

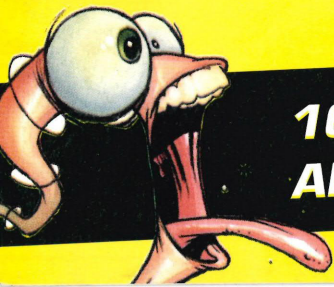
EARTHWORM

JAM



**EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
BOOKLET OF SHINY'S
SENSATIONAL SEQUEL**

**16 PAGES OF PIGS, COWS
AND CHIP BUTTIES!**



Late in 1994, as the gaming mags were raving over Earthworm Jim, and Shiny Entertainment's debut was first being tipped for the awards it would go on to win, its creators already had plans for the sequel.

For them, Jim wasn't just the apex of a journey in platform games that had begun with Cool Spot. It was the starting point for their company's quest to produce games that would redefine the limits of the hardware they ran on.

This year, Jim 2 has been commanding the covers and coverage that 1994's newcomer Jim didn't quite achieve. MEAN

MACHINES follows up its exclusive work-in-progress with this detailed review guide to Earthworm Jim 2, with the gracious assistance of Virgin and Shiny. When you reach the end, and doubtless go off to buy the game, don't think you've seen the last of the Earthworm.

Jim is set to go global with 32-bit conversions, merchandise, even animated superstardom. It's good to be back...

Even Jim requires the flimsiest pretext for a quest. Once again Psy Crow takes liberties with the Princess What's her name — Jim's bird (or so he thinks). Right, that's the plot dealt with.

ROCK AND ROL: PART



ANYTHING BUT TANGERINES

The opener, and the level bridging the relative sanity of the original Earthworm Jim with the lunatic genius created by ex-pat programmers being paid too much money in an overwarm climate. Also a good chance for prospective buyers who don't want to exploit farmyard animals for pleasure to get the message and steer well clear.

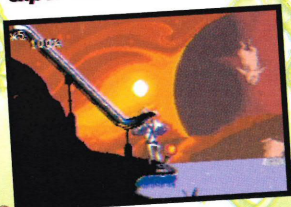
The graphic style and layout is similar to Jim 1, and Jim has two reasonably simple hurdles to overcome. The first involves using the heavy pigs to neutralise the evil goldfish, whose bowl-rolling antics prove hazardous. Jim makes use of the mechanical pig chutes provided. Secondly, he has to use the twin-speed granny stair-lift to avoid the free-falling coffin dodgers landing in his lap. If you like this bit, there's a second helping in the bonus game. This first level also acquaints you with the snott swing (see box). The anti-climax is a tense standoff with King Goldfish that lasts about a two seconds.



A clash of the titans! And it's only level one.



Jim's first tentative experiments with snott.



Here we have the pig chute in operation.



SHINY SAY

WE DIDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TOO FANCY WITH THIS LEVEL, AS IT'S TO EASE PLAYERS INTO SOME OF THE NEW STYLES OF THE GAME

SHINY SAY

THIS LEVEL STRENGTHENS THE GAME'S COW FLAVOUR, WHICH IS GOOD. **WE** PARTICULARLY ENJOYED ADDING ANIMATION DETAIL, LIKE THE COWS' EXPRESSION ONCE THEY GET INTO THE BARN. SOMETHING RESEMBLING ALARM, YOU WOULD AGREE.

UDDERLY ABDUCTED

At long last cows get into the action, with teats being pulled for all they are worth. This horizontal level is sectioned off by several gates connected to quaint cowsheds. Housed in these is a milking mechanism that provides the counterweight to the gate. Simply carry the cows that pop out the cowslips to the shed and watch the white stuff flow.

NEW

Chip butties yield an enormous 200% health bonus. It's Shiny's way of educating American kids about a nutritious British diet.

Complications come from the evil cow-abducting aliens in the udder-bottomed flying saucers. Any unattended cows are helpless in their tractor beams. Hinged platforms also collapse under the weight of a cow-laden Jim, and some of the herd are primed bombs that must be defused immediately!



Jim is disturbed by a vicious udder, just as he's throwing a brick.

This frightening mutation is actually Jim carrying a cow.

Bend from the knees when picking up a cow or you may damage your back.

LORENZO'S SOIL

Jim finds himself at the bottom of a very large sandpit, with the task of digging his way out. Now is the chance to let rip with the blaster as you have unlimited ammo to carve your way through the sediment. The sand is gradually dislodged above you to form the floor beneath you, raising you towards platforms out of reach at the outset.

Complications? Well, there's a time-limit of 90 seconds, which can be reset every time you hit one of the dangling pocket-watches (the crowd also go wild when you do this). Since you get a fresh 90 seconds whenever you do this, Lorenzo's Soil offers a tactical game for those prepared to explore further

NEW

Homing houses are excellent new power-ups. Point (anywhere) and fire. Worth firing for the sound alone.

than the simplest route, only hitting watches when they are in their final seconds. Miss the countdown, and Jim is the victim of a mini landslide. Burrowing ants and burst gas mains are additional hazards, but both of these can be buried with the judicious use of falling sand.

SHINY SAY

THIS LEVEL WAS A BUGGER TO DO. THERE WERE TIMES WE THOUGHT IT WAS ON THE VERGE OF IMPOSSIBLE. THE PROGRAMMING ROUTINES WERE INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED AS THE COMPUTER HAS TO REDRAW THE LEVEL MAP IN REAL-TIME, SHIFTING IT ACCORDING TO THE MOVEMENT OF SAND. IT IS PUSHING THE MEGADRIVE TO ITS LIMITS.

PUPPY LOVE

This diversionary level recurs several times throughout the game. In video game shorthand, it's very like one of the oldest Nintendo 'Game and Watch' titles, where you play a fireman with a trampoline, bouncing babies falling from a burning building. This time around it's **Psycrow** mercilessly throwing puppies from the upper story of a charming cottage. Jim has to bounce them to the safety

of Peter puppy's funnel, on the other side of the screen.

Retaliation comes when **Psycrow** throws a bomb instead of a puppy. Bounce that to the funnel and Peter takes fright and throws it back into **Psycrow's** face.

Once he's faced the requisite battering, the level's complete.

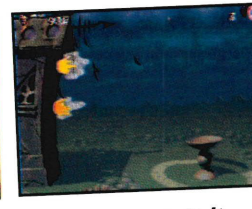
However, should you allow more than three pups to splat, Peter goes absolutely mental, turning into a huge rabid, warty monster and gives Jim a good savaging.

SHINY SAY

WE TOOK A SIMPLE BUT HIGHLY PLAYABLE GAME CONCEPT, BUT WE ENDED UP SPENDING MONTHS ON THE EXECUTION. **NICK JONES** ADDED A 3-D PERSPECTIVE TO EVERYTHING IN THE **SNES** BACKGROUND AND THE **SEGA** PROGRAMMERS FOLLOWED SUIT. **SOON** EVERYTHING WAS MOVING IN PERFECT PARALLAX, AND ONCE AGAIN THE MACHINES WERE BEING PUSHED AS FAR AS THEY COULD GO.



Peter chucks it...



And Psycrow gets it.



The Marshmallow.

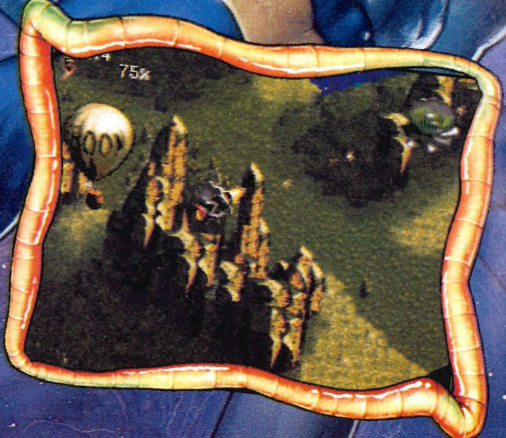
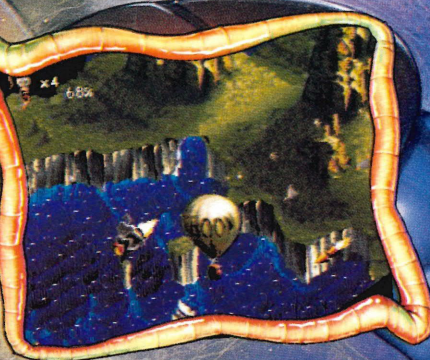


The monster.

THE FLYIN' KING

Jim's trusty Aeroflot Pratt and Whitney engine is pressed into service for a diversionary isometric shoot 'em up level. Another ludicrous plan is hatched by Jim's four brains to destroy the snot alien on his island at the far end of the level. A huge balloon bomb must be shunted up and detonated near him. Unfortunately Jim is under cannon attack from galleons below, and the catapulting natives who want to hang onto his outflow. Should one of his gunshots go amiss, the balloon explodes prematurely and the process begins all over again...

Flyin' King' is also your cue to reach for the tinted spacy specs — as the level is in 3-D! Revel in the rippling undercurrents and ethereal floating balloon graphics.

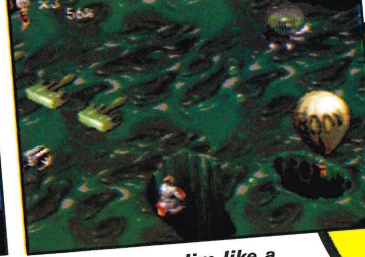


NEW

Instruments of torture and execution sit in the most awkward places, waiting to be activated by cruddy players.



Avast ye! Some pinko is sniffing Jim's vapour trail.

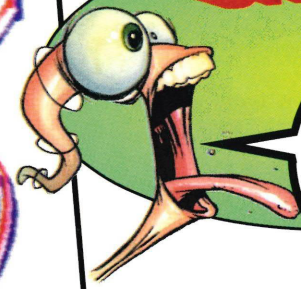
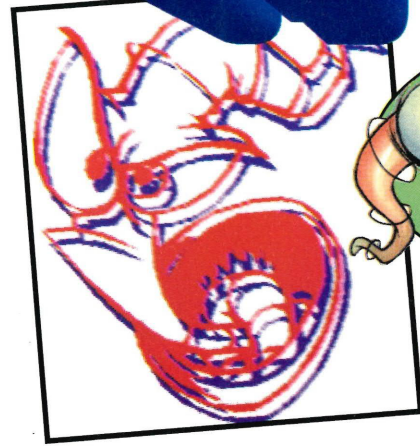


Speedy bonny Jim like a worm on an engine, over the sea to Snott



3-D

SHINY SAY



THE 3-D EFFECT IS DETERMINED BY COLOUR CHOICE — BLUE WORKS AS A BACKGROUND COLOUR, RED AS A FOREGROUND. GREEN IS NEUTRAL. WE HOPE PEOPLE GO TO THE TROUBLE OF TRYING IT OUT WITH SPECS, AS THE REFLECTION EFFECTS ON THE WATER ARE REALLY COOL. GAMEPLAY-WISE, THE ZAXXON-STYLE REALLY APPEALED TO US, AND THIS WAS THE PERFECT PLACE WITHIN THE GAME STRUCTURE TO INSERT IT.

NOW JIM'S A BLIND CAVE SALAMANDER

This turns out to be one of the classic moments in Megadrive gaming. Shiny wanted to include a flying level, but flying worms would be ridiculous, so they sensibly chose an animal that can fly — the blind cave salamander, and fashioned a convincing costume for Jim to wear.

The level appears to take place in the alimentary canal of some huge beast, as the walls are lined with thousands of rippling, em, squidly bits. These are actually sensitive to Jim and begin to ripple furiously when he approaches the walls. Should he fall into their clutches they give him a right seeing to.

Knowing this would create some difficulty, Shiny then added pinball-style bumpers which propel you wall-wards when touched. As the level progresses, the canal gets narrower, the bumpers more sadistically placed and the action extremely tense. It's a relief to reach the game show at the end. Game Show? Yes, there's a game show at the end of the level where you trade your collected worm tokens for big prizes. Speak your multiple choice answer clearly into the microphone please...



SHINY SAY

THE CAVE SALAMANDER IDEA IS PRETTY STUPID, AND IT ALL WENT DOWNHILL FROM THERE. THE WALL MOVEMENT LOOKS IMPRESSIVE, BUT IT'S A HARDWARE EFFECT THAT THE MEGADRIVE CAN DO, WHICH PEOPLE RARELY USE. DAVE HAD THE IDEA OF DIMMING THE LIGHT TO A SMALL AURA AROUND JIM, TO REALLY PRESSURISE THE PLAYER AT THE HARDER SECTIONS OF THE LEVEL.



SHINY SAY

WE GAVE THE GRAPHIC ARTIST COMPLETE FREEDOM TO COME UP WITH A BACK-DROP FOR THIS LEVEL AND THIS, ER IS WHAT HE CAME UP WITH.

LEVEL ATE

Time for a roasting as Jim resembles an anorexic banger set for the barbie. The real bane of this level is the relentless salt shaker — bound to increase your blood pressure as you search in vain for a refuge from its sprinkle. Bendy straws, hot plates and an entire canteen of cutlery stand against you, as the game challenge begins to move up a gear.

The level scrolls horizontally with little respite until the climax set in the box of a very deep-pan pizza. As you sink into the mozzarella, a flame-grilled steak swoops from above — which Shiny have done extremely well.



NEW

Lightbulbs take you to the bonus levels, should you have the nous and will to seek them out.

SHINY SAY

THE STRIKING THING VISUALLY ON THIS LEVEL IS THAT IT'S ENTIRELY BLACK AND WHITE, WHICH IS A DELIBERATE CONTRAST WITH THE REST OF THE GAME. THE INSPIRATION IS OUR TAX DEMANDS, WHICH FORM THE BACKDROP. THE RANDOM PAPER FLOATING EFFECT IS COMPLEX, AND IT'S A FIRST (AGAIN). THE END OF LEVEL BIT IS A JOKE, WHICH REQUIRES A BIT OF LATERAL THINKING.

ISO 9000

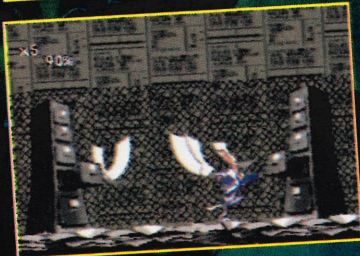
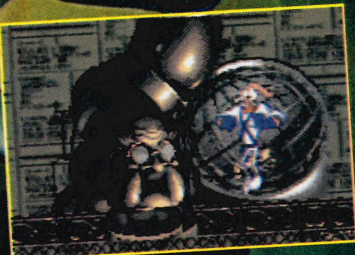
Jim is bogged down in tax demands on this level. Reams of the stuff create a maze which can only be traversed by hamster power. Pet rodents roam free in their exercise spheres (beautifully animated mesh sprites). By commandeering these, Jim can power the bizarre machine that sucks him further along the line.

Prowling the press are evil filing cabinets who can only be delayed by rustling up a sheaf of papers which they are powerless to defy and must file correctly! Braving these and the incinerators, Jim finds himself running after a door that doesn't want to be opened...



NEW

The snot swing allows you to grab the snot patches and swoop to hard-to-reach places.



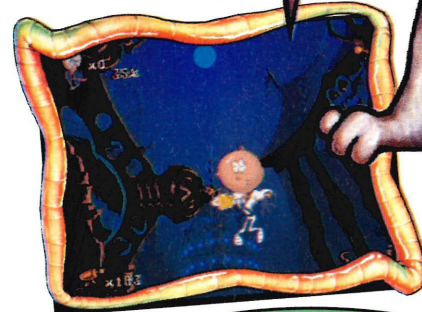
INFLATED HEAD

Jim takes liberties with his physical form yet again, taking himself on a trip, courtesy of the hookah pipes stacked on this vertically scrolling level. The object is to get extremely high by inhaling, and holding your breath. Bill Clinton ain't gonna like this one...

Jim can adjust the rate of ascent by letting out air, but the carnival scenery is lined by lethal light-bulbs. As he rises, he suffers assault from the sharp-clawed evil cat, whose pea-shooter attacks give way to all out dive-bombing, claws extended. At the top, the reward is a brief turn on the Test of Strength.

NEW

The password pieces let you skip levels, but only if you find all of them.



SHINY SAY

NO COMMENT. UNTIL WE'VE SEEN OUR LAWYERS.



We have to say it: he has a head for heights.

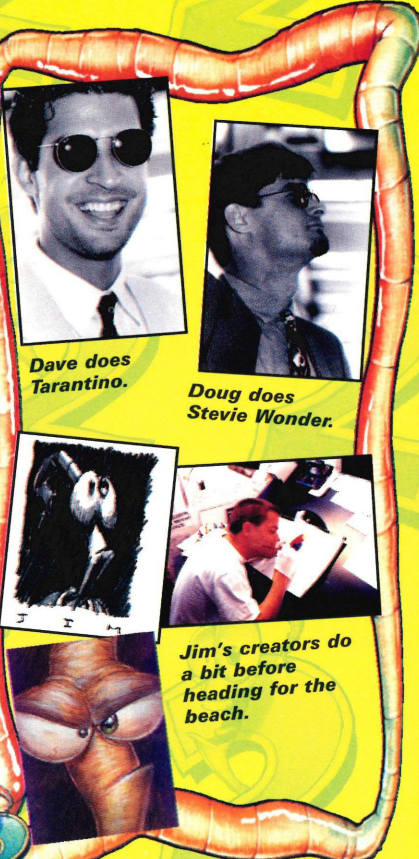


SHINYSTORY

Shiny was founded by Dave Perry, who has spent years in the game industry, first programming for machines like the Sinclair Spectrum, and later working at Probe Software, the large UK developer. He developed the engine used in Virgin's platform titles; Cool Spot, Aladdin and Jungle Book, moving to California in the process. He left Virgin during that project to start Shiny, taking a portion of the Virgin team with him.

Shiny are based in the not-entirely-unpleasant area of Laguna Beach, southern California, about an hour from L.A. They were recently bought by Interplay, in a deal that expands the company, while retaining its independent control. Take it from us, they have very nice offices. They are now starting various next-gen projects, including a '3-D game'.

When not working, the Shiny team like to go-kart, 'hang-out' at pools and improve their baseball batting averages. We might add that Dave Perry has acquired a Dodge Viper — a ludicrously powerful sports car which has no locks on the doors.



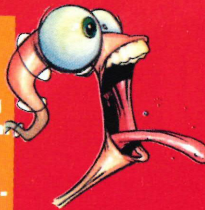
Dave does Tarantino.

Doug does Stevie Wonder.

Jim's creators do a bit before heading for the beach.

COMMENT

Since when does a **MEAN MACHINES** review only have a single comment? Since the game that's reviewed is hogged by one person is the answer. I'm not prepared to let anyone else have Earthworm Jim 2. Shiny have put together a stupendously good sequel that sets new standards. Forget next gen stuff — games this good only come from creative teams capable of realising the humour, style and gameplay that has nothing to do with clock speeds and polygon counts. You have to look at Jim 2 and say the Megadrive really cannot do much more than is being done here. There's as much gameplay variety as could be squeezed into 24 MEGS: Shoot 'em ups, platform levels, reflex games. And no area of it is weak — everything is enjoyable, everything has been polished to a level that shames most carts. Just look at the parallax on *Puppy Love*, or the 3-D on *Flyin' King*. Shiny set their own boundaries, from the technically unfeasible *Lorenzo's Soil* to the brilliant acapella opening music. There's also more hours of gameplay here than you could feel entitled to. I won't belabour superlatives in order to get the message across: buy this game.



GUS



RELEASE:NOVEMBER
PLAYERS:.....1
BY:VIRGIN

MEG:.....24
PRICE:.....TBA
GAME TYPE:.. PLATFORM

GRAPHICS 93

Glorious, adventurous and excellent. Using 3-D, amongst other triumphs.

EFFECTS 94

Samples for every occasion and the best shooting sounds in the business.

ANIMATION 95

Fantastic, with no area stinted. Beautifully animated in every detail.

PLAYABILITY 95

Gives a hit like no other platform game out there. This is The Real Thing.

MUSIC 92

Dismisses the limits of 16-bit sound with funny and entertaining music.

LASTABILITY 92

Variety enough for even the most appalling attention spans.

OVERALL 95

Better than Earthworm Jim. In fact, better than just about anything else. A Platformer's paradise.

JIM MARCHES ON

Earthworm Jim's adventures have spawned a cartoon series, which is currently showing on the satellite Children's Channel, with eventual plans to bring it to ITV next year. The series was produced between Universal and Warner Bros, with Shiny involvement in the plot lines and characters. It's really quite good.

Thanks to Dave, Brenda and all at Shiny Entertainment. Woody and Doug at Virgin Interactive.

ALSO AVAILABLE...

EARTHWORM JIM (MEGADRIVE):
Last year's triumph, still an excellent game and with few peers in platform land. The graphics and animation are almost up to those of Jim 2. 93%

EARTHWORM JIM (GAME GEAR):
Converted by Eurocom, who also produced the recent Cool Spot 3 on Megadrive. Basically the best platform game on the handheld. Get it. 93%

A

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

adventure in Animation.



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Available with December issue of MEAN MACHINES SEGA only.
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