

JULY - AUGUST 1996

cash box international

The Independent Magazine for the Family Entertainment & Amusement Machine Industries

magazine

Print Post Approved #PP 245358/00005

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Inside this month.....



PUB & TABLE GAMES

Pubs, Bars, Taverns, etc remain the street operators best chance of staying profitable and in this issue we look at some of the games that are working well for operators around the world

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BIENVENIDOS A SALEX

SALEX, la exhibición del gremio de máquinas de entretenimiento más grande del hemisferio sur está aquí nuevamente y los "hacedores" de la industria Sud-americana se encontrarán en San Pablo para la mayor SALEX hasta el presente. Al regresar a SALEX este año, felicitamos a los organizadores, World's Fair Exhibitions, Roberto Selles y a AAMA, y aprovechamos esta oportunidad para agradecerle a los operadores de Sud América por darnos la oportunidad de estar aquí, y por el increíble apoyo que le han dado a nuestra revista.

También deseamos expresar nuestro agradecimiento por la hospitalidad brindada en el pasado y, sin duda alguna, por la futura hospitalidad que nos brinden. Les damos la bienvenida a los concurrentes de SALEX en San Pablo y los invitamos a todos a realizar una visita por el Stand de la revista Cash Box Internacional.

Para aquellos que no pueden realizar el viaje, les informaremos sobre la exposición, pero deberían tratar de concurrir el próximo año, ya que SALEX es un encuentro muy importante que no debería ser omitido.

Jack Rodios.



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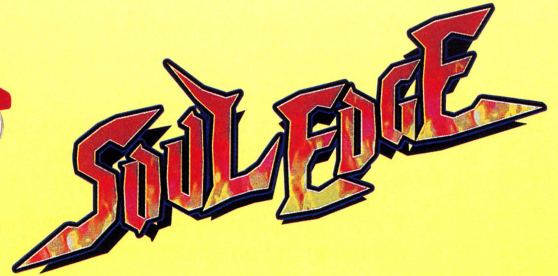
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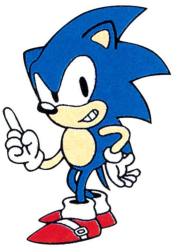
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World's Apart

SEGA'S RELENTLESS MARCH TO DOMINATE INDUSTRY IS ALARMING COIN-OP VETERANS

Only Hayao Nakayama, boss of Sega would know what the ultimate plan is for the big Japanese company, but looking from the outside in, coin-op veterans who have contacted Cash Box, see Sega as being in the midst of an unhealthy grab for complete and total dominance of the amusement industry, *and they are becoming alarmed that the hungry company will achieve its aims.*



Though it now appears Sega's attempts to add Capcom Pinball

to their trophy cabinet have at least temporarily failed, they are still pushing ahead into every area of coin-op with the latest rumours associating them with a buy-out of Rowe AMi.

Having in recent years, gobbled up companies like the UK's Deith Leisure who command a huge slice of UK and European manufacturing and distribution, and the three big AWP manufacturers, JPM, Crystal Leisure and Ace, the Japanese company has taken a firm hold on the industry in Europe and now it looks to be targeting the US where it gobbled up Data East Pinball a few years ago.



products is rife, but coin-op being what it is, good products will never be boycotted, and Sega know that.

It does appear however that Sega's lesser games and products, *and they spit out quite a few of them*, will not continue to receive the operator support they have in the past, a small gesture perhaps, but operators are realistic enough to know there's not a lot else they can do about a situation where struggling manufacturers see Sega dollars as their saviour.

Recently it has nibbled at Premier and Capcom, looked at Atari, and if rumours are correct, now have Rowe AMi in their sights, but while US industry traditionalists can accept European and Japanese companies falling to Sega, many are having trouble with the real possibility of famous coin-op names like Gottlieb and Rowe AMi being Japanese owned.

Talk of boycotting Sega

GERMANY

GAUSELMANN'S BUSY 40 YEARS

Paul Gauselmann, chief of the Gauselman Group, Europe's largest amusement machine manufacturer has celebrated his 40th year in the industry where he started working as a technician in 1956.



Eight years after coming into the industry, the young Paul Gauselman started his own business which has grown under his dynamic guidance to a group of companies that employ 4500 people.

The Gauselmann Group includes such well known coin-op and slot machine names as Nova, Stella and Atronic among others, and with its manufacturing and operation divisions turned over a massive DM 867 million (almost US\$700 million) in 1995.

In the mid 80's Gauselmann produced the "Disc", Germany's best ever AWP concept, which has sold over 50,000 units through a lifespan of many years. They have produced countless other AWP hits and now build this type of machine for most European countries as well as most other types of coin-op amusement and gaming machine.

In operations, after opening the first Spielothek arcade around 1970, the name is now seen on more than 150 branches throughout Germany.

Paul Gauselmann has had a truly busy and remarkable 40 years in coin-op and CBI magazine congratulate him on his many achievements.

UNITED STATES

AMOA PULL OUT ALL STOPS TO MAKE DALLAS BEST EXPO EVER

Aware that their annual AMOA Expo has been put under pressure in recent years by Fun Expo and IAAPA, which are held around the same time, the AMOA has pulled out all stops to make sure that this years fixture puts the big annual show firmly back on its pedestal as the premier amusement machine show in the USA.

AMOA Expo '96 will be held in Dallas, Texas from the 26th to the 28th September and though exhibitors are feeling the pinch a bit with all the shows and there were some earlier predictions of major companies not exhibiting at AMOA, all the big manufacturers will be there with

bells on, and with only a couple of months to go, it looks certain that the actual number of exhibitors will be considerably larger than last year.

With large numbers of foreign visitors realising the importance of AMOA and making the trip to Dallas, the only thing left to do is to get American operators to attend, and if the numbers of US ops that attend relate to the work the association have put in to ensure their attendance, they will have record numbers and deserve every one of them.



TRADE SHOW DIARY 1996



JULY 25TH - 27TH SALEX & PARKEX '96

Mart Centre, Sao Paulo, Brasil
Contact: John Slattery
Phone +44 161 624 3687
Fax: +44 161 665 1260

AUGUST 7TH - 8TH FEC ASIA, THEME PARKS & ATTRACNS.

Singapore Int'l Convention & Exhibition Centre
Phone: +65 222 8550 Fax: +65 224 6328

AUGUST 14TH - 16TH EXIME '96

World Trade Centre, Mexico City
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SEPTEMBER 1ST - 3RD AUSTRALASIAN GAMING EXPO '96

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SEPTEMBER 12TH - 14TH AM SHOW '96 (JAMMA)

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SEPTEMBER 24TH - 26TH LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

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SEPTEMBER 26TH - 28TH AMOA EXPO '96

Dallas Convention Centre, Dallas, Texas. USA
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OCTOBER 1ST - 3RD WORLD GAMING CONGRESS

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OCTOBER 10TH - 11TH FER - INTERAZAR

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OCTOBER 30TH - NOVEMBER 1ST GAMEX '96

Johannesburg, South Africa Contact: John Slattery
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NOVEMBER 5TH - 9TH AMOAQ CONVENTION '96

Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland. Australia
Contact: AMOAQ
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NOVEMBER 19TH - 23RD IAAPA CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

New Orleans Convention Centre, New Orleans. USA
Contact: Joe Rubel IAAPA
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NOVEMBER 28TH - 30TH JAMMA HONG KONG

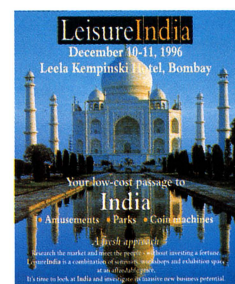
7th Floor Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
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DECEMBER 1ST - 3RD EELEX '96

Moscow, Russia Contact: John Slattery
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DECEMBER 10TH - 11TH LEISURE INDIA

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JANUARY 22nd - 25th 1997 IMA '97

Frankfurt Fairgrounds, Frankfurt. Germany
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UNITED STATES

FRANK CALLS IT A DAY...WELL SORT OF

Rock-Ola stalwart and one of the most popular men in the industry, Frank Shultz, finally retired from the company he's had a 'love affair' with for the past 47 years on May 31st

Well, *sort of* retired, he's relinquished his position as Rock-Ola's Vice President of

Sales, but will still act in an unofficial capacity as a consultant, and attend the major Trade Shows for the company for as long as he chooses to.

Earlier this year Frank told CBI that he was going to stay around till the company re-claimed the #1 spot in the Juke-box market that he believes is rightfully theirs and when questioned on this, his simple response was,

"Rock-Ola is #1, maybe not officially, but we've certainly got the #1 Jukebox on the market"

Frank will be spending his retirement in Wisconsin, but there better be a good shuttle service between Wisconsin and Chicago because we can't see him staying away from that city and all it's memories for too long a time.

The Jukebox industry will never be the same without this total gentleman, and Cash Box would like to wish Frank, everything he wishes himself, plus some, in his retirement.

JAPAN

NAMCO PUT SYSTEM 22 GRAPHICS INTO VR

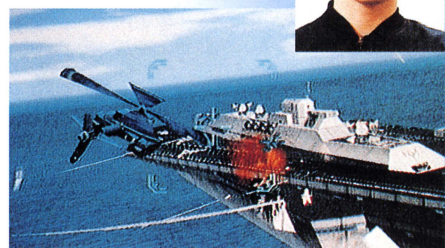
Namco and another Japanese company, Olympic Optical appear to have solved the big problem of graphics in Virtual Reality games with their announcement that they have developed a new type head mounted display that allows Namco CG graphics as used in System 22 games like Tekken, to be used in a VR game.

completely coincide with the players head movements. The new system will be adopted for the first time at Namco's new park, "Sunshine Nanja Town", which was due to open late June.

There is no word of the system being used in coin-op.



The CG graphic images are subjected to a chroma-key composition and by means of a Namco built high speed 3D sensor system, which uses both ultrasonic and gyro systems, the players head movements interact with the screen images and allow them to



UNITED STATES

NEW SIMULATOR READY FOR MARKET

ICE Inc of Buffalo, NY are in the final stages of testing for their new simulated video game titled SkiMaxx, a CG game that's been built in the USA, and which should be released this month.

A water skiing game with full hydraulic simulation, SkiMaxx will be shown at AMOA Expo, Fun Expo and IAAPA over the next few months and is expected to be very well received, particularly in the FEC sector with it's extraordinary family appeal.

The linking wasn't complete when SkiMaxx was seen, but it will be linkable, and we believe the price to operators will be several \$K's less than games like Alpine Racer.



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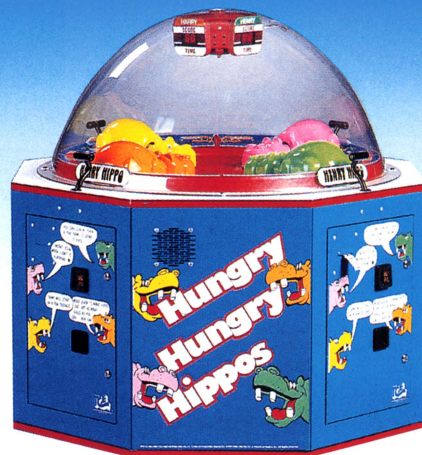
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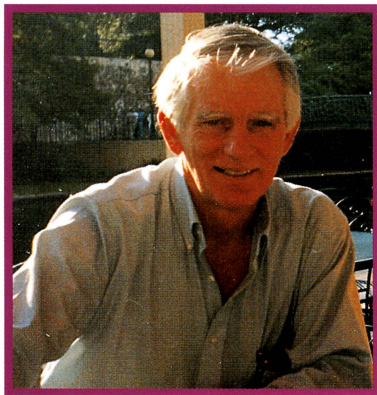
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Tellin' It Like It Is With Jack Rodios

The old story that the three "L's"..... Location, Location, Location, are the most important thing in this and many other businesses has a lot of merit, but I've always believed the three "C's"..... Confidence, Confidence, Confidence, are at least equally as important.

Confidence in what you do, confidence in the industry you work in, and confidence in yourself are vital elements for success, in fact I'd go so far as to say that without them, you're in deep poo poo.

Here at Cash Box, we try and stay positive about this industry, but it's very hard when you keep hearing stories of doom and gloom which can, if you're not careful, invade the brain and turn it into a big lump of negativity.

So when I feel in danger of this happening I deliberately go looking for positives, and no matter what anyone says about this industry, there are always plenty of positive things happening that you can latch onto and lift your confidence.

After hearing a bunch of gloomy tales about operations from places as far apart as Europe, Hong Kong and the USA over the last few months, I started looking for positives to write about and turned up an interesting fact. Like, in the developing markets of South America, South East Asia (excluding the well developed markets of Hong Kong and Singapore) the Middle East and India for example.....there is no real gloom, generally speaking, they're laughing, and if you look a bit deeper you find that all the gloom and doom stories are coming out of the developed markets.

Now there can be several reasons for this, the excitement of working in coin-op which is a relatively new business to many operators in these regions, the rise in the standard of living in these countries, many of which have booming economies, or in many cases the lack of competition and the quick prospects of expansion.

There could be any number of reasons, and one of those could be that most of the operators in these areas are younger, more confident, and have far greater enthusiasm for what they are doing than their counterparts in the developed markets. They don't want to listen to any crappy forecasts of doom and gloom, they just get on with the business of making a buck. And because they were not brought up in a culture that says a game has to pay for itself in 6 weeks, 26 weeks or whatever, they look at the profits they are earning differently and are quite content with what they're getting out of the industry in relation to the capital they're putting in. Sure they're working to achieve greater profit, but they're not despairing because they can't get it overnight..... to use a *cliche*, they look at the bigger picture and work more for the long term.....
and maybe a few operators in the more developed markets should try that.

On the manufacturing side of things, another positive vibe led me to the Buffalo, NY plant of ICE Inc, here's a company that has thrown any semblance of doom or gloom right out the door of their big, busy manufacturing facility which is working at a million miles an hour developing new product and filling orders of their established lines. ICE Inc is really buzzing with positive vibes, and within seconds of entering the place it's impossible to have a gloomy thought in your head.

You know that other old saying, "*When the going gets tough, the tough get going?*"

Well that applies in this industry too, you've just got to have confidence, be tough enough to withstand all the crap that periodically flies around, set your goals, and go out there and make it all happen.

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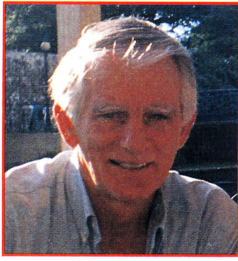
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Contando 'lo como és. *por Jack Radios*

La vieja historia de que las tres "C's" Centro de Entretenimiento, Centro de Entretenimiento, Centro de

Entretenimiento, es la cosa más importante en éste y en muchos otros negocios tiene mucho de mérito, pero yo siempre he creído que las tres "C's" Confianza/Seguridad, Confianza/Seguridad, Confianza/Seguridad, es por lo menos tan importante como la primera.

Seguridad y Confianza es lo que uno realiza, seguridad y confianza en la industria para la cual uno trabaja, y seguridad y confianza en uno mismo, son elementos vitales para lograr el éxito; en realidad yo iría hasta el límite de expresar que sin ellos, uno es un profundo pobretón. Acá en Cash Box, tratamos y nos mantenemos positivos sobre la industria. Siempre están ocurriendo un montón de cosas positivas con las que uno puede aferrarse para acrecentar la seguridad y la confianza.

Después de haber escuchado un montón de relatos de desaliento sobre operaciones en lugares tan distantes como Europa, Hong Kong y los Estados Unidos en estos últimos meses, comencé a buscar las cosas positivas sobre las cuales escribir y resultó en un hecho interesante.

Como, por ejemplo... en los crecientes mercados de Sud América, el Sud-Este Asiático (excluyendo los mercados ya bien desarrollados de Hong-Kong y Singapur), el Medio Este y la India.... no hay una tristeza real, hablando en general, ellos se están riendo, pero si uno observa más profundo, se encuentra que todos los relatos tristes y de fracaso surgen en mercados desarrollados.

Realmente entre otras, existen varias razones para que esto ocurra, la excitación de trabajar en el mercado de máquinas operadas con fichas, que es relativamente un negocio nuevo para muchos operadores en estas regiones, el mejoramiento del nivel de vida en estos países, muchos de los cuales tienen economías florecientes, o en muchos

casos la falta de competidores y las rápidas posibilidades de expansión.

Podrían existir numerosas razones, y una de estas podría ser que la mayoría de los operadores en estas zonas son jóvenes, con seguridad y confianza y, poseen un mayor entusiasmo por lo que están haciendo que sus colegas en los mercados desarrollados. Ellos no quieren escuchar pronósticos pesimistas de frustraciones y fracasos, y ellos avanzan en el negocio haciendo un esfuerzo.

Y debido a que no crecieron en una cultura que dice que un juego se debe pagar a sí mismo en 6 o menos semanas, o algo similar, ellos aprecian las ganancias que están obteniendo en forma diferente y están bastantes conformes con lo que logran de la industria en relación con el capital que están invirtiendo. Sin duda están trabajando para lograr mejores beneficios, pero no se desesperan por no lograrlos de la noche a la mañana ... para utilizar una frase muy conocida, ellos miran el gran escenario y trabajan a largo plazo ... y quizás algunos operadores en los mercados más desarrollados deberían intentar esto.

Entrando al campo de la fabricación, otra vibración positiva me llevó hasta la planta de ICE Inc., Búffalo, NY.; donde existe una compañía que expulsó cualquier parecido al fracaso y a la tristeza fuera de su gran fábrica y está trabajando a mil por hora desarrollando un nuevo producto y respondiendo a las órdenes de compra de sus ya establecidas líneas de producción. ICE Inc. está realmente zumbando con vibraciones positivas, y tan solo segundos después de entrar a la fábrica es imposible tener un pensamiento negativo en la mente. Uds. conocen el otro dicho viejo que dice: Cuando el avanzar se torna duro, el duro avanza?

Bueno, esto también se aplica a esta industria, uno debe tener confianza y seguridad, tener la suficiente fortaleza para oponer se a toda la basura que periódicamente vuela alrededor de uno, planear las metas y salir a dar los pasos necesarios para que éstas se hagan realidad.

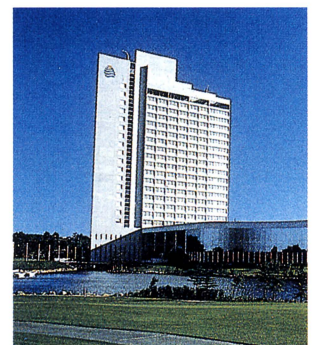
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Cash Box International GAME RATINGS



Cyclone
No 1 Redemption Game
July, 1996

REDEMPTION GAMES

ALLEY BOWLERS

- 1 Skee Ball Too
- 2 ICE Ball
- 3 Pro Striker
- 4 Smart Ball

BALL TOSS

- 1 Simple Simon
- 2 Ring Toss
- 3 Skee Toss BC
- 4 Bozo's Grand Prize

COIN PUSHERS

- 1 Jungle Jive
- 2 Klondike
- 3 Dino Valley
- 4 Rock & Roll

COIN SHOOTERS

- 1 Dinoscore
- 2 Dinoworld
- 3 Flip'n Win
- 4 Turf Wars

COIN ROLLDOWNS

- 1 Smokin' Token
- 2 Camelot
- 3 Home Run Hitter
- 4 Chicken Dash
- 5 Pharaoh's Phantasy

CRANES

- 1 Neo Carnival
- 2 Space Crane
- 3 Watch/Gift Box
- 4 Snack Attacker

KIDS GAMES

- 1 Mini Dunxx
- 2 Shoot to Win Junior
- 3 Awesome Toss'em
- 4 Li'l Dump the Ump

NOVELTIES

- 1 Cyclone
- 2 Colorama
- 3 Spin for Tickets
- 4 Triple Play
- 5 Cyclone Junior
- 6 Swamp Stomp

ROLL DOWNS

- 1 Spin to Win
- 2 Rollin' for Riches
- 3 Clown Rolldown
- 4 Twenty One
- 5 Rolldown

SPORTS GAMES

- 1 Super Shot D/x
- 2 Full Court Frenzy II
- 3 Rage in the Cage
- 4 Full Court Fever
- 5 Two Minute Drill
- 6 UBQB II
- 7 Penalty Shoot Out
- 8 Shoot to Win II

SHOOTING GAMES

- 1 Six Gun Saloon
- 2 Water race
- 3 Boom Ball
- 4 Cosmo Gang

VIDEO

- 1 Solar Spin
- 2 Mouse Attack
- 3 The Dealer
- 4 Double Cheese
- 5 Ghost Hunter

WHACKERS

- 1 Ribbit Racin'
- 2 Wacky Gator
- 3 Spider Splattin'
- 4 Cracky Crab

ENGLAND

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fighter Alpha 2
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Metal Slug
- 4 Soul Edge

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Alpine Racer
- 3 Virtua Cop
- 4 Manx TT

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Goldeneye 007
- 3 Airborne

BRASIL

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fighter Zero 2
- 3 Metal Slug
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Soul Edge

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Daytona USA
- 3 Rally Champ
- 4 Virtua Cop 2

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Mario Andretti
- 3 Theatre of Magic

SINGAPORE

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Streetfighter Zero 2
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Metal Slug

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Alpine Racer
- 3 Daytona USA

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Congo
- 3 Apollo 13

Cash Box International GAME RATINGS

JAPAN

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Streetfighter Alpha 2
- 2 Virtua Fighter 2
- 3 Psychic Force
- 4 Xevius 3D
- 5 Tekken 2
- 6 Metal Slug
- 7 Virtua Striker
- 8 Run & Gun 2
- 9 Classic Collection 2
- 10 Magical Drop 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Gunblade D/x
- 2 Virtua On
- 3 Time Crisis
- 4 Ace Driver Vic Lap
- 5 Alpine Racer
- 6 Virtua Cop 2
- 7 Point Blank
- 8 Rave Racer
- 9 Rally Champ
- 10 Dirt Dash

PINBALLS

- 1 Pinball Magic
- 2 Jurassic Park
- 3 Congo
- 4 Road Show
- 5 Frankenstein

HONG KONG

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Metal Slug
- 2 Ulter Champion
- 3 Streetfighter Alpha 2
- 4 Striker 1945
- 5 Mad Shark
- 6 Battle Garegga
- 7 Neo Turf Master

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Rave Racer
- 2 Alpine Racer
- 3 Sky Target
- 4 Daytona USA
- 5 Virtua Striker

PINBALLS

- 1 Stargate
- 2 Shaq Attaq
- 3 Frankenstein

UNITED STATES

VIDEO GAMES

- 1 Streetfighter Alpha 2
- 2 Metal Slug
- 3 Megatouch IV
- 4 Tourn. Solitaire
- 5 Tekken 2
- 6 Golden Tee 3D Golf
- 7 Soul Edge
- 8 Virtua Fighters 2
- 9 Neo Turf Masters
- 10 Killer Instinct 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Daytona USA
- 3 Alpine Racer
- 4 Cruisn' USA
- 5 Area 51
- 6 Virtua Cop
- 7 Manx TT
- 8 Cyber Cycles
- 9 Point Blank
- 10 Rally Champ

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Twister
- 3 Theatre of Magic
- 4 Breakshot
- 5 Barb Wire



Time Crisis
World's No 1 Game
July, 1996

AUSTRALIA

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Street Fighter Zero 2
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Metal Slug
- 4 Virtua Fighter 2
- 5 Soul Edge
- 6 Neo Turf Master
- 7 Dung'ns & Dragons 2
- 8 Ultimate MK3
- 9 Virtua Striker
- 10 Run & Gun 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Time Crisis
- 2 Rally Champ
- 3 Alpine Racer
- 4 Daytona USA
- 5 Virtua Cop 2
- 6 Point Blank
- 7 Ace Driver Vic. Lap
- 8 Midnight Run
- 9 Manx TT
- 10 Cyber Cycles

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Goldeneye 007
- 3 Theatre of Magic
- 4 Congo
- 5 No Fear
- 6 Big Hurt
- 7 Apollo 13
- 8 Batman Forever
- 9 Stargate
- 10 Shaq Attaq

GERMANY

VIDEO CONVERSION

- 1 Metal Slug
- 2 Tekken 2
- 3 Neo Turf Masters
- 4 Virtua Striker
- 5 Soul Edge

VIDEO DEDICATED

- 1 Alpine Racer
- 2 Time Crisis
- 3 Rally Champ
- 4 Area 51
- 5 Daytona USA
- 6 Virtua Cop 2

PINBALLS

- 1 Attack from Mars
- 2 Mario Andretti
- 3 Theatre of Magic
- 4 Goldeneye 007



TAIWAN

TWO-ARMED BANDIT

A company boss in Taipei devised a whole new way of doing business. He installed gambling machines at his metal work factory in Shulin township, the China Time's Express reported.

Several of his workers soon became addicted, and lost all their salary, month after month, to the machine belonging to the company owner, identified only as Liao. The employees, in effect, ended up paying their boss to work there.

Not content with this remarkable state of affairs, Liao set up a sideline loaning his peniless workers cash which they then helpfully added to that already in his machines!

The police however, didn't appreciate Liao's innovative cash management techniques, they took his machines away and very nearly took him too.

USA

NEW WILLIAMS PINBALL

Williams, who after releasing "Attack from Mars", slowed down further release of new pins admirably, have now put a new game titled "Tales of the Arabian Nights" into the market and early indications are that it's another first class game.

UNITED KINGDOM

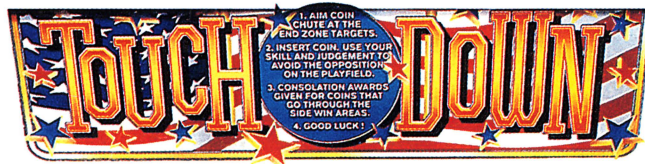
ATE CHAIRMAN FOR TOP TOURISM POST

Sonia Meaden, who is in her second year as chairman of ATE Ltd, has been elected to the influential post of vice-chairman of the West Country Tourist Board. Mrs Meaden is a director of the successful Weststar Holiday Parks, whose headquarters is in Devon

The West Country Tourist Board is an independent company, comprising a three-way partnership between central government, local government and private enterprise, it covers six western counties and represents one of the most successful areas of the domestic tourist industry, achieving twice as many British

tourist nights as any other region, and is also in the top three for international tourists.

Mrs Meaden said: "There are strong similarities between the marketing of ATEI and the development of tourism in the West Country. Both tasks require strong, defined, progressive policies, the provision of the right type and style of imagination for customers who make the journey to Britain from throughout the world, and the goal of providing excellence as standard."



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MALAYSIA

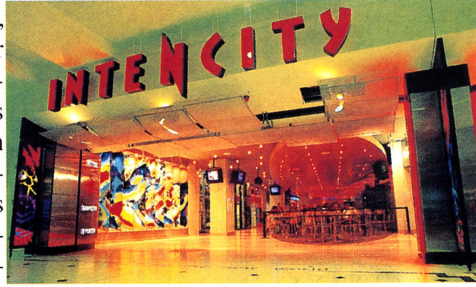
VILLAGE NINE LEISURE ON SCHEDULE FOR KL INTENCITY

Contrary to rumours circulating about Village Nine Leisure's 'softening' of commitment to their Intencity concept, it appears that the big Kuala Lumpur site is well under way and will open in August, pretty well in accord with the original schedule.

The Kuala Lumpur site is of around 50,000 square feet and it's believed that the only changes to the Intencity concept from those already oper-

ating in Australia, will be a larger number of coin-op games and less expenditure on the big, expensive attractions which are apparently not performing to the desired level of income.

It has been noticeable in the Intencity centres that are operating, coin-op games are



getting far more custom and appear a much better proposition than the big attractions like the Chameleon, in relation to cost.



UK - USA

CROMPTONS IN NEW CROSS DEAL WITH ICE INC

Cromptons Leisure Machines of the UK who are currently working to broaden their range of coin-op product to better service the FEC industry, have entered a new, cross distribution deal with ICE Inc of the USA

The company will distribute the full range of ICE products in the UK while ICE will take over the Crompton range of pushers and redemption games previously distributed in the USA by Betsons International.

HONG KONG

BONDEAL - HANKINS IN NEW HK SITE

One of Australia's leading coin-op companies, A Hankin & Co, and Bondeal Ltd of Hong Kong have opened a new, "up market" site in Chatham Road, Kowloon.

The site, situated in the basement of the Railway Plaza building has been fitted out in similar manner to Hankin's high class Australian arcades which are of a standard that's not normally seen in HK.

The initial section opened is around 5000 square feet, but the operators have a further 3000 square feet available to them in a few months and intend extending.

BIG WHEEL



NEW

Pushers
People
Play

JUNGLE JIVE



- Fire coins into car on rotating wheel to activate coin cascade onto pusher box
- Automatic coin firing action on coin entry
- Cash, Token or Ticket payout
- Available in 1 and 2 player models
- All coins played are active
- Rotating Big Wheel feature

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- With Skill Play Function
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EGYPT

EASING IMPORTS WILL LIFT INDUSTRY

Currently falling far behind most of their neighbours in leisure development, Egypt is looking at an easing of import duties and restrictions to lift the industry and encourage new development.

Initial signs are that if followed through, the plan should work as already several studies for FEC's and mini parks have been announced by developers

UAE

AL HOKAIR LOOK TO FEC'S

Al Hokair, the big Saudi Arabian entertainment group are moving more into FEC's for their future expansion and plan to open six to eight new centres in the Emirates over the next two years.



The Al Hokair Group are probably the largest operators of parks and FEC's in Saudi Arabia, and also a major manufacturer of park equipment, but they feel the existing parks, and many new park developments (some of which they are involved in) that are on the drawing board for the Gulf region, will adequately satisfy demand in that sector for the next few years.

MIDDLE EAST

MEMO FROM THE MID-EAST

by Philip D. Deighton



Marhaba! Greetings and welcome to the first in a regular series of jottings to do with business in the Middle East especially for CBI. This focus on the region aims to provide an industry insight into a part of the world about which many readers may be unfamiliar with and even circumspect.

One or two facts first. The Arabian Peninsula plus Egypt has a population of 121 million and is 5 million square kilometres in size. That's 7 times the population and two-thirds the size of Australia. The territory comprises 13 independent countries, main language Arabic, chief religion Islam. Over half the population is under 24 years of age. There are currently some 150 parks and FECs currently in operation, construction or actually on the drawing boards. Many more exist as twinkles in the eyes of their potential creators, as many trade show exhibitors will testify. To date, approximately US \$2 billion has been spent on the building and development of amusement attractions which have a total annual operating turnover of roughly US \$50 million.

The strong family values and traditions make amusement facilities "a natural". However, although all are styled along western lines and obviously obtain equipment from international manufacturers, the climate, culture and customs affect in no small way their suitability and operation. Many coin-op machines, for example, cannot be sold into most of the countries because on-screen and cabinet graphics are not acceptable. Pushers, AWP's and even redemption games may be similarly banned. Rides, also, must be decorated in a non-offensive manner and seating arrangements, say, need to accommodate not only the long attire worn by both men and women, but separate the sexes over a certain age too.

Philip Deighton runs Deighton International, a Consultant company in Leisure & Tourism that specialises in operational management and business development. Philip has been in the fun business for over 25 years, he has lived in the Middle East for three years, working for a national leisure and tourism development company and also runs the Association of Arabian Amusement Attractions (the 4A's) Philip is based in the UK and has an office in the Middle East, contact number, phone or fax is +44 1489 570289

The good news for suppliers, though, is that coin-op equipment imports are increasing, from almost US \$5 million in 1994 to a likely US \$7.5 million by the end of 1996. Park equipment was also up in 1994 over the previous year by 20% to US \$9 million with estimates for 1995 indicating further growth. Import duties are usually low.

The Middle East, therefore, is a developing market far from saturation but it requires careful, considered handling to reap the rewards. At this time of year, parks in many

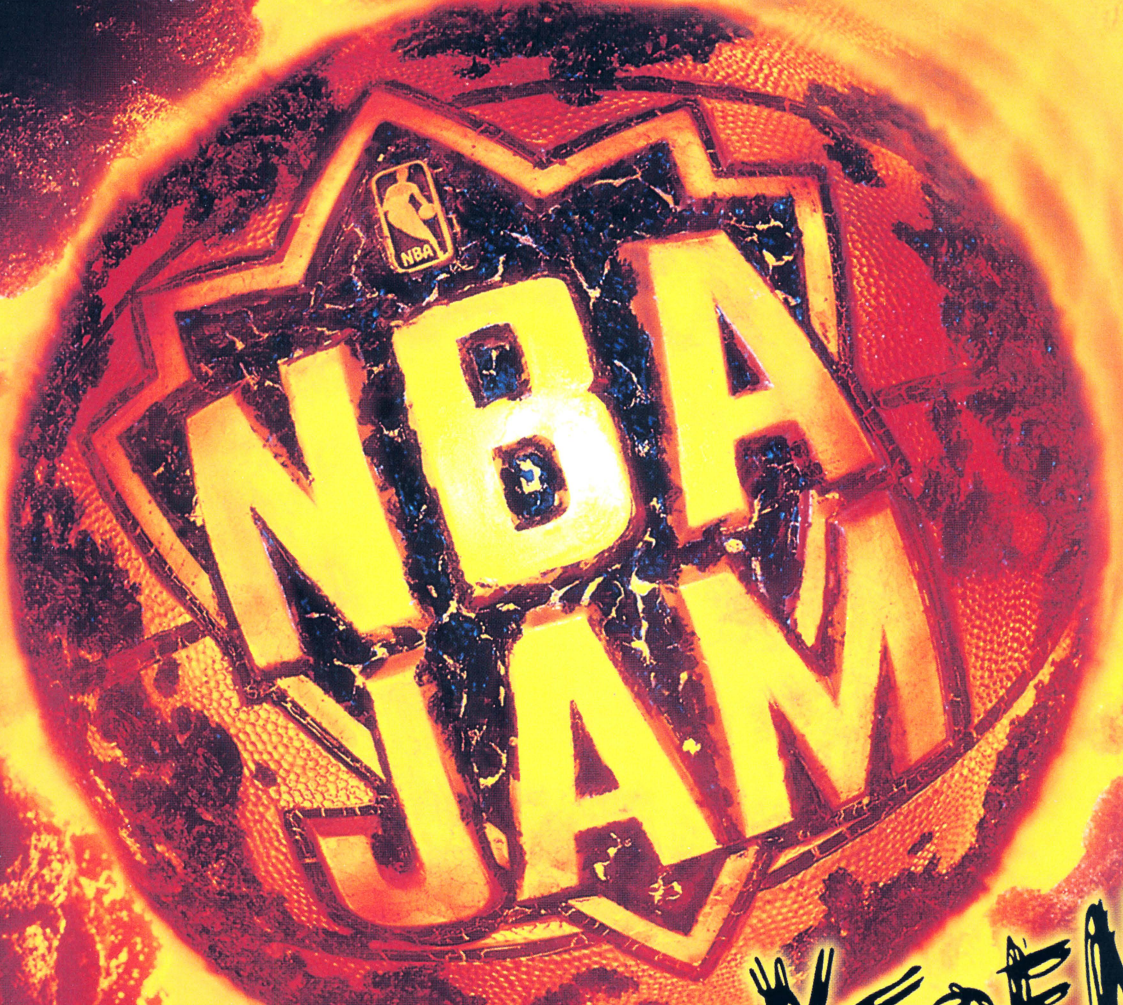


areas of the world are running at peak performance, enjoying the all-too-short high season when visitor numbers are at their highest.

For the Middle East, however, this is a quieter period with admissions lower than in winter months because of the high summer temperatures. Business picks up again towards the end of September. The weather does allow parks to remain open virtually all year round, closing perhaps during the Holy Month of Ramadan for essential maintenance.

Talking of maintenance, this is a particular problem in the MidEast and worse in locations close to the coast. I have seen serious amounts of sand and dust collect in units sealed against weather penetration; high grade stainless steel rust in weeks; tents sag under the weight of water - not rain, condensation!; plastic become brittle and snap within months; painted surfaces literally sandblasted during a shamahl. Manufacturers beware!

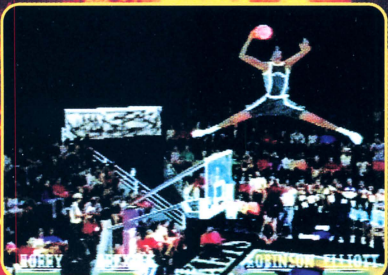
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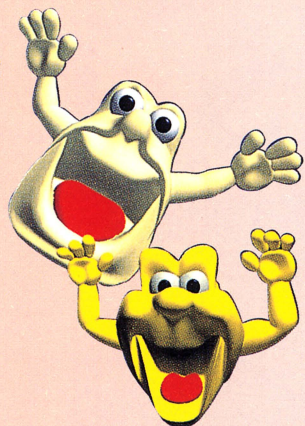
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No1.....And Going Further Ahead



SWAMP STOMP™

Players use their feet to stomp the buttons as they light up on the playfield floor to race the alligators on the backboard.

Lots of fun for 2 players against each other for one person against the game and Swamp Stomp is attractive to all ages with big ticket rewards



UPDATE KITS
New Low Cost Kits
Will Be Available



MINERS REVENGE™

Lazer-Tron has merged Redemption with Video to produce this exciting new shooter, Miners Revenge.

Players are hurled through a haunted mine where they must "slime" as many ghosts as they can and find secret buried treasures.

Awesome graphics, non violent family fun that can be upgraded with low cost kits.

In Spin-To-Win, players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots. Each slot is worth a certain number of tickets, bankrupt, lose a turn, or jackpot. Players can win up to 60 tickets on a single coin, but must avoid the Bankrupt slot, which will wipe out their earnings while trying to stop on the Jackpot on all three spins

RING TOSS™

Bringing the all-time favourite of the Midway to your location, Lazer-Tron's Ring Toss game is a fully automated version of the all time classic that players can't resist.

Players get five rings to toss over the Coke bottles and games can be linked for Super Jackpots. Ring Toss is an ideal game for all the family

And it's completely 'cheat-proof' with Lazer-Tron's patented sensor system.



SPIN-TO-WIN™

ROLLIN' FOR RICHES™



Players will be rockin' and rollin' on Lazer-Tron's new hit, roll-down game, Rollin' For Riches. Roll up to 5 balls per game to get specific numbers on the mechanical, spinning dice on the back wall. Players will try to form the best combinations to win as many tickets as possible on this exciting roll-down game.

It's a winner !



PHARAOH'S FANTASY™

Pharaoh's Fantasy is the most interactive roll-down game ever produced. Players get up to 20 rapid firing coins to fire at ten target slots in this exciting Egyptian themed game.

Pharaoh's Fantasy can be operated on any coin, debit card or Bill acceptor.

WHEELIN-N-DEALIN™



Players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots with each slot being worth a number of tickets.

Players can win up to 50 tickets on a single coin, but must always avoid the Bankrupt slot which will wipe out their winnings



Lazer-Tron has once again brought an all-time favourite Midway game to Redemption with this fully automated version of the classic coin-toss. Pitch-It is a sure fire winner. Players get six tokens for a quarter (adjustable) to pitch into the targets which have values of from 5 to 100 tickets. Lazer-Tron's patented OVS system detects if the coins are on targets and prevents cheating. *Family fun at it's best.*



PIRATES GOLD™

Players try to navigate their coins through the pins into the target hole in this fast paced coin-drop game. Pirates Gold features a "play till you win" style, unique to coin-drop games



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Cash Box International Magazine Advertising



SPAIN

NAMCO TIE UP WGP LICENSE

Namco Japan have secured a license from FIM World Motor Cycling Championships, (WGP) in Spain, to produce amusement games in all formats (coin-op, consumer and computer) using the prized WGP name and logo, etc.

They have also signed up the three Aoki brothers who contest the WGP to long term sponsorship agreements and are believed to have a new WGP motor bike game in development for possible showing at the AM Show and release early next year.

SNIPPETS

PETIT EXITS ACCLAIM

After bringing the company into the coin-op market and overseeing the merger with Lazer-Tron over the past two years, Tom Petit has resigned his position as President of Acclaim Coin-op to pursue other interests.

Lazer-Tron's Norm Petermeier is holding down the position as 'acting' President in while decisions are made, and his grasp of the company must make him a strong chance of getting the job on a permanent basis.

PLAY-BY-PLAY TO TAKE OVER ACE/ACME

Play-by-Play Toys & Novelties Inc, the big Texas based supplier of redemption and crane merchandise are in the process of acquiring Ace/Acme Corp, another very big US plush and novelty supplier for a reported US\$44 million

NAMCO UPDATE SOUL EDGE

Namco have released Soul Edge 2, or as they term it, *Soul Edge, Version 2*, (pic at right) in the USA, which coming so early, appears to be an admission that the original game has not performed as expected.

The update does appear to have a bit going for it however, and is expected to do well. (see games section)

JCM SETTLES WITH FORMER PRESIDENT

On July 24, 1995, JCM American Corporation filed suit against the president of its North American Bill Acceptor Division, Wayne D, Bozeman, and other employees of JCM. In the suit, JCM alleged that Bozeman and some other employees established a competing business, and then used JCM funds and product designs to benefit this company.

JCM sought to prosecute its case in the state court and filed a motion of summary judgement against The Component Factory, the company established by Bozeman. However, The Component Factory filed for Chapter 11 protection on the day its answer to the judgement motion was due. From that point on, Bozeman sought to settle the case and JCM agreed to a conditional settlement with the conditions remaining confidential.

AREA 51 A LONG LIFER TOO

The Atari (now Williams Midway) gun game, Area 51 is an excellent American made game that gets little press, but continues to earn quite incredible money after 12 months in the market.

The game appears to have plenty left in it yet and is available as a kit which has to make it a great proposition.



MORE CRUIS'N USA

And talking of long life, what about Cruis'n USA? While the Japanese built driving games continue to get all the hype, this well priced American made game has been so successful all round the world, that Midway are still building and selling the game almost two years after its release.



PARALLEL CASE DRAGS ON IN OZ

The industry court case in Australia instituted by Sega and LAI over parallel imports is, as expected, dragging on and on and those involved are getting a bit "toey" as the good Judge who heard the case and who's currently being called an 'emotional ratbag' in the

Appeals Court on another case, works on his judgement. Not that any of this really matters as when he does bring down his ruling, you can bet Paris to a peanut that it will be in the Appeals Court quicker than a frustrated operator can say: "*pondering parallels as potential pirates provokes pandemonium as prices pilfer practitioners profits*"

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GUAM

NEW FEC TO OPEN

The Luen Thai Int'l Group, who operate several successful amusement centres in Malaysia have negotiated a lease on excellent premises for an FEC in Guam.

Guam is the Micronesian island state east of the Philippines that has remained under US control since World War 2 where it was the scene of a vicious, but very decisive battle for supremacy in the Pacific.

The new centre is due to open shortly and Shane Romig who heads up new operations for Luen Thai Ltd is confident that with the growing popularity of Guam as a tourist destination, the company will have another successful outlet.

The company were one of the first to obtain approval to import and operate redemption games in Malaysia and are enjoying great success with them, (particularly the Benchmark games, Spin for Tickets, Camelot and Super Roll for Gold) so it's no surprise that they are installing a good number of redemption pieces in the new centre on Guam.

UNITED STATES

CHANGES IN AMERICAN MANUFACTURING SECTOR CONTINUE AS DATA EAST EXIT

Changes in the structure of the American manufacturing sector continue with news that Data East are closing down their US operation

The way we understand it, Data East will cease all manu-



facture in the USA where they made redemption games like the roll downs, *The Mask* and *World Cup Futbol*, and work through an agent similar to what Taito are doing.

The decision doesn't come as a major surprise as it's been more or less expected since Data East sold their Pinball division to Sega, but coming in the midst of a period when so much rationalisation is going on in the area of manufacturing, it adds to what is becoming a rather dismal picture.

Apart from some of their Japanese made redemption games, like *Wacky Gator*, Data East have not enjoyed a lot of success in redemption with

even good games like *The Mask* failing to meet sales targets in the sluggish market that prevails in the USA. The company's latest game, *World Cup Futbol* has also found it difficult to make an impression in the market.

Apart from the disappointing American subsidiary, Data East is reported to be doing quite well, they have escaped the big losses that several of their counterparts have had to endure over the last two years and are concentrating on video where they are busily developing games for their promising MLC system and also several bigger CG 3D games for the arcade market.

UNITED STATES

CAROUSEL INTERNATIONAL INTRODUCES THE "FRIENDLY DOLPHIN"

Now here's an excellent idea: Flipper prismatic stickers marketed on an attractive Kiddie Ride. Carousel International have incorporated this in their new "Friendly Dolphin" ride with the licensed prismatic Flipper stickers being vended through a bulk capsule vendor attached to the front of the machine.

The stickers are vended in 2 inch capsules for 50 cents each in the USA, but that could be varied in other countries and with the movie "Flipper" being heavily promoted as the current family movie to see, anything to do with Flipper should be a recognisable product to children.

The Friendly Dolphin also throws in an



environment message, telling kids to please keep the oceans clean and safe for dolphins. The soundtrack has been creatively done to make the dolphin's voice sound as if he is speaking underwater in a "bubbling" voice.



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BRAZIL

SALEX SET TO GIVE SOUTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY A FURTHER BOOST



All things considered, most of South America is moving along quite nicely right now, some regions could almost be classed as "booming", and the amusement industry is getting considerable benefits from the improved economy, particularly in Brazil.



This has led to high operator expectations for this months SALEX & PARTEX in Sao Paulo, which is by far the largest showing of coin-op and associated amusement equipment in the region, and more so than ever, a fixture that will draw operators from all over the continent.

We expect the big show to see a huge increase in buying of just about all types of equipment as many operators look to expand their businesses, and the overall result to be a further, significant boost to the industry's prosperity.

South American operators should make sure they don't miss this important fixture which will be held from the 25th to the 27th of this month in Sao Paulo's Mart Centre.

RUMOURS OF SEGA TIFF

We hear that there's a hell of an ongoing ruckus within Sega over South American distribution. Where it seemed certain that Sega's South American consumer game division had the distribution of coin-op games tied up, it appears that Sega USA are adamant that they should have it.

These two divisions of the giant Japanese company fighting over South American coin-op distribution is quite comical when you consider that the whole company has basically ignored the continent and treated South American operators like "poor relations" for years.

PINBALLS & JUKEBOXES

When we wrote a few months ago while everyone was still in "heavy crane mode" that Pinballs were on the rise in Brazil and South America, we were in some places ridiculed, but once again CBI was right on the button, and

Pinballs are now one of the biggest growth sectors in Brazil and gaining popularity all the time in neighbouring countries. The next big growth sector (not counting dedicated videos which are bound to see a big increase numbers) will in our opinion be Jukeboxes, which we can see at least doubling in number over the next few years.

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SEIBU TO WORK WITH DE'S MLC SYSTEM

Good news for fans of Data East's Motherless Cassette system is that the company are inviting outside game developers to make games for the system, and we hear that Seibu, makers of the Raiden, and other good games, will be among the first to become involved.

The first Seibu MLC game, as we hear it, will be a sort of "Raiden Returns" in 3D, and it should be in the market before this year is through.

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you there!**

JAPAN

GET THE WET SUITS ON, IT'S TIME FOR THE WATER GAMES

Namco are said to be putting the finishing touches to a new game that features a Jet Ski and is tentatively titled "Aqua Jet"

We believe the new game is very much like the Konami game "Jet Ski" that was shown earlier this year, though you would think that with Namco being given the opportunity of seeing their rivals game, they would do something to stand it apart from that game.

Or maybe they're counting on being first as from what we hear, the chances



Gunblade NY, #1 Dedicated game

a pretty fair assortment of games with a fair few carrying "2's" and "3's" after their names and almost all those of note, being in high end CG 3D.

JAMMA HK

JAMMA's Hong Kong Trade show scheduled for later this year is

starting to look like a bit of a closed shop. The word we have is that it will now be officially sponsored by a concern called JETRO and co sponsored by JAMMA. Intending exhibitors must be manufacturers or traders, etc authorised by JETRO and all products to be shown must be authorised by JAMMA.

are strong that Namco's game will actually be released earlier than the Konami game. Both the Japanese made games however, look like being beaten into the market by the water skiing game out of the USA from ICE Inc that's titled Ski Max, and is also a big screen simulator, but whatever way you look at it, it seems like water games are definitely the "in" thing.

EVERYONE SILENT ON AM SHOW

Seems a lot of authorisation to us for a show that is unlikely to raise a yelp in the overall scheme of things, as the way we see it, any Hong Kong or South East Asian buyer worth having at a trade show would slip over to Japan for the AM rather than wait a couple of months for the same product to be brought to their door.

Unlike most years when around this time we have a stack of 'leaks' out of the Japanese factories on what they will be showing at the AM Show (JAMMA), this year the 'leaks' are so thin that one wonders if there is even an AM Show on next month.

But based on what we think we know, visitors to the AM can expect

THE CHARTS

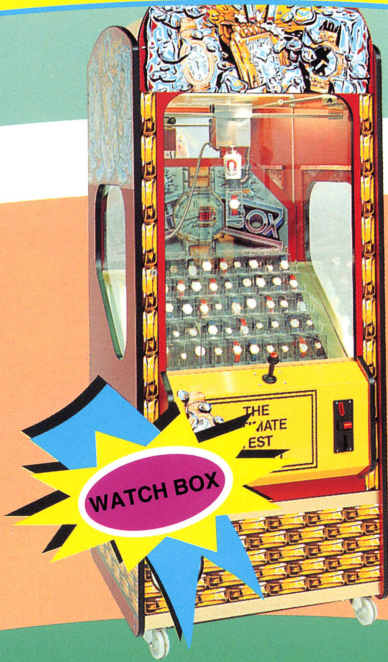
Driving games seem to have gone off the boil with only *Victory Lap* doing anything of note at this point.

Gunblade NY and *Virtua On* have knocked *Time Crisis* from the #1 spot in dedicated games to #3, but *Gunblade* looks pretty "soft", and unless there's a good new game come out soon, we wouldn't be surprised to see *Virtua On* or *Time Crisis* reclaim #1 in the short term.

In conversion games, *Street Fighter Alpha 2* has comfortably held it's spot on top with Taito's *Psychic Force*, SNK's *Metal Slug* and Namco's *Xevious 3D* the only games making any impression on it. *Tekken 2* is hanging in well at #5, but *VF Kids* has quickly sunk into oblivion as expected.

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USA

AAMA HONOURS DAVE COURINGTON

Dave Courington of Valley Recreation products was awarded with the AAMA President's Award at the associations Annual Dinner held at Spavone's Restaurant in Bloomingdale, Illinois. The President's Award is given each year to an AAMA member who has contributed outstanding efforts and assistance to the AAMA staff over the past year.

RICH BABICH, MARK STRUHS RECEIVE JOE ROBBINS AWARD

AAMA has named Rich Babich of Colorado Game

Exchange, and Mark Struhs of Dynamo as co-recipients of the Joe Robbins Award for 1996.

Rick Kirby, the newly re-elected AAMA president, presented the awards noting Babich's and Struhs' many contributions to the industry, as both are highly respected in their individual companies, as well as key members of AAMA's Board of Directors.

The Joe Robbins award is given each year to selected members of the coin-op industry for outstanding participation, contribution and services to the industry.

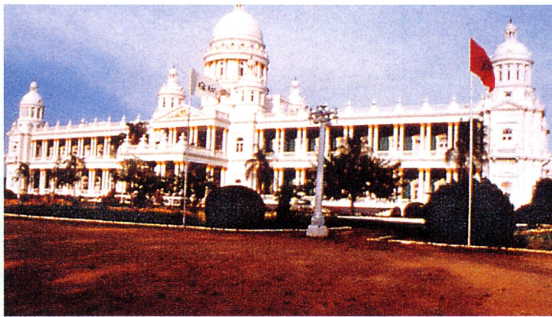
INDIA

AAMA TO ORGANISE NEW TRADE SHOW

Following their successful Trade Mission, and as forecast in CBI, the AAMA (US Manufacturers Association) have elected to organise a new Trade Show for the coin-op and associated industries in India.

Members of the association who travelled to India were amazed at the possibilities for coin games, etc on the sub continent and their report prompted quick and unanimous Board approval for a show which will have around 40 booths and be titled the "India Amusement Expo". It's scheduled for February 26th and 27th and will be held at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi and co-sponsored by the US Embassy Foreign Commercial Service in India.

Booth space for the show will be sold through WT Glasgow, +1 708 333 9292.



SINGAPORE

LEISURE ASIA 1997 DATES

Leisure ASIA, the international exhibition and conference for leisure, entertainment, heritage, amusement and recreation in Asia will return for the second time in 1977 from March 6 to 8. The event will be at the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Leisure ASIA '96 (pic below) was held earlier this year and the organisers have estimated the value of total trade enquiries at US\$50 million over the three day show.



GERMANY

IMA/BSI FOLLOWS INDUSTRY TRENDS

This year's IMA show in Germany was the first time the event had extended itself with a new exhibition section concentrating on billiards and sports games innovations (BSI). The BSI section of the trade show was canvassed and advertised separately and market research undertaken at IMA showed that 78.5% of guests approved of the new lay-out. Show organisers, Blenheim, have said that 82% of the 1996 exhibitors have already signed up for next year's IMA.



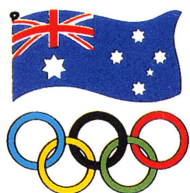
The organisers of IMA have always tried to reflect the ever-increasing diversification of the leisure industry and IMA '96 reflected this with all the new product groups joining the traditional exhibition area. For example, bowling and solariums are now seen in some German amusement arcades. This is because state restrictions have forced operators to reduce their range of machines and other types of equipment have been used to fill the gaps.

This year's IMA, for the first time, included exhibitors specialising in lighting fixtures as sophisticated amusement centre operators have begun to realise the value of good, appropriately used lighting. There was also an increased number of equipment installing companies as the coin-op industry has been opening itself up to include restaurants and cafes (especially Cyber cafes) as well as other suppliers in the leisure market. In addition to bowling and solariums, there have been moves towards fitness, go-karts and cinema experiences.

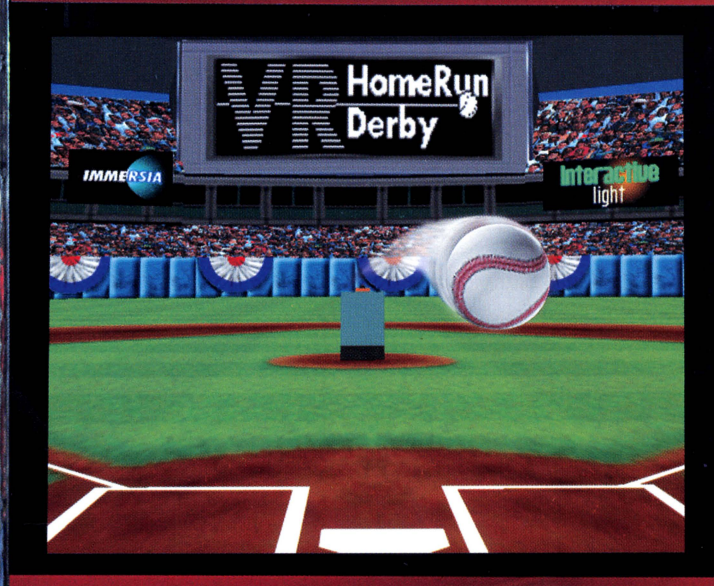
The vending machine exhibition area also reflected industry changes. Whereas cigarette vending machines once dominated, 1996 was much heavier in machines dispensing snacks, coffee, ice-cream, chips and refreshing drinks.

IMA, along with its BSI concept, plan to continue tailoring their exhibition area to the changes occurring in the amusement industry, and this will definitely shape their 1997 trade show. IMA '97 will be held in Frankfurt from January 22-25, and Petra Lassahn, the project manager can be contacted on:

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HONG KONG

COIN-OP STRONGHOLD DOING IT TOUGH ON ALL FRONTS

A coin-op stronghold for many years, Hong Kong is currently going through one of its worst periods ever in both sales of equipment and operations.

A survey of game centres revealed a general drop in income of between 10% and 20% for the month of May, and this drop is on figures that were already very much down on the colony's good times.

The interesting part of this was that most operators blamed the lack of recent quality games, they firmly believe the players are still there, but that they are tired of the same old stuff and are just not playing.

The continuing slump in HK operations has of course had a major effect on sales of equipment, both new and used,

within the colony, and coupled with a sharp drop in export business, some dealers are facing the sort of losses that have previously been unheard of in HK.

On this side of things 43 trading company's were surveyed, and while some were a bit reluctant to talk, none could say they were doing well, and most said business was poor to downright terrible, which probably has a lot to do with our observations on the bad attitude of visitors to the Asian Expo that we wrote of last month.

The word we got was that the only games selling were Tekken 1 & 2, Run & Gun, SF Alpha 2, King of Fighters '95 and Soul Edge at a low price.

There's little demand for dedicated games, with good games like Point Blank, Virtua



HK's games room operators are looking at a lot of idle machines

Cop 2 and Virtua Striker, basically selling at cost price. Daytona Twins are still selling, but only the very scarce Japanese made models which have a bigger and better Nanao monitor and better gear change mechanism than the US built machines, (and even though they generally sell for \$US2000 more than American machines)

And worse than all this, there is little confidence that much is going to change in the short term.

ISRAEL

START OF NEW FEC CHAIN

Israel got its first FEC when "Party Zone", a 1700 square metre establishment was opened in Haifa recently.

The Haifa centre includes coin-op games, redemption, fast food and a large soft play installation and is the first in a proposed chain of over 35 FEC's that the holding company plan to build over the next few years.

If all goes to plan, there will be 12 large centres like that in Haifa, and up to 25 smaller centres of around 600 square metres for smaller cities.

Quem Se Acha Do Negócio E Não Conhece O Sistema Neo Geo, Está Perdendo Tempo



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NEW ZEALAND

K&U CO OPENS NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

K&U Co, the Japanese distributor who specialise in second-hand video simulators, but handle almost all type of game, has opened an office in Rotorua, New Zealand to service its many Australian and New Zealand customers.

K&U Co already have several branch offices around the world and the company currently conduct regular auctions of amusement equipment in Japan, China, Singapore and in other major world markets.

These auctions are apparently becoming very popular as operators continue to find them an excellent way of buying and



selling equipment quickly and it's expected that there will be similar sales conducted in New Zealand.

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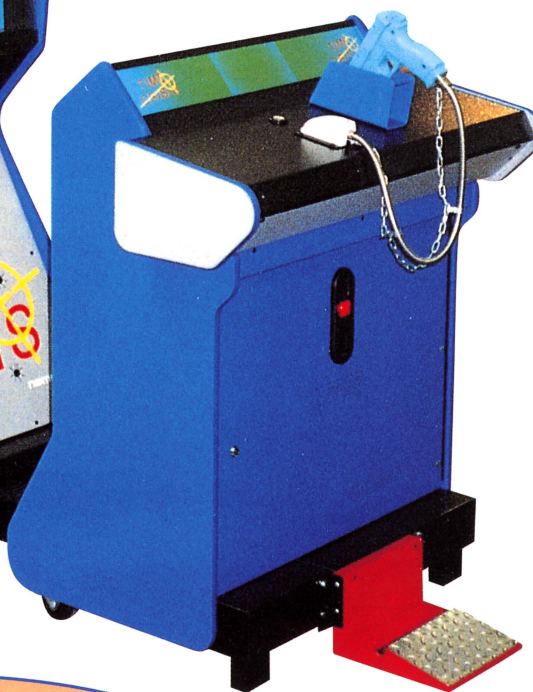
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Only a few months ago in these pages we asked the question "Can Capcom make it in Pinball", but today, the question is "Will Capcom Pinball fall to Sega?"

Well, a month or so ago we would have thought it was a certainty that Sega would take over the magnificent manufacturing facility that Capcom spared no expense on building outside Chicago, in fact we believed it was *fait accompli*, a done deal, but today the position is much more doubtful.

And that has perked this writer up a bit.

Though a good little capitalist at heart, and fully aware of the power in having dollars available at the right time, it was rather sad to see Data East go to Sega, and then to contemplate Capcom Pinball, after putting their *cahonas* and a hell of a lot of dollars on the line to start up Pinball manufacturing operations, falling by the wayside to Sega's size and ability to borrow money.....when Sega, who are far bigger and stronger have done nothing but sit back, and try to gobble up the results of their hard work and dedication to coin-op.

But strangely the question that a lot of people are asking is why would Sega want another Pinball company, and many are answering that with a simple "Because it's there", but with all due respect both the question and the 'throw away' answer show a rather alarming degree of ignorance in just what Capcom Pinball have achieved.

Page 30

For a start, Pinballs will not be in a slump forever, secondly Sega Pinball actually manufacture very little of their machines, they basically assemble them from components manufactured by others, which is quite OK, it's done everywhere, but Capcom have a new, state of the art, manufacturing facility and the savings in production by securing this facility would be enormous to Sega.

Thirdly they are obtaining a Pinball operating system that's far better, and far better suited to upgrading for future innovations than the operating

Having that system would also return huge benefits from day one, well into the future for Sega, and another valid point is that by taking Capcom into their clutches they would immediately eliminate a potentially very dangerous competitor, a company that could quickly put them under great pressure when the Pinball market turned around.

Be sure that if Sega were to buy Capcom Pinballs, they would get great value for whatever money it was likely to cost, even if they were to pay half of what it all cost to put together, and we believe the price being negotiated was even less than that, the Japanese giant would have picked up the sort of bargain that mere mortals can only dream about.

And in this world of "commercial reality" (a term commonly used by the predator in these situations) we have to accept that by turning back a deal with Premier Technology, who are going through difficult times, and going after Capcom, there had to be a chance that Sega, if they built two Pinballs as Williams does with the Bally name, could end up sharing the entire world Pinball market with Williams Bally sometime in the future.

That would depend on many things, but looking long term, Sega would have to see it as a chance.

CAPCOM PINBALL TO STAY AS IS ?

system they currently use, no one at Sega will be jumping out of their socks to admit that, but this writer saw the amazed looks on the faces of a number of their engineering staff when they seen what the Capcom operating system could do at the AMOA Expo '95 in New Orleans, when Pinball Magic was first shown to the industry.

We believe the Capcom system is even better than the older Bally Williams system and we know quite a few Pinball people who not only agree with that, but are also, somewhat in awe of the reliability the Capcom machines have demonstrated since entering the market.



Pinball needs competition as much as anything else and as far as we're concerned the industry will be best placed for the future if the status quo on manufacturers remains, people keep saying that five Pinball manufacturers (they count Williams Bally as two) is too many, but it's sure as hell a lot better than two would be.

And what would happen to the highly talented team that Capcom put together, it would be doubtful that it would all be kept together.

Capcom went after what and who they wanted with an open cheque book, but it's hard to see Sega paying members of the Capcom staff more than they are paying their own people who would apparently be in control of the enlarged Sega Pinball if they were to succeed in buying Capcom.

In the area of design one must query if the high profile designers like Mark Ritchie and 'Python' Angelo would be comfortable working under Joe Kaminkow and Garry Stern, whom we assume would remain in control. It's a hell of a hard step to take, from almost running a Pinball company, to working under a former rival.

It's possible to ponder over things like this forever, but the one thing that stands out is that the chances of losing some fine talent to other industries, would have to be high,

and that's not what this industry needs to take it into the next milenium.

So with the Sega deal looking decidedly shaky, we come back to the question of if

Capcom can make it in Pinball, and we still believe they can, certainly if they get a few breaks. To date everything has gone against them, Capcom Japan's huge losses last year, and to a lesser degree this year, in the consumer market, coupled with the slump in Pinball popularity that was in full

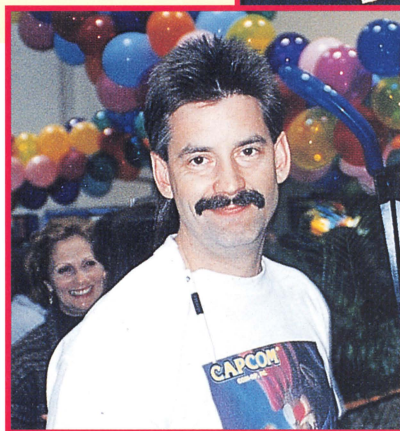
swing by the time they got their first Pinball to market, made up as mean a 'double whammy' as a company could be hit with, and put the fledgling Pinball division under great pressure.

If the two disasters hadn't occurred concurrently, there's little doubt that Capcom would have gone on to

become a successful manufacturer, the money that Capcom chief Kenzo Tsujimoto poured into the project showed he was fully committed to that aim, but even his very deep pockets were severely dented by the double whammy.



Left: Mark Ritchie, chief of Capcom design and above, 'Python' Angelo.



If Pinball popularity was to pick up in the near future, a very competitive Capcom would soon establish itself in world markets, Sega know that, that's why they wanted to buy it.

Until the silver ball returns to it's former levels of popularity however, we are quite sure that Sega will keep nibbling away at it's rival, and we can only hope that Mr Tsujimoto keeps resisting their advances.

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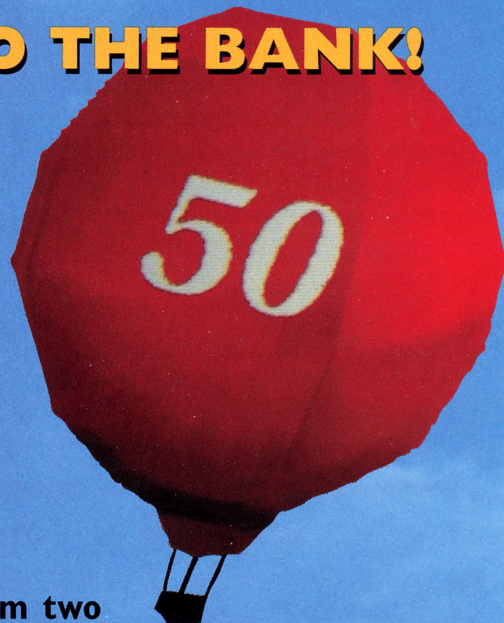
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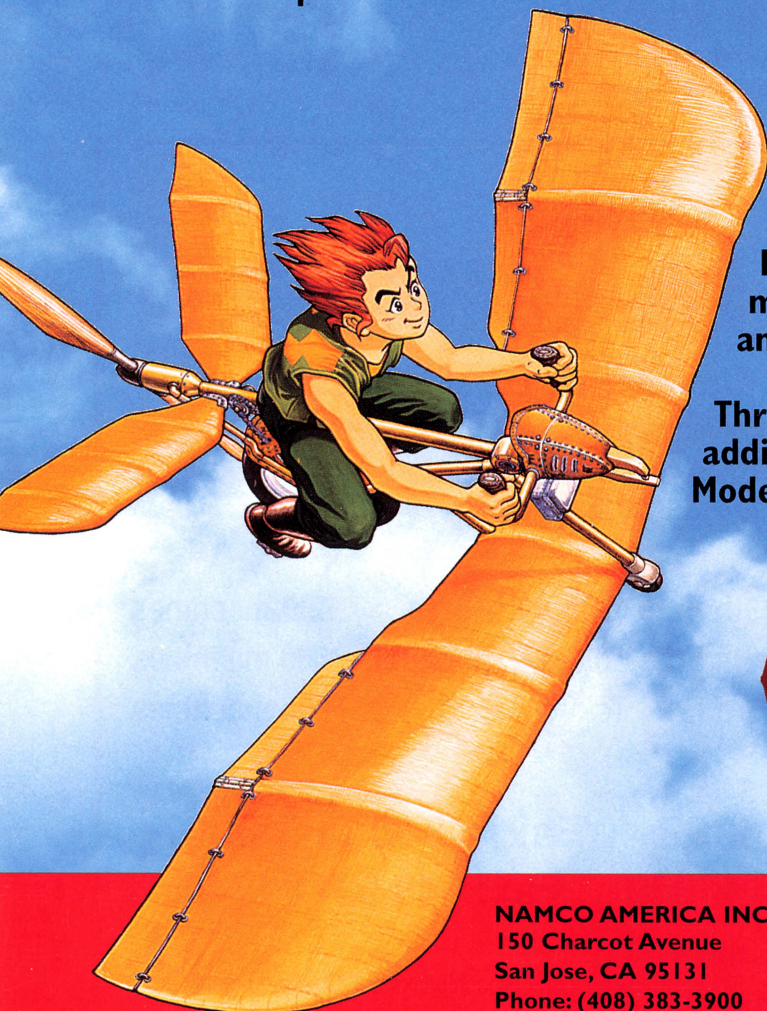
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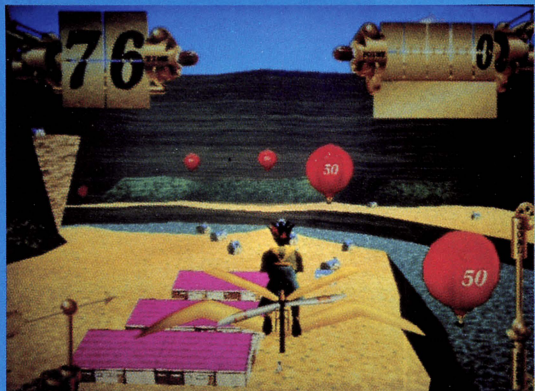


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PUB & TABLE GAMES

More than ever before, the emphasis of the coin-op industry is on arresting the adult dollar and that puts the emphasis on the places adults frequent most - licensed premises where they can get a drink - pubs and bars.

Not that coin-op in these places is anything new, they have always been keenly sought after locations for Pool Tables, Jukeboxes, Darts machines, Pinballs and of course in the UK and Europe, countless different types of AWP and SWP machines, but in today's market there's few restrictions on what amusement games can be placed in these locations.

Good operators around the world are trying all sorts of things, dedicated games, redemption games, cranes, countertops, sports games and anything else they can think of. Some work, some don't, but that's the only way to go, you'll never know if something works until you try it.

The biggest single factor when operating in these locations is not to operate with a closed mind, what was the case 'yesterday' may not be the case today. The demographics of pub locations change dramatically over a few short years in some cases and the operator has to be constantly aware of changes in the locations clientele and their leisure time needs.

We were recently told of an operator that had a pair of big De Luxe Daytonas sitting in his workshop for six weeks while he looked for an arcade location that didn't have the game and had the space to accommodate them.

His son, a junior partner in the business wanted to put them in a pub site they held which had the necessary space, but wise old Dad who had the real say in the business said:

"Don't be bloody stupid, these are arcade machines, they'd never work in the pub, I put a driver (Pole Position) in there once and it took nothing"

With over \$40,000 worth of equipment sitting there doing nothing for 6 weeks however, he eventually weakened and allowed the son to install them until he got an arcade site. *"As long as you install them and pull the big bastards out when I tell you, in your own time"* he threw in.

You don't really need to be told the end of this story, but in short the big "D's" are still in the pub, earning like crazy and if you ask the operator about them he'll tell you how brilliant he is for thinking of putting them there and *"how you have to keep trying things in this industry all the time to succeed"*

That is probably an extreme case, there's thankfully not too many in the industry that are so dopey as to leave good games idle rather than try them in different type of location than what they think the games will do best in. We certainly hope not anyway.

Table games, the other side of this review are generally closely aligned with pubs as the premier table game is Pool, but Pool



You'll never really know what type of person will play an amusement game until you give them the opportunity to play



Tables have proven such excellent property for operators over countless years that they are often taken for granted and left in operation long past the expiry of their "use by" date.

We know of so many sites that have increased

Pool takings in many cases to double their previous take, and have also accepted a lower commission on the higher takings, when the operator has installed new tables, that it amazes when you see scrappy old tables in good locations.

The long term benefits of paying out a smaller site commission far outweigh the somewhat 'piddling' cost of putting in new and more attractive tables and accessories, let alone the increase in actual takings that they can generate. Down the road a bit we'll show you the figures which clearly show that an update in Pool Tables can have as big an effect as you get

when you update a video game.

Regardless of how strong and consistent Pool Tables are there's always things that can be done to improve takings in today's environment where much more money is spent on leisure than ever before.

For example, many pubs have cable television and it's generally fixed permanently on the sports channel



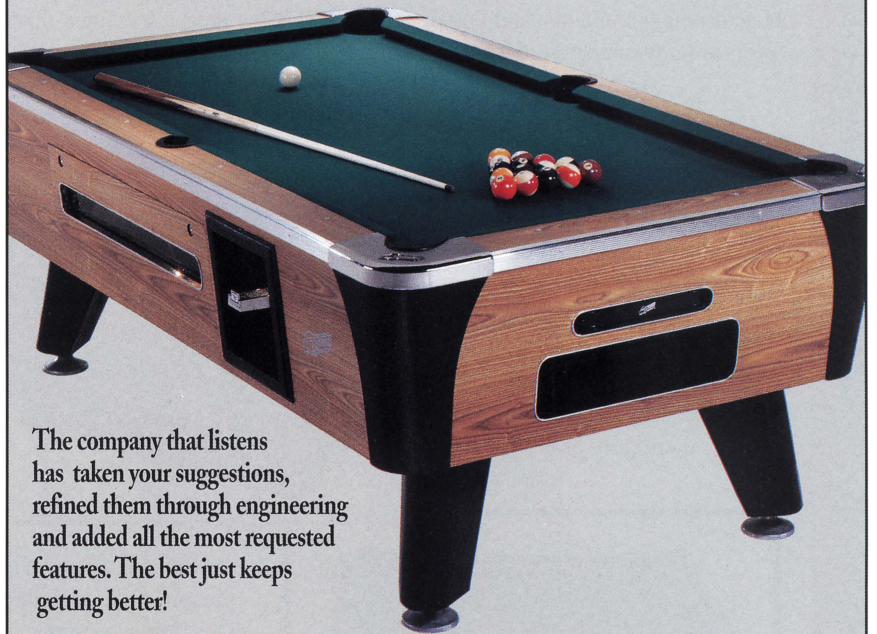
where hours of Snooker are played each week, wouldn't it be worth a try to install one of those New Zealand designed Snooker/Pool systems and see if the interest the Snooker on cable receives is transferred to the cash box?

If the Pool is doing well, what about trying an Air Hockey table or a Soccer table, a couple of good electronic darts games, a Caribbean Hook or a sports game of some sort, they won't all work everywhere, but we've seen different games do exceptional business in some places, just as we know of an

old Bumper Pool table in a pub that never takes less than \$120 a week, which is probably about what it cost 25 odd years ago, and a Major Title golf game that's been in the same pub site for over three years, has taken well over \$25,000 and looks like it will earn a lot more dollars before it's through.

Pub and Table game sites are among the very best locations that street operators can have and will remain that way well into the future.....*as long as the operator has an open mind and works them to his greatest advantage.*

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Countertops & Multi Games Big on ROI

There was a time when 'Pub' games were very clearly defined, but what constitutes a Pub game today, basically depends on the Pub.

While Pool and Darts, and to a lesser extent, Pinballs, are still the staple diet of Pubs, and will no doubt remain that way, changes over recent years have seen these staples overshadowed in many parts of the world, by products ranging from tiny countertop videos to huge driving simulators, and Pub operators are now prepared to try just about anything in their locations.

Overall though, and despite the really big earnings of dedicated games in some regions, the big success story in Pub games has been the countertop and small upright, multi game videos of which there are now several brands. These mighty midgets are taking on all over the world with their diversity of games, and the familiarity of the games employed.

Merit Industries "Megatouch III", through the total commitment the company has given the concept over the past few years, is the most successful of these games with huge numbers operating in America, Europe and many other places.

But "Solitaire Challenge" from Dynamo, "Magical Touch" from Micro Magic, and the "Concorde" from JVL all have their admirers and all give their operators an excellent ROI. Williams Midway have also started manufacture of a multi game countertop, titled the "Touch Master" and though we have no operator reports to date we're quite sure

bers, but to our knowledge, the *Mega Touch* has 17 games, *Magical Touch* 10, *Concorde* 12, *Touch Master* 7 and *Solitaire Challenge* many different types of solitaire. But though all games get a share of play time, the games that people play most are those based on universal card games like Solitaire, Black Jack and Poker, where the players familiarity with the game breaks down any of the reluctance to play, that is often present if a game is not fully understood.

As the machines have gone into more and more locations, they too have become a comfortable and familiar piece of the Pubs 'furniture' where unlike Pool or Darts, they can be played by a bunch of people having fun, or by a lone player who just wants to sit there in isolation and while away a bit of time.

Possibly the only markets this type of game is not working well in are those like the UK where the AWP culture is so strong, and markets where the operators have been greedy. It has to be understood with these games that a lot of their success in markets like the USA revolves around the value for money that players feel they get from the games.

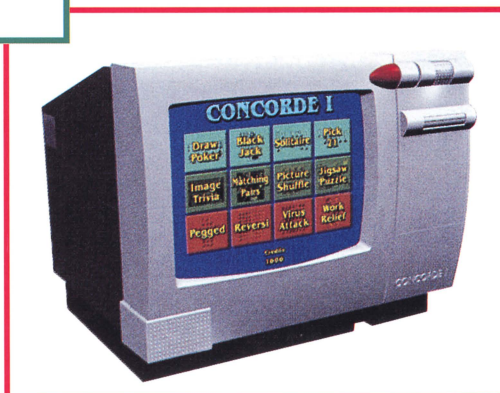
Just like the "ticket spitting" Redemption games that suffer the same misuse, countertop and cabaret multi games mostly come from the USA where they are designed for quarter (25 cents) play and where players believe they get good value for their quarters, but when the same game is thrown into a foreign market on \$1 play, or even more, *the player is being asked to accept 25% of the value that the game was designed to give.*

We have written many times that players aren't complete idiots, and operators treat them



it will be a worthy addition to the range of countertop games that are now available to operators.

Most of the different brands have a good selection of games that include, trivia and puzzles, etc, don't hold us to the num-



Top: The Tournament Mega Touch from Merit Industries. (17 games)

Centre left: Micro Manufacturing's Magical Touch (10 games)

Bottom: JVL's Concorde (12 games)

Facing Page: Dynamos Tournament Solitaire cabaret model and Merit's Mega Touch cabaret.

Note: Numbers of games in the machines could change.

Merit Ind make several countertop models with the latest being the Megatouch IV

as idiots at their peril, but many operators still blame the game, and not what they are doing with it, if it doesn't take the money that they have decided it should take.

We know of operators who on learning that countertops are taking \$150 a week in the USA on quarter play, expect \$600 a week on \$1 play, completely disregarding the fact that they would have to get that \$600 by giving the players 25% of the 'value' that they are entitled to get.

In fairness to the operator, a lot of this stems from the price he pays for the machines which often double and triple their US price by the time they cross a few oceans, get crucified by import duties and go through a few middle men.

That can be viewed as a problem, but players don't know, and generally don't have the slightest concern for what the game has cost the operator, or what he needs out of it to make the purchase a viable proposition, they want what they consider is value for their money.

And though purchase price in countries outside the USA can make things a bit more difficult for the operator, the general operator attitude of treating these games the same as other video games, doesn't help either. Often we hear operators talk of how 'X' the video game took \$400 and 'Y' the countertop "only" took \$150 or so.

What is being completely ignored is the fact that in most cases, 'X' will only take that sort of money for between 6 weeks and 6 months tops, and basically *has* to earn big, while the multi game has an unlimited lifespan at a consistent level of earnings that will ensure a far better ROI over it's life than just about any 'hot shot' video game.

And though we get all this garbage from the proponents of high game play prices about what a game has to earn, and how a game should pay for itself in so many weeks, etc, comparing a normal video game with a countertop or multi game bar piece that earns consistently well for years without anything having to be spent on it, is like comparing a rusty push bike to a big shiny Harley Davidson.

An American operator recently compared countertops to a Daytona Twin, he said;

"Daytona is a fantastic game and I probably need another one for a location I have, but I can get ten Mega Touch countertops for basically the same money and they will

gross me a \$1000 a week for a Hell of a long time, probably a good bit more than \$1000. Can anyone guarantee me that I'll gross \$1000 a week out of the Daytona for 6 months or a year?"

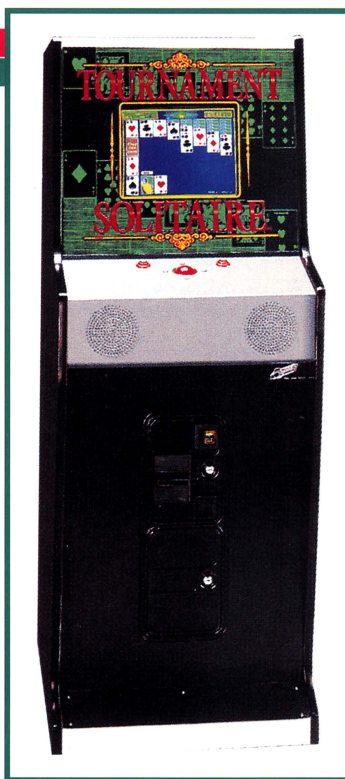
"No way they can, my locations can not support that type of revenue, the two Daytonas I have

now are averaging around \$400 a week and I'd consider myself lucky if this other location can do that after the first few weeks "

"It's simply 'no contest', I'll be buying the countertops"

Though we have at times seen reason for operators to go for quality rather than quantity, when you can get *quality in quantity*, numbers are good and we found it pretty hard to come up with an argument for the Daytona.

And as good as the countertops and multi games are now, there's a strong chance that they will get even better. Tournaments for example are increasing earnings in



those machines that utilise them like Dynamo's "Tournament Solitaire" and Merit's "Tournament Mega Touch" and the scope for new games is unlimited.

With operators getting a good return, the manufacturers will also get a good return with sales and that will provide more money for game development.

Multi game videos for bars, are to our mind one of the very best investments available to operators today and there is no valid reason why that will change for some time yet.

.....and free games too

Merit did something rarely seen in this industry recently when they gave operators of their Mega Touch games a new game they had developed, *for nothing bar the price of a couple of ROMs and the shipping.*

The game, titled 11-Up is a type of solitaire where players must clear the field in card combinations totalling eleven and it's one of those real "pain in the butt" sort of games game that sucks players in like nobody's business, in other words, it's almost addictive, a top game and an excellent addition to the Mega Touch range.

Operators have commented to us that they would gladly have paid for the game to try it out, and on finding out it's worth, would have paid to update all their machines, so Merit obviously made a lot of friends out of giving the game to operators and showing their commitment to keeping Mega Touch at the top.





Good Golf Games Rarely Miss

That good golf games go well in pubs and clubs is not a startling revelation, but it doesn't hurt to remind of these things particularly when there are some good games of this type in the market.

Probably the most successful as we write is the American made "Golden Tee 3D Golf" from Incredible Technologies which is not only sitting high on the charts against all comers, but is soon to be put into the NANI system that links locations.

Sold as a reasonably priced JAMMA compatible kit and able to earn what it is earning, *Golden Tee 3D*, pictured below, has to be top



property for pub operators, many of whom would have a stack of upright video machines sitting idle around the place that the game could be placed in and make up a real bargain priced package.

Golden Tee 3D is graphically excellent and offers players the choice of three well designed 18 hole Golf courses where they can play either stroke or skins play with reverse angle replays.

The game can accommodate up to four players and the great control the players have over the on screen golfer enables them to make any type of shot they can make on a golf course and a lot the average golfer can't.



Another good golf game and it's even less expensive is the Neo Geo game, *Turf Masters*, (above) a video golf game that's almost as frustrating as the real game.

This is a natural for bars and taverns, we've seen it suck adult players in so deep that they just about had to be forcibly removed from the machine at closing time and it will be quite surprising if it doesn't have a long and productive life in this type of location.

Another video golf game that's a pretty fair game is Sega's *Pebble Beach Golf*, but general operator opinion says it's not quite up to the other two.

Away from video games there's a new sports game in the market titled *Putting Challenge 2*. Most operators are familiar with the original *Putting Challenge* game which was manufactured by ICE Inc and is still doing business in many places around the world, and this new version, which is much more compact, takes up from that game.

Putting Challenge 2 is manufactured by a new company called GL Technology which we believe is owned by the designer of both games.

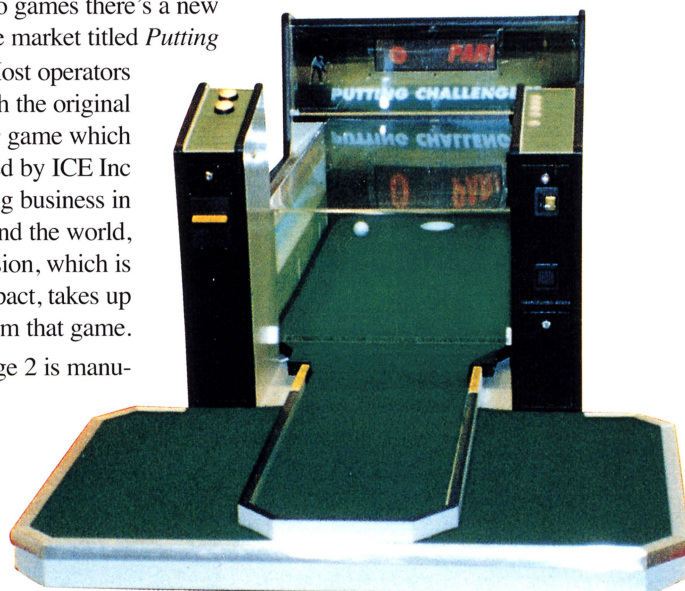
The makers claim the new game is 45% smaller than the original which should make it a lot easier to place, and it also has a ball return system that comes over the surface of the 'green', eliminating any chance of balls getting blocked up under-

neath which was a problem sometimes in the older game. There's also no assembly on this one,

you just basically wheel it in, plug it in and it's ready to earn.

Putting Challenge 2 has four 18 hole courses, two "Amateur" and two "Professional", giving a total of 72 different holes, so there's plenty of variety in the game play.

But while games like *Putting Challenge* will always have their admirers, video golf games have a definite edge, being able to offer so much in game play, and word that one of the major companies is currently developing a big polygon golf game should come as welcome news to operators that currently have locations where golf games really work.





All Weather Pool Tables



Though they have been in the market for a fair while, it's only now that all weather Pool tables are really being appreciated by operators, particularly those in countries where climatic conditions are favourable to out door entertainment.

Australia's Coastal Fibreglass, makers of the Coastal 2100 Table, have in only two years of operation become one of the world's biggest manufacturers of this type product and are currently exporting to several foreign markets.

Coastal Fibreglass Pool Tables' Coastal 2100 is the original and revolutionary indoor/outdoor pool table that will withstand not only the normal use of play but also the effects of weather, spilt drinks or food. Topped with a water resistant felt, the Coastal 2100 allows play to continue after a shower of rain or even a snowfall.

Decals can be added to advertise your establishment or allow for restaurant or bar advertising and many astute operators are utilising this aspect of fibreglass tables to consolidate locations. The Coastal table's modern high gloss finish and clean-cut lines compliment any decor, inside or outside and for ease of siting and transportation, the legs can be removed and packed inside the table.

Since commencing business two years ago, Coastal Fibreglass Pool Tables have made inroads into the world export market, sending tables to Egypt and Malaysia, with further orders from Singapore, India, NZ and the UK currently being negotiated.

For export tables, where operators envisage coinage problems from unusual coins, Coastal have had tokens made to suit the Essex Straight Six coin mechanism that's standard to the table, but in most cases the Essex mech can be adapted to suit the coinage.

The company is also looking at new ideas - 8' x 4' fibreglass tables are now available, and, another revolutionary new concept in pool tables is soon to be released.



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Nova Games Cover the World

In Europe, there are few companies who are more active in the area of Pub and Table Games than Germany's Nova Games. Along with representing many of the world's major video and pin-ball companies within Europe, Nova also produces their own line of payout machines, a series of novelty skill games, and the equipment we're most interested in for this feature article - the internationally-known Merkur-Darts and Taifun air hockey tables.

In darts, Nova offers a 4-player version, the Merkur-Plus, and the Merkur-Power, an 8-player. The company has had great results with their dart machines, not only because of their high quality, but also because of the "Merkur Sports & Games" concept they use to promote the game.

The concept includes both tournaments and leagues and has a ranking system which covers the whole of Europe. Players begin in a local competition and work their way up through the national and European championships right up to the World Championship if they are good enough. More than 30,000 participants from 7 countries provide the best evidence that the Merkur Sports & Games concept is a success.

Nova also distribute a whole range of sports and amusement machines worldwide that include the shooting game, Shooting Star, and the Taifun air hockey tables which are among Nova's most popular products. Nova's managing director, Dr Ludwig Möhlmann, spoke to Cash Box about the success of the Taifun tables (which have sold in their several thousands all over the world in recent years) and the company in general.



From left: The Nova team of Udo Nickel, Patrick Bachelart, Kai Prengel, Kjeld Erichsen, Dr Ludwig Möhlmann with the Taifun Air Hockey Table

CBI: Firstly, what does Taifun mean?

Dr Möhlmann: This is a very good question - when we of Nova Games took over the international business of Taifun from Gauselmann/Stella, a British operator told us, "This air hockey table is really great, but what has it got to do with Thai-Fun?"

We could only answer that this table has a lot to do with fun, but nothing to do with Thais, except for those people playing the air hockey tables in Thailand. The German spelling of the word "typhoon" is "taifun", that's the only reason for the name.

CBI: What are the main features of the Taifun air hockey table?

Dr Möhlmann: First of all let me point out that the idea of the air hockey table is not new. Paul Gauselmann, head of the Gauselmann Group, developed a silent air hockey table back in 1973. This silent version allowed the Taifun table not only to be placed in arcades but also in bars and pubs.

During the last 10 years this table has been further developed and made better and better and we are very proud of the product we have today. Just some of the features of our table are:

- a 20% quicker puck due to more and bigger holes in the playfield. (Chamfered edges of pucks also result in aerodynamic and speedy action)
- the pucks hit against heavy, solid steel rails and for silence purposes, the steel rails are rubber cushioned.
- the puck delivery channels are fully accessible by locked doors which is a very important service feature.
- overhanging bars to prevent injuries and pucks from lifting off.
- very low noise level as the Taifun tables have so-called whispering jets.

CBI: Do you also sell your products in other countries besides Germany?

Dr Möhlmann: Our main market for our range of coin-operated amusement machines is Germany, for sure, but on average, around 50% of all our equipment is exported with the main region being Europe. With Taifun 95% of the production is exported.

We are also working with more than 50 importers or distributors in around 30 different countries, with most of them on an exclusive basis. We never sell directly into other countries, we always use the experience of the selected importer or distributor in the relevant country, he knows more about this market than we do.

CBI: Is your distribution network growing?

Dr Möhlmann: Yes, during the last few months we appointed some exclusive distributors for Taifun. In the United States we were fortunate enough to get Merit Industries, and we have put an exclusive arrangement with Amusement Machine Rentals in New Zealand in place.

CBI: Are there any new products that will come into the market in the near future?

Dr Möhlmann: For sure there will be a lot of product innovations. As you know, Nova has been co-operating for decades with the biggest and best game designers and manufacturers in the world. Product innovations by these companies is being co-ordinated with Nova, tested, and sometimes further developed according to the relevant market demand.

At the end of August we will present many new games during our international distributor meeting in Hamburg, where all our distributors come together to meet and discuss new games and markets.



**“If you don't take a proper look first,
you might end up looking foolish.”**

It's not an idle boast when we say **TYPHOON**, **CYCLONE** and **HURRICANE** make more money than other air hockey tables. We can prove it. But you'll have to take a closer look at them first.

Our air hockey tables have the playfield with the most and biggest air nozzles, meaning the puck zaps along very fast. It gets up even more speed when it hits the heavy, solid steel rails, which make the puck rebound particularly well.

The game is so full of excitement that players keep on buying extra time. By the way, the steel rails are divided into several sections, mounted on rubber bearings. This design has such excellent silencing properties that our air hockey tables are the quietest games on the market. Further silencing comes from the rubber rings on the mallet. Take a proper look and you'll see for yourself: **Air hockey tables from NOVA GAMES. Simply more to offer!**



CYCLONE

Overhead score board with integrated black light.
Measurements (W x H x L) 128 x 197 x 251 cm



TYPHOON

Overhead score board with integrated black light.
Octagonal cushion for greater playing comfort.
Goals on playfield as in ice hockey.
Measurements (W x H x L) 128 x 197 x 251 cm



HURRICANE

Standard score board in the cushion.
Option: overhead display with integrated black light.
Measurements (W x H x L) 128 x 86 x 251 cm





Valley Move Into Foosball & Air Hockey



As everyone in the industry probably knows, Valley Recreation acquired Tornado Table Sports earlier this year. Already a leader in the pub and table games sector, the acquisition further strengthens Valley's position. Along with their quality pool tables and electronic dart machines, they have now extended their range to include foosball (table soccer) and air hockey.

Valley's interest in Tornado stemmed from the company's strong commitment to league sports. Valley's support of pool and dart leagues through the VNEA and the NDA is absolutely unquestionable, and the company will help operators to develop league programs for foosball, and possibly air hockey.

Street operators have recognised the value of leagues and tournaments to the success of their businesses, and are relying more and more upon league equipment manufacturers to help them expand their programs. The Tornado Foosball Tournament Program includes two international, five national tournaments and a host of sanctioned regional and state events and has been a major factor in the increasing popularity of foosball.

To build on this progress, Valley has created VIFA, the Valley International Foosball Association.

The aim of VIFA is for operators, foosball table manufacturers, and foosball players to work together to provide increased interest in the game of foosball.

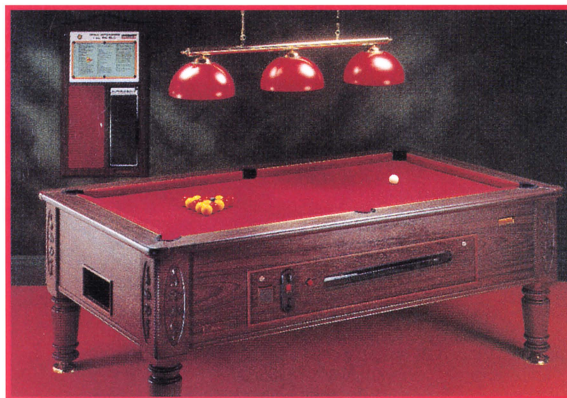
Like all league programs, this is done by encouraging players to form leagues and play in weekly competitions on tables owned by the operator members. When successful, leagues lead to increased profit for operators and locations, extra sales for manufacturers, more fun for the players, and a more stable industry for everyone.

It's a win-win situation. Scheduled league matches bring players and spectators into the location each week for the duration of the competition, leading to increased sales to the location. This, in turn, improves the relationship between the location owner and you, the operator.

Like the VNEA pool comp., VIFA will have a rule requiring matches to only be played on operator-owned tables. This discourages locations from buying their own equipment as players often seek out locations which are eligible to participate in such a well organised league program.

Casual players are quickly drawn into the excitement and social aspects of leagues and VIFA gives players plenty of benefits to get them interested. Along with a well run league competition, players get badges and cards to identify them as sanctioned members foosball league association and they are eligible for competition in local, state and international tournaments. On top of that there is a VIFA magazine and a comprehensive awards program.

Echo of the Past Guarantees Profits for the Future



Europe's most successful coin-operated pool tables. It has stylish, ornate legs, moulded fascia side panels and gold cushion trim, offset by burgundy cloth - or conventional green if preferred.

The new table has many of Super-league's unique features including a wider top frame for improved ball response and a solid Italian slate bed. The company's patented levelling System ensures

the table has a perfect playing surface in every site.

Hazel Grove (Superleague), one of the industry's leading pool table manufacturers have relied on the best styling of the past to create their "Superleague Imperial" table. The Imperial echoes the styling characteristics of the most elegant period furniture. According to Hazel Grove, it combines craftsmanship with sound, modern manufacturing principles and the latest in technology.

The Imperial has been designed for the many upmarket pool locations that are opening up all over the world. As the amusement industry expands, operators are beginning to recognise the advantages of choosing equipment to suit the style of a particular location.

The Imperial has evolved from Hazel Grove's Superleague Traditional, one of

the table has a perfect playing surface in every site.

A lift-off top frame and quick-release cushion system make authorised access to the table simple, while a Microcoin mechanism allows operators to change the price of play or offer bonus pricing at the flick of a switch. As with other Superleague tables there is the option to have a mechanical coin mechanism and both options feed a large capacity cash box hidden deep within the table for extra security.

As well as the attractive mahogany finish and the burgundy cloth which makes the Superleague Imperial so distinctive, a range of complementary optional accessories has been developed to enhance the tables.

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The Megatouch Countertop video game is the most popular tavern video game in the last decade. A multigame unit featuring games like *Solitaire*, *Run-21*, *Royal Flash*, *Memory*, *Breaking Bricks*, *Match-em-up*, and *Fourplay*, this game has something on it to appeal to any patron in the pub.

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Merit Industries is dedicated to the success of the pub operator. We are seeking to establish distributor relationships with companies who share our viewpoint that a strong operator is the backbone of our businesses.

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Fibreglass Pool Table Manufacturer Looks to World Markets



Stars & Stripes Amusements, well known for their Push and Slam Pog machine, have extended their manufacturing operation with the acquisition of Gamezone (Queensland) manufacturer of fibreglass Pool Tables, after being attracted to the business through their profitable operation of outdoor tables in southern Queensland.

Their aim is to service the local market and build up exports into foreign markets

Stars & Stripes Amusements, owned and operated by Ken Priest in Brisbane, has now established a Gold Coast operation, to be managed by Mr Fred Giusti, formerly of Gamezone (Queensland) Pty Ltd.

Part of this new venture is the acquisition of the Super Table indoor and outdoor line of Fibreglass Pool Tables, formerly manufactured in Australia for worldwide distribution by Gamezone (Queensland) Pty Ltd.

The Super Table will now be manufactured on the Gold Coast of Queensland by Stars & Stripes - Gold Coast, and with the injection of additional capital and an increased sales and marketing campaign, the new company should become a force to be reckoned with in the Australian and export markets in the months ahead.

The advent of the fibreglass pool table was initially seen as for outdoor use only. As they are impervious to weather due to the use of a special cloth and the fibreglass construction, they could be placed outdoors and not be affected by rain or other adverse weather conditions.

But things change and today, because of their modern appearance and the flexibility to customise and produce tables in a wide range of colours, they have also become accepted as an indoor table.

The special cloth can protect against drink spillages and most other unnatural disasters that occur in pubs, but there is also the option of having the fibreglass table fitted with English cloth and placed in the type of location where previously only traditional timber tables existed.

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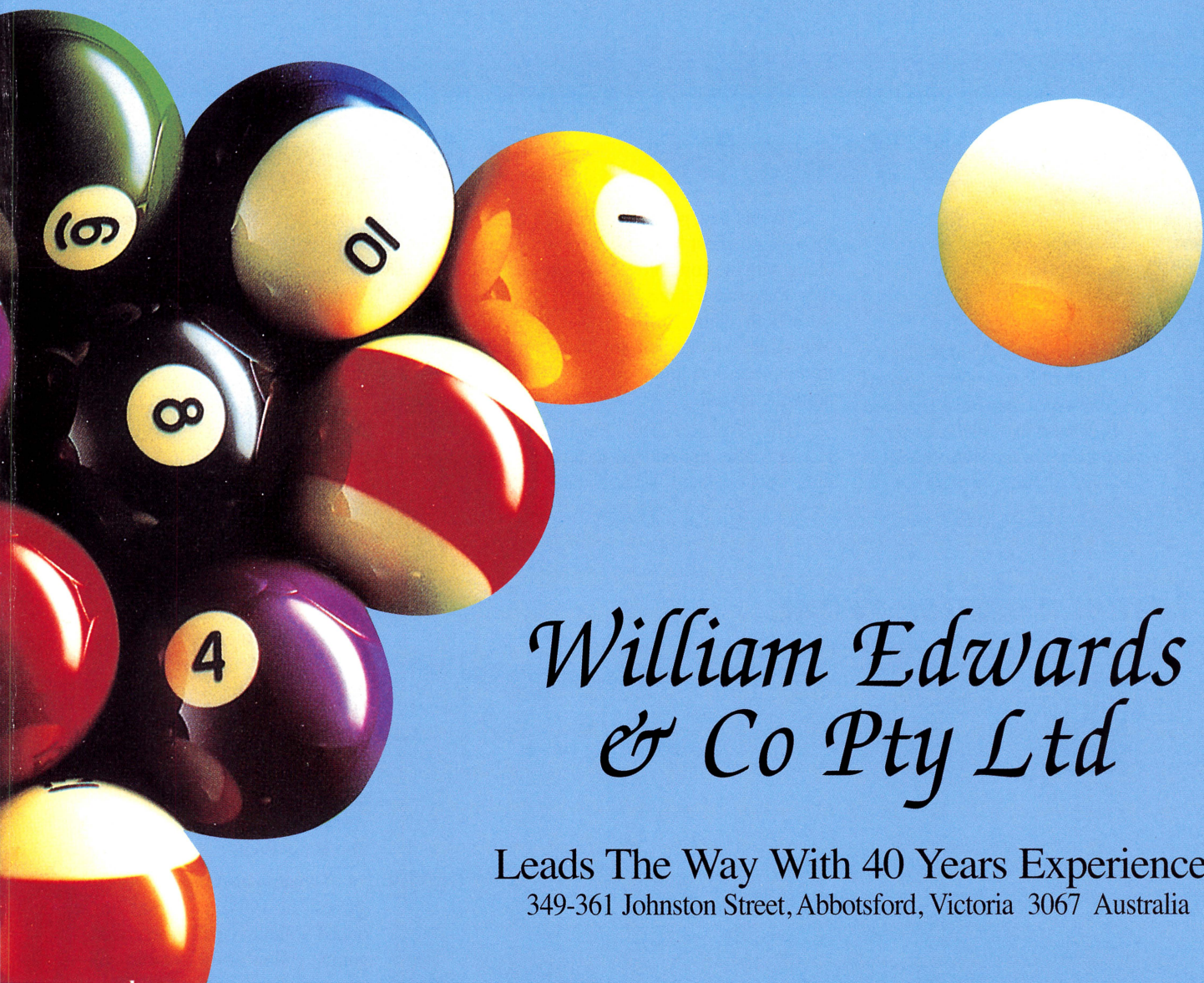
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25 Years Down the Coin-op Track



Dynamo started manufacturing pool tables 25 years ago and over the years they have grown to become a worldwide leader in amusement products, especially in the area of pub and table games.

To this day, pool tables remain one of Dynamo's most popular products, and along with the company's air hockey tables, they make up a large chunk of Dynamo's sales both within the U.S. and overseas. The tables are known for their reliable, trouble-free operation and their distinctive aesthetic appeal.

The 4-player Hot Flash Dynamo Hockey table, introduced last year, is the only coin-operated 4-player table hockey

game on the market. Dynamo has had great success with its table hockey line, especially Japan where the company is Sega's exclusive table hockey manufacturer. Air hockey games produced for Sega include the Exciting Speed Hockey and Pair Match Hockey games.

The Dynamo Top Brass pool table, with its blue felt, rich black laminate and all brass trim has become one of the market's most popular high-end coin-op pool tables.

According to VP of sales and marketing, Mark Struhs, the Top Brass line took Dynamo's pool tables to a new level and many operators have credited these tables with helping them secure new locations due to its unmatched aesthetic appeal.

Following the success of Top Brass Pool, Dynamo has just introduced a new hockey table called Dynamo Top Brass which will be the companion product to Top Brass Pool.

Dynamo also produces video games. In 1994, Dynamo introduced Solitaire Challenge, a video game version of the popular solitaire card game that is ideal for bar locations. Solitaire Challenge was an instant success and is still today a very high earning and popular machine.

Earlier this year, Dynamo rolled out Tournament Solitaire, a spin-off of Solitaire Challenge. It includes software that runs and manages tournaments, offering players the chance to win cash money and other prizes in weekly tournament action. Tournament Solitaire, with its tournament-operating feature built in, was an unprecedented introduction into the American market place.

And Dynamo are working on several new products that will benefit street operators.

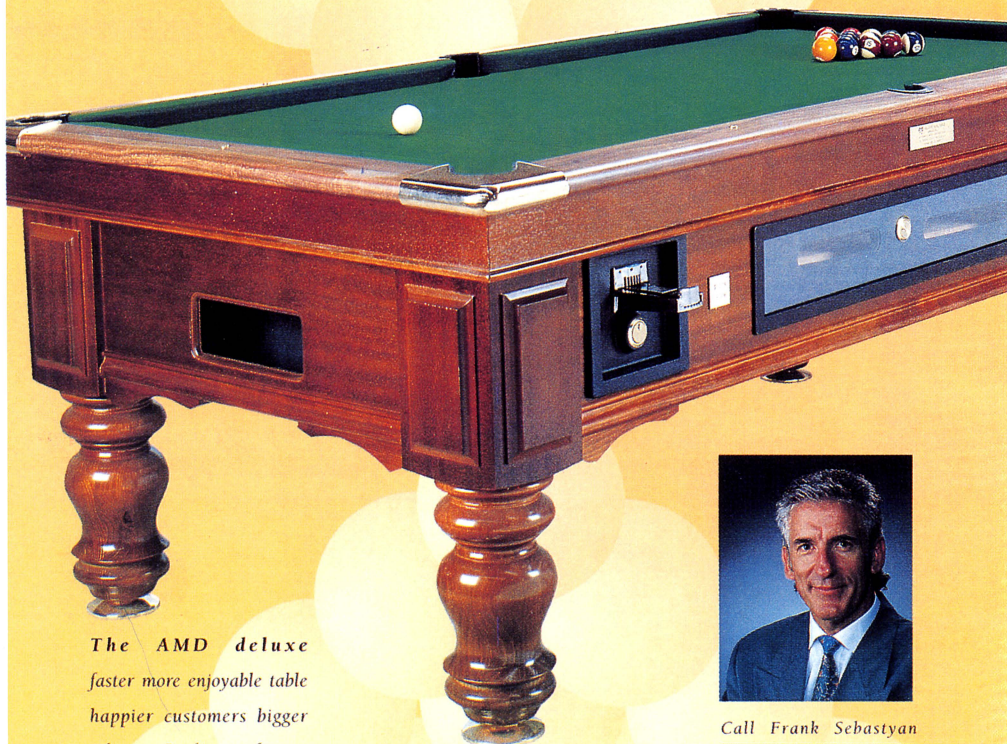
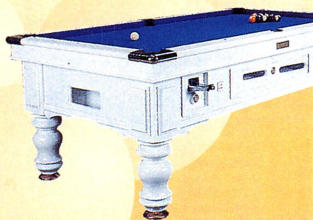
"In the past few years, we have made a dedicated effort to change the way we do business. The major change is to support amusement operators with new programs that will help their business," Mark Struhs said.

What more can you ask?

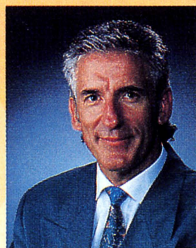
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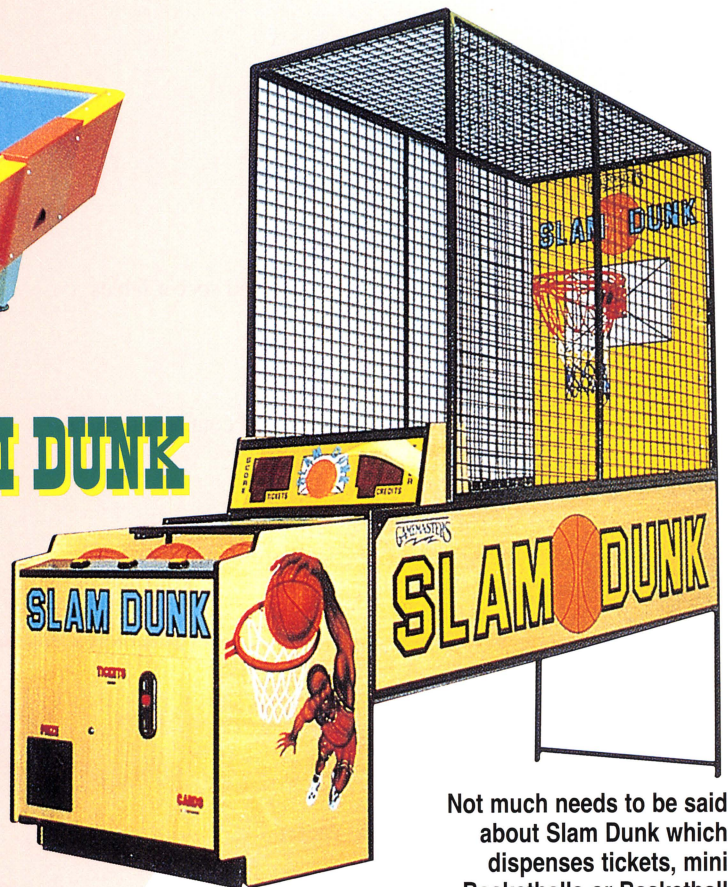
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Leading Pub & Table Game Manufacturers

Most countries in the world have local manufacturers of many of the products listed, but to assist operators in knowing what's available and where, we have compiled the following listing of leading manufacturers that export their products all over the world. With so many manufacturers the list will not be complete, but it picks up most of the main players.

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 Fax: +61 (0)2 529 2203
 - Australian manufacturer of pool tables

ALLIED 8 AMUSEMENTS

Phone: +27 11 839 2993
 Fax: +27 11 839 1141
 - South African manufacturer of pool and soccer tables

AMATIC TRADING GMBH

Phone: +43 7672 29 600
 Fax: +43 7672 29 728
 - Austrian supplier of dart machines and countertop games

AMD (SA) PTY LTD

Phone: +61 (0)8 212 6968
 Fax: +61 (0)8 231 5958
 - Australian manufacturer of classic style pool tables and decorative pool table lights.

ARACHNID INC

Phone: +1 815 654 0212
 - U.S. manufacturer of dart machines

BENCHMARK ENTERTAINMENT

Phone: +1 954 781 8080
 Fax: +1 954 781 7900
 - U.S. manufacturer of Caribbean Hook, a tavern skill game

CL&S

Phone: +61 (0)3 9482 2033
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- U.S. manufacturer of pool and soccer tables, accessories,

NSM AG

Phone: +49 6721 4070

Fax: +49 6721 407 449

- German jukebox manufacturer who also supplies pool tables, darts and soccer tables

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Fax: +49 40 538 06-199

- German manufacturer of Taifun air hockey Tables and Merkur darts, plus novelty bar games like Cup Final, Sinbad and Olympic Gold

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SETTING THE PACE

ICE ON A ROLL

Starting with Chexx, the Buffalo based ICE Inc have rolled out hit after hit, including the fantastic Cyclone, but their latest offering, Ski Max, has the potential to be their biggest hit of all. Intrigued by reports of the game, Cash Box editor Jack Rodios dropped in to the company's factory.



ICE Inc chiefs Ralph Coppola (top) and Jack Willert have plenty to be happy about

It's one of the most fascinating aspects of this industry that at the same time as we have coin game manufacturers closing down, reporting huge losses, and selling out, all round the world, that companies like ICE Inc from upstate New York are going through a mind boggling expansion programme that seems certain to place them in the very top bracket of

amusement game manufacturers

There are others that are moving ahead quite nicely, regardless of the somewhat 'dicey' state the industry is in, but none to our knowledge, that are expanding at the rate of the Buffalo based ICE Inc, subject of our cover story this month.

As Cash Box was responsible for setting up the ICE Inc deal with game designer Kyle Hodgetts who had a well earned reputation of being brilliant but somewhat erratic, we have retained deep interest in the projects they have been working on, but there's been so much else going on with this livewire company it's been hard to keep up with it all.

In February this year they moved into a new factory in Clarence, NY that they thought when they bought it, would accommodate their needs for some time, but by May they were talking to architects about expanding the facility from a whopping 86,000 square feet, to 110,000 square feet and work on the extension is due to commence around the time you read this.

And there's room for plenty more as the big factory is set on 32 acres of land.

ICE Inc now have just about everything they need under the one roof, a large R&D division headed up by John Calahan, Cabinet making facilities, decal production, electronics division, and oper-

ating as a separate company, a massive metalworking installation that works 24 hours round the clock on ICE components and a large amount of outside work.

You'd be entitled to think that getting a facility the size of this up and running whilst ensuring production of their established products went on would be sufficient to keep the ICE Inc team occupied for a while, but it's in the new products they have taken on and the game development work they are doing that their efforts really stand out.

In game development ICE have been going at a million miles an hour, starting in November last year when Ralph Coppola did the quick deal with Kyle Hodgetts that secured for the company an almost instant range of video redemption games, they have kept forging ahead at a pace that makes a mockery of the simple word, "expansion".

Moving into video redemption, a new field for the company, would probably be enough for most companies to digest, particularly in ICE's situation, where they were tied up with moving into the new factory and battling to keep the market supplied with their many established games like Cyclone, etc, but in reality, they were just getting started.



The next thing we know they had snapped up the Doyle range of products and committed themselves to upgrading the whole line of products and providing factory service and parts for the 20,000 odd Doyle games already in the market.

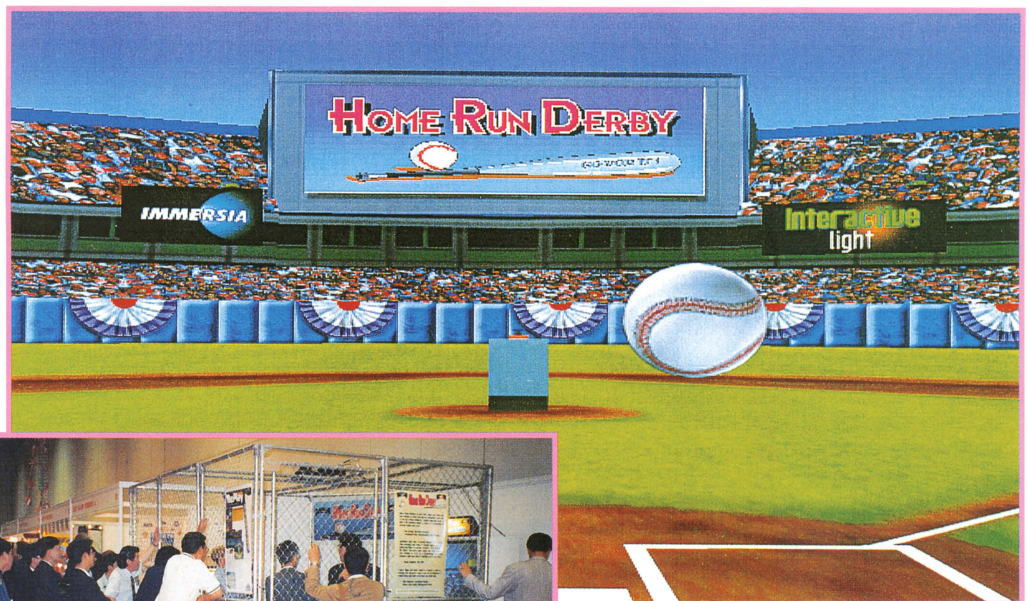
The following month, the company took another huge step when they made the decision to move into video game simulators and took up an option on Ski Maxx (pictured below), the water skiing game designed by Hodgetts that was first shown as a prototype at Orlando's ACME in early March, and a rather rough prototype at that (not built by ICE Inc)

This project alone was a huge one, particularly after they looked at the games that were in the market, looked at what they had, and decided without any fuss that they needed to do the game in polygon graphics to compete.

So at this point of time, the company was manufacturing their established games at a rate of knots, working on a couple of new redemption games, one of which is themed on a big name license, preparing their second video redemption game for the market, developing their first video simulator, building carnival operators trailers full of Ice Balls, and cleaning up the Doyle situation over in Idaho.

Surely that should be enough to quieten them down a bit, but *no way jose*, they then moved to cover yet other sectors of the market with a deal to manufacture the very clever Baseball game, Home Run Derby, a large, hi tech attraction that should do some great business in FEC's and other bigger sites, and then did a cross deal with the big UK manufacturer, Cromptons Leisure, to handle their popular range of pushers and games in the USA and South America.

All this activity was a bit much for this old editor, particularly with the number of times I was hearing so many people from so many other companies saying how tough things were, and when the term "totally awesome" was thrown into discussions on SkiMaxx, it was too much.



Home Run Derby is generating excellent income as it moves into the US market and going on the response the game got in Hong Kong (left) it will do well in international markets too

Below is the pre production model of SkiMaxx which we believe will be as you will see the production model.

Into the big United Airlines 747 and off to Buffalo for the old editor body, you can do a hell of a lot of things with phone, fax and e-mail these days, but what was going on in Buffalo had to be seen in the flesh.

But frankly I wasn't expecting to see the quality game that I saw either, anywhere in between fair and good would have made the trip worthwhile, but Ski Maxx has the potential to be far better than just good.



Now having had the "totally awesome" words layed on me by Kyle Hodgetts in regard to SkiMaxx, several times, I certainly wasn't expecting to find a big "pup" sitting on the factory floor, even though I had discounted the designers thoughts on the game.



ICE ON A ROLL

The game shown at ACME was done in conventional graphics and of limited depth, but in the few months since that showing, Hodgetts has reworked the game into a new, full polygon system equal to about Virtua Cop in graphic quality that he has developed, added new courses and generally put a lot more more depth into the game.

And while this was going on, the engineers at ICE have created a completely new, hydraulic based simulator cabinet. On looking at the final product I found it almost impossible to comprehend how so much had been done in such a short time.

The transformation from prototype to production model is absolutely incredible, technically you would be more likely to expect a Japanese nameplate on this game than the familiar ICE logo. Now I know that's a pretty heavy wrap, but it's the way Ski Maxx is.

Game play is also excellent, a bit physical for aged editors maybe, but extremely realistic and fun to play.

The courses on the game were not completed when it was seen, but it will probably finish up with four courses for players to choose from, which will range in difficulty, and guarantee a wide range of players.

All courses are good with a heap of fast moving action, plenty of obstacles, jumps, etc, and top rate backgrounds.

And when you go over the ski jumps, the game virtually lifts your guts up and drops them back into place (if you're lucky) If you get too cocky, act the lair, and "lose it", the pylon you hit is momentarily for real, you can almost feel the impact.

Only if I'd been in an arcade and seen an attendant struggling to pull a chock full cash box out of a Ski Maxx, could this game have been more impressive. Don't be a bit surprised at what it does.

Another impressive project the company has been working on is the carnival trailer pictured at right, carrying 10 Ice Ball alley rollers on 50 cent play, the ICE trailer has tested out at around \$2000 a day on the carnival circuit which makes it a pretty good proposi-

tion for everyone at somewhere around \$100,000 purchase price. The ICE trailer is much better looking in the flesh than the photo can show, it's fully hydraulic operated so that an operator can basically park on his site, plug it in, pull a few switches, and have it set up and running in no time.

Beautifully engineered, the Ice Ball trailer was developed by ex-operator Dave Dombrowski who was brought into the company to add operator input and help develop the Ice Ball game for it's release at Reno's ACME.

That was a couple of years ago and Dave stayed with ICE, joining the close knit team that make this place tick.

And like always when you get down to the bottom of things in coin-op, the games that we see as finished products are only as good as the people behind them.

It's not hard to see when prowling around the ICE Inc facility that top management genuinely appreciate their people, there's that good feeling right through the place that is found every now and then in a good company, and which can't be bought for any amount of money.

Most of this can be attributed to Ralph Coppola's and Jack Willert's "hands on" management and is probably helped a bit by the company's location in Buffalo, away from a lot of the stress associated with big city living

Most of those who work at ICE, including the chiefs, are locals of Buffalo, NY, which has a fair population of well over a million, but still manages to retain a sort of rural atmosphere.



The combination of providing first rate facilities to top class people, plus guts and commitment from management, is paying off for ICE Inc in no uncertain terms and it couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of blokes.

ICE Inc are on a hell of a roll now, and the "totally awesome" part of that is that you can't spend time in their company without thinking, *they're just getting warmed up.*



SPANISH AMUSEMENT TRADE SHOW
INTERNACIONAL



INTERAZAR



10, 11 y 12
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INTERALIA



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INTERAZAR

“What do you think of these new games?”

“BORING”

Every now and then, you get a player who will really talk when you ask them about about amusement games and recently we struck one in a Sydney arcade who had a lot to say about the current line up.

We don't know if what he says relates to players in general, or if he's 'one out' and his comments only apply to him, but he says not, and for what it's worth, we'll pass on the conversation.

Because he works in a pretty conservative company and is in line for a promotion, he asked us not to use his name, so we'll call him "Mick". Mick is 21, and he was standing around a city arcade looking completely lost when we zeroed in on him and asked him if he was a player, and what he thought of the current batch of games.



Mick: “Boring, really boring, I've been playing amusement games in arcades since I was about 10, and they haven't really changed since then, the games today are boring players shitless”

maybe Addams Family. The only games that are trying some really new concepts are Redemption games and if you're not into winning crappy prizes, there's no value in playing them”

While our rivals have concentrated on other things, Cash Box has worked tirelessly on expanding our subscriber base and as we now cruise through our third year of publication, we can lay claim to the largest number of paid subscribers of any international magazine in the world.....and it's still growing fast.



And CBI is #1 on the Internet too!

Like everyone, we know that a magazine that operators pay for..... is at least a 10 times better selling vehicle than a “junk mail freebee” circulated at random

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Jack: “You're kidding, the changes in game technology has been enormous in the last 10 years”

Mick: “I'm not talking about technology, sure the games look better and do a few more things, but I'm talking about the types of game, in 1988 say, video games had fighting games, shooting games, driving games, a few soccer, basketball and puzzle games, and very little else, what is there today that's different?”
“And Pinballs are much the same, I love the pinnies, but the games today haven't got the fun in them that the old pins had, except

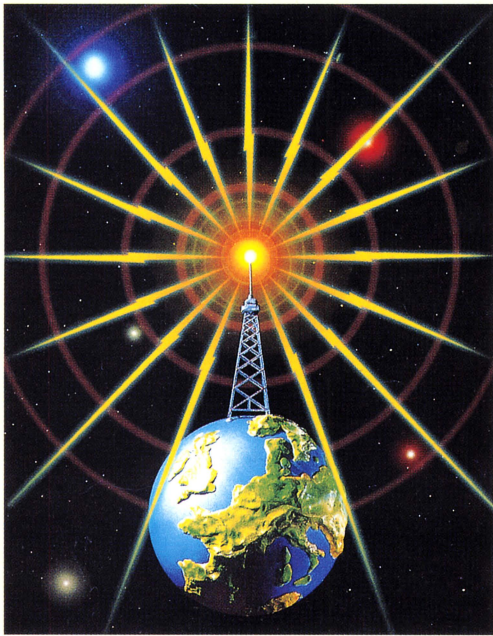
Jack: “Maybe you're getting older and growing out of games”

Mick: “I don't think it's that, it might be I suppose, but I really think if something new and exciting was to come along, I'd be into it real quick.

Jack: “OK, if I accept that the games are boring, what do you actually want in a game?”

Mick: “I don't know what I want, except I want something different, something that will get me pumped up and have me wanting to go back to play it over and over again, I love the arcade culture and I still come in here nearly every day after work, but I don't play the games anywhere near as much”

“Look, I've got this daggy old computer that on todays standards is a dinosaur, yet I can go into the Internet and download 100's of games of all types and play till I drop. There looks to be a heap of young game makers out there that have new concepts, new ideas, but they don't really get a look in, because the commercial game makers don't want to know about anything new, they're terrified they might lose a few bucks”

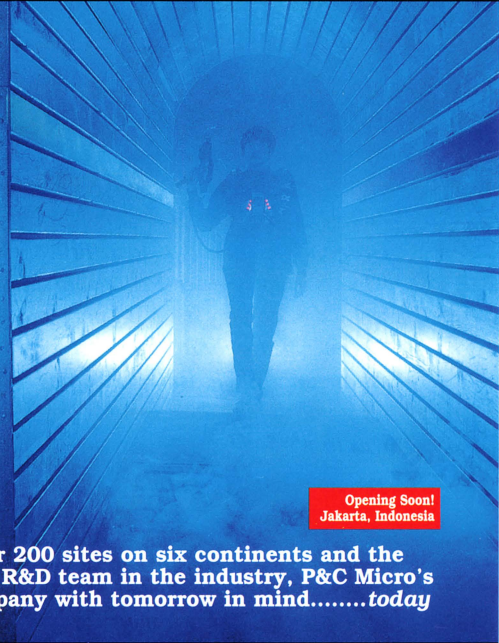


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“BORING”

“They just keep churning out the same old crap and expect us to keep putting our money in. And a lot more money at that, I used to play Double Dragon for 20 cents a game and when Virtua Fighter 2 came out, they wanted \$2 to play it. VF2 may look 10 times better than DD on screen, but it sure as hell isn’t a 10 times better game to play than Double Dragon was in it’s day”

Jack: *“What do your mates think about the games, are they bored?”*

Mick: *“course they are, how many guys around my age did you see actually playing the games over there?” (he was talking of the arcade we’d just left)*

Jack: *“But most guys your age would play in the pubs now wouldn’t they?”*

Mick: *“If there’s a bunch of us we do, but you can’t go to the pub every day, or at lunch time for example, and most pubs have only got driving games anyway”*

Jack: *“Don’t you like the driving games?”*

Mick: *“Mate, I must have done a couple of thousand laps around the Daytona and Ace Driver tracks, but I probably done a lot more on the original Final Lap when it came out. How many times can you be expected to play these things, Daytona and Ace Driver are two of the better games, but after you get the hang of them, they get boring too, and the only thing that gets you back on them is the fact that there’s nothing else.”*

Jack: *“What about the gun games, Time Crisis for example is a hell of a different game to say, Operation Wolf”*

Mick: *“I suppose it is, but I rarely play a game on my own now, the fun is in playing against or with a mate, and I’ve never really been into gun games anyway”*

Jack: *“OK Mick, you’ve made a point with all this, but what about some suggestions, You’ve obviously thought about this a lot, surely there’s something that you suggest”*

Mick: *“No, not really, I know what I don’t want, but I really don’t*

know what I do want, and don’t get all cut about me bagging the games, there’s a lot of things that are in the same boat”

Jack: *“What do you mean by that?”*

Mick: *“I used to go to the football every week, I followed St George (a top grade Rugby League side) since I was a real little guy, but I haven’t been to a game for over two years now and I seldom watch it on telly”*

Jack: *“What’s that got to do with amusement games?”*

Mick: *“They’ve got the same problem, League is boring, as the technical side of the game has got better and the players have got fitter, the game has deteriorated something horrid. You can watch game after game and except for the bounce of the ball or the occasional mistake that’s made, you know every move they’re going to make. It’s almost like it’s choreographed, they’ve killed the individual brilliance that made the game what it was and turned it into a boring game of defence, defence and more defence.”*

I go to the Basketball now, it’s a game where you can rarely be certain of what’s going to happen, a side can be 10 or 12 points behind with a minute to play and still win the game, same with Aussie Rules, and though I don’t know how, maybe the game makers can learn something from that, because I reckon they’ve got to bring a bit of excitement, maybe a bit of the unexpected, back to the games too”

Jack: *“Don’t take offense, but you’re bored with amusement games, bored with football, bored with pubs, did you ever think that it might be you that’s got the problem”*

Mick: *“You’re starting to sound like my Dad now, but I have thought about it actually, and there’s too many others like me, for it to be just me with the problem, either half the guys my age have the same problem, or*

“I was talking to a guy the other day and he was saying

what I’m saying, and I asked him if he thought it might be us with the problem, and he was quite sure it wasn’t he said;

“Look they’ve been force feeding us all this technology stuff for years, how wonderful it is, how it knows no limits and all that it’s going to do for us, and then expect us to cop the same old crap all the time, they’ve whet our appetites and sucked us in, but they don’t seem to understand that they have to keep delivering the goodies or people will walk away.”

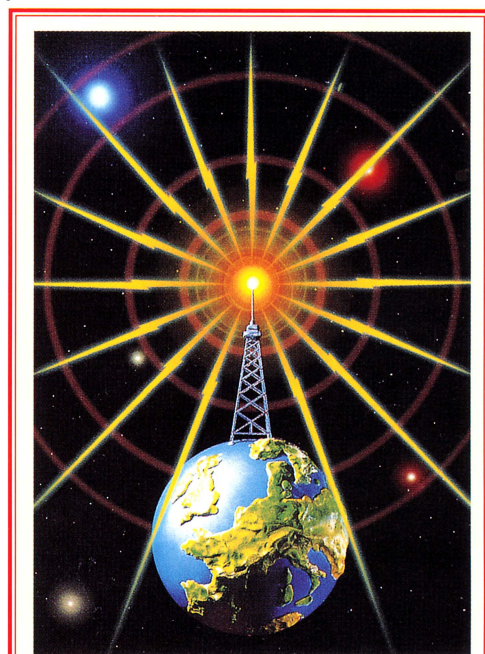
“He might have something there, they may have gone overboard on the technology brainwashing, because we certainly expect a lot more than what we are getting.”

Jack: *“It’s worth thinking about I guess Mick, thanks for your time, can I drop you off home or somewhere?”*

Mick: *“No, I’m going down the road to another arcade to see if they’ve got something new, we live in hopes you know”*

Jack: *“OK, see you mate, ring me if you find something that’s not boring”*

Mick: *“I will Jack, but don’t hold your breath waiting”*



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Meet CBI's New Sales Exec.

If you look at the picture on the right, the guy in the black and white strip who is at the top and still going higher in this scramble for the football, is Cash Box's new sales executive, Paul Bell.

Paul plays first grade Rugby League for Western Suburbs in the Australian wide ARL competition, a league that is commonly known in Rugby League circles as the toughest competition in the world, and now he's preparing for "life" after football in the offices of CBI.

Paul is 27, recently married to Jane (CBI's Jane) and unlike most footballers can see past his football career.

He was looking to get into sales after footy, so with a vacancy at Cash Box that can work in with his football commitments and a penchant for amusement games, Paul joined the company and is already proving to be a major asset.

Apart from joining Cash Box though, 1996 has been the sort of year a footballer has nightmares about. Prior to this year he had had a pretty much trouble free career, but this year he missed several games early

in the season after picking up a 'bug' in New Guinea where the team played a pre season trial, and just after claiming his place back in the first grade squad, he copped a double hernia to put him on the sidelines again.

Actually as this is being written, he's not on the sidelines at all, he's lying in an operating theatre about to get chopped up for the repair of the double hernia, so he's not going to be playing much football for a while, probably 8 or 10 weeks, going on what we have heard about the recovery time for this type of operation.

But he'll no doubt soon be back on deck at the office and all going well will be able to pick up a couple of the American trade shows at the end of the year and possibly ATEI in January to meet more of the people he'll be doing business with.

Paul's addition to the Cash Box team will take a bit of the load off



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Jane who has had to juggle much of the magazines sales with a constantly rising work load of subscriptions, trade shows, travel, overseas freight and general office management, as the magazine has progressed.

She will still work with Paul on some sales and manage her existing accounts..... *and a certain father is absolutely delighted to see this young husband and wife team positioning themselves to eventually take Cash Box International out of his hands and into the 2000's as the industry's leading international publication.*





JUST HOW STUPID IS IT TO LOWER PRICE OF PLAY

We had a visit through the week from Frank a country arcade operator who just casually dropped the word that he had reduced his Daytona Twins price of play from \$2 to \$1.

Naturally enough we had to ask him how it went and it turned out that he had lifted income on the games from \$400 a week to over \$1600 by halving the price of play, and the figures had already held up for several weeks. (Another operator had previously told us of a lift from \$350 a week to \$900

Looking deeper into it we found that the rest of the games in the arcade had generally held their earnings and Frank's only opposition, which is directly across the road and operated by a national chain, had stayed at \$2. He assumed he was getting a bit of their money, but insisted that a lot of the increased revenue he was getting, was

coming from younger players. OK, we realise there is a bit of downside here in that no one really wants a price of play war, or to unnecessarily undercut their opposition, but then again, if the 'big boys' try to steamroll the smaller guys, there aren't that many other ways to combat them.

And the point that remains is that players who had not previously played the \$2 games, were putting good money in at \$1 play. We've never said that cutting prices should be universally adopted, in America for instance we believe prices have to go up before the industry can go forward, but in many countries on high price of play there is an excellent argument for cheaper prices to get the young players back and it works.

So is it a completely stupid suggestion? Well at least we know one guy whose got 1200 reasons a week and another with 650 reasons a week, that don't think it's that stupid at all.

An old 'mate' of ours who has been a proponent of higher game play prices as long as we've known him, has been heard remark that our suggestion to maybe make the games more affordable to the kids, is the most stupid thing he's ever seen written about this industry.

But though that is yet another 'first' for Cash Box, we and several operators we know who have reduced prices in their arcade locations, know that it's not as stupid as it may sound.

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AND OTHER CONCEPTS IN FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

\$300 MILLION SPENT ON ROLLER COASTERS THIS YEAR

Showing that they simply do not lose their appeal to fun loving people, over \$US3 million has been spent on new Roller Coaster construction so far this year, the "International Year of the Roller Coaster"

That expenditure has seen a further 100,000 feet of coaster track built around the world in around six months and by the end of the year it's safe to say that figure will be at least doubled.

June 20th just past saw the US Senates proclaimed "National Roller Coaster Week" celebrated with fans gathering near roller coasters in California, Pennsylvania,

Ohio, Florida and England to participate in the special events of the "Coast to Coast to Coaster Celebration" that was organised by IAAPA and the American Coaster Enthusiasts, a private group devoted to roller coasters.

And though we had to go to press before the event started, indications in the days leading up to the 20th, were that there was going to be no shortage of numbers at these gatherings.

The "Year of the Roller Coaster" is already proving a first class promotion for the fun industry and IAAPA, an association of over 4000 members world wide, have done their members, and roller coaster enthusiasts, a great service by instigating the celebrations.



SHOWTIME

IAAPA TO FILL N'AWLINS TO THE BRIM

There seems little doubt, some four or five months before the big event that the IAAPA show is going to fill New Orleans to overflowing point with American and international visitors.

We believe the show this year will fill all halls of the huge New Orleans Convention Centre as well as utilise space outside the building for bigger rides and outdoor attractions.

And more than ever before, IAAPA will be an all round show, covering all aspects of the entertainment industry.

For several years now the number of traditional coin-op machine exhibitors has been growing constantly, but the way it's shaping up this year, it appears we're going to see more an explosion in numbers, than continued growth, with any manufacturing company of any note booking space to show their products.

SIMEX DEVELOPS PORTABLE SIMULATION THEATRE

SimEx Inc have unveiled their first pre-fabricated simulation theatre at the Canadian Museum of Civilisation summer exhibit, "Opening of the West".

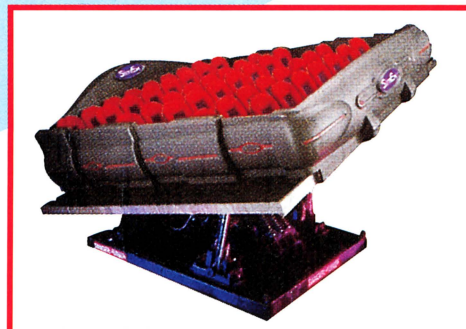
In the main plaza, live performances and demonstrations amid facades of an old railway station and other historic buildings celebrate the settling of Western Canada. The Museum was looking for a dynamic attraction which would convey the magnificent size and scope of Canada, yet would

not require a large capital investment.

SimEx's solution was to install a 40-seat open platform simulator theatre (pic below) and video pre-show inside a pre-fabricated structure. At the end of the summer, the theatre can be easily dismantled and relocated to another site.

"We feel these theatres offer tremendous opportunities for museums, expositions, science centres and zoos which often have special events which only last for three to six months," explained SimEx director of marketing, Geoff Cannon. "It also means that, for the first time, we can take a full scale simulator on the road."

For "Opening of the West", SimEx will be exhibiting Canadian Panorama to over a million people. The six and a half minute 35mm film was originally produced by the government of Canada for Expo '93 in Taejon, Korea.



USA - CANADA

THOMSON SIMULATOR PUTS YOU INTO A SNOWBIRD COCKPIT

During this summer the public in Canada and the USA will literally be able to step into the shoes of pilots from the Canadian Air Force's display team, "The Snowbirds", as they tour air shows and other events throughout North America.



The sensation of piloting a jet in close formation has been captured by Thomson Entertainment for use on a special 14-seat mobile Venturer Motionride simulator which will travel with the Snowbirds team.

The film was shot over six days by Quadrant Television during practice sessions flown by the Snowbirds over Vancouver Island with the thrilling shots being made possible by a 2.5" square camera mounted inside the cockpit linked directly to a Betacam-SP recorder housed behind the pilots head.

Three of Thomson Entertainment's most popular rides from its extensive library have also been included on the mobile system. - Astro Canyon Coaster, a spectacular computer generated astral roller coaster; Glacier Run which provides an exciting downhill race through an Arctic ice quarry; and the special effects of Smash Factory, which takes the rider on an unforgettable drive with a maverick crew through an underground car park.

UAE

4A's TO CREATE MIDDLE EAST BUYING CONSORTIUM

The Association of Arabian Amusement Attractions (4A's) has decided to establish a purchasing consortium for rides, games, products and services related to the industry.

With a membership of over 100 parks and family entertainment centres throughout the Middle East, the Association believes its combined buying power can be used to negotiate attractive deals with its international supplier members.

Philip D. Deighton, Association secretary, says: "The plan is for parks to combine together to acquire rides on a 'time share' basis with the Association co-ordinating arrangements and organising insurance, regular maintenance, and may be even financing. Our ride suppliers are anticipating rise in the amount of equipment sold into the region as a result of participating in the consortium."



Editorial

Sidah Russell

Reports continue to flow in of FEC closures in the United States and many experienced industry members are saying that the market has reached the point of saturation.

This has had a substantial effect on the redemption sector - a must have attraction for any FEC - and redemption game manufacturers are finding themselves competing in a shrinking market place.

It has been estimated that around 200 redemption/FEC locations have closed over the past 12 months in the United States, and the prediction is that there will probably be a few more to go yet.

The first major sign of over-supply came with the announcement that Edison Bros, the retail and entertainment company, had gone into Chapter 11 bankruptcy at the beginning of this year. When Namco only wanted to buy 80 of the 125 arcades and two of the 5 Exhilarama FEC's, it was obvious that a substantial part of the Edison Bros amusement chain was not viable.

Obviously, there were many centres in the United States which should never have been opened, and some have suggested that there are also too many manufacturers. Makers of redemption equipment are having their domestic sales hurt in two ways by FEC closures. Besides a decrease in potential customers, the failed centres are releasing second hand games onto an already weak market.

All this is a dramatic change from just a few years ago when redemption saw incredible growth and was the darling of the coin-operated amusement industry.

While it is expected that some operators and manufacturers of redemption games will disappear, the "shakeout" really has to be put into perspective. It certainly is not the end of the lucrative redemption business, just a slow down in America. The problems in the United States have been caused by an overbuilding of FECs and the production of too many marginal redemption games. What we are seeing now, is just a period of adjustment.

All the major manufacturers are confident that they will continue to achieve good sales over the coming year, although a greater percentage of those sales will be in overseas markets. A combined strategy of increasing exports and producing quality games will see the more innovative companies through the current rough patch.

Meanwhile the growth in FEC's outside the USA is still on the rise. While some amazing and successful locations are being developed, perhaps a note of caution should be expressed. America has always been the industry leader in regard to both FEC's and redemption, and many organisations are basically importing American amusement ideas lock, stock and barrel into their own countries.

Already there are rumblings about having too many developments in some Asian cities, and an awful lot of money is being spent on facilities in regions where there is poor infrastructure and other problems. Quick expansion, without the necessary research could see FEC closures in many countries besides the USA.

Family entertainment centres are a good, solid business, but they are definitely not something to rush into.

Siguen circulando informes sobre el cierre de FEC's (Centros de Entretenimientos Familiares) en los Estados Unidos y muchas personas experimentadas en esta industria están mencionando que el mercado ha llegado al punto de saturación.

Esto ha provocado un efecto sustancial en el sector de juegos de recuperero (redemption) - una atracción obligada para cualquier FEC - y los fabricantes de los juegos de recuperero se encuentran compitiendo en un mercado que se está reduciendo cada vez más. Se calcula que aproximadamente 200 FEC's/lugares de juegos de recuperero han cerrado en los últimos 12 meses en los Estados Unidos y las predicciones es que, probablemente, en los próximos meses, aún haya más cierres.

La primera indicación seria sobre la sobre-saturación llegó cuando el anunció de que Edison Bros., la empresa de entretenimientos y de ventas al por menor, había entrado en bancarrota según el artículo 11, a principios de este año. Cuando Namco sólo quiso comprar 80 de los 125 Salones de entretenimientos y 2 de los 5 Fec's Exhilarama, era obvio que una parte sustancial de la cadena de entretenimientos de Edison Bros. no era viable. Obviamente, habían en Estados Unidos muchos centros que nunca deberían haber abierto, e incluso muchos han sugerido que existen demasiados fabricantes.

Debido al cierre de los Fec's los fabricantes de los equipos de juegos de recuperero están sufriendo en sus ventas locales en dos formas. Además de una reducción de sus clientes potenciales, los centros que cierran están vendiendo juegos de segunda mano a un ya debilitado mercado.

Todo esto es un cambio muy profundo comparándolo con tan solo unos pocos años atrás, cuando los juegos de recuperero vivían un crecimiento increíble y eran la pieza más apreciada en la industria de entretenimientos operada con fichas. Mientras se estima que algunos operadores y fabricantes de juegos de recuperero desaparecerán, la "recesión" debe ser estudiada en su verdadera perspectiva. Sin duda alguna, no es el final del negocio tan lucrativo de los jue-

gos de recuperero, es tan solo una dilación en los Estados Unidos.

Los problemas en Estados Unidos surgieron como una consecuencia de la sobre-construcción de Fecs y la fabricación marginal de demasiados juegos de recuperero. Lo que estamos observando en la actualidad, es un período de reacomodamiento. Todos los fabricantes principales realmente creen que continuarán logrando buenas ventas en el corriente año, a pesar de que un mayor porcentaje de dichas ventas esté dirigida al mercado extranjero.

Una estrategia combinada del aumento de las exportaciones y la producción de juegos de mayor calidad resultará en compañías más innovativas en el actual mercado turbulento. Al mismo tiempo, el crecimiento de los FEC's fuera de Estados Unidos sigue aumentando. Quizás deberíamos expresar un llamado de atención mientras algunos Centros maravillosos están en pleno auge y éxito.

Estados Unidos ha sido siempre el líder de la industria con respecto tanto a los FEC's como a los juegos de recuperero y, muchas organizaciones están importando basicamente las ideas sobre la clave, el surtido y la medida de los entretenimientos estadounidenses a sus propios países.

Ya hay comentarios sobre el exceso de centros en algunas ciudades asiáticas, y de un gasto demasiado excesivo que se está realizando en centros en regiones donde existen infraestructuras muy pobres y una serie de otros problemas.

Una expansión rápida, sin la previa investigación apropiada podría resultar en el cierre de muchos FEC's en otros países además de Estados Unidos.

Los Centros de Entretenimientos Familiares son un buen negocio, sólido pero, definitivamente es necesario no ingresar al mismo en forma precipitada.



MIDDLE EAST

TOO MUCH TOO QUICK ?

That's the question being asked in the Gulf States right now about the growth in the number of parks and large FEC's over the past couple of years, plus those currently under construction.

The bigger question however seems to be can Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia attract enough tourists to make the entertainment facilities viable, as there doesn't seem to be any argument about the relatively small population being insufficient to sustain adequate revenue for the parks, etc that are established, let alone those that have not yet opened.

If the targeted number of tourists is achieved, there shouldn't be a problem, but the targets look a bit 'rich' when it's taken into account that many other developing nations are targeting the same tourists.

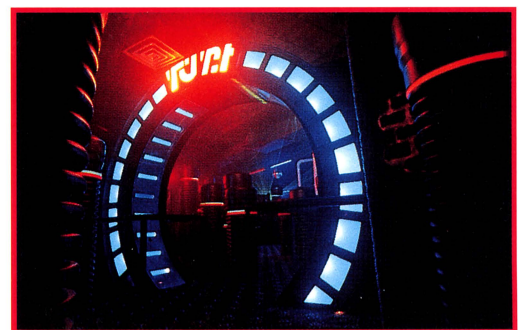
UNITED STATES

HEADS UP TECHNOLOGIES NAMES VICE PRESIDENT

Heads Up Technologies Inc announced today it has hired Rod Allen as vice president of sales and marketing for Laser Trek, the company's laser tag game.

Heads Up Technologies is a relatively new laser tag company but they have already established themselves worldwide with customers like Ripley's Believe It or Not! Thailand, MCA Universal Studios and Nickels and Dimes Inc. Allen brings to Heads Up Technologies over 15 years of marketing experience in the restaurant, hospitality and cable television industries.

Formerly president of Allen & Associates, a consulting firm providing marketing and management services for



hospitality, healthcare and hotel industries. Allen also served as vice president of sales and marketing for Sfuzzi Inc., a national restaurant chain. Allen graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BA in Marketing and Journalism.

"Rod's marketing experience in the entertainment industry will be very valuable to the Laser Trek program," said Rob Harshaw, of Heads Up Technologies.

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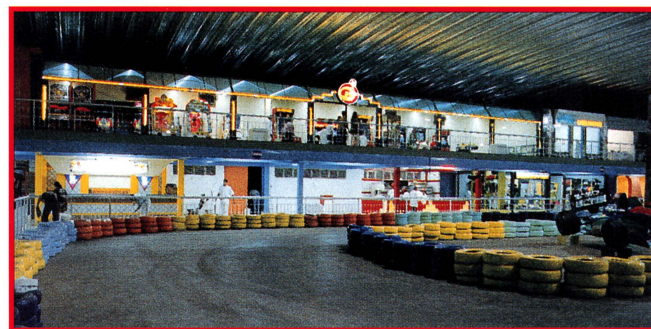
BRASIL

JUSTINO KART INDOOR OPENS TO BIG CROWDS IN GOIANIA

Brasil's largest FEC opened in Goiania recently and was hailed as not only the largest, but also the best by those who visited the location. Named "Justino Kart Indoor", the big centre has since opening, attracted numbers far in excess of what were expected, even allowing for the newness and novelty.

Justino Kart Indoor covers 4000 square metres (approx. 42,000 sq feet) and though it's based around Go-Karts, it has a huge Redemption and games area, take away food outlets and restaurant, playground and many other facilities including a licensed bar for the dads.

It will be open for 24 hours a day on weekends when over 2000 people a day are expected, and from 11 am to 12 pm weekdays which should see around 500 people a day visit. Goiania is the capital of the inland state of Goias and has a population of around 1.4 million.



Unlike most big FEC's that are situated in shopping malls, this new centre was built exclusively for use as an FEC, by it's owners, Francisco, Ananias and Laercid Justino a popular group in Goiania through their car racing activities. It's built in a beautiful garden setting of 15,000 sq metres with car parking for over 600 cars and it's likely that other attractions will be added to the site in the future. (More next month this centre)

MEXICO

LARGE INDOOR PARK IN MEXICO

The attraction of indoor entertainment centres is spreading across borders. Perimagico, at the centre of the Perinorte shopping mall located north of Mexico City is a good example with it's 7,200 square metre indoor amusement park focussed around a Zamba Balloon ferris wheel, whose hundreds of lights act as a magnet to visitors.

Pay-as-you-go rides include a dark roller coaster with special laser effects by Zierer; a Convoy from Zamperla; bumper cars; a large game area with skill and redemption games; and a food court. Perimagico also features the largest arcade in Latin America with over 300 video games, a virtual reality theatre, and hi-tech individual and group simulators. The centre's mezzanine houses an access-controlled kiddie zone with a maze from Omni, and colourful rooms for birthday parties.

Perimagico is owned by a group of real estate and other business investors and ONESA, which owns 45 family entertainment and arcade facilities in Mexico.

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DARK ZONE

Welcome to Dark Zone, the new showcase laser tag centre built by P&C Micros, the Australian manufacturer of Zone Laser Games.

P & C Micros have built the state-of-the-art complex in their home town of Melbourne, Australia. Located at Box Hill, an eastern suburb of the city, Dark Zone is much more than just a laser tag centre.

The venue would have to have one of the world's largest arenas in terms of volume. The floor space of the room is 5,000 square metres - but there are an amazing five levels. Not even Katie Holmes, P&C Micro's managing director, knows what the total floor space of the arena, including ramps, would add up to.

"We built the Box Hill centre because the company is really expanding both here and overseas," explains Katie Holmes. *"A lot of clients visit us in Melbourne because our headquarters are here, and we wanted to be able to show them a really good example of our equipment in operation."*

The Box Hill site will also be used to trial new products and concepts before releasing them to the industry. The centre is the first to run P&C Micro's new game software - System Z - which has added game features and options to keep the most experienced players interested.



System Z also has shoulder speakers installed in the players' packs so the packs "talk" to the player. Like all of P&C Micro's software, System Z has been designed with great flexibility and any previous systems can be easily upgraded to this latest one.

Box Hill was selected as the site for the centre for a number of reasons. It is a middle class suburb with a large number of young people and families, a busy retail district and a major exchange for trains and buses. This is mainly because there are a number of schools and technical colleges in the area, meaning that Dark Zone should have a steady stream of students flowing past it each afternoon.

THE OPENING

P&C Micros organised two openings for their Dark Zone centre: a media launch, and the official public opening. The first was a rather quiet affair where the centre was opened up to the local media, giving them a chance take pictures without the crowds.

When it came to the public opening, however, the company spared no expense in making sure that Dark Zone started with a bang. Because of the expected size of the crowd, P&C Micros had to hire the old Chinese restaurant next door to provide extra room. They had plenty of free giveaways, thanks to sponsors like Cadburys chocolate, Coca-Cola, Smiths chips and

AT TOP: The front of the Dark Zone centre.
LEFT: A player in the arena.

Streets ice cream. A colouring-in competition for younger kids had a massive 10kg block of Cadbury's chocolate as the prize - it had to be seen to be believed.

Plucka Duck, a character from a popular Australian television show, "Hey Hey It's Saturday!", made a guest appearance, as did other promotional characters. There were fireworks, bright spotlights shining into the night sky from the centre's roof (Hollywood style) and air cannons shooting out plush toys as prizes. Visitors were treated to free showbags, food and drink, and half price laser games.

While the opening was a massive promotional event, P&C Micros are only targeting the immediate Box Hill area for the daily operation of their centre. After all the promotions done with local radio stations and newspapers, it would be almost impossible for local residents not to know about Dark Zone.

THE ARENA

While Dark Zone has a number of other attractions, the laser tag arena is still very much the site's centrepiece. Players start in a special briefing room where the game is explained to them, they then move to the pack room where they suit up and get ready to start the game. Zone laser games have three teams in their game and the members of each team line up in separated cubicles after donning their packs. At the start of the game a roller door opens on all three cubicles at the same time and the players run out into the arena.

The Dark Zone arena is a rabbit warren of ramps, bridges and hidden nooks and crannies. Made of wood and steel, and painted black and grey, the maze has a very industrial look and feel. One of the features of its construction is the metal grating on various sections of the floor and ramps as players can shoot through these barriers.

This means that if a player is standing on a bridge made of metal grating, he can be shot by players on lower levels through the floor of the bridge. There is one such ramp at the very top of the maze and this makes for some strategic gameplay. The bridge is the best position to see where other players are hiding because you can look down on them from above - the only problem is that the bridge offers absolutely no protection because other players can shoot through its sides and floor.

At this stage the arena only has a couple of extra features: each team has a base to protect and there are a few reloading stations for players to replenish their ammunition. P&C Micros plans to add extra features and obstacles as the months go by to keep player interest at an optimum.

"We figured that players would get enough excitement at first from just exploring the arena," explains Peter Moran, P&C Micros international marketing manager. *"We plan to add extra lighting and some of our MFT's [multi-function targets] after a few months"*

"These will include a series of lights running across some of the archways to look like bars. These will be like locked doors because players who pass through the archways without de-activating the lights first, will be de-activated themselves. In terms of strategy, you will be able to pass through a door way and then shoot the MFT to turn the lights back on. This effectively locks the door behind you so anyone chasing you can't walk through."

Another type of arena obstacle that P&C Micros plans to install at a later date is a sentinel. This is a piece of electronics that shoots out lights, mainly to flush players out of "safe" corners of the maze. The sentinel can be themed in any number of ways, but only be de-activated at certain times so players have to be on their toes.

One application that Peter Moran has seen successfully used is a sentinel connected to a suit of armour. Lights in the

suit's eyes, as well as a turning head, indicate when the sentinel is active, and players have to try and de-activate it by hitting the target on its chest.

So while the Box Hill centre looks a little bit bare at the moment, it won't be that way for long. And as the company says, it doesn't really need all these added extras to excite players at this early stage. The arena is pretty amazing, in both size and design. On your first time in it's not that hard to get a bit lost, and it's guaranteed to make you work up a sweat if you use all five levels.

The design was the brainchild of Patrick Holmes (P&C Micros technical guru and the other half of the husband and wife team that owns the company). According to Peter Moran the combined floor plan of the maze had to be drawn after the thing was built. This was because the drawings would have been too confused and complicated for the construction people to build off. As you can imagine, none of the photos taken can capture the complicated structure, simply because only a small part of the maze can be seen from any one position.

UPSTAIRS

Zone laser games focus heavily on their game software which has enough levels and role-playing options to keep regular players interested. The company also encourages players to become members, offering special discounts, competitions and services like keeping all past game statistics on record.



ABOVE: Peter Moran, P&C Micro's international sales manager, holding a 10kg block of chocolate donated as a prize by Cadbury's.

BELOW: A player running through a small part of the complex maze.

To further their membership program, the company has built a special Member's Lounge in the upstairs area of their Box Hill centre. It's just a place that members can gather and meet, away from the busy entrance area below.

Also in the upstairs area are the centre's offices and party rooms. Like all laser tag venues, Dark Zone will rely heavily on group bookings in the form of birthday parties, corporate groups and family functions.

THE ENTRANCE AREA

As soon as you walk into Dark Zone you can tell that it is quite different from the average laser game centre. P&C Micros have gone for a very modern, hi-tech look with their theming.

DARK ZONE

There's a lot of steel and the walkway leading into the venue features black and yellow warning stripes.

The foyer area contains a Polly's Pizza outlet and an internet cafe. It provides a space where people can get something to eat or drink, sit down and chat or hook up to the internet. The food service gives Dark Zone a social dimension that most stand-alone laser tag sites lack. It's a place to meet for a night out, and if you have to wait for a game, there's something to do.

Polly's Pizza is a franchise concept developed in the United States where it goes under the name of Perky's Pizza. Visitors to IAAPA or Fun Expo last year should be familiar with the concept which has been designed especially for FECs. The complete installation, which includes equipment for everything from pressing the pizza dough to baking the finished product, fits in an extremely compact area.

From start to finish, the whole process of making a pizza takes as little as 6 or 7 minutes - and the end result is a very good tasting pizza. This means that the centre can provide customers with fresh, custom made pizzas with a minimum of fuss.

P&C Micros are now the Australian distributors for the turn-key concept which provides installation and training, food distribution and on-going assistance. The company believes Polly's Pizza is ideal for FEC's because it "fits efficiently within a larger operation whose focus it not necessarily food sales".

Once visitors have bought something to eat and drink, they can take a seat on the stools and benches in the Internet Cafe. The "cafe" has eight coin-operated terminals in total which give players access to the internet. The PC terminals are well presented in angular, modern looking cabinets with surround speakers and joysticks as well as the usual computer keyboard and mouse.

Each terminal uses a 586 computer with a 7 slot CD jukebox, offering internet access with Netscape 2.0, IRC, Pegasus Mail and FTP. Players buy time on the machines and there's a printer for obtaining a hard copy of anything interesting you find. P&C Micros hope to have an e-mail service running soon.

The units are also networked so a number of players can compete against

each other when playing the computer games. Network games include Doom, Heretic & Hexan, Descent 2, Warcraft and Mech Warrior.

A NEW NAME

Box Hill is the first Zone laser game in Australia to go under the Dark Zone label, although this is the name used by the master licensee in Canada. From now on all new Zone laser centres established in Australia will be marketed under the Dark Zone name instead of "Zone 3".

Katie Holmes explained why: "When we were a young company we couldn't afford to be as choosy as we would have liked in terms of who we sold our equipment to," she said.

"The centres from those early days are pretty old and a lot of them weren't as good as they could be, nor have they been maintained to the standard we would like. Now, of course, we have stricter controls written into our contracts to make sure new licensees live up to our expectations. That's why we want to operate under the Dark Zone name - it's new and exciting and breaks us away from the older Zone 3 image."

The Box Hill centre has certainly established a good start for the Dark Zone name in Australia and it indicates the direction in which P&C Micros want their venues to go. They have created a more complete concept than the usual stand-alone laser tag centre which was basically an arena and a cash register to take players' money.

"I don't think enough thought was put into the entrance and the atmosphere of some of the older centres," says Katie Holmes. "And that's something we've paid a lot of attention to in this site. We wanted to make this place feel safe and comfortable so people enjoy being here and will stay longer."

And by the end of the year there will be another big attraction at the Box Hill site. It's a totally new game being created



LEFT: The coin-operated Internet terminals, complete with networked video games. It costs \$2.50 for 10 minutes, or \$2.00 if you're a member.



ABOVE: Katie Holmes, managing director of P&C Micros.

by P&C Micros for the family market. While the company is not releasing too many details at this stage into a very competitive market, it seems it will be a themed, "objective based" team game.

Teams will be given a series of challenges to complete and problems to solve. As they move around the maze their reactions will be tested by computer based games and other interactive devices. The level of difficulty can be changed according to age so the game will be suitable for all age groups. Due to open in November, this attraction will make Dark Zone a well rounded amusement centre.

Meanwhile the laser tag arena is up and operating now. And if you are interested in getting into laser tag, if it's at all possible, we suggest you get yourself down to Melbourne to see Dark Zone in person.

Whether or not you end up buying P&C Micro's equipment, you will see an interesting laser tag centre in action - and probably the most complex laser tag arena in the world.

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PUTT-PUTT

GOLF AND GAMES

There's one name that is synonymous in most people's minds with miniature golf all around the world: Putt-Putt.

The franchise, which was established in America in 1954, has grown from strength to strength in the United States and has expanded successfully into Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Africa. More recently, the Ponderosa Group from Indonesia have acquired the master license for

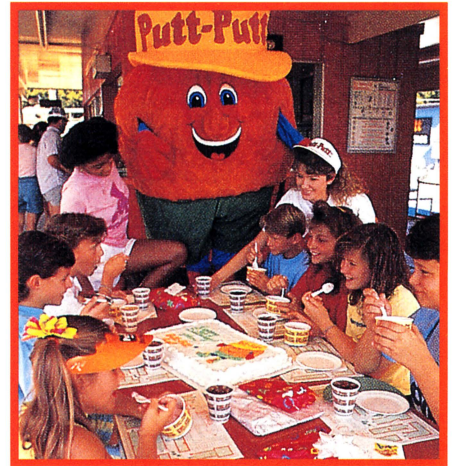
Asia and Europe and have ambitious plans for establishing at least 1,000 courses over the next 10 years.

The concept has developed over the years and the name "Putt-Putt Golf and Games" now truly reflects the nature of Putt-Putt courses. While golf is still the mainstay, Putt-Putt golf courses are so successful because they provide a range of family-based activities. In other words they are family entertainment centres in the true sense of the world.

Through the decades, Putt-Putt have concentrated on providing state-of-the-art construction designs, good service and responding to the desires of their customers. One of the most popular things about Putt-Putt courses are the specially designed holes which are constantly updated and changed according to player feedback. They are designed first of all to be "fun", but to also be challenging for those players who want to try and score a hole-in-one or get a good score.

This level of flexibility applies to every part of the Putt-Putt golf concept and an evolutionary process is always occurring. Changing building configurations, adding new attractions and introducing different promotions are all ways in which the organisation keeps players interested and makes sure franchise owners keep up with changes within the family recreation business.

Everyone would have a fairly clear idea of what a Putt-Putt miniature golf course is like (make sure you picture rock caves, waterfalls and plenty of theming) so let's look at



some of the other attractions that are now a standard part of a Putt-Putt equipment mix.

The diversification of activities at Putt-Putt locations is increasing all the time. In America alone, PP,G&G operate over 170 game rooms, which would have to place it among the largest operators of amusement centres in the country. The organisation also has one of the largest organised batting range operations in the USA and its franchises have been involved with raceway tracks since 1965.

Bumper boats are another of the organisation's successful attractions and Putt-Putt in the USA has found them to be a compatible partner with their golf operations, no matter what region of the country the course is situated in. Many Putt-Putt centres have actually incorporated the bumperboat pools into the water design aspects of the putting course which is a nice touch.

Like all family entertainment centres, Putt-Putt rely quite heavily on birthday party groups. The indoor sections of Putt-Putt Golf venues now house quality game rooms (with an emphasis on redemption) and multiple birthday party rooms.

Parties usually include use of the venue's facilities, a party with cake and other food, and the appearance of the Putt-Putt Golf mascot - you guessed it, a fluffy golf ball!



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PUTT-PUTT GOLF AND GAMES

Franchisees get the benefits of Putt-Putt's in-house game ranking polls, national advertising tools, and video game purchase programs. The organisation's home office staff consists of over 50 people and they keep in close contact with their franchisees to make sure everyone receives the most up to date information.

The Putt-Putt franchise system has also done a lot of the hard research work in establishing go-karts and batting cages. They have addressed all the crucial issues of design, customer safety, equipment selection and operational problems that can plague these attractions.

Finally, Putt-Putt is a member of the Professional Putters Association (PPA) which is recognised as the authority in miniature golf competition. The Association's current tournament program offers more than 2,200 local, state and national tournaments each year, with more than \$200,000 in prize money.

A major part of PP,G&G's success has been the support the organisation gives it franchisees in all areas of promotion and operation. They will evaluate potential sites, help in the design of the course, provide training courses, and a whole range of promotional products, including TV, radio and newspaper adverts, national insurance coverage, tournament competitions and discount purchases.



Along with all the interactive training tools, Putt-Putt also organises a week-long international convention each year. New programs and promotions are released and training is given to keep operators up to date with the constant changes that the amusement industry goes through. The convention is a chance for franchisees to exchange ideas on maintenance, marketing and overall operation so they don't end up with an out-dated, non-competitive course.

Whether or not you are interested in purchasing a Putt-Putt Golf franchise, the organisation has a lot to teach in terms of operating a family amusement facility. At last year's IAAPA, during a seminar on future trends for FEC's, most of the speakers were talking about the great future in hi-tech and serving the adult market with things like expensive simulators and restaurants serving alcohol.

One lone voice was Donna Lloyd from Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America, who advocated an alcohol-free, wholesome family environment. Instead of drawing people in with expensive, hi-tech attractions, she told operators to concentrate on giving their patrons top service and "doing what you do really well".

This philosophy has held the Putt-Putt franchise in good stead. It doesn't mean that they haven't been able to change with the times - they just know who their target audience is and aren't distracted by "trends" and "hype" that don't fit in with their family concept. The fact that they are willing to change can be seen in all the attractions they have added to the concept over the years: game rooms, batting cages, go-kart raceways, bumper boats...

The franchise structure, with its home office, numerous newsletters and annual convention, also provide the perfect way for operators to keep in touch and swap ideas with colleagues. All these things have helped Putt-Putt expand all across America - and now they are beginning to tackle the rest of the world. It just goes to show that a good, old-fashioned style of family fun can still be very successful.

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The Orion

One of the newest VR systems to hit the market is the Orion Game System from Canadian company, Dynamic Visions. It is a machine designed very much with operators in mind: it's modular, upgradable, operates with a standard PC platform, and doesn't need an attendant.

The units were first released internationally at last year's IAAPA trade show, after 12 months of testing at the busy Reno Hilton Hotel and Casino. The Orion Game System may not have the sleek, modern look of some of the other VR machines on the market, but the rugged, practical cabinet has been designed to withstand the sort of abuse sustained in arcades and FE Centres. Strength and resilience are particularly important when you consider that the game can be safely operated without an attendant.

All the cabinet components are encased in rugged shock-resistant housing and the "GameBlaster" gun is metal reinforced. Other practical design features include a suspension boom attached to the head mounted display (HMD) so the headset can't be dropped. This also makes the HMD easy to put on and stops players getting themselves tangled up in the cables as they turn around in the virtual world.

The unit in which the game is played is called the Orion CyberPod and it is equipped with electro-magnetic sensors. These are to make sure the pod is enclosed so players remain in the safe enclosure while playing the VR game. If the CyberPod is not properly closed, the machine will alert the player before the game begins - another way of eliminating the need for an attendant.

Once inside the CyberPod, customers will find a money collecting device - a card reader, coin mech. or bill acceptor - as well as the control buttons. The player has full control and can choose whether to join friends in a networked game or to simply play against the computer. Up to 11 units can be networked and experienced players also have the option of choosing a higher level of difficulty.

But perhaps the Orion system's most important feature is its modular design. The machine is made to be adaptable and upgradable as the need arises. Dynamic

Visions have already pinpointed some possible options for the future in a sit-down version of the Orion, a motion base, Datagloves and various other peripherals. But with technology moving as fast as it is, there will probably be developments that no one's even thought of yet.

The game system has opened PC architecture to make service and maintenance as simple as possible. And because it is a PC processor based VR system, parts and upgrades are both easy to obtain and affordable.

All the peripherals just plug in so if something breaks down, you just have to plug a new part in, resulting in minimal downtime. This also gives operators flexibility in other areas as the configuration of the system can be quickly changed, allowing different peripherals to be plugged in for different software titles.

One peripheral that deserves a special mention is Dynamic Vision's GameBlaster Gun which has a realistic recoil action that players can really feel. This is in sharp contrast to the usual hand held devices and joysticks that most VR systems use.

The Orion is currently the only VR system that is running a customised version of home PC software, although some manufacturers use the same software. Dynamic Visions has designed a completely graphical user interface so no keyboard is needed. For players, this means that the Orion plays just like a normal arcade video, with game options being chosen by using the GameBlaster Gun.

Violence in video games is a recurring issue that causes problems for the industry and VR is in no way an exception to this, in fact it often comes in for more criticism because of the immersive nature of the experience. The Orion has solved this problem for operators by including buttons to adjust the level of violence in the games. This can be left up to players to select, or default codes can block access.

The Orion game system also has two non-violent applications: "Capture the Flag" and "Tag... You're It", and more



games with non-violent themes are planned for the future.

Other operator-adjustable settings include length and cost per game - and these changes can be implemented into the data management system. Dynamic Visions recommends that operators charge \$1 per minute: for example, \$3 for a 3-minute game, or \$5 for a 5-minute game.

The longer the amount of time on the system, the more you can charge. The company has also designed its software to be compatible to different game lengths so the player does not lose out on game quality in shorter games.

The Orion's sound system is one of the best on the market for a commercial VR system - it has an 80 Watt amplifier with a digital equaliser to make every bit of the action more realistic for players. The loud speakers also attract attention and are a part of the Orion's promotional package.

In short, Dynamic Visions have gone a long way in achieving their goal of "eliminating the problems that plague the VR industry: fundamental issues of reliability, performance, future support, flexibility and price point."

They have certainly designed a system with operators in mind - and all for a starting price of US\$25,000. While the Orion is relatively new to the market and hasn't proven itself as yet, if you are considering VR, it is well worth taking a closer look at.



WHAT'S NEW

Soul Edge Version 2

Namco

Along with quite a few others, we genuinely thought the original Soul Edge was going to be a hit of major proportions, and though it has done from OK to pretty good in most markets, general opinion says that it hasn't quite reached the high expectations that were held for it insofar as takings and site longevity go.

But the word we hear is that this second version has had enough added to it to be a far better all round game. There are no major changes from what we can gather, a couple of new characters, new backgrounds and a few new tricks in the play with some hot "kill moves", but blended in with all the good stuff from the original game, Soul Edge 2 does look a more complete product and is apparently showing that in it's early cash box returns.

As far as we know there is little chance that this second version will be available as a ROM update, the way we understand it Namco were going to do another production run of the original game, but decided to make the changes and put out this "version 2" instead.

We were just a touch off the mark with Soul Edge, but we really think this one will make up for any disappointment there may have been with that one.

It should turn out to be a real good conversion kit that is capable of earning good money in any location that is a good one for fighting games.



SkiMaxx

ICE Inc

Last month this page brought you the great looking new CG driving game from Gaelco of Spain and this month we have another big



CG game that has not come out of the big Japanese factories, though looking at it, it's hard to tell until you see the ICE name.

SkiMaxx, is a great looking water skiing game that is loads of fun to play, but it's been a hard one for us to assess having been sort of involved in the development of it from the start. That ensured there had to be a chance that we'd got too close to it to be completely objective, but being aware of that trap, we've really stood back and studied every facet of SkiMaxx, watched and listened to people playing it, played it and really tried to find something to be critical of, but still find it extremely hard to see how this game can be anything other than a winner.

That ICE Inc have produced a CG video simulator at their first attempt which is going to be compared with products from the major Japanese manufacturers, will possibly surprise many in the industry, but that will only be the first surprise, 'cause we believe Ski Max is also going to do exceptionally well in the market.

Graphically, it's almost impossible to believe that the polygon system board and then the game have been developed in the short time they have, and the speed of the development hasn't detracted from the quality one little bit, we've been lauding the brilliance of game designer Kyle Hodgetts for years and it appears that his relationship with ICE Inc and the support the company have given him have provided a working environment that has brought out the very best in him.

And the ICE engineers have certainly done their bit in producing the big attractive cabinet with full hydraulic simulation that we feel sure we're going to see a lot of in FEC's and arcades around the world.

So when you see Ski Max at the Trade Shows or in distributors showrooms, jump on and go for a ride, try it right out, and if you like, compare it with the CG games currently on the market, unless everyone who's been on it to time of writing is completely wrong, this is a game with an enormous future and on top of that, we believe it's going to be very realistically priced.

As we go to press we have just received a report on the first day's site testing of SkiMaxx and it's sufficient to say that everyone at ICE Inc is grinning something horrid.

SKIMAXX (Esqui Maximo) ICE Inc.

El mes pasado esta página lo llevó a Ud. a observar el grandioso aspecto del nuevo juego de conducción CG de Galeco de España y este mes tenemos otro gran juego CG que no proviene de las fábricas de Namco o Sega, aunque observándolo, es difícil notarésto hasta que uno ve el nombre ICE en el mismo.

SkiMaxx, es un juego grandioso de esquí acuático, lleno de divertimento, pero es difícil para cualquiera de nosotros que hemos estado involucrados, en cierta forma, en el desarrollo del juego desde el principio, sin duda a que al estar involucrados no fuésemos totalmente objetivos. Pero ante tal eventualidad, nos apartamos un poco del mismo y estudiamos cada aspecto del SkiMaxx, observamos y escuchamos a la gente que jugó con él, lo jugamos nosotros mismos y buscamos alguna cosa que poder criticar, pero aún ahora nos resulta tremendamente difícil sentir que este juego pueda llegar a ser cualquier otra cosa que un gran ganador.

ICE Inc. ha logrado, en su primer intento, producir un video simulador CG que será comparado con los productos de los fabricantes más importantes japoneses, que posiblemente sorprenderá a muchos en la industria, pero ésto será tan solo la primera sorpresa - porque creemos que Ski Max se hará cargo de los Salones poniendo a sus contendientes a un costado en los pasillos ya que, según nuestra opinión es capaz de dar mejores resultados que cualquier video simulador que actualmente existe en el mercado.

Se va a obtener mucho dinero con este juego o nosotros seremos los sorprendidos.

Graficamente, es casi imposible creer que la pantalla de sistema poligonal y el juego en sí, han sido desarrollados en tan poco tiempo y que, la velocidad de este desarrollo no ha desmerecido en nada la calidad del juego. Nosotros hemos elogiado la brillantez del diseñador de juegos Kyle Hodgetts durante años y parece que su relación con Ice Inc. y el apoyo que la compañía le ha brindado otorgándole un buen marco de trabajo han resultado excelente para él.

Y, los ingenieros de ICE, sin duda alguna, aportaron su parte para producir estas grandes cabinas con simulación hidráulica total que estamos seguros que veremos mucho en los FEC's y Salones de Entretenimientos de todo el mundo.

Por lo tanto, cuando vean Ski Max en las exposiciones o en los salones de los distribuidores, salten al mismo y pruébenlo, y, si le gusta, compárenlo con los juegos CG actualmente en el mercado. Si todos los que lo han probado hasta el momento de escribir este artículo, no están totalmente equivocados, éste es un juego con un gran futuro.

SOUL EDGE - Version 2 - (Al Filo del Alma 2) Namco

Junto a varias personas más, nosotros realmente pensamos que el original Soul Edge iba a resultar en un gran éxito, y a pesar de que le ha ido bien en la mayoría de los mercados, la opinión generalizada dice que no ha alcanzado las altas expectativas que se tenían tanto con respecto a

sus ingresos como al tiempo que el juego perdería en el mercado.

Pero lo que escuchamos es que a la segunda versión se le ha adicionado lo suficiente para que en su totalidad sea un mejor juego. No hay cambios importantes, por lo que pudimos recoger; un par de personajes nuevos, nuevas escenografías, y un par de trucos nuevos en el juego con algunos - movimientos de muerte calientes, pero combinados con todo el buen material del juego original, Soul Edge 2 parece un producto más completo y aparentemente lo demuestra con los primeros ingresos en susarcas.

Por lo que sabemos existe poca probabilidad que ésta segunda versión esté disponible en el formato de actualización ROM. Por lo que entendimos de Namco, ellos iban a hacer una nueva producción del juego original pero decidieron aprovechar la oportunidad y poner en su lugar esta "segunda versión".

Nosotros esbozamos un resultado distinto al resultante con Soul Edge, pero realmente creemos que esta nueva versión compensará cualquier desilusión que hayan podido tener con el primer juego.

Debería ser un excelente kit de conversión, capaz de ganar buen dinero en cualquier salón de entretenimientos que sea bueno para juegos de lucha y pelea, y creemos que tendrá un precio bastante realista.

STREET FIGHTER III - Capcom

Hace un par de años todos esperaban que Capcom fabricara Street Fighter III pero en lugar de hacer esto, ellos eligieron fabricar diversas versiones de Street Fighter II... bueno, todas las cosas buenas llegan a quien espera y la compañía ha recientemente anunciado que están trabajando en Street Fighter III en un formato CG 3D (tercera dimensión) para su lanzamiento en 1997.

GUNBLADE NY - Sega

Sega ha lanzado un modelo más pequeño (y menos costoso) de Gunblade NY, el juego que figura al tope de las listas japonesas en el momento de escribir este artículo (habiendo volteado a Time Crisis) y ésto debería redundar en que el juego logre una proporción aún mejor en la mayoría de los operadores que la versión en la pantalla grande De Lujo (DeLuxe).

Las armas, que significan una parte imprescindible y vital del atractivo del juego, son las mismas en las máquinas más pequeñas a aquellas usadas en el modelo DeLuxe, así que aquí no existe problema alguno, y tampoco pierde mucho por ser mostrado en una pantalla más chica. Pero sin importar cuanto - puntaje- intentemos nosotros darle a este juego, lo consideramos como un juego con falta de verdadera profundidad, y a pesar de que podríamos estar totalmente equivocados, creemos que ha llegado a estar en el tope por omisión, más que por ser realmente un juego número 1.

El lanzamiento de este modelo sin embargo, debería ayudar a hacer que el juego sea más conocido en lugares ruterios y no es del todo inconcebible que pudiese funcionar bien en algunos bares ... no hay gran estrategia involucrada en su juga-

da y los jugadores con un poco de cerebro pueden disfrutar del estallido de básicamente todo lo que se mueve, incluso si golpean a algunos ciudadanos y a lo mejor, incluso, un embajador, en su recorrida.

Nosotros no creemos que GunBlade NY será un gran éxito, pero esta versión puede ser bastante útil en el tiempo.

LAST BRONX - Sega

Sega necesita tanto un buen juego como un hombre sediento necesita un trago, ya que cuando uno escudriña en los aproximadamente 10 últimos lanzamientos, uno no puede ayudar pero pensar que su -porcentaje de strikes (golpes) - ha resultado ser como una liendre en la nariz; y esta es una panía, de la cual se espera tanto, y que nosotros sabemos positivamente que pueden producir un juego realmente bueno.

Si este último juego de lucha puede resultar bueno o no, es una cuestión que sólo los jugadores responderán. Last Bronx parece tener un gran atractivo, pero tenemos nuestras dudas si es lo suficiente como para generar ingresos que lo ubiquen en la línea de los "juegos exitosos".

Nos hemos jugado por estos juegos de gran atractivo y por lo tanto, como nos hemos equivocado, nos hemos convertido en grandes cuestionadores de los mismos después que los jugadores han expresado su opinión en las cajas recolectoras donde juegos como Max TT y Soul Edge han solo logrado un 30% del éxito que se creía eran capaz de lograr.

Aún así, debemos esperar y nuestra impresión de este juego es que obtendrá considerablemente mejores resultados que Fighting Vipers (Víboras peleadoras) y muchísimo mejor que Virtua Fighter Kids y Sonic Fighters, aunque no llegará cerca de Virtua Fighter II. El juego tiene excelentes gráficos con personajes grandes y lindos en pantalla, aunque todos estos peleadores se comienzan a parecerse mucho. Y, el modo de juego en sí es bastante bueno aunque no posee nada que realmente enloquezca a los jugadores.

No podemos realmente sondear donde el "Bronx" entra en este juego ya que pensamos que este distrito tan famoso neoyorquino contenía muchas más manoplas de metal, cuchillas de filo y cachiporras que las armas orientales que usan estos luchadores pero, quizás el Bronx ha cambiado un poco, o Sega lo compró y lo trasladó hacia el Este.

Habiendo expresado todo esto, Last Bronx no es un juego al que saltaríamos por el precio que ya observamos que están solicitando. Como mención, diremos que en Australia, donde el kit de Fighting Vipers bajó de un precio solicitado de aproximadamente \$ 7,000 a aproximadamente \$ 2,000, y creemos que algo similar ha ocurrido en otros lugares, si este juego no es un juego realmente caliente, uno puede esperar sin duda alguna que siga la misma suerte, y esto puede llegar a ocurrir bastante pronto.

VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS Sega

Como muchos esperan, Virtua Fighter Kids de Sega se ha desplomado dramáticamente en las listas japonesas después de estar bastante bien

ubicado en su inicio en mayo. El juego que posee los Virtua Fighters de cuando eran kids (chicos) solo tiene un leve atractivo novedoso que no podemos pensar que va a perdurar por mucho tiempo en cualquier mercado, mientras que los jugadores aún pueden jugar la cosa real en Virtua Fighter 2.

NINJA MASTERS - SNK/ADK Neo Geo

Este nuevo juego de lucha de Ninjas desarrollado por ADK tiene la señal de un buen juego Neo Geo y así es como aparentemente los jugadores lo están tratando en sus primeros días en Japón, donde está resultando bueno.

Los personajes para jugar tienen todos a su disposición, las clásicas armas de los Ninjas, además de unas cuantas armas adicionales que cualquier Ninja respetable amaría poseer, y ellos poseen los movimientos para complimentar estas armas. El juego, también es más profundo de lo que se aprecia a simple vista y no es difícil imaginar a los jugadores disponiendo de un mayor tiempo para solucionar los "trucos" casi ilimitados que los Expertos Ninjas pueden lanzar cuando se encuentran en dificultades.

Todo lo que hemos observado da la pauta de que resultará en un buen juego para el sistema SNK, especialmente para operadores callejeros y lugares para los más chicos.

KING OF FIGHTERS '96 - SNK Neo Geo

SNK ha logrado éxitos extremadamente buenos con la serie King of Fighters. El del '95 que todavía está logrando resultados positivos y probablemente esté reclamando el título del juego más duradero de Neo Geo de todas las épocas, de forma que no sorprende que hayan trabajado duro en su última oferta, KOF'96, que está pronta a ser lanzada mientras escribimos estas líneas.

Como se podría esperar, los cambios principalmente son los personajes y la escenografía, pero existen también algunos giros que servirán para que los jugadores mantengan el interés por el juego. Confiamos que '96 será un nuevo clásico para KOF y que demostrará ser una buena adquisición para muchos operadores.

SONIC FIGHTERS - Sega

Observando los dos juegos, nos sentimos seguros al afirmar que el mismo tipo de Sega que autorizó el gasto de dinero para Virtua Fighter Kids operado con fichas, es también responsable de este juego, un juego Sonic bastante estúpido que está ingresando al mercado.

No se puede observar a Sonic y VF Kids, o jugarlos sin pensar que ambos bueron realmente diseñados para el mercado hogareño y cuando esto queda claro, flota la pregunta del porqué Sega está tratando de introducirlos e imponerlos entre los operadores de juegos con fichas.

Mientras que los juegos operados con fichas funcionan en el mercado hogareño, hasta ahora no hay nada que demuestre, en esta instancia que los juegos orientados al mercado hogareño funcionarán en el mercado de máquinas operadas con fichas.

Como un personaje de juego hogareño, que corre como loco a través de pantallas incontables de diversión para los más pequeñitos, y que es una belleza en sí mismo; cuando es presentado como Virtua Fighter pueda atraer a los jugadores?

Y, no hay garantía que alguna vez funcionará incluso en el mercado hogareño. Como Virtua Fighter Kids que se hundió sin dejar señas después de estar más o menos una semana en las listas de Japón, esperamos que el Hedgehog, una estrella de estrellas en el escenario correcto, y héroe de millones de pequeñitos en todo el mundo, en este caso sufra desgraciadamente la misma deshonra.

PUZZLE FIGHTER II - Capcom

Este nuevo juego de acertijos inteligentemente trabaja sobre el siempre popular tema de los Luchadores Callejeros (Street Fighter), aunque no existe en ningún lugar un Street Fighter y aunque no podemos concientemente verlo a este juego como impresionable en un mercado global lleno, debería obtener bastantes buenos resultados en Japón y posiblemente en otros países asiáticos, ya que posee cierto atractivo y un buen trabajo de armado y composición de juego.

Apoyando dicha impresión está el hecho que Puzzle Fighter II es aparentemente una continuación, y nadie aquí puede recordar que el original nos haya dejado para ir al mercado hogareño.

TWISTER - Sega Pinball

La película actual - Twister, The Dark Side of Nature - (El Contorsionista, el Lado Oscuro de la Naturaleza), fue realizada por uno de los equipos más taquilleros que alguna vez se haya juntado en Hollywood, el productor Steven Spielberg, Michael Crichton, el autor del best-seller, Jan de Bond, el director de "Speed" (Velocidad) y los efectos especiales de tiros intensos de Industrial Light & Magic, de forma tal que no es sorprendente que la película sea todo un éxito económico y esté siendo considerada una de las grandes películas del presente año.

Todo se suma al muy inteligente acuerdo de Licencia para Sega Pinball, que puso su nuevo juego, con el tema de la película, en una excelente posición para compartir los escenarios tan excitantes que rodean el exitoso film.

No les vamos a contar que nos gustaron los esquemas coloridos de la presentación del juego, un flipper violeta y amarillo que pretende irritar los sentidos un poco; pero que atrae la atención y obviamente está diseñado con éste propósito, para que las monedas entren al recolector y éste es todo lo que uno puede pretender de un juego.

La parte buena es que bajo los exteriores violeta y amarillo se encuentra un juego bastante bueno, bien pensado, que sigue el tema central y provee a los jugadores de todos los niveles, con un juego del que reciben un buen cambio por su inversión.

El campo de juego central es un cojín giratorio magnético que le otorga muchos puntos extras "bonus" y también cuando captura las bolas, lanza secuencias de multi-bolas de 3, 4 o 5,

acelerando el juego y arrojándolas por todas partes, haciendo que los jugadores realmente se extiendan al máximo para tener todo el control sobre el juego.

Esta y otras características, como el objetivo para descender la memoria, generan bastante excitación por parte de los jugadores que se alimentan con el fanático -tornado- que está en la caja posterior y que paladea durante toda la jugada. Por todo esto, es fácil ver porque Sega tiene confianza en que poseen frente a ellos una máquina de grandes ganancias con el Twister.

El programa de pruebas de este flipper fue realizado antes de que saliera al aire la película y aparentemente produjo grandes cifras, por lo tanto tenemos derecho a pensar que el juego incluso resultará aún mejor al ser respaldado por la película. Como en el juego, no se pueden manejar los colores.

BUBBLE MEMORIES - Taito

Taito no ha tenido ultimamente el mejor de los -resultados- en la fabricación de juegos, pero con Puzzle Bobble y el más reciente Psychic Force, ellos están ahí sin siquiera amenazar con reclamar su posición cerca del tope del árbol.

Este juego del tipo de Bubble Bobble tampoco encenderá la industria, pero es otra cuerda lanzada para el arco de operadores del paquete de F3 y es uno de esos juegos que debería ganar bien sin mayores problemas.

A pesar de que el juego es presentado como -The Story of Bubble Bobble (La Historia de Bubble Bobble) lo que fue un buen juego para fines del 80", no tiene mucha similitud con ese juego, pero es divertido para jugar y esto ayudará.

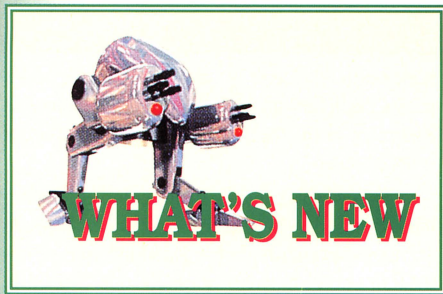
ANGEL EYES - Tecmo

En algún lugar del camino alguien le debe haber contado a los fabricantes japoneses de juegos que los juegos de lucha que incluyen pequeñitos funcionan bien, ya que ultimamente hemos visto dos grandes trabajos en CG de Sega y ahora éste de Tecmo, pero creemos que ellos han comprado un -cachorro- con chicos peleadores aunque todo lo que hemos visto dice lo contrario.

Es factible ver estos juegos funcionando en el mercado de juegos hogareños, donde muchos chiquitos juegan estos juegos pero, en el mercado de máquinas operadas con fichas, donde los pequeños realmente gastan dinero en salones de entretenimiento, etc. no quieren ellos jugar con pequeños peleadores, si es que van a jugar un juego de lucha, sino que quieren grandes -machos- como les gustaría ser a ellos.

El juego en sí parece bastante bueno y tiene algo de entretenido, pero para ser breves, no nos imaginamos a los Angel Eyes teniendo los elementos correctos para que realmente les vaya bien.

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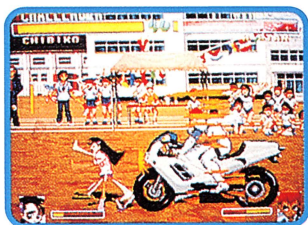
Angel Eyes

Tecmo

Somewhere along the way someone must have told the Japanese game makers that fighting games featuring little kids are the go, just lately we've seen two big CG jobs from Sega and now this one from Tecmo, but we think they've been sold a pup with kid fighters as everything we've seen says different.

It's possible to see these games working in the consumer game market where a lot of little guys play the games, but not coin-op as the kids who really spend money in arcades etc, don't want to play with little kid fighters, if they're going to play a fighting game they want the big macho guys that they'd like to be.

The game in itself looks quite OK and there is a bit of a fun element in it, but in short, we can't see Angel Eyes having the appeal necessary to generate reasonable income



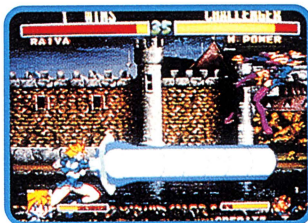
Bubble Memories

Taito

Taito haven't had the best of 'trots' in the game making caper of late, but with Puzzle Bobble and more recently Psychic Force, they're hanging in there without ever threatening to reclaim their position near the top of the tree.

This Bubble Bobble type game is not going to set the industry on fire either, but it's another string for the bow of F3 Package operators and one that should earn it's keep without having too many problems.

Though the game is promoted as "The Story of Bubble Bobble" which was a good game of the late 80's, there's not a lot of resemblance to that game, but it is fun to play, and that will help.



Side By Side

Taito Corp.

Taito have taken a few licks lately, but they could be on the right track now that they're into polygon games if this latest driving game release is any indication.

Side by side looks to us to be the best product Taito have put into the market for quite some time, graphically it's the equal of just about anything out there, it's quick, it's fun, and it brings into play the company's expertise in providing players with excellent handling of the on screen vehicles.

Players have a great selection of cars to choose from, the tracks are good and all in all, Side By Side comes up as a pretty good looking package and though it's not cheap, it's not badly priced if it can earn the sort of money that we have heard of it earning in it's early days.

The days when operators jump in and buy anything with a steering wheel are long gone and the game is going to have to prove itself, but this is certainly one to keep your eye on and for the rather battered, Taito's sake, we hope it makes the grade.



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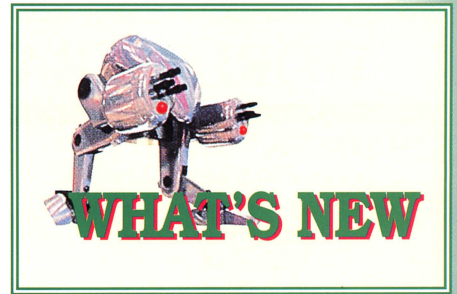
Twister

Sega Pinball

The current movie, "Twister, The Dark Side of Nature" was put together by one of the hottest film teams ever assembled in Hollywood, producer Steven Spielberg, Michael Crichton the best selling author, Jan de Bont the director of "Speed", and the special effects hot shots from Industrial Light & Magic, so it's no real surprise that the film is doing great box office and set to be one of the biggest films of the year.

Which all adds up to a very clever licensing deal for Sega Pinball, putting their new game that's themed on the movie in an excellent position to share in the excitement surrounding the hit film.

We're not going to tell you we like the colour scheme of the game, a purple and yellow Pinball tends to jangle the senses a bit, but if it attracts attention as it's obvi-



VF KIDS NOSEDIVES IN CHARTS

As expected by many, Sega's Virtua Fighter Kids has slumped dramatically in the Japanese charts after opening reasonably well in May.

The game which features the Virtua Fighters when they were kids has only a slight novelty appeal that we can't see lasting long in any market, when players can still play the real thing on VF 2

ously designed to do, it should lead to coin being dropped and that's all anyone can ask.

The good part is that underneath the purple and yellow exterior lies a pretty good, and well thought out game, that follows the central theme well and provides players of all standards with a game that they can get their moneys worth out of.

The central playfield feature is a magnetic spinning pad that gives big bonus points and also launches the 3, 4 or 5 ball multi ball sequences when it captures the balls, builds up speed and throws them all over the place, making players really scramble to get it all under control.

This and other features like the memory drop target, generate a good deal of player excitement that's fuelled by the backbox 'tornado' fan that gusts throughout the game, and it's easy to see why Sega are confident they have a high earning machine with the Twister.

The test program was done before the film was released and it apparently produced some great figures, so we'd be entitled to think the game will do even better with the film to back it up.

Like the game, just can't handle the colours.

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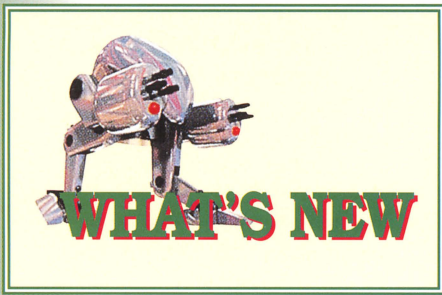
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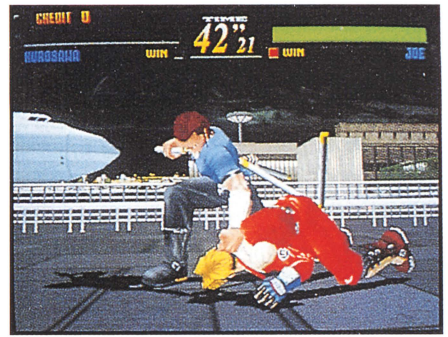
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Last Bronx Sega

Sega need a good game as bad as a thirsty man needs a drink right now as when you sift through their last ten or so releases, you can't help but see their "strike rate" has been a nit on the nose for a company that we know can produce a really good game, and from which so much is expected.



Ninja Masters

SNK/ADK Neo Geo

This new Ninja fighting game developed by ADK has the earmarks of a pretty good Neo Geo game and that's apparently how players are treating it in it's early days in Japan where it's doing quite well.

The players characters have all the classic Ninja weapons at their disposal, plus quite a few that any self respecting Ninja would love to have, and they have the moves to compliment them.

The game also has a bit more depth than is seen at first sight and it's not hard to imagine players spending quite a bit of time working out the almost limitless 'tricks' the Ninja Masters can pop up with when they are in difficulties.

Everything we've seen points to the game being a good one for the SNK system, particularly for street operators of kids sites.

King of Fighters '96

SNK Neo Geo

SNK have done extremely well out of the King of Fighters series with '95 still doing well and probably laying claim to the title of the longest lasting Neo Geo game ever, so it's no surprise that they have put a lot of work into this latest offering, KOF '96, which is due for release as we write.

As would be expected, the changes are mainly in characters and backgrounds, but there is a few new twists that should serve to keep players interested. We expect '96 to be another good vintage for KOF and prove pretty good property for many operators.

Whether this latest fighting game can turn it around or not is a question that only the players will answer, Last Bronx does appear to have a bit going for it, but we doubt it has enough to generate income that would put it into the "Hit game" bracket.

We've been sucked in by these great looking games before and have become very wary of them after players have had their say through the cash box and games like Manx TT and Soul Edge

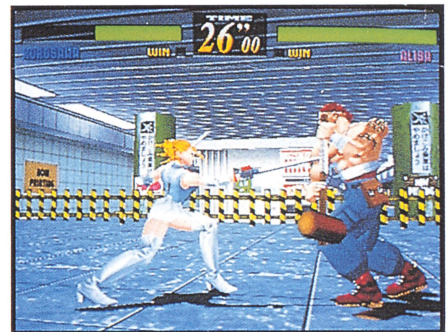
have only achieved about 30% of success that they were thought capable of.

Still one must take a stand and our impression of this game sees it doing considerably better than Fighting Vipers, and a whole lot better than Virtua Fighter

Kids and Sonic Fighters, though not really getting close to Virtua Fighter 2. Graphically the game is excellent with nice big on screen characters, even though all these fighters of late are starting to look very much the same, and the game play is pretty good without being anything to really get excited about.

And we can't quite fathom where the "Bronx" comes into this game as we would have thought the infamous New York district was more into brass knuckles, shivs and coshes than the oriental weapons these fighters use, but maybe the Bronx has changed a bit, or Sega bought it and moved it over to the east.

With all that said, Last Bronx is not a game that we would jump into at the price, in Australia we've recently seen the Fighting Vipers kit go from an asking price of around \$7000, down to around \$2000 and we believe similar has happened in other places, so unless this one is really hot, you can probably expect a drop in price pretty quick.



Sonic Fighters Sega

Looking at the two games, we feel safe in assuming the same Sega guy who authorised money to be spent on developing Virtua Fighter Kids for coin-op, is also responsible for this, quite stupid Sonic game coming into our market.

You can't look at Sonic and VF Kids, or play them without thinking that both the games were really designed for the consumer market and when that is clearly seen, the question pops up as to why Sega are trying to foist them onto coin operators. For while coin-op games will work in the consumer market, there's been nothing to show at this stage that consumer oriented games will work in coin-op.

As a consumer game character, running like crazy through countless frames of fun for the little guys, Sonic is a beauty, but when portrayed as a type of Virtual Fighter, he sucks, and there's no guarantee that this one will even work with consumers.

Like Virtua Fighter Kids which sank without trace after a week or so in the Japanese charts, we expect the Hedgehog, a star of stars in the right setting, and hero to millions of little guys around the world, to unfortunately suffer the same ignominy.

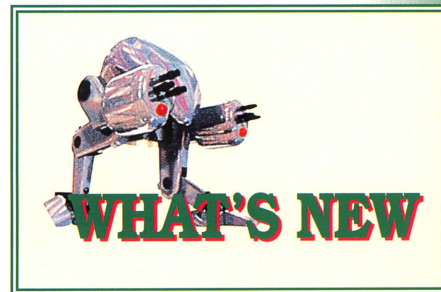




Gunblade NY Sega

Sega have released a smaller (and less expensive) model of Gunblade NY, the game that is sitting on top of the Japanese charts at time of writing, (having knocked off Time Crisis) and this should make the game a lot better proposition for the majority of operators than the big screen DeLuxe version.

The guns, which are a vital part of the games appeal, are the same on the smaller machine as those used on the DeLuxe model so there's no problem there, and it doesn't lose much in being shown on a smaller screen, but no matter how hard we try to give this game 'points', we still see it as lacking real depth, and though we could be proven horribly wrong, we believe it has got to the top by default, rather than because it's a genuine #1 game.



Street Fighter III

A couple of years ago everyone was waiting for Capcom to produce Street Fighter III, but instead of doing this they chose to do many versions of SFII.....well all good things come to those who wait as the company has just announced they are working on Street Fighter III in a CG 3D format for a 1997 release.

The release of this model however should assist it in getting exposure on street sites and it's not completely inconceivable that it could work in some pubsthere isn't any great strategy involved and players with a few jugs in them may enjoy blasting away at basically everything that moves even if they knock over a few citizens and maybe an ambassador, along the way.

We don't believe Gunblade NY will prove a major hit by any means, but it this version could prove quite useful over time.

Puzzle Fighter II

Capcom

This new puzzle game from Capcom cleverly works in the ever popular Street Fighter theme even though there's no Street Fighters anywhere close to it and though we can't conscientiously see it making a big impression

in the full global market, it should do some pretty good business in Japan and possibly other Asian countries, as it does have a certain appeal and there has obviously been a fair bit of thought go into putting the game together.

Backing that impression up is that though Puzzle Fighter II is apparently a sequel, no one around here can recall the original leaving us to believe it must have been kept in the home market



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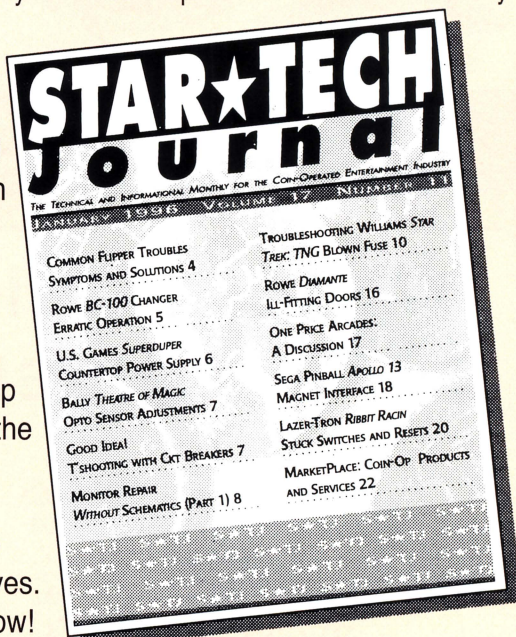
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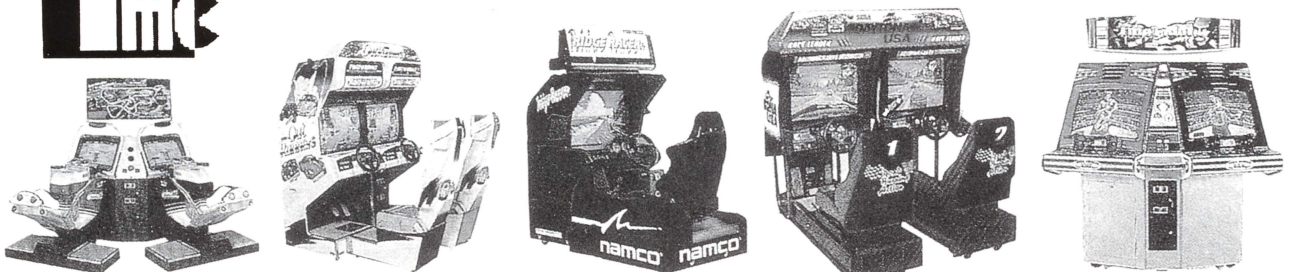
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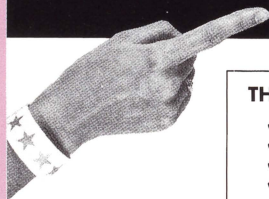
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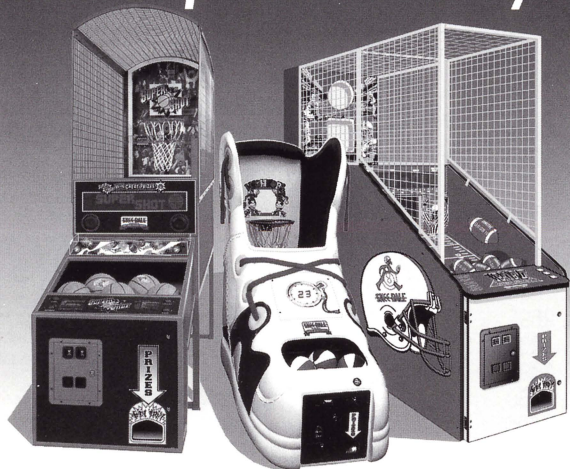
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PLAYER: Does your symptom only occur at high sound levels? If it skips even when no one bumps it and while it is playing at lower levels, then it is the player itself.

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Accumulating dirt in the lens would be consistent with a skipping problem that slowly gets worse over time.

The optics lens is supported on tiny coils which move it around to maintain focus and tracking. It is very tender. Hold the Q-tip lightly and apply minimal pressure to the lens, gently wiping sideways.

PMs Cleaning is something you need to do on a regular basis.



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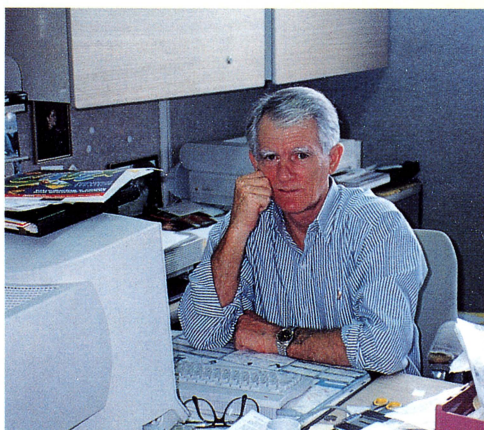
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Till Next Month...

with Jack Rodios



The charming Samantha from ATEI visited our shores during the past month with her husband Bob after scoring a free trip from the brewer, Fosters, and would you believe that in their first visit to Australia we were not able to do a thing with them.

We were all set for a night on the town when our little guy came down with the bloody chicken pox, and with Sam being very pregnant, and Bob never having had the wretched pox, it was thought better that we keep our distance.

A shame, but better be safe than be sorry. These ATEI people bear watching though, they have a distinct sense of humour and a lot of class, and I had to laugh when a little later I received a beautifully wrapped parcel by courier from Sam, of a book.

Not just any book though, a book titled "Faldo"

Regular readers will have no trouble getting the significance of the gift, if they recall our May issue when I revealed in this column how the ungodly ATEI mob had got Sega to build a Nick Faldo like robot to whup Aussie golfing legend, Greg Norman in the

US Masters Golf Championship.

And don't worry about the old dog not being on the ball when he's dealing with the ungodly, I opened the book very carefully.

It's a few months off yet, but the trip to London for ATEI '97 looks like being yet another very special event, and another reason to be most thankful for working with the great people we do.

Between chicken pox at home and a rush trip to Buffalo, it's been a pretty hectic month and sure enough, trouble hit the joint again with computers.

There was a time only two short days ago that I really thought I would spend the rest of my days rotting in a cell as believe me, I was all set to kill a computer technician. I won't go into the whole thing, we've been there before, but I'm still amazed at the way these blokes can literally look you in the eye and lie through their teeth.

Over a three day period before they finally took the thing away and lent me a replacement, I spent at least 30 minutes of every hour, sitting waiting for the rotten mongrel of a thing to come back to life after a crash. And I spent most of that time thinking how best I could kill this bloke who kept feeding me incredible quantities of crap.

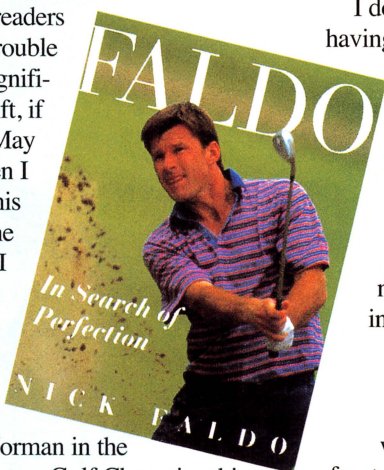
I don't know if any of you guys are having problems with new computers, but I've had a real gutful of them, and sometimes feel this race for technology costs more than it's worth.

The manufacturers are shoving all this hi tech junk in them that 99% of users will never use just so they can say it's in there, and the poor old computer system doesn't know if it's Arthur or Martha

I've got a total of \$21,700 worth of computer crap sitting in front of me and I swear I can't do any more with it in regards to the magazine than I could with the first one I bought for around \$1500 some ten years ago.

Maybe I can do it a bit quicker (if the bloody thing doesn't crash), but I can't think of any other advantage.

I feel a bit like an operator who has to buy a Daytona when he really only wants a Pole Position



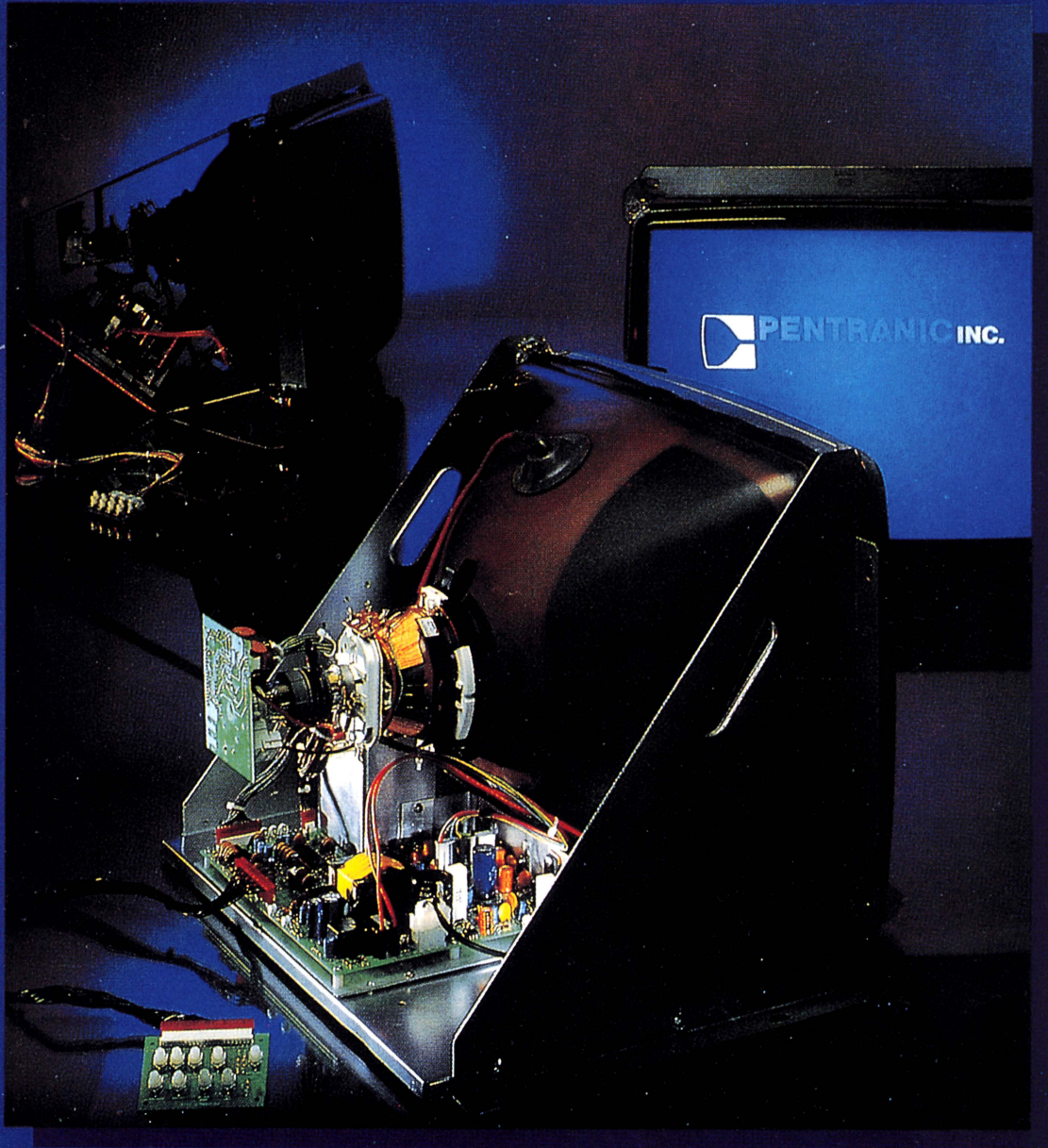
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