THE **OFFICIAL** DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

Dreamcast

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EURO SUPER LEAGUE
FIGHTING VIPERS 2
SKIES OF ARCADIA
SONIC SHUFFLE

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PLUS! SHENMUE AND METROPOLIS STREET RACER PLAYER GUIDES • EVERY DREAMCAST GAME RATED

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S COVER DISC →

FOUR PLAYABLE DEMOS!

SEGA EXTREME SPORTS

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

Sega Extreme Sports is a racing game that comprises of various, erm, extreme sports – including snowboarding, speed-gliding, bungee jumping and mountain biking.

Each race takes place over a set course and with a number of checkpoints that you must pass through before the timer reaches zero. There are also a number of changeover points where the mode of transport for the race changes.

This is what makes *Sega Extreme Sports* so exciting – you could begin a race on a snowboard, but before the end you may be required to swap to mountain bikes and finish with gliders. You must also avoid the other competitors who get in your way.

DUCATI WORLD SUPERBIKES

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

This demo gives you a taste of the forthcoming *Ducati World Superbikes* – a motorcycle racer that is set to offer over 40 famous Ducati bikes from both the past and present.

Here you get to take a Ducati 996 Superbike out for a burn. There's one short street circuit to test the bike, comprising of plenty of sharp bends, so make sure you don't go too fast. The demo is on an infinite timer – the simple challenge is to try and improve on and beat your previous best lap.

However, if you get tired of trying to beat your best lap time, then seeing how far you can unseat the rider each time you crash is always good for a laugh.

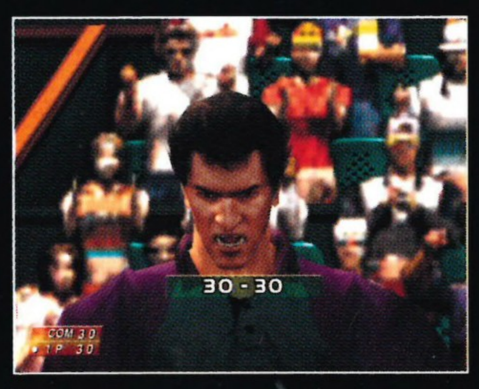
VIRTUA TENNIS

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

Virtua Tennis was voted the best game on Dreamcast by a panel of experts in our February issue *ODM* #16, and in case you haven't got the game yet, here's a chance to sample the delights and to discover why it's considered so good.

The demo allows you to play a game as one of four real pros, including Tim Henman, but make sure you try the others too as they each have very different strengths and weaknesses.

The full game contains eight real players from the world of tennis and the brilliant World Circuit mode – a single-player challenge where you make your way around the world battling other players and working on your skills with a number of unique training methods.



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

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

Get on your bike and prepare to tackle Woodward Camp's famous Lot 8 – a challenging and technical street course with enough ramps and rails to allow you to perform any trick you can think of.

Grind, stall and wheelie the different obstacles to try and beat the high score. That's not the only challenge, as there are a number of other records like longest jump or biggest air that should take some time before you can beat them all.

The game is in shops now and offers more pro riders and bikes to collect and plenty more levels with unique challenges.

SEGA SWIRL

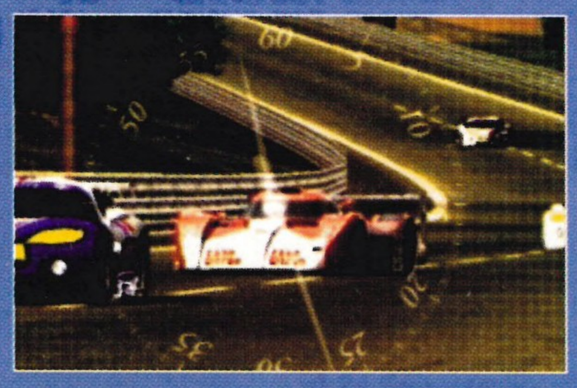
FREE COMPLETE GAME

Allowing four players to compete at once, this is an addictive puzzle game that challenges you to clear the screen of swirls by aligning those of the same colour and racking up combos.

The controls are simple: move around using the D-pad and use the A button to remove swirls. Lining up swirls of the same colour gives you point-scoring combos. Remove a swirl that isn't next to another of the same colour and lose 100 points.

More detailed instructions, for both the single-player and multiplayer games, are contained in the game's Tutorial mode.

MOVIES



LE MANS 24 HOURS

EXCLUSIVE MOVIE

Based on the historic 24-hour race, *Le Mans* is a challenging racer that looks incredible. The huge Le Mans circuit is stunningly recreated, and should you so desire you can even re-create the real racing conditions by taking part in a full 24-hour race. There's also a handful of other famous courses from around the world, including Suzuka and Donington.

Le Mans 24 Hours (*ODM* #14, 8/10) is available to buy now... so what are you waiting for?

FIGHTING VIPERS 2

EXCLUSIVE MOVIE

A quick peek at AM2's forthcoming beat 'em up. In *Fighting Vipers 2*, the one-on-one action takes place in enclosed arenas where each competitor is allowed to wear protective body armour and use some unlikely objects, such as bikes and guitars, as weapons.

Should you hit an opponent hard enough you can shatter their armour, making them more vulnerable to your attacks, or even knock them flying outside of the arena altogether.

Fighting Vipers 2, which is due to be released in March, is reviewed on page 72.

08.02.01

YES, STILL HERE...

IT'S NOT AN ESPECIALLY cheery topic to start a magazine but I figured you've heard the big news by now. Or, at least, a *version* of it. Shortly before we went to press this month a highly-respected Japanese business paper ran a story – apparently based on leaked information – claiming that Sega were to cease production of Dreamcast and would be publishing games on other platforms.

Within just a few hours the Internet exploded with stories. Sure, there was information, but there was also a lot of misinformation. And missed information.

"Sega Kills Dreamcast" claimed one usually reliable news source, "Dreamcast is DEAD!" said another (they were both very lazy summations – I'll come back to why in a minute). Pretty soon, the story was on every major news website in the world (and, of course, television and news programmes).

Naturally newsgroups and chat boards became awash with messages from worried Dreamcast owners. The common theme: disbelief. Could it be true? Was this really the end for Dreamcast? After all, we've all heard this kind of stuff before. Only a few weeks ago a well-known American newspaper claimed that Nintendo were going to buy Sega for $2 billion. Was that true? No.

And then... well then, finally, came some clarification. Yes, Sega *are* going to cease manufacturing Dreamcasts at the end of March. And, yes, they *will* be producing games on other platforms in the future (see page 22 for details).

But is the Dreamcast dead? NO! Sadly, most news sources neglected to report that Sega are to continue selling and supporting Dreamcast... and that there are *dozens* of great Dreamcast games that are still due to be released.

What's more, Dreamcast technology is going to live on inside a brand new set-top box from leading European manufacturer Pace Micro Technology (again, see page 22 for more details) and, no doubt, in other devices from other companies in the future. If you're a regular reader of *ODM*, this shouldn't come as a complete surprise to you – we reported on Sega's intention to license out their technology to hardware manufacturers, and their new focus on software development, in our January issue (*ODM* #15). In this respect, nothing has changed.

The other thing you'll know if you're a regular reader is that there's an incredible library of truly stunning games available for Dreamcast right now and, as I've said, plenty more still to come. So, no, we really don't think it's a good idea that you sell your precious Dreamcast, Eddy Kemp... but thanks for your email anyway. We will, of course, be back here next month. And I hope you will be too.

Take it easy,

WARREN CHRISMAS
Editor

THE OFFICIAL Dreamcast MAGAZINE

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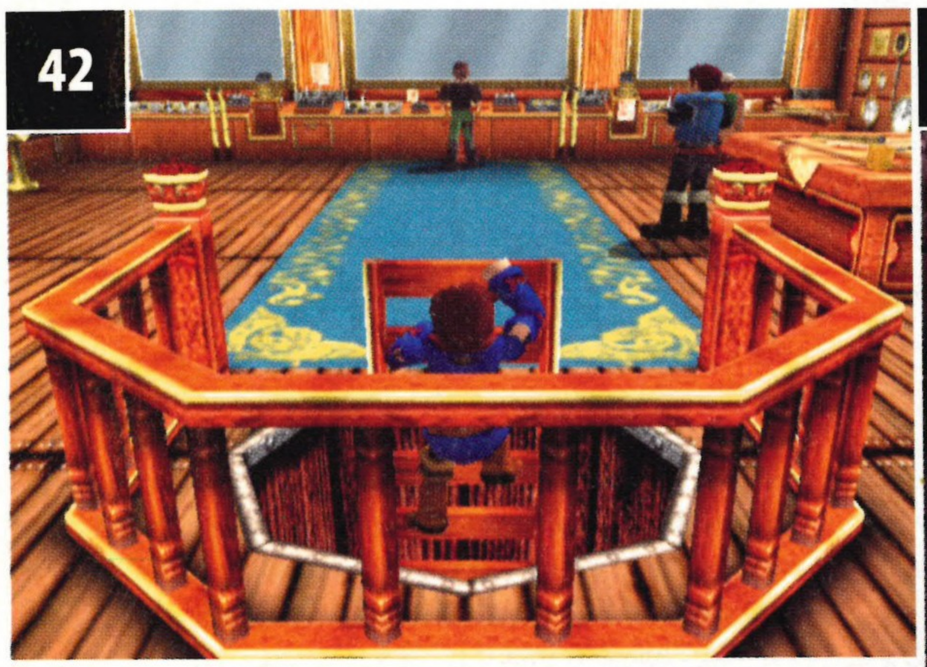

△ *Skies Of Arcadia*: an RPG that looks like stiff competition for *Phantasy Star*.

△ *Fighting Vipers 2:* it's a rage in a cage, as teen rebels use everything from skateboards to BMXs to beat each other up!

△ *Sonic Shuffle*: pick a card, any card, in this board game for your DC.

△ *Phantasy Star Online:* Sonic Team's ground-breaking online role-playing game is here. And it's, er… phantastic! Sorry.

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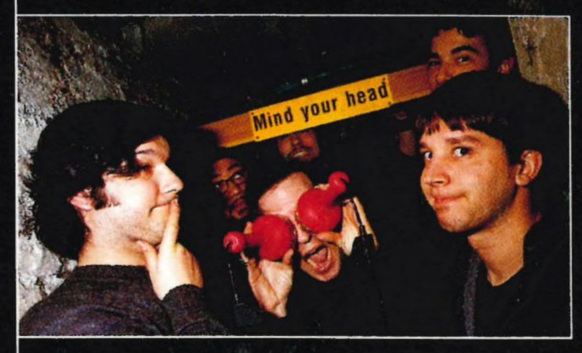

△ **Talent: we chat with US band Reel Big Fish.**

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WHO DOES THIS STUFF?

SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE*

ALEX HUHTALA

News editor Alex is typically a quietly spoken chap, but get a set of maracas in his hands and he's a bit of a *Samba De Amigo* demon. Typically, he's not one to crow about his abilities – "I just follow the instructions!" he says – but Alex in full flight on *La Bamba* is a sight to behold indeed. Just don't ask him what he thinks about Ricky Martin. Alex is also something of a *Tony Hawk's* guru, listing *Pro Skater 2* as one of his current favourites.

WENDY MORGAN

Wendy's been helping on the art side of *ODM*, an experience she says has been "an orgasmic pleasure!" (we're a very close team here… very close indeed). Being from Manchester, she's a fan of her fighting games and nicking stuff from ancient monuments – *Soul Calibur* and *Tomb Raider* being her respective favourites, although she admits her gaming background is limited. Time for a maraca initiation perhaps?

ANTHONY HOLDEN

Freelancer Anthony apparently enjoyed driving around the streets of London in *Metropolis Street Racer* so much that he moved here from his native Australia. "Tokyo and San Francisco aren't in PAL territories," he explains, "so I would have lost my saved game!" He has written for the Australian *Official PlayStation Magazine* in his time, but hasn't looked back since getting his Dreamcast. "It's a fantastic machine!" he enthuses.

TOM GUISE

Tom has written for *ODM* in the past, including reviews of *Crazy Taxi* and *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* along the way, but has been notable by his absence from the *ODM* office of late. Theories abound, but the most plausible is that he has been stranded under one of his trademark hats, living off a solitary M&M and humming *I Will Survive* until the time of his rescue. This month he casts his eye over *Fighting Vipers 2* and *Star Wars Demolition.*

NEED SOME HELP OR ADVICE?

A GUIDE TO THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

SEGA

SEGA CONSUMER LINE (GENERAL ENQUIRIES)
UK **0845 609 0090** [1]; EIRE **01560 925 555** [1]
SEGA INTERNET SUPPORT LINE
0906 654 4544 [2]

HINTS AND TIPS

SEGA HINTS AND TIPS LINE (SEGA GAMES ONLY)
0906 753 2222 [3]
ODM HINTS AND TIPS LINE (ALL DREAMCAST GAMES)
UK **0906 466 4477** [4]; EIRE **01580 924 606** [4]

ODM SUBS AND BACK ISSUES

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ODM BACK ISSUES (SEE PAGE 104)
01789 490215

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Dreamcast.
OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE
30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF
Tel: 020 7907 6000; Fax: 020 7907 6322
Email: letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk
Website: www.dreamcastmag.co.uk

EDITOR Warren Chrismas 020 7907 6314
PRODUCTION EDITOR Vanessa Hards 020 7907 6313
REVIEWS EDITOR Ed Lomas 020 7907 6319
NEWS EDITOR Alex Huhtala 020 7907 6316
STAFF WRITER Dan Trent 020 7907 6318
SENIOR DESIGNER Phil Madge 020 7907 6312

CONTRIBUTORS
Phil Clark, Dylan Davies, Caroline Elliott, Caspar Field, Foto Theme, Steve Fulljames, Tom Guise, Steve Hill, Anthony Holden, Steve Key, Laila Meyrick, John Millar, Wendy Morgan, Rosanna Negrotti, Philippa Norman, Steve Owen, Adam Phillips, Poggy, Paul Presley, Joe Roberts, Ged Talbot, Dan Thornton, Aston Villain

THANKS THIS ISSUE
Noel and all at Monkeychews

DEADLINE CHOON OF THE MONTH
Plump DJs – *Big Groovy F**cker*

GROUP PUBLISHER - LEISURE COMPUTING Helen Cribb 020 7907 6370
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER - LEISURE COMPUTING Tara Leathers 020 7907 6508
SENIOR GROUP ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER John Garewal 020 7907 6608
LEISURE GROUP ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER Mandy Hewitt 020 7907 6670
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGER Richard Downey 020 7907 6671
GROUP CLASSIFIED CONTROLLER Emma Regester 020 7907 6683
GROUP SALES DIRECTOR Ian Westwood 020 7907 6607
LIST RENTAL MANAGER Nerys Church 020 7907 6140
DIRECT MARKETING DIRECTOR Julian Thorne 020 7907 6150
RESEARCH DIRECTOR Lesley Downey 020 7907 6610
EPU MANAGER Sarah Gilliver 020 7907 6332

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Christine Martin
CIRCULATION AND MARKETING DIRECTOR Sean Farmer
FINANCE DIRECTOR Ian Leggett
MANAGING DIRECTOR Alistair Ramsay
CHAIRMAN Felix Dennis

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Dreamcast

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PSO

>>> AGE. SEX. LOCATION. LANGUAGE.
>>> THEY ARE NOW IRRELEVANT.
>>> WE ARE THE WORLD AND WE MUST
>>> UNITE IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE.

STEVE
NORTH LONDON
10:02PM

MICHIKO
TOKYO
7:02AM

LISA
NEW YORK
5:02PM

SCOTT
SYDNEY
9:02AM

>>>>>>YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY HERO>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

DIETMAR
DUSSELDORF
11:02PM

LAETITIA
NICE
11:02PM

CHERIE
VANCOUVER
2:02PM

RAUL
MADRID
11:02PM

YASUHIRO
OSAKA
7:02AM

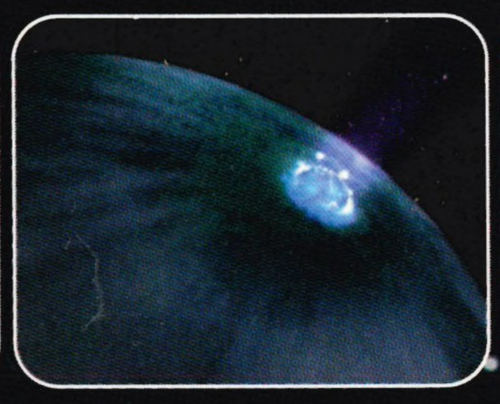
PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

A WORLD-SPANNING ONLINE ADVENTURE BEGINS. **STEVE FULLJAMES** IS NOT THE ONLY HERO

ESSENTIAL

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**

THE EARTH IS BROKEN. Mined, polluted and exploited until it became a very unpleasant place to live. A common theme in science fiction, but frankly it's our own fault for leaving the lights on all night and driving to the corner shop when we run out of chocolate instead of walking. However, instead of hiring Mel Gibson to race around in a dune buggy and search for petrol, the people of the *Phantasy Star* universe decided to launch the Pioneer project, a space mission to seek out a new world suitable for human life. Eventually Pioneer 1, a vast interstellar starship, found the planet Ragol, which seemed perfect in every way. A colony was founded, and the next ship loaded with tens of thousands of civilians departed from Earth. ▶



△ Some of the later levels have gorgeous visual effects.

△ Telepipes let you jump to and from the action.

△ 'Force' type characters are better off using magic attacks because physically they're not very strong.

But when Pioneer 2 arrives at Ragol and attempts to establish communications with the planet, a massive explosion rips through the new colony, severing the link. It soon becomes apparent that the jungles of Ragol are hiding a few nasty secrets. Shambling bear-like beasts lunge at explorers from the cover of the dense undergrowth – even the cute chicken things attack viciously with no warning. Confusion and fear run riot on Pioneer 2, until the ship's Principal decides that the best course of action is to send teams of hunters – highly trained mercenaries – down to the planet to find out what the hell is going on. This, as you may have guessed, is where you come in.

Phantasy Star Online is the work of Sonic Team, Sega's resident games geniuses, but… it's a role-playing game. Now, we know that conjures up images of geeks dressed as elves, big axes, hit points and not going outside much, but that good old Sonic Team magic is enough to make RPGs hip. Good thing number one: it's set in the future, so there's none of that cholera-infested olde worlde malarkey. Good thing number two: while many RPGs insist you take turns to attack things, *PSO* plays in real time so you can just wade in guns blazing whenever you like. Good thing number three: you can play with people from all over the world for the price of a local phone call.

SPARE PARTS EXPRESS

Phantasy Star Online isn't a 'press Start, start killing' sort of game. Instead, your first task upon booting up is to create a character to play with. There are nine character types to choose from. Some are 'Forces' who are great with magic, others are 'Rangers' who are weapons experts and some, the 'Hunters', fall between the two. You also have to decide whether to be male, female or an android. There's a wealth of options to customise your appearance, meaning that you're not likely to see another player online who looks quite the same as you (check out 'Frankenstein's Lab' across the page for more on setting up your character). But this isn't as far as developing your character goes, because, as with most RPGs, their abilities will evolve and change throughout the game.

If you're not familiar with the way role-playing games work, and we'd hazard a guess that you might not be since there haven't been any stunning examples of the breed on Dreamcast yet, allow us to explain. Your character is rated on a number of attributes, including attacking power, defensive power, agility and accuracy. Every time you kill something you'll gain experience points (EXP). These gradually add up, and reaching set EXP scores lets your character advance a level. In turn this improves your score for each attribute, which often makes new weapons, techniques or armour items available. Make sense? If not, think of it like this: the more you play and the more you do, the stronger your character becomes. So by the time you've reach level 27, you'll be able to strap on the awesome Hyper Frame armour to protect yourself. As long as you can afford the 31,000 Meseta asking price, of course.

Every hunter is accompanied on their adventures by a Mag, a small magical creature which, initially at least, resembles a small potato hovering by your character's left shoulder. Feed your Mag recovery items (make sure you leave some for yourself though!) every few minutes, and it uses their energy to gain power and intelligence. When certain levels are reached, special attacks that are guaranteed to wipe out any enemies in their path become available.

Once a Mag has evolved enough to perform attacks, it gets a name and changes shape, and the powers it gains vary depending on how you feed and treat it. Like the Chao in *Sonic Adventure* (*ODM* #0, 9/10), there's a staggering variety of Mag designs to be seen – you're almost guaranteed to see a new one every time you go

"THE MORE YOU PLAY AND THE MORE YOU DO, THE STRONGER YOUR CHARACTER BECOMES"

△ So this was the best you could pull at the Ragol nightclub. Brilliant.

△ Shoot traps before they blow up and injure you.

online. You're not limited to carrying just one Mag either, so more entrepreneurial players might like to try training several up and selling them on to other players in exchange for rare items or Meseta, the in-game currency.

KNOW WHERE TO RUN

The single-player adventure begins aboard the Pioneer 2 mothership, as Principal Tyrell briefs you on what to expect on the planet's surface. He's a bit hesitant though, because he doesn't actually have a clue what's going on down there either. Once the pleasantries are out of the way, it's a good idea to check out the rest of the ship and see what it has to offer.

Most important is the shop, which lets you stock up on new weapons, armour and consumable items. There's also a counter in there for the resident 'Tekker', who can identify any mystery items you might collect on Ragol – for a small fee, naturally. Next door is the Check Room, which acts as a depository for spare cash and items. You'll be using this a lot, because your character is only able to carry 30 items at once and you lose any money you were carrying if you happen to die.

Across the other side of the hi-tech concourse is the Hunter's Guild, which acts like a futuristic Jobcentre; the Hospital, where you restart in the event of death; and the main Telepipe that is the *Star Trek*-style teleport gateway to the surface of

FRANKENSTEIN'S LAB

BEFORE STARTING TO PLAY *Phantasy Star Online*, there's the small matter of creating the character that will represent you throughout the game. Choosing from nine basic character classes (three male, three female, three android) you have the option to change their face, hairstyle, clothes and body proportions. Finally, give 'em a name and you're off.

▲ Each character type has different strengths and weaknesses.

▲ Time to put your face on – literally. Choose one for your brave warrior.

▲ Pick a hairstyle and give it a tint – edit the colour with the sliders.

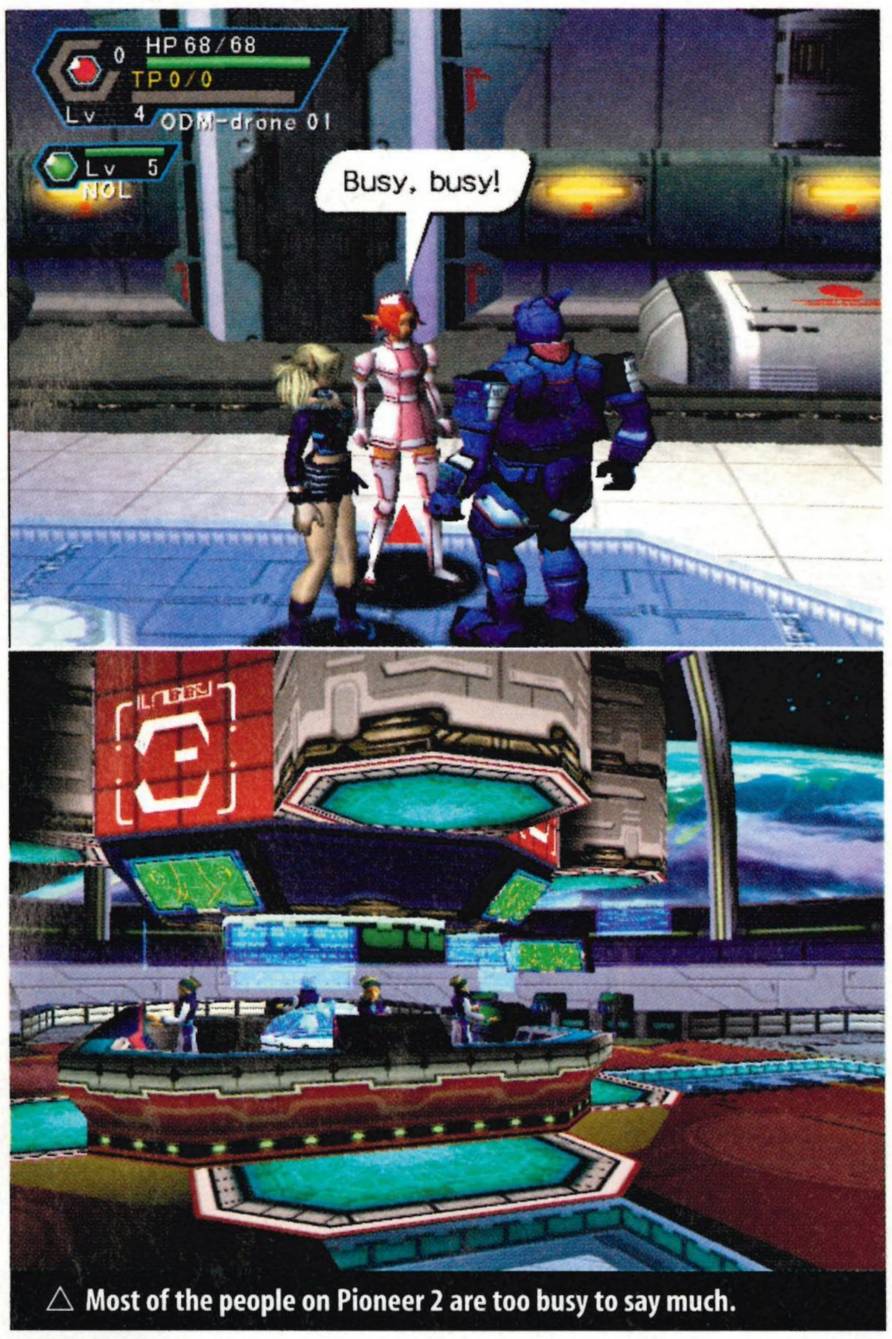
▲ Choose some threads. Epaulettes are *sooo* last season, darling.

▲ Skin tones add even more possibilities. Mmm, bit of rouge.

▲ Move the cross around in the box to create a bloater or a stick insect.

▲ Looking good. And finally – name your creation, Doctor.

▲ A Section ID is assigned at random once you okay your character.



△ Most of the people on Pioneer 2 are too busy to say much.

△ Watch out for this badass at the end of the forest area. Running away would seem to be the best plan here.

"PLAY NICE, BECAUSE IF YOU DIE, IT'S UP TO THE OTHERS TO RESURRECT YOU"

RAGOL SAFARI: FOREST

THE FIRST ENVIRONMENT in *Phantasy Star Online* is the lush forest on Ragol's surface. Native wildlife includes wolves, deceptively cute birds that think nothing of attacking in large groups, and various species of bear-like Booma. You can see sections of the Central Dome established by Pioneer 1 through the trees, but there's a distinct lack of colonists about. This relatively small section of the game only has two separate areas, but there's more than enough going on to cause trouble for new players.

Missions include tracking down missing biologists, acting as a bodyguard for journalists and scientists, and rescuing hapless prospectors from hordes of ravenous beasts.

△ Even with four players, everyone gets to attack at once.

△ Strong attacks must be charged up before you strike.

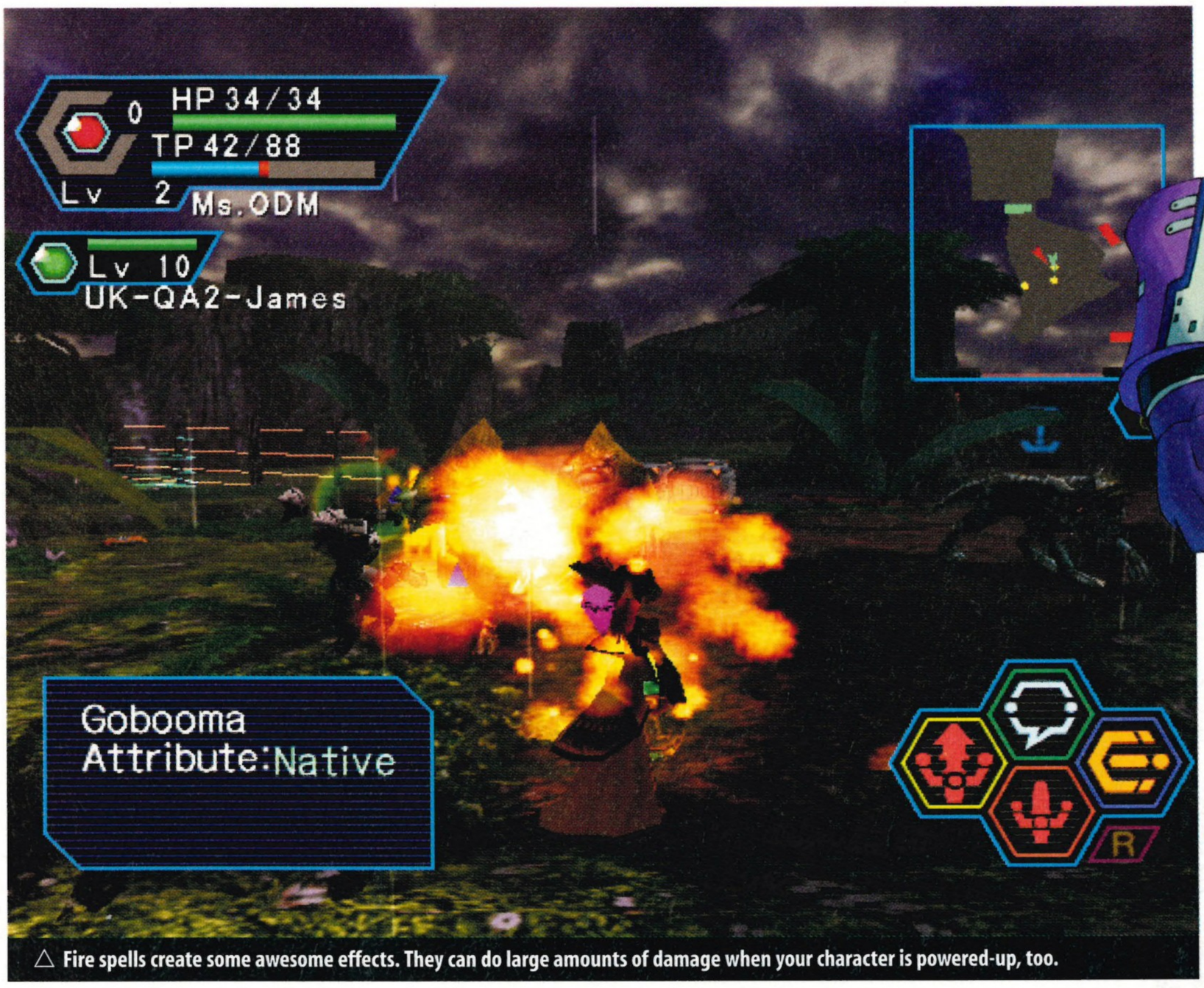
△ Monests spit out wasps until they die, so watch it.

Ragol. Cluttering up the ship are non-player characters, who sometimes offer advice but are more likely to blurt out cryptic clues that may or may not be vital to the plot.

If simply popping down to the planet and killing things doesn't appeal to you, *Phantasy Star Online* also contains around 50 set missions that you can sign up for at the Hunter's Guild. They get progressively more challenging as you progress, but to begin with you can expect to spend time fetching and carrying items, finding missing people and even mediating in an argument between a woman and her gun-obsessed husband. Successful completion of a quest earns you Meseta, which you'll then no doubt go and spend in the shops straight away. A fine example of capitalism in action for all you politics students!

Although there are 50 quests to complete, and the main storyline on top of that, there aren't 50 different levels. Instead, the various different environments on Ragol are reused like film sets, with switches, items and monsters rearranged for each mission. This means that, if you never play online, you might get a bit fed-up playing the same areas repeatedly.

As you play, you'll also get glimpses of sub-plots that might explain the mysteries of Ragol once and for all. What is the aim of the shadowy W.E.A.P.O.N.S. organisation? What happened to Mr and Mrs Grave, the famous biologists? You'll need to keep your wits about you to track down all the



△ Fire spells create some awesome effects. They can do large amounts of damage when your character is powered-up, too.

missing pieces of the puzzle, as key people only appear during certain missions and if you miss them, they're gone forever.

I DON'T KNOW YOU PEOPLE

Despite the size of the single-player adventure, the main point of the game is the ability to play online. The *Online* part of the title may have given that away. Those of you who haven't yet set up your Dreamcasts to connect to the Internet might want to dig out that Dreamkey disc. Not only is *Phantasy Star* one of the smoothest online DC games yet, it's also the first that lets you properly hook up with gamers from all over the world.

Dialling up, you're given the choice of joining in on the European, Japanese or US server 'ships', and from there the lobbies, where games are set up, are split into 16 blocks, each to cope with a massive number of simultaneous players. There's a maximum of four players per game, and you can set up your own with password protection if you're hanging about waiting for mates to connect. Once an online game is started, you're not tied into it until the bitter end. Players are able to come and go as they please, although if you flake out just before a boss battle you won't win many friends.

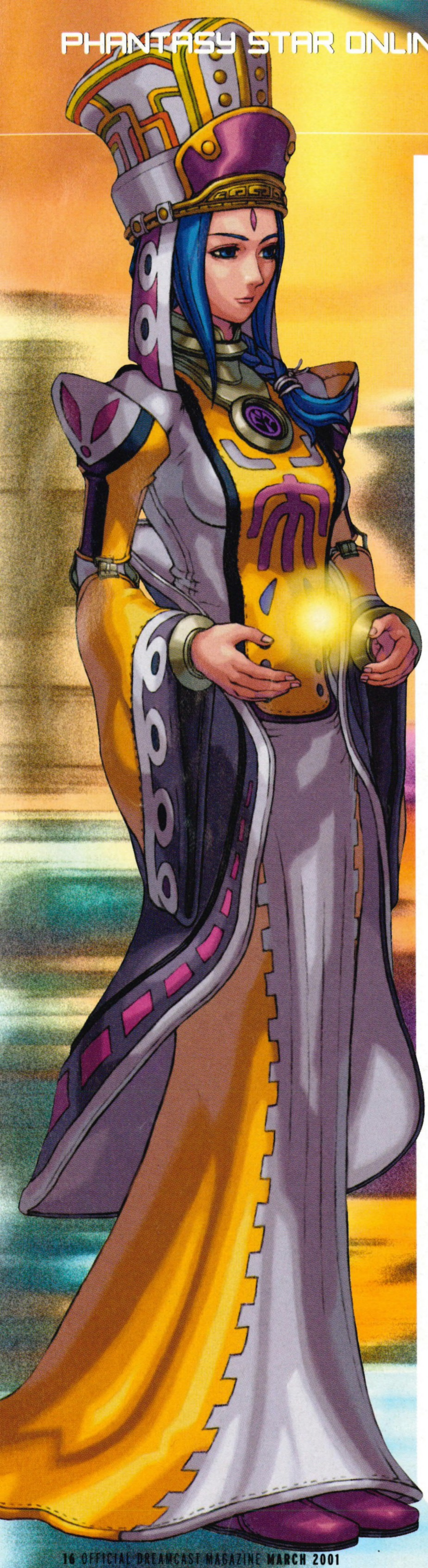
And for those still gritting their teeth at *ChuChu Rocket!* (*ODM* #9, 9/10), the great news is that there's no lag in *Phantasy Star Online*! Apart from a tiny delay on picking up items that are lying about in the levels, play proceeds online as

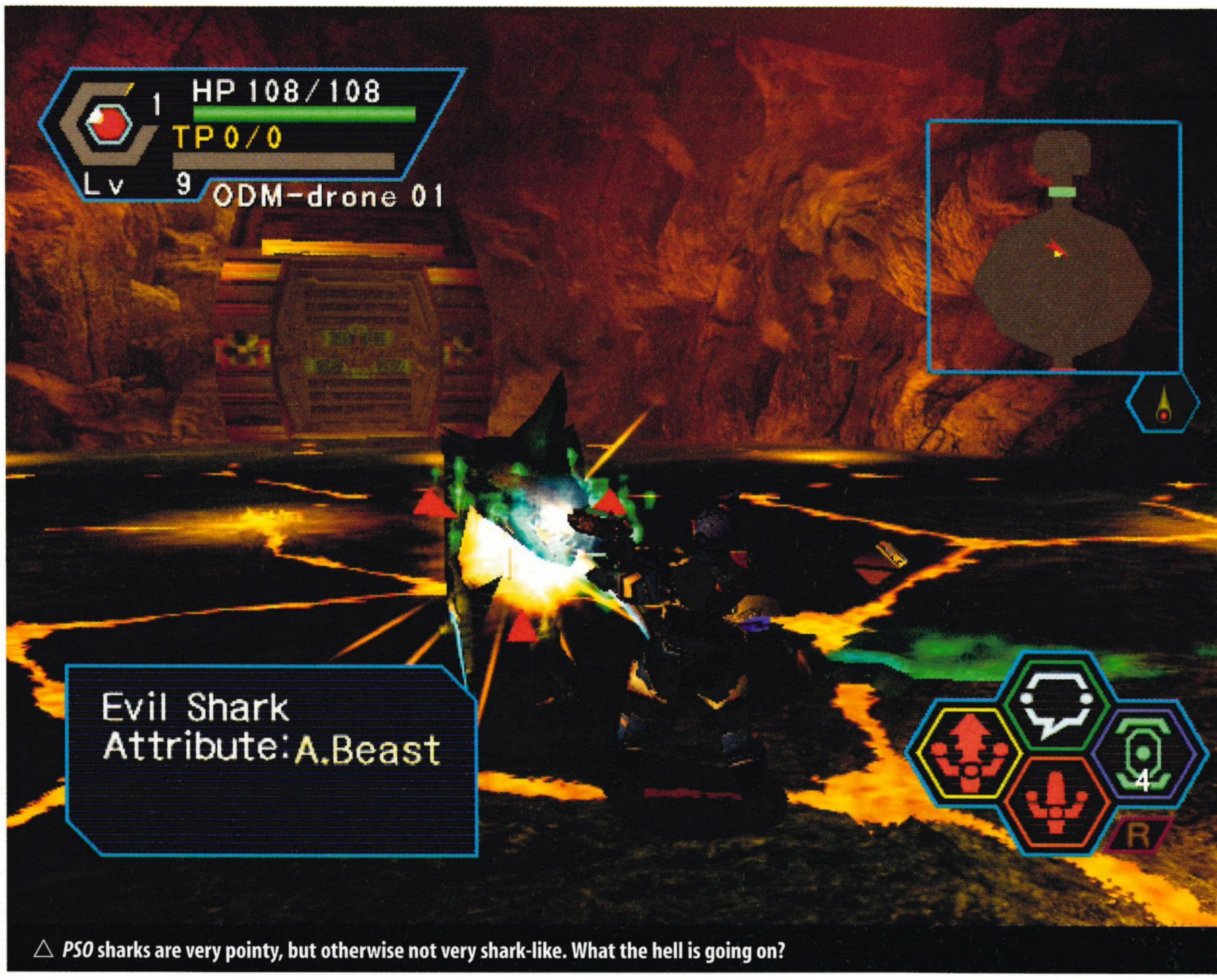
△ The start of the new year was heralded by fireworks and a giant 21!

TIME IS EVERYTHING

IF YOU LOG ON to the *Phantasy Star Online* servers at the right time of year, you'll be treated to special events. Sonic Team have a habit of doing this in their games – the classic *NiGHTS* on Saturn was affected by the date in a similar way, and there are Christmas and Hallowe'en add-ons to download for *Sonic Adventure*. We were playing *Phantasy Star Online* over the New Year, so the main deck of Pioneer 2 was decorated with an enormous holographic '21', while fireworks erupted in the background and music from *2001: A Space Odyssey* played!

We don't know what else is planned for the rest of the year, but going on past experience we'd suggest you play online on Valentine's Day, April 1, Hallowe'en, Christmas Day and maybe even Sonic Team boss Yuji Naka's birthday on September 17.





△ *PSO* sharks are very pointy, but otherwise not very shark-like. What the hell is going on?

SPEAK OUT

DAVE NULTY, EUROPEAN PRODUCER OF *PHANTASY STAR ONLINE*, CONSTRUCTED THESE ANSWERS OUT OF A LOAD OF PRE-SET PHRASES

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
It's all about co-operating with people rather than competing, a real feeling of camaraderie, which you don't often find in games. I think that and the fact you can communicate with people of different nationalities with the word 'select' makes this a very innovative title. I guess role-playing games are seen by many as quite a solitary pastime, but with *PSO* Sonic Team have created an experience that can be shared and that will hopefully put to flight those old-fashioned perceptions of the term 'RPG'.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU PLAYING AT THE MOMENT?
Truth is, I've been too busy to play other games!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER?
I think that has to go to *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* on Nintendo 64. It's the most complete, together game I have ever played. The first RPG I ever played was *Phantasy Star* on the Master System so it's a real honour to be part of bringing *PSO* to Europe. I also have a lot of admiration for Squaresoft's *Final Fantasy* series.

WHAT KIND OF BUDGET WOULD YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR DREAM GAME?
Erm, the kind of budget that will make my dream game stay a dream game!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR *PHANTASY STAR ONLINE* CHARACTER.
My character keeps changing, so I don't know which one to mention!

fluidly as it does offline. Fighting through a room full of sharks and dragons alongside gamers from Japan and America, you never feel like events are running out of control, and experience points are always handed out fairly. Sure, you might get the occasional glitch that causes another player to jump part-way across a room, but for the most part it feels like the other members of your team are in the next room, or even inside your Dreamcast.

If someone joins the party while you're halfway through a quest, it's easy to drop a Telepipe to let them catch up to your position in seconds. Similarly, you can return to Pioneer 2 then go back up to the lobby area if the other players in your team are cramping your style. Play nice though, because if you die it's up to the others to resurrect you, and you'd better hope they don't steal your weapons too. Anyone who plays like a greedy so-and-so is likely to spend a long time begging to be brought back to life.

PSO has been designed like this to encourage co-operation between players. Many online PC games have lost dedicated fans because a small minority go around killing fellow gamers or even hacking into servers to tip the balance in their favour. But when you're faced with a door that requires four people to stand on four switches at the same time to unlock, it makes sense to make an effort to get along. In fact, you can't actually harm other team members while you're playing.

△ Dred hangs out in the online lobby with his homeys.

△ Once you have a shield your character will defend automatically.

"PHANTASY STAR IS ONE OF THE SMOOTHEST ONLINE DREAMCAST GAMES YET"

To safeguard your character, you can only load up a *PSO* save game on the Dreamcast it was created on. This can be a bit of a hassle if you want to take the game round to a friend's to show it off, but it's a small price to pay when it means that no one else can steal the warrior you've spent hours building up. You also get a unique serial number with the game which must be entered before going online for the first time – another method to make sure you are who you say you are.

CRASH AND CARRY

There are always plenty of weapons lying about on Ragol, but the types you can pick up and use depend on the character class you're playing as. Magic users are better off with staffs and scythes, while androids are trigger-happy sharpshooters and more at home with a rifle or rail gun. Meanwhile, humans pick and choose from the lot, with the added bonus of being able to use swords and the awesome twin daggers. Old weapons you don't want any more, or ones your character can't use, can be sold in the shop on Pioneer 2 for extra pocket money.

More powerful weapons become available as aspects of your character are powered up, and some are more potent against specific types of enemy. All weapons can be used to attack in at least two different ways – a quick and dirty normal hit, or a charged attack which inflicts more damage but is less accurate. Certain

RAGOL SAFARI: CAVES

AFTER THE FOREST, the action moves on to caves deep underground. Enemies here are definitely weirder than on the surface, with mutant sharks, huge praying mantis-like Grass Assassins and powerful Nano Dragons all chasing for bits of your intestines. Split over three distinct areas, the caves change from hazardous pits of lava to lush grottos with waterfalls and rainbows, to more industrial sections that have clearly been carved out by humans – or maybe aliens.

Down here you can expect to find yourself delivering secret packages, fighting black-market traders and even searching out sweets for bored passengers on Pioneer 2.

△ Hidden traps pop into view at the last second.

△ Don't let the Nano Dragon attack with its laser blast!

△ The Pan Arms splits into two creatures as you attack it.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

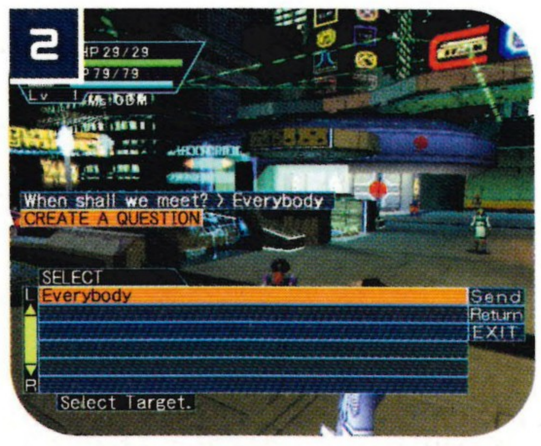
PHANTASY STAR ONLINE **is a social game, so naturally there are several ways to stay in touch with your fellow players. The simplest, but most cumbersome, is to use the on-screen keyboard and Dreamcast controller to tap out messages. You'll find it under the Y button at all times. But bring up the keyboard and then press X, and the menu switches to a system of pre-built phrases, meaning you can construct a sentence in a couple of seconds.**

Topics range from aspects of the game, to the weather and your favourite hobbies. The genius of this method is that sentences are automatically translated into Japanese, French, German or Spanish depending on what language the rest of your team speaks. Press X again to get a third system based on smiley-face icons, which you can even edit to create your own chat symbols.

If you've got a keyboard, you can type at any time during gameplay to speak to other players, without interrupting the game – although without auto-translation. There's also a chat log in your menu in case everyone tries to talk at once and you miss something.

Yet another way to talk to friends is the Simple Mail system. Swap Guild Cards – a note with your name and character number on – with another player, and you'll be able to send them short messages if they aren't online when you are.

△ **Online chat takes ages if you use the on-screen keyboard…**

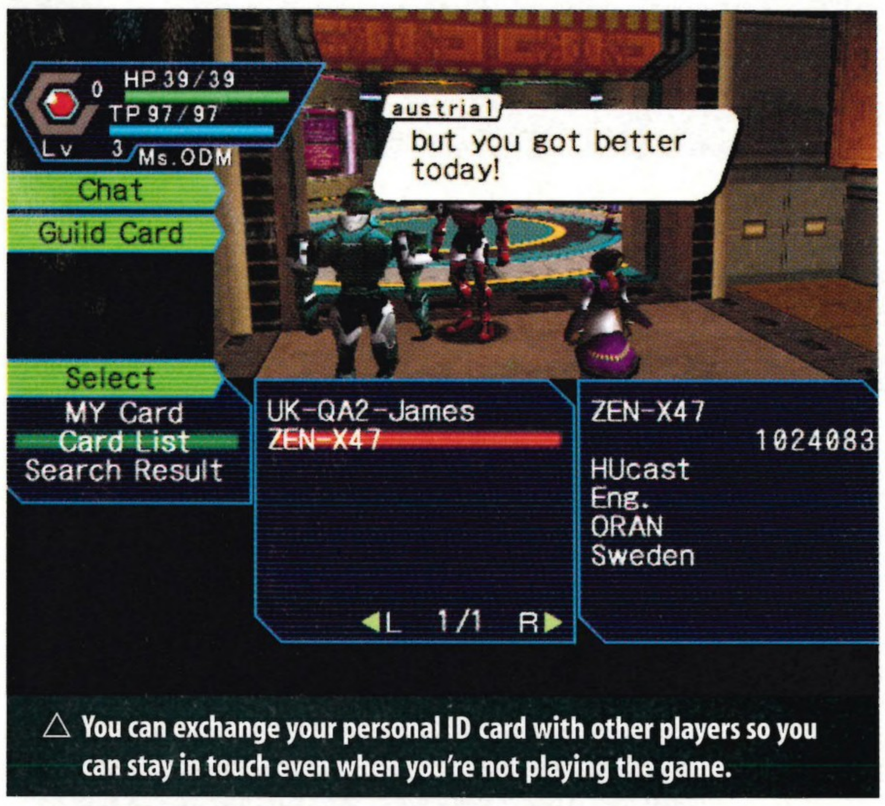


△ **…but the sentence menus are a lot faster (and translate automatically!).**

△ **Symbol chat is great because you can make up your own signs. Not happy!**

△ **If you've got a keyboard you can spout off about anything while you play.**

△ **Guild Cards can also be used to search for players in another game or lobby.**



△ **You can exchange your personal ID card with other players so you can stay in touch even when you're not playing the game.**

△ **Evil Sharks like nothing better than a good photon blast to the guts.**

▶ specialist weapons then have a third attack which can produce a bonus lightning strike or healing effect, confuse your enemies or even do a one-hit kill. It's also possible to string up to three attacks of any kind in a combo if you get the timing right. After weeks of play we still haven't uncovered all the weapon types in the game, so there should always be something to trade or sell to a friend online.

Weapons are great if you're an enormous cyborg, but the somewhat more petite 'Force' characters need a way to stay out of the heat of combat since they only have teeny health bars. Help comes in the form of 'Techniques', which is *PSO* code for magic powers. These are generally designed to work at a distance from the action, and, although regular humans can learn some Techniques, you need to play as a Force character to get the full benefits. Techniques available range from devastating attacks to spells which freeze or confuse enemies, to more beneficial potions that have a healing effect on you, and the rest of the team if they're nearby.

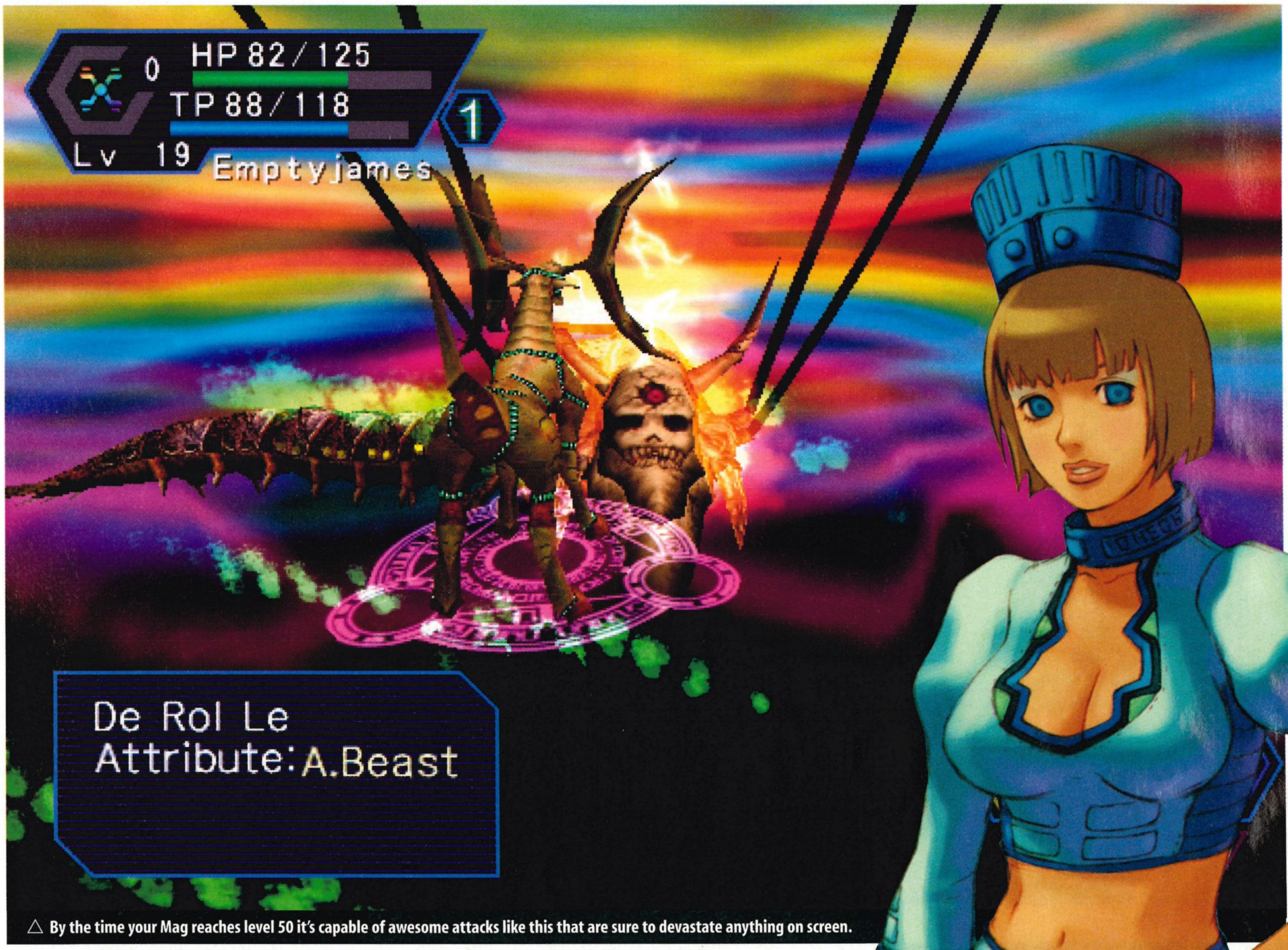
△ **Attacks can miss and leave you open to a counter.**

Walk on to a battlefield in just your underpants and you can expect to be sent home in a body bag pretty quickly. The same goes in *Phantasy Star Online*, where choice of armour is crucial to your survival. Like weapons and Techniques, the armour you're able to strap on gets better as your character is powered up, and some types even have slots to plug in improvements which can further boost your attacking power, agility or resistance to specific attacks.

OUT THERE SOMEWHERE

With so many weapons, items and magical powers to keep track of, you might think that the *PSO* control system would work out to be a bit of a nightmare. Luckily, a little bit of thought has gone into making the game as easy to play as possible. Of the four action buttons on your controller, Y is always 'talk', while X, A and B can be assigned to any type of attack, Technique or consumable item you like. And by holding the R trigger you access a second tier of controls which can also be customised. In practice you'll end up settling on half a dozen favourite items, so being able to choose which ones are always at your fingertips is a brilliant idea. Small icons in the corner of the screen give a reminder of which button does what, in case you forget.

The menus accessed by pressing the Start button are laid out well too, with information grouped logically around Item Pack, Customise, Technique and Chat options. A word of warning though – even the Start button doesn't pause the game! There's no pause function whatsoever because of the way it would affect an in-progress online game. Instead, you can continue to walk about with the Start menus on the screen.



△ By the time your Mag reaches level 50 it's capable of awesome attacks like this that are sure to devastate anything on screen.

Not being able to pause is annoying if the phone rings or you need the toilet, but we can forgive that because otherwise online games would be prone to interruption. Slightly more aggravating is the occasional slow response to the controls. If you're thigh-deep in monsters and pulling off a three-hit combo, it's impossible to turn and change your aim, or even stop attacking to use a health recovery item if a Booma gets a sneaky attack to connect. You have to wait until the sequence is complete before you're able to move again, online or off.

The game needs commitment, too. *Quake III Arena* (*ODM* #15, 9/10) is fast and noisy, but you can happily play for ten minutes at a time, then switch it off. The average length of a single quest in *Phantasy Star* is around an hour, and if you want your character powered up to a respectable level before you go online you'll have to put the hours in offline beforehand.

Because *Phantasy Star Online* is so focused on network play, the offline quests suffer slightly. There are loads of them, and there's always plenty to do, but the limited number of levels means that going through the motions over and over again can get to be a bit of a drag. If you're not able to play online for reasons beyond your control, then take a gamble with *Phantasy Star Online* or maybe try out *Shenmue* (*ODM* #14, 10/10) instead. But if you're simply too lazy to get off your ass and plug in the phone cable, it's like buying a Ferrari and then just using it to do three point turns on your drive.

Playing online is ultimately where *Phantasy Star Online* is at its best. Like all the best games, you forget just how long you've been playing. Until, that is, you look up hours later and realise there's a queue of people who want to use the phone, and you need to take out a loan to pay off the bill (until Sega and BT announce a flat-rate deal of some sort, that is). And, because it's co-operative rather than competitive, you've got more chance of getting to know people than you would in other online Dreamcast games. One day, all games will work like this. For now, you can be satisfied that you're playing one of the most innovative games around.

VERDICT

AS GOOD AS THEY COME ONLINE BUT GETS TEDIOUS ON YOUR OWN

UPPERS
Online play is fantastic • Looks lovely • Create your own unique character • Easy to pick up and play

DOWNERS
Slightly unresponsive controls • Must use own DC to play a saved game • You'll be entering phone-bill hell

IN ONE HOUR We'd created our character and explored Pioneer 2
WEBSITE www.sonicteam.com/pso/english/
CHECK OUT Real life, occasionally
MAX PLAYERS 4 online
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 50Hz, 60Hz option, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
9
SUPERB

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **SEGA** • DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE DREAM

◁ **One of the awards, made from solid crystal (or was it Perspex?)**

WE'RE ALWAYS TELLING YOU about our favourite Dreamcast games. It's, like, our job and all that. Well, now we'd like you to tell us what *your* favourites are in – drum roll please! – the inaugural *Official Dreamcast Magazine* Reader Awards.

We want these awards to be the *definitive* guide to what you – the cash-paying, game-playing public – think are the best titles currently available on DC. So, as an incentive for you to send in your votes, we've added a competition… and talked our lovely bosses into giving away a £500 cash prize!

Just think what you could do with the money. You could buy over a dozen games! You could go on holiday! You could buy a Dreamcast and some accessories for a cash-strapped mate! You could buy a top-of-the-range DVD player! You could get presents for all the relatives you forgot at Christmas! You could buy that posh mountain bike you've had your eye on! You could convert it into Lire and become a millionaire in Italy! You could buy 100 copies of *Official Dreamcast Magazine*! You could pay your dad some of that money you owe him!

You get the idea – you can do whatever you want with it! So, do you fancy winning £500 for just a few minutes of your time? You don't even have to buy a stamp! Well, what are you waiting for then, eh? Eh?

HOW TO ENTER

To register your votes in the *Official Dreamcast Magazine* 2001 Reader Awards, simply fill out the form on the right-hand side of this feature, listing – in order of preference – your five personal favourite Dreamcast games (please don't just list the last five games you've bought!).

Note: you may only vote for Dreamcast games released in the UK between 14 October 1999 and 31 December 2000. Please write the *full* name of each title to avoid any possible confusion, and add a short comment on why you like each game.

To be in win a chance of winning the £500 competition prize, you must also answer the following question correctly: Which was the *first* game to be awarded 10/10 in *Official Dreamcast Magazine*? And that's it, but please, please read the following rules very carefully before you enter.

HURRY! LAST CHANCE TO VOTE!

CAST GAMES AND WIN £500 CASH!

IMPORTANT RULES

The closing date for entries is Friday 2 March 2001. You *must* submit an entry form – photocopies will NOT be accepted under any circumstances. Strictly one entry per household. All entries with the correct answer will be put into a metaphorical hat with the prize winner drawn at random. The winner will be announced in our May issue, out Thursday 5 April, and sent a cheque for £500 within a week of this date. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Finally, entries from employees of Dennis Publishing, Sega Europe or anyone working for a game developer or publisher will not be accepted. Thank you for reading… and good luck!

ODM READER AWARDS 2001

Send your entry to:

ODM READER AWARDS (CODM102)
FREEPOST NEA 4479,
PO BOX 154,
BRADFORD, BD1 1BR

PRIZE QUESTION

Which was the *first* game to be awarded 10/10 in *Official Dreamcast Magazine*?

Answer: _____

YOUR FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAMES

1ST CHOICE: _____
Comment:

2ND CHOICE: _____
Comment:

3RD CHOICE: _____
Comment:

4TH CHOICE: _____
Comment:

5TH CHOICE _____
Comment:

YOUR DETAILS

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
POSTCODE _____ COUNTRY _____
CONTACT NUMBER _____
EMAIL _____

- ❑ Please tick here if you do NOT wish to receive details of special offers or new products from other companies
- ❑ Tick if you are under 18 (this is required so we do not send inappropriate material to minors
- ❑ Tick if you are currently a subscriber to *Official Dreamcast Magazine*

STOP PRESS!

THE DREAM IS ALIVE

Sega to cease hardware production… but Dreamcast lives on in an all-new set-top box

RUMOURS OF DREAMCAST'S demise have been greatly exaggerated. That was the message from Sega as *ODM* went to press, with the company busy fighting against damaging reports regarding their future.

A report from Japan stating that Sega were to halt production of Dreamcast hardware and develop for other platforms spread like wildfire throughout the media in late January.

While this information is true, few news providers covered the bigger picture. There is, in fact, a *new* type of Dreamcast on the way, and as many as 100 new games are still due to be released on the existing Dreamcast console this year.

Sega, who have reported financial losses for four straight years, have confirmed that production of the Dreamcast console, in its current form, will be suspended at the end of March. However, it is thought that several hundred thousand are currently stockpiled around the world. Sega have stated that they will continue to market and sell the console for now.

Moreover, a brand new Dreamcast is on its way very soon – a set-top box developed jointly by Sega and Yorkshire-based Pace Micro Technology, Europe's leading digital set-top box manufacturers.

The Dreamcast-compatible device, which features a broadband connection and a large capacity hard drive, will enable users to play games, access the Net and to view TV shows and other entertainment.

The new product sits in line with Sega's intention to license Dreamcast technology to hardware manufacturers – a strategy which was revealed last year (see our January 2001 issue, *ODM* #15). Similar deals with other companies are expected to be revealed in due course.

Reports across the media in January also 'announced' that Sega are to develop for other platforms. Again, this is something we have covered in the past.

ODM has recently learnt that Sega are to publish at least two titles on Nintendo's Game Boy Advance (see right). Rumours suggest that five Sega titles, including *Crazy Taxi*, are to appear on PlayStation 2. Sega have confirmed that negotiations with other console manufacturers are taking place. However, at the time of writing, the company had not announced firm plans to publish titles on the Sony console, or on the forthcoming Game Cube and Xbox consoles from Nintendo and Microsoft respectively.

Meanwhile, reaffirming their commitment to Dreamcast, Sega of Japan have unveiled a release list that includes several new and surprising titles, including *The House Of The Dead 3*, a sequel to *Space Channel 5*, *ToeJam & Earl* and *Victory Goal 2001* (see right for full story).

Sega Europe declined to comment on specific reports in the media, but issued a statement explaining that the company is considering a strategic reform to return the company to profit, and that this reform will be based on the previously announced management plan – a reference to a statement made by Sega in October (see *ODM* #15).

Charles Bellfield, Sega of America's vice president for marketing and corporate communications, had some reassuring words for Dreamcast owners. "I want to be very, very clear that Sega is categorically stating our continued support to the Dreamcast platform," he told MSNBC.com. "There is a big, bold future for Dreamcast, for the technology, the platform, the content, for the great games that developers are all creating, and for our consumers."

Bottom line: Dreamcast gaming is far from dead. Naturally, we'll have more on the future of Sega in the next issue of *ODM*, on sale Thursday 8 March.

△ **A confused Japanese Dreamcast, yesterday.**

△ **Sonic Team go mobile phone mad with *NiGHTS*, *Samba De Amigo* and *ChuChu Rocket!* Next stop, Game Boy Advance.**

SONIC'S GAME FOR BOYS

Sega developing for Game Boy Advance – official announcement expected soon

AFTER MONTHS OF speculation, we've finally uncovered the truth – Sonic The Hedgehog is to go to work for Nintendo!

At the time of writing, no official announcement had been made, but *Official Dreamcast Magazine* understands that two Sega titles, *Sonic Adventure* and *ChuChu Rocket!*, are in development for Nintendo's Game Boy Advance. The games are expected be unveiled shortly before the handheld is launched in Japan on March 21 (a UK release is pencilled in for some time in July).

Nintendo's Game Boy Advance shares a number of similarities with Dreamcast. Up to four machines can be linked for multiplayer gaming with friends. There are even plans for a mobile phone adapter to enable online gaming.

What remains unclear at this stage is who exactly is responsible for the games' production. Both titles are Sonic Team properties but the Japanese developer has yet to reveal any involvement with the conversions.

Sonic Team have, however, unveiled four titles developed for a new range of Japanese NTT mobile phones, including a handheld version of the classic Saturn game *NiGHTS*.

Also featured in the new Sonic Café suite of downloadable games is a simple version of *Samba De Amigo* and two titles based on *ChuChu Rocket!* (*ODM* #9, 9/10), called *ChuChu Puzzle* and *ChuChu Edit*. Users will pay a monthly fee of 300 yen (£1.70) for the games, with more titles promised in the future.

Sega are expected to officially announce their development plans for the Game Boy Advance in the coming weeks. We'll have more details in the next issue of *Official Dreamcast Magazine*.

NEW GAMES FROM JAPAN

Latest release schedule from Sega of Japan includes big sequels and several surprises

△ ***Sonic Adventure 2*: first among sequels.**

WE'VE KNOWN FOR A while that follow-ups to *Shenmue*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Crazy Taxi* and *Virtua Tennis* are all on the way, but Sega have revealed a number of surprises on their Japanese release schedule.

Among the newly announced titles are sequels to *Space Channel 5* and *Sega Bass Fishing*, and a football game called *Victory Goal 2001* from Smilebit (the makers of *Jet Set Radio)*. Also coming to Dreamcast are conversions of arcade games *House Of The Dead III*, *Dynamic Golf* and *Outtrigger*. Oh, and the release list confirms that a third game in the cult *ToeJam & Earl* series is currently under development. We first told you about that in our December 1999 issue (*ODM* #2)!

Several new games will support network play, including an airplane dogfighting game from AM2 provisionally named *Project Propeller Online*, "massive" multiplayer RPG *Far Nation*, and *Alien Front Online*, the futuristic tank shooter first seen at last year's E³ trade show (see *ODM* #10).

New versions of Sega's American sports simulations, namely *NFL2K2*, *NBA2K2*, *NHL2K2* and *WSB2K2*, are set for release in Japan at the end of the year, although it remains unclear whether any of these will make it to Europe. Among the titles which almost certainly *won't* be released here are 'love sim' *As Snow...* (working title), a bizarre creature battling game called *Let's Make A Monster!* and horse racing sims *Derby Owners Club Online* and *Derby Tsuku 2*.

NEWS ANALYSIS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ALEX HUHTALA

SOFT APPROACH

DESPITE THE scaremongering on Internet, the truth is that Dreamcast software support shows no sign of stopping, with a long list of new titles revealed for the console and the promise of more to be named as the year unfolds.

While software production continues for the console, Sega are hard at work implementing a new strategy for both the company and the Dreamcast platform, the aim being for Sega to be the biggest entertainment software provider in the world.

This new strategy will see the Dreamcast hardware incorporated into new technologies such as the Pace set-top boxe and other electrical appliances. Due to the emergence of these new Dreamcast-ready devices, Sega will no longer need to produce the same number of consoles. New avenues will be available to lure potential Dreamcast players who no longer require the console.

Existing owners needn't worry, however, as the new strategy enables Sega to concentrate their efforts on something that is far more important to current owners of the console – more games!

With inaccurate reports on the future of Dreamcast floating around, Sega of Japan sensibly revealed some of their software hand for the year ahead (see left). The list of new titles revealed in the announcement contains a number of big surprises that already have us salivating at the prospect of playing them.

Along them are *The House Of The Dead III* and *Dynamic Golf*, both of which will appear in arcades and on Dreamcast by the end of the year. Long-time Sega fans will be pleased to see the reappearance of *ToeJam & Earl* (remember the original on Sega Mega Drive?), while newer fans will welcome back Ulala with a sequel to *Space Channel 5*. Also on the way is *Sega Bass Fishing 2*. And yes, we could finally see a decent football title on the console, with Smilebit working on *Victory Goal 2001*.

Online titles include *Far Nation*, a massive online role-playing game, and the tentatively titled *Project Propeller Online*, an aerial shooter that promises dogfights with a wide selection of weird planes. Sound good? It sounds even better when you discover that AM2, the makers of *Shenmue*, are behind it.

Sega developing software for other platforms? Hopefully we'll know all the facts pretty soon. Rumours – and right now they're *only* rumours – suggest that Sega are working on five titles for the Sony PlayStation 2. Interestingly, reports suggest that they're *old* Dreamcast games, with *Crazy Taxi* (not the sequel) among them. Given that it's nearly a year since the original game was released, should any Dreamcast owners really care?

The Game Boy Advance situation seems much more straightforward, as the handheld clearly isn't in competition with Dreamcast. *ChuChu Rocket!* should be a great game to play on the move, and Sonic is a much-loved Sega mascot that will set sales alight on the platform.

I think the key to becoming the biggest entertainment software provider lies in Sega's past. Right now, Sega are sitting on a wealth of gaming history and knowledge. Decades' worth of hit games have been produced by the company, that, due to the industry's reliance on new software, is all currently unused.

Imagine if a film company, that constantly churns out new titles to be shown in cinemas, didn't release their old movies on video or DVD, or didn't allow them to be shown on television. It wouldn't make sense – they'd be missing out on huge markets where older products can continue to make lots of money.

In using their extensive catalogue of hits to provide software for other platforms, Sega appear to be moving into an area of production and distribution that is not dissimilar to a film company. And Game Boy Advance development could prove the tip of a very lucrative iceberg for Sega.

HEAR THIS!
DA BEST NEW MUSIC

HYBRID
REMIX & ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION BY...
DISTINCTIVE BREAKS

Cynics might argue that if you've heard one Hybrid remix you've heard them all, but that's not entirely fair. Sure, their distinctive breakbeat/trance/orchestral style of production can be a tad predictable, but their choice of subjects is anything but. Proving the point, this two-disc collection includes their takes on everything from Energy 52's *Café Del Mar*, Moby's *Body Rock* and the excellent *Papua New Guinea* from FSOL, to – gulp! – Andreas Johnson's *Glorious*. *WC*

VARIOUS
GU019: LOS ANGELES
BOXED

With their Global Underground series, Boxed continue to fly in the face of the big brand dance compilations and their predictable tracklistings. John Digweed is on duty, delivering (predominately) brand new, cool progressive house tracks, compiled and mixed with the verve you'd expect from one of the world's top DJs. That said, this is slower-paced and less engaging than *Communicate*, so it may not win over too many new fans. *WC*

VARIOUS
DEEP & CHILLED EUPHORIA
TELSTAR

While it contains fewer chill-out classics than last year's excellent *Chilled Euphoria* this follow-up is, nevertheless, a fine ambient collection. The likes of Leftfield, Moby, Sasha and Groove Armada are included across the two discs but Red Jerry primarily draws on lesser known artists and tracks, and that's no bad thing. You may wish to invest in a floatation tank to gain the full effect. *WC*

△ Stills from the *Shenmue II* movie, just to whet your appetite even more!

SHENMUE II IT'S COMING!

First official movie of *Shenmue II* is unveiled

JAPANESE DEVELOPER AM2 have unveiled the first proof that *Shenmue II* is a reality in the form of a movie that accompanies the Japanese version of *Fighting Vipers 2* (reviewed on page 72).

The *Shenmue II* trailer begins with a rotating Phoenix mirror and the game logo. In-game footage is then shown of Sha Hua – the mysterious girl that appears in Ryo Hazuki's dreams throughout the original *Shenmue* – sat in front of a full moon. We then see a large passenger boat sailing through a wide canyon towards a forest.

Ryo Hazuki is seen exploring the dense, sunlit forest on foot, walking across a narrow stone bridge and passing under the roots of a giant tree. In some scenes he is shown running, in others he strolls slowly, carrying a large rucksack over his shoulder.

A large bird passes in front of the camera and soars high above a waterfall before the action cuts to Ryo Hazuki meeting Sha Hua who is sat on the branch of a tree. Ryo and Sha Hua are then seen in a huge cave lit by a campfire. Ryo watches her fall asleep and the screen fades to black. 'The story goes on…' fades up, and the bird flies over the waterfall. Lovely.

At the time of going to press, Sega Europe could not confirm whether the movie will be included with the UK release of *Fighting Vipers 2*, scheduled for sale in March.

WILD THING!

Impressive first shots of Naomi 2 in action

SEGA HAVE SHOWN OFF the first game powered by Naomi 2 – the next-generation version of the arcade technology that shares many common features with Dreamcast (see *ODM* #14).

Wild Riders sees you take the role of a gang member on the run from the police. By pushing up and down on cabinet-mounted handlebars you're able to perform a number of tricks, like jumping over bridges and sliding under barriers and articulated trucks.

Timing the slides and jumps to perfection helps increase the gap between you and the police. Mess up and you run the risk of capture.

The game offers four different members of the biker gang to choose from, with play extended by reaching the destination in the given time. Like *Crazy Taxi* (*ODM* #5, 9/10), you can pick your own route through the city.

△ A slide to clear the police barrier.

△ Yep, ***Wild Riders*** **looks like a playable cartoon!**

△ Pull back on the handles to jump.

"This is a cracking, fast-paced, fun game which builds on the success of *Crazy Taxi*," says Paul Williams of Sega Amusements Europe Ltd. "The colours and brightness of the graphics are awesome. The power of the Naomi 2 board and the expansion of its capability is phenomenal, and we are all really excited about some of the new games that we have seen in development based on this new platform.

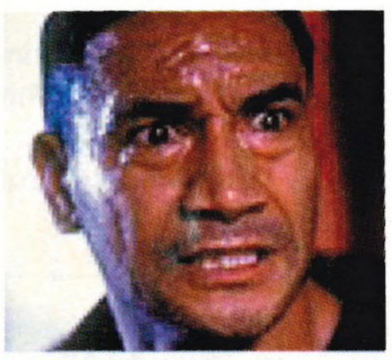
"We've seen a promotional video for Naomi 2 which shows some of its capabilities, one of which was an amphitheatre with 600 characters each moving independently in infinite directions. The amount of detail that can be gained from Naomi 2 is really mind-blowing."

The gorgeous-looking *Wild Riders* was Sega's main attraction at the January ATEI arcade show in London (we'll bring you a report of the event next issue). There's no news yet on whether the game will appear on Dreamcast in any form.

WATCH THIS!
NEW MOVIES ON VHS

X-MEN
OUT: FEB 12 • CERT: 12 • TO RENT

In a world filled with hate and prejudice there are mutants – the next stage of human evolution. Feared and loathed for their powers, they're outcasts. Professor X provides tutelage for the 'gifted', teaching them to use their abilities for the good of mankind – skills they will need to face a growing band of mutants that want to use their powers to punish humans. *X-Men* realistically brings the pages of the famous comic to the screen, mixing action and effects with solid story telling. *AH*



WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKEN HEARTED?
OUT NOW • CERT: 18 • TO RENT

Once Were Warriors*, New Zealand's most successful film to date, dealt with a poor and physically abused Maori family. This is the slightly less harrowing but even seedier sequel. Beer-swilling dad is now estranged from his family. While taking out another victim in a bar room brawl, his eldest son is killed in a gang fight. When his other son joins a rival gang in an effort to get revenge, Jake is forced to step in. Definitely not in the New Zealand Tourist Board's movie top ten. *CE

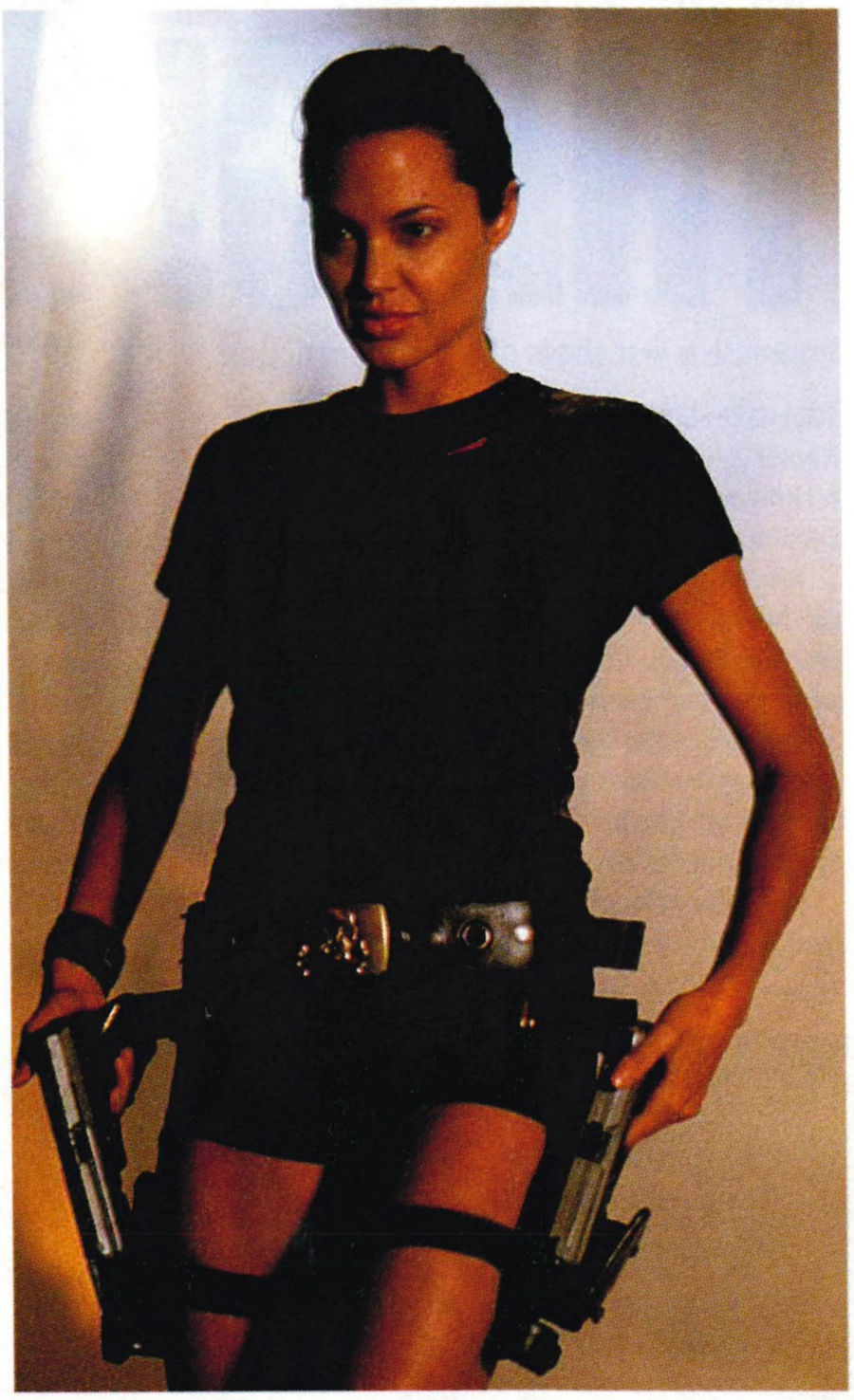
THERE'S ONLY ONE JIMMY GRIMBLE
OUT: FEB 19 • CERT: 12 • TO RENT

Fifteen-year-old Jimmy Grimble dreams of being a professional footie player. Trouble is, he's a Manchester City fan who's bullied by his Man United-supporting schoolmates and every time he plays in front of spectators his co-ordination goes kaput. One night, a bag lady gives him a pair of old footie boots and suddenly the tables turn. Great feel-good movie with a best of British cast. *CE*

JOLIE GOOD SHOW?

Lara Croft is like "a dirty Indiana Jones" claims movie star

△ **Angelina Jolie gets Lara in her eyes. Will it win her another Oscar? Probably not.**



HERE ARE THE FIRST official images from the upcoming summer movie *Tomb Raider*, the big screen adaptation of the multimillion-selling game series featuring the memorable Lara Croft.

Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie, who takes the role of Lara, has confirmed that she will star in at least two more movies based on the series, providing the first film is a success.

"Quite a few of us are signed up for two more," she revealed to movie website Empire Online. "Lara's like James Bond and a dirty Indiana Jones. Oh, and absolutely a woman. I doubt you'll forget that."

An action-packed trailer for the movie can currently be seen at cinemas and on the Internet at www.tombraidermovie.com. We'll see if there's potential for any sequels when the film is released in the UK on Friday 13 July.

BROAD APPEAL

Dreamcast-owning Americans move across to the online fast lane

△ ***Daytona USA 2001* and *Unreal Tournament* – two online titles that should fully support broadband.**

FASTER ONLINE CONNECTIONS have become a reality for Dreamcast owners in the United States, with the release of Sega's Broadband Adapter.

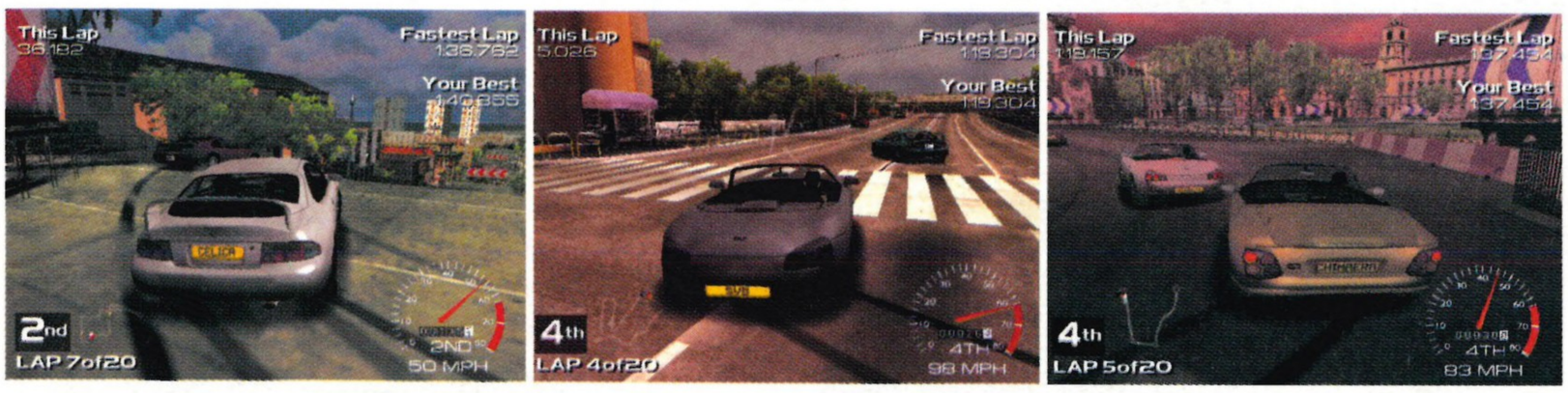
The device, that is designed to replace the Dreamcast's existing modem, allows users to browse the Internet at high speed and should provide no noticeable lag when playing online.

Although the majority of older online Dreamcast games won't work with the adapter, most new titles, including *Daytona USA 2001* and *Unreal Tournament*, should benefit from the faster connection.

The only stumbling block for a potential UK release is the limited availability of broadband phone links in homes. Nevertheless, Sega Europe is hoping to release the adapter in the UK in late summer.

"The broadband adapter is finished and ready to go," a Sega spokesperson told us. "We will confirm a release date when broadband connection is more widespread throughout Europe."

Naturally, *Official Dreamcast Magazine* will bring you more news as we get it, so watch this space!



△ ***Metropolis Street Racer*** **– the one and only. Quite literally. Don't expect a sequel from Bizarre Creations, because there isn't going to be one.**

NO MSR 2!

Bizarre Creations won't be creating a sequel to popular racer

DREAMCAST OWNERS HOPING to see a follow-up to *Metropolis Street Racer* (*ODM* #12, 9/10) from Bizarre Creations are in for a big, big disappointment.

Neither Sega Europe or the Liverpool-based developer were prepared to comment at the time of going to press, but the chances of a sequel appearing in the future look extremely slim to say the least.

ODM understands that no discussions on the possibility of a follow-up have taken place between the two parties, and that talks aren't likely anytime soon.

While Bizarre Creations own the technology and data used in the original title, Sega actually hold the rights to the *Metropolis Street Racer* name. As such, there is a small chance that an entirely new *MSR*-branded game from another developer may appear on Dreamcast in the future.

Bizarre are known to be working on three projects – a PlayStation 2 version of *Fur Fighters* (*ODM* #9, 7/10) and two brand-new games, code-named *Smokescreen* and *Swingers*, for as yet unspecified platforms.

The release of *MSR* was beset with problems, with the ambitious racing game hitting shelves over a year after the original launch date. The initial batch (which have since been replaced in stores) contained several bugs (see *ODM* #15), while the online features were not operational until several weeks after the game went on sale.

Despite these problems, *MSR* has proved extremely popular with gamers.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... TAKE THE BULLET?

We discover the whereabouts of DC games that have seemingly disappeared without a trace

LAST MENTIONED: ***ODM* #0**
ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: **Late 1999**
NEW RELEASE DATE: **2002**

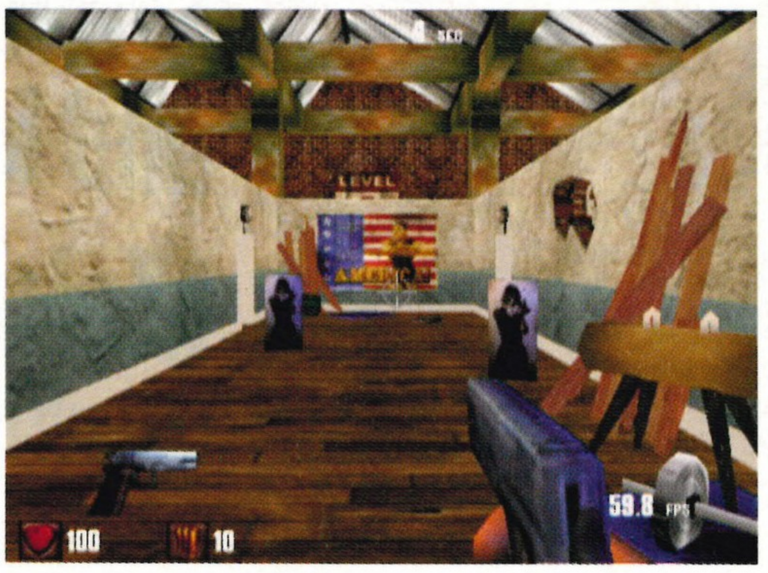
ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR release just after the UK launch of Dreamcast, *Take the Bullet* was intended to be a shooting game set in the USA during the late '60s. Players were to take the role of Jack Travis, a bodyguard employed to protect a presidential candidate during the course of an election campaign.

Touted as being the Dreamcast's equivalent to the Nintendo 64 shooter *Goldeneye*, *Take the Bullet* was to include 18 different weapons and would have been compatible with Dreamcast light-guns. When last seen, the game supported four players via a split-screen and there were even plans for a simultaneous 16-player online deathmatch mode (which no longer looks feasible).

We're referring to it in the past tense here, because little has been seen of *Take the Bullet* since an official unveiling to the press way back in early '99. So what's been happening? Well, we understand that Red Lemon, the Glasgow-based developers, took the title back to the drawing board early in 2000 following an evaluation of the project from Sega Europe.

But is there a chance that the game has actually been cancelled, as some reports have claimed? Despite ample opportunity, Red Lemon declined to comment on the current status of the game, but after much persuasion we got a response from Sega Europe. "Sega and Red Lemon are still working closely together on *Take the Bullet*," said a spokesman. "It is still on our release list and we are hopeful of a release next year." And, yes, that's 2002!

Light-gun owners should rest assured that Sega are planning a number of shooting games for release later this year. These include *Gun Valkyrie* and a conversion of a recent arcade title… that we can't tell you about yet.



△ **An early shot of *Take the Bullet*. We haven't seen much of it since.**

GAMES NEWS

TONY'S GOING CHEAP

The details are still to be confirmed, but Sega Europe's new budget-priced Dreamcast range is expected to be extended in March. Two highly rated Ubi Soft titles – *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* (*ODM* #6, 8/10) and *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* (*ODM* #10, 8/10) – are likely to join *Sega Rally 2* (*ODM* #1, 8/10), *Sonic Adventure* (*ODM* #0, 9/10) and *Toy Commander* (*ODM* #1, 8/10). All the titles in the budget range will be priced £19.99.

VFX GOES PUBLIC

The next chapter in Yu Suzuki's *Virtua Fighter* series, *Virtua Fighter X* will be officially unveiled at the Arcade Operators Union (AOU) show held in Makuhari, Japan on February 23-24. *Virtua Fighter X* is the long-awaited fourth fighter in the highly respected series that is as famous for technical innovation as innovative gameplay. *Virtua Fighter X* is Suzuki's first game to be powered by the new Naomi 2 arcade board. For more information on the Naomi 2 board, see page 25. We'll tell you what happened at the unveiling in the May issue of *ODM*, on sale Thursday 5 April.

IT COULD BE YOU

Sega are lining up a very special surprise for one lucky person in the UK. The company are expecting to sell half a million Dreamcasts in the UK at the end of February, and to celebrate the landmark sales figure, the purchaser of the 500,000th console will be rewarded with a one-off silver console and free Dreamcast games for life. You never know, if you're planning to buy a Dreamcast at the end of the month, it could be you!

IT'S A MIZ-TERY

Tetsuya Mizuguchi, the head of Sega's United Game Artists development team and creator of *Space Channel 5* (*ODM* #13, 8/10), *Sega Rally* and *Manx TT*, plans to unveil his next project at the Game Developers Conference in Japan this March. He attended last year's conference to lift the lid on *Space Channel 5* (above). No firm details have been revealed about what the game is about, but we are told it doesn't involve racing. Mizuguchi himself describes it as "people action". Hmmm.

PAPER MONEY

Respected American newspaper *The New York Times* has upset Sega of Japan by printing an article on December 27 stating that Nintendo were in talks to buy Sega for $2 billion. The article caused the Tokyo Stock Exchange to suspend trading of Sega shares. The newspaper printed a similar story on December 29, prompting Sega to write a letter of complaint to the paper. Despite recent reports, Nintendo have not purchased Sega!

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△ "Here's your popcorn. What did I miss?"

△ "So, is Tom Hanks in this one, or what?"

RYO HAZUKI, MOVIESTAR

Shenmue the Movie gets a blink-and-you'd-miss-it cinema release in Japan

NOT WANTING TO be left behind by the current crop of videogame-based movies in development (see *ODM* #15), Sega have surprised everyone by releasing *Shenmue the Movie* in Japan. But before you start to worry about who they got to play Ryo, perhaps we should fill you in a bit more.

Shenmue the Movie is a half-hour short film that tells the story of the first *Shenmue* game, using footage from the game itself. The film was given a very limited release in a tour of major Japanese cities in January.

In order to view the movie, fans of the game's developer AM2 had to respond to an advert placed on AM2's website where they could win a pair of tickets.

Those who were successful in getting tickets were treated to the story and action scenes of *Shenmue*, using English dialogue and Japanese subtitles. Yu Suzuki is said to be such a big fan of the English dialogue featured in the Western version of the game, that *Shenmue* will be re-released in Japan as a special collector's edition offering the Western dialogue with subtitles.

There's no news as to whether *Shenmue the Movie* will be shown outside of Japan, but we'll keep you posted.

HAVE YOUR SAY...

Vote for the best up-and-coming Dreamcast games and you could be heading for a free Visual Memory unit!

THERE ARE MORE Dreamcast games in development somewhere in the world than you could count on your fingers and toes combined, but which ones are getting you most excited? Let us know and courtesy of Sega, you could win a Visual Memory unit (worth around £19.99).

To vote, all you need to do is email us at vote@dreamcastmag.co.uk using the subject heading 'Vote DC!'. Please include, in order, a list of the five games you're most looking forward to, with the most keenly anticipated at the top. Placing them in order of preference is vitally important, with different points awarded for each place. You must also include your name, age and full postal address. Note: these details will not be passed on to anyone else.

A couple of rules: It doesn't matter if a release date for a particular game has yet to be set (they rarely are until the last minute), but you can only vote for games which have been released on DC abroad, or confirmed as forthcoming Dreamcast releases.

There's no closing date as this is an ongoing competition; with the winner drawn form the very expensive virtual hat each month. Only one entry from each reader will be accepted each calendar month; anyone submitting more than one will be disqualified from the competition, or forced to play *Roadsters*. For logistical reasons we can only accept votes by email.

This month's winner is Owen Cima from Malmesbury, Wiltshire. His top choice is *Sonic Adventure 2*, followed by *Half-Life*, *Crazy Taxi 2*, *Virtua Tennis 2* and *Phantasy Star Online*. Thanks Owen, your VM is in the post. Thanks to everyone else who voted, keep 'em coming!

YOUR MOST WANTED

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

1 (1) SONIC ADVENTURE 2 (SEGA)

FIRST 21% | TOP 5 75% | ETA MAY

Sonic looks to be settling into his position as the new head of your Most Wanted chart with a good lead. We've had a glimpse of the game and suffice to say it'll blow the socks off any *Sonic* fan. Look out for an exclusive preview soon!

2 (3) PHANTASY STAR ONLINE (SEGA)

FIRST 16% | TOP 5 57% | ETA FEB

With the release date creeping nearer, this month's cover game is shaping up to be a massive hit. Taking the role-playing game to a whole new level, *PSO* looks set to be dominating your playing time for a long time to come.

3 (2) HALF-LIFE (HAVAS)

FIRST 3% | TOP 5 66% | ETA APR

Havas seem intent on matching Railtrack for delay misery, but *Half-Life* remains a popular choice among you. We're as desperate as everyone else to see a finished copy, and as soon as we do, rest assured we'll be giving you the full goss.

4 (10) SHENMUE 2 (SEGA)

FIRST 30% | TOP 5 40% | ETA 2002

Rocketing up the chart as more of you get your hands on *Shenmue*, the sequel looks set to repeat the first game's dominance of the Most Wanted chart. Info was scarce at the time of writing but watch the news pages for all the latest.

5 (5) DAYTONA USA 2001 (SEGA)

FIRST 6% | TOP 5 39% | ETA APR

Out in Japan and wowing the import crowd, *Daytona* looks like it's back in style and online too. Even if you're new to the *Daytona* heritage, the prospect of battling it out online with the best-looking version of the game ever has to be a winner.

6 (8) HEADHUNTER (SEGA)

FIRST 6% | TOP 5 40% | ETA JUL

Sega are tight-lipped about this '1.5 party' developed game, but *Headhunter* is progressing up the chart. Cinematic visuals and an involved storyline are assured, but beyond that little is known. Look out for a big announcement soon!

7 (6) BLACK & WHITE (SEGA)

FIRST 2% | TOP 5 30% | ETA TBC

The lack of news and drawn-out development aren't doing *Black & White* any favours. But if it delivers on even half of what it's supposed to the wait should be well worth it. For megalomaniacs with a thing about giant cows everywhere.

8 (4) GRANDIA II (UBI SOFT)

FIRST 2% | TOP 5 30% | ETA JULY

A quick look at the chart shows the popularity of RPGs among you and *Grandia II* remains a strong contender as it nears release. It will be heading into a suddenly crowded market but there's plenty to set it apart and to enjoy.

9 (9) UNREAL TOURNAMENT (INFOGRAMES)

FIRST 4% | TOP 5 19% | ETA MAR

The PC purist's choice of first-person shooter, *Unreal Tournament* ups the stakes for *Quake III Arena* (*ODM* #15, 9/10) and promises to add four more players to the online carnage. There's little that needs to be said – we can't wait!

10 (7) 18 WHEELER APT (SEGA)

FIRST 2% | TOP 5 19% | ETA JUNE

Perhaps in part due to the slip in release and entry of some tough competition, *18 Wheeler* has fallen but is still a strong runner. Head-to-head online racing should be a winner, but we won't know until the summer.

TBC = to be confirmed

FIRST	Percentage of voters placing the game at the top of their Most Wanted lists
TOP 5	Percentage of voters including the game in their Top 5 Most Wanted lists
ETA	Estimated time of arrival (release in UK)

WATCH THIS! NEW MOVIES ON DVD

SNATCH

OUT NOW • CERT: 18 • £24.99

Having perfected the techniques he developed in *Lock Stock…*, Mr Ritchie puts them to excellent use in this splendid second offering about two unlicensed boxing promoters, a bare-knuckle boxing ace, three bungling burglars, a missing diamond and a squeaking dog. A typically twisty plot is complimented by an often hilarious script brilliantly delivered by the maddest of characters – most notably Alan Ford's myopic 'ard bastard Brick Top and Brad Pitt's 'pikey' pugilist. Stacks of extras include Making of, Behind the Scenes, photos *et al*. *CE*

SOUTHERN COMFORT

OUT NOW • CERT: 15 • £17.99

Well-deserved reissue of this excellent *Deliverance*-esque thriller in which nine National Guardsmen go into Louisiana's Bayou on a training exercise that goes awry. After poking fun at the local Cajuns, the unit's commander – the only real soldier – is shot dead, leaving the rest to flail around in swamps, armed only with blanks. A comment on the ineptitude of the American army when pitted against Vietnamese guerrillas? No extras but the DVD format perfectly compliments the brilliant photography and Ry Cooder's creepy soundtrack. *CE*

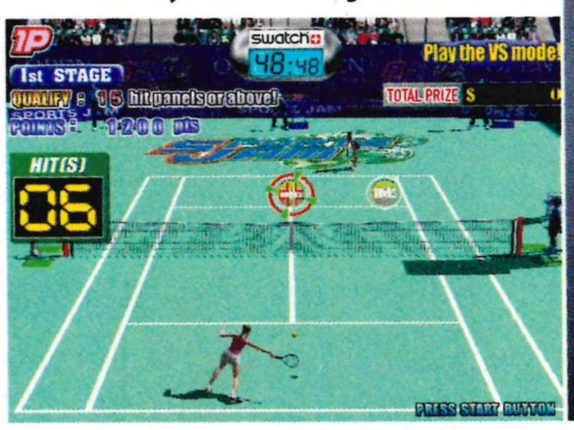
SEVEN

OUT NOW • CERT: 18 • £19.99

David Fincher's superior thriller follows a homicide detective on the brink of retirement (Morgan Freeman) and his fresh-faced replacement (Brad Pitt) as they track down a serial killer who is murdering victims based on the seven deadly sins – Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Pride, Lust, Envy and Wrath. With an unforgettable ending, *Seven* is as good as they get. The DVD features a selection of commentaries from actors and crew, deleted and alternate scenes including a quite different climax, and a closer look at the killer's detailed notebooks. *AH*

ARCADE TEST

△ This is how you hit the ball, got that?



△ It's tougher than *Virtua Tennis* – arrgh!

△ Years of perfecting the *Track & Field* two-button pummel technique won't help you here.

IT'S JAM PACKED

No, he's not athletic, but armchair sports fan **ALEX HUHTALA** seemed ideal to check out *Sports Jam*

REMEMBER THE OLD TV show *Superstars*? No? You must, it had athletes from different sports competing in the BBC's equivalent of school sports day. Getting some well-known stars such as Kevin Keegan and er… Brian Jacks to try their hand at cycling, running, swimming and squat thrusts (at which Brian was the man, although his sliding technique was frowned upon by the purists). Anyway, back to the point we're trying to make… *Sports Jam*, Sega's latest arcade sports title – it's a lot like *Superstars*.

In *Sports Jam* you are the superstar and you're challenged to try your hand at a number of different sporting events. They aren't, however, the kind of challenges you'd expect to see in a multi-event sports game. There's no hurdles and javelin throwing here, oh no. *Sports Jam* is made up of the biggest sports on the planet like football, basketball, tennis, golf and ice hockey.

There are eight different sports featured in the game, and a total of 12 different events. So how did they manage to squeeze all these sports into one game? The answer is they did and they didn't. Rather than take the complete sport, they've taken only one discipline from each – or rather one specific skill – and turned that skill into the challenge of each event. So, for example, in the golf challenge you're asked to get as close to the pin as possible. In football you must score a goal from a number of set positions. And in tennis the challenge is to return the computer's serves to hit the specified targets.

Unlike most multi-event sports titles, the events here aren't picked for you – you pick them. Complete three events and you go on to the final challenge. Beat this and you collect a virtual trophy, providing you meet the criteria of each event. If you so desire you can pick the same event three times (and there are definitely some events that are better than others).

Like the massive arcade and Dreamcast hit *Virtua Tennis*, each event is played with minimal controls. In fact they're even more simple here – you only have a joystick and a single-fire button to worry about. This simplicity makes the game easy to understand and play and should ensure that *Sports Jam* is a hit in pubs as well as arcades.

Overall, *Sports Jam* is a brave attempt to try something different with a variety of sports and a new multi-event structure. Not all of it works, especially as the range of sports includes too many American events such as baseball, basketball and American football.

Perhaps the weakest aspect is the announcer (who looks like a cross between the comic character Archie and Johnny Cab from the movie *Total Recall)*. Sega presumably included him to play up the competition angle and to make *Sports Jam* a little bit wacky. Problem is, he's teeth-gratingly bad.

Nevertheless, sports fans should lap up *Sports Jam*. With football, tennis, golf, ice hockey and more in the mix, there really should be an event for every taste. There's even a cycling event and if you mess up you can fall off the bike. So maybe it is a bit like *Superstars* after all…

SPORTS JAM

DEVELOPER: **WOW ENTERTAINMENT**
FORMAT: **NAOMI**
COST: **50P**
AVAILABILITY: **EVERYWHERE**
DUE ON DREAMCAST: **UNKNOWN**

YOU'S THE BOSS

Ever wanted to be in charge of a huge Japanese software company like Sega? Well take a look at this…

△ **The Dogma Corporation are taking over!**

△ **Battle the developers. Maybe this is Suzuki.**

SEGA HAVE GONE mad. You could say they've gone gaga. Or, to be exact, *Segagaga* – a new strategy game that allows you to take charge of a company that bears more than just a passing resemblance to Sega.

Segagaga simulates the games industry and puts you in charge of a fictional corporation called, you've guessed it, Segagaga. You're given three years to establish complete dominance in the gaming market.

In your way is an evil corporation called Dogma who are aiming to achieve their own success in the industry. To beat them you must release the games that the public wants to play.

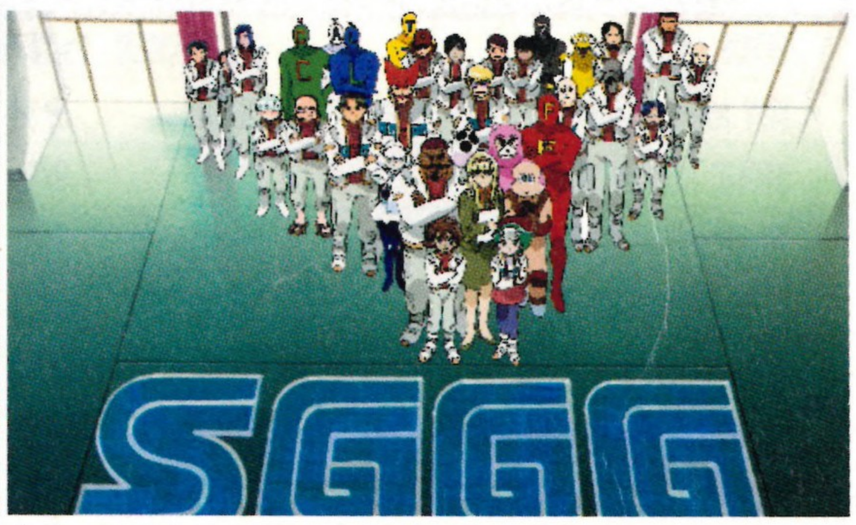
But before you release a game, you must collect the creators who will design the hit products for you. Bizarrely, potential game creators have been transformed into monsters which you must battle. If they are defeated, you can persuade them to join Segagaga and assign them a game to develop.

Travelling forwards to the year 2025 enables you to see how well Segagaga and Dogma are selling. The Japanese electronics district of Akihabara is where all new products are launched and where the number of billboards per company reveal which is performing better.

Segagaga is being developed by Hitmaker, the team responsible for Dreamcast hits *Virtua Tennis* (*ODM* #12, 9/10) and *Crazy Taxi* (*ODM* #5, 9/10).

Unfortunately, the game is currently only scheduled for a Japanese release. A UK appearance looks unlikely, but if there's any news then of course we'll be the first to let you know. Until then, enjoy the selection of screenshots of what is surely one of Sega of Japan's most bizarre productions to date.

△ **Is this the real life, or is it just fantasy?**



△ **The staff of Segagaga welcome you.**

EVERYONE'S A WINNER, BABY!*

Did you win a prize in the Dreamcast birthday competition in our November issue?

IF YOU ENTERED our grand Sega goodies give-away in our November issue (*ODM* #13) check below to see if you're a winner. Congratulations to all of you – your prizes are on the way.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER: Tony Tsang from Glasgow wins the Salomon snowboard, signed football, jacket, fleece, *ChuChu Rocket!* T-shirt, frisbee, sweets, Tomb Raider backpack, personal organiser, beach towel, swimming trunks and the bikini… as worn by Holly McGuire!

SECOND PRIZE WINNER: Peter Courtney from Tadley also gets a snowboard, fleece, trunks, backpack, polo shirt, games carry case and an exclusive slinky Dreamcast T-shirt.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER: Stephen Houston from County Down grabs a snowboard, fleece, backpack, games carry case, promo videos, frisbee and sweets.

LUCKY DIP RUNNERS-UP: David Collins, Dublin; John Mulholland, Rutland; David Hope, Glasgow; N Haslam, Blackpool; Simon Taylor-Murphy, Hastings; Chris Cheetham, Cardiff; Ryan Smith, St Albans; Daniel Robertson, Buntingford; Simon North, County Meath; Ashley Henson, Wakefield; Alex Heron, West Torrington; David Martin, Blackburn; C Blockley, Poole; Craig Gaynor, Farringdon; Chris Lyle, Cows; Richard Price, Gwent; William Mallard, Huntingdon; Nathan Wise, Tenterden; Brad Fury, Luton and Keith Fulton from Margate.

*Not exactly true, but a fair few of you did win!

PLAN, EXECUTE, PROTECT!

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX

TRAINING AND UNIQUE MISSIONS - INCLUDING EAGLE WATCH MISSIONS!

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RELEASE DATES
FEB/MARCH 2001

Here's a list of all the games coming out in the next two months, compiled with the help of HMV, Sega Europe and the game publishers themselves. Note that all of these are subject to change.

FEBRUARY 2
4x4 Evolution (Take 2)
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command (Activision)
Gunbird 2 (Virgin)

FEBRUARY 9
Phantasy Star Online (Sega)
Speed Devils Online (Ubi Soft)

FEBRUARY 16
European Super League (Virgin)
Vanishing Point (Acclaim)
Worms World Party (Virgin)

△ *Vanishing Point*: almost here!

FEBRUARY 23
Exhibition of Speed (Titus)
Starlancer (Ubi Soft)
Stunt GP (Hasbro)

MARCH
Championship Surfer (Learning Company)
Ducati World (Acclaim)
Fighting Vipers 2 (Sega)
Giant Killers (AAA Games)
Grandia II (Ubi Soft)
Heroes Of Might & Magic III (Ubi Soft)
NBA Hoopz (Midway)
Project Justice (Virgin)
Sonic Shuffle (Sega)
Stupid Invaders (Ubi Soft)
Surf Rocket Racers (Ubi Soft)
The Next Tetris (Ubi Soft)

△ *Grandia II*: out in March.

THE HMV TOP TEN

The ultimate guide to what's hot in the world of Dreamcast games on the streets of Great Britain

POS	LM	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RATING	REVIEWED IN ISSUE
1	(1)	SHENMUE	SEGA	10/10	14
2	(8)	WWTBA MILLIONAIRE?	EIDOS	3/10	13
3	(5)	METROPOLIS STREET RACER	SEGA	9/10	12
4	(-)	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION	9/10	15
5	(-)	TOY RACER	SEGA	6/10	17
6	(-)	QUAKE III ARENA	SEGA	9/10	14
7	(4)	JET SET RADIO	SEGA	8/10	14
8	(-)	VIRTUA TENNIS	SEGA	9/10	12
9	(3)	SILENT SCOPE	KONAMI	7/10	14
10	(-)	UFC	UBISOFT	9/10	13

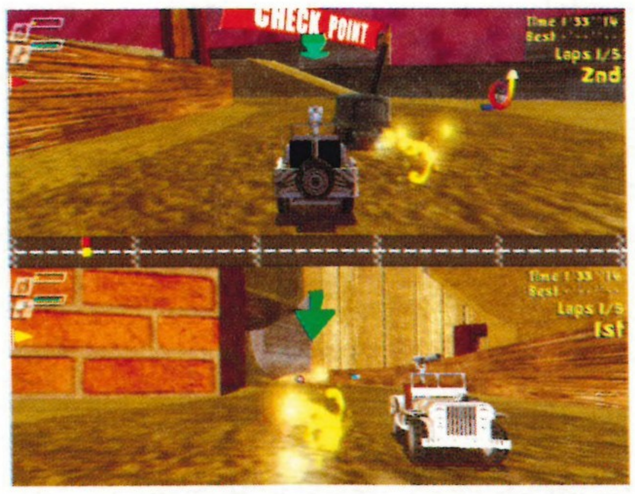
△ Whadd'ya mean, "Where's the sequel?"

THE ChartTrack TOP TWENTY

ELSPA

POS	LW	TITLE	PUBLISHER	RATING	REVIEWED IN ISSUE
1	(1)	TOY RACER	SEGA	6/10	17
2	(2)	SONIC ADVENTURE	SEGA	9/10	0
3	(5)	TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION	EIDOS	7/10	6
4	(7)	SEGA RALLY 2	SEGA	8/10	1
5	(3)	SHENMUE	SEGA	10/10	14
6	(6)	SEGA BASS FISHING	SEGA	7/10	1
7	(12)	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION	9/10	15
8	(4)	QUAKE III ARENA	SEGA	9/10	14
9	(19)	F355 CHALLENGE	ACCLAIM	8/10	13
10	(9)	METROPOLIS STREET RACER	SEGA	9/10	12
11	(-)	DEAD OR ALIVE 2	ACCLAIM	8/10	11
12	(10)	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	TAKE 2	7/10	13
13	(8)	READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2	SEGA	8/10	14
14	(14)	VIRTUA TENNIS	SEGA	9/10	12
15	(15)	WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?	EIDOS	3/10	13
16	(-)	RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA	EIDOS	9/10	8
17	(16)	JET SET RADIO	SEGA	8/10	14
18	(11)	TRICKSTYLE	ACCLAIM	7/10	1
19	(18)	WWF ATTITUDE	ACCLAIM	3/10	2
20	(13)	SEGA GT	SEGA	5/10	15

UK sales for week ending January 13th 2001. Compiled by Chart Track (c) ELSPA 2001



△ *Toy Racer*: proof that a £4.99 price tag will make you buy just about anything.

CHART ANALYSIS

EITHER YOU LIKE GIVING to charity or you like cheap games, because at the top of the chart is *Toy Racer*, the cheapest DC game at only £4.99 and with money donated to charity with each sale. Splendid. However, we've heard reports of *some* retailers charging £39.99. Shame on them – ripping off you, the developers *and* the charities.

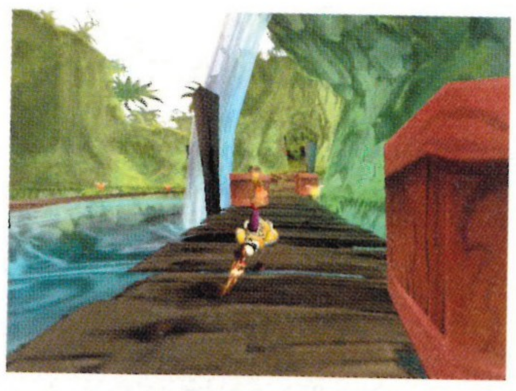
Elsewhere on the chart, *Shenmue* continues to dominate sales, despite a mixed response. Love it or hate it, you've got to admit it's a must-play game, as is *Jet Set Radio*, but sales of this have been surprisingly low. What's up?

Admittedly, so many great titles have been released recently that people simply can't afford them all. So come on, Sega – hurry up and start the budget range! After all, cheap games *do* sell!

THE PLAYLIST

OUR FAVOURITE GAMES

YOU CAN SAVE £5 OFF A GAME ST HMV WITH *ODM*. BUT WHAT SHOULD YOU BUY? PHILLIPA NORMAN PICKS HER FAVOURITE TITLES FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES



1 RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE

UBI SOFT • *ODM* #6, 8/10

I even got my Mum playing *Rayman 2* the other day. I think the giggles implied that she liked it. It is a truly fantastic game. The graphics are stunning, the levels are ingenious and I'd rather have a Rodeo Rocket than a car any day. My concentration span is notoriously short, but *Rayman 2* still manages to keep me amused for hours on end.

2 SPACE CHANNEL 5

SEGA • *ODM* #13, 8/10

Space Channel 5 is a wicked little game. I want to be just like Ulala when I grow up. She's the funkiest chick in the galaxy. The soundtrack is one the best I've heard. I've even been caught humming Mexican Flyer on a few occasions. Fantastic graphics make for cool, futuristic environments with a distinct retro touch to make it all the more enticing.

3 SEGA BASS FISHING

SEGA • *ODM* #1, 7/10

To be perfectly honest, *Sega Bass Fishing* sounded bloody boring to me, but I was still man enough to give it a go. Then it happened, I loved it! It was a magic moment – laughter and smiles all round. It's amazing how the simplest ideas can work so well. I get to haul in a whopper without adorning my wellies or impaling any innocent maggots.

4 SAMBA DE AMIGO

SEGA • *ODM* #15, 8/10

Brilliant! *Samba De Amigo* is just a totally ridiculous game. Although I have to admit that I get more pleasure from watching other people play it than actually playing it myself. After all, why make yourself look a complete twat when there are willing victims all around you? That doesn't mean of course that I don't shake my maracas in private, I just need a little more practice.

5 SONIC ADVENTURE

SEGA • *ODM* #0, 9/10

Sonic has always been one of my favourites – I first played it on my boyfriend's Game Gear years ago. We have broken up since and I have missed Sonic terribly. When I got my hands on *Sonic Adventure* it was like finding a new lease of life. It's the pace of the action that gets me. It's like being on a rollercoaster on warp-speed – blooming mental!

6 METROPOLIS STREET RACER

SEGA • *ODM* #12, 9/10

I don't have a driving license and now I know why. When I discovered *Metropolis Street Racer* I realised just how dangerous I would be if let loose on the road. Seriously though, *MSR* is the daddy. Its cities have been rendered with astonishing attention to detail, the graphics are top-notch and the kudos system is clever and original. Pure genius!

WIN THIS MONTH'S TOP TEN GAMES FROM HMV!!!

An easy way to win the ten best games in the world ever

AFTER THE CHRISTMAS RUSH of every developer trying to get their big game into the shops in time for the public's rush of hitting shops to buy presents – guess what? Nothing much gets released. Well it does, it's just a regular trickle of software that arrives during the first few months of every new year compared to the avalanche that falls on to shelves in the months before the year ends.

As such, most people bury themselves in their homes during the cold barren months with their stockpile of winter treats and snacks. We're giving you the chance to join the hibernation with a stockpile of great games that are sitting pretty in this month's HMV Top Ten.

The standard of titles snared in the chart this month is very high – it's the equivalent of a triple rollover, with *Quake III Arena*, *Shenmue*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* all present and correct. There's even *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* to soften the palette before you devour one of the biggies.

There really is something for everyone, providing you have a Dreamcast to play them on! All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is answer the simple question below.

Complete this coupon, then cut it out (or make a photocopy), stick it inside an envelope and post it to: *ODM* Top 10 Games Comp (March), c/o Simon Moore, HMV Marketing Department, Film House, 142 Wardour Street, London W1V 4LN.
The closing date for entries is Thursday 8 March 2001.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TOYS APPEARS IN THE *TOY STORY* MOVIES?

A) BORIZ
B) BUZZ
C) BEZI

ANSWER (circle one): A B C

NAME:

AGE:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

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

Terms & Conditions: Strictly one entry per person. Only entry forms with the correct answer, received before the closing date, will be entered into the prize draw (no, really). No cash alternative. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. All the other usual *ODM* competition rules, conditions and restrictions (available on request) apply.

£5 OFF ANY DREAMCAST GAME*

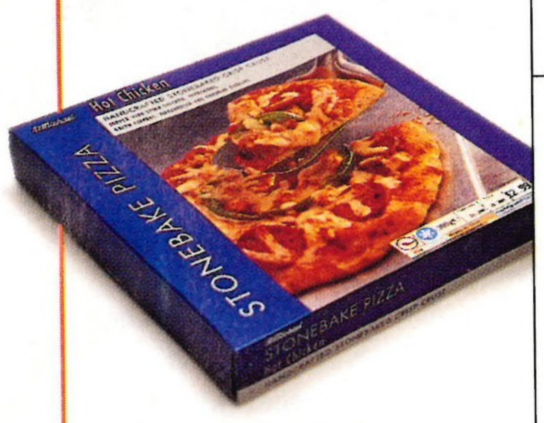
CUT OUT THIS COUPON AND TAKE IT ALONG TO AN HMV STORE TO RECEIVE £5 OFF ANY FULL-PRICE DREAMCAST GAME

Terms and Conditions:
1. This voucher entitles you to a saving of £5 off any Dreamcast game priced £39.99 or more at participating HMV stores. 2. Valid until Thursday 8th March 2001. 3. Only one voucher per transaction. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other voucher or promotion. 4. Offer is not open to employees of HMV, Dennis Publishing, their agencies or anyone directly connected with the offer. 5. Photocopied, damaged or defaced vouchers will not be accepted. 6. Cash value 0.001p

* Applies to full-price software only

HMV

SCOFF THIS! SUPERMARKET PIZZAS



STONE-BAKED HOT CHICKEN

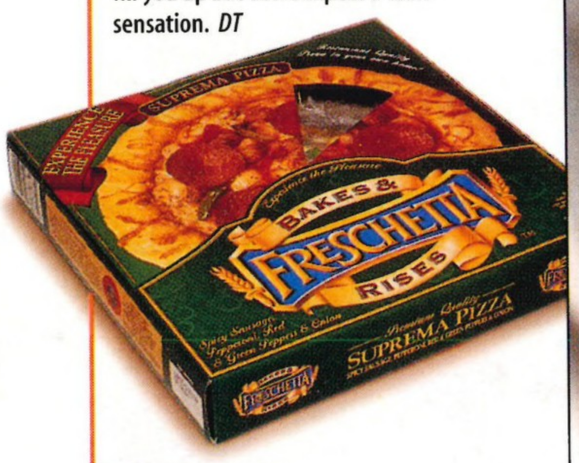
MARKS & SPENCER • £2.99

M&S have had the frozen food thing sorted for a long time now and their offering is typically solid and dependable with plenty of topping and a decent-tasting base. There were slight doubts about the pepperoni but overall this was the one that everybody could agree on as being the best all-rounder. A safe bet. ***DT***

TOMATO, OLIVE AND FOCACCIA

SAINSBURYS • £2.99

The Sainsburys offering wins on size and mass, never mind the fact that the elaborate descriptions of its ingredients on the box were enough to get our mouths watering. Sadly the proof wasn't there in the eating with a slightly stodgy base and some of the claimed ingredients notable by their absence. It'll fill you up but don't expect a taste sensation. ***DT***



BAKES & RISES SUPREMA

FRESCHETTA • £2.19

The stingiest by some distance by way of size and topping, the Suprema claimed to taste just like restaurant pizza but loses points for pretension and lack of bulk. The innovative rising base *is* the tastiest of the three but unless you're watching your waistline – hardly the point of pizza, really – this just isn't going to sustain you through a *Shenmue* marathon. ***DT***

INSPECT-A-GADGET

A remote-controlled Ferrari in a can, a solid silver chip fork, and a Japanese game design book are among this month's technological trailblazers

NIKE PSA[PLAY120

Nike's entry into the digital music market is a typically slick-looking product that promises "motivational benefits" for those extended training sessions. In other words, it's better to listen to your tunes than the frantic huffing and puffing of other people grimly trying to work off those excess pounds down at the gym. With no moving parts, it's not going to skip no matter how much you like to leap about and, most importantly, it looks really cool in a blobby, rounded sort of way – unless you wear it on the supplied armband (there's a belt clip, too). It doesn't have any removable memory, but the 64Mb of internal storage – over an hour in real terms – should be enough for most sessions.

Price: £270 **Contact:** Nike
Tel: 0800 0561640 **Web:** www.nike.com

TYCO CANNED HEAT

At a size and price that keeps it well within the 'fun' rather than the 'geeky' category, the Canned Heat Ferrari is a bit of a giggle, especially when you get two of them together for an impromptu race around the office. They're available with two different frequencies to enable you to do this and, in addition to the lovely Ferrari shown here, there's the choice of an Audi TT, Mini Cooper or VW Beetle. They're also portable, coming in a cylindrical case as the name suggests – the lid of which forms the transmitter. It's not super-quick and it makes a *really* annoying noise, but at the price it really can't be faulted...

Price: £29.95 **Contact:** Firebox
Tel: 0870 241 4289 **Web:** www.firebox.com

ELECTRONIC PLASTIC

The retro gamer frothing over obscure handheld games may well be a stereotypical object of ridicule, but Jaro Gielens' extensive examination of gaming's past is a fascinating look at a bygone era. Attractively filled with oh so cool Japanese graphic design, this book has the content to match its style and contains some amazing games from the days when primitive graphics meant wacky design was the only way to stand out. Pioneering inventions like 'detachable controllers' (gasp!) sit alongside some extremely odd gaming ideas (*Burger Time* anyone?) and whatever your take on the whole thing this is an essential purchase.

Price: £25.99 **Contact:** Die Gestalten Verlag
Web: www.die-gestalten.de (from bookshops)

SOLID SILVER CHIP FORK

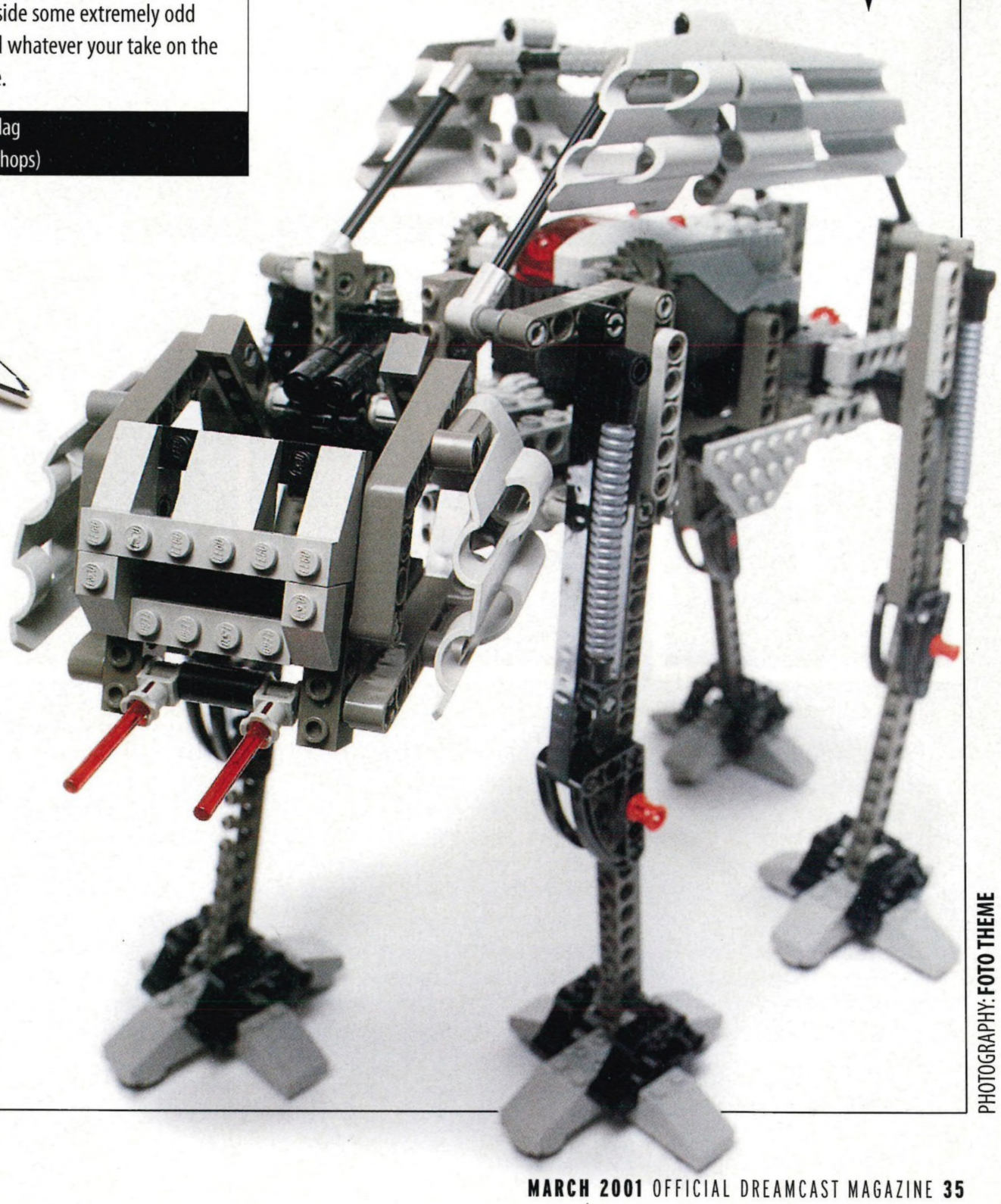
For the more sophisticated frequenter of the local chippy, this silver version of the ubiquitous wooden design is perfect for shovelling in your cod, chips and mushy peas (or avocado mousse if you prefer...). Admittedly, spending £50 on something you usually get for free is a slightly strange thing to do, but if you happen to be the type who absolutely *has* to get one up on everyone else then it's money well spent. You should probably keep it for Sunday best, though – using it at the closing time chip run will in all likelihood precede a visit to casualty to have your pride and joy removed from an extremely embarrassing location.

Price: £49.95 **Contact:** Firebox
Tel: 0870 241 4289 **Web:** www.firebox.com

LEGO DARKSIDE DEVELOPMENT KIT

It's a frightening thought that there will now exist a whole generation of kids who will have no idea what an AT-AT is. Always the most impressive of the *Star Wars* vehicles, these lumbering troop transports from *The Empire Strikes Back* have appeared in model form in many guises and Lego's latest take has to be one of the more impressive efforts. The kit is built from the advanced Technic Lego and is more than a trendy toy for bored office workers to put on top of their monitors. At its motorised heart is a programmable control centre that will have your new pet staggering drunkenly about according to light and predetermined movement patterns. Great!

Price: £79 **Contact:** Lego
Tel: 08457 080070 **Web:** http://mindstorms.lego.com



PHOTOGRAPHY: **FOTO THEME**

DAYTONA, YEAH!

BOY-RACER **DAN TRENT** TAKES *DAYTONA USA 2001* TO, ER, DAYTONA FOR AN EXCLUSIVE PUBLIC PREVIEW

DAVE, 28
RECRUIT. CONSULTANT

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Yup, in the arcades quite a bit...
Favourite driving games?
I like them all!
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
It's the same as the arcade version, but the steering is a bit fiddly...
What about the online function?
I've never played online before and this would be a good choice!
What was your best lap time?
1:10.78

JOHN, 22
PROGRAMMER

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Once or twice in the arcade.
Favourite driving games?
More realistic the better usually, but I like the fun ones too.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Very solid graphics, a little twitchy but that's the same as the arcade one.
What about the online function?
Good idea – it's certainly a good thing.
What was your best lap time?
0:55.34

CLIVE, 24
RECRUIT. CONSULTANT

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Never!
Favourite driving games?
Driver and *Gran Turismo*...oh, and *Ridge Racer*, too!
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Not too bad... it's not that realistic and a bit exaggerated...
What about the online function?
I like the idea of that a lot.
What was your best lap time?
0:57.93

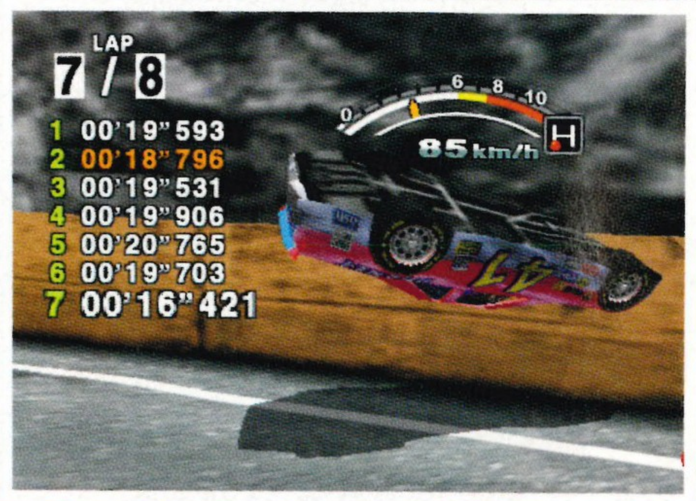
JASON, 31
DIRECTOR

Played *Daytona USA* before?
At the arcades, yeah.
Favourite driving games?
I like *TOCA 2*.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Very good, twitchy steering but you'd get used to that.
What about the online function?
I think that as long as it's quick enough it's a good idea.
What was your best lap time?
1:13.98

JOSE, 21
BARMAN

Played *Daytona USA* before?
The original arcade version, yeah.
Favourite driving games?
I'm more into my realistic ones.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
The steering is a bit jerky but it's a solid version. I'd prefer d-pad steering if possible.
What about the online function?
Very cool. It's going to be very interesting – I'm well into playing online.
What was your best lap time?
0:57.10

...WITH DAYTONA USA 2001



OKAY, SO IT'S NOT ACTUALLY Daytona as in the world famous raceway, but the Daytona Raceway karting track in London's Park Royal is an impressive set-up in its own right. Certainly go-karts are as close to taking part in motor-racing as many of us can get beyond a joypad and there's no denying the fun factor of blasting around a track with your mates pretending you're Michael Schumacher. Indeed, the great man himself started out racing karts, so perhaps there's hope for us all yet...

But to *Daytona USA 2001*! Ask anyone to name their favourite arcade driving game and there's a fair chance *Daytona USA* would be one of the first games they mention. When Sega revealed the Dreamcast version in their ECTS show reel the excitement was palpable. We thought the drivers at Daytona would be the perfect people to show the game to and get their reactions to an in-progress version we were lucky enough to get our hands on. With that in mind, we fired up the demo pod and tested our drivers on the Dinosaur Canyon course...

• To find out more about karting at Daytona Raceway call 020 8961 3616 or check out www.daytona.co.uk. There are three further Daytona tracks at Milton Keynes (020 8961 3616), Manchester (0161 876 0876) and Sandown (01372 471312).

ED, 29
ENGINEER

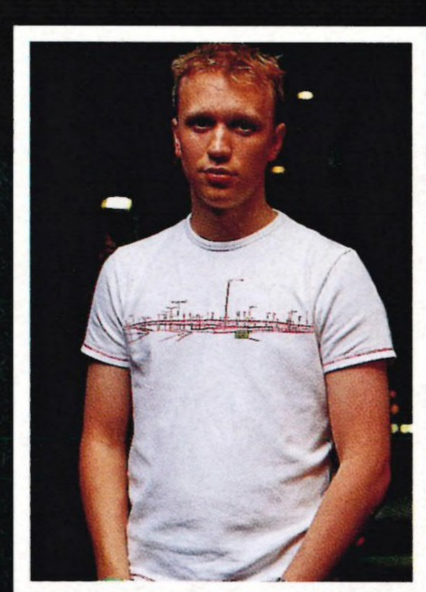
Played *Daytona USA* before?
Yes! Extensively...!
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Well, it's definitely a good update... there's not really a lot new but it's a pretty solid version.
What about the online function?
The link-up was always the strongest feature in the arcade version, so I think it will be fantastic.
What was your best lap time?
1:06.64

RICHARD, 29
DIRECTOR

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Never...
Favourite driving games?
I don't play 'em!
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Very simple, you know where you're going wrong and how to rectify it!
What about the online function?
It's a good idea, but it could get expensive! My son would be more into it than me.
What was your best lap time?
1:10.01

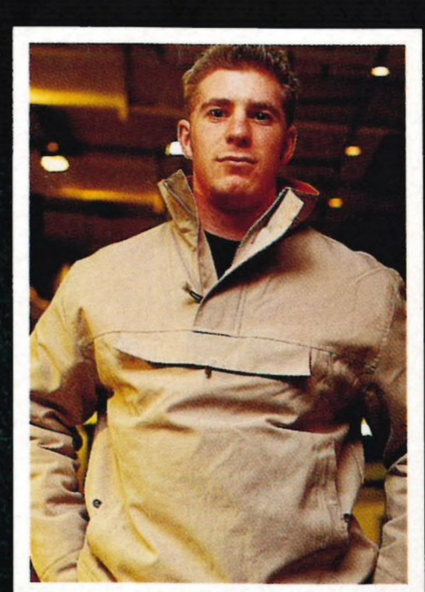
JUSTIN, 27
PHOTOGRAPHER

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Yep! First of the good arcade driving games.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Very similar, the only thing it lacks is the feedback steering. Graphically, it's spot-on.
What about the online function?
Great potential for keeping you interested and fresh competition. The complexity of the courses needs to increase, otherwise it's going to get down to close lap times.
What was your best lap time?
1:01.23



DANIEL, 18
CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Arcades and stuff, yeah...
Favourite driving games?
I still like the original *Ridge Racer*.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Good graphics and solid gameplay.
What about the online function?
That's what sets it apart from every other game like it. That's what's going to make it for *Daytona* in my opinion.
What was your best lap time?
0:59.32



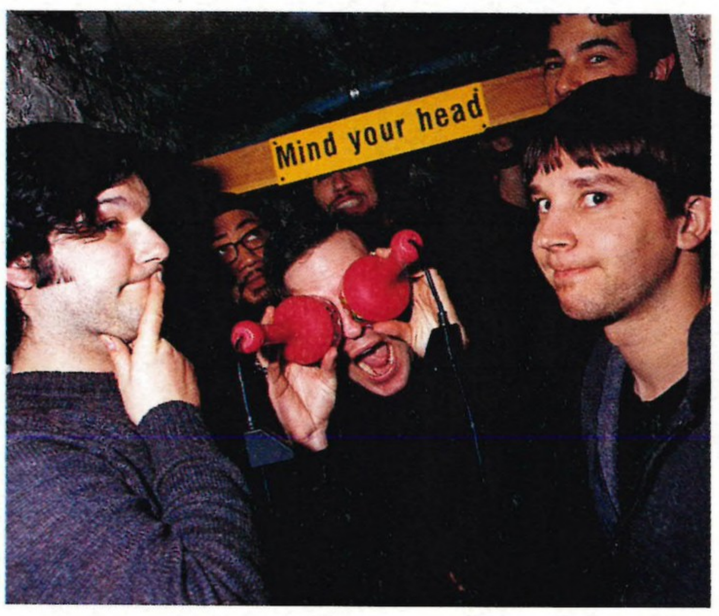
JASON, 25
ACCOUNT EXEC

Played *Daytona USA* before?
Yup, a fair amount...
Favourite driving games?
Gran Turismo is a favourite.
Did you like the Dreamcast version?
Actually it's not too bad – I think I could get into it.
What about the online function?
It's up and coming and I'd be interested in having a go.
What was your best lap time?
1:05.28

PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAN TRENT**

SHAKE ON ME!

MEET REEL BIG FISH, 'INTERPRETERS' OF AHA'S *TAKE ON ME* IN *SAMBA DE AMIGO*. **DAN TRENT** JOINS THE FUN



"WHAT MARACA GAME?" splutters singer Scott Klopfenstein. Ah, time for an explanation. We're in the depths of London's Underworld club to meet Reel Big Fish as they embark upon their first UK tour, ostensibly to chat about their involvement in Sonic Team's *Samba De Amigo*. As it turns out, thanks to some behind the scenes manoeuvring at their record label, our arrival in their dressing room is the first they've even heard of it…

The band's version of Aha's '80s hit *Take On Me* is one of the stand-out tracks in *Samba De Amigo* and, if you've had the chance to play it, you'll probably know the tune quite well – the big rock 'n' roll ending is one of the most satisfying moments of the game. So, having filled the boys in on what it's all about, it's with some relief that they seem to like the sound of the game.

"We're all pretty much videogame nerds," admits Tavis, trumpet player with the band. "We're pretty excited to have anything to do with it!," agrees Scott. "I think it's great! We got put in *FIFA 2000* and we were really excited about that, and now we can spread ourselves across all the game systems!" In the meantime, Dreamcast-owning bassist Matt seems to be having trouble with the whole concept. "You mean, you get to play along to our song with the maracas, then?" he asks, shaking his head ruefully. "That's so rad! At least, if the people here tonight start shaking their hands about, we'll know they're practising for the maracas…"

Big names on the US ska-punk scene, Reel Big Fish have a small but fanatical following over here. Not bad though, considering they don't even have a record deal in this country. "This is only our second day in the UK," Tavis told us, "but it's going well so far. We don't really know how people found out about us, but it's cool to be selling out venues already."

The band's history is by the book. "We all met through school and we didn't have friends or girlfriends, so we thought music was a good way to find both," says Scott. But the story behind *Take On Me* is, erm… inventive. "Why does everyone say *Take On Me* is a cover song? We wrote it!" claims singer Aaron, somewhat ambitiously. Scott picks up on the theme. "Well, actually we used to play a lot of golf with the guys from Aha… in… in… where is it they're from? Norway! So we said, since we play golf with you guys, next time we play, if you lose we get to do the song." There's a pause and muffled laughter from the rest of the band. "No, we just decided to cover it one day. It was a hit in the '80s and a lot of people liked it. So we did it."

Meanwhile, Matt's obviously been thinking about further ventures "We should have been on *Sega Bass Fishing*! – I love that game!" he says. "We were actually working on an idea for an Internet game kinda like *Bass Fishing*," adds Dan. "But whatever fish you caught, we'd mail you the actual fish! You're laughing like it's a joke but we were seriously considering it for a while. You sign up, you catch stuff online, and then we send you a fish!"

• For more information on Reel Big Fish, check out www.reel-big-fish.com

"…IF THE PEOPLE HERE TONIGHT START SHAKING THEIR HANDS ABOUT, WE'LL KNOW THEY'RE PRACTISING FOR THE MARACAS…"

PHOTOGRAPH: **DAN TRENT**

THIRTY SECONDS TO PROMOTE YOUR GAME: WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

DAN TRENT MEETS PETER BOOTH, THE MAN BEHIND SEGA'S *MSR* ADVERTS...

CORPORATE MESSENGER

OPINION MAY BE divided on the original Dreamcast advertising campaign, but there's one thing everyone seems to agree on: the need for more games footage. After all, what's the point in having the best graphics if you don't show them off at every given opportunity? Enter stage right Peter Booth, Dreamcast-owning creative director at advertising agency Bruce Dunlop Associates and the man behind the *Metropolis Street Racer* TV adverts.

"We were approached initially to do this big, one-off presentation at the Empire cinema in Leicester Square [*ODM* #13]," explains Peter. "Sega liked what we did and asked us to have a look at *Metropolis Street Racer*, and it went from there."

The Dreamcast Première event was a new direction for Peter, whose usual fare is anything from adverts for clients such as Channel 5 to trailers for feature films like *Scream*. "I am a gamer, though," he told us. "I've got a PlayStation and a Dreamcast, but time is short and unfortunately I don't get to play as often as I'd like. I'm a big driving game fan, though, and I've been looking at *Shenmue* a bit recently."

As a gamer, Peter sees the importance of including actual games footage in the adverts he makes. "I think Sega are probably right to [now] focus on showing games footage. It's like saying 'Don't buy it as a lifestyle accessory, just look – aren't the games fantastic, doesn't it look wonderful...?'" And the fact that it looks so wonderful was really exploited to the full in the *Metropolis Street Racer* advert. "You can play with reality and games footage quite seamlessly, although we had a few ideas at the beginning with trying out captions to explain what the game is about, but it just fell flat," says Peter. "In the end it was about stripping it down to its bare bones and trying to convey the excitement."

Having recently completed a *Virtua Tennis* TV advert for the Spanish market, Peter is keen to keep up the involvement with Dreamcast. "We're in the process of making an advert for *Vanishing Point* [see page 58], so we'll have to see what happens..."

"IT WAS ABOUT STRIPPING IT DOWN TO ITS BARE BONES AND TRYING TO CONVEY THE EXCITEMENT"

○ THE HOTTEST GAMES ○ THE COOLEST KIT ○ THE WACKIEST WEBSITES

pcgear

for the PC generation

Out now

NEW!

△ Some of the text in is still in Japanese at the moment, unfortunately. D'oh!

△ Vyse has freedom to explore wherever he is.

△ First boss Antonio is quite a mean bugger.

△ The bulk of the game is spent aboard your own flying ship in the rather impressive skies of Arcadia.

SKIES OF ARCADIA

Take to the skies and do battle in this potentially epic adventure. **STEVE KEY** is looting the high, er, skies as an Air Pirate

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **APRIL**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **OVERWORKS**

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- You control your character's personality
- Huge game world
- Giant flying ships to pilot
- Detailed battle sequences

IMAGINE IF LIFE WERE like the normal everyday adventures the main characters of role-playing games endured. For a start we'd all wear the same clothes for weeks on end – even sleep in them – and if we ever got ill or poorly, all it would take to cure these ailments would be a drop of holy water or a mystical apple. It'd be perfectly okay to walk into any town, stroll into people's houses and start rummaging through their drawers with them sitting next to you. You'd never need to take a dump (there are never any toilets anyway) and you'd never actually be killed – just knocked out before coming round again with the help of the aforementioned water/apples. Easy life. While *Skies of Arcadia* will have the same basic elements as most role-playing games, the developers hope that the blend of new ideas and the huge storyline they've created will take this type of game to a new and improved level.

With *Grandia II* (see last issue's preview, *ODM* #16) also waiting in the wings, *Skies of Arcadia* will have some tough competition when it's eventually released. But, as its Japanese development team Overworks told us, this will be a complex and intricate title that should distance itself enough from more traditional RPGs.

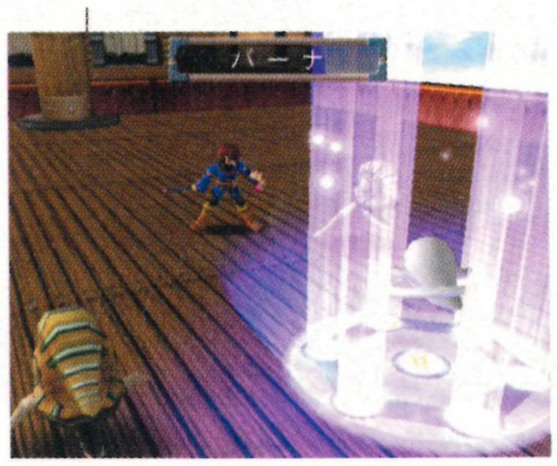
"We've tried to structure the game so that each task becomes an adventure in itself," says an Overworks spokesman, "so you'll always discover something new no matter what you're doing. And, later on in the game, you'll discover that if you hadn't completed a certain task or talked to a certain person, you'll be at a serious disadvantage! It's important to be aware of everything all the time."

PUT 'EM UP!

The fight sequences and battle system will be key in enticing those who have never before played an RPG and pleasing those who are hardened veterans. There will be so many aspects to consider when entering a battle that it'll require extreme concentration and awareness on your part. Not only will you have to think about what attacks to use, but also how high your Spirit Bar is and what type of enemy you're attacking. Confused? Then let Overworks elaborate. "The Spirit Bar represents your party's morale and can raise or lower rapidly depending on influences within the game. For example, if your party are

△ Aika will sometimes get close to enemies rather than attack from long range.

△ Vyse and Aika go for the Raw Moon Stone.



△ Some enemies attack you then run! Cowards!

△ The Blue Rogues show they don't have any underarm hair.

"THE GAME WAS INFLUENCED A GREAT DEAL BY PIRATE MOVIES"

defeating a monster with ease, the Spirit Bar will raise itself." Conversely, if a battle is taking ages it won't go up so quickly.

Normally in RPGs, magic spells or special attacks can only be cast once the character has enough Magic Points (MP). However, all spells in *Skies Of Arcadia* will use up only one MP, with their quality being determined by the amount of Spirit Points (SP) they take up. The higher the Spirit Rating, the more damage it'll do. "Certain spells require a certain amount of Spirit Points to cast and this brings a huge element of strategy into your battles," Overworks told us.

It won't end there either. Throughout the game, characters will come across items called Moon Stones. There will be six different coloured Moon Stones, each representing an element such as fire or ice. Once a Moon Stone is found, a player will be able to change the colour of his or her weapon to reflect that Moon Stone. You'll start the game with two Moon Stones already in your possession which, according to Overworks, will play a vital part in your development.

"By selecting a different colour Moon Stone you can gain experience and learn new magic related to that stone. In other words, if you choose the red Moon Stone to begin with, you'll learn fire-based magic during the first few fights. However, if you choose the green Moon Stone first, you'll learn recovery magic instead, allowing you to stay alive for longer during tough battles."

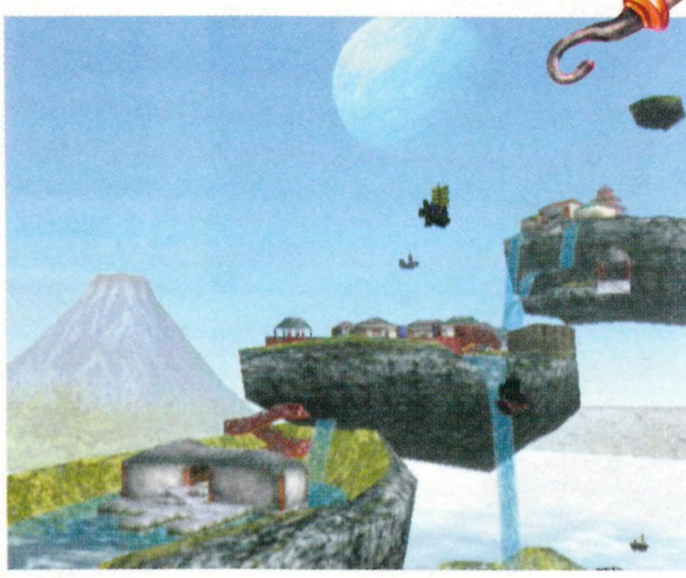
This will then open up a whole new type of tactical element, because certain Moon Stone-enhanced attacks will work better on specific creatures. It'll be down to you to pay attention to the colour of the enemy you're battling against. "By selecting which Moon Stone you use," the spokesman added, "you can determine the style you want to fight with."

WHEN THE SHIP GOES DOWN

Most RPGs are influenced by similar titles and, as *Skies Of Arcadia*'s developers told us, they're also prone to getting immersed in huge game worlds themselves. "We were big fans of the *Final Fantasy* series and also found that *Pokémon* was surprisingly enjoyable." They were also quite forthcoming when quizzed about where the original concept for *Skies of Arcadia* came from. "The game was influenced a great deal by children's adventure books like *Treasure Island*, or novels about voyages. Also pirate movies – it's easy to see ▷

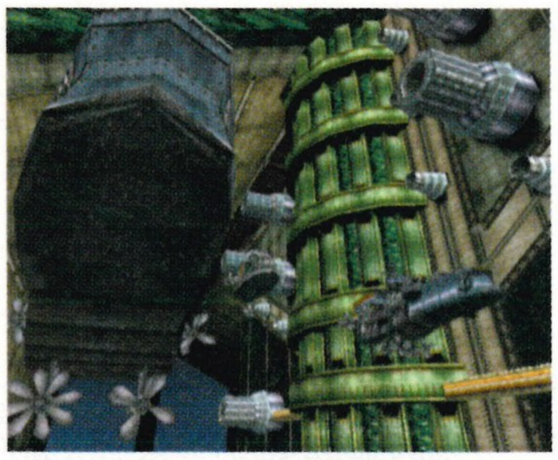
△ The ship battles look incredibly impressive! Watching all those pirate movies has really paid off.

△ Playing games with the local kids increases your Swashbuckler rating.



△ There's no shortage of space to park your boat around here.

△ The Black Pirates are the evil Air Pirates. Your crew – the Blue Rogues – are good.



△ Don't expect to see levels like this until you're deep into the adventure.

▷ the voyage aspect in the game."

Indeed it is, because as well as land battles and exploration stages, the bulk of the remaining gameplay will take place aboard your own flying ship and in the skies of Arcadia. "You'll see that there are many islands with different cultures and mysterious ancestries to discover," Overworks' spokesman explained. "We did a lot of research about environment and historical heritages, and it helped us in creating the game."

You'll have control of a small vessel that will let you get from island to island at the start. Initially, the craft will be limited in what you're able to do, but that's where the exploration aspect will come in. "Basically, you need a ship to navigate from place to place," explained the developers. "It's during this time that you get to fly your ship and meet new people, exchange items, battle other ships and weird monsters."

RECRUITMENT AGENCY

Obviously, the ship will start out quite small and weak, but as you progress and meet other people, they'll be more inclined to come and join you. "There are nearly 300 characters that appear in the game. Those who influence the story are called the 'Crew' and if you can make those characters become a member of your crew you can improve the ability of your ship."

However, the actions of Vyse (the main character in *Skies Of Arcadia*) during the course of the game will have a dramatic effect on how people react to him. At various points during play, when Vyse is asked a question or needs to react to a challenge, for example, two or three possible answers or solutions will appear. If the correct answer is chosen, his Swashbuckler rating will rise – the higher it is, the more trusting he'll be towards strangers. As Overworks told us, to get a high Swashbuckler rating, Vyse will need to be brave and make sensible decisions as well as going in with all guns blazing. If people trust Vyse, he'll persuade them to join the Blue Rogues – the name of his crew – and become an Air Pirate. Recruiting the right people will change the status of the ship and help create entire new sections.

"If you can get a good, skilled sailor, the speed of the ship will increase. And if a gunner joins you in the ship, the accuracy when shooting an enemy vessel will increase. Moreover, you can also get your own island as your secret base. If you have certain crewmembers, they'll build shops and houses – for example, if you can get a chef at your base they'll build a restaurant on your island."

Having people's trust will not always be enough to recruit new people to your mission, though. "How you meet the Crews and how you get them on your side varies," say Overworks. "Some charge a ridiculous price, some you may have to visit many times until they eventually give in, or sometimes you'll need to help them out with specific tasks." The programmers hope this will also add to the potential replay value of *Skies Of Arcadia*, as you'll be able to read a log at the end of the game to see who did or didn't join your crew, and play again to try and persuade them. At least, that's what's happened in Japan and America, where the game has already gone down extremely well.

This, Overworks assured us, is only half the story of *Skies of Arcadia*. Once people actually have the chance to sit down and play, the developers hope they'll quickly come to realise the size of the title and the amount of thought gone into creating an entertaining story. "The main concept was to create an enjoyable game that would be very rewarding to the player. Many of the main elements evolved with time – like the battle sequences with the ships – but other elements such as the fighting system and environments were there from the beginning." The early preview version we've been treated to only begins to scratch the surface of these

ideas, but to truly grasp the full magnitude of *Skies of Arcadia* it will require some serious sessions in front of the TV. "There are enough elements in the game to keep a player happy for well over 50 hours," Overworks' spokesman told us cheerfully. "But we'd hope that to be the case, seeing as it took a long time to develop. There are many original features within the game, like flying through 3D-rendered skies, fighting with enemy ships, and many movie sequences. All these features took a long time to implement."

But as we mentioned briefly earlier on, *Skies of Arcadia* will have to be something really special if it's to end up in your Dreamcast at home. The fantastic *Phantasy Star Online* (see page 8) will be in shops any time now and the other heavyweight RPG to emerge in the first quarter of 2001 – *Grandia II* – is also nearing completion. All three will be different in their own way, but which will stand out as the leader of the pack? Only time will tell. Watch out for a full review of *Skies Of Arcadia* next issue.

CHARGE 'N BLAST

Stand by for a blaster from the past!
ED LOMAS gets charged up

△ **Creepy big-toothed fish on the ocean floor. Blast 'em!**

THE LOWDOWN

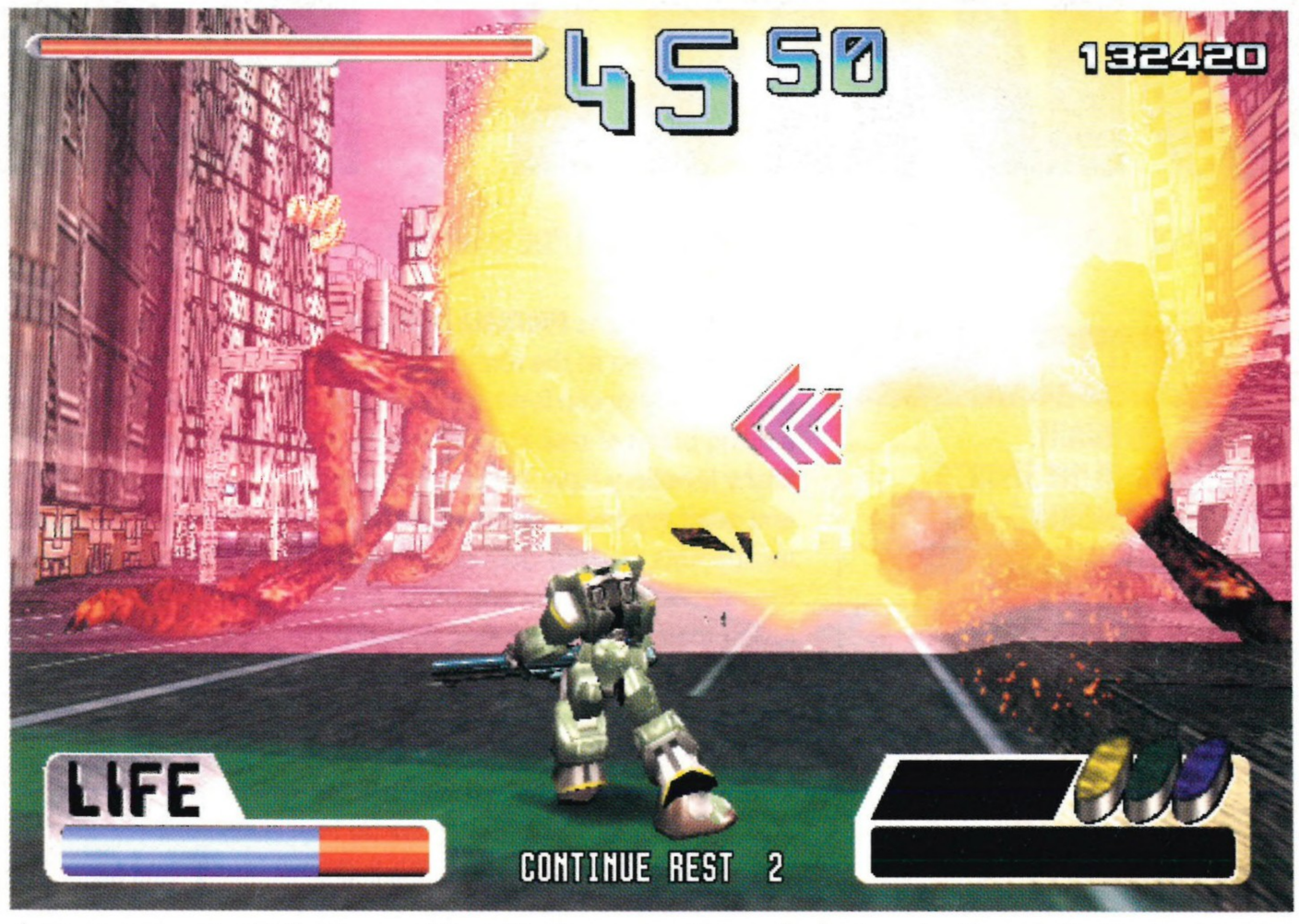
DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **TBC**
DEVELOPER: **SIMS**

DEVELOPED BY THE division of Sega responsible for bringing us *Sega Bass Fishing* (*ODM* #1, 7/10), *Charge 'N Blast* was originally created with the company's Naomi arcade system in mind. Having never seen an arcade release, it's instead been translated in its entirety ready for Dreamcast.

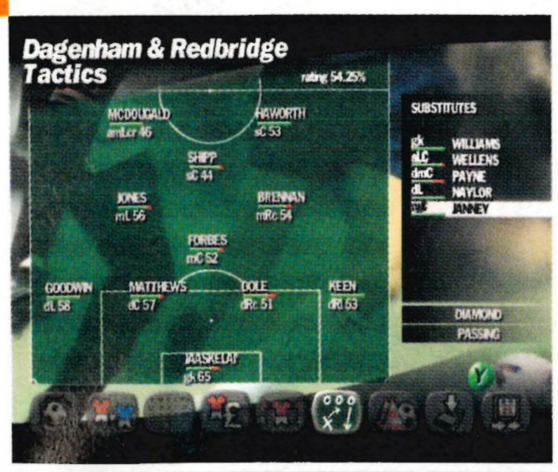
Charge 'N Blast's arcade heritage is extremely obvious, even at this stage – it's set to be a pure, all-out action shooting game with some of the oldest skool gameplay. There will be big monsters, and it'll be your job to shoot them all as quickly as possible – the faster and more efficiently you do it, the more points you'll get. Simple stuff, see?

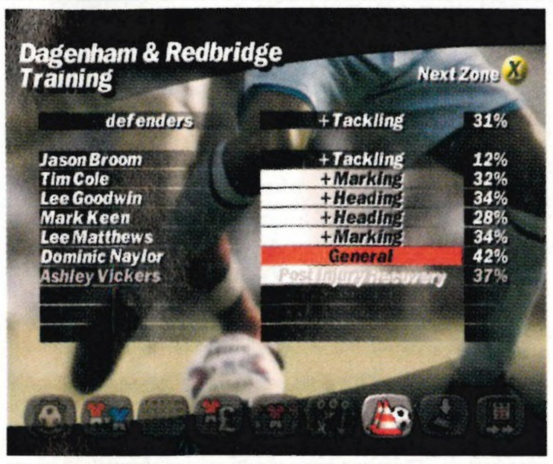
That's the *Blast* bit of the game's title covered, but what about the *Charge* bit? Well, each of the three main characters will have a choice of three weapons that can be chosen during the game simply by tapping the X, Y or B buttons. Once a weapon is selected, you'll have to wait for it to charge up to full power before you can shoot with the A button. Each weapon will have its own strengths and weaknesses, with larger, powerful guns taking longer to charge than smaller, less damaging ones. Choosing the right weapon for the situation, and reacting to the rapidly advancing hordes of enemies will keep you on your toes. Thankfully, you won't have to worry where you're going, as you only have to slide your character from left to right using the trigger buttons.

Charge 'N Blast is about as simple as games come, but it's already got the look and feel of the kind of title you might find in the back of an arcade and end up spending all day on. We'll let you know how it stands up to extended play in a review soon.



△ **The first stage, the brilliantly named 'City Of Nest', sees you taking out loads of oversized insects. Blast 'em!**





△ It was a game of two halves. Surprisingly.

△ Well, there's no harm in trying, is there? We are all entitled to dream a little…

GIANT KILLERS

The world of dodgy excuses, lame signings and obscene wages is coming to your home. **STEVE KEY** has his sheepskin jacket at the ready

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **FEBRUARY**
PUBLISHER: **ONLINE SPORTS**
DEVELOPER: **SMOKING GUN**

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the first football management game on the Dreamcast
- All the real players
- Every league plus some non-league teams
- Alternate skill levels change style of play

THE STEREOTYPICAL FOOTBALL MANAGER is sadly no longer at the forefront of our game. Ron Atkinson is probably the last of a dying breed of managers who wear the flashy jewellery, have a year-round tan and quaff expensive cigars. Nowadays, it's mostly suits, training clothes and blaming the referee rather than one-liners and losing their temper. Smoking Gun, the team behind *Giant Killers* are hoping to create a new generation of Big Ron wannabes with their first Dreamcast game.

There are many different football management games, but they are on PC, with a few on other consoles. This is the first to appear on Dreamcast and, as Fergus McNeill, managing director of Smoking Gun tells us, it's not so much bringing a new style of game to the machine that's a problem, but ensuring it's believable.

"Sometimes it seems that everything about making football management games is difficult, but one of the greatest challenges is creating a game that behaves as the real-life leagues behave," explains Fergus. "It's impossible for any title to get it 100 per cent accurate because football's full of surprises – all we can do is create something that feels 'right' when you play it."

The basics of *Giant Killers* will be as follows: you'll be able to choose any team from the Premiership, through the Nationwide League and even into the Nationwide Conference. Then it'll be down to you to manage the team's fortunes by changing or altering tactics, training, and your starting skill point. The Easy setting

"THE PROGRAMMERS HOPE THE *REAL* FANS WILL PLUMP FOR THE HARDEST OPTION"

△ **Trying to attract Premiership stars to the Conference won't work at all.**

△ **Read results aloud in a posh, Pools-type voice.**

will give you £25million to spend instantly and Medium will give all other clubs – as well as your own – the huge windfall. The programmers hope that *real* fans will plump straight for the hardest option, which will offer no financial backing whatsoever. As Fergus also points out, those who have never played this type of game before will have no problems getting to grips with *Giant Killers*. "It can be rather daunting to play a management game for the first time. We've tried to help new users wherever possible, such as our assistant manager who'll suggest various teams and formations for you."

Smoking Gun have decided to use their own experience as football fans to make a believable simulation, rather than a relatively worthless 'celebrity' endorsement. With the development team being such big footie fans, their conflicting opinions have unsurprisingly lead to some piss-taking in the office. "Because we're based in Southampton," explains Fergus, "certain unkind individuals in our office have suggested that the local professionals should be asking *us* for help!"

There will be no actual 'football' to watch in *Giant Killers* – instead the game will constantly print up descriptions of what's going on in the game, like saves, goals, bookings and sendings off. You'll be able to change the level of detail in these descriptions if you want to as well. "It's a game that won't put you off football management titles! It's very easy to get into, and you can play a lot of football in a short session," enthuses Fergus. We'll be able to give you the full lowdown next month.

IRON ACES 1942

Dust off the 'tally-ho' clichés. **DAN TRENT** takes a look at a brand new flight sim

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **TBC**
DEVELOPER: **GLOBAL ARTS**

FLIGHT SIMULATIONS ARE never the easiest games to pull off successfully on a console but, by harking back to the days when air combat was for real men with extravagant facial hair and Tom Cruise was but a glint in his granddaddy's eye, *Iron Aces 1942* hopes to be the one pulling the victory roll.

With over 20 real planes from all the major players in the Second World War to choose from, there should be plenty to keep the plane buffs among you happy. Fighters, heavy bombers, dive bombers and even early jet fighters can all be used according to the mission you're on, and tasks will take in everything from reconnaissance to bombing enemy installations and lots more besides. You'll be supervised in all your endeavours by a watchful character called Baker who'll be available to give you advice and hints as you progress through the game.

As well as the mission-based mode, expect to see a versus mode which is there if you just want to have a bit of a scrap against one of your mates or a squadron of computer-controlled foes. This mode will also give you instant access to all the aircraft, although you'll still need to unlock them in the main game to use them in the missions proper.

The version we've seen indicates nothing especially pioneering but rather a straightforward attempt to make a flight simulator that's fun to play rather than necessarily realistic. The planes all look fairly solid and are accurate representations of the real thing and it's simple to get to grips with – something other flight sims often struggle with. We'll be bringing you a full review very soon.

△ **Planes will have to be chosen according to the mission and there'll be more than 20 to unlock.**

△ **Dive! Dive! There were no such things as laser-guided bombs in 1942 so you have to be accurate.**

△ **Act out your own Pearl Harbour for several million dollars less than the film is costing...**

△ Don't finish the level too far from the Precioustone, or... Ow!

△ Knuckles meets a stoned fish in the Battle mode. Battered cod!

△ Sonic becomes paranoid and believes he's seeing large squid.

△ Sonic meddles with evil forces and produces a... six! Oh no!

△ Sonic is flown across the board by a dolphin with wings. Hmmm.

SONIC SHUFFLE

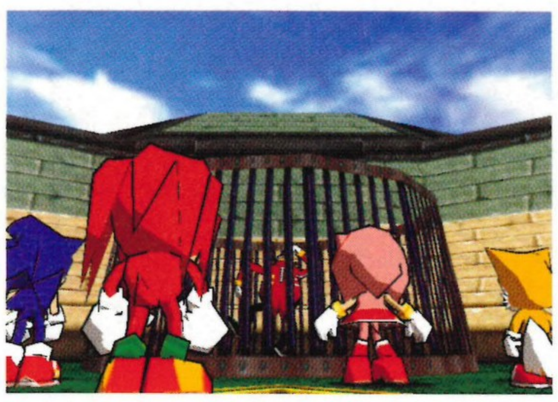
Bored of videogames? Well have you ever considered videoboardgames? Professional lounge lizard **DYLAN DAVIES** looks for the dice

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- A board game for the 21st century!
- Sonic and friends are in it
- Funky 'cell shading' graphics
- Loads of multiplayer mini-games



△ Look at the sexy cartoon graphics.

BOARD GAMES CARRY emotionally catastrophic memories for many a person. Numerous Christmas days traditionally ruined by siblings throwing uncontrollable fits because they lost Park Lane, grans unable to stop shaking long enough to play Operation and quiet mates becoming disturbingly Nazi-like during Risk competitions. Yes, the board game is a social ill, and luckily Sega reckon they've come up with the antidote – *Sonic Shuffle*.

Sonic Shuffle is a party game. It's designed to be played by up to four players – much like your preferred board game but on your TV screen, so no tipping over the board in a fit of rage here. As Sega's Mark Fisher told us, "Some features of a standard non-digital board game have been carried over in concept to *Sonic Shuffle*, but that's where the similarity ends. With five distinct boards, up to eight characters to choose from and an amazing 3D interactive graphical style, there is nothing quite like *Sonic Shuffle*."

Graphics-wise, the game really does look grand, as Sega have implemented the cartoon effect known as 'cell shading', which was used so successfully in *Jet Set Radio*.

The game itself is designed to be very simple. The main action takes place on a 3D board on which you compete with the other players to reach the 'Precioustone' (a gem placed randomly on the game board) before the other players do. Instead of dice, the players are given a collection of playing cards numbered from one to six at the start of each round, hence the *Shuffle* of the title. Players can steal cards from other players and place bad spells to hinder their progress. Along the way, players will also encounter turn-based combat with a menagerie of Dr Eggman's evil creatures – if you meet one of these monsters you must produce a higher card to beat them.

Instead of plastic playing pieces, you can choose one of four *Sonic* characters to begin with: Sonic himself, Knuckles, Tails or Amy. Each has their own attribute that will aid your navigation around the five 3D boards. Variety should never be too far away either, as we're promised 49 multiplayer mini-games for the characters to compete in along the way.

If you're Ainsley Harriet or just don't have any friends for another reason, you needn't worry. "The game does include artificial intelligence characters if you're playing alone, but *Sonic Shuffle* really comes into its own when playing with your mates", Mark pointed out.

By not being a hardcore maniac game, Sega feel they are gently reaching out to the non-gamer more and more. "One of the key elements to any successful board game is the simplicity

△ **The pre-argumentative team, at the start.**

of its play," Mark went on. "*Sonic Shuffle* allows both experienced gamers and those new to the Dreamcast to compete on equal terms. Not to forget it's a great game to play as you and some mates make your way through a shed-load of Stella". Positive words, and a sign that Sega are definitely at one with their key audience – alcoholics!

Unfortunately, Sega have said that this is one game that isn't going to have online capabilities, due to development decisions being made by the US of A – the Stetson-wearing wing of Sega – deciding that they didn't want the option in this type of game. "Our hands are tied!," Sega Europe told us. That never stopped Houdini though, did it?

We'll be spending plenty of time with *Sonic Shuffle* over the coming month, and should have a full review ready in time for the next issue of *Official Dreamcast Magazine*.

CHAMPIONSHIP SURFER

Here's a game that really is going to, er, make waves. **ED LOMAS** gets on board

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **MATTEL INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **KROME STUDIOS**

IN THE OLDEN DAYS, 'surfing' didn't mean browsing the Internet looking desperately for something of interest – it meant wiggling around while standing on a big bit of polystyrene in the ocean. With the modern version of surfing already so popular on Dreamcast, it's not surprising to find a recreation of 'classic' surfing on its way as well.

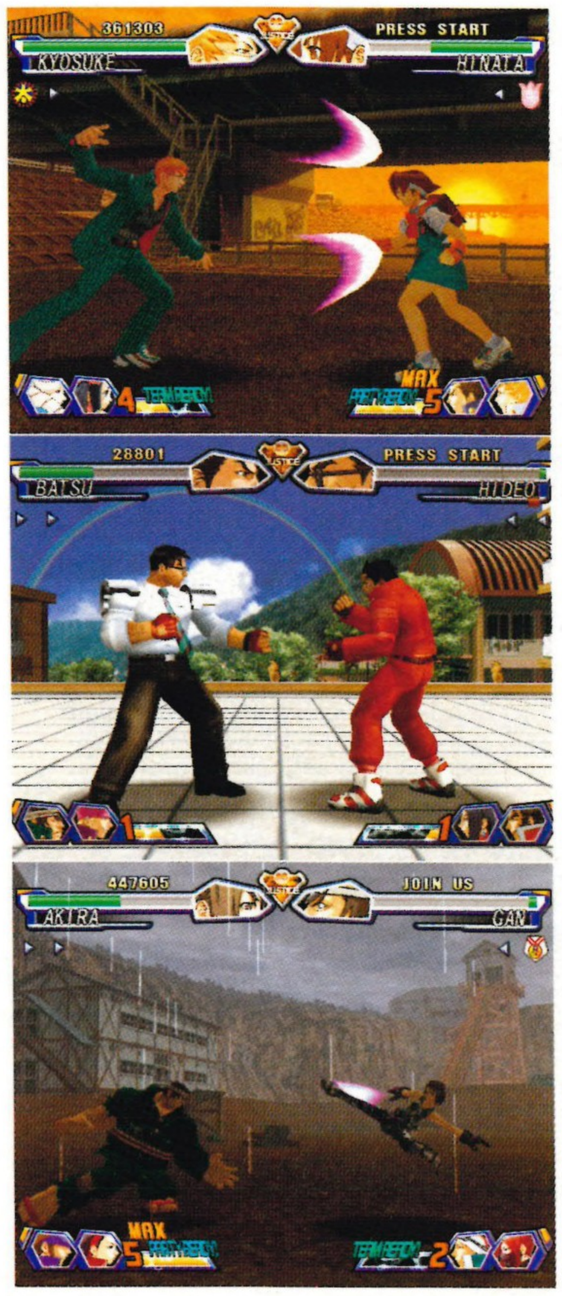
Designed by a bunch of surfing fanatic developers based in Australia, complete with the help of world champion surfer Richo, *Championship Surfer* is setting out to be the first decent simulation of one of the coolest sports around. The idea is – unsurprisingly – to watch enormous waves building, then get your timing just right so that you're able to ride them, pulling off tricks on the way.

There will be ten different beaches to surf off, each with its own unique type of wave to master. Real-life surfers are also being featured, each with their own set of boards and individual surfing attributes. As well as attempting to 'ride the tube' for as long as possible, pulling off tricks like rios, snaps, barrels and aerials will earn you valuable points. Do well in the various tournaments to earn extra boards, riders, and even a full-circuit championship contest.

We've also had a look at an odd mode where up to four players can surf at once, aiming to collect bonuses floating in the water while avoiding explosive mines. *Championship Surfer*'s looking and feeling pretty basic right now, but hopefully the finished game will be a lot tighter. We'll find out when we review the game next month.

△ **Yes, there's a fair bit of work to be done on the graphics before they're up to Dreamcast standard. Or Saturn standard...**

△ Each character has their own bizarre fighting technique, such as Ran the photography student who uses her camera to attack opponents!



△ They may not be interactive, but the environments look highly detailed.

PROJECT JUSTICE

High-school kids battle each other for justice and bragging rights. **ANTHONY HOLDEN** loiters in the schoolyard, looking for a fight

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Quirky characters
- Unique team battle system
- Hilariously OTT attacks
- Brawling schoolkids!

MAYBE WE'RE GETTING OLD and haven't been spending enough time in the arcade, but it seems like the beat 'em up genre has slowed down somewhat lately. A few years back, a shiny new brawler – usually offering only the most superficial variations on the theme – seemed to crop up every couple of weeks. Now the bar has been raised so many times it's definitely more a case of quality than quantity. It also means that beat 'em up masters Capcom can afford to relax a little and breathe more character and imagination into their titles without fear of losing ground, and this is just what they appear to be doing with the forthcoming *Project Justice*.

There's been a confusing name change along the way, but *Project Justice* is the long-awaited sequel to a pair of underrated beat 'em ups that appeared on the PlayStation a couple of years ago – *Rival Schools 1* and *2*. Even though they looked a bit shabby, these games won a lot of fans with their many inventive features and sheer likeabilty. The background to the fighting action was in itself a master stroke: six rival schools, each represented by teams of three top fighting students and staff (yep, the principal got in on the action too), slugging it out in a tag-team battle to be the toughest school in the 'hood. There was also an obscure plot of sinister secret fighting societies and seditious political intrigue, but for most of us it was just a bit of back-to-school biffo with heaps of great characters. Aside from the predictably vast improvement in graphics, *Project Justice* promises to contain all of these quality ideas and a few more besides.

The game's biggest selling point will undoubtedly be its brilliantly quirky assembly of schoolyard characters, including all the established Rivals plus a few new faces. The kendo teacher, the admin officer and the photography student will be there, along with a bunch of sporty types like the swimmer and baseball player, and a few punks, bullies and nice girls as well. In the fine tradition of Capcom fighting games, there will be no arm-long lists of special moves and obscure button combinations, just the usual handful of perfectly balanced signature attacks. The fact that coin-op legends like *Street Fighter II* are being played to this day clearly demonstrates the value of this simple, finely tuned approach, which lets you discover your own combos and timings rather than learning them by rote. It also allows you

△ The characters are quirky and likeable…

△ …and the signature attacks vintage Capcom.

to become adept with every character, rather than just one or two – something you'll definitely want to do in *Project Justice*. Each one promises to possess huge amounts of personality, with fighting moves that go well beyond the standard old uppercut and fireball (though these will of course make an appearance). As the swimmer, for example, you'll be able to attack your foe with an assortment of swimming strokes, dives and violent CPR, whereas the student photographer unleashes blinding camera flashes to the face. There will also be super moves using a power-up gauge, including 'team-up' and 'party-up' attacks where one or both of your team-mates jump in for a hilariously over-the-top combined assault. Another new feature is the 'break-up', which randomly occurs when a party-up attack is attempted, giving the opponent a few seconds to land a telling blow and prevent a crazy free-for-all on his buddy.

All this mad brawling is rendered in beautiful 3D. Capcom plan to incorporate a Story mode to the proceedings, with multiple story strands – each playable only by one of the six school teams. To uncover the whole plot you'll have to complete the Story mode with each school – a promising idea which will hopefully add a good dose of replay value. Other modes including Arcade, Versus, Tournament and Training will be available, but whether any online features are implemented remains to be seen. Things look to be shaping up nicely for this, er, project, so stay tuned for a full review in coming months, and don't hang up your old school tie just yet.

NBA HOOPZ

Gravity-defying basketball is back on Dreamcast. **DYLAN DAVIES** buys a new vest

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**

△ The chaps are baffled. Shaq has scored a three-pointer and he didn't even leave his Limo.

BASKETBALL TODAY IS GENERALLY played by very tall American gentlemen or skinny English chaps who believe they're 'street' but will never look good in a vest. Well, never mind all you skinny chaps, for you can soon enjoy all the glory without being tall or having to look good in sporting underwear, because Midway are soon to release the follow-up to last year's basketball extravaganza *NBA Showtime: NBA On NBC* (*ODM* #2, 6/10).

Little is known about the fundamental differences between *Hoopz* and *Showtime*, but we're assured that each of the licensed players – and there are hundreds of them – will have their own signature moves. This means Scottie Pippen can hit three-pointers as well as just being able to slam 'em in and Shaq O'Neal can apparently "…power it down on the paint". Why? Whatever that means, a lot of effort has gone into trying to capture every nuance and smell of the NBA to bring the armchair sports fan to life.

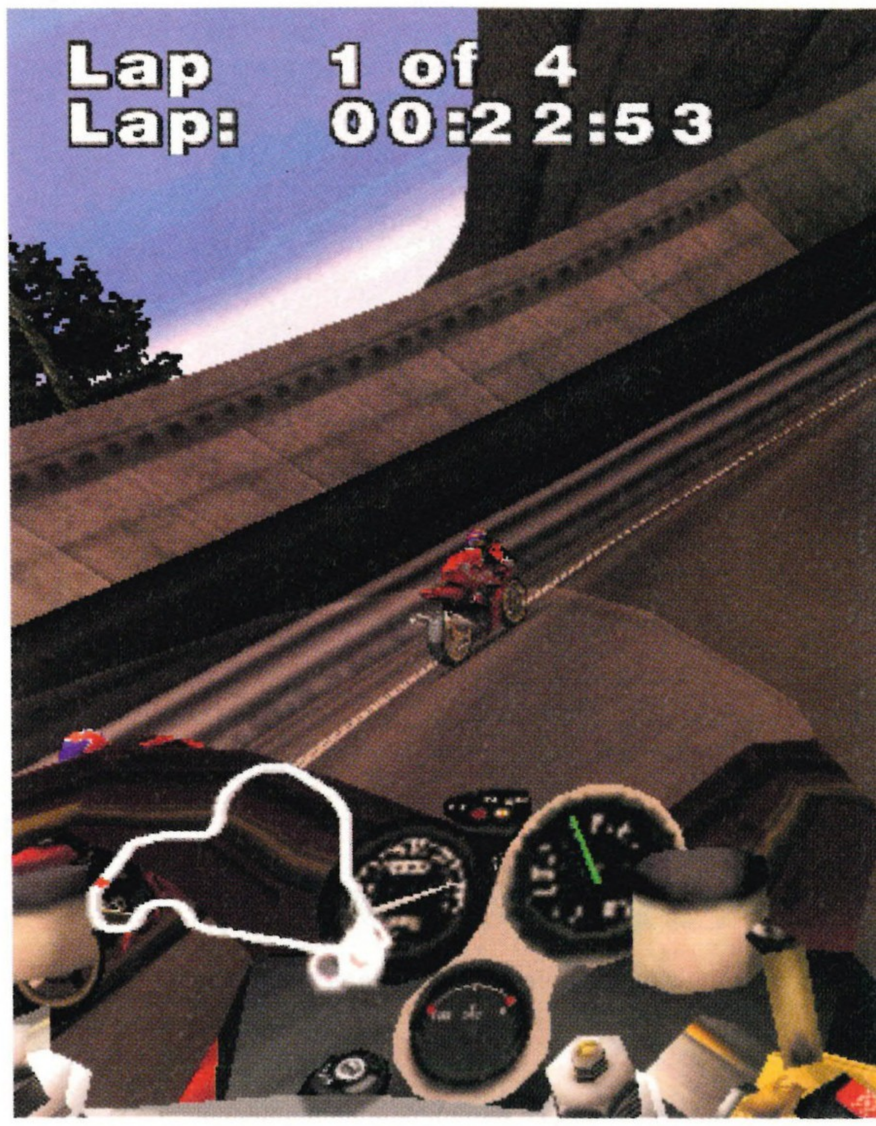
Who can play? Apparently four is too many and two is never enough, because *Hoopz* has taken the three-on-three option of play. This means with three controllers, three friends, three armchairs and three vests, you become a real team! You'll even be able to create a team name, statistics and clothing in the customisation settings. Soon people won't care about your pigeon chest and women will want your sporting thumbs.

The final product will have 500 slam animations for you to show off, unnervingly real player faces (which weren't blinking in our preview version – scary!), full commentary and a huge pile of over-the-top Midway stuff such as players catching fire and the comedic breaking of backboards. We'll find out whether it's all any good or not in the next issue.

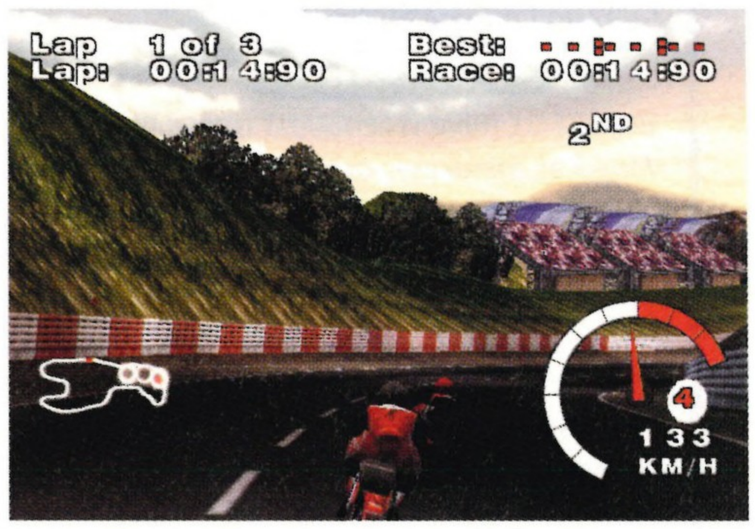
△ Number 3 becomes distressed as his moment is spoiled by the realisation that the ball is glued to the back of his head.

△ Just waiting at the traffic lights, looking cool as ever.

△ Pretty sexy, but no Evil Kneivel designs, sadly.



△ It's a fight to see who can deliver the pizza first.



△ They might look like bicycles, but they go much faster.

△ The despatch riders in hot pursuit after he called them 'greasy'.

DUCATI WORLD

Had enough of the boring old stability of four wheels? Time to make the switch to two! **DAN THORNTON** takes a rather wobbly look

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
DEVELOPER: **ATD**

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Loads of classic Ducatis to ride
- Gamble with your customised bikes
- Fast, arcade-style handling
- New bikes and parts to buy

△ Wheelies are inevitable with the fast bikes.

ON THE CD

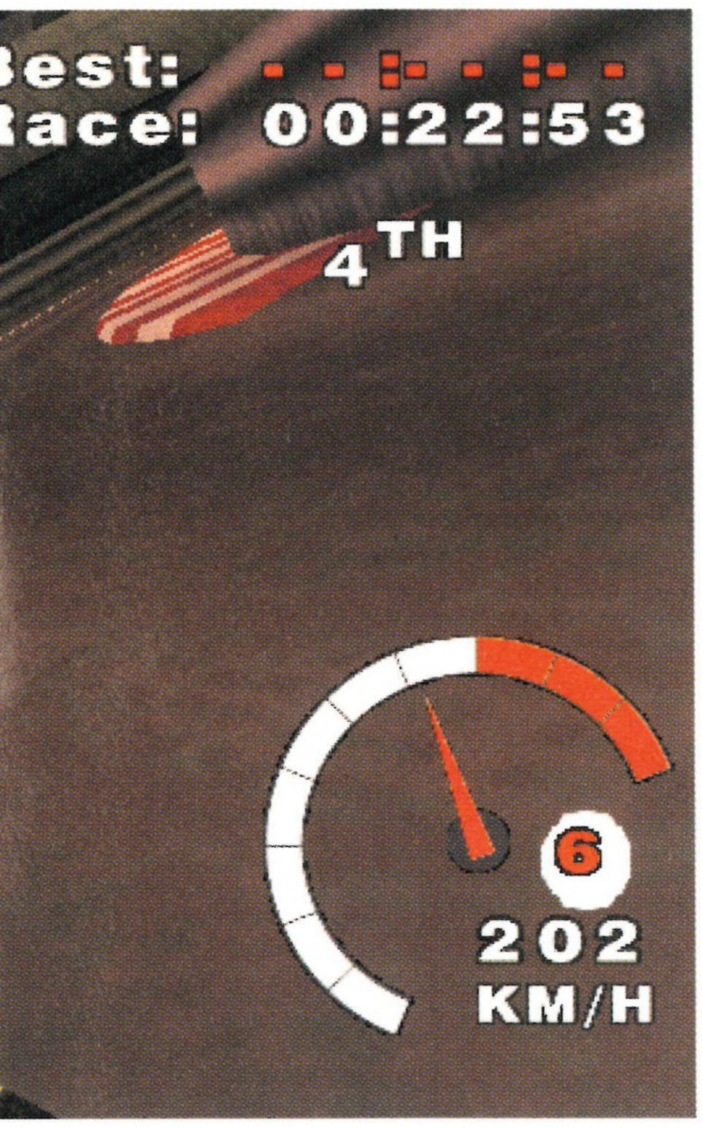
FOR THOSE WHO have no knowledge of motorised bicycles, Italian firm Ducati are the Ferrari of the motorbike world. They've been producing racing and road bikes for over 50 years, but have only now decided to licence a game based on their dream machines. *Ducati World*, developed by Warwickshire-based Attention To Detail, is set to include a variety of bikes spanning the history of the firm. These range from the 1950s Cucciolo with only 3bhp, to the Carl Fogarty 996 World Superbike with a staggering 163bhp – legendary in the last decade of World Superbike racing.

The handling of the bikes will attempt to mix realism and fun. Chris Gibbs, managing director of developers ATD, claims that the first six months of work went into finding the right balance for the handling and that this should result in bikes that handle realistically. He realises the problem of over-simplifying the handling," says Chris. "In most motorbike games you just lean left, lean right, lean left, lean right, and you don't really get the subtleties of being on two wheels," Chris told us. "I like to think that we've got a pretty good balance between playing a game and what it's like to be on a real bike. Certainly that's what most of the initial work was focused on."

The tracks will include a variety of locations, all created especially for the game. Expect fast and challenging neon-lit city streets, races through mountain tunnels, and even an airport circuit. "We've had three developers working on the layouts of the tracks, on the width, the camber, and the chicanes, to make them progressively more difficult," Chris explained.

Eight of the tracks will be available in the Quick Race mode, which will let you progress in an arcade style through the game. You'll be able to choose your bike and track, and then off you go. This is also where the two-player mode will most commonly be used and hopes are high that the split-screen won't slow the game down much. "The frame-rate should be consistently high, never going beneath 30 frames per second," Chris told us, "and in the two-player game we're looking to get the same sort of rate." The promise of being able to beat classic motorcycle anoraks on a souped-up modern machine certainly sounds like it could be fun.

The major part of the game for most people, however, will be the Ducati Life section. This is a career mode, where racing for money can earn you new bikes, parts, and even Ducati leathers and helmets to really look the part. You start this mode with a slow bike, which can have some advantages. "When you do eventually buy the superbikes – the Fogarty replicas – it makes you realise the full performance that they've got",



explains Chris. "It really puts it in perspective when you've ridden the slower bikes."

Some of the most promising events to be included in the game are the one- and two-player challenges. These involve risking either money, or your bike, on the outcome. Lose to a computer opponent, and your expensively tuned and improved bike is taken away from you. Lose to a friend and be prepared never to speak to them again, as they get to keep your pride and joy. The other races will be various one-make series, pitting you against four similar bikes. This will even include the Super Touring-style motorbikes, and the sight of five touring bikes – complete with panniers for their luggage – careering around a tight bend is very promising.

There will also be a variety of places to buy new bikes from, including dealerships and classified ads. Prices will vary, not only from shop to shop, but also over time, so that it might be possible to spot a bargain if you're prepared to keep hunting for it.

While we wait to find out whether the final version of *Ducati* is any good or not, let us all spare a thought for the 'poor', overworked developers at ATD who have been allowed to use real Ducatis to help with the realism. Still, if the finished game can come close to the thrill of actually being on a fast motorbike, then we won't be too bitter. After all, we don't have to pay road tax on a Dreamcast.

CARRIER

Mutated monsters are taking over a huge warship. **STEVE KEY** leads the mission recon

THE LOWDOWN

DUE OUT: **MARCH**
PUBLISHER: **TBC**
DEVELOPER: **JALECO**

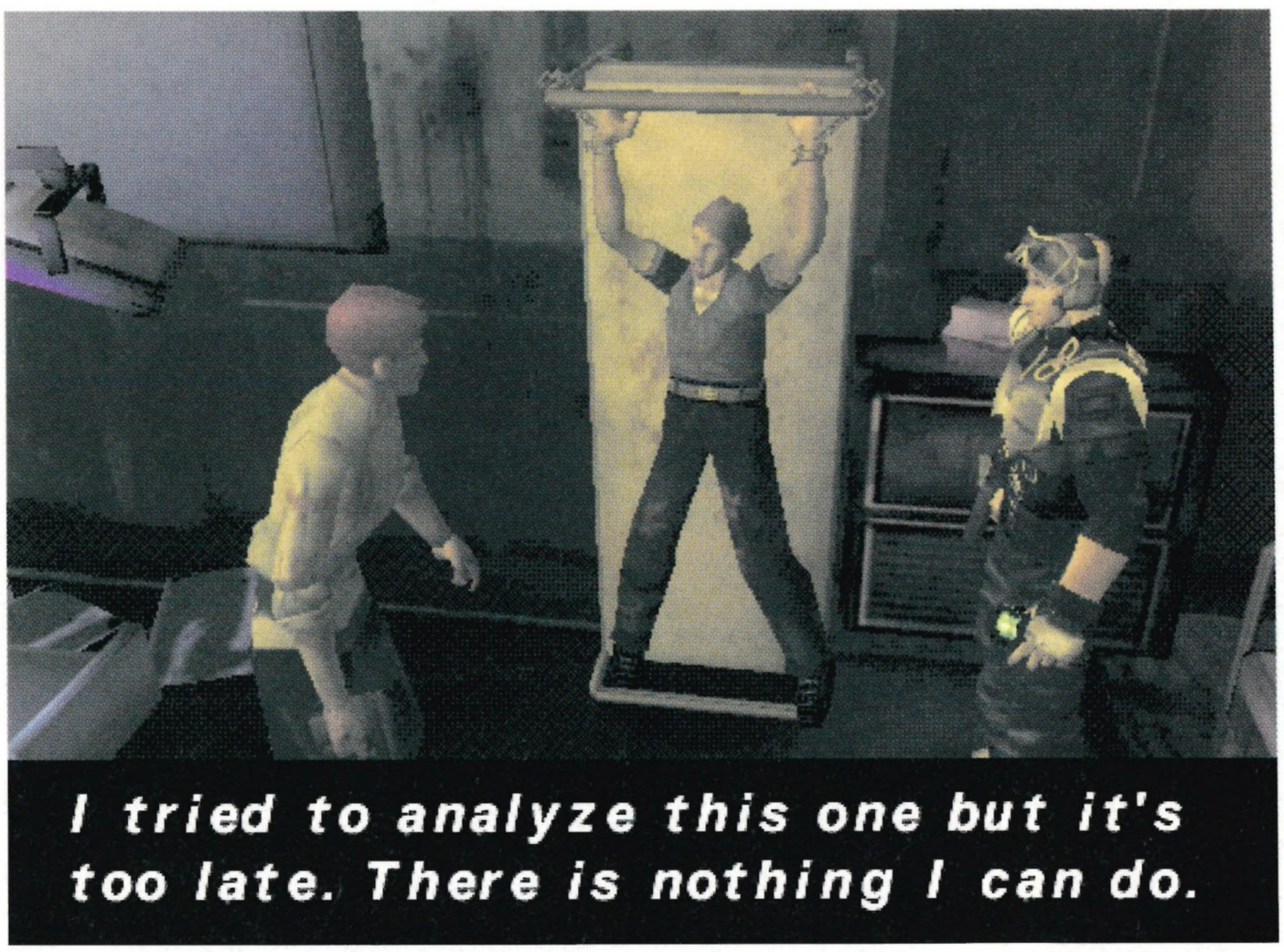
△ **Torsos fall from the ceiling and crawl at you! Grim.**

YOU MAY OR MAY not know this, but *Carrier* has been out in the States and Japan for almost a year now and yet we still haven't seen it in this country. The reason for this is that it's in the slightly dubious position of not yet having a definite European distributor. However, developers Jaleco are confident someone will release it on these shores within the next couple of months.

The basic story of *Carrier* will revolve around a huge warship called the Heimdal. Heading for North America, it is ordered to pick up a mysterious object known as the ARK en route. One of the team that discover the ARK is shot after becoming a paranoid maniac and refusing to be taken into detainment. Then an explosion aboard the ship turns it into a floating mass of zombies and mutants – and nobody knows why.

You'll take control of a rescue team and will have to try to work out what has happened on the vessel. There will be the usual array of gruesome violence as well as a fair degree of exploration and puzzle-solving. But the programmers are hoping that a few new elements will help to give *Carrier* an identity of its own. An item called the Scope will enable the player to check whether humans are indeed still homo sapiens or mutated zombies which need shooting. There will also be some *Predator*-style zombies that will be barely visible without the aid of said Scope.

Now that there are three *Resident Evil* games on Dreamcast, *Carrier* has a lot to be compared with. We'll pass judgement in the next couple of months – as soon as we hear of a definite release date.



△ **A mad scientist and a zombie chained to a bed. Who knows what happens next?**

SEGA

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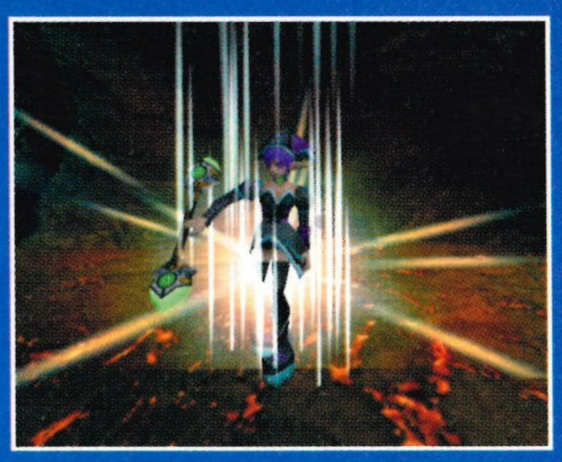

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re:news

THERE'S A WHOLE LOT MORE TO GOING ONLINE THAN BROKEN LINKS, STUPID RUMOURS AND BAD SPELLING

AFTER A YEAR OF MERELY missing out on the occasional interesting-sounding feature in a game, not having your Dreamcast set up online now means missing out on many of the console's most exciting highlights. This issue, for example, we've got reviews of three games designed specifically for playing online with other people – *Phantasy Star Online* (page 8), *Speed Devils Online Racing* (page 68) and *Toy Racer* (page 80) – and the last few months have seen an increasing number of releases in a similar online vein.

But it's not just these games that you're missing out on if you never take your Dreamcast online. Many non-online releases now include excellent online features that need to be tried out to get the maximum from the game. *Samba De Amigo* (*ODM* #15, 8/10), for example – great fun all the way, with extra tunes to earn by doing well in various game modes. But to get your hands on every available tune you need to take the game online, where you can download music from classic Sega games such as *Out Run* and *NiGHTS* to shake along to.

And *Shenmue* (*ODM* #14, 10/10) – yes, it's fun working your way through the adventure itself, but it's a whole lot more so if you use the *Shenmue* Passport disc to go online. As well as having tons more information on the people and places you come across in the game, you can also get hold of extra toys and enter your best mini-game scores into nationwide ranking tables.

Online gaming with Dreamcast has finally reached a point where it's more than just a novelty for a select few to appreciate. It's now an essential part of the Dreamcast experience, and the most exciting happening in the videogame world right now. If you've still not taken the plunge and registered on Dreamarena yet, plug that phone line in and do it right now. Then get online with the rest of us and have the time of your life. Whatever you do, don't go thinking that it's just like playing against friends in the same room, or against computer opponents – there's a whole online gaming culture to discover and get involved with, plus the long-distance ass-kicking of people you've never met before is a surprisingly satisfying experience.

As we've already said in our exclusive review of *Phantasy Star Online*, not using your Dreamcast on the Internet is "like buying a Ferrari and then just using it to do three point turns on your drive." Don't be a fool – take yours out for a spin on the information superhighway and see just how much fun it can be.

Be safe. Be seen,
Ed Lomas, Reviews Editor

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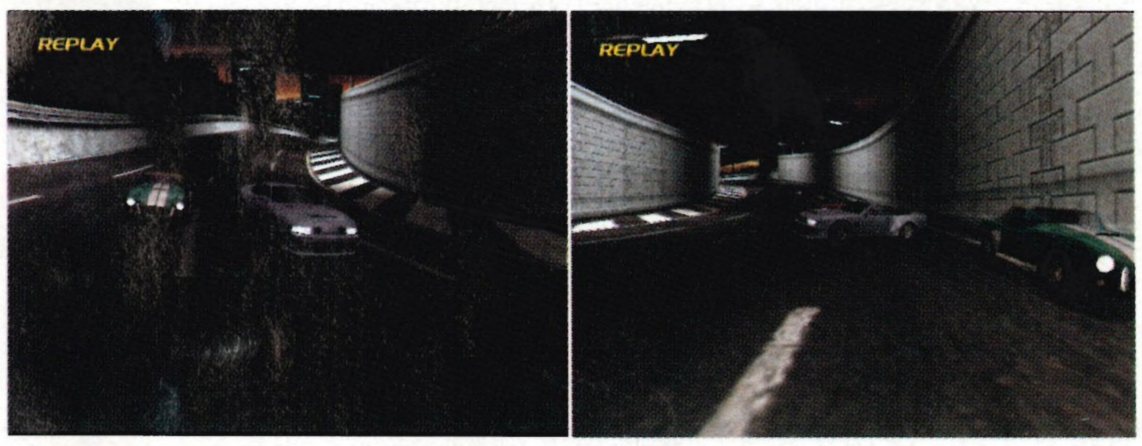
ODM RATINGS

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

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

△ That Jumbo's a little bit close to the ground, don't you think?

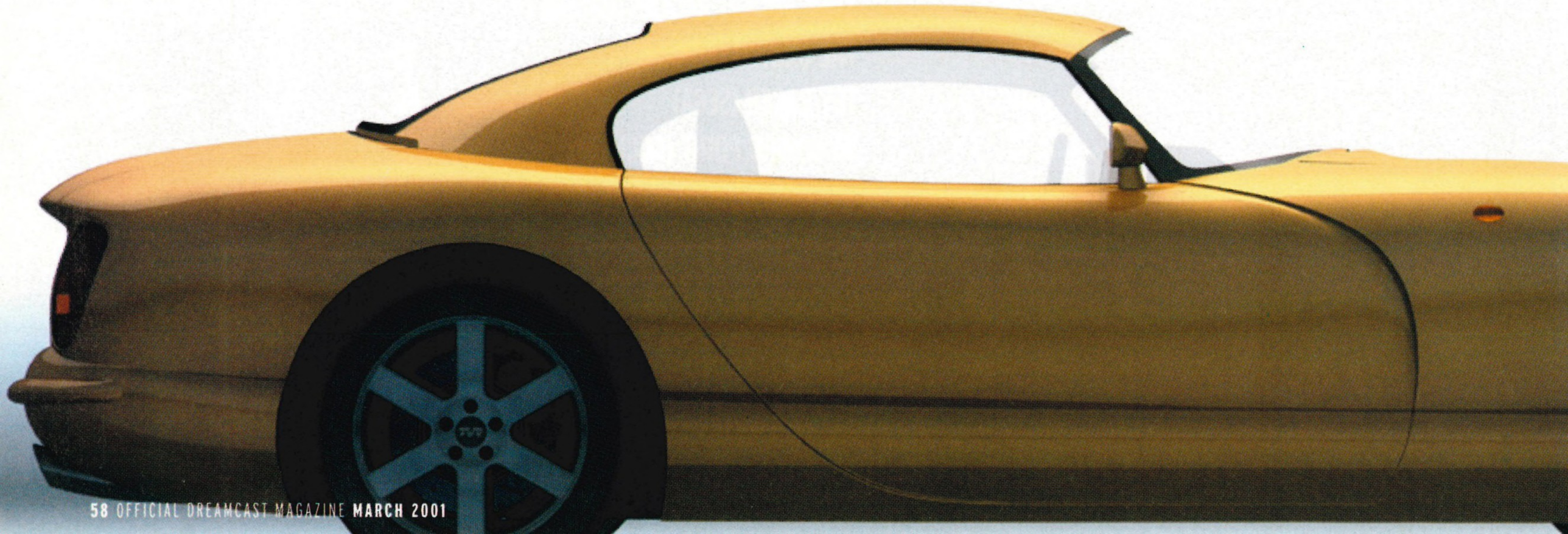


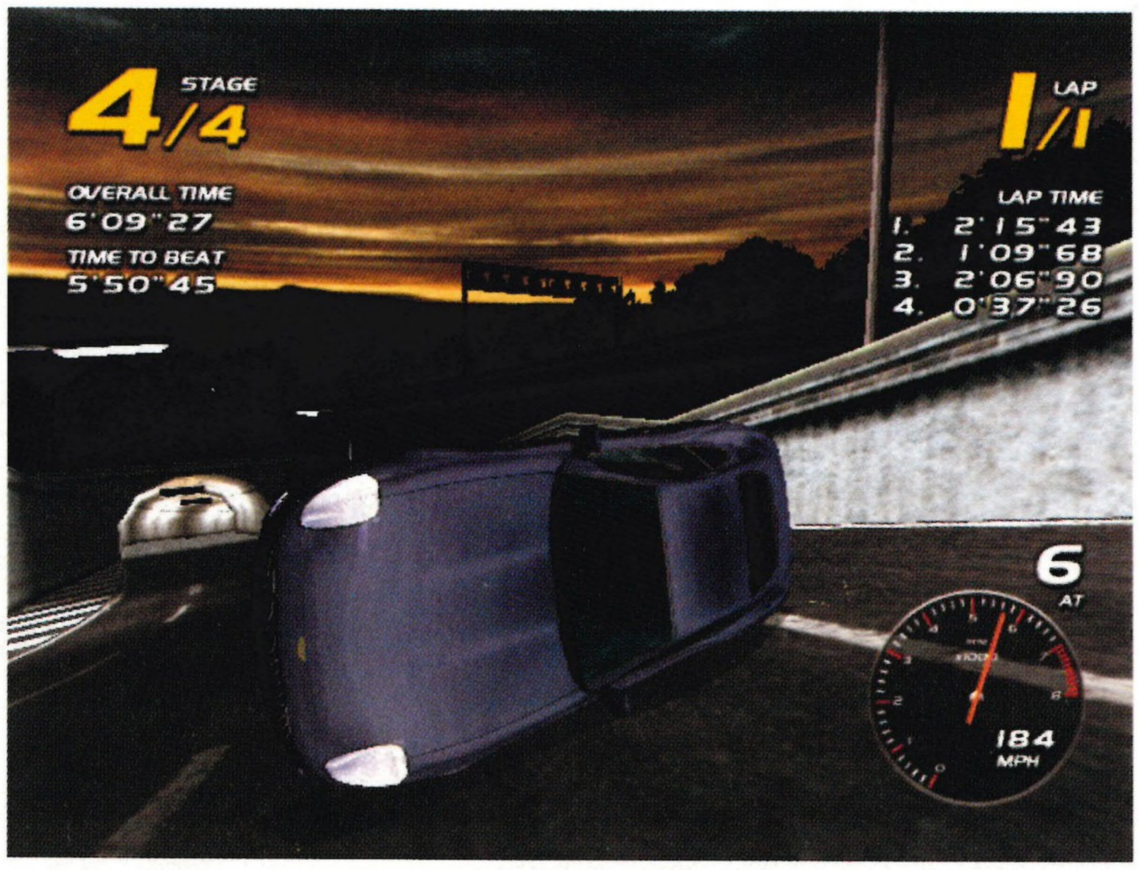
△ Don't worry, it's easier to see when you opt for one of the third-person views.

△ There's some very strange scenery, like these giant tiaras just buried in the Japanese countryside.

VANISHING POINT

If there's one thing the Dreamcast really needs, it's a decent driving game. **STEVE OWEN** feels like he's in a time warp

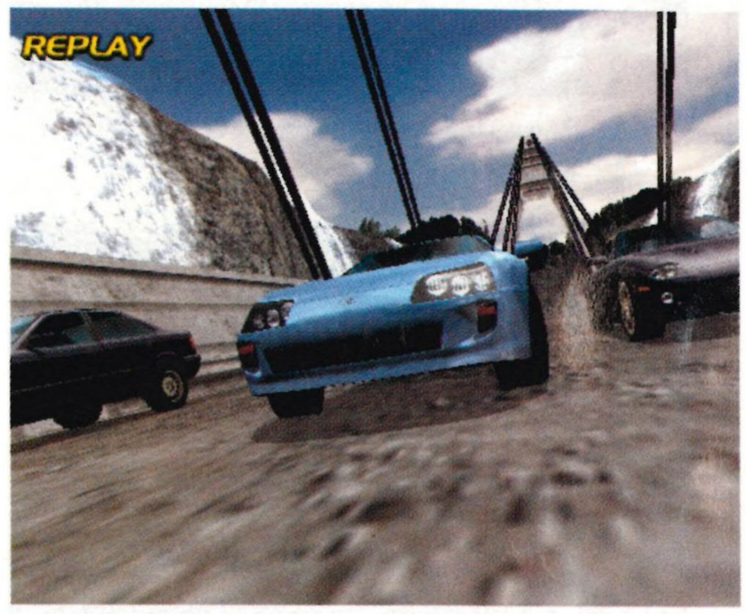




△ At least there's a button on the controller to right the vehicle, but it's all too easy to press by accident too, and it costs you a precious few seconds.

"THERE'S A WEALTH OF CARS TO BE UNLOCKED, THOUGH SOME ARE A REAL PAIN TO DRIVE"

△ The replays feature some very dramatic camera angles, much like those in the fantastic rendered introduction sequence.



△ Film-like in its construction, posing the game for screenshots is sometimes more fun than playing it for real.

THIS TIME LAST YEAR we were clamouring for a decent driving game. *Sega Rally 2* (*ODM* #1, 8/10) was fun, but not for too long. But 2000 should forever be known as the year the Dreamcast grew up, and gained two or three of the best driving games of all time.

That there's another one shouldn't be too great a surprise. The machine lends itself well to the format, comfortably handling 3D scenes at a rate of 60 frames per second. Sega's own arcade legacy is one of Dreamcast's great strengths, as demonstrated by *Daytona USA* and *Sega Rally* being two of the few gems in the Saturn's crown of thorns.

It's clear that British developers Clockwork Games are big fans of Sega too. *Vanishing Point*, while still heading for the PlayStation this summer, was originally designed for the PlayStation 2. That design went in the bin when the Dreamcast proved able to handle it better, easier and quicker. It's a decision that must have made a lot of sense, as *Vanishing Point* is almost a GD's worth of dedication to Sega driving games. There's even a half-mile of one track deliberately 'borrowed' from a sequence in *Out Run*.

Certainly, if you sit and watch the opening demo – or someone else playing *Vanishing Point* – you'd be forgiven for thinking that you're standing in an arcade watching someone take a spin on Sega's latest driving title. The graphics whiz past at a comfortable 60 frames a second. There's no pop-up or fogging (which, interestingly enough, is where the name comes from), and the tracks are as ludicrous as the arcade-style games of the past. You can drive past the Space Shuttle (it doesn't take off), Boeing 747s come in to land alongside the road, and hot air balloons float past in a seemingly dangerously gusty wind. It's all very old-skool, and ever-so-slightly reminiscent of *Screamer*, the PC's first decent arcade driving game from 1995.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

There's more to *Vanishing Point* than its single-player races. As these extra elements testify.

△ There's the two-player option, generally lacking any other cars, and it's really rather boring. Round we go again...

△ Similar to an event in the Stunt School (see 'Call Me Lee Majors'), another game has you attempting to pop your colour balloons while avoiding your opponent's. Definitely more fun.

△ **We liked the big wheel and the waterfall, so hopefully you don't mind that you can hardly see the car in this shot.**

▷ But it's all guff and decoration, an attempt to take your eye off the road, or to stop you from realising that despite the lack of fog and pop-up, you never really see that far ahead. While *Le Mans 24 Hours* (*ODM* #14, 8/10) has as much speed and less detail, the tracks stretch a mile into the distance. Clockwork Games, by their own admission, have spent a large proportion of the two-year development cycle keeping the frame-rate high, but it strikes us that this was achieved only partly because of clever programming, and predominantly through track design. You'll find that you're often driving down troughs, the far distance obscured by cleverly placed hills, bumps, trees, walls or other decoration. Gone is *Le Mans*' openness and countryside expanse, and in comes a sense of claustrophobia. That you can (reasonably realistically) run into the walls and scrape down them means that your driving doesn't have to be so accomplished, too, and you certainly don't need to learn the tracks. Getting your speed 'about right' is enough to make it around the corner pretty quickly.

That it still retains its element of fun does at least justify the company's design. Out of the 30 or so vehicles on offer (after some patient unlocking) there are two or three that really love this tight driving style, glueing to the road and power sliding around the bends. But unfortunately that leaves many more cars that just don't want to be too much fun.

DAY TO DAYTONA

There seems to have been some confusion at Clockwork as to the game's design. In fact, they've explained it to us and we still don't quite see how it makes sense.

Vanishing Point is predominantly a time-trial game. There's a dedicated time-trial option, but even the single-race mode involves a time-trial mechanism, similar to that found in rally games. That is, you have to complete two or three laps within a set time for that vehicle. At various checkpoints you are told how far ahead you are from the best time, or how much you need to catch up (and, subsequently, where in the ranking from 1 to 40 that time currently puts you). The idea is that there are 39 other competitors out there racing at different times. In fact, *Vanishing Point* would have you believe that they're still out there. The roads are chocka with other

"THE ROADS ARE CHOCKA WITH OTHER DRIVERS, HALF OF WHICH ARE POOTLING ALONG"

SPEAK OUT

WE CHATTED TO **NEIL CASINI,** THE DIRECTOR OF CLOCKWORK GAMES, ABOUT *VANISHING POINT* BEFORE HE SPED OFF INTO THE DISTANCE

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
The best thing about the game is that after about three years, it's exactly the game that we set out to make. There has been very little in the way of compromise and all credit to the team for keeping the passion and vision for so long.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU PLAYING AT THE MOMENT?
***Virtua Tennis*, *Capcom Vs SNK* and now *Vanishing Point*'s finished, I'll sink my teeth into *Shenmue*.**

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER?
Without a shadow of doubt, it has got to be *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* on Super Nintendo! There are no words to describe it really. I just connected with it and for those of you who did the same, you will know exactly what I mean. Just a remarkable experience!

WHAT KIND OF BUDGET WOULD YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR IDEAL VIDEOGAME?
I guess the kind of budget I would like would be accountable in time, not money. Time is key and this is something that no amount of money can buy. So whatever the game, I would like to have as long as it takes.

WHAT'S THE BEST VEHICLE IN THE GAME?
I have the most fun with the Audi TT Roadster (soft top). For me, it has the perfect balance of speed, power sliding and controllability. There are more expensive, faster and more desirable cars in the game but on balance, it has to be the TT Roadster!

"SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ARCADE AND SIMULATION" VANISHING POINT

△ Wouldn't mind that parked outside my house.

△ Altogether now – "We are the self pre-servation so-ci-ety!"

△ There's those damn walls again. Well, you'd only be continually slipping off into the distance every time you got a corner wrong.

"BEING STUCK WITH TWO RUBBISH CARS FOR YOUR FIRST EVENING'S PLAY IS A REAL PAIN"

vehicles, half of which are pootling along without a care in the world. The other half – marked with triangles hovering above the bonnet – are apparently competitive racers, speeding faster than the Sunday drivers, hogging the racing line and even deliberately knocking into you on occasion.

But what doesn't make sense is that these cars – if they are there – have already posted times. If they've posted times how come they're allowed to get in the way and ruin your race? If they haven't posted a time then how come the record times for each stage aren't affected when you cause a massive pile-up in the middle of a tunnel? And if through some quirk of the rules they have recorded a time and they're allowed to get in the way, how come they mostly let you pass by without incident? They're only driving at about two thirds of your top speed, enabling you to pass every one of them at speed on the straights, even if you can't get past them on a corner.

It strikes us that the game would work better – and make more sense – if, rather than displaying your success relative to such specific times (which renders the other cars on the course as little more than portable obstructions), you actually had to *overtake* these 39 cars. You can see the number counting down, you would be justified in driving that much quicker than everyone else, and you could protect any risk of losing places again by leaving a mass of destruction in the aforementioned tunnel. It might even slow any vehicles coming through for their second lap.

FAST FROM THE FIRST

This isn't the only strange element of the game design. When you first switch on the game there's little for you to do. While this works satisfyingly well with *Metropolis Street Racer* (*ODM* #12, 9/10), with perhaps 95 per cent of the game hidden behind a cloak of secrecy, in *Vanishing Point* it's a little frustrating. You have just one track and only two cars available. This certainly encourages you to continuously unlock new items – and you get something for nearly every race you win – but what you get at the beginning is pitiful. The single track is a boring, repetitive and unoriginal tarmac route around a dusty canyon. But the two cars you are given are a 4x4 Ford Explorer and a crappy Ford Mustang Cobra. The latter, the obvious first choice for a racing game, is an extremely rear-heavy, cheap sports car (similar, Clockwork Games tell us, to the real vehicle) which exacerbates the game's deliberately twitchy handling. Slight movements of the stick are enough to spin the car at high speed, and while this is preferred to sluggishness, there's slightly too much deadzone in the stick, which means that finding the minute space between pointing in a straight line and falling into a spin is frustratingly difficult.

Ironically, or perhaps appropriately, the 4x4 makes for a better drive, and thanks to adjusted target times, it's possible to unlock all of the tracks and a BMW in air-conditioned comfort, the weight of the Explorer bullying its way through any attempted sabotage by other road-users. The BMW is at least a moderately interesting car (particularly if you own a real one), but it still takes plenty of time investment before you eventually get the DB7, Audi TT or other top-of-the-range road cars. Strangely, although accurately, the game becomes easier as you unlock the new cars. As the vehicle improves, so does its handling, top speed and road-hugging abilities.

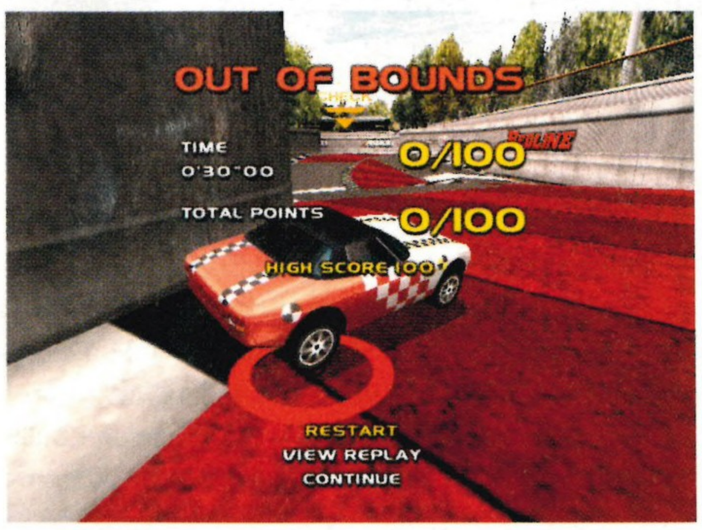
The only extra difficulty is that with higher speeds you're even more likely to run into the increasingly snail-like opposition. With *Vanishing Point*'s exciting collision system the crashes can be spectacular, although without any damage modelling there's no crumpling or real destruction. The Sunday drivers don't even stop to get your details – everyone just carries on with their journey, which shatters the illusion again.

That's over a thousand words of criticism, but the overall picture isn't a bad one. There's a possibility that 50 per cent of the people who buy this game will chuck it in the bin after the first evening. Those who don't may well take to *Vanishing Point*'s few but endearing charms. Graphically the game is exceptionally adept, and has enjoyed admiring glances from anyone in the office that happens to glance over at it. The game looks as crisp and clean as a Sega arcade game, although it lacks the unparalleled realism of *MSR* and *F355 Challenge* (*ODM* #13, 8/10). It moves as well as an arcade game, and once you've come to terms with the twitchy control system it drives as well as one too. And while being stuck ▷

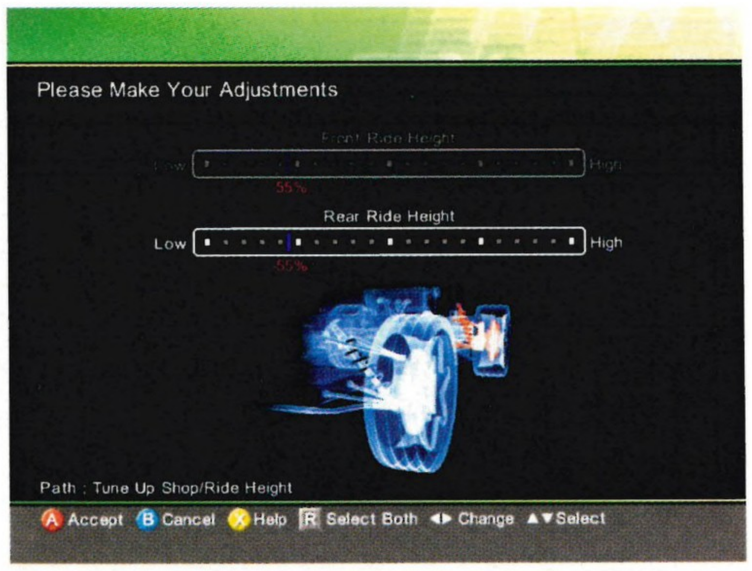
CALL ME LEE MAJORS

One of the more interesting aspects of *Vanishing Point*'s single-player game is the Stunt Driving school, a kind of tricky tutorial into the handling of the game's cars. The physics engine was developed by an engineering consultancy, apparently, and separate modelling of each tyre gives you the opportunity to jump, slalom and handbrake turn with forced accuracy and efficiency.

△ One of the coolest Stunt Driving stages sees you trying to barrel roll your car off a ramp, then land it perfectly.



△ If you even touch any of the red zones, the action freezes and you fail the stage immediately. Drive carefully!



△ You even have to earn the right to visit the tune-up shop, but it certainly helps to control some of the faster vehicles.

△ Sitting in his Aston Martin DB7, Mr Brosnan realised that this wasn't the most romantic location he'd ever worked in.

"ULTRA-REALISM IN THE CAR PHYSICS MEANS GREAT CRASHES"

▷ with two rubbish cars for your first evening's play is a real pain, the Internet is bound to be replete with cheats soon after the game comes out.

There's the intriguing Stunt Mode (see 'Call Me Lee Majors'), where you get to test various cars on crazy tracks, a reward point system pushing you to get the best time with ultimate accuracy. There's a wealth of cars to be unlocked, and while some of them are still a real pain to drive (the Elise is too demanding), others are intensely boring (unlocking the camper van could have been entertaining, but its terrible lack of speed is just dull). Some, thankfully, are just fabulous. The rear-wheel drive Alfa Romeo, for instance, is perfectly suited to *Vanishing Point*'s skid-induced cornering, giving you control the moment the car looks likely to fall into a 180.

With the help of an engineering firm, Clockwork Games have aimed for ultra-realism in the car physics, which is where it gains its great crashes. But it strikes us as if the end result made the game too scary – it's all become exaggerated, with suspension giving some vehicles a jelly-wobble, and gravity releasing some cars as they reach the top of relatively gentle slopes.

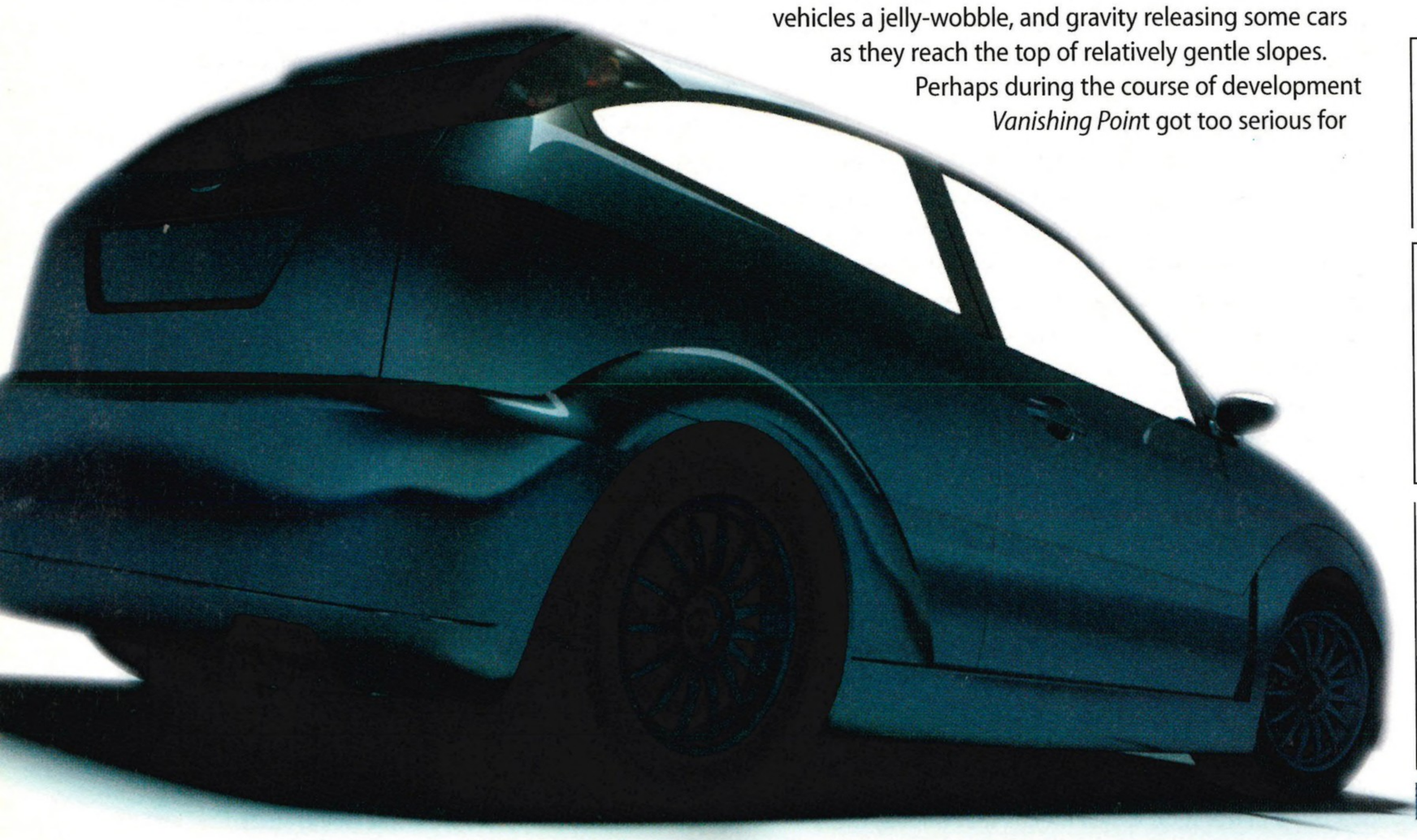
Perhaps during the course of development *Vanishing Point* got too serious for the arcade-game goal, and some attempt was made to lasso it back in.

But while the game is trying so hard to be a Sega game, it's forgotten to include unsurpassable tracks – the main strength of *Daytona USA* and *Sega Rally*. *Vanishing Point*'s tracks, while pretty enough, are rather forgettable to drive, their challenges taking a back seat to the traffic. While it isn't too noticeable in a competitive race, time-trial and split-screen races become boring trawls.

Vanishing Point's reward system does keep you playing, though, and the car rewards are welcome and a big improvement over what you're given at first.

Yet it can't be avoided that *Vanishing Point* sits somewhat uncomfortably between arcade and simulation. It doesn't have the long-term interest of a simulation (a category in which, on this occasion, we include *MSR*), nor does it have the instant appeal of an arcade game.

It's good, but perhaps not good enough.



VERDICT

A MIX OF DRIVING STYLES WHICH NEVER FULLY COMES TOGETHER

UPPERS
Extremely fast • Lots to unlock • Stunt driving is fun

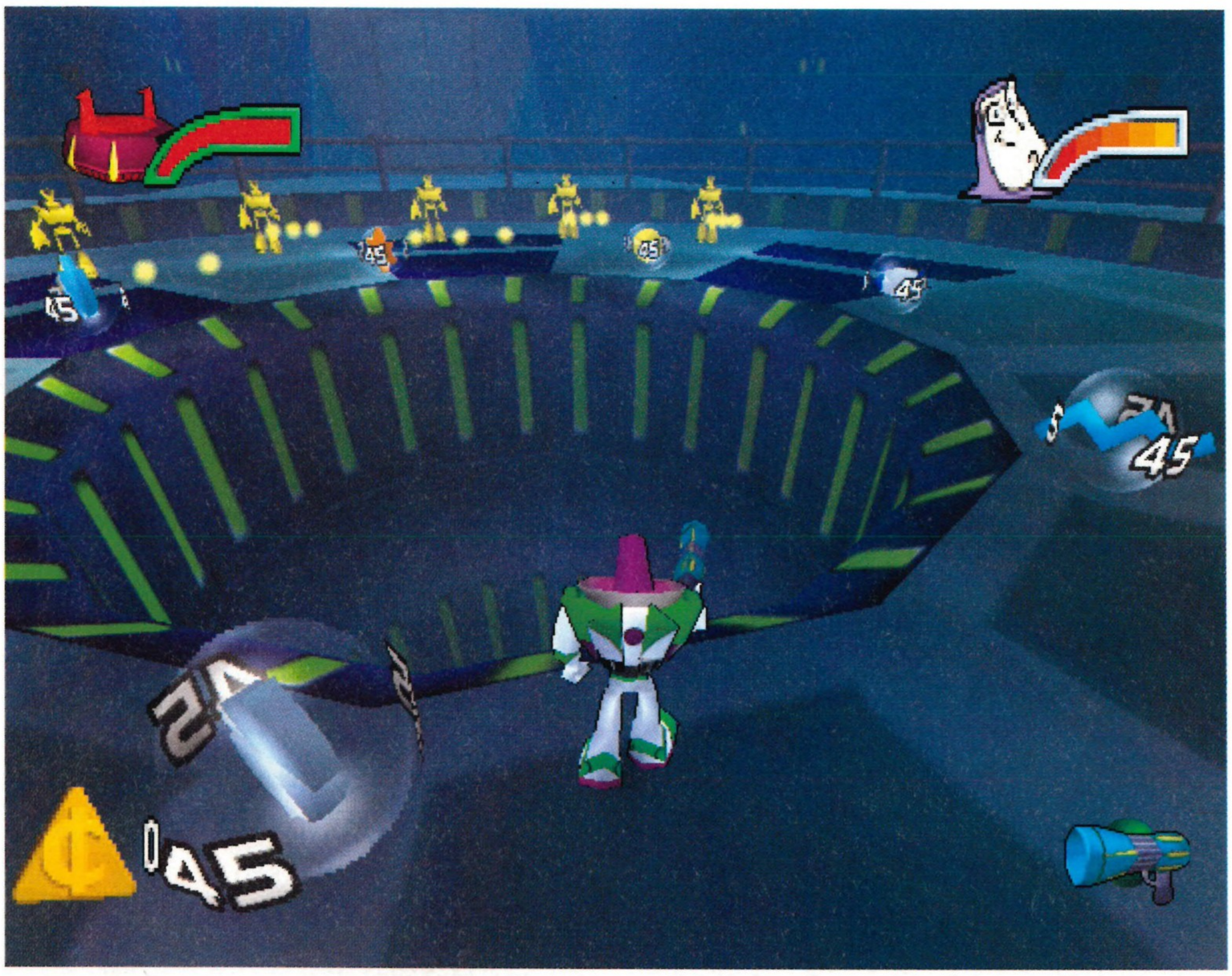
DOWNERS
Somewhat old-fashioned • No fun at first • Gets easier the more you play it

IN ONE HOUR Unlocked nearly all of the tracks
WEBSITE www.acclaim.com/games/vanishingpoint
MAX PLAYERS 2 split-screen, 8 turn-based
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

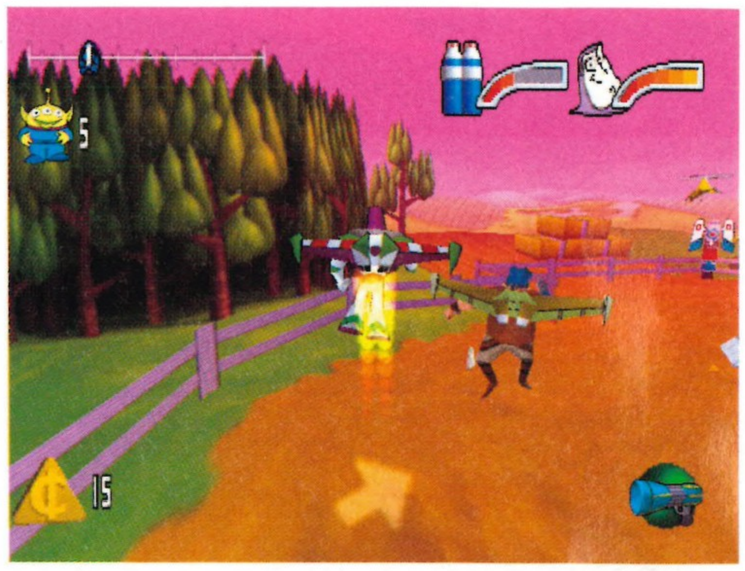
ODM RATING OUT OF 10
7
GOOD

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM** • DEVELOPER: **CLOCKWORK GAMES**

"A GOOD, SOLID ACTION GAME" BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND



△ This is Emperor Zurg's throneroom on Planet Z. It seems quite big for a toilet.



△ Jetpacks are much cooler than micro-scooters on Canis Lunis.

△ Bathyos, the underwater level, is full of these electric fish.

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND

"JUST TO ADD TO THE FUN, THERE'S A TIME LIMIT ON EVERYTHING"

The galaxy's greatest hero is back. **PHILIPPA NORMAN** reaches to infinity and beyond

IS IT A BIRD? Is it a plane? No, it's Buzz Lightyear! Again! His last performance – in *Toy Story 2* (*ODM* #16, 4/10) – was somewhat disappointing, so we're happy to report that *Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command* came to us as a pleasant surprise. This latest instalment of the Lightyear chronicles is based on the similarly named TV cartoon series that has recently started showing on Sky One.

BLOSC has a fairly typical platform game structure – battle your way through 14 levels set on eight different worlds until you reach Planet Z. Here you'll find the evil, but strangely amusing, Emperor Zurg. Each level comprises three challenges: a chase that ends in a fight with a big scary boss, a time challenge and a bit where you have to collect the scattered pieces of X-R the robot. Just to add to the fun, there's a time limit on everything. For example, if the bad guy or gal gets to the end of a chase section before you, you have a mere 15 seconds to catch them up. If you don't make it in time, you fail.

Now, when you've successfully completed all of these fiddly bits and pieces you're rewarded with gold medals – get enough of these medals and extra levels will be unlocked. You also get the chance to win silver medals on top by beating the best challenge times, saving little three-eyed aliens, or collecting loads of GACs. GAC stands for Galactic Alliance Credit – you'll find them scattered throughout the levels and they'll enable you to buy fancy new weapons and vehicles as you're running through a level. The vehicles are great, with hover-boards, jet-bikes and jetpacks all featuring. There are loads of enemies on every level, too – it's like World War III out there, so you worry about running out of ammo as well.

The levels are well constructed, with enough variety to keep things interesting, as well as solid, colourful, cartoon graphics. All the characters have been lifted straight from the TV series, plus there are cool voice-overs by the original actors as well as clips from the cartoon between levels to add to the authenticity.

Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command won't take long for you to work your way through, but is overall a good, solid, and – most importantly – *fun* action game. It may not be anything too spectacular, but it'll definitely stop you from picking your nose for a while.

VERDICT

SIMPLE BUT PLAYABLE GAME WITH JUST ENOUGH VARIETY

UPPERS
Good replay value • Great cartoon clips • Some clever level design • Same silly humour as *Toy Story* movies

DOWNERS
A bit too easy • Collecting the three-eyed aliens is incredibly fiddly • Not particularly original

IN ONE HOUR Hammered our way through six levels
WEBSITE www.activision.com/games/buzzlightyear
MAX PLAYERS 1
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
7
GOOD

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION** • DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLERS TALES**

△ This is Anfield. And that was your car.

△ Celebrations can be orchestrated via the joypad. Great!

△ Two for the price of one: the San Siro, home to Milan and Inter.

△ "It's the impossible angle!" Except it isn't.

△ It's a good save, but it was a nice height for the keeper.

EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

A game featuring the cream of Europe's club sides can mean only one thing. Another pay day for **STEVE HILL**, Chester City supporter

△ Set pieces employ a golf-game style. Where's this one going?

WE'VE SAID IT BEFORE, and we'll say it again, but every games system needs a decent football game if it's going to succeed. And while we may have got a bit excited about *UEFA Striker* (*ODM* #1, 8/10) back in the day, it still isn't exactly what you'd call definitive. As for the other pretenders to the vacant crown, while each has something to offer, none can be said to be reason enough for buying a Dreamcast alone. It's a source of constant frustration that we don't have a quality football game to call our own, and if it isn't sorted soon, there's going to be trouble. Sega see fit to give 15 million quid to the Arsenal, yet can't seem to commission anyone to type in a decent game of togger. Rant over.

Enter then, *European Super League*. Is this the answer to our prayers, the one game that will finally haul us away from the ancient PlayStation and its infernal *ISS Evolution Pro*? Of course it isn't. What it is, however, is a bold attempt to recreate the physical machinations of association football within the virtual arena. Alternately, it's a buffed-up version of a two-year-old flop. In the history of football games, the name *Viva Football* is not one that has lodged firmly in the psyche, and is mainly notable for once having its logo painted across the chests of topless 'luvverlies' outside Wembley Stadium.

Scratch beneath the surface of *ESL* though, and *Viva* is clearly visible, albeit slowed down, refined, and with considerably improved graphics. Not that this practice is anything new, and indeed releasing the same game year after year has established *FIFA* as the market leader. Besides, it isn't an issue for Dreamcast owners, as this is the game's first appearance on the console in any guise.

SAFE EUROPEAN HOME

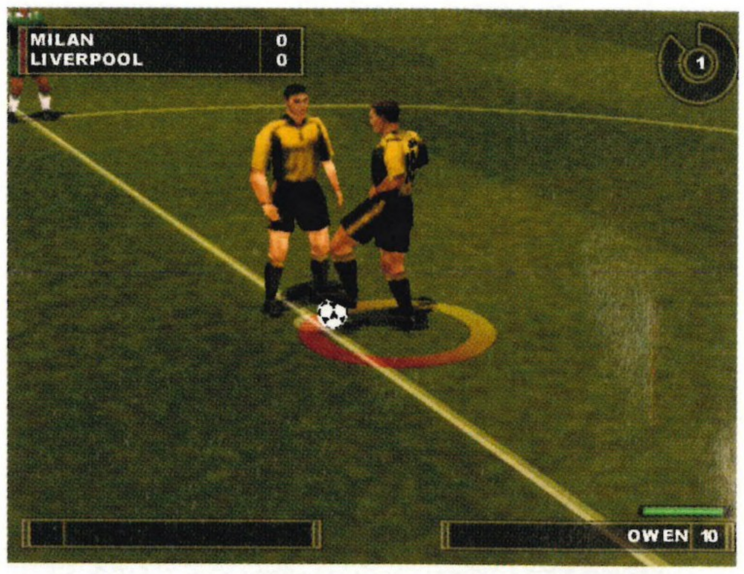
European Super League it is then, and as we reported in our preview (*ODM* #14), the game features 16 of Europe's finest. However, since we last set eyes on the game, Manchester United have for some reason been replaced by Chelsea, an exchange that will probably upset as many Londoners as it pleases. As for the rest, the usual suspects are all present, from Madrid to Milan to Marseille, each playing in resplendently recreated stadiums. Students of the European game will immediately recognise the impressive arenas, from the vertiginous stands of the Bernebeu to the cauldron of phlegm that is Anfield.

Authenticity is the one area in which *ESL* excels, also using real player names and likenesses, although to be honest, while the faces are a step in the right direction, they couldn't be used in a court of law. Further realism is added by the crowd noises, which are stadium-specific,

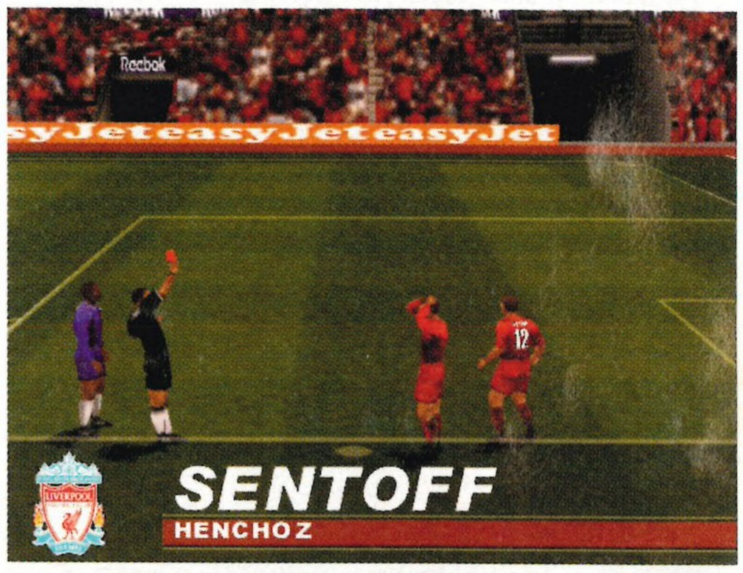
"TOO MANY LOOSE ELEMENTS TO ACHIEVE GREATNESS" **EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE**

△ Marseille, familiar to legions of England fans, as is the inside of a cell.

"A MUTANT HYBRID OF EVERY FOOTBALL GAME YOU'VE EVER PLAYED"



△ A rare start for The Boy Owen.



△ Is it red? Yep, go sit over there with your hands on your head.

SPEAK OUT

WE TACKLED **STEVE MARTIN,** LEAD ARTIST AT CRIMSON, AND HAD A BRIEF CHAT WITH HIM ABOUT *EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
Unmatched attention to detail and 16 official licences.

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU PLAYING AT THE MOMENT?
***Shenmue*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Jet Set Radio*.**

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER?
***Shenmue*, because it's visually stunning.**

WHAT KIND OF BUDGET WOULD YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR DREAM VIDEOGAME?
Real Madrid's annual wage bill!

WHICH TEAM DO YOU SUPPORT IN REAL LIFE?
Newcastle United FC – I'm a Geordie born and bred.

having been sampled directly from each of the grounds (nice work if you can get it). And in a mildly controversial move, commentary has been foregone in favour of players shrieking at each other in high-pitched voices. The overall effect is more than acceptable, and the atmosphere created is suited to the occasion.

WIDE OPEN SPACE

All of which has been a waste of time and effort if the game is unplayable. Fortunately it isn't and, while initially bewildering, the progression can soon be made from Arcade to Simulation mode, which is where the real action is to be had. Something of a mutant hybrid of every football game you've ever played, a host of features are thrown into the melting pot with varying degrees of success. Sprints, chips, measured kicks, through balls, and an armoury of special moves all contrive towards a game that while always playable, never feels particularly immediate and can prove scrappy (with or without a silent 's').

While admittedly convoluted, the controls don't provide as much of a problem as the suspect artificial intelligence, with players often choosing to wholly ignore the ball, despite the fact that it's clearly at their feet. This makes defending a haphazard process, and losing possession in your own half can be fatal. In fact, it's sometimes worth playing a sweeper to cover for the other defenders' ineptitude.

The marking in general is about as tight as a wizard's sleeve, making swift attacking moves a matter of course, with end-to-end games proving commonplace. Players tend to swarm towards the man on the ball, so an adroit switch of play can often find some wide open space. Shooting can also be fairly random, and while it's gratifying to see the ball rip into the net, having it trickle into the keeper's arms from a similar situation can be frustrating. The goals are at least varied, although it does seem to favour an acute approach followed by a shimmy and a blast from an improbable angle. Either way, goals are certainly plentiful, with scoreless draws proving as rare as rocking-horse turds.

COMPLETE CONTROL

Ultimately though, there are too many loose elements for the game to achieve true greatness. It can be infuriating to claw back a lead only to lose it again because your defender is looking the wrong way while impersonating beheaded poultry. You never feel as though you're totally in control, and seem to be punished for situations beyond your power. A side effect of this is that it promotes attacking football, as you can't begin to relax until you're three goals up. When it's good, it's great, and some well-worked moves can result in sensational goals.

Bottom line: if you don't yet own a Dreamcast football game (and have disposable income) then this is as good as any currently available. It's by no means the benchmark game required, but what it lacks in finesse, it makes up for in atmosphere and authenticity. At the end of the day, it gets dark.

VERDICT

GREAT ATMOSPHERICS AND GOALS BUT IT'S STILL NOT RIGHT

UPPERS
Impressive stadia • Authentic crowd noises • Real players • It's football

DOWNERS
Dodgy artificial intelligence • Unsatisfying heading • Random shooting • Outrageous offside decisions

IN ONE HOUR Goals were flying in at both ends
WEBSITE www.vie.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 50Hz, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
7
GOOD

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN** • DEVELOPER: **CRIMSON**

△ The characters and weapon effects look great. What you *can't* see is how hard it is to keep an eye on each other.

△ A big red target on your back is generally not a good sign.

△ Oh, *purlleeeaasse*. That temporary invulnerability act is just *so* transparent.

SPAWN: IN THE DEMON'S HAND

Demonic legions, Armageddon… must be the new *Spawn* game. **ANTHONY HOLDEN** sits in judgement

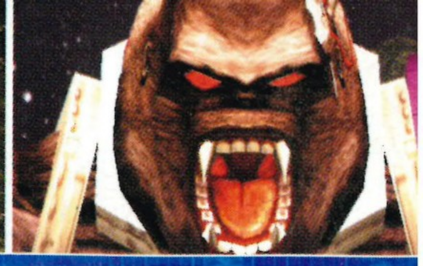
WITH GAMEPLAY LYING somewhere between the go-anywhere beat 'em up style of *Power Stone* (*ODM* #1, 8/10) and the deathmatching of *Quake III Arena* (*ODM* #15, 9/10), *Spawn: ITDH* is a bit of a poser. It seems to have all the elements for some classic arcade action, lent additional appeal by its bright and solid good looks, but pulling off such an ambitious mash-up of styles is not an easy thing to do.

The concept is not an unfamiliar one – one to four players are thrown into a variety of dangerous locations and encouraged to kill each other with a massive array of guns, blades, bombs, claws and magic projectiles. The usual assortment of power-ups, hidden weapons and special items are strewn around the place. On top of this all-against-all style scrapping, there's a team option to add spice to the proceedings. No problem so far – we all know the fun of running around a videogame battle arena blasting polygonal enemies into smaller, less integral polygonal chunks. However, it's no fun at all when the real battle ends up being against the game itself, and that's how it often feels to play *Spawn*.

The third-person perspective (the view from just behind your character, as if you didn't already know) is not well suited to a game of this pace and frequently falls down in the frantic mayhem of a deathmatch. The frustration of taking damage from an off-screen assailant while you struggle with camera angles can really grate on one's nerves. The only view change function puts the camera behind you if pressed, and causes a zoom into first-person perspective if held down. Which would be great, if only you could move your feet at the same time. Standing still in the middle of a blazing firefight against demons from hell tends not to be the most tactically sound idea. So there's a lot of clicking on the view-change button just to keep an eye on the action, and, while it is usually manageable, it puts a great big obstacle between you and the smooth, flowing gameplay which a less conspicuous interface might have allowed.

BAD CAMERAWORK

The Boss Attack mode, in which one or two players take on a series of increasingly tough bosses in an effort to enter hell and challenge the Demon King Malebolgia, seems to beg for a simple enemy lock-on button for camera positioning, but alas no. Some weapons will 'lock on' to opponents when they are in range, causing you to turn slightly to face them, but this only adds to the overall unskilful feel of the game. Even a sidestep function



"WILL INEVITABLY INVITE COMPARISONS TO *POWER STONE*" SPAWN: IN THE DEMON'S HAND

SPEAK OUT

PRODUCER OF *SPAWN: ITDH* AT EIDOS, **YOTA WADA,** SPOKE TO US ABOUT THE GAME AFTER RETURNING FROM HELL

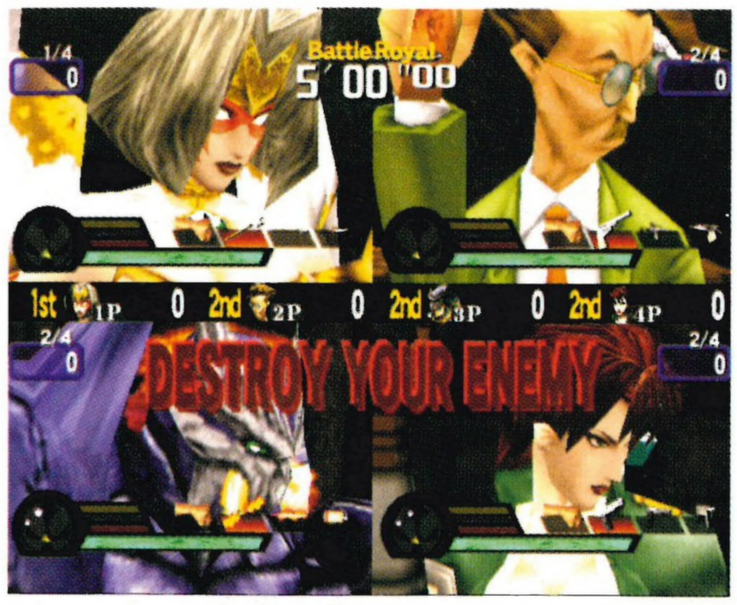
WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
You can play 32 different characters from the *Spawn* comics. You too can become the Spawn!

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU PLAYING AT THE MOMENT?
I've just started to play *Virtua Tennis*.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER?
The *Dragon Quest* series is the best! I just finished playing *Dragon Quest VII*. It really touches the emotional side very well.

WHAT KIND OF BUDGET WOULD YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR DREAM VIDEOGAME?
As our creativity is infinite – infinite budget! Realistically, ten to 15 million US Dollars.

WHAT OTHER COMIC WOULD LIKE TO SEE MADE INTO A GAME?
***Johnny Quest*. Because I always wanted to be Johnny when I was a kid.**



△ **Four players can duke it out in teams or solo, though only basic mazes can be played in four-way split-screen mode.**

△ **Fighting boss characters with a computer-controlled team-mate feels a little like cheating.**

△ **The characters themselves distinguish the game most. Brimstone, meet your nemesis, Hellitosis.**

△ **Tiffany can be powered up if she finds the Bikini of Steel. No, honestly.**

"THE GAME OFFERS A SHALLOW ARCADE EXPERIENCE"

may have saved matters somewhat, but unfortunately the simple arcade controls allow only for running, jumping and attacking. The visibility problem is compounded when the split-screen multiplayer mode carves up the screen, rendering the game virtually unplayable at times.

What grates even more, is that beyond this simple problem, *Spawn: ITDH* is a highly polished and well-presented piece of software. It doesn't rely on its licence to sell it like so many other cynically motivated games – in fact, Todd McFarlane's demonic comic world is handled with a rare degree of respect. *Spawn: ITDH* exhibits an exhaustive list of lovingly modelled characters and a thoroughly researched array of weaponry, special moves and character traits that will satisfy the most ardent fan. The battle arenas are many and large, with a pleasing variety of environment styles, from glacier to forest to smelting works, and due consideration is given to deathmatch tactics and level balance.

There is an occcasional hint of slowdown in the split-screen modes, and to cope with the mayhem of three and four-player battles only a handful of drab mazes, with a very limited set of textures, is available. Beyond these minor quibbles, though, the game is a flawless arcade conversion. Unfortunately, this applies equally well to the game options as to the graphics, as very little of substance has been added to the home version. The online option available to Dreamcast owners in Japan has unfortunately been removed for the European version, and without network support the game offers a fairly shallow arcade experience. Additional tournament options are simply extended versions of the Arcade mode, with a basic points system implemented as a dubious incentive.

More dubious still is the image gallery of unlockable comic art – a once amusing gimmick, now a lazy trend seen in too many hasty arcade conversions. Of course, it's better than nothing – which is what you get for beating some of the game modes – but presumably playing the game acts as its own reward (if only).

BALANCING ACT

Perhaps fittingly, it's the characters themselves that distinguish this game most. Admittedly, there are some problems with balance, especially with the larger creatures, who can often kill a smaller opponent with a single blow. However, the odd mismatch is forgivable in the face of such massive variety. There are 12 default characters and an additional 24 to unlock, with a range of special moves, tactics and characteristics that is undeniably impressive. The nervous-looking Twitch, for example, specialises in sharp-shooting and sniping tactics, and is cleverly given the opportunity to use these skills by not showing up on anyone else's radar, as well as being immune to weapon lock-on. Little touches like this reveal the level of depth given to the characters, and this is where a lot of the game's enjoyment is likely to come from, especially for fans of the licence.

Unfortunately, it's on the willingness of such fans to overlook the game's other problems that the fortunes of *Spawn: ITDH* ultimately depend, as the rest of us have little incentive to bother. Though difficult to categorise, the game will inevitably invite comparisons to Capcom stablemates such as *Power Stone* and some of the more traditional brawlers, and is clearly boxing above its weight against such quality titles.

VERDICT

LOOKS GREAT, BUT THE UNEASY MIX OF STYLES DOESN'T PAY OFF

UPPERS
Exhaustive range of weapons and moves • Great looking characters and levels

DOWNERS
Visibility problems, especially in multiplayer • Shallow arcade experience • No online option

IN ONE HOUR Beat Boss mode, unlocked one hidden character
WEBSITE www.capcom.com
CHECK OUT www.spawn.com – the official site for all things Todd McFarlane
MAX PLAYERS 4 split-screen
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 50Hz

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: £39.99 • PUBLISHER: EIDOS • DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

△ If you look to your right, we have beautiful scenery (ahhh)… and to your left, a sheer drop to certain death (argghhh!).

SPEED DEVILS ONLINE

Years ago, driving a car down the phone line would have been an impossible dream. But now **DYLAN DAVIES** is racing

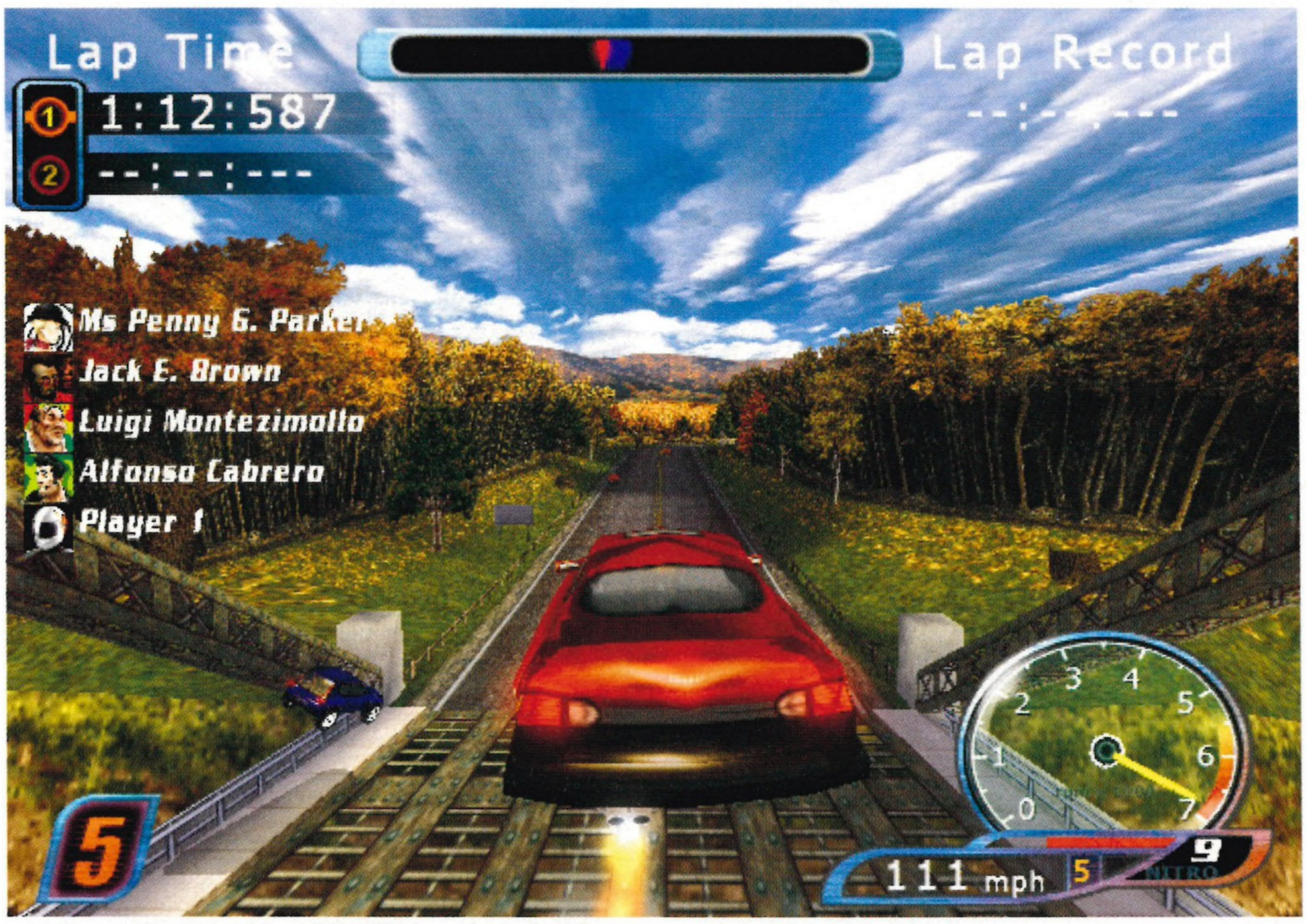
THE REALITY OF COMPETING against fellow couch sportsmen was once the sole preserve of PC gamers with three grand's worth of hardware and a telecommunications grid plugged directly into their necks. Luckily, with titles such as *Quake III Arena* (*ODM* #15, 9/10), we Dreamcast owners are now getting the chance to experience the joys of online play without going completely bankrupt. Ubi Soft are keen to be part of this revolution, and have now decided to release a kind of pseudo-sequel to their moderately popular *Speed Devils* (*ODM* #1, 7/10). It's a game of two halves – online and offline. To understand one we must understand the other, so we'll start with the offline game basics.

Offline is where you learn the fundamentals of the game – where you practice driving around the courses in one of the 22 different cars. These cars come in four categories, from the simple family saloon cars in the mediocre 'D' class up to the sexy 'A' class futuristic concept sports vehicles with names such as 'The Alien'. The cars can have their paint schemes altered and tyres changed to suit your taste and the course. It must be said that the reflection effects on these cars are some of the shiniest seen on the Dreamcast yet. They look like they've been polished by a million detailers working 24 hours a day for six months. Once you've chosen your style of ride it's time to look at learning the courses.

T-REXY

There are 14 courses in total – some are repeated but with a kinky twist. For example, as well as the normal Hollywood track (driving around studios and film sets) there's

"THERE'S A NICE COMMUNITY FEEL TO THE ONLINE PART OF THE GAME"



△ We have lift-off! Player one pushes the boundaries of how high you can get in a car. Oxygen masks are sadly not supplied...

△ In Mexico, protesters complaining about buses block the roads.

△ It looks like a little bit of *Tomb Raider*. Where are the crocs?

△ The lack of ground thwarts an inside cornering manoeuvre.

RACING

headlong towards an epic phone bill

Hollywood Disaster, which is fundamentally the same, only with extra obstacles such as Tyrannosaurus Rexes blocking your path. Other courses develop into tornado-strewn disaster areas – hit a twister and watch your car fly away like Dorothy's house in *The Wizard of Oz*. You can also customise the races yourself, by adding rain effects or choosing whether nitrous oxide can be used (it's a crazy gas that make cars go sooper-fast and is, strangely, also laughing gas). All the courses are vast with a few simple short cuts thrown in – a bit like *4 Wheel Thunder* (*ODM* #8, 8/10), only with dinosaurs. There are some good graphical details in the levels and thankfully a *Sega Rally*-style arrow warns you of trickier corners ahead. From here on you'll learn the ins and outs of the courses and which tyres suit which best. However, you'll also notice one major flaw, but we'll come to that later.

Once the basics have been dealt with, it's time to plug in the modem lead and journey via BT to the real meat of the game. For it is here, online, that you play against fellow speed devils in a bid to earn cash and online prestige. You'll immediately be denied access to any of your previous offline cars and given only $10,000 credit in your online account to buy a heap of junk to begin with. As the cars are categorised into four groups (A, B, C and er... D), you can sensibly select your opponents to match your own automobile's failings. Each online race can only sustain four other drivers but the network races run smoothly. There is very little delay and the whole operation seems to work well, except when waiting for player five to hit their 'ready' button and not waste time sending chat messages. Ubi Soft have carefully constructed a nice community feel to the online part of the game by having pre- and post-race lobbies where players can chat/talk rubbish and choose races. It's all good competitive stuff. Luckily, it's not just the winner of the race who gets prize money, for players are awarded cash for achieving goals such as highest top speed, fastest lap and so on. In association with this you can directly wager cash amounts on the outcome. This even goes as far as using your car as a stake, enabling you to steal some poor sod's money *and* garage. So you, the player, design the missions and your goal is to work your way up to having the most cars, upgrades and cash. This is an excellent online environment and more games should implement these kinds of features.

HANDLING IT BADLY

Sadly, all is not perfect. Remember the fundamental flaw we mentioned? It's the handling. This is an arcade game, so no one expected *F355 Challenge* (*ODM* #13, 8/10) physics, but this is one of the worst-handling racing games for a long time. There is a chronic delay between what you tell the car to do and its actions. Hit hard left on the controller and roughly half a second passes before the car moves. It may not sound like much, but in a fast car game reactions are vital. You'll be correcting movements from a couple of seconds previous in a long chain of control confusion. Laughably, you can also steer in the air. Unless wheels can act as rudders, this is most bizarre. So it's a flight simulator, too! The delay problem is not a failing of the Internet – it's apparent even before you play online. This fundamental flaw has spoiled a nice little game packed with great online ideas. A driving game that doesn't *feel right* is like a flute with no holes – not a flute at all.

VERDICT

A FLAWED DRIVING GAME, BUT WITH SOME GREAT ONLINE IDEAS

UPPERS
Interesting track design • Great online features • Developing rivalries with someone in Mexico

DOWNERS
Dire handling • Looks a bit ropey • Mid-air steering • The control delay

IN ONE HOUR Wondering if we were using the right controller due to handling problems
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS 5
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

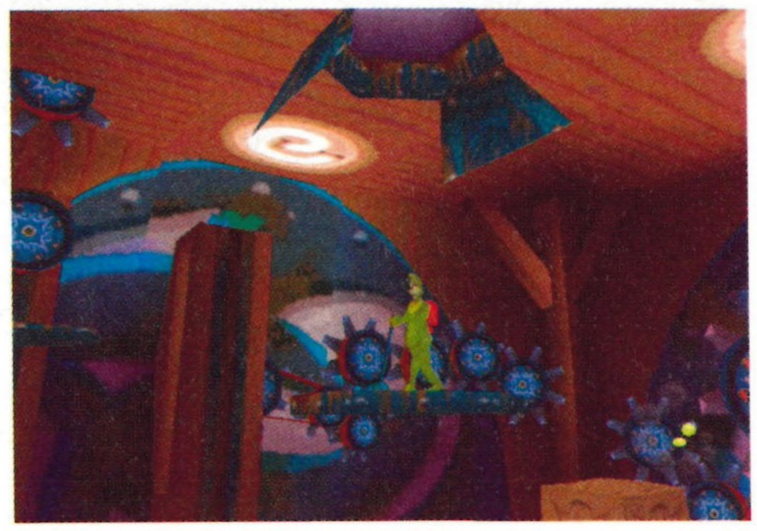
ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: £39.99 • PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT • DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT

"NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH ATTENTION TO DETAIL" **THE GRINCH**

△ Remember: mad cows are very, very dangerous. Especially when they look as freaky as this one does!

△ Our furry friend is quite talented on the parallel bars.



△ *The Countdown To Christmas Clock* is one big brain teaser. The lift will get you to the top, eventually!

THE GRINCH

He's green, hairy and hates Christmas. **PHILIPPA NORMAN** wanted to play with him

"PEOPLE AND OBJECTS CONSISTENTLY POP UP OUT OF NOWHERE"

THAT DR SEUSS BLOKE really does have a lot to answer for. What kind of evil mind does it take to create a character like The Grinch? Remember all those dark winter's eves spent peeping from under the quilt, worrying that this big green weirdo was going to come and steal the festive season? Well, now you get the chance to exorcise all your childhood nightmares by being Grinchy to a load of virtual kids in the videogame of the classic story.

It's a third-person action adventure, with you in the role of both The Grinch and his faithful dog Max, who can be used to creep through gaps too small for Grinches. Your ultimate goal is to ruin Christmas (you old Scrooge, you) for the inhabitants of Whoville, the Whos. The introduction sequence shows The Grinch losing all of the blueprints for his prized Grinch Gadgets on a gust of wind bound for Whoville, and it's down to you to find them all scattered throughout the levels. You'll need to use all of the gadgets at some point, so keep a sharp eye out for those all-important blueprints. There are four levels to get through – Whoville, Whoforest, The Dumps and Wholake, each featuring a number of naughty tasks that need to be completed.

Throughout the game there are heaps of lovely presents to be crushed, snowmen to be flattened and over-affectionate ginger children to be frightened. Brilliant! Destroying objects is simple – using The Grinch's 'pancake' manoeuvre will result in you squashing an object to smithereens with your robust behind. The puzzles, on the other hand, can be really bloody difficult. It's often very hard to work out what the hell you're supposed to be doing. They are generally quite cool, however, and as always you get a smug sense of satisfaction once you've got one sorted.

BAH HUMBUG!

There is one big, fat problem with this title, though – the graphics are *really* dodgy. The most annoying fault is that people and objects consistently pop up out of nowhere. Honestly, *The Grinch* has more 'pop' than a box of Rice Crispies. The scenery has all been constructed in the appropriate Seussian style, just with nowhere near enough attention to detail. Overall, the game has a very unfinished feel to it.

The Grinch may be reasonably playable – it's just more than a tad disappointing. Considering the creativity and imagination behind the original Dr Seuss series of books, a whole lot more could – and should – have been achieved with this title.

VERDICT

OFFERS SOME INTERESTING GAMEPLAY BUT CRAP VISUALS

UPPERS
Amusing, mischievous missions • Two playable characters • Cool gadgets to collect and put together

DOWNERS
Shoddy, dated graphics • Puzzles are a bit too tough, especially for kids • Another below par movie spin-off

IN ONE HOUR Unlocked level two and disapproved of the poor graphics
WEBSITE www.konami-europe.com
CHECK OUT Amusing kitchenware at www.grinchwarehouse.com
MAX PLAYERS 1
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10

4

BELOW AVERAGE

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** • DEVELOPER: **UNIVERSAL**

"THERE IS A HEALTHY DOSE OF TACTICAL THOUGHT" **GUNBIRD 2**

△ You can't be harmed for a precious few seconds after you've died. Which makes sense.

△ Alucard's smart bomb makes him invincible.

△ The coloured bats are a homing weapon.

△ People stroll about as if nothing is happening!

△ Shooting the small turrets reveals gold coins.

GUNBIRD 2

They don't make them like this anymore. Oh, they do. **STEVE KEY** gets all nostalgic

IT'S NICE TO SEE that in the time of motion-capture, ultra-realistic graphics and games that are constantly pushing back technological boundaries, it's still possible to pay homage to the Golden Age. A time when a screen scrolling vertically was the most jaw-dropping thing ever seen in a videogame, and the talk wasn't of bits or GD-ROMs, but of tapes and whether there were 16 colours on screen or a whopping 64! Capcom obviously have fond memories of the years gone by as *Gunbird 2* shows, because this is a shooting game that has all the hallmarks of days of old.

There are some smart ideas to be found here. For instance, there are five characters to choose from at the start and, because of the varying nature of their weapons, it's wise to choose carefully. While all have standard attack, smart bomb and close-range manoeuvres, these moves vary in size, hit radius and damage so you need to pick someone with a good mix of the three. Your character becomes more powerful once he or she collects floating icons with the letter P emblazoned across them – these power-ups are released when certain enemies are destroyed. They increase the size of your main weapon, enabling you to shoot more in a single blast, therefore also increasing the speed at which you can cause serious damage. The more hits you register, the quicker your power bar charges in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. And this is probably the best feature of *Gunbird 2*, as it brings a healthy dose of tactical thought to the proceedings, as opposed to simply holding down the shoot button and trying to dodge the bullets.

Once you've charged up to a minimum of level one, you have one of two choices. Pressing X unleashes a close-range attack that does a huge amount of concentrated damage, whereas if you've still got the shoot button (A) held, a charge attack is primed and also ready for use. By letting go of the A button, a secondary weapon is deployed, albeit temporarily, adding to your arsenal for a short amount of time and often helping to clear out areas without the use of smart bombs. It's not a major addition, but it certainly means you have to think a lot more during play.

There are other nice options, like being able to choose one of two endings and a variety of playing styles. If you turn your TV on its side you'll be able to recreate the authentic tall-screen arcade game, too. But, even with the entertaining weapons and scoring system, there's too much repetition and hardly any long-term value to make this anything more than a decent rental game.

VERDICT

A PRETTY DECENT BUT DATED SCROLLING SHOOTER

UPPERS
Fast and furious action • Easy to get the hang of • The hardest difficulty settings are extremely tough

DOWNERS
Essentially the same thing on every level • Can get frustrating • Too short

IN ONE HOUR Finished the game on difficulty 4
WEBSITE www.capcom.com
CHECK OUT The alternate two-player co-operative mode
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM** • DEVELOPER: **PSIKYO**

△ New *Vipers 2* fighter Emi using her rocket-powered teddy. Weird LED messages scroll across her arms too.

FIGHTING VIPERS 2

One of the late 20th century's loudest fighting games has reformed for one more gig. **TOM GUISE** goes ringside

ON THE CD

IF YOU'RE ANY KIND of Sega fan, you'll know of AM2. The arcade team behind *F355 Challenge*, *Daytona USA* and, perhaps most famously, *Virtua Fighter*. The original *VF* was quite literally that – the first 3D fighting game. But it did more than just add a new dimension to the already fantastic action of *Street Fighter II* or *King Of Fighters*. It came with a super-effective three-button control system. One so simple that a novice could instantly reel off enjoyable punch/kick combinations, while also allowing a master to link up awe-inspiring attacks. And by the time they released *Virtua Fighter 2*, it was (and still is) recognised as the most technically accomplished videogame combat system. How on earth could they follow that?

The answer was *Fighting Vipers*. A game that used the same three-button system, but played to a different beat. Faster, crazier and more destructive. For a start, the Vipers were stylish street kids. Skateboarders, bikers, heavy metallers, gang leaders. Some sported weapons. And they all wore body armour, which you could explode. But better than that, they fought inside cages. You could ram your opponent violently into the cage walls. Best of all though, you could smash them right through, scattering debris everywhere. This was *Virtua Fighter*'s hip, streetwise younger brother.

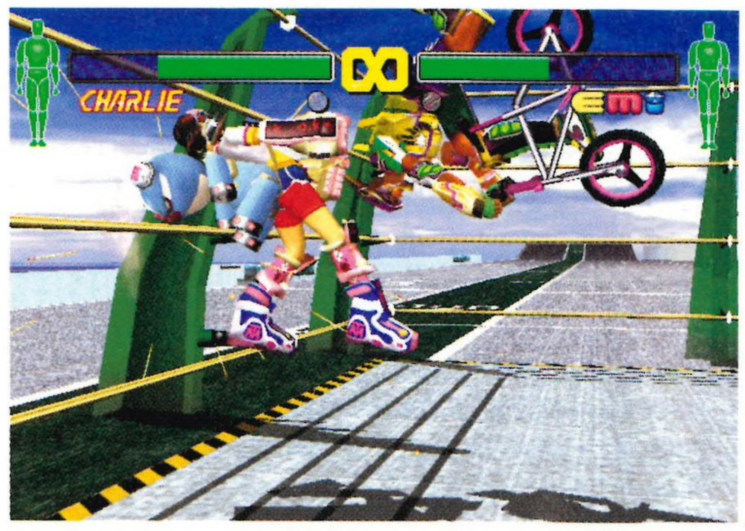
Make no mistake, for all their gimmicks the characters were comparable to the Virtua Fighters, as proven in a fantastic crossover game on Saturn – *Fighters Megamix*. Sega's old deep fat fryer almost prolapsed shifting all those graphics and moves. Walls flickered, faces pixelated, fingers were missing, but the Saturn did it. Just about. The Dreamcast though, could manage all that with ease. More so. A sequel, for example…

OLD DOG, NEW TRICKS

Fighting Vipers 2 isn't actually a new game. After *Virtua Fighter 3* hit the arcades, Sega brought out the *Vipers* follow-up on the same Model 3 technology. It had better

"ALL THE FIGHTERS HAVE A VAST RANGE OF IMPRESSIVE MOVES" **FIGHTING VIPERS 2**

△ The boss himself, BM, sporting an outfit made from 3000 different snakes. Most of them endangered.



△ Shifting the somersault kick up a gear – a BMX backflip.

△ Tony Hawk can't do this. But then can Picky even skate?

"AN EPIC TALE OF TERRITORIAL GANG WARFARE THAT'S LOST ON US"

graphics, more moves and extra characters. Remember? No, neither do we. And that's not because we're slackers – the coin-op was never seen outside Japan. Rumour was that it had bombed out there. Hard to believe considering the mass following of AM2 fighting games. But the fact remains – it looked to be the end of the road for the Vipers. Until now.

First, let's go into more detail about what you actual get, starting with the main Vipers. There's Bahn, a toothpick-chewing, trench coat-wearing gang member, who plays a lot like *Virtua Fighter*'s Akira. Jane is a rockhard GI-type with an offensively big power glove. Picky is a small agile skateboarder. Sanman looks like a dodgy biker and possesses a bizarre move where he throws his opponent like a bowling ball (complete with skittle sounds). Honey is the standard-issue micro-skirted virtual crumpet, only more so. Wearing suspenders and flashing her knickers, she makes Lara Croft seem like a knock-kneed nun. Raxel is your long-haired raa-awk star. Grace wears rollerblades, both as transport and slashing instruments. And Tokio is your trendy pretty-boy hero.

New for the sequel are Charlie, a BMX bandit if ever we saw one, and Emi, a schoolgirl with a giant robotic teddy on her back. Mahler, the original game's boss is now automatically playable too. His larger alter ego, BM (that's Big Mahler, or 'sir' to you and me) is now the major villain of the story. And just to drum that home, his battle arena is set atop the palm of his own Statue Of Liberty-sized effigy.

Speaking of the combat arenas, they all follow a route through the game based around an epic tale of territorial gang combat. A tale that's lost on us, not just

△ Drop attacks can be pulled off after scaling the walls. Do this to look like a real master.

△ Picky breaks off his own armour, hurting Sanman. Notice his Super KO is ready.

△ Finish with a Super KO and your foe is blasted into the city, wiping out a tower.

COOL FOOLERY

Combat in *Fighting Vipers 2* isn't just about slapping the other guy down first. It's about winning with sickening style and a two-finger salute. One of the first things you learn is throwing your enemy against the wall. But real masters throw themselves against it, or even climb on top for a drop attack. Then there's the armour breaker, shattering your opponent's shell. But nothing is cooler, or more masterful than exploding off your *own* armour. Better still, once unprotected you can go for a Super KO finish – spectacular, and worth two wins!

SPEAK OUT

MAT QUAECK, SEGA'S EUROPEAN PRODUCT MANAGER, REVEALED ALL BEFORE WE PUNCHED HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
My favourite part of the game is launching Picky against the fence and beating the crap out of him. I mean… come on – what sort of name is that?

WHAT DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU PLAYING AT THE MOMENT?
***Starlancer* – I get so engrossed in those space missions I find myself having to eat my dinner from plastic cases to prevent it from floating around the room.**

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER?
***Skies Of Arcadia* is fantastic. It's a huge 'goodie bag' of different gaming experiences spanned over six huge engrossing worlds.**

WHAT KIND OF BUDGET WOULD YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR DREAM VIDEOGAME?
A great deal over $70 million, then I could make *Shenmue* again. Ryo could drive a car and go to a disco or something.

IF YOU WERE A *FIGHTING VIPERS* CHARACTER, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE AS YOUR WEAPON?
My name would be 'Blagger' and I'd use my charm to win the opponent over.

△ BM blasts Jane through a wall, showing off the skyline nicely.

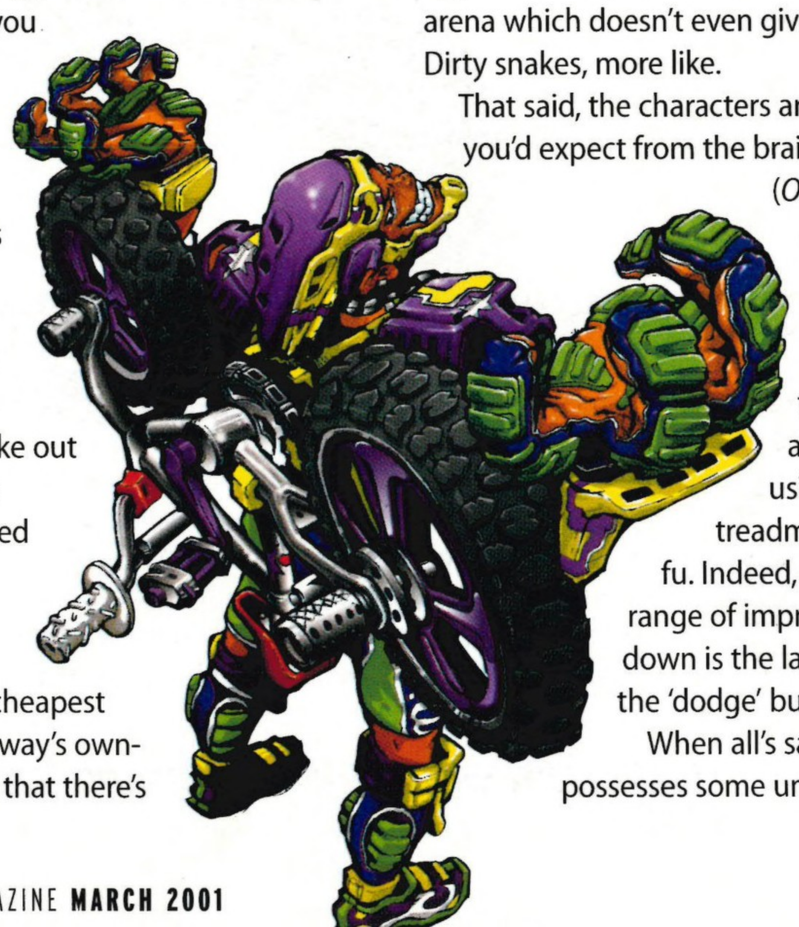
"HONEY MAKES LARA CROFT SEEM LIKE A KNOCK-KNEED NUN"

△ Dressed like a truck, Sanman uses Picky as a bowling ball.

△ Strangely no other fighters' winning angles are from this view.

because it's been so long since the first game, but because there's bugger all explanation of it here either. Set around the fictitious Armstone City, it kicks off atop a giant dam, before hitting the old Wild West quarter (which has been set alight since *Vipers*: Episode I). After that, you either traipse through the hangar and deck of an aircraft carrier, or battle on two levels of Armstone Tower (with a cracking view of the city by night). Next, there's a wicker house known as The Serpent's Cage, then another junction leading either through a furnace and chemical factory, or through a more pleasant natural history museum (complete with requisite T-Rex skeleton). All winding up at BM's monument (that guy just has to be mayor).

It's possible you're now drooling. Either because you've got over-active salivary glands, or the idea of these awesome arenas has you slack-jawed. After all, if *Dead Or Alive 2* (*ODM* #11, 8/10) has multi-tiered combat zones, what could these burstable battle zones be like? Well, wipe your mouth. Sure the arenas look snazzy, and when you pulverise your puny foe through the fencing they take out the scenery, shattering dino skeletons or exploding parked jet fighters. But that's when the flimsy illusion is also shattered. Some of this scenery breaks up into the cheapest flakes we've seen since Safeway's own-brand Frosties. And beyond that there's blurry painted scenery a Nintendo 64 owner would blush at. And if that sounds like a criticism, it is.



GETTING PICKY

While we're at it, let's poke out a few more holes – like the options. With companies like Namco adding a top-notch Mission Battle mode to *Soul Calibur* (*ODM* #2, 10/10), filled with hidden extras, it's disappointing to find little to match that here. There are extra characters (cool ones, too) unlocked when you complete the game in certain ways. You can even get Honey stripped down to her thong, which really is a virtual eye-opener. But that aside, what is there? Random mode, which lets you play the levels… mixed up. Ooh. Versus mode, with a team battle option. Survival, where you battle as many opponents as you can before succumbing. And a training arena which doesn't even give you a moves list. Vipers? Dirty snakes, more like.

That said, the characters are still excellently crafted, as you'd expect from the brains behind *Virtua Fighter 3tb* (*ODM* #1, 7/10). Players of the original *Vipers* will know all the axe-wielding displays from Raxel's guitar. But Charlie's BMX attacks take the biscuit, spinning, flipping and even keeping foes aloft using the wheels like a treadmill. You will believe in bike-fu. Indeed, all the fighters have a vast range of impressive moves. The only let down is the lack of sidestepping. Where's the 'dodge' button, added to *VF3tb*?

When all's said and done, *Vipers* still possesses some undeniable cool. But its once-trademark speed seems lost to faster games. Is it a perfect conversion of the coin-op? We don't know, but it's definitely not Model 3 board quality – let alone Dreamcast. If the arcade game looked like this, little surprise it never made a World tour. And as for its once hyper-stylish public image…

Seeing these guys together again is like catching up with a band you once loved, still knocking around past their prime in their old outfits. A bit ludicrous and a touch sad. Let's just hope we don't get *Duran Duran Fighter* or *Def Leppard Racer* on Dreamcast too.

VERDICT

NOSTALGIA-TINGED GAMEPLAY OUT-PACED BY TODAY'S FIGHTERS

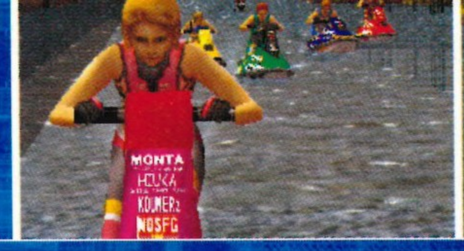
UPPERS
Well-crafted characters • Some dazzling attacks • Easy-to-use control system

DOWNERS
Some disappointing scenery • No sidestepping button • Last century's fashions

IN ONE HOUR Basic mastery of three fighters
WEBSITE www.dreamcast-europe.com
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50hz, full-screen 60hz option, VGA compatible

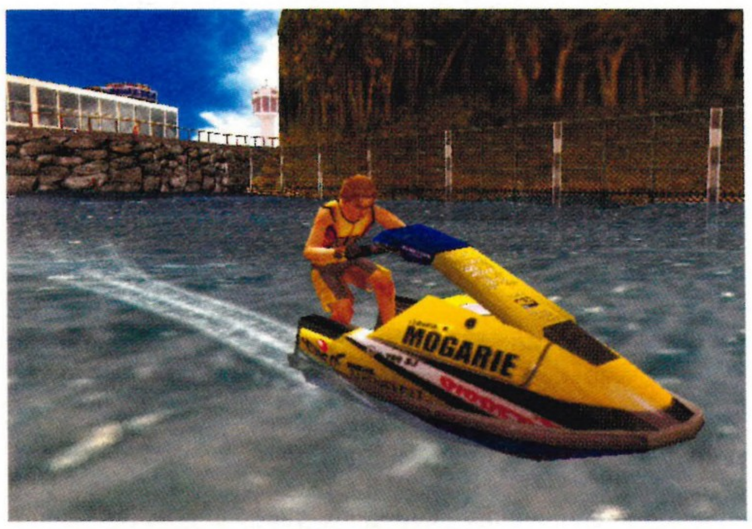
ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **SEGA** • DEVELOPER: **AM2/GENKI**



"THE WATER SURFACE IS FLAWED IN WAYS BEYOND COMPREHENSION" **SURF ROCKET RACERS**

△ Hit that wall and wait for the delay before the rider falls off!



△ You really need to see it moving to appreciate how terrible it is.

△ CRI haven't even attempted to give the jet skis a realistic wake. It's just a graphic pasted over the jelly. Sorry, 'water'.

SURF ROCKET RACERS

A brave **CASPAR FIELD** struggles into a wetsuit and hops aboard a jet ski bound for hell, all in the name of journalism

WATER-BASED GAMES ARE far and few between – good ones even more so (there's *WaveRace 64* and, er, that's it). There's a perfectly reasonable, scientific explanation for this: water is a bloody hard thing to simulate with a computer. Especially lots of it, with plenty of fast-moving objects floating around. Objects such as jet skis, which – not entirely coincidentally – are what you have to race around on in CRI's new game, *Surf Rocket Racers*.

Dubbed *Power Jet Racing 2001* in Japan, it's fair to say that this game makes a very strong case for developers never to dip their toes into the virtual water ever again. Just as a driving game needs to have credible handling, so *Surf Rocket Racers* needed to feel like it places a bobbing, throbbing jet ski at your fingertips. Instead, you are presented with a control system that is so numb to your inputs that the jet ski could be floating in space rather than water.

The water surface itself is flawed in ways beyond comprehension. In some sections it wobbles faster according to how quickly your jet ski glides over it, to the point where it undulates like a jelly freshly thwacked with a large spoon. More hilariously, there are also sections of courses – at the Niagara setting in particular – where the water tilts uphill, without any sign of flowing towards you, as if gravity itself had shifted.

Aside from its critical failings in how the jet skis handle and how the water looks, *Surf Rocket Racers* offers despicably shoddy course design (buoys? What buoys? Most courses are like driving down a 16-lane motorway). In addition, the dreadful animation is often out of synch with the action, the characters are hopeless, and the music shouldn't be described as such. CRI's track record is far from illustrious – *Aerowings* (*ODM* #1, 6/10) is another of their releases – but this game really takes the biscuit. Even the menu screens are rubbish.

Surf Rocket Racers' only redeeming factor is the selection of mini-games it has, which are in the *Crazy Taxi* Crazy Box-style, with long jumps, ball-ramming and suchlike. But even these are either undemanding or simply annoying. Just as the game's computer-controlled characters skilfully thunk into tight corners because they haven't been programmed to go around them properly, so *Surf Rocket Racers* drove us to bounce our heads against a wall in desperation that a game this bad could have been made. Please, please avoid.

△ The Manhattan course is hopeless. Pick a ramp – any ramp.

VERDICT

A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF HOW TO MAKE A REALLY, REALLY BAD GAME

UPPERS

The mini-games are average... • And, er... er... Okay, we're struggling here

DOWNERS

The water is dreadful • The control system sucks • The courses are hopeless • So bad it's not even funny

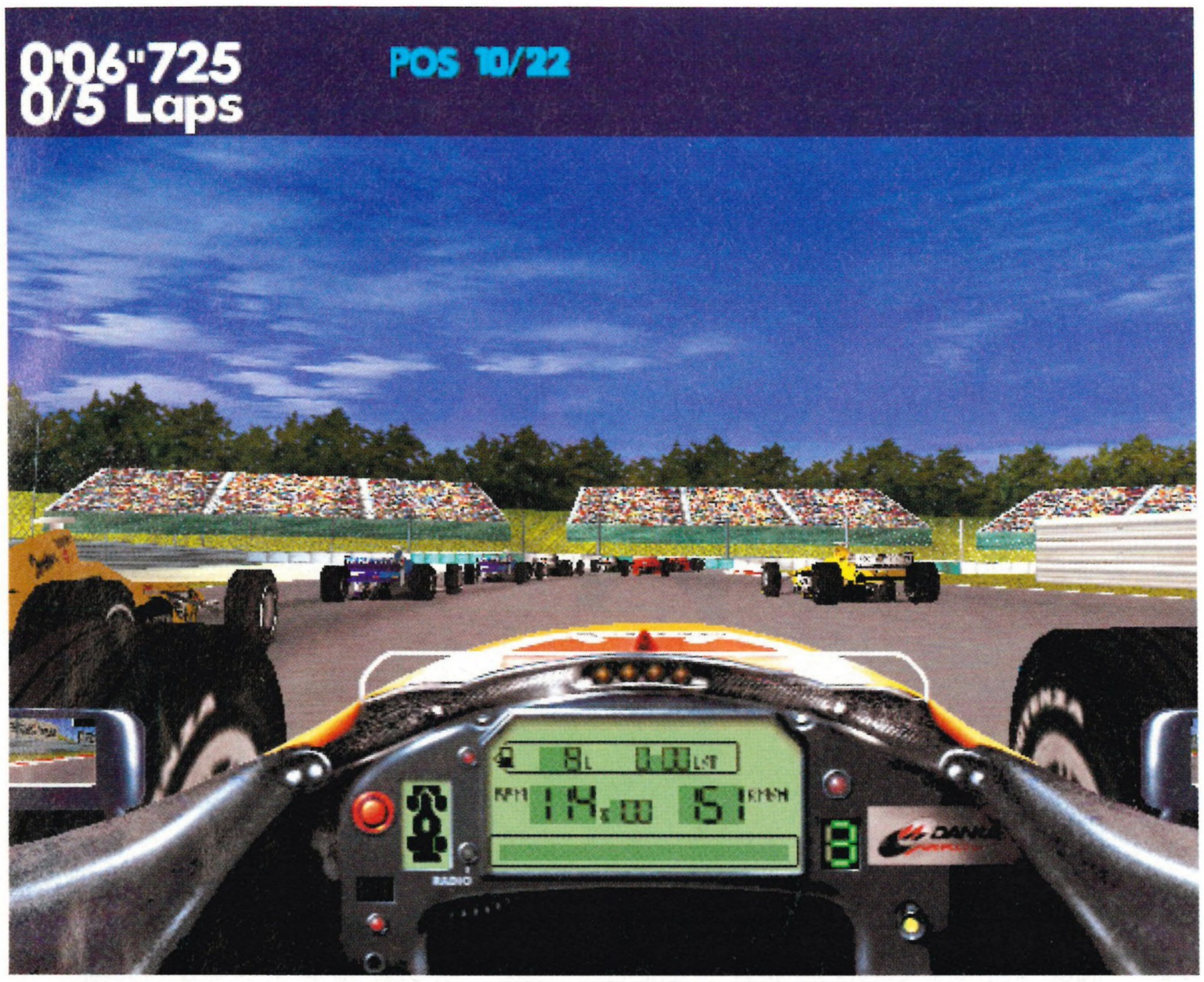
IN ONE HOUR We were completely stunned by the game's poorness
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.co.uk
CHECK OUT *WaveRace 64* on Nintendo 64 – how it *should* be done
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 50Hz, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10

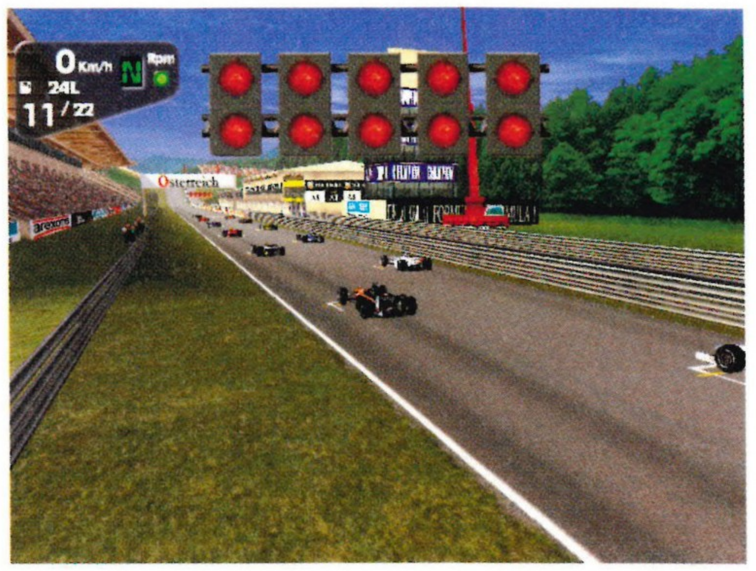
2

RUBBISH

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT** • DEVELOPER: **CRI**



△ Driving from the cockpit view can really be a virtual nightmare for the unskilled.



△ The most tense moment of any race. Fingernails are bitten to the quick. Beads of sweat on the brow. Sure you're up to this?

△ Fifth out of 22? Not bad, but he's gaining...!

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

Unless we're very much mistaken, that's **PAUL PRESLEY** reviewing this F1 game

IS IT JUST US, or is it really hard to find any driving games for the Dreamcast? Especially Formula 1 simulations. You'd think someone would have tapped into this potentially lucrative market before now.

That's the trouble with sarcasm, it doesn't really come across on the page. You really need that smug, whiny, comic-store-guy-from-*The-Simpsons* sort of voice to accompany it or it loses all meaning. Of course there are driving games for the Dreamcast. Can't move for the things. Just about every automotive fantasy, from tearing around Trafalgar Square in a top-notch Audi to driving 18-wheel juggernauts across America's highways, is – or soon will be – catered for. And as for Formula 1 games... well, oddly enough, there aren't all that many. Just about every other platform can boast 782 F1 titles every year (it's true, we checked), but the Dreamcast is stuck with around three. Which should make things easier for Ubi Soft's follow-up to *Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation* (*ODM* #1, 6/10).

△ The Arcade mode brings its own style of play.

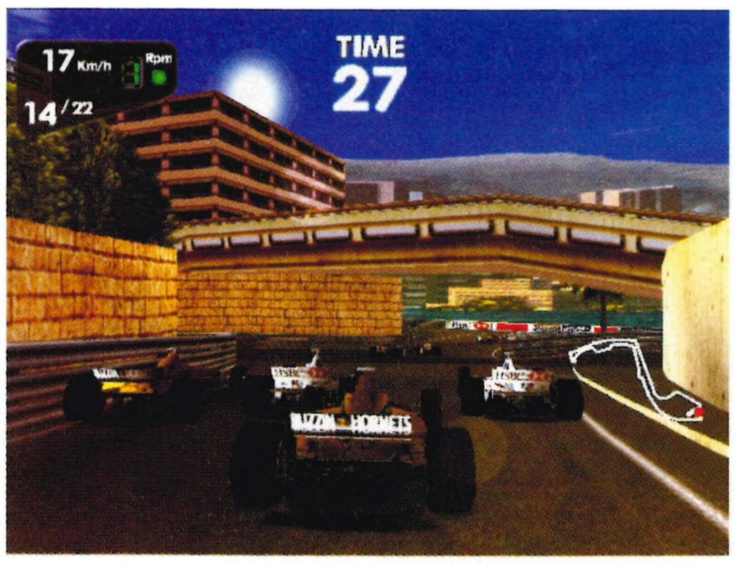
Once you're past the amateurish introduction sequence (certainly by today's standards) and have overlooked the fact that it still uses statistics, drivers and teams from over a year ago, you reach the meat of *F1RC*'s challenge – the dual modes of play. Arcade mode is exactly what you'd expect and we'll come to that later. Simulation mode is where the bulk of the game lies. Instant races, full Grand Prix weekends or entire seasons can be played, along with timed practice, training and two-player split-screen games.

The training is interesting, in that over the course of six laps it teaches you about the different areas of a Formula 1 car's handling, through the use of different combinations of driving aids. At first it seems a bit odd, but you quickly get used to the different overlays and markers telling you what to do. What's more, it works. You wouldn't expect it to, but it does.

NEVER MORE THAN FEELING

The single most important thing for developers to get right in Formula 1 games is the feel of the car. It's important in other driving games too of course, but since dedicated F1 fans are often among the most anally retentive, detail-obsessed, nit-pickers in the world, accuracy is paramount. Unfortunately, this is perhaps *F1RC*'s biggest failing. No matter how much you tinker with the camshafts, dampers and wing incidence angles, the cars never feel quite 'weighty' enough. The leader in this field is obviously Yu Suzuki's driving masterpiece, *F355 Challenge* (*ODM* #13, 8/10). The Ferraris just feel *correct*. You truly get the impression that you're hauling a high performance driving beast around each track. *F1RC* never quite seems to let its Arcade

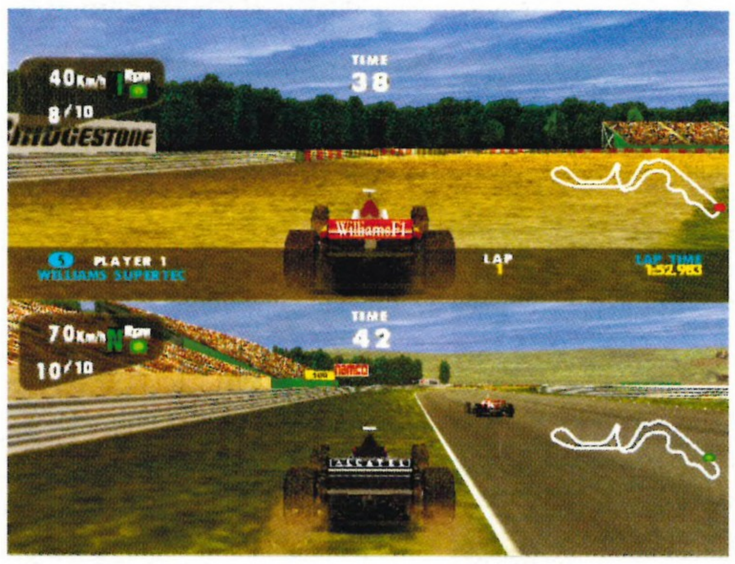
"NONE OF THE SPECTACULAR CRASHES YOU'VE COME TO EXPECT" **F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP**



△ Monaco – playground of the rich and tasteless.

△ Oooh, nasty! That'll definitely take more than eight seconds to fix. And it won't be cheap, no sir-ee.

"THERE'S LOTS TO BE ENJOYED IF YOU CAN LIVE WITH THE LIMITATIONS"



△ Two-player games have limited options, but are plenty of fun.

mode go completely when you make the jump to the Simulation side. Consequently, the feeling is just off.

Having said that, how many of you out there reading this are actually Formula 1 drivers, hmm? See – just the four of you. Most of us will never know how it actually feels to power down the long straights of the Nurburgring or swing around the tricky chicanery of Suzuka. More than that – as *Metropolis Street Racer* (*ODM* #12, 9/10) shows – most Dreamcast owners just want to drive fancy cars very fast. Hence that self-same Arcade mode.

Pedal to the max, barge your way down the course, pushing other cars aside like they were old women with Zimmer frames, dodgems with knobs on, using the tyre walls as brakes, flipping over every ten seconds yet still finishing in the top five – that's the Arcade mode. It's fun and simple and not designed to be anything else. Slightly annoying is the inclusion of the arcade-standard timed checkpoint system (it would be nice if we had the option of just having full races in this mode), but otherwise it does what it says on the tin. It won't win any awards – it's not *MSR* fun or anything – but it does provide a nice respite from the heavyweight Simulation mode, especially when you've lost your eighth race in a row and want to inflict some vehicular revenge on Coulthard, Schumi and co.

NEITHER ONE, NOR ANOTHER

But nobody buys F1 games for their Arcade modes. Realism is key in these things and while *F1RC* is good, it's not perfect. There's the aforementioned handling issues. And the – let's be honest – dated look of the graphics. There's the damage modelling, which is somewhat lightweight. Things go wrong with the car (on the plus side it does include faults such as electrical failures), and there are the usual bits of debris and breakable body parts when you hit a wall or car. But there are none of the spectacular car crashes you've come to expect from a game like this.

But beneath it all, you *do* have to admit to garnering pleasure from *F1 Racing Championship*. It may not be perfect, but there's lots to be enjoyed if you can live with the limitations. There's not much to separate this and *F1 World Grand Prix II* (*ODM* #13, 7/10), so whichever one you choose, you're in for much the same experience. There's slightly more of a game here, but there's a better feel over there. Horses for courses, mate. Horses for courses.

VERDICT

NOT BAD, BUT THERE ARE BETTER F1 GAMES AND RACING GAMES

UPPERS
Plenty of ways to play • Simulation mode has plenty of depth • Training levels are nicely handled

DOWNERS
Graphics are uninspiring • Handling feels twitchy • Damage modelling a little erratic • Old statistics

IN ONE HOUR 'Learnt' the first course at Adelaide and qualified in 18th position
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.com/f1rc
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: **£29.99** • PUBLISHER: **VIDEO SYSTEM** • DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT**

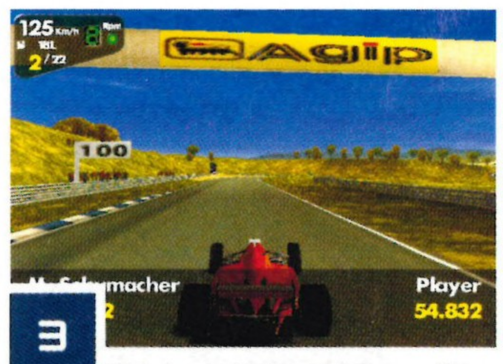
WALKTHROUGH

AND THEY'RE OFF!

Full race weekends have everything for the petrol-head, except for post-race shags from the dolly birds with the signs…

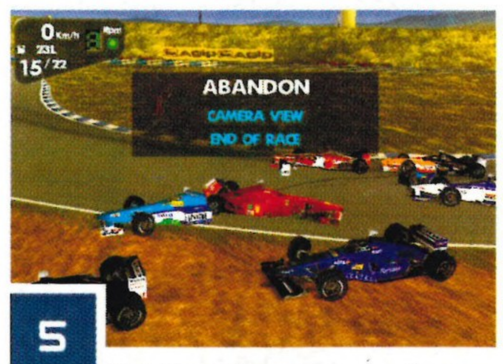
1 △ Start with a half-hour free practice session in order to get used to the circuit and test the car set-up.

2 △ Car understeering? Brakes not responsive enough? Use the garage to alter things under the bonnet, then head back out.



3 △ With the car finely tuned, the qualifying session should be a breeze. Should be, in theory at least…

4 △ Finally, the race. With an impressive, er, 21st position on the grid. Never mind, it could be worse…



5 △ Well, it's not like your race is going to last very long anyway. Better luck next time, eh?

△ Farmer Maul made sure the bullocks didn't mate out of season.

△ This kind of horseplay probably alerted the Empire to the Rebels' secret base.

△ For some reason, Naboo features a giant chessboard. Hey, there's the Rancor!

△ You can blow up quite a lot of the scenery. When there *is* quite a lot of scenery, that is.

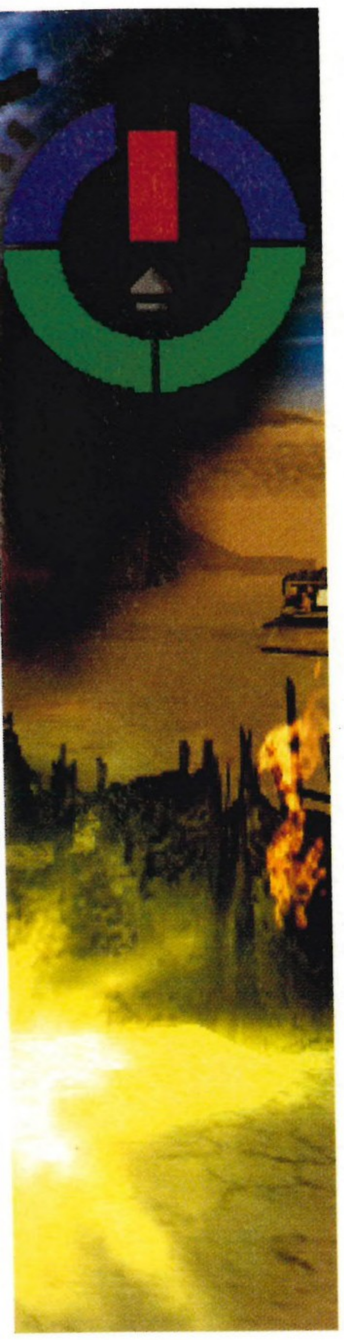
STAR WARS DEMOLITION

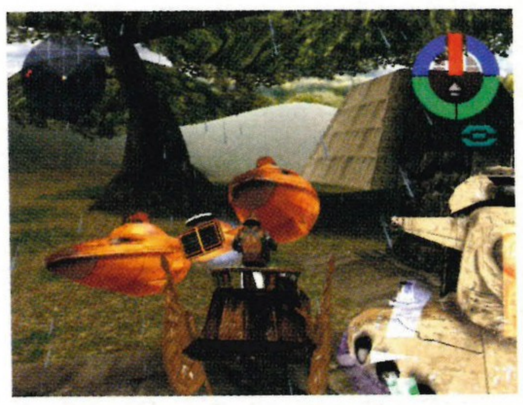
Wreck the *Star Wars* Universe? **TOM GUISE** tries to beat George Lucas to the job!

THE MOVIE IS STILL well over a year away, but the *Star Wars: Episode II* rumour mill has already gone into hyperdrive. And it doesn't matter what you thought of *The Phantom Menace* – you're going to get caught up in the hype all over again. Get ready for the secret origin of the Stormtroopers. Witness Yoda in full-on Lightsaber action. Check out teenage Boba Fett. And brace yourself for Christopher Walken as a Sith Lord deadlier than Darth Maul. Plus, Jabba returns with a lethal new sport: pitting the galaxy's greatest war machines in a gladiatorial battle to destruction. Just wait until you see an Imperial Walker exploded by the Rancor Beast's shoulder-mounted proton torpedoes. No, sorry, that's not really from *Episode II* – it's in this swamp donkey of a game.

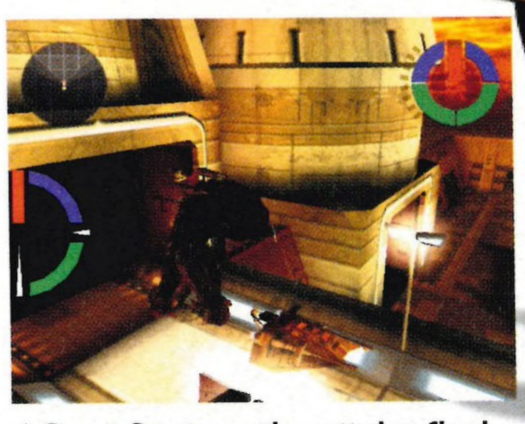
The title, *Star Wars Demolition*, sums it up really: trashing the good name of *Star Wars*. Some say *Episode I* already did that, but still, there's no harm in kicking a bearded millionaire when he's down. Sadly, Jabba's not a selectable character in the game – instead he just hosts this glorified *Robot Wars*. The concept is simple enough to have been thought up by a space slug, too. Just choose a combat arena (as featured in the smash-hit *Star Wars* movies), pick your vehicle (available from all good toy stores) and blow the jabbacrackers out of everyone else. Frankly, our galactic credits are on the bloke driving the Death Star!

Unfortunately, the combat isn't on such an interstellar scale. Forget that misleading '*Star Wars*' prefix, this game





△ All the ships are to scale. That's a little Boba Fett there. And Mini-Maul.



△ Rancor Beast recently spotted on Cloud City holiday with mystery Snowspeeder.

△ Here we're just pretending it's *The Empire Strikes Back*. But in our hearts, we know…

"THE TITLE SUMS IT UP REALLY: TRASHING THE GOOD NAME OF *STAR WARS*"

doesn't even go beyond Thunderdome. You don't get to steer heavyweight tanks like AT-AT walkers, sandcrawlers or those big droid carriers from *The Phantom Menace*. Instead, we get a bunch of junkpile rejects that would give the Sarlaac Pit the squits. Aside from the two-legged AT-ST walker and Rancor Beast (who's actually a steed for his fat keeper from *Return Of The Jedi*), there's a snow-speeder, pod-racer and landspeeder among others, all piloted by *Star Wars-In-Their-Eyes* lookalikes. Meet Quagga the Wookie, Pugwis the Dug and the loveable, chuckling General Otto. All probably from some spin-off novel or colouring book. But wait up – Uncle George has splashed out on a few deluxe action figures for you trilogy-spotting tykes. Boba Fett's here in his… jetpack. Oh. And Lando Calrissian too… piloting a desert skiff? Whoever came up with this bizarre choice of vehicles must have chewed on too many of Yoda's class A gimmer sticks.

COSTA DEL JABBA

So, where do you reckon the mighty Jabba has set up his gruesome battle arenas? The Mos Eisley spaceport, perhaps? Or around the dreaded Sarlaac Pit on Tatooine's Dune Sea? Both, actually. And, in an amazing coup for the vile space worm, he's also managed to secure some other top-notch venues, all made famous by the *Star Wars* films – the ice world of Hoth, Cloud City, Yoda's swampy home of Dagobah, Planet Naboo. Not that we're knocking this blatant cash-in. Better to fly around the Rebel Base on Yavin 4 than some unknown monkey planet. We're not even going to raise an eyebrow at the disgraceful bending of the normally airlock-tight *Star Wars* mythos. Or complain that the Empire have rented out the surface of the 'still in construction' Death Star II complete with the loan of TIE Fighters to carry power-ups. No, our gripe is how ground-based each arena is, especially considering eight of the ten vehicles are hovering. Why tease us with Boba Fett in his jetpack if he can only float two inches above the ground? Why doesn't he run? What's up with his legs? Space rickets? Seems the only Force you get to feel around here is gravity.

But as young Anakin would say, "Jeepers, it's just a bit of beezer fun, right?" Hmm, difficult to see that is. Stretch out with your feelings and the mindless concept of trashing *Star Wars* vehicles could be entertaining – all the more so against four mates. And there's a surreal pleasure to chugging around classic *Star Wars* dioramas, accompanied by foot-tapping drum 'n' bass remixes of the movie tunes. There are even extra characters to unlock, like Lando's sidekick Lobot and Darth Maul on his Sith Speeder. Now surely that has to be cool, right? Unfortunately not. Maybe it would be more entertaining if it was played for laughs, but this game is about as amusing as Jar Jar Binks stepping in Bantha poodoo. And George, that was never funny.

NOT LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Sadly, that disappointment sums up a lot of what LucasArts have come to represent. Older gamers will remember a time when The Force was strong in every one of their products. Adventures like *The Secret Of Monkey Island* and *Day Of The Tentacle* were funny and ground-breaking. And *Star Wars* titles like *X-Wing* actually matched the movies and set new standards. Even a quirky throwaway game like *Night Shift* (where you built LucasFilm characters in a factory) is still considered a unique classic.

And that's what this could have been – a tongue-in-cheek, enjoyable cocktail of great *Star Wars* ingredients. What it *actually* feels like is the usual *Star Wars* bobbins, thrown together with little enthusiasm and cynically marketed to a trusting fanbase. Although maybe it's unfair to single out just the Lucas videogames division. It's possible that the *Episode II* movie will make *The Phantom Menace* and those *Special Editions* look like just a 'rough patch'. Let's hope so.

There are moments playing *Demolition* when you gaze up at Jabba's sail-barge soaring overhead, or the towering AT-ATs stomping around, and imagine the perfect *Star Wars* game – letting you experience all your favourite moments like no *Star Wars* game ever has. It would take a bit of creative effort, but looking at this you *know* Dreamcast could power it with ease. And then Lobot trundles past in his Cloud Car and lobs a thermal detonator at you…

VERDICT

IF IT WASN'T *STAR WARS* IT WOULDN'T EVEN JUSTIFY A LOOK

UPPERS
It's *Star Wars* • Some impressive landscapes • Strangely compelling music

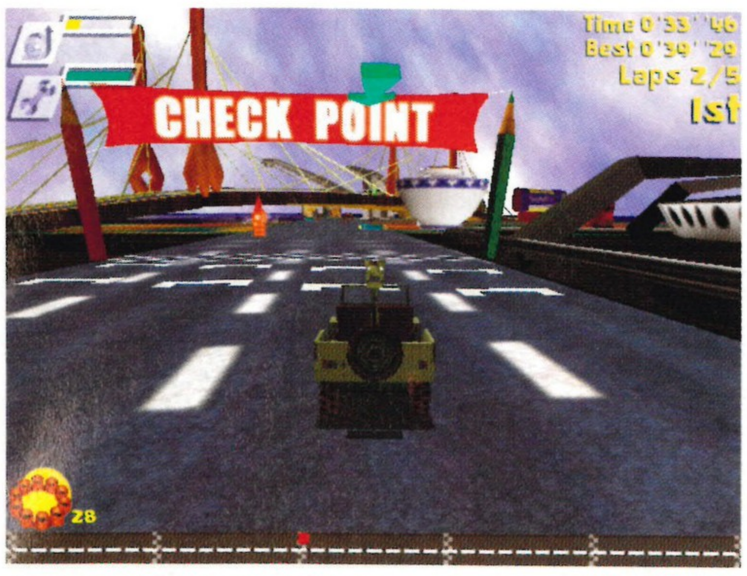
DOWNERS
Poor concept • Some shoddy distance fogging • Mixed bag of characters • Crap weapons

IN ONE HOUR We'd unlocked two extra characters
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
CHECK OUT www.starwars.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
4
BELOW AVERAGE

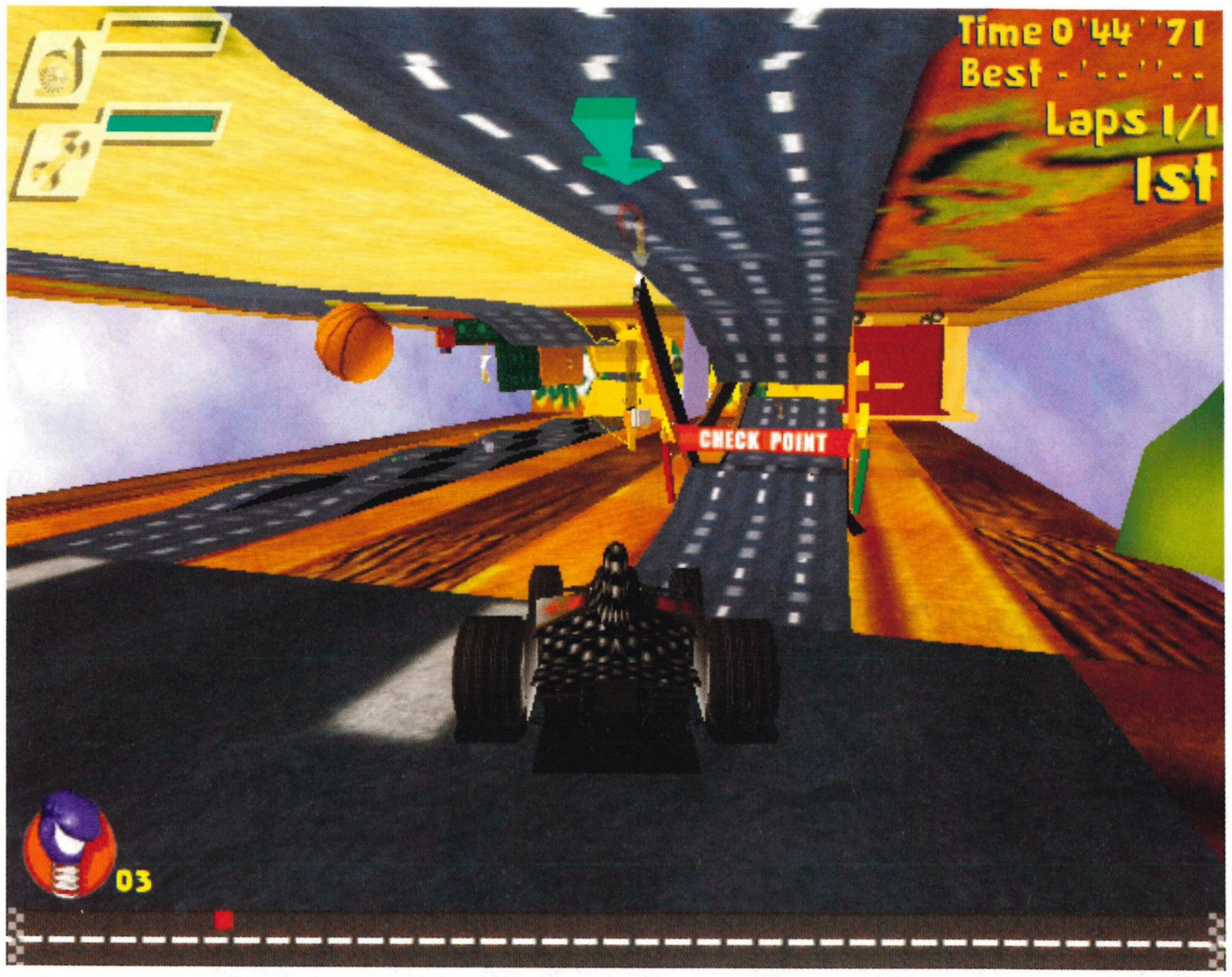
PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION** • DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS**

"THE WHOLE GAME IS REALLY JUST A NOVELTY" **TOY RACER**



△ These checkpoint barriers pop into view quite suddenly.

△ You can have multiplayer races without going online, too.



△ The attic provides the biggest vertical headache. And the biggest stomach churning.

TOY RACER

Cheap, cheerful and for charity. Only **PAUL PRESLEY**'s cold enough to sneer at that

CALL US SCROOGES IF you will (and you will), but just because *Toy Racer* donates a pound for every copy sold to ESC – a charity that puts modern computer equipment in the hands of sick little kiddies – doesn't mean that it's immune to criticism.

As a game, *Toy Racer* is another in the long line of cutesy racing games, this one stemming from No Cliché's fun action-adventure *Toy Commander* (*ODM* #1, 8/10). Take your pick from a wide variety of miniature model cars (speedy F1 toys, easy-to-handle remote control trucks, heavily armoured tanks and the like) and go hell for leather around half a dozen home interiors, from bedroom to bathroom. The twist here is that these courses aren't limited to just the floor. Races can take you up the wall, across the ceiling and back down the other side before you're done, which makes it easy to get disorientated – especially with the faster cars.

Other standards of the genre are present and accounted for, notably the weapons and power-ups. Pencil missiles, thumb tack mines and exploding caps make up the bulk of the weaponry, although power-ups can also affect the environment, such as covering the tracks with ice, slowing your opponents down to a crawl or blinding them with fog. A nice touch is that the power-ups have two states – one affecting you, the other your fellow racers – so timing becomes important and you often find yourself swerving out of the way at the last minute as they change state.

Playing online adds to the value and we're happy to report that doing so is a trouble-free experience. Races are easy to set up, run smoothly and we never seemed to have to wait very long to find a game. The split-screen multiplayer game is just as easy and, as you would expect, gives you the added advantage of being able to laugh directly at your beaten opponents' faces.

So far, so good. In fact, the only real problem that *Toy Racer* has is that there really isn't all that much to it. You only get a bare handful of courses and once you've been up the side of a wall once, you've done it a thousand times. The whole game is really just a novelty, and one that soon wears quite thin. In other words, it's fun while it lasts, but you won't be playing for long. Still, it *is* only five pounds and it's for a good cause. Although if that's the only reason you're thinking of buying it, then you might as well donate the whole fiver to a charity of your choice and do even more good.

"RACES CAN TAKE YOU UP THE WALL AND ACROSS THE CEILING"

VERDICT

THE CAUSE IS VERY GOOD, THE GAME ISN'T BAD

UPPERS
Fast, cheap and simple • It's all (well, partly) for charity • Plays smoothly enough online

DOWNERS
Hardly the longest-lasting game ever • Course layouts are confusing • Criticising it makes me sound mean

IN ONE HOUR Tried all the maps and lost several games online
WEBSITE www.nocliche.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz, full-screen 60Hz option, VGA compatible

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
6
PRETTY GOOD

PRICE: £4.99 • PUBLISHER: SEGA • DEVELOPER: NO CLICHE

"THE ENEMY'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS POOR" **RAINBOW SIX**

△ Night vision means you can creep up on unsuspecting foes. Hey, all's fair in love and war.

△ Decisions, decisions… What's a soldier to do?

△ You need to make sure your team is equipped for the mission.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX

If balaclavas are your bag, you're going to love this. **DAN TRENT** prefers bobble hats

YOU MAY REMEMBER THIS game from a preview we ran back in *ODM* #11 promising that the game was "almost upon us" but this time, after a delay worthy of the *Metropolis Street Racer* Award for Lateness, it *really* is here, complete with the extra 'Eagle Watch' missions to boot…

Based on the titular special forces outfit from Tom Clancy's novels, *Rainbow Six* is part strategy, part first-person shooter with pretensions of realism and a great deal of emphasis on planning your mission correctly, as well as making the best use of the resources available. Having read the briefings and genned up on all the available intelligence, you pick, clothe and equip your team according to the mission requirements, then plot their route into the target, controlling what they do when they get there and when. It sounds complicated, and it is.

Obviously such a complicated game is going to require some complex controls and *Rainbow Six* certainly doesn't disappoint on this front. If ever a game were crying out for mouse and keyboard compatibility then this is it, but as it is you'll have to make do with the standard controller.

Once you've navigated your way through the rather clumsy planning stage and got into the game proper, *Rainbow Six* isn't half as painful to play as you might have suspected. This is no mad shoot 'em up, but then it was never intended as such – you'll be doing a lot of sneaking about and when action does happen it's fast and brutal. Sadly, the enemy's artificial intelligence is poor – they're a sharp shot when they see you, but spend much of their time obligingly standing still while you pick them off, and as you get better at the game this becomes more and more frustrating. There's some satisfaction in seeing a well-hatched plan acted out by your squad before your eyes, although it does take a certain mentality to sit through the planning process at any length. If you'd rather just get on with the action this is possibly not the game for you.

It wouldn't be unreasonable to expect a game that has been delayed this long to be free of bugs and glitches but sadly this isn't the case with *Rainbow Six*. In one instance, one of the training missions crashed on every one of our attempts – an unforgivable fault that just shouldn't happen in a finished game. We didn't encounter any further instances of this happening but it hardly inspires confidence. Other than that, the game has been sharpened up considerably since we last saw it, although the graphics never really meet the standard one would hope for.

With the worrying glitches and diminishing returns offered by the artificial intelligence of the opponents, it's difficult to see the long-term benefits of owning a copy of *Rainbow Six*. If you fancy yourself as a bit of a military strategist, then by all means give it a look, but there are so many better ways of spending quality time with your Dreamcast that it's difficult to recommend as anything other than an 'almost ran'.

VERDICT

BURSTING WITH DETAIL, BUT IT GETS IN THE WAY OF HAVING FUN

UPPERS
In-depth approach • Well thought out story lines • Reasonably atmospheric • Plenty of missions

DOWNERS
Terrible enemy intelligence • Below par graphics • Clumsy planning stage • Complex controls

IN ONE HOUR We were still trying to get into it properly
WEBSITE www.redstorm.com
CHECK OUT www.planetrainbowsix.com
MAX PLAYERS 1
VIDEO MODES Bordered 50Hz

ODM RATING OUT OF 10
4
BELOW AVERAGE

PRICE: **£39.99** • PUBLISHER: **SWING** • DEVELOPER: **RED STORM**

REVIEWS ROUND-UP

DRINKING...

IT'S THE DEPTHS OF WINTER, BUT AT LEAST THERE'S A LOAD OF QUALITY GAMES OUT THERE. **DAN TRENT** AND THE TEAM GET ON THE CASE

THE LAST FEW MONTHS have seen a flurry of quality titles to go out and spend your money on, so we thought we'd expand Drinking & Thinking this month to reflect this. With Warren away in Australia (something to do with wanting to get as far away from us as possible), freelancer Steve Key joined the party.

The venue for this month's discussion is the bizarrely named Monkeychews in London's Chalk Farm. A regular haunt of reviews editor Ed, it's a low-key place and a perfect Sunday hang-out thanks to a wide range of cocktails and some very tasty food. Evenings are busier but retain a laid-back vibe and a mix of diners and mainly local drinkers...

PHOTOGRAPHY: **JOHN MILLAR**

...& THINKING

UP FOR DISCUSSION

THE *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE* TEAM TAKE SOME TIME OUT OF THE OFFICE TO DISCUSS FIVE RECENT RELEASES. THIS MONTH...

1 **LE MANS 24 HOURS**

2 **LOONEY TUNES: SPACE RACE**

LE MANS 24 HOURS

(*ODM* #14, 8/10)

A hardcore racing game with super-sharp graphics and an eye-aching 24 hour real-time race option, *Le Mans 24 Hours* impressed us from the moment we saw it. Two months on and it is still coming up with the goods...

DAN: I really like it, I think it's definitely one of the best all-round driving games on the Dreamcast... it's got elements of *F355 Challenge*'s [*ODM* #13, 8/10] seriousness but it seems a bit more accessible and varied.

ED: It looks nice and I like the handling, especially from the in-car view with the reflections in the bonnet. I particularly like the full Le Mans course with the five mile lap.

STEVE: I think it's funny that you can play for the full 24 hours if you really want to...

DAN: But obviously you can save the game when you go into the pits!

ED: Yeah, it's just as well really, but I was very impressed with the way the daytime changes to night, especially when you have it on the accelerated time. It looks great.

DAN: The thing I really like about it is that they obviously really wanted to make something quite realistic as far as the handling goes, but they've avoided the temptation to make the car set-up really complex. It's nice and simple – although perhaps a bit *too* simple...

ED: No, I like it like that.

DAN: But I like it like that too because, unlike *F1 World Grand Prix II* [*ODM* #13, 7/10], it's not baffling you with things you would never understand anyway.

ED: It's like *Metropolis Street Racer* [*ODM* #12, 9/10] because it's kind of realistic but you know it isn't really, so it's still fun to drive.

ALEX: There's not many tracks but they've picked the right ones – the ones that are fun to play and fun to learn. They're easier to learn because the track-side detail is so high, too.

ED: But the Le Mans circuit is just so long – it's almost impossible to learn!

DAN: Ahhh, but play it for long enough and, believe me, you learn!

ED: Maybe, but you can't afford to lose concentration and you've got to know exactly where you are.

DAN: And as you unlock the cars there are some which are *really* quick. It's one of the few racing games where you really get a sensation of the speed and it's pretty scary! The draw distance is huge too and that helps.

STEVE: I have to say the first time I played the Le Mans circuit I thought it was too long, but after a while I started getting the big speeds and I really enjoyed it.

ED: It's great to have a really long track though, it makes a nice difference.

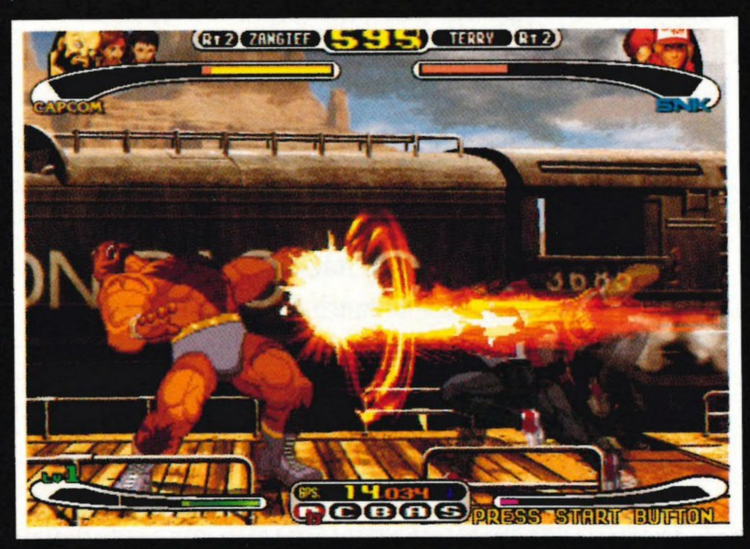
STEVE: People with short attention spans might get bored, but when you're nose to tail with someone all the way along the straight it's fantastic.

DAN: I think what's good about it is that fundamentally it is quite a formulaic racing game, but what it does it does with real quality and style.

ED: I like the music too... really good.

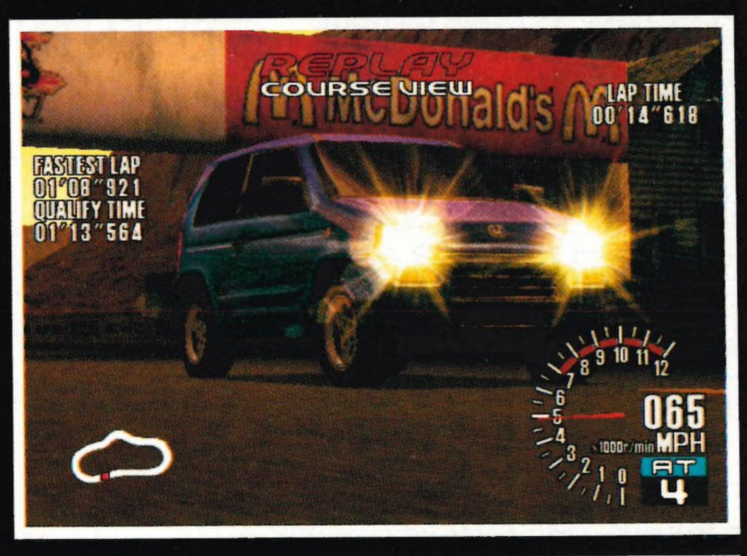
STEVE: It's been in development a long time though, hasn't it? I remember seeing stuff about this a long, long time ago.

DAN: I would be tempted to put this above *MSR* if I could only have one driving game on my Dreamcast.



3 **CAPCOM Vs SNK**

4 **DINO CRISIS**



5 **SEGA GT**

LOCATION • Monkeychews can be found at 2 Queens Crescent, Chalk Farm, London. Call them on 020 7267 6406 for further information.

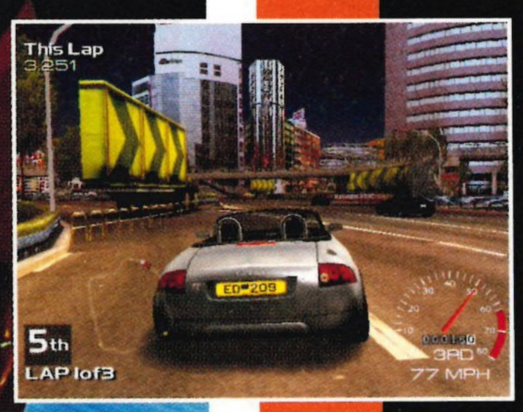
S593 Branch & Function
S593-02
S593-03

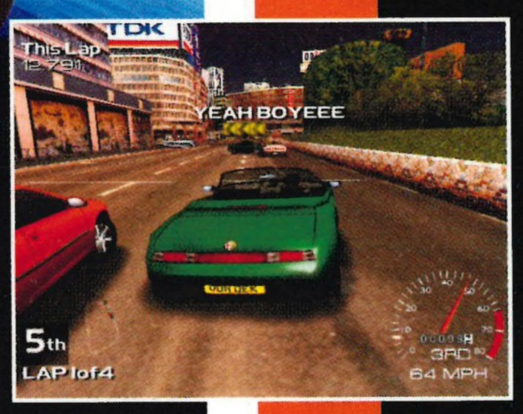
MP

HOW DID THEY DO THAT?

PART ONE: MSR'S VISUALS

IN THE FIRST OF A NEW SERIES, **ADAM PHILLIPS** TAKES A CLOSE LOOK AT A PARTICULAR ACHIEVEMENT FROM THE WORLD OF DREAMCAST, STARTING WITH THE NOW LEGENDARY GRAPHICS FEATURED IN THE MIGHTY *METROPOLIS STREET RACER*





THE ACHIEVEMENT

It was worth its wait in gold. The paranoid among us had begun to doubt if it would ever even make an appearance – that all those screenshots of *Metropolis Street Racer* (*ODM* #12, 9/10) were some kind of cruel PR stunt dreamt up by Sega to get us salivating at the idea of a racer so stunning to look at that we would rush out and buy a Dreamcast regardless. Delays, delays and more delays almost turned the game into an industry joke. Our 'chums' over at UK Resistance (www.ukresistance.com), even ran a piss-take story saying that the latest delay had been caused by a new bin being installed in London.

And then *MSR* touched down. Our reviews maestro Ed scurried off with the review copy while the rest of *ODM* paced round like anxious, chain-smoking fathers awaiting the arrival of a newborn baby. Would it deliver the goods? Could its looks live up to the hype? Ed returned the verdict. The gameplay was outstanding but sod that, the graphics were even more stunning in the flesh.

Perhaps it's not that surprising. After all, the game *did* take three years and well over 60,000 man hours to create. The end result, though, has stormed the games charts and has had every magazine from us 'serious' gamers to the usually lip service-paying gaming flakes on 'lifestyle' magazines dribbling over its drop-dead gorgeous looks. So, *MSR* finally delivered the goods. But how did they go about creating those graphics. The perfectly modelled cars? The exquisite-looking cities? Read on…

THE AMBITION

MARTIN CHUDLEY, PROGRAMMER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR. "AFTER A LOT OF ART EXPERIMENTATION WITH GENERIC CITIES AND SET PIECES, WE REALISED THE MOST IMPRESSIVE AND CHALLENGING WAY TO GO WAS TO BASE THE GAME IN REAL CITIES, USING REAL CARS"

So where did the initial idea for such an ambitious project come from? *ODM* asked company boss and programmer, Martin Chudley

WITH SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE end result, Bizarre Creation's initial idea for the game must have not only been ambitious but rather daunting. When Sega approached them to design and develop a racing game, it was Bizarre that opted for the idea of city-based races. "Soon after we started, we thought cities would be a dramatic environment to use for racing," explains Martin Chudley, managing director and *MSR*'s main programmer. "After a lot of art experimentation with generic cities and set pieces, we realised the most impressive and challenging way to go was to base the game in real cities, using real cars."

In fact, Martin readily admits that the graphics initially led the way for the game, with the game design following on from there. "We have worked hard to make the cities seem realistic in all respects – from the lighting to the weather," continues Martin, "and we also wanted to make sure that the cars looked real rather than like the super-shiny 'plastic' cars featured in some other games!"

But were such heady ambitions daunting for the team? "Not at all," reckons Martin. "The artist's ambition is the thing that drives our technology, really. They model things with far too many polygons and textures, and then it's up to the programmers to make it work! Some had already worked on building 18 real-life circuits for *Formula 1* (PlayStation) and so could plan how to go about making *MSR*."

△ Landmarks, gradient, streetmarkings – it's all there...

△ You'll know your way around if you ever visit Tokyo!

THE EXECUTION

MSR's impressive graphics are split into two distinctive areas – the cars and the cities. *ODM* talked to some of the artists behind each to find out what challenges *MSR* threw up

STEVE HEANEY, SENIOR 3D ARTIST. "THE PROBLEM [WITH THE MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO VI] WAS DUE TO CONFLICTING SOURCES OF REFERENCE – BODY KIT VARIATIONS, PHOTOS AND BROCHURES"

THE CARS

FORTY-EIGHT CARS ARE featured in *MSR*. A colossal amount by any standard, but all the more impressive because the game features the most accurately rendered cars ever seen in a videogame. Was it tough? Of course – just ask senior 3D artist, Steve Heaney. "In the beginning, we had to compile a list of cars, which did chop and change as various manufacturers went in or out of negotiations with us," Steve explains. "When it was finally decided upon, we compiled a list of materials that we needed for research – such as schematics and photos of the cars in question. This included a focus on specific bodywork moulding detail, along with badge and logo details. The information was used not only to construct the 3D representation of all the vehicles but also provided us with info upon which to create the car texture sets [the 'skin' of the car]."

But were the car manufacturers helpful? The majority of research material was gleaned from specifications in the cars' technical brochures and, according to Steve, "from site/showroom visits with a camera and a big ruler! We visited showrooms for most of the research, but even that proved problematic, and some cars like the Vauxhall VX220 weren't actually in existence at the time!"

Individual cars also threw up specific visual challenges for the artists, such as the Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VI. "The problem was mainly due to conflicting sources of reference – such as body kit variations, photos and brochures," explains Steve. "At first glance, most people didn't spot any differences, but after I had built the EVO VI from one source of reference, a few fellow team members started comparing it to conflicting sources of reference. Eventually, we managed to sort it out and I was able to correct the final model along with the detail levels."

Such unique issues aside, creating each car was a long-winded process, as Steve explains. "The length of time to create a high detail car, texture it and then create the accompanying five levels of detail usually took me around three days to complete."

Many cars were built more than once over the course of the project, as the team periodically re-worked aspects to refine and update it. After each car was signed off in-house it was inspected by the car manufacturers, to ensure they were happy with how their motors were being presented. Only then could they be unleashed on the public.

△ The Fiat Barchetta is one of the first cars you can use.

JON DUGDALE, SENIOR 3D ARTIST. "[TO CREATE THE INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE CITIES] WE ENDED UP WITH OVER 40,000 PHOTOS AND 40 HOURS OF VIDEO FOOTAGE TO WORK FROM"

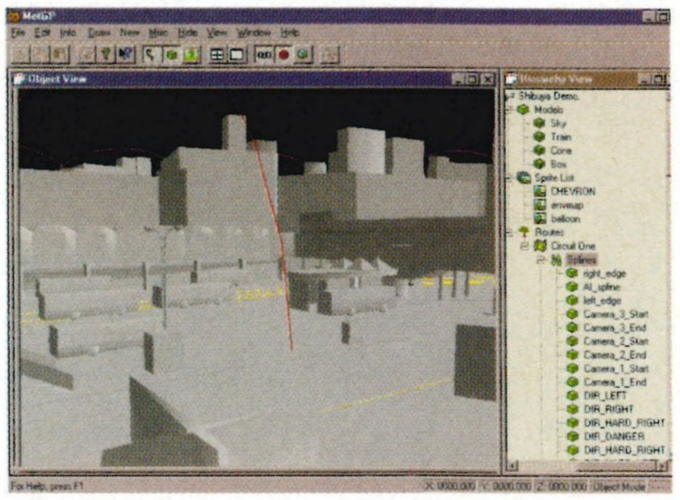
THE CITIES

WHILE WE ARE USED to accurate representations of cars in racing games, Bizarre Creation's pursuit of creating perfect renditions of London, San Francisco and Tokyo has bordered on the anal. *MSR* features around two square kilometres per area, with three areas per city. That's 18 square kilometres total in the game! The most important research element was actually visiting the cities. "Normally, three artists researched an area," explains Jon Dugdale, another senior 3D artist. "Two worked as photographers and one as a cameraman. The cameraman helped build a good understanding of the 3D space, and the photographs provided textures for the buildings and street furniture. There were some repeat visits, and for each city we had a resident contract photographer to fill in the missing pieces."

Each city had to be instantly recognisable, with as many landmarks as possible. "Tourist maps and Internet images were used to get a feel for the place and to decide which locations to build. The next stage was to get a good quality map with height data. This map was imported into SoftImage [3D package] to be used as a template for spline generation [splines are curved guidelines used in 3D model creation]."

The team ended up with about 50 different maps of the areas, and 20 or so aerial photographs. "The bulk of the data is in the photographs and videos – we ended up with over 40,000 photos and 40 hours of video footage to work from," says Jon. "The next

△ To make the cities look this good takes ages...



△ MetGP – the program which helped lay out the cities.

stage was building a driveable surface, so the area could actually be driven in the game," he adds. "The spline template was used with the height data to produce a mesh [a surface made up of polygons]. Although not complete, this rough driveable surface provided enough information for artists and programmers to continue with the fine tuning, by actually exporting it into the game's 3D engine and driving a car around it!"

So what challenges did each city throw up? "Japan has no street names, so organising the research was a big jigsaw," says Jon. "Plus all research was in Japanese! Pacific Heights in San Francisco had so many individual buildings that controlling the polygon count was intense. Finally, London is very ornate and required a heavy texture application process."

From initial city selection to basic, untextured driveable areas, each city took roughly four weeks to create. And then the fine tuning could begin...

THE END RESULT

PAUL SPENCER, 3D ARTIST. "TWEAKING THE LIGHTING WAS HELLISH AND TOOK ABSOLUTELY AGES. BUT IT REALLY DOES LOOK QUITE GOOD!"

ODM asked the *MSR* team to offer their views on the finished product

AS YOU'LL KNOW BY now, the results speak for themselves. There are 41 main cars and seven cheat vehicles, 18 square kilometres on tap, and 257 tracks to blaze round. But does each artist have a particular element that they are especially proud of? "Managing to get Pacific Heights in to texture memory!" reckons Mike Sharratt, another senior 3D artist on *MSR*. "It was a complete nightmare with a lot of individual buildings – there was a lot of jiggery pokery going on there, I can tell you!

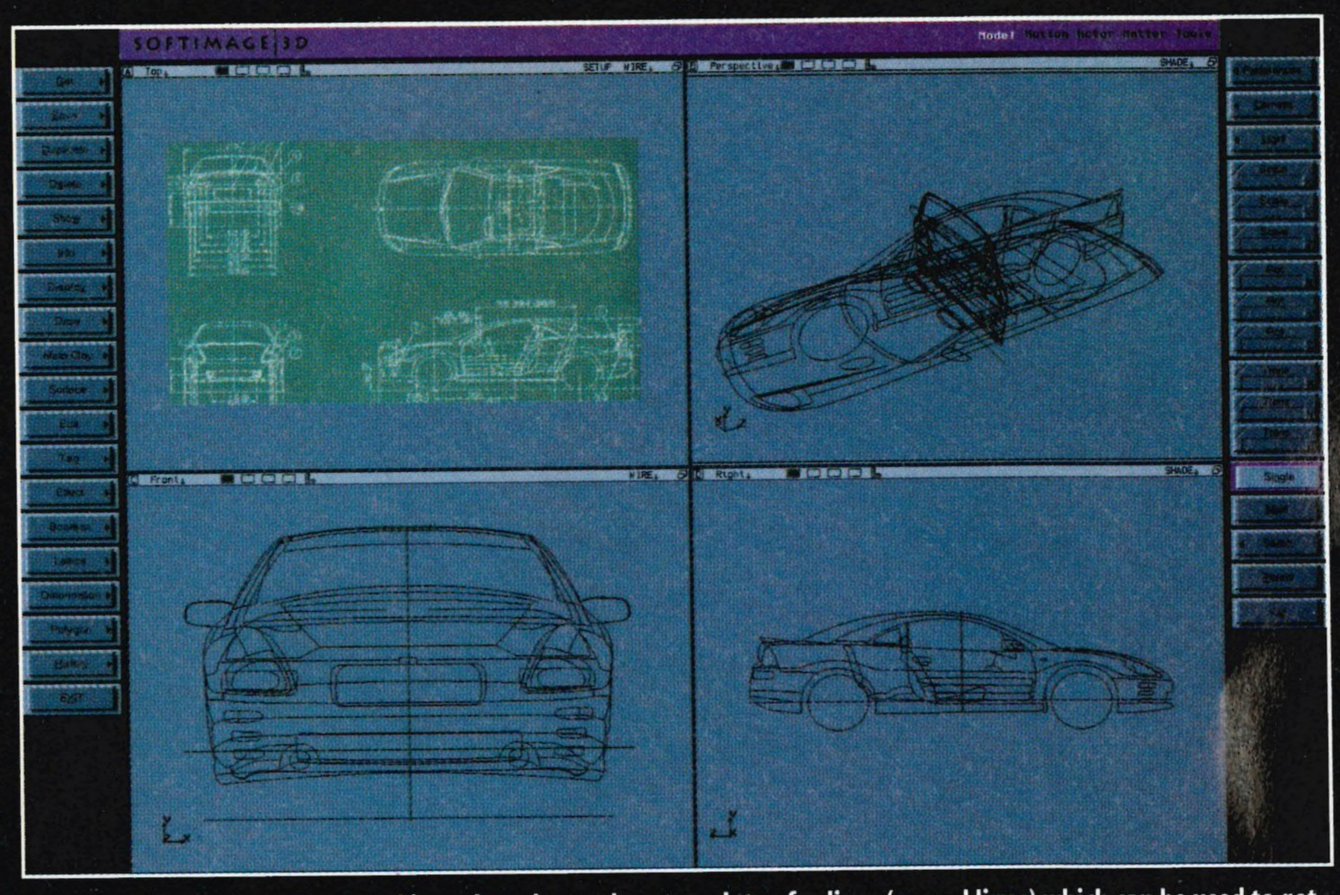
"The whole of Asakusa at night," offers 3D artist Paul Spencer. "Tweaking the lighting was hellish and took absolutely ages. But after all the hard work, it really does look quite good! Even if I do say so myself!"

Let's be frank, though – every creative always thinks that something could have been done better and *MSR*'s team is no exception. "It would have been nice to have had more lighting and night-time stuff," says Mike. "The methods we used weren't really that flexible or full-featured. Therefore, you couldn't have lights slowly switching on during the evening, and any building with a night-time texture on it wouldn't be affected by any lights in the scene so it was a bit clumsy. Also, the car headlights didn't light up the scenery enough."

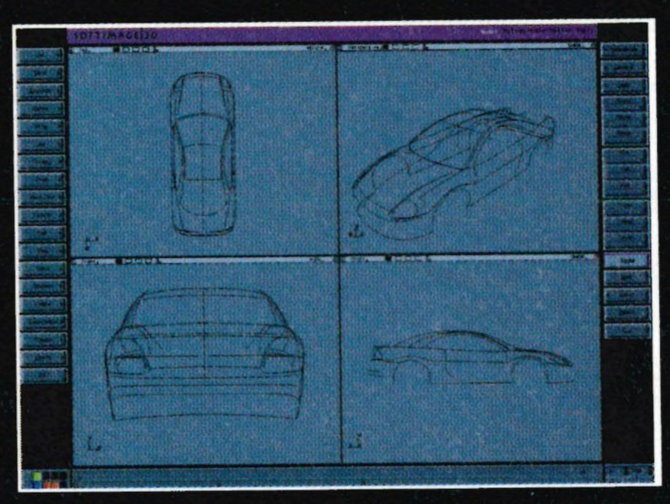
So, can we expect to see these elements present in a sequel? Over to Martin Chudley... "A sequel?!?! Give us a chance, we're still trying to recover from this one!!!"

THE CASE STUDY

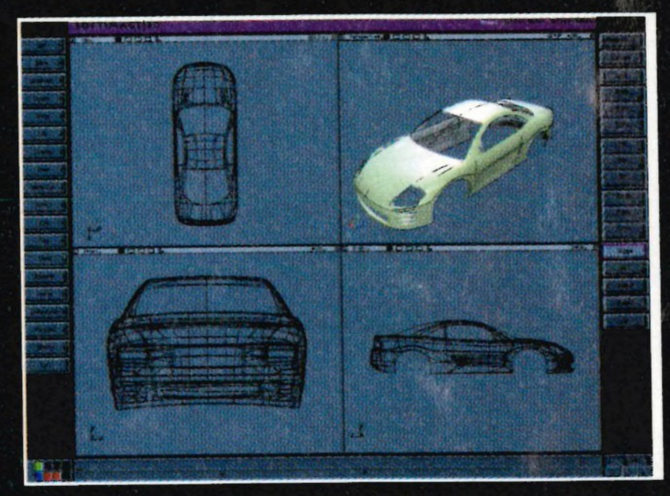
ODM takes a closer look at how the Mitsubishi Eclipse was produced for the game



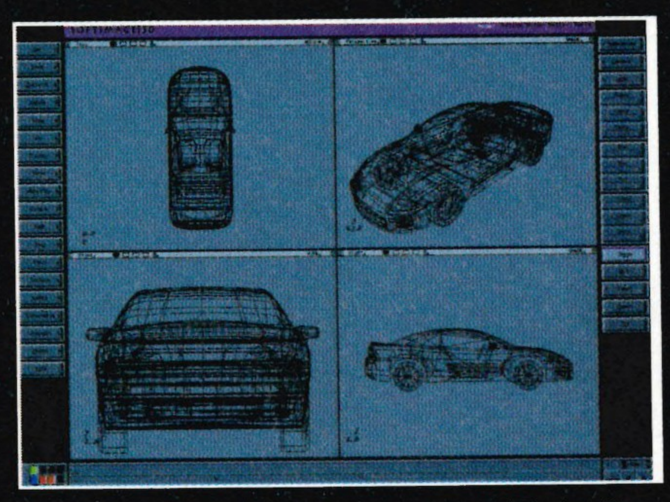
△ The car schematics are scanned in and used to make a template of splines (curved lines) which can be used to get the details of the model accurate.



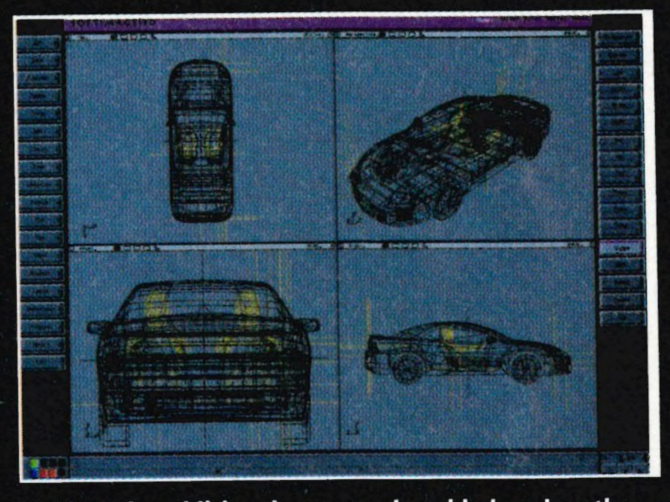
△ This is used to make a basic spline template of the car – like a 3D model just showing the 'edges' to build to.



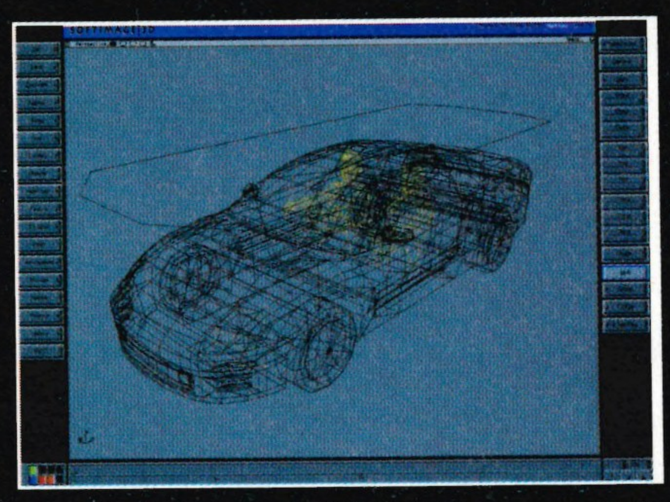
△ Using polygons, the car mesh is built up over the spline template, to get a representative 3D model of the car.



△ The mesh is fleshed out to produce the high-detail model using the polygon limit set by programmers.



△ Then the additional parts can be added, such as the driver models and headlights, steering wheel, etc.



△ The final wireframe car. This model has a second shell built on top for the environment mapping. The lower detail (perspective) models can now be built.

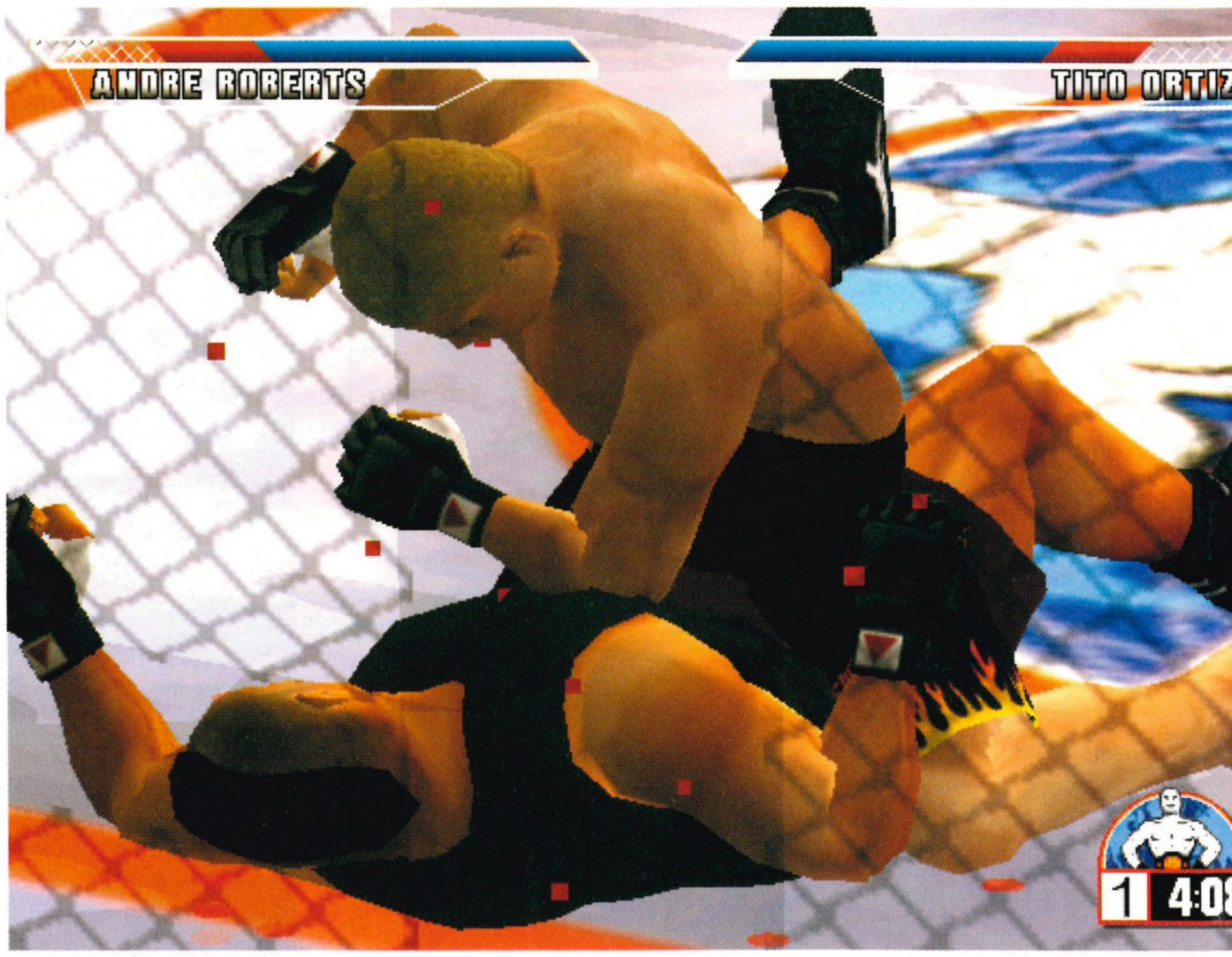
△ The textures [the 'colouring in' of the mesh] are added. This takes time as the textures need to be applied carefully in order to look correct from all angles.

IN THE HOT SEAT

WITH MIKE GIVENS

THE ASSOCIATE PRODUCER OF *ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP* AT CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE* READERS

COMING UP: NEXT ISSUE WE'LL BE PRINTING THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS YOU PUT TO ID SOFTWARE, DEVELOPERS OF *QUAKE III ARENA*



△ The real-life fighters were excited to see themselves in the game. Well, it makes a change from being in traction.

PROFILE

Crave Entertainment are one of the biggest developers and publishers in the USA, having released many of the biggest games of the last few years. They recently set up in Europe and published Dreamcast titles such as *Aerowings* (*ODM* #1, 6/10), *Super Magnetic Neo* (*ODM* #12, 6/10), *Tokyo Highway Challenge* (*ODM* #3, 5/10) and the excellent *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* (*ODM* #10, 8/10).

However, at the end of last year they pulled out of the UK publishing market, handing over titles such as *Ultimate Fighting Championship* (*ODM* #13, 9/10) to Ubi Soft. We passed on your questions to Mike Givens, the associate producer of the fantastic game.

FIGHTING FIT

How did the fighters feel about the way they are portrayed in the game? Did any of them threaten you to make them look good?

DAN HILLAGE, VIA EMAIL

MIKE GIVENS: They were quite excited to see themselves in the game, and were very helpful in telling us about the individual fighting moves they do that set them apart from the other fighters.

ARE YOU HARD ENOUGH?

Do you think that *UFC* is hard to get into, because the difference between beginners bashing the buttons and two really good players is enormous?

PAUL NYE, VIA EMAIL

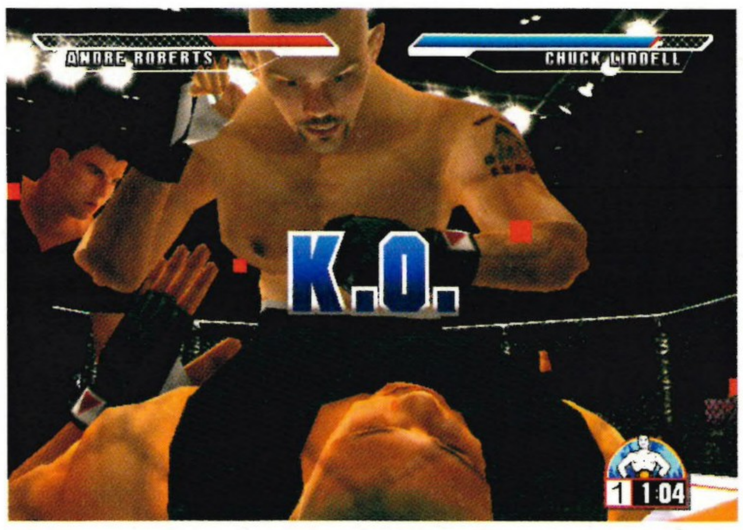
MG: I believe that there's a learning curve that allows the better player to come out on top, but the moves and timing are not too hard to learn. With some practice anyone can dominate.

VIDEO NASTIES

Did you have to watch all the real-life *UFC* videos? They make me feel really sick.

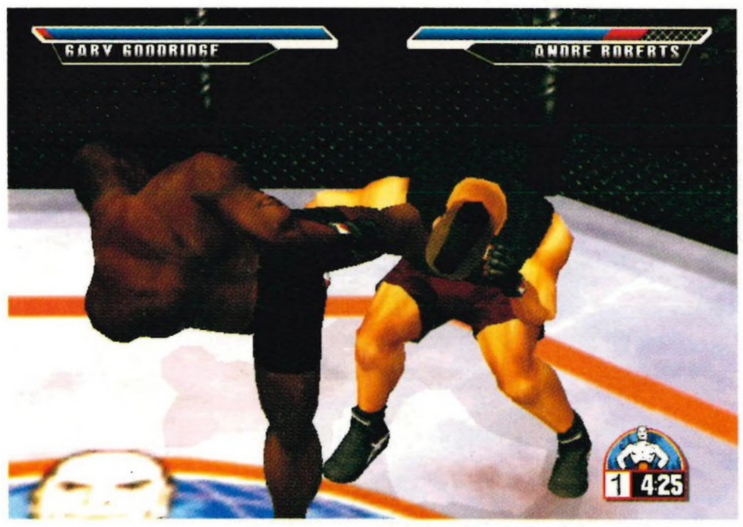
J. CALENTE, MANCHESTER

MG: Yes, I spent many weeks watching all the fights from *Ultimate Fighting Championships* 1 to 27. This turned out to be very useful while creating the game – I had a much, much deeper understanding as to how the fights play out, which allowed me to translate those nuances into the game.

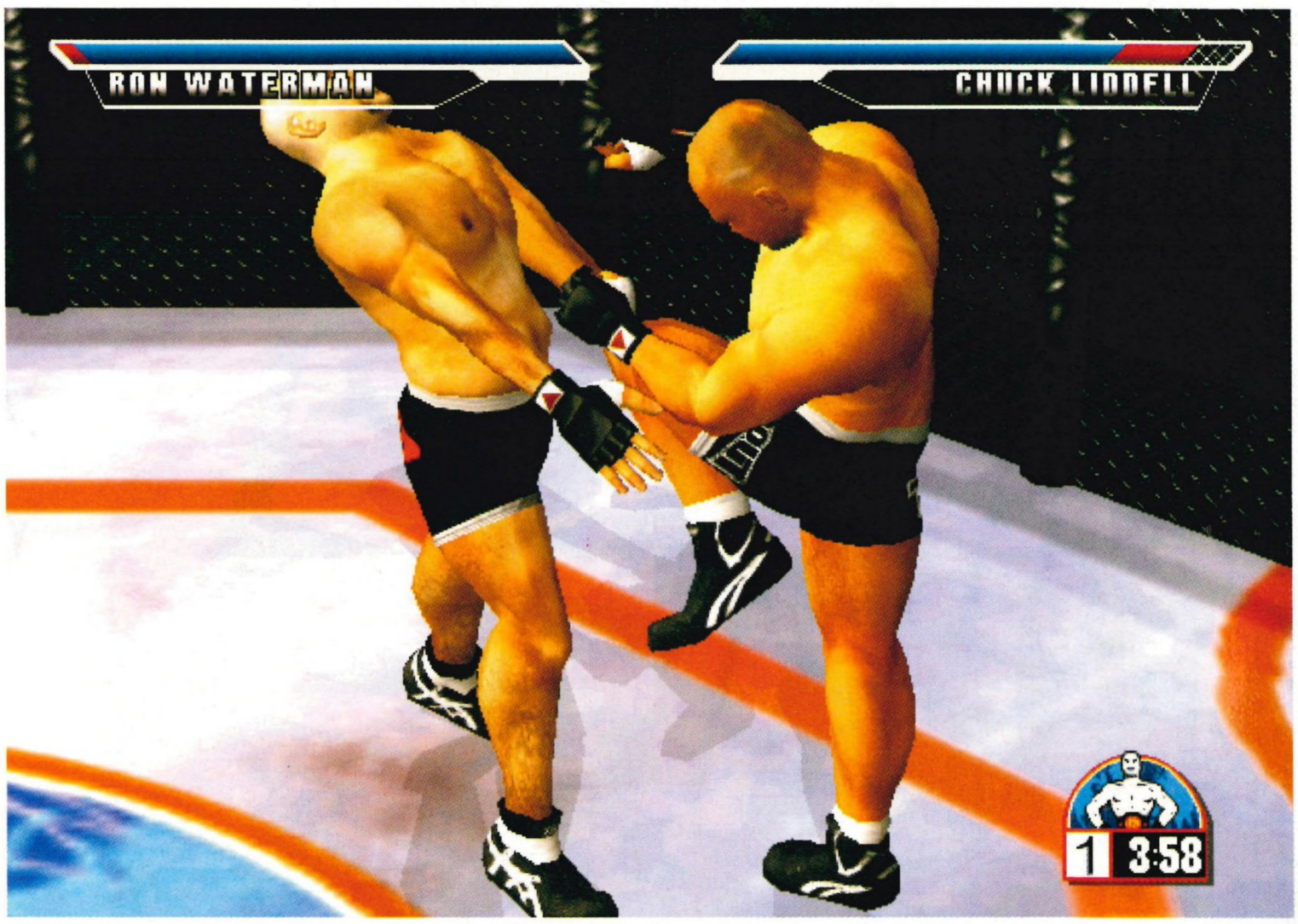


△ That'll be your cue to stop hitting him.

△ How's about that for a finishing move?



△ Don't even ask where that punch landed...



△ Moral of the story: never get in the way of a man's cancan rehersals, especially if he's got less hair than you.

HISTORY LESSON

What other games have members of the *UFC* development team worked on?

BEN RUDNICK, VIA EMAIL

MG: The development team is a mix of really talented people that worked on various titles such as *Tekken* [Namco], *Tobal No. 1* [Squaresoft], *Fighting Vipers* [Sega] and *Toy Fighter* [Sega].

DIFFICULTY DIFFICULTIES

What was the most difficult part of making *Ultimate Fighting Championship*?

PETE COWASJI, LONDON

MG: I would have to say it was the play balance. Making the game fair whether you're on the ground or standing was a bit of a challenge – but I feel that it turned out okay, allowing the player to counter just about any move that is thrown at him/her.

FIGHTING FAVOURITES

What fighting games, if any, influenced *Ultimate Fighting Championship*?

G. KEOGH, VIA EMAIL

MG: I would have to say titles like *Tekken* and *Tobal No. 1* were a great influence on my ideas for the game. *Tekken* had the great linker moves that required perfect timing, and *Tobal No. 1* gives you the ability to counter any move. So I would say that these titles were the biggest influence on me for *Ultimate Fighting Championship*.

DREAMCAST DIFFERENCES

I only own a Dreamcast, but I have heard that for the PlayStation version *Ultimate Fighting Championship* had completely different moves. Why?

AMIR MOOSAVI, VIA EMAIL

MG: I wouldn't say that the game has completely different moves, but due to the PlayStation's constraints there are not as many moves as the Dreamcast version. There are many moves that both games share, but the PlayStation does have a few unique moves to add a plus to the PlayStation version.

ALRIGHT FOR FIGHTING

When you were researching the game, did you have to go and watch any actual *UFC* events? If yes, how violent were the fights?

RICHARD ROWLEY, VIA EMAIL

MG: We did go to some fights, and they were quite violent to the average viewer. But the fighters are very well trained and know how to take a hit, or relieve the pressure from a choke. I've even had Eugene Jackson demonstrate choke moves on me and how to get out of them – you'd be surprised how much position and technique are involved in these manoeuvres.

ULTIMATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Have you considered doing a wrestling game like *UFC*? It would be much better than the rubbish ones we've had so far!

MARC WESTON, GLASGOW

MG: Well, we haven't thought about doing a wrestling game, but that would be a great idea.

HOW REAL?

I think the game is amazing. The counters and blockings were what really impressed me most. Are all the counters and blocks used in real life?

AMIR MOOSAVI, VIA EMAIL

MG: All the moves in *Ultimate Fighting Championship* are based on real moves. We spent a lot of time studying moves and counters, which we incorporated into the game. Our main goal was to achieve a certain realism that required these types of moves.

MISSING PEOPLE

Why did you choose not to include some of the earlier *UFC* fighters such as Don Frye, Dan Severn, and Jerry Bohlander?

ANTHONY, WALES

MG: Our choices are based on the top 22 current fighters. We felt that adding Ken Shamrock (since he hadn't fought for a while) was like adding Babe Ruth to a modern baseball game.

POETRY IN MOTION

How much motion-capture did you have to do to get the animation in *UFC* so realistic?

LISA HANNEMAN, VIA EMAIL

MG: We didn't use any at all. All the animation was done by hand by our talented development team.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE DEVELOPERS OF *TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2*?

The developers of the radical *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* (*ODM* #15, 9/10), Treyarch, will be In The Hot Seat in a couple of months' time, so we need your questions. Whatever you want to ask them about the game and its development, send it to us as soon as possible at questions@dreamcastmag.co.uk, or Treyarch In The Hot Seat, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF.

HINTS & TIPS

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Complete moves list and guide to extra scenes

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SHENMUE

PLAYER COMPANION PART 2

FOLLOWING ON FROM LAST MONTH'S GUIDE TO DOBUITA'S HIDDEN CHARMS, WE GIVE YOU A COMPLETE MOVES LIST AND DETAILS OF SOME BITS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED. **ED LOMAS** IS YOUR GUIDE

MOVES LIST

Here's a list of moves that Ryo can use in the Free Battle fight sections. Most of them are available from the start of the game, while others need to be bought, found or learned from certain characters. These moves are marked, and we've got details on how to collect them all.

HAND MOVES

Tiger Knuckle	X
Elbow Slam	Forward + X
Pit Blow (Learned)	Forward + X
Twist Knuckle	Back + X
Elbow Assault	Forward, Forward + X
Upper Knuckle	Back, Back + X
Sleeve Strike	Forward, Back + X
Rain Thrust	Back, Forward + X
Twin Blades (Learned)	Back, Forward, Forward + X
Rising Flash (Bought)	Forward, Back, Back + X
Big Wheel	X + A
Twin Hand Waves	Forward + X + A
Double Blow (Learned)	Forward + X + A
Backfist Willow	Back + X + A
Avalanche Lance	Forward, Forward + X + A
Katana Mist Slash	Back, Back + X + A
Stab Armor (Learned)	Forward + X + A

LEG MOVES

Crescent Kick	A
Trample Kick	Forward + A
Side Reaper Kick	Back + A
Against Cascade	Forward, Forward + A
Surplice Slash	Back, Back + A
Thunder Kick	Forward, Back + A
Hold Against Leg	Back, Forward + A
Mud Spider (Bought)	Back, Forward, Forward + A
Crawl Cyclone (Bought)	Forward, Back, Back + A
Swallow Dive (Learned)	Back + A
Tornado Kick (Learned)	Forward, Forward + A, A
Brutal Tiger	Forward, Back + X + A
Dark Moon	Back, Forward + X + A
Twin Swallow Leap (Bought)	Back, Forward, Forward + X + A

THROWS

Overthrow	B
Sweep Throw	Forward + B
Vortex Throw	Back + B
Vortex Knee Drop	Back + B, then Forward, Back + A
Mist Reaper	Forward, Forward + B
Demon Drop	Back, Back + B
Shoulder Buster	Forward, Back + B
Tengu Drop	Back, Forward + B
Back Twist Drop	B (from behind)
Darkside Hazuki	B (from the side)
Tiger Storm (Bought)	Back, Forward, Forward + B, B
Arm Break Fire (Bought)	Forward, Back, Back + B

RUNNING ATTACKS

Done while holding the L trigger to run.

Mistral Flash	X
Cyclone Kick	A
Windmill	X + A
Shadow Reaper (Learned)	Y + A

COUNTER ATTACKS

To counter attack, press the B button just as an opponent punches at you. You should grab them and put them in an arm lock. From here you have a number of options:

Neck Elbow	X
Knee	A
Straight Kick at another opponent	Any direction + A
Arm Break	Wait a second

There is another counter attack which can be learned:

Swallow Flip (Learned)	Back + X, A
Chest Strike	Back + X, A, then X

DODGES

Pressing the Y button and a direction lets you dodge around the fight arena. You can also press it to avoid an attack, just as your opponent goes for you. If you duck under their attack, there are a number of ways of hitting back from the ducking position:

Uppercut	X
Swing Kick	A
Forward Roll	X + A
Uppercut, or a kick counter	B
Shadow Step (Learned)	Forward + Y + B
Shadow Blade (Learned)	Forward + Y + B, X
Cross Charge (Learned)	Forward, Forward + Y + B

GRAPPLES

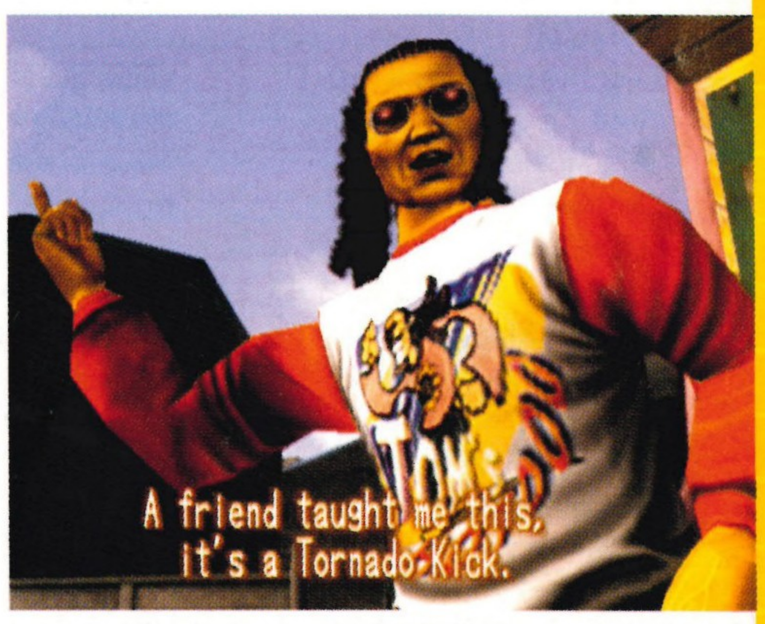
If you use the B button to throw an opponent when you're too far away from them, Ryo will grab them by the neck and hold them ready for more hits.

Stomach Punch	X
Two Stomach Punches	X, X
Stomach Punch, Straight Kick	X, A
Knee	A
Throw	B

COMBOS

By tapping the buttons quickly in order, Ryo can link attacks together.

Punch x 2, Straight Kick	X, X, A
Punch x 3, Jump Kick	X, X, X, A
Punch x 2, Elbow, Chop	X, X, Forward + X, X
Punch x 2, Elbow, Knee	X, X, Forward + X, A
Punch x 7, Elbow Assault	X, X, X, X, X, X, X, X
Punch x 2, Low Kick, Spin Kick x 2	X, X, Back + A, A, A
Punch, High Kick, Spin Kick x 2	X, A, A, A
High Kick, Spin Kick x 2	A, A, A
High Kick, Spin Punch, Jump Kick	A, X, A
High Kick, Punch x 5, Elbow Assault	A, X, X, X, X, X, X



△ **Funky Tom will teach you how to do the Tornado Kick.**

△ **"Heey Ryo, mon! Haw da yu laaik tha lista mooves heeah? Reel gruuuvie, yeh!"**

SPECIAL MOVES

LEARNED MOVES

These are moves you are able to learn on your way through the story. Some happen automatically, while others can only be learned if you speak to the right people at the right times, or find the move scrolls.

1 TWIN BLADES

Disc 1: This scroll is found in the laundry basket in the hallway of the Hazuki residence, just outside the door to the shrine.

PIT BLOW

Disc 1: On the second day, go to the dojo in the morning and Fuku-san will then teach you this move which replaces the Elbow Slam.

2 DOUBLE BLOW

Disc 1: Once you've spoken to Nozomi and Tom about the people in the black car, go to Suzume Park between 15:00 and 18:00 where you'll find Yamagishi-san who will teach you a replacement for the Twin Hand Waves.

STAB ARMOR

Disc 2: In the basement of the dojo, turn right when you enter the room and pick up the scroll on top of the books. To get it translated, phone Master Chen (61-5647) and then head to Old Warehouse #8.

3 SWALLOW DIVE

Disc 3: When you meet Gui-Zang down at the harbour, you will automatically be taught the move.

SHADOW REAPER

Disc 1: In Fuku-san's bedroom you'll find this scroll sitting on his desk.

SHADOW STEP

Disc 3: After your first full day of work at the harbour, go to the homeless man under the stairs near the Tomato Convenience Store.

SHADOW BLADE

Disc 3: After your second full day of work, go to the homeless man again.

4 CROSS CHARGE

Disc 3: After your fourth full day of work, go to the same homeless man.

5 TORNADO KICK

Disc 3: When you have lunch with Tom as part of the story, you'll automatically be taught the move.`

6 SWALLOW FLIP

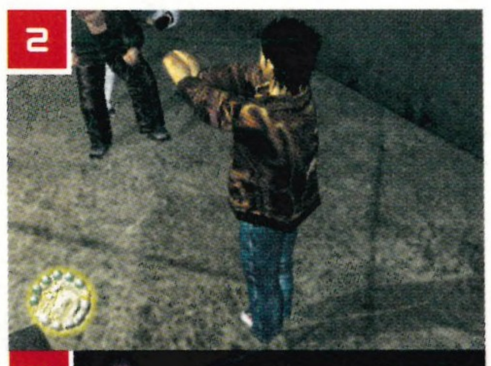
Disc 3: Master Chen will automatically teach you this special move in a cut-scene.

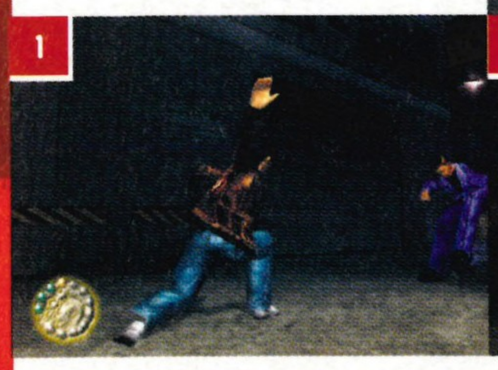
BOUGHT MOVES

These move scrolls can be found on sale in Bunkado Antiques in Dobuita. They vary in price from ¥500 to ¥3,000. Simply buy the scroll, then look at it to learn the move. Make sure you do this early on, as Ryo won't buy them after a while.

Rising Flash	¥500
Mud Spider	¥1,000
Crawl Cyclone	¥1,000
Twin Swallow Leap	¥1,000
Tiger Storm	¥2,000
Arm Break Fire	¥3,000

△ If you haven't spent all your cash in the arcade, you can buy move scrolls in the antique shop.





EXTRA SCENES

PASSPORT THEATRE SCENES

The *Shenmue* Passport Theatre lets you watch all of the cut-scenes you saw on your way through the game. Most of them happen automatically as you play, so they'll appear in the Theatre as you encounter them. A few cut-scenes can be missed if you don't do the right things though – here's how to collect the whole set.

SCENE 7

Disc 1: On the first day, when you're in the garden, look at the big tree in the corner.

SCENE 9

Disc 1: After you've had the fight in Heart Beats Bar and have been back home to get some sleep, make sure the weather is sunny and go to Sakuragaoka Park at around midday.

SCENE 12

Disc 1: After speaking to Warehouse #8 on the phone at the end of the disc, don't get straight on the bus. Instead, wait until 19:00 and then go home. At home, look at the phone and it will ring. Answer it for the scene.

1 SCENE 15

Disc 2: Once you've found the Phoenix Mirror, go to Russiya China Shop before going to meet Master Chen.

2 SCENE 25

Disc 3: After the date in the game has passed 26 December 1986, go to Game You Arcade after 19:00 to get a short cut-scene. Now head straight to Sakuragaoka Park to unlock another one.

BAD ENDING

There is actually a special 'bad' ending to *Shenmue* for those players who take too long in their adventure. If the date reaches 15 April 1987 and you then go to sleep, the bad ending will be activated.

The easiest way to get through to that date is by deliberately failing repeatedly at the section where you have to sneak past the guards to Old Warehouse #8. Each time you fail, you'll instantly move on a day and restart the section.

FIGHTS YOU MIGHT MISS

Disc 1: After the cut-scene in Sakuragaoka Park (see Scene 9), go to Okayama Heights after 19:00 for an extra Free Battle.

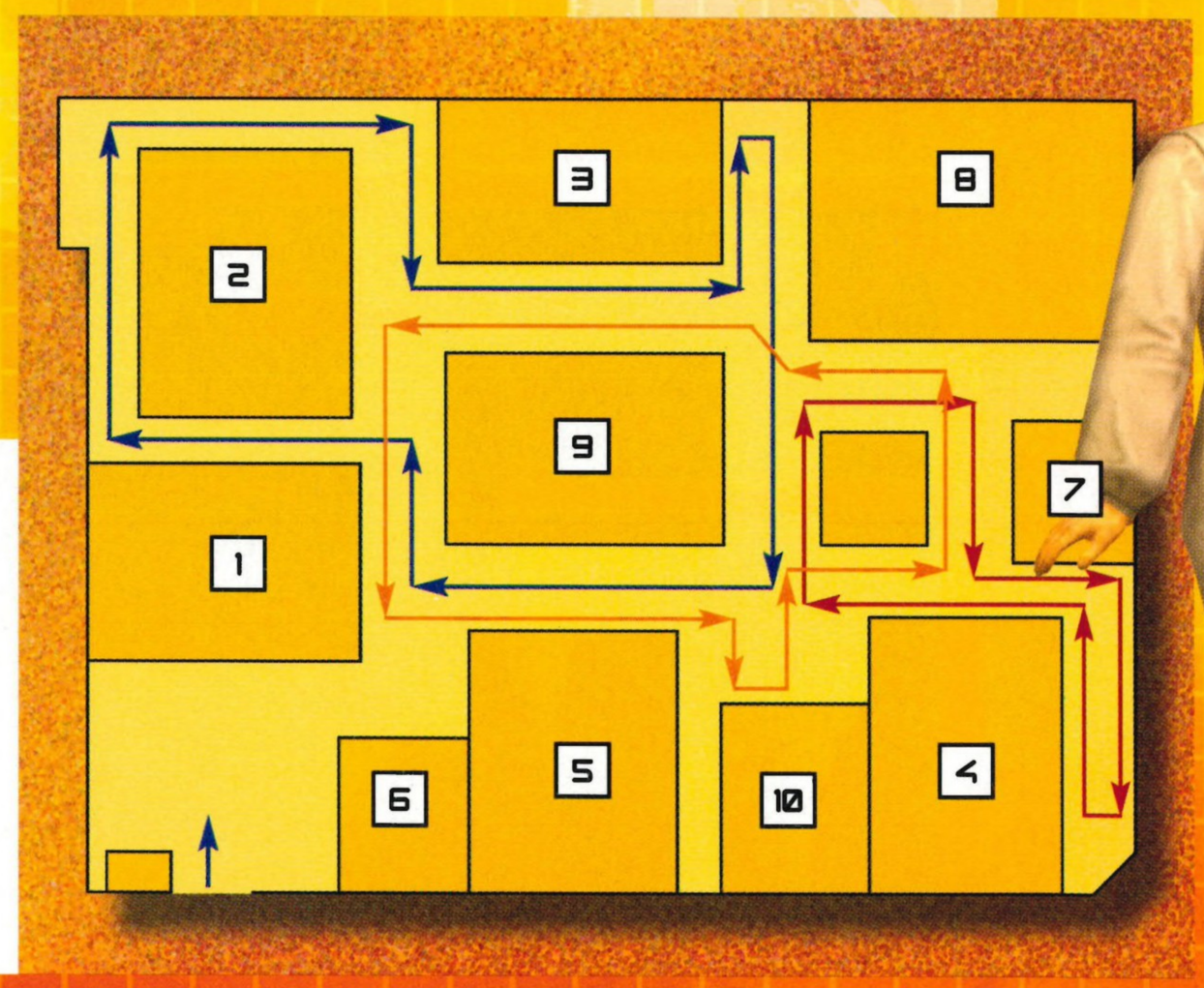
Disc 2: After you've been to the new Warehouse #8 and have tried to get into the Old Warehouse area, talk to Tom at his hot dog stand. Then talk to the lady at the lunchbox stall before going to Warehouse #17 (the one with the graffiti on the door) where you'll get a QTE.

Disc 2: At night, walk past Bar Yokosuka for an extra QTE.

That's the end of our *Shenmue* guide. If you have any queries about the game, write into our Help! department (see page 100).

GETTING TO OLD WAREHOUSE #8

If you're having trouble with the *Metal Gear Solid*-style section, where you have to avoid the guards while looking for Old Warehouse #8, this map should help. It shows the routes that the three guards take as they patrol the area. Use it to work out where it's safe to hide.



METROPOLIS STREET RACER

DRIVER'S GUIDE PART TWO

IN THE SECOND AND FINAL PART OF OUR OFFICIAL GUIDE TO *MSR*, BIZARRE CREATIONS' **GED TALBOT** OFFERS A CORNER-BY-CORNER GUIDE TO THE ONLINE CHALLENGES

INTERNET OPTIONS

1 Prove that you're the best *Metropolis Street Racer* driver in Europe! Or not, as the case may be. Yes, the online modes of *Metropolis Street Racer* are finally up and running. To access them, simply select Internet from the main menu of the game then follow the links to check out the *MSR* website (note: the option will only be highlighted if you have already registered on Dreamarena).

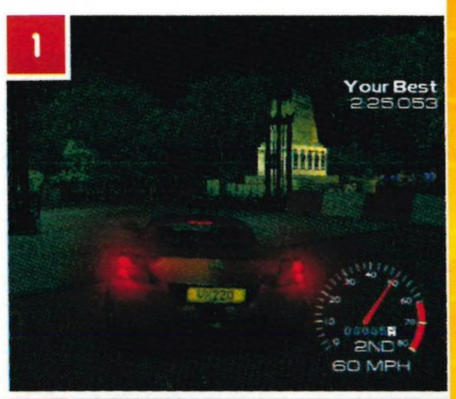
More modes are to be added in the future (watch the website for details), but for now you have the choice of either logging your total kudos points (don't bother unless you've got at least 350,000!) or entering your fastest times in the four speed challenges – San Francisco, London, Tokyo and the Three City challenge. The latter, as the name suggests, accumulates the times from the three city challenges.

2 Posting a kudos total or challenge time is easy – simply go to the relevant section of the website, follow the instructions, and then send the 68 block *MSR* data file from your VM. The upload shouldn't take more than about 40 seconds.

3 It's now too late to win prizes in the San Francisco and London challenges, (although you can still post your best times), but you have got time to enter the Tokyo (which runs from February 12 to March 9) and Three City (March 12 – April 6) speed competitions.

Here we offer a guide to getting around all three circuits in the fastest possible time. You'll need to supply your own talent. Incidentally, at the time of going to press the best times for the London and San Francisco challenges were 1:10.422 and 1:01.327 respectively. But you can do better than that, right?

1



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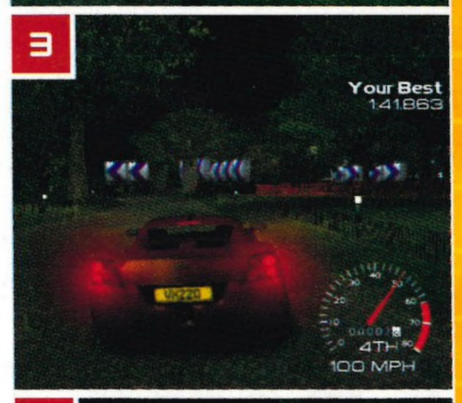

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THE LONDON SPEED CHALLENGE

1 The first corner is one of the hardest in the entire game as you're never quite sure when to start braking. The only advice we can give is to start off conservatively on the first couple of laps and then brake a little bit later with each progressive lap. You really want to enter the park in the dead centre of the road because the stone pillars at the entrance will bring the car to a complete stop if you hit one of them.

2 The park has a strange little S-bend about a third of the way down and you have to get it right if you don't want to end up in a brick wall. Use the grass verge to give you as much room as possible and try to stay as straight as you can.

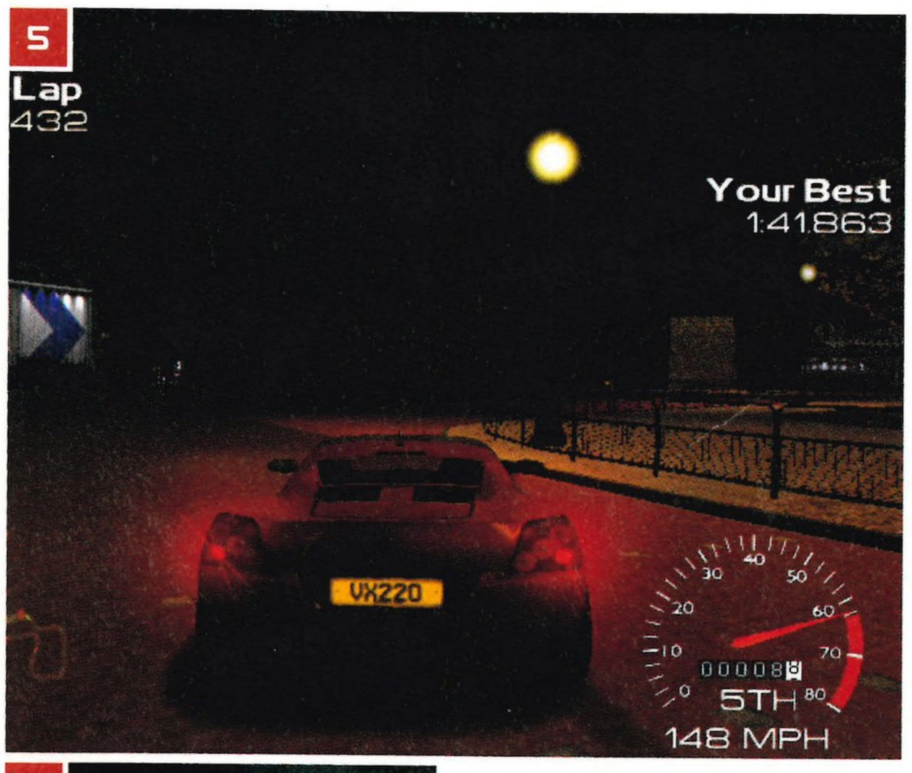
3 Along the park road you can see lots of little pillars with lights on them. As you get to the sharp corner before the bridge, use these pillars as a guide and remember to start braking hard when you get level with the second to last one.

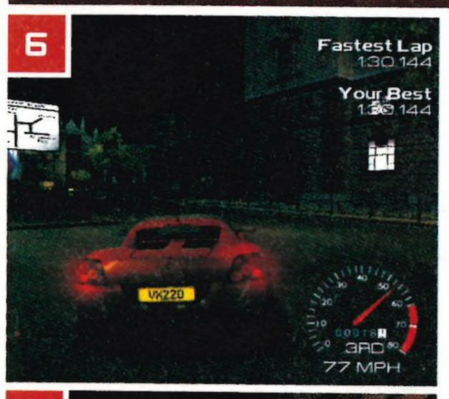
4 The corner at the entrance to the roundabout at Buckingham Palace (turn four) is another one that is deceptively tight. There is a split point some 50 metres before the corner. Use this to judge your braking distance. Stay away from the edge of the track as you can get stuck on the stone pillars along the outside railing.

5 After exiting Buckingham Palace, you take a long straight towards an extremely fast right hander (turn five). You can take this at nearly full speed if you get the angle right. Get as close to the inside curb as possible without hitting it (if you do, you'll invariably spin).

6 The second to last corner is a nightmare. The road, which is very wide up to this point, is cut up by a couple of horribly placed pedestrian crossings. Stay close to the left of the track until you get to the white sign near the directional barrier at the end of the straight. Try to enter the corner on a diagonal angle,

THE SAN FRAN SPEED CHALLENGE





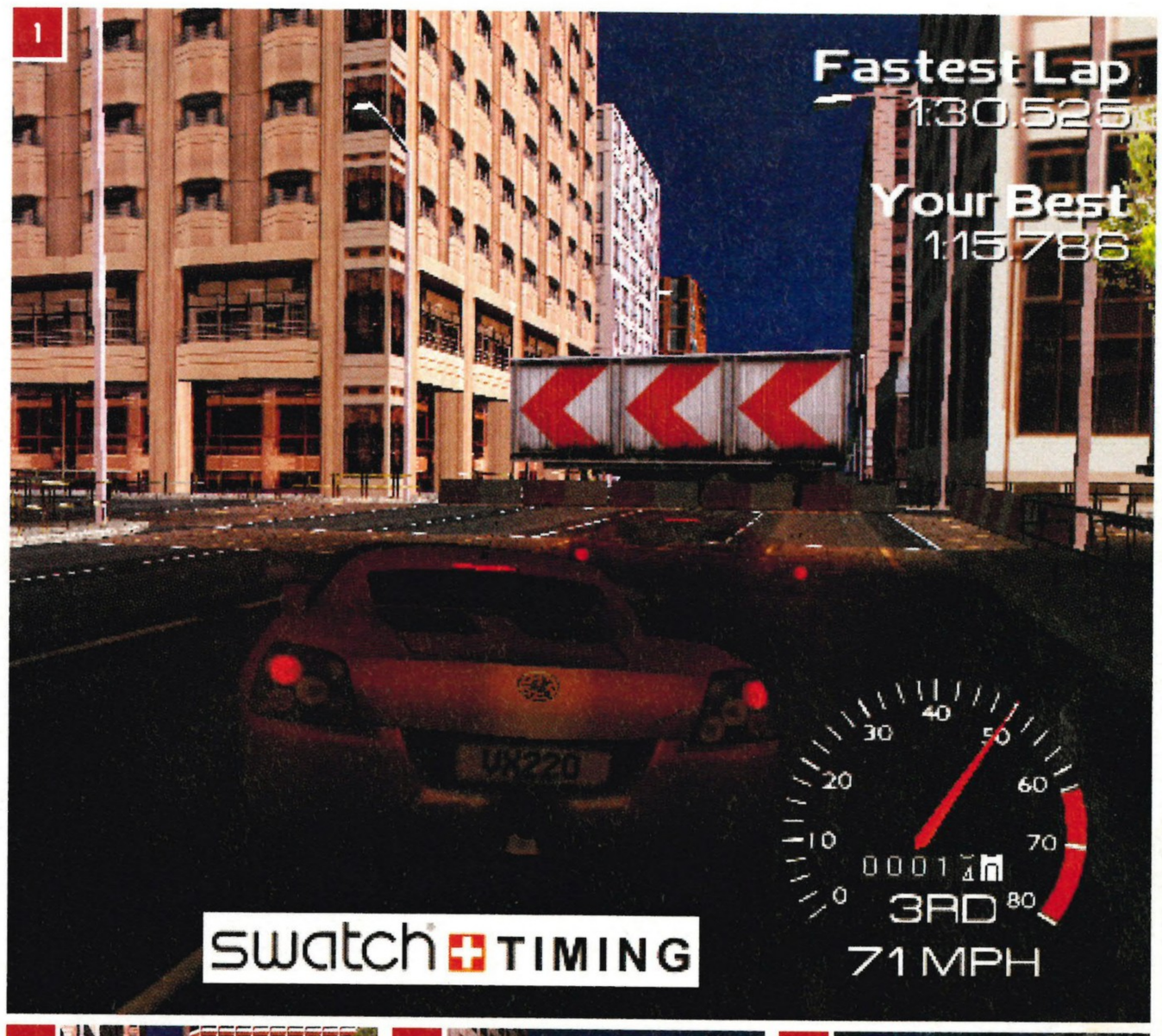
skimming past the railings under the other white sign. Now comes the hard bit...

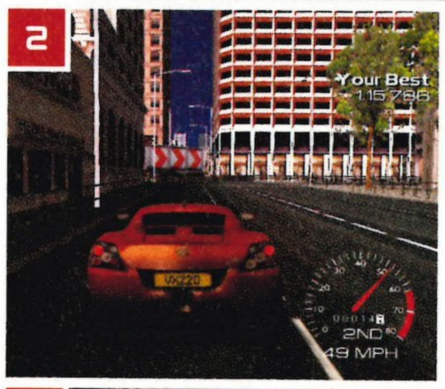
7 On the exit to the corner, the car will want to drift over to the outside but the road is partially blocked by another pedestrian crossing. If you have got it right you should be able to accelerate round the obstacle but if you find the car getting out of shape, be ready to hit the brakes.

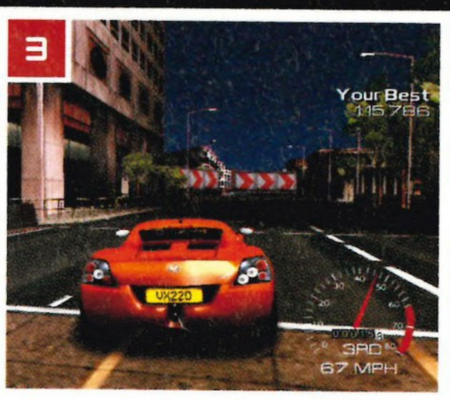
1 As you cross the line, make sure that you are on the right of the track, so you are well prepared for the first corner. You'll have to break earlier than you want to, to stop yourself sliding into the far-side barrier.

2 Turn two is very tricky, as it is very difficult to see the apex of the corner. The trick is to stay on the left side of the road until you get to the second to last lamp-post on the left. Then brake and turn into the corner. As you start the turn, keep your eyes peeled for a lamp-post. You won't be able to see it on the apex until after you have started the turn, so keep a look out and be ready to readjust your line quickly.

3 The second corner generally throws you out wide on the exit, giving you the perfect line for entering the third. Just allow the car to follow the wide line out of the second corner then you can continue through the third keeping up as much speed as possible.







4 Turn five is a 90° right-hander. You need to slow right down, because immediately after you have to throw the car left into a small back road.

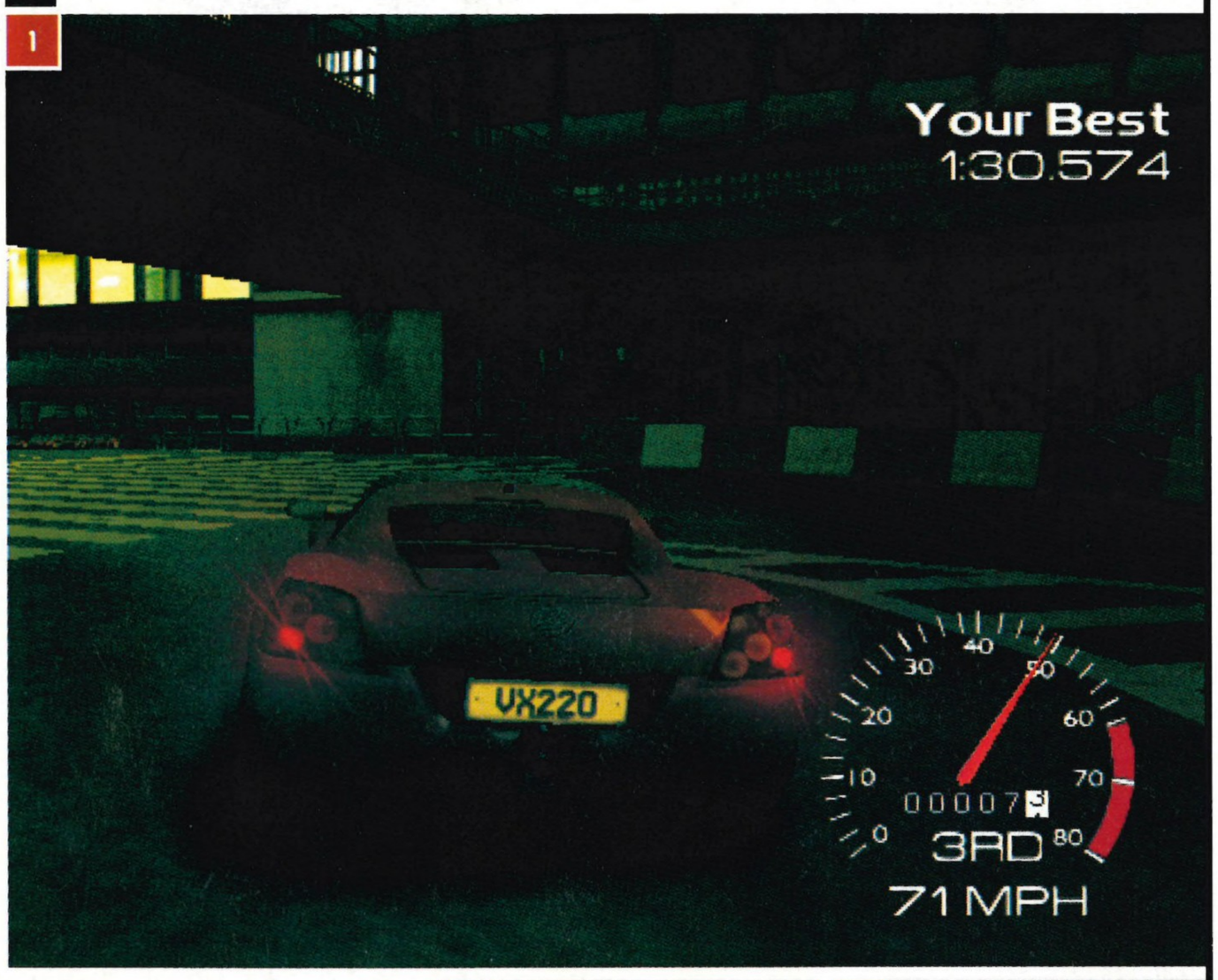
5 To get the right angle into this alley road (turn five), hug the inside of the corner, making sure that your car does not slide over to the left (you won't have time to recover and reposition yourself without hitting the railings).

6 At the end of the first straight the road splits into two, and you have to decide which route to take. The inside route (stay right) is the easier of the two, but you have to slow right down to take the curved right hander at the end of the road (turn eight). Watch for the inside railing. Taking the left route is much quicker as the corner can be taken wider (losing less speed), but be careful or else you'll hit the red and white barrier on the exit.

7 Turns nine and ten can be thought of as one long 180° corner. Stay on the left side of the track until you get halfway between the zebra crossing and the start of the corner, then break hard and turn right. Don't come in too sharply. Aim to go slightly wider, so you can hold the turn smoothly through both corners.

8 The next corner (turn 12) is another tough one, but the barrier around the inside of the corner will at least give you a clear view of the turn well in advance. As you head towards the corner, you should see a building with lots of white pillars on the left of the track. Start braking as you get to the end of this. Try not to slide, as you will almost certainly hit the railing on the outside of the corner. If you have to, use a little handbrake as you get to the apex just to help get the angle you need (make sure you are not going too fast, though).

1



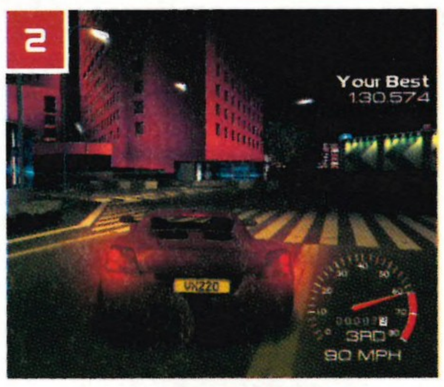
THE TOKYO SPEED CHALLENGE

1 The first tricky part here is the central reservation at turn three. This can easily catch you out if you are not careful. You should aim take the right (outside) lane, so take the corner wide to make sure you don't hit the central barriers – you can't see them as you start your turn.

2 Turn eight often comes as a complete surprise to even experienced players, as the track designers used green and white blocks to block half of the road with a set of railings along the centre. With the right side blocked, you have to brake early and stick to the inside curb like glue once you hit the apex. Don't worry too much if you go too far over – use a little handbrake to get extra turn and opposite lock to correct the slide

3 Down the long straight after corner eight there are two improved chicanes to negotiate. The second of these makes it very hard to get the car ready for turn nine (which you'll often approach with too much speed). If you don't brake enough you will drive straight into the railing at the end of the road (there isn't enough room to get the car into a wide slide). Instead, get on the brakes away after getting past the second chicane on the straight and drive around the corner as smoothly as possible

2



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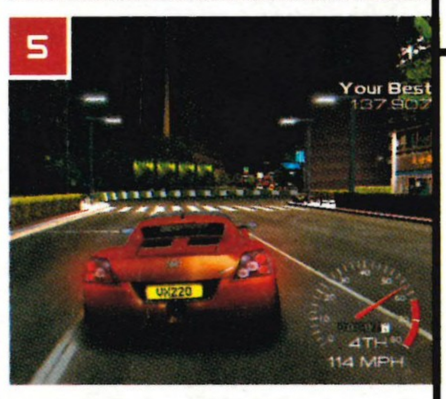

4 Corners ten and 11 are a quick left-right chicane, which are a lot easier to drive than they look. If you stay on the left hand side when you go into turn ten you won't have to come off the accelerator until you hit the apex to turn 11, where a small stab on the brake should be enough to see you safely round the corner.

5 The last corner should be approached at around 120mph. There are no real visual indicators for braking points, but as a guide you should start braking halfway between the last two trees on the left-hand side. As with many of the roads in Shinjuku, the start/finish straight here is split in two by a central reservation. Be careful that you don't turn in too sharply, as you could ruin a great lap at the very end.

THE CARS

YEP, IT'S A RUNDOWN OF EVERY CAR IN THE GAME. COLLECT 'EM ALL!

Fiat Barchetta	Free car
Mazda Miata	Free car
MGF	Free car
Opel Astra Coupé	Complete Chapter 1
Astra Sport	Bonus (Chapter 1, Stage 9, 75 kudos)
Renault Megane	Complete Chapter 2
Alfa Romeo Spider	Complete Chapter 3
Peugeot 306 Cabriolet	Bonus (Chapter 3, Stage 5, 125 kudos)
Peugeot 206	Complete Chapter 4
Peugeot 406 Coupé	Complete Chapter 5
MRS	Bonus (Chapter 5, Stage 7, 110 kudos)
MR2	Complete Chapter 6
Peugeot 306	Complete Chapter 7
Mercedes Benz SL 320	Bonus (Chapter 7, Stage 6, 145 kudos)
Mercedes Benz SLK	Complete chapter 8
Alfa Romeo 156	Complete chapter 9
Audi TT Roadster	Bonus (Chapter 9, Stage 2, 250 kudos)
Audi S3	Complete chapter 10
Alfa Romeo GTV	Complete chapter 11
Renault Spider	Bonus (Chapter 11, Stage 6, 195 kudos)
Audi TT Coupé	Complete Chapter 12
Toyota Celica	Complete Chapter 13
Toyota Celica 99	Bonus (Chapter 13, Stage 8, 185 kudos)
Fiat Coupé 20v Turbo	Complete Chapter 14
Mitsubishi FTO	Complete Chapter 15
Mitsubishi Eclipse GT	Bonus (Chapter 15, Stage 9, 225 kudos)
Mitsubishi Eclipse 99	Complete Chapter 16
Opel Speedster	Complete Chapter 17
Ford Mustang	Bonus (Chapter 17, Stage 4, 265 kudos)
Mitsubishi 3000 GT	Complete Chapter 18
Toyota Supra	Complete Chapter 19
MG RV8	Bonus (Chapter 19, Stage 10, 400 kudos)
Nissan Fairlady Z	Complete Chapter 20
Nissan Silvia	Complete Chapter 21
Toyota Celica GT-Four	Bonus (Chapter 21, Stage 5, 315 kudos)
Renault Clio V6	Complete Chapter 22
Mazda RX7	Complete Chapter 23
TVR Chimaera	Bonus (Chapter 23, Stage 7, 300 kudos)
Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VI	Complete Chapter 24
Jensen S-V8	Bonus (Chapter 24, Stage 9, 500 kudos)
Nissan Skyline GTR	Complete Chapter 25

THE BONUSES

A FULL LIST OF ALL THE BONUSES AND CHEATS IN THE GAME

Jokers	Chapter 10, Stage 7, 215 kudos, time: 16.00-2350
	Chapter 15, Stage 8, 150 kudos, time: 18.00-22.00
	Chapter 20, Stage 9, 180 kudos, time: 12.00-23.00
Garage slots	Chapter 3, Stage 10, 125 kudos
	Chapter 7, Stage 10, 145 kudos
	Chapter 12, Stage 10, 175 kudos
Funny cars	Chapter 6, Stage 10, 250 kudos, time: 08.00-12.00, Skyline
	Chapter 8, Stage 2, 225 kudos, time: 20.00-00.00, Skyline
	Chapter 12, Stage 9, 210 kudos, time: 12.00-16.00,Skyline
	Chapter 16, Stage 6, 235 kudos, time: 16.00-12.00, Skyline
	Chapter 17, Stage 1, 295 kudos, time: 04.00-08.00, Skyline
	Chapter 18, Stage 4, 360 kudos, time: 00.00-04.00, Skyline
	Chapter 20, Stage 2, 180 kudos, time: 06.00-10.00, Skyline
Weird cheats	Chapter 8, Stage 9, 225 kudos, time: 23.00-00.00, Coupe
	Chapter 10, Stage 7, 275 kudos, time: 08.10-08.40, GTO
	Chapter 11, Stage 4, 195 kudos, time: 23.50-01.00, Mustang
	Chapter 13, Stage 7, 150 kudos, time: 10.00-10.30, MGR
	Chapter 15, Stage 2, 2.00 kudos, time: 21.00-22.00, RX7
	Chapter 15, Stage 10, 3.00 kudos, time: 08.00-08.30, MRS
	Chapter 16, Stage 6, 1.00 kudos, time: 21.00-23.00, ZX
	Chapter 17, Stage 5, 350 kudos, time: 03.00-04.00, Skyline
	Chapter 21, Stage 5, 1.00 kudos, time: 18.00-22.00, RX7
	Chapter 23, Stage 10, 450 kudos, time: 14.00-14.50, Skyline
	Chapter 25, Stage 10, 101 kudos, time: 08.00-08.30, Skyline
Bonus circuits	Chapter 25, Stages 1-10, 101 kudos needed for each

That concludes our guide to *Metropolis Street Racer*. If you have any questions about the game, and how to play it, don't forget that you can write into our Help! department (see page 100 for details).

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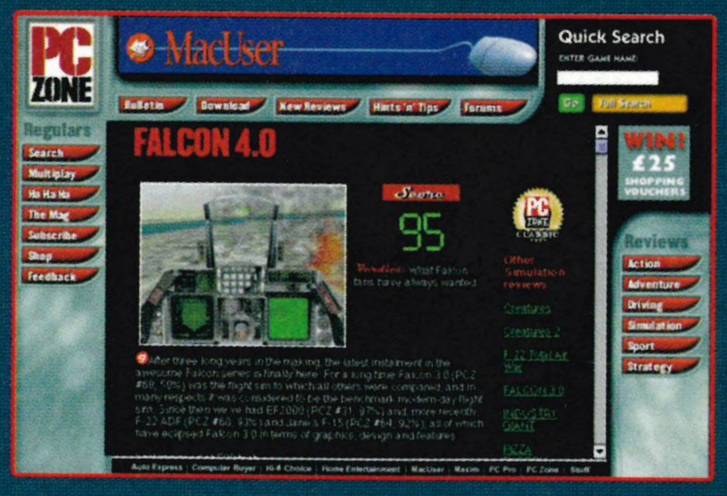
PC ZONE



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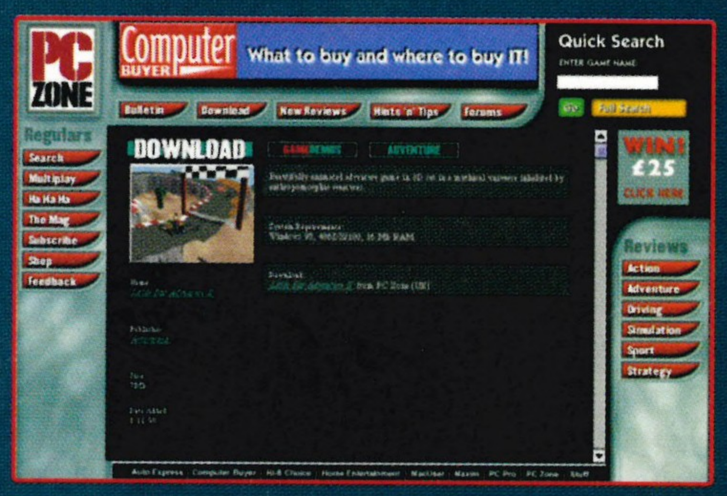

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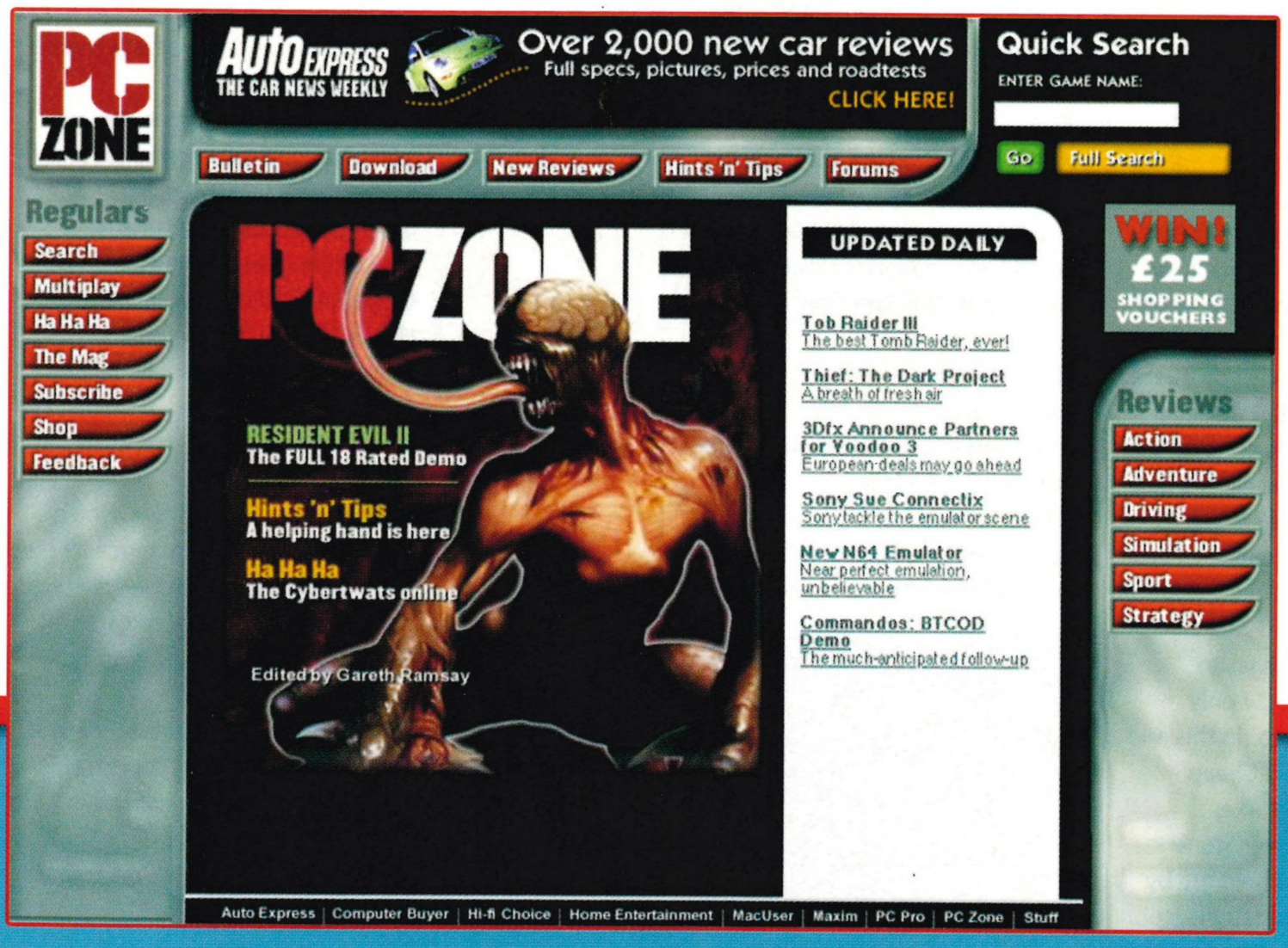

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FEAR NOT. NO MATTER HOW STUCK, STUMPED OR STRANDED YOU ARE, WRITE IN (CONTACT DETAILS BELOW) AND WE'LL TRY TO SOLVE YOUR GAMING WORRIES. **STEVE KEY** ANSWERS YOUR QUERIES

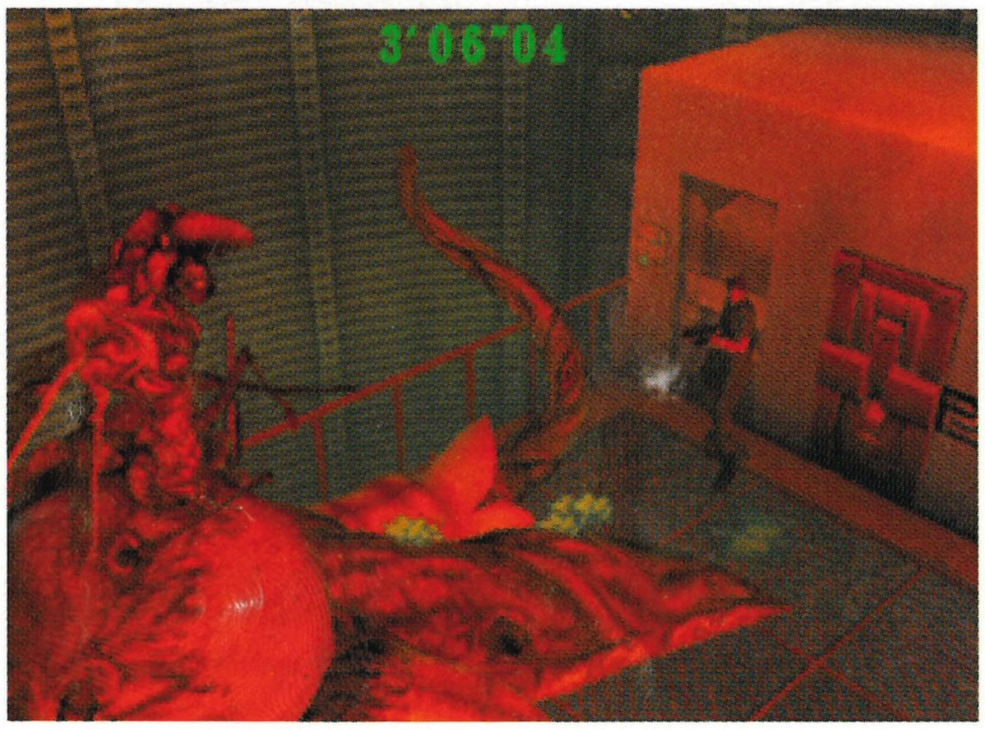
△ *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*: this is what the fountain should look like once you've drained it.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Please could you tell me how to drain the fountain on the Philadelphia level and also which subway rails you have to grind in the New York City levels.

MATT D, VIA EMAIL

You ready for this? Collect all of the Subway Tokens in NYC, then head up the escalator that's now open. Go to the end of the platform, then turn around and get some speed up as you head back towards the escalator. Now jump to the left and hit grind. You must hold it until you're round the corner to complete the objective. Draining the fountain is a lot tougher. You need to get up to the balcony where the valves that operate the fountain are located. From the start, grind the ramp in front of you then leap over two green ramps to get the 'World's most obvious gap' bonus. Now straight away grind the rail down the steps then you should have plenty of speed to jump from the planter and up on to the balcony.



△ *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*: how to defeat this monster of a boss the easy way!

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA

How the f*** do you beat Alexia in *Code: Veronica*? I put the dragonfly in the slot and returned to the save room but I didn't get anything. Also, I only have the shotgun and the handgun. Please help.

CHRISTOPHER O'SULLIVAN, VIA EMAIL

We're assuming you still have a decent amount of ammo in the shotgun otherwise you could be in trouble. After putting the dragonfly in the slot, enter the room and use the security card on the panel – the password is 'Veronica'. Run back outside and you get a scene. Hold aim and shoot Alexia once and you get another scene. Run to the far-left corner of the room and you'll be standing next to the mutated Alexia. Keep shooting her (and the little bugs) until she flies up into the air. At this point the Linear Launcher appears on the side of the building, so use that to shoot her.

I'm facing the second Tyrant but I only have ten handgun bullets due to my over-zealous use of the grenades in earlier sections. I have no save points to go back to so that I can do sections again. I can hit him with the crate five times and he doesn't die, but I do. Please say I don't have to start the game again!

WILL PUTTERGILL, VIA EMAIL.

There is indeed a way to defeat this boss, but it's really, really tough. Basically, you have to lure it so it's almost falling out of the plane and wait until it's about to attack you. As it's in mid-swipe, dodge the attack and run to the back of the plane and hit the switch on the wall so that the crate slides towards the Tyrant. If it's close enough to the edge, it won't be able to stop the crate and will fall out.

POWER STONE 2

I have been trying for ages to complete *Power Stone 2*. I only need five more items to do this and they are the Weird Rod, Cheap Umbrella, Lumberjacks Axe, Exciting Book, and Power Stone Mag. Please could you help me by telling me what combinations to use in the item shop.

MATT WELLS, NUNEATON VIA EMAIL

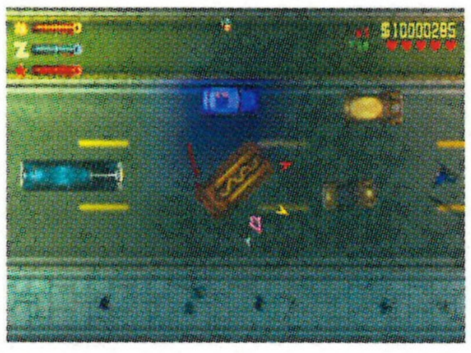
These are just some of the ways to get the items you need, Matt. To get the Weird Rod, mix the Spoon with either the Rabbit Ear, Tail or Arm. The Cheap Umbrella is yours by mixing the Metallic Bat, the Surprise Card and any other item. This is the only way we've found to get the Umbrella but it can be a little erratic. The Lumberjack's Axe we got by finishing the game on level two and the Exciting Book is yours by combining the Emperor's Crown, a Surprise Card and any other item. Finally, get the Power Stone Magazine by mixing the Lance of Lava with the Book of Legend, the Emblem of the Brave or the Exciting Book. Or you can try combining two Small Bombs and a Special Card or a Bamboo Shoot, a Special Card and any other item. Good luck!

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

Could you give me the invincibility code for *GTA2*, please?

GOLIATH, VIA EMAIL

We sure can. If you want unlimited energy, go to the Code Entry screen and enter your name as INFINITY. Also, try entering your name as BIGCATS for 99 Lives, ULTIMATE for $9,999,999 from the very start and SESAME to open all of the stages!



◁ *GTA2*: millions of dollars, untold lives *and* you can skip to any stage! Nice!

F355 CHALLENGE

Are there any hidden tracks in *F355* and if so how do you access them?

ANDREW BURTON, VIA EMAIL

First go to the Options screen. Now press and hold X and Y and a new option called Passwords will appear. Keeping X and Y held, select passwords and then enter one of these codes to open a new level: CinqueValvole, Fiorano, LagunaSeca, LiebeFrauMilch, Nurburgring, Stars&Stripes, KualaLumpur, Sepang, DaysofThunder, Atlanta.

EVOLUTION

I just completed *Evolution*, which opens up the Aftermath mode where you have freedom to access all ruins, but I have a *huge* debt to clear. How can I make money quickly?

GARY GREEN, VIA EMAIL

When you are on the carrier at the end of the game, go through the door with the first aid symbol on it and look in the medicine cabinet for Naolin Gold. Stock up on as much of that as you can then sell it to raise some cash.

NEED SOME HELP?

Then send your gaming problems to us at: Help!, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Alternatively email us at tips@dreamcastmag.co.uk with the subject heading 'Help!' and the name of the game you need help with. Please note: each month we print a selection of questions and answers in *ODM* but we regret that we are unable to provide personal replies.

CHEATS

DON'T FRET IF THINGS AREN'T WORKING OUT – TURN THE GAME ON ITS HEAD AND THE TIDES BACK IN YOUR FAVOUR WITH THESE NEW CHEATS

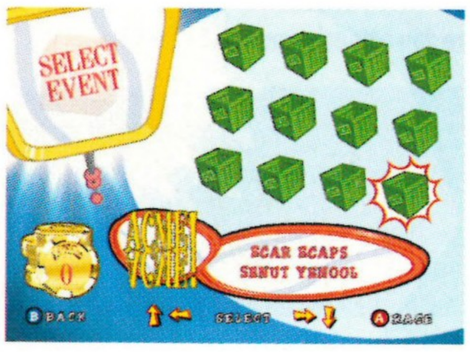
△ *Looney Tunes: Space Race*: **fancy playing as Marvin the Martian? Not a problem…**

LOONEY TUNES: SPACE RACE

VARIOUS CHEAT CODES

To activate these cheats, simply go to the Options screen, then select the cheats option. You'll be taken to a password screen where entering the following codes will either unlock one of the two secret characters, open one of the other locked stages or give you other bonuses, such as unlimited turbo. If you want all of these then simply enter the final code in the list first! Nothing could be simpler!

PORKY – YAVARMINT
MARVIN – REDWAGON
ACME 2 – MAROON
MARS 2 – SCWEWBALL
OFF WORLD 1 – DURNIDGIT
OFF WORLD 2 – PALOOKA
WILD WEST 1 – HOGGRAVY
WILD WEST 2 – MACKEREL
NEBULA – MRFUZZY
GALACTORAMA 1 – YOIKS
GALACTORAMA 2 – DODGPARRY
ALL ACME EVENTS – 3LILBOPS
ALL CHALLENGES – MOIDALIZE
ALL GALLERY ITEMS – MICHIGANJ
UNLIMITED TURBO – DUCKAMUCK
MIRROR MODE – SAMRALPH
NO GAGS – SUCCOTASH
ALL CHEATS ON – CHEESFISH



◁ *Looney Tunes: Space Race*: **all of the ACME Events opened in a flash**

SHENMUE

70 PERSON BRAWL!

To unlock the 70 person battle, first you'll have to beat the game. Then, on disc three, go to the main menu. Now go to Options and select the 70 person battle.

SAMBA DE AMIGO

RANDOM MODE

Once you're on the Difficulty Selection screen, shake the left maraca in the low position 15 times. If you're using the pad instead, simply hold Down-Left.

SUPER HARD MODE

Again on the Difficulty Selection screen shake the left maraca in the high position 15 times. If you play on the pad hold Up-Left instead.

UNLOCK SAMBA

Completing the maracas pro set of challenges in the Challenge mode will unlock the song *Samba de Amigo* for you to play.

UNLOCK MORE SONGS

Again in the Challenge mode, this time complete Challenge 1 and you'll get *Tequila*, *Love Lease* and *Soul Bossa Nova* as playable songs.

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

PLAY AS SLIM JIM

First select the Pro Quest mode and then on the Rider Select screen press the following buttons: Down, Down, Left, Right, Up, Up, Y. If you scroll through the riders, Slim Jim should now be selectable.

ALL BIKES

After you've selected your rider in the Pro Quest mode, you'll get to the Bike Selection screen. Now enter this code to get all of the bikes: Up, Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, Left, Right, Y.

ALL LEVELS

Also in the Pro Quest mode, get to the Track Selection screen and enter this code: Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Y.

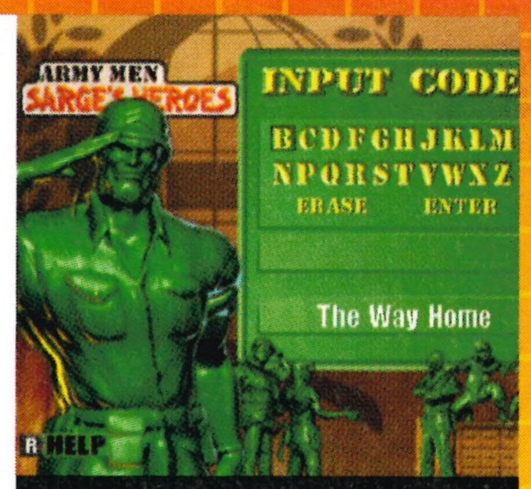
ALL STYLES

Once you've selected your rider and bike, you get to the Style Selection screen. Enter this code to get all of the available outfits: Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Y.

MTV SPORTS SKATEBOARDING

UNLOCK EVERYTHING

To get all skaters, boards, clothes and stages go into the Lifestyle mode. When you're asked to enter a name, enter PASWRD instead. Now you can quit and play whatever game mode you like with everything unlocked.



△ *Army Men*: **become Sarge's hero.**

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES

LEVEL CODES

To access any of the stages, go to the Input Code screen on the main menu. Also, the code that unlocks the final stage will add the secret characters to the multiplayer game.

LEVEL	PASSWORD
Spy Blue	TRGHTR
Bathroom	TDBWL
Riff Mission	MSTRMN
Forest	TLLTRS
Hoover Mission	SCRDCT
Thick Mission	STPDMN
Snow Mission	BLZZRD
Shrap Mission	SRFPNK
Fort Plastro	GNRLMN
Scorch Mission	HTTTRT
Showdown	ZBTSRL
Sandbox	HTKTTN
Kitchen	PTSPNS
Living Room	HXMSTR
The Way Home	VRCLN

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

UNLOCK MOVIES

Following on from last month's tips, here's some more secrets for you to try and uncover. To watch each of the clips you have to start a session then pause and select End Run.

'80S TONY VID

Earn three gold medals with McSqueeb to get a video of Tony Hawk in his early days of skating.

NEVERSOFT BAILS VID

Get three gold medals with Officer Dick to open the Neversoft Bail video.

SPIDERMAN SKATE VID

Win three gold medals with Spiderman to open up the Spiderman video.

NEVERSOFT MAKES VID

Earn three gold medals with Private Carrera to grant you access to the Neversoft Makes clip.

KNOW SOME GOOD CHEATS?

Well don't keep them all to yourself – send them in to help other gamers out and to show off your greatness. Send your Tips to: Tips, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Alternatively email them to us at tips@dreamcastmag.co.uk. Thanks this month to Luke Mears, Nicolas Lysandrou, Martin Brown, James Green, Dave Vesey, Andrew Edwards, Ryan Marks, Ben Simmonds, Gary Jones, Alexander Luxon, Duncan Bell, Martin Stephenson and countless others we couldn't fit in. Sorry we can't name you all.

PHONE FOR HELP

Having trouble with a game and can't wait to see a reply in these pages? Then you need to check out...

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△ **Get that sinking feeling with *Ecco*?**

△ **Flummoxed by *Fur Fighters*?**

△ **Still stuck in *Code: Veronica*?**

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CHALLENGES

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO IMMORTALISE YOURSELF ON THESE VERY PAGES. TOP ONE OF OUR CHALLENGES AND WIN A GAME IN THE PROCESS

THIS MONTH

Finish top in any of this month's challenges and win a game of your choice from Sega Europe! (Please read the rules below very carefully!)

△ ***Quake III Arena:* get fragging, people!**

QUAKE III ARENA

Free for all, Vs three computer opponents, easiest difficulty, ten minutes, no fraglimit, biggest winning margin

Playing as Sarge, you *must* play against Anarki, Angel and Biker. Ensure the frag-limit is zero, the time limit is ten minutes and the level is the arena gate. Then kill! The biggest winning margin will win.

△ ***Capcom Vs SNK:* are you king of the fighters?**

CAPCOM Vs SNK

Easiest difficulty, Arcade mode, use two characters, highest score ranking

Pick any two characters from those available (you can only have a maximum of two) and play through the Arcade mode on easiest difficulty. At the end, take a picture of this high score table with your name at the top and send it in to us.

△ ***Le Mans 24 Hours:* caffeine not mandatory.**

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Time Trial, Audi Sport UK car, amateur difficulty, race at Donington, fastest of three laps

Be thankful, we could have set a nasty challenge for this, involving you sitting up for days on end like Dan and Dylan did in *ODM* #14. Instead, just send us a picture of this screen showing your best lap time.

RESULTS

Did you enter a contest in our December issue (*ODM* #14)? Well here's a list of the top ten entries for each of the challenges in that issue. Congratulations to the winners, who each win a copy of *Metropolis Street Racer*, courtesy of Sega.

VIRTUA TENNIS

Most money earned, any character

1	$36,354,600	CHRISTOPHER OLIVER, CHES.
2	$36,178,488	L. D. BARDSLEY, RAMSBOTTOM
3	$30,618,488	S. DADGAR, CO. KILKENNY
4	$12,303,523	DARREN TURNER, DARLINGTON
5	$6,657,527	BRIAN CARR, DUBLIN
6	$5,883,290	MICHAEL GODFREY, CARDIFF
7	$5,861,606	BEN THOMAS, SCOTLAND
8	$5,289,790	TOMOMI TAMURA, LONDON
9	$4,854,390	ANDREW DOUGLAS, LUTON
10	$1,704,322	J. KATTAN, BUSHEY HEATH

INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Fastest time, 100m sprint, any mode

1=	9'04"	DUNCAN MACIVER, BURNLEY
1=	9'04"	SHAUN LOCKER, NORTHUM.
3	9'07"	STEPHEN BUTLER, HALESOWEN
4	9'10"	I. BELSOM, SHEERNESS, KENT
5=	9'11"	ANDREW ALFORD, DEVON
5=	9'11"	C. MALCOLM, WOLVERHAMPTON
7	9'12"	A. HARRISON, DARLINGTON
8=	9'15"	NEIL DONALDSON, NORTH YORKS
8=	9'15"	CHAD FYDELOR, SWINDON
8=	9'15"	WILL HEWITT, TAMWORTH

△ ***Virtua Tennis* (top) and *Track & Field* (bottom): were you athletic enough to rank?**

HOW DO YOU ENTER?

Play the given game with your camera at the ready. When you get your score/time, quickly take a picture (it's a good idea to darken the room and turn the flash off). Now post your photo along with your name and address and name of the game you'd like to win (you can choose any game published by Sega that appears in this issue's Directory, starting on page 106 *except Samba De Amigo*) to: Challenges, *ODM*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF. Note: please do not send digital photographs, print outs of digital photos, videos or VM units to confirm your scores – they will not be returned to you and you will not be included in the competition. *ODM* regrets that it cannot return photos. The closing date for these competitions is Friday 16 March.

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Blue Stinger
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Ecco the Dolphin
WWF Royal Rumble
Jet Set Radio
Super Runabout
Aerowings
GTA 2
Silent Scope
Dead or Alive 2
Ready 2 Rumble 2
Virtua Tennis
Soul Reaver: Leg of Kain
Sega Rally 2
WWF Attitude
UEFA Striker
Sega GT
MDK 2
House of the Dead 2
Soul Calibur

Ulti. Fighting Champ.
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Sega Bass Fishing
Silver
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Urban Chaos
Trickstyle
Four Wheel Thunder
Tony Hawk's Skateboard.
Buggy Heat
Rayman 2
Deadly Skies
Chu Chu Rocket
Shadowman
Powerstone 2
S. Francisco Rush 2049
Revolt
Virtua Striker 2
Worms Armageddon
Zombie Revenge
Aero Dancing
A Bug's Life
Royal Rumble (WWF)
V-Rally 2
Tokyo Extreme Racer
Fur Fighters
F355 Challenge
Star Wars: Jedi Power Bs
Resident Evil 2

Air Force Delta
ECW Hardcore Revol.
Toy Commander
Mortal Kombat Gold
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Hydro Thunder
Star Wars Demolition
NBA 2K
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Sword of the Berserk
Dynamite Cop
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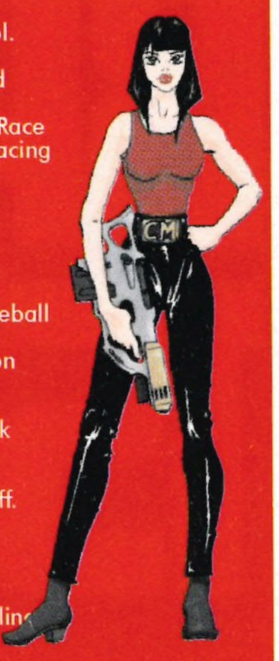

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Player guides: *Soul Calibur, Shadow Man, Worms Armageddon*
Playable demos: *SF Alpha 3, Rayman 2…*
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Player guides: *Tomb Raider: TLR, Rayman 2*
Playable demos: *Fur Fighters, 4 Wheel Thunder, Sega WWS: Euro Edition, V-Rally 2*
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Player guides: *RE Code: Veronica, Rayman 2*
Playable demos: *Resident Evil Code: Veronica, Tony Hawk's Skateboarding, Silver*
Reviews: *ChuChu Rocket!, Ecco The Dolphin…*

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Player guides: *Code: Veronica, ChuChu, Rayman 2*
Playable demos: *Super Magnetic Neo, Wacky Races, Toy Commander*
Reviews: *Marvel Vs Capcom 2, Tony Hawk's…*

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Player guides: *Ecco The Dolphin, Code: Veronica*
Playable demos: *F1 World Grand Prix II, Gauntlet Legends, Virtua Tennis*
Reviews: *Dead Or Alive 2, Sydney 2000…*

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Player guides: *Ecco The Dolphin, Virtua Tennis*
Playable demos: *UFC, San Francisco Rush 2049, Sydney 2000, Tokyo Highway Challenge 2…*
Reviews: *F355, Space Channel 5, UFC…*

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Player guides: *Dead Or Alive 2*
Playable demos: *Jet Set Radio, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2, Silent Scope, UEFA Dream Soccer…*
Reviews: *JSR, Le Mans 24 Hours, Shenmue…*

D0015 Issue #15 • £5.99 • January 2001

Player guides: *Dead Or Alive 2, UFC*
Playable demos: *Looney Tunes: Space Race, Super Runabout, Speed Devils Online Racing…*
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Player guides: *Shenmue, Metropolis Street Racer*
Playable demos: *Donald Duck: Quack Attack, Kiss Psycho Circus, Stupid Invaders, UFC…*
Reviews: *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis, Starlancer…*

Dreamcast™

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GAMES DIRECTORY

THE LOT. A SUMMARY OF EVERY DREAMCAST GAME REVIEWED IN *ODM*

GAME	PUBLISHER	MAX PLAYERS	ONLINE	VIDEO	ISSUE	RATING
102 DALMATIANS: PUPPIES TO THE RESCUE	EIDOS	6	NO	50/VGA	16	5
Movie tie-in aimed firmly at the kids. Here you've got to rescue puppies that are hidden on each level. Mini-games, including crazy golf that six can play at once, add to the fun.						
4 WHEEL THUNDER	MIDWAY	2	NO	50/60/VGA	8	8
Race nitro-guzzling monster trucks around a variety of long and short tracks, improving your vehicle as you collect prize money. Good fun with strong multiplayer modes.						
4x4 EVOLUTION	TAKE 2	4	YES	50/60/VGA	16	6
Competent multiplayer off-road racer that works well online but suffers from weak course design and poor collision detection. Too dull for single-player sessions.						
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES	3DO	4	NO	50/60	16	3
Mission-based action starring the famous plastic toys. The main emphasis is on combat with a variety of weapons. Shame the graphics, sound and levels are all so mediocre.						
AEROWINGS	CRAVE	1	NO	50	1	6
Take to the skies in an aerobatic flight sim. There's no bullets, just the test of flying in formation... which is surprisingly rewarding as you can save replays to a VM.						
AEROWINGS 2: AIR STRIKE	CRAVE	2	NO	50	11	6
More aerobatic missions, now with the added attraction of weapons and two-player dogfights. Good if you like flight sims although the missions are a bit limited.						
BANGAI-O	VIRGIN	1	NO	50/60	14	7
Action-packed 2D blaster with some very extravagant explosions. The '80s-style gameplay is simple and addictive, but lack of a two-player mode is a bummer.						
BLUE STINGER	ACTIVISION	1	NO	50	0	7
Save an island from a bunch of freaky mutants. Decent *Resident Evil*-inspired adventure thrills but a badly-paced story, poor controls and awkward camera positions let the side down.						
BUGGY HEAT	SEGA	2	*YES	50	2	4
Weak off-road racer starring dune buggies and trucks, although with slow speed and dull tracks. Downloading the driving style of other players to race against is a neat idea, though.						
BUST-A-MOVE 4	ACCLAIM	2	NO	50	9	7
Latest edition of the classic puzzler, boasting simple but extremely addictive multi-coloured bubble-bursting challenges. Easy to pick up – hard to put down.						
CAESARS PALACE 2000	INTERPLAY	4	NO	50/60	12	3
Large but uninspiring collection of gambling games. Slow computer decisions and unnecessary animations make even a hand of blackjack drag on. The computer cheats too!						
CAPCOM Vs SNK	VIRGIN	2	NO	50/60/VGA	15	8
Years in the making superbout between the two biggest 2D fighting dojos. The action doesn't disappoint. Pity about the character sprite resolution, though.						
CHICKEN RUN	EIDOS	1	NO	50/60/VGA	16	6
Fun film tie-in that borrows the sneaking around gameplay of *Metal Gear Solid*. The easy difficulty setting is a pain but the humour and mini-games add variety.						
CHUCHU ROCKET!	SEGA	4	YES	50/60/VGA	9	9
Frantic cat and mouse puzzle action. Easy to play and learn and with full online (although with a slight delay) features. Now only available with new Dreamcasts.						
CRAZY TAXI	SEGA	1	NO	50/60	5	9
As a cabbie driving through a virtual city you have to ferry people to their chosen destination before the timer reaches zero. A must-have arcade gem with a clever bonus system.						
DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX	ACCLAIM	2	NO	50/VGA	16	4
Perform BMX tricks in this *Tony Hawk* wannabe. There's good level design and loads of tricks to perform but overall it's too simple and almost impossible to fall off the bike.						
DEADLY SKIES	KONAMI	1	NO	50	4	5
Arcade-style air combat with you out to make money flying planes and there's a wide range of fighter planes to pick from. The action is fast and furious but soon gets repetitive.						
DEAD OR ALIVE 2	ACCLAIM	2	NO	50/60/VGA	11	8
Pretender to *Soul Calibur*'s crown that is better looking (if you can believe that) but doesn't feature as wide a range of fighters or moves. Interactive arenas are impressive.						
DEEP FIGHTER	UBI SOFT	1	NO	50/60/VGA	10	6
Inventive mission-based blaster set underwater in a mini-sub. Let down by slow action, caused in some part by the snail's pace and responsiveness of the sub.						
DINO CRISIS	VIRGIN	1	NO	50	15	6
Capcom survival horror on a remote island, with dinos instead of zombies. There's more strategy than the *Resident Evil* series but it still looks like a PlayStation game.						
DISNEY'S DINOSAUR	UBI SOFT	1	NO	50/60/VGA	15	5
Guide the dinosaurs to safety in this based-on-the-movie adventure. Switching between characters is clever, but there's not enough variety to keep you interested.						
DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK	UBI SOFT	1	NO	50/60/VGA	16	7
Colourful cartoon platform adventure starring Disney's famous duck. Good use of the character and imaginative structure but could do with some more levels.						
DRAGONS BLOOD	VIRGIN	1	NO	50/60	10	6
Fantasy-themed hack 'n' slash affair where the creatures you fight have different personalities – this adds a degree of challenge but sadly every other aspect is mediocre.						
DYNAMITE COP	SEGA	2	NO	50/VGA	2	5
Kick, punch, throw and shoot your way past terrorists who've taken control of a cruise ship. Save the passengers in this arcade conversion. Trashy fun while it lasts, but far too short.						
ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE	SEGA	1	NO	50/60/VGA	9	9
Underwater epic based on the exploits of a young dolphin out to save Earth. Long-lasting challenge that features amazing sounds and graphics. Tom 'Dr Who' Baker narrates!						
ECW HARDCORE REVOLUTION	ACCLAIM	4	NO	50	7	3
Successor to Acclaim's *WWF Attitude*, using the same poor game engine but substituting the WWF stars for ECW. Unresponsive controls kill any enjoyment.						
EVOLUTION	UBI SOFT	1	NO	50/60	3	8
Should keep fans of role-playing games happy, with a rewarding storyline and simple, intuitive controls. Looks cute but is quite challenging thanks in part to random elements.						
F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX FOR DC	SEGA	2	NO	50/60/VGA	2	8
Great driving sim with gorgeous graphics and plenty of features. Real drivers, teams and courses are on offer, plus a competent two-player split-screen mode.						
F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX II	KONAMI	2	NO	50/60/VGA	13	7
Superior sequel that offers improved handling and graphics, with plenty of behind-the-scenes enhancements and updated drivers and circuits of the 1999/00 season.						
F355 CHALLENGE	ACCLAIM	2	YES*	50/60/VGA	13	8
The most serious driving game ever. Essentially a simulator of the F355, with optional driver assists to give you a hand. Very, very challenging but stick with it and reap the rewards.						
FIGHTING FORCE 2	EIDOS	1	NO	50/60	4	3
Hawk Manson is a man on a mission in this weak port of a drab PlayStation title. Poor selection of fighting moves, lots of guns and explosions but it's just not fun.						
FUR FIGHTERS	ACCLAIM	4	NO	50/60/VGA	9	7
Cartoon animals carry handguns in this cute-looking adventure/shooter. Good multiplayer modes but the puzzling and shooting don't quite fit together properly.						
GAUNTLET LEGENDS	MIDWAY	4	NO	50/60/VGA	10	4
Eighties classic gets a 3D revamp, pity the gameplay hasn't been updated too. The result is a repetitive and frustrating hack 'n' slash adventure that never seems to get going.						
GIGA WING	VIRGIN	2	NO	50/60/VGA	14	3
Old-style 2D shooter with a nice deflector shield weapon but also big ugly sprites and too many moments of unavoidable death. Would have been average ten years ago.						
GTA 2	TAKE 2	1	NO	50/60	8	7
Steal cars and cause chaos in a futuristic city where nearly anything goes, providing you follow the missions. Not as controversial or appealing as the original but still worth a look.						
HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	TAKE 2	1	NO	50/60	13	7
Control the SAS on covert ops into enemy territory during World War II. Equal parts strategy and action. Great missions but a pity about the fiddly controls and it's only single-player.						
HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2	SEGA	2	NO	50	1	9
Presently the only game to support the light-gun peripheral. *HOTD 2* is an arcade treat with hordes of zombies waiting to become your cannon fodder and a thrill at every turn.						

HYDRO THUNDER	**MIDWAY**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**1**	**6**
Race extremely fast powerboats, making best use of the scattered power-ups and short cuts to finish first. Simple in looks and play. Fun, but no cigar.						
INCOMING	**RAGE**	**1**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**1**	**6**
Mindless shoot 'em up where you face a relentless barrage of enemies, who attack you in a variety of vehicles. Fast-paced, with some gorgeous graphics but the action is too repetitive.						
INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	**KONAMI**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**13**	**8**
Classic button-basher is updated for Dreamcast, featuring 12 sporting events ranging from the 100m sprint to clay pigeon shooting. Great fun in multiplayer. A little dull by yourself.						
JEREMY McGRATH SUPERCROSS 2000	**ACCLAIM**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**3**
Simple motocross racer with no long-lasting appeal. Races can be close, but with dull graphics and unrealistic handling you probably won't stick around to find out.						
JET SET RADIO	**SEGA**	**1**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**8**
Perform tricks on your rollerblades and tag objects with graffiti, but look out for rival gangs and police. *JSR* is yet another stunning DC exclusive. If only it could be a little longer.						
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**1**	**7**
Realistic recreation of pool and snooker. Intuitive controls, great ball physics and to complete the pub atmosphere there's a bonus game of darts and a working jukebox too!						
JO JO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60**	**7**	**5**
Crazy animé-inspired 2D fighter from Capcom, providing frantic action. Appealing thanks to some incredible combos, but not on the same level as some of their other fighters.						
KAO THE KANGAROO	**TITUS**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**6**
Platform game for younger players with good level design but nothing we haven't seen before. Kao's slow pace and a distinct lack of enemies makes the larger levels drag on.						
KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS	**TAKE 2**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**16**	**4**
By-the-numbers first-person shooter that is based on the comic book of the same name. Large number of enemies can appear on screen but everything else is dull and repetitive.						
LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER	**EIDOS**	**1**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**6**	**7**
As the undead Raziel, you're faced with a massive quest through the physical and spiritual planes. Large adventure with big levels, plenty of puzzles to solve and enemies to battle.						
LE MANS 24 HOURS	**INFOGRAMES**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**8**
Wide variety of circuits and cars means there is lots to come back for, but best of all is the ability to really race for 24 hours, saving your progress to VM whenever you make a pit stop.						
LOONEY TUNES: SPACE RACE	**INFOGRAMES**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**7**
Take to the stars in an intergalactic space race that is a cartoon reprise of *WipEout*. Simple to play but the Acme weapons can easily frustrate as there's no way of avoiding them.						
MAGFORCE RACING	**CRAVE**	**4**	**NO**	**60/VGA**	**14**	**3**
Race magnetic vehicles that can stick to ceilings! Another futuristic racer that looks to *WipEout* for inspiration. Unfortunately this one forgets to borrow the good bits.						
MAKEN X	**SEGA**	**1**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**11**	**5**
First-person slasher. You wield a large sword possessed by the mind of a young girl – yep, it's as bad as it sounds. Has a weak plot and confusing cut-scenes that drag on for hours.						
MARVEL Vs CAPCOM	**VIRGIN**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60**	**2**	**5**
Heroes and villains from the coin-ops of Capcom's biggest hits and the pages of Marvel comics face-off in a 2D tag team battle royal. Good, but already dated when it arrived on DC.						
MARVEL Vs CAPCOM 2	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**10**	**7**
Another bout, with a bigger roster of fighters, enhanced pyrotechnic effects and some impressive 3D backgrounds. Overwhelming at first – but fans will soon be getting their kicks.						
METROPOLIS STREET RACER	**SEGA**	**2**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**9**
Stunningly recreated city streets, including London, are only the start. Fantastic handling, over 250 circuits and novel gameplay additions make *MSR* one of the best racers ever.						
MDK 2	**VIRGIN**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**7**	**6**
Inventive action adventure combining shooting, role-playing and puzzle elements starring three unique characters. It's big too, with lots of aliens to battle.						
MIDWAY'S GREATEST HITS VOLUME 1	**MIDWAY**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**10**	**3**
Retro coin-op compilation featuring *Defender*, *Robotron* and *Joust*. Considering the age and simplicity of the titles, you should get hundreds of golden oldies – not just six.						
MILLENNIUM SOLDIER: EXPENDABLE	**RAGE**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**0**	**7**
Mindless shoot 'em up in the *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors* mould. Easy to pick up and play but too simple for a modern audience with little variety beyond the first few minutes.						
MOHO	**TAKE 2**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**3**
Escape from a futuristic prison by winning gladiatorial-style challenges, but with balls instead of legs it's not easy... especially when it's as dull and boring as this.						
MONACO GRAND PRIX RACING SIMULATION	**UBI SOFT**	**2**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**1**	**6**
Another F1 sim, this time without an official licence. Not bad in its day, but there's other racers, namely *F1 World Grand Prix II*, that do the same thing but better.						
MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD	**MIDWAY**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**1**	**5**
The *Mortal Kombat* series felt dated many years ago, and *Gold* does nothing to challenge the tarnished reputation. It looks poor and it is poor. Not a patch on modern fighters.						
MR DRILLER	**VIRGIN**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**7**
Colourful puzzle game with back-to-basics design. Drill beneath the earth, keeping an eye on the air as you go. Simple but very addictive with some great music.						
MTV SPORTS SKATEBOARDING	**THQ**	**4**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**15**	**5**
Attempt to dethrone *Tony Hawk* that fails due to poor controls and some very frustrating collision detection. Good music and flatland tricks but not much else.						
NBA 2K	**SEGA**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**5**	**8**
One of the best-looking sports sims ever. *NBA 2K* is fantastic, with real teams and players and matches flowing back and forth like the real thing. Where's the sequel Sega Europe?						
NBA SHOWTIME: NBA ON NBC	**MIDWAY**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60**	**2**	**6**
The NBA rule book is thrown out to create a fast-paced arcade-style game of basketball. Not so great on your own as it lacks longevity, but good fun in multiplayer.						
NIGHTMARE CREATURES II	**KONAMI**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**2**
Poor controls and PlayStation-quality graphics make this game starring an axe-wielding maniac that attacks marauding zombies a real nightmare, for all the wrong reasons.						
NFL BLITZ 2000	**MIDWAY**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60**	**1**	**7**
American football with rules ripped out, fewer players and ridiculous power-ups. Providing you're not a diehard fan of the sport it's all the better for it and a blast in multiplayer.						
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 2000	**ACCLAIM**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**2**	**5**
Average at best American football sim, mainly due to the clunky control system and the graphics don't do it any favours. Stats aplenty – but why would you want to read them?						
NHL 2K	**SEGA**	**4**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**9**	**7**
Competent ice hockey sim with fast action and impressive graphics. Confusing menus and limited moves dent the atmosphere and there's no fanfare when you score.						
PEN PEN	**INFOGRAMES**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**2**	**6**
A bizarre race through cartoon landscapes that involves running, swimming and tobogganing events. If only it was faster! Easy in single-player, multiplayer is more appealing.						
PLASMA SWORD: THE NIGHTMARE OF BILSTEIN	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**11**	**4**
Disappointing Capcom 3D beat 'em up offering a handful of fighters with simplified moves that make combos too easy. Doesn't do anything new. The name's the best bit.						
POD 2	**UBI SOFT**	**8**	**YES**	**50/60/VGA**	**16**	**5**
Futuristic racer that suffers from confusing track design and poor power-ups creating a weak one-player mode. Ability to race online prevents it from being a complete wash-out.						
POWER STONE	**EIDOS**	**2**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**1**	**8**
Lunatic fighting with complete 3D movement and interactive arenas. It's super-fast with a great cast and amazing combos. It's also better than the sequel.						
POWER STONE 2	**EIDOS**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**13**	**7**
Adds new characters and multiplayer into the mix, but other 'improvements' including vehicles and more weapons detract from the fighting fun of the original.						
PSYCHIC FORCE 2012	**ACCLAIM**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**2**	**7**
An inventive beat 'em up that takes place in mid-air, offering full 3D movement that allows for attacks from all sides. Competent rather than spectacular – for fight fans only.						
QUAKE III ARENA	**SEGA**	**4**	**YES**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**9**
The famous first-person shooter looks formidable on DC with furious multiplayer gunplay both online and off. If you're serious, get a mouse and keyboard.						
RAILROAD TYCOON II	**TAKE 2**	**4**	**YES**	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**7**
Make money building railroads and hauling cargo in this absorbing strategy game that requires planning and plenty of business sense. Plenty of scenarios mean it's long lasting too.						

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VISUAL MEMORY

WHAT'S A VM?

A VM (Visual Memory) is a memory card that plugs into your Dreamcast controller and enables you save game data. It's absolutely essential for titles like *Shenmue* and *Metropolis Street Racer* where you want to save your game position. The official Sega Visual Memory unit costs £19.99. (The official 4x Memory unit, without a screen, is due out around Easter for about the same price).

WHY DOES IN HAVE AN LCD SCREEN BUILT INTO IT?

To show additional information (hit ratios in *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, player data in *NBA 2K*, for example) when you're playing games. Also, when the VM is unplugged from a controller you can play mini-games (for example the Tamagotchi-style *Chao* game from *Sonic Adventure*). These are 'downloaded' via Dreamcast games or direct from the Net, and are stored in memory.

HOW MUCH INFORMATION DOES A VM HOLD?

128k, divided in 200 'blocks'. In other words, enough to store data from several titles and/or a mini-game.

HOW MANY BLOCKS DOES EACH GAME USE?

It depends on the game, but here are some examples: *Shenmue* (80 blocks), *Metropolis Street Racer* (68), *Virtua Tennis* (2), *Rayman 2* (2 per save plus 2 for configuration).

WHY DOES MY DREAMCAST BEEP WHEN IT STARTS UP?

The beeping is your DC telling you that the VM unit's batteries have run out.

WHERE CAN I GET NEW BATTERIES FOR IT?

Try Tandy if there's one near you, or any similar electronic retailer. The model number is CR2032 and they cost about £4 for a pair.

WILL I LOSE MY SAVE GAMES IF THE VM'S BATTERIES RUN OUT?

No. You won't be able to play mini-games on it, but it will still work as a memory card.

I'VE HEARD OF A VM ANIMATOR FOR PCS. WHERE CAN I GET ONE?

You can download the animator and loads of sample animations from Booyaka (www.booyaka.com) and Planetweb (http://dreamcast.planetweb.com/ community/vmu/).

WHAT'S THE POINT OF VM ANIMATIONS?

There isn't a point as such, it's just a bit of fun. *Ghostface* (based on the movie *Scream 3*) is our favourite. Others well worth a look include *Star Wars: Episode II*, *Alien Encounter* and *The Great Battle*.

WHICH DC TITLES INCLUDE VM MINI-GAMES?

Try the likes of *Sonic Adventure*, *Trickstyle*, *Power Stone*, *Zombie Revenge* and *Tech Romancer*. *Sega Rally 2* also has a high-score browser, which is a game in theory but isn't actually very entertaining.

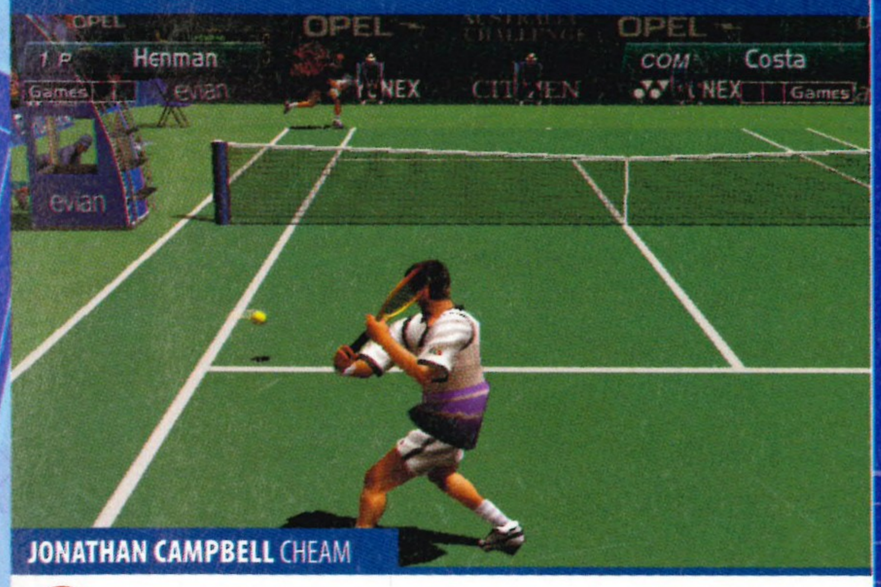
CAN I DOWNLOAD MINI-GAMES OFF THE NET?

Yes you can, although there aren't many about yet. Sega America have released an American football game (see www.sega.com), and Sega Europe are expected to release something similar in the future (er, hopefully). You can find some other bits and pieces at Booyaka and Planetweb (site addresses above).

• Have we missed something? If there's anything else you need to know about Visual Memory, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk

READERS' FIVES

NAME YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES



JONATHAN CAMPBELL CHEAM

1. **VIRTUA TENNIS (SEGA)**
"Easy to begin, difficult to master. A Triple-A title."
2. **JET SET RADIO (SEGA)**
"Masterpiece, with style and the content to match."
3. **SHENMUE (SEGA)**
"It has created its own genre, and its own following."
4. **METROPOLIS STREET RACER (SEGA)**
"Realism of the areas doesn't detract from the superb handling and physics."
5. **SONIC ADVENTURE (SEGA)**
"Top-class comeback for the great spiky-haired blue one."

BEN WILLCOCK DARWEN

1. **METROPOLIS STREET RACER (SEGA)**
"*MSR* is simply the best racer on any system. Plus it's one *huge* game!"
2. **SHENMUE (SEGA)**
"Arguably the best game on DC to date, but over too quickly."
3. **ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE (SEGA)**
"The best adventure game ever created, maybe a little too tough, though."
4. **RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA (EIDOS)**
"Shits you up more times than laxatives will ever do!"
5. **SOUL CALIBUR (SEGA)**
"Namco are the kings of fighting games – just give us the sequel, damn it!"

DAVID WHITE CAMBRIDGE

1. **TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2 (ACTIVISION)**
"The most addictive and sublimely playable game ever. Probably."
2. **METROPOLIS STREET RACER (SEGA)**
"Beautiful. Expansive. Obsessive. Compulsive. Challenging. *MSR*."
3. **CAPCOM VS SNK (VIRGIN)**
"2D still rules over 3D, and this is the best beat 'em up, ever. Period."
4. **CRAZY TAXI (SEGA)**
"Classic score attack at its finest. And it's yellow!"
5. **SONIC ADVENTURE (SEGA)**
"Underrated by everyone, this is still jaw-dropping even now."

WANNA SHARE YOUR FAVES?

To see your fave games printed in *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, send an email to letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk with the subject heading 'Readers' Fives'. You *must* provide the following information: your name, your home town, a list of your five favourite Dreamcast games (only include games you've played please!) and a 10-20 word explanation of why you like *each* game. We'll choose three entries at random each month and print them in the magazine. Note: we reserve the right to edit contributions. Only emailed entries will be accepted. Readers' Fives has *nothing* to do with the Reader Awards on page 20. Sorted.

RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE	**UBI SOFT**	**1**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**6**	**8**
Impressive platform adventure with excellent controls, good level design and plenty of set pieces and variety to keep you interested throughout. There's also great multiplayer modes!						
READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING	**MIDWAY**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**1**	**9**
Comedy boxer, with arcade-style play and a large cast of cartoon fighters. Fast-paced with OTT special moves, a great two-player title that makes the single-player mode look wimpy.						
READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2	**SEGA**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**8**
Greater roster of boxers and an expanded Championship mode make this a good purchase for fans that still enjoy the original. The computer fighters now pack plenty more punch.						
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR	**SWING**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**16**	**7**
Stop the evil sorceress from taking over the land. Huge role-player with plenty of spells and weapons with real-time battles. Starts off slowly, but you'll soon be absorbed by the action.						
RED DOG	**SEGA**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**5**	**5**
Futuristic shoot 'em up set behind the wheel of a heavily armed tank. Great multiplayer modes, but the main mission fails to captivate and the difficulty level is poorly balanced.						
RESIDENT EVIL 2	**VIRGIN**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60**	**4**	**7**
Explore the zombie-infested streets of Raccoon City. Simple conversion of the PlayStation/PC game that, despite the familiarity, still manages to provide plenty of thrills and shocks.						
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA	**EIDOS**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**8**	**9**
Real-time 3D graphics make this *Resident Evil* the best-looking and most ambitious in the series so far. Great for both longtime fans and newcomers and as scary as ever.						
RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS	**VIRGIN**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**16**	**8**
Visually not on par with *Code: Veronica* (hardly surprising considering the PlayStation roots), but *Nemesis* is another excellent adventure starring the zombies and a terrifying villain.						
RE-VOLT	**ACCLAIM**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**3**	**7**
Race remote-controlled cars around larger-than-life locations. Fast-moving with great tracks and visuals but the initial buzz wears off due to a lack of depth and polish.						
ROADSTERS	**TITUS**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**11**	**3**
Basic graphics, terrible handling and some ill-thought random environmental disasters prove that not every racer can be as good as *MSR*. The Mr Bean of driving games.						
SAMBA DE AMIGO	**SEGA**	**2**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**8**
Shake maracas to match the on-screen instructions. Genius musical party game that'll put a smile on your face and a dance in your step. But at £100, it's only for the rich.						
SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049	**MIDWAY**	**4**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**7**
Ramps, loops and flying cars that possess rocket-like speed. This is loud, mindless racing fun featuring multiplayer battle modes and stunt arenas plus other surprises.						
SEGA BASS FISHING	**SEGA**	**1**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**1**	**7**
Catch the biggest fish you can from a variety of tranquil settings. Sounds dull, but this is an arcade treat and with a dedicated fishing rod controller it's a scream.						
SEGA EXTREME SPORTS	**SEGA**	**2**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**13**	**5**
Adrenalin-packed racer, featuring a variety of extreme events including bungee jumping and quad bikes. Some events are weaker and the learning curve spoils the fun.						
SEGA GT	**SEGA**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**15**	**5**
Track racing in souped-up road cars in this shameless imitation of *Gran Turismo*. Plenty of cars and courses but the handling is wrong and spoils any potential enjoyment.						
SEGA RALLY 2	**SEGA**	**2**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**1**	**8**
Offering more cars and tracks than the arcade original. This is an impressive conversion (despite frame-rate probs) with good handling from the analogue pad and plenty of longevity.						
SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER 2000	**SEGA**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**3**	**6**
Sega's first football title for DC disappoints with a slow pace and an inability to win the ball without fouling your opponent. Plenty of options prevent a total wash out.						
SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER EURO EDITION	**SEGA**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**8**	**7**
Another attempt, released on the back of Euro 2000, adds some much needed speed and greater detail than before. The computer is still too easy to beat, though.						
SHADOWMAN	**ACCLAIM**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**3**	**6**
Inventive adult-oriented adventure packed with gore, swearing and voodoo magic. Good story and music but the dull level design lets the side down badly.						
SHENMUE	**SEGA**	**1**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**10**
Track down your father's killers in the most realistic game world ever created. An epic adventure that has to be played to be believed and is unlike anything you've played before.						
SILENT SCOPE	**KONAMI**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**7**
As a sniper you must eliminate armed terrorists from a variety of locations, using a telescopic sight to zoom in and out of the distant action. Good but short arcade thrills.						
SILVER	**INFOGRAMES**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**10**	**4**
A rare thing – an RPG developed in the UK. Detailed locations are appealing and *Silver* is easy to get into, but there's no spark to keep you playing and is too linear.						
SLAVE ZERO	**INFOGRAMES**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**5**	**6**
Stomp around a futuristic city in a 60-foot robot. There's a vast amount of enemies waiting to be shot or squished, but the action never really gets going. Even multiplayer is dull.						
SNO CROSS CHAMPIONSHIP RACING	**UBI SOFT**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60**	**16**	**4**
With the ability to create your own tracks this could have been good, but poor controls, a far too slow two-player option and numerous graphical glitches spoil the proceedings.						
SNOW SURFERS	**SEGA**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**2**	**6**
Snow Surfers' courses look great but they don't play that way. With poor characters and handling like a dog there's not enough speed to make hurtling down slopes exciting.						
SONIC ADVENTURE	**SEGA**	**1**	**YES***	**50/60/VGA**	**0**	**9**
Sega's mascot returns in a jaw-dropping adventure, with some lightning-fast levels and plenty of exploration. Six playable characters mean you get six different adventures.						
SOUL CALIBUR	**SEGA**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**2**	**10**
The best fighting game around, period. Boasting fantastic characters with stunning animation and moves. Not only gorgeous but features incredible depth too.						
SOUL FIGHTER	**CRAVE**	**1**	**NO**	**50**	**2**	**6**
Fantasy fighting adventure that calls on the same moves and special attacks to progress. Using combos to build magical attacks is good, but overall it's too easy and far too repetitive.						
SOUTH PARK: CHEF'S LUV SHACK	**ACCLAIM**	**4**	**NO**	**50**	**3**	**3**
TV-styled game show starring Cartman, Kenny et al, comprising mini-game challenges based on old Atari console favourites and useless trivia tests. One problem – it's not funny!						
SOUTH PARK RALLY	**ACCLAIM**	**4**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**6**
The *South Park* gang fare better in this *Mario Kart* clone that offers a variety of racing challenges and strong multiplayer modes. This one's funny! Pity about the fluctuating difficulty.						
SPACE CHANNEL 5	**SEGA**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**13**	**8**
Music and dance thrills. The watch and repeat gameplay sounds dull, but with sassy star Ulala trying to save the galaxy from aliens, you can't help but be won over. Short, though.						
SPEED DEVILS	**UBI SOFT**	**2**	**NO**	**50**	**1**	**7**
Quirky racer that offers long tracks featuring a range of bizarre events – including a UFO invasion, speed traps and police chases. Good two-player mode, but easy to complete.						
SPIRIT OF SPEED 1937	**ACCLAIM**	**1**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**12**	**3**
Period-themed racer that offers basic motors and long uneventful circuits. Unique idea, but the execution, especially the poor frame-rate, is unforgivable.						
STARLANCER	**UBI SOFT**	**4**	**YES**	**50/60/VGA**	**16**	**5**
Mission-based intergalactic space shooter that can also be played online. Slick graphics and sound effects make it immediately exciting but the action soon becomes too repetitive.						
STAR WARS EPISODE I: JEDI POWER BATTLES	**ACTIVISION**	**2**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**14**	**4**
Take control of a Jedi Knight including Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan in a scrolling beat 'em up that uses Lightsabers instead of fists. Bad collision detection leads to frustrating moments.						
STAR WARS EPISODE I: RACER	**ACTIVISION**	**2**	**NO**	**50/VGA**	**11**	**6**
WipEout-inspired racer that doesn't feature weapons, but moves at a hell of a pace. Exciting at first, but the courses and competitors are unimaginative and repetitive.						
STREET FIGHTER III: DOUBLE IMPACT	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**8**	**7**
Two games for the price of one, comprising of the original *Street Fighter III* and the sequel *2nd Strike: Giant Attack*. Not as accessible as other Capcom fighters. One for true fans only.						
STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60/VGA**	**14**	**8**
Not so much a remould of the series, rather a super tune-up. The ability to choose your opponent before bouts is an enticing new feature. Plus the smash the car bonus stage is back!						
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3	**VIRGIN**	**2**	**NO**	**50/60**	**2**	**8**
Huge array of the *Street Fighter* cast assemble in one of the best 2D fighters ever. Great cartoon looks and the excellent World Tour mode will keep you busy for many a night.						

SUPER MAGNETIC NEO	CRAVE	1	NO	50/VGA	12	6
Imaginative platformer starring Neo, who propels himself through the colourful levels by using the polarity of his magnetic head. Frustrating gameplay spoils the fun.						
SUPER RUNABOUT	VIRGIN	1	NO	50/VGA	14	6
Mission-based racer with a wide choice of vehicles and the option to play as cops or hillbillies. The carnage you can cause as you race to the next goal is the best part.						
SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING	UBI SOFT	2	NO	50	2	7
Very fast superbike racer endorsed by the Suzuki team. Nice variety of twisty circuits, but dodgy pop-up and collision detection mar the performance. Good two-player mode.						
SWORD OF THE BERSERK: GUT'S RAGE	EIDOS	1	NO	50/60/VGA	10	5
Hack 'n' slash and little else in this fantasy adventure. Initially enjoyable, but too many cut-scenes fragment the action which soon gets repetitive. Buy if you like gore!						
SYDNEY 2000	EIDOS	4	NO	50/VGA	11	7
Solid attempt to dethrone *International Track & Field* of the button-bashing athletics crown. Wide variety of events – but lacks the polish of Konami's similar title.						
TECH ROMANCER	VIRGIN	2	NO	50/60/VGA	8	6
More one-on-one fighting from Capcom, this time with giant robots taking centre stage. Lacks the finesse of other fighters and the 'giant' robots look tiny and wimpy.						
TEE OFF	ACCLAIM	4	NO	50/60	3	7
Cartoon-styled golf game that doesn't weigh you down with stats and unnecessary screen clutter. Things are kept simple and easy to follow and four can enjoy a round together.						
THE NOMAD SOUL	EIDOS	1	NO	50/60/VGA	7	5
A huge futuristic adventure starring David Bowie. Plenty of shooting, fighting and puzzle solving but they don't work as well as you'd like. Alright if you like sprawling sci-fi.						
TIME STALKERS	SEGA	1	NO	50/60/VGA	13	4
Lame attempt at a role-playing adventure that is too short and linear, with no attachment felt towards any of the characters. Not a good ambassador for RPGs.						
TOKYO HIGHWAY CHALLENGE	CRAVE	2	NO	50	1	5
Race for cash against other drivers around the Tokyo equivalent of the M25. There's only one track and the cars don't offer enough variety. May appeal to car nuts.						
TOKYO HIGHWAY CHALLENGE 2	UBI SOFT	2	NO	50/VGA	15	5
Another set of illegal Tokyo street races with a few more options and improved graphics. Win money and customise your fictional car. Still too dull for mass appeal.						
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION	EIDOS	1	YES*	50/60/VGA	6	7
Lara Croft's fourth adventure is set almost entirely in Egypt, getting back to what made the original game great: mind-bending puzzles, and lots of them.						
TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES	EIDOS	1	NO	50/60/VGA	15	6
Fifth outing for Lara sees some new but unsurprising ideas and a good variety of levels, but the series is now looking very tired and the control system is still flawed.						
TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING	CRAVE	2	NO	50/VGA	10	8
One of the best skateboarding games on the block, with a wide range of moves, sublime controls and memorable levels. Plenty of challenges to unlock and perfect.						
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION	2	NO	50/VGA	15	9
Bigger than the original, with wider range of challenges and tricks. Far better visually with expanded multiplayer modes and now you can design and save your own skate park.						
TOY COMMANDER	SEGA	4	NO	50/VGA	1	8
Mission-based war games with the action taking place in a house and re-enacted with a child and his toys. Much harder than it looks with imaginative use of the location.						
TOY STORY 2	ACTIVISION	1	NO	50/60/VGA	16	4
Below average platform adventure based on the movie with Buzz Lightyear attempting to save Woody from his captor. Weak graphics and an awful control system ruin what's good.						
TRICKSTYLE	ACCLAIM	2	NO	50	1	7
Futuristic hoverboard racing on the streets of London, New York and Tokyo. There's tricks to learn, and VM mini-games but the action is too slow to keep you interested.						
UEFA DREAM SOCCER	SEGA	4	YES*	50/60/VGA	16	5
Third instalment of the *Sega Worldwide Soccer* series, now going by a new name and offering female players as well as the men, but it's too similar to the previous versions.						
UEFA STRIKER	INFOGRAMES	4	NO	50	1	8
It was the first footie game on DC, and despite the simple looks, is still the best. It doesn't do anything spectacular, but it does it well and that's enough. Nice training mode too.						
ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP	UBI SOFT	2	NO	50/60/VGA	13	9
Brutal beat 'em up featuring a wide range of fighting styles as real-life competitors fight within a steel cage. Good controls and impressive graphics make this a real hit.						
URBAN CHAOS	EIDOS	1	NO	50/VGA	13	6
As a street cop in this large adventure you'll get to drive cars, shoot criminals and engage in hand-to-hand combat.A strong story and plenty of variety, pity about the poor controls.						
VIGILANTE 8: 2ND OFFENSE	ACTIVISION	4	NO	50/60/VGA	3	5
Vehicular combat on the streets of the American Deep South, with cars sporting every sort of weapon imaginable. Fun for a while but average rather than spectacular.						
VIRTUA ATHLETE 2K	SEGA	4	YES*	50/60/VGA	12	4
Sega get stingy with this athletics sim as it only contains seven events. The addition of a stamina bar to the button-bashing is a big mistake and there are no extras to unlock.						
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB	SEGA	2	NO	50/VGA	1	7
Competent conversion of the arcade legend that offers some fine fighting action but hardly any home extras. Great back in its day but looks shabby compared to *Soul Calibur*.						
VIRTUA STRIKER 2 (VER. 2000.1)	SEGA	2	NO	50/60	4	7
At first it seems unplayable, but take time to master the controls and discover why this is the best arcade football game around with national teams and a great goal rating system.						
V-RALLY 2 EXPERT EDITION	INFOGRAMES	4	NO	50/60/VGA	7	7
Fast-moving racer, with loads of courses and cars. Suspect handling slightly spoils the experience, especially as it feels like the cars could tip over at any second, and they usually do.						
VIRTUA TENNIS	SEGA	4	NO	50/60/VGA	12	9
Best sports title on Dreamcast. Simple controls mean anyone can master the variety of shots in a matter of minutes and includes some of the best home modes around.						
WACKY RACES	INFOGRAMES	4	NO	50/60/VGA	9	7
Classic cartoon becomes a slick *Mario Kart*-style racer. The cars and characters of the show are captured perfectly and there are some fun split-screen multiplayer modes.						
WALT DISNEY WORLD QUEST: MAGICAL RACING TOUR	EIDOS	4	NO	50/60/VGA	12	5
Nothing really magical about this *Mario Kart* clone set around the streets of Disneyland. Graphical glitches and boring power-ups spoil the proceedings. It's a small world after all!						
WETRIX+	TAKE 2	2	NO	50/60/VGA	7	6
Puzzler where you must raise and lower land to collect water, using fireballs to evaporate the pools and score points. Unfortunately it soon becomes monotonous.						
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?	EIDOS	4	NO	50/60/VGA	13	3
There's no cash prize for winning but this is surprisingly close to the hit TV quiz. The eventual repetition of questions and poor production values spoil the enjoyment.						
WILD METAL	TAKE 2	2	NO	50	6	5
Tank game with as much emphasis on strategy as blasting. Choose a tank and pit your wits against the enemy. Sparse, endless levels get in the way of potential action.						
WORMS ARMAGEDDON	HASBRO	4	NO	50/VGA	3	8
Basic 2D graphics hide one of the greatest multiplayer games created. With simple to understand battle to the death gameplay, it's very addictive with a wide variety of weapons.						
WORMS WORLD PARTY	VIRGIN	4	YES	50/60/VGA	15	8
The same as *Armageddon*, but now supports more than one controller and is playable online – or it will be. The release date has been put back to March.						
WWF ATTITUDE	ACCLAIM	4	NO	50	2	3
We don't hate wrestling but we hate bad wrestling games like this one, which has poorly animated wrestlers that don't respond to the controls. Not as fun as wrestling should be.						
WWF ROYAL RUMBLE	THQ	4	NO	50/60/VGA	12	7
Technically it's incredible – with up to nine versatile wrestlers on screen at once. The sparse roster of stars and modes are a disappointment as what you initially see is what you get.						
ZOMBIE REVENGE	SEGA	2	NO	50/VGA	6	7
Scrolling beat 'em up based on *HOTD2*. Competent arcade conversion with VM mini-games to beef up your character before loading them back into the game. Undead good.						

*** Denotes limited online modes, such as high-score ranking, new items available to download etc.**

FAQ
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ONLINE

WHY CAN'T I PLAY .WAV FILES ON MY DREAMCAST?
You can, as long as they're embedded in Web pages. The Dreamkey browser can also play .au and .aiff sound files, and has partial support for Javascript as well as Macromedia Flash (version 3).

WHEN WILL VERSION 2 OF DREAMKEY BE RELEASED?
Probably around Easter. Sega are adding improved Javascript and Flash support. Watch out for news on our website (www.dreamcastmag.co.uk) or Dreamarena.

CAN I USE MY OWN INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP) WITH DREAMCAST?
No.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO USE MY DC ONLINE?
Calls are charged at nationwide local rates.

WHAT NUMBER DOES THE DC DIAL?
The number in the UK is 0845 757 6339.

CAN I ADD THE NUMBER TO MY BT FRIENDS & FAMILY LIST?
Yes. And if you nominate the number as your 'best friend' number you can get further discounts.

ARE SEGA PLANNING A FLAT-RATE SERVICE LIKE BT'S SURFTIME WITH FREE CALLS?
They're looking into it, yes. We'll bring you news as soon as we have it.

WHY CAN'T I ACCESS CERTAIN WEBSITES?
Because Dreamkey has a built-in child lock to filter out 'inappropriate' content. Annoyingly, this also includes some legitimate sites like Hotmail.

CAN I ACCESS NEWSGROUPS ON DREAMCAST?
Yes, via sites like www.remarq.com and www.deja.com which provide a Web interface for newsgroups. Sites like these aren't among the easiest to browse on DC, however.

WHICH NEWSGROUPS ARE WORTH LOOKING AT?
That depends on your personal tastes. For Dreamcast gaming, uk.games.video.dreamcast is a good place to start.

CAN I STILL RECEIVE EMAILS EVEN WHEN MY DREAMCAST IS SWITCHED OFF?
Yes! Your mail is stored on Sega's servers and isn't affected by what you're doing with your Dreamcast.

HOW CAN I PLAY GAMES AGAINST OTHERS ONLINE?
The big one is *Quake III Arena*. There's also *ChuChu Rocket!* and, of course, *Phantasy Star Online* (reviewed on page 8).

OKAY, SO WHICH OTHER GAMES HAVE ONLINE FEATURES?
Metropolis Street Racer, *F355 Challenge*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Buggy Heat* and *Sega Rally 2* are among those with online facilities. Others, like *Rayman 2*, include bonuses which can be unlocked by going online. Check out the directory entries on these pages.

ARE SEGA GOING TO RELEASE A FASTER MODEM?
Despite rumours nothing definite has been announced yet.

CAN I USE A US OR JAPANESE DC ONLINE IN THE UK?
Yes, but only to surf the Web. You won't be able to access the Dreamarena portal or gaming network.

I'M HAVING PROBLEMS WITH MY DC ONLINE. WHO CAN I CALL FOR HELP?
Call Sega's Internet Support Line on 09066 544544 (calls charged at 60p per minute. Seek permission of the person who pays the telephone bill before calling).

• Have we missed something? If there's anything else you need to know about using the DC online, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk

ODM RECOMMENDS

CHOOSING A NEW GAME CAN BE DIFFICULT WITH THE VAST ARRAY OF TITLES ON OFFER, SO WE'VE COMPILED A LIST OF THE 20 GREATEST GAMES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. THEY COVER A WIDE RANGE OF STYLES AND OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY. SO DON'T BUY A DUD, CHECK THE LIST FIRST!

4 WHEEL THUNDER

MIDWAY • ISSUE #8 • 8/10 • DEMO #8

Ignore the clichés of level design and this arcade-style off-road racer is a winner. The four vehicles included (truck, buggy, jeep and quad), each have different handling – a simple but rewarding control system enables you to feel the characteristics of each. Unsurprisingly, the aim is to finish first. Littered throughout each course are speed boosts – hitting these is vital if you want to be on the podium at the end of each race. This is a great little racer with loads of thrills and some brilliant two-player modes. While never stunning, it's a competent racer that packs in plenty of play.

CAPCOM Vs SNK

VIRGIN • ISSUE #15 • 8/10

A 2D super-bout that fans have long clamoured for. Essentially *Street Fighter Vs King of Fighters* with a few bonus characters thrown in. *Capcom Vs SNK* merges two very different styles of play into a very competent fighter. It caters to fans of both camps with a unique 'groove' system that allows you to choose between the two control styles. For each bout you must pick a team. Each character is assigned a rating of one to three – one for a weaker fighter, three for a boss. Your team can be made up of any number of them, as long as the points' value is four. The end result may not represent the purest form of either series, but it's great to play.

CRAZY TAXI

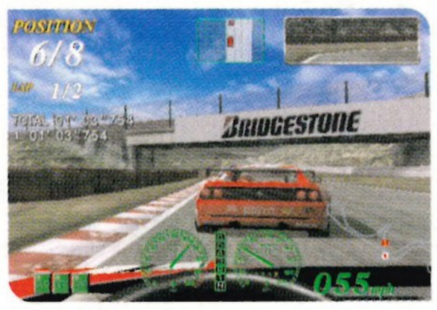
SEGA • ISSUE #5 • 9/10 • MOVIE#4

Get behind the wheel of a yellow cab and pick up customers, ensuring you drop them off at the correct destination in a bustling recreation of San Francisco. Drop them off within the time allowed to collect their cash. Then find another customer – but be quick! There's a host of excellent mini-games that will get you perfecting some of the special techniques that are buried beneath the surface of the main game. Essentially a score attack, this is an excellent conversion of the hit arcade game that manages to add a number of unique home features that'll make you play for much more than a few minutes.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

SEGA • ISSUE #9 • 9/10 • GUIDE #11,12,13

Beautiful aquatic adventure starring a young dolphin out to save Earth. An enemy known as the Foe has shattered the Guardian, the source of the Earth's defences – it's up to Ecco to search for the pieces. Controlling Ecco is easy. Think of it like a flight sim – you can swim any way you like, roll, turn upside down and leap out of the water... you can even get Ecco to tailwalk. The action starts easy enough, but soon gets very, very tough, with sharks and octopuses causing Ecco trouble and levels set underground – dolphins need air, remember? This is a stunning and entertaining underwater odyssey.



F355 CHALLENGE

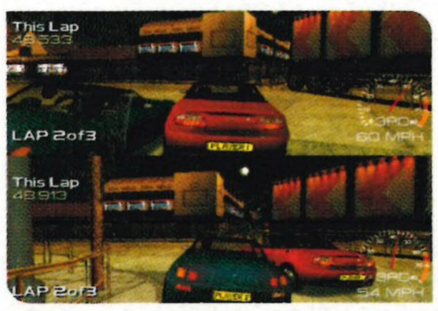
ACCLAIM • ISSUE #13 • 8/10 • MOVIE #12

Like the *Challenge* part of the title coincidentally suggests, *F355*'s adherence to realism and the laws of physics make it tough to master and has left the game with a love-it or loathe-it label. Playing *F355* is all about obsession. It'll take plenty of practice just to finish a race, let alone finish in the points, and as every car in the game is a Ferrari you've got to be in love with cars. Luckily, it's very easy to be obsessed about a Ferrari. It's a little short on extras, but the in-game detail and circuits are spectacular, and the handling is a triumph of software engineering. A purist's driving game, not for Sunday drivers.

JET SET RADIO

SEGA • ISSUE #14 • 8/10 • DEMO #14

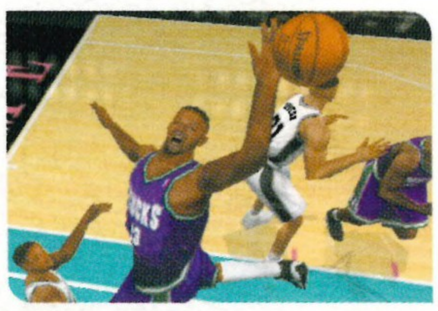
Employing a ground-breaking graphical technique that makes 3D characters look like flat cartoon drawings, *JSR* will guarantee a "wow" from anyone who sees it in action. Luckily, it plays as good as it looks. You're a rollerblader/graffiti artist who's out to tag every territory in the neighbourhood to show rival gangs who's the boss. Collect spray-cans, skate to the 'tagable' areas, then get spraying! But rival gangs and the police are out to stop you. Later levels get tougher, with the army called in and there's a greater reliance on tricks to reach new areas. With stunning looks, level design and music, you can't get fresher than this.



METROPOLIS STREET RACER

SEGA • ISSUE #12 • 9/10 • DEMO #12 • GUIDE #16, 17

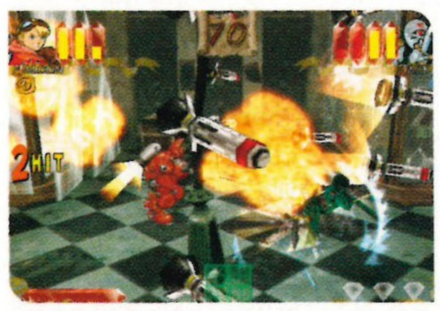
The major appeal of *MSR* is the three ultra-realistic cities you get to drive around – San Francisco, London and Tokyo are all perfectly recreated. You get to race around the famous streets in the flashiest of motors without the hindrance of the usual heavy traffic. The structure of *MSR* is also unlike any other racer, rewarding you with kudos points for good driving. These points in turn unlock new circuits – there are more than 250 in total – and allow you to obtain faster cars. There's unique handling for each car that makes them very different to drive but all enjoyable. One of the most revolutionary racers ever.



NBA 2K

SEGA • ISSUE #5 • 8/10 • GUIDE #7

Basketball may not be as popular as football in the UK, but if you're after a decent sports game *NBA 2K* is a much wiser investment than any of the DC's footie titles. Gorgeous graphics and a good play-by-play commentary should help those unfamiliar with the sport's rules. Real teams, players and more statistics than you'll ever need add to the realism, with each match flowing back and forth just like the real thing. Loads of tournaments and options make it a title that offers an excellent recreation of the sport with plenty of longevity. Playing *NBA 2K* only raises one question: why can't we have a footie game this good?



POWER STONE

EIDOS • ISSUE #1 • 8/10 • GUIDE #1

A fast-paced fighting game that offers complete 3D freedom of movement and a level of interactive items previously unseen in the beat 'em up field. There are loads of weapons, ranging from bats to bazookas, but you can also make use of other objects in each room, such as chairs, lamp-posts etc. Throw them at your opponent or hide behind them for defence. The power stones of the title also appear during each bout – grab three and you can transform into a super-powerful being and launch a devastating special attack. A hugely entertaining fighter. We think the original is better than the OTT sequel.

QUAKE III ARENA

SEGA • ISSUE #15 • 9/10

It may have been originally designed for PC, but the truth is *Quake III Arena* is far better suited to a console – specifically Dreamcast. This first-person shooter is fast and easy to understand, and quick reactions are essential. It's equally brilliant in single or multiplayer modes and you can also play it online. Single-player games play pretty much the same as multiplayer, due to the inclusion of 'bots' (computer-controlled adversaries that roam each level trying to hunt you down). The only disappointment is that to *really* appreciate it, you have to invest in the Dreamcast Mouse and Keyboard, especially if you're going to be battling online.

RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE

UBI SOFT • ISSUE #6• 8/10 • DEMO #5,7 • GUIDE #8,9,10

Platform thrills as Rayman tries to stop pirates terrorising his friends. Originality may not be its strong point, but when something plays as good as this you can't complain. It's also very tough, despite the simple opening levels to ease you into learning the controls. *Rayman* scores points for offering lots of variety – some levels see Rayman using rockets, spacecraft, and even a giant snake to water-ski. A great multiplayer bonus game is included. A simple yet extremely playable platformer, *Rayman 2* is cute, colourful and fun, and a supremely polished and well-constructed game.

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA

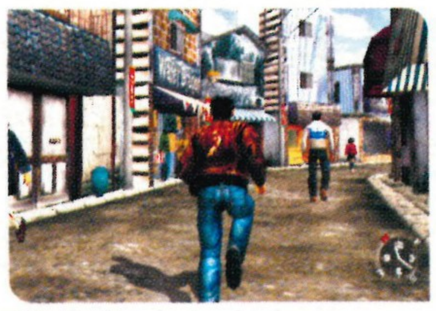
EIDOS • ISSUE #8 • 9/10 • DEMO #9 • GUIDE #9,10,11

The *RE* series continues in stunning fashion. It looks infinitely better than the original PlayStation titles, with true 3D characters and backgrounds and real-time cut-scenes. You control Chris and Claire Redfield, two survivors of previous *RE* games. As usual you're up against a zombie horde and a host of other hideous creatures. The only way to survive is to sensibly use the ammunition you find and solve puzzles to progress. This is a story-led adventure with plenty of shocks to keep you jumping and lots of secrets to discover to make you play again.

SAMBA DE AMIGO

SEGA • ISSUE #15 • 8/10

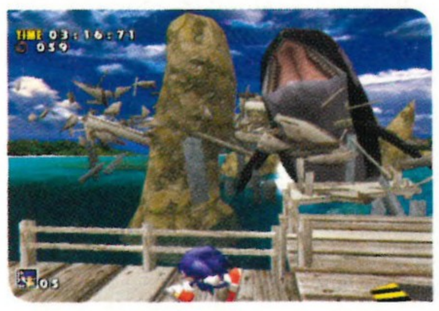
A bizarre 'rhythm action' title that has you standing in front of your TV shaking specially designed maraca controllers to correspond to the commands on screen. Essentially it's 'Simon Says' with famous Latin tunes to encourage you to get shaking, including some Ricky Martin hits and a very upbeat version of Aha's *Take On Me*. Despite an astronomical £100 price tag (due to the cost of manufacturing the sensor technology of the maracas), *Samba* is a winner. A guaranteed smash at any party, it will put a smile on anyone's face within five minutes of playing.



SHENMUE

SEGA • ISSUE #14 • 10/10 • MOVIE #14 • GUIDE #16, 17

Shenmue really is in a class of its own. You play Ryo Hazuki, a Japanese teenager who is searching for the killer of his father. A mixture of many different game styles, the best way to describe *Shenmue* is that it's kinda like real life. You take over the life of Ryo completely, waking each day, going to work, to shops, talking to other characters. Luckily, Ryo's daily life isn't mundane. As he starts to mix with a criminal element, you'll get involved a bar fight among other treats. The most expensive game ever created. Play it and you'll see why it's money well spent.



SONIC ADVENTURE

SEGA • ISSUE #0 • 9/10 • DEMO #1 •

Sonic is back doing what he does best – racing at lightning-fast speed and collecting rings through some of the most fantastic levels ever seen in a platformer. But that's only half of it. Adventure stages see Sonic explore his world at a slower pace, searching for clues that will lead him to his arch nemesis – the evil Dr. Robotnik. There are also five other characters that you'll get to control, with their own quests that intertwine with each other thanks to a plot that ties everything neatly together. *Sonic Adventure* is a fun title with stunning set-pieces and a host of mini-games that make excellent use of a VM unit.

SOUL CALIBUR

SEGA • ISSUE #2 • 10/10 • MOVIE #2 • GUIDE #3,4,5

This is still the best fighter on Dreamcast. Fights take place in small arenas, starring medieval heroes who batter each other with big swords and axes in best-of-three bouts. The characters appear large on screen, are incredibly realistic and animated superbly. Look closer and you can see that they breathe, wince, and smile! Best of all though, *Soul Calibur* plays far better than it looks. The Mission Battle mode adds longevity to play – you travel the world and fight battles where the rules are constantly changing. Doing this unlocks a host of cool secrets. You shouldn't rest until you've seen it all.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

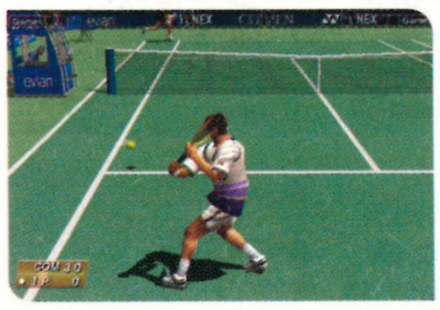
ACTIVISION • ISSUE #15 • 9/10 • DEMO #14

A great example of how to turn a specialist sport into a game that everyone can enjoy. *Pro Skater 2* allows you to perform an array of stunning skateboard tricks in locations that encourage you to go crazy. Once you've learnt the basic controls you'll be addicted. Then you can practice tougher moves that score more points and successfully complete the ten tasks that are set on each level. It's a huge challenge to complete the game, with some tasks seemingly impossible at first. Working your way through reaps its own rewards, with new areas and abilities made available. You even create your own skater or design your own skate park. Nice.

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

CRAVE • ISSUE #13 • 9/10 • DEMO #13,16 • GUIDE #15

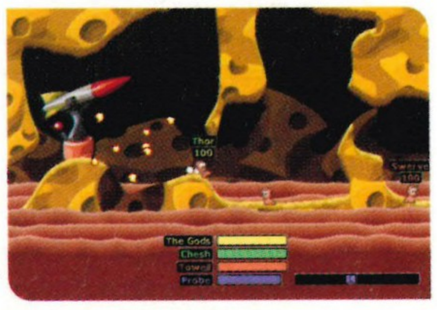
Realistic fighters battle in no-holds-barred matches in a wire-enclosed ring. Based on the American TV sport, *UFC* is the most brutal beat 'em up on the market. It looks mean, plays mean and it definitely sounds mean. Fighting styles are fully represented – ju-jitsu, freestyle wrestling and submission fighting are just a few. There's 22 characters, more than 3,000 moves, 1,200 combos and a wealth of modes. It wouldn't mean squat if it wasn't fun to play, but despite being brutal *UFC* rewards technical mat skills. It all adds up to make the most complex unarmed combat title ever created.



VIRTUA TENNIS

SEGA • ISSUE #12 • 9/10 • DEMO #11, 17 • GUIDE #13

Despite only using two buttons to select shots, *Virtua Tennis* isn't simple. Through a combination of positioning and timing, you can hit a much wider variety of shots than the standard and lob returns suggest. There are 20 computer opponents to challenge, including real players, who have different playing styles and characteristics. There's the straight-up Arcade mode or the more challenging World Circuit mode. *Virtua Tennis* is a fantastic multiplayer game. Play against an equally skilled friend to discover why, in the Best of the Best feature in *ODM* #16, the experts voted it number one.



WORMS WORLD PARTY

VIRGIN • ISSUE #15 • 8/10

Control a team of four worms and fight rival teams in a turn-based battle. There is a huge array of weapons available for you to mount your attacks, ranging from simple fists or handguns to bazookas and full-on air strikes. There are also some unusual weapons like skunks, exploding sheep and OAPs. *Worms* is simple on the surface, but dig deeper and there is a great depth to the gameplay. It's always been famous for being a great multiplayer experience but falling flat in single-player. The same problem is evident here, but now you can battle online, so you'll never have to play alone again – unless you really want to.

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PERIPHERALS

I'VE HEARD THAT THE SEGA LIGHT-GUN WON'T WORK WITH SONY SUPER TRINITRON TVS. IS THIS TRUE?

Turn off the Auto Picture facility of the television and you'll be okay.

I HAVE A 100HZ TELEVISION, AND THE DREAMCAST LIGHT-GUN DOESN'T WORK. WHY?

This is because the screen refreshes faster than the game, so the light-gun hits aren't registered properly. There's nothing you can do about this, we're afraid.

DOES THE LIGHT-GUN WORK WITH GAMES OTHER THAN *HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2*?

Currently no, but more compatible games are expected soon.

WHY SHOULD I BOTHER WITH A SCART LEAD?

Simply because it will improve picture quality compared with using the RF cable (or 'TV lead') which is supplied with the DC. A fully wired RGB SCART cable is the best option, but check that your TV is compatible before shelling out.

WHEN WILL THE DVD PLAYER BE COMING OUT FOR DREAMCAST?

Nothing official has been announced yet.

WHEN WILL THE ZIP DRIVE BE RELEASED?

Sega are said to be working on one, but there are no details yet on when we're likely to see it in the UK.

WHAT'S A ZIP DRIVE?

It's a storage device which uses discs which can hold 100Mb of data (ie approximately 700 times more than a VM).

ARE SEGA RELEASING A MICROPHONE, AND IF SO WHEN?

It's out now, priced at around £15.

WILL SEGA BE RELEASING A PRINTER SO I CAN PRINT OUT WEB PAGES?

It's extremely unlikely. For the record, there's a button marked 'Print' on the Dreamcast keyboard simply because it's based on a PC model.

ARE SEGA RELEASING A HARD DRIVE?

It's also unlikely. You won't need one as well as a Zip drive.

WHY CAN'T I FIND A DREAMCAST KEYBOARD?

There were supply problems, but keyboards are now readily available in stores and via Dreamarena.

WHAT'S ALL THIS I HEAR ABOUT A DC CAMERA?

Sega announced a camera add-on recently. You'll be able to use it to take pictures and take part in video chat on the Internet. Dreameye should be out in early 2001.

WHAT'S A VGA BOX?

It's an adaptor that enables you play DC games on a PC monitor, offering improved picture quality. Sega haven't officially released VGA boxes in Britain, but you'll find one if you look hard enough.

WHY DON'T ALL GAMES SUPPORT A VGA MODE?

Because it takes extra time for the developer to include support, and some don't think it's worth their while since only a tiny proportion of gamers have a VGA box. If support is included, then it should be a seen as a bonus.

WHAT'S A RUMBLE PACK, AND DOES IT WORK WITH ALL GAMES?

It's an add-on that plugs into you controller and makes it vibrate in time with the on-screen action. Expect to pay £14.99 for an official Sega one. It's compatible with virtually all games, and really good with *Crazy Taxi*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Soul Calibur*, *Hydro Thunder* and *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*.

IS IT WORTH GETTING AN ARCADE STICK?

If you like fighting games, yes it is. They cost £34.99 and are virtually indestructible, but aren't much use on racing or action games.

IS IT WORTH GETTING A STEERING WHEEL?

Only if you feel like splashing out – we covered them in *ODM* #14. Obviously you can only use them for driving games, and the standard DC pad gives you analogue steering, acceleration and braking, so there's really no need.

• Have we missed something? If there's anything else you need to know about the Dreamcast peripherals email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk

READER REVIEWS

THE BIT OF THE MAG WHERE YOU TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF GAMES. HAPPY WITH A PURCHASE? PICKED UP A DUD? THEN DO WRITE IN – IN UNDER 250 WORDS! – AND TELL US

QUAKE III ARENA

REVIEWED: *ODM* #15, 9/10

WE SAID: "Whether it's online, split-screen or single-player, Quake III Arena is so fast, so good-looking and so perfectly balanced that you'll pick up a controller and play for an hour without even noticing."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

Congratulations to Sega for finally proving that Dreamcast is a viable online gaming platform. I bought *Quake III Arena* initially because on their own, the one-player and split-screen modes are an absolute riot. I never hoped that the modem could deliver a fulfilling online experience.

Then, purely out of boredom and in a flu-ridden, bed-bound state, I decided to go online. What? Only two arenas were being played, and both had the maximum amount of players. "Bloody geeks," I said to myself, feeling left out.

Bravely, I decided to enter an arena on my own, in the hope that someone would join in. Two minutes of aimless wandering around later, and I was challenged by a fellow by the name of Grohl. I was losing 10-6, but holding my own, until a fellow 'no-namer' joined in and got soundly trounced by the both of us. Next arena, new entrant: Doom. Grohl was starting to look like an amateur, and I was being made to look, well, even worse!

Two hours later and I was still online, getting my arse whipped and never finishing higher than second! The rest is history. Well, apart from the fact that I bought a mouse as a consequence and am no longer a whipping boy. Oh, and my phone bill has soared – the only obstacle to Sega's online ambitions.

But how does Dreamcast *Quake III Arena* compare to its PC counterpart? Graphically, it's stunning, and easily on a par with a high-ish end PC. Online, and the lag is far less significant than many detractors would have you believe. The only real problem occurs when firing slow-reacting weapons such as Rocket Launchers and the Rail Gun, when you really have to anticipate where the player is going to move in advance. But this minor irritation is often forgotten in the heat of the battle, and you have to bear in mind that your opponents are equally disadvantaged.

The crux of the matter is this: if a game as blindingly fast as *Quake III Arena* works so well online on Dreamcast, then there is absolutely no reason why Sega's machine cannot succeed as an online gaming platform. Just get those call rate charges sorted!

HEADCASEY, VIA EMAIL

It's true. No matter how much fun you might be having with *Quake III Arena* offline, you really do have to experience the brilliance of playing it online.

SHENMUE

REVIEWED: *ODM* #14, 10/10

WE SAID: "The quality of production in every area is astounding. You'll see where all the years and millions of pounds have gone when you play it, as it genuinely sets new standards in just about every way."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

Thank you Sega, for the best game in the world! *Shenmue* is so great there are no words to tell you about the game that has been number one in your Most Wanted chart since day one. It's worth every cent of the $70 million that it took to make. I'm just upset I've finished the game in three weeks of having it and now I have to wait for ages for Chapter 2.

Seven out of ten of my friends that played it, said "I want this game for my PlayStation 2." My friends are now looking to sell their PS2s just to get a Dreamcast and *Shenmue*. I don't think Sega can get any better than this, but I hope they do. Thank you Sega, and a big thanks to you for having the best mag in the world. Keep up the good work!

BOB, VIA EMAIL

This is a warning to all gamers. *Shenmue* is not what you think. Here are the main problems: first, it comes on four GD-ROMs. When people see this they start to drool – but suck it back in! The three GDs that you play on are very short – I completed it in under two weeks, playing it for a couple of hours here and there.

Second, once you have completed the game there is no replay value, as all of the beat 'em up and reaction sections must be completed the same if you are to proceed – thus no different story or route. Third, you will get on with the main story/game as there is nothing else to do – the arcade is crap and no, we don't want to collect little toys. The towns are modelled beautifully, but who cares if there is nothing to do?

I can't see why this game took $50,000,000 or whatever to make, and there is no realistic way that profit will be made. I definitely advise people to spend their money on *Quake III Arena* instead.

THOMAS VINCETT, WESTON-SUPER-MARE

Positive comments far outweigh the negative ones, but there are some people who managed to completely miss the point of *Shenmue*. Their loss.

△ ***Quake III Arena*: showing us all how good online gaming can be when done well.**

ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE

REVIEWED: *ODM* #9, 9/10

WE SAID: "Do yourself a favour and check *Ecco* out even if it doesn't look like your cup of tea, because it would be a crime to miss out on one of the most original and pleasant games on Dreamcast."

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

ODM – a magazine we can trust? Oh yes! I've learned that if *ODM* says a game is crap, then the chances of it being crap are about 99.9 per cent. I am a bit of a games buff and have 25 games in my Dreamcast library, 12 of which were in the 'Best of the Best' feature in *ODM* #16.

But I am going to tell you about just one of those – *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future*. *ODM* gave this beauty 9/10, which I was very glad about because I am a very big fan of the series. I loved all the original 2D games way back on the much-loved Mega Drive.

△ ***Shenmue*: it's brilliant! No, it's rubbish! No, brilliant! Rubbish! Brilliant!**

△ ***Ecco The Dolphin*: one of the biggest, toughest DC games out there.**

"THE GRAPHICS ARE SPECIAL AND IT IS ALSO A MARVEL TO CONTROL, ONCE YOU GET USED TO IT"

– BEN WILCOCK ON *ECCO: DOTF*

△ ***Rayman 2*: we told you it was surprisingly brilliant. But did you listen?**

No *Ecco* game on the Saturn was a big disappointment to me and that made *DOTF* even more anticipated when I heard about it. When it was finally released a few months late, I bought the game and was literally blown away [literally? – ed]. But that is how all games usually start if you've paid enough for them. And then later the hair starts to fall out and blood seemingly rushes to the head. What I am trying to get at here, is that even though *DOTF* is breathtaking, aside from being a huge game it is also very challenging and that's letting it off lightly.

The graphics are quite unique and special in *DOTF* – it really does look nice and is also a marvel to control, once you get used to it. The story and overall plot seems to be a slight downer for this game – it appears to be a bit pointless to me. I would have preferred something more dramatic, like a planetary disaster or a meteor about to hit Earth.

The musical score and general audio will make you feel very aquatic indeed. Just think of Sea Life Centres and that's the kind of feel you get while playing in the calmer parts of the game. Then when the games turns darker and moodier you think John Williams is composing!

Overall, if you would like a five-star adventure game that is very open and dramatic, mixed with amazing visuals PS2 owners would drool over, together with one damn fine audio score, then I urge you to get *Ecco: DOTF* right now!

BEN WILCOCK, VIA EMAIL

Anyone complaining about *Shenmue* being too easy should try *Ecco* for size…

RAYMAN 2

REVIEWED: *ODM* #6, 8/10

WE SAID: "Beautiful, cartoon-like 3D graphics, excellent cute characters and simple controls… We love you, Rayman!"

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

Rayman 2. I never, ever thought I'd buy it, but I saw it for £4.99 in Virgin and decided to get it. I got that, *Toy Racer* and *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* with change out of a 20 pound note! I played *Toy Racer* for ages with mates, but when they left I tried the other two. *Tomb Raider* was simply s**t. The series went downhill after the second one.

But *Rayman 2*… that was different! I played it for about five minutes and initially thought I should have got that beer instead. I put it in the drawer. Then I played it again and something clicked. I love *Rayman 2*! It's better than *Sonic*! It is! I love *Sonic Adventure* and this shocked me – it's really great. I love it to bits, and I want invisible limbs too! Rayman rules!

'PLACEBO', VIA EMAIL

Go Rayman! Go Rayman! Go Rayman!

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE GAMES *YOU'VE* BOUGHT?

Send you comments (in *under* 250 words, please!) to Reader Reviews, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Alternatively, email them to letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk with the words 'Reader Review' and the name of the game you're commenting on in the subject line. Note: we reserve the right to edit submissions before publication. We will not consider any reviews longer than 250 words. And please include your name.

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MISCELLANEOUS

WHAT'S A GD-ROM?

A custom type of compact disc used for Dreamcast games. They hold up to 1Gb (1024Mb), which is more than a regular CD-ROM (650Mb).

WHY CAN'T I PLAY JAPANESE OR AMERICAN GAMES ON MY UK DREAMCAST?

Dreamcast games use something called 'territorial lock-out', a data track specific to the part of the world in which the game is supposed to be sold and played (ie Japan, Europe or America). This helps stop illegal imports of foreign goods.

WHY DO GAMES COME OUT IN JAPAN AND AMERICA MONTHS BEFORE THEY DO IN THE UK?

Because it takes time to convert them for our TV system (PAL) and to translate them into all the European languages. Games developed in Europe, like *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Ecco The Dolphin*, generally come out first here though.

WHAT IS THE RRP (RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE) OF A DREAMCAST?

£149.99. Look around though, and you may find it cheaper and/or bundled with free games.

WHEN'S DREAMCAST 2 COMING OUT?

A little impatient, aren't we? The average lifespan of a console is five years, so there's a while to go yet.

WHY DO RELEASE DATES KEEP CHANGING?

Making games isn't an exact science, so it's often hard to tell how long it will take to finish them. Games are usually delayed to make them better though.

WHO'S NAOMI?

Naomi is Sega's latest arcade hardware and it's very similar in design to Dreamcast, so coin-op to DC conversions are easy to do. *Crazy Taxi*, *Dead Or Alive 2*, *Jambo! Safari*, *F355 Challenge*, *Spawn* (see this month's demo disc) and *18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker* are all Naomi games.

WILL ALL NAOMI GAMES COME TO DREAMCAST?

Not necessarily. Some arcade games don't work well as home conversions.

WHY CAN'T MY DC PLAY WINDOWS GAMES?

Because it isn't a PC. Some Dreamcast games use Microsoft's Windows CE technology, but it doesn't make your Dreamcast a PC.

WHEN IS *SHENMUE II* COMING OUT IN THE UK?

Early 2002. Probably.

WHEN IS *FIFA SOCCER* COMING OUT?

FIFA Soccer is published by Electronic Arts, who haven't signed to Dreamcast yet.

WHEN IS…

Arrrgh! If there's any major news on release dates we'll tell you in our news pages. Please, please, please stop emailing us for information on release dates. Pretty please?

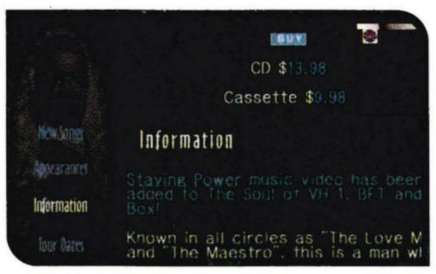
I DON'T LIVE IN BRITAIN OR IRELAND. CAN I SUBSCRIBE TO *ODM*?

Sorry, no. Subscriptions to this magazine are only available to those living in the British Isles.

• Have we missed something? If there's anything else you need to know (except release dates, please), email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk

VALENTINE WEBSITES

ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, **POGGY** HAS FOUND ALL THESE LOVEY-DOVEY WEBSITES, ESPECIALLY FOR LITTLE OL'YOU



BARRY WHITE
www.barrywhitemusic.com

The Walrus of Love's official site will have the plaster crumbling from your love nest as he weaves the inexplicable magic of his many chins. All his CDs are available here, as is his public appearance schedule so you can make a pilgrimage to touch the man himself.

BEAUTY PHOTO.COM
www.ace.photographer.org.uk

If you meet your true love online, you may have to send a more realistic photo than one of *Star Trek*'s Seven Of Nine. Visit this site to book a glamour makeover with liberal Vaseline on the lens, or pick up tips on how to fake it in the local photo booth.

BENDICKS
www.bendicks.co.uk

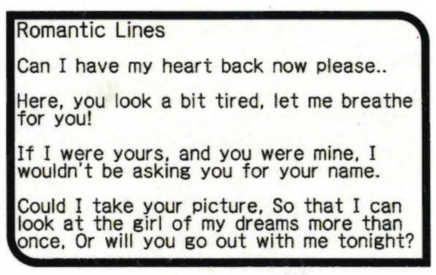
The Queen eats these, so if they work on the monarchy, they'll work on the plebs. Although you can't buy choccies direct from the site, there is a list of stockists, plus a competition and postcards of chocolates to torture all the eternal dieters out there.

BUY A GIFT
www.buyagift.co.uk

Flowers equal guilt. Chocolates elicit "you're trying to make me fat" and lingerie will have you accused of over 45 post-feminist crimes. This selection of go-karting, bungee jumping and speedboat gifts means that at least you can make it *look* like an accident...

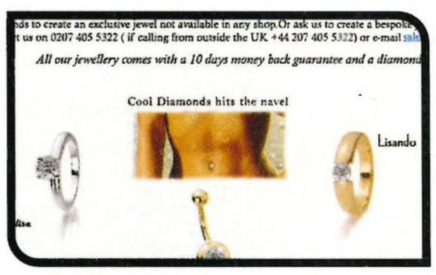
JONATHAN CAINER
www.cainer.com

He may well look like he's spent a few too many hours down in the dingly dell at dawn, but don't let the Goblin King look put you off. Rate your compatibility with your loved one (and with a twelfth of the world's population) on this site.



CHAT-UP LINES
www.legend.yorks.com/~jbrett

Eyes like dark limpid pools aren't what they were and 10p barely covers a call to your parents. Make like Bond with a selection ranging from what to shout in a club to something more slushy. Avoid "You remind me of my mum – will you tuck me into bed?".



COOL DIAMONDS
www.cooldiamonds.com

Diamonds *are* a girl's best friend – fiendishly pointy, many sided and completely impenetrable. Although Dreamcast owners can't buy online, they can submit orders by email or over the phone, at prices much lower than down the high street.

AM I HOT OR NOT?
www.amihotornot.com

Been off the dating scene for what seems like aeons? Skin translucent from months in a bunker playing *Shenmue*/building a wax and hair shrine to the God of Get Some? Submit your photo for the public's (dis)approval or vote for numerous others to gauge public opinion on whether the Bill Gates look is back in this month.

DIVORCE PRANKS
www.divorcepranks.com

Bitter exes are what keep this nation's locksmiths in shiny gold cars and diamond toothpaste. Read these tales for hints on where to hide your suits/shoes/mother, or submit your own story of manure, kippers in duvet covers and acidic eye drops.

GAY.COM
www.gay.com

Classified ads for gays and lesbians around the world, ranging from people in search of a lifetime in Homebase to those looking for someone to go clubbing with next Thursday. Also carries listings from entertainment to advice centres.

ECRUSH
www.Ecrush.com

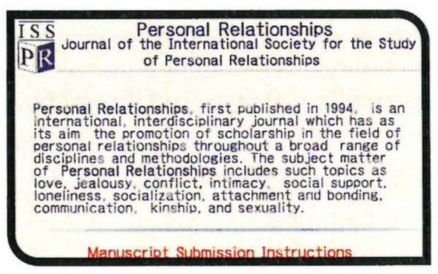
"My mate fancies you!" Come out from the bike sheds as this site takes the plucking out of plucking up courage to ask your idolised one out. An email will be sent to the object of your affections, who can only discover your identity by registering online. But remember, just because you're doing it online doesn't mean that you can't be drunk at the same time.

GRETNA GREEN
www.gretnaweddings.com

Create a misspent youth of your own, and re-enact Eastender's best Christmas special by eloping to Gretna Green. There's no need to take it to the grotty B&B level though, as this site has a variety of hotels and wedding packages. Uh huh huh huh huh. Packages!

INTERFLORA
www.interflora.co.uk

Forget the 'flowers equal guilt' factor and welcome the digital age. Interflora's calendar will allow you to enter all the birthdays/anniversaries you'll ever need and debit your account accordingly. Don't forget to delete the ex, or prepare for an exciting reunion.

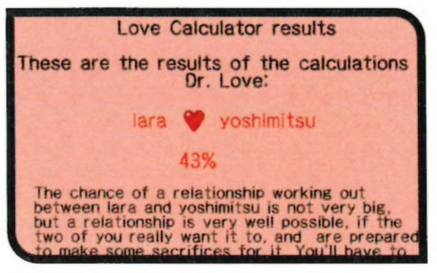


INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
www.isspr.org

Get a professional take on why your girlfriend keeps trying to scythe your head off with your copy of *Tomb Raider*. Then jump at the chance to become the subject of a study on bad dating habits, for the good of mankind.

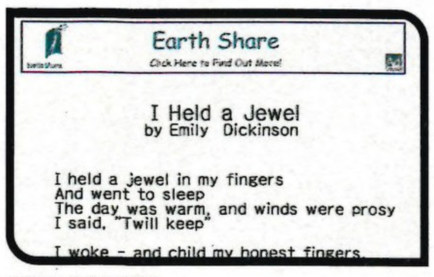
INTERNET DATING
http://internetdating.net

There are a myriad of Internet dating sites – some of them likely to match you with your dream date, others that will rip you off and set you up with a Trekkie. If at all. This portal will lead you to some of the more reputable sites, and warn you of what to expect.



LOVE CALCULATOR
www.lovecalculator.com

The letters in your name correspond with numbers, and adding them up is numerology. Input the names of you and your partner and the Love Calculator will do the rest. Then you can blame your failed love life on your parents calling you Jane and not Jacinta.



LOVE POETRY

www.lovepoetry.com

Girlfriend with a balcony and a copy of *Shakespeare In Love*? Notch up Brownie points without having to find a rhyme for 'orange', with some of literature's classic love poetry. Budding Wordsworths have submitted their own, but diabetics beware.

LOVE MAGIC

http://shanmonster.bla-bla.com/witch/love.html

Slipping a potion into the drink of your loved one isn't as acceptable as in Olde, but there are many other methods by which you can encourage love and eternal happiness... if your local Safeways sells vipers' testicles.

LOVE TEST

www.lovetest.com/lovesongs.html

Compatibility and crooning site. The karaoke of pulling doesn't have to end at *Lady In Red*. You can expand your repertoire all the way through to Phil Collins and the Backstreet Boys. Search lyrics from across the 'ooh baby' spectrum and listen to clips to get into key.

MILLS AND BOON

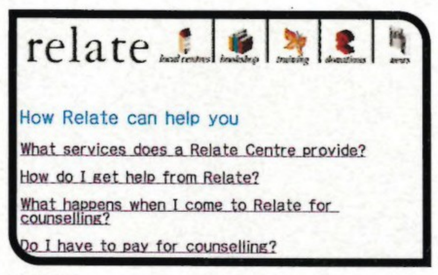
www.romance.net.au

Access to over 16,000 (yes, 16,000) Mills and Boon titles, which would amount to over 14,500 ripped bodices and more throbbing members than Cream's guest list. Boom. Encourage your maiden aunt to apply for free Internet access for life with a 'strapping musky-scented warrior just back from the French Revolution' postcard.

MAIL ORDER BRIDES

www.mailorderbrides.com

E-commerce is the future – you *can* live your life without leaving your flat. This portal takes you to eligible wives from around the world, and lays down strict guidelines for the potential spouse. Live-in staff and immigration legalities are also provided.



RELATE

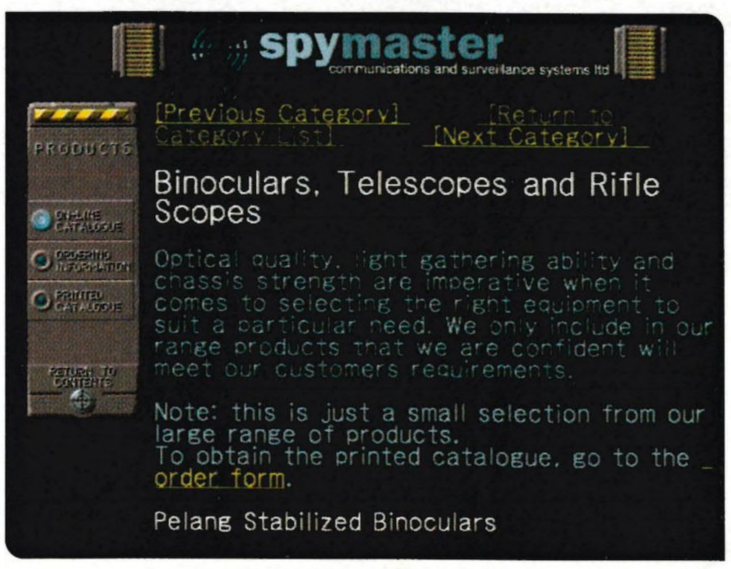
www.relate.org.uk

Spotted a pattern emerging in your love life? The three months of sunshine, daisy chains and spinning each other around without vomiting, then their shoes constrict your breath with their very presence. Relate can see you through to everlasting happiness.

RESTAURANTS

www.restaurants.co.uk

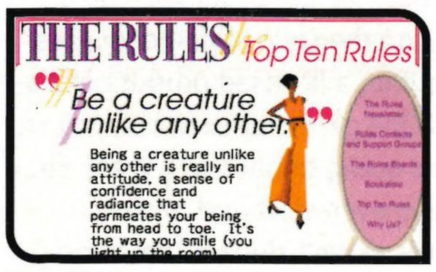
We can't all be Jamie Oliver, which is no bad thing – although probably a little annoying for Lambretta. Good food and setting fire to your fringe with candles in this UK restaurant guide. Plus no Spanish Inquisition-style utensils littering your kitchen.



SPYMASTER

www.spymaster.co.uk

Sometimes you need to do a little background work. No one needs to discover that their other half is the 'get-up-at-6am-for-a-run' type. Some people get a bit excited by suitors fogging up the windows though, so order a telephoto lens/night vision goggles here. They supply the world's sneakiest governments, including our own, so (s)he'll never see you coming...



THE RULES

www.therulesbook.com

If Ivana Trump is your role model, then this is your Bible. Tips include not speaking too much in case you appear to be babbling and always keep your hands folded in your lap. Probably in case you accidentally semaphore "Help me, I have a mind" at your host.

SPLENDOUR

www.splendour.com

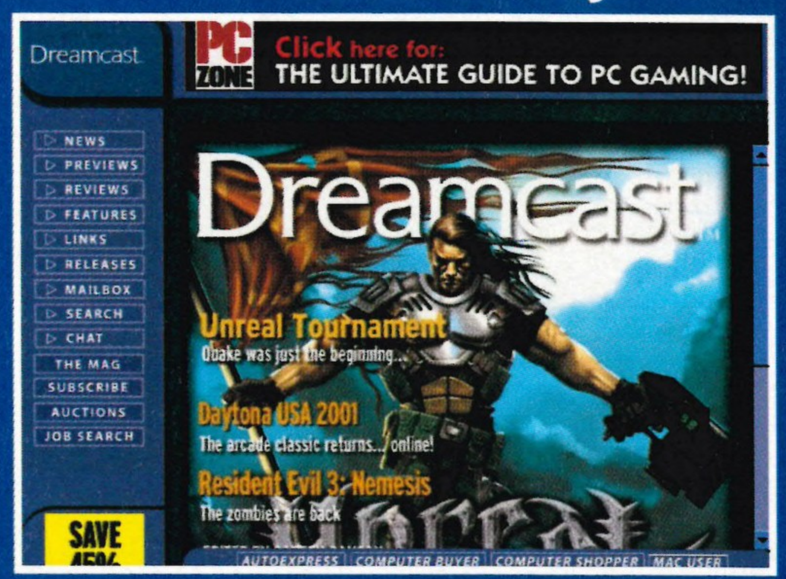
Update your greying M&S undergarment drawer with lingerie in a classy non-porn setting. For those last-minute black lace emergencies, this site can give you next-day delivery. Oh, and check out the Handsfree Bra (no, really).

VIVA LAS VEGAS WEDDING CHAPEL

www.vivalasvegasweddings.com

It's dead sophisticated and, more importantly, completely eliminates the risk of dancing wedding parents. This site will take care of everything from photos to cars and matching Elvis wigs. They also have suggestions for themes, so pack your spare beard.

www.dreamcastmag.co.uk



NEWS | LINKS
PREVIEWS | TIPS
REVIEWS | MAILBOX
FEATURES | CHAT

OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAG
WEBSITE

Okay, so you've read the mag. Well that's just the half of it – our website is second to none.

ODM online is updated daily with the latest news from the world of Dreamcast. If it's happened or happening, then you can bet you'll find out about it here first.

As well as our ever-growing archive of definitive reviews, previews and features, there's also the chance to make new friends and swap hints and tips with thousands of other Dreamcast users in our Live Chat and Chat forums.

www.dreamcastmag.co.uk

DAVE TAYLOR, 29
LEAD ARTIST AT ARGONAUT

Dave has been working in the games industry for five years now. Before that, he was a freelance video editor for Saatchi and Saatchi.

SEFTON HILL, 27
LEAD DESIGNER AT ARGONAUT

Last worked on *Red Dog* for Dreamcast. Sefton has worked in the games industry for four years.

ADRIAN MILLS, 28
WORKS FOR NTL

ODM reader Adrian loves games. And has "played them forever". His consoles include Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 and PlayStation.

THE BIG DEBATE

THE 70 MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION

GAMES CAN COST A FORTUNE TO MAKE THESE DAYS, BUT HOW IS THE MONEY SPENT? *ODM* PERSUADED INDUSTRY BODS AND READERS TO WRESTLE WITH ALL THINGS MONETARY

ODM: What does it cost to produce a game these days?

KATS: The average budget is $10 million in Japan. But we do develop *and* publish at Sega.

DAVE: To develop, the average budget in the UK is £2 million.

JOSÉ: The size of budgets also depends on the style of game you are creating. If it's a licensed product, like a Formula One game for example, you are obviously going to have to pay royalties before you even start and probably afterwards as well, depending on how many years you have the licence for.

DAVE: The cost of creating a game depends on how much technology you have available to you to begin with. If you have an engine already in place [a program's main code] and have all the research and development done, you

DUNCAN METCALFE, 25
WORKS IN ADVERTISING

Has been "interested in games for quite a few years" now. Duncan owns most of the major consoles.

KATS SATO, 35
EXEC. PRODUCER AT SEGA EUROPE

Kats produced *Metropolis Street Racer* and supervises most of the titles that come over from Japan.

JOSÉ ALLER, 30
PRODUCER AT SEGA EUROPE

José has been at Sega for six years. During that time he has produced *Crazy Taxi*, *Sega Rally 2* and *Samba De Amigo* among others.

can save money on that, but if you are starting from scratch with a new console, then you have to concept the *whole* engine. That's going to cost you more money!

DUNCAN: I imagine games are also getting more costly because you need larger teams who specialise in particular areas. You used to have a couple of people working in their bedrooms back in the old days of the Sinclair Spectrum but because you have consoles like the Dreamcast, it's no good having just one person working on all the areas. You need specialists for each area of the game, such as graphics, sound and programming.

ODM: Have you been surprised by how much budgets have gone up?

KATS: Not really. Sega do do big budget games, obviously, but we also do things like *ChuChu Rocket!*, which had a very reasonable budget indeed! Because we make the console though, we do have to lead this industry, so sometimes – even if we know a particular game is very risky – we will assign a big budget for it, like we did for *Shenmue*.

ODM: So how is the budget actually spent then?

DAVE: The money that is put into a project isn't necessarily just put into that project's team. It is also distributed round the company to support research and development into other projects, so as to keep the company a viable option.

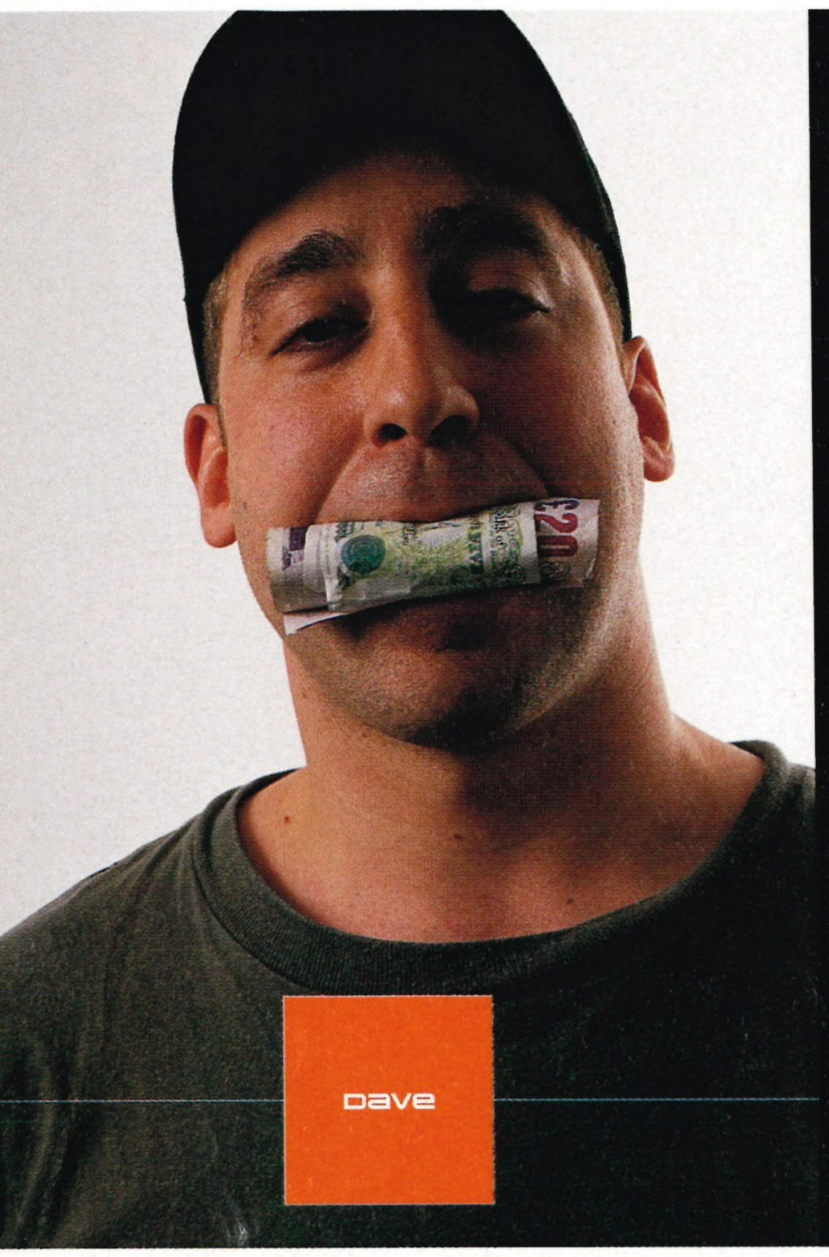
SEFTON: You've got a whole company to run after all! First of all, you've got to fund a team of 20 to 30 people. It's also a team that is ever-expending because of the demands of new technology. There are also unsigned projects that some of the signed projects are financing. So the money is going to a lot of different places. Fundamentally, it keeps the whole company running!

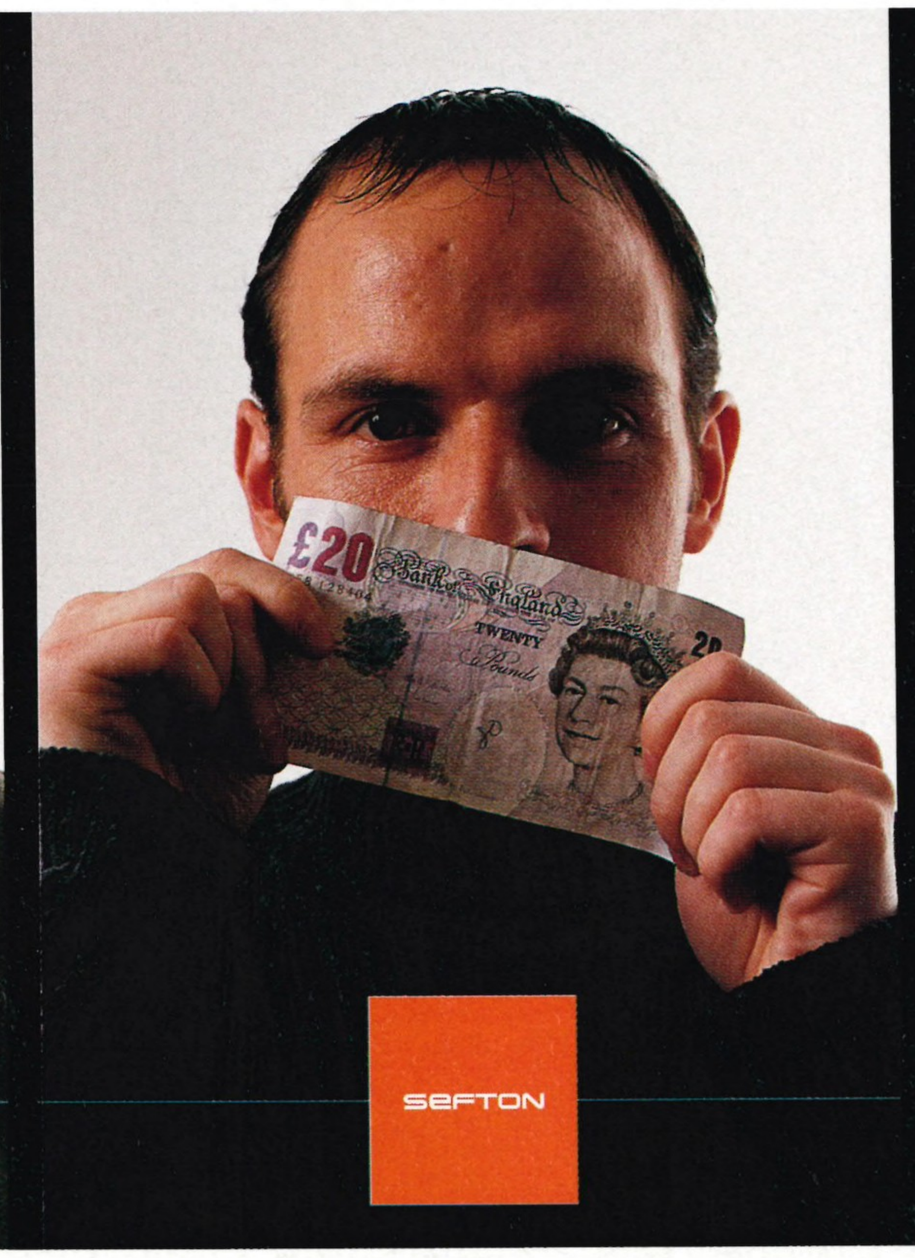
ODM: Turning to *Shenmue*, how did it end up costing $70 million to create?

KATS: The $70 million was spent just on the Japanese version of *Shenmue* alone! It was a very long project, though. It was intended for the Saturn before we decided to produce it for Dreamcast. Payments for artists, programmers and game designers were the biggest costs. After all, they are the most expensive element of any production! At Sega Japan, we use 100 people for one project sometimes and I'm pretty sure that with *Shenmue* they would have used more than 100 people. Also remember that the

"THE COST DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH TECHNOLOGY YOU HAVE TO BEGIN WITH" – DAVE TAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAN TRENT**





game took four or five years to create as well!

SEFTON: In general, costs are spiralling because you have to invest a lot of money in finding out how to get the best out of the latest technology. All companies are, and obviously every company wants to keep up. No one wants to release a substandard game.

ODM: What risks does this financial pursuit of technology pose?

ADRIAN: I think it is going to stop a lot of smaller, more original creative projects. I think that gameplay as seen in *ChuChu Rocket!* is getting lost because we *can* have a brand new engine, brilliant graphics, and push round seven million polygons on screen at once! I think at the end of the day people are going to get sick of it. I don't care about the polygon count – I'm interested in gameplay! Yes, *Shenmue* looks great, but it also plays great. I think that with a lot of games, they are going to spend all their money trying to get them to look as good as possible and they are going to forget about the actual game itself.

ODM: Duncan, in your email to *ODM* you mentioned the analogy of the film industry – that there will be space for the small 'indie' projects as well as the big blockbusters. What are people's thoughts on that?

DAVE: I disgree.

DUNCAN: Well, I don't know. I mean, how big is Id Software? Its team is quite small and *Quake III Arena* is a big, quality game.

SEFTON: There are only about 12 people making up the core team.

DAVE: Yeah, it's true they are a small team, but then they have a *lot* of backing behind them. In terms of money though, the film industry is different to the videogame industry because a film company can just go out, buy a small camera for about £2,000, and make a film. The camera is the equivalent of the engine in games but it costs a huge amount of money to establish an engine in the games industry. Either you have to buy it in for £250,000 *plus* royalties, or you have to develop one, which is a big risk in itself… plus it'll cost you £100,0000-200,000 to make it! Obviously small companies just don't have that kind of outlay! They haven't even got anything to write their games on! And, as the next-gen stuff gets pushed and pushed and it takes bigger and bigger teams to write these engines, the small companies are eventually going to get squeezed out.

ODM: But doesn't a game like *ChuChu Rocket!* show that you can put a small amount of money into a Dreamcast game and it *can* pay off? After all, the game did very well in Japan, financially speaking

JOSÉ: I think the problem there, though, is you still have to convince the marketing people who have to sell the product at the end of the day. If you presented this idea of mice being chased by cats, they'd probably think 'Errr, maybe not!' It would take some selling to them before it got the go-ahead. Sometimes at Sega, marketing *do* dictate what kind of product they want. For example, they can say 'In two years time, we would like to see a licensed car game'.

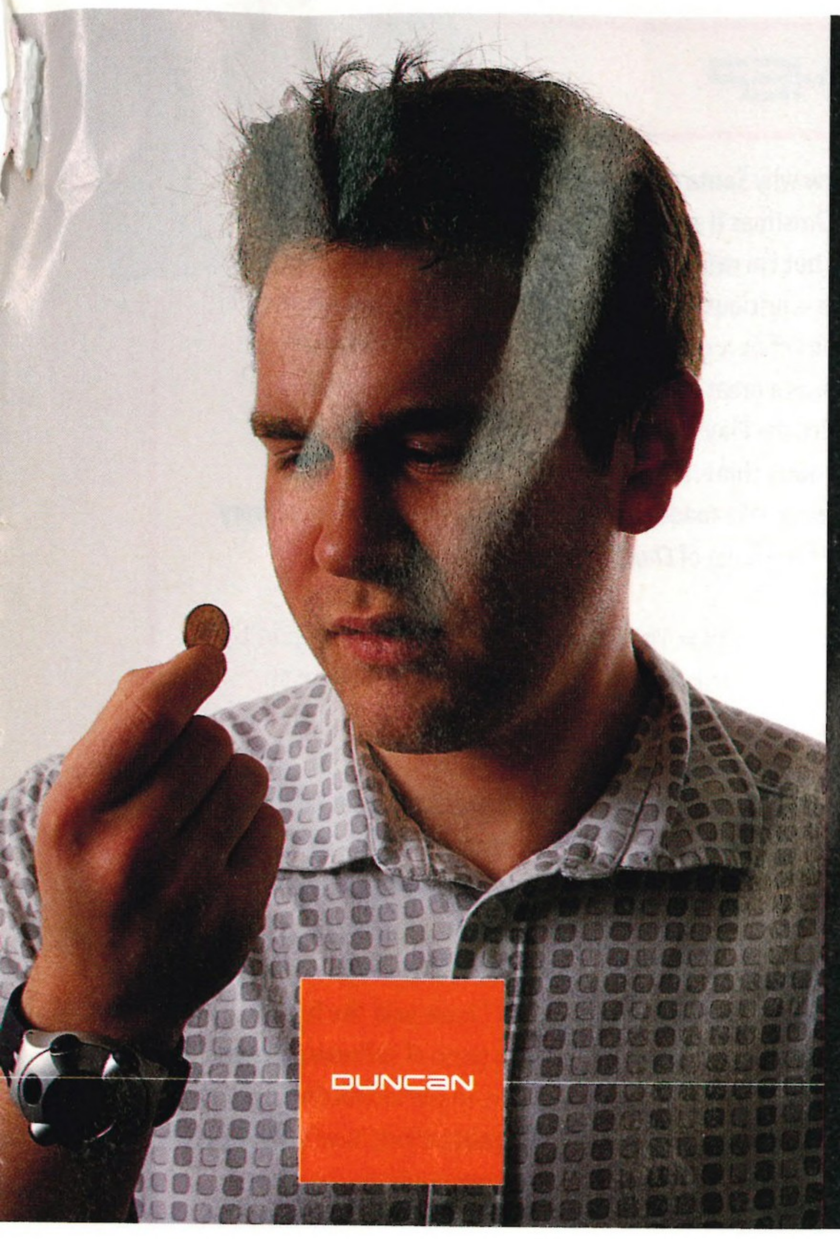
SEFTON: I think that is true everywhere. Marketing is trying to respond to the market and what sells games. It's their job!

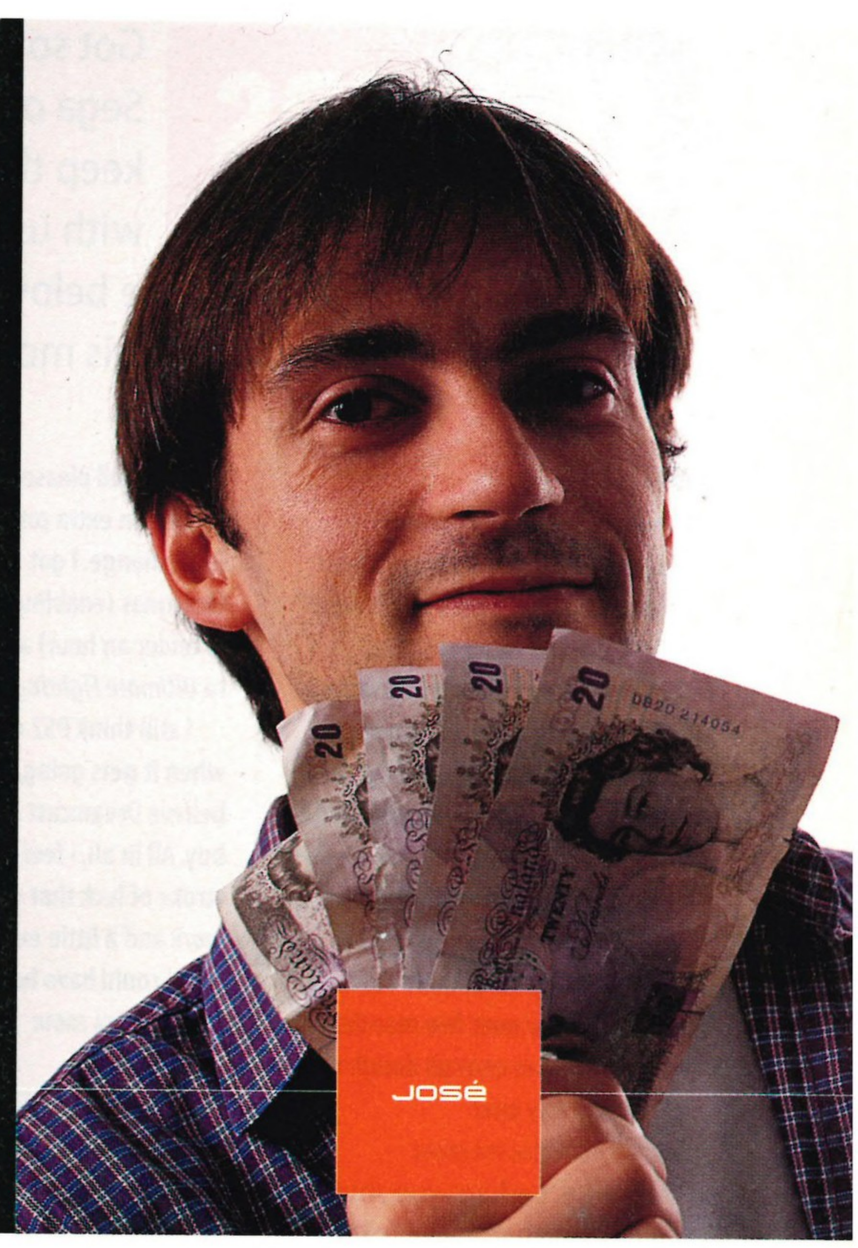
DAVE: *ChuChu Rocket!* is an exception that can only exist because Sega has already got a catalogue of high technology-driven games anyway.

ADRIAN: But as budgets get bigger, are people are going to take fewer and fewer risks because it costs so much to research and develop?

DAVE: I think there will always be a ratio. Like *Shenmue*, which is a flagship title – that's had money pumped into it to push the console right out there or to push the genre in a particular direction. Ultimately, though, there is always going to be a need for 'X' amount of games that fund

"AS BUDGETS GET BIGGER, ARE PEOPLE GOING TO TAKE FEWER RISKS AS IT COSTS SO MUCH TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOP?" – ADRIAN MILLS





"RECOUPING THE BUDGET IS SOMETIMES A SECONDARY ISSUE" – KATS SATO

productions like that. They can't just bring out five or six cutting edge flagship games! You need to bring out games that keep the market afloat.

DUNCAN: Yeah, we will always get the *FIFA*s of this world if publishers think that producing a football game is an easy way to raise money. *FIFA* does epitomise it, really! Every year, *FIFA* charge more and more for the licence, and yet Electronic Arts [the makers of the football series] continue to buy the licence because they know they are going to shift more units every year!

ADRIAN: I think they are just churning out the same thing over and over again. It is just something that is recognisable which panders to the public's lowest common dominator. Which is where the money is!

ODM: What is Sega's take on original games and sequels, in terms of money?

JOSÉ: You have your safe bets, such as when you release sequels to a game that was previously successful and that tends to fund the development of new ideas.

KATS: Sega is a console provider as well, though, and because of this we think releasing titles that are genuinely new is our responsibility. Dreamcast has a modem, so it is our responsibility to release fast, online titles! An important thing that must be remembered, is that we actually spend a huge amount of money establishing the network and servers for online gaming – even for individual titles. We have had to set up new servers in Europe, the US and Japan to do online gaming. So, for example, if we were to say 'Okay, let's greenlight this online title', it means that the game's minimum budget is already going to run into a few million because we have to set up servers for that game. Before Dreamcast's online gaming, how much the spend was on a project was just down to how many people were involved or how many years we spent on one project. For online titles like *Daytona USA 2001*, though, we now have to cover the costs of the servers as well!

ADRIAN: But with *Daytona* you must reckon that it is a safe bet to release it online, because it is a franchise and it'll make back the costs.

KATS: With *Daytona* we don't know whether we *can* recoup the budget, but we have to make online gaming popular everywhere in the world so recouping the budget is sometimes a secondary issue! Same with *Shenmue* – we may not recoup the costs but it's about showing what the Dreamcast can do!

ODM: How do we see game budgets developing in the future? Are they going to keep on climbing?

DAVE: There's no ceiling to it! Look at film budgets – they just go up and up.

SEFTON: When you bring in a new platform, and because they are a step up from the previous ones, you are going to need more texture artists because you'll want to make a bigger, more detailed world. Subsequently, you are going to need more designers, so immediately your team is bigger! And that costs more money.

DUNCAN: Gaming has to become far more mainstream than it is to justify the cost. At the moment, you know what the market is and you know you can sell only so many copies. Subsequently, there's no point in shovelling millions and millions of pounds into something when you know it is only going to sell a certain amount. Not everyone has a console yet but I assume it is going that way – especially with the likes of set-top boxes and other different ways of getting games into people's houses. Perhaps eventually you can justify huge costs, but I don't think we have got there yet.

JOSÉ: I think costs will definitely rise because the more hardware you sell, the more you know people have the machine who you can sell a game to! So developers and publishers will think 'We want to make this game better and better. There is an installed base out there who we can sell it to and they're going to be more and more willing to spend more money'. I think it's inevitable really – licences, development costs etc – it will all be driven by the user base. If there is a user base out there, game makers will always be willing to go just that extra mile and come up with something more special. Subsequently, one title sets the standard and everyone else wants to beat it, so they chuck more money at it!

LETTERS

Got some thoughts on Dreamcast, Sega or your magazine? Well don't keep them to yourself – share them with us and, if your letter is interesting, thousands of other readers (see below for contact details). Editor Warren Chrismas responds to this month's best letters

NOTENDO

I have always been a faithful Nintendo owner, apart from a brief affair with Sony "what's originality?" Entertainment. However, I was shopping recently and saw *Shenmue* on display and my jaw dropped.

Well, Nintendo have just lost a customer. I'm not waiting until 2002 for next-gen gaming – I want it now!

Having swotted up on Dreamcast, I see I will get arcade conversions *and* originality. What more can I ask for? Roll on the next few months when I will have enough dough to go out and buy one!

CRAIG THORNTON, VIA EMAIL

Hmmm, perhaps you should have asked that 'Santa' fellow?

CLOSE SHAVE

I don't usually write in to magazines and I always used to wonder who the hell does (yeah, us too – ed). But I feel I have to write in to say how impressed I am with my Dreamcast.

Although I really only have a passing interest in videogames, I'd been waiting for the PlayStation 2 to come out since I first read about it over a year ago.

I am well pleased. I got a bunch of games, an extra controller and over £150 change. I got a keyboard for Christmas (enabling me to write this in under an hour) and I'm addicted to *Ultimate Fighting Championship*.

I still think PS2 will be great when it gets going, but right now I believe Dreamcast is a *much* better buy. All in all, I feel I had a real stroke of luck that my PS2 didn't work and a little embarrassed that that I could have been so blinkered.

CLAYTON, VIA EMAIL

Welcome.

YES, WE KNOW

I'm writing to complain about the lack of a subscription-based Internet deal for us Dreamcast owners [oh no, not another one – ed]. Before you go thinking "oh no, not another one", I think I have a valid point to make.

Firstly, now that Sega have refocused their strategy to become the world's number one online software provider, you'd think they'd want to come up with a deal to get more regular users on the Dreamcast.

I bought *Quake III Arena* on the day of its release, and have been on it constantly ever since. What I was surprised at was the *lack* of people actually playing online.

The only reason I can think of is that not everyone can afford to play online, and what with it being a key DC online title it is a bit worrying.

I read the reason stating why Sega don't have an online deal on the Dreamarena and, personally, I think it's a joke. Just because it is a private network *doesn't* justify a lack of a deal – we access the Net in just the same way.

Also, a bit more than "Sega are working on a deal" would be appreciated. Updates on how negotiations are going would be nice.

I don't want to be seen as a moaning git because I eat, sleep and breathe *Quake III Arena*, but simply can't afford to be online for more than an hour a night. A deal would be excellent for people like me.

Please Sega, think about it! I think more people would be inclined to stay on longer on games like *Quake III Arena*, *Planet Ring* and *Toy Racer* etc if something was sorted out!

STEVEN RUTHERFORD, VIA EMAIL

Of course they would, Steven. You know that, we know that and Sega Europe, who have carried out extensive research on the issue, know that too.

As reported on several occasions, Sega Europe have been in discussions with BT regarding a possible single-payment, monthly subscription deal for Dreamcast owners, although we aren't privy to the exact details of those discussions (and don't expect to be).

If there's a sticking point, we'd imagine it's the financial model and how it would work for both companies under a new single-payment scheme.

As is stands, Sega Europe makes money from each call you make to Dreamarena. But, given that they take a small percentage from as little as 1p a minute (off-peak), you should be able to appreciate that they're not exactly coining it in. And, after all, Sega has to pay for the development and maintenance of Dreamarena somehow.

Whatever, we remain hopeful that a deal is sorted out in the near future and, naturally, we will keep you posted with developments as and when we get some news.

WHO HE?

△ Sorry, Santa doesn't exist (no, Warren in fancy dress doesn't count).

I still don't know why Santa got me a Dreamcast at Christmas (I asked for a PlayStation 2), but I'm extremely happy he did! It is superb – luscious graphics, good sounds and loads of new games on the horizon, as well as a great existing range.

Sony can stick the PlayStation 1 and 2 where the sun don't shine. Dreamcast rocks!

Sega and Santa have made this 41-year-old man (yeah, honest) very happy. Can't get the hang of *ChuChu* chuffin' *Rocket!*, though!

MARTIN R. TAYLOR, VIA EMAIL

Good news, Mr Taylor. Thing is, though, er, we really don't know how to break this to you, but… Santa doesn't exist!

OH DEAR…

What the f**k is wrong with you? You're a bunch of hypocrites. You rave on about *Shenmue* for a year, then start ranting on about *Shenmue II*, without hardly mentioning *Virtua Tennis*.

And then, in the Best Of The Best feature last issue, you put *Shenmue* at number five and *Virtua Tennis* number one. Why? [Er, because the 54 experts voted the games into those positions – ed]

Virtua Tennis is not even as good as *Grandslam* on Mega Drive, especially for multiplayer. In my opinion there's only one game that can beat *Shenmue*, and that isn't out till early 2002 [eh, *Shenmue II*? – ed].

In fact, the only other game that could come close to the experience of *Shenmue* is *Phantasy Star Online*, which I am desperately waiting for.

Oh yeah, and before I forget, in answer to Kerry [New Balls Please, Letters, *ODM* #16] – the reason there are no good footie games on DC is because footie is shite and footie games are *shitter* – get over it.

And yes, Kerry, asking people round to play *Virtua Tennis is* embarrassing, so get *Dead or Alive 2*, *Soul Calibur* or *Samba De Amigo*. Or don't invite friends round and get *Phantasy Star Online*, a life or *Shenmue* (another life).

'FUDGY CAKES OF DOOM', VIA EMAIL

I don't think there's much point in us trying to make you look (more) stupid with a witty reply, is there?

FREE TIPS

I feel the need for a moan. Each month I look through the pages of your glossy magazine, hunting for the tips and cheats to aid me in my gameplay enjoyment.

Recently, though, it's occurred to me that I shouldn't have to purchase magazines to find out how to achieve unlimited ammo etc by pressing Up, Down, Left, Right or whatever.

If I have paid the full retail price for a piece of software, I should be given, in the instruction booklet, all the codes which have been purposely programmed into the game.

It's like buying a new TV that can receive all digital channels, and only being told about BBC1, BBC2, ITV and Channel 4.

So come on software developers, give us what we have paid for, or it's the Office of Fair Trading for you! Thanks for a great mag.

ANDY MARTIN, VIA EMAIL

This is a joke, right?

CAN'T GO ON

Like the mag, blah, blah, blah. My point is this – I have developed a strange phobia to *Shenmue*. The game came into my possession at Christmas where I played (and loved) it for three days solid.

I got to the – how do I put this without spoiling it for the others? – 'forklift' bit and I am now too afraid to continue my adventure. I am at a loss to explain it.

I am aware there is a number of possible reasons for this:

1) I don't want it to end.

2) The thought of 'petting' that kitten again and wasting a further nine hours of my life on a God-awful but outrageously addictive darts simulation.

3) I'm in love with Ryo and am suppressing my cyber-homo-erotic fantasies.

Has anyone else experienced this strange phenomenon? I have waited, even craved, for this game for months. I became addicted and now… nothing. Oh well, every step is a way through.

SCOTT-SAN, UXBRIDGE

"I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BUY MAGAZINES TO FIND OUT HOW TO ACHIEVE UNLIMITED AMMO"

– ANDY MARTIN

Imagine my disappointment when, after finally returning home with my prized machine, the damn thing didn't work! I was totally gutted.

I didn't think there was much hope of getting another PlayStation 2 particularly quickly, judging from my past experiences with returning faulty goods to Sony. So I demanded a refund instead and bought a Dreamcast – something I hadn't given much thought to before.

GOT SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SAY ON DREAMCAST, SEGA OR YOUR MAGAZINE?

Email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk or send a letter to Mailbox, *Official Dreamcast Magazine*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Please note: you must tell us your full name and, preferably, your home town. *All* letters and emails sent to us are read by *all* the *ODM* team. We respond when we can, but we do not have time to send personal replies to everyone. Sorry! Also, we reserve the right to edit, spell check and add punctuation to letters before publication.

Funny, we've developed a similar reluctance to play *Surf Rocket Racers* (see page 75).

TICKED OFF

I seem to have discovered a new bug in *Metropolis Street Racer*. It seems that every time I play it, I set the clock and start playing only to find that what seems like 15 minutes, is actually recorded as being four hours.

Strangely, this bug also seems to alter the surrounding clocks in my house. I'm really impressed with the totally immersive 'day to night' transition phase. It actually feels like it *is* getting dark... and all in the space of 15 minutes. Amazing!!

ED ANDERSEN, VIA EMAIL

Ha ha. Yes, very funny. Mind you, the joke would have been even funnier if we hadn't read the same letter on the Net about three months ago...

RYOBOT

I have been given *Shenmue* as a present and have been playing it from dawn to dusk every day. I have noticed that if you look real close at the side of Ryo's head, there is a computer chip under some hair.

Is this part of a twist in the game or a fault? The only problem is that I've only noticed it on the third disc when he's talking to someone at the bus stop. Please tell me what it is.

CHRIS O' CONNOR, E-MAIL

Sorry, we're not allowed to give you details, Chris. You'll have to wait for the release of *Shenmue III Arena*. Probably.

THE REAL THING?

The very first thing I was planning to do as soon as I got *Shenmue* was leg it down to the arcade. On my way I wanted to get a nice can of Coca-Cola or Fanta. But they were replaced by some cheap rip-off called Jet Cola and Fruda. What the hell are those doing there? I was really looking forward to this.

LUKE MILDENHALL-WARD, BERRYNARBOR, DEVON

Well, you could always, like, go and buy some in real life.

BRAGGER

This is a mail to heap praise on all the first monthly winners on the *Planet Ring* rankings. I myself won the *Ball Bubble* 2p rankings with a win ratio of 80 per cent. This was close with Lukeb and Mimic not far behind. I know there will be no prizes at the moment for this game but how about some future developments in this area from Sega?

Congratulations to all the other winners and unlucky to those I have played (most of them). I am sure all the winners will have everyone else gunning for them in future games. A little recognition if you can. Thanks!

ROB EVANS, VIA EMAIL

Okay, Rob, we'll let you gloat... if only so it gives us the chance to remind readers who may have missed it that the excellent *Planet Ring* online games came free with our January issue (*ODM* #15), which is still available from our Back Issues department (see page 104). Thanks!

D'OH!

I've just paid £5 for your magazine and tried to use the two discs, but when I put them in the computer nothing happened at all. Can you please tell me what I'm doing wrong?

LUCY WEBBER (8), VIA EMAIL

Well, you could try putting them in a Dreamcast...

WAR IS OVER

I'd first like to say that *Quake III Arena* is the best game ever, but all that blood can make you queasy online. So, in one game I called a cease-fire and told my enemies to meet up with me, and not kill one another.

I greeted them with frantic jumping. Then they started jumping too. And there we were, all happily jumping around and chatting about how much fun we were having.

So, I call to all Quakers, jump about and have fun... until you get bored and want to do some more killing.

SAMWEL KEMP, VIA EMAIL

That's beautiful, Samwel.

PERSONAL SERVICE

I'm very excited because I'm getting *MSR* and *Shenmue*. Could you send me some reviews by email?

JACK ONLINE, VIA EMAIL

Yeah, right...

PERSONAL SERVICE 2

Your mag is the best. Could you send me info about forthcoming games?

T HOLLAND, VIA EMAIL

We certainly can, Mr/Ms Holland. In fact, we can do it on a monthly basis and at a very reasonable rate. See page 56 for details.

QWERKY

to dreamcast magazine, does it worth buying a dreamcast keyboard [sic]

ARYANASAADI47, VIA EMAIL

I think you've answered your own question...

ASK SEGA

Every month we give you the chance to talk directly to Sega. Send us your questions (contact details below) and we'll put them to the people behind the world's greatest console

SNAKES' ALIVE

Hi Sega bloke! I've had a great idea – you should release (over the Internet) a VM version of the enormously popular mobile phone game *Snake*! I think you'll agree that *is* a great idea.

SCOTTIE, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: I believe there are already several sites (such as booyakasha.com) where you can get a similar game. We do plan to start having VM games to download on Dreamarena shortly.

PRICE IS SLIGHT

How much does it cost to go on the Internet on the Dreamcast per minute or whatever?

DANIEL MILLS, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: Connection to the Internet is free, but phone calls are charged at the cost of a local rate call.

FORGOTTEN

I've forgotten my *ChuChu Rocket!* password and I can't play it. I know it's my fault but all I want to do is play online. Oh, and *Jet Set Radio* is ace!

ANDREW GIBBONS, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: Glad to hear you like *Jet Set Radio*. In answer to your question, call the support line (08456 090 090) for help. Answer a few questions about yourself and they should be able to give you the password you need.

SCRATCHED

If my copy of *Crazy Taxi* has trouble loading and says that the disc needs cleaning or is scratched what should I do? The disc is not scratched at all and I have cleaned it, but I cannot play this fantastic game.

STEVEN BURROWS, SOLIHULL

SEGA: It might be that the laser in your console is damaged. Call the support line (number above) for help on this issue.

DOWN UNDER

I plan to emigrate to Australia. Will my UK Dreamcast console be able to play games from the Australian market? Also, will I be able to surf the Web with it there?

DANNY KOH, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: Yes, you can play all your games there as Australia also uses the PAL system. Call [Sega's Australian distributors] Ozsoft when you get there to get a new browser disc to go online.

ARENA BATTLE

I logged on to Dreamarena today and found that it was taking ages to load! After talking to some people in the chat room we came up with a possible answer – we think it's due to *Quake III Arena*. Is this true and when will it be back to normal?

J MEEGAN, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: We do occasionally have the odd network problem with Dreamarena, but this has nothing to do with *Quake III Arena*. The game has no direct impact on the performance of Dreamarena.

PRICE IS WRONG

At my local Comet store in Barking, Essex, I took *Toy Racer* up to the counter and on the screen it said £4.99. Then they told me that this was wrong! I told them that Sega have issued this price, but they took off the £4.99 sticker and changed it to £39.99! Are they breaking some type of rules here?

JAMES JARVIS, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: The RRP (Recommended Retail Price) of this title is £4.99, but it's up to the stores how much they wish to charge. If you shop around you will be able to find *Toy Racer* for £4.99.

NET RUBBISH

I heard rumours on the Internet that the Dreamcast can hook up with the Xbox. I know that rumours come off the Internet every three seconds, but this one sounds real because of the 'Compatible with Microsoft Windows CE' text on the front of the Dreamcast. Is it true?

CIARAN McCRISKEN, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: No.

HONDA OUT

Why aren't there any Hondas in *Metropolis Street Racer*? I've completed all the Chapters and unlocked all the cars but there doesn't seem to be a single Honda in it. Any ideas?

ERIC TANG, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: Honda withdrew from *Metropolis Street Racer* at the 11th hour as they were not happy with the game's content. Which unfortunately means that there are no Honda cars in the game.

NUMBER'S UP

What number does the Dreamcast dial to get to Dreamarena? Can I use my Dreamarena account on a PC if I dial this number?

CURTIS JEWELL, VIA EMAIL

SEGA: The number is 0845 757 6339, but you can only dial through your Dreamcast at the moment. We hope to be able to offer PC access in the not too distant future.

GOT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO ASK SEGA?
Email your queries to us at sega@dreamcastmag.co.uk or send a letter to Ask Sega, *ODM*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. Please note: each month we chose the best of the queries, pass them on to Sega Europe and print their responses. Before writing please check that your queries haven't been answered in our FAQs starting on page 107.

YOU KNOW YOUR JOB IS GOOD WHEN...

...YOUR EMPLOYERS GIVE YOU A FREE DREAMCAST

It's a gamer's dream come true – play as much *Soul Calibur* as you like during office hours and your boss doesn't give a damn! Anthony Kyriazis, head of web agency Kioken UK, spills the beans

"GAMING IS PART OF the roots of the company – our name Kioken is derived from the word used by Chun-Li when she performs a particular power move in *Street Fighter*. Here and at our offices in New York, gaming is taken very seriously. We spend at least one to two hours a day playing games during office hours. Indeed, we've put clients on hold because we have been playing games! We never tell anyone off for playing too much – you can have as much free time as you want as long as the work that you produce is kick ass at the end of the day.

"At the moment, we only have one machine and two arcade sticks in our UK offices, but in the New York office we have a massive widescreen TV, five Dreamcasts and ten arcade sticks. Those machines run 24 hours a day and we have even had a couple of them burn out – they just don't start after a while or they crash and never recover!

"The most played games are *Street Fighter*, *Tekken* and *Soul Calibur* [*ODM* #2, 10/10] but *Soul Calibur* is the favourite. The guys in the US have been playing it for over one and a half years because they all got the Japanese version before the US version came out. In the UK office, *Soul Calibur* has been the game that we've been trained up on ever since we started, but we're also beginning to get into *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* [*ODM* #10, 8/10] as well, so we're breaking with tradition a bit!

"We are so gaming-oriented, that when you join the company you are given a Dreamcast, two arcade sticks and a copy of *Soul Calibur*! You can then take the gear home and play on it. This means that when you begin working at the office, you have something in common with everyone else. I have found that it's a really good way of breaking people in, so to speak – they can start socialising with other members of staff, and *Soul Calibur* and its ilk are something that you can automatically talk about or discuss straight away.

"It really encourages a sense of competition – everybody gathers round in our games room and we all play, discuss moves and tricks, and so on. You can have up to ten people in the games room watching games being played sometimes! 'Newbies' are guided by the people who are good at *Soul Calibur* and it's nice over the course of two months to see how the new employees progress with the game. At the end of the day, they end up as competitive as the rest of us when it comes to *Soul Calibur*!

"We take our gaming so seriously that we are also running a global challenge for any new media agency to take us on at either *Street Fighter*, *Tekken* or *Soul Calibur*. We want the best five people from any other new media agency to take on five of our best players. As an incentive, we have put up computer kit worth £7,000! Any competitor has to bring a machine of the same value and whoever wins takes both pieces of kit home with them!

"We've had one or two enquiries over in the States and only one from an agency in the UK, but they were not willing to put up a machine as a prize. We've also had people trying to change the challenge's games, but we're sticking with the three beat 'em ups!

"Bottom line is that the competition is open to agencies across the world – from US and Europe to Asia! It's really about getting people talking and to show that Kioken's whole gaming culture is real and not a myth! Many people still don't believe it! At the end of the day though, we believe that gaming is really about having fun!"

PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAN TRENT**

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Armada
Attitude (WWF)

B - 02
Blue Stinger
Buggy Heat
Bust A Move 4

C - 03
Crazy Taxi
Code Veronica (Res. Evil)
Chu Chu Rocket
Chicken Run
Chao Adventure
Carrier
Cueball (Jimmy White's 2)
Cool Boarders Burrrn
Climax Landers

D - 04
Dino Crisis
Dead or Alive 2
Deadly Skies
Dynamite Cop
Disney's Dinosaur
Daytona USA 2
Demolition (Star Wars)

E - 05
Ecco the Dolphin
ECW Hardcore Revolution
Evolution
Evolution 2
ESPN Int. Track & Field
Expendable
Episode One: Racer
Elemental Gimmick Gear

F - 06
Four Wheel Thunder
Fighting Force 2
F355 Challenge
Fur Fighters
Flag to Flag

G - 07
GTA 2
Gauntlet Legends
Giga Wing
Get Bass
Generator
Giant Gram: Wrestling 2
Godzilla Generations
Gunbird 2
Grandia 2

H - 08
Hidden & Dangerous
House of the Dead 2
Hydro Thunder
Half Life
Hardcore Heat
Hardcore Revolution (ECW)

I - 09
Incoming
Int. Track and Field

J - 10
Jet Set Radio
Jimmy White's 2 Cueball
Jedi Power Battles
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure

K - 11
King of the Fighters 99
Kao The Kangeroo

L - 12
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
Loony Tunes Space Race
Last Revelation (T. Raider 4)

M - 13
Metropolis Street Racer
MDK 2
Mortal Kombat Gold
Metropolitan H'way Battle
Monaco Grand Prix
Maken X
Magforce Racing
Millenium Soldier
Marvel vs Capcom
Marvel vs Capcom 2
MTV Sports Skateboarding

N - 14
NBA 2K
NBA Showtime
NFL Q'terback Club 2000
Nightmare Creatures 2
NFL Blitz 2000 NFL 2K
NBA 2K1

O - 15
Omikron: The Nomad Soul

P - 16
Powerstone 2
Psychic Force 2012
Powerstone
Plasma Sword
Pen Pen Trilcelon
Pop 'N Music
Puyo Puyo

Q - 17
Quake 3

R - 18
Resident Evil: Code Veronica
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing 2
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
Rayman 2
Revolt
Resident Evil 2
Royal Rumble (WWF)
Rippin Riders
Rainbow 6
Roadsters
Racer (Star Wars Episode 1)
Redline Racer
Racing Sim.: Monaco GP
Rush 2049 (San Francisco)

S - 19
Shenmue
Sonic Adventure
Super Runabout
Silent Scope
Soul Reaver (Legacy of Kain)
Sega GT
Soul Calibur
Sega Rally 2
Sega Bass Fishing
Silver
San Francisco Rush 2049
Shadowman
Star Wars: Jedi Power Battle
Street Fighter 3: 3rd Strike
Speed Devils
Star Wars Demolition
Suzuki Alstare Ext. Racing
Soul Fighter
Sword of the Berserk
Slave Zero
South Park
Star Wars Episode 1: Racer
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Soldier Of Fortune
Street Fighter 3 Double Imp
Space Channel 5
Seventh Cross
Star Gladiator 2
Street Fighter 3 W Impact
Shotuko Highway Battle
Super Speed Racing
Samba de Amigo
Sydney 2000

T - 20
Tomb Raider 4 (Last Rev.)
Tomb Raider 5 (Chronicles)
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Tony Hawk's Skateboarding
Trickstyle
Tokyo Extreme Racer
Toy Commander
Toy Story 2
Time Stalkers
Tee Off Golf
TNN Hardcore Heat
Test Drive 6
Tech Romancer
The Nomad Soul
Toukon Retsuden 4

U - 21
UEFA Striker
Ultimate Fighting Champ.
Urban Chaos

V - 22
Virtua Tennis
Virtua Striker 2
V-Rally 2
Vigilante 8 - 2nd Offense
Virtua Fightr 3TB

W - 23
WWF Royal Rumble
WWF Attittude
Worms Armageddon
Wacky Races
Wild Metal

Z - 26
Zombie Revenge

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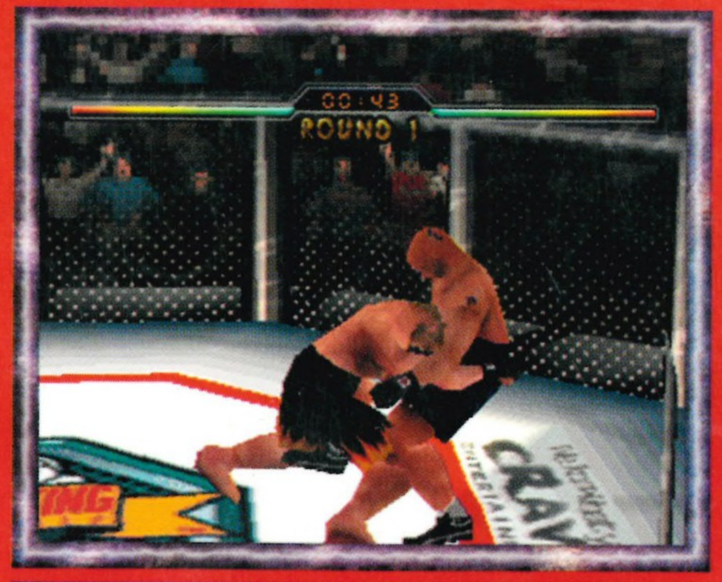

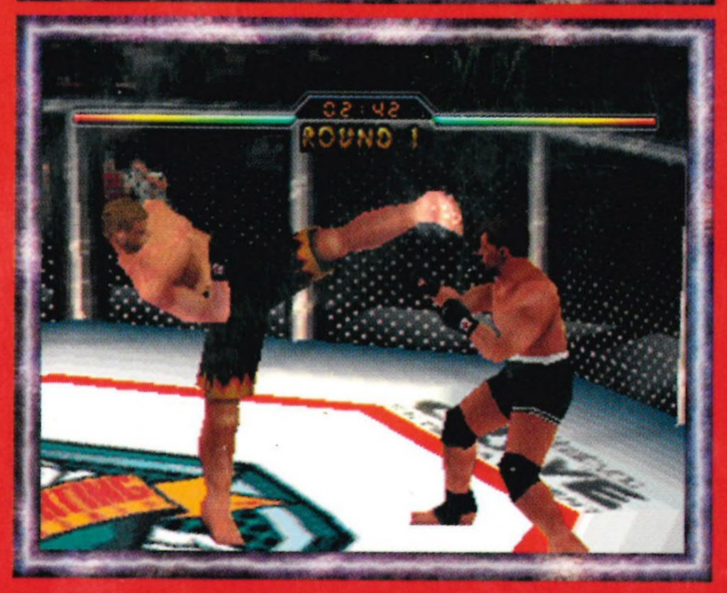

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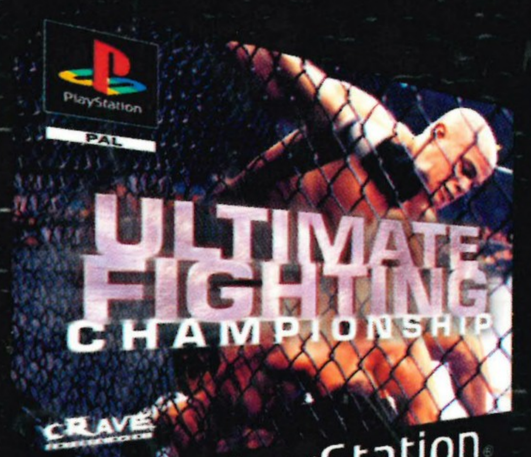

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