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May 1992

Jordan vs. Bird

The Classic Basketball Match-Up
Fast Breaks to the Genesis—Does It Score?

What's New in Computer Games? We Recap the Latest Hits for You

MAPS AND TIPS:

Ys III: Wanderers From Ys, Part II

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BOLDLY GO WHERE HAS GONE BEFORE.™

The Final Frontier beckons you to its darkest depths in two Star Trek® adventures for your NES™ and Game Boy® from Ultra®.

Take your NES through an intergalactic gauntlet of danger as you assume the role of Captain Kirk, guiding the U.S.S. Enterprise and its crew out of a mysterious rip in the fabric of space. Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, Scotty, Chekov, Uhura and Sulu are at your command in four adventure packed stages, each re-creating the look, feel, dialogue and humor of your favorite Star Trek episodes.

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NO MAN

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Navigate the U.S.S. Enterprise through asteroid fields, Tholian webs, swarms of Klingon Warships and cloaking Romulan vessels. Use your captain's instinct to adjust ship speed and shield and phaser strength. When you beam down to unknown planets, your tricorder will help you find weapons and analyze alien objects. Contact your crew with your communicator and be sure to set your phasers for full effect. Assuming you manage to reassemble the Disrupter, head straight down the Doomsday Machine's throat. If you don't, there won't be anywhere to boldly go.

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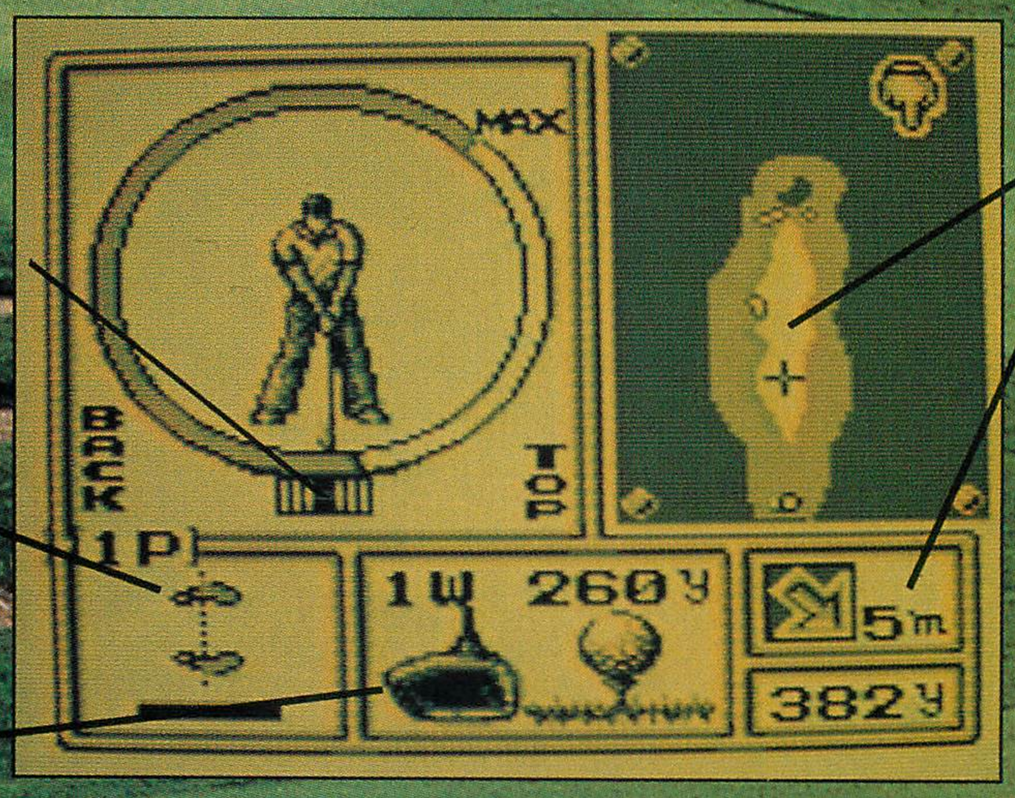
CIRCLE #101 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

IF IT WERE ANY MORE AUTHENTIC YOU'D HAVE TO PAY GREENS FEES.



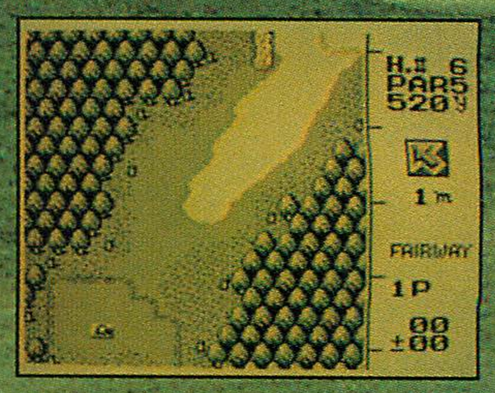
Back spin or top spin can turn a good shot into a great one.

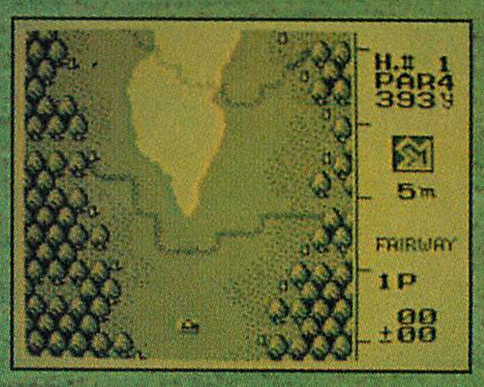
Adjust your stance to hit a draw or fade.

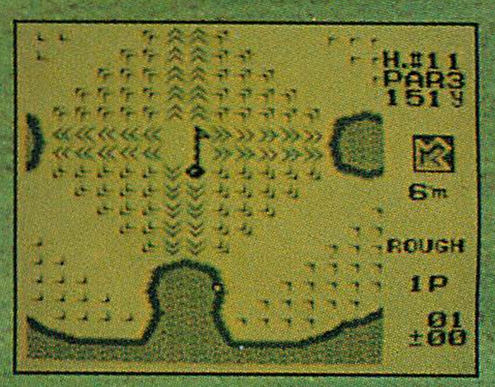
Select your club or use the computer's recommendation.

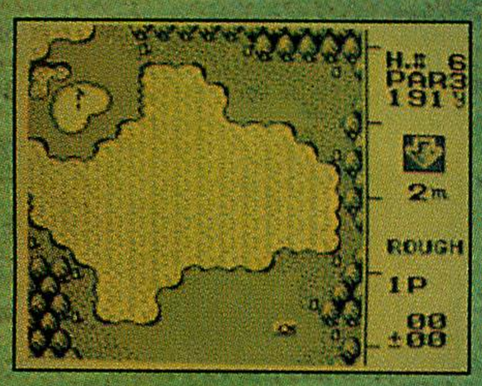
Scan the entire hole's topography before aiming your shot.

Play your shot according to wind speed and direction.









You won't spend anything on greens fees. But you'll spend hours on the course with Ultra Golf™ for Game Boy®. It's the most professional Game Boy golf experience around. Tear up two monster courses in practice mode or play up to four days of championship competition. But first you'll have to make the cut. In two player mode go head to head in stroke or match play on either course with just one Game Boy. A battery back-up saves the tournament leader board in one player mode and records closest to pin, longest drive, best score and tourney results. So tee up Ultra Golf. It's so authentic you can almost smell the sod.

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Electronic Arts' *One-On-One* series has been around in computer format for almost a decade now. The series has helped establish EA as a leader in the entertainment software industry. Turn to page 36 to find out if *Jordan vs. Bird: Super One-On-One* for the Sega Genesis lives up to the series' reputation.
Cover Photography: Dick Raphael

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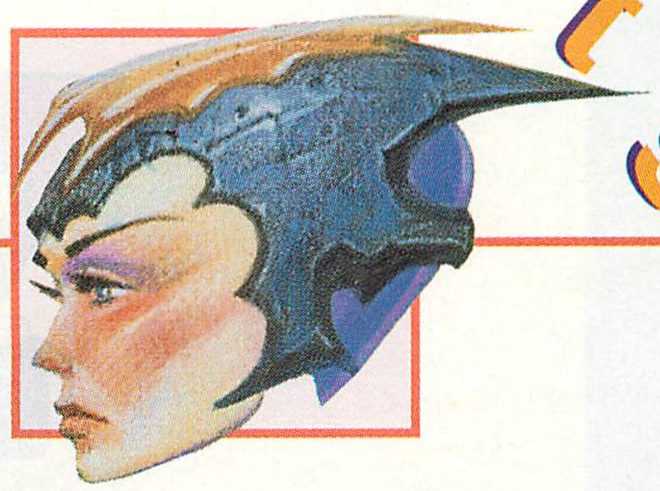

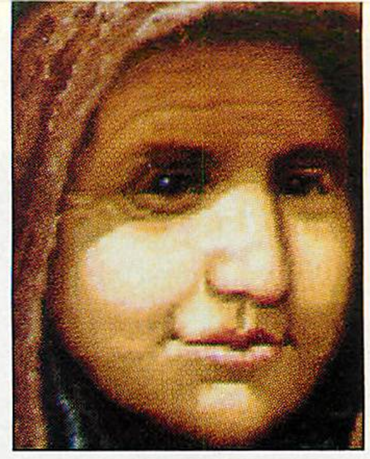

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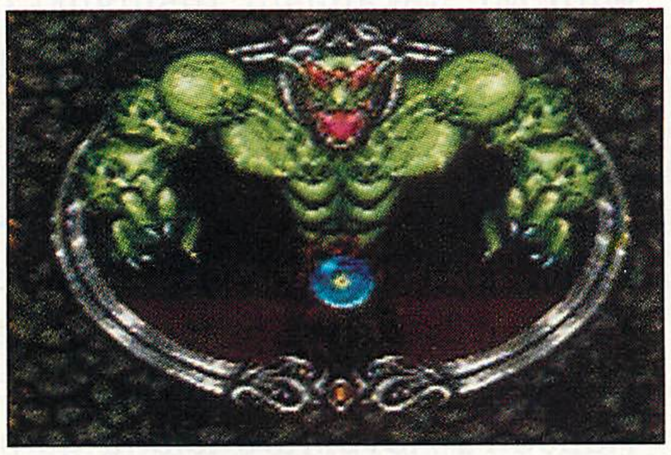

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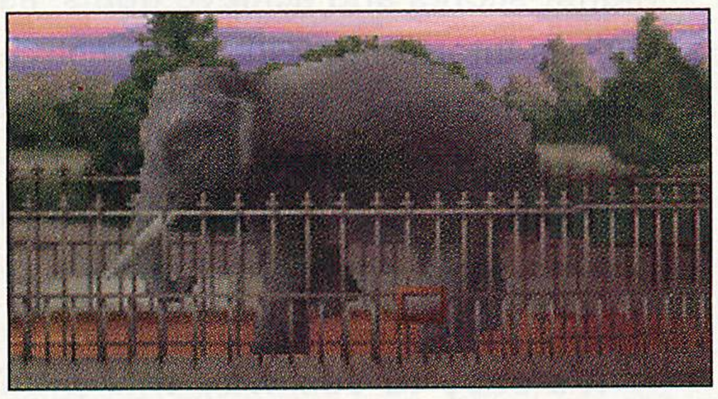

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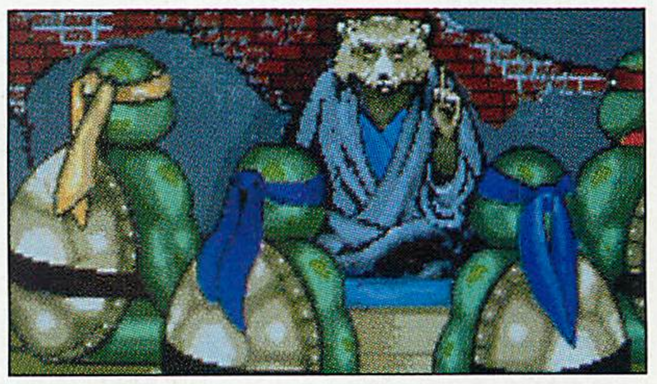

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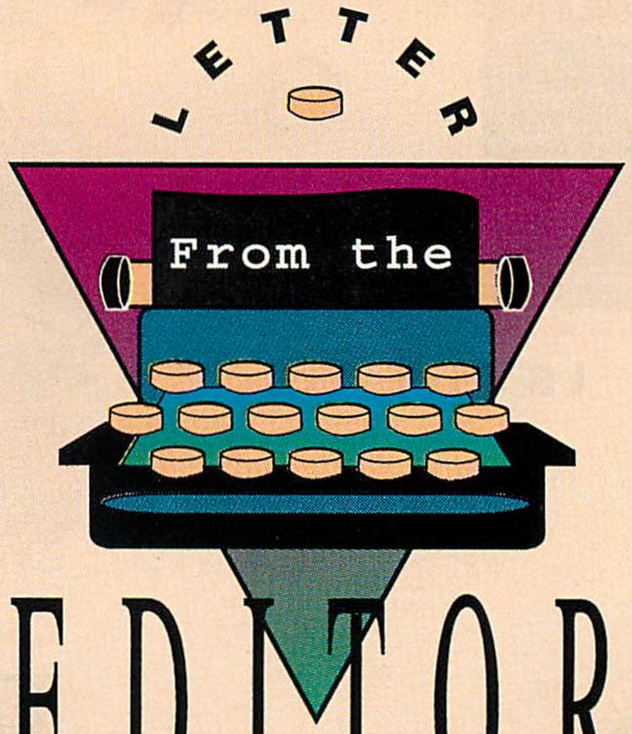
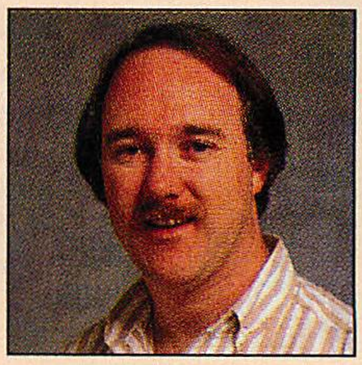


At the Winter CES, I had the occasion to meet with Mr. Takahashi Toshiyuki of Hudson Soft's Japan office. Though his name is not recognizable in America, he is quite popular in Japan, being seen on TV, magazines and in movies. One of Toshiyuki's claims to fame is that the Master Higgins character, of Hudson's *Adventure Island* game series—and our April 1992 cover, for that matter—was modeled after him.



However, our chat was on a different topic, that of how, in 1987, Hudson and Toshiyuki started a campaign for responsible video gaming. Basically, they determined that overplaying games hindered the player's ability to get higher scores and achieve goals, as well as interfering with other activities and chores. In the interest of the health of Japan's youth, the message was taken on the road that no more than one hour a day should be spent playing games.

It's easy to see why this plan met with resistance, not only from players, but from manufacturers, who concluded that the reduced playing time would translate to fewer games purchased. However, an interesting trend happened, according to Toshiyuki: The public actually started buying *more* games. Soon, the manufacturers came around, too, and the "one hour a day" message started making it into game manuals.

Now Hudson is going to introduce the "Responsible Play" advice here in America, beginning in June. It makes sense that you can burn yourself out if you play too much. I certainly recall times when I spent hours trying to get past a section of a game I was having trouble with, and found myself making less progress. That's wasted time and energy.

It will be interesting to see if Hudson gets the same support here that it did overseas. And before you think that VG&CE has gone soft, keep in mind that we haven't really made a decision as to how to handle this delicate issue. We're simply putting the word out, and we'd like to hear what you have to say. Send us a note, and we'll pass it on to Hudson—after we read it to see how you take to the concept. Just remember: There is more to life than electronic gaming.

And before you delve into this issue of VG&CE, let me remind you that the newly open-to-the-public Summer CES is just around the corner, May 28-31. To many of us in the industry, it will be a chance to meet some of our consumers. We know you're out there, but usually you are faceless to us—until now. The truth is, you keep us going, and it will be a pleasure to meet you. See you in Chicago.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

TERMINATOR™ 2 JUDGMENT DAY

ON NES™ & GAME BOY®

T-800 DATA FILE/READ ONLY

1997: THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE THERMONUCLEAR DESTRUCTION CALLED IT JUDGMENT DAY...BUT THEY LIVED ONLY TO FACE A NEW NIGHTMARE: THE WAR AGAINST THE MACHINES.

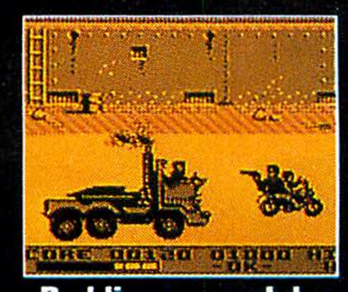
2029: SKYNET, THE SUPER COMPUTER THAT CONTROLS THE MACHINES, SENDS A T-1000 TERMINATOR BACK THROUGH TIME. IT IS PROGRAMMED TO TERMINATE JOHN CONNOR BEFORE HE BECOMES THE LEADER OF THE RESISTANCE!

IF IT SUCCEEDS, HUMANITY IS HISTORY.

NO FATE BUT WHAT YOU MAKE ON NES™:

You are a T-800 terminator. ***It's a T-1000.*** You carry a lever-action Winchester. ***It's invincible.*** You have on-screen target search displays. ***It's made of liquid metal.*** You have 10 barrels of high-explosives. ***It is the ultimate weapon of destruction!***

Destroy Skynet defenses in the future.



Red line young John Connor to safety!

Lend a hand to the Resistance—destroy the terminator endoskeleton.

FIGHT IN THE FUTURE...SAVE THE PAST ON GAME BOY®:

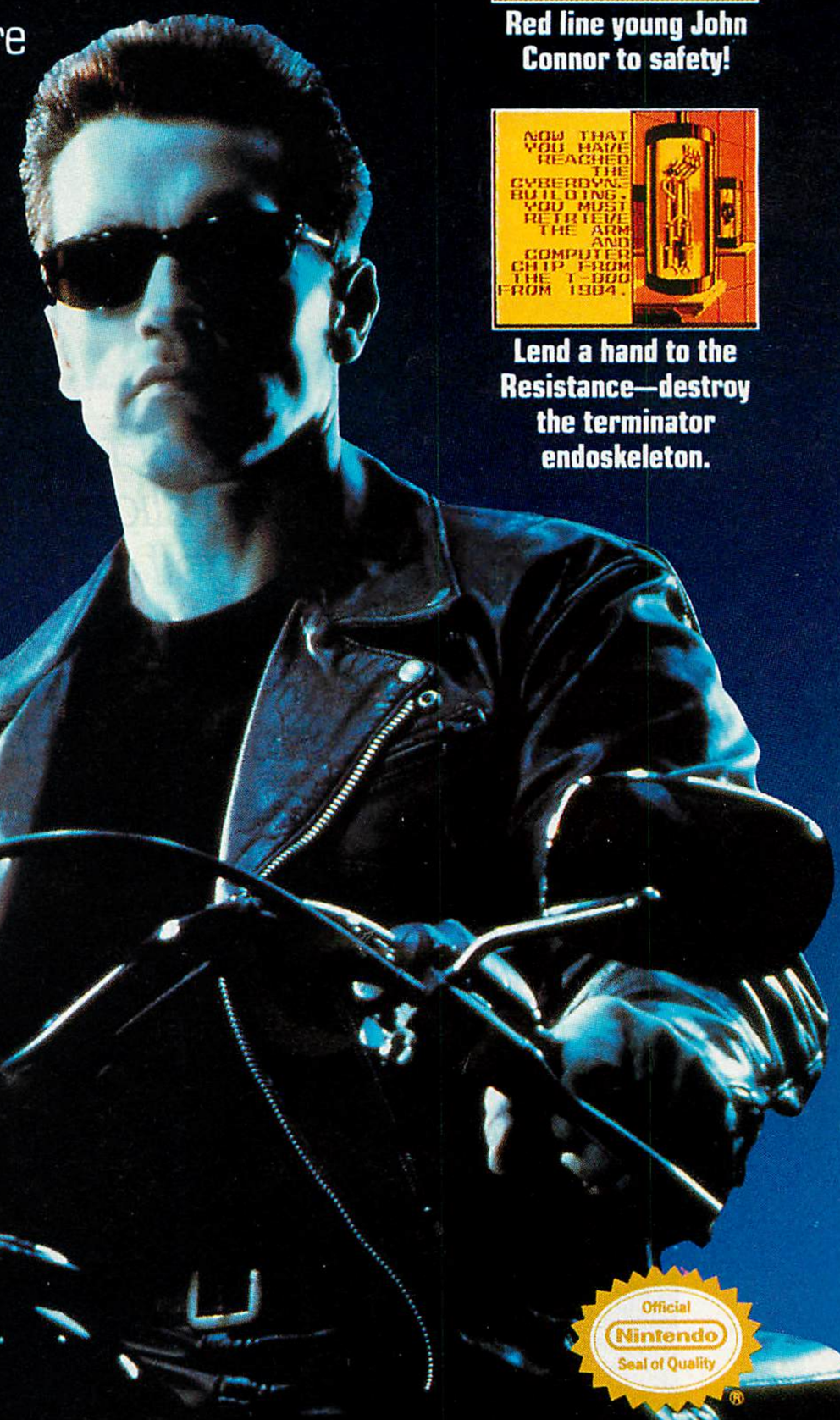
First battle titanium hyperalloy T-800's as the John Connor of 2029. Then, enter SKYNET, capture your own T-800, and become the Harley riding, grenade firing, terminator of today!

The battle for tomorrow begins today...with you!

These bikers are tough, but they ain't seen nothing like a T-800!

Can you take the heat? Destroy the T-1000!

Save humanity and terminate the T-1000 with T2 on NES™ and Game Boy®. "Hasta la vista, Baby!"



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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

THE ONLY GAME TO MAKE THE PGA TOUR CUT.

Pack your bags, you're going on tour.

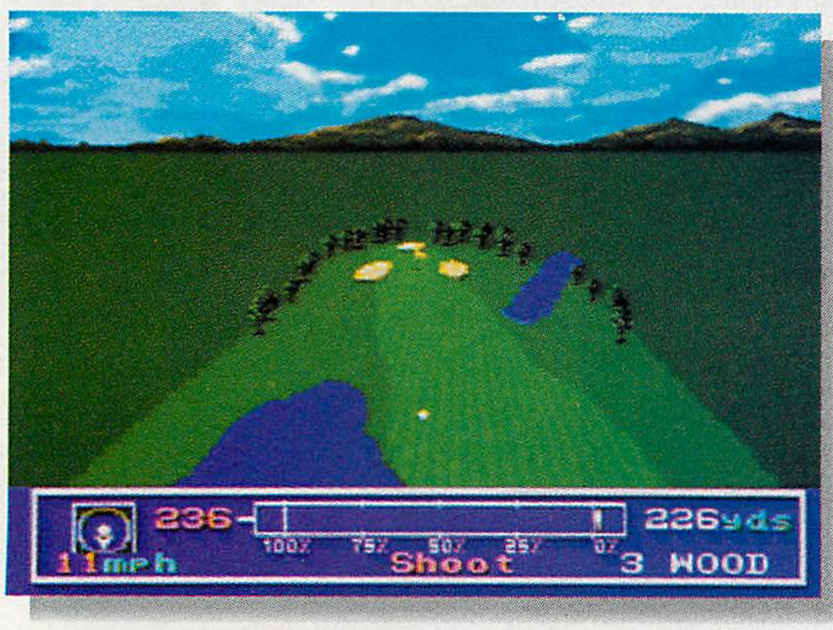
But make it your golf bags. Because it's PGA TOUR® Golf. The only game that lets you make the rounds with guys named Fuzzy, the Walrus, Zinger, and Fred. In sum, 60 of the best players ever to swing a club.

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

No matter how you slice it, this is the most realistic SuperNES™ golf game ever.

Real players with hole-by-hole tips. Real courses like the TPC's® at Sawgrass and Avenel. 3-D greens you can read like an open book. A whole arsenal of special shots like chips, punches, and fringe putts. Even random pin placement.

You think any other game has the PGA TOUR stamp of approval? Get real.

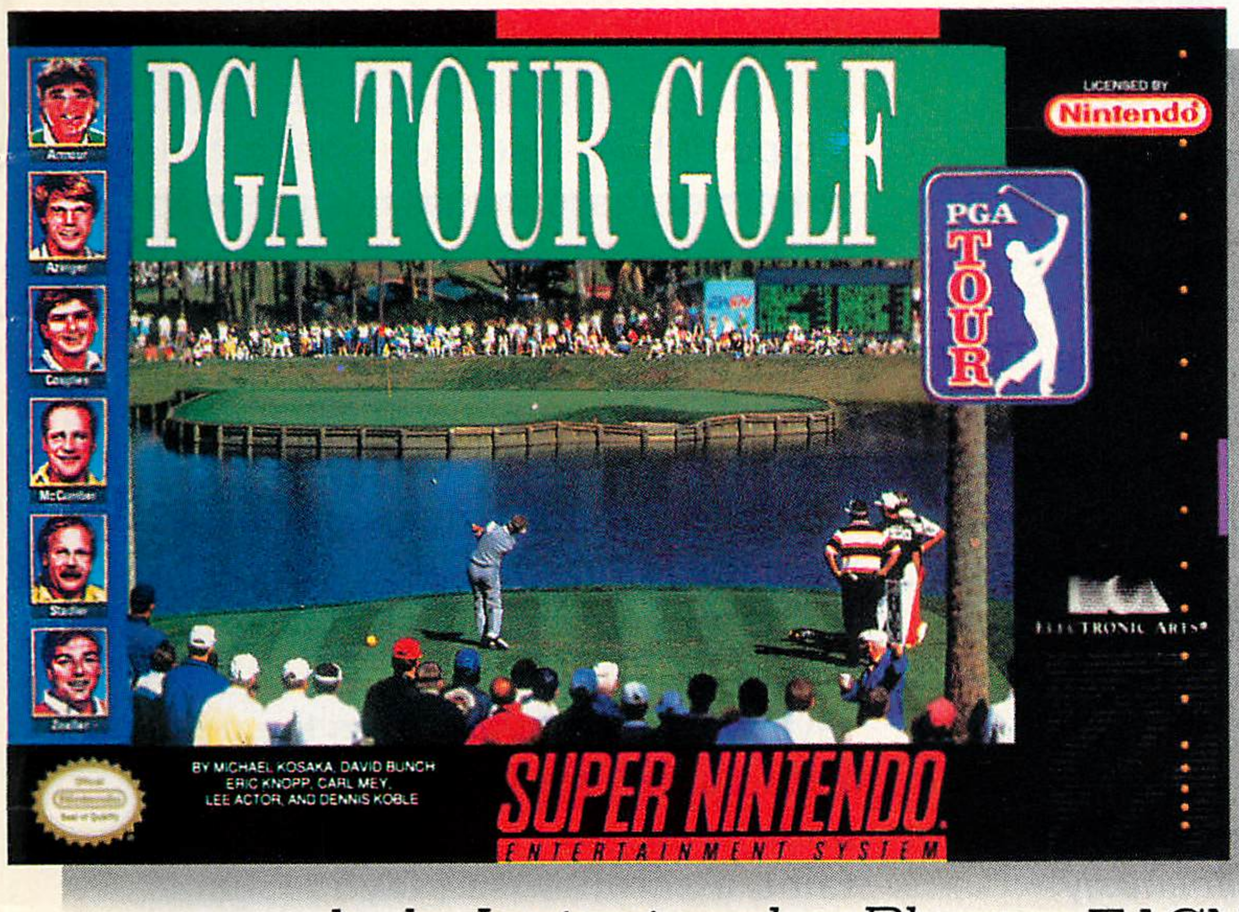


EASN reaches new heights with its exclusive Ball-Cam—an on-ball camera delivering a ball's-eye view of your shot in flight.

Take a real course in golf. We used the original blueprints that built the TPC's at Sawgrass, Avenel, Eagle Trace, and the PGA West Stadium Course. Anything else is just amateur.

PGA TOUR Golf doesn't miss a trick. With balls that have backspin and forward roll. A 360° putting grid for reading every green. And four TOUR courses, each built from the ground up from original blueprints.

Of course, EASN™—the premier interactive sports network—is there to capture every swing. With the exclusive Ball-Cam™ for a ball's-eye view of your shot in flight. Mode 7 scaling for the slickest panorama of every hole. Instant replay. Plus an EASN team of sports-casters with tournament highlights and a tournament award ceremony. But no stupid hair-loss commercials.



If you run afoul of the fairways, you'll finish out of the money, and back on the driving range and practice greens. A battery backup saves everything—games, accumulated earnings, even PGA TOUR stats.

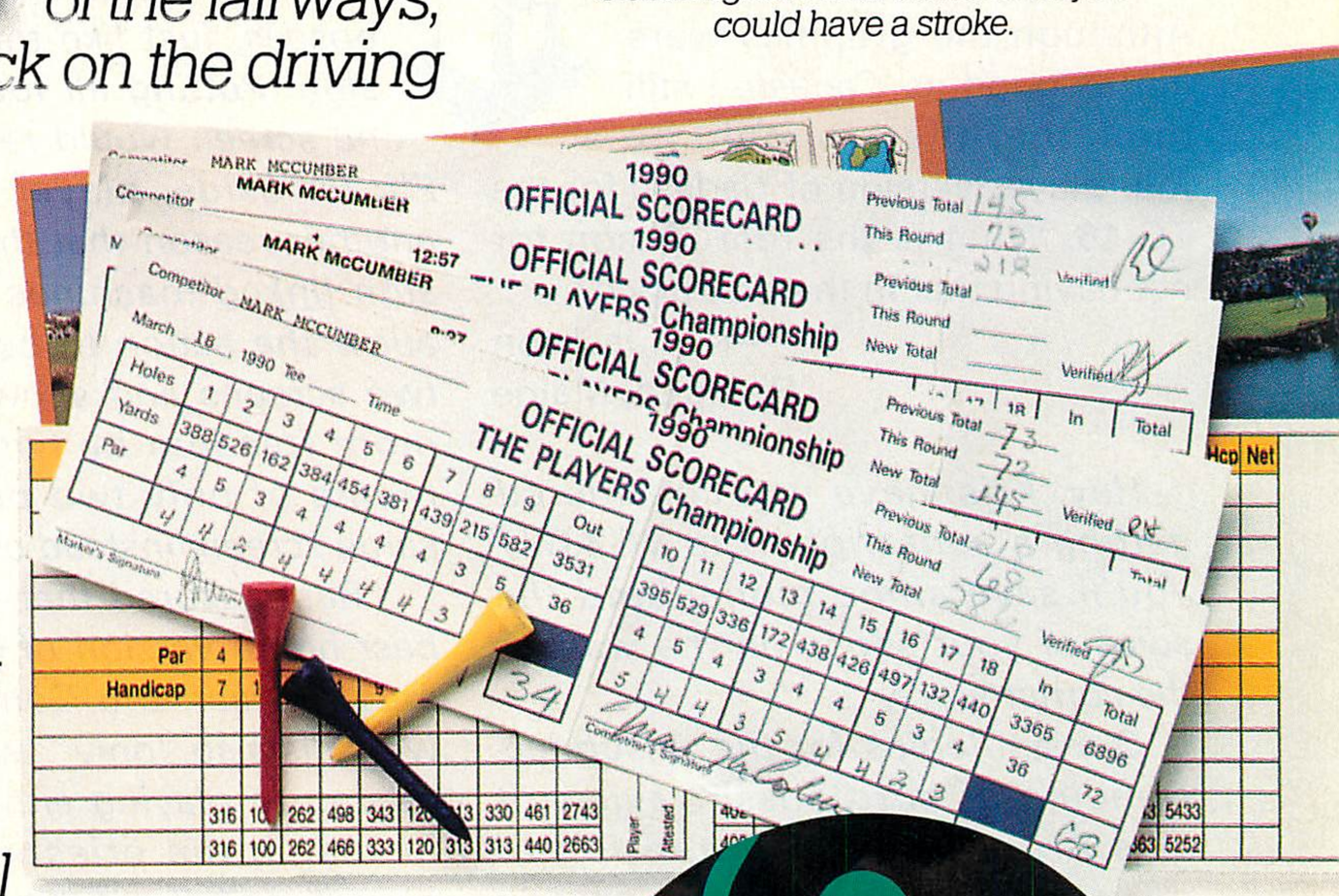
So why drive anything else when you can cruise the TOUR? Club your way to the top with PGA TOUR Golf from Electronic Arts.

Call 800-245-4525 anytime to order. Or visit your retailer. It's golf so real, you'll rush out and buy a cart.

EASN ELECTRONIC ARTS SPORTS NETWORK

With a 360° rotating putting grid you see every angle of the green. But if you don't read it correctly, watch out for the bogey man.

Trade shots with 60 top pros like Paul Azinger, Mark McCumber, Mark O'Meara, Fred Couples, Fuzzy Zoeller, and Craig Stadler. Ignore their advice and you could have a stroke.



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Get Real

CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

READER MAIL

CADASH LASH OUT

Dear VG&CE:

First, I would like to say that I enjoy reading your magazine, and that I buy a copy whenever the corner store has it.

I was reading your December 1991 issue and came across the review of the game *Cadash* for the TurboGrafx-16. All in all, I thought the review was good and well written. The part that I don't like, however, is the fact that it was only a two-player game. Also in your review you said that "since no such link-up exists for the TG-16, play is limited to two players." I beg to disagree. The TurboTap allows up to five people to play. I have played the game *Dungeon Explorer*, and it allows up to five people to play. Although the graphics were not as good as *Cadash*, I still think that there should be a four-player version of *Cadash* for the TG-16. What is the real reason for not having that in the first place?

—Kris Jackson
Portland, Maine

Hey, Kris, have you considered getting a subscription to VG&CE*? You'll save some money and the soles of your shoes on the walk to the corner store.*

Our apologies for the misunderstanding of our Cadash *review. It was Brent Walker's intention to describe that, unlike the arcade* Cadash *that allowed more than one machine to be "networked," you can't hook more than one TG-16 together in the same fashion. The coin-op version of* Cadash *was more than a standard two-player game because the network would allow the multiple machines to work in sync, but each player saw his or her own view of the action.*

For the reasons why the TG-16 version of Cadash *isn't designed for more than two players, we turned to Victor Ireland of Working Designs:*

"The real reason that four-player capability wasn't built into the Turbo version of Cadash *is that there's simply not enough screen space nor sprites to handle four players, their weapons, the bosses and their attack sprites simultaneously.*

"In Dungeon Explorer*, the perspective was overhead, using very small sprites and bosses, with limited action.* Cadash*, however, is side perspective, with large sprites, lots of action in spots and mostly huge bosses, just like the arcade version. Putting all four players on one screen would result in flicker. Flicker aside, player confusion is another reason that the arcade version linked machines together—to allow the action to be spread over two screens and allow each player more freedom by tying the movements of only two players to the same screen, instead of four.*

"Rest assured that you have the best home version of Cadash *available. In fact, the Genesis version, which is also "only" two-player, limits you to playing either the fighter or mage; the priestess and ninja have been left out entirely."*

PERFECTLY DULL?

Dear VG&CE:

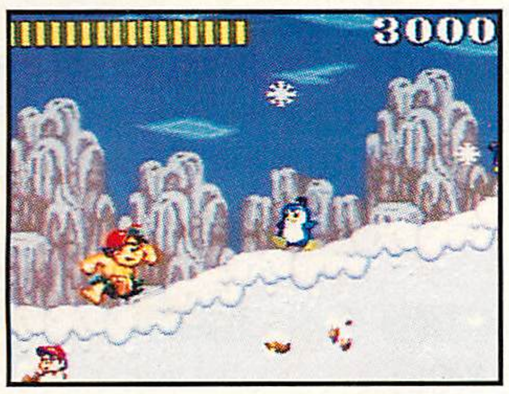
In some of the other gaming mags, I usually find that the articles and other writings tend to get excited, along with a bunch of exclamation points. Sometimes there will be a typo or two. It seems to be that the writers of these magazines get excited at what they're writing about. I like that. But your magazine is with few or no errors, and the writing is perfect, yet somehow the magazine seems lackluster in comparison.

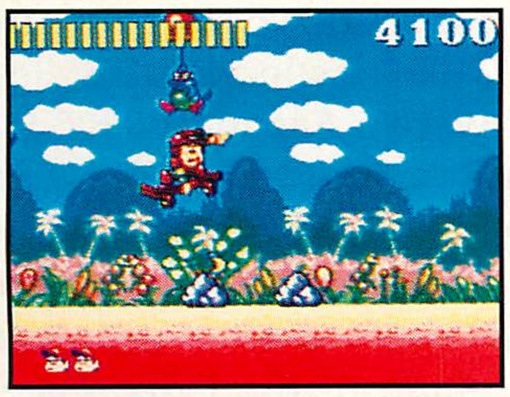
While the other mags are written by gamers for gamers, your mag is written by writers who play games once in a while. Some of your reviews, for instance, miss the point. Your reviewers (writers) will gripe and moan about a game that contains a scroll-boss play-mechanic, and the lack of any real innovation in game play. From one side, I can see where you're coming from, but the other side is that it doesn't mean that the game isn't fun. With all of this griping about loss of innovation, I haven't, to my knowledge, read any ideas for new, fun types of games in your mag.

Another black mark against you is your three-month lead time. Why? *Sports Illustrated* can do it in a week. And one of your competitors in three weeks! You protest against rumors, and only print info that is "correct" and that pertains to the U.S. market. Why? That is why your mag is boring to read. Newspapers run rumors. If they were like you and waited until everything was fact, it would be like reading last week's newspaper. And I'm sorry to say, that is how your mag is. Rumors are entertaining to read. And overseas coverage is fun too. It makes you read the particular mag over and over because it's fun. This means more sales.

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

The Master of Adventure!





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Now available for Super NES, the Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy!

Master Higgins is back in his wildest and greatest adventure of all! He leaps into action to defeat an army of guardian animals and monsters that protect the evil wizard, Dark Cloak! Join Master Higgins as he reaches new heights of excitement on his high flying skateboard. Speed through underground caves in a crazy mine car ride! Go from dangerous tropical shores to the belly of a whale - all in search of his final battle with the wicked sorcerer.

- Secret Bonus Rounds restore power and award points to our high jumping hero!
- Terrible traps and gigantic villains await your next move!

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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Your Game Doctor isn't too bright either. The Power Base Converter is *not* a mini-Master System. It simply allows access to the 3.58MHz Z-80 processor in the Genesis. When you are playing a 16-bit game, this processor is dedicated to your sound and music.

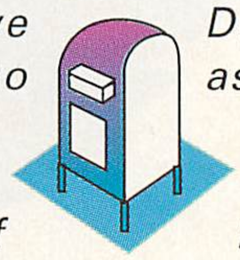
You may be wondering why I am writing if I find your mag such an unpleasant experience. Well, I believe you can make your mag better if you want to. While your totally unrelated computer coverage will keep mature, mundane and boring gamers reading your mag, you must evaluate yourself so you can actually compete with the other mags, and perhaps "contribute" to the gaming industry. Now I want to hear what you have to say.

—Joe Redifer
Denver, Colorado

Thanks for the advice-filled letter, Joe. However, we think your last part spells out the "unpleasantness" you are experiencing somewhat. We get the impression that you don't like the fact that there is an "& COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT *" in our name after the "*VIDEOGAMES.*" Sorry to say that, unlike what you imply, computer gamers aren't boring and mundane, but are identical to video gamers. In fact, in these days of 16-bit game machines, the subtle borders between computers and consoles have blurred into nonexistence in most cases. It's apparent when companies like Electronic Arts, Konami and Accolade do products for both disk and cartridge, that the gaming industry sees both markets as important. It's hard to categorize the computer gamer as "boring," while calling the video gamer "exciting" when both are playing the same product for the most part.*

That aside, let's address the issues about VG&CE *that you make note of. No, we don't use exclamation points often; it's a journalistic rule not to use the "!" except in times when it's really called for. (If you use it too often, it loses its impact for when you really need it.) Yes, we pride ourselves on being relatively error-free. What we're trying to say is that we want to do a respectable magazine, one that doesn't insult the reader's intelligence and provides quality information along the way.*

However, you are 100% wrong about our writers not being gamers. Of the people who write for VG&CE, *we have a* Guinness Book *record holder (yes, for video games), an arcade high-score holder, professional game designers and electronic game strategy-book authors. We also are writers. Again, we feel that quality is important, so we attempt to get people who know gaming and can form a sentence. Kills two birds with one stone. We're sorry if every paragraph we print doesn't sound like the writer is jumping with emotion. Most of the (other) letters we receive sing praise for our objectivity, clarity and honesty.*



The last word is key to our existence. We do an "honest" magazine, one that you can trust and use to make educated purchases. Again, we get plenty of letters about this, and, though there are differences of opinion at times, that's the concept behind a review. We don't come up with a lot of new game ideas in VG&CE *because that's not what we're here for. That isn't to say that we don't have ideas that we aren't talking to companies about, but that's not* VG&CE*'s mission.*

But we aren't just going to blow our horn here; we're not too arrogant to believe that the magazine can't be improved. Our lead time is long, perhaps too long, but that is something we're working on rectifying. We aren't going to sacrifice quality just for the sake of being faster. Perhaps at that time, we'll be able to be more "newsy" (no, rumors can't really qualify).

It's impossible to compare us to Sports Illustrated *because we just aren't in the same league as Time Warner (the publishers of* Sports Illustrated *and other major magazines). Newspapers have large staffs to accomplish their task daily or weekly—but the ink comes off on your hands and it's usually limited to black. You gain in some categories; you lose in others.*

All in all, though, thanks for the feedback. It helps us keep our fingers on the pulses of our readers to get letters, good or bad, like yours, Joe. Hopefully, you'll see your way clear to taking VG&CE *for what we intend it to be. Nothing is perfect, and we all have to live with that.*

To quell the debate about the Power Base Converter, we spoke to Al Nilsen of Sega of America, who told us that both you and the Game Doctor are correct on some aspects. The Genesis' Z-80 does run the program code that's fed from the game cart through the Power Base Converter, but both the PBC and the Genesis talk to each other, and the PBC is also responsible for the video processing of the SMS game.

FACING THE LYNX

Dear VG&CE:

I enjoyed your article in the November 1991 issue about Bullet-Proof Software's *Faceball 2000* for the Game Boy. The question I (and many other Lynx owners) have is when will we see it for Atari's handheld? With the superior graphics and networking of the Lynx, *Faceball 2000* could be a classic!

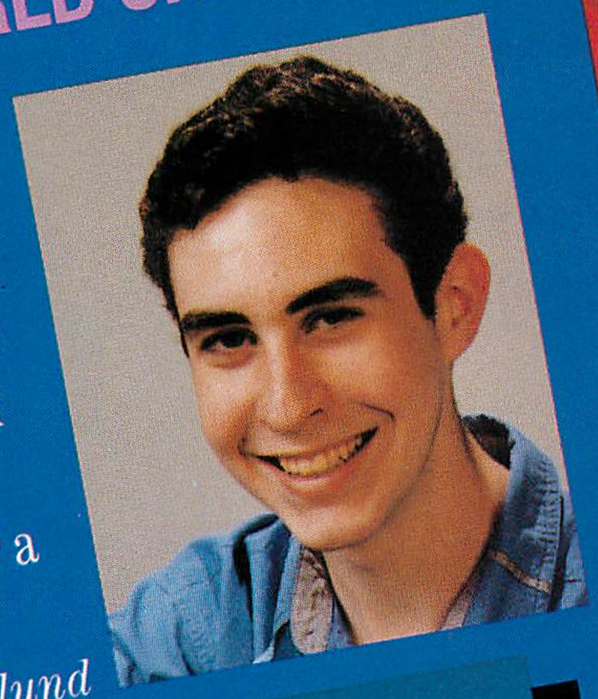
—Bryan Walker
Army Post Office AE

In talking to Atari Corp., it's apparent that MidiMaze/Faceball *is near and dear to their hearts. The sad news is that, while once under consideration for becoming a Lynx game, it is not currently being pursued by Atari's entertainment division. Perhaps a letter-writing campaign will help. The address is Atari Entertainment, 330 N. Eisenhower Lane, Lombard, IL 60148. As a final note, we understand that we'll be seeing* MidiMaze/Faceball *in another format (aside from the Atari ST, Game Boy and SNES), but right now our lips are sealed. Keep reading* VG&CE *to get the story soon.*

NEW

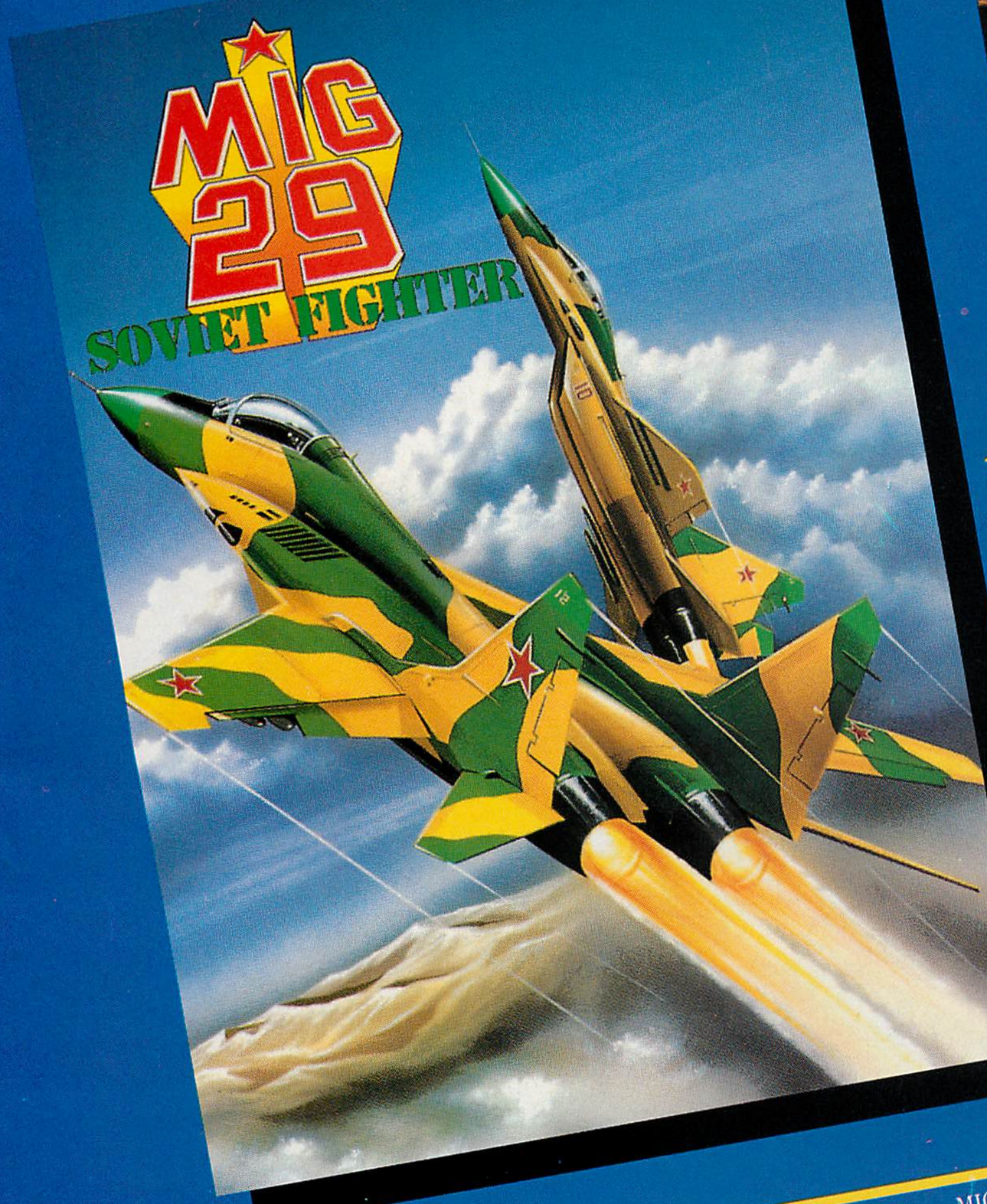
Introducing MIG-29 and Fire Hawk from Camerica Games

NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPION



"Here are two great additions for your game collection. MIG-29 is the fastest jet fighter game on any system and Fire Hawk has equal portions of strategy and adventure for a unique game experience."

–Thor Aackerlund



Fire Hawk *Coming soon.*

Experience the control and power of an advanced helicopter gunship on a series of deadly missions. Supersonic sound effects and dazzling 3D graphics!

MIG-29

The ultimate air combat game! Action, excitement, intrigue and super fast 3D graphics.

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EASY TO PICK UP. HARD TO PUT DOWN.

PUBLISHERS OF:

Micro Machines
Best Action Video Game 1991
Video Games & Computer Entertainment
Dizzy
Best NES Graphic Adventure Game 1991
Game Players

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...THE HOTTEST GRAPHICS WE'VE EVER SEEN!"
–GamePro TV

"...INTRODUCES A SENSE OF REALITY NEVER BEFORE SEEN ON THE SUPER NES™!"
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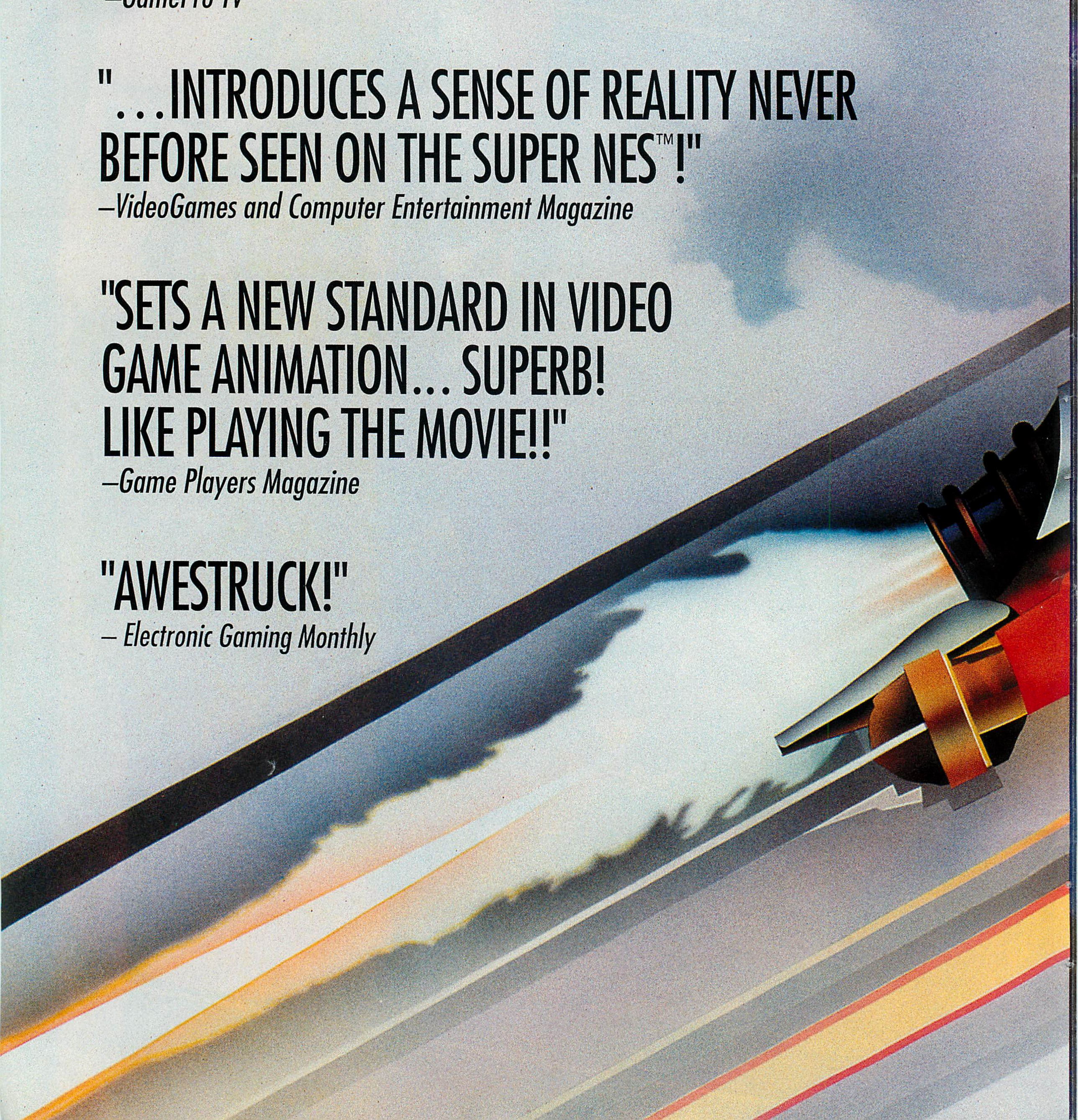
"SETS A NEW STANDARD IN VIDEO GAME ANIMATION... SUPERB! LIKE PLAYING THE MOVIE!!"
–Game Players Magazine

"AWESTRUCK!"
– Electronic Gaming Monthly



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For the Super Nintendo Entertainment System.

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CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

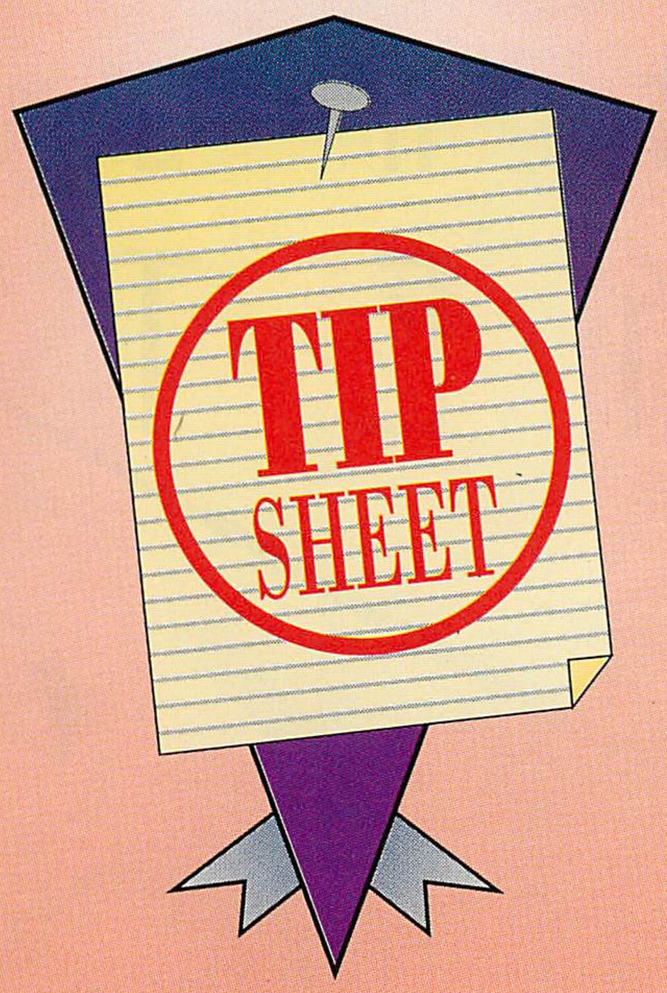
VG&CE,

9171 Wilshire Blvd.,

Suite 300

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: *Tip Sheet*



BY
DONN NAUERT

I recently bought a PC Engine Duo with Super CD-ROM built together and also *Ys—Book I and II*. I can't seem to hurt the boss in *Book I*. Since the game I'm playing is in Japanese, I don't know if I'm missing items or if I have the items and just don't know how to use them. Is there a way to go to *Book II* without completing *Book I*?

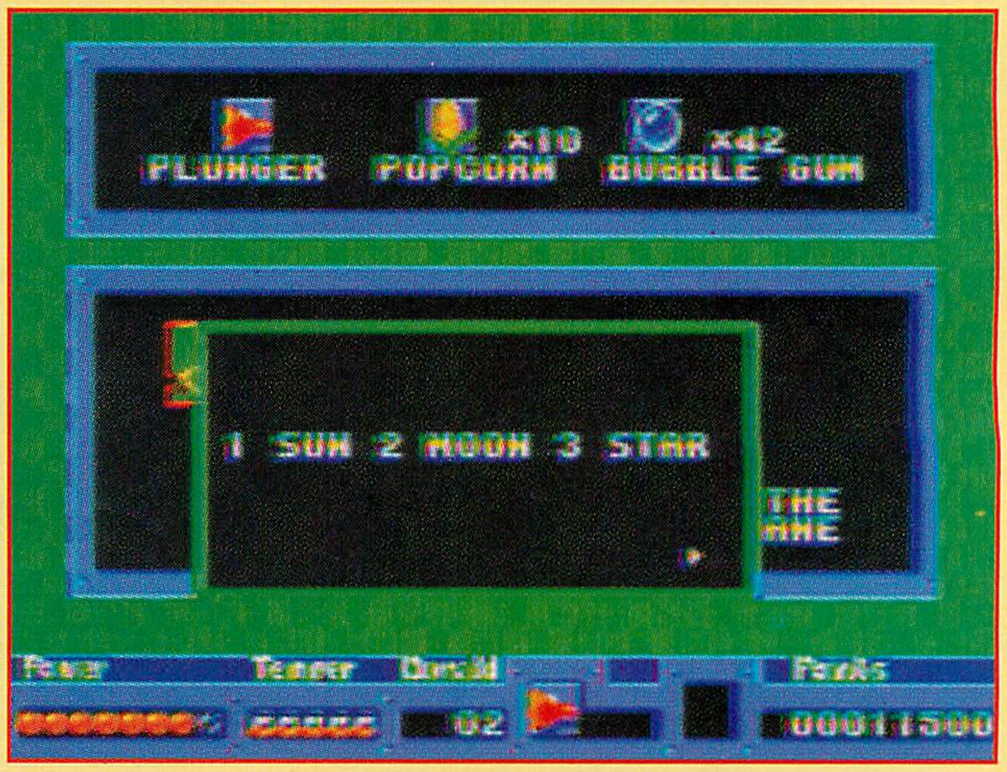
—Ang Mokio
Singapore

Without using codes to start on Book II, *you can't start on* Book II *without completing* Book I. *To defeat the boss of* Book I, *you must have and use the Silver Sword, Silver Shield and Silver Armor (the second-to-last selections on the right), which are the only items that will harm the boss. Sorry, the codes we have are in English and won't work for the Japanese version.*

On *Quackshot Starring Donald Duck*, how do you get past the part in the pyramid in Egypt, where the ceiling begins to come down and you have to climb over the wall? Can you tell me how to get over the wall before the ceiling is too far down?

—Matthew Zausin
St. James, New York

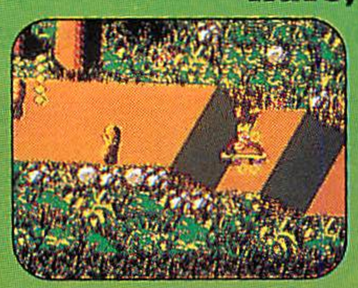
To get through that section of Egypt, first look at the scroll. On the scroll is the clue as to how you can get by the falling ceiling: It reads, 1 SUN 2 MOON 3 STAR. That means you need to jump on the blocks in that order. Once this is done, the ceiling will go back up and you can climb the wall to get the Scepter of Ra.



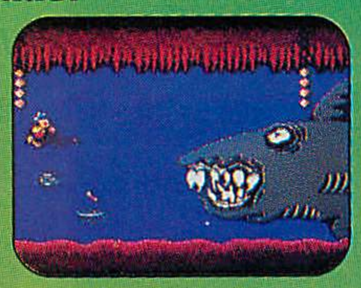
GO APE!

with THRILLA'S SURFARI™ for the NES™

Catch the ultimate wave, dude!



Hand-plant your way through the wilds of Africa!



Watch out for big fish!

Whoa, Thrilla Gorilla! Bag your boards for the raddest surf and skate action ever!

The evil Wazula has taken your babe to Africa. Skip the curbs and quarter-pipes; gnarly jungles and bakin' deserts are the ultimate skate challenge...ever aerial over a crocodile? Killer volcanoes and mammoth waterfalls mean surfin' more hardcore than Maui!

The excitement rips, but Wazula's two-headed flying Rhino and a way-tough Lava Monster demand serious shreddin'! So carve, slash, and trash Wazula with THRILLA'S SURFARI for the NES™...before he makes a monkey out of you!

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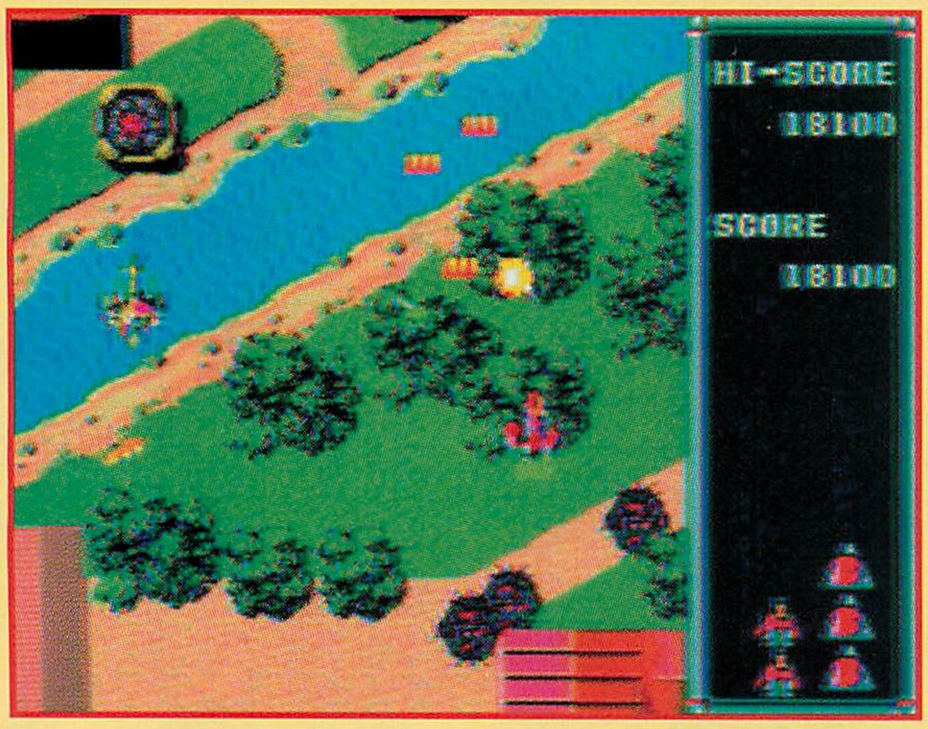


In the game *Final Fight* for the Super NES, I was wondering if there are any codes for extra lives, a level select or extra continues?

—Adam Acevedo
Harbor City, California

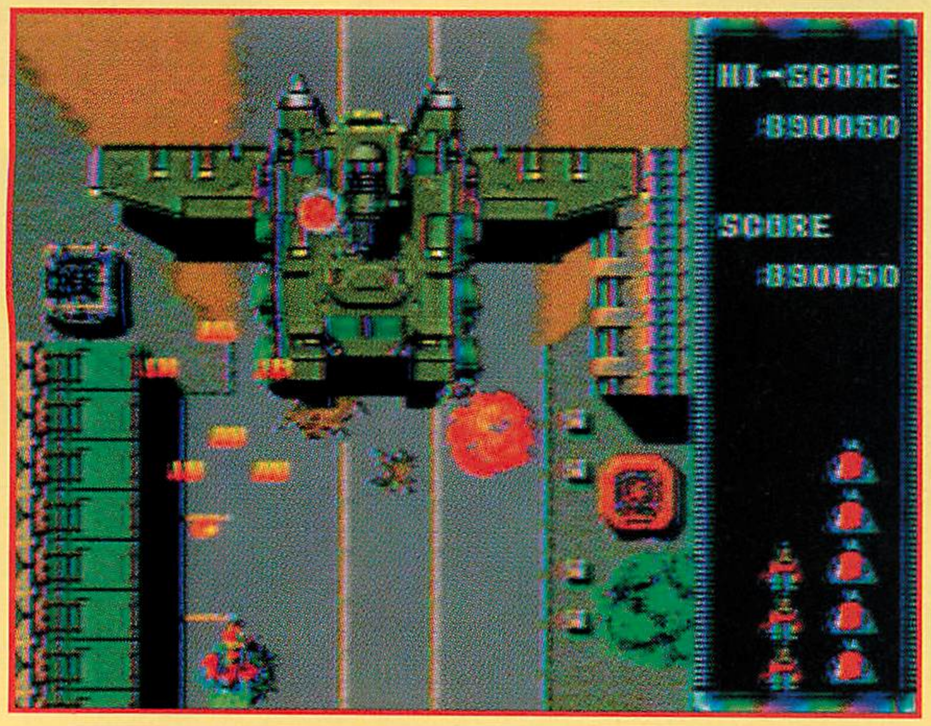
Here is a tip that will let you bring up a hidden option screen: During the title screen, press and hold buttons L and R then press ***START****.*

I'm having a problem with the end boss in *Raiden Trad.* I would appreciate any help.

—Mike Upshaw
San Bernardino, California

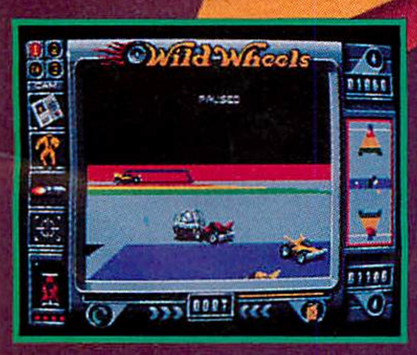
To defeat the fifth boss in Raiden Trad, *you must hit the center portion of the main vehicle, but first I like to take out the two side arms before doing too much damage to the enemy fortress. That way I can cut down on the number of guns firing at me—for when the enemy really starts getting mad. Once both arms are gone, turn your attention to the center part of the enemy and blast it as much as possible. The one thing you'll notice in the enemy's shots is that there is a gap between bullets just off center to the left and right. Try to weave back and forth between these two gaps until the enemy is toast. I like to use the wide shot over the laser, even though the laser is more concentrated, because then I don't always have to be right in front of the enemy to shoot it. One thing that usually helps when playing games like this is to have someone watch you play or even videotape the game. This way, the friend or the videotape can help you recognize patterns in enemy shots.*

Other things that will help are the fairies that you can find in Stages 1 and 4 (though not in the SNES version). Shoot in the spots indicated in the photos until they appear. They'll give you 10,000 points, as well as provide you with extra firepower after you've been shot down.



WILD WHEELS

FOR THE AMIGA AND IBM PC



Screen shots shown are from the Amiga version of the game.

The name of the game

ocean®

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1855 O'Toole Ave.
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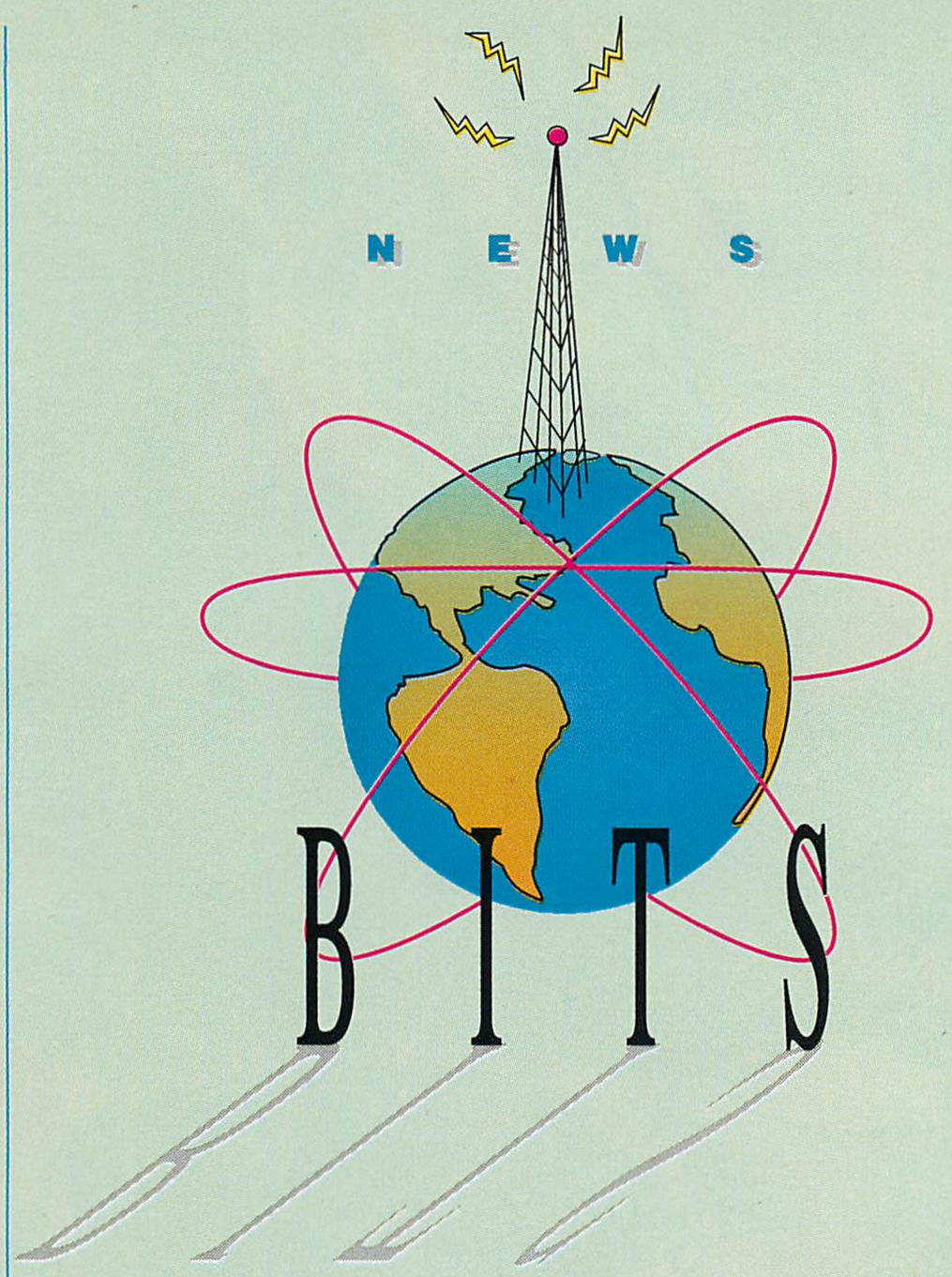
Enter The Arena Of Motorized Mayhem

In the arena of WILD WHEELS, frustrated new-technology motorists like you can experience the thrill of raw power and speed in fantastic monster mobiles. Some call it a game...Others say it's brutal car-to-car combat!

As your mechanoid beast's engine roars, the opposition stands ready to blast you into a million, white-hot bits of shrapnel! Are you up to the gut-wrenching challenge of WILD WHEELS?

CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



Cybergenic Ranger Strides Toward CD

Cybergenic Ranger, created by Symtus, will soon be available for CD-ROM play from Microdaft Software (1012 S. Main St., Taylor, PA 18517; [717] 562-0650). The game casts the player as the first cybergenically enhanced man, then sends the Ranger on a search for his father. The quest journeys through space travel and planetary exploration, and it provides continuous arcade-style action for joystick jockeys.

The new version, said to be essentially the same as the PC game, utilizes the CD-ROM's memory capacities. It should be available in its new format sometime this summer.

Super NES to Get CD-ROM

Nintendo announced that it will introduce a compact disc CD-ROM accessory for the Super NES early in 1993. Expected to retail for around $200, the accessory is based on technology licensed from Philips (the "CD-ROM XA format"), which allows the interleaving of sound, video and data.

The Super NES Compact Disc Accessory System consists of the compact disc player, system cartridge and AC adapter, and, to be used, it requires the Super NES, plus A/V cable or RF switch box and an AC adapter for the Super NES.

Super NES compact disc games will play on the Super NES and also on Philips' own Compact Disc-Interactive (CD-I) machine. In addition, Nintendo is currently discussing the possibility of making the products compatible with Sony's Play Station CD-ROM.

The company promises a full line of CD games by the time the product is introduced. To date, Nintendo hasn't revealed which third-party developers will be working on programs for the new format.

Summer CES Set for May

Chicago's Mayor Daley has issued an official proclamation declaring May 25-31 to be Consumer Electronics Week in the Windy City, in honor of the Silver Anniversary of the CES. The proclamation also honors the fact that, for the first time ever, the Electronics Show will be open to the public.

The Summer CES will be open to consumers on Saturday, May 30, from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sunday, May 31, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. On these days, enthusiasts will be able to see the exhibits of new products. Tickets cost $10 and will be sold on site at McCormick Place, or consumers can call (800) 388-6901 to order tickets or for more information.

There will be over a thousand exhibitors in 25 major product categories, such as audio, video, home, office and automation products, as well as computer entertainments and video games. The city expects over 100,000 consumers to attend the show, in addition to the 50,000-plus trade attendees.

The Winter CES show (which did not admit consumers) attracted over 79,000 attendees to Las Vegas, including trade, press and buyers.

Activision Reorganizes, Resumes Marketing

Mediagenic's plan of reorganization was confirmed by the bankruptcy court, and the company resumed business as usual, but this time using its traditional Activision name.

In 1990, the company, which was the first independent, third-party software firm in the gaming industry, had financial setbacks that forced the company to file for Chapter 11 reorganization. Now that

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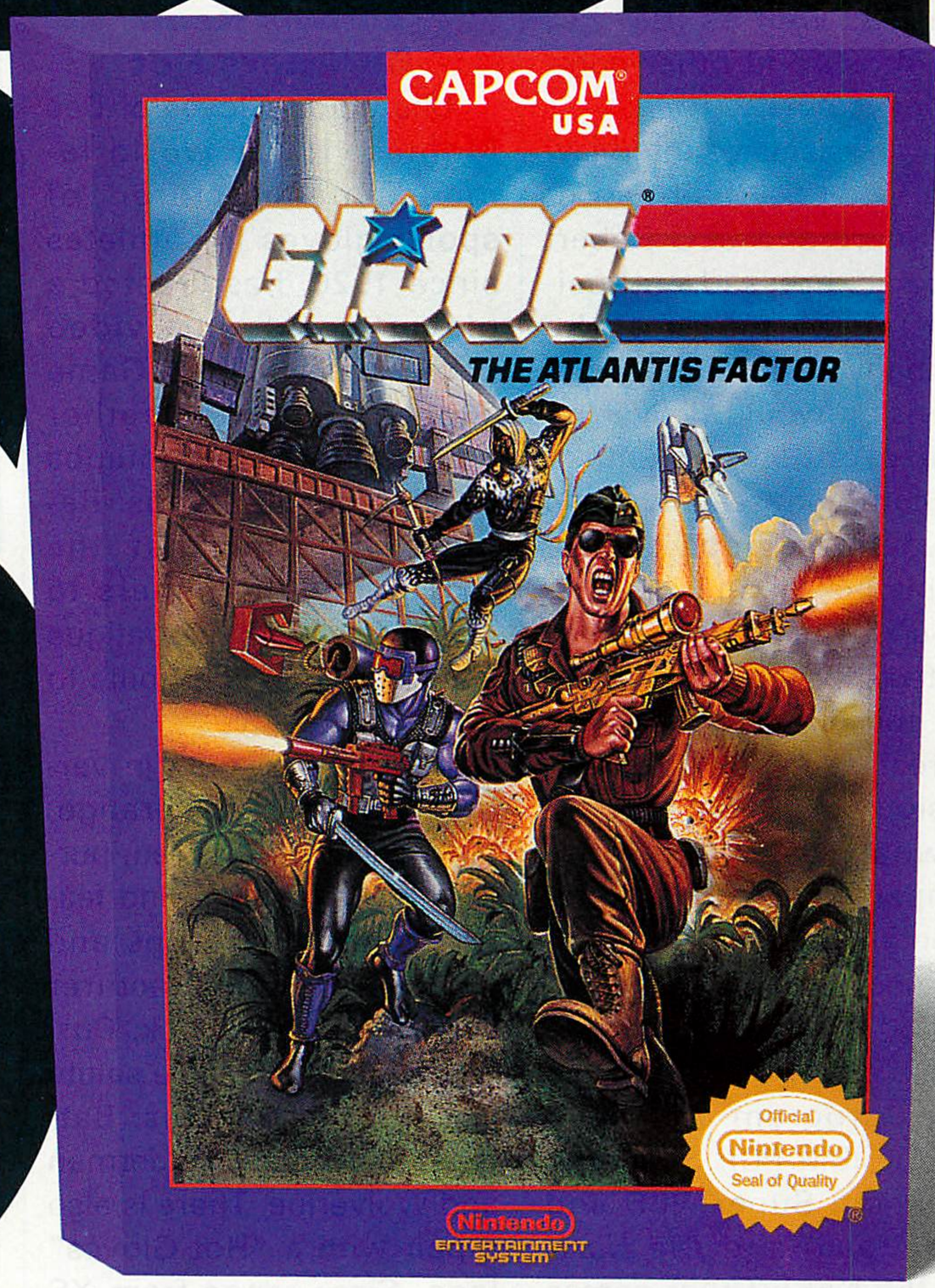

COBRA™ in THE ATLANTIS FACTOR

That power-crazed maniac Cobra Commander is back. This time, the snake's raised the ancient island of Atlantis out of the ocean and turned it into a base for taking over the world. He's got an invincible army. Space weapons too. ☛ But hey, you're a member of the G.I. Joe team and you're up for the fight. You've got to make it through lethal territories and destroy Cobra's awesome weapons complex and gunships. Blow it and it might as well be the end of the world. Get psyched and enlist today.

The weapons the Cobra's hiding in these statues could really ruin you.

Watch out for the Warlords–or you won't have a prayer of making it alive.

Destroy the big blue tank, or it's the end of the world as we know it.

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the plan has been accepted by the court, the company is resuming operations and will release software under the Activision and Infocom labels. The company will support all Nintendo systems, as well as IBM PC, Macintosh and other computer systems.

In an exclusive interview with VG&CE, Chairman of the Board and CEO Robert Kotick expressed enthusiasm for the future of the company and pledged that Activision would deliver no poor products, nor make any compromises in quality. "If you make good games, people buy them," he said. "You'll see a change in strategy for the company in that the Infocom label will be resurrected; on the Activision side, we'll go back to what really made the company successful—family entertainment."

Titles currently in the Activision catalog include the latest edition of the famous chess program *Sargon V* (for the IBM PC), *Shanghai II* (for the Super NES and Macintosh) and *Die Hard* (for the NES). Other games are *Swordmaster* (for the NES), a fantasy action contest, and *Ultimate Air Combat* (for the NES).

Under the Infocom trademark, the company is introducing *The Lost Treasures of Infocom*, a 20-game collection that includes: adventures, the five *Zork* games and *Deadline* (Arkie winner for Best Adventure in 1983); mysteries, *Witness*, *Suspect*, *Ballyhoo* and *Moonmist*; science fiction titles, *Starcross*, *Suspended*, *Stationfall*, *Planetfall* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*; and fantasies, *Enchanter*, *Sorcerer*, *Infidel*, *Lurking Horror* and *Spellbreaker*. Work currently in progress includes redesigning other Infocom stories into graphic adventures that reflect the current state of the art.

Gloves Keep Shooters Hot

Champion Gloves of Des Moines, Iowa, world-famous manufacturer of sports gloves for athletes since 1920, has created a player's aid for video gamers. The Video Game Gloves feature leather palms and padded thumbs to cushion the hands. Reports indicate that the gloves enable gamers to play longer with less fatigue and, therefore, contribute to higher scores.

The gloves come in varied colors (green, orange, pink, yellow, black, red, purple and royal blue) and feature cutoff fingertips and video-game manufacturer symbols on the back. Current choices available salute Bonk, Sega Genesis, Batman, Superman, Spiderman and Wolverine. There is also a pair with a "Hot Gloves" logo. Sizes range from XS (children ages 5-7) to XL for adults. Video Game Gloves are available at Electronics Boutique, Software Etc., Best Buy Stores, Sportmart Stores or through the Spiegel Catalog. Call Champion Gloves at (800) 247-4537 for more information.

ASCII Intros New Brand, New Wares

ASCII Entertainment Software (a subsidiary of ASCII Corporation, Japan's largest software company) is launching a new brand name for sale of entertainment software, peripherals and accessories. ASCIIWARE expects to introduce products for the NES, Super NES, Sega Genesis and for IBM PCs and compatibles.

The first new peripherals from ASCIIWARE are the ascii Pad, a controller for the Super NES, and the Power Clutch SG, a controller for the Sega Genesis. The ascii Pad retails for $24.95 and features independent turbo control for all buttons, hands-free automatic turbo fire (20 shots per second) and a slowmo function to slow down game sequences. The Power Clutch SG sells for $39.99 and has adjustable turbo control for all firing buttons (28 shots per second) and a slow-motion control.

Software currently under development includes two fantasy adventures, Joe Ybarra's *SpellCraft: Aspects of Valor* for the IBM PC and *Wizardry: Knight of Diamonds, The Second Scenario* for play on the NES.

TTI Introduces Three CD Titles for 1992-93

In a separate announcement, Turbo Technologies introduced three new CD games for 1992 and 1993: *Lords of the Rising Sun* (a role-playing game originally published by Cinemaware for computers), which is set in 12th-century Japan, *Shapeshifter* (designed by ICOM Simulations), a fantasy-action game starring a warrior with the power to change his shape and *Beyond Shadowgate* (ICOM), which is a sequel to TTI's hit PC game, *Shadowgate*.

Acclaim Purchases Mirrorsoft

In the wake of the recent death of Robert Maxwell (developer and publisher of entertainment software in Europe), Acclaim Entertainment purchased Mirrorsoft Ltd., and its U.S. subsidiary, Arena Entertainment.

Acclaim's president, Robert Holmes, explained the importance of the purchase: "With the acquisition of Mirrorsoft we hasten our expansion in Europe, accelerate our Sega market entry and augment our position as a multinational, multiformat company.... This purchase provides Acclaim with access to a broad catalog of titles...key new licenses... and strong development resources in both 16-bit and CD-ROM technology."

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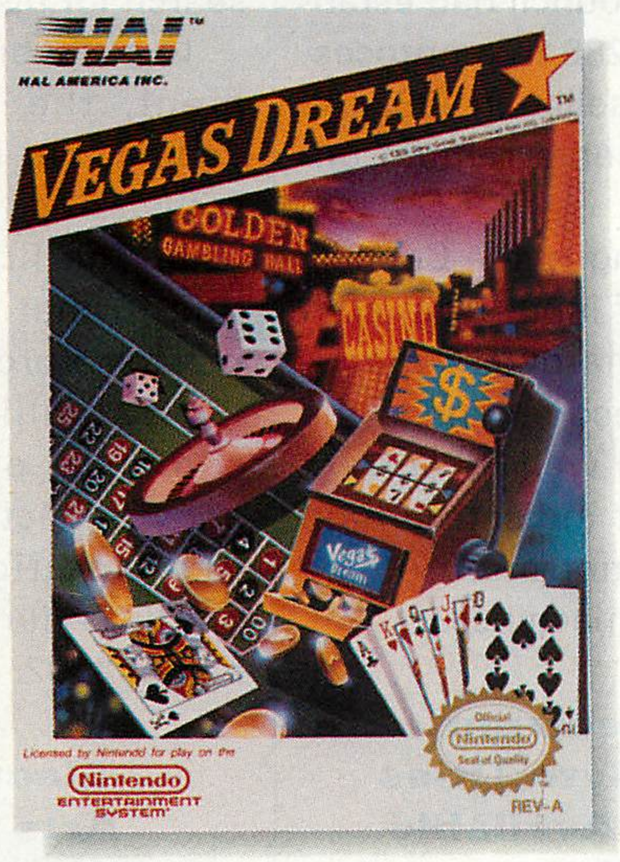

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Mirrorsoft was founded in 1984 and publishes software for the Amiga, Atari ST, Sega 8/16-bit markets and CD-ROM systems. Arena publishes computer and Sega Genesis software in the United States.

Disney Forms New Label

Walt Disney Computer Software has parented a new software label, Buena Vista Software, and announced the first game to come from the new company. The new company's policy is to develop entertainments designed for an older audience.

The first title under the new label is *Heaven and Earth*, for play on IBM PC and Macintosh, created by the same team that developed *Ishido* and *Shanghai*. It's a three-part entertainment that includes a card game, an action strategy contest called The Pendulum, and The Illusions (brainteasers and puzzles). Buena Vista also announced a new program currently on the drawing board, *Dog Eat Dog*, billed as a tongue-in-cheek look at office politics.

USAF Awards Contract to Wesson

Wesson International, a company best known for its air traffic control simulator for IBM PCs, *TRACON*, won a multimillion-dollar contract from the U.S. Air Force to supply it with PC-based professional air traffic control training systems. The company will install 338 training systems to more than a hundred U.S Air Force bases during the next three years.

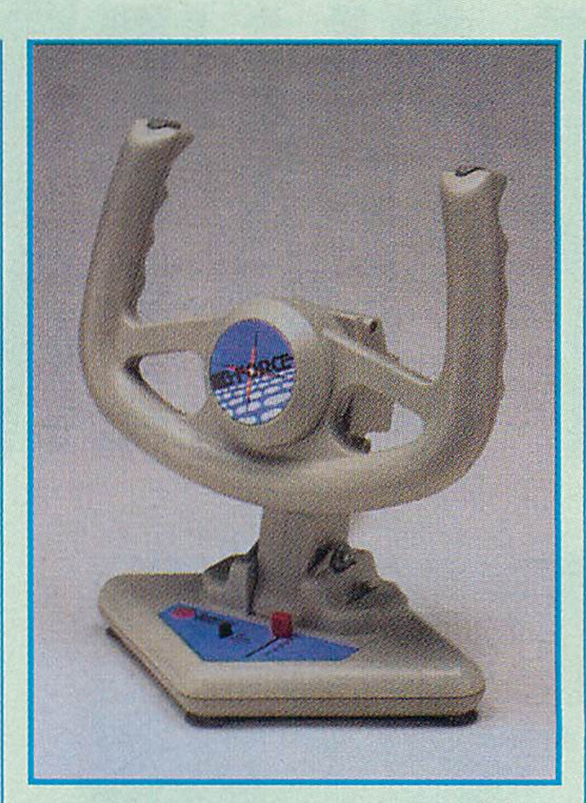
Each system will include RAPCON/Pro software (the military version of TRACON), Scenario Generator, Airspace Design Tool programs, custom keyboard, voice system, Sound Blaster card and network interface, plus DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.0 software.

Wesson recently completed delivery and installation of 20 systems for the Federal Aviation Administration's five Southern California Tracon facilities: Los Angeles, Burbank, San Diego, Ontario and Coast Tracon (located at El Toro Marine Naval Air Station).

Controller Yokes Flight, Driving Sims

Suncom's latest controller for IBM PC-based games, the G-Force, works equally well for flight simulation programs and for auto driving games. The full-sized yoke has fire buttons on top of each handle, trigger fire buttons and a throttle control on the base. Suction cups hold the yoke to the table.

The unique feature of the yoke is its use of a locking pin that holds the column in position with the handles upright for compupilots, or in reversed position (handles down) to create a steering wheel for driving games.



The G-Force will retail for $69.95 at major computer stores.

Council Modifies Specs for Multimedia

The Multimedia PC Marketing Council announced a modification in the base specifications of the Multimedia PC. The new specifications establish a minimum configuration of a personal computer with a 386SX microprocessor. Initially, the Council had established the 286 microprocessor as a baseline in 1989. All other elements remain unchanged.

According to the Council, a review of input from software and hardware manufacturers recommended the change, as well as current trends that indicate a high market penetration of the 386-based machines.

Spectrum HoloByte Titles Now Available in Europe

Spectrum HoloByte's software is going to Europe, thanks to an exclusive arrangement with MicroProse to distribute its products abroad. This agreement applies to all personal computer formats. Under the terms of the bargain, MicroProse will also translate selected Spectrum HoloByte titles for play on the Amiga.

Spectrum HoloByte also revealed a new licensing agreement with Paramount to produce games based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The first of the titles should appear in 1993, for play on the Super NES and Nintendo CD-ROM, plus IBM and Apple computers. Other games in the works are *Wordtris* for the Super NES and Game Boy, and *Falcon 3.0* for the Super NES.

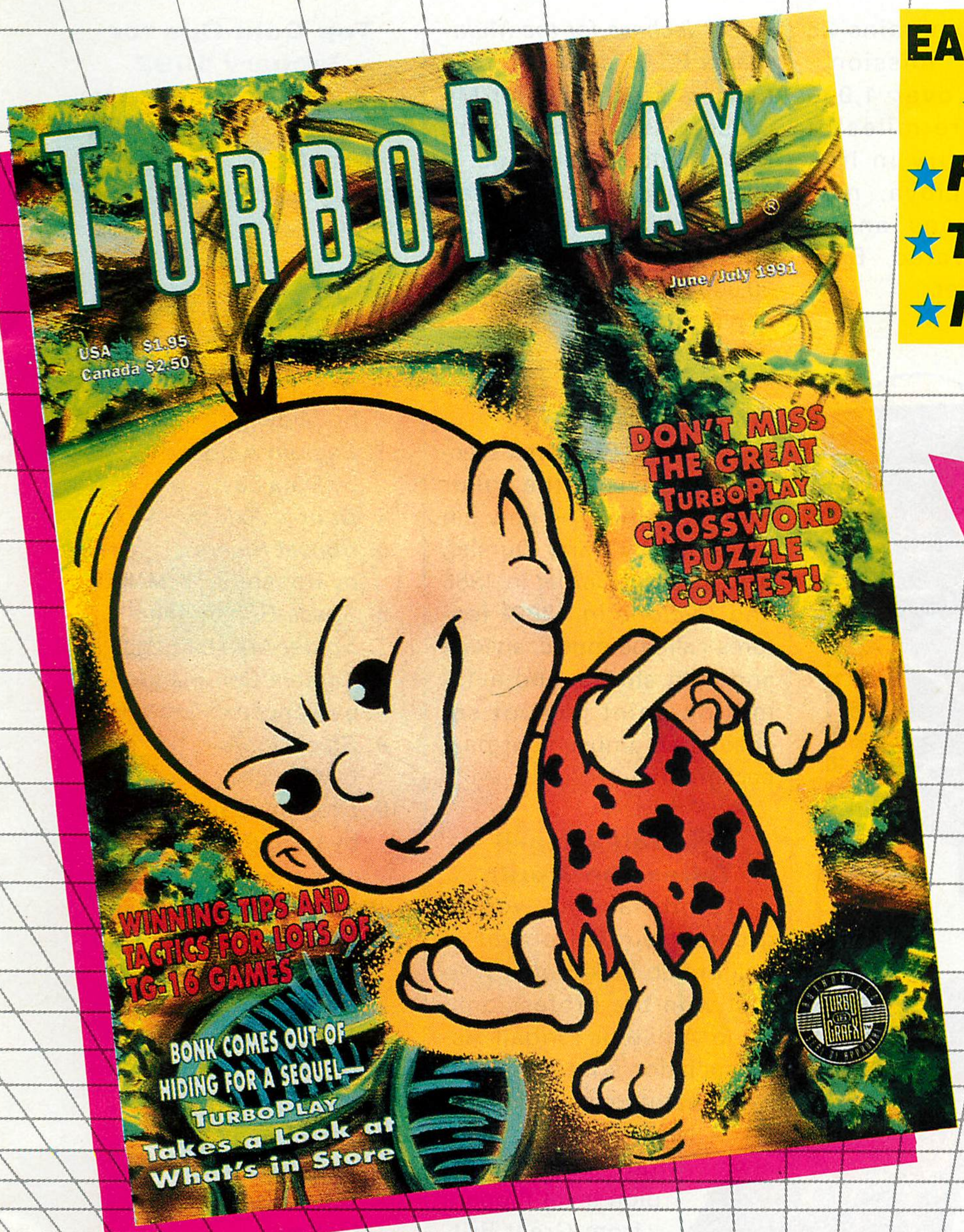
Software Toolworks Tools Up

Software Toolworks has signed an agreement with Nintendo of America to develop educational entertainment products using the Mario Bros. for play on personal computers. The first product using the famous characters is *Mario Is Missing*, which sends Luigi on a search for his brother.

In a separate announcement, the company revealed that it will develop software for the Sega Genesis. The first product for this format is *The Chessmaster*, a program that sold over a million copies for computer play. The company expects to introduce two additional Genesis products during the second half of 1992.

Electronic Arts Starts Players Club

Electronic Arts is currently offering memberships in the Electronic Arts Sports Network Players Association. For the $10 membership fee, players will receive a complete EASN Players Kit, including



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baseball cap, sunglasses and SnugZ, bumper sticker, stickers, school folder and pencil, patch, John Madden ruler, SkyBox NBA trading cards and personalized membership card. Members will then receive advance notice of new EASN games, including details, release dates and strategy hints.

To become a member, send $10, plus $4.50 shipping and handling fee, to: EASN Players Association, P.O. Box 7530, San Mateo, CA 94403-7530.

Sequels, Add-Ons and Enhancements

The latest crop of me-too-software includes Legend's latest sequel, *Spellcasting 201: The Sorcerer's Appliance*, to be distributed by Accolade. This new adventure pledges Ernie Eaglebeak to a fraternity, then puts him through Hell Week. It will be available for play on IBM PCs and compatibles.

Operation Sledgehammer is a new data disk that works with *MegaFortress* (Three-Sixty Pacific, for the IBM PC). It contains 25 new missions, with over 1,000 square miles of territory in Iran and Libya, new weapons and a renovated B-52 bomber.

Lucasfilm's *Tour of Duty* disks mate with *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, with new missions and a featured plane on each add-on. There's also a mission builder. Each add-on disk costs $29.95.

Software Toolworks is making new Windows-based entertainments, including *Casino Pack 1* (poker, roulette, blackjack and keno) and *The Chessmaster 3000* (upgraded chess program, with on-screen advice delivered in conversational English). Both are for IBM PC computers with Windows on board.

Battlechess for the Multimedia PC (Interplay Productions) is specifically for Microsoft Windows with Multimedia Extensions. It uses CD audio music, character voices and battle sounds, plus a library of 30,000 moves and ten levels of play.

New Pinball From Old Theme

Hurricane (Williams Electronics) revisits the roller coaster theme. The new pin (designed by Barry Oursler, who also did *Comet* in 1986 and *Cyclone* in 1988) features calliope music, speech and light shows, and a 15-million-point jackpot set against an amusement park background.

Pinball Wizard Takes the Apple

It's official: The world's greatest pinball player is Californian Rick Stetta, who just won the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association's International Championship, held in New York City. More than 400 champion-level flippers from Great Britain, Canada and the U.S. competed before members of the press and spectators, including such sports stars as Jeff Torborg (New York Mets manager), Darryl Boston, Kiki Vandeweghe, Pat Kelly, Rob Moore, Erik McMillan and Tommy John. The top prize was $1,500, a trophy and a trip to Chicago for the Pinball Expo.

The event was in support of the Tomorrow's Children's Fund and raised about $17,000 for that organization.

Top Coin-Ops for January 1992

The coin-op figures are courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, and are based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Terminator 2* by Midway
2. *Super High Impact* by Midway
3. *Captain America* by Data East
4. *Double Axle* by Taito
5. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
6. *Space Gun* by Taito
7. *Spider-Man* by Sega
8. *Captain Commando* by Capcom
9. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
10. *Dragon's Lair II* by Leland

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Steel Talons* by Atari
2. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
3. *Road Riot* by Atari
4. *Mad Dog McCree* by Betson/Icat
5. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
6. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
7. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
8. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco
9. *Final Lap* by Atari
10. *Rad Mobile* by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
3. *Robo Army* by SNK
4. *Super Baseball 2020* by SNK
5. *Off the Wall* by Atari
6. *Eightman* by SNK
7. *Raiden* by Fabtek
8. *High Impact* by Williams
9. *Vendetta* by Konami
10. *Sengoku* by SNK

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Relentless Onslaught!

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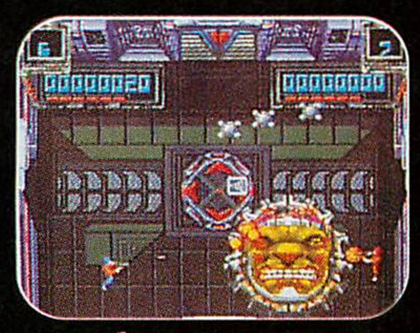
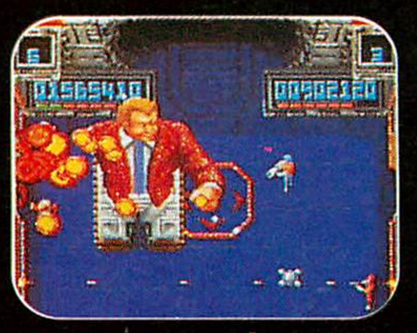


Scarface Massacre!



M.C. Mayhem!

Total Carnage!

Cobra Extermination!

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Once, the only way to experience the explosive, arcade action of Smash TV was to play it in the arcades. That was then...

SUPER SMASH TV™ for your SUPER NES™ is now! It's the *real* arcade game! Sure, you can win cars and toasters - but first destroy the metal munching twin cobras, 30 tons of angry Mutoid Man, club wielding mechanoids and more. After all, this is the game with the ultimate in prizes...your life!

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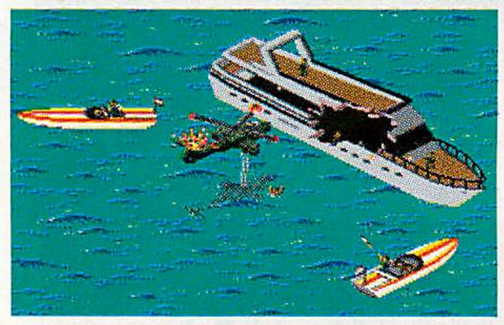
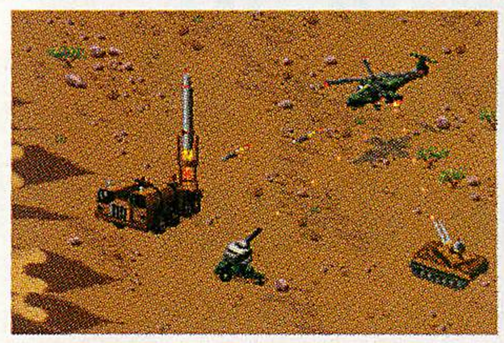
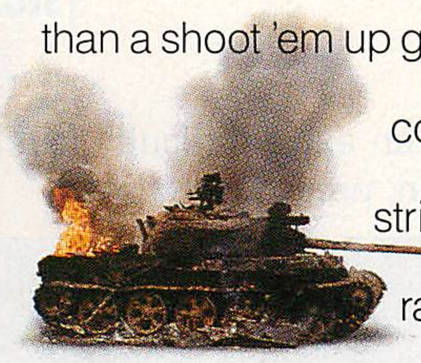
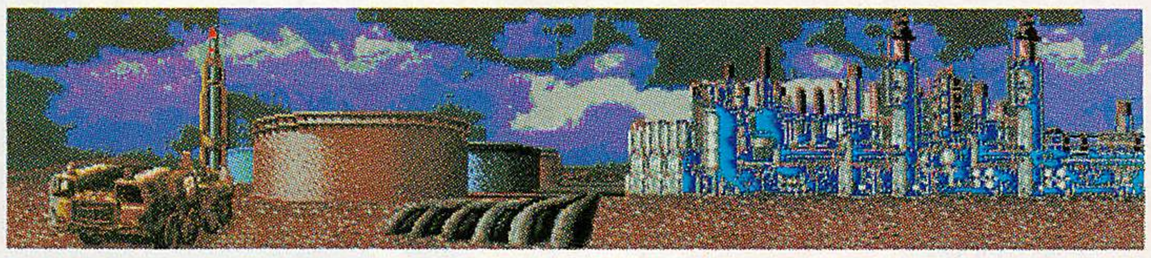




But Desert Strike is more than a shoot 'em up game. Surgical command strikes require razor sharp skill and the ability to think on the fly. You must plot your attack to survive 30 deadly-real missions. Access your battle map and on-board computer intelligence. Raid ammo dumps to reload. Rescue U.N. teams, hostages and spies. Protect the oil fields. And work towards your ultimate goal: hunting down the madman and obliterating his nuclear arsenal.





If you're ready to clean up more than just your room, get Desert Strike—Return to the Gulf for your Sega Genesis.

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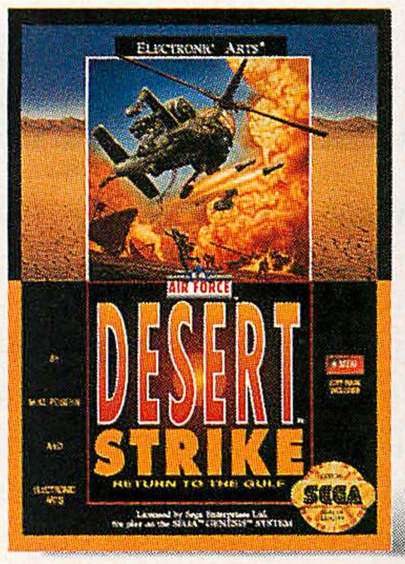

If you are under 18, be sure to get your parents' permission before using hotline (95¢ for first minute, 75¢ for each additional minute). Messages subject to change without notice. Desert Strike™—Return to the Gulf was designed by Mike Posehn and is a trademark of Electronic Arts. Sega and Genesis are trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd.

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Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!*

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

Batman: Return of the Joker

(SUNSOFT FOR THE GENESIS)

Here are passwords for *Batman: Return of the Joker* levels 2-2 through 7-1.

2-2 NWKL
3-1 LGZQ
3-2 GPTW
4-1 GNKF
4-2 KHCN
5-1 QGVN
5-2 WBZT
6-1 FFHG
6-2 CKQG
7-1 GPZT

Ms. Pac-Man

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)

Here's a way to start *Ms. Pac-Man* with six lives. Pause the game, hit Option 1, B twice, A twice, then unpause. John McHaz, of Marietta, Georgia, sent in this Easter egg.

Out Run

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

To get an extra difficulty level, on the title screen before you select the option screen, press C ten times.

Tyrone Tyree, of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, has found a way to see the designers' credits and a sixth ending to the race. To accomplish this, you must reach all five goals. After you make the fifth entry, just hit the **START** button and the *Out Run* car will automatically start driving down the road, stopping at billboards with the names of the programmers. After the car passes through this stage, it will drive between the bleachers and stop. The couple will get out and the trophy will be given to the girl, then she will give it back to the guy and give him a kiss. The scene will change to a picture of the two standing by the car with the trophy and "Congratulations!" will be displayed. Thanks, Tyrone.

continued on page 32

SO REAL YOU'LL WISH IT WAS JUST A GAME!

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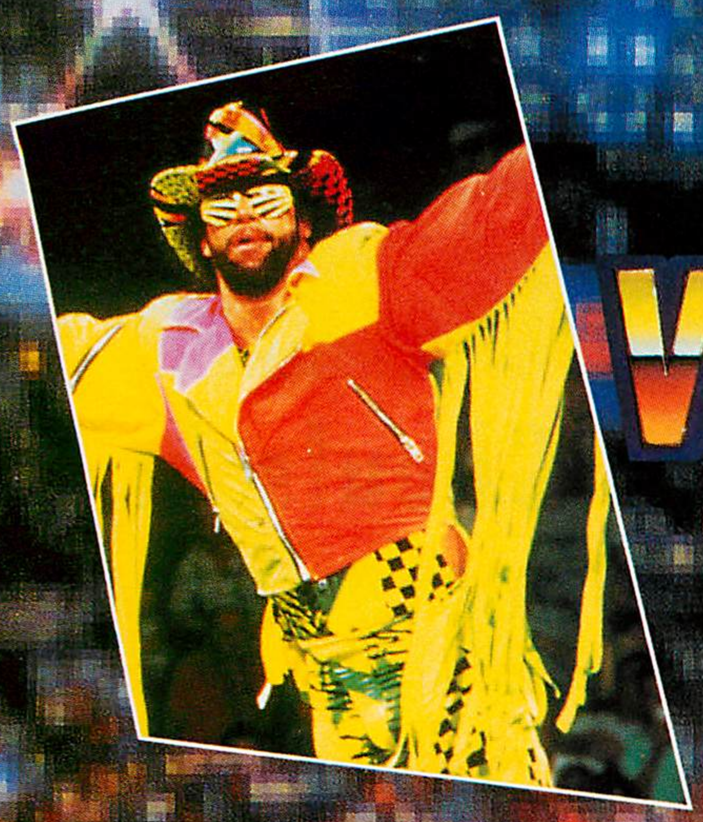

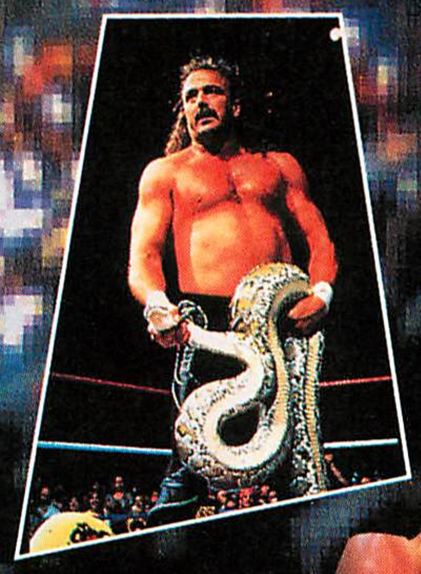

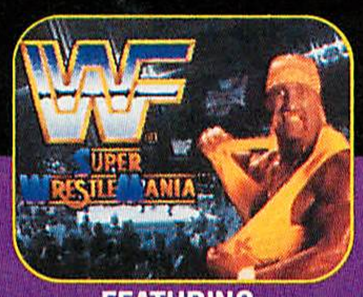

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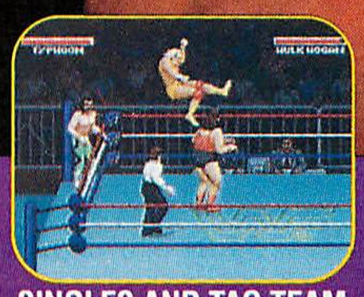

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continued from page 30

El Viento

(RENOVATION FOR THE GENESIS)

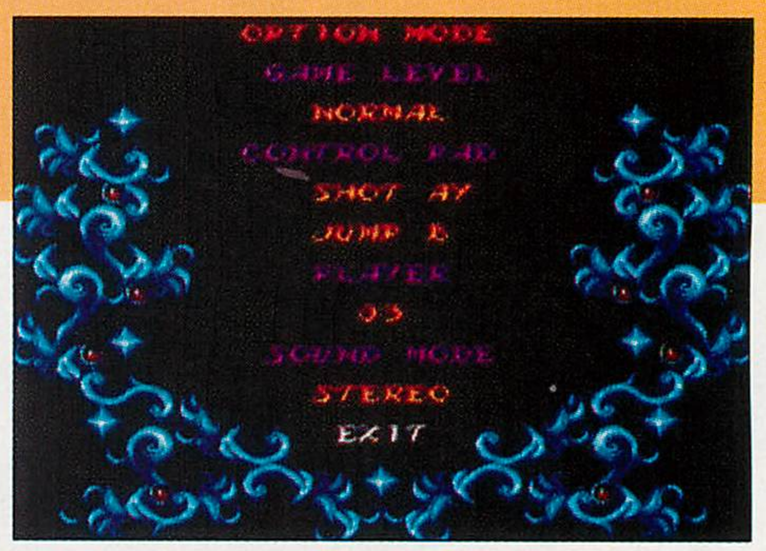
Here are some interesting options for this game:

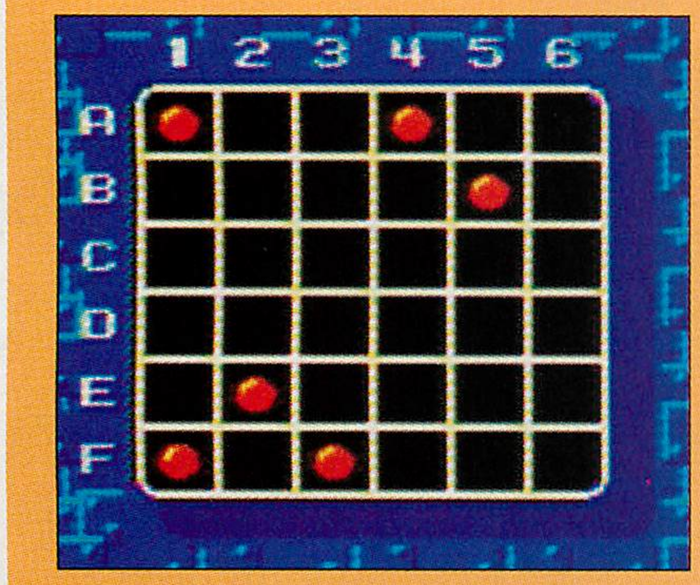
- Press **START** to pause the game, then press U, L, R, D, C. Repeat this sequence five more times for all the magics.
- Press **START** to pause the game, then press U, L, R, D, A for a slow-motion feature.
- Press **START** to pause the game, then press U, L, R, D, B to skip stages, advancing to the next one.

Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts

(CAPCOM FOR THE SNES)

To get a stage select and sound test screen, from the option screen, move the cursor to exit, press button L and **START** at the same time, then press **START** on controller 1.





Mega Man 4

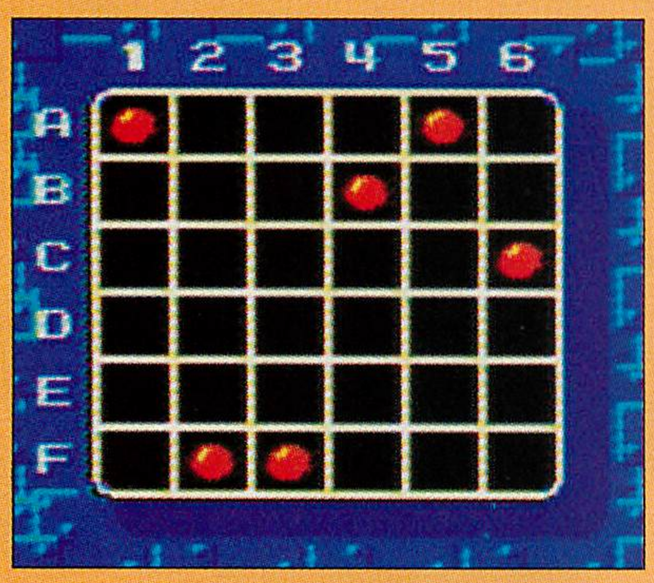
(CAPCOM FOR THE NES)

James Polak, of Joliet, Illinois, has been busy playing *Mega Man 4*, and here are two passwords he's found. The first password gives you all eight weapons and the two special items, Balloon and Wire Adapter; the second password starts you off with four (of the eight) robots beaten on the way to Dr. Cossack. Thanks for the Easter eggs, James.

First password: A1, A4, B5, E2, F1, F3
Second password: A1, A5, B4, C6, F2, F3

If you'd rather play it all the way through, here are some tips. Use:

- Dust against Skull Man;
- Bright against Pharaoh Man;
- Dive or powered up normal gun against Drill Man;
- Skull or powered up normal against Dive Man;
- Ring or powered up normal against Dust Man.



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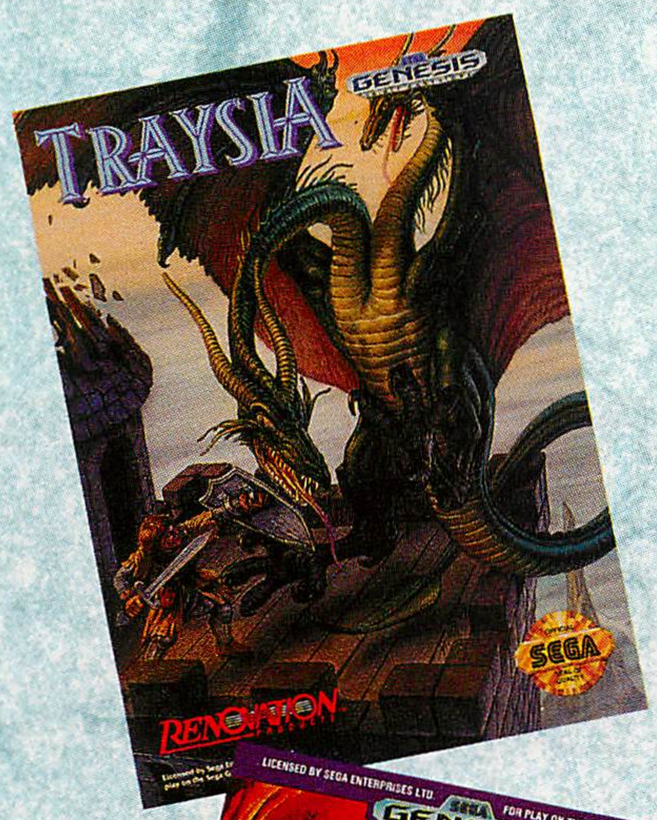

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Ultima: Quest of the Avatar

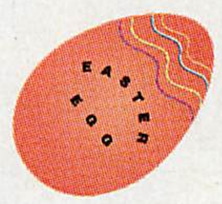
(FCI FOR THE NES)

If you're tight on gold, John Corbin, of Houston, Texas, has the tip for you. Since Lord British starts you with 400 gold after you die, take it to nearby Brittania, then buy a sword with it—surprisingly, costing 400 gold. Now go back to Lord British's chambers and die of the poison near the jail. Repeat this until each member of your party has the maximum number of swords he can carry. Die once more and go to Brittania's weapon shop again. This time sell all the swords for a huge profit. Great Easter egg, John.

Pac-Land

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)

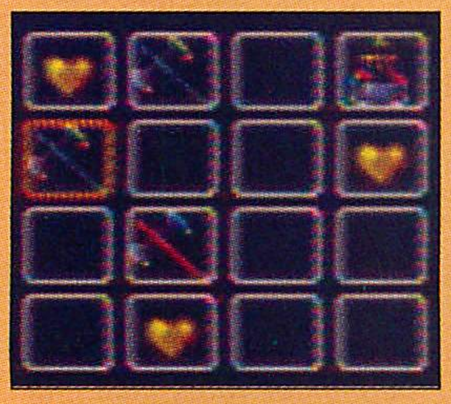
Here's a way to get ten extra lives: Get the high score and enter 330 NE. As long as that's the high score, you'll have ten extra lives every time you start. This Easter egg was also sent in by John McHaz. Thanks, John.



Super Castlevania IV

(KONAMI FOR THE SNES)

Here are the codes (on the screen photos) for all the stages in the second quest of the game. There should be no name entered when using these codes. And, yes, you can still get fully powered up in this more difficult quest by jumping from the step in front of the stairs on the last stage to an invisible platform at the bottom left-hand corner.



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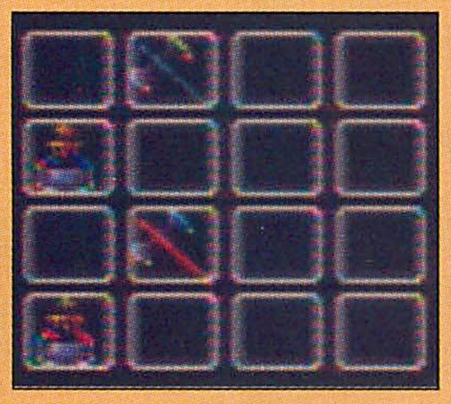

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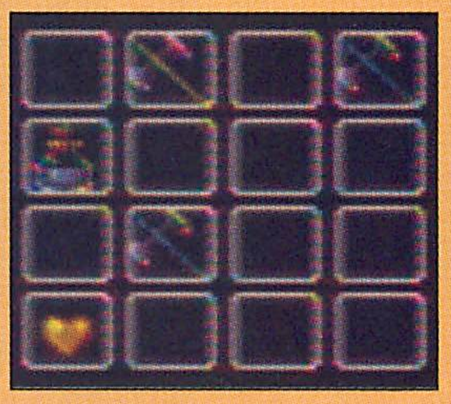

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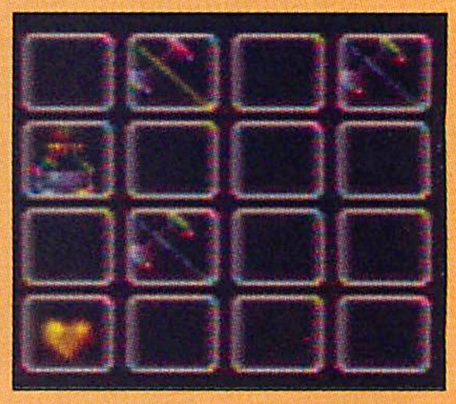

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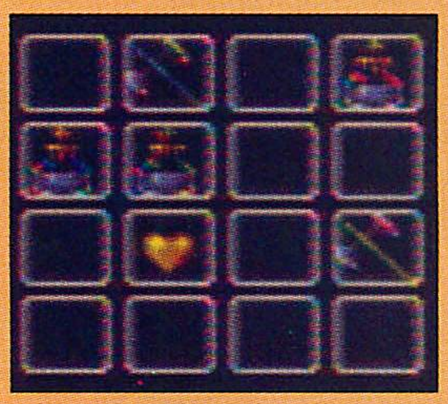

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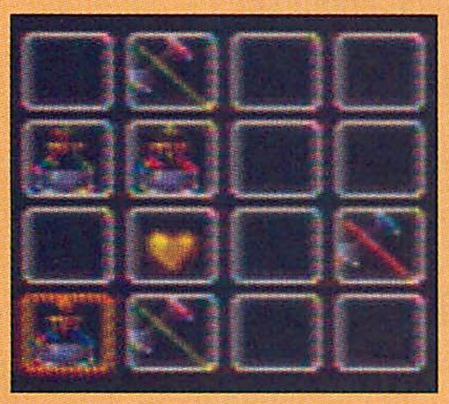

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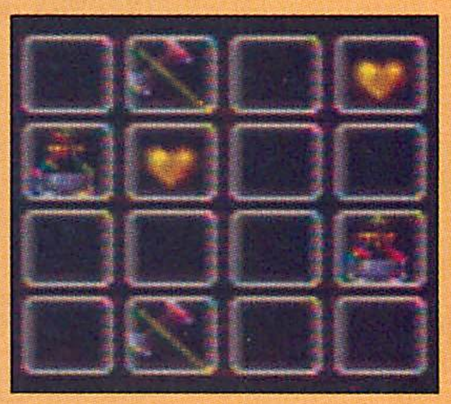

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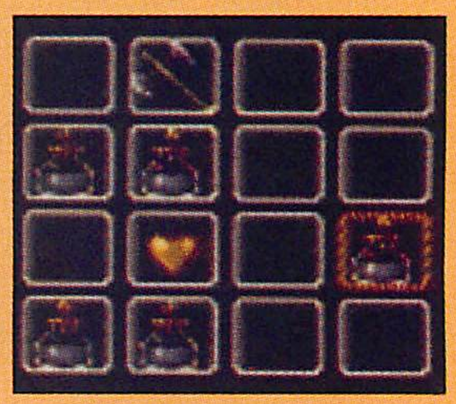

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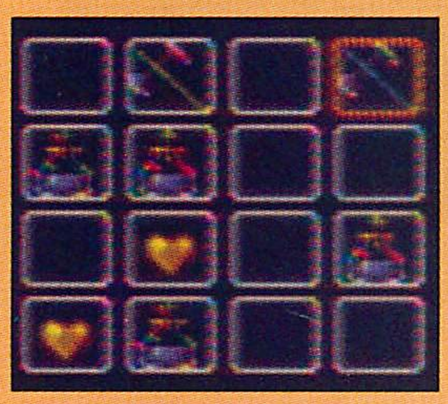
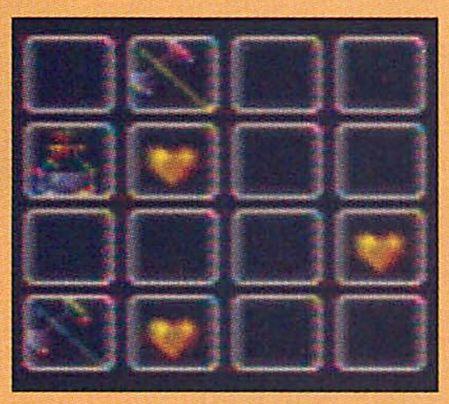
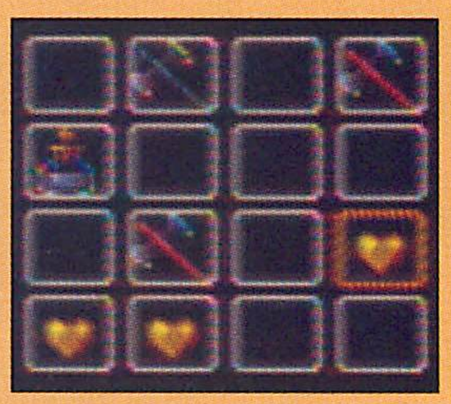


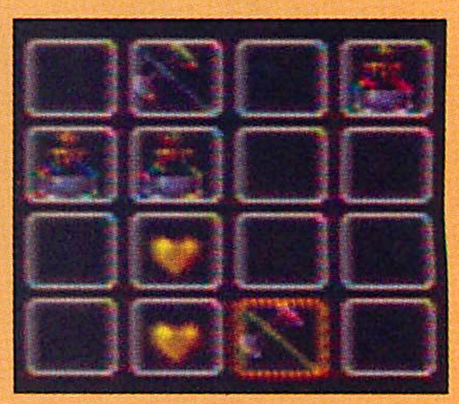
Stage 9



Stage A



Stage B



Last Stage

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CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Jordan vs. Bird: Super One-On-One

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

EASN: Electronic Arts Sports Network. I like the idea; I really do. By using that label to associate all of its sports titles with earlier hits like *John Madden Football* and *Lakers vs. Celtics*, Electronic Arts is making a bold and fearless statement. It's basically an open invitation to criticism: If an EASN title doesn't live up to the high standards set by games like *NHL Hockey*, folks like me are going to be the first to say so.

But not this time. *Jordan vs. Bird* on the Genesis is arguably the best version of *One-On-One* ever released by EA for any computer- or video-game system. We're talking about a video game that has thrived, in one form or another, for about a decade. Along with *Pinball Construction Set*, it helped to establish EA as one of the most important publishers of entertainment software in the entire industry.

If you're not familiar with the history of the *On-On-One* titles...well, the accompanying screen shots will tell you everything you need to know. It's a half-court game of roundball for one or two players—yes, you can choose to play as Michael or Larry. There's even an "arcade" mode that lifts the reality barrier to give both players equal talents. Seeing MJ sink three-pointers is not all that unusual, but it's pretty funny to see Bird soar to the rim for a behind-the-back reverse jam.

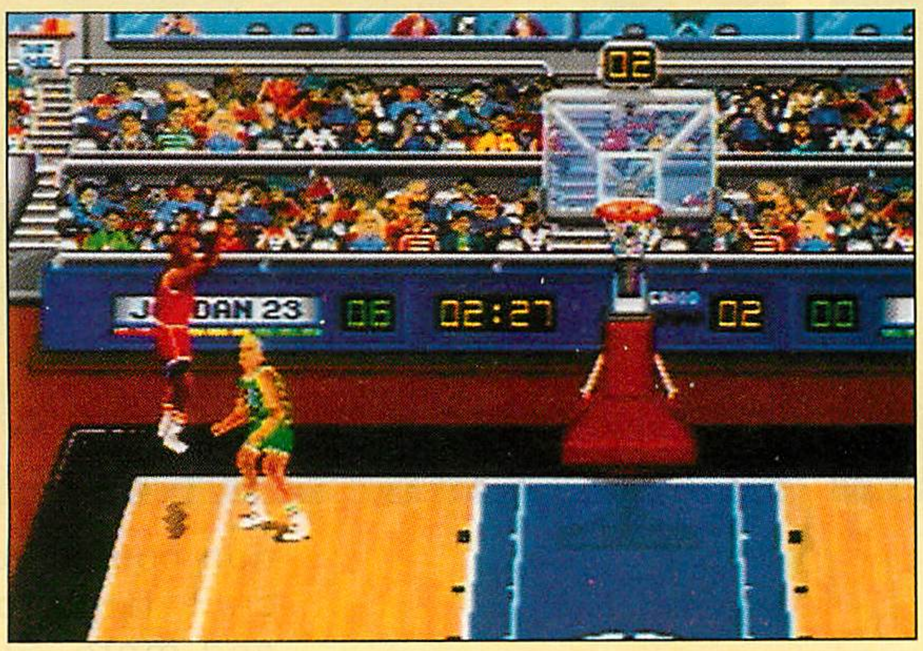
The play controls are pretty responsive, with all three action buttons being used for different functions. Though the tiny title-screen portraits of Jordan and Bird are lifted directly from EA's earlier *Lakers vs. Celtics* title, the rest of the game's graphics are uniformly excellent. The half-court screen uses a shifting background for a slight 3-D effect, and I swear there are times when Jordan looks like his tongue is hanging out.

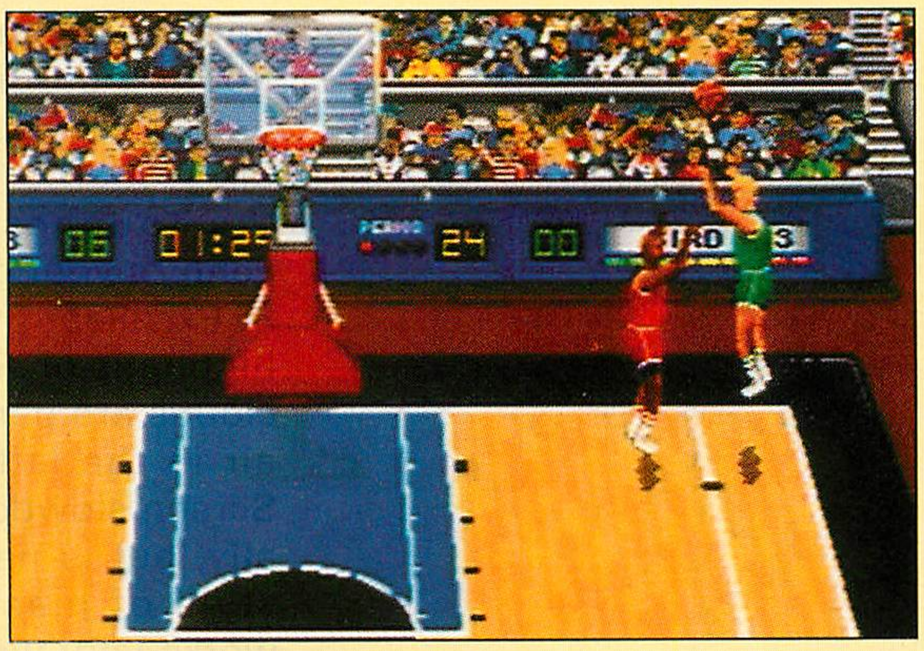
Along with the basic competition, *Super One-On-One* includes a slam-dunk extravaganza featuring Jordan, and a three-point contest that showcases Bird's legendary shooting accuracy. These bonus events have appeared in earlier versions of the game for different systems, but both of them have been com-

***Jordan vs. Bird: Super One-On-One* for the Genesis is arguably the best version of *One-On-One* ever released by Electronic Arts.**

pletely redesigned to take full advantage of the Genesis' capabilities.

The three-point shootout is particularly outstanding. This part of the game presents a view from directly behind Bird as he fires long jumpers from five different spots on the floor. The character animation is smooth and very realistic. Bird bounces slightly as he comes down from each shot, and you can clearly see the rotation of the ball as it soars ahead to the rim in a perfect arc.





As if that's not enough, the game's soundtrack really delivers the goods with style. Many of the sound effects—from the echo of the dribble and the squeak of a rubber sole on the parquet, to the rattle of the rim and the swish of the net—are cleanly digitized samples of the real thing. The crowd cheers and yelps "Awwwww!!" on cue, too. There's no music during the game itself—actually, a bit of the customary *Peter Gunn* theme would have enhanced the three-point shootout quite nicely—but the pre- and postgame tunes are finely crafted.

Alas, it's not quite the perfect game it could easily have been. Both players' hands look strangely like paws when they're not in possession of the ball, and both characters have a tendency to strike awkward poses from time to time—most notably, when your opponent "freezes" after each basket in the one-player game. And the slam-dunk contest is much more difficult than the three-point shootout, when, in reality, many players would argue that the opposite is true.

It's only fitting that *Jordan vs. Bird: Super One-On-One* should suffer from minor imperfections such as these. There's always room for improvement, and this is a classic that should continue to get better with age. It may not cater to all tastes, but fans of sports video games will surely eat it up as quickly and completely as any other EASN title.

—Chris Bieniek

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

The Rocketeer

IGS

For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

It's games like this that may make background artists start looking for a new line of work. I'm talking about the excellent background graphics that are present in the SNES version of *The Rocketeer*. In most areas of the game the backgrounds appear digitized (with perhaps some touch-up work) and provide excellent 3-D perspectives and realistic backdrops for game action.

The game is based upon the Disney movie, of course, and flows along in a similar fashion, with comic-book-type narratives separating the different portions of the game. Everything starts with Clifford (that's you) preparing to race against two other planes around a large track. Before you are allowed to try the rocket pack out, however, you must first win two races while flying the Gee Bee. While flying the plane, you have both a sideways perspective that dominates the majority of the screen, and a smaller, forward view window that assists by helping you to cut the corners as closely as possible and in showing your horizontal positioning around the course. Careful though, as it is possible to cut a bit too tightly and clip a tower, which costs precious time. Successfully com-

***The Rocketeer*, by IGS, uses comic-book-type narratives to bridge the different scenarios.**

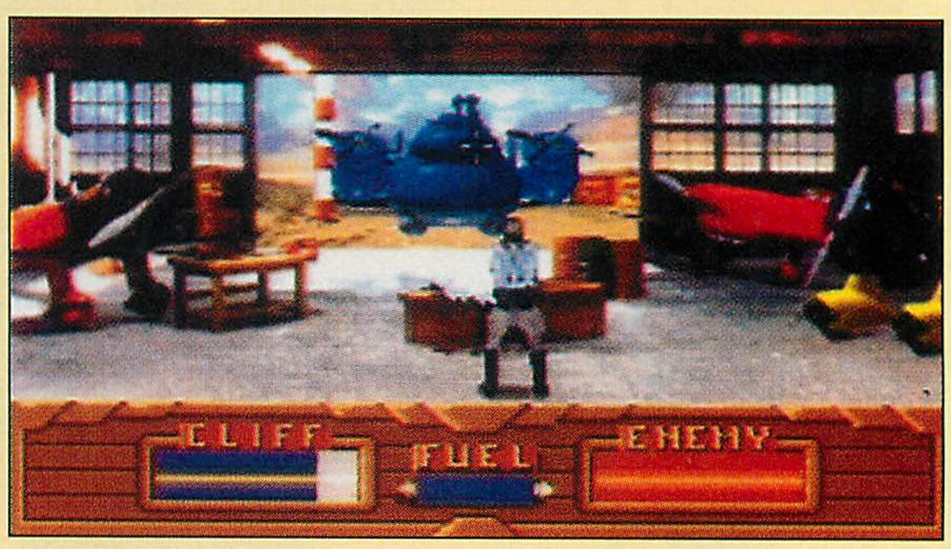
plete two races, and it's off to a nearby hangar to strap on the rocket pack.

As you prepare to leave the area, you are attacked by seemingly endless numbers of German soldiers, who hide behind crates, windows and other aircraft while trying to shoot you full of holes. A quick trigger finger and some dodging about in the air and along the ground will keep you alive. Special icons that appear both above and below you will award extra rocket fuel, health power-ups and one-ups.

If you make it out of the hangar in one piece, you will have just enough time to make it back to the track for your final race—this time with the rocket pack. The rocket pack performs great in the area of raw power, but controlling your movement is a bit trickier, and excessive contact with the course tower won't just clip your wings, it will knock you out.

Success sends our hero Cliff back to the hangar—you'd think he would have learned the first time around—where, sure enough, the soldiers are waiting once again to try to steal the prototype plans for an even better rocket pack. They kidnap Peevy, the plans and, worst of all, your girl, Jenny. Of course, we just can't have that, so once again you have to wipe out about a trillion soldiers. Wipe the floor with these guys, and it's off to rescue your friends.

Your first mission from here is to rescue Peevy and get the plans back. So, off



you zoom through the digitized clouds after him. The skies can be a dangerous place, as parachute-equipped mines and soldiers, bombs, jets, missiles and a few soldiers with rocket packs all float your way. Careful what you blast though, as power-ups and other special icons can float down as well.

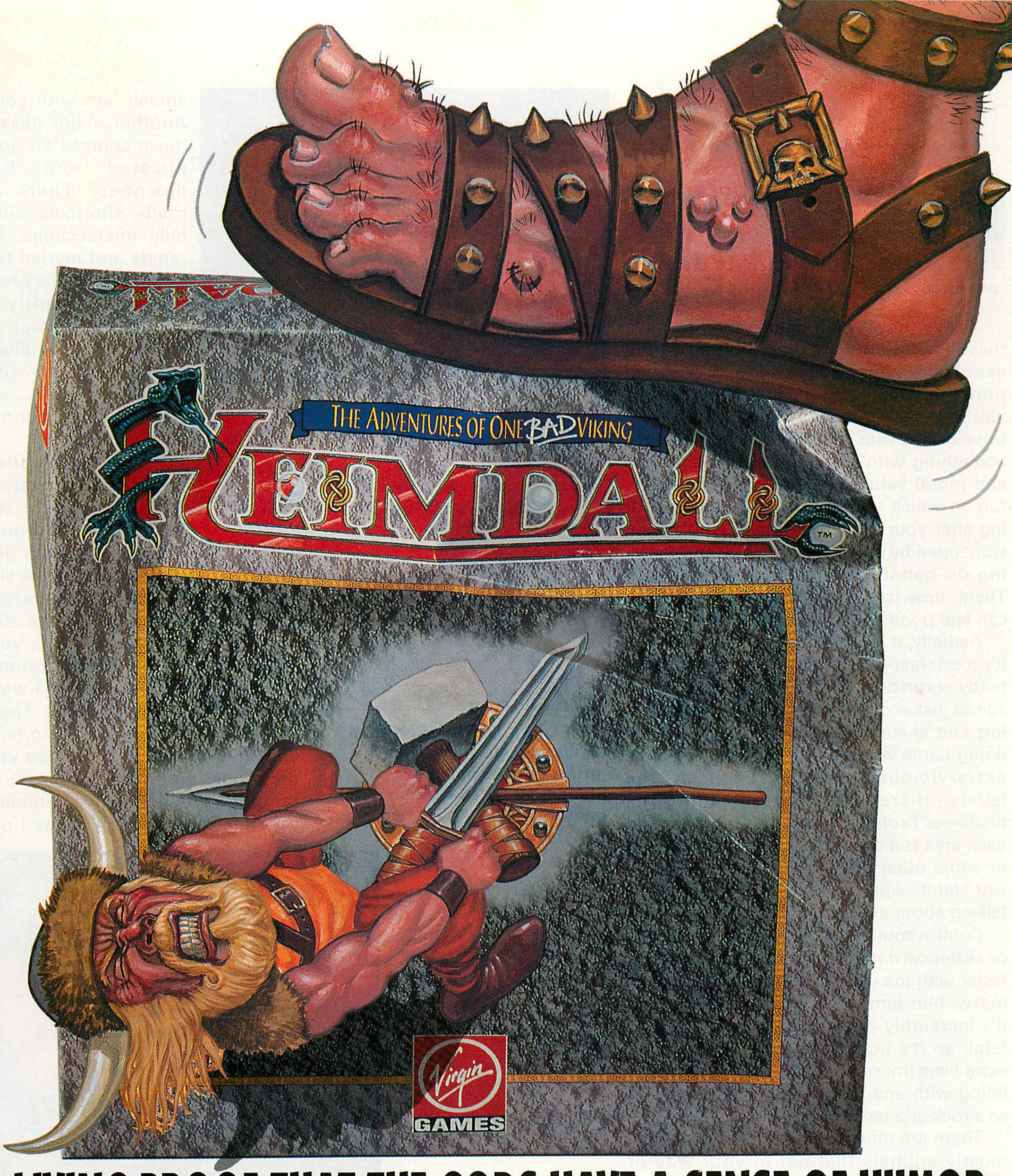
After rescuing Peevy, you nab one of their airships and head off after your darling Jenny. Once again, all manner of flying destruction comes your way: missile-laden aircraft, large rockets from below, blimps and more. Success here sends you to your final confrontation with the large floating dirigible where Jenny is being held. This final battle takes place on the tail section of the craft, and it is perhaps the toughest area of all, but, hey, Jenny's your gal, and isn't she worth it?

Excellent graphics throughout are the highlight of *Rocketeer*—the fluffy white clouds are perfect as you fly through the air in the latter sections of the game. Screen slowdown does appear occasionally, but is negligible. The comic-book-style of meshing the game together works very well, again with nice graphic panels preparing the scenes. Music and sound effects are fine.

The only questionable aspect of *Rocketeer* is longevity; there are only eight different stages to the game. Of those, three involve the air racing, two the hangar combat and two the air combat. I was able to finish the whole affair in about half an hour, and, although the option to continue from the beginning at a higher difficulty level is present, I question the overall life of the game. However, less demanding players should still get enjoyment out of a generally well-crafted game.

—Brent Walker

IGS
32 W. Colorado Ave., Suite 200
Pasadena, CA 91105
(818) 440-0626



HE'S LIVING PROOF THAT THE GODS HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

Here's what the reviewers are saying:

"Heimdall is constantly surprising and so huge it is going to be some time before you have exhausted the possibilities!"

"A delightful combination of action and animation."

"The graphical content is never less than good and in many places it's stunning."

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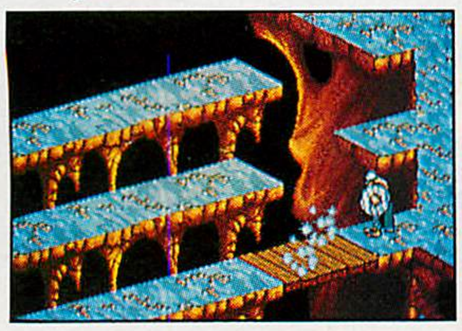
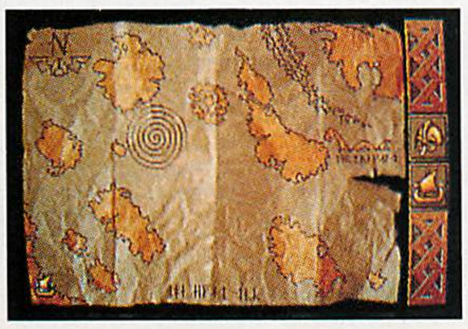
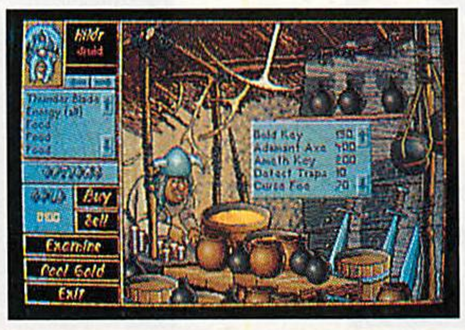
FEATURES:

- **Choose from over 30 different characters with varying RPG attributes**
- **Explore the mysterious realms of the Norseland as you solve puzzles guaranteed to keep you challenged for hours on end**
- **Top-down scrolling isometric viewpoint**
- **Fluid animation and stunning graphics created by a team of world class animators**







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CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Thrilla's Surfari

LJN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

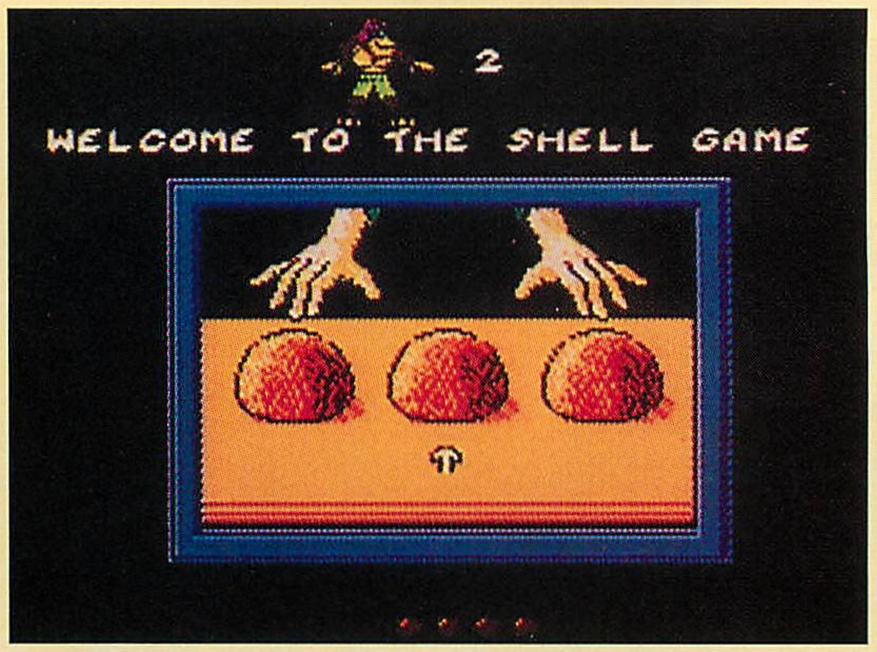
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC				**4**						
GRAPHICS						**6**				
PLAYABILITY								**8**		
OVERALL							**7**			

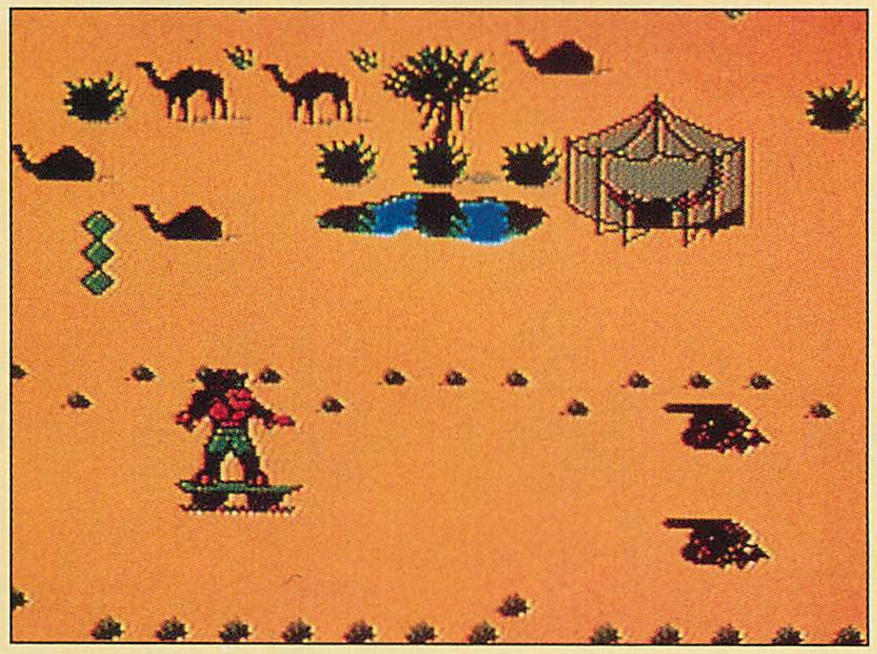
Y'know how video games tend to have these tacked-on, silly plots that all sound exactly the same? Evil overlord, kidnapped princess, alien military installation—and you're the Alignment's last chance? Well, time to set that nonsense aside and try something with deep cultural significance and moral value. Presenting *Thrilla's Surfari*, in which you're a Malibu gorilla, surfing after your human girlfriend who's been kidnapped by an African witch doctor working on behalf of Imu the Volcano God. There, now isn't that the kind of thing you can feel *good* about playing?

Actually, it is. This game is totally gonzo. It's loud, fast-paced, infuriating and consistently surprising. As Thrilla the Gorilla, you spend just about all of your time surfboarding and skateboarding, and occasionally doing battle with one of the Volcano God's extra-vicious minions. Each of the levels—there are seven, including the finale—is broken up into three areas, and each area is a stretch of jungle, river, desert or some other African landscape. (When I say "landscape," bear in mind that we're talking about average, 8-bit graphics here.)

Control couldn't be simpler. Thrilla's surf- or skateboard moves right or left, slower or faster with the directional pad, and a button makes him jump. The going is tough, and it's incredibly easy to wipe out, which is fatal, so it's important to accrue a lot of extra lives (more on that in a moment). Colliding with any immovable obstacle, such as a rock or a log, does you in.

There are other tribulations to deal with, mostly animals that get in your way or chase you down. These can be avoided or, if you time your jumps accurately, you can

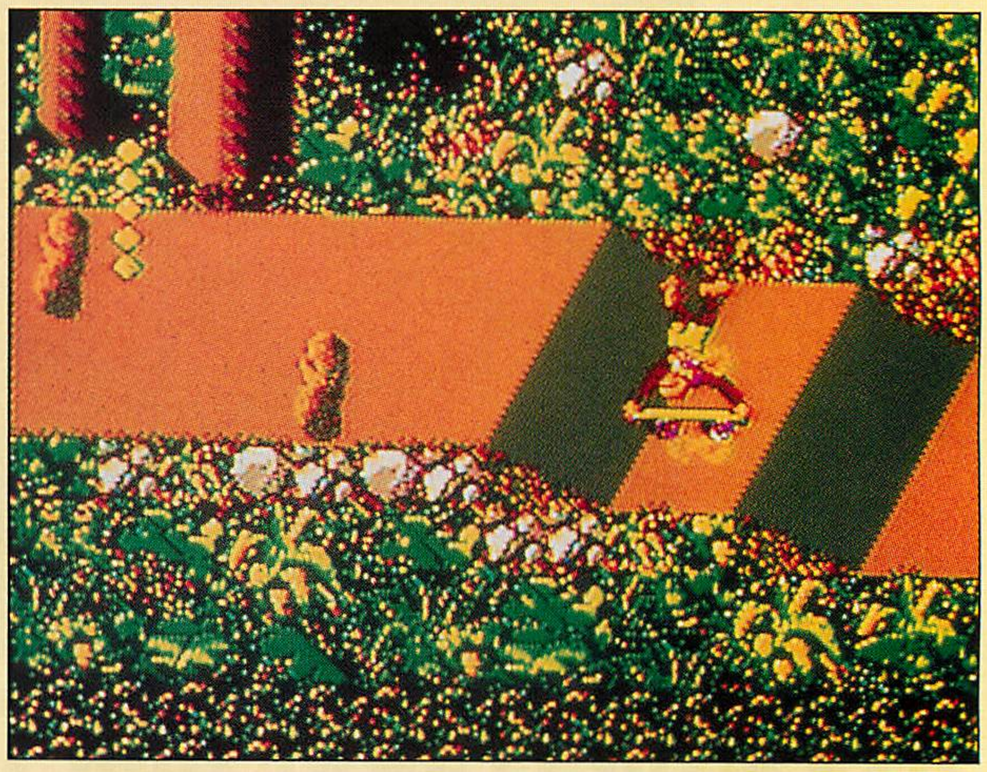


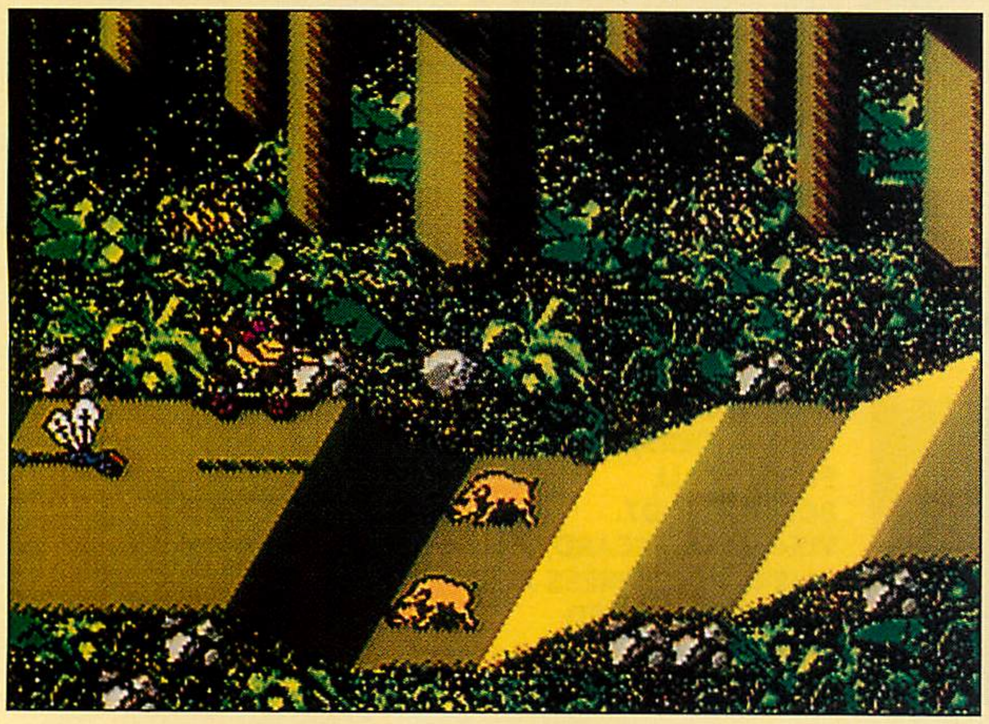


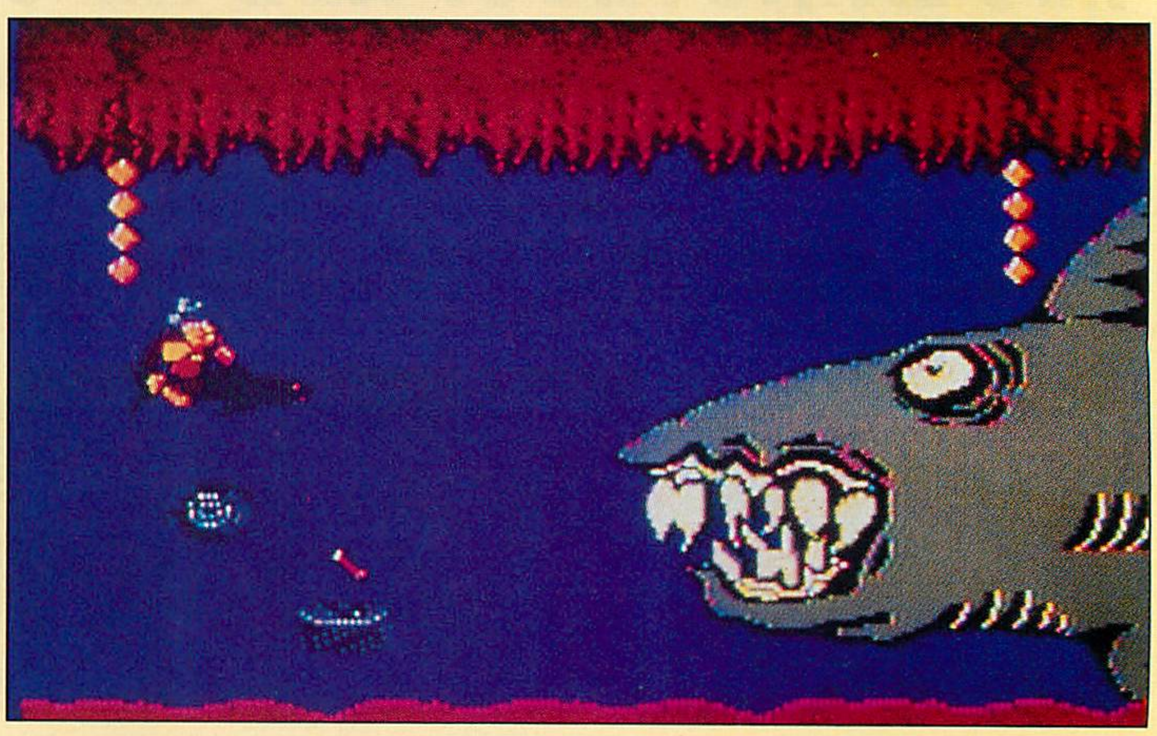
In LJN's *Thrilla's Surfari*, a Malibu gorilla surfs after his girlfriend who's been kidnapped by an African witch doctor.

smash 'em with your board. Another major hassle is that these courses are long, complicated and fiendishly designed! There are side roads, shortcuts, pits, ramps, hills, intersections, waterfalls, rapids and myriad twists and turns. You get very few breaks; you're constantly shifting speed and direction. And, though you can always stop and backtrack when skateboarding, you can't surf against the current on a water level.

There are the usual bonuses scattered along the way as well, including peanuts, diamonds and bananas. Peanuts give you a shot at playing the shell game between each area; every time you win the shell game (it's mostly luck), you win an extra life, so racking up a lot of peanuts is the way to keep the game going. There are no continues, so be prepared to get familiar with the early levels, 'cause you'll play them over and over. Diamonds offer you temporary invincibility; bananas extend your life meter, which is used up quickly







on contact with beasts. The boss encounters are a peculiar shift of pace: You have some mobility on your board, but mostly you throw and dodge.

While the art is coarse and cartoonish, a lot of attention has been paid to animation. Thrilla's maneuvers are very sophisticated: He pushes off, does some spectacular 720s and aerials, and crashes to the ground in all sorts of creative ways. Trouble is, if you're playing *right*, you're going so fast and concentrating so hard on not wiping out that you don't have time to notice the fine details. There are lots of scantily animated "meanwhile" and segue scenes to drive the wacky plot.

The music and sound effects are obnoxious and well-suited to the beach-blanket brashness that the game exudes. I preferred them turned down after the first few minutes, thank you very much.

If there was ever a video game that seemed to spring from the mind of a wise guy, 12-year-old genius, *Thrilla's Surfari* has gotta be the one...unless you count *Frogger*.

—Josh Mandel

LJN
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400

PGA TOUR Golf

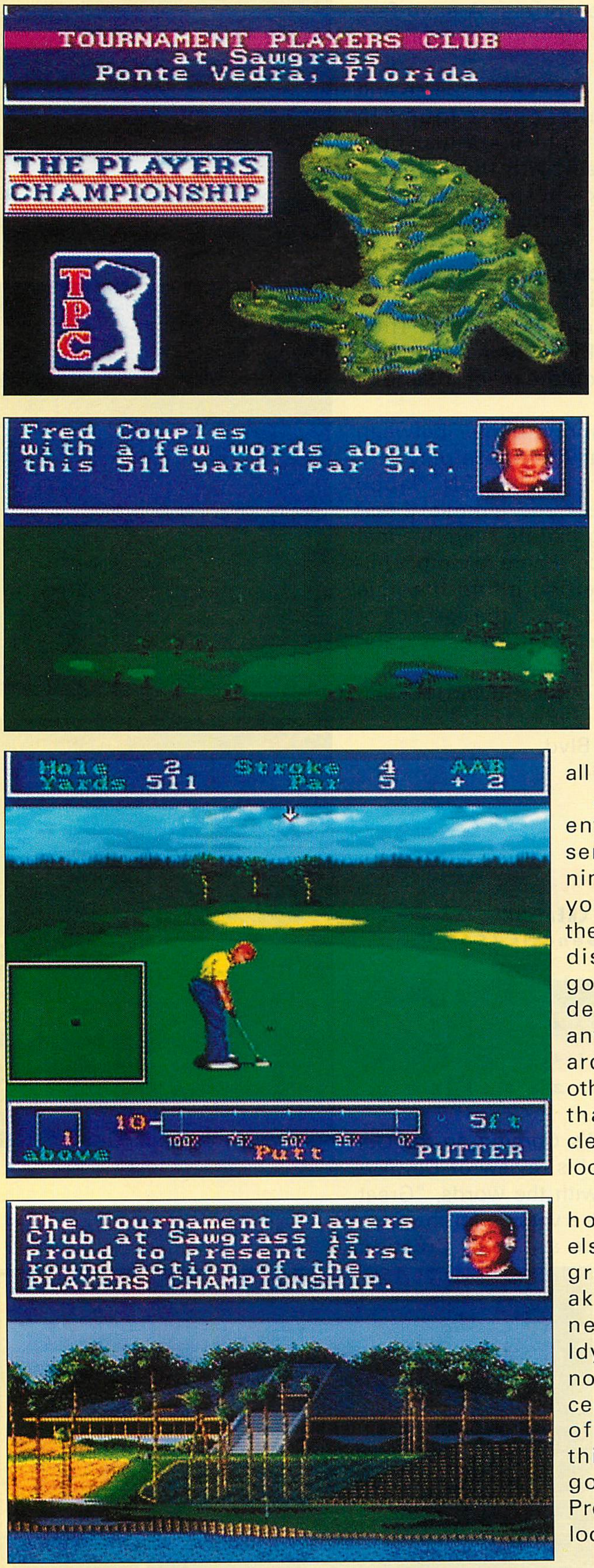
ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Golf. What's the big deal about it? Beats me. Yet a lot of folks feel differently—quite a number of them, considering that golf games for home and business computers are very popular. The same isn't really true for video-game systems, though, possibly because of the younger consumer base and limited capabilities of the hardware.

It's a little daring, therefore, for Electronic Arts to jump in and bring out a golf game when others are playing it safe and producing the tried-and-true formulas for the still-new Super NES. Also, there's T&E Soft, a third party dedicated to making golf games for the Super NES—with its first entry the impressive *True Golf Classics: Waialae Country Club* (and its *Pebble Beach* entry is reviewed elsewhere in this issue). And let's not forget Hal America's *Hal's Hole in One Golf*.

Under the Electronic Arts Sports Network banner, *PGA TOUR Golf* features



***PGA TOUR Golf* presents golf in a rather cut-and-dried manner.**

computerized golf in a rather cut-and-dried manner. There are four tournaments on the tour. Among them, the Kemper Open, the Honda Classic, the Players Championship and PGA West.

Despite having a greater number of courses and settings than *Waialae*, *PGA TOUR Golf* boils down to this: Video golfing on the Generic Stripway Course. You know you're in California when the background hills are sand-colored. Otherwise, you could be putting anywhere in the universe, for all that matters.

A nice layout of the entire course is presented at the beginning of a hole. Once you get to whacking the little ball, only the distance from your golfer to the hole is depicted along with any trees, water hazards, sand traps and other stuff in between that serve as obstacles or pretty props to look at.

Besides the distant horizon, everything else is a sea of dark green, making play akin to golfing on a netherworld oasis. Idyllic Hawaii this is not. All of these concerns are superficial, of course, but isn't this what real-world golf is about, too? Pretty places you can look at while playing?

Still, there's a lot to like. You're allowed to select your own set of clubs, if you wish, to suit your skills. The tour is a simple contest where you try to "out-golf" your computerized competitors or friends (up to four people

can play) for money prizes. A save feature lets you finish playing your remaining courses later.

The golf settings are indeed sparse and lacking in the realistic look found in *Waialae*, but the graphics are just fine. There's one problem with the courses: Most of them look physically flat, and they're really not. Contours are represented by differing shades of green, but the effect fails to be three-dimensional. And the golfers are hardly lifelike, either in the way they appear or the way they swing their clubs. Even their pants look better than what you'd expect a serious golfer to wear.

Other than the boring banter between two pseudosportscasters whose only purpose is to reinforce the "EASN" label, there are no pointless and gimmicky features like pestering caddie boys to deal with. The main concern here is simply hitting the ball and getting it into the hole under par. In the end, that's the essence of golf—and that's as exciting as it gets, *minus* the pretty places.

—Howard H. Wen

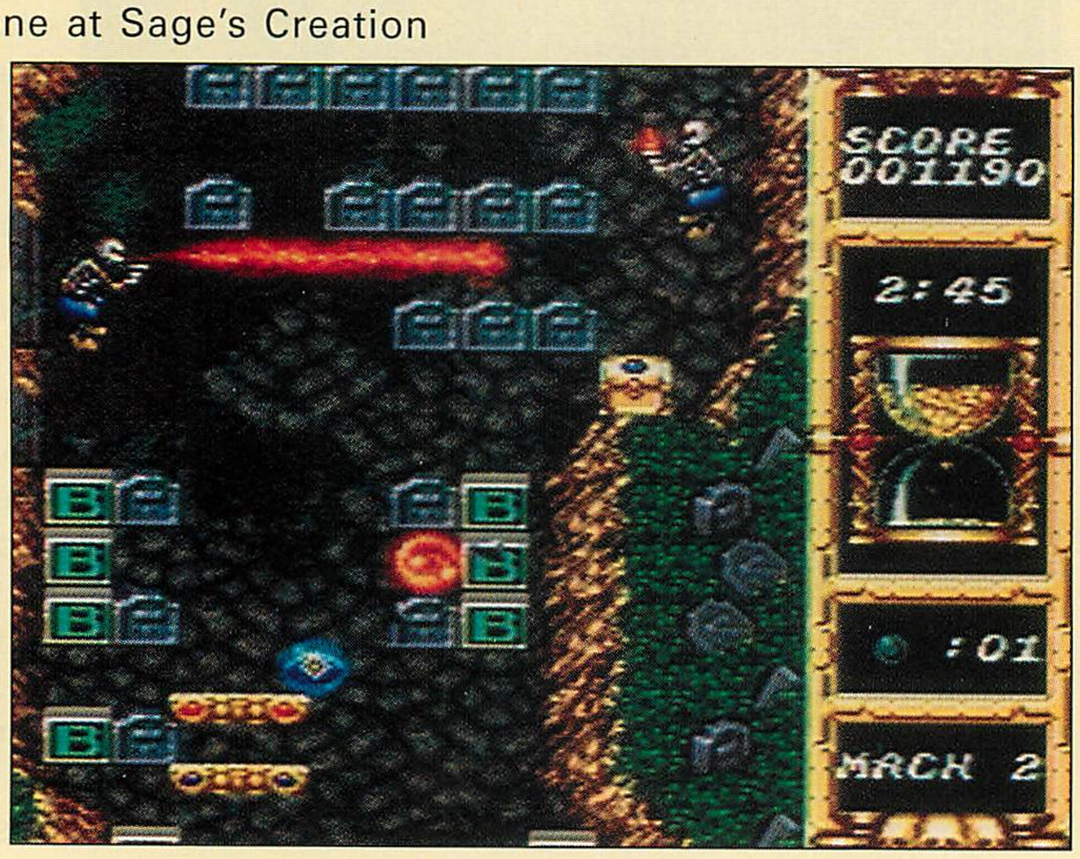
Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

Devilish

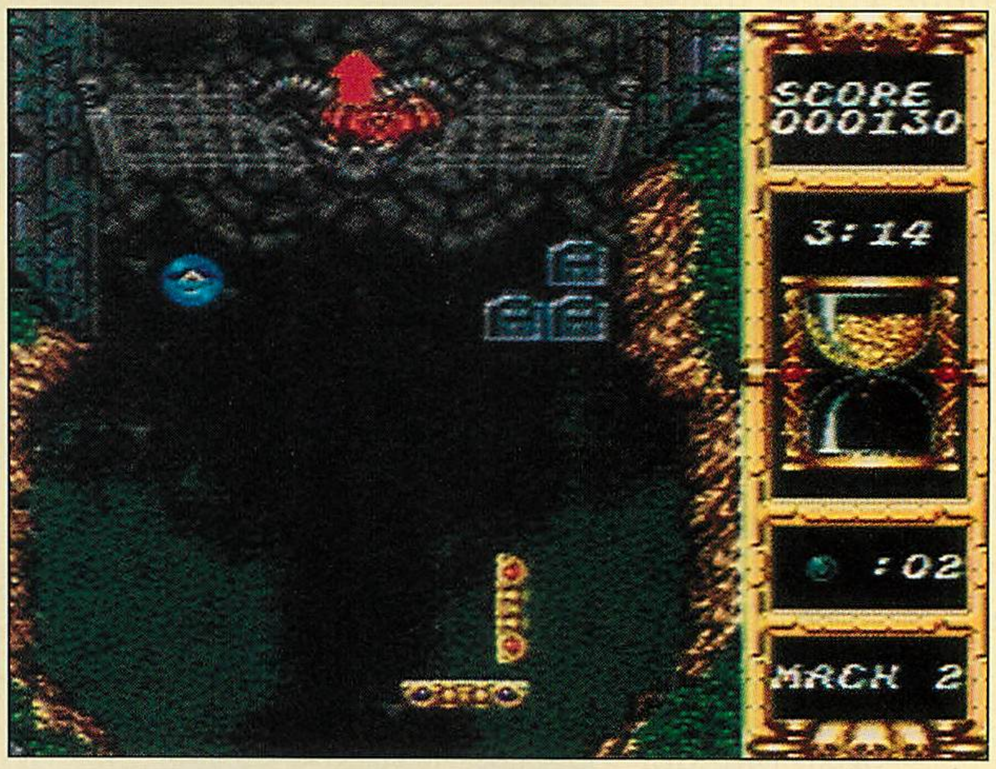
SAGE'S CREATION
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

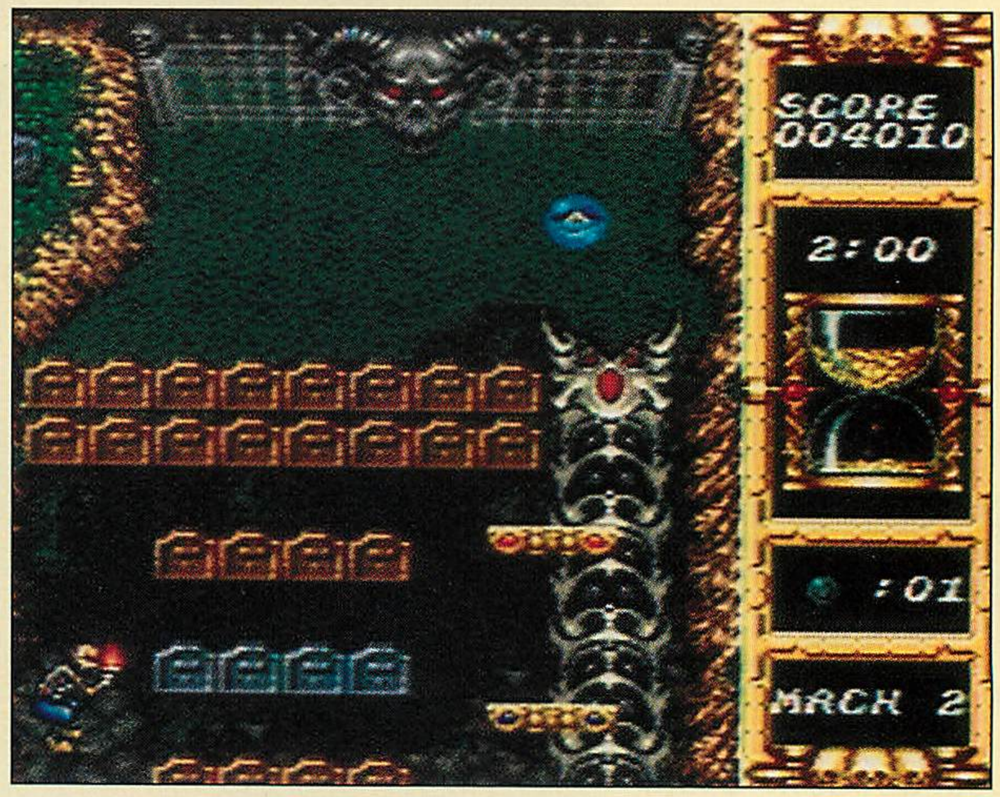
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

In December 1991's *Gaming on the Go*, Chris Bieniek closed his review of *Devilish* for the Game Gear with the words, "Great game—I'd love to see a version for the Genesis." Well, someone at Sage's Creation must've been listening, because the Genesis version is out, and it's every bit as good as the Game Gear cart.



Devilish is based on the classic game *Breakout*: You move a paddle to keep a ball in play, and bouncing the ball off obstacles breaks them up and earns you points. But the format's been given a radical face-lift. Each of the seven levels is a scrolling maze, a maze that you negotiate as you demolish the obstacles. There are sometimes multiple routes to the end of the maze; some routes are faster, some are slower and more hazardous but worth more points. The scrolling goes in every direction, so you often have to coax the ball sideways or down. Each level has some sort of "Main Event," usually a boss just begging to go a few rounds with your trusty sphere (curiously, the bosses are partway through each level, not at the end). And the whole game's been given the same treatment that pinball got in *Devil's Crush*: The playing field is a diorama of gothic horror and fantasy images. Castles, gargoyles, fire-breathing skeletons and hungry frog creatures are just a few of the menaces thrown your way.





Paddle control is a bit fancier than *Pong*'s, but easy to learn. There are actually two paddles (an enchanted prince and princess, don'tcha know), but they move in unison. There are three configurations of the paddle—one fewer than in the Game Gear version—so that the ball can be coaxed in different directions. The upper paddle can roam anywhere on the screen, so that's usually the one you end up using strategically. Paddle speed is variable; once you get good with it, there's not much reason to keep it at any speed but the fastest.

Some blocks or crushable objects contain items that affect either the paddles, the ball or the playfield, à la *Arkanoid*. The paddles shrink, enlarge or become useless; the ball turns into a giant, fiery snake; blocks explode without warning. Learning the location of the "favorable" blocks and avoiding the nasty ones is important to make it to the higher levels. Since there are *no* continues (read that again), the goal is to keep the game going by earning *lots* of free balls—and that can only be done by hitting plenty o' bonuses. There are three levels of difficulty, but they don't affect the game

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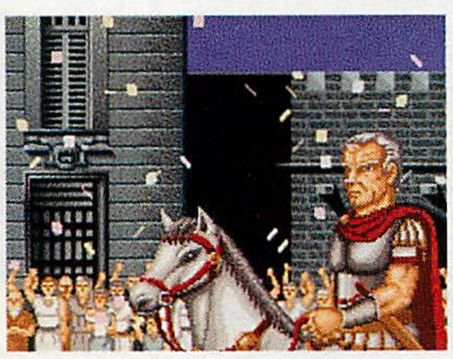

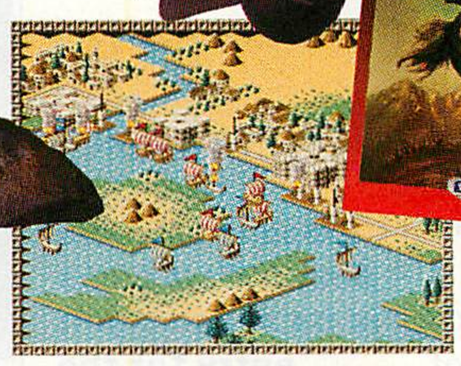

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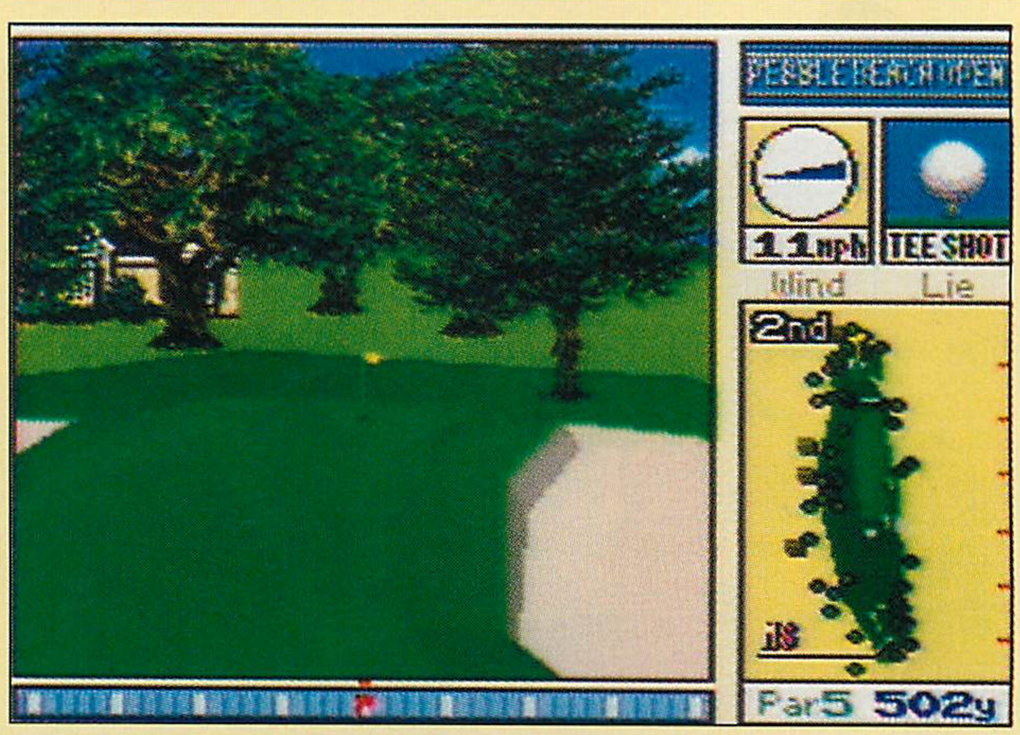
play itself, they only change the amount of time you're allotted to complete each level.

Visually, *Devilish* is highly detailed and ever-changing: There are tremendous rotating gears, waterfalls that make the ball hard to see and control, and much more. There's even some good multilevel work. One maze floats above the ground, which scrolls by below, while clouds drift by on top and hide the playing field. (Some players *hate* this kind of thing!) There's not much flicker, except when something blows up real good. However, there are periods of significant slowdown on a couple of levels. The music and sound effects are pretty good, except for the two grainy digitized samples.

Devilish is clever, challenging and the embellishment it brings to the *Breakout* concept is truly enjoyable. I wish it were longer; you cover a *lot* of ground very quickly, and there's tons of scenery, but because of the fast-moving nature of the play, any one game is usually over quickly. (Then you have to start over...ugh!)

—J.M.

Sage's Creation
12062 Valley View, Suite 250
Garden Grove, CA 92645
(714) 893-0309



True Golf Classics: Pebble Beach Golf Links

T&E SOFT
For the Super NES ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Forget about country clubs, golf carts and green fees—just stay at home with one of the *True Golf Classics*. *Pebble Beach Golf Links* is the second golf simulator from T&E Soft, the first being *Waialae Country Club*.

This new course is driven by the same graphics engine that gave the first one such great realism and 3-D effects. There are also 50% more polygons than before, which results in more and greater detailed objects in the background.

If you have played the first one, then it's just a matter of stepping onto this new course and learning your way around 18 new holes. Even if you haven't seen the first game, thorough instructions and some on-screen guidance from your caddie will give you the basics of the game in no time, although mastering the course is another thing entirely. There are a lot of features that need mentioning, so I'll get started.

First off, you need to register your player: Enter your name, and perhaps a handicap, and you're ready. Next, choose your game: Tournament, stroke play, skins or match play are available, as well as playing a practice hole if you need to get warmed up (no practice green, unfortunately).

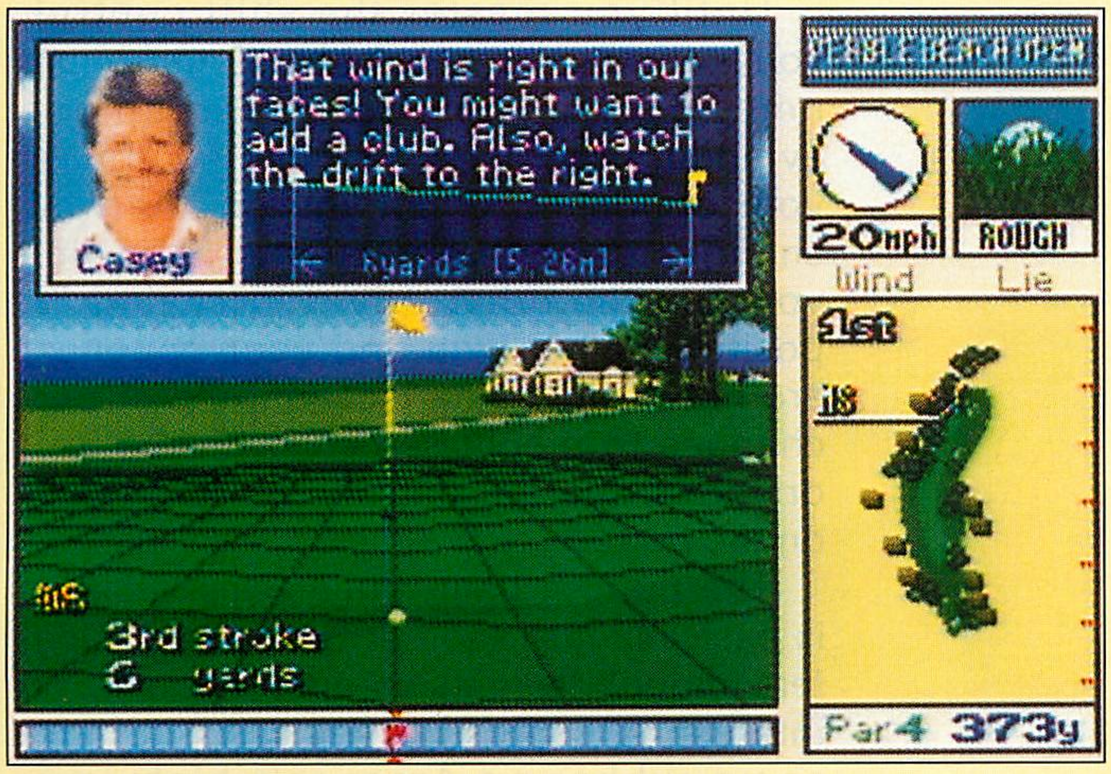
Play in a tournament, and you have 48 pros to go up against, as well as up to three additional players in your party, for a total of up to 51 players to compete against. Between holes, you will hear how other players along the course are doing, whether they eagled or double-bogied, and the leader board will be shown indicating each player's position.

The skins game will be a welcome addition for many, and the added option of setting the dollar amounts for each hole provides an intense hole-by-hole competition.

If you have multiple golf fans in your home, up to ten players can be kept in the roster at a time, along with individual statistics like longest drive, closest to pin, drive percentage, green percentage—you name it and it's there. Course records are also kept in storage, which may be erased at any time if you want to start over with a clean slate.

Along with the handicap option mentioned above, you may also set the stroke

T&E Soft's *True Golf Classics: Pebble Beach Golf Links* is its second golf entry for the Super NES.



speed so that your less agile friends can keep up with you. Four different caddies are available to choose from, each giving advice (though perhaps flattery would be a better term) from hole to hole and before putts when you approach the green. The documentation should not be overlooked as a source of advice either, as each hole is described within, along with some pointers to keep you on the fairways.

The course view may be adjusted from shot to shot, in case you are in a bunker and want to make sure you get the elevation right on your shot. Also important are your stance, where you want to hit the ball for the proper english, the wind speed and direction, and the type of surface you are hitting from. These must be taken into consideration for every shot.

Other extras available include a flyby option, which will slowly scroll the view along the hole, helping you decide where to place your shot. Another option will make the ball leave a trail through the air and along the ground, to show you just how much you managed to hook or slice.

If you make a killer shot, whether it's a 30-foot putt for birdie or a 250-yard drive into the ocean, an instant replay may be called up to let you experience the thrill again.

The most important aspect, that of actual game play, is great. Your shots go where you would expect, for the most part, and there is some degree of error allowed before you start knocking balls off at extreme angles. The holes all look great, with shading helping to indicate the slant of slopes and hills. The graphics are a trifle slow at times, though generally quick enough to provide the amount of detail desired without being a real detriment to the action.

Sound effects don't play a major role here, but they are okay, though the waves hitting the beach remind me more of a load of bombs hitting the ocean.

My overall impression is one of a good golf simulation that is easy to play and that, while complex enough to require some practice, is also simple enough to keep the game fun. Now if they can just manage to cram one or two more courses in....

—B.W.

T&E Soft
953 Mountain View Drive, Suite 167
Lafayette, CA 94549
(415) 253-1750

Race America

ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

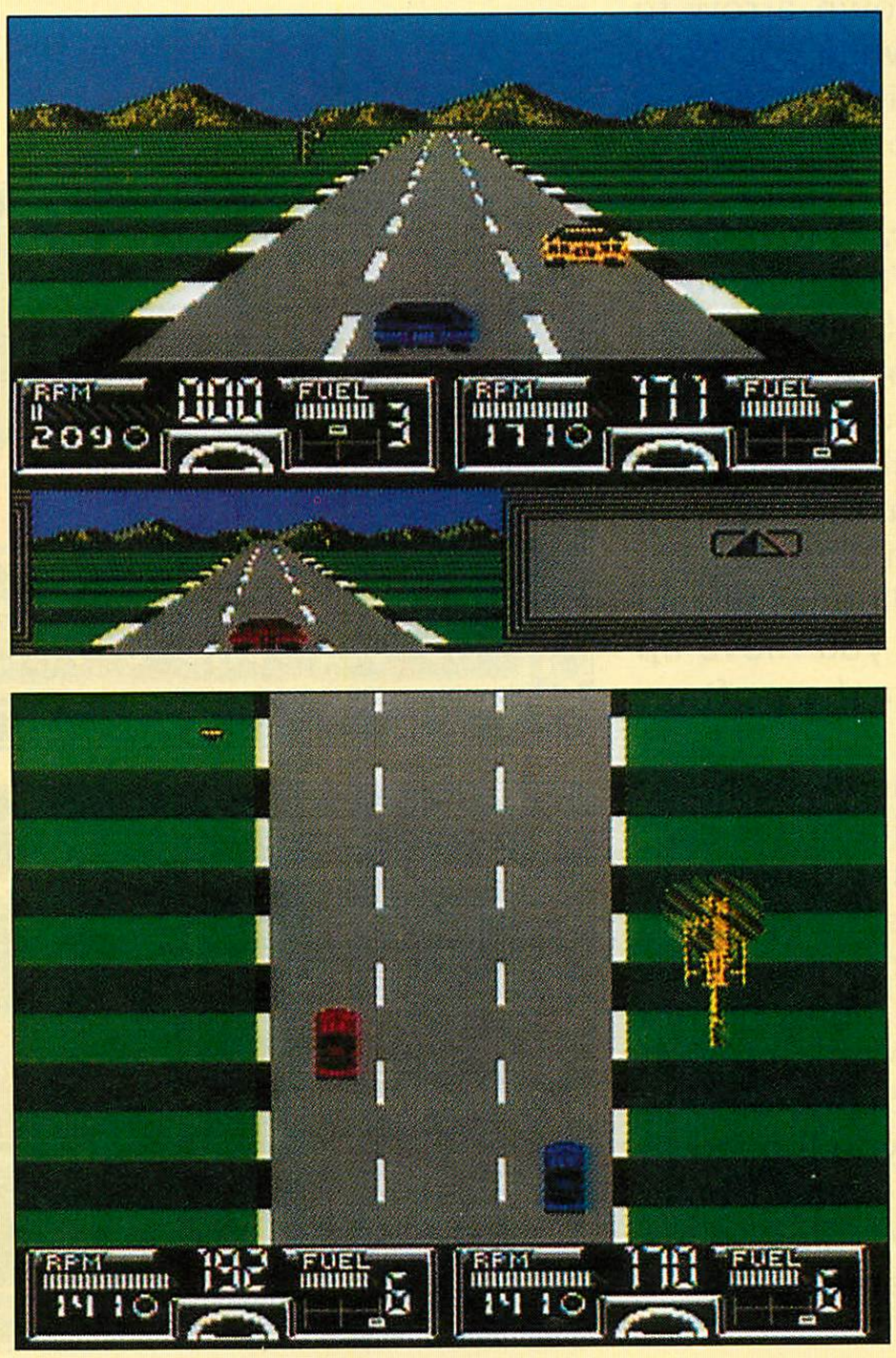
There are a slew of race games for the NES, and if you're like most people, you're probably tired of the same old squealing-tire car contests. So, for those of you who like race games but are looking for something a little different, *Race America* may be worth checking out.

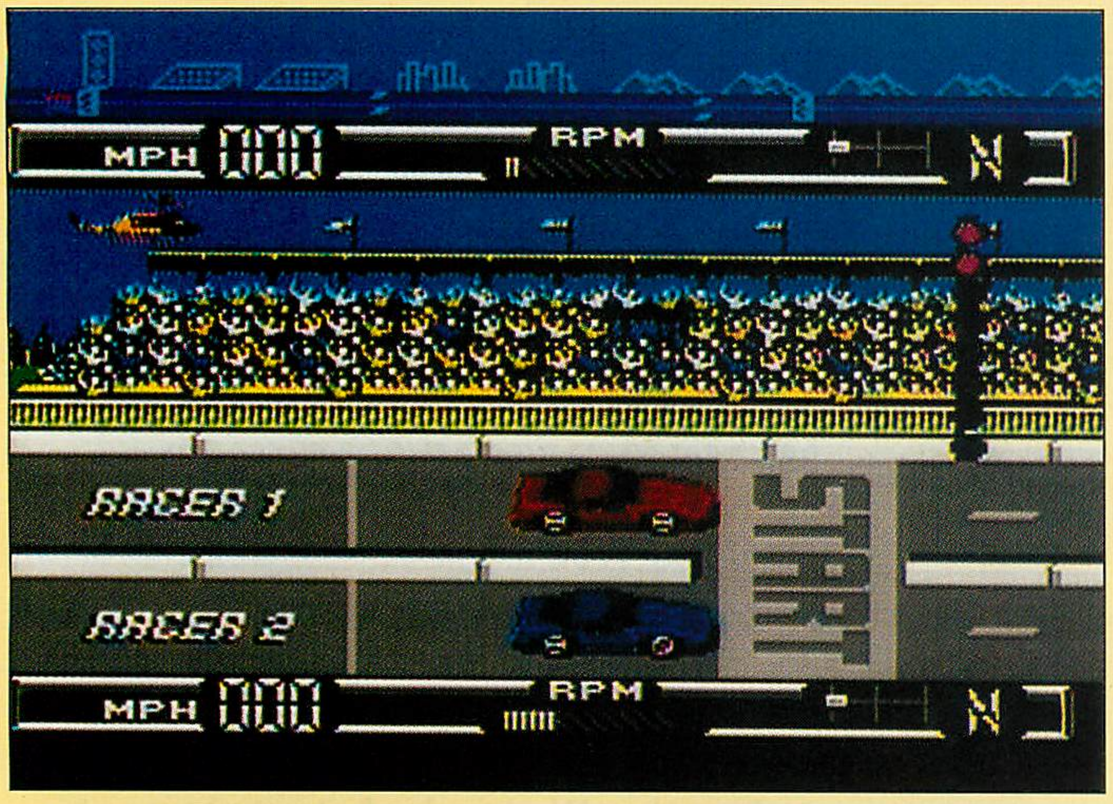
Like most race games, *Race America* features a pseudo-first-person perspective, where the view is immediately behind your car with the road streaming toward you. However, where *Race America* differs is in the skills you need to master in order to win. Speed isn't a problem here; you can go as fast as you like with no risk of spinning off the road when you hit a curve. Being a master of your shifter is the real trick.

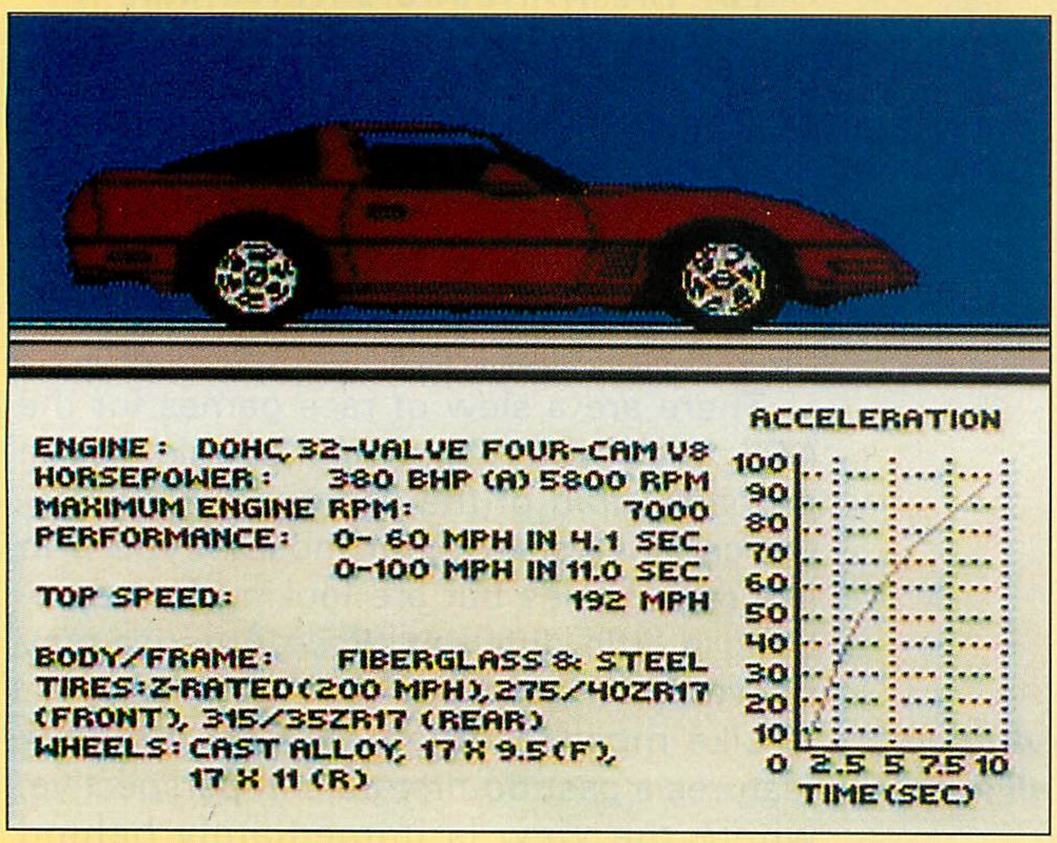
Your car has six gears through which you must shift in order to accelerate. As with a real car, shifting at the correct moment is imperative for getting speed up quickly. If you shift too early, your car moves sluggishly as it tries to accelerate without the power it needs. If you shift too late, you waste valuable time and gas.

To add to the challenge, shifting in *Race America* is a little tricky. You must release the gas at the same time you press your

In Absolute's *Race America* the gamer must beat all eight opponent drivers.







controller's up arrow (or down arrow to downshift). You can't shift while you have the pedal to the metal. Obviously, it takes oodles of practice to become a master driver.

Your goal in *Race America* is to beat all eight opponent drivers. These include such car jockeys as Lance Slick, "known for his cool moves and hot foot"; Mike Linguini, "a hot Italian who swerves all over the road"; and Derrick Stetson, "a tough Texan who herds racers just like cattle." As you can tell, each racer has his own way of driving. In addition, the racers become more skilled as you move up the ranks. Lance Slick crashes often, while Al Turbo, "King of the Road," blasts his way from the starting line to the finish without even nicking the paint on his car.

Of course, there are other drivers on the road besides your current opponent. This is, after all, a road race across America. As you rocket down the highway, you must steer around other vehicles that may spring up in your path. When you crash into another vehicle, you'll need to start the shifting sequence over, to build up your speed again. How many gears you're knocked back depends on how hard the collision was.

Until you master the shift control, you'll always start out behind your opponent. By keeping your speed up and avoiding other cars, you can soon pass your opponent. When you do, the view changes to an overhead shot, showing you and the other driver jockeying for position. When you and your opponent are not in the same location, the display changes to a split screen, with the lead driver on the top and the trailing driver on the bottom.

The bottom line: While *Race America* is basically just another race game, it differs enough from its competition to be an interesting contest. If you'd like to burn some rubber on America's highways, *Race America* may be the perfect vehicle.

—Clayton Walnum

Absolute Entertainment
251 Rock Road
Glen Rock, NJ 07452
(201) 652-1227

Exile

RENOVATION

For the Sega Genesis ($69.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

In *Exile*, a wandering war veteran known as Sadler is called back into action to repel the armies of Luciel, an enemy country. So Sadler does what any wandering warrior in such a predicament would do: He gathers together a party of trusted comrade adventurers, stocks up on weapons and supplies, and journeys out to kick some serious bad-guy tail.

It's yet another RPG romp for the Genesis. The only real difference here is that *Exile* trades the traditional medieval fantasy world for one that's desert-themed. Otherwise, things are the same—right down to the swords, shields, spells, magic, monsters and oh-so-helpful townspeople who dispense cryptic clues. There's even the obli-

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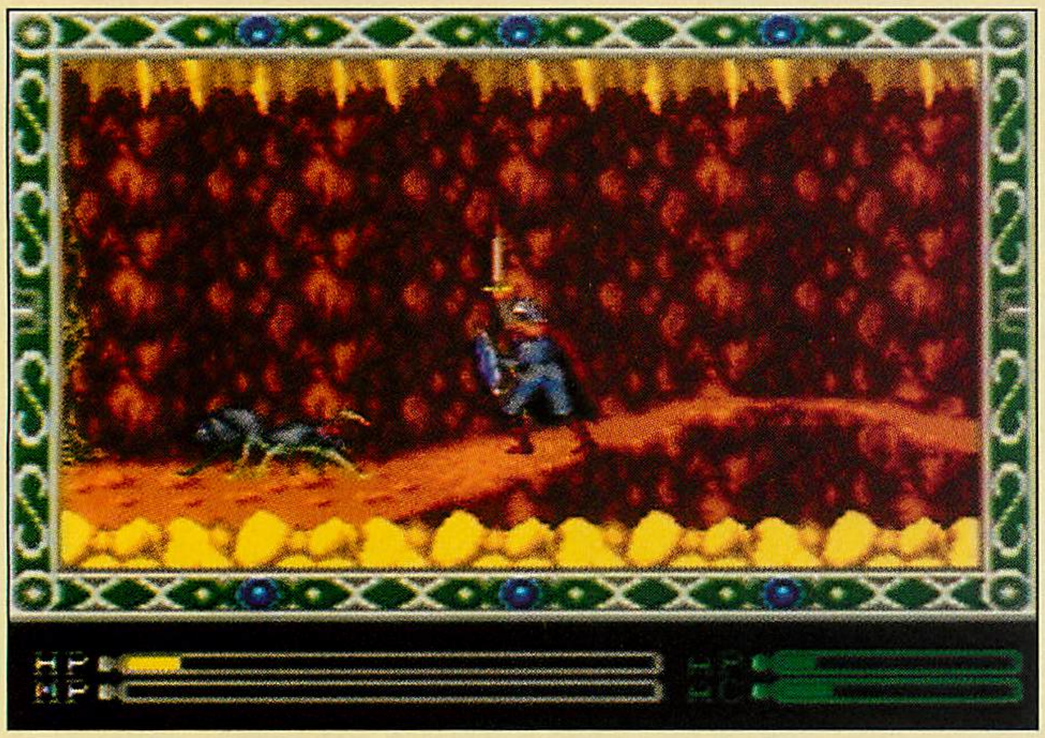


Renovation's *Exile* will provide the player with plenty of excitement without getting tied down to the technical specifics of traditional RPGs.

gatory slash-'em-up action sequence to show us that this isn't some stereotypically staid role-player. It's more *exciting*.

Things start off in the town of Dunes Vil, where you first put together your party and purchase needed weapons and supplies. From there, you leave town and a map appears on the screen so you can select your party's next destination point. Action sequences usually occur when you enter a particular area. In these parts of the game, you fight attacking bugs or other kinds of monsters in order to get prizes like gold and magic potions, or to simply escape to the nearest exit to continue your quest.

Nothing appears notably wrong with *Exile*. All the expected elements of a standard RPG are here. What fault there is lies in the game's weakness at pulling the player into its narrative—making the gamer feel actively *part* of the adventure. This is essential for any role-player. Otherwise, the participant might sense he is merely maneuvering a little person on the screen, staring at pretty maps and reading vital levels that look like nothing more than dull business charts.

This problem isn't the result of *Exile*'s familiar and undriven story line, but more due to its graphics. You don't go inside a building upon entering it. Instead, a dialogue window opens at the bottom of the screen and shows the words of someone

(presumably inside the place) who talks to you. Nor are there any quaint shop interiors when you purchase equipment or supplies. Apparently, business transactions take place at the doorstep.

Also, very unfortunately, the desert setting isn't emphasized enough. The world of *Exile* still looks and behaves a lot like a medieval fantasy one, except with sand poured everywhere. The graphics bear similarities to the first role-playing titles during the early years of the Genesis, indicating that *Exile* has been around for a while in Japan for Sega's Mega Drive system.

I suppose the intention of *Exile* is to provide the player with plenty of excitement without getting tied down to the technical specifics of traditional role-players, as the action scenes are frequent and quite difficult. Still, its dated look and uninvolving narrative don't help it, compared to newer RPGs for the Genesis.

—H.H.W.

Renovation Products Inc.
987 University Ave., Suite 10
Los Gatos, CA 95030
(408) 395-8377

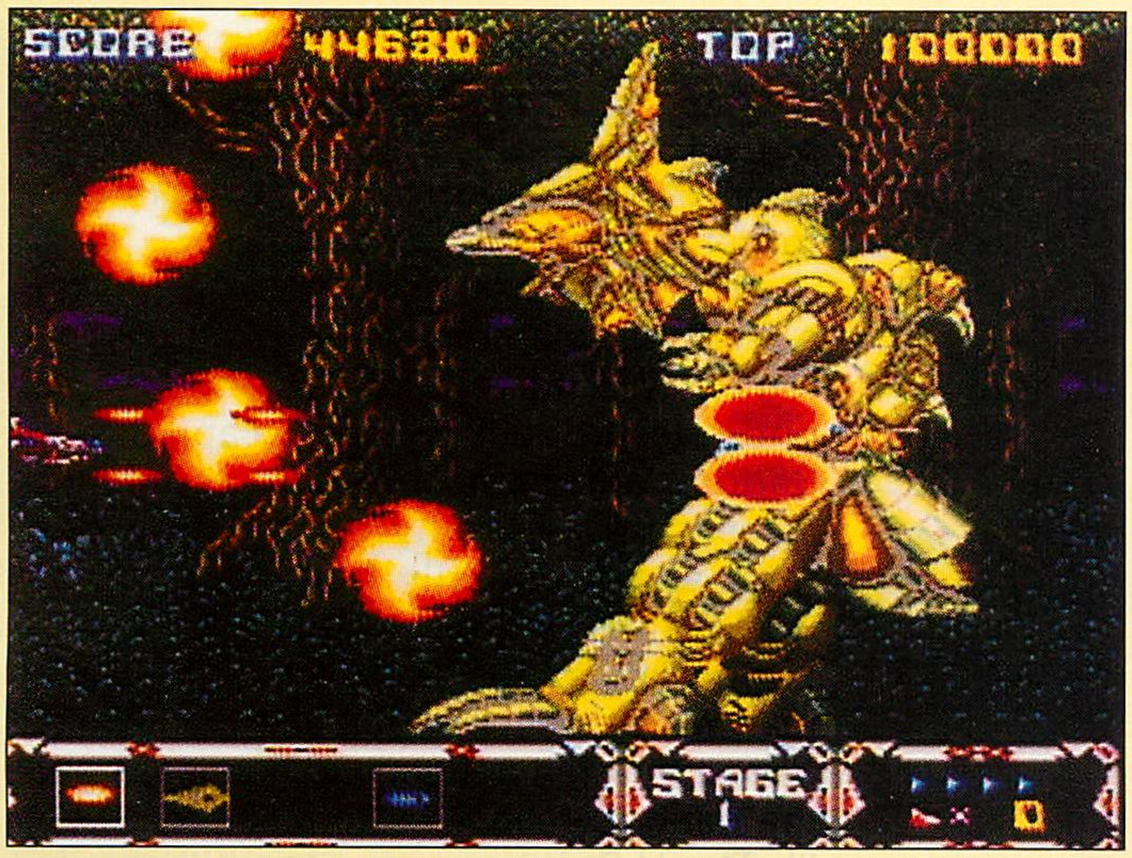
Thunder Spirits

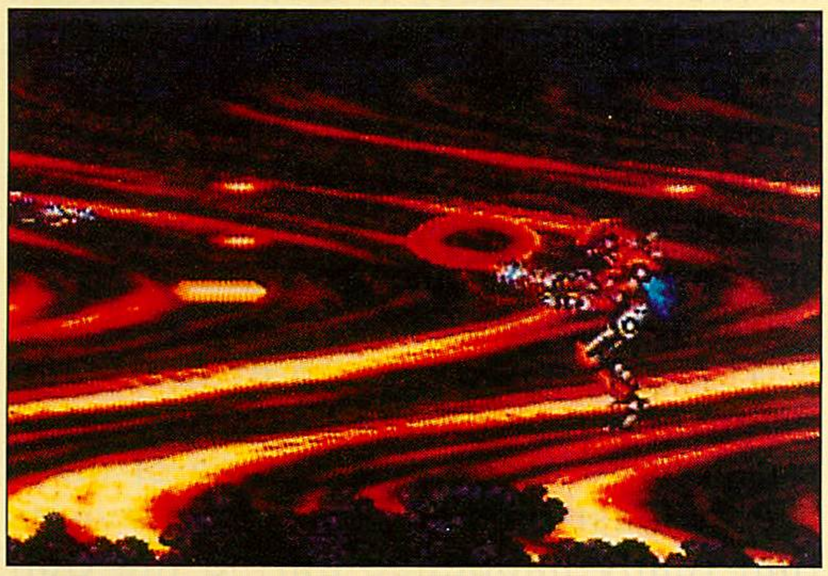
SEIKA
For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

You blastathon lovers better get your trigger fingers cranked up and greased. *Thunder Spirits* for your Super NES is one wild ride. From the opening scene right through to the end of the game, you can plan on enough fast-action shooting to get your controller pad steaming.

As you move from level to level in this nerve-racking shooter, you'll visit such locales as steamy jungles, molten lava pits, ocean caverns, high-tech hallways and outer space. Each scene is infested





If you're a blastathon lover get your trigger fingers cranked up, because Seika's *Thunder Spirits* is one wild ride.

with dozens of villains on which to target your weapons, including both mechanical and biological varieties.

You'll take on such enemies as mechanical fliers, giant bugs, huge monsters, killer plants, underwater worms and much more. Some of these enemies just buzz around, making nuisances of themselves, while others have their own weapons and refined attack patterns. In order to be successful in your battle, you'll need to use the right weapons in each situation.

What weapons you have, and how powerful they are, depends on which power-ups you scoop up from the screen. Some weapons that you'll use include laser bullets, sonic waves, laser beams, rear-fire missiles and rotating guns that use your currently selected weapon type to blast a wide swath across the screen. You can quickly switch from one weapon to another just by tapping your controller's R button.

Besides the weapons, you can pick up power-ups that give you shields, blast everything from the screen, provide weapon power boosts and more. You have to be fast to grab the power-ups, though, and you need to be able to dodge quickly. The power-ups are frequently tucked away in dangerous places.

As for the graphics, *Thunder Spirits* features colorful and detailed scenes. Each level boasts lush backgrounds and carefully rendered and animated enemies. The music, too, is lively and well composed.

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If this game is missing anything, it's a reprieve from the incessant shooting. Like most shooters, there's little to do but blast the baddies until they finally overpower you. Outside of snatching the power-ups and laying down hard on the fire button, there's little else in *Thunder Spirits*.

In short, if you like fast-action shoot-'em-ups, you'll probably drool over *Thunder Spirits*. But if you're looking for games with depth, you'll need to find your thunder elsewhere.

—C.W.

Seika
20000 Mariner Ave., Suite 100
Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 373-0404

Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

We all breathed a sigh of relief when the Gulf War came to an end. Not only because the men and women in our Armed Forces were safe, but because we wouldn't be bombarded by any more cheesy Gulf War novelty items! Remember all those moronic T-shirts and buttons? (Actually, you're probably trying to forget them.)

So, when I first saw *Desert Strike* had a Gulf War-inspired story line, I groaned loudly. Would this be yet another second-rate product trying to capitalize on Saddamania? I'm happy to report that *Desert Strike* is anything but second-rate, and it actually benefits from the Gulf War story line.

Speaking of the story: A psychotic madman named General Kilbaba has invaded a wealthy Arab nation, and he plans to use the nation's resources to start World War III. The U.S. is ready to stop Kilbaba, but the President doesn't want to risk an all-out air strike. Instead, he assigns a single Apache attack helicopter to run a series of attacks against Kilbaba's forces. The pilot of that Apache is you, and you've got to single-handedly prevent Kilbaba from causing Armageddon.

The game is made up of four campaigns. Each campaign has a number of missions to accomplish. Some of these are at least partially based on events that really happened during the Gulf

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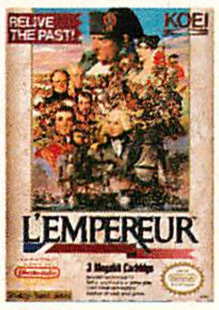

L' Empereur

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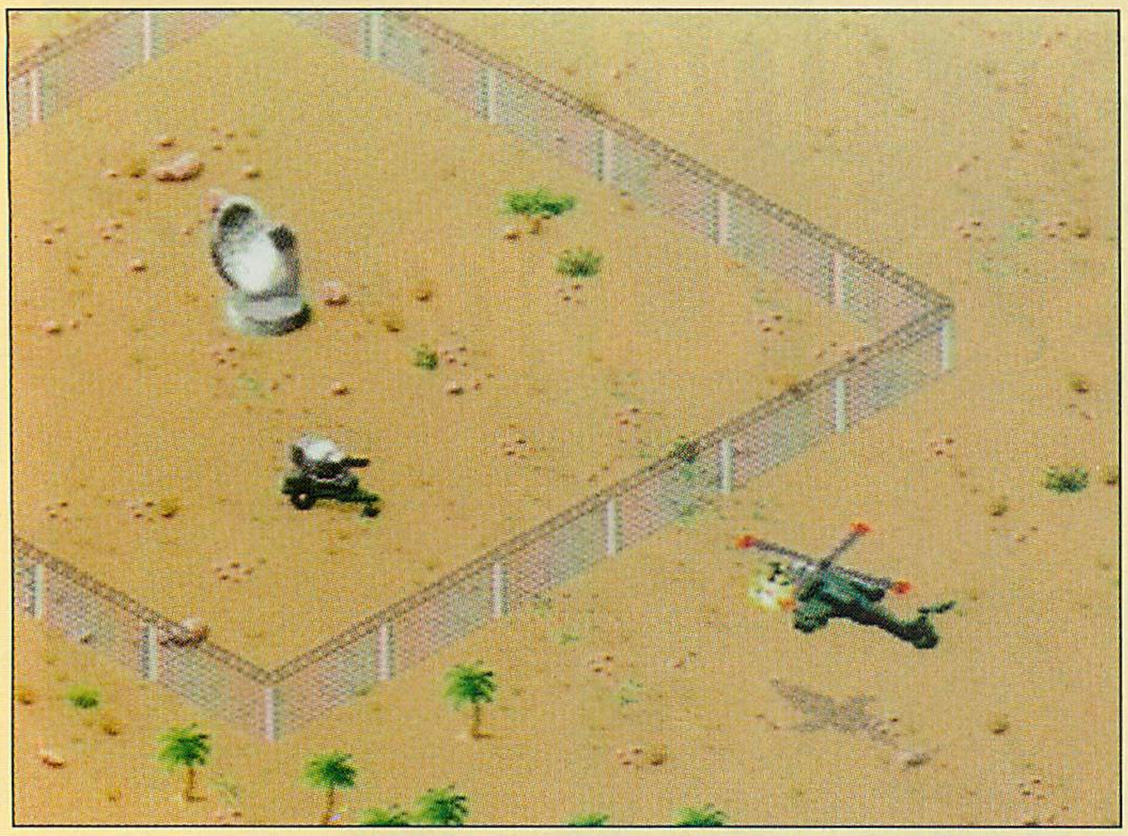
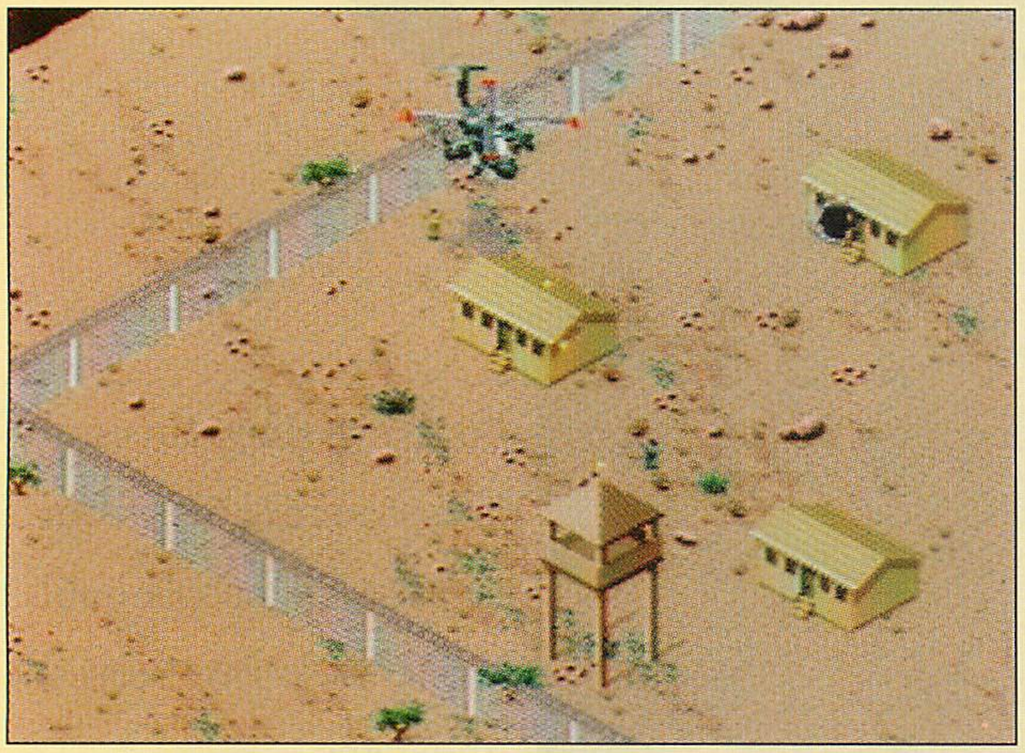
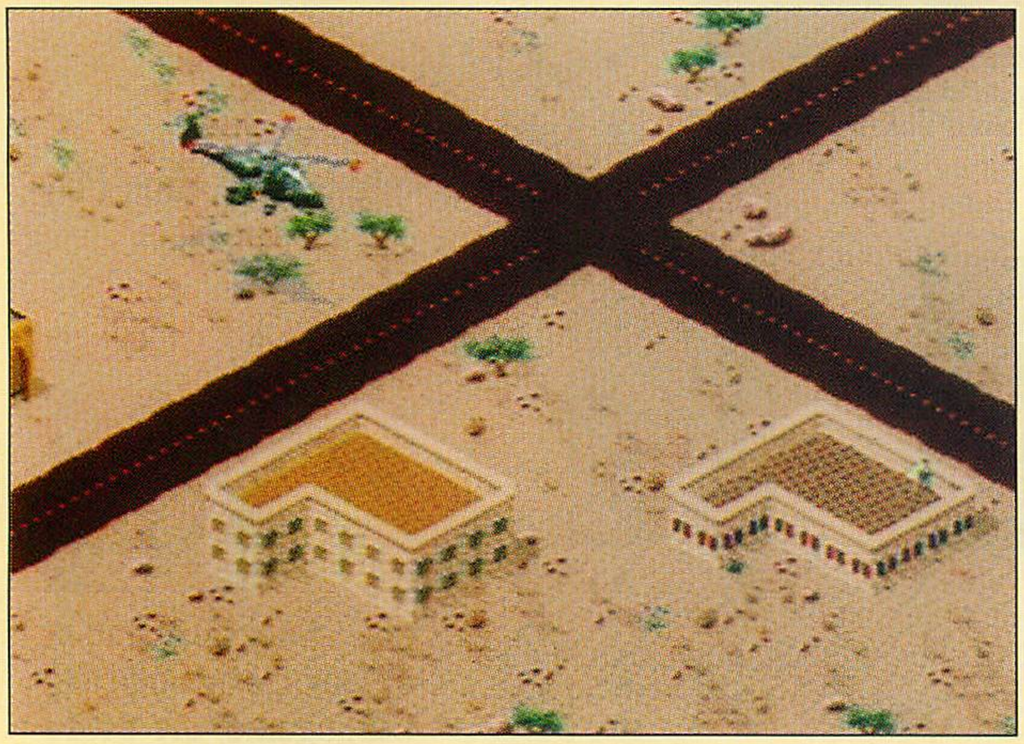




Electronic Arts' *Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf* is a good, solid shoot-'em-up action game.



War. One mission has you rescuing a group of United Nations inspectors; another has you destroying SCUD missile launchers.

At the start of each campaign, your helicopter is shown in the middle of the screen. The screen scrolls to reveal new terrain as you fly to each mission site. There is a lot of territory to cover in each campaign, but not so much as to overwhelm you.

The Apache helicopter is armed with three types of weapons: the wimpy Chain Gun, the average Hydra missile and the super-destructive Hellfire missile. You've got almost 1,200 rounds of ammo for the Chain Gun, but only eight Hellfires; one of your most important tasks is to conserve your ammunition until you really need it. Luckily, there are ammo crates located at various places that you can pick up to reload the Apache.

In addition to ammo, you've got to watch your Apache's armor and fuel supply. You earn extra armor by liberating hostages and flying them to a drop-off point, and you earn extra fuel by picking up fuel tanks scattered about.

You don't know where all of the ammo crates and fuel tanks are located at the start of each campaign. To find more of them, you have to shoot abandoned buildings and blow them up. This mass destruction earns you bonus points, and you may also discover items you wouldn't find elsewhere, such as extra lives or armor repair units.

The graphics in *Desert Strike* utilize the latest in computer-graphic technology. General Kilbaba and a few other characters in the game are digitized actors, and the Apache helicopter is a three-dimensional "ray-traced," or rendered, object. However, the majority of the game uses good, old-fashioned, hand-drawn graphics.

The sound effects are slightly above average. The game's opening music rocks, but the actual game is pretty quiet (unless you're shooting at something, of course). The sound effects are okay, but I found myself wishing for more of them—like a good, loud, bloodcurdling scream when you blast an enemy soldier.

Desert Strike has only two real weaknesses: It's too easy and it's too short, although I'd have taken added campaigns over added difficulty. Otherwise, it's a good, solid shoot-'em-up action game with a touch of strategy. Check it out.

—Zach Meston

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

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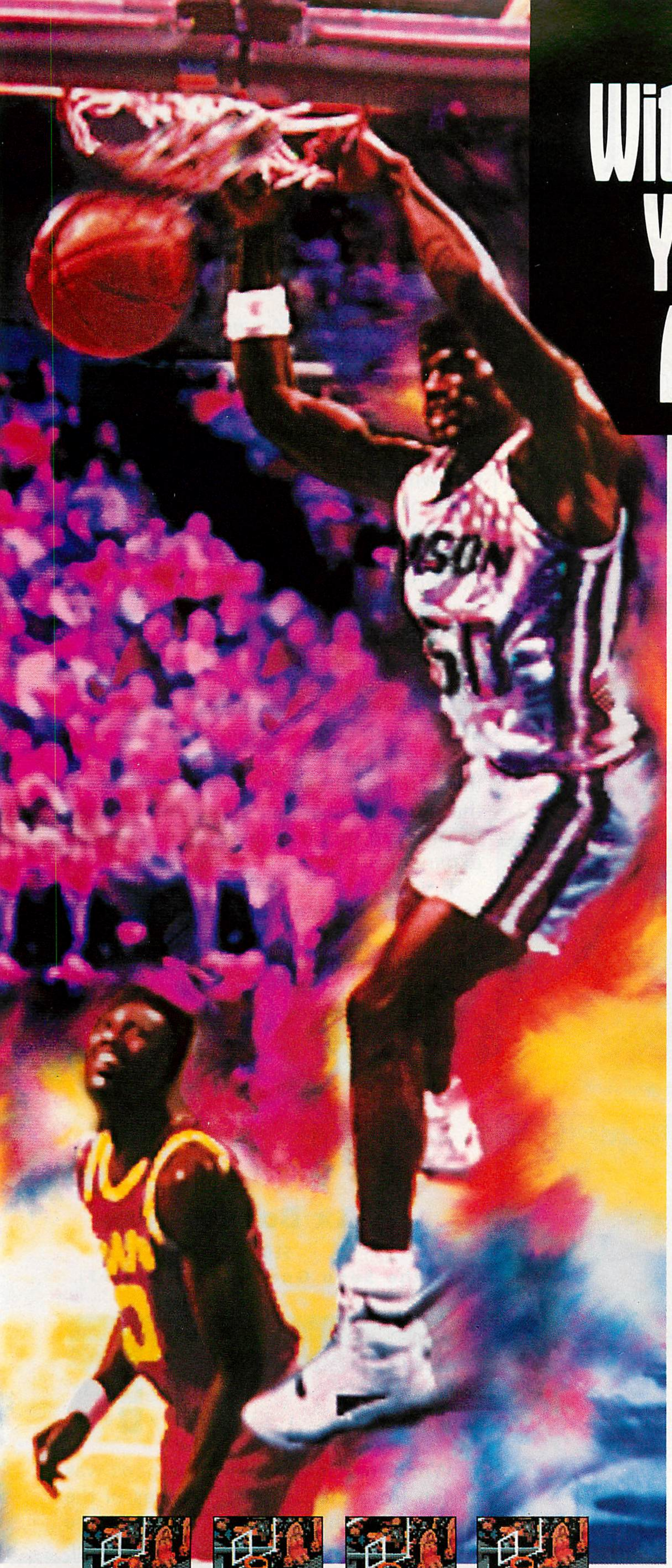

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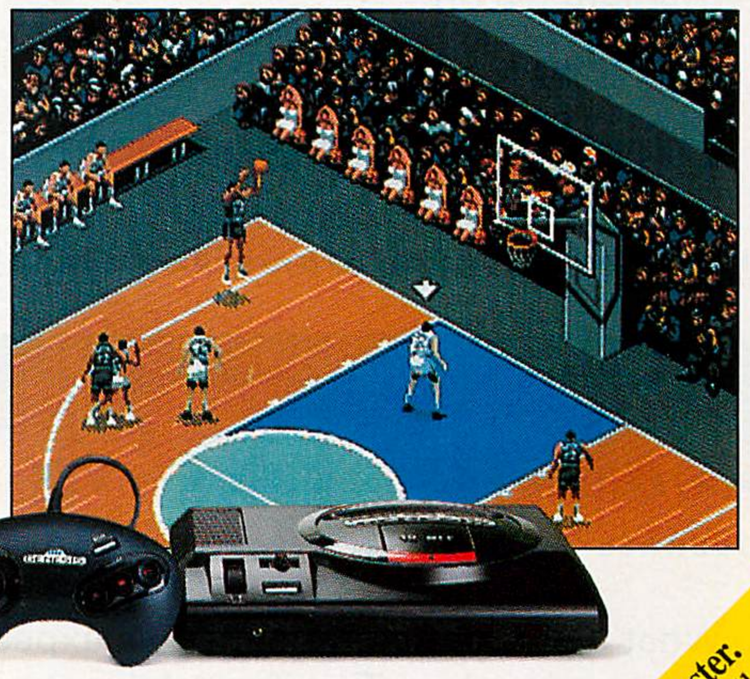
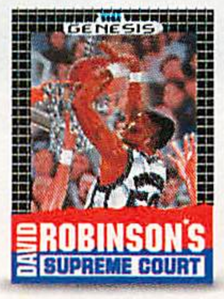


David Robinson's three pointer.



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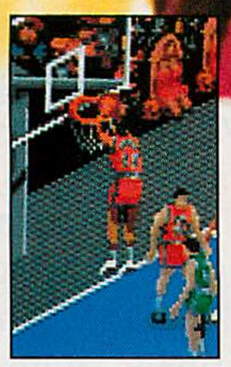
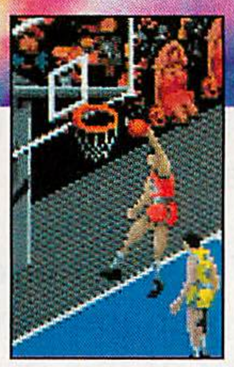
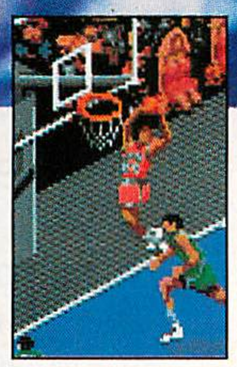


Monster slam.

Reverse slam.



Sky hook slam.



Pile driver.

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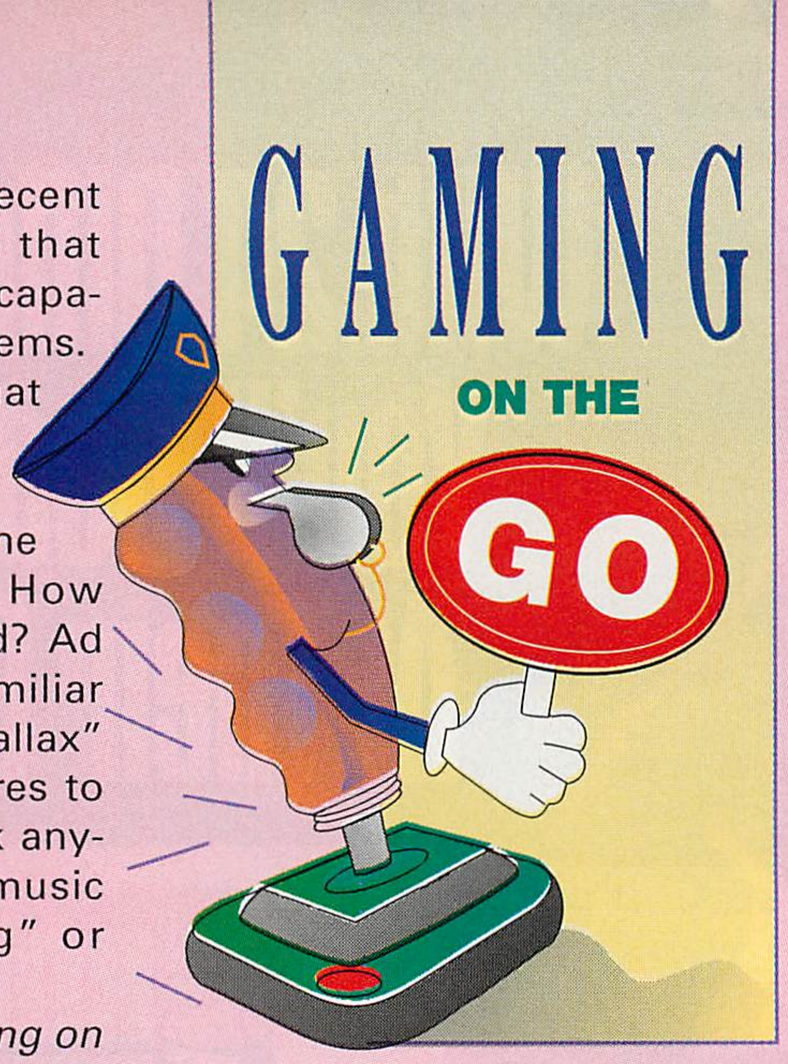
CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

GAMING ON THE GO



BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

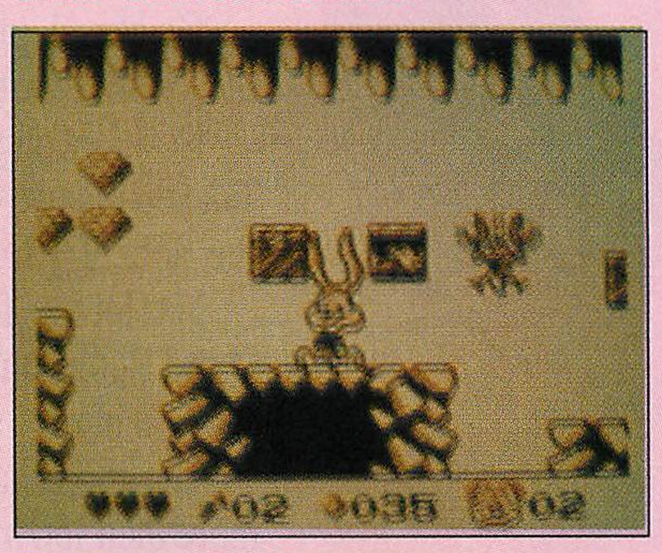
There's been a lot of talk in recent months about video games that don't take advantage of the capabilities of their respective game systems. I've always found it interesting that these discussions usually revolve around graphic issues: How many colors are on the screen at the same time? How big are the sprites? How many layers are in the background? Ad infinitum. We've all become so familiar with buzzwords like "scaling," "parallax" and "anti-aliasing" that nobody cares to mention a game's audio soundtrack anymore—unless it's to dismiss the music and sound effects as "annoying" or "repetitive."

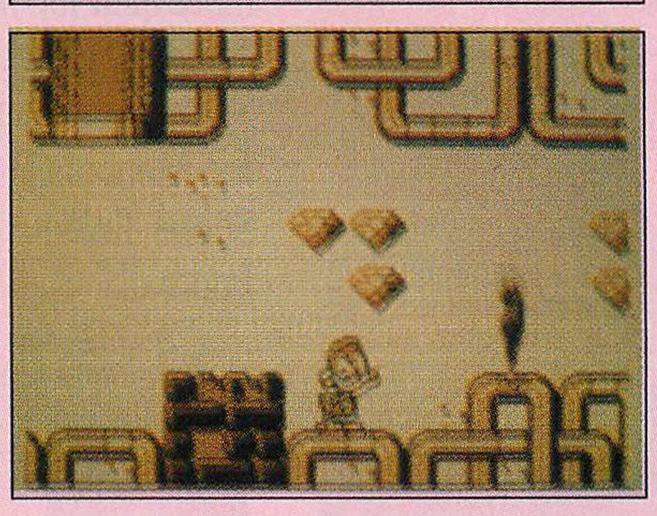
I'm bringing up this topic in *Gaming on the Go* because all three of the major portable systems are equipped with stereo capabilities—yet, the Game Boy is the only one with more than half of its software library taking advantage of this powerful feature. Admittedly, Atari's original Lynx did not support stereo, but those who have picked up the new, smaller Lynx may have been pleasantly surprised to hear the incredible stereo effects in games like *Klax* and *Xenophobe*, two titles that were actually released *before* the new Lynx hit the streets.

Still, stereo Lynx and Game Gear games are too few and far between. I'm sure I speak for the entire gaming community when I say that every portable game would benefit from a little separation between the left and right audio channels. All together now: *We want stereo!*

Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Konami's *Tiny Toon Adventures*, for the Game Boy, will appeal to both adults and kids.





Tiny Toon Adventures

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Game Boy (N/A)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							**7**			
GRAPHICS									**9**	
PLAYABILITY									**9**	
OVERALL								**8**		

What a pleasant surprise! I was expecting the worst when *Tiny Toon Adventures* showed up the other day—it just sounded too much like a quick knockoff to cash in on a license. Heck, a Konami insider even went as far as to warn me that it was a "kid's game."

Kid's game, eh? Sure, I'd imagine that Steven Spielberg's Tiny Toons, pint-sized versions of familiar Warner Bros. characters, were created primarily with kids in mind, but there's an audience for this kind of stuff that's much wider than many people realize. With shows like *The Simpsons* and *Capitol Critters* bringing cartoons back to an adult audience via prime-time TV, that yuppie stuck in the airport in the Game Boy commercials should be willing to try something other than *Tetris* and *Golf*.

Well, *Tiny Toon Adventures* would be a good place to start. Subtitled *Babs' Big Break*, this scrolling run-and-jump adventure takes the player through four long levels of box-hopping, enemy-squashing, gem-grabbing, fruit-and-vegetable-throwing fun. As Buster Bunny, Plucky Duck or Hamton Pig, you'll have to rescue Babs from the eeee-vil clutches of Montana Max, and there'll be plenty of power-ups, hidden items, secret rooms and cameo appearances by other toons along the way.

I thought I'd had my fill of *Super Mario* clones, and I'm sure that many of you feel the same way. But the flawless animation and smooth control scheme kept drawing me to this game like a magnet. The only thing that might scare off some gamers is the difficulty level: It's probably too easy to provide much of a challenge to the experienced player.

If you're one of the many video-game fans who wouldn't take a chance on a game like *Tiny Toon Adventures* because of the subject matter—well, you have my deepest sympathies. This is a beautiful game that deserves a fair shake from kids and adults alike.

Konami Inc.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111

Ax Battler

SEGA

For the Sega Game Gear ($29.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							**7**			
GRAPHICS								**8**		
PLAYABILITY								**8**		
OVERALL								**8**		

When the Golden Ax of the gods was stolen from the deepest recesses of the King's castle by a band of brigands, the King called upon his greatest warrior, "the only man who can save us. Call Ax Battler!"

While that sounds more like the name of a WWF wrestler than the sword-wielding champion of an entire kingdom, the star of this new action RPG makes quite a

Wipe the smile off this face!

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Here's your chance to wipe the smiles off those annoying happy faces once and for all! In FaceBall 2000, "Have a Nice Day" takes on a whole new meaning— in first-person perspective, with 3D graphics and 360° maneuvering!

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1991 Game Boy Game of the Year
Game Player's Magazine
1991 Strategy Game of the Year
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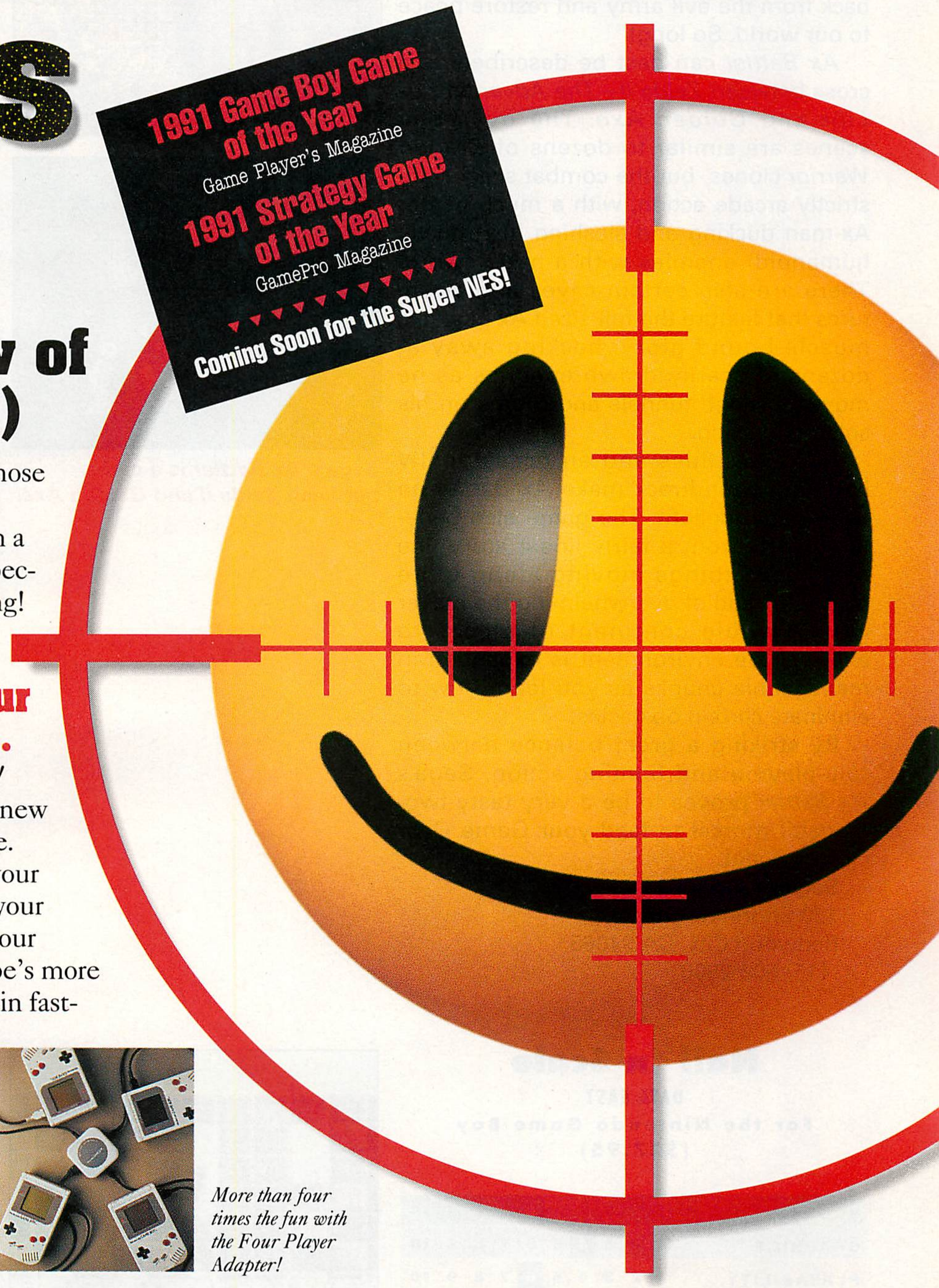

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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

favorable first impression. Looking like a lesser-clothed version of the Mighty Thor, he shows up at the throne to deliver this speech: "Your majesty, I already know what I must do. I must get the Golden Ax back from the evil army and restore peace to our world. So long!"

Ax Battler can best be described as a cross between *Zelda II—The Adventure of Link* and *Golden Axe*. The overhead scenes are similar to dozens of *Dragon Warrior* clones, but the combat scenes are strictly arcade action, with a much bigger Ax-man ducking and slashing his (mostly humanoid) enemies with a huge sword. There are also certain caves and structures that feature the full-sized Ax in all his muscle-bound glory, hacking away at dozens of scarily drawn enemies as he moves through tunnels and rooms on his solemn mission.

Good graphics and an occasionally haunting soundtrack make *Ax Battler* an audiovisual delight. The game also benefits greatly from a fairly linear story line that keeps things moving along quite nicely. Instead of overwhelming the player with a whole continent of places to explore, the environment is expanded in manageable chunks as you learn how to eliminate certain obstacles.

By striking a great balance between role-playing and fighting action, Sega's *Ax Battler* proves to be a very tasty two-megabit morsel to feed your Game Gear cartridge slot.

Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Sega's *Ax Battler* is a cross between *Zelda II* and *Golden Axe*.

Nail 'n Scale

DATA EAST
For the Nintendo Game Boy ($27.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Here's an interesting one. I'm sure I've never heard of *Nail 'n Scale* before, yet it looks exactly like the type of "classic" early-'80s game that people like me will talk about with a mad, nostalgic gleam in their eye. It's sort of a *Lode Runner/Spelunker* variant, a graphically simple platform game with two unique play mechanics.

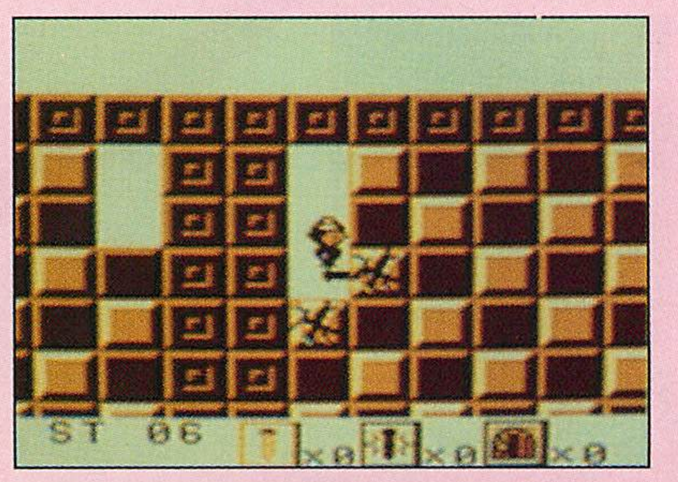
The hero, Spike, is a roundheaded little rascal—he looks a bit like Charlie Brown with one of those Devo hats on. Trapped in a 50-level maze, his purpose is to jump, climb and fight his way through to the lair of the evil dragon Atad Tsae. (Nice use of backwards lettering, eh?) Players can choose from two levels of difficulty, and there's a Game Link option that allows for two-player simultaneous action.

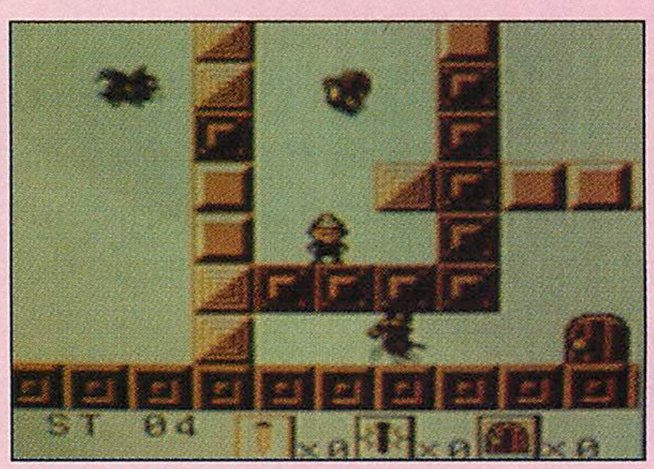
The neatest thing about Spike is his unique weaponry: He can fire an unlimited number of casehardened steel spikes in any direction. By the end of the first ten levels, you'll learn dozens of interesting ways to use these suckers. You can kill enemies with them, drive them into the walls for use as footholds, stand on top of them to jump higher or even kick them to break open certain maze blocks.

The other interesting gimmick is Spike's ability to jump up when he falls, as if he had bounced off of an invisible block. If he walks off the edge of a precipice, you can press the jump button for a one-time burst in midair. I didn't think that this feature had been programmed intentionally, but I soon realized that Spike is incapable of finishing certain levels without it.

Nail 'n Scale would have fit right in with the Game Boy titles a couple of years ago, when maze games like *Qwirk* and *Catrap* made up over 75% of the software market base for that system. It's a decent game, but it's going to have a tough time finding an audience when there's stuff like *Battletoads* and *FaceBall 2000* on the shelf next to it.

Data East USA Inc.
1850 Little Orchard St.
San Jose, CA 95125
(408) 286-7080





***Nail 'n Scale*, by Data East, is reminiscent of the games that dominated the early 1980s.**

Rampart

ATARI
For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Pick a castle, any castle. We'll build a wall around it and give you a handful of cannons to fend off the frigates that are about to attack from the shoreline. "Ready...aim...fire!" comes the cry, and your fortress will be peppered with enough firepower to reduce your defenses to Swiss cheese—but not before a few enemy ships are sent to their watery

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Black Bass	42
Blades of Steel	16
Blaster Master	10
Bo Jackson	26
Bomberman	18
Boy & His Blob	12
Breakthru	4
Bubble Bobble	22
Bucky O'Hare*	22
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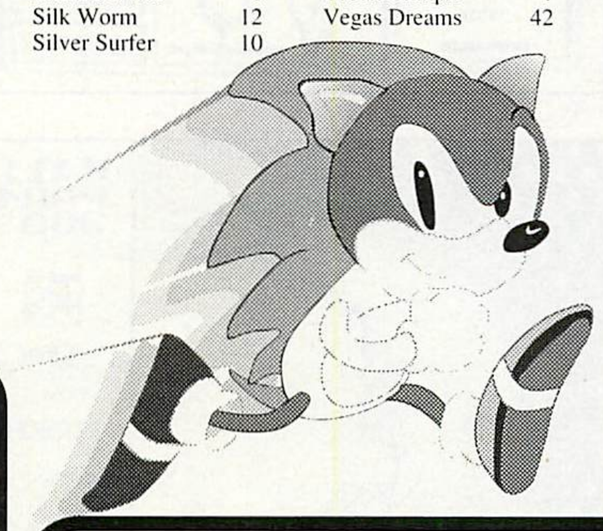

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graves by your own barrage. While the enemy is gearing up for another exchange, you'll get just 26 seconds to build walls around as many castles as you can. Here are a few more cannons, while you're at it. "Ready...aim...."

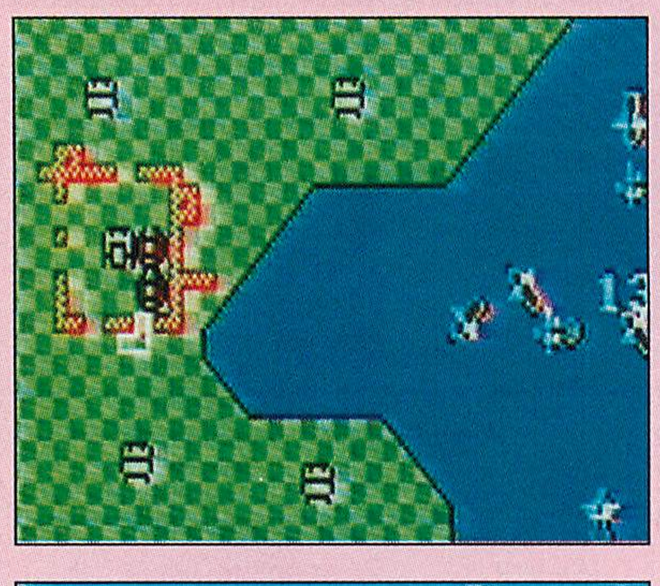
That's *Rampart*, an Atari Games coin-op now available for your Lynx. Created by the same programming team that was responsible for *Checkered Flag*, *Rampart* took less than three months to put together, which has to be a new record for a Lynx game. Happily, there's no evidence that the designers were rushed. This is a solid effort that even includes some extras that have not appeared in other versions of the game.

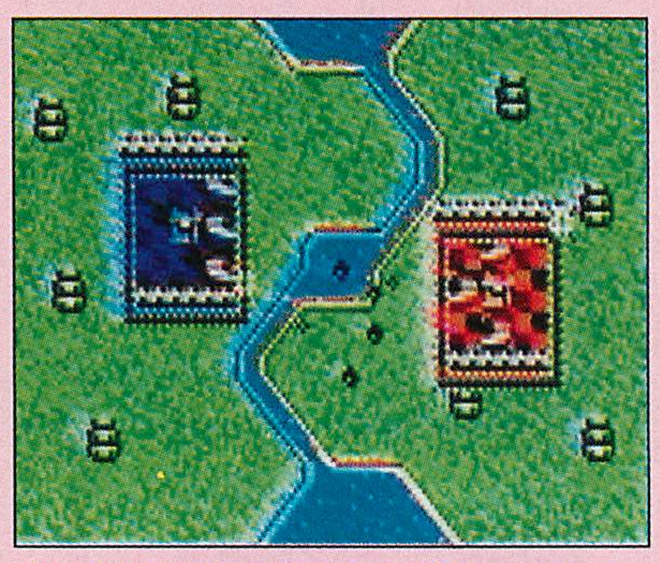
The brief, illustrated intermissions are a perfect example. Before each phase of the action, a full-screen graphic shows you what's about to happen: repairing your fortresses, positioning your cannons, etc. There's also a haunting "Game Over" screen that nearly makes losing worthwhile: It shows a huge, gloating Grim Reaper hovering over the flaming ruins of your last castle.

Rampart is a very challenging game, and it's definitely not recommended for the short-tempered. The two-player Com-Lynx mode is more suitable for blowing off steam; instead of fighting against a fleet of ships, you'll be raining cannonballs on your opponent's castles on the opposite side of the screen.

Expect another version of *Rampart* soon—its simple graphics would be perfectly acceptable on a monochrome display, so it's a natural for the Game Boy. But, even then, I'm sure that the Lynx translation will still be the best version of this addictive contest available for gamers on the go.

Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000





Atari's Lynx version of *Rampart* took less than three months to put together.

Ultra Golf

ULTRA

For the Nintendo Game Boy (N/A)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC						■				
GRAPHICS						■				
PLAYABILITY								■		
OVERALL							■			

I wish I had had a copy of this game when I was working on *Gaming on the Go* for February. In that column, we talked about *Awesome Golf* for the Lynx (a good one) and *Super Golf* for the Game Gear (a slightly above-average one). As it turns out, *Ultra Golf* would have fallen somewhere between the two—but a little closer to *Awesome* than to *Super*.

There's no doubt that Ultra made a conscious attempt to focus on realistic details and options, unlike Nintendo's own lightweight Game Boy golf title. From the variables involved in setting up each shot to keeping track of stats on two different courses, there's a lot of information to be managed, and the game does so as cleanly and efficiently as possible.

Though the graphics are a little too plain in the overhead view of each hole, the "shot screen" is very impressive—it gives a view of each swing that's very different from the majority of golf video games and takes a lot of the guesswork out of the timing trickery that other games tend to rely on too heavily.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of *Ultra Golf* is the battery backup that allows you to save a tournament in progress. This is a rarely seen luxury that's sure to please Game Boy fanatics.

I also liked the game's two-player options: For once, a two-player Game Boy game that *doesn't* require the use of another Game Boy and a Game Link cable. You simply pass the Game Boy to the other player when it's his or her turn. This "common sense" approach is evident throughout *Ultra Golf*. It is a classy, well-designed golf simulation from start to finish—from the clubhouse to the trophy room.

Ultra Software Corporation
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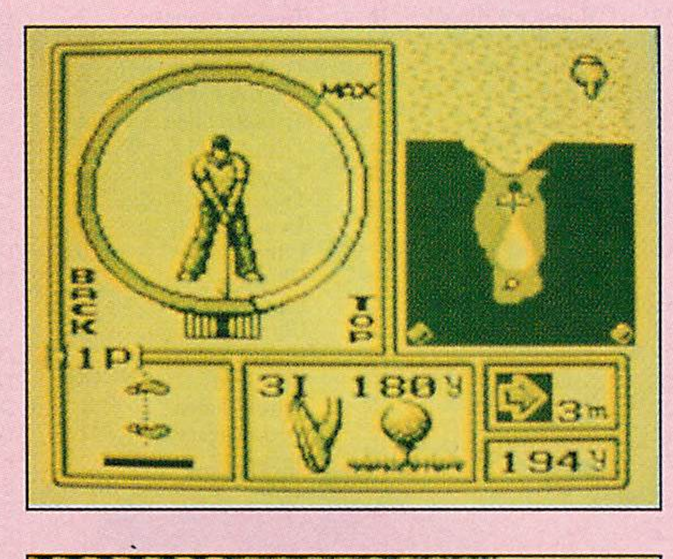

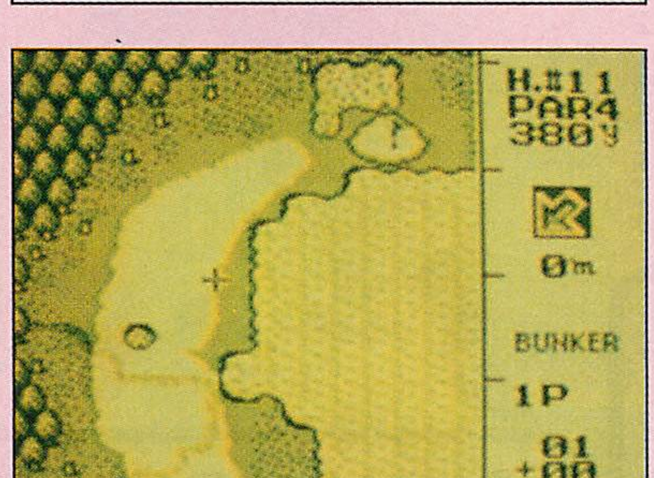

***Ultra Golf*'s battery backup will allow gamers to save a tournament in progress.**

Next month: Well, the manufacturers are pretty slow this time of year. We're waiting to get a look at several sports titles for the Lynx, as well as a promising trio from Acclaim for the Game Gear. I'll have an interesting Game Boy combat flight simulator, but, beyond that, who knows? Stop by in June; it'll be fun.

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to user name VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" and drop me a note in the open forum.

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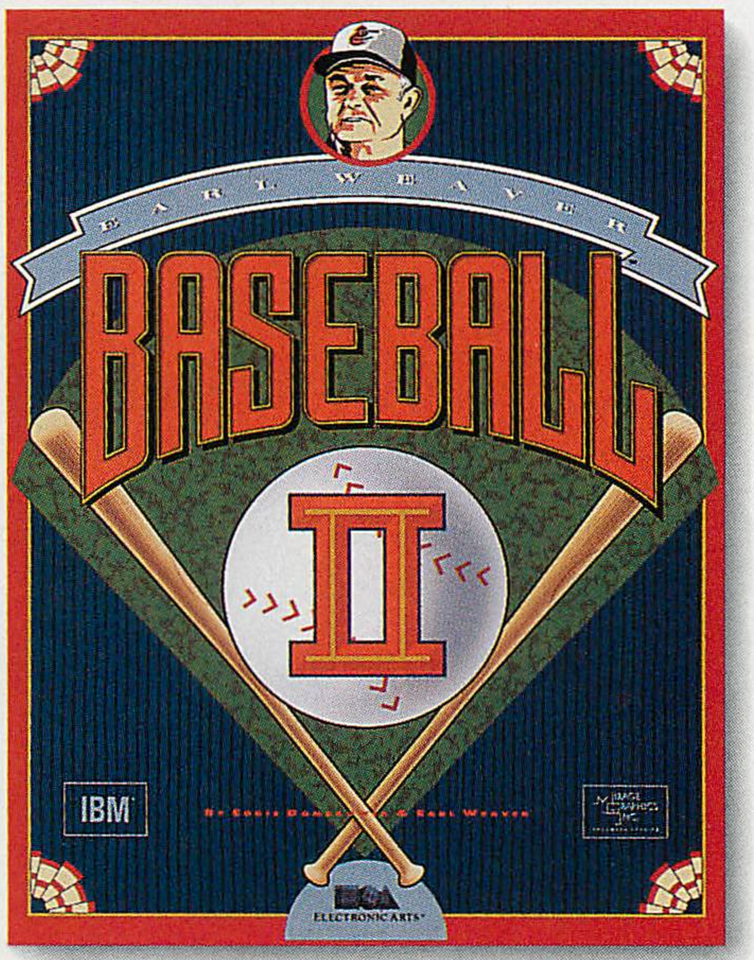
Just ask *Fantasy Baseball Magazine:* "Fantasy and computer baseball fans have been searching for one game that has it all—Weaver II is it; it will appeal to the fantasy-baseball fanatic as well as avid arcade gamers."



With actual, professionally rated big league managers, you experience every rich detail and subtle wrinkle of the game.

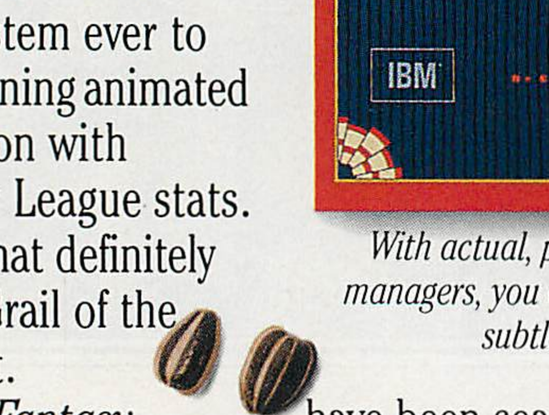
All the 1990 players and profiles on every manager based on 60 individual ratings. Updated annually.

Finally, a Game that Covers All the Bases.

Weaver II is simply a more animated game of baseball. Over 100,000 frames of animation. Giving you something we call perfect baseball physics. Instead of bush league canned sequences.

Which means a nubber off the end of the bat will crawl down the third baseline. Just like real life. Balls bounce differently from grass to turf, from park to park.

We have every one of the 26 current ballparks, famous historic parks, even six fantasy ones. And every diamond's a gem. With real dimensions, real characteristics.

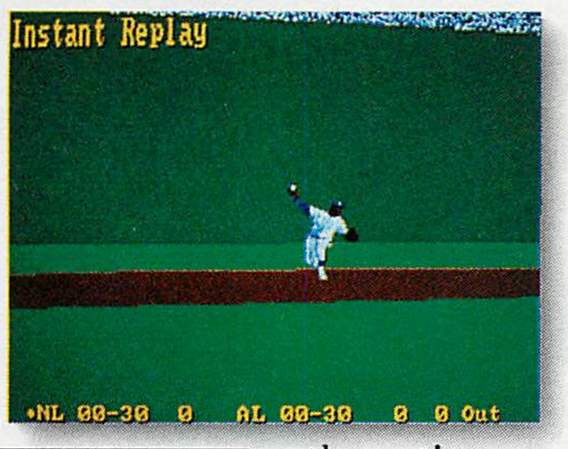


Talk about taking you out to the ballpark. Weaver II comes with all 26 stadiums plus historical landmarks like the Polo Grounds and even some outrageous fictional parks.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS MLB

©1991 MLBPA

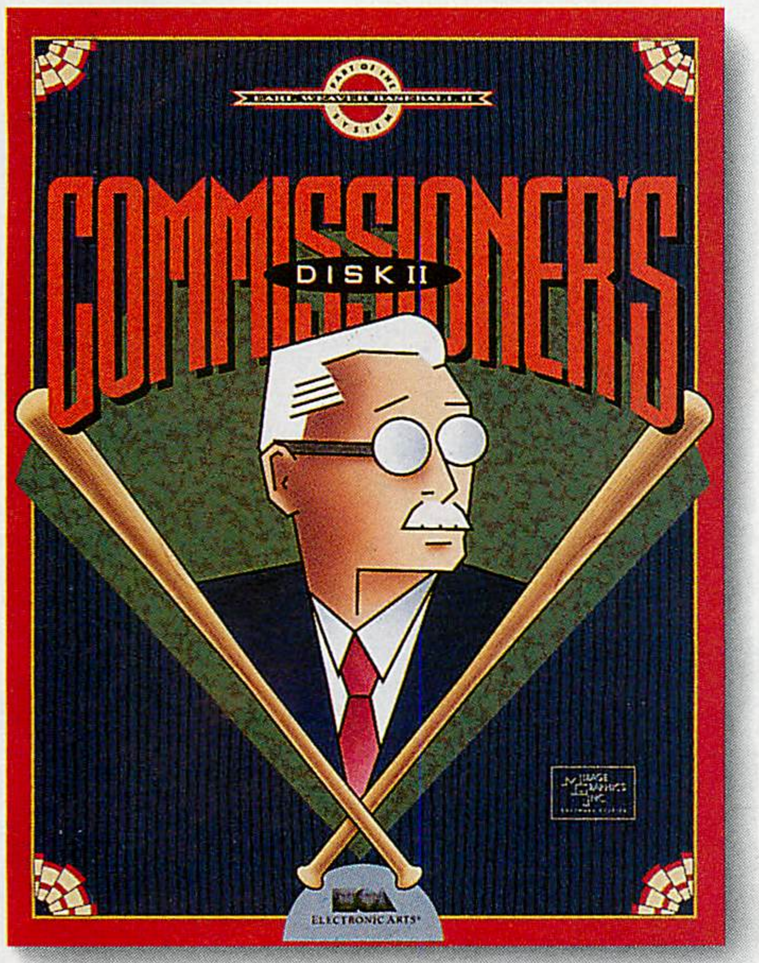
So you can conquer the Green Monster. Get blown away by Candlestick's winds. Steal home in the home of the Bronx Bombers. With unlimited camera views, instant replay, and support for 256-color MCGA/VGA graphics, you get better coverage than any network.



Make Stats Come Alive.

Weaver II adds up to the best baseball system ever for yet another reason. We play baseball completely by the numbers. All the 1990 stats for every Major League player.

You can download current player stats updated weekly. Accumulate, edit, and print player stats for virtually any category. Or save boxscores.



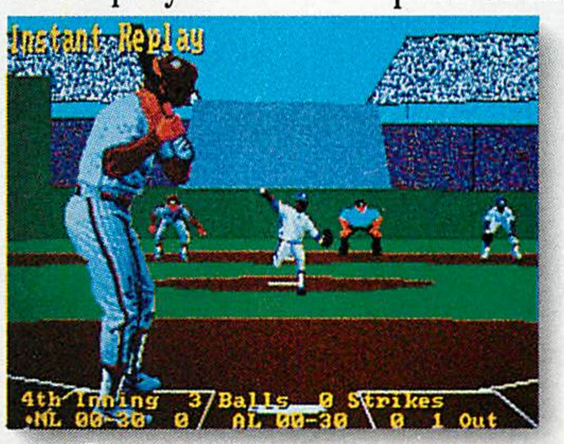
Now you can be baseball's Big Cheese. Set up leagues, draft players, even build your own stadium.

Play against the top dogs in the game: Jose, Kirby, Darryl, Boggs, Gwynn, Brett and all the rest.

Every hitter/fielder also comes with 50 stats and ratings. Every pitcher, 30 stats and ratings. Including finer points like flyball/groundball ratios for batters and pitchers and player durability.

Nobody offers this combination of ratings, flexibility, and sheer number of sorted lists. And while this certainly enriches the action aspect of Weaver II, the game is equally engrossing playing with stats only. Generate and then autoplay schedules with multiple line-ups and pitching rotations. Or play a game in under a minute in superfast simulation.

Of course, this game also comes with one of baseball's most prized characters: Earl Weaver. One of the winningest managers ever to kick dirt all over an umpire (owner of two Series rings, but you knew that already).



From your full screen batting perspective, you can see every seam of a pitched ball. Except if it's a Nolan Ryan heater. The unbeatable pitching includes 9 different pitches to 18 locations.

Play on Earl's team. Manage against him. You get profiles on every manager based on 60 individual ratings. Including frequency of calling bunts, steals, hit and run, and pinch hitters.

You can even ask Earl for advice anytime. As you'd expect, he's got an answer for just about any situation.

Run the Whole Show.

Some people aren't satisfied with just being a manager. That's what our Commissioner's Disk II™ is for.

It's the perfect thing to heat up fantasy leagues.

With it, you can even draft leagues, manage 40-men rosters, track salaries, hire free agents.

The Commissioner's Disk II also lets you build your own ballpark. Right down to the foul area, playing surface, weather, and seating.

Our Manager Construction Set, part of the Commissioner's Disk II, allows you to replace Earl. By using manager profiles from last year's teams or building your own manager profiles.

Put it all together — Earl Weaver Baseball II, the MLBPA® Player Statistics and Manager Profiles,™ and the Commissioner's Disk II — and you get baseball's most amazing triple play. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that this new system is already a tremendous hit with everyone including the baseball press.

Available for IBM PCs and compatibles. Requires 512K (640K for Tandy), EGA or better.

If you want the baseball system that's been called "the next best thing to box seats," call 1 (800) 245-4525 to order. Or visit your local computer dealer. And get the only game that covers all the bases.

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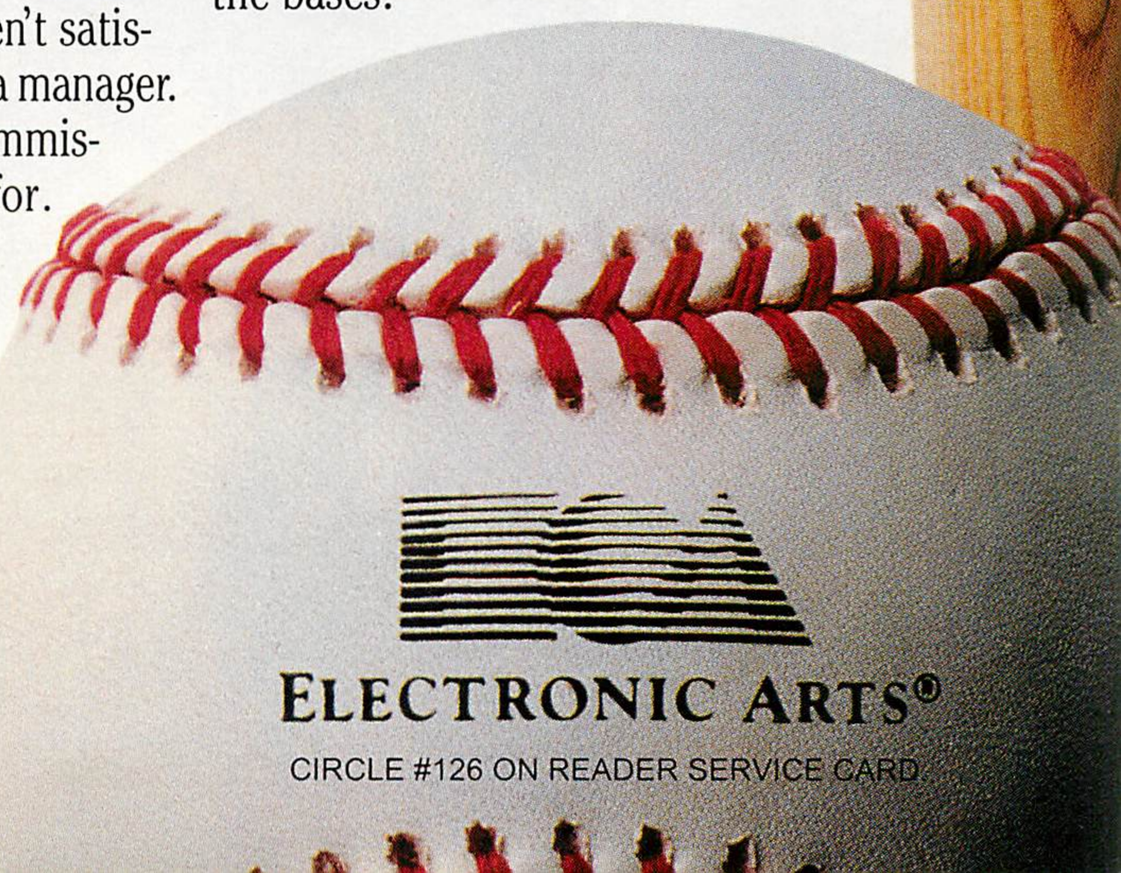

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ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

62 • MAY 1992

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

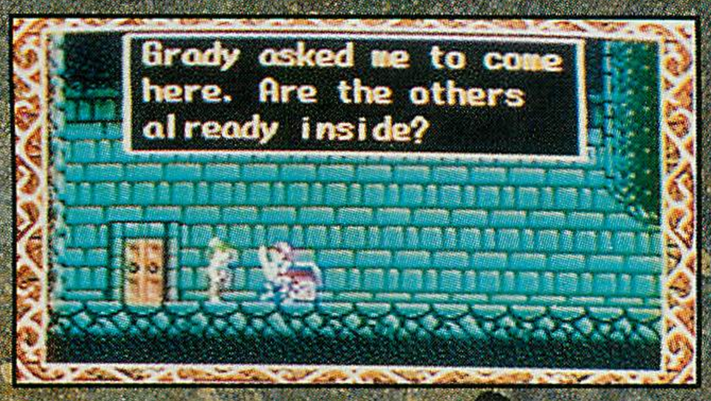
THE QUEST FOR THE STATUES

PART TWO

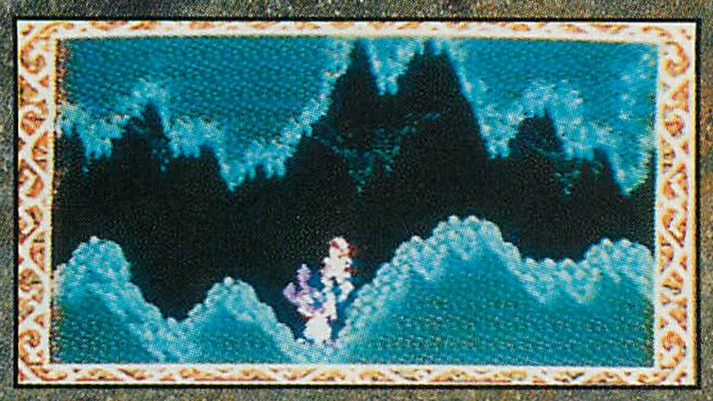
A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO Ys III

LAST MONTH, WE LOOKED AT THE FIRST HALF OF THIS HOT ADVENTURE IN THE WONDERFUL WORLDS OF *Ys*. THIS TIME AROUND, WE'LL FOLLOW ADOL AS HE TRAVELS THROUGH SUCH EXOTIC LOCALES AS MOUNT SEKO, VALESTINE CASTLE AND THE HORRIBLE DEMANICUS CAVE. ONLY MASTER ADVENTURERS WILL HAVE THE POWER TO SLAY DEMANICUS AND RESCUE MANKIND FROM POSSIBLE EXTINCTION. DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT STUFF?

BY CLAYTON WALNUM



This month, we start our quest by returning to this room in Tigre Mine.

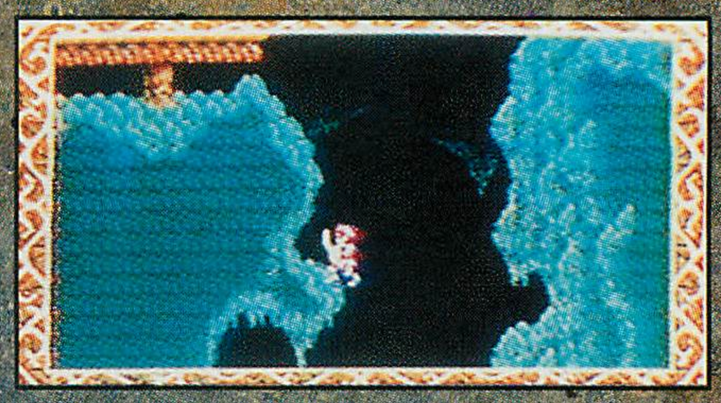


In the mines, plantlike creatures will come up from the ground. Be careful not to walk into them.

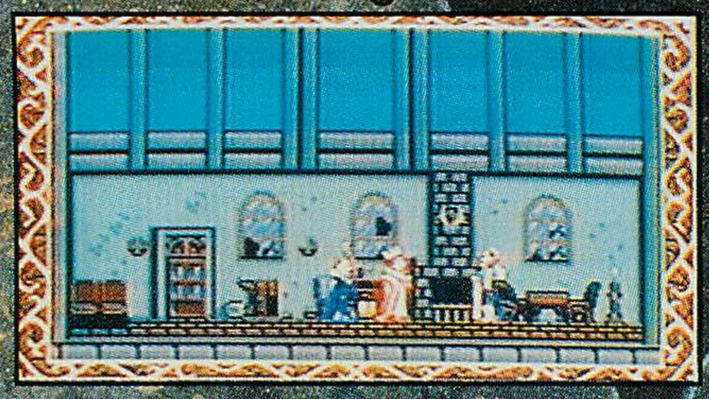
Make sure you go to the end of every tunnel. In a treasure chest, you'll find the Crystal.

...you have what you need to open it and find the Tablet.

Another treasure chest in the mines holds the plate mail armor. You won't want to miss this valuable prize.



When you find this vertical shaft, you must leap from this outcropping and...



Now, you must bring the statue back to the mayor. But when you get to the mayor's house, you overhear a sinister conversation.

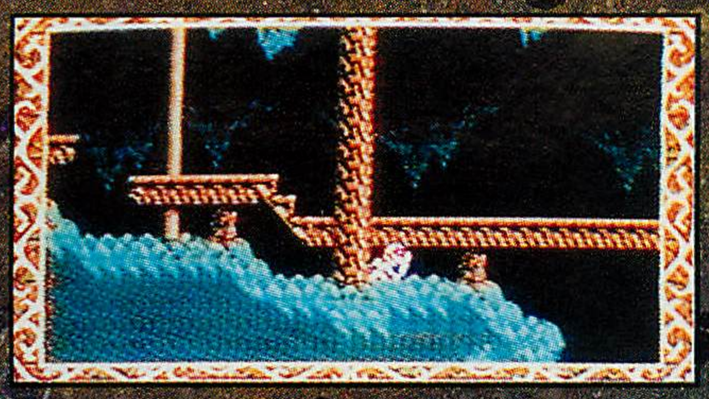
The mayor tells you about the king's evil plans, and then gives you a letter.

After getting the letter, it's off to Mount Seko.

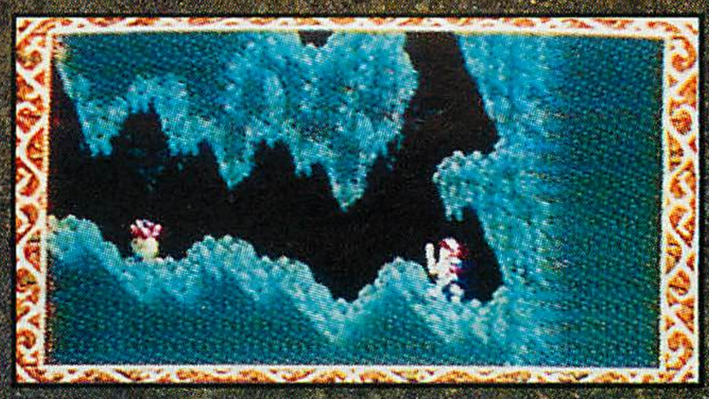
Inside the cabin, you'll hear another tale, as well as get healed.

After leaving the cabin, you must find this creature and kill her. To get her within range of your weapon, you must lure her down close to the ground.

When you beat her, you'll get the Flame Staff.



The only way down is to crawl under this platform.



At the bottom of a vertical shaft, you'll find more tunnels.

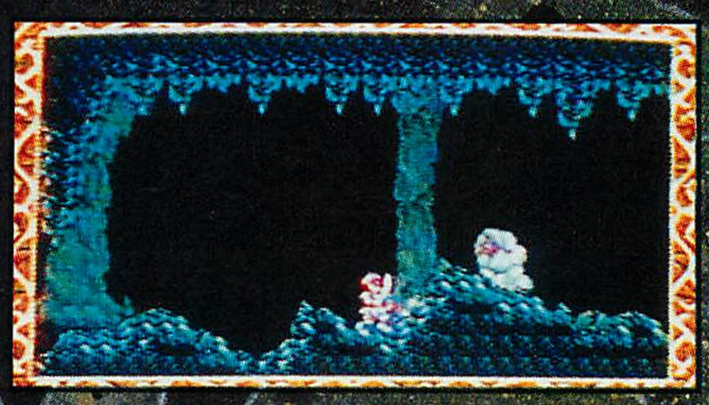
Another treasure chest! Even though the lid seems locked...

...immediately change direction back to the left, so you land on this tiny platform.

Beating this boss requires good timing. All the weapons move in a set pattern. When you've learned the pattern, you can move in, get in your licks, and then move back out of the way.

After beating this boss, you'll get the Light Statue.

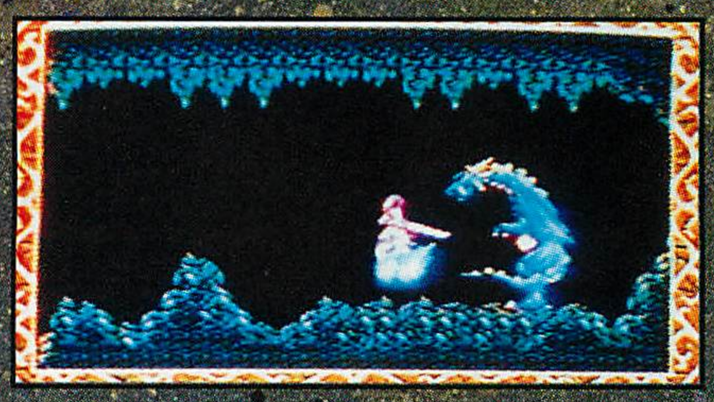
These mountains hide sneaky rock creatures that blend in with the other rocks. Watch out!



On your way through the mountains, you must pass through this cave. Watch out for the worm creatures that come up from the ground.

Finally, you'll find this cabin, where you'll talk with Dogi.

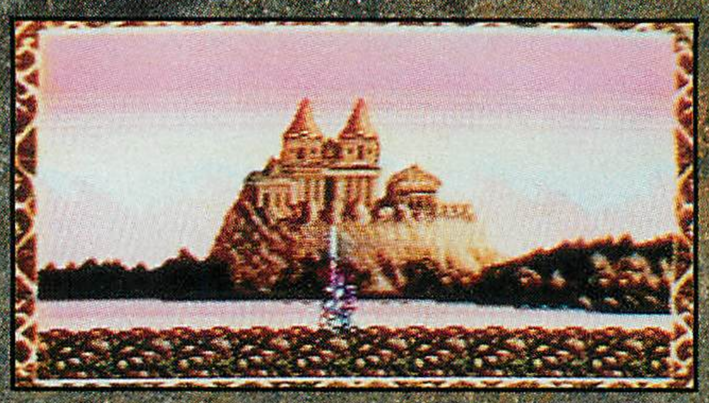
At this statue, the Flame Staff will burn away the snow, revealing a secret passage.



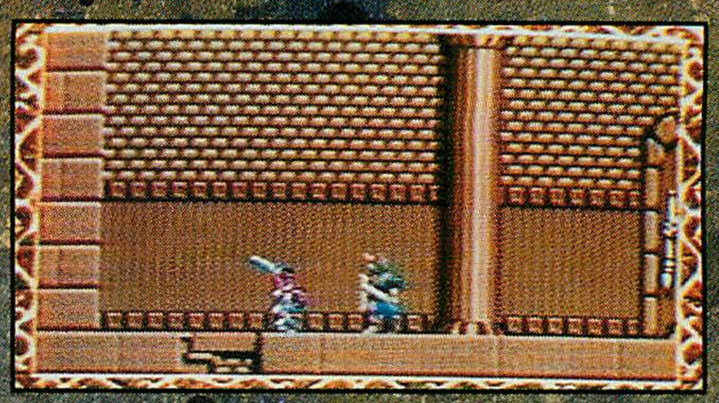
The passage leads to this hidden cave, which contains your next major foe. Get in close with your sword, and try to avoid his fireballs.

After beating the dragon, you'll get the Dark Statue.

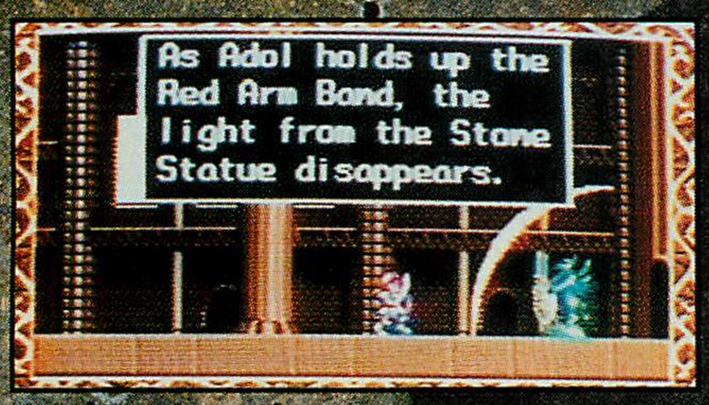
With the Dark Statue, return to town, where the townspeople will give you the valuable Heal Ring. Here, you learn that most of the townspeople have been kidnapped.



Valestine Castle is where the people are being held captive, so you must go there next.

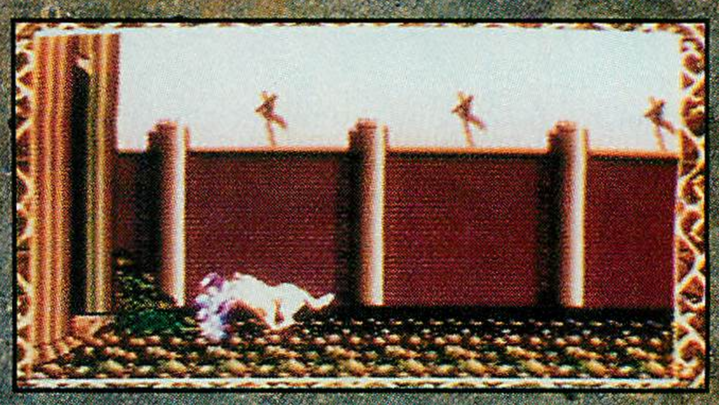


In the castle, you'll fight many guards.



...until you kill him, of course. Then you'll get the Red Arm Band.

You need the Red Arm Band to get past this magical obstacle. Without the arm band, the force field will kill you instantly.

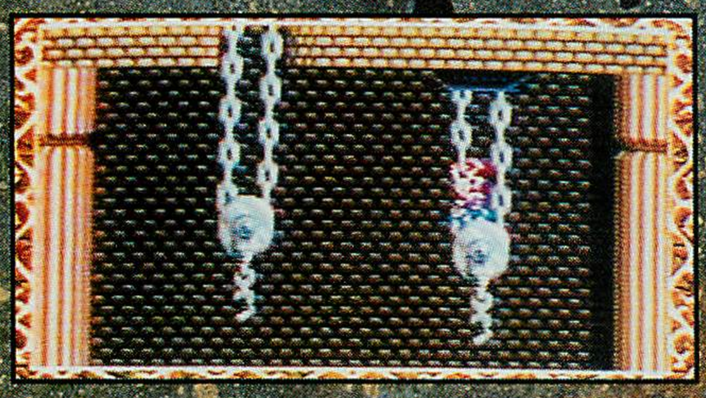


The battle armor, hidden in another treasure chest, will increase your powers even more.

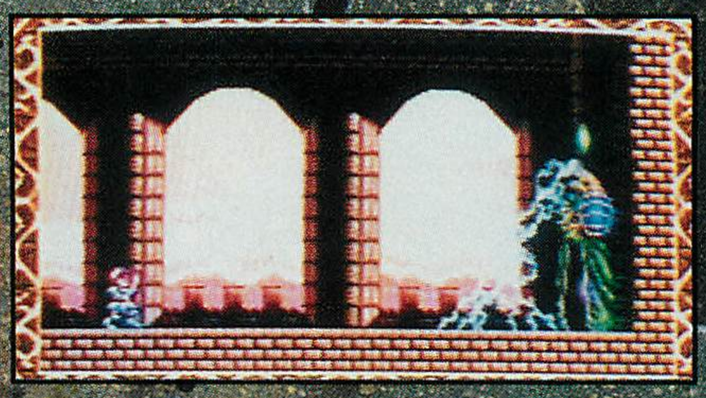
Hmmm. Do you suppose the people from the village could be in this jail cell? You'll need the key to find out.

This creature has the key. Stay out of the way of his rotating horn, and you'll have him defeated in a flash.

Now that you have the key...

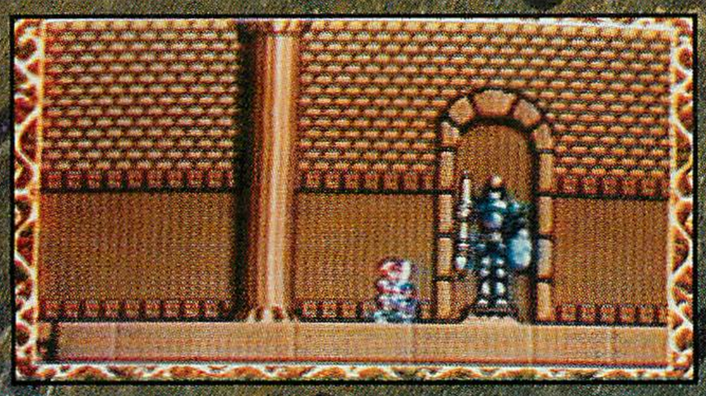


You'll also find the Flame Sword, a most powerful and beneficial weapon.



Ride the right hook up to the top, and then quickly jump to the left hook in order to get up through the ceiling.

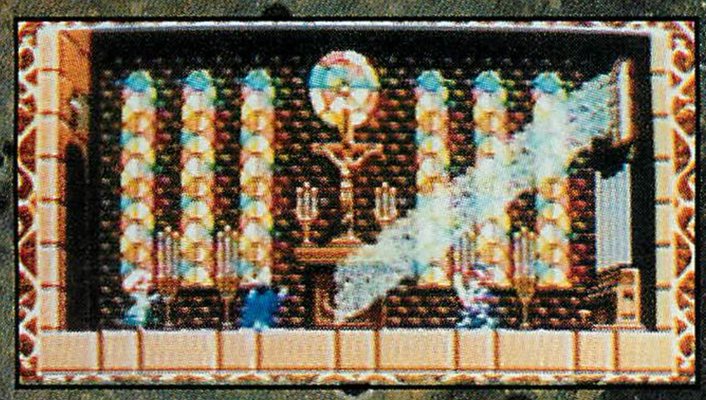
To beat Merland, stay close and try to avoid his lightning bolts.



You'll also have to make your way past haunted armor. Look out for those lances!

A treasure chest contains the Battle Shield. Your strength will last much longer once you have it.

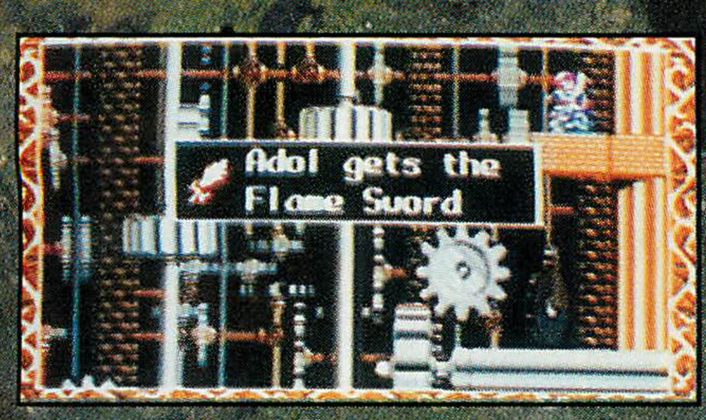
This huge guard won't let you past...



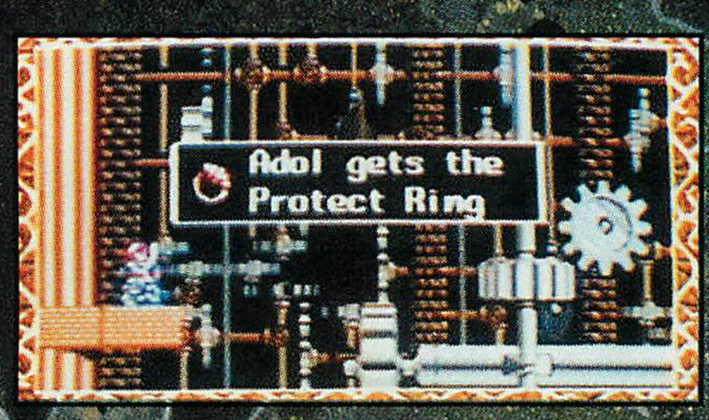
As long as you're not too weak, this savage dog is easy to beat.

When you find this chapel, you'll also find a secret entrance.

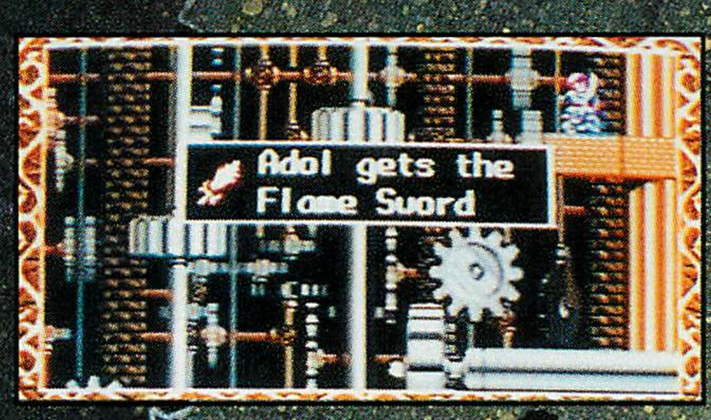
Beyond the chapel's hidden passage, you'll run into some mighty strange creatures. Luckily, they're not as tough as they look.



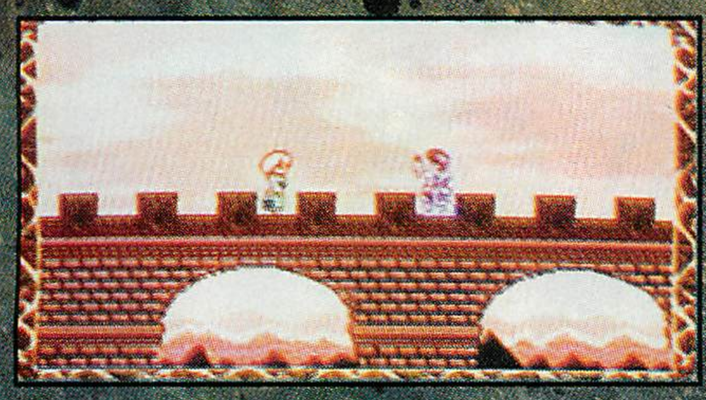
...it's back to the jail, where you must rescue the prisoners and collect the Blue Arm Band.



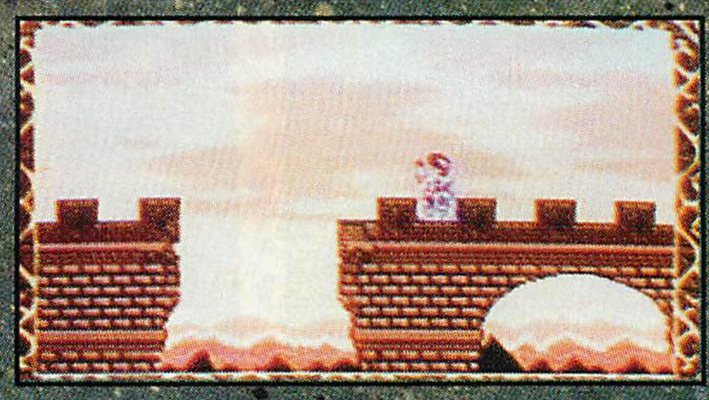
Your next obstacle is this room filled with gears and other dangerous mechanical devices. You'll need to do some fancy jumping here.



In the clock tower, you'll find the Protect Ring.



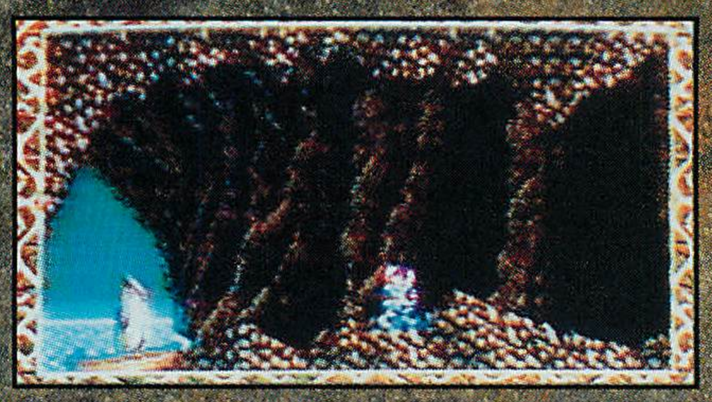
Thanks to you, the king will see the error of his ways. He will, in fact, give you the Goblin Idol.



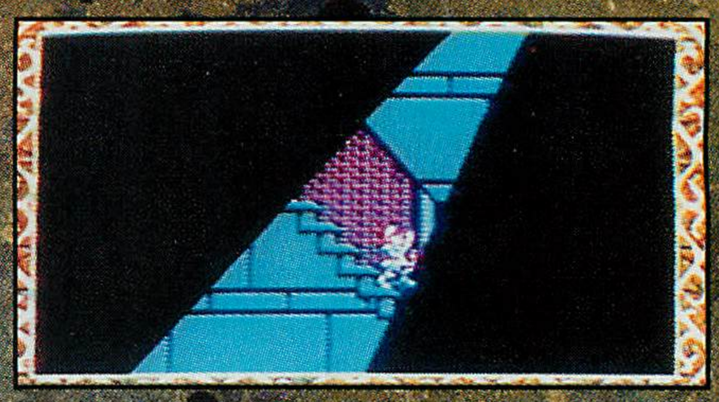
Finally, you find Elena...

...only to have her snatched away again.

There's nothing you can do but return to the town. The people are happy to be home, and the mayor will give you the Fire Jewel.

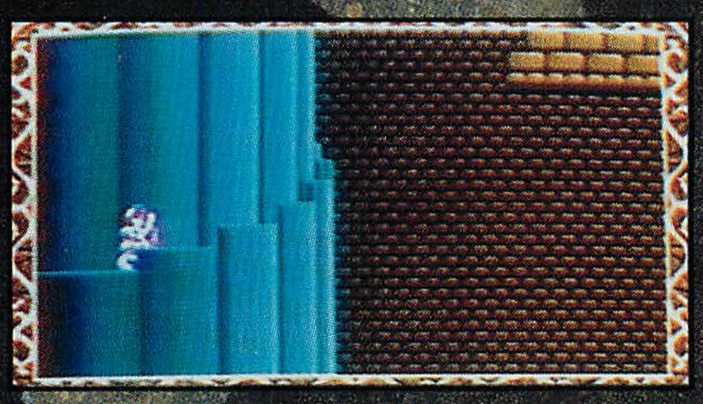


Despite the mayor's misgivings, you decide that you must take on Demanicus, so you cross the ocean...



...and find Demanicus' cave.

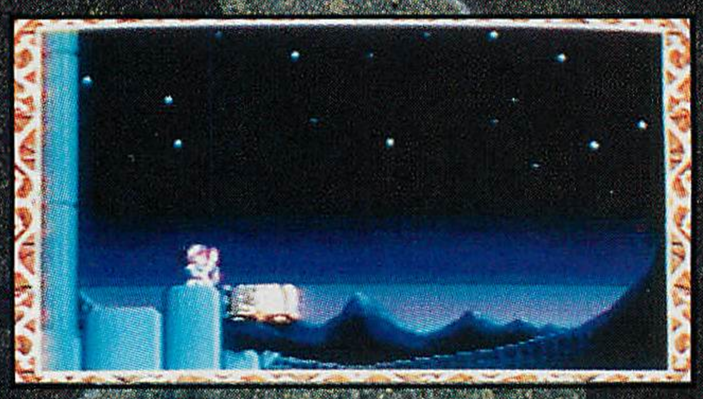
In Demanicus' castle, use the Fire Jewel to produce the light you need to find your way.



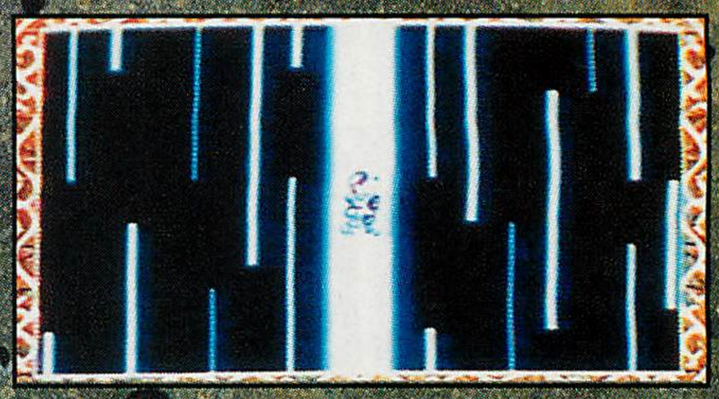
To beat this guardian, stay behind him as much as possible.

Next, it's up to the top of this strange tower...

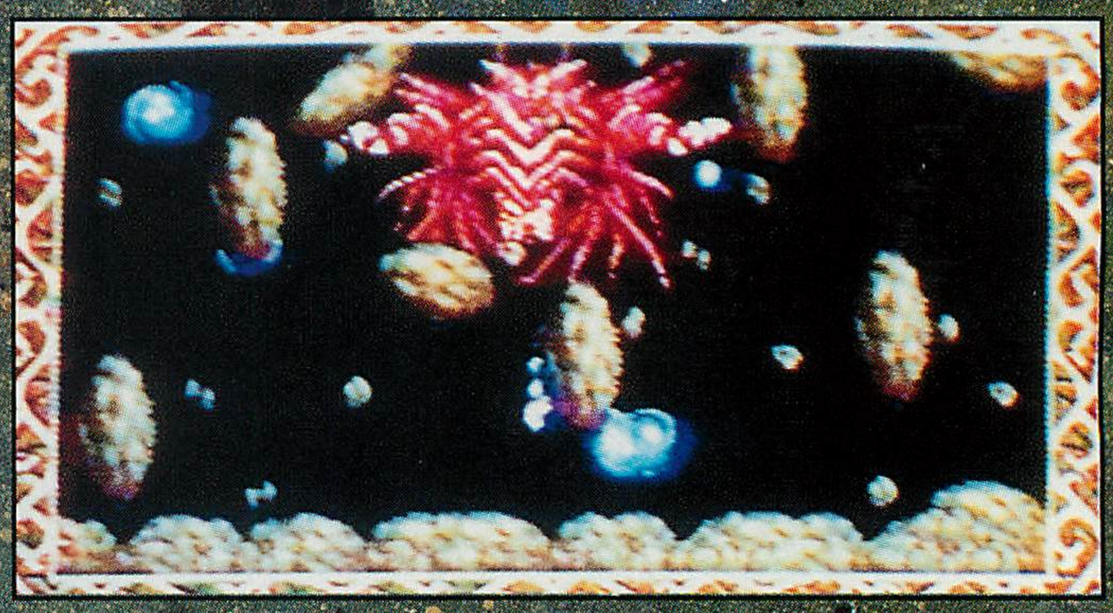
...where you'll find Chester. Chester has turned over a new leaf and now wants to rescue Elena.



But Demanicus has other plans.

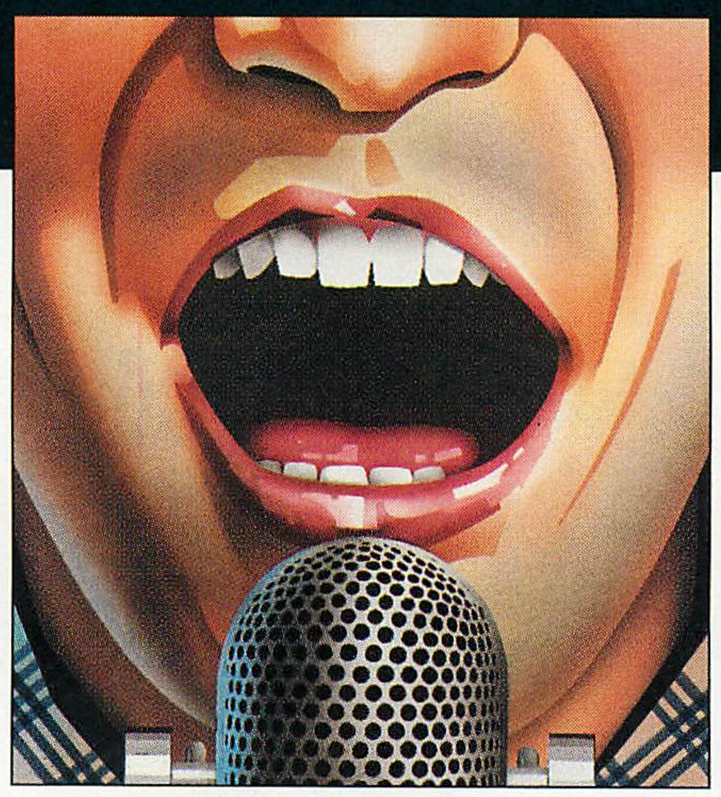


You offer Demanicus the statues if he'll leave Chester and Elena alone. You must now take this floating platform up to meet your fate.



As you streak upward, you prepare for your attack. To win this battle, you must be a champion swordsman. The answer to all lies beyond. Good luck!

Finally, Baseball So Real It Calls 'Em As It Sees 'Em.



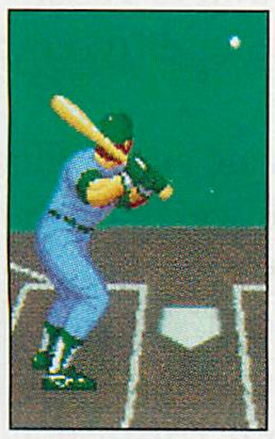
Sports Talk.

Sega™ announces the biggest improvement in the game since nachos. New Sports Talk Baseball™ from Sega™ Genesis.™ The only video baseball game with a play-by-play announcer who covers all the action as it happens. We're talkin' everything from the top of the first inning to the bottom of the ninth.

Will Clark

Listen Up.

"Bottom of the seventh. The relief pitcher is in. He takes a long look and delivers. The steal is on. There goes the throw…safe! Runners at second and third now. Here's the three-two pitch. Ball four. He loads the bases."

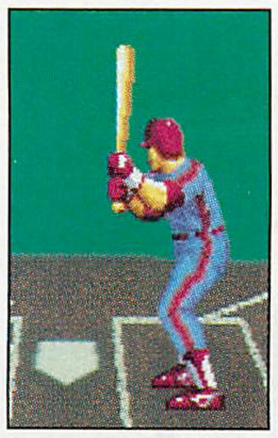


Terry Steinbach

More than 500 players and their 1991 season stats.

Talk about your deep bench. We've teamed up with the Major League Baseball Players Association to let you choose from more than 500 big league players, and their 1991 stats. Sluggers such as Canseco, Strawberry, Puckett and Ruben Sierra. Strike-out artists like Ryan, Eckersley and Roger Clemens.

Travis Fryman



Lenny Dykstra

Play Ball.

It's like playing and coaching in the bigs, only better. You'll get to call everything from the batter's stance to a sacrifice bunt. Through a full 162 game season, including a pennant race.

And you'll hear the action on every play as it goes down. From Rickey Henderson's steals to Cal Ripken Jr.'s latest grab. All the runs, hits and errors. The pick-offs, steals, and shoe-string catches.

Remember, there's only one place to catch chatter like this. New Sports Talk Baseball from Sega Genesis.

Everything else is just bush league.

MLB SPORTS TALK BASEBALL™

500 PRO PLAYERS, BASED ON 1991 STATS

Sports Talk Baseball is one of more than 150 hit games from Genesis.™ Including Sonic The Hedgehog,™ ToeJam & Earl,™ Spider-Man™ and Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football.™ The choice is simple. The choice is SEGA.

Robbie Thompson makes a close play to stop Cecil Fielder.

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COMPUTER GAMES KEEP GETTING BETTER

PUBLISHERS PUT THEIR BEST FOOT FORWARD AT THE WINTER CES

BY ARNIE KATZ, BILL KUNKEL AND JOYCE WORLEY

Technology ruled the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The bigger-than-expected crowds that surged through the aisles and filled hospitality suites to the bursting point saw plenty of high-quality software and hardware.

"Multimedia" was on everyone's lips. Complaints about today's CD-ROM technology are rampant but won't stop publishers and development houses from betting heavily on it. There's widespread confidence that the public will embrace CD-based interactive entertainment by the end of 1994, and many predict a new generation of hardware with faster data transmission by mid-decade.

Interactive CD is divided into three segments: the multimedia personal computer (MPC), video-game console CD peripherals and CD appliances. A lot is happening in all three areas.

The MPC Council eased minds with a more realistic, revised hardware standard. Many companies have forsaken the 286, and they don't fancy having to backtrack from the 386SX to develop games.

Commodore introduced the Amiga CD drive at the show, and it is now in many retail markets. It gives the Amiga compatibility with Commodore's CDTV "black box" unit.

The three leading makers of video-game consoles are all introducing CD peripherals. Sega has a drive that connects to the Genesis; Nintendo will support several multimedia configurations; and the newly formed Turbo Technologies plans to market the PC Engine Duo, which is reportedly four times more powerful than the Turbo-Grafx-CD unit introduced in 1989.

Nintendo and Sony have kissed and made up. The Sony Playstation, which combines a Super NES and a CD drive, will now benefit from the full support of both Sony Imagesoft and Nintendo. The true importance of the Sony-Nintendo accord may be that the Playstation will also be compatible with the Philips CD-I unit.

Will this make CD-I the living room entertainment unit of choice? Don't look for a definitive answer this year, but, realistically, that kind of clout has got to help the system.

QUALITY: BETTER THAN EVER

Computer software publishers are trying to get off the treadmill. The bloated product lines of 1988-1990 led to disastrous overproduction of mediocre titles. Consumers rebelled against a diet of quick-and-dirty European designs.

Computer gaming made an excellent recovery in 1991, as lower hardware prices and high-quality entertainment software spurred demand. Most publishers now concentrate on a small number of projects and try to make each one special.

The coming year will see reduced selection, but no one will complain. What's missing is most of the generic junk no one really wants anyway. None of the Winter CES introductions knocked attendees for a loop, but the trade show has never displayed a more impressive assortment of "A" titles.

SYSTEM SHUFFLE

Market pressures have done what editorial polemics could not accomplish; the Age of Standardization has arrived! IBM PC accounts for an overwhelming percentage of the installed base in this country.

Unfortunately, standardization has not brought true compatibility. The wide range of memory capacities and

operating speeds makes it tough to tune a new game to play correctly on all versions of the IBM PC-based hardware.

Some recent releases don't run on a 286, and many 386s will need a RAM upgrade before they can run mammoth games like *LINKS* and *Wing Commander II*.

Experts predict that home computing will achieve greater compatibility by 1994. The IBM-Apple joint project, a computer with the power of the IBM chip set and the user-friendliness of a Macintosh, is computing's best hope for gaining mass market acceptance. Expected products include emulators that allow IBM PC machines to run Mac programs and vice versa.

The Macintosh is battling for second place with the Commodore Amiga. The latter is losing favor with Americans, while the Mac's popularity growth makes games a more attractive proposition. Sierra On-Line is promising Macintosh editions of 12 popular games before the end of the year. If they do well, others will take the plunge, too.

Handicapped by a reputation for rampant piracy, the Amiga still has many admirers. It's great for gaming, but software support has crested and will now decline. The Amiga benefits from its popularity in the United Kingdom and Germany, but Stateside development is less common now than in 1990.

The Atari ST has virtually vanished from the commercial software scene. There will still be a trickle of European imports, but no major publisher plans to develop for the ST on this side of the Atlantic.

THE SURE THING

Nothing gives a nervous software salesman more confidence than a product with a solid gold track record. Games that break ground sometimes shatter sales records, but many executives see a big risk that offsets the upside potential.

That's why sequels and licenses have become so vital to computer and video gaming. There are plenty of both among announced 1992 products.

Among the coin-op games heading for the home market is *Rampart* (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC). Based on the Atari coin-op, *Rampart* will be available for the Super NES as well.

Books are often a source for new games.

Left: Sierra's *Laura Bow II: The Dagger of Amon Ra.* Below left and right: *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis.*

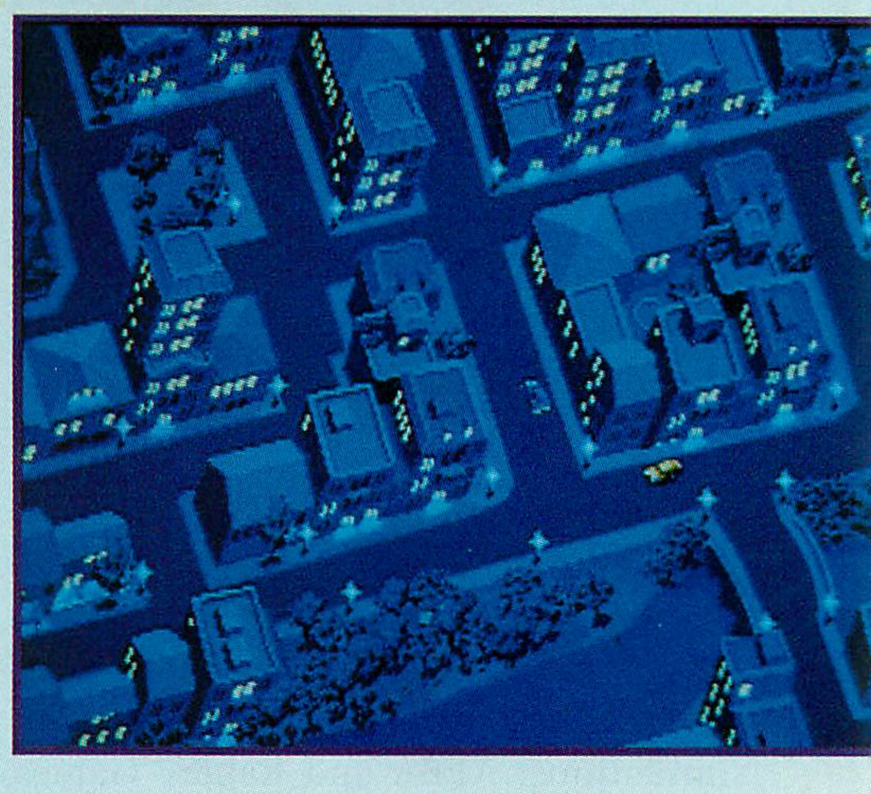
Readers of modern science fiction are likely to enjoy *Frederick Pohl's Gateway* (Accolade for the IBM PC), based on the award-winning science-fiction series. Legend has used a point-and-click interface that is somewhat similar to *TimeQuest*.

Nonelectronic games have frequently inspired computerized counterparts. In recent years, conventional role-playing games (RPGs) have been especially popular for conversion to disk.

MegaTraveller 3 (Paragon for the IBM PC) has three scenarios: rescue, revenge and find the lost city. These are randomly generated, and all take place in the "Unknown World." The game has a new character generator and provides a choice of three styles of fighting: interactive, descriptive and quick combat. For the first time in this series, the adventurer will be able to recruit characters encountered during the game and use them to augment the party's strength.

Treasures of the Savage Frontier (Strategic Simulations for the IBM PC), by Beyond Software, is a sequel to *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*, the newest of SSI's popular series based on the "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons" license. It incorporates characters from the first installment of the saga and continues the story line.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (Lucasfilm for the IBM PC) stars the

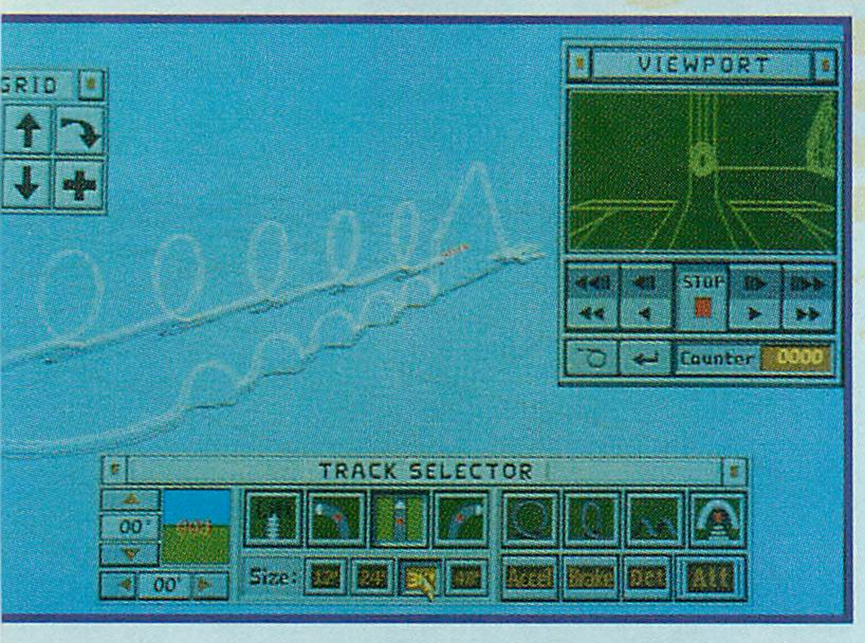


hero of the thrilling, big-budget movie trilogy. The major innovation is a new system that allows the program to generate the musical score on the fly and connect it to the events unfolding in this icon-driven adventure. The full-screen graphics are right up to Lucasfilm's high standards.

Fans of *Lemmings* and *Oh No, More Lemmings* can anticipate the arrival of *Lemmings II* (Psygnosis for the IBM PC). The development cycle still lies mostly in the future, but the publisher promises more individualized attributes and special gadgets to help the adorable creatures wend their way through at least 50 new playfields.

Sequels are going to be as important as ever at Sierra On-Line. Currently on the drawing board: *EcoQuest II*, *Dr. Brain II*, *Mixed-Up Math*, *Ice Man 2* and *Laura Bow II: The Dagger of Amon Ra*.

Of special importance to *Space Quest* fans is that the Two Guys From Andromeda have split! The good news is that Mark Crowe is sticking with Roger Wilco. He's in the Dynamix group now, where he is working on *Space Quest V*, which will be sold as a Sierra product.



**Top left: *Agony*, by Psygnosis.
Left and above: *Coaster*, by Disney.**

ADDING TO THE FUN

It all started with tabletop statistical simulations. APBA and Replay Games issued annual updates to adjust numbers in line with the most recently completed season. Everyone who liked the basic game became an annual customer.

Electronic publishers love the idea of guaranteed secondary sales. As a result, they're all hunting for games with that extra dimension.

Strategic Simulations plans a *Fantasy Manager* as an add-on to *Tony La Russa's Baseball*. It enables users to set their games in a selection of famous baseball parks.

Dynamix is preparing an expansion module for *Red Baron*. Out next month for IBM PC, it has a mission builder, more aces and new planes.

ACTION: SHARPSHOOTERS

All-out action is now the province of the video-game consoles. Older computerists want action games with a generous dose of strategy, so games that depend on pure reflex speed are usually in cartridge format.

Fantastic graphics and nonstop scrolling shooter action put *Agony* (Psygnosis for the Amiga) on top of the shopping list for action fans. Three levels of parallax scrolling and Psygnosis' usual outstanding artwork give the game's avian hero a great setting for high-density arcade combat.

Coaster (Disney Software for the IBM PC) is the second attempt to turn roller coasters into a game. Disney hopes that the exciting first-person view of the twists and turns, a course construction function and a dollop of strategy will be a winning formula. The program boasts an accurate simulation of the physics of coasters.

SIMULATORS: ARE THE SKIES TOO CROWDED?

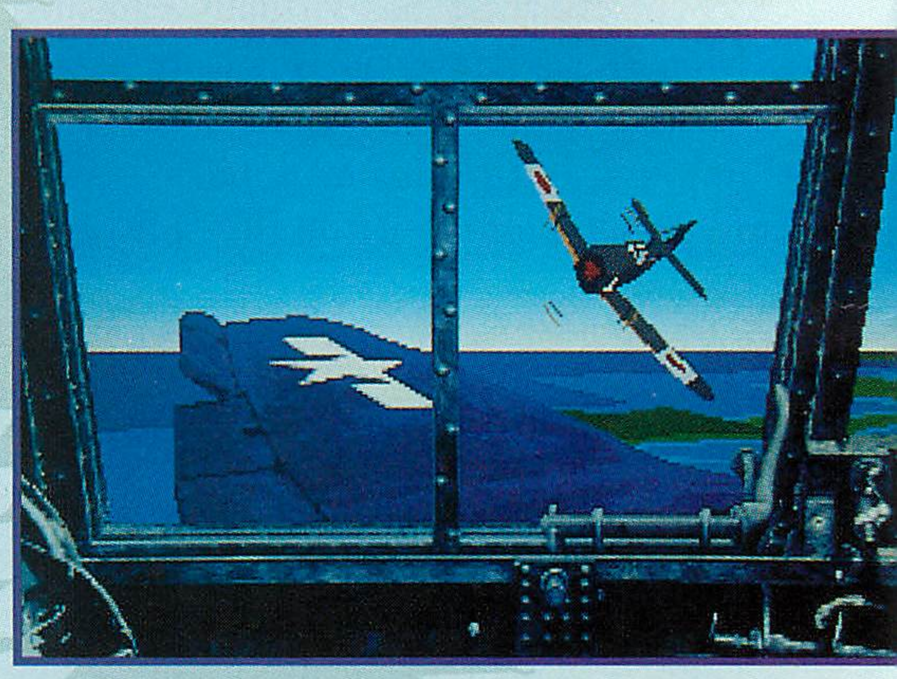
The graphics are great, the animation is flawless and the aircraft modeling is superlative. Yet some players may feel that flight simulators are getting repetitive.

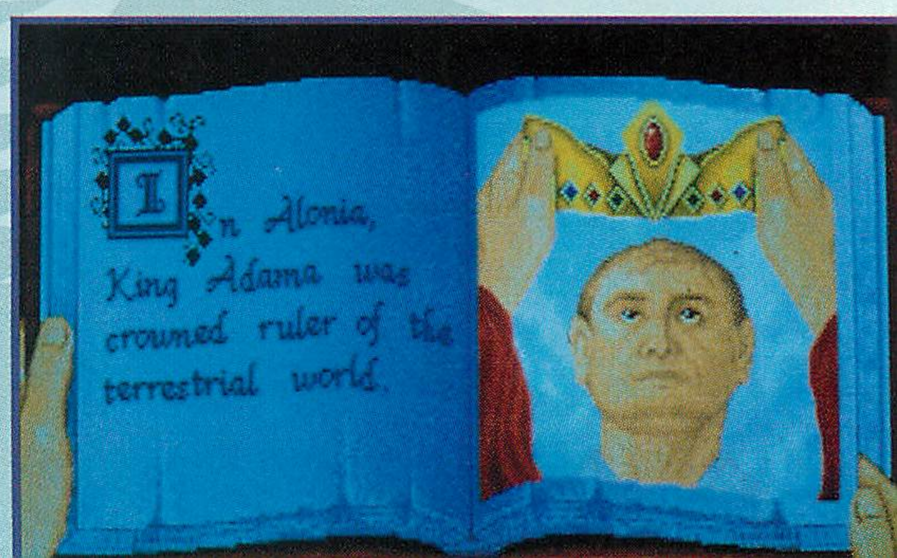
**Above right and center: *Aces of the Pacific*, by Dynamix.
Paragon's *Spellbound* (right) and *Mantis* (above).**

The 1992 flight simulators show small improvements in audiovisual effects, but it's the same candy in a new box. Last year's *Megafortress* (Three-Sixty Pacific) introduced a cinematic approach to the subject, but other developers haven't had time to follow suit. As a result, the forthcoming flight simulations are more apt to intrigue those who collect the *genre* than they are the casual gamer.

Heroes of the 357th (Electronic Arts for the Amiga and IBM PC) is an air combat simulator in which squadrons undertake missions in Europe during World War II. There's a choice between a full tour of duty and single-mission assignments. Preflight briefings, rendered in atmospheric black and white, utilize actual footage to put armchair pilots in the mood. The gamer flies with wingmen and views the polygon-fill scenery from a variety of perspectives.

Aces of the Pacific (Dynamix for the IBM PC) lets the player participate on either side of the conflict. There are 25





World War II planes in the game, which is essentially a variation of *Red Baron*. It has notable special effects and makes excellent use of period photos. There will be an expansion module two or three months after the original ships, with new aces, countries and campaigns.

Birds of Prey (Electronic Arts), already on the Amiga, will soon debut for IBM PC. It has 40 aircraft, all current multinational jets. The player selects a pilot and one of the 12 mission types, then takes to the skies for real-time excitement.

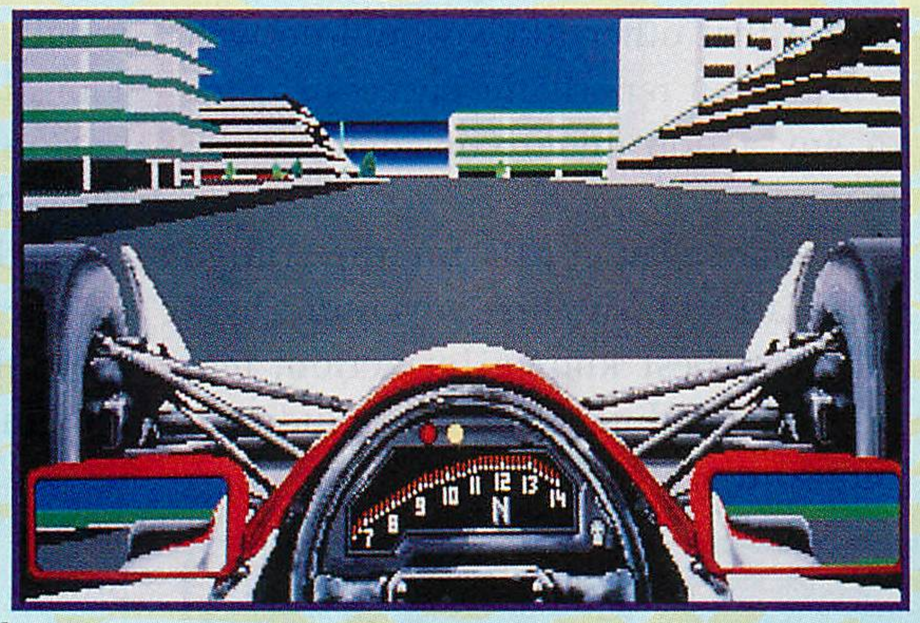
MiG-29 Fulcrum (Domark for the IBM PC) is the first release under a new agreement between the British game maker and Accolade, which will be distributing *MiG-29 Fulcrum* and other titles in the United States. The planes are accurately modeled, but the accent is on playability in this jet combat game.

Mantis (Paragon Software for the IBM PC) proves that it isn't necessarily bad to have a buggy program—at least not when the insects are the enemies in a stirring science-fiction combat simulator. Alien parasites are incubating in human bodies, and, with their telepathic powers and group mind, Earth's conquerors are a formidable foe. The player pilots the Mantis spacecraft while battling to save Earth in a simulator with a strong plot line and cinematic cut scenes.

Two big names in electronic gaming, Origin Systems and Software Toolworks, are joining forces on some hot titles for CD-ROM. A package including *Wing Commander* and *Secret Missions 1 & 2* should be especially appealing to owners of multimedia personal computers.

Spectre (Velocity), already available for Macintosh, gets an IBM PC version this spring. It uses polygon shapes to create a "capture the flag" arena tank battle. The program learns as the player improves, so the difficulty is infinitely adjustable.

A deluxe CD-ROM *Harpoon* (Three-Sixty Pacific) enhances the visual impact of this detailed simulation of missile boat warfare. Among the features is a beautiful hi-res character set designed expressly for the CD-ROM version.



Both by Accolade, *Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited* (above) and *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited—Signature Edition* (right).

Scoring Big With Sports

The Olympics will inspire new games in the coming year, but publishers won't let up on new boxing, basketball, football and baseball action contests and simulations. Sports games used to run in cycles. New basketball games would be the rage one year, then there'd be no new ones for 18 months or so. That has changed. The sports category is so hot now that few publishers worry about competition from existing games when formulating new ones.

Michael Jordan Flight (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC) uses digitized photos of actual players to duplicate all the pros' famous moves on the screen. The rotating court gives *Michael Jordan Flight* a unique look.

Walk in the footsteps of a gridiron genius in *John Madden II* (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC). The pigskin strategist can choose from 80 offensive and 100 defensive plays, and Madden himself recommends a call when advice is needed. The 3-D end zone view makes it easy to track the unfolding play, and the zoom feature zeros right in on key action. Frame-by-frame instant replay is an unsurpassed analytical tool for trying to figure out what went wrong on the last down.

Those who favor an arcade-style football game may prefer *NFL Football* (Konami for the IBM PC). A digitized referee's voice calls out penalties as athletes rated for 16 separate attributes go through their paces.

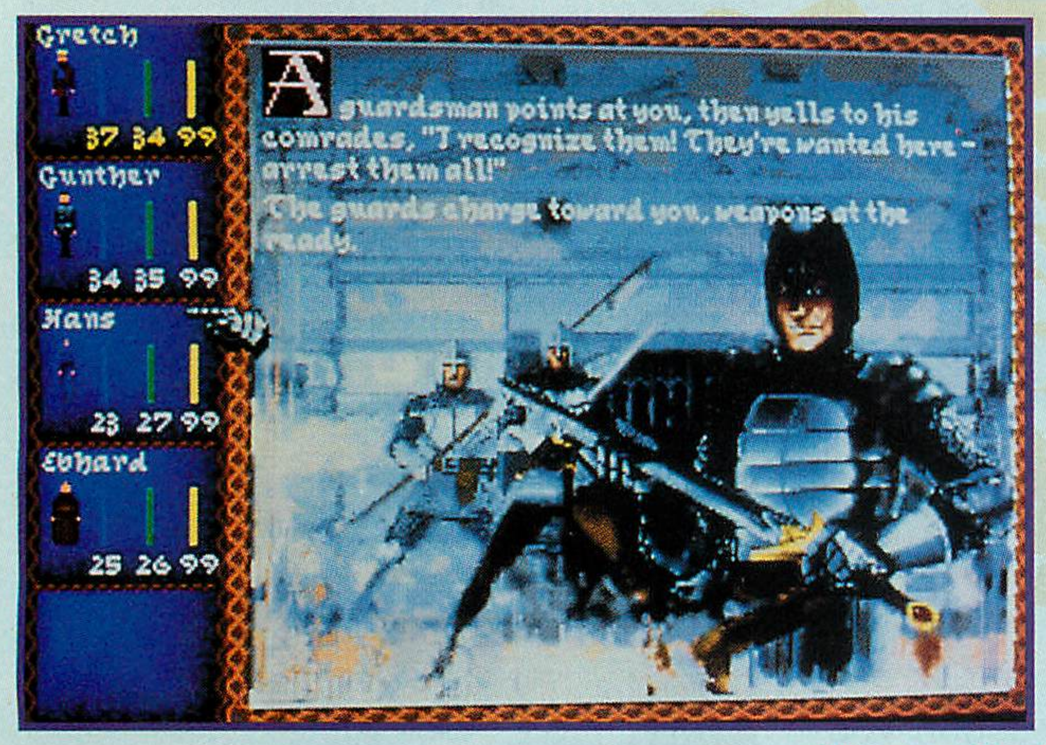
Real players, including actual video footage, highlight *Fantasy Challenge Baseball* (Doc's for the IBM PC with CD-ROM). More than 100 players, each mathematically modeled to reflect real-life performance, are available for drafting into teams in this simulation of major league managing.

LINKS Pro (Access for the IBM PC) is a high-powered version of the popular golf simulation. Players can pick a male or female on-screen character, edit the sound and view all the action in Super VGA graphics. Registered owners of *LINKS* will be offered trade-up options. A CD-ROM edition of *LINKS* is in preparation and should be available at midyear.

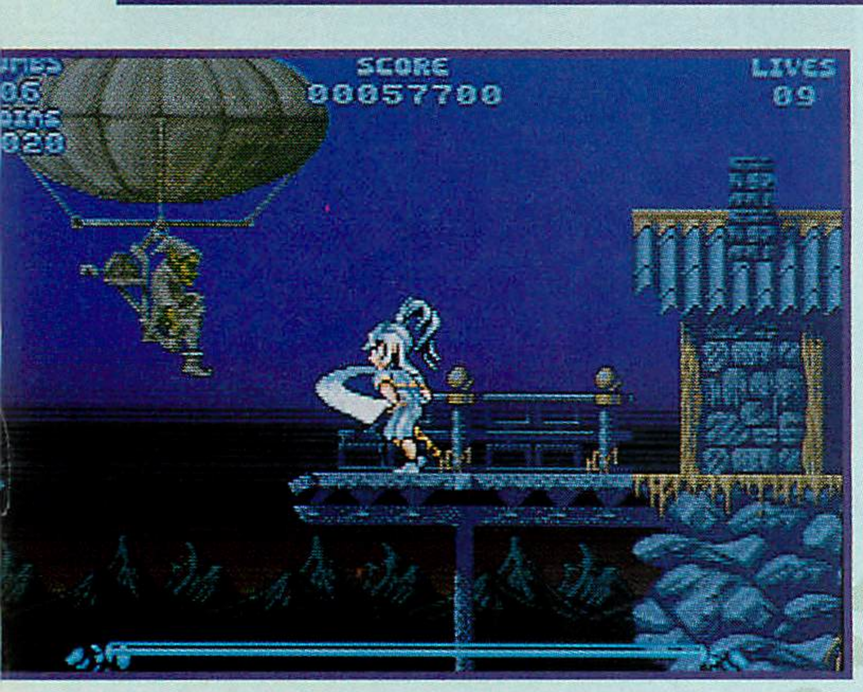
Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited—Signature Edition (Accolade for the IBM PC) is a "plot and play" course designer with a tournament feature. It uses digitized pictures of players and lets the gamer choose an on-screen surrogate from three male and one female golfers. It uses 256-color VGA graphics and bit-mapped course graphics.

Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited (Accolade for the IBM PC) is a hot new auto racing simulation by Tom Lowry (*Test Drive III*). This flexi-

ble game offers several types of activity. The armchair driver constructs a car in architect mode then competes in a circuit of 15 races or practices on any of the courses. The program has handsome digitized cars, which can be customized and fine-tuned by the computerist. Polygon-fill graphics depict the races in first-person perspective.



Above: *Darklands*, by MicroProse. Left: *Leander*, by Psygnosis.



Car & Driver (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC) uses U.S. Geological Service data to make the tracks completely realistic. It utilizes multiview camera angles and offers instant replays of all the action. The package contains ten cars and events.

ADVENTURE & RPG ROUNDUP

Medieval Germany is the setting for *Darklands* (MicroProse for the IBM PC), a point-and-click fantasy RPG. The gamer controls a four-member party, which can call upon the saints to help defeat evil forces. A lavish introductory sequence leads to a beautifully drawn fantasy world of sinister shadows. *Darklands* has an unusual help feature that other RPGs would do well to imitate; it reports the success chance for any action under consideration by the player.

Leander (Psygnosis for the Amiga and Atari ST), the first adventure by a publisher best known for action, features outstanding graphics, including a long and well-done introduction. A user-friendly interface and adjustable difficulty make *Leander* a game worth a try when it premieres.

Spellbound: The Challenge of Five Realms (Paragon Software for the IBM PC) uses speech extensively in the introduction, and during the game all main characters can talk. When an evil force kills the king and usurps the throne, the ruler's son grabs the crown and runs. As the disinherited prince, the gamer searches for the Witch Caliostra and other Princes of the Realm to overthrow the new ruler.

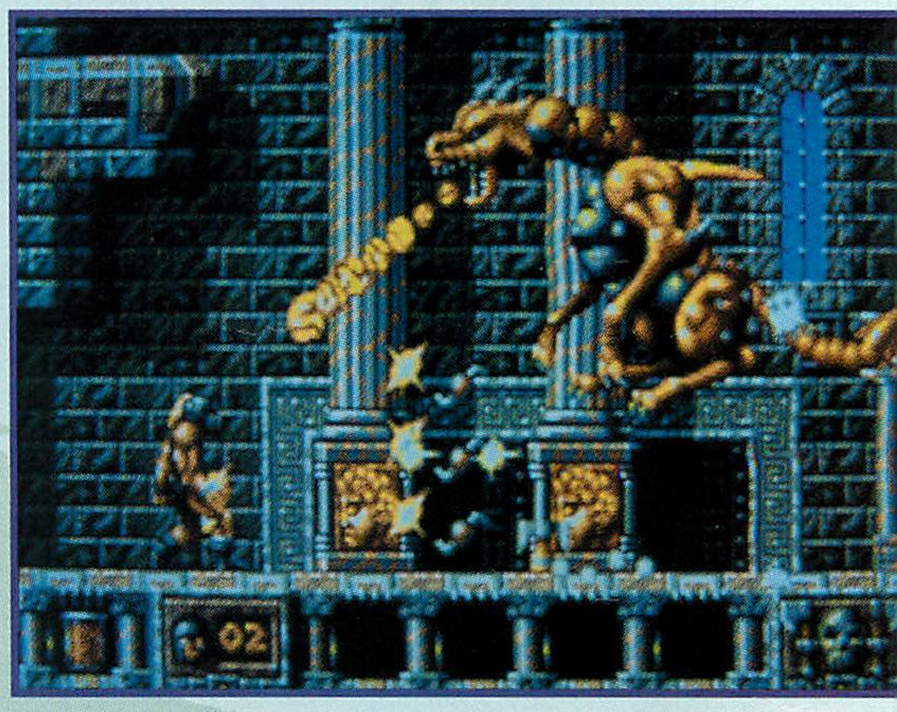
The life of the mighty man-god Hercules inspires the blend of action and role-playing in *Gods* (Konami for the IBM PC). As the fabled muscleman, the gamer collects treasures to buy weapons to make Herc's struggle easier.

Chaos Engine (Konami for the IBM PC) is a fantasy RPG that features an unusually high-level artificial intelligence. The player controls three characters, but only orders one of them directly; the computer puts the other two through their paces.

The CD-ROM *Loom* (Lucasfilm) is more than just shovelware. The tale of Bobbin the Weaver gains better graphics and, even more significantly, full speech in its new format. Lucasfilm has pulled the text off the screen, which not only makes the gorgeous visuals look even better, but makes the gameworld seem more accessible to the player.

The transformation of a painting into a three-dimensional image is only one of the stunning visuals in *Guest* (Virgin Games for the IBM PC CD-ROM). This is shaping up as the hottest CD-ROM original for next Christmas, and it could turn out to be a system-seller.

Roberta Williams, who gave us the *King's Quest* series, is going to fulfill an oft-stated ambition and design a horror adventure. Sierra On-Line doesn't even



Both by Konami, *Gods* (above right) and *Chaos Engine* (right).

TOP SECRET
KGB
To ALL NEW KGB AGENTS
From CENTRAL CONTROL
Special Instructions:
DESTROY INFORMATION ONCE
RECEIVED AND REPORT TO YOUR
COMPUTER TERMINAL FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION ON YOUR MISSION
It's your first day at Department P, Moscow KGB and you can't help but think that whoever arranged for your transfer here either has a strange sense of humor or hates your guts.
Despite all the upheaval in the Soviet government in recent years, the KGB, or Committee for State Security, is still the most feared and pervasive intelligence-gathering network in the world.
Only now the KGB itself is under secret surveillance - by you!
Questions lead to more questions but one thing is clear - the KGB reeks of corruption and you're about as safe as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Be advised, comrade - you must act quickly and shrewdly to uncover the conspirators before they uncover you.
FEATURES:
* Movie-like storyline filled with surprising twists and intrigue
* Intuitive Icon-based Interface - that means no more wading through menu after menu
* VCR-style "REWIND" option for keeping track of important clues and information
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Far left (top and bottom): Virgin's *Guest*. Left: Lucasfilm's *Loom*. Bottom: Mindcraft's *Might & Magic III*.

have a working name for the project yet, though Roberta has reportedly done extensive work on the story, characters and settings. Next Halloween looks like the estimated time of arrival in stores.

The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC) is the latest attempt to transfer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's scientific detective to the gaming screen. Robert Berg and Eric Lindstrom have designed a mouse/icon-driven mystery that they believe will take the electronic sleuth 40 hours to solve. While working on the master plot, Holmes solves several other murders and becomes enmeshed in a class struggle in Victorian London.

And speaking of lost files, the issue is a lost film in *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (Konami for the IBM PC). Once the computerist recovers from the disappointment that the game is *not* based on the classic bad movie itself, *Plan 9* becomes an exciting hunt for the five missing reels of film. The player meets the movie's original cast members in this Gremlin title.

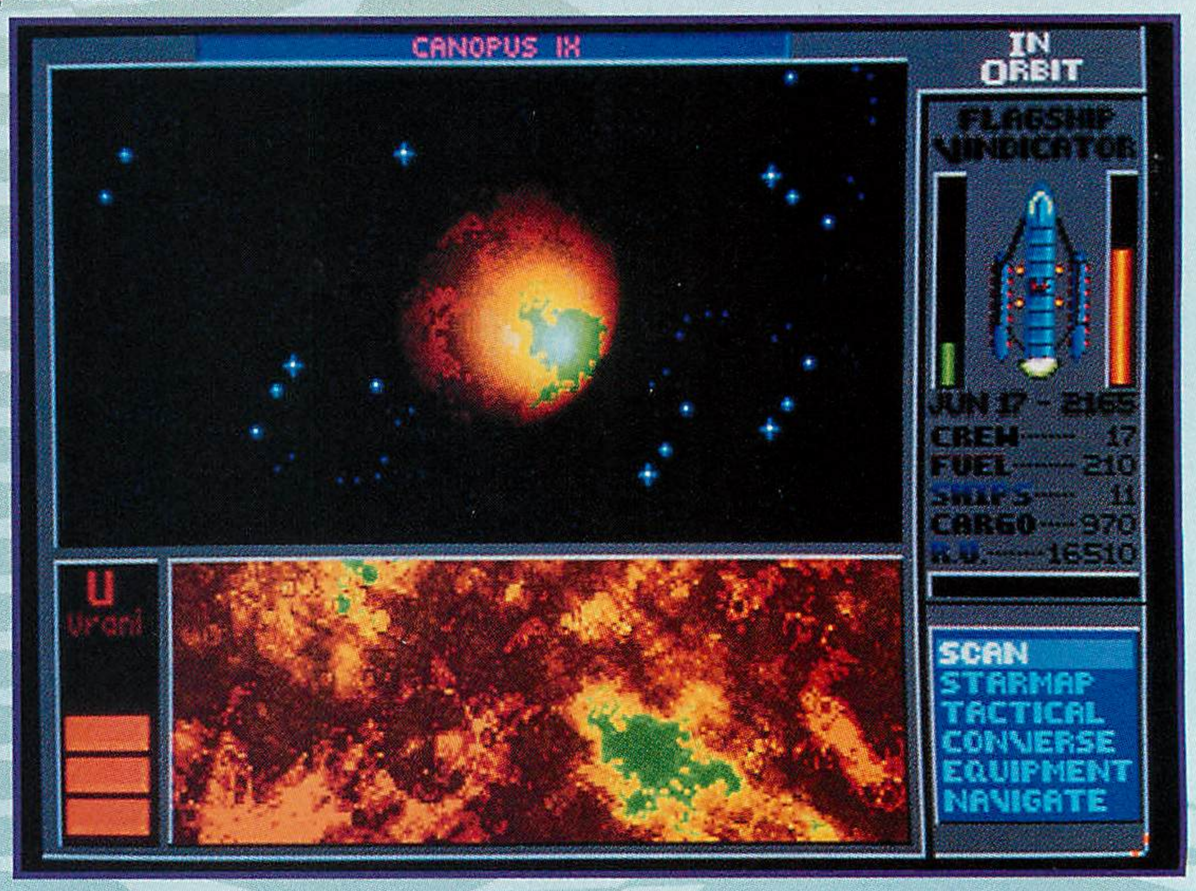
Software Toolworks is doing a couple of CD-ROM disks that adventurers might want to investigate. One presents Origin's *Ultima I-VI*, while the other offers *Wing Commander* and *Ultima VI*.

Magic Candle II (Mindcraft) will ship in 1992 for the Amiga. No word on when *Might & Magic III*, a late 1991 release, will make the journey to the Commodore system.

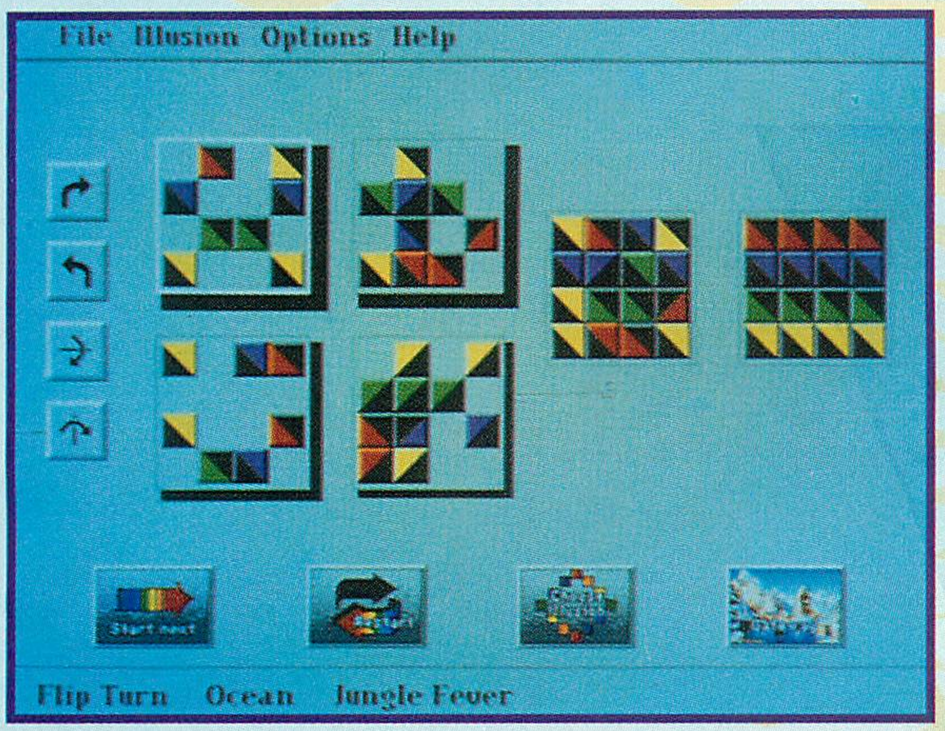
SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGY

Brainpower counts more than flashing fingers in today's computer gaming field. Action fans have gravitated toward the cartridge consoles, with a corresponding decrease of interest in fast-action computer contests. Sales patterns over the last 18 months have convinced most publishers that, for now at least, players want games with depth and subtlety that don't make them feel foolish or clumsy.

Star Control II (Accolade for the IBM PC), by Paul Reiche, is as much a role-playing adventure as an action-strategy contest. The player uncovers mysteries and fights stunning battles in space. It has all the ships from the first program, plus an assortment of new ones. Play begins on a colony world that's been out of touch for 25 years. The player colonizes worlds, builds ships and creates a strong economic base to support the effort to free an enslaved Earth. Don't worry; despite the deeper scenario, there's still plenty of outer space com-



***Star Control II*, by Accolade, for the IBM PC.**



Heaven and Earth will be Disney's first title under the Buena Vista label.

bat, the main attraction of the original *Star Control*.

Another computer game with both strategy and role-playing elements is *Celtic Legends* (UBI Soft for the Amiga and IBM PC). It pits the blue forces of good against the red forces of evil, with the land's inhabitants caught in the middle. The object is to capture castles and accumulate enough points to build new strongholds.

Theatre of War (Three-Sixty Pacific for the IBM PC) offers a different view of combat. It's a distant cousin of chess in which the board includes terrain with defense protective value. Each player controls a force of ten pieces, which have movement and fighting powers based on warfare of various historical periods.

Michael Feinberg and Brad Fregger, who last gave us *Ishido Stones*, are back with *Heaven and Earth* (Buena Vista for the IBM PC and Macintosh). Billed as a combination toy, game and puzzle, its three phases offer an unusually wide variety of play-mechanics. The first phase, "The Pendulum," is a contemplative activity in which the player attempts to hit targets by using magnets to direct the swing of a pendulum. The second phase is a card game, and the third is an electronic puzzle book with more than 500 stumpers of 12 types. The graphics are outstanding.

Global Effect (Millennium for the Amiga and IBM PC), designed and developed by Millennium, is a brain game with an ecological theme. The player, using an easy point-and-click interface, builds power stations, settles territory, plants trees and tries to keep the world in balance.

Step into the world of the movie stunt coordinator in *Stunt Island* (Disney Software for the IBM PC). The computerist designs and films stunts, complete with multiple-camera perspectives. Success brings the title "Stunt Pilot of the Year."

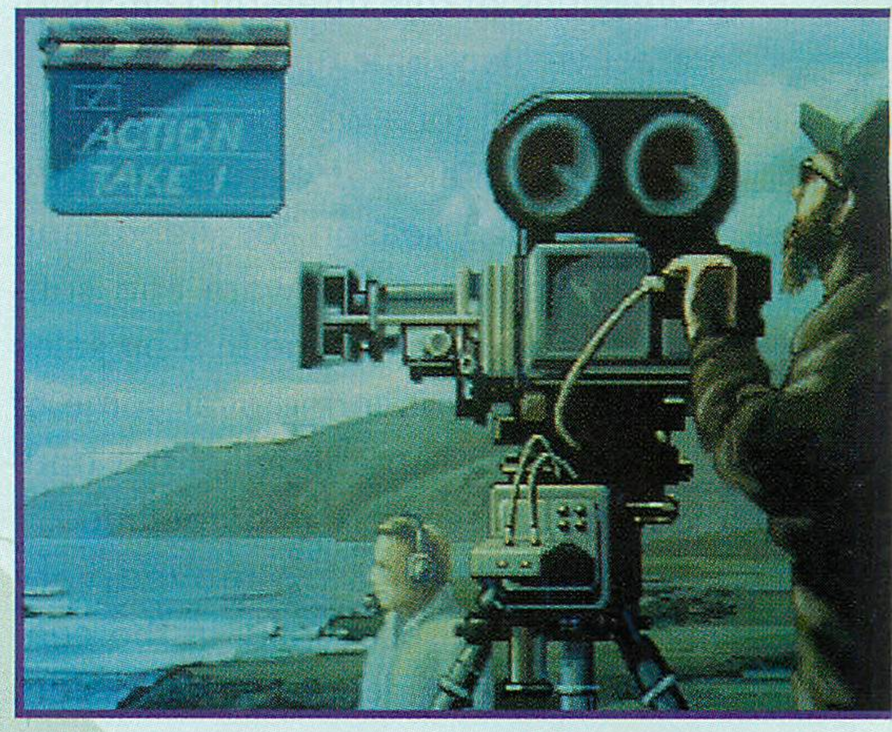
Dog Eat Dog (Buena Vista Software for the IBM PC) marks this company's first move into the strategy category. This simulation of corporate infighting should keep closet Trumps satisfied through many play sessions.

Accolade is developing an "edutainment" product for kids ages four to seven with the working title *Snoopy's Game Gallery* (Accolade for the IBM PC). The disk includes *Charlie Brown's Concentration*, *Snoopy's Puzzle* and *Woodstock's Twin*. *Snoopy's Puzzle* features animated pieces that keep the screen exciting even while the child assembles the jigsaw.

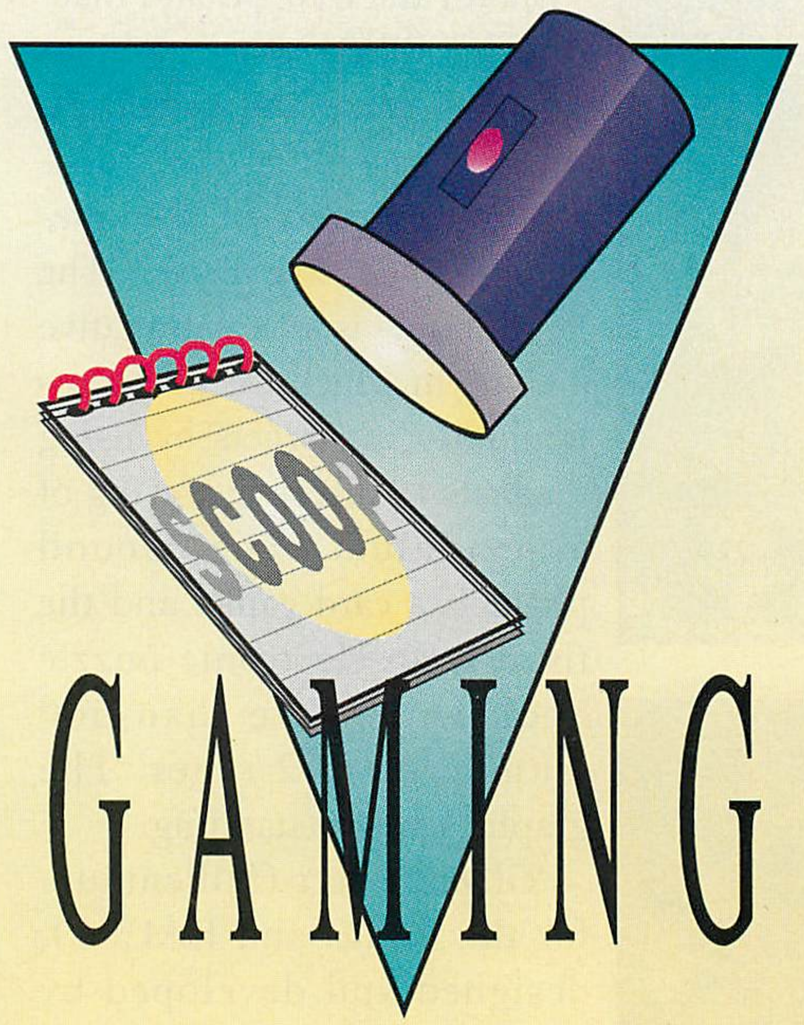
THE FORECAST

Computer software will boom through the end of this year, even though some publishers will divert development efforts to multimedia. More and more games will require the high memory and lightning speed of 386SX machines and beyond, so owners with less-powerful equipment will be upgrading.

We've looked at only a few of the many titles earmarked for next fall and winter. More information on these and details of "so far unannounced" games will be in future issues of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT.



Disney's *Stunt Island* will let the player design and film stunts.



GAMING

THE SHOW SURVIVOR

BY
ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie delivers his impressions of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show.

Lengthy articles elsewhere in this issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT report on the new games and major news stories unveiled at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show (CES), held January 9-12 in Las Vegas. My purpose is not to duplicate those exhaustive surveys, but rather to give you my impressions of this three-ring circus of interactive electronic fun.

The overall tone was positive at the CES in the wake of a surprisingly strong holiday season for video- and computer-gaming hardware and software. The serious decline in 8-bit sales kept the clouds hovering over some of the displays in Nintendoville, but optimism ruled elsewhere in gameland.

Computer hardware moved very well last winter, especially in the context of a serious economic recession, and all of the new users are boosting software sales, too. Nothing seriously challenges the supremacy of the IBM PC and its clones, though the standard configuration has changed very rapidly in the last 18 months. Macintosh owners can expect to see more of the popular games offered for their favorite system, while the news is not encouraging for Amiga owners. Many publishers are phasing out disk-based software for the Amiga, though the release of the CD-ROM drive this coming April could give the Commodore computer a new lease on life.

Everyone at the CES talked about CD-based interactive entertainment. Almost all computer software publishers have at least one project under way. "Multimedia" is this year's buzzword, even though most industry executives admit that it is unrealistic to expect a big sale before Christmas 1993 or even 1994. Most companies will try a CD-ROM project if they think they can break even on the deal, just for the experience. People say "when," not "if," when they speak of multimedia.

Some of the smaller publishers are stunned by the level of investment in time, personnel and money needed to bring a CD-ROM game to market. Costs are *at least* four times higher than a conventional computer game, and some multimedia titles are budgeted at over $1 million. Those are the kinds of numbers that make the presidents of the smaller companies gulp. The flowering of the multimedia personal computer (MPC) market will bring mergers and buy-outs, as small companies look for infusions of capital.

The 1992 Winter CES marked the first time that publishers showed multimedia games that could possibly intrigue the mass market that experts claim is just around the corner. Lucasfilm showed a CD version of *Loom* that grabbed even this slightly jaded gamesman. Obviously, this isn't the first computer game to spawn a CD edition, but none has fully exploited CD-ROM's capabilities.

Loom is a glimpse of the next leap forward in electronic adventuring. The design team removed all text from the screen and substituted wall-to-wall speech. Players can concentrate on role-playing the game-world instead of reading lines of text on the screen. This form of presentation greatly heightens the play experience by increasing the gamer's identification with the characters and situations portrayed in the adventure.

The original CD title that impressed me most was *Guest*, under development at Virgin Games. Designer Graeme Devine and artist Rob Landaros are still working on the early stages of this three-dimensional,

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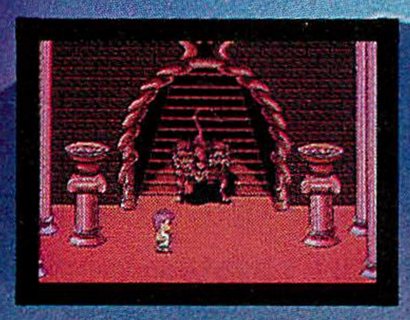

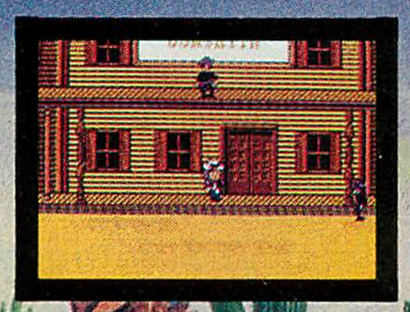

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haunted house puzzle-adventure, but the special demo they staged for VG&CE editors earned unanimous raves and made it my pick as CD game of the show.

No individual computer game stood out boldly from the pack this time, but the average quality of entertainment software reached an all-time high. Publishers are putting more resources into a smaller number of titles, and it's paying off in some incredible games.

Ultima Underground (Origin Systems for the IBM PC) gets my vote as the most exciting new program at CES. This first-person perspective dungeon crawl has breathtaking graphics and sound, including lots of detailed animation. The freewheeling continuous movement system puts the player right into the thick of the role-playing action.

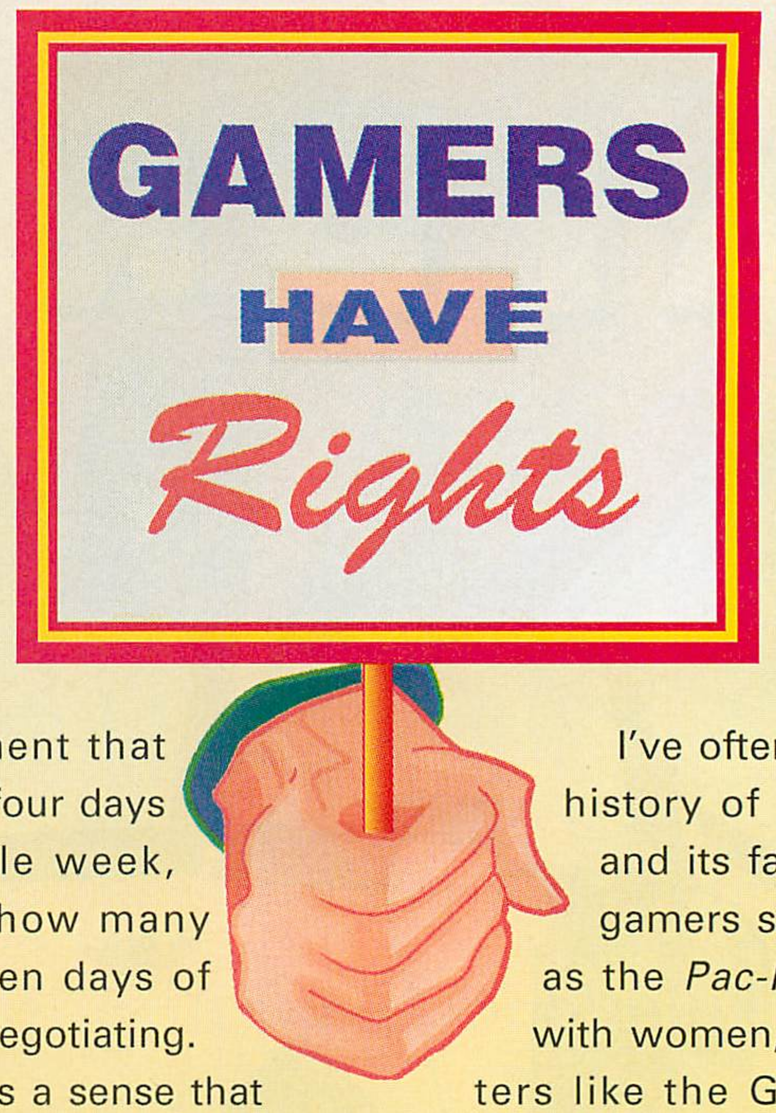
COMPUTER ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAXINE NAYLOR

The most innovative sports simulation I saw was *Michael Jordan Flight* (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC), one of several hoop titles EA is readying for computer and video gamers. The eye-catching court treatment stamps this as something fresh. The court rotates, somewhat in the style of the Super NES Mode 7, as the action rushes up and down the hardwood court.

It's impossible to discuss the Winter CES without mentioning the deal-making frenzy that now grips the electronic-gaming business. Some companies are trying to stockpile development power by acquiring independent houses, while others attempt to sell out to a big software publisher or one of the huge entertainment conglomerates hungrily eyeing the market. Throw in dozens of cross-system publishing deals and licensing agreements, and you've got meeting-mania. I heard more than one executive lament that the CES lasts only four days instead of a whole week, though I wonder how many would survive seven days of dawn-to-midnight negotiating.

Finally, there was a sense that the Consumer Electronics Show itself is about to change dramatically. The public will be allowed to attend the final two days of the 1992 Summer CES, including an unprecedented 9 p.m. closing on Saturday.

A few in the industry expressed enthusiasm for meeting their most loyal consumers. Many others bemoaned the cruel fate that will force them to show their wares to the public. In fact, a regrettable few, including one of the biggest names in video gaming, reportedly plan to skip the show rather than come face-to-face with the folks who have spent millions on their products. I'll name no names, in the hope that these companies will rethink their obligation to the gamers who have made them their fortunes. Speaking as a gamer, I hope that the Summer CES in Chicago will have all the major video- and computer-game companies that were prominent at the Vegas extravaganza. Anything else is a snub to our great hobby. And such insults cannot, and should not, be ignored.



A Glitch in Time

I've often written about the history of electronic gaming and its fandom. We veteran gamers savor victories such as the *Pac-Man* breakthrough with women, and mourn disasters like the Great Video-Game Crash of 1983.

Painful as it is to report the lowlights, it's my duty to report some bad news about the Electronic Games Expo. After polling companies in the field, Electronic Convention Management has decided to produce the event, scheduled for late September, as a trade-only event. The public will not be allowed to browse the mammoth exhibit hall nor hear the many speakers.

The first impulse is to roast ECM. After all, they promised a show that embraces both business and hobby, and now they've reneged. While the Electronic Games Expo deserves some blame for this failure of will, industry cowards must shoulder the bulk of the responsibility. This is just another expression of the impulse to duck the public (described earlier in this column) that generated complaints about CES' new open-door policy.

Electronic gaming will overcome this setback. ECM remains committed to the concept of a show for business *and* consumers. If the first Expo succeeds, perhaps next year's edition will be in a better position to implement the original plan.

The fight for gamers' rights has just begun. Fans will have their justice! Today, though, there's at least one journalist who is a little less proud to be an electronic-gaming pro.

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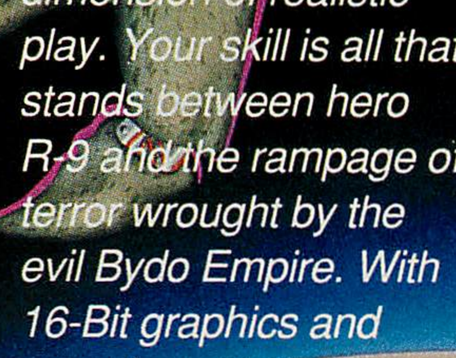

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TEXTBOOKS FOR VIDEO-GAME TOP GUNS

BY JOYCE WORLEY

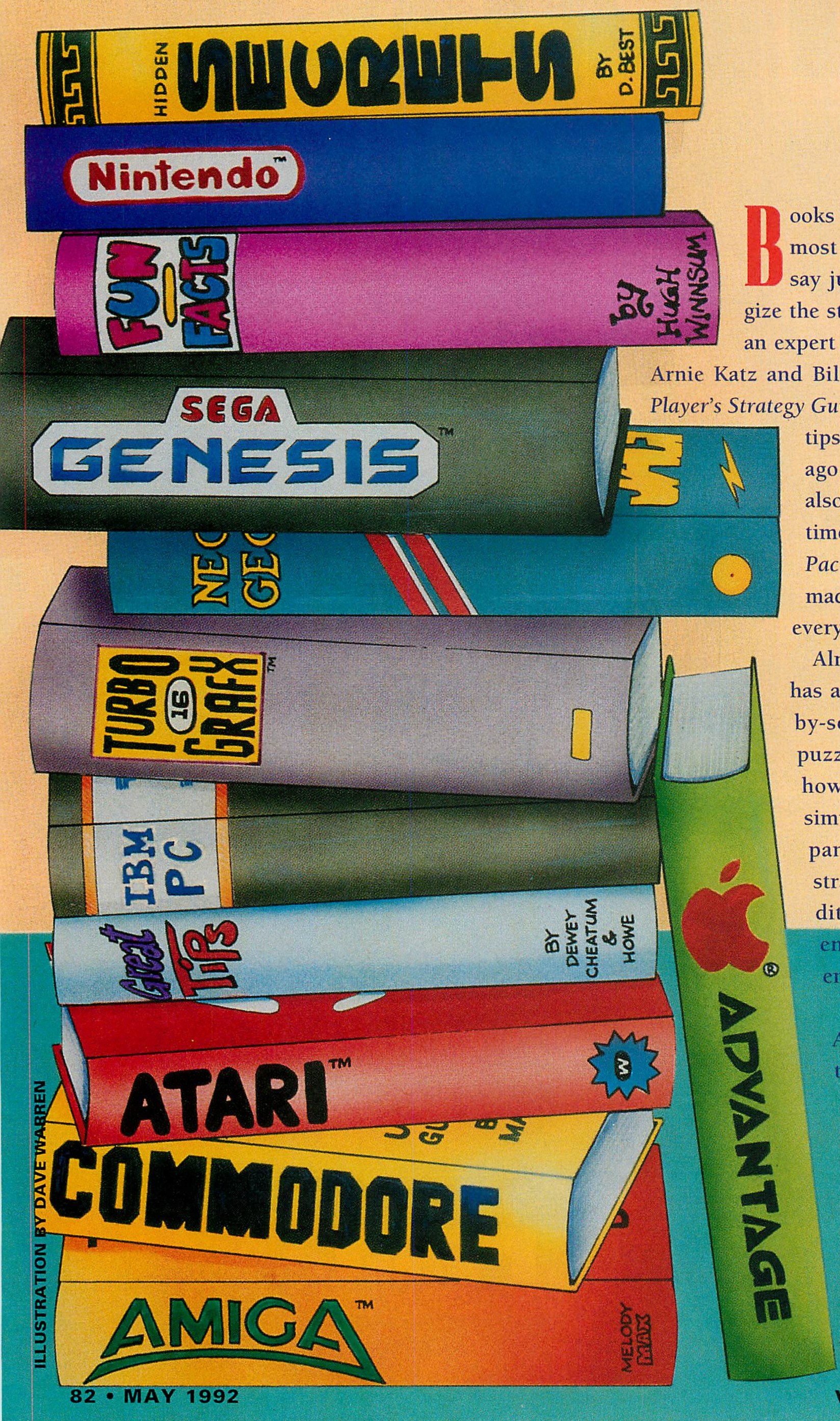


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE WARREN

Books have been part of electronic gaming almost since the hobby began. It's difficult to say just who was the first person to anthologize the strategy tips that make a good player into an expert or a poor player into an acceptable one. Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel penned Dell Publishing's *The Player's Strategy Guide to Atari VCE Home Video Games*, with tips from Frank Tetro Jr. more than a decade ago. My own *How to Win at Video Games*, also from Dell, came out at about that same time. But it was really Ken Uston's books on *Pac-Man* that made the biggest mark, and made video-game strategy books accepted in every bookstore in the country.

Almost every "big" computer or video game has a print companion, whether it's a screen-by-screen breakdown of how to overcome puzzles and traps or a complex treatise on how to explore the depths of complicated simulations. Some software publishing companies put out their own hint books and strategy guides; at the same time, some traditional print publishers have introduced entire lines of helpful books designed to enhance the fun potential of programs.

And they certainly do increase the fun. A must for would-be high scorers, the action-game tips give point-by-point clues for improving a player's performance. For simulations, the books explore the nuances of the program and suggest new ways for the gamer to gain even more enjoyment. Hint books are almost a necessity for adventure gamers; only a real expert can complete these huge programs without a little help here and there.

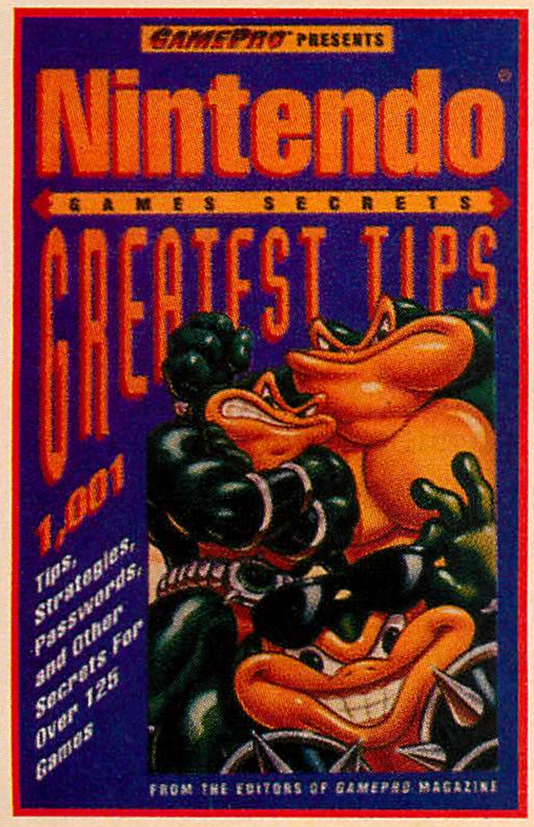
BOOKS ABOUT VIDEO GAMES

THE NINTENDO GAME GUIDES

There are currently more books to help Nintendo players up their scores than any other category of print helpers. These range from pamphlets that expose the workings of one game, usually compiled by the game company itself, to large anthologies covering many titles.

VideoGames & Computer Entertainment—Complete Guide to Nintendo Video Games, by the expert staff of VG&CE (Hayden Books, 236 pages, $9.50), is a comprehensive guide filled with 200 reviews of the hottest NES and Game Boy titles available. The book uses an easy color-coding scheme to categorize the games into their correct genres.

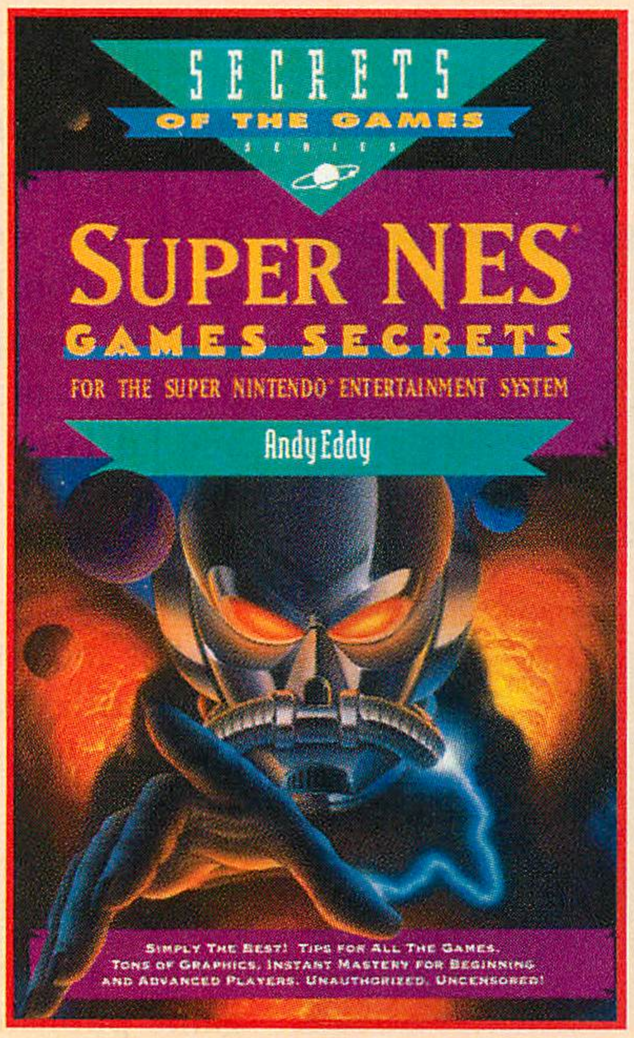
Nintendo Game Secrets, by experienced gamesman Rusel DeMaria (Prima, 359 pages, $9.95), is part of Prima's *Secrets of the Games Series*. Lengthy write-ups of each game are illustrated by many pictures. The book opens the games to the player and provides hints and strategies to complete each one. In addition, the book contains passwords and codes; detailed, plain-language guides to make champions of every player; a controller section; previews and a special chapter that addresses many of the worries of concerned parents.



Also part of the same series, *GamePro Presents: Nintendo Game Secrets Greatest Tips* (Prima, 192 pages, $9.99) was compiled by the editors of that magazine, and contains over 1,000 tips for more than 100 best-selling Nintendo cartridges.

Rusel DeMaria and Zach Meston teamed for *Super Mario World Secrets* (Prima, 320 pages, $9.99) to expose the workings of *Super Mario Bros. 4*. Tricks and techniques, secret locations and complete guides to beat the game make this a must-read for *Mario* fans.

Andy Eddy, executive editor of VG&CE, along with some of the editors and writers of the magazine, offer *Super NES Games Secrets* (Prima, 294 pages, $9.99). Part of the *Secrets of the Games Series*, the book focuses on strategies and tips for mastering 13 of the most popular SNES games. Also included is a chapter entitled "Tech Talk" that takes a detailed, technical look at the hardware and graphics that comprise the Super NES.



The *Bantam Game Mastery Series*, written by Corey Sandler and Tom Badgett, is an impressive collection of player aids. The multibook line uses a similar format in each volume. Almost every game entry is illustrated with a black-and-white screen view. The information provided includes the manufacturer (with phone number), number of players, control pad specifics, story line, number of levels, screen display descriptions, guide to the game options, and explanations of lives, scoring, weapons and enemies, with well-researched tips on how to score big. Games are given ratings in six categories: difficulty, graphics, sound, response, fun and overall. The large volumes in this series retail for $9.95, and range from 250 to more than 330 pages. *Ultimate Unauthorized Nintendo Game Strategies Volume One* contains tips for 100 games. *Volume Two* has information on another 60 games, including some golden oldies. There's also a chapter about the Game Boy and a special chapter on building up an ultimate Nintendo system. *Volume Three* in this outstanding line has strategies on 100 Nintendo games in the same workable format, as well as an invitation for players to send in information to be included in the next book.

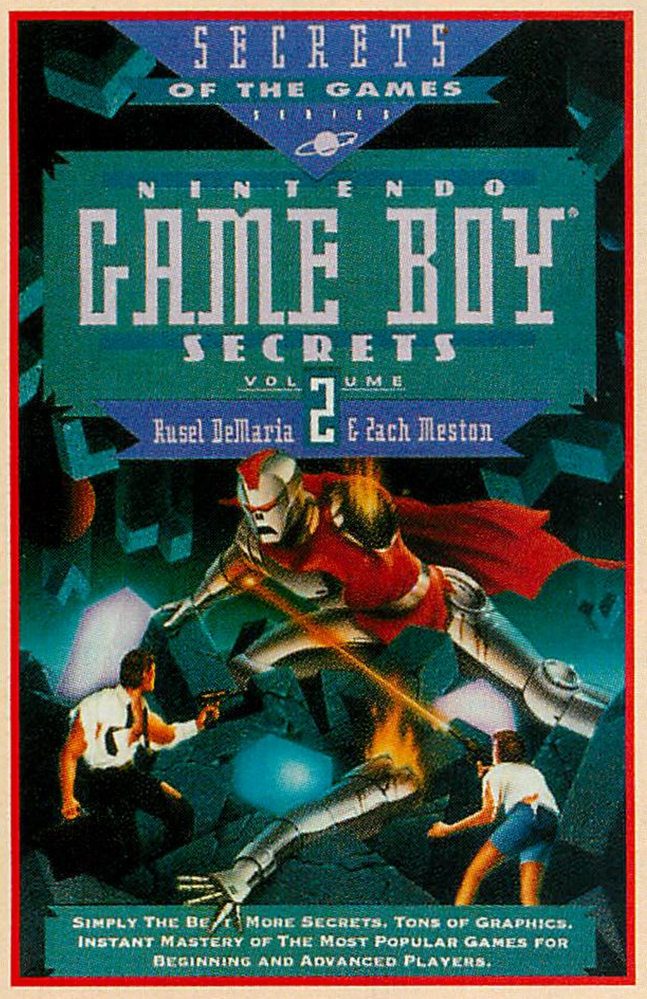
Ultimate Unauthorized Nintendo Classic Game Strategies (272 pages, $9.95), also in the *Bantam Game Mastery Series*, has coverage of 14 titles scheduled for 1992, as well as strategies for 28 classic games, including the complete *Super Mario Bros.*, *Zelda*, *Castlevania*, *Mega Man*, *T.M.N.T.* and the *Double Dragon* series. Also included are "mini hints" for 56 well-known Nintendo games.

Ultimate Unauthorized Nintendo Super NES Game Strategies (220 pages, $9.95) extends the *Game Mastery Series* to the new system. It covers 29 games (the resourceful authors traveled to Japan for early looks), technical information about the SNES, an introduction with some great background information and a short but well-written history of this hobby. Similar to the other books in this line, the game write-ups are illustrated with game screens. The authors also used the same format and rating systems.

Other Video-Game Books

Rusel DeMaria and Zach Meston penned *Sega Genesis Secrets, Volume 1* (Prima, 250 pages, $9.99) as part of Prima's continuing *Secrets of the Games Series*. Volumes two and three are the latest updates in guides for the Genesis, with still more hints, secrets, tricks and tips for the latest games.

Ultimate Sega Game Strategies for the Master and Genesis Systems (*Bantam Game Mastery Series*, Sandler and Badgett, 266 pages, $9.95) is similar in format to the Nintendo books in this series. It rates the games in the same categories, illustrates each with a large black-and-white picture and provides hints, advice, suggestions and complete explanations to make playing more fun.



Also in the *Secrets of the Games Series* are *TurboGrafx Secrets*, by Rusel DeMaria and Andy Eddy, which focuses on some of the most popular titles for the TG-16, and *Zelda 3 Secrets: The Ultimate Strategy Guide*, by Rusel DeMaria and Zach Meston, which offers tips, maps and strategies on how to win at the popular title.

Official Sega Genesis and Game Gear Strategies (first and second editions) offers more screen shots, but otherwise follows the proven format created by Sandler and Badgett for the *Game Mastery Series*. Over 300 pages of explanations and tips provide all the information the player needs to get through.

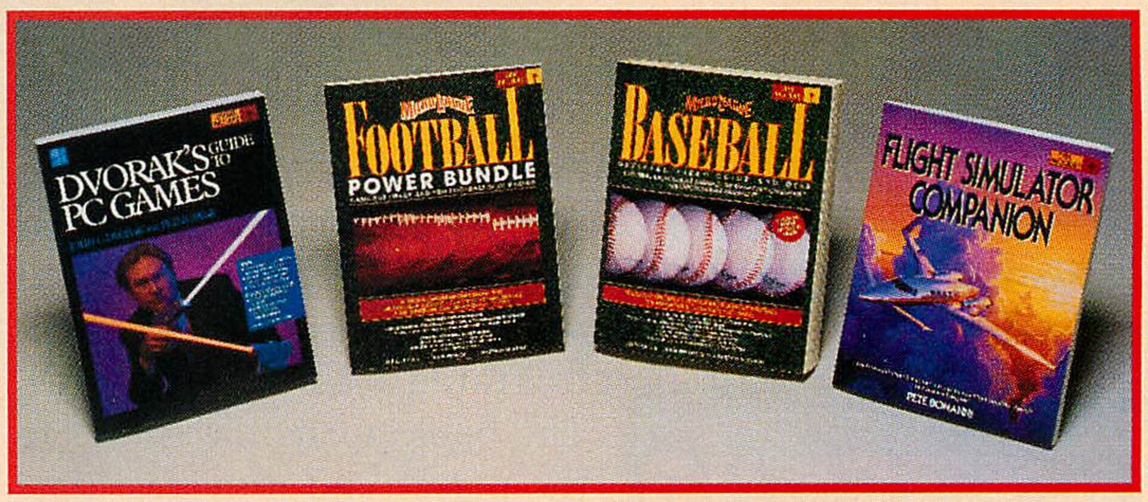
Ultimate Unauthorized Nintendo Game Boy Strategies (first and second editions) includes background stories as well as tips and hints on 41 games. Similar in style and format to the other books by authors Sandler and Badgett, each title has one or more illustrations, a rating for age of player and difficulty and a description of all the game functions. There's also a special section covering 12 modern, handheld games from Acclaim and Konami.

Corey Sandler and Tom Badgett also combined talents for one more title in the *Bantam Game Mastery Series*, *The Official TurboGrafx-16 Game Encyclopedia*. The book contains a well-written guide to the TurboGrafx-16 and the TurboExpress handheld system, and it rates about 50 cartridges in the categories of difficulty, graphics, sound, response, fun and overall.

COMPUTER-GAME GUIDES

The Anthologies

Several anthologies are currently available to provide strategy guidance for computer games. *Dvorak's Guide to PC Games*, by John Dvorak and Peter Spear (Bantam, 368 pages, $29.95), contains brief descriptions and a few tips each for more than 300 games, illustrated with screen shots and box art. The strategy tips are solid, but the book also works well as a buyer's guide. There are several chapters of background information that make good reading and two 360K PC disks with some useful utilities and seven shareware games.



Origin's *Quest for Clues* series of books by Shay Addams contains complete solutions for adventure and role-playing games, including maps, step-by-step player guides, weapons and spell lists, and story lines. *Volume IV* has solutions to 40 top games in a large-type, well-produced, 8½" x 11" format priced at $24.99. A new book, *Volume V*, should be in the stores this spring.

Prima Publishing has a pair of books that deliver games on disk as well as hints and player's guides. *Marvelous Mac Games* (Bob LeVitus, Prima, $24.95) contains 15 shareware games, along with the tips, illustrations and strategies needed to master each. *Phenomenal PC Games* (Bob LeVitus and Ed Tittel, Prima, $24.95) contains 15 shareware titles on disk for IBM PC users, with complete guides and hints.

Mastering One Game

The most thorough gaming guides are the ones devoted to single titles, where the author completely explores every nuance of the program and provides a rich report of its every aspect.

Most of the major publishing houses support their top games with hint books. Electronic Arts, SSI, Accolade and Origin are high-quality leaders in this sphere of computer-game publishing. The prices for the titles usually fall in the

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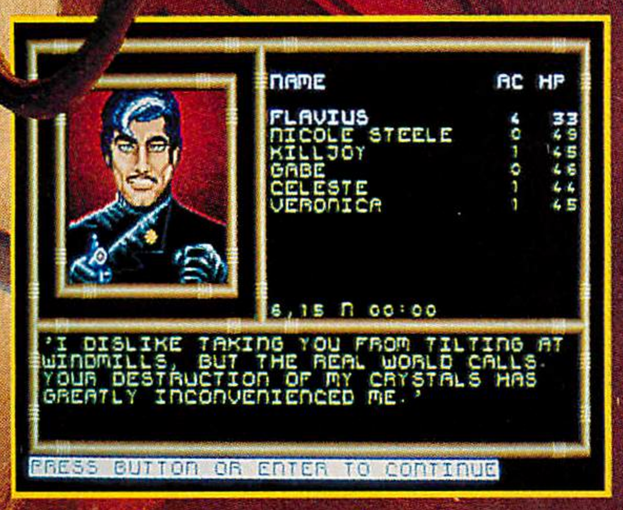

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$10 to $15 range, and the guides themselves are almost always complete layouts of the program, including maps, weapons and spell lists, locations, answers to puzzles and step-by-step instructions. Frequently the games' designers are involved with the book preparation, and this produces a real "insiders" feel. Watch for notices of these books, usually packed with the software itself; these are the "best buy" guides of gaming.

But for the most comprehensive coverage, the gamer should turn to one of the larger companion volumes.

Prima Publishing's reputation for this type of guide is impeccable. Each volume is by an author who has mastered the entertainment, then approached the writing task with a genuine sense of love and enjoyment. One volume, in particular, stands out as a field leader.

Harpoon Battlebook: The Official Strategies & Tactics Guide, by James DeGoey (300 pages, $18.95), provides a history of *Harpoon* (Three-Sixty), introductory and advanced tactics, a scenario-editor design guide, tables of data previously undisclosed (including sensor and weapon system data), battle set maps and guides to the weapon systems. This guide will enable players to get more out of the program than many could manage on their own.

MicroLeague Sports Association worked closely with Bill Gutman, Dave Weiner and Jonathan Markson on *MicroLeague Football Power Bundle* (Bantam, $39.95). The deluxe package contains *MicroLeague Football: The Coach's Challenge* for play on IBM PC-based systems (the disk can be exchanged for Amiga, C-64 or Macintosh versions through MLSA), along with *The Pro Football Scout Guide*. There's also an additional Super Bowl team disk.

The same trio (Gutman, Weiner and Markson) also worked on an earlier Bantam book/software package, *MicroLeague Baseball Official Field Guide and Disk* (Bantam, 486 pages, $26.95). Similar in makeup to the football package, this one offers the book together with a copy of the MicroLeague baseball game *The Manager's Challenge* on disk.

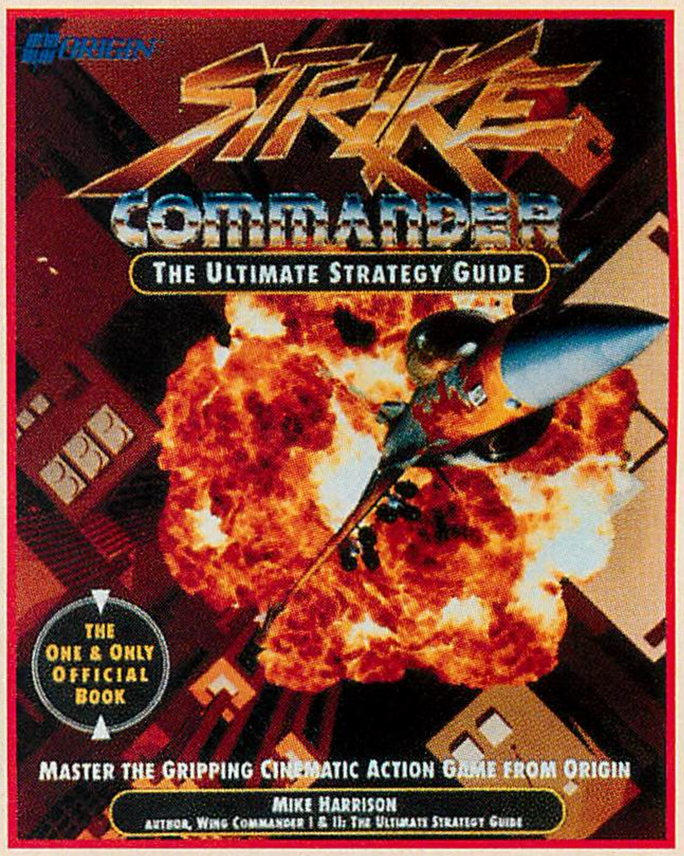
Peter Spear worked with Sierra On-Line on the first and second editions of *The Authorized Uncensored Leisure Suit Larry Bedside Companion* (*Bantam Game Mastery Series*, 241 and 331 pages, $9.95 and $11.95, respectively). The books provide explicit answers, clues, hints, walk-throughs and maps. Book one covers *In the Land of the Lounge Lizards*, *Looking for Love in Several Wrong Places* and *Passionate Patti in Pursuit of the Pulsating Pectorals*. Book two provides information on *Passionate Patti Does a Little Undercover Work*, as well as additional data on the other three *Leisure Suit Larry* games.

The King's Quest Companion, Second Edition, by Peter Spear (Silicon Valley, 544 pages, $14.95), covers the series from the first title through *King's Quest V*, with complete clues, answers, history, maps, legends and biographies of the characters.

Peter Spear and Richard Heimlich's book/disk combination *The Lemmings Companion: The Official Guide* (Prima, 250 pages, $24.95) is a guide for the delightful Psygnosis game, with strategy tips for saving the suicidal lemmings. The disk contains some new levels of the game, making this a must-have for *Lemmings* lovers.

Winning Your Wings

Flight programs are complex simulations of reality, and thousands of words have been written to help armchair pilots master the machines. The books all give ground-to-air instructions, complete descriptions of the aircrafts' features, guides to weaponry and advice on how to get the most entertainment from the software.



Wing Commander I & II: The Ultimate Strategy Guide and *Strike Commander: The Ultimate Strategy Guide*, both by Mike Harrison (280+ pages, $18.95), are written from the pilot's point of view, with behind-the-scenes explorations of the way the games were created by Origin Systems.

Rusel DeMaria and George Fontaine authored *The Official Lucasfilm Games Air Combat Strategies Book* (Prima, 470 pages, $18.95) to turn players into winners on three Lucasfilm games, *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* and *Battlehawks 1942*. A lovingly compiled book, it not only contains tips and hints for each game, but interviews from the series' developer, strategies for each historical mission, aerial stunts, historical backgrounds, real combat photos and reports from real pilots.

Jet Fighter II (Prima, 200 pages, $18.95), by Pete Bonanni, is for fans of Velocity Software's *Jet Fighter* program. It covers dogfights and landings at night, missile interception and enemy invasion.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat Handbook, by Russell Sipe and Mike Weksler (Prima, 256 pages, $18.95), includes craft performance charts, strategies for all missions, a discussion of the change in tactics between the three wars in the time period covered by the game and some special campaign games for the flyable aircraft.

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FOR THE AMIGA AND IBM PC

Screen shots shown are from the Amiga version of the game.

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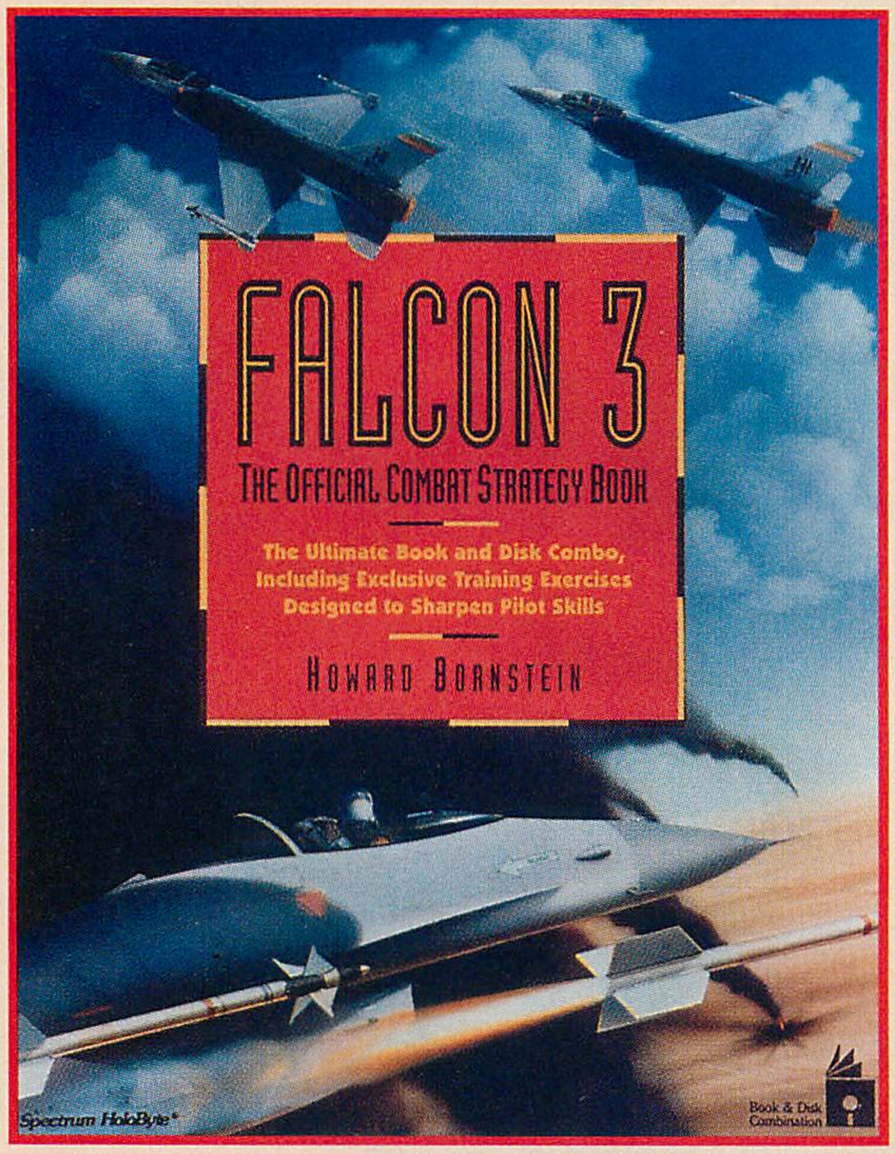
Falcon 3: The Official Combat Strategy Book, by Howard Bornstein (Prima, 275 pages, $27.95), includes all the tips and hints, as well as an IBM PC disk of flight plans.

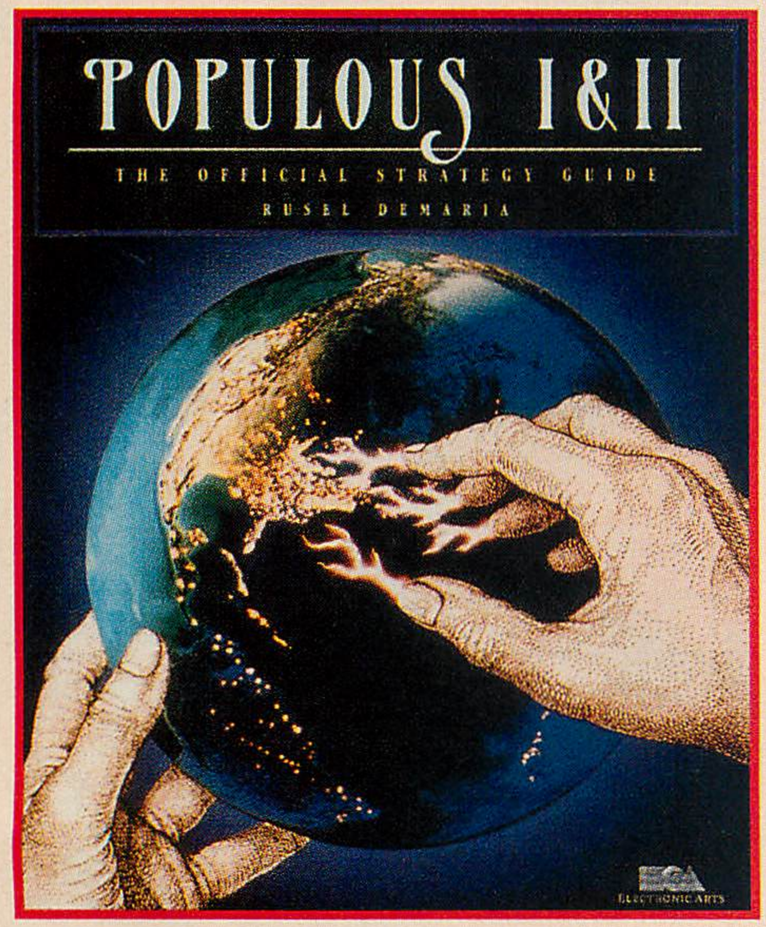
F-19 Stealth Air Combat (Silicon Valley, 208 pages, $14.95) and *Falcon Air Combat: A Fighter Pilot's Guide to Falcon, The F-16 Flight Simulator* (Silicon Valley, 208 pages, $14.95), both by ex-fighter-pilot Pete Bonanni, open the secrets of the aircraft and provide detailed guidance. Bonanni also penned *Flight Simulator Companion* (Bantam, 210 pages, $24.95) to cover Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 4.0* and *Flight Simulator Aircraft and Scenery Designer*. It covers all key features for beginners through advanced pilots and includes an IBM PC disk that contains new flight experiences, as well as new aircraft, airports and locales.



BUILD-A-WORLD BOOKS

Shay Addams wrote *Railroad Tycoon: Master Strategies for Empire Builders* (Silicon Valley, 229 pages, $14.95) to unveil Sid Meier's complex railroading game, with tips and hints, winning strategies and complete building guides.

Master Populous: Blueprints for World Power, by Clayton Walnum (SAMS, 203 pages, $16.95), provides expert advice, skill-building exercises and strategies to turn would-be conquerors into world-beaters.



Populous I & II: The Official Strategy Guide, by Rusel DeMaria (Prima, 320 pages, $18.95), has step-by-step strategy guides and complete explanations, including information from the programmers.

Maxis' *Sim* series has inspired numerous books. *The SimCity Planning Commission Handbook*, by Johnny Wilson (Silicon Valley, 193 pages, $14.95), describes how to use the program, provides an historical overview of how real cities develop and discusses ways to simulate real problems.

The SimEarth Bible, also by Johnny Wilson (Silicon Valley, 144 pages, $14.95), explores the program and suggests experiments and new approaches to planet planning.

SimEarth: The Official Strategy Guide (Prima, $18.95) is a collaboration between the game designers and author Rusel DeMaria. It has complete tutorials and solutions, with tricks, hints and lots of ecological insights.

AN ENDLESS FLOW OF WORDS

There are many more titles currently in development; computer-game strategists have an endless supply of advice, tips and help to impart, and the complicated games that currently dominate the software business need these dedicated writers to help players have more fun. Just keep watching the bookstores; there's probably a guide for *your* favorite game on someone's word processor at this very moment.

WHERE TO FIND THE BOOKS

If your local book or computer store doesn't have what you want, you can contact the publishers directly:

BANTAM BOOKS
666 Fifth Ave.
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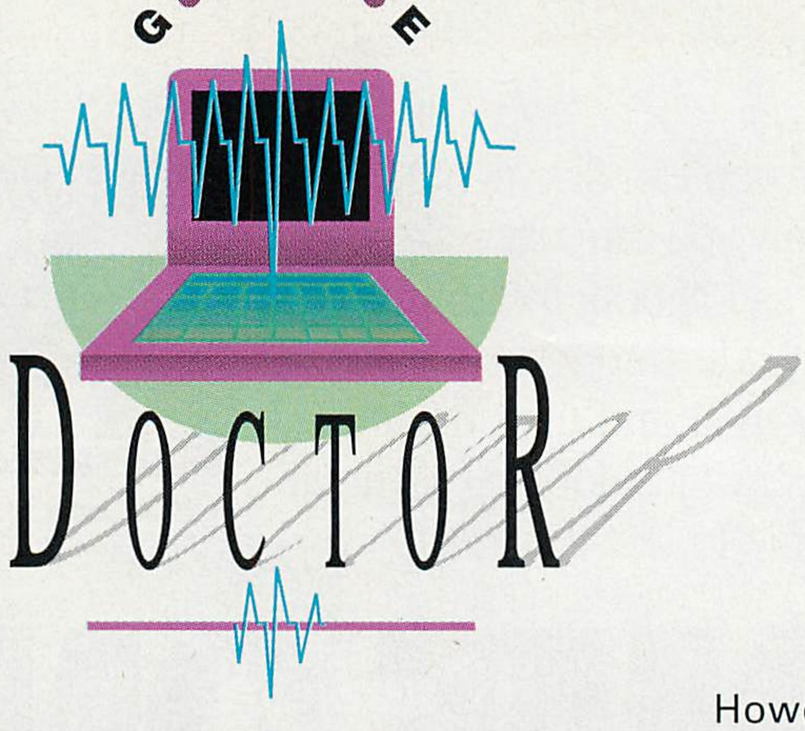


Micro-Medicinals and Video-Game Vapors

BY
THE GAME DOCTOR

Ah, spring is in the air! Baseballs are crashing through windows across America, millions of adolescents are experiencing the first pangs of love and, for some reason, we have more questions on hand than any time I can remember since the days when Atari ruled the planet.

Some of the issues we've been dealing with recently have become either old hat or even *more* complicated. (Guess what. There are still more *Wonder Boy* games on the way—at least one was, in fact, finished and being shown at the Winter CES! Yaaarrrggghhhhhh!) But one issue, it seems, never goes away—whose system has more whammos and whose has the most QPDs per pixel. You know, that technical stuff where folks fasten on a single statistic and decide to define one system's superiority to another's based solely on that number? Well, the war of the words continues, but you'll notice the manufacturers know where it's at—they advertise the *games*, not the systems. If system "A" has 120 ninjabytes and system "B" has only 80, who cares?! As long as system "B" has more games that meet your preference, that's all that counts.

That said, a very important question has been brought up that gives me an opportunity to apologize on behalf of myself and VG&CE for the typo error in my reply on column three, page 116, of the March '92 issue. The sentence reading "...the machine runs at less than 3 MHz," should have read "...the machine runs at less than 4 MHz." However, since I sent that copy belatedly, after realizing I had neglected to answer the second part of Mike Sieber's question in my initial submission, I was lucky to get it in at all.

In any case, reader Teresa M. Fuentes enclosed an article to me from another magazine which talks about the fact that, not only is the SNES slow, but its CPU is the 65816. To quote from this source: "Although it's a 16-bit chip, the 65816 is actually an upgraded version of the 8-bit 6502 chip found in the NES." What follows is Teresa's question based on that article.

question

Is the SNES not up to par with the rest? Can the chip in the SNES just be an overrated 8-bit processor? I'm totally confused. I know you probably can't publish this letter because the article is from another magazine. Anyway, happy tenth anniversary, and have many more!

—Teresa Fuentes
Miami, FL

answer

Okay, in the first place, let me state that the section of the article you sent went on to make many excellent points that put their earlier comments in perspective. They mentioned the special built-in features—such as rotation and scaling—possessed by the SNES, and echoed the foolishness of using one, two or even three stats as the basis for purchasing one machine over another. However, keep in mind exactly what the article said. The 65816 *is* a 16-bit chip. So what if it was based on the 6502? The 6502 was arguably the best game-playing CPU of its era.

There is no getting around its speed, however. It runs at exactly 3.58 MHz. Sega uses a 68000 CPU running at over 7 MHz for its Genesis. In terms of arcade-style games, it's going to take a lot of work on the part of the SNES developers to create games that zoom along at Genesis speed. The SNES developers have another handicap in that Sega developers have had a two-year jump on them. The SNES creators are only now beginning to work out ways to minimize the system's shortcomings while maximizing its strengths. Games like *Pilotwings* are the first act in what will likely be a long-running play pitting Sega against Nintendo. This time, Sega got off to the early lead, but it's not over till the fat lady sings, and, *ToeJam & Earl*'s Valkyrie aside, I haven't even heard the real fat lady clearing her throat yet.

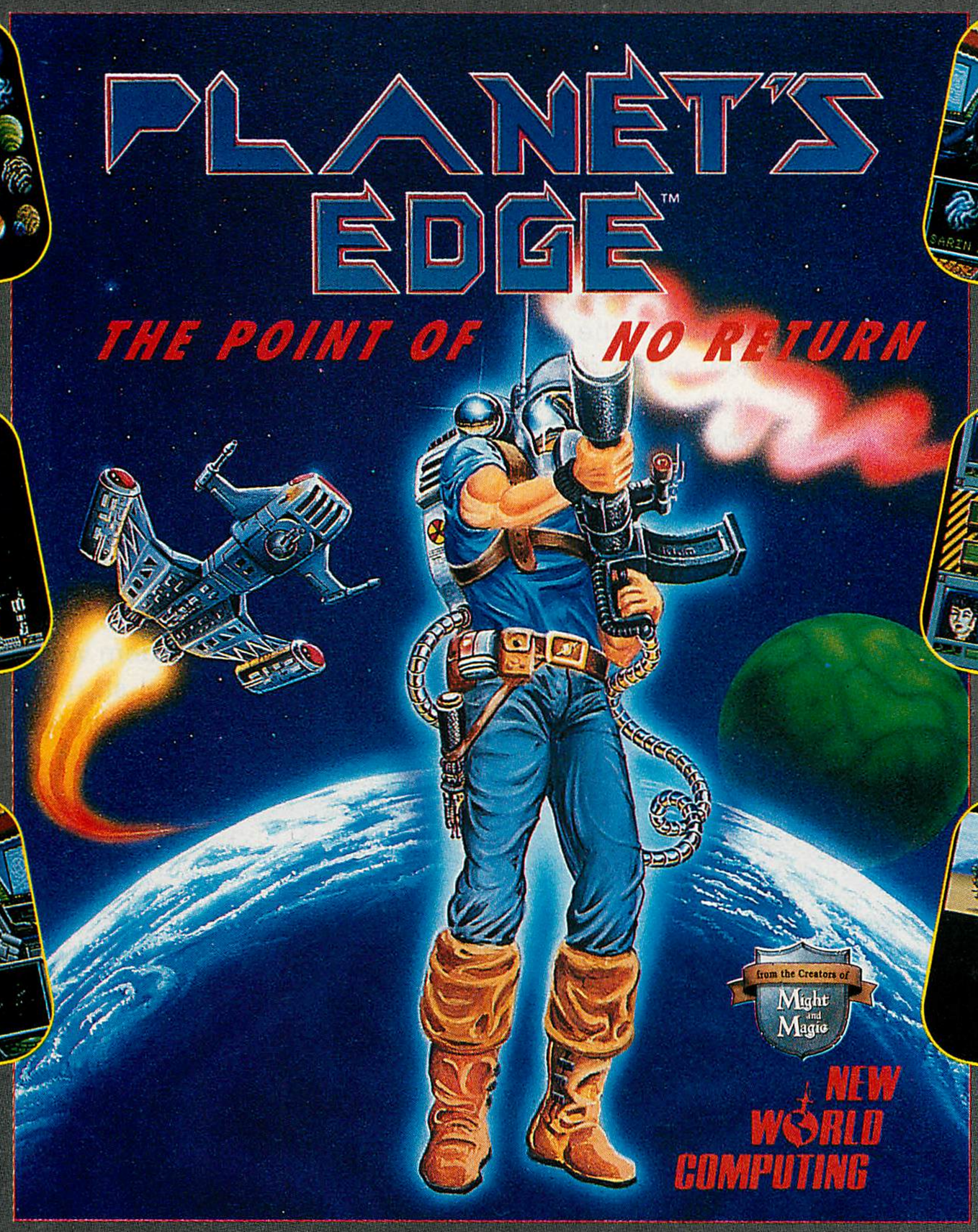
There are some tremendously impressive games coming for both systems, so remember Doc's Rule: Check out the best games on all systems, and buy the one whose games turn you on the most. Remember, early in a system's life cycle, games are apt to look only slightly better than the previous generation, but programmers are famous for being quick studies. Look at what Sega has done with its compression routines in games like *Sonic*. And on the SNES, who could fail to be impressed by games like *SimCity*? The only real question is whether or not the SNES will be able to deliver the high-excitement arcade games (such as Acclaim's *Super Smash TV* for the Genesis) in a form acceptable to the mass market of game players.

ADVENTURE INTO A LIVING UNIVERSE!

DISCOVER

DESIGN

CHALLENGE



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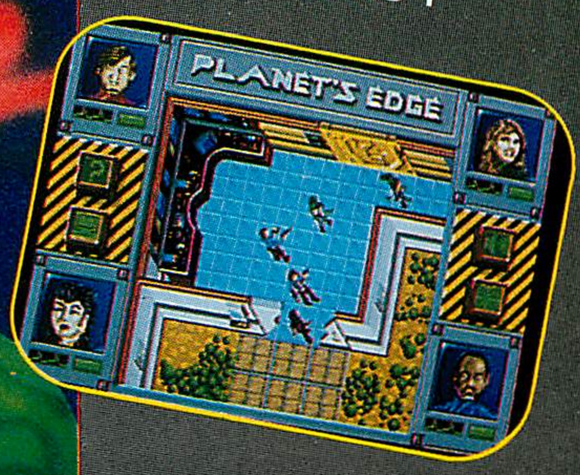

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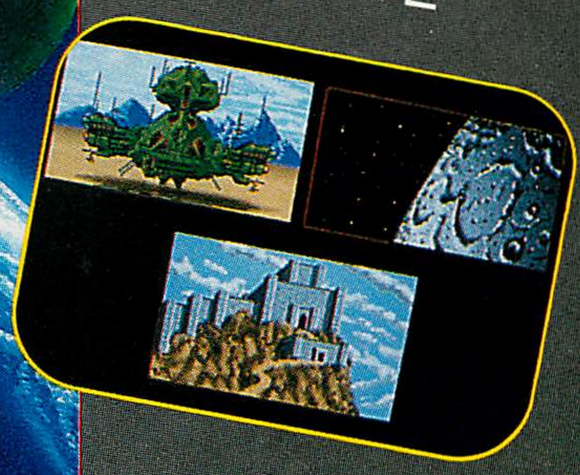

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question

I like Bill Kunkel's writing a lot, and I especially enjoy his annual baseball, football, etc., roundups. But I have a bone to pick with him regarding his article on "State of the Art," which appeared in *EG*. While I agreed with most of his selections, I can't imagine how he could list *Earl Weaver II* as representing "state of the art" in any way, shape or form. C'mon, Bill, don't tell me one of my favorite writers is selling out to Electronic Arts?

Finally, speaking of Kunkel—who *is* the Game Doctor anyway, Katz or Kunkel?

—Adam Aiello
Long Island, NY

answer

After confusing me with those two second-raters, I shouldn't answer this question at all, but I finally gave in and phoned Mr. Kunkel to ask him about his assessment of *EW II*. Here's what he told me: "I goofed. I based my ranking of *Earl Weaver II* on a preliminary version that was far superior to the version EA actually released. Sometimes a movie looks incredible in the early rushes but things go awry during filming and the finished product doesn't live up to the initial promise. Frankly, that's what happened here, and I hate to have to say this because I have enormous respect for Eddie Dombrower, who designed both *Weaver* games. I think perhaps they got overambitious, but, whatever the case, the game I would now put at or near the top in terms of state-of-the-art is probably DSI's *4-D Boxing* (also Electronic Arts). My apologies. And I'm not Arnie Katz! Good grief, where *do* people get these notions?

question

I was looking at some of my old Genesis posters when I noticed some major differences between my (own) carts and the one in the picture which I have enclosed with this letter. If I'm not mistaken, it looks like a Mega Drive cart. If so, how did they get it to fit in the Genesis? Also, what can you tell me about the TeleGenesis Modem?

—Jeremy Roark
Overland Park, KS

answer

The ad you enclosed does indeed seem to show a Mega Drive cart (with its distinctive scalloped sides) in a Genesis. You will notice, however, that the Genesis doesn't seem to be plugged in and is probably a mock-up produced just for that ad.

As for the TeleGenesis, it was to allow players to go head-to-head by phone line in specially designed games. However, it appears that the modem will never see the light of your local store: Sega has dropped it from its schedule of future products.

Q & A QUICKIES

Brad Weber of Wasilla, Arkansas, wonders if his power cord for the SMS is the same as for the Genesis? While the RF plugs generally work system to system, there are at least two minor variances between the input/output specs on the two power sources. The changes don't seem outrageous, but I wouldn't recommend it. And here are some questions I get on a regular basis: When did video games start? That's a toughie, actually, since experiments on very crude prototypes of what we would later dub "video games" date back to the late '50s/early '60s. In 1962, Steve Russell designed *Spacewar*, which is generally regarded as the first electronic game, and the inspiration of a fellow M.I.T. student named Nolan Bushnell. In 1966, Ralph Baer of Sanders Associates started working on a gizmo that would let people play games over their TV sets. ("I figured there *had* to be something else you could do with all those TV sets," he once told me.) A year later, he hired Bill Harrison and Bill Busch and put them in a small lab dubbed "the game room." They started work on what would eventually (May of 1972, to be exact, courtesy of Magnavox, which took over the project but, of course, kept the developers) become the first home video-game system, the Odyssey. Meanwhile, in 1971, Bushnell built a coin-op version of *Spacewar*. It flopped. The next year, however, he brought Bally/Midway his newest coin-op. Tired of his string of flops, they declined it. Bushnell then went ahead on his own, formed a company called "Atari" and tested the coin-op at Andy Capp's, a Sunnyvale tavern, where the machine quickly broke down—because it was jammed with quarters! The game was called *Pong*, and it became the subject of litigation, which resulted in Atari paying North American Philips (Magnavox) around a million dollars when it was decided that *Pong* was too close to a game Baer had demonstrated to colleagues several months earlier.

In 1973, Magnavox formally unveiled the Odyssey on a Frank Sinatra network TV special. Floppo! There is, of course, a lot more, but that's how video games got started.

In response to other Qs, at least one independent company is producing an NES adapter for the SNES. Also, thanks to the many readers who pointed out that the Genesis controller is downwardly compatible with the old Atari joystick, especially to Harvey A. Kong Tin, who explained the process so completely even *I* understood it. Of course, two of those extra buttons either won't work or will simply mimic the action of the first button, but, if you'd like to try Amiga, ST or old Atari 2600 games with the Genesis stick, have at it!

Next issue we have some BIG doings! One is that we will be printing the first list of names of readers interested in joining our International Gaming Pen Pals Club. People from *all* over have written in on this, and the reason we're so late is that we have a new Game Nurse—who we'll also introduce next month—and she's busy assembling the letters.

The other bonus next issue is the complete and unexpurgated saga of how there came to be *two* versions of *Tetris* on the NES. Several key sources are currently being interviewed, and we promise to have everything straightened out by next column. It's an amazing story, actually, and very few people, even within the industry, know all the details. So it's news hound time next month, as the Game Doc solves "The Mystery of the *Tetris*-ized Agent." Aloha!

Remember, send those questions, comments and corrections to the *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

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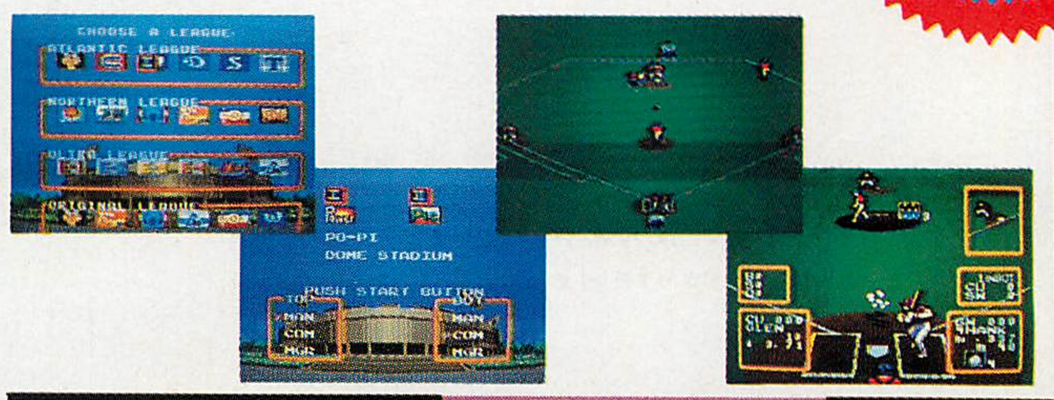

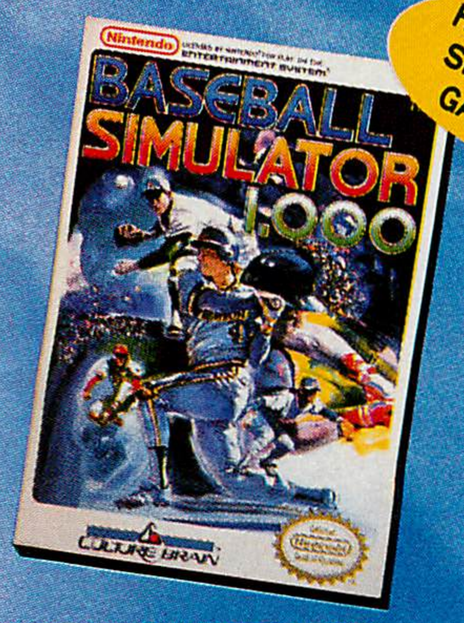

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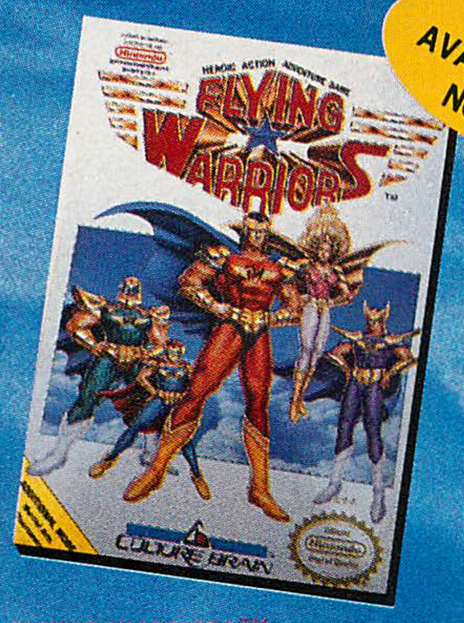

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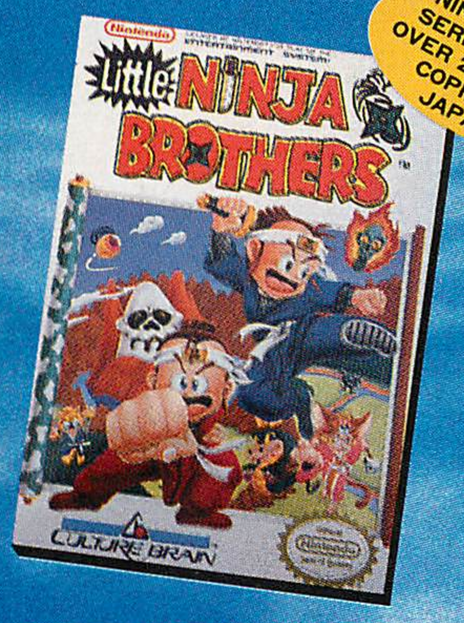

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FIRST LOOK

Heroes of the 357th

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

Midnight Software's *Heroes of the 357th* is a genuine rarity: a World War II-era combat flight simulator with some new wrinkles that take it beyond the usual polygon dogfight simulator. It combines superb and highly atmospheric graphics, an intuitive interface and all the frills expected in contemporary combat flight simulators.

The game begins with the player at a flight briefing and having three available options: Tour of Duty, Practice or Return to DOS. The Practice option allows gamers to hone their skills in the following categories, which comprise everything they will need to know in order to successfully complete a Tour of Duty: Fighter Sweep, Bomber Escort, Strafing Run, Special Weapons, V-1 Intercept and Free Flight.

The briefing begins with the lights in the cramped room going down while a black-and-white film is run showing aerial footage of the target area for the initial mission. Quite a bit of use is made of black-and-white footage simulation in *Heroes of the 357th*, and it works really well, especially the fade from black and white to color on the credit scene, in which we see the P-51s take off and land on the tarmac of the airfield. The game also makes use of alternative perspectives, including a top/down view of the entire squadron flying over a topographical map and external replays of combat sequences, as well as inside-the-cockpit point-of-view.

Unless they've already overdosed on World War II combat flight simulators, *Heroes of the 357th* should appeal to everyone from the casual flight simulator fan to the hard-core dogfight fanatic. Like EA's *PGA TOUR Golf*, *Heroes*' design and execution takes a well-worn category and, while never dazzling us with sizzle, simply does everything right, from making the game visually attractive to presenting it in the most user-friendly manner possible.

—Bill Kunkel

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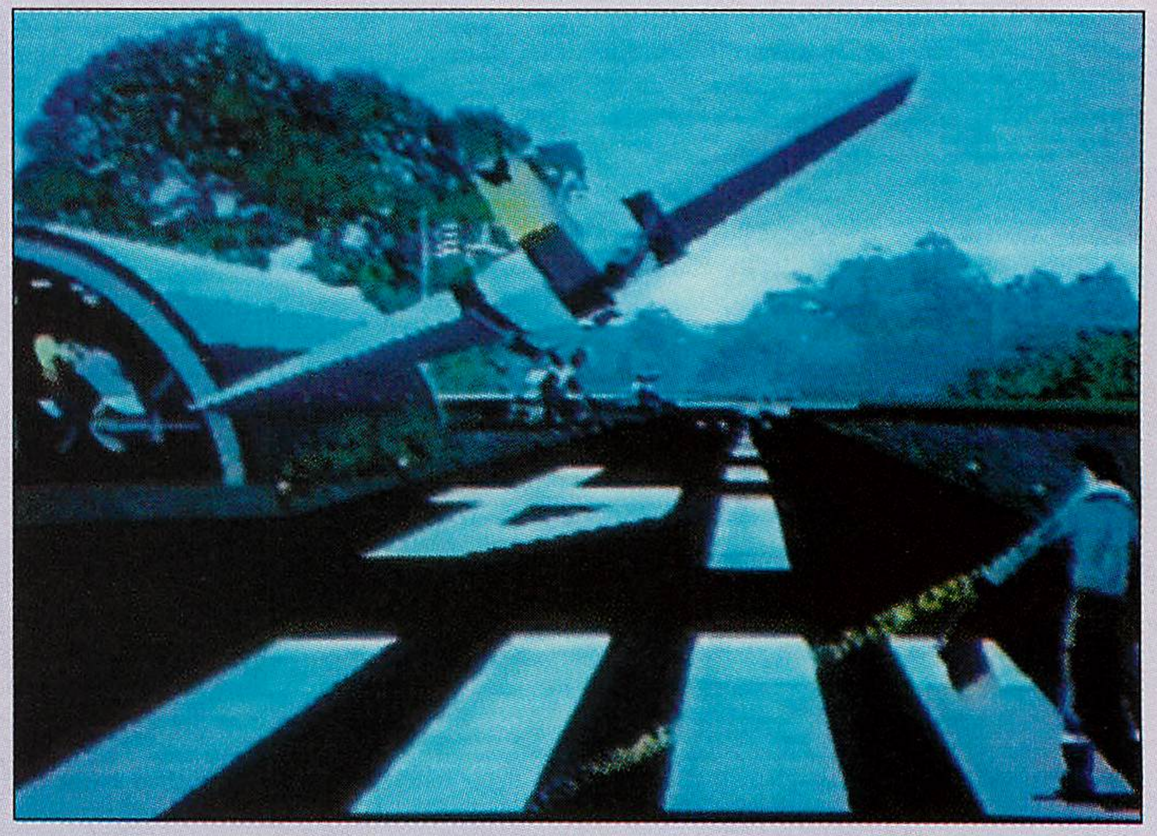
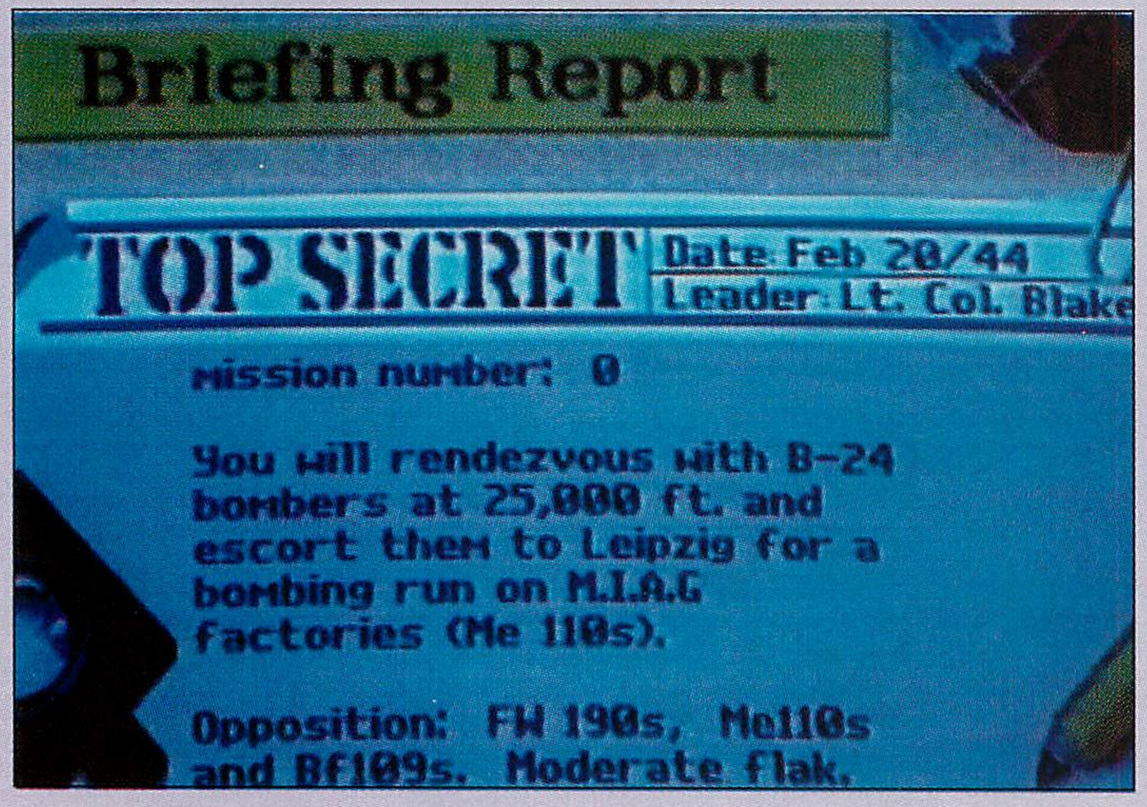
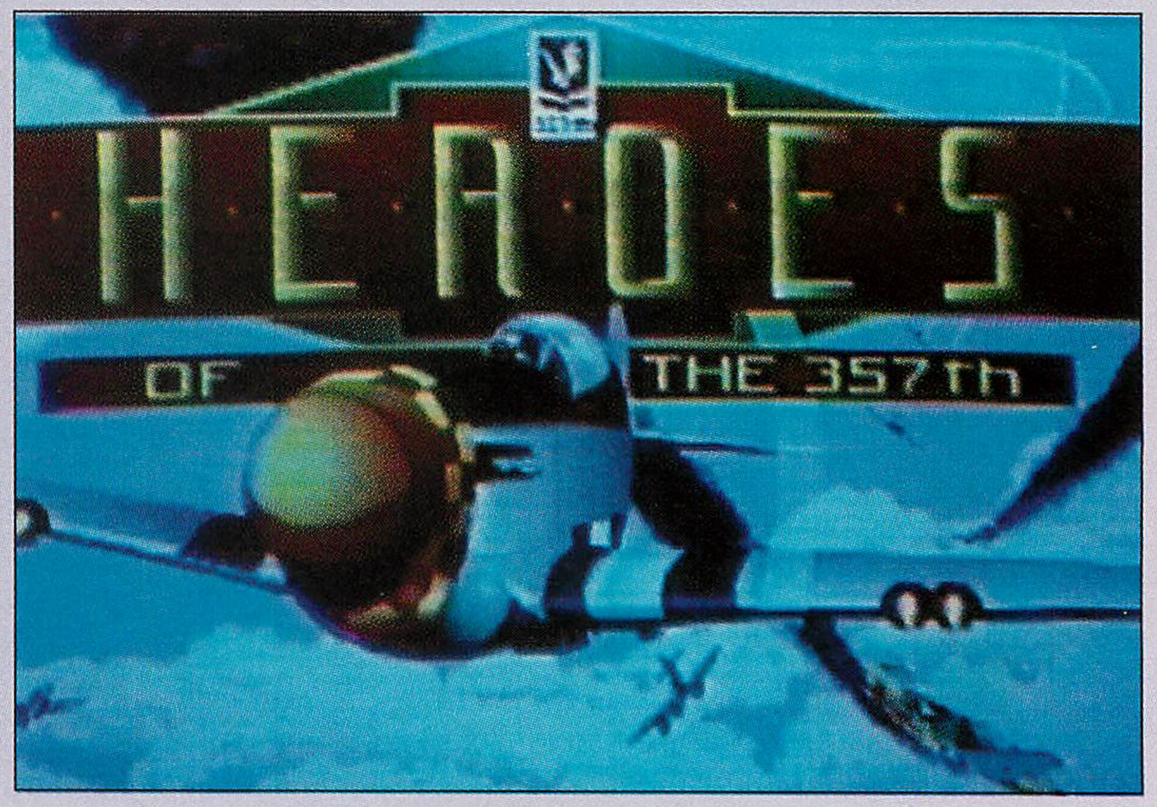


***Heroes of the 357th* should appeal to all fans of the World War II combat flight simulator category.**

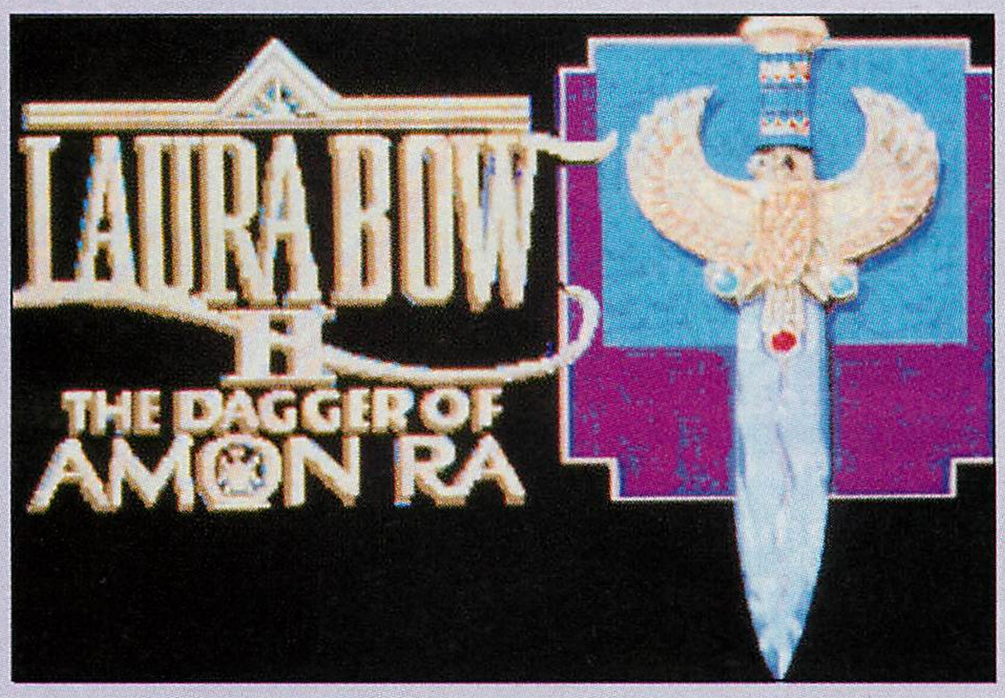




Laura Bow II: The Dagger of Amon Ra

SIERRA ON-LINE
Version Previewed: IBM PC

***Laura Bow II* will probably use the point-and-click interface found in Sierra's *Police Quest III*.**



Roberta Williams introduced her lady sleuth, Laura Bow, in last year's *The Colonel's Bequest*. Now graduated from college with a degree in journalism, Laura has forsaken the hothouse atmosphere of the Louisiana delta for the bright lights of 1926 New York. Her investigation of the theft of a priceless Egyptian artifact, the dagger of Amon Ra, from the Leyendecker Museum leads Laura back into her amateur detective sideline. When a body is found in a mummy case during a society bash at the museum, it is up to the player, as the intrepid Miss Bow, to solve the crime.

The command control system isn't in place yet, but the latest Sierra adventures, such as *Police Quest III*, suggest a point-and-click, no typing format with text readouts floated in boxes over full-screen graphics.

The artwork and animation in the sample sequences are absolutely wonderful. Somehow, Sierra's painstaking approach to the visuals pays off even more handsomely for a nonfantasy like *The Dagger of Amon Ra*. The street scenes evoke the Roaring '20s' ambience, and the shadowy exhibit rooms of the museum have the proper air of danger and mystery.

Although *The Dagger of Amon Ra* is far from ready for Williams' legion of fans, the clues point to another outstanding adventure. It looks like Sierra On-Line may have another hit series on its hands.

—Arnie Katz

Sierra On-Line
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter

PARAGON SOFTWARE
Version Previewed: IBM PC

Paragon Software of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, has begun playing with the big kids on the block with the release of Marc Miller's (*Megatraveller*) *Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter*, or just *Mantis* for the sake of brevity.

Mantis actually dares comparison with Origin's groud-breaking *Wing Commander* series, and, while it doesn't exactly match up to Chris Roberts' eye-popping visuals, it offers a strong plot with plenty of horrific overtones, not to mention some pretty impressive graphics of its own.

Mantis begins in the next century, with a female anchor sitting at a desk reading the news when she abruptly screams and pitches forward onto her desk. Suddenly, the skin erupts from her back and a huge, buglike alien crawls from her body. This signals the beginning of a double-front invasion. Humanity does what it can to battle the insects and learn how they got to the point where they were able to penetrate

Paragon's *Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter* may not be suitable for all audiences.

continued on page 98

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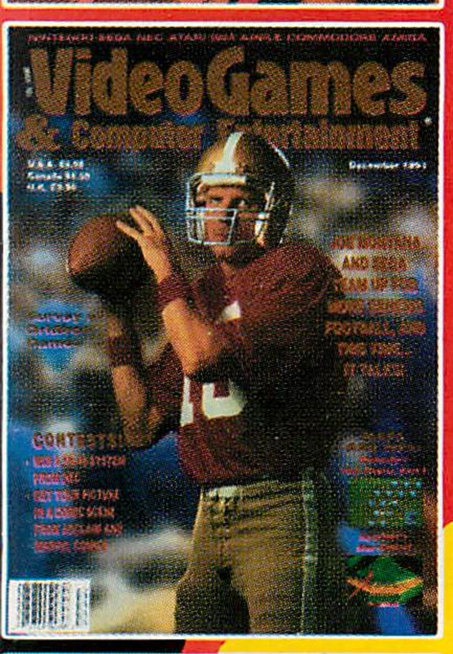

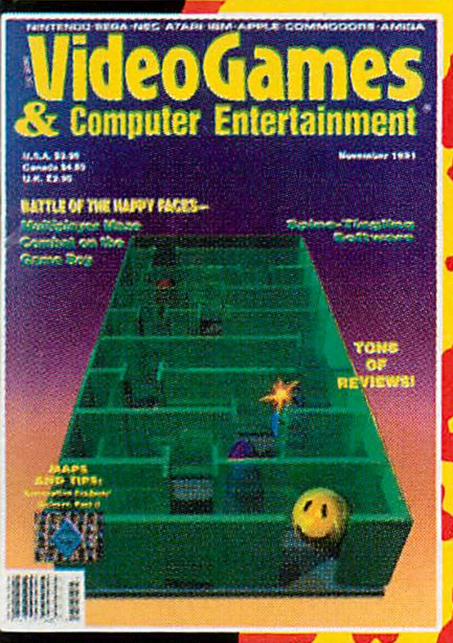

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continued from page 95

and incubate within human life-forms, when suddenly yet another alien race, the Sirian Alliance, sneak attacks our planet, dropping a million tons of nuclear bombs and killing roughly half the population. Discarding regional differences, the remnants of Earth unite into the Fist of Earth (F.O.E.) and move headquarters to Solbase, a space station safe from infestation by the space insects. There they wait for the inevitable second strike from the alliance.

Solbase's primary protection is the Mantis, an elegant fighter ship that is piloted by the user. The game contains lots of interesting subplots. Is there a connection between the Alliance and the parasitic bugs? *Or* were the Sirians merely exploiting a sudden weakness on our part?

The technology is not up to the level of Origin's, but there's a strong story line and graphics that are very impressive. Besides, how many times have bugs burst from human bodies in the *Wing Commander* games?

Because of its violence and disturbing plot line, however, *Mantis* may not be appropriate for young gamers.

—B.K.

Paragon Software
Berkshire Center, Suite 402
Greensburg, PA 15601
(412) 838-1166

The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes: The Case of the Serrated Scalpel

ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version Previewed: IBM PC

This is probably the most realistic and entertaining of the many attempts to bring the world's greatest consulting detective to the electronic environment. The game is presented with the appropriate gaslight glow in a number of connecting scenes, while play is driven by a series of click-on commands that deal with virtually every possible situation: look, move, talk, pick up, open, close, inventory, use, give, journal, files and set-up (which allows players to calibrate their joystick, go to the keyboard for input or eliminate the music).

The interface is largely intuitive, with the exception of conversation, but this should be easily mastered after a quick scan of the docs.

The plot revolves around the murder of an actress behind the Grady Theater. The murder is, at first, blamed on the Ripper, but nagging doubts compel Scotland Yard to seek the services of Sherlock Holmes and his trusty sidekick and biographer, Dr. John Watson. There are over 25 characters to converse and interact with, clues aplenty and even a journal, which permits the player to access any previous encounters with suspects and clues.

The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes is probably the most realistic attempt to bring the world's greatest consulting detective to the computer screen.

Join old friends like Lestrade, Gregson, Old Sherman, Toby and, it is hinted, perhaps even Moriarty himself in this 256-color recreation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Victorian England. An accurate map aids in the quest, as Holmes travels everywhere from the London Zoo to Covent Garden Square, and from the Thames Embankment (the most popular spot for bodies to wash up in the history of detective fiction) to, of course, his and Watson's own famous digs at 221B Baker Street. There's a lab to analyze clues and, when all else fails, Sherlock can always turn, albeit grudgingly, to elder brother Mycroft, the only man in England more astute than the great detective himself.

—B.K.

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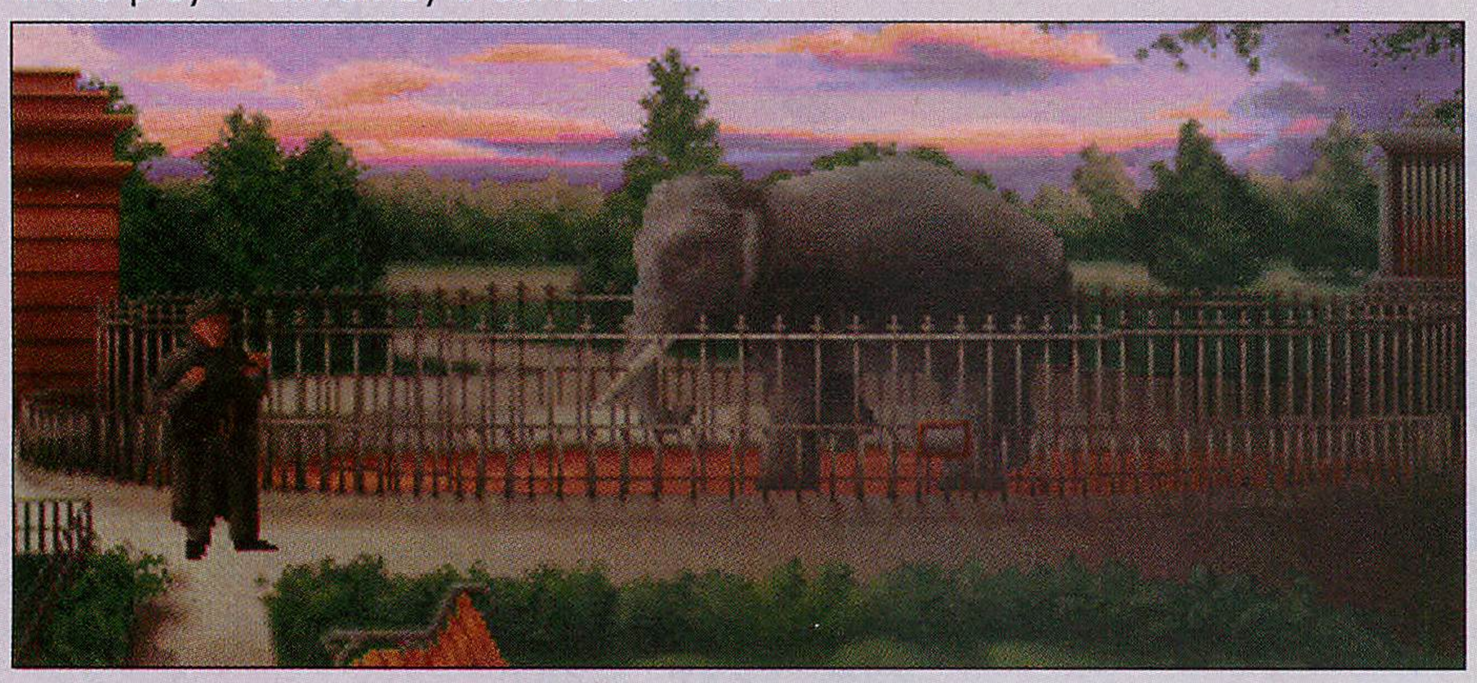

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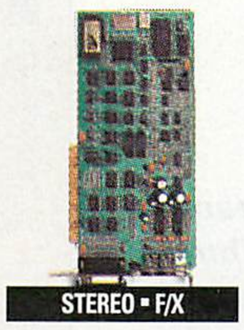

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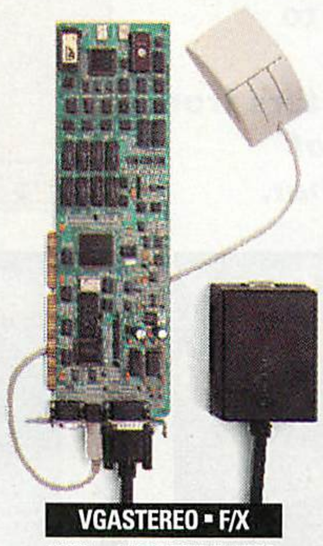

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Vengeance of Excalibur

VIRGIN GAMES

Versions: Amiga ($49.99), IBM PC ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Virgin Games has come a long way since the days of *War in Middle Earth*, but unfortunately, not far enough.

Vengeance of Excalibur is the sequel to *Spirit of Excalibur*, and players can import characters from that game, if they are not already included. King Constantine has had a spell of immobility cast over him. The castle is entered by the knight Sir Breuse and a shadowy figure. They steal Helye's magic book, King Andred's Gauntlets of Power, the Holy Grail and King Arthur's helmet, shield and sword (Excalibur). They also kidnap the court sorceress, Nineve. The player's quest, as a knight of the Round Table, is to find and retrieve all that was taken.

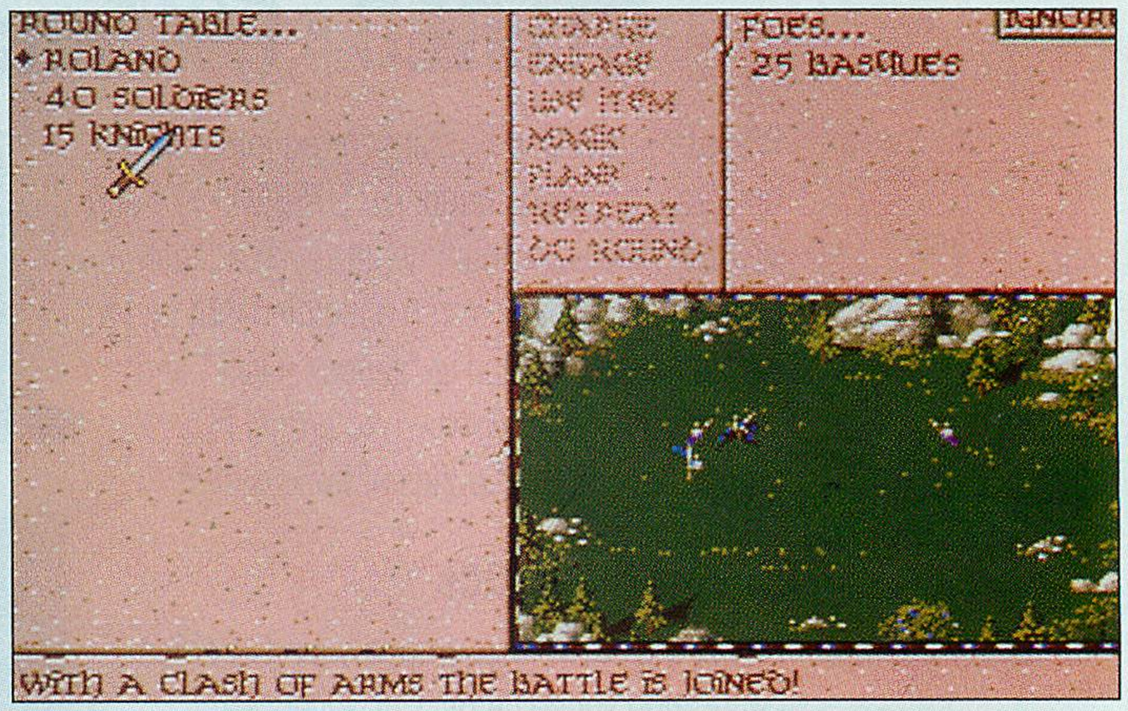
The game is presented on two levels: a map level and a scene level. It is understandable that the maps are two dimensional, but so are the scenes. In the style of *Monty Python's Holy Grail*, the knights generally walk onto each scene from the left side of the screen, rather than arriving on horseback. Clashes between individual knights are viewed from this same side perspective.

The game is mouse/icon driven, but keyboard commands are available, or the player can use a joystick to control the on-screen cursor. Multiple saves of games in progress are supported, and password copy protection is utilized.

The music is reminiscent of the type that accompanied silent films. (Roland, Ad Lib, CMS and Covox cards are supported.) The music toggle eliminates sound effects—which are few and far between. There are no digitized voices.

The VGA graphics are well above the level of antiques like *War in Middle Earth*, but they are still disappointing. Rather than utilizing the very large VGA palette to accurately shade all objects and backgrounds, heavy dithering was used. This is particularly noticeable in the death scene. The animation and scrolling (intro, map and death scenes) are choppy, even at 20 MHz. Clashes between armies are presented in quarter-screen windows, with minuscule character graphics.

Even if the foregoing minor annoyances could be ignored, certain failings in the software itself hold back the game. For example, people continue to hail you, even when they no longer have anything to say. File retrieves from a fast hard disk seem to be a bit slow. Several times during play testing, the game went into super-slow-motion, and screen fade-ins and animated side-view clashes became unbearable to wait through.



***Vengeance of Excalibur*, by Virgin Games, will allow the player to import characters from *Spirit of Excalibur*.**

With all of these technical difficulties, it would seem that the real revenge in *Vengeance of Excalibur* is carried out against the unhappy player, instead of the Arthurian villains.

—Frank Eva

Virgin Games
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Irvine, CA 92714
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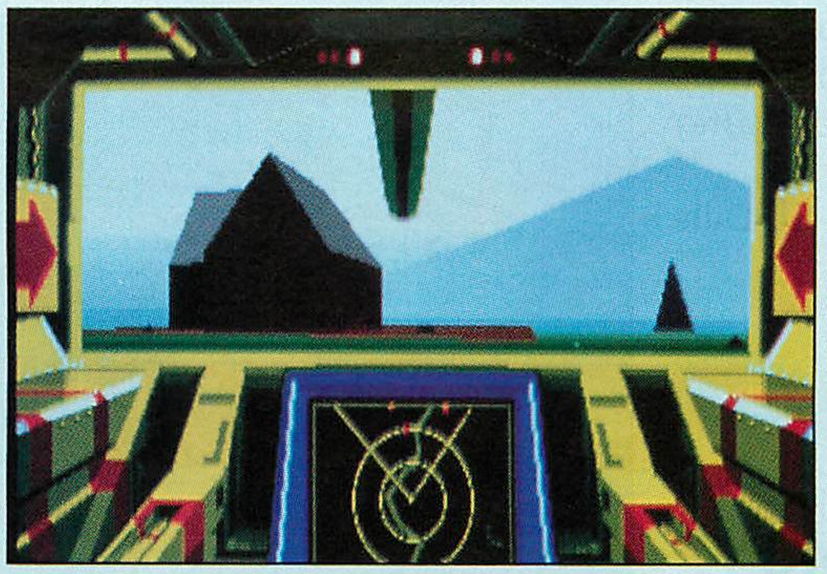


Travel to different cities is via a point-and-click interface on the map, but maneuvering within cities can be annoying. A 2-D overhead, three-quarter perspective view is used for movement on foot and, although it is easy to manipulate and offers good graphics, not enough of the area is depicted. Without frequent map reference, it's possible to walk right into a firefight, when earlier detection would have allowed use of long-range weapons. Sometimes the party is engaged even though the tactical map doesn't show where the fire is coming from. If unable to target something with the longest range weapon, it's impossible to determine which direction to travel to get into range to return fire. Also, after a firefight, when looking to collect the weapons of the enemies, their locations are lost from the tactical map. The player then has to walk around in his narrow view, locating the bodies strictly from memory and using expanding search patterns to find the goods.

The other method of travel and combat is from within a vehicle. This involves a first-person 3-D perspective of either the driver or gunner. Other items worth mentioning: Not all missions are death and destruction, some are missions of mercy; the combat system is very effective in modeling the original game; the opening sequence is very well done; and there is a lot of replay value in the program.

Twilight 2000 makes good use of the computer to add electronic life to the well-known paper game. While it's a full play

Twilight 2000

PARAGON SOFTWARE
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

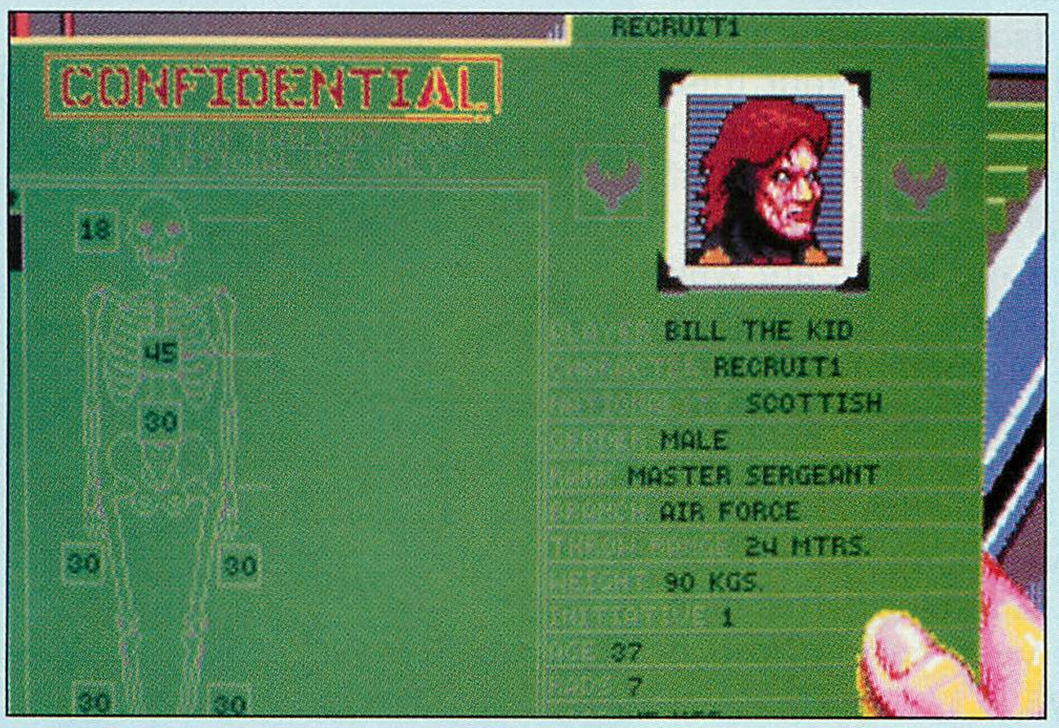
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

It was no surprise when Paragon announced that it would create *Twilight 2000* for the computer. It is, after all, perhaps the most successful pen-and-paper, post-apocalyptic board game to date to make the jump to home computer. Paragon's talents at doing translations from nonelectronic games continue to grow; they've managed to avoid many of the imperfections found in the translation of the *MegaTraveller* series. *Twilight 2000* offers a much improved graphical gaming environment for both exploration and combat. (The latter is the real focus of the game.)

Players create a platoon of up to 20 characters using random or manual generation, both of which allow transfer of characters to the pen-and-paper game, if desired. Each mission uses a maximum squad of four, and once characters are dead there are no resurrections (except by restoring a saved game). Each member's statistics are kept for total missions and kills, but there is no "experience point" system, whereby skills/levels increase over time.

To be successful, squads must be balanced for combat, noncombat and linguistic skills. A broad base of language is essential as key NPCs only speak certain languages. It is possible to radio base for the needed translator, but only if someone in the platoon has that skill.

The platoon is a ragtag group of mercenaries from varied backgrounds and nationalities, assigned to support the city of Krakow and resist the forces of the evil Baron Czarny, who seeks to rule all of Poland in an iron grasp. Initially, the player has weapons, ammunition and medical and other supplies that the individual characters purchased with their mustering-out pay. The first several missions provide vehicles as payoffs, from HUMVEEs to M1-A1 Main Battle Tanks.



Paragon has improved its gaming environment in *Twilight 2000*.

experience in itself, there is a lot of potential for add-on mission disks. Let's hope they're developed, since most computer warriors are certain to want more!

—Ed Dille

Paragon Software
Berkshire Center, Suite 402
Greensburg, PA 15601
(412) 838-1166

Mission Impossible

KONAMI

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

The opening sequence of Konami's *Mission Impossible* is a pulse-pounder, especially for those who prize the television series. Digitized still-life photographs and short animations (such as the match being struck and lighting the fuse) are accompanied by a completely faithful rendition of the original opening score (sounds fantastic on a Sound Blaster or Ad Lib card). Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to unravel the mystery behind the murders of some prominent judicial, corporate and political figures. It appears the killers are well connected, as the latest one has just been released from jail by a prominent and well-respected judge for insufficient evidence to prosecute. Naturally, if you or any of the IMF agents are compromised in the course of the investigation, we will deny any knowledge of your existence. Good luck! This tape will self-destruct in five seconds (and it does, very convincingly).

Players establish a Mission Impossible team of up to four agents. The game comes with pictures and profiles of numerous pre-generated agents (which serve the secondary function of document-based copy protection), but the player can use these same photographs to develop his own profiles and code names for the operatives. Unfortunately, by the time one is into the agent creation/selection process, the theme music that was so exciting at first has repeated for about the fourth time, no doubt causing most players to toggle it off.

Initially, the player sees an overhead view of a portion of the city, which can be scrolled in any direction (mouse control is highly recommended). The names of all major locations appear on a status/message bar, and the left side of the screen holds a panel of icons to perform certain actions, such as assigning an agent to track a particular NPC.

***Mission Impossible* is an intermediate-level adventure offering a challenge to a broad range of players.**

Buttons one through four represent individual agents. After selecting one, followed by the zoom option, the on-screen perspective shifts to show all four agents standing in the IMF headquarters building. From this vantage point, the mouse either directly moves a character or points to an area within the room for the character to move to.

Along the top of the screen are numerous point-and-click icons for functions not covered on the other panel, such as take, use, talk, etc. One's initial action should be to access the IMF computer, which can only be done while at headquarters, and check the records of any phone taps. Thus the player learns of an important rendezvous in MacArthur Park, so the first objective is to get a character headed in that direction to see what happens. The beauty of *Mission Impossible* is that the four characters can do four separate things at the same time.

Don't forget to rest the agents periodically or they'll get sloppy. Set up a watch rotation so one is always sleeping; this seems to work better than keeping all of them up until they all need to rest.

Mission Impossible is an intermediate-level adventure offering a challenge to a broad range of players. A polished product with a solid story line, nonetheless, like so many of its brethren in the genre, it is a one-play shot with no benefit to replaying the game at a later time.

However, the quality of the graphics, plotting and smooth interface more than justify adding *Mission Impossible* to the collection of amateur computer sleuths.

—E.D.

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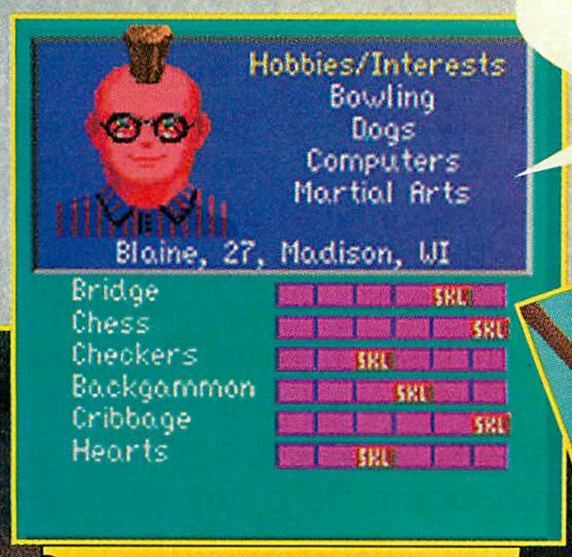

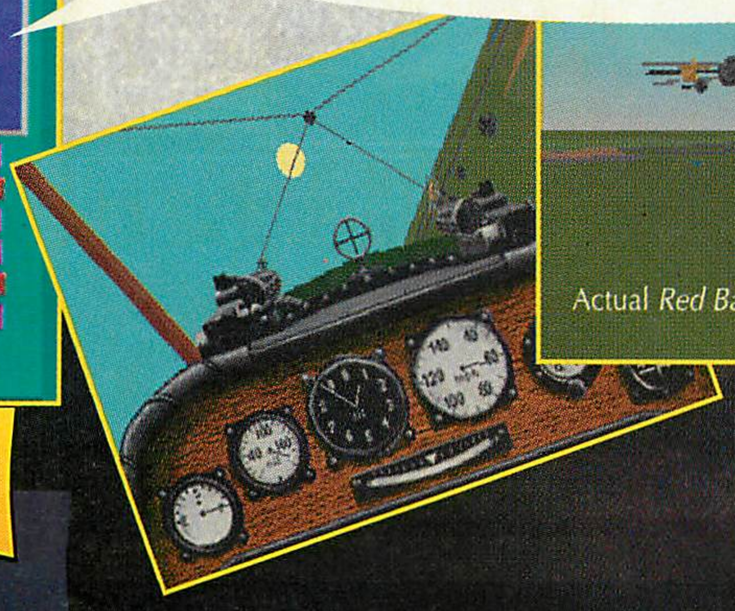

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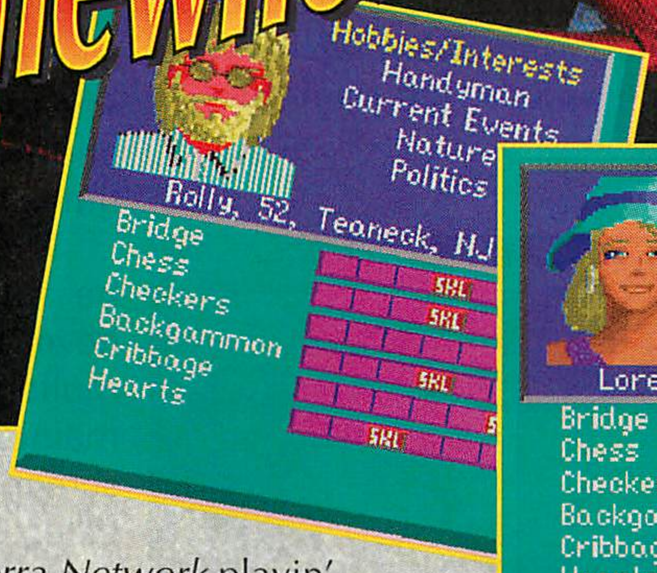
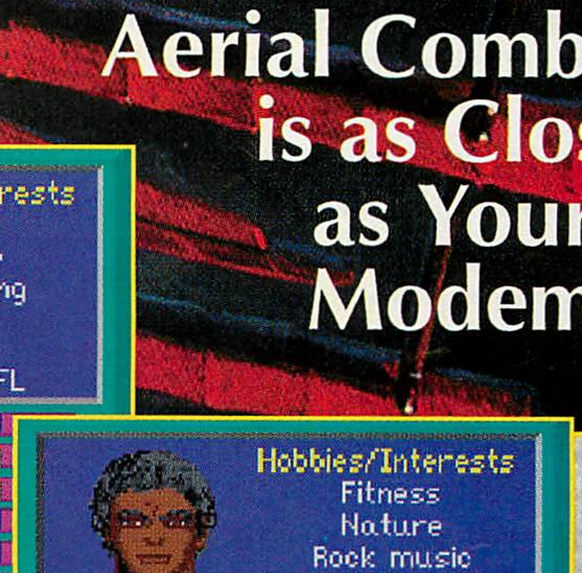
"hen I shot down the Red Baron somewhere over New Jersey..."





Head-to-Head Aerial Combat is as Close as Your Modem

I'm tellin' ya, it all started with a bridge game. I was on *The Sierra Network* playin' with my regular buds, Rolly, Loretta, and Michael, when Rolly started sayin' how cool New Jersey was, and puttin' down Wisconsin. I knew my only choice was to blow Rolly out of the sky. I challenged him to a game of *Red Baron*. Rolly took off in a Fokker tri-plane, and Michael was right behind him. I was in the air in a flash with Loretta covering my tail. I caught up to Rolly, and we were goin' at it hammer and tongs. Loretta came screamin' in from below, and I was, like, way bummed, because I wanted to blast Rolly myself. But suddenly Rolly pulled a slip-turn, choked his engine, and was all over Loretta like a bad haircut. She was history. It was just me and him. We were in tight, climbin' all the while. That sucker could turn on a dime, but my bi-plane was fast and mean. He almost got me, though. I was chasin' him when he spun around and went for me. Thinkin' fast, I climbed up, like I was runnin' away. He got excited and went for me. I spun hard to the right, and got him in my sights. I punched more holes in him than New Jersey has turnpike exits. I watched him spin out of sight, belchin' smoke and flames. Teach *him* to call me a cheesehead.

N E W F O R S P R I N G 1 9 9 2

Multi-Player *Red Baron* on *The Sierra Network*. Call 1-800-SIERRA -1

Requires IBM-compatible (286 or better), 640K memory, hard disk, high-density floppy drive, and Hayes-compatible modem. Supports Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Thunderboard, and Roland CM-32L and MT-32/LAPC-1. *Red Baron* requires a 2400 baud modem. Extra fees may apply

CIRCLE #137 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Manhattan Missions

KONAMI

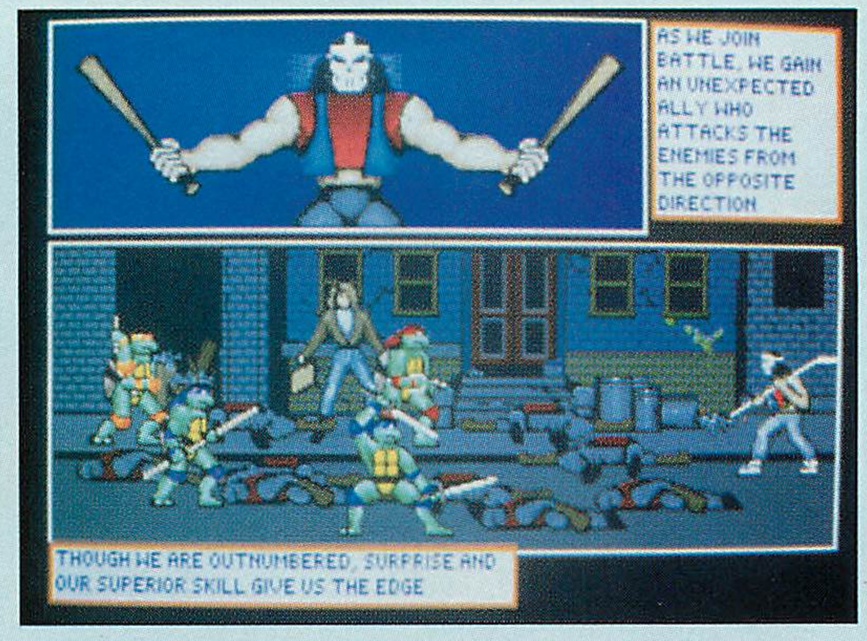
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

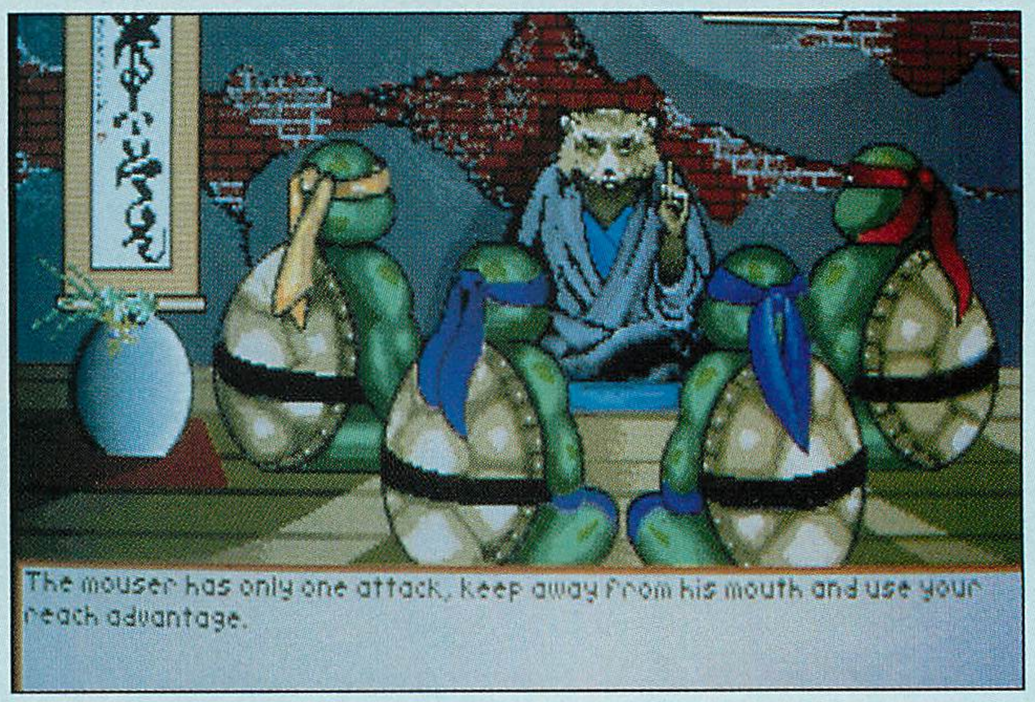
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

The Turtles are back and better than ever! *TMNT: Manhattan Missions* (*TMNT III*) offers outstanding graphics that rival those of the *TMNT* coin-op, and 15 levels of increasing difficulty to challenge the most dedicated among the hot sticks. Shredder and his minions have started a major crime wave throughout Manhattan, and the Turtles only have 48 hours of game time to stop him.

Individual missions are played in real time, but one will have to rest the Turtles periodically to replenish their energy. This is accomplished in one-hour increments, with several hours required to completely restore all the Turtles if they have been injured. As such, the 48-hour constraint is the limiting factor that ends most games in failure.

The game opens with the Turtles watching April on television reporting crimes occurring throughout the city. If the player selects the city map option, he initially sees five yellow lighted areas that represent the activities of ivory smugglers, arms dealers, bank robbers, extortionists and arsonists. These are the first five levels of the game, and completion of any one opens the next level for that opponent (e.g., Extortionist—Level 2). There are three levels for each illegal activity, and it is possible (though not necessary) to play all three of a given group before switching to different criminals. Once a level is completed, its light turns green and it will not be accessible again. Each time a level is entered but not completed, the light shifts to orange then red, and that portion of the city begins to decay on the map under the ravages of continued crime (and the player will have wasted a lot of precious time).





***TMNT: Manhattan Missions* offers graphics that rival the coin-op's.**

Before attempting to enter the mission areas, wise players can benefit from the training room. This feature allows the player to select a turtle and an opponent from any level of the game. Prior to entering the arena, Master Splinter offers a few choice thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of that opponent. Heed his ideas. Also, after these battles, spend some extra time manipulating each of the turtles to learn all possible attack and defense movements.

Document-based copy protection is used, and the manual is fairly comprehensive. Although keyboards are supported, joystick control is really required to be effective at higher levels. The musical score sets the tone of the game and never becomes annoying, as is sometimes the case in arcade games.

Two-player mode allows two Turtles to be selected in a single mission, but it is never possible to have all four on screen simultaneously, as in the coin-op. The two remaining Turtles are assumed to be just offscreen, ready to jump in and replace their fallen brothers if necessary. If three Turtles are injured, meaning one of the players cannot replace the last Turtle fallen, the level is over and the players must rest, whereas in one-player mode, all four Turtles must be injured before a level is lost. This balances the assumed advantage of being able to fight with two on-screen characters in each level, as it is often necessary to rest all of the turtles when one of them is already at full strength or close to it. In one-player mode, you can play until all of the Turtles are injured before resting any of them.

Finally, completion of each level increases the attributes of one of the turtles, reflecting the experience he gained in defeating those opponents. Don't focus on a favorite Turtle or they won't have the balance necessary to be effective in higher levels.

See ya later, dude!

—E.D.

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(708) 215-5111

Conan the Cimmerian

VIRGIN GAMES

Version: IBM PC ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

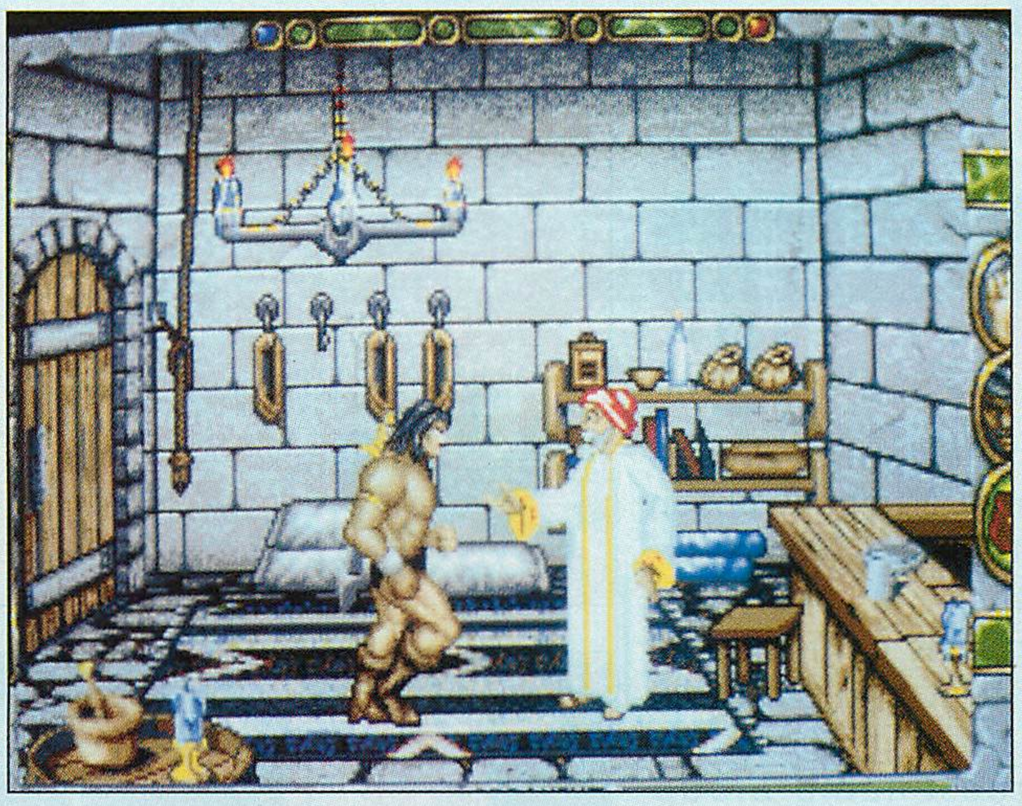
Robert E. Howard's Conan differs greatly from the grunting Arnold Schwarzenegger version of his sword-bearing hero and the many arcade games patterned after him. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian* is not only a walking death machine, but also an intelligent strategist and leader of men. Virgin Games' *Conan the Cimmerian* casts a more positive light on the original sword-and-sorcery warrior and brings to life the Conan of the original Howard novels.

Conan the Cimmerian incorporates fierce battles, great magic, evil villains and nasty monsters into a large game full of adventure in the Hyborean Age. It begins with an animation sequence to set the stage for the hero's quest for justice in the game. Conan's young wife, and many others, are brutally slaughtered by the forces of Thoth Amon, leader of the snake-worshiping cult of Set. As Conan, the player must ultimately defeat Thoth Amon and avenge the deaths of his people, but only after a number of mini-quests and seven game segments, or episodes.

At first there seems to be no purpose to Conan's wanderings, but the subplots and stories learned by talking to game characters point the player in the right direction. There is a lot to do in *Conan*, not all necessary for the completion of the game. This complexity translates to a slightly different experience for each person, depending on the mini-quests and subplots followed.

Conan expands on the interface from Virgin's *Excalibur* games; however, *Conan*'s interface is cleaner, the animation is smoother and the episodes are more easily digestible. Players spend most of their time with a three-quarters perspective, top/down view of the current city, dungeon or lair. The other view is the full-figure side view seen inside buildings and during combat. The mouse is the best input device, and gamers can click on Conan in both views for character information and options. A convenient inventory icon brings up the contents of Conan's pack, windowed for further examination and use.

After Conan leaves a city, a map of Hyborea appears on the screen with more destination choices. A nice touch in *Conan the Cimmerian* is that certain locations on the main map only appear after the player completes various tasks or discovers key information. This keeps the computerist in the dark as long as Conan, and only allows travel to these places when Conan has earned it.



***Conan the Cimmerian* is good, solid entertainment, full of surprises and excitement.**

Conan the Cimmerian is chock full of the magical items, swords, gems and potions that fans of this hero expect. In addition to his skills with various objects, Conan also spends a lot of time using his sword. Combat is limited to selection of the correct sword swing for the specific foe (e.g., only a chop will defeat the guards in the city of Shadizar). After the player chooses the swing, he need only time the blows to succeed in combat. The ease of combat reaffirms the game's concentration on strategy and exploration.

The division of the story into episodes makes this huge game more accessible for beginners, yet still very challenging for veteran adventurers. The mini-quests require the player to think like Conan and keep eyes open for objects and powers that may help.

The music and graphics definitely add to the enjoyment of *Conan*. The graphics and animation are nice, especially the variety of views and locations in the game. Even more impressive are the music score and sound effects, which change as events progress.

Conan the Cimmerian is good, solid entertainment, full of surprises and excitement. The only problems are the occasions when the on-screen character gets stuck near a wall and, more importantly, the glitch resulting in foes who were already defeated in battle reappearing when the player returns to that location.

Bugs aside, the program presents the legendary character in a different light than previous games, while keeping intact all of the combat, magic and characters that made Conan famous. Plus, you get that great Boris Vallejo cover art, as well as the manual and map printed on parchmentlike paper. Down with Thoth Amon and the Temple of Set!

—Russ Ceccola

Virgin Games
18061 Fitch Ave.
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

Amnios

PSYGNOSIS

Version: Amiga ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Psygnosis has been designing arcade games for a few years now. Most have been excellent, some revolutionary (*Shadow of the Beast* and *Lemmings*) and others just short of the mark. Psygnosis games range in difficulty, from the first two absurdly picky and difficult *Shadow of the Beast* games to the more reasonable *Blood Money*. The games also range in style, from action/arcade to adventure to simulation. *Amnios* is the latest shoot-'em-up action game. Not only graphically and sonically excellent, *Amnios* gets top honors from a design standpoint because, like all the great Taito arcade games of the past, more of the intricacies of the game come into play as the player gets better, and the game is "fair" to players who spend a lot of time gathering power-ups and other bonuses by not taking them away when they lose a life.

Amnios takes place on a series of ten living planets that must be destroyed because they pose a threat to all the other inhabitants of that area of the galaxy. Players move across the surface of the planets in a scrolling overhead view. It may first seem the object is to shoot everything that moves. Actually, the primary goal is to decrease the amount of heart, brain, living parts and eye matter of the planets by shooting the appropriate moving parts. Also, players must defeat the planets' guardians, save stranded humans and build up weapons and special powers along the way. Powers carry over from planet to planet, so it is important to do well on the earlier planets in order to make it to the later ones.

Joystick control is limited to thrusting and turning, a technique easy to learn on the first game. Besides attacking anything that moves, players must also save humans and synthesize weapons. Both functions involve the father ships that wander the planet.

The planet surface takes up most of the screen, except for a bioscanner (radar) display in the lower-right corner. Humans, father ships, DNA and enemy creatures appear as colored dots on the bioscanner. Players must locate humans and DNA on the bioscanner, then fly over them to pick them up. The ship may carry only one person or DNA strand at a time.

The next step is to fly over the father ship. Humans take refuge on the ship, and the DNA strand begins to mutate. A little later, an icon for a more powerful weapon, shield, etc. replaces the DNA strand from which it was synthesized. Father ships also repair damage to the player's ship, as long as it stays within its boundaries. It is obvious at this point that there is more to *Amnios* than shoot-'em-up action.

The combination of mindless action and strategy makes *Amnios* a near-perfect arcade game.

The surfaces of the planets are interesting, gruesome and detailed. There are three types of planets, defined by the surface graphics and features: squama, foliage and epidermis. Foliage planets have lots of plants and creatures disguised as flora. Epidermis planets look like skin, with all sorts of nasty things sticking out. Shoot the moving parts on the planets and explosions indicate success, as do the graphs for the four planet-part types at the top-right of the screen. The way to complete a level is to destroy enough of the parts for the planet to explode.

Graphics, animation, music and sound effects are all top-notch. The planets come to life on the screen, and many special effects bring the arcade game into the 1990s. For instance, when the planet is close to extinction, as soon as the guardian appears, the surface takes on a red tint, like the lights were turned out and infrared vision kicked in. All of the details of the environment remain clear and distinguishable.

Players encounter new details as they progress. The music and sound effects complete the loop and, together with the

JETTISON TO THE PLANETS

THE ADVENTURES OF STAR SAVER™

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- Baffling Bungy Jumping
- Rockin' Robot Power
- Mega Metal Madness

Has your Mom or Dad ever made you dress-up in a suit? It's a total drag. You can't play. Can't move. Can't get dirty. Can't get comfortable. Can't have any fun. Can't, can't, can't! Well, you can change all of that. Try stepping into the Tom Wolf robot suit.

This thing can do some amazing stuff. It has an intense blaster gun that can rapid-fire triple shots if you're on the lookout for charge-up items. You can grab a jet-pack and jolt those nasty aliens from the air. You even become faster in this super suit. The most radical thing, however, is its incredible bungy cord life ropes. These super rubber-bands can pull you out of some tight squeezes. You only get a few of them though, so, don't stretch your luck!

Oh, by the way, you need to use this suit to save your girlfriend and the planet against this alien invasion. But, when you're havin' this much fun, that's just part of the game.

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CIRCLE #138 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

graphics, make a game that plays best with the lights out and the volume turned up. *Amnios* would be downright scary on a large-screen TV!

Hats off to the designers. The combination of mindless action and the strategy associated with the father ships makes *Amnios* a near-perfect arcade game—as good as they come. Let's hope Psygnosis continues to put out more games like this; they'll satisfy the appetites of arcade-game purists everywhere.

—R.C.

Psygnosis
29 St. Mary's Court
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-3553

Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

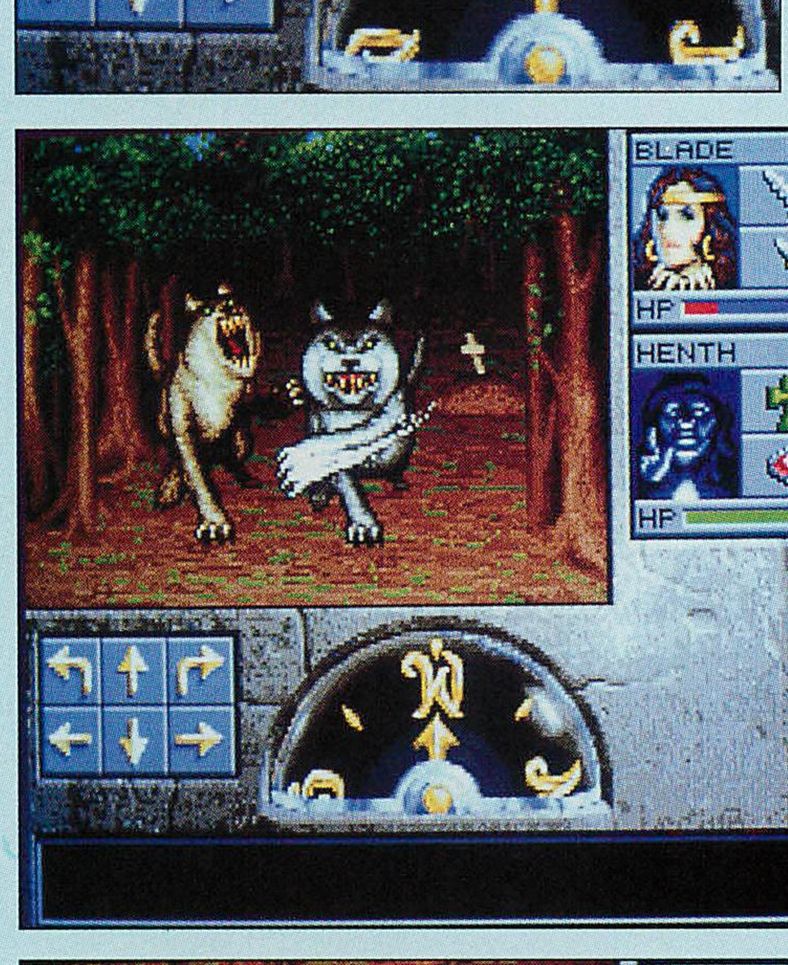
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Eye of the Beholder, with its real-time action and beautiful 3-D graphics, was the clear choice for VG&CE's 1991 best role-playing game. Less than one year later, SSI has released *Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon*. The creators, Westwood Associates, provided the "bigger," "better" and "meaner" game promised, but encountered the problems and self-limitations invariably present when trying to improve on what VG&CE called "state of the art."

Instead of beginning the adventure trapped in the dungeon, *Darkmoon* allows players to explore the forest-covered remains of the village of Torzac before it locks them in the Temple of Darkmoon. This wilderness section was beautifully illustrated and far too brief.

Mechanically, *Darkmoon* is almost identical to its predecessor. Players control up to six characters, complete with illustrated diagrams showing placement of all items carried. Only two items may be ready at any time, but up to three throwing daggers or rocks can be kept in reserve for those in missile combat. Any damage, poison or magic spells are graphically shown in the character boxes, as are unconsciousness and death—which replaces characters' faces with chilling skulls. Characters, who may be imported from *Eye of the Beholder*, may be one of five races and a combination of six classes. However, anyone hoping to clear out the dungeon with a party of multi-classed juggernauts will be thwarted by racial limitations, plus the need for magic users and clerics to carry spell books and holy symbols while casting.

Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon's real-time play and stunning graphics keep it ahead of most fantasy role-playing games.



One technical improvement over the first *Beholder* is the ability to load games saved at different points in the adventure. While the documentation boasts that it is not necessary to fight every monster and unlock every door to complete the adventure, *Darkmoon* is primarily a quest for keys. Because some are contained behind locked doors, it's essential to save before using any of them. Opening the wrong lock at the wrong time can permanently block off major sections of the adventure. With the preponderance of keys—be they skull, spider, darkmoon, copper or more adroitly disguised as teleporter activating gems or the horns of the winds—obtaining objects to get through doors is far more important than killing monsters. In fact, the opponents become obstacles in the party's way, rather than evil foes who must be slain.

Utilizing a few more spells and a greater variation of foes, combat is far more devastating than in the first game. The foes are nicely animated, and mastery of hit-and-run combat techniques is as necessary as learning to ration missile weapons and magic spells. With demonic nightmares occasionally preventing proper rest, potions and scrolls must be judiciously used as well.

Nevertheless, carefully learned tactics become meaningless for anyone who cannot handle the keyboard or mouse with the necessary agility to keep all six players in combat. Also, the realism of allowing only the top two characters to engage in melee combat is lost,

since the rear members can be attacked from the side without an opportunity to defend themselves.

One of the strengths of the first *Beholder* game was the incorporation of secret doors, pits, buttons and other dungeon trappings into the graphics, and the sequel's improved graphics hide secrets even more obscurely within the pictured stonework. Unfortunately, this makes life impossible for owners of simpler graphic monitors and for those who dislike stopping to stare at every wall encountered. At least the *Legend of Darkmoon* is relatively free of the sprawling mazes and the glut of teleporters found in *Eye of the Beholder*.

While improvements could have been more frequent and more pronounced, *Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon* is a worthy sequel. Its real-time play and stunning graphics keep it ahead of most fantasy role-playing games. Hopefully, now that Westwood Associates has given players a taste of outdoor adventure and more variety indoors, it will be as demanding as its customers when programming the next Legend Series installment.

—David Moskowitz

Strategic Simulations Inc.
675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-2901
(408) 737-6800

Team Suzuki

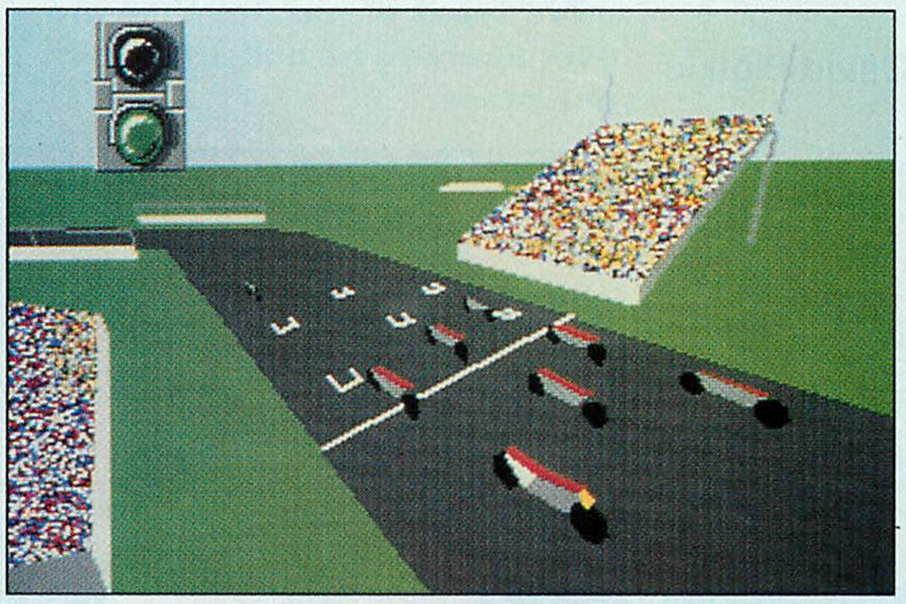
KONAMI
Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

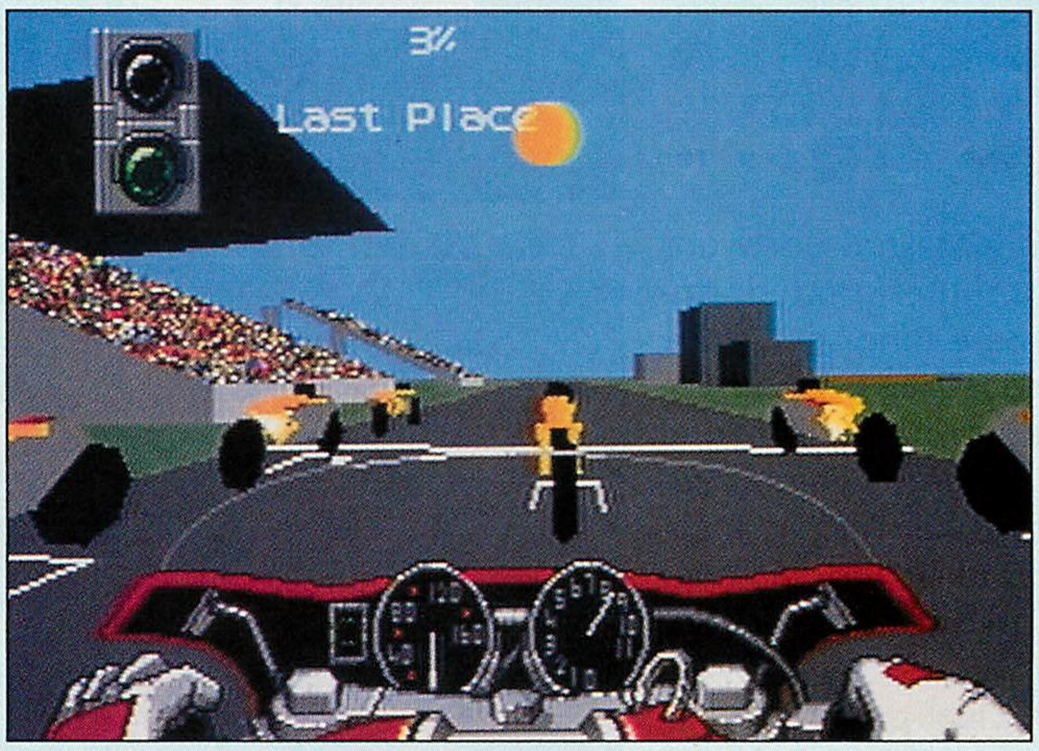
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

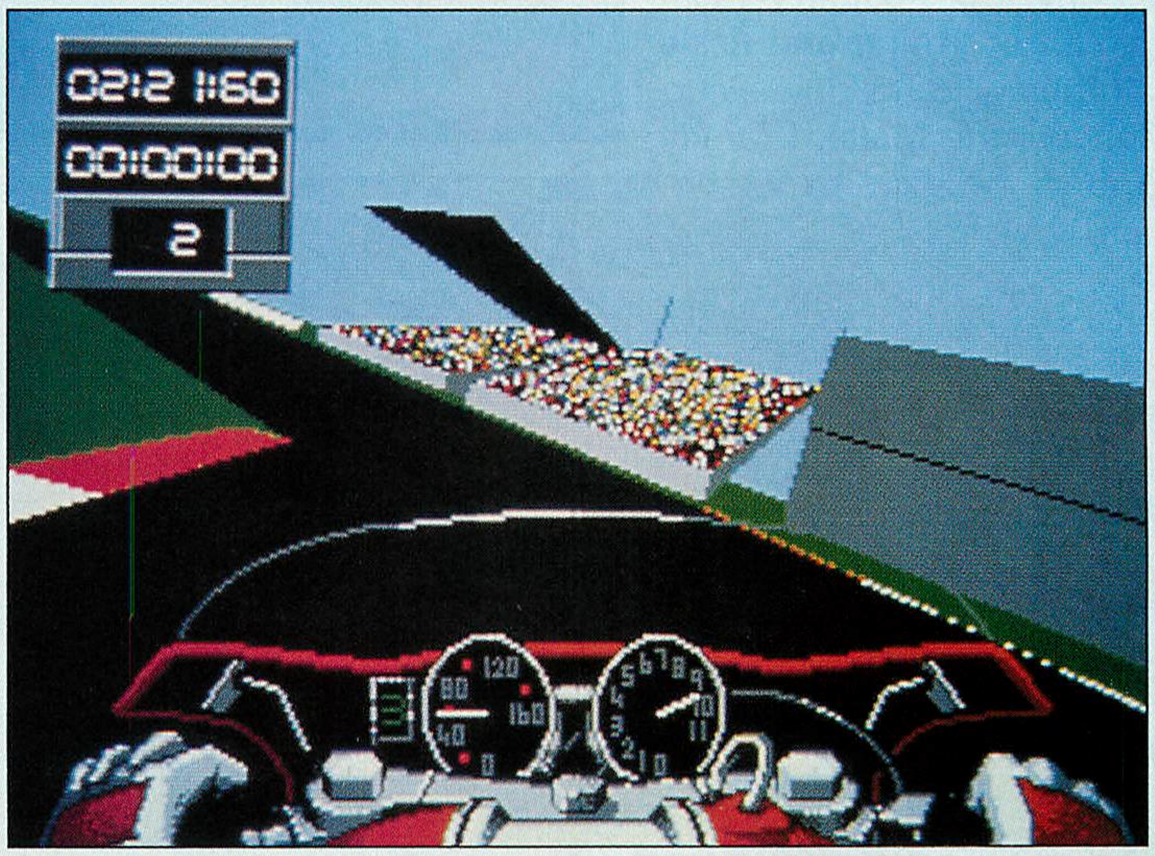
Motorcycle racing looks like it would be exciting to try—and dangerous, especially if you're not a professional. Now, Konami presents the opportunity to straddle a nimble 125cc, a heavier 250cc or a massive 500cc motorcycle and race around 32 of the world's most challenging courses—while trying not to get blown off of those courses by some very aggressive challengers.

The three motorcycles have different handling characteristics. The lightest one, rated at a 125cc engine displacement, is also the most maneuverable. It shifts gears automatically, while the player must shift gears manually with the other two bikes. The bikes can be controlled via the keyboard, mouse or joystick. The mouse is highly recommended—even the 125cc bike handles like a drunken sailor under joystick control.

***Team Suzuki*, by Konami, uses simple polygon-filled graphics.**







The player has the choice of four play modes: practice (learn the track with no time limit or competitors), training (no competitors), single race or full season. With the single race option, the player can select from the 32 available tracks and also choose how many laps make up a race. The full season option lets the player select one of the two sets of 16 tracks and the number of laps for each race.

Play mechanics for *Team Suzuki* are simple to learn, but very difficult to master. The main view is over the handlebars of the selected bike, with the tachometer, speedometer and other instruments in view at the bottom of the screen. The object is to go as fast as possible, while still staying on the track and avoiding the other riders. This is not easy. The bikes are difficult to control at high speed, and it is very easy to run off the road onto the grassy area surrounding the track. This causes damage to pile up; when the damage reaches 100%, the bike crashes and the player must withdraw from the race. The obvious solution is to slow down in order to maintain control, but if the player attempts this, the other racers pass with frustrating regularity. The player can get to know each track's curves well enough to know when to slow down, but only through a tremendous amount of practice and lots of lost races.

The graphics are simple polygon-filled and animated smoothly. Walls, grandstands and fences are represented on the landscape. I suspect the slow control responses (part of what makes it difficult to keep the bikes on the road) are a function of the

animation. The sound is limited to the roar of motorcycle engines. Neither graphics nor sound tax the ability of the Amiga version of this game. Six different cameras (including a chase plane view) play back the race from a variety of different angles, although only the over-the-handlebars view is effective during actual racing.

Team Suzuki is a pretty good substitute for the real thing for those interested in motorcycle racing. In order to get the full enjoyment out of it, however, the player must be prepared to spend many hours learning to control each bike, learning each track and practicing, practicing, practicing. It is more of a simulation than a game—and requires a certain amount of dedication to master.

—David Plotkin

Konami Inc.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(708) 215-5111

Are We There Yet?

ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Remember when educational software was little more than computer-graded, on-screen drills? We've come a long way since those golden years. These days, when we think of educational software, packages such as the popular *Carmen Sandiego* series leap to mind. And, while much educational software is aimed at kids, some is designed solely for adults (or incredibly precocious kids).

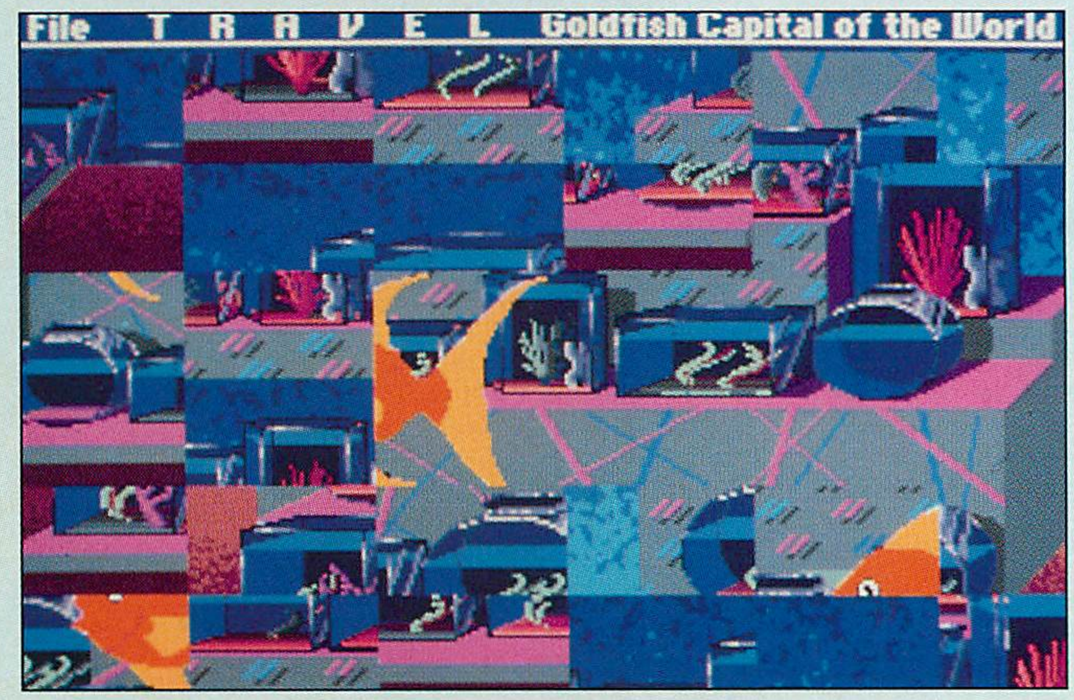
Such is the case with Electronic Arts' *Are We There Yet?*, a loony, cross-country vacation trip that'll frazzle your mind and tickle your funny bone. In this wild holiday excursion, the player follows the Mallard family as it invades one tourist trap after another, all the while stirring up more trouble than a nest of hornets in a honey factory. Along the way are some of the most brain-busting and original puzzles ever to grace this planet, and also a wealth of information about our United States.

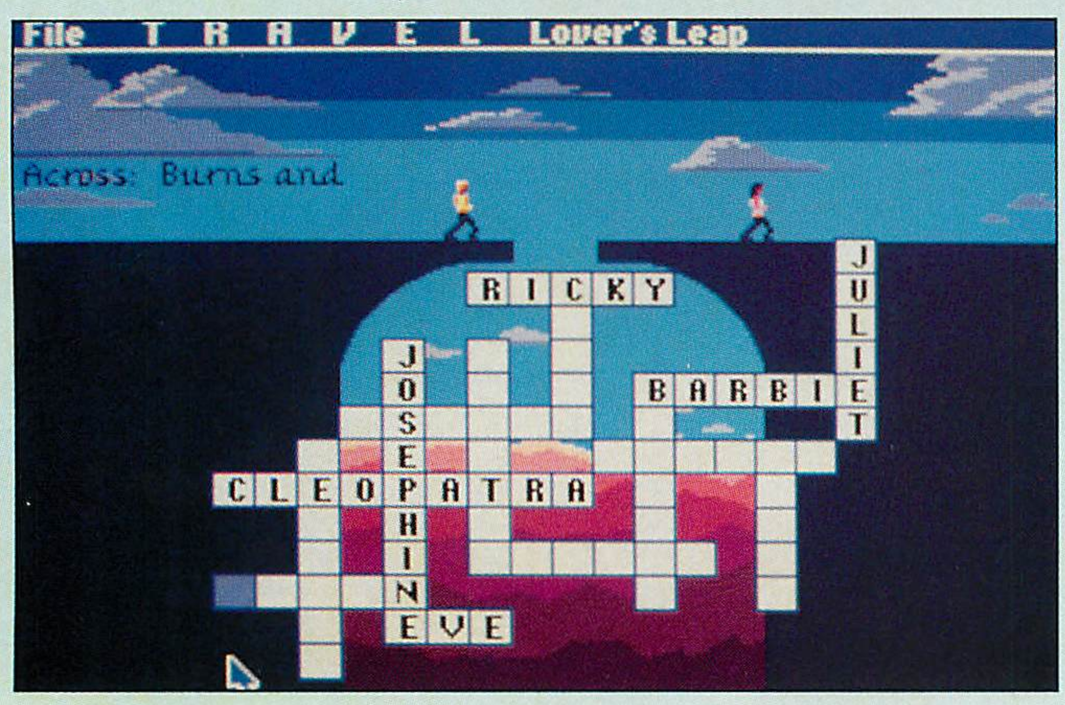
Upon starting the game, the first task is to unscramble a map of the United States. Once it's put together, it serves as the game's main screen, on which each state visited is recorded. The object of the game is to visit every state and solve every puzzle, of which there are two per state.

When a new state is entered, information is displayed: the state's capital, the date it entered the union, the origin of its name, its minerals and points of interest. Then the player is offered two attractions to visit, each of which has a related puzzle.

For example, in Illinois, the gamer can visit Max Nordeen's Wheel Museum or Engine 2500 (one of the largest steam locomotives ever built). At the wheel museum, wheels must be rotated to form words, whereas at the Engine 2500 attraction, letters and words are formed by pressing the right buttons on the locomotive.

Are We There Yet? boasts more types of puzzles than are ever likely to be collected in one place.





After each puzzle is solved, a short, humorous paragraph details the adventures of the Mallard family ("Are we near the crappie fishing?" "No, the fishin's been pretty good lately."). Usually, this paragraph is taken from a family member's diary, but it also might be complaints from the manager of the current attraction, rightly upset about the Mallards' shenanigans.

Along with the paragraph, there's a description of the attraction just visited. All these places are real, and include such oddities as the River of No Return, Trout-O-Rama, U-R Next Barber Shop, The Garden of Eden, Prairie Dog Town, Big Ugly Lake, Coon Dog Memorial and Dr. Ted's Musical Marvels. No humdrum Disneyland for the Mallards!

Are We There Yet? boasts more types of puzzles than are ever likely to be collected in one place: mazes, jigsaw puzzles, cryptograms, crosswords, word searches, rebuses and more. There are also many variations on standard types. One favorite is an animated jigsaw, in which a large goldfish swims across the screen as the player tries to unscramble the pieces. Because the screen is scrambled, parts of the fish appear

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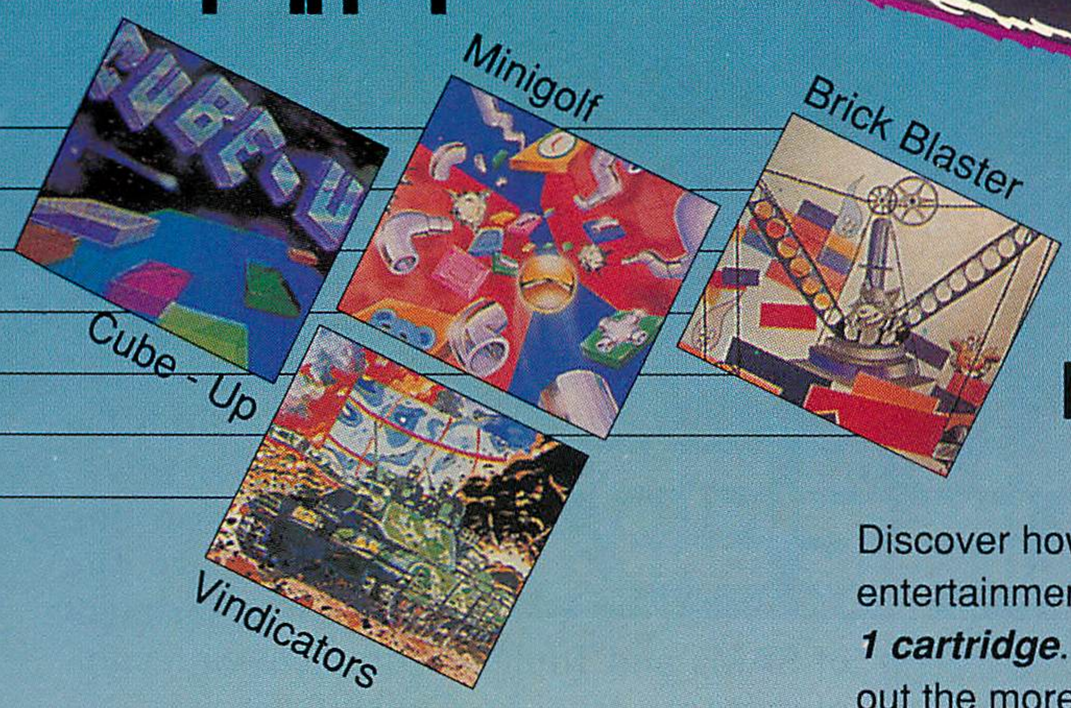

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in scattered blocks, providing a clue to how the pieces go together.

The puzzles in *Are We There Yet?* are not kid stuff. For example, one puzzle requires the gamer to construct specific birds' names. Ever hear of Mergansers, Eiders, Chachalacans, Ptarmigans, Biterns, Crakes, Jacanas or Auklets? Luckily, a clue book is included with the game.

For a vacation, consider traveling with the Mallards. They might get into a few scuffles or even get tossed out of an attraction or two, but the player will be grinning from sea to shining sea.

—Clayton Walnum

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Thunderhawk

VIRGIN GAMES
Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

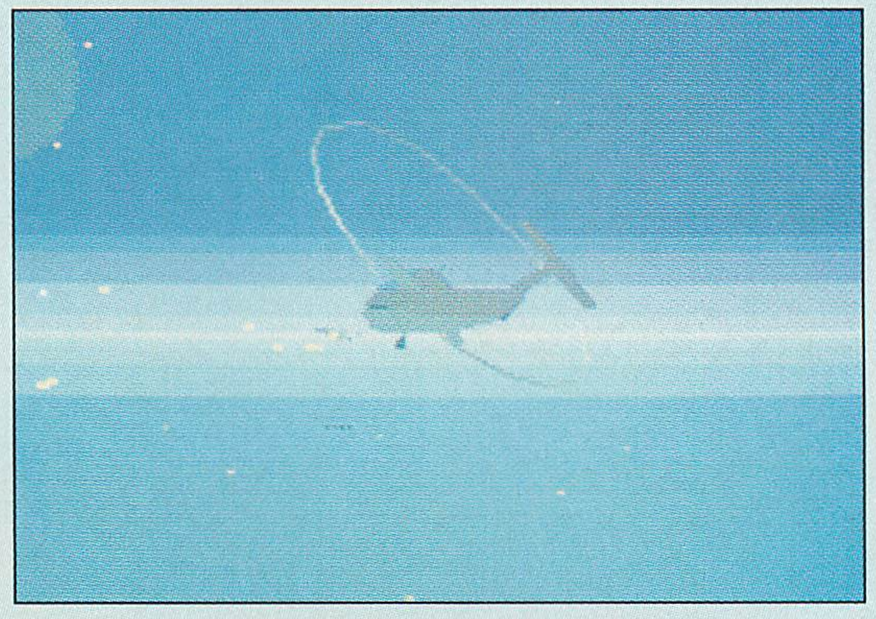
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							**7**			
GRAPHICS								**8**		
PLAYABILITY									**9**	
OVERALL								**8**		

Flight simulations, long a primary source of computer entertainment, have lately become so realistic that, without a keyboard overlay detailing every available cockpit gizmo, computer pilots can expect a short and ill-fated flying career until they master the skill to earn their wings.

Helicopter simulations are even more difficult because of the radically different way rotary-wing aircraft operate. The skills of a juggler are required to keep a helicopter flying when all it really wants to do is plummet.

Now comes *Thunderhawk*, from Virgin Games, which takes a completely different approach—simplicity and speed. Players pilot the futuristic AH-73M Thunderhawk (which looks like the mutant offspring of an AH-76A Apache and a UH-60 Blackhawk). Flight control is entirely mouse driven and is fiendishly simple. Theoretically, entire missions could be flown without ever touching the keyboard, which is used only to launch chaff and flares, toggle radar and IR jammers and manipulate external viewpoints.

Thunderhawk is a flight sim that takes a completely different approach— simplicity and speed.



Different combinations of button and mouse movements provide total control, and it quickly becomes second nature. The nice thing about the movement system is that the player's other hand is always free to pump some chaff or switch to a target's point of view as a laser-guided Firestorm missile screams home on it.

The game consists of ten missions each in six hot spots around the world: Latin and South America (easy), Southeast Asia and the Middle East (medium) and Central Europe and Alaska (hard). There is no yawn-filled flight to the battlefront; after choosing a campaign, being briefed and selecting a suitable ordnance load, the pilot takes off from a base just this side of the danger zone, and it's "safeties off!" Missions are most commonly flown against land-based targets under cover of darkness with the aid of an infrared sight, although the odd mission may require liberation of an oil rig at sea in broad daylight. Targets are rendered as 3-D polygon-fills and appear quite realistic. NOE (Nap Of the Earth) flight is essential to avoid radar detection and interception by MiG-29s, Su-25s, Mi-24s or (shudder!) Ka-136 Hokum attack choppers, which can both outturn and outclimb the Thunderhawk. Threats on the ground are the usual assortment of SAMs and Triple-A, complete with complimentary tracers. Cockpit displays are limited to simple threat, damage and stores indicators and a targeting camera.

But all of this action takes a backseat to the incredibly smooth and fast flight of the AH-73M. The scenery, though sparse, literally streaks by, and there is absolutely no lag time between control input and execution. Gamers put off by excessively complicated flight sims will be delighted with the elegant *Thunderhawk*.

—Scott Wolf

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Screen shots from Amiga version

Screen shots from Amiga version

Amiga & PC
(CGA, EGA, VGA, TANDY, AD-LIB & ROLAND)

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

It is the 1920's. Inspector Raoul Dusentier has been invited on a dream cruise in the Mediterranean, aboard the superb 3-masted ship belonging to Greek shipping magnate Niklos Karaboudjan. But no sooner has the cruise begun when Raoul is summoned to investigate a scandalous crime – the murder of his host Niklos! It's now up to Raoul to throw some light on this sinister mystery – there's a murderer on the loose and he could be prowling amongst the unsuspecting guests even now ....

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CIRCLE #140 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

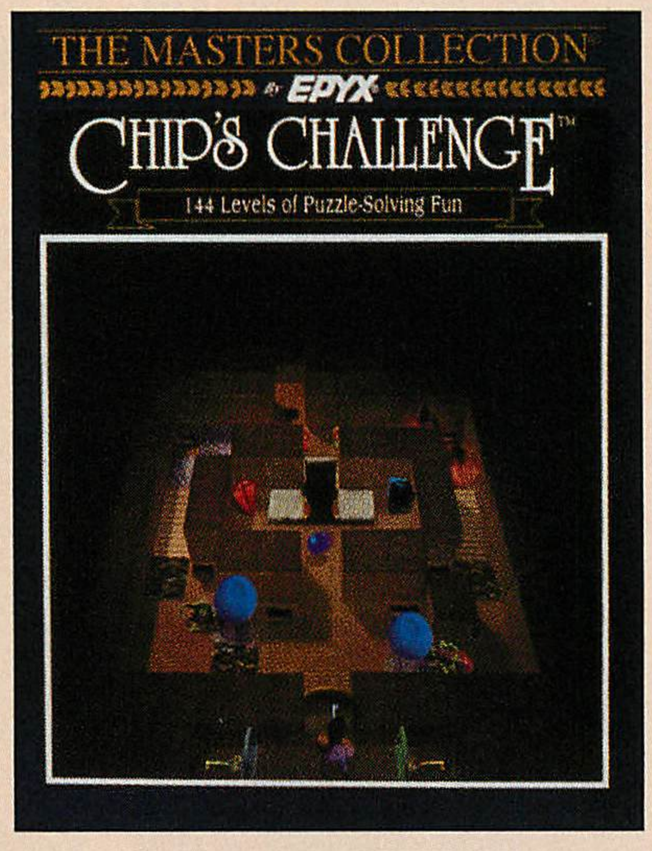
COMPUTER STRATEGIES

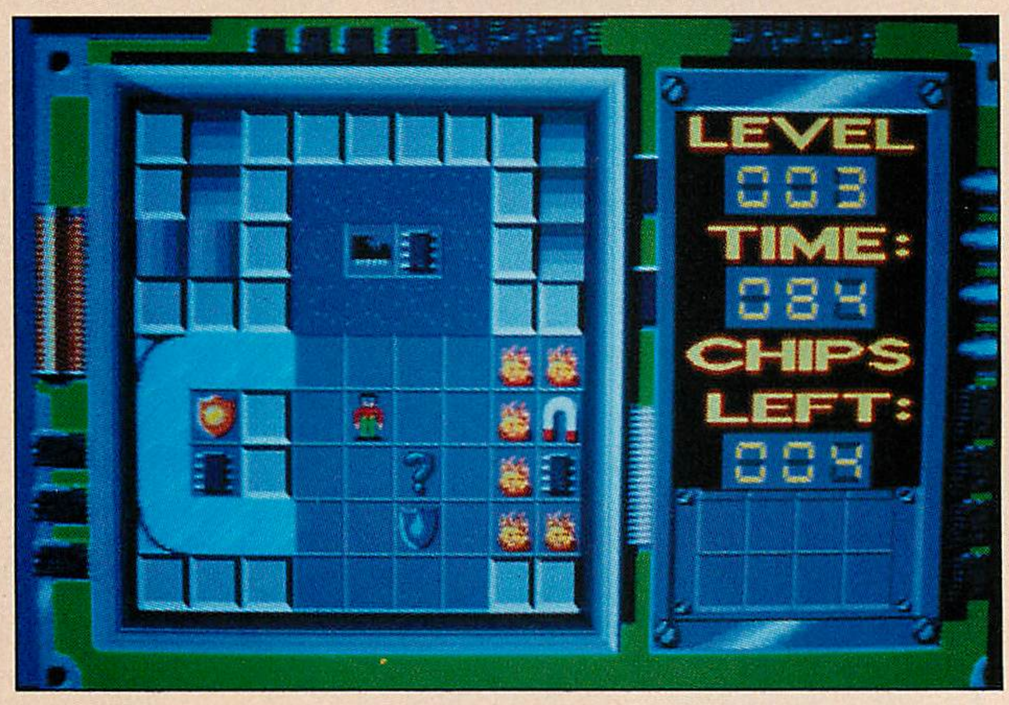
Taking Up Chip's Challenge

EPYX
Version: IBM PC

Chip's Challenge is one of the best puzzle games available for computers. It has plenty of levels (144) and enough variety in those levels to make the game interesting throughout. Unfortunately, because the game is so vast, some people may not be able to find a way to finish each and every level. *Chip's Challenge* is the perfect game to load up once or twice a day to try to solve another level or to take along when you're on the go. (It was originally introduced on the Lynx, but the computer version from Epyx retains all the fun and challenges of the portable.)

Completion of a level reveals a code that gamers can use so they don't have to replay the earlier levels. Fortunately, the codes are the same on all versions of the game so that you can cross over game systems and continue playing. It would be pointless to reveal codes in this column or tell how to solve certain levels. Instead, there are general strategies that will help finish the levels more quickly and with a certain degree of understanding.





The most important action on each level is experimentation. Each level is radically different from the others; this variety keeps the game fresh and the player on his toes. The best indication of what to expect is in the name of the level itself—usually a warning sign for the tougher levels. Pay attention to these titles! Some level names offer hints on clues left on levels, in the form of question marks.

Monsters sometimes make the levels more difficult. Rather than get frustrated, watch the pattern in which the monsters move. This often reveals a way to get around them. You can control the pattern of some monsters by pushing dirt blocks into their line of movement. Make sure to do this before the monsters are close. Otherwise, they often turn right into you. Gravel and dirt tiles block monsters from reaching you, but if you step on the dirt and turn it into a floor tile or step off the gravel tile, you open yourself up to attack.

Teleport tiles are often the most difficult parts of a level to investigate. Entering a teleport tile from different directions often sends you to a different place, and some directions might get you stuck. Make a note of where each direction sends you and then figure out the level from there. Some levels make use of more than six or seven teleport tiles. These require a lot of patience.

Although the first few levels require the player to collect a certain number of chips, this is not always the case. Some levels only require that you find your way to the exit. A few of these levels are timed; others give as much time as needed. The variety is what makes *Chip's Challenge* so much fun.

Collecting keys is another tricky part of the game. Green keys may be used more than once, so always try for the green keys first. This eliminates any worry about opening green doors and lets you concentrate on the other colors.

The red, green, blue and brown buttons are a puzzling part of the game. Sometimes monsters trigger the buttons as a nuisance. In other cases, you must encourage the monsters to trigger the buttons by leading them from another location. Some cases require you to trigger the button or push a block on top of a button to keep it "on." The technique depends on the situation.

Chip's Challenge is a wonderful game that incorporates a lot of different puzzles from other entertainments into its levels. Another version of the game will be available soon for the NES from Bulletproof Software, but it will rearrange the levels to group the difficult ones at the end of the game.

In any format, *Chip's Challenge* is a lot of fun. My only wish for 1992 is that someone makes a sequel that also includes a construction set, so players can trade levels and design their own sinister puzzles.

—Russ Ceccola

Winning the War With the Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe

LUCASFILM GAMES
Version: IBM PC

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is a logical extension of Lucasfilm's *Battle of Britain*, picking up with the strategic bombing campaign and continuing through the D-day assault to final victory. Objectives and strategy differ greatly for each side, but, since the Luftwaffe has the "focal" aircraft in the game (e.g., ME-262, ME-163 and the Go-229), this discussion centers on Hermann Göring's "almost" air force.

Luftwaffe players cannot win a war of attrition against the industrial might of the

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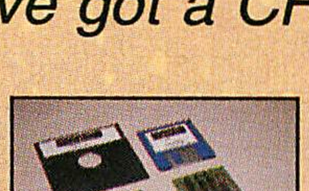

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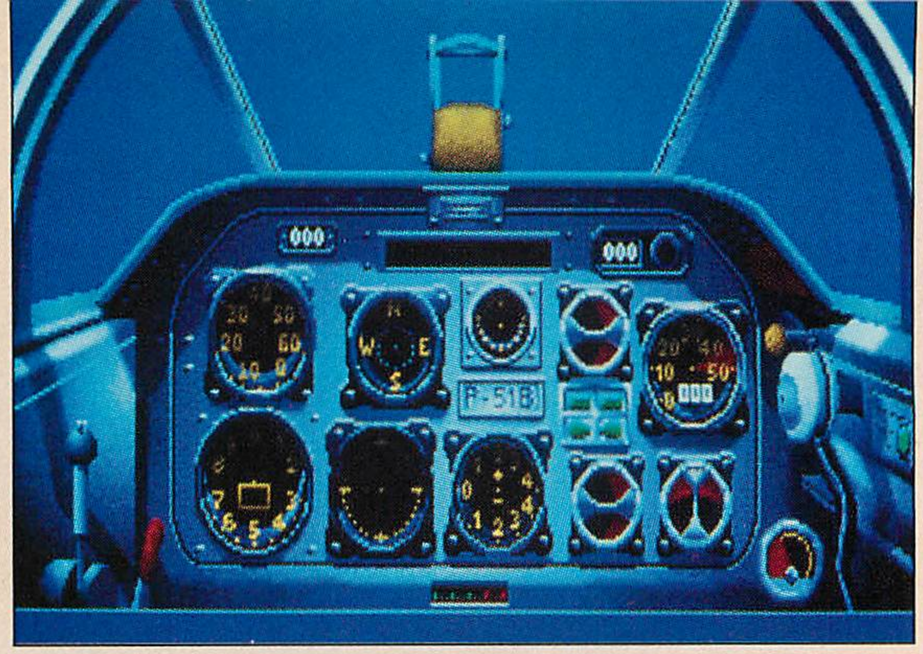
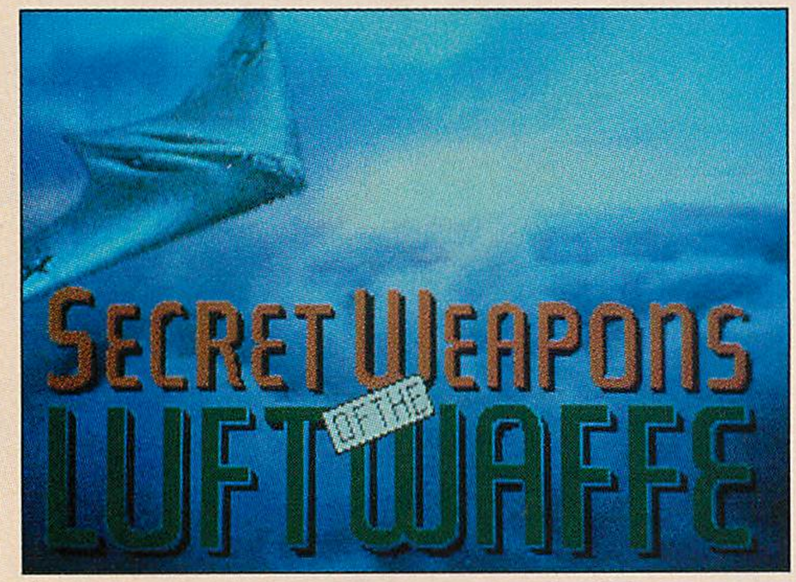


Allies. Therefore, the overall objective must be to survive the allotted time frame, keeping as much of the industrial infrastructure intact as possible, and concentrate all research and development efforts in one area (the V-1 or ME-262 are the best choices). Developing the ME-262 makes the Luftwaffe the "terror" of the skies and significantly increases Allied losses. Neither will be finished in time, however, unless the *Luftwaffe* player protects the research centers completely and enjoys above average success against other attacks.

There are two types of formations, dedicated fighter bomber units (either P-47s or P-51s, with P-38s available by an add-on disk) and classic, mutual supporting B-17 flight groups.

Fighter bomber units are the most difficult to counter because they are fast, maneuverable and normally outnumber the Luftwaffe three to two. Expect three to four groups of two to three aircraft apiece, staggered in altitude between 2,000 and 8,000 feet. Thus, while maneuvering to engage the closest aircraft at the highest altitude, several aircraft will remain unmolested en route to the target. These "leakers" must be engaged in close proximity to the target, generally at less than 1,000-foot altitude. Remember that their primary objective is not to dogfight, but to strafe and bomb. As such, if one doesn't chase departing fighters looking for easy kills, and, instead, concentrates on the remaining enemy around the target, one's chances of disrupting the bombing runs of several aircraft are greatly increased. The FW-190 is the aircraft of choice for these missions. Always remember altitude when maneuvering to reacquire a target: Auguring in is not uncommon in the heat of the moment.

Engaging conventional B-17 formations is no less dangerous, but the player has the luxury of more time before he reaches the target. The bombers will usually be in three flight groups, one to four aircraft each, staggered between 20,000 and 26,000 feet. Two escort fighters will be with the lead formation, 1,000 to 2,000 feet higher in altitude. If possible, assign a group of two FW-190s to intercept the fighter escort, and concentrate on the main groups with either a four-plane BF-109 swarm or two separate groups of two BF-109s. The latter should only be used after you've developed some of the pilots in the squadron and can assign more experienced flyers to the independent group. In either case, the player must strive to break up each of the B-17 formations so singles and pairs can be preyed upon at will without having to fly through the combined firepower gauntlet of three to four bombers.



The BF-109 has two excellent weapons for the initial assault, a 551 time fuze bomb and 21-cm rocket-fired mortars. Both of these add weight, hampering mobility, and should be used quickly if escort fighters are present. Although lobbing the aerial bomb is easiest when passing over a bomber formation from behind, learning to strike oncoming formations is the secret. Following this, continue level flight for about five seconds, to ensure you don't turn right back into their guns, then turn 180° (with flaps), losing several hundred feet of altitude in the process. This should place you behind the remainder of the group. Put the gun sight just above the center bomber and pump two rockets into him, then quickly shift to one of the bombers on the edge of the group and proceed into gun range for mop-up. Subsequent formations will prove more difficult without these two weapons, but good wingmen will still have theirs to use if you make quick work of the first group.

A single ME-262, once available, is capable of downing six to eight aircraft per mission. Use its superior speed to make slashing attacks from the sides of the formations, thereby minimizing exposure to return fire. Remember that, due to the excess speed, the plane makes wide sweeping turns (i.e., fighter escorts can turn inside you), so attempting to attain a classic "six o'clock" attack position is not as effective as the slash method. With the four 30mm cannons, it is possible to down fighters with a single well-aimed burst, and bombers with two to four bursts. Rocket usage is the same as for BF-109s.

The ME-163 is nothing more than a rocket-propelled glider, so forget conventional tactics. Pass under the bomber groups within 1,000 feet of their altitude to allow the vertically launched rockets to break up the formation, then convert all your speed to altitude. From this position, make diving-slashing attacks, pulling up immediately after each one to regain as much altitude as possible. Continue until you can no longer reattain the altitude of the bomber groups.

Finally, the Go-229 should be used like the ME-262. Remember that it has the altitude advantage over any other aircraft in the game; if in trouble—go up!

—Ed Dille

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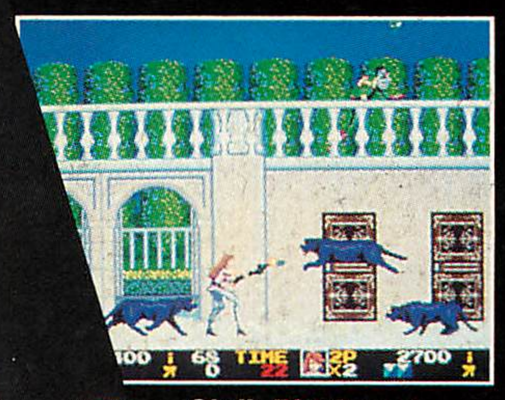

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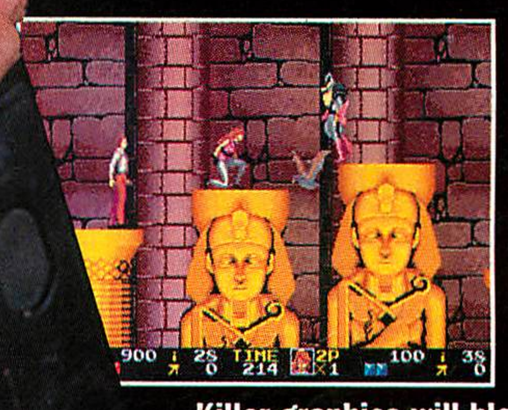

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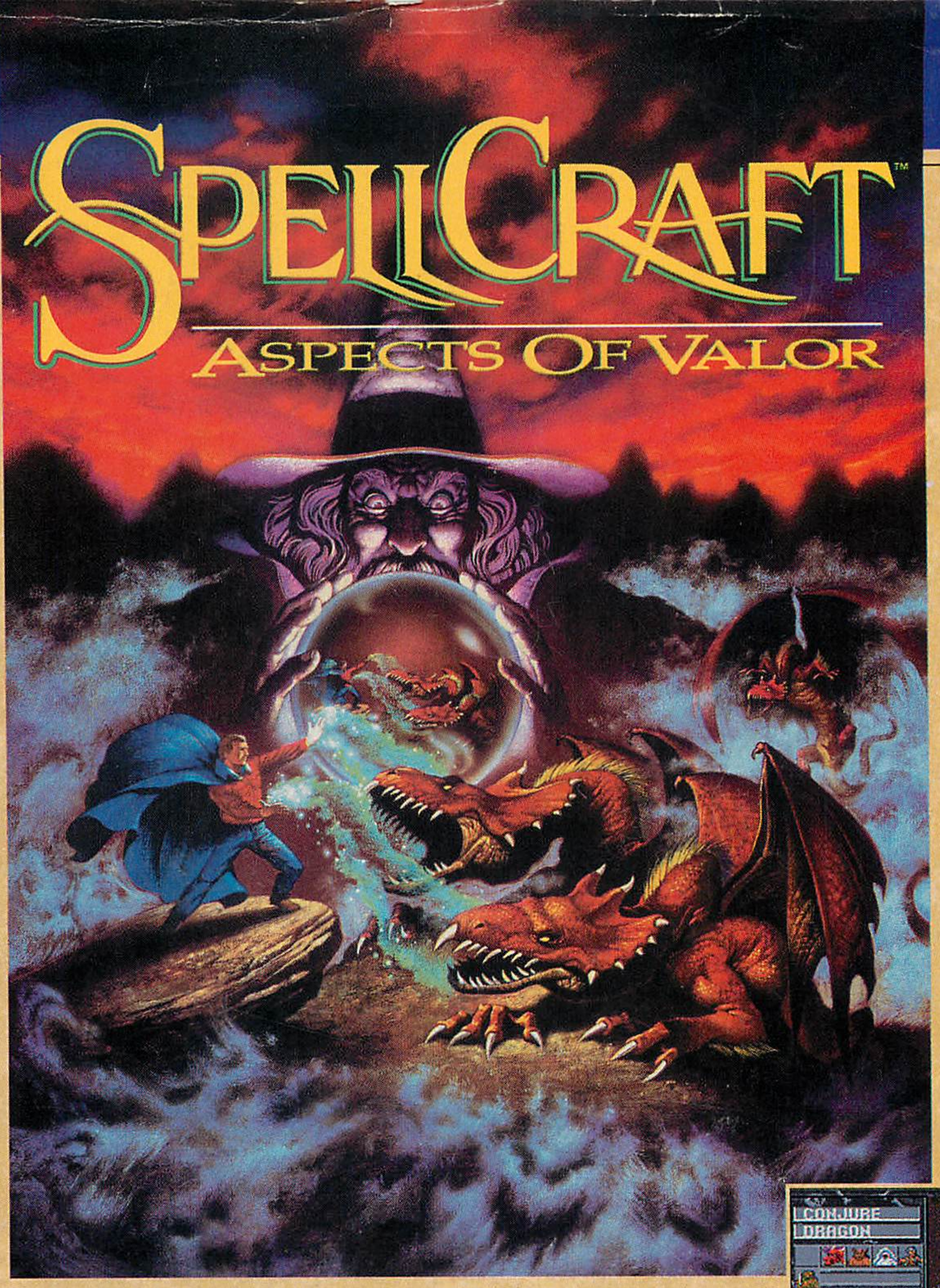

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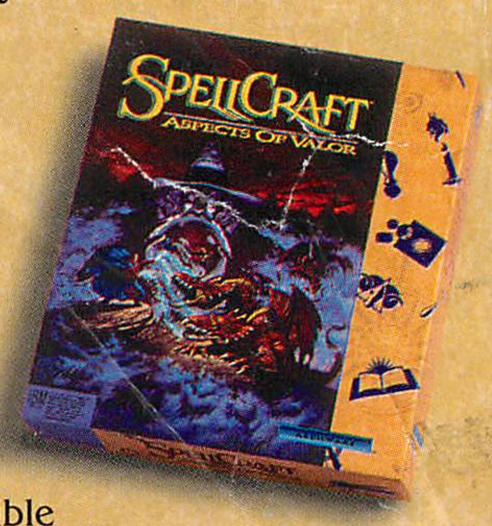

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