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The creator of *Metal Gear Solid* talks fags and karaoke. Plus: Solid Snake sings!



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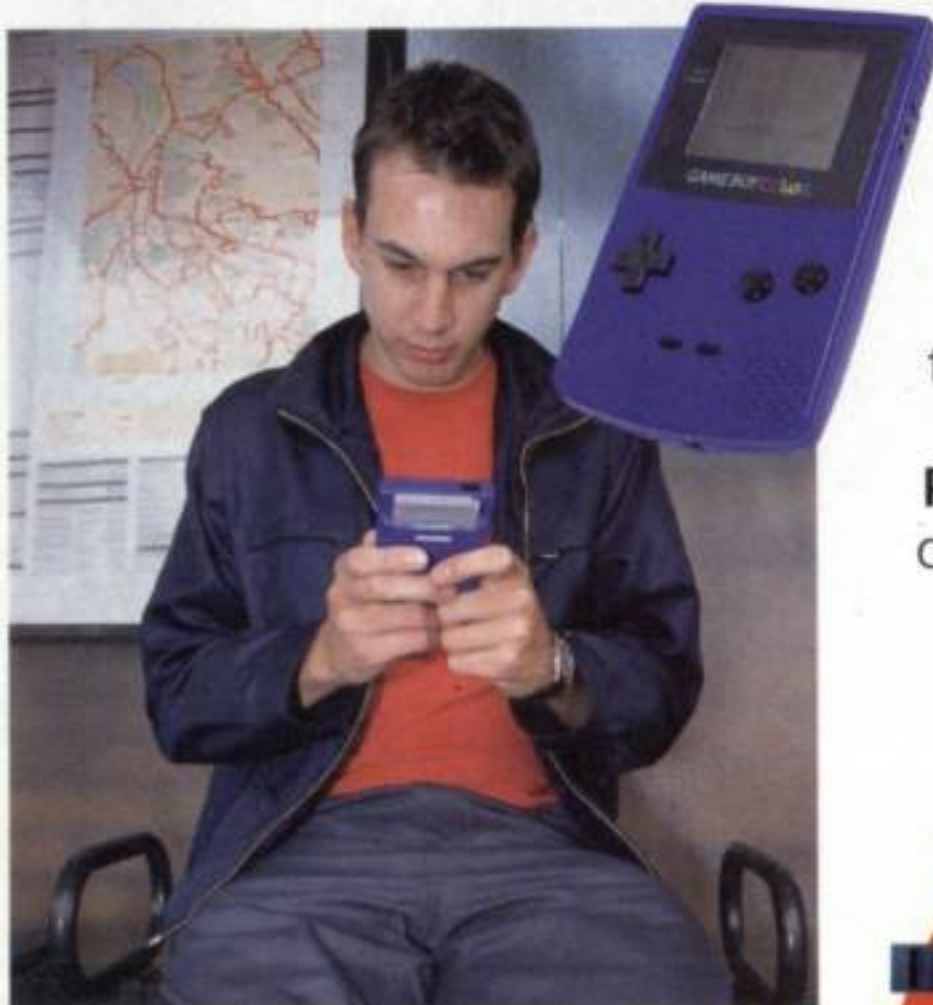
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## 160 Win a living room!

Or, at the very least, lots of cool kit to go in it.

STATE OF PLAY

ARCADE MAGAZINE, IN ASSOCIATION WITH GAMERS OF BRITAIN, PRESENTS

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"UNDISPUTED GAMES MACHINE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD"

# THE BIG FIGHT

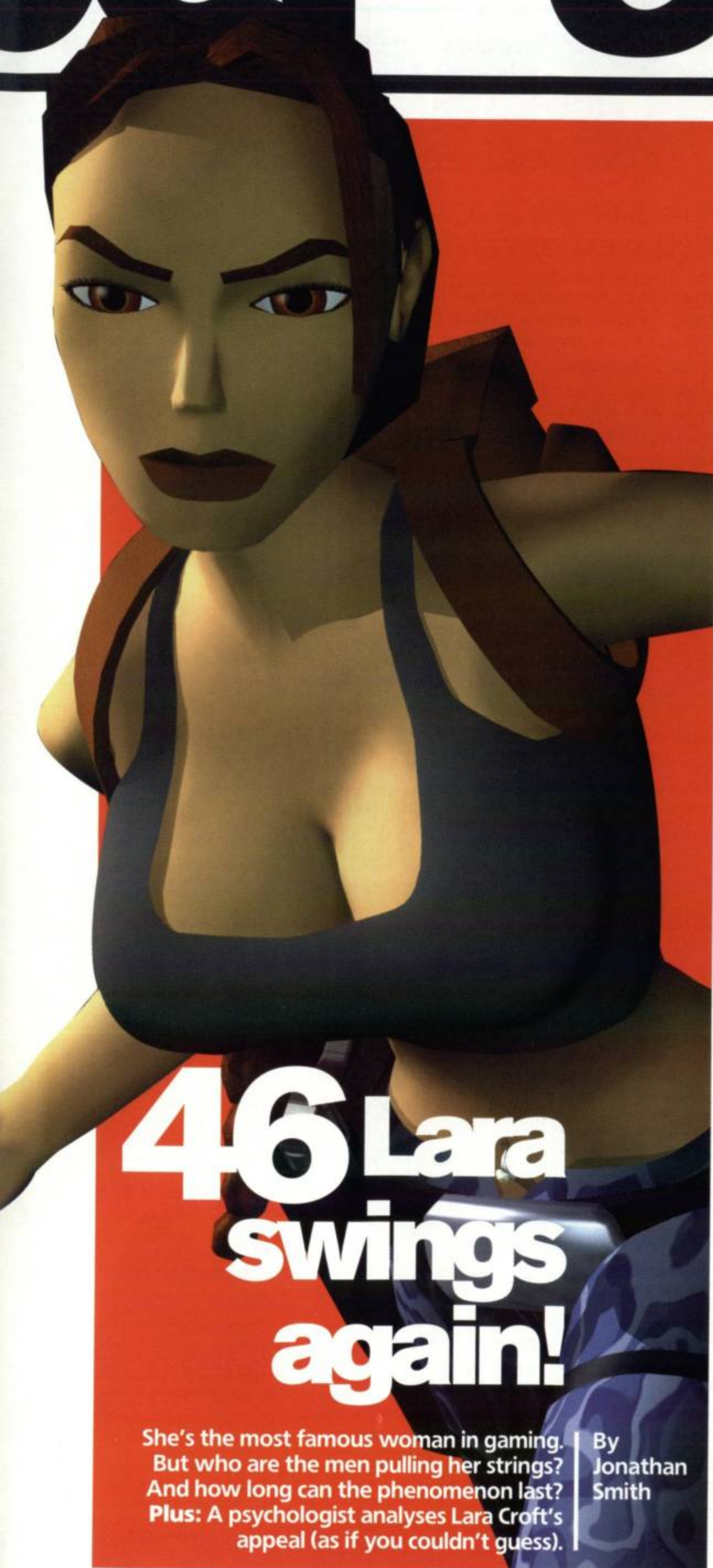
PlayStation vs Nintendo 64

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SIX ROUNDS OR A KNOCKOUT TO DECIDE | YOUR MASTER OF CEREMONIES: RICH PELLEY

The videogame magazine

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## 46 Lara swings again!

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By Jonathan Smith

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#### 114 New PlayStation Games

**New releases:** *Actua Golf 3, Brian Lara Cricket, Colony Wars: Vengeance, Cool Boarders 3, Formula 1 '98, Music, NFL Blitz, NHL '99, Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus, ODT, Rival Schools, Rogue Trip, R-Types, Spyro the Dragon, Tenchu, TOCA 2* and more.

**Import games:** *Metal Gear Solid* on test.

**Platinum budget games:** *Time Crisis, Croc* and *Grand Theft Auto* and more.

#### 128 New PC Games

**New releases:** *Caesar III, DethKarz, Dune 2000, FA Premier League Football Manager '99, The Fifth Element, Fighter Pilot, Hedz, Klingon Honor Guard, Links LS '99, Magic & Mayhem, Populous: The Beginning, Rainbow Six, Ring, Riverworld, Tomb Raider III* and more.

**Budget games:** *Dungeon Keeper, F1 Racing Simulation*, and *Theme Hospital* lead the pack.

#### 140 New N64 games

**New releases:** *1080°, Body Harvest, F1 World Grand Prix, F-Zero X, Gex 64: Enter the Gecko, Spacestation Silicon Valley, Starshot: Space Circus Fever, Turok 2*.

**Import games:** *NASCAR '99* screams in.

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# Why Arcade?



With **Matt Bielby,**  
Editor-in-Chief

It's the very first issue of a new magazine, and that generally means it's time for a little self-justification. And who am I to fly in the face of convention? Here, then, is the general thinking behind *Arcade*.

Y'see, there are two ways of looking at this magazine. You can see it as the culmination of years of videogame mags – as the best bits of *Your Sinclair* and *Crash* and *ACE* and *Zero* and *PC Gamer* and *Official PlayStation* holding a party between the same covers. (If you've been around games for more years than you care to count, you'll probably look at it like this.) Or you can see *Arcade* as something new – the first games magazine to take its cues from the semi-lifestyle specialist men's mags, like *Q* and *Empire* and *Total Film*. In truth, it's probably a bit of both.

*Arcade*, you see, is a new type of games magazine – but that doesn't mean we've chucked away all the traditional stuff. So yes, we have game previews (15 pages of them, starting on page 22) and developer interviews (page 42) and, of course, reviews (over 35 pages of them, tucked towards the back of the mag). But we also have plenty that should, with a bit of luck, be less familiar – features that go deeper than you might be used to (try our T-Rex-sized *Tomb Raider* epic, starting on 46), columnists who really know what they're talking about, and our paper-and-ink simulation of what it's like to play games round your mate's house, Games Night.

Mostly, though, it's in attitude that *Arcade* is different – we look at games and say, "They're no longer some bedroom hobby, but a young and growing slice of mainstream entertainment, just like films and music, and should be treated as such." Hopefully that's how it comes across.

You see, *Arcade* is for experts and novices alike – it's for anyone who's ever had fun with a game. It covers all the bases (chiefly PlayStation, PC and N64, for now at least) in enough depth to tell you what you need to know, but not enough to bore you. It gives you lots of pages, hopefully decent writing (you'll find many of the best videogame journalists of the last ten years lurking between these covers). And all at a affordable regular price of just £2.70.

All of which is just a long-winded way of saying welcome to what should become the magazine for videogamers. Please write and let me know what you think.

Matt Bielby  
Editor-in-Chief

# Rants & Raves

Packed with hymns, angst and vitriol, it's the bit we get you write. Well, next month it will be...

It's that old letters page conundrum. The first issue of a new magazine never has any letters, but the pages are still there to be filled. What do you do? Well, one solution is to ask all your pals in the videogame business to answer a couple of pressing questions. Like, "What's been your favourite game of 1998?", and "What are you looking forward to in '99?" So that's what we did. Next issue, this page will be home to your comments on *Arcade 1*, but in the meantime, over to the great and the good of gaming...

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

# Seriously spooky

Part of the problem with making your own games is that you have a lot less time to play other people's. In fact, I've got a stack of games about three feet high sitting next to my PC at home, waiting for *Half-Life* to be finished. With that said, the game I enjoyed the most this year was *Resident Evil 2*.

It's the kind of game I usually hate. I'm not usually a big fan of inventory-permutation and find-the-button adventure gameplay. The player control is pretty frustrating, and the beginning is a lot harder than the rest of it. But even with those faults stacked against the thing, I couldn't stop playing. I've finished it as Leon and Claire, and am even thinking about trying to play it through as Tofu next, too.

It's pretty weird, as a game designer, to find yourself playing and enjoying something you thought you would hate. But it's a good thing, because it forces you to try and understand exactly why it is you've been hooked. What did it for me was Capcom's utter commitment to turning *RE2* into a seriously spooky experience. It never got campy, the characters were always consistent, and, Tofu aside, they resisted the temptation to do anything silly. So even though I was a bit frustrated at times, I really felt like I was in the middle of a George Romero zombie movie – a feeling that kept me hanging on waiting to see what would happen next.

The game I'm looking forward to the most right now is the US version of Konami's *Metal Gear Solid*. We got hold of a Japanese demo version and a group of about 15 of us all stood around and watched. There were a ton of impressive things, from both a technological and design point of view. But when one of the people watching said, "Hey, can you do anything with the cardboard box?" and we were able to hide under it to sneak past the guard, the game pretty much owned me.

**Gabe Newell,**  
Managing Director, Valve Software  
*Valve's Half-Life for PC, already touted as the best 3D shooter yet, is reviewed in Arcade 2, out 14 December.*



Resident Evil 2: dark, scary, definitely one to play with all the lights on.



Write to us at

**Arcade**

Tell us what you think!

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The writer of the best letter each month receives an exclusive Arcade T-shirt. (We'll show you what they look like next issue.)





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## On the side

This year I have spent a lot of time playing *Anvil of Dawn*, even though it has been out for a while. I am most looking forward to the release of *Indiana Jones*. I'm always up for a new adventure.

**Roberta Williams, Designer (King's Quest), Sierra**

It's impossible for me to choose between my two favourite games of last year, *Fallout* and *Twinsun's Odyssey*. *Fallout*, in particular, kept me guessing right up to the end (both times I played it!). Unsurprisingly, I'm most looking forward to *Fallout 2*.  
**Alex Garden, CEO, Relic Entertainment**

From the opening cinematic all the way through to the exciting final battle, *Descent: Freespace* was a top notch game with high quality production values. *Zelda 64* is the one I'm looking forward to. Mr. Miyamoto consistently has the magic touch.  
**Cliff Bleszinski, Lead Level Designer (Unreal), Epic MegaGames**

My favourite game of '98 was *Dungeon Keeper*. I'm looking forward to playing *Zelda* because I know how much time Miyamoto-san has spent on it. This could be his magnum opus.  
**Will Wright, Designer, Maxis**

I'm going with *Total Annihilation*, a game loaded with so many innovations it made 2D real-time strategy games obsolete. I'm looking forward to *Half-Life*. Here's a game that plays like a 3D movie, and it's fun just walking around and seeing all the stuff that happens.  
**Scott Miller, President, Apogee**



■ The industry-wowing *Metal Gear Solid*. Creator Hideo Kojima is on p42.

## Glittering gem

I've played some cracking good games, but one gem that stands out for me in the glittering necklace of the games industry is *Metal Gear Solid*. It's easily Konami's finest hour! It's always great having access to import games, but few are as stunning as this classic espionage-cum-stealth romp.

The thing that attracted me to it is the whole stealth thing. In a world of endless beat-'em-ups and car games, it's refreshing to play a new type of game that really delivers the goods. Even if all the language is in Japanese, everything about *MGS* oozes quality. From its super-slick 3D engine, right through to its beautifully orchestrated soundtrack, it's superb. There's incredible attention to detail in evidence just about everywhere you look (the maggots in the cell are particularly fine).

As for the game I can't wait for, it's got to be Square's *Final Fantasy VIII*. From what little I've played of the demo that came free with *Brave Fencer*, it seems like it'll look and feel even better than its predecessor. And this time round they've moved the graphics up a gear. Roll on the long evenings!

**Christian Russell, Graphic Artist, Core Design**  
*Christian has worked on Normality, Hardcore 4x4 and Reloaded.*

## Damn expensive

After a hard day doing Bullfrog-type things, there's nothing like kicking back with a spot of multi-player *Quake II*. It's fast and furious and few survive – the all-night tequila session of the gaming world. Then, for a more chilled bit of gaming fun, there's always *StarCraft*. The three sides are so well-balanced, argument surges back and forth about which actually is the best. (Okay, okay, I know it's the Protoss. If only they weren't so damn expensive.)

The real craze for us, though, is our own *Populous: The Beginning*. We've had a hell of an intense time getting this one to play exactly right, and it's nice to be able to step back from the tweaking and just Net-play the demo with other humans, both guys in the office and people in America at night.

But what'll be the next thing to keep us here in the office, propped up next to empty beer bottles and cooling, half-eaten pizzas night after night? I reckon it'll be Valve Software's great *Half-*

*Life* – a first person game with a decent plot, clever cinematics and a bit of bleedin' thought behind it. It's about time. Games are the new films. Brown is the new black. Simon LeBon is a New Romantic. But watch your back, *Half-Life* – you may be looking great now, but *Indestructibles* is coming to get ya!

**James Leach, Head of scripting, Bullfrog**  
*James was once editor of Super Play, the much mourned Super Nintendo mag.*



■ *GoldenEye 007* stunned N64 gamers, but annoyed Peter Molyneux's mum.

## Mum trouble

I've enjoyed Rare's *GoldenEye 007* the most this year. I started playing it just before Christmas lunch and was immediately captivated – so much so that I missed the first course (and got in trouble with my Mum). *GoldenEye* is so impressive because it uses that old stand-by, a film license, in a way that no other game ever has before. It has a solid 3D engine, great level design and the balance is just perfect. The only thing I found poor was the multi-player bit, which felt a little like it was thrown together at the last moment.

As for '99, I'm probably looking forward to Bullfrog's *Populous III* the most (but partially because all other games I'm keen on have slipped!). This is all a bit nepotistic, because I know the people working on it, but it'll be so weird to play someone else's take on *Populous*. Weird, but good, too – from what I have seen of it, the game looks just amazing.

**Peter Molyneux, Director, Lionhead Studios**  
*Peter's God sims, like the Populous series and Powermonger, built Bullfrog and created a whole new game genre.*

## Life in the old girl

This last year I've been heavily involved with the design of Federation, Klingon and Romulan ground units for our own upcoming *Star Trek: New Worlds*. As a result, I'm now more deeply versed in *Trek* lore than is permitted under EU law. But I've still found time to play games.

My favourite of the year was *Unreal*. It looked great, played well and featured a *GoldenEye 007* sniper-rifle. What more could a growing boy want? But the one I'm looking forward to playing is *Tomb Raider III*. It may no longer be that innovative, or even a great leap forward for gaming, but I reckon there's life in the old girl yet.

**Trenton Webb, Designer, Binary Asylum**  
*Trent, an ex-journalist, turned to the dark side in the belief that Mario is his father.*



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NEEDS

# Rants & Raves <sup>3</sup>



■ **Duke Nukem 3D**, considered by many to be the thinking man's chess. Kinda.

## Sounds daft

I haven't really played many games this year. I know that sounds daft for a game developer, but the development of *Championship Manager 3* has been eating up a good, oh, 200% of my time. In fact, the last game I played for any real stretch was GT Interactive's **Duke Nukem 3D** – totally brilliant, of course.

In fact, I liked it so much that my most anticipated game for '99 has to be **Duke Nukem 4ever**, if they ever bloody get round to releasing it! That's why we keep delaying *Championship Manager 3* – we don't want to be outdone!

**Oliver Collyer,**  
Co-designer (*Championship Manager*), **EIDOS**

*Oliver is currently knuckling down to beat Duke Nukem 3D's tricky last level.*

## Hollywood great

For me, for sheer size and the quality of ideas, my pick of the year has to be Square's **Final Fantasy VII**. Its intriguing plot, great video sequences and top-notch music are woven together in a way to rival some of Hollywood's greats. Sure, the story's clichéd and moralistic, but like Spielberg's feel-good movies, that's what makes it so entertaining. And it's such a big game. But, like all good classics, at the end I was gutted because I realised I'd have to find something else to fill the void.

The game I'm looking forward to most is **Zelda 64**. Everything I've seen about it excites me. I had a chance to play it at the European Computer Trade Show, but I don't think I even scratched the surface (probably because a Nintendo babe was breathing down my neck and hinting for me to move over and let this other guy play). Again, it's the sheer quality and variety which makes it hard to resist. And, of course, it's the brainchild of good old Shigeru Miyamoto. I saw him at a trade show once – not as tall as you'd think.

**Nick Harper,**  
Game Designer, **Psygnosis**  
*Nick's last game was Overboard, but he won't tell us what his next project is.*

## Groovy ambush

Last year my favourite game was **Myth** from Bungie – I poured quite a bit of time into it. It's the first 3D strategy game to give me that *Command & Conquer* buzz again. That said, it had its problems. My main bitch is that I would sometimes spend ages setting up a groovy ambush and then, at the vital moment when I threw in my bomb, instead of setting off a chain reaction to wipe out the enemy, it would just fizzle and fail. I would be left with nothing but a giant group of enemies kicking my ass.

I hope this immensely annoying aspect

of the gameplay gets fixed in **Myth II**, which I intend to buy the day it appears.

The dark side of my job is that I work long hours. This means that I mostly get to play games when I'm on vacation or on a plane. As I write this, for instance, I'm sitting in a hotel room in Thailand, all I have with me is my laptop, and I fancy playing a good game. Except so many of them require 3D cards these days that they're totally non-laptop friendly. So please read this, Bungie – and make **Myth II** work on my laptop!

**Dave Perry,**  
President, **Shiny Entertainment**  
*Dave lives in sunny Laguna Beach, just south of LA, and we're dead jealous.*

## Very polished

I haven't had much time to play games this year – *Tomb Raider III* has taken up most of my time – but the one game that did grab me was Epic MegaGames' **Unreal**. Okay, so it wasn't quite the revelation I was expecting, but it was very polished.

For '99 I'm really looking forward to **Outcast** by Infogrames and the excellent-looking **Trespasser** from Dreamworks.  
**Richard Morten,**  
Designer, **Core Design**  
*Richard is has spent more time staring at Lara Croft's arse than any man alive.*



■ **StarCraft** pits alien races against each other. A bit like *It's a Knockout*.

## Instantly intrigued

For me it's a toss-up between Blizzard's **StarCraft** and Microsoft's **Age of Empires**. In the end I put more hours into **StarCraft**, probably because of the awesome sound and gameplay, and overall attention to detail. Blizzard really gets the interface and entertainment value right – their games are simple to use and endless fun.

I'm most looking forward to playing (or pointing and clicking around) LucasArts' **Grim Fandango**. I spent about 15 minutes with the demo and was intrigued by the characters, the story, the quality of the art and voices, and the unusual nature of the whole experience. I instantly pre-ordered a copy at my local store.

**Lorne Lanning,**  
President & Creative Director,  
**Oddworld Inhabitants**  
*Lorne's Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus on PlayStation is reviewed on page 117.*

## Misspent youth

Over the last year I've most enjoyed **Unreal**, **Gran Turismo**, and **GoldenEye**. Oh, and *Barbie Fashion Designer* bought back fond memories of my youth. I'm most looking forward to **Half-Life**, **Metal Gear Solid**, and **Zelda 64**.

**John Kavanagh,**  
Publishing Director, **EIDOS**  
*Neil West once overheard John singing tenderly to a bottle of beer.*

## CONTRIBUTORS

Among the boys and girls who've made **Arcade** this month are...



### Jonathan Smith

"The thing I've really learned about Ms Croft," says Jon Smith, after two weeks living and breathing Lara for this issue's lead feature, "is that the more you think about her, the less real she seems. Plus, I've been surprised to find that, in the

first game at least, her breasts really aren't that big at all. At best I'd say they're 36C. It's really only with the artwork for *Tomb Raider II*, once Core and EIDOS realised what they'd got their hands on, so to speak, that she turned into the top-heavy adventuress we've grown to love."

Jon's next assignment for **Arcade** involves trying out some of the latest board games. "I love 'em, but there's less opportunity for musing on bra size," he sighs.

**Game of the moment:** *Defender* on the PC's **Williams Arcade Classics**: "I'm trying to get over 100,000. It's nails."

**I'm holding my breath for:** *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* on Nintendo 64: "It's going to be the best thing ever."



### Mark Green

Mark's very much the new boy at **Arcade**: he's fresh out of university and right into his first job here. But rarely has a new boy shown quite such an extensive, nay, encyclopedic (nay, tragically comprehensive) knowledge of virtually every

game system under the sun. And rarely has one been brave or foolish enough to admit to some of the most unfashionable viewpoints this side of Ian Paisley – "I don't actually like *Star Wars* much", he says, and "I'm allergic to choc-ices". Don't worry though, his take on new games generally makes more sense.

**Game of the moment:** *F-Zero X* on N64: "It's like Speedy Gonzales on speed."

**I'm holding my breath for:** *Sonic Adventure* on Dreamcast: "It'll be like Speedy Gonzales on speed late for something important."



### Neil West

Back from California, his tan fading, his Beach Boy-blond locks slowly reverting to a natural mousey brown, Neil is finding a few things have changed in the five years he's been away from the UK.

"Everyone's gone out and bought a mobile phone," he says "and I haven't a clue who any of the soap characters are." What's not different, of course, is the dismal weather – this was not the summer to come back to Blighty. Neil's the long-term editor of **Arcade** and will take over full control of the reins when Matt B pushes off in a month or two. Occasionally a faint cry drifts towards Matt's end of the office: "Haven't you gone yet?"

**Game of the moment:** Blizzard's *StarCraft* on PC: "I'm still obsessed, I'm afraid."

**I'm holding my breath for:** *Parappa the Rapper 2* on PlayStation: "He reminds me of a girl I once fancied."



### Emma Parkinson

The office answer to Bowser, and certain to squash any of us if we get in her way, Emma's the heavyweight of the team, through position rather than choice – it's her job to make sure everyone does what they say, when they say they will

(and with this band of reprobates, it's not easy). She does have a softer, friendlier side – she claims – but it's not always easy to spot. "I hate animals, I'm not particularly fond of nuclear submarines" – Emma once chased down the British Trident fleet in a rubber boat near Faslane, Scotland – "and cakes make me retch."

**Game of the moment:** Macintosh *Tetris*: "Simply an all-time classic."

**I'm holding my breath for:** Interplay's *Star Trek: New Worlds* on PC.

## Arcade exit poll

### Arcade

■ We need to know what you like and don't like in the mag. Please fill out this form (or simply copy it on to a bit of paper) when you write to **Arcade**.

The best bits this issue:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

I didn't like \_\_\_\_\_

Arcade 1

# VIRGIN FESTIVE BRIBE SHOCKER!

SPEND £50 AND WE'LL SLIP

YOU

A £5 VOUCHER\*



Small Soldiers PSX



Moto Racer 2 PSX



Spyro The Dragon PSX



Tekken 3 PSX



\* See Instore For Details.

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# GAME ON!



The world of videogames: Give us 6 pages and we'll tell you everything



PHOTOGRAPHY: HIRO IZUMI

At last, it's ready. Sega's dream of stealing gamers away from PlayStation and Nintendo 64 just took one step closer to reality.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Dreamcast prepares to take on the world

Sega's 128-bit super-console ready | Launches in Japan 27 November

By Neil West

**S**ega's Dreamcast won't officially arrive in the UK until September of next year, but Japanese gamers get their hands on the 128-bit super-console within the next few weeks. 27 November is the official date, and Sega is working furiously behind the scenes to ensure that the launch is a success. After all, it knows that Dreamcast could be the company's last chance to recapture a significant share of the videogame console market.

In a flurry of last minute pre-launch activity, Sega showed its hand to the gathered world press at its second "New Challenge" conference in Tokyo this October. There, Sega President Mr. Iramajiri revealed that Dreamcast will sell for ¥29,800 (around £150) in Japan, and that five games will be

immediately available (*Godzilla Generations*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, *Pen Pen Trilcelon*, and *July*). He promised a "steady flow" to follow in the months ahead.

The disappointing news that the machine's most important early game, *Sonic Adventure* (see Coming Soon, page 22), has been delayed until 17 December was countered with the nice surprise that Capcom has signed up as a Dreamcast developer. A special version of *Resident Evil*, to be named *Biohazard: Code Veronica* in Japan, will be released "some time after April of 1999."

Additionally, veteran game maker Namco (publisher of the *Tekken* and *Ridge Racer* series) pledged support to Dreamcast's future, but could offer no firm

news of specific game releases. Something original seems likely.

It was all exciting news – enough to visibly excite the crowd, and the mood remained buoyant throughout the rest of the presentation. Even the less interesting unveiling of Sega's Dream Passport online network (unlikely to appear in the UK) was met with enthusiasm.

So Dreamcast has received a provisional thumbs up from the world's press, most of whom went on to the Tokyo Games Show (held the weekend after) to see what the game playing public would make of it (see the story on page 14 for more).

Of course, Sega's return to the home console arena is far from a guaranteed success, but at least

Dreamcast has negotiated its first couple of hurdles in some style. We'll have a full report on how it's going down in Tokyo in *Arcade 2*.

■ For more on Tokyo Games Show, page 14.

■ For more on Dreamcast, page 18.

■ Dreamcast's famous five early games (from top): *Godzilla Generations*, *July*, *Pen Pen Trilcelon*, *Sega Rally 2*, and *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. The last two matter most.

**"A special version of Capcom's Resident Evil will be released in 1999"**



FIRST TEST

## What's Dreamcast like to play?

Neil West is one of the first UK journalists to play Dreamcast.

■ Hello. I went to Tokyo to see Dreamcast for myself and, to be honest, on first impression it's a little underwhelming. It's not that it's no good – it is good, very good. But it's not the same leap forward that Nintendo's SNES was from the 8-bit

systems, or PlayStation was five years later. Do you remember the first time you played *F-Zero* or *Pilotwings*? I do. And I felt the same way when I first saw *Tohshinden* and *Ridge Racer* on PlayStation. With each new system, it was clear

that gaming would never be the same again. The rules had been changed forever.

Dreamcast doesn't do this. So, if it's to succeed, it'll be because its games are best. A tall order, yes, but Sega could just be the outfit to pull it off.

# Fast Lady

**Gran Turismo stole the PlayStation racing crown. Now, with Ridge Racer Type 4, Namco wants it back.**

By Matt Bielby

■ Back in 1994, it was Namco's *Ridge Racer* that first made everyone sit up and take notice of PlayStation. It was, quite simply, the most stunning racing game ever seen on a home console, delivering turbo-charged graphics and foot-to-the-floor powerslides straight from the arcade. Namco were overnight kings of the PlayStation highway.

But other developers quickly caught up, and when *Gran Turismo* roared into town with its hundreds of cars and "It's just like TV!" graphics the *Ridge Racer* series was left

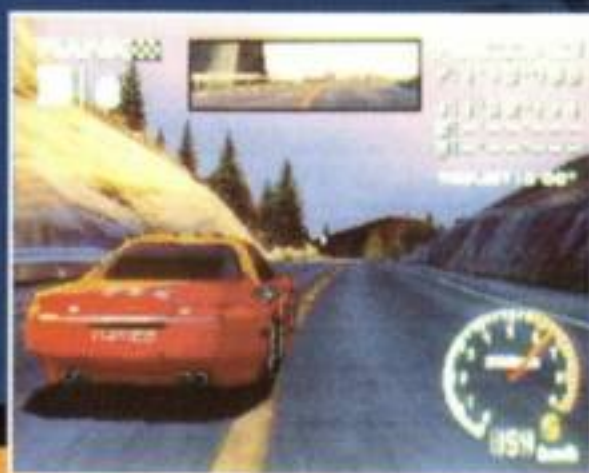
coughing exhaust fumes.

But now it's back, with *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4*, and it's looking to whup ass. The game features eight tracks, over 300 car variations and a new Grand Prix mode in which you have to compete with other drivers in your team for the best cars.

But it's the graphics that will amaze. Check out the glare trails from the cars' headlights and tail-lights during night levels. Take your eyes off the road to appreciate the colours and textures of the scenery. Too late return your eyes to the road and notice how the multi-vehicular collisions have been beefed up. Basically, marvel at the return to form of Namco. This one is going to be a classic. **A**



■ *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4* proves that there's still plenty of untapped power under PlayStation's hood. These graphics are a leap beyond anything yet seen, and with no sign of *Gran Turismo 2* anytime soon, Namco's return to pole position should be assured.



■ Arcade's photographer bags a close up of Sony's PocketStation. Nice work.



SHOW REPORT

# Tokyo Games Show

Dreamcast's public debut | Sony keeps stiff upper lip | Games, games and more games

By Neil West

**T**he videogame industry moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you might miss something. With this in mind, a band of videogame journalists, eager publicists, scruffy developers, firm-handshaking CEOs, and others with a stake in the booms and busts of Sony, Sega, Nintendo et al, spend a surprising amount of their working lives at trade shows. There's almost an established circuit, each year taking in London's ECTS (European Computer Trade Show), America's E3 (Electronic Entertainment Exposition), Nintendo's Space World extravaganza and Japan's leading event, the over-sized, biannual Tokyo Games Show.

The first public unveiling of Sega's Dreamcast headed the bill at this October's TGS, and this meant that I simply had to be there to witness events first hand. Although demonstrated to the press at Sega's own New Challenge conference over the days preceding the show (see

## Strangest success of the show was Taito's Go 2, a well loved train driving sim

pages 12 and 18 for more on this, and Dreamcast in general) the TGS was the 128-bit superconsole's first test under the eyes of the toughest critics of them all – the Japanese game playing public.

Sega has enjoyed mixed fortunes on its home turf over the years, but continued success in the arcades, and the perennial appeal of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, has kept the company a place in the hearts of Japan's gamers. Going into TGS, it was clear that most wanted to give Sega the benefit of the doubt one more time. They wanted *Sonic Adventure* to be like nothing they'd played before. They wanted Dreamcast to be a success. But were their hopes realised?

In a word, yes – the buzz surrounding the banks of

Dreamcast systems available for hands-on testing remained "up" throughout. Despite the absence of the eagerly awaited Dreamcast take on *Biohazard* (aka *Resident Evil*) or playable versions of the stunning-looking *Sega Rally 2*, Sega's new baby was met with almost universal approval. On the Saturday of the show, enthusiastic gamers (typically, but not always, schoolchildren) queued in lines ten deep to grab a five minute demo of *Sonic Adventure*, while the scrum surrounding the ten machines running *Virtua Fighter 3tb* (the tb stands for Tournament

Battle) often completely eclipsed the on-screen action. On the periphery, executives from both Nintendo and Sony cast a wary eye over their new competitor, occasionally even swapping notes. But despite all this, Dreamcast

wasn't necessarily the undisputed star of the show. The line of fanatical children waiting in line for a go at Bandai's *Mobile Suit Gundam: Char's Counterattack* reached such lengths that a man was sent out with a big sign informing the crowd that it would take four hours to reach the front.

■ Japan's videogame artwork is unique and distinctive. It's a pity more doesn't get to the UK intact.



## But then they would say that..

■ The movers 'n' shakers of the vast international videogame industry all came to the Tokyo Games Show to see Dreamcast and judge its potential for themselves. But finding a show-goer with an unbiased point of view is practically impossible in these days of corporate partners

and strategic alliances – nearly everyone's got a vested interest. Like this: "Dreamcast is clearly not everything Sega said it was going to be," says Sony's Phil Harrison. But then he would say that. He also thinks it's kinda great that, "Crash Bandicoot 3 can be quite reasonably compared to the very best game on a brand new system." Others, however, would disagree with him.

"Sega pulled off a great launch," says Jez San of Argonaut. "Of course, *Sonic* was the star. But *Virtua Fighter 3tb* was also excellent – an exact conversion of the model 3 coin-op, more or less. And *Sega Rally 2* looked good too!" So Jez is a big fan. But then, of course, his company, Argonaut, has a "special" relationship with Sega. So he would say that.



■ Was Dreamcast's public debut a success or failure? It depends on who you ask...



## Babes, beautiful babes

■ No game demo at the Tokyo Games Show is complete without a pack of scantily clad women (or "companions") to help draw in the very male-dominated crowds. Politically correct? Er, no, probably not. But our Japanese sources tell us competition for these jobs is fierce – with a

hefty pay packet and three days of "fame" (yes, "fame") the reward. At each show a "Costume Contest of Companion Lady" is held (we think it's a bit like *The Krypton Factor*) with the winner's photograph being publicly displayed in Tokyo's Megurui Square for a week.



The patient queue merely dug its heels in for the wait. Elsewhere, the unveiling of Namco's *Ridge Racer Type 4* (a worthy challenger to *Gran Turismo's* racing crown), Square's *Final Fantasy VIII* (the blockbuster follow-up to, you guessed it, *FFVII*), and Sunsoft's surprise hit *Hard Edge* (a *Resident Evil*-inspired action game) all served as reminders that any talk of PlayStation's successor may be more than a tad premature.

Indeed, Sony's business is booming – and continues to gain momentum. After the demise of Saturn, and with Nintendo 64's continued failure to impress the Japanese public, PlayStation is the undisputed champion of the Japanese games scene. Prior to the show there had been speculation that Dreamcast's launch would force Sony to show its hand regarding PlayStation 2 – but it didn't happen. Instead, Sony seemed content to allow Dreamcast to enjoy its 15 minutes in the spotlight. "It takes more than an ageing blue hedgehog and a two year old coin-op conversion to scare us," Sony seemed to be saying. Instead, PocketStation and games such as *Warped*, *IQ Final* and *Crash Bandicoot 3* were the focus of Sony's enormous stand.

Disappointingly, there was no sign of either *PaRappa the Rapper 2* or *Gran Turismo 2*, but there was plenty else to wow the crowds. Square, the undisputed king of Japanese computer graphics animation, once again cemented its reputation with a world-class display of its art. Produced

especially for the show, a trailer for *Final Fantasy VIII* featured snippets taken from the game's many cut scenes, including a one-on-one sword duel between Squall and Sypher (from the game's intro), stunning scenes of a speeding train and the game's bad-girl, Edea. Breathtaking stuff.

Capcom, another giant of the Japanese games scene, proved that you can't keep a great game down with *Street Fighter Zero (Alpha) 3*. Featuring a host of characters from Capcom's back catalogue and the classic gameplay of the *Street Fighter* series, it proves that 2D games are still viable – and a lot of fun.

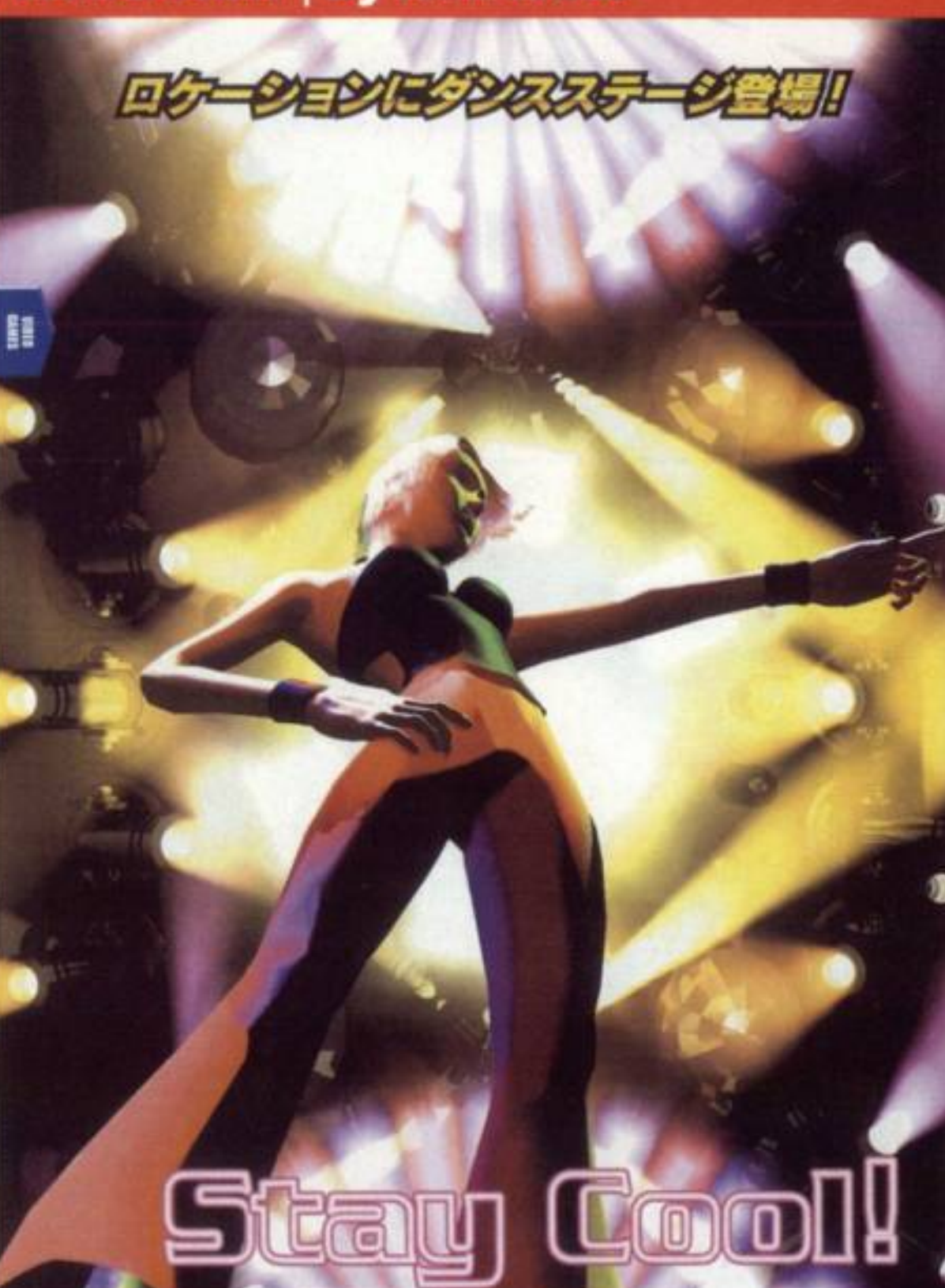
Perhaps the strangest success of the show was Taito's *Go 2* – a faithful PlayStation conversion of the well loved train driving game. Yes, soon you too will be able to enjoy at home the nerve-jangling tension and gut-wrenching excitement that is applying the brakes to a slow-moving train so that it stops in line with a mark on a platform. No, we don't get it either. But the Japanese love it.

So who were the big winners and losers? Well, Sega has to be pleased with Dreamcast's first outing. While not exactly rocking the Makahuri Messe convention centre to its foundations, it certainly sent out a few shock waves. And PlayStation gamers have both PocketStation and a slew of great new games to look forward to. All that was missing was Nintendo, but then its got its own show to look forward to later in November.

Arcade will be there.



## Weird stuff | by Neil West



■ Keep in time and you'll think you're John Travolta. Until the music starts to speed up...

# Everybody's kung fu fighting!

And grooving. And boogying. And twisting.

**T**he latest coin-op craze to hit Tokyo is Konami's *Dance Dance Revolution*. No, really – it's huge. Everyone's at it. Businessmen, kids, policemen, it seems no one can resist the unique experience of making an utter tit of oneself in front of an arcade full of giggling spectators.

Anyone who's played *PaRappa the Rapper* will see that *Dance Dance Revolution* is the logical evolution of an old theme. Here's how it works: dance music plays, moves are flashed on the game screen ("Right!" "Left!" "Right-right!" "Down!" and so on) and players have to respond accordingly. Except that they're not holding a joystick, they're standing on one. That's right. Pressure sensitive pads on the floor record your dance moves – the tiles light up under your feet, Michael Jackson style, if you're doing it right – and your performance is rated on screen. If you're keeping up with the steps to the song you're told, "You're a dancing machine!" and asked "Where did you learn moves like that?" If you have all the dancing talent of a dalek, you're unceremoniously booted off the floor.

At 4am one morning, your Arcade reporter witnessed queues five deep at one particular machine in the sleazy Ropongi area of Tokyo. The music was blaring. Two Japanese businessmen (complete with suits, ties, and briefcases) were duelling it out for supremacy. Both were on expert level. Both were sweating buckets. Both refused to quit.

Be warned, *Dance Dance Revolution* is highly addictive. And it's coming to an arcade near you soon.

■ It may look fairly harmless, but don't be fooled...



## Sam Richards' World of Games



### Gran Turismo 3 gets green light

■ Although details of near-mythical PlayStation 2 games are harder to come by than pubs in Iran, it seems likely the launch games will include *Gran Turismo 3*, the much-awaited second sequel to the currently reigning champion race game. This news would seem to suggest that *Gran Turismo 2*, due for PlayStation in Autumn '99 or thereabout, may use a modified version of the existing game engine, with all the hot new tricks being saved for PlayStation 2.

### PlayStation 2 "just rumours"

■ Meanwhile, Sony has released an official statement to coincide with the launch of Dreamcast, part of which warns against the circulation of spoof stories regarding PlayStation 2. So, er, don't believe everything you read...

### Unreal decision

■ Despite the success of Epic's brilliant PC first-person shooter *Unreal*, the company says it plans to farm out development of the sequel to Legend Entertainment, creators of the dubious *Star Control III*, rather than again produce the game though its in-house team. Epic has understandably refused to comment on this bizarre decision, although it confirms that the original team are working on various (as yet unspecified) *Unreal* add-ons.

### Micro coin-op

■ Fans of cult racing classic *MicroMachines* will be thrilled to learn that Japanese arcade giant Namco has approached UK-based Codemasters to develop a coin-op version of its console and home computer hit. The new game will boast special features exclusive to the arcade version – though it will, of course, retain the four-player option that had us all hooked. Codemasters expect the machine to be ready for the arcades by Autumn 1999, but will have to fight history if the thing is to succeed. After all, both EA with *Madden Football* and, famously, MicroProse with *F-1 Strike Eagle* have lost millions trying to pull off the same trick.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HIRO IZUMI, SIMON DOOD



## Sony's PocketStation is a cutie

■ It's the size of a fat PlayStation memory card. It has its own LCD display. It costs about £20. It's inspired by the phenomenal success in Japan of Tamagotchi and *Pocket Monsters*. And it's from Sony – so you can be sure that the damn thing will be a success. But what is it? Think of a stripped-down Game Boy. Except that you don't plug in cartridges, you slot it into your PlayStation's

memory card slot and download mini-games from select PlayStation games. Slap in a copy of *Final Fantasy VIII*, for example, plug in your PocketStation, and you can walk off with a little *FFVIII* sub-game to play. It's a very neat idea. Other upcoming PocketStation games include *Street Fighter Zero 3*, *Monster Farm 2* and *Lunatic Dawn III*. Sony says it will reach the UK next summer.



■ Child psychologists reckon this bloke could have a bad influence on your children. Surely not?



FASHION NEWS

## Leisure Suit Lara

A certain Ms Croft launches her own range of leisurewear.

**T**o tie in with the release of *Tomb Raider III* on PC and PlayStation, EIDOS Interactive has announced a new range of Lara clothing manufactured by Animal Promotions, each item featuring rubberised badges, stitched-on fabric labels, embossed logos and embroidery. There are Polo shirts, sweat shirts, t's, fleeces, jackets, rucksacks, baseball caps, towels, watches and the like, not to mention mousemats, calendars, Lara figurines and 5' free-standing cut-outs. "In line with the understated design principle, colours have been intentionally limited to black, white and grey," they say. No rubberised green t-shirts or cargo shorts then, unfortunately.



■ You've played the game, now... (And so on.)

INDUSTRY NEWS

# Carmageddon: censors see red

"Secretive" ratings board challenged | Child psychologists consulted

By Sam Richards

**T**hat slow-burning evergreen that is the videogame censorship issue flamed again this month as SCI's painfully punned *Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now* was finally released – but with zombies instead of humans providing the roadkill. This move was taken in order to appease rating chiefs from the British Board of Film Classification, who awarded the game with a 15 rating after some last-minute changes to the colour palette had turned

humans into green-blooded living dead. The original version of the game would have struggled to gain even an 18 certificate, and had encouraged the BBFC to hire child psychologists in a bid to assess it. "We were simply astounded when the psychologists were brought in," says Georgina Worsley-Winteringham of SCI. "It was always intended as an adult game."

The BBFC has declined to comment on the

matter, an unhelpful position that has provoked criticism from the European Leisure Software Publisher's Association. "We don't believe the BBFC are qualified to censor computer games," says ELSPA chairman Roger Bennett. "They're very secretive and give no idea as to their criteria. They can also take forever to rate a game, and don't let the publishers know what's going on."

Instead, ELSPA is confident it can persuade the government to change the law, taking power out of the BBFC's hands and instead enforcing a method of self-regulation, to be administered by the

existing Video Standards Council. "We are perfectly capable of ensuring that unacceptable games don't receive a rating," says Bennett. "Our criteria will be fair, sensible and, more importantly, out in the open."

Meanwhile, SCI insists that the graphical alterations made to *Carmageddon II* will have no real affect on the game's appeal, which "lies in the improved physics and gameplay." It's a view shared by Darren Newnham of HMV, who's hoping the game will still sell in large numbers to a "switched-on audience who know what they're getting, and will be on the look out for updates via patch disks or the internet anyway."



## INCOMING

Six of the best new games coming your way...

### 6 months



#### Marvel Super Heroes Versus Street Fighter

■ PlayStation ■ Capcom ■ March '99

Basically a sequel to X-Men Versus Street Fighter but with additional moves and crazy combos. Our money's on the Marvel Super Heroes.



#### Magical Tetris Starring Mickey

■ N64 ■ Capcom ■ Spring '99

Classic Tetris with playable Disney characters and mucho technicolor fun. You know, for kids.



#### Race-On

■ Coin-op ■ Namco ■ Spring '99

A mental Japanese racer which snaps your portrait and sticks it on the screen above your car. Makes watching your mate in the rear view mirror hilarious.



#### Crash Bandicoot 3

■ Sony PocketStation ■ SCE ■ Summer '99

That cheeky Crash fella features in the first bout of PocketStation software, along with Street Fighter 3, Theme Aquarium and Final Fantasy VIII.

### 1 year



#### Japan

■ PlayStation ■ Konami ■ Late '99

An action adventure, set in ancient you-know-where, in which you play a young Samurai fighting enemies possessed by demons. The poor chaps.



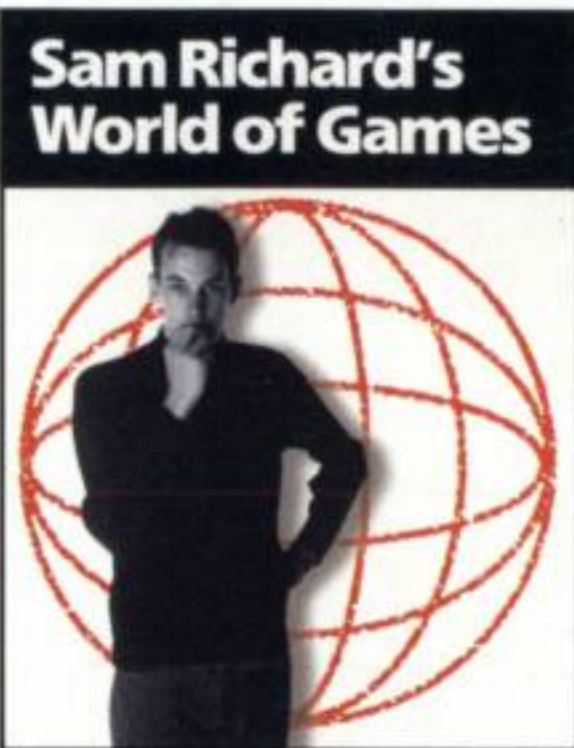
#### Biohazard Code: Veronica

■ Dreamcast ■ Capcom ■ Winter '99

Fitting in somewhere between Resident Evil parts II and III (the latter is planned for PlayStation 2), you play Claire Redfield trapped in a tropical zombie hell.



■ Thought you'd seen the last of James T Kirk and crew? Think again. They're like that bloke you met on your first day at college.



### Sam Richard's World of Games

#### Metal Gear and ISS coming to PC

■ Konami, long one of the world's top videogame developers, is considering a move into the PC market. The company has already begun work on Dreamcast conversions of some of its games, and now has its sights set on the PC market – a move that makes extra sense considering the similarities between Dreamcast and PC architecture. The first fruits of this move are likely to be PC versions of two of the very best PlayStation games, *Metal Gear Solid* and *ISS Pro*.

#### Thrill killed

■ *Thrill Kill*, the gory gothic beat-'em-up being developed by the American branch of Virgin Interactive, has been canned by the studio's new owners, EA. As a result, we're going to miss out on scenes of violent mutilation, not to mention the female character who appears to orgasm after a kill. "We will not publish *Thrill Kill* in its current form, nor will we publish any game using the *Thrill Kill* name," said EA tersely. Prudes.

#### Dixons announce new specialist game shops

■ As if we didn't already feel silly enough visiting Pink Planet, the Dixons group has cashed in on the videogames boom by announcing plans to open a chain of specialist videogame stores dubbed (ahem) @jarkarta. A Dixons spokesperson told us that the first shops will open before Christmas at Thurrock and Brighton, but could shed no light on the stupid name.

#### Bitmaps back

■ The Bitmap Brothers, much-hyped programming ponces of yesteryear, are set to return with an as yet unnamed project. Most famous for wearing shades and looking "cool" they also made graphically stunning Amiga games in the '80s, notably the *Speedball* and *Xenon* series. The Brothers are keeping pretty quiet about their new title, but when asked if they might follow it with further *Xenon* or *Speedball* sequels, they had this cheery reply for us: "No." Thanks, lads.

### INDUSTRY NEWS

# Activision reaches for the stars

**Star Trek and Star Wars under one roof | Software boss "very excited"**

**O**ne-time games giant Activision, still famous for bringing us the likes of *Pitfall* and *Ghostbusters* back in the '80s, is currently in the midst of a quite remarkable return to form, now capped by the signing of exclusive worldwide game rights to media outfit Viacom's *Star Trek* property for the next ten years. This follows a couple of distribution deals

struck with the Hollywood giants Disney and LucasArts – home, of course, of *Star Wars* – which will see some of the biggest games of '99 wearing the until-recently near-dead Activision label. The *Star Trek* deal is most significant, as it means all *Trek* games will be brought under the wing of a single publishing house for the first time. By the time the last games from existing licensees MicroProse and Interplay are with us, Activision should be ready with

its first *Trek* game, probably a multiformat title to tie-in with the new movie *Star Trek: Insurrection*. "The passion that's gone into creating the *Star Trek* universe is indescribable, and that passion is well reflected in its following," enthuses Activision's John Burns. "When you look at the depth of the characters, the vehicles and the equipment, plus every species of alien creature the Federation has encountered over the years, the potential for game design is as limitless as space itself."

Over in LucasLand, excitement is running even higher. All material featuring characters from the first three films is to be repackaged *Star Wars Classic* in the run-up to May '99's new movie, with a game based on *Episode One: The Phantom Menace* due pretty soon after. In the shadow of all this, the Disney stuff might seem like small potatoes, though much is hoped of the *Toy Story II* game, currently scheduled to tie-in with the release of the second movie sometime next year. **A**

### Smack my pitch up

Arcade tests the limits of industry patience with "creative" game ideas

## No. 1 Britannia Rules

■ **The pitch:** This is the in-depth PC strategy game where you get to make Britain great again! Your task is to build up Britain's army so she's in a position to reclaim her old empire territory. Will you begin with a small-scale attack on somewhere puny, like Singapore, or a large-scale invasion of a major former colony, like India? Will you covertly supply arms to Pakistan to distract Indian troops in Kashmir?

Will you offer all manner of bribes to easily corrupted third world rulers? Your task is to create a new empire on which the sun never sets. For each part of the map coloured pink you get revenue – money you can use to finance further land-grabs, or to quel lefty rebellion back home.

■ **The response:** "Without doubt this is the worst idea I have ever heard, ranking right up there with that awful game from Germany where you had to shoot all the Turkish immigrants as they came across the German border. Sorry, but there's no great gaming leap to be found here." Peter Molyneux, Lionhead boss and creator of *Populous*



■ **Next month:** We have another go.

### EVENT



## "You foolish mortals!"

Quake champ Thresh takes on all-comers at "Quakeadelica." Can you guess who wins?

**By Travis**  
 ■ The date: October 15th. The place: the world-famous London nightclub, Ministry of Sound. The event: Quakeadelica, a Wireplay-sponsored tournament to crown the UK's best *Quake II* player. After weeks of heats played at venues up and down the country as well as on Wireplay (http://www.wireplay.com), the best of British *Quake* players gathered to fight it out amongst themselves. To the winner, not only a trip to New York to play in a professional tournament, but also the chance to take on Thresh, acknowledged as the

world's greatest *Quake* player. After an evening of elimination only one man – handled "Bilox" – was left standing, and Thresh awaited. But 20 minutes later the gap between mere mortals such as Bilox and the indefatigable Thresh was evident. The final score: Thresh 56, Bilox -1. Complaints about Thresh using his own superior PC and faster USB mouse fell by the wayside; this was a smacking-down of unprecedented proportions. May we all hang our heads in shame.  
 ■ **Thresh squirms under Arcade's glare on page 44.**



■ Sega's dream scenario – Dreamcast storms though; Sony's left floundering.



### NEWS ANALYSIS

# Sega's Dreamcast offers incredible power, but will that be enough?

Impressive 128-bit superconsole | Arrives Japan now, UK Autumn '99 | But can it really beat Sony?

By Jason Brookes

**T**hese have been hard times for Sega. Only five years ago it was the acceptable face of gaming, the assertive brand leader confidently defining what videogaming could mean to the man in the street. Sonic the Hedgehog was a universally recognised icon, while the swoopily designed, aggressively marketed Mega Drive console gave gaming sex appeal for perhaps the first time. Early '90s Sega did tons to bring videogames out of the bedroom and into the living room, and for that we should all salute it.

But then it went wrong. Mega Drive got old. Add-ons such as the ill-fated 32X and Mega CD systems got nowhere. Worst of all, Sega's Mega

Drive replacement, Saturn, was utterly trounced by PlayStation. In no time at all, the brand became synonymous with arrogance and short-sightedness. To be this bad took Sega just four years.

But now the company has another chance. In Japan, where Sega's about to launch Dreamcast – its latest and most powerful games system – the pre-launch hype has worked desperately to put things right. The new machine hits Tokyo stores on 27 November,

and Sega's promotional push is already in full swing. Bizarrely enough, the TV ad campaigns have shown Yukawa Hidekazu, the company's executive director, wandering around Tokyo and realising that his worst fears have come true – Sega simply isn't cool anymore. But, of course, soon it will be. Dreamcast is something different, Sega's saying – a fact driven home by the conspicuous absence of the company's logo on the console itself.

You see, with Dreamcast, everything is new. Where previous Sega machines were black and flash, Dreamcast is an understated dull silver. The Japanese marketing works hard to build an impression of Apple-like quirky sophistication, while the name alludes not just to some vague "realisation of your dreams" motif, but to Sega's very own dream team of top-notch technology partners that includes NEC (graphics), Hitachi (processor), Yamaha (sound) and Microsoft

## FACT FILE

# Dreamcast

**Manufacturer:** Sega  
**CPU:** 128bit RISC Hitachi SH-4  
200 MHz  
**Graphics:** PowerVR Second  
Generation  
**Sound:** Yamaha 32bit RISC, 64  
channels  
**Main RAM:** 16Mb SDRAM  
**Video RAM:** 8Mb  
**Audio RAM:** 2Mb  
**Caches:** 8K instruction/16K  
data/128K CD-ROM buffer  
**Modem:** 33.6kbps (v34)  
**Video output:** VGA and  
640x480 interlaced RF  
**CD-ROM:** 1Gb proprietary format,  
12xspeed  
**Japanese release:** 27 November  
**Projected US/UK release:**  
September 1999

(operating system). By targeting the rather older, more affluent demographic – which Sony has done much to cultivate in recent years with PlayStation – Sega is hoping to leave the “kid’s toy” image completely behind. And with a \$100 million marketing budget allocated to each of the major territories, it should at least have a fighting chance.

But what’s so impressive about Dreamcast itself? Well, you have to say that technically this is a smart response to the increasing importance of the PC in the videogame market – basically, if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em. PC graphics card performance now eclipses what’s possible on the PlayStation and Nintendo 64, so it would seem smart to incorporate that technology into a dedicated console. So that’s what Sega’s done. Since Dreamcast only has to run game graphics, and can be mass produced in vast numbers, Sega is effectively able to deliver considerably more power than a 400 MHz state of the art Pentium PC costing up to £2000 for a mere ¥29,800 (about £150). Not only that, games will just plug-in-and-play – there won’t be any conflict between your sound chip and your joypad port, or any of that nonsense PC owners still put up with. It’s a console, after all.

And there are further techie innovations too. A built-in modem is available as standard in Japan – allowing the exciting prospect of head-to-head *Sega Rally 2* racing by direct dial (modem-to-modem) – but will likely be an accessory in the UK, where local phone calls are still prohibitively expensive. Dreamcast’s Visual Memory System (VMS) is one innovation that will come as standard on our machines, however – a mini Game Boy-like unit that plugs into the joypad and will allow many games to provide you with additional features (such as the Tamagotchi-style development of characters) in a portable fashion.

But all this will count for nothing, of course, if Sega’s new baby doesn’t become the home of great games. No console outfit – except, maybe, Atari – would be so dumb as to underestimate the importance of excellent software at launch, and this is one area where Sega *should* excel. Having just about recovered from



■ Dreamcast: looks a lot like a PlayStation, doesn't it?

## TECH SPECS

# How powerful is Dreamcast?

**How Dreamcast outperforms high-end Pentium PCs – and all for £150.**

■ There are many parallels between the Dreamcast chipset and a high-end Pentium PC, but there are also enough differences to make this a considerably more efficient and powerful piece of kit (although such is the nature of PCs, they will inevitably catch up). The new Sega machine’s central processing unit (CPU) is designed by Hitachi and is not only a faster chip than a Pentium 2, it’s ideally suited to running the fast mathematical calculations needed in 3D games. “The architecture of this system has been designed from the ground up to be optimised for console gaming,” says Neal Robison, director of advanced technical support at Sega of America. “We’ve allowed for the

flow of information to travel amongst the different components of this closed box architecture in a way that is best suited to videogames. This is something that just doesn’t happen on the PC.”

The graphical prowess of Dreamcast is largely down to the expertise of a UK outfit, PC graphics card manufacturer VideoLogic. Via parent company NEC, the second generation of its PowerVR PC 3D technology has been integrated into the Dreamcast chipset, providing a 640x480 standard high resolution and a massive number of polygons (the physical geometry that makes up most 3D graphics) on screen at once. The result is a system approaching or even

matching the power of a state of the art arcade game such as *Daytona USA 2*, or *The Lost World*, although it will take some time before Dreamcast titles that are this graphically accomplished start appearing.

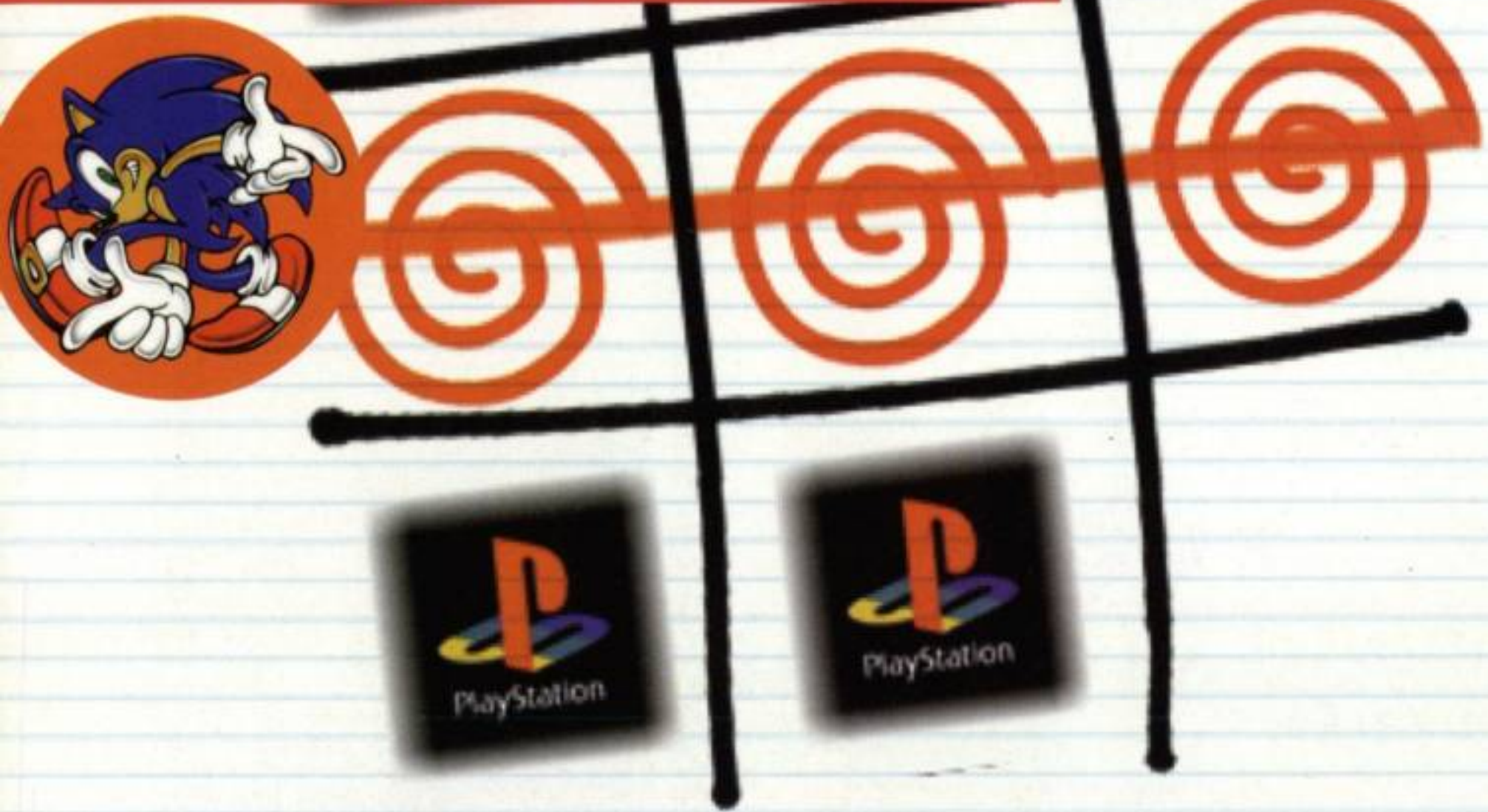
Dreamcast also plays host to a highly advanced sound processor courtesy of Yamaha (providing 64 voices, and sophisticated effects), as well as a 12-speed CD-ROM drive. While theoretically this should reduce loading delays compared to the PlayStation, in reality the system’s eight-fold increase in storage (RAM) space over Sony’s machine may off-set any potential benefits – yes, it’s quicker, but now there’s also more space to fill.

the nightmare that was Saturn (notoriously difficult to program, restricted developer support, a dearth of worthy titles), Sega has made sure it’s got the creative back-up to give Dreamcast the best chance possible. Around 300 developers have now signed up to

write games for the system, and while it’s questionable how many of these have it within themselves to create truly *great* games, there will be lots of good stuff about. And on top of that, of course, there’re still Sega’s vast internal development resources to draw

upon. The makers of countless landmark games over the years – particularly in the coin-op field – Sega’s creative side has had a serious shake-up in the past year or so, with dead-wood being moved aside to make way for fresher, more innovative blood.

It’s all starting to sound very promising. Step through the horde of rose-tinted Sega evangelists, however, and it becomes clear that not everyone subscribes to the Dreamcast vision. Developers are already voicing concern that, though Sega’s efforts to improve



its developer relations and give up vital technical information has been good, Microsoft's provision of its PC-based Windows CE operating system may undermine the overall quality level. Windows CE makes it easy to port PC code to Dreamcast, y'see, and the fear is that this may encourage lazy development. One prospective developer, who asked not to be named, commented, "There'll be a ton of turds dropping on that machine in no time, and they'll all be under-programmed ports of dodgy PC games – games that probably wouldn't have made it across without Windows CE".

It's a valid fear. The best of the Dreamcast programmers, on the other hand, are ignoring Windows CE completely, and "writing to the metal", thus producing results that are already some way ahead of what's possible on even a high-end PC. A steady flow of time-sensitive, technical information to developers from Sega should ensure that this is the route most of them take.

## Sega has made sure it's got the creative back-up to give Dreamcast the best chance possible

As has become traditional for game consoles, Dreamcast will receive a warm-up run in Japan before taking on the world – Sega's current estimate has US machines arriving in September '99, with official UK imports at the same time or shortly after. But for those too impatient to wait a whole year, specialist gaming stores will be bringing Japanese systems over to the UK by the start of December at a vastly inflated rate – expect to pay around £400 initially. It's a "grey import" market that has existed in the UK, US and Europe for years, and holds the same risks as personally importing a Jap spec car – your Japanese warranty

won't be worth the paper it's written on over here. You'll also need an NTSC compatible TV to get your import Dreamcast running.

So what's it add up to? Well, Dreamcast is clearly an exciting machine, and one we'll watch closely over the coming months. Possibly the biggest problem it faces, however, is that while good – and clearly more powerful than anything Sony or Nintendo have on offer – Dreamcast doesn't represent anything like the giant leap in graphical performance, or indeed, game experience, that Mega Drive/Super Nintendo and PlayStation/Nintendo 64 offered at launch. Sony's PlayStation, in particular, was a monumental step over the 2D displays of previous consoles, providing a rich and immersive 3D that's now become de rigeur. In technical terms Dreamcast is way ahead of PSX, but it still looks like an incremental step, or intermediate technology – a giant leap for Sega but a small one for videogaming, perhaps. This isn't necessarily a fatal flaw, but it means Dreamcast will need some imaginative software to become a mass-market must-buy.

More worrying is the fact that all eyes are now turned towards its biggest rival, Sony – a company that now boasts Godzilla-like stature in its native market. How much time will it give Sega to get Dreamcast established before leaping in with PSX 2? Ominously, major news about the PlayStation sequel is expected in the week prior to Dreamcast's launch, with most predicting that it'll be launched in Japan next Christmas. Sega clearly has a big fight on its hands.

■ **Sonic: the little blue fella will give Dreamcast its first ground-breaking game.**



### PERIPHERALS

## Dreamcast's innovative add-ons

Why the modem won't come to the UK, but VMS will



■ **Joypad**  
The Dreamcast pad looks and feels like a hybrid of the N64 pad and Sega's own analogue controller from Saturn. Hedging its bets, it uses an analogue stick and a conventional cross-pad. However, with only four main buttons plus a trigger either side, it's curiously lacking in control options, a leaning towards simplicity that could compromise game design in the future. A cavity in the top of the unit allows for the insertion of both the VMS data unit and a Nintendo-style vibrating rumble pack. Compatible arcade sticks and steering wheels will also be made immediately available to Japanese gamers.

■ **Visual Memory System**  
Almost a handheld console in its own right,

the VMS is a kind of personal data assistant designed to add a new element to Dreamcast games, as well as provide storage space for save game files. Boasting a 48x32 pixel screen, an 8-bit processor and 128K RAM, the unit has the capacity to act as a Tamagotchi/Pocket Monster-style games system (allowing you to, say, train a Dreamcast character away from the console, Tamagotchi-style). As the LCD screen is visible when the unit is plugged into the joypad, another potential use could be for displaying personal "hidden card" information to players in multiplayer games. The VMS has been designed so two can be connected for Pocket Monster-style battling or sharing of data, and it can even be plugged into the brand

new Naomi range of Dreamcast compatible coin-ops, allowing for yet more cross fertilisation of game information. It sounds fascinating.

■ **Modem**  
Built in as standard in the Japanese model, this 33.6Kbps device enables Dreamcast users in Japan to connect to online games servers or enter a dedicated Dreamcast online service, providing internet browsing and a host of features, such as high score "Halls of Fame" and even digital greeting cards that can be sent to other users. A keyboard will also be made available, further extending the scope of the console – if Sega makes use of such peripherals intelligently.

In the USA, where online gaming is at its most advanced, the modem may well be included – it'd be pretty foolish not to, especially considering the increased activity of cable online services over there. In the UK, however, it's unlikely that Dreamcast will get the modem – at least initially. Those who can afford the rather daunting local call rates for internet connection, however, should be able to buy it separately.



■ **The joypad's smaller than it looks (western ones may be bigger); VMS (above) is dinky.**

### THE COIN-OP

## Dreamcast goes to the arcades

■ Dreamcast tech is to be used in a new coin-op system, code-named Naomi, that will provide a stream of easy-to-do game conversions. Three titles for the new system have been announced so far – *Blood Bullet*, *House of the Dead 2*, and one called *Dynamite Baseball* – along with a *Spikeout*-

style beat-'em-up from Capcom called *Power Stone*. But will this move work? Aside from the costly Neo-Geo and Namco's PlayStation-powered *Tekken* coin-ops, the viability of an arcade system based on console technology has yet to be proven. Sega's own Saturn-based ST-V

system suffered from a lack of power compared to its high-end coin-op efforts, but it was a lack of top quality titles for the thing that actually killed it. Once again, as with the home machine, it is the games that will ultimately seal Naomi's fate, not just the power of the system itself.

■ Run, Sonic! Run like the wind! Dreamcast is depending on you!



THE SOFTWARE

# Giving the games away

Dreamcast should have around 10 titles ready for Christmas. We detail the front runners.

■ Despite an economy spiralling out of control, Japan's level of disposable income remains high. High enough that sales of the latest games technology have not been hit at all – Dreamcast will sell to the hardcore in its week of release whether one great game is available, or 20. What happens next is what matters, and Sega learned enough from the launch of Saturn four years ago to make sure its initial line-up is much stronger this time around. Of course, by the time the first official UK imports begin, it will have built up quite a library.

## Available at launch

The following games are scheduled to be released with the machine on its 27 November launch date. Of course, whether they'll all be ready by then is another thing entirely.

### ■ Godzillas Generations ■ 27.11.98

A clumsy 3D interpretation of the long-running B-flick series that's as impressive as the recent big-budget US movie version. Yes, it's that bad – and it's a real shame, because it's a great idea. This is the first title to make use of the Godzillas VMS unit that's been on sale in Japan for several months. The big idea is that the monsters created on your hand-held can be realised in 3D on the console version.



■ Godzillas: "clumsy."

### ■ Virtua Fighter 3 Tournament Battle ■ 27.11.98

The trump card in Japan. An enormously popular coin-op, this dassy beat-'em-up's been expertly converted from Sega's famous arcade machine. State of the art visuals and effortlessly fluid gameplay guarantee a hit.

VF3, and wasn't even made playable at the Tokyo Game Show – worrying, seeing as it's expected on launch day.

### ■ Pen Pen Tricelcon ■ 27.11.98

A cutesy animal racing game that stars a manic-looking penguin, and at least displays some nice 3D polygon environments.

■ July  
■ 27.11.98  
3D adventure. We've seen a London bus get blown up, which was kinda cool.

■ Sega Rally 2  
■ 27.11.98  
This conversion of the fairly recent arcade sequel lacks pizzazz when compared to



■ Sega Rally 2: "lacks pizzazz."

## Available before Christmas

This little lot should be available pre-Christmas, though most of them haven't got firmed-up release dates yet.

### ■ Blue Stinger ■ 3.12.98

An unashamedly blatant "tribute" to Resident Evil that features impressively detailed visuals and real time – as opposed to static – backdrops. The version shown at TGS received a mixed response, however. It certainly lacks the clever generation of atmosphere of Capcom's classic.

### ■ Sonic Adventure ■ 17.12.98

The main attraction when recently unveiled at the Tokyo Game Show (see page 14) Sonic is a make or break game for Dreamcast. Essentially a 3D incarnation of the Mega Drive classic, but bolstered by extra characters, different styles of gameplay and some vast 3D environments. We have more on this vital game on page 22.

■ Incoming  
■ 23.12.98  
A polished UK-developed PC title that was already

blessed with sumptuous visuals and now has the added power of Dreamcast behind it. Essentially just a 3D shoot-'em-up that allows you to take control of aeroplanes, tanks and ground installations, Rage's Incoming will be the first PC port to hit the machine.

### ■ Geist Force

Into-the-screen space ship shoot-'em-up that will have a daunting task if it hopes to compete with the N64's Starwing.

### ■ Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation 2

The inevitable Formula One racer, this one courtesy of the PC developer Ubisoft.

## Available 1999

Stuff for early next year.

### ■ Get Bass

Conversion of Sega's oddly engaging fishing coin-op.

### ■ Power Stone

Spikeout-style Naomi beat-'em-up from Capcom.

### ■ Virtual-On 2

Sega's robot fight coin-op.

### ■ Virtua Fighter RPG

Spin-off from the fighters.

### ■ Resident Evil

Code: Veronica

Dreamcast

interpretation of

the famous

spook-'em-up.

### ■ D2

Lovely looking

snow-bound 3D

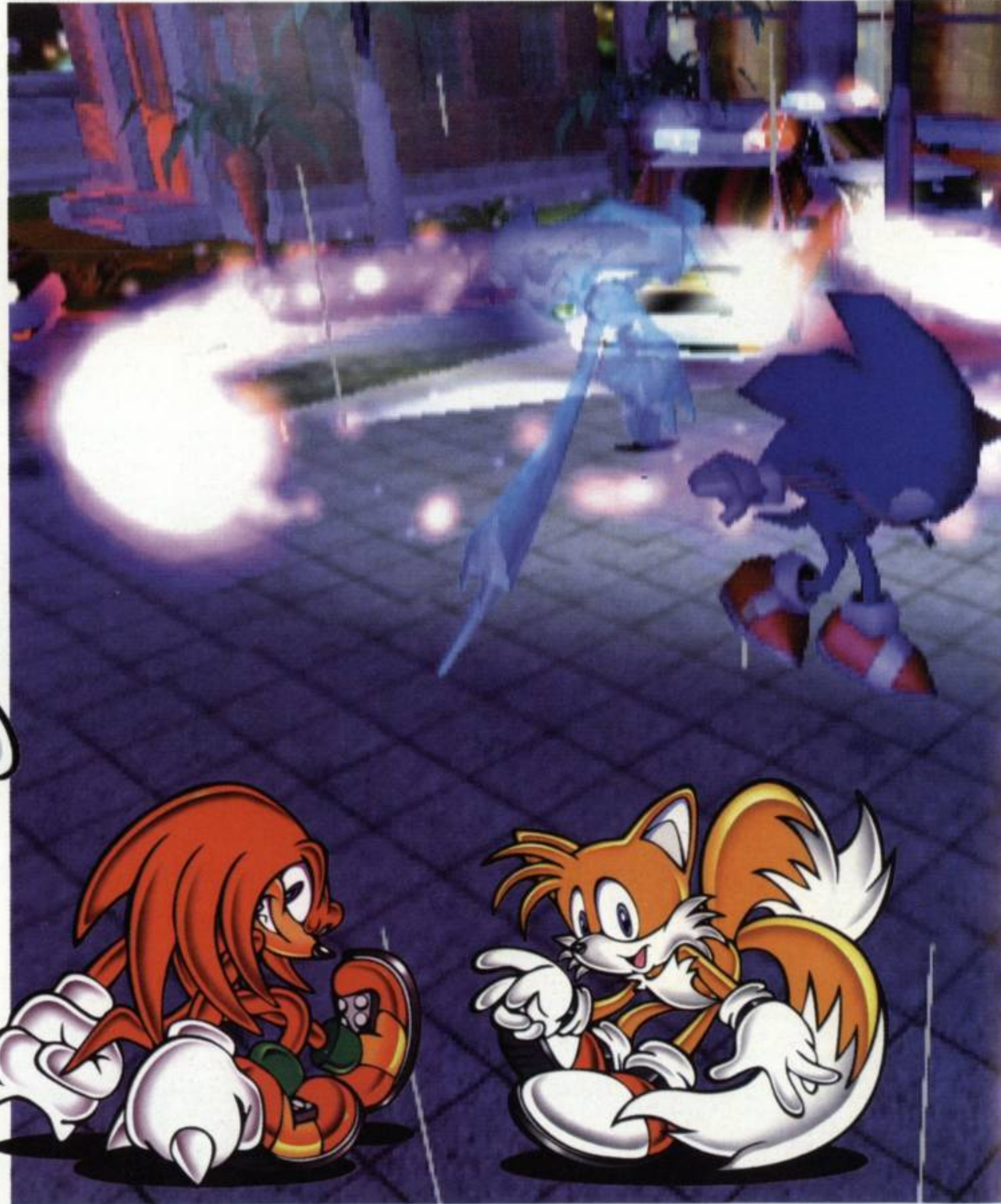
adventure.



■ D2: "lovely."

# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



DREAMCAST

## SONIC ADVENTURE

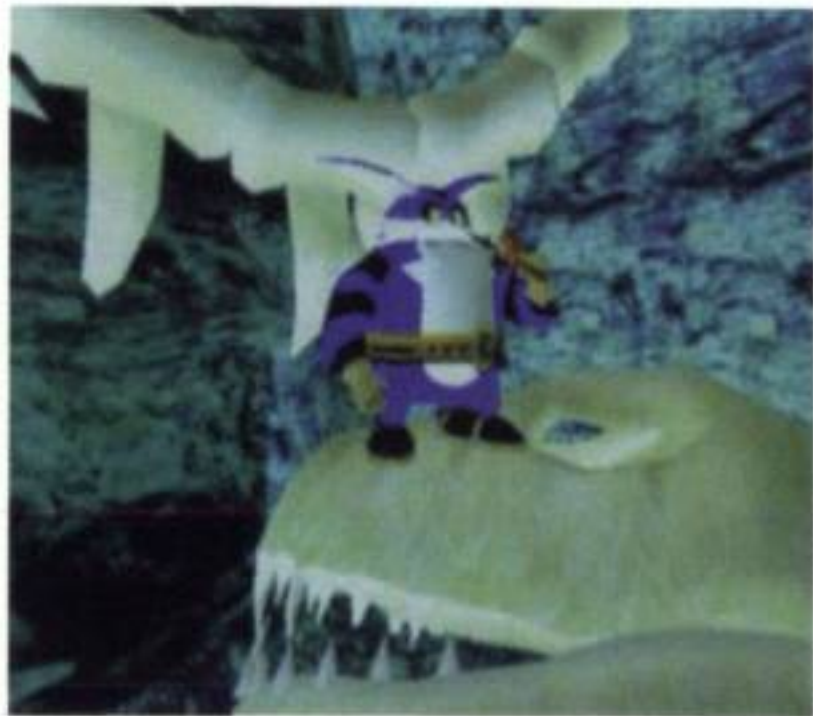
He's back. And he's been on more than Oil of Ulay while he was away. As a showcase game for the new 128-bit Dreamcast, *Sonic Adventure* simply has to be stunning. And it is. But can Sega's superstar recapture the thrills of his early '90s glory years?

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Dreamcast's showcase game is an ambitious 3D reworking of Mega Drive's greatest hit.

**B**ack in the early 1990s, it was *Sonic the Hedgehog* that pretty much single-handedly dragged Sega into the home videogame limelight. Although Sega continued to enjoy success throughout the 16-bit era, successive hardware disasters soon dragged the company back to the arcades from whence it came. Sure, Saturn fans will tell you Sega's 32-bit answer to PlayStation wasn't in the same dire league as the Mega CD or 32X travesties, but this is true only in the way some parts of the *Titanic* are slightly less underwater than others. Sega's home console business was sunk, and Sonic went down with the ship.

The good news is that Sega's back with a brand new console (for more, see page 18) and hopes are pinned on *Sonic Adventure* doing for Dreamcast what the original *Sonic the Hedgehog* did for the Mega Drive back in 1991. Arcade played a demo version at the Tokyo Games Show





■ All the *Sonic* trademarks are here: gold rings, mechanical moving platforms, the same re-start markers, flippers and bouncers, that plunger thingy at the end of each stage. You'll even recognise the same spiky enemies under the control of Dr. Robotnik. It's just that now they're in glorious 3D.



## SIX APPEAL

*Sonic Adventure* gives players the chance to play as six very different characters. The feel and pace of the game changes as each newcomer brings individual skills to the party (Knuckles can fly and Tails snowboards, for example). At the Tokyo Game Show, programmer Yuji Naka talked of the final game utilising both speech and Artificial Life technology – so expect a lot of character interaction. From left to right:

- **Sonic**  
No introduction necessary, surely.
- **Knuckles**  
Used to be Sonic's enemy, but is now an ally. He can fly.
- **Tails**  
A fox with two (wait for it) tails. Whether or not he has two bumholes is a matter for unsavoury debate elsewhere.
- **Amy**  
Sonic's girlfriend? Sega isn't saying. But she's got "love interest" written all over her. We'll wait and see.
- **Big USP**  
A fat, smiling cat with a fishing rod.
- **E-102**  
Packing a machine gun, E-102 is the first Sonic character to come armed.



and can offer an eye-witness glimpse of what we have in store.

First, *Sonic Adventure* looks great. Sega claims that Dreamcast's 128-bit graphics hardware can draw 1.8million polygons per second (compare to PlayStation's measly 120,000). Certainly, the intricate detail of Sonic's new 3D persona and game world is leaps and bounds ahead of what Mega Drive gamers will remember.

It's not, however, the quantum leap forward that the hype printed elsewhere may lead you to believe. Take our word for it, in places the graphics of *Sonic Adventure* really don't look that much more fancy and sophisticated than the best PlayStation or Nintendo 64 games. Look closely and you'll notice that the gold rings and long tunnels aren't so much circular as octagonal. At times, Sonic,

## RUNNING DOWN A SKYSCRAPER IS PRETTY MUCH GUARANTEED TO DELIVER AN ADRENALINE RUSH

Knuckles, Tails et al suffer from some severely jagged edges. A lot of the backgrounds are simply flat 2D pictures, as opposed to dynamic 3D models. And there's an uncomfortable degree of "pop up" (large objects appearing from nowhere, instead of gradually enlarging from the horizon).

On face value, these quirks could point you toward the conclusion that Dreamcast's graphics technology is not as powerful as we'd hoped. Or, it could be that Sega's Sonic Team hasn't got

it's head fully around how Dreamcast works yet. Either way, the game isn't quite finished, and Yuji Naka's Sonic Team have until December 17th for tweaking and tuning. And they've been known to pull off some pretty impressive feats in the past.

Of course, graphics are only part of the story. The real question should be is it fun to play? And yes, it most definitely is. Sonic's gameplay has always been based on speed, and here's where *Sonic Adventure* really delivers. Each of the game's six characters play at different paces, but it's Sonic's foot-to-the-floor rush through tubes, jumps, and loops that provide the greatest thrills. There's no arguing with running down the side of a skyscraper for delivering an adrenaline rush. Snowboarding down a mountain while being chased by an

### FACT FILE

**SONIC ADVENTURE**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** DREAMCAST  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** SONIC TEAM (SEGA)  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** SEGA JAPAN  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** SEPTEMBER 1999

avalanche is pretty cool too (even if you can't see where you're going – take note budding game designers).

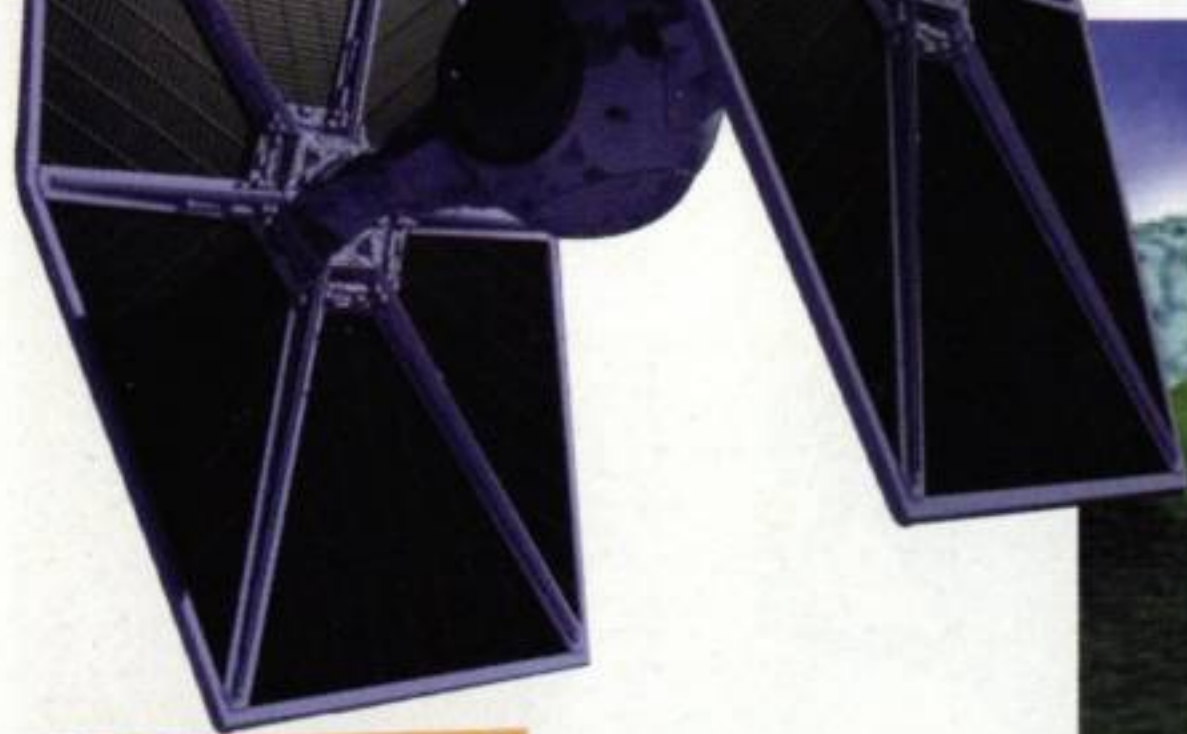
Control is generally solid but at times feels loose. The analogue pad is going to take a little getting used to, just as Nintendo 64's did. There'll be plenty of time to do so, though, because it's clear that the game boasts plenty of replay value. The fun of coming back to previously completed levels – to find all the rings and secret bits or beat a previous fastest time – is what made the first *Sonic* more than just a five minute thrill. And while *Sonic Adventure* is still no *Mario*, it's getting there.

*Sonic Adventure* is going to be a great videogame. No doubt. Whether it's enough to secure Dreamcast's future is another question entirely.



# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



PC NINTENDO 64

# STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON

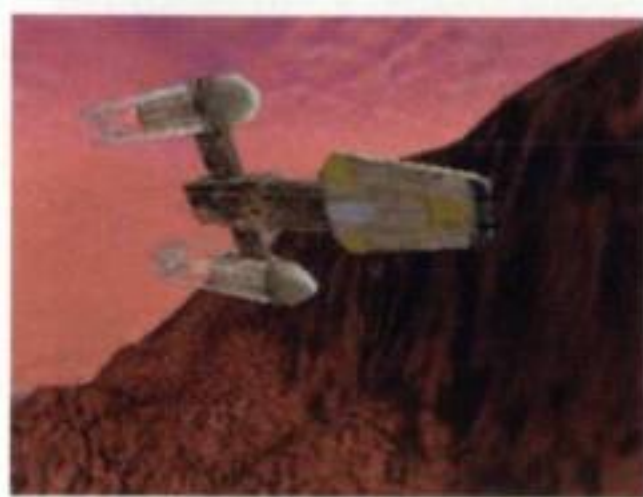
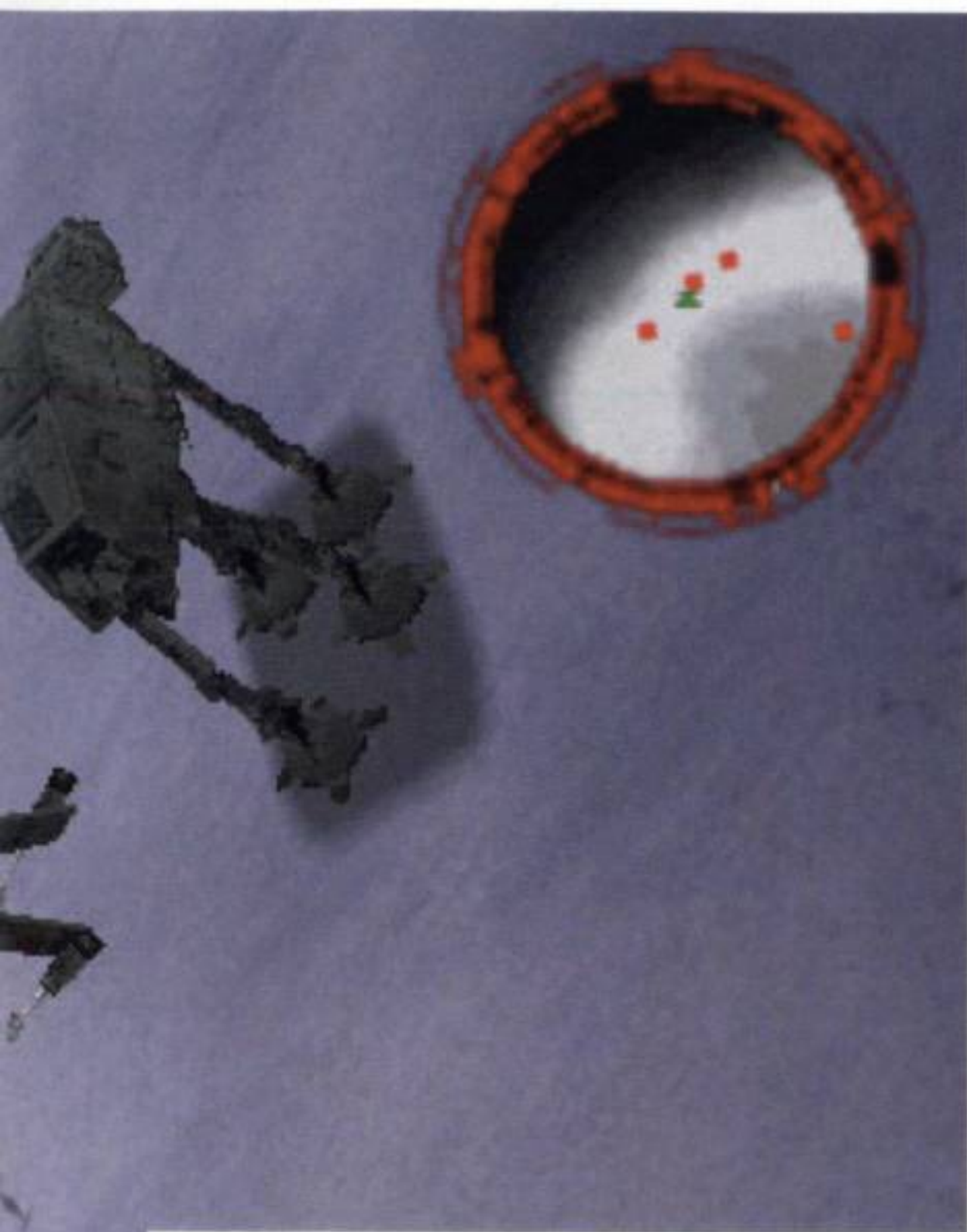
Furry midgets, walking carpets and Danish pastry haircuts. It can only be the new *Star Wars* game...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** The latest *Star Wars* spin-off, *Rogue Squadron* takes the arcade-action flight levels from *Shadows of the Empire* and builds a game around 'em.

**T**here are some films that touch a nerve inside all of us, that make us want to forget our boring, predictable lives and be someone else – who, after *Top Gun*, didn't want to don a furry-collared jacket and take to the skies, for instance? And who hasn't fancied being Luke Skywalker, saving the galaxy from black-cloaked, wheezing tyranny?

Indeed, such is the appeal of *Star Wars* it gives the LucasArts games based on it an almost unfair advantage over just about everything else – even when a *Star Wars* game is less than fantastic (like the overly video-reliant *Rebel Assault* games on PC) it'll still manage to do okay. The most recent *Star Wars*-licensed reincarnation was *Shadows of the Empire* for N64 and PC, which started well but fell to pieces after its exhilarating first level.

And now we have *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron*, set in the time between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*



■ Though the X-wing is ship-of-choice of a certain young Jedi, it ain't the only fighter you get to fly in this game. As you can see, the bulky, two-person Y-wings – last spotted aborting their attack run on the Death Star – also make an appearance, alongside *Empire Strikes Back* snowspeeders, A-wings and the new V-wings. Locations are often familiar too, ranging from the tentacle-infested Saalac Pit from *Return of the Jedi* to places only mentioned in the movies, including Mon Calamari (homeworld of fish-faced Admiral Akbar), the brutal imperial prison planet Kessel (which the Millennium Falcon could reach in less than 12 parsecs) and even Beggar's Canyon on Tatooine. Where? Only the place Luke "used to bullseye womp rats" back home...



and loosely based on the series of Wedge Antilles-starring *Rogue Squadron* books, in which Wedge leads a sort of Dirty Dozen of top X-wing pilots on dangerous and challenging missions. The game, in which you play Luke Skywalker on secondment to Rogue Squadron, centres on your climbing into as many different space vehicles as possible for 16 levels across familiar and unfamiliar *Star Wars* locations.

Missions are of an escort-and-then-rescue, search-and-destroy or reconnaissance variety, each complicated by a mix of primary, secondary and sub-objectives, while the plot is linked together using plenty of cut scenes. Keeping an eye on wingmen like Wedge and Dack from the films is a big priority – the more of them that are still alive, the more will

## WHO HASN'T FANCED BEING LUKE SKYWALKER, SAVING THE GALAXY FROM BLACK-CLOAKED TYRANNY?

### FACT FILE

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON  
 ■ FORMAT: PC, N64  
 ■ DEVELOPER: LUCASARTS  
 ■ PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION/NINTENDO  
 ■ PLAYERS: 1  
 ■ ON SALE IN UK: DECEMBER  
 ■ PC NEEDS: PC P133 WITH 3DFX

be around to protect you. But the emphasis here is really on flying around and having fun, pulling off manoeuvres like rolls and loop-the-loops.

"We took the best in gameplay from the action-packed flight levels of *Shadows of the Empire*," says LucasArts' Joel Dreskin, "and made it better, with special effects, real-time lighting, varied camera perspectives and more." And from the stuff we've seen so far, we'd be hard pushed to disagree.

## PLAYSTATION

# QUAKE 2

Death or glory? *Quake II* offers both...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** The famed PC killfest comes to the PlayStation – if they can work out how to make it fit.

**W**hen the PC version of *Quake II* materialized in games shops back in January, ecstatic PC owners curled up into tight, giggling balls.

This violent first-person shooter, follow-up to *Quake* and *Doom*, offered the quite irresistible combination of a convincing land-of-Satan environment and assorted blood-thirsty nasties which you had to remove in a variety of unpleasant ways.

Though they've teased us with glimpses of the PlayStation version a couple of times now, Activision is remaining extremely tight-lipped over exactly how the project's going. The fact is, Sony's gamebox just ain't equipped to cope with the huge, architecturally stunning levels *Quake* players have grown used to – or, indeed, the game engine itself, which was designed to run comfortably on £2,000-plus uber-computers. So what exactly was developer Hammerhead to do?

For starters, remain pragmatic about how it handles the conversion. That means that while the team clearly has to do its best to ensure that most of the maps remain intact, it's allowed to make it easier for the PSX to cope with

### FACT FILE

QUAKE II  
 ■ FORMAT: PLAYSTATION  
 ■ DEVELOPER: HAMMERHEAD  
 ■ PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION  
 ■ PLAYERS: 1-4  
 ■ ON SALE IN UK: QUARTER 1, 1999

by chopping them into smaller, much more manageable bits, then sell us on the change by simply cramming in a series of new, PlayStation-specific levels as a nice

sweetener. Next, use the guts of an existing graphics engine, as seen in the eye-popping *Shadow Master*, to deal with the visuals. They may never match those of their handsome PC big brother, but they should do the job.

Naturally, id – famed developer of the original PC games – is keeping a beady eye on proceedings to ensure that the profile of its ultra-profitable offspring isn't tarnished by a sub-standard conversion. To that end the id guys have helpfully donated the AI routines from the original to make sure that the Grunts and demons act the way creatures spawned from the depths of Hell should.

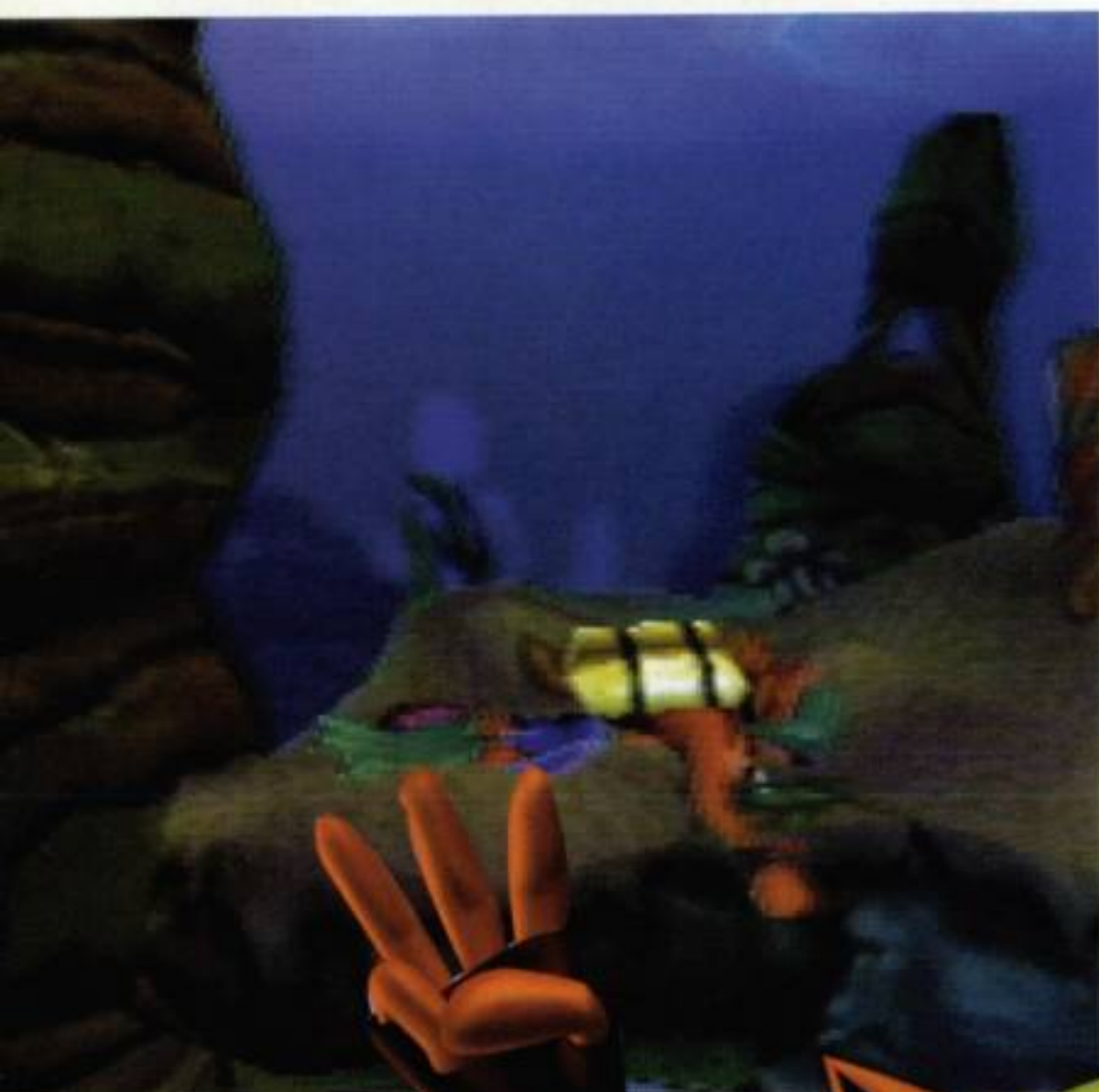
While PSX *Quake II* will never be able to offer the intense, Net-based multi-player bloodbath that made the PC model so popular, two-player and four-player split-screen deathmatches are promised, with a link-up mode also a possibility.



■ With the original *Quake* shelved for PlayStation release because no one was up to the conversion job, the fact that the coders of the impressive *Shadow Master*, Hammerhead, can make *Quake II* look this good is nothing short of astounding.



**COMING SOON**  
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



**PLAYSTATION**

# CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED

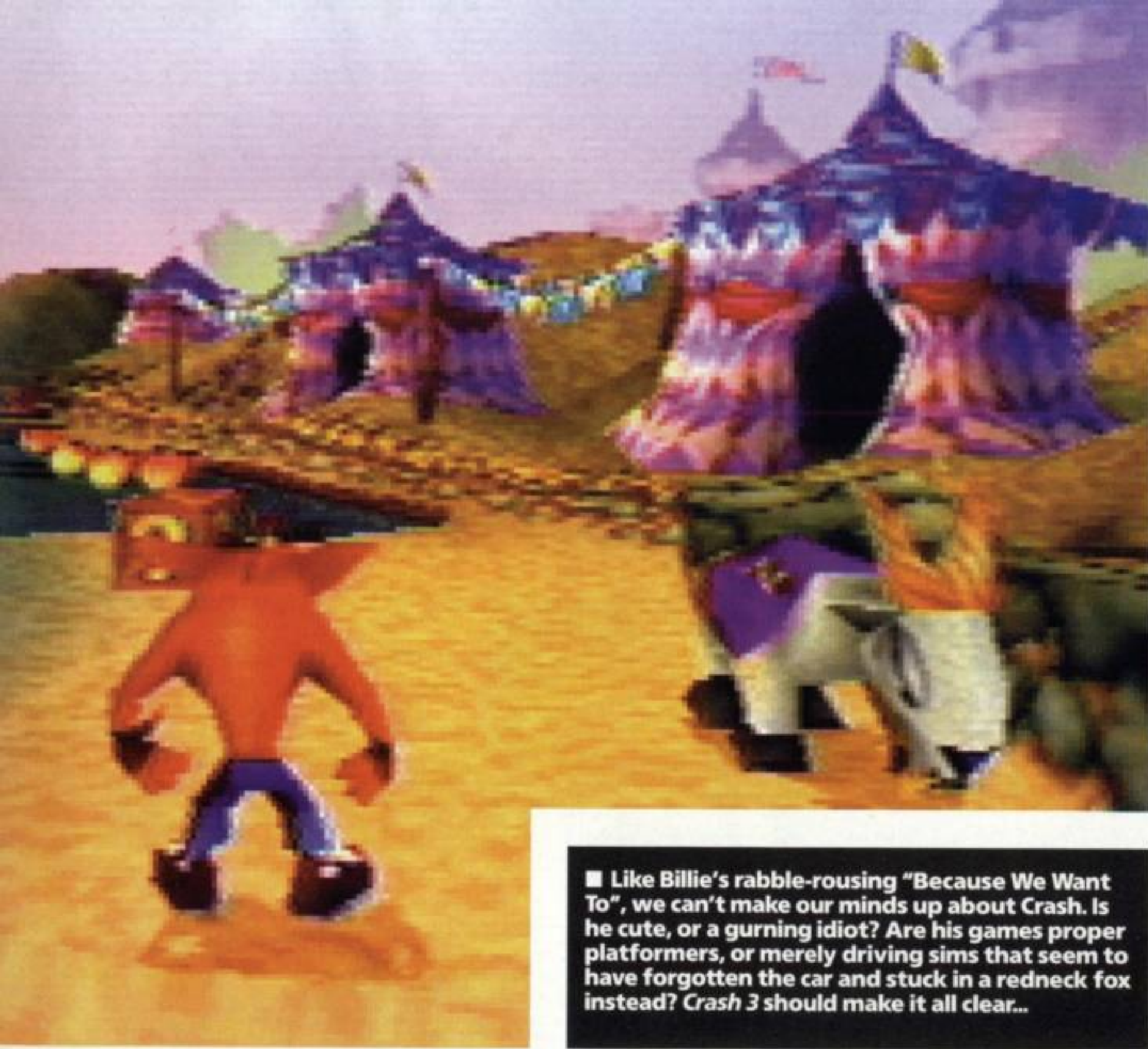
He's the cute PlayStation mascot to rival the all-conquering Mario and Sonic. And now he's back.

**■ IN A NUTSHELL:** Third in the popular, but not perfect, 3D platform series, boasting more characters and much wider-ranging levels. It's good, but is it a Mario-beater?

**T**he first two *Crash Bandicoot* games are real love 'em or hate 'em affairs. Though they're the best-looking 3D platformers available on the PlayStation, were generally well received, and are definite by-the-bucket-load sellers, there's always been something is not quite right with the gameplay – and for most, this rather spoils the games.

The problems aren't with Crash himself, who's full of comic animation. Nor is there anything wrong with the relentless pace, or the 3D levels which, in both existing cases, are large and beg exploration. It's to do with how frustrating the damn things are: the strict screen-wide routes which are full of timed jumps and probably too many baddies; the constant stumbles across deadly gaps sure to kill you and bounce you back to a restart point.

But with *Crash 3*, we're told, it's different. The early levels still remain hemmed in, but some of the later ones



■ Like Billie's rabble-rausing "Because We Want To", we can't make our minds up about Crash. Is he cute, or a gurning idiot? Are his games proper platformers, or merely driving sims that seem to have forgotten the car and stuck in a redneck fox instead? *Crash 3* should make it all clear...



are totally free-roaming and include vehicles for you to drive: a Harley, jet-ski, biplane, even a T-Rex. It's no longer totally linear, and you can tackle levels in different orders. There's another character too – your sister Cocoa (who rides a tiger). With bits set throughout history, there's plenty of diversity too, as you visit ancient China, the Jurassic period, the medieval era and Atlantis.

"*Crash 3* isn't a case of been there, done that, but a culmination of four years of work," claims Jason Rubin, president of *Crash's* development team, Naughty Dog. "The gameplay is better and there are fewer side-scrolling levels. It's more sophisticated than the previous two games. For example, when Crash stands in dark water, he reflects from the point where his body hits the water. These sort of things have never been done

## DETAIL IN THE 3D BACKGROUNDS IS QUITE INCREDIBLE, BUT YOU CAN'T ROOM AS MUCH AS YOU MIGHT LIKE

### FACT FILE

**CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** NAUGHTY DOG  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** SONY  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** DECEMBER 1998

in 3D before. Crash even has six new super-moves, including speed boosts, double jumps and a super belly flop."

And the end result is impressive. *Crash 3* looks beautiful, if pretty similar to the previous two incarnations. The detail in the 3D backgrounds is quite incredible, but you can't roam as much as you might like. And we did find the instant-death routines annoying as before. But this said, *Crash 3* is one that requires some playing. We'll tell you more next issue.

## NINTENDO 64

# JET FORCE GEMINI

Overloaded colour palettes and a bazooka-toting pup in Rare's latest lunatic spawn.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Nintendo's favourite non-Nipponesers launch stunning Mario-Rambo crossbreed.

### FACT FILE

**JET FORCE GEMINI**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** NINTENDO 64  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** RARE  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** MARCH 1999

**G**oldenEye 007. Banjo-Kazooie. Both recent N64 hits, and the handiwork of sly and secretive UK developer, Rare. So surely a coupling of Bond's cool with the crazed antics of the bear/bird combo would seem the next logical step – should anyone be unhinged enough to suggest it.

*Jet Force Gemini* provides an unstoppable mix of the best the N64 has to offer: a beautifully coloured 3D world, where movement is fast and free-roaming; bizarre yet strangely believable character designs (in this case a pre-pubescent blue-haired minx, a wannabe Power Ranger and a dog called Lupus); occasional puzzle interludes and of course, a multitude of frighteningly large weapons.

In normal mode you have to switch between the three characters in order to progress in an extension of the *Banjo-Kazooie*-style gameplay, but there is a lot more violence to

this game – along the way you have to beat the crap out of a menagerie of ugly opponents. The multi-player mode heralds a return to the days of two-player coin-ops, while a highly entertaining four-player deathmatch option proves gloriously incongruous as you blast the cute little characters to pixel oblivion.

*Jet Force Gemini* is the kind of non-taxing nonsensefest for which the N64 was invented. Rare beating the Japanese at their own game? Signs point to yes.



■ The big thought behind *Jet Force Gemini* is that cute little characters and a high big-gun quotient ain't necessarily mutually exclusive. Imagine what *Tomb Raider* would be like if Nintendo had done it. Or what would happen if the *Banjo-Kazooie* twins went loco down the gun shop.



# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



NINTENDO 64

# PERFECT DARK

With an *X-Files* inspired plot and spunky female lead, *Perfect Dark* sounds perhaps a tad dull and over-familiar – until you realise it uses the great *GoldenEye* engine. Join us for a walk in the *Dark*...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Rare's 007-free *GoldenEye* "sequel", with even more exotic locations, better AI, a whole host of new weapons and an all-new female star.

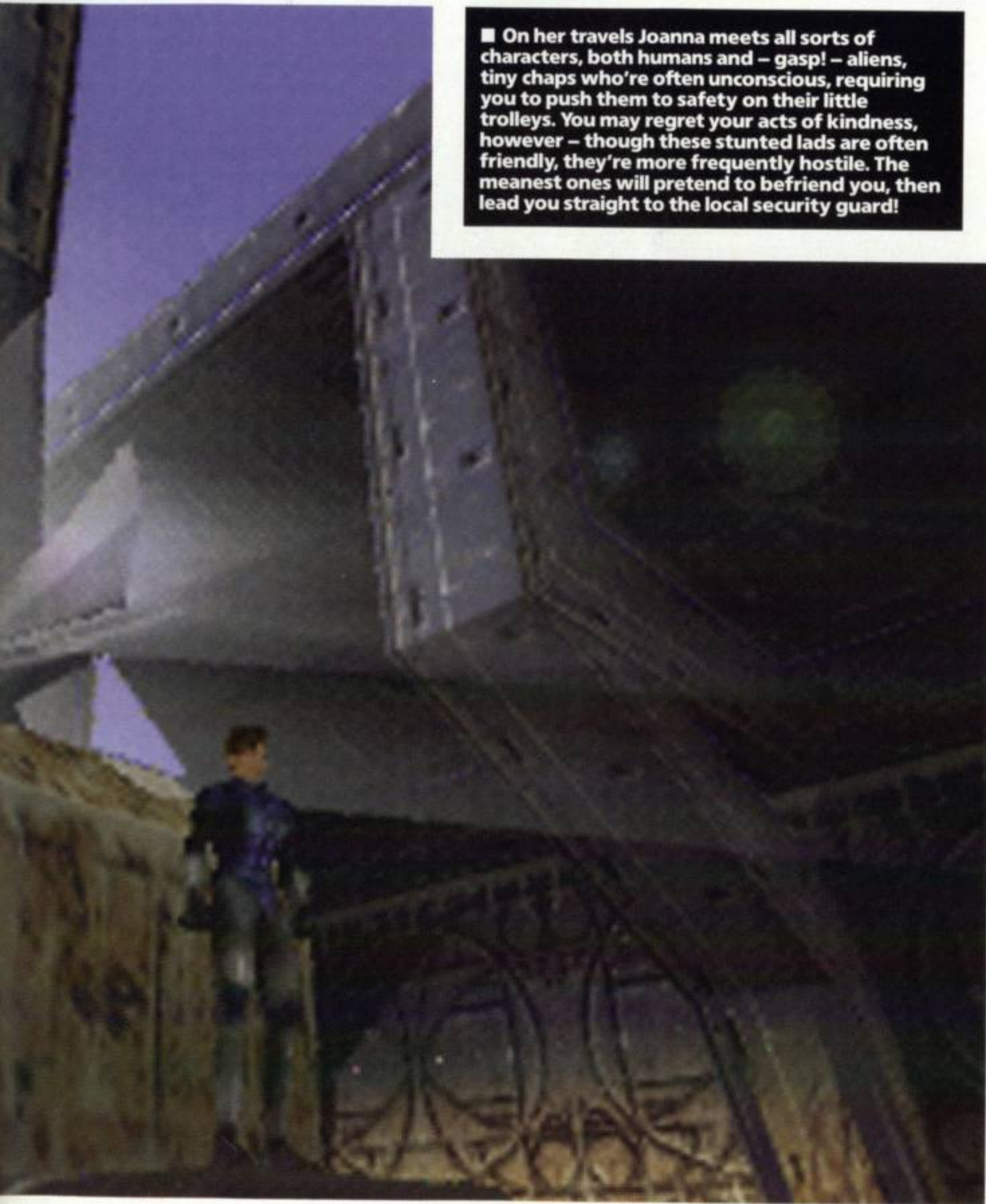
**W**ith the James Bond licence wrestled from its grasp, developer Rare was left with the excellent *GoldenEye* game engine and the freedom to use it in whatever way it chose. But how? After a collective brain racking, the guys came up with a game based around a sexy gun-toting young lady and alien conspiracies. Originality? It's dead. Quality, however, is very much alive...

The *Perfect Dark* team comprises the original *GoldenEye 007* programmers, plus a couple of new artists. Rare claims real-time ray-tracing can be thanked for the reflections, shadows, glares and transparency effects that add depth and realism to the game's futuristic sets, and there's clearly clever stuff going on here. After all, it looks fantastic and still manages to knock out a slinkily improved frame rate.

The game's 20 levels see heroine Joanna Dark on a mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist from the heart of



■ On her travels Joanna meets all sorts of characters, both humans and – gasp! – aliens, tiny chaps who're often unconscious, requiring you to push them to safety on their little trolleys. You may regret your acts of kindness, however – though these stunted lads are often friendly, they're more frequently hostile. The meanest ones will pretend to befriend you, then lead you straight to the local security guard!



## PLAYSTATION

# SILENT HILL

Long periods of quiet, a sudden squelch and then the screaming starts...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Konami's post Metal Gear hope is a gore-laden, shock horror rival to Resident Evil 2.

### FACT FILE

**SILENT HILL**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** KONAMI IN-HOUSE  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** QUARTER 2, 1999

psychological edge to the proceedings, as you constantly flit between the real world and a dreamlike "other state", fighting off the undead infants.

*Silent Hill* wears

**E**ven those who've seen off *Resident Evil 2*'s monstrous "licker" will get the Fear at this one. Run around a corner on the first playable level of Konami's new horror-based action adventure and you find your character surrounded by naked, knife-wielding babies screaming in the midst of a deserted school. Nice.

*Silent Hill* has a tacky-palmed feeling of horror that's all its own. Rather than the pre-rendered and essentially flat backdrops of both *Resident Evil* games, it features proper 3D polygon-built locations for you to explore, often by the beam of an *X-Files* torch or frantic peering through dense, anything-hiding fog.

The pace of the game is several notches higher than *Resident Evil*'s shuffling zombie onslaught too, with stark lighting used to shocking effect in a multitude of sinister locations, as horrific enemies leap out of the shadows into pools of light as they attack. And there's a disturbing



■ **Creature-obscuring fog** lies as thick as the dry ice in an early '80s pop video. And you're forced to investigate whatever lurks inside...



## A HOST OF NEW GUNS AND GADGETS INCLUDE A HEAT-SEEKING PISTOL AND MINES THAT DESTROY WALLS

the sinister dataDyne Corporation – an outfit suspected of harbouring secret alien equipment. As things progress you can expect to find a sprawling military-style airfield, science labs and even a Pacific underwater level, all rendered in gorgeous 3D. Each houses a decent amount of fodder for your big gun, though the emphasis on stealth that made *GoldenEye* a heart-pounding scare-fest will remain.

*Perfect Dark*'s improved AI should make the experience even more

convincing than *GoldenEye*. Many of your enemies will act with scary intelligence, basing their actions on what you're up to. Depending on the circumstance, they'll either hide, run away, get some friends to help, or simply start shooting at you.

Until, that is, you make a few holes in them with weapons of your own. Rare promises a host of new guns and gadgets, including a heat-seeking pistol and mines that you can use to destroy walls. And if you liked *GoldenEye*'s multi-player extravaganza, you'll simply love the new two-player co-operative experience.

Rare is striving to ensure that *Perfect Dark* tops Acclaim's fantastic *Turok 2*. Quite a task, but which would you rather murder in cold blood, a dinosaur or a super-cute four-foot high alien? Exactly. **A**

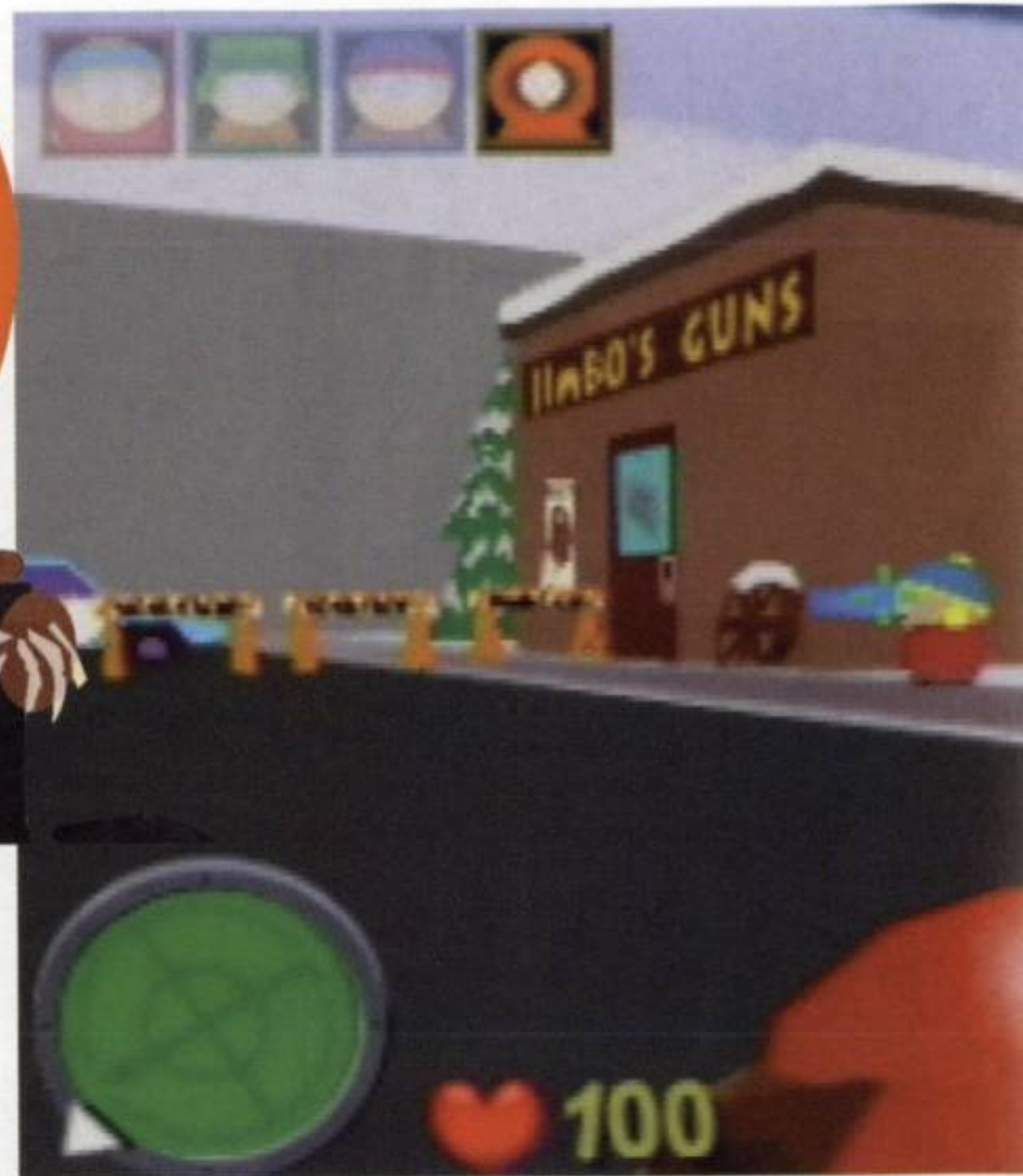


### FACT FILE

**PERFECT DARK**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** NINTENDO 64  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** RARE  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** SEPTEMBER 1999

# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



PC NINTENDO 64

# SOUTH PARK



Run away from a comet, rescue Cartman's mum and fling live chickens and Yuletide turds at everything that moves... Oh my God, you killed Kenny!

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** The game of the sick and depraved Trey Parker and Matt Stone series, coded by – of all people – Turok creator Iguana. Features Fart Dolls.

**C**oarse language, cross dressing, fart jokes and explosive diarrhoea. Probably not the original elements that were envisioned when the phrase "interactive cartoon" was first dreamt up. But get your hands on the *South Park* game and publisher Acclaim Entertainment reckons it'll be like taking part in your own episode, gay dogs included.

When a film or TV show occupies as important a place in world culture as *South Park* does, a game based on it is only ever going to be matter of time. Acclaim won this particular biro-to-cheque race, and by all accounts has come up with a very promising take on Comedy Central's twisted finest. The thing to get really excited about is that Kyle, Stan, Cartman and Kenny are running about in full 3D for the first time, thanks to the *Turok 2* engine – easily one of the most sophisticated polygon shifters yet developed, and used to stunning effect in the dinosaur-hunting shooter of





■ Oh my God! They're in 3D! Yup, the *South Park* guys have got into shape – and they're going to need to be fit as you race them around town as fast as their fat little legs can carry them. You can pick your character of choice and fire chickens, cows and turds in a variety of missions, including a four-player deathmatch. And when you're fed up of that, Kick the Baby!



## KYLE, STAN, CARTMAN AND KENNY ARE RUNNING ABOUT IN FULL 3D FOR THE FIRST TIME

the same name (reviewed for N64 on page 140 this issue).

*South Park* the game is simple – it's all to do with our heroes facing mayhem when a comet is revealed to be on collision course, *Armageddon*-style, with *South Park* itself. In the meantime, Cartman's mum has been kidnapped by aliens, and there's a problem with turkeys. The four main characters are all present, as well as a supporting cast that includes Terrence & Phillip, Mr Garrison, Big Gay Al and

### FACT FILE

■ **SOUTH PARK**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** N64, PC  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** IGIANA  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** ACCLAIM ENTERTAINMENT  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** JANUARY 1999

Mephisto. Chef's almost certain to be around somewhere, though his horny appearance has yet to be confirmed.

One-player mode enables you play as Kenny, Stan, Cartman or Kyle in six episode-based adventures that take their cue from the TV series. Stopping Kenny getting killed is likely to be a high priority. But it's the multi-player options that have got us smirking. The weapons list runs to an Auto Egger (firing live sniper chickens), a cow launcher and Mr Hankey, the talking yuletide turd. As well as four-player deathmatches, we expect capture the flag, a grudge match and (don't tell the BBFC), something called Kick the Baby ("Don't kick the baby!"). Not surprisingly, *South Park* is flagged "For mature audiences", though, of course, to get the most out of it you have to be anything but.

PC PLAYSTATION

# ROLLCAGE

Put *WipEout* on steroids, give it ten pints of strong lager, then stand well back to see the future of racing go apeshit...

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** More patent super-speedy sci-fi road rage from *WipEout* publisher, Psygnosis. This time with wheels.

**N**ow if anyone really knows futuristic racers, it's Psygnosis. With the original *WipEout* and its 2097 sequel, the 'pool-based outfit chucked away all the wheels, cat's eyes and sensible road markings of your average racing game in favour of a madly-paced vision of high-velocity hover cars, missiles and pumping techno.

*Rollcage* is along much the same lines, but with the tyres reinstated – this is less friction-free than *WipEout*, but still hardly a *Gran Turismo* in the realism stakes. Set in a future without traffic jams, it stars big-wheeled super-

### FACT FILE

■ **ROLLCAGE**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** PC, PLAYSTATION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** ATTENTION TO DETAIL  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** PSYGNOSIS  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
 ■ **16-PLAYER PC NETWORK GAME**  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** MARCH 1999

buggies that bear more than passing resemblance to those remote control jobs that flip over when you drive into walls.

So *Rollcage* shares a great deal with *WipEout*,

including a groovy soundtrack (this one featuring the likes of Fatboy Slim). Where it differs is in the behaviour of the cars. Rather than just clunking into the sides and blowing up, this bunch bounce off walls, flip over and keep going. Almost indestructible, they're tailor-made for driving up on to the ceiling, where the speed-up arrows have been cruelly placed.

But that's not all. Weapons have been thrown in to up the carnage level. Missiles are only to be expected, but there are also pick-ups that enable you to freeze the track in front of you, then watch as your opponents skid off, and warps, which actually enable you to slow the driver in front by altering the very passage of time. Your armoury isn't just there for car-to-car exchanges either – blast a building on the horizon (the pop-up-free graphics help) and you can send chunks of masonry down on a rival or cause an explosion that rips across the track.

Vicious opponent AI sees your competitors race like futuristic sales reps with more than just horns in their armoury, while the scenery moves by at such an impressive rate that hitting a speed-up arrow is almost more than you can take. Add in split-screen two-player races, a six-player PC network game and different gravity and weather on later tracks, and *Rollcage* looks like it might redefine racers all over again.



■ **Speed, that's what this one's all about. *Rollcage* stars a bunch of big-wheeled superbuggies that flip over but keep going every time they hit the slightest thing, just like those remote control things you see on kids' TV.**



# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Your nan. That bloke down the pub. *Everyone* loves Michael Owen. But can he shimmy round *ISS Pro's* back four to score as the best PlayStation footie game?

PC PLAYSTATION

## MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99

Yes, the scorer of *That Goal* has now got his own footie game.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Golden boy Owen supplies his fleet footed majesty to EIDOS' previously under-performing football franchise. Rival publishers are gutted.

License to print money, sub section d) "Football game endorsed by Michael Owen." Indeed there can't be many soccer stars better qualified to front your game in the increasingly hard-fought end of year football title tussle. But, of course, his name on the box doesn't guarantee that the *WLS '99*

itself will be any good. One should never judge a game by its packaging, right Trevor?

Certainly the immense largeness of Owen's name is probably necessary to bring some much-needed glamour to EIDOS Interactive's *World League Soccer* franchise. The original did tend to look a bit Wimbledon-ish when compared to *ISS Pro* and *FIFA's* silky shirted presentation. That said, it actually played very solid football and was hailed in some quarters as the fan's choice of football game last year. The emphasis was on a skilled passing game, which took some getting to grips with, rather than giving you instant out-of-the-box playability and a flashy great front end.

The biggest change in this year's version, apart from the name on the box, is in the graphics, with the

### FACT FILE

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99


- **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION, PC, N64
- **DEVELOPER:** SILICON DREAMS
- **PUBLISHER:** EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- **PLAYERS:** 1-4
- **ON SALE IN UK:** DECEMBER 1998 (PLAYSTATION, PC), APRIL 1999 (N64)

PlayStation version now running in hi-res. The players look more lifelike, and sport the same patented brand of smooth-skin technology as *Lara Croft*. The animation, too, is slicker throughout.

The controls, criticised as too complicated by casual players last time around, have been changed a tad to smooth-out *WLS's* learning curve to a gentler slope. Basic passing, shooting and tackling are on the PlayStation controller buttons but, used in combination with the shoulder buttons, enable shimmys, step overs and drag backs. The defence-splitting through balls and one-twos that were

such a highlight of the original are retained in the new version, and can now be used with a new camera pan that enables you to see players running into space.

Fittingly, for the universal appeal of the new license, *WLS '99* isn't as uncompromising to play as the original, which surely only lacked the endorsement of David Batty due to a clerical error. Shots now head swiftly goalwards even if you're not perfectly lined up, and while you don't get *FIFA-style* 15-14 goal bonanzas, a 1-1 draw's just as unlikely.

Judging by the latest version we've played at *Arcade*, developer Silicon Dreams shouldn't take the cup to the engravers quite yet, but the license alone should ensure more people get to experience a well-crafted game of football. 



■ Dive-'em-ups are a whole new genre, and bring with 'em new problems. Like how do you survive underwater without an air tank?

# PC HOMEWORLD

Remember *Battlestar Galactica*? Now you can play it (kinda) in Relic's space epic.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Real-time strategy in the C&C mould, but set in the vast impenetrableness of space.

**"No Hype. All Game."** That's the message behind the release of *Homeworld*, Cendant's soon-arriving real-time strategy epic. Unfortunately, developer Relic Entertainment has also described it as a cross between (yes!) *Star Wars* and *Command & Conquer*, forcing the hype machine to naturally flick on to automatic.

A brief look swiftly reveals what all the excitement is about. The plot echoes that of ageing TV space epic *Battlestar Galactica*, concentrating on our heroes' struggles to construct a gigantic mothership for use in their search for their lost "homeworld", the planet they were turfed off centuries before by nasty aliens. Your job is to take control of the ship and her accompanying fleet, before embarking on a series of missions in deep space, testing all your resource-building, exploration and combat skills.

Despite this real-time strategy basis, *Homeworld* differs wildly from

## FACT FILE

**HOMEWORLD**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** PC  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** RELIC  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** CENDANT  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** JANUARY 1999

*Red Alert* and friends in look and feel – after all, it's set in space, which means that both "goodie" and "baddie" ships can now roam about freely in three

dimensions. Relic promises that its player-controlled camera makes viewing the action from any angle simplicity itself, while the use of a bunch of pre-defined attack and defence formations should make 3D tactics more manageable than they perhaps sound.

Ah yes, the baddies. No Cylons, but you're ranged against feisty pirates and aliens, both of which are always ready for a fight. Your vast array of ships, from light-weight interceptors to heavy-duty, weapon-less research collectors, should be up for it. Best of all, the game boasts an impressive eight-player option, through Cendant's free on-line gaming Internet site.

It's been a while since a real-time strategy game has generated quite as much widespread excitement as *Homeworld*. Given the perennial popularity of the genre, you could be looking at the first PC smash-hit of '99.



PLAYSTATION

# DEEP BLUE

Don't risk plummeting like a rock in a crooked bathysphere. Explore under the sea the easy way, just you and a PlayStation.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Slightly bizarre Konami 3D diving game, presenting players with assorted wreck-searching, shark-fighting subaqua missions. Think the nautical bastard offspring of *Tomb Raider* and *Pilot Wings*.

**K**nown as *Dolphin's Dream* in Japan, and *G-Shock* in the US, Konami's latest is nothing if not original. It's a diving game offering a number of underwater missions, such as hunt down and kill an evil Great White in its waterlogged cave lair, or search level after level of Gigantic Matilda, a crazily named liner wreck, for trapped divers and sunken treasure. It also introduces just about every kind of fish you can think of, from barracuda to puffer fish, jellyfish to manta rays, some of which (we'll leave you to guess) damage your health bar should you bump into them.

There are puzzles to solve, caves to explore, rock-falls to avoid and stuff to find, each level being driven by a strict how-much-air-have-you-got? time limit. It's worse in the

## FACT FILE

**DEEP BLUE**  
 ■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** KONAMI  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** JANUARY 1999

early sections, where you're free-diving without an aqualung, like in the Jean Reno movie *The Big Blue*, and are thus

nerve-janglingly reliant on trapped air pockets and the like.

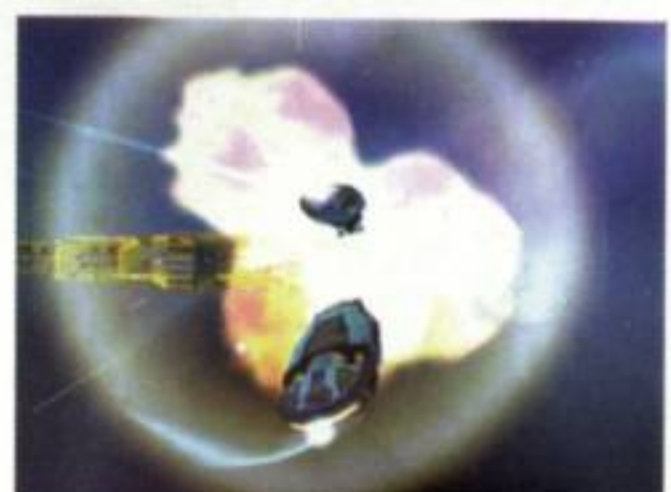
The whole thing is, like, pretty normal and realistic to start with, but – in the tradition of submarine movies like *The Abyss* – gets stranger as it goes on. Lobsters grow to giant sizes and the dolphins (who on early levels help you out when you're in trouble) start to reveal untold secrets.

For the UK version things are being rejigged slightly. The large and empty first level is being turned into a training area, for instance. The cheesy US intro voiceover is also being kicked into touch. But can these alterations ensure a UK success? "This is the sort of game the PlayStation has room for," hopes Konami's Jon Murphy.

We're not quite sure what that means either, but he's probably saying that while *Deep Blue* won't be to everyone's taste, there's always room for something just that little bit different. And *Arcade* agrees with him wholeheartedly.



■ **Real Time Strategy games (pioneered by *Command & Conquer*) are evolving at a furious rate. What's not sure, however, is if the move from 2D to 3D is necessarily the best way to go. *Homeworld* will help answer this question by unashamedly pitching its tent in the 3D camp.**

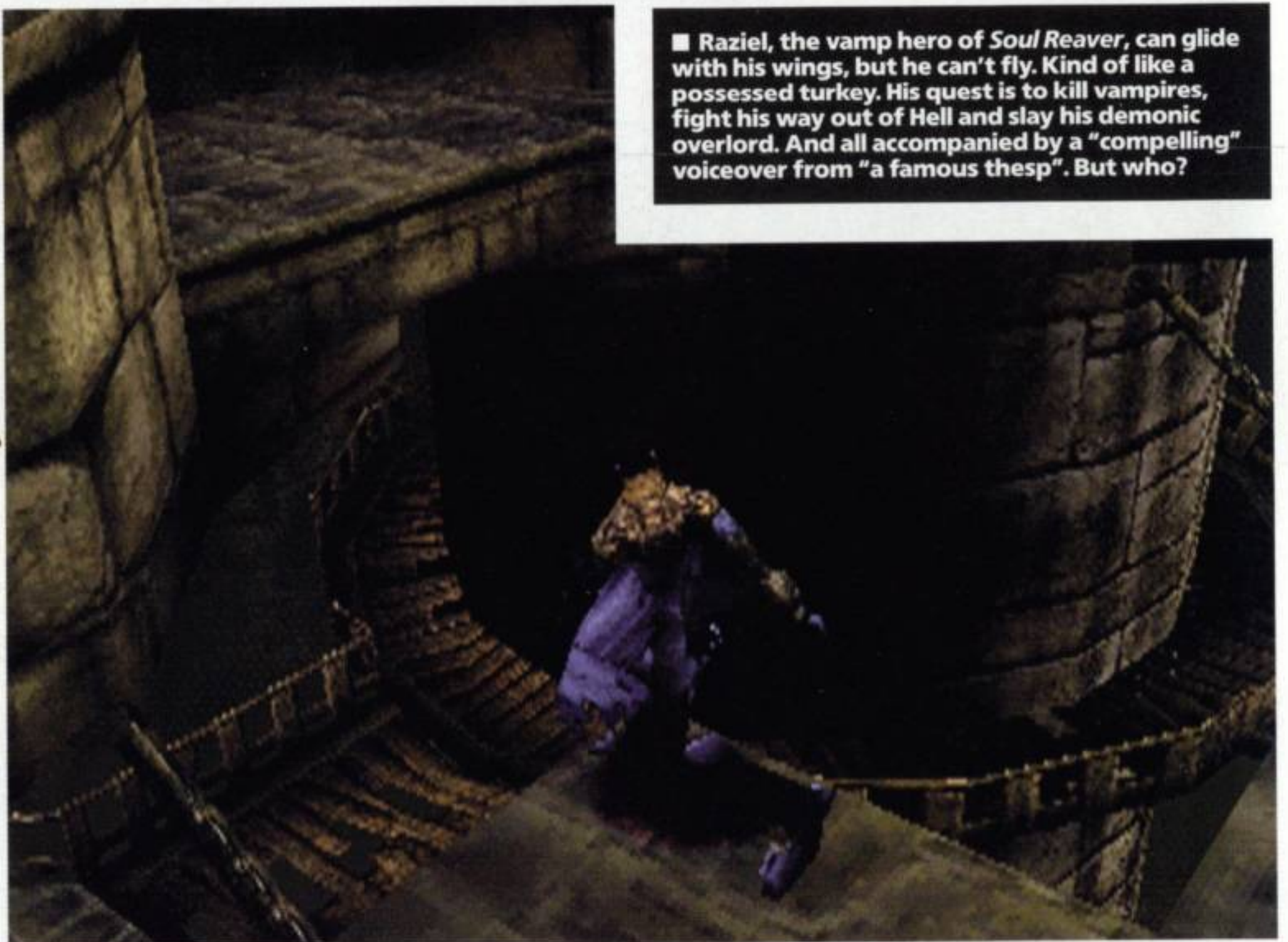


# COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Raziel, the vamp hero of *Soul Reaver*, can glide with his wings, but he can't fly. Kind of like a possessed turkey. His quest is to kill vampires, fight his way out of Hell and slay his demonic overlord. And all accompanied by a "compelling" voiceover from "a famous thesp". But who?



PLAYSTATION

## LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

Do Anne Rice novels get your pulse racing? Then try this 3D vampire title.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Tomb Raider-ish 3D adventure, using the vampire-populated RPG world introduced in *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* to more dramatic effect.

**F**or all those who say, "Sod brown, pink, or whatever it is they're claiming is the new black this year. Black is the new black, and always will be," the intricate gothic world of *Legacy of Kain* will feel like coming home. It's a place occupied almost entirely by vampires – at least 10 different types at last count, including ones specifically adapted to life underwater. In this world humans have largely become domesticated cattle, and the ruling

vampire court houses intrigues and back-stabbings to rival any European monarchy.

If you never played the original *Legacy* game, *Blood Omen* – a top-down viewed action RPG from a couple of years back, but set 1000 years before *Soul Reaver* – the first thing that may surprise you is that you don't play Kain himself. Instead he's the vampire Lord who established the status quo, and thus has become your enemy. You play Raziel, once one of his prized lieutenants, who's been

thrown out of the land of Nosgoth into the bottomless vortex, Lucifer-style, for daring to mutate – as all the leading vampires do, apparently – faster than his master. Now serving another, perhaps-yet-darker, lord, you're back in a Nosgoth now rendered in fluid full-freedom 3D, seeking vengeance, and perhaps to uncover the mysteries of this world.

The game boasts a new hand-to-hand combat system that allows you to club foes with whatever happens to be lying around – very effective.

### FACT FILE

LEGACY OF KAIN  
SOUL REAVER

■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION  
■ **DEVELOPER:** CRYSTAL DYNAMICS  
■ **PUBLISHER:** EIDOS INTERACTIVE  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **ON SALE IN UK:** MARCH 1999

There's a bizarre morphing effect that allows you to move from the real world to a twisted spectral realm, where you'll be able to do things impossible in the physical universe.

And, as you move around, sucking the souls from other vampires will even give you added superhuman abilities. You can already glide (but not quite fly – kind of like a flying squirrel) on bat-like wings (the mutation that got Kain so hacked at you, apparently), but killing an underwater vamp will give you his abilities too, for instance.

The game may look kinda *Tomb Raider*, but it's weirder. And definitely blacker.





PLAYSTATION

# G-POLICE 2 WEAPONS OF JUSTICE

Psygnosis updates last year's 3D blaster with harder hardware and badder battles.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** Sequel to the ace but ill-selling futuristic 3D blaster-cum-flight game.

**T**he news that Psygnosis is releasing a sequel to its ambitious 3D flying-and-shooting adventure will probably excite fewer people than it should. The original – imagine some kind of futuristic version of a helicopter gunship blaster and you won't be far off – garnered frothing reviews on its release in December last year, but still sold damn poorly. It remains unclear why.

Perhaps it was because previous PlayStation flight titles had almost always been turds in a trunk, so gamers were unwilling to take a risk. Or perhaps it's because *G-Police* offered such an aggressive learning curve people got quickly bored and frustrated with it. Certainly, the relative complexity of the game may well have daunted less experienced gamers. Admittedly important points, but more than balanced out by the gorgeous opening FMV sequence, the imaginative storyline and the many and varied missions. All good stuff, so it's great to see the same team back for a second bite at the cherry.

*G-Police 2* makes a series of very important changes. Handling the complexities of flying – a vital part of the game – is far more intuitive than it was before, with Psygnosis making

**FACT FILE**

**G-POLICE 2: WEAPONS OF JUSTICE**

■ **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION (DUAL SHOCK AND ANALOGUE)  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** PSYGNOSIS  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** PSYGNOSIS  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** MARCH 1999

the most of the PlayStation joypad's limited abilities as a flight game controller. You'll still start out in charge of a Havoc Vector Thrust gunship, but once you're proficient the new game offers the

opportunity to instead fly the trickier, but ultimately more satisfying, Venom. Psygnosis also promises a further three new vehicles and, although information on these is "classified" at the moment, early screenshots suggest that a nippy armoured car and some kind of AT-AT-style battle robot will be among them.

The missions will again take place under the dark skies of the moon Callisto, but all 16 domed areas are bigger, and boast a wider variety of landscapes. At least this time you won't keep getting blown to pieces as you're struggling to find which way is up.



■ **The first *G-Police* relied largely on your skills at the helm of the Havoc helicopter. But *Weapons Of Justice* gives you these three intriguing new vehicles. By the looks of things, you can fly, drive and stomp robotically over all who stand in the way of wiping out inter-galactical crime.**



■ **There's no disguising the influence of Sega's awesome *Sega Rally* coin-op in the design of *V-Rally*. There are the same track pointers, a similar commentary, and even comparable cars. But this isn't necessarily a bad thing: with Sega committed to its own hardware aspirations (see the news feature on page 18) there's no way it would allow such a major game to appear on a rival system. This, then, is about as near as Nintendo 64 is likely to get to that seminal arcade game. Make do with it.**



NINTENDO 64

# V-RALLY 98 CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

At last – a Nintendo 64 version of one of PlayStation's greatest off-road racers. And about time.

■ **IN A NUTSHELL:** This new N64 version of a top PlayStation rally game gives Nintendo's machine a much needed boost in the vaguely-realistic driving sim stakes

**T**he Nintendo 64 take on *V-Rally* isn't a radical improvement on the PlayStation game, but it is an important release nonetheless. Slipping into shops barely this side of New Year it near-enough justifies its "98" tag and will be afforded a warm welcome from Nintendo 64 gamers itching for something to drive. This, *F-1 World Grand Prix* and *F-Zero* are all needed to fill gaps in Nintendo's software line-up lingering from of the bad old "quality not quantity" days when its philosophy appeared to be never to release any games.

*Mario Kart* and lookalike *Diddy Kong Racing* have offered cartoon-style thrills, but what the system has needed is a half-decent, serious(ish) driving game. The good news is that it looks like it may now have got one.

*V-Rally '98* is one of the best around. It boasts 12 real rally cars – including radical Class A types like the Subaru Impreza and milder Class B Peugeots and Renaults – plus a

**FACT FILE**

**V-RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION**

■ **FORMAT:** NINTENDO 64  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** EDEN STUDIOS  
 ■ **PUBLISHER:** INFOGRAAMES  
 ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
 ■ **ON SALE IN UK:** DECEMBER 1998

few secret ones. There are 39 tracks in eight countries (taking in nearly everything from rainy England to rocky Corsica). There are four game modes (Arcade, Time Trail, Championship and

Rally), plus a choice of horizontal or vertical split-screen options (but no four-player mode – it was rumoured, but the game chugs enough with two controllable cars on screen). Just the fact that Infogrames has bothered to improve upon the PlayStation version (with better car dynamics) suggests a new commitment from the French giant to the N64 too: another plus.

In fact, Nintendo players are clearly benefiting from the game's testing in the PlayStation market. It's got a well-thought-out game structure, fine controls, night, mist, dust, snow and every other weather condition you can think of, and a real feeling that you're in a different car each time – especially when you switch from a tail-happy real-driver to a scrabbling front-wheel-drive to a beautifully balanced 4x4. N64 die-hards might normally be reluctant to buy a game soiled by PlayStation association, but this one's good enough to make them swallow their pride.



**COMING SOON**  
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Lots of people who know what they're talking about expect bronto-sized things of *Trespasser* (not least *Tomb Raider III* designer Richard Morten – see letters, page 6). The game's complex AI and great graphics prove not all movie tie-need be dinosaurs.



**PC**  
**TRESPASSER**

Here's a *Jurassic Park* game without the *Jurassic Park* name.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** Shoot the dinosaurs, sure. Show 'em who's the daddy. But cock up their ecosystem and you could be extinct.

**T**he *Jurassic Park* saga rumbles steadily onward. The disappointing *Lost World* movie sequel was accompanied by a fantastic coin-op shooter which bore little resemblance to its cinematic cousin (save for the inclusion of



dinosaurs, naturally), and now *Trespasser* grasps the fraying ends of the story's thread. Hapless Anne (voiced by Minnie Driver) is stranded on the nasty Site B island, and it's your job to get her outta there in one piece. However, blasting your way through the reptilian population is not an option...

Two years in creation, *Trespasser* is presented in the first-person, with you as Anne running about, grabbing weapons and solving lots of puzzles. With every object in the 3D environment promising interactivity, cause-and-effect becomes a serious issue. What's certain is that you can expect tasks to be intricate

**FACT FILE**

**TRESPASSER**  
■ **FORMAT:** PC  
■ **DEVELOPER:** DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE  
■ **PUBLISHER:** EA  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **ON SALE IN UK:** LATE DECEMBER 1998

and varied, from manipulating logs in order to cross a river, to weighing specific quantities of chemicals.

But perhaps *Trespasser's* most interesting feature is that an understanding of the island's dino ecosystem is needed to finish the game. Although this could sound a tad pretentious, this also promises to be fascinating. Apparently, the use of ground-breaking AI and physics modelling now mean the game's dinosaurs react to their environment both physically and emotionally, behaving more like sophisticated animals than one-dimensional monsters. Mess about with the food chain, then, and you could be in

trouble as your place in it shifts. In an ironic echo of the original film plot, apocryphal stories have the game's designers supposedly expressing surprise at the actions of their own on-screen dinosaurs. We're keeping a pinch of salt handy for that one, but it certainly sounds interesting.

Chances are *Trespasser* isn't going to appeal to everyone. Edge-of-seat thrills are largely replaced by cerebral deliberation – this is much more complex than your average *JP* game. And creeping around – *Metal Gear Solid* style – is as much a part of the game as blasting. It's so complex, in fact, that there are fears over the level of hardware required to run the thing satisfactorily. EA claims a P166 will do the job, but a 3D accelerator card may be needed to get *Trespasser* playing as it should.



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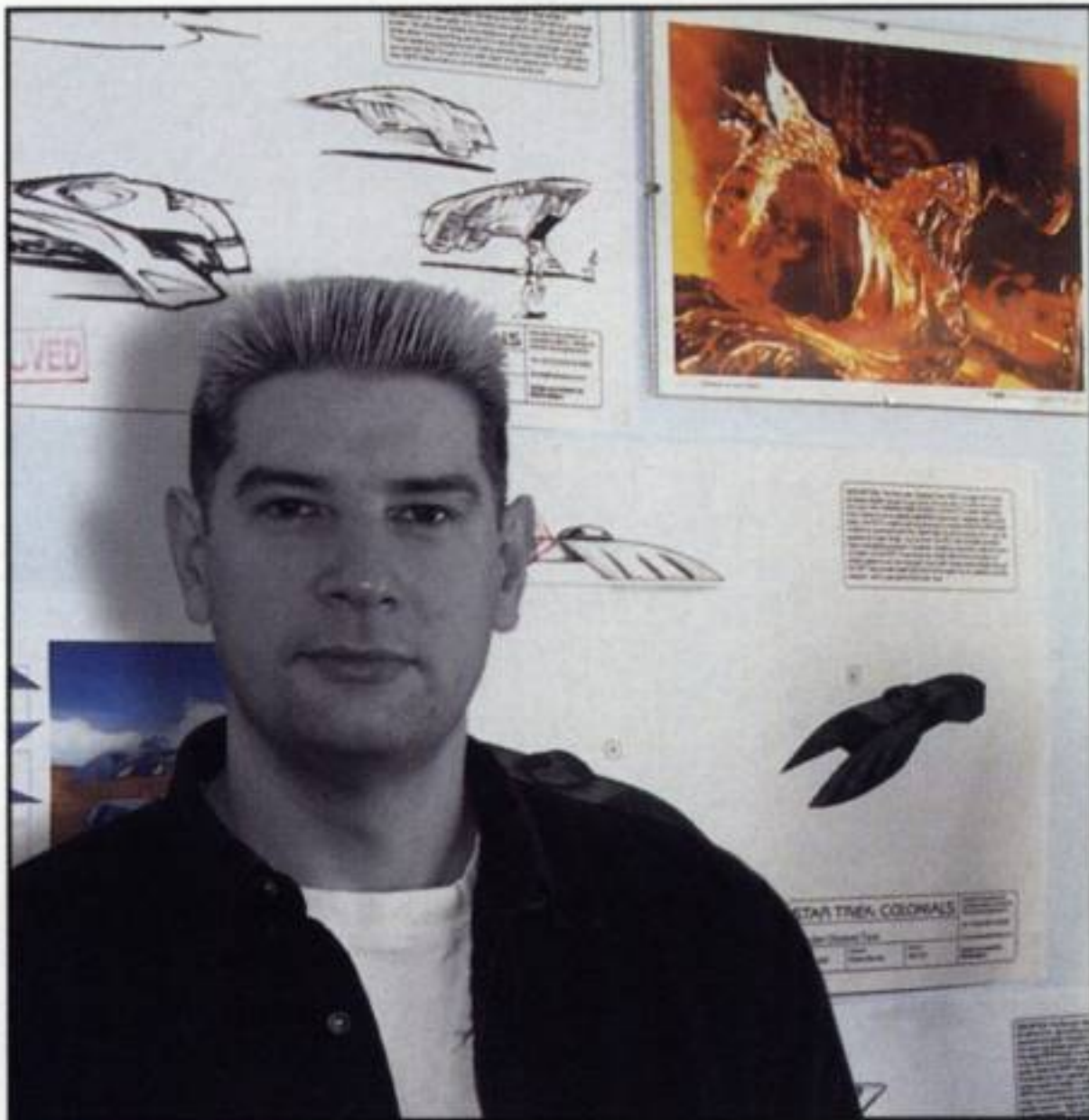
  
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# Games Insider

You know games. We know games. But these guys, they really know games. And when they talk about games... Well, it's worth listening.



BACKSCREEN

## Neil Jackson

Ever waited in desperation for a game to arrive? I have. And I was working on it...

**H**ave you ever wondered what happens behind the scenes in the games-biz? In my industry days, I've managed to fit in job titles including game producer, software manager and even (a long time ago) games magazine hack, so I know how it looks from every single angle. At the moment, for instance, I'm co-designing *Star Trek: New Worlds* for Binary Asylum, eventually to be published by Interplay. But right here, right now I've got a different job – to try and give you some straight answers to the questions that continually dumbfound those of us in the real world. About games, that is; I don't do plumbing or DIY tips.

So what's the biggest – and frequently most frustrating – mystery kicked up by the games industry? Easy: why does so much software come out so late? Here's my tardy top ten:

### 1) Bad bugs show up in final testing

There's a saying that 95% of a game takes 95% of the planned time to do, and the last 5% takes another 95%. Nobody plans to put bugs into code, so guesstimates are all that can ever be scheduled for testing. A screwed-up game can't be shipped (unless you want it to be your last).

### 2) The developer runs out of money

If a game's running late, and the original money-men pull out, and the developer can't immediately jump into bed with a new partner in a follow-on relationship, it's screwed. If a deal comes really late, teams sometimes "two-time" their publishers, working on two different games simultaneously, delaying both. It's the oldest vicious circle in the business.

### 3) The producer/designer/lead programmer changes

New-arrival bosses are always a problem – like a new wife, they'll try and change round the whole house. And losing your top coder is similar to losing a vital organ – a person's programming tricks are as individual as their lovemaking style, and it can take days to figure out why someone else's methods work better than yours. Documentation is like washing-up – it only gets done by flunkies, not coders.

### 4) Expectation exceeds capability

The failure to realise that the full-screen 3D, real-time-animated, action-adventure-simulation-strategy-management-cinematic-shoot-'em-up is just not going to get done in five months by two retired ex-Civil Service computer operators, no matter how late they stay at the office.

### 5) The marketing guys want "just a little bit" more

A mere couple of months before completion, the marketing team develops its plans and assesses the competition. If it doesn't think the game is as red-hot as a Dutch porn video, the team will demand an overhaul. It's like wallpapering the living room only to find that the missus now wants "marbling", like Mr and Mrs Jones next door.

### 6) Shareholder pressure

The investors in stockmarket-quoted publishers are rather like difficult, gold-digging girlfriends – one dodgy present and you're dumped. Healthy-looking accounts mean happy shareholders, so people often get fired or moved, budgets get cut and offices closed

for reasons that have nothing to do with the game. It can ruin continuity and scare key people into jumping like rats off what they fear is soon to be a sinking ship. Then, of course, it sinks.

### 7) Strong rival games expected on sale at the same time as yours

When a project is first signed up, publishers are like nuns on a vow of silence. Three-quarters in, and they turn into knicker-flashing cheerleaders. Then they get like jealous lovers if they discover a sexy-looking rival will be running head-to-head with their offering. If they can't release earlier, they'll move your project back – often after they've already started the game's pre-release hype. Oops.

### 8) The licensor holds up approval


For every game-of-the-film, book or sport, there's a company that's licensing a publisher to use its trademark. Strings are always attached. The licensor holds the right of approval, and may force redesigns at any stage. A licensor may even withhold final approval because the dumb computer-illiterate fools simply can't load or play the finished product.

### 9) Platform quality dramatically improves or new platforms emerge

You're nine months into a game's development, and then someone decides that the new Sogeyendo Dream-Station 64 really is better than ecstasy. The publisher cuts a new deal, perhaps with a different developer, to do a version for it. A tightwad publisher may sit on the completed version of a project and launch them both together for the same marketing cost.

### 10) The developer runs into technical trouble

When an inexperienced team is hired solely on the strength of a demo, it may find expanding a neat, one-trick demo into a fully-fledged game turns it into a ball of virtual spaghetti. It's like arguing with your lover: you're always in the wrong and losing ground, no matter what you add, excuse or fiddle with.

Well that's this issue's mystery demystified, but if you have a question about the software biz, or want to know the reasons behind some of the seemingly daft decisions that get made, send your hard-hitting questions to [backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk](mailto:backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk) and I'll try and answer them in a future column. 

■ **Ex-Argonaut producer Neil is working on *Star Trek: New Worlds* at Binary Asylum.**



THIS IS HARDCORE

## Julian Rignall

You may think *Unreal* is just another dumb shooter. It's not.

**I've been playing games for years. Ever since Pong, indeed. I was one of those idiots who used to play arcade machines all day for 10p, and I'm always first to buy the latest console. I'm a hardcore gamer.**

But as the years have gone by, I've found fewer and fewer games get me really excited. At times I've been as jaded as buggery. But every time I think that I'm finally going to hang up my joypad and quit, from out of nowhere a stonking game comes along and reminds me why I got into this business in the first place. It's because videogames are great. Videogames *really* are great. You've just got to sort the wheat from the chaff.

The latest sheaf of wheat to get me all lathered up has been *Unreal*. It's a truly excellent game, and even though it's not really original, it has something that just keeps me playing. What is that "something"? Let's take a look.

First of all, the environments are superb – for the first time ever while playing a game, I actually stopped to look around and marvel at the view. *Unreal* genuinely feels like it's transported you to someplace you've never been before. A lot of games try and do this, but few succeed. *Unreal's* parents, *Doom* and *Quake*, were pretty good at it though, and *Unreal* takes it to new heights. There's a kind of cohesion to the environment that makes it highly convincing – it feels lived-in.

And, in a way, it is. Basically, the planet you crash land on at the start of the game is occupied by a horde of ruthless aliens who are slowly killing the peace-loving indigenous populace. But you don't know this at first, instead slowly discovering the grizzly truth as you wander around the environment, happening upon torn bodies hanging from rafters,



roasting over hot fires or just lying in bloody bits at every turn. You soon realise who the good guys are, who the baddies are, and that you're in a world where something "big" is going down. You don't know what, but you want to find out. And it's this plot construction, on top of the lush graphics, that makes the action compelling from the off.

To really get my motor running, a game has to offer depth, evolving interest and lots of things to do. *Unreal* provides plenty of great examples of this. Occasionally, for instance, you'll stumble into a situation where there might be two or three bad guys about to execute a good guy. If you're quick enough, you can save the good guy. If you're too slow, or if you are seen, the baddies quickly kill off the good guys and then come after you. It doesn't necessarily matter to your completion of the game whether or not you get there in time. It just makes the whole experience feel a bit more real, it makes you feel like there's stuff happening all around you, whether you stumble across it or not. You're actually somewhere else, getting involved in something where maybe you can make a difference.

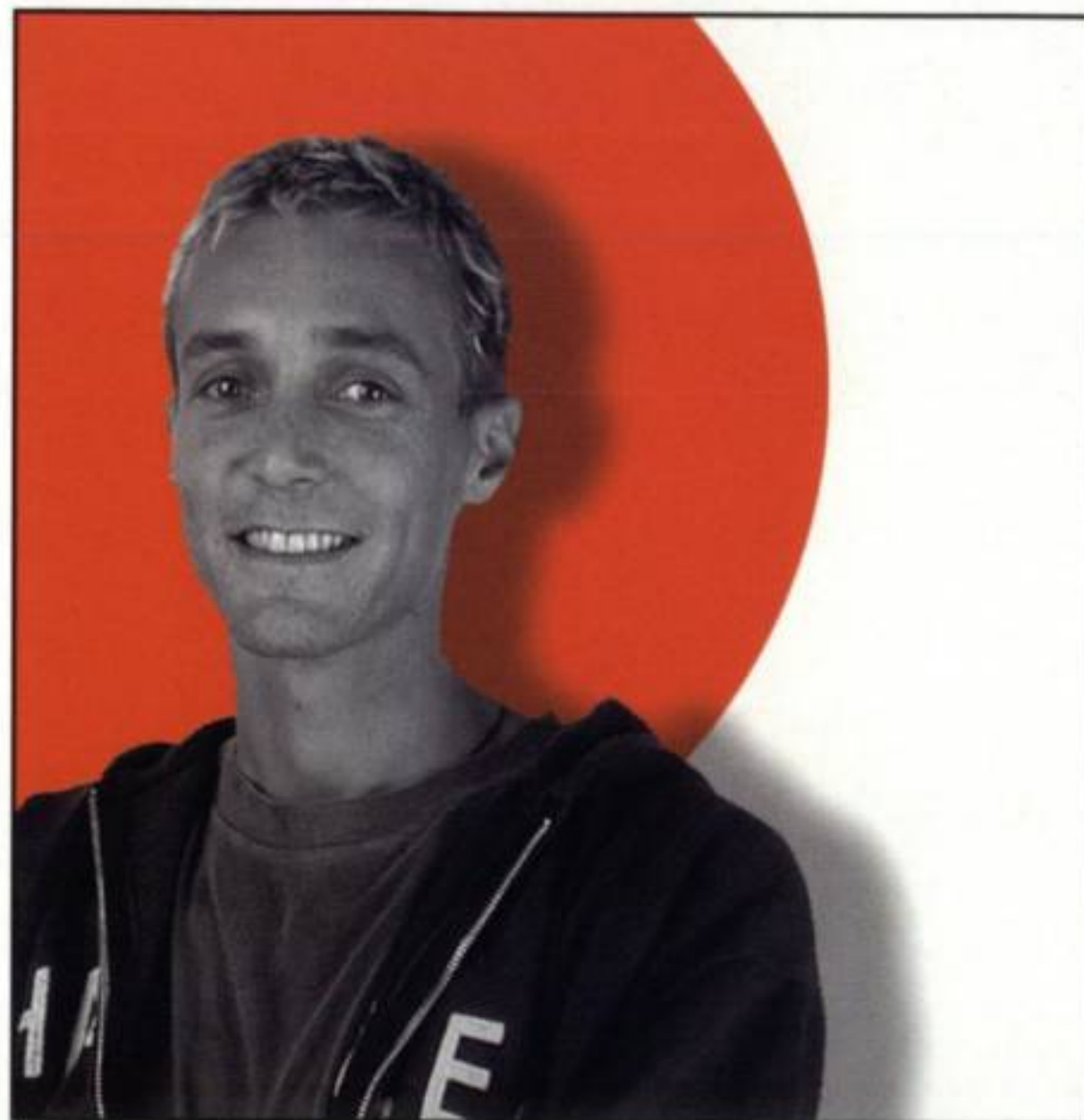
Other games have done this in the past, but not to *Unreal's* degree. So even though there are plenty of holes in the game; even though, when you get down to it, the plot and scenario are still fairly simplistic; *Unreal* still marks a step forward. Not a great one, but just enough to offer a decent glimpse of how games can continue to evolve if they're to make sure they stay entertaining.

Bottom line: making a great game is not just about upping the audio-visuals and supplying us "more" of what we played last year. It's about challenging the player with new ideas, ideals and situations. It's about delivering something that will make even a jaded old hack like me stop and think: "If I shoot this guy, what's going to happen? If I get involved in this situation, is someone in the game world going to get pissed off and make things harder? Or will there be a reward that makes things easier?"

It's about making sure the player taxes more than just his trigger finger.



■ Julian's a gaming legend. Just ask anyone who's been around for a while.



#### TURNING JAPANESE

## Jason Brookes

Introducing a brand new genre: the "rhythm action" game...

**W**hether cruising Tokyo's "electric town" of Akihabara, with its endless sprawl of frantic game stores, or simply wandering into packed arcades at midnight on a Friday, Japan's reputation as gaming's nirvana is deserved. Few know this better than Hideo Kojima, designer of one of 1998's biggest PlayStation titles, *Metal Gear Solid*. Sitting in a restaurant with *Arcade* staff after the Tokyo Games Show, he accepts a napkin from a passing waiter – not to wipe his mouth, but for scribbling his autograph on. The man about to take his order, you see, is also an awestruck fan. Forget Mario, Sonic and *Crash Bandicoot* – Japan has real-life videogaming stars.

Despite an economy that has the bailiffs banging at the door, Japan is still unmistakably the epicentre of the videogaming world. Indeed, by



#### AMERICAN EXPRESS

## Simon Cox

Americans: they're odd. Well, odd-ish.

**W**hatever happened to Esperanto? You remember, the international language that some boffin figured would unite the world, prevent wars over

mispronunciations and enable the Americans to understand street signs in countries they were about to invade. Well, it failed. The Sinclair C5 of languages, it had a silly name, a high concept and, in the end, no one bought it. Attempting anything on such a grand scale, it seems, is a risky proposition. But wait – it seems that videogames could be working where Esperanto failed.

It would be stretching the point to say that videogames are a truly international language. But you could probably get away with arguing that great videogames – no matter where conceived – cross borders at least as well as any other cultural export. The joy of fragging that last Grunt with just 2% health left is exactly the same in any language.

Americans are waiting with baited breath for *Quake III*, and so are you. Americans are dying to sneak about wearing a dress instead of a tux in the *GoldenEye* "sequel" *Perfect Dark* – just like

## Dancing coin-ops are monopolising the time of arcade goers

1990 one in four households in Japan owned a Nintendo console – back then, an unassuming box called the Famicom (in terms of brand consciousness, this was the Hoover of videogames), which later became known as the NES in the west. Now, just eight years later, the company that took videogaming into the Japanese home and built a multi-billion Yen industry, has been relegated to third position in the living room console stakes behind relative newcomer Sony and longer-term rival Sega (Saturn having been a much bigger deal in Japan than anywhere else, while Nintendo 64 conspicuously failed to take off in its homeland). Only the imminent and wonderful *Zelda* looks set to revitalise the N64's fortunes.

Nintendo's misfortune has been Sony's gain, however, and the changes in Japan's gaming landscape since Sony entered the market, in December 1994, have been remarkable. Sony tapped into the population well beyond the established videogaming demographics (kids and hardcore gamers) and opened up its appeal to an older, more casual onlooker.

While Sony has been criticised for allowing too many games to come into the Japanese market – and one look in a typically packed games store will confirm there's a problem – the company has also been commended for investing some of its vast revenue into creating fresher, more imaginative

software. A successful example is the gloriously "kawaii" (cute) *PaRappa the Rapper*, which has not only incited a wave of rival products (a genre in Japan dubbed by some magazines as "rhythm action" games), but has also provided a bankable blueprint to be used by exploitative coin-op manufacturers. As a result, both DJ beat mixing and dancing coin-ops are monopolising the time of Japan's millions of arcade goers. The best – Konami's *Dance Dance Revolution*, covered in detail in Game On this issue (page 12) – is a real crowd puller.

Sony's influence on the games market can also be seen in the release and marketing of western-developed games in Japan. In this notoriously tough-to-crack market, games often bomb, irrespective of quality, so a clever marketing job spent "educating" PlayStation owners about new software while bestowing foreign games with a modicum of kudos, has helped – particularly with *Crash Bandicoot*, the most successful non-Japanese videogame character in Japan so far. The fact that it took a hefty campaign from Sony to convince people to buy American instead of Japanese, is, of course, a sign that western videogames have some way to go before they command the same respect as western pop music.



■ Jason is an ex-editor of *Edge* magazine.

you. And they're going to rush out in their millions to buy *Zelda* when it eventually ships just, in fact, like you. And although it required a lot of reading (something marginally less appealing to Americans than a bone marrow transplant), Square's *Final Fantasy VII* made just as big an impression in the leafy suburbs of New England as it did in, well, old England.

Okay, so *FIFA '99* isn't going to sell more than *Madden 99*. And if Bullfrog wants to shift *Populous: The Beginning* over here it may need to add some tanks to the mix. But all in all, the markets are converging. Hits are hits, after all.

Now, this may be great, in a "Why can't we all just get along?" kind of way. But it also buggers up this column. What's the point of me going on about US gamers if they're just like you? Have I just talked my way out of a job?

Well, no. You see, even if the US and UK gaming scenes are 99% the same, there's still that 1% difference. And that 1% says so much. Every now and then there's a great but quirky European game that fails to raise the Yanks from

their chips and salsa. There are the UK marketing campaigns that meet nothing but blank stares from perplexed American gamers ("Yeah, but can I shoot it?"). And there's the worrying tendency for PC gamers over here to spend hours simulating nutter sports. So even though, mainly, they have the same gaming DNA as us, in some ways they're very, very different.

Over the coming months I'll be celebrating this difference, and in the process trying to explain how much you're missing out on by ignoring things like on-line gaming. I'll try and get to the bottom of the success of the *Madden* gridiron franchise. And, somehow, I'll find a cultural and sociological reason for the existence of titles like *Deer Hunter*. Other, obviously, than pointing at this country's rare talent for producing psychotic gun-toting Republican loonies by the 16-wheeler truck-load.

Because that wouldn't be sporting, would it?



■ Simon is executive editor of *San Francisco's Next Generation* magazine.

# Reaper Woman

Devastating elemental sorceress Delphi is about to raise temperatures in the upcoming PC game *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. Here's why.

**W**hen your island home has been invaded by evil space marines, and Kabuto, the overgrown monster that you've created to protect yourself has turned against you, eaten most of your people, and driven the rest of you into the sea, you've got an excuse for looking a tad marked. Hence Delphi's less than welcoming scowl. Don't be fooled by appearances, though — underneath she's just a pussycat. Well, sort of.

"Delphi's still a little pissed off about that whole losing her island thing," explains creator Bob Stevenson of Planet Moon Studios, home of the soon-to-be-release PC game she stars in, *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. "When she finally kills Kabuto and gets rid of all the Meccaryns she'll hopefully cheer up a bit."

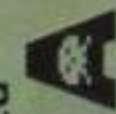
There's a chance she'll do it, too. Delphi is queen of the Sea Reapers, angry all-female humanoid creatures who — through prolonged exposure to the magical oceans of their world — have become semi-energy beings, capable of virtual immortality and somehow able to fertilise themselves, and procreate, by bathing in the sea. "There used to be both males and females," says Bob, "but the surviving blokes sadly didn't become fantastically long-lived through the waters, weren't needed for making babies, and thus died out of sheer boredom. Worse, they weren't missed. It's all a little brutal, actually."

*Giants: Citizen Kabuto* is a 3D strategy game that enables you to play either Delphi and her Sea Reapers, the Mecc soldiers or Kabuto himself, in a mission to rid the island of everyone else and claim it for yourself. On their side the Reapers have natural magical abilities enhanced by the oceans, and these enable them to take different energy forms to help fight


their enemies. Favourites among their armoury are elemental weapons — like ultra-destructive sword-wielding tornadoes — and more physical magical bows.

"We wanted to create a character who was elegant but deadly," concludes Bob. "Kind of like a siren; a good-looking Medusa. Visually, I wanted to make her look like she's lit from within, ethereal and graceful. But with a modest, pert pair of breasts."

■ Delphi appears in *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*, developed by Planet Moon and published by Interplay. Look out for a spring '99 release.







**“Snake likes songs with positive lyrics more than love songs. There may be times on the battlefield when he sings while reloading his gun.”**

*Hideo Kojima, Tokyo, October 1998*

# Hideo Kojima

Interview by | Neil West

**Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* man on the evils of smoking, karaoke and why Solid Snake doesn't get invited to parties much, but loves the songs of Burt Bacharach**

**H**ideo Kojima is producer of Konami's red-hot *Metal Gear Solid*, due for release in the UK this February. The game is already available in Japan, where it has been dubbed "the best PlayStation game of all time" by several magazines. It's selling by the bucketload too, and Kojima-san is enjoying something approaching rock star status in his native Tokyo.

Arcade caught up with him at the Tokyo Games Show to talk about his ground-breaking sneak-'em-up, and its hero, Solid Snake...

**You've become pretty famous in Tokyo. Are you enjoying it?**

Now that *Metal Gear*'s been out for a month, I can relax – I can walk around and see stuff. When my own games first go on sale I worry about what other people think of them. I get very nervous. But now I can walk around making other people nervous!

**Have you been stalked by any crazy Japanese fans?**

There was this one guy who used to work in the Japanese Self Defence Army. He sent me a whole bunch of pictures of himself without a shirt posing with a model gun in his hand. These were crazy photos. In his letter he wrote "Use me as Snake!" and kept on explaining how physically fit he was. Luckily, not all gamers are like this.

**How involved are you in the UK version of *Metal Gear Solid*?**

Mainly it's just a case of translating the language and moving from NTSC to PAL. We haven't added any major features, it's just little things. Japanese and Western gamers have slightly different tastes in terms of difficulty level, for example.

**Hang on. Are you calling Western gamers poofs?**

No – I meant the other way round. We actually have to make it easier for the

Japanese gamers. They're accustomed to playing easy games. They're used to being able to finish everything they play.

You see, I think you get used to games like you get used to cars: if you're used to a heavy-steering car, then you might not feel comfortable driving a car with light steering. So US and European gamers would be dissatisfied with the difficulty level of the Japanese version.

**Plenty of English gamers are so keen to play *Metal Gear Solid*, they've bought Japanese versions on import. Assuming they can't speak Japanese, how much are they missing out on?**

They won't understand the storyline and the in-game dialogue. But the real fun of the game is sneaking around, hiding and creeping up on enemies, and all this is the same, regardless of language. And the message of the game – anti-war, anti-nuclear weapons – is quite simple and pretty obvious.

**Anti-war? But Snake is so incredibly violent. If I was to meet him in a bar, do you think he'd be friendly?**

It's hard to say. We tried not to give him too much character because we want players to be able to take on his role. Snake isn't like a movie star. He's not someone you watch, he's someone you can step into the shoes of. Playing Snake gives gamers the chance to be a hero.

**OK, so he's mysterious. But let's try to add a little colour. What would he choose to sing at a karaoke party?**

If he had to, I think he'd probably pick something like "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head" by Burt Bacharach. With the BJ Thomas vocal – from the 1969 movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. He'd probably sing in a whispering, mumbling kind of way.

Snake likes songs with positive lyrics more than love songs. There may be times on the battlefield when he sings while reloading his gun.

**Does he get invited to many parties?**

Snake is not the sociable type, but he does want to go to parties. He gets invited often and goes to the venue. But he stands outside and stares through the window at the people inside, envying all the fun they're having.

**Why are we waiting?**

It's pretty damn frustrating being a UK gamer, and thus having to wait a good six months after *Metal Gear Solid*'s release in Japan for the game to make its official UK debut (for a few reasons why this sort of thing happens, check out page 59). But it could be worse. Spare a thought for the real Snake fan – the diehard who's been waiting almost ten years for a third installment in the *Metal Gear* series.

The original *Metal Gear*, also produced by Mr. Kojima, debuted in 1987 on the ill-fated MSX2 console. Nintendo was quick to secure a conversion for its own NES, and the game's popularity soared. Its sequel, *Solid Snake*, was released the next year to rapturous acclaim. But then it all went quiet. Kojima busied himself with projects for Konami such as *Snatcher* and *Policenauts*, and it seemed Snake had taken early retirement.

But no – Kojima was just waiting for graphics technology to catch up with his ideas for what *Metal Gear Solid* should be. "I have lots of ideas," he says, "and even right now there are many things I want to do that just aren't possible with the machines that are available currently." In other words, don't hold your breath for *Metal Gear Solid 2*...

**Now we're getting somewhere. He smokes, too. Was it hard getting cigarettes in the game? Some publishers get funny about it.**

People of our generation, we grew up with these hard-boiled characters in hardcore espionage stories – and they all smoked cigarettes and wore shades. So Snake had to do the same in the game. Konami didn't have a problem with it because we let the player know that cigarettes are bad for them. Snake's life bar goes down when he's smoking.


**It seems that smoking a pack of Snake's cigs equates to taking a bullet in the head! Those are pretty serious fags he's got...**

It's not that bad. And he can't die from smoking. If you were down to your last little bit of health, and lit a cigarette, it wouldn't kill you. We were planning to include more of the cigarettes in the gameplay. At one point you would be stuck in a cell with no way out. The trick would be to befriend the guard by giving him a cigarette, but this idea didn't make it to the final game.

**What games first made you catch the videogame bug?**

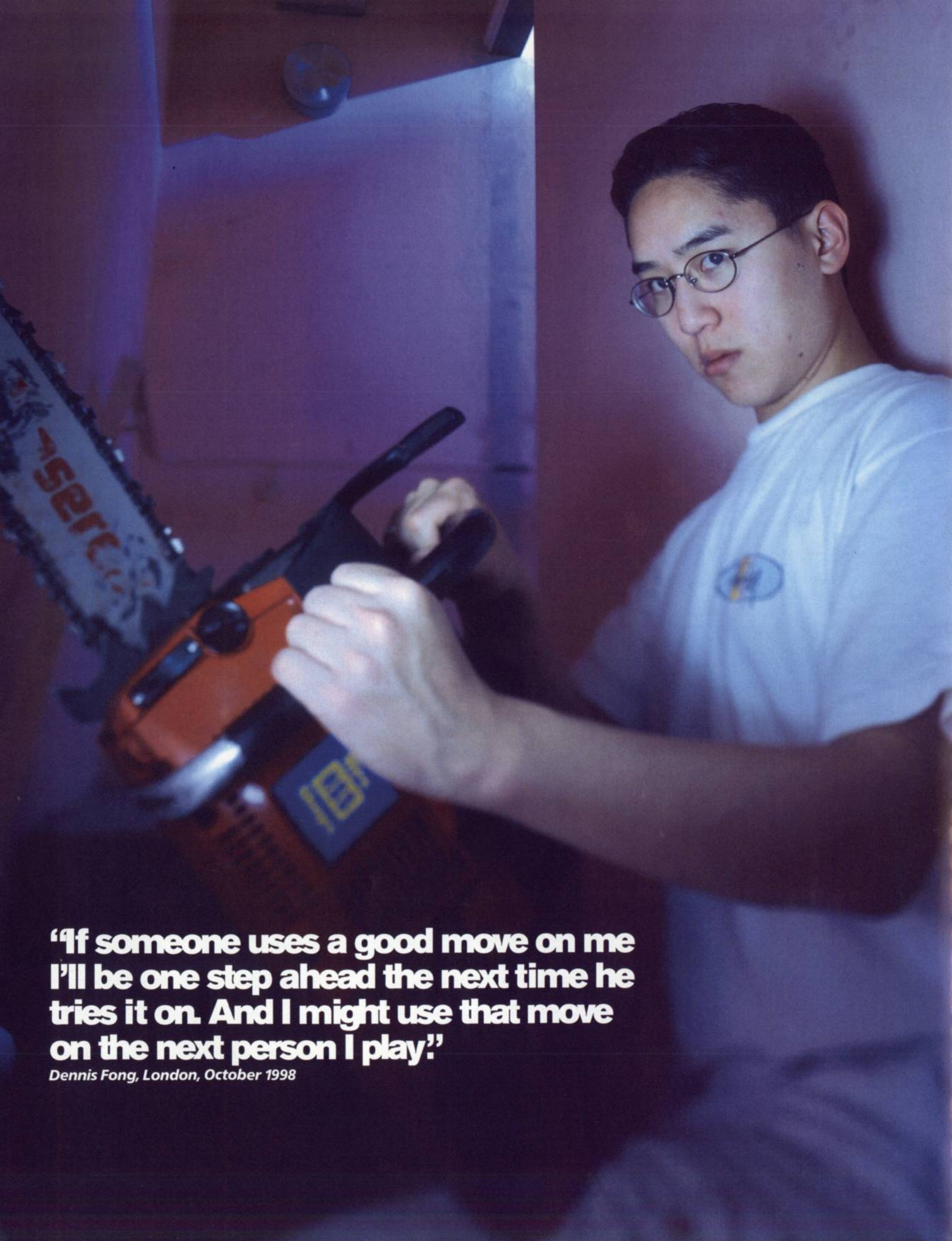
*Super Mario Bros*, *Murder in the Portal*, which is a text adventure game, and the shoot-'em-up *Xevious*.

**And have those early experiences shaped the way you approach your own games?**

I am influenced by many things but, yes, these early games did make a big impact on me. *Super Mario Bros* taught me what an action game should aspire to be. *Murder in the Portal* taught me that it's possible to mix great gameplay with a strong story line. From *Xevious* I learned that you can create an entire universe in which a game can take place. I've tried to do all that for Solid Snake. 

**Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* will be released in the UK in February 1999.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: HIRO IZUMI



**“If someone uses a good move on me I’ll be one step ahead the next time he tries it on. And I might use that move on the next person I play.”**

*Dennis Fong, London, October 1998*

Interview by | Mark Green

# Thresh

The world **Quake** champion on cool nicknames, gaming as a spectator sport, the future of first person shooters and how to frag, but never get fragged

**T**hresh is the first in what will probably become a long line of professional gaming "personalities" – people who actually play computer or videogames, in public, for prizes. After collecting more than \$100,000 in prize money and a Ferrari donated by *Quake* designer John Carmack, Thresh is beginning to look beyond America and plot world domination. The day before the Ministry of Sound's "Quakeadelica" event in October (see *Game On*, page 12), we cornered him in a London cybercafé, to find out what it takes to become one of the world's greatest gamers.

**Let's get this out of the way first, then: why Thresh?**

I used to use the name "Threshold" back in my old role playing days, because I wanted my opponents to be on "the threshold of fear". But one day I logged on to a new gaming server, the name wouldn't fit, so I shortened it. I didn't know it was a real word until I looked it up and saw it meant "to hit repeatedly". I thought that was pretty cool.

**Here in the UK, we're not used to these big game tournaments that you take part in. How do they work?**

They generally start off with a massive free-for-all game of *Quake*, until about 128 players are left, and then it's one-on-one until you get a winner. I started on the road to becoming a champion when I won a *Doom* deathmatch tournament back in 1995, which got me on to the local news back home in Los Altos, California. It all spiralled from there, until I became official *Quake* champion at this big videogame show that we had in Atlanta last year.

**What did your friends say?**

They were like, "What the hell were you doing in the news? Was that really you?"

That was kind of funny. Before then I'd just been a normal teenager in an average high school. I'd been waiting til midnight to play *Doom* at home, because that's when there's much less traffic on the Internet, so no-one really had any idea how good I was.

**What's the secret of your success?**

I approach the game a bit differently to most people. If someone uses a good move on me, I'll be one step ahead the next time he tries it on. And I might use that move on the next person I play. But there are lots of great players out there, and any one of them could trash me on any particular day.

**Like Reptile did at the Professional Gamers' League contest recently...**

Yeah, I got over-confident that day, because I knew I could beat him. I got up to 10-0, relaxed, and got whopped. I came back and won after that, though, which showed the people who thought I'd panic and lose the whole match.

**Why do you think that *Doom* and *Quake* are so popular?**

They're very immersive. I've played them at night with the lights off, and fallen off the chair with fright. These games have people trying to peek around their monitor to see what's round the next corner. That's amazing.

**Do you ever worry that the violence in games like *Quake* might be a little too realistic for comfort?**

Games have ratings like films, so I don't see how people can criticise. Anyway, the graphics in computer games are still quite cartoony. Seeing severed heads rolling about just makes me laugh.

**So is the head-rolling your favourite bit in *Quake II*?**

No, most of my favourite bits are from *Quake*. If *Quake II* had *Quake* physics, you could bounce guys around by hitting them with rockets. That'd be cool.

**So you prefer the original, eh? Is John Carmack happy about that?**

People have criticised me for complaining about *Quake II*, but I just say that for

## Thresh who?

Thresh, aka Dennis Fong, was catapulted to fame in July 1997, when he won the first Official *Quake* Tournament at America's Electronic Entertainment Expo – "E3", to its friends – in Atlanta, Georgia. This success encouraged him to take up gameplaying professionally, and he now tours America and the world entering tournaments and taking on all-comers. Recently, he won processor manufacturer AMD's Professional Gamers' League tournament in Seattle, despite losing a game publicly for the first time. Still, at least it was against his friend – the equally colourfully titled Reptile.

Thresh recently set up a company, Gamers Extreme, which creates strategy books and a well-visited Web site ([www.gamers.com](http://www.gamers.com)), dedicated to on-line gaming news and Thresh's "weekly rant". Part of the Death Row *Quake* clan, Thresh is sponsored by Microsoft, and endorses several of the company's products in return for hard cash.

most people *Quake* is the better game, which everyone would realise if they just sat down and played it. *Quake II*'s still fun, but it's too slow. It's actually set multi-player gaming back somewhat.

**But you play-tested *Quake II* – why didn't you tell creator id all this?**

id really didn't care that much about the multi-player options. I'm in contact with id, and even level designer John Romero now admits the guys made a mistake. *Quake III* will be faster-paced. I'm really excited about it. When id said it was going to concentrate on multi-player...

**...you fell off your chair?**

If anyone's going to do it properly, it's going to be id. The guys know what they're doing this time. And John Carmack's a genius.

**What other games do you play?**

I've won a few *Warcraft II* tournaments, and I play *Riven* sometimes. I don't tend to play games single-player, although I might well make an exception for Sierra's *Half-Life*. I've seen screenshots of that, and it's like – "Wow!" I do a bit of real-life paintballing with friends, too.

**Outside of id, you have to be the expert on 3D shoot-'em-ups. What do you think is the next big step forward for *Quake*-style games?**

Once on-line gaming really takes off, we'll see professional gaming enter the big time. The next generation of these games are already building towards that, putting camera modes in that'll turn *Quake* into a proper spectator sport. If the company can do this and make the games less violent, then we might see sponsors like Coke or Pepsi get involved. You can probably expect to see a whole lot more Threshes in the future...

■ **Quake III: Arena is scheduled to go on sale in May 1999.**



**SLIP ON THE  
RUCKSACK.  
LOAD THE  
AUTOMATICS.  
CATCH A PLANE.**

# LARA

# SWINGS

# AGAIN

STORY BY JONATHAN SMITH

**NEXT TO A CERTAIN STUNTED ITALIAN PLUMBER, SHE'S THE MOST RECOGNISABLE HUMAN IN VIDEOGAMES. NOW THERE'S A THIRD *TOMB RAIDER* OUTING ON THE HORIZON, A MOVIE IN THE OFFING AND THE INEVITABLE BACKLASH RUMBLING IN THE BACKGROUND. WHERE CAN LARA GO FROM HERE?**







**LARA  
SWINGS  
AGAIN**



**S**he's not real, you know. Despite the interviews and pin-ups. Despite the glossy fashion spreads and the newspaper features. Despite the sackloads of shakily-handwritten fan mail from desperate boys. She's not real. Sorry.

"She's real to me," says David Burton. "I work with her five days a week."

David Burton is Marketing Manager at EIDOS Interactive, the man in charge of selling Lara Croft to the world. He gets her on posters and on television; on stage with the right bands and associated with the right products. He looks after her. If Lara was real – and, let's get this straight, she's not – David Burton would be her agent.

"MTV phoned me a couple of weeks ago, because they want to give Lara her own show," he boasts. "Lucozade have just approached us to feature her in a TV ad. Meccano called me the day before yesterday, because they've got a new crane coming out, and they want to see if they can have Lara hanging by a bungee rope from it."

For someone who isn't real, Lara Croft certainly gets around a bit.

"And we're going to have the movie for next Christmas," continues Burton. "It'll be a live-action film; it won't be rendered, like *Toy Story*. That's going to be huge."

The film. The TV show. The book. The album. The doll. The watch. The backpack. And – oh yes, the game.

It's easy to forget that the Lara Croft phenomenon began with a computer game. The original *Tomb Raider*, for PlayStation and PC, came out just in time for Christmas 1996. There was a sequel (*Tomb Raider II*, starring Lara Croft), in time for Christmas 1997. Santa will be stuffing copies of the third game into stockings across the world this winter – and you can read a review of it on page 128 this issue.

But how did a computer game character become a celebrity? And why

**“It's a constant battle with the press, particularly the European press, who always want her posed in as little clothing as possible”** David Burton, Lara's "agent"

this character in particular? What makes her so special? Who the hell, in short, does Lara Croft think she is?

**C**ertain facts are well known. There are more than 100 Lara Croft Internet fan sites, and each carries the same mini-biography culled from the game manuals. Ms Croft, they tell us, is the daughter of one Lord Henshingly Croft. She was born in Wimbledon, went to Gordonstoun boarding school, and was destined to marry "The Earl of Farringdon". But a character-building two weeks spent trekking solo across the Himalayas after a plane crash turned Lara into a new woman. She spurned the aristocratic life and her chinless fiance, and decided instead to jet around the world, leaping improbable gaps and shooting endangered animals.

In the manner of a *Smash Hits*-style pop star factfile, we also have a list of vital statistics. Lara's eyes are brown. She's 5 feet 9 inches tall, and weighs just over 9 stone. Her birthday is February 14th. Her blood group, apparently, is AB negative.

But that's pretty much all there is to know. Beyond that barest of an outline, everything gets a bit hazy. Is Lara happy? Does she ever dream of settling down and having children? What makes her laugh? How did she vote in the last election? Does she ever regret killing so many animals? We just can't tell. All we have is her blood group – the most trivial piece of information imaginable. Think of all the people you know, friends and family. Do you know anyone's blood group?

No, the more you try to work out what makes Lara Croft such a popular character, the more you realise that she isn't a character at all. She's nothing more than a collection of polygons. It's all a scam. She's not real.

And yet...

And yet, she is adored.

If Lara's so unreal, how come millions of players have cared so much about her? Have tried so hard to protect her on her adventures?

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SHRINK RAP

## The Croft Report

**Want to understand Lara? Over to Dr Mark Griffiths of Nottingham Trent University's Psychology department...**

■ When it comes to videogames icons, Lara Croft is one of the most psychologically interesting. With her gravity-defying breasts, she's the first real sex-symbol of the digital age (most players claim that, were she real, they would definitely like to meet her) and a symbol of change within the industry. As her creators claim, "If you're going to sit in front of a computer for 80 hours, you'll want something pleasant to look at."

But is that enough to explain Lara's immense popularity? While the bottom line, of course, is that sex sells – you don't need a psychologist to tell you that – there's more to Lara than sex. After all, we've seen attractive female characters in games before, and none of them have gone on to Lara levels of stardom.

The truth is that many – maybe most – *Tomb Raider* players are neither lusting or lustful adolescents. Psychologists such as myself are interested in what players think about as they play a game. Is their prime motivation the character, the game, or an interaction of the two? And might there be something about Lara herself that creates some kind of psychological hold over the players?

If so, there are plenty of elements to the Lara character that hold quite obvious appeal. There's her untouchable aristocratic background, her perceived high intelligence and single status, her practical use of clothing and her killer instinct. I've asked *Tomb Raider* players about all of these in my research into the game – and generally drawn a blank. The truth is simply this: no-one I've ever interviewed as part of my research has mentioned any of Lara's personal attributes except the basic anatomical ones. Psychologically, Lara Croft is pretty much a *tabula rasa*, a "blank slate".

Some themes do crop up regularly, however, as I discovered when I questioned a group of players and asked them exactly why *Tomb Raider* is such a good game. The younger ones tended to



■ Do you guide Lara or do you become Lara? And is the appeal of *Tomb Raider* purely based on sex? Lara's extreme success has prompted lots of questions.



■ Players claim to admire her "realism" and "believability". But they do see how "others" may enjoy the "fairly sexual" positions she occasionally finds herself in.

mention the visual impact of Lara and the realism of her moves – for instance, the way she crouches and swims ("believability" and "realism" are often quoted as important components to the game). More importantly, there was the visual impact of the game itself, with striking images – such as the wonderful panoramic view of Lara next to the Sphinx near the end of the first *Tomb Raider* – holding particular appeal.

A few players also note that the positions that Lara gets herself into can be "fairly sexual" and, though they distanced themselves from this viewpoint, speculated that for others this might be an important motivational factor in playing the game.

However, what soon became clear is that it's the nature of the game itself that entraps people. Treasure hunt games are intrinsically motivating to great numbers of people, and by combining this with an action element, a mix of exotic locations and a strong central character,

*Tomb Raider* seems to have hit the jackpot.

So is Lara a good influence? I would be the first to say that games need strong female icons, if only to bring in the still fairly untapped women's market. Lara has problems doing this – too many women see her as a crudely realised male fantasy figure for her to be completely effective in this role – but she's a step in the right direction. Until *Tomb Raider*, female game characters – outside of the limited beat-'em-up genre – tended to be cast as victims of violence (as in *Night Trap*), victims to be rescued (*Mario* and *Zelda*), or simple diversions from the action. Lara, on the other hand, is very much her own person. She's fit, independent and completely unreliable on super-human powers (again, believability is an important issue with many players). And she inhabits a series of great games. Ultimately, that is what matters most.

■ Dr Mark Griffiths lectures at Nottingham Trent University

PHOTOGRAPHY: CRAIG STENNETT

**LARA**  
**SWINGS**  
**AGAIN**



49 Have cursed, and maybe even cried, when she's been injured? How come MTV wants her to present the channel's videos? Clearly, there's more to Lara than the simple facts.

**J**eremy Smith knows Lara Croft better than anyone. Along with his brother Adrian, he founded *Tomb Raider* developer Core Design. He's masterminded Lara's rise to fame ever since he returned from a behind-closed-doors preview of PlayStation, took his entire company out to a hotel, and asked them to invent a game which would take Core into the new 32-bit world he had just glimpsed.

"We just sat down and started throwing ideas around," he remembers. "And then one of the guys said, 'I've got this idea for an Egyptian-style pyramid raiding game'. The irony of the whole thing,"

Smith laughs, "is that there's not one tomb in *Tomb Raider*. But the original thing was going to be very Egyptian. We visualised pyramids with entire cities beneath them, connected by underground tunnels."

But no Lara.

"The original character was actually male. He had a whip – more a rope, really – which he was going to use to climb and lasso things, and we just thought, 'That's so close to Indiana Jones, it's scary. We don't fancy taking on the weight of LucasArts [the publisher who owns the rights to produce games based on *Indiana Jones*] so let's look at something else'."

And a couple of weeks later, the something else was Lara.

This is a disappointingly undignified birth for someone who turned out so perfect. The idea that there could have been a *Tomb Raider* without Lara now seems ridiculous, but Smith

## To reflect her toffee-nosed background, Lara "Cruz" – her original name – had to be ditched in favour of the significantly more English "Croft"

admits he had no idea at the time how important she would become.

"We knew what we were trying to achieve with our 3D game engine, and it was a case of fitting a character around it," he states, prosaically. And when Lead Artist Toby Gard came up with Lara, Smith was initially unconvinced. His immediate reaction was, he says, "Shit... do we really want to do a female character in a game?"

Gard recalls the cool reception his creation received: "I really liked making Lara," he says, "and I couldn't understand how other people could fail to succumb to her charms."

But succumb, eventually, they did, and Lara was born. Well, almost. Lara "Cruz" – the originally proposed name – had to be ditched, first, with the significantly more English "Croft" introduced to reflect the character's toffee-nosed background. And then she had to be brought to life.

"None of Lara's actions were motion captured," says Gard, "but I animated her to move as realistically as I could. Although her movements were stylised, they were stylised to look like a normal person."

His attention to detail paid off, and Lara did indeed look stunningly real – a major factor behind the dramatic impact she had on anyone who played her. This was the very dawn of the modern 3D age, don't forget, and the recognisable humanity of Lara Croft was an eye-burstingly giant leap forward for gamers used to cartoony sprites. Jeremy Smith's claim to have created "the first third-person-perspective game" is a little wishful (even if we were only talking about 3D titles, *Virtua Fighter* was already in the arcades and on Saturn, while *Alone in the Dark* offered a similar over-the-shoulder 3D perspective years ago), but Lara still sent jaws plummeting.

Crucially, the fact that she looked like a normal person brought a new depth to player-character interaction. "Because she's recognisably human," says Smith, "you have an affinity with her. It's difficult to get emotional if Sonic falls off a cliff, but different principles apply when you're playing Lara. There's a bond between player and character – if you're playing some mad creature, like a big dog or a fox, or whatever, it's far more

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# Fighting, fit

**With two gigantic leaps, Lara Croft conquered the hearts of gamers the world over. Later this issue we discover if *Tomb Raider III* is a jump too far, but first the original games, both soon to be available at budget prices. How have they weathered the passage of time?**

TOMB  
RAIDER III  
REVIEWED  
IN FULL ON  
PAGE 128



## Tomb Raider

Producer: EIDOS

Release date: Christmas 1996

Format: PC, PlayStation, Saturn

■ No one was expecting it. A couple of previews had commented positively on the 3D graphics, but no one had seen the game running for long. Bets on *Tomb Raider's* success were hedged with "could"s and "might be"s.

And then everyone played it. And played it. And loved it.

"It's not often that we're shocked," began the PC *Gamer* review of *Tomb Raider* in the Christmas 1996 issue, but shocked they were. And so was everyone else. Up to that point, the only ground-breaking game to have come from Core Design, a low-profile British software house, had been *Thunderhawk* on the ill-fated Mega CD. An obvious PlayStation sequel and such forgettable titles as *BC Racers*, *Shellshock* and *Blam Machinehead* had given no indication as to what Core was working on behind the scenes.

And now the company had created "one of those ground-breaking games that changes the way games are made forever," said *Official Playstation Magazine*.

The concept of a true-3D polygonal engine wasn't revolutionary – *Quake* was out on PC, and *Mario 64* was out in Japan – but *Tomb Raider's* real brilliance was its excellence as a game, and this is what has assured its continued success through budget re-releases. Even without the flash graphics, *Tomb Raider* would have been great fun to play. The variety of challenges on offer is utterly gripping, as it mixes exploration with gunplay, platformy athleticism with puzzly brain-teasers.

The imagination, technical achievement and first-rate game-sense of its creators shone through in every aspect of *Tomb Raider*, from large (the sheer size of the adventure on offer, and the clever construction of its levels) to small (the bone-crushing sound effects accompanying fatal falls, for example, or the muzzle flashes from Lara's pistols).

Naturally enough, *Tomb Raider* became the PlayStation's best-selling game – despite a mundane first level, some joypad-hurlingly control stodginess ("Jump, damn you! Jump!") and not-infrequent problems with the positioning of the virtual "camera".

It's worth noting that the PC version now comes with *Unfinished Business*, four extra levels released some time after the game first appeared.

★★★★★



## Tomb Raider II

Producer: EIDOS

Release date: Christmas 1997

Format: PC, PlayStation

■ Second time around, of course, everyone was ready. More than ready. Slaving in anticipation. Lara had become a superstar, and what started out as a game had become a phenomenon.

Movie sequels, it is often observed, are always inferior to the originals. But things usually work the other way round in the gaming industry – the continued evolution of technology usually means that games just keep on getting better. *Tomb Raider II* was, as hoped, fantastic. Better, even, than the ground-breaking original.

Lara was more responsive to control, had some spectacular new weapons at her disposal, and could climb walls. In another excellent feature, she could commandeer vehicles, too – most memorably, the superb powerboat on the spectacular Venice levels. An overhauled 3D engine resulted in fewer graphical glitches, enabled levels to be set outdoors, and added real-time lighting effects.

*Tomb Raider II's* sense of drama was even more developed than in the original, too. A succession of outstanding set-pieces and coups de theatre intensified the game's movie-like feel, somehow managing to up the "Wow!" factor on a title that had itself redefined expectations.

Already, however, the first stirrings of a backlash were noticeable. "*Tomb Raider II* isn't the unequivocal triumph you might have been expecting," cautioned *Playstation Power* magazine, citing niggles related to combat, the game camera and a tendency to fling "sudden, initially inescapable death" at you. A number of on-line fans, too, complained that the increased combat-quotient had ruined the atmosphere of the original game.

But punter-land at large cared not a whit. And *Tomb Raider II's* chart-topping created even more Lara Croft fans than the original title, since the PlayStation user base had increased dramatically over the intervening year.

But not a penny of the resulting cash bonanza found its way to either *Tomb Raider's* Lead Artist/Original Concept designer Toby Gard or to Lead Programmer Paul Douglas. They'd jumped ship from Core in February '97 to found their own company Confounding Factor.

And they're not at all bitter about the mountains of Lara-related wealth they spurned by leaving. They say.

★★★★★

**LARA**  
**SWINGS**  
**AGAIN**



**51** difficult to actually connect with that character." And connect we do. You don't have to be involved in the Internet cult of Lara "fan fiction", glamourising your fantasies in sixth-form prose, to have struck up a personal relationship with the *Tomb Raider* heroine. You don't have to believe she's real, like the Net-fan who feels she's "a nice person... remember her giving you tips at the assault course? Not harsh in any way, but reasonable and clear."

You don't have to be dysfunctional to get intimate with this virtual woman. You simply have to play her.

"It's like a movie," muses Smith. "I mean, it's difficult to watch a movie and not relate to the main character."

The cinematic elements of the *Tomb Raider* titles, the animated cut-scenes and dramatic set-pieces, certainly support this analogy. At the same time, however, the games are more than movies. You're not just watching Lara – you are her. Or are you controlling her? Guiding her? The relationship is difficult to define.

**A**sking players where they place themselves in relation to Lara elicits a wide variety of responses. Some project themselves strongly into the game environment, and play very much as themselves. In other words they *become* Lara and play from what amounts to a first-person perspective. Others describe themselves as spectators, or sidekicks, trying to share in Lara's success. The language used by male players, revealingly, is often that of the chivalrous protector: "I'm guiding her... I don't want bad things to happen to her."

Jeremy Smith believes that Lara's femininity makes men more receptive to her. "I'm not sure that male players actually want to 'be' Lara," he says. "I think they like playing Lara, because it's a refreshing change from being the muscular masculine guy. At the end of the day, it's far more difficult for a bloke to get emotional about another bloke on screen."

## “It's difficult to get emotional if Sonic falls off a cliff, but Lara is human. There's a bond between player and character”

Jeremy Smith, Core Design

Which is probably true. In addition, though, there's the never-overlooked matter of Lara's sex appeal.

"We know that she's very heavily regarded as a sex icon," says marketer David Burton. "We've always tried to be very, very careful about how much clothing we let her take off in the artwork that we've produced for her. It's a constant battle with the press, particularly the European press, who always want her to have on as little clothing as possible."

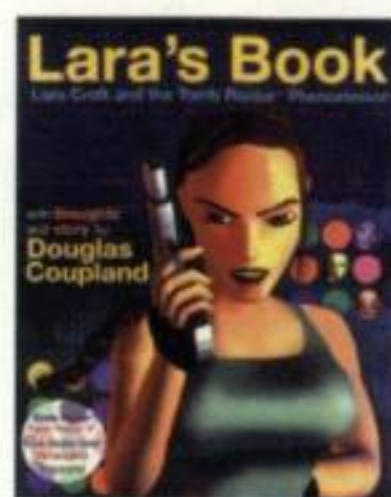
"Then again," he adds, "we don't ever pose her so she's looking unattractive or like a wet blanket. You'll never see Lara looking frumpy."

No. Of course not. No bed-messed hair for Ms Croft. But there's a curious discrepancy between her promotional portrayals outside the game – the swimsuit pics; the come-hither poses; the centre-of-attention bust – and Lara's image within *Tomb Raider* itself. If you go back and play the original game, for example, one of the first things to strike you is the fact that her chest isn't half as prominent as you remember it from subsequent marketing images. Rounded out with a higher polygon count, *Tomb Raider II*'s heroine is rather more top-heavy, but even then the game's clearly more concerned with big guns than... er, bigguns.

**T**oby Gard, who's still credited with *Tomb Raider*'s original concept, left Core a few months after the first game was released, and cites "down-market marketing" as one of the reasons for his departure. "The sexism only started when the marketing people came in," echoed graphic artist Heather Gibson in a *Daily Telegraph* article last year.

So when does "sexy" become "sexism"? And how much of Lara's mass-market profile is due to her image as cyber-sex object, how much to her in-game role as resourceful puzzle-solver?

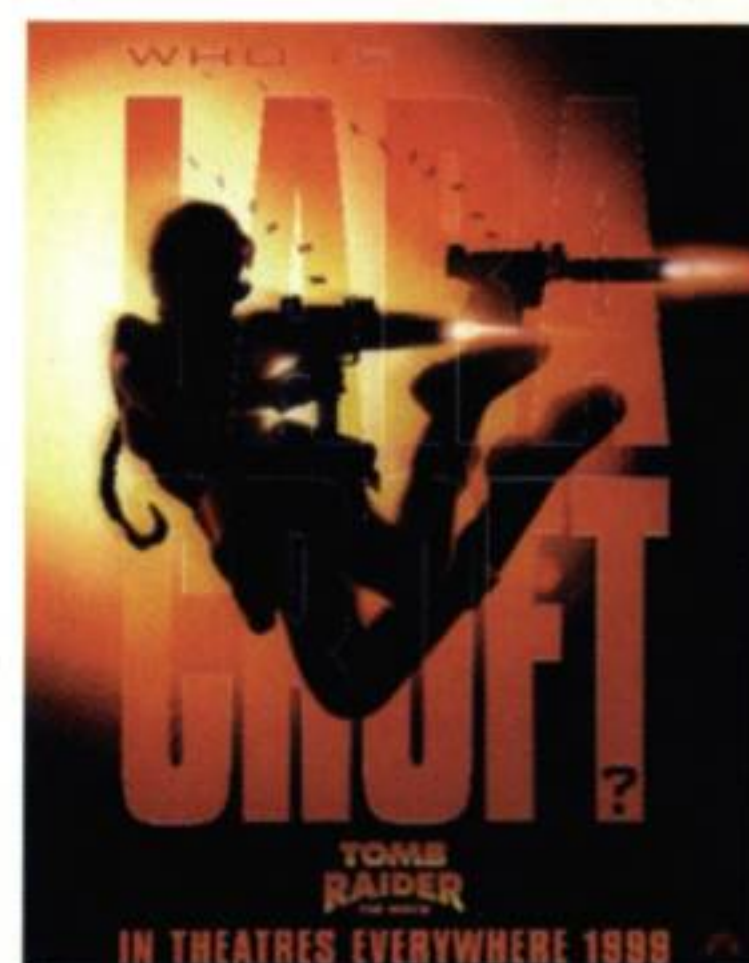
A large part of *Tomb Raider*'s cross-over media coverage has to be credited to her random-access mammaries. And even if we can't blame the marketing men for, as could be charitably claimed, just doing their job, we can certainly curse the imaginatively bankrupt designers who



■ Celebrated Generation X author Douglas Coupland claims to be "drawn" to Lara. From the vapid nature of his contribution to *Lara's Book*, we detect he feels the lure of easy money, too.



■ The Face that launched Lara head-first into a media feeding frenzy.



■ Tomb Raider: The Movie is scheduled for general release in late 1999.

**53** have subsequently cloned a harem of overtly chested heroines, all eager to clamber aboard Lara's bosom bandwagon.

David Burton, meanwhile, is keen to assert his appreciation of Lara's unbreadth attributes, and play up her cross-gender appeal.

"From what we've seen," he says, "the vast majority of women like what she does, and like the way she takes no crap from anyone. I think she's a good role model. People rarely get the advantage over her, and she's always up against the odds. I guess that people often feel in their lives like they're up against it - she always is, and she overcomes things. Her games aren't about going around killing everything, either: there's a lot of puzzle-solving, which is a type of game that girls traditionally like anyway."

And, after his initial uncertainty, Jeremy Smith is left with no doubts that he made the right decision to go with a female lead character. "I think the timing was absolutely right for us," he says. "There was a huge surge of change within the population of the world, almost, towards - you know - women. The whole girly power thing was happening at the time, and nobody could have planned for that."

**G**irly power? Perhaps. But the timing was also absolutely right for Lara to ride the wave of PlayStation's success into a new game-friendly culture. Sony's marketing nous broke the console through the "toy" barrier into the grown-up mass market, and Lara fought in the front line of the company's assault.

"Sony realises how linked Lara is to PlayStation," says David Burton. "Whenever you see a PlayStation, you see *Tomb Raider*."

"She's an icon," Smith asserts.

An icon of what?

"An icon of videogaming. Videogaming has matured from being a bunch of geeks who stay up very late at night in their bedrooms, to being an industry. And I think Lara is an icon for the whole gaming industry."

**"The French like her sexiness. The Germans like her aggressive side. I think the English like her aloofness."** David Burton, Lara's "agent"

That sounds like a bold claim. But the fortunes of the game and the industry-redefining console have certainly been intertwined. It's difficult to imagine a PC-only Lara gracing the cover of *The Face* - the world of video card upgrades and DirectX conflicts is hardly hip.

And now the textured temptress is taking on Hollywood, though Smith is philosophical about her trip to Tinseltown.

"People loved the *Indiana Jones* series, and here we've got a female Indiana Jones, basically," he says. "As a standalone concept, that's great. The fact that it's going to be packaged with Lara on it is a bonus to us."

Doesn't he worry that her "virtual" mystique won't translate into a live-action vehicle?

"I think if we'd done a virtual character movie then I'd be more concerned," Smith replies. "I see this as a kind of side issue to the whole gaming arena. It'll run alongside the game quite comfortably. But if *Tomb Raider* fans go and see it and think it sucks, I don't think it will affect their view on the videogame side of things, because we're not using anything from the game in the movie, other than the name."

Oh, Right... And are there other areas into which Lara's likely to move?

"There's lots, but to be honest with you we're just holding back. We're cautious of over-exposing her. We don't want to sell her out. There's no need to - we're not too bothered about being a sponsor for a thousand different pieces of merchandise. She doesn't need it."

Well, how about the games, then? How long can *Tomb Raider* maintain its momentum?

"I think it would be silly to kill off somebody as strong as Lara. Our philosophy is very simple: we will produce *Tomb Raider* games while people want them. You've only got to see the buzz on the Net about Lara, or the quantity of letters we get here about the game, to know that people want more. We'll look at doing something else when it gets to the point that people say, 'Well, we're bored of this now; what else are you going to do?'"

A different kind of game, but still with Lara?

"Absolutely. Lara can't continue to sustain her appeal in the environment she's in currently. There will come a saturation point. Take the *Mario* series





as an example of the fairly static platform game: what did they do next? They blew *Mario* into this tremendous 3D world, and off he goes again. Lara's already in a 3D world - where does she go from there? Well, lots of places. There's plenty of room, with new hardware coming through, to expand on what we've done so far fairly rapidly."

And that answers the recent complaints, both in the press and on the Net, that the *Tomb Raider* series is in danger of stagnating. Magazine previews of the new game, in particular, have been generally rather sniffy about a perceived lack of originality. In response, EIDOS launched a major campaign of "re-education" to show seen-it-all-before hacks the error of their ways. Was this a conscious move to nip a potential backlash in the bud?

"In this country, people like to knock anything that's successful," gripes Jeremy Smith. "They seem to take great delight in knocking people off podiums when they've got up there. If people buy *Tomb Raider III* then I'll be very happy - whatever the press say... I mean, it's a free world, they can say what they like. Unfortunately, some people are very quick to judge without having a close look at what it's all about. And now there's a huge swing in the press activity on *Tomb Raider III*, and they're going, 'Wow, this is actually the best of the games so far'."

The new *Tomb Raider* has a smoother, triangle-based graphics system. It exploits all the new 3D card special effects and it's got a new, non-linear structure. But what about Lara?

She's got some new moves. And, yes, a few new outfits. But don't expect any character developments. She's unlikely to show us a whole new side to her personality. We'll still know little more than her blood type, and where she went to school.

And perhaps this is for the best. Perhaps the secret of Lara's success lies not in her marketed sexuality or her ever-improving realism, or even the exotic drama of her exploits. Who the hell does Lara Croft think she is? Jeremy Smith has a compelling answer:

**"The sexism only started when the marketing people came in"** Heather Gisbon, graphic artist on *Tomb Raider*

"I think the key is that she's whatever anybody wants her to be," he says.

Lara has been given just enough character to enable her to run and shoot, as the game requires of its heroine. Any more personality than that, however, would intrude into the player's relationship with her. Perhaps you learn Lara likes country music - if you don't dig Hank Williams, that'll make it harder for you to care so much about her next time you play *Tomb Raider III*. Lara can only accommodate the wishes of the eight million people who've bought one of her games by being, essentially, an empty vessel.

"It's interesting how she's perceived differently in different markets," reveals David Burton. "For example, the French angle is more on her sexiness, the Germans like her aggressive side. I think the English like her aloofness, and her sense of inaccessibility. A lot of English men have a thing about Lara because she has this aristocratic unobtainability about her."

So we all see what we want to see.

**O**ne of the most recent additions to the world of Lara Croft has been a glossy 188-page book. It's called, perhaps unsurprisingly, *Lara's Book*, and its vacuity is astounding. Inside is where we learn that Lara's blood group is AB negative, for instance. There are many pictures of her and, inexplicably, several pages of coloured circles.

But there's more. Also included in this lovably pointless tome, Zeitgeisty *Generation X* author Douglas Coupland tries to pin down Lara's character. "She is a composition of devastating force, set against a backdrop of intelligence and intuition. Perhaps it's that juxtaposition which draws me to her," he writes. It's all very airy.

Ask Toby Gard his opinion of the book, and Lara's creator comments dryly. "It seems to me you can go up your own arse over-analysing things."

Gard believes that all the money around *Tomb Raider* has restricted the game's development. "I guess it won't ever change that much," he says. "I suppose like any corporate thing it's now too inflexible, so something flashier and less staid will eventually come along and blow it away."

He hopes said blowage will come courtesy of his own game, *Galleon*. Like *Tomb Raider*, it'll be a third-person-perspective 3D action-adventure. But whereas Lara, Gard reckons, "began to be limited by the realistic style," his new, male central character Rhama will be "almost superhuman".

Because, after all, he's not real, you know.

■ Jon Smith is a regular contributor to *Arcade* magazine.



ARCADE COMPETITION

# Win! A larger than life Lara!

**She's six foot tall. She's packing heat. She'll kick your butt. Guaranteed.**



■ Now here's a prize you don't come across every day. We've got a larger-than-life Lara Croft statue for you to win. It's six feet something of pistol-packing female Indiana Jones, mounted on a plinth and ready to scare the living daylight out of any unsuspecting strangers who should stumble across her in your living room, hallway, bedroom (steady) or anywhere else you might decide she belongs.

Our giant Lara (still being made at time of going to press, which is why we haven't shown you her here) might not quite boast the level of detail of our Nell McAndrew stand-in, but she's pretty impressive nonetheless.

And getting the chance to win her is simplicity itself. All you have to do to be in with a chance is complete the following sentence in the most amusing and convincing fashion: **"My Lara statue is better than the real thing because..."**

Simply jot your answer on the back of a postcard or envelope, and send it to:

**Lara Competition, Arcade Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

Entries should reach us no later than December 31, 1998, when we'll pick our favourite. The editor's decision is final, by the way, but for the full rules check out page 160.

# A Charts

Edited by **Mark Green**

**What goes up must come down. But not until we've had some fun with it.**

## Official All-Formats Top 40



## ChartTrack



### 1 (2) F1 World Grand Prix N64, Nintendo

The N64's first truly playable racing car (as opposed to racing go-kart) game barges past the mighty Tekken 3 to take the top slot. No pole position jokes here, though.

### 2 (1) Tekken 3 PSX, Namco

With virtually all the hardcore scrap fans buying this – the current Best Fighting Game Ever – in its first month of release, our prediction is that Tekken 3 will soon be dropping like a great big rock.

### 3 (9) Colin McRae Rally PSX/PC, Codemasters

The ultimate wet 'n' muddy rally sim, starring the ultimate in bald Scots, crashes back into the top three, thanks to a timely PC release. We expect it to stick around the multiforum chart for a while – after all, rallying suits the winter months.

### (4) TOCA Touring Car Championship PSX, Codemasters



The highest-placed Platinum entry is this excellent if rather ancient Codemasters racer, still precariously holding on after nearly a year in the charts.

### 5 (5) ISS '98 PSX/N64, Konami



The football lover's football game sees off contenders in much the same staunch, unflashy way as Arsenal's Lee Dixon/Nigel Winterburn back line.

### 6 (–) 1080° N64, Nintendo

Nintendo's definitive snowboarding sim slides into the top 10 with consummate ease. It's a great game, reviewed this issue.

### 7 (10) Gran Turismo PSX, Sony

The Best PlayStation Racing Game In The World adds to its 250,000 sales to date.

### 8 (3) Mission: Impossible N64, Ocean

Horrendous spy sim, deservedly falling after being hyped up into higher territory.

### 9 (7) Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee PSX/PC, GT

Interest in this budget platformer is rather waning with the imminent release of its Oddworld sequel, Abe's Exoddus.

### 10 (11) Premier Manager '98 PSX/PC, Gremlin

Still hanging shifty around the top 10.

### 11 (8) Dune 2000 PC, EA

Goodbye to the top 10 for this recently-released real-time strategy game.

### 12 (16) Tomb Raider PSX, EIDOS Interactive

The Platinum price means Lara's original exploits are now out-selling TRIL.

### 13 (13) V-Rally PSX/GB, Infogrames

The first really fun rally sim, now a year old, selling at a cheapo price, and still loitering around in the top 20.

### 14 (12) Tomb Raider II PSX/PC, EIDOS Interactive

More big bap puzzle action, and gradually falling as people await Tomb Raider III.

### 15 (15) World Cup '98 PSX/PC/N64/GB, EA Sports

Passable licensed fare, still flying out of the shops five months after you-know-what.

### 16 (6) C&C: Retaliation PSX, Westwood

The best real-time strategy on PlayStation, sadly heading down the chart.

### 17 (17) Crash Bandicoot PSX, SCEE

The Platinum release of this average platformer is a non-mover this month.

### 18 (29) Command & Conquer PSX/PC, EA

A Platinum release rejuvenates the mother of all real-time strategy titles.

### 19 (14) WWF: Warzone PSX/N64/GB, Acclaim

The first good wrestling game is still selling well, but won't be around for much longer.

### 20 (–) MediEvil PSX, SCEE

Average Tomb-Raidery running around is just enough to excite PlayStation owners.

### 21 (–) Moto Racer 2 PSX, Adeline

### 22 (19) Theme Hospital PC/PSX, Bullfrog (budget)

### 23 (20) Tekken 2 PSX, Namco (budget)

### 24 (21) Resident Evil 2 PSX, Virgin

### 25 (27) Rayman PSX/PC, Ubisoft (budget)

### 26 (18) Formula 1 '97 PSX/PC, Psygnosis

### 27 (26) Die Hard Trilogy PSX/PC/SAT, Fox Interactive (budget)

### 28 (24) Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines PC, EIDOS Interactive

### 29 (25) Banjo-Kazooie N64, Nintendo

### 30 (23) FIA Formula 1 PSX/PC, Psygnosis (budget)

### 31 (–) Grand Prix Legends PC, Sierra

### 32 (28) Grand Theft Auto PSX/PC, DMA

### 33 (31) Micro Machines V3 PSX/PC, Codemasters (budget)

### 34 (22) Mortal Kombat 4 N64/PC/PSX, GT/Williams

### 35 (32) Theme Park PSX/PC/Amiga, Bullfrog (budget)

### 36 (33) Spice World PSX, SCEE (budget)

### 37 (37) Need For Speed 3: Hot Pursuit PC/PSX, EA

### 38 (36) C&C: Red Alert PSX/PC, Westwood

### 39 (34) Worms PSX/GB/MD/Saturn Ocean/Team 17 (budget)

### 40 (39) Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business PC, EIDOS Interactive (expansion pack)

CHARTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHART TRACK & ELSPA

### PlayStation Top 10

- 1 (1) Tekken 3 Namco
- 2 (2) TOCA Touring Car Championship Platinum
- 3 (5) Gran Turismo SCEE
- 4 (6) ISS '98 Konami
- 5 (7) Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee Platinum
- 6 (4) Colin McRae Rally Codemasters
- 7 (9) Tomb Raider Platinum
- 8 (3) C&C: Retaliation Westwood
- 9 (8) V-Rally Platinum
- 10 (11) Crash Bandicoot Platinum

No real changes here, with the usual suspects playing musical chairs for the top positions.

### N64 Top 10

- 1 (1) F1 World Grand Prix Nintendo
- 2 (–) 1080° Nintendo
- 3 (2) Mission: Impossible Ocean
- 4 (3) Banjo-Kazooie Nintendo
- 5 (4) ISS '98 Konami
- 6 (5) WWF: Warzone Acclaim
- 7 (7) GoldenEye 007 Nintendo
- 8 (6) Mortal Kombat 4 GT/Williams
- 9 (8) Mario Kart 64 Nintendo
- 10 (10) Super Mario 64 Nintendo

F1's still holding the top slot, but – look out! – 1080° has swept in from nowhere to challenge it.

### PC Top 10

- 1 (1) Dune 2000 Westwood
  - 2 (–) Colin McRae Rally Codemasters
  - 3 (3) Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines EIDOS
  - 4 (–) GP Legends Sierra
  - 5 (4) Premier Manager '98 Gremlin
  - 6 (8) Need for Speed 3: Hot Pursuit EA
  - 7 (9) C&C: Red Alert Westwood
  - 8 (5) Titanic: Adventure Out Of Time Europress
  - 9 (7) World Cup '98 EA Sports
  - 10 (6) Age of Empires Microsoft
- Dune 2000 rocks. We approve.

### Import zone | With NextGen (0181 339 0666)

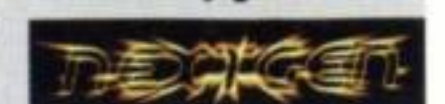


Who's that at the door? Why, it's Steve Lucas from top game import shop NextGen. He's kindly agreed to let us know what the movers and shakers are on the import

scene at the mo. So what's "going down", Mr Lucas? "Well, Metal Gear Solid is still selling a ton, especially now that the US release is out. And NTSC Tekken 3 is shifting as people

realise how rubbish the PAL conversion is." What about the N64? "The Australian PAL version of 1080° is still popular." Anything else? "Cards that let you play movie CDs on the PlayStation are flying out of the door, as are Saturn titles."

So Sega's poor old Saturn is live and well on the import scene, eh? Shame about everywhere else, really. See you next month, Steve! (Oh, he's already gone.)



# Stop smiling at me!

Some game characters are just plain annoying. Here's a top 10.



■ And the Beat Mania goes on.

## Japanese All-Format Top 10

1 (-) Beat Mania	PSX, Konami
2 (1) Dragon Quest Monsters: Terry's Wonderland	GB, Enix
3 (3) Pocket Monster Pikachu	GB, Nintendo
4 (5) Metal Gear Solid	PSX, Konami
5 (-) Masked Rider	PSX, Bandai
6 (2) Itadaki Street Gorgeous King	PSX, Enix
7 (6) Pilot Ni Narou!	PSX, Pack In Soft
8 (-) SD Gundam G Generation	PSX, Bandai
9 (-) Xi	PSX, Sony
10 (-) Winning Post 3 '98	PSX, Koei

## US Console Top 5

1 (1) WWF: Warzone	N64/PSX, Acclaim
2 (-) NCAA Football '99	PSX, EA
3 (-) Madden Football '99	PSX, EA
4 (1) Banjo-Kazooie	N64, Nintendo
5 (-) NFL Gameday '99	PSX, Sony

## US PC Top 5

1 (-) Need For Speed 3	EA
2 (1) Deer Hunter	GT
3 (5) Barbie Nail Designer	Mattel
4 (-) Civil War Generals 2	Cendant
5 (4) Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	Red Storm

US charts supplied by PC-Data

**W**e spend so much time with some major game characters (Lara, for instance) that inevitably we tend to warm to them. But occasionally, however, a game character rubs you up the wrong way. Sometimes you happen across an irritating "pixelated pal" who's annoying enough to have you punching the screen, kicking the cat, or tossing your controller to the floor in frustration. Here are ten little bastards who particularly get our goats.

### 1. Dizzy

■ Argh! This walking egg thing became a national phenomenon in the '80s, with his "merry" blend of platforms and puzzles. But his lolling gait, fixed grin, and nasty tendency to roll about like a buffoon when a simple walking manoeuvre would be more desirable, made him one egg we hoped would contract a particularly virulent strain of salmonella. No, really. He's a git.

### 2. Lemmings

■ The aim was to save the little green-haired gonks from hideous death, but their nauseatingly cute catchphrases – "Oh no!" – and their irritating ignorance of the danger of wandering under a guillotine or into a blazing fire, made the "Nuke All Lemmings" button the most attractive option.



■ Dizzy. His head is spinning.

### 3. Toad

(Mario 64/Mario Kart 64)  
 ■ You know, the mushroomy guy. He seemed okay in Super Mario 64, helping you along with an extra star here and there, but then he cropped up in Mario Kart 64 with a helium-enhanced voice and an attitude perfectly summed up by his trademark, "I'm the best!" as he swept past to victory. Worse still was the cocky little cackle as he smacked you up with a red shell. The little turd.

### 4. Rascal

■ Oh, how Psygnosis crowed when it so-very-cleverly commissioned the world renowned Jim Henson's Creature Shop to create (at considerable expense) a new character for its brave, bold Mario-beating 3D platform game. And how the company wept (and, of course, countless rival game publishers sniggered) when the result turned out to be a faceless, leather-jacket-wearing, baseball-capped urchin with all the personality of a walking brick.

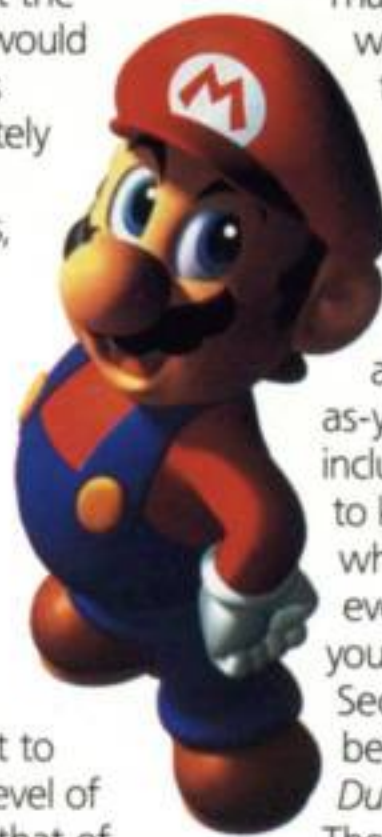


### 5. Natalya

(GoldenEye 007)  
 ■ Unbelievably annoying sidekick (so called because you'll want to kick her). She'll mince about the shop, seemingly oblivious to the screaming gun-battles taking place in her immediate vicinity, and can only be alerted to danger by an accidental bullet-in-the-face (or, much more likely, a completely intentional bullet-in-the-butt) from Bond, thus causing an automatic mission failure.

### 6. Yoshi

(Super Mario World)  
 ■ Before Yoshi became a leading Nintendo character in his own right, he was just Mario's fancy horse. And he was rubbish. It'd be fine until some turtle got in your way, at which point the grinning dinosaur would throw you from his back and immediately leg it, evading all recapture attempts, hell-bent on throwing himself straight down the nearest hole.



### 7. Sonic

■ The blue hedgehog attracted a whole load of admirers upon his debut. But to many, he oozes a level of arrogance beyond that of even Chris Evans. His specialty was tapping his foot and scowling when left to rest, and yet putting on a melodramatic cry-baby face and shedding his coin haul upon smacking into a spike. And now he's back. Where's the justice?

### 8. Thorin

(The Hobbit)  
 ■ Back in the days when adventures consisted of typing "GO NORTH" and "KILL GOBLIN", the ZX Spectrum brought you a character who considered sitting on the ground and singing about gold as somehow helpful to your quest. The usual recourse to this practice was to type "TAKE THORIN AND INSERT GOLD".

### 9. Thargons (Elite)

■ Ancient 8-bit classic Elite mostly involved a happy medium of combat and trading. Until, without warning, an "error in hyperspace" occurred, plunging you immediately into unpleasant "witchspace", and a pitched battle against several hard-as-you-like Thargon ships, whose pleasure it was to finish you off in time for tea. And had you saved your game beforehand? Had you hell. Bastards.

### 10. Mario

■ Well, if Sonic's going to appear, then Nintendo's camp-as-you-like plumber has to be included, too. First, he's unable to keep quiet, with a ridiculous whoop or gasp accompanying every leap. Imagine if one of your friends behaved that way. Second, he looks like a cross between Uncle Jesse from The Dukes of Hazzard and one of The Village People.

Time passes... Thorin sits down and starts singing about gold.

■ Thorin. A name to inspire loathing around the world.

## Ten sport sims that you'll never see on the shelves:

1. Synchronised swimming
2. Bungee jumping
3. Heavy drinking
4. Off-ground tag
5. British bulldog
6. Tiddly-winks
7. Kite flying
8. Dwarf throwing
9. Fox hunting
10. Caber tossing

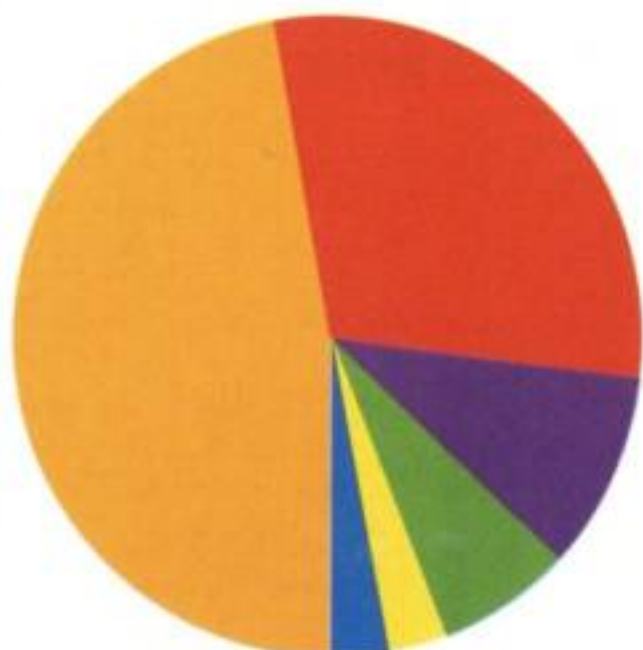


## Chart Analysis | For all you crazy stat fans

■ Our pie-chart this month clearly shows that games starring people are the most popular this month, healthily beating cars to the top slot. The Tomb Raider games and Spice World make games starring boobs the third most popular, with animals (chiefly worms and bandicoots), aliens (Abe) and wrestlers bringing up the rear.

### Who's the star?

PEOPLE	47%
CARS	30%
BOOBS	10%
ANIMALS	7%
ALIENS	3%
WRESTLERS	3%



## Vox-pop | But what games are The People's Choice? We found out.



■ Hello. [Enthusiastically] "Oh! Hello!" Who are you, then? "Tom." And what do you do? "I'm a DJ." Blimey, that's a bit flash. Bet you haven't got a PlayStation, then. "Actually, I got a PlayStation last Christmas." What do you play most? "Tekken 3, bye!" OK, bye.



■ Who are you? "I'm Anne and I'm a housewife. I was looking at CD-ROMS to learn Spanish." Don't suppose you play any games, do you? "Actually, I'm quite good at Minesweeper. But I'm too old for games, really." But you're young at heart, right? Oh, you've gone.



■ Hello. "Hello, I'm Charlie." [Grins] And how old are you? "I'm 22 years old. And a quarter. No, hang on, three quarters. Right." And you're a... "I'm a student." Are you on your way to lectures? "No, I'm going home to play GoldenEye." Excellent, that's great. Thanks.

# Release Schedule

What's coming out when? Here's our current best guess to the next three months.

## November

now	Blasto	SCEE	PSX	20th	Music	Codemasters	PSX	27th	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	N64
now	Bust-A-Groove	SCEE	PSX	20th	NBA Live '99	EA	PSX	27th	WCW/NWO Revenge	THQ	N64
now	Croc	Sony	PSX	20th	PFA Soccer Manager	EA	PSX	27th	WipEout 64	Psynosis	N64
now	Dodgem Arena	Project X	PSX	20th	Psybadek	Psygnosis	PSX	TBA	360	Cendant	PC
now	Lemmings Compilation	Psygnosis	PSX	20th	Tomb Raider III	EIDOS	PSX	TBA	Assault	Telstar	PC
now	Libero Grande	SCEE	PSX	20th	Heavy Gear 2	Activision	PC	TBA	Chaos	Ubisoft	PC
now	Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT	PSX	20th	Populous: The Beginning	EA	PC	TBA	Crime Killer	Interplay	PC
now	Player Manager 2	Anco	PSX	20th	RoboRumble	Topware	PC	TBA	Deth Karz	Infogrames	PC
now	Pocket Fighter	Capcom	PSX	20th	Tomb Raider III	EIDOS	PC	TBA	Driver	TBA	PC
now	RC Stunt Copter	Interplay	PSX	20th	UEFA Championship Manager	Infogrames	PC	TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PC
now	Rogue Trip	GT	PSX	20th	Viva Football	Virgin	PC	TBA	Extreme G 2	Acclaim	PC
now	Small Soldiers	EA	PSX	20th	Micro Machines 64	Codemasters	N64	TBA	Falcon 4	MicroProse	PC
now	Test Drive 5	EA	PSX	20th	NBA Live '99	EA	N64	TBA	Flying Nightmares 2	EIDOS	PC
now	Carmageddon 2	Sci	PC	20th	NHL Hockey '99	Acclaim	N64	TBA	Forbidden City	Cryo	PC
now	Dungeon Keeper Classic	EA	PC	23rd	Game & Watch Gallery 2	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	Golgotha	Telstar	PC
now	European Air War	MicroProse	PC	23rd	Gex	GT	CGB	TBA	Guardians: Agents of Justice	MicroProse	PC
now	Fighter Pilot	EA	PC	23rd	Harvest Moon	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	Head Hunter	EIDOS	PC
now	Half-Life	Sierra	PC	23rd	Men In Black	Gremlin	CGB	TBA	Jimmy White 2 Cue Ball	Virgin	PC
now	Railroad Tycoon 2	Take Two	PC	23rd	Mortal Kombat 4	GT	CGB	TBA	Kanaan	Ubisoft	PC
now	SCARS	Ubisoft	PC	23rd	New Tetris	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	Knockout Kings '99	EA	PC
now	Sim City 3000	EA	PC	23rd	NFL Blitz	Midway	CGB	TBA	Legend of the Five Rings	Activision	PC
now	Simpsons Cartoon Studio	Fox	PC	23rd	NFL Blitz	Midway	CGB	TBA	Liath	Project Two	PC
now	SiN	Activision	PC	23rd	Pocket Bomberman	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	MadTrax	Ubisoft	PC
now	Virtual Springfield	Fox	PC	23rd	Pocket Tales Conker	Rare	CGB	TBA	MechWarrior 3	MicroProse	PC
now	Wing Commander Gold	EA	PC	23rd	Quest for Camelot	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	NFL Quarterback Club '99	Acclaim	PC
now	F-Zero X	Nintendo	N64	23rd	Rampage World Tour	Midway	CGB	TBA	Powerslide	GT	PC
now	Starshot	Infogrames	N64	23rd	Tennis 2	Nintendo	CGB	TBA	Premier Manager '99	Gremlin	PC
now	Apocalypse	Activision	PSX	27th	Actua Soccer 3	Gremlin	PSX	TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
now	B-Movie	EA	PSX	27th	F1 '98	Ubisoft	PSX	TBA	Reel Feel Golf	Ubisoft	PC
now	Colony Wars: Vengeance	Psygnosis	PSX	27th	FIFA '99	EA	PSX	TBA	Revenant	EIDOS	PC
now	Hercules	Platinum	PSX	27th	Pool Shark	Gremlin	PSX	TBA	Saga	Cryo	PC
now	Michael Owen's WLS	EIDOS	PSX	27th	TOCA Touring Car 2	Codemasters	PSX	TBA	Skullcaps	Ubisoft	PC
now	Mickey's Wild Adventure	Platinum	PSX	27th	Abe's Exoddus	GT	PC	TBA	Speedbusters	Ubisoft	PC
now	NBA Jam '99	Acclaim	PSX	27th	Actua Soccer 3	Gremlin	PC	TBA	Tank Racer	Grolier	PC
now	Rival Schools	Virgin	PSX	27th	Baldur's Gate	Interplay	PC	TBA	Third World	Activision	PC
now	Time Crisis	Platinum	PSX	27th	F-16 Aggressor	Virgin	PC	TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	PC
now	Age of Empires: Rise of Rome	Microsoft	PC	27th	FIFA '99	EA	PC	TBA	Top Gun Hornets Nest	MicroProse	PC
now	Centipede	GT	PC	27th	Gangsters	EIDOS	PC	TBA	Tunguska	Project Two	PC
now	Combat Flight Simulator	Microsoft	PC	27th	Global Domination	Psygnosis	PC	TBA	Ultrafighters	I-active Magic	PC
now	Dominant Species	Red Storm	PC	27th	Heretic 2	Activision	PC	TBA	Virtual Pool 2 Deluxe	Interplay	PC
now	Lula Virtual Babe	Take 2	PC	27th	Jurassic Park Lost World	EA	PC	TBA	War of the Worlds	GT	PC
now	Magic & Mayhem	Virgin	PC	27th	Links '99	EIDOS	PC	TBA	Warzone 2100	EIDOS	PC
now	Michael Owen's WLS	EIDOS	PC	27th	Moto Racer 2	EA	PC	TBA	Zorro Pinball	P-ball Gme Ltd	PC
now	Settlers 3	Blue Byte	PC	27th	NBA Live '99	EA	PC	<b>December</b>			
now	Starsiege	Sierra	PC	27th	Pinball Arcade	Microsoft	PC	TBA	Holy Magic Century	Konami	N64
now	VR American Football '99	Interplay	PC	27th	Pool Shark	Gremlin	PC	TBA	Turok 2	Acclaim	N64
now	Body Harvest	Take Two	N64	27th	Pro 18 World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PC	4th	American Deer Hunter	GT	PSX
now	Extreme G 2	Acclaim	N64	27th	Test Drive 4x4	Accolade	PC	4th	Asteroids	Activision	PSX
now	NBA Jam '99	Acclaim	N64	27th	TOCA Touring Car 2	Codemasters	PC	4th	Brunswick Bowling	EA	PSX
now	NFL Quarterback Club '99	Acclaim	N64	27th	Wargasm	Infogrames	PC	4th	C3 Racing	Empire	PSX
now	Top Gear Rally Overdrive	Infogrames	N64	27th	WCW Nitro	THQ	PC	4th	Crash Bandicoot 3	SCEE	PSX
20th	Cool Boarders 3	SCEE	PSX	27th	4MB Ram Pack	Nintendo	N64	4th	Knockout Kings '99	EA	PSX
				27th	FIFA '99	EA	N64	4th	Tai Fu	Activision	PSX
				27th	Legend of Zelda	Nintendo	N64	4th	Test Drive 4x4	EA	PSX
				27th	Nascar '99	EA	N64				

## Most wanted | Write and let us know what you're looking forward to playing. Here are our choices...



**Metal Gear Solid**  
Konami, PlayStation  
Scheduled to arrive here in February, this gorgeous stealth-laden experience is going to be simply great. Check out the import review on page 126 if you doubt us. Even in a foreign tongue, this is a strong contender for Most Absorbing PlayStation Game Yet.



**Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time**  
Nintendo, N64  
This one's been rather a long time coming – a big three years at the last count – but it looks set to be the second N64 game, after *Super Mario 64*, to re-shape an entire genre. Check out the five-page feature on page 68 for more details.



**Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun**  
Westwood, PC  
It's just been delayed again, but should still be worth the wait. With lots of hot new 3D landscape technology, completely destructible scenery and real-life physics, it's just packed with promise. Come on, Westwood!

## December

4th	Tiger Woods '99	EA	PSX
4th	Asteroids	Activision	PC
4th	Test Drive 5	EA	PC
4th	Thief	EIDOS	PC
4th	Wild Metal Country	Gremlin	PC
4th	Buck Bumble	Ubisoft	N64
4th	F1 '98	Ubisoft	N64
4th	SCARS	Ubisoft	N64
4th	Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Midway	N64
4th	Virtual Pool	Crave	N64
4th	V-Rally 64	Infogrames	N64

11th	Parasite Eve	SCEE	PSX
11th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT	N64
11th	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	LucasArts	N64
TBA	Blade	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Brian Lara Cricket	Codemasters	PC
TBA	D Jump	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Drakan	Psygnosis	PC
TBA	NHL Hockey	EA	PC
TBA	Requiem	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Solar	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Soulbringer	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Tribal Lore	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Turok 2	Acclaim	PC

## January

TBA	Pro 18: World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	PSX
TBA	Championship Manager 3	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Civilization 2	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Daikatana	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Dragonflight	Grolier	PC
TBA	Homeworld	Cendant	PC
TBA	Ignition	Virgin W Label	PC
TBA	Monkey Hero	Take Two	PC
TBA	Resident Evil	Virgin W Label	PC
TBA	Shadows of the Empire	Virgin W Label	PC
TBA	4x4 Mud Monsters	Take Two	N64

## February

5th	Bugs Life	Disney	PC
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PSX
TBA	Indiana Jones / Infernal Machine	Virgin	PSX
TBA	Joe Blow	Telstar	PSX
TBA	Soul Reaver	Cryst Dynamics	PSX
TBA	Metal Gear Solid	Konami	PSX
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PSX
TBA	Space Invaders	Activision	PSX
TBA	Viva Football	Virgin	PSX
TBA	WCW Thunder	THQ	PSX
TBA	Alien vs Predator	Fox	PC
TBA	Alpha Centauri	EA	PC
TBA	Baja 1000 Racing	Broderbund	PC
TBA	Delta Force	Novalogic	PC
TBA	Diablo 2	EA	PC
TBA	Duke Nuken 4ever	GT	PC
TBA	Dungeon Keeper 2	EA	PC
TBA	Extreme Warfare	Broderbund	PC
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Interstate '82	Activision	PC
TBA	Lands of Lore 3	Westwood	PC
TBA	Machines	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Outcast	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Prax Wars	EA	PC
TBA	South Park	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Star Wars: X-wing Alliance	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Ultima Ascension	EA	PC
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	N64
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	N64
TBA	South Park	Acclaim	N64
TBA	Twelve Tales	Rare	N64

# Q&A

## Write to us

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**Got a burning gaming question? We know the answer. Or rather, Mark Green won't be paid until he finds it out.**

**Q** Why are the best games and new consoles always out much later over here than in Japan or the US? *Metal Gear Solid* and Sega's Dreamcast spring to mind...

**A** Here's why it happens: Japan is where most blockbuster games and gorgeous machines originate, so it's perhaps only natural that Japan gets stuff first. It's the keenest games market in the world, but also physically small (at least next to Europe or the US), making it an ideal testbed – if a game does well there, there's a good chance it will do well elsewhere too. The US is gaming's most important market, and so they get second bite at the cherry. Europe's also massive, but trickier – lots of different languages, lots of different countries, lots of different TV systems – so we come last.

But that's not quite the whole story. Factories can only produce a certain number of carts or CDs at any one time, so they tend to do it territory by territory – publishers make sure Japan and the States have all they need before starting on Europe. The odd game gets held back until what seems like a suitable time for launch too – like the N64 game *1080°*, waylaid until a) the big Christmas sales period and b) people started planning their snowboarding holidays.

**Q** When's *Super Mario 64 2* coming out? It's been ages since the first one. Is the bloke who did it still alive?

**A** Of course he is! He's Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of many of Nintendo's best games, and currently resting after putting the final touches to the fantastic new *Zelda* game (reviewed next issue). *Mario 64 2* is started, but it's been on a



**Old Spectrum games. You've got to love them. Just try not to notice that, erm, they're a bit crap.**

back burner for a while, waiting for *Zelda*. Once he gets back to it, however, Mr. Miyamoto reckons *Mario 2* "shouldn't take too long" to complete. Just remember that Nintendo Time™ is a little different to time by any other measure. It could take years.

**Q** Is there anywhere I can get hold of old Spectrum games? I'd like to see if any of them are as good as I remember.

**A** You can, but with a few exceptions they're probably not. The internet holds a host of freely available emulators to make your PC think it's a Speccy (or C64 for that matter) – the problem is, using them can push you into a legal minefield. Alternatively, find a car-boot sale or good second-hand shop, or scour the classifieds. You won't be able to move for old, cheap rubbish. **A**

## Whatever happened to...? Superstars of gaming's past tracked down

### Matthew Smith

**Claim to fame:** A pioneer of the UK platform game, Matthew Smith became a hero to thousands (and a reputed millionaire, though that seems very unlikely in the cold light of '90s reason) in 1983, when he came up with the ace new ZX Spectrum game, *Manic Miner*. Based on the Atari classic *Miner 2049'er*, it was hardly original – but it did sell. And sell and sell and sell. Its sequel, *Jet Set Willy*, was even better.

But following this impressive double whammy, things went quiet. There were rumours of a mysterious third title, and indeed – some years later – adverts started appearing for something called *Attack of the Flesh-Eating Zombie Chickens from Mars*. But the game never appeared. *Attack's* publishers said they didn't know where he'd gone. So what happened?

**So, where is he?** We don't know. Now, that may sound a bit crap, but



it seems no one knows. It's a bit like Richie of the Manic Street Preachers. But like Richie, keen Matthew fans won't allow him to rest in peace. Web sites are devoted to tracking him down (try [ds.dial.pipex.com/town/parade/no50/specmain.html](http://ds.dial.pipex.com/town/parade/no50/specmain.html)), with the rumour being that after *Jet Set Willy*, Matthew

developed a penchant for motorbikes, changed his name to "Matthew From-Earth" and ran off to live in a Dutch commune. Apparently he's still there, his only link with the outside world being an occasional call to UK talk radio shows. (In other words, don't expect *Jet Set Willy 2* any time soon.)

# THE COLOR PURPLE



In the world of handhelds Nintendo rules. Nearly ten years after the launch of the all-conquering Game Boy, comes its biggest update ever: colour.

**I**t's hard to believe that the Game Boy is knocking on for ten years old now – in the fast moving world of game consoles that's veteran status – but the truth is that it's rarely been more popular. One time would-be rivals like the Sega Game Gear and Atari Lynx have been seen-off, while bright new casings, fancy add-ons and the slim-line Pocket models have added a bit of sex appeal to what was, for so long, a chewing gum-coloured brick. But the biggest step forward was always going to be with the introduction of colour games running on a snazzier, non-backlit LCD screen. And from November 23, that's what we've got.

The first thing you'll notice about Game Boy Color is the shape – ever so slightly larger than the Pocket models, and in what Nintendo claims to be a more ergonomic shape. "Some people find the Pocket a little fiddly," reckons Nintendo UK's John Bailey. "The new one has a slight bulge in the back to accommodate the larger AA batteries, too." (Pocket, of course, uses AAA.) The other surprise is the actual colour of the casing – while in Japan Game Boy Color will come in a wide range of shades, UK models, initially at least, will be any colour as long as it's purple: either a solid colour or a pale transparent. The reason why is simple: purple Game Boys have never been sold in this country before. But the colours that really concern us, of course, are those on the screen.

And very impressive they are. Not as eyeball-popping as you might have hoped for – Game Boy Color is never going to provide a Teletubby-proportioned assault on the retina – but nice. Get ready for a range of 32,000 available colours, 32 of which will be available at any one time on the

early colour games, with some 1999 releases boosting that to 56. Sure, it's mostly seaweed greens, rusty browns, timid yellows and the like – more Morris Marina than Ferrari – but they're good for LCD. And anyway, it could well be that the greatest asset of Game Boy Color turns out not to be colour, but the resolution of the screen.

You see, from now on, original Game Boy will start to look fuzzy and indistinct. Tilt the new

screens in any direction, subject them to malign light sources – natural and artificial – and your viewing experience is barely affected. Thank Sharp for its ingenious development of non-backlit LCDs – technology which could finally mean an end to long coach journey migraines.

And it's not just colour and a sharper screen that our purple friend has over its long-in-the-tooth cousins – Game Boy Color's CPU can run up to twice as fast as the original, allowing for much more sophisticated software. Original Game Boy games (which will run on the new machine), will look better too. They'll be sharper, and won't suffer from the dizzy motion blurring than could make quicker sections on platformers impossibly hard. Not only that, they'll also boast a

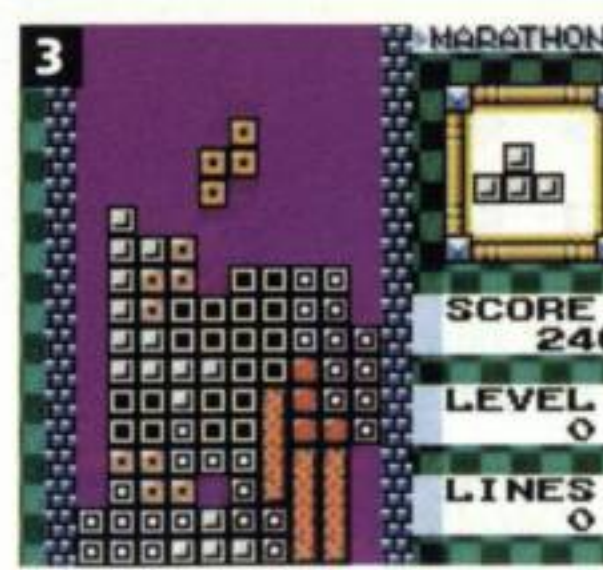
## What about the new games?

**Release day should bring five or six newbies, but the best is yet to come.**

■ It's likely to be '99 before we see the best new games. The top early colour release from Nintendo is probably going to be *Pocket Bomber Man*, though here at Arcade the farm-'em-up *Harvest Moon* (a *Zelda*-lookalike RPG, where you plant seeds, sell sheep and run a farm) is also anticipated. There's also the RPG *Quest For Camelot*, *New Color Tetris* and *Game & Watch Gallery 2*. Soon out are *Conker's Pocket Tales*, *Tetris Deluxe* and upgrades of *The Legend Of Zelda: Link's Awakening* (an extra dungeon), *Wario Land 2*, *Metroid II: Return Of Samus* and *Kirby's Dream Land 2*. NES adaptations will include



*Shadowgate Classics*, *Spy Hunter* and *Moon Patrol*. Take 2 promises *Cool Hand*, *Montezuma's Return* and *Reservoir Rat* by Xmas. Midway's *Mortal Kombat 4*, *Rampage World Tour* and *NFL Blitz* are out at launch, with *San Francisco Rush* and Infogrames' *Game Boy Wars 2*, *Twouble*, *Carrot Crazy* and *Super Black Bass 3* soon.



■ There's a wealth of games on the way for the new Game Boy Color, including all-time favourites like *Mortal Kombat* (1), *New Color Tetris* (3), and the well-loved '80s classic *Moon Patrol* (2).



■ The original. Bless. ■ Game Boy Pocket. ■ Game Boy Camera. ■ And Game Boy Color.

## The Game Boy History Man

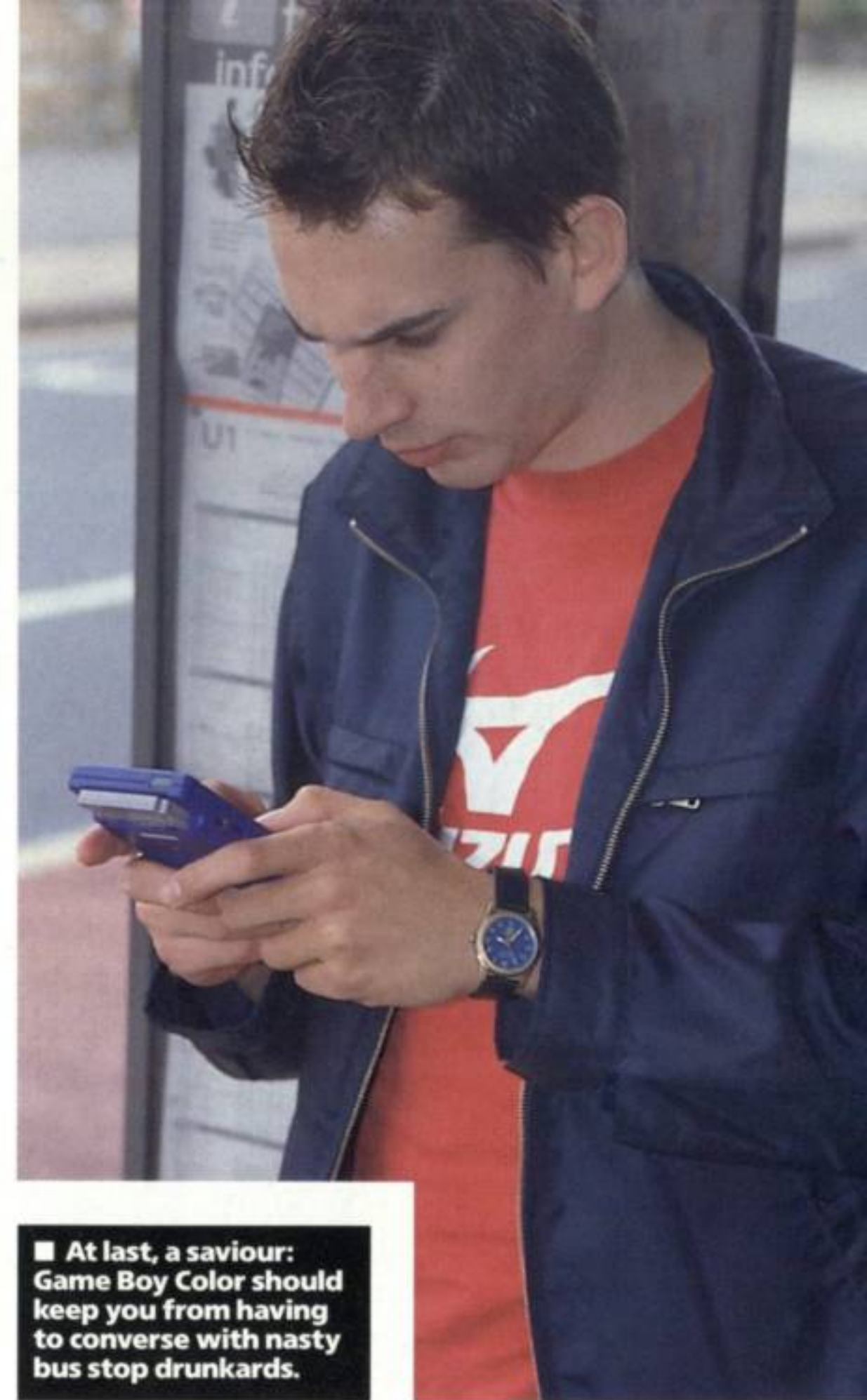
*It's a familiar feature in the hand of every teenager but how did it start?*

■ Launched with very little fanfare in April '89, Game Boy was initially seen by Nintendo as a way to take advantage of the "Game & Watch" craze of the time – those electronic toys with a single game built in. Few could have predicted the

quiet revolution Game Boy would begin – within two years, this grey box had become the public face of videogames. Outside on the streets it was ubiquitous and unavoidable, just as at home on the bus or in the office, as it was in the

playground. *Tetris* became a craze; its infuriatingly tinny accompanying music the Game Boy's official theme tune. Since then Game Boy has had more fade aways and comebacks than Gary Glitter, but in recent years smart marketing and new variations – like coloured outer cases, smaller Pocket versions and the recent Game Boy Camera – allied to a very consistent flow of quality software, have made for a real renaissance. It's estimated that there are 63 million Game Boys in use

worldwide, far more than any other games machine. Over the years Game Boy games have become more complex – the current trend being for scaled-down adaptations of 64-bit titles – but there's only so much you can do with a machine of such modest memory capabilities. The continually rising sales curve suggests that consumers are happy with the product, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't like it to be better. And that means having bigger games – and colour.



■ At last, a saviour: Game Boy Color should keep you from having to converse with nasty bus stop drunkards.

## THE CONSOLE WILL ANALYSE THE CODE, WORK OUT WHAT'S A MOVING SPRITE, WHAT'S A BACKGROUND OBJECT, AND WHAT SHADE OF GREY THEY ALL ARE, THEN ATTEMPT TO COLOUR THEM

rudimentary colour of their own. That's right – chuck an old GB game onto GBC and the console will analyse the code, work out what's a moving sprite, what's a background object, and what shade of grey they all are, then attempt to colour them. It may not get it right – Mario might get a blue outfit, say – but you can cycle through combinations until you get to something vaguely acceptable. (It's similar to what Super Game Boy – the cart that plugged into SNES machines, enabling you to play GB games on your TV screen – used to do, but cleverer.) Some games work better than others – *Golf* just goes all green with black men and a red ball, but some of the *Kirby* games look impressive, with up to four shades of colour to each item. Inserting an old *Donkey Kong* cartridge, we found that only the characters coloured, while the scenery remained grey.

But all this new technology needn't send shivers up your spine if you own a mono Game Boy – your machine isn't getting phased out any time soon, and neither is the supply of software going to dry



up. Instead there will soon be three types of GB software on sale – black and white, Color, and dual mode. No-one has yet suggested how long it will be before mono and dual mode are phased out in favour of colour-only, but around two or three years would seem to be a decent bet.

While it's long been possible to link two Game Boys with a cable for head-to-head gaming, Game Boy Color also offers an intriguing alternative – there is a new infra-red port on the top side of each machine, which will enable two Game Boy Colors to communicate without them needing to physically touch, as long as the ports are facing each other and not too many inches apart. This sounds very exciting, but no-one – or certainly no-one outside Nintendo Japan – seems quite sure what the feature is going to be used for. As far as we are aware there isn't any software due soon which makes use of it. Our best guess – and also that of Nintendo UK, incidentally – is that the ports will be used to transfer data from one Game Boy Color to another, perhaps for trading of characters in a *Pocket Monsters* game. It's certainly hard to imagine infra-red being any use for head-to-head, so delicate is the signal.

And that, in a nutshell, is Game Boy Color. Nothing about it is very radical, or (the infra-red port aside) even surprising, but it all works, and enables more involving handheld games than previously possible. This is, it's safe to say, Game

Boy as it always should have been – and at under £70, pretty damn affordable. Now all we need to wait for are the first batch of 56-colour games, and perhaps, a wider range of casing colours. I mean, purple. What were they thinking of?



### SPECIFICATIONS

#### Game Boy Color

- 32,000 colour palate, with up to 56 colours displayed at any one time.
- Vastly upgraded, non-backlit LCD screen.
- Improved link cable ports and new infra-red ports for better Boy-to-Boy communication.
- Capable of adding basic colour to old mono games.
- Four times the RAM, eight times the ROM.
- Takes two AA batteries.
- UK price: £69.99 (software from £19.99).
- In the shops: 23 November 1998.



■ Game Boy Color features include an infra-red port and that all-important battery-bulge.

# Ha

Simon

Neil

Rich

It looked like **Mario Kart** would be a Neil victory, until, in a moment of supreme over-confidence, he took a corner too tight, spun, and sailed right off the edge of a cliff...





# rd Drivin'!

Your host | Simon Kirrane



Mark

Matt

**Every few weeks, we get together for beer, insults and games. Lots of games. Our quest: to name the best car sims for multi-player fun.**

**I**t's late. You're trying to scrub kebab sauce off the back of the sofa and one of your friends suggests rounding the evening off with a glass of port, a Cuban cigar and some virtual, high-speed fun. We've all been there – and it ain't a bad place to be. Games are always great, of course, but never quite as great as with a few mates, a crate of beer and lots of shouting.

Thus, in a selfless quest to bring you the best games for your own bouts of late night multi-player madness, we present Games Night. The idea is simplicity itself: every month we get together, get drunk, play a bunch of stuff and hopefully remember enough the next morning to come up with a few recommendations. Because it's such a social thing, the best Games Night games will typically be on PlayStation or N64 – far more front-room friendly than a PC – and they will almost certainly all have some sort of multi-player mode. They'll also be high in action, high in accessibility and highest of all in generating a real feeling of competitiveness – things like football games, beat-'em-ups and first-person shoot-'em-ups are all naturals, as are this month's contenders, the big-name driving games.

The minute we arrived at my house for the night's action, the tension began to mount. Everyone figures they're handy behind the wheel, but now – in our safe little way – it was time to prove it...

**7.32pm**

### Circuit Breakers, Mindscape

From the development team that brought us Codemasters' excellent *MicroMachines* comes this very similar effort – another top-down viewed affair with tiny cars, a great full-screen four-player mode and crazily eccentric courses. It fared well in reviews a few months ago, but isn't exactly flying off the shelves. Somehow it's failed to capture the imagination of the great gaming public. Would it grab ours?

The signs were good from the start. All four of us could play at once, with the twisted tracks and abundance of power-ups (ranging from rockets and smoke bombs to *Alice In Wonderland*-esque Huge and Small options) encouraging us to cheat, nudge, blow up and generally scupper our pals as much as possible. Okay, so it's not exactly realistic, but damn, it's playable.

There were, of course, initial set up problems ("Which one am I?", "My car's not moving!", "Oh, that's me, is it?"), but soon we were really motoring. Quickly the game's major flaw came to light. Matt moaned about it first: "I can't see where I'm supposed to be going."

And he was right – when you're leading the pack you can race so far up the screen that you can't see more than a car length or two ahead of you, making steering as much a test of your memory of the course as it is a test of your reactions.

**Matt:** "It's a massive problem! You can't see when to turn, which is ridiculous – this is meant to be a driving game."

Neil completely disagreed – "I reckon the whole point is that you have to get used to the tracks" – and the debate raged, Neil making his point by winning every race for the next half hour. At least it meant Matt knew which way to go – he could just follow Neil.

That *Circuit Breakers* has taken the lead from *MicroMachines* in the teeny-weeny racing stakes may not be news to hardcore

# Games Night

gamers, but the public at large remains unimpressed. It's a shame – we reckon a bit more exposure to *Circuit Breakers* would change most minds, even Matt's. Indeed, despite his grumbling, he failed to complain when we overran our strict "30 minutes per game" rule by a good 20 minutes.

## 8.28pm Gran Turismo, SCE

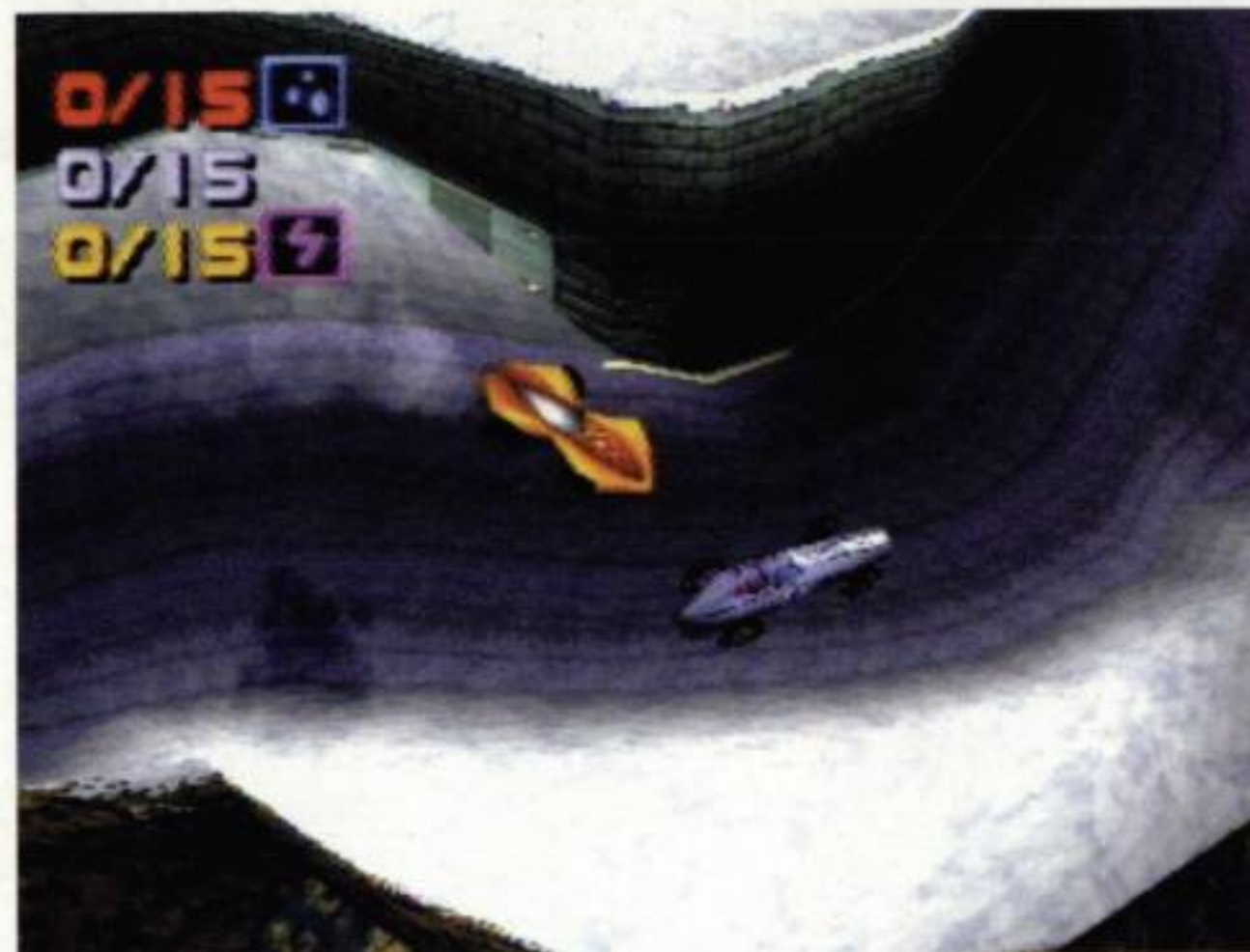
This is, of course, the racing game that set the PlayStation alight – and it's not hard to see why. It boasts the most thrilling handling and by far the best graphics available on any PSX racer, plus a vast assortment of almost photo-realistic cars (mainly Japanese factory hot rods, which adds to the exotic feel) and exactly the sort of soundtrack (Ash, Garbage et al) that you'd put on if you were racing these road rockets for real. What it lacks – and what told against it in Games Night terms – is a four-player mode. Instead we were reduced to running a bunch of two-player challenges, pitting the different driver combos (Matt vs Rich, Mark vs Neil and so on) against each other, awarding a point for each victory, then letting the two leaders (Neil and Mark) go head-to-head in the final, which was eventually won by Mark.

Overall we remain as impressed with *Gran Turismo* as we were when we first witnessed its real feeling of speed, fine handling (it's forgiving yet realistic) and, of course, its great looks. As ever, fun was had watching the movie-style full screen replays – it's hard to think of another game, the odd football sim aside, where the replays count so much towards the overall fun factor. If games were rated on the swearing and outrageous boasting they generate in their players (Neil's "I'm going to reel you in like the floundering kipper of the road that you are!" will live long in the memory), *GT* would be in pole position.

**Neil:** "Elsewhere this issue we've got *GT* down as one of the best driving games to date... and playing it tonight isn't changing my mind any. It's great."

**Matt:** "I know it's only a small part of the overall thing, but I just love the presentation. It's almost like an official Japanese car Web site, with genuine company logos and near photo-realistic pics of all the cars. A good

## Circuit Breakers



■ Maintaining a *Circuit Breakers* lead required Nostradamus-like levels of foresight to judge the up-and-coming twists and turns.

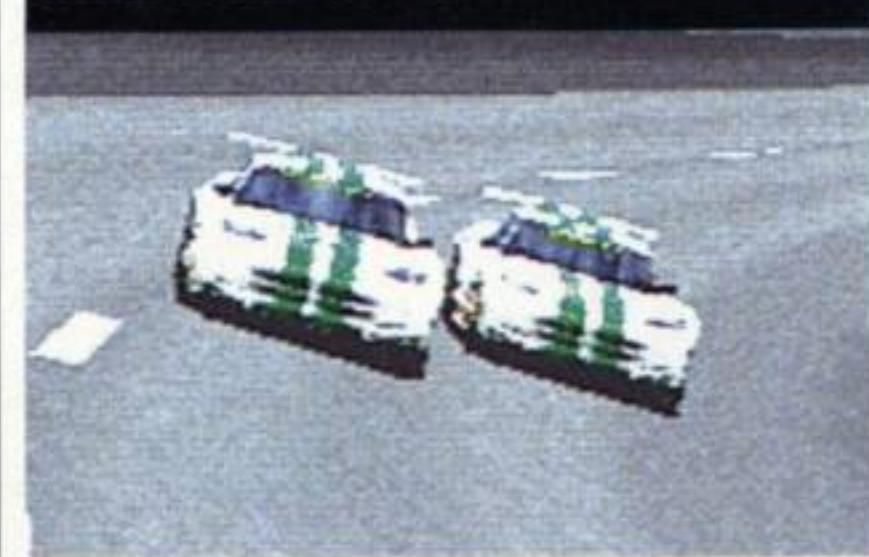
half of them are special super-hot Japan-only models that you can't buy here, which really adds to the excitement level – *GT* is thrilling before you even pick up the joypad! And then the fact that the cars look good when moving is the icing on the cake."

**Rich:** "The cars feel very different to each other, too. This one [he'd picked the skittish Mitsubishi FTO – dot] is all over the place..."

**Matt:** "For me this is probably the best game of the night, but I have to admit that it's at least partially because I love stupidly fast Japanese cars and this lets me drive them all from the comfort of my sofa."

**Mark:** "You know, I'm not sure realism counts for much. Mario Kart doesn't look real in the slightest, but once you're moving that hardly matters. Who cares if you're a

## Gran Turismo



■ *GT* proved too realistic – Rich was badly travel sick over the side of the sofa.

## First he hit a tree, then a fence, then, for a long time he sat facing backwards in a ditch, his head in his hands

Mazda RX-7 or a dinosaur in a go-kart? You're just racing, and your overall concern is to win. For me, *GT* is a great, but Mario Kart is better – and particularly for tonight, when we're messing with the four-player mode."

And no-one could disagree. Except for one dissenting voice in the wilderness:

**Rich:** "I like the music in *GT* better than in Mario Kart, that's for sure."

And no-one could disagree with him.

## 9.14pm Colin McRae World Rally, Codemasters

If there's a game to challenge the racing god *Gran Turismo* for realism, it's this surprisingly popular rally game. Surprising, because it simulates that grimmest of motor sports (rallying, is, after all, more at home in damp woods than Monte Carlo), and because its ex-world champion star, Mr Colin McRae, is hardly a household name. Where the game has scored with many gamers, however, is with its realistic car feel and great attention to detail. The cars' behavioural physics seem believable and also, after the perhaps over-generous *GT*, *McRae's* beef-and-potatoes insistence that if your car hits something it might get damaged comes across like a breath of fresh forest air. There's not much

## The joypad jury

**Eight games, four men, one writer and one mission – a race to the death.**

■ They were all friends at the start of the night – but would they be so chummy by the end? Each budding Coulthard brought along a game to champion, a six-pack of beer, and a point to prove...



**Matt**  
Arcade Ed-in-chief, sporadically "good" gameplayer and hopeless Japanese muscle-car fan. He brought along that hymn to Skyline GT-Rs, *Gran Turismo*.



**Neil**  
Fresh from San Francisco and Japan, he picked the twistiest, turniest driving game of them all: *Circuit Breakers*.



**Rich**  
Rarely very serious about anything, he shocked us all by sponsoring the most grimly realistic game of the night: *Colin McRae Rally*.

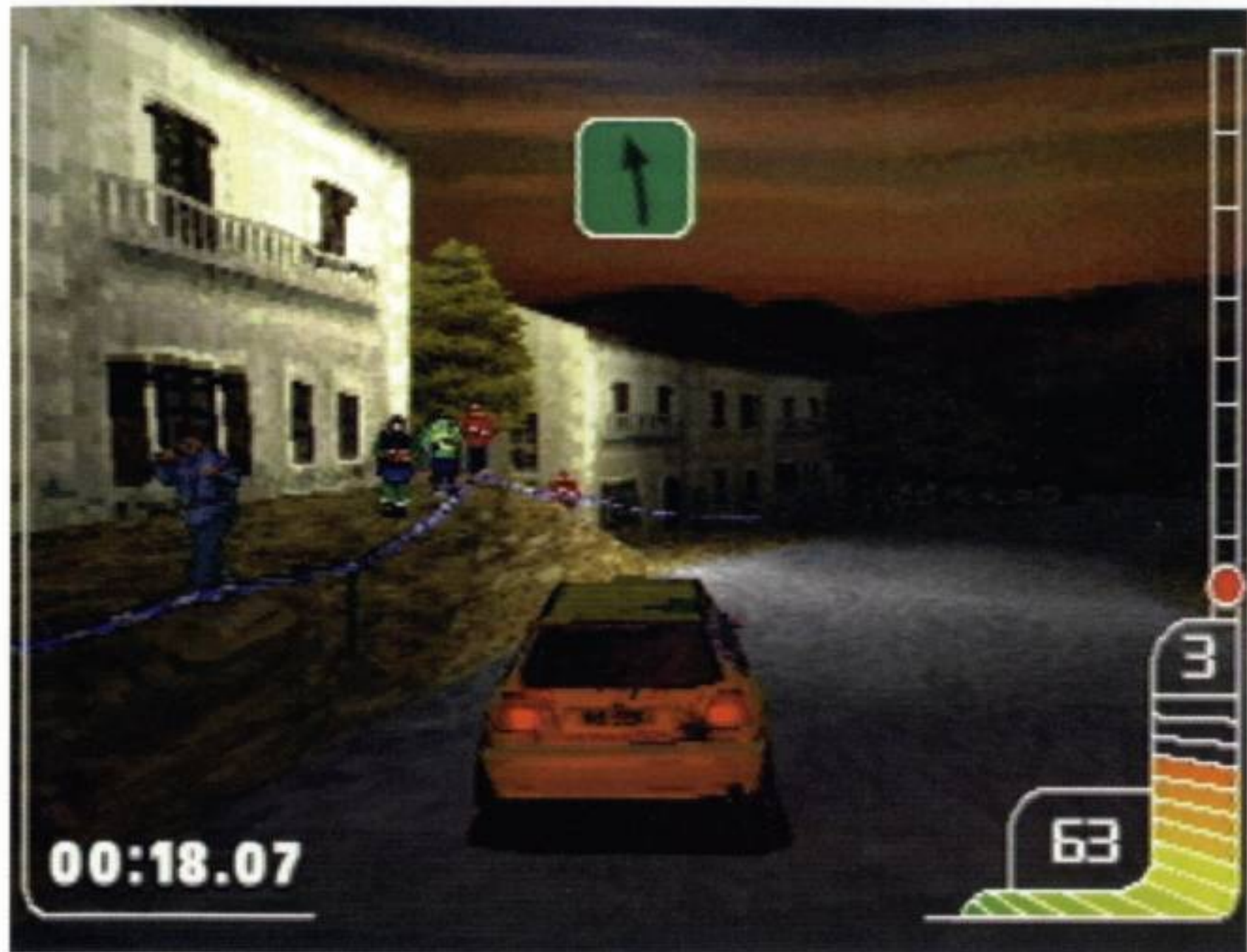


**Mark**  
Young, dumb and full of fun, our N64 fan went with Nintendo's new interpretation of a classic: *F-Zero X*.



**Simon**  
Your host, listener and scribe. He bought *Mario Kart 64*, *Motor Toon GP2*, *Pole Position* and *Supersonic Racers*. Gentlemen, start your engines...

## Colin McRae World Rally



■ Ultra-realistic rallying might be well-suited to lonesome bedroom gamers, but it doesn't make for thrilling two-player tournaments. You can't run over the McRae spectators, either.

glamour to *Colin McRae*, but an abundance of seat-of-your-pants grit more than makes up for the absence of champagne and laurel.

For this particular bout of mud-splattered hill-side tumbling we chose the arcade two-player race, and plumped for the ghost cars option, which ensures that no contact is ever made between the two cars (it just shows how confident we were in our ability not to hit each other). Rich had picked *Colin McRae* as the game he'd champion, claiming he was "really rather good at it". We'd see...

**Neil:** "So, who exactly is Colin McRae?"

Neil, you have to remember, has been in the USA for the last five years, so we quickly filled him in on Col's Scottishness, thinning hairline and car-sliding trickery. Meanwhile, it was quickly becoming apparent that "really rather good" means something different in Rich's world to ours. First he hit a tree, then a fence, then, for a long time, he sat facing backwards in a ditch, his head in his hands. Eventually, the truth was revealed – he had only picked *Colin McRae Rally* to bring along because he'd got it mixed up with *V-Rally*.

Rich having given up in despair, the rest of us started to work our way through the game, and opinion quickly split. On the plus side, we did all agree it looks great – the backgrounds are intricate, even beautiful, but at the expense of some very noticeable pop-up at times – and we reckoned that it's probably better as a one-player



game than thrown to the lions like this. But ranged against it was the simple fact that we were all crashing too much for it to be fun – that, and the strange emptiness of it all, which almost tempts you to slow to a country-drive saunter instead of pressing on, forcing your car forward like a madman.

**Mark:** "I enjoy *V-Rally* and at the arcades I love *Sega Rally*, but this is just – I don't know – floaty and unreal. And where are all the crazed spectators who leap out of the way of the cars at the last minute? It doesn't feel like I'm driving – it's just too detached."

Time, then, for the next game.

## 9.32pm Motor Toon GP2, SCEE

*Colin McRae's* surprise panning meant this was rapidly developing into a digital *Killing Fields*, but no other game got mauled quite as badly as *Motor Toon GP2*. Amazingly, it was developed by the same in-house Sony team that brought us *Gran Turismo*, but it doesn't show. It's reasonably fast, but the crazed cartoon graphics (likened by more than one player to Jeremy Beadle's tragic skewwiff house from earlier incarnations of *You've Been Framed*) and dubious handling rob it of any sense of the car, road or any relationship between the two. To be honest we disliked the whole look and feel of the thing, and didn't give it much of a chance.

**Mark:** "So how on earth did this shower go on to make GT?"

It was a good question. We concluded that the quitting of heavy narcotics must have had something to do with it, before deciding to follow their lead. We quit. All in

## Motor Toon GP2



■ Don't even ask. Playing this was about as much fun as Hoovering up the mess we'd made at Simon's house at the end of the evening.

all the unfortunate game was loaded on the PlayStation for around three minutes.

## 9.40pm Supersonic Racers, Mindscape

Next was another offering from Supersonic Software, creator of *Circuit Breakers* and *MicroMachines* – this one being, we believe, the team's third attempt at top-down tiny-car racing, and its first since making a break away from Codemasters. Happily, *Supersonic Racers* would allow for some always-fun four-player battling. Unhappily, however, we randomly chose the Planet level, a ridiculous novelty course (like you get any other sort in a Supersonic game), which had us all racing around a barrier-free track in space rockets.

**Matt:** "My God, it's *Motor Toon GP2* all over again. This looks like *Wacky Races*."

Soon everyone discovered the big challenge of the game – staying on the



# Games Night

twisty, narrow track. Fall off and you're toast, which would make sense if you were in a car, but becomes more difficult to swallow when you're piloting a Fireball XL-5 lookalike. With wings and everything.

**Neil:** "Let's quit this track and start again."

So quit it we did, but even the more Earth-bound replacement proved frustrating. Bored with crashing, we moved on, with Neil summing up the feeling for all of us: "I never want to play that game again."

## 9.53pm

### Namco Museum Volume 2: Pole Position, Namco

*Pole Position* was, of course, the original racing game – the first coin-op to use the now traditional just-behind-your-car viewpoint. As such, it deserves our respect – but not, perhaps, our playing time. Naturally, by modern standards this racer is almost unbelievably crude, but we all know from the likes of *Defender* and even from *Space Invaders* that crude doesn't always mean rubbish. The question is, can the same hold true of something that's attempting to simulate real life, like a racing sim?

*Pole Position* is on the *Namco Museum Vol 2* compilation, where it and its historical companions take up so little disc space that Namco has wrapped the whole thing up in a bizarre late-'90s front end, which takes the form of a sort of virtual coin-op museum. Each ancient coin-op, along with assorted displays, lives in its own gallery and takes a surprising amount of walking around to find. Once there, though, we quickly realised that our wander had been a squandered effort – the sad fact is that, in 1998, *Pole Position* is a complete waste of time. It's faults are legion, and we're not just talking about Spectrum-quality graphics, or even the utterly hopeless soundtrack (which sounds exactly the same as a Speccy loading), either.

**Rich:** "How come it seems to play slower on the straights than on the corners?"

Yes, for some reason known only to '80s coin-op developers, *Pole Position's* cars all react in a completely opposite way to a real car, speeding up as they take the tightest corners (on rails, like a train), but chugging along like asthmatic Austin Allegros when you put your foot down on the straight.

**Matt:** "There's nothing wrong with retro gaming..."

**Mark:** "...it's just that while some old games are still playable, most of them aren't. And this is one that isn't."

## 10.10pm

### Mario Kart 64, Nintendo

At last. We'd waded through the mounds of racing rubbish – now it was time for some fun. Everyone had played *Mario Kart 64* before, everyone knew how great it is and everyone was thrilled by the chance to use, once more, one of the very best multi-player options that exists in gaming. As a die-hard Nintendo fan, Mark was especially thrilled to be moving over to his favourite machine from the PlayStation, not least because it meant there'd be no more CD loading time to contend with, while the rest of us were

## Supersonic Racers



■ *Supersonic Racers*: staying on the track is half the "fun". In other words, no fun at all.

just looking forward to taking part in some great competitive action. Inevitably, a mini-debate started almost immediately on the relative merits of this 64-bit take on *Mario Kart* vis-a-vis the original Super Nintendo masterpiece. Even more inevitably, though, we dropped the chatter as soon as the line-up for the first race began.

Our first course was an atypically realistic highway route, peppered with giant trucks and hazardous cars, both intent on crushing our go-kart-mounted chums. Neil stormed into an early lead, using a speed start and one of the heavier characters, then narrowly avoided being crushed by a looming bus, and started grabbing the better power-ups. Immediately a shower of banana-skins, loose shells and that lightning that shrinks you into a miniature version of yourself, began to rain down upon the rest of us.

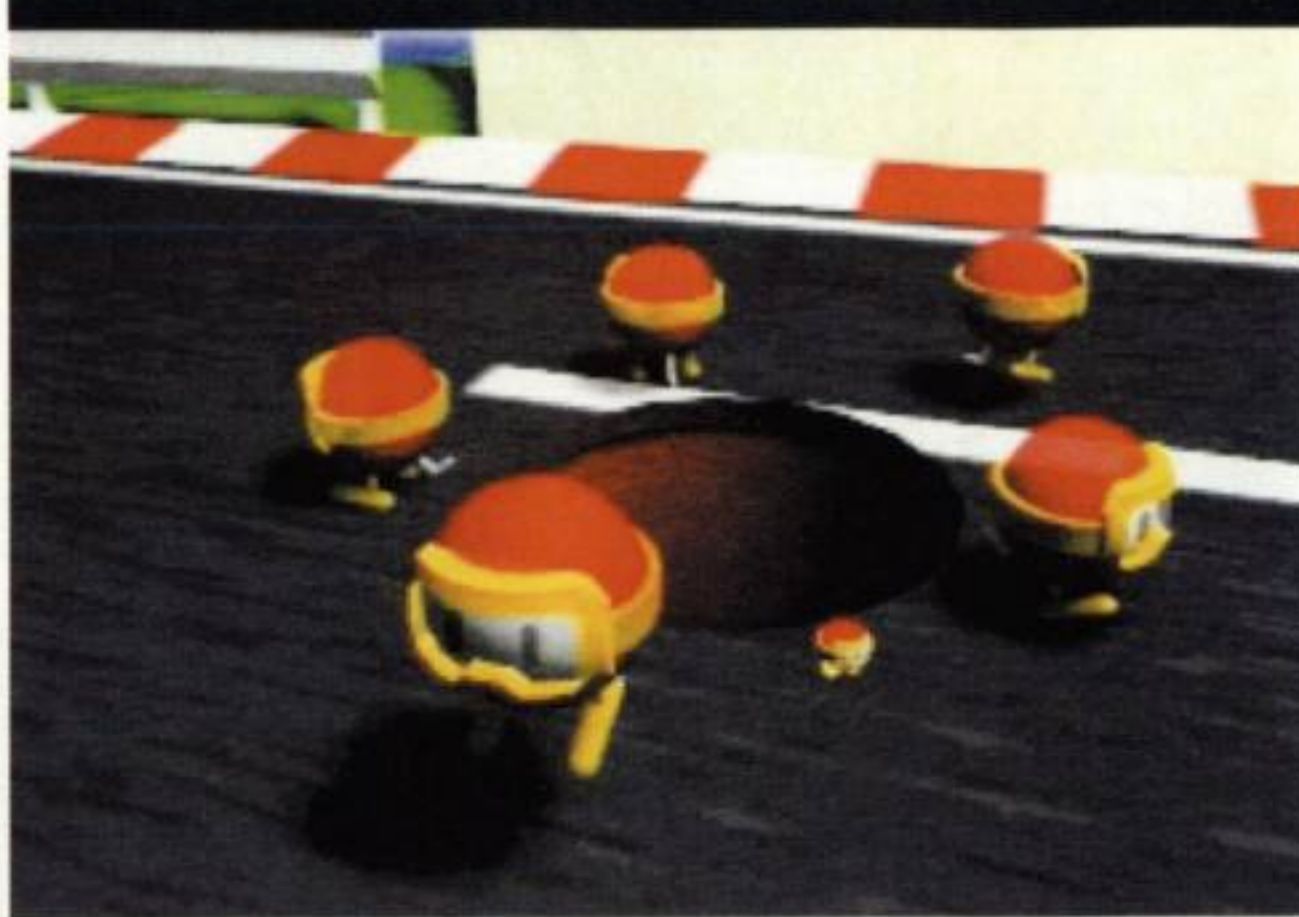
**Neil:** "You can't catch me! I'm unstoppable!"

And he was, at least until the rest of us got the hang of manoeuvring round the trucks instead of going under them. With Rich still insisting on the superiority of the SNES version – and heading the wrong way round the course for much of the race – and Matt failing to make headway on second-placed Mark, it looked like *Kart* would be a Neil victory until, in a moment of supreme over-confidence, he took a corner too tight, spun and sailed right off the edge of a cliff, leaving Mark to take the chequered flag.

Mark, the Nintendo fan, won the second race too, after which priority one became a concerted effort to scupper him, whatever the personal cost to the other players.

**Rich:** "How did Mark get so far ahead?"

## Namco Museum Vol 2: Pole Position



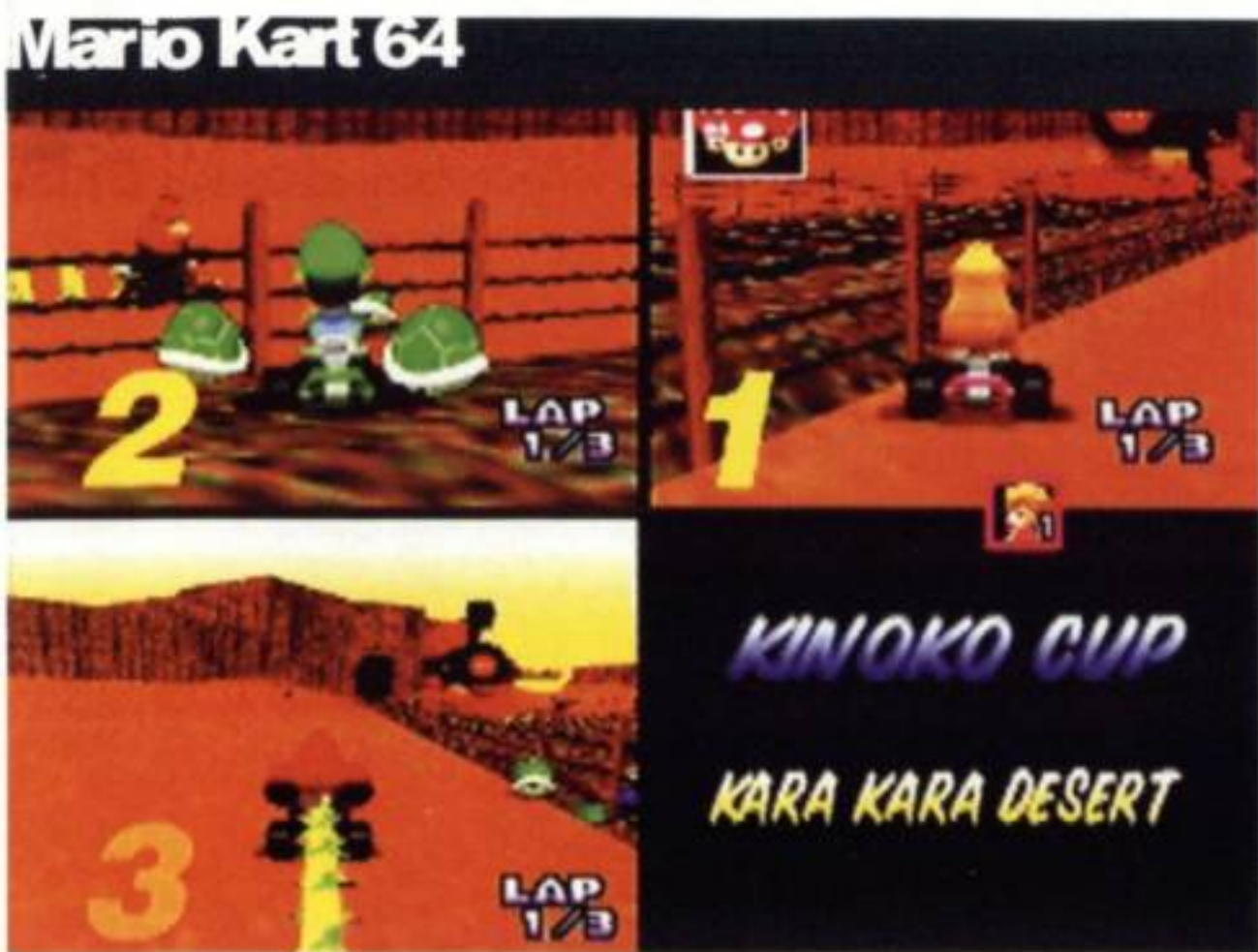
■ "They don't make 'em like they used to." "An oldie but a goodie." Phrases which we quickly abandoned upon playing *Pole Position*.

**"Right, Rich – don't touch anything! We're both bombs now, so just reverse away from me slowly..."**

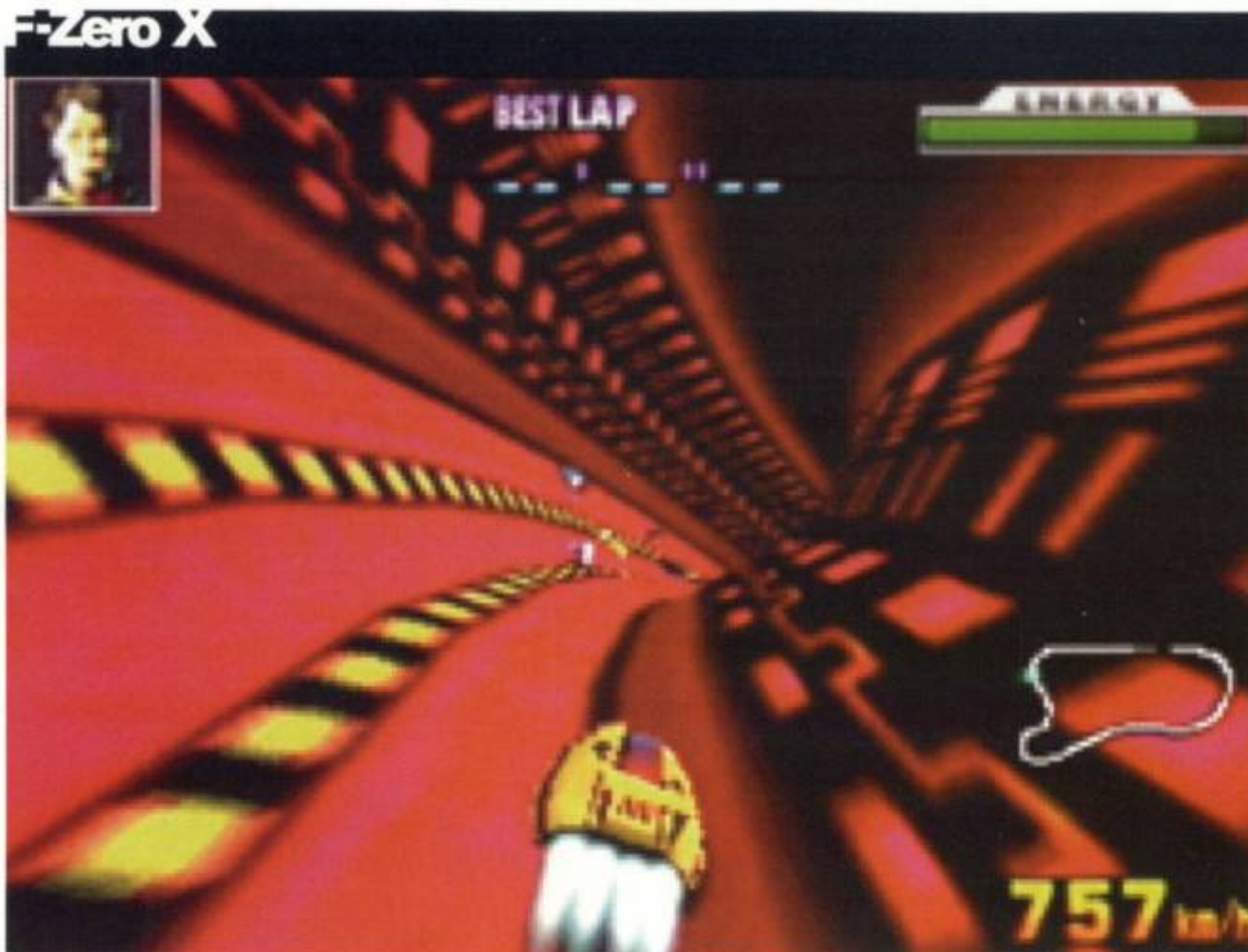
**Neil:** "Because he's too scared to stay back here and join a man's race."

It was getting on towards 11 o'clock by now, and though we still had another game to slot in, the vote to keep messing about with *Mario Kart* was unanimous – the sure sign of a great game. This time, though, we decided to go for the battle match – *Mario Kart's* famous non-racing option, where you chase each other around maze-like circuits. As ever, you're all armed with fireable shells, which you use in the attempt to take the other guys out of the game. It's sort of





■ The king of multi-player gaming, *Mario Kart* was the racer that separated the plumbers from the obscure green dinosaur things.



■ Nintendo's new-fangled space racer had us all holding our stomachs, with its twisty-turny loops and phenomenal speeds. Only Mark avoided falling off the track every three seconds.

like dogfighting, but in this case it happens in (largely) two dimensions.

As you'd expect, a fall guy was chosen. As you'd expect, it was Rich. Three shells later and he'd lost his lives, reducing him to a sort of living death as a hazard for the other players – a random and lethal bomb. **Rich:** "So what is it that I do now, exactly? Just drive around trying to hit one of you and blow you up?"

He'd got it exactly right. In a touching scene Matt attempted to point Rich in the right direction, only to be undone by a sneak double attack from Neil and, seconds later, Mark. Now we had two unstable bombs roaming the circuit – and, unfortunately, in dangerous proximity to each other.

**Matt:** "Right, Rich – don't touch anything! We're both bombs now, so just reverse away from me slowly..."

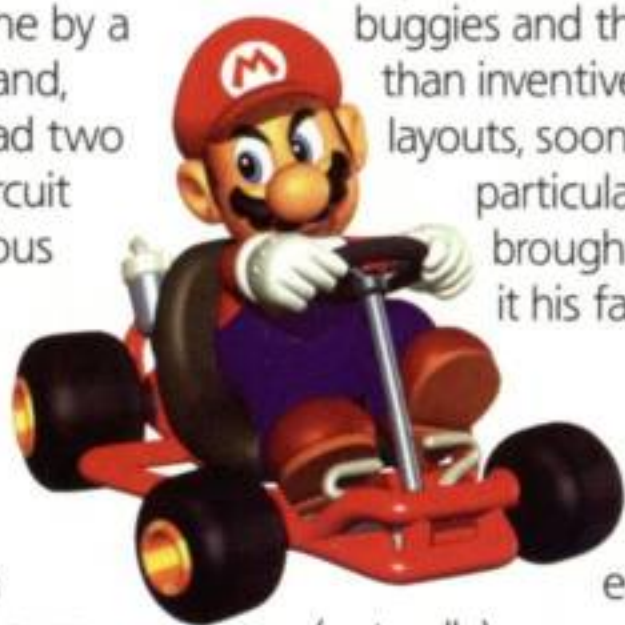
But instead of reversing Rich nudged forward, both bombs go up, and Mark and Neil were left to wage their battle to the death. Like the Phoney War in '39, it began with much shouting and no action, until cajoling from Matt and Rich forced an end to the stealth and the start of some serious shell-play. It was a bloodbath, with Neil emerging – just – as the victor.

## 12.15am

### F-Zero X, Nintendo

It was getting late for a school night, but we had just one more game to play. Everyone remembered the original Super Nintendo version of *F-Zero*, making this new take on

the rapid future racer a welcome sight. Back in the early '90s, *F-Zero* had pioneered the use of "Mode 7", the super-whizzy fake-3D graphics capability of the Super NES that became its main weapon against Sega's Mega Drive. It had looked stunning at the time, but *F-Zero X*, of course, has knocked it into a cocked hat. The N64 version is a nerve-rattling four-player, which moves at a quite incredible lick – easily the fastest game of the night. That it simultaneously packs the game with "cars" (really, futuristic hover- buggies and the like) and is never any less than inventive in its use of crazy course layouts, soon made it a firm favourite – particularly with Mark, who had brought the game along and voted it his favourite of the night.



We soon saw why – he'd obviously played it rather a lot, meaning he knew all the cars, all the courses, each and every short cut and (naturally) every cheat. He was, quite frankly, looking for a damn good slapping.

**Neil:** "Let it be noted that Mark, the utter bastard, just chose a car that's a full 300mph faster than everyone else, while encouraging me to go for 'the pretty blue one'."

And now, with Mark tempting the entire team on to a very bizarre pole track, where oversteering results in an inevitable tumble to your death, things began to get even more heated. With everyone glowering at Mark – at which point, of course, he finally came up with a few vital how-to-stay-on tips – things started to descend into chaos, tempting Matt into a well-meaning but vain

attempt to keep things civil by insisting that everyone had the same cars and that the track should hold no surprises. And it didn't – until a huge jump appeared from nowhere. Everyone failed to land, and Mark was forcibly ejected from the house.

So the first Games Night was over. Next morning we would reconvene, and try and come up with some conclusions. **A**

## Games Night picks

**Our Night of the Long Drives furnished us with a number of interesting high-speed conclusions:**

- 1) Sometimes people like games for reasons not always apparent to anyone else, or which have nothing to do with the game. (Hence, Matt's rather pathetic devotion to *Gran Turismo* has as much to do with the enjoyment of picking cars and watching replays as it does with racing.)
- 2) Nobody likes a game they're no good at. (Except Rich, who claimed to be a big fan of *F-Zero X*, despite all the evidence.)
- 3) In a Games Night-type context, things like realism and even glorious graphics count for much less than speed, a neat multi-

player option and the opportunity to do the dirty on your mates as often as possible.

4) Classic sometimes means "old and really great", but more often it just means "old". With that list in mind, the night's heroes soon began to emerge.



### Our winner

**Mario Kart 64**  
This one has it all – lots of cool characters, a top four-player option, plenty of speed, great courses and the chance to attack all the other players as often as you

like. Nobody has a bad word to say about it – that's how good it is.

### Runners up

**1. Circuit Breakers**  
Plenty of imagination, lots of barging around and a real you-get-right-into-it feel make this a sleeper hit.

**2= Gran Turismo**  
Fantastic look and feel, but let down on the night by an obvious limitation – only two of you can play at once.

**2= F-Zero X**  
The fastest game of the night. Some felt the four-player option should have boosted its position well above *Gran Turismo*, but Matt shouted them down.

# MISSING



# LINK

**WHEN NINTENDO FINALLY RELEASES THE LONG-AWAITED LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME – A GAME CRUCIAL TO THE FUTURE OF THE SYSTEM – MILLIONS OF N64 OWNERS WILL TAKE TO THE STREETS TO CELEBRATE. AND THEN RUSH INSIDE, PAUSING ONLY TO HANG “DO NOT DISTURB” SIGNS ON THEIR DOORS. SO, WE ASK CREATOR SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, WHAT EXACTLY HAS BEEN THE HOLD-UP?**

**E**ver since Nintendo released its 64-bit machine in the middle of 1996, N64 owners have been anxiously pacing up and down their bedrooms. They played *Super Mario 64*, which helped for a while. *GoldenEye 007* provided a few more weeks' distraction. And plenty of other games have come and gone – some fantastic, some excruciating. But even the best ones have been let down by one fundamental problem: they're not *Zelda 64*. Nintendo promised us *Zelda* within a year of the N64's release. The company was typically secretive about how the game would work, but showed us enough amazing-looking screenshots to have us dribbling down our T-shirts in anticipation. *Zelda 64* would have all the action and adventure of the great *Zelda* games of old – but in 3D!

The game would feature Link, Zelda and all our other pals from the previous games – but there'd be a crowd of new faces as well! Once again you'd get a sword, a bow and arrow, a boomerang and bombs – but you'd be able to use them to fight dazzling 3D battles! Nintendo promised that *Zelda 64* would redefine the role-playing game forever!

But summer 1997 drifted by. The leaves turned brown; the sky, grey. There'd be a delay, we were told, until Christmas. Final tidying up and tweaking, they said. Besides, technically speaking Nintendo had never actually set a definite release date in the first place. In the meantime, though, here were some more pictures to pore over. The graphics looked even more incredible. And – get this – there wasn't just one Link, but two! Our elven chum would appear as his old, diminutive self for part of the game, and as a strapping teenager for the rest. Some sort of time-travelling storyline looked to be in order. And the game would come on a huge 256 Megabit cartridge, four times the size of *Super Mario 64*'s. In the light of these revelations we resolved to wait, knowing that Nintendo knew best.

The evenings drew in, and our breath formed clouds in the chill night air. But anyone hoping to find a copy of *Zelda 64* in their Christmas stocking was to be disappointed. There'd been another delay. Til February.

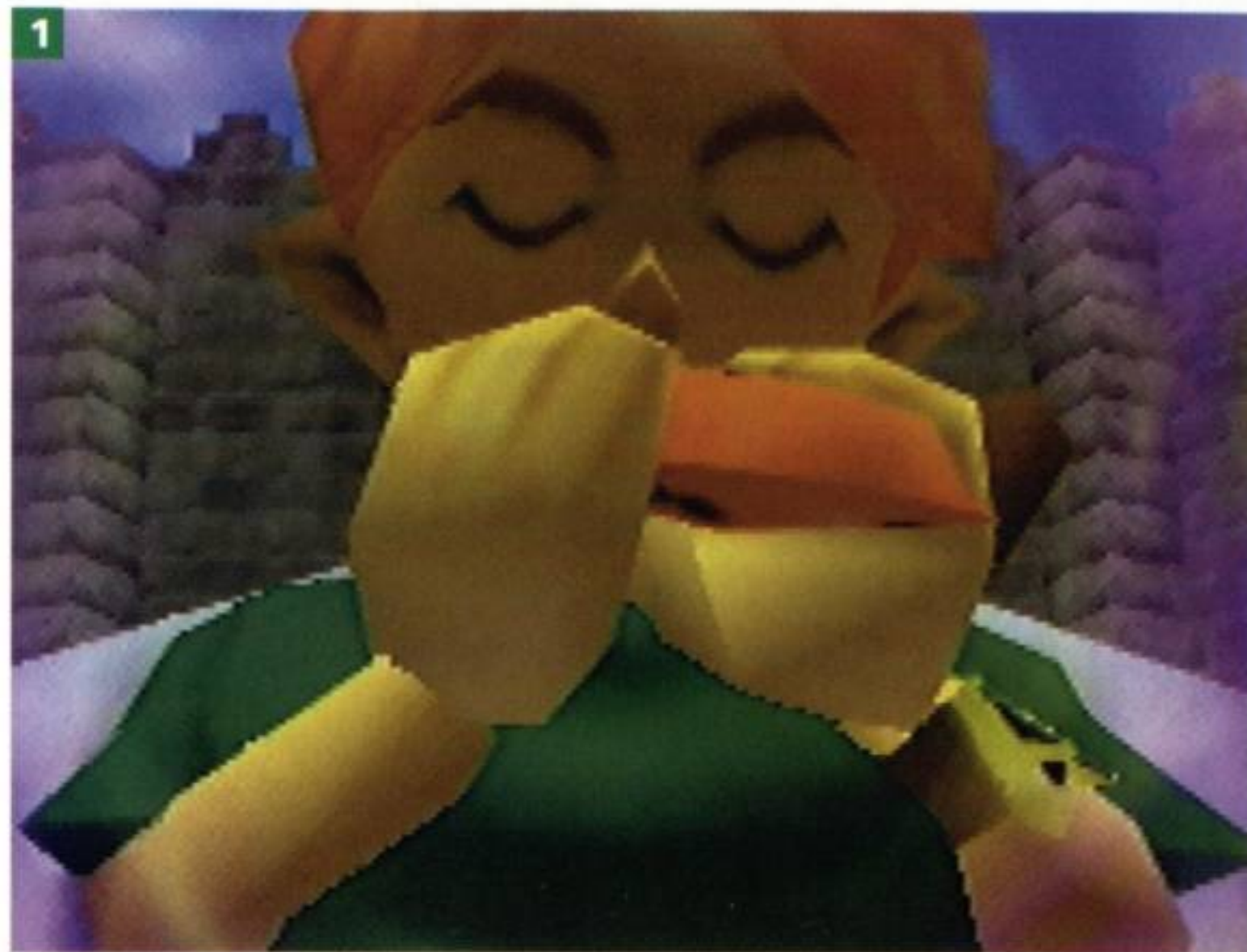
Here were some more pictures, though – and an official title: *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. Scurrying to our dictionaries, we discovered an ocarina to be a simple wind instrument made from clay. Link's magic ocarina, Nintendo told us, would enable him to travel in time on a quest to beat the evil Ganondorf (a version of Gannon from the old games) to the Triforce. Well, okay, we'd wait a bit longer, although we'd

## Once again you'd get a sword, a bow and arrow, a boomerang and bombs – but you'd be able to use them to fight dazzling 3D battles!

already gnawed our knuckles almost to the bone. Crocuses emerged through the frosty ground. Squirrels crawled sleepily from their burrows, yawned and stretched in the crisp spring air. But *Zelda* remained in hibernation in the depths of Nintendo's Kyoto headquarters. Despite topping "most wanted" lists across the globe, it wouldn't now be out til April.

**B**ut – hey – more pictures. We could see more clearly than ever the exciting battles we'd be able to fight when *Zelda* did finally appear. There were hordes of baddies to take on – skeletons, giant spiders, boulder-spitting Octoroks – and some dazzling special effects to accompany them. There were massive bosses, too. But best of all, perhaps, the graphics now looked extraordinary – especially the villages, with finely detailed cottages and trees. We'd wait til April, albeit with our legs crossed, jiggling up and down on our chairs.

1998's excuse for a summer reached its soggy height, yet still no *Zelda*. Instead, we were offered a few more screenshots – brilliant ones, though, showing the astonishing cut-scenes that would illustrate important plot points while giving your thumbs a rest – and a definite, absolute. ➔



■ *Ocarina of Time* is a gigantic game. So big you'll need help getting about. Summoning such help is one of many properties of Link's ocarina, a tiny wind instrument – that's him blowing on it in (1). It can be used to call Epona, Link's horse, or work the Temple of Time (*Ocarina of Time* takes place in two different time zones, and Link the child and Link the 17-year-old warrior must co-operate across the years if you want to finish it). It can even be used to force the sun to rise, driving away nasty night-time beasts. You've got to play brief songs on the ocarina to work the magic. Link has other weapons too, from basic sword-and-shield combos (2) to boomerangs, fairy slingshots and even throwable nuts. The glowing thing in (3) is Navi, Link's fairy friend and guide, while (4) shows one of the many creatures he meets on his quest – a friendly, rock-munching Goron. Less pally is the Dondango Dragon boss character in (5). Birds feature heavily too. The owl (6) offers advice and can carry you, while catching hens (7) earns a bonus.

# MISSING LINK

no-really-this-time release date: November 14th in Japan and the 23rd in America, with the UK following shortly afterwards.

That was months away! How could Nintendo toy with our emotions like this? *November?* "I'm very sorry we've kept you waiting so long," apologises Shigeru Miyamoto, the man who's running the whole *Zelda 64* project. "As we've proceeded with the creative process, new ideas have popped up one after another.

The world of *Legend of Zelda* has been evolving endlessly. If we could, we'd like to continue forever." Er... "On the other hand, our marketing guys are furious. So *Zelda's* going to make it this time, finally."

He may have put us through hell over the last few months, but it's hard to be annoyed with Shigeru Miyamoto for long. He is, after all, the reason *Zelda 64* is so eagerly anticipated in the first place. Behind Miyamoto's humble, easy-going facade lies a powerful brain that understands games better than anyone else in the world.

While questions have been raised over Nintendo's business acumen recently – particularly following the N64's dismal performance at home in Japan – its capacity to produce the best games in the world has never been in doubt. And it's Miyamoto the company has got to thank. He's produced hit after hit on machines going right back to the NES, which sold largely on the strength of his *Super Mario Bros* series. But Miyamoto concedes a debt to Nintendo, too: "Nintendo is one of those rare companies which put the top priority on the developers' voices, not the marketing people's. So it's fun to work there because I can do what I want to."

While Mario has become the moustachioed face of Nintendo, it's the *Zelda* games for which millions salute Miyamoto. Nintendo fans adore Link and his ceaseless struggles to save Princess Zelda from the attentions of the evil sorcerer Gannon. They love the *Zelda* games' attention to detail, their wealth of secrets, their midnight-oil-consuming scope and their quirky humour.

The only thing Link's adventures have never really done is stretch the boundaries of Nintendo's hardware. *Zeldas 1 and 2* were big, but scarcely threatened to overload the NES's 6502 processor. Only the Game Boy ever seemed stretched by its contribution to the series, and that was only because the Game Boy is slightly more powerful than an egg timer. All this looks set to change with *Ocarina of Time*.

"Dynamic light, dynamic fog, lens flare, particle physics and motion blur are all being used," says Yoshiaki Koizumi, *Zelda's* graphics director. If previous Nintendo 64 games have moved the graphical goal posts, he implies, *Zelda 64* will load them into a van, drive them to an airfield, transfer them to a C-130 Hercules and re-erect them in the Maldives.

"Texture mapping, making full use of the Nintendo 64's colour combiner, has enabled a rich expression of landscapes, light and natural objects. Our skin technology has allowed smooth rendering of Link, his enemies and non-playable characters without the joins. More than 500 player motions can be displayed in real-time, with these being calculated to be smoothly synchronised with rugged topographies."



■ Link is a member of a race of forest elves, the Kokiri, who live in the wooded areas of Hyrule. He has friends there – like Saria (1), who gives him his ocarina in one of the very first scenes of the game. Among the many worlds he later explores (2, 3, 4) are a gigantic desert level, rainy graveyards, subterranean caverns, a threatening wood (nothing like cosy old Kokiri Forest), and an underwater kingdom beneath Lake Hylia, where Link helps the peaceful Zoras. The all-important Temple of Time (5) is an old church in the market square – it's only when you're inside here that Link's ocarina can facilitate time travel. A dusty road leads to Hyrule Castle, which Link has to sneak into early in the game so he can meet up with the magic-using Princess Zelda, one of the few people to share his vision that something awful is about to happen to Hyrule. At Kakariko village, nearby, Link helps a guy work a windmill (6), before facing the Skulltulas (7), men who've been turned into spiders.







**T**he "dynamic light" bit is perhaps the most exciting aspect. Such things have previously been the preserve of top-end PC games.

"Light source calculation is being done for every frame," elaborates Yoshiaki Koizumi.

"The shadows change according to a plural light

source. Like in a motion picture, we're using plural lights in order to express natural feelings." So hairy-legged Ghomas standing before flickering torches will cast spooky shadows on the slimy walls around them.

All this will be brought to life by a roving camera far more flexible than even *Mario 64's*. It'll shift to give the most dramatic view possible of the action, so when, for example, Link is attacked by a giant, fire-breathing Dodongo it will suddenly switch to the monster's point of view, showing the ant-like Link cowering beneath it, before switching back to Link's view of the giant beast towering above him. Then, when battle commences, *Zelda 64's* "Z-Targeting System" will come into play, whereby pressing the Z-Trigger locks the view onto the moving monster, giving Link the opportunity to really start putting the boot in.

When even more detail is called for, full 3D graphics will make way for static, *Resident Evil*-style backdrops. You'll see this when Link is wandering around the exquisitely drawn villages, for example, when he'll be superimposed onto a fixed background. "But with N64 technology, everything will look like full 3D graphics," promises Koizumi, adding: "You'll see this technique in future N64 adventure games, too."

Watch out, also, for seamless transitions to expositional cut-scenes. The screen will close to a letterbox format (for stylistic reasons, rather than because the N64 can't hack it), the controls will lock out and we'll be treated to dazzling scenes of fire dragons preparing to attack, Ganondorf smiting



his foes from horseback, the Triforce emitting blinding rays of light or the (ahem) Fairy Tree, Deku, imparting knowledge to Link.

All this graphical trickery is a far cry from the original *Zelda* concept, however. With role-playing games, isn't the idea to keep things simple, and allow the player's imagination to fill in the blanks? Isn't there a

**When even more detail is called for, full 3D graphics will make way for static, *Resident Evil*-style backdrops. You'll see this when Link explores the exquisitely drawn villages**

danger of the magic being lost? "Now you mention it, I suspect many people might have a similar view," admits Yoshiaki Koizumi. "But on the other hand, no player could possibly explore the world of *Ocarina of Time* without expending the maximum power of his imagination. In other words, your imagination is more strongly required for other purposes. So please don't worry about such a thing." Phew.

**T**hese "other purposes" are likely to involve fiendish puzzles, a hallmark of all *Zelda* games – and, not least, the deployment of the eponymous ocarina. (Ocarinas are rather more popular in Japan than over here, in case you're wondering, although you can hear one in "California Dreamin'" by The Mamas and the Papas and also in "Wild Thing" by the Troggs, fact fans.) It's now common knowledge that *Zelda 64's* plot involves the evil Ganondorf once again trying to plunge the land of Hyrule into chaos. This time he plans to capture the Triforce

■ *Ocarina of Time* has an incredibly involved series of fighting options, which take in a number of different weapons and control systems, and combine magic with more physical attacks. Most of the basic weapons are to be found in the early levels set in Kokiri Forest and Hyrule Field (hub area for the first big chunk of your adventure, which allows Link access to lots of different worlds). You have to practice using these pretty sharpish, for though early baddies are a cinch to kill, later monsters will have you for breakfast if you don't know all the attacks. Holding down the B button allows you to charge your sword for a deadly spinning slash (1), upgradable later in the game to blue fire (2, 3) and even better red fire (4, 5) devastation. The Z button allows you to "lock on" to monsters (7), so that wherever you move you'll always be facing it ready to attack (8, 9, 10). Link can use magic too, for effects like force fields or fire walls. On a lighter note (6), here's your horse pal, Epona, cantering in a field.

# MISSING LINK



itself (the Triforce being a symbol of power in Hyrule). Link hears this from the (cough) Fairy Tree, teams up with Zelda and sets off to thwart Ganondorf by using the ocarina to travel through time.

Curiously enough, however, according to Miyamoto-san there isn't just the one ocarina. "There are actually two," he discloses. "the Ocarina of Time and the Ocarina of Fairy. Rumour has it the latter is used by a certain tribe to communicate their unspoken

words, while the former is said to be a secret treasure of the royal family of Hyrule." Perhaps a duet is in order.

Tradition has it that nothing of the *Zelda* world is abandoned when a new game joins the series. So as well as a new slingshot weapon, Link will pack his trusty boomerang, bow, bombs, Deku stick staff and sword (complete with spectacular 3D power-swoosh if you hold down the fire button, and – brand new! – a beam of light projected from its tip). As well as extra monsters, such as water and fire spirits, there'll be all his old adversaries like Ghosts, Stalfos Knights, Mud Dolls and Tektites. As usual he'll need to hunt out Rupees and energy hearts hidden deep within the undergrowth. And once again he'll be getting some help from (erm) fairies – although this time, rather than having to search them out in caves scattered around Hyrule, he'll have one called Navi constantly by his side. Tinkerbell-like, who'll warn him of impending danger by turning a rather fetching shade of red.

As news of all these goodies has slowly filtered through Nintendo's PR apparatus, *Zelda* fans have grown more and more excited. But there's one feature of *Ocarina of Time* that's had them practically writhing on the floor in anticipation. In what's almost certainly a video game first, Link will be

## Tradition has it that nothing of the *Zelda* world is lost when a new game joins the series. So as well as a new slingshot weapon, Link will pack his trusty boomerang, bow and Deku stick staff

able to blow a whistle to summon a fully animated 3D horse – and then ride off on it. It can canter! It can gallop! It can jump! It can be spurred on (by pressing B)! It can rear up on its back legs! At one point you can race against Mr Ingo, the ranch hand, for Rupee prizes. Another bit sees you having to shoot targets with your bow and arrow from horseback. It seems only Big Link can saddle up, although in one picture Little Link comes across a foal that bears a striking resemblance to Big Link's steed...

With all the delays and aborted release dates that have afflicted *Zelda 64*, the normally secretive Nintendo has ended up releasing an enormous amount of information about the game. In fact, you could probably cut out all the hundreds of screen-shots they've handed out, staple them together into a flick book and see pretty much the entire game. Couldn't you?

"Oh no," Shigeru Miyamoto assures us. He says *Ocarina of Time* is a colossal game of which we've seen just a tiny fraction. "There are lots more surprises than we've shown you so far. That's why it ended up being a 256Mbit game – we wanted to construct a world with so much depth. And anyway, seeing pictures is one thing. Playing the actual game is quite another. Please try it and see for yourself."

Chance'd be a fine thing.



## If Hyruled the world

*Newcomers to the land of Hyrule might not appreciate just why Nintendo devotees are looking forward to *Zelda 64* so much. Who actually is Zelda? Why isn't she in many pictures? What's the Triforce? And what's everyone's problem with this Gannon chap? Here, then, is an ocarina-stop tour of the *Zelda* story so far...*

### 1987: The Legend of Zelda (NES)

Looks a bit rubbish now, but a sensation in its day. On his way to the shop to pick up his *Hyrule Evening Post*, Link comes across a damsel being harassed by a band of thugs. He sees them off – not bad for a pixelly sprite with very limited animation – and asks the lady what's up. Turns out she's Princess Zelda's nursemaid, sent with a plea for help. Her highness was kidnapped by the evil Gannon, but not before she managed to split the Triforce – the key to peace in Hyrule – into eight parts to prevent it falling into Gannon's hands. She's after someone to a) recover the Triforce, and b) rescue her. Looks like Link's her man. Nothing like *The Legend of Zelda* had been seen before. It offered a huge quest spread over dozens of screens, requiring hours of devoted play. It had action, adventure, treasure, rock-spitting monsters and the promise of a snog at the end.



Link bore a remarkable resemblance to Mario's little brother Luigi in his first NES outing. Ask Link to fix your pipes, though, and you'll be sorry.

### Miyamoto allowed one character in *The Adventure Of Link* to admit to the mistake of moving to a side-on view.



Despite its diminutive stature, the Game Boy almost beat even the SNES version when it came to graphics. Look at those frogs!

### 1989: The Adventure of Link (NES)

The million-plus *Zelda* fans who'd bought the first game tutted disapprovingly upon discovering Nintendo had switched the view from over Link's head to a more conventional side-on approach. If they wanted a platform game, they sniffed, they'd play *Castlevania*. But some already-established *Zelda* traditions were preserved. Conversations, for one: you couldn't move an inch without a villager pouring his heart out about his lost mystical dog. And several-objects-scattered-throughout-the-land-that-needed-collecting, for another. This time it was six crystals that wanted rounding up before Link headed for the final confrontation with Gannon in the seventh cavern. *Zelda II* was distinguished mainly by being hard – you couldn't find energy hearts for love nor Rupees.

the rest of the gang, it was actually set some time before they were born – generations before, in fact. *This* Link and Zelda were are in fact ancestors of the Link and Zelda we'd come to know and revere. More reassuringly, for its SNES outing the format returned to the original bird's-eye-view format, albeit with rather nattier graphics and 3D "Mode 7" map. And Link's task? To round up a number of things, of course. Pendants, this time. And then? Rescue – yes – Zelda, from a caddish wizard called Agahnim who needed seeing to with the Master Sword. The best *Zelda* game so far, *A Link to the Past* was split across two worlds – Hyrule and the Dark World – and required around 35 hours' graft to play to completion.

quest set not in Hyrule but on the island of Koholint. A shipwrecked Link had to secure his passage home *Wizard-of-Oz*-style by seeking the Wind Fish that ruled the island. You may well raise an eyebrow, but Nintendo's American wing hadn't really got the hang of the translation by this point. The characters had progressed from mumbling Japlish gobbledegook in the first game to coming out with genuinely funny lines, and the moment when a troupe of monkeys descends from the trees and builds Link a bridge to the castle will remain in players' hearts forever.

### 1992: A Link to the Past (SNES)

Here the story started to get a little confused, so listen up. Although *Zelda 3* featured Link, Zelda and

### 1994: Link's Awakening (Game Boy)

The saga's pocket-sized installment proved to be anything but when it came to item gathering (eight Instruments of the Sirens this time), with another epic

### And the CDI games

At some point, as a side effect of some arcane negotiation with Nintendo over the abortive SNES CD-ROM drive, Philips managed to secure the rights to produce *Zelda* games for their ill-fated CDI console. Additions to the canon included *Zelda: The Wand of Gamelon* and *Link: The Faces of Evil*. But we tend not to talk about them.

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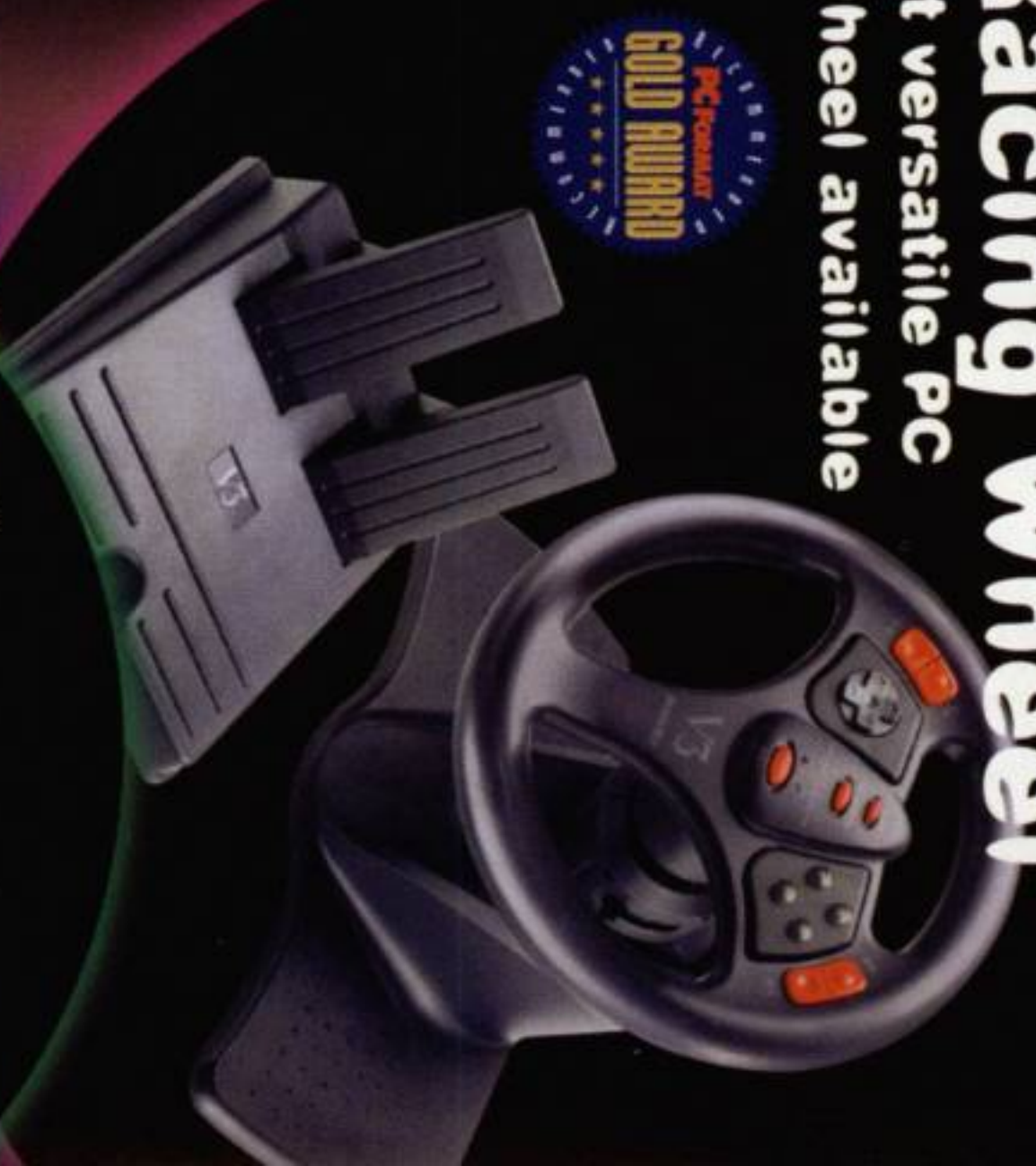
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■ Doctors worried that Bob's devotion to old coin-ops was becoming unhealthy.

# STATE OF PLAY

■ FILM PCS: KOBOL COLLECTION

Twenty years ago we loved *Space Invaders*. Today it's the turn of *Tomb Raider III*, *1080°* and *Metal Gear Solid*. Tomorrow there's *Sonic Adventure*, *Zelda 64* and a world of 128-bit possibilities. Videogames are evolving apace – developing specialist genres, establishing a place in our language, spawning superstars and finding their way out of the bedroom. Chances are, there's a console next to your VCR now. *Arcade* takes stock.

**I**n the last quarter century, videogames have grown at such a pace, and in so many directions, it's safe to say that no one – not even the most diehard fanatic – has all of it covered. With 60 or more titles released every month, across a multitude of platforms and genres, it would be near-impossible.

Whether you've been into games for years, spend the odd evening in with a PlayStation or simply sneak the occasional blast on *Quake* when the boss's back is turned, you've probably only scratched the surface of gaming. So for now, let's take stock of where the industry's at. Join us for 22 pages of the world's best games and a look at the people who make them, as well as the most exciting systems and the pros and cons of popular hardware. Read this, and we can't promise you'll know everything there is to know – but you'll know where to start... ➔

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# FUTURE

Before you can understand where gaming's going, you need to know where it came from. So join us, Doc Emmett Brown and good old Marty McFly for a flight back, way back, into the distant past. Next stop, the 1970s...

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<p><b>The PC wakes up</b></p> <p>The advent of budget re-releases and tapes on magazine covers keeps 8-bit markets buoyant, but the 16-bit 32-bit 64-bit killer menacingly as the warboat sim <i>Carrier Command</i> and the shoot-'em-up <i>Xenon</i> arrive. The PC games market begins to stir as people stuck with the more boring computers begin to demand some fun.</p> <p>Commodore realises its crazy error and cuts the price of the Amiga, prompting the horrible-to-watch drowning of the ST. In development are the new Spectrum-based machine <i>SAM</i> and a super-console from <i>Konix</i>, which courts a ridiculous hydraulic chair among its add-ons. The gorgeous-looking, ahead-of-its-time <i>PC Engine</i> puts in an appearance over in Japan.</p> <p>Ben Johnson's drug-fuelled 100m Olympic victory and the tragic Lockerbie disaster are making headlines.</p> <p><i>Fatal Attraction</i> scares men to death and rekindles the popularity of rabbit stew, and Scott and Charlene finally marry in <i>Neighbours</i>, to the haunting strains of a large, bald man called Angry Anderson.</p> <p>Kylie and Bros sing their hearts out with "I Should Be So Lucky" and "When Will I Be Famous?" The top record is "Mistletoe and Wine" from still-rot-dead yuletide regular Cliff Richard.</p>	<p><b>The console revival</b></p> <p>Arcade adventures <i>Myth</i> and <i>R-Type</i> give good cause for celebration, but the consoles and 16-bit games such as God-sim <i>Populous</i>, are forcing the 8-bitters to trade-up.</p> <p>The 16-bit war reaches its most violent, with both sides bundling tons of games with their machines. The console revival really kicks off, as the 8-bit machines and <i>PC Engine</i> imports help to bring ugly grey boxes back into our homes. The <i>SAM Coupe</i> arrives, heavily bugged following huge delays, having now lost the support it once had.</p> <p>The Friday The 13th computer virus scare comes to nothing.</p> <p>Poor, innocent Mrs Thatcher is cast aside by her party, replaced by Mr Charisma, <i>John Major</i>, while the odd <i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i> are very much the new fashion.</p> <p>Batman arrives at the cinema and gets a new rating all of its very own (12), and the very last series of <i>Blackadder</i> runs on TV. <i>Agatha Christie's Poirot</i>, starring veteran actor David Suchet, is the programme to watch.</p> <p>Jason and Kylie duet on "Especially For You," breaking sweet teenage hearts all over the shop. "Ride On Time" from <i>Black Box</i> lights up many a dance floor, despite the band later being sued for illegal sampling.</p> <p>Madonna does "Vogue", and <i>Vanilla Ice</i> does "Ice Ice Baby." One of these artists remained an international recording phenomenon. Can you remember which one?</p>	<p><b>Hand-held fun arrives</b></p> <p><i>Rainbow Islands</i> and <i>Turrican</i> mark the end of 8-bit gaming, while Game Boy's <i>Tetris</i> causes torn-out hair to litter streets and train carriages country-wide. The Sega Master System receives the popular coin-op conversion <i>Golden Axe</i>, another game where a dwarf manages to sneak unnoticed into the starring role.</p> <p>Handhelds appear. Atari's all-colour <i>Lynx</i> fails miserably, largely because of pitifully short battery life, but the Nintendo <i>Game Boy</i> becomes the most successful games machine of all time. Sega launches its <i>Mega Drive</i> in the UK and, with that, joins the 16-bit revolution. Hurrah!</p> <p>Poor, innocent Mrs Thatcher is cast aside by her party, replaced by Mr Charisma, <i>John Major</i>, while the odd <i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i> are very much the new fashion.</p> <p><i>Pretty Woman</i> makes prostitution cool, and <i>Only Fools and Horses</i> is hinting at popularity to come.</p> <p><i>Terminator 2</i> says "Hasta La Vista, Baby," while Mr Meldrew's <i>One Foot In The Grave</i> is the most popular programme on TV, despite <i>Noel's House Party</i> yapping at its heels like an irritating puppy.</p> <p>Irritatingly durable ballad "Everything I Do (I Do It For You)" from Bryan Adams keeps <i>Right Said Fred</i> from the top of the charts with the amusing ditty "I'm Too Sexy."</p>	<p><b>Cute vs even cuter</b></p> <p>The SNES launch (see below) sees another top-class Mario game, while <i>Super Mario World</i>, causing jaws to drop worldwide. Sega creates its own star, <i>Sonic</i> the irritable Hedgehog, and the Mario v Sonic wars begin. Also in full force are the 8-bit magazine wars, with cassettes shoved on front covers holding up to 12 games.</p> <p>Interest in the 8-bit consoles completely dissipates as Nintendo shows off the 16-bit Super Nintendo Entertainment System (<i>SNES</i>) to a startled public. The 8-bit computers are still selling the majority of games, thanks only to budget releases. The 16-bits are now the publishers' favourites.</p> <p>The <i>Gulf War</i> kicks off and concludes, and poor Robert Maxwell falls off his boat having never owned Clive Sinclair.</p> <p>The Olympic Games in Barcelona brings medals for Britain, largely thanks to <i>Linford Christie</i> and his packed lunch, and Windsor Castle goes up in flames.</p>	<p><b>Full-on console wars</b></p> <p>A boom year, with the console wars on full blast, and <i>Sonic 2</i> and <i>Street Fighter II</i> launched to massive attention. The 16-bits are contemplating wandering into a dark corner to die quietly. But the phenomenally successful football sim <i>Sensible Soccer</i> keeps them on their feet. Just.</p> <p>With the 8-bits finished and the PC just about the only computer left, attention shifts to Nintendo's launch of the <i>SNES</i> and its bloody battle with Sega for console domination. A succession of quite appalling TV adverts suck in the punters, but a series of new consoles threaten Sega's dominance.</p> <p>The year in which dead machines lay strewn across the gaming battlefield, as a whole load of manufacturers jump on the promising CD-ROM bandwagon. Commodore goes bankrupt after it launches the first 32-bit console, the <i>CD32</i>.</p> <p>Terrorists bomb the <i>World Trade Centre</i> in America.</p> <p>A massive comet ploughs into <i>Jupiter</i>. Gasp! <i>Torville and Dean</i> fail to win gold at the Olympics, and therefore become popular British heroes.</p>	<p><b>It was going so well...</b></p> <p>Lack of decent games and a tendency for publishers to churn out awful titles based on movies makes videogaming the sole preserve of spotty boys once more. The strategic <i>Command &amp; Conquer</i> is the sole shaft of light, but it causes controversy with references to World War battles.</p> <p>First-person shoot-'em-up <i>Doom</i> arrives on the PC, heralding the age of the <i>Doom</i> clone (which has so far lasted four years and counting), and the renaissance of PC gaming. <i>Ridge Racer</i> and <i>Virtua Fighter</i>, both with near arcade visuals, help to sell the PlayStation and Sega Saturn. <i>Tempest 2000</i> is the only decent Jaguar game.</p> <p>Sony launches the <i>PlayStation</i> in Japan, and the domination of the Big Two ends. But the Saturn launch keeps Sega optimistic, especially as it starts as the slightly more popular machine, but the disastrous <i>Mega Drive</i> add-on, the 32X, spoils it all.</p> <p><i>Eric Cantona</i> smacks a spectator up real nice, and <i>OJ Simpson</i> walks free. Why? Because he's innocent of the cold-blooded murder of his wife, you see.</p> <p><i>James Bond</i> returns from the cinematic grave with the suave <i>GoldenEye</i>, while <i>Jeremy Beadle</i> hosts <i>You've Been Framed</i> on TV, continuing the succession of dwarves taking starring roles in the media.</p> <p><i>Blur</i> and <i>Oasis</i> engage in pointless musical bickering, with the big-headed super Gallagher brothers coming out temporarily on top.</p> <p><i>Wet Wet Wet</i> score high with "Love Is All Around," before they mysteriously pull the record from shops the week before it's due to break records for longest run at the top. Odd, that.</p>	<p><b>Sony takes control</b></p> <p>The UK PlayStation launch brings space racer <i>WipeOut</i>, and ensures that Sony sells machines to people who aren't spotty, or even boys. Sega's launch game, <i>Virtua Fighter</i>, isn't enough to lure people away from Sony. The last gasp of the 16-bits comes in the form of the brilliant <i>Yoshi's Island</i>, with Mario's dinosaur buddy.</p> <p>The <i>Nintendo 64</i> is released in Japan, theoretically streets ahead of Sony's world-beater. The Saturn, already quite unhealthy, stumbles and falls into third place. Coin-ops make a startling comeback, thanks to thrillingly unoriginal racing and fighting games.</p> <p>National mourning begins as England crashes spectacularly out of <i>Euro 96</i>. The horrific disaster at a Dunblane school brings it all into perspective.</p> <p>British film <i>The Full Monty</i> makes male nudity fashionable, the <i>Teletubbies</i> say "Eh-oh", and everyone else (apart from most toddlers and wacky crazy students) says "Eh-off".</p> <p>Girl-band <i>All Saints</i> makes an appearance with "Never Ever," only to spoil it all by having one of their number run off with Robbie Williams.</p>	<p><b>Gaming gets a bit cool</b></p> <p>The UK PlayStation launch brings space racer <i>WipeOut</i>, and ensures that Sony sells machines to people who aren't spotty, or even boys. Sega's launch game, <i>Virtua Fighter</i>, isn't enough to lure people away from Sony. The last gasp of the 16-bits comes in the form of the brilliant <i>Yoshi's Island</i>, with Mario's dinosaur buddy.</p> <p>The <i>Nintendo 64</i> is released in Japan, theoretically streets ahead of Sony's world-beater. The Saturn, already quite unhealthy, stumbles and falls into third place. 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Coin-ops make a startling comeback, thanks to thrillingly unoriginal racing and fighting games.</p> <p>National mourning begins as England crashes spectacularly out of <i>Euro 96</i>. The horrific disaster at a Dunblane school brings it all into perspective.</p> <p>British film <i>The Full Monty</i> makes male nudity fashionable, the <i>Teletubbies</i> say "Eh-oh", and everyone else (apart from most toddlers and wacky crazy students) says "Eh-off".</p> <p>Girl-band <i>All Saints</i> makes an appearance with "Never Ever," only to spoil it all by having one of their number run off with Robbie Williams.</p>	<p><b>Too... much... money...</b></p> <p>With the games industry being worth nigh-on £4 billion, everyone wants in. The N64 reveals the murderous heart beneath its fluffy bunny exterior with blood-laden shoot-'em-ups <i>Turok</i> and <i>GoldenEye</i>, while <i>Tomb Raider</i> and <i>Quake</i> give birth to babies who are almost too identical to their mums.</p> <p>The Saturn is lying bleeding on the floor, while Sony punches Nintendo repeatedly in the face. Plans for a sequel to the 3DO, the M2, are thrown in the bin, as rumours of a new Sega machine (code-named <i>Katana</i>) and a DVD-based machine (<i>Project X</i>), are flying about like mad flying things.</p> <p>Louise Woodward stands up for trial, creating the yearly British patriotic hype and hysteria, and the Diana/tunnel collision in August makes it a double-whammy year for emotion-filled cries in New Labour's New Britain.</p> <p>Bill Clinton's sexual misdemeanours finally catch up with him, as the world awaits his imminent impeachment.</p> <p><i>Titanic</i> becomes The Biggest Film In The World Ever, largely thanks to Leonardo Di Caprio's face and lovely Kate Winslet's breasts. Fly-on-the-wall docusoaps fill up the TV.</p>	<p><b>We're still here...</b></p> <p>Driver <i>Gran Turismo</i> and fighter <i>Tekken 3</i> near videogame perfection. <i>Resident Evil II</i> turns up with a load of policemen-turned-into-zombies making it look like a Halloween special of <i>The Bill</i>. Mario-clone <i>Banjo-Kazooie</i> is the first game to feature a talking toilet.</p> <p>Sega's <i>Katana</i> becomes the <i>Dreamcast</i>, with the Sega brand receiving the chop just in case suspecting members of the public suspect that Saturn People are behind the machine. Nintendo finally brings out a much awaited <i>Game Boy Color</i>.</p> <p>Eric Cantona smacks a spectator up real nice, and OJ Simpson walks free. Why? Because he's innocent of the cold-blooded murder of his wife, you see.</p> <p>James Bond returns from the cinematic grave with the suave GoldenEye, while Jeremy Beadle hosts You've Been Framed on TV, continuing the succession of dwarves taking starring roles in the media.</p> <p>Blur and Oasis engage in pointless musical bickering, with the big-headed super Gallagher brothers coming out temporarily on top.</p> <p>Wet Wet Wet score high with "Love Is All Around," before they mysteriously pull the record from shops the week before it's due to break records for longest run at the top. Odd, that.</p> <p>The UK PlayStation launch brings space racer WipeOut, and ensures that Sony sells machines to people who aren't spotty, or even boys. Sega's launch game, Virtua Fighter, isn't enough to lure people away from Sony. The last gasp of the 16-bits comes in the form of the brilliant Yoshi's Island, with Mario's dinosaur buddy.</p> <p>The Nintendo 64 is released in Japan, theoretically streets ahead of Sony's world-beater. The Saturn, already quite unhealthy, stumbles and falls into third place. Coin-ops make a startling comeback, thanks to thrillingly unoriginal racing and fighting games.</p> <p>National mourning begins as England crashes spectacularly out of Euro 96. The horrific disaster at a Dunblane school brings it all into perspective.</p> <p>British film The Full Monty makes male nudity fashionable, the Teletubbies say "Eh-oh", and everyone else (apart from most toddlers and wacky crazy students) says "Eh-off".</p> <p>Girl-band All Saints makes an appearance with "Never Ever," only to spoil it all by having one of their number run off with Robbie Williams.</p>

THE MACHINES

THE GAMES

THE NEWS

THE BIG SCREEN

THE SOUNDS

PC as a games machine

16-bit consoles Handhelds

Next Generation Consoles

ARCADE MAGAZINE, IN ASSOCIATION WITH GAMERS OF BRITAIN, PRESENTS FOR THE TITLE  
**"UNDISPUTED GAMES MACHINE  
 CHAMPION OF THE WORLD"**

# THE **BIG** FIGHT



**SONY PLAYSTATION**  
**"THE AGING CHAMP"**

**NINTENDO 64**  
**"THE LAST-CHANCE KID"**

**SIX ROUNDS OR A KNOCKOUT TO DECIDE | YOUR MASTER OF CEREMONIES: RICH PELLEY**

In the red corner: Sony's PlayStation, the most successful games machine ever. In the blue corner: Nintendo's N64, now loaded with top-notch titles and armed with reduced prices for a Christmas push. Get ready as the contenders do battle for a share of your gaming cash. Seconds out...

**T**he games industry is now moving so fast that virtually every year something happens to force a sea-change in the way we look at things, but 1999's shaping up to be more volatile than most. Sony's PlayStation rules the roost in a way no console ever has before, but it's getting on a bit, and its detractors are suggesting that all the startling things a developer can do with the machine have already been done. Nintendo's N64 is – most

would agree – more powerful, and with some fine software, but the problem is its serious lack of titles. And lurking round the corner for '99 is the official UK release of Sega's Dreamcast, the first emissary of an even more powerful generation of machines which, provided that Sega doesn't fumble the ball, should really start a fight.

So this is a very significant time for Sony and Nintendo. 1999 may well prove to be PlayStation's biggest ever year, but few are predicting that next Christmas will be as





# WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE PLAYSTATION



Sean Atkins: "games just get better."

In the red corner: Sony PlayStation, championed by Sean Atkins, editor of *PlayStation Power* magazine.

**"T**he PlayStation has many obvious advantages over the N64 – chiefly the sheer wealth of software and the fact that it has plenty of budget-priced releases. It's also generally considered the cooler machine and looks better propped under your telly, but there are some less obvious reasons to opt for a PlayStation, as well.

"For a start, the new N64 games never seem to surpass the quality of some of the

platform's first releases like *Mario 64*, while PlayStation games just get better. The third generation of PlayStation games, things like *Metal Gear Solid*, are an advance over what came before, and the fourth-gen games like *Gran Turismo 2* and *Ridge Racer 4*, both due in '99, are going to get even better. Yes, the Nintendo is good at things like *Doom*-clones and platform games, but the fact that it lacks any decent beat-'em-ups or driving games is another massive handicap. Plus, Dreamcast will hurt N64 more than it hurts PlayStation – PlayStation 2 is waiting in the

wings, and should be more powerful than Dreamcast. It will certainly boast more software. The only disappointment is that it doesn't look like it's going to be backwards-compatible. Otherwise, it's no contest."

## The official line

"The PlayStation should be most people's preferred format, due to the quality of existing software and the aspirational values suggested by the strength and positioning of the brand. The release of creative entertainment products, such as *Fluid*, has somewhat broadened the appeal of the PlayStation, making it attractive and accessible to an even wider audience."

Guy Pearce, PR Manager, Sony UK

## PlayStation's flagship games

*If there are ten games you've got to own on PlayStation, it's this little lot.*

■ You'll find many all-time greats on the PlayStation, and you already know stars like Lara Croft and Crash Bandicoot, so where better to start than by seeing what they're up to in new releases *Tomb Raider III* and *Crash Bandicoot 3*? Then feel free to join in with the gore-fest that is *Doom*, at its best on PlayStation, and only £20.

*Gran Turismo* is easily the best driving game ever. It

was developed using Sony's new Performance Analyser which enables programmers to push all the PlayStation's processors to their optimum. Sports games like *Cool Boarders 2* (4) and *ISS Pro '98* are great too.

But it's not all action. The Japanese RPG *Final Fantasy VII* (2) is deep, absorbing and highly user-friendly. In fact, couple this with the great *Resident Evil 2* (dripping in



tension) and *Command and Conquer: Retaliation* (3) (real-time war gaming) and your PlayStation is likely to eat up a chunk of your life.

Finally, you should treat yourself to something like the fine *Tetris*-influenced *Bust-A-Move 2* (1) so you can remember that simple games can be great too.



■ Because PlayStation games come on CDs and not cartridges, they're pretty cheap to make. This means a greater diversity of game genres as publishers can take a chance on niche markets. You'll find something for everyone somewhere in PlayStation's catalogue.



# THE BIG FIGHT



## SONY PLAYSTATION VS NINTENDO 64

**78** strong as this one, and then from there on it'll be downhill fast. (Of course, by then PlayStation 2 should be ready for release, but that's a completely different story.)

For Nintendo, 1999 may be the last chance to confirm its position as the UK's number two system before Sega comes in and spoils the party. To this end the two big players have identical £99 price points, and impressive new game release schedules – indeed, the Nintendo release list is particularly sexy, particularly considering how little appeared for the machine throughout much of 1998. So, if you're picking a machine to buy this Christmas, you've got quite a choice to make...

### ROUND 1 WHICH IS BEST FOR YOUR IMAGE?

Image, it would seem, is everything. Consider the differing stances Sony and Nintendo have taken on their advertising. These days, Sony doesn't feel the need to show games in its telly adverts at all, aiming instead at a lifestyle sell ("By day I catch the bus, and run with the hoi-polloi") that sits easily among the beer adverts in the men's glossy mags and peak-time ad breaks. Such is the stylish look of the campaign and its all-pervasive nature that it's starting to work, too – Sony's square/circle/triangle/cross logo is edging ever closer to Nike's Swoosh in terms of sheer recognisability and (perhaps even more remarkably) trendiness,

hammering home the overall message that if a game comes out on the PlayStation you can guarantee that it's going to be stylish, cool and halfway-playable just as a matter of course.

Nintendo, on the other hand, has far less money to splash out and runs blink-or-you'll-miss-'em ads that sell on the graphical content of the games alone. Advertisers reckon a 20-second glimpse of *GoldenEye 007* with some loud background music, that appears halfway through *Home and Away*, is all Nintendo requires (or can afford) to get you dashing shopwards.

Though they have their detractors, most would agree that Sony's adverts are far cooler than Nintendo's more basic message – N64, the TV adverts seem to say, is for younger kids, and maybe some hardcore gamers too (a funny mix, but that's what games like *Mario 64* court). The PlayStation, on the other hand, is the gaming console of choice, as selected by hip teens and twentysomethings. First round to Sony.

**Round 1:** Sony.

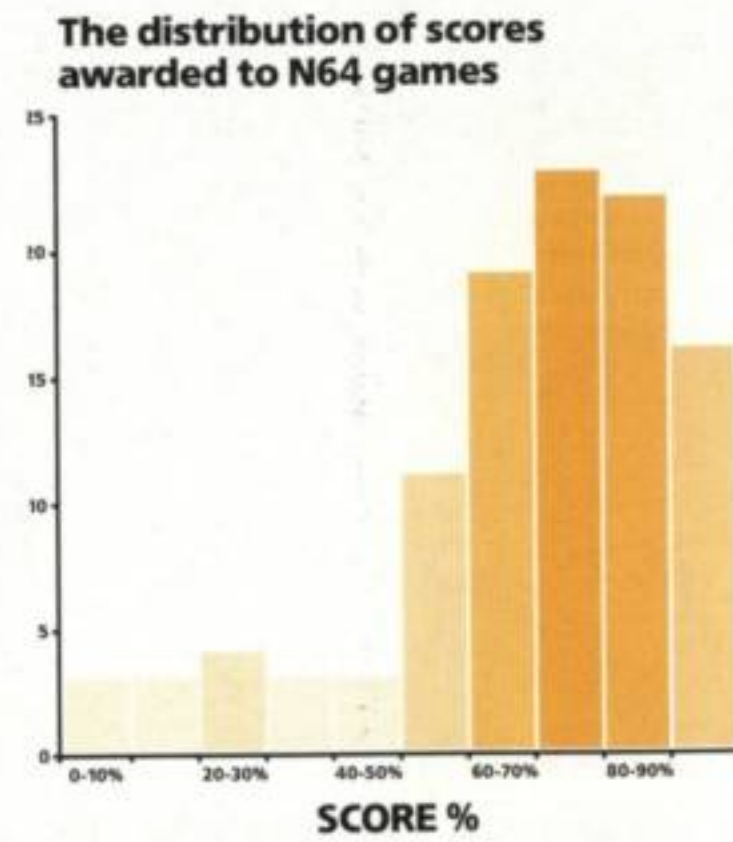
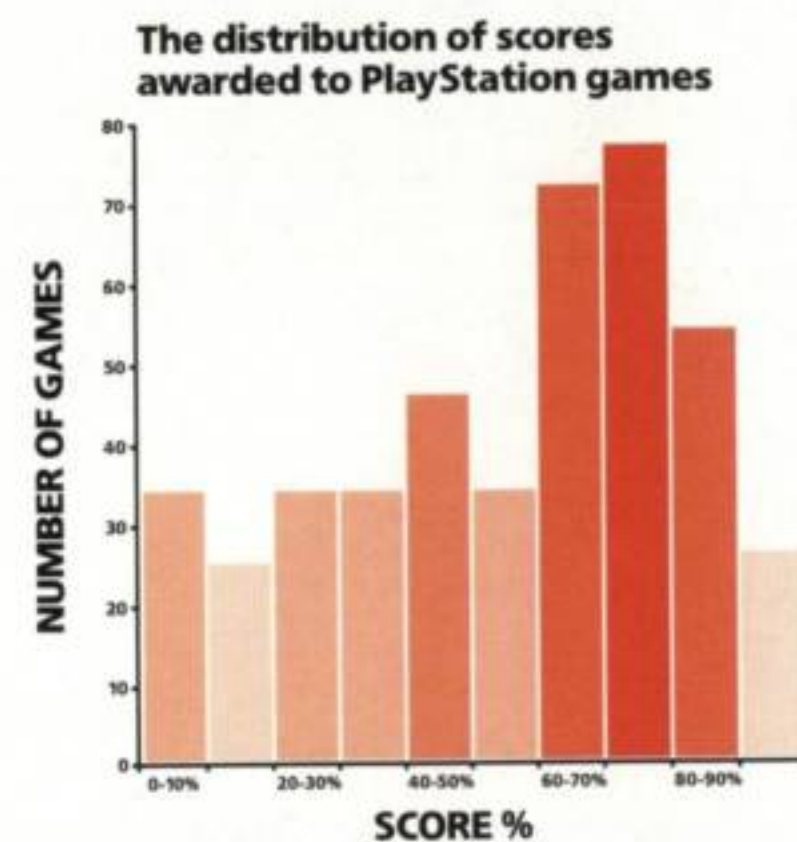
### ROUND 2 WHICH HAS THE BEST GAMES?

At the time of writing, there were 487 games available on the PlayStation but only 101 on the N64. On choice alone, then, it's another round to PlayStation.

But wait. What's that you say – Nintendo games tend to be much better than most PlayStation efforts? You may have a point – and it's one we can easily back up with a bit of (dubious) research. We took every review published in *PlayStation Power* and *N64 Magazine* – both of which are independent machine-dedicated game titles from the same stable as *Arcade*, and both of which score games out of the traditional 100% – and dividing the scores into bands by the percentage they earned, plotted the results on the histograms above.

Both graphs peak in the 70%-80% bracket. However, few games score below 50% on the N64, while loads come below the halfway mark on PlayStation, suggesting that either there's far less crap for the N64, or

# Assuming that you just wouldn't want any game that scored below 70%, the chances of randomly picking a game and finding it to be a turkey are 67.7% for PlayStation, but only 39.9% for N64



that *PlayStation Power's* reviewers are exceptionally harsh in their marking schemes. Indeed, a bit of calculator work reveals mean scores of 73.3% on the N64 and 49.3% on the PlayStation. Taking into account that there are 4.8 PlayStation games on the market for every N64 game, and assuming that (at £40 a pop) you wouldn't want to play any game that scored less than 70%, the chances of walking into a shop, randomly picking a game off the shelf and finding it to be a turkey is (hang on) 67.7% for the PlayStation, but only 39.9% for the N64. There's only a 14.5% chance that you're still reading, but in the meantime it looks like it's Round 2 to the N64.

Except maybe not. You see, most of us don't buy our games blind, but put some degree of research into it, making the "random pick" test pretty much irrelevant – sure, there might be less N64 rubbish out there, but there are so many PlayStation games that both systems offer many more quality choices than any average gamer will ever be able to afford – or indeed have time to play. That being the case, the choice of which system you prefer probably comes down to the style of gameplay you enjoy the most. The PlayStation is great at racing games and shoot-'em-ups, while the N64 is unrivalled at the platform game, but has an incredible weak spot in that it boasts virtually no fighting games. A hard one to call, then, so after an all-action bout with both the contenders nearly snatching victory, the result is an honourable draw.

**Round 2:** a tie.

### ROUND 3 WHICH IS MOST POWERFUL?

The evolution of the N64 was strange. Rather than trying to improve the earlier Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo instead decided to start from scratch by teaming up with Silicon Graphics, the company behind the computer-generated dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*. Nintendo's idea was to take a hefty £10,000 Silicon Graphics machine, chop out the non-essentials and mass produce like crazy to create a machine virtually as powerful for a couple of hundred quid (and now a smidge under £100). And this is what happened.

Sony entered the console market via – equally oddly – a deal brokered with Nintendo to create a CD drive to sit under the SNES. In return, Nintendo allowed Sony to produce a Sony/SNES-compatible standalone console. But somewhere down the line Nintendo pulled out, leaving Sony with a half-finished console that, in time to come, would evolve into the PlayStation.

Two very different approaches to virtually the same task, then, but which is technically better? Well, both machines are jammed full of custom hardware chips, but the PlayStation's main processor is 32-bit while the N64's is 64-bit. This "bittage" is actually a measure of the processor bus width, which is in turn a measure of how big a number each processor can cope with. Think of it as like seeing how many Maltesers you can get in your mouth at a time. The PlayStation can eat 32, but the N64 can

**Sony**

**PlayStation**

Price: £99.99

Number of games: 487

Average game score: 49

CPU: 32-bit; 33MHz

Instructions per minute: 30 million

RAM: 2Mb

Colours: 16.8 million

**Nintendo**

**N64**

Price: £99.99

Number of games: 101

Average game score: 73

CPU: 64-bit; 93.75MHz

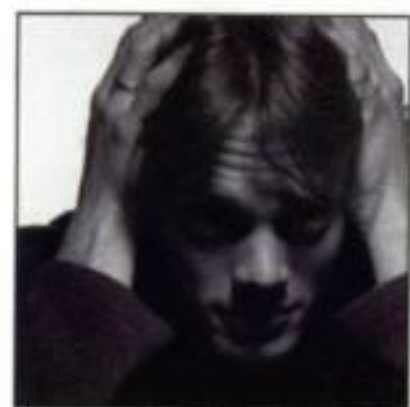
Instructions per minute: 125 million

RAM: 4Mb

Colours: 16.8 million



# WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE NINTENDO 64



James Ashton: "N64 games are special."

In the blue corner: Nintendo 64, championed by James Ashton, editor of *N64 Magazine*.

**"T**he N64 will always be streets ahead of the PlayStation because its games have more soul. Nintendo's designers are more interested in creating a deeper experience than simply trying to dazzle. N64 games inspire a genuine, emotional response, an alternative reality – a virtual reality without the headset or headache.

"N64 games are special to people who are getting jaded by the cynically repetitive

and formula-based stream of PlayStation 3D racers and shoot-'em-ups. In its short life the N64 has played host to more benchmark titles than Sony could ever imagine having, swamping Sony's cast of Lara-alikes with an army of characters who are strong enough to live outside their games, with several even jumping to their own TV shows.

"With more games, an aggressive pricing policy and a wide (if misguided) following, the PlayStation looks like an attractive bet. If it's originality you're after, though; games that are worth more than a quick post-pub

thrash; games that are "games" and not just an exercise in copyist programming, then the N64 is the only choice."

## The official line

"In the turn up to Christmas we have 12 triple-A titles in the pipeline, Nintendo's strongest line up ever. All in all, we intend to wipe the floor with Sony. The great thing about the N64 is the graphics. If you compare the N64's *F1 Racing Grand Prix* with Sony's *F1 98*, or *1080°* with *Cool Boarders 2*, it is obvious which machine is the best. With the release of *Zelda*, the N64 should go from strength to strength."

Shelly Friend, PR and Communications manager, THE Games (Nintendo UK)

## N64's flagship games

Still waiting to be convinced of the power of N64? Check out this lineup.

■ Stimulate your brain with plenty of platform action, nourish bone marrow with a healthy intake of racing and clear your bowels with N64's selection of 3D shooters.

*Banjo-Kazooie* looks as good as a Saturday morning Warner Brothers' cartoon, in fact, the only game around that can really beat it is *Super Mario World*.

*GoldenEye* should be your next order since it's the

best *Doom*-style blaster ever. The scenery is beautiful, the weaponry breathtaking, the difficulty level perfectly pitched, and the four-player deathmatch mode nailbiting. While you're there, plug in copies of *Super Mario Kart 64* and *Diddy Kong Racing* (1), both also ace.

While we're thinking about racing games, do bag yourself *Wave Race 64* (jet bike racing), *F-Zero X* (zippy



1,000mph space-race) and *1080°* (3) (snowboarding minus the limb-breaking). And dessert? *International Superstar Soccer* (2).

Finally, along with your coffee and mints, tuck away a copy of *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* (4), like *Jurassic Park*, but with all the destruction that game so badly needed.



■ "Quality not quantity" was Nintendo's slogan when N64 was released. For a while, though, delays upon delays meant that disgruntled gamers got neither. But now N64 boasts some of the best games on the planet, and more are arriving every month.



# THE BIG FIGHT



## SONY PLAYSTATION VS NINTENDO 64

**80** gobble 64. The most direct consequence of this is that the PlayStation can cope with 30 million instructions per second, but the N64 can cope with up to 125 million. The N64 is clearly a more capable machine – and that means a triple-A quality N64 title is always going to wow an audience much more than a triple-A PlayStation title. And this is going to become increasingly true, say some industry watchers, as the Nintendo developers continue to explore the potential of their machine while the PlayStation programmers struggle to squeeze anything additional out of hardware that's already running at more or less the limit of its abilities.

That's not quite all there is to it, though. PlayStation games come on CDs, which take up little room and are very easy and cheap to mass produce – hence the generally lower price of PlayStation games and opportunities for budget-priced ranges and cover-mounted magazine demo discs – but CDs can get scratched and require you to wait for access times. N64 games come on cartridges, which cost much more to produce (hence the games cost more), but are harder to pirate, load almost instantly and are virtually indestructible. Cost aside, then – and that's not what we're talking about here – Round 3 goes to Nintendo.

**Round 3:** Nintendo.

### ROUND 4 WHICH IS THE CHEAPEST?

With both consoles currently retailing, software-free, for £100, and recent price-drops having brought the cost of many N64 games down to PlayStation levels, you could be forgiven for thinking that this round is already a tie. But wait! First you have to take into account the fact that the PlayStation also has a budget-price (£20 a pop) Platinum range, that boasts such fine titles as *Doom*, *International Superstar Soccer Pro*, *Tekken 2* and *WipEout 2097*. Desire any game on the N64 – even a really old one – and you are going to have to pay full whack for it. Another PlayStation victory, therefore – as long as nothing ever goes wrong. You see, the PlayStation's CD drive is extremely fragile and can play up at the slightest provocation, while the N64 is a much more solid beast. This

said, though, we have to come down on the side of cheaper games.

**Round 4:** Sony.

### ROUND 5 WHICH WILL MAKE YOU MOST FRIENDS?

Two and a half million PlayStations have been sold in the UK, but only 860,000 N64s. That's four PlayStations to every N64. And that ratio doesn't seem to be evening out – in the last three months, for instance, our local branch of Argos sold 64 PlayStations but only 12 N64s. As a social thing, then – seeing as owning a particular system means being able to swap games with mates and enjoy drawn-out conversations with strangers on trains – you would think that Round 5 would have to go to the PlayStation.

But hold it! One of the N64's initial selling points was that it came with four joypad ports for, essentially, four-player games of *Super Mario Kart 64*. And lots of fun those games were – nearly as good, in fact, as playing the later *GoldenEye 007* in the four-player deathmatch mode. The new *F-Zero X* kicks four-player ass, too, making the Nintendo a social experience to be savoured. By comparison, PlayStation's multi-player credentials are relatively limp-wristed – sure, there are loads of two-player games, but for four players you need to buy a MultiTap, and the only good game is *Bomberman World*. After much debate, then, the judges consider Round 5 a draw.

**Round 5:** a tie.

### THE FINAL BELL

As we predicted, this is no clear-cut contest – both machines have their strong points, their weaker ones, their advocates and their detractors. So, assuming the evidence presented so far hasn't swayed you one way or the other, we decided to ask the experts. A couple of magazine editors defend their favoured systems elsewhere on these pages, alongside comments from Nintendo and Sony themselves – and all, of course, come firmly down on the side of their own machine.

The answer, then, is that there is no answer – you weigh up the pros and cons and take your pick. For what it's worth, even within the *Arcade* office opinion is hopelessly divided. Staff writer Mark, a long-time Nintendo devotee, is adamant that N64 games are simply better. Sam, relatively new to the scene and a PlayStation owner, insists that the N64 looks "like it is for kids with all those big colour joypad ports and cartoony *Banjo-Kazooie* games." The truth is that you won't lose out either way – both are great consoles with great games, and at these prices there's a lot to be said for having both systems in your lounge.

Of course where it gets lots more complicated is when the PC Goliath enters the equation. Look to your right to find out why... **A**

# ARCADE PRESENTS TONIGHT'S SECOND BOUT A MISMATCHED DAVID & GOLIATH CONTEST



PC

THE DARK-GREY BRUISER

CONSOLE

THE PUNY PLASTIC FLYWEIGHT

## "CAN WEEDY LITTLE CONSOLES REALLY COMPETE WITH THE POWER OF PC?"

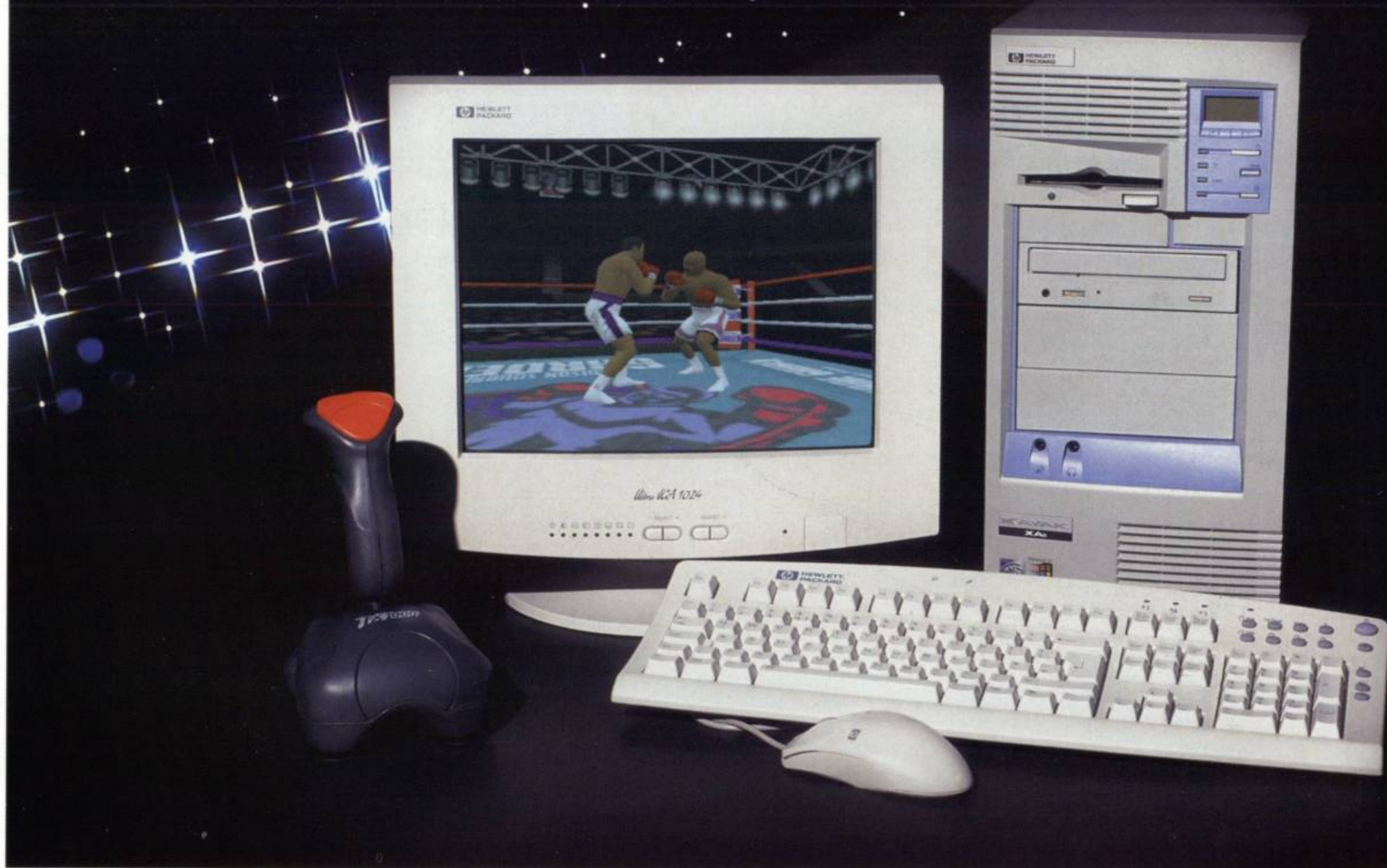
### MASTER OF CEREMONIES: RICH PELLEY

While the leading consoles battle it out between themselves, a giant looms in the background. A giant that has the power to crush the victor without breaking a sweat.

But it has an Achilles heel – it's expensive and over-complex. So, how serious a games machine is the PC?

**F**or all sorts of reasons, the PC is a very different beast from consoles like PlayStation and N64. It's a computer, for a start, not a dedicated games machine, so you can do a lot more with it. And it's much more expensive. To buy a halfway decent PC – let alone a really good one, the sort you need to play the best PC games at a decent speed – you're talking at least ten times the price of a console. Really, then, despite the fact that you can use both systems for playing games (and sometimes the very same games), they're not competitors at all. Both have strengths and weaknesses, and what you're going to be using really depends on little more than what you've got access to – if playing games is the only thing you want to do, such is the price difference between PCs and their supposed rivals, that there's simply no choice.

But there's still a point to making this comparison. If you've got a PC, you may be wondering if it's worth splashing out on a console as well. And if you've got, or are



# WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE A PC



James Binns: "the best games first."

If you want real games, you want a real man's machine: by James Binns, editor of *PC Format*.

**"T**he open nature of the PC means that anyone can develop for it. Not only do PC owners often get the best games first, but the concepts that lie behind those games can be more adventurous than those that you so often see presented by the average console platformer. Plus, the growth of the Internet enables you to get hold of free levels and upgrades really easily, enabling you to keep your

**favourite games exciting and interesting pretty much forever.**

"You can also design your own levels for games, and save them out too – it all puts the PlayStation's memory card to shame. The PC's mouse is the very best system of control for real time strategy games and 3D shooters, while the Force Feedback of PC joysticks makes rumble packs seem more like grumble packs.

"On the presentation side, PCs can offer totally unrivalled network support, covering both networking and Internet gaming.

Games have the very best 3D graphics and Surround Sound, and that's not to mention all the other funky stuff you can do. You can make music or create stunning graphics, browse the Web and much more, making the PC an essential tool whether you decide to play games on it or not."

## The PC's flagship games

*So you bought it for your accounts? Never mind, take a look at this lot.*

There are thousands of games available for the PC, at all prices. Unlike console games, however, PC games date quickly – just like the hardware. Because of this, we'll just take a look at the newest and best around.

Try **Conflict: Freespace The Great War** (1) to play a sprawling, yet intricate space combat sim – it's deeper than a really big hole in the ground, comes with plenty

of replayability and is a really good example of Just What Can Be Done on the PC. The same can be said for **Final Fantasy VII** (2), the great PlayStation RPG made bigger and better with a marvellous story, lavish graphics and a brilliant selection of spells. **StarCraft** (4) (real-time strategy stuff), is fab too.

Then, of course, there are the **Doom/Quake** (3) twins. Or, more correctly, the



recent bandwagon-hopping group of games that are, in the main, even better than the originals. **Forsaken** is full of droids, missiles, guns and robots. **Unreal**, on the other hand, simply oozes with atmosphere and gore, and features a great deathmatch where you can play against 16 simulated humans.



Because of its large writeable hard drive (it can store lots of game data) and its keyboard (communication isn't restricted to joystick twitches) the PC has traditionally enjoyed more cerebral games. Now, 3D cards mean they have great graphics too.



# THE BIG FIGHT 2

## PC vs CONSOLE

**82** thinking of buying a console, are you going to be missing out on much by not having access to a PII 333MHz? Let's find out, eh?

### ROUND 1 WHICH HAS MOST POWER?

In terms of game size, graphics quality and just about any other benchmark by which you can judge them, N64 and PlayStation games are every bit as good as their PC cousins, in spite of the fact that the consoles now come in at under £100. This is because the consoles are rammed full of custom chips that have been designed for game playing. By not having to cope with all the other functions that PCs have to manage, consoles balance power with price far more efficiently. If you only want a machine for gaming, your wallet will tell you what to do.

**Round 1:** Consoles.

### ROUND 2 THE AGONY OF CHOICE

In a typical month there might be around ten or 15 PlayStation releases and three or four N64 games –

though rather more around Christmas, obviously. In the same period of time, however, the PC will take that number and double it, then double it again. This being the case, there are now thousands of PC games available, many of which don't appear on any other system. Though most platform fans won't be too impressed with the majority of PC releases, there are some areas in which the PC is very strong – notably strategy games, simulations of various types (but mostly planes) and first person shoot-'em-ups. Despite the lack of an obvious Miyamoto-type genius coming up with a landmark game every few years (and see page 95 of this issue for more information about him), the PC whups any console on sheer volume alone.

**Round 2:** PC.

### ROUND 3 NO NEED TO PURCHASE

Unlike consoles, people buy and own PCs for many reasons. Maybe you do your home accounts or check out Web pages on your PC. Maybe you like fly fishing CD-ROMs, or e-mailing your cousin in Alabama. Maybe you're a quarter of the way through writing that novel that's going to make you rich and famous one day. Maybe you won your PC in a raffle. It's unlikely (though by no means impossible) that you simply bought it to play games on.

You see, games are but a small part of the PC's repertoire. Buying a PC and just using it to solely to play games is like buying a Ferrari and only driving to Sainsbury's. But owning a PC for some other reason and then finding that

# Spend about £1,500 on a PC and it will play all the latest games very well indeed. But in six months it will start to appear a little slow, and in a year you'll have to upgrade

you can play some games on it is like driving back from Sainsbury's in your Ferrari on a Saturday afternoon, and discovering that you've just won the National Lottery. The PC can do so much more than a console developer could ever dream of.

**Round 3:** PC.

### ROUND 4 THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPECIES

From a developer's point of view, consoles are very different to PCs. The creation of a top quality console game requires a programmer to push the machine to its limits – something the developers tend to get better and better at over time. You can see this in the games themselves – the fantastic PlayStation racer *Gran Turismo*, for instance, shows what the PlayStation is capable of when working flat out, shifting scenery at a rate that puts the PlayStation's initial flagship racing

game *Ridge Racer*, to shame. It's the same story on N64 – faces gawped when people first saw *Super Mario World*, but two years on and *Banjo-Kazooie* looks even better. The real problem is that sooner or later both N64 and PlayStation will get pushed to their absolute limits, and at that stage the public's interest will start to wane, leaving the door open for Dreamcast and the next generation of machines.

PCs, though, are different. They still evolve. Spend about £1,500 on a PC today and it will play all the latest games very well indeed. In six months' time, however, it will appear a little slow at running the cutting-edge stuff, and in a year it won't play the latest releases effectively and you'll have to upgrade. Buy a PC today, and chances you're still going to have to have it MOT-ed once a year to keep up with the best games. If you don't want the fight to keep your games machine up-to-date to turn into a never-ending

## "Do you think I'm made of money?"

*We don't know much about PCs, but we do like the one that we use in the office. It's grey, and has some light blue bits and some rubber keys. Apparently, there's a little more to PCs than that, though. These days you wouldn't want anything less than a Pentium 166, with both a soundcard and 3Dfx graphics card, which, on a decent PC, will come as standard. Here are some shopping suggestions for the best packages around.*

#### UNDER £1,000



### Lexon 3D2

Price: £999  
What you get: PII 266MHz PC, monitor, speakers, keyboard, mouse.  
Contact: Lexon Technology on 0181 667 1173

The Lexon exudes quality from the moment you lift it out of the box – it's a slick looker in a cool case. Sound and video-wise you've got a AWE64 and an 8Mb Diamond Monster 3D 2 accelerator, and the speakers include a booming sub-woofer. It's excellent value for money, but it may be as little as six months before you have to start thinking about upgrading a bit to keep up with new games.

#### £1,000-£2,000



### G6-33M

Price: £1,789.52  
What you get: PII 333MHz PC, monitor, speakers, keyboard, mouse, Digital Versatile Disk drive.  
Contact: Gateway on 0800 322000

The G6-33M includes a Digital Versatile Disk (DVD) player for watching films and a huge 19-inch monitor. It's a very capable machine that certainly gives you computing power for your money – you should be able to wait at least a year before needing to upgrade.

#### £2,000 and over



### Simply Professional PL10

Price: £2,184  
What you get: PII 400MHz PC, monitor, speakers, keyboard, mouse, DVD drive, colour-inkjet printer, scanner, video camera and a copy of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (on DVD).  
Contact: Simply Computers on 0181 498 2100

The ultimate in current PCs with enough extra gadgetry to keep you locked inside the house for weeks. You get an extremely well balanced system with the extra advantage that the manufacturer offers copious after-sales support to help you get the most from your purchase. We reckon you should get two years of gaming out of the PL10 before upgrading becomes an issue.

battle, the what-you-buy-is-what-you-get console would seem like a much better bet all round.

You see, in many ways the beauty of the PC is also its fatal flaw. Software no longer has to be designed with the capabilities of the average user's home machine in mind because everyone is upgrading all the time, which enables developers to create some thoroughly excellent games – but games which require many people to buy expensive hardware upgrades before they can run them. The PC will continue to grow as a business tool and also as a games machine, but it still remains much more of a hobbyist thing than a console, and much less of a toy.

**Round 4:** Consoles.

## ROUND 5

### TWO'S COMPANY, THREE'S BETTER

Networking is a huge part of PC game culture. Games like *Quake* can be played over an office network, over the Internet or by as many PCs as you can link together with cables. Here at *Arcade* you can guarantee to hear the harsh fizzle of gunfire and screams of disembowelment at 6.00pm every evening, as *Quake's* loyal little band of devotees log on instead of going to the pub like the rest of us.

But the users of office networks are still the lucky exception rather than the rule. *Quake* (or whichever of the many clones you favour) may well be the best multi-player game in the world, but relatively few people will ever get to play it in the environment for which it was designed. At home, the four-player options available on PlayStation and N64 are a much more practical multi-player proposition.

**Round 4:** Consoles.

## THE FINAL BELL

We really are comparing apples and oranges here. The PC, despite being immensely popular, remains something of a specialist taste as a pure games machine. PCs are expensive – a great deal more expensive than previous generations of home computer, like the Commodore Amiga or Sinclair Spectrum – but then they're also a lot more powerful. PCs go out of date almost the minute you buy them – the way a new car loses a grand or two in value the minute you drive it off the garage forecourt – but they offer loads of games and applications, and you can link them together for a fantastic multi-player experience. PCs are getting much more user friendly, too. The fact is that you'd almost certainly buy a PC for completely different reasons than you would a console, making this mismatched title fight not so much a draw, more a null and void contest. We love both PCs and consoles (well, with the PC it's more of a love/hate relationship), and can't imagine living in a world that didn't have both.



# But what if you don't want, or can't afford, a PlayStation, N64 or PC?

*There are alternatives available, and a right mixed bag they are. Some are old favourites – previous generation game machines you can currently pick up for a song. Others are the up-and-comers – like Sega's new Dreamcast. And some, chiefly Nintendo's Game Boy, have carved a niche for themselves by doing a specialist job superbly. These aren't all mainstream choices, obviously, but whether it is because they're cheap, or exciting or simply because they do a different job to everyone else, they all have something to recommend them.*

### THE 8-BIT HOME COMPUTERS

## Sinclair Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC

This trio of '80s efforts are the oldest home computers you're likely to come across. These tiny, tinny, often cassette-driven relics more than likely won't cost you a penny – and you may decide that's almost too much when you look at their primitive games.

Early Spectrums come with rubber keys, but with three ex-*Your Sinclair* writers on the *Arcade* staff, it has to be our recommendation. After all, many Speccy games – like *The Sentinel* or *Knight Lore* – remain retro classics with a strong cult following.



### THE 8-BIT CONSOLES

## Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Master System

Two bitter rivals from the late-'80s pre-Mega Drive/Super NES generation, this pair of brick-lookalikes – with their bright, flat colours but brilliantly designed gameplay – got most of us hooked on gaming. Nintendo offered the brilliant *Super Mario Brothers* and *Zelda*, while Sega countered with, er, *Golden Axe*. Available for a couple of quid second hand, we'd take the Nintendo.



### THE 16-BIT CONSOLES

## Commodore Amiga and Atari ST

In the first half of the '90s, before the IBM-compatible PCs took over the world, these 16-bit computers ruled the roost. Relatively cheap and quite capable – they're good for word processing and Internet access among other things, as well as games – they still have their fans today, particularly the superior Amiga. These are very cheap second hand – about £80 with a bunch of games chucked in – and are home to some fantastic games. The Amiga effort *Sensible Soccer* is unofficially the Best Football Game of All Time.



## Sega Mega Drive

The SNES's big early '90s rival, and these are now absurdly cheap second hand. A very trendy machine in its time, with swoopy (if plastic) Darth Vader styling, it had bags more games but a bit less ability than the Nintendo machine.

Shown here, by the way, is the restyled Mega Drive 2 with piggybacking 32X, a hardware boosting add-on. And gamewise? It's over to *Arcade Editor*, and one-time boss at the Mega Drive-dedicated *Mega* magazine, Neil West: "*Sonic the Hedgehog* and its sequels, obviously, are still superb. *Strider* – a platform actioner starring a guy with a big sword – is good too, but my personal favourite remains EA's superb *John Madden Football*, which set the standard for American football games."



## Super Nintendo Entertainment System

The N64's immediate predecessor can be picked up second-hand for around £30-40, with games a fiver a pop, and it still plays very well. In its day ('92 through '95) it occupied a similar position in the market to that now occupied by the N64 – it was more powerful than the rival Sega Mega Drive, but it didn't sell as well and had far fewer games. Still, much of what it did have was fantastic and some still argue that SNES *Mario Kart* is superior to the N64 version. Other big name games, like *Star Wing* and *Super Mario World*, still play very well.



## Nintendo Game Boy

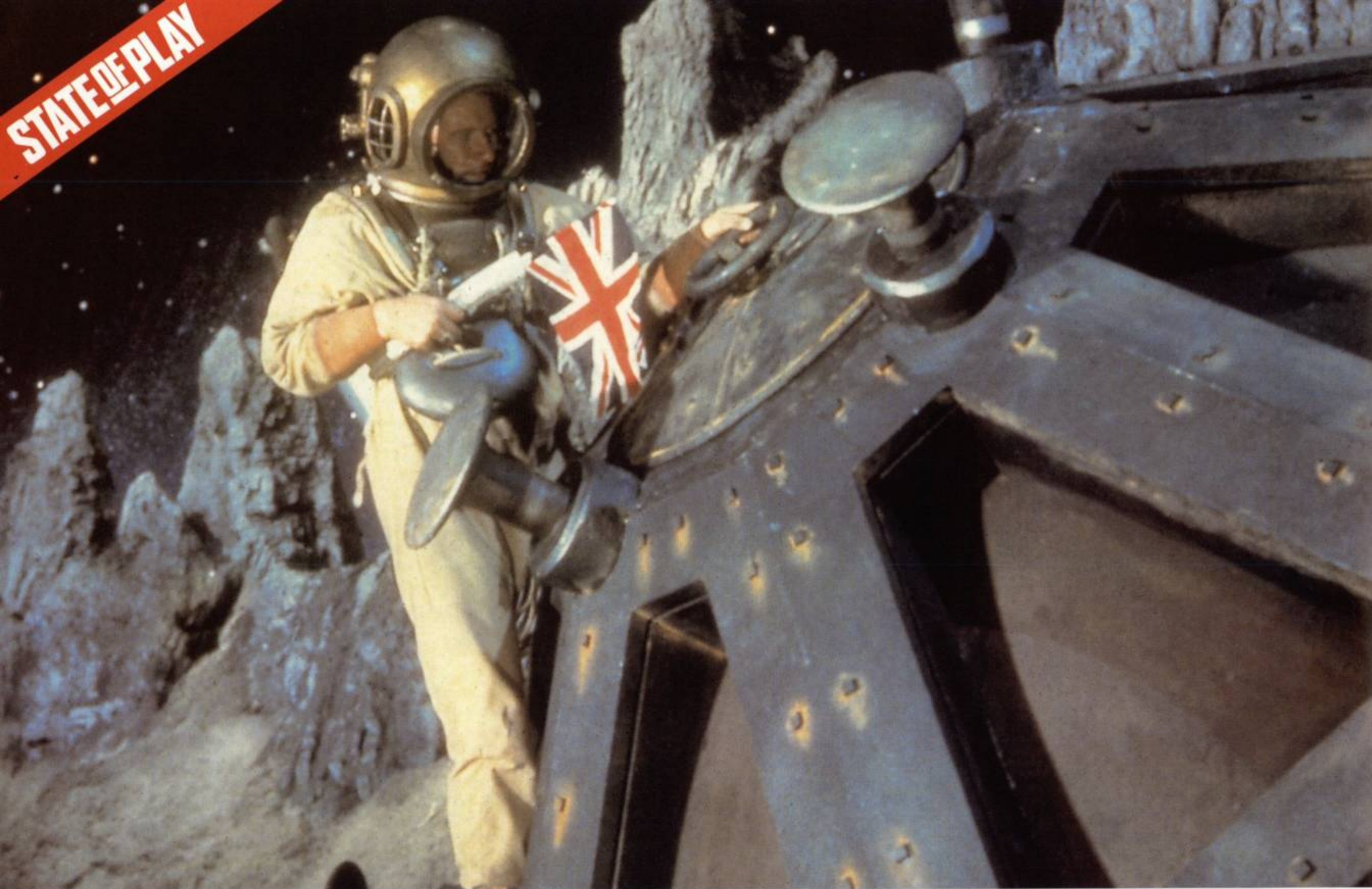
The world's most popular handheld games machine, Nintendo's Game Boy has been on the scene for around nine years now, sometimes looking likely to fade from popularity, but always coming back stronger than ever. Now, with the arrival of a new colour version (see page 60 this issue), its future looks assured. For as little as £45 new (or maybe £60 second-hand, with a bunch of games), the Game Boy remains a must-have for any long journey, with *Tetris* the classic game. Sega's defunct rival Game Gear had a colour screen from the beginning, but it was larger (a real issue if you're intending to carry it around) and more expensive.



## And the rest...

Of course, there are a whole range of other rarer machines out there too. Fancy a *PC Engine* or *Neo-Geo*? You might be looking a while. These 16-bit consoles offered near-perfect arcade conversions, but were never officially released in Britain. The *Atari Jaguar* did make it, but few games and a nightmarish controller sank it without trace. The *Sega Saturn* had lots of games, but PlayStation killed it, and Commodore's *CD-TV*, Philips's *CD-I* and *3DO* all used CD-ROM to run dull interactive movies and encyclopaedias. Which leaves *Dreamcast* (pictured), available on import now...





# BEST OF BREED



Games come in all shapes and sizes. But, with a bit of pushing and shoving, most can sorted into genres – or, for the sake of this article – breeds. So what are these “breeds”? And which games represent them best?

## OLD SKOOL

*It's not like the old days...*

**S**ome people will tell you that, like *Wagon Wheels* or *Shreddies* with hot milk, old games are never as good as you remember. Perhaps, then, the best way to treat the retro gaming revival is as an exercise in nostalgia.

That said, there's a definite tingle of excitement to be had from playing retro compilations and PC emulators. And some of these oldies really are goldies. We're thinking here of things like *Williams Arcade Classics*, boasting *Defender* and *Robotron*. Then there's *Atari Classics*, with *Missile Command* and *Tempest*, and *Namco Collection Vol 3* with *Ms Pacman* and *Galaga*.

Another way to enjoy the games of yesterday is with remakes of classic titles. Activision's *Battlezone* makes the wireframe original look like the knuckle-dragging distant predecessor it undoubtedly is. Meanwhile, *Tempest 2000* and *Tempest X* fiddle only mildly with the original formula. Best of all, though, is discovering an old coin-op at some rundown seaside arcade and playing a classic the old fashioned way.

## BEST OF BREED

### MAME

System: **PC/Mac**  
Publisher: **From the Internet**



■ The Internet's full of emulators, but get hold of the superb MAME (multi-arcade machine emulator), for either PC or Mac, and the history of arcade games is yours. Practically every coin-op, from *Space Invaders* to *Mr Do*, is out there, and all downloadable in their original ROM form. As well as enabling you to own and replay classics, MAME is a great way of finding long-forgotten games, a history lesson in videogaming – and in some cases illegal. Many of the games use illegally copied code and having your own copies breaks anti-piracy laws. We'll be looking the issues surrounding gaming piracy in a future *Arcade*.

#### Honourable mentions:

*The Atari Collection* (PSX, GTI); *Namco Museum Vol 3* (PSX, Namco); *Street Fighter Collection* (PSX, Capcom); *Tempest X* (PSX, Interplay); *Williams Arcade Classics* (PSX, Williams).

#### Videogame Lexicon

**1st-person** – a game viewed as though you were looking through the eyes of the character you're controlling.

**3D accelerator** – a PC add-on card which specialises in polygons and optimises 3D performance.

**3Dfx** – currently the most widely-used and supported brand of 3D accelerator.

**Add-on** – item inserted into computer or console to gain additional benefits. Sounds nuder than it is.





## 3D SHOOTERS

**Blood, gore, guns, limbs. Bang bang! You're dead.**

**3**D-shooters do exactly what they say on the tin; you run around big mazes, killing everything that moves, before it kills you. However, the reasons these games appeal so much are a little uncomfortable when you think about them – worrying, even. Perhaps the exploration is like visiting a new country and the panic like getting lost in a supermarket while young. Maybe the mindless violence links with our queasy interest in motorway pile-ups and fire



■ *Quake*: didn't so much capture the imagination as gag and execute it.

you do want a solitary, single-player experience on the PC, most people recommend the similar *Unreal*.

In the future, 3D shooters will evolve in two directions. *Quake III* promises to concentrate on delivering the ultimate multi-player experience, while games such as *Forsaken*, from Acclaim, focus on design and enemy AI to beef up the one-player fun. On consoles, one game shines brightly. And its sequel is hotly awaited...



■ *Wolfenstein* may have been first, but it was *Doom* that had the impact.

engines. Possibly the slaughter provides a vent for frustrations and homicidal fantasies – like playing cowboys and indians in the park when you're small.

Whatever the reason, there's no denying that id software's *Doom*, the first mega-hit of the type, defined a generation of computer games back in early '93. Though primarily a PC phenomenon, *Doom* was recently converted to the PlayStation. Son of *Doom* – *Quake* – and its sequel *Quake II*, continue to rock on the PC. Most people prefer playing these 3D games, not as single players, but with PCs linked together locally or over the Internet where you can experience a deathmatch with up to 16 players. If

### BEST OF BREED

#### GoldenEye 007

System: N64 Publisher: Nintendo



■ *GoldenEye* functions as superbly with one player as it does if you try a four-player deathmatch multi-game, thanks to its intricate level design and highly logical progression. Developer Rare has made full use of the James Bond licence, ensuring that the game sticks strictly to the movie plot, and has enough secrets and difficulty levels to keep you playing for an eternity. Miss the opportunity to play *GoldenEye* and you risk suffering a stylish-yet-traditional cyanide-tablet-dropped-into-your-wine-when-you're-least-expecting-it death.

**Honourable mentions:** *Doom* (Mac/PC/PSX, GTI); *Duke Nukem* (Mac/PC, GTI); *Jedi Knight* (PC, LucasArts); *Quake/Quake II* (PC, GTI); *Unreal* (Mac/PC, GTI).

## STRATEGY

**You don't have to have a beard to play these, but it certainly helps...**

**T**hroughout gaming history there have been several classic strategy games – like *Populous*, *Civilization*, *SimCity*, *Railroad Tycoon* – that remain as milestones of evolution. It wasn't until the 1993 release of *Dune II*, though, that a successful formula for strategy gaming arrived; a formula that was powerful enough to grow beyond the dedicated PC fan base and grab a slice of the mainstream pie.

Westwood Studios has hogged the stage ever since with its *Command & Conquer* series. Blizzard's *WarCraft II* and *StarCraft* have pushed the genre forward too, but the fact remains that most strategy games still boil down to the same basic elements that *Dune II* pioneered; explore your surroundings, locate resources, consolidate supply lines, fashion a defensive/offensive game-plan and then – preparations made – set about hammering seven shades of shit out of the opposition.

If you've never been initiated into this world, it may not sound like much fun, but we say don't knock it til you've tried it. With the ability to link PCs together (either locally or via the Internet), the option to slug it out with your mates can swiftly become highly



■ Aliens battle it out in *StarCraft*. Pull his antenna bits! Tread on his tentacle!

exhilarating. Indeed, these games have progressed a long way from the drab, hexagon-mapped, turn-based affairs that you may remember of old.

While the bulk of strategy games are PC-only affairs, a few have snuck on to the PlayStation over recent years (with the best being *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*). Sadly, though, the N64 doesn't get a look in. ➔

### BEST OF BREED

#### Total Annihilation

System: PC Publisher: GT Interactive



■ *Total Annihilation* is the thinking man's strategy game. It's faster, meaner and far more involved than any other RTS (real-time strategy) title on the market and, tactically speaking, it's way ahead of the competition. The exquisite true-3D landscapes look peachy as your textured-polygon forces roll relentlessly across 'em. There are shedloads of units to build, with more released regularly on the Internet, via developer Cavedog's Web site. *TA* is a game for the history books. Buy it now and enjoy it.

**Honourable mentions:** *Civilization II* (Mac/PC, MicroProse); *Command & Conquer* (Mac/PC, Westwood); *SimCity 2000* (Mac/PC, Maxis); *StarCraft* (PC, Blizzard); *WarCraft II* (Mac/PC, Blizzard).



■ It may look dated, but *Civilization* was Sid Meier's strategy milestone.

**AI** – artificial intelligence. code that determines the behaviour of game characters not under your control.

**Analogue control** – control system which, unlike digital, enables a range of commands and control, not just on/off.

**Arcade perfect** – a coin-op to console/PC conversion so good that even your mum can't tell the difference.

**Bit (1)** – the smallest unit of computer storage space. Can be either "1" (on) or "0" (off).

**Bit (2)** – indication of the largest number a computer can deal with. Larger means faster, as in 32-bit, 64-bit.

**Bonus level** – game section where you can collect lots of goodies without anything trying to maim you.

**Borders** – black bars at the top and bottom of foreign games converted for the UK's PAL TV system.

**Boss** – usually humongous, near-invincible monster at the end or middle of levels.

**Bug** – error in game code, that causes both unexpected and unintentional things to happen to the game.

**Byte** – measurement of a computer's storage space. 1 byte = 8 bits; 1Kbyte = 1,000 bytes; 1Mbyte = 1,000 Kbytes.



## DRIVING/RACING

Get your motor running, head out on the highway. Looking for adventure...

Driving games divide into three categories; strict simulations in the style of *Grand Prix II* (PC) and *F1 '98* (PlayStation), where you race around actual grand prix circuits; arcade games like *San Francisco Rush* and *Colin McRae Rally*, where it all looks realistic, but you can soon hare round tracks with the pedal flat on the floor; and comedy racers like *Diddy Kong Racing*, where the rules of the road make way for a monkey driving a go-kart. Just to confuse things further, there's also top fun to be had in entirely different vehicles like space ships (as in *WipeOut*) and jet skis (*WaveRace*).

Most PC driving games are strict simulations. These are frequently annoying at first, as everyone hurtles into the distance, leaving you to chug round an empty track, but if you stick with it you'll find there's lots to enjoy. The PlayStation focuses on foot-to-the-floor arcade-style games such as *Colin McRae Rally* and *Formula One Grand Prix*, but many people say the best fun of all is to be had on the four-player thrills of N64's *Mario Kart 64*.

Basically, if you've ever seen *Top Gear*, you know the world of cars and racing is one of confusion and pain.



92 miles an hour – there's no time for fear in *San Francisco Rush*.

### BEST OF BREED

#### Gran Turismo

System: PlayStation Publisher: SCEE



After a mammoth tiff over whether this or *Mario Kart* should finally take the chequered flag, we settled on the game that's caused many other developers to question their life's work. Pulling off visual trickery that you would never have expected from a grey box the size of a couple of bricks, the real strength of *Gran Turismo* is that it couples the genuine feeling of wrestling with real car dynamics (understeer, oversteer, the works) with movie car chase-quality visuals. With a choice of either arcade-style thrills or technically accurate jiggery-pokery, no-one should be without this game. Except N64 and PC owners, of course. D'oh!

**Honourable mentions:** *Colin McRae Rally* (PSX, Codemasters); *Grand Prix II* (PC, MicroProse); *Grand Prix Legends* (PC, Sierra); *Mario Kart 64* (N64, Nintendo); *MicroMachines V3* (PSX, Codemasters); *WaveRace 64* (N64, Nintendo).



Good old-fashioned arcade-style racing saves the day for *Colin McRae*.

## ACTION ADVENTURE

For the gamer who likes to think (just a little bit).

It's difficult, this categorising games. Sometimes it all gets a bit woolly. And this is one of those times. Basically, the action adventure category embraces all those games that require a degree of thought and puzzle-solving abilities, as well as lightning-quick trigger fingers. It also incorporates the more slow-paced releases that, while never quite becoming role playing games (there's not much conversation, say), do include a story element. Good examples of this genre are *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider*.

Action adventures have evolved from two main threads. Echoes of classic oldies such as *Alone in the Dark*, *Prince of Persia* and *Flashback* can be seen in the likes of the *Indiana Jones*-influenced *Tomb Raider* series, while another thread – represented by *Resident Evil* – owes much to the dull CD-based "interactive movies" of the early '90s. These showed you video snippets then asked "What next?" Praise the Lord, technology has caught up with this concept, and the sight of a player staring in bulbous-eyed terror



Much imitated, never equalled, it's the gorgeous Lara in *Tomb Raider*.



Never before has a game been so scary. Be afraid – it's *Resident Evil*.

at the screen, in fear of what's round the next corner, has become common.

One to watch in the future is *Metal Gear Solid*, where you achieve stealthy infiltration using both guard-strangling action and hair-tearing puzzles. It's the love interest within the story that shows just how plot-led these games can be. And how cloyingly soppy.

### BEST OF BREED

#### Resident Evil 2

System: PlayStation Publisher: Capcom



The movie rule that suggests sequels should, by default, be several multiples worse than the original version has never really applied to videogames – probably because the games are all so technology-driven. *Resident Evil 2* is no exception. A game with a heavyweight BBFC rating, and with good reason, *RE2* carefully crafts all its menacing camera angles and horror-movie set-pieces into a nerve-tangling whole. Play this game to see just how videogames can induce emotions (albeit basic ones, like fear) in exactly the same way as a good movie. In other words, keep the light on.

**Honourable mentions:** *Alone in the Dark* (Mac/PC, Interplay); *OddWorld: Abe's Oddysee* (PC/PSX, GTI); *Tomb Raider II* (Mac/PC/PSX, EIDOS).



# FIGHTING

See that bloke over there? He's looking at you funny...

Until recently, videogames were almost entirely the preserve of young men – and if there's one thing young men like doing it's smacking people up. The pleasure that's to be had playing fighting games comes, simply, from using your on-screen fighter to soundly trounce an opponent through sheer digitised brutality. And then performing your own special little victory dance around the room. This genre's strength lies in the two-player mode. Because total perfection comes through using a lethal combination of reflexes, speed, technique, co-ordination and memory, if you beat someone at a fighting game, you're just

better than them. Simple as that. In many ways, the beat-'em-up is the purest form of videogame there is.

1984's *Karate Champ* from Data East was the first real arcade fighter, born of the karate craze of the early '80s. *The Way of the Exploding Fist*



Whether armed with swords, knives or fists, the appeal of fighting games is that they enable two friends to inflict a degree of pain upon each other not experienced since early childhood "play".



bought the idea to home PCs, but it wasn't until 1991's *Street Fighter II* that the genre came of age. Capcom's masterpiece introduced the concept of hammering out a finger-wrecking button sequence to unleash special,

more complex, moves. The gameplay balance and amusing characters (like Indian rubber-man Dhalsim) helped endear the game to millions. Its big rival was the brutal *Mortal Kombat*, which grabbed headlines the world over with its blood-soaked fatalities.

Since then, many fighting games have embraced the move to 3D (led by Sega's *Virtua Fighter* series), but in essence have actually changed little. Some immensely complex background stories have emerged, and the range and violence of moves has increased, but there have been few innovations. Testament to this trend is Capcom's continued success with new *Street Fighter* games that are, essentially, eight years old. The PlayStation is the

home of most fighters – both the PC and N64 have failed to add significantly to the fighting game genre.

If this sounds negative, don't be put off. The lack of real evolution is largely because none is needed. *Street Fighter II* was such a great game that it's still highly playable. And there are some new champions. Square's *Bushido Blade* on the PlayStation is steeped in oriental

mystique and cerebral challenge. Meanwhile, the *Tekken* series gets stronger with *Tekken 3* offering PlayStation gamers as good a scrap as it's possible to get.

## BEST OF BREED

### Tekken 3

System: PlayStation Publisher: Namco



Let's be honest. *Tekken 3* is as unoriginal as a game gets. It borrows heavily from every single fighter before it, including its own prequels. But each borrowed bit has been handed over to the master programmers deep inside Namco (we strongly suspect they must themselves be ninjas) who tinker, tweak, test and tune the gameplay until it's just right – and then keel over. As perfect as Big Daddy versus Giant Haystacks, but a hell of a lot more visually appealing.

**Honourable mentions:** *Street Fighter Alpha 2* (PSX, Capcom); *Virtua Fighter 2* (Saturn, Sega); *Virtua Fighter 3* (arcade coin-op, Sega).

**Controller** – an essential add-on that enables you to move your character about in games. A joystick, for instance.

**CPU** – central processing unit. The "brain" that co-ordinates and controls what happens on your computer or console.

**Cut-scene** – game section between levels, which updates the continuing plot-line, usually as FMV.

**Developer** – an individual or team that contributes to a game's development.

**Digital** – binary system in which values are either "1" ("on") or "0" ("off").

**Digital control** – control system (for example a standard joystick) in which commands are "on" or "off".

**Download** – the process of sucking items from the Internet or other computers onto your computer.

**DVD** – digital versatile disc. New type of CD, holding – gasp! – 16,000Mb of data.

**Emulate** – to use code that cruelly tricks your computer into thinking that it's a totally different machine.

**FMV** – full motion video. Snippets of video played straight from CD by a computer/console.



**BEST OF BREED**

# ARCADE ACTION

After a bit of mindless action to pass the time of day? Step right this way guv'nor...

**A**rcade action games can look very different to each other, but the feeling you get from playing each one should be more or less the same. You might find yourself in a car, a space ship or a space marine's size 12s – indeed, on first glance an arcade action game may well look like one of our other breeds instead. But don't be fooled – a quick play will soon reveal the truth.

There are two big giveaway signs: first, it'll challenge your reflexes more than your grey matter. It will remain relentlessly fast-paced throughout (with no puzzle element or restful moments, like you might get in that other great catch-all category, the action adventure) and undoubtedly you'll be armed. Second, you'll soon find that although it might look a bit like a driving game or basic flight sim, there's so little reality to your situation that you'd be reluctant to call it such. Ha! So it must be an arcade action game. In truth, this is an extremely woolly, ill-defined genre – but you'll know one when you play it.

Since the '80s, when you couldn't leave your house for tripping over the piles of "sideways-scrolling" shoot-'em-ups and fighters that are this genre's staple, the number of arcade action



■ *Lylat Wars* offers typical arcade action in that you shoot people. A lot. titles has decreased. Today's examples are commonly just updates of classics (such as *G-Darius* on the PlayStation) or fast-paced action-packed romps around 3D environments.

**BEST OF BREED**

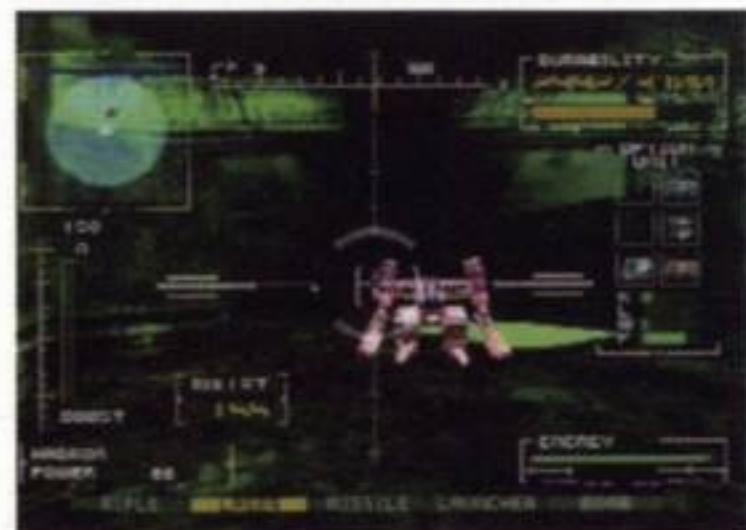
## Incoming

System: PC Publisher: Rage



■ With visuals that make *Independence Day* look bland, and a host of missions, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this space-based shoot-out was trying to hide something rotten within. But no, *Incoming* takes the best ingredients of arcade action – aliens, shooting and explosions – and pumps them up to 11 on the actionometer. Guaranteed to bring forth the sore thumb associated with protracted game-play and 200 fire button presses a minute.

**Honourable mentions:** *Fighting Force* (PSX, EIDOS Interactive); *Lylat Wars* (N64, Nintendo); *Twisted Metal 2* (PSX, SCEE).



■ *Fighting Force* offers typical arcade action in that you hit people. A lot.

# PLATFORMERS

A world of mushroom-eating plumbers and marsupials with attitude.

**U**nless you're Bowser, King of the Koopas, and thus destined to be forever embarrassed by an Italian bog mechanic, platformers are great. With gameplay and innovation skipping hand in hand, they've provided console gaming with some of its finest moments. They are dismissed as "kids stuff" only by those who know not what they say.

The whole breed is more or less the life's work of one man, Shigeru Miyamoto. Creating *Donkey Kong* for Nintendo in 1981, he introduced the whole "avoid and collect" concept, as well as a new character – Jumpman. Renamed Mario, the moustachioed tradesman has dominated the genre ever since, establishing Nintendo as the dominant videogame company with three *Mario Bros* games on the NES (later collected in enhanced form on the Super NES).

The Shigster's level design and imagination reached its 2D peak in *Super Mario World* on the SNES which, with sequel *Yoshi's Island* trailing just behind, was the best platformer ever, until the same man then shifted everything into 3D with *Super Mario 64*. As one writer eloquently scribed, it suddenly seemed that all previous *Mario* games had merely been postcards from this magical land.

Sega is hoping to see an equally revolutionary update of its platform mascot with the new *Sonic Adventure* for Dreamcast. The blue hedgehog's Mega Drive outings are remembered fondly, although they never matched *Mario* for creativity. With *Sonic* stabled while Saturn struggled, it's been up to Sony's *Crash Bandicoot*, the stunning looking *Spyro the Dragon* and the



■ "Animal platformers" (such as the *Yoshi* series) are a common sub-genre.

execrable *Croc* to provide *Mario* with competition. Only Rare (Nintendo's UK ally) has come even close to emulating Miyamoto's genius, with the *Donkey Kong Country* series on the SNES and *Banjo-Kazooie* on the N64.

At *Arcade*, we're looking forward to *Sonic Adventure*, sure. But it's the coming prospect of *Super Mario 64 2* (due for release late next year) that's keeping us awake at night.

**BEST OF BREED**

## Super Mario 64

System: N64 Publisher: Nintendo



■ *Mario's* 3D N64 debut is arguably the finest videogame ever created. Offering unrivalled character control, sparkling level design, tons of secret bits, and the gameplay of Nintendo's 2D platformers, *Super Mario 64* is good enough to make grown gamers weep. In fact, the only bad bit about Miyamoto's masterpiece is that it inspired countless developers to come up with inferior clones. If you haven't played this game, go and steal a copy from a small child immediately.

**Honourable mentions:** *Crash Bandicoot 2* (PSX, SCEE); *Sonic the Hedgehog* (Mega Drive, Sega); *Super Mario World* (SNES, Nintendo).



# SPORTS

**One ball, four posts, 22 men and a spreadsheet...**

**P**ong started the whole videogame sports ball bouncing back in '73. Since then sports games have increased in popularity, as TV-games like tennis evolved into the 3D, "It looks just like TV!" offerings of today.

Of all gaming genres, it's sports that offers the most diversity. Take golf, for example. For most of the '80s it was golf that pushed game graphics, with increasingly photo-realistic offerings trying to woo the lucrative "dad" market. Now, of course, there's also Sony's cute *Everybody's Golf* – a game with console written all over it.

The pattern repeats everywhere. Any sport you can think of is not only represented, but has its own range of wildly different titles, catering for

every gamer imaginable, from full-on action junkies to spreadsheet jocks.

In the UK, football dominates. EA Sports leads with an ever-present and constantly updated market leader in its *FIFA* series, but both Gremlin's *Actua Soccer* (the only serious British contender) and Konami's *International Superstar Soccer* are gaining ground with each release. New and ambitious



**■ The US market for ice hockey, basketball, baseball and American football games is huge. Sooner or later most of these games turn up in the UK, along with more home-grown faves like football and tennis.**



young turks like EIDOS's *World League Soccer* series aren't content merely to pick up small pieces of this burgeoning market either, it seems, as the recent

recruitment of a certain footballing young turk, Michael Owen, testifies.

Gridiron fans have the US market-leader *Madden*, and efforts from the *Gameday*, *Blitz*, *QB Club* and *Pro* lines to consider. For basketball think *In the Zone*, *NBA Live*, *NBA Hangtime* and *NBA Pro*. Even *Deerhunter* (a number one PC smash in the States), is about to be challenged by the likes of *Wild Turkey Hunt* and *Cabela's Big Game Hunter*. You get the idea.

In the real world, the result of this branding is the trend towards stables and labels – EA Sports, VRSports – the list is growing fast. Every games company needs a spin-off sports arm. Fox Interactive in the States did it the easy way, buying the rights to the *Actua* range and changing the name.

The immediate future belongs to EA Sports. *FIFA '99* is heading towards a Christmas list near you, and the Canadian giant has just signed a four-year licensing deal with the Carling Premiership, upon which it's building its first management sim. Sports sims may rarely attempt the radical, but they'll always be here. ➔

## BEST OF BREED



### ISS Pro '98

System: **PlayStation** Publisher: **Konami**



■ Ooh, controversial. While many insist that the N64's (totally different) version of *ISS '98* is just the best football game available, here in the *Arcade* office it's scorned for its habit of allowing cheap, stick-wobbling dribbles and finishes. The PlayStation version, however, allies some impressive team AI with solid defences and a slick passing game. Graphically, it's helped along by superb animation.

Of course it's the two-player game, abetted by solid, layered controls and a wealth of convincing team moves, that makes this such a favourite. Very rarely have we played a two-player game that provides such an involving contest. It's simply the best rendering of the best sport on the planet.

#### Honourable mentions:

*Links LS* (PC, Access); *Madden '93* (Mega Drive, EA Sports); *NHL '98* (PC, EA); *NBA In The Zone II* (PlayStation, Konami); *NFL GameDay '98* (PlayStation, SCE); *World Series '98* (Saturn, Sega).

**Life** – used to describe the number of "goes" you have left in a game.

**Light gun** – a plastic gun that's used to shoot baddies dogging up your telly.

**Loading** – the act of putting a game into your computer or console's memory.

**Memory card** – an add-on on which you can store a game position, allowing sleep, food etc.

**Mbit** – Megabit. Equal to 128 Kbytes, and a measure of game cartridge size.

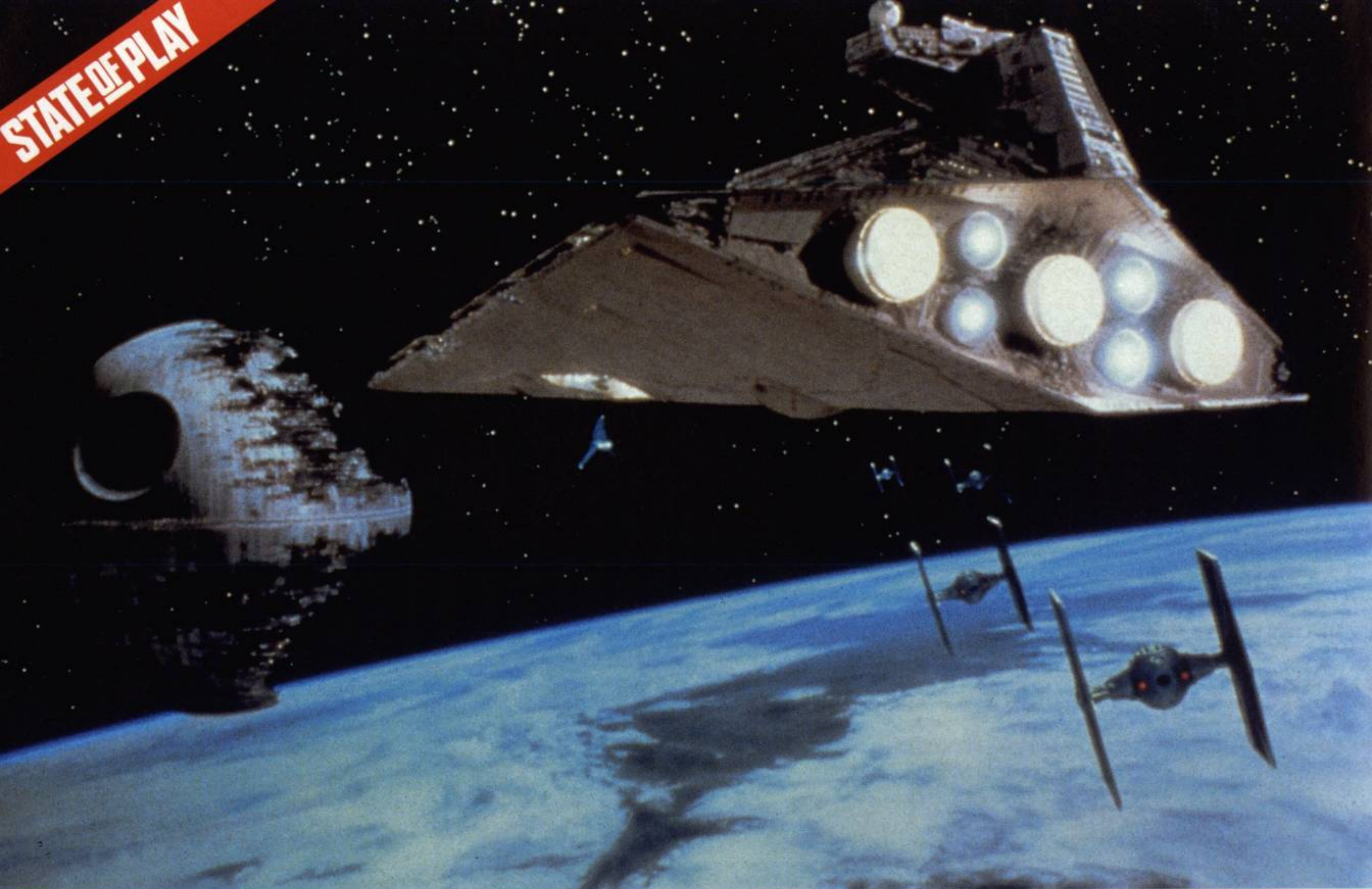
**MHz** – Megahertz. A measure of a machine's speed. The bigger the better (unlike life).

**Motion capture** – storing the movement of real people and reproducing it in-game to enhance realism.

**MPEG** – Motion Picture Experts Group. A format for storing moving pictures on computer media.

**Multi-player** – a game which you can play either simultaneously with your chums, or over a network.

**NTSC** – A TV display system using 525 lines, it's faster than the UK's PAL and favoured by the USA and Japan.



**BEST OF BREED**

# EPIC SPACE COMBAT

Use the force! Fulfil your destiny! (Just make sure you don't end up snogging your sister.)

**F**ly around space, trade with friendly races, shoot down the hostile ones, forge new alliances, break them, then turn fugitive and meet a grizzly end, hunted like the vermin that you are. Wannabe Luke Skywalkers start here.

Until recent times Origin's *Wing Commander* series ruled this roost, boasting oodles of video clips starring Mark Hamill and ex-porn star Ginger Lynn Allen, mixed in with wide-ranging space dogfights. LucasArts trumped all this, though, with the release of real *Star Wars* action in the form of *X-wing vs TIE-Fighter* (and what was *Wing Commander* but *Star Wars* with the serial numbers filed off?), but at the expense of the trading element. *Hard Wars*, *Home World* and *Conflict: The Great War* have all since offered beefed up graphics and missions.

On the PlayStation, *Colony Wars* and *Darklight Conflict* haven't been as good as expected. And N64's *Starfox* doesn't count, because its shooting emphasis makes it arcade action.

**BEST OF BREED**

## Elite

System: BBC Micro Publisher: Acornsoft



It came out in 1984. There's was no story and no end of game goal. It had wireframe 3D graphics and was black and white. It was just you, a space ship and a whole universe to explore. It was the greatest space combat game ever, copied by many and rubbished by its sequels, but never, ever, bettered.

**Honourable mentions:** *Colony Wars* (PlayStation, Psygnosis); *Wing Commander IV* (PC, EA); *X-wing vs TIE Fighter* (Mac/PC, LucasArts).



# TRUE ORIGINALS

Run free, little ones!

**S**ome games defy being pigeon-holed and show an arrogant disregard for the rules. These originals are the result of someone's belief that a crazy idea might just work. And often this belief is justified. Remember *Little Computer People* (1986) on the Commodore 64, a *Tamagotchi* 15 years ahead of its time?

While games like this will never sell as well as fighters or 3D shooters, true originals are fun – often hilarious – and rarely impose strict rules on the

player. In the majority of these games it's impossible to "die" – they're more interactive toys than games. We're all looking forward to the release of *Bust-A-Groove* on the PlayStation, where the simple aim is, bizarrely, just to dance yourself stupid...

**BEST OF BREED**

## PaRappa The Rapper



System: PlayStation Publisher: SCEE



Our only criticism of this rapping dog game is that there's just not enough of it. The basic concept requires you to remember ever-more-complicated button sequences (essentially it's *Simon* with knobs on), and it's accompanied by catchy tunes and – praise the Lord – a genuinely amusing sense of humour.

**Honourable mentions:** *Creatures* (Mac/PC, Mindscape); *Pilotwings 64* (N64, Nintendo); *The Sentinel* (Spectrum, Firebird); *Tail of the Sun* (PSX, ArtDink).

**Videogame Lexicon**

**On-line gaming** – playing multi-player games with weird unknown people, via the internet.

**PAL** – another type of TV display system, using 625 lines, and favoured in the UK.

**Parallax** – creating the impression of depth by moving distant objects more slowly than closer ones.

**Pixel** – the smallest dot that your TV screen can show when it's connected to a computer or console.

**Polygon** – a filled-in, angular shape. Shove a load on screen together to create 3D games.

**Pop-up** – in 3D games, when distant objects suddenly appear from nowhere as you approach them.

**Port** – lazy conversion. A game converted without taking advantage of the target system's specialities.

**Power-up** – an item in a game that gives your character a benefit when you pick it up, like extra speed.

**Programmer** – the super-masochist who helps write every drop of code for a game. Eats pizza, drinks Coke.



■ Enter the stunning, puzzling and utterly absorbing world of *Myst*.



■ *Full Throttle* is a great reminder of why LucasArts is king of the genre.



■ Still harbour childhood dreams of being a fighter pilot? Try *Jet Fighter*.



■ *Team Apache*: if you could master the manual, the chopper was easy.

## POINT & CLICK ADVENTURES

Funny, charming, sedate – and not just for OAPs.

Usually, point 'n' clicks start off by giving you the role of a character. Sometimes you can see your character on screen, sometimes you can't. By pointing the cursor at a place, and then clicking it, you can pick things up, put things down, use things, talk to other characters, move around the game world and solve puzzles to progress the story. At worst, point 'n' click adventures are an exercise in moving the cursor about the screen until an area lights up, indicating that you've found something of interest.



■ *Grim Fandango*: it's the next big adventure, and reviewed in *Arcade 2*.

At best, they are as surprising and absorbing as gaming gets.

LucasArts does point 'n' clicks better than anyone. The pirate-based *Monkey Island* trilogy proved just how funny computer games can be, while *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* is so well scripted that it is rumoured to be a potential starting point for the next *Indy* film.

### BEST OF BREED

## The Curse of Monkey Island

System: PC Publisher: LucasArts



■ *Curse* is as huge, visually adorable and clever a point 'n' click as you could want. The story's great and there's enough self-depreciation and jokes to make you laugh out loud, just as you would when watching a film. The extra skeleton-blasting and sea-battle subgames show just how much imagination has been included and, learning from experience, the puzzles are logical and the gameplay flowing. An all-time classic.

**Honourable mentions:** *Beneath a Steel Sky* (Amiga, VIE); *Full Throttle* (PC/Mac, LucasArts); *Myst* (PC/Mac, Brøderbund); *Sam & Max Hit The Road* (PC/Mac, LucasArts).



## SIMULATIONS

It's time to live out all those magical childhood dreams.

You name your transport and there'll be an obscure PC game that simulates it. Most popular of all are the flight sims which, over the years, have become so accurate that if you were to get good at them and then find yourself in an *Airplane!*-style "No need to panic, but can anybody fly a plane?" situation, you'd be the most qualified for the job.

The problem is that getting to grips with your virtual machinery can be a lengthy process. Every key of your keyboard will have a specific purpose, and occasionally it's necessary to use custom controllers. And it's not just hardware. Games like *Flight Unlimited* stick you up in the sky in a stunt plane, with a manual the size of a novel. *F-15*



■ *Total AirWar*: all the action and, um, black smoke of a real dog fight.

puts you in charge of a fighter, and a manual the size of a phone book. *Team Apache* gives you a helicopter, and a manual the size of a shoe box. *Apollo 18* puts you in a space shuttle, with a manual the size of a house. An honourable mention, though, to sub-sim *Spy Craft*. The game appeared on the Speccy, and had a manual that folded into a sheet big enough to re-wallpaper your bedroom.

### BEST OF BREED

## Flight Unlimited 2

System: PC Publisher: EIDOS Interactive



■ No other flight sim creates quite the same three-way battle between man, machine and the elements as *Flight Unlimited 2*, set in the skies above San Francisco. There are 11,000 square miles of photo-realistic terrain, as well as solid models for any building over ten stories high. There's no actual combat involved, so you can focus your attention entirely on flying around – and under – the Golden Gate Bridge, without having to worry about being shot down. Ace.

**Honourable Mentions:** *Apollo 18* (PC, Black Friar); *F-15* (PC, Origin); *Jet Fighter* (PC, Take 2); *Pro Pilot* (PC, Sierra On-Line); *Total Air War* (PC, DiD).



**Publisher** – the company that puts games on the market for the developer, usually taking all the credit.

**RAM** – random access memory. The chips inside your machine that games load into.

**Real-time** – these type of games keep on running without waiting for your commands, the sods.

**Release date** – a kind of joke that publishers make about when their next game is coming out.

**Render** – a highly-detailed, static, mathematical picture created by a computer. Usually of Lara Croft.

**Resolution** – the higher the resolution of your game, the more detailed the picture on your screen will be.

**RGB** – red/green/blue. A standard format that is used for transferring images from your console to your TV.

**ROM** – read only memory. Cartridge/PC chips that hold the instructions which make the whole box tick.

**RPG** – role playing game. Any story-led, multi-character game (with big swords) is one of these.

**Scart** – second-placed contender in the "lead-that-puts-console-game-pictures-on-your-TV" awards.



**BEST OF BREED**

# ROLE PLAYING GAMES

See that goblin – the one in the pixelated pointy hat? It's looking at you funny...

**Y**ou're surrounded by giant eels. You're scouring the Plains of Akh'nedar for the mythical Sword of Poking. You're running low on Hit Points, and there's a vicious Red Dragon between you and the nearest village. Chances are, you're playing an RPG. A role-playing game.

The line between adventure and RPG is dotted and wiggly. In both you lead characters on quests. You meet other characters and talk to them. You collect objects and solve puzzles. But an RPG is concerned with atmosphere and character development, rather than simple progress through a linear narrative. You nurture your on-screen alter-egos obsessively, as they grow powerful by slaying evil monsters or discovering valuable equipment.

RPGs are complicated. You often control a group of characters, each with different specialities. You have to manage enormous inventories and work your way through numerous separate plots and sub-plots. RPGs are an utterly immersive experience – and a killer of real-world relationships.

Vintage RPGs like *Wizardry* and *Might and Magic* were based on the *Dungeons & Dragons* worlds inhabited by US and UK teenagers in the '70s



■ *Zelda* on the NES: the starting point for Link's enthralling RPG adventures.

and '80s, and western hemisphere-originated titles have tended to follow in their statistic-heavy, combat-centred footsteps. Meanwhile, the Japanese have revolutionised the genre.

Japanese RPGs – exemplified, most famously, by Shigeru Miyamoto's *Zelda* series of NES and SNES classics – are epic masterpieces of quite spectacular storytelling, rather than merely a series of hack-and-slash hunting trips. Their mighty inventiveness inspires fanatical devotion among many fans. They're accessible, colourful, action-packed and emotionally involving. And they'll suck your life away if you let 'em.

**BEST OF BREED**

## Final Fantasy VII

System: PlayStation Publisher: Square



Many glassy eyed believers will tell you *Final Fantasy VII* is the most complex, surprising and engrossing game ever. It has superbly defined characters, plenty of action and a relentlessly imaginative setting. The combat system is elegant and flexible, and the graphics stylish and sparkling with dramatic special effects. Even the non-interactive cut-scenes that pepper the action are compelling. And the whole thing's bloody enormous. You will spend around 150 hours of your life playing *Final Fantasy VII* – and love every single minute of it.

**Honourable Mentions:** *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* (SNES, Nintendo); *Ultima VIII* (PC, Origin).

# PERFECT PUZZLERS

Submit your cerebellum to the ultimate conundrums with some of the most fiendishly addictive games ever made.



■ *Bust-A-Move 2*: it's simple, gripping and it'll probably take over your life.



■ "Oh no!" It's the Lemmings – green-haired time thieves.

**O**ne school of thought says that the best way to test the pedigree of a puzzle game is to see if you can describe it to friend in one sentence; any game that takes longer is just too complicated.

Fancy graphics and sound effects are good, but rarely add much to the gameplay (for example, in *Super Street Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo* the characters do their special moves when you're about to win). A two-player mode, however, ups the fun tremendously, as playing a puzzle game by yourself can feel like tennis with no one at the other end of the court. Playing against another person pushes the boundaries of human competition up a notch, enabling you to simply and easily work out who is best. And, let's face it, if you're best at *Bust-A-Move 2*, you're going to be best at life. **A**

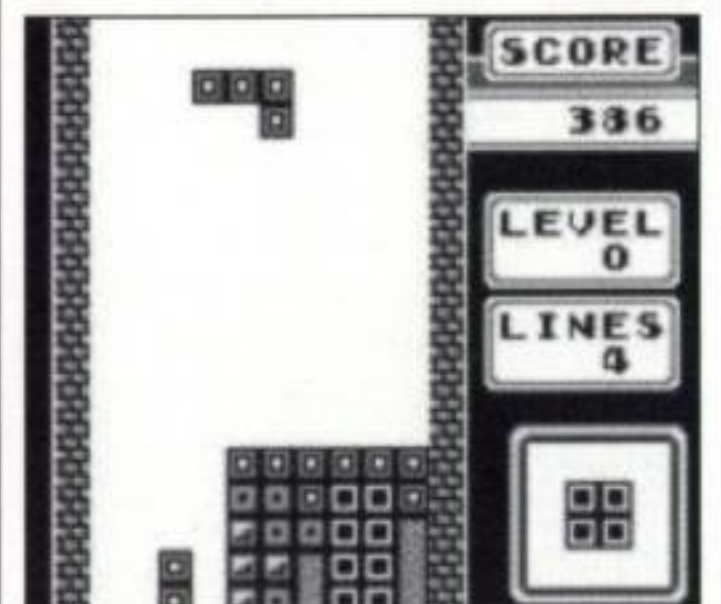


■ Stop those bubbles building in *Bust-A-Move 2*. Oh, just one more go then...

**BEST OF BREED**

## Tetris

System: Game Boy Publisher: Nintendo



Over many years, *Tetris* has evolved into *Wetrix* and a myriad of shameless (and not so shameless) clones, but despite all this effort, no one has truly surpassed the original. The double-handed beauties of the Game Boy version are its simplicity and portability. On the beach, on the bus, on the toilet, driving the car (no, forget we ever said that) – *Tetris* fun is to be had wherever you have two hands free. According to the latest statistics, three out of every five Americans have played *Tetris*. The other 100 million don't know what they're missing.

**Honourable Mentions:** *Bust-A-Move 2* (PSX/N64, Acclaim); *Lemmings* (PC/Mac, Psygnosis); *Super Puzzle Fighter 2* (PSX, Capcom); *Wetrix* (PC/N64, Ocean).

**Videogame Lexicon**

**S-video** – the lead of champions for getting pictures from your machine on to your TV.

**Scrolling** – when the game view shifts smoothly in the direction of your character's movement.

**Shareware** – a (usually) cheap alternative to the more commercial software available in the shops.

**Sim** – short for simulator. Games which attempt to realistically simulate their subject. Like a gardening sim.

**SKU** – publisher-speak for the machine which a game is due to be released on.

**Sprite** – game character or object which shares the 3D world by existing in 2D form.

**Third-party games** – games not written by the company who made the machine they're published on.

**Unit** – one thing. Another needless slice of jargon from the world of marketing.

**Universal adaptor** – console add-on. Enables you to play import games on your UK machine.



# MOVE OVER, QUENTINI!

Spielberg, Tarantino, Scorsese – we all know the best movie directors. But who are the brains behind the world's top games? Here are ten of the best...

**J**ust as moviemaking is a very much a team game, videogame creation is becoming a group activity. Couple that with the shy, elusive nature of game developers, and the importance of brand names as signifiers of quality, and it becomes clear why no game creator has reached household-name status yet, despite the increasing size of the industry. That said, just as movie directors take a lot of credit for their films, every game has its guiding light – someone with a vision and the ability to realise it – and a few have been conspicuous enough to achieve minor superstar status. The individuals here will be keen to share credit with colleagues, but let's face it – without these guys, many of the most significant games of all time wouldn't have happened.



**SHIGERU  
MIYAMOTO**

## The father of videogaming

**Home team:** Nintendo.  
**Career highlight:** Creator of *Mario*.  
**What's the big deal?** The most lauded (and also imitated) console developer of them all. Mario is the most successful game character of all time (Nintendo has shifted over 140 million *Mario* carts since his 1985 NES debut). Each new instalment of the *Mario* series pushes the "easy to pick up, hard to put down" gameplay style forward. Put simply, nobody does it better.  
**In-game signature:** Penguins tend to crop up a lot, for some reason.  
**Currently working on:** *Zelda 64: The Ocarina of Time*, due 27 November 1998.



**YU  
SUZUKI**

## Non-stop action pioneer

**Home team:** Sega.  
**Career highlight:** *Virtua Fighter* series.  
**What's the big deal?** As the long-time creative head of Sega's legendary AM2 arcade division, Suzuki was responsible for some of the coin-op world's finest. He's less hands-on now, but his legacy and influence live on. The *Virtua Fighter* series continues to blaze a trail for *Tekken* and others to follow, while more than one *Arcade* writer still rates *OutRun* as the best racer ever.  
**In-game signature:** Leggy American blondes are his background detail of choice.  
**Currently working on:** Assorted Dreamcast projects.



**YUJI  
NAKA**

## Playing Miyamoto at his own game

**Home team:** Sega's Sonic Team.  
**Career highlight:** *Sonic The Hedgehog*.  
**What's the big deal?** It's videogame folklore that, before launching the Mega Drive, Sega had an internal competition to come up with a *Mario* challenger. Sonic was the result, and Yuji Naka the programmer given the job of creating him. Naka's non-Sonic *NIGHTS*, while great, failed to ignite Saturn sales, but *Sonic* for Dreamcast is Naka's chance to prove he's still top tier.  
**In-game signature:** Loop-the-loops.  
**Currently working on:** *Sonic Adventure*, due December 1998 (Japan).



**TIM & CHRIS  
STAMPER**

## Britsoft's ruling dynasty

**Home team:** Rare  
**Career highlight:** *GoldenEye 007*.  
**What's the big deal?** Spectrum gamers will remember developer Ultimate: Play The Game and hits like *Knight Lore*, *Sabre Wulf*, *Underwulde* and *Jetpac* from the early 1980s. Ultimate grew into Rare, and is now Nintendo's favoured western developer. Sure, *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Diddy Kong Racing* are just well-realised tributes to Miyamoto's genius, but *GoldenEye* proved that the Stamper Bros have a magic of their own.  
**In-game signature:** Depth and quality.  
**Currently working on:** *Perfect Dark*, *Jet Force Gemini*, *Donkey Kong World*.



**JOHN  
CARMACK**

## The doyen of Doom

**Home team:** id software.  
**Career highlight:** *Doom/Quake* series.  
**What's the big deal?** When *Doom* conquered the world, and the id software phenomenon began, it was level designer John Romero who was first thrust into the spotlight of the world's media as company spokesman. Romero deserves much of the credit, but it was Carmack who crafted the engine for the *Doom* juggernaut, and has kept id's pedal to the metal ever since.  
**In-game signature:** Primeval hunting/being hunted thrills and big, big guns.  
**Currently working on:** *Quake 3 Arena*, due May 1999.



**BRUCE  
MCMILLAN**

## He's got game

**Home team:** EA Sports.  
**Career highlight:** *FIFA Soccer* series.  
**What's the big deal?** Despite EA losing some of its creative edge in recent years, EA Sports remains the most powerful cross-platform brand in the business. And Bruce McMillan of EA Canada deserves much of the credit, with titles like the *FIFA* and *NHL Hockey* series. Bruce is being promoted to vice president of worldwide development, so his influence will increase – especially as part of that job involves running Bullfrog.  
**In-game signature:** EA Sports ad hoardings and fat American commentators.  
**Currently working on:** Everything.



**HIRONOBU  
SAKAGUCHI**

## Japanese RPG's top dog

**Home team:** Square.  
**Career highlight:** *Final Fantasy* series.  
**What's the big deal?** From '87 until last year, Square's *Final Fantasy* games were adored by their Japanese audience. It wasn't until the success of *Final Fantasy VII* on PlayStation that Sakaguchi's work began to enjoy worldwide acclaim. He's now top dog in the increasingly crucial console RPG arena and – short of a very drastic creative u-turn – it's unlikely anyone will catch him.  
**In-game signature:** *Akira*-style wide-eyed teen angst.  
**Currently working on:** *Final Fantasy VIII*, due December 1998 (Japan).



**BRETT  
SPERRY**

## King of PC strategy

**Home team:** Westwood Studios.  
**Career highlight:** *Command & Conquer*.  
**What's the big deal?** With Brett Sperry at the helm, Las Vegas-based Westwood Studios had been turning out great quality, inventive games for years. But it wasn't until 1995's *Command & Conquer* – essentially a remake of its own *Dune II* – that the game world took any notice. Copycat real-time strategy games are now legion, but with the release of each derivative title, it seems that yet more gamers return to the original.  
**In-game signature:** Realistic battles.  
**Currently working on:** *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*, due March 1999.



**RICHARD  
GARRIOT**

## Lord British himself!

**Home team:** Origin.  
**Career highlights:** *Ultima* series.  
**What's the big deal?** Richard Garriot's role-playing game *Ultima* is almost as old as gaming itself (the first instalment ran on an Apple II and debuted in 1982). With eight instalments under his jewel-encrusted belt, Garriot is still king of the PC RPG castle. And with the Net-based *Ultima Online* multi-player adventures, his talents are reaching more people than ever.  
**In-game signature:** An appearance from Lord British (Garriot's alter ego).  
**Currently working on:** *Ultima 9: Ascension*, due April 1999.



**SID  
MEIER**

## Giving games history

**Home team:** Firaxis.  
**Career highlight:** *Civilization*.  
**What's the big deal?** It's more than six years old, but *Civilization* regularly makes the top five in "best games of all time" lists. It's the deepest, most engaging, and – arguably – most influential PC game ever. Meier's mantra, "Games take place in the player's head, not on a monitor screen", means graphics often take a back seat, but for rivetting gameplay he's second to none.  
**In-game signature:** Your efforts rated and compared to those of historical figures.  
**Currently working on:** *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, due February 1999.

## What, no Brits?

■ Of these ten high-fliers only the Stamper brothers are British. A few years ago, however, it seemed all the top game designers were Brits. So what's happened?

Basically, the games industry has lost its parochialism. In the "good old days" a system could thrive in a space as small as just one country. The Spectrum was designed and built by a Brit (Sir Clive Sinclair), bought mostly by Brits (us lot) and all the games were coded by Brits. The heroes of yesteryear seemed like big fish, but they were in a very little pond.

Nowadays, the PC and consoles are global systems and our boys have to compete on the world stage. There are still plenty of heroes keeping the British end up, though, and if we were to write a Top 50, it would include all these chaps and more besides:

**David Braben** Frontier Development: *Elite*, *V2000*

**Geoff Crammond:** *F1 Grand Prix*

**Richard Darling** Codemasters: *MicroMachines*, *TOCA*, *Colin McRae Rally*

**David Jones** DMA Design: *Lemmings*, *Grand Theft Auto*

**Martin Kenright** DID: *F22*, *EF2000*, *TFX*

**Ian Livingston** EIDOS Interactive: *Deathtrap Dungeon*, *Games Workshop*

**Jeff Minter** Llamasoft: *Tempest 2000*, *Llamatron*

**Peter Molyneux** Lionhead Studios: *Populous*, *Dungeon Keeper*

**Dave Perry** Shiny Entertainment: *Earthworm Jim*, *MDK*, *Wild 9*



■ The PlayStation 2 game *Lakeside 3000* was not a major success.


day Sega releases its new machine. A mere coincidence? Of course it's not. Meanwhile, Nintendo already has plans for Nintendo 64's replacement. There'll soon be more custom designed silicon squabbling for your attention than in an episode of *Baywatch*.

So who's going to win? Most people guess that Sega will get a year of glory with its Dreamcast before getting squished by PlayStation 2. We should then see a battle between Sega and Nintendo for number two. But nothing is guaranteed. The only certain winner in all of this is us, the game players – for we get to play great new games on whichever piece of kit comes out on top.

As for home computers, prices will continue to fall, and more people will want Internet access, so more PCs will find their way into people's homes. And games will ride in on the coat tails. Sooner or later every PC will be used to play games. It's destiny. And as processors become more powerful and 3D accelerators commonplace, the games will continue to improve. The internet, too, offers bags of potential for multi-player gaming. Despite the promises of Dreamcast et al, the PC will remain a cutting-edge games system for the foreseeable future.

So where will it all end? *Star Trek's* Holodeck is the technological dream. And slowly we're getting there.

In some ways, though, for all of gaming's great technological leaps, we haven't really progressed at all. Why? Because, from *Space Invaders* through to *Quake II*, we're still just shooting things. We can't talk to other game characters and our range of behaviour is extremely limited. We're still acting like cavemen – silently wandering about killing things. And it's in areas like behaviour and interaction that much of gaming's most exciting evolution is yet to occur. Sophisticated character development, Artificial Life technologies, improved interfaces, speech recognition – games are just going to get deeper, more complex, more involving, and plain better.

And *Arcade* magazine will be watching, excited as hell. 

# SO WHERE'S IT ALL GOING?

In which we dust off our crystal balls, wait for the mists to part, and take a few wild stabs at what the future holds...

**C**ompare the lush 3D worlds of *Tomb Raider* or *Quake II* with the black and white flatness of *Space Invaders*. Videogames are moving very fast indeed – faster than any entertainment medium has ever moved before. Just witness the quantum leap in quality from *Mario* on the SNES to the awesome beauty of *Super Mario 64*. And yet most experts agree that this is just the beginning. Even the move from 2D to 3D is just equivalent to the two year period in the late '20s when movies evolved from silent into the talkies.

The price of all this technological progress, however, is that sooner or later all videogame hardware becomes dated and eventually obsolete. At the moment, Sony's PlayStation rules the roost, but this will inevitably change. And though PlayStation probably has a couple more years of mainstream success ahead of it, the potential successors are already lining up.

First into the ring is going to be Sega's Dreamcast, due to be launched in Japan this November (see page 18 for the full story). It probably won't be

released in the UK until late 1999, but it looks like it'll be well worth the wait. Graphics for the first batch of games look jaw-dropping, and there's better to come. Unofficial bench tests rate Dreamcast's graphics output as more powerful than that of a state-of-the-art *Virtua Fighter 3* arcade cabinet. Sega is backing this technological left hook with a hunger to reclaim the glory of the Mega Drive years – and

## Sony ain't gonna let no pesky hedgehog undo all the good work that the PlayStation has done

the return of Sonic the Hedgehog is a sure-fire crowd-pleasing start.

Trouble is, though, Sony ain't gonna let no pesky hedgehog undo all of the good work that PlayStation has done. The company's response to Dreamcast will be PlayStation 2, rumoured to be a DVD-based powerhouse, every inch a match for Dreamcast. Ominously for Sega, Sony has announced that it will unveil its PlayStation 2 plans the same

## Bigger all the time

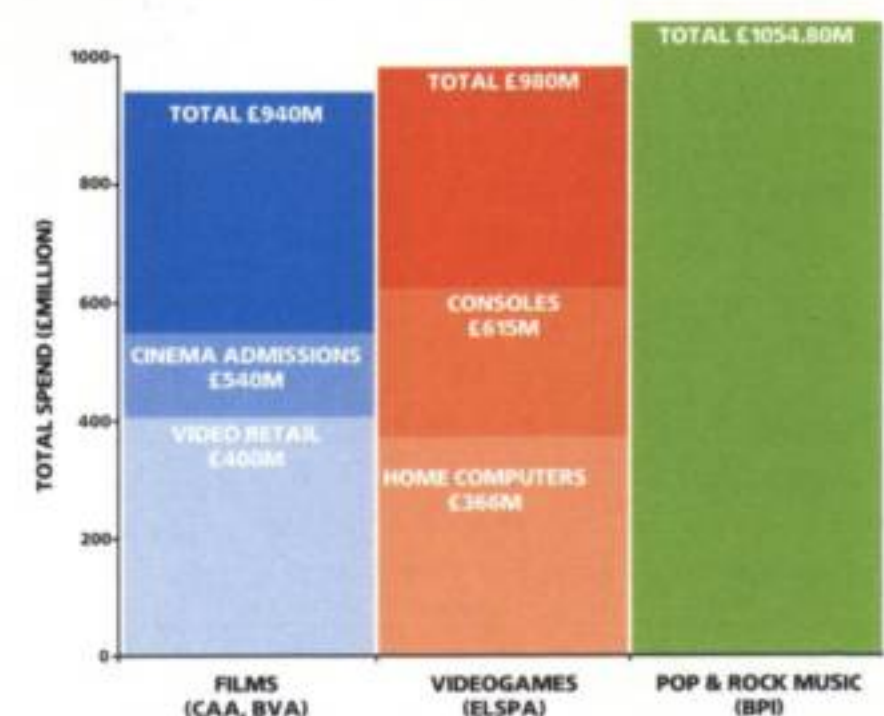
*Just look how big games have got!*

■ Bigger than the movies? Bigger than pop music? Just check out the graph.

Some notes about the figures: the games total includes neither rental nor coin-op revenues, and combines both console and PC sales. The music total includes all retail sales of CDs, singles and cassettes, and assumes that pop and rock is 60% of total sales. The movies total does not

include satellite, cable or rental, and assumes an average cinema admission price of £4 and that 60% of video sales are of feature films. Data is from the

European Leisure Software Publisher's Association, the British Video Association, the Cinema Advertising Association, and the British Phonograph Institute.



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# KICK ASS

## BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

WELCOME TO KICK ASS

### IT'S SPYROTASTIC!

Edited by Rich Pelley



**W**hen I was first offered the position of staff writer on *Arcade*, I was told that it was my friendly nature, skill with electrical appliances and general willingness to "get my hands dirty" that made me the ideal candidate. However, I'd expected my responsibilities to extend beyond simply making the tea and I was right. Not only do I get to make the tea (and go to the shops anytime anyone in the office fancies chocolate or crisps), but I also have to personally scour the globe to bring you the most complete monthly tips section money can buy. Everything from over-sized complete gaming guides to the smallest hints - I'm on their tail.

Welcome, therefore, to Kick Ass. This month I've been playing quite a lot of *Spyro the Dragon*. In fact, I've

**"We'll be offering complete guides to the biggest games around every month"**

played all of it. Only this morning I beat G nasty Gnorc, the final boss, but was told that I'd have to collect every single item of treasure before I'd be allowed into the last level, at which point I nearly had a nervous breakdown. I'll be blown if I can find the third dragon in Haunted Towers, but apart from that, I present a mammoth six-page guide to everything (else) you need to know about *Spyro the Dragon*. Took me ages, you know. We'll be doing complete guides like this to the biggest games around every month, so let these adventures with *Spyro* whet your appetite.

I've got pretty good at *1080°*, the top-quality N64 snowboarding game too, and you'll find tips for that on page 106. In fact, there are tips for over 35 games here, on everything from the N64 to the PlayStation to the PC to the Game Boy. If there's a cheat worth knowing about, *Arcade* is the place to read about it, no matter what your system preference or taste in games. I bid you the very best of gentleman's luck, and hope to see you again next issue.



COMPLETE PLAYERS  
GUIDE

KICK ASS AT...

# SPYRO THE

Format: PlayStation | Publisher: Sony | Developer: Insomniac Games | Price: £39.99 | Players: 1 | ★★★★★

**Spyro the Dragon** is a game that always turns heads, and impresses upon the brain just how powerful a machine the PlayStation can be when it tries. It's a great game, of course, as you'll have gathered from our review on page 124, but how do you complete it?

COMPLETE PLAYERS  
GUIDE  
SPYRO THE DRAGON  
ARTISANS  
WORLD  
1

## GENERAL TIPPERY



### Fans

Fire at fans to release a gem.

### Gliding

Press **△** to jump, **△** again while in the air to glide, and **△** to stop abruptly from a glide.

### About to die?

If you mistime a fatal jump on a level other than one of the Home ones, press Start and chose Exit Level. You'll be saved.

### Chests

Those with a lock require a key. Those with no lock can be supercharged, or you can blast them open with a red firework, TNT barrel or your breath (once you've kissed a blue fairy).

### Fairies

There are three types of fairy. Red ones appear when you rescue a dragon, and enable you to save the game. Blue ones (on High Caves and Haunted Towers) will give you a kiss and temporarily supercharge your breath so you can blow through metal doors,



and kill otherwise invincible baddies. Yellow ones open up new whirlwinds (on Lofty Castle), and save you (on High Caves) when you leap off a cliff.

### Supercharge strips

Yellow arrows on the floor enable you to supercharge into baddies and chests. Jump at the end for a huge leap. Sometimes, you need to charge down more than one strip in a row to get a super-supercharge.

### Thieves

Catching a thief can be a tricky business. Put your horns down and charge, following their movement patterns. They run slightly slower than you, so you can catch them by cutting corners and jumping. Torch or charge them. If you lose them, they'll reappear in the same spot as you first saw them. On later levels, slow down for the tricky navigation parts - there's nothing more annoying than charging after a thief only to plummet off the side of a bridge.

### LEVEL 1 HOME

Rescue Nestor and Delbin from the waterfall. Collect gems from the raised platforms near Stone Hill. Dark Hollow is through the maze that's next to the castle entrance. Take the purple door by Stone Hill to rescue Tomas, use the whirlwind to glide to treasure and enter the Town Square. Back at the start, glide from the hill for gems, run through the gap to the right to release Argus and enter Toasty. Then go back through the castle entrance and grab a lift with Marco.

### LEVEL 2 STONE HILL

Jump down the well to release Gavin. Run through the first door to bag treasure and rescue Lindar. Take the whirlwind inside the tower to rescue Gildas. Glide off the hill to reach the level outskirts. Nab the treasure and chase the thief. Jump onto the castle wall and drop down onto the beach for the key. Open the chest down the well, rescue Astor and return home.



### LEVEL 3 DARK HOLLOW

Follow the trail of gems to Darius. Fly from the left of the steps for more treasure. Back on the flat, jump on the raised platforms to the chest. Glide down and rescue Alban. Head down the steps, jump on the platforms for the key and rescue Oswin. Open the chest and then return home.

### LEVEL 4 TOWN SQUARE

Take the steps to Nils. Glide to the bulls. Glide again from the highest point, jump over the water and rescue Delvin. Up the steps to Alvar. Stand on the platform up the steps by the chickens and glide down the steps to the right. Chase the thief and rescue Thor.

### LEVEL 5 TOASTY

An opening on the left leads to dogs, shepherds and treasure. Rescue Nevin. Kill the dogs before you have a pop at the Henceman and avoid his scythe.



**36  
GAMES  
TIPPED  
THIS  
MONTH**

**PLAYSTATION**

- P110 G-Darius
- P110 Madden '99
- P105 NBA Hangtime
- P110 R-Types
- P107 San Francisco Rush
- P98 Spyro the Dragon
- P105 Tekken 3
- P105 Tenchu
- P106 Wild Arms
- P104 WWF War Zone
- P110 X-Men vs Street Fighter

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- P109 Colin McRae Rally
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- P110 Max 2
- P107 Nightmare Creatures
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- P106 Redneck Rampage Rides Again
- P108 Street Fighter Alpha Warrior
- P107 War Games
- P105 Wreckin' Crew
- P107 The X-Files

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- P104 F-1 World Grand Prix
- P107 F-Zero X
- P108 Gex 64
- P110 Super Robot Spirits
- P104 WWF War Zone

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- P106 Castlevania Legends
- P109 James Bond 007

# DRAGON

**FOR FULL  
REVIEW  
TURN TO  
PAGE 124**

**COMPLETE PLAYERS  
GUIDE** **SPYRO THE DRAGON  
PEACE KEEPERS** **WORLD 2**



■ Dragons. You never know quite where you are with dragons.

**LEVEL 1 HOME**

■ Rescue Titan. Flame the tents, rescue Magnus. Find the red target on the rock, kill the bad guy manning the cannon, nudge the cannon round and breathe the flames on the end to fire at the target. Jump across to rescue Gunnar and grab the egg from the thief, get the key and find Night Flight. Keep coming back to this level to charge up your lives.



**LEVEL 2 DRY CANYON**

■ Hang a sharp left to nab the thief and plenty of treasure. Rescue Conan. Use the steps over the water to glide down to rescue Ivor and (with a bit of jumping and gliding) plenty of treasure. The chest is on a rock out to sea. Back at the starting area, leap under the steps and rescue Boris. Glide into the castle entrance above the water for treasure. Explore for the final dragon before returning home.



**LEVEL 3 CLIFF TOWN**

■ Collect treasure from the rooftops, go over the second bridge, rescue Halvor and chase the thief. Follow the string of bridges up to Enzo. Shoot the cauldrons for a gem. Glide over to the rooftop with the red firework, and use it to blast open the chest. Glide from Enzo to the other side of the river. Clear the place of gems and buzzards, and rescue Marco. Glide in all directions to nab more treasure.

**LEVEL 4 ICE CAVERN**

■ Rescue Ulrik and Todor. Knock the poles for gems, and glide to the platform for the key. Glide back to the chest and turn right. A passage on the left leads to Andor and back round to Todor. Glide across the main straight to the chest, then follow back over the narrow windy bridge to Asher. There's more treasure past the Return Home chest. Follow the trail of crystals over the platforms by Asher, and kill and collect your way to Ragnar.



**LEVEL 5 DOCTOR SHEMP**

■ Follow the outskirts of the castle around past the first whirlwind and take the second one around the corner. Glide over to the purple gem, then down to the key. Take the first whirlwind and rescue Trondo. Get close to the yellow Zulu boss (to avoid his staff) and torch his bottom. Kill him three times. Exit the level.





# SPYRO THE DRAGON CONTINUED...



## COMPLETE PLAYERS GUIDE SPYRO THE DRAGON MAGIC CRAFTERS WORLD 3

### LEVEL 1 HOME

Jump the water and bust the thief. Rescue Cosmos. Follow the main path round and nab the second thief. Go up against the yellow arrows and rescue Zantor. Enter High Caves. Supercharge down the hill and rescue Boldar to Crystal Flight. The key and chest are hidden in caves that you can spy if you but stop for a look around.



### LEVEL 2 ALPINE RIDGE

Round and up the steps, jumping to kill the wizard and rescue Zane. Leap right, and time your way into the cave (jump a second after the wall has raised). Time your way over to Eldrid. Head down the purple cave for treasure, and up the steps to Zander. Glide down to the purple cave to rescue Kelvin and chase the thief.

### LEVEL 3 HIGH CAVES

Go up hill past the whirlwinds. Rescue Cyrus. The blue wizards shoot the green wizards. Jump across the platforms. Avoid the lobsters in the cave to the kissing fairy past the last cave. Rescue Ajax. Use the supercharge ramp to leap to the right cave. Leap into oblivion. The fairies will carry you to the supercharge ramp. Leap to the left cave and rescue Cedric. Take the fairies. Jump from the bridge to the nearest cave. Jump to the second and nail the thief. Use the fairies. Jump to the distant grass. Hit the second thief. Use the fairies. Go left to the ring around the castle for treasure.

### LEVEL 4 WIZARD PEAK

Look around the edges of the opening cave. Jump on the platforms for gems and whirlwinds. There are no dead ends so you can work all the way around back to the start. Enter and clear the area of bad guys. Rescue Jarvis. Charge down the supercharge ramps to kill the wizards. Rescue Hexus. Now supercharge to the chest. There's lots of treasure through the cave on the right. Supercharge through and jump to the platforms. Go up the stairs, nab the thief, rescue Losas who opens the Sunny Flight level on Artisans. The thief is behind the big superjump ramp.

### LEVEL 5 BLOWHARD

Follow round to the Whirlwind boss, shoot him, run through the door, over the platforms, kill the wizards and rescue Altair. Over the platforms, find the boss and shoot and kill him. Jump down the windy bit.

## THE BADDIES How to beat every baddy in the entire game? You must be joking. No, we're not.



- 1 MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Artisans  
 ■ Appearance: green, brown hat, big feet  
 ■ Attacks: run away  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 2 THIEVES**  
 ■ Level: Artisans  
 ■ Appearance: green, swag bags, drop goodies  
 ■ Attacks: run away  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 3 RAMS**  
 ■ Level: Stone Hill
- Appearance: yellow, big horns**  
 ■ Attacks: charge  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 4 SHEPHERDS**  
 ■ Level: Stone Hill/Toasty  
 ■ Appearance: hat, cloak, staff  
 ■ Attacks: with staffs  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 5 SHIELDED MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Dark Hollow  
 ■ Appearance: green, hat, shield
- Appearance: yellow, big horns**  
 ■ Attacks: block with shield  
 ■ Kill: charge (shield down) or fire (shield up)
- 6 CLUB MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Dark Hollow  
 ■ Appearance: fat, green, big dub  
 ■ Attacks: whack you  
 ■ Kill: fire
- 7 FAT MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Dark Hollow  
 ■ Appearance: belly, Viking hat, armour  
 ■ Attacks: belly-bounce
- 8 BULLS**  
 ■ Level: Town Square  
 ■ Appearance: red horns, nose ring  
 ■ Attacks: charge  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 9 BULLFIGHTER**  
 ■ Level: Town Square  
 ■ Appearance: hat, red cloak  
 ■ Attacks: chases bull  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 10 HENCHMAN**  
 ■ Level: Toasty
- Appearance: scarecrow**  
 ■ Attacks: with scythe  
 ■ Kill: by continually blasting
- 11 DOGS**  
 ■ Level: Toasty  
 ■ Appearance: asleep  
 ■ Attacks: pounce when disturbed  
 ■ Kill: avoid pounce, turn and fire
- 12 SPEAR MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Peace Keepers  
 ■ Appearance: red hat, front armour, spear
- Appearance: swipes spear**  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 13 CANNON MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Peace Keepers  
 ■ Appearance: blue hat, mans cannon  
 ■ Attacks: fires cannons  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 14 CHEEKY MONSTERS**  
 ■ Level: Peace Keepers  
 ■ Appearance: hide in tents  
 ■ Attacks: quakes and moons!  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 15 BLUNDERBUSS BADDIES**  
 ■ Level: Dry Canyon  
 ■ Appearance: yellow, shield, rifle  
 ■ Attacks: fires  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 16 BUZZARDS**  
 ■ Level: Dry Canyon  
 ■ Appearance: feathers, beaks  
 ■ Attacks: swoops  
 ■ Kill: charge or fire
- 17 BIRD-SWINGING BADDY**  
 ■ Level: Dry Canyon  
 ■ Appearance: hat, yellow

**LEVEL 1 HOME**

Find Bruno, rescue Cleetus. Jump down a well next to Cleetus to find Wild Flight. The key is on a platform out to sea over the bridge past the tree stump, and the chest nearby.

water on the platforms to the cave and rescue Damon. Glide back to land. Jump down the cave. Rescue Zeke and Bubba, and search around for some more easy treasure.

**LEVEL 5 METAL HEAD**

Lots of treasure to find, and Sadiki to rescue. To kill the boss, charge the energy poles when they are green.

**LEVEL 2 TERRACE VILLAGE**

Push right as soon as you enter the level or you'll land in the swamp. Follow the level round. Always take out ground electrocuters first, then charge into the cannon bad guys. Go into the building, skirt around the outside for more treasure, and rescue Claude. There's lots of treasure around the outskirts of the castle. Take the whirlwind and glide to more treasure, including from the top of the brown steps and round the corner for more rooftop access, and two more fireworks. Navigate some more electrical platforms and rescue Cyprin.



**LEVEL 3 TREE TOPS**

Head right through window for the key. Glide over to Lyle. Supercharge jump over to the platform, jump to the castle wall and superjump again. Use the whirlwind by the Return Home chest. Back at the start, keep straight on for the chest and rescue Isaak. Supercharge over, and supercharge again. The last dragon is tricky to find. Look for him in the distance: you need to combine superjumps. The green thief at the beginning will lead you to him if you follow.



**LEVEL 4 MISTY BOG**

Kill the baddy behind the start. Rescue Rosco. Ram the Walkman-wearing bad guys, turn back on yourself and cross the



■ **Attacks:** swings vultures  
 ■ **Kill:** charge or fire  
**18 MEXICANS**  
 ■ **Level:** Cliff Town  
 ■ **Appearance:** sombrero, shield  
 ■ **Attacks:** with knife  
 ■ **Kill:** charge  
**19 COOKS**  
 ■ **Level:** Cliff Town/Doctor Shemp  
 ■ **Appearance:** red dress, wooden spoon  
 ■ **Attacks:** by slapping

■ **Kill:** fire  
**20 PURPLE BOXERS**  
 ■ **Level:** Ice Cavern  
 ■ **Appearance:** purple, hat  
 ■ **Attacks:** punch  
 ■ **Kill:** fire  
**21 GREEN BOXERS**  
 ■ **Level:** Ice Cavern  
 ■ **Appearance:** green, hat  
 ■ **Attacks:** punch  
 ■ **Kill:** barge off the edge  
**22 SNOWBALLERS**  
 ■ **Level:** Ice Cavern  
 ■ **Appearance:** snowboots,

snow hat  
 ■ **Attacks:** lobs snowballs  
 ■ **Kill:** charge or fire  
**23 SKIERS**  
 ■ **Level:** Ice Cavern  
 ■ **Appearance:** purple, skis  
 ■ **Attacks:** lobs snowballs  
 ■ **Kill:** fire  
**24 KAMIKAZE ZULUS**  
 ■ **Level:** Doctor Shemp  
 ■ **Appearance:** shield, mask, knife, staff  
 ■ **Attacks:** charging and shrieking

■ **Kill:** charge  
**25 ZULU BOSS**  
 ■ **Level:** Doctor Shemp  
 ■ **Appearance:** yellow, mad hair, sunglasses  
 ■ **Attacks:** with staff  
 ■ **Kill:** torch his bottom  
**26 DWARF WIZARDS**  
 ■ **Level:** Magic Crafters  
 ■ **Appearance:** beards, googly eyes, staff  
 ■ **Attacks:** by waving staff  
 ■ **Kill:** charge  
**27 GREEN WIZARDS**

■ **Level:** Magic Crafters/Alpine Ridge/High Caves  
 ■ **Appearance:** beard, green cloak  
 ■ **Attacks:** uses magic  
 ■ **Kill:** charge  
**28 LIGHTENING WIZARDS**  
 ■ **Level:** Magic Crafters/Wizards Peak/Blowhard  
 ■ **Appearance:** short, green  
 ■ **Attacks:** fires lightening  
 ■ **Kill:** charge  
**29 LOBSTERS**  
 ■ **Level:** High Caves

■ **Appearance:** crustacean  
 ■ **Attacks:** with pincers  
 ■ **Kill:** invincible unless you've kissed a fairy  
**30 WHIRLWINDS**  
 ■ **Level:** High Caves  
 ■ **Appearance:** white swirls  
 ■ **Attacks:** picks you up  
 ■ **Kill:** avoid them  
**31 FAT CLUBBERS**  
 ■ **Level:** Wizards Peak  
 ■ **Appearance:** naked, white  
 ■ **Attacks:** with club  
 ■ **Kill:** fire

**32 WHIRLWIND BOSS**  
 ■ **Attacks:** Blowhard  
 ■ **Appearance:** trapped in whirlwind  
 ■ **Attacks:** blue lightening  
 ■ **Kill:** fire  
**33 YELLOW HIPPOS**  
 ■ **Level:** Alpine Ridge  
 ■ **Appearance:** four legs, tusks  
 ■ **Attacks:** pounces  
 ■ **Kill:** fire  
**34 BOARS**  
 ■ **Level:** Beast Makers

# SPYRO THE DRAGON CONTINUED...

## COME FLY WITH ME | The flying levels, eh? Where are they?



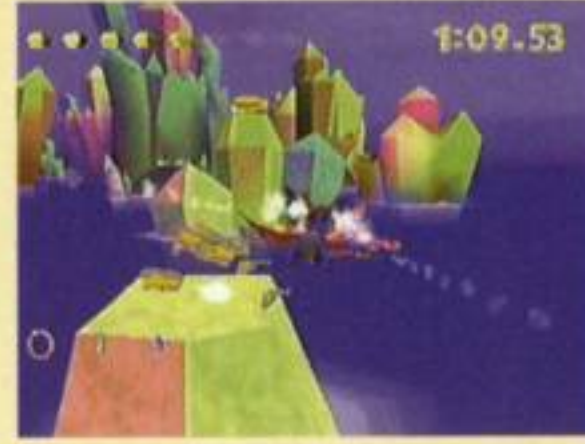
### ■ SUNNY FLIGHT ARTISANS

Rescue Losas from Wizard Peak on Magic Crafters. Return to Artisan. Jump on the five platforms by the waterfall. The archway will open.



### ■ NIGHT FLIGHT PEACE KEEPERS

Go to the cannon near the rock with the red target. Nudge the cannon round, flame the end to blast the rock, jump the platform. Turn right.



### ■ CRYSTAL FLIGHT MAGIC CRAFTERS

Charge down the supercharge ramp, knock over the big green wizards, take out the small green wizards and rescue the dragon.



### ■ WILD FLIGHT BEAST MAKERS

It's down a well near where you rescue the second dragon from. Jump down, and use the whirlwind to get back up again.



### ■ ICY FLIGHT DREAM WEAVERS

Use cannon to shoot guys blocking the doorway to the castle. Hop through, flame the jesters, jump onto raised platform and bingo!

## COMPLETE PLAYERS GUIDE

## SPYRO THE DRAGON DREAM WEAVERS

## WORLD 5



### LEVEL 1 HOME

■ Lots of jumps, but an otherwise easy home level to negotiate. Rescue Lateef. To get into the castle, kill the bad guy manning the morphing cannon and fire at the two blokes guarding the entrance. Use the alarm jesters to jump the platforms to reach the Icy Flight Level. Dive down to rescue Zilemo.

### LEVEL 2 DARK PASSAGE

■ Take whirlwind, rescue Kasiya. Follow path round to Azizi. Glide from here to the green cave. This will lead you, via a couple of glides, around the entire level to Apari, Obasi and eventually Bakari, and in doing so enable you to bag an almost obscene amount of treasure.

### LEVEL 3 LOFTY CASTLE

■ Release the three trapped fairies to open up a whirlwind. Rescue Mudara. Baruti is over some more platforms. Release the three fairies on the platforms.

Inside the castle, take the handy whirlwind and glide to release the three fairies hanging in the air. They'll then take you to the key and Useni. Jump across and superjump to nab the rest of the lovely treasure.

### LEVEL 4 HAUNTED TOWERS

■ Pull right to land, or you'll end up in the sea. Kiss the fairy, shoot the robots and blast through the metal doors. Take the whirlwind to rescue Kosoko, kiss the second fairy, blast the metal door. In the castle, supercharge the door and rescue Lutulo. There's a third dragon somewhere but (ahem) we'll be blown if we can find it. Any ideas?

### LEVEL 5 JACQUES

■ Shoot the alarm jesters to raise the platforms. There's one bit where you have to shoot two to raise the platform high enough to make the jump. Revilo is down some purple stairs. Tackle the fox boss by shooting and following him over the array of platforms, and rescue the final dragon. Now onto the last world...

## THE BADDIES CONT'D



■ **Appearance:** pink nose, tusks  
■ **Attacks:** charge  
■ **Kill:** fire  
35 **ELECTRICIANS**  
■ **Level:** Beast Makers/Terrace Village  
■ **Appearance:** green, backpacks  
■ **Attacks:** electrify ground  
■ **Kill:** charge then fire  
36 **ZAPPERS**  
■ **Level:** Terrace Village  
■ **Appearance:** purple, black



vest, backpack gun  
■ **Attacks:** zap you  
■ **Kill:** fire  
37 **TWIN-TURRET BADDIES**  
■ **Level:** Terrace Village  
■ **Appearance:** hide inside mini tank  
■ **Attacks:** blast you  
■ **Kill:** charge  
38 **SMALL ZULUS**  
■ **Level:** Tree Tops/MetalHead  
■ **Appearance:** big head, small body  
■ **Attacks:** lobbs yellow spears



■ **Kill:** charge or fire  
39 **BIG ZULUS**  
■ **Level:** Tree Tops/MetalHead  
■ **Appearance:** arrow, long arms  
■ **Attacks:** grabs you/spins small Zulus  
■ **Kill:** fire  
40 **BLUE WIZARDS**  
■ **Level:** High Caves/Wizards Peak  
■ **Appearance:** blue cloaks  
■ **Attacks:** grab  
■ **Kill:** fire



41 **WALKMAN WEARING BADDIES**  
■ **Level:** Misty Bog  
■ **Appearance:** shield, knife, headphones  
■ **Attacks:** stab  
■ **Kill:** charge  
42 **SHRUBS**  
■ **Level:** Misty Bog  
■ **Appearance:** tree  
■ **Attacks:** eats you  
■ **Kill:** fire  
43 **BLUE FROGS**  
■ **Level:** Misty Bog



■ **Appearance:** amphibian  
■ **Attacks:** swipes tongue  
■ **Kill:** fire  
44 **TUMBLING ZULUS**  
■ **Level:** MetalHead  
■ **Appearance:** small and spinning  
■ **Attacks:** knocks you over  
■ **Kill:** charge  
45 **ROBOT BOSS**  
■ **Level:** MetalHead  
■ **Appearance:** metallic  
■ **Attacks:** hurls Zulus, fires  
■ **Kill:** knock over energy poles



when they are green.  
46 **MAD MEN**  
■ **Level:** Dream Weavers  
■ **Appearance:** gangly/shrinks to toy  
■ **Attacks:** grabs you  
■ **Kill:** charge or fire  
47 **MAD MEN 2**  
■ **Level:** Dream Weavers  
■ **Appearance:** waves arms/shrinks inside armour  
■ **Attacks:** grabs  
■ **Kill:** charge or fire  
48 **ALARM JESTERS**



■ **Level:** Dream Weavers/Jacques  
■ **Appearance:** jester hat, grin  
■ **Attacks:** harmless  
■ **Kill:** shoot, turns to alarm dock, raises/drops platform  
49 **PUPPIES**  
■ **Level:** Dark Passage  
■ **Appearance:** cute/grows to Rotweiler  
■ **Attacks:** eats you  
■ **Kill:** fire when small  
50 **JOKERS**  
■ **Level:** Dark Passage





**LEVEL 1** GNORC GNEXUS

■ This is the portal to the final four levels. Complete and find the exit to progress to the next. Rescue Delbin, nab the treasure and head into Gnorc Cove.



**LEVEL 2** GNORC COVE

■ Get past first two barrel-rollers, and collect the treasure. Use the TNT barrel to blow open the chest. Jump (don't fire at) the TNT barrels rolling down the slope. Kill the bad guy at the top. Rescue Lateef. Enter the boat and follow round. Rescue Tomas. Follow round. Blow the bad guy standing on TNT barrels. Tonk the barrel with your horns to clear a path through baddies. Exit level.



**LEVEL 3** TWILIGHT HARBOUR

■ Kill your way round to the whirlwind, and follow the basic course of the level.



**LEVEL 4** GNASTY GNORC

■ Chase the thief, nab the key, chase the thief, nab the key. Chase Gnorc around the circuit, jumping and gliding to save time (and avoid falling off) as you go down the stairs. Shoot him once as he stops on his platform, quickly follow him, jump over the platforms and shoot him again. Speed is the key – if you're too slow you'll run out of platforms.



**LEVEL 5** IS THAT IT?

■ Er, kinda. Except the very last level, which you need to have 100% treasure to enter. Yikes.



**HIGH ENERGY**

You have to feed your dragonfly to keep your energy levels topped up. "But with what?", we hear you ask?

	
■ Sheep	■ Frogs
	
■ Chickens	■ Rabbits
	
■ Lizards	■ Bats
	
■ Bloating chickens	■ Dancing mushrooms



- **Appearance:** carries lantern
- **Attacks:** friendly
- **Kill:** fire, turns into lantern
- 51 TORTOISES**
- **Level:** Dark Passage
- **Appearance:** armoured shell/grows to huge monster
- **Attacks:** fireballs/bites you
- **Kill:** charge when small
- 52 DEVILS**
- **Level:** Dark Passage
- **Appearance:** red, horns, bow
- **Attacks:** fires arrow
- **Kill:** fire
- 53 BALLOON BADDIES**
- **Level:** Lofty Castle
- **Appearance:** hang on orange balloons
- **Attacks:** whack you with shield
- **Kill:** shoot balloon
- 54 FAT BIRDS**
- **Level:** Lofty Castle
- **Appearance:** yellow, fat, flies
- **Attacks:** pecks
- **Kill:** fire
- 55 ARMOUR ROBOTS**
- **Level:** Haunted Towers
- **Appearance:** metallic, armour
- **Attacks:** flatten you
- **Kill:** kiss a fairy then fire
- 56 GRENADEERS**
- **Level:** Haunted Towers
- **Appearance:** hat, shield, grenade
- **Attacks:** lob grenade
- **Kill:** charge
- 57 BLUE LIGHTNING WIZARDS**
- **Level:** Haunted Towers
- **Appearance:** short, blue cloak
- **Attacks:** lightning
- **Kill:** charge
- 58 TICKLERS**
- **Level:** Jacques
- **Appearance:** long arms
- **Attacks:** slaps you
- **Kill:** charge
- 59 FEMALE TICKLERS**
- **Level:** Jacques
- **Appearance:** long arms, flower
- **Attacks:** slaps you
- **Kill:** fire
- 60 FOX BOSS**
- **Level:** Jacques
- **Appearance:** multi-coloured, bushy tail
- **Attacks:** throws boxes
- **Kill:** follow and fire
- 61 BARREL ROLLERS**
- **Level:** Gnorc Cove
- **Appearance:** brown, yellow hat
- **Attacks:** roll barrels
- **Kill:** fire
- 62 TNT BARREL ROLLERS**
- **Level:** Gnorc Cove
- **Appearance:** brown, yellow hat
- **Attacks:** roll TNT barrels
- **Kill:** fire at barrels or shoot directly
- 63 SPANNER MAN**
- **Level:** Gnorc Cove
- **Appearance:** mask, spanner
- **Attacks:** spanners you
- **Kill:** fire
- 64 MACHINE GUNNERS**
- **Level:** Twilight Harbour
- **Appearance:** green, big gun
- **Attacks:** Red beret
- **Kill:** charge up to then fire
- 65 PIRATES**
- **Level:** Twilight Harbour
- **Appearance:** bandana, dungarees
- **Attacks:** throws knives
- **Kill:** fire
- 66 GNASTY GNORC**
- **Level:** Gnorc Gnorc
- **Appearance:** ugly bast
- **Attacks:** runs away
- **Kill:** chase and blast

# WWF WAR ZONE

■ Interesting wrestling facts that everybody already knows. 1) Big Daddy's real name was Shirley Crabtree. (He's dead now.) 2) WWF Wrestling is entirely staged. 3) Wrestling games always sell by the Giant Haystack-full. Here's some banter on the latest one.

For an easy ring out, climb down from the ring when the match begins. Your opponent will always follow. Then you get them to follow you around the outside of the ring to run the timer down. But don't get too far away or your opponent will climb back into the ring. Once the timer reaches four or five seconds, quickly hit your opponent repeatedly to stun them. Jump back on the mat with only a second or two to spare and you should win by ring out. Granted, it's not particularly interesting, but victory will be yours. Oh yes.

## ARM-LOCKING MOVES



■ PlayStation  
To view the FMV Movies, at the title screen press Up+⊙, Right+⊙, Down+⊙, Left+⊙ four times, R1+L1 and R2+L2 twice. The words "Movie 1" will appear. Use Up and Down to scroll through the movies, and

⊙ to play. To let the computer choose a wrestler for you, hold Up and hit Block. To change outfits, hold L2. For third and fourth outfits (available for Austin and Goldust only) hold R1 or R2. To call a wrestler in a match, hold the top buttons

(L1+L2+R1+R2) and press a direction and an attack button — they're linked to each of the 16 wrestlers. To access the basement, hit L1 and R1 at the Main Menu. This is what you unlock when you beat Challenge mode. Get fiddling!

## NINTENDO 64



■ Nintendo 64  
To let the computer choose a wrestler for you at the selection screen, hold Up and hit Kick. Hold C-Down, C-Right, top R or C-Up while selecting your wrestler for alternate outfits. To call for a certain wrestler to run in during a match, hold both top buttons, the Z trigger and press a direction on the digital pad and an attack button. To access the basement, hit the top L and then the top R at the elevator.



## FINISHING MOVES

And the finishing moves? The same apply to both PlayStation and N64.

"Stone Cold" Steve Austin

Stone Cold Stunner: Right, Right, Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to be Tied Up

"Heartbreak Kid" Shawn Michaels

Sweet Chin Music: Right, Down, Up, Kick+Block  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

"Triple H" Hunter Hearst Helmsley

The Pedigree: Right, Down, L, Punch+Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

The Undertaker

Tombstone Piledriver: Down, Down, Down, Punch+Tie Up

To do it, you need: to be both standing

"The Black Hart" Owen Hart

The Sharpshooter: Left, Left, Up, Kick+Block  
To do it, you need: to stand at the feet of a fallen opponent

"The Rock" Rocky Maivia

The Rock Bottom: Right, Right, Up, Punch+Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

Faarooq

The Dominator: Up, Up, Up, Tie Up+Block  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

Mankind/Cactus Jack/Dude Love

Mandible Claw: Right, Left, Up, Tie Up+Block  
To do it, you need: to be both standing, or standing at the head of a fallen opponent

Goldust

Curtain Call: Left, Down, Down, Tie Up+Block  
To do it, you need: to be behind your opponent

Ken Shamrock

Ankle Lock Submission: Left, Right, Up, Kick, Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to stand at the feet of a fallen opponent

Bret "Hitman" Hart

The Sharpshooter: Left, Left, Up, Kick+Block  
To do it, you need: to stand at the feet of a fallen opponent

"The British Bulldog" Davey Boy Smith

Running Powerslam: Up, Down, Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to be tied up

Ahmed Johnson

Pearl River Plunge: Right, Left, Up, Kick+Block  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

Kane

Tombstone Piledriver: Down, Down, Down, Punch+Tie Up  
To do it, you need: to be both standing

Headbanger Mosh

Mosh Pit: Left, Right, Up, Tie Up+Block  
To do it, you need: your opponent on the ground, while you're standing on the top turnbuckle

Headbanger Thrasher

Stage Dive: Right, Up, Up, Punch+Kick  
To do it, you need: your opponent on ground, while you're standing on the top turnbuckle

## NINTENDO 64

# F-1 WORLD GRAND PRIX

■ All good things come to those who wait. Like bedtime, where you can go to sleep and not have to worry about writing any more tips until you wake up again. And a decent F1 sim appearing on the N64. But it did, and it's good, with an intricate knowledge of the twists and bends of each track being as vital to you as it is a professional F1 driver. There are cheats, too.

For a fast start, press the Gas button just as the red light turns off. Practice, as ever, makes perfect. Hold the analog stick down and to the direction you are facing to turn sharply (but don't hold down too long or you'll spin out).

Select Williams in Exhibition mode, edit the last name to "Vacation" to open up the bonus Hawaii track (replete with palm trees, a suspension bridge and volcano). Then change the name to "Pyrite" or "Chrome" for Gold and Silver drivers.



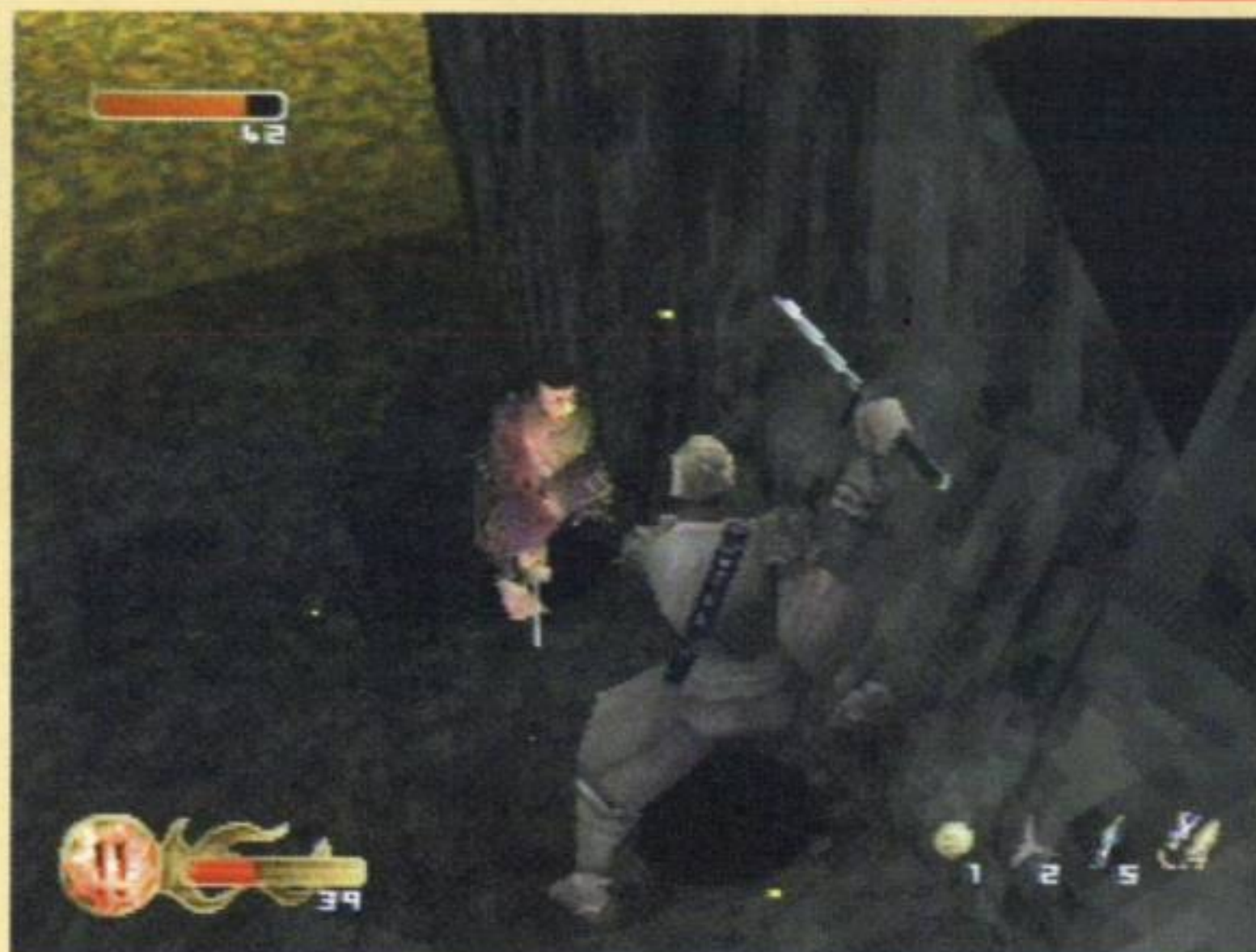
## PC

# HOUSE OF THE DEAD

■ Cheaty pants.

■ Hold [ctrl] and type 'skidmarx' at the main menu to enable the cheat options. Then type 'creatures' to be able to edit the character stats.





# TENCHU

■ There's a brand new breed of game coming on to the market – sneak-'em-ups, which are arcade adventures where the emphasis is not on the fighting, but instead on the passive completion of your mission. *Metal Gear Solid* which is (reviewed in import on page 126) is going to be massive, and similarly, *Tenchu* (bless you) did snazzy things recently too.

To restore your health during play, press Start to pause then press Up twice, Down twice,

Left, Right, Left, Right, ⊙, ⊙. A shout should confirm things. To carry up to 99 weapons, hold L1 and press Up twice, Down twice, Left, Right, Left, Right, ⊙, ⊙ at the weapon selection screen. To increase your ammo, hold L2 and press Up twice, Down twice, Left, Right, Left, Right, ⊙, ⊙. For more weapons hold R1 and press Up twice, Down twice, Left, Right, Left, Right, ⊙, ⊙ at the weapon selection screen. Do you want to select a level? Select a character then hold R2, and press Up twice, Down twice, Left, Right, Left, Right, ⊙+⊙ at the next screen.



## GENERAL TIPPERY

- Watch your opponent carefully, and take advantage of any movement that he does.
- Block when you need to. Some attacks will pierce your guard if they're too strong (like the bear's attack), or if they're at the correct angle. So, be wary.
- Use water. No enemy can swim, not even the bosses.
- You can drink medicine when fighting the boss if you find a safe area. Pick it up from the floor if it's knocked from your hand. Use a bomb if you really need to.
- Remember, fighting is a ninja's second weapon; the way of Shinobi should always be foremost in your thoughts (chickening out and sneaking around instead). There is never a need for you to strike first. Unless the bloke really pisses you off.

## YOU SNEAKY BAST

The first thing you need to remember is to not be seen. Use the L1 button to check out the territory around you, and then hide behind carts and walls – whatever you can.

Keep a close eye on the circle below you. When it's green, no-one can see you. When it's orange, enemies (especially dogs) will move closer and spot you. When it's red, you've been spotted and are under attack. Try to escape and return. The size of the circle is directly proportionate to the proximity of enemies.

Use rooftops – the baddies rarely look up. Wait until the guard changes direction or yawns before attacking. You can minimise the risk of a baddy turning around as you drop from a nearby rooftop by crouching and rolling off with a



sideways roll for the very best viewing angle.

If you can't get a clear shot at an enemy, don't use the L1 button. By the time you release it and drop, they'll have turned around. Instead, go back and forth for a better view. If all else fails and you can only get one glance at an enemy's back, leg it. Most times you'll make it.

# NBA HANGTIME

■ If at first you don't succeed... enter one of the following numbers to activate a cheat function.

Effect	Code
Tournament mode	111
Fast paced	120
Stealth turbo	273
Maximum speed	84
No pushing	390
Unlimited turbo	461
Hyper speed	552
Maximum block	616
Quick hands	709
Maximum power	802
Goal tending	937

# TEKKEN 3



■ Tsk. *Tekken*, eh? What can we say about the world's greatest beat-'em-up game? Well, apart from how to fight as the other characters, not a great deal...

So, you've bought *Tekken 3* and want to beat the crap out of all your mates. Well, you can fight as Kuma, Julia, Gun Jack, Mokujin, Anna, Bryan, Ogre, True Ogre or Heihachi just by completing Arcade mode with each of the nine characters. Fight as Panda or Tiger by

highlighting Kuma or Tiger at the character selection screen and pressing ⊙ or ⊙.

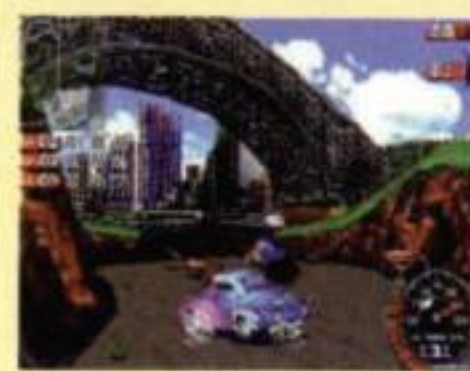
Alternatively, if you want to, you can fight as Doctor Boskonovitch by completing Force Mode four times, and defeating the Doctor.

And if that's not your cup of tea (or indeed, doesn't flex your honed muscles to bursting point), you can fight as Gon by completing Arcade mode using Doctor Boskonovitch. Then, select Arcade mode and press the D-pad off either side of the character selection screen. Or

you can defeat Gon under "Ball mode" or play Survival or Force mode until prompted for initials, then enter GON.

Enter Practice mode and then choose the "Freestyle" selection. Press L1+L2+R1+R2+⊙ at the freestyle options screen. Then press Down+Select to record or replay a combo. Select Arcade mode, highlight a fighter on the character selection screen, and hold R1+R2+L1+L2 until the timer reaches zero. Release the buttons when both fighters are displayed. Et voilà!

# WRECKIN' CREW



■ Enter these easy-to-type codes on the option screen. Oh, go on – you know you want to really.

GIMMEALL	All levels and cars
RESETALL	Resets the game to defaults
RESTLAP	Resets lap records, times
KEYFOUND	Give you all the paddock keys
CINEMAON	Access all the FMV bits
KARTSON	Play with karts





# 1080°

■ If Kentucky Fried Chicken is finger-licking good (discuss), then 1080° is finger-twistingly hard. At times, it requires the finger dexterity of, er, someone who can move their digits about totally independently from each other. There's far more to the controls than the instructions or initial play might suggest, as well as plenty of interesting glitches. Won't you step this way?

When in the air, position your board correctly to land any form of jump. Tucking makes you go faster, inhibits steering, but increases stability. When

you do a jump, tap the Z button a split second before you land. Tuck also any time you find yourself not on snow. When jumping, the longer you hold the A button, the higher you fly. Remember that you can't grab your board while you're holding either the Z or the A button.

You can pull off some grab tricks on flat ground, such as a Method or Tweak. Others, such as Indy Nosebone, require lift off a ramp or lip first.

The key with spin tricks is not to get too frustrated. Practice looking at your hands rather than the telly. Once you are accustomed to accelerating up the sides of the half-pipe, releasing Z and pressing A, you



need only give the screen an occasional glance as you sort your fingers out. In fact, it's even worth practising on a spare controller: work the correct combinations of fingers, pressing faster and faster until you're confident enough to try one on the game proper.

To get a boost at the start or after a crash, wait until the 'I' is about to turn to 'go', and tap forward. For a huge ramp, immediately turn left at the start of the training halfpipe and squeeze Z. When you're near the wall, you need to turn back towards the pipe to be boosted absurdly high into the air. For a huge jump, leap off the cliff next to the first pointing neon light on Dragon Forest. If you choose 'Retire' as you approach the finish line in a

match race, you'll be able to continue snowboarding. And if you carry out this manoeuvre on the Deadly Falls course, you will be able to board right off the cliff. Cool, eh?

If you can't complete a training trick (stop going down the pub and get practising), you can pick and complete a really easy one and press C-Right while you're still in the air. Scroll down to the trick you can't do, and when you land, you'll be credited for completing it. You can score an easy 500-point combo even on the flat with a jump+grab+180°. If that's too easy, jump immediately after the word 'go'. With practice, you ought to be able to make a 360°+540°+360°+540°+180°, worth 8000 points.

The fastest way through the Mountain Village tunnel, meanwhile, is to fork first right, then left. As the light at the end of the tunnel comes into view, crouch and fly out as far as possible, but don't jump. Past the two logs, jump off/drop off on to the mud leading to a mogul and a house.



FOR FULL REVIEW TURN TO PAGE 144

## REDNECK RAMPAGE RIDES AGAIN



■ Enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.

RDHOUNDDOG	Toggle God mode
RDALL	All guns, ammo, items, keys
RDMEADOW«EPISODE #»«LEVEL #»	warp (#episode, #level)
RDYERAT	Toggle coordinates
RDVIEW	Toggle use of [F7] for view mode
RDUNLOCK	Toggle lock
RDITEMS	All items
RDRATE	View frame rate
RDSKILL«SKILL LEVEL»	Set skill level
RDTEACHERS	Message
RDMOONSHINE	Moonshine
RDCRITTERS	Toggle monster respawning
RDRAFAEL	Message
RDSHOWMAP	Toggle full map
RDCLIP	Toggle clip mode
RDGUNS	All guns
RDINVENTORY	Full inventory
RDKEYS	All keys
RDDEBUG	Toggle debug mode
RDJOSEPH	Motorcycle
RDMRBILL	Increase damage
RDRHETT	Suicide
RDAARON	Mushroom mode
RDNOCHEAT	Disable all cheats
RDWOLESGLAGLE	Toggle drunk mode
RDGREG	Boat
RDNOAH	Toggle alternate debug display
RDKFC	Chicken mode
RDCLUCK	Mark opened doors with feathers

## WILD ARMS

■ PlayStation RPG fun, with a nifty flaw that enables you to duplicate items in your inventory.

Make sure that you've only got one of the item to be duplicated, then enter a battle mode. Have the first character (typically Jack) use a healing item, such as a medicine or

berry. Then have the second character (typically Cecille) also use the same healing item. Have the final character (Rudy) exchange the positions of the healing item and the item to be multiplied in the inventory. Then, have Rudy use the healing item. Post-victory, the inventory will contain 255 of the multiplied item. Coo.



## CASTLEVANIA LEGENDS

■ Hand-held pleasure.

Enter [Meat] [Candle] [Candle] [Meat] as a password to start at the last level with all items and soul weapons. And the level passwords? Try [Axe] [Cross] [Space] [Clock] for level three, and [Clock] [Space] [Dagger] [Dagger] for level four.

# THE X-FILES

**FBI FIELD OFFICE, SEATTLE: APRIL 2, 1996**



■ **Having any problems getting started? Walk this way, Spook-fans.**

First up, meet Special Agent Cook in the hall. Pick friendly emotion to greet him. Then take one step forward, turn left into your office, enter it and pick up the phone. Now go to the chief's office and look at the map on the door which leads outside.

Skinner tells you Mulder and Scully are missing. Ask him where they were last seen and what case they were working on. You'll receive orders. They flew from Dulles International Airport to Tacoma, and are staying at the Comity Inn in Everett. Ask him about their previous behaviour (and all the questions you want, even if they seem irrelevant).

Talk to the chief, and nip to

his office. Talk to him, but don't ask him to send an APB. Go to your own room. Look at the right desk drawer beneath the phone. Get the gun, cuffs and badge. Use the computer and enter the password 'shiloh', found on the clipboard on the wall. Read your e-mail.

Hand the file from your desk to Cook. Finally, choose Everett and Comity Inn as your destinations.

**THE COMITY INN, EVERETT: APRIL 2, 1996**

First, show the girl behind the counter your ID badge. Ask her about the two missing agents and the rental car (it's a Ford Taurus, plate 621517). The note she's written will be in your folder. Ask the girl to show you the rented rooms 103 and 104.

Search the room. There's a paper with some alien-related articles, plus some sunflower seeds and a bottle of vodka mix. In the suitcase on the bed there's a case file (number SE-75424, case 3X99) with forms and a note on it. Take the book from the stand near the phone.

Ask Skinner about the case Scully and Mulder were on. Ask the girl at the motel office about the outgoing calls (click on the phone image). Call the numbers on the form. Now return to the motel room and take the laptop (you'll get a password from the Crime Lab later). Go back to the motel office and talk to Skinner. Go back to the FBI field office and



hide behind your PC. Use the ING function to look up the phone numbers, passwords and rental car number. Go to the meeting room, then the closet for authorised personal only. Get the binoculars, camera, lock pick, flashlight, night vision goggles and evidence kit. Leave the office, head for the Seattle docks. Got it now? You're on your own from here.



PLAYSTATION

## SAN FRANCISCO RUSH



■ **There are lots of secret vehicles to find, you know.**

For access to all the cars, press @, @, @, @, @, and R1 at the Options screen. For a truck, select any car, then hold L1 until the race begins. For a buggy, select any car, then hold R1 until the race begins. For an secret car, do the same but hold R1 + R2 until the race begins. Alternatively, select any car, then press Down at the transmission selection screen to cycle between a low rider, bus, rocket engine car, taxi, and police car. The number

of cars that are selectable varies, depending on how many keys have been found. Additionally, press @ at the car selection screen to access four more vehicles, including a Viper, Hippie Van, VW Beetle, and McLaren.

Hold R1+R2+L1+L2 at the car selection screen and choose a car. Keep those buttons held and press @ at the transmission selection screen. Then, hold @ until the race begins and you'll get to play a UFO.

Still not bored? Press @ at the car selection screen to chose your colours.

## WAR GAMES

■ **Enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.**

EYEOFGOD	Enable extra zoom level on lower-level machines
SALADTOSSED	Mission select
TWOBYFOUR «UNIT TYPE»	Build any unit
HERMES	Faster unit ordering
DONKEYS	Shoot jeeps instead of missiles
MORNINGAFTER	Full map
GIMMIEGIMMIE	Build anything without a Command Center or Complex
UNCLEJOHN	God mode
CHACHING	\$10,000 added to resources
MRMUSCLE	Increased armour
BIGSOFTY	Decreased enemy armour
COFFEE	Increased speed
BEER	Decreased enemy speed
SHAFT	Increased fire-power
SHANK	Decreased enemy fire-power



## NIGHTMARE CREATURES

■ **Type everywhere to enable cheat mode and a level selection feature. Then, enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.**

BOULON	Unlimited items
BRONKO	Play as creature
CHICO	Small creatures
DAVID	Disable combos
GU	One hit kills
BLUR	Blur mode
BES	Debug mode
MOBY	Music test
ALAIN GUYET	Enable all cheats
LOVDIK	Development team message

NINTENDO 64

## F-ZERO X

■ **It doesn't look that great, but buried deep beneath F-Zero X's graphics lies a game of quite remarkable depth. As you ought to know, from our review on page 143. There're some cheats, too, though. Like you didn't know, eh?**



For instant access to all the cups, all 30 cars, and an extra difficulty level, press in strict order at the Mode Selection screen, L, Z, R, C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, Start. You should then hear a chime to

tell you that things are all working. At the car selection screen, you can shrink all the cars by press and holding L, R, and the four C-buttons. You can change your ship colour by pressing Z or R at the ship

stats screen too, and give your ship a twirl with the C buttons. Plus, it's also possible to ram the side of the track and blow up through the finish line if you cross with no energy left. Which all sounds ideal...



■ **Eat your heart out, Herbie.**

■ Okay, so you've got the bigger gun, but what are you like at Scrabble?

# BIO FREAKS



■ Beat-'em-ups, eh? They're usually full of cheats anyway...

You'll be pleased to hear that it's possible to guarantee a win in every fight with every player in the game, except for Purge. Start the Arcade mode, begin a fight, and pause. Go to the Disable menu, turn off shields and return to the game. Now, when you return to the game, you can beat everyone just by holding your distance and firing.

Use this technique to kill Mutilator with an Ultimate Victory too. Turn off shields and

play as Minitek or Zipperhead. As Minitek, continually repeat the missile attack (Down+RP+LP) to shove Mutilator in to the water and send him to a watery grave. As Zipperhead, aim at his gun. You ought to be able to kill the bast in five or six rounds of ammo.

Once a fight has started, press and hold Left on the digital pad, then press the Start button. Bizarrely, you will be able to play through the eyes of your character. Not ever-so helpful, maybe, but fun none the less. To switch back, press and hold down on the digital

pad and press the Start button. And you did know that you can taunt your opponent by pressing LP+RK simultaneously, didn't you? Good.

## FATALITIES

■ And here's a list of how to pull off every fatality.

MinaTek: Headspit  
Towards, Away, Left-C+Bottom-C (close)

ZipperHead: Buzzcut  
Towards, Away, Away+Right-C  
(close once opponent's arms are gone)

Ssapo: Headeavour  
Towards, Away, Away+Top-C+Right-C (close)

PsyClown: Cut in half  
Towards, Away, Away+Left-C+Top-C (close)

Sabotage: Decapiblast  
Towards, Away, Away+Top-C  
(1-3 steps away once opponent's arms are gone)

BullzEye: Backhandecap  
Towards, Away, Away+Top-C (close)

Delta: TorsoShears  
Towards, Away, Away+Bottom-C (close)

Purge: Mutilator  
Away, Towards, Towards+Top-C+Right-C



# GEX 64



■ Here's how to find some of the more obscure Silver remotes.

**Out of Toon:** After passing through the Hard Hat Area, go to the stream and jump the two rainbows. Go to your left and follow the ledge to a snowy area. The remote is where the retracting ledge reaches out. You'll need to run across the ledge to bag it.

**First Scream TV:** Get to the jumping jack-o-lantern and a blood cooler. Go up to the bookcase. Inside are skulls, gravestones, or masks. There's also a switch there. Tailwhip it and go find a balcony with two doors. Go into the one with a Mona Lisa picture inside, and walk out again. You'll see a red remote here, but don't get it. Instead, jump off an edge where there's no balcony. You should land on or next to a river. Go down to the end of the river and you will find a silver remote. Now go back and nab the red remote to get out of the place.

**Pre-History Channel:** Dodge the Steam Vents level. After going up all the steam vents (or taking the short-cut), jump up to where there's fire coming out of the wall. Instead



of running into the fire for the red remote, turn to the right where you will see a silver remote. Jump on to the ledge and get it, and then you can continue on with your regular journey.

**Smellraiser:** Pick Ride The Haunted Elevator. When you get to red remote for that task, jump off the bridge into a little stream. Go all the way

to the end and there you'll find the silver remote. To get out of the stream, go to the other end to find some steps leading up to where the red remote was.

**Other top tips:** Also, for easy Access to either the "No Weddings and a Funeral" level, complete Gexilla vs Mecharez. Run through the gate you opened and jump on the platform to the right. The platform then flies you up to a stone lion head. The jaws are closed shut and can't be opened until you get 26 red remotes. However, there is a tiny crack which you can jump into. (The easiest way to do this is to aim between the teeth). And that's your lot.

# CRUIS'N WORLD



■ Low-key, nigger-heavy and sluggish driving game. Oh, and it doesn't look too hot either. Looking forward to it?

You don't have to win races to get points in the crazy universe that is *Cruis'n World*. Doing flips, rolls and helicopter spins also rack up the rewards. To rapidly gain points, therefore,

go to the Options screen and set the laps to six. You should start a championship on easy, and aim to take as many jumps as possible. Before each jump, pump the gas twice to perform a flip. You can even flip off the back of opponent cars if you're in the right position. Press the gas+Left or Right on the analog to do a two-wheel side wheelie. And remember that if

you perform this before you go for a jump, you will roll.

Your aim in *Cruis'n World* is to complete all six laps while performing as many tricks as you can. When done, get the points and quit. Go back to options and set the laps to one. Go back to championship and finish the next two easy tracks. Repeat the process and you'll have bags of points in no time.

PC

# STREET FIGHTER ALPHA WARRIOR



■ **Super Street Fighter Turbo Alpha Beta: Warrior Dreams 2 Puzzle Special Edition: Christmas Version 1998.** These Street Fighter people are going to run out of

sub-titles quite soon if they're not careful.

To play as Akuma, put the cursor over the random character selection icon, hold Space and the strongest Kick

button, then press the weak Kick button. To be Bison, do the same by holding the strongest Punch rather than the strongest Kick. For Dan, hold Space and press any Kick or Punch button.

# DOMINION: STORM OVER GIFT 3

■ Want some cheats? Press Enter, type in the relevant code, then hit Enter again.

INFRA RED	Show map
ZIPPER	Speed building
BANSHEE	Increase resources
COMBUSTION	Kill all the bad guys



■ Some exploding monster render action. Nice.



## COLIN MCRAE RALLY

■ The mighty PlayStation game makes it on to the PC and, surprisingly, it's still really good. They've even managed to keep the cheats in...

KITCAR	Turbo Boost
MOREOOMPH	Double Power
FORKLIFT	Forklift Mode
SILKYSMOOTH	60 Frames/Sec
MOONWALK	Reduce Gravity
DIDDYCARS	MicroMachines
SKCART	Reverse Tracks
WHITEBUNNY	Mirror Tracks
NIGHTRIDER	All Night
HOVERCRAFT	Hover Car
TINFOILED	Chrome Car

# FINAL FANTASY VII

■ Anything PlayStation can do, PCs can do better.

For easy Chocobo races, hold [Page Down] + [Target] while racing to restore energy. For unlimited items, you'll need the W-Item materia. You get the materia after your party parachutes back into Midgar in disc three. After entering the subway tunnels in sector eight, your party may walk away from the screen and encounter the Turks, or towards it to reach another subway section. Select second choice and follow the tunnel until the dead end with the W-Item materia. Equip the materia on the character with

the item to be duplicated. When a battle begins, select the W-Item entry on the Battle menu and pick the item to be duplicated. Answer "OK" to confirm, and choose who will receive the item. When you're selecting the second item, choose the item to be duplicated. Answer "OK" to confirm, but cancel before choosing a person to receive. The amount of that item should have increased by one. This can be repeated to increase the total of that item to 99.

For money, sell a Master level All materia. Another appears when the original reaches Master level.



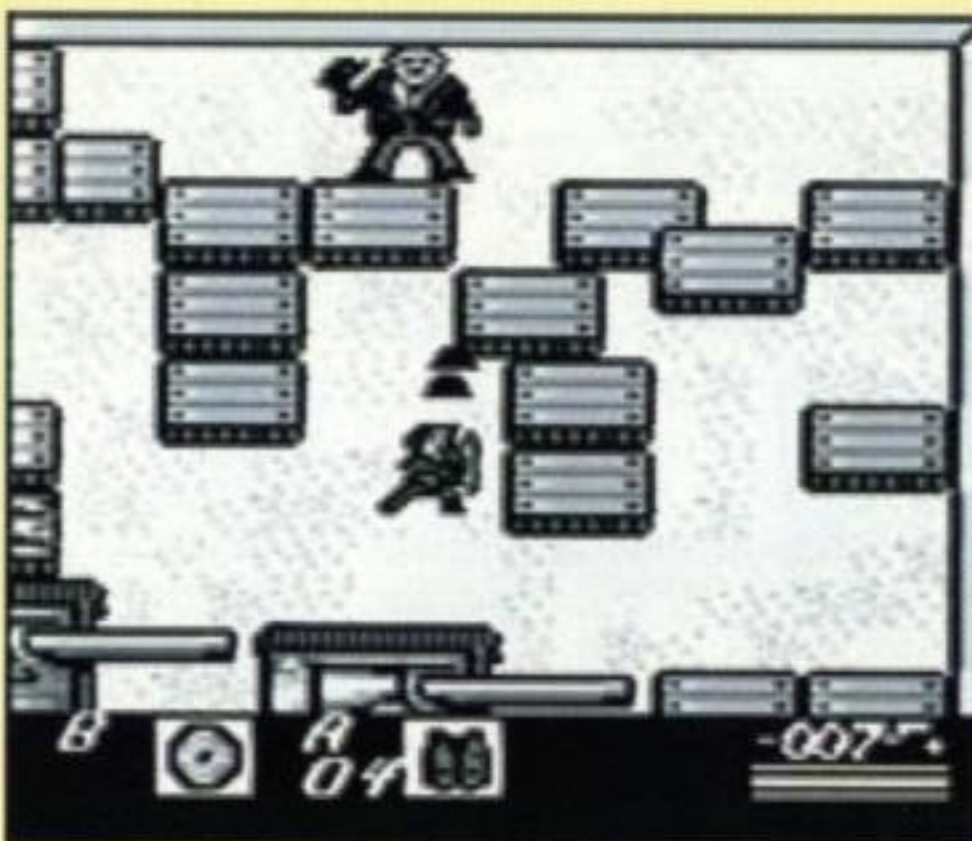
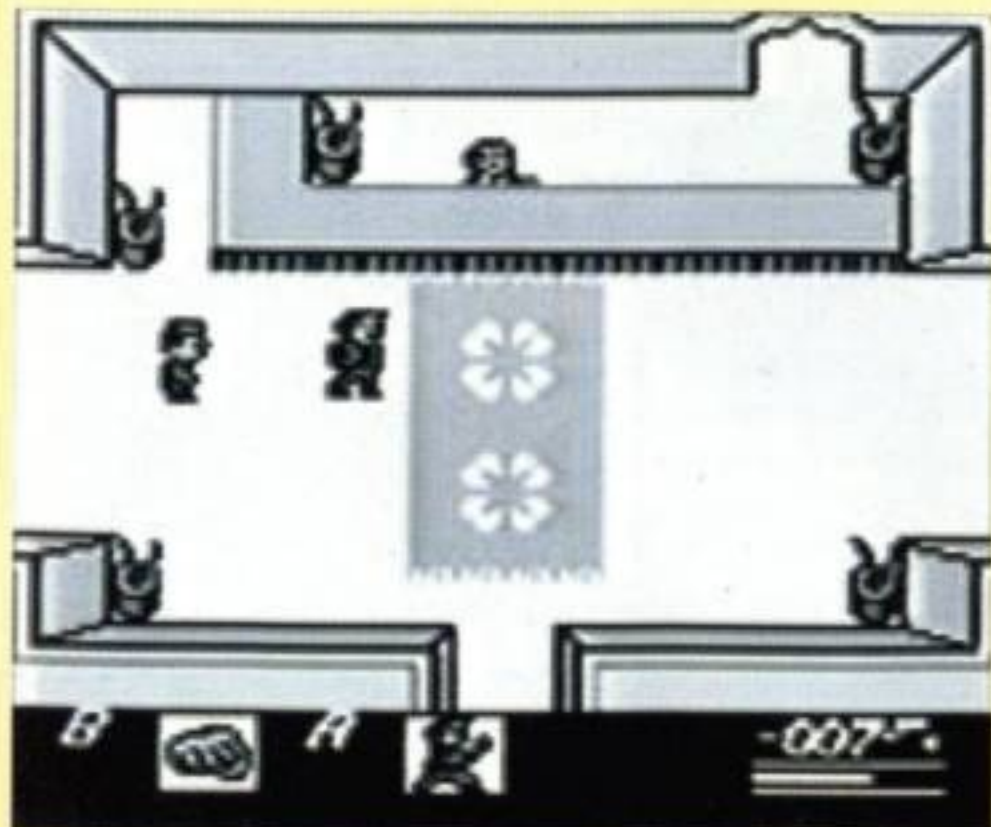
■ Adventure, dosh, subway tunnels. A day in the life.

### GAME BOY

# BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN

■ Getting beat up? Don't worry, we'll help out.

For Scorch mode, press Select three times, Up twice, Select, A, Down twice, Select, and B at the Takara screen. You can now conduct special attacks. To fight as the Bosses, press Up, Down, B, A, Right, Left, B, A when Ellis begins to dance. Gaia, Gaia 2, Uranus, and Sho will now be accessible at the character selection screen. To view all dialogue, press B, A, Left, Right, B, A, Down, Up, B, A when the Takara logo appears. Dialogue from all characters, including tips and special attacks will now be displayed.



## JAMES BOND 007

■ Here, you can reduce Pierce Brosnan to a quarter of an inch - about as big as he felt when the reviews of Dante's Peak came out.

If you want a Black Jack mini-game, enter your name as BJACK. For a Baccarat mini-game, enter BACCR as a name. For a Red Dog mini-game, enter REDDOG. All very logical really.

For extra med-kits, begin gameplay and enter the house. Take the med-kit from the top bunk, save the game, and quit. Resume the game and enter the house to find another med-kit in the same location. Repeat this process to collect up to ten med-kits.

To find the secret MARBLE object (which you can't use until you've completed the

game), go to London (which is on the second level), pass Moneypenny, give the plans to M, and visit Q. Next, you need to move above him to the occupied chair. Press B and Q will say "Don't touch that, 007!". Press B again and the chair will rocket away and leave a hole. Enter the hole, and grab the MARBLE.

Now, go to the casino in Marricretch and play any one of the casino games. If you win about \$17,000, your opponent will tell you that you're a high roller and the casino will pay for your visit. After that heavy night out, you return to the hotel and talk to the manager behind the desk. There, he will give you the presidential key that will open the locked door on the first floor. And remember, don't steal the bath robe...

### NINTENDO 64

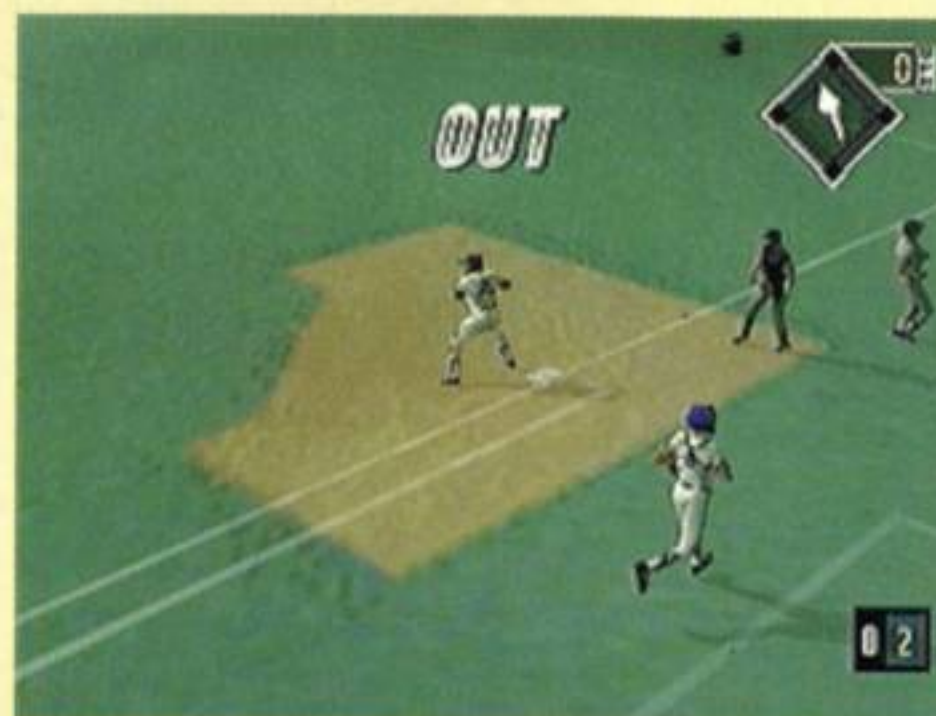
# ALL-STAR BASEBALL 99

■ Here's how you can score easy home runs and easy outs.

For an easy out, when a runner on the computer's team gets on any base, throw the ball to the base he's on. Keep throwing between the base he's on and the base in front of him until a player throws it wildly. As he leaves the base, throw the ball to the closest person and tag him out.

For an easy home run, turn the pitch aid on at the

Options screen. Set up your batting marker a little below the pitching marker, so that the pitch marker is almost even with the top of your batting marker. When the pitcher throws you an inside pitch, line the batting marker up so it's on the inside section with the pitcher's marker, level with the top of your batting marker. This will enable you to pull the ball and whack a whopper. If the pitch is outside, do the same with the markers lined up conversely. Go Blue Jays...



### WEIRDITIES

And for some in-game weirdities, try pressing the following key combinations in-game.

Paper Thin	URARADDUUD
Big Extremes	LARDBALL
Big Baseball	URALLBULL
Baseball Trail	BLURDBALL
Fat & Skinny	ALLRUBR

# MADDEN '99



■ Loads a bonus team cheats. Enter one of the following names as a code, then make an identical entry as a player name on the "Create Player" screen.

NFC Pro Bowl	BESTNFC
AFC Pro Bowl	AFCBEST
All-Madden	BOOM
All-Time Stat Leaders	IMTHEMAN
'60s Greats	PEACELOVE
'70s Greats	BELLBOTTOMS
'80s Greats	SPRBWLSHUFL
'90s Greats	HEREANDNOW
All-Time Greats	TURKEYLEG
75th Anniversary Team	THROWBACK
NFL Equipment Team	GEARGUYS
1999 Cleveland Browns	WELCOMEBACK
EA Sports	INTHEGAME
Tiburon	HAMMERHEAD
Enable real names on classic teams	MADDENAMES



# R-TYPES

■ All sorts of cheats for the classic blaster.

Great moments in gaming history part one: when you first get to level 5 of *R-Type*, you discover that the whole level is made up of an entire ship. Awful moments gaming history part one: realising how impossible it is if you get killed, and lose all your weapons.

Highlight either the *R-Type* or *R-Type II* options at the title screen. Quickly press L2 ten times, then R2 ten times. Begin gameplay and press Start. Any level, including the ending FMV sequences, may now be accessible. To put the game into turbo mode, press Start to pause. Hold L2 and press Right, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, Down, Left, Ⓞ. For slow mode, pause, hold L2 and press Right, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, Down, Left, and Ⓞ. For all the weapons, pause and hold L2 and press Right, Up, Left, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right followed by one of the following buttons for various weapons: Ⓞ, Ⓞ, ⊗, ⊙, or R1.

# X-MEN VS STREET FIGHTER



■ *X-Men* used to be a comic, but it's now a videogame. *Street Fighter* used to be a videogame, but is now a comic. It was inevitable that at some point along the line the two would meet.

Quickly press Ⓞ twice, Right, Ⓞ, L1, Right, Ⓞ and L1 at the main menu to enable an Option screen.

To fight as Akuma, highlight Magneto, Juggernaut, Dhalsim, or Vega and press Up at the character selection screen. To fight as Apocalypse, select Versus mode. Highlight Gouki, hold Select for at least five seconds and press any Punch button. To fight as the *Street Fighter Alpha 2* version of Chun Li, highlight Chun Li on the character selection screen, hold Select for at least five seconds and press any button. For a random character selection, highlight the left end of the character selection screen and press Left, or highlight the right end and press Right. For the original costume colours, press LP or LK when selecting a character. And to keep hammering away at an already defeated opponent, press Start immediately after winning the match. You evil thing.

# G-DARIUS

■ Fancy some unlimited credits? You do? Then pray follow me, m'lud.

Accumulate over 100 continues, then enter the Options screen. Change the "Credit" option to "Free Play". To View all the FMV sequences, highlight the "Movie" selection on the Options screen. Finally, you need to press Down, Up, Down, Up, and then hold L1+L2+R1+R2 and press Start. Easy when you know how.

NINTENDO 64

# SUPER ROBOT SPIRITS



■ Weird Japanese anime-style beat-'em-up. Will it get a release over here? Who can say.

To access all the characters, start the game and put in the following code before the Banpresto logo fades. Press L nine times, then R seven times, Z once, C-Down ten times and C-Right five times. You can now play all the characters. Beat Story Mode with all characters, then use Master Gundam in the 64 Mode and beat Devil Gundam. You can now select Devil Gundam. Beat Master Gundam three times in the

Story Mode, and you can select him. Use Shining Gundam in VS mode: if you win 20 times, Super Mode Shining Gundam appears at your 21st turn. Go to the select screen and press Start while selecting Shining Gundam. You can use him everywhere now – even in Training and 64 Mode.

Leave the game on for over 50 hours, and you can select different coloured versions of Dunbine and Walker Galliam by pressing Start on them at the select screen. Leave your N64 on for over 300 hours (!), and insectoid Judecca appears.

PC

# COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

■ Type gonzo1982 in gameplay to enable cheat mode. Then, enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.

[SHIFT] + X	Place selected commandos under the pointer
[CTRL] + I	Invincibility
[CTRL] + [SHIFT] + N	Mission skip
[CTRL] + [SHIFT] + X	Destroy everything
[SHIFT] + V	Trace user

And the level codes? Sigh.

Level 2	4JJXB	Level 14	T18D1
Level 3	ZDD1T	Level 15	XQWDC
Level 4	RFF1J	Level 16	334MW
Level 5	K4TCG	Level 17	VTIM3
Level 6	DT1WN	Level 18	R4OJF
Level 7	IH3W1	Level 19	TFCWB
Level 8	52WJ7	Level 20	DKW1
Level 9	24BF		
Level 10	HYBM3		
Level 11	JF0P3		
Level 12	4MB4D		
Level 13	BJK4Y		



# MAX 2

■ Fan of real-time strategy games? Fan of the original MAX? Fan of MAX 2? Got MAX 2? Then you're sure to appreciate some handy cheat code to aid you on your strategic, mission-gulping way.

Enter one of the following codes, including the bracket characters, to activate the corresponding cheat function. Don't try to use multi-player mode, though – it destroys all your stuff!

[MAXSPY]	View all enemies and animals
[MAXSTORAGE]	Maximum raw materials
[MAXSURVEY]	View all deposits
[MAXSUPER]	Max out highlighted unit

## CLOCKING OFF

■ Well, that's me well and truly finished off for another month. Next month, we'll be bringing you a complete guide to... Oh, why pretend? Right now I haven't got a clue.

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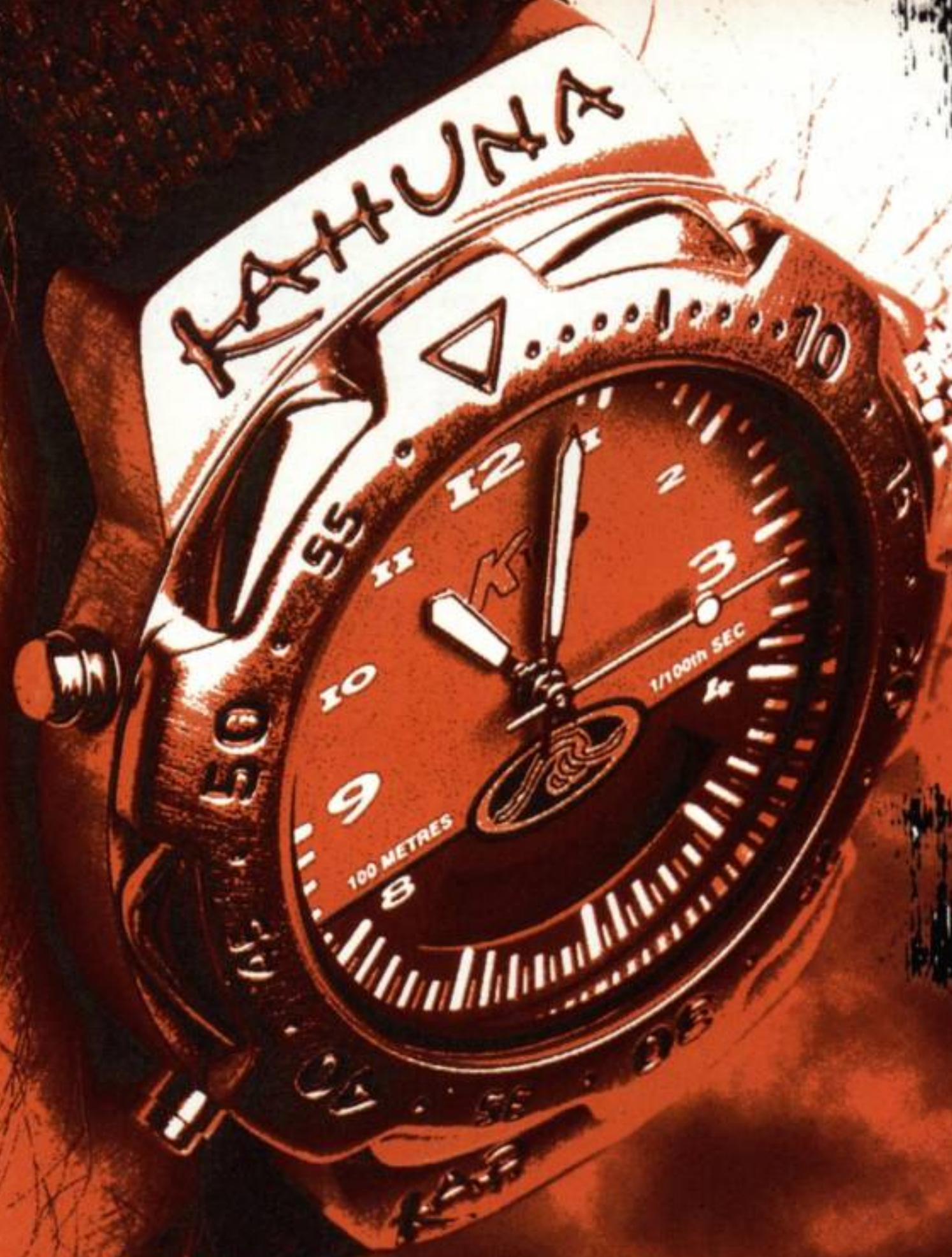
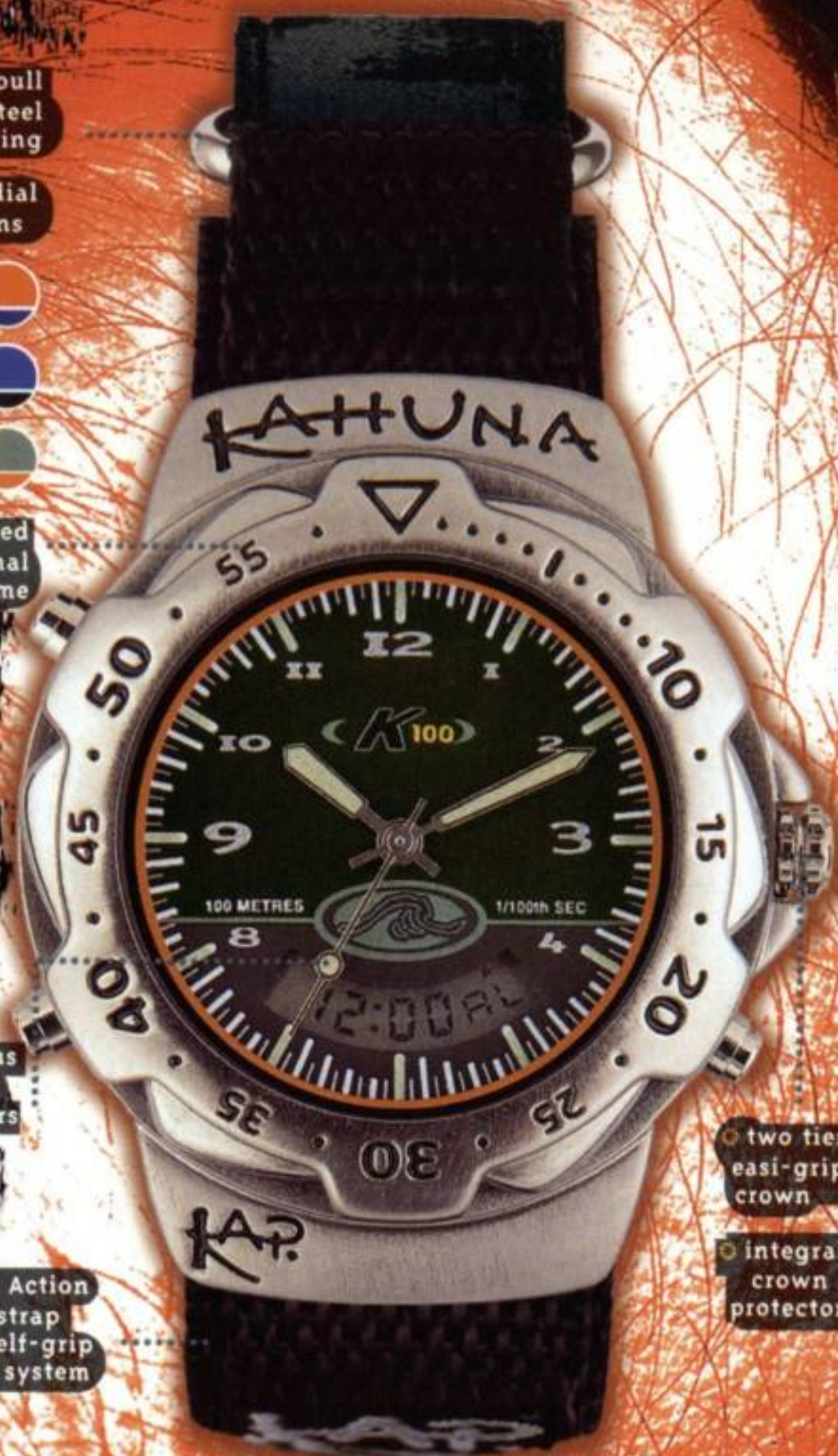
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December 1998



# A Review

## The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

**MORE THAN  
75  
GAMES  
REVIEWED!**



### INSIDE...

- 1080°
- Actua Golf 3
- Body Harvest
- Colony Wars: Vengeance
- Cool Boarders 3
- Dune 2000
- F1 '98
- F-Zero X
- Metal Gear Solid
- Music
- NFL Blitz
- Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus
- ODT
- Rival Schools
- Silicon Valley
- Spyro The Dragon
- Test Drive 5
- TOCA 2
- Turok 2

# TOMB RAIDER III

**WHISPER IT! SOME SAY LARA'S LATEST AIN'T WHAT IT SHOULD BE. FIND OUT IF THEY'RE RIGHT ON PAGE 128.**

**PLUS!** BOOKS/BOARD GAMES/CD-ROMS/COMICS/FILMS/MUSIC  
GAME ACCESSORIES/INTERNET/GADGETS/TOYS/VIDEOS

#### Star ratings

- \*\*\*\*\* Simply the best. A game you really must play.
- \*\*\*\* Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- \*\*\* Good stuff. Not a world-beater, but fine within its genre.
- \*\* Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- \* Awful. Avoid at all costs.

# New PlayStation Games



■ Interest you in a new motor, guv? Only one careful owner...

# SUPER STAR TOCA BABY, YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR...

# TOCA 2



■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer: **Codemasters**  
 ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release Date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **Memory Card, Dual Shock, Analogue Pad**

**Praised for its realism and thrills, but criticised for bland looks and a too-high learning curve, the original TOCA sold by the helmet-full, but divided PlayStation owners. Will this one do the same?**

**W**e'd heard great things about *TOCA 2*; like it was the best PlayStation touring car game by far. But when we started playing, we didn't like it much. "It's a bit boring," we thought, as everyone else whizzed off into the distance and we were forced to spend the remains of the course staring at the gaping expanse of blank tarmac in front of the car.

"It's not very glamorous," we said, as we raced through the country, with nothing but hills and trees for company.

"It's a bit hard," we mused, as we over-steered on virtually every corner, spinning round hopelessly and being forced to reverse back on to the track.

"In fact," we concluded, "it's just as if we got a car, souped it up a bit, and burnt around some country roads as fast as possible, trying not to crash."

## THERE'S SOMETHING REASSURINGLY BOY RACERY ABOUT TAKING THE TRACKS IN A SOUPED-UP FIESTA

Then we stopped.

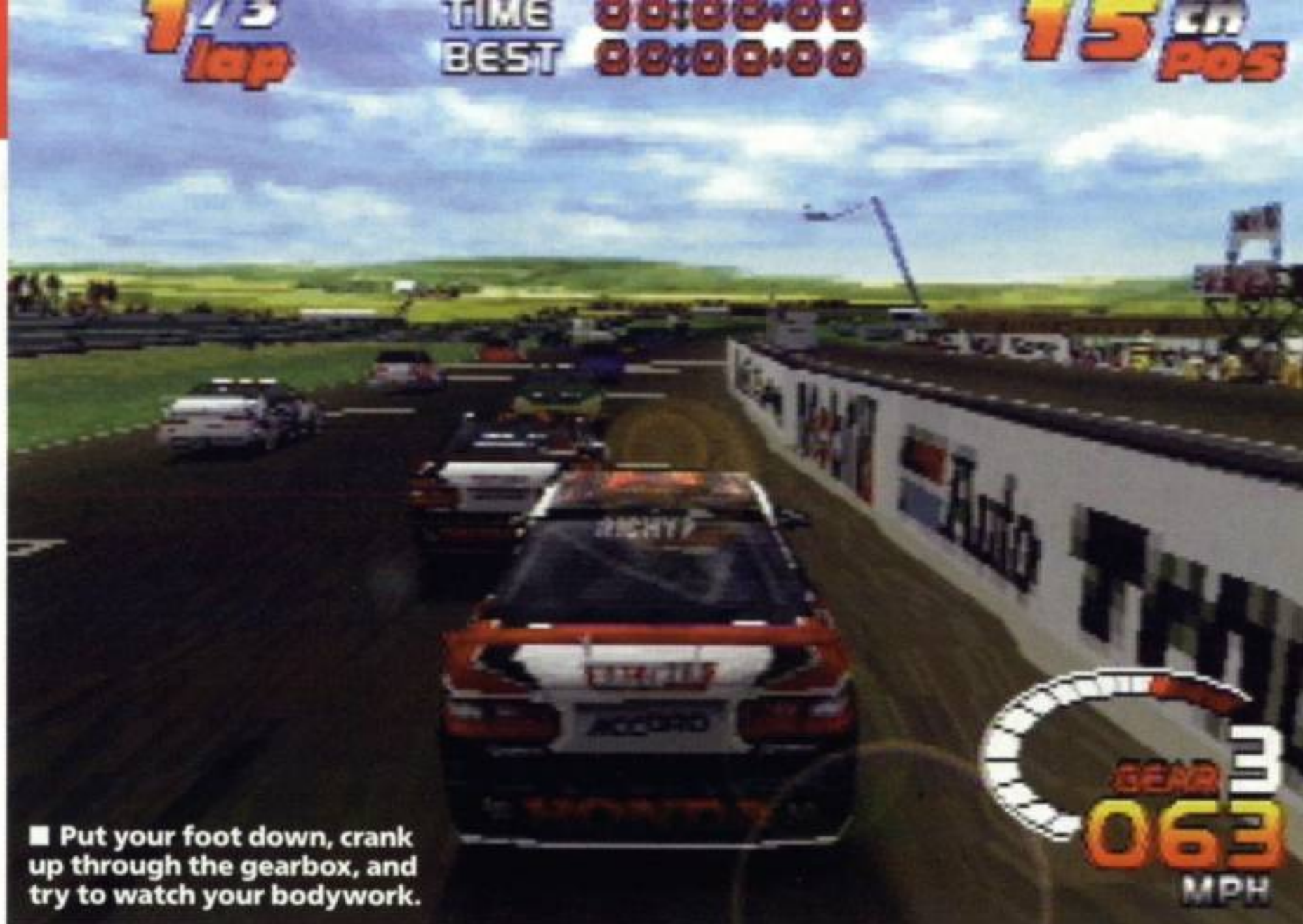
And thought about what we'd just said.

You see, the fact is that *TOCA 2* plays just as if you'd got a car, souped it up a bit, and burnt around some country roads as fast as possible, trying not to crash. This is exactly what makes it so great – it's as accurate a simulation of touring car racing as you could possibly hope for. To drive successfully you need to motor sensibly – braking severely into corners, keeping strictly to the roads and respecting other road users (because banging into them is going to mess up your lap times a treat). To win, you need to steer like a maniac, braking at the right moment and accelerating out of bends. It's a matter of finding the shortest racing line and weaving in and out of the other cars with as much care as you'd take removing a splinter from a loved one's finger. You have to learn to drive *TOCA* to play it properly.

The main circuits are set in England and Scotland and look fantastic, having been accurately modelled from the



■ Racing around Bulgaria in a sports car is something not many of us will ever get to experience in real life. You do in *TOCA 2*.



■ Put your foot down, crank up through the gearbox, and try to watch your bodywork.



■ Glass, eh? Who needs it? Anybody got the number for a good windscreen company?



■ One of the rather sillier secret cars.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

- Foot on the gas**
- Looks and feels stunningly realistic
  - High AI in the opposing cars
  - Split-screen two-player mode
- Car on the grass**
- Initially high learning curve
  - No race catch-up feature

real thing. Screaming round Silverstone, admiring the grandstands and drizzly English weather, the layout feels as familiar as watching *Grandstand*. The scenery is relevant rather than decorative: fences are there to be crashed into, sand traps are there to catch you if you spin off, and as much detail has been put into the trackside visuals as the cars themselves. There are bonus tracks too,

including an alpine climb, Bavaria, three test tracks and downtown USA, where every bend is a right angle and there's a fantastic *Italian Job*-style short-cut down a long run of concrete steps.

The cars feel good too. They all handle differently, and can be tweaked to accommodate your needs. Which will be your favourite? The Mondeo? The Honda? The Fiesta? The Vauxhall? There's something reassuringly Boy Racery about taking the tracks in a souped up Fiesta, and it's our car of choice. The bonus cars include a Jaguar, an AC Superblower and a cigar-shaped three wheeler, with one rear wheel.

And (hurrah!) there's a split-screen two-player mode, too – the most disappointing omission from the first *TOCA* game. The speed that the game cracks along at, with two players and 16 other cars on screen, is quite phenomenal, and the graphics are colourful and hi-res.

*TOCA 2* is a game that you are going to have to stick at. It may well not appeal at first and, to be honest, might not be the right thing if you were raised on the arcade thrills of the likes of *Rage Racer*. Like the real sport, *TOCA 2* ain't as sexy-looking as its F1 rivals, but stick with it and you'll find it provides more consistently enthralling racing. If you want a Mars Bar, you'd go to the newsagents. If you want the best touring car racing game on the PlayStation, buy *TOCA 2*, and celebrate your fine purchase with a Mars Bar from the newsagents on the way home. ★★★★★

**Rich Pelley**

**Or you could try...** *TOCA* Codemasters ★★★★★ The original, now only £20.

Colin McRae Rally Codemasters ★★★★★ Dirt-road driving fun.



■ From the bottom, up: evidence of the split-screen two-player mode, the choice-to-drive Fiestas, and the fact that neither player seems to be particularly good. Shame.



■ Two choices: d'you take the ramp clean for speed, or risk tricks to try to impress?

■ The action remains fast, the visuals hold together well and the single player game is (wait for it) rad.

# ALP HUNTERS

## THE COOL BOARDERS SERIES SAVES ITS BEST TIL LAST

### Uppers & Downers

#### Chillin'

- Fantastic, wide-ranging graphics
- Tricky combos to rapture the stoutest fingers
- It's fast

#### Illin'

- Sometimes you can board straight through trees
- Ridiculously bump-resistant boarders
- It's pretty difficult

## Cool Boarders 3

■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Developer: **989 Studios**  
 ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ UK release: **November 20**  
 Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **Dual Shock, Memory Card**

**Third in the PlayStation's premier snowboarding series, Cool Boarders 3 throws away the old game engine and starts again from scratch.**

**A**s you might have guessed from the title, we have here the culmination of a trilogy. *Cool Boarders 1* and *2* pretty much set the standard for ironing-board-down-hill games but for this third incarnation the series has had a complete makeover. The simplistic, grainy visuals of UEP Systems' earlier games have melted away, and taken with them some of the more niggly control problems. The result is both stylish and fun: if *CB2* sported C&A boarding gear, *CB3* is pure Ellesse.

The basic premise, of course, remains the same. There's you. Or rather a wide selection of yous, from the sturdy, mohicaned Joker to the slender, foxy Sasha. Then there's your board. Or rather, a wide selection of boards. Some built for downhill tanking, others for twisty, turny, tricksyness. Splice board and boarder together, and you're ready for some slush-in-mouth action.

*Cool Boarders 3* offers 30 tracks – three of 'em are immediately available, the rest accessed by working through a full tournament. Some demand the more obvious, racing game-style pleasures of

pure speed; others require trick moves (there are 34 to master), making the whole thing feel more like a beat-'em-up, of all things, as you battle through a myriad button combinations in an attempt to pull off ever more complicated moves. Fortunately, control over your boarder is generally sharp – a nudge, a flick, an on-a-sixpence turn, all are easily accessed from the D-Pad (or, even better, with an analogue controller). Press down and your character's resulting crouch will add speed, but minimises control. This is the crux of the game, a constant binary choice between pace and precision.

*Cool Boarders 3* without doubt is the best looking of any PlayStation winter sports game, but it does slip up occasionally. Collision detection is less than 100% predictable (sometimes you can go through the foliage and pop out the other side, and other times you'll break your face – realistic, perhaps, but annoying). Also, the game has a general tendency to hover disconcertingly between realism and arcade fantasy. The boards feel correct and the physics of their movement has been captured accurately, but all this seems somewhat superfluous when your courageous, Pepsi Max dude tosses himself from a colossal precipice, hits a rock and somehow manages to keep going.

Perhaps the biggest fly in the ointment, however, is the existence of Nintendo's *1080°*. Sorry, PSX fans, but the N64 simply has the hardware to handle this sort of stuff better. So while *Cool Boarders 3* may be the best snowboarding game available on PlayStation, it's not the best snowboarding game *full stop*. ★★★★★ **Stephen Pierce**

### Or you could try...

**Cool Boarders 2**  
SCEE ★★★★★  
Surpassed by CB3 but still a decent downhill blast.

**Chill**  
EIDOS ★★  
Acceptable boarding with an extreme sports feel.

**Phat Air Extreme Snowboarding**  
Funsoft ★  
No phun whatsoever.





### NHL '99

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Developer: **EA Sports**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date:  
**on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Latest update of the on-going series of licensed NHL ice hockey games.**

■ It's strange how some sports – like, say, ice hockey – evoke such outbursts of frustration and violence. The crushing feeling of defeat is universally unpleasant throughout all sporting endeavour, but never do you see someone like Jimmy White picking up his cue and breaking it in two over Stephen Hendry's head, before attempting to ram a metre-or-so of splintered wood up the smug, Scottish one's bottom.

Anyway, ice hockey. *NHL '99* is the latest in a long line of NHL-licensed sports games. What we have, therefore, is an ice hockey game which a) looks great and comes packed with loads of small, detailed graphics; b) plays well, with strong artificial intelligence exhibited by members of both team; c) features a well-adjusted learning curve, with a simplistic, yet versatile, control method; and d) is up-to-date, with all the stats you'd expect to find buried in an official NHL licence.

When you're playing, *NHL '99* enables you to feel like you're in control of your team, while giving you just enough support to stop you colliding red-faced into the crash barriers with every speedy turn. There's also room for special manoeuvres like 360° spin turns and stick flicks, and you can either steam up the arena on your own or, alternatively, you can play the – ultimately more successful – passing game.

The camera problems that bugged *NHL '98* have been corrected, with '99 showing off its pretty visuals, and atmospheric touches like victory celebrations, gleefully. The only real downside is to do with the built-in problems of ice hockey – a game with so many goals scored that the excitement of each one is swiftly diminished. If you're into the sport, this is fine, but for most people a more comprehensible, strategic football game is probably a much better bet. ★★ **Rich Pelley**



■ You'll often need the help of a whole team of Mudokons when you're solving the puzzles. Shouting out "Work!" and "Follow me!" soon becomes second nature.



# I GOT YOU ABE THE ODD SQUAD RETURN



## Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer:  
**Oddworld Inhabitants** ■ Price: **£40**  
 ■ Release date: **November 20** ■ Players: **1-2**  
**(alternate)** ■ Extras: **Memory card**

**It's Abe to the rescue again, in another puzzly platforming potpourri.**

**A**rmed with a limited repertoire of baby-talk and some disquieting personal habits, Abe has attracted a fan base beyond that usually expected of your average pony-tailed alien with a taped-up mouth.

*Exoddus* sticks rigidly to the formula that defined its prequel, *Abe's Oddysee*. As you wander through atmospheric 2D platform worlds, your task is to reach the exit and, if you're feeling generous, rescue your enslaved compatriots.

This time, though, your alien buddies are subject to various types of emotional turmoil. Infuriating as this is, as they sit on the ground sulking or stumble about giggling like school-



kids, the feature isn't used to excess, and most dissenters can be swiftly cured with a "Sorry" or – more satisfyingly – a quick thump.

The puzzles are a brilliantly perplexing mix of tripping switches, opening doors, climbing and jumping. Even if you're a puzzling demi-God, there are effectively two "levels" to the game; whizzing through – cheerfully sticking two fingers up at your friends – offers a quick fix, but the challenging option of freeing the Mudokons leaves you feeling a lot better.

Happily, none of the puzzles are irritatingly taxing. This makes progress a lot more fun than frustrating and the extra touches, like being able to mind-control all the enemy characters (rather than just the one you were allowed in *Oddysee*), are enjoyable and integral to the gameplay.

*Exoddus's* strength comes from its character and humour. Abe is as loveable as ever, and watching him chat, laugh and otherwise interact with his mates never gets boring. The combination of this, the pleasure of solving puzzles and the range of tasks on offer, makes *Exoddus* essential for any cerebral platform fan. ★★★★★ **Mark Green**

### Uppers & Downers

- Mudokons**
- Beautifully-rendered graphics merge seamlessly with the FMV
  - Excellent characterisation, and a sense of humour, too
  - Almost two different games, depending on how you decide to play it
- Mudokraps**
- You'll find the controls initially infuriating
  - Making progress often descends into simply timing your moves perfectly
  - Having to do the same bit repeatedly is annoying

**Or you could try...**

**Abe's Oddysee**  
 GT Interactive ★★★★★  
 Much the same sort of thing.  
 (Platinum)

**Tombi**  
 Sony ★★★★★  
 2D platforming fun with a bloke and his pigs.



## Lemmings Compilation

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Developer: **DMA Design**  
 ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **1**

**Live or die? The lemmings don't care. The deathwish dunces' first two outings are back on PlayStation.**

■ Sharing many of the attributes associated with Team 17's *Worms* (small, cute, squeaky, irritating), the Lemmings have returned to the PlayStation. After the chaotic melange of contemporary styling and tactical fiddling that was the more recent *Lemmings 3D*, it is refreshing to again view these miniscule suicidal nincompoops as they were originally devised. Flat and simple, but with the sort of addictive properties that you rarely find aided by spooning on additional polygons.

Put simply, *Lemmings* and *Oh No! More Lemmings* are puzzle games, designed to tax your mind more than they do your reflexes. Lemmings are stupid. They walk. Constantly. Other than that they need to be told exactly what to do, and this is where you come into the grand scheme of things. Each screen involves a maze, that you view side-on. As the furry fools drop from the ceiling, they are immediately in danger of striding straight off a cliff, drowning or getting burned alive, chopped, sliced or minced, depending on their environment.

At the base of each screen you'll find your function icons, including blocking, swimming, digging, climbing and – always rather tragic this one – blowing up. You click on a function to activate it, then select a lemming to carry out the procedure that you've chosen. This way you can manipulate the constantly flowing stream of lemmings through puzzle after puzzle, with the overall aim being to rescue the requisite number of green-haired beauties from whatever deathly fate they were trooping toward.

While the games are initially easy, they very soon become an organisational nightmare. Visually, *Lemmings* is, rather obviously, a pensioner. Aurally, it's virtually deaf. But this is to veer from the point. Both titles grab you by the joypad (or preferably mouse) and drag you, and your cerebrum, into a lunatic world of bijou lemming carnage. While not for everyone, *Lemmings Compilation* happily ignores the tinsel and glitter of modern gaming, and is better for it. ★★★ **Stephen Pierce**

# STRANGE HILL

IT'S ZAMMO VS GRIPPER, JAPANESE-STYLE



■ There's never been a fighting game quite like this: it's as if Steven Segal became head at the school out of *Saved By The Bell*. Hit an opponent into the air and you can play a great game of keepy-uppy with 'em.

### Uppers & Downers

#### Blazing school

- Some brilliantly over-the-top fighting
- Massive number of modes
- Includes the second value-packed *Evolution* CD

#### School blazer

- No create-a-player option available in the UK version
- Some finger-drumming loading breaks
- The fighters aren't as solid looking as *Tekken 3*'s



## Rival Schools

■ Publisher: **Virgin Interactive Entertainment**  
 ■ Developer: **Capcom** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **20 November** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Subtitled *United By Fate*, Capcom's new 3D fighter features battling Tokyo high-school kids and whispered messages to meet on the common after the bell. Bike chains not included.**

**B**eat-'em-ups and real-world logic have never made happy bedfellows. You only need study the average fighter's range of bizarre haircuts and extravagant trousers to know that. But where the likes of games like *Tekken 3* know more or less where to stop (with a stumpy dinosaur fighter or walking tree), *Rival Schools* gleefully throws absolutely all sense of reality out of the window. With its press-up performing tutors, minor volleyball sub-games and flaming footballs replacing traditional weapons, this entire sense-assaulting, anime-style experience provides a brand new address benchmark for the fighting genre. It's still classy stuff – as ever from *Street Fighter* supremo Capcom, the character designs are superb – but it ain't exactly sensible.

One bit that's surprisingly non-fanciful, however, is the title – *Rival Schools* really is about rucking schoolkids. 20 pupils and (not exactly professional, surely?) teachers fight it out in 3D, with each player given the opportunity to team-up two characters (as you see in tag-team wrestling, or *X-Men Vs Street Fighter*). You can switch between the pair of them before bouts, making a strategic swap for a more suitable match against an opponent. But it's the dramatic selection of special moves, where you can have both your characters appear on screen to do a double-whammy on your enemy's energy bar, that sets the brilliantly over-the-top tone of the fighting.

This is real *Street Fighter II* stuff – full of spectacular blue energy balls and blurred, jaw-thudding specials. Despite their flashiness, the moves are all surprisingly easy to pull off – after all, it's solid Capcom fight mechanics that underpin the game. One of the best things about *Rival Schools* is that you're never many button pushes away from a decent move. *Street Fighter* veterans should enjoy seeing favourites like the Dragon Punch performed by spec-wearing teachers, rather than Ryu or Ken.

In fact, *Rival Schools* is full of enjoyable bits. It comes on two CDs – one holding the basic PlayStation take on Capcom's arcade original, the other being a value adding "Evolution" disc, which packs in more ways to play (league, tournament, group and co-operative), overloads you with lovely manga artwork and provides a lesson mode that teaches and tests your fighting skills. It's a shame the create-a-fighter simulation mode of the Japanese version hasn't been included, but you do get some great sub games as reward when you complete the game according to different criteria.

*Rival Schools'* real strength is that it's not trying to be *Tekken*. Instead, Capcom has built on its expertise at the cartoony, honed over countless *Street Fighter* games, but this time has let its imagination run even wilder than usual. The result may lack quite the technical brilliance or hardcore scrapping feel that you get from a good game of *Tekken 3*, but by pitching the action at an over-the-top, guests-on-Jerry Springer level all its own, comes far closer than most to equalling the PlayStation's grandmaster. ★★★ **Robin Alway**

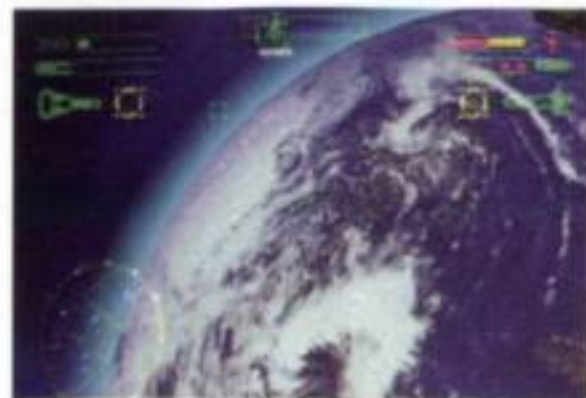
### Or you could try...

**Tekken 3**  
 Namco ★★★  
 Best-'em-up bar none.

**Street Fighter Ex Plus Alpha**  
 Capcom ★★★  
 Street Fighter in 3D for the first time.

**Street Fighter Collection**  
 Capcom ★★★  
 Three-game compilation of the classic 2D fighter.





■ In your imagination, *Colony Wars* always looks this detailed, this visually stunning. But the reality is more like the shot on the left: big, black, empty space, only broken up by the odd looming planet.



# COLONY WARS: IT'S BIG, AND SOMETIMES IT'S CLEVER COLONIC IRRITATION

## Colony Wars: Vengeance

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **Memory Card**

Follow-up to the fantastic-looking but rather samey 3D space shoot-'em-up, this updated model boasts more structured, varied missions.

**C**olony Wars: *Vengeance* is like a puppy. Treat it well, with love, patience and attention and it'll love you back. Lose your temper and whack it with a rolled-up newspaper, however, and it'll bite you in the ankles.

You'll be wary when you start playing. You'll find it irritating that you keep getting blasted out of the sky the instant any enemies appear. You'll complain that you don't have enough missiles and that your lasers are ineffective. You'll give yourself a headache chasing enemy fighters around the 360° environment, trying to line up your sights.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

- Space flight**
- Graphical detail
  - Mission variety
  - Non-sequential
- A bit shite**
- Fiddly, can feel repetitive
  - Frustrating at the outset
  - There's just too much space

But then you discover the energy bar accompanying every baddy, and realise that you can drain the yellow bar (the shields) with the shield-draining laser and then the red bar (energy) with the plasma laser. You'll soon get to grips with the missiles – one press of **⊙** to lock on, another to fire. You'll realise that you can take out baddies far more effectively



while they're in the distance, where you can avoid return fire. You'll also begin to appreciate the variety of missions, whether you're flying through asteroid zones, protecting your fleet in a raid on the enemy's base, or finding energy pods and blasting them into wormholes before they go off.

*Vengeance* has an atmosphere all its own. You don't get many slow, methodical shoot-'em-ups, but this is a Sunday drive in the country, not a screeching lap of Brands Hatch. But it doesn't make it bad. Partly because the graphics are very impressive – stunningly detailed throughout, though you could complain that the ships seem a little small (for much of the time, 90% of the screen is black). But mostly because, unlike the original *Colony Wars*, this gives you loads of interesting things to do.

To some extent, *Vengeance* is full of missed opportunities. It's a pity more isn't made of the motherships and enemy bases. It'd be nice to be able to fly over their surfaces, then dive into trenches and pull back, *Star Wars*-style. But you can't. Once you're used to it, piloting your ship takes little skill, either – a thrust here, an afterburn there, but sadly with little feeling that you are in a huge metallic box, zooming about in the sky. There's definitely work to be done on this whole game design, but for all its faults, *Vengeance* still manages to entertain. Treat it well, show it patience, and it'll return the favour. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**

### Or you could try...

**Colony Wars**  
Psygnosis ★★  
The *Vengeance* prequel, set 100 years earlier. It's fantastic looking, but boring.

**Blast Radius**  
Psygnosis ★★★  
Fast, direct, dogfighting fun.



**PILOTING YOUR SHIP TAKES LITTLE SKILL – A THRUST HERE, AN AFTERBURN THERE...**



■ More space: it's black, there's no up or down, and it's very easy to get lost.



## Tenchu

■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Developer: **Sony Music**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date:  
**on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

**Metal Gear Solid meets Bushido Blade down a dark alley. Spurting arteries a distinct possibility.**

■ After Core's unobtrusive arcade approach to the ancient warrior cult in *Ninja: Shadow of Darkness*, this is the authentic kung fu slipper-wearing experience. With a swirling Oriental soundtrack, furtive gameplay that encourages you to hide in the shadows and blood spilling at Moulinex-sans-lid levels, it's atmospheric enough to have even real-time strategy fans balancing one-legged on a post when they think no one's looking.

The behind-character view is similar to *Tomb Raider*, but in your conduct over the ten mission-based levels, *Tenchu* makes an honourable bow to *Metal Gear*'s stealthy play. You crawl about on rooftops (which you access with a superb grappling hook accessory), before dropping down to slit throats and sever a selection of major arteries with a swish of your sword. As with the similarly inscrutable *Bushido Blade*, the fighting is pitched at a much more realistic level than the usual punishment-taking beat-'em-up. A few blows can very quickly cut your energy bar in half, which means that no opponent, be they mangy old guard dog or dagger-wielding ninja female-alike can be taken for granted.

Technically, *Tenchu* is perhaps a little close to its chop sockey film counterparts, however. The erratic camera makes the fights confusing, there's some unsightly glitching and the animation of your character (you can play as a very different male or female ninja) doesn't seem quite right. But while it lacks *Metal Gear*'s finesse, *Tenchu*'s secretive air and edgy, fleet-footed feel makes for an engaging, endorsed-by-Zen-masters experience. Learn to live with the graphical failings, and the atmosphere will soon have you uttering mystic wisdom like "I must become as one with the wind." Trust us. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**



■ *ODT* has assorted things to fight, but the lack-lustre fantasy look of it all has nothing like the appeal of *la Croft*'s enemies. As someone once said, "It says nothing to me about my life."

# FRENCH FANCY

## IT STANDS FOR OR DIE TRYING. NO, REALLY



### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**OK**  
 ■ Imaginative levels  
 ■ The RPG elements are welcome  
 ■ Very French design

**OD**  
 ■ Shambolic 3D engine  
 ■ Fiddly frequent deaths  
 ■ Very French design

## ODT

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis** ■ Developer: **Psygnosis** ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **Dual Shock or Analogue pad**

**A 3D third-person Lara wannabe, by the team that brought us the awful adidas Power Soccer. Not a good start then.**

**O**f all the times to release a *Tomb Raider* clone, this – to coincide with the release of *Tomb Raider III* – is perhaps the worst. Fortunately, *ODT* aims to sidestep such accusations with the addition of RPG-type elements and a choice of four characters. Nice, but there's no mistaking that follow-cam and those hoards of things that need killing. This is Lara without the breasts.

The first level of *ODT* has to be the most precarious introduction to any game ever. Set atop an ancient tower, it is riddled with pitfalls, traps and ant-wide ledges. When paired with the slightly shaky controls the result is many falls into the inky blackness. Fortunately once you're inside the tower the opportunity to tumble off the damn thing is greatly reduced and the real meat of the game can begin.

Ammo, health and magic power-ups are scattered throughout, and can be used to

enhance your chosen skill, be it better, more powerful weapons or attaining the latest spell. Ultimately though, collecting these pick-ups isn't worth the difficult death-defying leaps and bounds. And the fiddly weapon aiming system makes it easier just to ignore baddies, rather than taking them on in combat.

*ODT*'s ultimate sin, you see, is its bloody awful controls. No matter which button-assignment you choose, the running, walking, weapon loading, looking, aiming and spell selecting seems to fall on the wrong finger. The inability to judge jump distances (and whether they're possible) is awkward because of the camera angle, and actually getting to an edge is dicing with death thanks to the rather imprecise too-little-then-too-much weighting to the run and walk features. Fortunately, a restart point is never far away, as the areas held in memory are no bigger than a football pitch – perhaps because of the game's *adidas Power Soccer 2* engine origins? Also, in another nod to misery, each chunk requires painful loading and reloading as it's entered.

There's much good stuff in here, and the levels are sizable and imaginative, but the lame execution of the project lets the whole shaky package down. ★★ **Simon Garner**



■ You're right, Lara he ain't. Watching him is going to be no fun.

**Or you could try...**

**Tomb Raider I, II or III**  
 EDO5 ★★★★★  
 Much, much better. And it's got Lara. And some gorgeous scenery. And first one is dead cheap now. What are you waiting for?

# PLAY SCHOOL

## MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU



■ Convince yourself that you've created 1999's Ibiza club anthem with *Music's* easy-to-approach sequencing program.

### Music: Music Creation for the PlayStation

■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer: **Jester Interactive** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ UK release: **20 November** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **memory card**

**Forget your destruction of evil sand zombies from the moon of Kronax for just one moment and turn your attentions to becoming the next Fatboy Slim. Without unplugging your PlayStation.**

Ever harboured an ambition to become the next Armand Van Helden or Fatboy Slim? Where would you begin? A keyboard? Sampler? Pair of decks? PC sequencing package? All of these are legitimate starting points for creating your own dance music. Suggest that you're going to win a Mercury prize using only your PlayStation, and we will justifiably knock you to the ground with a rusty synth-axe. The PlayStation

#### Uppers & Downers

- Diva**
- Makes banging tunes
  - Truly interactive
- Diver**
- Makes crap videos
  - Can't play melodies

is a games machine rather than a creative tool largely because its sole source of information is the CD, and you can only manipulate what's already etched on there, rather than add anything new.

So step forward Jester and Codemasters, who have created

what is arguably the first product for the PlayStation to include no element of gameplay whatsoever. *Fluid* had a go at the music creation thing earlier this year, but you still had to assume the role of a dolphin, swimming around your tranquil aquamarine undersea world in search of musical stimuli. *Music* dispenses with the frills altogether and presents you with a scaled-down version of the display used on professional sequencing programs such as *Cubase* or *Cakewalk*. If you're familiar with the general concept of on-screen sequencing you have a head start with this set-up, although *Music* works in a completely logical fashion and it isn't difficult to pick up.

Essentially, the idea is to arrange blocks of sound. These are divided into chunks of four or eight beats, and these chunks are arranged in the program by genre and subdivided again by instrument. These sound blocks are professional samples assembled by "acclaimed" dance producers Cold Storage, and are all cleverly beatmatched to avoid troublesome discrepancies in pitch and tempo. If you follow the manual's advice and lay down a drum track, followed by percussion, then a pre-recorded bassline and various snatches of melody, you'll be pumping out passable trancey house before you can say Paul Oakenfold.

If you delve into musically more complex genres such as drum 'n' bass, you may find that the pre-arranged loops are a little limited, which is where the Riff Editor comes into play. With a whole assortment of instruments, you can create your own four-beat riffs. Unfortunately, it's impossible to play your melodies in real-time, so unless you're a musical prodigy, this is a painstaking trial-and-error process. And once you start altering pitches, there's no guarantee they will tally with the prerecorded loops.

The worst case scenario is that *Music* will frustrate the novices, while anyone with genuine desire to create music will opt for a set-up which enables genuine sampling and melody creation. In fact, though, *Music* has the potential to amuse and stimulate all ability ranges and undoubtedly provides greater intellectual exercise than even the most complex of so-called interactive games. I haven't given a mention to the video creation mode, but unless you're interested in manipulating a load of garish fractal patterns in time to your music, it's best to stick with the beats. See you at the pressing plant. ★★★

**Sam Richards**

#### Or you could try...

**Fluid**  
Sony ★★★  
An improbably mellow dolphin-led dance music creator.

**Dance eJay**  
Fast Trak ★★★  
Music's precursor, but only available for the PC.



### Test Drive 4x4

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
■ Developer: **Accolade**  
■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **4 December** ■ Players: **1**  
■ Extras: **Dual Shock, memory cartridge**

**Dirty international driving brought to you direct from the good old US of A. Don't even go there...**

■ If piloting colossal, wheeled biscuit tins over swathes of glamorous, international dirt appeals, then start sizing garish bodywarmers and unsuitable baseball headwear now. If you are of a rather more discerning nature, however, you should simply stick with *Gran Turismo*, *Colin McRae* or the forthcoming *TOCA 2*. Why? Well *Test Drive* is just a roof-rack packed full with average. You have five classes of licensed motors including the Hummer, Safari and SUV, and six courses (each with a reverse) in such grandiose locations as Santa Cruz, Hawaii and, er... well, Wales. Basically, there's a medley of mud, sand, snow, grit, shale, shingle and asphalt just waiting for you to slide about on it.

Once you head to the vehicles, you can immediately flick on the ignition of a number of cars in the single race option, but it's the World Tour that forms the crux of the title. Here, you are required to win races, to win credits, to win better cars, to win more races. "Hooray!" you might say. But no. The vast, rectangular, behemoths sluggishly sidle about the track as if someone's spiked their diesel. The hillock-based terrain is often spartan and drab, while your tyres churn piles of snow that rekindle memories of the gusting paper bits in TV's *The Crystal Maze*.

For all of *Test Drive's* visual shortcomings, however, it is the gameplay that really requires an MOT. The undulating nature of the tracks mean that "getting air" is a prerequisite. This sounds okay in theory, it's just that no sooner have you returned from enforced aeronautics than you are bounced skyward again, while the gleeful American commentator trots out another of his limited phrases. "Awwwwesome", it most certainly is not. ★★★

**Stephen Pierce**





## Rogue Trip

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Singletrac**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date:  
**November** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Another entrant in the normally hopeless cars-with-guns sub-genre, GT's innovation is to make you play a taxi driver. Otherwise it's business as usual.**

■ With *Rogue Trip*, Singletrac has churned out more vehicle-based violence to supplement its brace of *Twisted Metal* outings. This time, there's a plot of sorts – you play one of a fleet of vigilante taxi drivers, and it's your job to take tourists from the King's Crosses of a run-down Earth of the future to the Mayfairs, hopefully keeping car and passenger intact long enough to collect your fare, which you can then spend on weapon upgrades for the next level. But, of course, being a taxi driver, you're probably far more interested in abusing your taxi colleagues than taking the poor holiday makers to decent photo points.

Indeed, you'll soon discover the tourist plot is near irrelevant, seeing as completing each level relies on destroying all the other vehicles and, er, that's it. Despite the variety of weapons on offer, including a sort of giant swinging sausage attack from a hot dog waggon, this is less interesting than it sounds – and much harder, considering your opponents' swiftness to skuttle off to energy recharging stations every time you manage to land a decent hit.

The levels themselves are, by and large, reasonably pretty, but they don't all seem to have had the same amount of time spent on them – Quake-O-Rama, for example, is nothing more than a series of flat, cuboid skyscrapers. Happily, though, you can destroy almost all the scenery on each level, making for horrendously bad-taste action in the airport level, where you can bring planes crashing from the sky.

Ultimately, *Rogue Trip* suffers the same fate as its predecessors – the gameplay is too repetitive for any real longevity, with all the fun coming from the imagination that level designers can bring to proceedings (the plane stuff, for instance, is a hoot) rather than any intrinsic challenge. Sure, the two-player mode is an improvement, although it all too often turns into a one-sided horror that's just no fun for anyone. Like a cab driver who's blathering on, *Rogue Trip* swiftly becomes very repetitive indeed. ★★ **Mark Green**



■ The cars lack detail close up. Something Murray Walker has almost certainly never said.

■ Visually, the game's stuck way back in the '95 season.



# FORMULA FORGETTABLE

## F1 '98: AMAZINGLY, NOT AS GOOD AS '97. OR '96

### Formula 1 '98

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis** ■ Developer: **Visual Sciences**  
 ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-4 (with link cable)**

**Post Gran Turismo, racing gamers expect a lot. But the third in Psygnosis's ultra-successful Formula 1 series conspicuously fails to deliver.**

**T**o be frank, *Formula 1 '98* is a disaster. Not because it's terrible – it's merely very average – but because the first two games in the trilogy were so good. Far from being a progressive, suitably tweaked update of its two well-received predecessors, this year's '98 model distinguishes itself by being commensurately inferior to both. It should be run off the road.

Psygnosis received unwanted publicity following the release of its first *F1* title a couple of years back, with many owners disappointed by its many apparent "bugs" (including one glitch that saw every CPU-controlled car take a pit stop per lap). *F1 '98* features a technical shortcoming of a far more sinister nature: its polygon-pushing game engine just isn't up to the task required of it. Most PlayStation driving games – *Gran Turismo* included – feature pop-up and limited draw distances, and we always have to keep that in mind when reviewing them.

#### ↑↓ Uppers & Downers

- McLarens**
- "Real" names and cars to choose from
  - The link cable mode's a nice idea
  - Um... it doesn't have scabies?
- Saubers**
- Dismal graphics engine
  - Disappointingly unrealistic car physics
  - Horrible car control, more "doom" than "vroom"

But *F1 '98* takes this to absurd extremes. It features such a ridiculously low horizon that the percentage of track you have visible at any one time is woefully inadequate.

Consequently, its in-car views are virtually useless, making the judging of corners an imprecise affair. Even with an external alternative, you must memorise the layout of any given track before you have even a fighting chance of completing a lap at speed without crashing. This renders the game more an exercise in measured, almost robotic joystick manipulation than anything else.

Worse still, *F1 '98*'s handling mechanics are hideously unconvincing. Psygnosis's patronising assumption that most PlayStation owners will prefer a simplified physics model removes much of the challenge and suspense of disbelief that the game could have done with. What of the aspirational aspect of playing games? What of the fact that most people want a racing title to offer them a crack at a 180mph overtaking manoeuvre through the Monaco tunnel that they'll simply never get to experience in real life? From the smallest spin to the biggest slide, *F1 '98* trades the sim-like pretensions it so desperately needs for an inappropriate, flawed, arcade-oriented drive.

In its defence, the game does boast an impressive number of options, and the admirable inclusion of a link cable mode enables you to combine two TVs and PSXs in the name of four-player gaming. But who will be inclined to bother? Particularly as the most eloquent argument against buying this update is probably sharing shelf space with it. The excellent *F1 '97* is now a mere £20, and worth every penny. You know what to do. ★★ **James Price**

**Or you could try...**

**F1 '97**  
 Psygnosis ★★★  
 Now on Platinum, and rather groovy

**Gran Turismo**  
 Sony ★★★★★  
 Need we say more about this one? Oh. We already did. Sorry to go on...

# TEST MATCH SPECIAL

## AT LAST! CRICKET GETS A FAIR VIDEOGAMING INNING

### Brian Lara Cricket

■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer: **Codemasters** ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **18 November** ■ Players: **1-4**

**West Indies captain Brian Lara returns from years stuck in Mega Drive ignominy to star in PlayStation's first cricket game.**

Ten minutes into *Brian Lara Cricket*, and Geoffrey Boycott and Jonathan Agnew start chatting. Not in an "And. Australia. Are. About. To. Bat." kind of way. No, theirs is a conversation. They talk about pitches, about batsmen. They even talk about the weather. And it's right there and then that the class of Codemasters' sequel to the Mega Drive hit becomes clear.

The PlayStation, hardly well known for its tranquil games, has never before seen the like of *BLC*. Sure, it's one for lazing on a Sunday afternoon, but the game feels so good to play you don't mind whiling the hours away. Funnily enough, it's when you lose concentration and spoon the ball into the slips that it becomes the most enjoyable. It goes without saying

that the players move smoothly, and the whole thing looks good, but the knowledge that you were caught because you got the split second timing wrong just about sums up *BLC*. It's realistic alright.

Mostly *Brian Lara Cricket* is an enjoyable afternoon (not) spent at the park. The fielding is depressingly difficult – much better to let the computer do the donkey work for you – but again, a close run-out decision adds to the fun.

Batting is very much easier than bowling, however. How Alec Stewart must wish he could see where the ball was going to pitch before it left Shane Warne's magic fingertips – in *BLC* being a bowler means moving an all-too-apparent circle up and down the pitch, taking some of the surprise out of the whole affair. Nevertheless, with enough statistics, players and teams to make John Madden himself blush, *BLC* is wonderfully well executed. It should sell – well, a few copies, at least – simply because fans have been so starved of cricket games they'll lap up whatever they can get. But more of us should give it a chance. In fact, even the most devoted *Final Fantasy* fan should find there's much to enjoy here.

★★★★

**Ben East**

**Or you could try...**

**ISS Pro 98**  
Konami ★★★★★  
The best football game in the world

**Jonah Lomu Rugby**  
Codemasters ★★★★★  
Fun oval ball action

**Madden NFL '99**  
EA ★★★★★  
Vintage year for US footy perennial



**Uppers & Downers**

**Ashes**

- The Classic Game option
- Wonderfully playable
- Looks and feels like cricket. Without the pads

**Bashes**

- The umpires look terrible
- It's too hard to keep the score down
- Fielding is a pain

■ Just grab a beer cooler, smear on the Zinc creme and relax into a Sunday afternoon of thrashing the opposition.



### Zero Divide 2

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Zoom** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Sequel to hopeless robot beat-'em-up Zero Divide, boasting (slightly) more convincing 'bots.**

■ Looks can be very deceptive. Take Nicky Clarke, the famous hairdresser. Now examine his haircut – would you trust him to touch your barnet? And those chocolate covered pretzels? They just look horrible.

And like chocolate pretzels, *Zero Divide 2* looks like it's going to be a no-hoper from the start. Why, you can't help thinking, would you want to play a beat-'em-up as a cross between an *Alien* alien and a chicken? Surely, you think, playing as a big red crab isn't going to give you much of

an advantage if you opponent is a hulking great human-shaped robot? And you'd be right. The difference between Nicky, Pretzel Flipz and this is that with the first two a gruesome first impression hides a talent, of sorts. With *Zero Divide 2*, however, what you see is what you get. It's rubbish.

But though the visuals aren't promising, it's the lack of even matches that makes *Zero Divide 2* the doofer it is. It's simple: the human-shaped robots always have the edge over the non-human ones. The crabs and the like have going for them the fact that they clunk with a satisfying metallic sound, and segments of their exoskeletons shatter, but that's all. Also, there aren't nearly enough moves available. What you want are lots of flashy bangs and lights, resulting from slick moves that would set the robot characters of *Zero Divide 2* apart from the ninjas of *Tekken 3*. What you get is a variety of pushes and shoves that with a little more hair-pulling and name-calling wouldn't look out of place in a schoolyard girl-fight. Overall, *Zero Divide 2* is a limp beat-'em-up, with not nearly enough adrenaline-rushing, body-flinching, blood-curdling violence. Next to *Tekken* (or *anything*), it's a joke. ★

**Rich Pelley**



### NFL Extreme

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **989 Studios** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**

**Sony presents us with its gormlessly grinning antidote to po-faced American football sims.**

■ This is Sony's answer to *NFL Blitz* (see page 125), the game that attempted to treat American football with the less-serious, arcade-style paintbrush that EA has successfully applied to the *Jam* series of basketball. In *NFL Extreme* you'll find simplified rules, a host of illegal tackles and punches and a handful of dubious comedy moments – like players' buttocks alarmingly catching fire as they go for a touchdown. You'll also get your attacker screaming at you after

every successful tackle. You only need to hear some shoulder-padded American beefcake shouting gibberish at you once before you've had enough.

All this simplicity is reflected in the controls, which offer only a handful of buttons to press for throws, tackles and everything else. It sounds, then, reasonably promising – a way, perhaps, to sell the non-believers among us on the virtues of gridiron.

Such a shame, then, that 989 Studios has seen fit to complicate matters in a number of flashy but ultimately pointless ways. The biggest problem is that passing and running have been made near-impossible by the over use of obscure camera angles and the decidedly low-resolution graphics – a combination that makes picking yourself and your team mates out of the crowd more difficult than finding your car in the Lakeside car park.

Meanwhile, though simplified from the usual over-complicated American football game choice of plays, the tactical side of *NFL Extreme* still seems too involved for what's presumably meant to be a beginner's version of the game – when you play against a computer opponent, progress is so difficult that each yard you

make up-pitch soon becomes cause for minor celebration, while you really have to keep your wits about you in two-player mode to prevent your PlayStation leaping upon any hesitation and deciding your move for you.

Basically, this game is caught between two stools – it's still too American footballly for beginners to the genre, and it's too arcadey if you're already a shoulderpad fanatic. Within that context, its poor attempts at humour swiftly become just plain annoying. And as for effects like realistic motion capture? No, we'll go for mad flailing idiots. Break for tactics after a tackle? No, we'll jump on the attacker, screaming at the downed unfortunate after every collision. It's guaranteed to leave both football fans and arcade players disappointed. In fact, they might both feel a touch down. Geddit? ★★ **Mark Green**





## B-Movie

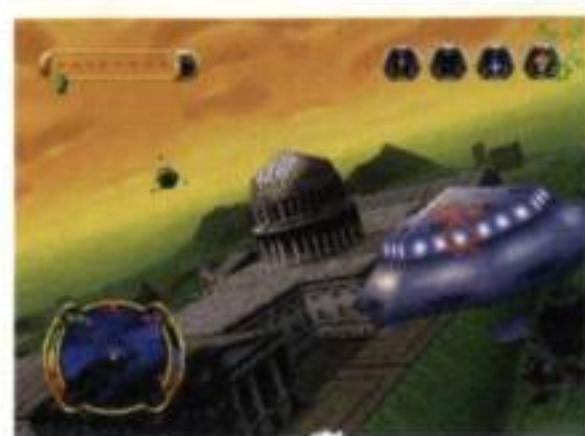
■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **King Of The Jungle** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **20 November**  
 ■ Players: **1**

**Save the Earth from the evil Martian horde in this not-to-be-taken-too-seriously space shooter.**

■ Aliens these days, eh? They've no manners, no respect, you just don't know where you stand with them. So if the behaviour of the modern brand of extra terrestrial enemy disgusts you, let *B-Movie* return you to those halcyon days when Martians were Martians and liked nothing better than to travel in flying saucers, creating crop circles and shooting rayguns.

This is a fast, original 3D flight shooter in which you control the starship pilot Irwin Stryker (he's a former vacuum cleaner salesman, naturally) whose task is to protect the Earth from alien marauders. Not only must you fight off the swarms of enemy ships, but a series of missions beamed in from Earthlink Command require you to move civilians to safe houses and reposition ground forces. There are no pretensions to cutting edge graphics, but *B-Movie's* cartoon setting is surprisingly well-drawn, with great attention to cheesy detail, including a collection of white-haired scientists dressed in labcoats and Martian mother ships whose bellies open up to release flocks of smaller craft.

As you progress through the early missions, amassing piles of equipment and technology in order to build more impressive weapons, the gameplay is quietly satisfying, even if the controls can be occasionally inaccurate. It's not very long, however, before you encounter an insurmountable barrier as you find yourself forced to manipulate your ground troops while facing a barrage of hostile fire. And this is the problem with *B-Movie*. It becomes too hard too quickly, and offers no short cuts – there's only so long you can vainly attempt the same mission before casting the joystick to the floor in a childish fit of petulance. Despite some encouraging signs, this is one that should head straight to video. ★★★ **Sam Richards**



■ The magical, colourful world in which *Spyro* lives. And a big baddy with a club, down on the right there. Better try not to upset him.



**COMPLETE SOLUTION**  
 FINISH SPYRO WITH OUR TIPS ON PAGE 98

# COOCHIE-COO

## MEET SPYRO: CAMP, CUTE AND COCKSURE



## Spyro the Dragon

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Insomniac Games** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

**Long-awaited 3D explore-'em-up, with a painfully cute hero and Mario gameplay.**

**T**here's a very fine line between cute and camp, and *Spyro*, graphically at least, lives very much on the boundary. On the one hand, he's the dragon you'll want to take home and love as a pet, to stroke as he curls up on your bed. On the other, you can't help feeling rather less than macho as you control a character who runs around a 3D world with a bouncing effeminate canter and suggestive tail flick – you wouldn't want the lads from the pub football team catching you playing with a My Little Pony, after all.

But you can't help growing to love *Spyro*, and the breathtaking world that he inhabits. It's true 3D in the style of *Mario World 64* (rather than the contrived 3D of *Tomb Raider*) and enables you to gallop off in any direction – to spy a place in the distance and actually be

able to go there. Equally, the puzzles are set at an ideal skill level, meaning that you won't die for a while (unlike games such as *Gex 3D* that kill you within seconds for Not Knowing What You Are Doing). Better still, *Spyro* provides you with plenty of opportunity to explore your 3D environment without you having to achieve anything that's too taxing.

As you progress through *Spyro*, you'll come across other dragons who have been turned to stone. Your main mission is to find them all and release them. In return, the previously fossilised dragons will provide you with helpful hints – from suggestions for getting to grips with the control methods, to advising which part of the map to visit next. New sections of the map open up all the time, but you also have to keep coming back to the old ones; they're complex enough that you've almost certainly missed some goodies, and probably a dragon or two.

*Spyro* plays as well as it looks. It's full of nice touches, including mooning bad guys and a huge scarecrow boss whose jacket opens to reveal a sheep standing on stilts. The gameplay won't frustrate you, either – you'll simply keep playing *Spyro* until you finish it – which is how, as any dedicated game player will tell you, life should be. ★★★ **Rich Pelley**

**Uppers & Downers**

**Breathing fire**

- Huge world
- Instantly playable
- Bags of nice touches

**All smoked out**

- Finish it and you're off



■ *Spyro* glides through his world, kissing blue fairies. What japes!

**Or you could try...**

**Gex 3D**  
 Pygnosis ★★★  
 More of an old-school platformer, only in 3D.

**Croc**  
 Electronic Arts ★  
 3D, but with no real sense of freedom or adventure.



### Actua Golf 3

■ Publisher: **Gremlin Interactive** ■ Developer: **Gremlin Interactive**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**

**Don your plaid and grab your clubs. Here's your opportunity to play pro golf on eight stunning Actua courses.**

■ Light years away from the hustle, the bustle, the hurly and the burly of your dull workaday life, lies a green, green world. It's a world that's populated entirely by check-panted playboys and ruled by the lord of languor, Sir Peter Alliss, himself. This is the land of *Actua Golf*, and it's now entering its third golden age.

It's easy to see why the *Actua* brand is appealing to so many people. The games are instantly comforting and they ease you gently into competition, while gradually revealing depths of complexity as you encounter hidden bunkers, prevailing winds and dastardly CPU opponents.

*Actua Golf 3* boasts eight beautifully sculpted courses (some simulated, some fictional) and a wider variety of game styles than ever before, from basic strokeplay (where you can "gimmie" and "mulligan" your way to an easy victory – more obvious innuendo notwithstanding), through to team competitions, a fiendish driving range and races against the clock. If you're committed, you can even assume the status of a rookie golfer and enter yourself in a series of tournaments, lopping strokes off your handicap until you're ready to compete against the likes of Faldo and Norman on the Professional Tour.

*Actua* excels in the subtle touches. Watch for the splash as you slice an easy drive into the lake and then suffer the withering snub of co-commentator Alex Hay: "I think he's been at the refreshments before the game." Make use of the full variety of shots you have on hand – including the extravagant high lob – and remain alert to the various rubs of the green. Review your impeccable tee shot from a vast number of different angles and, finally, take time out to personally buck the worrying trend among today's golfers of eschewing Pringle 'n' plus-fours in favour of branded sports gear and dress your man up in a great selection of monstrous pink tartan attire.

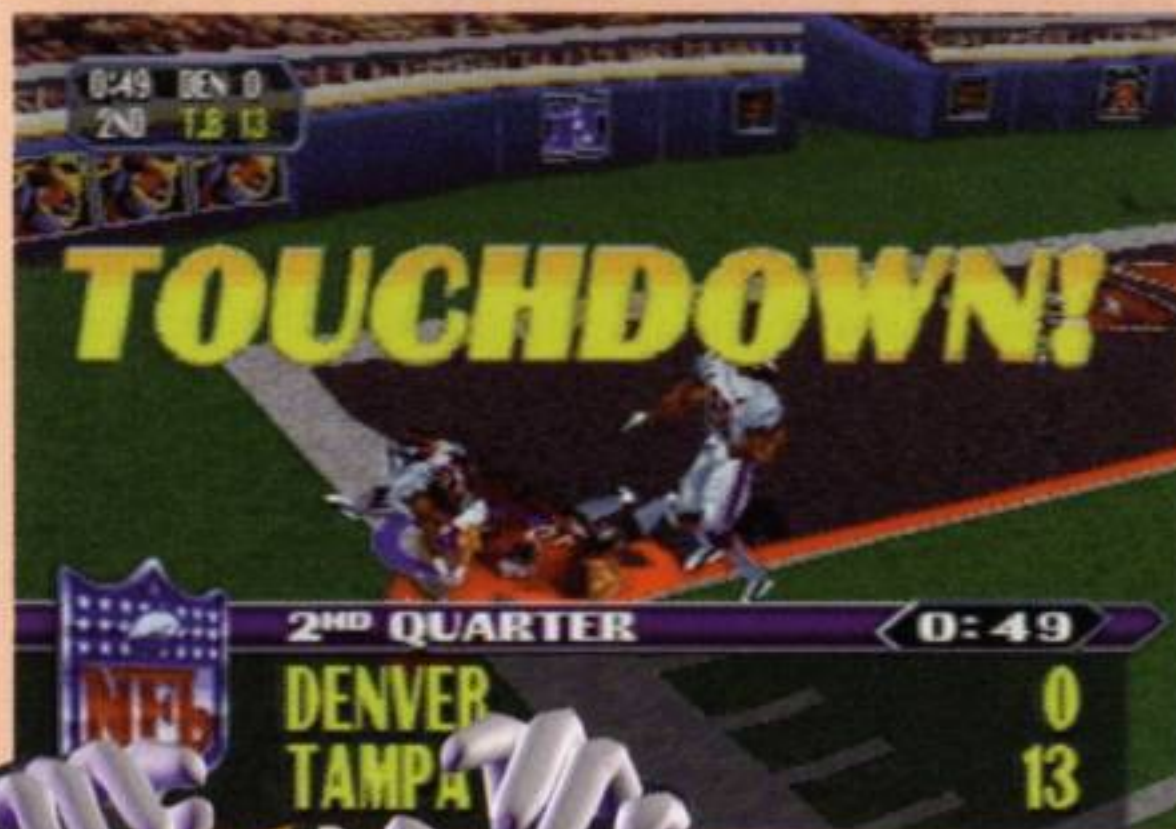
Like Sir Peter himself is wont to say, "That's simply marvellous golf." ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

# BRUISE EXPLOSION

## OF SHOULDER PADS, HELMETS AND CHOREOGRAPHED HOMICIDE



■ Forget tactics. Just mind you don't slip on all that spilt blood.



■ If you like sport to degenerate into argybargy at the drop of a hat, this un's for you.

### Uppers & Downers

**Touchdown!**  
 ■ Wanton spine-mangling  
 ■ Arcade addiction  
 ■ 'Tis simplicity itself

**Fumble!**  
 ■ Mid-game loading delays  
 ■ Not a game for Stattons  
 ■ 'Tis simplicity itself

## NFL Blitz

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Midway**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **December** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Acclaim stuck two fingers up to motion-captured realism with 1996's *NBA Jam*. Now, Midway decides to give American Football a similar makeover, ditching the tactics for balls-out carnage...**

Not for everyone is the testosterone ballet that is American Football. What once appeared to be an emerging sport back the '80s (The Fridge, anyone?) has, in the face of increasing public apathy, been reduced to 3.27am graveyard TV slots on Channel 5. That taken, it's no surprise then that of the seven zillion NFL licensed games released every year in the US, only the odd few make it over the Pond. Like, who cares?

Well, you should actually. Because while the majority of American Football titles come replete with motion-captured pirouettes and infinite screens of the tedious stats Johnny Yank so cherishes, *NFL Blitz* arrives without rules, without realism and without the safety warning it so palpably requires. While the title is understandably based on the actual game, and makes the most of that expensive NFL licence (with real player names and the like), it's from there that *Blitz* departs from tradition. "First down and ten" is now "first down and 30", the number of players per team has been reduced to a mere seven and the amount of both offensive and defensive plays is minimal, totalling a scant 18 and nine respectively. Granted, a few stats adorn the mid-game loading screens, but anyone expecting EA Sports-style numerical overload best leave the stadium right now.

And after that? And after that... madness. Blessed with a simple control interface and an amphetamine arcade pace, the whole game now revolves around getting into your opponent's end zone and mangling as much player cartilage as you humanly can on the way. Yup, *Blitz* comes sans penalties and thus you can ditch the comparatively gentle art of blocking and happily kick, punch and gouge your way to hellish gridiron victory. True, said tactics are not exactly sportsman-like – and a clever play will always win out over machismo-driven brute force – but there is much schadenfreude to be savoured by simple thuggery. "Watch out! He's gone postal!" bellows a passing in-game commentator. Damn right he has.

*NFL Blitz* is no masterpiece. The graphics are a tad too blocky, it's perhaps a touch too simple and, painful though it is to admit it, the beatific bliss that is poleaxing a huge quarterback with a dropkick will inevitably become sadly repetitive. On the other hand, knickers to that. *NFL Blitz* is übertolerance stamped on a shiny black disc and it deserves to be wedged in the PlayStation of every right-minded psychopath who enjoys the give of Lycra and the taste of pain. Yup, that good. ★★★★★ **Mike Goldsmith**

### Or you could try...

**Madden NFL '99**  
 EA ★★★★★  
 A more serious gridiron game, but this is a vintage year for the US footy perennial

**Dead Ball Zone**  
 GT Interactive ★★★  
 Super-fast rugby aimed squarely at space-age, violence-worshipping sadists.



## Test Drive 5

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Developer: **Accolade Inc**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date:  
**on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Take a spin round the globe in some of the world's finest automobiles. (It's not as sexy as it sounds.)**

■ If the words "test drive" conjure up for you the image of a greasy teenager in a Next suit straining to look like a company CEO so he can spin round suburban streets in a top-of-the-range Aston Martin with plastic on the seats for an hour, you're not alone. Which is why *Test Drive* is a silly name for this glamorous street racing series. Classic American models such as the Pontiac GTO are pitched in fantasy battles against lovingly-rendered Jaguar XKRs and TVR Cerberas. Not wanting to resort to Jeremy Clarkson levels of sexual metaphor, the handling of each car is basic but responsive, with subtle differences between the models. Basically, *Test Drive 5* boasts high accessibility, but with questionable longevity.

Still, the game's trump card may well be the intricacy and diversity of its courses. If you've ever wanted to burn around the streets of Moscow at 185mph, upending Sunday drivers and handbraking round Red Square, alight here. You can also stage a road race round the faux-Victorian cobbled streets of Edinburgh's steep and narrow thoroughfares. It's not geographically accurate, but at it creates a satisfyingly different environment to, say, the deserts of Jordan. Your driving companions are also amusingly stereotyped, depending on your venue. Thus everyone in Sydney becomes Bruce, while back in Scotland's city of culture, your opponents are Lloyd and Alec.

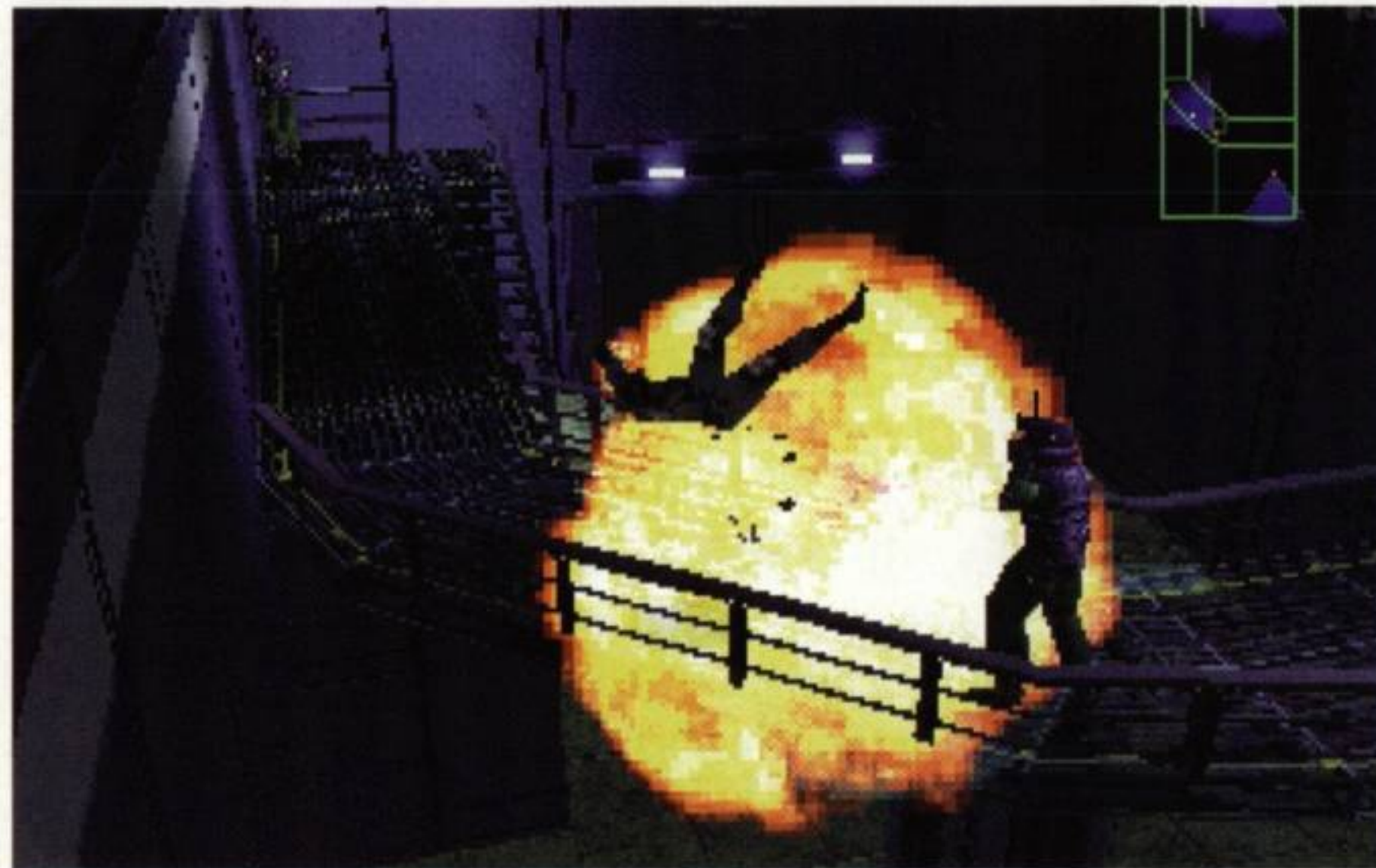
*Test Drive 5* shows some neat touches, but given the illustrious nature of the competition, you can't really rate its chances (*Colin McRae*, *Gran Turismo* and *TOCA* are all ostensibly similar, but much more absorbing). Borrow it, have a few laughs, and play the industrial metal soundtrack for someone you hate. ★★ **Sam Richards**



**IMPORT**

# SNAKE CHARMER

## INTRODUCING A BRAND NEW GENRE: THE SNEAK-'EM-UP



■ Creeping along corridors and throttling guards 'fore they realise you're there is a nerve-jangling task. Don't play this with the lights off.

## Metal Gear Solid

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Konami** ■ Release date (Japan): **on sale now (available from: NextGen on 0181 339 0666)** ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date (UK): **March 1999** ■ Players: **1**

**Based on the old NES Metal Gear series, this James Bond/SAS-style sneak-around is hotly tipped to be the Next Big Thing. It presents a concept rare in gaming: fear.**

**M**etal Gear Solid is a simply fantastic game – possibly it's the best-ever on the PlayStation, and sure to herald a tidal wave of "sneak-'em-ups", action games where the emphasis is on keeping a low profile and staying out of trouble. Many game creators will tell you that the next big step in gaming will be to make the player genuinely experience real emotions while playing, and *Metal Gear Solid* handles this fantastically well – rarely have you felt the fear of getting caught like this before.

As the uniquely named Solid Snake, you're a special forces guy on a near-suicidal one-man mission to take out a snow-bound base full of baddies intent on lobbing nukes at the rest of

the world. It's a simple story, but told well – from the off your mission deviates from the original plan as new characters and subplots are introduced, while the near-faultless detail of the graphics and cinematic twist of the camera angles immerse you in the action.

There are so many perfectly realised "good bits" in *Metal Gear Solid*, you won't be able to stop playing. For instance, there's a cardboard box that you won't be able to get out of for at least half an hour, once you've found it and realised that you can use it to hide in and sneak past enemies.

The problem is, however, that buy it on Japanese import and you're going to miss out on a lot of what the game has to offer. It's all unreadable, of course, and so plot heavy that not only will you be losing out a great story line, but on all but the most basic level you won't have the faintest idea what's going on. There would be no way of knowing, for example, that you have to blow to bits large sections of the wall with plastic explosives in the underground basement on the third area you visit.

A brilliant, technically stunning, well thought through release that's sure to influence action adventure games for many years. But we can't recommend the Japanese original – not when the English-language US release has just gone on sale, and the UK version is expected by March '99. Wait for one of those.

★★★★★

**Rich Pelley**

### Uppers & Downers

- Turning Japanese**
- Drenched in atmosphere
  - Truly original
  - Progressive gameplay
- Turned off**
- Instant death routines
  - Frustrating sections



■ Unless your grasp of Kanji's top-notch, you won't get far in MGS.



**Or you could try...**

**Tenchu**  
 Activision ★★★★★  
 Just as sneaky, but with a far less tense atmosphere.

**Resident Evil 2**  
 Virgin ★★★★★  
 Scary, plot heavy, but with more shooting.





## Megaman Legends

■ Publisher: **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** ■ Developer: **Capcom**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **November** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

**Remember me? The blue boy returns, and this time he's brought along an extra dimension.**

■ Now that most people have lost count of the number of *Megaman* titles, the robotically-enhanced super-boy has finally obtained himself a shiny new polygon suit. Besides the obvious graphical improvements, however, Capcom hasn't made many more changes for this latest addition – it certainly hasn't tinkered too much with the original *Megaman* formula of puzzles and shooting. What it has done, however, is add a limited story-led RPG element, and this has just about proved enough to breath new life into the tiny tyke's adventures.

The first couple of minutes of *Megaman Legends*, set in bland, grey *Doom*-style corridors, acts as a training ground to help you get to grips with doing battle in 3D. With a helpful auto-aim function and a host of power-ups, running in circles and shooting is at least easy to pull off, but – despite its importance if you're going to successfully face the troop of mammoth robots queuing up to finish you off later in the game – quickly becomes monotonous.

Despite the sheer number of massive automatons, it's the story that really drives along *Megaman Legends*. After crashing his anime-style flying ship, the little lad is drawn into a city under siege and beyond. It's a Japanese game, so it comes supplied with a generous dollop of saucer-eyed teen girls and cutesy robot slaves to help the plot along, the storytelling achieved through an absorbing mix of cut-scenes and chatting.

The new 3D visuals do the job adequately and smoothly, and the game's massive map, taking in vistas like sprawling cityscapes and atmospheric towns and villages, means that *Legends* backs up its engrossing story with a degree of "What's-around-the-next-corner?" excitement. Overall, though, you will find that it's the repetitiveness of the shooting sections, and the limited nature of the puzzles (often simply a case of moving between locations before the next fight), that make *Legends* limited fun. ★★★ **Mark Green**



## R-Type

■ Publisher: **Virgin Interactive Entertainment** ■ Developer: **Irem** ■ Price: **£29.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

**Think arcades. Think shoot-'em-up. Think R-Type. The Irem classic redefined the coin-op back in the mid-'80s – and now it's back and available from the comfort of your own sofa.**

■ Time was when I'd be able to pop 20p into an *R-Type* machine and breeze to level five without losing a life. Well, maybe just one. These days I can't even get past the big green mothership on level three – by the pricing standards of today's coin-ops, I'd already be down by about £12.50.

I mean, it's just not fair. Back in '87 when I first took on the entire Bydo Empire single handed, I was a mere lad, unburdened by the ravages of age, and considerably nimbler of hand and swifter of reaction. But have the aliens

mellowed over time, attacking in tasteless plaid craft, wearing comfortable cardies or simply choosing not to fight because "it looks a bit nippy out tonight"? Have they fuck.

Ah, *R-Type*. And your lesser-known but equally profanity-inducing brother, *R-Type II*. There can't be many an *Arcade* reader who hasn't – in one format or another – suffered repeatedly at the hands of your many varied and unpleasantly-hued hordes.

After all these years, I thought these 8-bit throwbacks would look dreadfully out of place on Sony's 3D grafikmeister; but the pixel-perfect conversions merely show just how far ahead of their time the originals were.

Besides, if Irem stooped to pull off an *R-Type* '98, you'd get 24-bit colour and 15 levels of parallax scrolling and tiresome over-acted video sequences, but I doubt if the structure of the game would change. Yes, every go on *R-Type* is exactly the same, and yes, you have to stick mindlessly to the same old tactics, and yes, when you die you're shagged because your weaponry (that fantastic ball thing we keep popping on about) has gone. But because the route to success is so bloody obvious, you refuse to believe that you can't do it – and so you keep coming back time after time after time, for Just One More Go.

★★★★ **Steve Jarratt**



## Pool Shark

■ Publisher: **Gremlin Interactive** ■ Developer: **Mirage** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **27 November** ■ Players: **1-2**

**Take an entertaining game that involves skill and social intercourse and convert it so you can play it using a joystick on your tod. Hmm.**

■ Well, no prizes for guessing what this one's about: good old "dingy back room of the pub, line up your money on the side of the table" pool. The game in question features three, six, eight, nine or ten-ball pool with US or UK rules, played in one of four locations and against a variety of CPU-controlled opponents.

As you'd expect, it's played just like any of the snooker and pool sims that have been doing the rounds over the last couple of years. Your hand and cue are represented on screen, forcing you to eye up the shot just as you

would in real life: position the cue (taking far too long for a shot this simple); choose side, screw or top (then think better of it, knowing that you only have a basic grasp of pool physics); adjust the power of the shot (if in doubt, twat it); and then watch as your target ball slips below baize level (watch as you down the white, miss totally or sink your opponent's ball).

*Pool Shark* is all there, but it's not without its faults. For starters, why is such an incredibly non-processor intensive game not presented in hi-res, so it's all nice and crisp looking? Please, spare the technical excuses. Second, the roving, golf-style power bar is just crap – I want to be able to set my power accurately, not have to rely on a random button press; and third, there are times when you want to line a shot up without having the cue in the way. Okay, so this can be achieved by flicking between cue and camera views, but it's a faff that I don't need, frankly. So nice try, but no cigar.

★★★ **Steve Jarratt**



# PlayStation budget round-up

by Robin Alway and Sam Richards

One of the best things about PlayStations is that you can get hold of all sorts of top quality goodies for under £20.



### Croc

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Developer: **Argonaut** ■ Price: **£19.99**  
 ■ Release date: **November** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

■ The first attempt at "doing" *Super Mario 64* on the PlayStation, *Croc's* a technically impressive 3D platformer, but is severely lacking in the sort of inspired gameplay that's needed to save it from the obvious, if harsh, "of shite" punchline. There's no sense of freedom as you negotiate the enclosed stages. The "Will this do?" level design suggests the developers went to the pub soon after perfecting the graphics engine, leaving you more or less alone with the allegedly lovable hero, a few baddies and platforms you fall off more because of the oft-dodgy camera angle than anything.

To be fair, this ain't completely disastrous, just dull and frustrating. And *Croc* himself isn't much to write home about. Even well-adjusted five-year-olds struggle to warm to the cynically cute reptile (his shouts of "whey-hey!" are particularly nauseating), meaning you'd be better off with one of his fellow animal platformers, notably *Gex 3D* or *Crash Bandicoot* (also on Platinum). ★★



### Grand Theft Auto

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Developer: **Argonaut** ■ Price: **£19.99**  
 ■ Release date: **November** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

■ If inciting controversy was a legitimate criterion by which to judge a game, *Grand Theft Auto* would have clocked max points on its release in December '97. Tedious moralisers queued up to froth about the game's proud depiction of joyriding, drug-dealing and all-out lawlessness, missing the almost life-affirming hilarity it also offered. You got *Death Race 2000*-style stunts like mowing down pedestrians, *Blues Brothers* police car wreckage and *Scorsese*-standard foul-mouthery. At first, this seemed like the most original, gutsy game in years.

If only it had stood up to inspection. Become blasé to the game's behind-the-bike-sheds humour and the top-down viewed missions are soon repetitive. The graphics are nothing special either – Commodore 64, anyone? – and together these elements conspire to drain the game of all its excitement. There's an American version of *Grand Theft Auto* which makes use of improved graphics and gameplay, so why couldn't we have had that instead of just a budget re-release of the inferior UK model? ★★★



### Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Oddworld Inhabitants** ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **memory card**

■ Released at around the same time as the first poor-quality PlayStation *Mario* clones, it soon became clear that Abe wasn't from around these parts. The grey-green scrawny little alien meat packer turned freedom fighter didn't only look weird, he was starring in a platformer that was 2D and proud of the fact. Still, it did have lavishly drawn backdrops and a darkly humorous feel that was all its own, at least until the sequel came along (see page 117).

Nice touches abound in *Oddworld*, as our endearingly animated hero chants, talks and farts his way through some intricately crafted puzzles, possessing baddies and running them into mincing machines to rescue his fellow enslaved Mudokens. Admittedly, at the end of the day this is only a flick-screen 2D platformer, but the production values are lavish and you can't help but be carried along by the sheer wealth of imagination that's gone into creating *Oddworld*. ★★★★★



### Time Crisis

■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Developer: **Namco**  
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Release date: **November** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **G-Con 45 light gun**

■ In its coin-op incarnation, this was the ultimate motorway service station tension reliever, and this classy conversion was originally packaged with Namco's super sharp G-Con light gun. Now robbed of its sidearm for a Platinum re-release, *Time Crisis* is still the finest screen-shooter that's available for home consumption, as you take on the massed forces of international terrorism against a time limit that makes the *Countdown* clock look soft.

*Time Crisis* piles on the tension as the seconds ticks away, but also gives you the chance to alleviate it – a "duck" button letting you hide behind scenery before popping up and blazing away. You do need to play with the light gun rather than a pad to feel the full John Woo-film benefit, though, which means this an essential purchase only if you bought your G-Con along with Namco's other excellent light gunner, *Point Blank*. ★★★★★

# New PC Games

Arcade  
PC  
Game of  
the Month



■ London girl: *Tomb Raider III* sets Lara loose in the UK for the very first time. Foxes and hedgehogs should pack their bags now.

# AUTOMATICS FOR THE PEOPLE LARA'S BACK. THE GAME'S HARDER. BUT SHE'S LOVELIER

## Tomb Raider III

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Interactive** ■ Developer: **Core Design**  
■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **20 November**  
■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM**  
■ Recommended: **32Mb RAM, 3D card**

The new moves, locations and costumes are the obvious things *Tomb Raider III* has over the earlier games. Look closer, though, and you'll see more.

**M**ake sure there are no sensitively eared young kids or shockable grandparents near when you start to play *Tomb Raider III*. They should be shielded from the abuse you will, inevitably, hurl at the screen.

"What the... no! Arghh!"

"Don't jump that way, you stupid... nyaaagh!"

"Where the hell did that come from... NO! GNAAAGH!"

*Tomb Raider III* is utterly frustrating. It's often irritating and repetitive. And, at the same time, it's totally brilliant.

There are two main reasons why a game this *annoying* is also so totally great. To begin with, there's the fact that every obstacle – every jump you don't quite make, every enemy who comes out of nowhere, every fatal surprise – can and will be beaten, with a little skill and practice.

The first time you get skewered by a descending ceiling of spikes as you run around trying to escape, you'll curse long and hard. The second and third times, when you've worked out what to do but can't quite manage it, or you mess up some tiny element of timing, you'll yell even more vehemently. But the fourth time, you'll do it, and you'll be delighted. (Then, of course, you'll get killed in the next bit, and will have to go back and do it all again, because of the ferociously difficult new save-game system.)

But the point is that however angry you get, however much you cry "unfair!", you never give up. You always feel that, *this time* you'll make it through. And when you don't, you know exactly what you did wrong. You're locked in the grip of that "just one more try" compulsion, because you're never truly stuck for more than a few minutes. Every step's a struggle, but you will make it to the next level. Eventually.

And the second reason for *TRIII*'s success is that your efforts are rewarded. Every new area is awe-inspiring, and solved puzzles grant access to so many magical spectacles. Conventionally, it's said that graphics have no impact on "gameplay", but the dramatic majesty of *TRIII*'s visuals is perhaps the most important factor in the game's success.

This is because – and it's important to remember this – the *Tomb Raider* titles aim towards the *adventure* end of



■ Haven't you heard the gun laws, Lara? Our girl is as trigger-happy as ever.



■ Lara's hair wafts in the night air. It's rather gorgeous, really.



■ Whether you're hanging from a cliff-face or crawling down dank tunnels, *Tomb Raider III* always feels ripe with possibility.

action adventure games. Despite their running and shooting excitement, the essential object of the series is to explore and discover all the new places. The more impressive that these "new places" appear, the more rewarding it is to find them.

And by golly, *Tomb Raider III* will take you to some truly remarkable new places. There are bits of this game that are simply breathtaking.

Whether you're standing high in the treetops above the Ganges or shivering in the rain on a walkway above the streets of London, *Tomb Raider III*'s sense of the dramatic wows you with a cinematic vision. It's not just the awesome vistas, or the intense close-up action sequences, or even the clever mixing of cutscenes, video sequences and in-game set-pieces, which gives the game its emotional power. It's the theatrical flourish with which it surprises you at every turn, exceeding your expectations with each trick or stunt.

The many cosmetic enhancements new to this third *Tomb Raider* title are crucial details in this captivating vision.

### EVERY STEP'S A STRUGGLE, BUT YOU WILL MAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL. EVENTUALLY.

■ It's alive. It should be dead. Not a sophisticated philosophy, but you can't deny it works.



## ↑ Uppers & Downers

- Tombs**
- Some fantastic locations
  - Beautiful graphical details
  - Genuine feeling of tension
  - New save-game system
  - Very hard
- Glooms**
- Not much of a step on from earlier games
  - Ultra-annoying instant death
  - Very hard

complete absorption in the adventure. You really do gasp at the tension as Lara hangs from the edge of a balcony, inching along by her fingernails while a guard patrols directly above her. You can't help but let out an involuntary cry when an Alsatian leaps out at her from a darkened corner – just as you can't help but cheer when her quad bike leaps the chasm.

This combination of carefully-controlled realism with hyper-dramatic special effects has always been a trademark of the *Tomb Raider* titles, but this new game develops the style with total confidence, taking it onwards to a thrilling new level.

That's not all that's been developed in *TRIII*, though. The almost-entirely-new design team has taken two very significant liberties with the basic *Tomb Raider* structure.

First, they've broken up the constricting linearity of the earlier titles, thus offering you radically different pathways through many of the levels. The easiest way is rarely the best way, and some daring exploration will frequently be rewarded by hidden areas and pick-ups.

Second, there's an all-new save-game system. As in the last game, you can still save at any place in the level, but now it's going to cost you one "blue crystal" to do so. And, be warned, these blue crystals are quite *incredibly* hard to come by. You start the game with a meagre four, and you'll be whooping with delight each time you snaffle a new one.

This new set-up is, of course, more satisfactory than the clumsy and tension-disrupting "save-anywhere" system, but it also makes the game much, much harder. The same jumps and the same enemies are going to take you out again and again as you slog through to the next save crystal – and there are going to be times when your frustration will boil over, and you'll have to go away for a little while and have a lie down. On the up-side, however, everything becomes much more exciting. You'll take a lot more care and, in the long run, find you have a much more rewarding game because of the extra challenge.

So, does all that add up to a sequel worthy of the name? Are there enough new elements here to justify an entirely new game?

Let's face it, *Tomb Raider III* isn't a quantum leap in game development from *Tomb Raider II*. It wasn't meant to be. It's a measured, intelligent progression. If you've never liked the *Tomb Raider* style, then three or four new "moves" and a few graphical tweaks aren't going to make a convert of you.

But if you do have the patience to immerse yourself in a true adventure, then *Tomb Raider III* offers a collection of brilliantly imaginative virtual playgrounds for you to explore. Most of the levels are great (except for some of the early ones, which are a little prosaic), and some are outstanding. The action is well-paced, challenging and varied. It's full of surprises and treats, most notable among these the supremely entertaining vehicles (including the quad bike, kayak and a brilliant James Bond-style underwater propulsion unit). There's a fantastic arsenal to collect, and, better still, a great variety of semi-intelligent creatures to try it out on.

You could, perhaps, complain that it needs a greater number of more intriguing puzzles, or moan that it's still far too keen to throw instant death your way. You could even throw in a gripe about the occasionally mismatched textures, or the times when your great new vehicle gets glitchily stuck inside a solid wall.

But you're much more likely to be, quite simply, thrilled. There's life left in Lara yet. ★★★★★ **Jonathan Smith**



■ "No animals around here. What a boring place." We're all searching, looking for something or someone, but Lara takes it to extremes.

Elements such as the impressive new dynamic lighting system or the truly outstanding "particled" smoke effects (which mean, for example, that circles of smoke waft and dissipate in the air above your pistols as you fire them) could be instantly dismissed as trivial, but collectively these create a startlingly realistic veneer of plausibility.

Everywhere you look, there's some new lifelike detail, from the footsteps in the snow to

the rippling water, from the shafts of light through the trees to the cold grey fog at the bottom of the valley. Lara's ponytail flutters; your enemies are better animated; the true-3D London rain effects have to be seen to be believed. On a PC with 3D acceleration, the new effects are especially impressive.

And the cumulative result of this unprecedented level of realism is a true suspension of disbelief, and



## THE ACTION IS WELL-PACED, CHALLENGING AND VARIED. IT'S FULL OF SURPRISES AND TREATS.



■ Still looking. Neither happy nor sad, just looking. Perhaps that's why we like her so.

## Or you could try...

**Deathtrap Dungeon**  
EDOS Interactive ★★  
Traipse round a huge (surprise, surprise!) dungeon and kill monsters in this TR clone.

**Duke Nukem: Time to Kill**  
GT Interactive ★★  
More bad-taste Duke Nukem action, but this time in third person. With lap dancers.



## The Fifth Element

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft**  
 ■ Developer: **Kalisto** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 50Mb HD space, soundcard, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **3Dfx card**

**The much-hyped game of Luc Besson's flamboyant Bruce Willis-starrer. But if you shout the loudest, you will inevitably have the most to prove...**

■ Beyond simply cashing in on its association with the Luc Besson sci-fi film, *The Fifth Element* also attempts the "3D-rendered hot babe" ploy. But while these two selling points may grab the title a bunch of attention they don't, of course, necessarily mean that the game will be any good.

Technically, *The Fifth Element* is an average *Tomb Raider* done involving the usual mix of puzzle solving, weaponry and hand-to-hand combat. Its controls are a little cumbersome, but if you keep at it for all 23 levels, you should become pretty adept at moving without constantly bashing your head against brick walls, or moonwalking into dark corners. That said, the game's third-person camera's peculiar behaviour can still make life difficult, even for the exceptionally patient.

Sometimes developers have to work hard to find gameplay in a film license, but this one should have been a no-brainer. Except it clearly wasn't. Forget the *Fifth Element*, what about the plot elements? The Ubisoft guys have played fast and loose with the movie's (admittedly convoluted) storyline. This time around, Leeloo, high-kicking heroine and wearer of that inimitable strap of orange fanbelt, spends as much time kicking the crap out of cops as she does the evil Mangalores. The manual's hint: "Destroy everything you can", is surely not the credo of The Ultimate Being, the protector of all life? Evidently it is. Even *TFE*'s dramatic climax, the solution to the triggering of the stones, is clumsily re-written to use tacky pickup objects called Activators, instead of the movie's, far subtler, power of imagination.

Classic games can be made from classic films, but it's attention to detail and at least a passing degree of reverence for the original material that makes them worthwhile. A game which spells Mondoshawans no less than five different ways is obviously not even trying. ★★ **Neil Jackson**



■ Let's face it. We've all, at some time, daydreamed of being a Roman aristocrat. (Er, guys? Back me up here.)

# UP POMPEI

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY, BUT YOU CAN BUGGER IT ALL UP IN LESS THAN AN HOUR

## Caesar III

■ Publisher: **Sierra** ■ Developer: **Impressions**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P90, 16Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, 1Mb PCI video card, soundcard, Win 95**

**Novices be warned: this one's a toughie.**

**A**ncient Rome was an incredible military and engineering force, but its role as a social innovator is frequently over-estimated. If you remember your history you'll know that Roman culture was largely based on Greek principles and ideals. A lot of Rome's greatness, it transpires, was borrowed. It's perhaps fitting, then, that Impressions' *Caesar* series owes a similar debt of gratitude to the *SimCity* series and, with this third installment, *System 3's Constructor*.

*Caesar III* offers two different types of game: either pursue a goal-based career or take the more traditional option of building and refining a single city. Either way, your immediate aim will be to appease both your populace and the titular autocrat.

At first, it's hard to shake off the suspicion that *Caesar III*'s huge variety of buildings and game laws encourages linear "reaction" alone

— rather than the more free creation you might have preferred. For a city to evolve, you must address seemingly every demand from a rarely content populace. And, as in *Constructor*, the detailed specifications of the many, many structures available threatens to drown even the most hardy God-game enthusiast beneath tidal waves of statistics.

On page 210 of the *Caesar III* manual, there's the following delightfully inappropriate typo: "Administration: Prosperity rating up to 75%. what the hell is this shit." (sic) At first — as you plough through the instructions for clues on how to make your city work — you'll be tempted to agree with the anonymous writer.

But as time goes on, you'll start to think he's wrong and, with experience, the details and rules that at first frustrated begin to fascinate. Sure, *Caesar III* ain't one for the faint-hearted. But buried under all the stats and hassle is a fine real-time strategy game, and one of the highlights of the genre to date.

One thing's for sure, with this level of complexity *Caesar IV* will need a massive rethink. Keep going in this particular direction, and Sierra risks seriously over-taxing the one piece of PC gaming hardware that can't be upgraded — the player. ★★★★★ **James Price**

**Or you could try...**

**Constructor**  
 Acclaim ★★★★★  
 More of a knockabout *SimCity*. With hippies. Lots of fun.

**Sim City 2000**  
 Maxis ★★★★★  
 The all-time classic city building game. This time in 3D.

### Uppers & Downers

#### Toga party

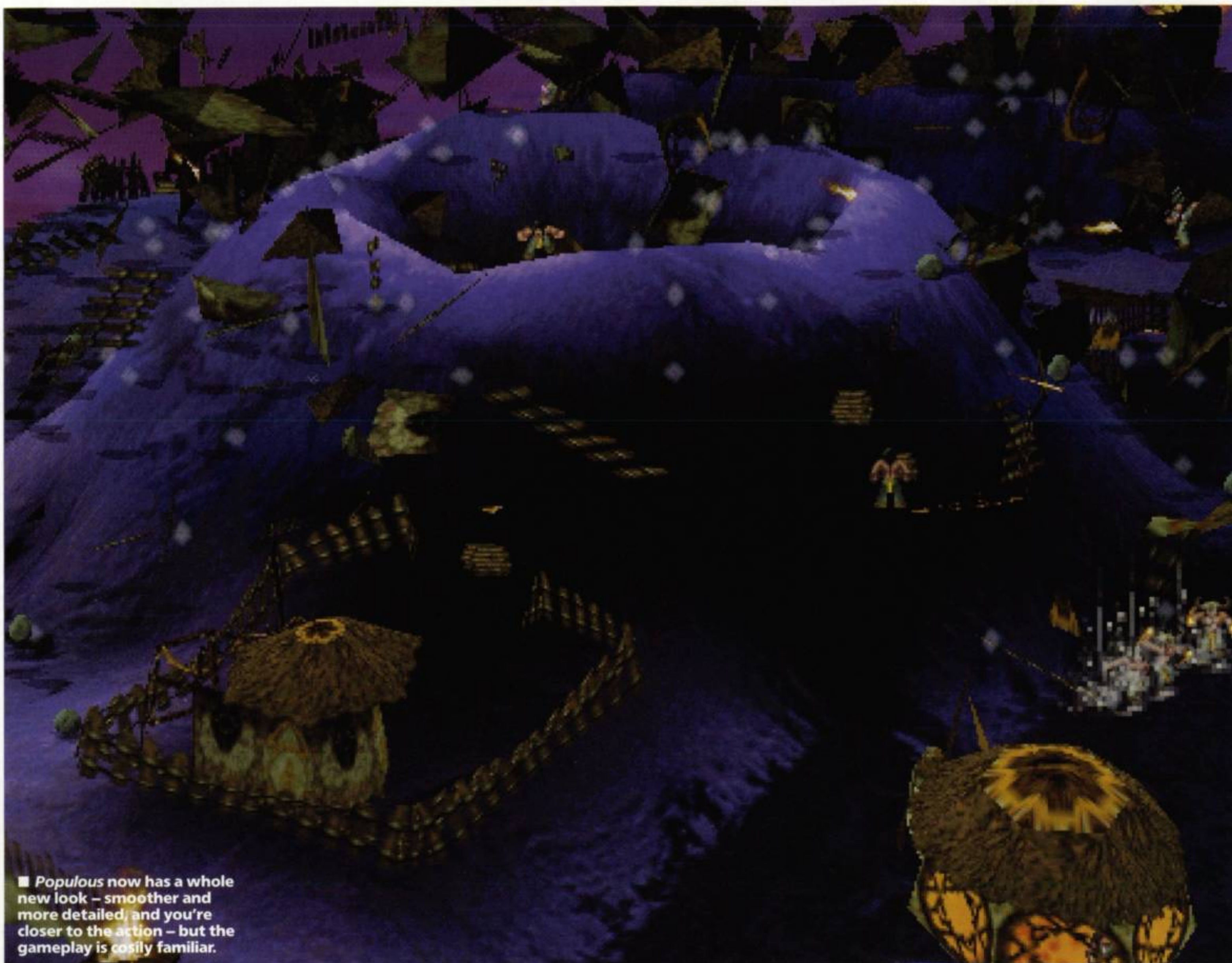
- There's a whole lot of game to get stuck into
- Two modes to play

#### Animal house

- Heavy going to start
- And where are the orgies?



■ Graduates of *SimCity 2000* will find *Caesar III* a great new challenge.



■ *Populous* now has a whole new look – smoother and more detailed, and you're closer to the action – but the gameplay is cosily familiar.

# PEOPLE MOVER DO YOU STILL BELIEVE?

## Populous: The Beginning

- Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
- Developer: **Bullfrog Productions**
- Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **out now**
- Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, sound card, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **P200, 3D card (direct 3D)**

*Populous* was the release that heralded the arrival of Bullfrog, built a games industry star out of creator Peter Molyneux, and, along with the first *SimCity*, invented the "God sim". Now, 10 years later, it's back. But, in a world of ever-more-complicated real time strategy games, is there still a place for the game that started it all?

**T**he idea of *Populous* is to build up a village of warriors on one side of the game's beautifully depicted world map that's strong enough to take out the enemy village on the other.

And that's it. Except, you see, religion's involved – so inevitably everything gets complicated. As "God", you start each level with just a handful of male and female villagers (braves) and a female leader (your shaman, and the only one capable of casting spells). You can command the

### ↑ Uppers & ↓ Downers

#### Resurrection

- Natty 3D graphics engine
- Well-adjusted learning curve
- Classic, tried 'n' true gameplay

#### Limp erection

- But it's classic because it's really just the same game as before

braves to build huts, in which they will live and breed and gain magic power (mana), and training huts, in which they will become warriors. Sacred monuments, such as stone heads and totem poles, are scattered near your starting point. Your followers need to worship these to enable you to gain new spells (ones to create land, so they can walk from island to island, say) or build more intricate buildings like guard posts and temples. Once you have temples, you can turn some of your braves into preachers, who will convert the enemy's warriors and braves to your side.

With me so far?

But to gain the powerful spells needed to decisively beat your enemy, and thus move to the next level, you're going to have to try a bit harder. In fact, your shaman will often have to sneak towards the enemy camp where she can worship at their Vault of Knowledge tower. Here's well you'll find the Really Good Stuff – a different super-spell per level, giving you the ability to, say, blast a bolt of lightning down on an enemy, send a swarm of bees to scatter his forces, or cause a spectacular volcano to erupt from the ground and ooze lava, causing mucho destruction.

Hang on a minute.

You've heard this all before, right?

*Populous* first came out in 1989, and spawned a sequel and a whole host of imitations and derivatives. There were so many that everyone eventually got bored of this whole building-up-communities-then-sending-them-to-fight stuff. By the mid-'90s the original genre, the so-called "God sims", had all but died. Real-time strategy games such as *C&C* and *WarCraft* took the basic concept and successfully ran with it.

But now the first, the original, is back. *Populous: The Beginning* is essentially the same game it always was – simple at its heart (though it always comes across as complicated when you try to explain it), and definitely touched by a smattering of genius. So what's different about *The Beginning*? And is it relevant ten years on?

It's certainly much better looking, with a swish new 3D graphics engine that enables you to swivel your way around the levels and view what's going on in your domain from all angles. The only slight problem is that this can occasionally become disorientating, particularly when you've become used to seeing the level from one viewpoint. A quick change of camera angle can feel a bit like stopping halfway through a meal, turning



your plate around, and expecting to see the mashed potato where the carrots are.

*Populous: The Beginning* is also easier to get to grips with than the original. You don't have to worry

about flattening your land to provide room for your people to build (a major part of the original). There's less emphasis placed on the continuous acquisition of mana. And your people go where you tell them to (they've become more manageable in their old age). It's really is an old-school God sim, but presented with '90s sophistication – which is, I guess, exactly what Bullfrog wanted.

If you've never played *Populous*, then, this makes an excellent place to start. You'll probably be fascinated by the great central idea, and you'll get to see what all the fuss was about – this is still one of gaming's landmark titles. If you *did* play the original game, play it again in 3D. How much you get out of it – and this touches on a slight feeling of repetitiveness that is the only real

downside to the game – will depend on how much you persevere. ★★★★★

**Rich Pelley**



**Or you could try...**

**Settlers 2**  
BlueByte ★★★  
Lots of different little people.

**Populous 2**  
Electronic Arts ★★★  
Ancient classic, if you can find it.



■ As with many modern interpretations of old games, *Populous: The Beginning* is like one of those live action film versions of cartoons. Say, *The Flintstones*. You remember stuff like the volcanos (top) from before, but they never looked real until now.



■ Forget our tragic winter, and head out into *Links '99's* gorgeous landscapes. It's a golf course paradise where the sun always shines.

## Links LS '99

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Access Software**  
 ■ Price: **TBA** ■ Release date: **late November 1998**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **P150, 32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**

**The latest incarnation of one of the big name golf sims. It looks great and has lots of courses and options.**

■ The *Links* series is one of gaming's hardy perennials. It's been going so long there was once a version for users of only the most expensive, high-end machines called... *Links 386*. We've come on a fair way since then, of course and this latest incarnation is the most comprehensive yet. It boasts four beautiful courses (St Andrews, Bay Hill Club and Lodge, Entrada at Snow Canyon and the Latrobe Country Club) and a virtual version of veteran putter Arnold Palmer to play against.

Before you get to hit any balls, however, you must traverse a myriad of option screens. There are over 30 modes of play available, ranging from "Normal" to "Putt or die", and there's even a screen that enables you to either create a digital effigy of yourself or (if lazy) pick one of eight supplied players.

*Links's* greens are gorgeous, hi-res affairs, with beautiful rolling greens and simply fabulous-looking lakes that even reflect the surrounding scenery. You have to pay for all this visual sumptuousness, however, with the long processing times required to generate them: every time a new scene is drawn you're left sitting there, twiddling your thumbs, as your PC chugs away.

When it comes to the actual business of whacking the ball you get two-click, three-click and PowerStroke mouse swing options. There's even, in the Tournament mode, a crowd to cheer you on if you get it right. Putting is a far less satisfying business, however, and I certainly found it much harder to sink the damned ball than I did getting it onto the green.

A quality golf game, then, but not a perfect one. Not least because I've yet to see any conclusive proof it helps you pull. So much for the *Links* Effect.

★★★★

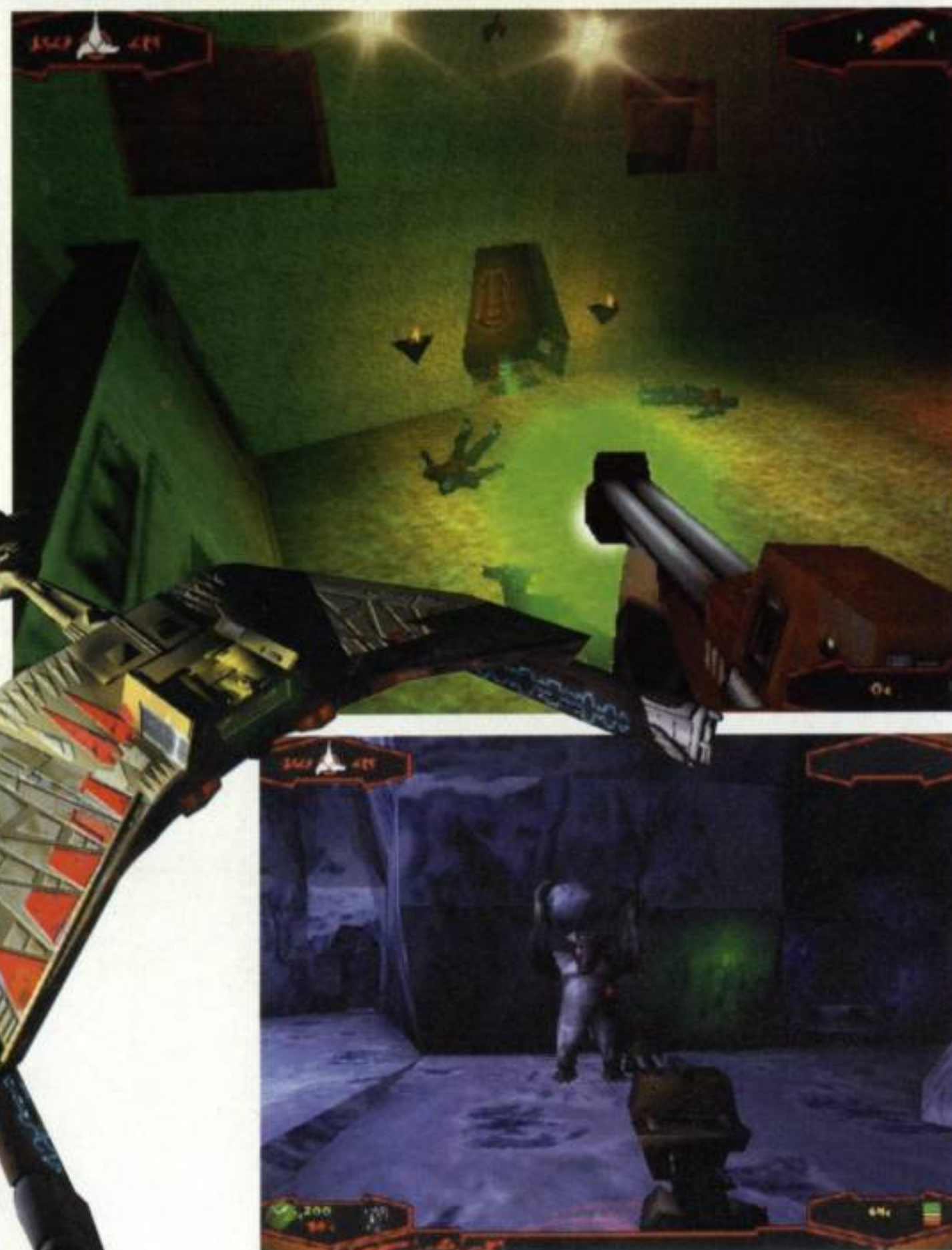
**Tim Cant**

# WORF EAGER

ALIEN LONG-HAIRS KILL EACH OTHER. LIKE WOODSTOCK, ONLY GRISLIER



■ Those wacky Klingons. They like nothing better than smacking each other down in a deathrite. (That's Klingon for "deathmatch".)



■ Klingons are so hard. They're always up for a game of "Head the Boulder" with any passing ice monsters.

## Uppers & Downers

- Federation**
- It's *Star Trek*
  - With shiny *Unreal* looks
  - And you can kill things!
- Klingon**
- But you can't kill Kirk
  - Or Wesley
  - Kla'Ch Akcwah p'Faghl

# Klingon Honor Guard

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**  
 ■ Developer: **MicroProse** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-16**  
 ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **3D card**

**It's the first *Star Trek* game with proper killing. Ever. (BTW, why do Klingons have such big chips on their shoulders? To go with the pasties on their foreheads!)**

So then, a proper *Star Trek* first-person action game. Well, sort of. Due to the legal complications of the mighty *Star Trek* franchise, doing a proper shooting game with real *Star Trek* characters is against the rules. No matter how attractive, nay, necessary, it might seem, no way are you ever going to see Wesley Crusher get his balls blown off by a rocket launcher. So to get round the intricacies of Hollywood contracts, MicroProse has pulled off the wizard wheeze of having a *Star Trek* shooter in the *Star Trek* universe, but without real *Star Trek* characters; just those grizzly old Klingons. You're a Klingon and, thanks, no doubt, to some administrative cock-up, the bad guys are Klingons as well.

Look, it's based around Epic Megagame's mighty *Unreal* engine, so have little doubt that *Klingon Honor Guard* looks fantastic; the best-looking *Star Trek* game ever, in fact. And like *Unreal*, it mostly plays like a dream. There are a couple of oddities that might annoy or perplex you; the fact that if you kill an evil Klingon who has a better weapon than you, you can't pick it up. Why? Loads of them have those weird boomerang-shaped swords, and early in the game there's little more irritating than smacking them down, only to find that they keep a tight grip on their bendy blades. Gits.

And then there's the way that some levels end when you least expect it. You think you've got some way to go, you do something important without realising it and next thing you know, you're on your way to the next level. Uh, why? What did I do right? Couldn't we have some sort of big, obvious button to press to end the level of our own accord? It sounds picky, but if you're the type who likes to fully explore every level and find all those tricky secrets, this is going to wind you up something rotten.

Two complaints and that's about it, apart from the inevitable fact that you need a monster PC for it to look its best. On the plus side are the witty asides your Klingon character comes up with and, uh, the rest of it. A shade more polishing and it would have been perfect. As the Klingons themselves would say... Oh, sod it. Get a big throat full of phlegm and make some guttural noises. That sounds about right. ★★★★★

**Travis**

**Or you could try...**

**Quake**  
 GT ★★★★★  
 Ultimate, industry standard shooter.

**Unreal**  
 GT ★★★★★  
 Like Quake but stunning looking.

**Quake II**  
 GT ★★★★★  
 More of the fantastic same.



# DESERT STORM

## BUILDING CASTLES IN THE SAND



■ Evoking *Boys' Own Paper* images of the SAS, *Rainbow Six* adds strategic depth to the first-person gore-fest.

### Rainbow Six

■ Publisher: **Red Storm**  
 ■ Developer: **Red Storm**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-16**  
 ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, 16-bit SVGA, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **P200, 32Mb RAM, D3D Accelerator**

**Don your black combats, not to go clubbing but to pitch in with hard-as-nails SAS-types in Tom Clancy's realistic shoot-'em-up.**

■ The whole first-person shooter genre has been crying out for a more cerebral approach, and *Rainbow Six* delivers it. Not that I was convinced it would (I've been burned too many times by games based on books or films). But *Rainbow Six* isn't just a Jack Ryan vehicle, it stars all new characters: a bunch of tough ex-special forces types from assorted nations, all specialists in combating international terrorism.

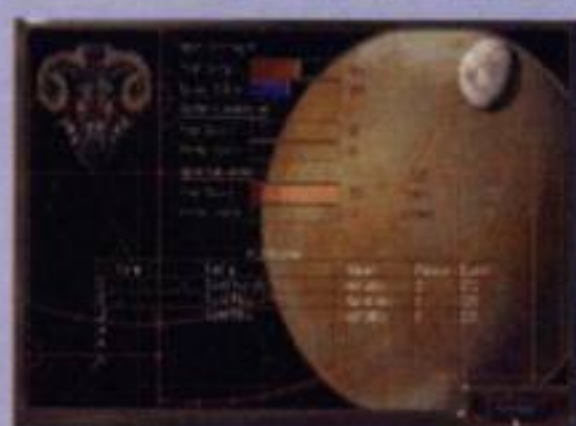
During the action, you assume a *Quake*-style perspective as you wander through petro-chemical plants and foreign embassies, defusing explosives, rescuing hostages and putting bullets in the brains of terrorists. The graphics are more *Jedi Knight* than *Unreal*, but suit the game well with some nice touches, such as slow-forming pools of claret around the recently deceased.

As a nod towards realism, there are no health packs conveniently lying around, and no grenade-proof armour. A single bullet could quickly end your career. This all gives the game a very realistic, stealth-orientated feel – even more so than with PlayStation's *Metal Gear Solid*.

But where *Rainbow Six* really exceeds expectations is in the planning of missions. You get to configure your team's strategy, routes and tasks prior to the action on a blueprint of the target building. It's real Iranian embassy stuff, and adds layers of depth.

Perhaps the only real flaw is the AI of your troops, who waver between SAS-style brilliance and United States Marine Corps incompetence. The terrorists themselves are a bit like Grandpa – their eyesight and hearing isn't what it should be. But while this is frustrating, it's not enough to spoil an unusual and otherwise inventive title. ★★★★★

Jason Weston



■ The Sandworms leave your foot troops alone, but gobble up your vehicles with gusto. Oh, and beware the dubious character who'll brief you for the Harkonnen missions.

### Uppers & Downers

- Up**
- Faithful to Westwood's original classic
  - With a few updates
  - Pleasantly simple strategy-lite diversion
- Dune**
- Dated feel
  - Expensive, for what it is
  - *Tiberian Sun*'s out soon

by dumping the plodding turn-based business that'd dominated the area, giving birth to a new style of game: real-time strategy.

But that was then, and this is now. Strategy games have come along in leaps and bounds since 1993, and *Dune II*'s long-awaited sequel – *Dune 2000* – is both more and, curiously, less than the

original. What we have here is *Dune II* with knobs on. It's the original game lovingly reproduced, polished, and dressed in a dapper tweed sports jacket. In this brushed up reincarnation, your challenge is to fight your way across 27 map sections playing the warlike Harkonnen, the sneaky Ordos, or the rather more noble Atreides – all races introduced in Frank Herbert's best-selling *Dune* series of science fiction novels, of course – using a combination of fighting and resource management to progress.

The problem is that while *Dune 2000* manages to offer improvements over the original in virtually every area, these improvements really aren't very dramatic. The graphics haven't been beefed up so much as given a quick lick of paint. This time around the Giant Sandworms (surely the *Dune* series' most compelling visual) are more pleasantly rendered and animated – their appearance augured by telltale blue crackles of static electricity – but that's it. The combat units themselves, although prettier than *Dune II*'s, aren't much to write home about either – they look very dated, even shabbier than the original *Command & Conquer*'s. Considering that *C&C* was released a little over three years ago, that's pretty disappointing. The control interface has also been updated, with group selection now possible and, unlike in the original, you can now direct building projects from the sidebar. Pretty cool, but for a game that once innovated so much, this is hardly ground-breaking stuff.

So where does all this lead us? The sad fact is that great though *Dune II* was in its time, any new version is going to be too simplistic to compete with modern real-time strategy titles, the likes of *Age Of Empires* or *Total Annihilation*, unless it's given a pretty serious overhaul. And *Dune 2000* simply hasn't been given the attention.

On one level perhaps I'm being a little unfair. *Dune 2000* never specifically claims to be a next-generation game, more the remaster of a classic. And on these terms it works. So if you fancy a trip down memory lane then give it a try – you'll be playing a piece of gaming's history. If you're after an innovative game that breaks new ground, however, look elsewhere. Gaming moves so fast these days there's little room for old men. And that's decidedly what *Dune 2000* is. ★★★

Alex Bickham

## Dune 2000

■ Publisher **EA** ■ Developer: **Westwood Studios**  
 ■ Price: **£35** ■ UK release: **out now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **P100, 16Mb RAM, HD space, CD speed, graphics card** ■ Recommended: **P166, 32Mb RAM, HD space, CD speed, graphics card**

**Command & Conquer's dad is back, with new braces and trimmed whiskers. He's fun, for a while.**

In the unlikely event that you've never heard of *Dune II*, here's a quick re-cap: it's 1993, and strategy is tired. The inherent limitations of its turn-based nature and a remorseless parade of dull-looking games seemingly condemn it to backwater status. Nobody seems to know how to get the whole genre out of a serious rut. Nobody, that is, apart from Westwood Studios, who add a bucketful of spice to the colourless porridge with an inspirational new game, *Dune II*. The breakthrough comes

**Or you could try...**

**Command & Conquer: Red Alert**  
 Virgin Interactive ★★★★★  
 The most recent incarnation of C&C

**Total Annihilation**  
 GT Interactive ★★★★★  
 Simply the best real-time strategy to date.



## Hedz

■ Publisher: **Hasbro Interactive** ■ Developer: **VIS Interactive** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1 (Internet multi-player option)** ■ Requires: **P100, 16Mb RAM, 30Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 2Mb graphics card**

**Now here's an original release: you have to scamper around 3D mazes, taking the phrase "head-hunting" to its limit.**

■ It seems most people are wary of the prospect of real-life head transplants being mere years away and, if *Hedz* is anything to go by, we've got good reason to be scared. Hasbro has evidently seen the future and it's a world where aliens strap human brain-balls onto their torsos and then adopt not only their dead suitor's physical attributes, but also any weapons or vehicles they may have owned. It isn't as gory as it sounds, though – largely because you play the part of one of the noggin-nabbing aliens.

*Hedz* takes place in a series of garish 3D worlds, ranging from downtown cities to over-sized children's playrooms, all of them viewed from the behind-and-above perspective that's become *de rigeur* since dear Lara's first appearance. Your quest is to collect bonces from the other head-hunting green-boys littering the landscape. And – wouldn't you know it? – asking nicely just ain't gonna work.

Despite the lure of gaining extra heads, each bringing with it new abilities, actually making progress in *Hedz* verges on the monotonous. The only way to open locked doors, for example, is to kill aliens until one of them spits out a key. These key-holders will frequently make such a run for it that you have to trek back half a level to find them. After three or more levels of this sort of "action", you'll be contemplating removing your own head just for the relief of it.

On the plus side... on the plus side. Let me see. I suppose the idea is fairly neat. And the controls are intuitive enough, with homing shots and a helpful radar showing your enemies at long range. The graphics and sound do their job too, and there are a host of nice touches – such as shot aliens making a last grab for their lost head before they're teleported out. So it's interesting, if not actually that entertaining. Me, I'm looking forward to the sequel, *Legz*. ★★ **Mark Green**

TEAM: MANCHESTER U V LEEDS  
 TODAY IS 27 JUL 1998  
 PREMIERSHIP 15 AUG 1998  
 442 DEF

FORMATION	STATUS	CONTRACTORY	PLURAL	ROLES
<b>FIRST TEAM</b>				
GK 1	P. Schmeichel	90	0	GK
RB 2	G. Neville	90	0	RB RWB CD
LB 3	D. Irwin	90	0	LB RB
CD 24	R. Johnson	90	0	CD
CD 5	J. Star	90	0	CD RB
DM 16	R. Keane	90	0	AK DM
DM 8	N. Butt	90	0	OK DM
DM 7	D. Beckham	90	0	RM OK AK
LW 11	R. Giggs	90	0	LW LW
CF 18	P. Scholes	90	0	CF AK
CF 10	T. Sheenaghua	90	0	CF ST
<b>SUBSTITUTES (5)</b>				
GK 17	R. van der Gouw	90	0	GK
CD 21	N. Berg	90	0	CD RB
AK 14	J. Croxoff	90	0	AK CF
ST 9	A. Cole	90	0	ST
ST 20	O. Solikjaer	90	0	ST
<b>RESERVES</b>				
GK 25	K. Pillington	90	0	GK

COACHING BUSINESS  
 TEAM  
 Formation  
 Stats  
 Performance  
 Ind Orders  
 Specific Roles  
 Team Orders  
 Training  
 TRANSFER  
 YOUTH  
 TABLES  
 ANALYSIS  
 EMAIL

JAAP STAM, CENTRAL DEFENDER  
 Jun 15 1998 21:32:26

■ Have you got what it takes to manage a premier league team? Try this before you buy that sheepskin coat.

# MID-LEAGUE RESPECTABILITY FANCY YOURSELF AS GLEN HODDLE?

## FA Premier League Football Manager '99

■ Publisher: **EA Sports** ■ Developer: **EA Sports**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, Win 95, 3Dfx card**  
 ■ Recommended: **P200, 32Mb RAM**

**EA Sports makes its inevitable move into the football management arena, and does its usual professional job.**

**T**eaming up with the FA Premier League is a good start, but EA's still going to need to give 110% to lure fans away from such well-established football manager league-leaders as EIDOS's *Championship Manager* and Gremlin's *Premier Manager* series.

Despite the title, *FA Premier League Football Manager '99* allows you to work with teams from the top four English and top two Scottish divisions. So you can start off small and, if you're successful, switch to larger clubs as the season progresses. The game is divided into the usual business and coaching options, and both are handled well. EA-mails arrive at your office to let you know if something major needs attending

**Uppers & Downers**

**Premier Division**

- Training pays off
- Virtual managers help out
- A great transfer system
- It's not just the premiere league teams

**Vauxhall Conference**

- It's up against some pretty stiff competition

to, and if there are any aspects of the game you don't fancy handling, you can pass them over to computer-controlled Virtual Managers, something that's certainly recommended for the more trivial parts of the job – like organising the selling of replica jerseys, say.

But the meat of this type of game is, of course, the coaching side, and *Premier League* scores well here. Training individual players makes a big difference to their performance, while the transfer system is both realistic and backed by a solid database of players worldwide. Each player is rated in 13 separate categories, which you'll probably find is more than enough. I certainly got quickly tired of such intricacy, and stuck to choosing my team on the basis of recent performances on the pitch (which at the end of the day, Mr Brooking, is surely the fairest way, wouldn't you agree, Gary?). Commentary is supplied by John Motson, in case you were wondering.

On match days you have enough control over your team's formation and strategy to give the impression that your input is actually making a difference. Viewing the game is fairly impressive too, particularly if you're using 3Dfx acceleration, which renders things in stunning 3D (the visuals are far less impressive without). Alternatively you can use a more practical overhead 2D view to see how your tactics are working on the pitch.

Altogether, *Premier League* is an impressive package, but brand loyalty is high in this genre and competition is fierce. Fans of other titles may want a yet more convincing performance from EA before switching team allegiance.

★★★★

**Glen Weston**

**Or you could try...**

**Championship Manager 2**  
 EIDOS ★★★★★  
 Now released at budget price, EIDOS's offering has to offer the best value.

**Premier Manager '98**  
 Gremlin ★★★  
 A good game, but not up to the standards of its competition.

# RACE FOR YOUR LIFE

## STEP INTO A DARK AND DEMANDING FUTURE

### DethKarz

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Melbourne House** ■ Price: **£34.99**  
 ■ Release date: **November** ■ Players: **1-8**  
 ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 3D card**

**Why is the future never a bright place where peaceful citizens reside in quiet affability? Because dark, fast and dangerous makes for a better storyline.**

**P**C simulations can be perplexing articles. Almost every flight sim you boot-up looks like it belongs in a military training establishment, while driving games can be as gruelling as a genuine 24 hour Le Mans session. Occasionally you crave a good old fashioned arcade diversion, and with a top-notch PC – 3D card primed – you ought to expect something fast, furious and fun.

Et voila! It's *DethKarz*, a moronically titled yet classy looking release, which has few very original ideas but more zest than a lemon. Through squinted eyes it resembles *WipeOut 2097*, *POD*, *Motorhead*... in fact any brightly-lit, high-energy racing game set in the far future.

The game offers 12 circuits, set across four worlds, each more challenging than the last.

Metro City, Grand Keys, The Pole and Red Planet provide the backdrops for a roller-coaster ride of sudden turns and gut-twisting leaps. Your vehicles resemble a collection of souped-up F1 machines each awaiting the onset of road rage, although you are going to have to earn the right to drive the more powerful of the bunch. Each comes with a laser gun with which to punch rivals out of your path, although you can collect a range of more powerful weapon power-ups on the track, like the antimatter device which arches out to sap energy from passing opponents.

There are no invisible walls keeping you locked to the track, which means that skidding clean off the road is frustratingly easy to do and, until you become proficient, the crash-restart routine is very alienating. But once the handling has become second-nature, *DethKarz* becomes an exhilarating bit of nonsense which should please all but the most demanding PC thrill-seekers. ★★★

**Cam Anderson**

#### ↑ Uppers & Downers

##### Spares

- 12 impressive tracks
- Great collection of weaponry to build
- Exciting racing challenges

##### Flats

- Initially difficult to keep your Karz on-track
- Time consuming, irritating crash restart routine



■ Once you've got the hang of the handling, you can soon plough round *DethKarz*' 12 tracks like the weapon-toting speed pro you are.



#### Or you could try...

**Screamer Rally 2**  
 Virgin Interactive  
 Entertainment ★★★  
 Classic arcade burn-up

**Motorhead**  
 Gremlin Interactive ★★★★★  
 Drool-worthy Wipeout-done with wheels



### Ring

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: **Cryo** ■ Price: **£44.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, 8x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**

**What do you get if you cross an operatic epic with a puzzling point 'n' click? Oddly, not quite the disaster you'd expect.**

■ Videogames based on operas are becoming a rarity, especially since Codemasters canned its eagerly awaited *TOSCA Touring Car Championship*. Not missing a trick (or a gap in the market), eccentric French developer Cryo steps into the breach with the unfortunately titled *Ring*, a game based on Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelungen*.

*Ring* actually began life all the way back in 1972 as a set of stage designs for a futuristic reworking

of Wagner's Viking epic, but two and a half decades down the line, it's mutated into a point and click adventure, complete with singing characters and music conducted by Sir Georg Solti.

It really is as odd as it sounds. Wagner's music plays constantly in the background as you explore the various different worlds in *Ring*'s universe, and at important points in the story the characters will burst into song. When there's no singing going on you get the opportunity to wander round the stunning settings and solve a few puzzles. Opera aside, it's basically a standard first-person adventure, albeit one that also has some stunning pre-rendered graphics and an utterly bonkers collection of robotic Norse gods thrown in to the mix. The puzzles are pretty simple, the graphics are lovely and controlling the characters is a breeze – this is particularly useful if you're just getting started with playing videogames.

*Ring* comes on six CD-ROMs, so there's a pretty big amount of adventuring to be had, and the game does a good job of drawing you in to the plot – especially as you'll never quite know when Alberich the dwarf king might start belting out another tune. Big up the aria! ★★★ **Tim Cant**



### Riverworld

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: **Cryo** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1 and networked game**  
 ■ Requires: **P90, 16Mb RAM, 30Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM drive, soundcard**  
 ■ Recommended: **3D accelerator card**

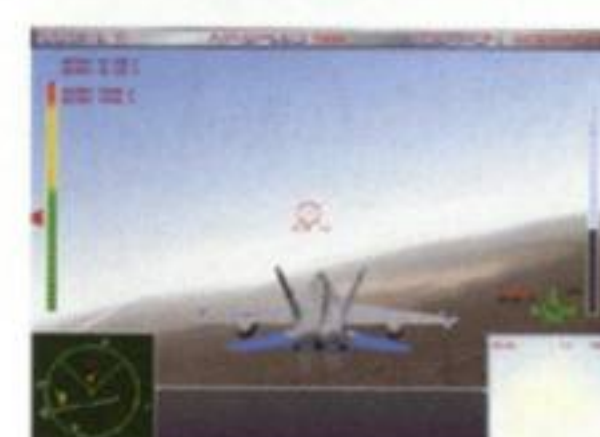
**How do you take a sprawling series of classic science fiction novels and condense them into a single game? Not like this.**

■ *Riverworld* is based on the series of novels by Philip Jose Farmer. It's an interesting premise: imagine that everyone who has ever lived has been reincarnated in the far future on the banks of a river that winds its way around a massive planet. If you've ever wanted to watch Queen Victoria go five rounds with Julius Caesar,

now's your chance. (Actually, if you do want to see that, you should probably seek help from an appropriately qualified person.)

Not to put too fine a point on it, *Riverworld* is a god-sim. You control the actions of one Richard Burton (the Victorian explorer, not the bloke who married Liz Taylor), and your eventual aim is to find the source of the river. In order to do this, you'll need to enlist the help of the various people around you. To begin with, you'll need to provide them with somewhere to live. After that, they'll happily do your work for you, chopping down trees or quarrying stone to build your little empire. You can expand your territory by taking over your neighbours' Grailstones, which they need to provide them with food. There are well-known historical figures scattered around who will help you or fight as you try to find your way up-river.

The game uses an intuitive point-and-click system that makes use of a 3D cards if you have one. Graphically, it's attractive but overall it's not very varied, making it a great game for fans of the lengthy series of books, but not one that's likely to pull too many non sci-fi fans in. Goodish, then, but certainly not the best in its genre. ★★ **Jim Chandler**



### Fighter Pilot

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Developer: **Electronic Arts**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1 (2-player network game)**  
 ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 85Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 2Mb graphics card, soundcard, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **joystick, 3D accelerator card**

**It looks like a flight sim, it smells like a flight sim, but by golly it doesn't taste like a flight sim. EA's *Fighter Pilot* has all the trappings, but no complications.**

■ Despite the looks, this isn't really a flight sim. It's an arcade game. There's no mucking around with flaps and radios, and tedious details like taking off and landing simply don't happen. Stripped to the

bone, leaving only the fun stuff, this is a game with killing at its core – you shoot enemy planes, you blast ground installations, you save the free world. Weapons include the usual mix of air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, plus a bunch of other defensive and offensive goodies.

The end result is pretty groovy – once you've got past the clichéd trappings of the formula (speed guitar music; the cheerful "kick-ass-and-take-names" tone of your fellow pilots), at least. *Fighter Pilot* takes advantage of 3D accelerator cards, and looks very nice indeed if you're using a Voodoo card of some type. Your plane handles smoothly, and it's satisfying when one of your missiles finds its mark. And once you've completed the missions, you can link two PCs over a network to shoot down your friends instead.

Where *Fighter Pilot* falls down is in a general lack of variety – this really is a fire-and-forget game – so it won't hold much long term appeal, but with your brain locked firmly in standby mode, you're bound to have an entertaining time. ★★★ **Jim Chandler**



## Newman/Haas Racing

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Developer: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**  
 ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, 33Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM, graphics card, soundcard, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **P166, 4x CD-ROM, 3Dfx card** ■ Extras: **steering wheel can be used**

**In the wheeler-dealer world of racing games, it's easier to end up with a Trabant than your dream Ferrari. Psygnosis's latest IndyCar effort is a bit of both.**

■ *Newman/Haas Racing* has all the usual racing-game suspects: 16 different cars and drivers, 11 tracks with different racing styles and oodles of crisp 3D scenery. You get plenty of pit action, knob twiddling and technoblurb, while the racing is smooth, fast and doesn't require an engineering degree. Sounds great? It's not.

*Newman/Haas* seems to have it all, but doesn't. The sounds grate. Like the commentator. The engine is stolen from your sister's moped – it's tinny and unrealistic, despite the fact it's a sampled Haas. And far from the chassis-crunching cacophony you'd expect from high-speed crashes, they all sound like someone whacking

# NOW THAT'S MAGIC BUT HAS IT GOT A RABBIT UP ITS SLEEVE?



■ It's always the same, isn't it? Out on a binge with your mates, and after two ales, you're fighting over who gets to take the skinny skeletons back to yours for "coffee".



■ It might look like your standard fantasy fare, but *Magic & Mayhem* has a lot more to offer than goblins.

## Magic & Mayhem

■ Publisher: **Virgin Interactive Entertainment**  
 ■ Developer: **Mythos Games** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P100, 16Mb RAM, 100Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM, 2Mb graphics card, soundcard** ■ Recommended: **P133, 32Mb RAM, 275Mb HD space, modem for Internet play**

**For once, a combination of spells, summoning and strategy guaranteed to entertain someone other than hippies and eternal students.**

**W**ith a name like *Magic & Mayhem*, you know it's either a fantasy battle game, or a heavy night out with Paul Daniels. Let's hope bloodshed is involved, either way. It's tempting at this stage to let rip a barrage of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* quotes – but I shall resist. Still, *M&M* sets itself up royally for that kind of treatment, focusing as it does on such staple-diet fantasies as quests for golden cups, mighty wizards with dull-sounding names, knights of the round tabletop wargames, and so on.

Preconceptions aside, the surprise is that *M&M* is great entertainment. It's absolutely packed with stuff – okay, so it's the usual spell-casting and zombie-summoning, but it's beautifully done and that's what counts. It manages to serve two masters equally; there is good main-character development with

**↑ Uppers & ↓ Downers**

**Magic tricks**

- Great music, played by the Afro Celt Sound System
- Superb plot development
- Top hack-'n'-slash strategy

**Sleight of hand**

- No unusual foes or monsters added to the genre
- Sexy character-free

an appealing, not-too-tired story line, yet it's also a great hack-'n'-slash strategy game. A rare thing.

You may be sick to death of Arthurian legends, tales of Avalon, and old Joe from Arimathea – but if those things still appeal, *M&M* is a must-have. Even its combination of 30 Celtic, Greek and Medieval regions feels wonderfully Olde English, but without a trace of that puerile "pointy-hatted damsel" rubbish we've come to loathe in so many US-made fantasy games. I'd probably never admit this in the pub, in front of my football and motorbike-loving mates, but I like *M&M* – and I think I'm gonna buy a copy, so I can finish the damn thing. Pass the brimstone Merlin, it's going to be another late one. ★★★★★ **Neil Jackson**

### Or you could try...

**X-Com: Apocalypse**  
 MicroProse ★★★★★  
 Another swift-playing strategy offering, developed by the same brothers as *M&M*.

**Warcraft II**  
 Blizzard ★★★★★  
 The same principle as *C&C*, transported to a fantasy setting.



■ Oooh, that's going to stain...

heads with a biscuit tin lid. Visually, *Newman/Haas* gets sillier: square tyre-heaps stop cars – dead – at 140mph, without knocking the traffic cones off the top. Bollards.

However, once you've settled into racing, not crashing, the fun starts. The impossible right-angled corners click. The wall-jamming frustration opens into a seat-of-the-pants experience. Your near-misses are captured by the Crash-Cam, which zooms out to catch the calamity, yet not so far that you lose connection with things.

So where does it finish? Well, *Newman/Haas Racing* is a middle-lane contender, beating most of the traffic, but occasionally ending up with a wheel on the hard shoulder. ★★ ★ Neil Jackson



### Emergency: Fighters for Life

■ Publisher: ASCII ■ Developer: TopWare ■ Price: £24.99  
 ■ Release date: on sale now  
 ■ Players: 1 ■ Requires: P120, 16Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM, SVGA video card, Win 95  
 ■ Recommended: P166, 32Mb RAM, soundcard

**It's a fantastic idea for a god sim: take control of an emergency scene, and co-ordinate the rescue services to save the day.**

■ *Emergency* could have been the *Theme Disaster* that Bullfrog never made – a ground-breaking strategy game combining the spectacle of *Armageddon* with the human stories of a *Casualty* or *ER*. But it's not. Instead, it stands as a staggeringly innovative idea, flattened by a clumsy execution.

There's nothing wrong with the basic set-up. You play the god-like controller of all rescue forces, the guy whose job it is to save lives and prevent property damage while re-routing traffic

and protecting bystanders. All against the clock, and against the budget. Many of the incidents you're faced with are of cat-stuck-up-tree urgency, but the more catastrophic missions include a nuclear meltdown and a poison-gas subway attack. On paper it sounds like excellent fun, but in reality *Emergency* has so many faults that after 20 minutes you'll begin to feel in need of rescue.

For starters, *Emergency's* graphics are so small it's difficult to spot many of the objects that you'll need to manipulate. In one episode, I came across the vital switch that I needed to flick to enable a helicopter to land on the motorway more by luck than by judgement – it was less than four

pixels across. The absence of a zoom function makes playing a strain too, with scrolling around many scenes quickly becoming a jerky chore. But perhaps most frustrating of all is the utter lack of decent AI. No-one seems to have a mind of their own – the doctors let patients die unless specifically instructed otherwise, while the process of sending out four police units to an accident scene requires you to look after them individually – which in a short time becomes enough to stop you caring. These people are so stupid, they don't deserve to live.

All of which make *Emergency* a classic case of could-have-been, should-have-been. ★★ Ian Harris



## PC budget re-releases by Robin Alway and Sam Richards

**Here's an entrepreneurial idea. Take a load of old PC games. Package 'em up in shiny new boxes and sell 'em dead cheap. Eh? Come on, we'd make a fortune... Oh. Someone already thought of that. Bugger. Well, there goes another get-rich-quick scheme. Best take a look at what they've done, then.**



### Dungeon Keeper

■ Publisher: EA Classics ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ Hyped to buggery and then distressingly late, industry veteran Peter Molyneux made *Dungeon Keeper* his last work for his British company Bullfrog Productions. It was worth the wait, and Molyneux left the company in style: *Dungeon Keeper* is every strategy fanatic's daydream, offering you the chance to run your very own underground labyrinth. Like an antidote to regular heroic fantasy games, your task is to play the evil overlord. An uneasy mixture of point-'n'-click tactics, *Theme Park*-style construction, first-person action and tight resource management means the first few hours of play may alienate, but perseverance is rewarded by *DK's* devilish sense of humour. ★★★★★



### F1 Racing Simulation

■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8  
 ■ Until its sequel *Monaco Grand Prix* hit the shelves this autumn, *F1 Racing Simulation* was the most authentic Grand Prix driving title for the PC. It's dauntingly difficult to control even if you play it in Easy mode with all the AI assistance switched on, and the learning curve is steep, but you can feel a (slow) sense of progression. An hour spent practising round the 1996 World Championship tracks, or realigning the tyres and tweaking the spoiler angle, always leaves you feeling empowered. Arcade fun may have been sacrificed on the high altar of realism, but with clean, super-fast visuals, and car options to make an F1 anorak dribble, this is a bargain for Damon Hill-wannabes. ★★★★★



### Little Big Adventure 2

■ Publisher: EA Classics ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ An elephant in a shiny space suit, some dancing sausages and giraffes having a sauna? There is only one game where you can encounter these things in colourful isometric 3D and believe in the logic of it all. The universe in EA's finest adventure release is surreal but consistent, and your progress in the role of the bouncy Twinsen is challengingly non-linear. Your quest is to overcome the insidious aliens, and along the way you'll chat with characters, ride in vehicles and even visit outer space. Twinsen has an enormous number of moves, and you must somersault, fight and peashoot your way through the levels. Despite its weirdness, *LBA 2* is sure to become a classic. ★★★★★



### Network Q RAC Rally

■ Publisher: Europress 'Q' ■ Price: £9.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ Re-released on budget, this granddaddy of PC driving simulations has been around the block more times than a pensioner afraid to cross the street. Looking at its bland DOS interface and its sprite-based environment in the light of today's market is depressing. Like watching a gunslinger whose shooting hand has the shakes. For the time, it was a highly ambitious project, and the business of following your grueling rally route on a map, and driving it properly from behind the wheel, inspired many imitators and at least two sequels. Clearly *RAC Rally* has been overtaken, and its appearance on the Q label is unrealistic – you could have *F1 Racing Simulation* for a mere £3 more. ★★



### Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

■ Publisher: GT Replay ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ The PC is nobody's first choice for platform games and *Abe's Oddysee* on PC CD-ROM shows all the symptoms of being a second thought, only converted from the PlayStation "because it was there". The sympathetic lead character and sophisticated little touches – like the ability to talk to other inhabitants – barely make up for the gameplay's dated consistency. There are some pseudo-3D puzzles, such as objects that swing "in" and "out" of view, or villains who appear to be in the distance, but essentially you just flick from one puzzling screen to the next à la *Manic Miner*. If you want to have this sort of experience regularly, buy a console. ★★★



### Pro Pinball: Timeshock!

■ Publisher: GT Replay ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ Your biggest disappointment, aside from the obvious lack of a huge machine clanking against your midriff, might be that *Timeshock!* has only one pinball table available. Fortunately, this is likely to be your only disappointment. *Timeshock!* remains the acme of the pinball sim genre. A varied, vibrantly animated set of sci-fi table obstructions might initially grab your interest, but it's the authentic silver-ball physics and the anal attention to detail that is going to keep you hooked: even the mechanics of the tilt warning work according to a virtual under-table pendulum. Worth a punt, if only to save you spending cash in the machine in your local. ★★★★★



### Sid Meier's Gettysburg!

■ Publisher: EA Classics ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: out now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ A legend in videogame history, thanks almost entirely to *Civilization*, Mr Meier left MicroProse in 1996 to form Firaxis. *Gettysburg!* – an atmospheric amalgam of real-time strategy and traditional number-heavy wargaming – was the first Firaxis release. Despite a clumsy interface, training and deploying your troops isn't a chore, and you can gleefully fight your way through the early battles of the American Civil War as either Confederates or Unionists. If accurate re-enactment bores you, *Gettysburg!* can also create random scenarios set in the same era. Like *Civilization* before it, the visuals are crisp and functional but not cutting-edge. ★★★★★



### Sub Culture

■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-4  
 ■ Every title that features a mixture of exploration, trading and combat claims to be the new *Elite*. Setting its buy-sell-shoot adventure under the ocean, developer Criterion has implemented its proprietary Dive 3D engine to charming effect. The deep-sea environment glides along, boasting giant turtles, shoals of fish and (of course) a navy of inch-high warriors all out to get you. A range of well-conceived missions and a comic storyline – the miniature ocean-bound society is consolidating to take revenge on humanity's polluting ways – can't conceal the limited nature of the gameplay. Where *Elite* had hundreds of star systems, *Sub Culture* has a mere five cities. 'Nuff said. ★★★★★



### Theme Hospital

■ Publisher: EA Classics ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ It's been suggested that a worldwide indifference to what some pundits feel is a gaming classic comes down to one factor: despite what *Carry On* movies suggest, hospitals aren't hilarious. In chunky 3D your task is to design an institution, putting down plenty of seats and stocking surgeries with machines that go "Ping". You must then hire staff before a range of comedy epidemics test your clinic's mettle. Subsequently, you continue to enhance the clinic's appearance, reputation and resources. Initially intriguing, *Theme Hospital* can become repetitive, and if you lack patience you should look for *Theme Park*, which is earlier, funnier and also available on budget. ★★★★★



### Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business

■ Publisher: EIDOS ■ Price: £14.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1  
 ■ Supposedly offering the fans an alternative ending to the original game, but actually more likely to be considered a cynical way to cash in on Lara Croft's popularity before the backlash, *Unfinished Business* is *Tomb Raider* plus four extra levels. The add-on sections are more intense than in the original, with Lara facing hordes of opponents in an enhanced Atlantis environment. From there she travels to Khamoon to hunt for artefacts, and takes on the magical Egyptian cat folk. *Tomb Raider* is getting on for three years old, but think of *Unfinished Business* as an expert challenge; a bit extra if you thought Ms Croft's first quest was over too soon. ★★★★★



### Total Annihilation

■ Publisher: GT Replay ■ Price: £12.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8  
 ■ By streamlining the top-down strategy concept until all that's left is pure adrenaline, *TA* has become the undisputed Emperor of the genre. It's a better real-time combat game than *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* or *StarCraft*. *TA's* genius lies in an interface and shortcut command system that is a cinch to use, even if you're only just getting started. The management of your resources – metal and energy – is clear-cut, and you don't even have to send out tiresome mining units. Battles are fast, intense and heart-thumpingly well animated. Better still, hundreds of additional units and multi-player maps are already available on the Net, so this is a title to keep you busy for months. ★★★★★



### Total Insanity 2

■ Publisher: Europress ■ Price: £29.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1-8 (different for each game)  
 ■ Some things are greater than the sum of their parts. Sadly, a package of weakly executed and frustrating titles doesn't add up to a great compilation. *Worms 2* isn't bad, but remains frighteningly similar to its turn-based prequel. It still provides some entertainment, which is more than can be said for the point-and-click *Titanic: An Adventure Out of Time*. This has nothing to do with the movie and is the worst kind of ponderous nonsense. The final offering, the first-person adventure *Star Trek: Generations*, is based too tightly on the Paramount film for real flexibility, and bores with its clumsy progress. *Total Insanity 2* is about quantity, not quality. ★★

# New Nintendo 64 Games



■ It'll take more than Dickie Attenborough, a fast computer and some test tubes to bring this one back to life.

# DINO-ROAR!

SHOW THOSE LIZARDS WHO'S BOSS WITH SOME DISTURBINGLY UNPLEASANT WEAPONRY

# Turok 2

**Arcade**  
**Nintendo 64**  
**Game of the Month**

■ Publisher: **Acclaim Entertainment** ■ Developer: **Iguana**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **Late November, 1998**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **4Mb RAM Pack (Nintendo, price and availability TBA)**

**The king of blood and splatter is back. And this time his toys are going to make even more of a mess.**

If you ask us, there's something fishy going on at Iguana, the Acclaim-owned developer behind *Turok 2*. Back in 1997, the company released a first-person dinosaur shoot-'em-up that saved Acclaim from bankruptcy – and helped prop up the adult end of the N64's launch into the bargain. Now they've followed it up with a sequel that betters the original in almost every way.

So why the fish? Look at it this way. *Turok* was the first game to use Nintendo's controller-housed memory pack – even before any of Nintendo's own games. Not only that, *Turok* showed technical expertise that hasn't been achieved elsewhere, outside of Rare and Nintendo's Kyoto HQ.

Now consider *Turok 2*. The game comes on the biggest game cartridge ever manufactured (32Mb) and is – needless to say – the biggest N64 game yet. More surprisingly, though, it's the first game to make use of Nintendo's 4Mb memory expansion pack – a memory upgrade that fits under the N64's top hatch and doubles its memory power to 8Mb. When Nintendo America's President was questioned about the expansion pack at this year's ECTS computer game show in London, he had to admit that Nintendo hadn't even thought of a name for the thing yet. So how did Iguana get hold of a memory pack so early? Why was it the first company to have a game capable of using it (just as they did with the memory pack the year before)? And how come *Turok 2* is so damn good?

*Arcade's* first videogame conspiracy theory, then: there's something going on between Nintendo and Acclaim. At the very least the Iguana studio has a direct – and completely unique – helpline back to the technical boffins in Japan. At the most, Nintendo has secretly broken open its enormous cash vault and bought into one of the oldest companies in the videogame business. Okay, so it's not a case for Mulder and Scully, but with a company as resolutely shy as Nintendo, it's always nice to start a bit of speculation.

Either way, *Turok 2* is the finest-looking N64 outing yet. Without the RAM pack in place, it improves five-fold on *Turok* – rolling back the first game's all-encompassing mists to show far more of a level than you ever got a chance to see originally. With the RAM pack in place, the game looks like a graphics card-assisted, high-end PC title – you won't believe what you see on your TV can really come from the same machine that plays host to *Cruis'n World*.

In fact, it's impossible to talk about *Turok 2* without dwelling on the graphics. While the game's setting has remained roughly the same – a cross between *Jabberwocky* medievalism and a *Doom* dungeon – the enemies have changed beyond all recognition. Out go the majority of the first game's curiously uninvolved dinosaurs and in comes a new range of pi-pedal mutant space monsters, many of them with guns. Big guns. The Raptors remain, fortunately, and (if you can bear to watch as they spring out on you) you'll see the attention to graphic detail is superb. From rows of bloody reptile teeth, to the points on their slicing talons, these guys will haunt your thoughts long after you've turned your machine off.

Of course, whenever screen-filling bad guys turn up in a game like *Turok 2*, you can be sure that someone's carelessly left an enormous arsenal of dangerous weaponry lying about. Indeed, if you thought *Turok's* nuclear weapon-sized Chronoscepter was the endpoint for any first-person game's gun ambitions, you'll be pleased to learn that *Turok*



■ Everything, from the bad guys to the weapons, have been given a complete graphical overhaul.



*2* has found new extremes in which to revel. How about a spiked frisbee with boomerang properties that slices the limbs off anything you throw it at? Or a three-at-a-time missile launcher, whose final missile never does anything more than spread your enemy's corpse a little bit further across the grass? And if – due to some mental impairment, say – those don't take your fancy, switch to the Cerebral Bore and watch as your missile locks on to an enemy's head, drills into it (accompanied by a fantastic Black and Decker whine), making a hole for blood and cranial fluid to exit in a graceful arc, and then explodes, leaving a stumbling headless corpse. As a nod to Rare's *GoldenEye*, there's even a sniper sight with some of the weapons, enabling you to take out bad guys at long range.

Where the original game fell down was its difficulty. To make proceedings last, Iguana incorporated madly frustrating precision jumping levels where the slightest mistake resulted in death. Now, the designers of *Turok 2* have used the extra cartridge space to offer instead a barely manageable stream of enemies who simply won't take no for an answer. A lot better. Couple all this with a four-player mode – the biggest omission in the first game – and *Turok 2* threatens to eclipse the might of Rare's *GoldenEye*. Did anyone think this was possible?

If you're going to level a criticism at *Turok 2*, you could say that the actual bread and butter of its gameplay – kill things, find switches, open doors, kill more things – has undergone only cosmetic surgery since the days of *Doom*. It's not intellectually taxing, certainly, but it's not supposed to be. *Turok 2* is happy to stick with "chilling", "exhilarating" and "tough", which – if it's going to be as well executed as this – we're more than happy with.

This is a great, great game. Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough. ★★★★★ **James Ashton**

■ Gone are the shrouds of mist that haunted the original *Turok*. *Turok 2's* levels feel more open, more expansive, and plain bigger.

## TUROK 2 THREATENS TO ECLIPSE THE MIGHT OF RARE'S GOLDENEYE. DID ANYONE THINK THIS WAS POSSIBLE?

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Evolving**  
 ■ Loads of blood  
 ■ Eye-bleedingly gorgeous looks  
 ■ Tough enough to last for ages

**Extinct**  
 ■ Over-steep learning curve  
 ■ You'll need the RAM pack to see it in its full glory

### Or you could try...

**GoldenEye**  
 Rare ★★★★★  
 The king of N64 first-person shooters. Until now.

**Duke Nukem**  
 GT Interactive ★★★★★  
 No arguing with Duke's cool and style, but he's no Bond.

**Hexen**  
 id ★★  
 Don't be tempted by the id name, this is dull, dull, dull.

# THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

## MOW DOWN CIVILIANS, DRIVE COOL VEHICLES, BLAST ALIENS AND SAVE THE WORLD

■ *Body Harvest's* graphics, while not the best, generate the feel of an Earth terrorised by alien people-eaters. Fans of the likes of Wyndham's *The Kraken Wakes* will recognise scenes like this.



■ *Body Harvest* draws upon B-movie imagery and a number of established gameplay styles. There are even elements of the Williams coin-op classic, *Defender*.

## Body Harvest

- Publisher: **Gremlin Interactive**
- Developer: **DMA** ■ Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
- Extras: **Rumble pack**

**It's been three long years in the making, but DMA's incredibly violent alien invasion epic is finally here. This is a massive game, but graphics are only so-so. Can it live up to expectations?**

Imagine an amalgamation of every fantastic alien bug B-movie you've ever seen on Channel 4 late on a Saturday night. Imagine a world with huge, hideous creatures, unfazed by the heaviest artillery the military can muster, flesh-eating mutants hell-bent on reducing the population of Small Town USA to a decidedly unhealthy zero and a lone hero, Earth's last hope of avoiding its grisly fate as a larder for a race of alien superbeings.

Now imagine that you're the star of the show. Throw in a sizeable arsenal of destructive weaponry, more than 100 vehicles, five very different stages with over 1,000 square miles of landscape, and – lo and behold – you've got DMA Design's epic *Body Harvest*. The game casts you as Adam Drake, a genetically

enhanced warrior from the 21st century. Earth is blighted by time-travelling aliens who have infested various time zones from the past in order to snack on their favourite calorie-uncontrolled diet of human brains, bones and balls. The only way to put a stop to their unsavoury habit is to travel back in time and meet the aliens before they can wolf down enough of your ancestors to make the idea of even the loosest family reunion a non-starter.

Your first stop is in 1916 Greece, and it takes all of 30 seconds before you're thrown into your first battle with an alien harvester patrol. Enter a unit consisting of winged scouts which sniff out humans in their homes, muscular "bashers" which knock down any houses the scouts hover over and the utterly disgusting Drone King. This fella is the leader of the operation, and sits in the middle of the destruction waiting for the roving blobs of green goo it dumps from its grisly backside to fetch it some homeless Earth folk. The captured humans are delivered directly to the Drone King's jaws and swallowed down whole.

Luckily for the hapless Greeks, you're armed with a laser pistol and a trigger finger-chaffingly large amount of ammo. The scouts and bashers are swiftly dispatched, and you can free the trapped humans from the slime by simply shooting at it. A few well-placed shots and the Drone King will spew yuck and explode, scattering the remains of its last lunch over the remains of its last lunch's house.

Similar harvester waves beam down into the levels at pre-set intervals, and you have a limited amount of time to



locate them. If you ignore the little red arrow pointing you in the direction of the action, munching will occur on a wholesale basis. When six humans have been eaten, a super-powerful mutant alien will arrive and hunt you remorselessly. If you're slack enough to let more than 25 hapless people meet their fate in the Drone King's belly, it's Game Over.

Since each level is so huge, and Adam is hardly Sally Gunnell when it comes to the old pegging-it-around-on-foot-looking-for-alien-invaders lark, it's a good job that there are hundreds of vehicles lying around just waiting to be stolen. You can drive everything from tanks to buses and fire engines to motorbikes. All the vehicles handle and perform differently – you can pull handbrake turns in a lightweight two-seater sports car, or you can hop in a tank and just roll over the smaller flea-like aliens.

You can also roll over the humans (they make a crunchy, squishy sort of sound). They're very tempting to kill but, sadly, any innocent folk you may absent-mindedly slaughter get added on to your 25-human maximum death-level-

## YOU CAN ROLL OVER THE HUMANS (THEY MAKE A CRUNCHY, SQUISHY SORT OF SOUND). VERY TEMPTING...

meter – even if it's an honest mistake (like parking the tank at the top of a hill and accidentally letting it roll down into the town square).

If you make it through the four main stages of the level, you'll be faced with a gigantic boss alien and given the Alpha Tank – a futuristic hovercraft – as your final vehicle with which to battle it.

And that's just the first level. It's followed by Java 1941, USA 1966, Siberia 1991, and a final trip out to the aliens' comet homeworld in 2016. Each level is just as vast as Greece, and is infested with tougher varieties of bug. They also offer a completely different set of vehicles. Java is filled

with wartime jeeps and trucks, the USA has Cadillacs and helicopters, and Siberia has secret military hardware and – bizarrely – a combine harvester, which can be used to mince zombies and... damn! It's that 25-kill limit spoiling the fun again.

*Body Harvest* is almost the perfect action/shooting/bug-hunting game. It's got some fairly basic puzzle-solving elements, with characters to talk to and items to find, but for the most part it's all about killing. And it does it extremely well. The sheer size of the game means you won't finish it for ages, and the promise of trying out every vehicle is enough to keep you playing until you do. Just tooling about in the various different trucks is almost a game in itself.

Excellent stuff. ★★★★★

Simon Garner



### ↑ Uppers & Downers

#### Harvest festival

- Wholesale slaughter is fun. This proves it
- Puzzle elements provide a break from the shooting
- Next to *Turok 2*, it's the biggest game on the N64

#### Grim reaper

- Murky, unattractive graphics
- Dire character dialogue
- It's easy to get completely lost



■ *F-Zero X* really is fast. So fast, that it's tough to keep track of four-player races.

## TOO MUCH WALL SNOGGING NOT ONLY COSTS YOU ENERGY BUT ALSO SLOWS YOU DOWN

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

#### Thrill

- Very, very fast
- Lasting challenge

#### Kill

- Cheating computer craft
- Often too difficult

# EFFIN' QUICK

NOT A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO ROAD SAFETY

## F-Zero X

■ Publisher: **Nintendo** ■ Developer: **in-house**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ UK release: **out now** ■ Players: **1-4**

With the original SNES *F-Zero*, Nintendo set the standard for futuristic racers. Now the master is back to teach *WipEout* a few lessons.

**N**intendo's futuristic racer has apparently set itself one aim: to be the fastest game in the whole wide world. And with one track featuring a series of turbo pads that will get you up to a whopping claimed 1,000kmph, and another whipping through neon-striped tunnels so fast it feels like you're going backwards, it hasn't done too badly.

With this much speed, graphical complications have understandably taken a back seat. Every one of *F-Zero X*'s tracks are suspended in mid-air so there's no pesky scenery to draw. Instead, processing power can be focussed purely on providing high-octane racing thrills with 29 opponents from hell and routes designed by someone who thinks that jumps followed by 200ft drops are "a pretty neat idea."

The angular, space-age transports of *F-Zero X* (yes, they do look a little like *WipEout*'s) are a pleasure to drive thanks to finely-tuned controls that respond perfectly to subtle pushes of the analogue stick. This is good because winning races means pushing your machine to its limit; tearing round corners without skidding, smashing into walls or falling off. Too much wall-snogging not only costs you energy but also slows you down.

On the easier difficulty settings you'll soon be champion, but things get tougher very quickly. Indeed, if anything risks spoiling *F-Zero X* for the average player it's the way your computer opponents cheat on the trickier stages. All too often they'll simply scream past thanks to some kind of magic boosting power (they get it from the start, you have to wait a lap). There's no countering this unfair advantage, other than by tracking the arrow highlighting your nearest rival, sneaking up quietly behind

him and, at your convenience, giving him a gentle shove earthwards.

There are 24 tracks divided between four race series, or "Cups", culminating in the nightmarish, U-turn-

laden Big Hand, a course laid out like – well, you guessed it. Complete all this and you graduate to the X Cup, which spontaneously generates a random track every time you play. These special tracks have a habit of churning out horrific 90° turns immediately preceded by a jump, causing more ground-plunging heartbreak than all the other courses put together.

*F-Zero X* isn't perfect, but it's not far off. And with the inclusion of a four-player option it's another great buy for N64 owners who feel the need... ★★★★★ **Mark Green**

### Or you could try...

**Turok Dinosaur Hunter**  
Acclaim Entertainment  
★★★★★  
Gun-filled gore-fest.

**GoldenEye**  
Rare ★★★★★  
Stealthy, sniping action.

**Lylat Wars**  
Nintendo ★★★★★  
Explosion-packed 3D space shooter.

### Or you could try...

**F1 Grand Prix**  
Nintendo ★★★★★  
Reviewed in this very issue (see page 144) it's not futuristic, but a great F1 game.

**Aero Gauge**  
ASC ★  
Before *F-Zero X*, there was little reason to buy this. Now there's none whatsoever.



## 1080° Snowboarding

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**  
 ■ Developer: **Nintendo**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

**It's old news in the States, Japan and Australia, but now it's winter, Nintendo's top-notch snowboard sim finally gets its UK release.**

■ A very familiar title with import gamers, *1080°* is at last getting a UK release – just in time for a few practice runs before you lash out 600 quid on a week in Chamonix. And it's about time too. *1080°* has become a real office favourite in recent weeks, not least because its wide range of options and pick-up-and-go nature make it as much fun for a quick five minute powder blast as it is for a longer mountain-bashing sesh.

Playing in Match Race mode means you simply have to win to progress. In the slalom Time Trial, though, you race against a ghost of yourself from a previous race. Trick Attack mode is superb, too, enabling you to go for all sorts of fancy moves and combos, racking up points. There are six courses, a training track, a half-pipe course and one big run-up leading to a huge air-ramp, not to mention five main and three additional secret snowboarders, and eight main boards, with one secret – all in all, more than enough options to keep anyone interested.

Of course, none of this would matter a hoot if the game didn't look and feel good, and this is where *1080°* really delivers. It's suitably fast, almost superhumanly smooth and scattered with lovely visual effects, not least the way that visibility seems to close in as snow begins to fall, giving an eerie feel to some sections – familiar if you've ever suddenly found yourself alone and lonely on top of a French mountain.

The replays are all fantastic-looking too, and useful – helping you to commit every nook and cranny of each course to memory. Assorted camera angles chase your boarder down the slope, zoom out as he twists 540° out of a cliff jump, then pan down the mountain as your man grabs a Stiffy to Indy Nosebone, mistakes the landing and touches down in the powder on his arse. With a pumping soundtrack and snow-whooshing effects, replays look as good as any snowboard video.

But while the speed racing games are fantastic, it's trying to perfect the wide range of trick moves that'll keep you coming

# SILICON CHIC

## WHY NOT TRY A BIT OF ANIMAL MAGIC?



■ **Slipping inside a dead animal's body is quite legal in *Silicon Valley*. But where it really gets fun is when you get to use their weapons. You haven't lived til you've controlled a bomb-dropping flying rabbit, or a boxing kangaroo.**

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Evo Stik**  
 ■ Pleasingly difficult puzzles  
 ■ Loads of attention to detail

**Jelly sheep**  
 ■ Some characters too slow  
 ■ Erratic camera

# Spacestation: Silicon Valley

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Developer: **DMA Design**  
 ■ Price: **£49.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

**From the creator of *Lemmings* comes another creature-based puzzler. Killing animals and taking control of the corpses has never been so much fun.**

**D**MA is best-known for bad-taste titles that cheekily deviate from the mainstream. Watching tiny green-haired idiots getting drowned, crushed and hanged? That'd be *Lemmings*. Trafficking drugs and shooting coppers? You're playing *Grand Theft Auto*. Now say "Hi" to *Spacestation: Silicon Valley*, which carries on the style with its emphasis on killing cute animals.

The central character is Evo, a small computer chip with the power of resurrection. To complete each level is a case of flipping switches or dragging items from one place to another to kill and then control assorted beasties, each animal's skills and shortcomings affecting where you can go and which creatures you're able to kill for later use.

With levels featuring everything from underground sewers to picturesque fields, the graphics have a flat, old-skool *Mario* feel to them, which makes everything seem a tad other-worldly. Want to see a jelly-like wobbling sheep or a fox on wheels? Then this is the game for you.

Despite some of the animals being a bit slow, they're all easy to control – if there's any difficulty getting any of them to do what you want, it's intentional, to prevent you completing the level too easily. On the down side, the camera doesn't always track you properly, and this can occasionally make seeing where you're going difficult.

But it's the attention to detail that makes *Silicon Valley* so likable. The music gets louder as you approach loud-speakers, while animals leave footprints in the snow level. Fun, then, but no showstopper. ★★★★★ **Mark Green**

### Or you could try...

**Glover**  
 Hasbro ★★★  
 Tricky puzzle-solving that involves bizzare ball-glove combo.

**Bust-A-Move 2**  
 Acclaim ★★★★★  
 The purest and most compulsive puzzling money can buy.

back for more. It'll take you ages to do them all – the grab ones (like *Tweak* and *Mute Grab*) are reasonably easy, but the Spin tricks are excruciatingly hard. They require spins of the joystick and well-timed button presses, progressing from the fairly basic 180° (R+left), through the harder 720° (R+anticlockwise rotation, then R+anticlockwise rotation +B), to the mother of them all; the 1,080° (R+anti, then R+anti +B, then R+anti+B+Z). It took me weeks to get it right, and even now I have a very limited success rate. (For more help staying on your feet, check out the tips in *Kick Ass*, starting on page 98.)

All-in-all, then, *1080°* is a near-perfect release – easy to get into, hard to perfect, great looking, and packed tight with variety. It even comes with a split-screen two-player mode (actually one of the few disappointments – play with a friend and the more expert boarder is soon bound to zoom off into the far distance, never to be seen again). This is, as near as dammit, perfect snowboarding on your N64. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**



## F1 World Grand Prix

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**  
 ■ Developer: **Nintendo** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

**17 tracks of beautiful, accurate race simulation. From Nintendo itself.**

■ "Have you got that one that was on TV?" someone asked the other day when I explained that I played N64 games for a living. They meant the heavily advertised ("Let's see that again!") *F1 World Grand Prix*, the Formula One racer to put all others to shame.

With games like this and snow sim *1080°* (left), Nintendo is slowly

building up a strong portfolio of more PlayStation-style games – accurate simulations of cool, real-life activities, unadorned by bright colours and cute animals and thus, perhaps, more attractive to the man in the street. Take this more photo-realistic approach, add it to the graphical power of the N64 and the abilities of Nintendo's peerless in-house development team, and you have a predictably stunning product – squint your eyes a bit, and you could instead be watching ITV on a Sunday afternoon. The graphics are first-rate, the sound is perfect, the handling of the cars is spot on, all the real cars and drivers are present and correct, and the tracks are so accurate you could be there. Just as you'd expect.

What comes as more of a treat, however, is the effort made to give variety to the way you play the game. You can mess around with it in Arcade mode, which has automatic braking and gears and enables you to charge round all 17 laps with your finger pretty much glued to the accelerate button. You can play it as a racing game

with automatic gears – your finger switching between brake and accelerate as you commit the bends of each course to memory. You can play a strict simulation, where a thorough understanding of each course's twists, turns and undulations is as important to you as it is to a real-life Grand Prix driver. You can even play through a simulation of the entire 1997 Formula One Grand Prix season, where everything down to the weather, pit stops, crashes and positioning of the other cars is historically accurate. If even that's not quite enough for you, and you're starting to feel a touch lonely, you can play a friend in two-player mode, and watch the replays over and over again. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**





### Gex 64: Enter the Gecko

- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Developer: **Crystal Dynamics** ■ Price: **£39.99**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**

**A been-there, done-that rerun for the 3D0 gecko.**

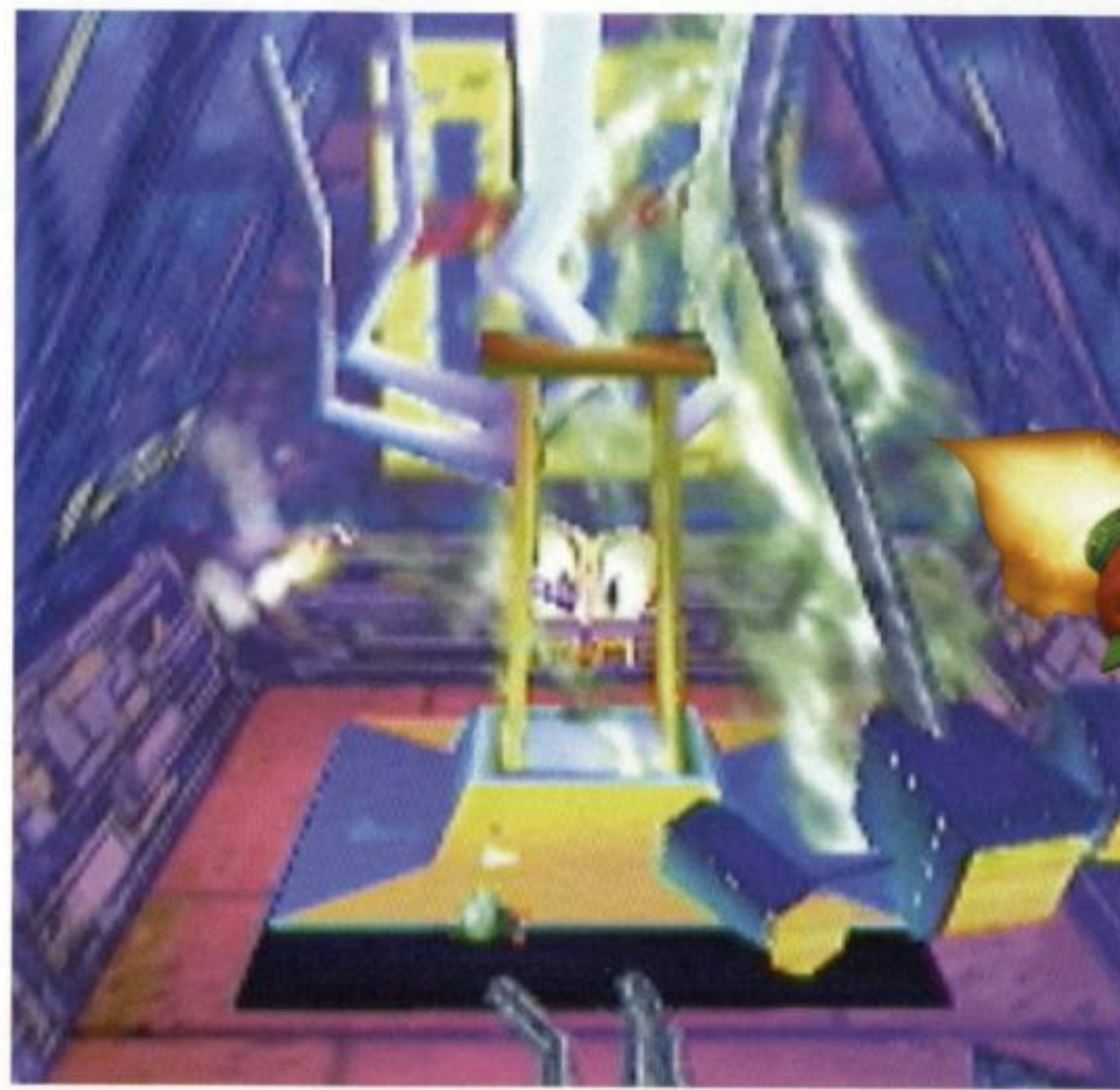
■ Gex the gecko has a history that stretches all the way back to the ill-fated 3D0 console, when he starred in a below-average 2D platformer. Now, in 1998, the lime-green leaping lizard has returned in a new 64-bit conversion of the PlayStation sequel, which actually manages to be inferior to all of the tedious originals. Quite a feat.

Gex 64 is terrible. It attempts to imitate *Mario*, offering three different mission objectives for each level, but it's so amateurishly executed that at times it seems like it was designed as part of somebody's GCSE art project. Completing almost all of the objectives is simply a matter of travelling to a certain point in the level, avoiding a few very basic traps along the way. The whole thing is very linear, and the game experience incredibly unsatisfying.

An extra level, Titanic, has been added to distinguish Gex 64 from the PlayStation version, and it's one of the poorest examples of the game designer's art we've ever seen. Gex seems to get stuck behind invisible bits of scenery, the camera regularly loses sight of the action behind a wall and the graphics look like they took all of ten minutes to knock up. It's quite simply appalling.

Gex himself boasts almost as many frames of animation as the kids in *South Park*. And we're talking the wilfully flat TV series here, not the upcoming (and rather fine-looking) *Quake*-style 3D game. He does occasionally stick to walls, which is a bonus, but then so does a well-aimed wad of phlegm. Most disturbingly, he utters a selection of muffled wisecracks throughout the game. Some of them are unfortunately intelligible, but even the best is about as amusing as a false-positive in a pregnancy test. *Enter the Gecko?* We'd rather not, thanks. ★

**Martin Kitts**



■ Faithful companions Willfly (the rocket-type bloke above) and Willfall (the dopey-looking wheeled guy below) are meant to help you in your quest. Willfly at least helps you fly around, but Willfall is, frankly, useless.

# CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

## ROLL UP! ROLL UP! OR RATHER, DON'T

### Starshot: Space Circus Fever

- Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Infogrames** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **November 1998** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **Cartridge back-up**

**3D platforming antics, with a dash of puzzling and a whole heap of bizarre European humour.**

Entering on a touring "Space Circus", which is in battle with the evil "Virtua Circus" for exotic items, *Starshot* sounds more intriguing than it is. In fact, it's just a French *Mario 64*-like 3D platformer, and full of the same flaws that have scuppered earlier pretenders. An unwieldy and confusing camera? Seen it before. Over-fiddly controls? Been there. It's all so disappointingly familiar.

Each planet that impish character Starshot visits is impressively large, packed with enemies and pretty. But the graphics, although intricate, are garish and confusing, and the number of

both static and wandering objects means you'll often find yourself stumbling about confused before falling off a nearby ledge.

There's a developing plot and characters to speak to, but the map is almost too helpful, turning play into a case of merely getting to the target area and talking to an "instruction balloon". Reaching the target is a problem, though, with an over-reliance on jumping between platforms suspended in mid-air, made more difficult by the combination of 3D perspective and jerky graphics.

This is a shame, because the few puzzles you encounter are often quite original. One, for example, has you turning a jukebox on to bring a dancing ghost to life, and then pushing tables together so that he dances across the room to smash open a locked door. The firing system, though – where you can guide missiles with the analogue stick – is too cumbersome and makes the shooting puzzles as difficult as the brain and control-oriented examples.

So, despite being loaded with a scary atmosphere and a decent sense of humour, *Starshot* is too frustrating and, ironically, one-dimensional to hook you. ★★★

**Mark Green**

#### Uppers & Downers

##### Lions and tigers

- Very, very big
- Often surprisingly amusing
- The map makes getting about possible

##### Reptile house

- Confusing graphics
- Relies too much on precision jumping
- Gets very jerky



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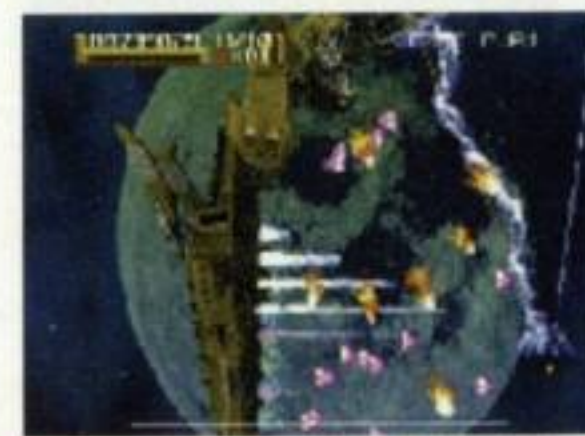
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PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER CANNING/VIEWPOINT



■ No split-screen nonsense here; each player sits at his or her own screen and views the action first-person. The result is the nearest gaming has come to simulating a real fight – but without the pain.



**SEGA SATURN**

## Radiant Silvergun

■ Publisher: **Treasure**  
 ■ Developer: **Treasure**  
 ■ Price: **See importer**  
 ■ Japanese release: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

**Crazed but respected Jap developer Treasure takes the Saturn to the peak of its 2D powers.**

# STREET FIGHT

## LUCKILY, YOUR MATES ARE WITH YOU

**COIN-OP**

## SpikeOut

■ Maker: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega Am2** ■ Release date: **early 1999** ■ Players: **1-4**

**Already out in Japan, Sega's latest arcade creation offers all the fun of gangland fighting. With your pals.**

There's no disputing that Sega's AM2 coin-op division is the very best. With a back catalogue including *Hang-On*, *OutRun*, *Daytona USA*, *Scud Race* and the *Virtua Fighter* series, no one – not even Namco – comes close. Sega AM2 really is (as young people say) "all that."

There's also no disputing the power of Sega's Model 3 arcade graphics technology. And there's no arguing with the appeal of extreme, multi-player, no-holds-barred violence.

Combine these three vital ingredients and you're pretty much guaranteed a winner. And that's exactly what *SpikeOut* is.

Essentially, it's a 3D beat-'em-up, viewed from behind the back of your character (kind of like *Tomb Raider*). If

it feels somewhat like *Virtua Fighter*, that's because some of *VF3*'s animation code was borrowed for *SpikeOut*'s basic fighting moves. The game's 3D setting also takes a lot of *Virtua Fighter*'s feel and turns it into something more gritty, more urban and with tons more interactive scenery.

Having picked one of four characters, it's into this world you must walk with a view to kicking some serious ass. You head through a department store (the fights on the escalators are a game in themselves) and in to the city. Gangs of hoodlums and thugs surround you from all directions. At the end of each section a hard-as-nails boss and an assortment of cronies will try to do dreadful things to you. It's a world of pain.

Except that you're not alone. And this is one of those game features that you have to play to appreciate. Knowing that you have three other allies watching your back (players two, three and four) is tops. You can fight as a team. You can combine to pull off special combos. You can be stuck in a corner, having seven shades of shit hammered out of you, and then all of a sudden your assailants are dispersed with a few well-aimed punches from one of your buddies. It feels just like the end of *Star Wars*, when Han piles in and saves Luke.

*SpikeOut* is great. We love it. Try it as soon as you can. ★★★★★ **Neil West**

## Fighting talk

*SpikeOut* is the brainchild of Sega's Toshihiro Nagoshi, previously best known for the *Daytona USA* series of coin-ops. Here's what he had to say when we asked about the development of his most ambitious title yet:

**What turned out to be the hardest part of making *SpikeOut*?**

The multi-player feature was difficult to implement, and it was also difficult dealing with multiple enemies. From my previous experience on driving games I'm familiar with multi-player, but characters have much more data than cars – cars don't have special moves!

***SpikeOut* is a true original. Why do you think it's taken so long for a game like this to appear?**

It's a problem of technology, but also one of time. Apart from Sega, there are few companies in the world who could make such a game.

**So how would you describe the difference between *SpikeOut* and conventional fighting games?**

*SpikeOut* is not really a fighting game in the traditional sense. Recent fighting games feature very short periods of play, with fights lasting just 20 or 30 seconds. *SpikeOut* is a very different spin on the genre. It will take an expert player 45 minutes to complete. It is based on collaboration. You are not fighting against the person sitting next to you, but you collaborate with him against the CPU.

**So, d'you reckon a *SpikeOut* conversion will ever appear for the Dreamcast?**

I wouldn't rule it out.





## MACINTOSH

### Unreal

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Epic MegaGames**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-full network game** ■ Requires: **603e PowerMac (80MHz) or better, 32Mb RAM, 128Mb HD space, System 7, modem for Net play** ■ Recommended: **G3, 80Mb RAM, 3Dfx card**

Not since *Marathon* was released back in 1994 has the Mac had such a game to shout about, but pretty graphics aside, is *Unreal* actually any good?

■ You can blame *Wolfenstein*. That's where the tidal wave of first person shooters started. It defined a new genre, one which *Unreal* takes to its limits, testing your abilities and those of your Mac. *Unreal* is basically just *Quake* taken up two gears; a first person shooter with a more advanced 3D engine, and more gore.

The plot goes thus: you are an inmate aboard a prison colony space ship, crash-landed on a planet inhabited by helpful but over-religious four-armed bipeds called the Nali, and an assortment of deeply unpleasant creatures who'd like to disembowel you. You start by escaping the crippled ship, negotiating corridors, vents and the remains of fellow inmates and crew, who seem unable to die either quietly or in one piece. From there, you move into bright sunlight and the planet's surface, pick up a weapon and kill your first alien/demon. What follows is 20-odd levels of temples, tunnels and villages to fire through.

What sets *Unreal* apart from other 3D games is the detail in the graphics. The maps are highly complex and the textures detailed and realistic. The sound effects are great, and you will literally break into cold sweat when you hear a deep growl coming from behind you. Your opponents are varied and intelligent. First they stalk you, then dodge your fire, weaving left, right, up and down to close in for the kill. Your weapons are limited to start with, and *Unreal* doloes out power-ups grudgingly. There are no fantastic weapons of mass destruction à la *Turok*; the grenade-launcher and mini-gun are about as powerful as it gets.

*Unreal* is great fun. However, there are no new ideas here – something to replace the tired and frustrating hunt-the-switch gag is needed, and *Unreal* doesn't provide. It's good, but it's nothing new. ★★★ **Lindsay Bruce**

# COLOR CLASH

## THE FIRST GAME BOY COLOR STUFF IS HERE!

As Game Boy Color arrives on these shores, so does the first batch of multi-hued software. It's not a selection bursting with big names, but hey – at least everything on offer is quite pretty. By Robin Alway.



### GAME BOY COLOR

#### Cool Hand

■ Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Tarantula**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1**

Card games with enough swagger to turn even the wettest Welsh weekend into a Las Vegas fantasy.

■ Cards. Hardly the most thrilling pastime to base a whizzy new Game Boy Color title on. And the green baize and red hearts aren't exactly going to push the palette of Nintendo's brand new baby to its Technicolor limits.

But give it a chance and *Cool Hand* actually turns out to be a decent little title. You can play the blackjack mode to Atlantic City, London or Las Vegas rules (the game has on-screen instructions that run to 36 pages!), aided by a dealer in a stripey waistcoat who presents the Game Boy's new colour capability with perhaps its biggest challenge.

But this is *Cool Hand*, not "Blackjack", and there are other options too. You can call up a screen to help you perfect your card counting techniques with no threat of any *Casino*-style circular saw retribution. The solitaire and cribbage games are extensive, too, although not as likely to make you hanker for the classic fat cigar/green visor combo. Indeed, the whole package provides about as solid a collection of card-based time wastery as you could hope for. (Of course, a simple pack of real-life cards is just as portable and far cheaper, but that's Dad talk where we come from.) ★★★



### GAME BOY COLOR

#### Montezuma's Return

■ Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Tarantula**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1**

It's the multi-coloured return of one of "gaming's most loved characters". (It says here.)

■ He's back! You know, Max Montezuma? Little bloke with a hat? No, we're not sure of his gaming heritage either, but he's returning whether we want him or not in one of the first third-party Game Boy Color releases.

He doesn't look too chipper, though. A small brown character stuck in a decidedly belt-and-braces platformer, which adheres slavishly to an old-skool ledges and ladders formula. There are ropes to shin down, fires to avoid and (get this!) keys to pick up that open doors. He even makes a "Boing!" noise when he jumps, for Christ's sake. It's not exactly the height of sophistication, but with harsh death in the offing if you drop down a few pixels too far, you're bound to keep playing to maintain your platform gaming pride... for a while at least. Just don't expect anything to happen in these in 58 colours that matches the joy of *Super Mario Land* in a few shades of grey. ★★



### GAME BOY COLOR

#### Power Quest

■ Publisher: **Sunsoft**  
 ■ Developer: **Sunsoft**  
 ■ Release date: **December**  
 ■ Price: **TBC** ■ Players: **2**

Remote control beat-'em-up with RPG elements. But who cares? It's in colour!

■ One of the first playable Game Boy Color titles around, *Power Quest* is liable to cause a few moments of confusion as you're adjusting to the *Wizard of Oz*-like shift into polychrome. To start with it looks like an RPG – there are lots of people to talk to, screens full of conversation and the obligatory shop scene. But then you're flung into a side-on beat-'em-up, with remote control fighting machines. Those Japanese, eh?

As it turns out, the robot scrapping is actually the major chunk of the game. By winning cash you can upgrade your bots, adding new moves and attacks which mean you can take on harder opponents. The fighting itself is quite sophisticated for the Game Boy, and is added a degree of depth by the RPG bits, which shape into an on-going plot that sends you traipsing around the central map looking for aggro. A rival gang of robot controllers even shows up at one point in the game, throwing its weight around and scrambling your controls.

It's not exactly *Zelda* then, but *Power Quest*'s an engaging title, and really rather different to the Game Boy's standard platform offerings. And better still, it's in colour, obviously. ★★★



### GAME BOY COLOR

#### Reservoir Rat

■ Publisher: **Take 2 Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Tarantula**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Players: **1**

A rat-plat that's more fun than Weil's disease. Just.

■ More simple platform action, this time with a smug, shades-wearing rodent who's unlikely to make it on to licensed lunch boxes anytime soon. The fact that you can shoot and jump is flagged as selling point, which gives you some idea of just how straightforward the proceedings are.

*Reservoir Rat*'s difficulty level has only been cranked out of the reach of anyone over the age of seven by a strict requirement that you kill every enemy and collect every item on each screen before you can exit – something sure to cause executive stress if Nintendo is successful in its plan to market Game Boy Color to men in suits. A worse feature still – and in direct contravention of International Platform Ordinances – you can't jump on baddies' heads or make the kind of pin-point accurate leaps necessary to avoid psycho red squirrels (now there's the kind of sentence you're only going to read in a games mag). All in all, it's another workaday platformer, never managing to offer the sort of gameplay needed to match the Game Boy Color's new-found techno sophistication. ★★

## On-line gaming



# NO ONE IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RESIST THE QUAKE UNIVERSE



■ *Quake, Quake, and yet more Quake.* You see, the internet's not all conspiracy theorists and pictures of Pamela Anderson's tits.

When you talk network gaming, you're really talking about just one game: *Quake*, king of the first-person 3D shooters.

Ever since a rudimentary test version was released on the Internet early in 1996, one title has dominated the on-line gaming scene: that game is *Quake*. From the outset, it was clear that id's latest offering was far more than merely *Doom* with knobs on. As well as showcasing the best 3D graphics engine yet seen, it was clear that *Quake* was built with multi-player games in mind. The first versions available for play offered multi-player levels only, and the *Quake* "deathmatch" – fast, frantic, occasionally tactical and always very, very bloody – was born. Word quickly spread, and the greatest Net gaming phenomenon of them all had begun.

There's a lot more to the game than simply shooting people's faces off with rockets, though. (That said, it should be noted that shooting people's faces off with rockets is a *lot* more fun – and remains fun for a lot longer – than those who haven't tried it might suspect.) A quick glance at the leading *Quake*-related site, *Blue's News* (<http://www.bluesnews.com/>) will yield a wealth of *Quake*-related fun to be had a little off the beaten path. The game's open architecture enables anyone with an ounce or two of imagination and programming ability to make their own customised version, and there are a lot of them about: *Capture the Flag* is by a long way the most popular variant, where two teams try to nab each other's standard and carry it back to base, and then there's *TeamFortress*, another team-based game where every player has his own skills and abilities. Those are the two big favourites, but many, many more abound; you can find a huge assortment of them at *PlanetQuake* (<http://www.planetquake.com/>).

Spend more than a couple of minutes sniffing the air in these places and you'll detect bubbling excitement for the forthcoming *Quake III: Arena*. ("What about *Quake II*?"

You may ask. *Quake II* was designed more with the solo player in mind, and did nothing to better the first's multiplayer experience, thus it was largely bi-passed by gamers on the Net.)

How does anyone keep up with it all? *Blue's News* is the place to start, but for something different try *Cary's Shuga Shack* (<http://www.shugashac.com>) for "sweet-ass news just the way you like it."



**Games Domain**  
<http://www.gamesdomain.com/>

■ The games industry moves pretty quick, and while print magazines are still the best way of keeping up (in an easy-to-read, high-resolution, take-it-to-the-bog-with-you kind of way), for fast news and software downloads, websites do what print magazines simply can't.

It's inevitable, then, that a number of on-line game sites have sprung up. Some are better than others, obviously, and *Games Domain* is one of the best. It's also one of the longest-lived and remains vehemently independent, staffed by a huge roster of die-hard games enthusiasts.

Its news is always hot off the virtual presses, its reviews get straight to the heart of any game's qualities (or lack of them) and its cheats database is about the biggest in the business. What it lacks in professional shine it makes up for with passion and commitment. And let's not forget that it's a great place to nab the latest demos and patches, as long as you can withstand the truly enormous downloads. Just make sure you have a fast modem and plenty of money to pay the phone bill. ★★★★★



**GamerzEdge**  
<http://www.gamerzedge.com/>

■ If the *Games Domain* is an object lesson in maintaining a good gaming site, *GamerzEdge* could give a few handy hints on how *not* to do it. Let's examine the first warning sign: that use of a Z instead of an S in the title. Any reason for that? Well, it could be to make it attractive to those hardcore Internet types who count themselves as "I33t haX0r d00ds" and never use the proper letters when a number or symbol could be substituted. It *could...* but given the fact that *GamerzEdge* (Z or no Z) is an unmitigated bag of mildewed pants, the ploy would work for all of three seconds.

Take a look if you don't believe me. Just pick any one of its reviews for a stream of sadly ill-structured gabble leading eventually to either "this rocks!" or "this sucks!" It could be forgiven if it actually did give gamers some kind of "edge" by supplying a useful assortment of tips and cheats, but the selection in that department is as poor as the reviews. Looks-wise, it's on a par with *Games Domain*, just about, but all similarity ends there. Still, at least you don't have to pay to read it. ★

## CD-ROM of the Month



### Ceremony of Innocence

■ Publisher: **Real World Multimedia** ■ Price: **£24.99**  
■ Contact **01225 743188**;  
<http://www.realworld.on.net/> ■ Requires: **Pentium 90 PC, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95**  
■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ Not so long ago, following a particularly lacklustre bout of thinly veiled databases, the multimedia CD was declared dead. Not just running a bit of a temperature, but full-on dead, deceased, and gone to meet its maker.

It seems the life-support machines (with Intel inside, naturally) weren't switched off completely, however, because here's another multimedia CD-

ROM. And it seems that the genre's near-death experience must have provided more than a little visionary inspiration.

Based around the best selling *Griffin and Sabine* trilogy, written by Nick Bantock (essentially a kind of love story/mystery built on a stack of correspondence between the two eponymous artists, one in North London, the latter upon a remote South Sea island), the tale is virtually recreated here via interactive postcards. The front of each is decorated by a heady combination of dream imagery, cerebral conundrums and a smattering of hotspots. The rear offers text recited by the likes of Paul McGann and Isabella Rossellini. Whilst this structure may make for a somewhat linear experience, it is more than justified by the compelling story-line and some genuinely breathtaking images.

So if you want to see just how good CD-ROMs can be, buy it. It just won two BAFTA awards, too, so you don't have to take my word for it. ★★★★★

Chris James



# Fat Boy Skint

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### 1. Jordan Grand Prix Wheel

■ **Price:** £49.99  
 ■ **Available from:** Joytech on 01525 852900

■ Revolutionary attachment technology (suckers) means you don't have to mess about with clamps to fix this flimsy-looking wheel to your desk. The problem is that the Jordan's so sensitive, throwing it through the jerks of a real racing driver is a non-starter – at least if you want to stay near the road. The pedal block is sturdy, but the pedals are too steep (though this may, if we're being charitable, replicate the design of F1 cars). Basically, it does the job, but not spectacularly well. ★★★

### 2. Air Racer Wheel

■ **Price:** £49.99  
 ■ **Available from:** SC&T on 01705 200700

■ A free floating wheel, would you believe? Call us old-fashioned, but we prefer to play in gaming's equivalent of the missionary position – sitting square-on, facing the screen – and it's in such repose that this shows its true colours.

First, any wheel without auto-centring is always going to be tricky to control. Piss about with something that moves in three dimensions, but only recognises two, and you're sure to run into trouble, not to mention walls and unsuspecting pedestrians. The Air Racer is a non-starter. ★

### 3. Stealth Playcentre

■ **Price:** £59.99 including P&P  
 ■ **Available from:** The Furniture Factory on 0870 602 4000

■ The Stealth Playcentre is, on first investigation, very heavy. Retrieved from a nearby office, where it was being utilised to accommodate a pot plant, we put it to its true purpose – telly on top, PlayStation on the shelf, games up the side, feet placed (comfortably) on special raised platforms and bottom on a bean bag. It's a little expensive for a TV stand, but at least it leaves your telly at the perfect height for you to sit on the floor and slob out big time. ★★★

### 4. Maquadian PlayStation Console Tidier

■ **Price:** £19.99  
 ■ **Available from:** Cotswold Exports on 01242 253516

■ Quite a good idea in theory – a bright yellow metal washing up rack to keep your PlayStation (and, unofficially, N64) in. The console sits in the middle of the rack and you can wrap your controller leads around the handles to keep them out of the way. It does the job – such as it is – and it does stop you covering the living room floor in cable spaghetti, but come on, it's far too expensive. ★★

### 5. ASCII 360° Sphere

■ **Price:** £49.99  
 ■ **Available from:** ASCII on 01923 202097

■ Though ASCII's new model may look odd, it does at least make a fair stab at breaking fresh ground for PlayStation controllers.

It can be hard to use a joypad to control 3D games – particularly flight sims – but ASCII's ball design is intended to make the full 360° as easy as pie. Sadly, since flight sims don't really translate to the PSX, there are few games that suit the Sphere. ASCII suggests games like 3D shooter *Descent* can be played more smoothly with it, but ought to give more reasons for this device's existence. ★★



## 6. PlayStation Movie Card

■ **Price:** £70 plus P&P  
 ■ **Available from:** Digital City on 0181 491 6349

■ The PlayStation plays games from CDs, right? And films can be stuck on to CD too, right? And ages ago some people stuck films on CD for the now defunct Philips 3DO and CDi machines. Films no longer appear in the Video CD format in the UK, but in countries like Taiwan and Hong Kong, VCDs are extremely cheap (as little as 60p from local, but bizarrely legal, markets) and very popular.

The PlayStation Movie Card plugs into the back of your PSX and enables you watch films in

this VCD format – the discs are available by mail order for around a tenner. The main advantage is that many import films actually arrive in this format before their UK cinema release. We were able to watch the *X-Files* film (and didn't enjoy it one bit, though that's nowt to do with the Movie Card). The sound quality of VCD films is excellent (Dolby stereo) and the picture, apart from the odd sticking frame, is not too far behind regular VHS video.

Incidentally, don't confuse VCD with DVD (Digital Versatile Disc); DVD offers much more advanced performance in a different format. Also, if you own a white imported PlayStation, then you don't need a Movie Card, since you already have the necessary gadgetry. ★★★

## 7. Quickshot GenX 500

■ **Price:** £24.99  
 ■ **Available from:** Quickshot on 0181 365 1993

■ It looks black, but according to the box, GenX is a "cool, dark, metallic blue". The base is large, flat and sturdy, and you feel safe in yanking the shaft back as hard as you like to recover from a stall turn in *Flight Unlimited 2*. It's also good to know that you can frag with the best in *Quake* without the thing flying off the desk. The Quickshot includes the important multi-view HAT switch (a separate little joystick at the top), and the shaft rotates too. A cheap and sturdy PC-only joystick. ★★★★

## 8. Formula Sprint Wheel

■ **Price:** £34.99 (with *International Rally Championship*)  
 ■ **Available from:** Thrustmaster on 01276 609955

■ Sometimes you wonder why anyone ever spends a hundred quid or more on a PC steering wheel. Think about how many goes you could have on the dodgems for that kind of cash. Plus, at home you don't get to "impress" girls, eat candy floss or give your mates whiplash. That's where the cheapish Formula Sprint comes in. It works fine,

enables you to play all your driving games to a pretty good standard, yet leaves enough money for his 'n' hers candyfloss and a couple of goes on the coconut shy.

PC-only, the Formula Sprint moves smoothly, but is weighty enough not to force your virtual automobile into a 180° spin at the slightest push. The pedal board is equally solid and, indeed, the whole deal looks like it has been designed to take a battering. Thrustmaster is obviously well in touch with its gaming audience, right down to the provision of some of the most straightforward installation instructions we've ever seen. Great stuff. ★★★★

## Film of the Month



■ Catherine Zeta Jones: a good Lara Croft, anyone?

# SWORD AND HORSERY

## ANTONIO BANDERAS: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE FLYNN

### The Mask Of Zorro

■ Director: **Martin Campbell**  
 ■ Starring: **Anthony Hopkins, Antonio Banderas, Catherine Zeta Jones**  
 ■ UK release: **11 December**

**Big-budget revamp of the ancient TV show about 19th Century vigilante Don Diego De La Vega – aka Zorro, the olde Los Angeles answer to Robin Hood.**

**M**ake no mistake, folks, *The Mask Of Zorro* – a lavish, beautifully-crafted, incredibly enjoyable action/adventure full of the kind of stylish swordplay that went out of favour with Errol Flynn – is the finest blockbuster of the year. It walks all over the likes of *Godzilla* and *Armageddon* – and without any CGI in sight.

Back in the late '50s, when Guy Williams starred in the black-and-white *Zorro* TV show, our hero was the slacker son of a California landowner, a wimpish fop who turned, Clark Kent-like, into a superhuman defender of the oppressed when trouble threatened. It's a classic story – part Batman, part Robin Hood –

– and *GoldenEye*-helmer Martin Campbell has been smart enough to update it in details but not in spirit. The swish new '98 model has Brit thesp Anthony Hopkins as the aging masked avenger who, when his wife is murdered and daughter kidnapped by evil Spanish governor Stuart Wilson, trains bandit drifter Antonio Banderas as his do-gooder replacement. The Zorro team then battle Wilson, rescue Hopkins junior (now grown into Catherine Zeta Jones), and generally raise merry hell. As Campbell insists, this is, "not the traditional story with Zorro as a nobleman's son. It has more to do with a Merlin/King Arthur relationship, where Zorro trains a young man to be his successor."

But it's not so much the story as the fast-paced style of the film that counts. *The Mask Of Zorro* is that rare thing – a big-budget "event" picture that doesn't simply rely on a series of explosive set-pieces to pump it mindlessly along. Sure, it's packed with action (chiefly swordfights and old-fashioned horse stunts), but it's the character bits, played by a fantastic international cast, that you remember. *Zorro* is epic, loud, passionate, genuinely funny, largely free of cheesy cliché and immensely enjoyable from start to finish. The best action/adventure film of 1998? Absolutely. ★★★★★



■ "What do you mean, 'The Gay Blade?'"



■ *Out of Sight*: "hot."

### Out Of Sight

■ Director: **Steven Soderbergh**  
 ■ Starring: **George Clooney, Jennifer Lopez**  
 ■ UK release: **27 November**

■ Another adaptation of an Elmore Leonard crime novel (we've already had *Get Shorty*, *Touch*, TV's *Maximum Bob* and Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* in recent years), *Out of Sight* mixes cool, likeable characters, great snappy dialogue, the occasional tense set-piece and slightly surreal comedy in typical Leonard fashion. This time out events revolve around the sexual tension between *ER* heartthrob George Clooney's jail escapee and hot Federal Marshal Jennifer Lopez: he takes her hostage, banter with her, frees her, and she goes after him, so beginning a cat-and-mouse chase bound to end with him in her jail, her bed, or both.

*Out of Sight* is a character piece really, relying on an excellent script and brilliant acting rather than overblown set-pieces. It's well-served by its actors – George is suitably charismatic (there's no trace of smarmy Doc Ross here) and Jen decidedly sexy – while director Steven Soderbergh has fun with the madly weaving plot. Even the tiniest supporting role is memorable (we have the likes of

### If Tekken 3 was a film...

■ It would be directed by **Paul Verhoeven** – acknowledged god of bloody, flashy, over-the-top action and moral ambiguity.  
 ■ It would star **Bjork** as Ling Xiaoyu, **Uma Thurman** as Anna, a rediscovered **Dolph Lundgren** as Paul Phoenix, a masked **Ice-T** as King, **David Beckham** as the petulant Hwoarang, the suitably wooden **Keanu Reeves** as Mokujin and that **Ray** from the "Reef Radio" Bacardi ads as Eddy Gordo's laugh. First choice for Lei Wulong, **Jackie Chan**, would fall out with the dark Verhoeven when the director refuses to film a slapstick, cross-dressing 20-minute fight atop a train, to be replaced, controversially, by Verhoeven pal **Rutger Hauer**.  
 ■ **Fact:** There's was an animated *Tekken* film made by Japanese director Junji Sakamoto in 1990. Limited numbers are available on import.



■ Anna: kind of Emma Peelish.

Ving Rhames and Dennis Farina in the little parts), making this one movie I challenge you to watch without a wry smile curling on your lips. Even if you've read the book, it'll still surprise. The movie has a new ending, and it's much, much better. ★★★★★

## Blade

■ Director: **Stephen Norrington** ■ Starring: **Wesley Snipes, Stephen Dorff** ■ UK release: **out now**

■ Inspired by the recently revamped '70s Marvel comic-book hero, Wesley Snipes pulls on the leather boots of vampire-hunter Blade – a half-human, half-bloodsucking vigilante originally intended as an enemy for Dracula, but now pressed into service as a general vamp-killer in constant battle with his own dark side. The plot is wispy but works as a hook on which to hang assorted action sequences and moody *Batman/The Crow*-style visuals. Bad boy this time round is nasty neck-biter Stephen Dorff, a mean-spirited type out to revive the ancient Blood God and take over the world. The whole thing is played strictly for fun – like a kind of joke-free *Ghostbusters* – and is dominated by an energetic wham-bam mix of brawls, bangs and spectacular sfx.



■ *Blade*: "wham-bam."



■ *Ronin*: "middle-aged."

Sounds cheesy and a bit crap? Well, it is – kinda. But go to it in the right frame of mind, and you'll have to admit that Snipes – who also produced and choreographed the *Mortal Kombat*-style action sequences – has done a pretty stylish job, considering. ★★★

## Rounders

■ Director: **John Dahl** ■ Starring: **Matt Damon, Edward Norton** ■ UK release: **20 November**

■ Fresh-faced *Good Will Hunting* star Matt Damon is everywhere at the moment, and while many of his choices have been good ones (*Saving Private Ryan*, say) he's been due a clunker. And this is it.

*Rounders* is a "quirky drama" that revolves around the dimly-lit world of hardcore poker players. Damon plays a reformed card-sharp who thinks his gambling years are behind him. He's got a good life, a pretty girlfriend – and an ex-jailbird best friend, Edward

Norton, who has a \$25,000 debt hanging over his head. In a bid to help his pal, Damon promises to partner Eddie in a series of big-money poker games, an idea that might have worked, if Ed hadn't turned out to be a conniving git...

*Rounders* has a pretty good cast (John Malkovich, *GoldenEye*'s Famke Janssen and *Space: 1999* hero Martin Landau are also here) and *Red Rock West*-helmer John Dahl is always interesting, but the whole film is let down terribly by a series of confusing, boring poker games. It tries desperately hard to convey the addictive, high-risk, you-could-lose-everything nature of high-stakes gambling, but inconsistent plotting and characters you swiftly realise you couldn't give a monkey about soon reduce it to an jargon-infested bore. By the time John Malkovich's hilariously-accented Russian has strangled the final reel, stripping away the tension of the win-or-have-your-legs-broken finale, you'll be wondering why you bothered. So don't. ★

## Ronin

■ Director: **John Frankenheimer** ■ Starring: **Robert De Niro, Natasha McElhone, Jean Reno, Jonathan Pryce, Sean Bean** ■ UK release: **20 November**

■ Coming on like some middle-aged *Mission: Impossible*, this \$35 million heavyweight action thriller tells the story of an international gang of ex-Cold War spies who're persuaded to take one last, covert op. Their job: recover a briefcase from an unknown group of men, for an unidentified employer. Our freelance ex-agents answer to no-one – like the ronin (masterless samurai) of ancient Japan – but still retain all of their special forces skills. Cue violence and destruction on an epic scale...

*Ronin* is certainly classier than most action films. Made by John Frankenheimer (career high: *The Manchurian Candidate*; career low: *The Island Of Dr Moreau*) and boasting a top-notch cast, this *should* have been a thoughtful, action-packed thriller of *Heat* proportions. But it ain't. Instead, *Ronin*'s over-complicated plot is a rush of killings, backstabbing, betrayed friendships and quite unforeseeable twists that goes nowhere. There's a bad-taste take on the Diana car crash too. ★★★



■ *Rounders*: "confusing."

## Videos to Rent



■ *The Wedding Singer*: "keenly observed."

## The Wedding Singer

■ **Entertainment In Video** ■ Cheap '80s laughs abound in this mullet-a-minute romantic comedy. Adam Sandler is the former rock star turned hapless cabaret entertainer, searching for love and marriage in a hostile world populated by yuppies in bad jackets. Eventually, he finds it in the form of Drew Barrymore, who puts her little-girl smile to full (and ultimately nauseating) use. Still, the plot is clever and more keenly observed than it first appears, and Billy Idol makes a priceless cameo. ★★★

## Scream 2

■ **Buena Vista** ■ The sequel to Wes Craven's excellent post modern slasher movie, *Scream 2* relies again on flicking between several levels of reality, attempting to incorporate the whole idea of "the sequel" into its smart self-parody. As the characters themselves agree, the bodycount just has to be higher second time round, and the gore gorier. And it is.

Unfortunately, however, the surprise the first one had on its side is gone – this is perhaps too clever-clever and self-referential. The cast of bright young things look suitably terrified and sexy, but it's difficult to care very much when you see them slowly picked off. As for the ending, it seems that Craven is striving so hard for an unpredictable finale that the surprise is actually no surprise at all. Merely satirising the fact that it's a sequel doesn't save *Scream 2* from the near-inevitable. Yes, it's not as good as the original. ★★★

## City Of Angels

■ **Warners** ■ Not having seen *Wings Of Desire*, on which this is based, maybe I'm missing something, but *City Of Angels* is tedium in a box. Okay, the cinematography is excellent, capturing a hazy and serene atmosphere, but if only the plot held as much appeal.

Nicolas Cage plays an angel who falls for brain surgeon Meg Ryan and then has to consider the nature of his immortality. But that's about it, which makes for endless shots of Cage wearing his hangdog face and looking like he's suffering from a slow puncture. Meg Ryan puts in much the same "Will this do?" performance as ever, and there's about as much spark between the characters as two wet sticks. And if you, for some reason, find yourself liking it, please switch off before the botched ending, which strives for noble tragedy bit is, in fact, laughable. ★★

## Videos to Buy



■ *Boogie Nights*: "lurid."

## Boogie Nights

■ **Entertainment In Video** ■ Probably the best film ever about a man's penis, *Boogie Nights* is more than a kitsch take on late '70s disco/porn it first appears. Mark Wahlberg is Eddy – aka "Dirk Diggler" – a prodigiously endowed crash 'n' burn porn star, while Burt Reynolds is superb as his mentor. Inevitably, the film's opening glamorous pool-side parties soon give way to drug-dependency, violence and depravity as Dirk, Jack and assorted hangers-on rapidly find themselves men out of time. The ridiculous attire and

lurid interiors are gloriously realised, but the whole thing is surprisingly subtle, even in its extravagance. ★★★★★

## Starship Troopers

■ **Touchstone** ■ Hollywood irony can be a tiresome thing, but *Starship Troopers* is more irritating than most. This being a Verhoeven effort, the wafer-thin plot is largely an excuse for huge space FX, spurring alien entrails and lots of shouting. It's unclear what we're meant to think of the bland humans, traditionally bastions of goodness in these

sort of movies, but portrayed here as emotionally-retarded aggressors. Still, the giant bugs they fight aren't much better. (I must, however, point out that the rest of the *Arcade* team love this film. Go figure.) ★★

## The Simpsons: Last Temptation of Homer

■ **20th Century Fox** ■ A new *Simpsons* is always worth having, especially when – like this one – it leans heavily on the comic antics of Homer J Simpson Esq. The one where Homer eats poisoned blowfish

at a sushi restaurant and is given 24 hours to live is the best episode here, but there's nothing to be sniffed at in the others instalments, which include Homer managing a country & western singer, Marge visiting Rancho Relaxo and the one where Homer grows hair. In an added treat, Bart and Lisa do a version of "Shaft" too.

TV Quizmaster: "The capital of North Dakota is named after which German leader?" Homer: "Hitler!" ★★★★★

## LA Confidential

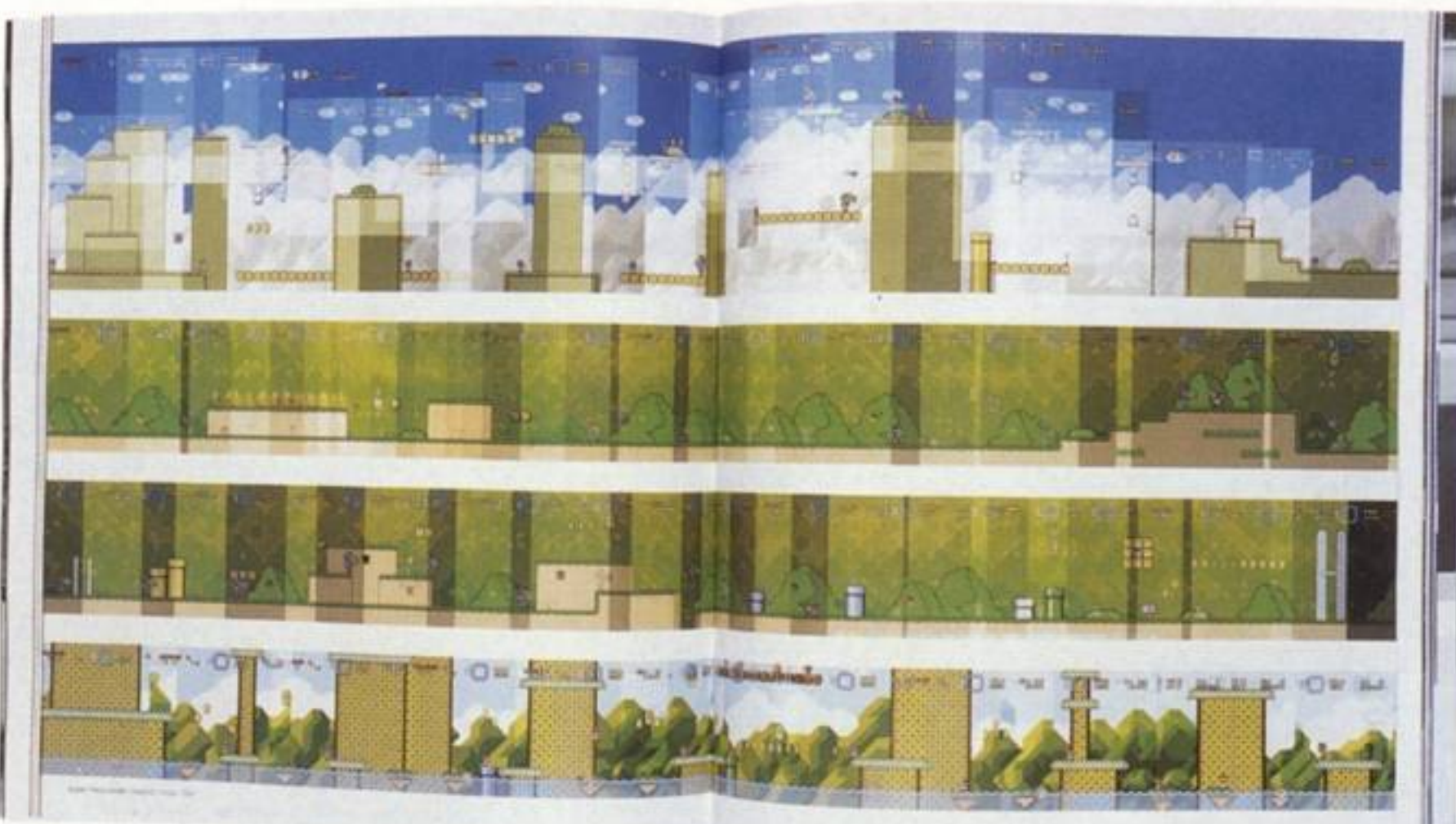
■ **MGM** ■ Shame on you if you didn't see this at the cinema, since it is without doubt the cleverest, most stylish crime thriller of recent years, and the power of its assault – both on heart and mind – is diminished little on the small screen. Based on a James Ellroy novel, and set in 1950s L.A., the film is a multi-layered exploration of police corruption. Guy Pearce (ex-*Neighbours*) is the young detective whose unerring

morality is almost his downfall, while Kevin Spacey is faultless as the local celebrity cop, and Russell Crowe does well as Pearce's partner, reluctant to know the devastating truth about his beloved force. Even Kim Bassinger is superb. ★★★★★

## The Very Best of Father Ted

■ **VCI** ■ As a great collection of some of the best situation comedy ever performed, this video stands as a perfect testament to the late Dermot Morgan. *Father Ted*, Jack and Dougal are all classic comic creations, but the masterstroke of writers Linehan and Matthews is to contain them in the surreal environment of Craggy Island. Included here are the episodes where Ted resorts to skulduggery in an effort to win the All-Priests Lookalikes Contest, the *Speed* parody in which Dougal must keep his milk float running at over 4mph and, naturally, the entry of "My Lovely Horse" in A Song For Europe. ★★★★★

## Book of the Month



# SUPER MARIO ART

## GAME GRAPHICS GET THE ARTHOUSE TREATMENT



## Re:play: Ultimate Games Graphics

Liz Faber/State Design

- Price: **£19.95**
- Publisher: **Laurence King**
- ISBN: **1-85669-140-3**

Considering the size and speed-of-growth of the games industry, it's surprising so few books have been written about it, decent or not. That being the case, something as glossy and professional-looking as *Re:play* would make a welcome addition even if it read terribly – at least the piccies would still look nice.

Thankfully, however, it's better than that. Sure, the text is cursory (a general introduction, a page each on the different genres, and short interviews with the likes of *Quake's* John Romero, *Myst/Riven* creators Robyn and Rand Miller, and Lara's "dad", Toby Gard), but what's here is fine. It's written from a UK perspective (well, kinda – Sega's Mega Drive is referred to as Genesis, and important machines like the Amiga don't even warrant a mention), but it covers all the bases and makes some important points. And anyway, words aren't what *Re:play* is all about. Instead, it's a glossy showcase for some of the best game graphics from the last quarter century, from *Pong* – which gets an entire double page spread! – to the likes of *Virtua Fighter* and *Final Fantasy VII*.

A few things swiftly become clear. Once frozen, removed from the game and blown up large, many screenshots begin to demand contemplation as works



of art. *Re:play's* minimalist presentation enables graphics to tell their own story – there's powerful imagery at work here, from the simple, immediately recognisable shapes of a *Pac-man* or *Space Invaders* to glorious (if over-familiar) renders from *Tekken 3*. At the most basic level, this is a collection of good-looking pictures which you'll enjoy having hang around your coffee table – and well-selected enough to provoke weepy nostalgia in anyone who remembers the likes of *Battlezone* or *Pole Position* first time round.

As a major part of pop culture, gaming has so few defining volumes that *Re:play* will probably get more attention than it deserves. Still, it'll make a fantastic Xmas present. The only real downer I can see is if you own more than three game mags, you'll have seen most of these pictures before, albeit not presented in quite such a glam way. ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

## Everybody Dies

- Author: **Lawrence Block**
- Price: **£16.99**
- Publisher: **Orion**
- ISBN: **0-75280-213-5**



■ In an unusual turn of events, the dame wasn't trouble. Nor was it a hot, sultry summer night. Apart from these minor

points, however, *Everybody Dies* is as formulaic a detective thriller as you could wish to find; a mix of ex-cops turned private eyes, call-girls made good, and small-time Hell's Kitchen gangsters with a penchant for getting capped.

This is the 14th in Lawrence Block's series of Matt Scudder novels, narrated by a jaded PI hero who is, naturally enough, ex-New York PD and ex-alcoholic in roughly equal measure. Thus time round Matt makes the mistake of doing a favour for pal Mick Ballou, and soon the bullets are flying.

Block's style is standard hard-boiled stuff – "She was standing beside the bed, wearing perfume and a smile" – that exists in a sort of timeless fantasy world, which works fine once you're used to it. Certainly, it doesn't prevent the last moments of Scudder's fight for life from being unexpectedly gripping. *Everybody Dies* is not a taxing read, but for its engaging characters is well worth an evening of your life. ★★★

**Emma Parkinson**

## King Rat

- **China Miéville**
- Price: **£9.99**
- Publisher: **Macmillan**
- ISBN: **0333738810**



■ A young, shaven-headed intellectual writes his debut novel about the city's seedy underbelly set to a pumping drum 'n'

bass soundtrack – predictable enough. But you'd be pretty hard pressed to forsee Miéville swinging wildly into the world of fantasy, ignoring the more prosaic charms of drugs, sex and petty crime in favour of shady mutant rodents – the "King Rat" of the title – battling an evil Pied Piper for control of London's sewers.

Our hero, Saul Garamond, gets caught up in the struggle when he's arrested for the killing of his father, then rescued from the cells by King Rat himself, who turns out to be Saul's uncle, making our boy a man/rodent hybrid, capable of resisting the Piper's lure.

It's all pretty ludicrous, but you've got to admire the amount of commitment Miéville brings to such unlikely goings on. Less successful, however, are laboured references to London's club scene, and the generally uninspiring prose. An uncomfortable mix of bleak 'n' filthy real-life and wild flights of fantasy, you're going to need a wide gullet to swallow it.

★★

**Sam Richards**

## An Arm and Four Legs

- Author: **Stan Hey**
- Price: **£15**
- Publisher: **Yellow Jersey**
- ISBN: **0-224-05237-3**



■ This is a book born of obsession. Subtitled "A Journey Into Race-horse Ownership", it acknowledges that childhood sporting

dreams are best left as exactly that – but then goes on to detail how our hero, the author, got involved in one anyway. The first few chapters are a meticulous listing of the myriad disadvantages of actually getting involved in geegee ownership – the initial outlay, the endless peripheral costs, the meagre prize money and overwhelming odds in favour of your buying a nag that never wins anything. But then he goes on to write a whopping cheque to the Tally-Ho Partnership for a share in two jump horses anyway.

The subsequent litany of failure is almost inevitable, but Hey doesn't give up, and is eventually rewarded with a partnership with trainer Nigel Smith, one of many eccentric personalities he meets on his journeys around British racecourses. As an insight into the racing community, and a look at sporting obsession, it's enthralling stuff. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

## Questioning the Millennium

- Author: **Stephen Jay Gould**
- Price: **TBA**
- Publisher: **Vintage**
- ISBN: **0787116459**



■ You've probably noticed that there's a date of supposed importance rapidly approaching. The publishing industry

certainly has, with Stephen Jay Gould's latest merely adding to the build-up of unnecessary millennium fever. Still, at least he refrains from making prophecies, instead looking to the reasons why we invest such an arbitrary human creation as a mere date with such importance.

Tackling both the concept of the apocalypse throughout history and our attempts to reconcile numerical logic with the stubborn indivisibility of the Earth's natural cycles, Gould roams between the scholarly disciplines with style. His writing is highly approachable and, although occasionally smug, avoids soulless objectivity.

If you're still puzzled by the idea of a flexible Easter, wonder if we really did "lose" 11 days in 1752 and want to know if there's any basis for our obsession with round numbers, read this – and before 31 December, 1999.

★★★★★

**Sam Richards**

## Comic of the Month



# GATES OF WRATH

## 300

■ Creator: **Frank Miller**  
 ■ Publisher: **Dark Horse Comics**

■ Trust Frank Miller. If you know comics, you'll know anything by this guy is a must-buy, but sometimes he even excels himself. His work on Marvel's *Daredevil* and, in particular, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* – in which septuagenarian millionaire Bruce Wayne came out of retirement to take on the evils of a Mad Maxian future – began the grim-and-gritty trend that pervades superhero comics to this day, and managed to sell outside the limited confines of comic fandom. Now – with his current five-part series *300*, soon to be compiled into a graphic novel – he looks certain to bring comics to a yet wider audience. This is, after all, a historical story – the tale of 300 Spartan warriors who, in the year 480 BC, defended ancient

Greece from the might of 300,000 invading Persians, and thus kept safe, as Miller has it, "the world's one hope for reason and justice".

It's stirring, powerful stuff, mixing elements of the Alamo and Rorke's Drift with insights into the near-incomprehensible Spartan mindset – imagine a city state where the small and weak are killed at birth, and the remainder trained to SAS standards from childhood – and boasting countless scenes and moments that are more than cinematic, they're pure comics. And all drawn in a mutated version of the masculine, heavy-on-the-blacks style familiar from his recent *Sin City* crime stories. More than anything since *Maus* (the Penguin-published version of the Holocaust, told with *Animal Farm*-style cats and mice), this is a work to give comics a much-needed slice of respectability. Like I said, trust Frank Miller. ★★★★★

**Matt Bielby**

## Music Edited by Sam Richards

### Various Artists

**Free The Funk Volume 3**

■ Company: **R&S**



■ It's not made clear quite who imprisoned the funk in the first place, but if this compilation is anything to go by, the funk has sneaked out of its cell, released the other convicts and trashed the jailhouse for good measure. *Free The Funk* is on a quest to distract, astound, amuse and annoy, as its admirably odd track selection testifies. Pitch the minimalist soul of Nicolette and Karmine Kendra next to Add N To X's Moog terrorism and The Bullinuts' kinky afros. Then find the eminently sensible Howie B surfing through a lunatic medley entitled "My Speedboat Is Faster Than Yours".

The Belgians responsible for this collection claim they're all floor-fillers from their Brussels club night. It's almost worth a trip across the Channel to gawp at the chaos. ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

### Super Furry Animals

**Out Spaced**

■ Company: **Creation**



■ Yet another compilation: my finely attuned seasonal-trend antennae tells me it must be nearly Xmas. In a way, it's a shame that one of our most inventive pop groups, noted for pink tanks, 60-foot

inflatable pandas and articulate views on Welsh devolution, has succumbed to that tedious manifestation of '90s rock culture, the B-Sides And Rarities Album. Then again, not many pop groups can claim as a rarity one of the funniest, smartest, most powerful tunes of the decade in "The Man Don't Give A Fuck". A Steely Dan sample and 50 examples of the classic shock word in three minutes – beat that, Ice Cube.

Out Spaced follows the same path from filthy glam stomps to rural melancholia, via acid blasts and cartoon theme tunes; just like SFA's two proper albums, but without the cohesion. Pedants might point to the omission of gems like "Lazy Life" in favour of the inconsequential "Fix Idris" and "Carry The Can", but overall, good stuff. ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

### Oasis

**The Masterplan**

■ Company: **Creation**



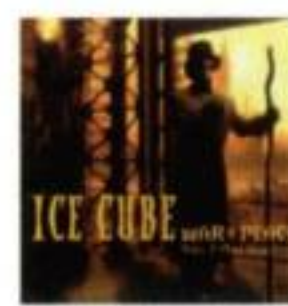
■ No matter what your views on Oasis, musical gods or talentless louts, however much you know their songs, whether you can hum "Stay Young" or know that "Talk Tonight" goes Em7, A7sus4, C7, G, A7sus4, Cadd9, however much you disagree with Noel Gallagher's decision not to let the Wombles call their new album *What's The Story (Tobermory)*, an Oasis b-sides album is still a significant release. Many a fan will argue that the band's finest moments occur on the reverse side of the vinyl, allowing Noel to croon away on

such happy buskers as "Half a World Away" and Liam to stretch his vocals on "Acquiesce". They've all been heard before, of course, but the songs sit comfortably together and alternate between the loud ones ("Listen Up" and "(It's Good) To Be Free"), the quiet ones ("Going Nowhere" and "Rockin' Chair"), the classic ("I am the Walrus"), the pure genius ("Listen Up") and the inevitable crap ("The Swamp Song"). This is as much as a proper album as a collection, and not a Womble in sight. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**

### Ice Cube

**War and Peace Volume One: The War Disc**

■ Company: **Virgin**



■ Adding to hip hop's mountain of grandiose concept albums, and causing merry hell at HMV when staff try to squeeze the title on to a section divider, comes the first solo work from Ice Cube in nearly five years. Name checking Tolstoy and with *Volume Two: The Peace Disc* already in the can, it's clear the man isn't messing around. Vitally, there's none of the mellowing off that could have been predicted from recent lame film work. *Volume One* is a visceral return to the shouty ghetto reportage that made his name, with a sound that cleverly takes in both former NWA cohort Dr Dre-style g-funk and the horror film freakiness of the Wu-Tang Clan. Cube remains one of rap's most compulsive vocalists. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**

## Album of the Month

■ Beck:  
 "sensible."



# MUTANT STRAINS

CONSIDERED STUFF FROM THE KING OF POST MODERN COOL



## Beck

**Mutations**

■ Company: **Geffen**

Last time we saw him, Beck was leaping about a festival stage in cowboy hat and purple slacks, human beatboxing through a harmonica. But his new album, *Mutations*, finds him in very different mood – sedate, deferent, even sensible. This means no more obtuse references to mayonnaise and "pocket line-dancing satans", replaced instead by a poetical weariness. It may be muted, but these are amongst his best lyrics to date.

If you're familiar with Beck's early lo-fi country efforts on albums such as *One Foot in the Grave*, you should recognise the trains of thought at work here, if not this album's songwriting conventionality. *Mutations* is normal and revels in the fact. Musically, homage is paid to Woody Guthrie and John Lennon, and future single "Tropicalia" cheekily recalls Georgie Fame's "Yeah Yeah". The downside of all this reverence is that, with worrying irony, Beck occasionally sounds like new stars, Gomez.

It's when Beck performs tricks that no-one else can fathom that he truly excels. "Static" begins as a gorgeous existential lament, before becoming a fuzzrock boot-shaker, floating away on portentous organ chords. In the man's own words, this may be a "parenthetical" album, but even Beck's tossed-off in-betweeners contain greatness. ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

## Millennium Jukebox

Stuff rockin' the Arcade office this month...

### Album

**The Pastels**

■ **Illuminati (Domino)**

A bunch of ace Pastels remixes by some very cool people indeed, including Kid Loco (mellifluous), My Bloody Valentine (bloody marvellous) and Stereolab (sheer madness).

### Album

**Various Artists**

■ **Streetwise (NCH)**

A mammoth compilation in aid of the House Our Youth 2000 charity, which does a pretty good job of

defining UK dance music. Never off the office CD.

### Track

**Subtropic**

■ **"Angus Meets Jimi"**

(From the LP *Compression Point, Fused And Bruised*) Funk rock battle to the death except with short-circuiting synths instead of guitars. Everyone wins.

### Track

**Cornelius**

■ **"Kick Off"**

(From the single "Star Fruits Surf Rider", Matador)

Frantic, ludicrous and with a commendably tenuous grasp of what makes a really good football tune. Undeniably Japanese, but undeniably good.

### Track

**Eric B & Rakim**

■ **"Paid In Full – Coldcut Remix"**

(From "Paid In Full: The Platinum Edition", Island)

An old, old favourite, resurrected once more just so we can all do that air-scratching thing. It really is a journey into sound.

# Games & Gadgets



■ My Lord, 3D games that you can really touch. How novel.

## KRYPTON NIGHT

3D BRAINBLENDERS TO GET YOUR HEAD HURTING

**AHead** ★★★  
**Firewood** ★★  
**Saturn** ★★★★★

■ Price: **£35 each**  
 ■ Available from: **branches of John Lewis and Argos, or Really Useful Games on 0171 534 0600**

**Y**ou've eaten the food, you've drunk the wine and you've exchanged repartee. So now, the only way to round off that impressive dinner party is to dig out the parlour games and, let's face it, a dog-eared copy of *Monopoly* is just not going to cut the mustard. Step forward Really Useful and its new range of sleek puzzle games.

This lot are marketed, a little disingenuously, as *Krypton Factor*-style puzzles, though really games like *Downfall* and *Ker-Plunk* are obvious inspirations. This level of difficulty works, though, since it's unlikely that you'd want to tackle an intense logic problem with a head-full of Cabernet Sauvignon '96. The games are all competitive, but, cleverly, the difficulty of each specific contest depends as much on the (drunken) calibre of your opponent as on any intrinsic hardness.

The most original of the three is *Saturn*. The central concept involves gambling with weights on a peculiar series of interdependently balanced rings. It's probably a cinch for physics graduates, but if you are rather less acquainted with the intricacies of Newton's laws, a tense and hard-fought mental battle should ensue.

*AHead* relies more on luck, as you attempt to create blocks of matching colour on your side of a hole in a wooden head, while interfering with your opponent's pursuit of the same goal. Unfortunately, a too-complex scoring system has been added to thing, obviously with the intention of providing more depth to the gameplay. It does that alright, but it also means that adding up the final tally can prove more taxing than the game itself.

At first glance, *Firewood* seems impossible, but the ingenious design ought to see it rival *Jenga* in the try-to-pull-a-piece-from-the-bottom-of-the-structure-without-toppling-the-whole-lot genre. In *Firewood*, gravity is your tool, so use it wisely.

As a trio they're all a little bit Galt for our liking (we can't help feel that parlour games should have boards and fiddly plastic pieces), but everyone who enters our office immediately gravitates to *AHead*, wondering what on Earth it is. Proof that real 3D gaming still has appeal, and looks better than a CD when you stick it on your mantelpiece. **Sam Richards**

## FORE PLAY



### Nintendo 64 Goodies

■ **AM/FM Bike Light Radio**  
 ■ Price: **£9.99** ★

■ **35mm MegaView Camera**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ★★★

■ **AM/FM Stereo Cassette Player** ■ Price: **£15.99** ★★★★★

■ Available from: **toy stores, or Planet Distribution on 01992 707407**

■ If you want to proclaim your devotion to the home of *Mario* and *Banjo-Kazooie* wherever you go, this Nintendo-badged tack may appeal. The bike light with built-in radio and stop-watch is, if you ask us, a pointless idea – you can't hear the radio as you ride. The camera features an extremely large view finder, meaning that although you see loads through the eye piece, you'll probably accidentally cut everybody's head off in your pictures. Tragically, the film jammed when we gave it a first go, but on our second try everything went smoothly. The developed results weren't much better than a disposable camera, but then it only costs about £2 more so you can't really complain

### Sports Feel Golf

■ Product: **Sports Feel Golf**  
 ■ Manufacturer: **Tiger Electronics** ■ Price: **£19.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Available from: **John Lewis and most toy stores or call 01423 501151**

■ Believe it when people tell you virtual reality is the future. You can now play a physically strenuous round of golf without leaving your house and for less than 20 quid. Step forward *Sports Feel Golf*, the latest in a bizarre string of handheld electronic games to combine LCD action with a physical simulation of sport.

Essentially, it's console golf on a machine which emulates a golf club. You select a club and direct your

ball, and your shot's power is determined by the traditional on-screen swingometer. However (and here's the clever bit), you must coincide your release of the swingometer with a physical swing of the club in order to move the ball.

The handle of the *Sports Feel Golf* is only 20cm long, so the recommendation to swing as if it were a real club seems impossible. It's far more comfortable to swing the thing like a cudgel and this is no less effective, though to the untrained eye this may look like more like virtual GBH than virtual golf.

Ultimately, the game is pretty limited; we were soon flouncing round in seven under par, trying to ignore the first twinges of cudgel elbow. Hilarious to begin with, but you soon hit a steep boredom curve, and it's expensive compared with the cost of a new toy for your Game Boy. ★★★ **Sam Richards**



■ It's the world's first interactive cudgel.

# MINI TVs

## TAKE A TUBE ON THE TUBE

You're a go-getter, always on the move: you're here, you're there, with a finger on the pulse and an eye on the main chance. Thing is, you keep missing *The Bill*. What you need to improve the quality of your life, says Russell Deeks, is one of these miniature tellies.



### JY-10 LCD colour TV

■ Available from: **Casio on 0181 450 9131** ■ Price: **£90**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ The JY-10 is the unfortunate result of what was obviously an attempt to design by committee. "Let's make it blue." "No! Let's make it yellow." "No! Let's make it purple." "Tell you what, let's make it bright yellow with blue writing and a strange purple bit at the end."

Fantastic. Unfortunately, while looks aren't everything, the JY-10 doesn't fare much better on the performance front. It comes complete with lacklustre sound and an LCD that has a habit of disappearing whenever the sun comes out. It's heavy, too, so not too many marks there, either. Basically you should resist the temptation to buy this, even if you have some strange addiction to bright yellow things. ★



too much. The cassette player is chunky, waterproof and yellow (always a bonus), and comes with a radio. It's a bit big to carry round in your pocket, but the sound quality is surprisingly clear, with very acceptable bass. It's good for the beach, and our pick of the trio.

**Rich Pelley**



### Game Boy Bath and Shower Foam

■ Price: **£2.99**  
 ■ Available from: **Boots the Chemist.**

■ Arriving in six colours, the Game Boy Bath and Shower Foam provides entertainment while you soak away your troubles. Of the six games available (all of the squidgy-button-designed-to-fire-bits-of-plastic-through-liquid variety), our favourite has you firing bananas into Donkey Kong Junior's barrel. This model scores points for the independence of the buttons – one fires bananas, the other shoots DK Jnr up a tree. The shower gel smells nice, too, although it did make our hair go a bit fluffy. ★★★★★ **Rich Pelley**

# MPEG PEGGED

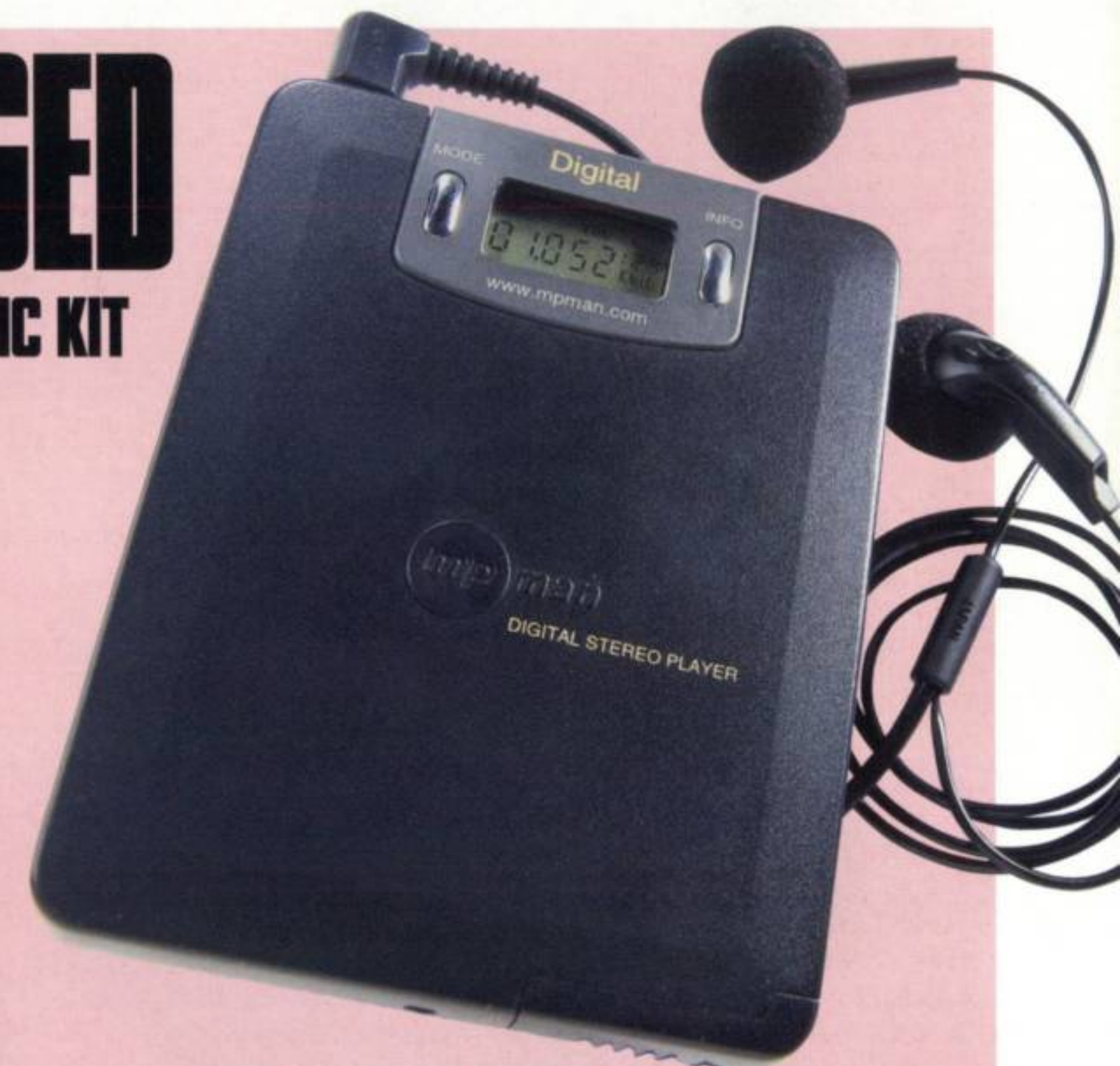
## THE BEST IN PORTABLE MUSIC KIT

### MPMan personal audio player

■ Available from: **GBS Ltd on 07050 607078**  
 ■ Price: **£399** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

**M**P3 is a new form of digital data compression that enables you to squeeze sound files into a tenth of the space they'd normally occupy, without any loss in quality. The significant thing about it is that it makes downloading music off the Net much quicker than normal – a situation the music industry isn't happy with, since it's made possible a whole bunch of sites offering copyright-breaking MP3s of material by established artists. Of course, there are plenty of legal MP3s on the Net, too, usually by unsigned bands and the like. And here, for £399, is the perfect thing to play them on.

Using it is simplicity itself – just download the MP3s to your PC, put the MPMan in its supplied docking station and click and drag



files into its memory. Hey presto, you've got a near CD-quality personal stereo that'll play 90 minutes of your favourite music. The MPMan also comes with cables, an AC adaptor and all the necessary PC software and, better still, it will never skip or jump, because there are no moving parts. The fact that it looks dead sexy is merely a bonus. ★★★★★ **Russell Deeks**

■ **The MPMan plays 90 minutes of music, will never skip and looks cool as you like.**



### ST173 LCD colour TV and FM/AM radio

■ Available from: **Citizen on 01869 233200** ■ Price: **£170** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ This is the first model from Citizen to feature here, and the flashier one of the two, with its laptop-like styling. Our grumbles are the disappointing size of the screen compared to the overall dimensions, the variable picture quality (fast on-screen movement leads to annoying amounts of flicker) and the sound, which is a bit flat. On the plus side, you get colour and brightness controls, and a built-in radio. The radio sound is actually rather good, even though it's mono only. Of the models here, this is the one you could pull out of your pocket in the pub and hear all your mates go "Ooh". That's assuming you're willing to fork out £170 just so your friends don't miss *Brookie*. ★★



### LCD-3203 LCD colour TV and FM radio

■ Available from: **Roadstar on 0181 594 5533** ■ Price: **£150** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ There could be a valid argument for saying that the LCD-3203 doesn't belong here: is it a pocket TV (you'd have to have a pocket the size of Alan Partridge's) or just a very small portable? However, it takes batteries (although a mains cable is supplied), so we'll say the former. Its bulk means it feels more substantial than some of the other models here, it's nice and easy to use, and it features an FM radio as well. The sound's passable, if tinny, but the picture quality's very good (although the viewing angle's a tad limited). On the whole, the LCD-3203 is a pretty respectable offering, albeit one of the priciest here. ★★★★★



### Watchman FDL-E22U LCD colour TV

■ Available from: **Sony on 01932 816000** ■ Price: **£100** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ You're probably familiar with the Sony Watchman brand, and this latest model is surely one of the most coo-some of the six tellies featured here. It's matt black, and shaped to be nice and easy to hold (if you're the kind of person who finds stuff difficult to hold on to). It also offers great sound quality, but what lets the Watchman down is the lack of an external aerial. This tragic omission will result in you performing all kinds of bizarre (and possibly illegal) contortions as you attempt to hold the Watchman in the position that gives you the best picture. And, of course, the image you finally do get probably won't come up to scratch anyway. D'oh! ★★★★★



### TV-770 LCD colour TV

■ Available from: **Casio on 0181 450 9131** ■ Price: **£70** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ This second offering from Casio is far superior to the JY-10 (also featured on these pages), not least because it abandons the garish colour scheme in favour of respectable gunmetal grey. It's £20 cheaper, too (in fact it's the least expensive model here), and it's much easier to lug around, which has to be one of the prime considerations. The picture quality and sound aren't the very best on test, but they're clear enough, and far from being the worst we've seen. At this price, you're getting a reasonable-enough little telly for your money – just don't expect any miracles. Or a brightness control, or any other little extras. You pays your money and you takes your choice. ★★★★★



### ST755 LCD colour TV

■ Available from: **Citizen on 01869 233200** ■ Price: **£100** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ They don't come much more compact than this. Measuring just 79 x 122 x 30mm, the ST755 is the smallest of the six models featured here, which means it's also the easiest to carry around (and the easiest to hide in your desk drawer when you need to keep an eye on the Test match). What's more, it has a socket so you can plug it into a VCR (though hiding that in your desk might be more problematic) and comes in a sleek silver casing. The auto tuning's simple to use and works well, and the picture is excellent. In fact, the only quibble we have is that it's a bit on the quiet side – but while that might be a drawback if you watch on the train, it's probably for the best in the office. ★★★★★

## Competition

# Live life in the fast lane!

No, we can't give you a Jordan, but you can win the front room of your dreams

**Y**ou've got the PlayStation or N64, but somehow the rest of your pad just doesn't come up to scratch. Your couch isn't comfy, your TV screen's covered in funny white flecks, and the volume's so poor you can barely hear the explosions in *Lylat Wars*. If this all sounds like a painfully familiar story, what you need is the *Arcade/Psygnosis* makeover. We can't do anything about your flea-infested sofa, but the crap TV blues? That's something else entirely.

### First prize The complete living room makeover

*Reinvigorate your drab and tired old lounge with these fabulous prizes...*

Now this really is the business. We'll give you a top-quality 28-inch Sony widescreen TV, a Dolby Pro-Logic amplifier and the speakers to go with it, a Nicam long-play video recorder, a bunch of Formula 1 season round-up goodies and even some official F1 clobber to wear while you're using it all. Then, when you've studied exactly how the real-life season panned out using your new book and video, you can get ready to relive the whole thing on your PlayStation, running it through your fantastic new television.

### Runner up prizes also officially "not bad"

Ten runners up will each get a copy of the Formula 1 season round-up video and the F1 cap as consolation for not winning the "big telly."



### Rules of the game

- 1) No purchase is necessary.
- 2) No Future Publishing or Psygnosis employees or their associates may enter this draw.
- 3) The closing date is midnight on 31 December 1998.
- 4) The editor's decision is final and absolutely no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition.
- 5) There is no cash alternative to the prizes.
- 6) Individuals may only enter once.
- 7) All entries must be sent to:  
**Formula 1 Compo, Arcade, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW**

## Look at what you can win



■ Sony 28-inch Nicam stereo widescreen TV. (It's a damn sight nicer than the one in the *Arcade* office. Wanna swap?)

■ A Sony Dolby Pro-Logic amplifier and two speakers. (Your games will sound absolutely fantastic!)

■ Sony Nicam long-play video recorder. (So good it makes even *South Park* look like fine art.)

■ A Formula 1 season round-up video, a Formula 1 season

round-up book. (Every corner, every start, every overtaking move – pickled in aspic, obviously.)

■ A rather classy Formula 1 fleece jacket and Formula 1 cap (forget replacing your clapped-out central heating. This clobber will keep you warm and stylish while you play at home).

■ Ten lucky runners up will be the proud winners of an excellent hat and video pack. Not quite a telly, but still quite a snatch.



## Introducing Formula 1 '98



**Psygnosis' updated racer "more difficult" than before.**

■ The race circuit at Suzuka, Japan, is empty. The last race of the season is fast fading into memory. The 1998 Formula 1 Championship is dead and buried. Or maybe not. Now, with Psygnosis' new PlayStation racer *Formula 1 '98* you can re-live one of the most exciting seasons in years.

With you in charge, a rain-blinded Schumacher might miss the back of Coulthard's car, blasting past to win the race. With you in charge, David might decide "Sod you, Mika," and accelerate on to victory. With you in charge, alert officials might fail to prevent a homicidal German storming the McLaren pits, with horrifying consequences. With you in charge, Damon Hill might even get to win more than one race...

You see *Formula 1 '98*, Psygnosis' third official Grand Prix game, puts you in the driving seat. All the teams and all the racetracks of the 1998 season are here, along with a host of new features – including gameplay that gets progressively more difficult as the season progresses, super-smart artificially intelligent rival cars and a brand-new four-player link-up mode through combined split-screen and combat-cable play. For Grand Prix fans, it's a must-play experience.

■ Psygnosis' *Formula 1 '98* is produced under license from Formula 1 Administration, and is currently the only official Formula 1 product based on the 1998 season. The PlayStation version is produced for Psygnosis by Visual Sciences Ltd, and is available now.

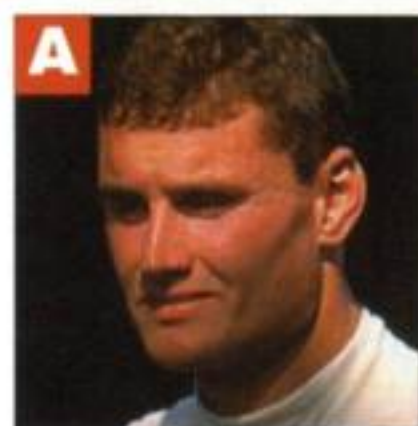
## How to enter | Here are ten of the world's greatest Formula 1 heroes. Can you name them all?

■ Taking part couldn't be easier. Just send us a postcard or sealed envelope with your name, address and daytime telephone number on it – and the names of the ten famous Formula 1 drivers pictured below. Some are current heroes, some are '70s superstars, but none of them are particularly obscure. We've even given you their first names, just to get you going.

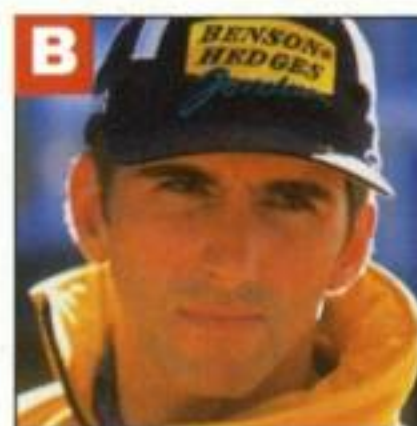
But like our heroes above, you'll have to get a move on if you want to take part: the closing date is 31 December 1998. Remember to get your spelling write and send you entry to:

**Formula 1 Competition,  
Arcade,  
Future Publishing,  
30 Monmouth Street,  
Bath BA1 2BW**

The names of the winner and ten runners up will be published in *Arcade 4*.



■ David



■ Damon



■ Alain



■ James



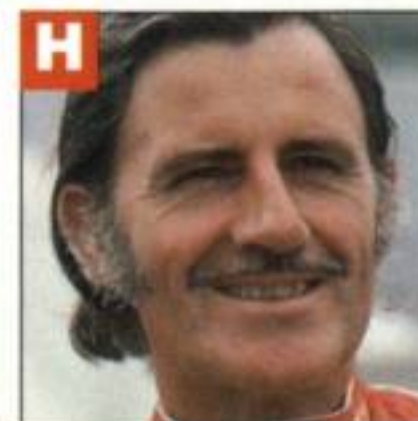
■ Mika



■ Michael



■ Niki



■ Graham



■ Ralph



■ Ayrton

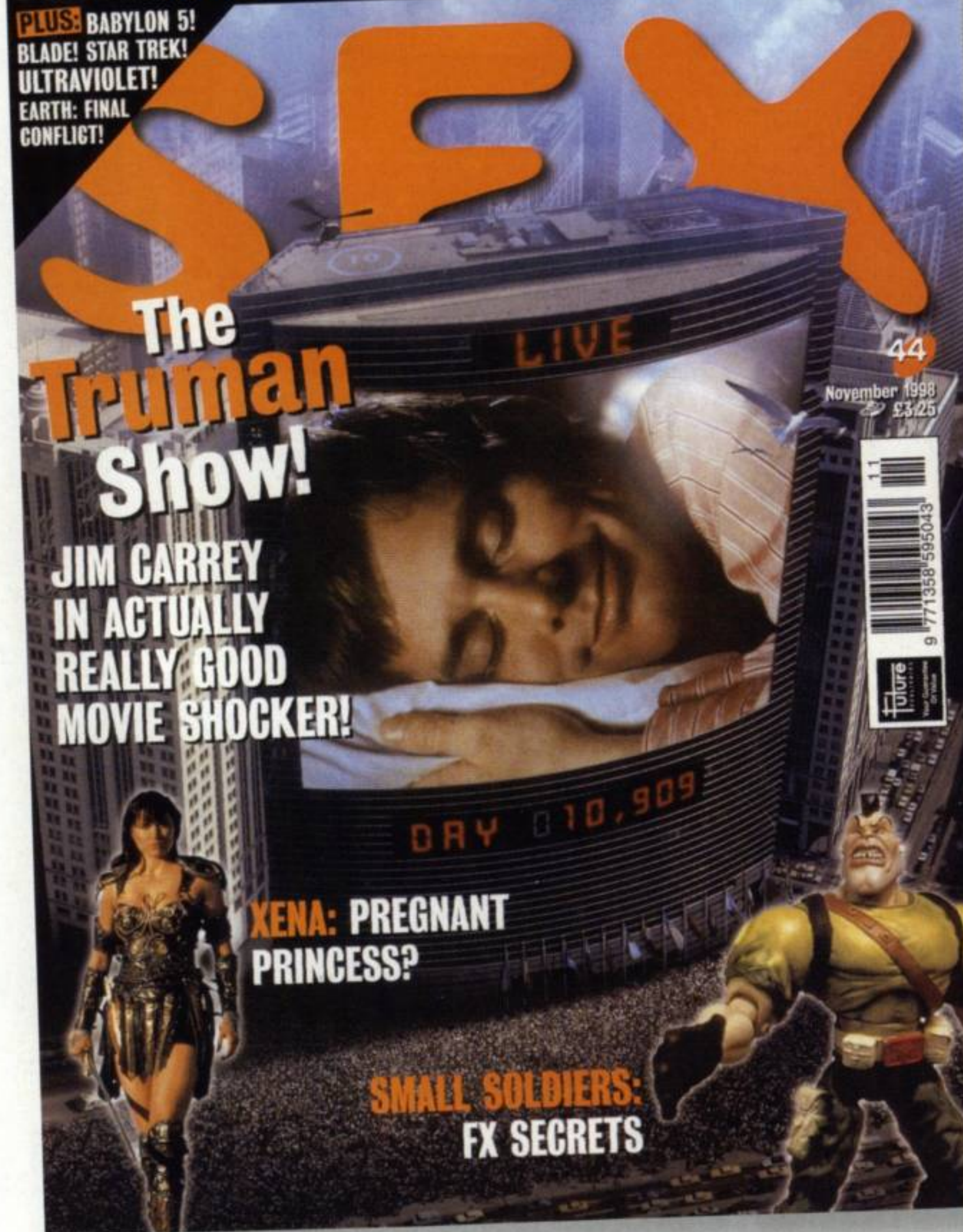


# FREE!

Episode guide to Deep Space Nine with unique season seven preview.

# You don't have to love SF to love SFX...

EXCLUSIVE X-FILES MOVIE & SMALL SOLDIERS SPECIAL EFFECTS PICS



WHY? JUST CHECK OUT OUR LATEST, FANTASTIC VACUUM-PACKED ISSUE...

## The Truman Show...

Director Peter Weir reveals how he turned Jim Carrey from grinning loon to possible Oscar nominee in this year's best movie.

## Vampires!

The creator of the UK's answer to *The X-Files*, Joe Ahearne, describes how he's re-invented the vampire myth in Channel 4's *Ultraviolet*... Plus an exclusive interview with the writer of the surprise US box office smash, *Blade*...

## Dan Aykroyd

He really believes in aliens! Honest! The *Ghostbuster* star tells SFX how he's the PR guy for the real X-Files...

## Cube

The indie film that's wowing SF fans and critics alike



**Plus:** *Babylon 5, Star Trek, Lord Of The Rings, Doctor Who, Xena: Warrior Princess...*

**EXCLUSIVE!**

Special pics from *The X-Files* movie & *Small Soldiers*  
**SFX44 ON SALE NOW!**



# A-list

Welcome to the A-list, Arcade's harsh-but-fair guide to what's hot and what's not in the world of gaming. We don't claim to cover every game ever made, but all the big names are here. And some would much rather they weren't.

This month in the hard-hitting, constantly updated A-list...

## 165 Golf galore!

Fancy a round? Then join us for a quick run through the five best golf games.

## 166 Why I love Mario

Mark Green has a secret desire – it's for a portly plumber from Palma.

## 168 Grand Prix 2

Long term test.

## 170 Zig-a-zig-arghh!

Why buying *Spice World* isn't acceptable behaviour under any circumstances.

## 163 PlayStation games

Over 130 games reviewed for Britain's top console.

## 168 PC games

More than 90 of the latest PC releases rated.

## 171 Nintendo 64 games

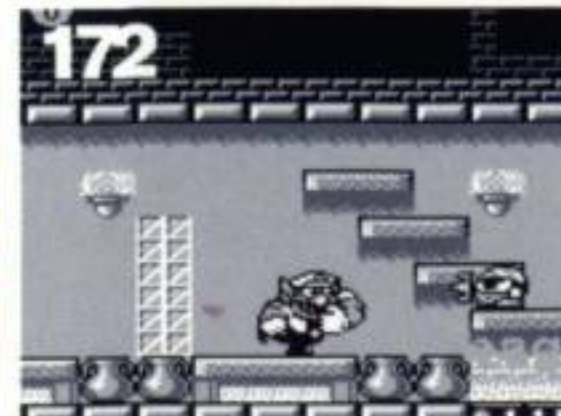
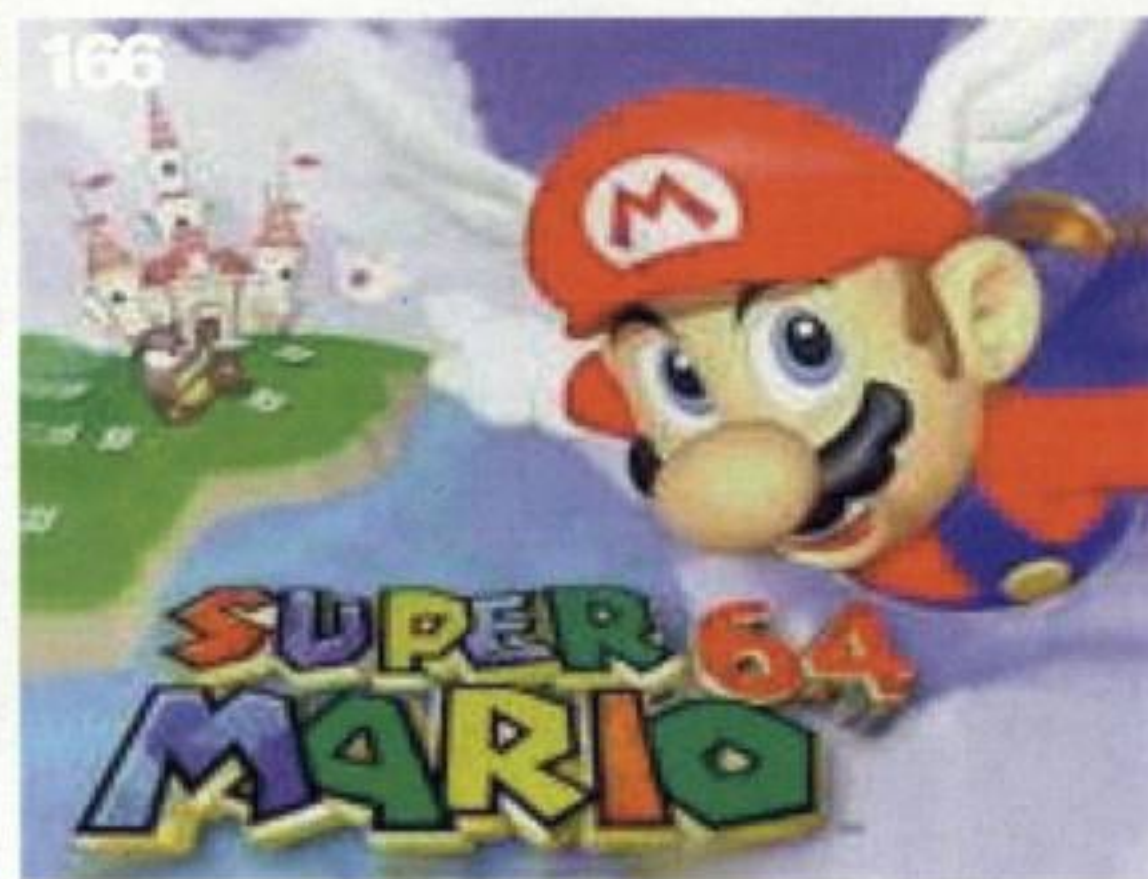
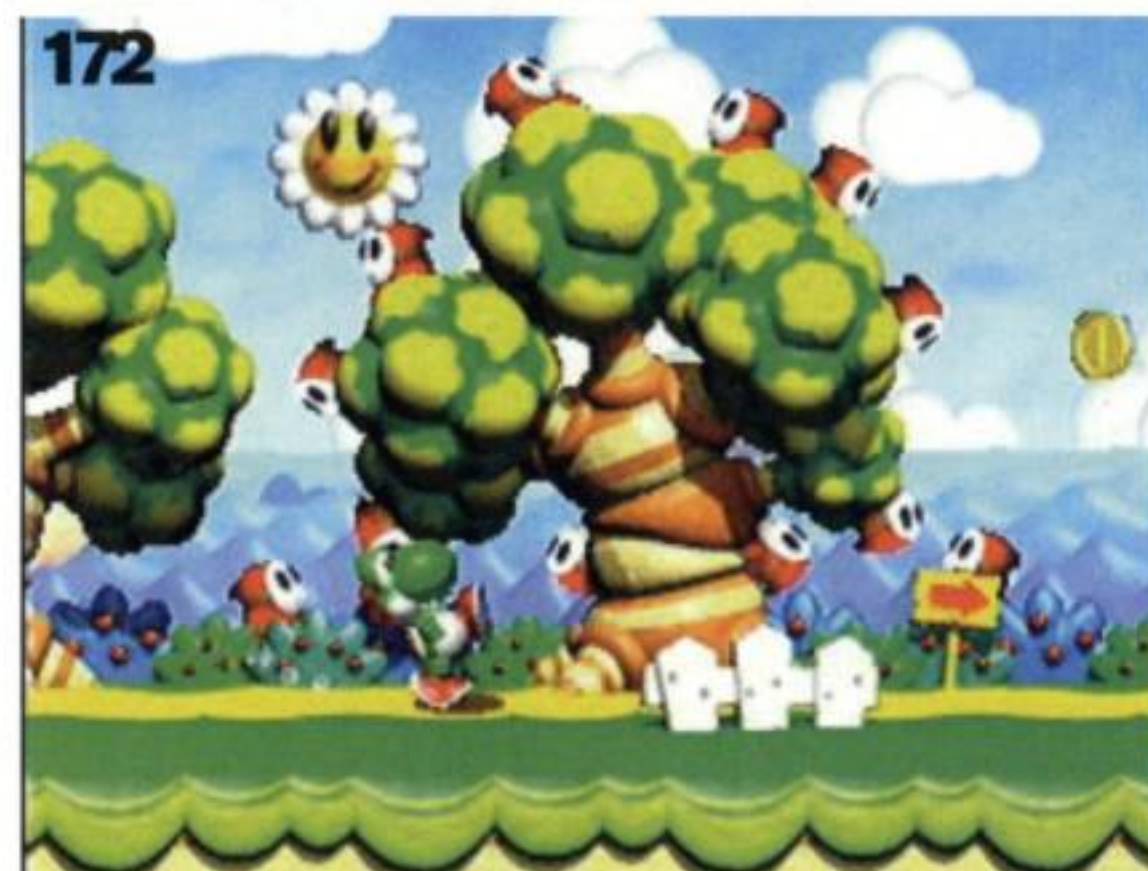
We haven't forgotten...

## 172 Game Boy games

...the less popular systems!

### Star ratings

- ★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really should try.
- ★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- ★★★ Good stuff. Not exactly a world beater, but fine within its genre.
- ★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- ★ Really bad news. Avoid at all costs.



## PlayStation

### 2Xtreme

■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Half-arsed extreme sports cobblers Utter nonsense. You get snowboards, skateboards, blades, MTBs, 12 courses, ten characters, four levels, two players – but it's scuppered by cock-eyed graphics and sloppy controls. ★  
Or try: **ESPN Extreme Games** ■ 1 player ■ SCEE ■ More snow, more wheels, more garbage. ★  
Also available: **Snow Racer** ■ 1-2 players ■ Ocean ■ Crude and too simple. ★★



### Actua Golf 2

■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Well-made if unsurprising golf sim Excellent commentary and beautiful scenery over six courses give this golf outing the edge over other rivals. Great free-flying 3D camera too. ★★★★★  
Or try: **Actua Golf** ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Only eclipsed by the sequel. ★★★

### Actua Ice Hockey

■ Sports ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Minority sport for psychopaths Surprisingly slow and unresponsive, but *Actua Ice Hockey's* saving grace is its easy-to-pick-up control system. You'll have players bouncing off the ice in no time. ★★★  
Or try: **Wayne Gretsky's Hockey** ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ 3D graphics, but strictly 1D long-term appeal. ★★★



### Actua Soccer 2

■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Solid enough soccer sim The commentary's great, the graphics smooth and the pace swift, but otherwise this is unexceptional stuff – the attacking options are frustratingly limited and changing tactics seems to make bugger all difference. It's cheapish at around £30, but richer gamers should stick with the ISS and World Cup brands. ★★  
Or try: **Actua Soccer CE** ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Does nothing genuinely new. ★★



stats you need. The two modes satisfy both arcade and sim fans, though two-player is a let down. ★★  
**Or try: Andretti Racing**  
 ■ 1-2 players ■ EA Sports ■ Difficult tracks, ropery redraw. ★★

**Fade to Black**  
 ■ Adventure ■ 1 player  
 ■ Electronic Arts ■ Platinum  
 ■ Sequel to the classic **Flashback** Definitely looking its age, with dull flat-shaded graphics, but still a very commendable mix of puzzles, running and shooting. It has since been done a great deal better, but this is fun for the price. ★★



**Final Fantasy VII**  
 ■ RPG ■ 1 player ■ SCEE  
 ■ 150 hours of truly epic adventure Quite incredible cut-scenes, which mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and a story-line that will have you emotionally involved throughout. The random battles and linear nature are minor faults, but otherwise, it's a near-perfect adventure experience. ★★★★★

**Fluid**  
 ■ Music ■ 1 player ■ SCEE  
 ■ Interactive aquatic music Guiding a dolphin around to find and create music is a weird idea, but the ability to create and edit music, and visuals to go with it, is engrossing. The graphics are jerkier than you'd expect, but it should keep your hippie friends quiet in those chilled post-club hours. ★★

**Forsaken**  
 ■ First-person shooter  
 ■ 1-2 players ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Blast

**bikers away** Battle to the death in a mad scramble to gain the last resources of a condemned planet in this very tough tunnel-based hovercraft shoot-'em-up. The controls are tricky, but the sheer look of the thing will keep you persevering. ★★  
**Or try: Tunnel B1**  
 ■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ Fast and claustrophobic. ★★

**Frenzy!**  
 ■ Shooter ■ 1 player ■ SCI  
 ■ Pilot a biplane, fly into the screen, fall asleep The levels are huge, but confusing, mostly ill-conceived and full of weirdness. With only three lives, your death comes frustratingly often, and the shoddy graphics and slowdown are immensely frustrating. And, as though on a quest for nails to slam into its coffin, it tries desperately to be funny. ★

**G Darius**  
 ■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players  
 ■ THQ ■ Updated 2D shooter 15 levels arranged so that you have a choice of route don't make this game any easier, or any less monotonous. It's action-packed for shooting fans, and the great "attack enemy ship to use their weapons" concept is nifty, but with so many enemies on screen you risk brain bleed. ★★



**G-Police**  
 ■ Shooter ■ 1 player  
 ■ Psygnosis ■ You are the law Mission-based shoot-'em-up, with plenty of variety and a series of interesting world layouts set in domed cities. Initially as easy to control as a three-year-old in a supermarket, but stick with it and a compulsive experience emerges,

especially as it manages to slip some strategy elements in while you're not looking. ★★★★★

**Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko**  
 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player  
 ■ Take 2 Interactive ■ Lizard-lover's platformer It's after Mario's crown, but Gex doesn't feel as free-roaming as the Big M, and even with 125 moves at your disposal, the level design can't match Nintendo's. It's a barrel of fun, but thanks to its appalling sense of humour, not a barrel of laughs. ★★  
**Or try: Rascal**  
 ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis  
 ■ Gorgeous graphics at the expense of gameplay. ★★

**Ghost in the Shell**  
 ■ Shooter ■ 1 player ■ SCEE  
 ■ Take on the world in a little tank This manga-licensed offering has first-person gunplay, coupled with straightforward search and chase missions. These are varied, but get to the end of each one and you're faced with a boss who's simply too hard to beat. The control and structure favours stealth and tactics, giving short-lived - if frustrating - fun. ★★

**Or try: Assault Rig**  
 ■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis  
 ■ Doom with tanks. ★★

**Grand Theft Auto**  
 ■ Joy riding ■ 1 player  
 ■ BMG Interactive  
 ■ Controversy ahoy! The shoddy graphics and poor speed affect the central appeal of kicking in civilians and driving whatever vehicle you care to purloin, but this is still an involving crim-'em-up. Just don't look at the graphics on the PC version, unless you want to be made green with envy. ★★★★★

**Gran Turismo**  
 ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players  
 ■ SCEE ■ Probably the best racing game in the world Take one measure of outrageously good graphics and near-perfect

handling, throw in immediacy of play and almost limitless levels of depth, add a dash of replay mode, and you've a pleasure pie that can't be missed. A masterpiece. ★★★★★

**Heart of Darkness**  
 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player  
 ■ Ocean ■ Long-awaited 2D adventure, and it shows Four years out of date, this Gallic epic about a boy and his wee doggie is frustratingly difficult, despite helpful hints thrown up at various points, and descends into trial-and-error on too many occasions. It's big, but in this case size really doesn't matter. ★★  
**Or try: Hercules**  
 ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts  
 ■ SNES-style cartoon platformer. ★★



**ISS Pro '98**  
 ■ Sports ■ 1-4 players  
 ■ Konami ■ The best football game in the world Konami sticks one up its desperate licence-toting rivals by beautifully honing its original killer title. Playability is smoother, tactics more subtle, graphics more realised, goal-scoring more rewarding and that through-pass will send shivers of ecstasy along your spine. Plus Tony Gubba's commentary is oddly soothing. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Kick Off '97**  
 ■ 1-2 players ■ Maxis ■ There's no prize for second place. ★★

**Jeremy McGrath Supercross '98**  
 ■ Racing ■ 1 player  
 ■ Acclaim Entertainment  
 ■ Eat soil less often than you would in real life Very fast, but far too easy, so this dirt bike sim jettisons any sense of

realism. The graphics are poor, but the track editor adds an element of longevity if you're the creative type who likes motorcross. ★★

**Klonoa**  
 ■ Platformer ■ 1 player  
 ■ Namco ■ Cutesy 2.5D platformer with a dog Well-designed and intuitive platformer that would be up there with Mario if not for the fact you'll complete it far too quickly. Quite story-led too, making it something of a platform RPG, and so more involving than your average platform game. ★★

**Kick Off World**  
 ■ Sports management  
 ■ 1-2 players ■ Anco  
 ■ Direction and playing combined The management section suffers from a distinct lack of options but just about passes muster, while the playing section looks terrible, has flawed keepers and chucks out goals every couple of minutes. The lack of depth and excitement make Kick Off roughly comparable to watching week-old re-runs of ITV footy coverage. ★



**Kula World**  
 ■ Puzzler ■ 1-2 players  
 ■ SCEE ■ Indecently addictive puzzler Ball-rolling-impossibly-on-a-floating-maze game. Hard to get into, but once you're sucked in you'll be hooked, mostly due to the well-designed controls and head-scratching levels. We rashly claim: you won't stop playing these colourful scenes until you've literally scratched your own head off. ★★  
**Or try: Kurushi**  
 ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE  
 ■ Mind-twisting block-shifting. ★★

**Loaded**  
 ■ Shooter ■ 1 player  
 ■ Gremlin Interactive  
 ■ Platinum ■ Mass murder quest Starring a whole series of unhinged nutters, this bloke-bloodbath has no pretensions about being anything other than mindless shooting fun, complete with gore-splattering explosions and weapons that would make Arnie blush. On the downside, it's very difficult to see what's going on, and the sheer number of similar mazes will have you very bored, very quickly. ★★

**Men In Black: The Game**  
 ■ Adventure ■ 1 player  
 ■ Gremlin Interactive  
 ■ Planetary defenders A film license that appears to have been knocked out in a desperate attempt to make some cash, with graphics and controls that hinder the gameplay. Nuff said. ★

**Micro Machines V3**  
 ■ Racing ■ 1-8 players  
 ■ Codemasters ■ Platinum  
 ■ Tiny cars race around your living room The old 2D game souped up into pseudo-3D for a modern audience, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a multi-player game that's just beautifully designed and great overhead camera. And all of this for just 20 quid? We must be dreaming. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Motor Mash**  
 ■ 1-4 players ■ Ocean  
 ■ Old idea with a new twist. ★

**Mortal Kombat 4**  
 ■ Fighting ■ 1-2 players  
 ■ GT Interactive  
 ■ "Come and 'ave a go if you think..." Although in 3D, this fails to take advantage of the extra dimension, thus boiling down to the same old tedious Mortal Kombat features again and again. The controls and characters are looking incredibly over-familiar, and it's not a patch on Tekken 3. Strictly for fans of the series. ★★

FIVE OF THE BEST

# Five fores!

Golf games are near-identical, so why try to rate 'em? Because you'll only ever need to buy one...



THE BEST GOLF GAME EVER!

**1. The Golf Pro featuring Gary Player**  
 ■ PC ■ Empire  
 You haven't heard of him; no-one has except crazy American fans of the sport that likes to take things nice and easy. But he's given his name to one of the best-looking PC golf games ever, not to mention the most innovative. *The Golf Pro* uses a side-to-side mouse-swinging system that works well, despite being something you wouldn't try in front of a new girlfriend. The only downside is that you get a mere two courses, presumably because Gary's a bit rubbish at the others.

**2. Links LS '98**

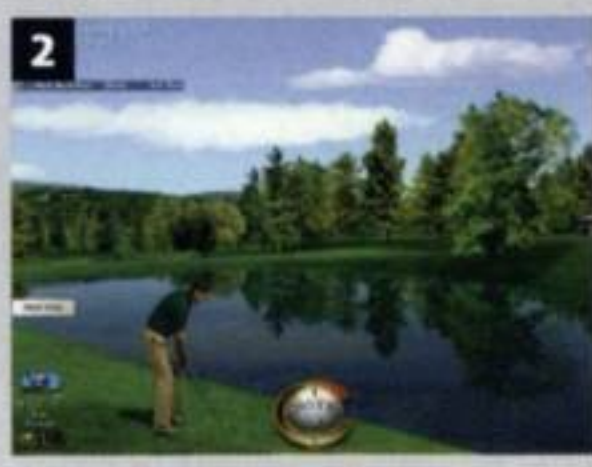
■ PC ■ Eidos Interactive  
 Visually stunning, with realistic ball physics and some options that would impress even Justin Rose. You get the atmosphere of intense realism, the intuitive controls put the power of golf at your fingertips, and the network option enables you to enjoy the game with other golfing fans. Definitely the first golf game you should look at if you suffer an irrational hatred of Gary Player.

**3. Tiger Woods '99**

■ PC ■ EA Sports  
 With plenty of "Tiger grips" at your disposal, and an option to hit the kind of astonishing shot only the Woodster could pull off, this is one definitely viewed through the "eye of the Tiger". The intuitive controls and shot system make many shots easy, though birdies and eagles are still pretty challenging. The three courses on offer look great too. As Tiger himself would say, "It's grrrrreat!" (Sorry about that...)

**4. Everybody's Golf**

■ PlayStation ■ SCEE  
 At last, a golf game that doesn't take itself too seriously, yet still



offers enough control and depth to satisfy 1,000 budding Jimmy Tarbucks. Using the more familiar power-bar system, and including a clutch of well-designed courses and cutesy Japanese-looking kids, this is a game that reckons the best incentive to mastering golf is shoving "NICE SHOT!" on the screen every time you pull off a halfway decent stroke.

**5. Actua Golf 2**

■ PlayStation/PC ■ Gremlin Interactive  
 It's the golf game for people who actually want to be Jimmy Tarbuck. *Actua Golf 2* offers a shed-load of options to make sure you're birdying and hole-ing with the best them, enabling you to hone your skills over six lovely-looking courses. The free-floating camera and beautifully-timed commentary is only spoilt by a lack of both AI and any real difficulty. Birdy on!



■ Gary Player: likin' the way he looks...

**Or try: Mortal Kombat Trilogy** ■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Everything from the previous three. ★★★

**Motorhead**  
■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Furious racing action

A futuristic racer, which at 50fps is so fast and smooth you'll be on the edge of your seat throughout. The courses aren't fantastic, but with ten cars each race, the sheer ferocious glee of screaming past the opposition makes for a pant-dampening experience. ★★★

**Mr Domino**  
■ Puzzler ■ 1 player ■ JVC ■ Does exactly what it says on the tin. A PSX version of those crazy Record Breakers-style domino-topping events, with a central character cursed with the inability to stop walking. Once you work out what's going on, this gets addictive, but it suffers from that typically Japanese a-bit-too-easy feel. ★★★



**N20**  
■ Shooter ■ 1-2 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Old-style shooter Traditional shoot-'em-up, set in futuristic tunnels, and more on-rails than Gremlin would have you believe. It feels

similar to *Tempest*, and is good fun in a retro sense, but despite its addictive powers, it's just not that exciting. ★★★

**Nagano Winter Olympics '98**  
■ Sports ■ 1 player ■ Konami ■ Snow-bound simulation The sluggish controls feel completely unrelated to your character's movement, and just to make matters worse, you also get poor collision detection, and very boring events. Less entertaining than Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards. ★  
**Or try: Chill**  
■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ Badly-controlled adrenaline sports. ★



**Namco Museum 1**  
■ Retro ■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Galaga, Pacman, Pole Position, Rally X The first of the five-strong museum collection is certainly the best, housing the least obscure games of the various volumes. It might provide nostalgic relief, but this lot are otherwise far too simple to be worth the money for today's audience. ★★★  
**Or try: Namco Museum 3**  
■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Thrill-free retro. ★★

**NBA Live '98**  
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ EA Sports ■ 3D basketball An improvement over the two earlier incarnations, these 3D players have enough options to

satisfy anyone who sits up at night watching hoopage on Channel 4. Even with all the stats, though, it's dull. ★★  
**Or try: NBA Hangtime**  
■ 1-4 players ■ GT Interactive ■ Competent but uninspired. ★★

**Need for Speed 3**  
■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ EA Sports ■ I feel the need... Plenty of modes to make the game last that little bit longer, great graphics and a good sense of speed (lucky, what with the name and everything). The chance to leg it from the police and the two-player mode make this the best NFS so far, but it has been overtaken on the inside by *Gran Turismo*. ★★★  
**Or try: Test Drive 4**  
■ 1-2 players ■ EA Sports ■ Smooth graphics, neat tracks, intuitive controls. ★★★

**NHL '98**  
■ Sports ■ 1-4 players ■ EA Sports ■ Great ice hockey If you're looking for an ice hockey game (and Lord only knows why), this is the one for you. It's fast and frantic, yet control of the hectic play is effortless. A genuine improvement over the previous instalment, too, unlike some licensed sports games we could mention. ★★★  
**Or try: NHL Open Ice**  
■ 1-2 players ■ GT Interactive ■ No excitement, no point. ★  
**Or try: NHL Powerplay '98**  
■ 1-2 players ■ Virgin Interactive Entertainment ■ Sturdy but slow. ★★

**Nuclear Strike**  
■ Shooter/sim ■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Guns! Helicopters! There are several missions and 13 vehicles on offer in the latest of this long-running

helicopter-based shoot-'em-up series, along with loads of strategy requirements linked to limited fuel and armour. Plenty of FMV, but this is very much for fans of the series. ★★

**Ninja: Shadow of Darkness**  
■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ EIDOS Interactive ■ Here comes the man in black... A great range of punches, kicks and magic, coupled with a decent amount of switch-finding and the like, make this enjoyable enough. But, sadly, the odd camera system spoils the lovely graphics, and overall, the game is horrendously difficult. ★★★  
**Or try: Soviet Strike**  
■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Platinum ■ More of the same. ★★★



**Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee**  
■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive ■ Platinum ■ Save cute-but-ugly alien from the meat factory Borrowing heavily from the classic *Flashback*, this is a platformer, but heavily disguised by some great graphics. The controls take time to learn, but do their job brilliantly, and it's absolutely massive too, with puzzles that will break your brain. ★★★★★

**Pandemonium**  
■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ BMG Interactive ■ Platinum ■ Two sorcerer's apprentices jump about The graphics look lovely, but with 3D that is actually 2D in cunning disguise, and levels that are happy to copy ideas from other platformers through the ages, *Pandemonium* is ultimately disappointing. After a few hours spent wrestling with the camera system and fruitlessly leaping around, you'll have had enough. ★★★

**Pandemonium 2**  
■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ BMG Interactive ■ It's chaos in there Crystal Dynamics didn't take criticism of the original on board, and the augmented breasts of female lead Nikki are the only apparent change here. *Pandemonium 2* still suffers from basic platform sins (like the leap of faith), and the complete lack of challenge and appalling camera will make you cry. ★★  
**Or try: The Lost World**  
■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Beautiful, but too demanding. ★★



**PaRappa the Rapper**  
■ Rapping ■ 1 player ■ SCEE ■ Puppy love songs It's time to join the rapping dog with "attitude". A selection of fantastic tunes make this brilliantly funny and completely original. Hit the buttons so you rap "Good" and you're sure to finish *PaRappa* in an afternoon, but this said, it's still something you must have. ★★★★★

**Point Blank**  
■ Lightgun shooter ■ 1-4 players ■ Namco ■ Grab your gun Only the Japanese could create a shooting gallery featuring ninjas and piranhas, stick in a four-player mode, and still make it one of the most weirdly addictive gameplay experiences this side of *Time Crisis*. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Crypt Killer**  
■ 1 player ■ Konami ■ Poor-man's light-gun fight. ★

**Porsche Challenge**  
■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Sony ■ Platinum ■ Cruise in expensive cars Stunning light-sourcing and lovely sunsets make this one of the best looking racers, and the 24 tracks, including variations on each of the basic circuits, ensure longevity. The realistic handling (so we're told) and easier-to-control arcade mode should keep wannabe owners happy for days. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Formula 1** ■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ Psygnosis ■ Good looking but an ultimately dull experience. ★★★

**Poy Poy**  
■ Platformer ■ 1-4 players ■ Konami ■ Chuck stuff about Chucking bombs, rocks and even your opponents at each other is the aim – a console *Jerry Springer Show*, if you will. Despite the arenas, ranging from forest to desert, the one-player game lacks variety and runs slowly. The multi-player option – on the other hand – provides pure, if freaky looking, entertainment that makes it all worthwhile. ★★★

**Premier Manager '98**  
■ Sports management ■ 1-4 players ■ Gremlin Interactive ■ Football management for everyone It's the most comprehensive simulation this side of Ruud's office, and yet it's also clearly presented and easy to understand. Would-be Hoddles (if there be any) will enjoy months of re-creating England's various spectacular World Cup crash-outs. ★★★

**Rage Racer**  
■ Racing ■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Arcade racing in your house The third in the *Ridge Racer* series is incredibly faithful to the arcade original, losing none of the speed, moody good looks or options in the conversion process. This is the definitive racer if you like your racing a bit more "Woaah-woah-woooooahhhhh" than *Gran Turismo*. Let down only by the lack of a split-screen option. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Peak Performance**  
■ 1 player ■ Electronic Arts ■ Great editing, poor driving. ★

**Rampage World Tour**  
■ Smash-'em-up ■ 1 player ■ GT Interactive ■ Old-school bizarro building-smasher An attempt to bring a very old arcade game up to date for a '90s audience. It was original and fun at the time, but now it falls at the first hurdle by being too simplistic, too easy and looking very poor indeed. Check out the three massive monsters, though. ★

**Rapid Racer**  
■ Racing ■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Powerboat racing The random "track" generator is a good inclusion, and the hi-res visuals will undoubtedly make jaws drop, but the handling and lack of realism causes it to sink slowly and gracefully to the bottom of the gaming ocean. ★★  
**Or try: Jet Rider 2**  
■ 1-2 players ■ SCEE ■ Haphazard water fun. ★★  
**Also available: Powerboat Racing**  
■ 1-2 players ■ Interplay ■ Comprehensive but ugly. ★★



**Rayman**  
■ Platformer ■ 1 player ■ UbiSoft ■ Platinum ■ Old-school platformer, now looking a bit wrinkly Cheap, but that's about all it has in its favour. It's very 16-bit, and doesn't have anything that would push a dear old Mega Drive. It's packed with eye-wrenching colour and it's horrendously difficult; just say "No!", kids. ★★

**Resident Evil**  
■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ Boo! A decent interactive movie at long last. Genuinely frightening and the first game to achieve a proper film-like anticipation of the next scene, aided in part by brilliantly poor acting. Detailed backgrounds and a great plot. Have a clean pair of pants handy, kids! ★★★★★  
**Or try: Alone in the Dark**  
■ 1 player ■ Ocean ■ 3D people in a 2D world. ★★  
**Or try: Clock Tower**  
■ 1 player ■ ASCII ■ Insanity, intrigue and ghoulishly Japanese murder. ★★

**Resident Evil: Director's Cut**  
■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ Added value version of RE1, plus a demo of the sequel Now that we have *RE2*, the significance of the demo here is diminishing, but if you still don't have the original, this is a high-on essential purchase. This is the Japanese version, so is bound to attract the hardcore gamer. ★★★★★



**Resident Evil 2**  
■ Action adventure ■ 1 player ■ Capcom ■ Scary sequel to the original gore-fest The two-character feature is a touch gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation, but *RE2* is much better than the original in all other respects. The improvement in script and acting, and the wildly increased zombie count, will scare your skin off. ★★★★★

**Or try: The City of Lost Children**  
■ 1 player ■ Psygnosis ■ Fiddly, French. ★★  
**Also available: D**  
■ 1 player ■ Acclaim Entertainment ■ Good looking, but ultimately cold. ★★

**Ridge Racer Revolution**  
■ Racer ■ 1-2 players ■ Namco ■ Platinum ■ Fast car action The definitive arcade racer. Looks absolutely beautiful, but it's the fantastic arcade-style handling and ridiculous speed that should have you racing over the three one-player tracks for quite unreasonable amounts of your life. The five-course two-player link-up mode finishes off an utterly brilliant package. ★★★★★  
**Or try: Ridge Racer**  
■ 1 player ■ Namco ■ Platinum ■ Brilliant, but smoothly overtaken by *Revolution*. ★★★★★

**THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE**

# Why I love Mario

*Super Mario 64* might have altered young Mark Green's life forever, but he can't hold it against the portly pipe polisher.



■ *Super Mario 64* was The Game That Ruined My Life. Its arrival was heralded as videogaming's equivalent of the Second Coming, so I started dropping hints to my then-girlfriend that I'd probably be blowing £300 of my interest-free student loan on an import N64 sometime soon, but that it was okay, we could do the holiday next year. To put it mildly, she wasn't happy, and in the same week and through the same door, I watched my glistening



relationship. And anyway, *Super Mario 64* is the sort of game that hammers home just how irrelevant real-life actually is. Playing *Mario 64* is, for me, like watching a video of half-remembered kids' cartoons and wallowing in gut-tightening nostalgia. *Mario 64* creates such a convincing and individual world that I find myself waving "Hello" to old Bowser and King Bob-Omb as if they're school pals. The levels are all a tad familiar now, and the graphics no longer so world-beating, but it remains as a reminder that the best games are created by a man called Miyamoto, and usually star a stunted plumber named Mario.

new Nintendo arrive, and my girlfriend leave. But I don't begrudge my little Italian friend a thing. Partly because I'm adult enough to admit that it wasn't *Mario*, but a combo of both constant arguing and possessiveness that ended my







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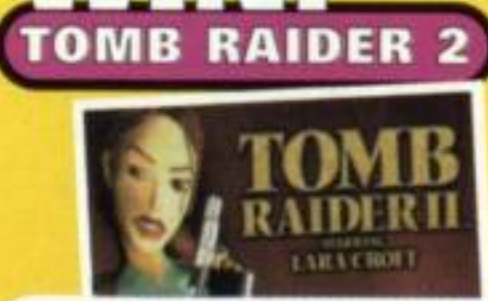
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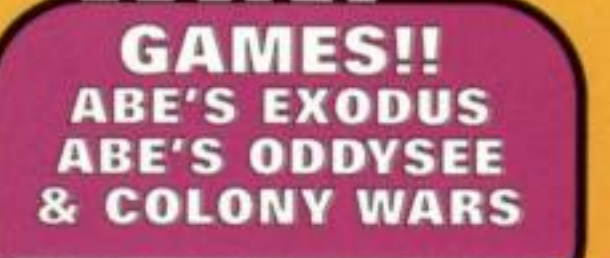
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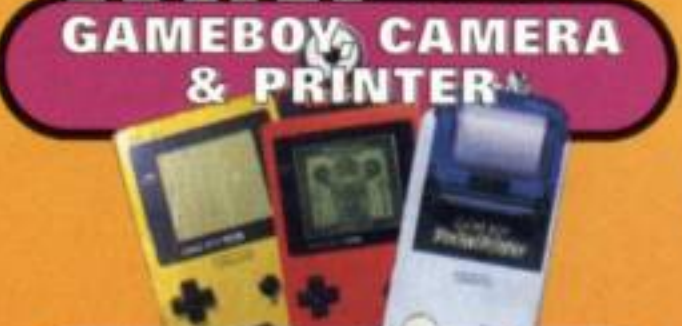
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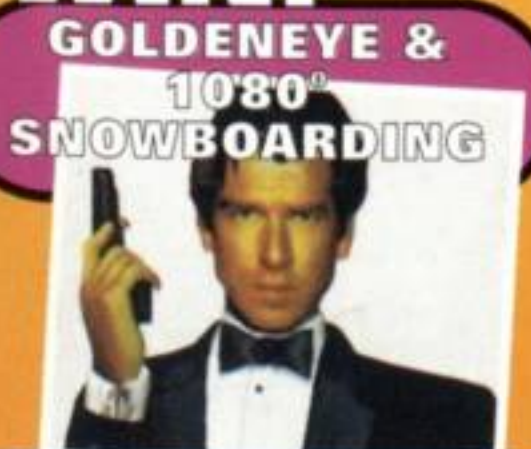
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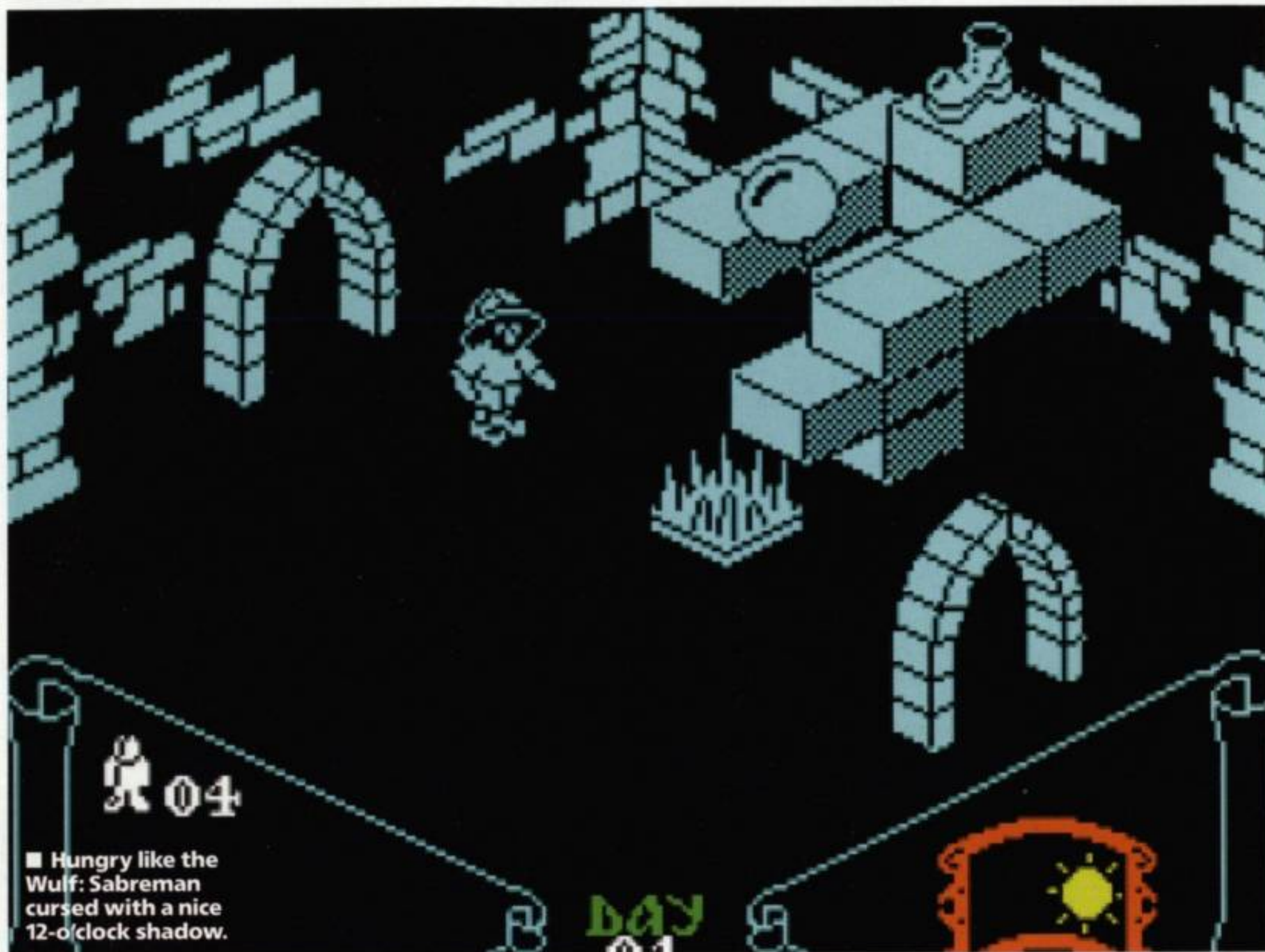
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Compiled by **Mark Green**

# December 1984

The best games, biggest failures and news that rocked the world **14 years ago.**



■ Hungry like the Wulf: Sabreman cursed with a nice 12-o'clock shadow.

## Knight Lore spearheads Ultimate double-whammy

**B**y 1984 the quite madly monickered Ultimate Play The Game was held by its peers, magazines and gamers alike in an esteem usually reserved for bearded deities, despite – or perhaps because of – constant hide-and-seek playing with the press and a policy of releasing games at the bank-breaking price of (gasp!) £10. Its wordless, darkly atmospheric one-page advertisements heralded games of such promise, they caused reviewers to gibber “arcade quality” and similar (frankly ludicrous) phrases with gay abandon, creating a

mystique and expectation level that has rarely been equalled at any time since.

So, when hints began to be dropped of a new game starring Sabreman, the hero of *Sabre Wulf*, boasting a never-before-seen graphics engine dubbed Filimation, the likes of Spectrum mag *Crash* got very excited – as did its readers. By the time *Knight Lore* appeared on the ZX Spectrum, with its jaw-splintering isometric-3D graphics trampling over anything that had come before, gamers were sending letters to their parents with thanks for conceiving them in time to see it.

The storyline was simple – Sabreman needed to collect potion ingredients to prevent nightly transformations into a hairy werewolf, making the game a sort of precursor to the following year’s

● ‘Any Ultimate game is a thrill to unpack and load, but with *Knight Lore* they have surpassed themselves. The 3D graphics are so exciting to see that the fingers are instantly itching to get at the keys. A novel idea... is the best’

### ■ How much did Ultimate pay this guy?

Michael J Fox movie *Teen Wolf*. The plot, though, was secondary to the game itself, which, being more-or-less a platformer in 3D, was able to deliver entirely new challenges.

The reviewers fell over themselves rushing for the office thesaurus in a race to come up with the best superlative. Chris Bourne of *Sinclair User* said it was “a crepuscular world of claustrophobic menace,” while *Crash* thought only capitals could convey the game’s brilliance, shouting, “IT’S SIMPLY A GREAT GAME.” *Computer & Video Games* magazine was more reserved, merely stating that *Knight Lore* was “great to look at and to play.”

The software houses loved it too. *Crash* described *Knight Lore* as “the second most cloned piece of software after *Word Star* [the first word processor].” Some showed restraint, such as Pete Harrap, then of Gremlin Graphics and now director at Krisalis Software, who remembers how, “we did a few game plans along a similar vein until we realised that’s what everyone else was doing”. Most, though, threw caution to the wind, ripped *Knight Lore*’s code apart and gave birth to numerous genetic twins as quickly as possible.

But *Knight Lore* saved its biggest surprise for four years later, when Tim and Chris Stamper, Ultimate’s directors, revealed to Roger Kean of now-defunct *Games Machine* magazine, that *Knight Lore* had been ready for release months earlier. But, anxious to avoid rendering all following games disappointments, the Stampers held it back.

That meant that Ultimate had not one but two great games available for Christmas ’84. The second half of its seasonal double-whammy was *Underwulde*, a fairly typical *Jet Set Willy*-style multi-screen platformer disguised by gorgeous graphics. Being less innovative than its stable-mate, it caused marginally less fuss, but was still a massive hit – as with *Knight Lore*, the beauty of the game lay in a slickness and arcade-feel that left rival programmers breaking their brains.

After leaving the Spectrum scene, Ultimate metamorphosed into Rare, and began to work exclusively for Nintendo consoles. Today, it has *GoldenEye*, *Diddy Kong Racing* and *Banjo-Kazooie* behind it, showing that it hasn’t lost the knack of coaxing the maximum potential from its chosen platform.

## Games of the month | This little lot were the Tomb Raider IIIs and Metal Gear Solids of 14 years ago...



**Daley Thompson's Decathlon**  
 Publisher: Ocean  
 System: Spectrum  
 ■ Based rather obviously on arcade game *Track & Field*, *Decathlon* gave a nation sore wrists through the ridiculous joystick-waggling technique needed to run quickly. It also managed to highlight racism in the industry by giving poor Daley a white face.



**Pyjamarama**  
 Publisher: Mikro-Gem  
 System: Spectrum  
 ■ Taking the multi-screen platformer/object-collecting concept created by *Jet Set Willy* and extending it with bigger and prettier graphics and a complex set of puzzles, *Pyjamarama* created a star in Wally Week, its hero. Wally went on to feature in a sequel, *Everyone's a Wally*.

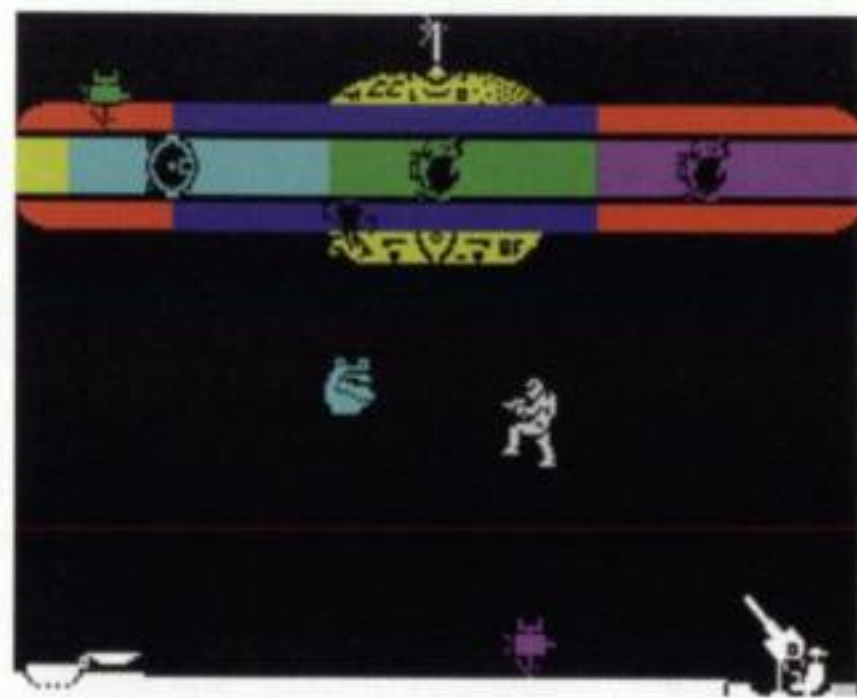


**Skool Daze**  
 Publisher: Microsphere  
 System: Spectrum  
 ■ Now acclaimed as one of the most original and involving games of the '80s, *Skool Daze* built an inventive game around an 'ordinary' school. You played Eric, whose task was to alter his school report in time for term end. We all remember playing this and writing rudies on the blackboards. Don't we?





Imagine's Zoom: not quite a megagame.



Cosmic Cruiser: one of Imagine's flops.

# Imagination overload

**T**elevison only takes the world of videogames seriously when there's a big pile of money involved. So, in 1984, a BBC2 film crew travelled to Liverpool to film the phenomenal success of publishing house Imagine. And as soon as the cameras started rolling, everything began to go horribly wrong...

Imagine had shot to fame overnight with its Galaxians clone, *Arcadia*, but the money from this success was quickly frittered away. Full-page colour magazine ads, huge company expansion, plus Ferraris and BMWs for programmers led the BBC to smell a family of stinking rats.

Before the cameras arrived, the quality of software had begun to drop, with bugged titles such as *Ah Diddums* and *Stonkers*. This, along with failing deals, prompted a hissy cat fight between the directors of Imagine, Marc Butler, Dave Lawson and Ian Hetherington.

"Ian wanted to become a millionaire overnight, while Dave was anxious about losing his house," described Bruce Everiss, responsible for the day-to-day running of the company. According to Marc Dawson, ex-Imagine and now Senior Projects Manager at Software Creations, one director resigned the day before the TV cameras arrived "and took us all down the pub to get drunk."

According to Marc, the trouble really started when Imagine signed a reputed multi-million

pound deal with famous partwork publishers Marshall Cavendish to produce a brand new line of games. "The company thought it was going to get a game every two weeks," he says, "but it soon became crystal clear that the programmers simply couldn't cope."

In fact, Imagine had other ideas anyway – big ideas. The proposed "megagames", *Bandersnatch* and *Psychapse*, would both come bundled with hardware add-ons, providing essential

extra memory and processing power. It was as over-ambitious as it sounds.

"*Bandersnatch* was great," explains Marc, "but the add-on was a C64 on the back of your C64." And *Psychapse* had the artwork and packaging, but the game was no more than an idea.

With Imagine's overdraft rumoured at £11,000, the megagames would never happen. Plans were drawn up to pass its assets and talent to a new software house, but these fell through and Imagine was wound up. The company's name, logo and programmers were bought by publishing house Ocean, who used the label for more minor releases. The rights to *Bandersnatch* were bought by Sinclair Research for the QL computer, but the game never saw the light of day.

The final collective act by Imagine was a re-union party in July the following year. A coffin was hired, an "Imagine RIP" plaque placed on top, and programmers laid single roses at the feet of the company's metaphorical corpse. **A**



## World News Headlines

Back in the real world, this was going on...

■ Boomtown Rats singer Bob Geldof ropes in all his showbiz chums to perform a concert in aid of the famine in Ethiopia. Live Aid also spawned a single (which you can see in the charts to the right), and even a computer game compilation, *Soft Aid*, both of which shot straight to number one in their respective charts.

■ Trouble at Tehran airport, as four passengers of a Kuwaiti airliner are shot dead after being taken hostage by nasty hijackers. Two days later, Iranian security forces swept in and rescued everyone, bless 'em.

■ A massive row erupts as Debenhams and Mothercare hint that they might open on the

two Sundays before Christmas (against the law at the time). After protests from the usual quarters, the plans were abandoned. No nappies or nylons in stockings that year.

■ Lovely housewife Mrs Thatcher joined Mikhail Gorbachov in a call for peace, and increased contact between East and West. Gorbachov wasn't yet president, but he wasn't exactly a long shot, as the last few had dropped dead, one after the other.

■ The sweet little half-penny coin spent its last day in the country's tills and banks, ceasing to be legal tender on January 1, 1985. Cue hundreds of people hoarding the coins, in the misguided belief that they'll be worth thousands in a few years time...

■ *Ghostbusters* became the highest grossed comedy of all time, only displaced by slapstick mess *Home Alone* in 1990. The *Last Starfighter* made a hero of a kid who spent his life playing arcade games, giving a false glimmer of hope to spotty boys.

### Music Charts

15th December 1984

- 1 (-) Do They Know It's Christmas *Band Aid*
- 2 (-) Last Christmas/Everything She Wants *Wham!*
- 3 (1) The Power of Love *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*
- 4 (9) We All Stand Together *Paul McCartney*
- 5 (8) Like A Virgin *Madonna*

### Film Charts

London, 14th Dec

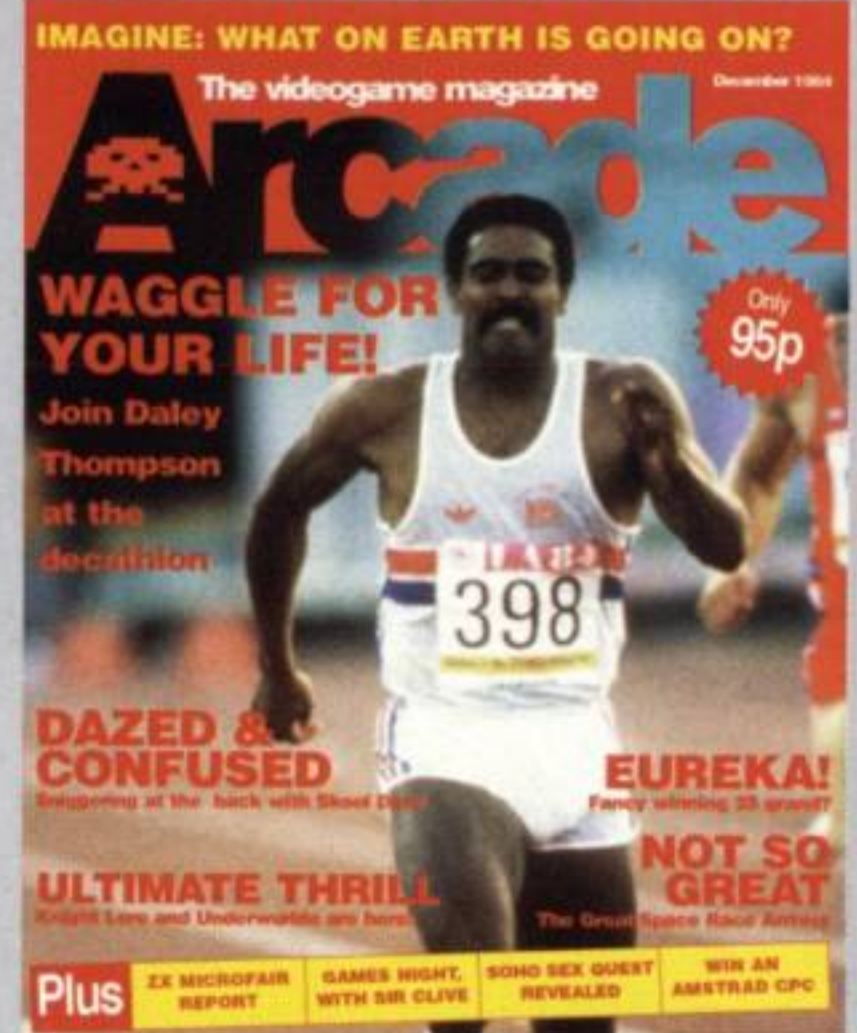
- 1 (-) Ghostbusters
- 2 (-) Gremlins
- 3 (5) The Killing Fields
- 4 (3) A Private Function
- 5 (1) Give My Regards To Broad Street

■ Coleco pulled out of the computer market after its disastrous Adam console, sequel to the Colecovision, failed to take off. And that's despite having a *Smurfs* game. Where's the justice there?

■ Publishing house Mastertronic hit a whole load of trouble with its *Manic Miner* clone *Chiller*. A certain Mr Michael Jackson threatened massive legal action unless it did something about the game's music, which was "heavily influenced" by his hit *Thriller*. Mastertronic, never one to shy away from a fight, completely removed the music from the game and went on to apologise profusely to the monkey-loving singer. Wimps!

■ Long-awaited adventure game *The Wrath of Magra*, first developed by Carnell Software, finally slipped out under budget software label Mastertronic, although at a distinctly non-budget price of £12.50. Bundled with a 158-page book and packed on to two cassettes, it wasn't finished and sold all of two copies.

■ Legend Software, enjoying the critical



■ Here's how our dear mag would have looked way back then. More attractive than Lara Croft? You decide.

and commercial success of "interactive adventure" *Valhalla*, wasted no time in taking out double-page press adverts for its new title, *The Great Space Race*. Touting its mystical "Movisoft2" technique, its release revealed it as a pitifully thin space trading game which played itself, and it was hailed by several magazines as "the worst game of all time." Legend replied by going bust.

■ Malan Associates decided to court controversy with a couple of titles based on carnal knowledge.

*Soho Sex Quest* and *Herpes or Bust* prompted minimal column inches from the computer press, with *Your Spectrum* running it under the headline "Programs for Perverts?" and refusing to give out the company's phone number. Tsk.

■ Rumours of a motorised vehicle from Clive Sinclair gathered pace in the press. Meanwhile, Clive himself was quoted as saying "unemployment will cease to be a worry of the '90s." Well done, Clive – such insight.

## All Formats Top 10

- 1 (2) Ghostbusters *Activision, C64*
- 2 (1) Daley Thompson's Decathlon *Ocean, Spec/C64*
- 3 (-) Starstrike *Real Time, Spec*
- 4 (-) Elite *Acornsoft, BBC*
- 5 (-) Raid over Moscow *US Gold, C64*
- 6 (-) Pyjamarama *Mikro-Gen, Spec*
- 7 (4) Elite *Acornsoft, Electron*
- 8 (-) Match Day *Ocean, Spec*
- 9 (-) Booty *Firebird, Spec/C64*
- 10 (14) Skool Daze *Microsphere, Spec*

## Your Spectrum magazine Reader's Top 10

- 1 (2) Sabre Wulf *Ultimate*
- 2 (-) Daley Thompson's Decathlon *Ocean*
- 3 (1) Jet Set Willy *Software Projects*
- 4 (5) Trashman *New Generation*
- 5 (15) Match Point *Psion*
- 6 (10) Lords of Midnight *Beyond*
- 7 (4) Atic Atac *Ultimate*
- 8 (-) Fighter Pilot *Digital Integration*
- 9 (14) World Cup *Artic*
- 10 (-) Monty Mole *Gremlin Graphics*

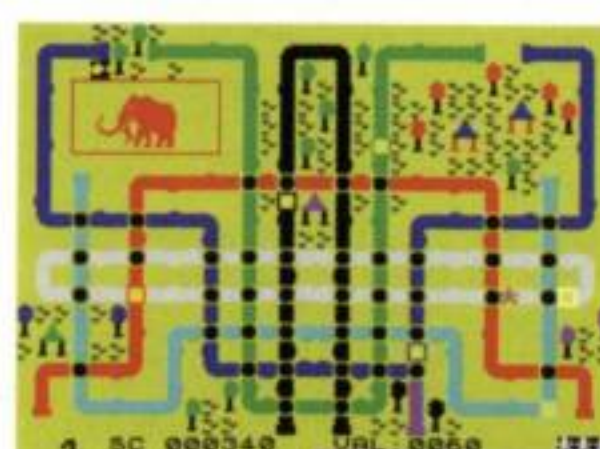
PHOTOGRAPHY: MSI, EMPICS



**Kung Fu**  
Publisher: Bug-Byte System: Spectrum  
■ The first fighting game on home computers, this was an admirable attempt to emulate the sporting craze of the time, with absolutely massive characters and a worthy series of moves to pull off. No Mr Miyagi, though, which is a shame. Or is that karate? Bah.



**Raid Over Moscow**  
Publisher: US Gold System: Commodore 64  
■ This caused horrendous controversy with its title, requiring you to shoot down the mad communist ruskies. CND ended up protesting outside US Gold's offices, and when the Spectrum version was released, it had the far less offensive name, *Raid*.



**Eureka!**  
Publisher: Domark System: Spectrum  
■ The first release from Domark, *Eureka!* was an adventure with a difference. It offered a prize of £25,000 to the first person to successfully complete it and ring a phone number revealed at the end of the game. The prize was duly won – by a young spotty boy, would you believe?



■ Guess who's coming to dinner? Our little Egyptians wonder what's on the menu in Lionhead's first game, *Black & White*. Read about it in next month's 1999 preview.

Next Month

In January's  
**Arcade**

Let's  
**party**  
like it's

All the new games. All the hot new developments. Plus plenty of opinion, prediction and prejudice. Next issue we have the entire story of the year to come.

**1999**

## Electric Avenue

**Fancy buying your own coin-op?  
We meet the men who have.**

Everyone thinks about it, at least occasionally. But few of us ever do it. The idea of having a genuine, real-life arcade machine in yer living room has a universal appeal, but immense practical consequences. Where would you put it? How much noise would it make? How long before one of your family members attacked it with a rolling pin? Next month we talk to four men who've – through a combination of rashness, bravery and ignorance – taken the plunge, and chat with the coin-op world's answer to Quentin Willson for a complete round-up of what to get, where to get it from and how much to spend. (It's less than you think!)

## Plus!

All the latest games reviewed, plus Coming Soon, Games Night, all your soon-to-be-favourites – and the odd surprise. With luck, we'll have a free gift for you too.

**Arcade 2 on sale Monday, 14 December.  
Order your copy now.**

# Use the Force!

Remembered by | **Matt Bielby**

Getting to grips with **R-Type's** Force, the ballsiest add-on weapon of them all.



**T**he first ever computer games I played were on my uncle's Commodore Pet – moon landing "sims" and one where subs torpedoed ships that chugged erratically across the screen. This would have been 1982 or '83. The first computer I ever owned was a Speccy 128K+2. And the first proper job I ever had was as staff writer on *Computer & Video Games*, Britain's first games magazine. It was early 1988 and we wrote on typewriters, but in the games room lurked every kind of games machine imaginable. It was like walking into an arcade – and it was there that I came across the PC Engine version of *R-Type*.

To a kid who'd only ever owned a Speccy it was all amazing. There was a Nintendo, where I discovered *Super Mario Brothers*.

The new Commodore Amiga and Atari ST were impressive, too (early favourites: the shoot-'em-up *Sidewinder* and the Bitmap Brothers' *Speedball*). But the best toy in the shop was that small, grey chunk of plastic from Japan: NEC's fabulous PC Engine.

If you don't already know, the PC Engine was one of the great missed opportunities of gaming – tiny and powerful (the graphics were all Amiga quality or better), yet never officially imported into this country. And in *R-Type*, its best game, it owned one of the greatest shoot-'em-ups ever created for a home system. Sure, Irem's coin-op quickly found its way on to virtually every games system going, but for those who saw it, the PC Engine version was the best – one of the very few coin-op conversions that ever lived up to the description "arcade perfect". It was as near as dammit a 1:1 port.

And what a coin-op. *R-Type* wasn't just stylish, it was also brilliantly designed. All the levels were distinctive and original, the boss characters gigantic and ingenious, and the power-ups simply perfect. *R-Type* took the extensive extra-weapon system introduced in games like *Gradius* and vastly improved it.

Your basic R-9 ship came armed with a standard shot that could be charged for a

### Wanna play?

■ You can easily play the classic *R-Type* on your PlayStation today. Virgin's *R-Types* has both the original game and its even harder and prettier sequel *R-Type II* on one disc – a rather good deal when you think that the original PC Engine version only included the first half of the coin-op (you had to buy the second lot of levels separately). With a bit of digging you can get hold of a version of *R-Type* for just about any system – there's even one for Nintendo's Game Boy, and it's surprisingly decent.

high-powered burst if you held on to the fire button for an extra second or two – a great weapon in its own right – but once you'd blasted a few bonus droids (spherical R2-D2s that hopped across the screen) things really started to motor. It was then you earned the Force – a floating ball about half the size of your ship that could be clamped to the front or back to boost firepower and act as an impregnable shield. Alternatively it could be left to tag around after you like some loyal sheepdog, blasting bad guys as it went – and it was a simply perfect weapon. Speed-ups, extra weapon power-ups (including the great rear-shots, bouncing lasers and so on) and power boosts for your existing arsenal added to the fun, but it was that very first introduction of the Force – and your almost immediate realisation that it was simply the best shoot-'em-up weapon you had ever seen – that gets my nomination as a Great Gaming Moment. **A**

**It could be left to tag around you like some loyal sheepdog, blasting bad guys as it went**

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