

Q-LETTER

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The Q-Mann Plugs In...

...Welcome to the first installment of the Q-Letter, your one-stop source for the latest inside info on the hottest topics in video gaming! There's plenty of trunk to talk about kiddies, but this month yours truly will focus in on the battle between the systems and the shape of game machines to come. We've heard a lot about the killer consoles and the games they'll play - now it's the Q-Mann's turn to deliver the dirt on what will win big and what will fail with the most giant sucking sounds (did you say Atari?)...

...The Q-Minator is hot on the heels of what could be the biggest new name in town - Jaguar. Yep, the super 64-Bit (really, guys, this is the marketing equivalent of a brown snowstorm - 32-Bit is almost believable, but if you're going to go that high, why not just give it a REALLY impressive number like 1,000,000-Bit) was hailed by most tech-heads at the recent CES as *the* mega machine of the show! Sure, it has RAM problems that cripple its lightning-fast processor and advanced graphic chips (we're talking polygon heaven here boys and girls), but if the Masters Inside Atari (MIA?) screw their brains in straight we may see this system get the attention many say it deserves...

...Now the Quarter-fiend comes to the 3DO. The hardware brains behind Trip's miracle machine are totally dazzling, but its the price! OUCH! The Q-Mann has mixed feelings on this next generation monster. If your pop is the president of Federal Express or if you have a bank named after the family, I say go get it! There will be tons of softs with big guns like EA and Paramount offering most of the muscle. If you find yourself saving for months to get a Lameboy, er, Gameboy cart, 3DO may not be what you're looking for. Of course the 3DO promises games via cable and low monthly rental fees (I sound like a furniture ad) in the future, so don't write it off just yet...

...It has been a few months since the guru of gossip threw some ink at the upcoming wonder-machine from Sega, internally code-named the Giga-Drive. Although you'll never see a system bearing that name, the Q-Mann has heard directly from a top-level suit in Japan who not only confirms the existence of the console, but indicated that such a device may find its way onto store shelves in the Land of the Rising Sun as early as this year! SOA champs deny such rumors, but with the Genesis selling at a number one speed and the Sega CD firing all thrusters, a new hunk of hardware is the last thing they want to see. Giga is supposedly going to operate at 32-Bit with an 11MHz processor, but is unlikely to support much of Sega's System 32 arcade architecture. Great games and downward compatibility with the Genesis and Sega CD are also among the rumored features of the vid industry's current big-hitter...

...Now I know the Turbo never really picked up the speed it may have deserved under NEC's direction, but that hasn't stopped plenty of activity from brewing for a major mega-bit assault on the market by TTI! The 32-Bit system which EGM exclusively previewed a couple of months back is now in the final stages of design, with a street date still tentative but due sometime this year. The Q-Mann, despite all the best attempts, has had difficulty pinning down game names, but a demo tape crossed my eyes which showed off the system's graphic superiority. Hold onto your seats because TTI is rumored to be making plans to deliver the Hudson design with a CD-only interface, eight button controllers, and instant on-screen morphing. Groovy!...

...Up in the attic are continued industry gossip on a possible Nintendo color portable (the Q-Mann gives this design the big diss), split opinions on the Pioneer laserdisc machine that comes with game systems to plug in, and the Nintendo CD-ROM (check out the full specs courtesy of yours truly in the April issue of EGM and expanded coverage in the April edition of Electronic Games). Regardless of their outcome, you can bet on hotter hardware and better games to come...

- QUARTERMANN

QUARTERMANN'S "OVERHEARD AT THE CES" COLUMN

...While undercover during the recent CES show in Vegas, the Q-Mann overheard plenty of interesting talk from those in the know. Sure, its true they had no idea that the one and only doomsday journalist was near, but I guess that's the price you pay for talking too loud over a lousy burger...

- "Get out of the way, the bow tie monster is coming..."
- "Why wasn't Total Carnage in the Acclaim booth? I read in that EGM rip-off that it would be here as a 12-Meg game..."
- "Hit me."
- "Nintendo told me that Street Fighter 2 would never come out for another system..."
- "Nintendo told me that Street Fighter 2 would be out on Sega later this year..."
- "I'll trade you three Ken Lobb cards for a Howard Phillips..."
- "Wasn't that the buffet where they had the food poisoning scare..."
- "If Sonic CD is so good, why isn't it here?"
- "I didn't realize that was Martin Alessi. What happened to the WD-40?"
- "No!
That's not true!
That's impossible!"

THE Q-MANN REVIEWS...

ROAD AVENGER

Did you ever get an urge to watch a movie that only displayed three seconds of film before requiring you to hit the appropriate button on your VCR control before it played the next three seconds of film? For all you video masochists out there, Renovation has produced this little number that boasts some slick full-motion video (and look, they nearly got it to fill up the whole screen!!!) and absolutely

tranked action that includes moves like the pedestrian plow!

Road Avenger isn't much of a game, but, like Cobra Command before it and Time Gal soon to follow, it is a gas! The cartoon footage is straight from a Japanimation and is good for a few laughs. Probably the best showpiece the Sega CD has to date (no more videos, PLEASESSSEE), the Q-Mann gives RA thumbs up!

THE Q-MANN REVIEWS...

STARFOX

The quality and presentation of this title is absolutely obscene.

Leave it to Nintendo to keep the first Super FX cart for themselves...and what a cart it is. Developed in the U.K. by Argonaut (the same group that developed the SFX chips), Star Fox takes home polygon gaming to an all-new plateau. Between the massive number of explosions and on-screen fighters, to the overall inten-

sity of the battles, StarFox scores big with the boss of goss.

Count on plenty of depth in this head's-on, eye's-up blast-a-thon, but watch out for the flurry of copy-cat poly games that are sure to follow (maybe we'll finally get a decent version of Hard Drivin' on a home sys.). The word is kick Nintendo, and you did some all over the place during the CES show! Bravo!

THE Q-MANN PREVIEWS...

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

This little gem, hiding in one of those back rooms at the CES your mother told you never to venture into, was undoubtedly the best of the show (where did you EGM guys get Flashback? It was Silpheed all the way for Best o' Show).

The second 16-Bit Star Wars epic from Lucas is cranked up even more, with awesome mode 7 screens of snowspeeders with back-

ground definition that left the Q-Meister awestruck!

Although this cart was far from finished, the wizards at Lucas assured me that no expense would be spared to insure that the follow-up to their brilliant Star Wars game would be just as good. Mark the words of the dirt driver, Empire Strikes Back will have everyone licking their chops and waiting for more. My only question is: Where's Jedi?