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MEGA TECH

MEGADRIVE HYPER GAMING TECHNIQUE

DESERT STRIKE
Death in the desert from Electronic Arts

REVIEWED INSIDE:

- PITFIGHTER
- MARBLE MADNESS
- ROLLING THUNDER 2
- FIGHTING MASTERS
- BEAST WARRIORS
- MARIO LEMIEUX ICE HOCKEY
- RUNARK

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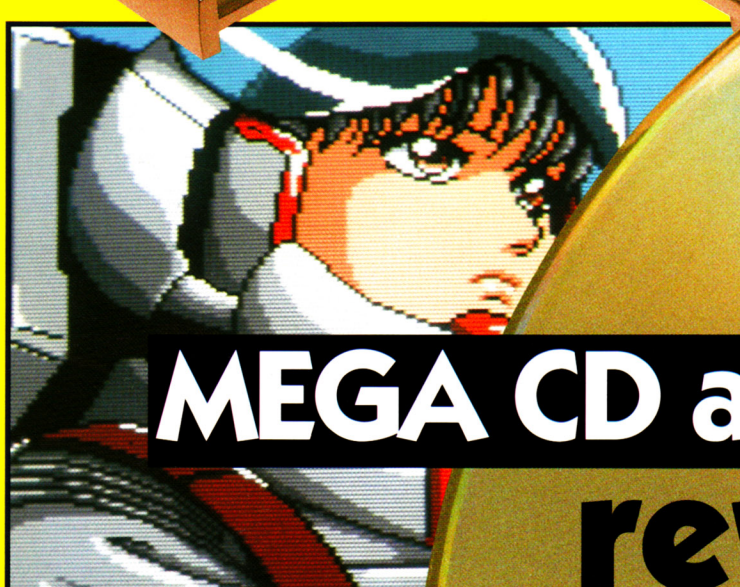

MEGA CD and games reviewed

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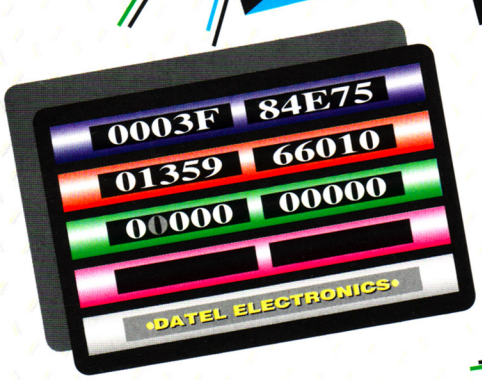

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● ON LINE FOUR you will find hints, cheats and tips for the all the latest games. It's your chance to find out a load of the stuff we'll be printing in the next issue's Technique Zone more than a month early! So what are you waiting for?

Calls are charged at 36p per minute off peak, and 48p per minute at peak times.If you're under 18 make sure you OK things with whoever pays the 'phone bill before you call.

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DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SUB-CONTINENT WIDELY ATTRIBUTED TO : Christopher Columbus

THIS MONTH'S GEM OF WISDOM SUPPLIED BY THE ANCIENT CHINESE: "Although there exist many thousand subjects for elegant conversation, there are persons who cannot meet a cripple without talking about feet".

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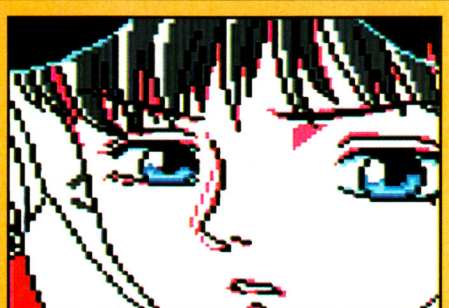

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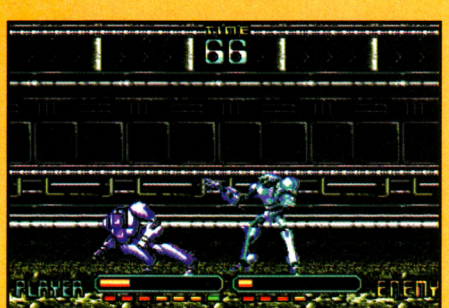

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Here's what you've a

The Mega-CD, in case you've been in a coma for the past six months, is Sega's CD-ROM unit which plugs into the Megadrive to provide it with graphics and sound abilities on a par with those of Nintendo's Super Famicom and enough program storage space to hold (in theory) 660 8 M-bit cartridge games. Not surprisingly, this makes the potential for incredible games with great sound and graphics enormous. Also not surprisingly, this makes it the machine that every Megadrive owner wants for Christmas (or Easter, or a birthday present).

The Mega-CD's intro gives a taste of how its new graphics processor can brutalise sprites.

CD-WHAT?

CD-ROM (which stands for Compact Disc Read Only Memory) is a powerful software storage system which has been in use for a couple of years, but has only recently become cheap enough to produce affordable home systems. It works much like a very high capacity computer disk drive, but stores data optically on a 5" compact disc (the same as a music CD) which is read by a laser.

BIG BUFFERS

With most computer CD-ROM systems, program information is loaded into the computer's memory as it's needed, and that can be a little slow. To speed things up, the Mega-CD is equipped with a high-speed laser pick-up and a six megabit buffer, which allows it to load in six megabits of information in advance then transfer it instantaneously into the Megadrive's memory as soon as the game requests it.

SOUND AS A POUND

Most Megadrive games would never be able to use all of the space on a CD, so there will always be plenty of room for studio-recorded music tracks and speech on a disc. The Mega-CD can't read game data and music tracks at the same time, though, so the unit also has an eight-channel PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) chip inside it, to provide perfectly synthesised music and sound effects.

GRAPHICS FROM HELL

As well as being the fastest console CD-ROM in town, the Mega-CD incorporates an extra processor chip which helps improve the Megadrive's graphics capabilities. As well as being able to move sprites and animate them, the Megadrive can take an image and rotate it, change its size or flip it to give it a perspective effect. Previously the only console with such features was Nintendo's Super Famicom which makes good use of the rotation and perspective effects in games such as Pilot Wings, F-Zero and Super Formation Soccer. Does this mean that we could now see similar games on the Megadrive?

Sega's Mega-CD is the add-on every Megadrive owner has been waiting for since it was first unveiled on June 6th of last year. Six months later it's available on import, but was it worth the wait? Paul Glancey puts the machine through it's paces.

I been waiting for!

The Megadrive/Mega-CD combination in all its glory. The large plastic blob on the right-hand side connects the two units together and contains a 30-way edge connector which lets all that lovely game data flow between the two.

The rear of the Mega-CD is where you'll find a 3.5mm mixing jack and the two phono sockets which connect the machine to a stereo amplifier.

There are no controls built onto the Mega-CD at all, even opening and closing the disc tray has to be done via the control screen. If you just want to play a music CD the system must be connected to a monitor so you can see the control panel.

Combinations of the red and green LEDs on the front panel display indicate when a disc is installed, when the machine is in stand-by mode and when data is actually being read from the disc.

OPEN THE BOX

Unpacking the Mega-CD, you come across three bits of new hardware. There's the Mega-CD unit itself of course, a metal locking plate and the Mega-CD's own 9-volt mains adaptor.

The Mega-CD is a black box, about the same size as the Megadrive only slightly taller. There are power and sound output sockets on the back, an edge connector sticking out of the top right-hand side but no buttons on it at all. Two LEDs (one red and the other green) on the front of the machine flash in four combinations while the machine is operating to indicate whether there's a disc inside and when it's being accessed.

Does it look sexy? Well, actually, it looks a bit, well, cheap really. But the proof of the high-tech new console gadget is in the plugging in and playing with so let's swiftly move on to...

FITTING THE MEGA-CD

To fit the Mega-CD to your Megadrive you first need to turn the Megadrive over and remove the plastic hatch in the right-hand side of the case (see, you always wondered what that was for). Once that's gone remove the orange plastic sleeve covering the edge connector and screw the locking plate to the underside of the Megadrive's case. Now you can slide the Megadrive onto the top of the Mega-CD, and fix the two together by pushing the edge connectors home.

Mega-CD minus Megadrive – small, cheap-looking and worth £300. The potential's there, but will the software come up to scratch?

Both the Megadrive and the Mega-CD need their own power supplies, so it's important to make sure the Mega-CD mains adaptor you get will plug into a 240-volt mains socket and is not a Japanese 100-volt AC unit.

Once the power is all connected up, make sure there's no cartridge in the Megadrive, and switch on.

THE DEMO

Turn on the Mega-CD and the machine will show off its potential in a demo sequence which lasts about a minute. A sprite in the form of the Mega-CD logo is first stretched, then flipped and rotated, then spun into the distance and back again in various wacky patterns to illustrate the uses for the sprite molesting hardware.

Meanwhile, in the background the new PCM sound chip plays a never-ending tune, which repeats every ten seconds or so. The instruments are nicely synthesised, though, and the quality of the sound overall is noticeably better so the potential for much groovier tunes is there.

GAME PLAYING

Press START while the demo is running and you're confronted with this control panel screen which replaces any push-button controls on the front of the Mega-CD. To start playing a game, move the cursor to OPEN, press the button and the disc drawer opens. Drop your disc into the drawer, close it and move the cursor up to CD-ROM to load the game.

Among its CD features are track search, two types of random play and program mode which lets you select the running order of the CD.

CD PLAYING

Of course, when you're not playing games on your Mega-CD you can use it to play music discs. On the back of the machine there are two RCA phono sockets for connection to a standard amplifier or hi-fi system and a mixing jack. The Megadrive's stereo jack socket also serves as a sound output, so you can plug in headphones and the volume control on the Megadrive works as normal.

The Mega-CD also has the added advantage of being able to play CDGs, music disks that contain computer tracks with information, and occasionally pictures of the group. While this seemed like a good idea at the time, CDG never really took off in Japan and very few disks are available here.

Unfortunately, the Mega-CD cannot operate as a CD player independent of the Megadrive, and you'd have trouble if the whole thing wasn't also plugged into a monitor. Because there are no controls on the front of the Mega-CD, to open and close the disc drawer, select tracks and program a sequence you have to use the control screen.

THE GAMES

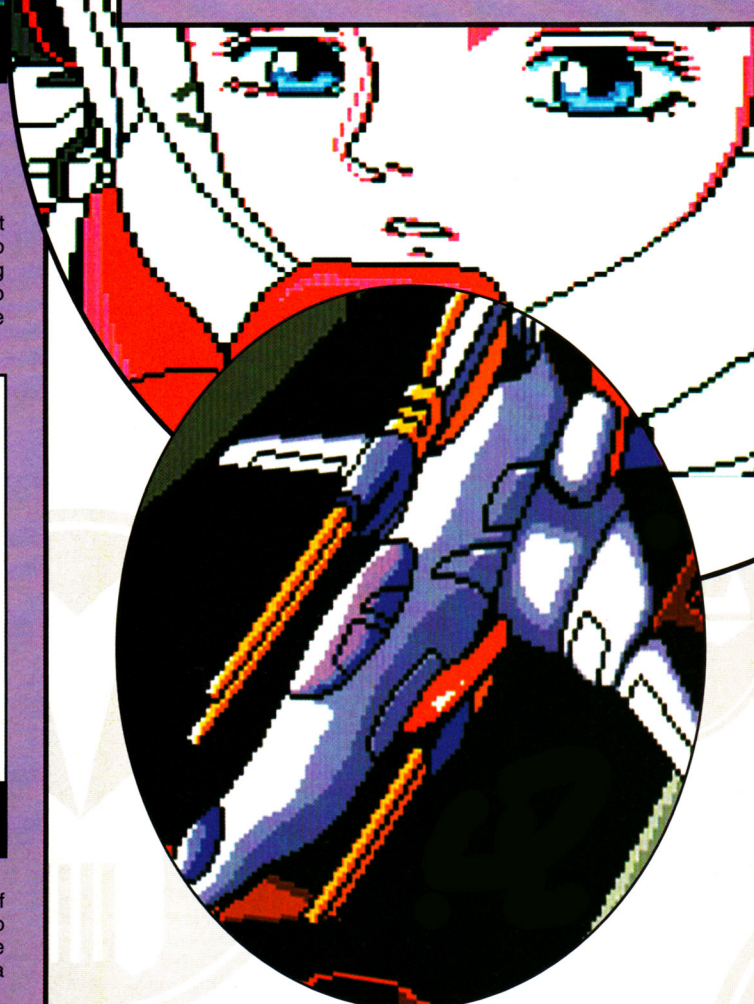
The first releases for the Mega-CD largely consist of huge role-playing games, such as Cosmic Stories, Detonator Organ (???), Crying Dragon, Lunar – The Silver Star, Phaeria, Dark Wizard and 3x3 Eyes. Obviously a lot of these won't be much good to players who can't read Japanese, but there are a few arcade games available as you read this. Two of them, Solfeace and Heavy Nova, are reviewed in this issue of MegaTech.

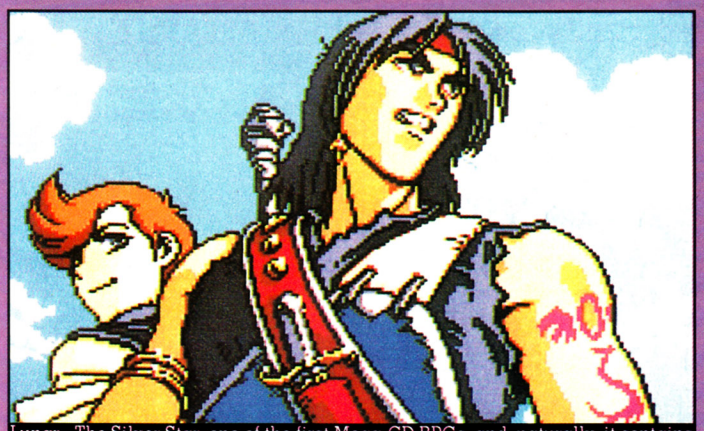
Other titles currently being programmed in Japan include a vast platform game called The Adventures of Earnest Evans, as well as a Rastan-style hack-'em up which has an untranslatable name and a new Michael Jackson game, Moonwalker II, which should have excellent music tracks on the disc.

The Mega-CD has also attracted the attention of American software companies. Lucasfilm are working on conversions of two of their superb role-playing games, Loom and (reportedly) The Secret of Monkey Island. Dynamix also have their vast graphic adventure, Rise of the Dragon, on the launch pad and Maxis (the company that originally produced Sim City) are converting their planet simulator, Sim Earth, onto Mega-CD. Origin are programming a Mega-CD version of Wing Commander, the 3D space flight simulator which would only run on very fast PCs but which should be able to make good use of the new sprite-scaling hardware.

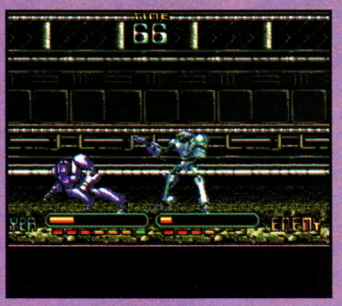
Sega have released no news as to whether or not they plan to release conversions of any of their coin-ops. The one game that everyone hoped would appear on the Mega-CD, Capcom's Street Fighter 2 coin-op, has been signed up by Nintendo for conversion to the Super Famicom so iit now seems extremely unlikely that the game will ever appear on a Sega system.

Of course, MegaTech will be reviewing Mega-CD games as they appear.

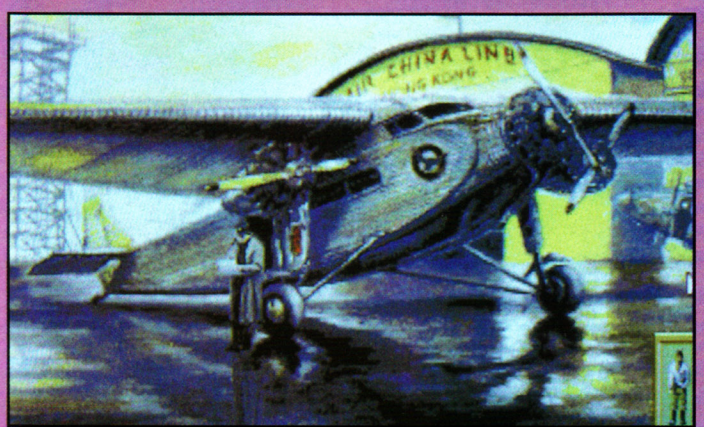




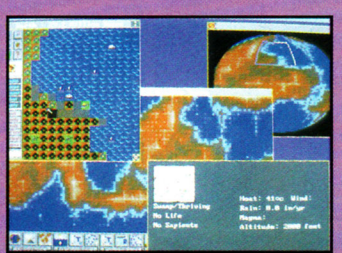
Lunar - The Silver Star, one of the first Mega-CD RPGs, and, naturally, it contains stacks of Japanese text.



The Secret Of Monkey Island is Lucasfilm's most famous game to date. This game could trigger a host of PC to CD conversions.



Rise Of The Dragon is a veritable PC classic from Dynamix. The original version featured 256 colour graphics and digitised people. Who knows what's in store for the CD version (Dynamix, probably)?



Sim Earth, from Maxis, is due for release late in the year.

Look out for a review of this, Earnest Evans, in the next issue.

THE CATCH

Sounds great doesn't it? Enhanced graphics and sound, bigger games and a CD player all in one box must be a Megadrive fan's dream come true. But there's a catch.

The Mega-CDs which are currently being sold are imported from Japan and only work with imported SCART machines. They are not compatible with official Megadrives or imported PAL machines, and at time of writing, none of the importers have managed to work out any modifications to get the two working together. Needless to say, it won't be long before our enterprising Tommies produce a converted Mega-CD for PAL machines (expect them to be advertised in February), but if you want to buy official you'll just have to wait.

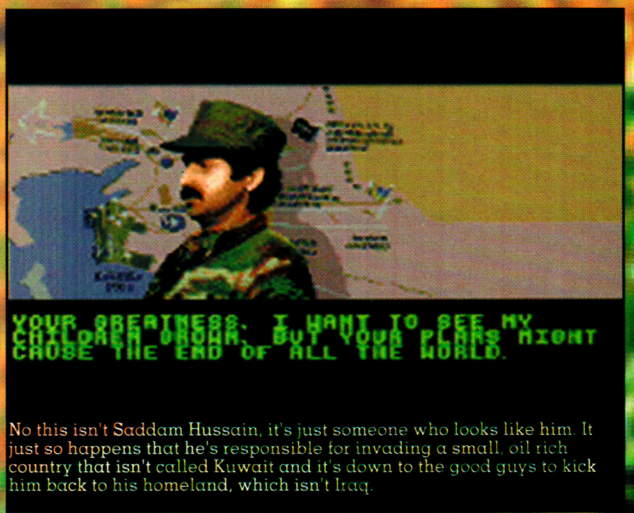
PRICE AND RELEASE DATE

Our review Mega-CD was supplied by importers Advanced Console Entertainment (tel 071 383 0480) who expect to sell their machines for just under £300.00. At time of writing, Sega Europe have not released a date for the launch of their official Mega-CD, though the word on the street is that it will be released in the Autumn of this year priced at around £250.00. Keep watching MegaTech for further details as they emerge.

THANKS!

Many thanks go to Advanced Console Entertainment (tel 071 383 0480) for supplying us with the Mega-CD so promptly.

Oil installations are also on your hit list. Of course you're not out to destroy the enemies infra-structure. Anyway, the enemy have no military installations, just a lot of heavily guarded baby milk factories.



No this isn't Saddam Hussain, it's just someone who looks like him. It just so happens that he's responsible for invading a small, oil rich country that isn't called Kuwait and it's down to the good guys to kick him back to his homeland, which isn't Iraq.

DESERT ST

Honestly - Middle-Eastern dictators. You give them a funny moustache and they think they own the country next door. Then what do they do? They get their Russian-made T-80 tank out of the garage, drive through the desert, over the border and claim the whole place and its valuable natural oil resources.

Of course, this scenario is pure fantasy and any resemblance to any uniformed persons (with moustaches) living (in Baghdad) or dead is pure coincidence, which is why Electronic Arts can use it in perfectly good taste for their top new game, Desert Strike.

With the stage set for the mother of all battles (or something), you take control of an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter based on a patrolling destroyer. Armed with a 30mm chain gun and pylons full of Hydra and Hellfire missiles you have to take off and torch strategic targets in the desert (the first mission features airports, SAM sites radar installations and power stations).

The game is basically a shoot 'em up with knobs on, but from what we've seen it's going to be right proper tasty-like. There are five missions in total, each being made up of a number of sub-missions in which you have to destroy the individual targets displayed on the navigation computer's map.

The action is displayed in isometric perspective and as you fly over the dunescape, the screen scrolls to follow. The Apache flies at a constant height and the joypad moves it forward, back and rotates it so that targets can be lined up. Once you've got an enemy in your sights, let rip with a missile or a hail of bullets and watch it blow up!

Just like real life (which is of course an exception for Desert Strike because, we would remind you, it has nothing to do with the Gulf War), your helicopter does not have an infinite supply of ammunition and when stocks are running low you have to brave enemy machine gun and SAM attacks to find the nearest supply depot. The armour on your Apache also needs replenishing after a good hard bullet-bashing, but the only mechanics who ever have the parts have set up their workshop on the beach miles from anywhere.

As well as having to blow things up, you have to find and rescue missing Marines who are wandering around the desert looking rugged. When you find one, you have to hover over him while your winch man lowers a harness and hauls him back up. The winch man also comes in handy when you find a crate which you can collect to replenish your helicopter's armour, fuel or weapons.

Desert Strike is currently being programmed in The States by Mike Posehn (who also programmed Deluxe Video on the Amiga in case you're interested) and is due for release in Britain in mid-March, priced at £39.99. Watch out for a full review in the next issue of MegaTech.

Your co-pilot is the guy who operates the winch and, more importantly, the guns. If you're not happy with your comrade's perfomance you can ditch him and take another on board.

Your mission, should you wish to accept it, is to take your big, shiny, helicopter into the desert and destroy everything you come across, except nice American hostages that is.

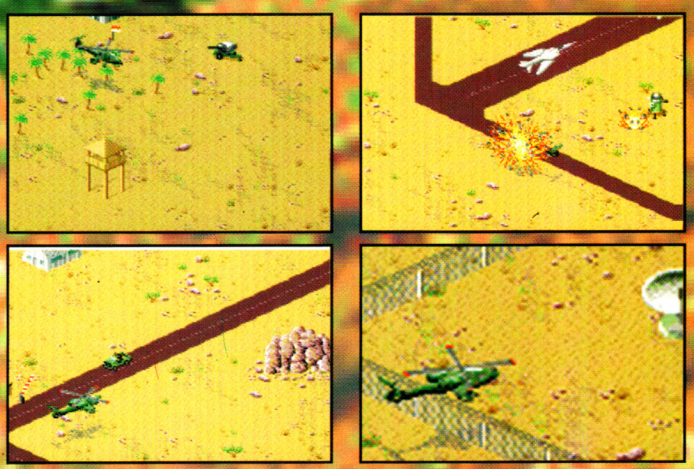
TRIKE

A MEGATECH PREVIEW FEATURE

Despite being armed with a state-of-the-art helicopter, you can't attack your base ship. Once airborne a short flight east takes you to the mainland, and a whole passel of targets.

The information screen shows you what state your helicopter is in, how much ammunition is in your stores, and where the enemy is.

You come under fire as soon as you reach the coast. Here we see a brave enemy soldier going one-on-one with your 'copter. What he doesn't realise is that your helicopter is almost bullet proof and carries big missiles.



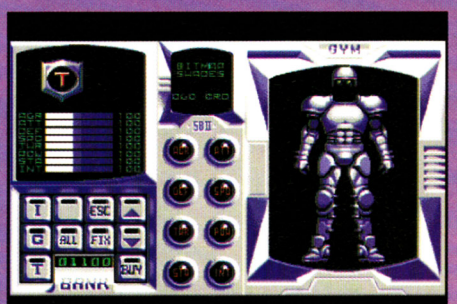
As a rule of the thumb, if it's man-made you can destroy it. Some buildings contain weapons and fuel which can be winched up and added to your reserves.

SPEEDBALL 2 OUT NOW

If any of your Amiga-owning mates have tried to make you jealous by putting this fantastic future sports simulation on every time you go round to their house (or boat if they live on a barge), you can now sleep easy, safe in the knowledge that you too can own this classic for your Megadrive.

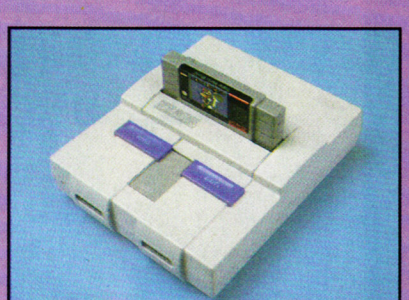
Speedball 2 is another game based on the old science fiction obsession of the ultra-violent future sport. Fortunately, Speedball 2 actually concentrates more on a playable sports game than a high bodycount, although it's no softie. There are many different ways of scoring points, as well as lots of bonus icons which appear on the field to give both sides a hard time, and there are extensive team management options for use during league and cup tournaments. The graphics and sound in the Megadrive version of Speedball 2 are exactly comparable to the Amiga version and it still plays brilliantly too.

Mirrorsoft will be releasing the British versions of Speedball 2 in the spring, but if you're really desperate, a version is currently available on import, but be warned, it only works on those there SCART machines.



Not only do play, you have to manage your team, choosing how they train and what equipment they use.

UH-OH! NINTENDO RELEASE SUPER NES AT EASTER



We know MegaTech is a 100% Megadrive mag but this is important. Nintendo have just announced they will be officially releasing their Super Famicom (which will be renamed the Super Nintendo Entertainment System) in early spring priced at £149.99, with Super Mario World included in the pack.

Sega are remaining tight-lipped over their reaction to this news, but speculation is rife on its effect on their plans for the Megadrive. Because the console-buying public perceive the Super NES as the superior machine, Sega may have to drop the price of the Megadrive to something in the region of £99.99. The Nintendo launch may also affect the official launch date of the Mega-CD which was originally destined to be autumn of 1992, but may well be moved forward to early summer to make the Megadrive a more attractive purchase. We'll keep you posted.

...STOP PRESS...

Typical. Just when we're about to put our feet up and drink our Horlicks, the news floodgates open and we're inundated with scoops. So here, for your delectation, are the ones that couldn't get away...

- Pal Soft's Megadrive conversion of that old arcade smack 'em up, **Double Dragon II**, is out on import now. We'll be looking at it more closely next month, but first impressions weren't good...

- **Lemmings**, hailed as one of the most original games ever, is set for a Megadrive release later this year. The objective is to guide a horde of suicidal critters to safety by guiding over, under and through life-threatening situations.

- At last the Megadrive might be getting a decent soccer game. Tecmo are converting their arcade footy sim **World Cup '92** for release on Megadrive very soon. Wait a minute–World Cup? '92?

- **Super Monaco II** is on its way. Formula One world champion Ayrton Senna has been signed up to front the sequel to Sega's original smash-hit driving game.

- **Road Blasters**, Atari's ancient shooting-cum-driving coin-op, has undergone the Megadrive conversion treatment and will be appearing from Tengen in the very near future. Expect a review next month.

- Death 'n guns shoot 'em up **Cal .50** is another oldie that's due on the Megadrive very soon. A bit of a duffer in the arcades, will the Megadrive version be any better?

- The second batch of **Mega-CD software** has just arrived in the UK. Included are Earnest Evans, Street Rally (a viewed-from-above driving game) and Super Aleste (a CD version of that old mega-weapons shooter, Musha).

- Our final "Coming Soon" is **Crude Busters**, a conversion of Data East' Double Dragon-type coin-op starring knuckle-dragging skin-heads and squared-jawed heroes. Pheweee!

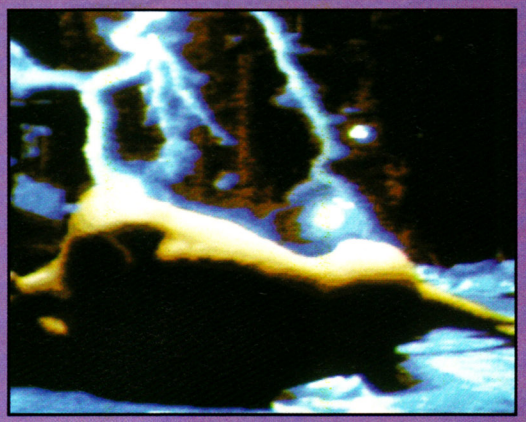
Double Dragon 2 and Lemmings - coming soon.

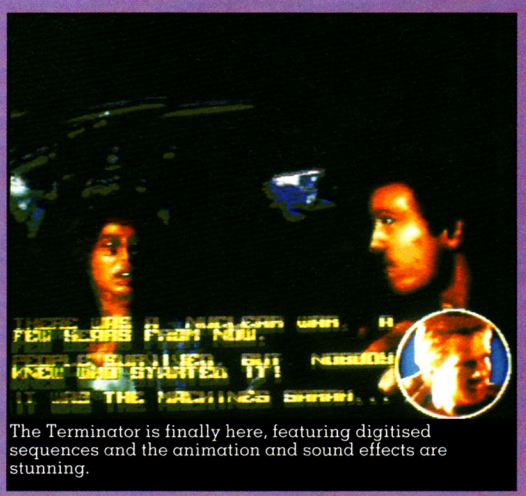
YOU'RE TERMINATED!

Soon to be released on the mighty Megadrive is Virgin Games' conversion of the original Terminator film. This is the first time the film has ever been converted to any machine, which is surprising when you consider the particularly convertable plot.

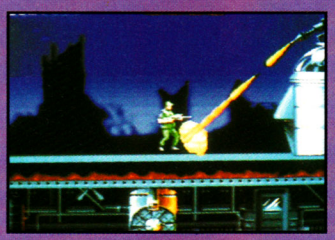
The game casts you as Kyle Reese, a soldier of the future embroiled in a bitter war against Skynet, the human hating American defense mainframe. Skynet has sent a T101 Terminator back in time to kill the mother of the future resistance leader. You must also travel back in time to protect Sarah Connor (for it is she) and along the way become John Connor's (for it is he) father (although there aren't any scenes of *that* in the game).

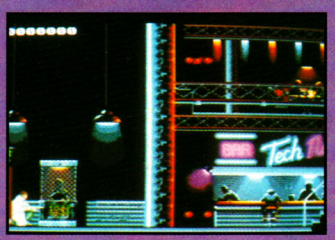
The game is a horizontally scrolling platform game with blast 'em up overtones. The first level sees Kyle attempting to fight his way through to the Terminator time travelling device in their HQ. Subsequent levels see him in shootouts and climatic battle sequences. The graphics throughout are great, with superb use of colour, wonderful robot design, sombre and fitting backgrounds and some fantastic animation, the Reese sprite is particularly impressive. Sound is also top rate, lots of great tunes and sampled effects, including an Uzi and a sampled Arnie! Best of all, the game is very playable and packs an enormous challenge. Terminator is shaping up to be possibly the best Megadrive license ever, so look out for it soon.





The Terminator is finally here, featuring digitised sequences and the animation and sound effects are stunning.





BALLISTIC SNOWBOUND

It's Olympics time again, and in true video game industry style, that means there will soon be load of sports games popping up all over the place. First up (on the Megadrive at least) is Ballistic's The Games: Winter Challenge which puts you in the furry boots of snowbound athletes in eight different events. Leap off ski-jumps in... the ski-jump, slide down icy channels in a bobsleigh or on a luge or just ski down a few hills and shoot at targets in the biathlon. It's out around Winter Olympics time priced £39.99, so wax up your skis in time for the review next issue.

Keep an eye out for the review next issue.

WIN £500'S WORTH OF GAMES!

VOTE FOR THE BEST MEGADRIVE GAMES OF '91 IN THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY GOLDEN JOYSTICKS!

Yes it's true, a whopping and spectacular £500's worth of Megadrive software will be winging it's way to one lucky Megatech reader in our super soaraway Golden Joysticks competition.

The Golden Joysticks are the prestigious annual industry awards sponsored by the people who bring you Megatech. This year sees the tenth anniversary of these awards and that's why we're being especially generous in our software giving-away antics.

We need to hear your opinion as to who or what you think are tops in a number of categories which are listed below. Also, you should note the name of the company responsible for any games you vote for, or the company your fave programmer(s) were working for when they programmed the game(s) which make them so worthy of your admiration. Then send all this vital information off to us here at the GOLDEN JOYSTICKS, MEGATECH, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. We'll then compile all the data, and the people or games which get the most votes will win a fantastic Golden Joystick at a prestigious ceremony held in sunny London.

Afterwards, we'll take all of the voting slips back and pull one out of the sack. This lucky voter will get their hands on that magnificent mound of Megadrive excitement. Will it be you? Well guess what, you're not going to stand a chance unless you get your answers down on that form and send it in to the address above. Not only will you be playing a part in recognising the true heroes (and villains) of the Megadrive's year of glory, you'll also put yourself in line for enough games to bury your cat with. Make sure, though, that your entries make it to MEGATECH by Friday March 12th, or your entry will be will be used to light fires with or something. Also, remember to write, print, score, indent or otherwise record your name upon your voting paper by any (visible) means you wish, along with your address (so we can send the prizes to you if you win), and your daytime telephone number (if you have one) so we can give you a ring to inform you of any sudden software wealth you may suddenly come in to.

The voting for the 10th Golden Joysticks is as follows...

BEST GRAPHICS - 16 BIT .....

BY .....

BEST SOUNDTRACK - 16 BIT .....

BY .....

BEST SIMULATION - 16 BIT .....

BY .....

BEST COIN-OP CONVERSION .....

BY .....

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR - 16 BIT .....

BY .....

16 BIT GAME OF THE YEAR .....

BY .....

PROGRAMMING TEAM OF THE YEAR .....

BY .....

SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR .....

BY .....

WORST GAME OF THE YEAR .....

BY .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER .....

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MEGAMAIL

Since last issue, we here at Megatech have received a veritable torrent of postal communication. So may we present, for your delectation and edification, the finest of these letters in the feature they call 1. If these letters should inspire you to put pen, pencil, crayon or fingerpaints to paper, you can reach us at , MEGATECH, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

SUBS CONSCIOUS

Dear MEGATECH,

Is it going to be possible to subscribe to your magazine, as I don't have a very co-operative newsagent? If so could you please give me the details. Thanks.

S Stone, Staleybridge, Cheshire

You can annoy your newsagent no end with the knowledge that you most certainly will be able subscribe to MEGATECH. We haven't actually tied up a deal as yet, but keep watching the next couple of issues of Megatech for hot subs-type news!

ENQUIRIES DESK, PART 1

Dear MEGATECH,

I have a few questions to ask about the Megadrive.

1. Is the Mega CD still a 16 bit graphics machine?

2. What price range will the CD games be in?

3. Will a new joypad be made with more buttons for Street Fighter2?

4. Will any of these arcade games come out for the Megadrive or Mega CD; Air Bike Cop, Crude Busters, Caveman Ninja, Robocop 2, WWF Wrestlefest, Moonwalker, the Simpsons, Mutant Fighter and Iron Sword?

5. Will any of these computer games be converted; Rick Dangerous 1 or 2, any of the Dizzy collection and Predator?

Your mag is excellent, especially the tips section.

Peter Delahunty, Haydock, St Helens

Ahem,

1. The Mega CD contains a second 16 bit processor working in conjunction with the Megadrive's own.

2. Well, the actual CDs are much cheaper to manufacture than cartridges BUT if the games actually use the Mega-CD's full potential (ie with more gameplay, graphics, etc, and fully orchestrated soundtracks) they'll cost more to program. Because the punters perceive CD games as being better than cartridge games, it seems likely that the manufacturers will be able to charge more for them. Only time will tell.

3. Alas, news has recently reached us that Capcom are converting Street Fighter II exclusively for the Nintendo Super Famicom. The day Nintendo share such a hot coin-op licence with Sega is the day the North Sea turns to apricot and mango yoghurt, so it seems that all the rumours about it coming out on the Mega-CD were unfounded. Bwah! If we hear any more news on the SF2 situation we'll let you know.

4. Both a WWF game and a Simpsons game are currently being programmed but it is unlikely that either will be a conversion of the respective coin-ops. Moonwalker has been out for some time, but it's not the arcade game, though we know that Moonwalker II is under production in Japan for Mega-CD release. As for the rest, we have no news at this time.

5. The Dizzy series is enormously popular in the States and console licenses are being bandied about, although whether it will make it to the Megadrive is yet to be seen. Stick with MEGATECH for further developments.

As for a Megadrive version of Rick Dangerous, you'd have about as much chance of seeing the Invisible Man at the helm of the Flying Dutchman. In the Bermuda Triangle.

Mirrorsoft have a Predator 2 game in production which will hopefully be available next year. it's not a conversion of any computer title but a wholly original 3D blasting game and it looks really good.

LEGACY OF ENQUIRIES DESK

Dear MEGATECH,

Firstly I would like to say thank you for publishing a magazine completely dedicated to the Megadrive. Beforehand you could go into any newsagents and you would find 90% of the magazines were for the Amiga or ST, so your magazine is long overdue. Secondly, could you please answer the following questions:

1 Will the arcade hit Vendetta be appearing on the Megadrive, and if so is there any release date?

2 When will the Mega CD be officially released in the UK?

3 Will Hellfire, Wings of Wor and Zero Wing be released officially? Also, which of these is best?

Lee Stork, Hillborough, Sheffield

1 There are no plans for a Vendetta conversion we know of.

2 Supposedly September, although it's likely that it will be pushed forward.

3 Yes, yes and yes. Hellfire is best but they're all superb.

ENQUIRIES DESK PART III: THE FINAL QUESTION

Dear MEGATECH,

I have written in to ask a few questions. Will you be reviewing CD ROM games? Do you use PAL or SCART for your screenshots? I don't know if this is such a good idea but will you be giving away free gifts, eg stickers? I have enjoyed reading Megatech and think it is better than MEAN MACHINES as it is all Megadrive.

All the best.

Jonathan Wilson, Litherland, Liverpool

As you have probably already seen, this issue is stuffed full of exciting CD ROM-related news, previews and reviews, and you can expect more of the same for the future. Some of the screenshots we use are taken from a Philips SCART monitor, the rest are snapped by a very expensive bit of computer stuff. We're planning some unusual MegaTech freebies but they're top secret so we'll have to keep them under our floppy hats for the moment.

ANYTHING KICKING ABOUT?

Dear MEGATECH,

As a Megadrive owner and a total soccer nut, please let me know if, in the near future, there

will be any footie sims being released. As you well know Italia '90 isn't up to scratch, and being our national sport there must be something in the pipeline.

Matthew Stone, Neasden, London

Well feel free to perform cartwheels of joy, Matthew as there will in fact be two new soccer games out on the Megadrive early next year. TekMagic will be releasing a UEFA Cup license which is shaping up well and will probably be released around May (which is when the UEFA Cup Finals take place). The other is a conversion of Anco's Kick Off 2, which promises all the thrills of the fantastic Amiga version and more.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO MEGADRIVE ACTION

Dear MEGATECH,

I am writing to ask if it is possible to order copies of "The Complete Guide to Megadrive" directly through you as I have tried every newsagent around my area, and most have not even heard of it. If you could give me any details I would greatly appreciate it.

Terry Rumbold, Bermondsey, London

PS Congratulations on a great magazine, keep up the good work. It's good to see some old ZZAP! staff have gone on to better things!!

It is indeed possible to order the Complete Guide through us. Simply send a cheque or postal order for £3.45 (£2.95 + 50p p&p) made payable to MEAN MACHINES. Overseas readers should send £5 00 cash (UK sterling only).

SUPER FAMICOM STROP

Dear MEGATECH,

I have just bought a Megadrive and now I've got it I'm having doubts about buying it. I am having doubts because I think that maybe I should have bought a Super Famicom instead. I am feeling down at the moment because of this. Please could you reassure me and make me look on the bright side that I made a good decision in buying a Megadrive.

Plus please can you tell me about the Famicom CD ROM, will it have better features (graphics, sound) than the Mega CD?

Martin Little

PS Does the Megadrive give the Super Famicom a run for it's money?

Be calm, Martin, be calm. The Megadrive was a most worthy purchase. Look at some of the fab games that have come out on the MD recently such as Streets of Rage, John Madden's '92, Sonic, Devil Crash...the list goes on. Can you get any of these on the Super Famicom? No. The Megadrive is slightly inferior to the Famicom technically, but it has a clear advantage when it comes to quantity and variety of quality software. All we need now is some decent Mega-CD software and the Famicom will be a threat no more!

STREETS OF RAGE HERO PROVES TO BE REAL PERSON - UNLIKELY SHOCKER!

Listen MEGATECH!

You'd better tell me when Pitfighter is coming to the Megadrive and whether or not the digitised graphics will be kept in as Adam and Blaze don't reckon they will. Got ta crack some skulls, see ya!

Axel Stone, Rage Street, NY

You poor deluded child. Still, on your way to the asylum, you can console yourself with the fact that Pitfighter will be out early next year, and the digitised graphics will indeed be kept in, as you can see for yourself by turning to the review on page 24. And you'd better get your life sorted out, Axel Stone –we don't think

RRRROCKIN' CHAIR

Dear MEGATECH,

I was recently looking through the Daily Mirror, when an item on The Chair caught my eye. This is connected to a Megadrive and every movement you make sitting in it is translated to on-screen moves. Of course, seeing this I went straight to my nearest computer stockist and asked for some information, but they said they had never heard of it so I decided to write to the experts. Please could you give me some information about this so-called Sega Chair?

Dean Carter, Northalt, Middx

Now then, now then, young man. As it 'appens we have some tasty information for you guys and gals auauauauaua jewelry jewelry. "The Chair" is a glorified joypad substitute just launched in Japan for the equivalent of £150. There's no official release date as yet and we'd be surprised if there ever will be. You'll be unlikely to find an importer that has has one because they're so big transport costs would be immense. Sorry about that, but they're not all that exciting anyway.

THE MEGATECH REVIEWING SYSTEM

Nobody takes Megadrive games more seriously than MegaTech, so when we review the latest hot cart we use one of the most detailed reviewing systems in any magazine. If you're new to MegaTech, we'd better explain it...

THE AMORPHOUS QUADRILATERAL RATING SYSTEM (A•Q•RAT)

A picture is worth a thousand words, that's why we've got the Amorphous Quadrilateral Rating system, or A-Q-RAT. This shows you how much a game taxes your reflexes, mental prowess, strategic ability and it's overall challenge. The further the shape intrudes into the quadrants, the more is required of the player in that field.

PRESENTATION

Good presentation is an essential part of any game. The rating covers the clarity of the instructions, options, in-game help, screen layout and all the other features which go into making the game easy to get into as well as attractive.

GRAPHICS

There are four factors that are taken into account for this rating, the sprites, background graphics, animation and how well it all fits in. After all, a game like Streets of Rage would look pretty dumb with Mickey Mouse-style graphics.

SOUND

Do the blood-curdling screams of your vanquished foes come accompanied with a crashing music score, or will you be reaching for the volume control in disgust at the painfully sappy sounds. Background music, spot effects and atmosphere are all taken into account.

SHORT-TERM PLAY

Is the game easy to understand or an uphill slog right from hitting the on button? Short-term play determines how easy it is to get into a game and whether you'll want to carry on playing.

LONG-TERM PLAY

When you're spending 30 or 40 quid a time on a game, you don't want to be able to complete it on the day you bought it. You don't want to be bored stupid either, so look to this rating to find out how long it'll be before your latest purchase goes stale.

MEGATECH RATING

This is the big one. Should you buy or pass by? This rating is a reflection of how good the game is as an overall package, not an average of the other scores. It may have the greatest graphics ever, but if the gameplay sucks it's not going to score highly.

0-14 Yeeeaaarrrgghh! Anything that scores this low does not deserve to exist.

15-29 Abysmal. Virtually no appeal whatsoever.

30-44 Below average. Even fans of the style will be tempted to shelve it after a few games.

45-64 Average. Nothing special, but games in this range may appeal to some people.

65-79 A good game, but flawed in some way.

80-89 Excellent but just not good enough to be a...

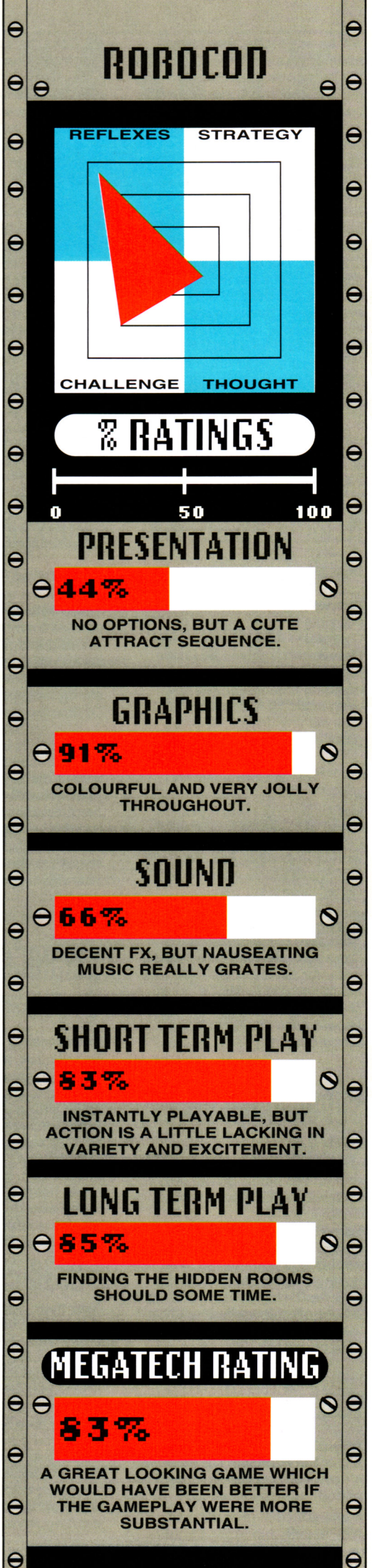
90+ Hyper Hyper! If a game scores this or higher it's a must buy.

ALTERNATIVELY...

While most games are original in execution, their roots aren't. If you like the sound of a game that's got a not-so-hot review, or perhaps you've already got the game and are looking for something along the same lines, the Alternatively boxes will tell you what's best in that genre.

HYPER HYPER!

Only best games are Hyper Hyper. If you see one of the badges on a game you'd be a fool to miss it. Either that or skint.



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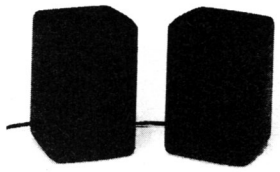

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REVIEW

SOL-FEACE

BY WOLF-TEAM

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: CD

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: INFINITE

SKILL SETTINGS: 2

RESPONSE: GOOD

Sol-Feace is the first Mega-CD shoot 'em up, but despite being on new technology it's another aliens-attacking-only-one-man-and-his-female-co-pilot-can-save-the-Earth type game.

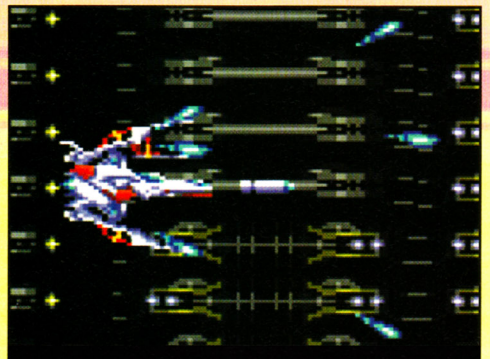
The action is set over six horizontally-scrolling levels which take you through space, the enemy's asteroid-based arsenal, zones of artificial solar gravity, around and through a giant alien battle cruiser, then finally across the surface of invading forces' home planet. Throughout the game, you're assailed by screaming hordes of enemies, which range in size from tiny space ships to huge gangling robots. So, no surprises there.

GUN-HO

One novel feature of Sol-Feace is controllable directional fire. When you collect an extra weapon it bolts onto the side of the craft and can be swung through 45 degrees to fire diagonally, strafing ground targets while the main cannon atomises anything in front.

You might think this requires some fancy control method, but to configure your weapons all you have to do is release the fire button and move back or forward to angle your external guns in and out, giving you a wider firing arc. Moving up and down positions one gun at a time.

Naw, y' don't wanna do it like that! Y' wanna close up your weapons to send a concentrated burst of fire down the Crab-Brain's throat!



Hot alien-torching action with weapons in a wide spread configuration.

A narrower deployment, but that's just enough to let you skim the ground and strafe gun turrets.

BOMBS AWAY

Shooting a weapons canister leaves behind one of the following icons. There are only four, but you can arm your top, bottom and central guns differently and run three different weapons at once by flying into the icon from above, below or head on.

BLASTER

This equips your ship with the twin external cannons.

WIDE BLASTER

Two-way fire that spreads out if it's angled.

MELT RAY

A powerful laser that's a must when you reach the bosses.

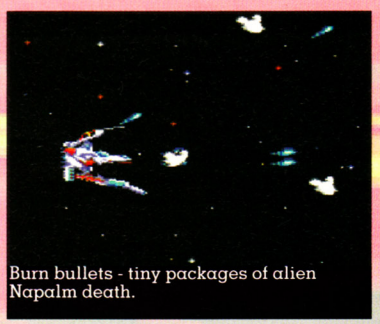
BURN BULLET

Missiles that fire at an angle. Good and powerful.

Three-way firepower comes cheap with the Blaster.

Double the bullets from every gun muzzle with Wide Blaster.

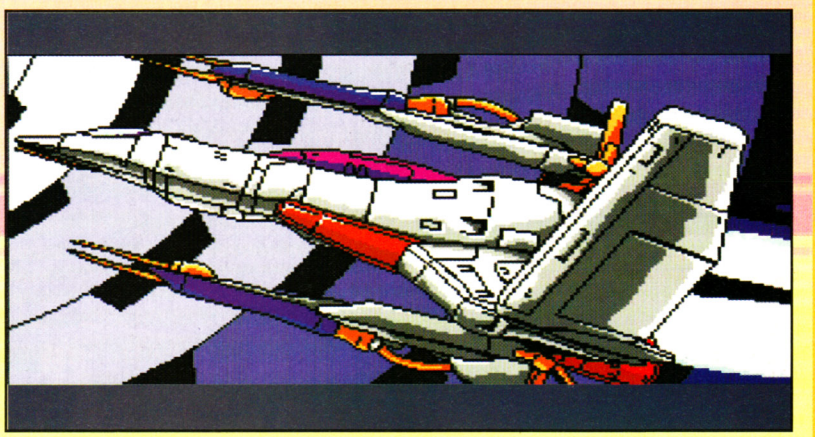
:Melt Ray: get three of these and nothing stands in your way for long.



Burn bullets - tiny packages of alien Napalm death.

CD SOL-FEATURES

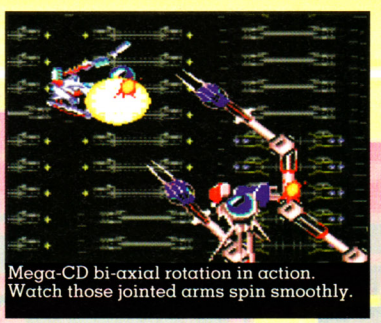
Sol-Feace makes use of some of the Mega-CD's features, although for the most part it's all very subtle. Some of the tunes, and the sound effects that accompany the bosses, are read straight from CD and the biaxial sprite rotation has been used extensively, though not impressively. For the most part it's small sprites that get the spinning treatment, though hazards such as these grabbing arms which appear in the second stage of the game also rotate smoothly at the joints to follow your ship.



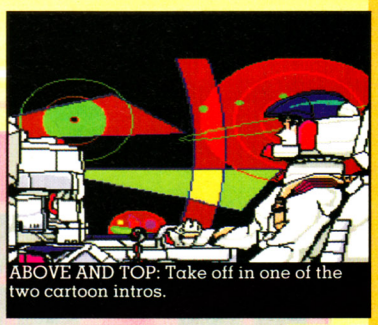
ANIMATTRACTIONS

Lengthy cartoon intros are just what you'd expect in a CD game, and Sol-Feace has two. The first is a rather unimpressive display in which several pages of scrolling Japanese text are read out by a meaty-voiced Jap before the heroes are shown going through their prelaunch sequence before taking off.

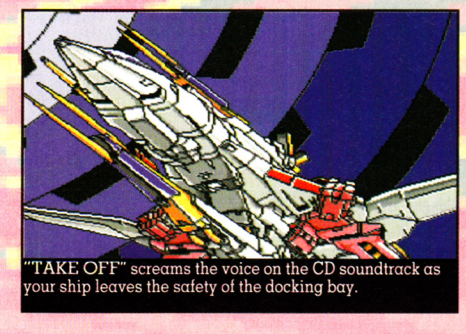
The other intro is a much more interesting Battle of the Planets-type sequence showing the good guys kicking alien ass. This one is fully animated and features some great evasive manoeuvring and laser action as you can see from this strip of pics.



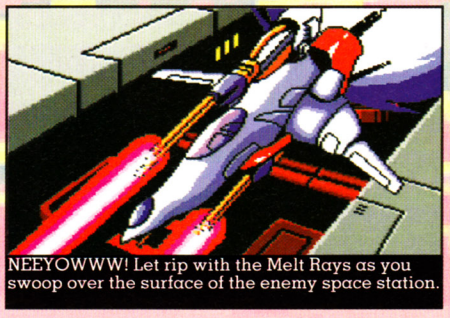
Mega-CD bi-axial rotation in action. Watch those jointed arms spin smoothly.



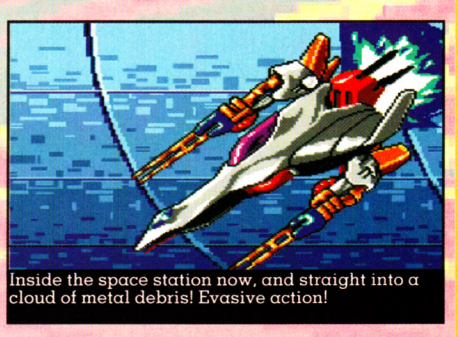
ABOVE AND TOP: Take off in one of the two cartoon intros.



"TAKE OFF" screams the voice on the CD soundtrack as your ship leaves the safety of the docking bay.



NEEYOWWW! Let rip with the Melt Rays as you swoop over the surface of the enemy space station.



Inside the space station now, and straight into a cloud of metal debris! Evasive action!

SEVERAL UGLY MOTHERS

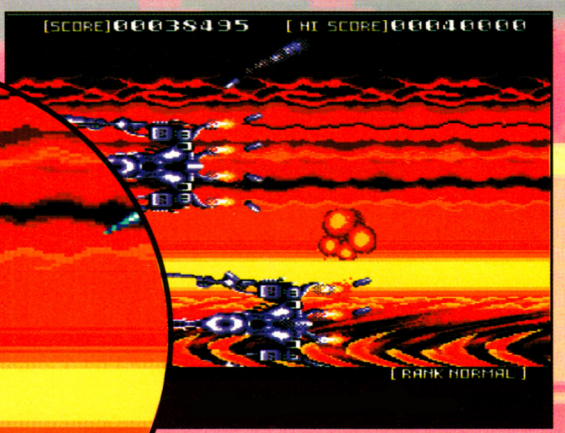
The bosses range from dull to outrageous. Level one has Crab-Brain, a giant crustacean that looks more like a spider than anything else. Despite its size, it only takes a few well-placed shots to the mandibles to blow it into a mass of rapidly rotating sprites.

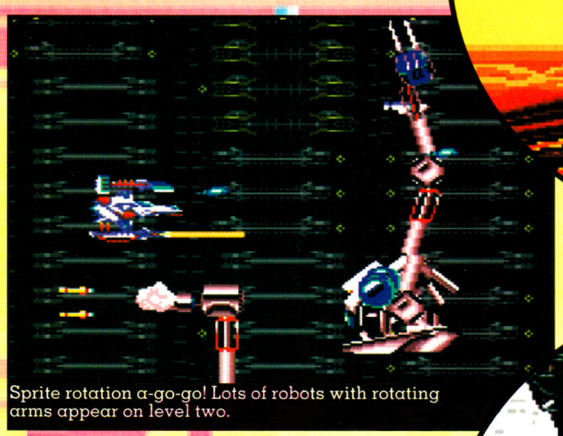
At the end of stage two is Egg-Walker, an ED-209 rip-off, who comes complete with rapid fire guns and missiles. That isn't the end though, because Egg-Walker just guards the entrance to a chamber containing a rather crabby-looking lump of metal that chucks energy spheres at you.

The ensuing four levels has you blasting a giant robot worm in what the game text describes as 'a sphere of artical solar gravity', then battling a giant space ship before battling on inside it. Finally you face off against duplicates of your ship over the surface of an alien world.

Halfway through level one and you're already being accosted by giant alien ships. He won't last long against your Wide Blasters, though.

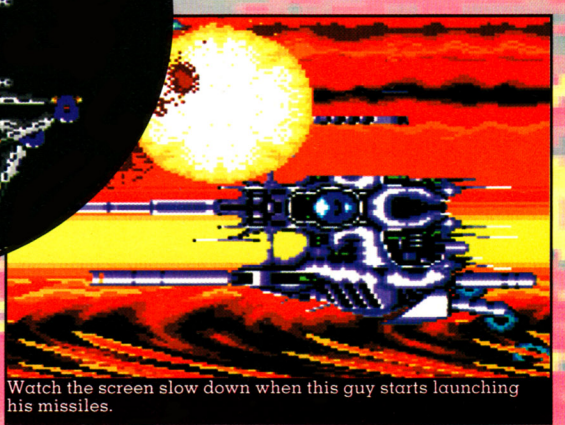
Egg-Walker is armed with a rapid-fire cannon., but you have a few rapid-fire weapons yourself.




Sprite rotation a-go-go! Lots of robots with rotating arms appear on level two.

Oops! Didn't quite make it past those deadly energy spheres.

After negotiating the solar gravity zone you're faced with this laser-spitting flying worm, Very nasty.


Watch the screen slow down when this guy starts launching his missiles.

ALTERNATIVELY...

HELLFIRE

PRICE: IMPORT

BY: TOAPLAN

Regarded by some as the best Megadrive shoot 'em up to date this smart arcade conversion features loads of blasting action (with multiple angle lasers, not unlike Solfeace, sort of). Watch out for the official version due for release shortly.

MEGATECH RATING: 89%

Hellfire, the king of Megadrive shoot 'em ups.

MARK'S COMMENT

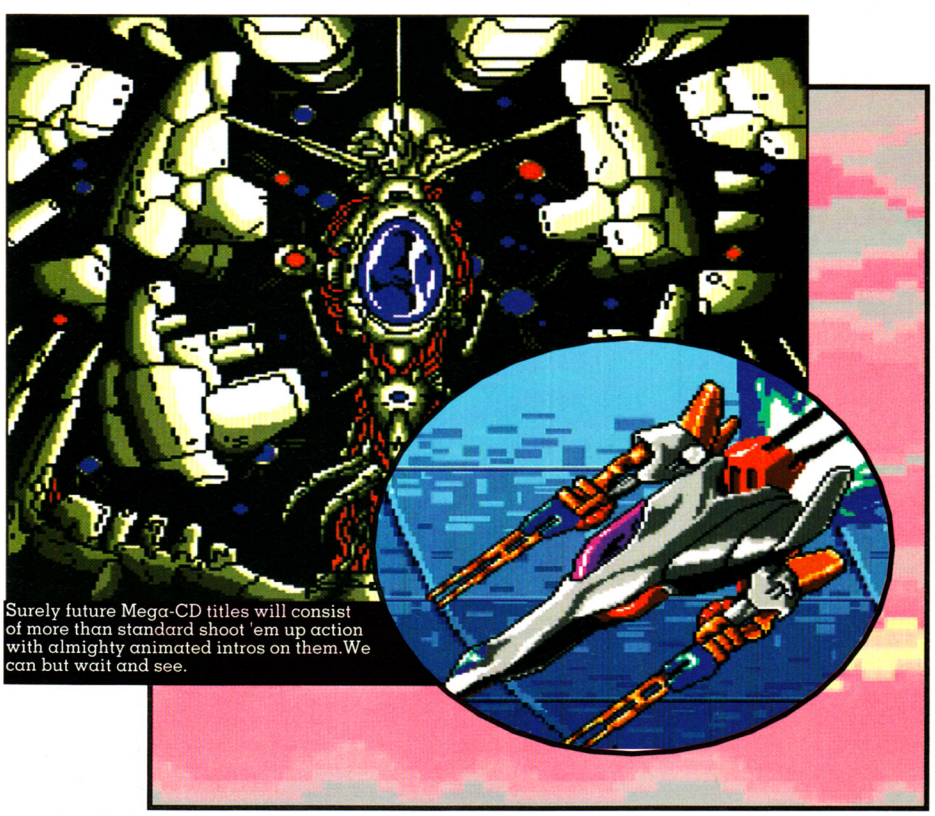
MARK

This is a good shoot 'em up, but when you consider what the Mega-CD is capable of, Solfeace is something of a disappointment. There are some impressively large opponents, which work really well within the game, but are actually no more impressive than those in Thunderforce 3 and Gaiares. In spite of my initial reservations, after playing the game for a while I did find it quite addictive. The control system works very well, and much to my surprise, proved to be more than a gimmick by actually coming in handy for some sections. If you've forked out the cash for a Mega-CD this is the first game you should check out. It's playable and you don't need a degree in Jap to play it.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

This isn't quite as spectacular as I was expecting but Sol-Feace is definitely the better of the first two Mega-CD releases and it's a pretty good shoot 'em up to boot. The action is fast and challenging, and it has some great features, such as the gun controls and the ability to have three different weapons going in three different directions. The music and the mechanical sounds which come from the CD suit the game perfectly, but some of the synthesised effects are a bit farty. Sol-Feace certainly doesn't make the most of the Mega-CD's hardware, but if this is the first attempt of a company like Wolf Team (who have never really had any Megadrive blockbusters), I can't wait to see what the programmers at Sega or Tecnosoft can cook up on CD.



Surely future Mega-CD titles will consist of more than standard shoot 'em up action with almighty animated intros on them. We can but wait and see.

SOL-FEACE

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

85%

SMART ANIMATED INTROS, BUT THE BETWEEN-LEVEL SCREENS ARE A BIT DULL.

GRAPHICS

75%

DOESN'T USE THE HARDWARE TO FULL EFFECT, BUT MANAGES TO LOOK GOOD NEVERTHE LESS.

SOUND

76%

GOOD SPOT EFFECTS AND TUNES FROM THE CD, BUT SOME SYNTHESISED FX ARE A BIT FLATULENT

SHORT TERM PLAY

84%

FAST, CHALLENGING AND ADDICTIVE.

LONG TERM PLAY

74%

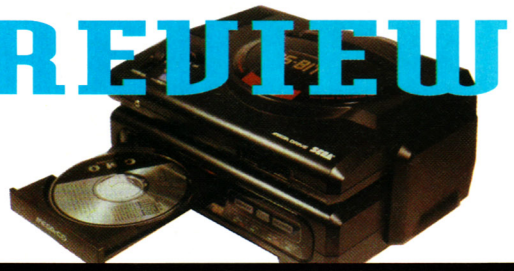
SOLID PLAYING SHOULD SEE THE SIX LEVELS COMPLETED FAIRLY QUICKLY.

MEGATECH RATING

80%

A CLASSY SHOOT 'EM UP, BUT A LET-DOWN AS A CD GAME.

REVIEW



HEAVY NOVA

BY MICRONET

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: CD ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: 3

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: SLOW

In the future, the safety of the universe is assured by the Interplanetary Defence Force, a team comprised of dedicated pilots who take on evil-doers in their giant DOLL (Derestricted Omnipotent Lethal Lifelike) robots.

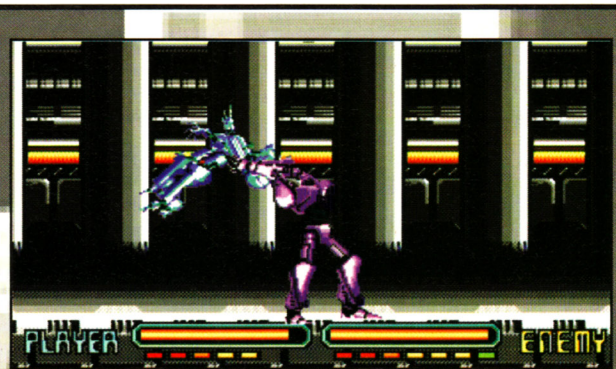
You play a rookie DOLL pilot, desperate to gain entry into the elite ranks of the IDF. Of course, only the hardest robots are allowed in, so before you gain passage to flights of adventure and dangerous combat, you must overcome the gruelling IDF training course – which looks just like a horizontally-scrolling platform beat 'em up.

On each level of the course you have to deal with squads of mini robots and various traps (rocks in the ceiling and force shields) before you're confronted by a guardian robot. Using your DOLL's programmed one-on-one fighting manoeuvres you have to smack the other robot around until his energy is gone and he explodes in a shower of sparks! Hoorah!

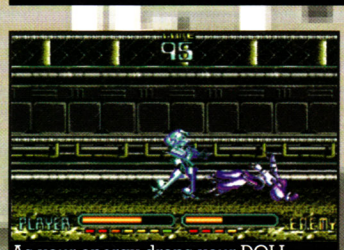
KICKING 'BOT

Your basic baddies aren't very complex–they're usually armed with some kind of feeble cannon and are destroyed with one kick–but the bosses are a different matter. The first one is slow and can only punch, but later in your training you'll encounter fully mobile androids capable of sliding hooks, jumping roundhouses and pile drivers. Fret not, though, because every time you defeat a boss robot your DOLL is programmed with another set of moves up to a full repertoire of twelve, including hammer knuckles, shoulder tackles and a devastating missile barrage!

This pink-guy is easily dealt with. Keep your distance and attack with jumping kicks.

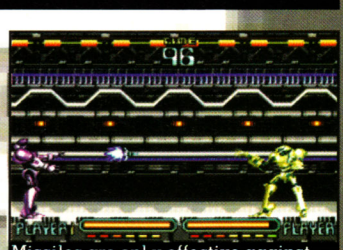


Throws can devastate a DOLL. Although you have to get in close to preform one, and the computer usually beats you to the move.



As your energy drops your DOLL takes longer to recover from hits.

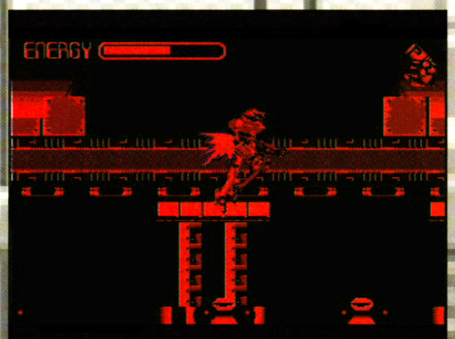
The pildriver is the ultimate offensive move.



Missiles are onl.y effective against the most unwary opponent.

MIND-BENDING MECHANISMS

Certain missions have something of a puzzle aspect about them. For instance, at one point, a series of levers spread throughout the level must be hit in the correct order to open some giant security doors. Once thisis done, an "American Footballer" robot must be activated to barge down the remaining defences. Trouble is, this puts a strain on the power supply, and the lighting switches first to the red emergency power lights, and then to no lights at all, leaving you to blunder your way around in near total darkness!

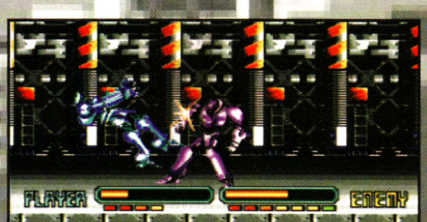


Despite their size, the inventer of the DOLL forgot to include head-lamps.

TWO PLAYER ACTION

In two-player mode, each player gets to choose a boss DOLL to go one-on-one with their mate. This may seem a bit unfair, as one player could pick the crap metal slug with minimal moves from the first level, while the other claims the chromoid ninja, but to even the odds each DOLL is allocated a selection of moves and an energy level which makes it more of a match for the other.

You can use to two-player mode to check up on the opposition you face in the one-player game.



MARK'S COMMENT

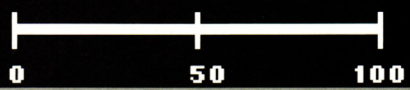
Heavy Nova's intro is certainly stunning, with an impressive graphical title/attract sequence and a Jap-pop soundtrack from the CD. However, start up a one player game and you're on a one-way trip to Boredom Central. The controls are very sluggish and it's hard work making your robot do what you want. The action itself isn't what you could call inspiring either–a few simple puzzles, unchallenging platform "action" and easy-to-beat enemies. Once you reach a boss, you might expect everything to change, but most of them just stand where they are and keep punching in your direction making it impossible to get near enough to execute a hold or throw. What you have to do is stand just out of range and perform the same spinning kick over and over again. The two player mode is a bit more fun but the controls are still too slow to make the game enjoyable.

PAUL'S COMMENT

Having seen pics of Heavy Nova's fighting robots in Japanese mags I couldn't wait to see the game in action. Unfortunately, the finished article is a disappointment simply because it's not half as much fun as it could have been. All those moves are very difficult to use because they require complicated sequences of directions and buttons, and some moves only operate when you're at a certain distance from your opponent. Working them out by trial and error would be hell (partly because the control response is so slow), but luckily you don't have to because you can get through most of the game by simply kicking and punching - which kind of defeats the object, doesn't it? The other problem is that the pace of the game is quite slow, which is not surprising considering they are supposed to be lumbering robots, but the result is slow-motion fighting... Yawn. If you're desperate to buy a game for your new Mega-CD, leave this on the shelf and pick up Sol-Feace.

HEAVY NOVA

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION

A GOOD SET OF OPTIONS, LONG ANIMATED INTRO AND BETWEEN MISSION SEQUENCES.

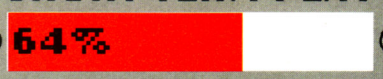
GRAPHICS

HUGE, NICELY ANIMATED SPRITES, BUT INDUSTRIAL BACKDROPS ARE BLAND.

SOUND

MEDIOCRE EFFECTS AND EVEN THE CD MUSIC IS A BIT NAFF.

SHORT TERM PLAY



HEAVY NOVA DOESN'T REALLY GRAB YOU IMMEDIATELY...

LONG TERM PLAY

...OR INDEED AT ALL. THE GAMEPLAY DOESN'T GET ANY MORE EXCITING, AND IT'S NOT CHALLENGING ENOUGH.

MEGATECH RATING

A LOT OF POTENTIAL WASTED IN A SLOW AND RATHER BORING ROBO BEAT 'EM UP.

REVIEW

PAPERBOY

BY TENGEN

PRICE: £34.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: ARCADE

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: AVERAGE

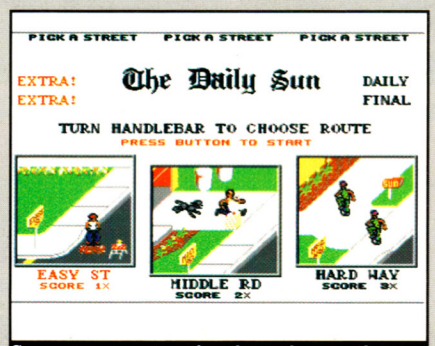
It must be ooh, what, seven or eight years since Atari released Paperboy in the arcades as one of the first of their oddball non-violent coin-op range. The unusual gameplay and controls (a pair of handlebars) won it several fans and home conversions promptly appeared, courtesy of British software house, Elite. Interestingly (or perhaps not), it is Elite's console programming affiliates, Motivetime, who have programmed the Megadrive version of Paperboy for Tengen.

In case you hadn't already worked it out, the object of the game is to pedal your BMX around your round, keeping your customers happy by chucking copies of The Daily Sun at their houses (which are cleverly labelled with the word SUN). Non-subscribers (whose houses are identified by doormats bearing the words "GET LOST") deserve all they get, though, so if you have any spare papers in your bag feel free to lob one through their windows or smash up the statues in their gardens. Make sure you don't miss out any of your customers as any Sun reader who doesn't get his morning paper cancels his order for the rest of the week. Some people, eh (Cheesey)?

NEWSROUND

Supplying the spice for this suburban odyssey are the trillions of hazards on the pavements which make each day a peril-packed adventure into the periodical delivery business.

Dogs, cats, drunks, blokes having a fight, animated statues, skateboarders and radio-controlled cars are just a few of the obstacles which inhabit the sidewalks threatening to knock you off your bike. Dare to venture onto the road and you have to watch out for VWs, sports cars and manic bikers on choppers who think nothing of squashing an innocent lad beneath their wheels. Wa-hey!



Some streets are tougher than others, and sometimes a paper just isn't a good defence.

Bullseye! Another satisfied customer who have their paper, and no broken windows.

Just like real life you have to put your head down and burn across roads.

Crump a person with a wedged-up newspaper and your violence is rewarded with bonus points.

If they don't buy your papers, they don't got no windows (because you can knock 'em out).

EXTRA! EXTRA!

There are numerous opportunities for sharp-eyed paperboys to earn bonus points with accurate paper-throwing. While you're out on your round you can rack up masses of points by planting the newspapers directly into the mailboxes–and there are plenty of other worthy targets. Hitting cats, knocking down gravestones, concussing burglars, and of course, smashing the windows in non-subscribers' houses earns you heaps of points.

For an even higher score you can take your BMX for a spin around the stunt course at the end of each street. Leaping over streams while lobbing papers at targets isn't as easy as it looks–and if you fall off once you don't get another chance!

Don not underestimate the power of a visciously hurled, rolled up newspaper. Windows beware.

Earn death or glory on the dirt track. Death is the norm when you get cocky and use the ramps.

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

I remember being moderately impressed by the coin-op when I first saw it, but that was back in 1985 when I was a mere slip of a lad. Nowadays I expect a few more thrills from a game and don't really get many kicks from strange scenarios and weird gameplay so I found Paperboy wasn't a whole box of fun. To be fair, this is an accurate conversion which looks and even sounds good, but when it comes down to it I'd rather spend my cash on something with a bit more action. Unless you're after something well out of the norm, give this a miss.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

This is the best home conversion of Paperboy I've played but... well, even the arcade game wasn't the crowning pinnacle of video game entertainment and I can't imagine anyone still being really enthusiastic about the game after all this time. The problem is that, ultimately, Paperboy isn't very exciting and in that respect it loses out to a lot of other Megadrive games. I enjoyed playing it for a while but it's not a game I would come back to again and again.

Too many crashes and your lose your job, which makes front page news for some reason. What should be noted is that this paperboy can survive having a car run over his head, being assualted by an out of control Flymo and smacking his un-helmeted head on curb s.

PAPERBOY

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

70%

A FEW OPTIONS AND INTERMEDIATE SCREENS.

GRAPHICS

79%

TRUE TO THE COIN–OP, AND QUITE PLEASANT OVERALL.

SOUND

76%

GOOD RENSITIONS OF THE COIN–OP TUNES AND MUFFLED SAMPLED SPEECH.

SHORT TERM PLAY

76%

UNUSUAL GAMEPLAY HELPS MAKE THINGS FUN TO BEGIN WITH.

LONG TERM PLAY

63%

TURNS OUT TO BE LACKING IN EXCITMENT AND A BIT TOO REPETITIVE.

MEGATECH RATING

70%

A GOOD CONVERSION OF A QUIRKY, OLD, ACTION–UNPACKED COIN–OP.

REVIEW

PIT-FIGHTER

BY DOMARK

PRICE: £39.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL SETTINGS: 8

RESPONSE: GOOD

In 1990, Atari unleashed one of the best beat 'em ups ever into British arcades. Pit-Fighter let up to three players partake in the brutal fun of kicking in three opposing uglies for money (not real cash though). For extra realism Pit-Fighter's graphics were actually digitised pictures of large men (and women) slapping each other about and these have been included in this conversion by Tengen, albeit in miniaturised form

What Megadrive Pit-Fighter lacks is the original game's three player mode (not enough joypad sockets, y'see). However, there is a two-player option and you can choose to fight as any of the three original characters, Buzz the wrestler, Ty the kickboxer and Kato the Karate master. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to fight your way through all the other fighters and defeat the Executioner, the quite hard King of the Pit-Fighters. Beat this slimy article and you may retire to spend the oodles of sponds which you amass during your career.

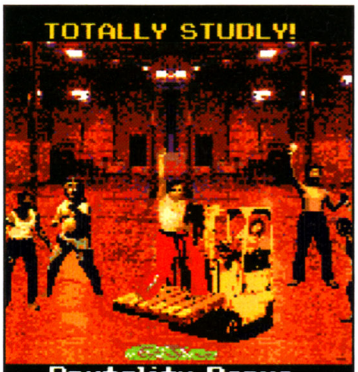
PIT-FIGHTING MEN

Each of the three characters are very different in their fighting styles. Kicks, punches and jumps are available to any of the trio, but each of them has his own specialist moves which make him unique. Buzz, for instance, is able to shoulder throw and piledrive his opponents, and then slamdive them whilst they lie helpless on the ground. Ty is quite fond of his high roundhouses and leaping knife kicks, whilst Kato floors enemies with jumping spin kicks and Ninja magic hurricane punches! Watch out though, because some of the thugs you'll go up against are so big that they can shrug off even the most perfectly timed move!

Each character can punch and kick, but they also have individual power moves which are accessed by pressing A, B and C together.

BRUTALITY BONUS

If you're a right sociopath, one aspect of Pit-Fighter that will most certainly appeal to you is the brutality bonus. Put simply this means the more evil and twisted you are, the more money you receive at the end of the bout (should you survive it). Hitting your fellow player in two player mode is a good way to rack up points on the brutalityometer, as is punching and kicking your enemy whilst they are floored. Not only does this reap a financial reward, it's great fun too!



Brutality Bonus

Power pills are often hidden inside crates, which can only be opened by smashing them on someone's head.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

If you think the "sport" itself is violent, you should see the audience! This motley mass of scurvy scum tend to take the principal of audience participation a little too far. For instance, should your fighter end up being thrown into the crowds or try to escape through them you can expect them to end up being turfed out again! Some of the cheeky blighters even run out into the arena to stab one of the combatants! Fear not, though, for a single blow is usually enough to send them to the Great Pit In The Sky.

There's nothing more annoying than six inches of steel hitting you via an over-zealous spectator.

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO "OWW!"

Sometimes, even your best bare-knuckle efforts just aren't enough. That's where the multitude of weapons left in the ring come in. In most locations, there's something to throw, such as bar stools or kegs, shuriken, knives or even motorbikes. The best find, however, is the hidden Power Pill which is usually to be found under a barrel. Grab this glowing baby and your power is greatly magnified, giving you a limited period of mass destruction! Don't go mad, though, as you are still vulnerable to attack even in your spangly state.

The weapons include knives, stools, barrels, throwing stars and, on one level, motorbikes which can be thrown at your enemies!

RUMBLE!

After every two gruelling bouts, a bonus "Grudge Match" is called. Should you be indulging in double player action, this consists of you and the second player having a bit of a dukes-up to the best of three falls. This means moves which deck people easily, such as throws, are what's important. If there's only you playing, the match is still called, but you must face a blue-trousered clone of yourself, complete with a full repertoire of death-dealing special moves!

DOUBLE CREAMING

There is a two-player mode in Pit-Fighter. Each player chooses a different character, and two different opponents appear in regular bouts - one each if you hadn't guessed. As previously mentioned, the grudge match is competitive, giving you a good chance to beat heck out of your pals (on-screen that is!)

At the start of a bout you're shown cameos of your opponents. Ty and Buzz instantly get into the action, Kato, however, bows in traditional Karate fashion, which leaves him open to attack.

This dude may look like a reject from from the most suspect type of shop, but he's actually the ultimate warrior, your final opponent..

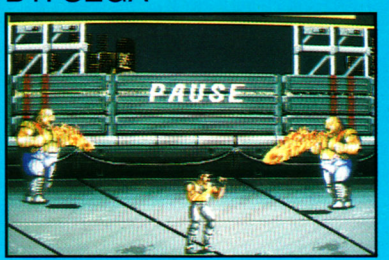
COIN-OP COMPARISON

The attract screens and intros from the arcade machine are still there, as are the digitised sprites. What's not there is the sprite scaling, smooth scrolling or good animation. Still, it's quite playable all the same, which is what really counts at the end of the day isn't it?

ALTERNATIVELY

TITLE: STREETS OF RAGE

BY: SEGA



PRICE: £34.99

This is the best beat 'em up on the Megadrive with tons of moves, action, death and great electro soundtracks. Buy this if it's fist action you're after.

MEGATECH RATING: 92%

At the end of the day plain old punches are the best attack. A combination of blows usually ends up with a special move being performed automatically, thus decking the opponent and leaving them open to a follow-up move.

The best feature of the two-player mode is being able to duff-up your partner. Once their down you can elbow or knee drop them in the spine. Yeow!

MARK'S COMMENT

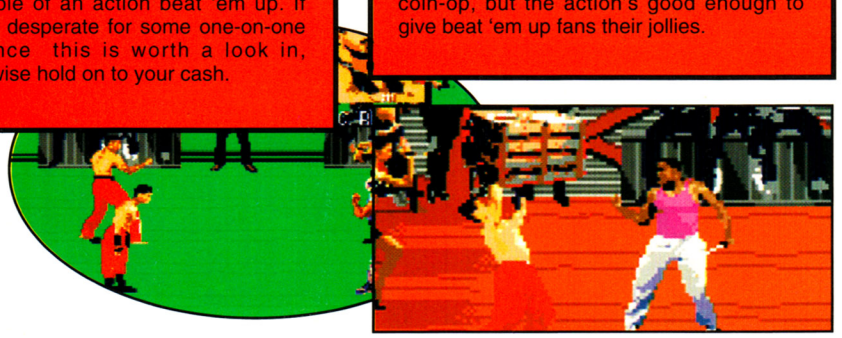
MARK

Pit-Fighter is playable, but easy to beat. There are enough novel moves such as scissor kicks and throws to make combat interesting, but there's nothing new about the combat system. The best feature of this game has to be the two player mode. Not only can you pick up your partner and hurl him at the opposition, you also get to smack them about between rounds. Great emphasis has been placed on the digitised graphics, which aren't that spectacular - or even complicated to produce. This is fun for a few hours but don't expect the arcade game on the cart: it lacks the close-ups and much of the speed so it couldn't really be called a sparkling example of an action beat 'em up. If you're desperate for some one-on-one violence this is worth a look in, otherwise hold on to your cash.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

Pit-Fighter is not one of those games which oozes instant appeal because it looks so duff. The sprites aren't too bad, but they're poorly animated and the scrolling is jerky. The action itself is bland to start with and you might start to wonder what possessed you to have a go in the first place but all of this changes as soon as you get to grips with the special moves of each fighter, though. Soon you'll be thinking of new tactics and working out new strategies with your broader command of death-dealing manoeuvres. The lasting appeal of the game is bolstered somewhat by the number of skill levels, and the action itself is enjoyable enough to keep you coming back to it once it's been completed. A bit disappointing considering the quality of the coin-op, but the action's good enough to give beat 'em up fans their jollies.



PITFIGHTER

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

90%

QUALITY ANIMATED INTRO AND INTERMISSION SEQUENCES, AND LOADS OF OPTION SETTINGS.

GRAPHICS

75%

MINI VERSIONS OF THE COIN–OP'S DIGITISED GRAPHICS. SCROLLING AND ANIMATION ARE A BIT SAD.

SOUND

70%

MEDIOCRE MUSIC BUT LOTS OF FIGHT EFECTS AND ROPEY SPEECH.

SHORT TERM PLAY

76%

EASY TO START, BUT MAXIMUM FUN ONLY COMES WHEN YOU'VE LEARNED TO FIGHT PROPERLY.

LONG TERM PLAY

80%

DOESN'T TAKE LONG TO COMPLETE, BUT ENJOYABLE ENOUGH TO COME BACK TO.

MEGATECH RATING

80%

A GAME WHICH BEAT'EM UP FANS AND SADISTS WILL LOVE.

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY

BY SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

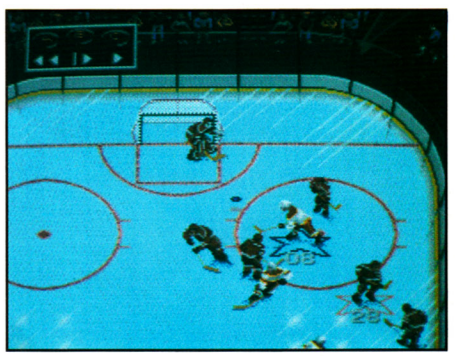
GAME TYPE: SPORTS

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: SLOW

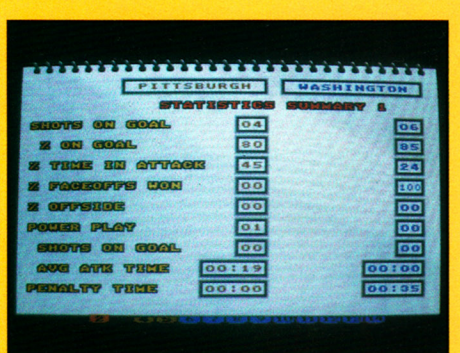
Mario Lemieux is one of Canada's most famous ice hockey players, although seeing as the only Canadian anyone over here has ever heard of is Bryan Adams, you could be forgiven for thinking he's the Prime Minister or something. Still, Sega like him so much that they've decided to name a game after him.



Ice hockey is played by two teams of six players each. Every one of these players is kitted out with a curved stick, with which to strike the flat puck used in place of a ball. This stick is the only means the players have to propel the puck, the only exception to this rule being the goalkeepers. These players are allowed to use any part of their body to stop the puck, so it comes as no surprise to see them fully clad in body armour! The object of the game is to score as many goals as possible, and preferably more than your opponent, in three periods. Should the game come out as a draw, the winner is decided through a penalty shootout.

Mario Hockey is a side-view version of the sport, with the full team at your command. Your on-screen players are capable of a range of offensive and defensive moves, depending on whether they are in possession of the puck or not. Certain aspects of the game, namely fights, penalties and face-offs are represented by large, almost full-screen sprites which enhance the atmosphere no end.

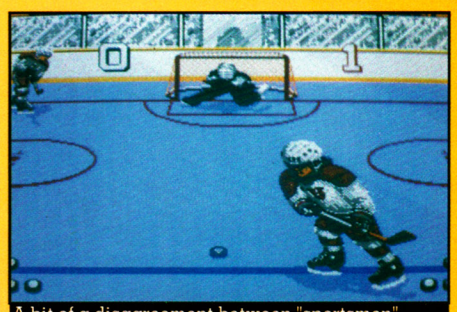
A-LEVEL STATISTICS



If you're a bit of a stat merchant, Mario Lemieux Hockey will undoubtedly make you go weak at the knees. By pressing the start button, the game stats are called up, all fourteen pages of them! If you want to know who scored all the goals, who' s won all the fights, possession times, shot or pass ratios, face-off statistics, basically anything you could possibly imagine (except the number of rink invasions by green aardvarks) these facts are a mere button press away.

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Most people watch ice hockey in case there's a bit of fisticuffs between two opposing players, and the programmers of MLH have obviously decided to capitalise upon this bloodthirsty voyeurism by devoting a whole different section of the game to scraps twixt opponents. The violence is viewed from the side showing waist-up views of the angered parties. Combinations of button presses and directions produce a variety of hooks, jabs and uppercuts, not to mention defensive moves such as ducking and dodging. If you're feeling particularly vengeful you can even grab your fellow combatant by the neck and strangle him! Should fighting breakout during a game, it earns the troublemakers three minutes in the sin bin, although penalty free fist action can be had by selected the "Fight Only" option on the main menu.

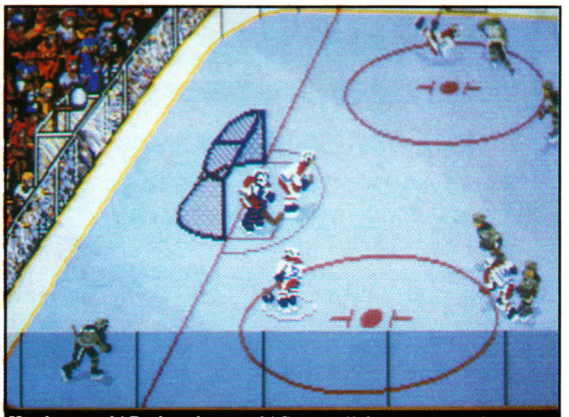


A bit of a disagreement between "sportsmen".

FACE-OFF

Fights aren't the only events which demand close-up attention. At the start of the match and after every goal a face-off is called. A face-off consists of the two team captains standing on either side of the centre spot. The referee then drops the puck between the two captains and the captains attempt to knock the puck back to their own team. face-offs are also called after fouls or minor rules infringements. In these cases the face-off is held on the offending team's foul spots, situated near the goal.

Pucking off (hur hur) for early possession.



Hit that puck! Dodge that stick! Stave off that insomnia!

Saints alive! It's Bob the commentator! What a guy!

PENALTY!

The last of the zoom-view elements of Mario Hockey are penalties. Unless you've selected a particularly harsh referee, it's quite difficult to have a penalty called against you, but should this occur you are treated to a rear view of whoever is taking the shot. Another player on the same team will knock the puck towards them, and it is up to the penalty taker to time and angle their shot exactly to spin the puck into the goal. Should you find yourself on the receiving end of a penalty, then don't despair. Your 'keeper is far from defenceless, being able to block shots to the left or right with a deft dive, or stop shots going between his legs by slamming his stick to the ice.

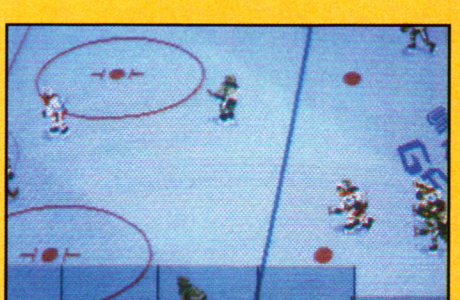
Stick swinging fun with those cheeky teenagers.

It's a goal mouth frenzy! A fight is brewing methinks.

TWO-PLAYER MODE

Like most Megadrive sports games, Mario Hockey has a two player option. It's the standard "versus" option where you must pit your skills against those of the other player, instead of being all chummy and playing on the same team.

Violence between your friends guaranteed, both on and off screen!



Midfield "action" with that dodgy player select.

ALTERNATIVELY

TITLE: EA HOCKEY

PRICE: £39.99

BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

The first ice hockey game on the Megadrive and still the best. It is more responsive than Mario Hockey and it has a better player select feature, so you never end up in control of someone at the wrong end of the rink. If you're not into options and stats, go for this.

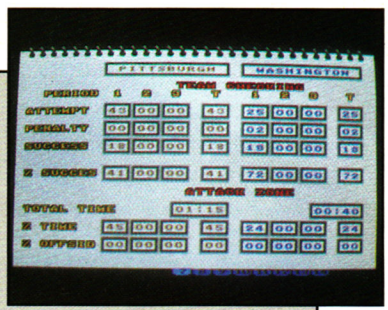
MEGATECH RATING: 94%

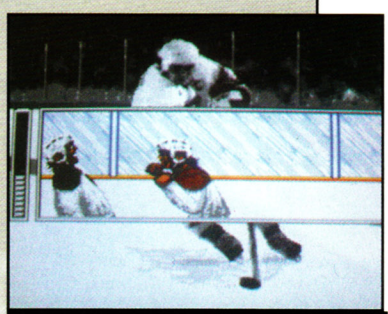
This is more like it! Real excitement with EA Hockey.

MARK'S COMMENT

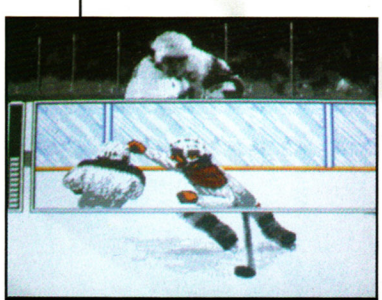
MARK

I wouldn't say I was eagerly looking forward to playing this because Ice Hockey isn't a favourite sport of mine, but I was interested to see how it compared with the very enjoyable EA Hockey. As it turns out, EA still have the upper hand, but that's not to say Mario Lemieux Hockey is complete crap. It's quite good fun to play (especially with two players), but the only thing it really has over EA Hockey is its mind-boggling array of statistics, which hardened hockey fans may well value, but which don't really add much to the game for the average Limey player. More off putting is the game's rather strange player switching system which sometimes gives you control of someone who is actually off the screen (???), and the sluggish joypad response. EA Hockey had no such problems, so unless you're such a fan of the sport that you need those extra options and stats, you may as well get that.





The great man himself celebrates yet another glorious victory.



End to end play culminating in this magnificent feat of ice hockey prowess.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

Sega's programmers had their work cut out trying to produce a hockey game which beat EA's but it doesn't look like they were able to manage it. The players are unresponsive, although the inertia is realistic, but the main fault is in the player selection. Too often I was left controlling someone not even on the screen (indicated by a "ghost" player at one edge of the screen), and selecting a new player manually proved just as bad, it takes a long time to get to the player you want unless you want someone in a completely ineffective position. Mario's graphics aren't too bad, with the close-up scenes being a lot of fun and quite impressive. However, the sound is dire. Short snatches of "tune" occasionally warble their way along for a few seconds at random points and there are few effects to speak of. If the mere thought of ice hockey statistics is enough to make your palms itch, Mario will doubtless hold some appeal for you, the volume of game stats recorded is phenomenal. However, if you're just looking the best ice hockey game on the Megadrive, EA Hockey is the product you should be looking at.

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

90%

A NUMBER OF INTROS FROM BOB THE COMMENTATOR, A SACK OF OPTIONS AND PASSWORDS.

GRAPHICS

81%

DECENT SPRITES AND BACKDROPS AND THE CLOSE-UP ACTION IS GREAT.

SOUND

15%

A FEW PITEOUS BARS OF AGONISING MUSIC AND ABOUT THREE SOUND EFFECTS.

SHORT TERM PLAY

80%

EASY TO GET INTO AND ALL THE OPTIONS AND STATS ENHANCE THE GAME.

LONG TERM PLAY

71%

ONCE THE ATTRACTION OF THE OPTIONS AND STATS WEARS OFF, THE GAME SEEMS RATHER DULL.

MEGATECH RATING

75%

NOT A BAD GAME, BUT EA HOCKEY IS STILL SUPERIOR.

REVIEW

ROLLING THUNDER 2

HYPER HYPER

BY NAMCOT

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: PASSWORD

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: FAST

You can't leave those GELDRA people alone for five minutes before they start one of their schemes for global domination. This time, they've decided to spread confusion and disinformation around the planet by destroying all the world's communications satellites. As a result there is a mass breakdown in communication across the world. Stock markets have crashed, because no one knows what's going on in the world of shares and international relations have ground to a halt. It's just a happy coincidence that one of the only remaining satellites belongs to a top secret government agency known for it's past successes at stopping GELDRA's ruthless plans. Thus agents Albatross and Leila are dispatched to combat evil by finding enough evidence to incriminate the GELDRA bosses and close down the terrorist organisation forever.

THE SCENIC ROUTE

One of the things which separates Rolling Thunder 2 from the other platform blasters on the MD is the interactive scenery. Spread throughout each level are doors or alcoves which can be ducked into should the going get a little too tough. This works both ways, though, and, especially on later levels, it's not uncommon to see enemy troops using the same tricks to dodge your attacks!

GELDRAN GUN GIFTS

Doors serve more than one purpose. Sure, they're handy for dodging into, but certain doors lead to goody packed rooms! These rooms can often be identified by the signs by the door indicating what is stored within, whether it's weapons or ammo. However, those forgetful GELDRAns have gone and forgotten to signpost a few of them, usually the ones which contain bonus energy or extra time. So don't forget to search as many doors as you can.

The best doors to find are those containing special weapons. These mega-powerful pieces of kit, such as machine guns, shotguns, flame throwers and energy rifles, have a limited ammo supply which cannot be replenished, meaning you have to use them judiciously. However, as these weapons are capable of killing the hardest GELDRAN by just looking at them you don't have to worry too much.

There are several extra weapons such as the three-way gun and the flame thrower.

Some GELDRAN's, though, take a real pummeling before they go up in smoke.

DOUBLE DESTRUCTION

Like it's predecessor, Rolling Thunder 2 is played on two levels. This means not only are you under threat from forces on the ground, there's an overhead walkway stuffed with enemies as well! Leaping from level to level is essential to get past some sections of the game, and it's also a good way to get out of trouble when there are no doors around!

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Sound test fans will go loopy about Rolling Thunder 2. The test is controlled from a console in the bottom left hand corner of the screen, and there are a number of hi-fi-like controls there, such as back-to-back play. This isn't all, though. The main attraction of Rolling Thunder 2's sound test is that you're able to watch a band made up of aliens perform the tune onstage!

Perfectly out of keeping with the game is the sound test screen, most bizarre.

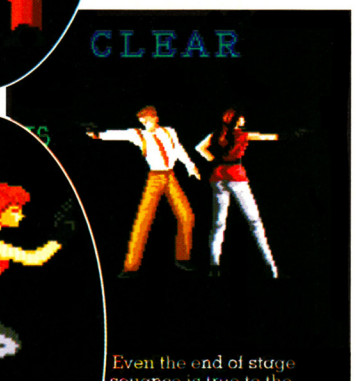
TWO-PLAYER MODE

Rolling Thunder 2 has an excellent two-player mode. One player is Albatross and the other is Leila. Should one of the agents die, it is up to their partner to reach a restart point (indicated in 2-up mode by the ghost of the other player) so they can rejoin play. Should they fail to do this, both agents start again at the last restart point passed.

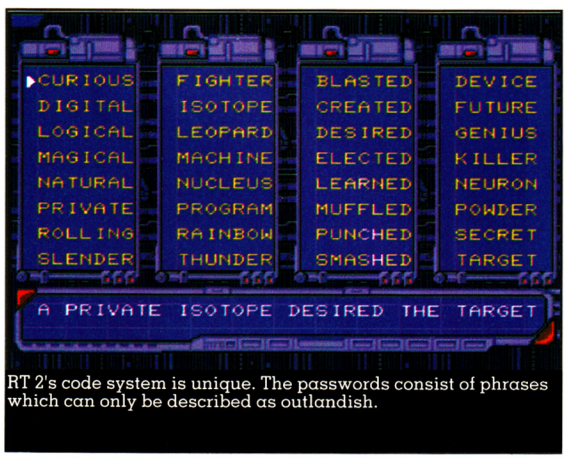
There are no advantages from playing Albatross or Leila

One hit from an enemy bullet means instant death for our heroes.

The stars of the game are introduced in a rather natty intro sequence.



Even the end of stage seuqnce is true to the arcade game.



RT 2's code system is unique. The passwords consist of phrases which can only be described as outlandish.

SCART ALERT!

Alas, Rolling Thunder 2 is one of that elite band of Megadrive cartridges that only works on imported SCART machines like the one pictured. If you have an official or imported PAL Megadrive you'll just have to wait for an official version to appear. Keep watching MegaTech for news of when that is going to happen.

COIN-OP COMPARISON

Rolling Thunder 2 is graphically and sonically almost identical to it's arcade counterpart, but there is one big difference–the Megadrive version has more levels!

This dude can't jump over boxes, so hiding behind them is the best way to to destroy him.

ALTERNATIVELY

TITLE: ESWAT

PRICE: £34.99

BY: SEGA

Become a hardnut metal copper in ESWAT, one of the best platform shooting games on the Megadrive, and that's some praise considering how many there are. ESWAT has a stronger platform element than Rolling Thunder 2 and more powerful weapons, but it isn't nearly as challenging as RT2.

MEGATECH RATING: 92%

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

Thank God – a challenging game for once! After hours of play and frantic code-scribbling I still can't get past level 8. That's not to say Rolling Thunder 2 is frustrating, because it's really very playable. RT 2 is one of the most perfect conversions available, with fab sound and graphics, superb animation and even the arcade game's excellent intermission screens are in there. It's just a shame that it doesn't work on PAL machines, but anyone with a Japanese SCART machine would have to be nuts to miss it.

If an agent runs out of ammunition he's reduced to using a painfully slow loading single shot gun.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

As arcade conversions go, Rolling Thunder is second only to Golden Axe. There's all the graphics and sounds of the coin-op, plus even more playability! What's more, unlike many Megadrive carts these days, Rolling Thunder 2 is very challenging. There are eleven long levels which become progressively harder so that by level eight your skills are being tested to their utmost! There are quite a few platform action games on the MD, but this is probably the best of the bunch, combining a smart front end, addictive gameplay and the kind of difficulty setting that will keep hardened arcade players going for a long time.

GELDRA's boss appears at the end of level 6, only to disappear again in hi private submarine.

THANKS TO...

... Console Concepts of Stoke for the loan of our review cartridge. Call them on 0782 712759.

ROLLING THUNDER 2

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

91%

ALL THE COIN–OP'S INTRO SCREENS, GREAT PASSWORD OPTION AND A GREAT SOUND TEST.

GRAPHICS

89%

LARGE DETAILED SPRITES WHICH ARE SMOOTHLY ANIMATED. VERY DETAILED AND VARIED LEVELS.

SOUND

88%

GOOD FX,BUT REPETITIVE AFTER A WHILE. A VARIETY OF DECENT TUNES ACCOMPANY THE ACTION.

SHORT TERM PLAY

86%

THE HIGH DIFFICULTY SETTING COULD BE OFF-PUTTING FOR THE FIRST FEW GOES.

LONG TERM PLAY

92%

BIG ENOUGH AND FUN ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU AT IT FOR A MONTH.

MEGATECH RATING

90%

A SLICK AND PLAYABLE CONVERSION. WELL WORTH ANYONE'S CASH IF THEY'VE A JAPANESE SCART MEGADRIVE.

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REVIEW

HARD DRIVIN'

BY TENGEN

PRICE: £34.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: DRIVING

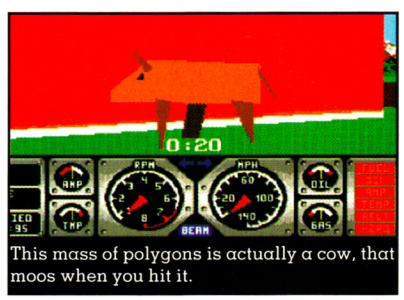
CONTINUES: 0

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: POOR

As far as arcade games went, 1989 was the year of the driving game. Sega were already enjoying success with the likes of Out Run when they released Power Drift and Super Monaco GP. Namco went for a more realistic approach with Winning Run and Taito enjoyed some success with their variant on the boy racer theme, the ripping cop car game Chase HQ. In the middle of all this, Atari's Hard Drivin' was unusual because it was a real driving simulation which used realistic controls and vector graphics to convey a feeling of motoring at speed.

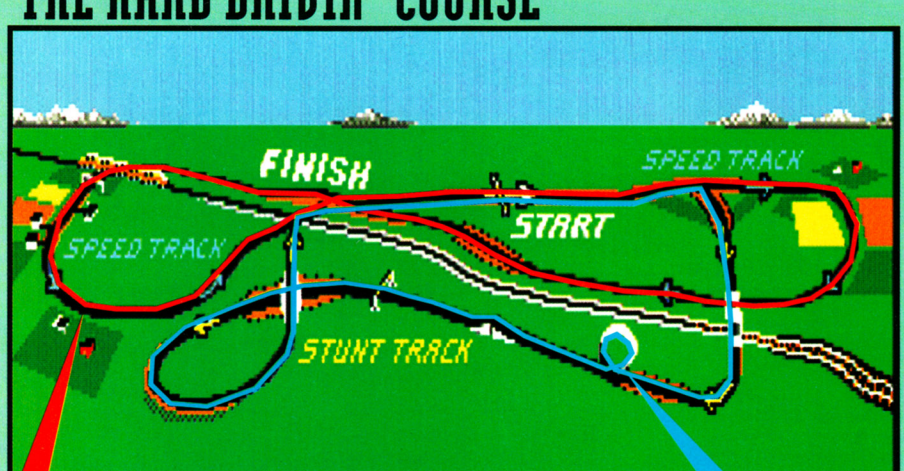
In this conversion, as in the coin-op, the driver finds himself on a circuit made up of two connected courses, a stunt track and a speed track. The objective of both is to race against the clock to the checkpoints, avoiding oncoming cars and trying to stay on the road. Crashing costs time and when the clock runs down the car grinds to a halt and it's game over. Oh dear.



This mass of polygons is actually a cow, that moos when you hit it.

Manual gears give you much better acceleration than automatic mode, although it can be a pig changing down.

THE HARD DRIVIN' COURSE



THE SPEED TRACK

This is a cinch. Drive straight on from the starting grid and just put your foot down. There are a couple of tricky corners but there's nothing to stop you doing four or five circuits of the speed track without any problems at all.

The jump has to be taken at 60Mph. Too fast and you'll nose-dive on the other side.

THE STUNT TRACK

Hang a right after the start and you're on the stunt course. Watch out for oncoming traffic as you cross the bridge-jump and enter the loop-the-loop. After a hill jump and a quick dip the final challenge is staying on the speed bank – don't go faster than 40!

Looping-the loop is easy, avoiding other vehicles on the obstacle isn't.

RACE THE PHANTOM PHOTON

If you can do the stunt track in around 100 seconds on the qualifying lap, you should have no problems when it comes to beating Phantom Photon

Complete a lap in under 100 seconds and you qualify for the race-off against Hard Drivin' champ Phantom Photon. You're only allowed to leave the road for a total of ten seconds, and crashing leads to instant disqualification. Should you win, however, your performance is recorded so that future challengers race against you instead of Mr Photon!

Photon will always get off to a better start than you, but catching up is easy.

COIN-OP COMPARISON

The Hard Drivin' coin-op was a highly specialised bit of arcade equipment, so the Megadrive has its work cut out trying to recreate the feel of the original. All of the track features are in there, along with the instant replay sequences and the choice of manual or automatic gearboxes. However, the conversion has a problem with producing the high speed 3D graphics smoothly, and driving with a joypad proves to be much more difficult than using a steering wheel.

No matter how hard you hit another car, yours always comes off worst.

ALTERNATIVELY...

TITLE: SUPER MONACO GP

PRICE: £39.99

BY: SEGA

Probably the best car racing game on the Megadrive. It has all the qualities essential to a racing game - speed, graphics and competitive action. An essential purchase.

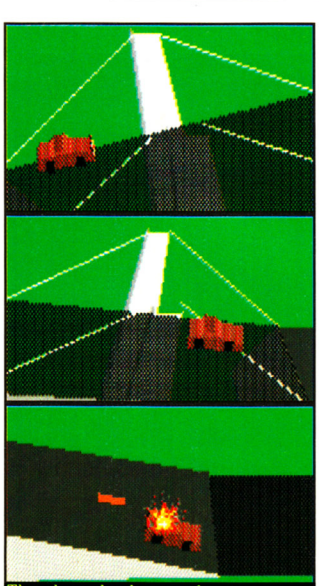
MEGATECH RATING: 93%

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

Hard Drivin' is distinctly short on action, something it could get away with in the arcades because the great graphics and the realistic controls made playing it almost like driving a real car. Unfortunately, the graphics and controls aren't up to much in this conversion, so it ends up looking small and sad. Strangely, though the handling of the car is very poor, it doesn't make the game any tougher. I found it very easy to get into the Phantom Photon challenge and win, and after that the only further challenge is to better your previous time – not very interesting. If you want a good racing game you'd be much better off leaving Hard Drivin' on the shelf and going for Super Monaco GP or Road Rash instead.

The poor handling make some turns difficult.


The obstacles have to be approached at the right speed,go too fast and you'll end up writing-off your car.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

Maybe if it had been a race against other drivers rather than simply a race against time Hard Drivin' would have survived the conversion process. Without the realistic graphics and controls, the weaknesses in the gameplay are quickly revealed in the Megadrive game. It doesn't take long to zip around the two tracks a few times and beat the Phantom Photon, after that there's not much more you can do with the game. The problem with the controls is that they aren't precise enough for a simulation like this. You can accelerate or brake but can't maintain a constant speed, nor can you corner smoothly because you have to repeatedly hit left or right on the pad, which is like driving round a bend by continuously jerking the steering wheel between the centre and full lock. That's just about good enough to let you bounce around the track for a couple of hours of vague enjoyment, but after that it all starts to grow tedious. Seeing as you can shove a couple of quid in the arcade game and get slightly more thrills I'd recommend the cheaper option.

HARD DRIVIN'

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

75%

SOME USEFUL OPTIONS AND THE COIN–OP'S CRASH REPLAY FEATURE IS INCLUDED.

GRAPHICS

72%

FAST, BUT SLIGHTLY JERKY VECTOR GRAPHICS.

SOUND

70%

MEDIOCRE TITLE TUNE AND FLATULENT ENGINE NOISES.

SHORT TERM PLAY

65%

ONCE YOU'VE GOT THE HANG OF THE CONTROLS IT'S FUN FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS.

LONG TERM PLAY

49%

TURNS OUT TO BE RATHER BORING, AS WELL AS BEING EASY TO FINISH.

MEGATECH RATING

50%

AN ACCURATELY PROGRAMMED, BUR UNEXCITING ARCADE CONVERSION.

REVIEW

GAIARES

BY RENOVATION/UBISOFT

PRICE: £44.99

FORMAT: 8M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: SHOOTING

CONTINUES: 4

SKILL SETTINGS: 2

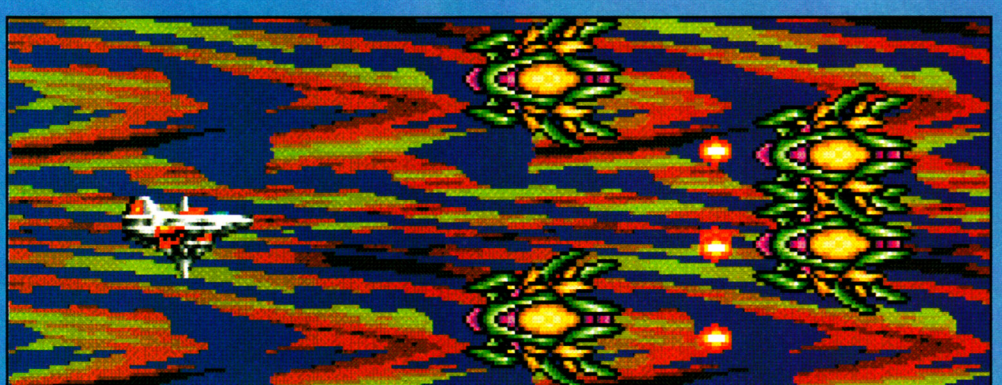
RESPONSE: EXCELLENT

That nasty gang of space terrorists, Gulfer, is looking for raw materials to manufacture weapons and they've found just what they need... on Earth (gasp!) The galaxy's governing body, the United Star Cluster of Leezaluth, have uncovered Gulfer's plan but are powerless to stop them so they have issued an ultimatum to the people of the Earth, stating that if they cannot find some way to stop Gulfer, they will have no option but to destroy Earth's resources, along with the Earth and most of the solar system by turning the sun into a supernova!

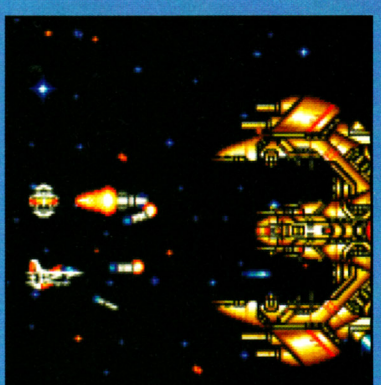
Luckily, Earth is not completely defenceless. The planet's top space pilot, Dan Dare (not *the* Dan Dare of course) is all ready to take on Gulfer's forces and their leader, Queen ZZ Badnasty, in his newly modified spacecraft. His ship is equipped with the TOZ, a miniature drone which can scan any enemy weapon and duplicate its death-dealing abilities.

Dan Dare, pilot of the future and all round nice guy, sets off with his girlfriend, Alexis, to save Earth from almost certain destruction.

But, will the TOZ be enough? Eight long levels of interplanetary shooting action lie before Dan and only the highest quality hyper pilot will be able to withstand the onslaught of Gulfer's danger-squads...



Psychedelic rules here. Apart from looking rather bizarre, the background also makes it difficult to spot enemy bullets.



Without an extremely large weapon you're not going to get very far.

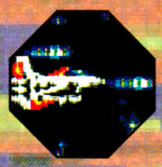
A gothic castle filled with guillotines is strangest of all the backdrops.

background also makes it difficult to spot enemy bullets.

No, this isn't the latest thing in space-craft washes, it's actually a hazard.

WEAPONS INSPECTION

The Gulfer ships carry a variety of about 15 weapons for the TOZ to copy. Some of them are spelled rather strangely, but they all provide many hours of fun for all the family. Here are a few of them in action.



IONIC VULCAN CANNON

The basic armament which fires single shots forward or three when powered up.

QUARK MISSILE

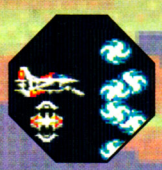
Fires diagonally. Not very powerful, but useful for taking-out ground and aerial

HORIZONTAL LASER

A standard forward laser. Devastating at maximum power.

VERTICAL LASER

A laser wall which shoots forwards rather than up as the name suggests.



ROLLING COLADOR

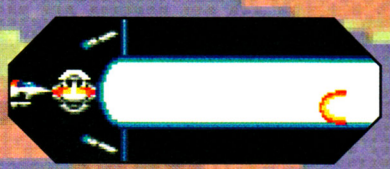
Multi-direction shots. Good spread but not very powerful.

ENERGY SMASH

Holding down B increases the power of the shot. Slow but effective.

PLASMA CANNON

Multi-directional laser that's a necessity on some levels.

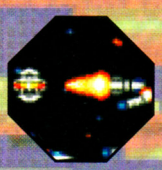


GIGA-BEAM

The largest laser. Goes through anything.

SOMERSAULT LASER

Small homing lasers. Probably the best weapon, in spite of its name.



TEKTITE MISSILE

Devastating multi-launch rocket system. Yummy, yummy.

F-FORMATION

The most powerful weapon in the game, deals with bosses in seconds.

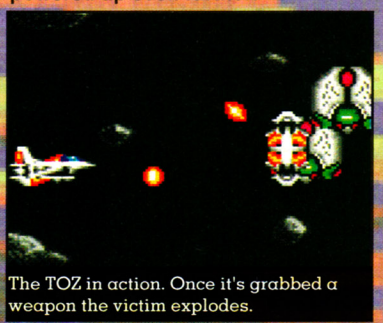
TOZ SPOT

Stage 1: Draw level with your target.

Stage 2: fire off the Toz to power-up.

Stage 3: Blast everything with your newly-gained weapon.

The TOZ works a bit like the multiples in arcade games such as Salamander, following your movements and firing as you do, but it also has another, more important feature. When the TOZ is activated, it shoots forward, latches onto an enemy ship, then duplicates its weapon and bolts it onto your craft. If you TOZ other aliens of the same type your new weapon is powered up even further!



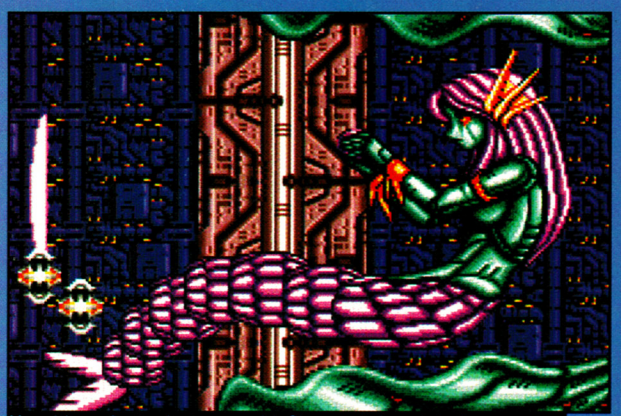
The TOZ in action. Once it's grabbed a weapon the victim explodes.

Be careful though, because while the TOZ is doing its biz your weapons are disabled. However, if you're already powered-up to max-imum the TOZ will steam through the attack wave destroying every alien it touches!

DOUBLE BOSS TYPE ACTION

Just to make things really difficult most of Gaiares' eight levels are guarded by two bosses! The first usually appears mid-level, and is a proper push-over, but the end of level guardians are a different kettle of fish. As well as being exceedingly well drawn and animated, they're also rather large and well armed, so you stand almost no chance of beating one if you're not tooled up with some top-notch weapons.

Despite looking mean, the dragon is easily disposed of by shooting it in the head.

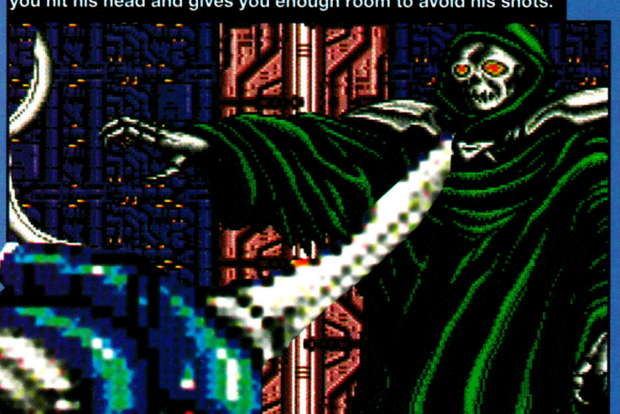


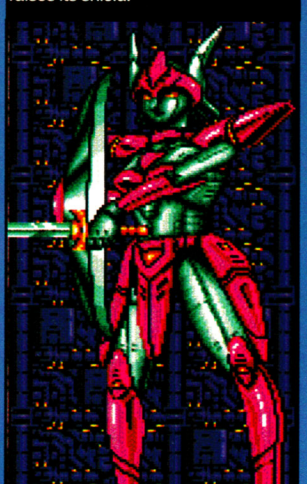
Yep, it's a giant robot mermaid. She can take a lot of punishment, so power-up before you meet her.

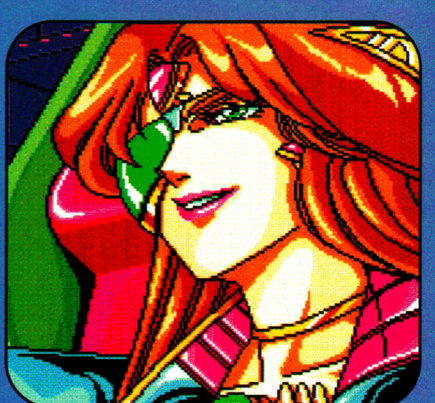
Above: The first big ship you meat. – easy to destroy unlike the monster below, which can only be hit when it raises its shield.

It's the Ice World Boss! Destroy it by using to the TOZ to duplicate its laser.

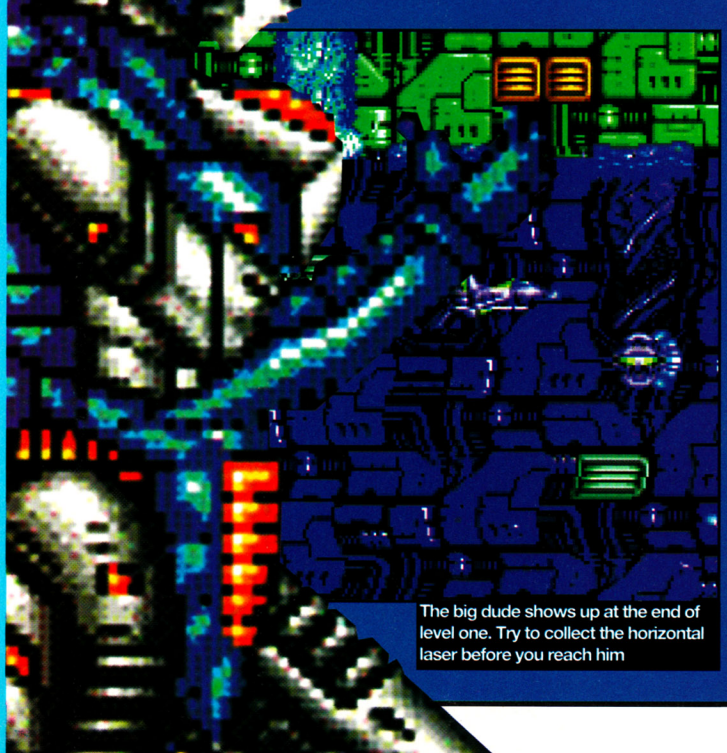
Death's a real wussy. Wait for him to start materialising, then fly to the top corner on the opposite side of the screen. This lets you hit his head and gives you enough room to avoid his shots.







ZZ Badnasty shows up at the end of level 8, riding in a comet. Before you reach her you have to negotiate a hail of giant snowballs.



The big dude shows up at the end of level one. Try to collect the horizontal laser before you reach him

A CHANGE OF SCENERY

Dan's trip takes him through a wide variety of landscapes, which often change in mid level. One moment you're cruising through deep space, the next you're flying through a right-to-left scrolling Arctic waste! Later on black-holes appear which draw you to a rather dark, imploding-type of death. Other background hazards include asteroids, ice-bergs, falling stalactites and collapsing ceilings in a medieval castle. That's right - for some reason you go from deep space to the great hall of some mysterious space castle, via an underwater chamber. Curiouser and curiouser...

Iron spikes and falling masonary are the hazards in the castle.

You can go two ways here, over the top, or under with the ice-bergs.

ALTERNATIVELY...

Not as tough as Gaiares, but still a very good shoot 'em up.

TITLE: THUNDERFORCE 3

PRICE: £34.99

BY: SEGA

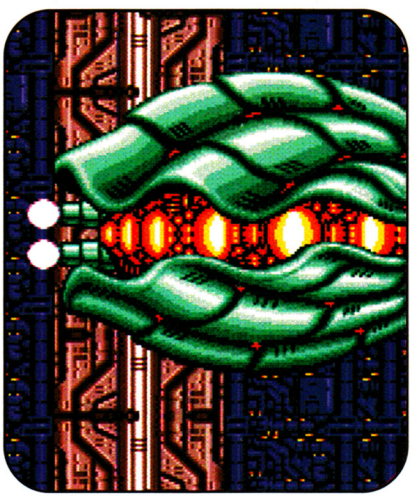
This is one of the best shoot 'em ups on the Megadrive. Six levels of gorgeous-looking blasting-frenzy action make Thunderforce III an essential cartridge.

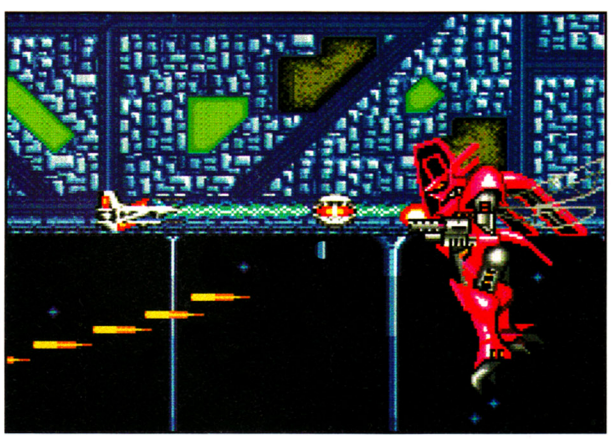
MEGATECH RATING: 89%

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

A lot of Megadrive shoot 'em ups look good but turn out to be a tad dull, mainly because they're just rehashes of the same old stuff. Gaiares, however, is different. The variety in weapons and levels make it difficult to leave the game once you've started playing. My only quibble is about the difficulty. Gaiares is one of the toughest games I have ever played, and I can imagine a lot of people chucking this to the back of their collection out of sheer frustration. Of course, challenge is something a lot of Megadrive games lack, so if you like a good blast and have a high tolerance for pain and frustration check this out.

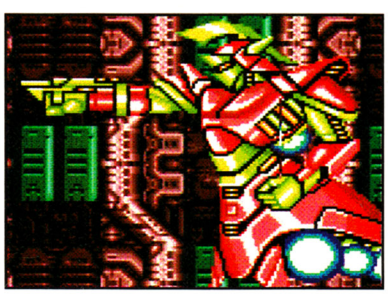


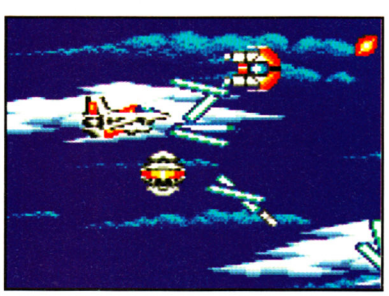


Left: The winged guardian appears on several levels.

Below left: This guy is also a regular, although he's a lot tougher.

Bottom left: The age-old R-Type rip-off worm. Yawn.



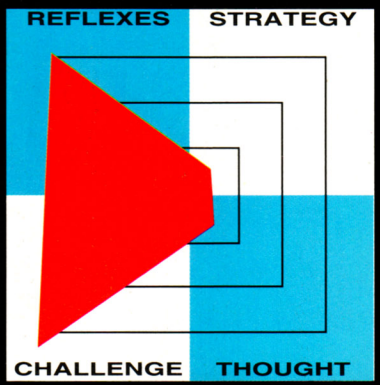


PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

Most British Megadrive players seemed to miss out on this smart shooter first time round so I'm glad to see UbiSoft have revived it (in another of their "Free Jap cartridge converter packages). Gaiares won quite a few awards in the USA, and deservedly so, because it looks terrific, has a fair amount of variety in the gameplay and is very challenging indeed – a combination of features rarely found in this type of Megadrive game. In fact, if you ever moaned about never getting your money's worth from a shoot 'em up, you should see how far your skills get you in Gaiares, which must surely be the toughest blast available on the Megadrive. Even our best players (who finished Thunderforce III on their first attempt) couldn't get beyond halfway in this game. If you reckon you're of that calibre, Gaiares is a challenge you can't avoid taking up.

GAIARES



% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

81%

THE USUAL OPTIONS, BUT A NICE INTRO AND PLENTY OF EFFECTS.

GRAPHICS

88%

BACKGROUNDS AND BOSSES ARE EXCELLENT, THE SPRITES ARE ONLY AVERAGE THOUGH.

SOUND

70%

LOADS OF BOG–STANDARD ZAPS AND EXPLOSIONS ALONGSIDE REPETITIVE TUNES.

SHORT TERM PLAY

80%

CAN BE VERY FUSTRATING TO BEGIN WITH.

LONG TERM PLAY

85%

EIGHT MASSIVE AND DIFFICULT LEVELS. IT'LL TAKE AGES TO COMPLETE.

MEGATECH RATING

84%

ABOVE AVERAGE BLAST THAT'S WELL WORTH TAKING A LOOK AT.

REVIEW

MARBLE MADNESS

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS

PRICE: £29.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: ARCADE PUZZLE

CONTINUES: 0

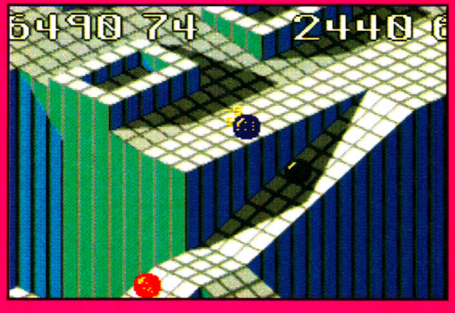
SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: AVERAGE

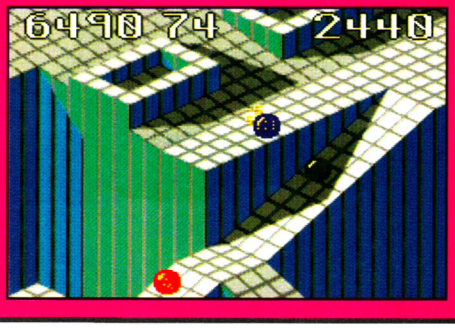
In the "Mad Game Concept" awards, Marble Madness would have to win something. The object of the game is to steer a sphere around a series of mazes inhabited by hostile hammers, acid puddles, psychotic birds, giant vacuum cleaners and of course, green maggots.

When Atari launched it in the arcades MM attracted plenty of interest as it was one of the only non-violent coin-ops you could play and it's unusual concept earned it cult status in Britain and the USA. Considering its success, it's surprising that no-one tried to produce an arcade copy of Marble Madness, but Electronic Arts have been responsible for several home conversions, the Amiga one being programmed by Will Harvey who also came up with The Immortal, reviewed last issue.

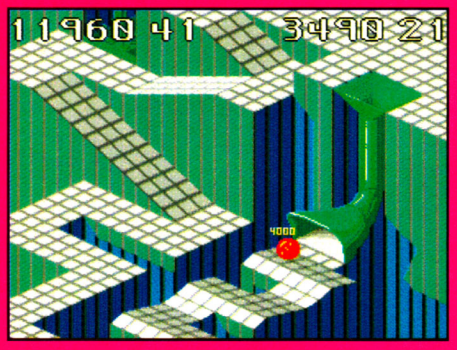
TIME'S UP!



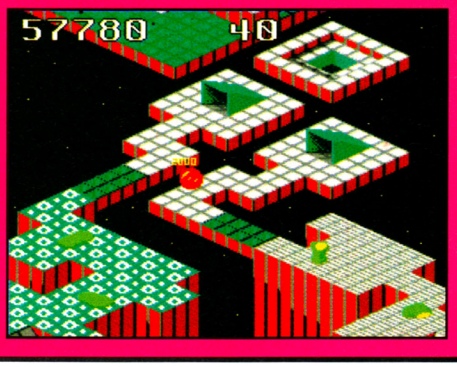
There are no lives and no continues in Marble Madness, just a time limit. You get 60 seconds to complete a level, plus whatever time you had left from the previous stage. Should you come a cropper, you lose time waiting for your new marble to appear. In two-player mode both marbles are shown on the same screen so If your opponent outpaces you by more than the height of the screen, you're teleported next to the other player and given a five second penalty.



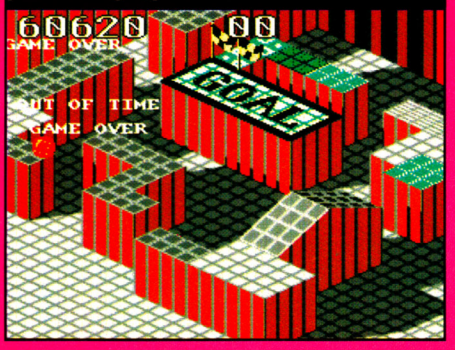
LEVEL BEST

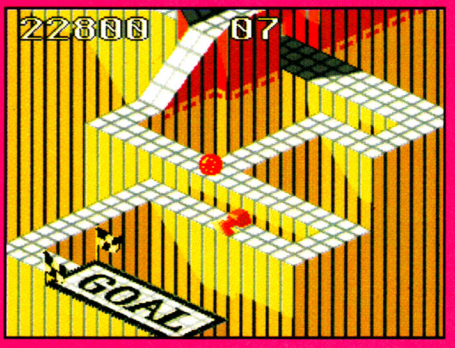


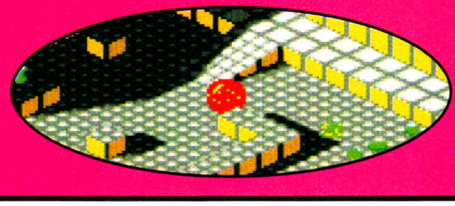
There are six levels in total, plus a hidden seventh stage. The objective in each is to reach the goal line, which is usually in some out of the way location, defended by a varied array of nasties. Each stage boasts a new feature, drain pipes, catapults and so on, as well as a number of short-cuts, which are easily found but not so easily negotiated.



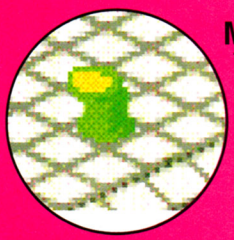
The last level is aptly named The Ultimate Challenge. It features most of the hazards of the previous stages, plus some new ones.





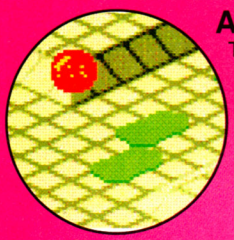


HAZARD WARNING



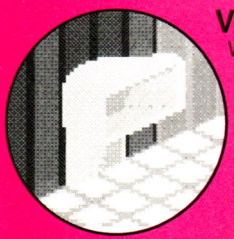
MAGGOTS

These creatures will only stun your marble if they touch it. Occasionally they open their substantial mouths and pounce on the unsuspecting sphere. Instant death.



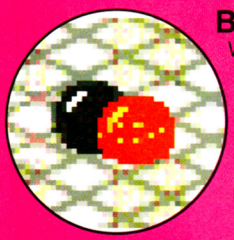
ACID BLOBS

Touch one of these and it's marble meltdown. They don't track you, but have a habit of blocking your path just as you start running low on time.



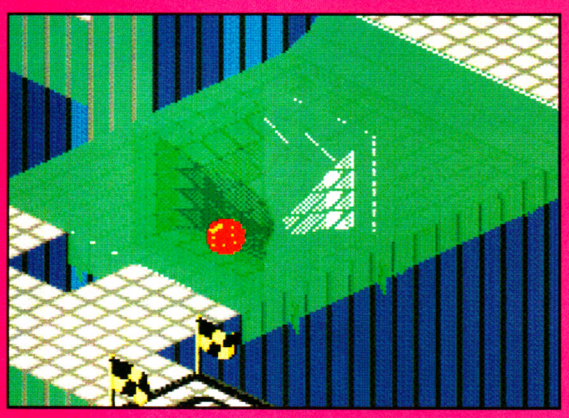
VACUUM

When these rear their ugly heads you'd better run. They line the paths of level four and attempt to Hoover-up anything that strays too close.



BLACK MARBLE

While this isn't the most dangerous thing you face, it's certainly the most annoying. It's sole aim in life is to bump you off the course. Naturally you can do the same to it and pick up a healthy 1,000 points in the process.



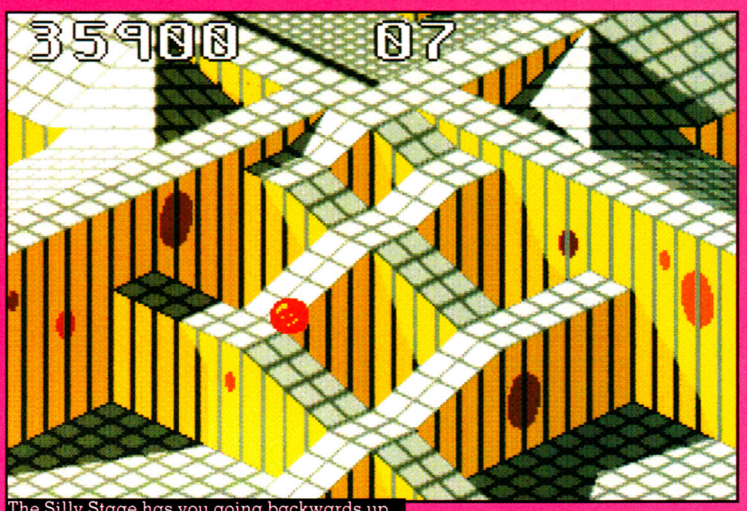
ICE

At first glance ice patches don't seem too dangerous, but once you're on one you can't change direction and usually plummet over a conveniently placed cliff.

HAMMERS

It's "Good-night, Vienna" should one of these hit you. Fortunately their movement pattern is easily sussed, so you'd have to be a real sap to get caught-out.

CONTROLLING YOURSELF

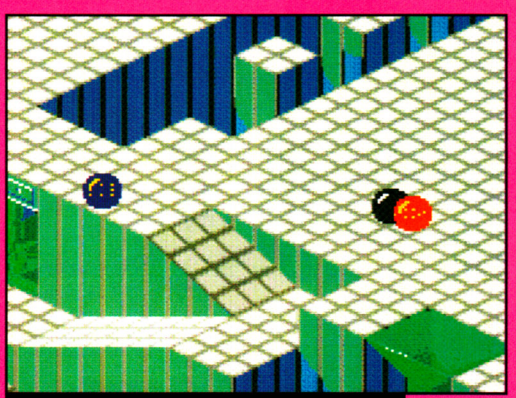


The Silly Stage has you going backwards up the level.

The Marble Madness coin-op is fitted with a Trakball which is perfectly suited to a game in which you control a rolling marble, but trying to do the same on a Megadrive joypad takes some getting used to.

There are two control systems, normal and grid, which determine which direction the joypad sends you. In normal mode, pushing left sends you left, but with grid selected you go up and left. The fire buttons provide a speed boost which is handy, but makes the marble tricky to steer.

TWO-PLAYER MODE

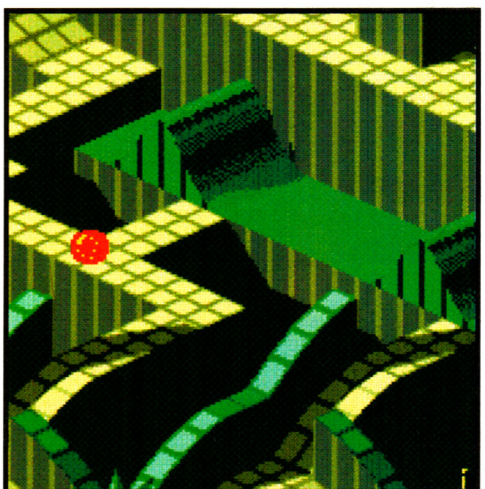


Three's a crowd, so try to bump off the black marble and beat blue to the chute..

To add a competitive edge there's a simultaneous two-player option. There's no way to help each other out, so the onus is on finishing the level first. Of course, trying to bump your opponent off the course is contrary to the spirit of the game... we don't think...

COIN-OP COMPARISON

The coin-op is nigh on ten years old so there's no reason for this to be anything but a close conversion, and it is. The graphics, sound and playability are almost arcade perfect, and it has the hidden water level. What more could you ask for? Apart from a Trakball?

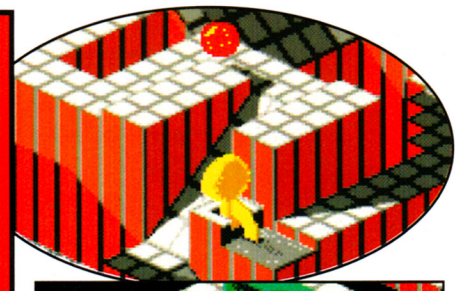


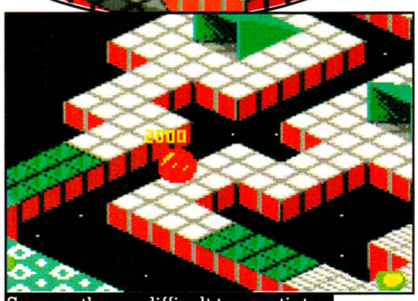
The waves are the largest hazard, they're also very easy to avoid.

MARK'S COMMENT

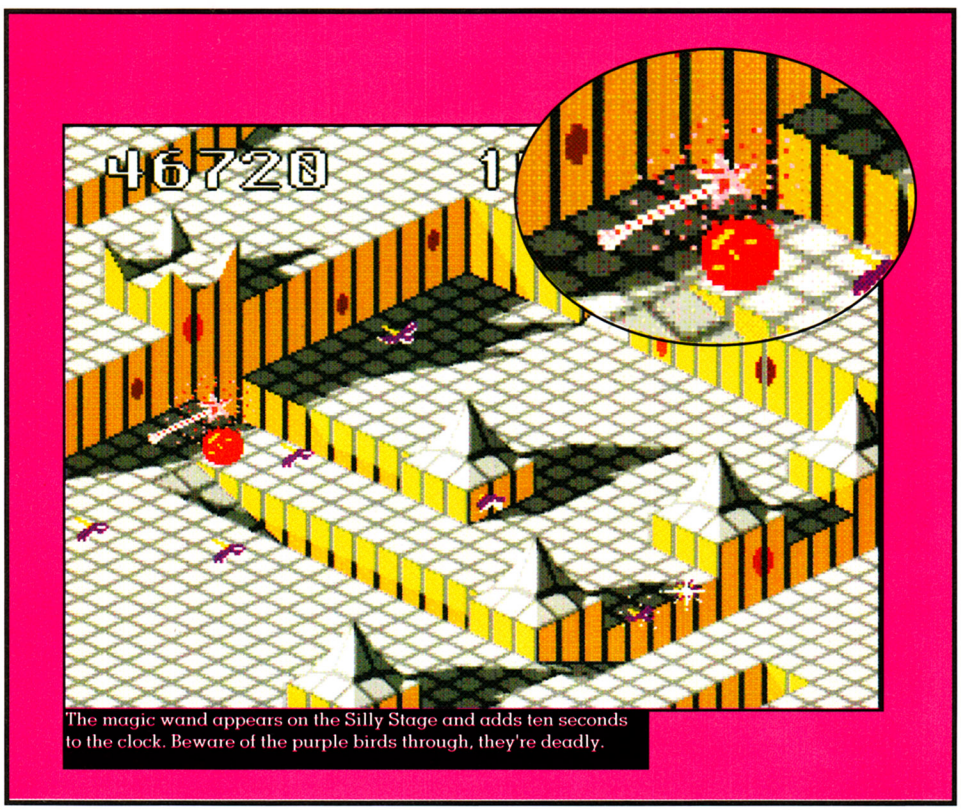
MARK

This is as true to the coin-op as you could want. The graphics are neat, the scrolling smooth and the sound effects are smart. What it lacks is size. Although it has six levels like the arcade version, I wouldn't pay thirty quid for it. Even on hard level the game only becomes challenging around the fourth stage, and it doesn't take much of an effort to go the rest of the way. That said it is frustratingly addictive and exceedingly playable. The two-player mode is fun as you can bump your mate off the course, but even this becomes a bit dull after a while. You'll no doubt go to hell and back for a copy if you liked the coin-op, but anyone else should think twice before they cough-up the readies.

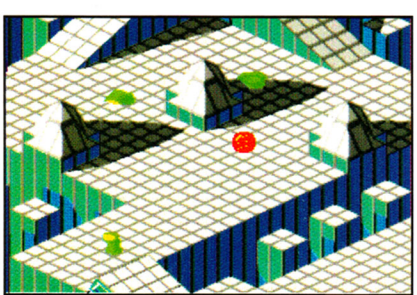




Some paths are difficult to negotiate because of the perspective.



The magic wand appears on the Silly Stage and adds ten seconds to the clock. Beware of the purple birds through, they're deadly.



Maggots have random movement patterns and can easily be avoided.

Even a small drop can mean a crushing death for the marble.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

I was never a big fan of Marble Madness, mainly because all that frantic Trakball slapping used to give me blisters (on my hands, that is). This conversion didn't give me blisters (anywhere) but apart from that it's the most accurate home conversion you can get. But, while I applaud the programmers for their attention to detail Marble Madness has one big problem - there's just not enough to it! Of the six levels, the first five are very easy to complete and the sixth is the only one which puts up a fight. While it lasts it's very playable and the REAL marble fans will get a big kick out of shaving seconds off their best times, but it could certainly have done with some alternative sets of newly-designed courses to keep yer average player interested.

MARBLE MADNESS

% RATINGS

PRESENTATION

73%

A FEW BASIC OPTIONS, BUT A BIT BARE APART FROM THAT.

GRAPHICS

80%

TRUE TO THE ARCADE, RIGHT DOWN TO ALL THE NASTIES AND OBSTACLES.

SOUND

78%

WEIRD, MINIMALISTIC MUSIC AND NEAT SPOT EFFECTS DURING THE GAME.

SHORT TERM PLAY

86%

EASY TO GET INTO AND VERY ADDICTIVE.

LONG TERM PLAY

55%

THE GAME'S JUST TOO EASY TO COMPLETE.

MEGATECH RATING

73%

A FAB CONVERSION, BUT THERE'S JUST NOT ENOUGH TO IT.

READY

STEADY

GO!

GAMEBOY

GAME GEAR

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ISHIDO

BY ACCOLADE

PRICE: £35.99

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: PUZZLE

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL SETTINGS: 1

RESPONSE: GOOD

Trevor and Simon fans are probably under the impression that Ninja masters spend their free time running around the supermarket and stealing each other's sugar, but Accolade know better. They happen to know that they stay at home, sit cross-legged on the floor and hone their mental prowess with a few games of Ishido, the Way of Stones.

Ishido is a puzzle game played on a board of 96 squares, with 72 tiles. Each tile bears one of six different symbols in one of six different colours, and there are two of each different tile.The game starts with six tiles on the board, one in each corner and two others in the centre, representing every colour and symbol design.

Tiles are drawn from a pouch at random and placed on the board next to a tile which has the same symbol or colour. If you place a tile between two others, one must match in colour and the other by symbol. The object of the game is to place down as many tiles and score as many points as possible before you run out of moves. There – easy. Or is it?

+GETTING STARTED

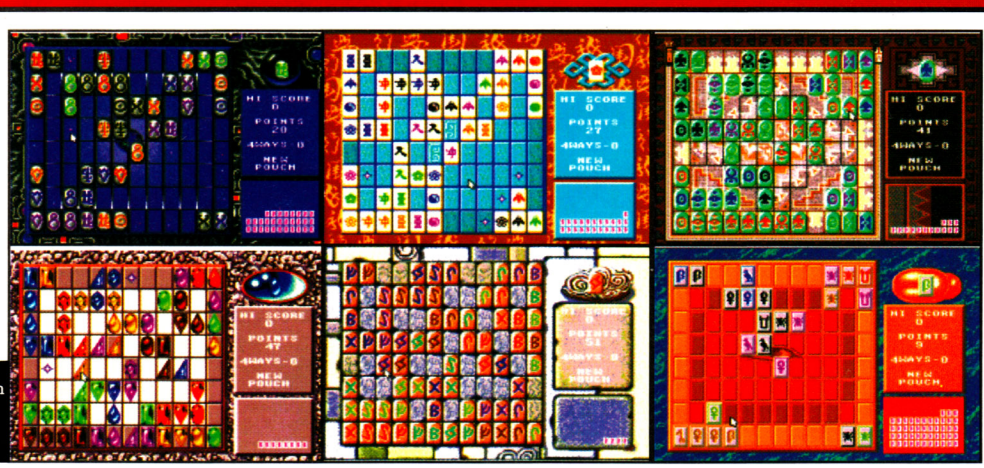
The easiest way to match tiles is with a single link. This means just joining up with one other tile of the same colour or symbol. You can't just do this willy-nilly, though, because as the game progresses the board fills up and there are less loose tiles available to let you do this. Also, these single matches earn you only one point each, so for a higher score you'll need to work out some clever moves in advance.

BETTER TECHNIQUES

The most common tile links are two and three way matches.

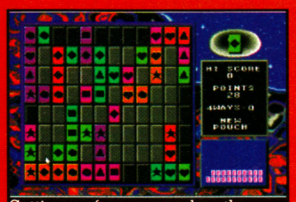
For a two way match, the tile must match the colour of one adjoining piece and the symbol of the other. This manoeuvre scores a whopping two points!

The other moderately easy move is the three-way match. To legally place your stone so that it adjoins three other stones, you must match two of the stones with one attribute (ie colour or symbol) and the third stone with the second attribute. Pull this off and a mighty four points are yours for the taking.



There are six different sets of tiles, although the jewels and shape-tiles are the only sets clear enough to use. The different sets are used to illustrate the fact that the game was supposed to have originated in six different countries.

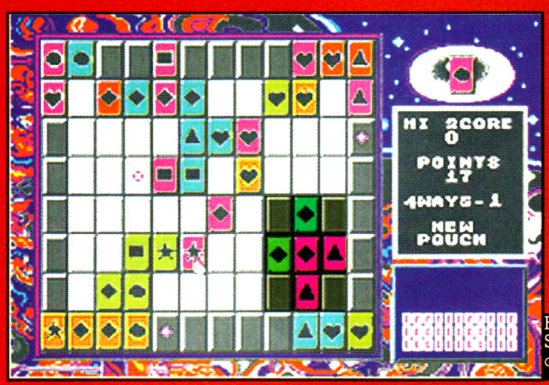
MASTERFUL SUPREMACY



Setting up four-ways when the board is busy is almost impossible.

The hardest, but most rewarding move, is the four-way masterstroke, so called because only top players can manage it.

First, a ring of stones must be set up with a single space in the centre. Only when a stone matches two others by colour and two others by symbol may it be placed in the middle and eight points are yours. The more four-way strokes played, the more bonus points are awarded. So for your first four-way an extra 25 points come your way, but should you play the maximum of twelve, the twelfth four-way reaps an enormous fifty thousand points! Should you create eight four-way matches around the six opening stones you have played a Master Game and you are well on your way to becoming a legend (or so the rulebook says).



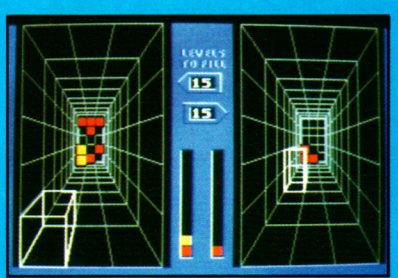
Four-ways are few and far between. Should you get one you're almost odds-on to get a high-score.

ALTERNATIVES...

TITLE: BLOCK OUT

PRICE: £34.99

BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS



This 3D Tetris clone is one of the best puzzle games around. The combination of reflex-testing speed and the cerebral puzzle element make this one a winner for those who like their brain-action a bit more on the pulse-racing side.

MEGATECH RATING: 91%

MARK'S COMMENT

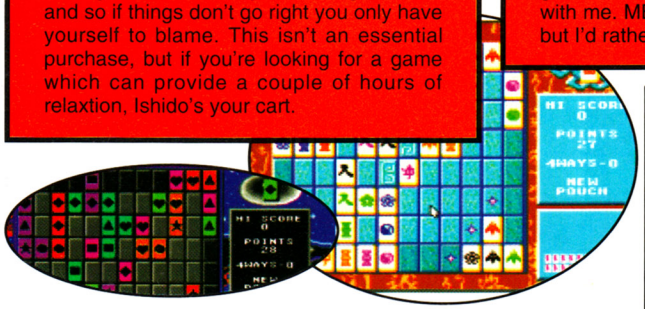
MARK

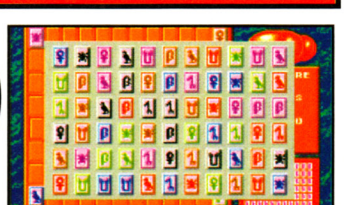
Ishido isn't one of those games that has adrenalin coursing through your veins even at the peak of it's excitement level, but that's not to say it's a bad game. It's sufficiently involved to draw you in for several games in a row and there's something strangely relaxing about the whole thing–you can even change the board and tiles to suit your mood! The main challenge of Ishido is that you are really playing against yourself, the console has nohing to do with how your strategies form and so if things don't go right you only have yourself to blame. This isn't an essential purchase, but if you're looking for a game which can provide a couple of hours of relaxtion, Ishido's your cart.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

This game intrigues me because I like the idea, but it's so difficult to play that I didn't actually enjoy it much. Shame that, because there's nothing wrong with the programming or the game design, and Ishido even looks quite nice. For some reason, though, the profusion of colours and shapes led to sensory overload and I just couldn't get the hang of visualising any but the simplest of winning moves. I'm normally quite good at these games, honestly, but Ishido just didn't click with me. MENSA candidates might enjoy it, but I'd rather play Block Out.





Selecting pouch lets you check out the remaining tiles.

ISHIDO

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

76%

LOTS OF OPTIONS, HELP ROUTINES AND TWEAKABLES, SUCH AS DIFFERENT BOARDS.

GRAPHICS

65%

THE TILES AND BOARDS ARE NICELY DRAWN, ALTHOUGH THE COLOURS CAN BE CONFUSING.

SOUND

76%

A SOOTHING TUNE ACCOMPANIES THE GAME, BUT SOUND EFFECTS ARE DISTINCTLY LACKING.

SHORT TERM PLAY

74%

THE TUTORIALS MAKE ISHIDO EASY TO LEARN,BUT MASTERING IT TAKES AN AWFUL LONG TIME.

LONG TERM PLAY

81%

ONCE YOU GET TO GRIPS WITH IT, YOU CAN SPEND YEARS GETTING TO MASTER STATUS.

MEGATECH RATING

80%

AN ATTRACTIVE BUT DIFFICULT PUZZLE GAME.

RUNARK

BY TAITO

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: 3-7

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: OK

Deep in the heart of Africa evil deeds are afoot. Poachers intent on making a fast buck are packing the entire Kenyan ecosystem up in wooden crates and shipping them to dodgy Far-Eastern circuses. Enter the rangers, a band of four jungle trackers who have sworn to protect the wildlife in their care with their own special mix of jungle kung-fu and anti-personnel rocket launchers.

Unfortunately, this being a single player game, you can choose only one of the four to follow the vendetta against the poachers. All of them are thoroughly hard, as well as being well qualified in the use of fists, knives, pistols, automatic machine guns and, of course, the aforementioned anti-personnel rocket launchers.

If all this sounds a bit familiar, that's because Runark is in fact the Japanese for a Taito coin-op which was released in this country as Growl. Arcade experts agree that Growl was a bit of a duffer, but hey, at least it was environmentally friendly.

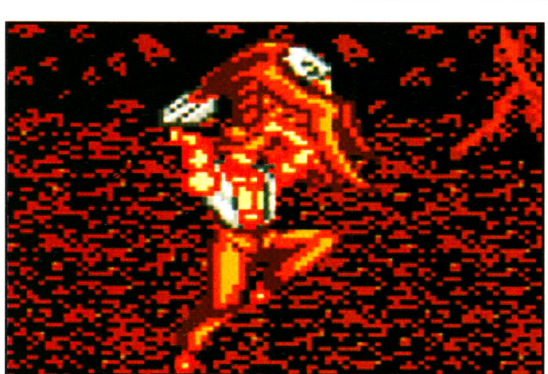
HURRAH! IT'S THE HEROES!

Before you get stuck into the action you have to choose your favourite hero from this selection of swarthies. All four can use the same fighting manoeuvres, but as you can see each has a different rating for life (that sets the size of his energy bar), attack strength and jumping ability.

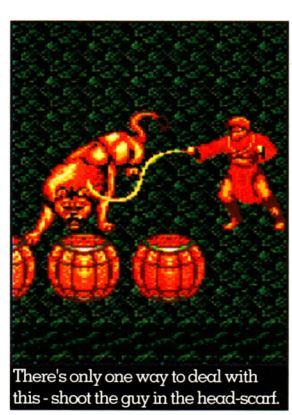
We found it best to plumb for the bloke with the most energy, as this allows you to use your special frequently.

BOOO! IT'S THE VILLAINS!

The bosses in Runark are, like the rest of the game, very silly. The first one you encounter is the amazing exploding Samurai. After you've slapped him about a bit he drops to the floor and the ammunition he has strapped to his body explodes. Mysteriously, he manages to survive this assault on his well-upholstered person and starts running round until you hit him again and even more of his ammo blows up! Criminy! At least he's not quite as bad as the flying Moroccans with the cast-iron elbows who appear in an alleyway later on in the game (or even the final boss who transforms into a giant, bouncing alien!)



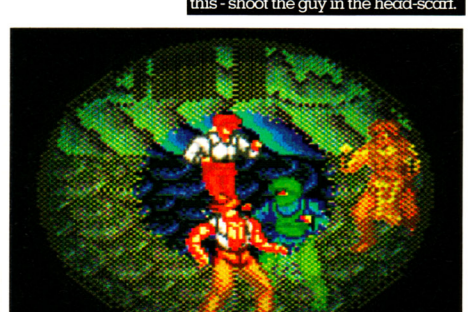
Rescue the eagle and he comes to your aid when you reach the chasm.



There's only one way to deal with this - shoot the guy in the head-scarf.

When this guy falls to the ground you'd better get out the way.

Rocket launchers are the ultimate in offensive weaponary.



It's combat by torch-light in the cave. You can only punch and kick here, no weapons allowed!

The flying Moroccans are a constant annoyance.

MAXIMUM DEATH

The business of saving endangered species is thick with hazards, and some very big weapons.

DAGGER
Whether you chuck it or stab someone with it, the dagger is a pretty poor weapon.

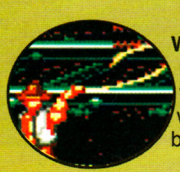
GRENADE
Drop it and hit the dirt. Guaranteed to blow apart persistent trouble makers.

PIPE
There's nothing like a belt in the head with a lead pipe to put an evil poacher down.

PISTOL
A six-shooter which can make holes *this big* in non-animal lovers.

SWORD
Impress your friends and chop up your enemies with two feet of sharpened steel.

ASSAULT RIFLE
Rapid-fire lead packages fly from the muzzle of this little beauty which doubles up as a club when the ammo runs out.



WHIP
Lashings of fun (ho ho!) with this leather lovely which can splat enemies behind AND in front!

ROCKET LAUNCHER
Death extreme! Rips apart anybody caught in the resulting explosion. Comes with four rounds.

ALTERNATIVELY...

TITLE: STREETS OF RAGE

PRICE: £34.99

BY: SEGA

If it's a beat 'em up your after, look no further than this title from the makers of Revenge of Shinobi. It's a tad easy to complete, but Streets of Rage has that much sought-after two-player action which makes it the best thumping game on the Megadrive.

MEGATECH RATING: 92%

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

As well as being very silly, Runark is also very tedious. All it is is pick up a weapon, smack around some bad guys, dump the weapon and repeat the process. This lack of variety is reflected in the graphics. Only the backdrops change with the levels and you get the same bad guys and ludicrously dressed women regardless of the level. Even worse, it's not at all difficult and if the right weapons appear you can make mincemeat out of the enemy and finish the game in no time at all. Not the worst game ever, but it's a contender for the title, so you'd best leave it alone.

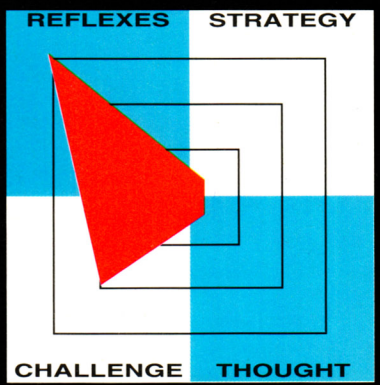
PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

This looks like a crappy Master System game, but it's not totally devoid of enjoyment. For one thing it's one of the most violent beat 'em ups I've seen on the Megadrive and some of it, such as the exploding people and the thrashing-the-bloke-around-above-your-head bit , looks like it's come straight from a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Unfortunately, while the game starts off well, the combat is very samey all the way through, and after about 20 minutes I was holding back the yawns. Luckily it was all over soon after that because I'd destroyed the final boss and finished the game! For a better looking and more exciting game you'd best take our advice and go for Streets of Rage.

Yes, we know a head-on collision between an elephant and a forty-ton tank usually result in a dead jumbo – not in this game though. Nellie turns up to wipe-out the bad guys and their tank. Hurrah!

RUNARK



% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION
80%
THE USUAL OPTIONS PLUS SOME INTER–LEVEL SEQUENCES.

GRAPHICS
55%
CRUDELY COLOURED AND ANIMATED, BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF ACTION.

SOUND
59%
CRASHES, BANGS AND AN IRRITATING TUNE.

SHORT TERM PLAY
68%
EASY TO PICK UP, AND THE ULTRA–VIOLENCE MAKES IT FUN.

LONG TERM PLAY
46%
SOON BECOMES BORING AND REPETITIVE, AND ISN'T DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE.

MEGATECH RATING
50%
NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS, BUT STILL NOT VERY GOOD.

REVIEW

Beast Warriors

BY RIOT

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL SETTINGS: 0

RESPONSE: OK

Beast Warriors is a wrestling game with a major difference – no wrestlers. Instead of fat men in masks, Spandex and knee-length boots, all of the competitors in this game are monsters which weigh in at several tons and look like rejects from a Clive Barker movie.

After choosing one of ten beasts to be your on-screen fighting proxy, you take to the ring, your objective being to completely annihilate your opponent. Each creature has its own advantages over the others plus a unique special attack. Some traditional wrestling moves are included such as suplexes and shoulder charges, but for the most part the manoeuvres are wholly original.

The version reviewed here is a Japanese import, although it works with suitably converted UK machines. By the time you read this Ubi-Soft should have an official version on the shelves, priced at £44.99.

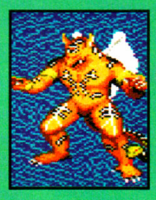
IN THE RED CORNER...

There are 18 monsters in the Wrestling Monsters Federation and if you elect to play a tournament you have to beat all of them. Choose to play a single match, though, and you can choose any two from these and pit them against each other.

DIECOON
Holder of 2nd Domestic Title
Height: 12.59m 6.55m
Weight: 2.64 tons 2.0 tons
Power points: 250
Life points:250
Strength points: 350
This huge snake-man makes good use of his tail and can shoot laser beams from his eyes.

AIR-HOHLE
Holder of 4th Domestic Title
Height: 6.55m
Weight: 2.0 tons
Power points: 80
Life points: 100
Strength points: 250
The weakest character, but his special move, the flying pile driver is devastating!

OMINOS T-2
Holder of 2nd World Title
Height: 12.62m
Weight: 3.0 tons
Power points: 500
Life points: 700
Strength points: 500
Ominos' ability to become temporarily invisible is pretty useless - controlling him is difficult if you can't see him!



MACALHA
Holder of 3rd World Title
Height: 8.56 m
Weight: 2.39 tons
Power points: 580
Life points: 670
Strength points: 630
Macalha favours rope throws, but appears to have no special move. How odd.

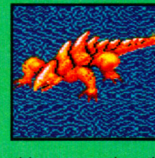
HAX-004
Holder of 4th World Title
Height: 8.36m
Weight: 12.85 tons
Power points:700
Life points:780
Strength points: 500
This robot is the toughest of these ten characters and is armed with a laser sword.

PROGLARZE
Holder of 5th World Title
Height: 8.04 m
Weight: 3.01 tons
Power points: 530
Life points: 650
Strength points: 450
He may be fat, but Proglarze has some fancy moves, such his off-the-ropes death spin.

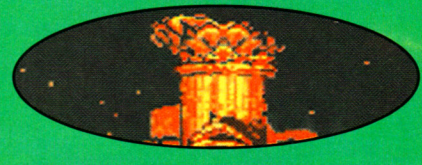
OCT
Holder of 6th World Title
Height: 7.45 m
Weight: 2.85 tons
Power points: 430
Life points: 400
Strength points: 400
A walking octopus who likes to throttle his opponents. Watch out for his aerial spin off the ropes.

ARELOW
Holder of 7th World Title
Height: 9.56m
Weight: 1.32 tons
Power points: 380
Life points: 450
Strength points: 330
Beware the blob! Arelow likes to bite(?!) or strangle but when he's roused he expands into an amorphous stinging mass!

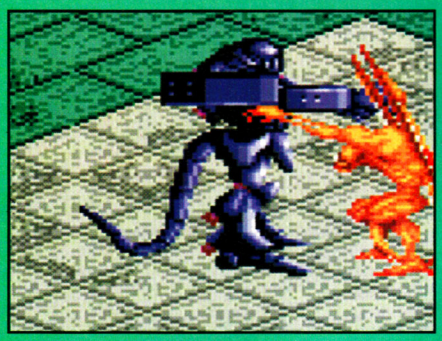
WLOBOLOS
Holder of 8th World Title
Height: 13.56m
Weight: 8.94 tons
Power points: 400
Life points: 500
Strength points: 300
A snake-man cyborg who can direct a powerful electrical discharge at his opponents from the protruberances at the side of his head.



FEDERICO
Holder of 9th World Title
Length: 13.22 m (inc tail)
Weight: 2.99 tons
Power points: 280
Life points: 250
Strength points: 100
Other wrestlers can't get hold of this armoured reptile, making it easy for him to wear them down with head butts and his energy beam.

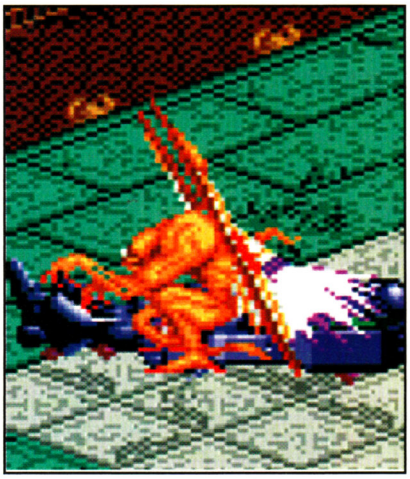


HOW TO WRESTLE, MONSTER-STYLE!



Without the benefit of English instructions, it takes a while to work out how to control your wrestler, but it turns out that the system used is not unlike that of Sega's Wrestle War.

While he's stalking around the ring, the A and B buttons make your creature lash out with a punch, kick or thrust of the tail. Get in close and the two beasts lock together in a clinch. To come out tops you have to hammer A and B along with the D control to perform a move. Once it's down, you can grind your adversary into the canvas.



One of the highlights of the game is Air Hohles super-pile-driver, but even that becomes dull after a while.

ALTERNATIVELY

TITLE: FIGHTING MASTERS

PRICE: IMPORT

BY: TRECO

More monster-wrestling fun which is reviewed on the very next page of this issue!

MEGATECH RATING: 80%

Many of the creatures have secret weapons. Hax-004 has lasers hidden in his shoulders while Air Hohle has a cannon between his wings.

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

The biggest problem with Beast Warriors is the lack of moves. There are about six per character, but because they depend on your opponent's situation, you're usually limited to two types of attack. When you do manage to perform a series of moves, you're left wondering whether it was actually you who did it or whether the computer temporarily took control of your wrestler. The graphics are nice and large, but the gameplay is so boring you're lucky if a match ends within the seven minute limit.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

There are some nice ideas in Beast Warriors, but the player doesn't really feel their benefit because the game is so tedious to play. You can be hammering away at your opponent for ages and it seems to take ages before your blows seem to have any effect on his energy level. In two player mode this isn't too bad because at least you have the enjoyment of beating up your mate, but I don't think I could stand playing a full tournament. Perhaps the game would be more enjoyable if we could understand all its untranslatable features, and if that's the case I would suggest giving the imported version a miss and waiting for UBI-Soft to release Beast Warriors with English instructions. We'll let you know if that improves the situation in a future issue.

BEAST WARRIORS

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

76%

NICE INTRO SCREENS, EVEN THOUGH THE TEXT IS IN JAPANESE.

GRAPHICS

72%

LARGE CHARACTERS WHICH ARE A TAD LACKING IN THE ANIMATION DEPARTMENT.

SOUND

52%

MUFFLED SAMPLES OF GROWLS AND SOME DUFF MUSIC.

SHORT TERM PLAY

61%

LOOKS PROMISING TO BEGIN WITH...

LONG TERM PLAY

45%

...BUT TURNS OUT TO BE QUITE TEDIOUS TO PLAY FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME.

MEGATECH RATING

45%

NICE IDEAS DON'T SAVE BEAST WARRIORS FROM BEING A DULL BEAT 'EM UP.

FIGHTING MASTERS

BY TRECO

PRICE: IMPORT

FORMAT: 4M–BIT ROM

PLAYERS: 1–2

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

CONTINUES: 3–5

SKILL SETTINGS: 3

RESPONSE: GOOD

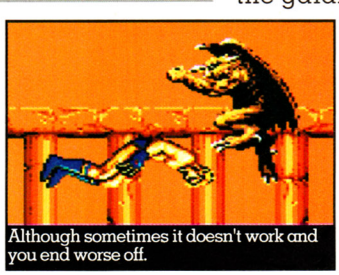
The galaxy is, as usual, under threat from a rotten emperor, but this time, instead of sending fleets of death cruiser-fighter-killships to laser his extremities, you have to beat him up.

Of course, there's not just him. Valgasu (for that is his name) has brain-washed twelve other galactic emperors into doing his dirty work, so to get to him you have to kick in his zombie gang. Luckily, you can de-brainwash one of the twelve emperors and get him to fight back.

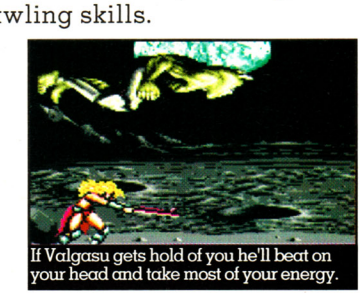
That's not going to be easy because being bug-eyed space aliens, they all have mysterious special abilities. Some can fly, some are extremely fast and some have slow, heavy duty attacks. Luckily, you can make use of your chosen emperor's unarmed combat abilities with combinations of joypad directions and the B and C buttons.

When one opponent is beaten, you're whisked off to fight the next of the eleven and when you're the only one left standing, Valgasu himself turns up for the final confrontation. Beat him (not easy) and the galaxy kneels before your mighty brawling skills.

Sometimes to get an attack in you have to wait for your opponent to strike...


Although sometimes it doesn't work and you end worse off.

Drason's fire attack is best avoided by leaping over him and attacking from behind.


If Valgasu gets hold of you he'll beat on your head and take most of your energy.

THE EMPERORS STRIKE BACK

Lay-deeees an' gennelmen. Pree-senting the twelve emperors who will be fighting for your pleasure in this game...

LARRY - 100% man, but a bit feeble. Favours drop kicks and flying knees to the face but his best move is probably the overhead throw.

BEOWOLF - Don't get too close to this eagle-clawed robot or he'll use his special spinning kick which resembles a deadly form of break-dancing (remember that?)

MEDUSA - Fat and blue, but Medusa has a mighty powerful spinning jump which can repeatedly flatten any emperor in his way.

ELEPHA - The Elephant Man. When he's not tossing his enemies around with his trunk he throws them in the air and head-butts them across the arena.

GOLDROCK - This stone man isn't as rock hard as he looks, but he has mighty shoulder throwing abilities which make him a formidable adversary.

DRASON - Like Tomahawk, Drason can fly his opponents up to tree-top level before dropping them, AND he has the ability to toast them with his firey breath.

FLAMER - The Boxing Horse of Mystery. Has a tremendous somersault kick, and his shoulder throw can cut an opponent's energy bar by half.

TOMAHAWK - A Hawkman who will either piledrive his opponent into the floor or grab them, fly upwards then kick them to the ground.

DIO - Half-man, half-Venus Flytrap this angry young vegetable can lob his foes in the air then send them reeling with a flick of his roots.

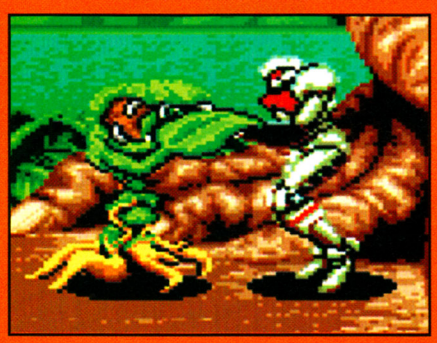
MORIN - Fast and agile, this girl likes to smack her foes around with her tonfa, then when they're stunned, hurl them into the nearest wall.

ZRYGUNTE - A giant Lobsteroid armed with vicious claws. Watch out for his diving pincer movement and his ability to fling his opponents about like rag dolls.

EYESIGHT - This troll-like being from beyond the stars has rubber arms which provide him with a stretch punch and a "Hundred Hands Slap"-type move.

ALIEN FIGHTING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

The best way to attack your opponent is while he's stunned. Smack him one in the face with a punch or a leaping kick then while he's groggy get up close and grab him. Each character has different moves, but hitting B or C while your enemy is in your clutches usually results in him being flung around the screen in an extremely painful manner.

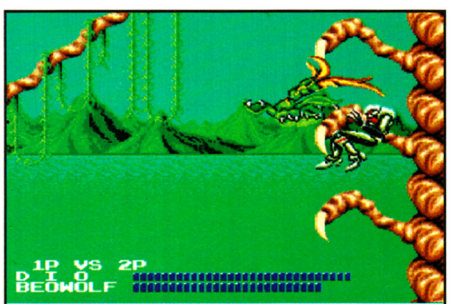


TWO-PLAYER MODE

Select the two-player option and you get to fight another plugged-in mate in a best-of-three match as any of the 12 emperors. Flippin' good fun it is too.

Some attacks result in opponents being hurled off walls for up to four hits.

Valgasu can only be defeated by staying out of his way the going in with rapid attacks.



Stunning an opponent then grabbing them lets you perform a super-move.

MARK'S COMMENT

MARK

Fighting Masters isn't much cop as a one player game – I managed to complete it on hard level after only a few goes – but as a two-player game it's terrific. Learning the characters is almost as much fun as it is in Street Fighter 2, and the action is sufficiently fast and furious to make Fighting Masters one of the best beat 'em ups on the Megadrive. Having said that, though I don't think it would take an exceptional game to surpass it as without the two-player mode it would soon grow quite dull. A worthwhile purchase providing you have two joypads and a friend.

PAUL'S COMMENT

PAUL

Considering the quality of Treco's duff conversion of Street Smart I was surprised to find they've done a great job on Fighting Masters. Now that it looks like Street Fighter II won't be appearing on the Mega-CD it looks like this will be the next best thing. The smattering of tactics, the variety of characters and the rather smart graphics make this probably the best one-on-one beat 'em up on the Megadrive. If you're playing on your own you seem to run out of opponents after a couple of days of play, but with two players going head to head the fun goes on and on. An unmissable bit of punching action.

FIGHTING MASTERS

% RATINGS

0 50 100

PRESENTATION

79%

A MODICUM OF OPTIONS AND SOME FAIR INTRO SCREENS.

GRAPHICS

88%

GREAT MONSTER SPRITES, NOT MUCH VARIETY IN BACKDROPS.

SOUND

80%

MORE THAN ADEQUATE TUNES AND SOUND EFFECTS.

SHORT TERM PLAY

88%

GREAT BLEND OF TACTICS AND VIOLENCE TO MASTER.

LONG TERM PLAY

78%

DOESN'T LAST LONG IN SINGLE PLAYER MODE,BUT TWO PLAYERS CAN KEEP PLAYING FOR AGES.

MEGATECH RATING

86%

THE BEST ONE–ON –ONE BEAT 'EM UP CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR THE MEGADRIVE.

TECHNIQUE ZONE

No lengthy intros this month because there are just so many tips in Technique Zone that, well, there's just no space to waste! Six pages of Technique Zone lie before your twinkling eyes, and following that there are a further six pages of Hyper Technique Zone bearing the first sensual part of a playing guide to The Immortal - journey from level two through to level four without a solitary hitch! Watch out for the concluding part of that HTZ in the very next issue. If you think you can come up with a playing guide of similar quality, or you've just discovered a hot Megadrive cheat, why not write it down and send it in to us at: Technique Zone, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

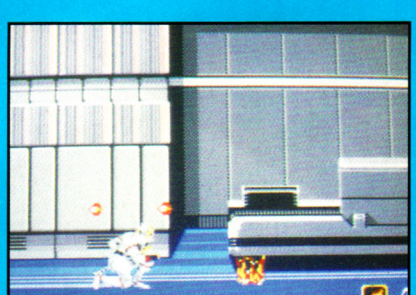
ROAD RASH

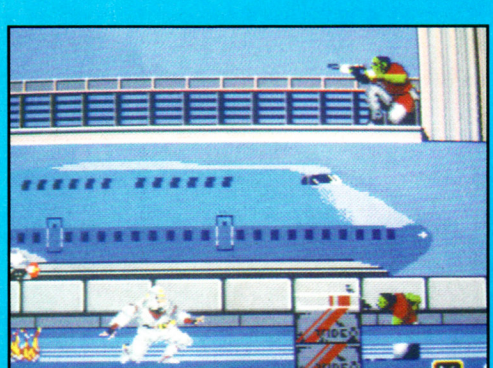
"Just writing to help out all of those people who are stuck on the amazing Megadrive game Road Rash" quoth helpful Danny Fantarrow of County Durham. His tip for this racing beat 'em up is as follows. If you are stuck on a couple of races in a level, you can change your position order around on the code screen eg 42389 to 98423. This way you can skip the hard races.

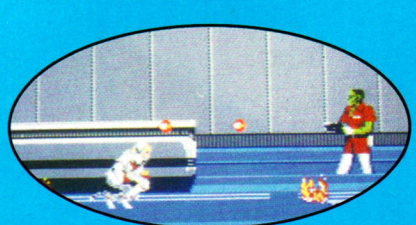
SHADOW DANCER

When it comes to getting extra lives on bonus screens, Richard Hollingworth from Stockport is the man to see. He reckons that he has a foolproof way of earning two or even three extra ninja on this Shinobi sequel. At the very start of the bonus level go to the far left, right up against the wall and fire as fast as you can (autofire is helpful here). You should be able to kill fifty ninja, gaining a funky three-up for your troubles.

Also, a certain Christopher Keenan has found the hidden level select on Shadow Dancer and he reckons you can activate it by simply depressing the buttons A, B, C and start on the title screen.

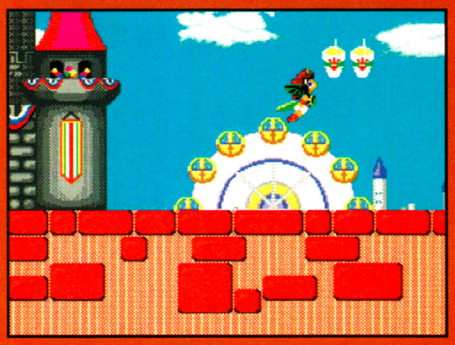






MARVEL LAND

If the final level is eluding you, then try the handy passwords supplied by Francis Shonteff from Reading. World 4-6 can be accessed by the passcode TRIDENT (THRIDENT in HARD mode). From here any level (except the final one 4-7) can be selected for your delectation.

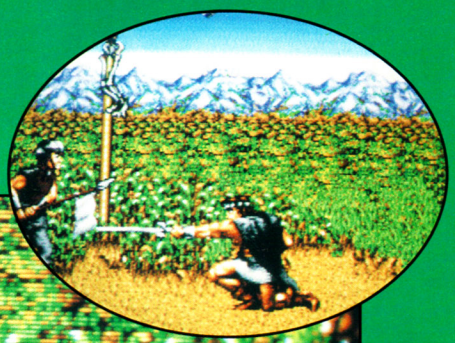


SWORD OF SODAN

The Boy Almey is back once more for a feast of useful potion combinations for this tawdry yawn 'em up.

Blue and grey: Shield.
Blue and orange: Poison
Green and red: Extra life.
Blue, green and red: Extra life.
Blue, green and orange: Super zapper.
Green and orange: Flaming sword.
Orange and red: Longer-lasting flaming sword.

This one's from Oops, Sorry, Lost Your Name again. Plug two controllers in to your Megadrive. Enter your name as HINANP, press START on controller two and you will be able to select your starting level!



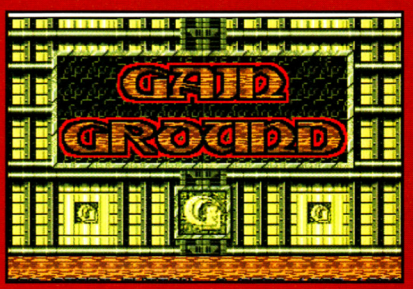
FAERY TALE ADVENTURE

Blow me, Roy's at it again (and if he doesn't stop he'll go blind), this time with the end game password for Faery Tale Adventure. Don't you ever buy any good games, Roy?Anyway, here's that thar code:

7R2KUL6RSZXSKGNHGSDCB720663 R12H07

GAIN GROUND

Roy "the Boy" Almey might have a stupid nickname, but he's tops when it comes to the business of Megadrive tips! His hint for this duff flip screen Gauntlet clone concerns the pressing of the buttons A, C, B, C in order on the options screen. This will allow you to select any starting stage.



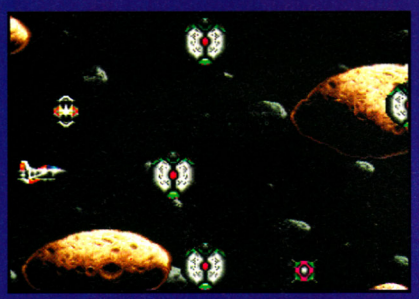
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Corks! S Tilcher (I think that's what it says) of Vale in Guernsey has a tip for high-score freaks in possession of the cart they call Sonic. Completing level one in under 29 seconds reaps a momentous 500 000 points bonus!

GAIARES

To activate the level skip in Gaiares you'll need two controllers. Press Start and B together to bring up the options screen, then select tune number 18. Hold down A on the second controller and select 'Exit' with pad one. While still holding down A, press C on pad one. Hold both until the SEGA logo disappears. When you hit start you'll get a level select screen.

If that's not enough, London's Neil Persad can help. He says that by simply shooting out your TOZ unit six times before capturing an enemy ship at the beginning of the first stage earns you the heat-seeking T Braster weapon, the best piece of alien shooting kit going!

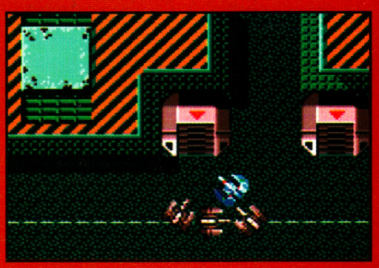


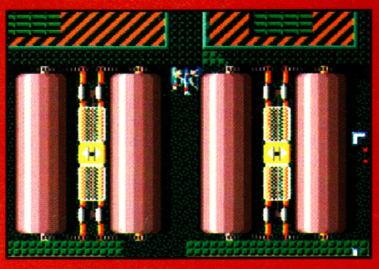
PHELIOS

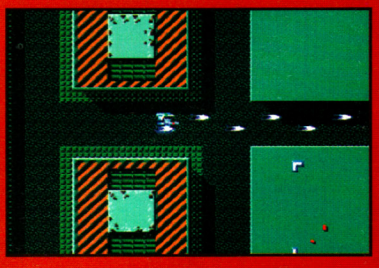
Here's one for you Phelios players. When you're confronted by Antaeus, the boss at the end of level four, move to the far right of the screen. Stay here and Antaeus won't be able to hit you, and for an added bonus, press fire as fast as you can and you will receive loads of bonus points and extra lives.

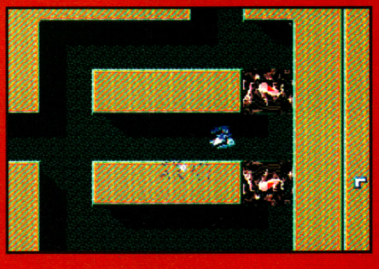
GRANADA X

If you're on the second level of Granada X, here's a way to boost the power of your mega-blaster. Go over to the end of the left-hand wing of the giant flying battleship Astarsha, then drive down the antenna to the end. Wait there for a few seconds and the extra weapon flies onto the screen. Catch it and your blaster is now permanently powered up! Be careful, though, as this extra power gives the weapon quite a kick, and if you use it in precarious positions, such as on the wings of the Astarsha, the recoil can send you flying backwards to your doom!







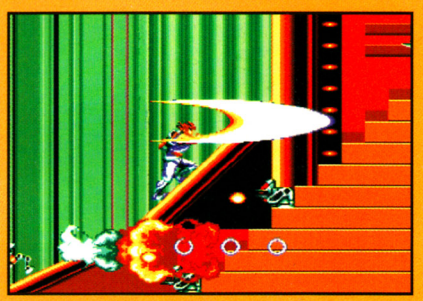


JAMES POND

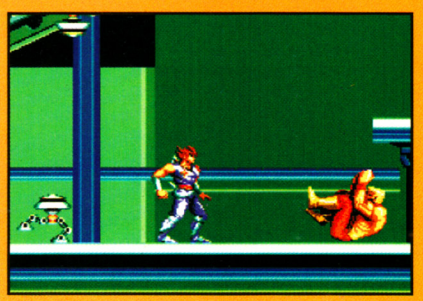
Unknown is back again, this time with a great cheat for the predecessor of Robocod. If you want to exit a level before you have completed it, press C and LEFT together. Then, press START on the title screen. When you want to open the exit, press A, B and C simultaneously whilst rotating the joypad.

STRIDER

On level one, gain two drones and cut open the robo tiger pod. Lose the drones and collect the robo tiger. When the robo tiger splits you get one or two drones for nothing! An extra power unit can be found on this level if you jump downwards from the second platform and fire with the sword.



When on the platforms to the helicopters (leading to the ballet dancers) found on level two, use the sword to find power up units to replace lost energy.



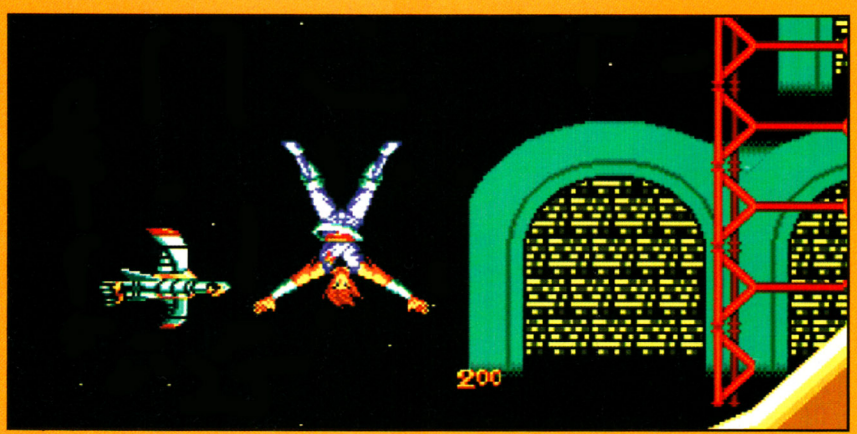
Run down at the start of level fourand let the sloping "bridge" collapse. Jump to the far left and climb down. Use your sword and extra power is yours.

When you reach level five, climb onto the satallite dish above the chain gun trooper and use the sword to find concealed extra life!

If you're in difficulty (ie, very low energy) but with a full set of power ups, wait for the timer to run out. You should then be placed back with all your power ups, at the cost of only a measly one life.

Who's responsible for this here mound of Strider-beating information? Why it's none other than The Lord of Eurasia, currently residing in Sidcup, Kent. Thanks, Lord!

Following on from this comes a cheat from one Man With No Name (always remember to print your name on anything you send into MegaTech, even if it's a bit of birthday cake). At the very beginning of the game, whilst the Master is laughing, press DOWN, A, C, B, C, A. For your pains, you should be rewarded with as mighty three continues!

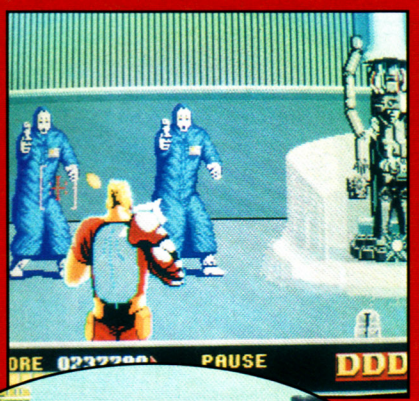


STREETS OF RAGE

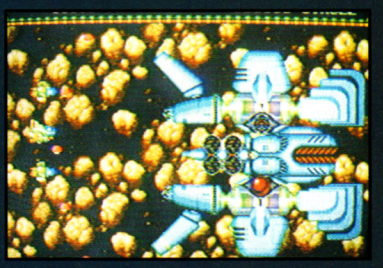
Blimey! If you're a bit bad at Streets of Rage and find yourself running out of continues, Robert also has the solution for you. Press LEFT, LEFT, B, B, B, C, C, C and START on the Game Over screen and you should be away!

DYNAMITE DUKE

"A tip for Dynamite Duke on the Sega Megadrive" begins Christopher Keenan from Glasgow. Luckily for Dynamite Duke owners, it doesn't stop there. Press button C ten times on the title screen and then START. Choose options. Repeat this process. It should now say Super Options and you will be able to elect to satart on the final missions, not to mention the many extra lives and continues you will now be able to bestow upon yourself.



ZERO WING

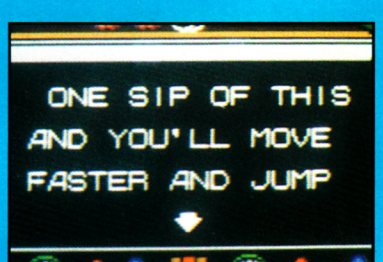


Oliver Birdajewicz of the fair Milton Keynes has something of a tipola for this spanking shoot 'em up. Firstly, complete the game (er...), then press START to play through it again. Collect all the green powerups and a square purple power up should wend it's merry way onto the screen. Grab this and the most mega firepower imaginable is yours to command! Cor!

ALTERED BEAST

When it comes to laconically worded cheats, Kevin Springall from Burton on Trent has a clear lead over anyone else. Here's his funky tip: "To start a new game at the same place you left off last go, press button A while pressing START." On the other hand, you could always just throw the cart away and buy something good.

DECAPATTACK



Oliver also has a groovy cheat for Decapattack. Fed up with that pesky end of level two frog? Simply jump over the platforms above the area where he appears, crack the statues open and leg it exitwards! Simple but brilliant as cheats go.

DEVIL CRASH

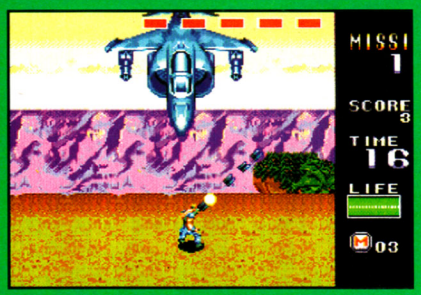
Cor lumme! No sooner has this absolutely stupendous pinball 'em up released than someone has a cheat for it! According to fabby Christopher Giles of Saltwood in Kent, entering TECNOSOFT in the password screen gives you a whopping ten balls (ooer, yawn) and a bonus of two million of your English points sterling. He also sent in some other tips, but they were crap so we didn't print them.

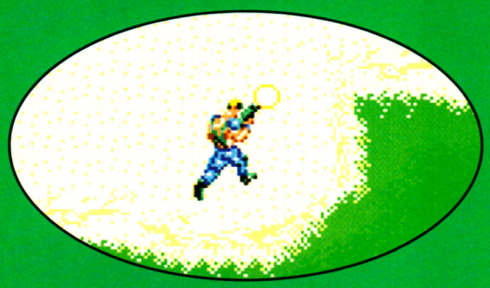
ELEMENTAL MASTER

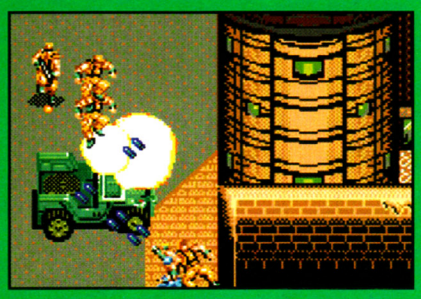
David Dewhurst from Carlisle has some help for options-seeking owners of this technically superb shoot 'em up. By pressing A and START simultaneously, that there sexy options screen is yours to command.

MERCS

Stephen Worthy has discovered something quite exciting for this top quality Megadrive Commando derivative. On level eight in original mode, shoot the doorway with the soldiers coming out of it. This might sound a bit useless to you, but hark and listen to the rest of the tip. If no soldiers are coming out of said doorway, that means it is a special shop, probably the military branch of Poundstretcher, which sells all their wares for a minuscule single medal each! This means you can stock up on energy and MegaCrashes to your hearts content at less than the price of a packet of biscuits. Probably.







TWIN HAWK

Action man Paul Miller, who hails from Girton in Cambridge may have sad handwriting, but his tip-related abilities know no bounds, well, when it comes to getting extra points on Twin Hawk. The procedure is quite simple. If you die whilst you've got your squadron out (for the lads), press B and the aforementioned squadron

JOHN MADDEN '92

Another hot-of-the-EPROM-blower cart gets the tips treatment today. This time, the man with the knowledge has actually written his name and address! Still, I suppose you're all salivating over the tasty morsel of tipdom awaiting you, so take it away Robert Smith (don't you sing with the Cure?) of London. "Here is the password for the final playoff in John Madden '92. The game is Buffalo versus Philadelphia and the code is: D5FHS6V1. Hope this is of help." Well, it's funny you should say that Robert, because it is.

That's about it for this feast of tips, cheats and losses of names and addresses. If you've got an interesting (or even a dull) tip or cheat, or even player's guide, send it in to us at TECHNIQUE ZONE, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Remember to write your name and address clearly somewhere on your reply or you won't get the credit for your doubtless fantastic efforts. Don't forget that you can preview some of next month's tips on the MegaTech Hyper Technique line, by dialling 0839 500 809*, so you can astound your friends by being at the forefront of tips technology whilst they remain sad and uneducated in the cheat department for a full month. Keep those tips coming in, and we'll see you next month. Now turn the page, you Immortal players for part one of the fantastic Hyper Technique Zone guide.

*Calls cost 48p per minute (peak time) or 36p per minute (all other times). If you are under 18 please make sure you have the permission of the person who pays the telephone bill before you dial.

HYPER TECHNIQUE ZONE

Judging by some of the 'phone calls we've had, this ace arcade adventure has been causing some consternation amongst you Megadrive players so MegaTech (in association with the nice Electronic Arts people) has put together this step-by-step Hyper Technique Zone guide to completing the game.

We're featuring levels two, three and four this month, and next issue we'll be showing you how to finish the game. If you're wondering why the guide begins at level two you probably didn't realise that the manual deals with level one in full and you'd have to be a complete dumb-ass not to have finished it. We also left out the certificate codes because... well, we're not going to make it too easy, are we?

THE IMMORTAL

LEVEL TWO

The second level is populated by belligerent Goblins and puddles of living slime which dissolves flesh on contact! You'll need to find three gems to activate the exit, but one of the three is disguised...

You will find...

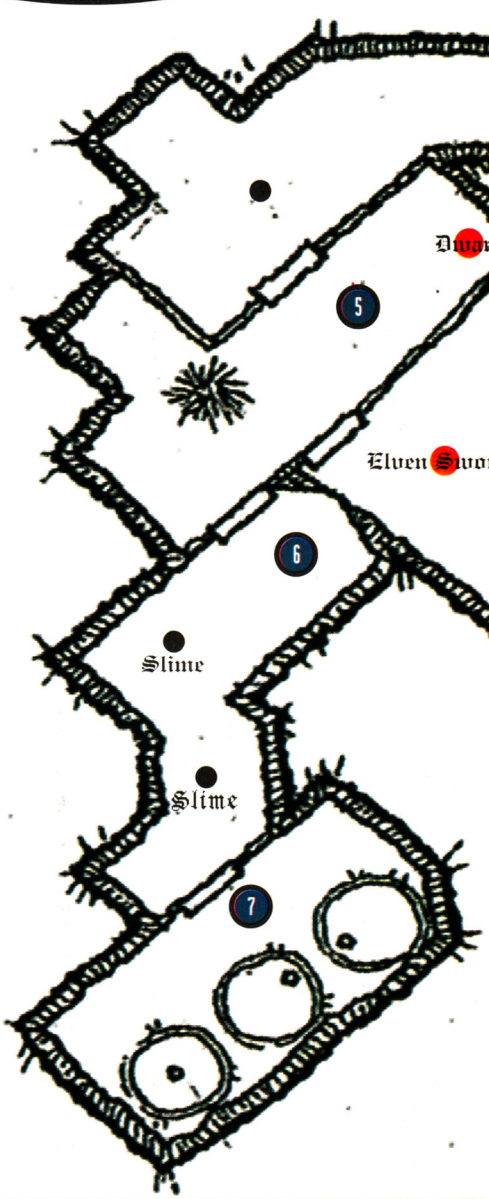
1 Two red gems
2 Elven Sword of Agility
3 Slime oil
4 Dust of Complaisance
5 Door Key
6 Stone

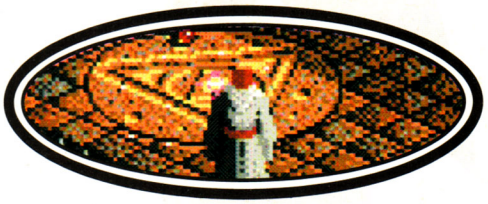
STEP 5

At first the dwarf won't give you his gem, but throw some Dust of Complaisance over him and he's nice as ninepence!

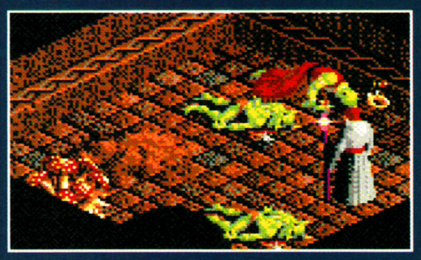
STEP 6

Enter and quickly use the Slime Oil. Walk down the passage carefully, and when some slime is in front of you, drop the rock. The slime dissolves the outer coating to reveal the third gem! Hurrah! Grab it quickly and escape through the door at the far end.





STEP 4

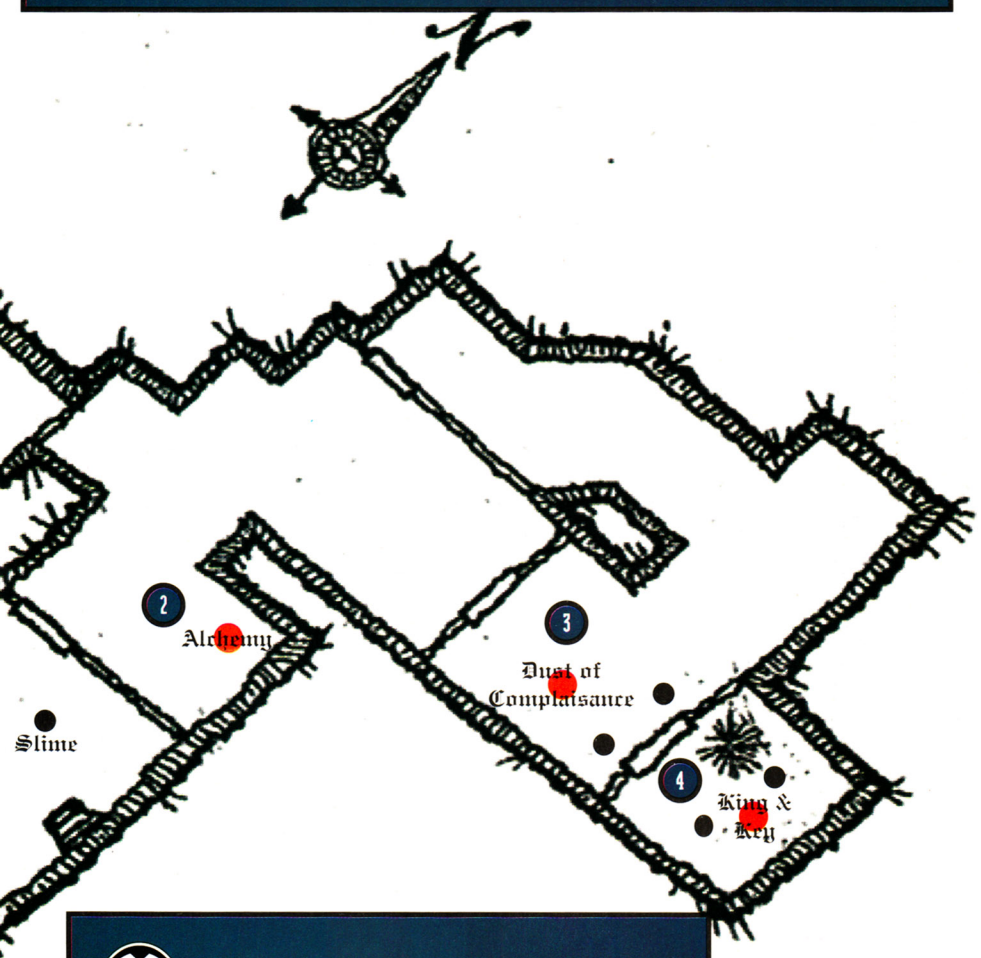


The Goblin guards in here are pretty tough, but you can avoid combat with them by sneaking over to the brown pile and planting the spores. Move a couple of steps away from the door, then head left along the back wall. Walk forward until you're just at the edge of the pile. Plant the spores and leave the room as fast as possible! Return after a few seconds and the spores will have grown into mushrooms and the Goblins have collapsed.

Go over to the Goblin King and speak to him. Give him the water and you're rewarded with a clue and a key.

STEP 3

As soon as you enter, make sure the Wills o' the Wisp have followed you, then read the Charm spell again to set them on the two Goblins guarding the door. When both are dead, search the bodies to find a bag of Dust of Complaisance. Go through the door.



STEP 2

Refuse the merchant's offer of slime oil for 80 gold pieces, then go back to him and buy it when he offers it to you for 60 gold pieces. As soon as you see the Wills o' the Wisp use your Charm spell and they won't attack. Get the rock and go through the door on the right.

STEP 7

This is the end of the level. To reveal the exit, heed the words of the Goblin King and place a gem on the right of the first circle, the left of the second circle and the centre of the one on the right. Hey presto! You've done it.

STEP 1

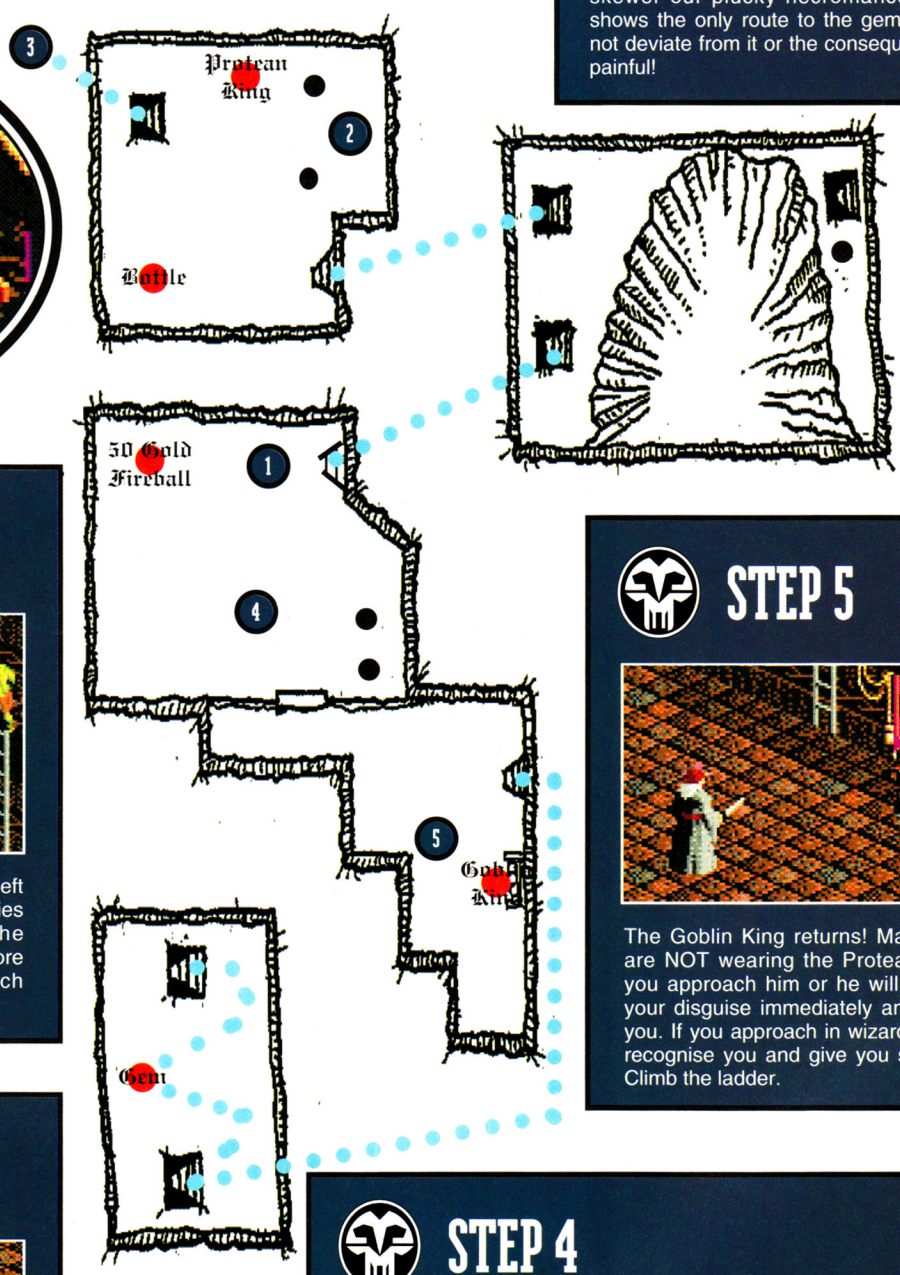
Dodge the two slime pools and grab the red gem. Search the bones and you will find an Elven sword of agility, but don't continue the search. The wet, green thing is more slime.

LEVEL 3

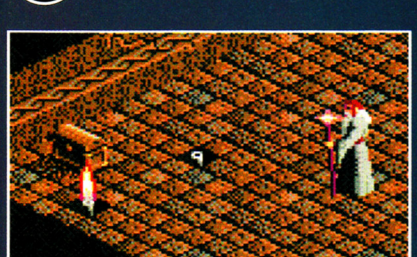
You find yourself in a room with a gaping pit in the middle and two ladders leading down. Your exit is on the other side of the pit, but how do you get across...?

You will find...

1 100 gold pieces
2 Fireball spell (two shots)
3 Protean Ring
4 Three anti-Troll gas bombs
5 Red gem
6 Troll ritual knife
7 Magic Muscle potion



STEP 1



Come here first. Avoid the flame jets, open the chest and go back up the ladder.

STEP 2

Line yourself up with the Goblin on the left then hit him with a fireball spell. As he dies he will turn into a Troll and drop the Protean Ring. Search him to get it. Ignore the other Goblin and the bottle (which contains slime). Go down the ladder.

STEP 4

After you've got the gas bombs and the Protean Ring, return here and incinerate the Troll (that's the one on the left) with a fireball and search the body to find a ritual knife. Killing the Troll allows the Goblin he was fighting to open the door and escape, so you can follow him into the next room.

STEP 5

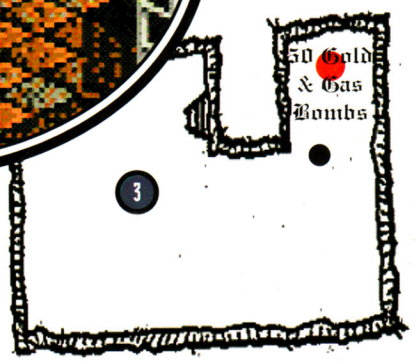
The Goblin King returns! Make sure you are NOT wearing the Protean ring when you approach him or he will see through your disguise immediately and won't help you. If you approach in wizard form he will recognise you and give you some advice. Climb the ladder.

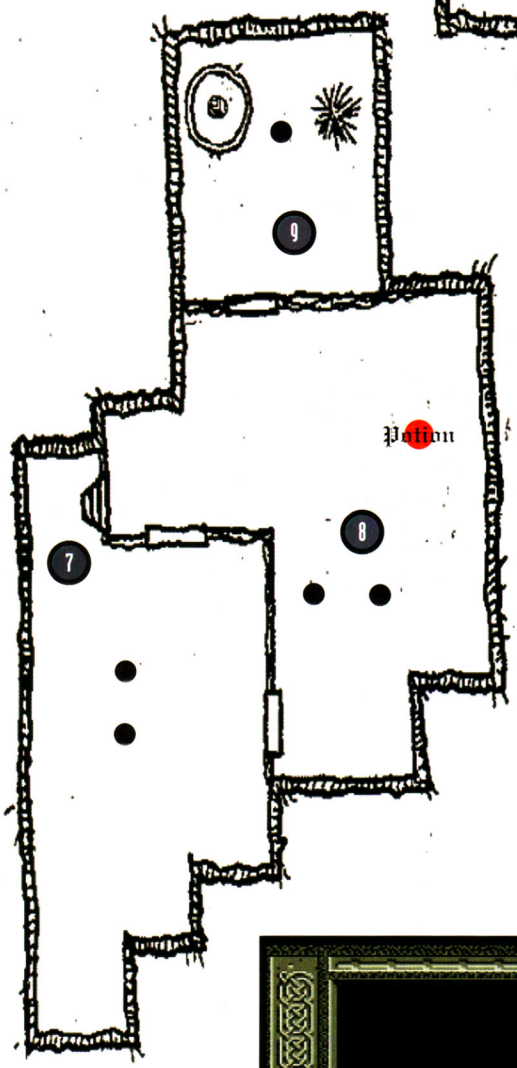
STEP 6

Spikes appear through the floor threatening to skewer our plucky necromancer! The map shows the only route to the gem and out. Do not deviate from it or the consequences will be painful!

STEP 9

Paralyse the Troll before he can fight you, then making sure you have the red gem, go towards the beam of light. When the beam is purple (not when it's a flame!) step into it and you will be transported to the far side of the pit room next to the exit. Oh, be sure to move as soon as you rematerialise or you'll spontaneously combust.





STEP 8

This room is inhabited by two hard Trolls, but you can quickly get rid of them by attracting their attention and throwing the ritual dagger. They will then start fighting each other and ignore you! Go through the door on the right.

STEP 3

Wear the Protean Ring to take on the appearance of a Goblin then walk around the corner towards the chest which contains 50 gold pieces and three gas bombs. Don't get too close to the Goblin guard or he'll see through your disguise. Go back to the pit room, remembering to take off the ring before you leave (you can't climb ladders when you're wearing it).

STEP 7

This room is inhabited by two hard Trolls, but you can quickly get rid of them by attracting their attention and throwing the ritual dagger. They will then start fighting each other and ignore you! Go through the door on the right.

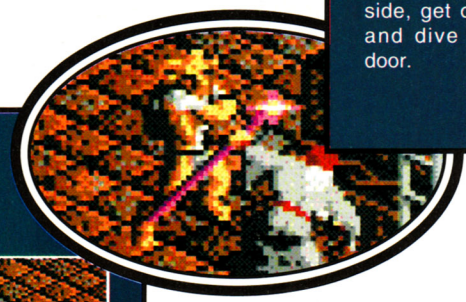
Don't get into unnecessary fights. You need as much energy as possible for some of the unavoidable encounters. Sleep if your strength is running low.

LEVEL 4

Fire and giant worms are the perils that dog the unwary wizard throughout this level. Luckily it's quite short, and doesn't pose too many problems once you've got the hang of controlling the magic carpet.

You will find...

1 Magic Carpet
2 Ana's ring
3 A gift ring



STEP 1

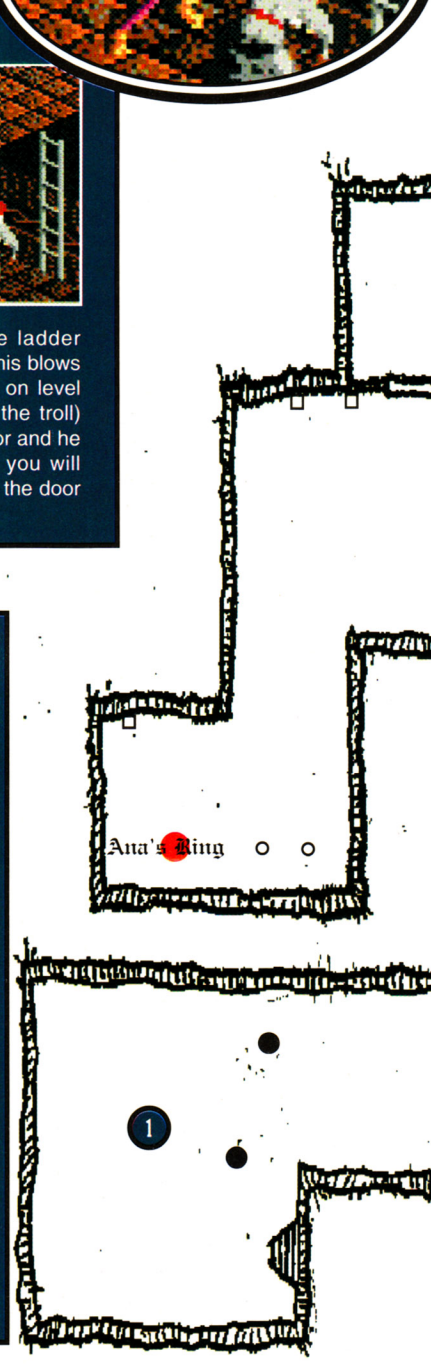
As soon as you climb down the ladder you're attacked by a Troll! Dodge his blows and Ulindor (who you helped out on level one and who is standing behind the troll) will kill him for you. Go up to Ulindor and he gives you a magic carpet which you will need as soon as you step through the door to the right.

STEP 2

Fireballs galore, but your main worries are all the hungry worms hiding under the floor and the flame jets which fry any who cross over them. Activate the magic carpet and guide it up and around the corner. Follow the corridor until you find the woman's robe and Ana's ring, then return to the door, deactivate the carpet and go through.

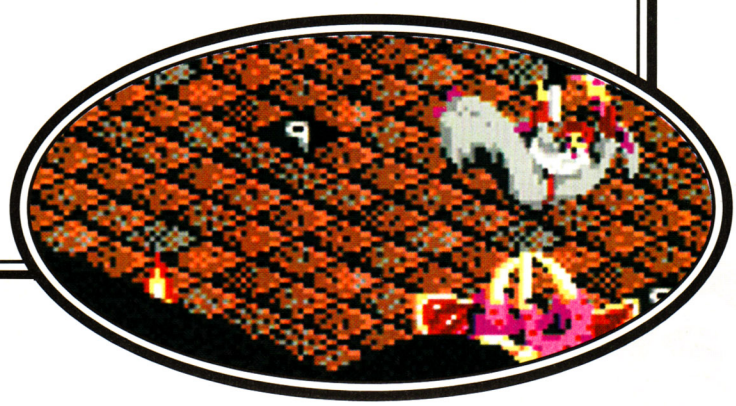
STEP 3

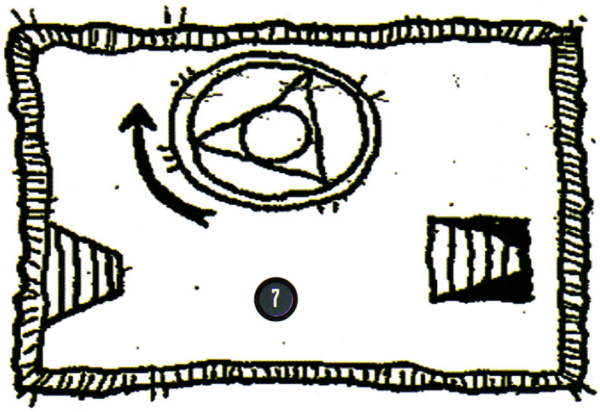
More flame jets and fireballs, but activate the carpet again and sail straight across the room between them. As soon as you reach the other side, get off the carpet and dive through the door.



STEP 4

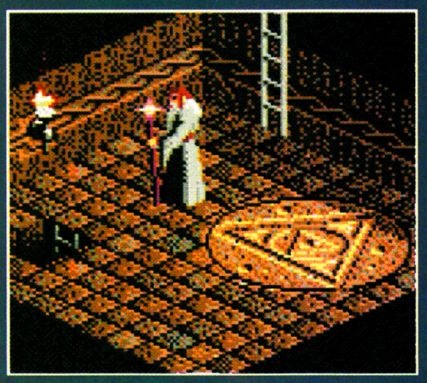
You may be feeling a bit knackered after all this, so have a kip on the straw before going down the ladder.

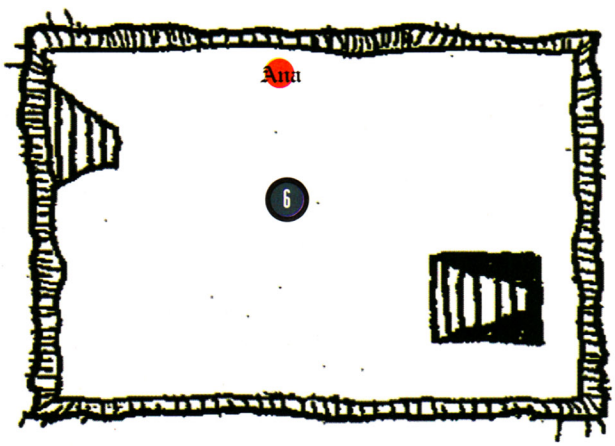




STEP 7

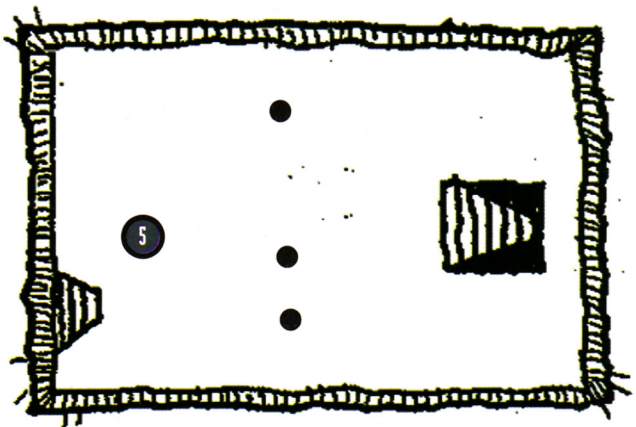
Just follow Ana's instructions and the exit will open. Easy.





STEP 6

Meet Ana, who looks like she's got stuck in the wall. Give her her ring back and she'll give you another, a clue as to how to finish the level and a big snog. Down the ladder! The end is in sight!



STEP 5

There are two Trolls and a Goblin in this room, but fortunately the Goblin is fighting one of the Trolls, so if you're quick you'll only have to fight one (and he's proper soft anyway). Once he's dead, go down the ladder before the other Troll tries it on.

HELP

There's no stopping those people in dire need of help! This month we've had more Helpline replies letters than we could possibly print, so if for some reason you're stuck in a game (unless it's because you broke all your fingers when you trapped your hand in the door) then write down your problem as best you can and send it to HYPER HYPER HELPLINE, MEGATECH, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU and we'll do our best to help.

QUACKSHOT

Dear Helpline

My Megadrive gaming problem is with Quackshot. I can get through Duckburg, Mexico and Transylvania, beating the count. But then I get stuck. I've been to the Viking ship, an old man just says you need the key to open the hatch. This key is in the ice at the South Pole but I've tried all my weapons to break the ice but it doesn't work. I walked past the key and came to a big pit. A bird was flying over Donald but I needed the green plunger to attach Donald to the bird in order to get across, but where's the green plunger? So I then went to Egypt and came to a door, I tried everything to open it but nothing worked. So I went to the Maharaja who said beat the tiger in the garden. What tiger?? I walked past the Maharaja and started going through some numbered doors ending up going through the same doors and getting nowhere. So what do I do? How do I get the key and the green plunger? Could you please tell me this?

Absent-minded person who forgot to put his name and address on his letter.

The riddle of the doors is the key to your whole dilemma. The actual route through the doors is simple trial and error, but the important doors are those marked with the number six. From the first "six" door, waddle right, until you reach a chamber which is secreted in a low tunnel, as seen in this pic. Go through this and you'll be in the garden with the ferocious tiger out of the Jungle Book. Defeating the tiger is quite tricky. He has a habit of charging around the screen at you and the only way to harm him is to hit him from below whilst he is jumping, with your bubble gum shooter. Fire your weapon the moment you have dodged under his leap, otherwise your slow-moving shots will miss him. Beat the tiger and Maharaja will give you a huge nuclear device to destroy the South Pole with. Well, not really, but he will give you a sphinx tear with which to open that locked door in Egypt. Complete the res of the Egyptian level and you will ecieve he sceptre of Ra. Use this to melt the ice in the South Pole. Use the key to complete the rest of the Viking level and you will receive the green plunger. Use the green plunger to get across the ice gap and behold, a cavern awaits you. Beat this level, get the Viking diary, return to the surface and watch what happens next! The next two levels, the Ducky Gang Hideout and the Great Duck Treasure Island, shouldn't pose too mich of a problem to you after all that!

DJ BOY

Dear Helpline,

Please could you help me with DJ Boy? I can finish the level where you have to fight all the end of level baddies but then there is a fat lady that disappears, so please will you help me with her?

Tom Wright, Guiseley, Leeds

First of all, make life a bit easier for yourself by hitting the third barrel in the falling barrels section of level three. Loads of coins and other goodies shouldfall out to make the going a little less rough. The best way to kill Kung Fu Kate is to get close up and perform loads of flying kicks, but watch out for her reverse moves.

RAINBOW ISLANDS

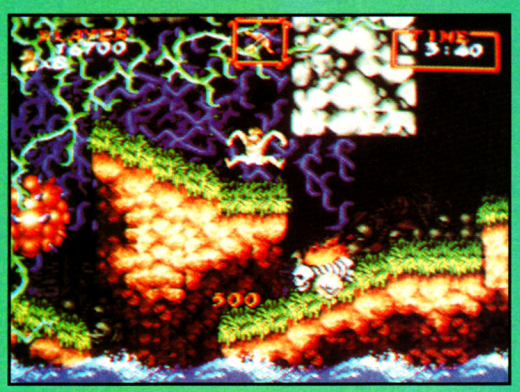
Dear Helpline,

I'm a big fan of that Taito cart Rainbow Islands, but as Frank Spencer would say, I'm having a bit of trouble. Are there any cheats at all for this fab game?

Adrian Proudlove, Birmingham

Well, as you don't specify your problem, the only help we can give you is to tell you that by pressing UP, B, DOWN, LEFT, C, A, A, B, C on the title screen you will start the game with red and yellow bottles and speed up shoes.

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS



Dear Helpline,

I know this is a bit of an oldie but I really do need help. I've had Ghouls 'n' Ghosts for ages but I still haven't completed it! I can get up to the bit where you get sent back to the beginning, but I can't get to Loki the second time around. Please can you help me as it's all starting to drive me mad.

Robert Crabb, Stapeley, Cheshire

Luckily for you there is the very cheat which you require, BUT (and this is a big "but") it only works if you have a good, honest British copy of the game. Press UP, A, DOWN, A LEFT, A, RIGHT, A, B, C on the title screen for invincibility. If it doesn't seem to work that's because you have to press pause to activate it, so you can get past the bit you're stuck on without boring yourself stupid playing the whole thing as Mr Invulnerability.

THUNDERFORCE III

Dear Helpline,

You are my last hope. Early last year I purchased a Megadrive, and one of the first games I got was Thunderforce 3. Trouble is, it's so hard that I still can't get past Cerebus!! Understandably this reflects poorly upon my gaming skills and is most annoying. Can you please put me out of my misery and tell me how to beat the motorfinger?

Richard Colhard, St Neots, Cambs

If there's one thing you're in, Richard, it's luck. If you want to change the difficulty setting, a hidden options screen is yours by pressing A, B, C and START simultaneously on the title screen. If you think more weapons would aid you in your quest, pause the game, push UP ten times, B twice, DOWN twice, B six times and A once. Upon unpausing the game, a full complement of armaments are yours. The tactics you should use again Cerebus himself are as follows. Use SEVER to destroy the retro rockets and FIRE to blast the nasties on top of the ship. Keep on FIRE when you are at the side of the ship and keep that on until you reach the hatch from which the fighters launch, and destroy this. Destroy everything else you see and switch to sever and claw. Remember to dodge into the small niche when the lasers are fired at you. Keep on a-shooting and Cerebus should fall.

GRANADA X

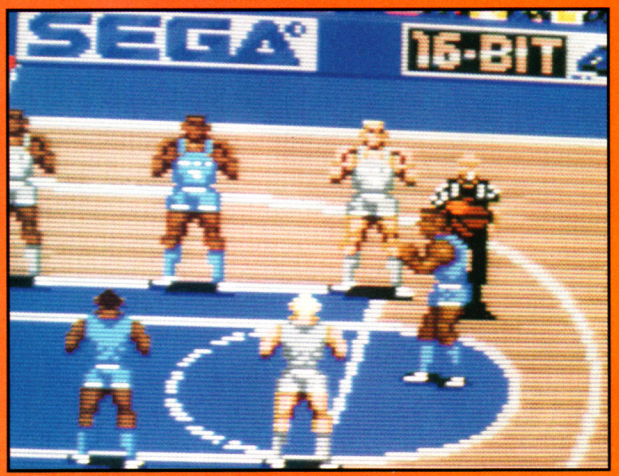
Dear Helpline,

Your review of Granada X inspired me to buy it, especially as it was on special offer in my local computer shop, and I think it's great. Only problem is, the later levels are a mite difficult for me and I'd like to know if there's any way to make the going a bit easier.

Simon Harrison, Chigwell, Essex

By simply entering the options screen and pressing C ten times on the "rank" option to select the secret EASY option.

SUPER REAL BASKETBALL



Dear Helpline,

Me and my friends are big basketball fans and regularly indulge in tournaments of Super Real Basketball on my Megadrive. I'd quite like to improve on my league standing, so are there any ways I can cheat to win every time?

Jeremy Buck, Wrexham, Clwyd

Ooh, if your mates knew... Still, you can cheat your pals to your hearts content with these handy tipettes. When you're going for a three pointer, wait until the big animated screen appears press A, B and C in sequence seven times for a one hundred percent success rate. If your three point attempt is from one side, use the sequence A, B and C four times, then press just A and B. If this isn't enough, stand without moving just inside your opponent's three point line, you will receive a pushing foul just about every time.

SPACE HARRIER 2

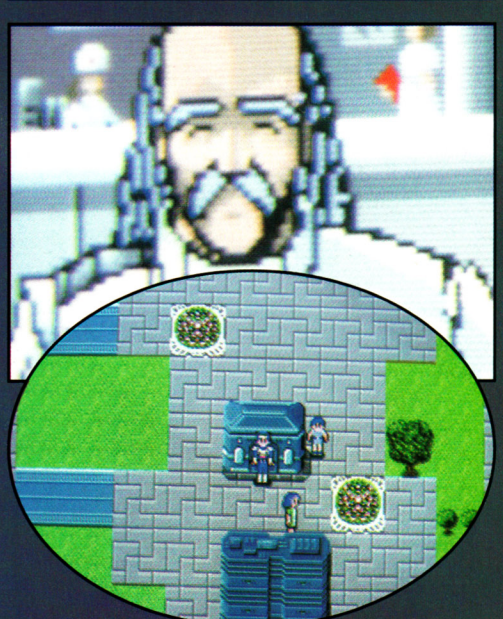
Dear Helpline,

I bought the first issue of your magazine last week and I'd just like to say how good I think it is. Keep up the good work! Now I've finished grovelling, is there any chance that you could help me with my gaming problem? For my birthday, my brother bought me Space Harrier 2. It's quite good fun and the graphics are dead good, but it's bit of a chore having to play all the early levels over and over again to get to the harder bits. And once I get to the harder bits, I just die! Is there an invincibility cheat or something so I can see all of the game without getting bored or frustrated?

Steve Banes, Manchester

Sorry, Steve, there's no invincibility cheat for Space Harrier 2, but there is another cheat which looks like your sort of thing. During the intro in the space ship, just push LEFT or RIGHT to select your level, allowing you to see however much of the game you like without ruining the challenge of the gameplay!

PHANTASY STAR II



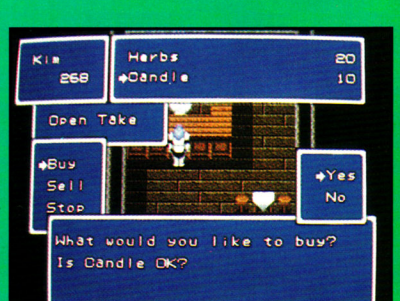
Dear HELPLINE,

I really love role-playing games, and one of my favourites on my Megadrive is Phantasy Star II. Trouble is, I always end up getting attacked by loads of wandering monsters and spend hours in combat that I would rather spend exploring and solving puzzles. Is there a cheat to kill monsters easily, as this is the only thing which lets the cart down?

James Talbot, London

W-e-e-e-ll there is a way to stop most wandering monsters attacking you, but it's quite slow. Simply take one step forward, call up the sub-menu (button C) and close it again (button B), repeat the process over and over again and your life should be monster free.

SWORD OF VERMILION



Dear Helpline,

I recently completed that fab game, The Sword of Vermilion. What I can't work out is, what's the significance of the Joke Book, vase and small bomb? And where do you find the Kalm Vase? And is the Mysterious Tree important?

Alex Perry, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs

The Joke Book, vase and small bomb are all purchased from the merchant. What you buy from him isn't important, as long as you do buy something (although the vase can later be re-sold for lots of cash) This very same merchant will give you the eponymous Sword of Vermilion later in the game. Don't bother looking for the Kalm Vase or the Mysterious Tree as they don't do anything.

RECKON YOU'RE HARD? RECKON YOU'RE TOUGH?

RECKON YOU KNOW ABOUT GAMES?

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AND IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH... BRITAIN'S ONLY HAND-HELD MAG IS FREE INSIDE!

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WE ARE.

WE WANT YOUR SCORES!

A magazine devoted to the Megadrive would not be complete without a run-down of the achievements of the greatest Megadrive players, and so we proudly present the MegaTech HyperPlayers Hall of Fame where you can find the scores you have to beat on your favourite games.

We've got a few new games featured in HyperPlayers this month, but we're still looking for loads more so get playing and list as many of your top scores as possible on the coupon below, then send it in to HYPERPLAYERS, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. And no cheating...

AFTERBURNER
27,861,520
Daniel Sullivan, Coventry

ALIEN STORM
Duel mode: 100 ("Supreme Ruler")
Dan Towes, Gillingham

ALTERED BEAST
3,303,900
Wayne Lockwood, Boroughbridge

BATMAN
481,700
David Park, Gateshead

BATTLE SQUADRON
8,900,000
Julian Rignall, MegaTech

COLUMNS
44,000,000
Julian Rignall, MegaTech

DEVIL CRASH
480,000,000
Shelley Viner, Wood Green

DJ BOY
9,835,700
Jonathon Tilbrook, Sheffield

FANTASIA
10,576,500 (Hard level)
Dan Towes, Gillingham

FLICKY
755,800
Julian Rignall, MegaTech

FORGOTTEN WORLDS
1,845,200
Robert Golden, Lymington

GHOSTBUSTERS
15,639,000
Wayne Lockwood, Boroughbridge

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS
912,300
Daniel Sullivan, Coventry

GOLDEN AXE
371.5
Glen Williams, London

JAMES "BUSTER" DOUGLAS KNOCKOUT BOXING
3,189,520
Shejal Mistry, Aylesbury

HARD DRIVIN'
127,704
Paul Glancey, MegaTech

HELLFIRE
3,025,005
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

KLAX
1,000,050
Richard Leadbetter, MEAN MACHINES

MARBLE MADNESS
67,610
Paul Glancey, MegaTech

MICKEY MOUSE
385,900 (Completed with one life)
Dan Towes, Gillingham

MOONWALKER
23,570
Peter Allport, Surrey

NEW ZEALAND STORY
522,360
Nigel Weston, Wilmslow

PGA TOUR GOLF
55 strokes (Best 18 holes, Sawgrass course)
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

RAIDEN TRAD
1,611,309
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

RAMBO III
9,730,000
Christopher Oakes, Stoke on Trent

REVENGE OF SHINOBI
9,999,900
Daniel Sullivan, Coventry

ROLLING THUNDER 2
102,400
Derek Brockhouse, Bolton

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
4,280,140
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

SPACE HARRIER II
27,283,600
Lee Royle, Reading

SPIDER MAN
Completed with 23 hourse, 6 minutes, 8 seconds to spare
Mark Andrews, Broadstairs

STREETS OF RAGE
999,900
Radion Automatic, MEAN MACHINES

STRIDER
140,200
Wayne Lockwood, Boroughbridge

SUPER HANG-ON
Beginner: 38,200,240
Wayne Lockwood, Boroughbridge
Junior: 59,986,600
Matthew Adamson, Amersham
Senior: 76,188,460
76,188,460,
Matthew Adamson, Amersham
Expert: 83,772,640
Simon Cumptsey, Kirkham

SUPER MONACO GP
4,810 Driver's points
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

THUNDERFORCE II
2,560,090
Paul Bristow, Erith

THUNDERFORCE III
6,611,550 (Mania)
Martin Trewren, Taunton

ULTIMATE TIGER
4,100,000
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

ZERO WING
7,120,100
Robert Ingram, Hounslow

ZOOM
209,530
Andrew Croft, Dewsbury

NAME .....
ADDRESS:.....
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GAME:.....
SCORE:.....
CREDITS USED:.....
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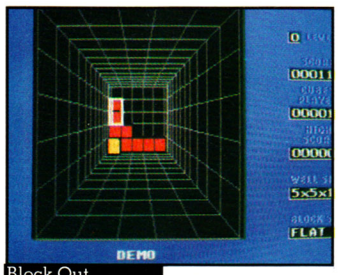
GAME INDEX

688 Attack Sub

Atomic Robokid



Block Out

Bonanza Brothers

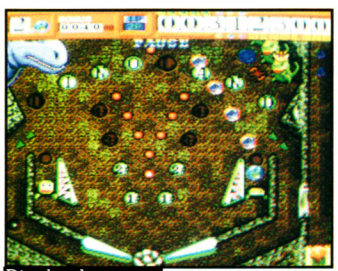
Centurion

GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
688 ATTACK SUB	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	80	80	89	88	86	88	An excellent submarine simulation which gives you ten missions to complete as a US sub commander, or six as a Russian. Although it sounds dull, it's a very compelling game and is thoroughly recommended to someone who's after something different (with plenty of "depth"–ho! ho!).
AEROBLASTERS	KENIO	IMPORT	78	84	81	85	71	78	A fairly easy-to-complete one or simultaneous two-player horizontally scrolling blast. The graphics, sound and playability are all excellent, but that low challenge factor means it can only be recommended to shoot 'em up novices.
AFTERBURNER II	SEGA	£34.99	86	91	92	92	82	90	All the thrills and spills of the original machine have been included as you fly your fighter through 23 missions of amazingly smooth and fast 3D action. The sound is also terrific, with a variety of thumping good rock soundtracks and great sampled speech. If you're an Afterburner fan,
ALEX KIDD IN THE ENCHANTED CASTLE	SEGA	£39.99	70	67	64	72	62	68	The graphics and sound are almost Master System standard, and while it's fun to play, with plenty of secret rooms and things to work out, it lacks that really addictive spark that makes the 8-bit Sega Alex Kidd games so much fun to play. For ardent Alex Kidd fans only.
ALIEN STORM	SEGA	£34.99	84	90	80	89	71	78	An absolutely outstanding conversion of the coin-op, with great graphics and highly enjoyable one or two-player action. The big problem is that it's just too easy. For some unknown reason, the import version is harder, but even then it's not that difficult to finish.
ALTERED BEAST	SEGA	£39.99	65	78	73	72	57	67	"Free" with many official UK Megadrives, Altered Beast is a spot-on conversion of the coin-op. The trouble is, the arcade game wasn't exactly a smash-hit - it's a very simple beat 'em up with only five levels. The gameplay is very samey, and it doesn't take long to get all the way through the game. It's okay as a freebie, though.
ARCUS ODYSSEY	RENOVATION/ UBI-SOFT	£44.99	86	88	87	90	75	86	Arcus Odyssey is peculiar game which can be likened to a 3D Gauntlet clone. The object is to guide your hero(s) (it's two-player simultaneous) around a number of forced perspective levers in search of the witch-queen Castorima. Excellent, and addictive.
ARNOLD PALMER'S GOLF	SEGA	£39.99	85	79	69	86	80	85	This is a pretty decent golf sim. Featuring a variety of options, excellent graphics (the 3D viewpoint and the animation on the large golfer sprite are both superb) and a very tough course indeed, Arnold Palmer's Golf will appeal to golf and sports simulation fans alike.
ASSUALT SUIT LEYNOS	NCS	IMPORT	82	80	81	73	71	73	This strange sort of platform-cum-shoot 'em up puts you in control of a multi be-weaponed space commando. While the graphics and sound are very good, the gameplay borders on frustrating - there are loads of things to shoot down and the control method is very fiddly, so unless you're prepared to stick with it, you won't get full enjoyment from the game.
ATOMIC ROBO KID	UPL	IMPORT	70	79	78	84	76	82	There are four different power-ups to collect in this accurate multidirectionally scrolling coin-op conversion. The gameplay is tough enough to keep you coming back for more. Check it out if you're after a no-frills blast with the emphasis on pure destruction.
AXIS FZ	WOLF TEAM	IMPORT	84	85	65	86	80	84	A very unusual and original forced perspective 3D blaster in which you control a armoured robot who patrols the multidirectionally scrolling landscape in search of things to blow up. It's great fun and is highly recommended if you can find it.
BATMAN	SEGA	£34.99	87	90	91	86	72	83	The graphics and sound are truly tremendous: the beautifully-drawn backdrops are as sombre-looking as the sets in the film. The only problem is that the game is fairly easy to beat, so expert gamers might not get full value for money out of this.
BATTLE SQUADRON	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	78	83	79	82	81	80	A tough, frantic and noisy one or simultaneous two-player up-the-screen blaster. Although it's pretty much devoid of original features, it's a fun game and lays down a challenge to test even the most experienced of shooting fanatics.
BIMINI RUN	NAMCOT	IMPORT	64	45	70	61	42	45	A rather naff 3D shoot 'em up in which you pilot a speedboat though enemy-infested waters. The graphics aren't much cop and the gameplay isn't any better, and after a couple of sessions it all becomes rather tedious.
BLOK OUT	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£34.99	78	70	30	93	91	91	This sort of 3D Tetris is surely the finest Megadrive puzzle game available. Packed with tons of options (including a simultaneous two-player mode) and featuring highly addictive gameplay, this is a must for your collection.
BONAZA BROS	SEGA	£34.99	82	88	84	86	55	73	Like Alien Storm, this is another superb conversion which is let down by the fact that it's just too easy. The two-player action is fun, but at the end of the day what you need is a challenge, and unless you're a games novice, this simply fails to deliver.
BUDOKAN	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	87	83	79	90	86	89	Billed correctly as a "thinking man's beat 'em up", this graphically and sonically superb oriental fighting game lets you take out your aggression with four different martial arts skills - nunchuku, bo, karate and kendo. With over 25 moves per art and 12 very tough opponents, Budokan isn't a game you'll master overnight.
BURNING FORCE	NAMCOT	IMPORT	78	83	82	79	71	76	Very much in the Space Harrier mould, this 3D shoot 'em up puts you in the seat of a high-powered jet bike with the object of blowing up everything that gets in your way. There are extra weapons to pick up, of course, and there are plenty of mean 'n' meaty aliens to blow into oblivion. The graphics are very attractive, and the sound isn't too bad, but unfortunately the gameplay gets rather repetitive after a while.
CENTURION	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	69	60	62	54	50	52	An interesting-sounding but ultimately tedious and frustrating strategy-style game which unless you're completely into Roman History fails to provide entertainment worthy of its price tag.
COLUMNS	SEGA	£39.99	76	69	93	88	87	88	Sega's answer to Tetris, the aim of this rather cerebral game is to match groups of three differently-coloured jewels as they fall down the screen. The sound is excellent, and there's a huge variety of options, including arcade-style time trials, three different difficulty settings, nine different starting levels and a two-player head-to-head mode which adds to the game's lasting appeal.

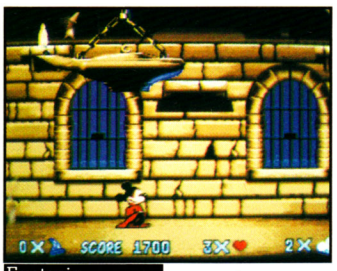
GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
CRACKDOWN	SEGA	£39.99	81	70	75	78	61	65	Another one of those very good, but all-too-easy arcade conversions. The two-player aspect is fun, and the game is enjoyable to play but the lack of challenge means that only a videogame novice will get his money's worth.
CURSE	MICRONET	IMPORT	66	71	69	71	67	70	While Curse is fun to play, it suffers from a lack of originality and one very annoying feature - when you die you lose all your extra weapons, and it's very difficult to continue. Try out other shoot 'em ups like Hellfire or Atomic Robokid before shelling out for this.
CYBERBALL	SEGA	£34.99	79	79	82	81	77	80	A decent conversion of the multi-player coin-op American football game which features robots instead of humans, Cyberball features pretty neat graphics but has been overshadowed by the likes of John Madden '92, which are offer superior gridiron gameplay. If you're an American Football fan, try this out - but not until you've seen these others.
DARIUS II	TAITO	IMPORT	83	85	82	87	80	83	A very stylish horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up which sports tremendous graphics and seven completely different endings, depending on which route you take through the game! Recommended to ardent blasting fans.
DARK CASTLE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£34.99	43	47	52	48	35	34	This conversion of an age-old Amiga duffer is an appaling tragedy. The graphics are tiny and badly animated and the game is a real pigs ear to play. Avoid this at all costs.
DARWIN 4081	DATA EAST	IMPORT	78	81	74	77	67	74	A conversion of the rather obscure vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, Darwin 4081 is yet another scroll-up-the-screen alien blasting game with extra weapons and big end-of-level guardians to destroy. It's fun for a while, but there's nothing new.
DECAPATTACK	SEGA	£34.99	74	80	70	83	81	82	A fun-filled platform game which is basically identical to the old import game, Magical Flying Hat Turbo Adventure, except it has different sprites. Platform fans will love it - if you're one, check it out.
DEVIL CRASH	TECHNOSOFT	IMPORT	86	91	84	93	88	90	A stunning-looking pinball simulation which is packed full of features. The ball movement is completely realistic, and the general game "feel" makes it the best pinball game yet seen - a must-buy for silverball fans.
DICK TRACEY	SEGA	£34.99	83	85	80	90	88	89	A sort of Shinobi-style game with machine guns, Dick Tracy is a challenging and addictive action game which should appeal to fans of the movie and gamesplayers alike.
DINLOAND	WOLF TEAM	IMPORT	60	57	73	55	53	53	A jolly, but fairly unchallenging pinball simulation which is let down by jerky and unrealistic ball movement. If you're a pinball fan, look out for Devil Crash, which is miles better than this.
DJ BOY	SAMMY	IMPORT	78	80	76	84	73	78	DJ Boy is a beat 'em up on wheels, and while it's great fun to play, but suffers from one flaw - it's too darn easy. However, if you're the type that wants to beat the game on all levels, try it out. It's a simple as that!
DYNAMITE DUKE	SEGA	£34.99	83	82	74	84	61	73	One of the few Operation Wolf-style games available for the Megadrive, this provides plenty of blasting fun and frolics, but is ultimately let down by the lack of challenge. Once again, only novices really need apply...
EA HOCKEY	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	90	88	90	94	93	94	A truly superb sports simulation which perfectly captures the atmosphere of the noble (and violent) sport of ice hockey. The gameplay is simply superb and the tough computer opponents and an excellent two-player option provide plenty of lasting appeal. One of the best sports simulations available - miss it at your peril.
ELEMENTAL MASTER	TECHNOSOFT	IMPORT	72	87	86	85	73	78	A technically superb shoot 'em up which combines excellent graphics and superb sound to make it an audio/visual treat. The gameplay is very enjoyable, but the problem is that there are only five levels, and they're not that difficult to beat.
EL VIENTO	RENOVATION	IMPORT	68	60	72	87	84	80	A tough 'n' challenging platform game which doesn't look particularly hot, but is surprisingly addictive and keeps you playing for ages. There's an official version coming soon from Ubi-Soft.
ESWAT	SEGA	£34.99	86	87	82	93	88	92	ESWAT is a super-slick platform shoot 'em up that simply oozes quality. The parallax scrolling backdrops and sprites are excellent, and the sound is great. Combine those with challenging and highly addictive gameplay and you've got a game that's a must for your collection.
FAERY TALE ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	56	43	69	50	47	49	A dull role-playing game which lacks action and atmosphere. There are plenty of better games of this type, so look elsewhere.
FANTASIA	SEGA	£39.99	72	93	44	52	47	49	This sequel to Mickey Mouse was keenly anticipated, but turned out to be a massive disappointment. The graphics are excellent, but sadly naff sound and poorly designed, bland and frustrating gameplay result in a game that has very little appeal - even to the biggest Mickey fans.
FASTEST ONE	HUMAN	IMPORT	41	35	25	31	28	29	This split screen one or two-player racing game completely fails to deliver. Crap graphics, sound and playability and utterly tedious action result in the worst Megadrive racing game by far. Steer well clear.
F22 INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	94	80	76	89	94	90	This, the only console flight simulation, is absolutely fantastic. The graphics, presentation and playability are all spot on. If you fancy a change from mindless horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups, check this out.

Curse

Dark Castle


Dinoland

Elemental Master


Fantasia

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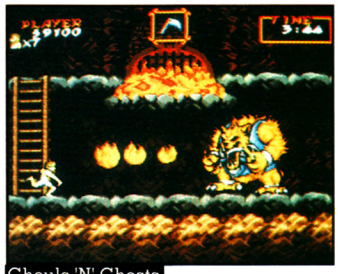
Fatal Rewind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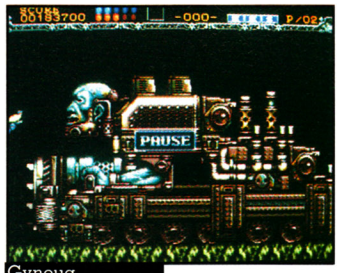
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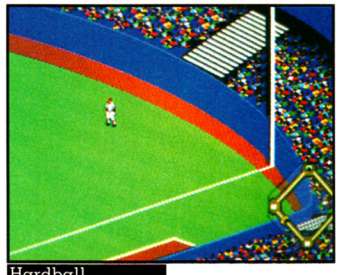
Hardball

James Pond

GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
FATAL REWIND	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£34.99	72	90	81	84	82	83	Better known as Killing Game Show, this is a very fast and furious platform game where memorising the screen layout is the key to success. Some may find its high difficulty level just too frustrating, but if you're after a challenge, this is where to be.
FIRE MUSTANG	TAITO	IMPORT	62	70	63	78	53	59	This P-47 clone is quite good fun to play at first, but the trouble is that there simply isn't anything new on offer and after a few sessions it all becomes dull and predictable.
FORGOTTEN WORLDS	SEGA	£39.99	82	79	86	79	80	82	Forgotten Worlds is a good looking one- or two-player blast, with plenty of action on offer. Like other Megadrive games, it's easy to finish on the easy level, but offers plenty of challenge on difficult. Check it out if you're into destruction.
GAIARES	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	81	88	75	80	85	84	An excellent-looking game, Gaiares is by far the toughest horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up available on the Megadrive and is highly recommended to blasting fans who are hankering after a challenge.
GAIN GROUND	SEGA	£34.99	65	49	52	50	40	43	A very accurate conversion of an obscure and hopelessly crap arcade game which features the average graphics, rubbish sound and boring gameplay of the original machine.
GHOSTBUSTERS	SEGA	£39.99	84	85	83	84	81	82	Featuring humorous cartoon-style graphics - some of the end-of-level ghosts are truly superb - and some excellent tunes, Ghostbusters is a platform game which will keep you amused for some time. If you ain't afraid of no ghosts, try this one out.
GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS	SEGA	£39.99	88	92	93	93	92	93	Ghouls 'n' Ghosts is a stunning conversion on the classic coin-op, combining stunning graphics and sound with very challenging gameplay. It's a truly superb game, and is a must for your Megadrive software library.
GOLDEN AXE	SEGA	£34.99	90	91	90	95	91	94	Golden Axe is a pixel-perfect replica of the arcade machine, containing identical graphics, sound and gameplay. This is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen, and a game which no Megadrive owner should be without.
GRANADA X	UBI-SOFT	£39.99	91	74	79	88	87	86	This little known blaster suffers from small graphics and poor sound. That aside it's extremely playable, with varied levels and plenty of action. If it's some mindless shoot 'em up action you're after you won't go wrong here.
GYNOUG	MASIYA	IMPORT	83	95	89	93	89	92	Known in the US as Wings of Wor, this is one of the finest horizontally scrolling blaster available on the Megadrive. The gory, ghoulish graphics are outstanding, the sound is excellent and the tough and challenging gameplay is extremely addictive. A must for blasting fans.
HARDBALL	ACCOLADE	£34.99	845	88	89	76	70	75	A decent baseball game which doesn't have enough novel or interesting features to make it appeal to anyone other than real fans of the sport.
HEAVY UNIT	TOHO	IMPORT	79	88	79	87	85	85	Another horizontally scrolling blast, but this one is made more remarkable than most thanks to great graphics and tough, but addictive gameplay. If you're a blastaholic, check it out.
HELLFIRE	TOAPLAN	IMPORT	85	84	81	93	89	90	Featuring novel four-way selectable firepower and power-up weapons, this is a slick and very good looking blaster which oozes playability. There are plenty of surprises , especially on the final level. If you're a shoot 'em up fan looking for a challenge, check out
HERZOG ZWEI	SEGA	£29.99	76	71	75	76	74	76	A weird title for a weird game. Herzog Zwei is a sort of strategy shoot 'em up in which one or two players attempt to defeat opposing enemy forces by strategically positioning their own armoured divisions. Rather short on action, but an interesting title which would be more suitable for thetacticians, rather than arcade players.
INSECTOR X	HOT B	IMPORT	76	80	78	81	67	74	The game is fun at first - and the slick graphics and decent sound certainly add a little to the excitement - but none of the power-up weapons are particularly exciting, and the action has very little in the way of original features.
JAMES POND	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	44	91	66	83	85	83	A cute and entertaining twelve-level aquatic platform game which provides plenty of fun. There are lots of hidden levels, and ardent platform addicts will definitely enjoy the action.
JEWEL MASTER	SEGA	£39.99	47	50	64	66	51	55	A fairly standard platform game which despite a few original features has neither the challenge or addiction to keep you entertained for more than a few sessions.
JOE MONTANA SPORTS TALK FOOTBALL	SEGA	£39.99	91	81	96	80	72	80	Joe Montana 2 is a significant departure from its predecessor. The game is now horizontally scrolling with close-up views of the action. Best of all is the digitised speech which provides a running commentary through a game. Not as playable as John Madden's '92, though.
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	90	95	93	89	96	95	This is the best American footy game anywhere on any machine. The graphics are excellent and, more importantly, the control system is easy to understand and use. No megadrive owner should be without a copy of this.,
KAGEKI	KANEKO	IMPORT	51	50	69	45	20	30	A complete duffer of a beat 'em up, converted from an old coin-op. The poor graphics would have been bad enough, but your fighter is gifted with only two fighting moves making the action dull beyond belief.

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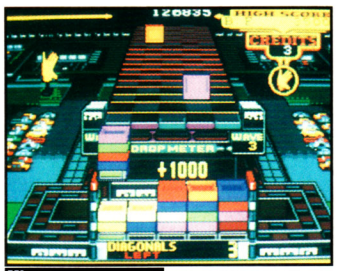
GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
KINGS BOUNTY	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£34.99	70	69	45	72	71	71	A fairly complex, non-action oriented role-playing game which should appeal to fans of the genre.
KLAX	TENGEN	£34.99	90	74	85	84	82	85	Beware! The Japanese import version of this isn't particularly good due to a vague and imprecise control method. American and official versions have that problem cured and are much better. Fans of the original coin-op
LAST BATTLE	SEGA	£29.99	53	76	71	35	26	32	Amongst one of the first Megadrive games to appear, this is a failure on two counts: it neither shows off any of the Megadrive's capabilities nor is an enjoyable game in its own right. Do yourself a favour, and plug this into anything but your Sega.
M1 ABRAMS TANK	SEGA	£39.99	85	80	82	83	79	81	A thoroughly enjoyable simulation which features eight missions to test the skills of a budding tank commander.
MARVEL LAND	NAMCOT	IMPORT	76	81	80	85	79	81	A huge, sprawling platform game with loads of levels. Although original features are few and far between, it's a playable, fun game which should appeal to fans of the genre.
MEGTRAX	NAMCOT	IMPORT	67	40	41	42	30	33	A very disappointing version of the enjoyable quadbike racing coin-op. Although it has simultaneous two-player action, the naff graphics and bland gameplay fail to spark any excitement at all. Avoid it.
MERCS	SEGA	£39.99	89	85	84	91	80	90	This as good a conversion of the coin-op as fans could hope for. You also get two versions of the game on the one cartridge - an action game and original mode, where you recruit other Mercs to help your cause. An essential for shoot 'em up fans.
MICKEY MOUSE IN THE CASTLE OF ILLUSION	SEGA	£39.99	88	95	85	94	90	93	One of the best Megadrive platform games around, combining superlative graphics and excellent gameplay to provide an addictive and thoroughly enjoyable challenge.
MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE	SEGA	£39.99	80	85	90	88	78	85	A very faithful coin-op conversion which packs all the looks, sounds and levels of the original machine. On the lowest setting the challenge is lacking, but stick it on hard and you should have a great time!
MIGHT AND MAGIC 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	85	77	50	80	85	81	An extremely good menu/text-driven RPG which should keep purists scratching their craniums for months.
MIKE DITKA'S POWER FOOTBALL	ACCOLADE	£39.99	69	74	88	76	69	72	A cross between Joe Montana Football and John Madden's Football, but not as good as either. Check this out only if you're desperate for something different.
MOONWALKER	SEGA	£34.99	84	91	93	88	79	85	With its excellent graphics, thumping soundtrack (including such hits as Beat It, Billie Jean and Bad) and sampled speech this is a very addictive platform game which will have you tapping your feet while you play. Forget the fact that this has the cred-damaging Michael Jackson face on the cover, and just enjoy the action.
MUSHA	N/a	IMPORT	65	78	68	73	65	71	Uneven graphics and the easy difficulty level make this a rather dull up-the-screen shoot 'em up which we can only recommend to novices.
MYSTIC DEFENDER	SEGA	£39.99	81	78	71	67	55	63	Originally imported as Kujaku II, this Ghouls 'n' Ghosts clone lacks the oomph to keep you coming back for more.
NEW ZEALAND STORY	SEGA	£34.99	85	84	83	91	85	89	New Zealand Story might look as cute as a litter of kittens, but it's tough and challenging, with different screens from the arcade version to make life difficult even for coin-op experts. Highly recommended.
OUTRUN	SEGA	£39.99	87	80	80	71	43	58	This conversion of the classic coin-op simply doesn't do it justice. The graphics and sound are okay, but it's the gameplay where it falls flat - it's so easy even a complete dumbo can complete it within a couple of goes.
PACMANIA	TENGEN	£34.99	82	82	73	80	60	70	This is a Perfect conversion of the coin-op, unfortunately it's very boring, and you have to be an appaling games-player not to be able to go all the way round on your first go. Not an essential purchase by any means.
PGA TOUR GOLF	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	90	85	87	94	94	93	Simply the best golf game available on any system. Superb gameplay, a tough challenge, multi-player options, battery-backed RAM and loads of courses make this a sports simulation not to miss.
PHANTASY STAR II	SEGA	£49.99	61	61	67	73	79	78	There's certainly a big challenge in store in this massive menu-driven adventure, but to be honest, Phantasy Star II is more suited to pure RPG fans who like to use their brains rather than their joysticks, Arcade fans will soon become bored due to the lack of immediate action.
PHANTASY STAR III	SEGA	£49.99	89	84	77	85	92	89	Another enormous role-playing game, but this one has far more depth and variety than its predecessor. It's by far the best RPG on the Megadrive, but the real bummer is that it costs a massive £50.00! Eeek!



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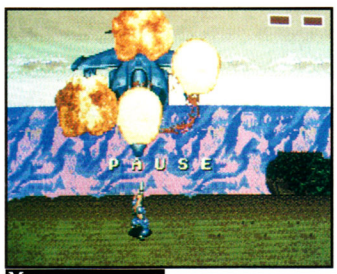
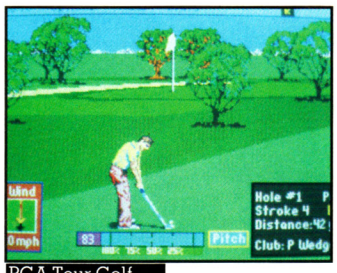


Mercs

Mickey Mouse

Musha



PGA Tour Golf

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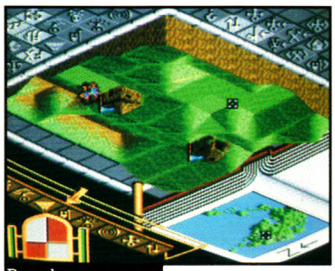
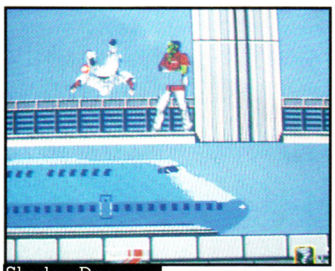

Populous

Quackshot


Shadow Dancer

Stormlord

Streets Of Rage

GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
POPULOUS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	90	82	73	92	91	91	Ever wanted to play God? Of course you have. And now here's your opportunity, courtesy of this stunning Electronic Arts. With super graphics and 500 different levels, Populous is both highly original and amazingly addictive. With a constant challenge on offer, Populous is a game which you will return to time and time again.
QUACKSHOT	SEGA	£39.99	80	92	89	83	80	82	Donald Duck is the star of Sega's third Disney game, and a good effort it is too. Donald has to set off in search of the lost treasure of King Garuzia, aided by a host of Disney stars. The graphics are excellent, but the infinite continues make the game easy to complete.
RAINBOW ISLANDS	TAITO	IMPORT	83	80	76	87	85	86	Save the vertical scrolling platform levels of the Rainbow Islands in this conversion of the Taito coin-op. Virtually arcade perfect (both arcade versions, normal and super have been included) with only flickery sprites letting the side down, Rainbow Islands is a rewarding, playable platform game.
RAMBIO III	SEGA	£39.99	78	87	93	89	82	87	In typical Rambo style, the object of this multidirectionally scrolling shoot 'em up is to infiltrate five different enemy zones and destroy everything and anything silly enough to step in your way. It's not a difficult game to finish, but it's great fun, and keeps you coming back for more even when you've defected the enemy!
REVENGE OF SHINOBI	SEGA	£34.99	85	92	93	95	91	94	This is a slick, superb looking, great sounding and incredibly playable platform game in which you guide hero Shinobi on a solo infiltration deep into enemy territory. The game is huge, spread over 20 different and very long sub-levels. If you're a platform game fan, this is an essential purchase.
ROAD RASH	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	89	92	92	94	88	92	Take your high-powered bike into the Road Rash tournaments, a series of races where the objective is to travel the Super Hang-On-style roadways indulging in violent acts with other "Rashers". Lots of races, lots of bikes to ride, and plenty of thrills 'n' spills make Road Rash the best racer on the Megadrive!
SHADOW DANCER	SEGA	£39.99	74	77	72	78	49	59	Joe Mushashi's back for some more ninjitsu-related platform action in this follow-up to Revenge of Shinobi. Graphics, sound and playability are all inferior to Revenge, so smart cookies should check that one out for the ultimate ninja game.
SHINING IN THE DARKNESS	SEGA	£49.99	86	82	80	70	73	72	A role-playing game with excellent graphics and a brilliant window system, Shining in the Darkness is recommended to RPG buffs. Watch out though for irritating combat, reliant on luck rather than the player's skill.
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG	SEGA	£39.99	85	93	81	93	79	83	Sega's hyped-beyond-belief character stars in a game heavily inspired by Nintendo's Mario platform game series. It's very addictive with brilliant graphics and speed. However, the gameplay is frustrating at times and experienced gamers should have this one licked within days.
SPACE HARRIER II	SEGA	£39.99	73	82	80	79	71	76	Take off and battle aliens who've invaded 12 zones of the beautiful Fantasy Zone in this 3D shoot 'em up. However, the gameplay gets pretty dull after a while due to the lack of variety. If you're a fan of Space Harrier, this will obviously have great appeal, but for everyone else, the novelty will wear off very quickly.
SPIDERMAN	SEGA	£39.99	88	84	86	92	90	91	Marvel's web-slinging hero hits the Megadrive in style, with excellent comic-like backdrops and sprites with great gameplay. With plenty to see and do, Spider-Man should appeal to anyone after an excellent, challenging platform game.
STAR CONTROL	ACCOLADE	£39.99	86	68	90	93	90	90	Two space empires battle it out for supremacy in this awesome rendition of the arcade classic, Space Wars (albeit with extra strategy bits thrown in). A bit dull in one-player mode, but the highly entertaining two-player version more than makes up for it.
STORMLORD	RAZOR SOFT	£39.99	82	87	79	59	55	57	Ghouls 'n' Ghosts-style platform action in this Amiga conversion. Unfortunately, the playability's cursed with unforgiving collision detection and a very high frustration level. Put bluntly, even the Spectrum version beats this hands down in the playability department. Avoid.
STREET SMART	SEGA	£39.99	75	80	66	68	41	55	A dreadful beat 'em up debacle, Street Smart starts off well with decent sprites and backdrops. However start the game proper and you'll discover that the gameplay is a complete joke with repetitive attack moves and no challenge whatsoever. Get Streets of Rage instead.
STREETS OF RAGE	SEGA	£34.99	90	90	94	94	89	92	Yes! The Megadrive needed a fabulous beat 'em up, and Streets of Rage more than delivers. With excellent sprites, backdrops and brilliant music, Streets of Rage is initially very appealing. Add in great gameplay and simultaneous two-player action and you've got an essential buy.
STRIDER	SEGA	£34.99	84	94	88	94	87	91	This conversion's graphics and sound are nigh on arcade-perfect, and it also packs a considerable challenge. Packing a considerable challenge, Strider is a truly superlative coin-op conversion which will appeal to any arcade fan - and its multiple difficulty levels means that it won't become boring very quickly.
SUPER HANG-ON	SEGA	£39.99	90	89	90	93	84	89	Converted from the Sega coin-op, this is an excellent copy and has all the features of the original machine plus an extra challenge game thrown in for good measure! The graphics and sound are both excellent, and with playability to match, this is a race game that no Megadrive owner should be without.
SUPER MONACO GP	SEGA	£34.99	90	90	78	96	91	94	This incredible race game is a superb conversion of the brilliant coin-op It's a thrilling race game, with fast and effective 3D and great gameplay. It's incredibly addictive and has loads of lasting appeal, with a password system to let you have an ongoing Grand Prix campaign. If you're a speed nut, make sure you get this.
SUPER REAL BASKETBALL	SEGA	£39.99	80	79	77	81	80	81	The computer isn't difficult to beat once you've got used to the comprehensive control method there's a very good two-player mode. With excellent graphics - the animation on the players is particularly good - and plenty of different gameplay options.
SUPER THUNDERBLADE	SEGA	£34.99	60	78	67	72	55	69	This was one of the first ever Megadrive games, and a two years ago it looked pretty good. However, compared with other offerings, the jerky 3D and sluggish control methods makes this game look rough around the edges. Fans of the original machine will get plenty of kicks, but anyone else will find it all rather uninspiring.

GAME NAME	BY...	PRICE	RATINGS %						GENERAL COMMENTS
			PRESENTATION	GRAPHICS	SOUND	STP	LTP	M'TECH RATING	
SUPER VOLLLEYBALL	VIDEO SYSTEMS CO.	IMPORT	77	80	55	69	50	61	Although it looks good, the rather fiddly and irritating control method means that only the most ardent of volleyball fans will be willing to persevere with this.
SWORD OF SODAN	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£34.99	69	70	60	61	51	55	Although Sword of Sodan's big sprites look impressive, the poor animation and pedestrian playability results in a game that will only appeal to people who like their action sl-o-o-w.
SWORD OF VERMILLION	SEGA	£49.99	85	79	94	85	90	87	Put simply, this is probably the best RPG on the Megadrive. A gripping plot combined with user-friendly controls and great presentation make for an RPG that even a die-hard laser brain should thoroughly enjoy.
TECHNOCOP	RAZOR SOFT	£39.99	60	66	54	52	43	49	A grotesque drive-and-shoot game which, mystifyingly, won awards in the USA. After driving to crime scenes in a very ropey 3D road bit, you enter bland warehouses packed with criminals who have to be blasted into quivering red heaps. Boring to play and ugly too.
THUNDERFORCE 2	SEGA	£34.99	80	82	88	83	76	81	Overshadowed by its successor, but nevertheless a robust shoot 'em up with plenty of thrills 'n' spills, this blaster has action set over nine different horizontally and overhead scrolling levels packed to the gills with enemy ships and huge (and we mean huge) end-of-level guardians. Recommended to blasting fans.
THUNDERFORCE 3	SEGA	£39.99	82	88	86	91	86	89	The Thunderforce fighter is back in a six-level graphical tour de force. The graphics are truly marvellous, with parallax-scrolling backdrops and some great sprites. The sound isn't bad, either. Put those together with the great gameplay and you've got a superb shoot 'em up which is highly recommended.
TOE JAM AND EARL	SEGA	£39.99	87	90	96	94	79	87	A completely bizarre one or simultaneous two-player arcade adventure that's absolutely jam-packed with humorous touches - both visual and aural. The game is very laid back, and the emphasis is on exploration rather than rushing about. Thoroughly enjoyable, thoroughly weird and thoroughly worth checking out.
TONGUE OF THE FATMAN	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	85	87	75	86	62	71	This one or two-player arcade-style one-on-one beat 'em up throws the player into the futuristic arena where combatants have to fight one another in a gladitorial style contest.The gameplay, which to be blunt, is far too easy. Check it out by all means - if just to see the excellent graphics - but play before you buy.
TORA TORA TORA	TOAPLAN	IMPORT	75	61	57	67	48	59	This is the latest from vertically scrolling shoot 'em up specialists Toaplan (authors of Truxton and Flying Shark), and although it's great fun, suffers from being too easy to complete. Perhaps one for the novices?
TRUXTON	TOAPLAN	IMPORT	76	81	79	83	78	82	Although original features are distinctly lacking in this vertically scrolling arcade conversion (which incidentally is also known as Tatsujin), it's a good, solid blast which offers plenty of action, speed and excitement.
TURRICAN	ACCOLDAE	£39.99	65	71	72	77	72	73	A fairly enjoyable platform/shooting game which has one flaw - it starts out fairly tricky, but gets easier the further you go!
VAPOR TRAIL	RENOVATION	IMPORT	84	80	90	81	59	70	Another vertically scrolling shoot 'em up? You bet! Vapor Trail is another average effort with decent graphics, exceptional sound but rather lacking in the challenge department. One for die-hard blasting fans to have a look at.
VERYTEX	ASMIK	IMPORT	72	78	88	77	69	73	Would you believe it? ANOTHER vertically scrolling blaster! For Verytex, read Very Average. Unexceptional graphics coupled with dull gameplay make Verytex very boring very quickly.
WARDNER	VISCO	IMPORT	81	71	80	81	71	75	Wardner was a minor coin-op hit, and this Megadrive conversion is pretty creditable. It's standard platform fare - dodge the traps and blast the meanies and massive bosses. Wardner is pretty playable, but infinite continues make it pretty simple to complete.
WONDER BOY III	SEGA	£39.99	67	71	72	70	38	47	Tom-Tom's back for some more platform-based scrolling shoot 'em up action. Very average graphics and sound stand hand-in-hand with uneventful, completely unchallenging gameplay. A big disappointment for Wonderboy fans.
WHIP RUSH	SEGA	£34.99	54	48	36	55	70	71	Originality certainly wasn't high on the priority sheet when this very average scrolling shoot 'em up was thought up. To be honest, it's one of the crappiest blasters available - try something like Truxton or Thunderforce III rather than wasting your cash on this.
WORLD CUP ITALIA '90	SEGA	£39.99	65	78	71	77	59	64	The one and only soccer game on the Megadrive... but it's not particularly brilliant and is very easy to beat the crap computer opponents. Worth checking out if you're really desperate for a football game.
XDR	UNIPACC	IMPORT	85	59	45	49	41	47	This horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up looks more like a Master System game than a Megadrive game! It takes but a few goes to become bored, and that's not what Megadrive games are about. We want excitement! Thrills! Spills! And some decent gameplay. Give it a miss and buy something far more exciting instead.
ZANY GOLF	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£39.99	85	85	85	85	85	85	This is an offbeat "sports" simulation based around that most famous of British seaside resort pastimes, crazy golf. Featuring courses as bizarre as they're tricky, this is a surprisingly addictive little number that just keeps you coming back for more. If you're after something different, check this out!
ZOOM	SEGA	£29.99	60	61	72	51	43	45	Reminiscent in many respects of that decade-old arcade classic, Amidar, this painting game requires you to make your way around a grid and fill in each square by painting around the edges. It's quite good fun, and is addictive to boot. However, there isn't much variety, and after a couple of sessions it all starts to get a little bit boring.

Toe Jam ¶ Earl

Thunderforce 3

Technocop

Vapor Trail

Zany Golf

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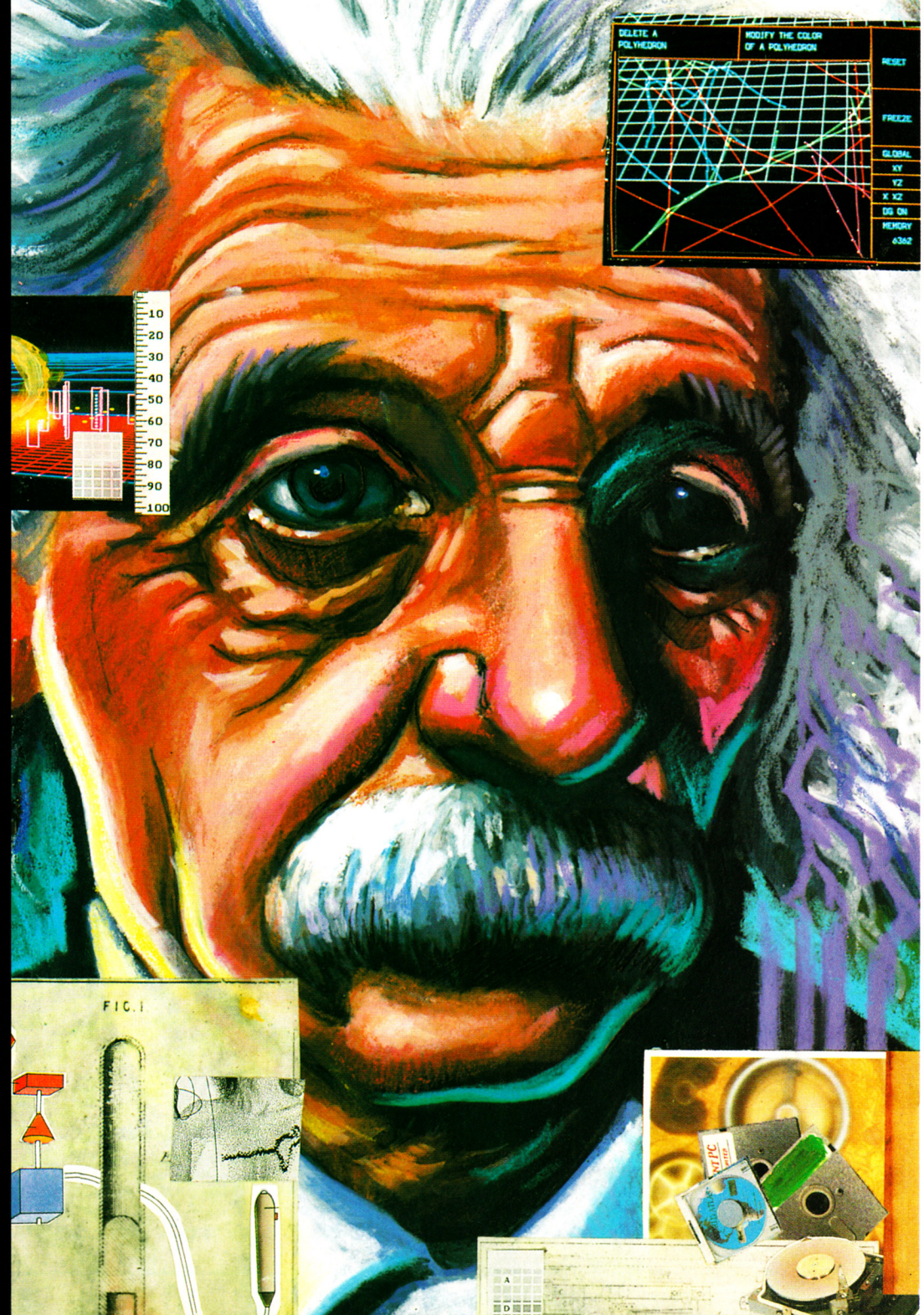

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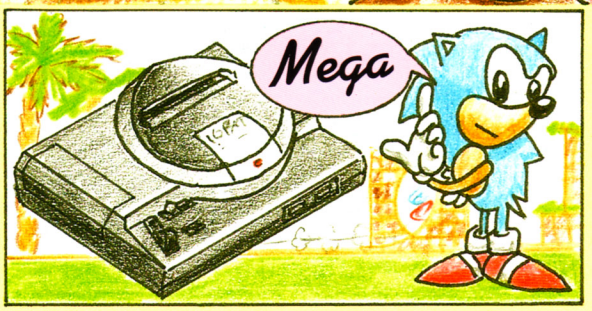

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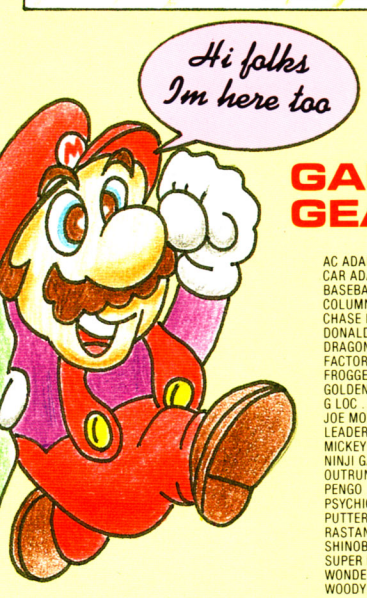

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