

FREE!

SONIC 2

THE HEDGEHOG



From the moment he appeared on our screens at the end of 1990, we all knew the story of Sonic the Hedgehog would, well, run and run.

The turbo-charged rodent inhabited a world full of beautiful colours, stylish scenery, and turbo-charged action which every Megadrive player must have sampled at some point.

At the end of the first Sonic the Hedgehog game, Sonic's arch-enemy Dr Robotnik was still at large. His forces now regrouped, Robotnik is preparing for another assault on the world, and once again, it's up to Sonic to stop him in a game twice as big and at least 1.3 times as challenging.

This is Sonic the Hedgehog 2.



SONIC 2

BY SEGA

PRICE: £39.99

PLAYERS: 1-2

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

CONTINUES: VARIES

SKILL SETTINGS: 1



Yes! Robotnik is back! Having escaped the long arm of the law at the end of the first Sonic the Hedgehog game, Robotnik has spent the meantime upgrading his world conquering equipment and he's now back with an even mightier army of fluffy robo-zombies poised to wrest freedom from the entire planet.

But Sonic is ready to do battle again and this time he's joined by a two-tailed fox cub named Miles Prower (or 'Tails' to his mates). Together (or apart, this being a one or two player game), they run, jump, fly and swim (sort of) through eleven enormous platform stages, gradually eradicating Robotnik's presence from the face of the Earth.

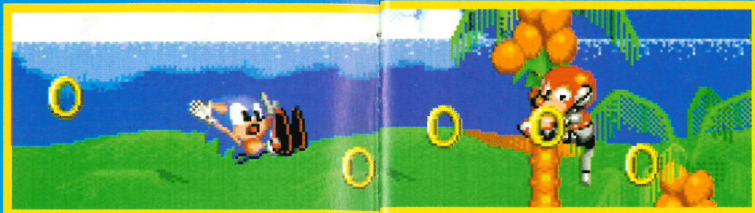
The only way to defeat Robotnik for good is to gain possession of the Chaos Emeralds which hold the key to ultimate power. Needless to say, if Sonic and Tails don't get them, Robotnik will and if he does his plan will be unstoppable.

Braving the armies of Robotnik, all Sonic and Tails have in their defence are their prodigious athletic skills and the ability to roll into Spiky Balls Of Destruction. Oh, and as before they can pick up magic rings which protect them from one hit each.

STAGE ONE: EMERALD HILL ZONE

Sonic II's designers thought it would be a good idea to start players in familiar territory, and Emerald Hill Zone's grassy hills and valleys, spring jumps and waterfalls are reminiscent of the original Green Hill Zone.

The familiar loop-the-loops are in there, but they're joined by roller coaster roadways which have two paths running side by side, but bucking up and down like crazy. Watch out for the robot

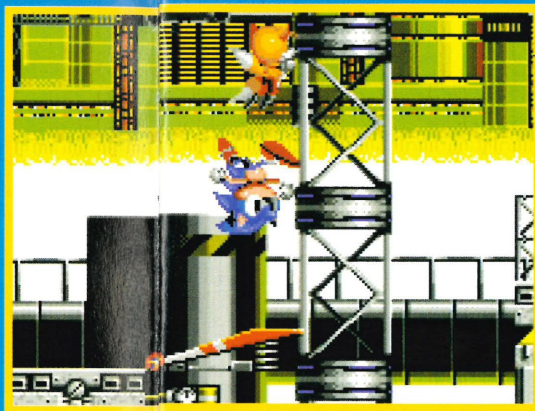


STAGE TWO: CHEMICAL PLANT ZONE

After the Emerald Hill Zone, Sonic runs straight into new territory—Robotnik's gigantic chemical factory.

It's built of networks of platforms and transport pipes with extending bridges running between them. This stage also features some of the most spectacular examples of what a Megadrive can do. After building up speed on a series of loop-the-loops, Sonic hurtles down long downhill stretches at unbelievable velocities!

As Sonic approaches his goal water begins to flood in, and of course, Sonic still hasn't learned to hold his breath for more than a few seconds!



STAGE THREE: AQUATIC RUN



At first sight this looks like a re-run of Emerald Hill Zone, but this level is set in a part-sunken temple populated by robot fish and other nasty Robotnik creations, such as pillars which fire arrows at our plucky hedgehog. Hollow tree trunk tunnels and underwater passages lead to the end, but remember, Sonic isn't much of a swimmer and he needs to catch air bubbles every few seconds.



STAGE FOUR: CASINO NIGHT



Remember the Star Light Zone from Sonic 1, with all those pinball bumpers? Well, Casino Night is even crazier! As well as bouncing off bumpers, Sonic rebounds his way around trampolines, springboards and spring-loaded ball shooters.

Amongst all the pinball paraphernalia are fruit machines. Set the reels spinning and you can win a jackpot of 150 bonus rings, but if they show three Robotniks, he loses all the jewelry collected so far!



59420

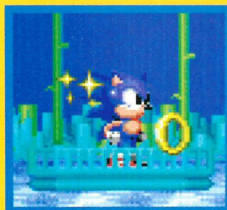


STAGE SIX: MYSTIC CAVE



Vast chasms of purple rocks lie between Sonic and the exit in this stage, but there are easy ways out of danger. Look for the levers and switches which are hidden among the vines and you should find that these open up new galleries and lower drawbridges spanning the gaps.

STAGE FIVE: HILL TOP ZONE



Sonic enters a lost world hidden in the crater of a volcano high above cloud level. Naturally, lava causes big problems throughout the level and Sonic has to constantly fight to stay unsinged.

Beware of spike-headed creatures, flame-throwing blobs and robot dinosaurs. Some blob creatures actually help by

bouncing Sonic up the level on see-saws.

Watch out for the lifts. The vines that hold them up aren't strong enough to hold even an athletic hedgehog!

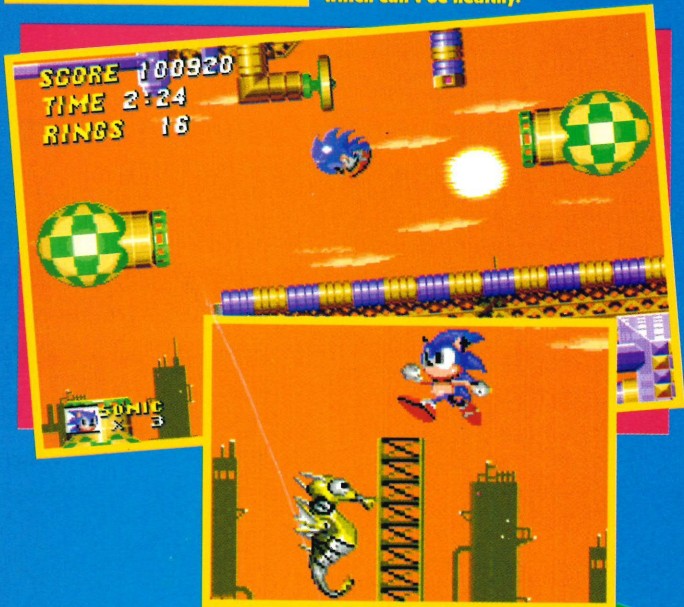


STAGE SEVEN: OIL OCEAN



Sonic arrives on Robotnik's oil pollution platform and is immediately attacked by flying robot seahorses!

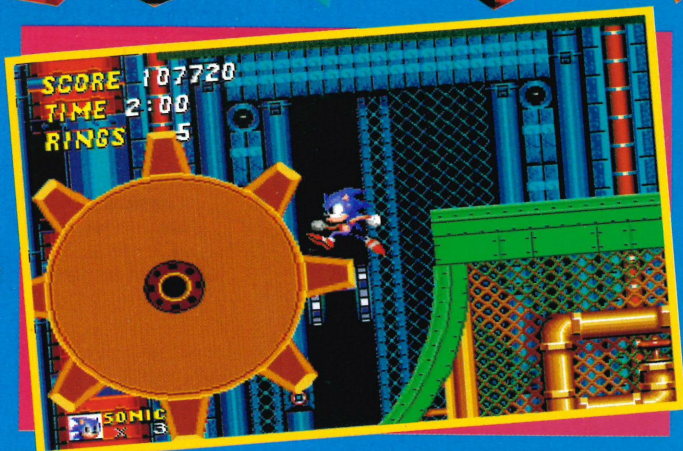
The only way is up, and the only way up is to ride the lifts which are powered into the air by dangerous flame jets on the ground! Before sliding down again on the slippery oil drains, Sonic has to brave being shot out of a series of cannon pots, which can't be healthy!



STAGE EIGHT: METROPOLIS ZONE

This is the biggest of the Zones, and comprises three Acts (most of the others just have two). It's set in a giant machine city, full of wall-mounted springs, rotating wire tunnels, pulley systems which scoop up molten metal, spinning cogs and travel platforms which are carried along by chains of gears.

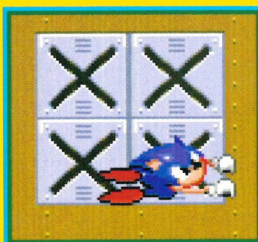
The lifts in Metropolis are a bit different too. They take the form of nuts mounted on huge bolts, and to ascend and descend Sonic has to stand on the nut and run like crazy to get it to screw its way up or down the bolt!





STAGE NINE: SKY CHASE ZONE

Robotnik makes good his escape to his flying Egg Craft but Sonic and Tails are hard on his heels in a bi-plane. Tails is at the controls while Sonic stands on the wing and clears the way of flying turtle craft, mini fighter planes and floating bombers.



STAGE TEN: WING FORTRESS

Robotnik's aircraft base, but the fight's still not over. As Sonic and Tails approach Robotnik shoots down their bi-plane and while Tails plummets earthwards, Sonic has to leap onto the tail of the Wing Fortress to try to find a way inside.



STAGE ELEVEN: DEATH EGG!!

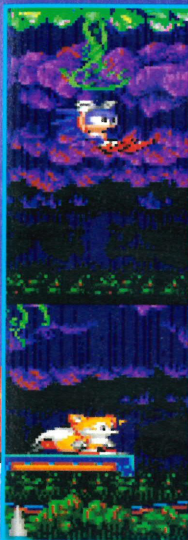
And still it continues—but we're not going to spoil it by telling you how! Suffice it to say that Sonic II has a few spectacular surprises to spring on the player at the end of the game. It certainly is worth playing for, and Robotnik certainly doesn't give in easily!



SONIC AND TAILS: VERSUS MODE!

Yep, in case you didn't know already, Sonic II is a one or two player game.

Yes, that's two players on screen at the same time, with one player as Sonic and the other as Tails!



How is this done? Surely, both players aren't kept together on the same screen, thus limiting the excitement of the game's exploration element? No.

It took a bit of technical jiggery-pokery on the part of the Sonic Team programmers, but the upshot of it all is that both Sonic and Tails have a screen to themselves so they can explore together or apart.

This was done by effectively doubling the vertical resolution of the MegaDrive's screen from 124 lines to 440, so each sub-screen does have a full screen's worth of pixels on it. However, this rather stretches the standard TV or monitor beyond its usual display abilities so Sonic does look like he's been crossing country roads without looking both ways first. As you might expect, this does make it a bit hard on the eyes, but you do get used to it after a while. The special stage, by the way, is played on a single screen.



SPECIAL STAGE



How, we were wondering, could Sonic Team top the amazing rotating special stage in Sonic I. Would it be some variation on the same theme? Sega weren't telling, except to say that, no, it was something completely new. And so it is! This special stage is a spectacular 3D game unlike anything seen before on the Megadrive (in fact it

resembles Atari's STUN Runner coin-op more than anything else).

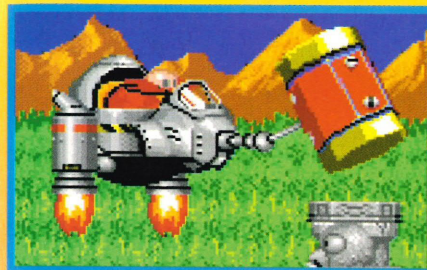
To enter the special stage you need to reach a star post restart beacon with 50 rings. A spinning circle of stars appears above it, so just jump into it to be transported to the chute. Sonic and Tails travel down this chute, collecting as many of the rings which are lying around as possible, while avoiding bombs. If they collect the required number of rings before reaching the checkpoint they're allowed through to the next stage. To complete the race they need 150 rings, and if they reach the end they receive a Chaos Emerald!

The tunnel dips and curves in all sorts of directions, but the speedy pair can run up the walls and even perform somersaults over the top of the tunnel to get the rings which levitate above the roadway. When one player jumps he moves ahead of his opponent making it possible to snatch a ring from under his wet nose.

Check out these pictures and witness the spectacle!



THE MANY GUISES OF DR ROBOTNIK



Since the end of Sonic I, that twisted genius, Dr Robotnik, has been working hard to upgrade his hedgehog-mashing machinery and at the end of each of the eleven zones you get to find out how hard when he drives them on and sets them running!



PAUL'S COMMENT

As far as megabits goes, Sonic 2 is twice as big as Sonic I, but is it twice as playable? Well, maybe not twice as playable, but it's a better game. At first sight it looks like the improvements are only graphical, but as you delve further into the game, you realise that the acts are much bigger than before, with more special landscape features.

This is certainly not as easy to complete as the first game. Aside from the fact that the levels are longer and there are more of them, the later parts of the game are very tricky indeed and the end of the game is not at all the falling-off-a-log exercise it was in the first game.

The additions, such as the two-player mode and the new special stage are excellent (though, for the sake of your eyesight, I'd advise against playing the two-player game on a ropey telly), and I hardly need comment on the quality of the graphics, as you can see that for yourself.

Sega are soon to be setting new standards in Megadrive games with titles like World of Illusion, and Sonic II is the perfect start to this new age of great-looking, great-playing software. Don't miss it.

TOM'S COMMENT

Much has been the hype surrounding the second coming and believe it or not, Sonic 2 actually is as good as Sega have been telling us.

The original Sonic game looked fantastic, but this is flabbergasting. The awesome backdrops, the attention to detail, it's all just incredible. And just take a look at the animation on the Sonic sprite! Both he and Tails are true cartoon characters.

As for gameplay—imagine taking the superb playability of the original and speeding it up! Yes, it's even faster, and the levels are much bigger and have loads in them to discover and although, to start with, they seem very similar to those of the first game, things soon change and the later levels are plain brilliant. It isn't actually harder to play than the original, but the size of the game, the ingenuity of some of the later levels and some of the Robotnik confrontations make this a game which will take much longer to crack.

Sonic 2 is, in my opinion, the best platform game on the Megadrive. It doesn't matter if you have the original (and who hasn't?), it really is such a good game that it is an essential purchase. And I don't care what other people say, I prefer it to the Mario games.

RATING

PRESENTATION:94%

Excellent two player mode, lots of hidden nooks and crannies and an amazing new bonus stage!

GRAPHICS:98%

Undoubtedly the prettiest, most imaginative graphics on any Megadrive game to date.

SOUND:85%

A lot of remixes of the original's tunes, but some snappy new ones too.

SHORT TERM PLAY:94%

Great fun to play right from the word go!

LONG TERM PLAY:90%

Twenty huge acts to complete and it'll take a lot longer to finish than the first game.

**OVERALL
RATING:95%**

The wait has been worth it. An unmissable platform game.



**THIS BOOKLET IS COPYRIGHT EMAP IMAGES LTD ALL, RIGHTS RESERVED.
TO BE GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF MEGATECH AND NOT TO BE
SOLD SEPARATELY.**

SEGA AND MEGADRIVE ARE TRADEMARKS OF SEGA CORPORATION. |