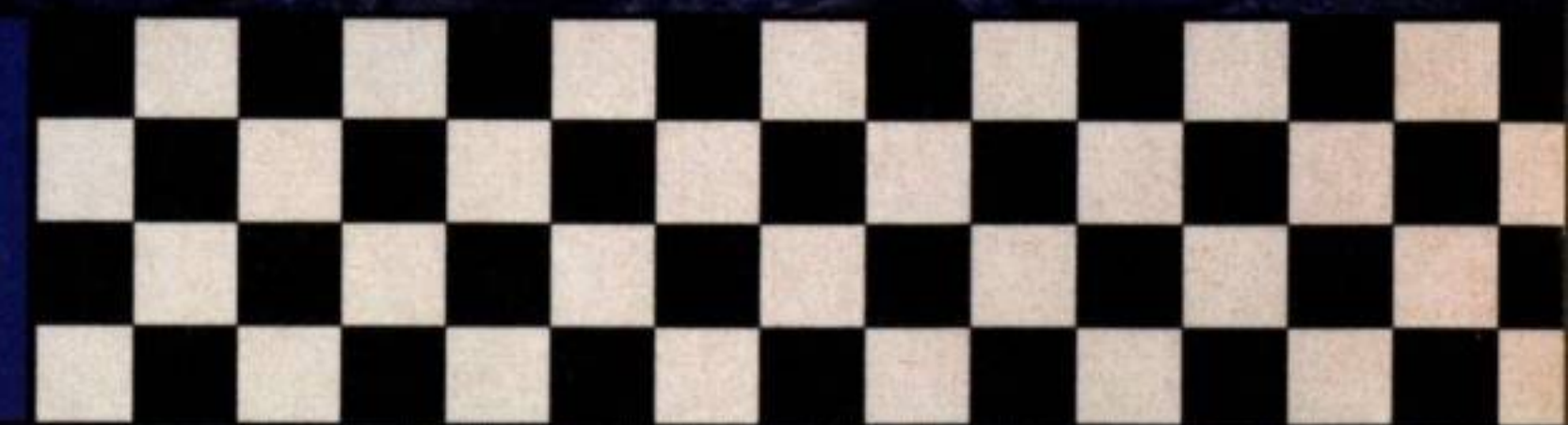
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DAIKATANA II
ION STORM HAVE REVEALED THAT THERE WILL DEFINITELY BE A FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR HIGHLY ANTICIPATED FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER, *DAIKATANA*. ROB LEGG, STATES THAT, "WE WILL BE DOING A SEQUEL TO *DAIKATANA* SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE. BUT THE TIME LINE FOR THAT IS UNDETERMINED AT THIS POINT. AS

FAR AS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IS CONCERNED, WE'RE DEVELOPING OUR OWN 3D GAME ENGINE RIGHT NOW." THIS NEWS SHOULD QUASH FEARS THAT THE FIRST GAME WOULD NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AND CONFIRMS IT IS STILL SLATED FOR AN END-OF-THE-YEAR RELEASE.

UPDATE: JET FORCE GEMINI



Don't forget folks, Rare are up to much more than *Perfect Dark*...

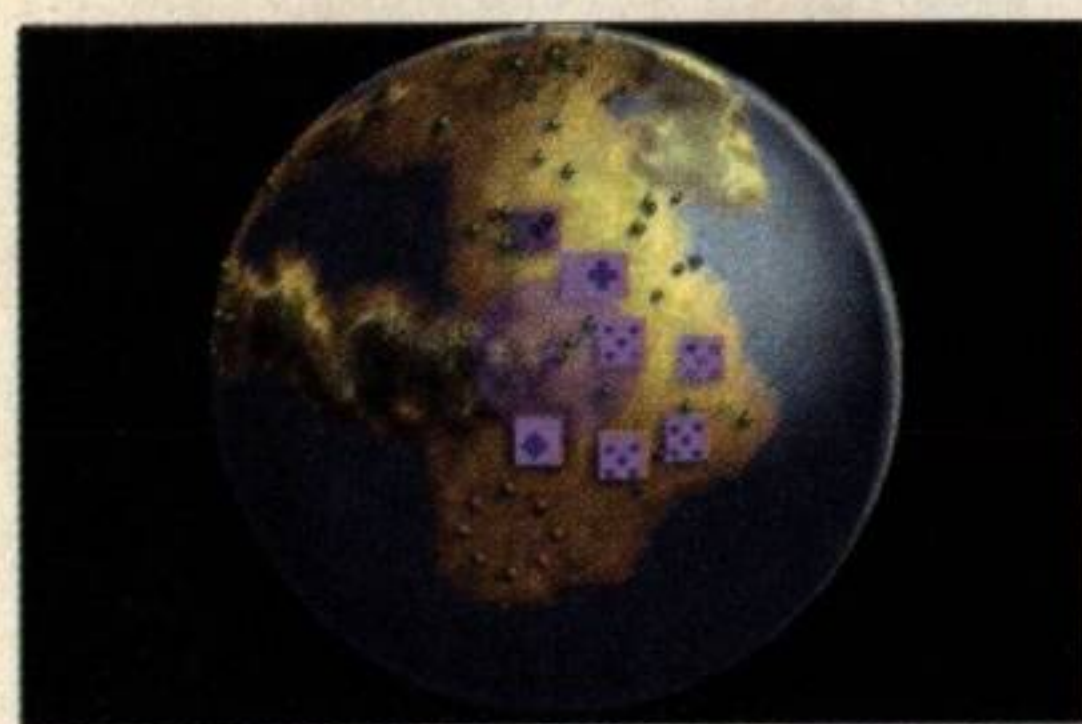
Somewhat overshadowed – but by no means overlooked – by *Perfect Dark* is Rare's 'other' game, *Jet Force Gemini*. There is a simple story behind the game: take one bad guy (named Mizar), add an interstellar war waged by that said bad guy, and enter into the equation a team of good guys. Guess who you play and what you have to do...? *Jet Force Gemini* is best described as a 3D shoot-'em-up with the added bonus of few puzzles to divert your attention from all that blasting. The player takes control of each of the Jet Force Gemini team and has to guide them to the Mizar's HQ for one massive scrap at the end and decide the fate of the universe. Yes, it's standard stuff, but with Rare

at the helm, you can be sure that *Jet Force Gemini* will be a pyrotechnical feast of a game. The game also boasts both a co-operative mode and deathmatch mode and utilises all manner of lighting effects and AI routines to produce what should be one of the biggest N64 titles next year. We'll keep you posted. **TC**



BEGIN THE BEGINNING

Populous: The Beginning demo available on the internet



Fans of the *Populous* series will be pleased to know that Bullfrog's first project without the illustrious Peter Molyneux is now available to download on the Internet

A sneak preview of Bullfrog's first project since the departure of founder Peter Molyneux is available to download from sites on the internet. The demo features three one player levels and one multiplayer level which can be played via a LAN connection or over the internet.

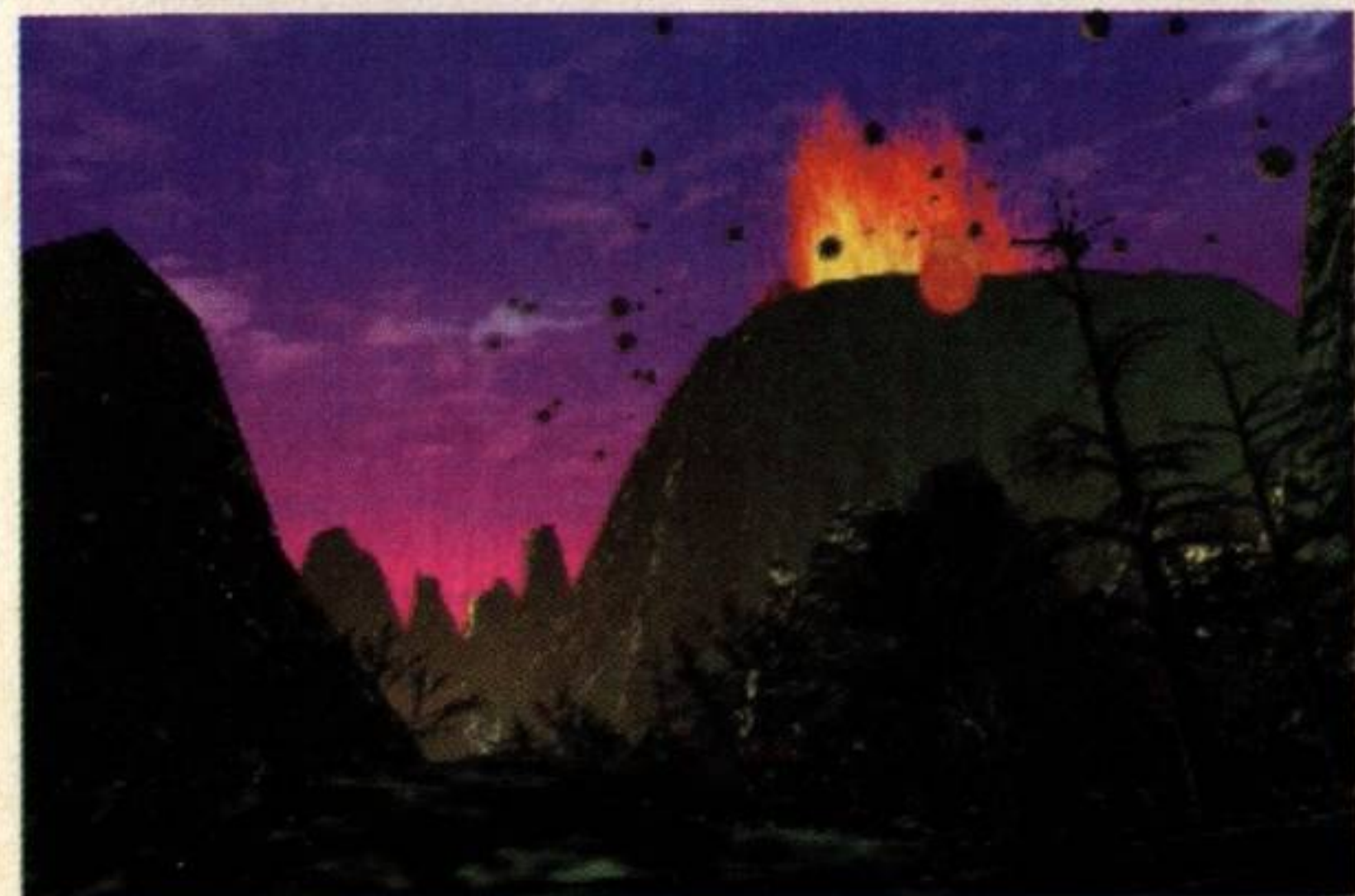
If you've ever played one of the previous *Populous* games, then you'll know pretty much what the game is about. The object of the game is to conquer worlds. You play the role of a god with command over a tribe of worshippers – their worship provides you with important Mana which gives you your power and the ability to cast spells. You are basically fighting against other

gods with control over rival tribes. The object of the game is to defeat each of the tribes and – with their tribe and Mana gone – the rival gods will cease to be. A simple idea, but also a mammothly popular one – the *Populous* series has sold millions worldwide.

The Beginning differs in many ways. Firstly there is the cosmetic side – the game looks gorgeous with or without a 3D accelerator. The main difference, however, is in the gameplay. The game has taken on something of real-time strategy element to it, with different grades of tribesman from brave to guard to firewarrior. Some also have abilities such as preaching, which can be used to convert followers from a rival tribe to your cause.

Then there are the spells, which although a lot have been retained from the original, take on a whole new meaning when used in this impressive 3D engine. These are activated through your presence on the planet. Magic such as fireballs and lightning are pretty basic, but the earthquake spell is especially impressive – hills and mountains can be levelled in one fell swoop.

Populous: The Beginning is sure to be a huge hit when it's released at the end of November. If you don't believe us then just pop over to Bullfrog's web page on EA's site or Download.com: www.download.com to see just what's in store. **TC**



This version will be very different from its predecessors. Most significantly, as these screenshots indicate, the game will look gorgeous with or without a 3D accelerator



PlayStation

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BRITISH SOFTWARE INDUSTRY IS BOOMING, BUT FOR HOW LONG? A WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED RECENTLY AT THE ECTS IN LONDON HAS NAMED BRITAIN AS EUROPE'S LEADING SOFTWARE MANUFACTURER, EXPORTING £417 MILLION WORTH OF GAMES PER ANNUM. THIS IS THANKS TO MAJOR BRITISH COMPANIES SUCH AS PSYGNOSIS, EIDOS

AND CODEMASTERS, BUT THE PAPER ALSO WARNS THAT THE BRITISH STRONGHOLD OVER THE MARKET IS IN DANGER OF DECLINING, MAINLY DUE TO PIRACY, WHICH IS PREDICTED TO STEAL OVER £135 MILLION FROM THE INDUSTRY THIS YEAR ALONE.

SILVER STEALS THE SHOW

Infogrames show that Square aren't the only ones who can make a great RPG



The Lone Ranger clearly wasn't the only one to realise the value of Silver

One of the surprise games of the recent ECTS show was *Silver* for the PC by Infogrames. The story takes place in a mythical land of Jarrah, where the obligatory evil ruler (named Silver) has an equally evil plan. He kidnaps 100 women in order to sacrifice them to the god Apocalypse. In return Apocalypse will make Silver his favourite evil-doer and bestow him plenty of power of the evil variety. Just what Silver wants. Of course, this is where you come in; you must take control of our hero, David, and rescue the women before they meet with an untimely end.

The game is probably best described as a European *Final Fantasy VII* with real-time combat. This is by far the most innovative feature of the game; the mouse gives you direct control of your

sword. For example, moving the mouse quickly forwards results in a thrust of the sword, moving from left to right results in a swipe, and a sharp backwards motion on the mouse causes your hero to turn quickly and attack any enemies that attack from behind.

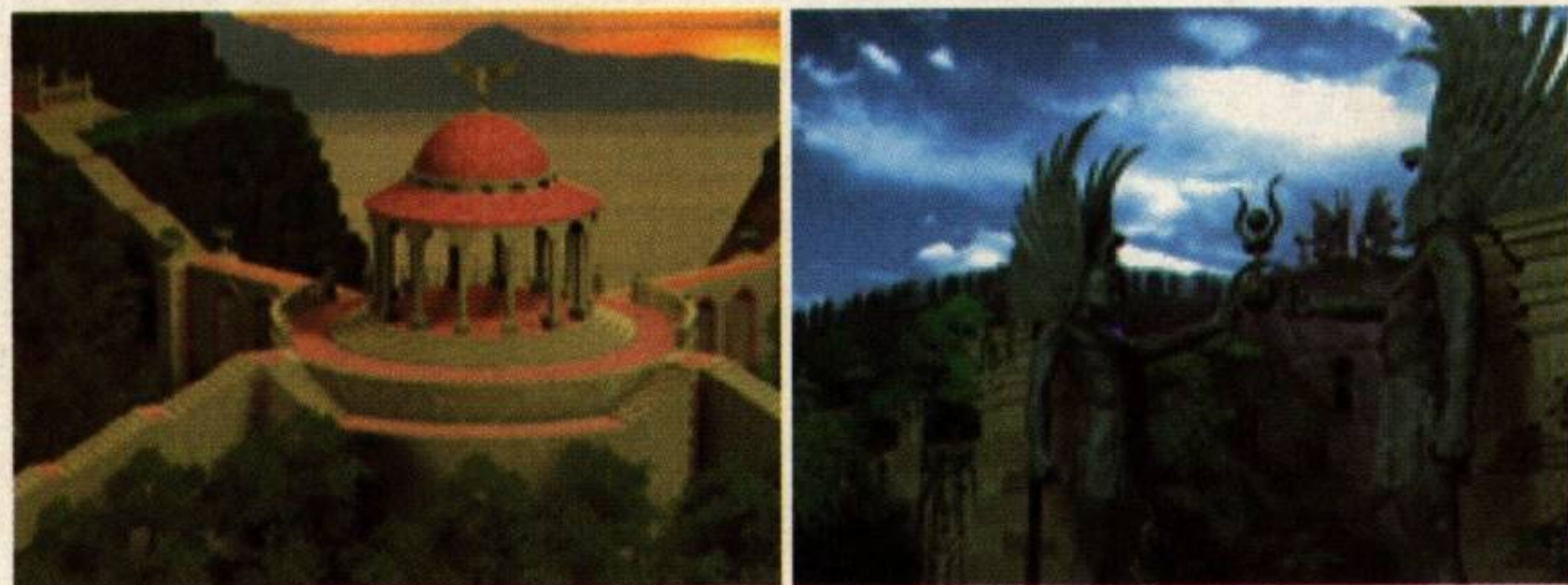
Silver features all the usual magic spells you might expect from a game of this genre: fire

bolts, health spells, invisibility and so on; all the spells have three levels of power.

One of the pleasing aspects of *Silver* is that the transition from action into cut scenes is as smooth as can be. This is because everything is done real time – something of a novelty in the FMV obsessed world we live in today.

The menu system used in *Silver* is extremely intuitive: clicking once on the right mouse button brings up a wheel of options on screen and while the game is still running – everything you need is here. The advantage of the menu popping up whilst still in game is that it lends itself to the real-time aspects of *Silver*. It is quite a skill to be able to run away from a horde of demons while trying to execute a spell from the menu.

The developers promise that *Silver* will offer gamers more than thirty hours gameplay, a figure which compares quite favourably with that of *Final Fantasy VII*. It also possible that the *Silver* will become the first in a long line of titles, with each one expanding further on the lovingly crafted universe we see here. And, as if that wasn't enough, there is also talk of a possible Dreamcast version. Now that should really give Square a run for their money... **TC**



With magic and mayhem firmly on the agenda, this looks like being a big release

DATEL'S 4MB EXPANSION



British peripherals firm, Datel Electronics have announced the first third party 4MB expansion pack for the N64. The device, which slots into the slot at the top of the N64, expands the memory of the N64 to 8MB. The obvious advantages to this are faster running software in a higher resolution. The

expansion will only be compatible with expansion compatible games – a number of which have already been announced. These include *NFL Quarterback Club '99* and *Turok 2* from Acclaim, and *Rogue Squadron*, the Star Wars tie-in from LucasArts.

The release of the device could signal the demise of the 64DD in Europe and the US. The expansion pack was originally planned as an add-on that came with Nintendo's

disk drive, and now that it has been confirmed, it is likely to mean the end for the drive as we know it. Nintendo are keen not to confuse customers with hardware and make the same mistake that Sega made with their Mega CD and 32X.

Datel's Expansion Pak will be available from this month from all major retailers or directly from Datel who can be contacted on 01785 810800. **TC**

ACTIVISION BOLDLY GO...

A TEN YEAR DEAL HAS BEEN STRUCK BETWEEN ACTIVISION AND VIACOM FOR THE RIGHTS TO EXCLUSIVELY PUBLISH TITLES BASED ON THE STAR TREK FRANCHISE. THIS DEAL IS FOR ALL PLATFORMS ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE. THE FIRST TITLE WILL BE *STAR TREK: INSURRECTION*. "WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO BE COLLABORATING WITH VIACOM ON THIS EXTRAORDINARY PROPERTY," SAID

ACTIVISION CHIEF, ROBERT KOTICK. "FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, STAR TREK HAS CAPTIVATED THE IMAGINATION OF AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE. WITH THIS AGREEMENT WE CAN EXTEND THE RICH INTERSTELLAR HISTORY AND TRADITIONS INHERENT IN THE STAR TREK UNIVERSE AND BRING MANY NEW AND EXCITING PRODUCTS TO THE MARKETPLACE."

THE EA BUNNIES Shooting for the onion bag

One thing that most games players have grown to accept is that the EA Sports series of games just isn't going to go away – they're here to stay, and leading the pack is *FIFA*.

FIFA '99 is on the way, and is shaping up to be far more of an improvement over the previous games than many would be expecting. Aside from new and improved graphics, a faster frame rate and some excellent special effects, there are a variety of new gameplay features, including more precise ball control, several

new moves, fakes, dummies and aerial moves, faster acceleration, semi-automatic goalkeepers and some much improved CPU tactics. It also comes with many more new game modes.



FIFA '99 is set to appear on N64 PlayStation and PC, with four, eight and twenty player support respectively. There is every indication that *FIFA '99* will be as big a success as all of EA's previous *FIFA* games. **TC**

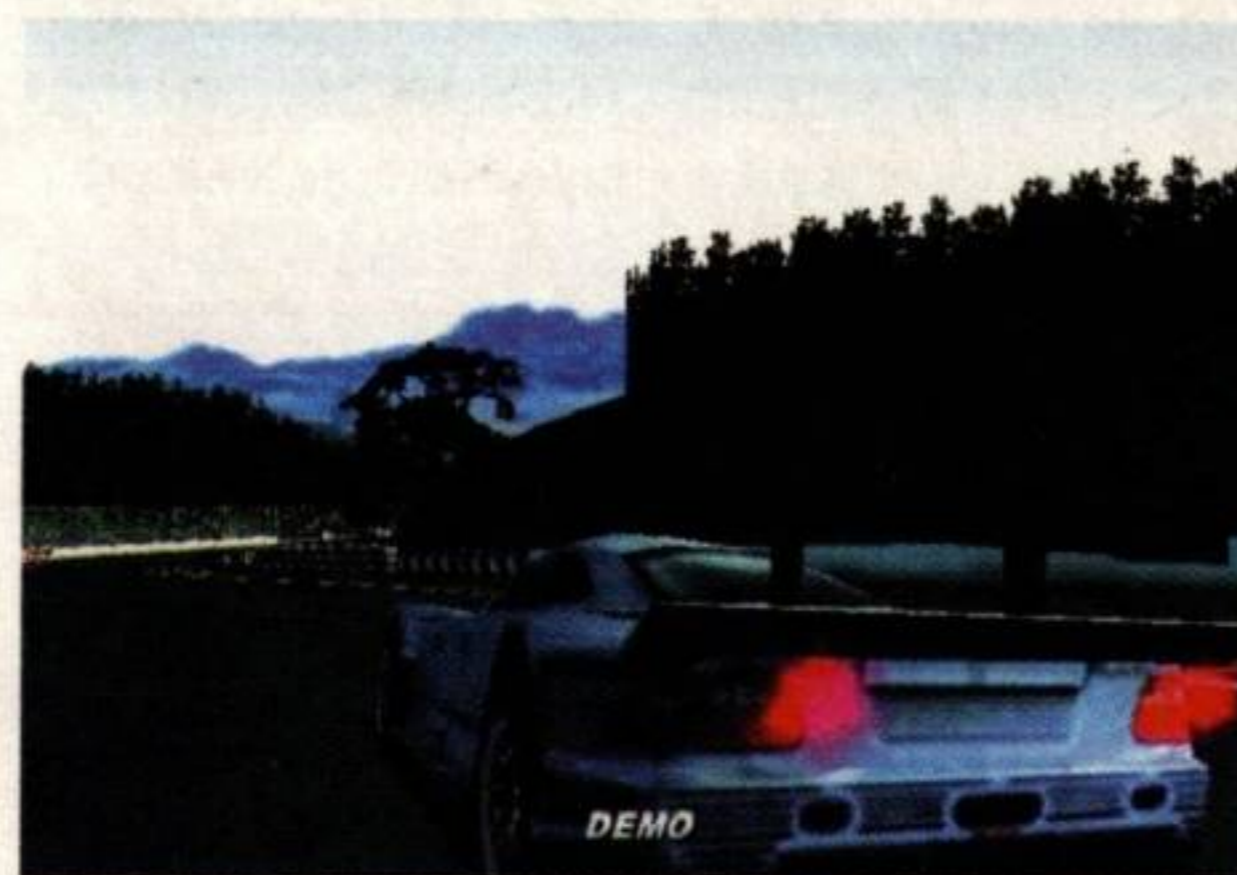


What will they do with *FIFA* next?

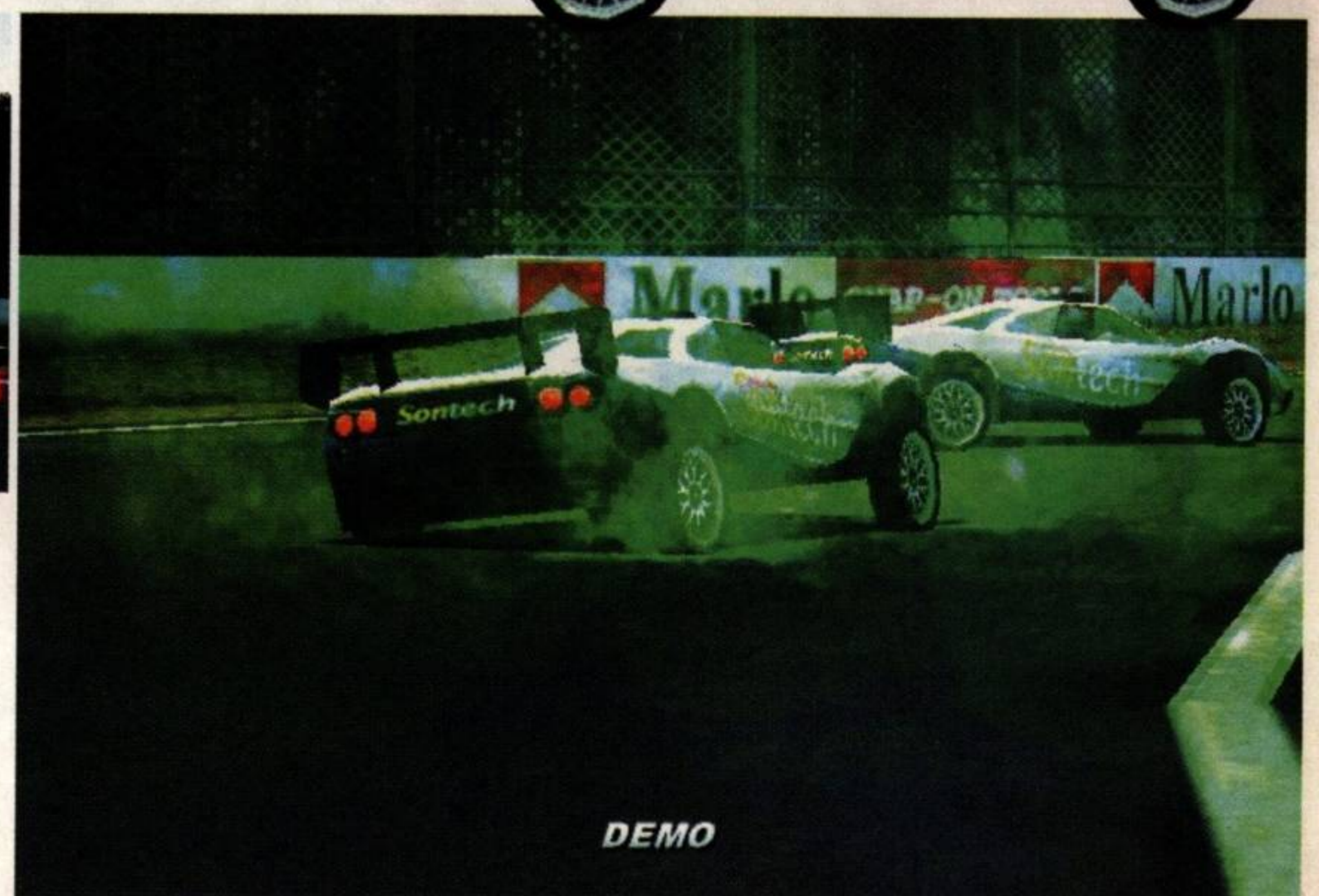
EMPIRE'S ANSWER TO GRAN TURISMO... ON THE PC



Gran Turismo, the long-standing No. 1 hit PlayStation racing game, has raised many eyebrows over the months since its release. Empire Interactive are getting ready for the PC release of *Grand Touring*, which could turn out to be the game that PC owners have been crying out for since the release of the PlayStation classic. One of its main assets is that it uses an extremely fast game engine that reaches up to 50 frames per second, but there's a lot more to it than just speed. Alongside the many secret cars, there are 20 others to choose from, races will house twelve of them at a time, and there are also twelve tracks to learn. One of the other big talking points is the AI of the other drivers; all of them will have a



uniquely different driving style which should heat things up on the track. Along with the many standard races, there is also a unique stunt mode and an eight player LAN option. *Grand Touring* should be surfacing on the PC sometime in November, with PlayStation and N64 versions planned for spring next year. **TC**



Empire are planning to release their new racer on all the gaming formats

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QUESTION:

Which of these is a well known Interplay character?

Postman Pat
Earthworm Jim
Donald Duck

Name your entry:

INTER PLAYSTATION COMP

GIVE A DOG A BONE
ARGONAUT, THE DEVELOPERS OF SNES *STARWING* AND THE N64'S *BUCK BUMBLE*, HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR PROJECT FOR THE DREAMCAST. THE PROJECT HAS BEEN CODE-NAMED '*RED DOG*' AND HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A 'NEXT GENERATION BLASTER FEATURING TANKS'. APPARENTLY, THEY WERE TOLD

BY SEGA TO PRE-RENDER THEIR IDEAL SHOOT-'EM-UP ON HIGH-END WORKSTATION. THEY THEN RECEIVED THEIR DREAMCAST DEVELOPMENT KITS, AND A MONTH LATER, THEY FOUND IT WAS POSSIBLE TO RECREATE THE PRE-RENDERED STUFF IN REAL-TIME. IMPRESSIVE? YOU BET!

METAL FATIGUE

Well what do you expect from huge robots?



At a press launch at their San Francisco headquarters last week, veteran publishers Psygnosis announced a new game under development by Zono Inc., due for release in May of next year. Although



it is described as a real-time strategy game, *Metal Fatigue* is a radical departure from the mainstream of that well-populated genre.

The anime-inspired game features huge robots with a wide variety of interchangeable weapons and body parts, and a very Oriental story line involving family betrayal and giant corporations. Players can choose between three opposing forces, each with their own unique characteristics, but as the game progresses, each side can capture and research technology belonging to the others.

The game's spectacular graphics are driven by a powerful 3D terrain engine with a fully rotatable camera view. Particle system effects and state-of-the-art coloured dynamic

lighting provide spectacular explosions and special effects. A powerful AI system controlling the enemy forces ensures that the single player game is a constant challenge, while up to eight players can battle it out in multiplayer mode.

The action takes place simultaneously on three maps, the main one being at ground level with conventional units including the giant robots and the main part of the base structures, while further units inhabit orbital asteroids and underground caverns. Orbiting units can employ powerful weapons to rain destruction on those below, while subterranean forces can tunnel up under enemy bases to mount surprise attacks. **TC**

TAISHO: TOTAL WAR

Shock, Horror! An original game unveiled by UK developer...



Prepare to rule the world in the guise of a feudal warlord

One of the most original games unveiled at the recent European Computer Trade Show at Olympia was the remarkable *Taisho*, developed by the UK-based company, The Creative Assembly. The game is set in sixteenth-century Japan, in a time of feudal warlords and political upheaval, and puts the player in the position of the ruler, or Daimyo, of a small province. The strategy elements of the game allow the player to compete with neighbouring territories

for political power by building up armies, spying with ninja, and making strategic treaties and alliances with other Daimyo and with European explorers complete with superior firearms technology.

The game feature several technical innovations, not least of which are the awesome battle sequences which place up to five thousand troops on screen at once, with each soldier being controlled by its own AI routine and possessing individual characteristics.

The behaviour of these characters mimics the actions of real troops on a battlefield with remarkable accuracy.

Taisho also supports amazingly high screen resolutions, as high as 1800 x 1200, well in advance of the current range of monitors and graphics cards. The vast panoramic 3D landscapes allow budding generals to deploy their troops with total freedom.

Taisho (which means "general in the field of battle") is due for release in the spring of 1999. **TC**



A major part of this forthcoming release will be the battle sequences. These epic conflicts are said to place up to five thousand troops on screen at once

THERE'S A NASTY LITTLE BUG GOING AROUND

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64 MAGAZINE

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R IN BRIEF

MICRO MACHINES FOR ARCADE
AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL RELEASE OF *MICRO MACHINES V3* IN JAPAN (THROUGH NAMCO), CODEMASTERS HAVE ANNOUNCED A DEAL THAT WILL TAKE THE GAME TO THE ARCADES OF THE WORLD. NICK WHEELWRIGHT, CODEMASTERS' BOSS, SAID, "A GAMES PUBLISHER

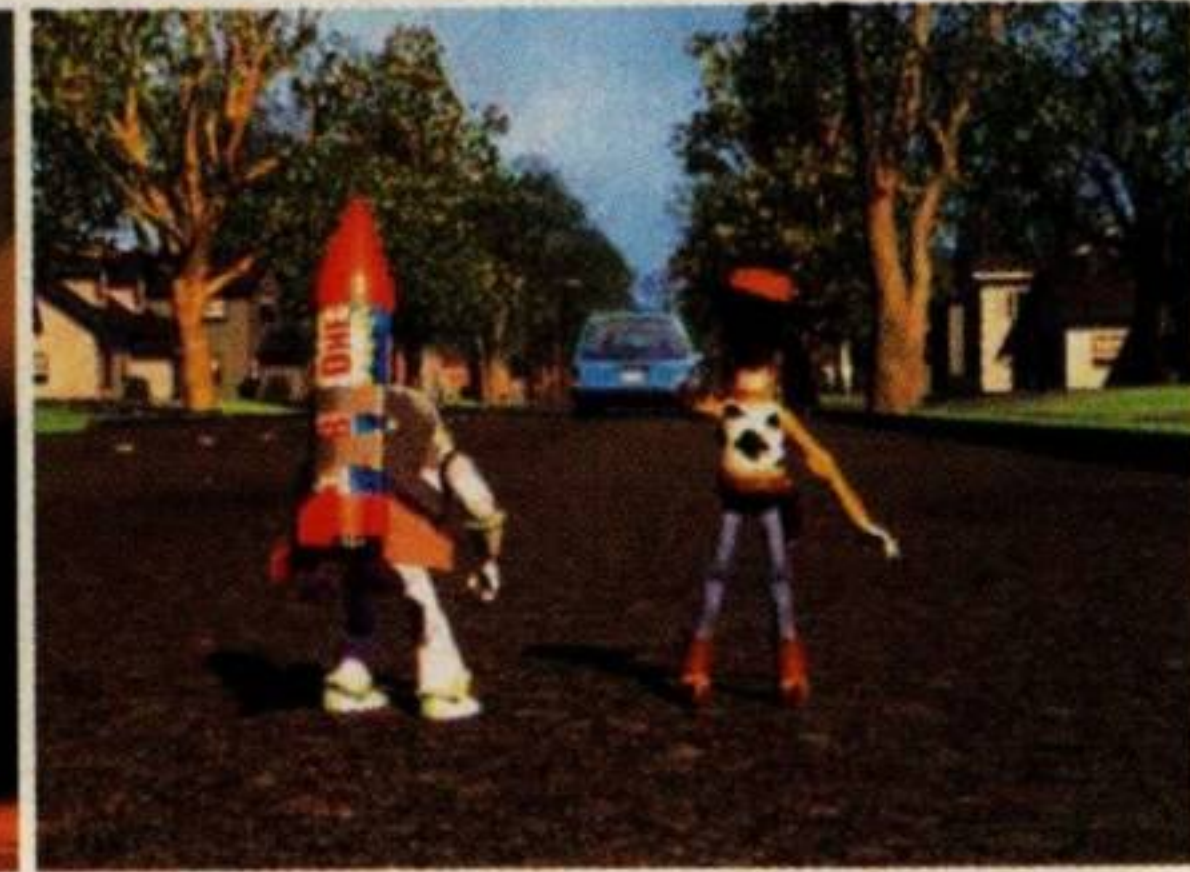
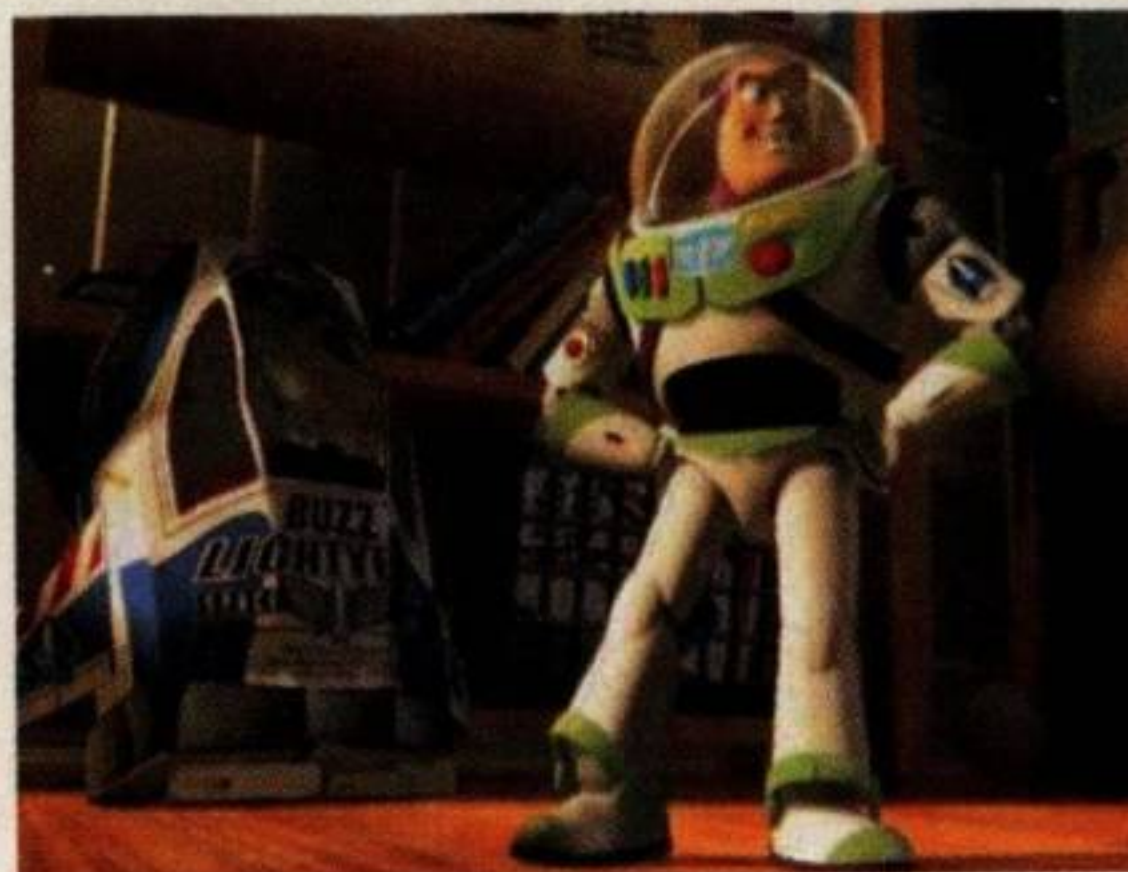
DEVELOPING AN ARCADE EDITION OF A POPULAR HOME GAMING BRAND IS VERY RARE. TO HAVE THE SAME GAME MANUFACTURED AND MARKETING BY NAMCO IS UNIQUE, AS IT IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S PRINCIPAL BRANDS OF COIN-OP AMUSEMENT."

ACTIVISION TOY WITH DISNEY

Software giant signs Mickey Mouse deal



Activision are rapidly becoming the most popular games company on the planet, with one of the most impressive and outstanding line-ups we've seen. On the PC there is *SiN* and *Quake III*, on the PlayStation there is *Tenchu: Stealth Assassin* and *Apocalypse*, while the N64 will shortly be encountering *Quake II* and *Battlezone*. In what is perhaps more than a slight move away from the violent style of many of these titles, Activision have announced a contract with Disney, allowing them exclusive rights to the game based around the upcoming *Toy Story 2* film.



The film will once again feature the exploits of Buzz Lightyear, Woody the toy soldiers and co., but Activision will have to be careful to avoid creating a similar game to the original *Toy Story* game, which didn't exactly make impressive sales following its release. A further six as-yet-unnamed Disney

titles will also be making their way onto a computer game format via the same software giant. Hopefully Activision will follow on their impressive record to the same level of quality and deliver a Disney film conversion that may actually be worth looking into.

If anyone can... **TC**

WARGASM

Could this be a sublime combination of stimulants?



As you would expect, massive explosions look to be the norm in this forthcoming release

Flight simulator specialists, Simis have used their unsurpassed expertise to produce a game which combines the authenticity and graphical sophistication of a top-of-the-range sim with the addictive gameplay of an arcade shoot-'em-up.

The premise for the game is that in the future, nations will fight bloodless wars in cyberspace on realistic virtual battlefields using simulations of advanced military hardware instead of the real thing.

The result is *Wargasm*, a game which gives the player total control over a range of military vehicles and personnel, including tanks, helicopters and infantry. The intuitive interface allows the battle to be controlled from a number of viewpoints, including first-person, third-person and a comprehensive tactical overview. From the tactical map the player can order reconnaissance, air strikes and artillery barrages.

The weaponry available includes heat-seeking missiles, bombs, cannons and fused grenades, as well as the latest in attack helicopters, spy planes and armoured personnel carriers. The game is fully compatible with the latest

generation of 3D accelerator hardware and force feedback controllers, although it has a low minimum specification and can be played in software-only mode.

Wargasm is being published by Infogrames UK, and should be available for release in time for the Christmas rush. **TC**



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QUESTION:

Which of these monkeys could speak perfect English?

Cheetah
Cornelius
King Kong

Name your entry:
PLAYSTATION OF THE APES

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A copy of *Monkey Hero* and a load of *Monkey Hero* merchandise

NAMCO SIGNS WITH SEGA

IN A SURPRISING MOVE, NAMCO HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL BE DEVELOPING TITLES FOR THE DREAMCAST. SURPRISING? WELL, YES, SEEING AS SEGA AND NAMCO ARE ARCH RIVALS IN THE ARCADE AND NAMCO HAVE ENJOYED A REMARKABLE PARTNERSHIP WITH SONY OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BRINGING GAMES SUCH AS *RIDGE RACER* AND, OF COURSE, *TEKKEN* TO THE CONSOLE. IT'S NOT YET CLEAR WHAT

GAMES NAMCO WILL BE DEVELOPING ON THE DREAMCAST, BUT *SOUL CALIBER* IS DEFINITE FOR THE PLAYSTATION, WHILE NAMCO STATE THAT THE CONSOLE FOR THE NEXT *TEKKEN* GAME HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED UPON. DREAMCAST OR PLAYSTATION 2? POSSIBLY BOTH, AND FOR THE MEANTIME, NAMCO WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH BOTH SONY AND SEGA.

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Nintendo challenge Sony for Christmas supremacy

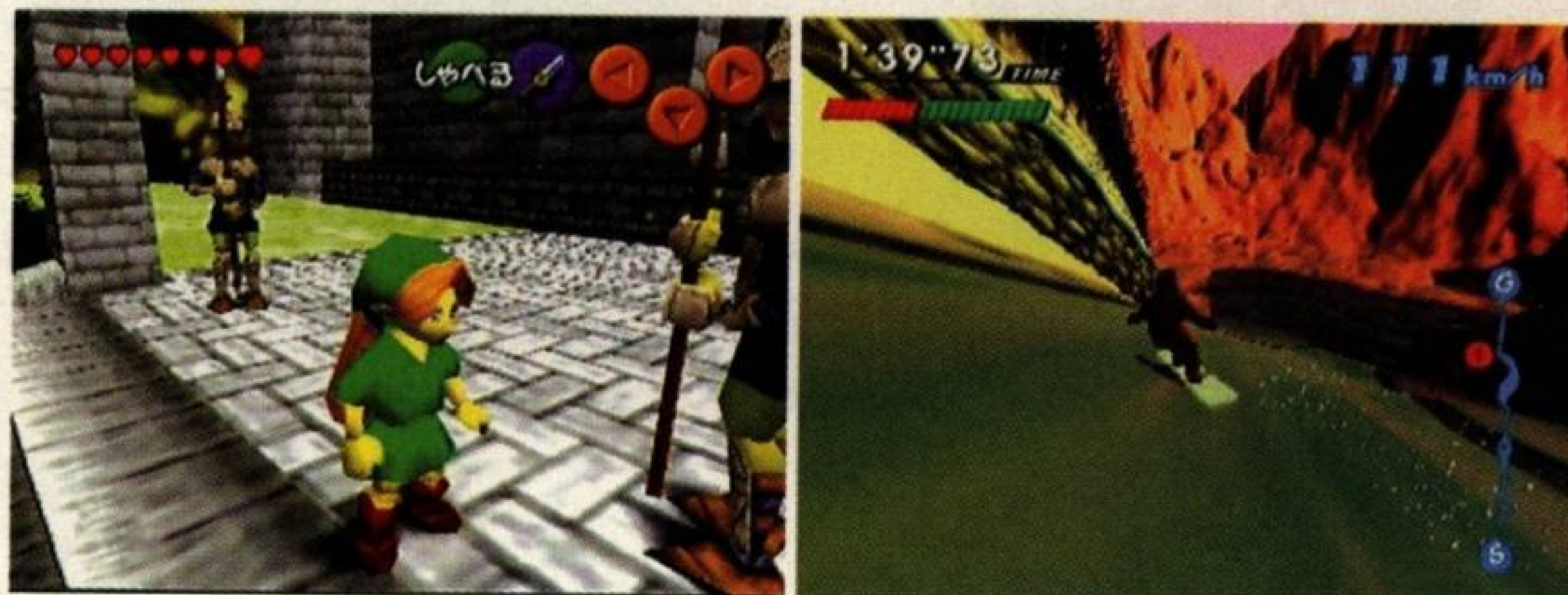
Nintendo's campaign to draw a larger and more loyal user base has recently been bolstered by a number of price cuts that took effect from the 16th of September. Speculation is rife that this move is a retaliative measure in the face of Sony's new dual shock pack, which hit the shelves in early August. But with the two mega companies preparing to enter the Christmas battle, and with much anticipation already building over the Dreamcast, Nintendo's move seems less like an act of confidence, more a necessity.

Whatever the reason, the marketing battle can only be good news for the

games-buying public, the highlight of which is that games such as *Turok 2*, *ISS '98* and *1080° Snowboarding* will retail at £39.99, with *Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* hitting the shelves at £49.99 (eventually). A number of games will also be reduced to £39.99, and some, such as *Blast Corps*, to £29.99. N64 hand controllers will also face a £10 price drop. Nintendo are hoping that the new software prices will sway any remaining 'floating voters' over to their side of the fence. But as needed as it was, the new prices only match that of the current Sony titles, making the quality of the software a far more important

consideration for the undecided public. Perhaps the best news is that it seems as if the N64 is finally beginning to gather some much-needed momentum and that Nintendo have at last worked out their marketing strategy. It ain't over yet, Sony. **TC**

NINTENDO⁶⁴



64DD DROPPED

Howard Lincoln confirms the demise of the 64DD

At the recent ECTS show in London, NOA Chairman, Howard Lincoln confirmed what we had feared for a long time – that the 64DD would not be released in Europe or the United States. The controversial disk drive add-on has suffered many delays since it was first announced almost two years ago. Lincoln put the cancellation down to the fact that, 'The cost of the chips for making cartridges is falling... and now, the difference in manufacturing cost between a 64DD disk and a cartridge has dropped significantly. In

terms of memory there is no need for the 64DD – we can simply make bigger cartridges.' Many inside the industry touted that the add-on would follow the same fate of Sega's Mega CD, and it appears that Nintendo are unwilling to take the risk of bringing it to these shores. There is, however, a chance that Japanese gamers might get their hands on one sometime in mid-1999, although Nintendo are reluctant to confirm this and won't force the machine onto the public unless there is a 'killer piece of software'. **TC**



DREAMCAST STOP PRESS!

A dream price for the Japanese launch

Sega have finally put an end to speculation over the launch details of the Dreamcast super-console by releasing the final on-sale price and the list of games which will initially be available. Dreamcast will hit the shops on November 27th in Japan, priced at 29,800 Yen, which translates to a competitive £129. There will be five games titles on sale at the launch, which will be *Sega Rally 2*, *Virtua Fighter 3 Tournament Battle*, *Pen Pen Triathlon*, *Godzilla*

Generations and *July*. The much-hyped *Sonic Adventure* will be released a few weeks later on December 17th, along with *Climax Landers*. Sega have also announced a list of forty-five third party games currently in development, including the third instalment of Capcom's *Resident Evil* series, which will be exclusive to the console. Sega also revealed a further list of over three hundred developers in Japan alone who will be supporting the new format.

The Japanese launch bundle will also include a 33.6k modem

and the Dream Passport on-line software. This news will certainly be welcomed by the many people in the UK who are planning to import the machine as soon as it is on sale in Japan. **TC**


Dreamcast™



R

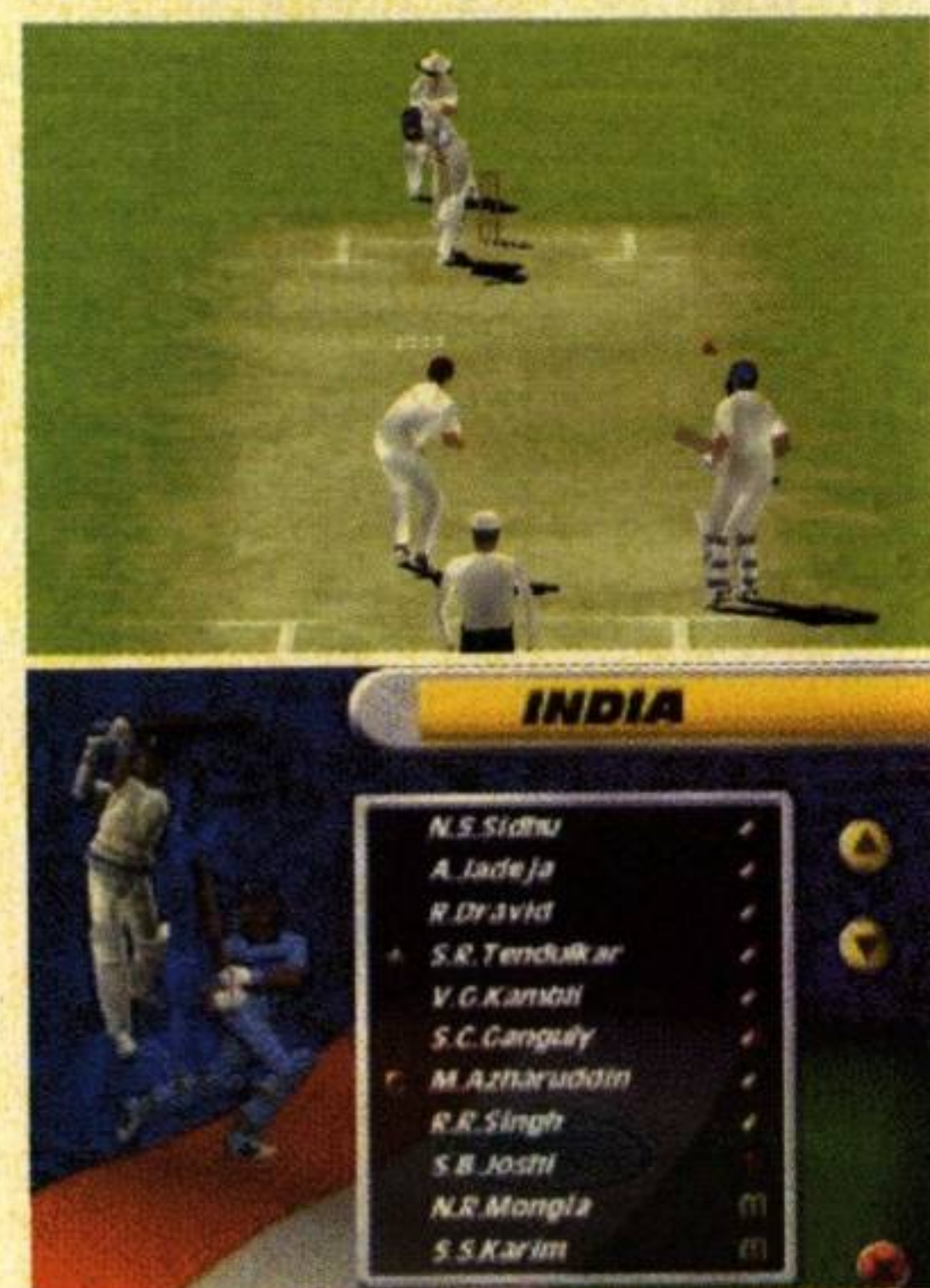
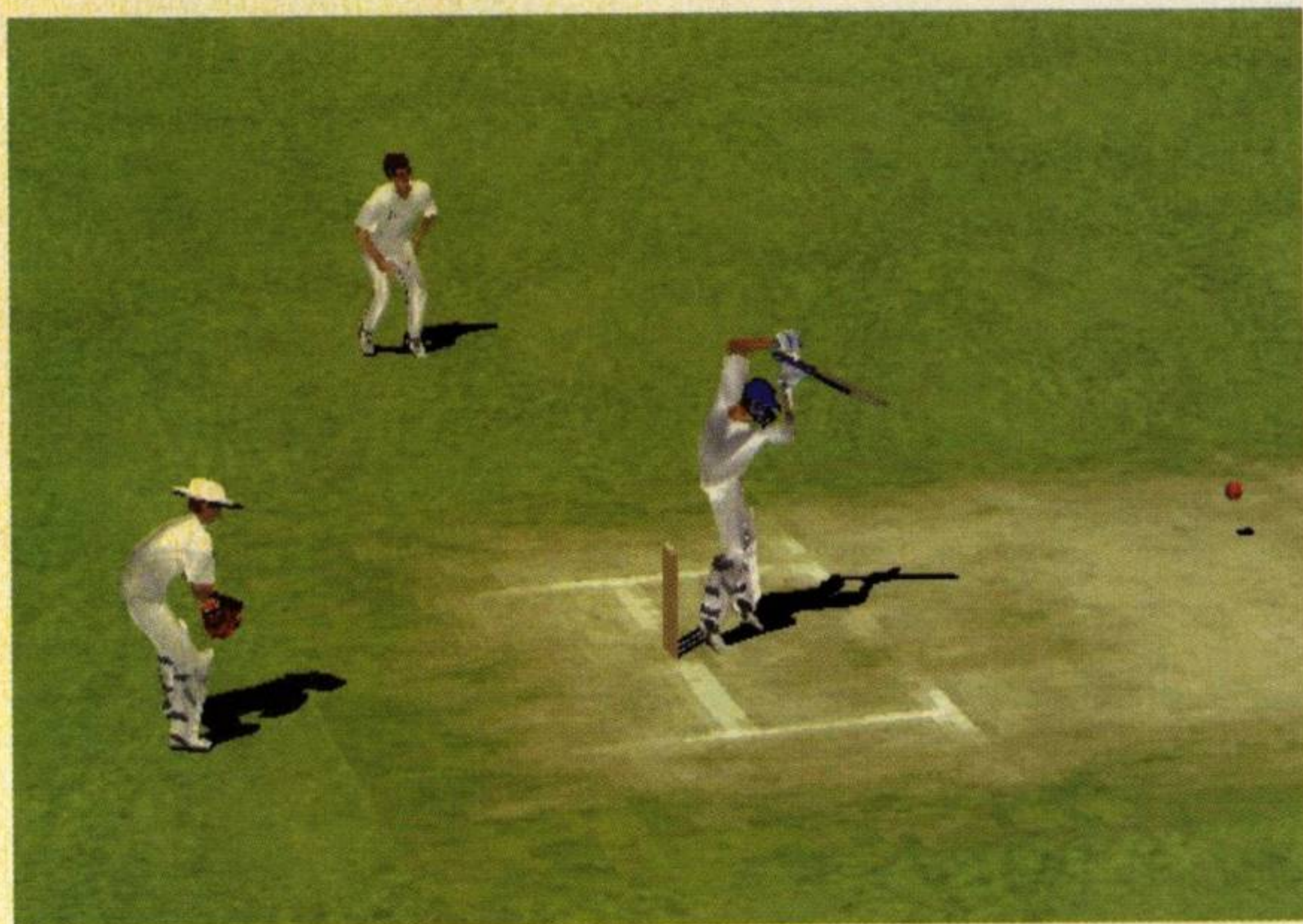
IN BRIEF

GREMLIN GRAB A GOLDEN GOLFER
 GOLFERS ARE HOT PROPERTY AT THE MOMENT IN THE PC WORLD. ELECTRONIC ARTS HAVE PROBABLY SIGNED GOLF'S BIGGEST SUPERSTAR WITH THE ACQUISITION OF THE TIGER WOODS LICENCE. HOWEVER, NOT TO BE OUTDONE, THE GREMLIN GOLF MACHINE HAS SWUNG INTO ACTION AND

SECURED THE SERVICES OF NEW GOLF SENSATION LEE WESTWOOD. WHILE TIGER IS CONSIDERED THE WORLD'S GREATEST GOLFER, LEE IS CURRENTLY REGARDED AS THE BEST OF THE EUROPEAN SWINGERS AND SHOULD BE EMINENTLY CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THE MOTION FOR THE NEW GAME...

BRIAN LARA

Codemasters update the most successful cricket game of all time



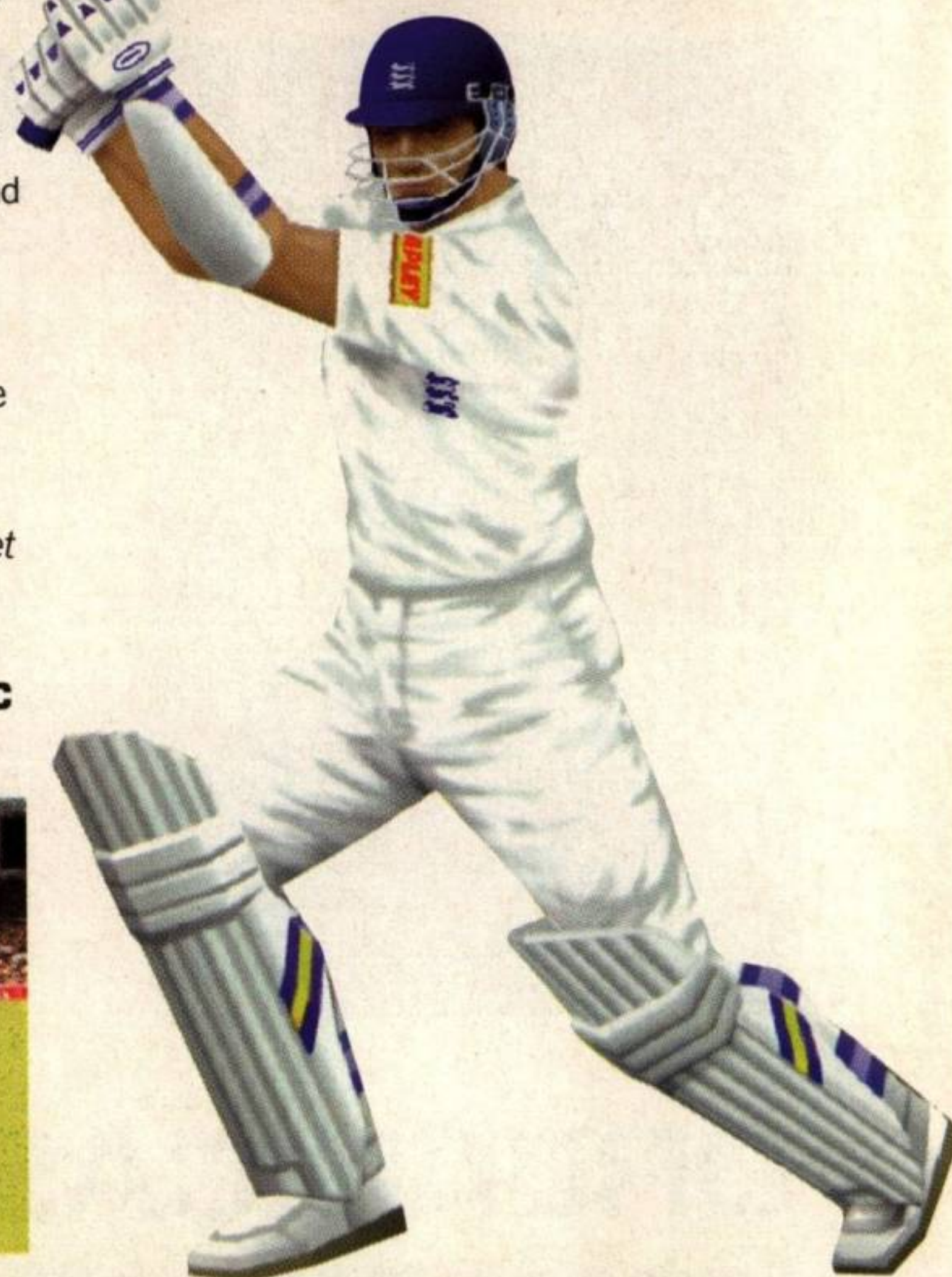
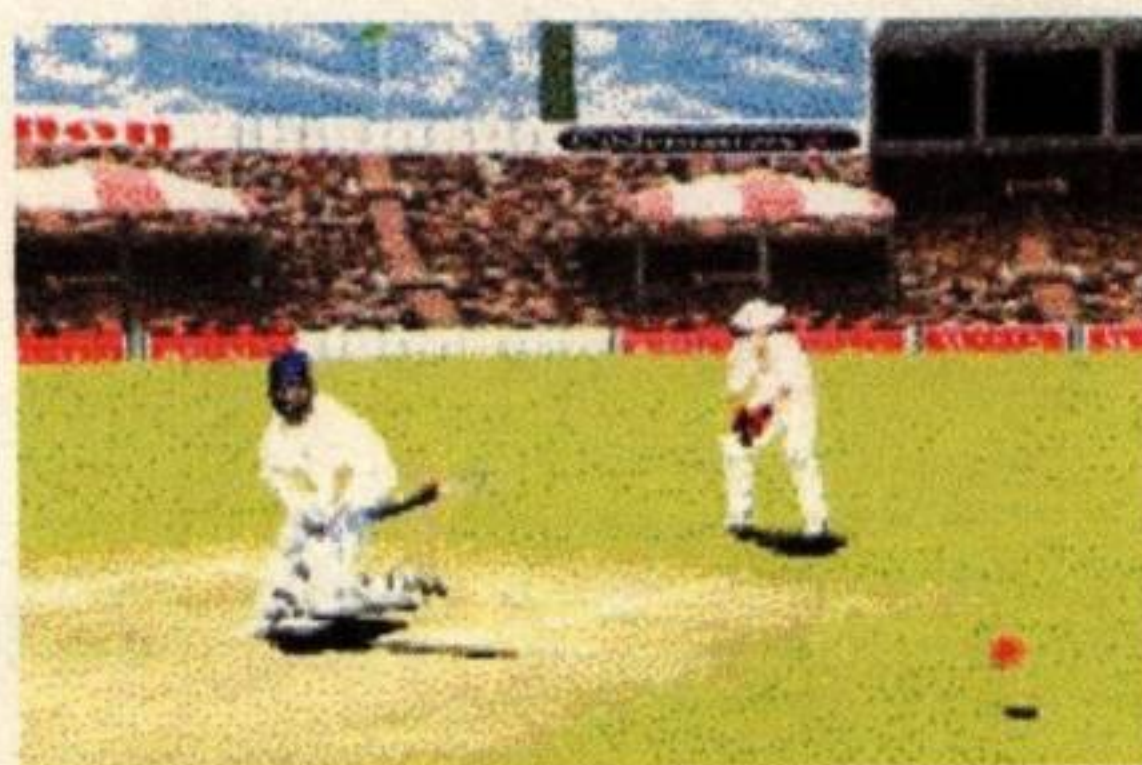
Test your abilities with the latest version of Lara's favourite sport

The sequel to the most successful cricket game ever is about to be released on PlayStation and PC. *Brian Lara Cricket* was first published on the Mega Drive back in 1995, and went on to sell more than 100,000 copies in the UK. The new version obviously takes advantage of the advance in technology since then and features motion captured players, 3D



stadiums and commentary from Geoffrey Boycott. Players will be able to choose game modes from a ten-over slogging match to five day test match. Up to four people can play – two on each side – and *Brian Lara Cricket* features all of the current international sides.

With the domestic cricket season drawn to a close, the timing of the release might seem a little off, but then there's always this winter's Ashes tour to get people interested again. *Brian Lara Cricket* is due for release in November, and Total CONTROL is sure that the game will sell well, if not better, than its predecessor. **TC**



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- 11
- 4
- 32

Name your entry:

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NINTENDO⁶⁴

You will believe a bear can fly



BANJO - KAZOOIE

Fly like a Bear and climb like a Bird?

This dynamic duo open a stunning new world of tag teaming game play that prove that two heads are better than one. And with a game this big you'll need all the help you can get.



"This is a brilliant game"



THE FASTEST MOST POWERFUL GAMES CONSOLE ON EARTH

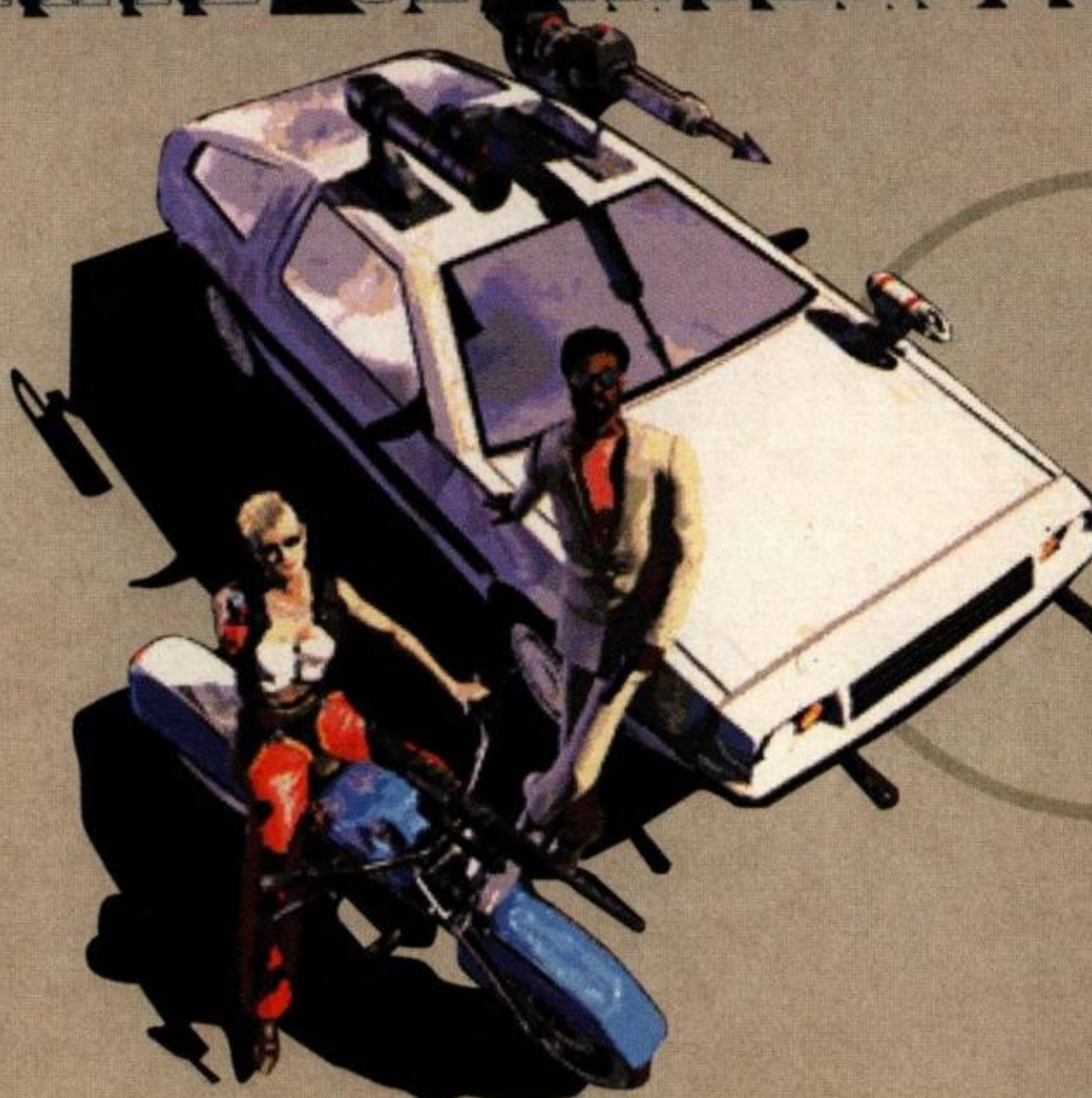
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Interstate '82

Cruising down the highway in a DeLorean, armed with machine guns, rocket launchers and a bad haircut... It's got to be Activision's sequel to *Interstate '76*.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	In-house
STYLE	Driving shoot-'em-up
PLAYERS	1-10





Interstate '76 was a bit of an unexpected hit for Activision last year. Despite being described by some as 'Quake with cars', the game has found its own distinct niche in the market, and has attracted something of a cult following. The attraction of game is not hard to recognise. With its cheesy 70s theme, tongue-in-cheek humour and classily gameplay, *Interstate '76* is instantly likeable. It has its roots in movies like *Mad Max*, the *Gumball Rally* and any number of *Cannonball Runs*. Its gaming

antecedents include the Steve Jackson classic *Car Wars*, a pen-and-paper auto-duelling game which had a cult following of its own in the early to mid-80s. Apparently Steve Jackson has played *Interstate '76*, and he loves it.

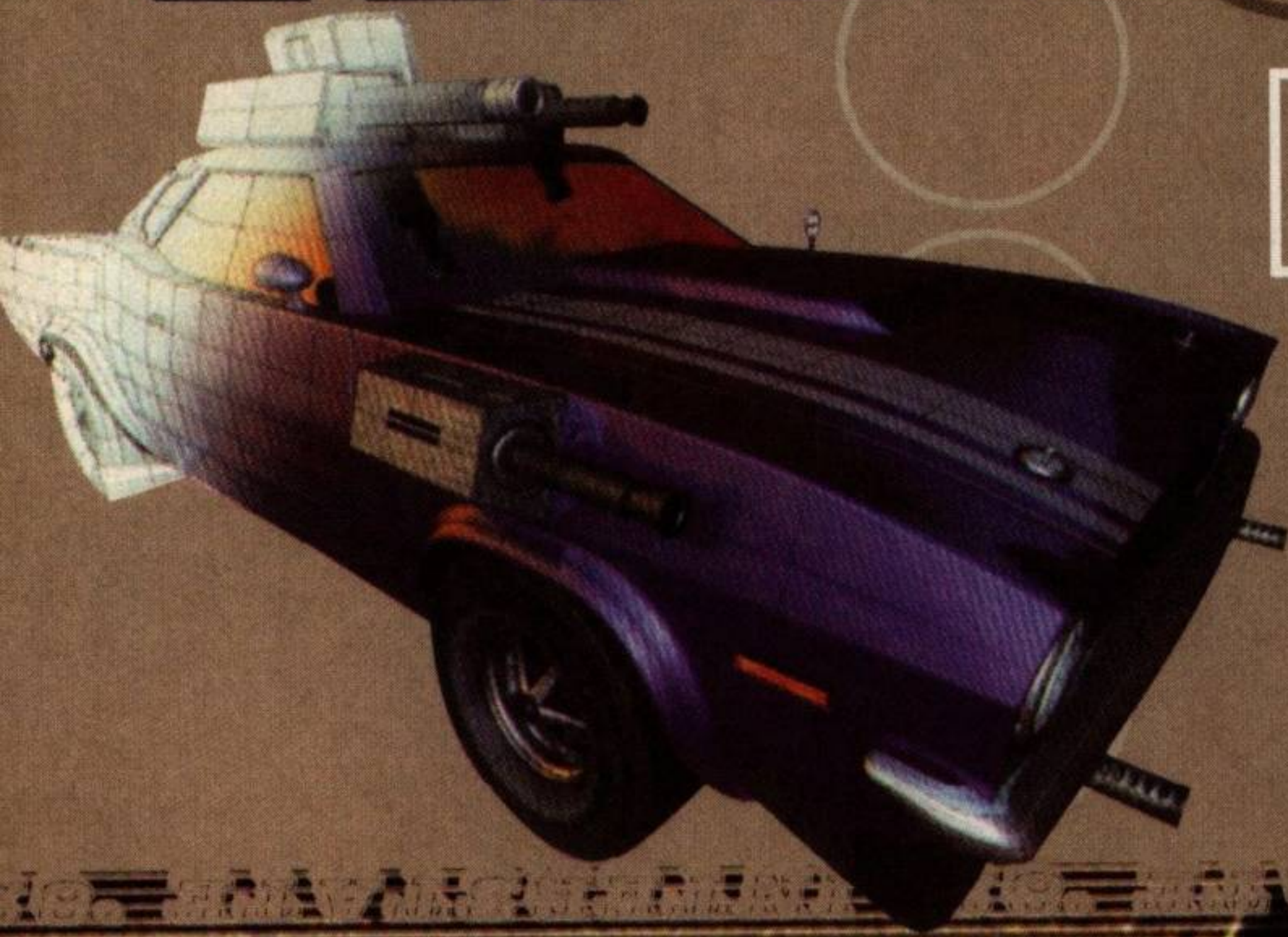
Ready to roll

The idea behind the game is fairly straightforward. You take a standard American family car, add armour plating, an upgraded engine and rally suspension, strap on a heavy machine



Interstate '82 contains many graphical improvements over its older sibling, such as gloss reflections and cityscape maps

INTERSTATE



Rleased last year, *Interstate '76* was a nostalgic, tongue-in-cheek car-based shoot-'em-up which gave you the opportunity to choose from a list of twenty-five cars loosely based on classic seventies American models, then equip your chosen chariot with a selection from over twenty different weapons, ranging from machine guns and flame-throwers to guided missiles, mortars, oil slicks, and land mine dispensers. The game had a campaign in which you played Groove Champion, a long-haired, flared-trousered vigilante out to avenge the death of his sister Jade, aided by Taurus, his Afro-haired buddy, and Skeeter, his mechanic. Alongside this, you had to try and prevent a gang of automotive mercenaries from destroying the United States' oil reserves. After all, this was the seventies (in a strange parallel-world sort of way) and the world oil crisis has reduced the American economy to a state of near anarchy.

The game's popularity came about due to a combination of its superb physics engine, which allowed realistic handling over a variety of different terrain surfaces, and its natural aptitude as an on-line multiplayer game. The release of the *Nitro Pack* add-on earlier this year served to increase *'76*'s fame by including extra cars, tracks and weapons, and support for several 3D accelerator cards.



gun, a rocket launcher and a landmine dispenser, and take to the road in search of fun, adventure and things to blow up.

THE CARS THEMSELVES ARE MUCH IMPROVED, WITH ACCURATELY MODELLED HANDLING ON A VARIETY OF SURFACES, AS WELL AS FULLY MODELLED AND TEXTURE-MAPPED DAMAGE

The single player campaign has 17 missions and a plot revolving around revenge for a murder and a conspiracy to destroy the United States' oil reserves. The characters, such as Groove Champion and his buddy Taurus, are great 70s stereotypes, complete with

flares and Afro haircuts. With realistic car physics and excellent graphics, *Interstate '76* is a great single player game, but it is as a multiplayer on-line game that it really shines.

of the international drug cartels. Naturally, the heroes of '76 are ready to rise to the challenge, and that's where you come in.

The single player campaign of *Interstate '82* centres around the American south west, including an alternate-world Las Vegas, the centre of the drug smuggling operation. The huge city-street maps are one of the many new features of *Interstate '82*, with buildings you can drive through and many damageable objects.

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Here's a quick précis of the story line for *Interstate '82* from Zack Norman, the writer and director of the project:

"It's 1982 and a ton of shit has gone down since 1976.

Groove, now a solo auto-vigilante, is in trouble. See, he stumbles on these creepers who were running a ton of do-re-mi into Mexico. After infiltrating the ranks of the bad guys undercover, he sees that every auto villain car he searches is more full of bills than a duck soufflé. Groove finds evidence that the US government is somehow involved in this whole thing, and so are the Contras (remember them?). Having lost a leg from the knee down in a combine harvester accident in the Dakotas back in '80, he is a wee bit over the hill and decides to NOT try and bust up this Contra/cash circus 'cuz of the calibre of creeper scum he would have to wax. He decides to slip away into the cover to the vast Nevada desert wastes – but...

Once you are in you can never get out.

So the creepers track him down and nab him, but not before he gets out a call to his sister, Skye. Skye, mohawked biker hottie and youngest of the Champion siblings, decides to (go figure...) adopt the auto-vigilante identity of her dead sister, Jade, becoming the new 'Vixen', and enlists the aid of Taurus, Groove's one-time partner, an African American, Jerri-curled auto warrior with a bitchin' linen wardrobe.

Taurus is the bad-ass hero this time – you play him.

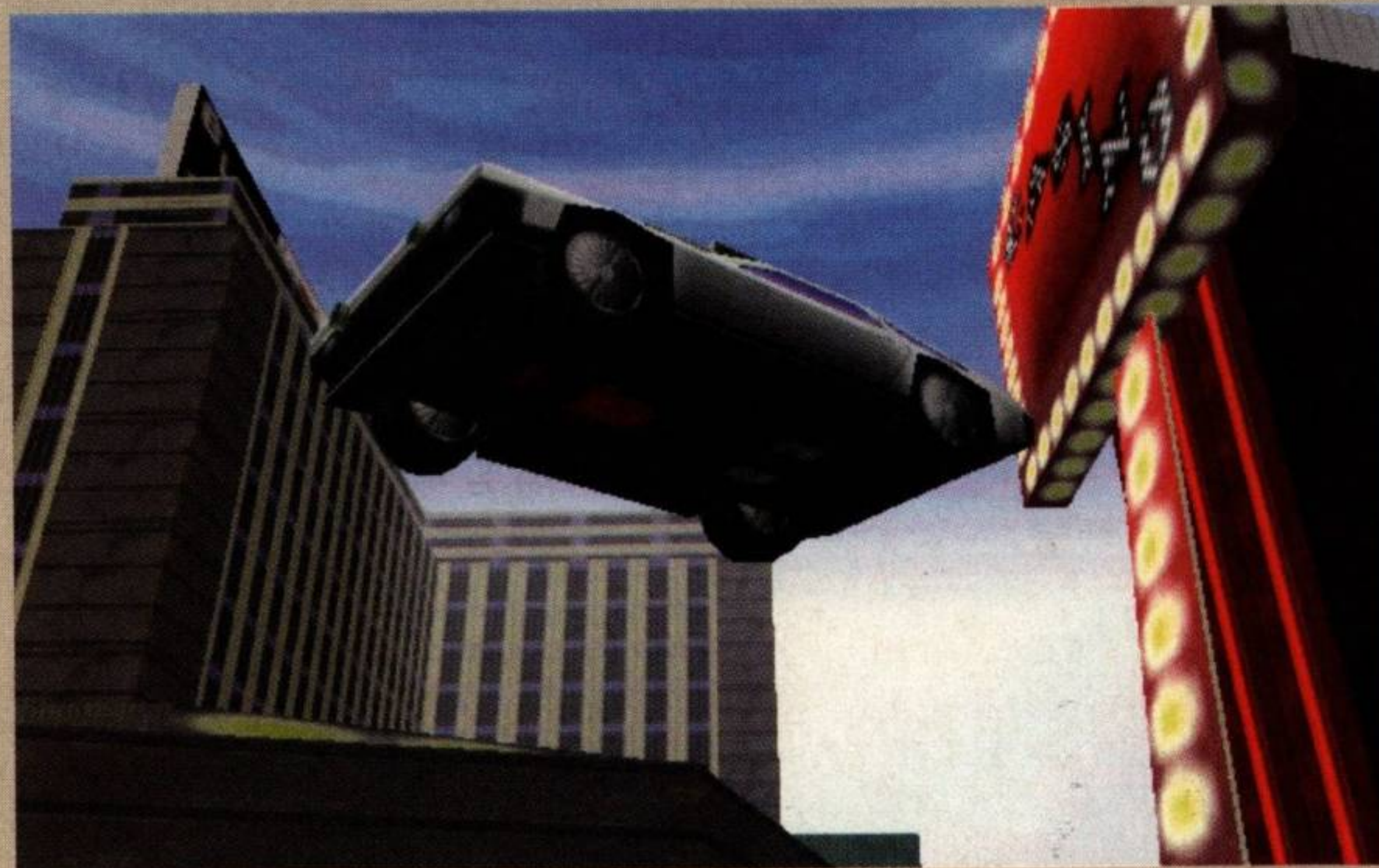
So you (as Taurus) and Skye kick the creepers' ass and save Groove, who reveals the evil plot (which I will keep a secret thank-you-very-much) and you all go kick ass sideways and through the middle from behind the wheel of whatever car you feel like jacking."

Viva Las Vegas

With the success of *Interstate '76* assured, Activision are now working on a sequel which should see the auto-vigilantes' fame continue into the next millennium. *Interstate '82* takes up the story of Groove and Taurus six years later. Fashions have changed, there are new cars on the roads, and a new global threat looms in the shape

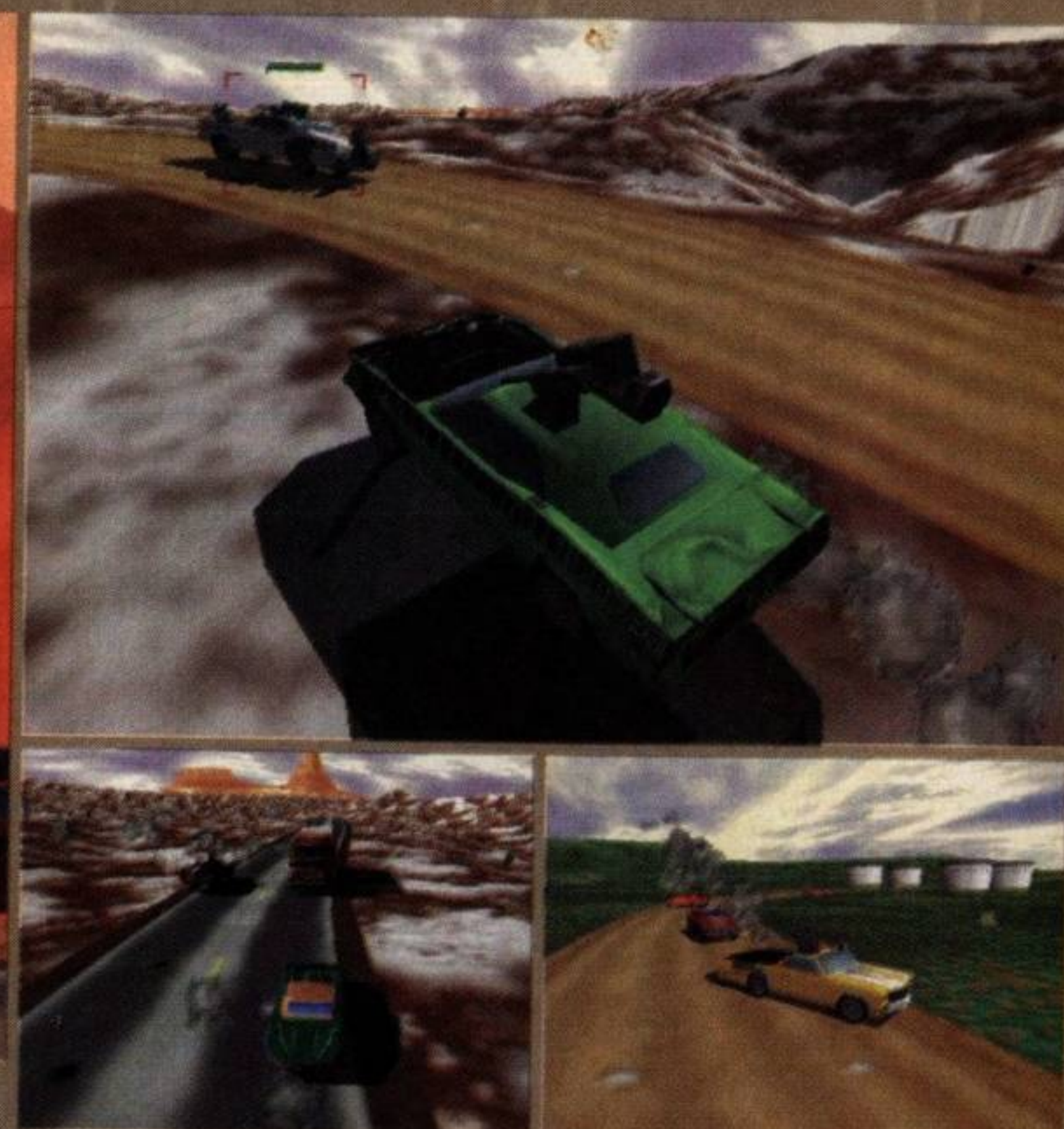
Around the bend

The huge 3D maps are based on single deformable multi-polygon



Some famous DeLoreans have been known to get even higher than this. Allegedly

'76



Flared trousers and a 1970 Boss 302 Mustang. What more could you possibly ask for? Taste? Nah...

meshes, which allow drivers to disappear down tunnels or over multi-level overpasses while others drive over or under them, all on the same map. Other multi-level 3D games use several different maps per mission, one for each layer or 3D area. The single mesh technique allows seamlessly smooth multiplayer gaming and huge single-player mission maps. The accelerator-only game engine can display a vast number of polygons on-screen, so the terrain is composed of intricate and smoothly curved shapes and is full of detail.

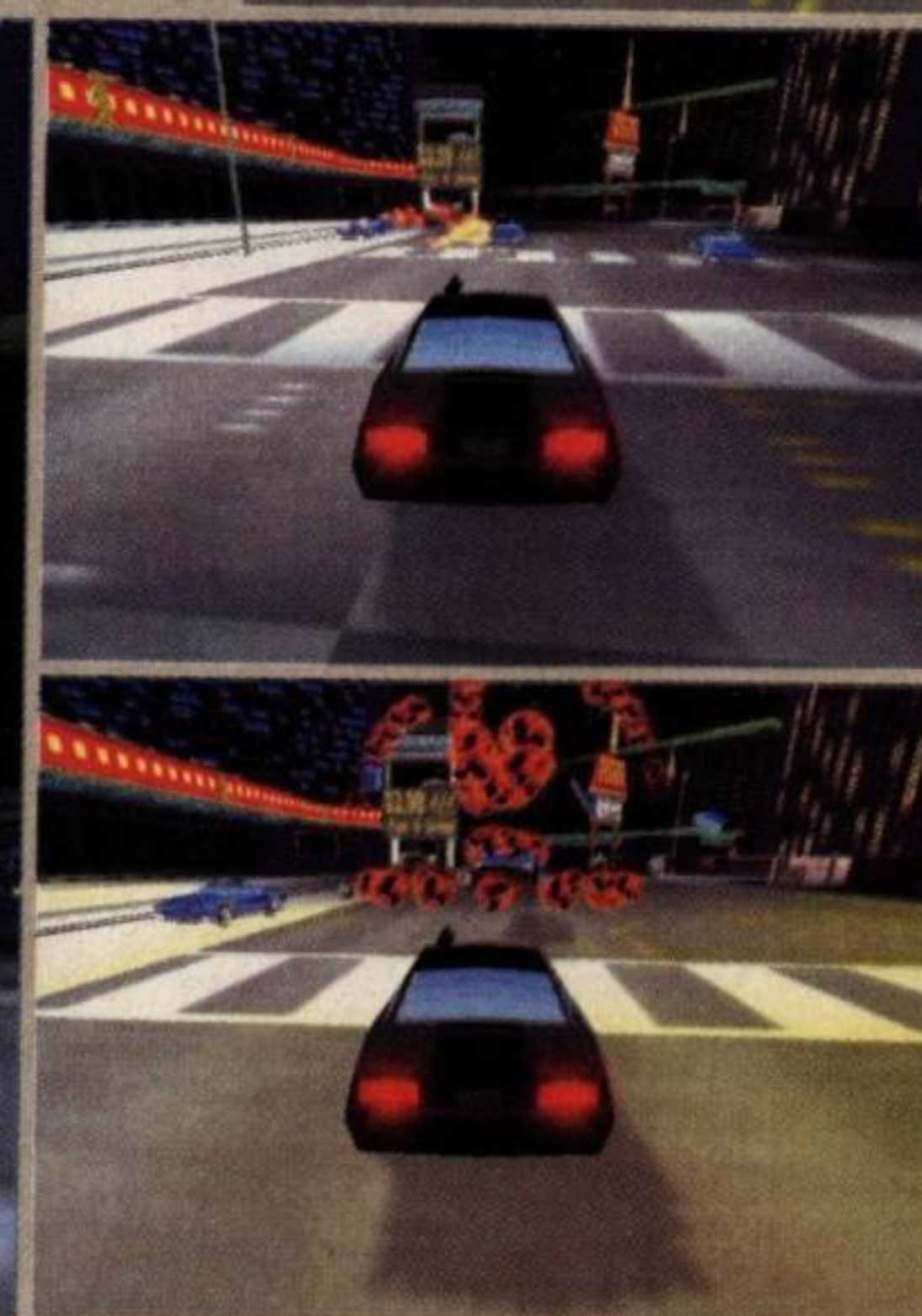
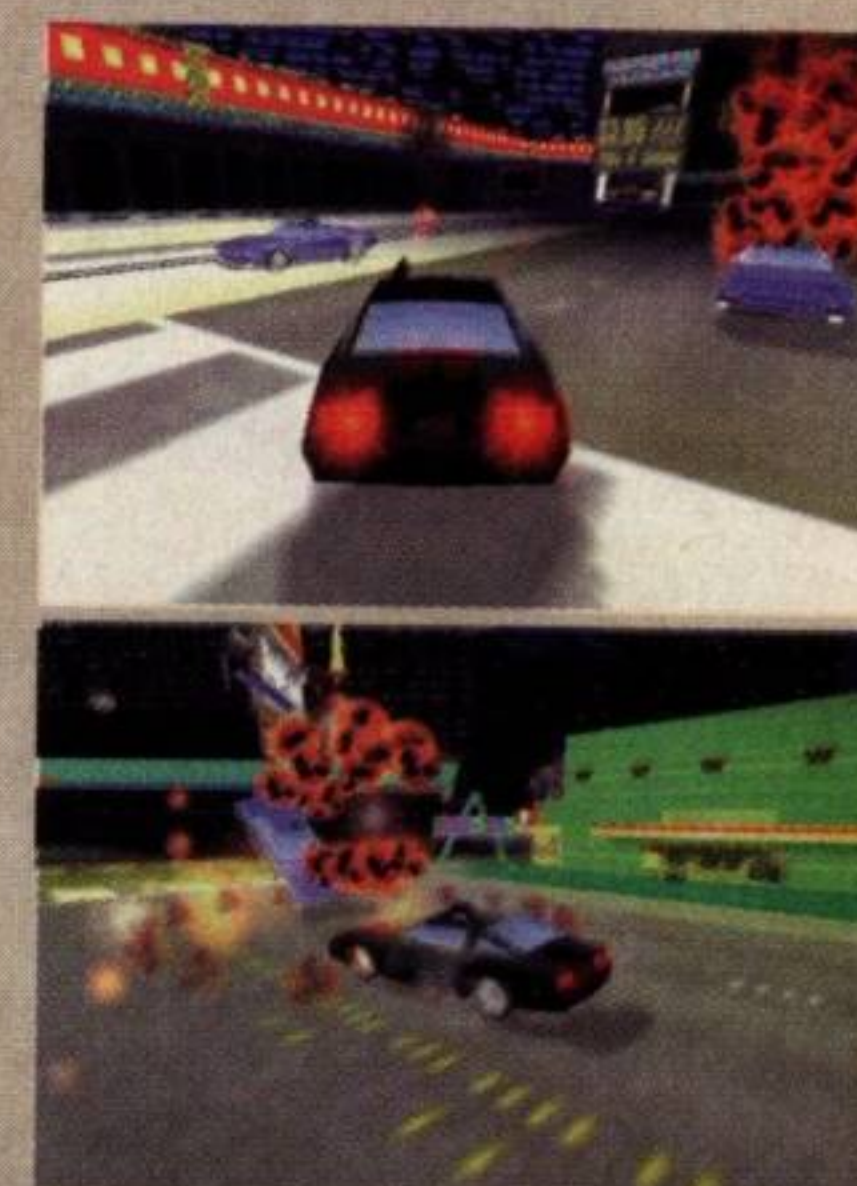
Card business

Like several of Activision's latest games, *Interstate '82* is designed to be run on PCs equipped with 3D accelerator cards such as 3Dfx, Power VR or Rendition. The reason for this is that if your computer CPU doesn't have to deal with the graphics, it can get on

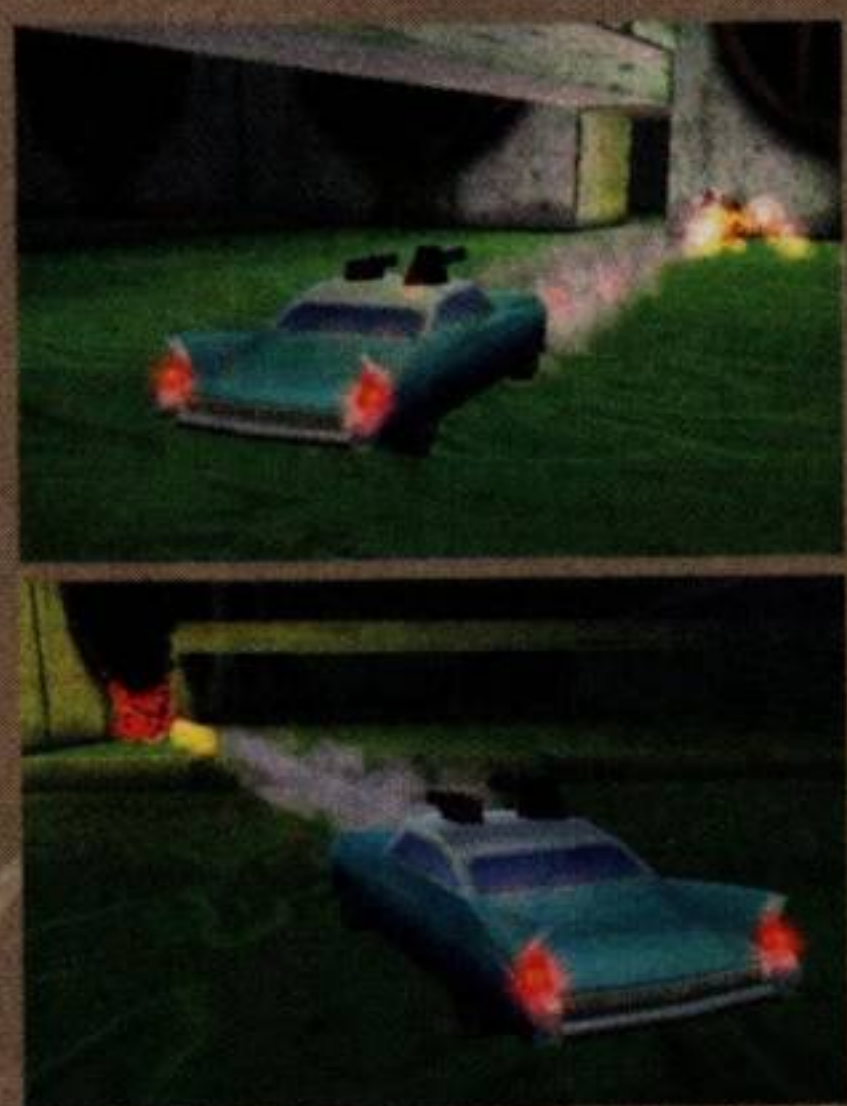
with the number-crunching of the gameplay, which it is better suited for. The 3D card handles all the polygons, textures and lighting effects of the graphics engine, while the main motherboard processor handles the mechanics of the actual game. This may seem unfair to those of you who don't yet own a 3D accelerator card, but if you regularly use your PC for running 3D games, perhaps you should think about buying one. You can experience graphics way beyond what even a Nintendo 64 can generate, and a decent card will cost about the same as a console machine.

Leave your mark

There are many other graphical niceties in the *Interstate '82* engine, such as mirror-like water reflections from lakes and rivers, coloured dynamic lighting for more spectacular explosions, and realistic reflections on the paintwork of the cars. The cars themselves are much improved, with accurately modelled handling on a variety of surfaces, as well as fully modelled and texture-mapped damage. If you shoot up an opponent's car, you will see the bullet holes in his bodywork, and if a car explodes, it flies apart in fragments



These exclusive night shots show off the versatility of the new 3D graphics engine. Other new changes include the ability to get out of your car and run about on foot



Weapons in action. For a full run-down of the impressive '82 arsenal on offer, consult our handy guide below



and burns with realistic flames and clouds of thick, acrid 3D smoke. Of course, you can get bullet holes in your own bodywork as well if you're not careful.

My other car's a Porsche

The variety of vehicles in *Interstate '82* is far wider than in its predecessor. There are at least 40 to choose from, including cars, motorcycles, a helicopter and some other special vehicles. There are some classic 80s cars, including the Lamborghini Countach, the DeLorean and even the



appalling Knight Rider's black 1982 Trans Am, although this version isn't quite as bullet proof. One interesting feature which the development team are planning is the inclusion of localised special vehicles. For every global region in which the game is released, there will be one unique car which can only be selected after completing a special challenge. We can't tell you yet what the special car for the European release will be or what you will have to do in order to drive it, but watch this space. We have ways of making them talk!

ONE INTERESTING FEATURE WHICH THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM ARE PLANNING IS THE INCLUSION OF LOCALISED SPECIAL VEHICLES

Two legs bad

One major change to the gameplay for the sequel is the option to get out of

your car and run about on foot. This feature is worked into some of the single-player missions, where you may have to get out to open doors or throw switches, and it also has its uses in the multiplayer game as well. Now you are still in the game even if your car has been trashed, because you can always steal someone else's. While on foot, you will only be armed with a small calibre handgun, but that should be enough to carry out a basic carjacking. The developers didn't want to include more powerful hand-held weapons, because this is supposed to be an

automotive combat game not a *Quake*-clone, and all the real fighting will take place on four (or two) wheels.



Weapons were a big part of *Interstate '76*, and they are just as important in '82. There are more to choose from this time, but the effects are a lot better balanced

SPORTING GOODS

Here's a partial list of the many weapons you can play with in *Interstate '82*. Remember: keep death off the roads – drop mines on the pavements!

SLUG THROWERS:

Wessel and Ripper 52cal. Light MG – Fires bullets and tracers.
 Bruding-Nanger 9.47mm Gatling Heavy MG – Fires more and bigger bullets and tracers.
 Cannon GunCo. 107mm Recoilless Cannon – Fires 'Big-ass shells'.

SELF-PROPELLED WEAPONS:

Narladyne Fire-Rite Rocket Pod – Fires rockets.
 Lockwell Global Aim-Nein mk2 Infra-red Missile – Well, it's a missile...
 4U Propulsion Dr. Radar Radar Guided Missile – ...And so is this, but it beeps...

LIQUID THROWERS:

Charwell-Hurtzer FX27 Dragon-Fire Flame-Thrower – Flaming jets of napalm.
 Charwell-Hurtzer AX31 Brown-Magic Acid-Thrower – Sizzling green acid.

KARPOONS:

Narladyne HaVIK Karpoon – When it hits, it causes a jolt of electricity to run along the surface of the car, causing the engine to die.
 Narladyne MaGMA Karpoon – When it hits, all guided missiles automatically acquire that car as their new target.
 Clustered Hypercaustic Inhalant Projectile – Cluster bomb with gas grenades.

DROPPERS:

Lex Stein West Valley Contractors Oil Dropper – Big black oil patch on the ground.



Get together

The greatest strength of *Interstate '76* was its sheer playability as an on-line game, but it still came in for criticism for being too easy and having a lack of balance in the available weapons. There were some guns which were so powerful they made you virtually unstoppable. These problems have been

addressed in the sequel, with all the weapons – with the exception of the trusty machine gun – having counter-measures which limit their effectiveness. If someone is gunning for you with guided missiles, you will be able to add a jamming system which will protect you. There are also weapons which enhance the multiplayer game in more subtle



Taurus is still a cool Funk Soul Brother, but at least you can see his eyes this time



ways. The 'Karpoon' can attach tracking devices to enemy cars, which will tag them for all other players and allow guided weapons to home in on them.

Eighties night

Interstate '82 features a 'great' (if you like that sort of thing, Simon Lovell) soundtrack of authentic eighties music, including three previously unreleased tracks from one of the most popular bands of that infamous decade, those action men from Akron, Ohio, Devo. Other background music is provided by specially commissioned musicians and done in a distinctive 80s style, so expect lots of synthesizers, drum machines and moody angst-filled lyrics about bedsits (sounds lovely, doesn't it?). In most games the music helps to set the tone of the game, but in *Interstate '82* the music sets the tone of the whole decade. The atmosphere of *Interstate '76* was quite definitely tongue-in-cheek, and *Interstate '82* is the same, gently mocking the style (or utter lack of it) of the decade in which it is set. **TC**



The cars in the new game are typical of what we were all driving in the eighties. I had a Lamborghini just like this one, honest. Activision have promised special cars for each release territory

Charwell-Hurtzer FG18 Lava-Boy Fire Dropper – Burning gasoline with thick black smoke.
Bruding-Nanger Mine Dropper PM21 – Standard Type Proximity Mine.
Dover Motors Weapons Division Smoke Screen – Dense black smoke pours out the back of the car.
Lex Stein West Valley Contractors Paint Sprayer – Cloud of paint which hangs in the air.

CONTACT WEAPONS:

Dover Motors Weapons Division Structo-Bumper – A large, shiny steel bar attached to the front of the car.
Dover Motors Weapons Division Carbide Cutters – Two large blades which extend out the front of the car.

LOBBED WEAPONS:

Bruding-Nanger Billiard Mine – Grenade that bounces, with a time limit.
Mortar GunCo. 82mm Mortar – Fires a bomb on a high trajectory.

ENERGY WEAPONS:

Andersen Semi-conductor Cutting Laser – Big red laser beam which sears a black line in its target.
Lockwell Global L.A.R.S. Uplink – A satellite dish fixed to the roof which stays locked on one location in the sky (the satellite) no matter which direction the car turns, and can call down an energy beam from space.

SPECIALS:

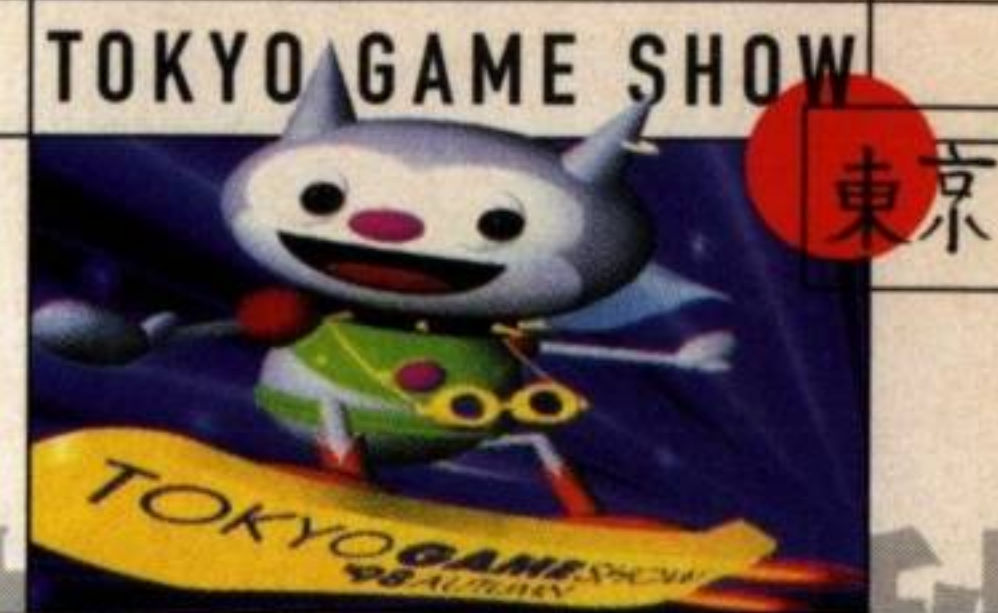
Narladyne SureHot-350 Flare Launching System – Fire parachute flares.
Corcheval Motors Counter-measures Division Chaff Ejector – Chaff ball ejects, bursts, and aluminum bits float down.
North American Dental Catalog No. 4500-N02-M005 N02 – Nitrous oxide injection!
Corcheval Motors Countermeasures Division Fire Extinguisher – Operates automatically.
Good-Knight Industries SuCCLeR (self-contained car launching rocket) – Knight Rider-style improbable leaps on demand.



東京ゲームショウ

T O K Y O
G A M E S H O W

the videogames of the



東京ゲームショウ 98秋



With the Dreamcast officially being unveiled to the public for the first time, and rumours circulating that Sony would be looking to spoil Sega's show with PlayStation 2, Tokyo was

the videogames of the future



the place to be for three days this October. We sent our intrepid editor, **Justin Calvert**, to the Land of the Rising Sun to separate the facts from the hype...

What you'll be playing in 1999 and beyond

東京ゲームショウ'98秋



The Tokyo Game Show was first held in August 1996 to commemorate the foundation of CESA, the Computer Entertainment Software Association. It has since become a regular event and this, the fifth Tokyo Game Show, happily coincides with CESA's second birthday.

The largest show of its kind in Japan, Tokyo Game Show is seen as one of the great achievements of cooperation between different manufacturers, sponsored as it is by Sony Computer Entertainment, Nintendo and Sega Enterprises. The theme for this autumn's show was, very roughly translated, 'The game is energy that surprise you', and for a journalist from the United Kingdom who's never been to a show outside of England or America, it seemed very appropriate.

My first extremely pleasant surprise came before I'd even got into the exhibition hall. Anticipating queues on the first day to be comparable with those of America's E3, where it can take foreign journalists well over an hour to register, I arrived well before the show was due to open. Imagine my surprise when I find that the foreign registration desk was little more than a single desk, manned by only two show staff, and that despite this they were totally on top of the situation and had me registered within a couple of minutes.



東京ゲームショウ'98秋

The Early Bird

The literature I had received before going to the show explained that it was to be held in exhibition halls 1-8 of the Makuhari Messe Center. So, with eight halls to cover in as many hours on the press only day, I skipped breakfast and got straight to work.

The first hall I arrived in was unlike anything I have ever seen at a computer trade show – there were no games whatsoever. The hall, which was actually halls seven and eight opened up into one, resembled some kind of indoor market – which in effect is exactly what it was. The main difference being that all of the stalls were being run by games companies such as Square, Konami, Namco and Capcom, and they sold nothing but games merchandise – everything from the usual T-shirts, models and over-priced cuddly toys through to Biohazard (*Resident Evil*) body armour, snowboards with game logos on them and shelves full of compact discs containing various in-game music and sound effects. Assuming that, as with previous trade shows I've visited, a lot of similar stuff would be given away for free on the publisher's stands in the main show, I moved swiftly on...

SONIC ADVENTURE - Dreamcast

The screenshots you see here do not do *Sonic Adventure* – or the Dreamcast for that matter – any justice whatsoever. The graphics are incredibly detailed, and when you start running through a few rings you just won't believe how fast the action gets – or how smoothly it runs. *Sonic the Hedgehog* games have never been known for having great replay value, but this latest incarnation promises to keep gamers amused even after they've completed the game a few times, thanks to the addition of five extra playable characters. Each of the characters has unique special skills, and although it's unclear exactly how players will gain access to the extra characters at this time, the level I played at the show let me choose any of the six characters to play with, and the level seemed quite different depending on which I was using. The animations for all of the characters are incredibly smooth, and when characters curl up into balls, the impression of them rotating at speed is faultless. In fact the only fault I could find with *Sonic Adventure* at this time concerned the occasionally wayward camera angles. Despite being able to rotate the camera using the shoulder buttons, I found myself unable to actually see my character for worrying lengths of time. Perhaps the most disturbing thing from Sega's point of view, though, (providing their press release is accurate) is that *Sonic Adventure* will now not be released until December 17th – almost a full month after the console.





COOL BOARDERS - Dreamcast

The character and course were recognisable from the PlayStation version. The speed, lighting effects and smoothness of the graphics, however, were not. This version of *Cool Boarders* is a lot closer to 1080 on the Nintendo 64 than it is to its own predecessors on the PlayStation, with different types of snow realistically affecting the handling of the board and completely believable tracks being left in the snow behind the player. *Cool Boarders* on the Dreamcast looks like being the most realistic and beautiful snowboarding game to date, leaving *1080 Snowboarding* for dead and not even racing on the same mountain as the PlayStation game to which it owes so much.

Because I had arrived before the show was officially open, many of the stands were unmanned or not even fully erected yet. The first stand I came across that was fully up and running belonged to *Cool Boarders* developers, UEP Systems. Initially I only noticed two games on display: the peculiar *Rising Zan the Samurai Gunman* and the predictable *Cool Boarders 3*, both on the PlayStation. It was then that I spotted my first Dreamcast... Suddenly the 11-hour flight and overly expensive taxi journeys seemed worthwhile, and I became mesmerised by the snowman that I recognised as the secret character from *Cool Boarders* on the PlayStation.

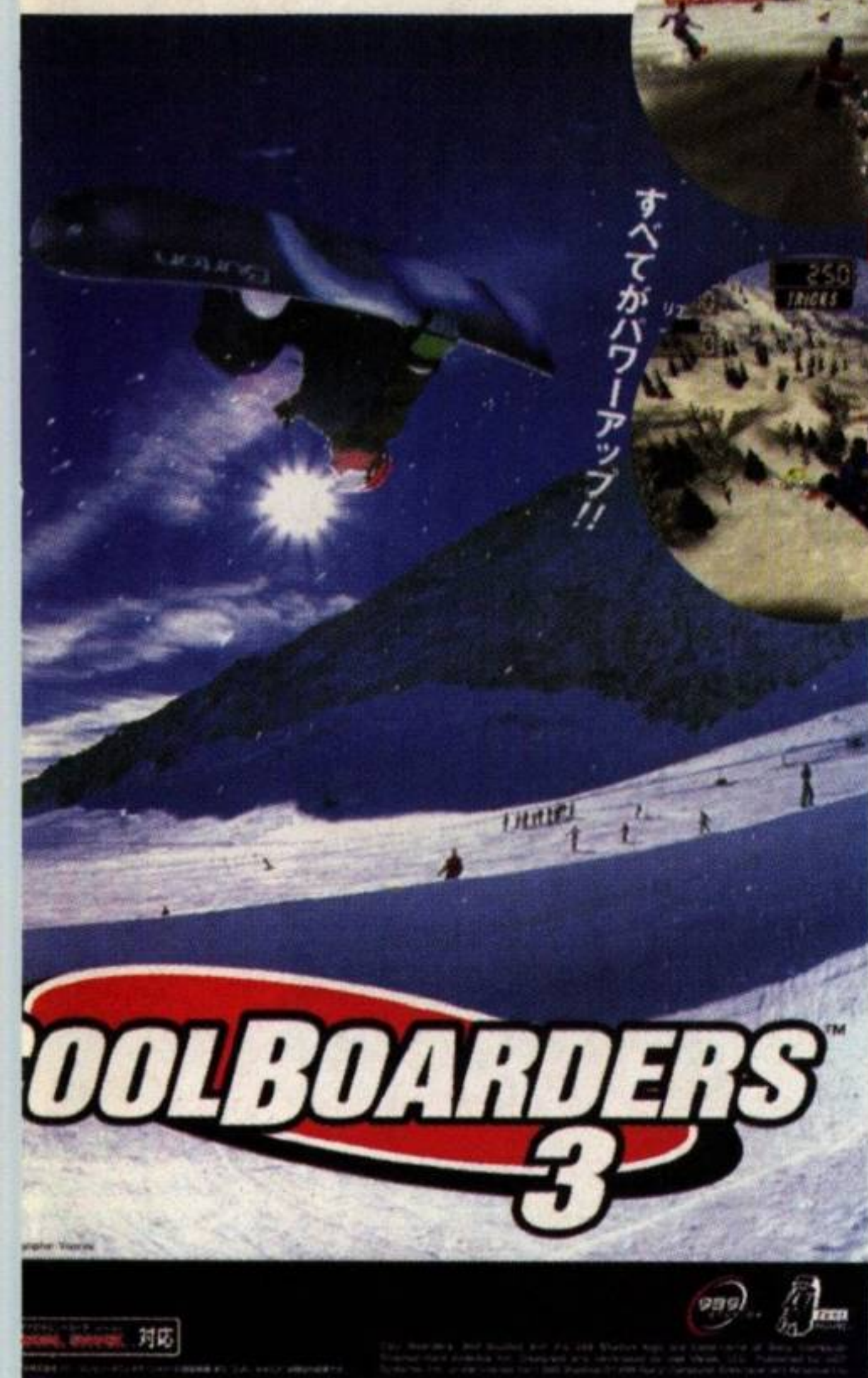
All things Dreamcast...

With my appetite for all things Dreamcast well and truly whetted, I decided to look for what I anticipated to be a blue Sega stand, but which actually turned out to be a bright orange Dreamcast stand where Sega's Saturn console barely got a look in. The stand was small by E3 standards, but was easily one of the biggest (and busiest once everyone arrived) at the show. Predictably, my first port of call was *Sonic Adventure*. The crowds hadn't really

~~then I spotted my first Dreamcast... suddenly the 11-hour flight and overly expensive taxi journeys seemed worthwhile~~

arrived yet, and it was obvious that when they did I'd be lucky to get within ten metres of Sega's lead software title. I found it difficult to concentrate on the screen as I struggled to get to grips with a joypad that was alien to me; it was, like the Dreamcast itself, surprisingly small. It was actually so small that I didn't feel totally comfortable with it, and not being blessed with large hands, I came to the conclusion that Sega will probably follow in Sony's footsteps by producing a larger version for the Western market. Let's hope so!

After playing *Sonic* for around half an hour, I noticed that the inevitable hordes of Dreamcast-obsessed journalists were beginning to arrive at the show. I quickly took up position at the next game on the stand, *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. The experience was basically identical to playing in the arcade - the graphics were smooth and quick, and almost as soon as I started playing I was surrounded by Japanese journalists, eager to get their hands on the joypad in mine. Fearing for my safety, I dutifully handed the pad to the next in line, gave a small bow, and searched for a machine that wasn't in use.



the videogames of the future



VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB - Dreamcast

Fans of the *Virtua Fighter* series will not be disappointed with this latest incarnation; quite simply, it is the best-looking beat-'em-up ever to grace a home system. The action is extremely fast and the fighter animations are seamless. I personally question its ability to take on the mighty *Tekken 3* in terms of depth, but when it's released in a month's time I guess the King of Iron Fist Tournament will be long forgotten by many of Japan's tech-obsessed gamers. Still on target to be launched at the same time as the Dreamcast console, I wouldn't be surprised if this is the first CD a lot of gamesplayers load up on their Dreamcast.



Battling my way out of the *Virtua Fighter 3tb* area, I noticed out of the corner of my eye that the *Sega Rally 2 Championship* area seemed empty. Hardly believing my luck, I made my way towards what I assumed would be a row of Dreamcasts running the game. Then, much to my disappointment, I realised why nobody was playing – there were no Dreamcasts to be seen. The picture on the monitor was coming from a video. The footage was, unsurprisingly, extremely fast, but I can only assume that perhaps the handling is not up to scratch at this stage of development, and so it was decided not to show the game for risk of disappointing players. It's only a theory, but the footage showed what appeared for all intents and purposes to be final code – I just don't understand why else Sega wouldn't have it there. Apparently the game is still going to be released at the launch of the console, but its absence from the show certainly raises a few questions. With *Sonic Adventure* already having been delayed, putting back the release date of another key launch title could prove very costly indeed.

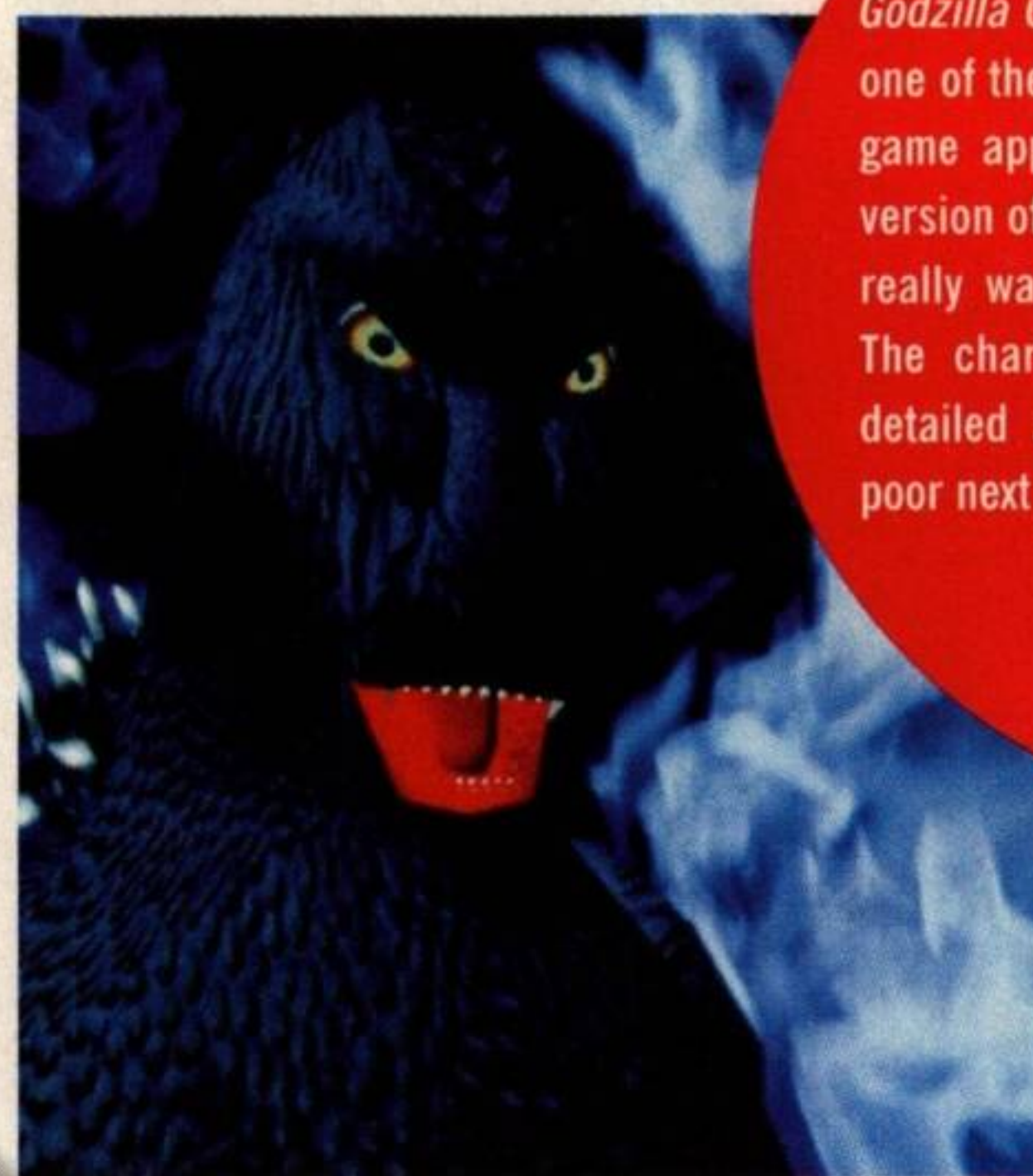
Let Battle Commence

As the Dreamcast stand became more and more crowded, I decided that a change of scenery was in order – perhaps the Konami stand would be a little less claustrophobic?

The first game I went looking for was *Silent Hill* on the PlayStation. All I had seen of the game previously was a few screenshots, so I was pleased to find that there was playable code at the show. The level I played was, for the purposes of the Tokyo Show demo, simply called 'Battle', and it unsurprisingly involved me fighting off some particularly aggressive enemies. The level was set both indoors and outside in a garden, with the outside sections taking place in almost complete darkness. Fortunately my character was equipped with a torch which lit up the surrounding area in a manner that puts the flares in *Tomb Raider II* to shame. The visibility was still extremely limited, but the waist-high creatures that were attempting to kill me were obviously finding it difficult to see as well – until I turned on my torch, of course, at which point they spotted me and attempted to show me the impressive Game Over screen. The lighting effects in *Silent Hill* are easily the best I've seen on the

GODZILLA GENERATIONS - Dreamcast

Godzilla Generations, in my opinion, looks like one of the weaker titles on the Dreamcast. The game appears to be little more than a 3D version of *Rampage*, a game which doesn't really warrant a Dreamcast incarnation. The character models weren't terribly detailed and the animation looked very poor next to the likes of *Virtua Fighter 3tb*.






東京

東京ゲームショウ'98秋

おめでとーっ、湯川専務。



「ソニックアドベンチャー」の発売が、Dreamcastの成功を決定づけた。その理由を、Dreamcastの専務取締役、湯川専務に聞いた。

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湯川専務を男にしてください。

予約受付中

誰も見たことのない、夢のエンターテインメントマシンを、いち早く手に入れよう!!



29,800円

ドリームキャスト、いよいよ11月27日発売。

Dreamcast

PlayStation, as were (unbelievably) the rendered sequences, which effortlessly matched those seen in *Tekken 3*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *Resident Evil 2*. Gameplay-wise *Silent Hill* obviously borrows heavily from the *Resident Evil* series, but then so do a lot of games nowadays, and *Silent Hill* does it better than any of the other titles I've seen.

Hybrid Heaven on the Nintendo 64 was less impressive though. It's been so long in the making that features such as the graphics are looking very dated now that the first of the games making use of the 4MB expansion pak are starting to appear. I didn't get to play the game for very long, but it seemed that technically it was on a par with the original *Tomb Raider* in terms of the character control and animation.

More exciting for Nintendo fans was Konami's 'Unnamed 3D action adventure game', which I can only describe as looking like a third-person version of *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. I wouldn't like to say for definite whether or not the game was using a 4MB expansion pak, but judging by the impressive quality of the graphics, I think so.

PREPARE TO LAUNCH... DREAMCAST!

The official Dreamcast price upon release on November 27th will be 29800 Yen, which roughly translates as £120 – although it's unlikely you'll be able to get one on import before Christmas for under £500. A little expensive, but looking at the quality of the games that will be available by then, I know which console I'll be putting on my Christmas list! In Japan, of course, this price represents something of a bargain – only around £50 more than the slowly ageing PlayStation. The games on the two systems will be selling at the same price, 5800 Yen, which is only about £25.

I think it's fair to say that had *Sonic Adventure* made the console launch date, the Dreamcast would have had the strongest list of software available at launch of any games console. As it is they will be without their lead character, which I think might put some potential buyers off temporarily - but then the PlayStation never even had a lead character.

~~the turntables are certainly well-made, but I've never claimed to be a DJ and the sounds coming from the machine I was using were quite unpleasant.~~

The game I have to thank for keeping the rest of the Konami stand relatively free of congestion is *Beat Mania*, a DJ simulator that is currently at number one in the Japanese PlayStation chart. Gameplay-wise it is similar to *Bust a Groove*, in that players have to press predetermined button combinations in time with the music. The main difference with *Beat Mania* is that it is best played with a specially made turntable peripheral from ASCii, incorporating the five buttons needed to play the game and a turntable roughly the size of a seven inch single. The game is also a big hit in the arcades, where two players can compete with each other using full-size record decks. I attempted to get into the PlayStation version of *Beat Mania* whilst in Japan – after all, for it to reach number one in the Japanese chart it's got to be pretty good... right? Well, maybe. After only about quarter of an hour, I'm afraid I gave up. The turntables are certainly well-made, but I've never claimed to be a DJ and the sounds coming from the machine I was using were quite unpleasant. I'm sure it's every bit as good as the highly enjoyable *Bust a Groove*, but in the middle of a crowded and very noisy show it seemed incredibly difficult.








Dreamcast™



R4 RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 - PlayStation

Seeing Square's

One of the most over populated stands at the show was that of Square. With over 40 PlayStations running the latest build of *Final Fantasy VIII*, there were still hundreds of RPG fans willing to wait for

two-three hours for the chance to play it. Other games on show included *God Bless the Ring*, Square's latest beat-'em-up featuring Cloud and other well-known characters; *Chocobo Quest 2*, a *Zelda*-type game with a chocobo as the central character; *Another Mind*, a dialogue adventure game which I'm certain will never make it out of Japan; and the superb-looking *Chocobo Racing*.

Another large stand at the show almost completely devoted to a single product was Namco's, which consisted of around 30 machines running *R4 Ridge Racer Type 4* and not a lot else. As far as I could tell there were only two other games present on the stand, a manga-style RPG called *Tales of Phantasia*, and an interesting soccer game called *Libero Grande*, the latter of which featured a split



The first thing that struck me about *R4* was how much the graphics have improved upon previous games in the series. Visually *R4* is easily on a par with Sony's *Gran Turismo*, including a high-resolution replay mode. After completing a race on the first track available, I was marginally concerned to find that the circuit required almost no powersliding – the series' trademark manoeuvre. But fear not, racing the second track was classic Ridge Racing, with snaking roads worthy of the Swiss Alps. The tracks seem much more varied than in previous incarnations, and in-between races there are more options than ever before for tuning up your car.



NAMCO'S STAND CONSISTED OF AROUND 30 MACHINES RUNNING R4 RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 AND NOT A LOT ELSE.

screen mode enabling, for example, one player to line up a shot from behind a free kick while the other player, from his viewpoint behind the goal, positions his defensive wall accordingly. In general play the game appears similar to the *Actua Soccer* series. As to whether or not the game will ever make general release in Europe, your guess is as good as mine.

Pocket Power

Disappointed with the overall quality of PlayStation product on show (which is not to say there weren't a lot of great titles, just an awful lot of shoddy-looking ones) I headed for the Sony stand, where I was faced with a stage full of around 50 young children singing what sounded like 'I want to be PocketStation?'. In fact around half of Sony's massive stand was devoted to the promotion of their PDA (Pocket Digital Assistant), or PocketStation as it is now known. Launching on December 23rd, the PocketStation can not only be used as a standard memory card but can be used to play its own games. These games will be downloaded from the console via the memory card port, with 31 titles already

CHOCOBO RACING - PlayStation

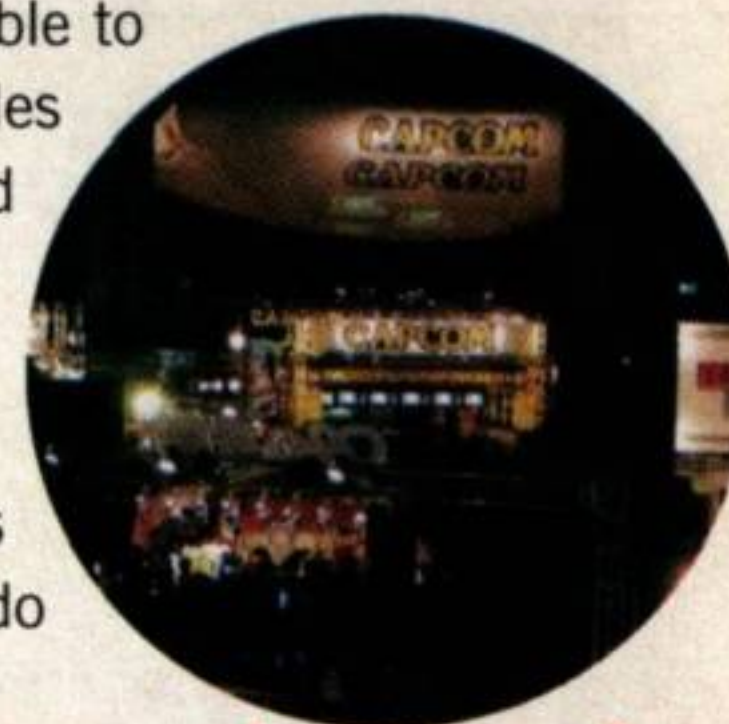
After countless failed *Mario Kart* clones on the PlayStation, it looks as though Square might be the company to finally crack it. *Chocobo Racing* looks every bit as enjoyable as Nintendo's classic and features equally cute characters and weapons.





confirmed as PDA compatible. Because the PocketStation also incorporates a calendar function, users will be treated to software making use of the flow of time or even the changing of the seasons – with the PocketStation plugged into the memory card the possibilities are quite literally endless. Added to this is the ability to transfer information between PocketStations via infra-red.

Rumours that Sony would spoil Sega's party by unveiling PlayStation 2 were obviously totally unfounded, as were those stating that Tekken 4 would be putting in an appearance. In fact Sony's stand was a little disappointing, with Crash Bandicoot 3 essentially the only major title on display. That said, though, Crash Bandicoot 3 looks to be a full torso, head and shoulders above its predecessors, with a large range of new moves and vehicles available to Sony's heroic marsupial. New vehicles include a car, a motorbike, a jet ski and a bi-plane. The vehicles also add a lot more to the gameplay than they have ever done before, with the jet ski section in particular looking almost as good as Wave Race on the Nintendo



FINAL FANTASY VIII - PlayStation

Looking a lot less stylised than *Final Fantasy VII*, the realistically proportioned characters in *Final Fantasy VIII* are superbly animated. The sequel to one of the best games ever, *FFVIII* is unbelievably improving upon its predecessor in almost every way. One of the few queues to match the size of that to play *Final Fantasy VIII* was the queue for *FFVIII* merchandise at the Square stall. Merchandise on offer included T-shirts, Zippo lighters, alarm clocks, credit card holders and just about everything big enough to carry a *FFVIII* logo.

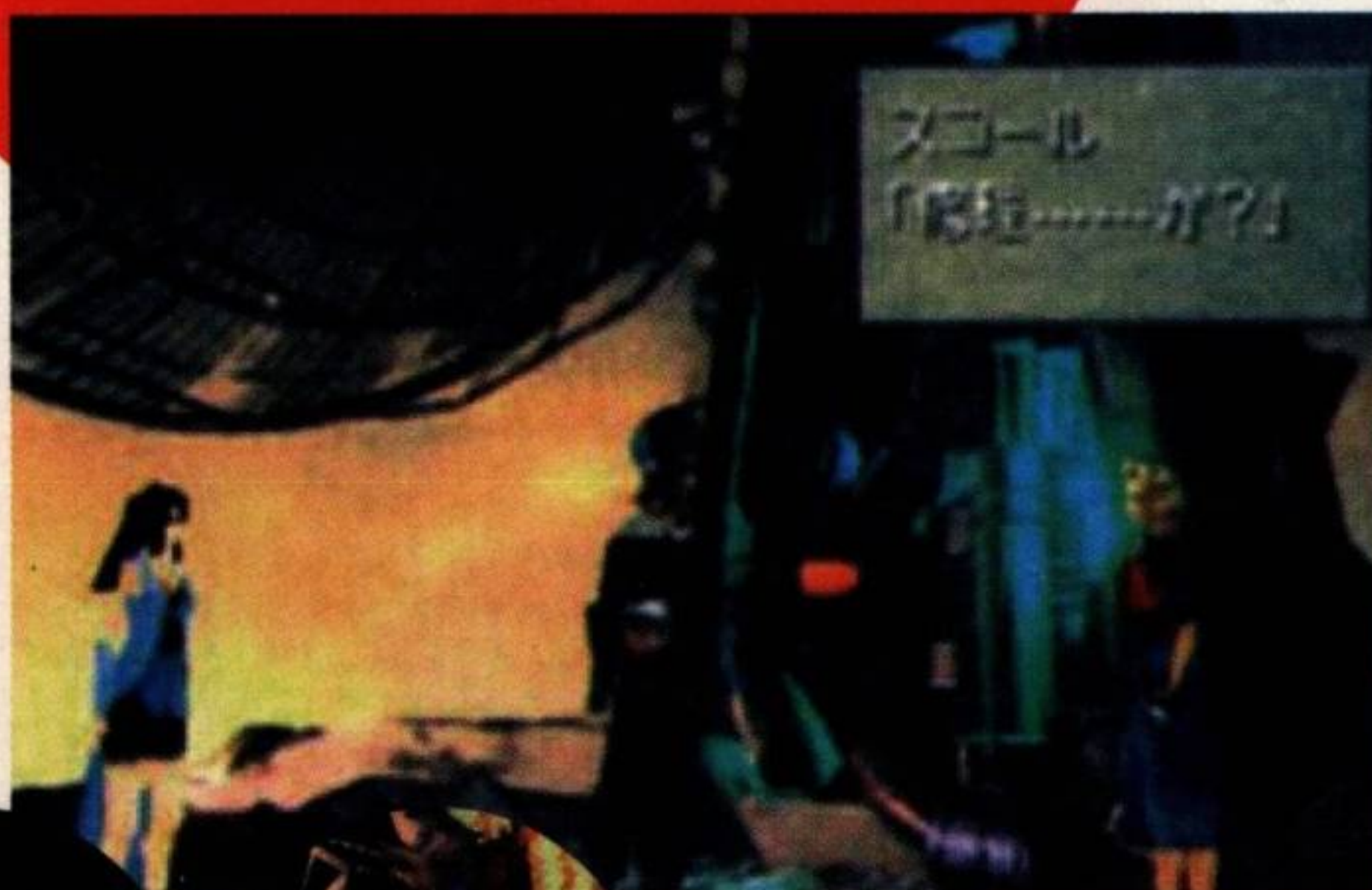
CRASH BANDICOOT 3 LOOKS TO BE A FULL TORSO, HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE ITS PREDECESSORS, WITH A LARGE RANGE OF NEW MOVES AND VEHICLES AVAILABLE.

64 – stunts and all! Riding baby tigers and dinosaurs and wandering around with a larger than life rocket launcher – *Crash Bandicoot* is not a marsupial you'd want to bump into on a dark night.



Gamesplayers in Training

One of the games I was hoping to avoid whilst in Tokyo was the legendary train driver simulator, a game I believed to be little more than a myth until I was confronted with the Taito stand. Inside a life-size rail carriage there were no less than ten machines running the game, *GO 2!* All I can say about this curious title is that for the most part all ten machines appeared to be almost identical, the only real difference occurring when one of the gamesplayers excitedly



happened upon a level crossing – the mind boggles... There is even a specially made peripheral for the game



the videogames of the future

the videogames of the autumn

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA - Dreamcast

Capcom recently announced that the next instalment of their *Resident Evil* series will be exclusive to Dreamcast. *Code: Veronica* wasn't at the show in any shape or form – even the official Sega press release had a blank box where a screenshot should have been. The screenshots below are – as far as we know – the only ones in existence at the moment of what will probably prove to be the game that persuades more PlayStation owners to make the transition to Dreamcast than any other.



incorporating a train driver's controller – and you thought the PlayStation peripheral incorporating a fishing reel was laughable!



Desperate to find a modicum of normality in what I was increasingly becoming convinced was some kind of videogame freak show, I turned my attentions to the Electronic Arts stand. A few sports titles, I thought, just what I need to calm my nerves. Electronic Arts, however, had other ideas, showing only two games on their stand, only one of which was a sports title (*FIFA World Cup 98*, which we've all seen). The other title, which it must be said was dominating the stand over *FIFA* in a major way, was *Theme Aquarium*. Not much needs to be said about *Theme Aquarium* if you've ever played any of the *Theme* series – think of *Theme Hospital*, swap the beds and patients for aquariums and fish and you've pretty much got the idea. What makes *Theme Aquarium* interesting, however, is that it will be one of the first third party games to make use of Sony's PocketStation, I can hardly wait...



not much needs to be said about these aquariums if you've ever played any of the theme series - think of theme hospital, swap the beds and patients for aquariums and fish and you've pretty much got the idea.

Back to the UK

The twelve and a half-hour flight back to Heathrow afforded me plenty of time to reflect on what I'd seen in Tokyo. The show is definitely intended for Japanese consumption, but if only for the curiosity value of many of the exhibits, it was definitely worth the visit. If it hadn't been for the unveiling of a new console I'm not sure how easy it would have been to justify my trip, but with PlayStation 2 looming, I have high hopes that I'll get to go again next year. **TC**



NINTEND...NO?

Despite not having their own show this year, Nintendo still decided not to grace this autumn's Tokyo Show with their presence. With the imminent launches of the Game Boy Color and the long, long awaited *Zelda 64: Ocarina of Time*, it seems strange that these products weren't at least trying to steal some of the limelight from Sega's Dreamcast. There was very little in the way of Nintendo 64 software at the show, and it was easily outnumbered by titles for the Game Boy Color. The most exciting thing I learned about the N64 was not even at the show, but from the guy I sat next to on the flight over. It seems that the PC classic *Battlezone* is definitely on its way to the Nintendo 64, greatly enhanced and making use of the 4MB expansion pak. Up to four players will be able to participate in the multiplayer mode (the same as the strategy multiplayer on the PC), and in addition to the many tank-style units in the original, there will now be personnel including paratroopers and, possibly, a satellite weapon.





Total Control Game of Show



With hundreds of titles to choose from across several different formats, picking a game of show was never going to be easy. As a fan of beat-'em-ups, I was hoping to be suitably impressed by *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, but although it's arcade perfect, I just couldn't justify giving the award to a game which, at the end of the day, has done next to nothing to advance its genre. *Sonic Adventure* would have been the obvious choice, and I suspect it will be named game of show by plenty of other magazines, but even though it's a spectacular title, technically I am yet to be convinced of the quality of the gameplay. *Sonic* fans will love it, but I don't think it's a game that will have PlayStation owners falling over themselves to buy a Dreamcast in the same way that a couple of the other confirmed titles will when they're released.

Final Fantasy VIII would have been another predictable winner, but to be perfectly honest having only played the game in Japanese, I don't really feel qualified to comment on certain aspects of the gameplay and plot that are so important when looking at a game of this kind. Other games that were considered include *Blue Stinger*, *Crash Bandicoot 3* and *R4 Ridge Racer Type 4*. However, none of them captured my imagination quite like the unique *Pen Pen Triathlon* – the deserved winner of the Total CONTROL Game of Show award...



PEN PEN TRIATHLON - Dreamcast

The racing genre is the last place I expected to find a stunningly original title, but upon discovering *Pen Pen Triathlon* around the back of Sega's Dreamcast stand, I would gladly have stayed there all day if my deadline hadn't dictated otherwise.

Initially the game looks closer to *Mario 64* and *Banjo Kazooie* than a racing game, mainly because instead of racing in vehicles, the competitors are all based on animals such as hippos, sharks and dogs, resembling characters from *Banjo Kazooie* much more closely even than characters from *Mario Kart*. The track designs are incredibly varied, incorporating running, swimming and sliding sections not unlike those found in *Mario 64*. The graphics are, in my opinion, easily a match for those to be found in *Sonic Adventure* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. Running in four player split screen mode, the action showed no signs of slowing down whatsoever – even when all four racers were on screen at one time with power-ups aplenty. When I finally get hold of a Dreamcast for myself, this will be the game I invite three of my friends around to play for an all-night session.



START

おじゃまのじあいが勝負の分かれめ!

これから始まる、氷上ドタバタ大競争。滑って、泳いで、突っ走る。ハマる、笑える。こんなゲームもありなのだ。

滑って

ペンペン

泳いで

SWIM

走って

GOAL!

11月27日

DASH!

泳いで


SWIM

走って

GOAL!

11月27日





Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

The **N64's winter line-up** is looking good. Titles such as *Zelda* and *Body Harvest* should restore the public's faith in what has become a flagging format. And then there's *Turok 2*, a game that could do better than both of those titles...



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	Iguana
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	4MB Optional

The original *Turok* was one of the first third party titles to be released on the N64, and it wasn't half bad either. It boasted some wonderful animations (the death sequences were most notable), some huge worlds (the majority of which were set outdoors) and some superb shooting action. Unfortunately, *Turok* also became notorious for the huge amount of fog used to hide pop-up. This game promises to rectify some of the problems of the original (and then some). *Turok 2* will be one of the first

games to use the N64's new 4MB memory expansion pak.

The story begins where the last *Turok* left off. Unbeknownst to our hero, by destroying the chronoscepter in a volcano he caused a violent explosion and freed a powerful alien warlord who had been trapped underground for centuries. As luck would have it, the Primagen (as he is known) is not a nice man; he has designs on global domination. This is where you come in. Your task is to make your way to the Primagen's

crashed spaceship and destroy him before it's too late.

There's been a lot of talk recently about Nintendo's 4MB expansion pak – *Turok 2* is set to be the second game to utilise the expansion. So how does it look? Put simply, *Turok 2* looks as good as any PC 3D accelerated game. It is absolutely stunning with the memory boost: sharp edges, highly detailed textures and, best of all, there is a serious reduction in fog. This is not to say that the game looks bad without using the expansion pak, but



Each of the enemies has its own polygon 'skin' which wraps around a base skeleton and stretches to hide the joints. The effect is superb



GORE BLIMEY!

How did this game make it past Nintendo's notoriously harsh censors? The blood and guts are quite unlike anything ever seen before in a videogame. It is possible to kill creatures in a variety of ways, blowing arms and legs off, as well as heads. And if you kill one with a grenade, then the bodies are likely to be blown to pieces.



once you play the game in hi-res, you'll never go back.

Seeds of Evil

The gore in *Turok 2* is quite unlike anything yet seen on the N64. Although there is a leaning towards a comic book style of blood, it is possible to do all manner of nasty things to the bad guys. Arms and heads fly off with alarming regularity, resulting in fountain-like spurting of the red stuff. This is almost always

sadistic items. One such creation is the electric dart gun; shooting creatures with this stuns them for a short time, allowing you to select another weapon and blow off a limb of your choice. Then there is the Cerebral Bore. Once the weapon has locked on, a bore device homes in on your victim's skull, attaches itself, and then proceeds to borrow into their skull, spurting brains and blood everywhere.

The variety in the level design is also to be admired. You start the game

to this game. The action is beautifully complimented with a classical score, building to a crescendo when the on-screen action heats up. The whole thing lends itself perfectly to the epic feel of *Turok 2*.

Everything about *Turok 2* oozes quality. From the iguana intro screen, where an iguana pulls two machine guns on an attacker, to the wonderful cut scenes, the character and level design and the wonderful graphics, this is the kind of game that Nintendo hoped would be



The flame-thrower is especially impressive. Not only do the creatures continue burning after they are dead, the thrower will lighten up a darkened room

THE ACTION IS COMPLIMENTED WITH A CLASSICAL SCORE. BUILDING TO A CRESCENDO WHEN THE ON-SCREEN ACTION HEATS UP. IT LENDS ITSELF PERFECTLY TO THE EPIC FEEL OF TUROK 2

accompanied by some outrageous death sequence in which the victim squirms around on the floor before breathing his last in a pool of blood.

This is, of course, only possible via the huge selection of innovative weapons. These include the usual stuff: shotguns, pistols and so on, but there are also a large amount of new and highly destructive weapons at your disposal. These include some blatantly

in a sea port, and then quickly move into a swamp, complete with rivers with currents, floating logs which sink if you stand on them for too long and all manner of wonderful details. There are, unfortunately, only six levels, but each of these is massive – something along the lines of six times the size of your average *Goldeneye* level.

Whoever thinks that the N64 'can't do music' should take a listen

appearing on the N64. The multiplayer game is the icing on the cake – it makes *Goldeneye's* deathmatch look positively slovenly. *Turok 2* will be huge, and will no doubt be responsible for an upturn in Nintendo's fortunes this Christmas. If you don't own an N64 yet, then now is the time to buy one. The next few months will be the most exciting in Nintendo's recent history. **TC**



Weapons in *Turok 2* are predictably impressive, and a few now feature a telescopic sight. The zoom is incredibly smooth and effective

SUMMING UP

- +** Can be played in the N64's high-res mode. Looks as good as a PC.
- Features wonderfully constructed, varied and massive levels.
- The levels may be huge, but why are there only six?
- Despite the inclusion of *Goldeneye* controls, this part is still twitchy.

= Although this game is completely different, *Turok 2* is set to take the first-person shooter crown from *Goldeneye*.

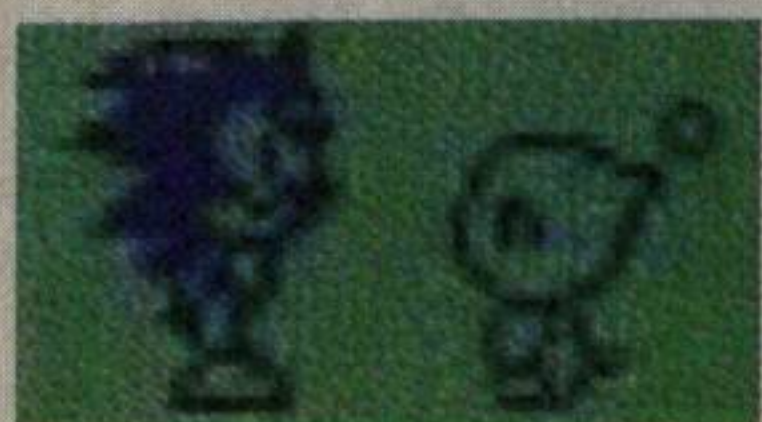


Sonic Adventure

Prepare yourself for the return of **Sonic the Hedgehog**. Will a **blue-haired mammal** be the spark that **Sega** need to revive their **flagging fortunes**?

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Sega
DEVELOPER	In-house (Sonic Team)
STYLE	3D Platformer
RELEASE	December 17 (Jap)
PRICE	£TBA
VMS	Yes
ON-LINE	TBA



The above picture is of *Sonic Adventure* in action on the VMS. You can download data from the main game and play a Pocket Monsters-type of mini adventure.

In the days of the 16-bit console battles, Sonic the Hedgehog was Sega's main weapon against Nintendo's Mario. The two were pitched in a platform character war to the death. This was one of the contributing factors in Sega's dominance in the US and Europe over arch rivals, Nintendo. Although the *Mario* games are considered to be far superior to any of the *Sonic* games, it was perceived value (i.e. image) that was important.

As much as Mario represented Nintendo with his rounded, fun, almost child-like qualities, the hedgehog epitomised Sega in those days: fast, streamlined and altogether more hip. But times change, and when the

Saturn came along, Sega neglected their most successful character in history. Poor Sonic was reduced to bit parts in games such as *Sonic R*. Probably his best outing on the Saturn was in a 'best of' Sonic's Megadrive appearances. Instead of developing Sonic, Sega opted to push more mature characters such as the *Virtua Fighters* to the forefront in an attempt to make the (then) expensive Saturn appeal to an older audience – an audience with a larger disposable income. Sonic was

seen as being perhaps too immature, a myth that Nintendo exploded with the release of *Mario 64*, a game that could appeal to everyone. Now that Sonic is back at the forefront of Dreamcast development, Sega see him as a vital

part of their strategy to regain dominance in a market they could once call their own.

The story concerns the return of Dr. Robotnik and his quest for world destruction. This time he's been in South America, unearthing a deadly primal force known simply as 'Chaos'. His intention is to let loose Chaos on the world, and this is (you guessed it) where you come in. Yes, it's your typical save-the-world-type scenario... but at least there aren't any princesses to rescue.

Obviously, the first thing about *Sonic*

Adventure is that it is in three dimensions. However, the game is not simply a *Mario 64* clone – the levels have a loose structure to them and more of a direct feeling. Although exploration is rewarded,

"IT'S STILL VERY DIFFICULT TO RUN THIS GAME EVEN ON A HIGH-END PC. THE VOODOO2 3D GRAPHICS CARD IS STILL A LONG WAY OFF THE PERFORMANCE OF DREAMCAST." YUJI NAKA, PROJECT LEADER



TRY TO SEE IT FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S POINT OF VIEW...

Possibly the most intriguing aspect of *Sonic Adventure* is the opportunity to play the game with one of six characters. So far, only four have been announced (two are rumoured to be hidden within the game). These are: Sonic, Tails, Knuckles and Amy Rose. Each of the characters has his or her own attributes; Sonic (centre) is quick, Tails (left) can fly, and Knuckles (right) has the ability to glide and dig. Also, by playing the game with the different characters you will see it from their point of view. Sounds fascinating...



there is a linear nature to the game. The player is guided by use of the camera. When the camera follows the player, you will be moving in the direction of the next part. As this is a Sonic game, a lot of emphasis has been placed on speed, and as a result the levels are quite literally massive. Try picturing a level from *Mario 64*, only twenty times the size, and you'll have a pretty good idea of the gargantuan nature of them. Yuji Naka, project leader, says "I've put huge efforts into creating a big map. Of course, I have to focus on the details of the 3D world, but I have to create a vast huge scale map as well. This is the most difficult aspect of *Sonic Adventure*. If it were Mario or a slower character, I wouldn't have to create maps quite as large as this. I created the huge world first for Sonic, but then thought, 'why not utilise these maps for other characters? Maybe I could add some variety to the game – not just running quickly through this huge world.' That's one of the key concepts in the game."

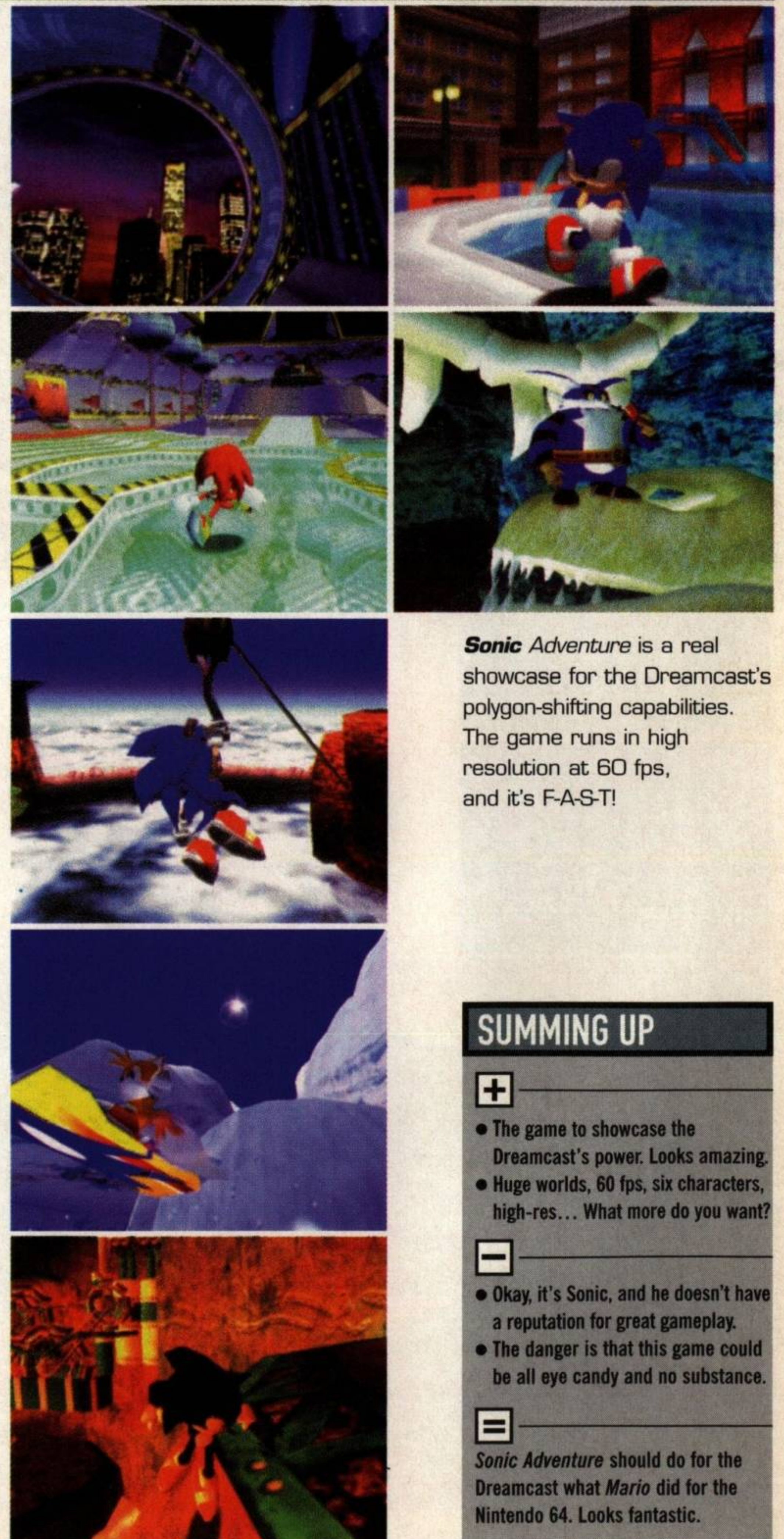
There are also RPG elements to the game: Sonic has to talk to inhabitants of the levels in order to make progress.

There are six playable characters to choose from: Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy Rose and two secret ones. Each character

has his or her own abilities: Sonic can run at high speeds; Tails can fly; and so on. But the interesting thing here is that each character plays the game from his or her point of view. Playing with Sonic is totally different from playing with Knuckles, for example. You will also meet the other characters as you move around the world, each with his or her own objectives. This feature gives the game a life of its own and ensures that you'll be coming back to this game for a long time. We are also promised by Naka that there will be great replay value. He's not saying exactly what, only that he has some "nice ideas".

You don't need telling that *Sonic Adventure* looks absolutely stunning. But what these screenshots don't convey is the sheer speed of the thing. The game moves along at an incredible 60 fps without any fogging effects whatsoever. According to Yuji Naka, *Sonic* cannot be duplicated even on the highest end PCs: "It can't be done – only on Dreamcast"

Not since the 64-bit debut of Mario have a bunch of videogames journos been so excited about a game. It's a tall order to live up to, but with stunning graphics, the now classic character design of the Sonic games and the world famous design skills of Sonic Team, we'll be in for a treat. **TC**



Sonic Adventure is a real showcase for the Dreamcast's polygon-shifting capabilities. The game runs in high resolution at 60 fps, and it's F-A-S-T!

SUMMING UP

- +**
- The game to showcase the Dreamcast's power. Looks amazing.
- Huge worlds, 60 fps, six characters, high-res... What more do you want?

-
- Okay, it's Sonic, and he doesn't have a reputation for great gameplay.
- The danger is that this game could be all eye candy and no substance.

=
Sonic Adventure should do for the Dreamcast what *Mario* did for the Nintendo 64. Looks fantastic.



CARMAGEDDON II: Carpocalypse Now

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	SCi
DEVELOPER	Stainless Software
STYLE	Violent driving game
RELEASE	November (PC)
PRICE	£34.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166
MEMORY	TBA
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

If you've never played *Carmageddon*, you've missed out on one of the true classics of computer gaming and you owe it to yourself to check out the sequel.

Carmageddon, from Stainless Software, is a driving game with a difference. Most racing games reward careful driving, staying on the track and avoiding accidents. Not this one though. You get extra points for running over pedestrians in a stylish manner, or for eliminating your opponents in spectacular crashes. Actually finishing a race is of secondary importance at best.

The game has been stirring up controversy since it first appeared in 1997. The British Board of Film Censors ensured that the pedestrians became green-blooded zombies, and before *Grand Theft Auto* came along the popular media frequently used it as an example of why playing computer games will turn us all into deranged killers. I would have thought reading the tabloids was a lot more likely to have that effect...



Immediately after the start we check out the new definition of spring cleaning

Despite all the bad publicity, *Carmageddon* has survived to become a much-loved classic, and the addition of the infamous Splat Pack add-on, restoring the original colour palette and improving the graphics with 3Dfx compatibility, increased both its popularity and notoriety with PC and Mac owners.

Reap what you mow

Never a company to bow under pressure, Stainless Software have been hard at work developing a sequel, and the cheesily named *Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now* is due to smash into

your local games shop in November. The game has undergone a complete transformation, featuring built-in compatibility with a range of accelerators and controllers, vastly improved graphics and car physics, a long list of new power-ups and the long awaited transition onto both the PlayStation and the N64. What remains unchanged is the level of carnage and destruction. Hapless pedestrians splatter over your windshield with even more gore, cars smash and explode with greater violence, and the whole thing is twice as much fun as it ever was.



Left: The damage is displayed far more graphically – even the glass in your cockpit can shatter. Middle: The prototype 'unconvertible' model on its maiden voyage



GLORY ROAD

There are plenty of great-looking new toys in *Carmageddon II*, and not just cars either. There are over forty new vehicles, including a massive jumbo jet, a light aircraft with no wings but a razor sharp propeller, and a combine harvester which bales your victim into neat-but-gory little cubes. Many of the favourite cars from the first game have been redesigned, with lots of added features like opening doors which can swipe pedestrians as you go past. All the vehicles have realistically modelled physics attributes, and every polygon of the model can be damaged or removed.



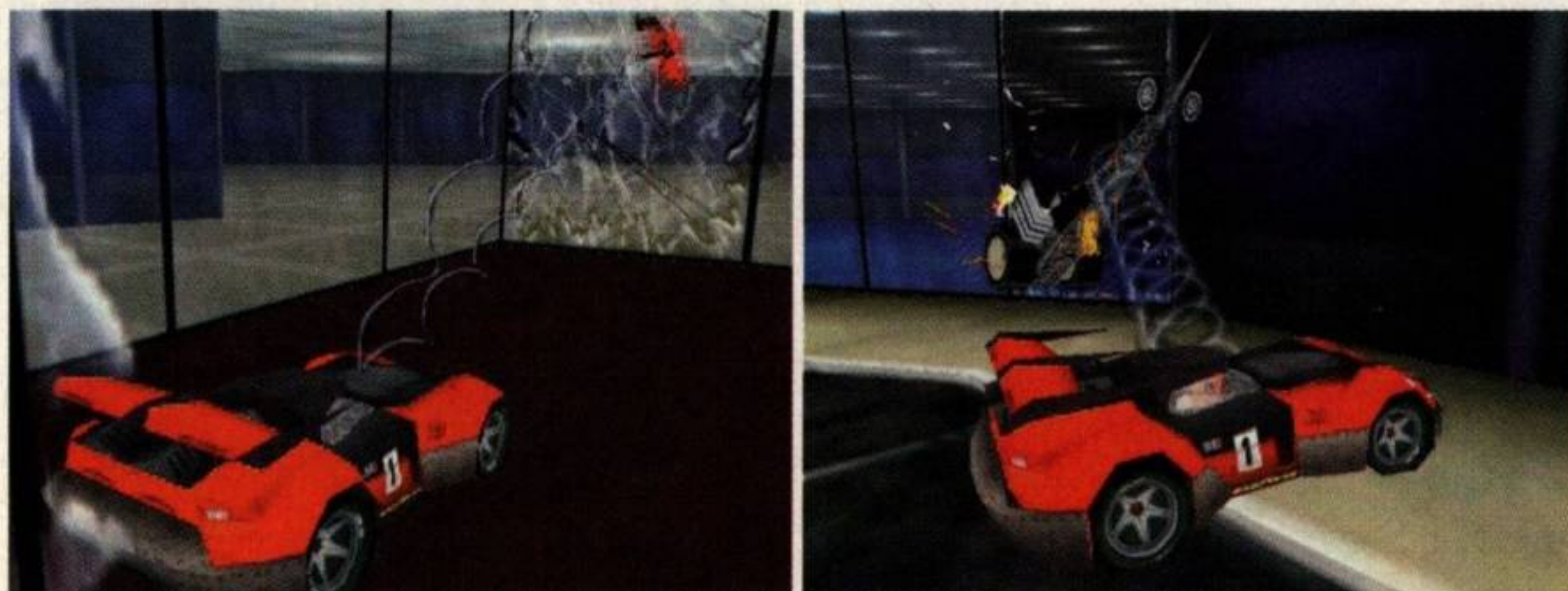
The scale of the game has more than doubled, with huge new levels such as an athletics arena and an aircraft carrier, and plenty of hidden extras and secret trigger points to open up new areas. The game is so big that

INJURED VICTIMS WILL TRY TO CRAWL AWAY - UNLESS YOU HAVE MANAGED TO REMOVE JUST ONE LEG, IN WHICH CASE THEY WILL HOP DOWN THE ROAD

even the pedestrians have to drive around in cars. These 'drone cars' don't join in the race, they just drive around town, obeying the normal rules of the road and generally getting in everyone's way. Not really a problem, just more things to destroy.

Max Damage

For the UK release version, the game will still feature a zombie mode with



Power-ups have become an important part of the game, here's one of our favourites



supposedly less offensive green blood, but unlike the original, this will mean more than just a change of colour palette. The zombies are specially animated to resemble the lurching horrors from classic George Romero movies such as *Dawn of the Dead*. The animation of the pedestrians is one of the main features of the new game. If you can hit them carefully enough, you can remove limbs without killing them

outright. Injured victims will try to crawl away - unless you have managed to remove just one leg, in which case they will hop down the road, dripping blood as they go. Horrific, gory and morally indefensible, but hilariously funny nonetheless.

The animation of the damage to the cars is a lot better too. Windscreens shatter, panels bend and come away, the wheels can come off

These shots show off the immense detail of *Carmageddon II*, including Hawaiian shirts and drivers in each of the vehicles

and the chassis can be folded or snapped in half. The damage model is so complete, you can even knock your engine out onto the road. The auto-repair function is also well animated, looking eerily reminiscent of the movie

Christine, as the panels bend themselves back into shape.

Live action

Naturally, for those of you who prefer live prey, the game can be played over the Internet or a local area network. This is one of the most popular features of the original game, especially amongst the designers here at Rapide.

Carmageddon is one of the few decent games which can be played over a Macintosh network. There are numerous Websites dedicated to the first game, and I have no doubt that there will soon be just as many for the sequel. One rather neat feature aimed at die-hard fans is the instant replay recorder, which allows you to save your most spectacular stunts to disk for later appreciation. You can even send them over the Internet, allowing you to compare notes with other like-minded auto duellists. **TC**

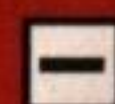


The driver looks out across the ruined city, contemplating whether to ask a nearby ped the way to the nearest chippy

SUMMING UP



- Vastly improved graphics and smarter, funnier pedestrians
- Bigger, better levels and lots more action



- Very, very, very, violent. Not for kids
- Can't customise cars or design own tracks

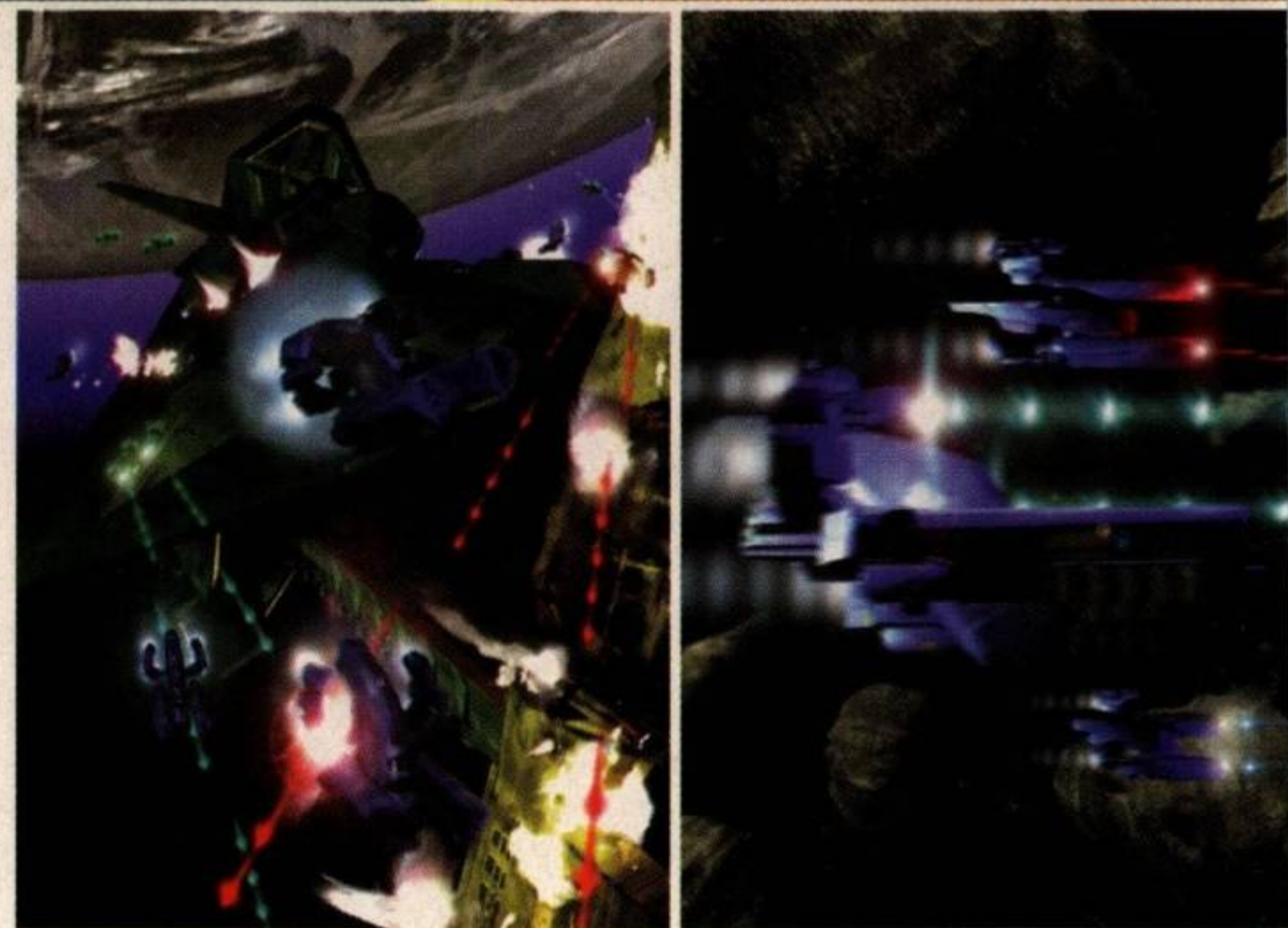


This will become a classic on every format, and I expect to see a third version about this time next year



COLONY WARS: Vengeance

With its **innovative** branching plotline, dazzling graphics and challenging gameplay, **Colony Wars** has been one of the best **space adventure** games available on any platform. **Until now, that is...**



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Psygnosis
DEVELOPER	In-house
STYLE	Space Combat
RELEASE	December
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

When Liverpool-based developers Psygnosis released their space-flight battle game, *Colony Wars* this time last year, it never quite achieved the popularity it deserved. This was not due to any particular fault in the game – which was superb – it was just a matter of bad timing. It appeared just before last Christmas, at about the same time as *Tomb Raider II* – which was bound to sell by the truckload – and the disappointing but over-hyped *G-Police*. However, *Colony Wars* has

sold steadily since then and has collected some very favourable reviews along the way, so Psygnosis have rewarded its perseverance with a well-earned sequel.

Shock treatment

Colony Wars: Vengeance is recognisably the same game, but has a long list of improvements over the original version. Psygnosis have wisely kept all the best features of the first game and have added to them, building a solid product on a strong foundation. The control system is the

same comprehensive but easy-to-handle pattern as the first game, but analogue compatibility has been added to make use of the new Dual-Shock controller. The flight model is similar but has been tweaked to give better control and greater realism, with heavy damage affecting the performance of your ship. The many changes are mostly in the details, and nearly all of them are for the better.

One great feature which is retained for the new game is the clever branching storyline. Again, there are six possible endings, and



which one you see depends on the outcome of a series of key missions. If one mission ends in failure, it alters the course of the war and can change the eventual outcome. The storyline follows on from the plot of the

The designs of the ships have been massively improved for this sequel. Ground attack missions are a welcome novelty

against the tyranny of Earth and its powerful navy. This time the roles are reversed, and you play a pilot in Earth's newly reborn navy, fighting to free the solar system from the oppression of the League. Once again you are following a charismatic leader, and the plot is advanced after each group of missions. Depending on how well you are doing, the tone of the FMV cut-scenes is either triumphant or downbeat. Either way, the standard of animation is superb.

the game features an Earth with the continents mirror-reversed! Maybe this is supposed to indicate that you are in an alternate reality...

Present time

Colony Wars had about sixty different ship models, most of which were based on very similar designs. There are seventy-five different models in *Vengeance*, and the designs are a lot more varied, with higher numbers of polygons and more detailed and

colourful texture maps – the bigger ships are particularly impressive. The controlling AI

of the enemy ships has been greatly improved, as have the wingmen who help on your missions. They now have distinct personalities and react to your presence in an almost lifelike manner.

Colony Wars: Vengeance is due out before Christmas, which unfortunately brings it once again into conflict with the unstoppable Lara Croft. However, this is going to be a very strong game, and with less competition, it should do better second time around. **TC**

THIS TIME THE ROLES ARE REVERSED, AND YOU PLAY A PILOT IN EARTH'S NEWLY REBORN NAVY, FIGHTING TO FREE THE SOLAR SYSTEM FROM OPPRESSION

original game but is set a century later, after one of the six possible endings of the first game. In *Colony Wars*, you played the role of a pilot in the League of Free Worlds, fighting

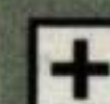
The graphics of the first game were widely praised, and *Vengeance* is even better. Planets are visibly spherical and have detailed surfaces, although, in an amusing oversight, the preview copy of

LOOKING GOOD

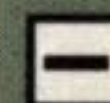
One of the most welcome changes in the sequel is the ability to customise your ships. Between missions you have the option to visit the hangar, where changes to your ships can be made. Each time you successfully complete a mission, you are awarded a 'tech point', which you can use to improve one of four aspects of your ship's performance: engine power, afterburner duration, shield strength and gyros, which affect your turning speed. These improvements are permanent, even if your ship is destroyed. You can also be rewarded for some missions with a whole new ship, which means that you can build up your own little fleet and choose the best one for a particular mission. This gives a lot more flexibility and player involvement, a quality which was slightly lacking in the original game. The single biggest addition to the game engine is the inclusion of planet-based ground attack missions.



SUMMING UP



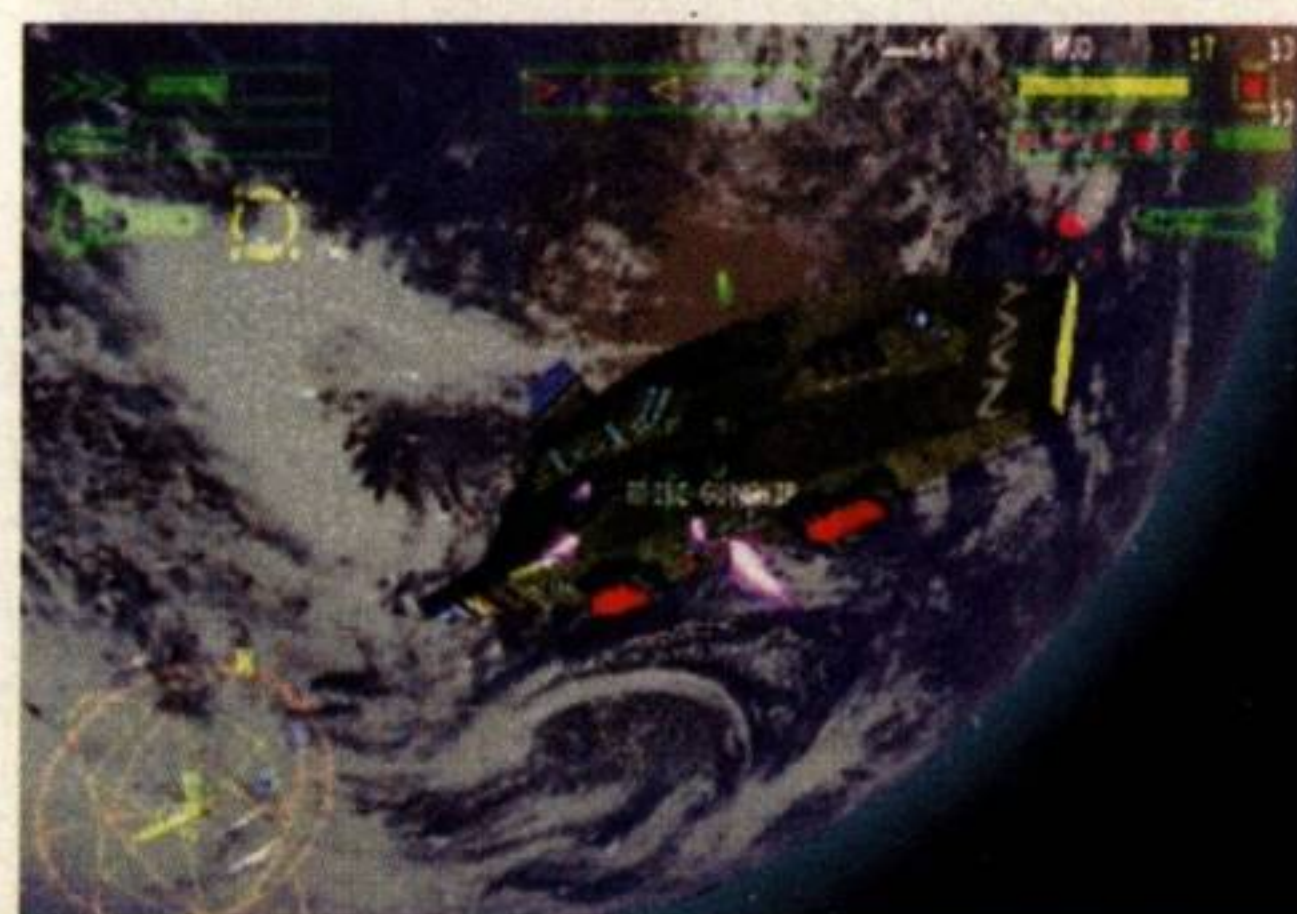
- Greatly improved graphics and playability.
- More varied missions and customisable ships.



- Possibly a bit too similar to the previous game for some players.
- Missions not adequately explained during briefings.



Great-looking all-action space combat game, easily the best of its kind on the PlayStation



The new missions are a lot more varied and present a greater challenge



Warzone 2100

As the **imminent release of Tiberian Sun** approaches, the struggle for the **real-time strategy crown** is intensifying. Warzone 2100 is the **latest pretender to the throne...**

Whenever we see a real-time strategy game, the words 'Command & Conquer' come hurtling into our minds. This game has been responsible for what seems like a thousand and one copycat attempts, and few have lived up to the high standards of Westwood's seminal game. *Warzone 2100* is the latest attempt to bring

repetition critical point?

The story line of *Warzone 2100* is nothing to get excited about; as ever, it's set in a post-nuclear war scenario. After the nuclear winter, people start to emerge from underground shelters into a world not-too-dissimilar to that of Mad Max. Tribes of people scavenge for what fuel there is to power their fortresses and war machines, and this

Building an army

On the surface *Warzone 2100* appears to be a *Command & Conquer* clone, but spend more than ten minutes with it and you'll see why it isn't. The most innovative feature of *Warzone 2100* is the way that you can construct your own vehicles. By going to the Construct menu, you first select the base of your vehicle, then the method of movement (i.e. tracks, wheels, hover) and finally a weapon or utility. These start off as basic machine guns, but as you progress you'll gain access to

THE MOST INNOVATIVE FEATURE OF WARZONE 2100 IS THE WAY THAT IT GIVES YOU THE ABILITY TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT YOUR OWN VEHICLES

something new into the format. What new ideas can Pumpkin Studios bring to a genre that seems to be reaching

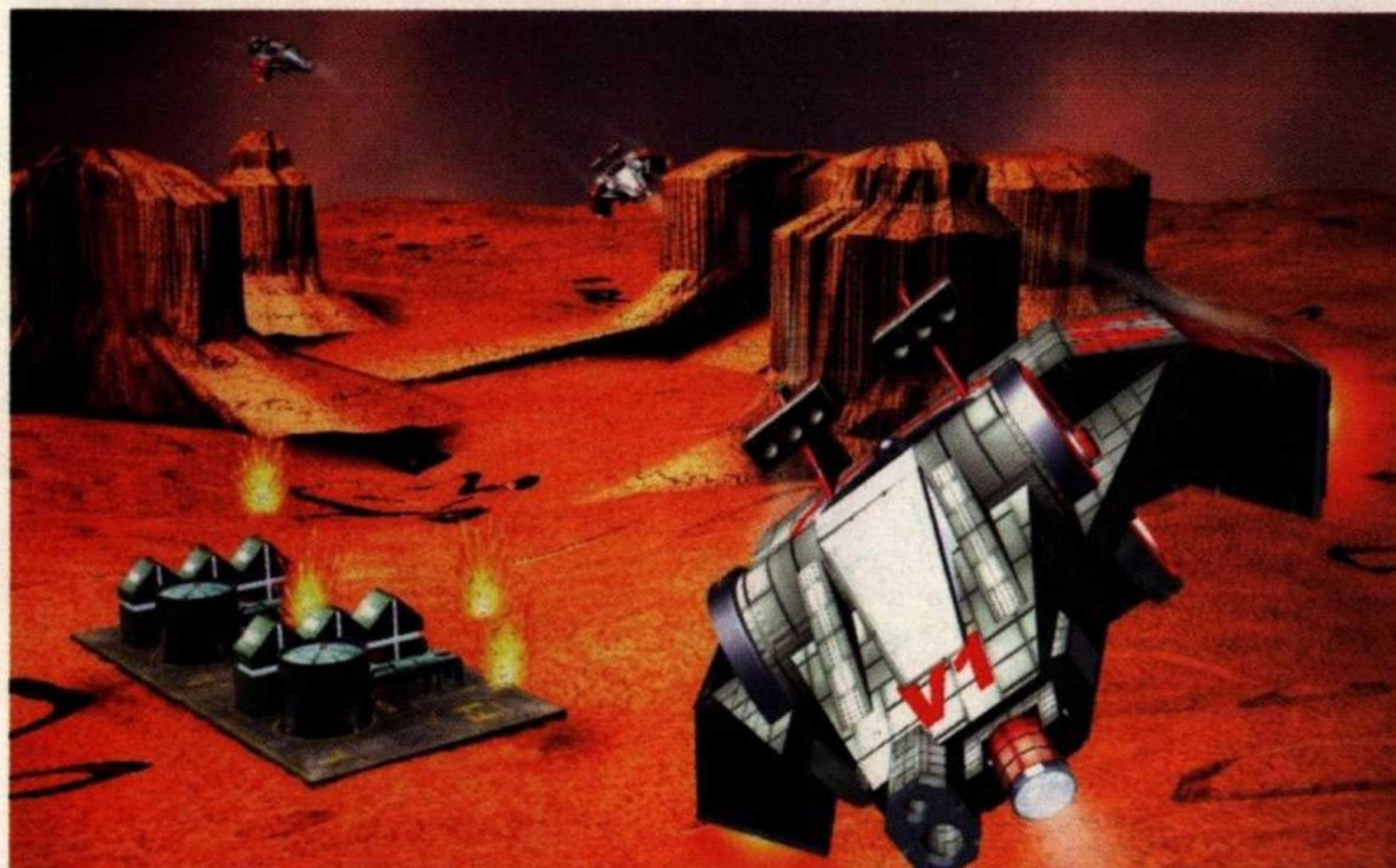
where the game begins. Nothing too original in the setting, but what lies beneath is quite radical.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Eidos
DEVELOPER	Pumpkin Studios
STYLE	Real time strategy
RELEASE	Spring '99
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-16
PROCESSOR	TBA
MEMORY	TBA
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional



You'll find plenty of variety in landscapes. Missions start off in the scorched desert but move into crumbling cities later on in the game



flame-throwers, missile launchers and repair units. You can then name your new creation anything you like. Vehicles are upgradeable by discovery of new technologies. These are sometimes found in the wreckage of buildings or forgotten vehicles, but more often than not they are in the possession of rival tribes. So basically what we have here is a game of survival of the fittest – destroy your nearest rival, steal his technology and move on. Technologies are then taken back to your base, where they can be researched and experimented with to make new creations. This not only applies to the vehicles you can build, but to buildings and communications.

Missions are also suitably varied. To begin with, you are given simplistic 'hunt and destroy' type levels, but these soon progress to something a bit more imaginative. A transport ship comes into play when you reach a certain level of development and you are then given objectives away from the immediate area of your base. In these parts it is vital that you select your 'away team' well, as to re-supply them means loading up the transport and then waiting a few minutes for deployment as it makes its way to the drop site. When there is a time limit, this can play a major part in tactics. This idea brings into play lots of possibilities and immediately puts you on the back foot if you run

into organised resistance. These missions are typically reconnaissance and recovery-based to begin with, but other, more difficult levels await where you will have to set up a new base and invade a rival's territory with only limited resources.

From whatever angle...

Warzone 2100 is also the first game of its type to use fully three dimensional, rotating environments. These look especially pleasing when viewed with an accelerator card. The three dimensional terrain not only looks great but also comes into play when deciding what vehicles to design. Vehicles with tank tracks will struggle up hills and mountains, while hover cars have got no chance of making the climb. In this situation, tyres are the best option, proving that you'll need a good blend of different vehicle types to succeed.

So what might seem an uninspiring setting for a game actually hides an imaginative take on the real-time strategy concept. The ability to design your own vehicles is a novel idea and a welcome one, which will no doubt be incorporated into the next lot of real-time strategy games. An extensive multiplayer game is also promised, with team play and deathmatches as standard. It looks like *Warzone 2100* will be a serious challenger to Westwood's crown. **TC**



DO IT YOURSELF

The best feature in *Warzone 2100* is undoubtedly the option to design your own vehicles. This option becomes open as you discover new technologies. You can decide on everything from propulsion of the vehicle to the type of weaponry. Eidos promise more than 500 possibilities.



Above: these conceptual renders show the thought that has gone into the overall look of the game

SUMMING UP

- +** Gives you the ability to design your own vehicles
- Rotatable 3D terrain widens the strategic possibilities
- Missions strive to be different to *C&C* but could fall into doing the same things
- Haven't we had enough of real-time strategy games?

Warzone 2100 should give *Tiberian Sun* a good run for its money



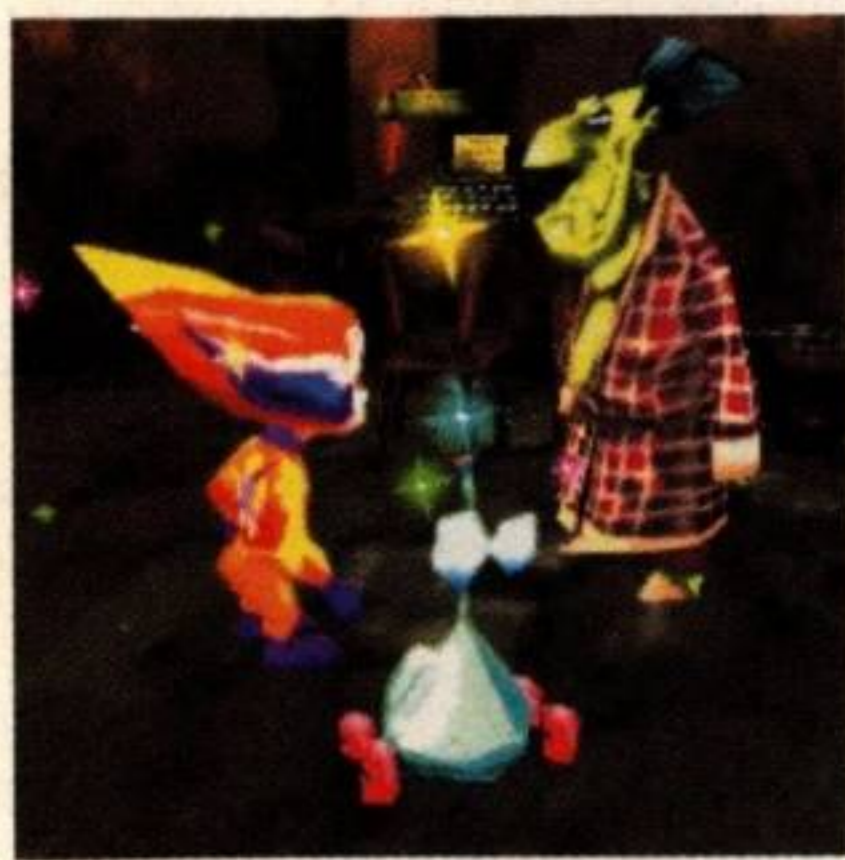
The 3D accelerated version of *Warzone 2100* is especially impressive, utilising numerous lighting and particle effects for explosions



Starshot: Space Circus Fever

The competition's already pretty tough after the recent release of *Banjo-Kazooie*, but *Starshot* looks like it could be something quite special.

The **N64** has **another 3D platformer** on the way



3D Platformers on the N64 are like real-time strategies on the PC and racing games on the PlayStation; they have been in demand so much that quantity is beginning to take precedence over quality. *Starshot* is shaping up to be a game that will revert to the old code of high quality platform games.

If these screenshots look familiar, but the name doesn't, then you may be

business. So before landing on a particular planet and performing your show, you must first see off the Virtua menace and ultimately steal the show.

Starshot is a very Japanese platformer, with a style reminiscent of Manga films, primarily aimed at the younger audience. Starting off in the HQ of your starship, you can first gain information about the planet you are about to land on from some of the

no automatic settings. As you play you are almost forced to keep your fingers over the angle controls so that you always have a good view ahead (which gets quite difficult when there are plenty of obstacles around). The problem with this is that you don't want to have to do it all the way through the game. Also, because 'up' on the stick will always move you up on the screen as well (which in itself is quite normal), you'll need to be very careful – especially when running over a narrow ledge – because you are able to control the direction that your character runs by changing the camera angle and keeping the stick up (sometimes it works quite well).

During the game there are plenty of pick-ups in the form of multi-coloured stars. The red stars are for fuel. These are saved up and, through all of the levels that you find, if you don't have enough at the end, then you'll need to go back and find some more. There

STARSHOT IS A VERY JAPANESE PLATFORMER, WITH A STYLE REMINISCENT OF MANGA FILMS, PRIMARILY AIMED AT THE YOUNGER AUDIENCE

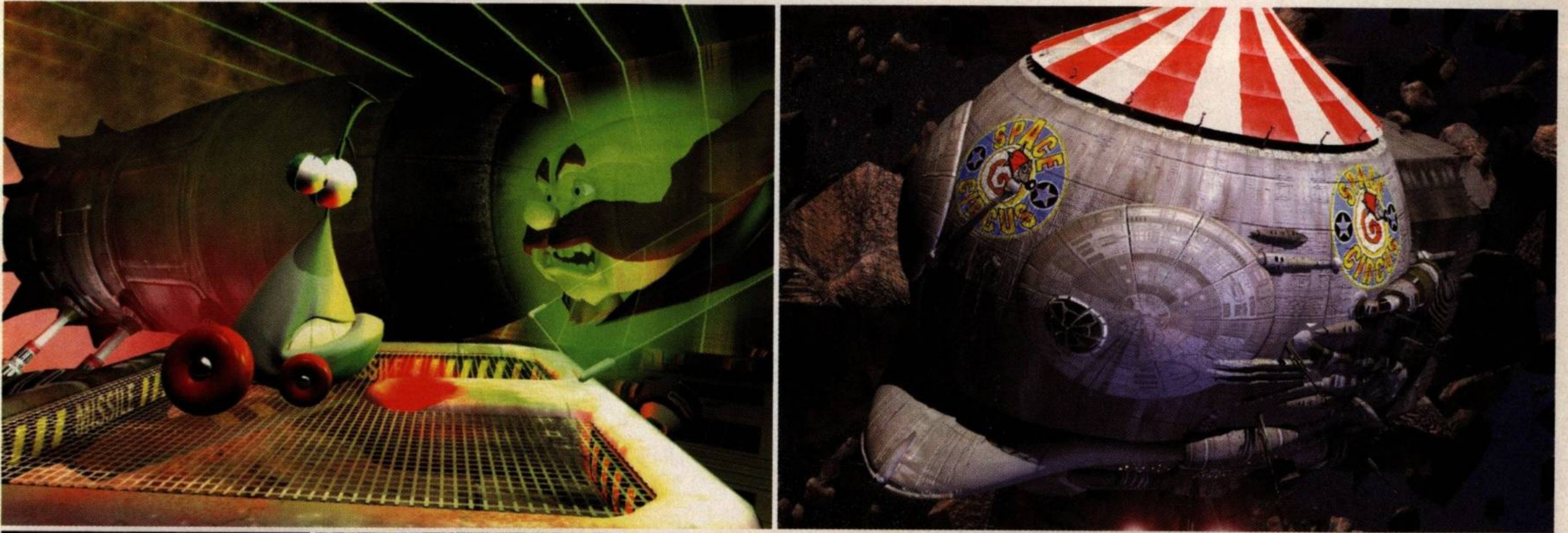
thinking about *Space Circus*. Before you get too confused, this was the original title for the game. So, apart from the name, *Starshot* is everything that *Space Circus* was set to be.

You play the eponymous Starshot, a star juggler for the intergalactic space circus. There's one problem: demand for the space circus has gone down since the rise of the Virtua Circus – your rivals, intent on putting you out of

many robots there. Then you yourself must beam down to the planet and accomplish your mission. Quite often the mission will change as you progress through the level when you discover certain things about the Virtua Circus' activities there. One of the initial problems with the basic movement is the camera angle; the player has complete control over the angle. And it's just as well, as there are

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	Infogrames
STYLE	3D Platformer
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	One
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	No
EXPANSION PAK	No



Some of the narrow ledges shown in these shots will be quite difficult to cross unless you've mastered the manual camera controls

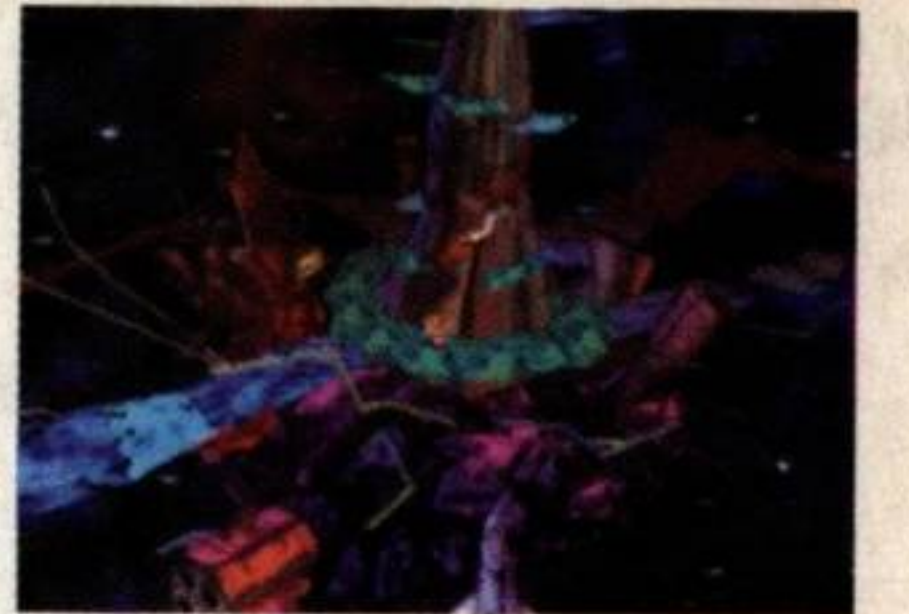
are green stars for health, of which you can have a maximum of eight at a time. The blue stars are for your firepower – each one is one shot, and you are allowed to carry a maximum of fifty shots. Because of your expertise with star juggling, you can bend the shots after you have thrown them, allowing you to hit the enemies when you are out of their line of sight—it's tricky at first but you soon get the hang of it. The stars that are the most fun are the yellow ones. These supply fuel that allows you to take to the skies for as long as they last, giving you access to some of the secrets that are scattered around and are sometimes necessary to complete a part of the level. If you've got them you'll probably use quite a lot, even when they are not necessary, because jumping from platform to platform is difficult to judge.

Starshot is very strange, in that you'll find each successive section very difficult until you manage to do it, after which you'll be able to go back and do it again with relative ease. Luckily there are plenty of restart points scattered around, and a supply of infinite lives certainly comes in handy. It's a very strategic platformer, with the missions requiring you to interact with some of the 300 characters in the game. It certainly has the potential to become another great N64 Platform game, but there are still quite a few things that need to be ironed out. **TC**



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

One of the more interesting additions *Starshot* has is the use of speech as a necessary means to progress. To accomplish certain acts, you must first find and then talk to certain characters, who in return will give you vital hints and items that are necessary to complete the level.



One thing that *Starshot's* not lacking is imagination. Some of the locations are utterly bizarre and totally surreal, it could only happen in Japan

SUMMING UP

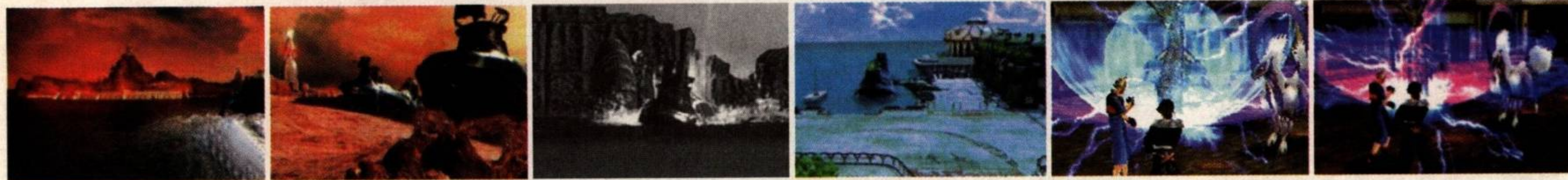
- +**
 - Very intelligent platformer requiring a lot of brain-taxing problem solving.
 - Manages to avoid being cute but still retains the 'enchanted' feel that is common to most platform games.
- - Slightly annoying control system that is difficult to master and can at times be very frustrating.
 - Graphically it's not as accomplished as *Banjo-Kazooie* or the majority of the other big N64 platform games.

= A game that you'll be hearing a lot more about in the coming months. It won't be quite as good as *Banjo-Kazooie* or *Mario 64*, but it will almost certainly be in the same league.



Final Fantasy VIII

The **biggest game series in history** is about to get a new instalment. How can Square possibly better the **monster** that was *Final Fantasy VII...*?



The join between pre-rendered cut scenes and in-game action is, as expected, seamless

When *Final Fantasy VII* was released last year, it took the world by storm. Never before has a game made the kind of impact that *FFVII* made. Not only did it break all sales records in its native Japan, but *FFVII* crossed the cultural boundary to the US and Europe more successfully than any Japanese game ever.

SQUARE ARE NOW DOING THINGS WITH THE PLAYSTATION'S GRAPHICS CHIP THAT SONY COULD ONLY HAVE DREAMT OF THREE YEARS AGO

FFVII will be remembered for many reasons: the sheer size of the game; the wonderfully dramatic storyline, but probably most of all for the way the game made you feel terrific empathy for a bunch of computer generated characters. *FFVII* wasn't so much a game as a way of life. So the follow-up

has its work cut out from the start. Can Square do the seemingly impossible and make a better game than *FFVII*?

The story revolves around two military organisations: Garden and SeeD. Garden is a military school for six to nineteen-year-olds, where students are conscripted to join an army after graduation. Graduates can become commanders of a foreign army,

but can't pick their place of duty. SeeD is a special forces unit connected to Garden. This is where you, and the game's main character, Squall Leonhart, come in.

The other main characters are Zell Dincht, who is a boxer, and Rinoa Heartilly, a similar character to Aeris in

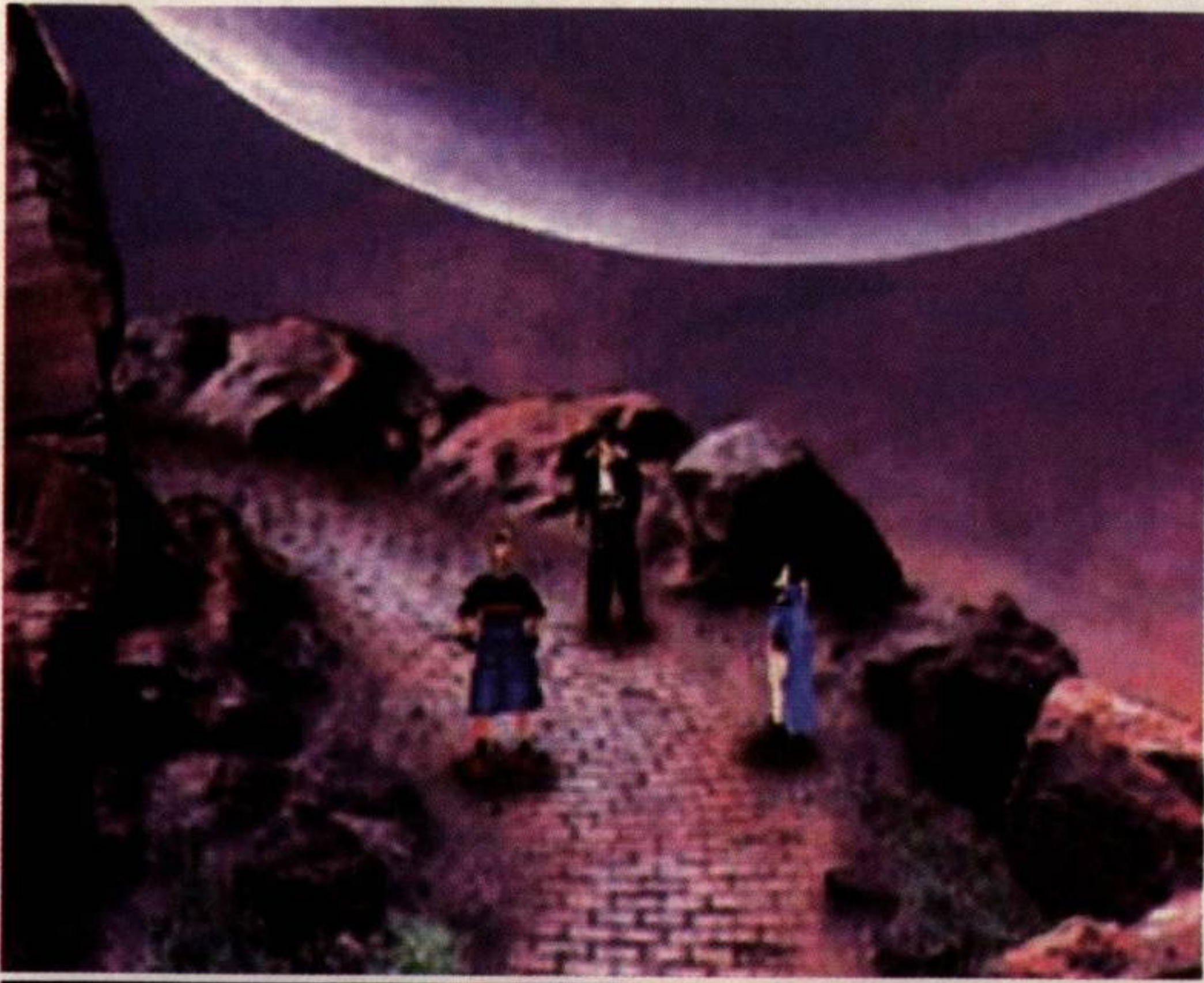
the way that she is strong in the magic department. Another leading character, and possibly Squall's rival in the game, is Seifer Almsy, a hot-tempered man dressed in a long white overcoat with a Gunblade similar to Squall's. He's definitely a key player in the grand scheme of things.

The major change with *FFVIII* is with the actual style of the game.

Gone are the highly stylised characters from *FFVII*, and in their place are more realistically proportioned people. Square have stated that, due to *FFVII*'s success in the Western markets, the characters need to be more realistic. The idea is that it is easier for Western audiences to identify with characters who look reasonably realistic, without the trademark Japanese stylisation of

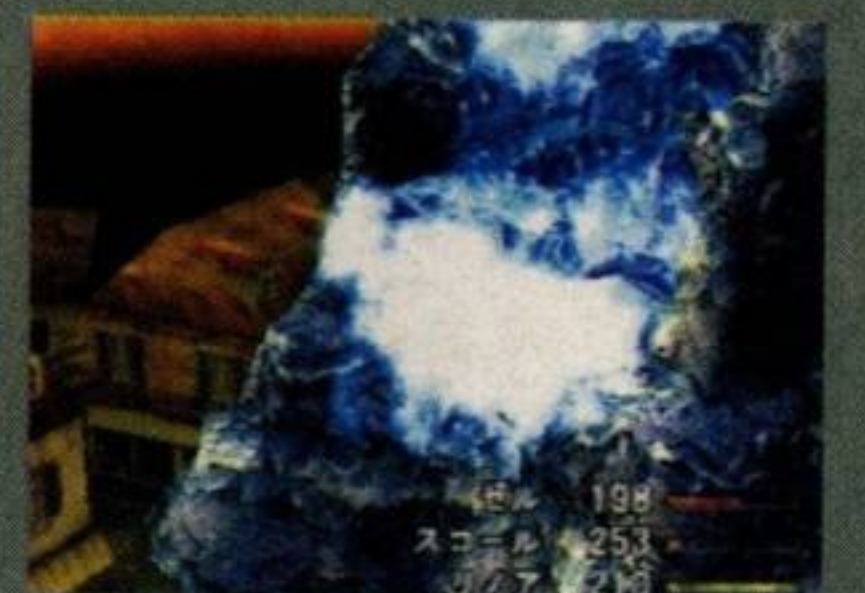
INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Squaresoft
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	1999 (UK)
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	No
MEMORY CARD	One block



SUMMON!

The summon magic in *FFVII* was impressive, so how could Square come up with anything better? Well, in *FFVIII* they have! As you can see from this sequence, the summons are even more spectacular. The Leviathan summon (the only summon featured in the demo) begins with a giant water snake appearing (think special effects from *The Abyss*). A mountain then rises from the ground and a cascade of water flows from the top. The sequence ends with the water washing your hapless enemies away. The only thing these shots don't show is the flow of the water from this Leviathan summon – the effect is truly amazing.



big heads, big eyes and small bodies. In another authentic touch, the entire party is shown onscreen at all times, as opposed to previous games in the series where just the leader represented the entire party outside of combat.

Believe it or not, the look of the game is a vast improvement over *FFVII*. Square are now doing things with the PlayStation's graphics chip that Sony could only have dreamt of three years ago. Everything just looks so much better, from the quality of the texture maps to the animation of the characters; in battle they now stagger around when injured and collapse on the floor when killed instead of just disappearing.

FMV has also been heavily employed, as in the last game, but to more of an interactive effect. Real-

time polygons are now mixed with streamed footage for enhanced viewing. A great example of this is at the beginning of the demo that we played. The game opens with our hero onboard a hover boat. We see the boat racing towards the shore of an island – it skids to a halt on the beach and then four polygon characters jump out. The sequence is seamless from FMV to real-time.

The famous *Final Fantasy* combat system has been given a few tweaks as well. Much of the system remains intact; magic, limit breaks and summons are still there. What has changed is that the menu system has been radically altered. You can now see the whole screen instead of having the bottom third dedicated to the menus. There have been a few

tweaks as well: when using a Phoenix Down to revive a character, the spell will automatically go to the dead character. So there's no more frustration of using your last Phoenix Down on the wrong man.

You can almost guarantee that *Final Fantasy VIII* will be a must-have title. And with the cuteness of the last game consigned to history, it is likely to appeal to an even larger audience. The improvements in graphics and continuation of Square's innovative videogame storylines should see this game break all records when it's released in the UK mid-1999. If you were one of those people who lost large chunks of your life to *Final Fantasy VII*, then book your holidays now – it's going to be the same story all over again... **TC**

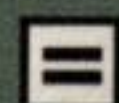
SUMMING UP



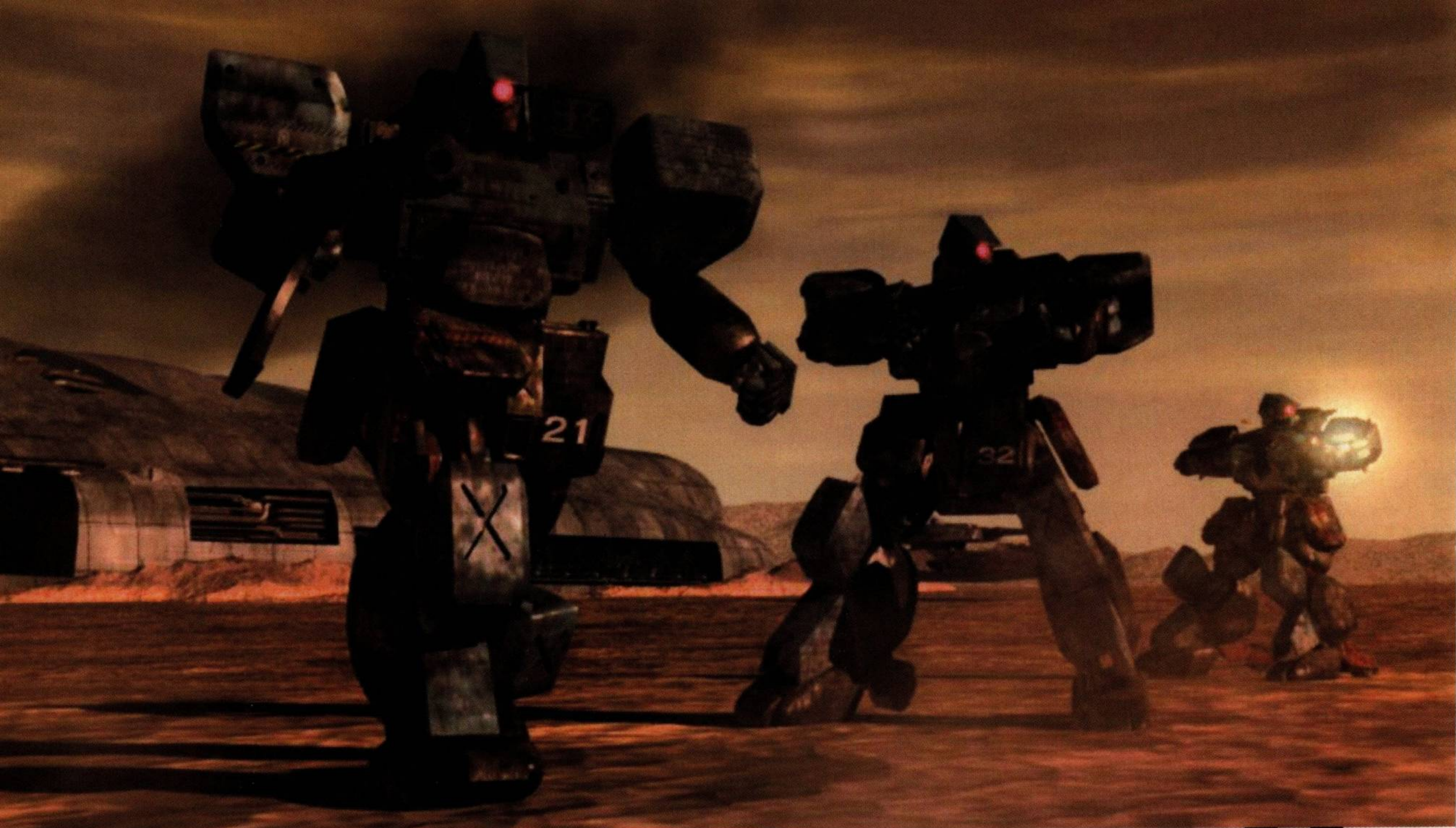
- Stunning graphics with a more realistic feel to them.
- Err, it's a *Final Fantasy* game from Square... what more do you need to know?



- The only frustrating part of *FFVII*; trying to explore new locations when you keep getting into battles, is still there.



Final Fantasy VIII is potentially the biggest game, in terms of both gameplay time and sales, that will ever be released on the PlayStation. Expect it to be brilliant.



Heavy Gear II

Defend the world of **Terra Nova** against the oppressive forces of **Earth** in this keenly anticipated sequel from **Activision**.



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	In-house
STYLE	3D battle sim
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-10
PROCESSOR	P166
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

Despite losing the MechWarrior licence to Microprose, last year Activision released a game in much the same mould. *Heavy Gear* placed the player at the controls of a giant armoured walking machine, a kind of tank with legs, in a futuristic war on a world called Terra Nova. The game was well received, but was let down by disappointing graphics and some annoying gameplay problems. However, the concept was a good one, so a sequel was definitely in order. Consequently, last July, a completely new in-house development team began work on rebuilding *Heavy Gear* from the ground up, with a new 3D graphics engine, new tactical gameplay and

some great new ideas. The result of their labours, unsurprisingly titled *Heavy Gear II*, is due for release this Christmas. Total CONTROL have taken an early look at it, and we were impressed by what we saw.

Space suits

One of the things which let down the original *Heavy Gear* was the terrain graphics, which were rather dull and unrealistic. The developers of the sequel have addressed this problem and have designed landscapes with plenty of details and a lot more variety than the first game. Outdoor maps have objects such as extremely realistic trees and fallen logs to

provide cover, and rivers which the Gears can hide in. Buildings are also more detailed and can be destroyed with spectacular explosions.

An exciting addition to the game is the ability to fight in space. The Gears are equipped with thruster packs and magnetic boots which enable them to walk about on the surface of orbiting spacecraft. One of the maps is a huge space station with surfaces branching off in all directions, and you can fight a bizarre 3D battle with Gears on surfaces which are at any angle, even upside down relative to each other. There are also metallic asteroids which you can fly out to and land on.





Gears in space! The addition of space combat missions adds a whole new dimension to *Heavy Gear II*. Magnetic boots allow you to walk around on the hulls of huge spaceships

Cool moves

The versatility of the game has been improved by giving the Gears a whole range of new moves. They can now kneel, lie prone and crawl forward. Jump jets allow them to leap tall buildings in a single bound, and they can even operate underwater. All the moves are smoothly animated, as are reactions to impacts, weapon damage and recovering from

The animated movement of the Gears is very good, conveying a convincing impression of weight and power

falls. Although the Gears are primarily walking machines, they also have wheels for fast movement over smooth surfaces, and the animation for this has been greatly improved. They now look exactly like someone rollerblading. The general animated movement of the Gears is very good, conveying a convincing impression of weight and power.

The animation for the wide variety of weapons is also much improved. One of the most impressive is a cluster of rockets which streak towards their target trailing smoke, all travelling by slightly different routes. The effect is pure Japanese anime, and looks superb. The game features the now almost obligatory dynamic lighting effects, so flames and

explosions light up the scenery in a very realistic fashion.

View from above

The original game had some tactical options, with communication between the various Gears in a unit being possible. The new game takes this idea much further, however. When you select the tactical overview option, the

viewpoint zooms out to an overhead perspective of the whole battlefield, showing all the units and structures which are visible or known to you, and allowing you to direct other members of your team. The range of orders has been expanded to cover a wide range of tactical options, so you can set up ambushes, defensive perimeters or post lookouts, amongst others. This option changes the nature of the game from a simple first-person shoot-'em-up into a fully fledged tactical battle simulator.

On the wire

Heavy Gear II has been designed from the outset to be just as good a multiplayer game as it is single player.

There will be all the usual on-line gaming options, such as deathmatches and capture-the-flag events, as well as special multiplayer missions with the game AI playing a part. Activision are planning to support the on-line game with a linked server with permanent leagues, encouraging the formation of clans and combat units. A game editor will be available to download sometime in the new year, so players will be able to create their own scenarios for either single or multiplayer games.

This is a well thought-out game with some really nice touches, and with the right support it could become as popular as *Quake II* for on-line gaming. It needs a pretty hefty machine to run it, but if you have the hardware, *Heavy Gear II* will be well worth buying. **TC**

PICK A CARD

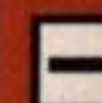
When a game reaches this level of complexity, the CPU in your computer has enough to do just running the game mechanics without having to worry about the graphics as well. For this reason, *Heavy Gear II* can only be run on a PC with a hardware 3D accelerator card. Using the Glide software, any card which supports Z-buffering will be able to handle the graphics. The game will support all the major name brands, such as 3Dfx, Power VR and Rendition, and hopefully most of the lesser known makes as well.



SUMMING UP



• The re-written graphics engine looks great, and the tactical features make *HGII* great fun either single player or on-line.

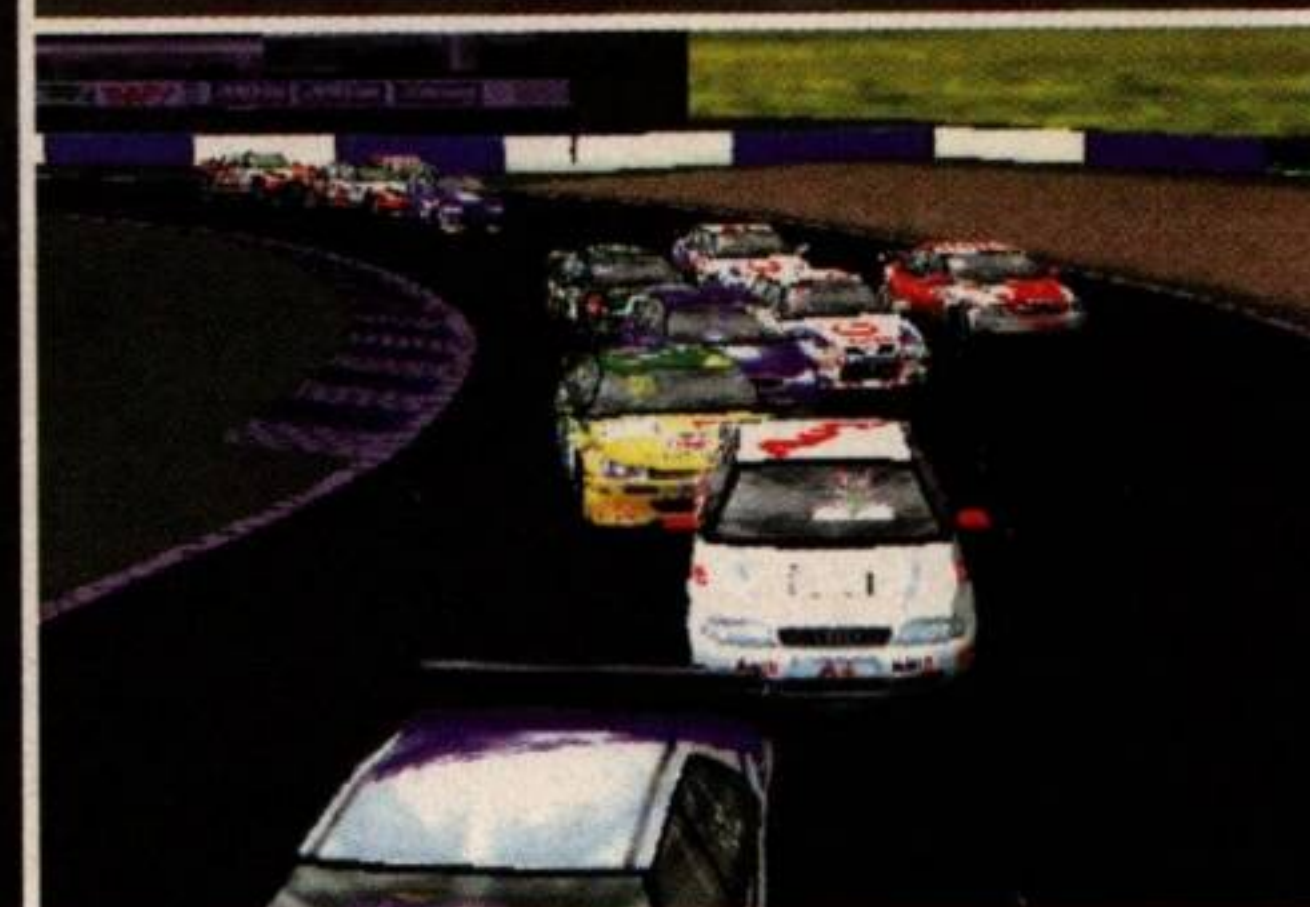


• If you haven't got a nice fast PC with lots of memory and a 3D accelerator card, don't even bother thinking about it.



If you've got the hardware to run it, this is a great-looking state-of-the-art tactical battle game.





TOCA 2: Touring Cars

Some might say that *Gran Turismo* has spent long enough as the PlayStation's number one racer – especially Codemasters, as they prepare to release the game that could put them back into the slipstream.



Not content with already releasing one triple-A racing title, in the space of a few months Codemasters are going all out with another one. *Colin McRae Rally* has already received huge praise from the computer game press, and you can be sure that *TOCA 2: Touring Cars* will do equally well when it is let loose in the high street this winter. The original *TOCA* also did rather well when

it appeared last Christmas, winning the 'best driving game' accolade (amongst others) at the PlayStation awards – so how have Codemasters managed to improve on an already great game?

The most immediately noticeable difference can be seen in the improved visuals; *TOCA 2* now runs in an enhanced high-res mode and looks noticeably less blocky than before. As well as this we are now graced with a

multitude of completely remodelled and stylish-looking cars. One really neat touch is that the windows of the cars are transparent, allowing you to see into the vehicle's interior – those with a keen eye may also spot the player's name texture-mapped onto the back of the car. We have also been told that there will be several on-track hazards, such as flocks of birds on the road that fly off as you approach – nice one, Codemasters.

Other than this you can expect the usual array of fine features from the illustrious developers: there are now eight more new tracks to race on, and each looks very nice with its own individual theme. You can now race around a German town, the French Alps, an American city and even a Scottish loch, amongst others. There is promise of multiple routes throughout each course so you won't get bored too

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Codemasters
DEVELOPER	Codemasters
STYLE	Racing Sim
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-4
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block



The beginning of the race is the best time to gain places – a good start is crucial



Here's just a small selection of the cars available. Each one is promised to handle very differently, so most people will probably find a favourite and stick to it. Every car is magnificently detailed with multiple texture maps and – best of all – transparent windows so you can actually see the driver shaking around inside



Many corners will have to be repeated until you find the optimum speed to take them

quickly, which is sure to give *TOCA 2* even more replay value.

The test of time

The lastability of this racer will never come into question, because *TOCA 2* is certainly not a game that you'll be completing in the first few hours – what we have here looks as if it could become one of the most realistic driving simulations around. Unlike *Gran Turismo*, tracks cannot be completed by simply holding down the accelerator button throughout the lap – attempt this and you'll soon find your car spinning off the road and right at the back of the pack when you restart. Because the grass verges reduce your speed so much, missing a corner only slightly can be enough to deny you a place in the top three, so if your wheels lock after taking a corner too

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW REALISM AND PLAYABILITY CAN BE THROWN INTO THE BLENDER TOGETHER TO PRODUCE A VERY ENJOYABLE AND ENTERTAINING GAME

fast, sending you spinning right off and leaving you facing in the wrong direction, you are very unlikely to recover. True, you would be able to cut corners in many other games of this type, but here the other racers show no mercy. You will have a top speed that is more or less equal to theirs.



Some improvements are shown here. Note the enhanced weather and smoke effects



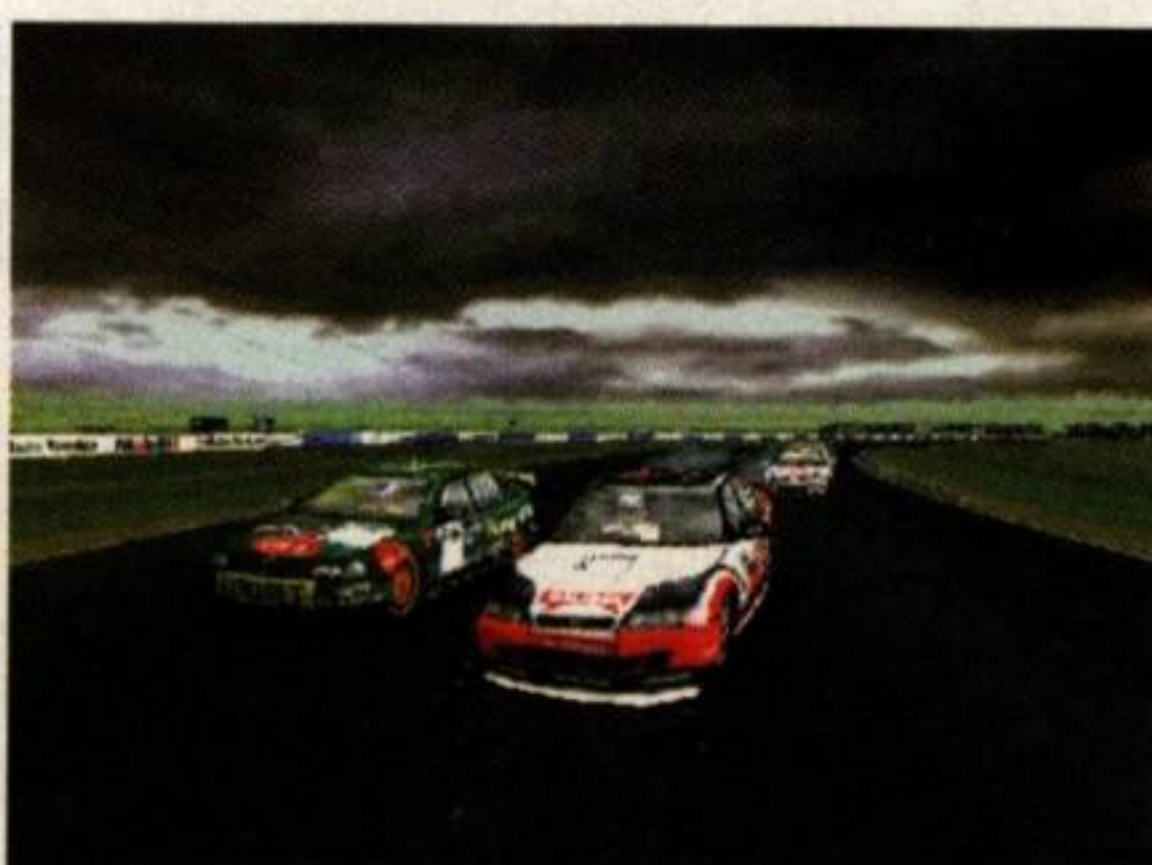
The only real difference between them and you is that they follow the track far more precisely, obviously being of the opinion that staying on the road is usually a good idea. As such the only way of finishing in the top flight is by learning the corners and the right speed to enter them; don't accelerate during a sharp turn – exit those corners with the pedal on the metal and you'll find yourself gaining precious seconds on the race leaders.

Fender bender

In a sport like this, crashing at 120mph into a wall is going to have its repercussions. All of the cars have

visible damage, so when your car starts looking like a rusty tin on wheels, you'll know that you ought to take a quick pit stop. Pit stops are a very important part of the game, and you'll have to strategically plan ahead when to change tyres etc. if you want to succeed.

Codemasters should also be



GET INTO THE CAR

In the high octane world of Touring Car Championships, in-between the headlining races there are also a variety of support car races on the same track. *TOCA 2* allows you to don your helmet and get strapped into one of these cars and then enter one such race. It's a bit like having a variety of bonus cars to use. The vehicles available include the Jaguar XJ220 (just make sure you don't crash it), Ford Fiesta, Grinnall Scorpion and a Formula Ford. There are many more still to be announced.



complemented on their multiplayer modes; the two player game mode can be either the standard championship or special battle race, but now you'll see all sixteen cars on screen at the same time, which makes things much more interesting, and if you have a mate with another console and link-up cable there is an option of having up to four human players racing at the same time.

Though we have only received PlayStation code we can confirm that *TOCA 2* will be released on the PC, also in November. The gameplay shouldn't differ that much, but you should expect the PC version to be slightly better looking, and we've been told that it will include an eight player network game mode

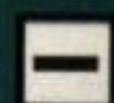
A lot of games have been criticised for being over-realistic, but *TOCA 2* looks to be a good example of how realism and playability can be thrown into the blender together to produce a very enjoyable and entertaining game. There will be a full review of *TOCA 2: Touring Cars* next issue. **TC**

These car models give you some indication of how *TOCA 2* has improved upon the original

SUMMING UP



- A challenging driving game that will last a long time
- Superbly implemented multiplayer mode for up to four players



- Initially difficult and frustrating, possibly too much so for fans of arcade racing games



A game to look out for in the coming months. It's almost certain to make it to the PlayStation's podium of racing games



Wild Metal Country



What happens when **DMA Design** decide to **make a game** that involves **two simple ingredients**: gravity and tanks?
A highly innovative and addictive game, actually, and it's called *Wild Metal Country*...

INFORMATION	
PUBLISHER	Gremlin
DEVELOPER	DMA Design
STYLE	Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	TBA
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-16
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	16MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

After a fallow period in the games industry, DMA Design are fast emerging as one of the best developers in the world. The hallmarks of DMA games are innovation, attention to detail and a wacky sense of humour. Games such as *GTA*, *Body Harvest* and *Silicon Valley* have all had large doses of all these things. So what can we expect from a game that is based around an accurate physics engine?

The story to these type of games is often, for good reason, inconsequential. It's the same story for *Wild Metal*

Country; the plot only acts as interesting but irrelevant background information for the game.

WMC follows a thousand year war between three planets in the Tehric system. The war has not only wiped out the populations of those planets, but also left behind an inexhaustible power source in the shape of a selection of power cores. This is where you come in: it's your mission to retrieve these generators and sell them to the highest bidder. The only problem is that the scientists that built the cores never intended them to leave the

planets on which they were built. To ensure this, they deployed a vast number of hunter/killer machines to guard the generators...

Wild Metal Country is, simply put, a tank game. The basic premise is, on each of the levels, to drive around shooting stuff. With this in mind, the gameplay is obviously fairly straightforward, but at no point does it become simplistic. This is assured by the complicated and ultra-realistic physics engine that is at the core of the game. Gravity affects everything: boulders and mines roll downhill, and

THE HILLS HAVE EYES

The environments in *Wild Metal Country* are truly impressive. The huge scale maps are dominated by all manner of cliffs and mountains. Great fun to fall off, and you don't take any damage for doing so.



falling off the edge of a cliff has an obvious effect. However, it's not as if this hasn't been done before. Games such as *Thrust* and *V2000* (this issue) have attempted to simulate the effects of gravity and inertia with varying degrees of success. It is *Wild Metal Country's* level of realism which is impressive. A certain amount of pleasure can be had just by watching stuff rolling downhill. Sounds sad, but it's true.

The physics aren't only applied to the tanks and objects in the game. Firing shells is an action that is also affected by gravity – it's not just a case of lining up your sights and blasting away with the mouse button, oh no... You'll have to judge the trajectory of each shot – the further away your enemy, the higher your turret will have to aim. This certainly makes for some precision gameplay, but it also ensures

complete gaming satisfaction when you hit an enemy at long range with a single shot.

As with the gameplay, the controls are incredibly intuitive. Control over your tank is generally with the 5, 6, 2 and 3 buttons on the numeric pad. Each one corresponds to one of your tank tracks: 5 and 2 for the left, 6 and 3 for the right. The thing to get your head around here is that pushing forwards on the right tank track makes your tank move to the left, and vice versa. This takes a little getting used to at first, but after a while becomes second nature. There is also your turret to worry about as well. This moves independently to the body of your tank, so it is possible to make a speedy retreat from a fight while still giving as good as you get.

Weapons are generally inventive.



Apart from the usual shells there are mines, bouncing bombs and homing missiles. Of particular note are the magnetic mines which, when launched, attract everything made of metal in the locality towards them.

The enemy's AI is handled in an

IT IS WILD METAL COUNTRY'S LEVEL OF REALISM WHICH IS IMPRESSIVE. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PLEASURE CAN BE HAD JUST BY WATCHING STUFF ROLLING DOWNHILL. SOUNDS SAD, BUT IT'S TRUE.



interesting and inventive manner by giving each of them the same radar as the player. This can then be acted on by the computer opponents by 'using' the same control system as the player. In other words, the computer has to 'press' the same keys as the player to move and fire. This turns out to be a highly effective way of doing things and gives *Wild Metal Country* an impressive and highly realistic AI.

Wild Metal Country is yet another promising game from those boys and girls at DMA Design. It is a simple test of control and skill and offers an exciting multiplayer challenge away from the dark and claustrophobic corridors of *Quake*. We can't wait to put our tank skills to the test... **TC**



From top: the environments in *Wild Metal Country* are impressively organic with the aid of 3D technology

SUMMING UP

- +**
- Has a superbly realistic physics engine.
- Simple but incredibly addictive gameplay.
-
- Perhaps not the most adrenaline pumping game ever.
- No solid structure could lead to wandering aimlessly.

Wild Metal Country's simple yet focused gameplay will be a breath of fresh air to the PC market.

XG2

The **N64** doesn't have any difficulty in producing **solid 3D worlds** with **lovable characters**. The trouble comes when it tries to make fast racing games. However, **XG2**, from **Acclaim**, looks to right that wrong...



The bike design in XG2 follows that of the original - slimline, neon and 'teeth' being the operative words

The future is a dark, forlorn place. Well, it seems to be on the N64. According to games developers, the Earth will be a barren planet, war-torn and inhospitable. We'll spend our days scavenging for food and watching the only sport man has left: high-speed racing through ruined cities. Well, at

WITH COMPETITION FROM F-ZERO X AND WIPEOUT 64, XG2 HAS GOT ITS WORK CUT OUT THIS CHRISTMAS. HOPEFULLY, THE FEW PROBLEMS WITH SPEED WILL BE SORTED OUT

least that's what will happen if you are to believe Acclaim, Psygnosis or even happy boys Nintendo. In the run-up to Christmas, the N64 will see three such games: *F-Zero X*, *Wipeout 64* and *XG2*, Acclaim's follow-up to their successful *Wipeout* clone.

When Acclaim released the original *Extreme G* on the N64 last year, it was an unashamed attempt to bring the joys of *Wipeout* to Nintendo's machine. The futuristic setting, soundtrack and overall attitude was probably a bit too close to Psygnosis' classic game for comfort. The main difference was replacing the hover cars from *Wipeout* with anti-

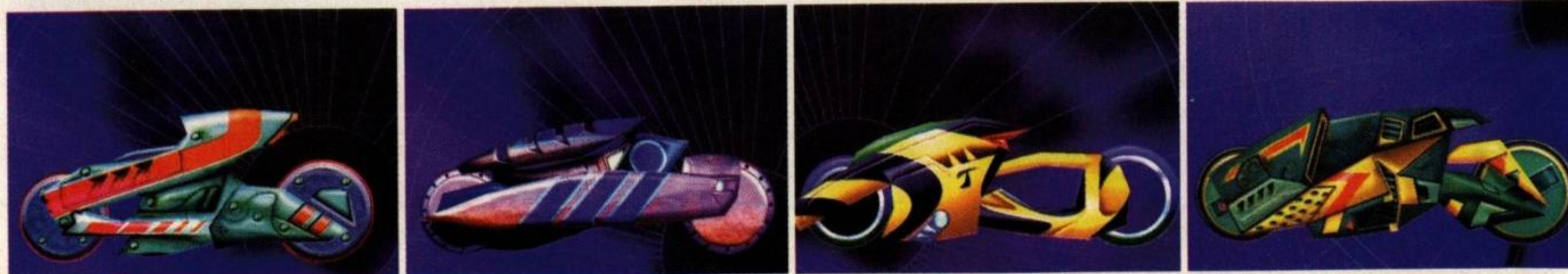
gravity bikes. The game also boasted breakneck speeds and outrageous roller coaster-style tracks with vertical climbs, loop the loops and g-force-inducing corners. The game did very well, with no other competition to speak of, but now there are two competitors.

Wipeout and Nintendo's own *F-Zero X* (the follow up to the original futuristic racer) are due for release before Christmas. So how will XG2 fare against titles of this pedigree?

As sequels go, XG2 is more of an update than an out and out new game. The basic premise is the same: race your way through increasingly difficult and complex tracks, competing in a Grand Prix-style championship. That's the main game, but there are a few other features as well. There's a shoot-'em-up section where you race the courses as usual, but waves of drone robots fly down to destroy you. This is essentially a take on all those classic arcade shooters à la *R-Type*.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Acclaim
DEVELOPER	Probe
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-4
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	4MB Optional



Bikes! Even though XG2 is 'influenced' by Psygnosis' *Wipeout* games, there is a modicum of originality with the modes of racing...



BATTLE TANKS

In the four player mode in XG2 you can take a break from the racing in the form of a deathmatch-style tank battle. The power-ups from the main game remain, but the action takes place in specifically designed arenas. These vary from a simple square arena to one on a Stonehenge-style stage and a Forsaken-style pyramid level. Don't worry, there's also a four player racing mode.



Above: XG2 boasts extremely slick presentation – unusual for a N64 game; the settings for the tracks are varied – everything from derelict cities to desert and jungle

There's also a battle mode where the bikes are replaced by tanks and up to four players can slog it out in a deathmatch arena.

The main game is pretty much formulaic, with all the usual options you'd expect. There are ten different bikes to choose from, each with their own individual attributes; some are fast but have low armour, some have good acceleration but a poor top speed – you get the idea. There are also weapons to be picked up and speed arrows en route. There's even the usual soundtrack for this kind of game – drum

n' bass – which actually sounds very good for an N64.

XG2 is the third game from Acclaim to use the N64's new expansion pak. Slip a 4MB pak into the port at the top of the N64 and the game will run in the N64's medium-res mode. This feature seems essential to enjoy this game at its best. Admittedly, the version that we saw was at an early preview stage, but there were times when XG2 suffered from some severe slowdown – a few bikes with a few explosions going off were enough to almost bring the game to a complete standstill. Hopefully, by the

time the game is optimised this will have been sorted out, but seeing as the original *Extreme G* suffered a similar fate, we'll have wait and see.

With competition from *F-Zero X* and *Wipeout 64*, XG2 has got its work cut out this Christmas. Hopefully, the few problems with speed will be sorted out and the game will find an audience. What the game has (when there's no slowdown) is some incredibly fast and exciting courses that will test your reactions to the limit. But if you've bought the first *Extreme G*, will there be enough that's different here to warrant your interest? **TC**



...this adds variety to the gameplay and gives the game a very different feel – keeping your bike on the track is vital to maintain speed

SUMMING UP

+

- Promises to be the fastest racer on the N64, bar none.
- Superb soundtrack makes full use of the N64's limited sound quality... and then some!

-

- The attempt at a high-speed, highly detailed game could lead to some serious slowdown.
- With competition from *F-Zero X* and *Wipeout 64*, XG2 could find itself lagging way behind on the futuristic racer front.

=

Admittedly an unoriginal title, but the attitude and style of the game could mean a successful release.



Activision are preparing to unleash **SiN** upon an expectant audience in the coming months, and it shouldn't have too much trouble being **noticed in the crowd.**



Hmmm, talking of sins... She is just one of the rather tempting characters in the game

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Ritual Entertainment
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-16
PROCESSOR	P150 P166
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

After the initial success of the *Doom* duo, *Quake* and its sequel have successfully managed to hold off the competition in the PC's first-person shooter category for a very long time. However, the recent launch of

the graphically superior *Unreal* seems to have caused a few ripples in the Activision camp, and not willing to lose the first-person shooter crown, *SiN* is here to keep us happy during the long wait for *Quake III*. However, this is no filler; *SiN* is already looking incredibly good, and following its release it shouldn't have too much trouble fending off the competition.

First-person shooters have always had the best results on the PC platform, but *Goldeneye* is still considered by many to be the number one title in the multi-format

stakes. *SiN* would perhaps be better described as a *Goldeneye* clone than a derivative of *Quake II* for a variety of reasons. Firstly, and most obviously, you are battling with human foes. This is something that makes far more of a difference than

you might think – not only is it much cooler to gun down members of your own species, but you'll notice that each enemy contains a number of 'hit points', meaning that it will be far more ammo-conservative to aim for the enemy's head or upper chest instead of his arms or legs.

Think or swim

Another similarity to *Goldeneye* is that each mission is structured in a way that requires you to complete a variety of missions (obtaining security keys etc.). This means that you'll now need to work

out a far more thoughtful approach than you may have done before – you won't necessarily be able to roam around anywhere, guns blazing, and manage to make your way to an exit unscathed. It also gives the developers the chance to include some very nice touches

because of its slightly more linear nature.

Err... sorry, did I say linear? *SiN* uses an advanced action-based outcome system, meaning that if there is one thing that this game is not, it's linear. Every outcome of each mission will have a strong effect on the later ones; in one mission you are given the chance to destroy a dam – later on you will come across a mission which may or may not be flooded, depending on your previous actions. If so you will be able to swim to parts of the level that would be otherwise inaccessible, but you will be unable to open any of the doors underwater. You also have the option





In first person games the attire of the player character is obviously not a major concern

The underwater sections of the game are innovative and well realised as are the areas in which you get to drive various vehicles

of returning to a level that you have already completed using new items to gain access to other areas of the game. Working your way through the game will rarely be the same twice, which is a very good thing. It may be worth mentioning that *SiN* is optimised for the single player game – far more so than *Quake II* was – but it still includes all of the basic multiplayer features.

SiN contains some of the coolest weapons ever to appear in a video game. Luckily they haven't borrowed from *Duke Nukem* or *Unreal*, as there's no poncing around with slime guns or other weird gadgets here, only a large selection of very big, very powerful guns, enabling you to cause total carnage to pretty much anything you can see. At one early point in the game you'll find yourself in a helicopter on a raid through a city street, sitting inside a massive mini-gun turret... heh heh heh.

To Die For

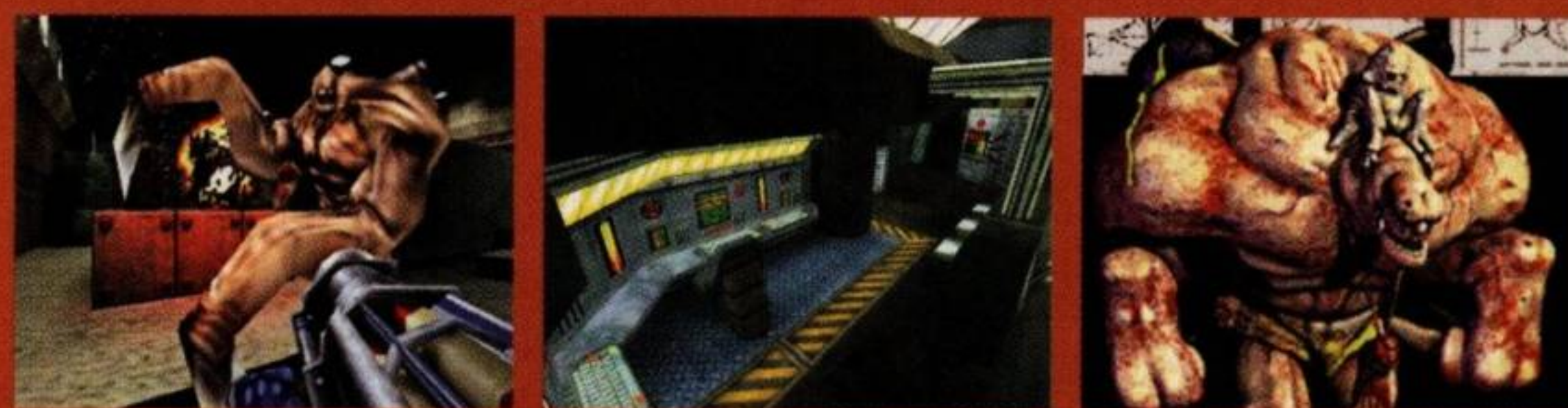
SiN uses an updated version of the *Quake II* engine. Part of the appeal of the game's visuals lies in the fact that it is set in the real world rather than some make-believe future or past. With a host of original features, *SiN* manages to hold its own very successfully against both the current and imminent opposition, and on the

whole, the game looks great.

Though it won't be out until early next year, *SiN* is already looking very nice, and apart from one or two glitches in the AI, it seems to be very near to completion. This could well be one of THE PC games for the beginning of next year, so make sure that you don't spend that Christmas money too soon. **TC**

DEADLY SINS

One thing that separates *SiN* from a lot of the other first-person shooters is the incredible atmosphere that is built up, much of which is due to the excellent use of speech in the game – dialogue includes the shouts and screams of other people elsewhere in the building. The game's hero, John Blade, borrows heavily from *Duke Nukem*, with one-liners such as 'rest in pieces' cropping up at the appropriate times.



SUMMING UP



- Action-based outcomes allow for an excellent replayability score.
- Hugely atmospheric due to the superlative graphics and sound.



- The gameplay is fairly unoriginal, with lots of strong competition around.
- The human enemies are not as lifelike as those in *Goldeneye*.



It's another first-person shooter that is in essence the same as *Quake II*, but with enough extra features to make it a huge hit.



The sniper gun (far left) is by far the most fun to use, especially in the multiplayer sessions. No variable zoom function though



Tomb Raider III: The Adventures of Lara Croft

We've got the first **playable PC version** of **Lara Croft's latest adventure**, and we're here to tell you **what we think of it...**

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Eidos
DEVELOPER	Core Design
STYLE	3D Adventure
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

Lara Croft is big business these days. The budget re-release of the original *Tomb Raider* game is high in the charts on three different formats, and *Tomb Raider II* is still in the top ten nearly a year after its release. The not-a-cash-in-honest *Unfinished Business* has sold better than expected, and there are well-publicised plans by Paramount Studios to bring Lara Croft to the big screen some time next year. Every computer trade show has a huge Eidos stand with the gorgeous but far from cheap Nell McAndrew brandishing her weapons at a baying crowd of

admirers, and in the midst of this, Eidos are about to release the third game in the series, cunningly sub-titled *The Adventures of Lara Croft*.

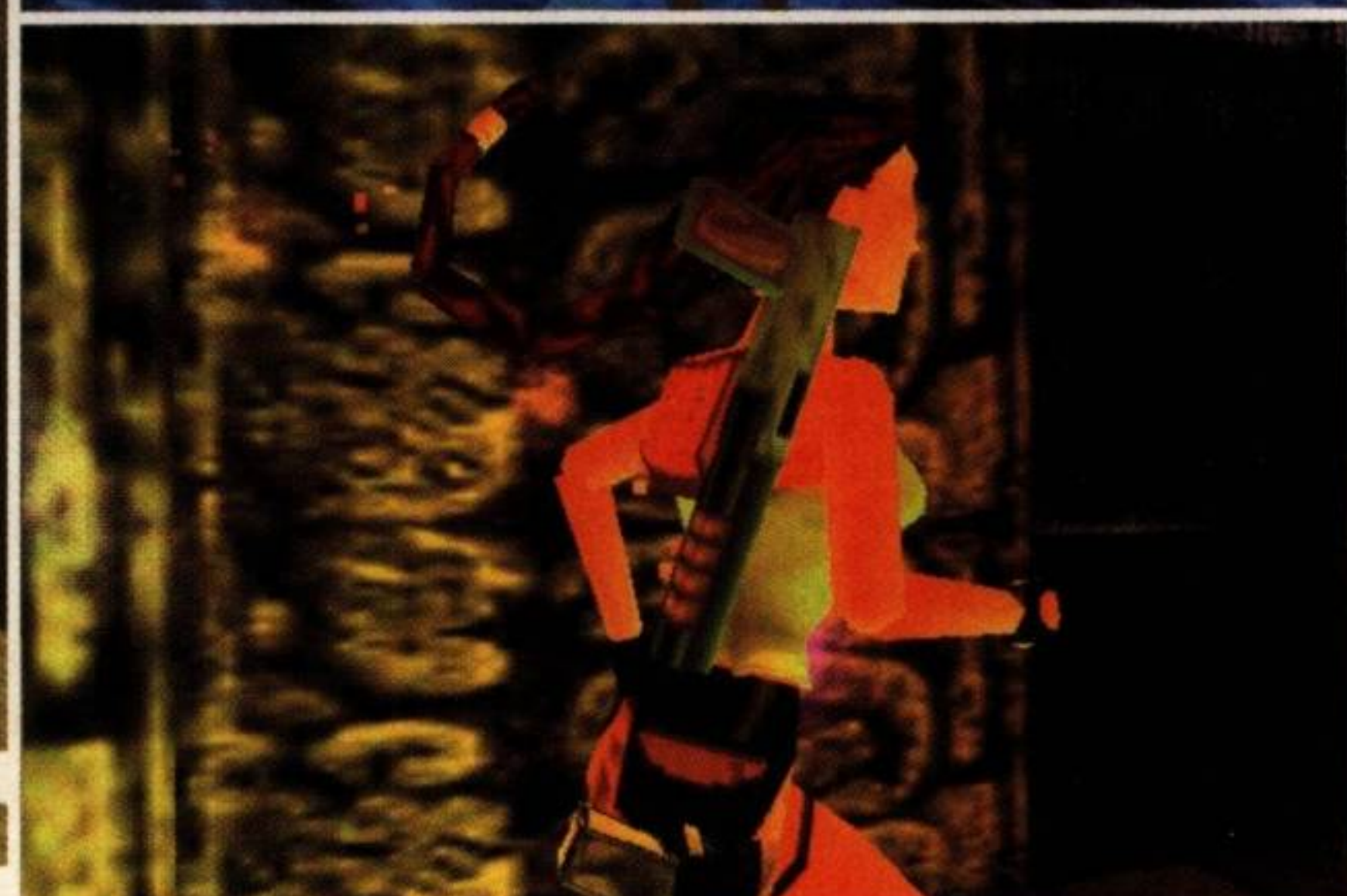
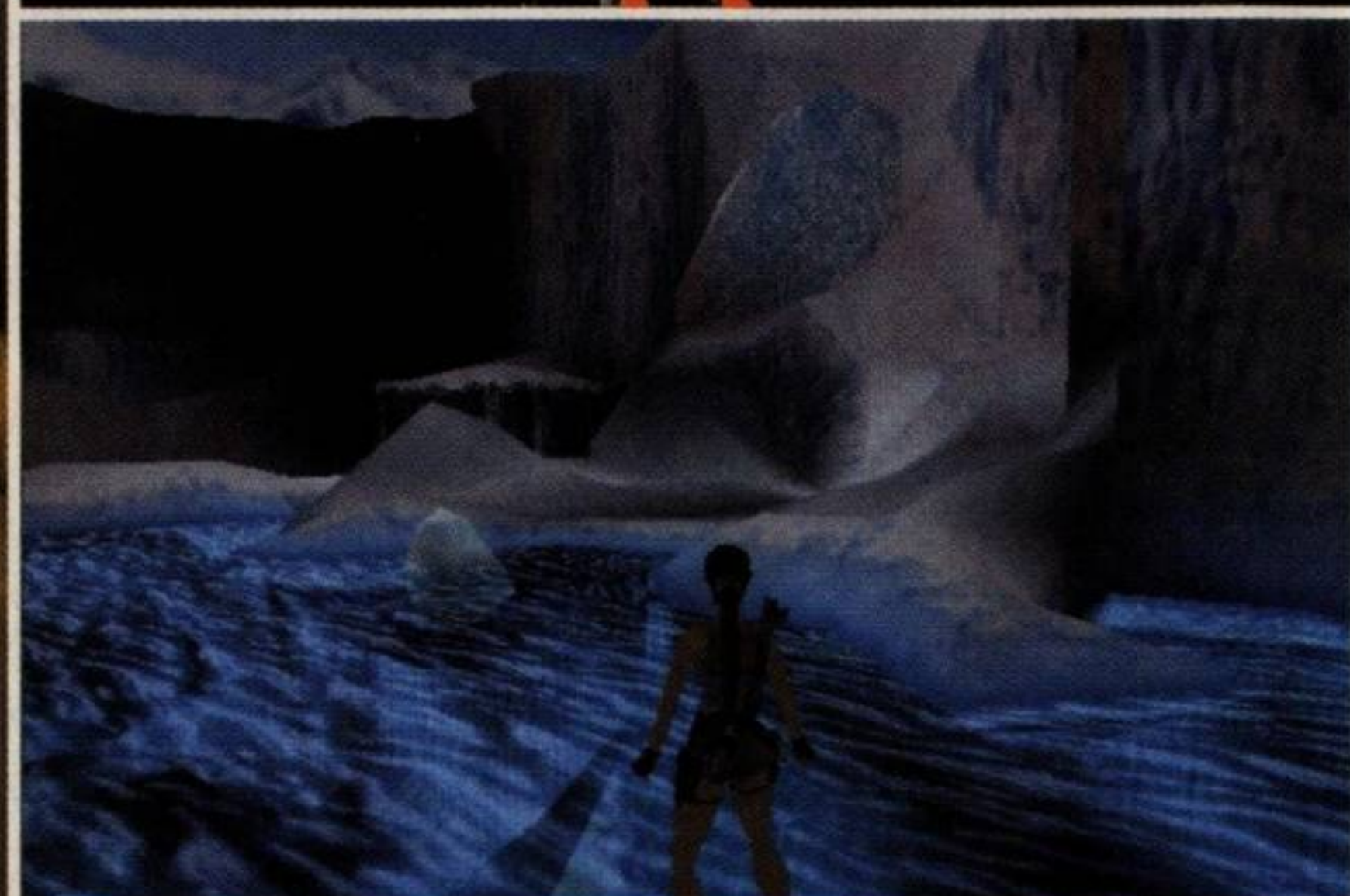
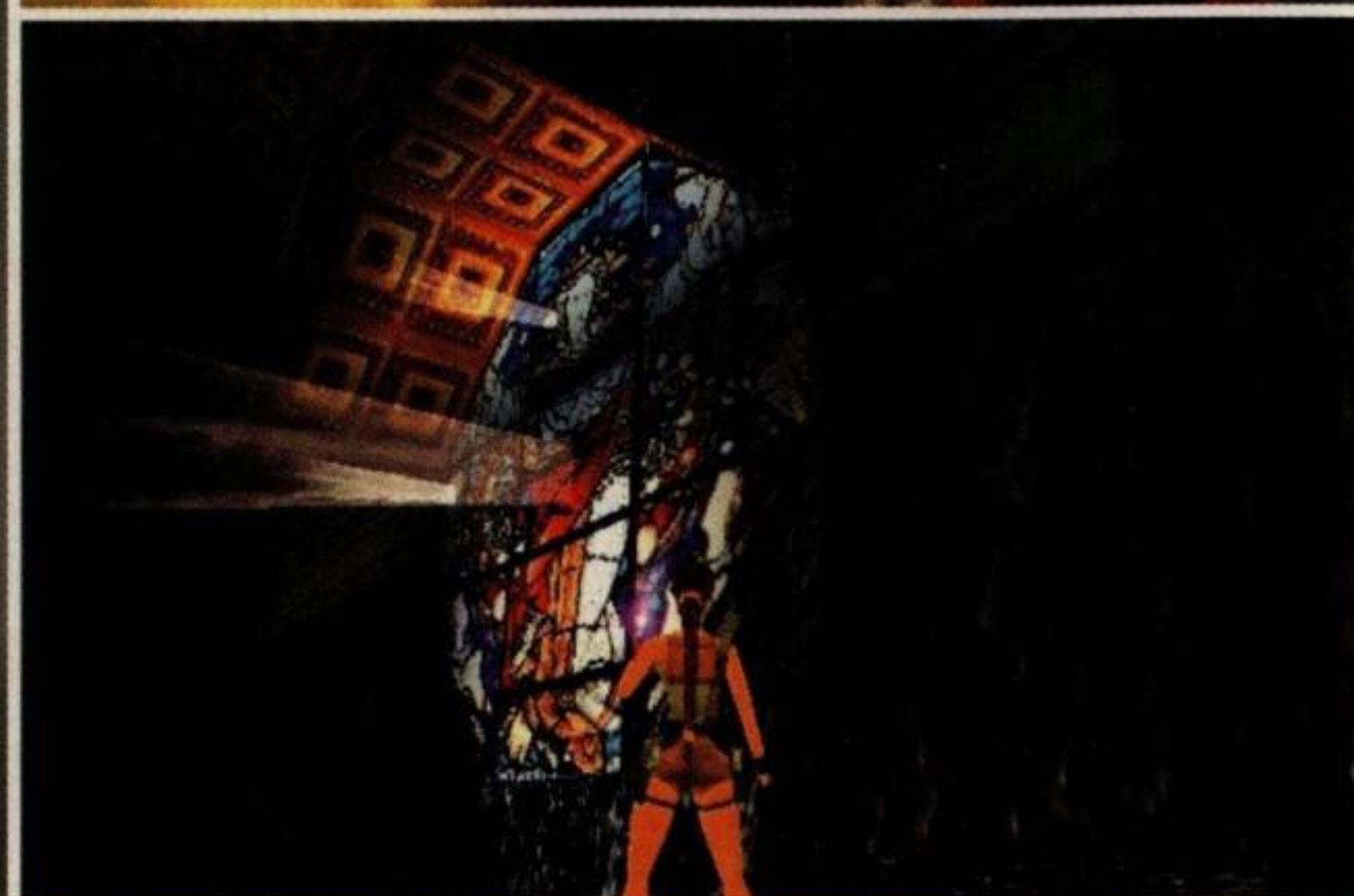
Assets maximised

It has to be said though that Lara's creators, Core Design, have not rested on their laurels. *Tomb Raider III* is packed with new features, and the gameplay has been improved to counter criticisms levelled at the previous two instalments. There are more new moves in *TRIII* than in the previous title, as well as new weapons, enemies, vehicles and, of course,

costumes. The graphics engine has also been completely overhauled to improve the look of the game, especially the PlayStation version. A playable demo disk is currently doing the rounds of the various computer mags, and from the look of it the changes have all been for the better.

Impressive features

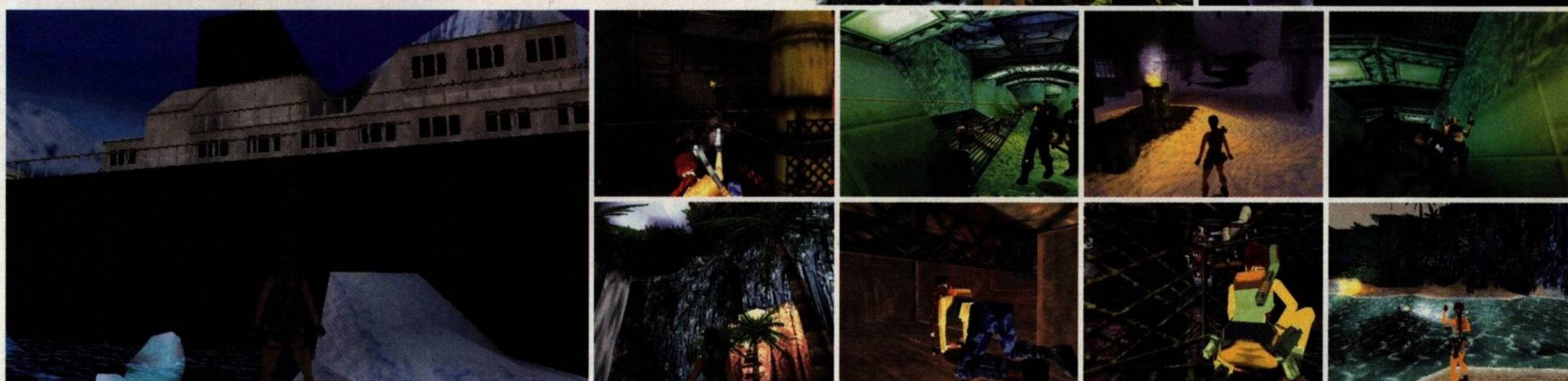
The main feature that distinguishes the new game from the earlier versions is the way in which the levels are structured. There are five levels to play, all of which must be completed, but once you have done





DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF LARA

Lara Croft always used to be content with sensible boots, a green vest and a pair of (very) shorts, but in the second game she got to try on a couple of new costumes, and – apparently – decided she liked it. *TRIII* sees the fashion-conscious adventuress modelling four new kits. She starts off in her normal costume, but soon changes to a pair of blue DPM trousers and a belly-revealing top for her trip to Nevada. In London she wears a slinky Mrs. Peel-style black cat suit, and to catch up on her tan on a South Pacific island, she changes into a white bra-top and her shorts (which must be getting a bit whiffy by now). For the Antarctic Lara sensibly opts for a warm jacket and long trousers, but still manages to leave a bit of cleavage showing.



the first one, you can do the next three in any order you like before moving on to the concluding level and the end-of-game boss. Core are hoping to counter complaints that the previous games were too linear by breaking up the structure of the game and involving the player more in the decision-making process. This approach is carried through into the

LARA CAN DUCK, CRAWL, WALK, RUN, SPRINT, SPRINT AND DIVE, JUMP, JUMP AND GRAB, SIDE STEP, SIDE FLIP, BACK FLIP, CLIMB LADDERS, MONKEY-SWING AND SWING ON A ROPE

design of the levels, with some sections having branching paths leading to a particular objective. The choice is up to the player, who must decide between a safer path with few pick-ups, or a more hazardous but rewarding route. The new improved enemy AI also gives you the option to avoid getting into a gunfight by sneaking past guards. The aim has been to balance the game evenly between fighting and puzzle solving.

Making light of it

The graphical tweaks to the game engine are pretty impressive. The previous game had dynamic lighting of sorts, with flares and muzzle flashes illuminating the scenery. *TRIII* has coloured dynamic lighting in abundance. The playable demo shows this off particularly well, with

flashing alarm strobes, moving spotlights, flames, explosions and gunfire lighting up the place like bonfire night. The other major change is the addition of triangular sections to the framework making up the landscape, allowing more natural shapes such as tree roots and archways in place of the previously rather square appearance. Other

improvements to the graphics include particle-system effects for smoke, flame and blood splashes, and more realistic-looking water with ripples and splashes. One additional feature of which Core are especially proud is the totally realistic 3D rain.

You move me

The gameplay is made considerably more versatile by the addition of many new moves. In the previous games it was usually pretty obvious which of Lara's limited repertoire of moves was required at any point, but now there are so many to choose from you can try just about anything. Lara can duck, crawl, walk, run, sprint, sprint and dive, jump, jump and grab, side-step, side-flip, back-flip, climb ladders, monkey-swing and swing on a rope (amongst

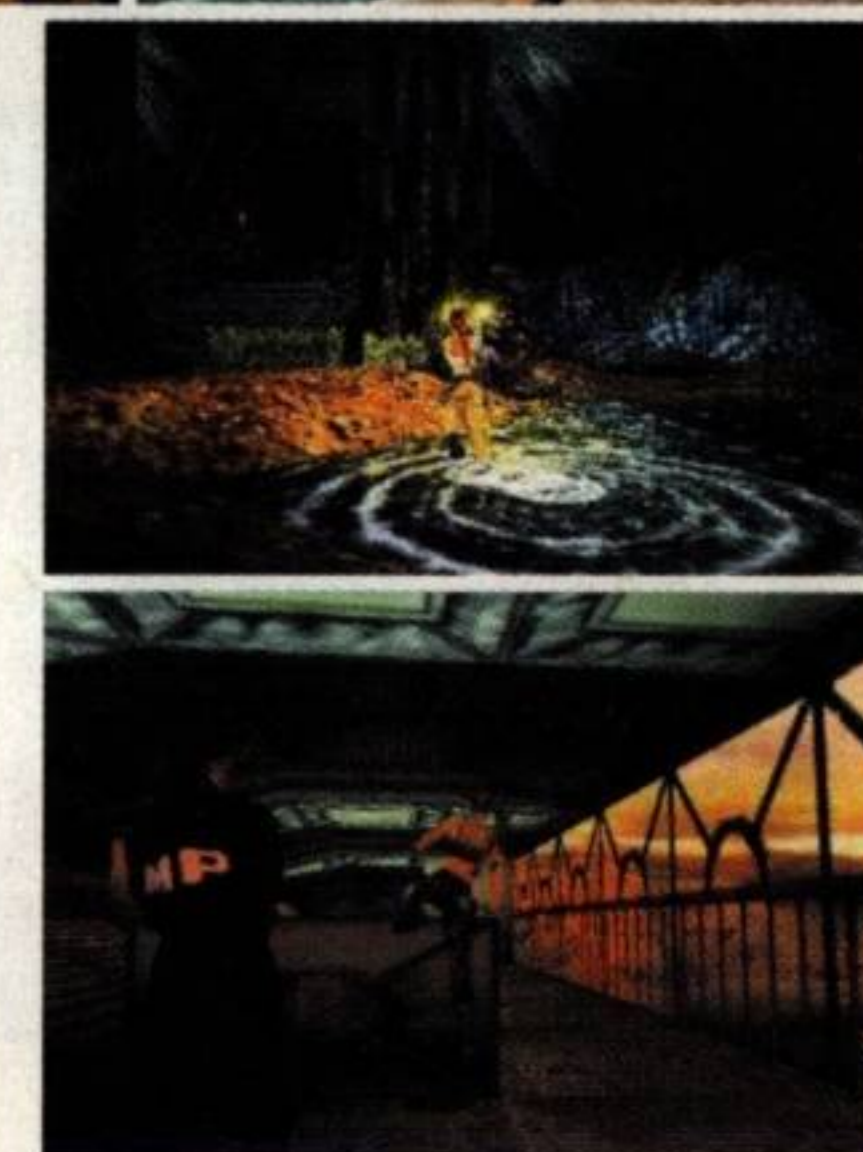
others), and that's just on dry land. Her swimming abilities have also been improved, including a sideways strafe move.

Chicks, cars and guns

It's no big secret that the target audience for the *Tomb Raider* games is the libido of adolescent boys. The combination of a comfortably

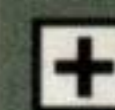
upholstered woman-shape, powerful vehicles and lots of big shiny guns has an irresistible appeal, and so

naturally there are far more of all three in the third game. In a series of impractical costumes, Lara gets to show off her skill and suicidal nerve by base-jumping with a parachute, shooting rapids in a canoe, bouncing around on an all-terrain quad-bike and racing through the desert in a jeep. To help her navigate underwater, she has a Jaques Cousteau-style propulsion unit. The other major hardware requirement of a *Tomb Raider* game is weaponry, and Lara gets to play with some impressive firearms in the new game. A powerful and stylish Desert Eagle auto-mag replaces the previous Magnums, a modern Heckler and Koch MPK5 sub-machine gun takes the place of the bulky M-16 assault rifle, and there's a cute hand-held rocket launcher with a big damage radius for those awkward crowd control problems...TC

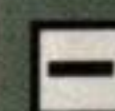


These pictures do more than a thousand words would to show you the new moves, graphics and effects in *TRIII*

SUMMING UP



• Big improvements to graphics and gameplay keep Lara up to date and looking good. Branched plot is a good idea.



• Despite all the cosmetic surgery, it's still pretty much the same old game. Could it be time for Lara to settle down and get a proper job?



Well, it's going to sell by the cartload isn't it? It doesn't really matter what I think of it...



V-RALLY: Championship Edition '99

There have been a few half-decent racing games on the N64, but not many. So here come **Infogrames to sort it out** with a conversion of one of the **best PlayStation racers ever...**

PlayStation owners have always had one over their N64 counterparts when it comes to driving games. Two racers in particular have stood out of late: *Gran Turismo* and *Colin McRae Rally*. And although there hasn't been a lack of companies wanting to try and release a driving game for the

N64, few have even come close to matching the PlayStation's two stars. Games like *Top Gear Rally* and *MRC* have tried and failed when it comes to offering the basic options of their PlayStation counterparts and – essentially for a driving game – a believable speed. Now it's time for Infogrames' *V-Rally*, a previous best-

seller on the PlayStation, to change all that.

Show me your licence

Based on the highly successful PlayStation version, *V-Rally: Championship Edition '99* is the first racing game (*F-Zero X* aside) to offer N64 owners a believable level of

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Infogrames
DEVELOPER	In-house
STYLE	Racing
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	1-2
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	No



There are plenty of rally cars to choose from and each has its own characteristics - speed, acceleration and handling come into play



THRILLS AND SPILLS

One thing that *V-Rally* is not short of is action. Obviously, by design, the cars are intended to launch into the air at even the slightest knock. Great fun in two player, but slightly frustrating when you're trying to win the rally championship...



Stages in the N64 version of *V-Rally* are based on their PlayStation counterparts, which is not a bad thing. The majority of them have been lengthened and improved

speed. The ground positively whizzes past at a rate of knots and – this must be some kind of first for a videogame – it actually looks like you're doing a hundred miles an hour when the speedometer says that you are.

You get all the usual options you might expect of a driving game: Arcade, Time Trial and Championship. Arcade is basically a four race match against three other cars, Time Trial is, well, a time trial mode, and Championship involves traditional rally-style racing (i.e. against the clock for the fastest time). You also get to tinker with your car, modifying things like steering, tyres and gear

and over. Spectacular to watch, and more than a little bit fun, but slightly unrealistic. And perhaps the steering is a bit too sensitive; only a small push left or right on the analogue stick can be enough to oversteer your car, and then you'll be in all sorts of bother.

Doing 60 in a 30 mile an hour zone

Apart from the speed, the game is graphically not that far off *V-Rally* on the PlayStation, including the unfortunate pop-up. Although it has to be said that the game has yet to be optimised and the graphical

PlayStation version. The same environments are there, only many of the tracks have now been expanded and the cars have more freedom; you can now drive onto pavements, for example.

A two player mode has been implemented already, and we are promised a four player option but, judging by the speed of the two player mode, this will take a lot of work if it is to be implemented by the time the game is released in November.

V-Rally: Championship Edition '99 will undoubtedly be one of the best racers seen yet on the N64. It is

THINGS LIKE STEERING AND CAR WEIGHT ARE ON THE LIGHT SIDE, THUS GIVING V-RALLY THE THRILLS AND SPILLS OF AN ARCADE MACHINE, THE EMPHASIS FIRMLY ON THE SPILLS

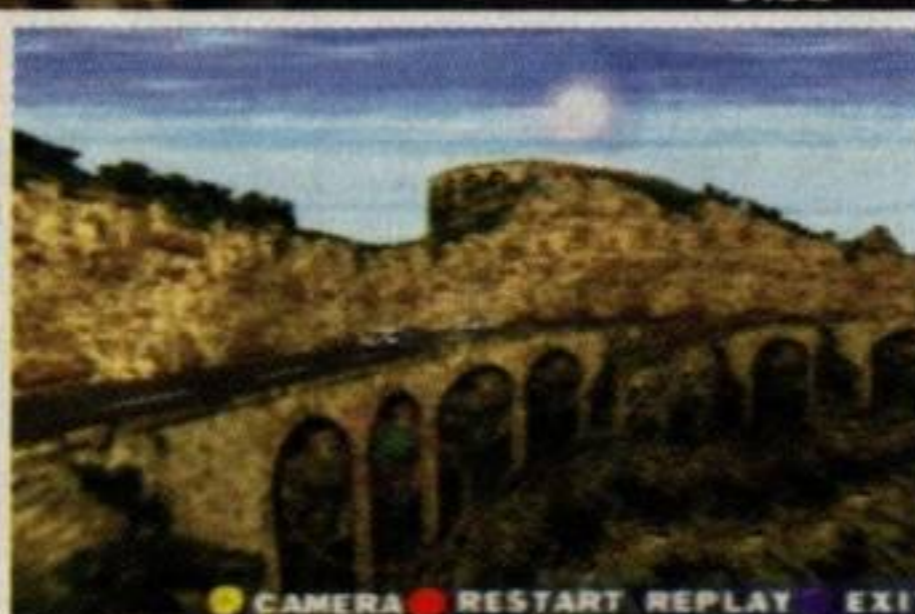
ratios. This part is fairly basic, but that is in accordance with the style of racing game *V-Rally* is - most definitely arcade style.

Realism is taken with a pinch of salt. Things like steering and car weight are made to lean on the light side, thus giving *V-Rally* the thrills and spills of an arcade machine, with the emphasis firmly on the spills. The cars are perhaps a bit too light and bouncy for rally enthusiasts; clip a small rock at the side of the track at speed and watch your car flip over

and over. Spectacular to watch, and more than a little bit fun, but slightly unrealistic. And perhaps the steering is a bit too sensitive; only a small push left or right on the analogue stick can be enough to oversteer your car, and then you'll be in all sorts of bother.

The tracks (39 in all) are loosely based on the ones to be found in the

a game that Nintendo owners have been crying out for; an exciting arcade driving game with a decent amount of speed. The handling of the cars will have to be tweaked, but apart from that, it seems that Infogrames have got themselves a sure-fire hit this winter. **TC**



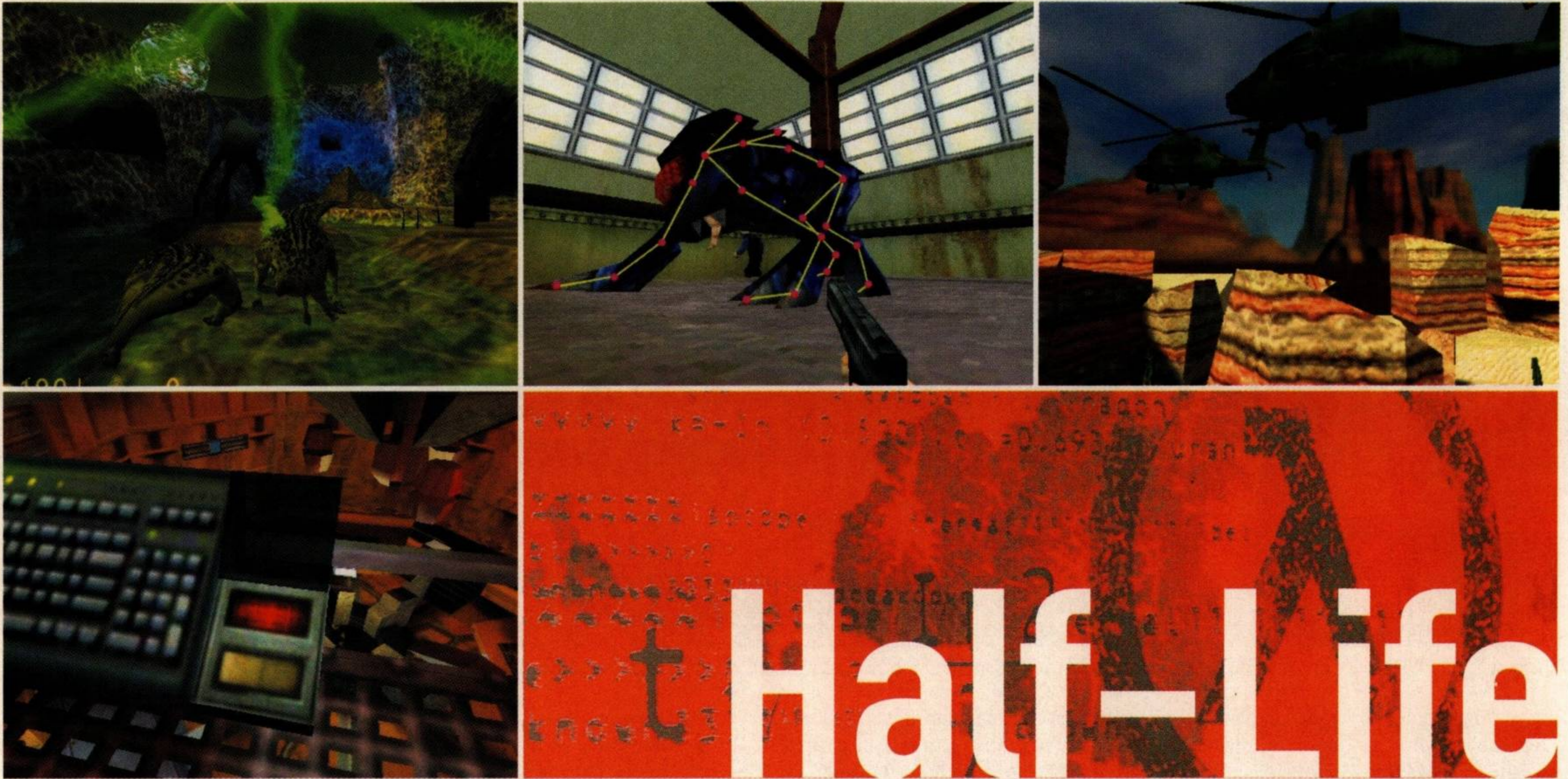
The lighting is most impressive. Stages take place at sunset, noon and at night, where you get an impressive headlight effect



Top: The headlights will only light up a small section of the track, so reactions are important. Above: The replay option is an enjoyable feature

SUMMING UP

- +**
 - Fantastic speed, the likes of which have never been seen before on the N64.
 - With 39 tracks, *V-Rally* on the N64 should give you great replay value
- - The infamous *V-Rally* steering and car weight is still here – might be a little too unrealistic for enthusiasts.
 - The game may suffer from too much slowdown in two player mode.
- =**
 - Should be the best N64 racer to date.



Half-Life is the latest game to use **id's irrepressible Quake II engine.**

However, the developers have made one or two **significant changes...**



It's about time we had some innovation in the first-person shooter genre. All those corridors and monsters and all that shooting is starting to get a bit monotonous. *Half-Life* might just be the game to break all boundaries...

The story sees you assuming the role of a laboratory technician in a top secret government lab – the scientists are experimenting with things out of their control. The game opens on a

normal day at the office. The intro scene is brilliant, with you travelling on the train to work, all done in real-time graphics. You then proceed to the laboratory, where you are

instructed by colleagues to perform the experiment. Something goes horribly wrong and a portal to another dimension is opened, allowing all manner of creatures to enter the lab. And so the adventure begins...

Half-Life, like so many recent games, relies on *Quake II* for its game engine. However, to their credit, Valve have used this only as a starting point and have made several significant modifications. First of all, you have a

can you glean information, but you can get help from the characters; scientists will unlock doors for you and guards will generally follow you around and help you dispose of the monsters.

There are a certain number of 'staged cut scenes' in *Half-Life* – an example: upon walking into a room you see a ventilation shaft and two scientists, one being dragged into the shaft and the other furiously trying to pull him out. As you

approach, they both get pulled in, and you can only watch

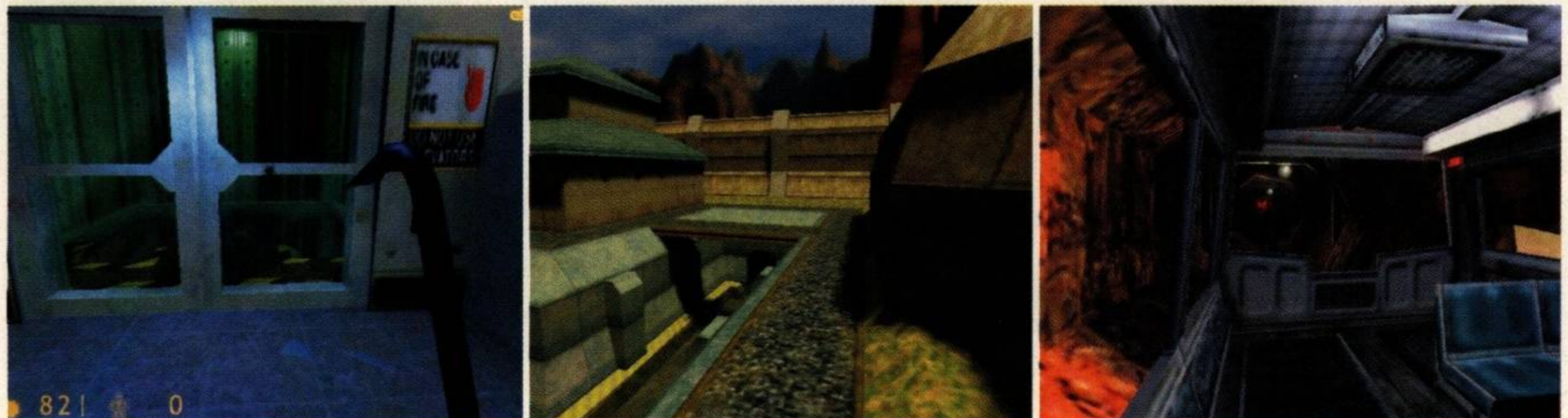
as their remains are thrown out of the forbidding shaft. In this case, you could not have saved them, but there are other instances where you can take an active role in a

AT LAST, DEVELOPERS ARE COMING FROM OUT OF ID SOFTWARE'S SUBSTANTIAL SHADOW, AND PRODUCING SOFTWARE THAT IS NO LONGER A SIMPLE MATTER OF SHOOTING STUFF

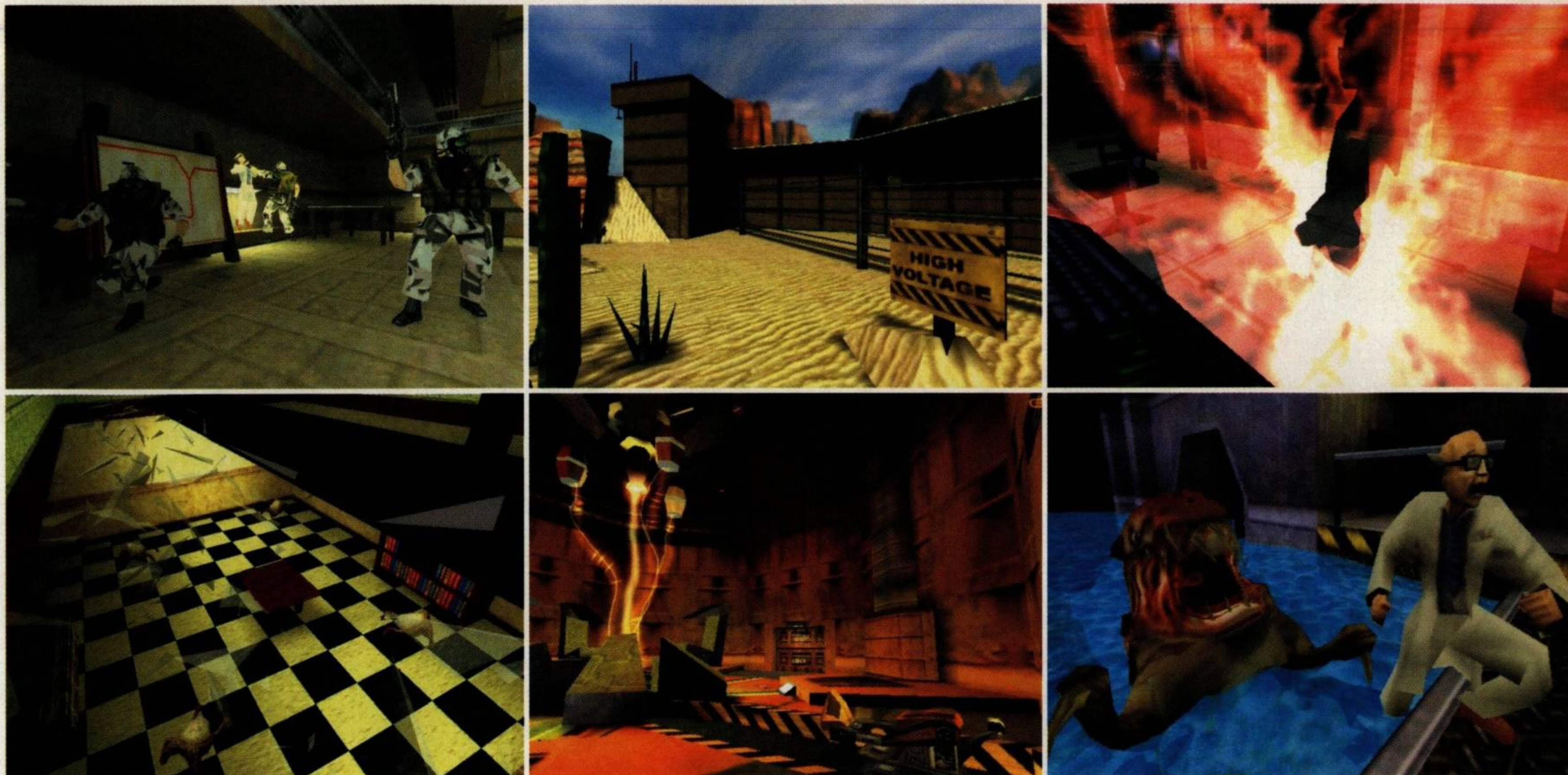
certain level of interactivity with the characters you meet. At first scientists just make conversation with idle chit-chat, but later on interaction becomes a vital element to the game. Not only

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Sierra
DEVELOPER	Valve
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	December
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-32
PROCESSOR	P100 P166
MEMORY	16MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional



You can see from the above shots the variety of environments that *Half-Life* boasts. And these are just on the first level!



Above: *Half-Life* is a graphical tour de force, and is easily one of the best-looking games on the PC. Detailed polygon models and dramatic lighting effects abound

CONVERSATION

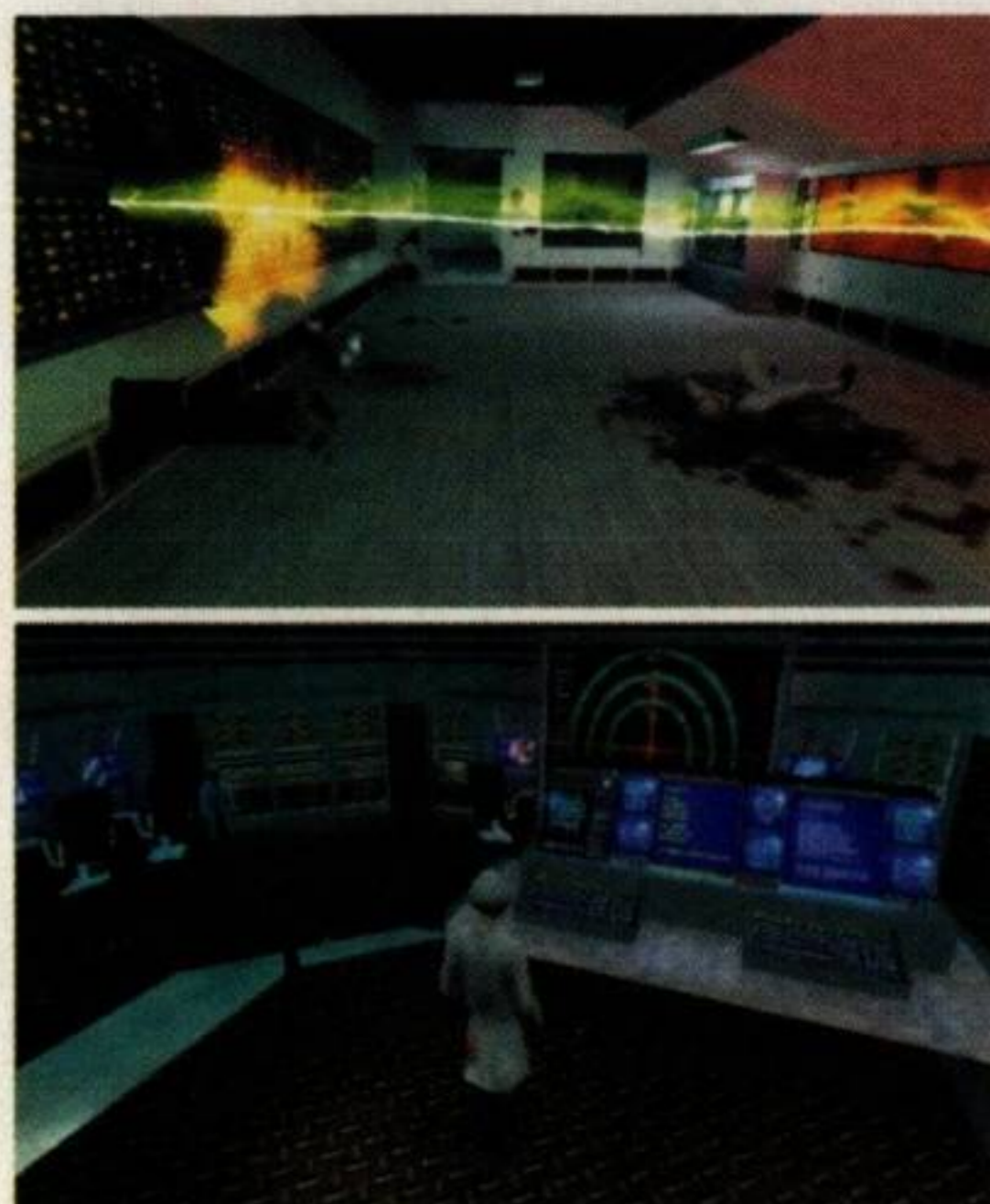
One of the most impressive features in *Half-Life* is the ability to interact with the in-game characters. This starts off as being a simple 'hello' to your fellow workers, but later on becomes vital to your survival. Scientists can be used to open locked doors and guards become your allies in your fight against the devil spawn. On a technical side, the speech and lip sync is superb.



character's fate. Usually, by saving someone your reward is one of health or a weapon. Oh yes, and unusually for this kind of game, you start the game without a weapon – these must be either taken from dead guards or found.

Half-Life often requires the player to solve puzzles in order to progress. These are not too complicated and often involve you breaking a window here or a ventilation cover there, but occasionally you have to use a number of skills to reach the next part of the level.

Graphically, *Half-Life* isn't that far ahead of the game from which it takes its engine, it's just that there is so much more variety to the textures. By setting the game in a believable environment (the game starts off in a research laboratory), the designers have given themselves a wide scope from which to take their inspiration, i.e. real life. Familiar objects are to be found all over the place – microwave ovens, lift shafts and computer consoles give the whole game a familiar feel which, to be honest, is refreshing after so many futuristic and fantasy settings we get with this kind



of game. Aside from this, there is a wonderful attention to detail. Almost everything is destructible – glass and wooden doors being the most obvious – and there are plenty of nice touches; you have a torch to use when crawling around in the claustrophobic air vents and objects such as boxes and tables are movable. You can use the latter to gain access to other areas.

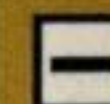
At last, developers are coming from out of id software's substantial shadow (with a little help from the Quake II engine of course), and producing software that is no longer a simple matter of shooting stuff. *Half-Life* is proof that there is life after *Quake*, and although the basic premise is the same, this game offers the gamesplayer more of a cerebral challenge than just pushing buttons, killing things and figuring out where to go next and how to get there. All in all, a step in the right direction. **TC**

Cut scenes are both impressive and handled in real-time. As a result, the gameplay flows beautifully

SUMMING UP



- Interaction with in-game characters gives the game a more immersive feel.
- Combination of puzzles and action means the game is more of a cerebral challenge.



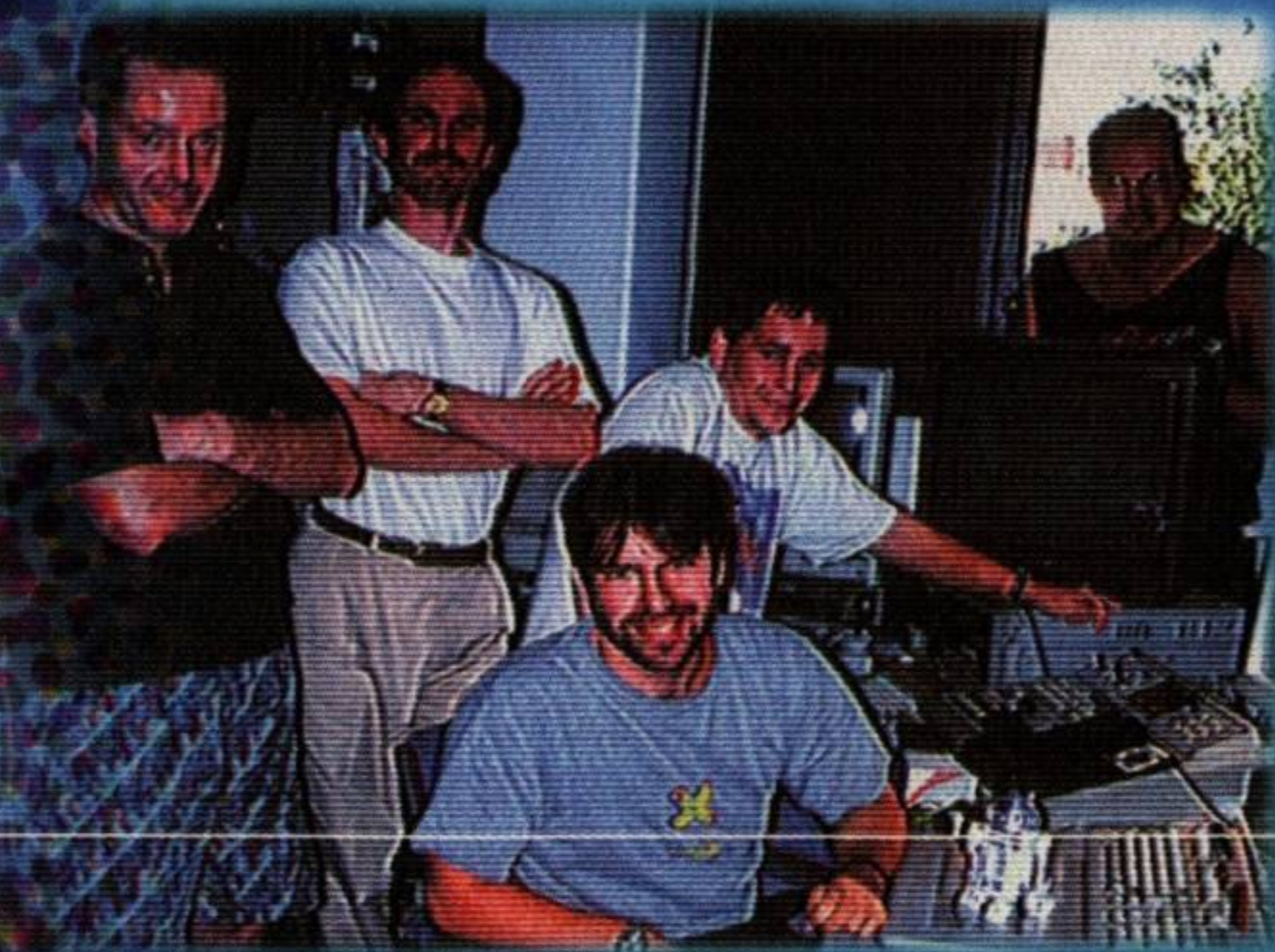
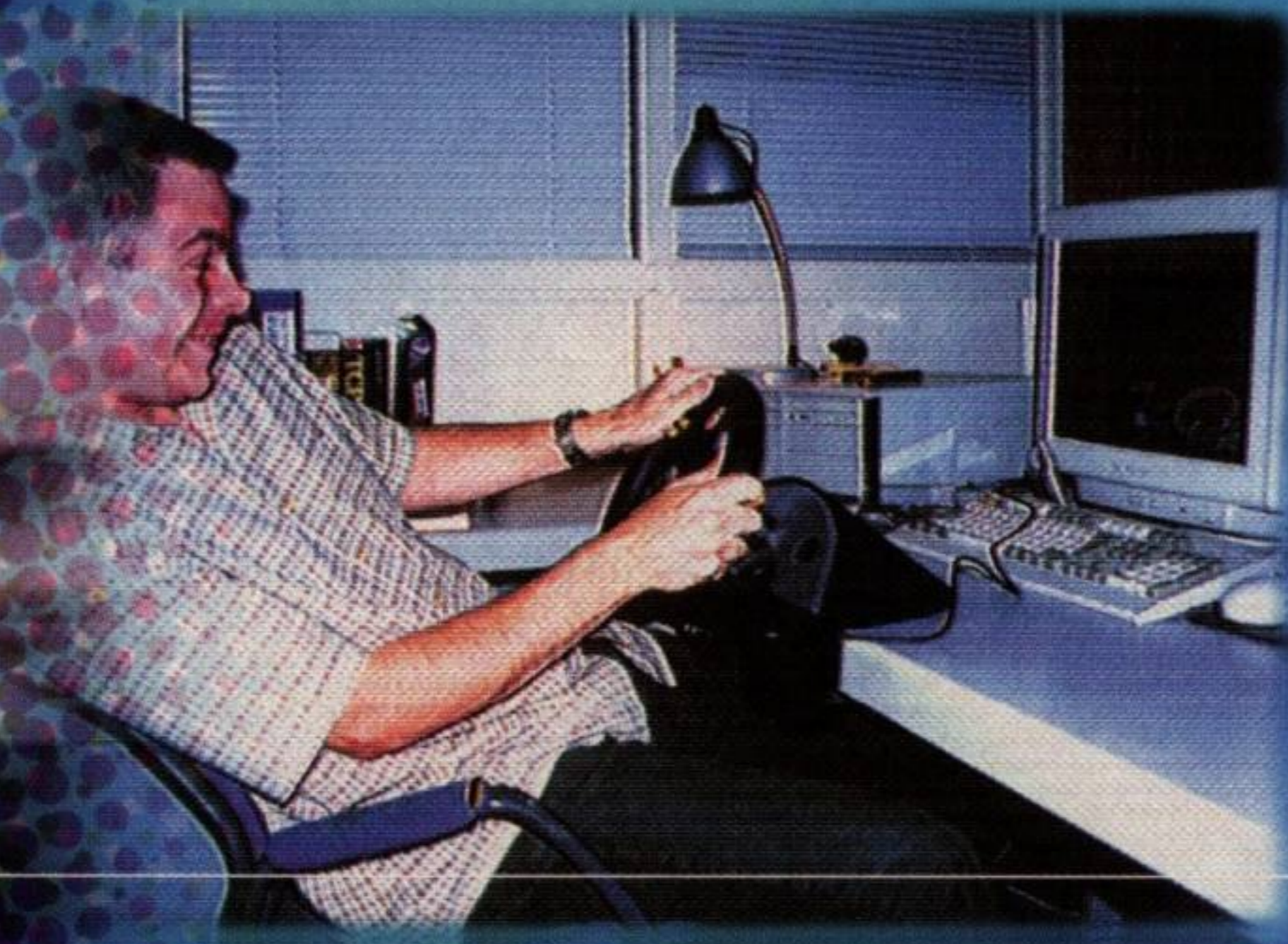
- Because of the Quake II engine, *Half-Life* looks similar to other games on the market – see this month's Beta Look of *SiN*.



Half-Life is set to rewrite the rule books on how to make a first-person shooter.



TEAM 17





Cliff Smith dons his **safari hat** and travels to **darkest Yorkshire** to take an **exclusive look** at the great new range of **games** under development by **Team 17**.

A year is a long time in the computer games industry. PCs can double in speed and ability, a new games console can arrive and revolutionise home entertainment, and a development company can bring out a range of games that will dominate the market. Over the next twelve months or so, Yorkshire-based developers, Team 17 will be releasing a series of titles which should confirm their reputation as one of the most innovative and capable names in the industry.

As any Amiga owner will know, they are certainly no strangers to fame, fortune and glory. In their eight-year history they have scooped just about every major award in the industry, and have been responsible for some of the most popular and enjoyable games ever. Since the appearance of the massively successful Amiga-based beat-'em-up, *Full Contact* in June 1991, through to the PC CD-ROM release of the long-awaited *Worms 2* last year, the company have gone from strength to strength.

Dream team

Although best known for their classic Amiga titles such as *Project X*, *Superfrog*, the *Alien Breed* trilogy and, of course, *Worms*, Team 17 have definitely moved with the times. Their

distribution deal with Ocean Software has given them access to the console market, with games being developed for the PlayStation, Sega Saturn and Megadrive, Atari Jaguar, Amiga CD32, Phillips CDI, SNES, Gameboy and Virtual Boy. They are licensed developers for the Nintendo 64 and the Sega Dreamcast, with several titles already in development for the new super-console. Their commitment to high quality playability could be one of the decisive factors in the success of this new platform. They are also considering development of titles for future machines such as Toshiba's exciting Project X, a DVD-based home entertainment unit. Perhaps they were attracted by the name...

One for all

Team 17's new range of games encompasses not only every major platform, but all genres and age groups as well. From the fairy-tale fantasy of *P.I.G.* to the hard-core graphic adventure of the game they will only refer to as 'Project WM', there is something for everyone in the new line-up. To get the low-down on what's up north, Cliff Smith travelled to Ossett in Yorkshire, to meet up with Team 17's popular Media Relations Manager, Steve Heley, who took him to meet the development teams working on the new products. Here's what he saw...



INFORMATION

STYLE 3D Platform/Adventure
PLATFORM PlayStation, PC
RELEASE DATE Spring 1999



P.I.G.

INTERVIEW: P.I.G.

Q. Well, I guess the obvious question is 'why a pig?'

A. Because P.I.G.'s are FUN! We wanted a character with character, and there's not many animals that are as round, as pink, as stupid, as intelligent and as clumsy as your average round, pink, PORKER!! Hugh Grunt, a pig for all seasons...

Q. What inspired the theme park setting?

A. Because theme parks are fun places where your imagination can run wild. The P.I.G. team loves them, and for us, to start off in a theme park seemed the best place in the world to begin. The setting also helps with many things, like the non-linear type of gameplay that we have tried to achieve by allowing the player to just wonder around the park, choosing which areas they want to explore in their own time - walking into a seemingly small area to discover an entire world hidden inside!

Q. Have there been any problems developing the game for both the PC and the PlayStation?

A. Yes! Err... where do we begin? To be honest the list is endless on a project that has taken two years. Many things crop up during development, such as fitting such huge levels into a PlayStation, trying to get the PC to run smoothly (with Windows), the writing of a 3D editor to create the worlds, as well as getting both the PlayStation and PC 3D engines to run as fast as possible, whilst maintaining compatibility between the two projects. The biggest thing is probably maintaining the vision of a project throughout such a long development period. Keeping track of two years worth of work so that it all fits together seamlessly can be an immense task. When you're writing a game that has well over 40 graphically different worlds, has had two project managers, two weddings, two babies and ten staff working on it, it can take a lot to keep going! We could go on, but we won't!

As adventure game heroes go, private investigator George is a bit of an unlikely choice. He is clumsy, overweight, greedy and a little thick - in fact he's a bit of a pig. That's why he's going to need your help to solve the mysterious disappearance of a bunch of piglets, kidnapped by the evil Dr. Gotem in the strange and puzzle-filled Fun Dazzle Magic Land theme park.

The park is divided into eight main themed areas, such as Mars, the Arctic or fairy-tales, and each theme is subdivided

HUMOUR IS A STRONG ELEMENT IN P.I.G. THE GAME IS FULL OF THE GROAN INDUCING PUNS AND JOKES FOR WHICH TEAM 17 ARE JUSTLY NOTORIOUS

into three or four sub-levels, filled with a huge variety of tricks, traps and puzzles, giving a total of around 40 different environments to play in. There are sub-games such as arcade machines featuring P.I.G.-style versions of some classic games, and surreal sections where George is swallowed by a giant pumpkin lantern or shrunk to minute size. Humour is a strong element in P.I.G. The game is full of the groan inducing puns and jokes for which Team 17 are justly notorious.

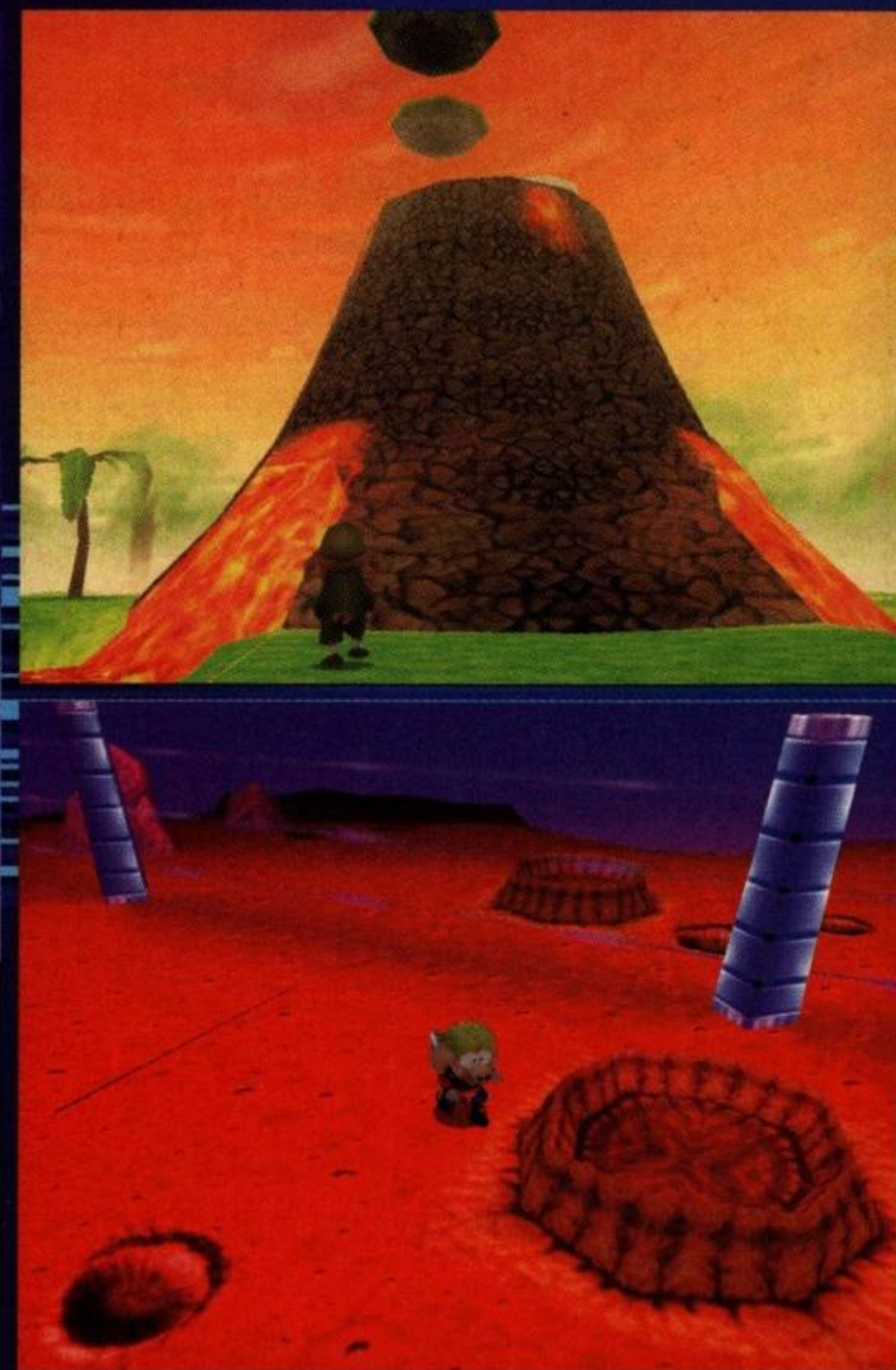
The game has been compared favourably to the N64 hit *Banjo-Kazooie*, and the custom built 3D rendering engine produces graphics on the PlayStation which are as good as anything yet seen on the platform. The PAL version supports a frame rate of 25 FPS, with full Gouraud shading, MIP-mapping and dynamic coloured lighting effects. Running on an accelerated PC, the graphics are even more spectacular. The development team have written special data compression routines to fit huge levels onto the disk, and the free-roaming, no rails 3D gameplay takes full advantage of them. The player-controllable camera view allows you to view the action from almost any angle, including a first-person perspective to

help you with certain puzzles.

Another major element is the interaction of the detective pig with the 60 to 70 AI-controlled characters you can meet in the game. These range from Little Bo Peep to the Grim Reaper, and they will help or hinder you on your way through their world. Although the humorous and colourful graphics will certainly appeal to younger players, P.I.G. contains more than enough multi-levelled play to challenge the more experienced gamer.



Like Lara Croft before him, George has a variety of different outfits available for different climates



Phoenix



Space flight games have been a popular genre since the earliest days of computer gaming, with titles like *Elite*, *Frontier* and the long-running *Wing Commander* series being firm favourites. Recent releases such as *Colony Wars*, *Conflict: Freespace* and *I-War* have shown that the species shows no sign of dying out. Team 17 have joined the space-race with a game called *Phoenix*, due out in the second quarter of next year. Their design philosophy has been a simple one: to play all their favourite space combat games, decide

THERE ARE MORE THAN 100 DIFFERENT SHIPS IN THE GAME, AT LEAST FIFTEEN OF WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE TO FLY IN THE SINGLE PLAYER GAME

what was wrong with them, then design a better one. The result is a state-of-the-art package with more innovative features than any other game in the genre.

The design team behind *Phoenix* have included so many technological advances previously thought to be impossible that they seem determined to earn themselves a breakfast at Milliways. Even running in software render mode, the game includes Phong shading, shockwaves, lens flare, coloured lighting, bump-mapping and specular lighting effects, which give the imaginatively designed spacecraft in the game a futuristic, metallic look previously only seen in expensive rendered animation such as that in *Babylon 5* or *Star Trek T.N.G.* There are more than 100 different ships in the game, at least fifteen of which will be available to fly in the single player game.

One of the things which the team had noticed about people playing other space games was that they spent most of their time watching the often inadequate radar screens to see what the enemy was up to. To improve on this, the ships in *Phoenix* have multiple scanners which show not only your immediate surroundings, but also what ships are attacking you, what ships are attacking your targeted enemy and what is happening to your allies, as well as tracking the manoeuvres of the ship you are dogfighting with. Although all this sounds

complicated, the clever and intuitive layout of the display makes it simple to keep track of even the fastest battle.

Other refinements include intelligent weapons selection which automatically advises you on the most appropriate weapon for your chosen target, and a comprehensive strategic communication system allowing you to give complex orders to your wingmen. There is also an ongoing training program which teaches you to use new tactical manoeuvres which will only be included in missions once you know how to use them.

The physics of space flight are also realistically handled, with two optional flight models, either using accurate Newtonian physics 'drift' mode or the more Hollywood-styled 'flight' mode. Likewise, the mission structure and storyline are a lot more mature than most games in the genre, with a classic hard sci-fi edge lacking in other titles and stunning FMV sequences which would not look out of place in a major feature film.

INFORMATION

STYLE	Space combat sim
PLATFORM	PC
RELEASE DATE	Summer 1999



The sky at night...

A couple of really huge explosions would look great right now



INTERVIEW: PHEONIX

Q. What is your favourite space game?

A. Andy M: I find them all pretty much the same; increasingly sophisticated graphics hiding essentially identical – and not particularly gripping – gameplay.
Andy C: I did play *Elite* a lot on the BBC Micro. Like Andy M. says, though, once you've played *Elite* you've played them all. Mission-based or free-flight, the basic gameplay has remained unchanged, even down to the way other ships fly and the scanners and weapons systems involved (lasers and missiles). I think this lack of

innovation is what triggered *Phoenix* for me. Since *Elite* I've been really excited every time a new space game came out, but after the swish FMV and glitzy menus, and the initial "ooh, that's a big, complicated-looking ship!", I've felt let down by the rather drab and frustrating gameplay.
Charles: I played *Elite* a great deal of the time too – although I preferred the Spectrum version. There was something about it that just pulled you in. Many of the recent space games have been formulaic rehashes of previous space games, claiming a great deal but missing

out on the gameplay – either that or losing steam after the first few missions.

Q. Have you drawn inspiration from your favourite sci-fi movies and books?

A. Andy M: Not that I've noticed.
Andy C: I don't think so. We tried to avoid basing the story line on anything as we developed it. The plot in the game has been significantly streamlined from the original concept (it would have made a great book, but a rather confusing game). As luck would have it, someone else appears to have recently had a similar plot

idea (but we won't say who to avoid spoiling things). That's just the way things go I suppose! As far as style goes, we've drawn more on old Bogart movies than anything, to make sure the main character isn't some wide-eyed, blow-dried teenager.
Charles: Andy C and I are both avid fans of *Babylon 5*, and originally drew a lot of inspiration from the CG scenes in the early series. Some of their graphics looked quite amazing, and we tried to pluck the nice bits out for our engine. The credit for the original idea has to go to Andy C on that one.

Q. Do you have plans to use the technical advances in *Phoenix* in any other forthcoming games?

A. Andy C: The data-handling side of the game is pretty advanced and flexible, so that (or perhaps a generic implementation of it) might well find itself into other quite different projects. The teamwork and tactic systems are also good candidates for re-use.
Charles: As Andy says, the engine is quite advanced, and it's been written to be very flexible. Although we currently have no plans, I certainly intend to use at least part of it on whatever I do next.

SGP

Although not due for release for another twelve months, *SGP*, or *Stunt Grand Prix* to give it its full title, is already looking like one of the best and most enjoyable driving games around. The premise is simplicity itself: take a totally realistic car physics simulation and apply it to fast, colourful radio-controlled stunt buggies. Add a series of challenging tracks with jumps, loops, tunnels and massive banked corners, and you have a recipe for a fast-paced, action-packed racing game which will appeal to everyone from die-hard simulator fans to arcade-only speed merchants.

The graphical presentation of the game is extremely impressive, as are the specifications of the machine needed to run it. Despite the fact that Pentium II 500 MHz PCs should be available by the time the game hits the shops, *SGP* will run at thirty frames per second on a lowly P166 with a Voodoo card. On a similar machine with a second-generation Voodoo card, the frame rate jumps to a super-smooth 60 frames per second. Although, like most race games, *SGP* works best with a good quality steering wheel controller, it is still surprisingly easy to pull off satisfying power slides using just the keyboard.

The buggies themselves look superb, with fully independent

suspension, whip aerials which move with realistic inertia and volumetric smoke effects for the turbo exhaust. The texture maps for the brightly coloured body shells can be customised with any Windows paint package. The game engine allows for every aspect of your buggy's performance to be fine-tuned with an in-game catalogue of spare parts and add-ons – but watch out: a realistic damage model means that a severe crash can also affect the way your car drives.

SGP is designed to be a great single-player game, but obviously has a lot of potential as an on-line game as well. Current plans are for more than 30 single-player tracks in tournament or arcade mode, eight special multiplayer tracks and a 'stunt park' arena, where up to eight players can race around showing off their best stunts. As in the single-player game, the more outrageous and difficult the leaps and rolls you pull off, the more points you get. There is a stunt trainer option to help you learn how to put your buggy through its paces. In the multiplayer games, a subtle but effective catch-up feature will ensure that the games remain competitive, and the short one minute laps should keep the game burning along at breakneck speed.

INFORMATION

STYLE	Buggy racing sim
PLATFORM	PC
RELEASE DATE	Winter 1999



If for some reason you find the paint jobs unappealing, don't worry, you can create your own



INTERVIEW: SGP

Q. Why did you choose to model RC buggies instead of full size cars?

A. There are two main reasons for that choice. Firstly, the tracks feature manic components like ramps, loop-the-loops and corkscrews which would be impossible to engineer in real

life, but can be done on a smaller scale. Secondly, the cars will take a real pounding on and off the track, and a real car could just not recover from this without hours in the garage. We are making the game as realistic as possible, and we've all seen

RC cars do some wild and amazing things.

Q. Will the game include a track editor?

A. We are not planning to release a track editor with the game, but we are working on that as an add-on to be released sometime afterwards,

along with more goodies.

Q. What's next for the SGP engine?

A. There's a tremendous number of applications for the SGP engine in the future. We do have plans which we obviously can't discuss at the moment, but these will be influenced by the success of SGP

and by getting a feel for what people really want from a driving game. The engine could simulate anything from the nuts and bolts realism of professional racing such as F1 or rallying, right through to an all-out futuristic racing and battling action game.

A.B.C.



In keeping with Total CONTROL's philosophy of being first with the latest games news, here is the first look at a game which won't be released until the first months of the next millennium. While *A.B.C.* looks towards the future, this game is firmly rooted in the past. It is none other than the latest instalment in one of the most popular series of games ever to grace the Amiga. It's full name (albeit a working title at present) is *Alien Breed Conflict*. Blending elements of real-time strategy and role-playing games, *A.B.C.* is a true 3D squad-level combat game set in the distant future. Choose your squad from a pool of characters from five different races, all with differing racial characteristics; humans for aggression and technological superiority, a lizard race for their chameleon-like stealth ability, etc. Each character in your squad will have their own abilities and skills which will improve with each mission they undertake, and they will steadily develop their own personalities, helping you to identify with them and drawing you further into the game.

The control interface is being designed to be as intuitive as possible. You will simply select a character with the left mouse button, then right click to bring up a menu of orders. Characters

can be ordered to perform a wide variety of actions in several different styles. The emphasis of the game will be divided between combat, exploration and puzzle solving, and the complexity of the missions will proceed step by step, starting off with one character and introducing new concepts on a carefully balanced learning curve.

The game graphics are of an exceptionally high standard even at this very early stage of development, so by the time the game is finished they should be absolutely amazing. Dynamic coloured lighting, extremely realistic water effects and metallic specular reflections are already in place, and the futuristic look of the game's different alien worlds is beginning to take shape.

When the game is released, the editor used to construct the levels will be included on the disk, so you will be able to construct your own worlds for use in multiplayer games. On-line options will include head-to-head, deathmatch, co-operative games with CPU controlled enemies and several others. Current plans are for four to six players to be able to join in, but that could be increased depending on the available technology. Although the title and some of the details may change in the next year, this should be a great game for the new millennium.

'Project WM'

The game which we can only refer to as '*Project WM*' is being developed for them by Italian company Trecision, who were responsible for the recent release, *Nightlong*. Although the new game is not a sequel to that title, it shares the design ethos of stunningly rendered 3D environments and a complex plot. Although they were being somewhat guarded about the story line, it involves an ancient and international occult conspiracy. More than that they would not say, but if *Nightlong* is anything to go by, it will be spooky enough to make Mulder and Scully hide under their beds.

Despite the early stage of development, the quality of the graphics is already stunning, with highly realistic building interiors which show off the famous Italian flair for design. The game is played from a third-person perspective, using animated characters. There are two characters to play, male or female, both animated

using the latest motion-capture techniques. Even actions such as opening doors and searching through desk drawers are fully animated, and look so natural and realistic you don't even notice at first just how technically sophisticated they really are.

The characters have complete freedom of movement within the 3D environment and can be guided either by steering them with the keyboard or by clicking on a location with the mouse. There are over a hundred different locations to explore, both indoors and outdoors, and the mystery unfolds as you solve puzzles and find clues to advance the plot.

Although it still has over a year of development to go, '*Project WM*' is already looking like a major title, and could be a candidate for release on the Dreamcast – although this was something that Team 17 would 'neither confirm nor deny'. They're definitely getting the hang of this conspiracy business...

INFORMATION

STYLE	3D squad combat
PLATFORM	PC
RELEASE DATE	Spring 2000

INTERVIEW: A.B.C.

Q. Did any of the ABC team work on the previous Alien Breed titles?

A. Both Andreas Tadic and Rico Holmes worked on the original Alien Breed title – Andreas is lead programmer on ABC and Rico is the lead artist. The rest of the team are new to the Alien Breed brand.

Q. What do you consider to be the most important element of the game?

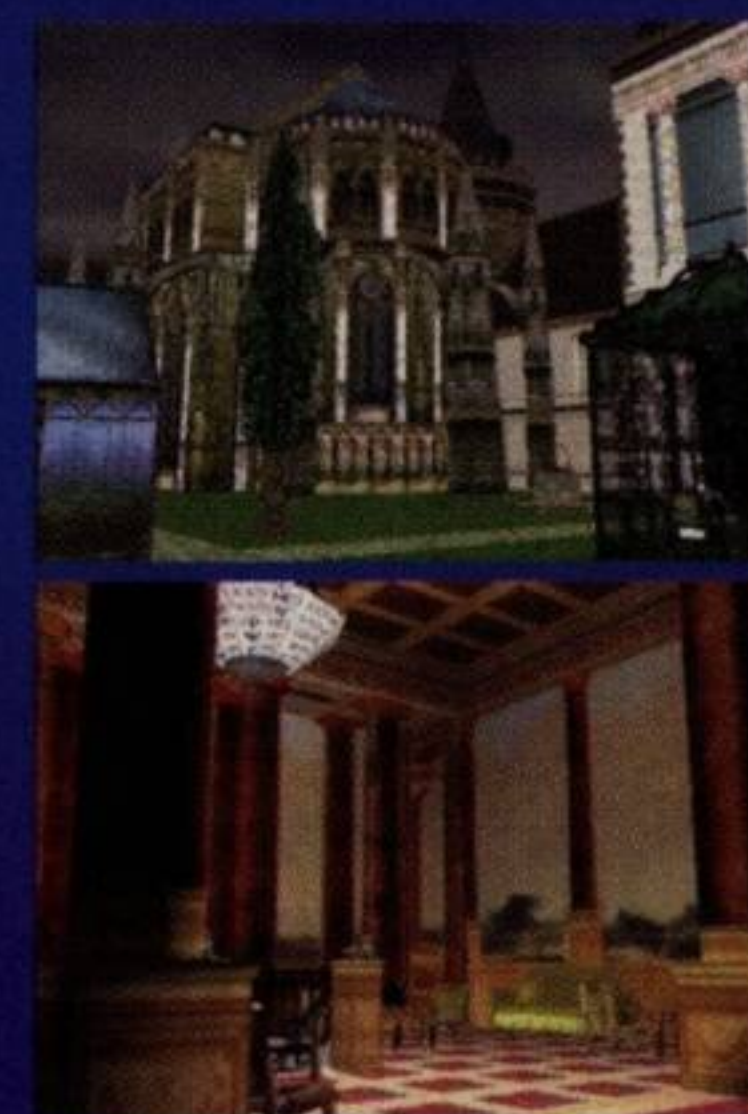
A. Fun. If it isn't fun to play, then it doesn't matter what other elements are in the game. But I guess coming in a close second would be the strategy element.

Q. Where did you get the inspiration for the design of the alien species?

A. We wanted each alien species to typify one style of play. That way the player could make a team of characters that best suits the way he or she wants to play the game. It kind of sprung from that idea really.

INFORMATION

STYLE	3D adventure
PLATFORM	PC
RELEASE DATE	Late 1999



INTERVIEW: 'PROJECT WM'

Q. Without giving too much away, what is the inspiration for the plot?

A. WM has been inspired by man's never-ending search for a hidden, deeper truth in existence. The

gamer will play the roles of a scientist who specialises in paranormal activity and a young ambitious lawyer whose job is to oversee the doctor's research. Inside the walls of an ancient

Austrian castle, the two characters will unveil secrets that are just whispers in the ears of government officials. They will have to reveal the mystery of a new and incredibly powerful

energy source called Ley Lines, or The Unknown Roads of the Dead.

Q. Will Trecision be doing any future titles for you?

A. Nothing has been signed yet as Trecision are moving full-steam

ahead on WM, but because of the great relationship we experienced with *Nightlong* and *Project WM*, both parties are looking forward to further collaboration in the future.

INFORMATION

STYLE Arcade strategy
PLATFORM PC, PlayStation
RELEASE DATE Xmas [PC version]

Worms Armageddon

INTERVIEW: WORMS

Q. You have described this as being the final version of Worms. Why?

A. We've described this as certainly the last game of Worms as it stands. The phrase we used was 'it's the end as we know it', which was why we called it Worms Armageddon.

Q. How much has Andy Davidson been involved in the development?

A. Andy was involved during the design stages earlier in the year and is involved again during the final few weeks.

Q. Will the Worms return in a different style of game someday?

A. It's a possibility, but if they do it will be a very different game...

If you know the name of Team 17 for only one game, then that game has got to be *Worms*. Andy Davidson's classic arcade strategy game has won more awards than just about anything and has appeared on every major platform from the Amiga, where it first appeared, to the PC. *Worms 2* was released last year to major acclaim from every quarter. The forthcoming PC release of *Worms Armageddon* is supposed to be the final version of *Worms* on that platform, but I guess we'll just wait and see about that. A long-awaited PlayStation version will be coming along in the early spring of next year. As for other platforms, well why not?

Although the game is superficially quite similar in appearance to *Worms 2*, there are numerous improvements, mainly based upon player suggestions sent in to Team 17's Web site. There are now more than 60 bizarre and brutal weapons to choose from, such as flame-throwers, poison gas canisters, cloned sheep and nuclear bombs. Many weapons have new features, such as the ability to strafe when firing the

mini-gun or Uzi, and the bow and arrows which can be used to make an impromptu ladder up an otherwise unclimbable slope. Weapons can now be used when swinging from a rope.

A wholly new addition are the utilities – not weapons exactly, but still very useful, such as the laser sight which can be used with any aimed weapon. Girders now come in packs of five initially, so if you are a total chicken you can barricade yourself in behind them.

Changes to the actual gameplay are more subtle. Teams can now form alliances and share weapons, and each team will have access to one exclusive super-weapon. The game's front end interface has been improved to make it easier to use, and there are more options in the pre-game set-up. The famous replays are now done in slow motion, complete with slowed-down sound, so you can relive the full effects of your violence.

For additional fun and merriment, you can load in any BMP image to use as a background, or even paint your own, so if you ever wanted to play *Worms* on Pamela Anderson's bouncy bits...



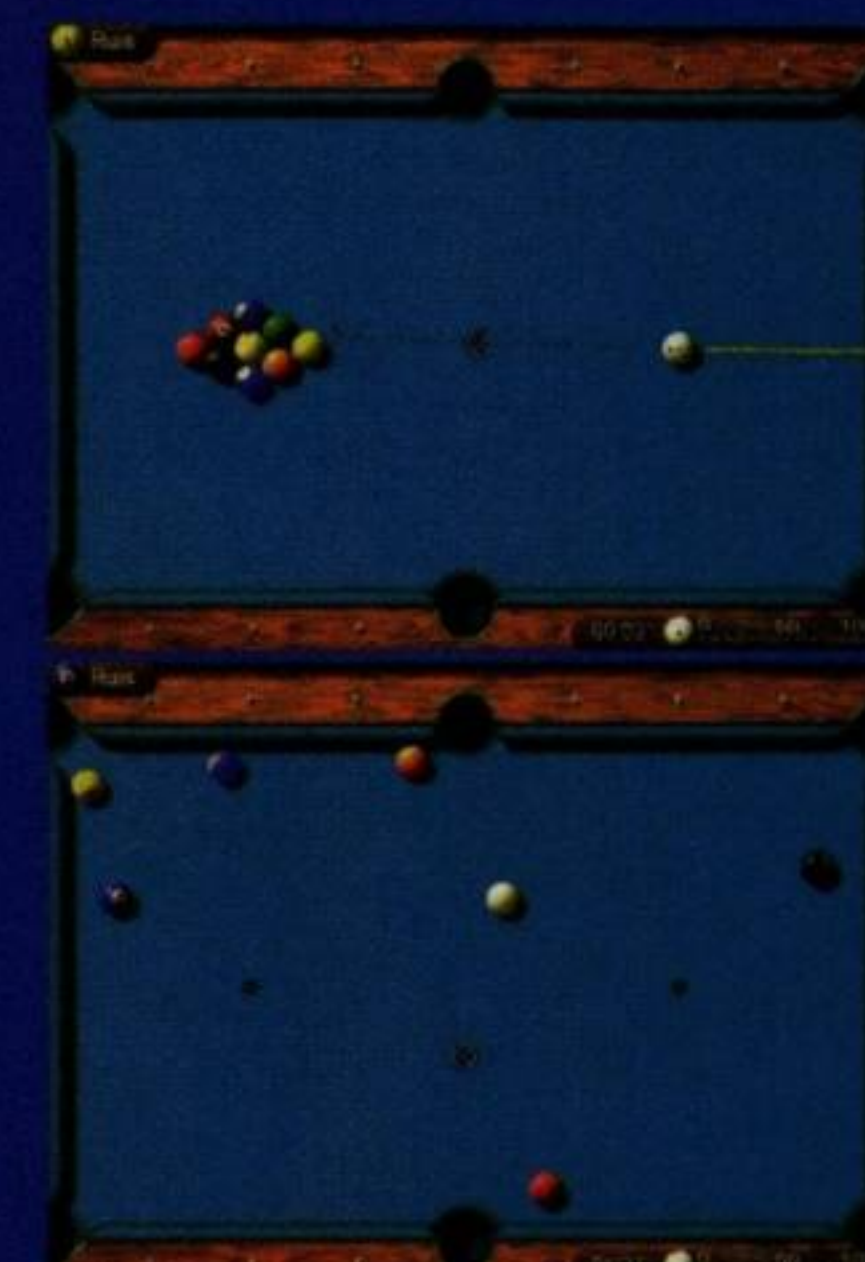
Arcade Pool 2

Arcade Pool 2 is a simple but enjoyable simulator of the popular pub game designed to be played on-line, allowing people on opposite sides of the globe to enjoy potting a few balls and to have a chat even if they have never met. It supports both US and UK rules, and has nine different games, including eight-ball and nine-ball versions, and even variations such as killer and speed pool. There are different table designs for each version, and the graphics are subtle but sophisticated, with realistic 3D lighting, accurate physics and smooth animation. The action is viewed from above, with a simple mouse controlled

interface for the cue. The background sounds are sampled pub noises to add that last touch of realistic atmosphere.

Plans for the game include a Web site league table so you can compare your scores and compete with other players on an international level.

The only slight hitch in the plans is that the game's Italian creator, Mario Savola, has just been drafted into his country's national service, which may last nine months, so you will just have to wait until the Italian government has finished with him before you can rack up and play!



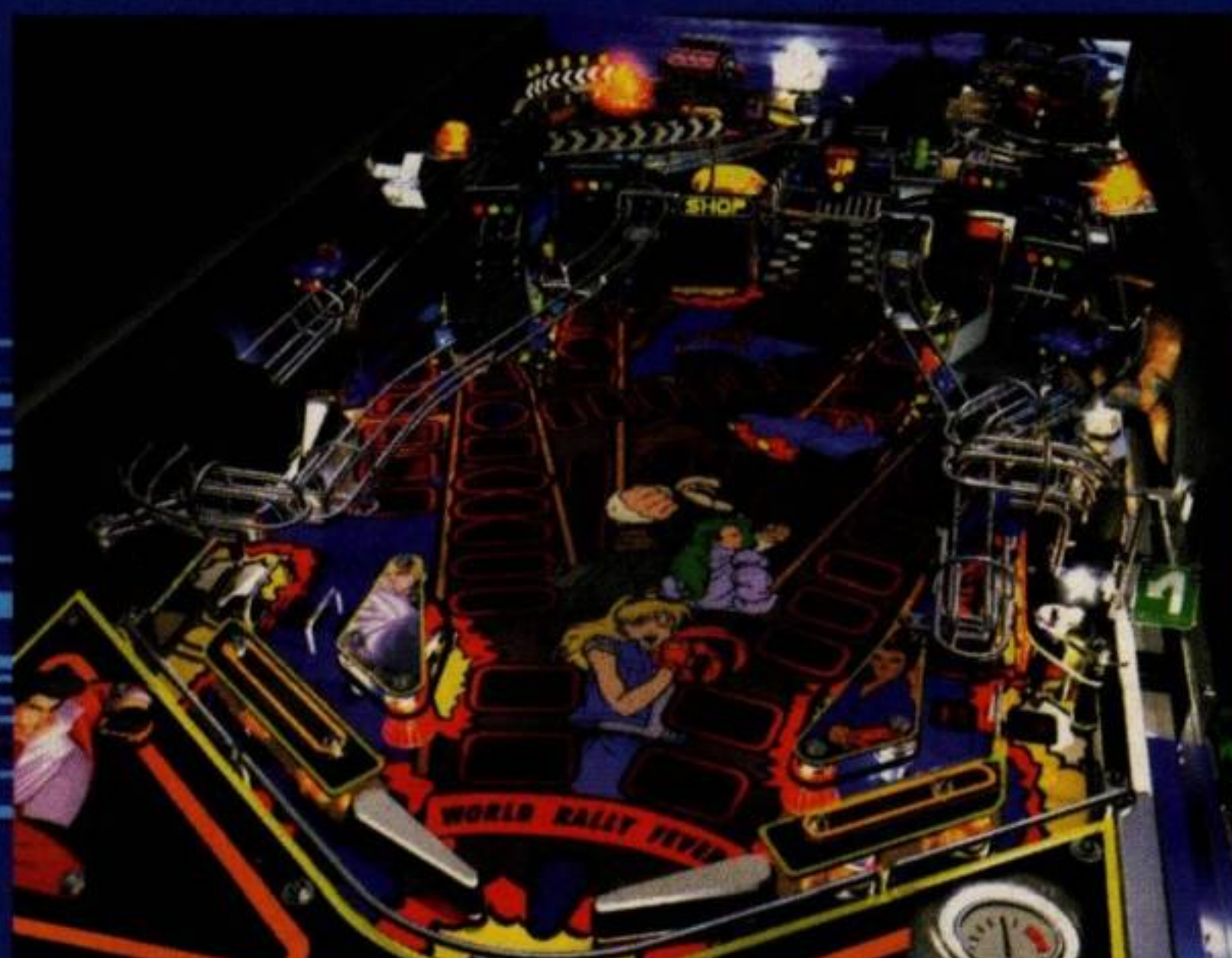
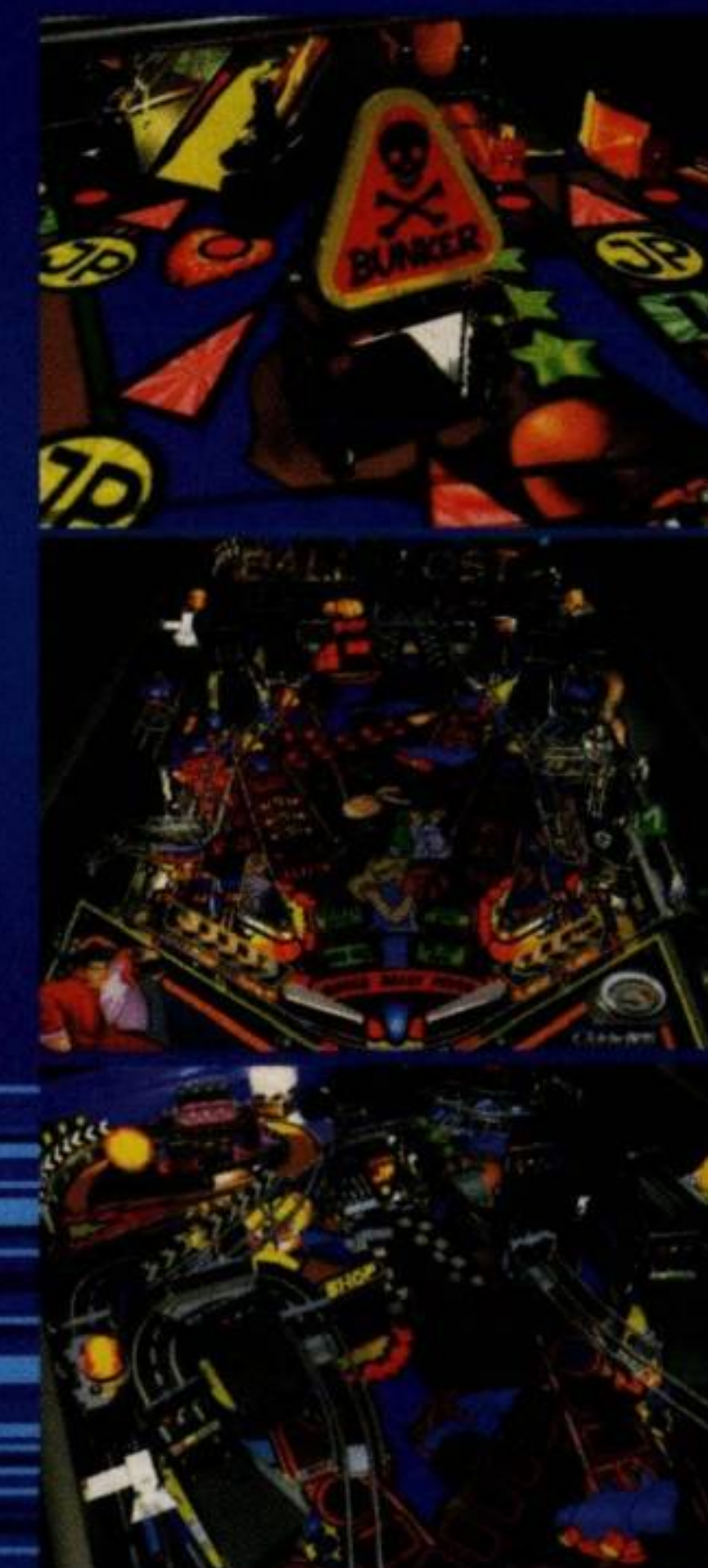
I'm not sure I'd fancy playing on any of the tables to the left after a few pints, what about you?

Addiction Pinball

The PC version of *Addiction Pinball* was released in March of this year and gathered some very favourable review scores from the gaming press. The PlayStation version is a totally accurate port of the full game, with both the *Worms* and *Rally Fever* tables being faithfully reproduced in high-res 3D. The only thing missing is the side-on view, which wasn't that popular anyway. The clever stuff they have had to do to fit the game into the PlayStation's tiny memory is truly impressive. Specially developed compression

techniques, cheating with the PlayStation palette and making the sound effects and back screen animations play from the CD while the game is running are just the start.

The only major change in the game is the front end, which has been rewritten to be more 'consoley'. The game is Dual Shock compatible and can handle four players. There are four standard views and one secret view for each table, and 38 music tracks on the CD. If you like pinball, you can't do better than this.



Plenty of chrome, lots of flashing lights... Is it a car? Is it a pinball table? It's a combination of the two - Woo Hoo!

INFORMATION

STYLE	Pinball sim
PLATFORM	PlayStation
RELEASE DATE	Xmas 1998

GAMES TESTED

- 086 Abe's Exoddus
- 090 Dune 2000
- 094 Silicon Valley
- 096 Grand Prix Legends
- 098 1080 Snowboarding
- 100 Rainbow Six
- 102 Tenchu: Stealth Assassins
- 104 Sensible Soccer European Cup Edition
- 106 Total Air War
- 108 Quake 2: Ground Zero
- 110 Buck Bumble
- 112 V2000
- 114 Spyro the Dragon
- 116 Quantity Control



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Namco
STYLE	Beat-'em-up
RELEASE	£34.99
PRICE	Out Now
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	1 Block

INFORMATION

This is where you can find out everything you need to know about the game reviewed. The Information box is different for each format and includes everything from the release date and price to more specific details such as how many blocks it will take up on your PlayStation memory card or whether the game takes advantage of your Nintendo 64 Rumble Pak.

The PC version of the Information box will occasionally contain more than one specification, this is so that we can show you both the minimum and recommended machine specifications required to run the game. Always remember that in some cases the minimum specification is literally just enough to get the game going, the speed of the gameplay or the resolution of the graphics will often suffer if the game is running on a minimum specification machine.

TAKING CONTROL

In this boxout the reviewer will comment on what he thought of the game after the first 20 minutes or so. Needless to say there are games out there which might seem like a waste of time for the first hour or so but which reward perseverance. By the same token there are games that seem great when you test them for ten minutes in your local software emporium but can disappoint once you've played them at home for a longer time. The Taking Control boxout is our way of warning you about games where your first impressions may not be reliable enough to base your purchasing decision on.

TAKING CONTROL

You need only watch the intro sequence to understand just how special *Tekken 3* really is. With all the style of a Hollywood blockbuster, it grabs you by the throat and draws you in to the whole experience. The first play is equally satisfying; silky smooth animation, plenty of impressive moves and a great selection of very different characters. Everything here has been polished until it shines.

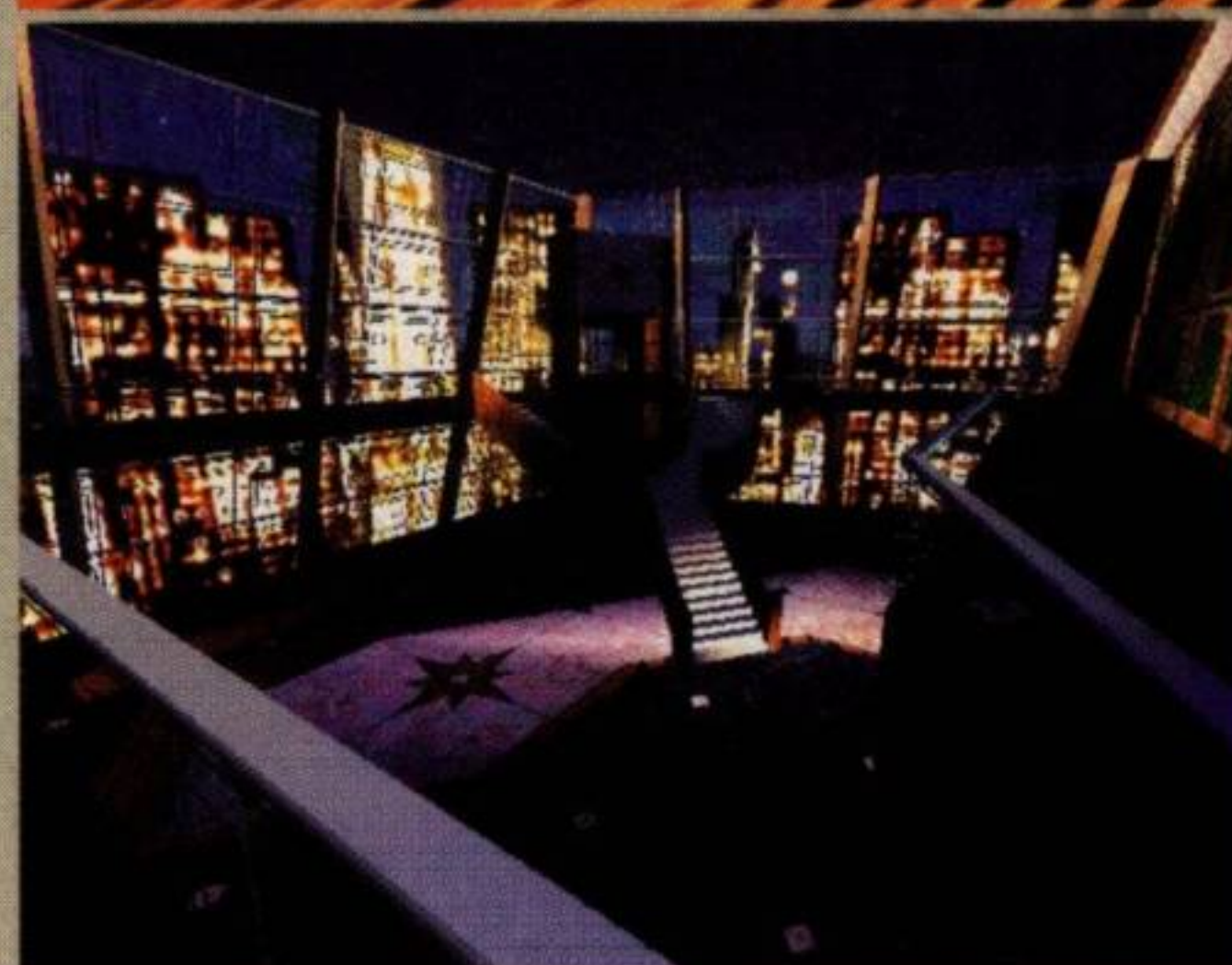
FORMATS



086
Abe's Exoddus
 Those lovable Mudokon's are in need of saving again. Cue Abe and his infamous flatulence.



094
Silicon Valley
 DMA's platform puzzler sees you take control of a space station full of genetically enhanced animals.



100
Rainbow Six
 This is your chance to lead a crack team of commandos in a fight against terrorism.

TOTAL CONTROL CHARTS

Your chance to check out which games come home with us after work and keep us up to the early hours, even when we're not on deadline.

Justin

1. Tenchu: Stealth Assassins (PlayStation)
2. Tekken 3 (PlayStation)
3. Banjo Kazooie (Nintendo 64)
4. Quake II: Ground Zero (PC CDROM)
5. Populous 3 (PC CDROM)

Will

1. Half-Life (PC CDROM)
2. Abe's Exoddus (PlayStation)
3. Metal Gear Solid (PlayStation)
4. Quake II: Ground Zero (PC CDROM)
5. Goldeneye (Nintendo 64)

Nick

1. Metal Gear Solid (PlayStation)
2. Turok 2: Seeds of Evil (Nintendo 64)
3. Populous 3 (PC CDROM)
4. Half-Life (PC CDROM)
5. Music (PlayStation)

Cliff

1. Quake II: Ground Zero (PC CDROM)
2. Total Air War (PC CDROM)
3. Drakan (PC CDROM)
4. Colony Wars Vengeance (PlayStation)
5. Tomb Raider III (PC CDROM)

OTHER FORMATS?

The review you are reading may not be for a game currently confirmed on your machine, however Total CONTROL is a genuine multi-format magazine. This means that at every opportunity we will be keeping you fully informed of any developments affecting you and the machines that you own. The Other Formats boxout is a prime example of this, a probability rating of 1-5 indicates what we consider to be the likelihood of the featured game ever appearing on your machine, while the accompanying text explains our reasoning or that of the company concerned.

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Namco have not released a game on the PC to date. We would love to think that *Tekken 3* could be the game to buck the trend, but it's extremely unlikely

N64 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Although a few of Namco's minor titles have made it to the N64, Sony's deal means that there is as much chance as no chance of *Tekken* appearing on the N64

VERDICT

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Tekken 3
GRAPHICS	95
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	95
OVERALL	94
Out of 100	

With scores given in three categories before arriving at a final score you can see exactly what the game's strengths and weaknesses are. Don't expect the overall score to be a mathematical average of the other three though, the playability rating will generally carry a lot more weight than the other two. How important the scores for sound and graphics are will vary according to the style of game reviewed. It should also be noted that where most games magazines generally score games on a scale of 60-100 unless they are especially dire. Total CONTROL will not be afraid to use the entire 0-100 scale, awarding average titles a suitably average rating of 50%. Any game scoring over 50% should be considered an above average title and worthy of your attention, particularly if you are a fan of the genre.

Abe's Exoddus

Those **Mudokons** are in trouble again, and it's up to you to put things right. The **sequel to *Abe's Oddysee*** promises to be everything the original was... **and more.**



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	GT Interactive
DEVELOPER	Oddworld Inhabitants
STYLE	Platform Adventure
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
ANALOGUE	No
DUAL SHOCK	No
MEMORY CARD	One Block

Oddworld Inhabitants' second addition to their *Oddworld* saga follows on the story in much the manner as their previous game, *Abe's Oddysee*. For those of you not in the know, *Abe's Oddysee* was to be the first chapter in a quintuple (that would be five instalments) of *Oddworld* games, each having a separate character for the lead role. *Abe's Exoddus* was born out of the huge following from the previous game. So what we have here is not actually the second in the series, but more of a version 1.5.

A Mudokon with a mission

Abe is a member of the Mudokon race, who live on the planet Oddworld with a number of other semi-intelligent races. Once the most powerful species on Oddworld, the Mudokons have since

become enslaved by evil Glukkons and are doomed to a life of misery and toil. As a young factory worker in a food processing plant called Rupture Farms, Abe stumbled across a horrifying discovery: the Glukkons were using the Mudokons as the main ingredient for their product! Obviously not to happy with this discovery, he decided that escaping would be his best chance for survival, also managing to save 99 of his co-workers and destroy Rupture Farms along the way. Following a celebration of his return, he was visited by the restless spirits of the dead Mudokons, who told him how (due to the loss of their supply from Rupture Farms) the Glukkons were now using blind slave Mudokons to dig

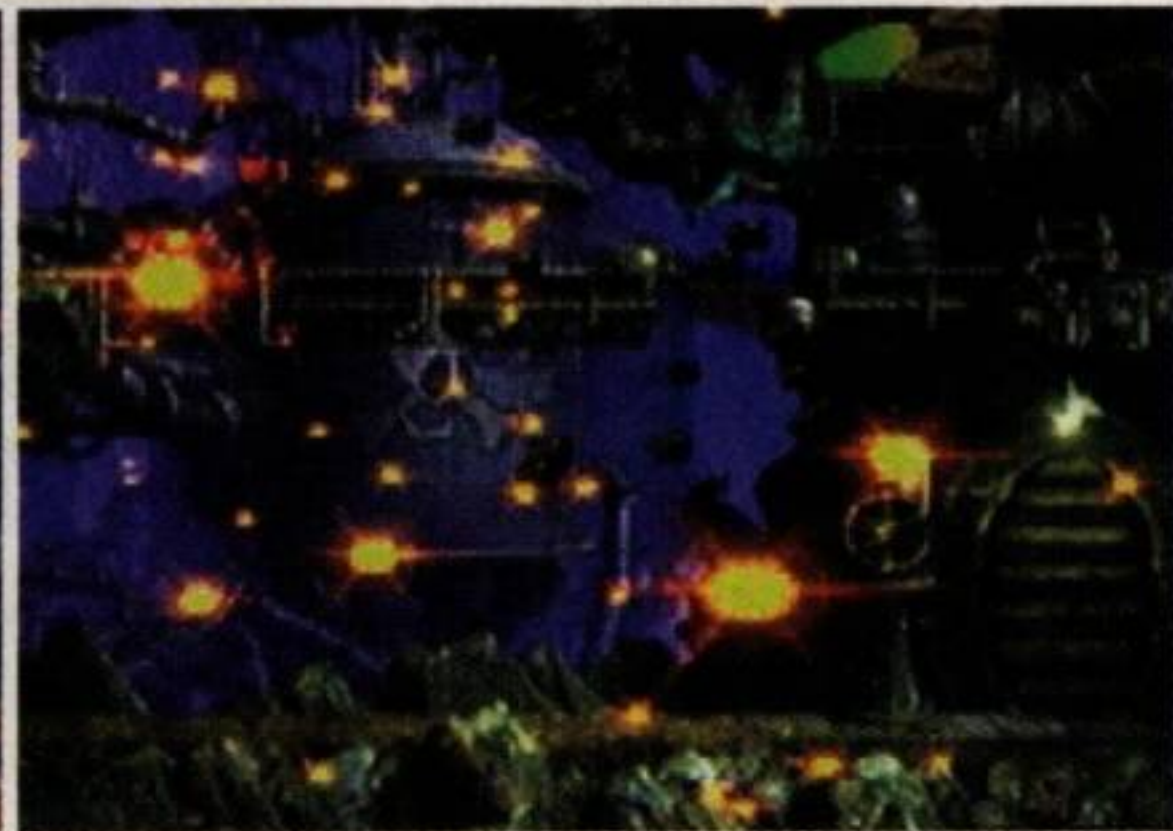
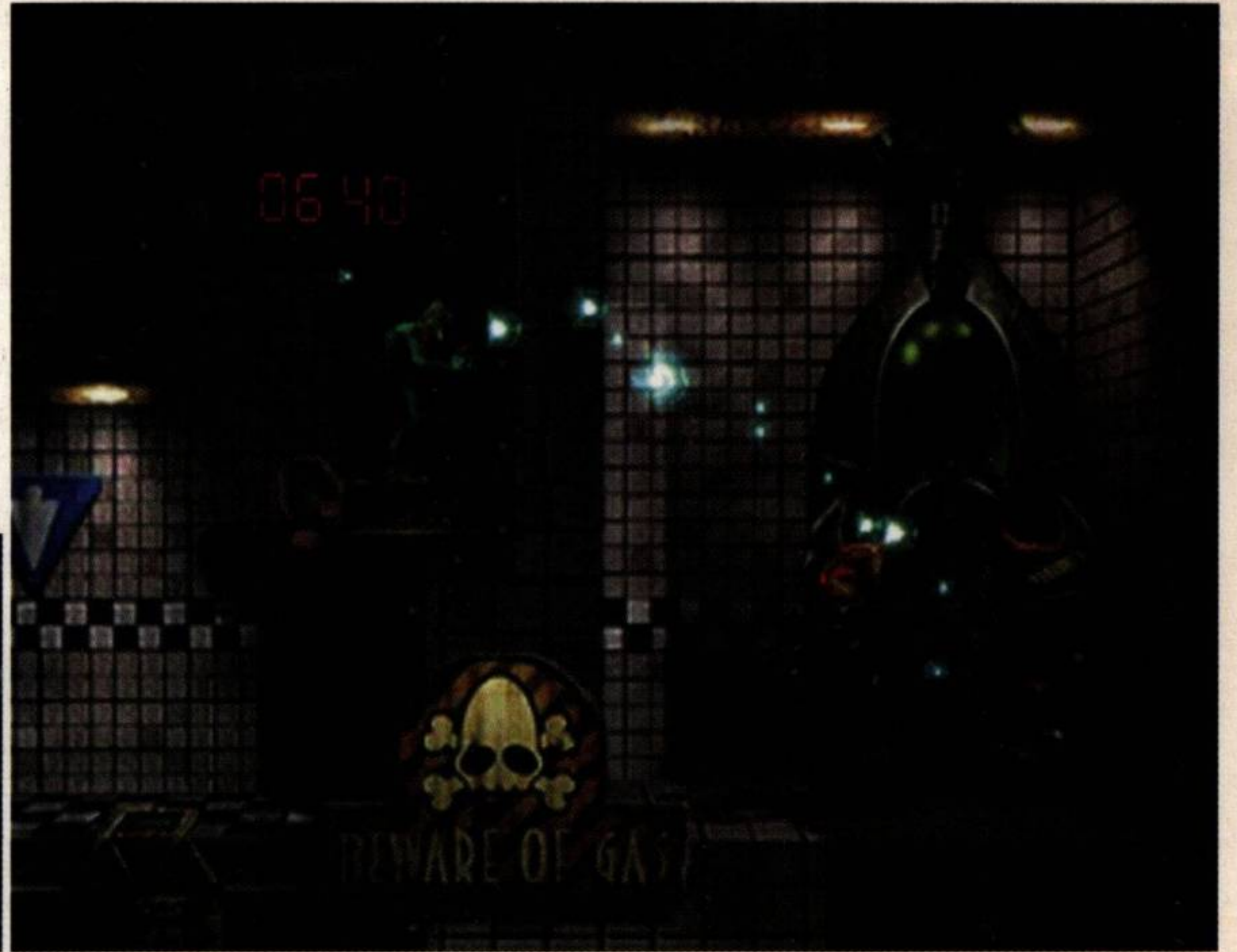
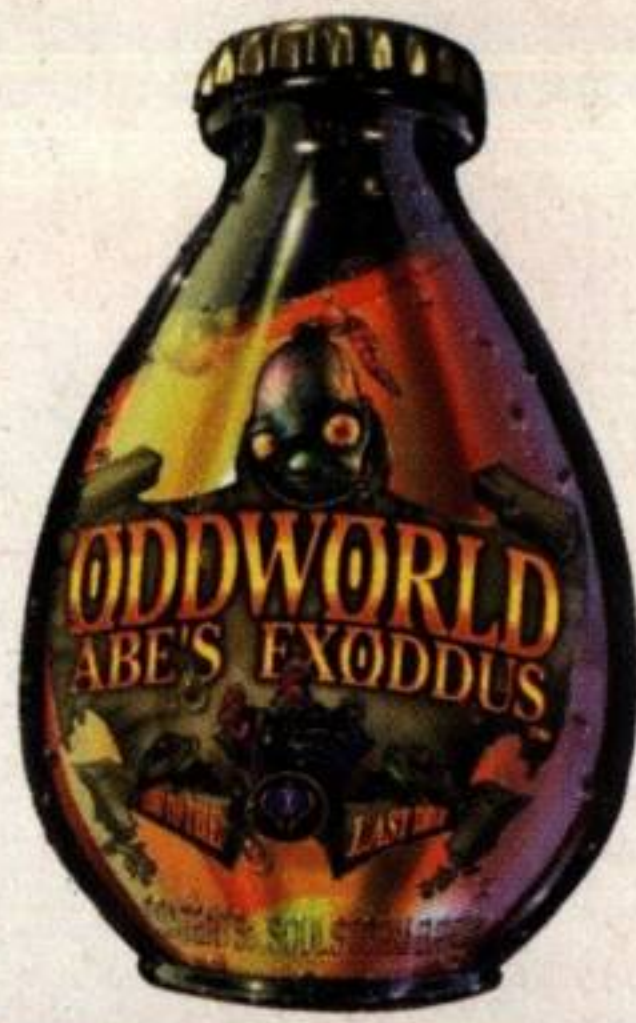
TAKING CONTROL

Abe's back with more of the same wacky humour and platform action. Though there don't seem to be too many new improvements, this is still a smoothly polished game with thousands of great touches and plenty of Abe's unique charm. I'm going to have trouble putting this one down...

DON'T CALL ME ABE

Abe's quirky character has a number of moves for you to learn, but for any new visitors to Oddworld, the beginning of the game has plenty of banners in the background offering helpful advice and playing instructions. It's an ideal way of learning the game for those of you not willing to face the dreaded instruction manual.





up their bones from the Mudokon Burial Grounds to be used in their new beverage line. As you are the only Mudokon in a very long time to show any signs of intelligence, they have come to ask you to find the burial grounds and put an end to the Glukkon tyranny... which is exactly what you set out to do.

Flip for it

In essence, *Abe's Exoddus* is virtually identical to *Oddyssey* in terms of gameplay. As Abe, you make your way through one of the eight huge levels via a flip screen mechanism, solving plenty of puzzles along the way. Should, by some strange twist of fate, you realise that you have neither played nor seen the

YOU'LL FIND THAT SOME OF THE MUDOKONS HAVE DRUNK THEMSELVES INTO A DEEP DEPRESSION - SLAP THEM WHEN THEY ARE LIKE THIS AND THEY COULD GET SUICIDAL

previous game, then just think of *Heart of Darkness* or the far more dusty *Flashback* and you'll have the right idea. Almost every screen contains some sort of activity to occupy your brain, from puzzles such as avoiding bad guys or working out how to open doors, to more traditional platform antics like timing your jumps to avoid falling boulders, etc.

Along your travels you will meet plenty of other Mudokons workers in the area – some of them you can ignore, but should you want to talk to them you can use your limited Mudokon

vocabulary. This communication method is copied almost directly from the original, but since he's been away Abe's learnt a few new phrases to use. 'Hello' still serves as the common greeting used to get their attention, and the old phrases such as 'follow me' and 'wait here' are pretty self-explanatory. One addition over the original is the 'all a'ya' phrase, which will allow you to talk to more than one Mudokon at a time. Following this with a command such as 'work' can save you a lot of time.

You'll also find that some of the Mudokons now have different emotional states. Expose them to laughing gas and they'll get a bit uncontrollable (also a good time to resort to the old fart routine). Often when they are in this state they won't

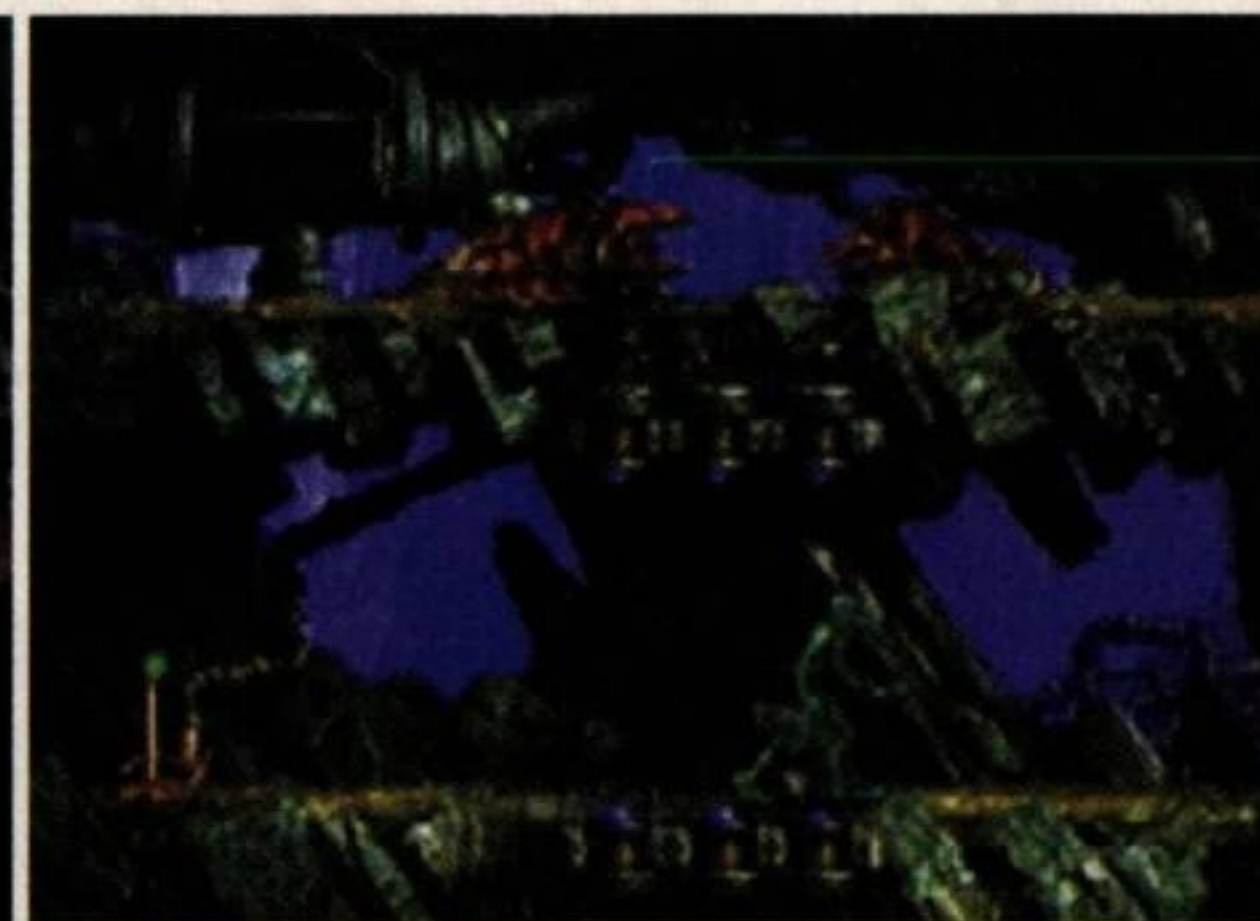
pay any attention to you until you slap them to bring them back to their senses (another

one of your new moves). If you slap them when they're in a normal state or annoy them in any other way they'll become very angry and start slapping anything they can find (usually you), so you can apologise to them with the 'sorry' command. Early on in the game you'll find that some of the Mudokons have drunk themselves into a deep depression – slap them when they are like this and they could get suicidal. At times like these apologising just doesn't do it for them, so you'll have to really cheer them up by releasing some of the trapped

Here Abe is in the process of possessing one of the enemies. This can sometimes help you find some of the secret areas in the game

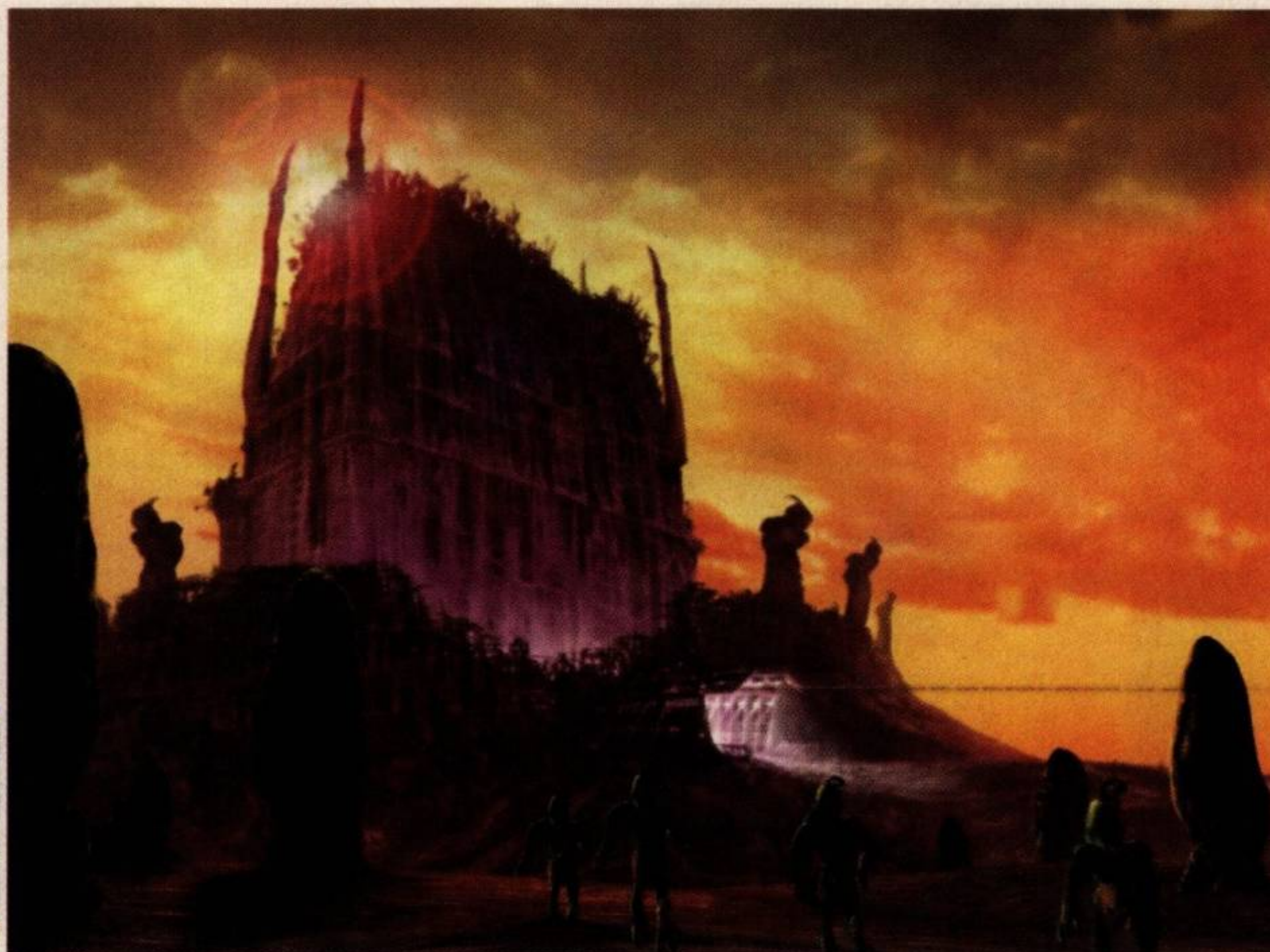


Managing to block the violence below from his mind, Abe contemplates a lever



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Though *Abe's Exoddus* is officially two player, to call it that may be misleading. All that the two player mode offers you over the single player one is the option to transfer control of Abe to the other controller port after he dies. It may be a bit more interesting, but it only saves you the trouble of physically handing your controller over to your mate or making sure that you get another go after he dies.



Mudokon Spirits, which can only be done later on in the game. Abe, too, has a varying emotional state represented by the tone of his voice. If he's been bad (for example, by killing another Mudokon) then his voice will get noticeably deeper.

Save them

As in the first game, these Mudokons can be saved from their slavery by leading them to safety. Luckily you don't actually have to walk them all the way back, but only as far as the

ABE HAS A VARYING EMOTIONAL STATE REPRESENTED BY THE TONE OF HIS VOICE. IF HE'S BEEN BAD THEN HIS VOICE WILL GET NOTICEABLY DEEPER

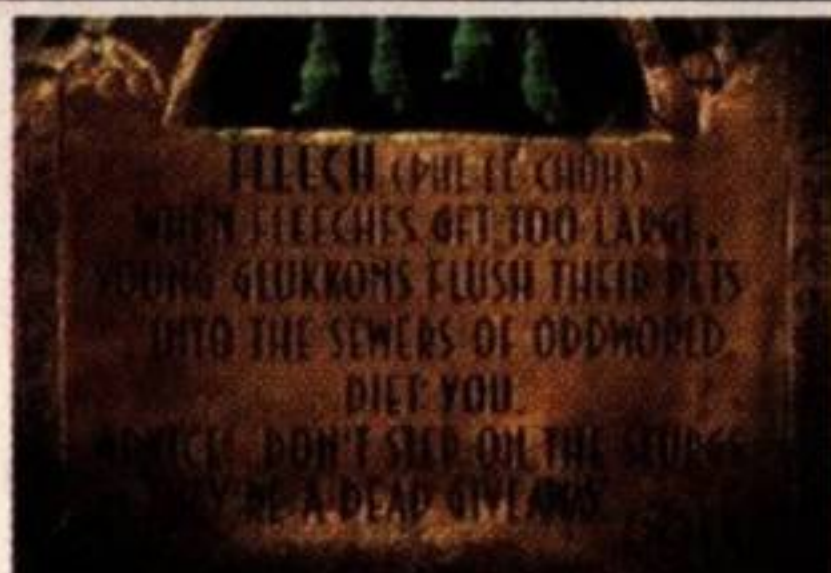
nearest portal. Portals can be created by Abe when he stumbles across a place where there is a circle of flying birds. One of Abe's many abilities is to turn this feathery ring into a

magic portal by chanting so that your new-found friends can escape. Most of these portals will not hold after you have stopped chanting, but if you find one that will, jumping through it will most likely lead you on to an otherwise inaccessible part of that level, or even to a secret sub-level. Some of the Mudokons (the ones that are mining for bones) have been blinded by the Glukkons, so you'll have to be careful when you tell them to follow you as they can only follow your voice and won't stop walking when you do. As you

would expect, the places where these guys work contain some highly dangerous machinery, so you'll have to make careful use of the 'wait' command in situations like these. Sometimes freeing Mudokons is necessary to open doors that could not be opened any other way, but usually this is only a secondary objective and you won't be penalised for killing a few of them off. Rescuing all 100 of them provides a far greater challenge than completing the game alone (a big enough challenge on its own), so this gives the game a high level of replayability and extends the gameplay considerably.



My mother always told me not to tread on land mines. Some of the explosions in *Exoddus* are very spectacular and cover the whole screen





My sentiments exactly. The puzzles aren't too difficult – just look for a nearby lever



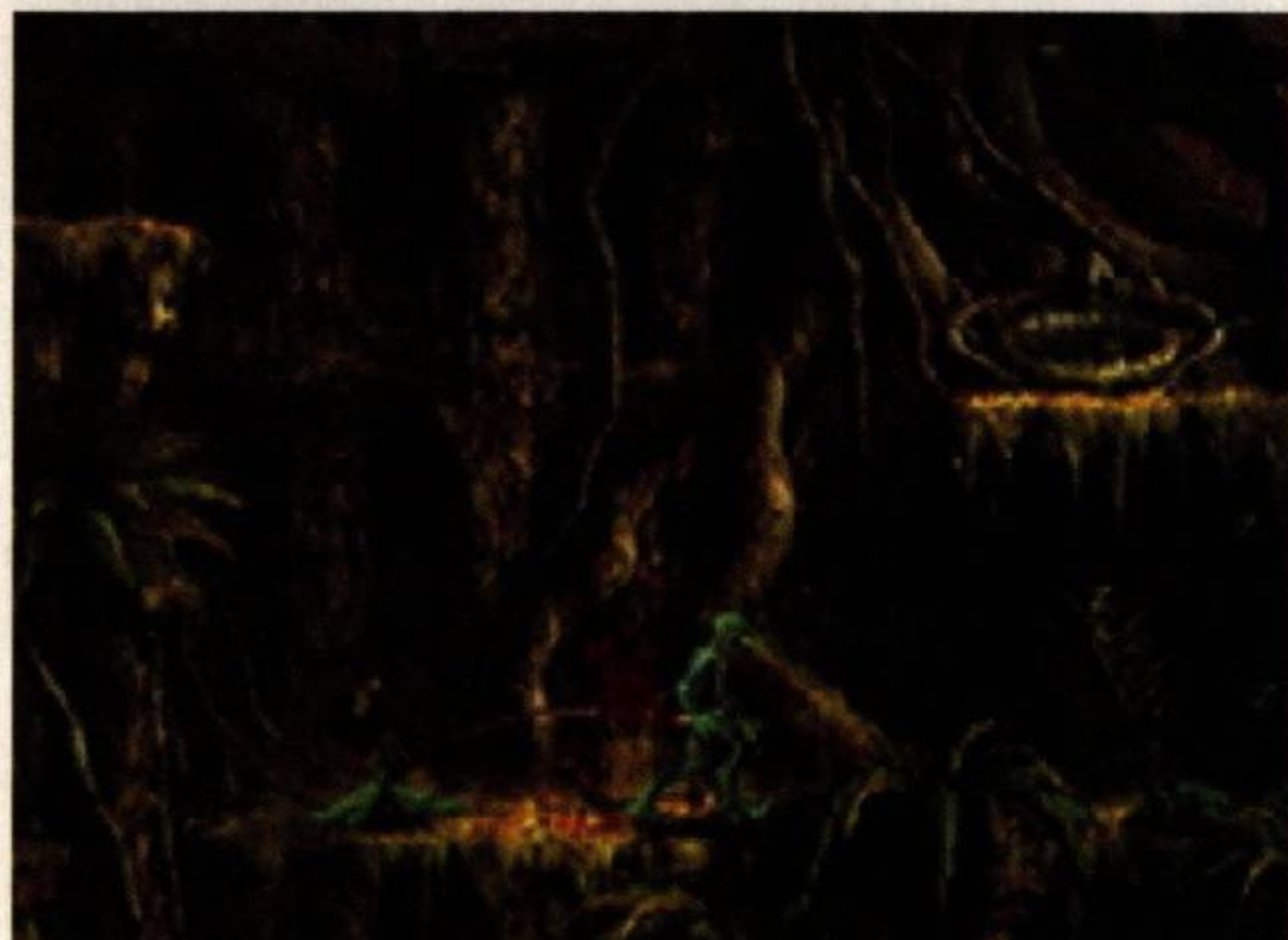
As in *Abe's Oddysee*, you still have the power to possess other creatures. This is done in the same way as creating a portal (i.e. by chanting), which will then transfer Abe's spirit into another being. However, it can only be done to enemies on the same screen. When you successfully possess them you'll have complete power over them, being able to move around the level in the same way as they would and inheriting all of their abilities, such as flying (if they can), their weapons, or the ability to climb to areas that Abe would not normally be able to. Your vocabulary also changes, which is a great touch, allowing you to communicate with any of the other members of your host species that you can

THE LEARNING CURVE IS EXCELLENT - YOU USUALLY FIND THAT YOU ARE MORE ANNOYED WITH YOURSELF THAN WITH THE COMPUTER

find, telling them to follow, kill, etc. As you have complete control over them you can easily dispose of them in a number of ways, and as a result of this there are a number of rooms containing objects that prevent you from transferring your spirit and stop the game from becoming too easy. This element has been dramatically expanded and improved on over the original game – almost all of the creatures in *Exoddus* can be possessed, rather than just the Slig guards as it was in the original.

Save me

Because the annoying save system of the first game (saving at every six or seven screens along) has now been replaced by a quick save system that can enacted at any point the player chooses, you should be able to walk through the game very quickly – if it were not for the very tricky puzzles. Luckily these



are not of the unfairly difficult variety – in fact they're more of the spot-on type. Many of the puzzles seen in the first game are duplicated here: you'll find those blinking mines, motion detectors, etc. but there are enough new puzzles to keep you more than happy. A lot of the new puzzles revolve around one of Abe's newest tricks: becoming invisible (a trick he gains from the Mudokon Spirits), and overall the learning curve is excellent. You usually find that you are more annoyed with yourself than with the computer, which is the way it should be.

Abe's Exoddus is a superbly polished game from beginning to end. The graphics are excellent, though there are not many animated backdrops (which would have been a great touch). The depth of the game is evident in a multitude of areas, since most screens have some sort of background platform as well as foreground. Though you cannot move from one to the other whenever you feel like it, sometimes you will find yourself there, and yet the gameplay remains exactly the same. Some enemies may be able to shoot at you from the background, so you'll have to pay attention to what's going on in both levels. Though the animated characters look very good, Abe doesn't seem to be quite as fluid in his movement as he could be, especially in the joints between performing different moves. Still, the sound is also great, with plenty of excellent effects and character speech that not only adds humour, but makes the game a much more absorbing experience.

Setting the scene

Another highly commendable feature can be seen in the superb cut scenes that develop the engrossing story line as you progress through the game. They are every bit as good as you could imagine, and appear frequently throughout. Considering the amount of these cut scenes, it's surprising that *Exoddus* only came on two CDs, since this is one huge game. It'll take you ages to complete, and then when you've done it you'll probably want to go thorough it again to attempt to rescue all of the other Mudokons. The game's value for money rating is very high.

There is so little here to fault *Exoddus* on – maybe Abe could have done with a few different moves, and a few weapons would have been nice as well, but these are minor gripes. *Abe's Exoddus* is an example of exactly how good the first game was because Oddworld Inhabitants haven't felt the need to improve upon it by much. However, what they have done works really well, and *Abe's Exoddus* is a game that no one should be without. **Will**

The cut scenes appear very frequently, so it's just as well they're of the highest quality and packed with plenty of humour

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●●●

The PC version is confirmed and set for a joint release with the PlayStation version. It's very unlikely that there will be any difference between the two formats.

N64 ●○○○○

Err, I don't think so. *Abe's Exoddus* comes on two CDs – an amount of data far too big to get on to one of those little grey cartridges.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Abe's Exoddus
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	92%
OVERALL	89
Out of 100	



Dune 2000

Many PC owners will have been looking out for *Dune 2000* for some time now. Why? We take a closer look and try to find some answers

TAKING CONTROL

A quick check of the box reveals that this is in fact a standalone game and not a *Red Alert* mission pack. After looking hard I can't find anything apart from the concrete and worm ideas that separates the two games. 'Disappointed' is the word of the day.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER	Westwood Studios
STYLE	Real-Time Strategy
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£34.99
PLAYERS	1-6
PROCESSOR	P90 P133
MEMORY	16MB
DISK SPACE	105MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Not Supported

Hype is a very strange thing. When you think about some of the forthcoming hyped titles such as *Turok 2*, *Half-Life* etc. there's usually something pretty special about the game that sets the computer game press off into a frenzy (more often than not it's ground-breaking graphics). How *Dune 2000* has managed to generate the level of hype that it has is a bit of a mystery. Graphically it's not that great, and there are no major additions to the tried (tired) and tested formula. It has probably got quite a lot to do with an impressive advertising campaign and the fact that it comes from Westwood Studios – the inventors of this particular genre that has led many of us to believe that this is a game worth

looking out for. Before we get to cynical, let me just point out right now that this is not a bad game – it's just that after hearing what I had about the game and then playing it, I was a little surprised to say the least.

Dune 2000 is the third game in the *Dune* computer game series that was first born into the world on an Amiga several years ago. *Dune* was basically a tactical adventure, successfully combining strategy and resource management with the point and click format that was so popular at the time. It was later superseded by *Dune 2* – in many people's eyes this was a fantastic game in its time, and it's no surprise, as it was this game that used the first ever real-time strategy engine.





SIDE ORDERS

If you've read the book or (more likely) seen the film, then you may remember the blue-eyed Fremmen. This race of nomadic warriors are indigenous to Dune, and they will make an appearance in many missions. The Atreides seek to ally themselves with the Fremmen, while the Harkonnen are intent on destroying them. You'll also find small bands of smugglers and mercenaries appearing frequently. These side groups can be either helpful or a hindrance towards your own objectives



Unfortunately all the nice visuals in the world can't hide the fact that *Dune 2000* is based on an already extremely dated game

Spice up your life

It is probably wrong to call *Dune 2000* the third game in the series – actually this is more of a *Dune 2: The Special Edition* – so why not an entirely new plot? Well, the answer to that is simply that *Dune 2* borrowed much of its plot from the classic book by Frank Herbert, which goes something along these lines:

The planet Arrakis (also know as Dune) is the key planet in

WHEN ANY UNIT IS ON SAND IT SENDS RIPPLES OUT THAT WILL ATTRACT THE WORMS, WITH THE INTENSITY OF THE WAVES BEING DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WEIGHT OF THE UNIT

an uneasy empire. Its barren desert contains a plentiful supply of a substance commonly know as Spice – an immensely valuable material produced by the huge and mysterious sand worms, or Shi-Huluds, that inhabit the planet. The spice is not only used as an extremely powerful and addictive hallucinogenic drug, but is also a necessary requirement for the guild (a strange and mostly unknown race), in that it enables them to bend space-time and so allows for instantaneous interplanetary travel. The crumbling empire consists of many separate houses – the main two are the Atreides (the good guys) and the Harkonnen (the power-crazy maniacs), who have

been bitter enemies for a long time. Since the price of spice is escalating upwards at a phenomenal rate, the Harkonnen have decided to stake their claim on Dune before negotiations have been met, which the empire has turned a blind eye to (largely due to the level of corruption that goes all the way to the top). The Atreides, realising the corruption of the Empire, have decided that the Harkonnen cannot be allowed complete control over the spice and have stepped in to intervene. In

Dune 2000 there is a third house known as Ordus – these are mostly

an unknown race, but appear to match the others with their numbers – and so a three-way battle ensues, and you begin the game with the option to decide which of the three houses to join.

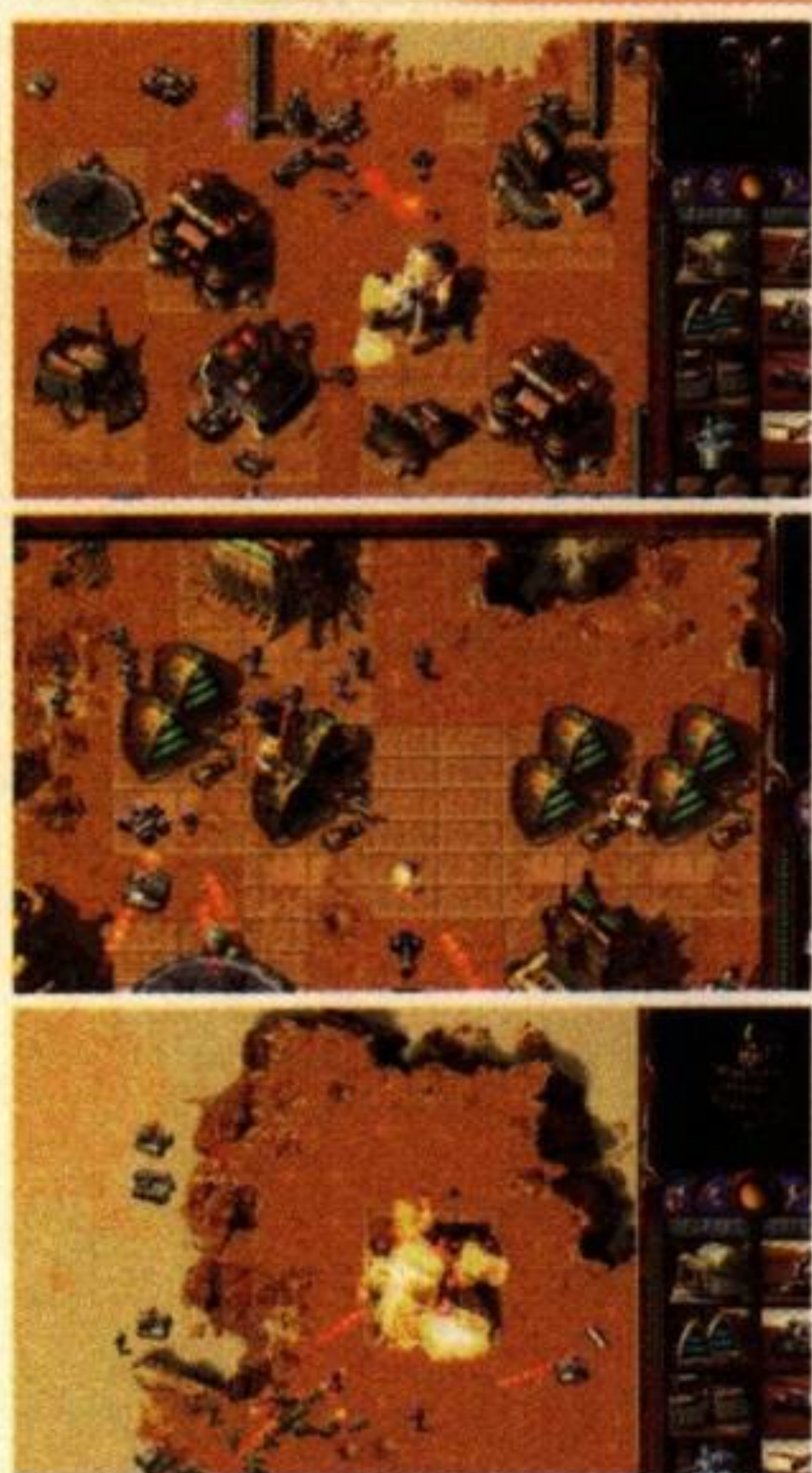
Coming back to life

Re-makes seem to be the current craze at the moment; *V2000* is one example featured this month, and there are a host of other classic titles being converted to both the N64 and the PlayStation that you'll be hearing a lot more about soon. So what's new about *Dune 2000*, and why should you buy it if you've already got *Dune 2*? As mentioned above, there are now three different houses for you to join, and each one brings some slightly different units and has its own unique political agenda. The Harkonnen live for the Baron, and have settled by their own accord on a first-come-first-served solution. The Harkonnen army consists of several different types of powerful units, but many of them lack the speed of the other races. The new House Ordos have a mostly unknown agenda – it is presumed that they simply don't want to be left out of the race. Their units don't match the power of the Harkonnen, but while being weakly armoured, they are mostly very quick and cheaper to manufacture. The Noble Atreides are in the war for justice and believe in fair play. Led by The Duke, the attributes of their



The giant sand worms serve as a rare reminder that the game you're playing is not Red Alert





If you're looking at these screenshots wondering what all the fuss has been about, don't worry so are we

units are mostly intermediate, being somewhere in-between the other two races. As a result they are a well-balanced race and a good starting point for the novice commander.

All of the real-time strategies that have been released recently have struggled to avoid being dubbed a *Command and Conquer* clone, and this is something which doesn't really apply to *Dune 2000* because it makes no effort to be

MANY OF THE SPEECH EFFECTS ARE NOT ONLY IDENTICAL LINES TO THOSE IN RED ALERT, BUT ALSO SOUND UNCANNILY LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN VOICED BY THE SAME FEMALE ACTRESS

anything else. When the box reads: 'Remastered for the new millennium', what it actually means is 'turned into a *Red Alert* rip-off'. The style of this genre is well-known: start a level with a variety of units and/or buildings and set about building more structures to allow you to build and repair more units. To do this you need a harvester and a refinery of sorts. Use the harvester to go out and collect some form of material – in this case spice – and bring it back to the refinery to gain money to fund your developments. The eventual aim is usually to destroy the enemies on the level and so progress to the next. Anyone who has ever played Westwood's classic *C&C: Red Alert* will immediately be familiar with everything they find in *Dune 2000*, from the menu bar on the right of the screen and the general layout, to the speech effects such as 'building', 'unit ready' and 'construction complete', which are not only identical lines to those in *Red Alert*, but also sound uncannily like they have been voiced by the same female actress. Of course the voice is different for each side, and there are a few additional samples that have been added – 'for the duke' is one that surprisingly made it past the game testers and was heard far too often for my liking. To state the

rest of the similarities would be quite pointless; the differences make for shorter reading.

Shame about the terrain

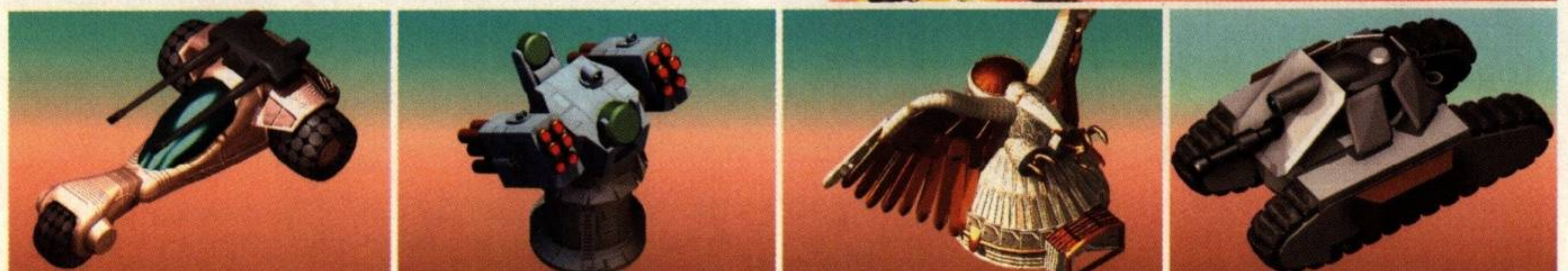
The most striking new development stems from the type of terrain you will be developing your base upon, i.e. sand. This isn't the friendliest of terrains to build on, and if you do the energy level of the buildings will gradually decrease.

Luckily those clever men in white coats have thought up a solution: concrete. Before you set about building a structure it's a good idea to lay down some sort of foundation for it first. Concrete is very vulnerable, so if you are attacked and it is destroyed before you can place your building down, you'll have to cancel the construction to create some more concrete first. This makes for some much more strategic gameplay and also means that the planning of your base becomes much more complex – you won't want to waste time building concrete where you don't really need it. Capturing enemy buildings and placing your concrete around their base can obstruct their building plans too – especially as there is no way of telling which bits of concrete are owned by who (this makes you wonder why they can't just build on your blocks of concrete, but anyway...).

One of the other additions are the Sand Worms. In every level there are a few different types of terrain. Most of it will be sand, but there is some rock on Arrakis, and this is where you should build your base and deploy your men toward. At some points along the sandy terrain you may notice some form of disruption – more often than not this is a worm moving underground. These animals pose a universal threat to all races, and if one of your units gets too close it could rise out of the ground and take that unit back under with it. Their movement is not random, though, and when any unit is on sand it sends ripples out that will attract the worms, with the intensity of the

waves being directly related to the weight of the unit, so infantry and

light vehicles will often go unnoticed – leaving stray units alone can be a dangerous strategy, and moving them onto rocky terrain is advisable whenever possible. As the spice is created by the worms, shooting at them so they will leave is not always the best strategy, but sometimes it is the only option when your harvesters are amongst the heaviest (and slowest) of your units.

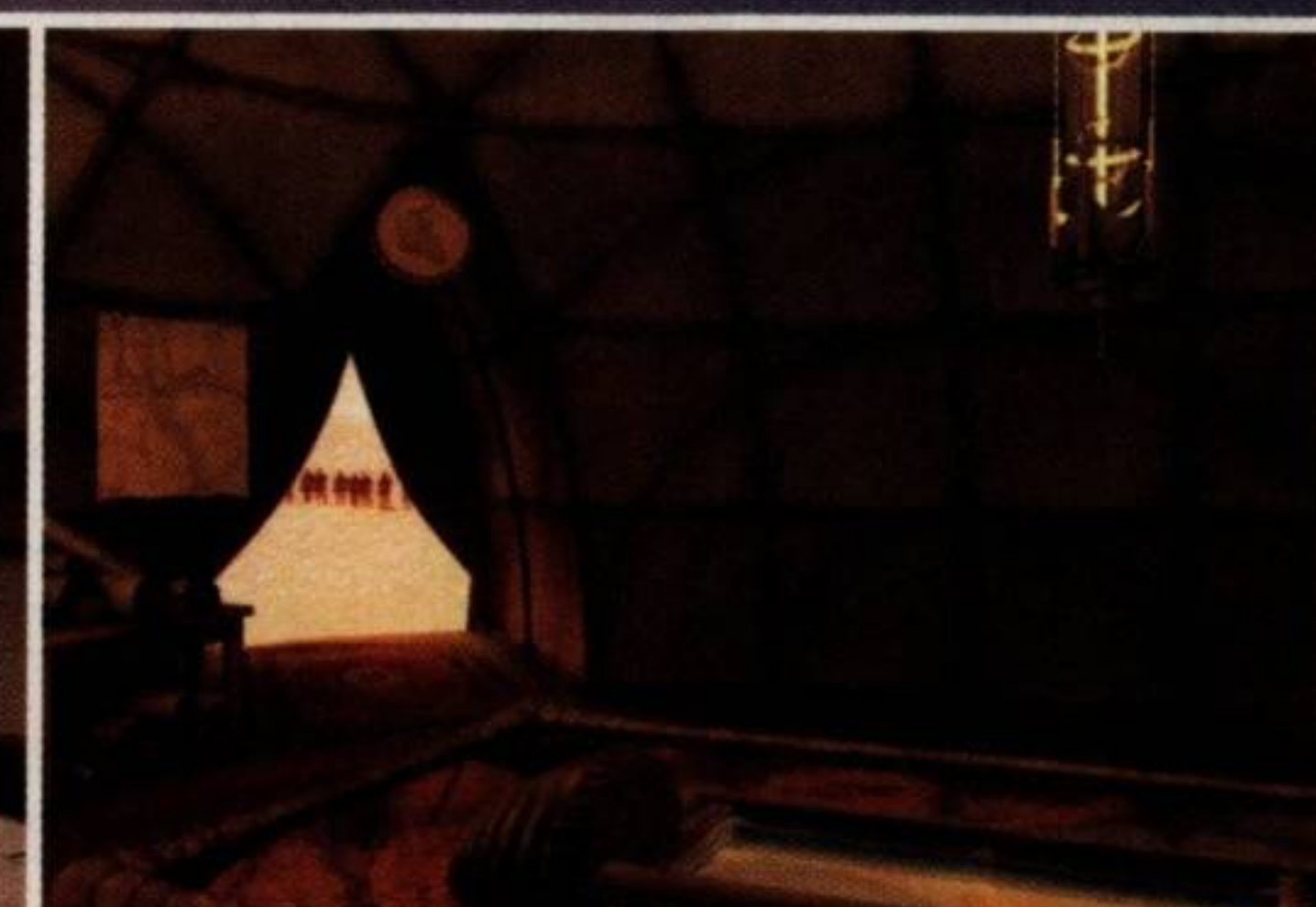
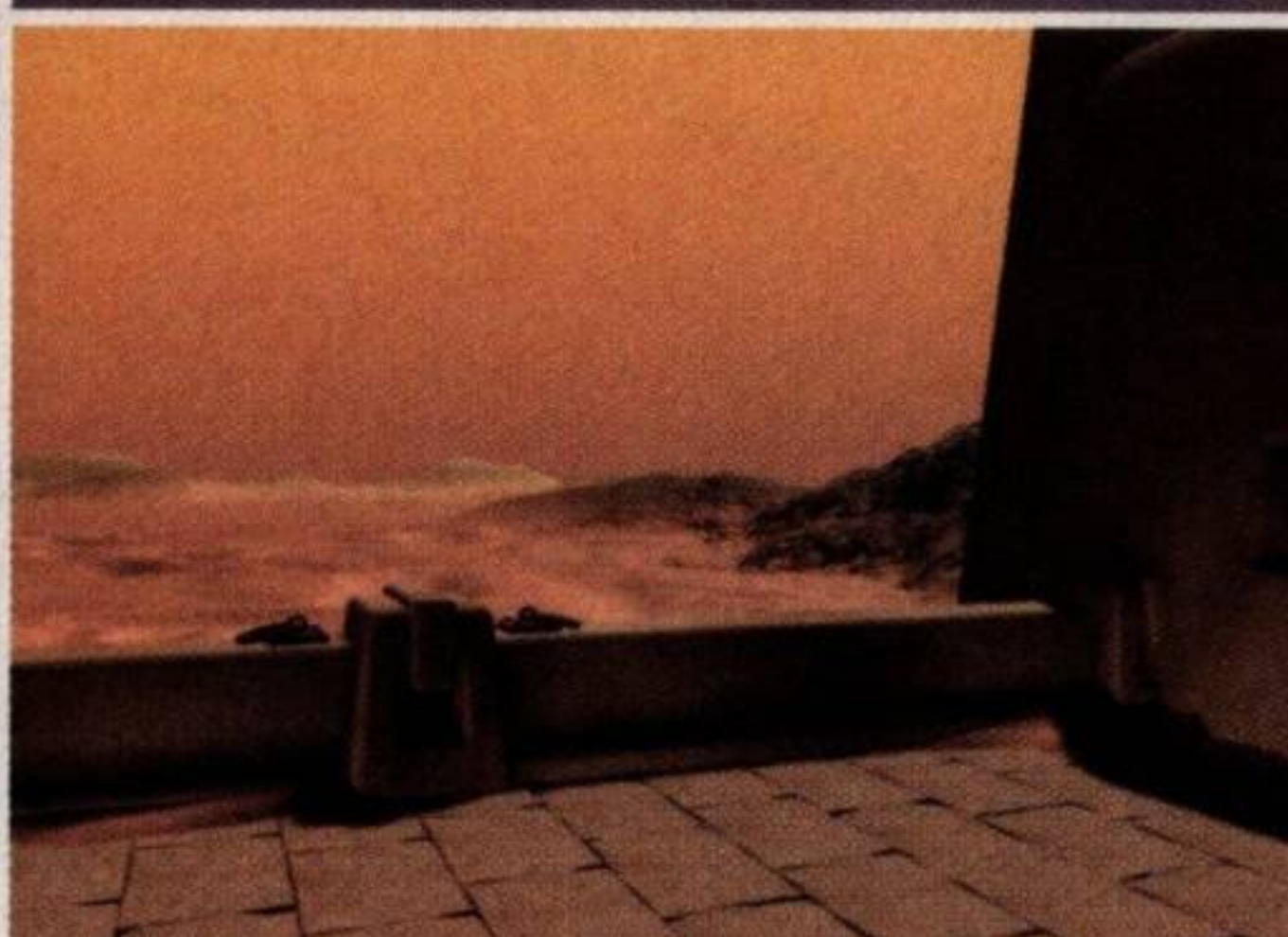
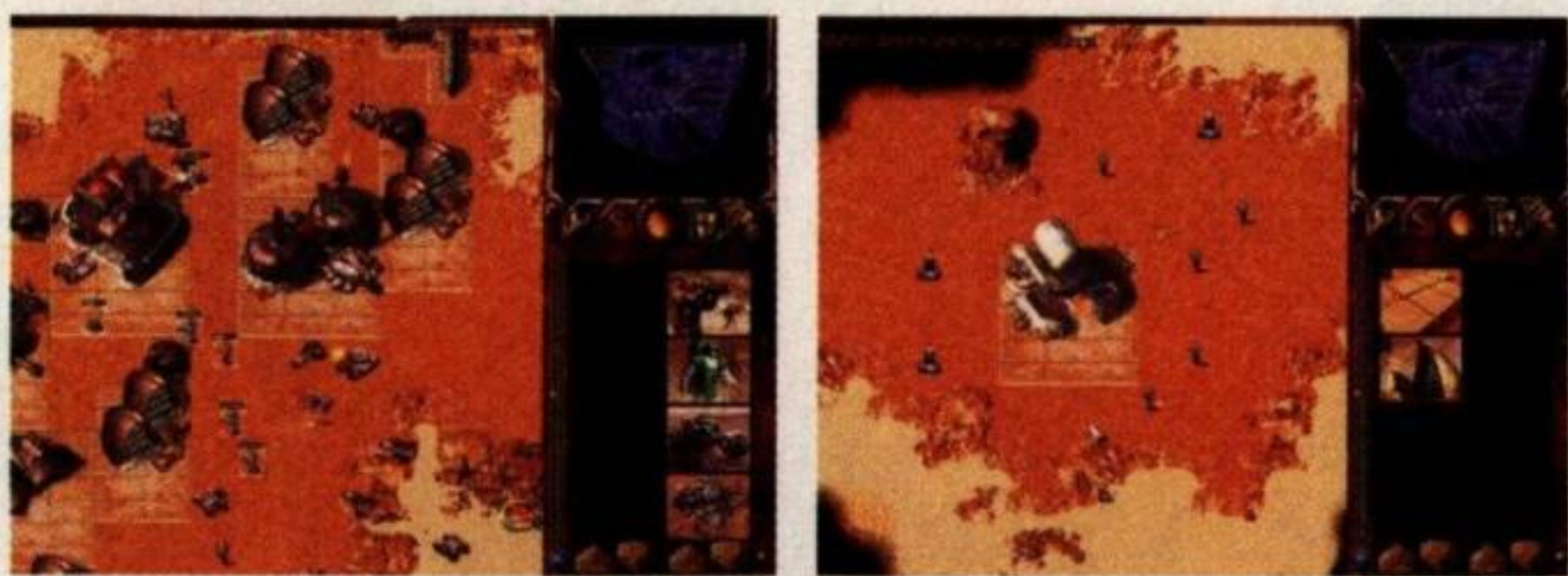


There are plenty of nice looking units in *Dune 2000* but at the end of the day we've seen and played with them all before.



FRIENDLY FIRE

The multiplayer mode provides additional stability. Here you will also have some additional units at your disposal, such as the thumper, an infantry unit that will attract the worms to his location. Send him over to an enemy's base and then sit back and watch chaos ensue. *Dune 2000* also contains a practice multiplayer mode where you play against up to seven computer-controlled enemies.



Been looking hard

The only other differences are that there is a higher resolution, meaning that the system specs have increased. The units also seem to be a lot more fiddly to control than they were in *Red Alert*, and the game speed is also slower. The main point that I have circling around my head is why they haven't put any effort into improving the game over *Red Alert*, as so many over companies have attempted to do in the past, and there are two fairly simple reasons for this. The first is that *Red Alert* is still the standard for all real-time strategies. By using a game engine that is in essence identical to that one they can safely assume that the game will still retain all of the fun and playability of their previous title and go down well with most people. But secondly, and far more importantly, by improving upon the engine too much they would be competing their own upcoming title, *Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun*. They themselves don't want to add too much to the already fierce competition that there is in the genre. That is the game Westwood are waiting for, and I recommend that you do the same.



If *Red Alert* had taken place on a barren desert planet this is exactly what it would have looked (and played) like

That said, it's true that *Dune 2000* is every bit as good as *Red Alert* was, which is no bad thing. As long as you know that you are basically buying a *Red Alert* mission pack (and an expensive one at that), you won't be at all disappointed. **Will**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●●○○○

Westwood have already converted *Red Alert* over to the PlayStation, so it's possible that *Dune 2000* may appear should the game ship well on the PC

N64 ●○○○○

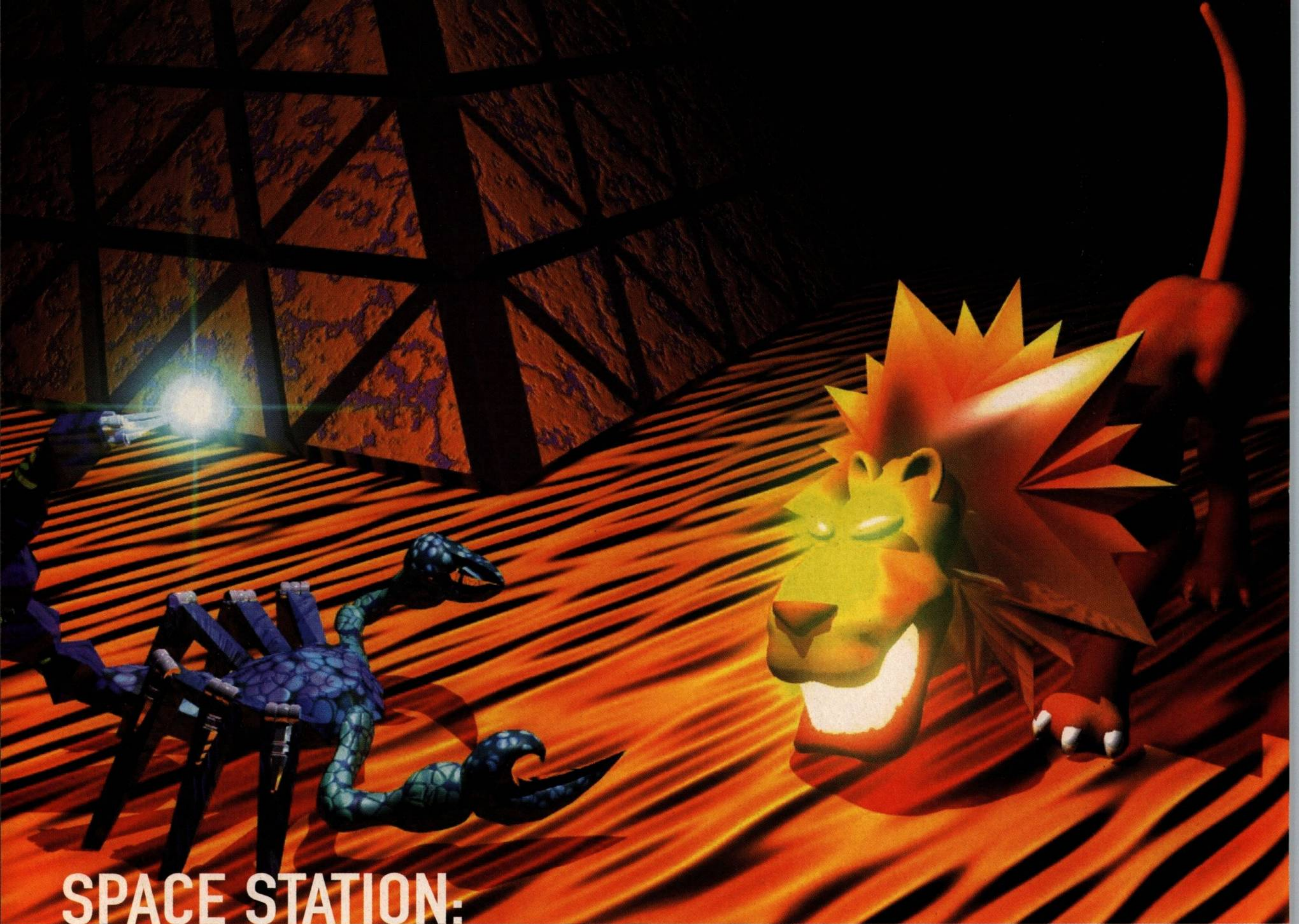
It's very unlikely that *Dune 2000* will ever make it to the N64. There is a much better chance of some form of *Command and Conquer* game.



Some more units you might recognise, and if you don't it's probably because the one thing Westwood changed are the designs

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Dune 2000
GRAPHICS	41
SOUND	72
PLAYABILITY	68
OVERALL	59
Out of 100	



SPACE STATION:

Silicon Valley

A game like no other is on its way – in fact it's on a direct collision course with planet Earth. And guess what? **Only you can stop it!**

TAKING CONTROL

After assuming the unlikely roles of a sheepdog on wheels and a 2.0 litre-engined racing mouse on the first couple of levels, I am already well and truly hooked. It's obvious that, as we have come to expect from DMA Design, this is an extremely original piece of software in which no two levels are the same. I can't wait to play it some more...

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	DMA Design
STYLE	Platform Adventure
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	One
RUMBLE PAK	No
MEMORY PAK	No
EXPANSION PAK	Not Supported

If you haven't read much about *Silicon Valley* during the past three years of its development and have been passing your eye across the screenshots on these two pages, you could almost be forgiven for thinking that this is little more than another *Mario 64* clone. True, the graphics are of a comparable quality, and the 3D playing environments wouldn't look out of place with a rotund Italian plumber scampering around in them, but I'm pleased to report that the similarities end there.

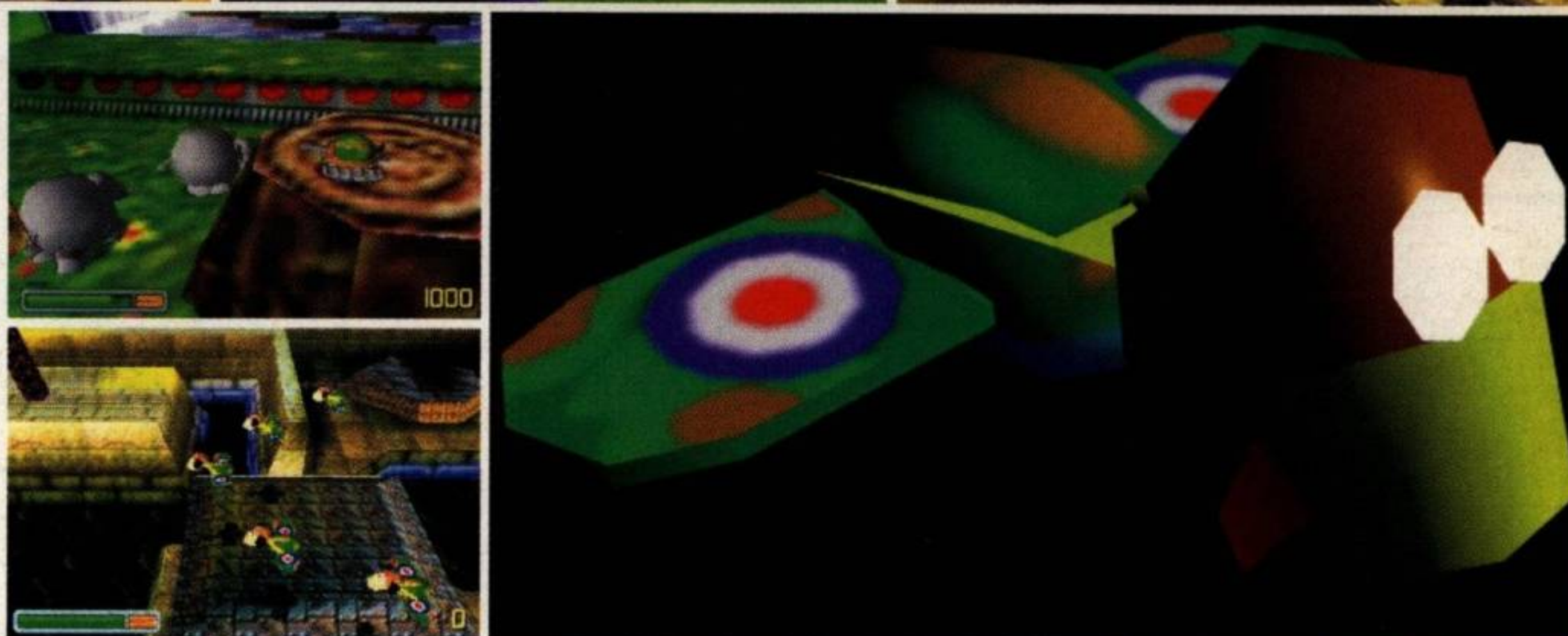


Variety is the spice of life, and *Space Station Silicon Valley* is a lot spicier than most – 50 delicious courses on one cartridge!



CREATURE FEATURES

Each time you assume control of a new creature you'll be shown a list of specifications detailing its capabilities. At first glance they appear quite humorous, but upon closer inspection you'll find that the specifications also provide valuable information on the creature's special moves, strengths and weaknesses.



computer programmer working long hours. And *Silicon Valley*, conceived by some of the most warped minds in the business, is no exception.

The year is 3701; a full millennium after the space station 'Silicon Valley' was originally launched and subsequently lost in space. Aboard the space station, experiments were being conducted in nanobot technology as mankind attempted to produce intelligent, self-replicating machines with the ability to evolve beyond their original programming.

The good news is that the space station has now been found. The bad news is that it's on a collision course with

IT'S REFRESHING TO PLAY A GAME THAT LOOKS AS GOOD AS MIYAMOTO'S MASTERPIECE, BUT WHICH MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO IMITATE IT

Earth. And if you want to hear the ugly news as well, the experiments onboard have proved dangerously successful. It's a strange plot to say the least, but then how else could DMA set the stage for a game where the player gets to control high speed racing mice, llamas with chainsaws and floating sheep? (To name but a few...)

There are over 40 different creatures that you'll need to take control of at some stage of the game, each with their own special abilities essential to solving puzzles within the space station. Taking control of the partly robotic creatures is fairly straightforward. Your 'character' in the game is a microchip with the handy ability to assume control of the creatures simply by hopping onto their backs while they're unconscious. Use

your current creature's abilities or weapons to beat another to the ground, hop from one to the other, and you're off!

Puzzle? Adventure? Platformer?

For me the most impressive aspect of *Space Station: Silicon Valley* is the sheer amount of variety that the programmers have managed to squeeze onto a single cartridge. Because most of the 50 levels in the game have very little in common with each other, the desire to reach the next level is such that even part-time gamers will find themselves struggling to overcome the fiendish puzzles into the early hours. And although the learning curve is a little steep, with levels becoming quite tricky before you've even reached double figures, your perseverance will be rewarded as you

slap yourself on the forehead upon realising how simple the puzzle you've been stuck on for the last week really is.

As much as I've enjoyed, and will continue to enjoy, playing *Space Station: Silicon Valley*, I'd have to say that I don't think it's a game that will appeal to everyone. If you're a fan of platform puzzle games, which is the genre I've rightly or wrongly decided to honour with the presence of *Silicon Valley*, then you could definitely do a lot worse. If, however, you're after another *Mario 64* or *Banjo-Kazooie*-style platformer where the puzzles aren't terribly taxing and the most dangerous weapon you're likely to get your hands on is a blue egg, I'd suggest you look elsewhere. Dogs with rocket launchers and rats with exploding turds just might not be your scene. **Justin**



The levels are so incredibly varied that you wouldn't even guess they were from the same game if not for the telltale energy bar



Controlling a rocket-powered fox, you now face the dilemma of whether or not to opt for the missile-launching dog as you attempt to pass the rat with the exploding turds

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
There are no plans to date, but I would like to think that the occasionally stale PC games market might be afforded this breath of fresh air at some point.

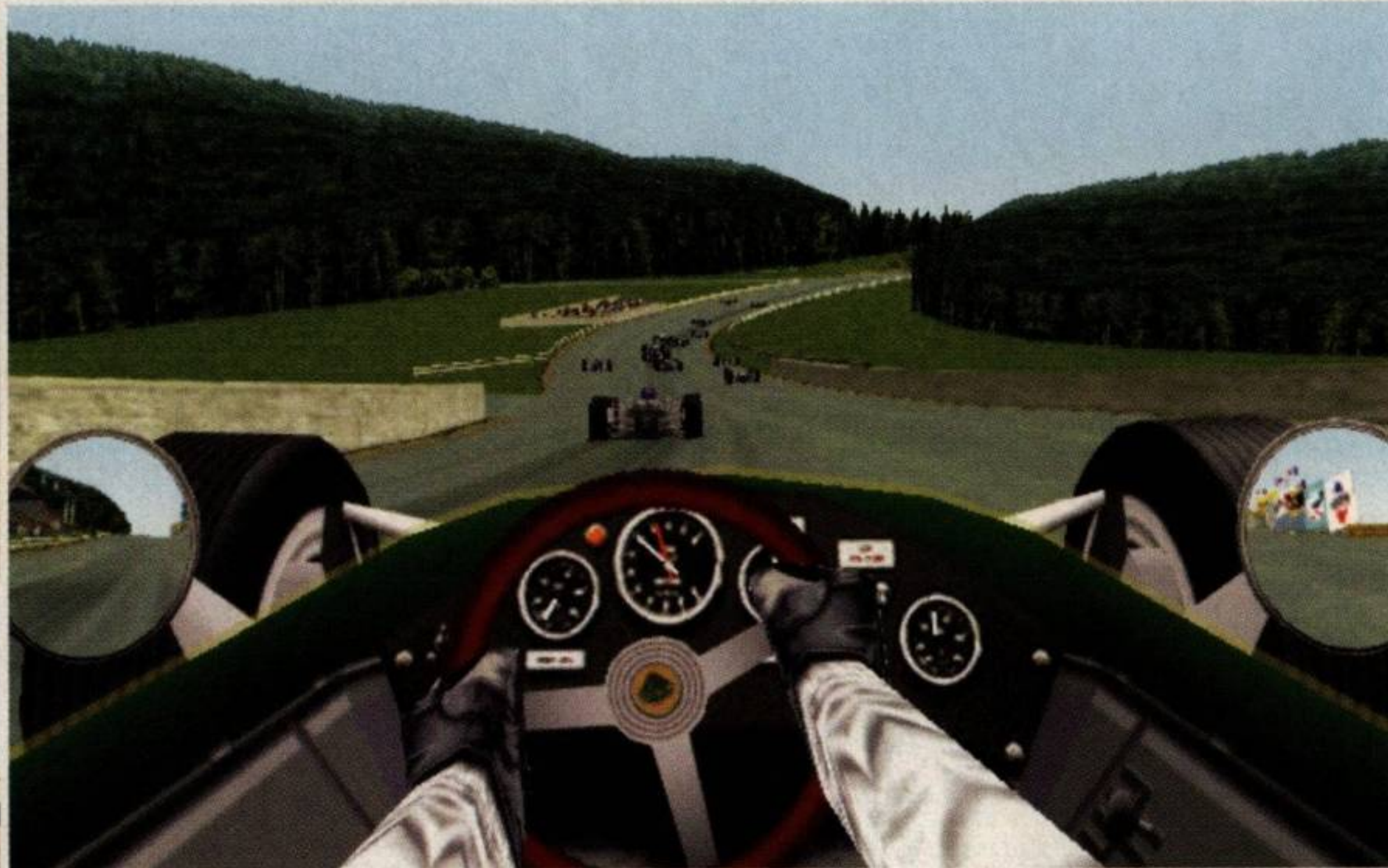
PlayStation ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Although DMA Design have produced PlayStation games in the past I can't imagine that *Space Station: Silicon Valley* would make the transition terribly well.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Silicon Valley
GRAPHICS	83
SOUND	77
PLAYABILITY	89
OVERALL	84
Out of 100	

Grand Prix Legen

Join Graham Hill and Jim Clark on **the starting grid** for a lap or two of **racing nostalgia** in this **classy simulator** from **Sierra...**



TAKING CONTROL

Unless you are used to realistic racing simulators, the initial impression of *GP Legends* is that it is far too difficult. You will be lucky to complete a lap on your first time out, and until you learn how to handle the cars, you will be spending a lot of time bouncing off the crash barriers. Stick with it, though, as it repays perseverance with a very rewarding drive.

It's all in the braking. Get it right every time and you'll soon be Formula 1 world champion

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Sierra
DEVELOPER	Papyrus
STYLE	Racing sim
RELEASE	Out now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-20
PROCESSOR	P166 P233
MEMORY	32MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	128MB 128MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

Sierra's excellent *Grand Prix Legends* has become a firm favourite around the Rapide offices. Playing the game after work over the PC network, our nightly races have taken on a seriously competitive edge. Its combination of totally realistic handling and blindingly fast gameplay make it one of the most enjoyable racing games on any platform. Admittedly, it's not the easiest drive in the world, but once you have taken the time to get used to the cars' handling, it is an extremely rewarding experience. To understand why, you have to look at the cars and the tracks featured in the game.

Australian Grand Prix

GP Legends is a simulation based on the 1967 Grand Prix season, back when Formula One racing was a very different sport. The cars of that era averaged around 400 horsepower,

which isn't much by today's standards, but they had none of the complex aerodynamics of modern cars. The current batch of GP cars generate so much downforce that they could theoretically drive upside-down stuck to the ceiling by air pressure at just eighty miles per hour. The cars of the 1960s had no such refinement. They were simply high-powered, low weight projectiles running on tyres less than half the width of those on today's racers, and keeping them on the road was much more of an art than a science.

Chop and change

The world famous racing circuits included in the game, such as Monza, Silverstone and Monaco, have also changed dramatically since the sixties. Due to the increasing speed and power of the cars, and following a series of horrific fatal crashes

1967 FORMULA 1 DRIVER'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Here's how the Driver's Championship looked at the end of the 1967 season. See how many names you recognise.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Denny Hulme (NZL) Brabham-Repco 51 pts. | 8. Dan Gurney (USA) Eagle-Climax 13 pts. | 14. Jo Bonnier (SWE) Cooper-Maserati 3 pts. |
| 2. Jack Brabham (AUS) Brabham-Repco 46 pts. | 9. Jackie Stewart (GB) BRM 10 pts. | 16. Bob Anderson (GB) Brabham-Climax 2 pts. |
| 3. Jim Clark (GB) Lotus-BRM 41 pts. | 10. Mike Spence (GB) BRM 9 pts. | 16. Mike Parkes (GB) Ferrari 2 pts. |
| 4. John Surtees (GB) Honda 20 pts. | 11. John Love (RSR) Cooper-Climax 6 pts. | 16. Chris Irwin (GB) Lotus-BRM 2 pts. |
| 4. Chris Amon (NZL) Ferrari 20 pts. | 11. Jochen Rindt (AUT) Cooper-Maserati 6 pts. | 19. Guy Ligier (FRA) Cooper-Maserati 1 pt. |
| 6. Pedro Rodriguez (MEX) Cooper-Maserati 15 pts. | 11. Jo Siffert (CH) Cooper-Maserati 6 pts. | 19. Jacky Ickx (BEL) Matra-Ford 1 pt. |
| 6. Graham Hill (GB) Lotus-BRM 15 pts. | 14. Bruce McLaren (NZL) McLaren-BRM 3 pts. | 19. Ludovico Scarfiotti (ITA) Ferrari 1 pt. |



ds



These cars are incredibly tricky to control. With skinny tyres and no downforce, you only have to look at them funny and they'll spin off the track and straight into a concrete wall

in the seventies, many notorious tracks saw the addition of chicanes and extra corners in an effort to slow the cars down. Gravel traps and tyre walls replaced the lethal concrete walls, and spectators were moved well away from the tracks.

Sierra's simulation recaptures a bygone age of motor sport, and when you have played it, you will have a new respect for the drivers featured in the game, like Graham Hill and Jack Brabham, who risked their lives in the pursuit of speed and glory.

Start your engines

The list of classic cars featured in *Grand Prix Legends* reads like a history lesson on Formula One: Lotus, BRM, Anglo-

GP LEGENDS IS A SIMULATION BASED ON THE 1967 GRAND PRIX SEASON, BACK WHEN FORMULA ONE RACING WAS A VERY DIFFERENT SPORT

American, Ferrari; all the great names are there, and accurately modelled with all the technical sophistication of a state of the art 3D engine. Every aspect of the pre-race set-up is included, from tyre pressures and final drive ratios to toe-in and stabiliser stiffness – you can even choose the colour of your crash helmet. Playing the game from the superior cockpit view, even the instrument panels are accurately represented, primitive though they are by today's standards – just a big rev counter, a seven-gate manual gearshift and a proper round steering wheel. No LCD display panels and engine computer telemetry in those days...

Best seat in the house

It almost goes without saying that this is no arcade game. It is a serious attempt to make a realistic simulator of an exciting sport, and as such it succeeds admirably. For the faint-hearted, there are options for steering and braking assistance, but to get the best out of this superb game, you should pick your favourite car – the Lotus is good for beginners – and take the time to learn how to drive it properly. Using a good quality steering wheel controller with pedals is highly recommended if you can afford one, as this allows you to fully immerse yourself in the driving experience. It is also worthwhile watching the game's multi-mode replay function, which allows you to watch the race from many different viewpoints, so you can see how the AI drivers do it and where you went wrong.

Driving ambition

The game has an excellent training option which will help to familiarise you with the cars. You can work your way up from novice level using a limited speed car with a four speed gearbox and no car damage model, all the way to a full 60-odd lap Grand Prix race against 20 other drivers on-line, with qualifying laps to determine grid position and an accurate damage model which can put you out of the race with one mistake. By the time you have completed those 60 laps, I guarantee you'll be sweating, and you'll be totally hooked on Formula One racing. **Cliff**

MULTIPLAYER

Grand Prix Legends was designed from the ground up to be a unique multiplayer game. It can handle an unprecedented 20 players over a modem or local network, so you can have a full grid of on-line drivers for the ultimate challenge. The game has a built-in option to cut slower machines out of the LAN connection in order to keep the game speed up. To play on-line, you will need a 100% Hayes compatible modem of at least 28,800 bps and a high-speed serial card.



OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●○○○○

Sierra have looked into the possibility, but due to the architecture of the PlayStation, it would have lost a lot of its best features and ended up as an arcade game.

N64 ●○○○○

For the same reasons stated above, Sierra have no plans to transfer *GPL* to the N64. The machine could handle the graphics, but not the multiplayer features.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Grand Prix Legends
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	65
PLAYABILITY	95
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Sierra have told us that they have received such a favourable response to *Grand Prix Legends* that they are planning a sequel to be released towards the end of next year. It will be based on the 1976 Formula One season and will feature many of the famous drivers of that era, such as James Hunt, Nikki Lauda and Mario Andretti. Expect to see cars from teams like Tyrrell, Ligier and Shadow. Sierra are also planning to release a CART racing game based on the same engine.

1080° Snowboarding

What happens when the team that brought you the technically superb *Wave Race 64* turn their attention to **the sport of snowboarding**? *1080° Snowboarding* is the result, and it might just **change a few people's opinions** of the **N64...**



TAKING CONTROL

Wow! After the poor attempts at a snowboarding game by Sony, this came as a sweet surprise. The actual feel of snowboarding is as close as you are going to get without getting your feet cold, as it were. Superb graphics matched with superb feel. How could this game go wrong?



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	In-House
STYLE	Snowboarding Racer
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-2
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	No
EXPANSION PAK	Not supported

Snowboarding is a sport that has not been well represented in videogames. Witness the *CoolBoarders* games on the PlayStation; good ideas let down by poor game mechanics and ropey graphics. *1080°*

Snowboarding is Nintendo's attempt at emulating what could be the killer app. for any console: a trendy game based on an ultra-trendy sport. A marketing man's dream!

In *1080° Snowboarding* there are four main modes of play: Match Race, Time Attack, Trick Attack and Contest. Match Race is where the main part of the game lies. Here you must take on one of the other snowboarders in increasingly difficult races. However, it is here that you are made aware of *1080° Snowboarding's* most immediate

MORE COURSES AND A BETTER MULTIPLAYER GAME WOULD HAVE SEEN THIS GAME GOING DOWN AS ONE OF THE ALL-TIME N64 CLASSICS

limitation: you can only race one snowboarder at a time. The obvious thing to have done here would be to race against three others at least, a la *Wave Race*, and work the competition on a points system. It seems that with all the power of the N64, producing the spectacular courses is taking up quite a bit of the machine's memory. The

Time and Trick Attack modes are pretty self-explanatory, but the Contest mode offers quite a diversion. Here you get to race the courses in slalom mode, and every two races there is a 'Big Make' contest, which is basically a huge ramp for doing tricks on.

Work your body

The control of your boarder is simply superb. This is done, as you would expect, via the analogue stick, which directly controls the direction and level of your board. Learning the latter part of this is vital – when you jump off something you have to position your board at the correct angle or face a nasty crash. You'll also have to adjust your board as you are simply skiing down the courses. This is due to the excellent modelling of the snow, which undulates just like the real thing. The feeling of flying from one mound to another at quite a high speed is unlike anything seen before in a snowboarding game.

There are also a variety of different types of snow for you to contend with. The two main types you'll encounter are hard and powder. Apart from the pure aesthetics of them (with the hard type you leave a trail cut into it, whilst the powder brings



The replay feature in *1080° Snowboarding* is nothing short of spectacular. Sit back, relax and see just how much work has gone into the look of the game

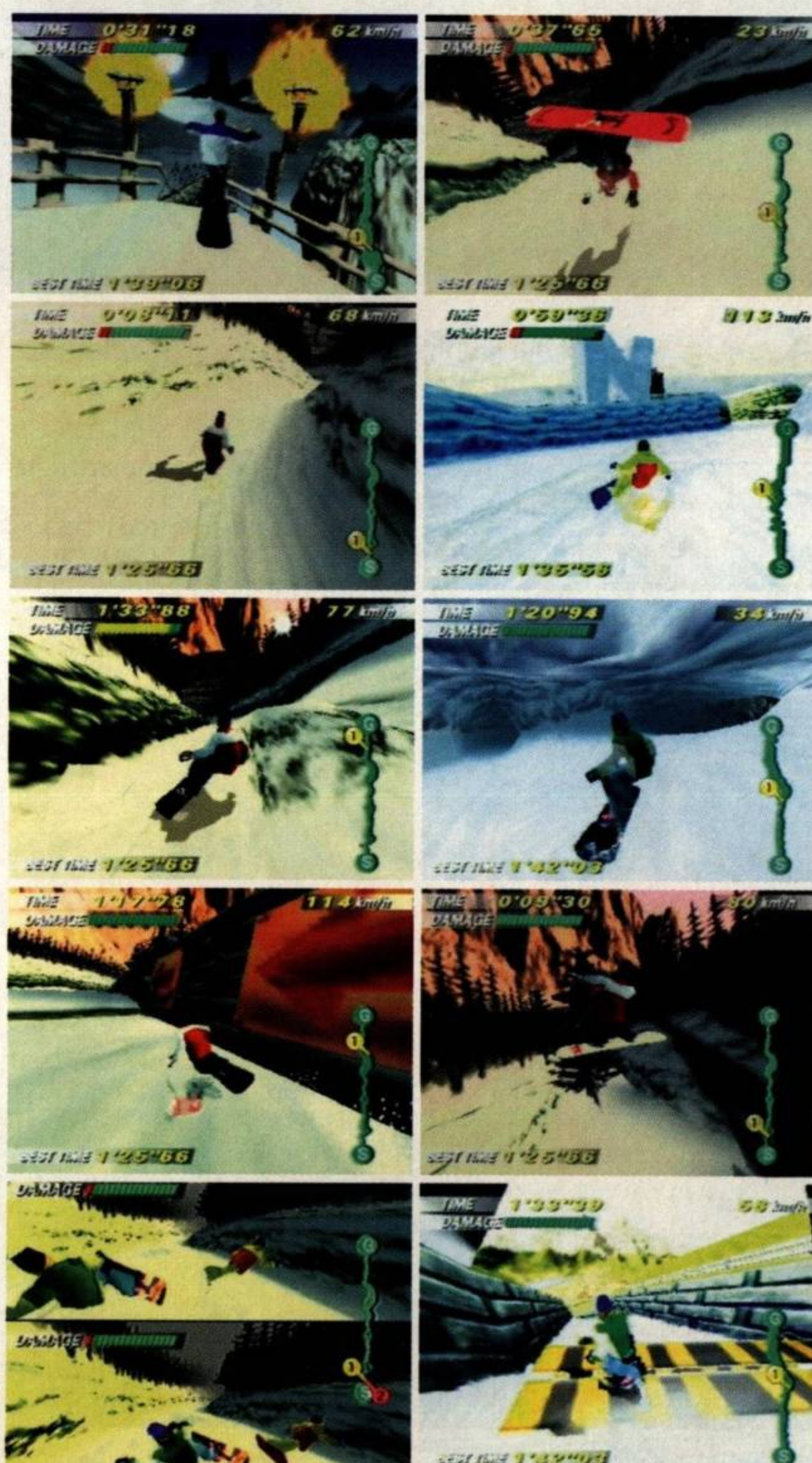
up a trail of snow spray behind you) they actually effect your boarder. The hard stuff is quick and firm, while the powder slows you down, depending on how deep it is. The effects here are gorgeous – your boarder will sink up to his knees and powder will spray out from behind the board.

1080° Snowboarding is full to the brim with clever effects that are just the icing on the cake. Sun glares through trees and then vanishes as it goes out of view. Snow blows convincingly towards the screen, and whenever you go over an icy surface your boarder is reflected on the piste. *1080° Snowboarding* is a graphical feast from start to finish, and proof of what the N64 can do when pushed.

The courses are wonderfully designed – the game lets you go almost everywhere that you can see, and each new course expands on this. To begin with you are given a pretty linear affair to contend with, but as you progress you are given more and more multiple routes until you reach the final course, where you have what seems like an entire mountain to board down. This is where the game is at its best and best simulates snowboarding – you have the complete illusion of freedom. If only this had been expanded on and more courses such as this had been included. Of the eight in the game, only six are sufficiently complex to make you want to play them over.

Unfortunately, there is a major flaw to *1080°*, namely the two player mode. Apart from the fact that there is only a two player mode and not four, this has not been implemented very well at all. Loads of fogging, loss of details such as trees and plenty of slowdown ruin what could have been the best feature of the game.

1080° Snowboarding will bring a much-needed image boost to the N64 this Christmas. It is a wonderful piece of programming and an entertaining game to boot. But the ideas on show here have failed to be exploited fully – more courses and a better multiplayer game would have seen this game going down as one of the all-time N64 classics. As it is, *1080° Snowboarding* is great fun to play while it lasts, but you can't help but think what might have been. **Nick**



SWEET, SWEET EYE CANDY

Some of the graphical effects in *1080° Snowboarding* are simply gorgeous. Check out this sun glare pic. Some of the effects put the PC's 3D accelerated games to shame...



OTHER FORMATS?

PSX ○○○○○

Er hello? A Nintendo product on PlayStation? No way, no way, no way...

PC ○○○○○

Same again for the PC, I'm afraid. Although PC owners will be getting their very own snowboarding game in the form of *Supreme Snowboarding* soon.

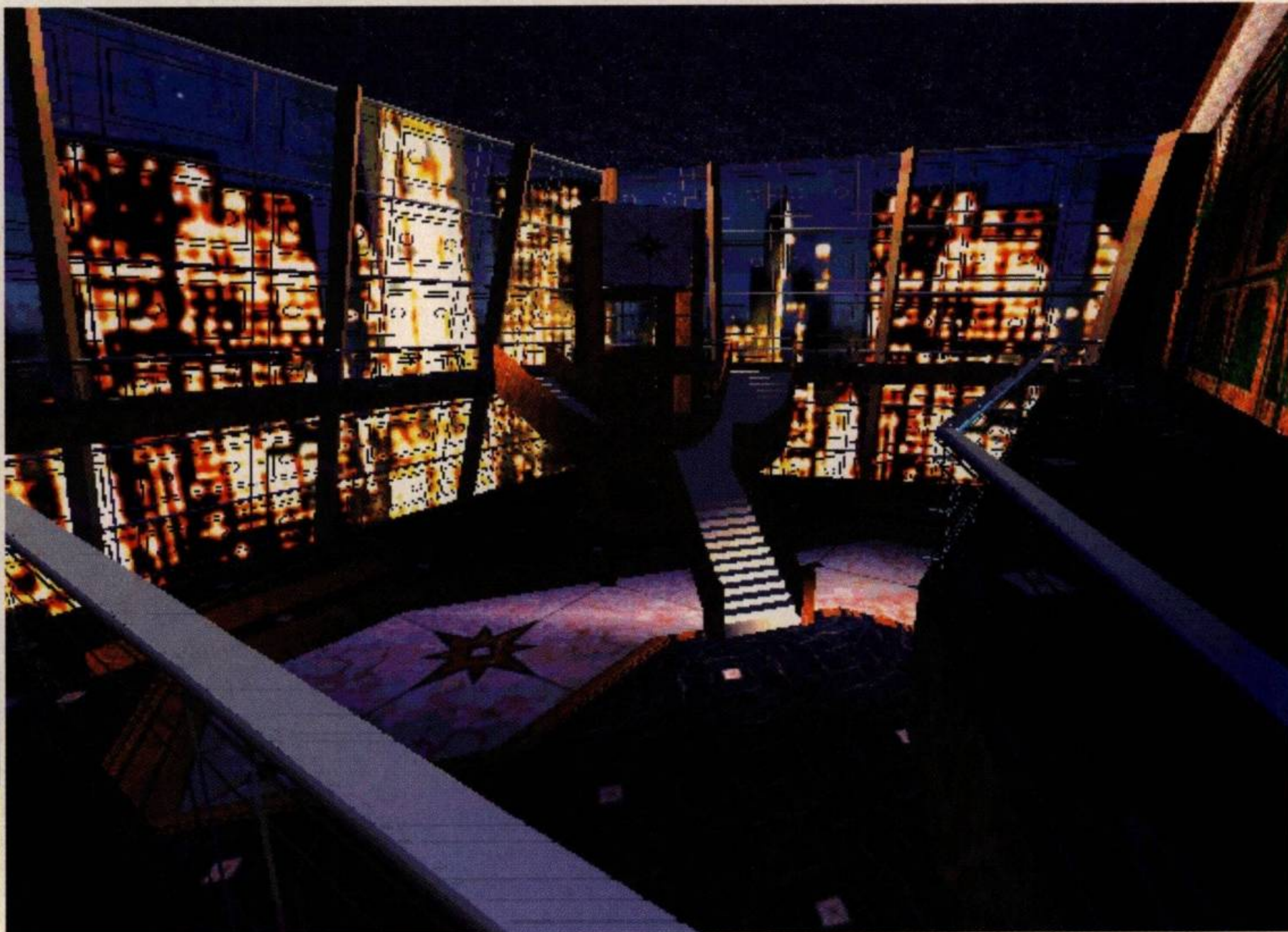
VERDICT

GAME NAME	1080° Snowboarding
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	70
OVERALL	78
Out of 100	



TOM CLANCY'S Rainbow Six

The **first-person** shooting genre **lacks diversity**. No question. That, **however**, is **all about to change** with this, Tom Clancy's **Rainbow Six**...



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Take 2 Interactive
DEVELOPER	Red Storm
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166 P233
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	57MB 329MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

TAKING CONTROL

Initial impressions were good.

A *Quake*-style shooter with added levels of realism, strategy and stealth thrown in. To begin with, the early stages of preparing your missions seem a little tedious – this quickly becomes as absorbing as the action itself. It was also pleasing to see a game set in realistic locations.

The words 'innovation' and 'first-person shooter' do not go arm in arm. With a constant stream of these titles for the PC, you might think that developers would be trying everything to give their products the edge over games such as *Quake II*. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen often; witness the likes of *Unreal* and *Hexen 2*. Very nice games in themselves, but little more than games 'inspired' by id's classic. Surely the first-person action game could be taken in almost endless directions? Cue *Rainbow Six*, a game with more than one foot in the real world...

By the book...

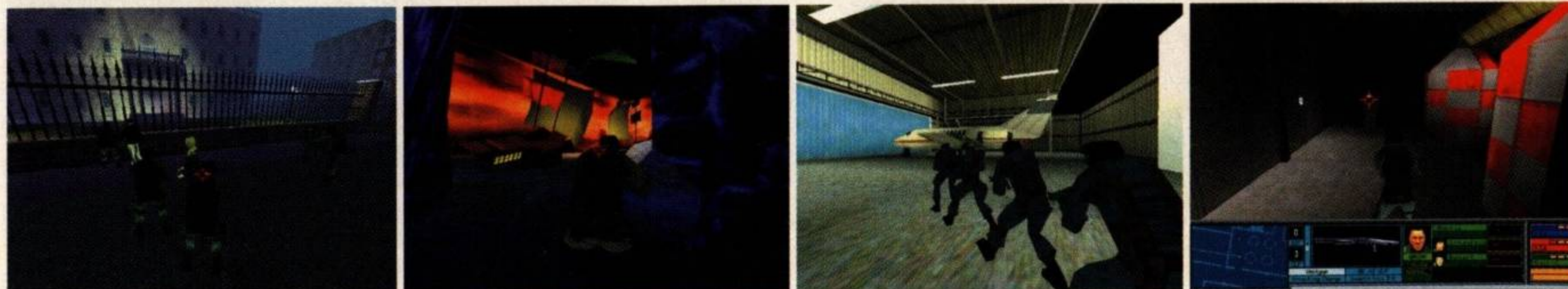
As you've probably guessed by now, *Rainbow Six* is based on the book of the same name by Tom Clancy. It's quite surprising that the game has been marketed with this moniker, as previous Clancy-inspired games have, to put it mildly, bombed. *Politika* springs to mind – a poorly realised

turn-based strategy game. This previously unhappy relationship should not, however, reflect on *Rainbow Six*. To put it in a nutshell, *Rainbow Six* is a breath of fresh air to the first-person genre. It's a gem of a game.

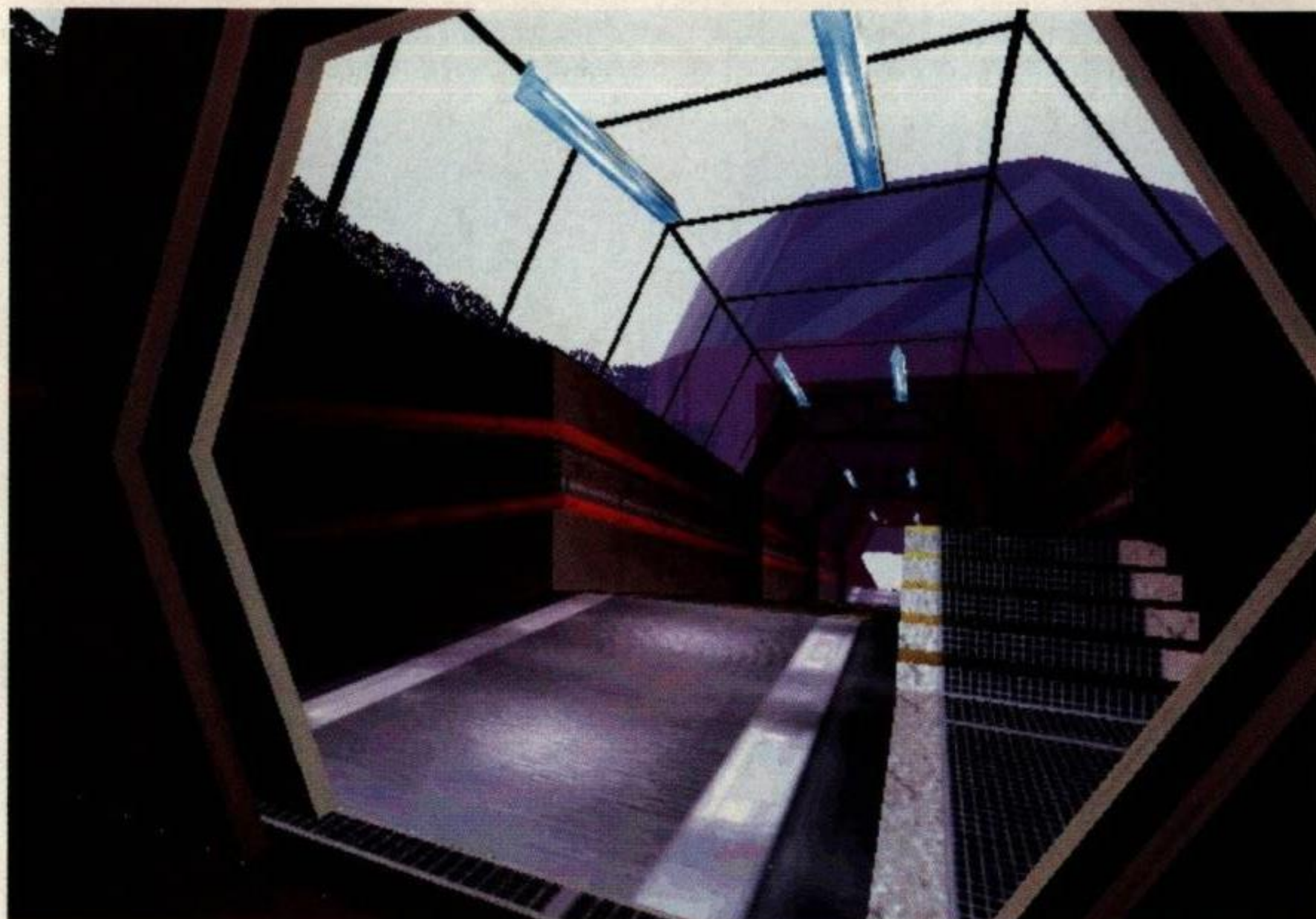
IT'S REFRESHING TO SEE A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER SET ON OIL RIGS, HACIENDAS AND OTHER LOCATIONS TAKEN FROM THE REAL WORLD

The story follows that of the book: it's the turn of the millennium, and the world is being held to ransom by a group of terrorists known as the Phoenix Group. To counteract this threat to both governments and civilians, the world powers set up an anti-terrorist group known as Rainbow Six, the members of which are the cream of counter-terrorism teams the world over, such as the SAS and SEALs teams. This is where you come in. As commander of Rainbow Six, you must take your team into volatile situations and diffuse the terrorist threat.

Rainbow Six is divided up into a series of missions – each one furthers the story. At the start of each mission



Missions take place in a variety of locations. From left to right: a foreign embassy, a theme park, a secret airport and an oil rig



The 3D accelerated graphics are wonderfully detailed (main); Characters react in a realistic fashion (left); A third person view of your soldier is also included (right)

you are given a detailed mission brief outlining objectives and so forth. You then choose which members of the team you wish to take on the mission; each has his or her own stats, such as aggression, leadership, firearms and so on. You also have a selection of specialised people; some are good at assault, some at demolition, some at electronics. The idea is to choose the right balance for the team on the mission brief. Next, the strategy comes in. Dividing your men into teams, you can then plan your mission. This is done by setting waypoints and go codes for each of the teams. Once this is done, you choose which team you wish to begin with.

Man down... we need back-up NOW!


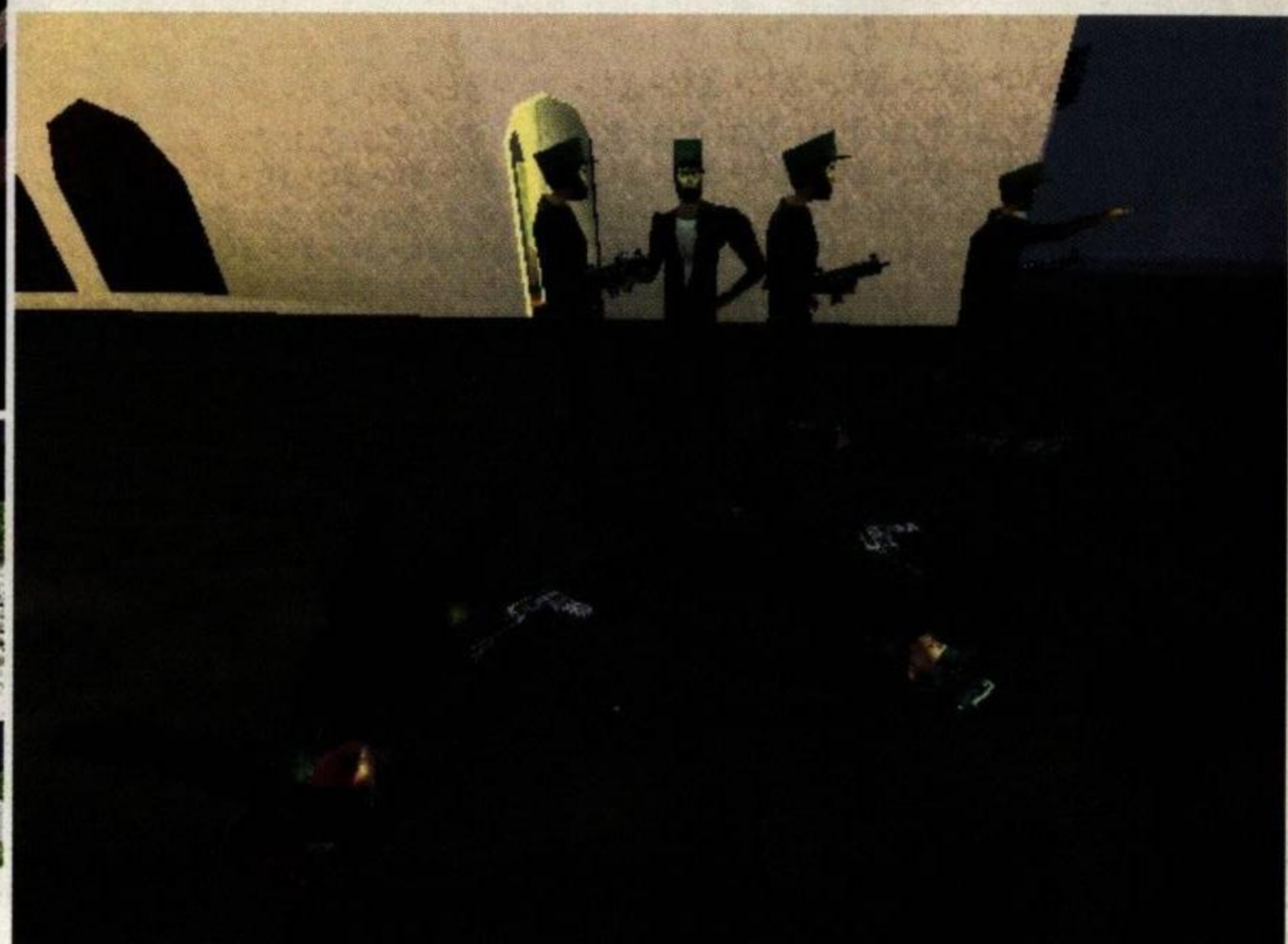
The player then takes control of one of the members of the team. Controls are similar to *Quake II* but with one major difference to that game – if you get shot, then

RAINBOW SIX IS A HIGHLY ENJOYABLE AND INNOVATIVE GAME. THE ATMOSPHERE AND TENSION CREATED IS QUITE UNLIKE ANY GAME YET SEEN ON THE PC

you'll be dead... or (at the very least) incapacitated. If this happens then control moves onto the next man in the team and the mission continues. There is one major drawback: once a team member is dead, then that's it – he's out of the team for good. Obviously, it's wise to keep your men alive.

MULTIPLAYER

Rainbow Six is playable over the Internet or via a network. The games are a little more complicated than your average deathmatch. They include Stronghold, where one team must defend a base while the other attacks; Double Stronghold, where both teams must defend their base while capturing the opposition's; and Double Bluff, where two hostages take the place of a flag in a 'capture the flag' scenario.

Missions are highly varied, and each one calls for a number of objectives to be reached. These vary from simply clearing an embassy of terrorists or rescuing hostages, to simply placing a bug on a drug baron's telephone. In the latter of these missions you have to get into and out of a mansion undetected without killing any of the numerous guards – tricky, but highly satisfying when completed. As an added bonus, once the game is completed, you are able to attempt it a harder difficulty setting. Not only are enemies generally smarter (the AI is excellent anyway), each mission now has different parameters; extra objectives and time limits come into play.

Graphically, *Rainbow Six* makes good use of Direct X and the environments are superbly designed with some wonderfully atmospheric lighting. It's refreshing to see a first-person shooter set on oil rigs, haciendas and other locations taken from the real world. This theme of realism is taken into almost every aspect of the game.

To sum up, *Rainbow Six* is a highly enjoyable and innovative game. The atmosphere and tension created is quite unlike any game yet seen on the PC. Knowing that you could be shot and killed with a single hit means that stealth is a priority, and this, married with the realistic environments, results in a highly immersive experience that PC owners should lap up. **Nick**



Each of your team members has his or her own personal stats. Correct team selection is essential.

OTHER FORMATS?

Playstation ●●●●●
Rainbow Six has already been confirmed for the PlayStation. Expect it to be released sometime in the near future. Watch this space.

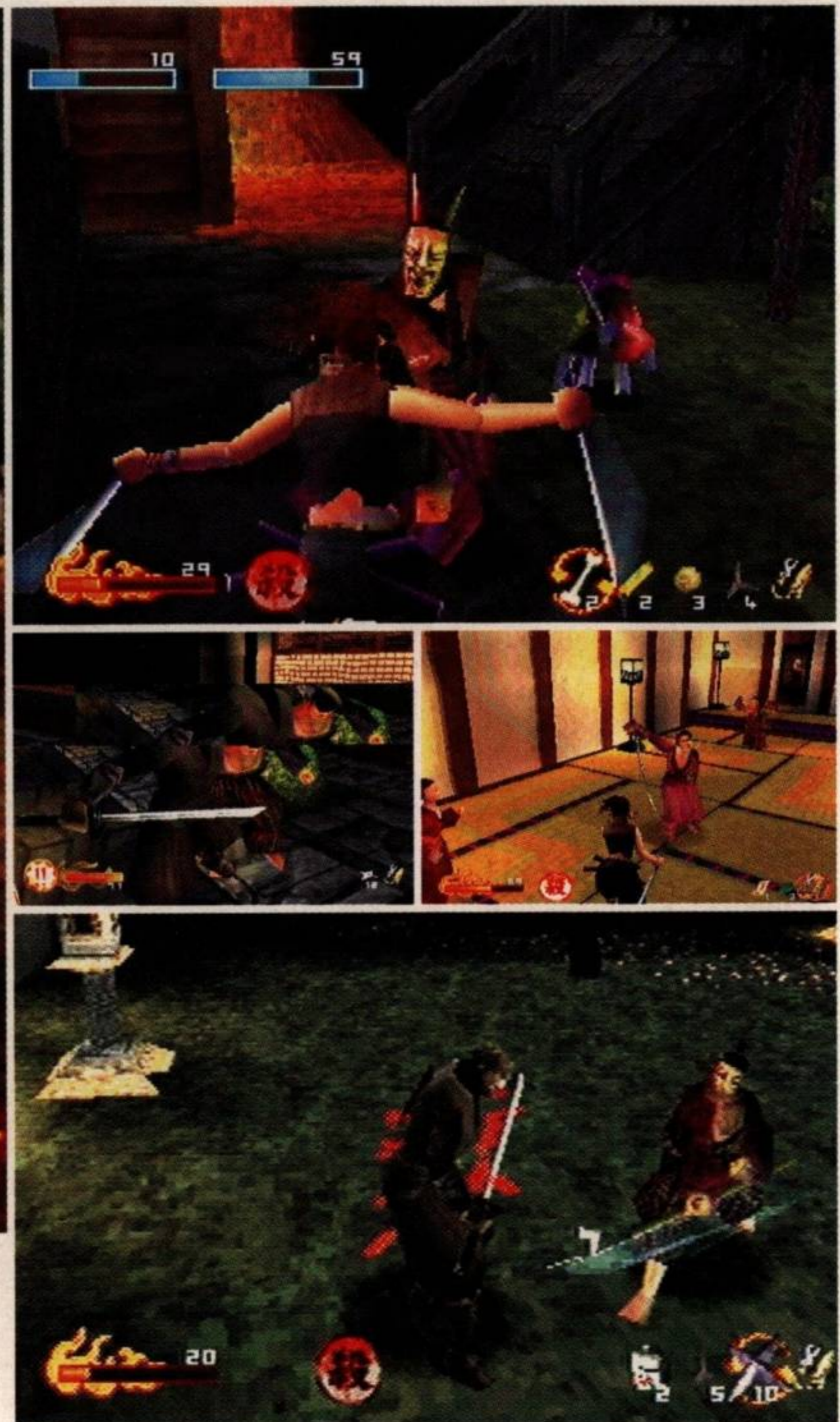
N64 ●●●○○
 Would be a welcome addition to the ever-growing N64 catalogue, but *Rainbow Six* would suffer against competition from *Goldeneye*, a game from which it borrows heavily.



Extensive planning is essential. From left to right: mission briefing, team selection and kit, team assignment and planning your assault

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Rainbow Six
GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	



Tenchu: Stealth Assassins

Under normal video game circumstances you might **expect a big sword and a pocketful of shuriken** to be more than enough **to see you safely** to the end sequence. Think again...



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	Sony Music
PRICE	£39.99
RELEASE	Out Now
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One block

The way of the ninja has never been particularly well represented in video games; the costumes have always been believable, but what of the Oriental assassin's legendary code of conduct? As a ninja it is not your job to wander into an enemy camp Rambo-style and kill everything that moves – quite the opposite in fact. By killing those other than your intended target you increase the risk of your detection. To the best of my knowledge, *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins* is the first game to ever take the ninja seriously; they are not trophy fighters competing in tournaments with characters from *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter*, they are highly skilled assassins for whom honour is a way of life.

Now you see me...

The first thing that struck me about *Tenchu* was how unimpressive the graphics are – it's not that there is anything wrong with them especially, it's just that compared to many of the games now appearing on the PlayStation they look decidedly unfinished. That said, however, it's great to see that there are still developers out there willing to concentrate their efforts on refining and perfecting gameplay rather than wasting too much time on visuals and sound effects which are, of course, of secondary importance. The front end and menu screens are well presented, and I recommend that

these be your first port of call as you head for the optional training mode.

Training in this instance consists of a series of rooms, which you must then move through without being detected by any of the numerous enemies that are patrolling the building. Occasionally you can sneak past them without the need for any violence, but more often than not you'll need to make use of *Tenchu's* more than adequate combat system. The seemingly obvious way to dispense of an enemy without being seen would be with a shuriken (throwing star). Unfortunately this won't work because one star is not enough to kill a guard, and when he realises he's got a shuriken stuck into one of his limbs he will inevitably become aware that he is under attack. Also, strictly speaking the UK version of the game does not contain shuriken. In their infinite wisdom those responsible for the censorship of video games

TAKING CONTROL

The stylish black and white intro set the mood perfectly, and after watching it in its entirety, I couldn't wait to don my ninja suit and set about killing bad guys. Big mistake. Having witnessed the Game Over screen twice, I now realise that although I have plenty of weapons at my disposal, stealth and cunning are two I should be making use of.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

From the equipment select screen you can choose no more than four different types of item to take with you on your next mission. Highlights include smoke bombs, poison rice, mines and grenades.



have determined that throwing stars should not appear in the game, and so the ninja projectiles have been replaced with throwing knives, which are presumably much less likely to turn us all into mass murderers.

Anyway, back to the problem of getting past these guards. Basically your best bet generally is to make use of the Stealth button, which allows your character to crouch, roll along the ground, edge along walls etc. However, if you simply cannot find a way past them without engaging a guard in combat, it's time to ready your sword and approach with caution. If he sees you coming he'll alert other guards and you'll become involved in an unwanted battle where you'll need to concentrate on blocking your enemies' attacks at the same time as making your own. Catch him completely unawares, however, and it's a very different story; a single blow will be enough to kill your opponent in any of several ways, depending on which of the

rooftops, but as long as you're not just running around up there you should be able to spot them before they spot you – a task made easier by the fact that the guards quite often talk to each other... well, that and the small device in the top corner which shows you how close the nearest guard is and alerts you when you're spotted.

There are ten levels in all, including two that did not appear in the original Japanese version – a rare example of us European PlayStation owners getting superior rather than inferior software to our Eastern counterparts. The levels offer plenty of variety in terms of both locations and mission objectives, and tactics you've employed on one mission might do you no good at all on the next.

Upon completing a level you will be awarded points based on your stealth and honourable conduct, or lack thereof. Rush through a level killing everything in sight and you will receive the rating of Thug. Play with plenty of patience, picking off guards only when necessary, and you might receive a rating of Ninja or Master Ninja. The real trick, though, is to achieve Grand Master status, at which time you will be awarded a magical item to aid you on your future missions.

Tenchu is a game like no other on the market. The closest thing to it right now is *Metal Gear Solid*, which isn't coming out until next year over here and is, in my opinion, flawed to the point that it's hard to take the game seriously. The learning curve is spot on, and you'll find that when you replay missions attempting to gain a Grand Master rating, a few things might have changed on the level. For example, what was an empty room might contain a potentially noisy cat next time around. Play the same level again and you might find a guard sleeping on the floor.

Provided you're able to see beyond the graphics and sounds, which are functional at best, and devote plenty of time to mastering the ways of the ninja, you'll find *Tenchu* a very absorbing and rewarding gaming experience. **Justin**

Tenchu's emphasis on stealth doesn't necessarily preclude the fact that the game contains many graphically violent scenes



AS A NINJA IT IS NOT YOUR JOB TO WANDER INTO AN ENEMY CAMP RAMBO-STYLE AND KILL EVERYTHING THAT MOVES, - QUITE THE OPPOSITE IN FACT

two characters you're using and on the position from which you attack. You might chop off his head, break his neck at the end of a three hit combo or simply run him through – either way plenty of blood is guaranteed.

Now you don't!

The first mission is a classic example of how stealth can be a much more effective weapon than violence. Your goal is to assassinate a single target who lives in an extremely well guarded mansion. If you really wanted to you could spend a while taking out every single bodyguard on the level before entering the mansion, but even if you were never actually seen, it's likely that one of the bodies littering the grounds would be discovered before your mission was complete. By using your grappling hook to gain access to the rooftops you can bypass guards and dogs relatively easily, and if you're really cunning you should be able to reach your target without needing to eliminate a single guard. They can still spot you on the



OTHER FORMATS?

PC ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

There are no plans for a PC conversion at this time, but maybe somebody will be smart enough to think about a 3Dfx version in the future?

N64 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Even if there was a publisher who felt inclined to release *Tenchu* on the N64, I very much doubt Nintendo would allow it in anything like its current form.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Tenchu: Stealth Assassins
GRAPHICS	62
SOUND	73
PLAYABILITY	90
OVERALL	83
Out of 100	



Sensible Soccer

European Club Edition

One of the **greatest** football games of all time, *Sensible Soccer* was a **perfect example of gameplay over graphics**. How will the latest instalment fare in a **polygon-obsessed marketplace**?

TAKING CONTROL

Ahh... Sensi's back. Surely the best footie game of those long gone 16-bit days will show the new pretenders a thing or two about gameplay... Alas, this was not to be. It seems that my memories of *Sensi* are tinted by rose-coloured spectacles...

Sensible Soccer is rated by many as being the best football game in history. Why? The fine mix of an intuitive control system and deceptively deep gameplay has yet to be bettered by a top-down football game – a viewpoint totally overlooked by modern 'simulations'. Many versions have come and gone over the years, but how can the latest version hope to hold a candle to the polygon-rich titles of today?

The first change, if only purely cosmetic, is that *Sensi's* footballers are now made from polygons. A strange decision, as the viewpoint is identical to all the other games. This does, however,

offer the chance to make some particularly convincing animations. There is now also a two button feature: one performs all the usual *Sensi* stuff, such as short pass (tap the button), lofted ball (hold button and move the pad in the opposite direction) and sliding tackle. This makes the control very intuitive; there's no need for a twelve button pad to perform all the moves. The other button is used for a lunging tackle and a 'trap' move. This is basically used to tackle a player with the ball – the trouble is that this is far too effective, favouring the player tackling and thus making it imperative that you pass the ball as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, there isn't always a pass on, so the ball is likely to

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	GT Interactive
DEVELOPER	Sensible Software
STYLE	Football Sim
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-64
PROCESSOR	133 166
MEMORY	16MB 16MB
DISK SPACE	100MB
3D ACCELERATOR	No



After a goal, the replay mode takes you closer into the action



go into space and a melee ensues, with players all over the place. The result? Games can quickly turn into a midfield lottery.

Players also seem to have no idea of how to play one-touch football. The only way that you can achieve this is to anticipate the path of the ball and perform a sliding tackle to knock the ball on. This doesn't, however, give you much control as to where the ball is going. I'm sure that one-touch passing was one of the best parts of the Amiga *Sensible Soccer*...

This version offers a wealth of options, and a lot of emphasis can be placed on the strategic side of things if so desired. Almost everything is customisable, from team formations to individual

WITH THE ULTRA-QUICK GAMEPLAY AND EXTENSIVE TEAM OPTIONS, SENSI OFFERS AN ADDICTIVE GAMING EXPERIENCE FOR FOOTBALL FANS

player positions and tactics. This is something that will be welcomed by football fans everywhere and adds a great deal to the longevity of the game.

Play the percentages

The thing is, you really want *Sensible Soccer* to be good – better than all its polygon-obsessed competitors – just because of the pedigree of the game. But the simple truth is that it is not. And as it is with almost all football games, it's the small things that ruin

the whole experience.

First off: goalkeepers, which programmers have yet to get right after a good ten years of research and development. *Sensi* is the same. You will find that they are all well and good when it comes to shot stopping from long range and generally every aspect of goalkeeping... that is, until the ball is played into the penalty area and stops just short of the six yard line. Then your

keeper goes into idiot mode and will just stand on his goal line allowing opposing strikers to come in and score. No shouting, however loud, will persuade your goalkeeper to do otherwise. Defenders also seem a few seats short of a stadium. It seems to take an age for them to realise that your goal is under attack and it's time for them to get back and defend. Now you could argue that you could change your tactics to a more defensive formation, but even with a defensive 5-3-2, they were still gallivanting up the pitch (or even hanging around near the goalkeeper, playing the opposition inside). Small details, I know, but both make *Sensi* that little bit too frustrating to play.

The redeeming feature of *Sensi* is it undeniably instant appeal. The game is playable from the word go. You might not be the best player in the *Sensi* universe at first, but you'll enjoy it and, of course, the game is made better with two players. Here, no doubt, you'll get plenty of enjoyment from this game, and the faults won't matter so much.

Overall, *Sensi* is little more than an update of the previous games. The new player animations are extremely satisfying and new moves are also well implemented. The main problem is that *Sensi* is let down by a few niggling faults and a simplistic control method. With the ultra-quick gameplay and extensive team options, *Sensi* offers an addictive gaming experience for football fans, but it should be seen as something of a missed opportunity to update a classic of football game history. **Justin**

Without 3D acceleration, it has to be said, *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition* looks extremely dated

MEMORY LANE

Back in the good old days of the Atari ST and Amiga, *Sensible Soccer* was the king of all football games. Its functional graphics perfectly suited the instantly addictive gameplay. A modern day classic which some might say has never been bettered. The game was converted to almost every platform imaginable, including the Mega Drive and Game Boy.

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●●●●●
A certainty for the PlayStation. But how will it fare on a platform with more than enough footie games? Due for release next year.

N64 ●●●○○
A strong possibility, but as yet unconfirmed by Sensible Software. A serious alternative to *ISS* and *World Cup '98* would be welcome.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Sensible Soccer
GRAPHICS	45
SOUND	40
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL	65
Out of 100	



F22: Total Air War

What makes a good flight sim? **Realism, excitement, brilliant graphics**, and the most advanced fighter plane in the world. DID know this, and **F-22: Total Air War** proves it.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Ocean
DEVELOPER	DID
STYLE	Combat flight sim
RELEASE	Out now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P166 P200
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	70 MB 205MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional



TAKING CONTROL

The first impression of *Total Air War* is probably, like most flight sims, going to be one of overwhelming complexity. But once you find your way around the interface and get used to the main keyboard commands, it is actually quite an easy game to play.

There are several ways to approach writing a computer game review. One way is to list a series of impressive-sounding statistics, dazzle everyone with your grasp of technical jargon, and finally award a calculated score accurate to three decimal places. Thorough perhaps, but dull, dull, dull. Alternatively, you can go for the hip, happening yo-kids-word-from-the-street approach, but since I am generally regarded as being about as hip and happening as the Boer War, perhaps I should avoid that one also. Thirdly, you can simply play the game in question for three or four days, trying out all the options, making notes as you go, and simply write down what you think. Simple, to the point, and above all very, very easy.

What I think of DID's *F-22: Total Air War* is this: It is simply the most thorough, detailed and realistic combat flight simulator I have yet seen. Unfortunately, I have to write more than that or I don't get paid, so I'd better fill in some details.

Look mummy...

With any computer game, the first thing you notice is the graphical presentation, and in this department *Total Air War* is second to none. With a 3D accelerator, *TAW* sports highly

detailed mip-mapped terrain with texture maps based on the actual appearance of the geographical location in which the campaign is set. Roads, rivers and towns are represented with a high degree of accuracy, the only changes being cosmetic ones designed to enhance gameplay.

Since most of the action takes place in the sky, this is also presented with a unique level of accuracy. The game has realistic-looking volumetric 3D clouds, which form a translucent mass rather than the usual 2D layer of pixels found in some other games. Since the F-22 has an operational ceiling of around fifty thousand feet, the upper layers of the atmosphere are also accurately depicted, with stars visible as you travel higher.

The lighting effects from flames and explosions are equally realistic, and the afterburners on the various aircraft look superb, with that distinctive pulsing effect associated with powerful jet fighters.

...There's an aeroplane...

Although the Lockheed Martin F-22 is not due to enter military service until 2002, it has already become the aircraft of choice for developers of flight simulators, partly because of its





THE F-22 RAPTOR




The first production F-22 air dominance fighter for the U.S. Air Force was unveiled on April 9th 1997, at a ceremony hosted by the F-22 contractor team – Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Pratt & Whitney – in preparation for its first flight the following month. General Richard Hawley, commander of the Air Force's Air Combat Command, announced the popular name for the plane: the Raptor.

The F-22 is regarded as being the most advanced tactical fighter aircraft in the world. It combines a quantum leap in technology and combat capability with reduced support requirements and maintenance costs. It is designed to replace the aging F-15 as America's premier front-line fighter, with deliveries beginning in 2002.

According to Lockheed Martin, its combination of stealth-integrated avionics, the manoeuvrability of its unique



thrust vectoring engines and its ability to "supercruise" (fly at supersonic speeds without using an afterburner) will give the F-22 Raptor an unbeatable "first-look, first-shot, first-kill" ability against enemy aircraft. The F-22's inherent air-to-ground capabilities also give it a multi-mission capability, complementing the primary air-to-ground role for which the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) is being designed.

CRITICAL DATA	F-22 SPECIFICATIONS	LOCKHEED MARTIN
		(U) UNCLASSIFIED DATA
		
Wing Area.....	640 sq ft	
Engine Thrust Class.....	35,000 lb	
Length.....	62.00 ft (18.90 m)	
Wing Span.....	44.5 ft (13.56 m)	
Horizontal Tail Span.....	29 ft (8.84 m)	
Height.....	16.67 ft (5.08 m)	
Track Width.....	10.6 ft (3.23 m)	
		
		
	LOCKHEED MARTIN	



Detailed information is available on the objectives of your combat missions



The mission planner allows you to try out your piloting skill against a wide range of enemy aircraft, and the accurate aerodynamic modelling makes the battles extremely realistic

unique multi-mission capabilities, but mostly, I suspect, because it is such a cool-looking plane.

The true test of any flight sim is the degree of realism, and DID have gone to great lengths to ensure that theirs cannot be faulted. The exterior model of the aircraft looks totally authentic, and the superbly detailed virtual cockpit

TOTAL AIR WAR IS SIMPLY THE MOST THOROUGH, DETAILED AND REALISTIC COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR I HAVE YET SEEN

could almost be the real thing. There are two fields of view to select: normal or wide angle. The latter allows you to see the working cockpit instruments as well as the view through the canopy. Using the normal view restricts you to the head-up display, which is also spot on, with the targeting symbols and instrument read-outs all lifted from the military aircraft.

...Up in the sky...

The missions in *Total Air War* are set in a fictitious but spookily prescient campaign in Sudan, involving forces from the United States and a number of Arab countries. There are allies, enemies and neutrals, all using a huge range of air,

sea and ground-based weaponry, from Type 42 frigates to trailer-mounted SAM units. The missions are varied, from escorting refuelling tankers to taking out armoured columns. The real-time interactive nature of the campaign scenario means that no two missions will ever be the same, giving the game almost unlimited replay value. Also worthy of

mention are the AWACS command missions, in which you take on the role of an airborne command post, directing allied forces on an overhead map. If you

find an F-22 in the air on one of these missions, you can jump straight into the cockpit simply by double-clicking on the aircraft's map marker.

The air combat missions can be almost too realistic, treading the fine line between a playable game and an obsessively realistic simulation. While it is possible in most missions to 'time-skip' forwards to the action, you can sometimes find yourself sitting on the tarmac at the end of a runway for several minutes, waiting for orders to take off. However, when you do get the order to scramble, and get up there in the sky amongst the MiGs and missiles, there is excitement aplenty. **Cliff**

OTHER FORMATS?

PSX ●○○○○

Flight sims are a genre pretty much exclusive to the PC, and the technical complexity of *TAW* is way beyond the capabilities of the PlayStation.

N64 ○○○○○

Although the N64 could probably handle the graphics, a full-spec military flight sim is not the sort of thing you'd expect to see on the Nintendo machine.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	F-22: Total Air War
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	85
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	



Quake II Mission Pack: Ground Zero

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Activision
DEVELOPER	ID Software
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£24.99
PLAYERS	1-32
PROCESSOR	P90 P133
MEMORY	16MB 24MB
DISK SPACE	130MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional

TAKING CONTROL

Straight into a hectic multiplayer session, and it looks like your basic set of extra levels and guns – pretty cool ones, but still nothing special. But what's this? An enemy ducking behind a crate was the first example I could see of how the AI had been improved, and it just got better from there on...

The second **Quake II mission pack** has now arrived. So what will this add-on pack offer over the original, and **can Quake II still compete** in today's market? We endeavour to find out...

Q *quake II* is the most established first-person shoot-'em-up on the PC at the moment – perhaps even of all time. So it's no surprise that it has managed to spawn several mission packs, though maybe more of a surprise that there are only two. The first mission pack, *The Reckoning*, was a very simple pack consisting of a couple of extra levels, enemies and a few new weapons and toys, so what many of us were expecting was another very similar package. Luckily for us *Quake II* fans, we've got a little bonus...

Box clever, see?

The most impressive feature in *Quake II: Ground Zero* is the level of intelligence that many of the enemies have now been blessed with. Faults in the original included being able to run into other rooms and not have the enemies follow you and suicidal enemies who would attack you no matter the odds. It's safe to say that these faults have been rectified. Basically, an enemy will now decide how strong you are compared to him; meet a lowlife grunt in a room on his own and he'll probably run away to another room. If there's nowhere for him to run he

could take cover behind an obstacle (such as a pile of boxes) in that room. Should you follow him out of the room he may have found some form of back-up, which you'll set about dispersing until your health level starts dwindling. Then, when you run for cover (and hopefully a nice supply of health you may have missed earlier) the enemies will continue to follow you until you either out-run them and hide, or die. The effect of this intelligence is almost immediately noticeable, and it gets really annoying when there are a lot of enemies around; you want to pick them off one by one to cut down their combined fire power, but a lot of them will seek some form of cover when they are low on health, so it becomes that much more difficult. There are, of course, still a fair amount of bloodthirsty aliens who show little intelligence and just run at you, but unfortunately they're usually the pretty tough ones, meaning that you're usually the one who should be doing the running.

The best thing about this is that it's backwards compatible with your original *Quake II* and *The Reckoning* (should you have it), so as soon as you finish the new levels here you can then go back and replay all of your old missions with the new



WE COME IN PEACE

Essentially *Quake II: Ground Zero* is a game that will be bought for mainly multiplayer purposes. If you (like us) are the type of person who searches the Net for downloads to use in your next multiplayer game, you'll like the sound of the new download system. Now only one person needs to have the downloads of the extra player models and maps. When anyone who doesn't have one of your downloads joins, the computer will automatically transfer the files across.



AI. This gives a whole new lease of life to the game, and if you have been giving it a bit of a rest recently, it will give you a good excuse to go back and realise what a great game it is again. You probably won't be doing that for a while, though, because there are enough missions here to keep you playing for quite a long time. Each of the 30 new levels is split down into

IT'S BACKWARDS COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR ORIGINAL QUAKE II, SO AS SOON AS YOU FINISH THE NEW LEVELS HERE, YOU CAN THEN GO BACK AND REPLAY ALL OF YOUR OLD MISSIONS WITH THE NEW AI

several units. When you start you will have to work your way through each unit and carry out various missions as and when they appear over your comm link (much like the original game). You will often have to return back to a particular level to carry out some of these missions, which can be done by finding the appropriate tunnel or door, though you won't be able to jump between units unless you reload a saved game. Because of this it's just as well that the missions are huge, because you never really get bored of them since there are usually a few new areas that you will have probably missed the first time around.

Look at the size of that thing!

The size of each level becomes particularly apparent when you play a multiplayer game. Many of them tend to drag on a bit with only three or four players, but they are extremely well designed and probably better (especially in a healthy multiplayer tournament) than any of the other sets of maps. Luckily for those games without large numbers of people, there are a couple of dedicated multiplayer maps thrown in there for multiplayer use only. (Did I say a few? I meant fourteen...)



The obligatory new weapons are also quite tasty; the ETRF Rifle fires rapid fire projectiles out of two barrels and is very similar to the Hyperblaster in strength, yet without the delay. The proximity mine launcher fires rounds in the same manner as the grenade launcher, but will stick to floors and surfaces until someone (or thing) gets too close. The other, and far more powerful main weapon is the plasma beam. This fires a hugely powerful beam of plasma (duh!) at your opponents, which will take any adversary out in no time – very much a case of the quick and the dead. The down side is that it uses cells, and uses them very quickly, so you may be forced to give the BFG and the Hyperblaster a rest after

discovering this one. It's now the office's favourite weapon, dramatically knocking the rail gun down to second place. Other toys include the various spheres that will now follow you above your head. These are mainly a multiplayer bonus and do things such as firing additional rounds at your opponents and making sure that any would-be assassin comes to a sticky end should he kill you first. There's also an AM bomb that takes out anything in a very big range and shakes the whole level with its strength. The Tesla mine acts much like a proximity one, except it will explode after a set time and not after each use, whilst the Doppelganger looks like you and will kill anyone who mistakes it for the real thing (multiplayer only).

£25 is a lot to pay when games like *Half-Life* and *SiN* (and even *Quake III*) are on the way, but this is still an excellent add-on pack which should revitalise your enthusiasm for the game. It's an especially good purchase for those with multiplayer capabilities, and if you can spare the dough, it's well worth it until the next generation of first-person shooters begins to appear. **Will**

The many different varieties of spheres shown above are particularly useful in the multiplayer modes



Though the proximity mines look the same as normal grenades, they are much more useful for a player who can use his head

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●○○○○

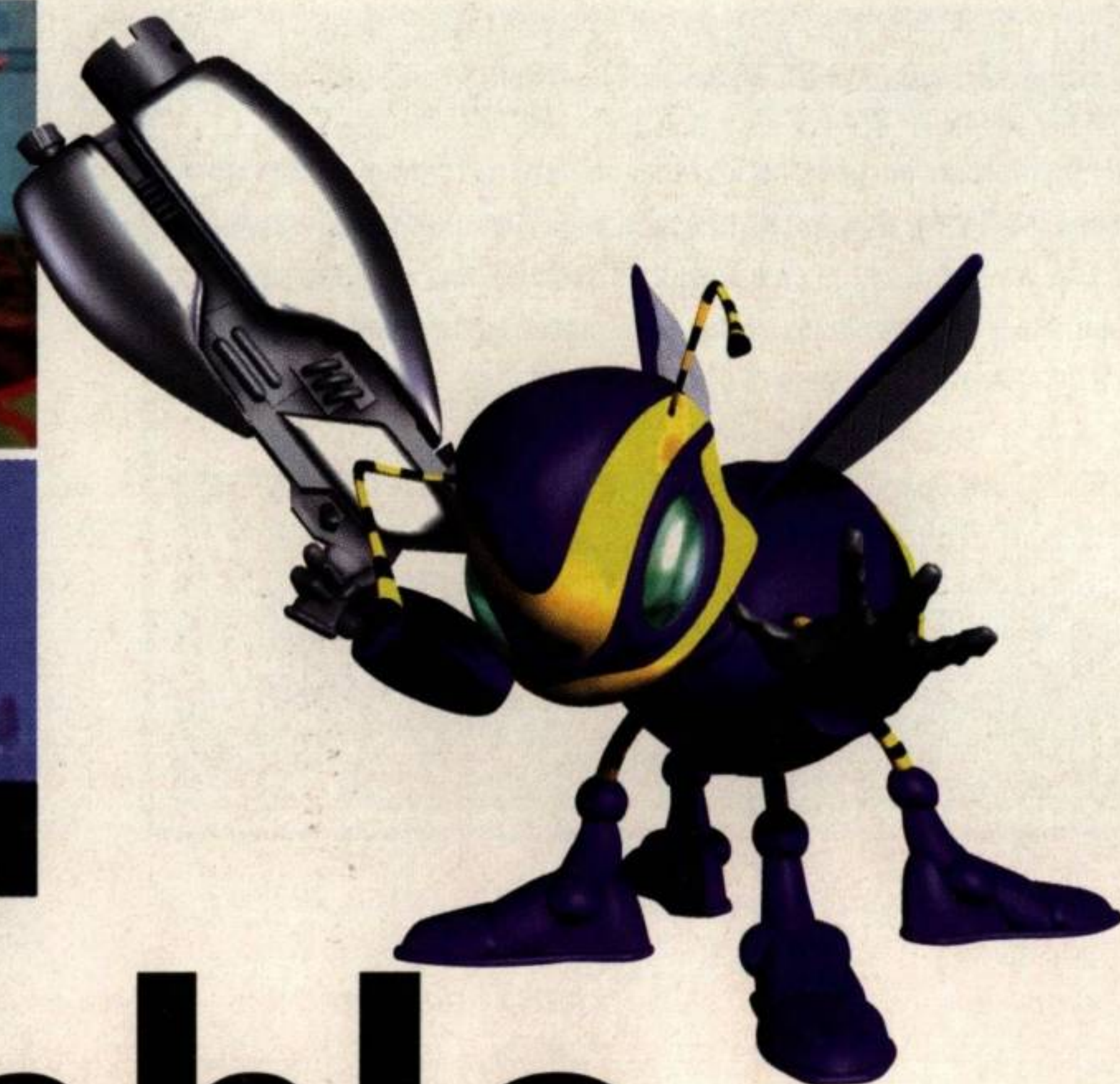
Though you'll be able to play *Quake II* on your PlayStation in Q2 of 1999, it's extremely unlikely that a mission pack will ever be released on that format.

N64 ○○○○○

Like the PlayStation, *Quake II* is also coming to the N64 next year, but it's impossible for an add-on pack to ever be released for the cartridge format (unless the 64DD miraculously arrives).

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Ground Zero
GRAPHICS	60
SOUND	84
PLAYABILITY	88
OVERALL	76
Out of 100	



Buck Bumble

What's that you say? **Mutated insects** with **robotic limbs** going to war with each other? It could only happen **on the N64...**

TAKING CONTROL

After a few minutes playing time, it seemed that I was playing a game that was very awkward to control and didn't really have a lot going for it. But it quickly grew on me, and before long I was hooked on this hugely addictive shoot-'em-up.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	UbiSoft
DEVELOPER	Argonaut
STYLE	3D Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	November
PRICE	£49.99
PLAYERS	1-2
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	Yes
EXPANSION PAK	No

The plot that accompanies *Buck Bumble* won't take long to explain, so bear with me just one moment. After a very nasty chemical spillage caused by us nasty humans, the nearby insects somehow mutate into intelligent beings. With the aid of this new-found intelligence, some of the bugs begin to get very aggressive and set out to conquer all of the surrounding neighbouring bugs. Not willing to give in to their rule, you set out to put things right once again.

You play Buck Bumble, a heroic bumblebee (about as heroic as any bee could get) on his quest to vanquish the enemy threat. Oddly enough, you and all of the insects in the game have advanced sufficiently enough to be able to develop artificial replacements for various body parts. Your cyborg body comes in handy, because it allows you to take much more of a battering than your everyday honeybee.

Everybody bee cool

The game is normally played in a third-person viewpoint, though there is an option to play in a first-person view if you prefer. You fly into the screen and make your way to the end of the level,

TARGETING BECOMES MUCH MORE INSTINCTIVE AS YOU PLAY THE GAME, AND EVENTUALLY YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HIT A SPEEDY WASP FROM A FULL METRE AWAY

completing any mission objectives that you may have along the way. The closest thing that the N64 has to this would be the all-range mode in *Lylat Wars*, but *Buck Bumble* works much better, giving you far more control than you had in that game.

Making a playable flight model for a bumblebee can't be easy,

but the one on show here works just fine. The trigger button accelerates you forward and the stick points you in the right direction. One of the initial problems is that the targeting can be very difficult to start with; you can't actually hover without losing altitude, so you have to constantly be on the move. Strangely, the targeting becomes much more instinctive as you play the game, and eventually you'll be able to hit a speedy wasp from a full metre away (a long way if you're a bee). If you are having trouble shooting some of the ground-based items then you can always land and take them out from a more stable position.

Bee the best

All of the levels are fairly linear, echoing the apparent trend for the game to revert back to the more traditional shoot-'em-up. Each 3D world is very big, but they are split up into a number of smaller 'rooms' connected by what are effectively doorways. To move through the door you'll either have to destroy all of the enemies in that room or find the power supply for the door. Shooting that will send a power surge through the cable connecting the two structures and blow a hole through to the next stage of the level. There are five separate environments to

explore, starting off in the garden and moving on through the house, swamps, rubbish dumps and – eventually – the

enemy hive, with each environment made up of five different levels. In each level you may have a couple of mission objectives, such as destroying the enemy radar installations – sometimes it may merely be to take out a graphically impressive enemy boss character.



Considering the amazing level of detail in the game and the number of objects on screen, it's impressive that *Buck Bumble* hardly ever suffers from slow-down



Take control of the coolest bee on the planet. It's a shame that you spend most of the game looking at his butt

The enemies in *Buck Bumble* are variations on your typical insects. Dragonflies pose little threat, neither do many of the ground-based beetles, but a swam of wasps can prove troublesome because of their speed, often forcing you to dive low and take them out in the grasses where your manoeuvrability gives you the upper hand.

One advantage Buck does have is his rather large arsenal of weaponry. Starting off with a poxy gun, you'll later get some much more interesting weapons, including a self-guided rocket launcher and scatter mines. But the biggest guns usually have limited ammo, so it's best to conserve their use.

Bumbling around

Graphically *Buck Bumble* is very accomplished. The worlds are impressively big, though they do suffer from some heavy fogging. There's a very nice sense of scale here, evidenced by the enormous wheelbarrow on one of the early missions – a lot of the enemies are also impressively big. Even with the level of detail on show, the frame rate is always very high (over 30 f.p.s.), making the game very smooth. The sound is also of a very high quality – something the N64 has fallen down on in the past.

There are a few faults, though, the main one being that the white targeting cursor becomes invisible when you steer up because of the bright sky (as does your radar, which is also far too light). However, this minor drawback doesn't completely spoil your enjoyment, because as you get used to the game you come to rely on them less anyway. Gaining altitude is also very difficult – you'll have to spiral up quite a lot, which can often make you lose your bearings... but then a bee with vertical take-off might be a bit too much to ask.

Buck Bumble is a very good game that successfully takes some of the tried and tested formulas of many early 90s shoot-'em-ups and combines them with the graphical technology we have today. There isn't too much that is ground-breaking or fantastically original about it, but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying this highly entertaining, if slightly difficult shooter. **Will**



The enemies are well-drawn and can be absolutely huge

BUSY BEE

Sadly there is no four player mode, but along with the two player deathmatch there's an excellent version of Buck Ball. Basically it throws two players onto a rectangular pitch with two goals and a very large ball. The objective is to ram into the ball, forcing it into the other player's net. It's a lot more difficult than it looks. It's one of the best multiplayer concepts you could have for this type of game, and you'll find yourself playing it long after you've given up on the single player mode.



OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●○○○

Ubisoft are currently converting a lot of their games onto different platforms. *Buck Bumble* could well follow the trend, although it's unlikely to surface until after Christmas.

PlayStation ●●○○○○

As with the PC, *Buck Bumble* might be converted to the PlayStation in the new year. It has yet to be confirmed, but we're sure it will be discussed at some point.



VERDICT

GAME NAME	Buck Bumble
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	75%
OVERALL	74
Out of 100	



V2000

TAKING CONTROL

No messing around with introduction sequences here – straight into the action and I'm already feeling dizzy. Too many buttons to press in awkward places on the keyboard, my ship's already smashed up pretty good and I haven't even met an alien yet. This feels a bit like a George of the Jungle computer game... WATCH OUT FOR THAT TREE!!... Ouch!



David Braben's *Virus* gets a **serious make over** in time to celebrate its **tenth birthday**. Should you have **V2000 on your PC?**

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Grolier Interactive
DEVELOPER	Frontier Developments
STYLE	Shoot-'em-up
RELEASE	October
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-8
PROCESSOR	P120 P200
MEMORY	16MB 32MB
DISK SPACE	10MB
3D ACCELERATOR	Optional



The red patches represent the spread of the virus

V2000 is the sequel to the hugely successful *Virus*, released nearly ten years ago. *Virus* was the game that helped send its designer, David Braben into the hall of fame after his previous smash hit, *Elite* – a game that had the polarising effect of being either loved or hated by everyone who played it. The idea behind it was a simple one: save the world from a lethal virus by flying around in a small flying machine shooting as many aliens as possible. The thing that people found difficult, though, was the very difficult control system. Because the craft hovered rather than floated, it had a certain downward thrust that, depending on the tilt of the ship, made it either hover, accelerate forward, or decelerate and eventually move backwards. The variable level of thrust meant that a skillful combination of forward, lean and power had to be used for manoeuvring. It may sound quite simple on paper, but in practice it was far from it – especially as far as targeting enemies was concerned. However, those who eventually mastered it discovered a hugely rewarding action game.

It may not need to be said, but *V2000* is basically more of the same. A deadly red virus is being spread over the world by a number of invading aliens in order to make the

EVEN AFTER YOU LEARN TO MASTER THE VERY AWKWARD CONTROL SYSTEM, IT STILL DOESN'T MANAGE TO DRAW YOU IN

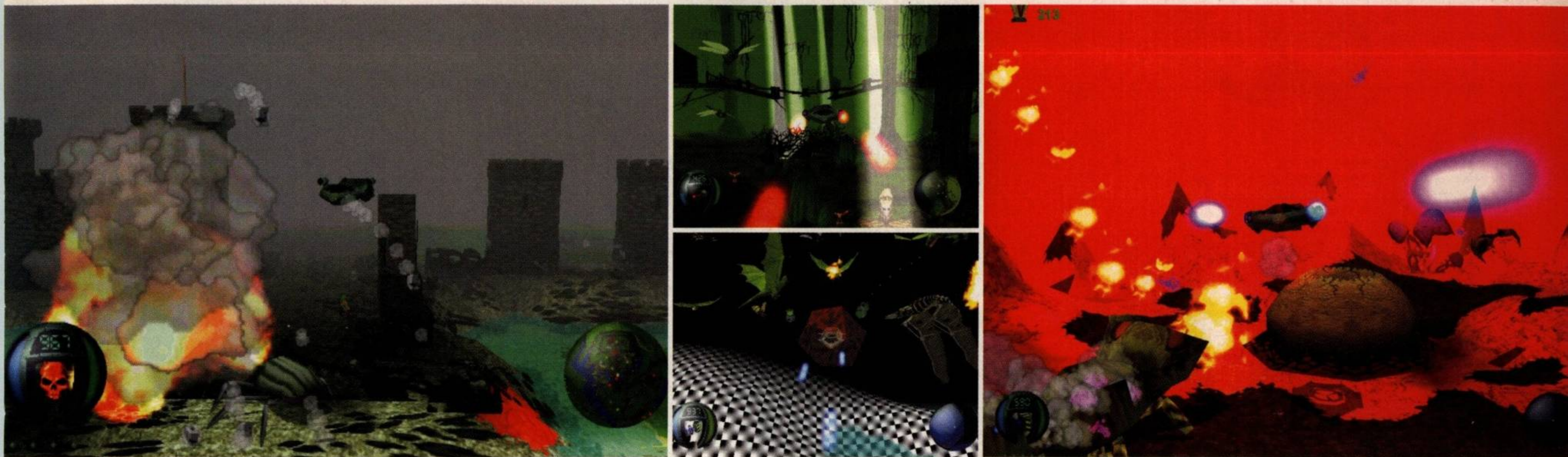
terrain more hospitable for them. In this world there is only one craft remaining that has the power to vanquish this alien menace, and you are the only person qualified to fly it (lucky you). On most of the worlds there will be a number of civilians to be rescued and taken back to your base. In return for their lives they will undertake training and then man your factories, eventually providing you with some useful weapon power-ups and other goodies.

The civilian aspect makes the game far more interesting than it would be otherwise; you only have limited space in your cargo hold, so you need to think ahead and plan out your strategy when moving the men around the island. Keeping trained men in your craft results in a gradual health increase as they repair your ship – a good thing to have in mind when you go in for the kill against some of the tougher enemies. It's not as simple as this, though, because if you lose too many men or your base, or you fail a mission objective, then you will have lost that level. When this happens the aliens multiply and convert the level into a 'dark world', destroying everything in it except for you and a lot more of them. You can still finish it and move on to the next, but it becomes a lot harder to do and isn't advised.

Getting physical

One of the most important new additions to the gameplay is that you now have much more control over the physics of the flight model. The original game was criticised for being over-sensitive, making it too easy to flip your craft over through 360°. There are now a number of options to rectify this, while still allowing the player to use a mode similar to the original (for those that managed to master that control method before).

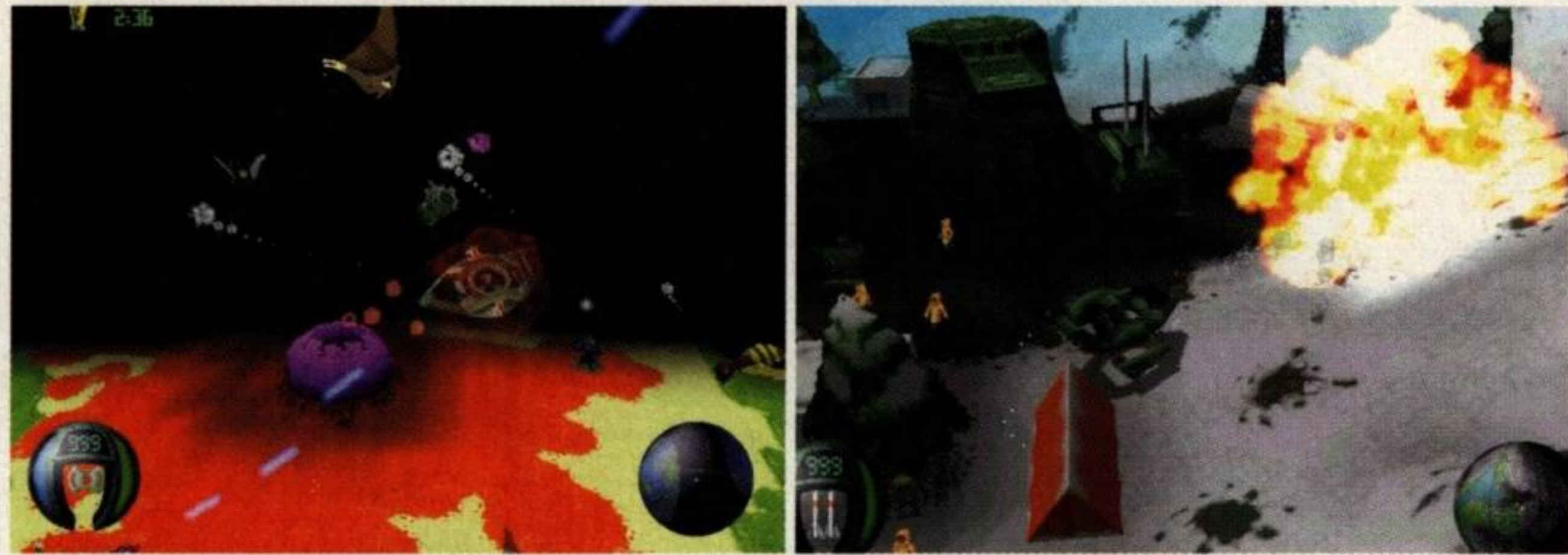
You also have one additional mode of flight: a hover mode. Using this you have far more control over your ship – you stay at a constant height above the land and don't use up any fuel, thus making the collection of items a much easier task. The down side is that you will now have to concentrate much more on avoiding the scenery, and mountains or steep verges are far more difficult to scale, so a combination of the two must be used. Sadly, though, this is very difficult to avoid whichever mode you use,



Because of the frantic nature of the game, many of the excellent graphical touches pass unnoticed, but these stills show just how frenetic the game can get

HE AIN'T HEAVY . . .

The flight model in *V2000* is superb. Not only does your ship fly very accurately over normal terrain, but there are a number of great touches for your benefit, such as picking up a weight. Not only do you notice the difference to your ship's handling, but you'll also be able to go underwater and swim with the fishes. Some levels even have wind and tidal effects that hurl your ship backwards and forwards in the current.



Apart from the graphical changes the underwater levels are essentially the same

because the camera angles are often confusing and do not turn with your ship. You will often not see an obstacle coming until it is too late, forcing you to drop your speed right down. Many objects can block your view of your ship as well, particularly on the jungle missions. The camera, while being very good at avoiding the scenery, doesn't share the same trick of not being obscured many of the other obstacles.

Graphically *V2000* looks very nice. Transparent explosions and some very nice water effects all work really well, but the game could have done with some form of a sky or background and much less fogging. The sound, too, is also a mixed bag; the background effects such as wind and thunder are superbly atmospheric, but the main sound effects fall a long way short of being near the same quality, whilst the distinct lack of any music is immediately apparent and a glaring omission.

Get a load of those guns

On the plus side, there are a multitude of weapons available – twenty four to be precise – most of which have a number of different levels of destruction. There are also many different items, from portable radar stations that extend the area of the visible map to portable gun turrets and cargo bay extensions. On each level there can be any number of possible exits that can take you either back to a previous level in order to pick up more weapons and search for secrets, or on to a new world, so the game takes a very non-linear stance.

V2000 is a game that delivers a long-lasting and involving challenge, but even after you learn to master the very awkward control system, it still doesn't manage to draw you in because of its fiddly and excessively frustrating nature. It's well worth a look, and it's certainly an above average game, but you may find that you grow bored of it rather quickly. **Will**

OTHER FORMATS?

PlayStation ●●●●●

The PlayStation version is set for a joint launch with the PC release in October. It is essentially identical apart from the loss of resolution and multiplayer mode.

N64 ●○○○○

You'll be the first people to know if news reaches us of a conversion, but for the foreseeable future it's very unlikely that *V2000* will ever appear on the N64.

VERDICT

GAME NAME	V2000
GRAPHICS	73%
SOUND	36%
PLAYABILITY	75%
OVERALL	72
Out of 100	



Spyro the Dragon

If the only dragon you've ever heard of **lives by the sea** and **goes by the name of Puff**, then get ready to meet a whole load more, as we look at **Sony's latest monster title**.

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Sony
DEVELOPER	Insomniac Games
STYLE	3D Platformer
RELEASE	Out Now
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	1 Block

Since the days of the 2D platform game, few titles have managed to stand out as incredible 3D platformers. Of those games that have, even fewer have appeared on the PlayStation, with the N64 having the pick of the bunch. But things in this department definitely seem to be shaping up nicely on Sony's machine at the moment. Alongside Sony's own *Medevil*, a fabulous game in its own right, comes *Spyro the Dragon*, with all of the style and magical charm that you would expect from a platformer of the very highest quality.

You are a young dragon named Spyro (not unexpectedly), and by following and generally hanging around with the elder dragons that you live with, you seek to learn wisdom and eventually become a legend amongst your tribe. But your chance to become a hero arrives prematurely when your masters are all turned to stone. So while we are still waiting to see a platform game with a semi-interesting plot, this is where

you join the game, as Spyro sets off to free his fellow dragons.

The game begins in a level select world of sorts – the thing is, it's easily as big as an early level and contains its own selection of baddies and bonuses. Run through a magic gate and it will whisk you to the corresponding level, containing a further selection of puzzles and treasures for you to find. Scattered around each world are a number of stone dragons



The colour of the fairy that follows you represents your health



LEARNING TO FLY:

Every now and then you'll find yourself in a sub-game of some sort. The objectives of these differ, but along the way you'll usually have to collect a load of different items and bonuses. One early sub-game involved Spyro actually flying instead of floating in an attempt to collect a number of gems before a time limit.



that can be rescued by running up to them. Usually, before they disappear they will give you some hints on the general gameplay and controls in the game.

These mini-cut scenes and the introduction sequence are all drawn in real-time in accordance with the current trend for games to flow better, avoiding the use of fancy 3D movies that are said to temporarily pull the gamer away from the action. Personally I'm a fan of good old fashioned expensive cut-scenes, but it needs to be said that the ones on show here do work very well. This is mainly due to the fact that the character models in the cut-scenes (the same as those used mid-game) are superbly drawn and really well animated. This level of graphic detail is echoed throughout the game, and overall it is one of the best-looking platformers on the PlayStation.

Keeping you in the picture

One thing that was very refreshing to see was a camera that managed to keep you in the picture at all times; back up against a wall and at first it zooms in on you and then lifts to an aerial view. It doesn't manage to turn very well, though, and the player is often forced to resort to the manual camera controls to get it pointing in the right direction.

The only real problem with the game has to do with the general gameplay; many of the levels are designed in a very non-linear way, which would be fine, save for the lack of direction in the game, with levels tending to be very open, housing multiple

MANY OF THE LEVELS ARE DESIGNED IN A VERY NON-LINEAR WAY, WHICH WOULD BE FINE, SAVE FOR THE LACK OF DIRECTION IN THE GAME

routes through it. On its own it's not a bad thing, but often you come across several dead ends, and reaching a certain point in a level will require you to spend far too much time exploring the level. Progression though many of the levels is done by navigating various platforms, hence the name of the genre. One of Spyro's abilities allows him to fly – or rather float down from a jump so that he can travel a long distance from a high point in the level. This is done by tapping the jump button twice, but when navigating across cluster platforms, you will often float accidentally, and it's very easy to over-jump and miss your intended platform, which can be incredibly annoying – especially as I found it occurred far too often.

TAKING CONTROL

After mastering the initially awkward control system, I sat back to admire a very smoothly polished game. From the start, even though I wasn't sure exactly what I was supposed to be doing, I knew I was playing a better than average 3D platformer. And it slowly got better from there.



You'll need to use your head to defeat the bigger enemies

The good, the bad and the ugly

To start with the enemies are very easy to take care of. Your rather pathetic but quite useful fire breath will take them out without too much trouble. When you run you also duck your head, and ramming into enemies this way is equally effective, though you'll have much less control. Later on you'll find some much harder and more intelligent ones, and some really great boss characters too. One boss initially looks like a menacing scarecrow, but after you've hit him a few times his cape will drop off, revealing a tiny sheep on stilts. This is a good example of the excellent humour that flows through the game – it's definitely aimed at a younger audience – and I doubt that there will be many kids who wouldn't enjoy this game.

As I mentioned earlier, the graphics are fabulous and fully utilise the PlayStation's high-res mode to great effect. The sound effects and music too, while not being incredible, compliment the game very well. *Spyro's* main competition is Sony's other forthcoming title, *Medevil* (see Mini Reviews). It's a very good game, and it is a close battle, but *Spyro* beats it by a horn for me. The cartoony feel and great sense of humour combine to make a great game that'll successfully keep the kids happy for months. **Will**



OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●○○○○
All we can say is that it's highly unlikely – maybe in some strange future it might, but if I were you I wouldn't wait for it.

N64 ○○○○○
Err, anyone hoping for Sony to ever release a game on Nintendo's machine really should wake up now. No way, no chance, no how

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Spyro The Dragon
GRAPHICS	88
SOUND	73
PLAYABILITY	81
OVERALL	79
Out of 100	

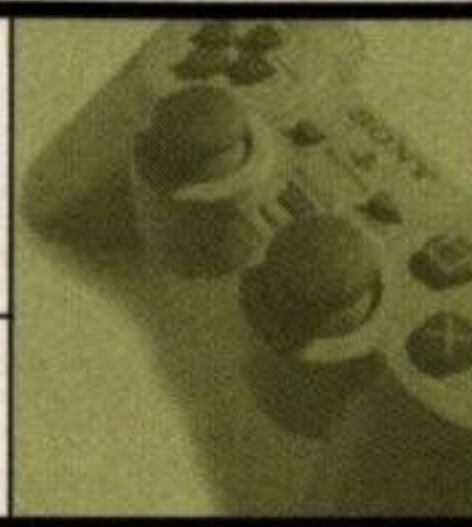
Q

QUANTITY

CONTROL

Medievil

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Sony** Developer: **Sony** Style: **Strategy** Release: **Out Now**
 Price: **£24.99** Players: **One** Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



A long time ago, in the kingdom of Gallowmere, a sorcerer named Zarok decided to raise an army of demons and kill the entire population for no apparent reason. He was defeated by the king's army, led by Daniel Fortesque, who went

down in history as the man who gave his life to put an end to the evil menace. Now the sorcerer has returned, and you have been summoned back from the dead for a repeat performance.

Sony's latest title may not have the most imaginative plot, but that doesn't prevent it from being a very good game. The most noticeable feature is probably that it looks very nice indeed, running very smoothly in high-res mode. As you make your way to face Zarok, you'll come across a variety of baddies, puzzles and platforms, all of which work very well. You are given the chance to upgrade your weapons and shield, and there are extra moves to be learnt as you progress, all of which successfully manages to sustain your interest.

Overall there are no complaints with any part of the game, and as far as 3D platformers go, you won't go far wrong with this one. **Will** **VERDICT: 73%**



Future Cop LAPD

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **Electronic Arts**
 Style: **Shoot-'em-up** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£40.00** Players: **Two**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



No longer scared by men in stupid hats carrying truncheons, the criminal sector of society has set out to do all the bad things they've always wanted without recrimination. Not liking that idea too much, you have volunteered to see that they take up more law-abiding ways. But the perks of being a policeman in the future seem to differ from those of the present. According to EA, the average cop will have access to the rather tasty TAC X-1 Alpha. This nifty piece of kit not only allows you to fire light, heavy and special weapons at once, but it also gives you the option of transforming from a *MechWarrior*-style death machine to a very nippy hovercraft and back again. Each mode has its own unique abilities, and though to start with you'll probably only use the two legged mode, it will soon



become more than necessary to experiment with each.

What is really great about this game is the inclusion of the two player co-operative and deathmatch modes, which work really well and ensure lastability. The only thing I didn't like was the slightly repetitive nature of the game, but other than that it's an excellent shoot-'em-up, well worth checking out. **Will** **VERDICT: 75%**



Moto Racer 2

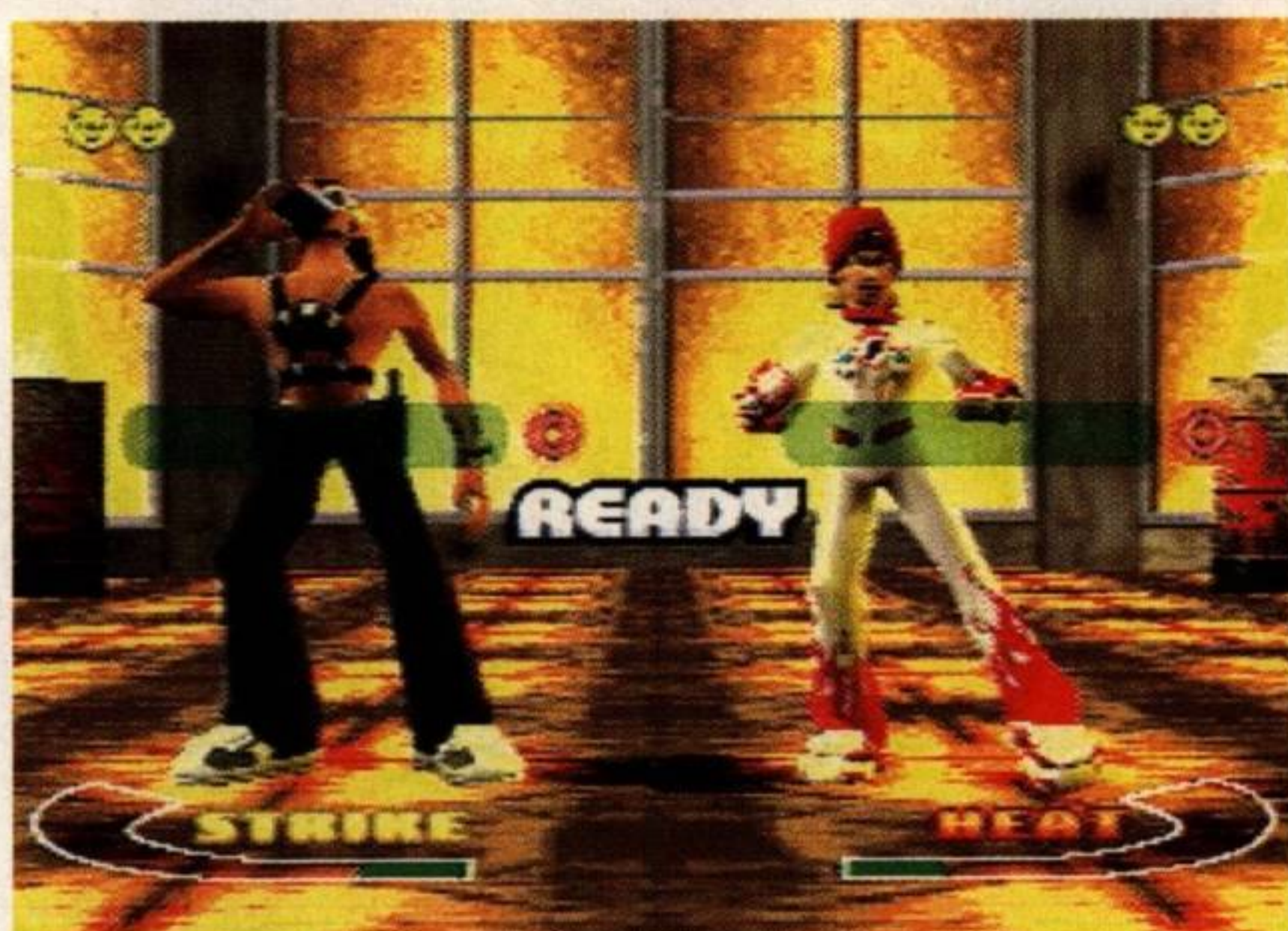
Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 Developer: **Delphine Software International** Style: **Driving** Release: **Out Now**
 Price: **£40.00** Players: **Two**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



With all the fuss about racing games having to be fast at the moment, it's good to see *Moto Racer 2* acknowledging this. It really is extremely fast, but, sadly, this is about the best thing to be said about the game.

Aside from the terrible graphics, there are so many little glitches that it seems as if the developers realised they were making a bad game and gave up on it long before it was finished. Since when did a few blades of grass on the side of the road become such a huge obstacle that they cause a massive motorbike to bounce back across the road after a head-on collision? How do you manage to turn a bike through nearly 180 degrees mid-flight, or miss a tunnel and smash into the side, yet somehow manage to move through the wall losing only 50 mph?

On the plus side, it does come bundled with forty tracks for you to race around and a comprehensive track editor, but that's about all. If this game had been released a year or so back it might have been very impressive, but sadly it's clearly been left too late, and it really shows from the moment you turn it on. **Will** **VERDICT: 27%**



Bust-a-Groove

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Sony** Developer: **Enix** Style: **Dancing Beat-'em-up**
 Release: **Out Now** Price: **£29.99** Players: **1-2**
 Analogue: **No** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



The advent of CD technology has had its good and bad effects on software development. One of the more positive aspects has got to be the recent trend of 'music-based' games, notably *PaRappa the Rappa* and *Fluid* from Sony. *Bust-a-Groove* is very much in the same vein as the former, but substitutes rapping for a dancing competition.

The game takes the form of a traditional beat-'em-up – in other words you must dance against each of your twelve opponents until you eventually reach an impressive boss character, namely Robo Z, the giant city-destroying robot.

The winner of each dance off is decided by the amount of camera time each dancer gets – make the better dance moves and the camera will follow! Dancing is performed by following a series of presses on the directional pad, followed by hitting either the circle or cross buttons in time with the beat. Apart from this, players have the chance to make combos and send 'attacks' over to their opponent.

Visually, *Bust-a-Groove* is excellent, using motion capture techniques for the dancing – the characters look especially solid and move convincingly. The music side of things is, however, somewhat disappointingly dull dance music. But I suppose that sort of thing is a matter of personal taste... right?

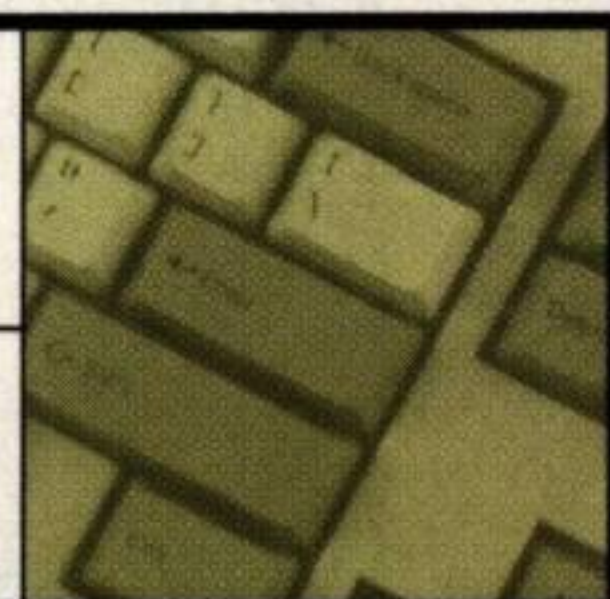
Bust-a-Groove is unlikely to keep you playing for months, but it is a welcome novelty in a PlayStation market dominated by beat-'em-ups and driving games. **Nick**

VERDICT: **75%**



Colin McRae Rally

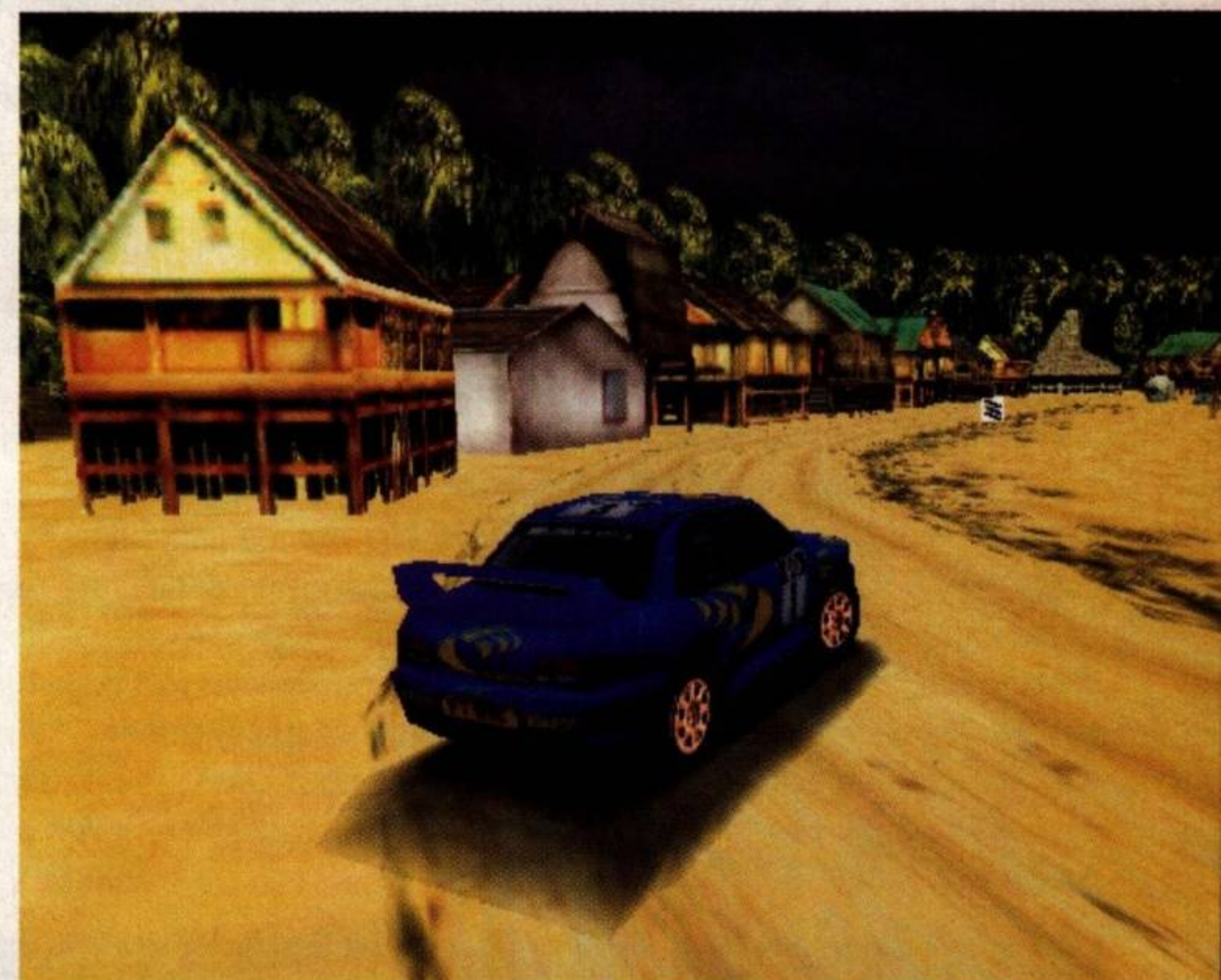
Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Codemasters** Developer: **Codemasters**
 Style: **Racing Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£34.99** Players: **1-8**
 Processor: **P166 P200** Memory: **16MB 32MB** Disk Space: **120MB 200MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**



The premise of this game is simple: *Colin McRae Rally* is an emulation of the World Rally Championship – a good start for a driving game if there ever was one. There are loads of tracks – about twelve in all – and the variety is to be admired; they range from the hot and dusty desert tracks of Australia to the snowbound mountain roads of Switzerland. Of particular note are the UK stages set at night. With only your head lamps and trusty co-pilot to guide you, they are a real test. Handling-wise, the cars are realistic to a point that doesn't ruin the game, and overall the game has an arcade feel to it. Add to this a wealth of options and an enjoyable 'driving school' mode and Codemasters have a winning formula.

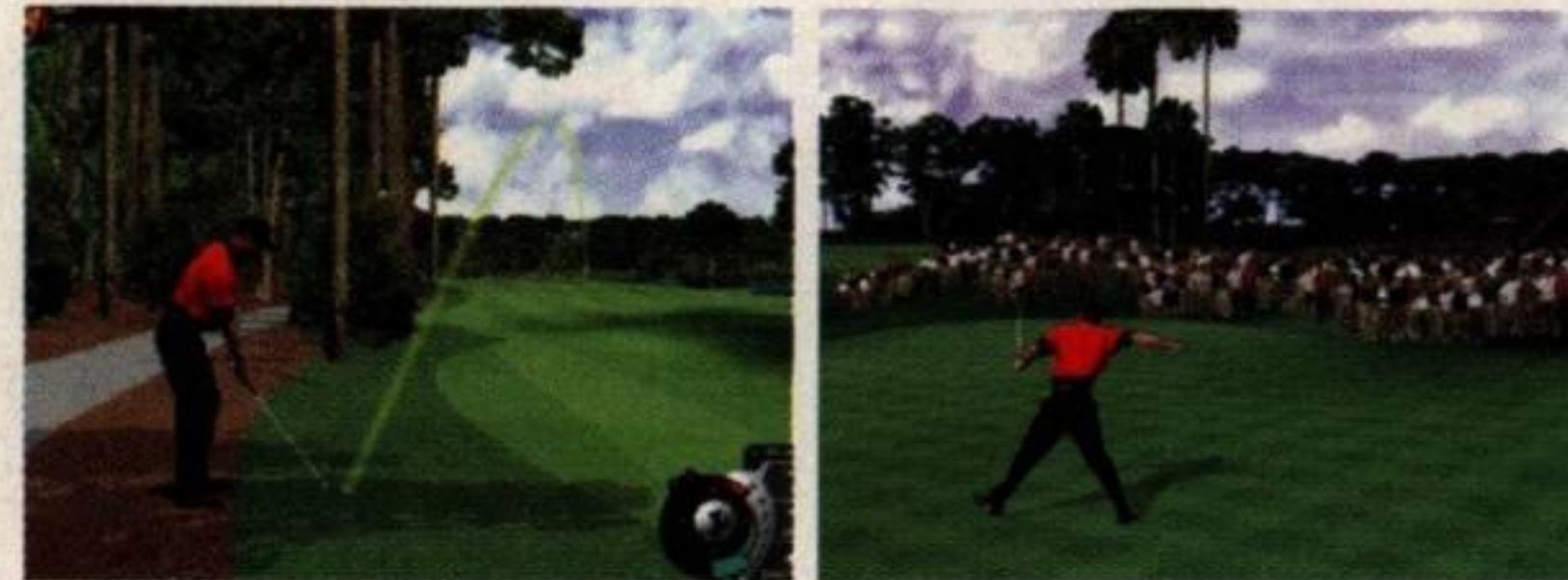
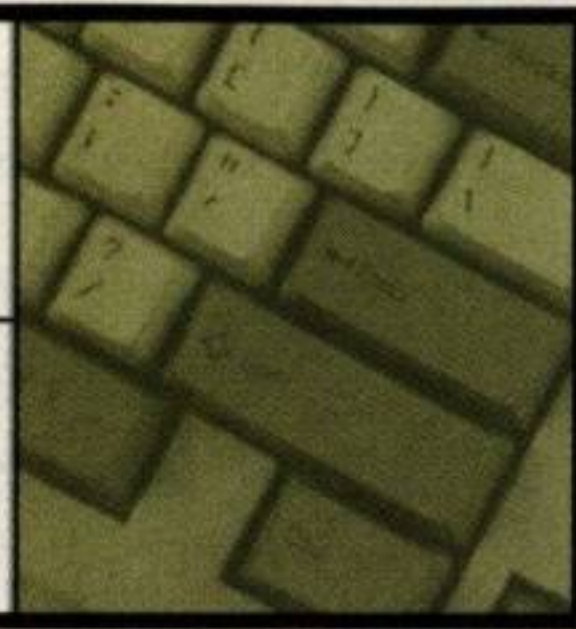
Colin McRae Rally is without doubt one of the best driving games available on the PC, eclipsing *Sega Rally* with ease. If you are a fan of rally sport or just driving games in general, then this game will be a more than welcome addition to your collection. **Nick**

VERDICT: **80%**



Tiger Woods '99

Platform: **PC-CDROM** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **In-House**
 Style: **Golf Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£34.99** Players: **1-8** Processor: **P133 P166**
 Memory: **32MB 32MB** Disk Space: **65MB 505MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**



EA's long-standing relationship with the PGA has taken a new twist with the endorsement of their new product by Tiger Woods. This has allowed EA to implement a few new features that only endorsement by Tiger could allow. For example, this is the first ever golf game to feature special moves. Seriously. Well, okay, there's only one: the 'Tiger shot'. This is activated by hitting the swingometer exactly on all three of the stop points. Tiger fizzes with electricity and unleashes a fearsome drive – the ball moves so fast it's on fire! Pure comedy. This pretty much sets the tone for what is a typically EA golf game. Nice graphics, loads of stats, and no innovation – oh yes, and plenty of sickeningly over-the-top commentary and applause. That 'no innovation' bit isn't exactly true; they've included a 'shot suggestion button' which allows even the most foolish amongst you to play good shots. Not that *Tiger Woods '99* is much of a challenge anyway.

No doubt the Tiger Woods licence will sell this game, and it's true that it is an extremely polished piece of software – it's backwards compatible with previous PGA games, so there are plenty of courses to choose from anyway. One for golf addicts only. **Nick** **VERDICT: 50%**

Rogue Trip

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **GT Interactive**
 Developer: **Singletrac** Style: **Driving Shoot-'em-up**
 Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-4**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



In a post-apocalyptic future where society is in ruins, it's good to now that you can still have a good holiday to get away from it all. However, for most folk there's always that old problem of cost. You and a bunch



of other low-life mercenary scum have come up with the following rather dodgy solution to your average punter's holiday dilemma: You are offering people the opportunity to pay to be driven around in your souped-up car and enjoy the spectacle of you attempting to blow up all of the other mercenaries (and their customers) on city courses such as Nuke York. Along the way you can gain extra money by taking them to a photo spot to give them a quick souvenir. This will help fund repairs and weapon power-ups – though there are plenty of these on the track already.

Rogue Trip is a terrible game – one of the worst I've played on the PlayStation for quite a while. The car physics are ridiculous, allowing the player to turn through 180 degrees in mid-air, and the game doesn't seem capable of differentiating between whatever sort of terrain you are driving over; whether it's concrete, grass or even a river, your car will handle in exactly the same manner over each. Most of the vehicles available have virtually identical characteristics, and the nine weapons on offer are far too easy to come by. Even the four player link-up mode can't save it, because even if you don't have the sense to avoid it, the chances are, most of your mates will. **Will** **VERDICT: 14%**



Duke Nukem: Time to Kill

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **GT Interactive** Developer: **3D Realms**
 Style: **3D Action Adventure** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-2**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



Duke's back again, but this time he's gone third-person. As with most of his other games, the plot is not really important. But, once again, he finds that aliens are running amok in his vicinity and decides it's time to do something about it.

To start with you won't notice too much difference in the general style of the game from *Duke Nukem 3D*. Many of the aliens, such as the shotgun-wielding pig cops, have been ported straight over from the previous game.

You start off in a townscape and make your way into enemy territory. But when I mention that later on you will find yourself in the middle of a Roman bath wearing a small robe and carrying a sword, you'll soon realise that this game has more than its fair share of twists later on (there's a big hint in the name).

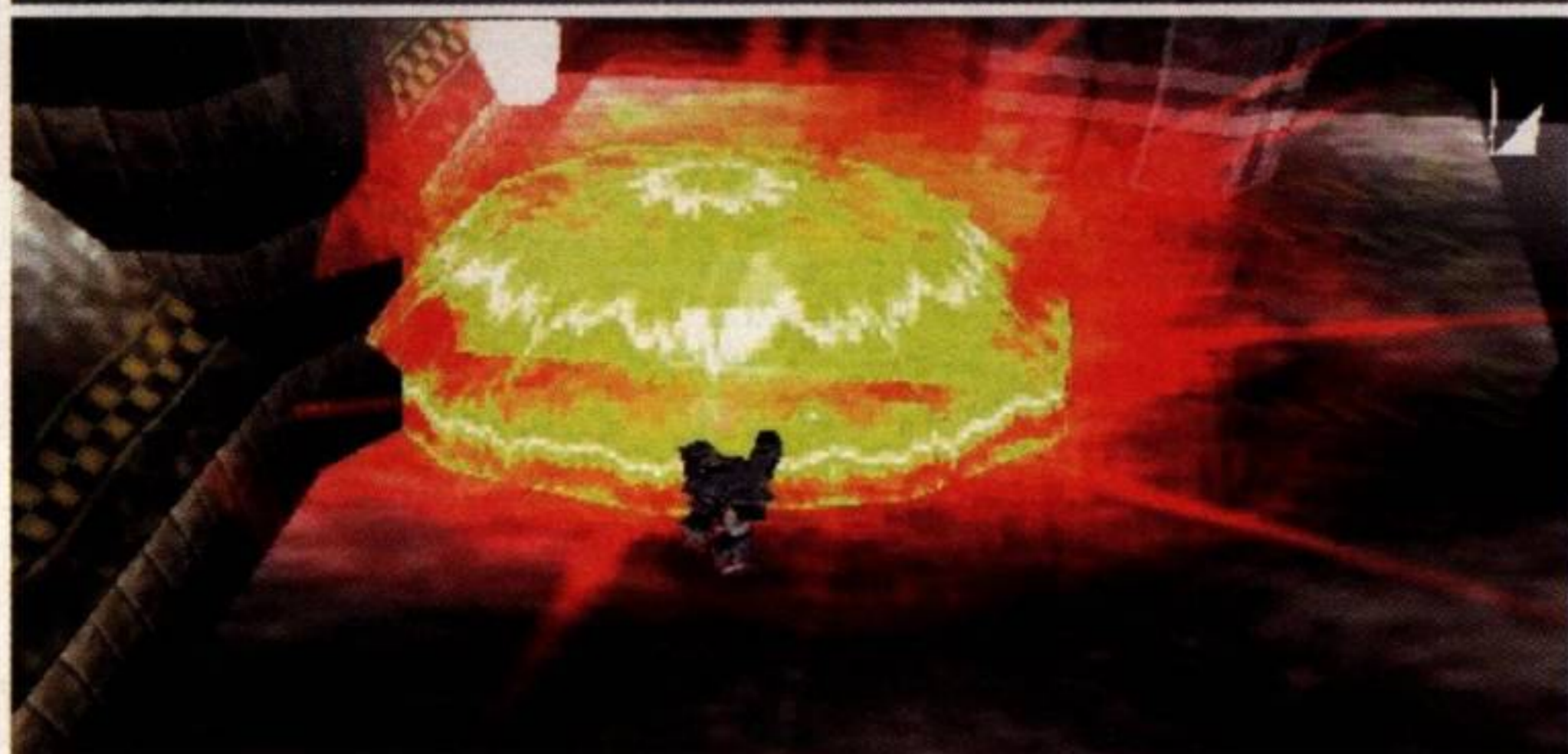
The third-person view works reasonable well, but the below average graphics and occasional jerkiness don't do the game any favours. The biggest and most interesting addition is that there are now a huge number of moves available that couldn't previously be performed in a first-person game, but most of them are very tricky to pull off to any useful effect.

While it's often annoying and looks outdated, *Time to Kill* offers a reasonable challenge that many will happily persist with until its conclusion – and maybe even after, with the somewhat rudimentary split screen deathmatch mode. **Will** **VERDICT: 45%**



Assault

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Telstar**
 Developer: **Candlelight Studios** Style: **Shoot-'em-up**
 Release: **Out Now** Price: **£34.99** Players: **1-2**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



It seems that the retro gaming phenomenon is here to stay. With titles like *R-Types* and the *Atari* and *Namco* collections doing the rounds, someone seems to think that 80s games should be played by the 90s breed of gamers. *Assault* is the latest 90s update of a classic genre: the sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up.

Everything you'd expect is here: aliens, big guns and power-ups, all displayed in 'wondrous' 3D. The advantage in *Assault* is that the camera can move around and give you new and exciting angles to view the on-screen massacre. You can also play with a friend, adding a new dimension to the word 'fun'. And that's all there is to *Assault* really: shooting stuff.

Back in the days when 2D was the norm you could get away with a game like *Assault*. In fact, the genre has seen some classics in its time – *Gryzor* and *Super Probotector* on the SNES spring to mind. However, like the 2D scrolling shoot-'em-up, this kind of game has long since had its day. Games players these days have far bigger expectations of games than just this simplistic shooting gameplay. *Assault* might be of interest for those of you who remember those halcyon days in the arcades, but otherwise don't bother. **Nick**

VERDICT: **35%**

The Fifth Element

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Kalisto Entertainment** Developer: **Gaumont Multimedia** Style: **3D Action Adventure** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99**
 Players: **1-2** Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **One Block**



In years past, film licences usually turned out to be something of a disappointment. But recently some have been surprisingly good – take the stunning *Goldeneye*, for example, along with some of the more recent *Star Wars* conversions and *The Die Hard Trilogy*. *The Fifth Element* is an emphatic return to those golden days of absolutely terrible film-game conversions.

While the game uses plenty of rather nice clips from the film, it doesn't follow the same plot, so they are split up and mixed around – not what fans of the film would want to see. The game is basically a third-person arcade shoot-'em-up. You are given control of either Korben or Leeloo, though you can't choose which, and must work your way to the end of a poorly designed level. The in-game graphics are particularly bad, with dodgy polygon joins and fogging so excessive that enemies can shoot you before they are even visible. The characters turn far too slowly and aiming your gun is extremely difficult. The only plus point is that there are quite a variety of moves available, although you will rarely use them.

The Fifth Element is way past its release-by date, looking very old and lacking a major amount of gameplay. Leave this one to rot on the shelves. **Will**

VERDICT: **17%**



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QUESTION:

Which of these games is best played with a Scorpion light gun?

- Point Blank
- Fluid
- Grand Theft Auto

Name your entry: **'ON FIRE COMPETITION'**

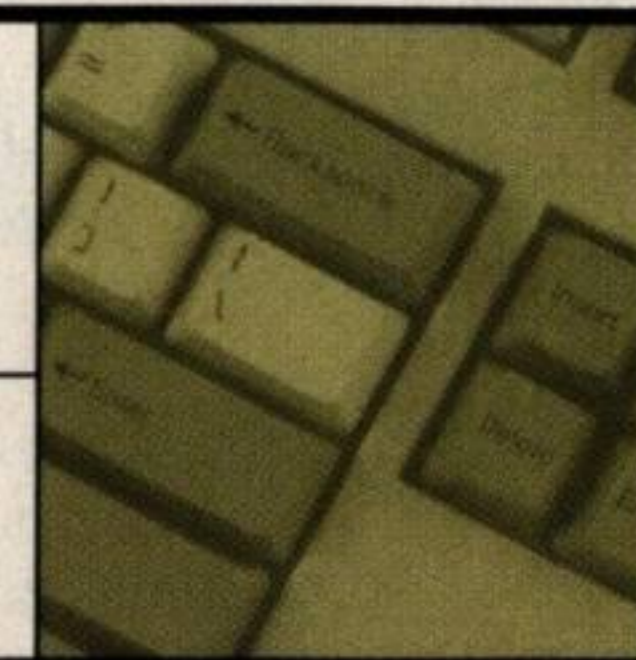
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Mortal Kombat 4

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Midway** Developer: **Midway** Style: **Beat-'em-up** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-8** Processor: **P133 P200** Memory: **16MB 32MB** Disk Space: **24MB 24MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**



The fourth instalment of the not-particularly-good-but-strangely-successful *Mortal Kombat* series is here – with a slight image change; this time the digitised graphics are replaced by a couple of three dimensional models. This graphical change may look good on paper, but watch it moving – it's very disappointing.

There are roughly fifteen moves available to each character, which is a pathetic amount when you compare it to the likes of *Tekken*. The background is totally 2D, and to play it you are certainly going to need a pad. One of the more interesting features is the weapons. Now, by pulling your weapon out of your pants you gain access to a couple of new and more powerful moves. The weapon can be dropped, though, and left for your opponent to pick up.

Maybe they should start calling these games *Immortal Kombat*? This, strangely the sixth game in the series, is every bit as poor as its predecessors. That said, there have been – and probably still are – a couple of fans out there who will probably take a lot away from it. My advice: try before you buy. **Will VERDICT: 30%**



Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation 2

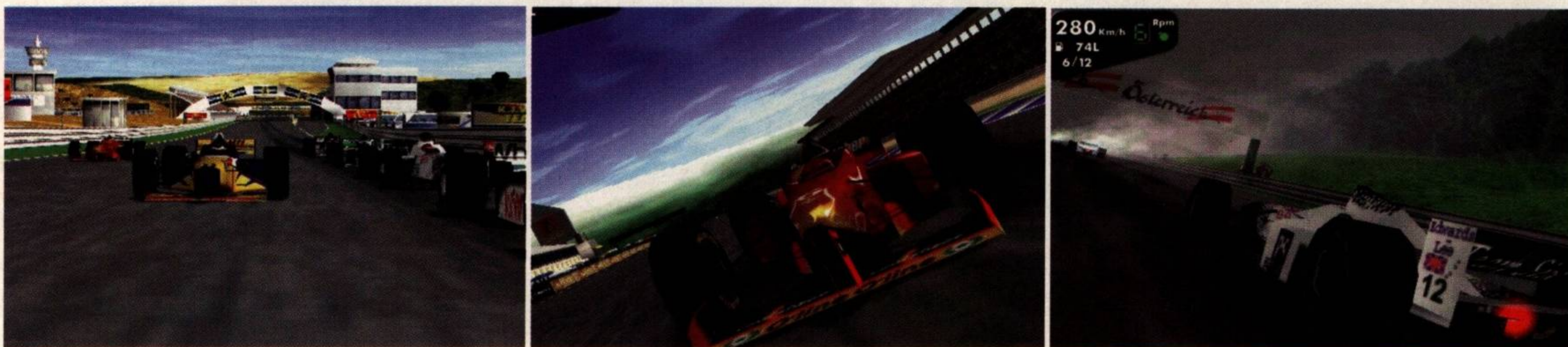
Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Ubi Soft** Developer: **Ubi Soft** Style: **Racing Simulation** Release: **October** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-8** Processor: **P133 P200** Memory: **32MB 64MB** Disk Space: **80MB 300MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**



Surprisingly enough, there haven't been that many decent F1 simulations on the PC recently. But the ridiculously lengthy-titled *Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation 2* (the sequel to *F1 Racing Simulation*) is hoping to change all that. One of the only real problems with this game involves the long-lasting challenge of being able to produce a simulation with plenty of realism while still leaving the playability intact. This is something that Ubi Soft's latest doesn't really manage to pull off to good effect. The graphics are very good, being both super-smooth and very fast. However, most of the F1 tracks have a tendency to be quite dull (though this is no fault of the game itself). The problem is that it's extremely difficult to stay on the track; you'll have to study the races to get to learn the ideal speed to enter each corner, and it's certainly not a game that you can just pick up and play.

As a simulation this is a very good effort, but as a game it's far too tricky and frustrating to hold your attention – unless you are a seriously mainstream Formula 1 fan. **Will**

VERDICT: 39%

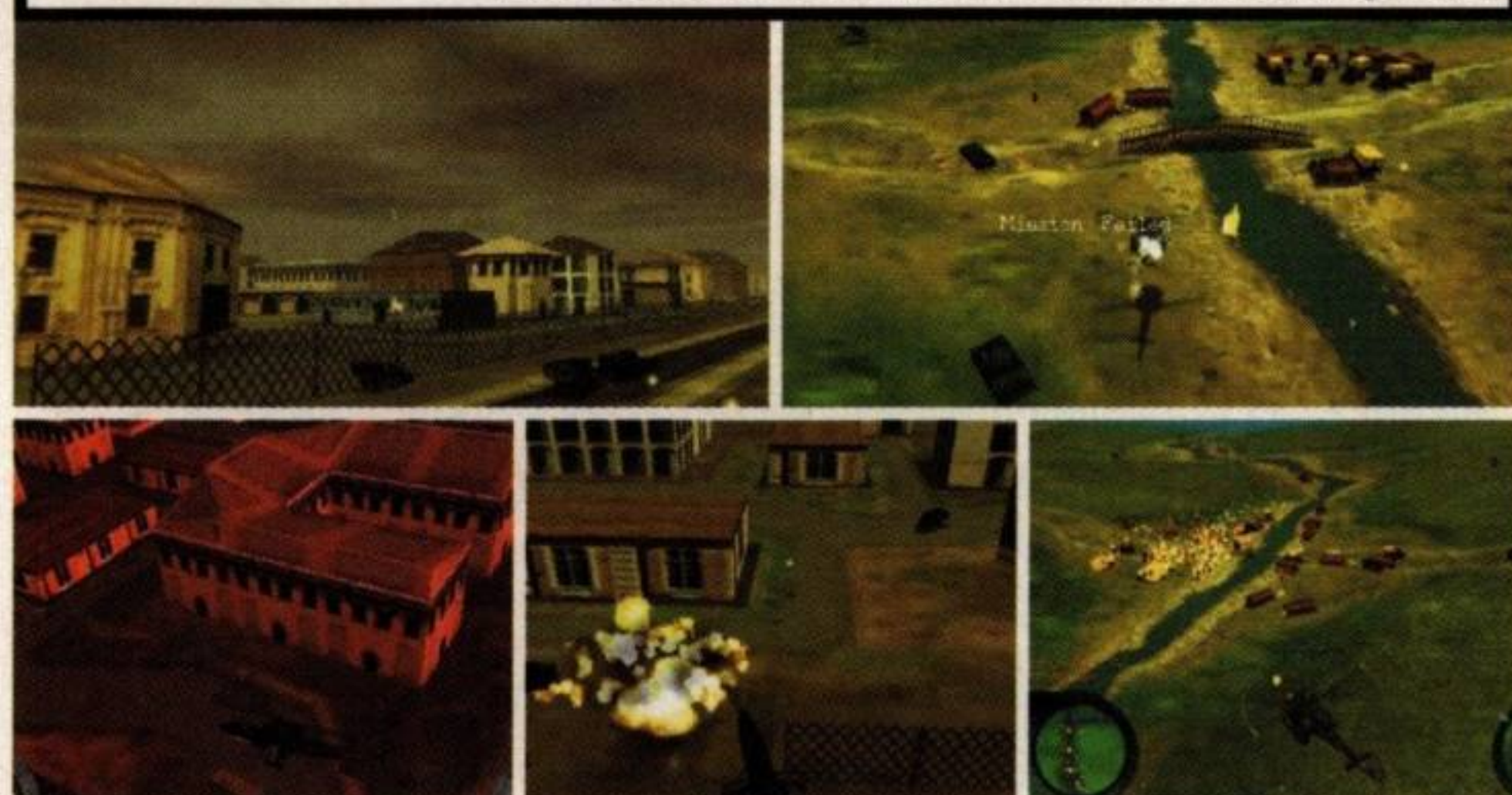




Missing In Action



Platform: **PC** Publisher: **GT Interactive** Developer: **Simis**
 Style: **Arcade shoot-'em-up** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£34.99** Players: **One**
 Processor: **P133 P166** Memory: **16MB 32MB**
 Disk Space: **110MB 110MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**



The Vietnam war may have ended over twenty years ago, but up until recently there have been relatively few computer games based on it. Perhaps it was just too fresh a wound in the American psyche to be a fit subject for an entertainment often perceived as irreverent and trivial. However, after a quarter of a century, *Missing In Action* has come along, featuring arcade-style shoot-'em-up helicopter action based on actual missions from the war in Vietnam.

The game is developed by Simis, better known for their superb flight sims such as *Team Apache* and *Flying Nightmares*. You play an Air Cavalry chopper pilot named Captain Mann, and you are assigned 26 missions divided into four campaigns. The style of the game owes much to the *Strike* series from Electronic Arts, but *MIA* is a lot more realistic. The missions are much more varied, and the design of the terrain is better. There are no power-ups to collect; you have a set amount of ammo and armour, and when it's gone, so are you. There are four different helicopters to fly, depending on the specific mission, and they have realistic weapons configurations and ammunition levels.

Despite the realism, the gameplay is simple and addictive. Using keyboard, pad, or preferably a three-axis joystick, the control of the helicopter is simplified to direction, speed and altitude. Weapons are self-aiming to a certain extent, with big cursors on the ground to indicate where you are pointing them. The explosions are superb, but the best feature of the game is the superb animation of the intelligent enemy units. Drop a grenade in front of a fleeing enemy jeep and watch as it swerves off the road with a screech of tyres.

This game is great fun, yet challenging enough to keep you coming back for more. **Cliff** **VERDICT: 78%**

Montezuma's Revenge



Platform: **Nintendo 64** Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive** Developer: **Tarantula Studios**
 Style: **Platform** Release: **TBA** Price: **£TBA** Game Boy Colour: **Compatible**

It is good to see that there is still a slow but steady supply of games making their way onto Nintendo's little grey box. Sadly, many of them are all the same: basically nothing more than your average Game Boy platformer, and unfortunately *Montezuma's Revenge* falls into that category.

Plots in games like these are far from important, and to cut an unoriginal story short, you find yourself having to jump across various platforms and run away from various baddies.

Montezuma's Revenge is a combination of sideways scrolling and jump screen action. There are various rooms that you will make your way through, each consisting of the obligatory ropes, ladders and sliding platforms that we have come to take as granted over the years. You will also need to collect keys in order to open doors and make your way into the next room. Many of the rooms will have multiple exits, so you can have many routes through to the end of the level.

This is a far from original platformer that doesn't really offer anything new or exciting. Compared to many other games of its type it has trouble standing out, and can only really be classed as an average game. Still, there's plenty of challenge here, and most fans of the genre will be quite happy whiling away the hours with this. **Will**

VERDICT: 43%



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A copy of *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins* and a copy of *Apocalypse*.

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ACTIVISION

QUESTION:

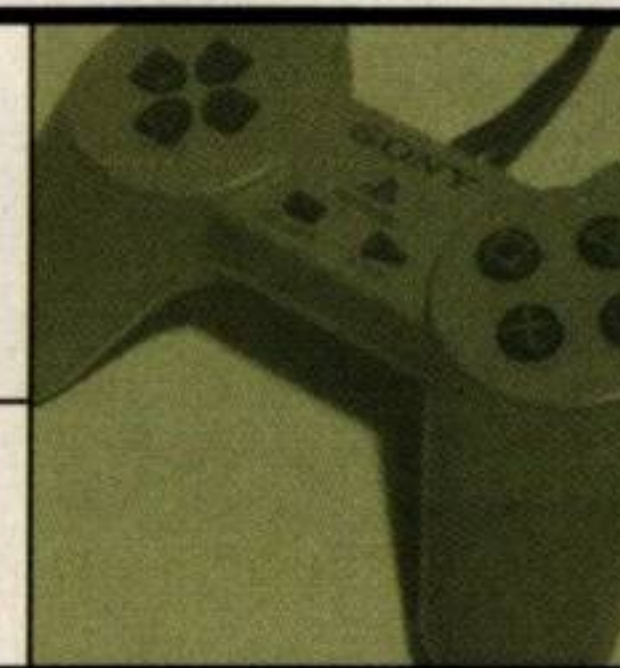
Which Hollywood star appears in the game *Apocalypse*?

Tom Cruise
Bruce Willis
Sylvester Stallone

Name your entry:
APOCALYPSE NOW COMP

NHL '99

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **EA Sports** Style: **Ice Hockey Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-8** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **1 Block** Analogue **Yes**

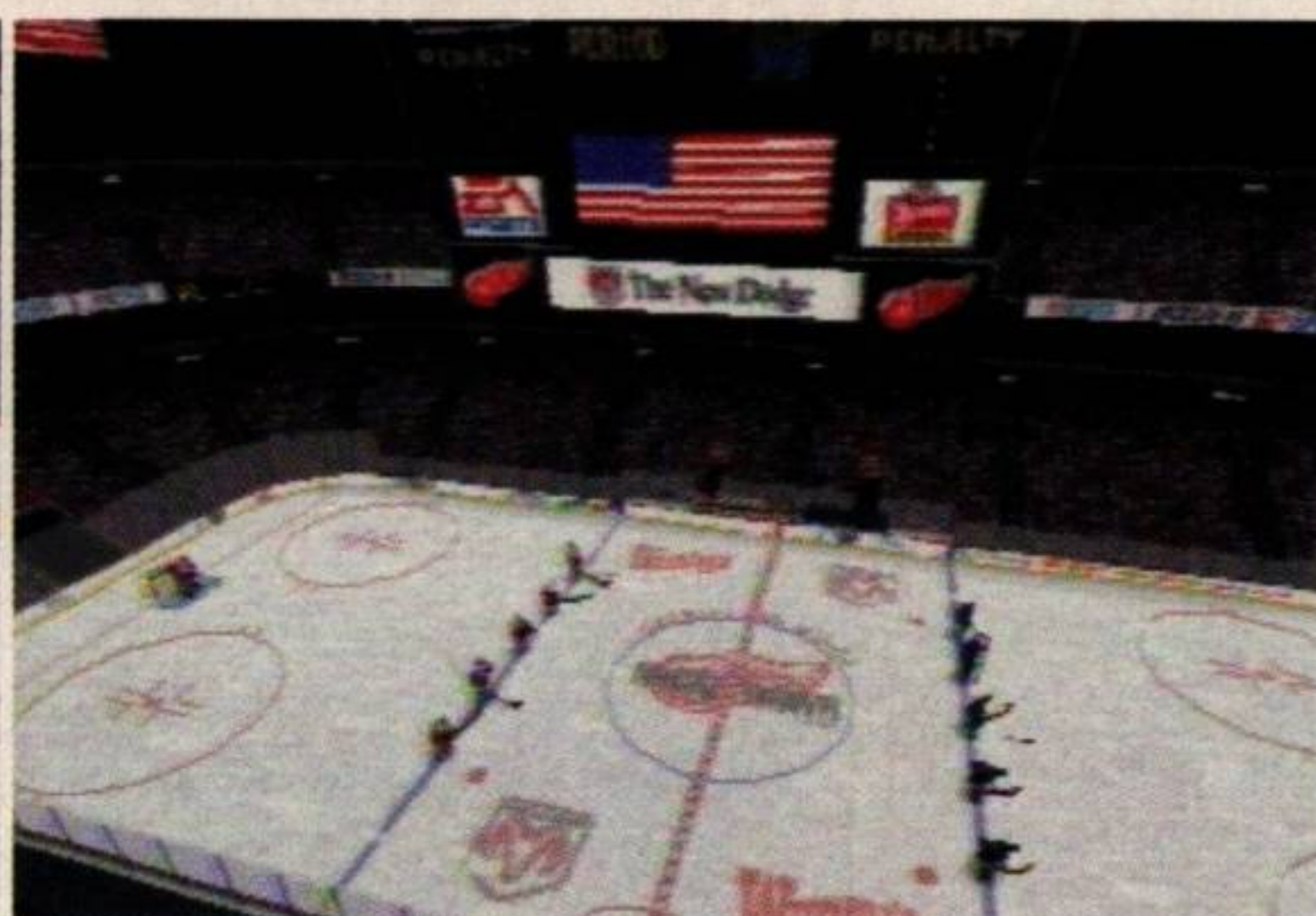
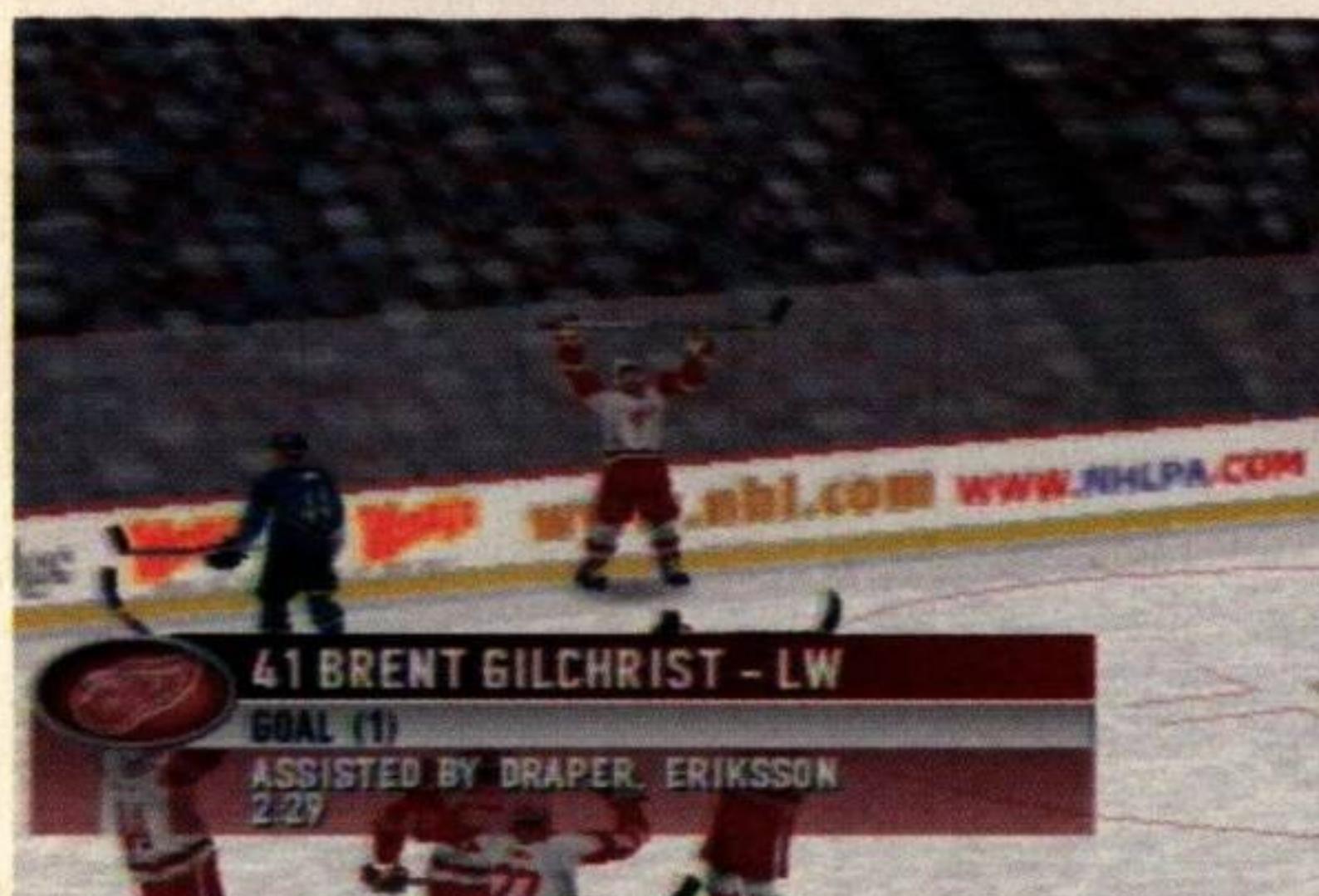


Ice hockey games are one of the few sports that convert well to the computer screen – probably because you don't have immediate control of your players, meaning that most games are very tense and huge fun to play. The *NHL* series of ice hockey games has progressed from its early Megadrive days very well, and *NHL '99* improves upon the previous games – but not by much.

Basically you've now got some slightly crisper graphics, better-looking and more fluently animated players and some improved AI – not much too shout about when you're trying to improve on the previous game. But it's still great fun, especially in multiplayer mode. There's also a fully comprehensive coaching feature, a vastly improved fighting system (with energy bars) and enough options to keep you happy for a pretty long time.

If you liked the other game then you will probably prefer this game, but under no circumstances is it worth the extra money. If you've never played an *NHL* game before then this is certainly worth a look – even if you hate the sport. Perhaps the best point about the game is that a conversion to the N64 (and the PC) is underway, so Nintendo nuts will also be able to play EA's latest too. **Will**

VERDICT: **72%**



Chopper Attack

Platform: **N64** Publisher: **GT Interactive** Developer: **Midway**
Style: **3D Shoot-'em-up** Release: **Out Now**
Price: **£49.99** Players: **One**
Rumble Pak: **Yes** Memory Pak: **No** Expansion Pak: **No**



Chopper Attack is a 3D helicopter-based shoot-'em-up in a similar vein to *Desert Strike*, the difference being that this isn't a good game.

From the moment that you pick it up, the controls are awkward and your craft does not fly well. Over-turning is far too common, which removes the much-needed control element that is vital in all shoot-'em-ups.

You do have access to eight different choppers which, admittedly, handle in a noticeably different manner to each other. The level of weaponry that you take with you depends on how much money you have, which you receive both during and after a mission. The targeting cursor does not show your whereabouts on the map you are targeting, but instead is a mid-way point between the line of your guns and your target. This is initially very difficult to master, but will be quickly learned.

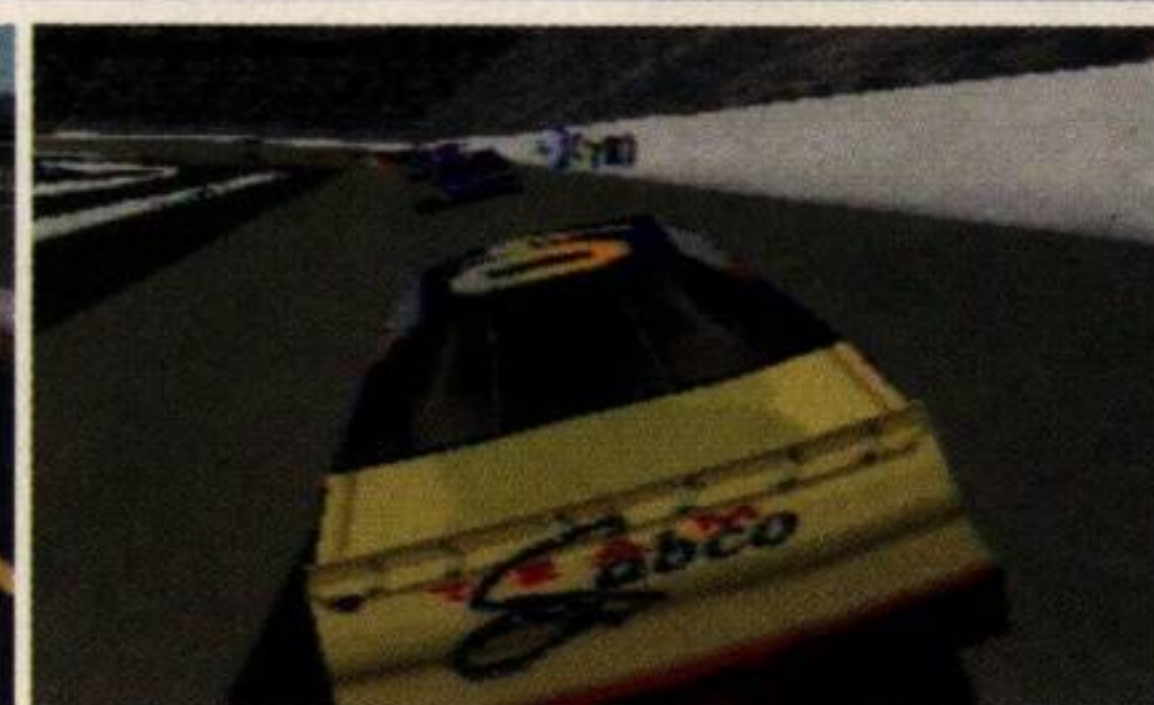
Chopper Attack is a typical low-key shoot-'em-up, part of a genre that is only beginning to take off on the N64. But with the likes of *Buck Bumble* just around the corner, the odds of *Chopper Attack* ever getting off the ground are pretty slim. **Will**

VERDICT: **41%**



NASCAR '99

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **EA Sports** Style: **Racing Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-2** Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes** Memory Card: **1 Block**



Not that I'm picky, but how many people think that racing around 18 almost entirely circular race tracks in a car that is about as responsive as a dead fish is ever going to be any fun to play? *NASCAR '99* not only looks dated, but plays like a bad game too – anyone apart from hard-core NASCAR fans will agree.

To achieve success you must first unlock some of the hidden drivers in the game. To start with you are given a choice of 31 drivers, but after completing a championship of length 50% or more you will find another six. The problem is that a race of 50% can consist of up to 250 laps – hardly an enticing prospect. Who'd ever want to race a game throughout the whole 100%?

One thing you'll notice is that the cars don't respond very well at all – not that they need to on the circular courses – but to start with you won't realise whether you are supposed to be controlling the car or not. It's not really that necessary, because most of the tracks are very simple – with the exception of two 'out of stadium tracks' that also don't work well because of the control system.

NASCAR '99 is certainly a game that you should make sure that you like before you seriously consider buying it. **Will**

VERDICT: **27%**



Blaze and Blade

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Funsoft** Developer: **T&E Soft**
 Style: **RPG** Release: **November** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-4**
 Analogue: **No** Dual Shock: **No** Memory Card: **3-15 Blocks**



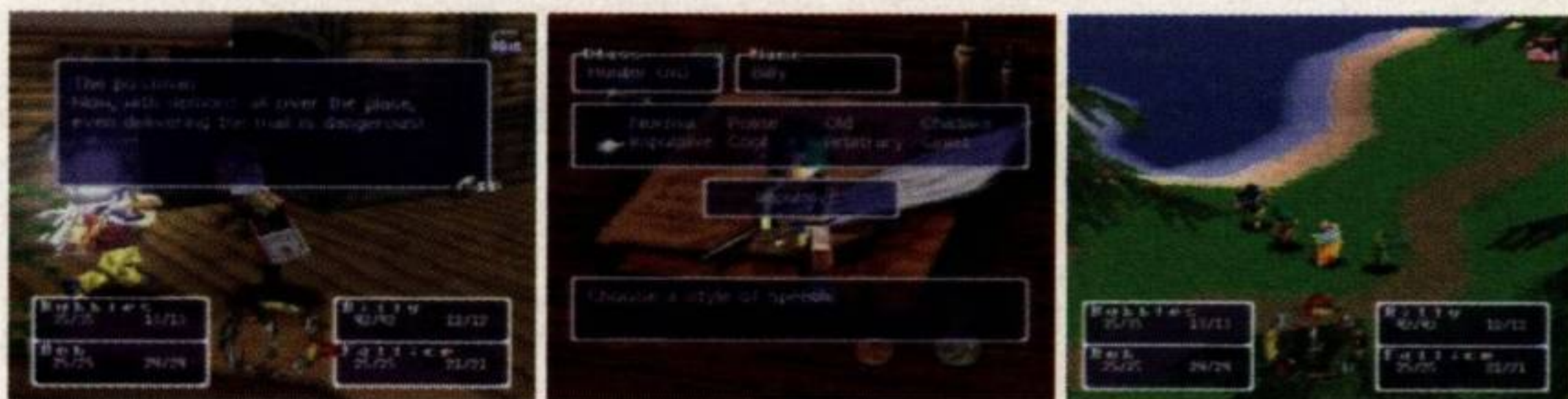
Long ago in a land called Foresia, a culture of magic that had thrived for centuries was destroyed after a horde of demons were accidentally summoned into the realm. Now it is a forbidden place, and you and your team of adventurers have decided that this is where they want to go exploring.

Any RPG that begins with a plot like this isn't really going to manage to generate the same kind of excitement as a game such as *Final Fantasy VIII* or *Parasite Eve*. The calibre of any RPG relies heavily on the quality of the story, and so, unsurprisingly, the game didn't manage to interest me for long.

Before playing, the characters are created by allocating names and attributes to a player model, which are then saved on a memory card. Even if you play a one player game you can still use a team of four, so when each player takes up three blocks on your memory card you'll need to reserve almost a whole card to playing this game.

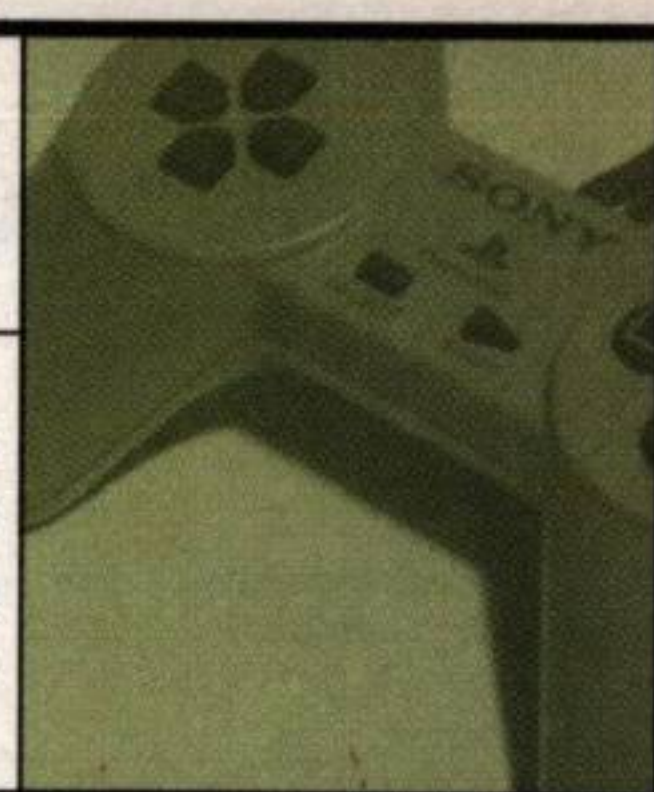
The graphics are exceptionally bad, the sound isn't much better, the loading times are far too long (and also occur far too frequently), the menus are confusing and need to be accessed in real-time, combat is messy and enemies spontaneously appear on the screen when you hang around for too long.

To sum it up, *Blaze and Blade* is a bad game, only recommended to extremely desperate fans of the RPG genre. **Will** **VERDICT: 30%**



Legend

Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Funsoft** Developer: **Toka Soft**
 Style: **Hack-'em-up** Release: **November** Price: **£34.99**
 Players: **1-2** Analogue: **No** Dual Shock: **No**
 Memory Card: **1 Block**



Golden Axe was a game that many people devoted many weeks of their life to when it was released on the MegaDrive and later the Amiga. The closest thing that we've had to a remake of the sideways scrolling hack-'em-up since then has been *Fighting Force* (or the Tekken Force mode), but *Legend* once again takes us back to the days of swords, sorcery and bigger swords, in what is actually a very enjoyable game.

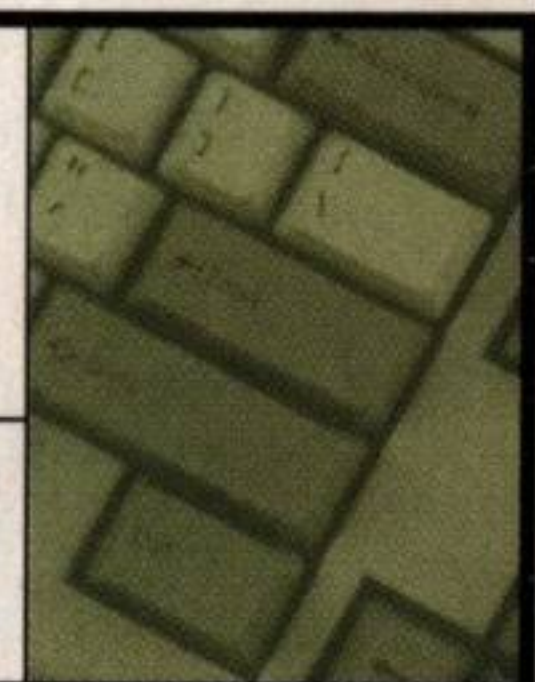
Before embarking on a mission to rescue the enslaved king of Tokavia from his evil brother, you may choose from one of three warriors to take you on your quest. Each of the characters has similar moves, including several combos and magic spells, but they all perform them in a slightly different way. You travel from left to right and come across several small bands of mutants, barbarians and general hard guys along the way. All of the baddies are surprisingly tough and show reasonable intelligence, making the game very difficult. Some of them will even drop weapons after they're dead, which you can then pick up and use until you wear them out, and at the end of the game you reach a shop where you can buy loads of different weapons, potions, extra lives, etc.

Legend is huge fun, but its repetitive nature means that the lastability stems mainly from the two player co-op mode. Still, it's definitely worth checking out. **Will** **VERDICT: 71%**



Emergency!

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **ASCII** Developer: **16 Tons**
 Style: **Emergency Services Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£29.99** Players: **One** Processor: **P90/P90** Memory: **16MB/16MB**
 Disk Space: **48MB/48MB** 3D Accelerator: **Not supported**

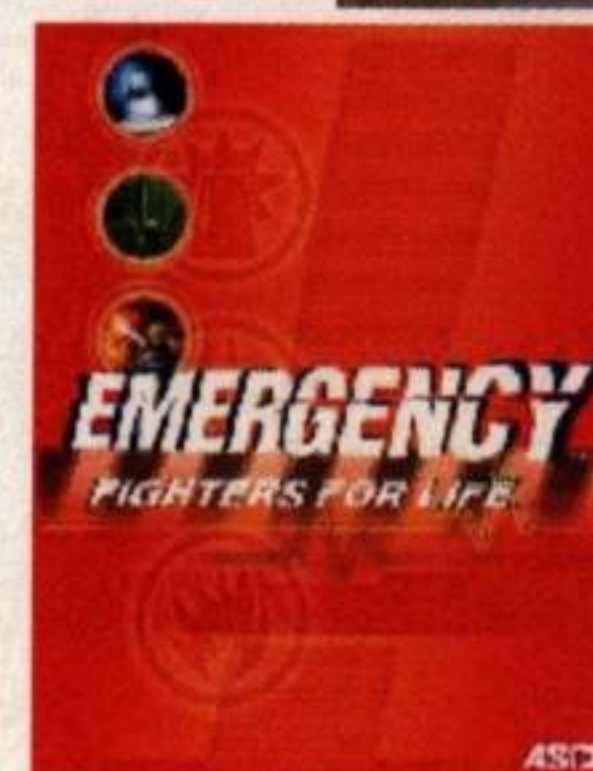


There have to be a thousand other ways this game could have been done. It could have been exciting or darkly humorous, or even totally realistic. Instead, it is dull, prosaic and about five years out of date.

The isometric 3D view resembles *Theme Hospital*, but *Emergency* has none of the humour of that game. The vehicles are chunky and unimaginative, and are not in any way accurate simulations of real emergency vehicles. Although there is a wide variety, the emergency situations themselves are contrived and unrealistic, and don't even look good. There is only one correct way of doing each mission, and you simply select one vehicle, person or option after another until you complete it. Get it 'wrong' and you have to do it all over again. It is boring, methodical and no fun whatsoever.

If you ignore the morality of making a game out of major human tragedies and accept it as entertainment, then surely the whole point of such a product should be to capture the danger and excitement of an emergency situation. Unfortunately, this game is about as exciting as a trip to the dentist. I just don't see the point of this product. It isn't accurate enough to be a simulator or entertaining enough to be a decent game, so what is it for?

Emergency is an appallingly dull little game that takes all the fun out of a good road accident. **Cliff** **VERDICT: 32%**



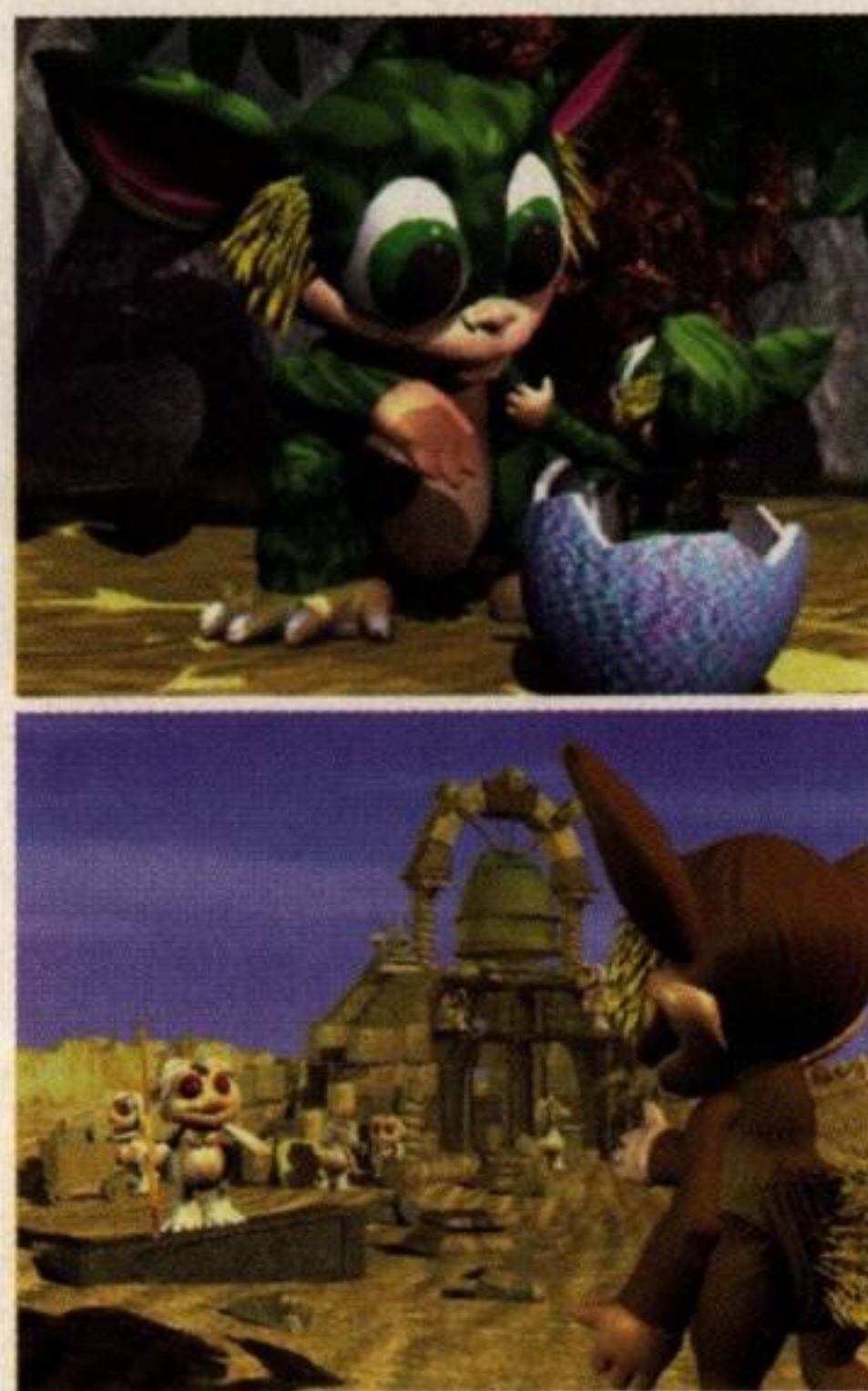
Creatures 2

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Mindscape** Developer: **Cyberlife** Style: **Parent Sim** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99** Players: **One**
Processor: **P166 P233** Memory: **16MB 32MB** Disk Space: **300MB 300MB** 3D Accelerator: **Not Supplied**

Until I experienced this piece of software (definitely not to be confused with a game), I had no idea how frustrating being a parent could be. Your goal in *Creatures 2*, as it was in the original, is to hatch an egg containing an infant Norn and then raise the infant as if it were your own. This involves teaching them everything – for example, the names of objects such as 'Ball', 'Food', and 'Teleporter'. Depending on how intelligent your Norn is, it will either learn these things almost instantly – at which point you should reward it with a quick tickle – or frustrate you to the point of insanity – in which case your only revenge is to administer a rather feeble slap to the Norn's behind. And so it goes on. Eventually your Norns will reach maturity, learn more complicated actions and even breed with each other. At which point it all begins again – except that babies will retain a little of their parent's knowledge, supposedly making it less frustrating for the player.

Creatures 2 is actually an amazing product, containing highly advanced artificial intelligence and some great ideas. Unfortunately, I have no idea who the target audience is. Kids will bore of it very quickly, I imagine, while their parents are already not enjoying a similar game called 'adult life'. Lastability won't be a problem if you're willing to stick at it, but that's only because it'll take you weeks and weeks to really get any sense of achievement. A clever piece of programming, but if I want to bang my head against a brick wall, I will – it's a lot cheaper. **Justin**

VERDICT: **49%**



FA Premier Manager

Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **In-House**
Style: **Football Management** Release: **Out Now** Price: **£TBA** Players: **One**
Processor: **TBA** Memory: **TBA**
Disk Space: **TBA** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**

The market is awash with football management sims at the moment – it must be that time of year again. Almost every fan of the genre will admit that there is only one contender for the best management sim, and that is the glorious *Championship Manager 2*. Many have tried to match this game's depth and immersion, but almost all have failed. Despite the official FA Premiership licence, *FA Premier Manager* from EA falls into the latter category.

One of the most important aspects of the genre for football fans has got to be the in-depth statistics of both players and teams. *FA Premier Manager '99* is severely lacking here, with players only rated on a few general phases. Okay, this may be little more realistic, but there is something strangely appealing about all the facts and figures in *CM2*.

There are a couple of good ideas here – youth team football is a welcome addition, along with the EAMail system where you communicate with people via e-mail. There is also an option to watch each match in its entirety, but this is poorly executed and resembles a school yard kickabout rather than a Premiership game.

There's also too much depth to the management side of things – since when did managers have a say in merchandising and stadium improvements? This part is a time-consuming but necessary to raise cash, but only serves to distract from the important side of things – the team management.

All in all, *FA Premier Manager '99* tries too hard to be a comprehensive simulation but fails on the most basic of things. Save your money for *CM3*.

Nick

VERDICT: **56**



Reservoir Rat

Platform: **Game Boy** Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive**
Developer: **Tarantula Studios**
Style: **Platform** Release: **TBA** Price: **£TBA**
Game Boy Colour: **Compatible**

Reservoir Rat is a game that never attempted to break any moulds – it's everything you would expect from a Game Boy platform game and nothing more.

Reservoir Rat is split into a number of taxing levels. In each, you will have to kill every bad guy and collect every item before the exit opens and you can move onto the next. Luckily you've got a gun, so killing the enemies isn't too much trouble, but leave them for too long and they will quickly regenerate. To stop them you need to run over their bodies, so shooting them from too far a distance can cause trouble. When all of the items and monsters have been collected and killed, you will have a set time limit to reach the exit before you are chased by another invincible bad guy, so there is some strategy to the order in which you complete each level, which are all fairly non-linear.

Basically you can tell if this is the game you want to buy from the screenshots. There's nothing new or original about it – it even borrows the music from the 'Peter Gunn theme'. That said, it is still fun to play (in small doses) and should keep most platform fans happy. **Will**

VERDICT: **67%**





V-Rally Platinum Edition



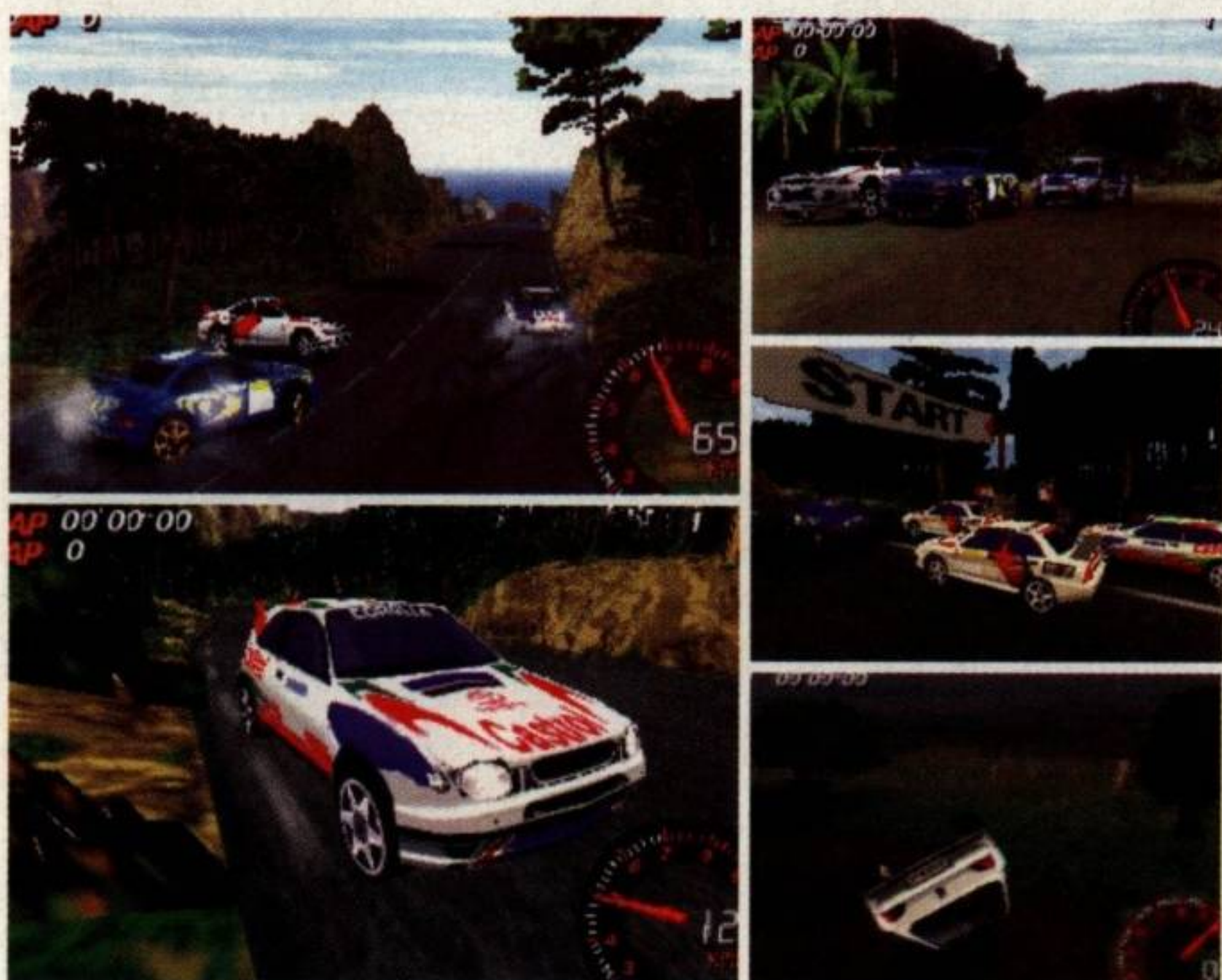
Platform: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Infogrames**
 Developer: **In-House** Style: **Racing**
 Release: **Out Now** Price: **£19.99** Players: **1-2**
 Analogue: **Yes** Dual Shock: **Yes**
 Memory Card: **Yes**

When *V-Rally* first appeared on the PlayStation it took almost every fan of the driving game's breath away. It was the first game, apart from Namco's *Ridge Racer* games, to challenge *Sega Rally* as 'best driving game'. Things have changed a bit since then, and the market has moved on. Titles like *Gran Turismo* and, more importantly, *Colin McRae Rally* have come along and showed just how to make a driving game to rival the arcade experience.

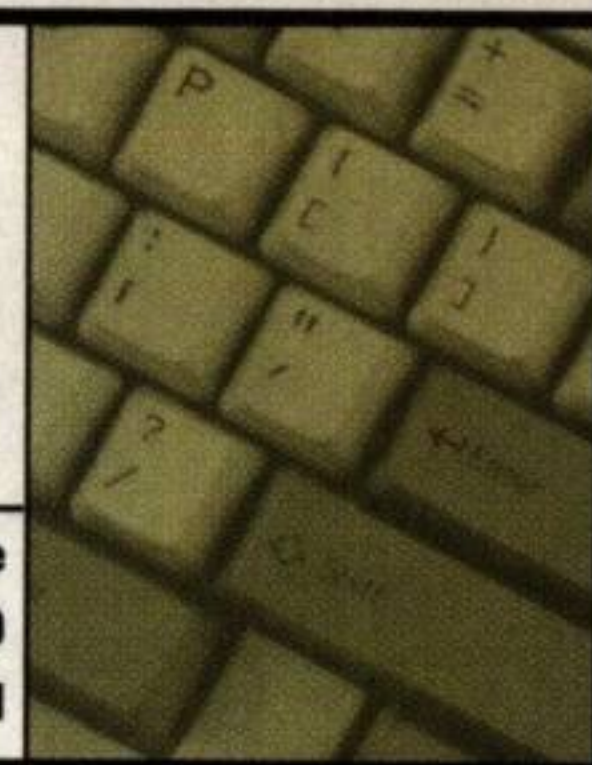
Playing *V-Rally* after these two little beauties makes you realise just how far the genre has come – better car handling, faster game engines and a generally better driving experience. *V-Rally* still has a lot going for it; no other rally game offers the same arcade thrills and spills, whilst the two player racing is still a delight.

V-Rally on Sony's Platinum label is by no means a bad thing. The game has undergone a few tweaks here and there (it now supports analogue control and dual shock) and is still a good game, even by today's high standards. For twenty notes you could do a lot worse. If you're a fan of arcade racing then you'll get a lot out of this title – it's just that *Colin McRae Rally* does it so much better. **Nick**

VERDICT: **78%**



Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit



Platform: **PC** Publisher: **Electronic Arts** Developer: **Electronic Arts** Style: **Arcade Racing**
 Release: **Out Now** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-8** Processor: **P133 P200**
 Memory: **16MB 32MB** Disk Space: **90MB 110MB** 3D Accelerator: **Optional**

The third version of this popular racing game should be in the shops by the time you read this, and it looks like EA have learned from the criticism of the second one. The new game still has an impressive list of licensed supercars, but it now has some unique features which set it apart from other driving games. The most obvious is implied in the sub-title. In *Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit* you have a choice; either drive like the wind and try to outrun the law, or change sides and take the controls of a super-fast police pursuit car, aiming to catch and apprehend law breakers on the roads.

One novel feature is the ability to download new cars from EA's web site for use in the game. The first of these, the impressive Spectre R42, is already available. Others will be added over the following months. The game has eight well designed tracks, ranging from desert to Alpine environments, and they are full of jumps, tunnels and sneaky shortcuts. The graphics are impressive, with coloured lights, blowing dust and leaves, and a high frame-rate for smooth scrolling.

Another handy feature is the split-screen two player mode, allowing two drivers to compete on the same machine. The only weak links in this formula are the handling, which is not all it could be, and the rather annoying ease with which you can be stopped by the police. Instead of allowing you to reverse out of trouble and escape, as soon as your car stops they have you and after three times it's game over. **Will**

VERDICT: **70%**



WIN a Playstation



QUESTION:

Sponsored by:

Gran Turismo is billed as?
Surreal Drive Simulator
Quite a good driving game
The Real Driving Simulator



Name your entry:

GRAB A GRAN COMP

Plus:

A copy of Gran Turismo
 and a Dual Shock Analogue pad



Dreamcast Concept - A PLACE
WHERE PEOPLE ENJOY ENTERTAINMENT



Sweet Dreams

A strange new logo and a name
without the word **'Play'** or a number in it.
What are Sega up to?



Dreamcast™



Isao Okawa
CHAIRMAN
SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.

The pace of change in societal trends around the world has increased dramatically. Significant advances in network, communications, and satellite technologies in recent years have changed our social infrastructure, speeding up the way we all interact. As part of this change, people's desires have shifted and people today want things that are both artistically creative and functional.

The new generation video game machine that we unveil today, "Dreamcast", is truly a "dream machine", incorporating the most advanced technologies from the world's leading companies in their respective fields of Information Technology. With your support, I am confident that "Dreamcast" will become a de facto standard for the future of all digital entertainment.

I encourage everyone from artists to developers and distributors to participate in the Dreamcast project. Together with you, I would like to boldly bring Dreamcast into the 21st century.

Your support is deeply appreciated.

On November 27 1998, we will see the start of a new 'next generation' console war. Sega will launch the Dreamcast onto an excited Japanese public and attempt to resurrect their flagging console credibility.

While the Saturn is still seen as a partial success in Japan, the console was not well received outside of its native country. The reasons for this are well documented. Despite the Saturn being first out of the blocks in all major territories, it was beaten hands down by the PlayStation. Better marketing and a public perception that Sony's machine was the more powerful of the two led to domination in the 32-bit market for the PlayStation. Also, it didn't help that Sega didn't fully recognise the 3D revolution that was about to take place, releasing a console which was first and foremost a 2D machine – three dimensions were almost put in as an afterthought.

Dream on...

With the Dreamcast, Sega are sure that they will not repeat their mistakes. Not only are they first out of the blocks again,

this time they have a machine that will take some beating – not only by rival console manufacturers, but by PC technologies as well. To put it in a nutshell, the Dreamcast offers better than high-end PC power for the price of a console.

How have they managed this? Well, Sega admit that they will be absorbing a huge loss on the making of the console (the Dreamcast is expected to retail for around the equivalent of £140 in Japan), but they expect to make their money on the

TO COMPETE WITH THE CURRENT PLAYSTATION USER BASE (SOMEWHERE IN THE REGION OF 37 MILLION PLAYSTATIONS WORLDWIDE), SOMETHING RADICAL IS NEEDED.

software. Could this be seen as a desperate measure on Sega's behalf? Well, yes and no. The PlayStation experience has taught companies the importance of having a huge installed user base, and to compete with the current PlayStation user base (somewhere in the region of 37 million PlayStations worldwide), something radical is needed. Sega would like to undermine Sony's huge market share with an irresistible package of fantastic performance at an inexpensive price. And if anyone in Europe fears that they will be overlooked as a minor →

CONFIRMED DREAMCAST DEVELOPERS

Acclaim
Adeline
Appaloosa Interactive
Argonaut
Atari Games
Atlus
Birthday
Bizarre Creations
Capcom
Cavedog
Climax
Core
Data East
Duck Corporation
Electronic Arts
Enix
Epic Megagames
Eurocom
Fortyfive
Fox Interactive
General Entertainment
Genki
Gremlin
GT Interactive
Hudson Soft
Human
ID Software
Imagineer
Infogrames
Interplay
JVC/Victor
Kalisto
Konami
Lionhead
MCS Masaya
Microcabin
Microprose
Midway
NEC
Nigma
No Cliche
Ocean
Oddworld Inhabitants
Psygnosis
Rage Software
Red Company
Red Lemon
Revenant
Shiny
Silicon Dreams
Surreal Software
Tecmo
TE Soft
Treasure
Taito
Tantrum
UbiSoft
Video System
Visual Concepts
Warp
Zeneraru Entertainment



Shoichiro Irimajiri
PRESIDENT
SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD

Thanks to the support of its many customers all over the world, Sega will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2001.

Working with many creative and talented individuals, I started the development of our new video game machine with two objectives in mind: 1) to develop a system that will lead Sega into the 21st century; and 2) to provide content that directly addresses the needs and wants of consumers. In order to achieve these objectives for Dreamcast, Sega has drawn upon research and development resources of some of the world's most prominent technology providers.

Through the provision of a wide variety of software content for the platform, I am confident Dreamcast will provide an entirely new world of entertainment opportunity – one that surpasses the limitations of both time and space.

Today Sega establishes "Dreamcast" not only as the name for its new video game console, but as the name for an independent, revolutionary new brand in digital entertainment worldwide.

With "Dreamcast", Sega will continue to enrich people's lives by providing the highest level of entertainment experience.



THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

Evolution is the first RPG to be announced for the Dreamcast. *FFVII* showed the importance of a strong RPG for success in Japan



territory, CEO of Sega Europe, Kazutoshi Miyake, had this to say about Sega's future role in Europe: "Our goal is to deliver unprecedented gaming experiences to European consumers. Dreamcast will achieve this goal. All prominent publishers/developers are already supporting Dreamcast, guaranteeing from day one the strongest software line-up ever available for a new videogame console." The delayed release date for America and Europe is there so that Sega can have 30 or so titles on sale at the launch.

take this as an accurate figure. All you need to know is that the results are simply superb. Sound is handled by Yamaha's 3D sound chip, giving programmers 64 channels to use for music, speech and sound effects.

A modem that will allow gameplay over the Internet and potentially enable users to download extra game data will come as standard in the US and Japan, although this has yet to be confirmed for Europe. The reasoning behind this is simply that Japanese and American Internet users have enjoyed free local

"...ALL PROMINENT PUBLISHERS/DEVELOPERS ARE ALREADY SUPPORTING DREAMCAST, GUARANTEEING FROM DAY ONE THE STRONGEST SOFTWARE LINE-UP EVER AVAILABLE FOR A NEW VIDEOGAME CONSOLE"

calls for some time now – something that BT are reluctant to do despite considerable pressure.

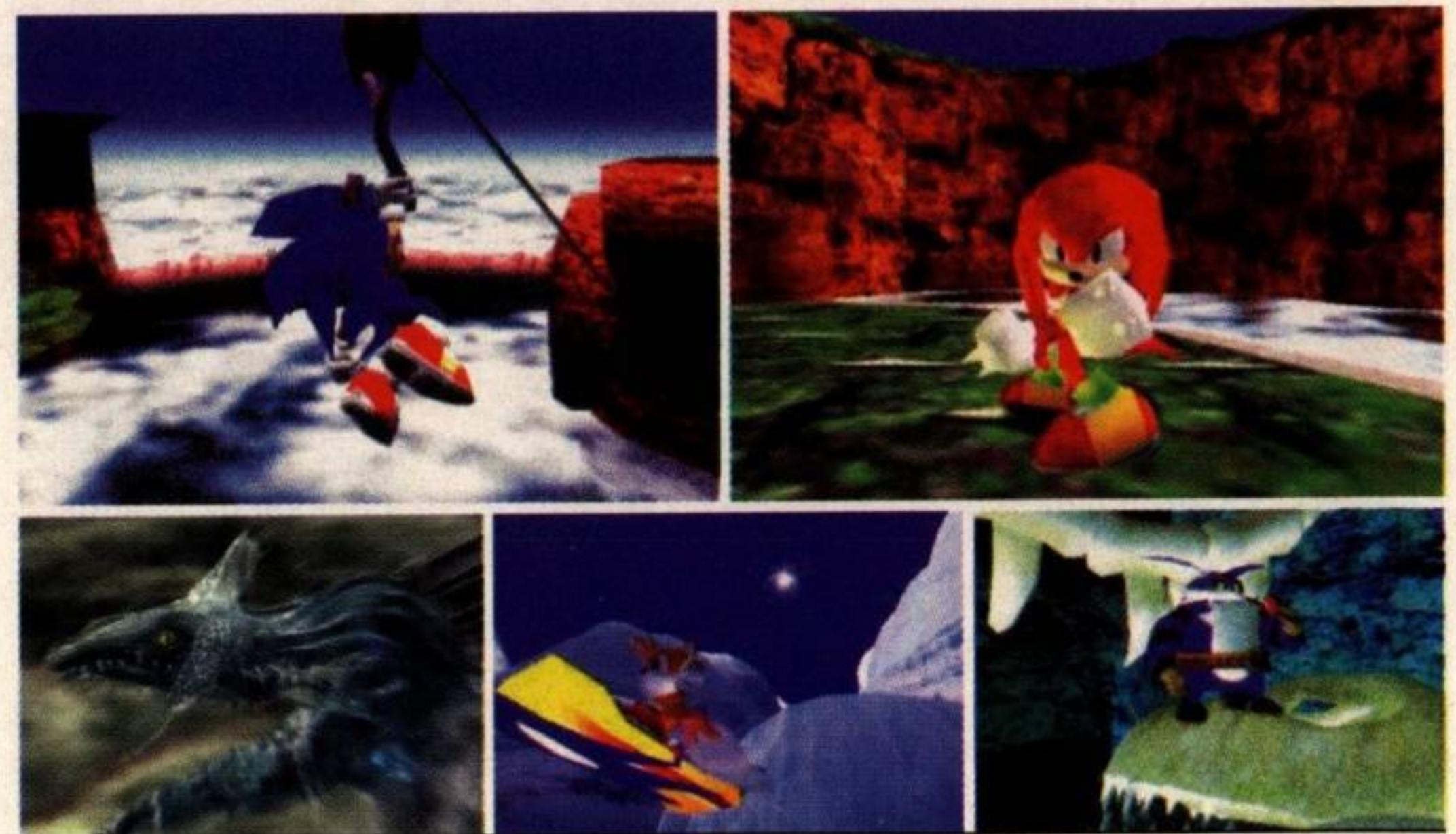
The Dreamcast has two main chips at its heart: the Hitachi SH4 RISC chip as the main CPU, which runs at 200MHz, and a specialised graphics processor, utilising Power VR 2 technology. These two combined, so we are told, give the Dreamcast the equivalent of 128-bit processing power and leads Sega to boast that the machine can display more than three million polygons on screen per second. No details have been given as to whether the polygons are textured or light sourced or at what resolution they are displayed, so you can't

There is also cost to take into account; supplying a modem as standard would add another £30 or so to the price of a Dreamcast, and it seems that Sega are keen on a sub-£200 price point. This is something that would be more realistic if wasn't the extra cost of a modem to consider. However, they are still undecided on the future of such a peripheral, so let's hope they opt to include a modem. The modem will be 33.6Kbps, fast enough for current online demands, and will be removable. As modems become faster and cheaper, you will be able to upgrade. Sega are the first

KEY SOFTWARE #1

SONIC ADVENTURE

One of the launch Dreamcast releases will see the return of Sega's most famous mascot, Sonic the Hedgehog. The blue-haired one's popularity has drooped of late, due to the release of some samey titles towards the end of his Megadrive career and his unfulfilled exploitation on the Saturn. The Dreamcast game promises to see Sonic return to form with stunning graphics, speed (as you might expect from a Sonic game) and, most importantly, a change to the tired gameplay. Speed and collecting gold rings will still be an important part of the game, but there are several significant innovations to the gameplay. 'RPG elements' have been added – Sonic now needs to communicate with the in-game characters in order to progress. See this month's preview for further details.





DO YOU

REMEMBER YOUR DREAMS?

VMS

CPU Energy-saving 8-bit Data Storage Capacity 128 KB Display (LCD) 48 dot (W) x 32 dot (H) monochrome Display size 37mm (W) x 26mm (H) Size 47mm (W) x 80mm (H) x 16mm (D) Power Button battery x 2, auto off function Sound PWM 1 channel sound source Weight 45g

What is the VMS?

Sega's Visual Memory System (VMS) is a revolutionary peripheral which will expand Dreamcast's world of new generation digital entertainment. Functioning as back-up memory, a sub-monitor and a personal data recorder, the VMS unit is a completely new personal communication tool which provides new ways of enjoying video gaming.

When you detach the VMS from Dreamcast:

VMS will transform into a tiny portable game machine after downloading the game from Dreamcast. Results of your game can then be downloaded back to Dreamcast for use in another game. By using the built-in screen you can easily see what data is stored in the memory without connecting to Dreamcast.

When connected to the Dreamcast hand controller:

You can use VMS as your back-up memory with high speed memory transfer achieved as you save or load gaming data to the Dreamcast. VMS can be used during gameplay to perform changes in your game settings (eg. Save position, load character data etc.) Used as a sub-

monitor: the built-in liquid crystal display means you can keep information secret from your gaming opponents: in sports games you can change your formations discretely; in action games you can use the screen as a radar, or to list inventory of items. Two player games can be more fun on Dreamcast than on any current games system on the market.

When two VMS's are plugged together:

Data can be exchanged between two units. Two player head-to-head games can be played.

The combined power of VMS and Dreamcast is set to offer a wider variety of gaming enjoyment that ever before. We hope you will watch with interest as the full potential of this system is uncovered.

PERFORMANCE

The world's most powerful video game performance
 CPU SH4
 RISC CPU with 128-bit graphics engine (200MHz 360MIPS/1.4 GFLOPS)
 Graphics Engine
 Power VR Second-Generation (CG performance of over 3 million polygons per second)
 Sound Engine
 Super intelligent sound processor with 32-bit RISC CPU (64 channel ADPCM)
 Main Memory 16M byte (64M-bit SD-RAM x 2)
 OS
 Customised Microsoft Windows CE operating system
 Media
 CD-ROM
 CD-ROM Drive
 Maximum speed 12x
 Colour
 16.77 million colours
 Computer Graphics
 Bump mapping, Fog, Alpha-blending, Mip mapping, Tri-linear filtering, Anti-aliasing, Environment mapping, Specular effects
 Data Save
 VM system (Visual Memory)
 Size
 190mm (W) x 195mm (H) x 78mm (D)
 Weight
 2.0kg

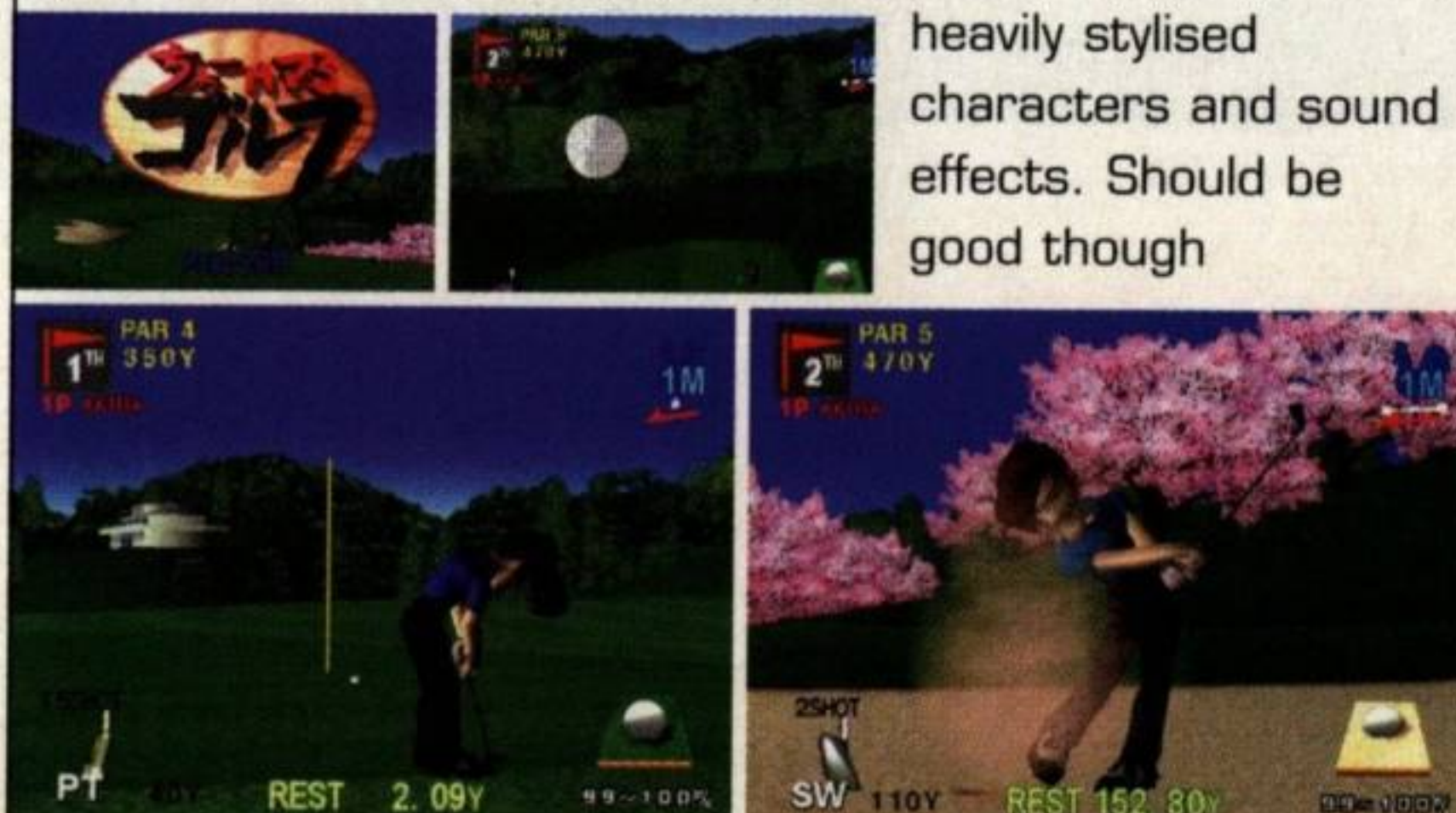
console company to commit themselves to Internet gaming – something that PC owners have been able to enjoy for years – and this decision will undoubtedly increase the sales of *Quake*-style games.

The operating system for the Dreamcast is to be a version of Microsoft's Windows CE. This is basically a cut down version of Windows 95 and it is currently used in laptop PCs. The implications of this are widespread. Not only will this facilitate connections to network games, but this, along with the Power VR 2 technology, will make the port of PC titles to Dreamcast a walk in the park. Expect many future PC titles to be developed in conjunction with their Dreamcast counterparts.

Rumours abound that PlayStation 2 will be DVD, so why have Sega opted for CD-ROM? The only advantage that DVD holds over CD for games manufacturers is in the amount of storage space available – DVD holds 4.7GB whilst a CD has →

THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

Golf is another popular genre in Japan. This title makes use of the analogue stick for the golfer's swing. It is possibly the best-looking golf game ever – complete with



heavily stylised characters and sound effects. Should be good though

KEY SOFTWARE #2

SEGA RALLY 2

The follow-up to arguably the best ever racing game is one of the key games for the Dreamcast's launch. *Sega Rally 2* is visually, to say the least, absolutely stunning. The graphics are bordering on the photo-realistic, with an absurd amount of detail. But this is not the only reason for the game's success – *Rally 2* handles like a dream. It is likely that the Dreamcast version will have plenty of extra features unseen in the arcade version.



THE DREAM TEAM

Hitachi

The central processor in Dreamcast is the video game-customised Hitachi SH4 chip. Sega and Hitachi retooled the chip to enhance its floating-point operations capabilities – the key ingredient for high-output 3D gaming applications. The Dreamcast processor can perform floating-point operations four times faster than the Pentium 2 chip.

Microsoft

Microsoft will provide an exclusive version of its Windows CE-based operating system that has been optimised for console-style gaming. Sega and Microsoft are working together to maximise software development efficiencies by giving developers familiar game authoring environments and tools to minimise their learning curve in creating cutting-edge entertainment for Dreamcast.

NEC

The muscle behind Dreamcast's high-end graphics engine is a custom-designed version of NEC's PowerVR Second Generation chip. With a peak performance of 3 million polygons per second and customised anti-aliasing technology, the PowerVR Second Generation chip in Dreamcast outperforms all other graphic chips today or proposed for use in forthcoming PCs. NEC has a proven track record in the chip industry and is a global leader with expertise in chip design and fabrication.

VideoLogic

VideoLogic Second Generation PowerVR technology provided the 3D graphics display system optimised specifically for the new highly advanced Dreamcast game console. Delivering unprecedented levels of game performance, PowerVR provides the most advanced 3D feature set available to date.

Yamaha

Yamaha is contributing a dedicated, real-time 3D audio chip with more power than some next generation consoles offer in total. Sega also worked with Yamaha to develop a high-density CD-ROM and drive, which speeds up access time and allows for much bigger games and larger playing fields.



650MB. This sounds like a huge gap, but not when you take into account that most CD games use very little of their storage space for game data. Sega have opted to use their own brand of 1GB CDs, in a move that will not only give a little extra space for FMV, but will also help to reduce piracy (no one but Sega and its licensees will have access to these CDs).

The Dreamcast's controller is based on the Saturn's aging analogue controller, albeit with two major innovations. There are two slots on the underside – one presumably for a rumble pack-type accessory, the other for the far more

intriguing Visual Memory System. This innovative device has several functions. Firstly it acts as a memory card. Secondly, and more importantly, it has an LCD display screen. When plugged into the Dreamcast, this acts as a separate display

"IN SPORTS GAMES YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR FORMATIONS DISCREETLY IN ACTION GAMES YOU CAN USE THE SCREEN AS A RADAR..."

that will keep information secret from opponents. Sega promote the idea that, "in sports games you can change your formations discretely, in action games you can use the screen as a radar or to list an inventory of items". There must be

THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

Blue Stinger is reminiscent of *Resident Evil* – it's an action adventure with some stunning real-time graphics



CONFIRMED DREAMCAST GAMES

3D Looney Toons Fox Interactive	3D Shooter Sega	Agartha No Cliche	Age of Empires Microsoft	Akolyte Revenant	Alone in the Dark 4 Infogrames	Black And White Lionhead	Black Matrix NEC Interchannel	Blitz 2 Midway	Blue Stinger Climax	Carmageddon 2 Interplay	Castlevania 3D Konami	Crimson Core Design	D-Jump Ubi Soft	D2 Warp	Dark Earth Adventure Kalisto/Microprose	Daytona USA 2 Sega	Drakan Surreal Software	Drones Nigma	Ecco the Dolphin 2 Appaloosa	Elemental Gimmick Gear HudsonSoft	Expendable Rage Software	Football Visual Concepts	Formula 1 Video System	Godzilla Generations Sega	Gutherman (Working title) No Cliche	Half-Life Valve	Harley-Davidson & LA Riders Sega	Incoming (Launch title) Rage Software	July Fortyfive	Kita he: "White Illumination" Hudson and Red Company	Lunar: Eternal Blue GameArts	Marvel vs Capcom Capcom	Messiah Shiny	Metropolis Bizarre Creations	Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation Ubi Soft	Mortal Kombat 4 Eurocom	Munch Oddysee Oddworld Inhabitants	NBA Action 2000 Sega
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THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

July is an original horror adventure with multiple routes through the game. An intriguing story line involves humans born without sexual organs who plan to take over the world



plenty of other uses for the screen – how about using it to perform a special move in a fighting game? There is another way to use the VMS as well. When detached from the Dreamcast, the VMS becomes a portable game machine, along the same lines as a Game Boy or Sony's PDU. The idea is that you download data from the Dreamcast, such as a virtual pet game, for example. You can then link two VMS units together and transfer data. The success of Nintendo's *Pokémon* series has obviously been an influence here.

Sega have announced five titles for the Japanese launch of the Dreamcast: *Sonic Adventure*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Virtua Fighter*

IF YOU'RE THINKING OF BUYING AN IMPORTED MACHINE, THEN BE PREPARED TO PAY THROUGH THE TEETH - THE CURRENT PRICE BEING QUOTED BY IMPORT SPECIALISTS IS £600-700

3, *Pen Pen Triathlon* and *7th Cross*. The news that Sega's most established character will be there on launch shows that this time they really mean business. This, along with the arcade hits *Sega Rally 2* and *Virtua Fighter 3*, will ensure that the machine will be a sell out in no time at all.

That's fine for starters, but what about third party software? As the N64 proved, it is vital to have high quality third party software released at a constant rate. Despite the high quality of Nintendo's own software, it was impossible to expect them to continually release titles of the calibre of *Mario 64* and *Pilotwings*. There had to

come a point where third parties took over, and when they did (for the most part), the software was poor. Well, it seems that Sega have got this side tied up as well. By taking another leaf out of Sony's book and allowing anyone to develop, they have ensured that there will be a steady stream of games. Also, the PC-friendly chipset of the Dreamcast has encouraged PC developers to port their games where before they might not have thought it worth all the time and effort.

With the way the Japanese lap up all new consoles when they are released, you can expect the Dreamcast to be sold out within hours of it reaching the shelves. Oh yes, and if you're thinking of buying an imported machine, then be prepared to pay through the teeth – the current price being quoted by import specialists is £600-700. Ouch. If

you're not prepared to go to those lengths, then the Dreamcast is expect to retail for around the £200 mark when it finally hits our shores late next year. So until then, start saving those pennies... **TC**

KEY SOFTWARE #3

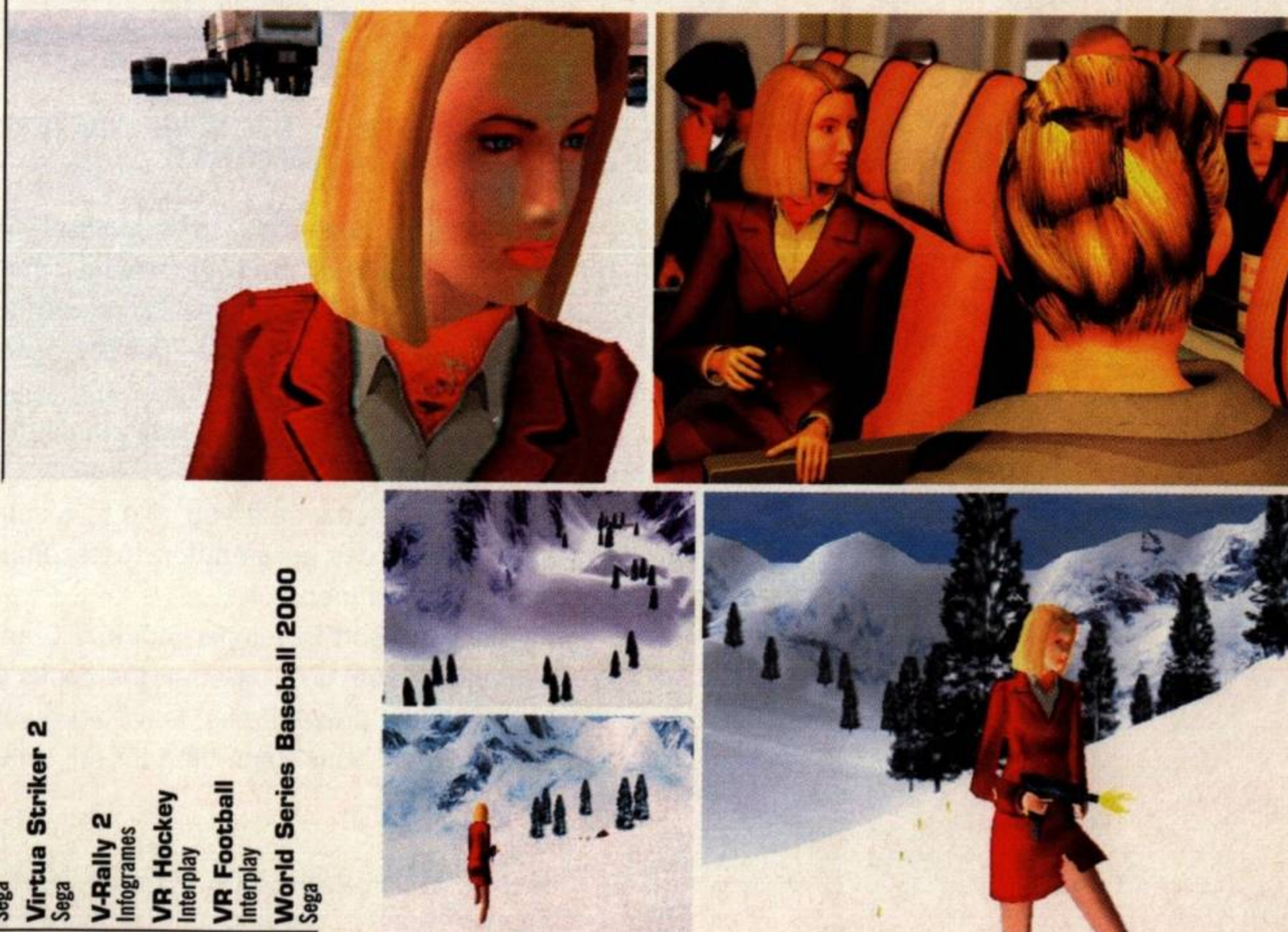
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Another visually stunning title is Sega's killer arcade game, *Virtua Fighter 3*. Although it is thought inferior to Namco's *Tekken 3* in terms of gameplay, *VF3* is streets ahead of its rival in terms of graphics. This will be an important title, simply because Sega will hope that it will woo PlayStation owners to their machine. The most interesting thing about this game is that it will work with the modem, allowing on-line fighting of the like never seen before.



THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

D2 is the follow up to the popular (in Japan) adventure game, *D*. This game could turn out to be the Dreamcast's *Tomb Raider* – it's a 3D action adventure starring a strong female character.



THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE

J. League Football. A football title is vital for a console to succeed, especially in Japan and Europe. This is first of what will be a wealth of footie games for the Dreamcast



- NFL Blitz Midway
- Outcast 2 Infogrames
- Panzer Dragoon DC Team Andromeda
- Pen Pen Triathlon General Entertainment
- POD 2 Ubi Soft
- Rayman 2 Ubi Soft
- Resident Evil 4 Capcom
- Scud Race/Super GT Sega
- Sega Rally 2 (Launch title) Sega
- Soccer Game Sega
- Sonic Adventure (Launch title) Sonic Team
- Sonic and Knuckles RPG Sonic Team
- Spike Out Sega
- The Lost World: Jurassic Park Sega
- Unreal Epic Megagames
- Urban Assault Microsoft
- Virtua Fighter 3 Team Battle (Launch title) Sega
- Virtua Fighter RPG Sega
- Virtua Striker 2 Sega
- V-Rally 2 Infogrames
- VR Hockey Interplay
- VR Football Interplay
- World Series Baseball 2000 Sega

Having words with . . .

For the first of a **regular monthly feature** we **tracked down the legendary** John Romero and decided to **have a few words** with him...



JOHN ROMERO

John Romero's list of game credits reads like a comprehensive history of computer gaming. For the past twenty years he has accomplished more than almost anyone else in the industry and has helped to shape the way computer games are played. Although he has repeatedly demonstrated a unique talent for game design, and is probably best known for the genre-making and much imitated *Doom* and *Quake*, he has also been a strong driving force behind some of the most successful and innovative software companies in the field. He helped to launch id Software, famous for *Quake II*, and his new company Ion Storm are soon to release *Daikatana*. So who better for us to talk to at the launch of our new magazine?

Q: How did you get started in computer game development?

A: I began programming games back in 1979 on an HP mainframe at the local college when I was 12. A few years later, my parents bought me an Apple II+, and it was all up from there. Pretty much 99% of my programming time has been designing and coding games since I was 12.

Q: What was the first home computer you ever owned, and what do you have now? Do you own a game console?

A: An Apple II+ was my first home computer, and today I have two Pentium II 400mhz systems with absolutely everything that you can get for them. I own almost all game consoles. I have two PlayStations, an N64, a Saturn, a SNES, an NES, a Genesis, an SMS, a TurboGrafix-16 and a NeoGeo.

Q: Do you think that the days of the independent 'bedroom programmer' are long gone, or could they make a comeback?

"CONSOLES ARE DEFINITELY MORE STABLE TO DESIGN FOR, SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY SPECIAL PERIPHERALS TO PLAY A NEW GAME ON A CONSOLE"

A: It's pretty tough today to be a closet programmer and complete a full project by yourself and be even close to competitive in today's commercial market. That's why there's shareware – it's the perfect outlet for the lone coder. But to make it big, you need a team nowadays. There's no way around that.

Q: What advice would you give to a school student who has an ambition to become a game programmer?

A: Get Microsoft Developer Studio 5.0 and start coding in Visual C++. Get all the books you can find on game programming and start teaching yourself in all your spare time (or full time if you can swing it).

Q: Since most games take between eighteen months and two years to develop, but computers seem to

double in speed and size twice a year, do you find it a problem knowing what specification to aim at when starting on a new title?

A: Well, it's a problem we've been dealing with ever since the PC arrived on the scene. Now that we're in the position of licensing technology, that seems to make the decision of minimum features a bit easier, since the engines support most of what the user expects.

Q: Do you find that it is easier to develop games for the relatively stable console platforms rather than the ever-changing PC?

A: Consoles are definitely more stable to design for, simply because you don't have to buy special peripherals to play a new game on a console. Console players are used to spending their money on new games, PC players are used to spending their money on peripherals. But you can do so much more on a PC and the graphics can be so much better that there's definitely a trade-off between the two markets.

Q: Most modern game graphics are based on texture mapped polygons, with various shading, lighting and filtering techniques to give the impression of realistic 3D. Do you see this continuing to be the case, or are there other better alternatives available with today's faster processors?

A: In the future, you will see more complex primitives being supported on the 3D cards like spheres, curves, maybe voxels. Couple that with multiple-pass texturing and better lighting models and you can plainly see that future 3D games will be more realistic than ever before.

Q: Many of the leading processor manufacturers are working on a new generation of chips called 'media processors,' which will be at the heart of the next wave of interactive home entertainment and communication hardware. As a leading game developer, are you working on any software to exploit the awesome potential of these new devices?

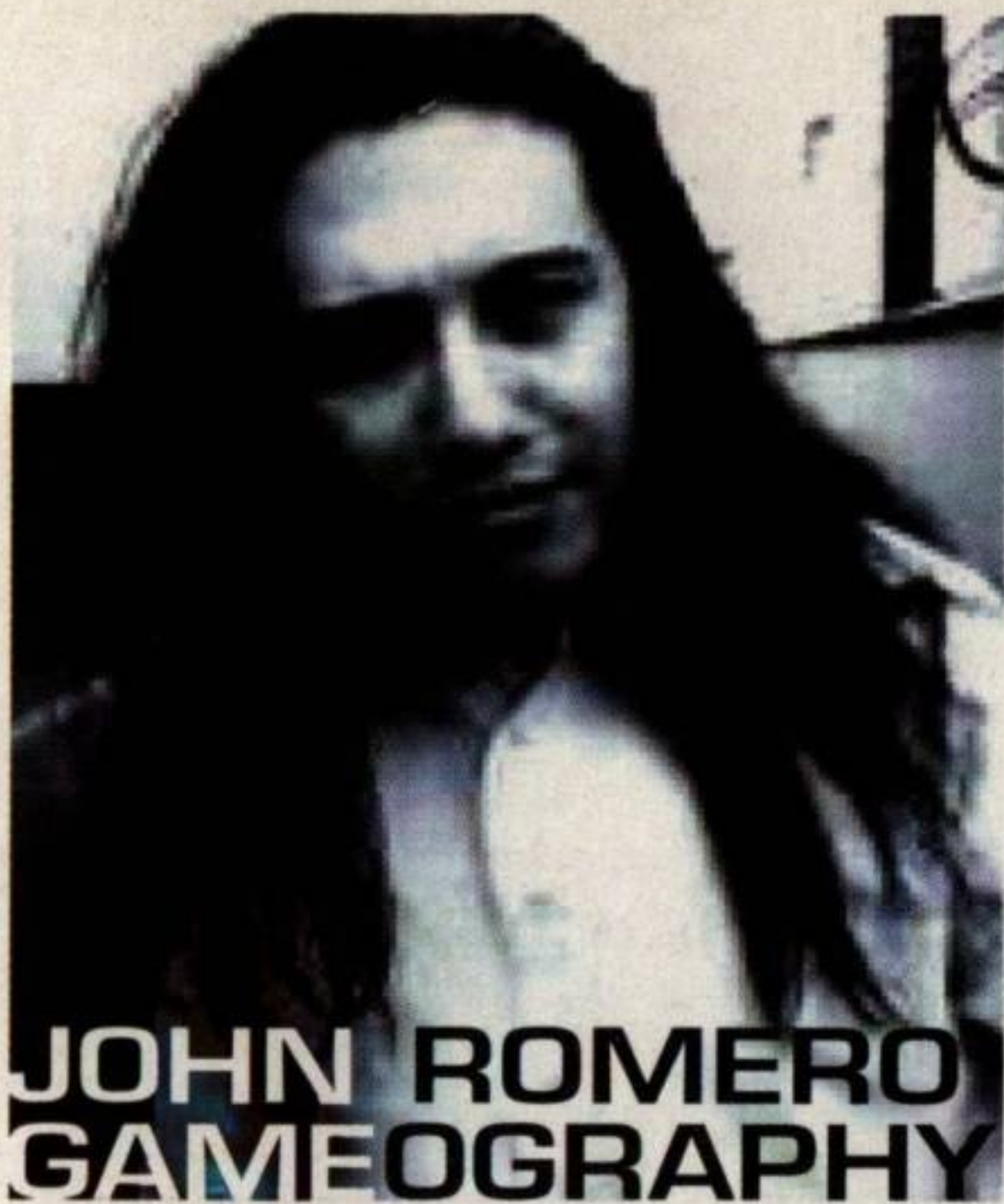
A: No, not until we actually get some of those chips will we be able to support them.

Q: Do you play many computer games in your spare time? What are you playing at the moment, and what is your favourite game of all time?

A: In my spare time, I like to play *Doom II* and *Age of Empires*. I am still working my way through *Unreal*, but I don't have much free time lately. My favourite game of all time is a toss-up between *Doom II*, *Chrono Trigger* and *Super Mario 3*.

Q: If you met John Carmack in a *Quake* Deathmatch, who would win?

A: I think I would win, mainly because I've spent more time deathmatching than John has.



- Scout Search (June 1984)
- Cavern Crusader (1984)
- Bongo's Bash (1985)
- Snag! (1985)
- Major Mayhem (Dec 1987)
- Evil Eye (1987)
- Subnodule (1987)
- Jumpster (1987)
- Pyramids of Egypt (1987)
- Lethal Labyrinth (1987)
- Krazy Kobra (1987)
- Wacky Wizard (1987)
- Neptune's Nasties (1987)
- Zippy Zombi (1987)
- City Centurian (Dec 1988)
- Dangerous Dave (1988)
- Operation: Obliteration (1988)
- 2400 A.D. (1988)
- Space Rogue (1988)
- Tower Toppler (1988)
- Might & Magic II (1988)
- Treasure Dive (1989)
- Zappa Roids, with Lane Roathe (1989)
- Magic Boxes (1989)
- Alfredo's Stupendous Surprise, with Tom Hall (1989)
- How to Weigh An Elephant (1990)
- Dinosorcerer (1990)
- Same or Different (1990)
- Dark Designs (1990)
- Double Dangerous Dave (1990)
- Catacomb II (1990)
- Slordax (1990)
- Commander Keen: Marooned on Mars (1990)
- Commander Keen: The Earth Explodes (1990)
- Commander Keen: Keen Must Die! (1990)
- Shadow Knights (1991)
- Dangerous Dave in the Haunted Mansion (1991)
- Hovortank One (1991)
- Rescue Rover! (1991)
- Keen Dreams (1991)
- Rescue Rover II: Return of the Robots (1991)
- Commander Keen: Secret of the Oracle (1991)
- Commander Keen: The Armageddon Machine (1991)
- Commander Keen: Aliens Ate My Baby Sitter (1991)
- Catacomb 3-D (1991)
- Wolfenstein 3-D (1992)
- Spear of Destiny (1992)
- DOOM (1993)
- DOOM II (1994)
- Heretic (1994)
- The Ultimate DOOM (1995)
- Hexen (1995)
- Quake (1996)
- Daikatana (1998)

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HERETIC II

Hexen was just a walk in the park!

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LIGHTS. CAMERA.

ACTION!

The video game industry has long had a relationship with the movie industry. Since the dawn of digital entertainment, games designers have always wanted to replicate what happens on the big screen. Total CONTROL investigates the crossover between two of the world's biggest forms of entertainment...



SUPER MARIO

From a two colour sprite to Hollywood in eight years. Not bad for a plumber, but then few plumbers have the popularity of Miyamoto's loveable creation. Unfortunately, neither did the film version.



The relationship between films and video games has been a long-standing one. Ever since the early days of the 4-bit consoles, marketing men have seen the opportunity of a film tie-in as a way of making a few bucks. And for good reason; the success of film tie-ins is a testament to how a licence can sell a product. Simply sticking a logo of the latest Hollywood blockbuster is guaranteed to sell a multiplex full of games.

A licence to print money?

The sales of such titles has often outweighed the quality of the product, and all but a select few can be rated as great games. But why is this? Surely there have been some great opportunities to convert films to the digital screen? There have been a few successes, however, notably *Blade Runner* on the PC and *Goldeneye* on the N64. The success of

these titles can be put down to the fact that the films inspired certain aspects of the game, often a gameplay feature, rather than the games trying to be an out and out translation of the film to the computer. *Goldeneye* was quite clearly inspired by the idea of a spy-sim, and this first-person shooter incorporated ideas of objective-based missions and stealth into the gameplay.

Then there is, of course, Star Wars – a law unto itself when it comes to film licences. The thing about Star Wars is that it allows developers to draw

THEN THERE IS, OF COURSE, STAR WARS – A LAW UNTO ITSELF WHEN IT COMES TO FILM LICENCES

from such a rich and diverse universe that it would be hard to make a bad game based upon it. Brilliant characters, settings and music are already there before you start, so half the job is done already. However, LucasArts' tie-ins have almost all been brilliant on their own terms and serve as an example of just how to make a great film licence.

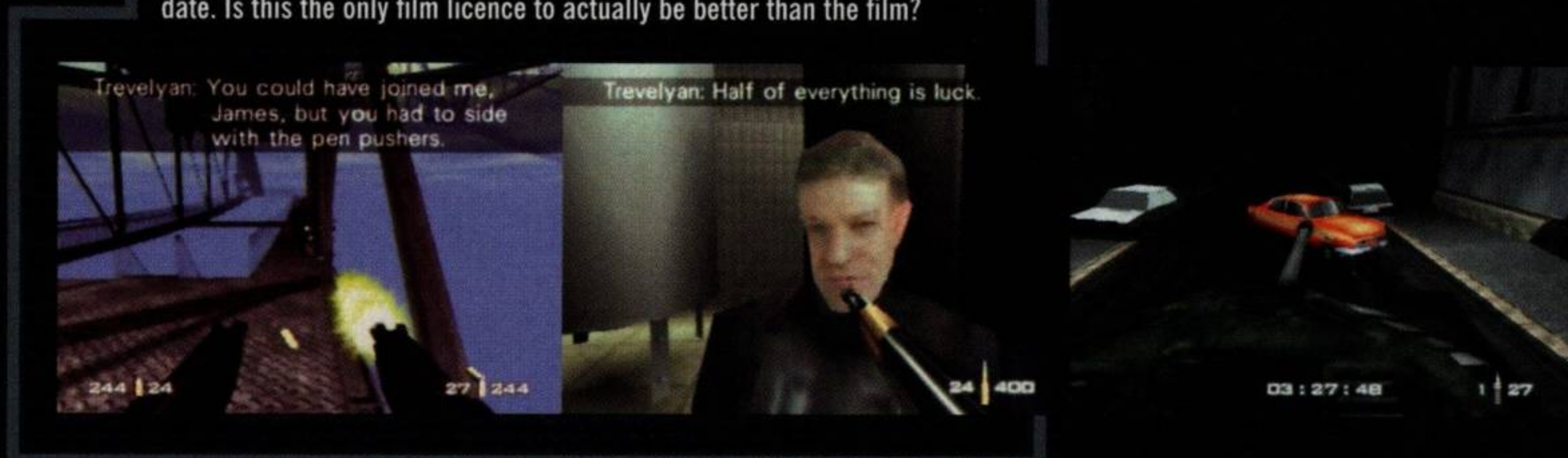


Street Fighter: The Movie was not only a terrible film, but also a flop at the box office

THE GOOD #1

GOLDENEYE (Rare) – N64, 1997

It is a testament to just how good *Goldeneye* is that it could stand alone without the film licence attached. Scenes from the film are brilliantly recreated, right down to the correct wall textures and actual actors' faces placed on polygon models. The James Bond atmosphere is recreated superbly with an excellent soundtrack, making this the best film licence to date. Is this the only film licence to actually be better than the film?



A game of a film of a game

Now, with the video games industry being the huge money spinner that it is (last year it grossed more than the movie industry), it seems that Hollywood wants to cash in on the million seller popular titles and their characters. After all, in a recent survey of American children it was found that more recognised Mario than Mickey Mouse – it seems reasonable that someone should make a film based on Miyamoto's enduring character. However, when it came to Mario's big screen debut, he had lost all of his simple Japanese charm and been turned into a stereotypical all-American hero.

There have been other attempts too – who could forget *Street Fighter: The Movie* and *Mortal Kombat*? *Mortal Kombat* wasn't a complete failure, but *Street Fighter* was, to say the least, rather poor. In a bizarre twist, Acclaim released a game based on the film of *Street Fighter* using digitised characters, just like *Mortal Kombat*. It was a game based on the film based on the game! Needless to say, *Street Fighter: The Movie: The Game*, or whatever it was called, was very, very bad.

Recently there has been talk of a *Lara Croft* movie (this looks set to happen, with an official web page opening recently), a *Resident Evil* movie and even a film based on *Quake*. With all these brilliant games relying heavily on films for inspiration, the film versions will no doubt be seen as unoriginal and clichéd. No doubt we'll all be shelling out for the licences of the films of the games in the near future...

IN A BIZARRE TWIST, ACCLAIM RELEASED A GAME BASED ON THE FILM OF STREET FIGHTER USING DIGITISED CHARACTERS. IT WAS A GAME BASED ON THE FILM BASED ON THE GAME

This does, of course, ignore the original crossover film released in the early eighties: *Tron*. The film successfully tapped into the first golden age of video games, with the story of a video game whizz-kid transported into cyberspace to rescue the world from the tyrannical Master Programmer. The producers also had the canny idea of incorporating games into the film, which could all then be played down your local arcade on the *Tron* arcade machine, which was suitably styled to look like a prop from the film.

Attempts at interactive movies

With the advent of the CD-Rom, it appeared that a new dawn of video games was upon us. The 'interactive movie' was touted as the next big thing by many, and the PC and Philips' ill-fated CD-I were the platforms

where many of the first titles appeared. However, probably the most memorable of these games first appeared on Sega's Mega CD and then the PC. The game in question was the infamous *Night Trap*, which courted controversy with its supposedly risqué content. This was alleged amorality was a

NEEDLESS TO SAY, STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE: THE GAME, OR WHATEVER IT WAS CALLED, WAS VERY, VERY BAD



THE GOOD #2

BLADE RUNNER

(Westwood) – PC, 1997

There have been several attempts at recreating Ridley Scott's classic film noir, but only the recent PC adventure has come close. You take control of a Decker-type character on the trail of some renegade replicants. The game basically takes the point and click adventure style of LucasArts' fame and takes it to the dark world of Los Angeles, 2019. Beautifully rendered graphics and locations from the film give what is essentially a detective game more than a foot in the film. There are also multiple endings to the engrossing story.

CINEMATIC INTERACTIVE

A growing trend, especially in Japan, is the game which is also a movie. *Final Fantasy VII* is an obvious example of a game with a strong narrative

and intensive characterisation. *Metal Gear Solid* and *Silent Hill* follow this with cinematic experiences of their own. The first real interactive movies?



SILENT HILL



FINAL FANTASY VII



METAL GEAR SOLID

ALIEN TRILOGY

Obviously a huge improvement over its 8-bit cousin, but the main element of tension is a necessary factor in any Alien game. *Trilogy* succeeded in bringing the fear of the movies into your own home.



PRESENTED BY



THE GOOD #2 ALIENS

(Electric Dreams) - ZX Spectrum and C64, 1986

Okay, this looks extremely dated now, but it's remembered by me for having created a serious amount of fear as an eight-year-old. It was a simple *Doom*-style shooter... sort of. You had control of a team of six of the film members, including Ripley, and you had to make your way to the escape point on the map. The hazards in your way were, of course, the aliens. It was in first-person perspective and you moved from room to room, standing in the middle of each room you entered with the walls scrolling around you as you looked left and right. Extremely basic by today's standards, but at the time it was cool.





Night Trap attracted the attention of the national press for allegedly being a 'video nasty'

THE BAD

BATMAN FOREVER

(Acclaim) – PlayStation, 1996

A great example of a licence selling a game over gameplay. This was basically a sideways scrolling beat-'em-up in the shape of *Double Dragon*, only with sprites digitised from the film. A complete lack of originality led the game to be something of a flop. Very poor.

complete fallacy made up by the tabloids on one of their 'video games are bad for you' campaigns. Claims of murdering and raping young girls were completely unfounded, and the whole object of the game was in actual fact to protect the girls. Basically the game boiled down to watching a lot of poor quality video interrupted by moments of interactivity where the player made a few limited choices. It's hardly surprising that the game wasn't a success seeing as the emphasis was placed heavily on the movie part and not on the interactive side.

A more recent attempt at creating an interactive movie is *Tender Loving Care* (which stars British actor, John Hurt) – a title which takes an interesting slant at the genre. The idea behind the game is that the film it shows is supposedly designed to suit the individual playing it. It does this by analysing the player's responses to a psychological questions, asked at key points of the film. The questions are in a multiple choice form and are (as is their nature) loaded and auto-suggestive – as such it's not hard to see where each of the answers leads; the psychology involved is best described as amateurish.



TLC attempts to analyse the players' psyche based on your opinions about the characters in the film

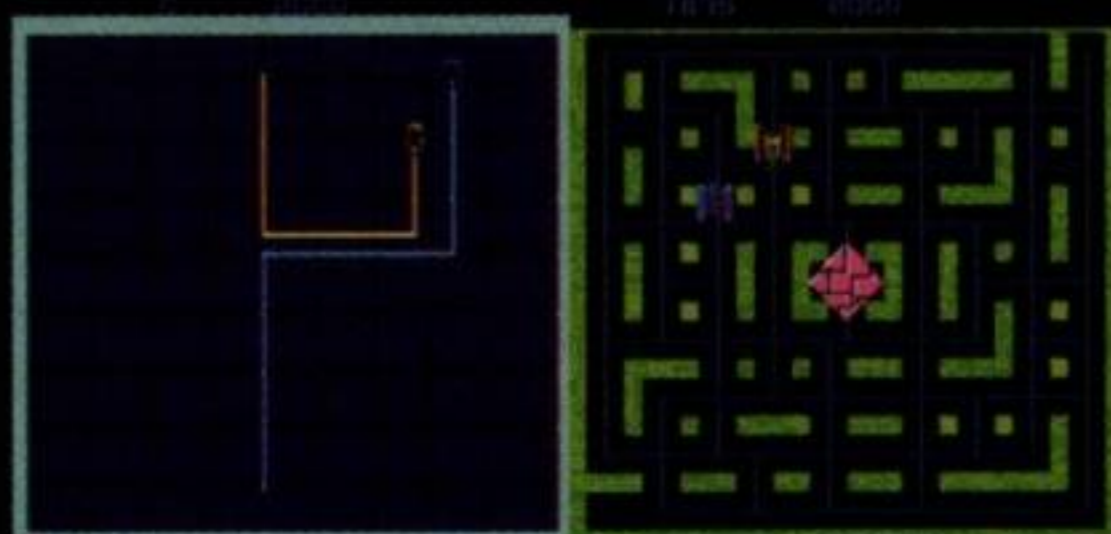
Nevertheless, it is an interesting idea not quite realised in an enjoyable form – the game falls down where so many of these titles do, i.e. by having a weak story to tell.

There is also a trend for well-known actors appearing in games. With budgets which are quickly approaching the scale of their film counterparts, interactive movies are attracting the likes of Bruce Willis, Christopher Walken and Mark Hamill. Of course, Mark Hamill (of Luke Skywalker fame) had a chance to shine again in the increasingly cinematic *Wing Commander* series. Brian Blessed and Malcolm MacDowell were also among the cast for *Wing Commanders 3* and *4*. Unfortunately, the actual interactive parts – the space-based missions – were not up to the high production values of the film.

An art form in itself

It seems that now video games are coming from out of the shadow of films and into an art form of their own. Sound like a delusion of grandeur? Maybe. But in recent times we have seen a new breed of game which, although taking a lot of inspiration from the narrative format of films, make it their own. Think of *Final Fantasy VII* and you'll have some idea of what we're referring to. Square's masterpiece is remarkable for many reasons, mainly for reinventing the RPG genre and bringing it a wider audience than ever before. But probably the most significant feature of the game was the way that it seamlessly blended the compulsive gameplay with a compelling story line. Hours were lost to this game just on the whim of seeing 'what was around the next corner' and what would happen in the ever-changing story. The level of characterisation was also unprecedented, with the game delving into the backgrounds and the psyche of each of the main characters. *Final Fantasy VII* was the first game where you actually felt

TRON HAD THE CANNY IDEA OF INCORPORATING GAMES INTO THE FILM, WHICH COULD ALL THEN BE PLAYED DOWN YOUR LOCAL ARCADE ON THE TRON ARCADE MACHINE...





THE UGLY

ET (Atari) - Atari 2600, 1982

This bore absolutely no resemblance to the film, unless you count an oddly-shaped, one colour sprite that looked vaguely like E.T. The game was a great example of laziness when it comes to creating this sort of title, and Atari paid dearly. The game sold well at first, but when people played the game and realised how bad it was they were not happy. The returned cartridges cost Atari an absolute fortune and almost brought the company down.

empathy for a bunch of computer-generated people. Possibly the most telling moment was when Cloud catches up with the lost Aeris, only for Sephiroth to kill her in one of the most dramatic moments in video game history. A truly emotional moment from a truly exceptional game. The sequel promises more of the same, and *Final Fantasy VIII* is being touted as a love story – surely a first for a console game.

Final Fantasy VII is not alone in this trend, and Japanese developers are at the forefront. Another Square title, *Parasite Eve* (reviewed this issue) is a simplified version of *Final Fantasy VII*, albeit with a 'real world' setting.

The game basically takes the player through a linear series of cut scenes with exploration and battle parts in-between. This game borrows heavily from Capcom's *Resident Evil* games, and here we can see not only a story line taken from a stereotypical zombie film, but also the

influence of splatter cinematography. Many of the camera angles in *Resident Evil* are taken straight from classic zombie films, especially those of John Romero.

Metal Gear Solid is game that has been billed as one of stealth and infiltration – the main gameplay centres around your ability to infiltrate the HQ of an international terrorist whilst avoiding detection. What has been overlooked by Western observers (mostly because of the Japanese sound and text) is the story line and theme of the game: the power of the nuclear bomb. The objective in *Metal Gear Solid* is to prevent the terrorist group from deploying a nuclear warhead, and throughout the story there are references to the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombs. There is even old footage from the plane that dropped the Hiroshima bomb and of the mushroom cloud itself. Nuclear attack is a

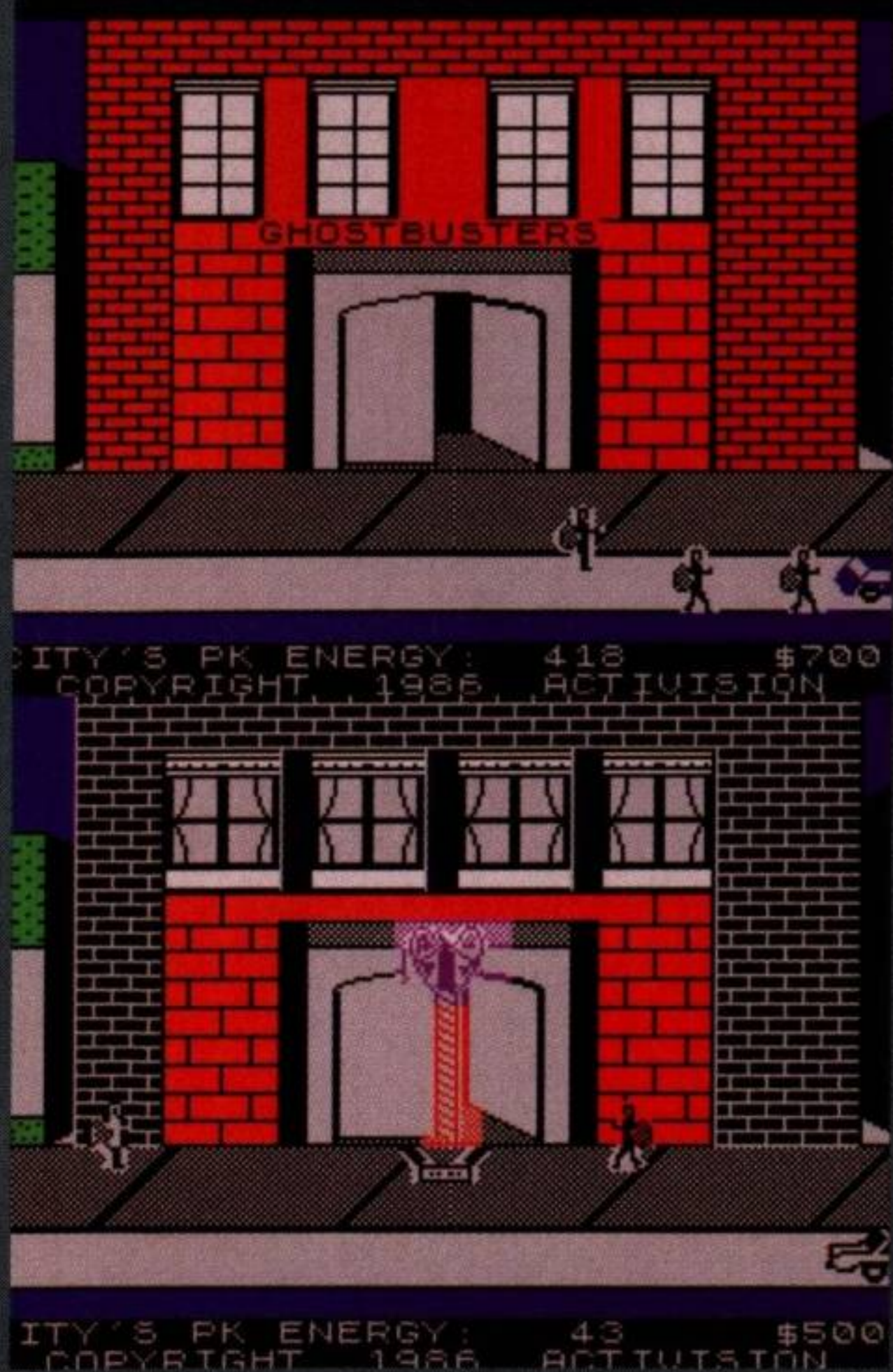
phenomena that will remain in the psyche of the Japanese people for a long time and is a subject matter usually dealt with by photographers, artists and film makers. The theme of nuclear holocaust has reared its head in past video games but has never been dealt with in such an artistic manner. The construction of game itself is in a cinematic fashion. The composition of the shots which make up the extensive cut scenes have a real film quality to them and, on a technical and artistic side, the game attempts to create a 'depth of field' in the in-game scenes (in other words, placing objects in the foreground and background out of focus). This game could potentially rewrite the books on how video games are made.

BUT ALSO THE INFLUENCE OF SPLATTER CINEMATOGRAPHY

PARASITE EVE BORROWS HEAVILY FROM CAPCOM'S RESIDENT EVIL GAMES, AND HERE WE CAN SEE NOT ONLY A STORY LINE TAKEN FROM A STEREOTYPICAL ZOMBIE FILM,

GHOSTBUSTERS

One of the earliest attempts to recreate a blockbuster film on home computer was the highly successful *Ghostbusters*. Perhaps best remembered for its (at the time) innovative speech



Resident Evil owes a lot of its atmosphere to the use of camera angles, as seen in zombie films

MK3

The *Street Fighter* game based on the movie used digitised characters. This brought it closer to its biggest rival – *Mortal Kombat*, which enjoyed far more movie success



FROM SPRITES TO CELLULOID

HOW TO DO IT BADLY...

STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE

Dreadful. Starred Jean-Claude Van Damme as Guile and Kylie Minogue as Cammy. A boring story line, poor acting and lame action sequences made this the worst film based on a game ever. Sad that this was Raul Julia's last film before he died.



The future

Where does the future lie for the film/game crossover? It seems that the three main areas of development will continue for the foreseeable future. Film tie-ins, interactive movies and games which are influenced by films are all here to stay. Hopefully, though, we will see more games take *Final Fantasy VII*'s cue and be confident enough to produce an experience which can rival or even better the experience had by spending a couple of hours at a cinema. The future does look bright in this respect – *Silent Hill* from Konami and *Grim Fandango* from LucasArts are both heavily stepped in celluloid concerns such as cinematography, lighting and character development. One thing is for sure: the relationship between films and video games has a lot of life in it yet.

GAMES SHOULD BE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO PRODUCE AN EXPERIENCE WHICH CAN RIVAL OR EVEN BETTER THE EXPERIENCE HAD BY SPENDING A COUPLE OF HOURS AT A CINEMA

AND HOW TO DO IT WELL

JACKIE CHAN

AS STREET FIGHTER

Street Fighter made an unexpected appearance in Chan's film, *City Hunter*. The bizarre sequence occurs when Chan's character falls into a *Street Fighter* machine and, while dazed, he imagines his assailant as different characters from the game. Jackie wins the fight by putting in a great performance as Chun-Li. Superb.



Grim Fandango from LucasArts is partly influenced by movie stars both past and present



Hard Stuff

Saitek X6-62M

In the wide and varied market of third-party games peripherals, Saitek's products stand out as being among the best, and the X6-62M PlayStation controller is no exception. The build quality is second to none, and the general feel of the device is solid and comfortable. The overall shape of the pad fits the hands well, with the grips being slightly longer than those on the standard Sony pad. The shoulder buttons are angled outwards and fall neatly under the fingers, and the four symbol buttons are raised up more and have a slightly longer travel than normal, giving the pad a very positive action. The D-pad is a raised eight-way control with microswitches rather than the usual four-way sunken pad, and is ideal for those tricky *Tekken 3* combos. The 'Start' and 'Select' buttons are recessed and press with a very positive 'click'.

The main feature of the pad is the array of three-way switches on the top face. Using these you can set any of the eight buttons to either normal, auto or turbo mode, allowing a great deal of versatility. There is also a slow-motion switch, although this will only work with certain games. Overall, this is a good quality pad, comfortable to use, with some useful extra features. **TC**

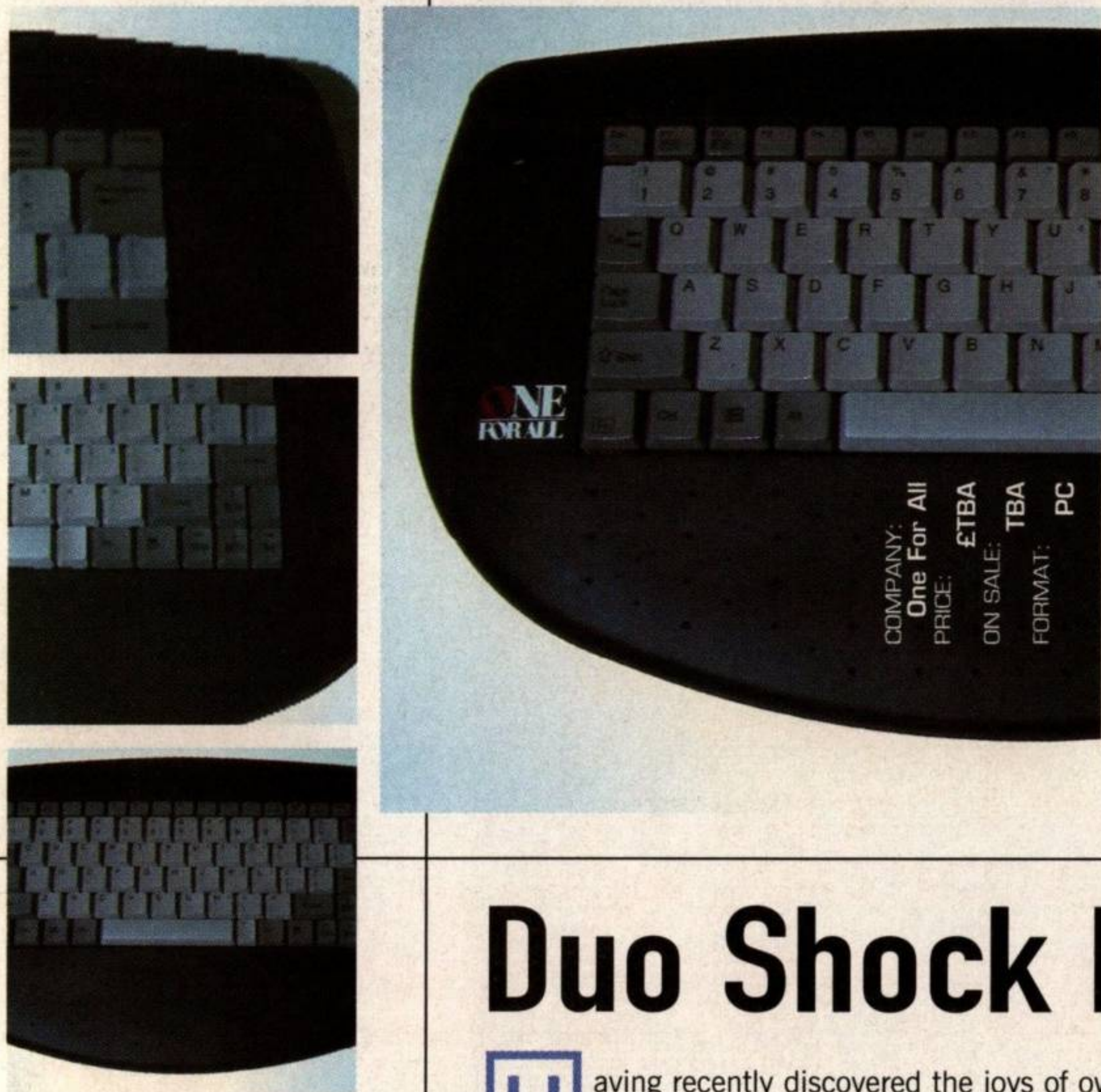
In the first of a regular section, we take a close look at some of the top peripherals on a variety of formats that are due to hit the shelves soon.



Wireless Keyboard

This is definitely a nice-looking piece of kit. It's basically similar to keyboards found on laptops, incorporating a built-in 'mouse' and infra-red receiver. For typing I found it every bit as good as the keyboard that was bundled with my PC, although I suspect that some users may find the buttons a little too small and close together. The mouse device definitely took a bit of getting used to, but after an hour or so I swore I'd never go back to my old keyboard again. With a desk situation as cluttered as mine, anything that eliminates the need for extra wires is most welcome – hell, I could even lock my keyboard in the cupboard at night to prevent anyone else from using my machine!

But then my bubble burst. A shout of 'Quake II session!' came from the other end of the office, and I was forced to revert to my original keyboard to avoid becoming a moving target for my colleagues. Unfortunately it is nigh on impossible to play most styles of game on this keyboard, especially since the left and right mouse buttons are at opposite corners of it. With some well-planned reconfiguration of controls I guess you could get around it to some extent, but to be honest, I didn't feel inclined to do so – and I don't think you will either. **TC**



Duo Shock Pad

Having recently discovered the joys of owning a PlayStation pad with Dual Shock capabilities, I was extremely interested to see how a third party model would measure up against Sony's official product. The

most obvious difference between the two is the appearance; while the Sony pad is only available in grey in this country, the Blaze model comes in a variety of different colours – most of which are transparent, allowing you to see how the shock effect actually works. The seemingly obvious games to put the pad through its paces were *Gran Turismo* and *Tekken 3* – the effect with both games was every bit as good as with the official pad.

So, rumblings aside, how does the pad actually play? There are minor differences between this and the official pad, the most noticeable of which would have to be the buttons; they work perfectly but somehow manage to feel slightly less responsive. The analogue sticks offer a little less resistance and the pad feels much more like plastic than the satin finish of its Sony counterpart, but at the end of the day it's a fiver cheaper and comes in plenty of nice colours. The decision... is yours. **TC**



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THE SPECS

The prize offered is a P233 with 32MB RAM and a 3.2GB hard drive. A modem and a 3Dfx card have been fitted to compliment the built-in 4MB videocard. Comes with a 15" monitor and a copy of *Worms 2* as shown.



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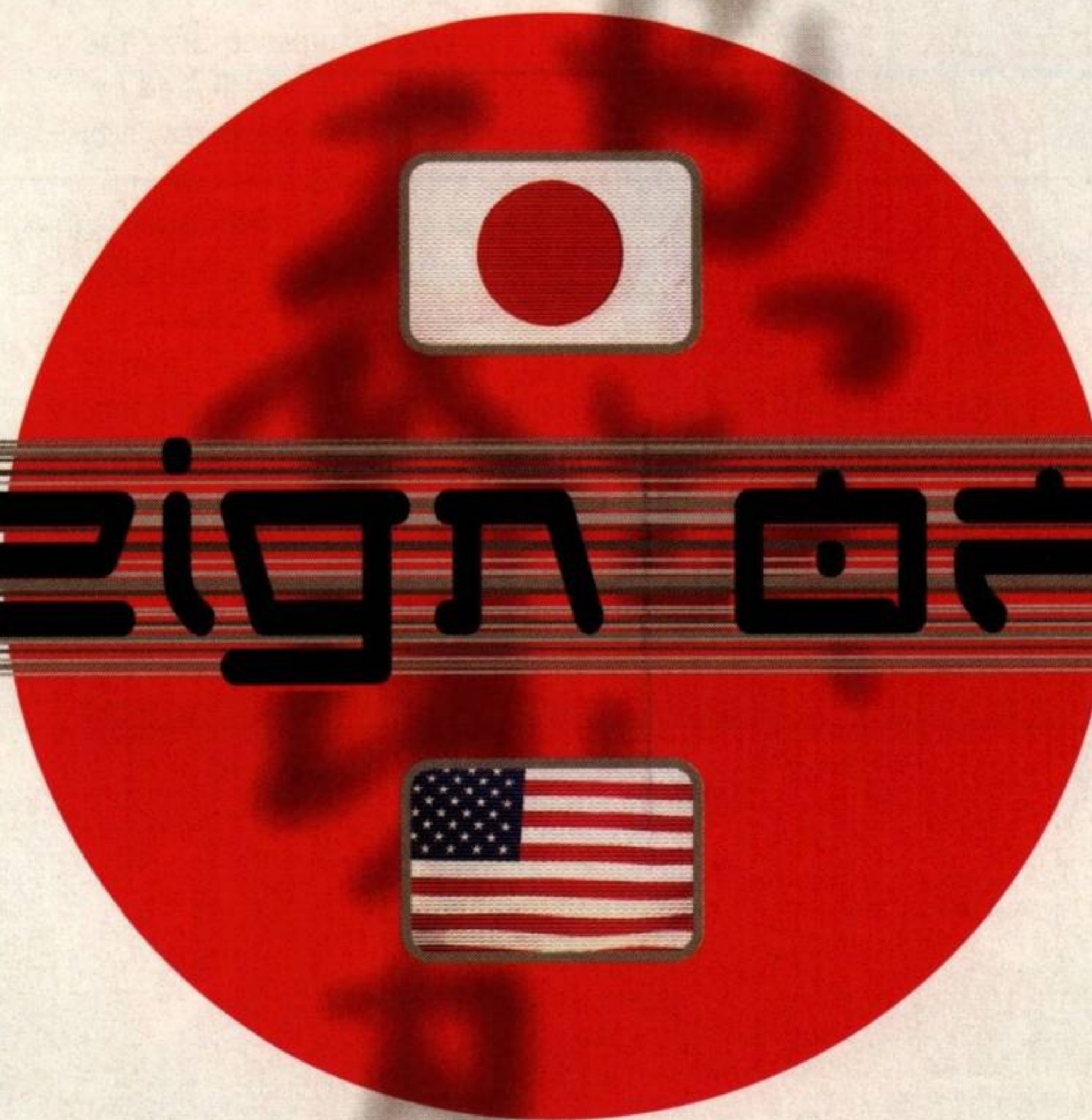
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The Questions

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. What do the initials P.I.G. stand for in the Team 17 game of the same name? | 2. One of the following is NOT a Team 17 title – which one? | 3. Who was the intrepid Total CONTROL reporter who visited Team 17 this month? |
| a. 'Particularly Inventive Game'
b. 'Private Investigator George'
c. 'Private Investments Guaranteed' | a. Superfrog
b. Alien Breed
c. Slugs: Armageddon | a. White Cliff of Dover
b. Cliff Smith
c. Nick 'Mad Juice' Jones |

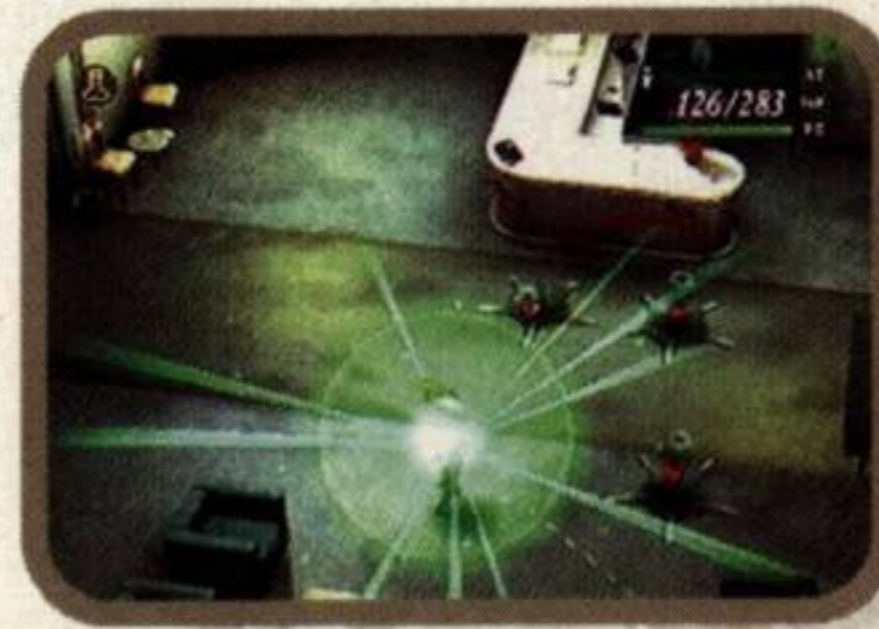


Is this the **game of the year**? Total CONTROL playtests one of the **most anticipated games ever**, *Metal Gear Solid*



foreign office

It has **scary monsters**, a deadly **firestarting virus** and a beautiful **lady**. How could Parasite Eve possibly go wrong?





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Keep up to date with all the **breaking news** from Japan and the US in Total CONTROL's **Foreign Office**.

New Dreamcast titles unveiled

Blue Stinger and *July* - two original titles for Dreamcast



Two new titles for the Dreamcast have been announced in Japan. The two in question are *Blue Stinger* and *July*, developed by Sega and new developers, Forty Five, respectively.

Blue Stinger is described as an action adventure. It is the year 2000, and after a massive earthquake hits Mexico, a new island appears off the Yucatan peninsula, which the American and Mexican governments decide to name Dinosaur Island. A joint geological survey team is sent over to the island to investigate,

but none of the results were published to the public. Now, eighteen years later, a city has been built on the island and all seems calm. That is all about to change...

People start to disappear amidst bizarre events, so a task force is sent over to investigate. This is where you come in. You play Elliot Ballade, the group's leader - other members include Dogs Bower, a heavy weapons expert, and Janean King, a female scientist.

It is your task to explore the island and discover what's going on - part of the game is learning the bizarre story, so not many details have been released as yet. The game



Above: *Blue Stinger* is going to be a real graphical tour de force

Namco announce JogCon

R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 to get new Namco peripheral

To coincide with the Japanese release of *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4*, Namco will release a new controller, the JogCon. Dedicated gamers may remember the company's last peripheral, the NegCon, which attempted to make driving games more realistic by incorporating an analogue 'twist' function to the joypad. The new pad features a radio control-style dial in the centre, which Namco hope will improve reality and ease of play in driving games. The JogCon will also feature force feedback. It is still unknown whether or not the pad will be launched outside of Japan.





is basically a *Resident Evil*-style game, only all the graphics are drawn real-time and are extremely well detailed. You have complete freedom of the city. You can go absolutely anywhere; into shops, banks, video game arcades, houses – if you can see it, then you'll be able to go there.

July, on the other hand, is a potentially ground-breaking horror adventure title. The game is set in – surprise, surprise – July 1999, when the human race undergoes a weird mutation as babies start to be born without any sexual organs. Eventually

these humans grow up and realise that there is another major difference: they no longer age and cannot die. They begin to consider themselves superior to the remaining population.

The story centres around one such 'sexless' human, Gene Raven, who kills his father and decides to construct a world of his own. He hatches a plan to capture the remaining 'sexless' bodies and destroy the human race.

You play the role of Makoto Takamura, a young university student who gets caught up in Gene's evil plan.

July features over 150 characters for you to interact with, although the route that you take through the game will depend on whether or not they are friend or foe. There are several possible outcomes to the game, depending on the choices you make – especially whether you go along with Gene or decide to fight him. This should mean that the game has plenty of replay value.

These two titles show that the Dreamcast is not the arcade and PC game-only platform that it was in danger of becoming. Both titles are looking highly original and playable. We'll have more news next month. **TC**

Above: *Blue Stinger* promises to be a visually stunning title



Above: Character artwork from *July* is suitably moody

Zelda delayed (again)

The *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*, the most anticipated and possibly the most delayed game in history, is on the rocks again – although not seriously. The game will be released in Japan one week later than was originally intended. The new date is now November 21st in Japan, which puts it only three days before the US and European release. Nintendo said the delay was necessary to ensure that there would be enough cartridges to satisfy the initial demand. However, news from Japanese magazines hints at a Rumble Pak compatible mini-game featuring a fishing pond and a playable ocarina which rewards Link with a prize if he plays the relevant tune. Sounds interesting...





JAPANESE CHARTS

1	Pocket Monsters Pikachu (Nintendo)	Game Boy
2	Metal Gear Solid (Konami)	PlayStation
3	Simulation RPG Sequel (Game Construction)	PlayStation
4	Max 2 (Atlus)	PlayStation
5	SD Gundam Generation (Bandai)	PlayStation
6	Goshingaku Girl Detectives (Human Adventure)	PlayStation
7	Fuujin Engi (Koei)	PlayStation
8	XI [Zai] (SCE)	PlayStation
9	Star Ocean Second Story (Enix)	PlayStation
10	Jikkyou Power Pro Baseball 98 (Konami)	PlayStation

In a month where the Jap top ten is dominated by PlayStation titles, Nintendo have a reason to feel chuffed. The latest Game Boy Pokemon title, *Pocket Monsters Pikachu* sits proudly on top, ahead of its nearest rival by 45,481 units. In the last week, *Pocket Monsters* sold 103,683 copies to *Metal Gear Solid's* 58,202. Shame that there are no N64 titles in the top ten though...

US CHARTS

1	Madden '99 (EA)	PlayStation
2	NFL Gameday '99 (989)	PlayStation
3	WWF: Warzone (Acclaim)	Nintendo 64
4	WWF: Warzone (Acclaim)	PlayStation
5	C&C: Red Alert: Retaliation (EA)	PlayStation
6	Goldeneye 007 (NOA)	Nintendo 64
7	Gran Turismo (SCEA)	PlayStation
8	NCAA Football '99 (EA)	PlayStation
9	Banjo-Kazooie (Rare)	Nintendo 64
10	Tekken 3 (Namco)	PlayStation

Two American football titles dominate the US charts this month, *Madden '99* just pipping Sony's own gridiron game to the top spot. It's also good to see two British games in the chart - *Goldeneye* is still selling well.

Naomi is a super-model

NEC announce arcade deal with Sega

in a move reminiscent of Sony's deal with Namco, NEC have announced that they are producing a new arcade board that features the same chipset as the Dreamcast, albeit with more memory - 32MB compared to the Dreamcast's 16MB. Two titles have been announced so far, *House of the Dead 2* and *Blood Bullet* (the latter is described as a 3D *Final Fight*-type game). Both titles are being developed by Sega and are due out in Japan before the end of the year.

The similarity between the Dreamcast and Naomi will mean that conversion time will be negligible. Most of the time will be spent enhancing the arcade games for the home machine. In an interesting move, Sega have also told all teams working on development on the Model 3 board to concentrate on Naomi. This will only serve to speed up home conversion of all Sega's own arcade games to the Dreamcast.

So far about twenty developers have signed up for development on the Naomi arcade board, including Konami, Treasure, Tecmo and Capcom. It is expected that titles resulting from this development will start appearing on the Dreamcast mid-1999. **TC**

The American Dream

US Dreamcast launch details revealed

Sega recently met with US industry buyers in order to drum up retail support for the Stateside launch of the Dreamcast. Some interesting details have emerged - most importantly, the modem has been confirmed. This was thought a certainty by insiders, but this is the first time that Sega of America have officially confirmed it.

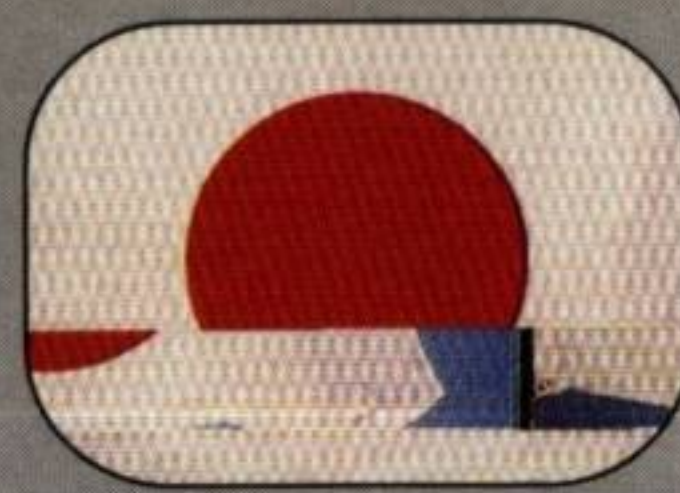
Launch titles were also revealed. Apart from the expected *Sonic Adventure*, there will also be a basketball title and an American football title, as well as an impressive arcade-style shooter. There was also

a game developed by Sega of America hinted at, but no details were released. It also emerged that there are already ten to twelve games in development that will utilise the modem. *Virtua Fighter 3* will be one of them...

There is also a rumour that one of the first third party titles to appear in the US will be a conversion of the PlayStation hit game, *Metal Gear Solid*. Sources say that the gameplay will remain almost identical but the graphics and sound will be improved to take advantage of the Dreamcast's power. We can't wait. **TC**



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Dreamcast

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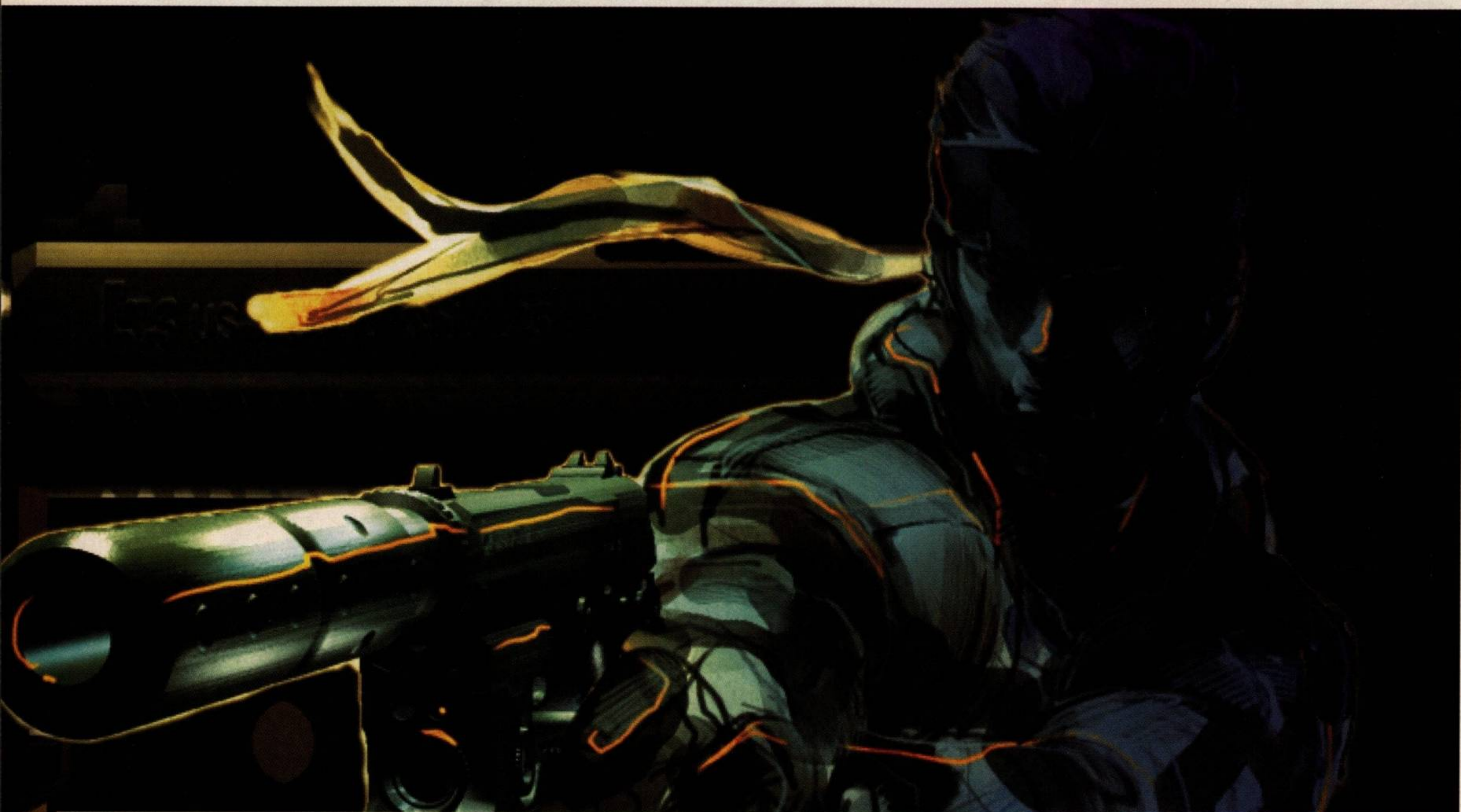
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METAL GEAR SOLID

Any title that manages to win 'Game of the Year' at E3 has got to have **something going for it**. We look at the Japanese import and decide if it's really worth its **very prestigious title**

INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Konami
DEVELOPER	SCEI
STYLE	3D Action/Strategy
RELEASE	Out now (Jap)
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

Take a moment to think about some of the games that featured at E3 earlier this year – games such as *Grim Fandango* on the PC, the excellent Abe's *Exodus*, *Force Commander*, and even *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. The E3 Game of the Year award may not mean very much to many of you – after all, it's only based on the opinions of a few people, right? But with so many more top quality titles

present than at any other E3 show before it, the winner of that particular award is going to have to be something pretty special for anyone to choose it over the rest of the contenders there. The winner of that award, *Metal Gear Solid* follows on from the two previous *Metal Gear* games that appeared on the NES several years ago. Its combination of brain-taxing strategy, in-your-face action and highly involving gameplay

won the Atlanta judges over. And after playing it non-stop since it arrived in the office, I was not surprised...

The most annoying thing about having to review *Metal Gear Solid* is that this is the Japanese NTSC code. 'Fair enough...' I thought, not expecting the plot to be half as involving as it was. One thing that *MGS* specialises in is its fabulous cut scenes. But not being able to understand Japanese, wading through each one



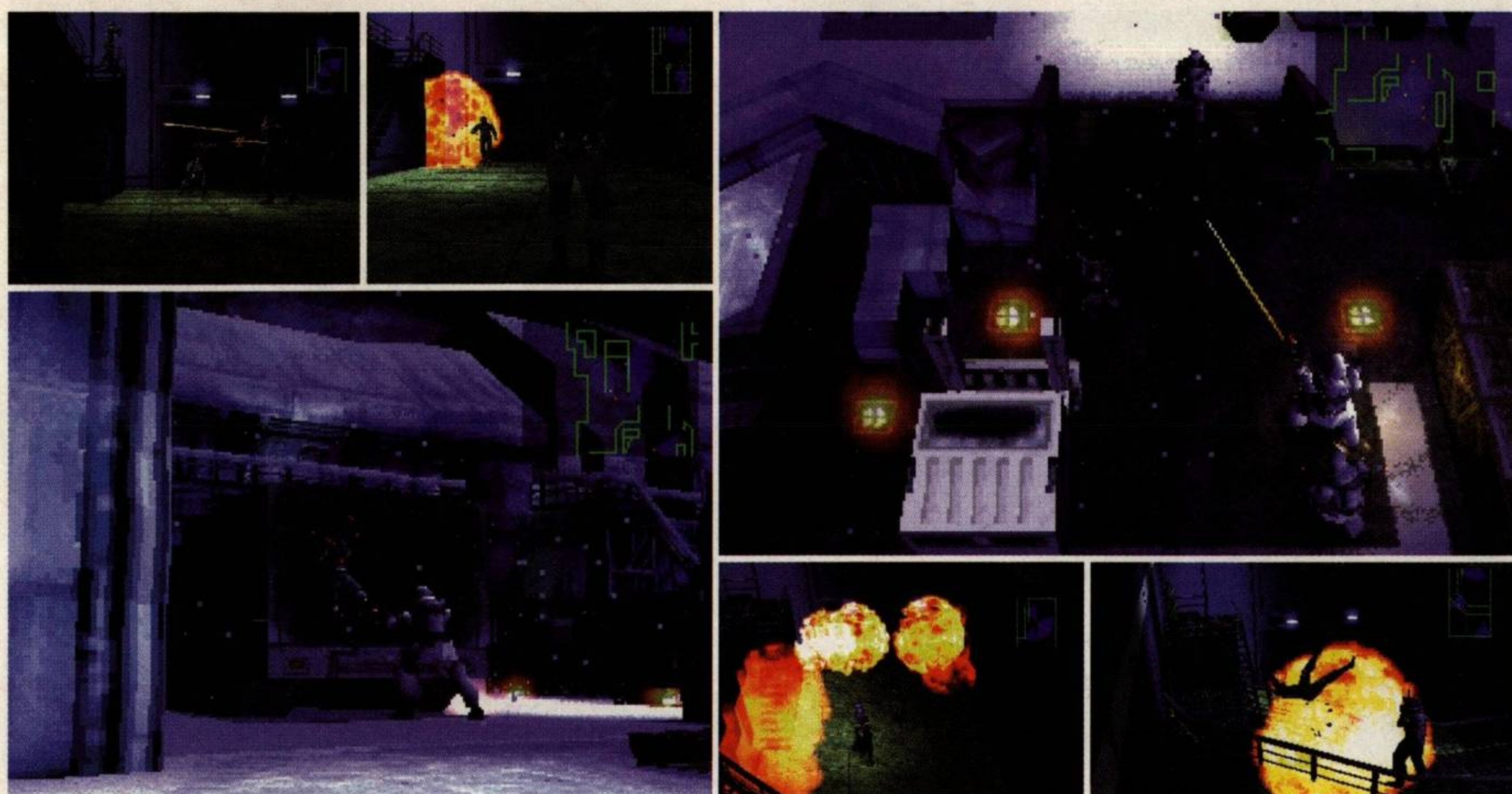
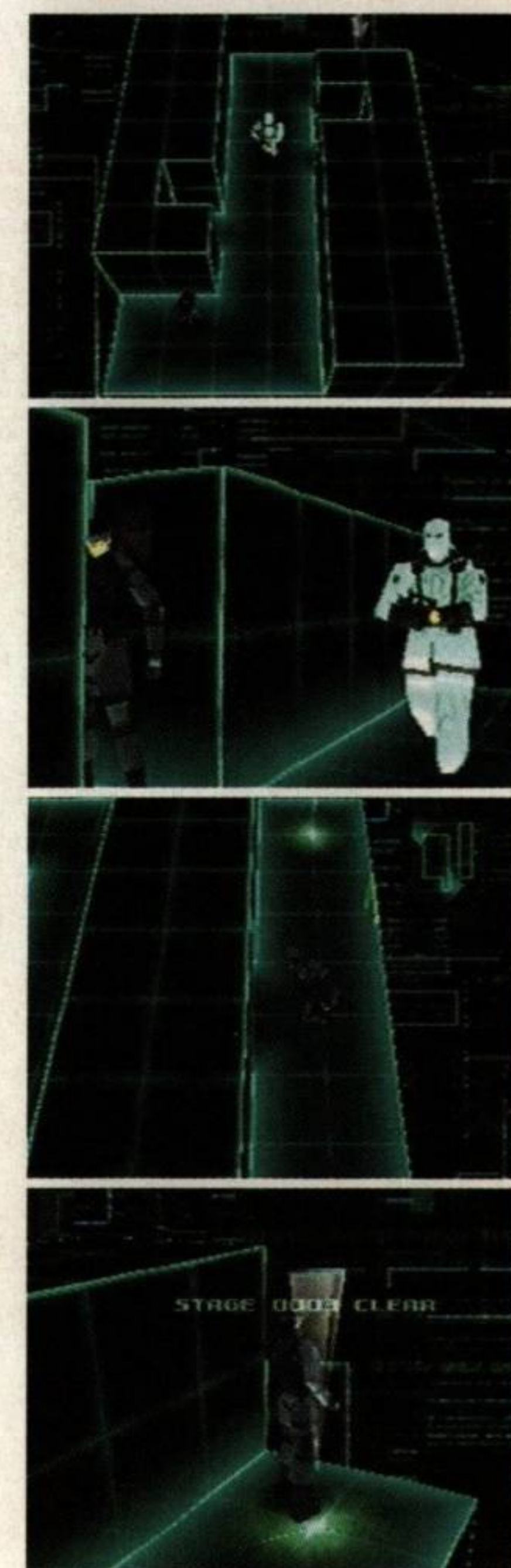
TAKING CONTROL

My first impressions were that maybe the hype was unjustified. There were a lot of small problems with the game, and without being able to understand the cut scenes, there was no real direction to it. Then, after managing to solve one very important puzzle, it became a completely different story.



VR mode

It's actually titled 'VR Training' on the menu, but this is more like an entirely different sub-game. There are a number of different stages, all containing ten levels. Each one puts you in a virtual room with your objective being to make your way to a portal to move on to the next level. The catch is that if you are seen by an enemy, the game is over. Later stages give you time limits and force you to kill all of the guards before the portal appears.



becomes interminably frustrating; you get the definite impression of an incredible but indecipherable plot as the game progresses... but more about the problems caused by the Japanese text later.

Anyway...

Before I actually began playing *Metal Gear Solid* I was initially quite sceptical for a number of reasons, one of which was that the poorly translated English section of the manual begins with the

shaping up to be a 3D version of *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines...*

The character you play (the bizarrely-named Solid Snake) is a member of a covert government agency called Fox Hound. Starting off in the sewers below the enemy headquarters, you make your way up to the surface avoiding enemy detection whenever possible. Without giving too much away, you will find that your objectives change radically later on in the game.

literally have to be right under their noses in order for them to sound the alarm.

When this happens the radar changes to reveal a danger counter that counts down from ten seconds. During this time the guards will go into 'Alert' mode and call for back up (of which there is usually an infinite amount). Finding somewhere to hide is usually your best option here, because each time you are seen the counter resets to ten seconds. Once the counter reaches zero, a ten second

you can bang on walls to lure guards away from their set paths and even grab enemies around the neck and use them as human shields

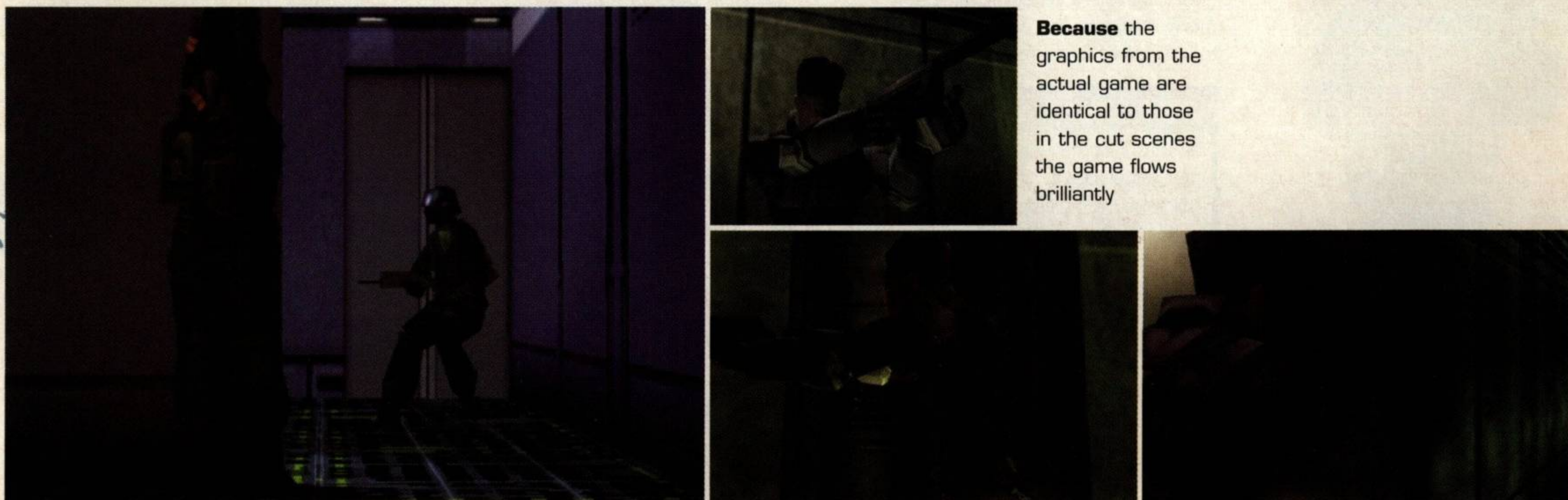
statement, "Infiltrate without being found by enemies", and goes on to state your initial briefing: to sneak into a terrorist base and decide if they have the ability to launch a nuclear weapon. If they have it is your duty to stop them. Your secondary objective is to rescue any hostages that you find, but, more specifically, two important businessmen who have been kidnapped. It was

To help you in your quest you have a radar in the top right of the screen which shows your position, the position of the enemy guards surrounding you and their line of sight. The first and most ridiculous fault that I noticed was that the enemy guards can only see about ten feet in front of them. Stand on the other side of a small room, directly in front of them, and they won't notice you are there – you

evasion mode phase begins. The surrounding guards will still look around for you outside of their patrolling route, but now they are also listening for you, so you'll have to be careful not to make any noise. After this you will regain your radar and everything turns back to normal, so perhaps it's just as well that the guards have such a limited field of view.

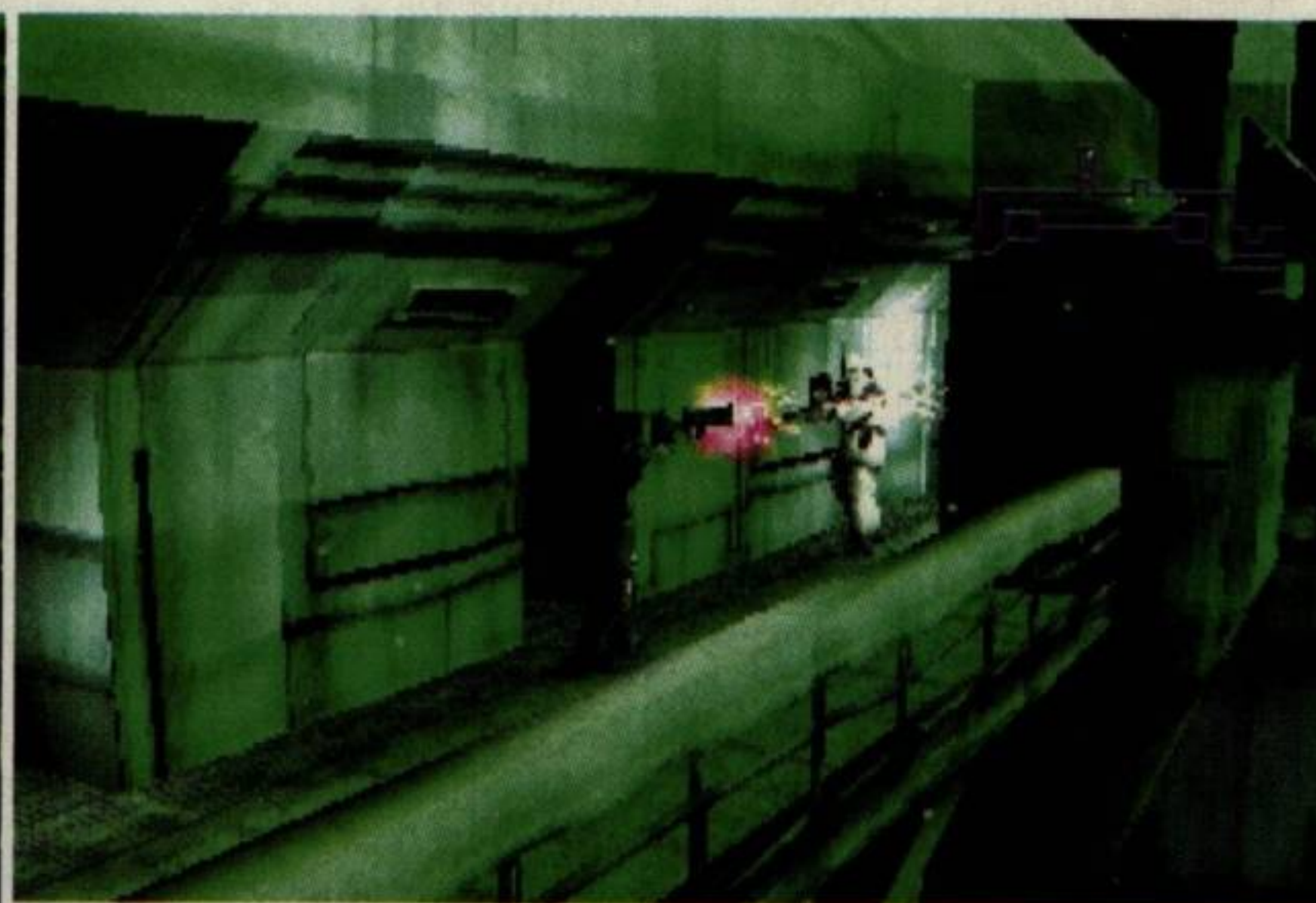
However, this is not the only fault I

Because the graphics from the actual game are identical to those in the cut scenes the game flows brilliantly





A selection of characters from the game, many of whom you will only have contact with via your Codec device, but they still play a big part in the story



could find with the enemy AI. Another problem that arises after they have seen you is evident when you enter an area that they cannot, such as a ventilation shaft or the back of a truck. Even crawling under a table to the other side gets them stumped, as they will stay to one side, apparently wondering where you went. You can also injure a guard when in normal mode, and as long as

perform running dives into pools of water and even grab enemies around the neck and use them as human shields (very cool). The view seems to be zoomed in a bit too much, so you are usually forced to manoeuvre past guards using your radar. If you want to shoot them it often has to be an off-screen shot, though there is an auto-target which makes this easier than it would otherwise be. To get a better

tactics is in order. As you knock down their health they too will usually change their pattern of attack, forcing you to come up with a new approach.

Though this is the basic format of the game, it's not quite as linear as first impressions may suggest. There are plenty of puzzles to be completed using a variety of items and weapons that can be found along the way.

if there's one thing that the japanese should be commended for it's their ability to conceive some of the best plots seen in computer games

he does not see you do it, he will not set off the alarm, only stand still for a bit wondering what just happened. Minor faults such as these tarnish Konami's claims for MGS's unparalleled realism, but fortunately do not cloud the gameplay, which shines like the rare gem it is.

The main game is played from a top-down isometric 3D perspective. You make your way through each room, killing bad guys and collecting extra items and weapons. Movement is fluid and well animated, with a variety of different moves available. You can bang on walls to lure guards away from their set paths,

view you can switch the game to a first-person view, but sadly you cannot shoot or move when using this option.

Getting bossed around

The game does not contain levels as such, but you will come across several boss characters in the game, all of whom are uniquely different, and most will take some time to beat, requiring you to use all of your available techniques. Most of them will have a weak point or will be vulnerable to a particular route of attack, so if you notice that your health is dropping faster than theirs, maybe a change of



While the game environment is pretty big, you never get the feeling of being totally lost as you are guided along using a key card mechanism. As you progress, your key card level increases, allowing you access to security doors that were previously inaccessible. If you get stuck it's a good idea to have a look around and go back to some of the rooms that you may have passed earlier but were not allowed entrance to – some of them may contain some very useful stuff.

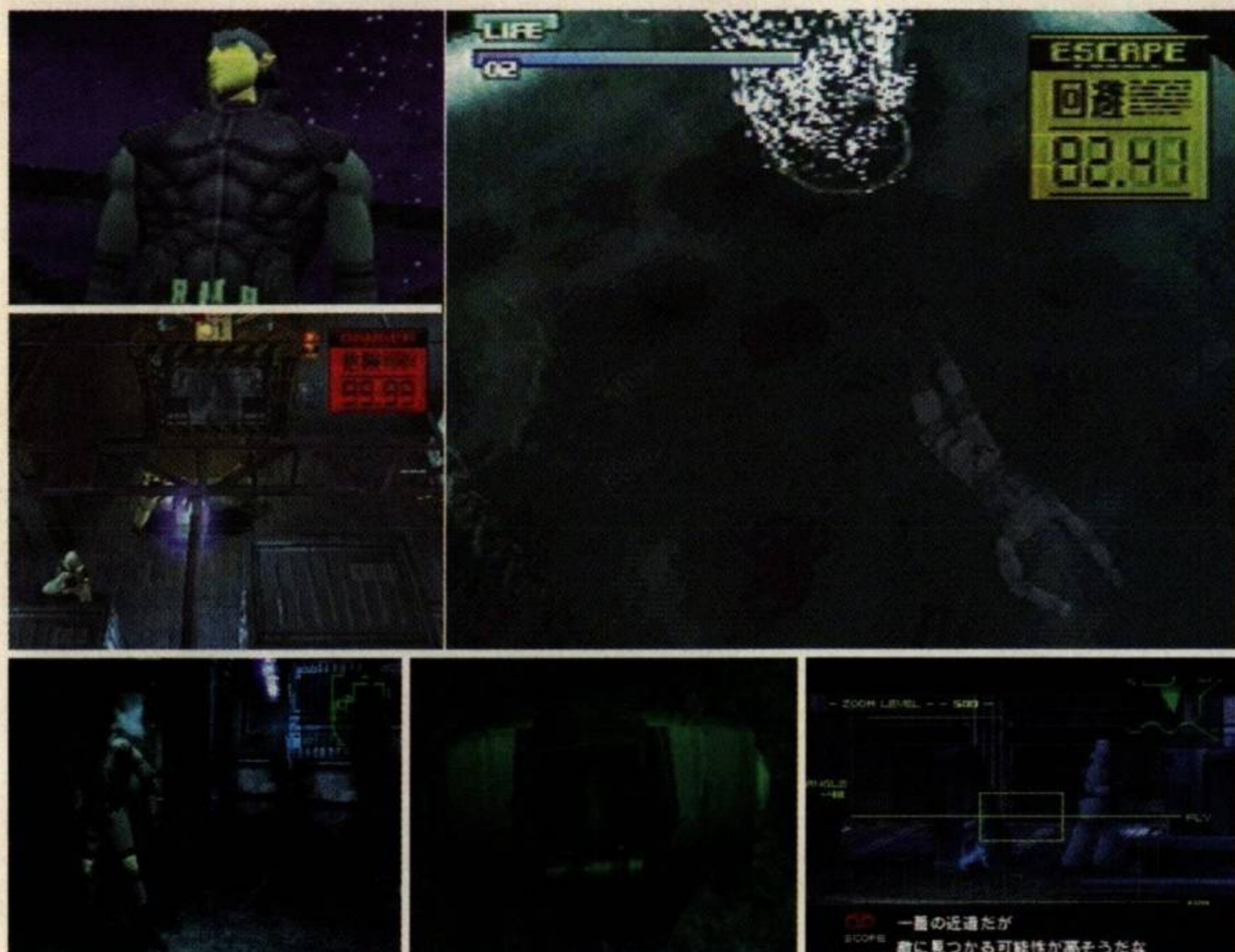
The path of the righteous man

That said, there is a set route to the game but you will stray from it occasionally. This is mainly down to the fact that most of the advice you receive to point you in the right direction is in Japanese. Hints often come in the form of your Codec device, which is basically a telephone. You will receive messages from a number of people regarding things such as background information or descriptions of new equipment and enemy tactics. At any point in the game you can use this to report the current situation to the other members of your team in the hope that they will give you some advice. Obviously it won't be in

謎のヒント

Because a lot of the hints in the game are hidden within the lines of Japanese text, every now and then you're going to get stuck and not have a clue where to go. The only point at which I really got stuck came early on in the game, and I was forced to resort to the internet for help. For those without that resource here's a valuable hint: After finding the C4 explosive you can blow a hole in the same room near the cracks by the bottom left corner.



English, so you'll end up flicking through a ridiculously long conversation with the X button. The usefulness of this item is restricted to saving your game.

One thing that most of you will end up doing at some point in the game is wandering around and backtracking all the way to the beginning of the game. Nobody likes this sort of aimless wandering, but you can be sure that this is only due to the language barrier. Once you do get back on track you'll probably kick yourself because the solution had been staring you in the face all along. The most important portions of the game – menus, names of items, etc. are in English and fully understandable, so wandering is rare and only necessary a few times, as most of the game is self-explanatory. A good example is when

~~you get the feeling that it would lose its charm had it been in English, a bit like watching a dubbed manga film~~

you are captured and thrown in a cell – a friend passes a key card and a bottle of ketchup through to you. It doesn't take a genius to work out what to do next. When you are running around exploring unseen rooms and making progress you are frequently treated to some very nice cut scenes. These are worthy of special mention.

If there's one thing that the Japanese should be commended for it's their ability to conceive some of the best plots seen in computer games. The plot in *MGS* is revealed through a number of lengthy (about ten minute)

cut scenes. To squeeze all of this onto two CDs, the cut scenes in *MGS* use the same polygon models as in the actual game, albeit with the addition of some very nice visual effects such as motion blurring and transparency. One bonus of using these graphics is that the game flows much better. You never feel separated from the game, and so it doesn't split it up into different chapters – it's a nice effect. Many of them consist primarily of the camera floating around two characters in conversation (speaking Japanese), but there are several scenes that are great to watch – for example, the introduction of the invisible robot ninja (told you there was more to the story) or the death of Wolf, the enemy sniper. You wouldn't have thought that overlong conversations in

Japanese were much fun to watch, but even though you can't understand them, they are still fairly easy to follow and it's not difficult to work out what's going on. As the saying goes, 'it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it', and the Japanese know exactly what they're doing here. Each cut scene plays like a film and has that unique Japanese style, but not just because they are all speaking the language. After playing this version as long as I have, you get the feeling that it would lose its charm had it been in English, a bit like watching a dubbed Manga film.

Looking good

You will have already noticed that there are some pretty nice graphics in the game, but stills don't do *MGS* any justice. There was one room that had what is perhaps the best real-time graphics that I had ever seen on a PlayStation; an office with a transparently textured marble floor, combined with a true reflection of the surrounding wall. The rest of the game graphics are almost as good.

Beating the graphics hands down is the outstanding soundtrack, which gives the game the movie-like feel that it has. The in-game effects are also superb. After being tortured you are thrown in a cell, and while you work out your escape route you can hear the screams of your other unfortunate cell mates.

Whether the Japanese version of this excellent game is worth buying is something you'll have to decide for yourself. It will certainly be a must-buy for everyone at some point in the future, but whether you are willing to wait for the English translation depends on how patient you are. Though the language barrier is not as important as it would be in a game like *Final Fantasy VIII*, it's still there, and it detracts from the experience. Other than this *MGS*'s many little faults pale into insignificance when you look at the game as a whole – bear in mind that the score would be considerably higher had this been in English. If you decide to let it pass for now, make sure you check out the PAL version as soon as you get the chance. **Will**

The robotic ninja above is a character that you'll meet more than once in the story. As he has the ability to become invisible, he is a fearsome adversary



OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●○○○○

Since Konami have never released a game on the PC, it seems very unlikely that they'll start now. Still, you never know...

N64 ●●●○○

There have been rumours that *Metal Gear Solid* could make an appearance on the N64 at some point in the future. We'd like to see it happen about as much as Nintendo would.

Dreamcast ●●●○○

Could *MGS* join the tasty bunch of titles looking to make an appearance on Sega's latest? Possibly, though nothing has been confirmed yet.

IMPORT SOFTWARE SUPPLIED BY: **OAKLAND CONSOLES**

Verdict

GAME NAME	Metal Gear Solid
GRAPHICS	92
SOUND	93
PLAYABILITY	83
OVERALL	96
Out of 100	





PARASITE EVE

After a game like *Final Fantasy VII*, where do a company like **Squaresoft** go next?



INFORMATION

PUBLISHER	Squaresoft/EA [US]
DEVELOPER	Squaresoft
PRICE	One
TYPE	RPG
RELEASE	Out Now [US]
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block



With games like *Secret of Mana* (SNES), *Bushido Blade* and the incredible *Final Fantasy VII* under their belt, Squaresoft have got to be acknowledged as one of the best software developers in the world. Their unhealthy attention to detail has got to be admired, as has their constant drive to push back the boundaries of game genres. Witness *Bushido Blade*, a fighting game like no other and, of course, *Final Fantasy VII*, a game which is arguably in a genre all of its own. So what happens when Square decide to make a game that has a distinctive horror theme, uses 3D pre-rendered backgrounds and features a mutant virus? Sound familiar? Well, the

similarities between *Parasite Eve* and *Resident Evil* don't end there...

You play the role of Aya Brea, a NYPD cop who's unfeasibly good-looking – but that's marketing for you. Anyway, the game opens with one of the most dramatic intro sequences ever. Our heroine is on a date – at Carnegie Hall in Manhattan – to see the opera. The show begins, and suddenly all the people around her start bursting into flames. With burning bodies all around her, Aya Brea's gaze falls onto the leading lady. Their eyes meet, and the only two people in the hall not burnt to a crisp are connected. And so the game begins. It soon transpires that Eve (the singer) is a walking experiment



into mitochondria, a chemical reaction that turns oxygen into energy in the body. This process has evolved into such a high form that it has acquired a consciousness all of its own and is hellbent on destruction of the human race and world domination. Aya was also one part of this experiment, and as such cannot be

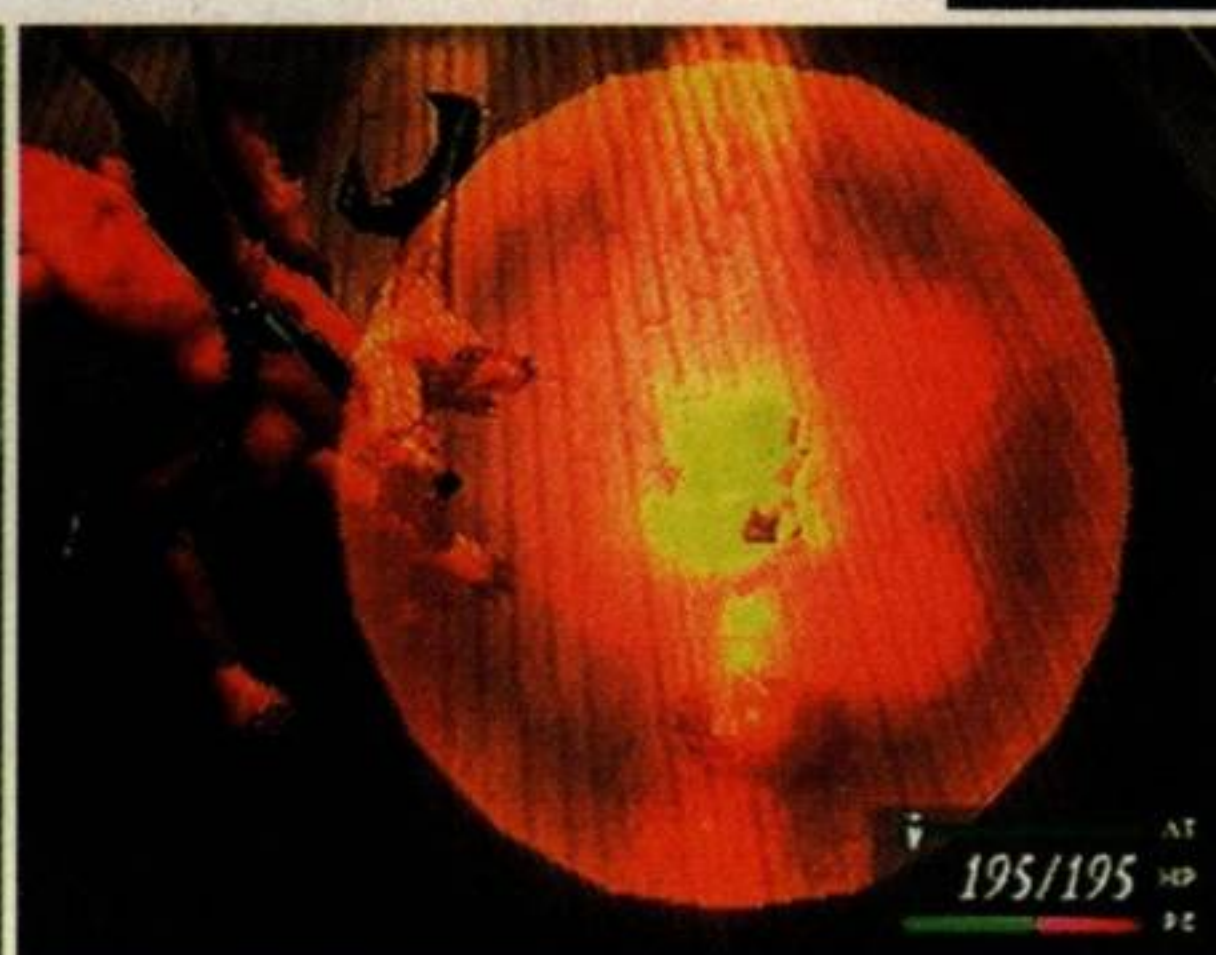
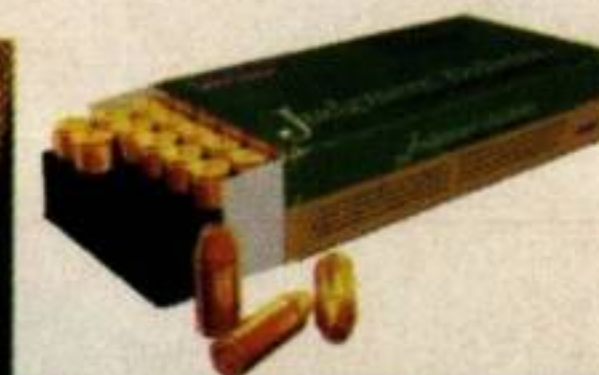
GUNS GALLERY

Plenty of weapons are available in *Parasite Eve*. You are able to modify each of the guns to make one 'super weapon'.



it's a greek... no, it's a roman... no, it's a greek!

With its linear nature and stunning use of FMV, *Parasite Eve* continues the trend set by *FFVII* – you might even describe it as an interactive movie. Below are some examples of how *Parasite Eve* uses cut scenes and pre-rendered scenes to illustrate the story.



affected by Eve in the same way that normal people are. Cue Aya to save the world and all of humanity.

A beginning, a middle and an end...

Parasite Eve is part RPG, part film. It is probably the closest we've come yet to an interactive movie. The gameplay consists of exploration (which is limited), fighting creatures and finding keys, armour and weapons. There are none of the 'puzzles' seen in *Resident Evil*. Combat is a variation on the turn-based combat seen in *Final Fantasy VII*. Although you have to wait for a time meter to fill before you can attack, you (and your opponents) have the ability to run around a designated area. This allows you to dodge attacks and also brings another aspect into play:

Parasite Eve looks gorgeous. The lush backgrounds are only matched by the game's wonderful cut scenes

range of weapon. You will have to be close enough to your opponent to attack. This works well – it successfully integrates some vital arcade elements into what may have been a limited, if not tedious, battle system.

There are plenty of subtleties to be found in the game as well. There is the 'tool' tune-up for weapons, where you are able to take characteristics from one weapon (such as fire rate and range) and add them to another. You will eventually end up with one mother of a weapon. You also have 'Parasite' powers. These are reminiscent of the Materia from *FFVII* – you have spells such as heal, detox and projectile attacks, and you'll gain more powers the more experience points you have.

Parasite Eve looks gorgeous. The lush backgrounds are only matched by the game's wonderful cut scenes. These successfully explain the narrative and are some of the best yet seen in a videogame. And there are lots of them – out of the ten hours it

takes to complete this game, probably about a third of that time is spent watching FMV. This is represented by the fact that *Parasite Eve* comes on two CDs, but does this represent money's worth?

Games versus movies

Parasite Eve is an accomplished piece of programming and is an enjoyable experience. However, the similarities between this game and *Resident Evil* are perhaps a little too close for comfort. The combination of the pre-rendered backgrounds and a storyline where animals are transformed by a 'virus' leaves you thinking that you've seen it all before. And done better. However, the game manages to generate an atmosphere that is distinctly different from Capcom's horror epic. The linear nature and the fact that the game is a little too easy means that you won't be playing this game for too long – and you

probably won't come back for more once completed. In short, it depends what you want from a game. If you enjoyed the narrative aspects of *FFVII* and all the character analysis from that game, then you'll enjoy *Parasite Eve*. Some gamers, however, might demand more from a game that'll cost you the best part of fifty notes.

Parasite Eve is something of a strange venture for Squaresoft. It uses ideas from several sources and ends up being little more than a sum of those parts. For a company that is renowned for innovation, this can be seen as something of a disappointment. **Nick**

Graphically, *Parasite Eve* is more than impressive. The high standard of pre-rendered backgrounds is only matched by the quality of the real-time polygon models and special effects

OTHER FORMATS?

PC ●●●●○

After Squaresoft's release of *FFVII* for the PC, it makes it highly likely that we'll see more of their titles in the future. *Parasite Eve* is a similar title, so why not?

N64 ○○○○○

Square and Nintendo used to be best mates in the days of the SNES, but the relationship has gone sour recently. There's next to no chance of *Parasite Eve* ever appearing on the N64.

IMPORT SOFTWARE SUPPLIED BY: 

VERDICT

GAME NAME	Parasite Eve
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL	70
Out of 100	

TAKING CONTROL

After a stunning intro sequence you are left a bit lost for words... I don't think that there's been a more dramatic start to a game. Shortly afterwards, however, you are thinking, "haven't I seen this all somewhere before...?"



The innovative battle system gives your weapons a range



BRAVE FENCER MUSAHIDEN

Brave Fencer Musahiden is the latest RPG from the ever-growing **thoroughbred stable** of Squaresoft. Only this time, they've gone **a little way off the beaten track...**

-taking control

After only a few minutes the feeling was one of confusion – Japanese text everywhere! After a while, I homed in on the quirky gameplay and was enjoying every minute. Oh, and a translation from the Internet helped a little bit...

information

PUBLISHER	Squaresoft
DEVELOPER	In-house
STYLE	Action RPG
RELEASE	Out Now (Japan)
PRICE	£50 (Import)
PLAYERS	One
ANALOGUE	Yes
DUAL SHOCK	Yes
MEMORY CARD	One Block

When the life of the PlayStation has finally run its course, who will be remembered for producing the best software for the console? Possibly Namco, with its batch of highly polished arcade conversions, but for originality and titles which push back boundaries, there can be no one other than Squaresoft. Games like *Xenogears* and (naturally) *Final Fantasy VII* have both proved ground-breaking, and both were fairly serious RPGs. So, what happens when Square decide to

make an action RPG with the emphasis on quirky humour and gameplay? *Brave Fencer Musahiden* is the result, and it's not bad at all.

The main character in *Brave Fencer Musahiden* is loosely based on Japan's greatest swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi. The game sees you playing the Brave Fencer on a typical RPG quest to rescue a kidnapped girl and find your way back home. Nothing unusual there, but *Brave Fencer* has a few surprises up its sleeve...

Typically for a Square title, *Brave Fencer Musahiden* looks amazing; there are some wonderfully designed environments. Texture mapping is also of a high standard – what you'd expect when Square's top artists go to work on a game. The detail is impressive for a PlayStation with giant castles, villages and forests all rendered superbly. The character design is also typically Japanese, so it's big eyes and small bodies all round. In fact, the main character comes across as very similar to



If you want to know about *Brave Fencer* graphically, just take a look at this selection of shots – detailed textures and effects throughout

ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING

Even though *Brave Fencer Musahiden* attempts to break the RPG mould at every opportunity, there are moments where experienced players will feel at home. This typically Japanese village (left) is full of all the usual characters that you'd find in an RPG. This normality is well contrasted with locations on an epic scale; this spiral tower (right) for example, is huge and a testament to the talent of Square's programmers and artists.



Variety and set pieces are some of the delights of *Brave Fencer Musahiden*. It constantly amazes you with its imagination and invention. An English translation would be welcome

Konami's ninja hero, Ganbre Goemon, even down to the funky blue hair. Similarities between this game and

actions awaken a giant stone head which promptly chases him, intent on squashing the blue-haired one 'under

THERE IS PLENTY TO BE ADMIRER HERE - WONDERFUL VISUALS AND MUSIC, IMAGINATIVE GAMEPLAY AND SOME SPLENDID CHARACTERISATION

the previous *Goemon* games are subtle but welcome.

To begin with, the game has a linear structure (*Brave Fencer* takes part in chapters), but this soon opens up with more traditional RPG exploring and interaction with characters (have a translation handy if you can't read Japanese). The game retains its chapter by chapter story line, which is something of a novelty for a RPG.

The game is jam-packed with set sequences and has moments that will take your breath away. As early as the first chapter, our hero acquires a magical sword. Unfortunately, his

chin'. The sequence is brilliant: *Brave Fencer* is chased all the way down a tower and through a forest, all the time being caught up by the crashing and spinning head, smashing rocks and felling trees as he goes.

There is plenty to be admired here - wonderful visuals and music, entertaining and imaginative gameplay and some splendid characterisation. And with the game's linear structure and action approach to the genre, it is significantly different to any other RPG on the PlayStation to warrant a purchase for fans of Japanese RPGs. The charm inherent to this game is extremely

'Nintendo', and this is mirrored in the variety of gameplay on offer. *Brave Fencer Musahiden* continually delights the player with new ideas and situations. There are a wealth of sub-games to be played and marvelled at. It's only the old problem of unintelligible Japanese text that inhibits your enjoyment of what is undoubtedly an entertaining and amusing story line. If you have access to one of numerous translations on the Internet then there's no reason why you won't get as much enjoyment from this game as if it was in English.

Overall, *Brave Fencer Musahiden* is a superbly made game with all the hallmarks of a great Square game. With the addition of a translation to English this game will undoubtedly become one of the PlayStation's classic RPGs. **Nick**

OTHER FORMATS

PC ○○○○

Okay, you might get away with this very Japanese game for Western audiences on PlayStation, but for PC owners? Very unlikely.

N64 ○○○○

We've said it before: Squaresoft and Nintendo just aren't talking. There's no chance of *Brave Fencer* for the N64.



Despite the quirky Japanese gameplay, *Brave Fencer* should make it to Europe. A US release is planned sometime early next year

IMPORT SOFTWARE SUPPLIED BY: 

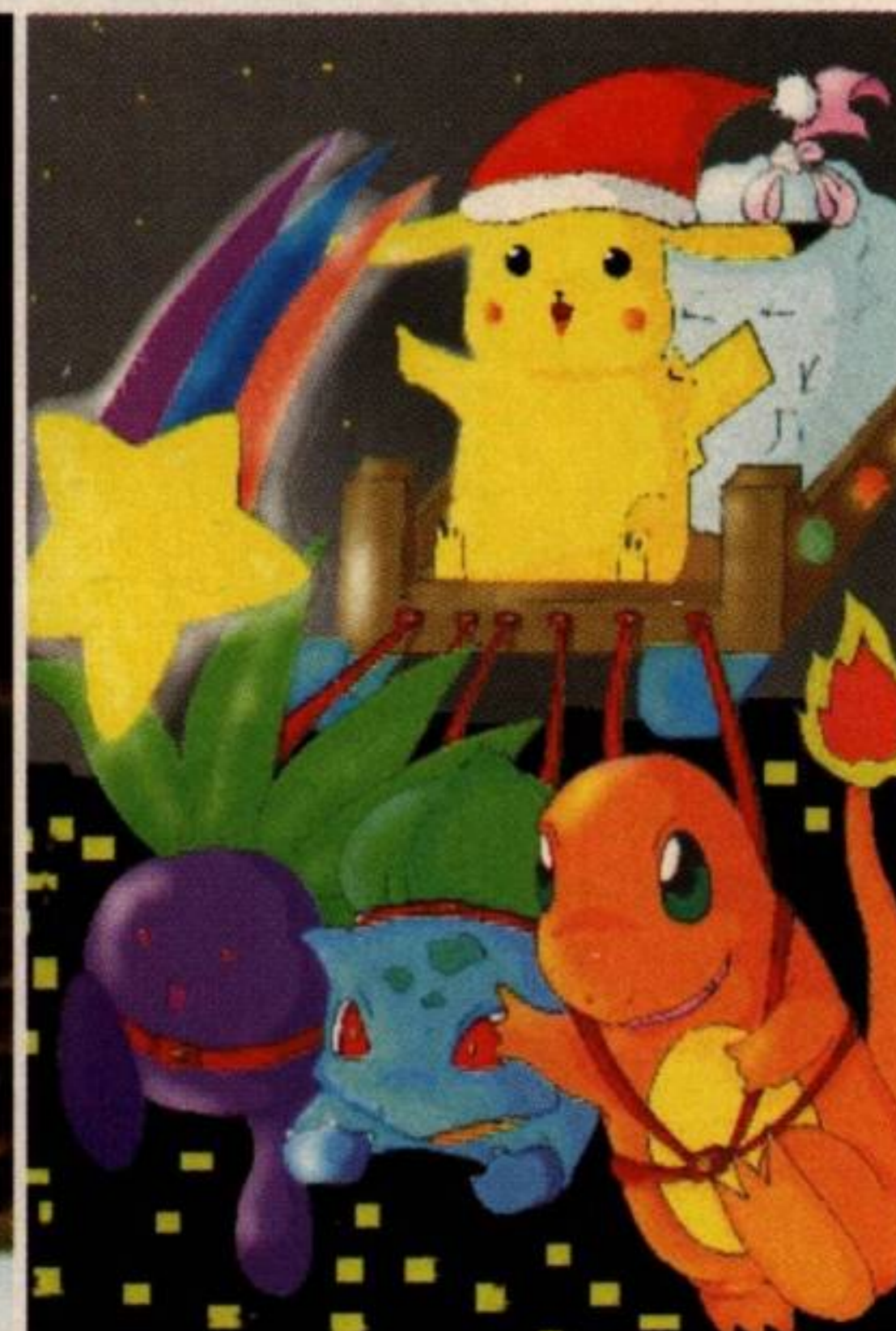
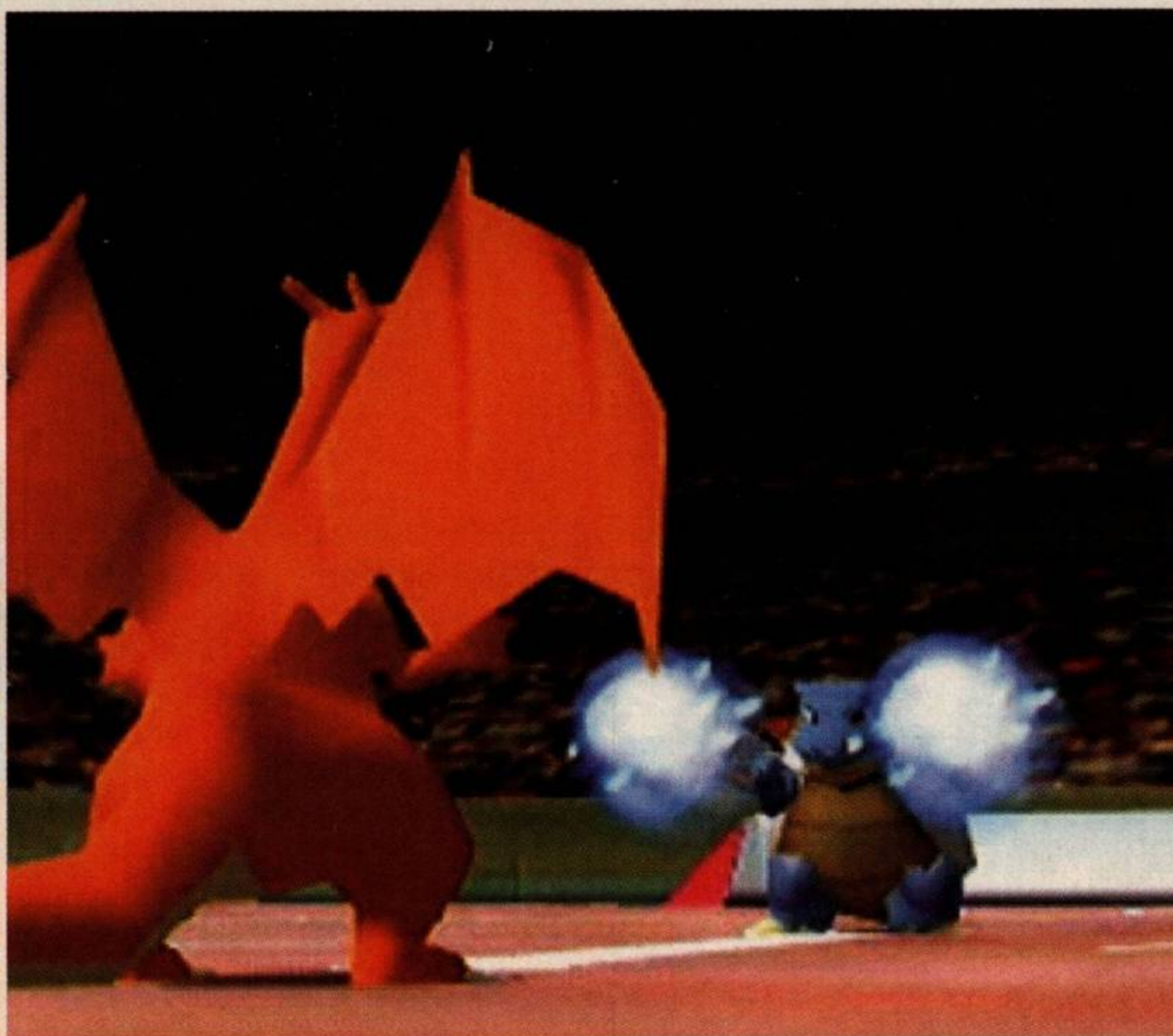
VERDICT

GAME NAME	Brave Fencer
GRAPHICS	84
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL	80
Out of 100	



ポケモン stadium

Apparently, **pretty soon**, after what only seems like months since the Tamagotchi, **we're all going to be invaded** by yet another Japanese craze. **Pokémon is coming**, so read on to find out **what it's all about**.



情報	
PUBLISHER	Nintendo
DEVELOPER	Nintendo
STYLE	Turn-based fighting sim
RELEASE	Out now [in Japan]
PRICE	???
PLAYERS	1 - 2
RUMBLE PAK	Yes
MEMORY PAK	N/A
EXPANSION PAK	No

Taking Control
 First impressions were predictable; too much Japanese text and not a clue of how to get anywhere. After a certain amount of luck, I found myself in a game where obvious comparisons could be drawn against the battle scenes in *Final Fantasy VII*. Sadly, the game seems to be far too optimised for players with a Pokémon Game Boy set-up and all the other relative parts. Still, it shows a lot of promise for the conversion.

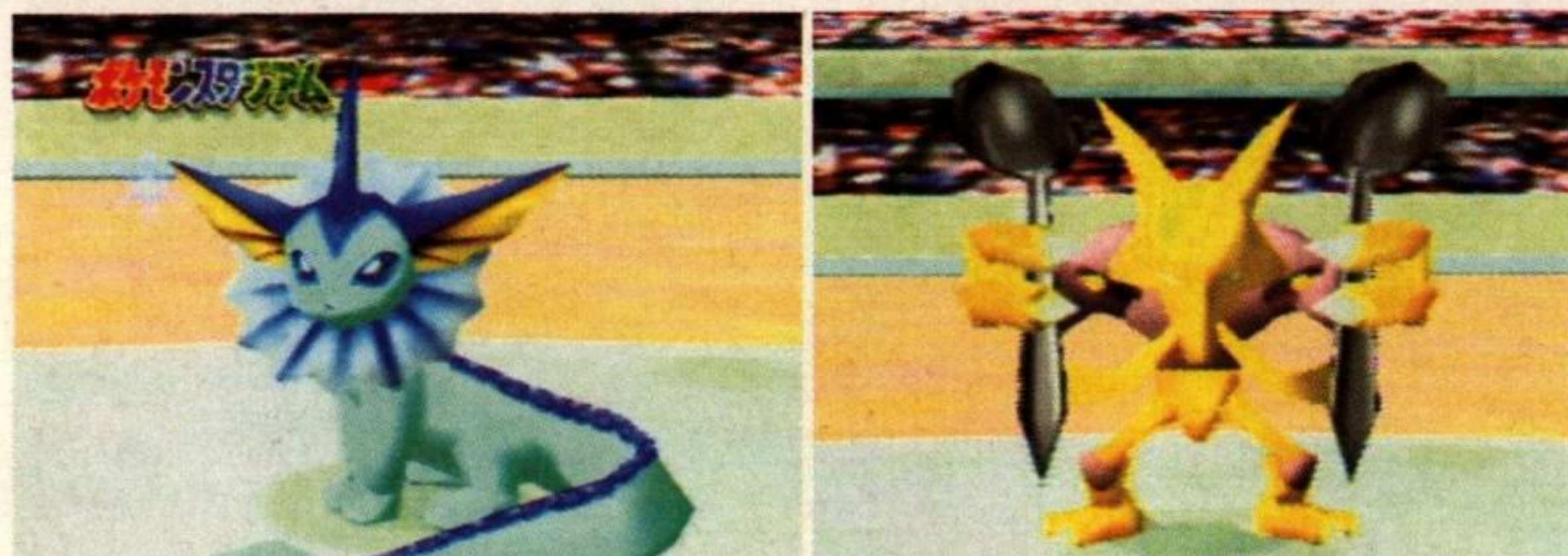
if you've never heard of *Pokémon* before then you'd better get used to it, because you'll be hearing a lot about it in the near future. *Pokémon* is the latest Japanese craze that looks set to make it over here – although it's actually been big over there for quite a long time already. It basically stands for 'Pocket Monsters'. But before you start thinking of Tamagotchis, don't worry; these won't die if you leave them on their own, though there are still a lot of similarities between the two.

Pokémon originated on the Game Boy as a role-playing game. You are a Pokémon trainer who captures, trains and ultimately fights the new monsters against other people's monsters for the prize of an entirely new Pokémon for you to train, fight and win with. Eventually your collection of Pokémon monsters will grow until either you have the ultimate collection of Pokémon... or you get bored with it and decide to do something else. Think of it as the 90s version of conkers; a game that is aimed at young school kids who can fight their

own trained monsters against each other, or a more civilised version of the boxing trade using a Game Boy link-up cable. It's perhaps not something that will appeal to everyone, but it's far bigger than you might expect in Japan. The merchandising in the Far East includes T-shirts, glasses, dolls, bags, toys and even full-sized Pokémon costumes. There is also a new TV cartoon show about to be released (how that will work I'm not sure), and the invasion onto American soil is already underway, so expect it here very soon.

If it's in the name...

But what has all this got to do with the N64? *Pokémon Stadium* is set for a release with the 64GB Pak. This little device is basically the N64 version of the Super Game Boy, which will plug into the back of your N64 controller and allow you to play Game Boy games on your N64. If you happen to own a Game Boy and a copy of *Pokémon* for it, as



jaan attack

One of the features that I'm looking forward to in the English version will be the commentary that is blaring out when your Pokémon go into battle. Obviously it's not quite the same in a foreign language, but even though you can't understand a word they are saying, it still ups the excitement quite a lot.



well as an N64 and a 64GB Pak, then *Pokémon Stadium* comes into its own, because it will allow you to plug your Game Boy cartridge into your N64 and use it in conjunction with this game.

Pokémon Stadium is basically what it says it is: a stadium for your Pokémon. Slap in your Game Boy cartridge, and then your monsters can battle it out on the bigger screen in full

each of these different opponents. Each bout requires you to choose three of your six Pokémon to go in to battle with, whilst the CPU does the same. Before combat it's usually a good idea to assign specific moves to each of the C-Buttons on your pad. When the bout begins, your first Pokémon will appear in the area alongside the first enemy Pokémon. Then battle commences.

are currently using is having little effect or running out of either hit points or moves.

That lingual malarkey

As nice an idea as *Pokémon Stadium* is, there are several reasons why this import version of the game should be avoided. Firstly, the actual game here is very limited and not very involved at all. This

~~think of it as the 90's version of Conkers, a game that is aimed at young school kids who can fight their own trained monsters against each other~~

colour and glory – with some very nice special effects to boot. Hooray!

Getting the treatment

If you don't have the special equipment needed to do that then don't worry too much, because you don't actually need it to play *Pokémon Stadium*. Without the Game Boy it merely becomes a battle game using your selection of monsters which works a little something like this.

Contained on the cartridge a varied selection of 40 reasonably trained Pokémon. You select six of them and then enter a tournament against a series of computer-controlled opponents with their own unique selection of Pokémon. You will face a series of bouts against

Battle is carried out in a style reminiscent of *Final Fantasy VII*. Basically you and your opponent will choose a particular move and then the Pokémon will fight it out. After this you select another one, and so on and so on. The Pokémon's health is represented by a hit point counter, with the different Pokémon having a wide range of hit points and moves. Some moves will be defensive and can have varying effects. Some moves will also have to be used sparingly as the number of times any Pokémon can use the same move in a bout is limited. Instead of performing a move you can switch your Pokémon to one of the other three you selected if the one you

is primarily an add-on pack for those of you with the equipment and software to use it with the Game Boy version – as a standalone game it's certainly lacking. But (far more importantly) this is the Japanese version, and unless you can read the language you are going to have some serious problems with this game. All of the menus, help features, weapon descriptions – everything – is all in Japanese, so you won't have a clue what you are doing at all. The English translated version looks as if it could be a huge hit if it is released over here after the Game Boy game, so you can expect a vastly different score. As it is, you'd have to be a big fan of *Pokémon* to go out of your way and buy this game. **Will**



The above are some of the set-up screens that you'll have to navigate through to get to the game. Do ya feel lucky?

OTHER PLATFORMS?

PlayStation ○○○○

There's not even a glimmer of a chance that you'll be seeing *Pokémon Stadium* on your PlayStation. If Nintendo have any sense at all, they'll be keeping this one to themselves.

PC ○○○○

Again, the chances of seeing any *Pokémon* game on any machine that doesn't bear the Nintendo logo are virtually non-existent.

IMPORT SOFTWARE SUPPLIED BY: OAKLAND CONSOLES

任天堂

GAME NAME	Pokémon Stadium
GRAPHICS	68
SOUND	70
PLAYABILITY	46
OVERALL	36
Out of 100	

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Out of CONTROL

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Name: JUSTIN CALVERT

Position: Editor

Previous experience:

Editor – PlayStation Solutions

Editor – Total 64 Editor – PC Force

Favourite game ever *Sensible World of Soccer* on the Amiga, purely because of the number of hours I spent on it making Exeter City the most feared domestic side in Europe. If my Amiga hadn't packed up a few years ago, I honestly believe I'd still be playing it now.

Game of the moment Definitely *Tekken 3* on the PlayStation. The original *Tekken* was the reason I bought a PlayStation in the first place, *Tekken 2* was the perfect sequel – and now they've improved upon it. No other PlayStation beat-'em-up is even worth looking at right now.

Next month I'm planning to spend as much as time as possible checking out *Championship Manager III*, probably with some help from everyone else on our office network. I'm also looking forward to getting my hands on reviewable code of some of the games we've looked at this issue. There are times when I positively enjoy taking my work home with me!

We've also got a Total CONTROL launch party to look forward to somewhere in London, where I believe tradition dictates that the editor be bought a drink by everybody attending, or did I dream that last bit? I'll let you know when I recover...

Name: NICK JONES

Position: Deputy Editor

Previous experience:

Staff Writer – PlayStation Solutions

Editor – Total 64

Favourite game ever Just for sheer amount of hours spent playing it over one Christmas, *Super Mario World* on the SNES. No platform game has come close to the charm, longevity and playability of Miyamoto's classic.

Game of the moment *Metal Gear Solid* on PlayStation. Even though this game is Japanese text-heavy, the gameplay is enough to keep you captivated in the same way that *FFVII* did. Can't wait to get the English version to see what on earth everybody's talking about! Easily the darkest game on the PlayStation.

Next month A few things stand out from the crowd. First and foremost is Miyamoto's potential masterpiece, *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. We don't have a review yet, but what we will have is a chance to spend some time with a beta version. From what we've seen already, it has the potential to be the best game ever – God knows, we've waited long enough...

Also, more deathmatch mayhem is promised with final *SiN* and *Half-Life* code, although the latter's single player game should be worth the admission price alone. Oh, and there's another N64 title that could be great, namely DMA's *Body Harvest*, an insectoid alien frag fest supreme!

Name: WILL ADKIN

Position: Staff Writer

Previous experience:

Staff Writer – PC Force

Favourite game ever *Goldeneye* is perhaps an obvious choice, but it's universally loved by everyone who's ever played it. As a single player game it's involving and rewarding with a perfect learning curve. As a multiplayer game, it's fast, frantic and huge fun. *Goldeneye* is perfect in almost every respect. It will be a very long wait for *Perfect Dark*

Game of the moment It's been a long time coming, but *Half-Life* is the first game that successfully manages to blend a superb on-going plot with an intense first-person shooter. It's shaping up superbly and should blow everything else away when it eventually arrives in full.

Next month I'll be looking out for the mail man to bring around a copy of *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* in the coming weeks. Having had the chance to sample it briefly at ECTS, it looks to be shaping up very well indeed, adding to the strong presence of the N64 at the moment. There's also the chance to sample *Grim Fandango*, a brilliant return to the days of *Monkey Island* and co. to water the current point and click adventure drought. With the other little matter of *Zelda* making its beta appearance soon, next month will be one to look forward to.

Name: CLIFF SMITH

Position: Senior Staff Writer

Previous experience:

Staff Writer – Ultimate PC

Favourite game ever I've been playing *Civilization* on the Amiga for nearly five years, and I still come back for more. It is the most perfectly designed game ever, far better than even its own sequel. It is witty, intelligent, and even slightly educational. A couple of hours spent playing *Civilization* never feels like time wasted.

Game of the moment This month, I've been mostly playing *Tekken 3*, although Justin keeps beating me. Hopefully I can get some practice in while he's in Tokyo!

As for the PC, we seem to have a whole squadron of combat flight simulators in at the moment, and I've spent a lot of time checking out DID's excellent *Total Air War*. As for why, see the review this issue.

Next month I'm looking forward to the arrival of Lara Croft's latest adventure in *Tomb Raider III*. I've already played the single level preview, and it looks superb on both a PlayStation and an accelerated PC.

Hopefully I'll also get to take a look at the *Age of Empires* expansion pack, *The Rise of Rome*. I'm a big fan of *AoE*, and three extra civilisations and half a dozen new unit should keep me busy until the sequel, *Age of Kings*, comes out sometime next year.

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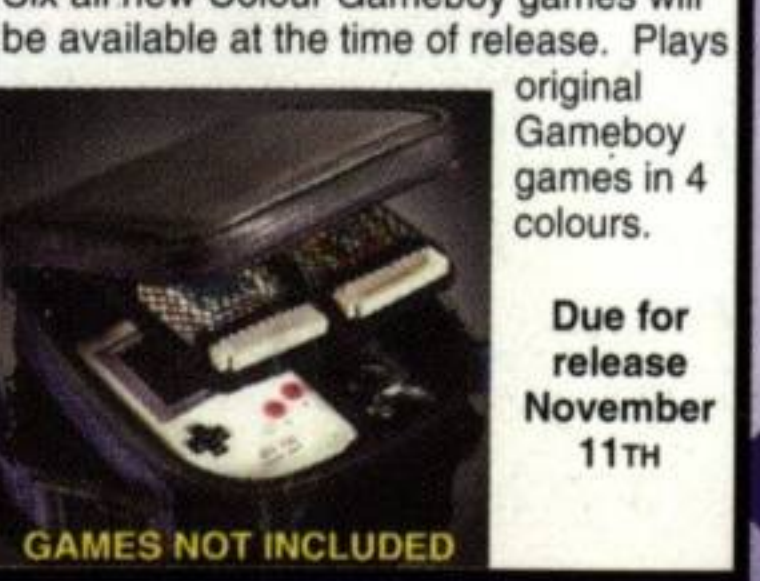
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