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The videogame magazine

October 1999
Issue 11

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TOMB RAIDER 4
Has Lara Croft been
boning up on Solid Snake?

DONKEY KONG 64
Have a banana on page 122

SPEED FREAKS
Mario Kart on your
PlayStation! Can it be true?

FREE CD MISSING?
Harsh words with your newsagent
are in order, surely.



**TURN FLAP FOR
FULL CONTENTS**

HOMEWORLD

is there **SPACE** in your head?

100 YEARS AGO A SATELLITE DETECTED AN OBJECT UNDER THE SANDS OF THE GREAT DESERT. AN EXPEDITION WAS SENT. DEEP INSIDE THE RUIN WAS A SINGLE STONE THAT WOULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF OUR HISTORY FOREVER. ON THE STONE WAS ETCHED A GALACTIC MAP AND A SINGLE WORD MORE ANCIENT THAN THE CLANS THEMSELVES, **HIGARA**, OUR HOME.

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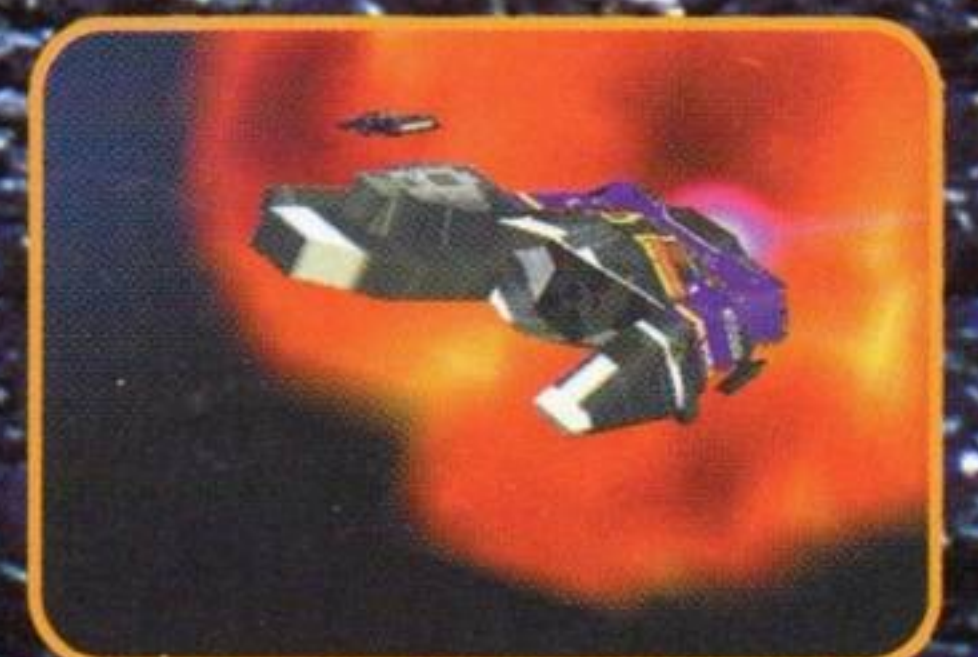
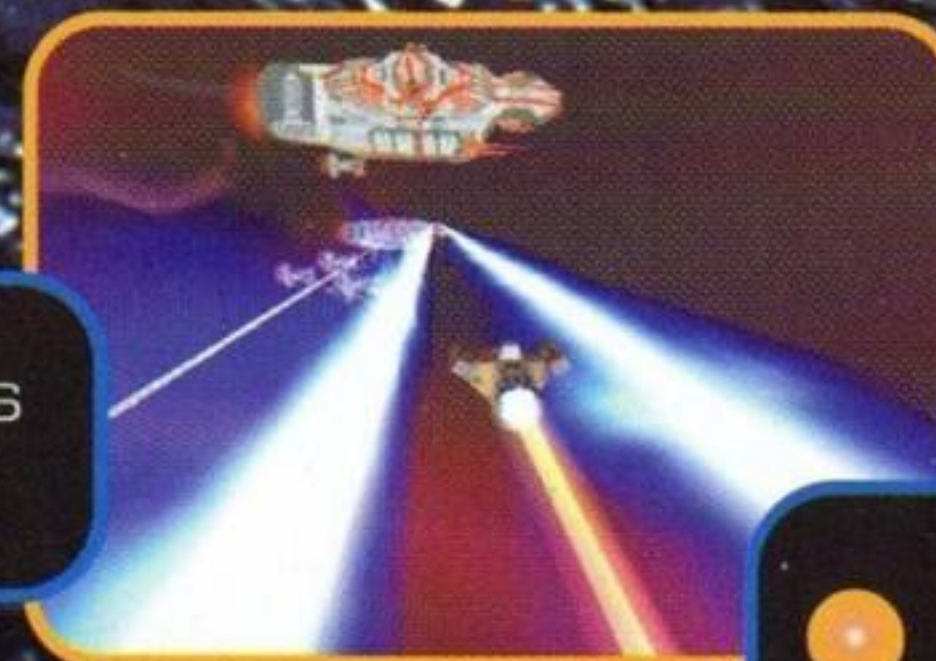
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Tomb Raider 4 unveiled. As inevitable as Christmas, really.

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The chicks from *BITS* beat us at our own games.

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The music! The game! The history! The design! It's all here! Don't forget, now.



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With *3D Death Chase*.



PHOTOS: MARTIN THOMPSON/K-KREATE, JUDE EDGINGTON, JUSTIN SCOBIE, ANDY MCANDLISH



A Review ★★★★★

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

74 New PlayStation Games

New releases: *Speed Freaks, WWF Attitude, Um Jammer Lammy, G-Police 2, Point Blank 2, FA Premier League Stars, Castrol Super Bikes.*

■ **Fun racer on the PlayStation.**



84 New PC Games

New releases: *Unreal Tournament, Braveheart, TA: Kingdoms, F-22 Lightning 3, Decent 3, Heavy Gear 2*

Budget releases: *Addiction Pinball, Daytona USA Deluxe, Frogger, HEDZ, Lords of Magic, Panzer Dragoon, Pro Pilot 98, Quake, Star Trek: A Final Unity, Star Trek: Generations, Top Gun: Fire At Will, Warcraft 2: Tides of Darkness*

■ **Unreal Tournament: a blast.**



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NEW GAMES
REVIEWED!

90 New N64 Games

New releases: *Shadowman, Superman, Premier Manager 99.*



■ **Shadowman: big, ugly, fantastic.**

104 Other Games

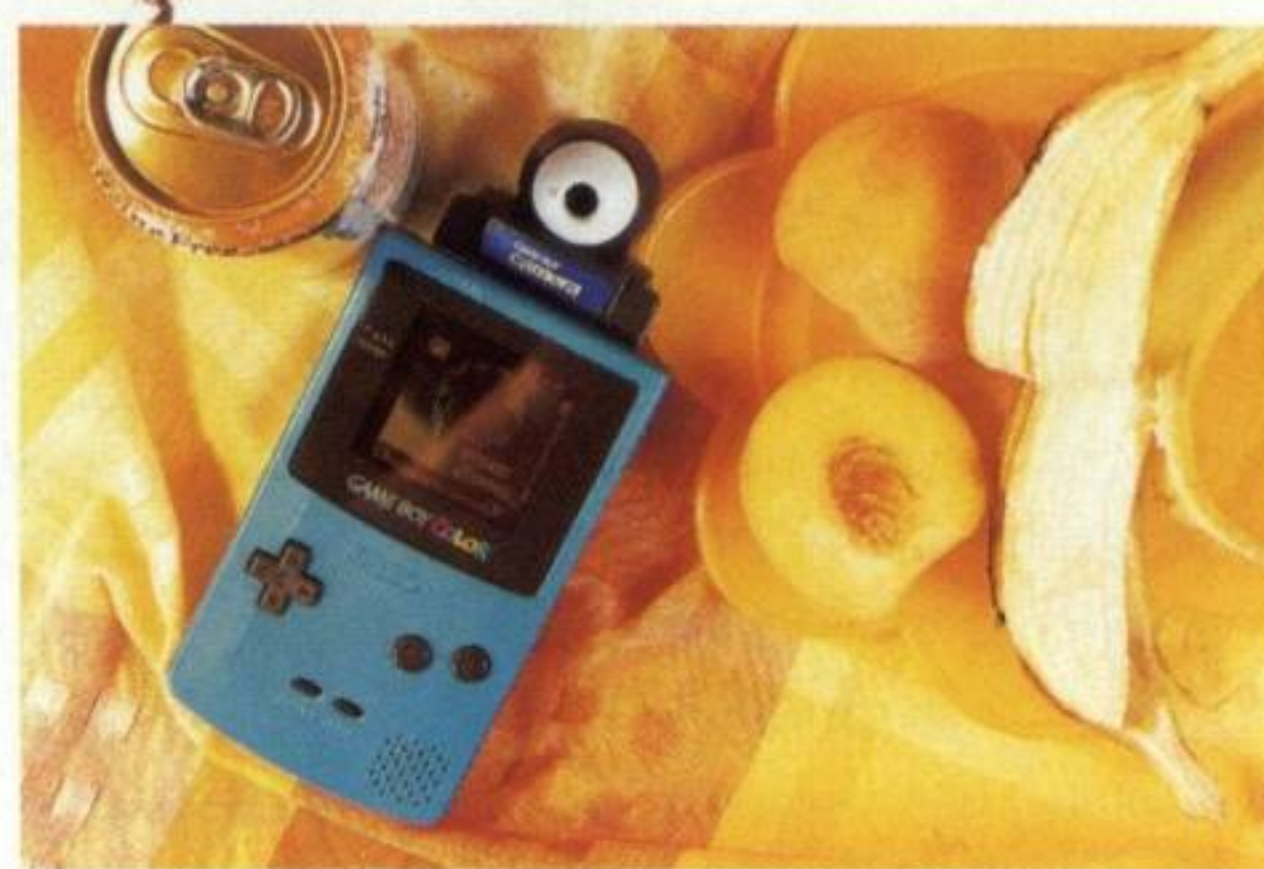
Dreamcast: *Tokyo Highway Battle*

Coin-op: *Tekken Tag Tournament*

Macintosh: *Carmageddon 2*

Game Boy Color: *F1 World Grand Prix, Paperboy, Spy VS Spy, All Star Tennis '99, Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol*

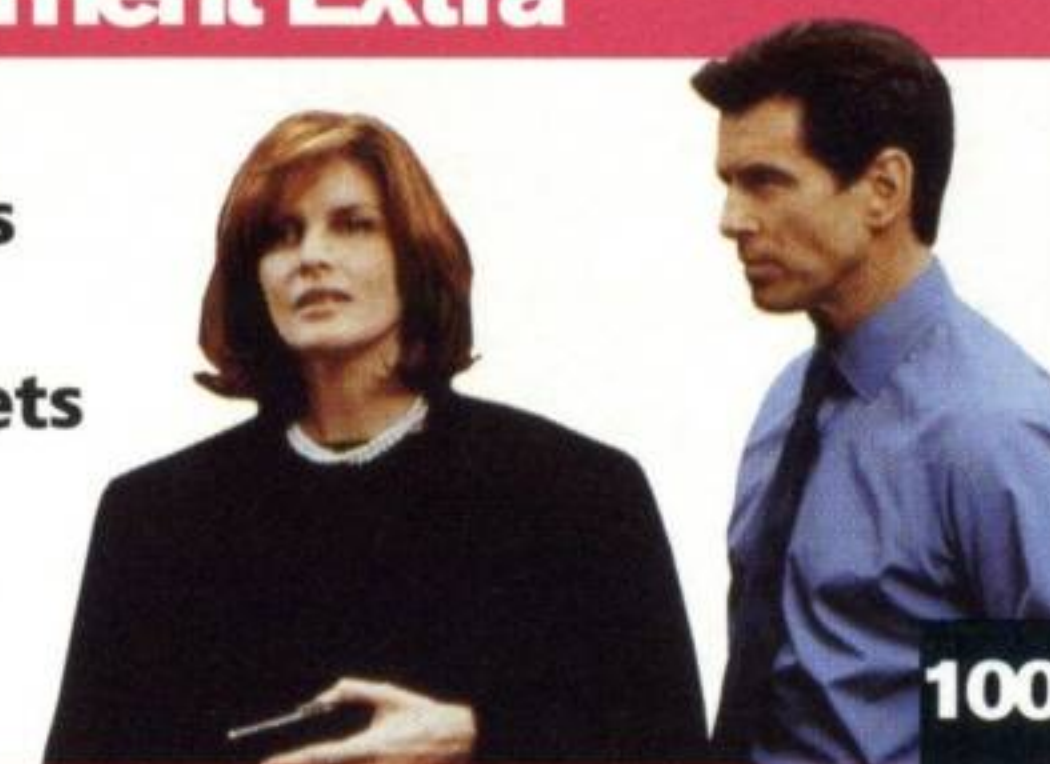
98 Videogame Accessories



All the available extras for your Game Boy on a tasteful orange table cloth with some fruit. And, er, the banana and peach arrangement on the top left of page 99 is just a coincidence, honestly.

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Arcade

The videogame magazine

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Cover *Wipeout 3 (Psygnosis)*



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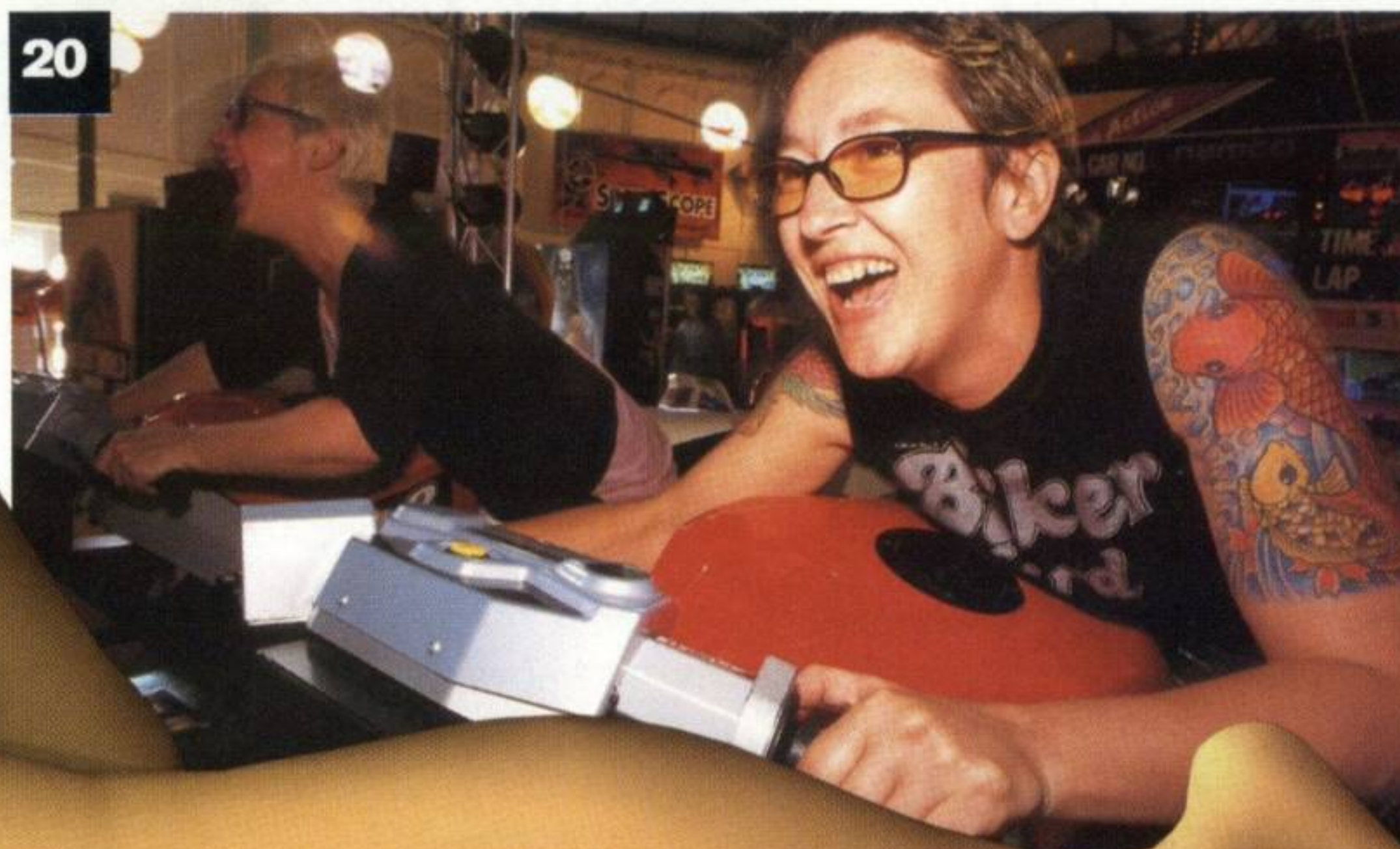
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Free Aural Pleasure



With
Sean Atkins,
Editor

The new editor's first intro piece: enough to give even the most hardened of hacks a dose of *The Fear*. Should I flex my creative muscles and go all out for a comedy concept intro? No, too clever-clever. Maybe a courteous nod to the previous editor to reassure loyal readers that things aren't about to go tits up? A bit wet. How about... how about just getting on with it?

You can't fail to have noticed the free *Wipeout 3* CD taped to the cover. Our best giveaway yet and arguably the best music CD to have graced the cover of any magazine. The Chemical Brothers, Underworld, Paul Van Dyk and others, all directed by the mighty Sasha, help form the perfect futuristic racing experience. And to complete the package, the game really does reward the two year wait. The PlayStation may well have reached peak performance. *Arcade* chats to the artists and delves deep into the *Wipeout* phenomenon, all while getting hooked on the dazzling *Wipeout 3* on page 48.

It has been a rollercoaster ride fuelled with change on *Arcade* this month, but this is only the beginning. A new editor, top choons for free, a new look from next issue, the Dreamcast just one month away, the first public airing for PlayStation 2 in Japan just around the corner, *Mario* for Dolphin confirmed in the works – and that's just what we know. The beauty of videogaming is that you can never know what's going to happen next. Change is a good thing. Er, unless that is you happened to catch *Dukes Of Hazzard: The Reunion* the other Sunday – Daisy now has a PhD, Bo is a racing driver, Luke puts out posh fires and Cooter is a congressman. Proof that every rule has an exception.

Sean Atkins
Editor



■ **Wipeout 3 The Music:** For more on this quality CD, the artists and the game, see page 48.

Rants & Raves

Two pages, jammed to the rafters with controversial opinion, razor-sharp insight and utter stupidity. This month: those bizarre Dreamcast ads, the joys of letter repetition, female pirate busters and stropky PC knockers.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Look at Sega's hair!

Although the event turned into a bit of a marketing fiasco, I, like many other people, went to see *Star Wars* at the cinema the other week. Not because I am a great fan, you understand, but because I thought I'd better get it out the way so that I could join in with conversations down the pub should the need arise.

Needless to say I was thoroughly disappointed with the film: it was totally contrived, didn't have enough bits in space and threw up all sorts of ridiculous questions. Such as – why don't Jedis just have guns? And why, whenever Jedi Knights have a fight, do they always end up doing it over a bottomless pit?

Actually, the point of this letter is not based on my rants and raves at *Star Wars*, but at the adverts beforehand. Have you seen car advert? That one with the magician doing card tricks? It's amazing! The bit where he looks to the camera and makes you subconsciously pick a card from the deck and then says "this is your card!" It was! So for me, half of *Star Wars* was spent trying to work out if I fancied the Queen, whilst the other was wondering how the devil he did it. But – that wasn't the best advert. The one for the Dreamcast was truly outstanding. A load of blokes having their hair cut, some nonsense about 30,000 competitors or something, and then a brief flash of the Dreamcast logo. For the life of me I can't work out what tactic Sega is going for here. Sure, adverts for the PlayStation have gone a little off-the-wall, but the entire point is that they are advertising a product which the target audience is already familiar with.

Sega, on the other hand, may have pioneered this idea with its MegaDrive adverts (remember the one with the fat bloke from *Casualty* which went on for the entire ad break), but that was in the days when Sega and Nintendo held the videogame market exclusively. The PlayStation may be a familiar machine, but who exactly out of a cinema-full of *Star Wars* goers (which you could probably simple just read as "everyone") is going to be up-to-date enough with the world of videogames to realise that an advert full of odd-looking men having their hair cut is for a brand new games console? Certainly not the man behind me who turned to his wife/girlfriend/date/mistress with a simple but audible "eh?", which I think just about sums it up for me.

The power of the advert is a great one, and the amount of coverage on that campaign is immense. But surely a simple "X times more powerful than any existing games console"-style advert would be far more effective. Has Sega shot itself in the foot already? I, for one, will certainly be waiting a while to see how the Dreamcast takes off before parting with any of my wonga.

Keith Eastman, Oxford

Like many would be critics you're being a harsh to *Star Wars* – it's a kids' film! As for Sega's strange new campaign, you make a valid point, but contrary to popular belief the folk at Sega are no fools. This is the beginning of a marketing masterplan for Dreamcast – see page 12 for more on this campaign.

Write to us at

Arcade

■ Letters, e-mail, smoke signals, plastic cups with string connecting them – choose a method, just let us know what's burning you. Send those letters to:

**Rants & Raves,
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Future Publishing,
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Bath BA1 2BW.**

E-mail us at: arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk

The best letter each month wins an Arcade T-shirt, modelled here by the lovely Lisa. She reads all our correspondence and has been known to call up the occasional reader and flirt needlessly. Oh yes.



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So, here we go. Sailing the fresh seas of publishing aboard a daringly crewed skiff, intent on keeping a firm course for magazine paradise UK and overseas newsstand distribution: Future Publishing Ltd - 01225 442244. Printed in the UK. All material © Future Publishing 1999.



Next issue on sale 20 September

On the side

V-Rally 2 really isn't very good at all. Can everyone please shut up about it?
Simon Heard, Crediton

Including you Simon

McDonald's or Burger King?
Andy Moon, via e-mail

Shwartz Brothers.

Byron Marshall's letter in Arcade 10 was blatantly wrong!
Howard Smith, via e-mail

You tell him Howard.

I can't be arsed with online gaming. I have friends you see?
Rich Duffy, Hull

Well done. Your parents must be particularly proud

I was lucky enough to play the new Dreamcast title *Virtua Fighter 3* in France the other week. Can you please tell me why your German colleague, Thomas Gerhardt, is so very bad at the game?
Gerard Blanc, St Etienne, France

It seems he has gone into hiding, but we'll reveal all next issue.

Déjà vu that you do

Whilst reading the letters page of your most recent issue, I got a serious case of déjà vu. When I started reading Scott Taylor's letter of *How Videogames Saved Me Fighting* it struck me that I'd read the same crap story in this month's C&VG (it won letter of the month too!!!!). So congrats to Scott, his life must be fucking dull if he has to write multiple letters in order to appear interesting and urbane, I will give you the benefit of the doubt as the issue might have gone to press before you realised your error...

Oh and another thing, how come no ISS footy games appear in the Nintendo A-List? This is possibly the finest console football game ever.
Gareth, via e-mail

Yes, well done to Scott indeed. He fleeced us for a T-Shirt good style. As for ISS64, this is a criminal omission that will be addressed in next month's new-look A-List.

Pirates and testicles

For many years we've had to listen to the drivel included in letters pages concerning the pirating debate. For too long we've had to perform monkey tasks to enable us to play games (or *Krypton Factor* tasks, if you include David Brabham's *Elite II* game protection) and for many years game manufacturers have had a focus on which to place the high prices of games (£40 for *Asterix*, I think not!).

Well now it ends.

The solution to the problem is so simple it defies belief. Sony and others have always told us how pirating harms producers and leads to higher prices - not for the people buying pirate games it doesn't. Software companies' focus of attack is consistently on the wrong group of people, they should be targeting (pause for dramatic effect) females.

Consider this: when health authorities wanted to raise awareness in the area of testicular cancer they targeted women's magazines. They did this because men are known risk takers and would be unlikely to take heed of the adverts. With wives and girlfriends involved you could be sure that there was going to be plenty more rummaging down there, and not just for pleasure. If the world was full of men living on their own, how many would bother to have a TV licence?

Now... a few adverts in popular women's magazines covering the ages of, say, 15-35, explaining that owning pirated software is a crime that can lead to hefty fines, loss of holidays, children going hungry, blah blah blah, would surely do the trick? Follow this up with a phone-in hotline, shop your neighbours, and you can be sure that plenty a husband and boyfriend would be coming home to find the bin full of pirated games (along with a few originals) in the bin. So that's sorted.

Also, with regard to the worst haircuts of all time, I feel I must point out the glaring omission of Jaz Rignal's *ZZap 64* magazine days. Please see that the appropriate people are fired. Many thanks.
Fraser Lamont, Dodescombleigh

A fair point, if somewhat clumsily made. You do like to dance around the issues don't you Fraser. Also, your view of females, as you describe them, seems a little Victorian for our tastes - are the women in your life really that simplistic?

Abusive words

I couldn't help but notice that in the September issue of *Arcade*, on pages 28 and 29 there is the blatant use of abusive words - not bad. What a brilliant interview. It had me giggling for ages. What about a Roger Mellie videogame? I think *Celebrity Pissflaps* would translate perfectly on to the PC, although getting the celebrities to pose for the pictures might prove a tad difficult. Just a thought.

Major Bridlington-Smythe, Cleethorpes

Thanks. Glad you liked it. A Mellie game is inevitable at some stage, although *Celebrity Pissflaps* seems somewhat unlikely if decidedly gigglesome.

PC insecurity

After reading your article on "The Future of Videogames", I found that most of the sections were generally fine (give or take some exaggerations). However, when I read the PC article, I couldn't believe it. The writer spent most of the piece comparing the PC to the next generation of consoles, and some of his claims were clearly not true. Of all of these, the claim that a high end PC would "happily have a pop at Playstation 2", and "the proposed graphical power of the next generation of consoles seems weedy" compared to the PC, this can be seen by comparing any of the PC shots to any of the Playstation 2 and Dreamcast shots. Also, the polygon-pushing power of the next generation Sony and Nintendo systems are far ahead of what the PC can currently manage.

He then goes on to claim that PC games "look and play better than anything the consoles have to offer" - has he never played on a console? *Zelda, Mario, Final Fantasy, Castlevania, Gran Turismo* and *Metal Gear Solid* are all better designed and play better than almost every PC game, so the claim that PC games are better is absolutely ludicrous. While I cannot deny that the PC does play host to a lot of great games, I am annoyed that the writer feels so insecure that he has to make such narrow-minded comments. Also the comment that the PC "refined role playing beyond all recognition", seems strange, considering that the PC has always played host to very formulaic, traditional RPGs.

Perhaps the writer would be better off coming to terms with the fact that the PC alone will never be the future of videogames as it will never have a representation of every genre in its library.

Lee Kitching, via e-mail

Okay, the writer in question did get slightly carried away, but we asked for a pro-PC piece on the future of gaming and that's what we got. The issues of pricing were conveniently missing, but otherwise it makes some valid points. Lighten up.

What is this?

In your latest issue of *Arcade* you have a small feature on *Final Fantasy XI*. Where has this come from? *FFVIII* isn't out in Britain yet, and there are only a few details about *FFIX*, in Japan, let alone *FFX* or the *FFXI* that you talk about. Is this an exclusive preview or something?

Robert Gaskell, via e-mail

That'll be your traditional quality games journalism. It's what we're paid good money for you know.

Arcade exit poll



■ We're determined to make *Arcade* the best we can. To help us, please include answers to the following questions when you write to *Arcade*.

The best bits this issue are:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

I didn't like _____

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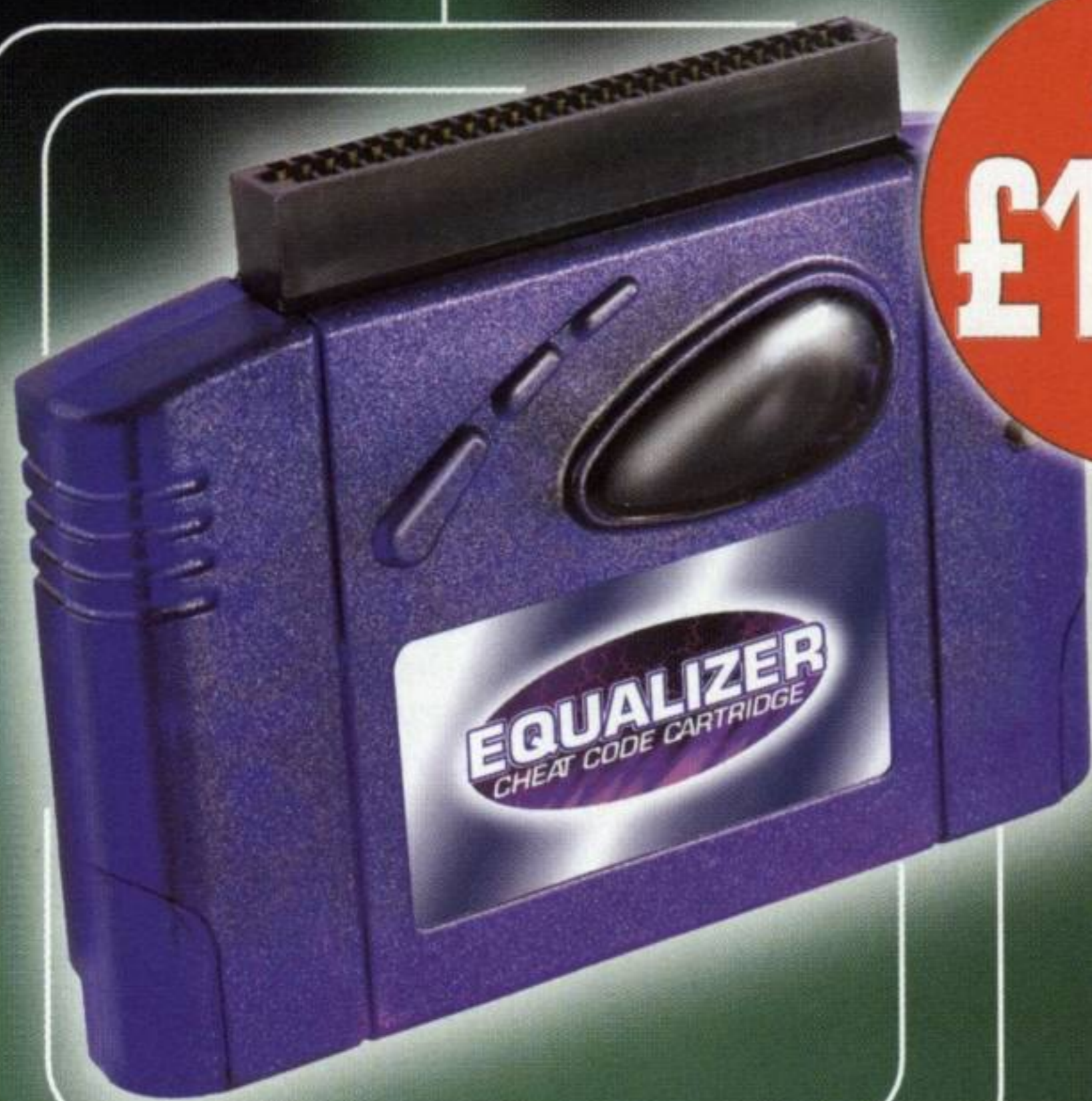
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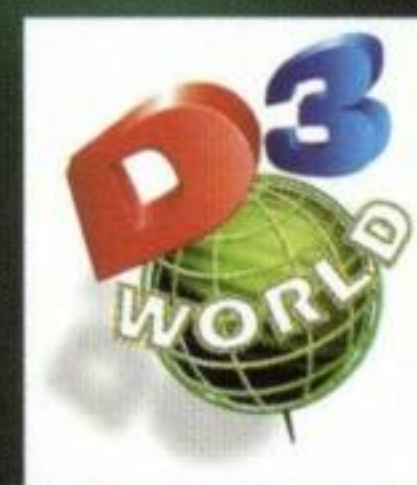
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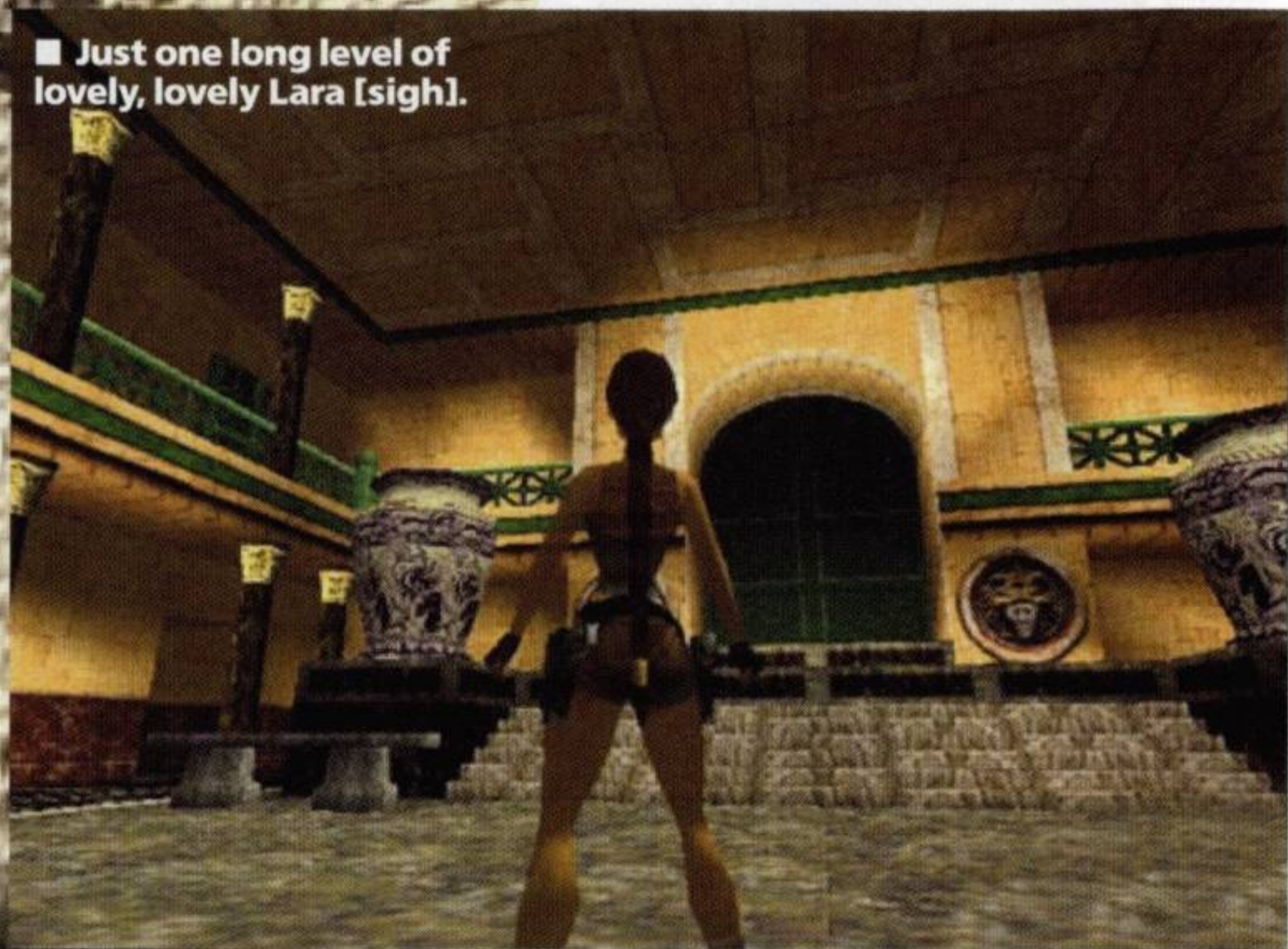
The world of videogames: we take you round the globe in six pages



■ Will you ever get to see her starkers?



■ Just one long level of lovely, lovely Lara [sigh].



MORE RAIDER

Lara bounces back for more

But is there a word that means one more than trilogy?

The appeal of *Tomb Raider* is difficult to fathom. While those in the know appreciate the cunning mix of action and adventure bits with a world that both begs and rewards for exploration, it's the lead character, Lara Croft, who has taken 99% of the credit and elevated herself far beyond the confines of a videogame. Hence – as information starts to leak about the new *Tomb Raider* – it is still Lara who hogs the limelight and begs the questions of the majority of fans of the game. What outfits will she be wearing? Will her hair swing around any differently? And how long will it be before someone puts an Action Replay code on the net which enables you to play with an excitingly naked Lara?

Tomb Raider 4: The Last Revelation sounds like a Indiana Jones rip-, er, tribute right from its title. Perhaps, in fact, it could be

best advertised by that bloke who does voice-overs for film trailers. [Dramatic music. A black

screen. Lara swoops in gently from behind. A huge explosion. Lara jumps right up to the camera and delivers a knowing wink] "Egypt: land of mythology, mystery and pharaohs. At the coming of the Millennium, all is not right with the alignment of the stars. The whole of humanity has been

threatened. And only one person can save us." [Series of fast-moving shots of Lara mowing down a big sword-wielding skeleton] "Featuring an advanced game engine which reads the CD as you go along and spools the gameplay seamlessly into the cut-scenes, levels are a thing of the

moves, and more detailed than ever before!"

[Lara sits down on a dead foe and takes a swig of Lucozade] "Coming this November to a PlayStation and PC near you – *Tomb Raider 4: The Last Revelation*."

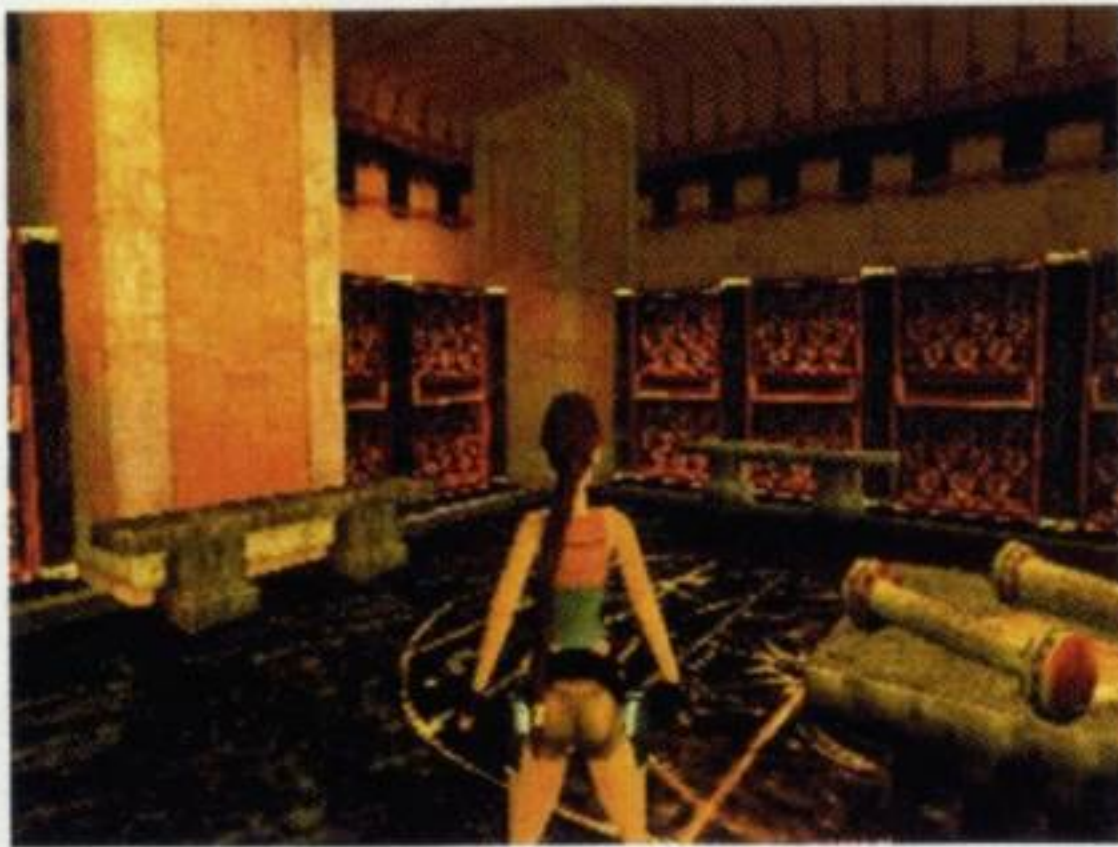
Detail remains sketchy, but what you can expect from *Tomb Raider 4* is more of the same, with tweaks. Some of the missions take a leaf out of *Metal Gear Solid's* book and require an element of stealth as well as trigger finger speed. It's a slightly odd move setting the game solely in Egypt after the round the world trip of *Tomb Raider 3*, but the idea of a single level sounds intriguing.



Tomb Raider 4 could make game levels a thing of the past

past as *Tomb Raider 4* takes place as one continuous level. Featuring! A brand new inventory system allowing items to be combined, collected and stored. Boasting! More puzzles, more objects. Marvel! At the improved lightning. See Lara! Equipped with new

■ Well, what else do you expect her to do when she isn't working?



Bluffer's guide to Tomb Raider

Lorna who? Everything you need to know about Lara Croft.

1 Olde Folk Law says that the reason Lara Croft's breasts are so big is that when the original sketches were being done, the artist's pen slipped. This "boob" on the artists behalf, it was decided, actually made Lara look better.

2 The first system *Tomb Raider* appeared on was The Sega Saturn.

3 The previous real-life Lara Croft, Nell McAndrew, appears on the front of (and naked inside) the new *Playboy*. The latest Lara, Lara Weller, was arrested by police on her way out from her first official photoshoot for waving her guns at passing motorists.

4 Lara was born on 14 February 1967, in Wimbledon. She's 5ft 9in, weighs 9st 4lbs and her measurements are 34D/24/35. Her blood type is AB negative.

5 There is a German magazine dedicated to Lara Croft. The first page reads: "Sie Haben sie bestimmt schon einmal gesehen: zum Zopf geflochtene Haare, volle Lippen, lange Beine und eine auffallend uppige Oberweite." We've no idea what that means.

■ You can run, but don't even think about hiding.



MIGHTY FRAG

PlayStation hit by *Quake*

Quake II on PSX | Superb four-player mode

The PlayStation conversion of *Quake II* is finally complete and ready for release at the end of September. **Arcade is glad to report that UK-based developer HammerHead has done a**

sterling job with the conversion of id's classic first-person-shooter and the game runs faster and more smoothly than we could have hoped.

The real triumph is the four-player mode. Previously, the only way you could frag a

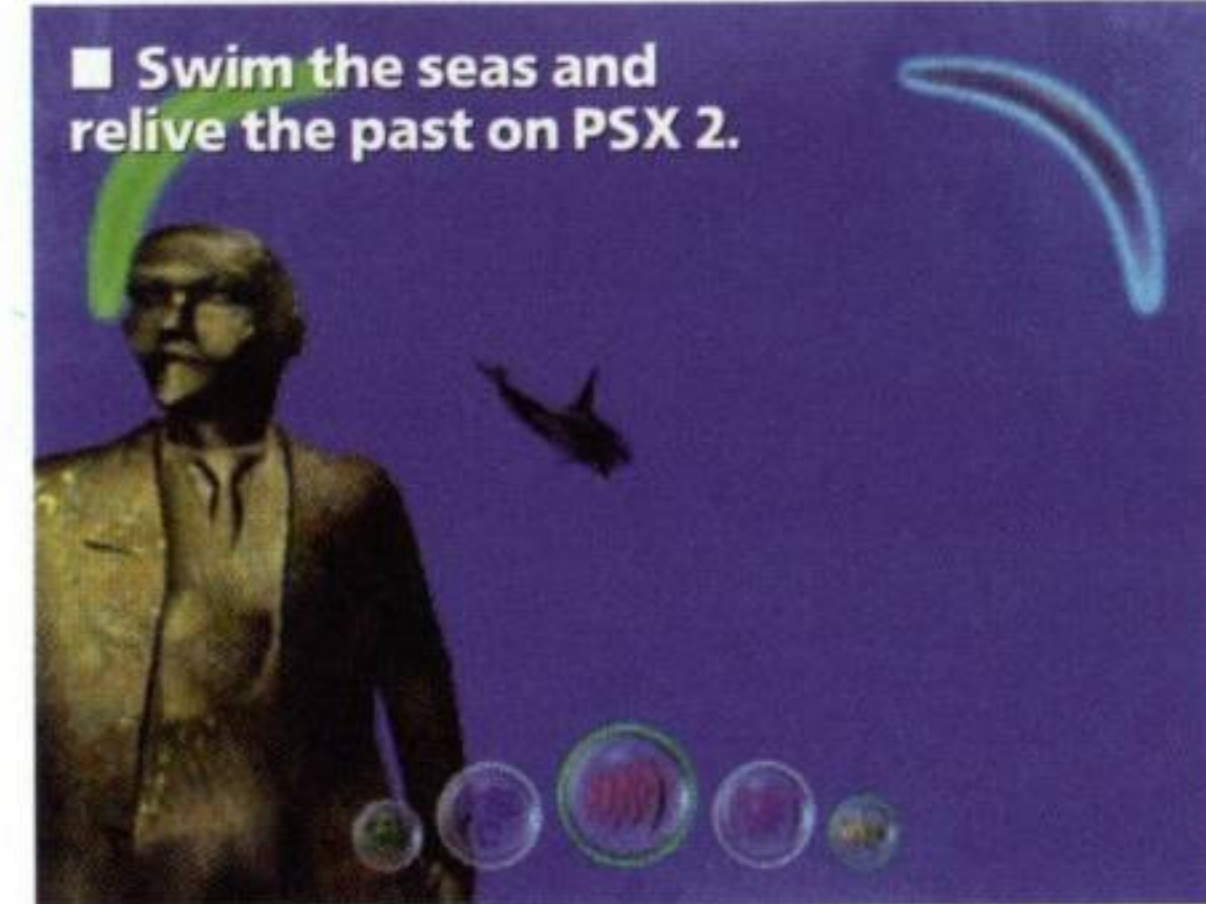
friend on the PlayStation was to link two machines and two televisions for *Doom*, which was a hassle. Making use of the multitap, *Quake II* bungs four players on the same screen with little loss of graphical sharpness. Adapting typical first-person shooter controls to



the more limited PlayStation controller was another worry for *Quake* fans, but the user setup is satisfying and immediate while still allowing devotees of the PC or N64 versions an advantage over *Quake* virgins. Naturally, *Quake II* makes excellent use of the analogue sticks for full fluid movement.

The story, objectives and weapons of the one-player mode are essentially the same as *Quake II* on PC, but new levels are included. This is a landmark release for PlayStation, so get saving. **A**

■ Swim the seas and relive the past on PSX 2.



PLAYSTATION WHAT?

PlayStation 2 – new facts emerge

Sony top dogs in lip loosening shocker

In the run-up to the official unveiling of Sony's Next Generation PlayStation at Tokyo Game Show in September, a few interesting new facts have emerged from the mouths of Phil Harrison (Sony US) and Ken Kutaragi (Sony Japan).

First up, Phil Harrison confirmed that PlayStation 2 will not have a built-in modem. According to Harrison, the reasoning for such a move is apparently not motivated by cost: "If we were to adopt a particular modem strategy

today and include it in with the hardware, then by the time we launch it would be obsolete. It's important that the consumer has a choice to get the best and most appropriate connectivity option for them and their game style."

Which, to read between the lines, should mean that an evolving range of modem add-ons will be available from the launch of the new console.

Harrison also confirmed that "initially" there will be no new joypad for PlayStation 2.

The unit will come packaged with a standard PlayStation Dual Shock controller, albeit in a "cool" new colour.

Meanwhile, Sony President Ken Kutaragi recently let slip the bombshell that the name of the new machine will contain the name PlayStation. Playstation what, he wouldn't be drawn on.

However, it's the games that count and two new titles came to light this month in the form of *Virtual Ocean* and *Kessen*. *Virtual Ocean* appears to be in the same vein as Sega's upcoming *Ecco The Dolphin* (a swim-

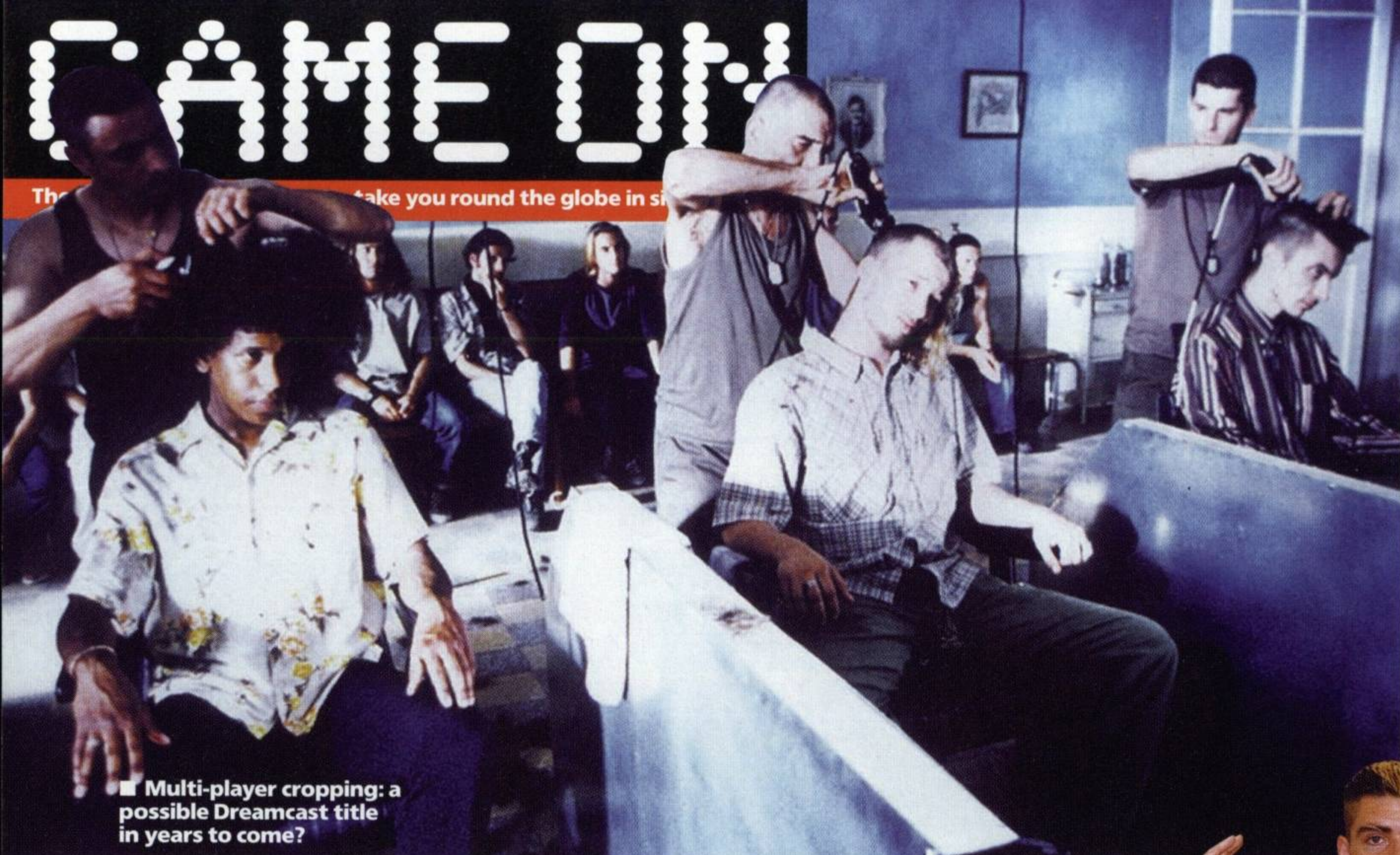
■ Love your joypad: it isn't going anywhere.

'em-up). *Kessen* is a real time feudal wargame from Koei that boasts the ability to handle more than 300 cavalymen on screen simultaneously. More on both of these titles next month.

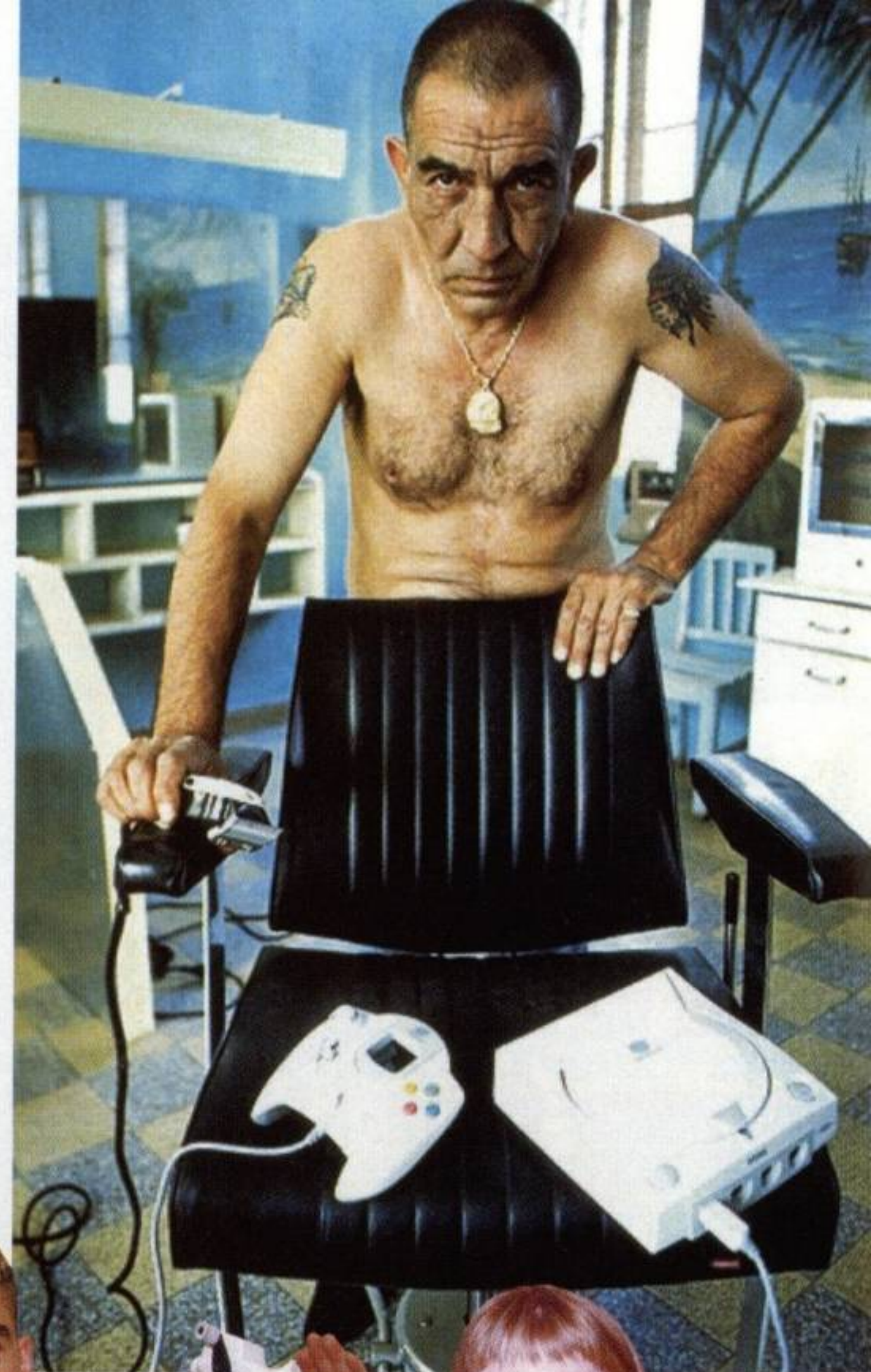


GAME ON

The... take you round the globe in s...



■ Multi-player cropping: a possible Dreamcast title in years to come?



IT'S NEARLY HERE

One month to go

Dreamcast steps up campaign | The biggest videogame console launch for five years

Sega is poised to launch an assault on the UK gaming industry when the long-awaited Dreamcast console hits the shops on 23 September. Regular readers of *Arcade* will know all about the slew of great games, both from within Sega and outside, that we'll be able to play in PAL format in a few weeks.

Less committed gamers will also now be aware of Dreamcast as Sega's subtle and unusual advertising campaign spreads throughout the land. Anywhere Arsenal have been recently, they've taken Dreamcast with them on their shirts and on

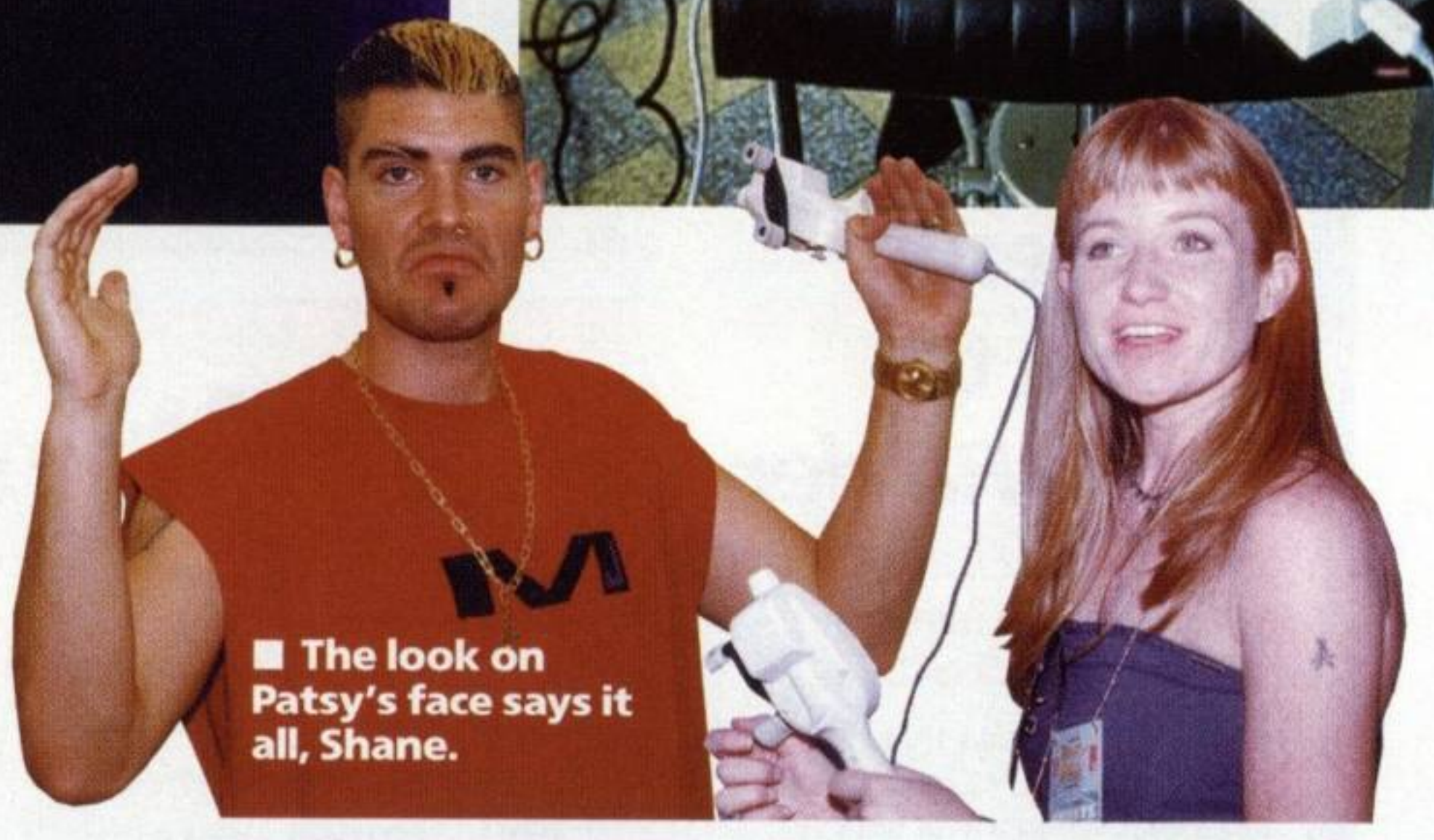
accompanying king sized advertising hoardings. Dreamcast pods have travelled the land for special promo events, including Party In The Park where Shane Boyzone and Patsy Palmer

The assumption has to be that the campaign is part of a wider strategy

were keen to show off the size of their catches in *Get Bass*. Anyone viewing early screenings of *The Phantom Menace* will also have seen the Dreamcast commercials, soon to hit terrestrial TV, which Sega is

hoping will translate some of the philosophy behind the console. The first depicts a trio of burly barbers, who live up their mundane occupation by competing to shave heads. The

second stars a group of children attempting to be the first to hit a buoy in the sea – one of the boys uses a catapult, ie a cheat. Robbie Williams, currently touting his wares around the videogames industry (see over), provides the



■ The look on Patsy's face says it all, Shane.

soundtrack. These advertisements attempt to portray the communal nature of the Dreamcast and assert that playing videogames is simply an extension of the games we invent every day to make life more interesting. Sega's tack is certainly off-beat: no game footage, no boasts concerning superior technology and no real information about the machine. The assumption has to be that this is part of a wider strategy.

Meanwhile, sample pods are gradually surfacing at retail outlets around the country and a pre-sale rental deal (where you can take the Dreamcast home for a couple of days prior to the release date) should now be operating at Blockbuster Video. Most game

stores are offering pre-order deals. Sega isn't telling how many machines it hopes to sell by Christmas, but 250,000 is the figure currently doing the rounds.

News on the Dreamcast's on-line facilities is a little more vague. Full e-mail and Internet start-up will be available for free from day one, but true on-line gaming may not be possible until a few months after launch.

If you're still wavering over whether to shell out £199 in a month's time, wait for the next issue of *Arcade*, where we tell you absolutely everything you could possibly want to know about Dreamcast, its software, its peripherals, its on-line network and its future.

Smack my pitch up | *Arcade sets out to annoy and offend with unsavoury game ideas. And succeeds.*

No 135: Begging For It

■ **The pitch:** An RPG in which you play a tramp forced to beg and imbibe cheap scrumpy in order to sustain your existence. Plan complex begging strategies until you progress to the *Big Issue* selling levels in which you must develop a tourist-baiting patter. With money made you can buy a shit tin whistle and go busking, or simply spend it on Special Brew. Struggle to avoid the temptation of the offy while attempting to keep control of your rabid,

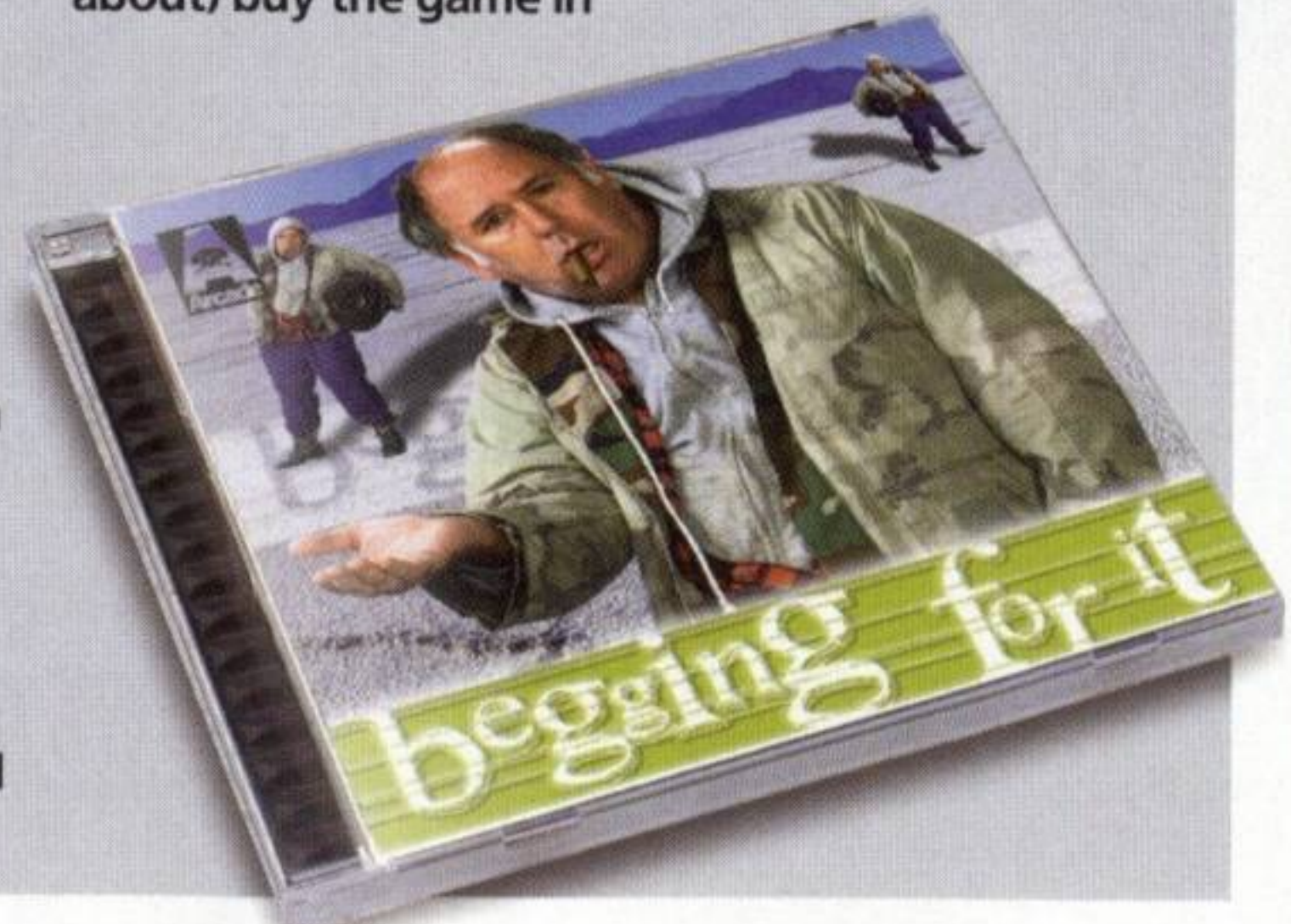
starving dog. A battle system enables you to wrestle with fellow vagrants for no reason, bar providing sick voyeuristic thrills for passers-by.

■ **The response:** Well... RPGs are always popular, and the game's setting is certainly different from the old "goblins and wizards" thing. It's a novel and interesting idea, but I think a lot of people would take offence and it could land you in hot

water. However, if for every copy sold a donation was made to help the homeless then players could (just about) buy the game in

good conscience and so everyone would benefit. I think.

■ **Kev Shaw, Eutechnyx**



NEW GAME

Bastard son of Micro Machines

The next game in Codemasters' mini-racing series won't feature vehicles at all.

Excitement has grown from the moment that Codemasters first revealed that Andrew Graham was close to completing a new game in his celebrated *Micro Machines* series. Then when the company claimed that this new game wouldn't feature vehicles at all, it felt like April Fool's Day.

However, initial sketches show bipedal figures, called Little

Bastards. This is also the working title for the game, suggesting that the tone will be darker than previous *Micro Machines* outings. These creatures will still take on giant environments, but there are no details on how the racing will function – or if the eight-player mode will remain. Codemasters is aiming for a pre-Christmas release on the PlayStation.



■ **Little Bastards, or a little joke?**



■ The days of the lurid jumpsuit may well be set to return, with the launch of *TrickStyle*.



HOVER CRAFT

Ready for boarding

TrickStyle points the way towards the future of the Dreamcast

Sega knows that it is vital that the UK Dreamcast doesn't launch with a bunch of titles that have been out in Japan for six months. As great as *Sonic Adventure*, *Sega Rally* and *Virtua Fighter* are, the importers have had them in stock since December. To avoid the vague feeling that the UK launch is in some way secondhand, stunning home-developed software is vital.

Step forward Criterion, currently putting the finishing touches to gorgeous hoverboard racer *TrickStyle* (first revealed in *Arcade 7*). The UK will get this game within two weeks of launch and it could well prove to rank alongside the heavyweights from Sega Japan.

A cast of racers are selectable to board at

astoundingly high speeds through futuristic cityscapes. A combination of speed and stunts is essential to the gameplay, with trick combos allowing the player to gain velocity, access additional routes or even set traps for opponents throughout the course of a race. The option to customise courses in multi-player mode is deeply appealing.

The vision of skate and snowboard chic transported to a future environment immediately makes *TrickStyle* one of the most stylish-looking Dreamcast games to date. It should also be one of the first games to offer a 60Hz option which allows typically slower PAL games to run as fast as their NTSC versions. **A**



The world of videogames: we take you round the globe in six p



■ Robbie panicked when he noticed he was shrinking.

TAKE THAT

Let EA entertain you

Robbie to star in FIFA 2000 | New song will feature

EA Sports has slipped an early goal past its footy game rivals by securing the services of cheeky pop chappy Robbie Williams for *FIFA 2000*. The official licence already means that *FIFA 2000* is top of those Christmas shopping lists, but this latest coup can only

arouse further interest in the football game brand of the moment.

Although final details of this momentous pop collaboration have yet to be confirmed, *Arcade* can reveal that Robbie Williams will be a playable character in the game, perhaps to be unlocked by victory in certain game modes. Like the hordes of professional players in *FIFA 2000* Robbie should

appear as a good likeness of himself, although he may be denied the opportunity to play for his beloved Port Vale due to their lower division status.

Robbie will record a new song for the soundtrack of *FIFA 2000*, which has been provisionally slated for a commercial release – and subsequent chart assault – on the double A-side of a Robbie single later this year. **A**

Orient excess

It could only happen in Japan



Fine and dandy

■ If you invented a game involving massive hulking robots bashing the hell out each other, you'd probably call it something suitably butch and techno-friendly. Perhaps *MechWarrior* or *Shogo: Mobile Armour Division* would be sensible choices, but not for Japanese developer Human. The company's new PlayStation robot battle game is named *Remote Control Dandy*, a title which suggests the

distant manipulation of a flamboyant and limp-wristed gentleman in a velvet cape (press Square to twirl his cane). Then again, one of the robots is called Galahad and does have a mildly camp look about him.

Other dubious software titles announced recently include a PlayStation beat-em-up from Media Works called *Lord Of Fist*.

■ Next month: the craze of the cooking sim explored.



■ Galahad: mildly camp robot?

■ Would you look at the polygons on that baby...



COLIN MCRAE 2

Clumsy Colin is at it again

Rally follow-up imminent.

The world of entertainments seems to revolve around sequels, prequels and trequels, with the distinct motto of: if it works, do it all over again. No surprise,

then, that *Colin McRae Rally* should deserve a follow-up.

Codemasters is working on it at the moment. An *Arcade* source revealed that the detail of the cars has been bumped up from 400 to 700 polygons. There are

to be more tracks, with more roadside detail. And the PC version is being programmed completely separately to the PlayStation game, to make the most of the hardware. Expect enhanced driving fun.

INCOMING

Tasty gaming morsels roasting slowly on the development spit

3 months



Warpath: Jurassic Park

■ PlayStation
■ Dreamworks/EA
■ October

Bizarre dino beat-'em-up extension to the Jurassic Park brand where you chow on humans for health.



Mission: Impossible

■ PlayStation
■ Infogrames ■ October

If this message doesn't self-destruct in five seconds, you'll know this cinematic adventure is finally finished and ready to rumble.



Battlezone 2

■ PC
■ Pandemic/Activision
■ October

Return of the expansive space action/strategy, beaming down into a world of mauve mountains and orange skies.

6 months



Everybody's Golf 2

■ PlayStation
■ Sony ■ December
What Smash Court is to tennis, Everybody's Golf is to the sport of woods, irons and putters. That's cute, funny and clever, then.



Roadsters

■ N64/PlayStation/
Dreamcast ■ Titus
■ Christmas

Cheerily thrilling arcade racer involving convertibles. Just like *Speed Devils*, you'll need to bet on your performance to progress.

1 year



Virtua Striker 2 (v2000)

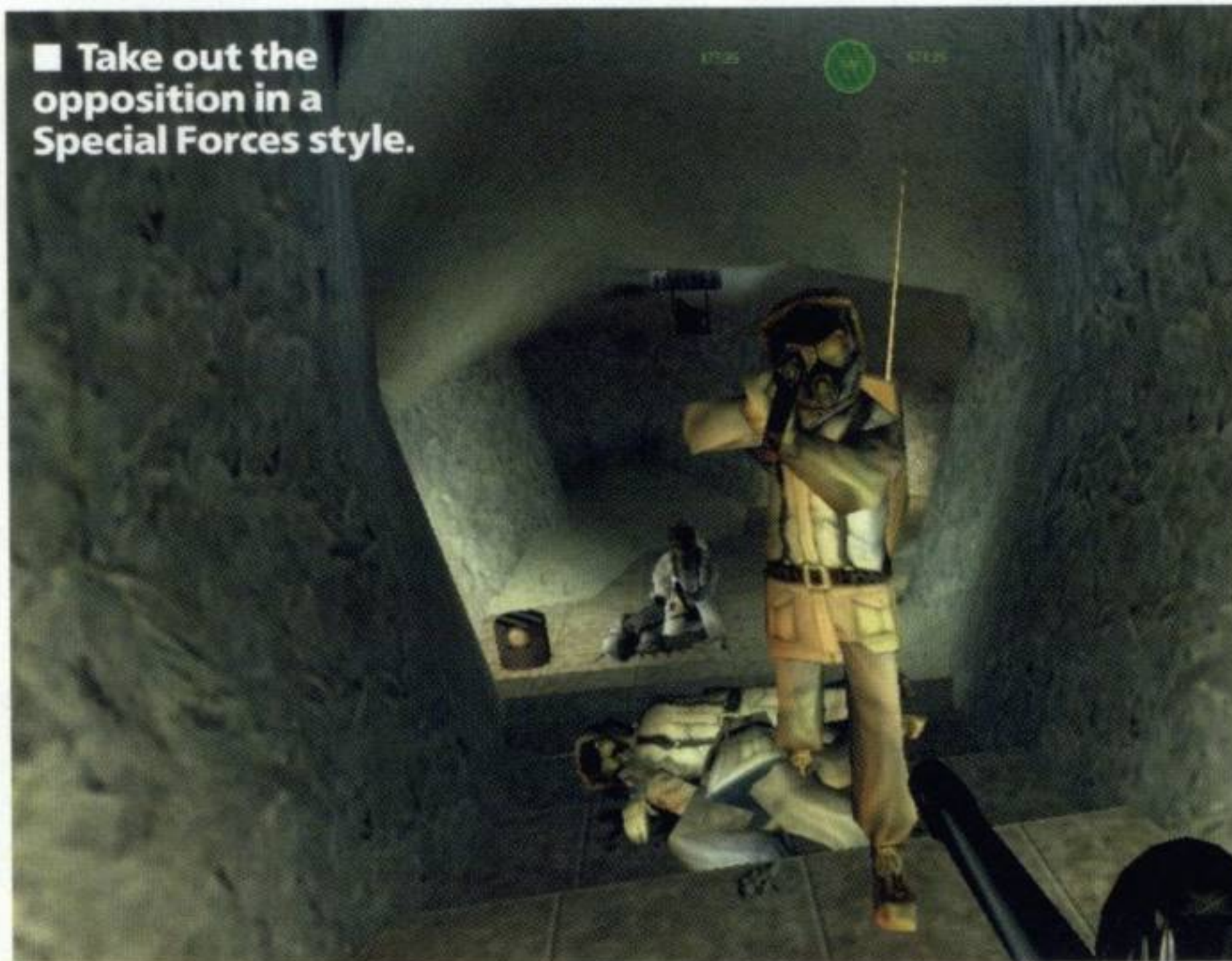
■ Coin-op/Dreamcast
■ Sega ■ Early 2000

The coin-op is only an update version using the new Naomi hardware, but console owners will be gagging to play this classic.

■ That gun will do exactly what it says on the tin.



■ Take out the opposition in a Special Forces style.



Sam Richards' World of Games



Space is the place

Nintendo never exhibits any games at the twice-yearly Tokyo Game Show because the company doesn't like playing with the other boys. Instead it hosts its own Spaceworld expo, which is held in Japan next month.

Among the games destined for an appearance is *Zelda: Gaiden*, a kind of add-on adventure to the celebrated *Ocarina Of Time*. Originally this was slated only to appear on obscure Jap-only peripheral the 64DD but Nintendo has seen sense and looks to be preparing a cartridge version. *Mario RPG 2* and *Mario Party 2* are two other titles Arcade is getting mildly excited about. Full story on Nintendo Spaceworld in next month's Game On.

Olympian feats

Wallet-wielding Eidos has recently snapped up the International Olympic Committee license, which gives the company the rights to produce games based on Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Eidos is particularly smug about this deal since the Olympic licence is one of few sporting brands with true worldwide appeal.

The Sydney 2000 game is already well underway at UK developers Attention To Detail, as previously reported in this column. PC and PlayStation versions are confirmed, with other formats under consideration.

PocketStation canned

After months of indecision, Sony has confirmed that its miniature handheld PocketStation will never be released in the UK. Although a big success in Japan, the relevance of the PocketStation on the UK gaming scene was always under debate. Sony is now believed to be working on an improved version of the PocketStation for compatibility with PlayStation 2.

NEW GAME

Fortune favours the brave

Activision signs licence with *Soldier Of Fortune* mag | An ultra-realistic PC shooter is the result

Videogames are about to take another step towards violent realism with the release of *Soldier Of Fortune*, a PC first-person shooter developed by Raven and to be released by Activision in November. You play a mercenary hired by the US Government to despatch an international cabal of terrorists over 10 missions across the globe.

Soldier Of Fortune has been created in conjunction with

America's "military action adventure" magazine of the same name, and the major result of this partnership has been to recruit former Special Forces officer and combat mission expert John F Mullins to oversee the creation of the game. The developers now believe that *Soldier Of Fortune* offers a realistic portrayal of mercenary operations without sacrificing the gameplay.

It uses a highly-modified version of the *Quake II* engine with the emphasis on character modelling. A wide variety of intelligent enemies will confront

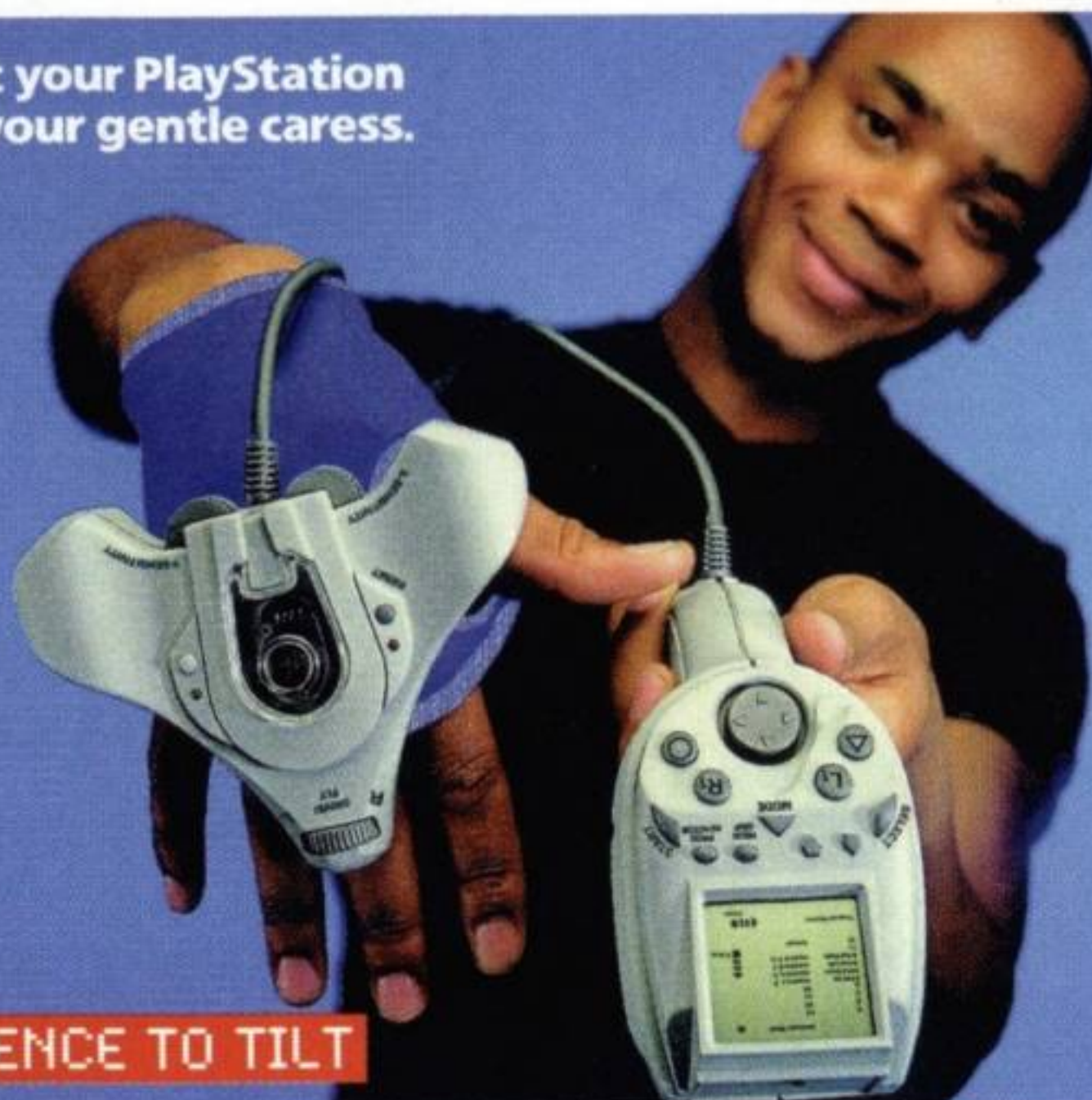
you throughout the game and each can be hit in one of 26 "gore zones" about the body, a detail which enables *Soldier Of Fortune* to invest the receivers of the bullets with realistic (and bloody) reactions. Arcade watched a programmer using a sniper rifle shoot the hat from atop the head of a distant computer opponent, who instinctively defended his face with a briefcase. This was then shot from his grasp and the enemy nullified with a headshot. The ratings men won't like it, but the detail of the game is absolutely incredible.



■ *Soldier Of Fortune*: real.



■ Let your PlayStation feel your gentle caress.



LICENCE TO TILT

Hand in glove

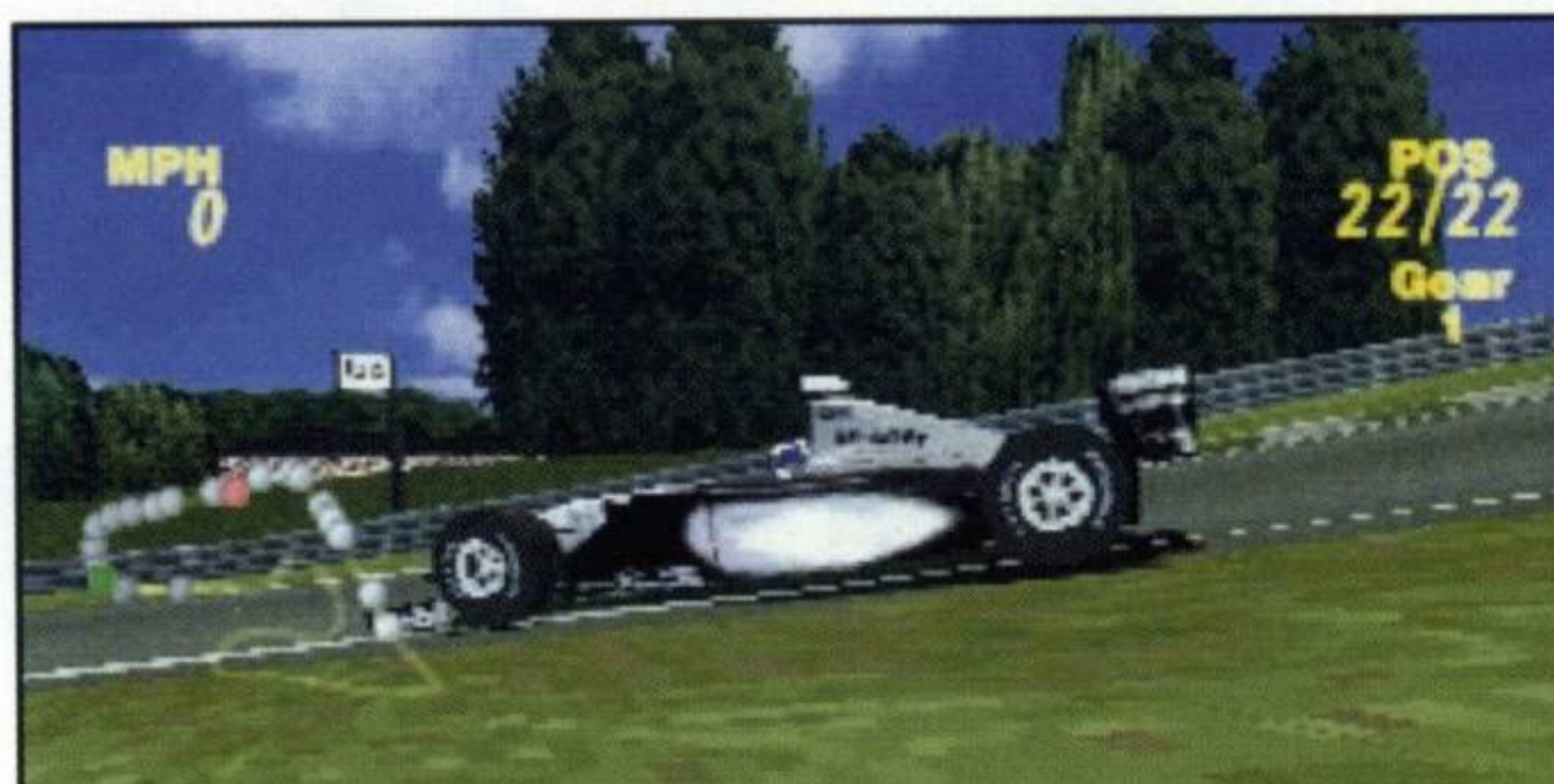
Another crazy peripheral, but it might just work

■ Every time some hapless company launches a "revolutionary" PlayStation controller, particularly anything involving a glove or a helmet, the usual response at Arcade is to chuckle heartily. The Gamester Evolution Control System is different, and is actually a well-considered piece of kit which, if unlikely to be an essential purchase in its own right, does prove that motion sensitive "tilt" technology can work. Arcade playtested the

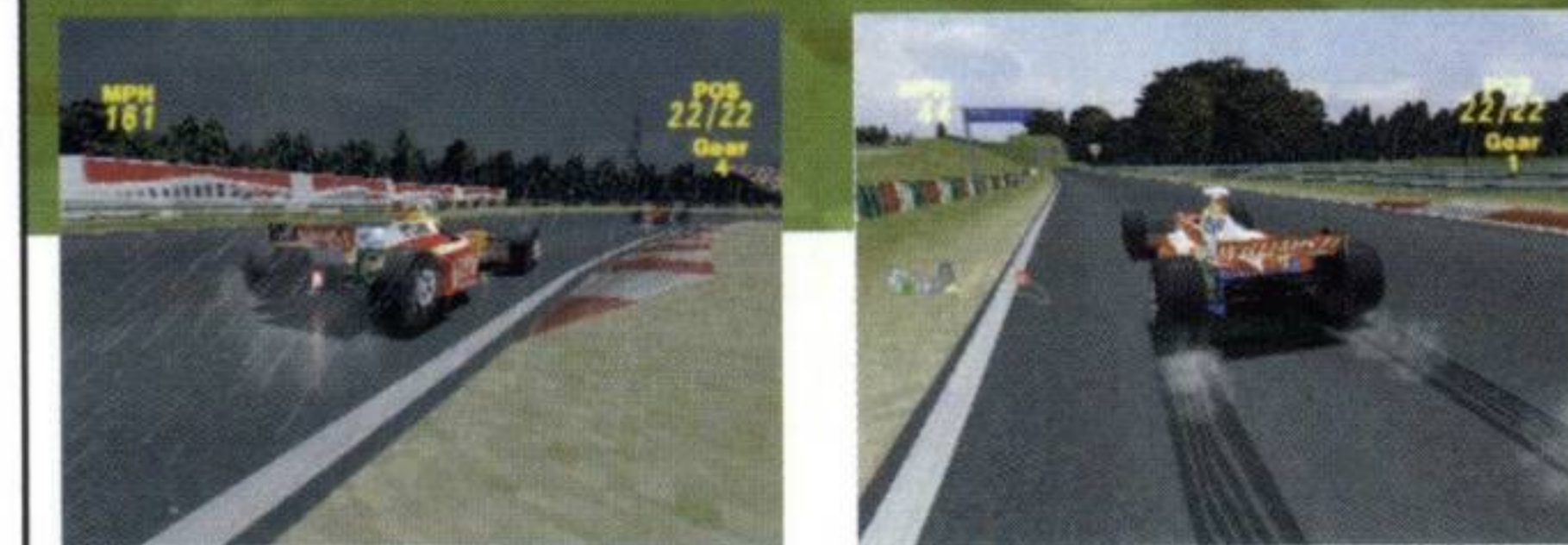
Evolution controller recently. It consists of a Reactor unit attached to a glove, and a separate GripStick. The Reactor senses tiny movements of the wrist, which are used to denote direction or acceleration. The GripStick houses all the regular function buttons. The specs can be adapted so the two units can be used together.

The Evolution Control System is back-compatible with every PlayStation game. Arcade tried it with *Gran Turismo*, and while it

took a while to get used to, the controller was surprisingly intuitive. Gamester claims the system is so versatile that it will satisfactorily control every type of PlayStation game - to prove the point, Arcade had it working of a fashion with *Tekken 3*. The system will eventually launch at around £50. The price and relative complexity of the Evolution Control System will probably dissuade most gamers, but it will be an essential purchase for hardcore techie gamers.



■ Eye candy, yes. Brain candy, who knows?



NEW GAME

An all new formula

New box, whack a Flake in it, and hey presto - F1 '99

After last year's shockingly poor *F1 '98* (Was it the worst sequel ever?), Psygnosis has booted Visual Sciences off the franchise and started from scratch with motorsport gaming specialists, Studio 33, at

the helm for this year's installment - *F1 '99* for PlayStation. As you would imagine, this year's effort contains all of this year's stats, drivers, tracks, Murray Walker commentary and the like, but then they always do, don't they? What's remarkable about *F1 '99* is the

graphical sheen. It doesn't run in hi-res proper, but looks like it does. The pop-up scenery of old is gone, the cars in the distance no longer look like Lego and the two-player split-screen can now handle all the cars. Eye candy it has, but can it deliver brain candy to match?

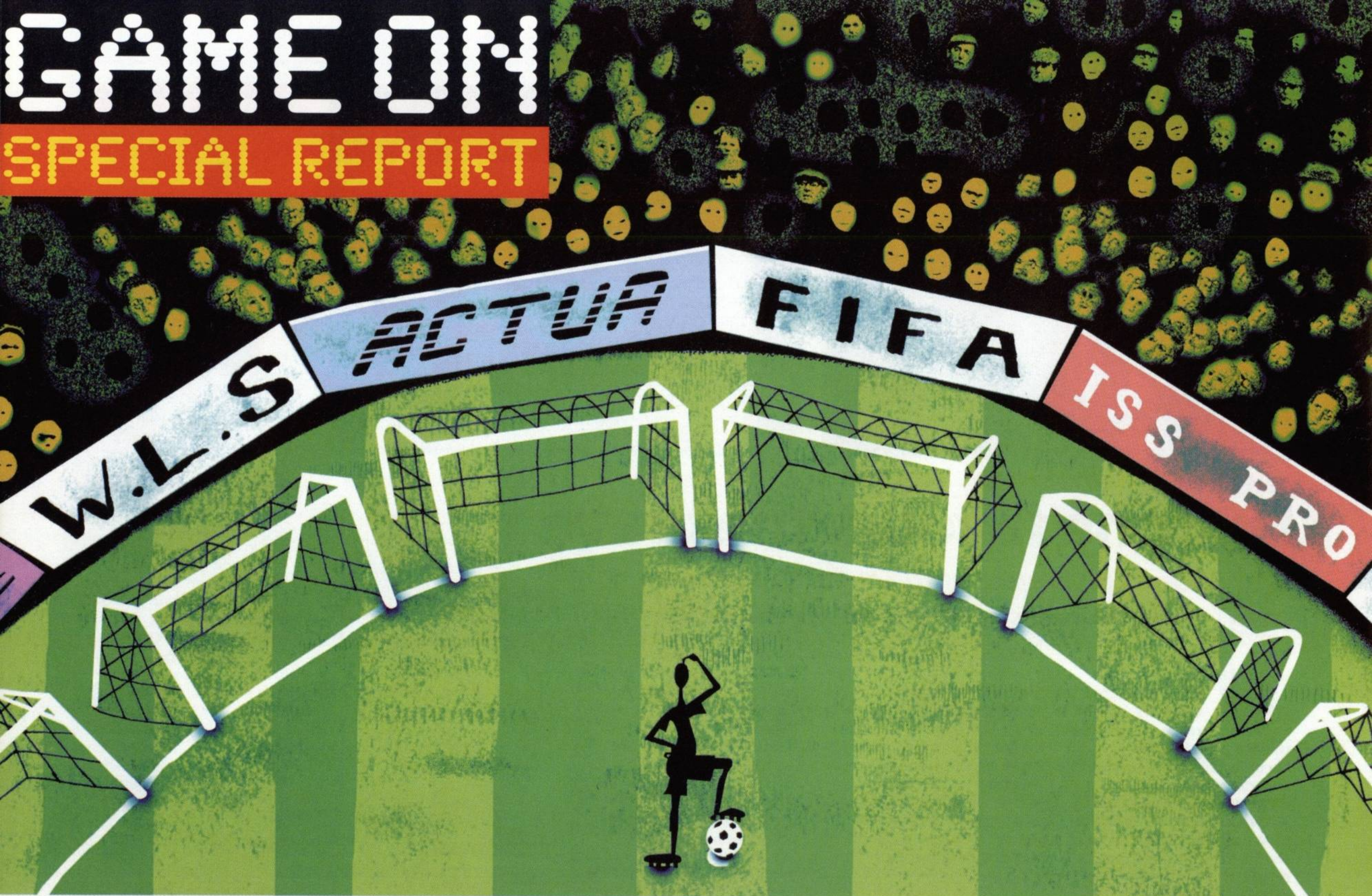


ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

NEWS ANALYSIS

A new football season: but will it be a whole different ball game?

The rules are changing in the world of football game development. *Arcade* investigates.

By Steve Merrett

The cliché that football is a “funny old game” is no longer applicable. While developers attempt to recreate the drag-backs and 30-yard volleys of the real thing, other similarities between the Premiership and football videogames are becoming more noticeable.

As the Premiership becomes split into the haves and have-nots, a similar divide is growing within software publishers. Just as only Arsenal, Manchester United and Chelsea can bankroll the crème-de-la-footballing-crème, so EA and Eidos have started to pull away from their rivals with big names and bigger deals.

Gaming connoisseurs will argue that Konami's *ISS* is the best kickaround you will find, yet it sells considerably less than chart-topping *FIFA*, from EA. You'll also be pushed to locate a game that appeals more to casual users than *FIFA*. Why? Because it has Bergkamp on the front and you can play as the likes of Arsenal or Manchester United.

Therein lies the paradox. Konami's *ISS Pro* is widely regarded by gamers as the better of the two, yet *FIFA* is always firmly ensconced at

the top of the charts. Why? Money and marketing – the importance of which are growing. EA has spent so much time building the *FIFA* franchise that it can spend wads of money on TV ads and the best names to front the boxes. Konami, on the other hand, has more limited resources.

However, Konami doesn't do too badly out of it. “If you check the sales figures we have the second best selling football game

in Europe next to *FIFA*. We certainly outsold *WLS*, licence or not,” argues Konami spokesman Jon Murphy. Like the Murphy, Konami's not bitter.

Indeed, Konami is quite happy to take a back seat in marketing. “Gameplay makes *ISS* successful,” Murphy continues. “No other football game can touch the way *ISS* plays”. But surely Konami would relish the chance to add real players to its obvious match

winner? “Of course,” he concedes. “If we had silly money, *ISS* would be the biggest and best.

“But Konami is a cautious company and we will not use real players' names unless we are sure we are legally entitled to.”

On the flip-side of the coin, cash-happy Eidos also feels gameplay is everything – but admits a strong licence and extensive marketing support is essential. “A good game will always sell,” Mike Newey, Eidos' football Product Manager, insists. “It is just that this is also a business environment and every element of the publishing process is becoming key to success.

“Everything needs to be done

Electronic Arts and Eidos have started to pull away from the rest



■ Is EA saturating the market with the release of Premier League Stars, a game suspiciously similar to the FIFA series?



■ It's spot the difference time with FIFA 2000.



■ Sony enters the footy game arena with This Is Football.



■ Signing up top rank players now seems crucial to a game's success.

well and that means financial commitment."

EA wouldn't confirm its marketing spend for FIFA, but different sources state the firm will spend more than £1 million promoting each update. EA doesn't consider this a luxury; just a reflection on how the industry is developing. "As FIFA reaches and appeals to a wider audience so our marketing budgets have had to grow to reach that wider audience," explains Executive

Product Manager Marc Aubernel. "Where television advertising was an occasional luxury, it is now a given fact.

"I think our media spend on FIFA last year was bigger than the whole EA marketing budget of a few years ago."

EA can only do this because of past sales. If it scored an own-goal with a dreadful game, sales would inevitably go down. This is a good sign that quality is still all-important – and that the money is used to improve a product that's already strong.

"We always consider any expenses relating to location visits or motion capture as an investment that makes a much better game, and a better game usually leads to much better sales," Aubernel reasons.

Another argument for the growing gulf is that Eidos and EA produce popular mass-market titles. They've also ploughed profits straight into the next generation of titles, adding the big names and endorsements that are now expected.

Nevertheless, these levels of competition haven't deterred

newcomers from entering the football fray. A successful football game can bring in more money than any other genre. Infogrames is launching a two-pronged attack this year with UEFA Striker in October and a Ronaldo game in November. Infogrames' Nathan Wilson realises the firm still has all to play for.

"I think the ideal time to get into football games was 18 months ago," he admits. "At that point FIFA was crap, but now the EA games are noticeably better. It will be very difficult to outdo the EA and Eidos games." Wilson still feels Infogrames' global nature will give it a good chance of breaking Eidos and EA's duopoly and sees the UEFA licence as an integral part of the Infogrames' game's success.

"We're doing our best to launch UEFA as a brand," he says. "FIFA is just a governing body, but UEFA means more to people."

The reason Eidos and EA splash the cash is because, at the end of the day, they can. Eidos' Michael Newey attributes the success of the firm's licensed games to "a good development and marketing process and, above all, a good game". He wouldn't be drawn on the actual marketing and licensing spend, but says: "You could buy an up and coming professional player for the amount we spend on each game.

ATTACKING FORMATION

Transfer round up

A guide to players warming up on the touchline...



ISS Pro Evolution

■ Konami

■ A tighter control system, more instinctive shooting opportunities – but, again, no licensed teams or players. The West Ham of football games: unpopular with the masses but loved by true connoisseurs of football.



more arcade-orientated experience could make it a shallow experience.



New UEFA title

■ Eidos

■ Silicon Dreams is currently updating its WLS engine. The Champions League game was the tightest effort yet from the Banbury-based team, but expect more intricate passing and skilled moves for the new UEFA title.

FA Premier League Stars

■ EA

■ Released one week after the start of the season, Stars will be the big summer hit. The chance to play any Premiership side and visit such perfectly recreated stadiums as Anfield, Old Trafford and, er, Filbert Street.

Ronaldo

■ Infogrames

■ The Game Boy Color version of the game will arrive first, so expect football's hottest property to resemble a cluster of gaudy pixels. The PlayStation version follows in January.

FIFA 2000

■ EA

■ As inevitable as a red card for Roy Keane. Details are scarce on the latest FIFA update, but early bets are predicting a History mode wherein great teams of yesteryear are available. Has only Lara Croft to beat to score the Christmas winner.

Player Manager 2000

■ Anco

■ Anco's addition to the management fold continues the rapid improvement of the Player Manager series. Updated stats for the new season and a more concise control system for PlayStation owners are promised.

Viva Football 2

■ Virgin

■ The last game seemed rushed and its brave attempt at realistic controls was flawed. Things are apparently being tightened up for the sequel, and the prospect of playing as the 1966 England team is always pleasant.



This is Football

■ SCEE

■ Sony jumps in with a title endorsed by the European players association. Due out in October, initial indications point towards a very playable game

Three Lions

■ Take 2

■ A handheld version of the official England game. But bear in mind that even ISS failed on the Game Boy.

A successful football game can bring in more than any other genre

"We don't think our games are cheap, and our marketing spend reflects this."

The quality of FIFA '99 and Champions League offers no indication that cash is being used to push poor games – although Eidos and EA have been criticised for the overt similarities between their titles. Eidos' Mike Newey counters: "It's not necessarily about being new – it's about being good. Our football games

combine new technology and novel ideas with established gameplay – which is what it is really about."

All the time that the major firms keep this in mind, football games will – gradually – improve. Just don't expect small firms to pull off giant-killing victories any more. Money is now as important as gameplay, and if a publisher can't pay, soon it won't be able to play.

SIGN 'EM UP

Bad management?

Endorsement fever continues

■ Just as the use of real players, kits and stadiums is playing a larger part in the creation of football titles, so endorsements are moving into managerial games. Recent football management efforts from Infogrames, Eidos and Gremlin have been endorsed by George Graham, Arsene Wenger and Kevin Keegan. The games-buying public

associates such managers with good quality and their use is certain to continue. As EA's Marc Aubernel says: "Using the best talent possible is paramount. People expect the best production values in film and TV – why not in games? Would you want to watch a movie that had no name actors?"



A PICTURESQUE FOOTPATH CAN QUICKLY LEAD TO YOUR VIOLENT AND BLOODY DATE WITH DEATH.



No.4
**THE GAME BOY
COLOR GUIDE TO
WOODLAND!**



Fig 1. Animals have no respect for your superior status in the food chain. A meat-eating animal (carnivorous) will attack your fleshiest anatomical part (arse).





Available in six different colour casings.

As makers of Game Boy Color, it's our obligation to ensure that you play safe out there.

A FEW MINUTES SPENT FAMILIARISING YOURSELF WITH THE TIPS IN THIS HANDY GUIDE WILL MEAN THAT YOU CAN ENJOY LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF GAMES WITHOUT COMING TO HARM.

TEST YOUR WITS

WHILST PLAYING GAME BOY COLOR IN WOODLAND YOU SHOULD ALSO BE WARY OF:

- A** Animals that offer you sweets.
- B** Mustachioed-men wanting to hold your hand.
- C** Walking too far and getting a stitch.
- D** All of the above.



Fig2. Chainsaw sound effects do not appear in any GBC game. Hearing such a sound will alert you of a psychopathic killer's presence. Probably behind you. Hockey masks are a dead giveaway.

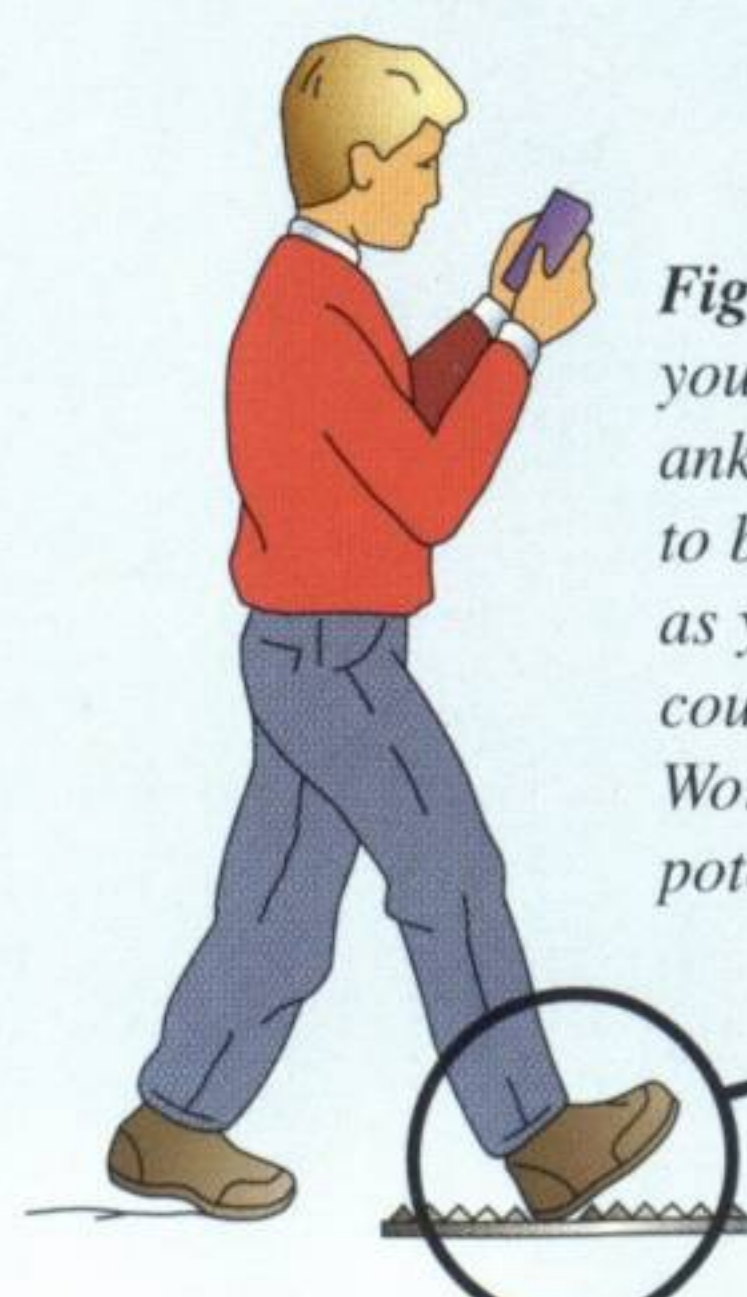
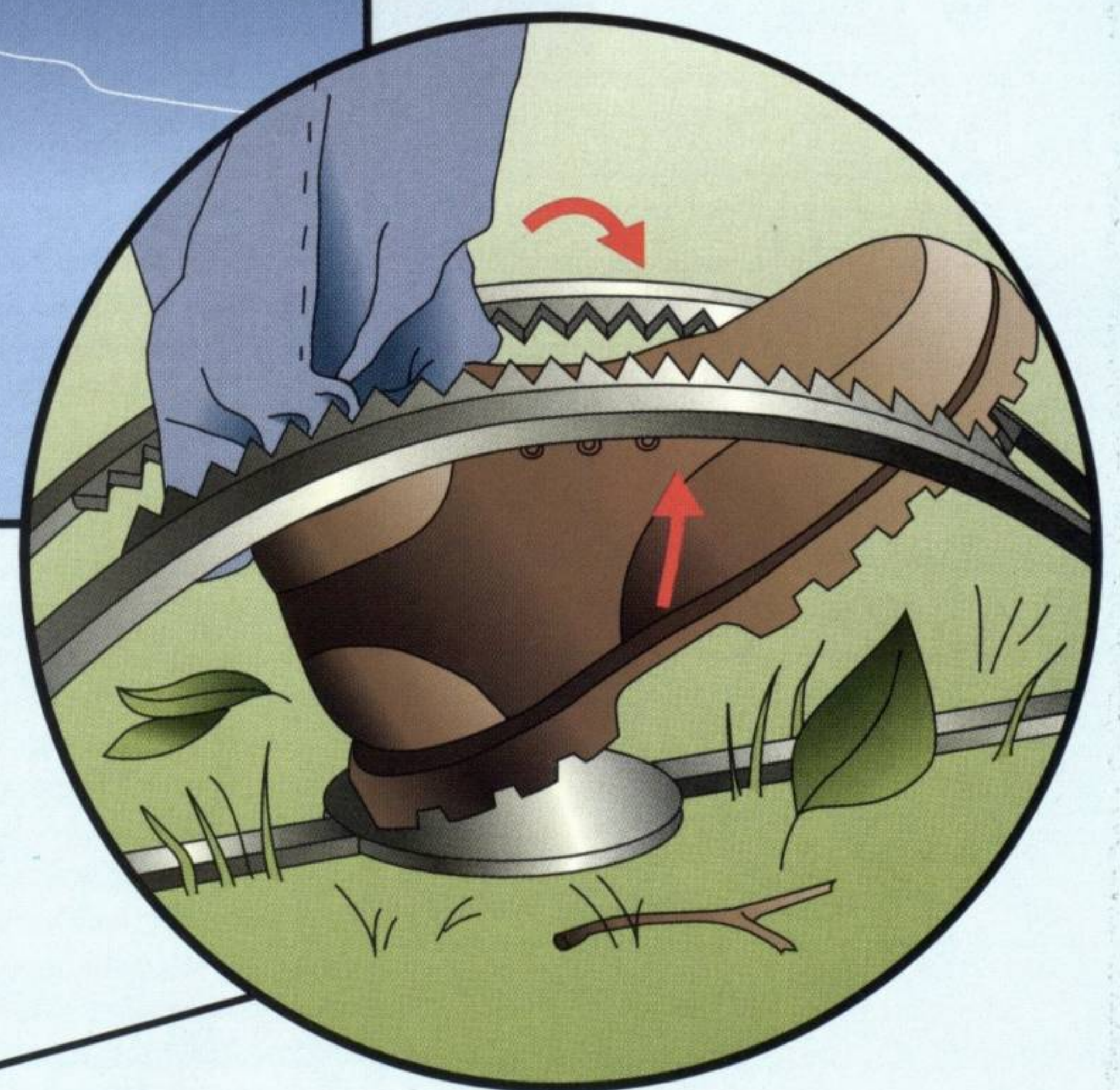


Fig3. A trap will sever your foot at the ankle causing you to bleed to death as you hobble courageously for aid. Worse still, ruin a potential high score.



REMEMBER: A SMART PLAYER IS A SAFE PLAYER.

“My Beautiful Seaside”

Oh, we do like to be beside the seaside. Provided we get to play videogames and eat candyfloss, of course...

■ The flash flood shook Wembley to its very foundations.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON

THIS MONTH

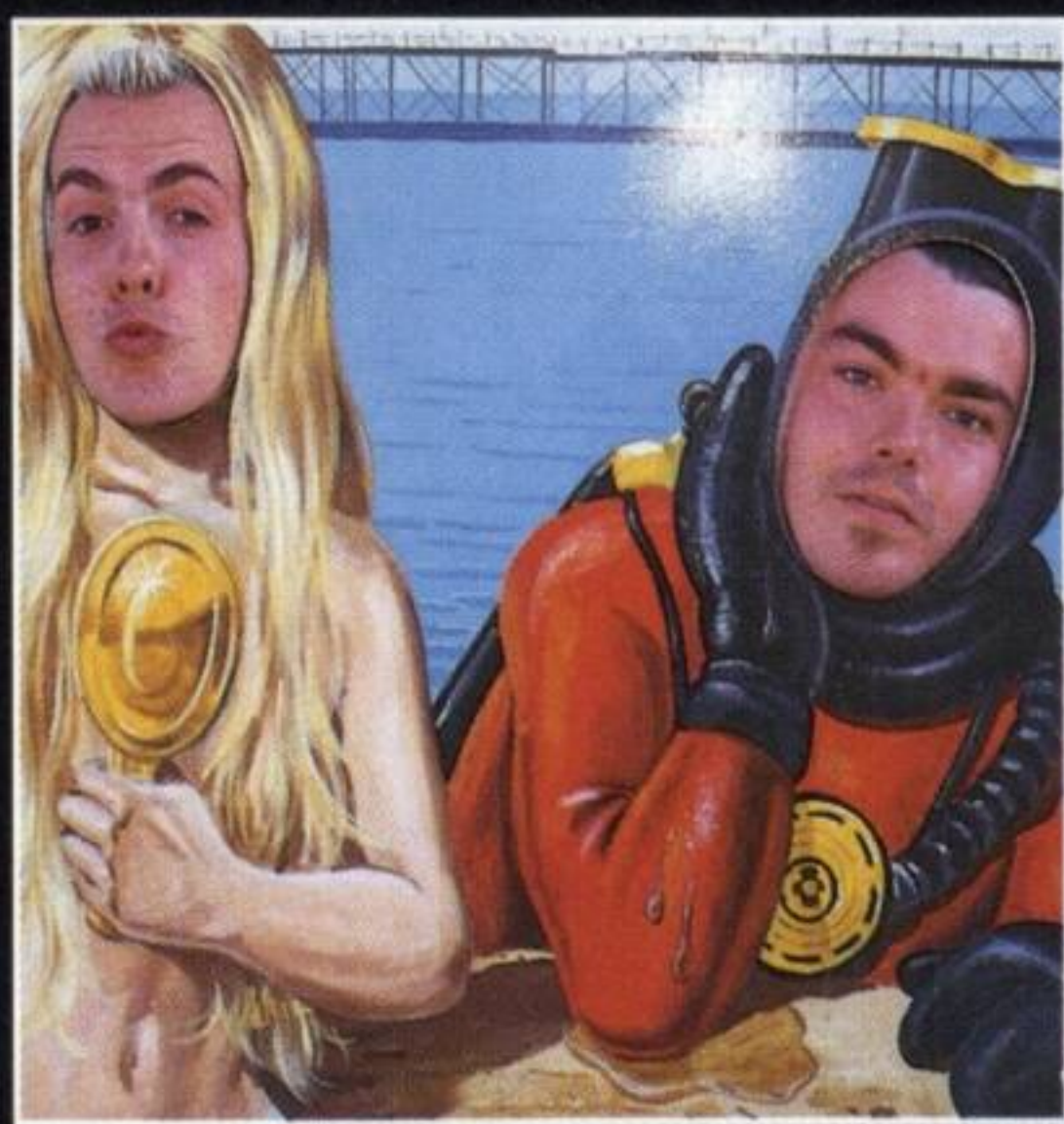
Palace Pier, Brighton

On the one hand Brighton is the sort of place you'd expect your granny to go on holiday, and on the other, it's the home of such cool bods as Fat Boy Slim and (it transpires) Phats out of Phats & Small's mum. There's something for everyone in this most celebrated of English seaside resorts. And no visit to the seaside would be complete without at least a cursory wander along the pier. Chock full of videogames and fairground rides, we couldn't think of a better place to take My Beautiful Arcade for a summer awayday.

Slot check

- Place: **Palace Pier, The Seafront, Brighton**
- Size: **Pier-ish**
- Entertainment: **Two traditional seaside amusement arcades, pub, restaurant, fairground (including helter skelter, dodgems, rollercoaster), and lots of seagulls. Mind your head.**
- How much: **Free entry and deckchairs. Most coin-ops £1 a pop.**
- Telephone: **01273 292599 (Tourist Information)**
- Opening Hours: **9.00am - 3.00am, 365 days a year**
- House rules: **No skateboarding, no dogs, no (ahem) photographs for professional use**
- Security: **Strict, with lots of scary big men with walkie talkies**





Pete & John

Brighton, *Ocean Hunter*, 24 & 28

Hello. What're you playing?

"*Ocean Hunter*. You have to shoot fish. We only stuck in a couple of quid, but we've been playing for hours."

Any good? "It's set under the sea, but the fish aren't nearly ugly or scary enough. The impact was high, but the gameplay was about as exciting as opening a can of sardines."

Are you in a submarine or something, then? "No, you've just got a helmet on and this big jetpack thing on your back."

That sounds a bit stupid. Are you into videogames? "Yeah, but

it's best to pretend not to be. It's cool not to like videogames, now."

[Worried] Er, is it? "Don't worry. People don't like TV either. Rots the brain, man."

So why are you on the pier playing games, then? "Er, because we were bored. Anyway, we do like games."

You just said that you didn't. "Everyone likes games. It's just not cool to say so. See?"

[Deeply confused]. Not really. "Not to worry."

Oh, alright then. Thanks. We, er, think.



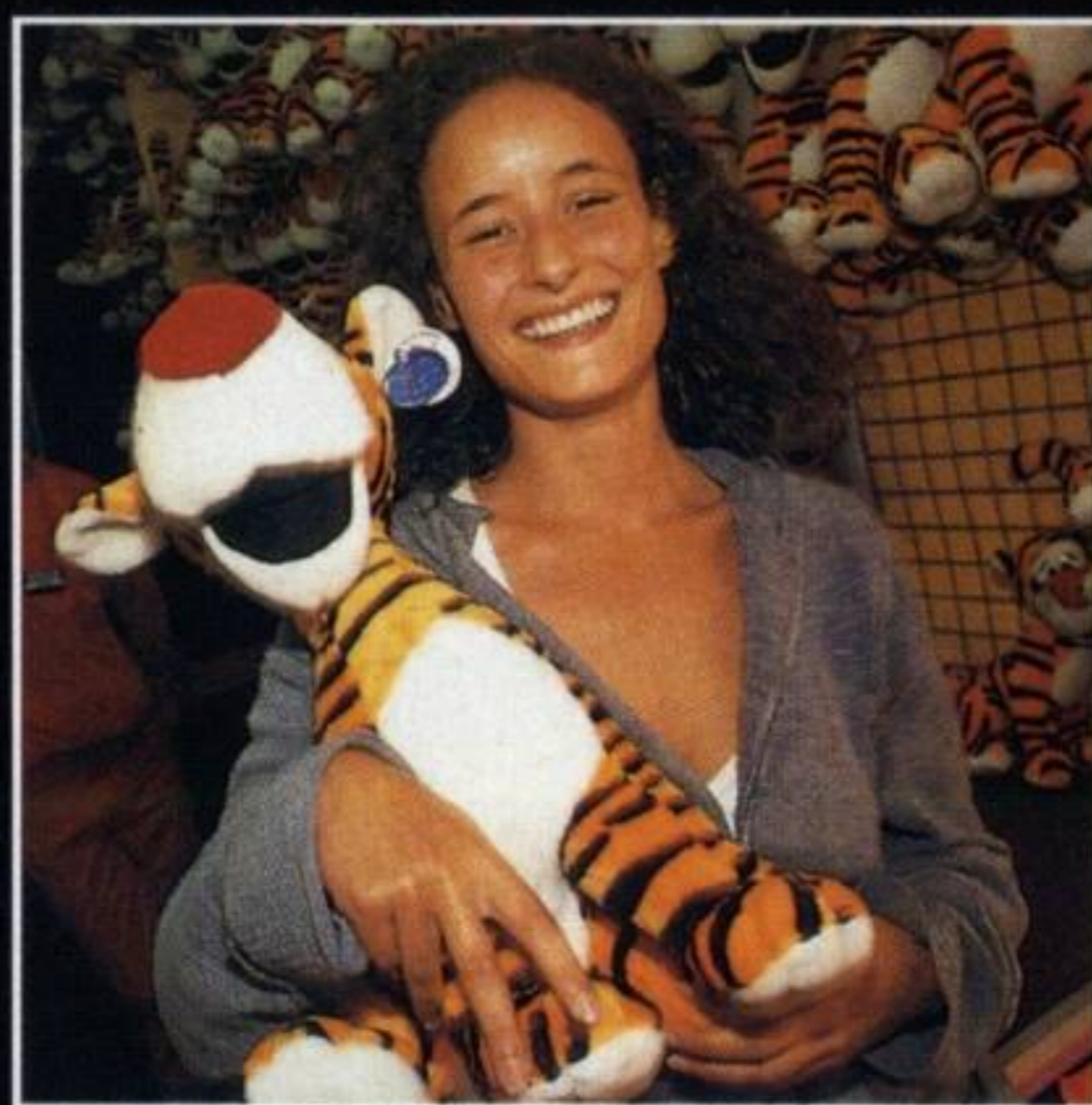
**“My Beautiful
Seaside”** Palace Pier,
Brighton



**“I’ve got the sneaking
suspicion the hoops are the
same size as the ball.”**



Lili Denmark, *Tigger Hot Shot*, 24



Blimey, it's windy. "Beautiful, though. Look at the sunset."

Brighton's lovely. What are you doing here? "I just finished my degree, so I'm staying on for the summer. It's quite nice doing nothing. Suppose I'll have to get a job soon, though."

[Beckoning with eyes] D'you reckon this game is fixed?

"You're supposed to throw these balls into the hoop to win a prize. But I've got the sneaking suspicion

that [hushed tones] the hoops are exactly the same size as the ball. Every time I got near, the ball bounced out again."

How come you're holding a Tigger, then? Did you win? "No. The man behind the stall let me hold one for the photo. I've got to give it back afterwards."

Oh. Are you a videogame fan? "My housemates have a Nintendo 64. They waste all their time, even though I keep telling them they should go out and do something more productive."

That's a bit harsh. "But the thing is, I've found myself drawn into it."

What, so do you have to sneak down in the middle of the night to play? "Pretty much."

You should be proud.

Videogames are cool now. "Really?"

[Thinks] Except some blokes just told us they weren't. "Well, that's alright then."

Errmm. Thanks. Bye.



"My Beautiful Seaside"

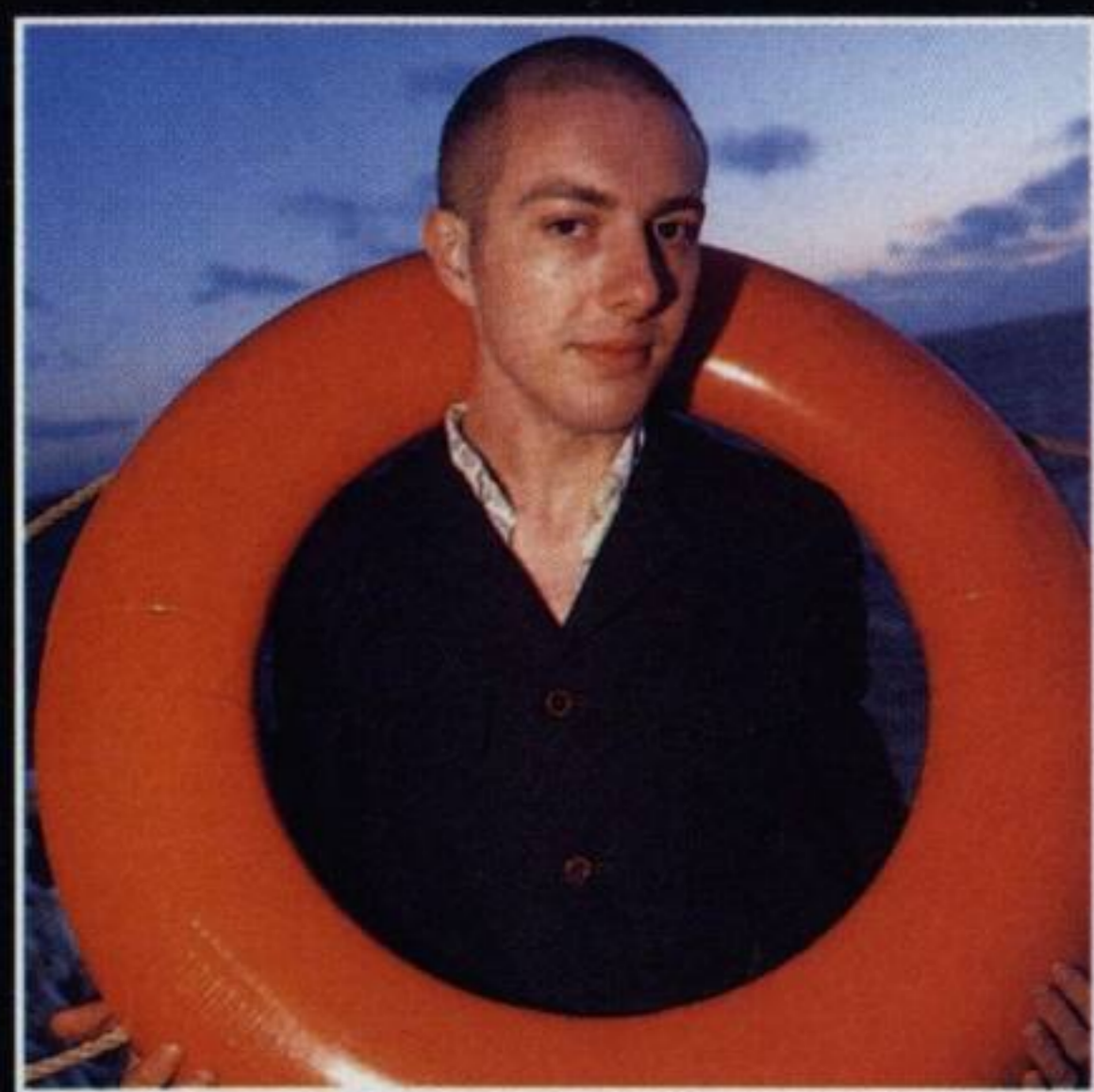
Palace P
Brighton



"Sid Owen from *Eastenders* used to live down our road. He's moved away now."



Simon, Bumper Boats, Brighton, 23



Hello. What do you do for a living? [Proudly] "I'm a chocolatier. I work for a company called Choccywoccydoodah."

Choccywoccywhat? "We make things out of chocolate. Wedding cakes, mainly."

What, entirely out of chocolate? "Well, there's chocolate sponge in the middle, but that's still technically chocolate, isn't it? [Pauses]. I've had my photo taken for a magazine before, you know."

Really? Which one? "*Bliss for Brides*. I was modelling one of my cakes."

Blimey. "Actually, I had one of my cakes on *Richard and Judy* recently. Richard Madeley said that it was the best chocolate cake he had ever tasted."

Nice one. What did Judy think?

"She wasn't there. She's never there any more. There's definitely something funny going on."

So, er, videogames. Are you a fan? "I've got an N64. I used to have a PlayStation. I thought that was better, to be honest."

Why? "I like the CDs - they're all shiny. The N64's carts are a bit ugly, aren't they?"

So what happened to your PlayStation? "I split up with my girlfriend. She was on the dole so she had loads of time and got really addicted. I got to keep all my toys, though."

You were lucky. At least she left you something.





Jennie, Sarah & Katherine

Stuffing their faces, Brighton, 18 apiece

What's happened to your candy floss? It was massive a minute ago. [All taking at once]. "It must be the wind. It's making it shrink. Eeeuuuu. It's blowing in our hair."
Better hurry up and scoff it, then. So are you from Brighton? Lots of famous people live here, don't they? "Phats out of Phats & Small's mum lives above my uncle Sam. Sid Owen from *EastEnders* used to live down our road, but he's moved away now."
Oh. That's a shame. Are you into videogames? "No."

What, not at all? "Well, we used to play videogames with our boyfriends."

[Jennie speaks]. "My brother's got an N64, and I like *Diddy Kong*."

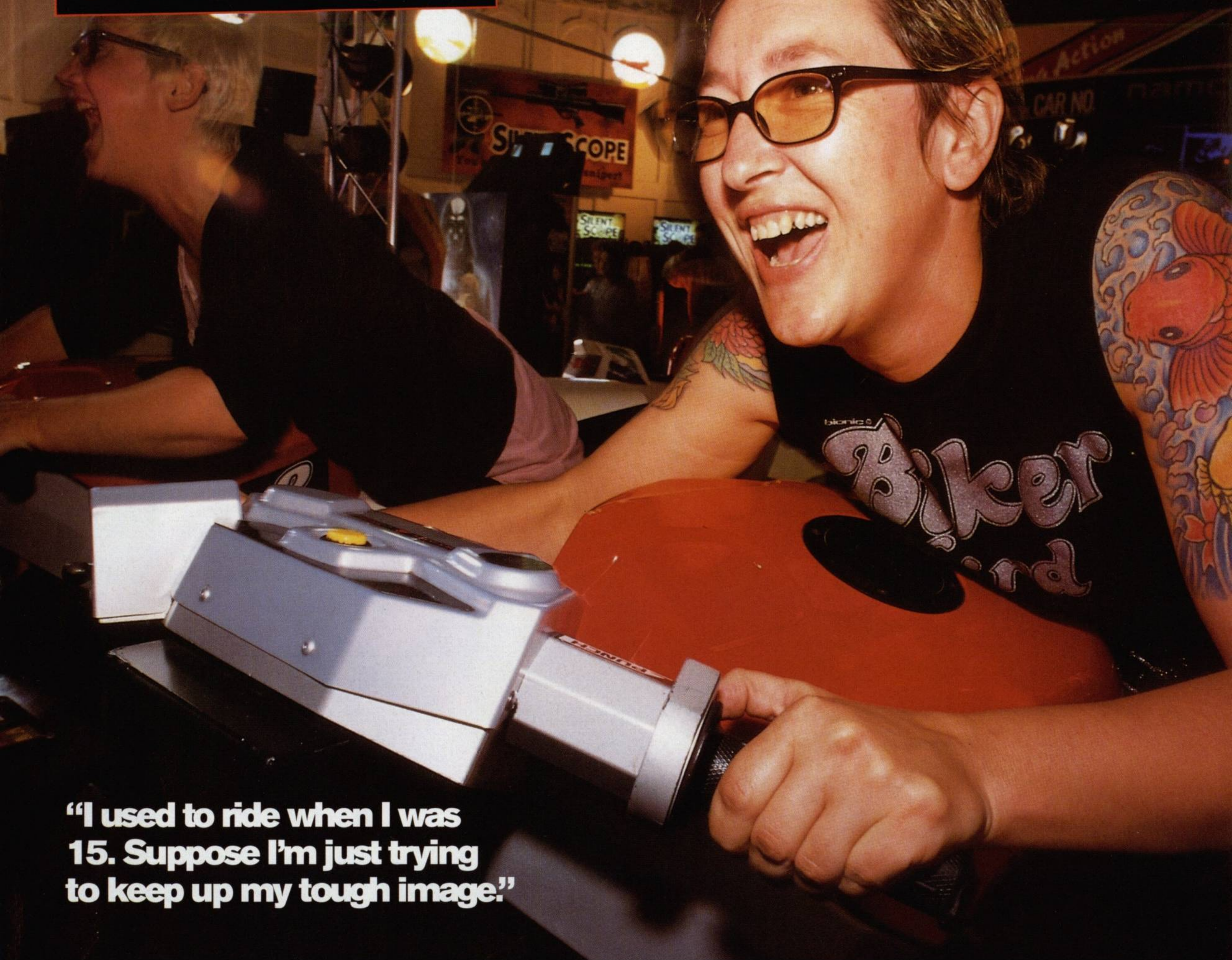
[Sarah] "I like playing that *Porsche Challenge* thing."

[Katherine] "I used to play *Doom* on my PC. And *Worms*. And *Solitaire*."

So between you, you've actually played quite a few games. Anyway, ladies, we'll leave you to it. Have a nice night. "Tatty bye."



"My Beautiful Seaside" Palace Pier, Brighton



"I used to ride when I was 15. Suppose I'm just trying to keep up my tough image."



Lucy and Deborah

Brighton, *Motor Raid*, 29 & 32

Hello. Are you really a biker babe? [Laughing.] "I used to ride when I was about 15. Suppose I'm just trying to keep up my tough image."

You ought to have a scooter living in Brighton. "I'd quite like one of those motorised scooters. They look rather nippy to me. A friend of mine's got a chopper."

[Excitedly] What, a Raleigh Chopper? "No, no. A proper motorbike with drop handlebars. That would be great."

[Dismissively] For someone who's got at least a passing

interest in bikes, you weren't doing too well on *Motor Raid*. "Eh?"

You were leaning the wrong way for a start. [Defensively] "Yes, well it took a while to work out it out."

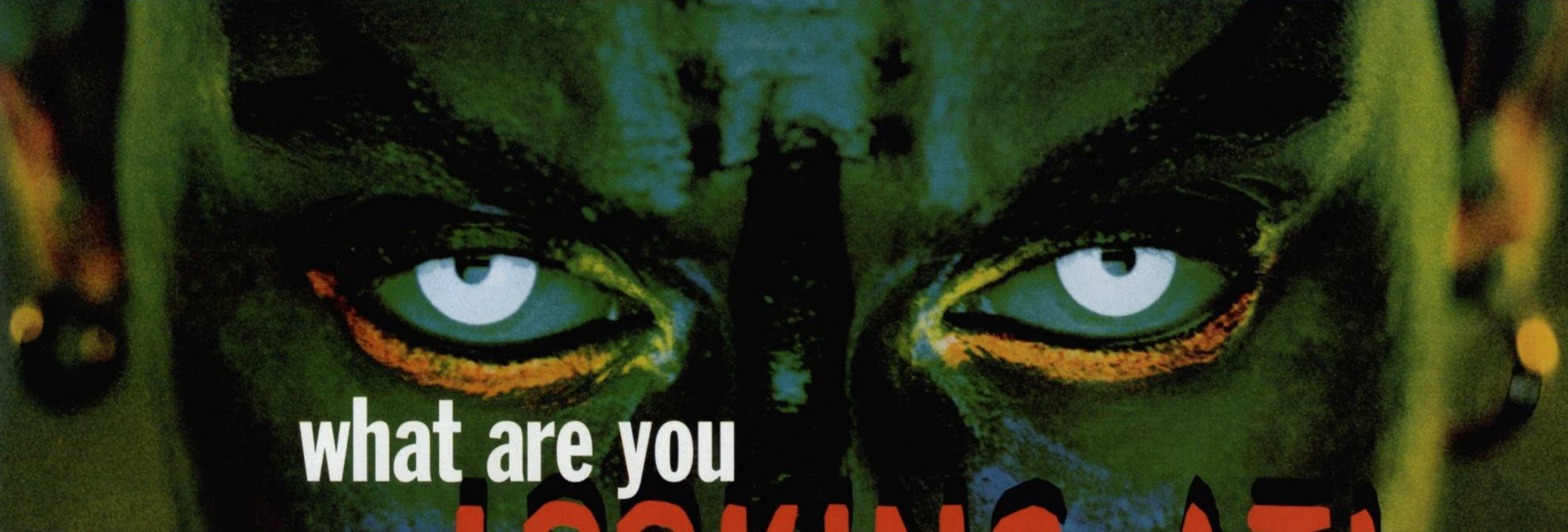
Tsk. Are you into games? "I like *Gez The Gecko*, or whatever it's called. The one with Leslie Phillips doing the voiceover."

Surely he's the most irritating man in the entire world? "No, not at all. He still makes me laugh."
RRrrriiighht. Okay, then. Have fun. Bye.

Your beautiful arcade...

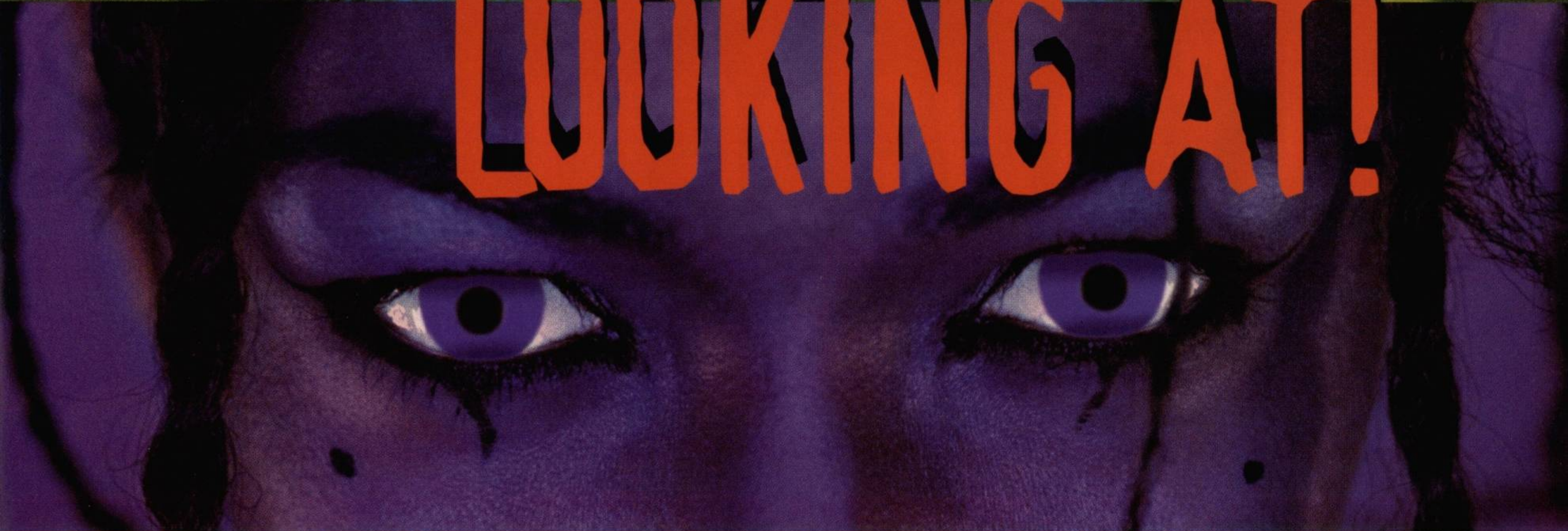
■ Well, that was fun. But [guzzling on a stick of rock] where shall we go next month? We've no idea. If you like to play videogames in an unusual place, write in and let us know, and we'll pop round with a big bag of pound coins.

Write to us at:
My Beautiful Arcade,
Arcade, 30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW
Fax: 01225 732375
E-mail: Arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk



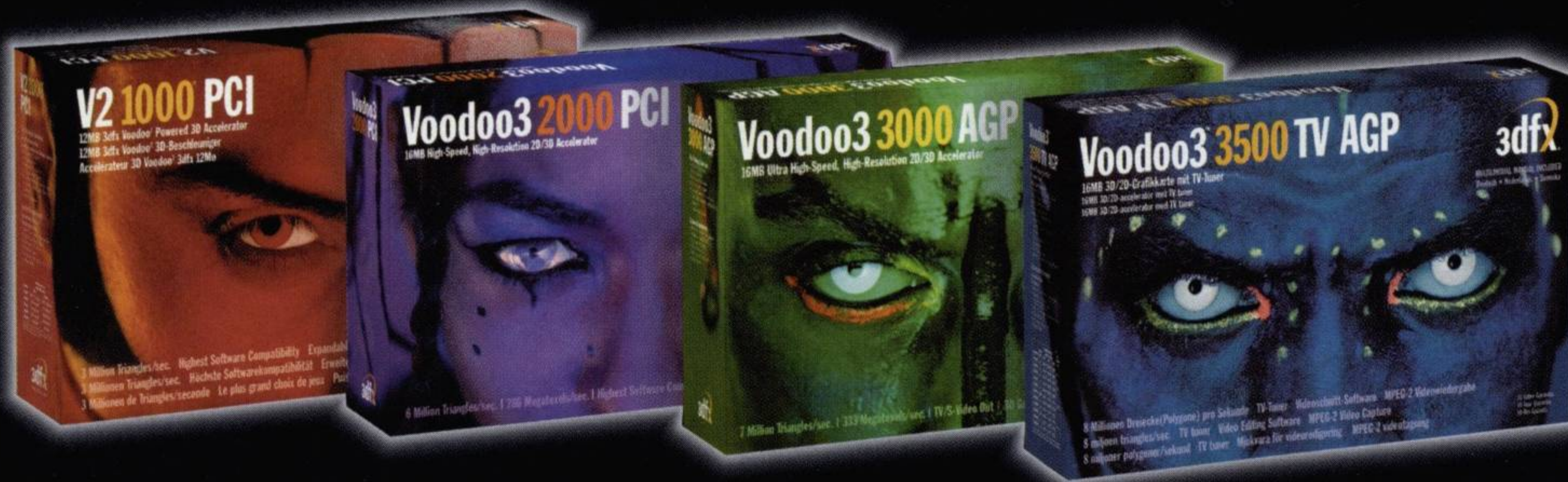
what are you

LOOKING AT!



the most

POWERFUL
family alive



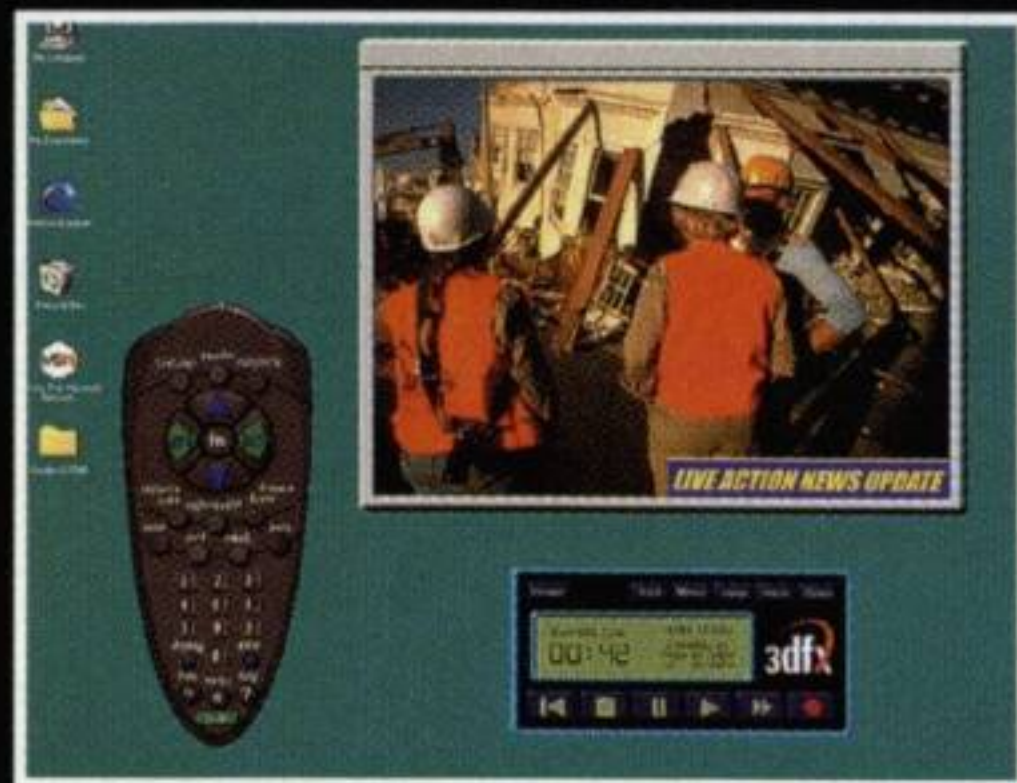
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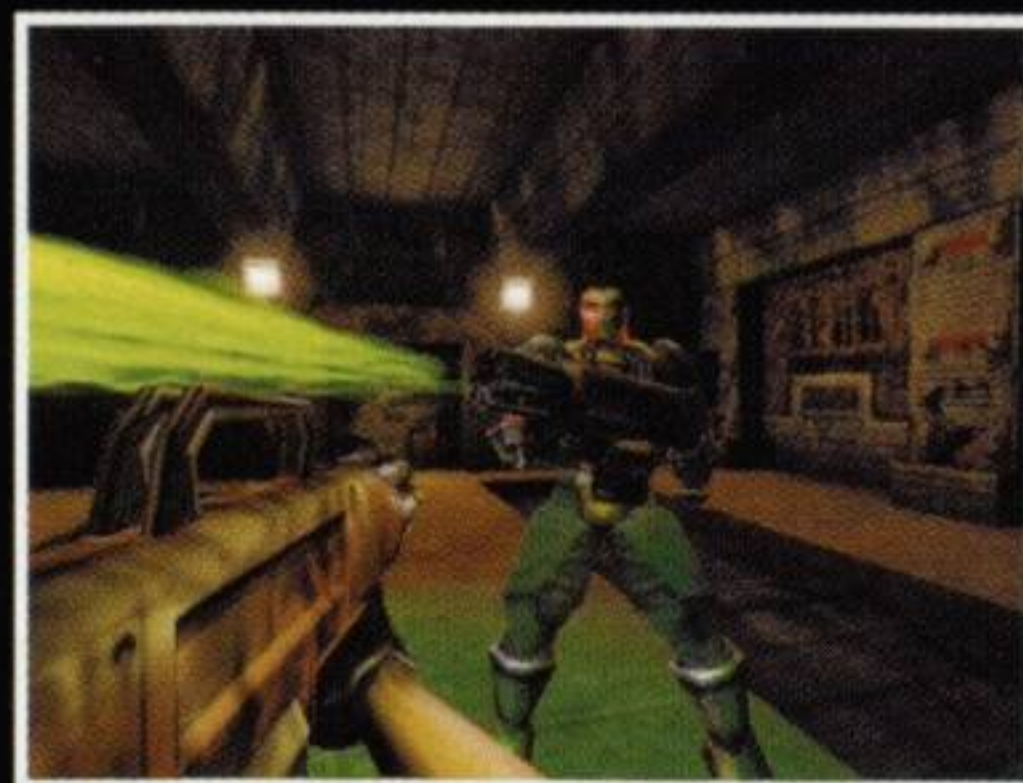
Voodoo3™ 3500 TV

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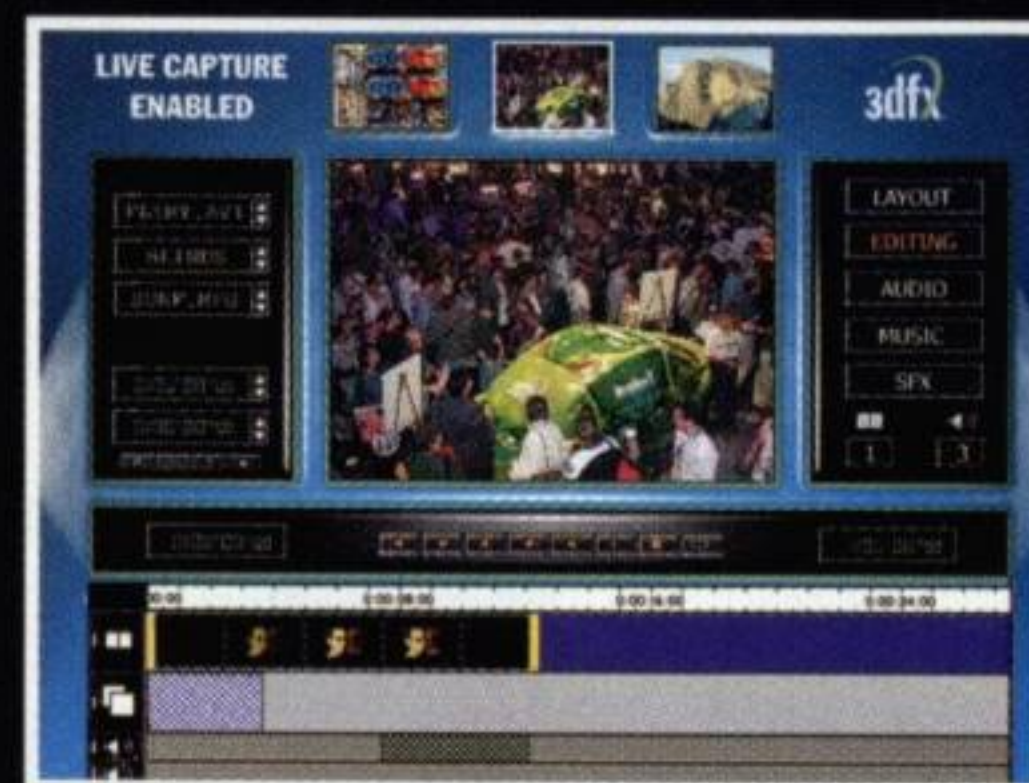
So, if you can find a minute to pull yourself away from the blistering gameplay speeds of the Voodoo3 3500TV, you may just discover you have other interests too.



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■ **NOW PLAYING:** *Speed Freaks* – How does this cartoon kart caper fare against the long-established N64 equivalent or, indeed, against real life karting?



NOW PLAYING IN THE SHOPS THIS MONTH SPEED FREAKS

Format: PlayStation | Developer: Funcom | Publisher: Sony | Price: £40 | Release date: on sale now | Players: 1-4 | ★★★



AND THERE'S MORE

■ Come first in the four Easy races and you'll be able to access Cosworth's Challenge from the Bonus section of the main menu. Beat Cosworth and from then on you'll be able to play as him. He's a deft handler, and when he wins a race he tips back his head and shakes it as though he's got an ear infection.



■ Some would say it's a shame that real go-karting doesn't allow you to send a Shockwave hurtling towards your opponent's vehicle or nudge them into a lake of acid.



WHAT'S SPEED FREAKS ALL ABOUT?

■ Racing around in go-karts, that's what. Or, at least, racing around upon mysteriously disembodied wheels. It's fast, with splendid graphics, and great game designers like Shigeru Miyamoto must be wishing they'd thought of it first.

With at least 12 tracks to race around, a minimum of six characters to choose from, and precisely eight pick-ups to collect, *Speed Freaks* isn't a game to be taken lightly. Your computer opponents aren't to be trifled with, either – they'll harry you to the line. And if you tire of their company you can haul in a pal, cleave the screen in twain and race head-to-head. For those with a multitap there's four-player fun to be had too.

KART TO KART

Speed Freaks, reality or Mario Kart? You decide.

The distinction between video games and reality is becoming increasingly blurred, as is the difference between certain Nintendo 64 games and their PlayStation counterparts. The danger of getting confused and committing an

embarrassing faux pas is therefore growing.

What you need, then, is a guide to differentiating between N64 games, PlayStation games and real life.

Perhaps beginning with go-karting.



GAMES	SPEED FREAKS	MARIO KART 64	REAL GO-KARTING
Number of characters	6 (plus bonuses)	8	1,040,009 (plus bonuses)
Number of courses	12	16	45 in the UK alone 1997 estimate
Best character to "be"	Montgomery "Monty" Carlo. With medium weight, average top speed and average acceleration, Monty's the archetypal all-rounder.	Toad. He's a bit of a lightweight but formidably nimble, and he says "I'm the best!" when he takes the chequered flag.	That smug bloke who brought his own helmet – the one who comes every Saturday for the satisfaction of beating beginners.
Best circuit to race on	Skate Park. It has a half-pipe section where you can do perilous stunts, and a jump through a hoop of fire.	Mario Raceway. The Circuit of Champions. Can you jump over the wall three times in a row and do under 1 minute 10 seconds?	A big, outdoor circuit, ideally. With long straights where you can really get up to speed. You'll be in trouble if it rains, though.
Best power-up	The Shockwave. It looks smashing, and follows the racing line so you don't have to worry about aiming it or anything.	The Thunderbolt. It shrinks everyone and slows them down. Ideally, deploy it as your sworn foe is about to take a jump.	The over-priced hamburgers, or maybe the slimy hotdogs. Make sure they don't put any onion in, though.
Bond-style lines to use	When someone spins out on a blob of slime you've dropped behind you: "Ahh, that seems to have given him the slip."	When you hit someone with three red shells in a row: "Ahh, he must be seeing red."	When you nudge someone into the tyres: "Ahh, mate, I'm really sorry. No, look, it was an accident, all right? Ow. No. That's hot. Urgh."
If you suspect you're about to get shot	Er... er... there's not much you can do. At least see if you can reach the Start button and hit Restart Race before ignominy strikes.	Whip out a banana or a green shell and, by holding the fire button, trail it behind you defensively. Or try to hop over the offending projectile	Crikey. Pull over immediately and ask a supervisor to call the police. Hide under some overalls, or something.

SPEED FREAKS TIPS!

Pulverise the pack



Off to a good start
Ensure you press and hold the accelerator between the second and third starting lights coming on.

Depending on precisely when your thumb meets plastic, you'll get a great, excellent or perfect start to the race.

Corner the market

Rely on the basic steering system in *Speed Freaks* and you'll end up in deep water. Literally, probably. To stay on course you need to employ the dodge

buttons – L1 and R1. As you steer, tap them gently to turn more sharply. Or hold them for long, tail-out skids.

Recovery position

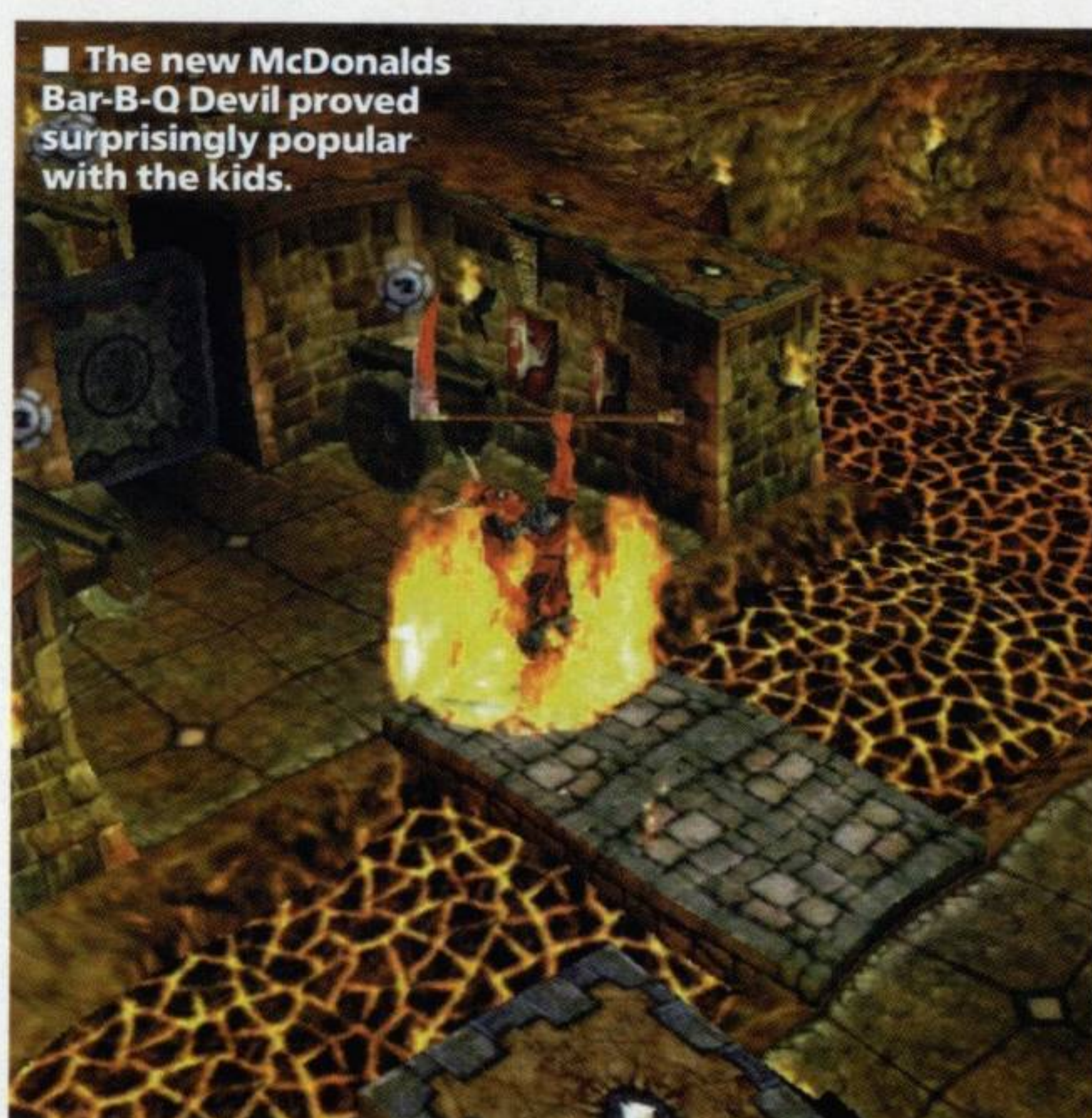
Don't waste time getting back up to speed again. Press and hold both the accelerator and the brake, and you'll get a turbo-boost. Or, press and hold them and then steer left or right. You will start doing donuts at this point. Do two or three and then let go of everything. You'll zip off at top speed.



■ **NOW PLAYING:** *Dungeon Keeper 2*
– believe it or not, characters like these are under your control through the game. Go on, rule them with a rod of iron.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Bullfrog** | Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Price: **£35** | Release date: **on sale now** | Players: 1-4 ★★★★★



■ The new McDonalds Bar-B-Q Devil proved surprisingly popular with the kids.



WHAT'S DUNGEON KEEPER 2 ALL ABOUT?

■ Well, a lot more than bondage for a start. *Dungeon Keeper 2* is the sequel to the massively successful and imaginative *Dungeon Keeper*. While it is based around a similar build/fight/conquer formula to many other real-time strategy games, its stroke of genius is its setting.

You play an evil-drenched Keeper, who is constructing a dungeon with the aim of restoring foulness to the land. Then along come a whole bunch of would-be heroes, keen to evict you from their Tolkienesque lands. So, quite understandably, you kill them for being insufferably smug. The sequel manages to iron out the multitude of minor faults, which stopped the original being as epochal as it should have been, by tightening its design and polishing its ebony hide until it gleams black promise. Well worth five stars. Very dark ones.

WHIP IT

It's the game the Marquis de Sade would play

Dungeon Keeper 2 has much to recommend it. It features the nefarious gaining of unearned wealth; it has the brutal, yet charming, slaughter of annoying goody two-shoes; and there's a partner-or-guardian-pleasing intellectual component to justify it. But any list of its notable qualities would be lacking without mention of the torture chambers.

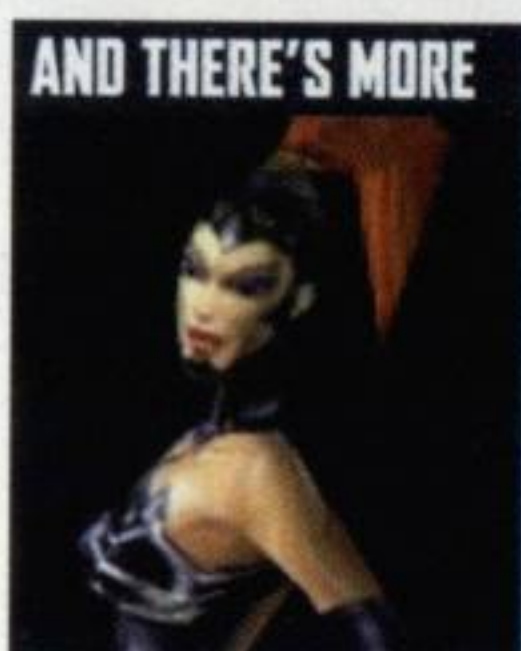
Getting one of these beauties immediately leads to all manner of frolics as the leather-clad Dark Mistresses go to work strapping themselves and whoever else is within arm's reach into dread contraptions for (erm) relaxation. But what does a professional make of it all? We asked Mr. X (not his real name, we fear), proprietor of a private dungeon in leafy Oxford

Thanks for speaking to us. I'm sure you must be very busy.

Oh, not that much. A hot summer is always a slow season. You can only take uncomfortable to a certain level before the culture-tourists turn away. Have you ever tried wearing a gimp suit in this weather? But, of course, there are always a few real devotees. Bless them.

Dungeon Keeper's torture room has gone further in flirting with S&M imagery than any previous game. Do you think there's an untapped bondage/computer game market?

Hmmm. I would imagine so. You don't exactly do either in the street do you? How about linking up a pair of electrodes that give you a shock when you die in the game? There are all manner of possibilities open for experimentation.



■ The Dark Mistress is the principle practitioner of fetishistic action in *Dungeon Keeper 2*, but her fervour has a tendency to get the better of her. Since she adores pain, she won't run away from any conflict and her great powers can be wasted. It's often best to possess her when leading an attack so you can override her... impulses.

So... how would you recommend going about setting up a decent dungeon?

Planning is very important. Most people who flirt with this world are obsessive, so make sure everything's nice and neat. And clean up after your clients. It's lucky most people don't have fetishes for non-wipe clean fabrics. My washing bill would be horrendous.

There's a lot of whipping in Dungeon Keeper 2, mainly by the Dark Mistress. How much of a cliché is it? Do you still get loads of people asking for it?

Oh yes. Absolutely mass-market stuff. I like to think of it as the baked potato of the bondage world: A bit plain, but basically satisfying. Not exactly sophisticated, but still.

The dungeon in the game is a little different to yours. Do you think there's room for someone making a game about your sort of dungeon?

Oh, I wouldn't know. You're the expert. You could come down and try out a few things and tell me if you think there's any possibility of a crossover. We've just got a delicious set of vices. And there are always the electrodes I just mentioned.

Erm... actually we had better be going now. Bye. **A**

TOP TIPS!

Beyond good and evil

■ Get rid of your nice guy tendencies. When you set someone to work in a room it's worth giving them a swift slap with the hand of evil as a motivational tool. Notable exception: the Dark Angels.
■ To improve the chance that your torture chamber will break the will of its captive and convert them to your side, be sure to boost their health from time to time with a chicken

or heal spell. Chucking in a Dark Mistress to add her own brand of tender loving care can work wonders, too.
■ Rooms without a minimum size, such as treasure or sleeping chambers, are ideal for filling gaps in your domain. Space quickly becomes a premium, so don't waste three by three blocks on them.
■ There are a load of hidden levels to access from Levels 5, 7, 10, 13

and 17. You can enter them by locating the Hidden Realm specials. So keep your eyes open.
■ Vampires are among your most powerful pawns, but they have an important weakness: they can't cross water. Plan accordingly.
■ The Dark Mistress is the principal practitioner of fetishistic action in the game, but her fervour can really get the better of her. Since she adores pain, she



won't run away from any conflict and her great powers can be wasted. It's often best to possess her when leading an attack so you can override her... erm... strong urges.

GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

It hurts so good

■ If you really want to put yourself through hell – and you know you do – you could try the following: set up your dungeon as normal. However, as soon as you get a torture

chamber and jail, capture some enemy troops and convert them. Now, put all your monsters in a locked room and only use converted creatures to finish the level. Enjoy.



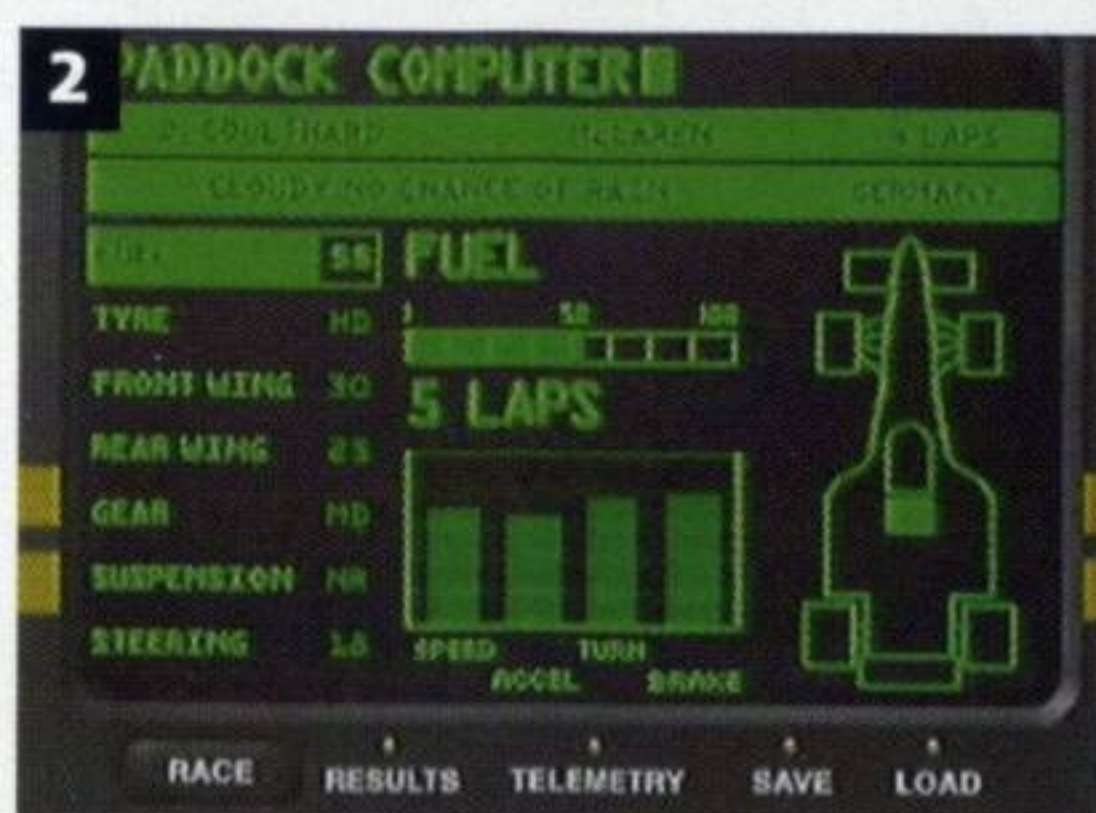
■ **NOW PLAYING:** *F1 World Grand Prix II* – How long before racing sims look like the shot below? *F1 World Grand Prix IV* on Nintendo's upcoming Dolphin maybe?



NOW PLAYING
IN THE SHOPS THIS MONTH

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX II

Format: **Nintendo 64** | Developer: **Paradigm** | Publisher: **Video System** | Price: **£40** | Release date: **on sale now** | Players: **1-2** | ★★☆☆



WHAT'S F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX II ALL ABOUT?

World Grand Prix II is so accurate, real Formula One drivers use it to learn the circuits before races. Or maybe that was another game. Anyway, it's amazingly accurate, right down to the labels on your fresh tyres as you leave the pits. It has all the cars and drivers from the 1998 season – so it's only a year out of date – and by turning on "1998 events" you can relive the wonder of each and every Grand Prix.

World GP II won four stars in *Arcade 10*. If only the developers had included our brilliant new modes on the options screen, it could all have been so different.



So, you already own the original *F1 World Grand Prix*? Why on Earth would you want to buy what is essentially the same game again? Well, like the original, *World GP II* is a year out of date (so that it can accurately recreate the season after it has happened). And who can remember what happened in 1997? Not us, that's for sure, which dates the original game an entire season.

The paddock screen has been given a bit of a tidy-up as well, and a new Tutorial mode gives you a chance to get a handle on the layout of the assorted courses before you strap yourself into a mean machine and get serious. And, as for any worries that the original game looked a little juddery? Well, fear not. *World GP II* zips along with the frame rate of a tabloid snapper at a celebrity orgy.

FORMULA FUN

You could drive round in circles for hours. Or...

Anyone who watched the Spanish Grand Prix in May could be forgiven for wondering whether Formula One is starting to get – whisper it – a bit boring. There must be a limit to the number of times a billion people will be prepared to sit on their settees watching 22 cars do the conga for an hour and a half. And there must be a danger, too, that the closer Formula One sims such as *World Grand Prix II* get to reality, the more likely they are to follow the real thing and become the gaming equivalent of a warm, milky drink before bedtime.

Praise be, therefore, to *Arcade's* five-point plan for enlivening *F1 World GP II*. Maybe Bernie Ecclestone should take note.

1. The Contraflow Method

Ensure you start in pole position. As soon as the five red lights go out, do a swift 180° turn and bury the throttle. Watch your opponents dive for cover, the less fortunate ones bouncing right over your head in a shower of bodywork.

Objective: Cripple all 21 of your opponents' cars within four laps, retaining enough wheels to limp across the finish line and take the chequered flag.

Would it work in real life? Undoubtedly. This, surely, is how the safety car should more usefully be employed, instead of holding everyone up all the time.

2. Reckless Speed Freakery

Instruct your mechanics to trim your car for straight-line speed. You'll need minimal spoilers, the merest drop of fuel and a manual gearbox with high ratios. Then see how fast she'll go. Hockenheim is the best place for record attempts – turn damage off so she'll fly right through the chicanes.

Objective: A briefly glimpsed 223mph in David Coulthard's McLaren.

Would it work in real life? We'll find out at next autumn's US Grand Prix at the Indianapolis Oval.

3. The Spoiler

Start in pole position, and see how slow a first lap you can do, while preventing anyone else from overtaking you. Use the zoomed-out, from-behind-the-car view so you can spot people trying to sneak past.

Objective: A frustratingly tardy Hockenheim lap time of 2 minutes 12.06 seconds. You can do worse.

Would it work in real life? Only if they hitched a caravan behind the leader.

4. Donut Factory

Find yourself a nice, wide stretch of

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX II TIPS!

Keep it locked

In order to merit a place on the podium in *F1 World Grand Prix II*, you need the patience of a saint and the attention span of a fighter pilot.

Above all, it is imperative that you remain distraction-free

for the length of the race. Lock the doors. After – of course – you've emptied your bladder. Dim the lights. Try to think, to breathe, to drive like a Formula One Grand Prix driver. And, above all, don't begin to wonder

whether frighteningly realistic Formula One racing games are actually that fun to play, and wonder what's on telly instead. It will do little for your performance.

Tarmac. The start/finish straight at Silverstone is ideal. Select neutral, floor the throttle and wind on full steering lock. When you hit the rev limiter, drop it into first and see how many "donuts" you can do before the engine explodes.

Objective: Disappointingly, *World GP II* doesn't seem to do proper donuts. Bah. Your best bet's probably to go for reverse gear.

Would it work in real life?

Surely paying punters would cheerfully sit for a couple of hours watching Mika, Michael and chums filling the air with smoke.

5. The Old Timer

Playing as former world champion Damon Hill, see how quickly you can eliminate yourself from the race.

Objective: You'll have to go some to match the champ's exit on lap one of this year's Melbourne GP, but *Arcade's* in-house hopeless case managed to be out of the competition in 32.93 seconds.

Would it work in real life? It seems to. Sales of yellow flags have never been better.

GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

Be quicker than Mika



What? You want another challenge? And what's that? A proper one this time? Okay. See if you can beat Mika Hakkinen's 1998 British Grand Prix qualifying time of

1 minute 25.76 seconds. Actually, it seems suspiciously easy. The Finn clearly wasn't trying hard enough. So see if you can get below 1 minute 24.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ACTION IMAGES

Public Service

She helps folk in need, rides a big bike and wields a weapon with the best of them; Cybill – the law interest in *Silent Hill* – is the sort of woman we'd like to get to know better... if only she'd open up a bit.



Coppers, eh. Never there when you need them, and all over the shop when you'd rather they were elsewhere. Some of them seem to have forgotten that they are public servants; employed to help and paid for by the public from the sweat of their workday brows.


Which is why it's so refreshing to come across a member of the constabulary who seems so willing to put herself out for those in difficulty – and who looks so fine while in action. Cybil, who is new to motorcycle coppery, is the first human face the unfortunate Harry Mason spies after he finds himself plunged into the atmosphere-heavy horror-fest of *Silent Hill*.

And very pleasant she is too, sympathising with the poor bloke, whose daughter, Cheryl, disappeared after he crashed their car on the outskirts of town. A girl stepped out of the mist and straight into the road, and Harry awoke after the accident to see a figure that looked like Cheryl wandering off towards the town.


So thank god for Cybil, who has apparently been drafted in to investigate the mysterious disappearance of the majority of the townspeople. The first thing she does is to hand

Harry a useful-looking hand gun to protect himself as he hunts for his daughter around the near-deserted town, and – like all good law enforcers – she manages to be in the right place at the right time as the action unfolds.

There's just something about such a capable woman astride a mighty hog that sets your heart a-soaring, but Cybil has that extra hint of danger about her. Everything seems just too right, and she is that little bit too self-contained and confident for someone so young in such a dangerous place. When you look into her eyes she gives nothing away, and although you trust her... you can't quite put your finger on it... there's menace there.

But hey, roll with it and enjoy the ride. It isn't every day that you meet someone who wakes you up and makes you feel alive again, and Cybil certainly manages to do that. Who knows what the future holds, it's best to take her at face value. But stay on your toes – you know she wouldn't want it any other way. 

■ *Cybil* appears in Konami game *Silent Hill* on the PlayStation. *Silent Hill* is on sale now, and carries a 15 certificate.



“It’s simply not possible for hobbyist enthusiasts to create a game that’s going to compete commercially”

Richard Darling, on how much the games industry has changed

Richard Darling

Interview by | Neil West

Richard Darling, Executive Director of Codemasters is worth a pretty packet in the games industry. But how much, exactly? We tried to ask him.

When Del Boy used to go on to Rodney about how "This time next year, we'll be mwillneon-aires", you always knew that *one day they'd find out that a watch they'd been using to time eggs in their kitchen was actually worth a fortune. But when Richard and David Darling formed Codemasters, it was simply to fuel their passion for videogames. What makes their story surprising is that Richard and David have been producing games since their early teens, and now Codemasters is one of the most well respected and richest British players in the business. Both Richard and David have remained in the public eye throughout Codemasters' course. We caught up with Richard to ask him about the money, the law, the fame, the girls and that bloody egg...*

Back in the 1980's you and your brother David found fame as "whizz kid" videogame programmers. For a while you couldn't pick up a games magazine without your grins beaming out from its pages. How did it all begin?

We started writing games at home as enthusiasts, originally on Commodore PET, then Commodore VIC-20. At that time, with very limited sound and graphics capabilities, it didn't take long to make a game, once you understood the machine. When we had some games which we thought were good enough, we started advertising them for mail order sales through computer magazines.

So – to cut to the chase – how much money did you manage to make?

We didn't make a lot of money in the early years. Any profits were put back into the business to finance the growth. I can't recall the figures, but it certainly wasn't as much as a "proper" job, especially considering the long hours we were working. But once the business became established, the story changed.

Did it feel like you were trying to take on the world between you?

Not really. It felt more like joining a small club which we were convinced was the nucleus of what would become a mainstream entertainment industry. And we wanted to be part of it.

Do you think that there's room for a Next Generation Richard and David Darling? Could there be two more young entrepreneurs waiting in the wings formulating a similar "alternative" path to success?

The games development industry has changed beyond all recognition since we got involved. Now it's mainstream entertainment that rivals music and films in terms of size. It has reached the stage where it's simply not possible for hobbyist enthusiasts to create a game that's going to compete commercially. It costs too much money.

Oh. That's our plan scuppered, then. [Casually] So, er, what other routes are there into making big bucks in the videogame industry?

If someone wants to make games, they should get the academic training necessary to get a job as a games developer. Trickier would be to try to identify an area of business that is currently in its infancy and become an expert in that field. That way, you could grow with the industry.

Sounds a bit complicated.

[Enthusiastically] Maybe we could try to come up with a fantastic videogame character, and get rich off the back of that? Codemasters almost managed to do it with Dizzy. The only snag was that he was a bit of a love/hate character.

[Defensively] Ah, but the thing was, *Dizzy* wasn't actually devised by myself or David. He was the brainchild of Philip and Andrew Oliver – the infamous Oliver twins – who produced a lot of games for us on the 8-bit formats. Anyway, most people I've talked to loved *Dizzy*. After all, how can you possibly take a dislike to a bouncy egg wearing boxing gloves?

Well – you're probably right. But tell us more about Codemasters as a whole. You're been creating top-quality, gameplay-oriented titles for years. Yet you don't seem to get

"Absolutely Brilliant"

■ Hey, hey! An (abridged) Codies' softology. Ever own a Spectrum, C64, Amstrad CPC, Amiga, Atari ST, NES, Mega Drive, PlayStation or PC? Remember these?

Dizzy; Treasure Island Dizzy; Magicland Dizzy; Fantasy World Dizzy; Kwik Snax; Grand Prix Simulator; BMX Simulator; Run The World; Super Robin Hood; Rock Star Ate My Hamster; Dizzy Down The Rapids; Super Stuntman; Frankenstein Jr; Jet Bike Simulator; ATB Simulator; CJ's Elephant Antics; Micro Machines; Fantastic Dizzy; Ultimate Stuntman; Micro Machines; Cosmic Spacehead; Fantastic Dizzy; Brian Lara Cricket; Pete Sampras Tennis; Micro Machines 2 Turbo Tournament; Brian Lara Cricket '96; Sampras Tennis '96; Psycho Pinball; Micro Machines Military; Sampras Extreme Tennis; Jonah Lomu Rugby; Micro Machines V3; TOCA Touring Car Championship; Colin McRae Rally; TOCA 2 Touring Cars; Brian Lara Cricket and Music.

mentioned in the same breath as, say, Rare or Psygnosis. Does this piss you off?

Well, this does seem to be changing. The problem was probably that we have always had lots of other facets to our identity that distracted the press from the games themselves. The focus on myself and David has been pretty intense, for a start. Other companies may be famed for their games, but can you put any faces to the games? Probably not.

You've had a few run-ins with the law as well, haven't you?

There was the whole Game Genie legal dispute with Nintendo. However, in the last few years we've done nothing else except build up our development teams and produce the best games we can. We're now getting recognised as a publisher that consistently produces extremely good games. So hopefully our image is constantly improving.

Actually, you're right when you say that when it comes to publicity, many people think of you and your brother David rather than the games you produce. Come to think of it, your brother David was in the News of the World recently. "Lonely tycoon with Ferrari and a private plane seeks fun-loving girlfriend to help him spend £100m fortune," or something, along with a huge picture. Front page material wasn't it? So what was all that about?

An interview about making a success of a company turning into a typically pointless *News of the World* exclusive.

Ooops. Touchy subject? Sorry. [Racks brain] So, er, which of your games are you most proud of?

Colin McRae Rally. It's the most recent and it's the most advanced game we've ever made. I can't put my finger on any single element, but the overall effect is better than I thought possible. It really does portray the excitement of driving a world rally car. I'm proud of the whole team.



THE TOP 50 BEST GAMING FINDS

WORDS BY RICH PELLEY

Every now and again, you'll be playing a game and find something you weren't expecting. Whether it's a power-up, a cool new vehicle, or even a secret character, these little surprises are videogaming's equivalent of finding a fiver down the back of the sofa. So let's count down, Smashy and Nicey style, the 50 best gaming finds of all time (Mate).

PHOTOGRAPHY: UPI/CORBIS



■ Sisters Mary and Maria approached the lucky dip with enthusiasm.



NINTENDO 64

50. Dino-rection

■ Run across the Shy White Guy in *Yoshi's Story* and then shed a tear of happiness when he unexpectedly helps to rescue a dead Yoshi from the castle.



PLAYSTATION

49. Overhead pass

■ Never return to a lighted firework. Feel free, though, to pick up the huge rockets you will find in *Poy Poy* and then lob them about all over the shop.



NINTENDO 64

48. Surf's up

■ It's the next best thing to participating in a Saturday-night student shopping-trolley race, when you guide Mario on the koopa shell surfboard in *Mario 64*.



NINTENDO 64

47. Tanks a lot

■ It might look like a bizarre futuristic bird table, but the hovering Alpha Tank in *Body Harvest* is worth its weight in compressed air.



NINTENDO 64

46. Quick fit fitters

■ Pull in for a pit stop in the sky, and be thankful when you find a wing repair icon in *Lylat Wars*.



PLAYSTATION

45. Crispy sausages

■ Play through *Vandal Hearts* and by the time you get to the last 20% of the spells, their effects will be more devastating than the time your Dad lit the barbecue with petrol.



PC

44. Have one yourself

■ It's actually funnier to see someone else collect the speed boost in *Plane Crazy* and then watch as they crash into the first hill. You'll enjoy yourself more as you chortle from afar.



NINTENDO 64

43. P-p-p-pick up a power-up

■ Snowboard down the slopes of *1080°* on a flattened penguin. It's as bizarre as it sounds.



■ This year, the local hunt was in for a surprise.

It's the next best thing to participating in a Saturday-night student shopping-trolley race



PLAYSTATION

42. Mummy's boy

■ The gaming equivalent of wrapping your entire body in cotton wool, the shield in *Assault* provides all the protection you need to survive those nasty aliens.



PLAYSTATION

41. Safe from harm

■ The vast missile pod in *Raiden* enables you to scroll up the screen, safe in the knowledge that nothing can get past the huge number of rockets you're flinging out.



PC

40. Snipe and sneak

■ Absolutely the best thing about *Spec Ops* is the sniper rifle. Zoom in so close you can see the whites of your victim's eyes, then – blam! No more enemy.



PLAYSTATION

39. Fill 'er up

■ Running out of juice isn't clever. In *Soviet Strike*, though, it's easy to forget about your fuel consumption as you get bogged down in Commie-bashing. They might be ugly, but these fuel dumps are a sight for sore eyes.



NINTENDO 64

38. Snow fan you

■ While racing down a mountain on a snowboard, you can't get much more of a turbo boost than by strapping a fan to your bottom. Which, incidentally, is exactly what you get in *Snowboard Kids*



DREAMCAST

37. Clark's finest

■ Slip yourself into the Sonic Shoes in *Sonic Adventure* and you'll be able to charge up inside a great big blue ball of electricity, before "Sonic Spinning" higher than a hedgehog has ever spun before.



NINTENDO 64

36. Fun in the sun

■ Never look directly at the sun. Except in the castle foyer in *Super Mario 64*, where you need to look at the sun before you can be transported into a world in the clouds.



PLAYSTATION

35. Free game

■ Play through to the end of *Pitfall 3D* and you'll be rewarded with the cheat code to unlock the original Atari VCS game that's hidden deep in the disc; green jumper, purple head, stick legs and all.



PC

31. Smart arse

■ Played *The Reap*? Then you'll be thanking your lucky stars for the smart bombs. They explode enemies into such small fragments that you have to wait ten seconds for the debris to clear so you can see where you are.



PLAYSTATION

30. Apple of my eye

■ Perhaps not the most obvious choice of missile, but nonetheless extremely effective, our marsupial friend lets rip with a round or two of Cox's Orange Pippins fired from a huge green rocket launcher in *Crash Bandicoot 3*



PLAYSTATION

29. Bursting for it

■ They might look like some sort of futuristic urinal, but the sight of the energy power bases in *Fade to Black* will be more of a relief than emptying your bladder after cruising 60 miles down the M4 with no service station in sight.



PLAYSTATION PC

28. Crash diet

■ Rosemary Conley diets have nothing on this zombie weight-loss program. Wait for your undead *Resident Evil 2* target to get really close and blow him in half with the shotgun. You don't even have to worry about cleaning up the mess afterwards.

Our marsupial friend lets rip with a round of Cox's Orange Pippins fired from a huge green rocket launcher



NINTENDO 64

24. Brain twister

■ There are weapons, and there are *weapons*. Most of them fire things and, when you've had a bit of practice, the majority can be deadly. But then there's the Cerebral Bore in *Turok 2*. This weapon homes in on your brain, bores through your forehead and – using a little bit of nifty physics – sucks your brain out. Yeeuch.



NINTENDO 64

23. Zippy devil

■ It's already fast enough to make your eyes bleed, but hit one of *F-Zero X*'s yellow boost chevrons and your stomach will be left behind as your N64 goes into overdrive. If *F-Zero X* was an animal, it would be a cheetah. A cheetah riding in a souped-up supersonic car attempting to break the land speed record.



NINTENDO 64

22. Bear necessities

■ You'll need to collect Mumbos to take to Mumbo Jumbo so you can turn into a termite, a crocodile or a walrus; a fantastic trick in itself. But nowhere near as fantastic as the sound effect every time you pick up a Mumbo token in *Banjo Kazooie*. If there was any justice, "Ickum Bokum" would be included in the next edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.



PLAYSTATION

21. Must die harder

■ A terrorist favourite, the MP5 automatic machine gun is the weapon of choice for any madman. As long as you have the MP5, a short haircut, problems with the wife and *lots* of scars, you'll need nothing else to see you through the trickier levels of *Die Hard Trilogy*. Except a vest.

THE TOP 50 BEST GAMING FINDS



PLAYSTATION PC

34. Cheek-flapper

■ It might be 2097, but it's still fun to run over the flashy arrow things to earn yourself a brief, but skin-stretchingly fast burst of energy in **Wipeout 2097**.



PC

33. Robots in disguise

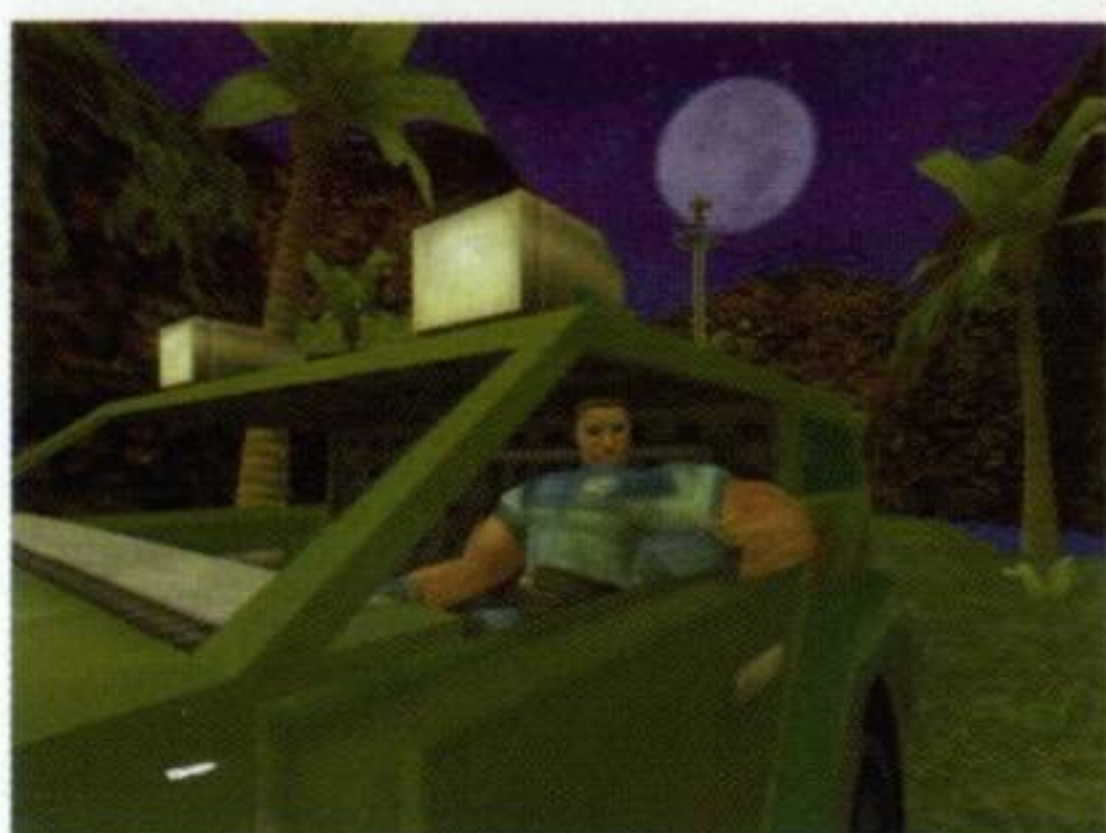
■ With large, metallic mecha suits that come equipped with massive weaponry and the ability to jump huge distances **Shogun: Mobile Armour Division** is just no fun until you're inside a mech. In true *Transformers* style, they also double up as a vehicle at the press of a button. Very handy.



PLAYSTATION PC

32. Gandhi's revenge

■ Being able to hoard two power-ups at once in **Rollcage** is a useful attribute. More specifically, if you nab two speed-ups at a time you'll rocket along the track faster than last week's dash to the toilet after that particularly hot vindaloo.



PC

27. Jeep for joy

■ Climb inside the Jeep in **Sin**, use it to tear down cardboard boxes and run over a few unsuspecting pedestrians, and you won't ever want to get out of its hard, green shell and walk again. It's as exciting as going out with your Dad on your 17th birthday and driving around Tesco's car park.



PC

26. Over the hill and far away

■ **HEDZ** is an appalling game that only becomes bearable once you're able to play as the Red Baron. He's one of the few airborne Hedz, so play him and you can fly away from the "action", sit atop a high hill and fire bombs designed to land on top of the badly animated fools scrapping below you.



PLAYSTATION

20. Stool's out

■ For the English gentleman, summer doesn't start until he hears the sound of leather on willow. In **Jackie Chan Stuntmaster**, however, it's the sound of flesh on willow that you'll hanker for as you pick up the stool and use it to batter your enemies. The sound effect is similar to that achieved by jumping off a chair on to a plate of blancmange.



PC

19. Tackle out

■ There are many things in life that males would like to be able to extend the length, girth and overall size of. None more than that of the Dispersion pistol in **Unreal**. It's not much of a weapon to start with, but collect the Morph Extensions and you'll soon have the biggest gun you've ever seen.

I know I buried him somewhere near here...



PLAYSTATION PC NINTENDO 64

25. Meat and no veg

■ Finding the hidden fighters in **Mortal Kombat 4** is all very well. Until, that is, you come across Meat, who looks like he's been hanging in a butcher's shop window for far too long. It's enough to force a vegetarian to vomit, and put the rest of us right off our sausages.



PC NINTENDO 64

18. Medallion man

■ The Pentagram of Protection is the power-up every **Quake** multi-player gamer heads for. There's only one per level – grab it and you'll become invincible for 30 seconds. Even if someone has Quad Damage, you can confidently run after them, axing them in the back. Heh, heh, and thrice heh.

THE TOP 50 BEST GAMING FINDS



PLAYSTATION PC NINTENDO 64

17. Stop! Hammer time

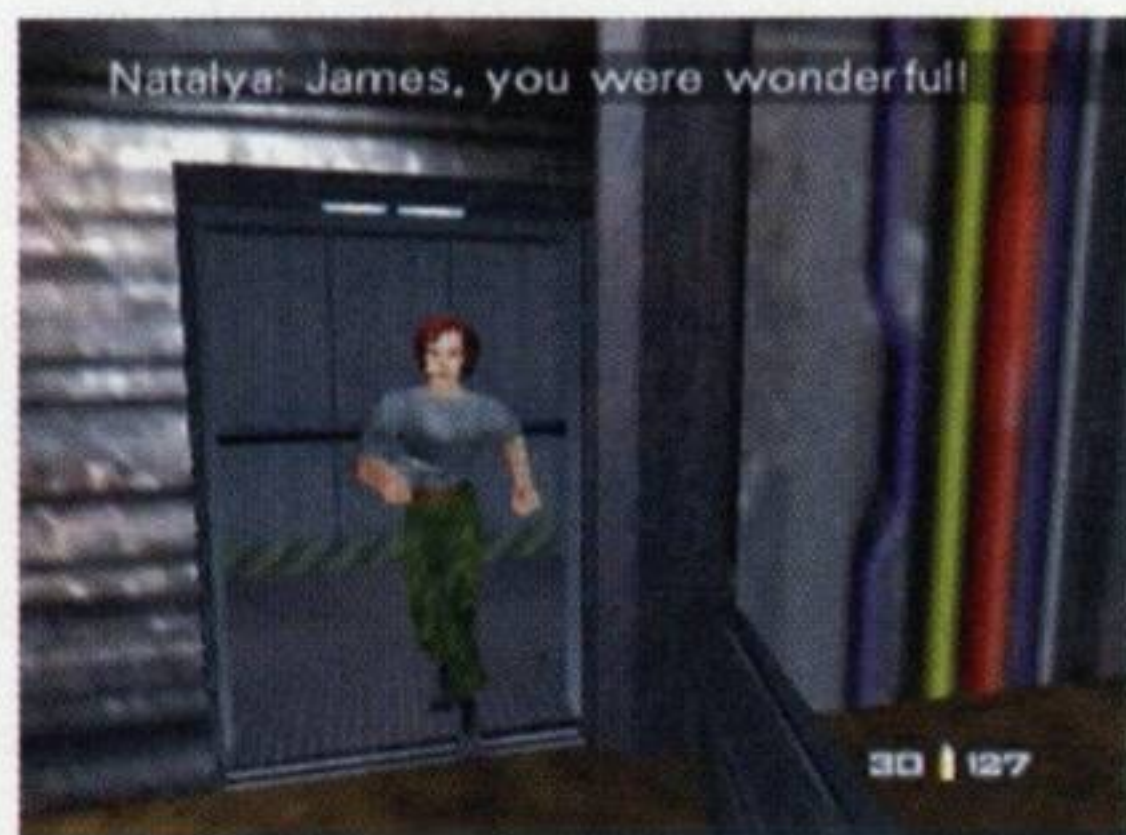
■ It's still funny to watch Bob fumble under his desk, pull out a huge frying pan and whack Vic over the head in *Bang Bang it's Reeves and Mortimer*. Even funnier is the enormous bonnet-mounted comedy hammer in *MicroMachines*, which you can use to knock out any motorists in your vicinity.



PC

10. Don't force it, dear

■ Tunes must have paid a fortune for the licence, but still there's nothing more deadly than being able to use Darth Vader's telepathic throat-choke as a Force power in *Jedi Knight*. If only we could learn how to do it in real life, then estate agents, traffic wardens and people who push past you on Tube escalators with big bags over their shoulders would fear for their lives.

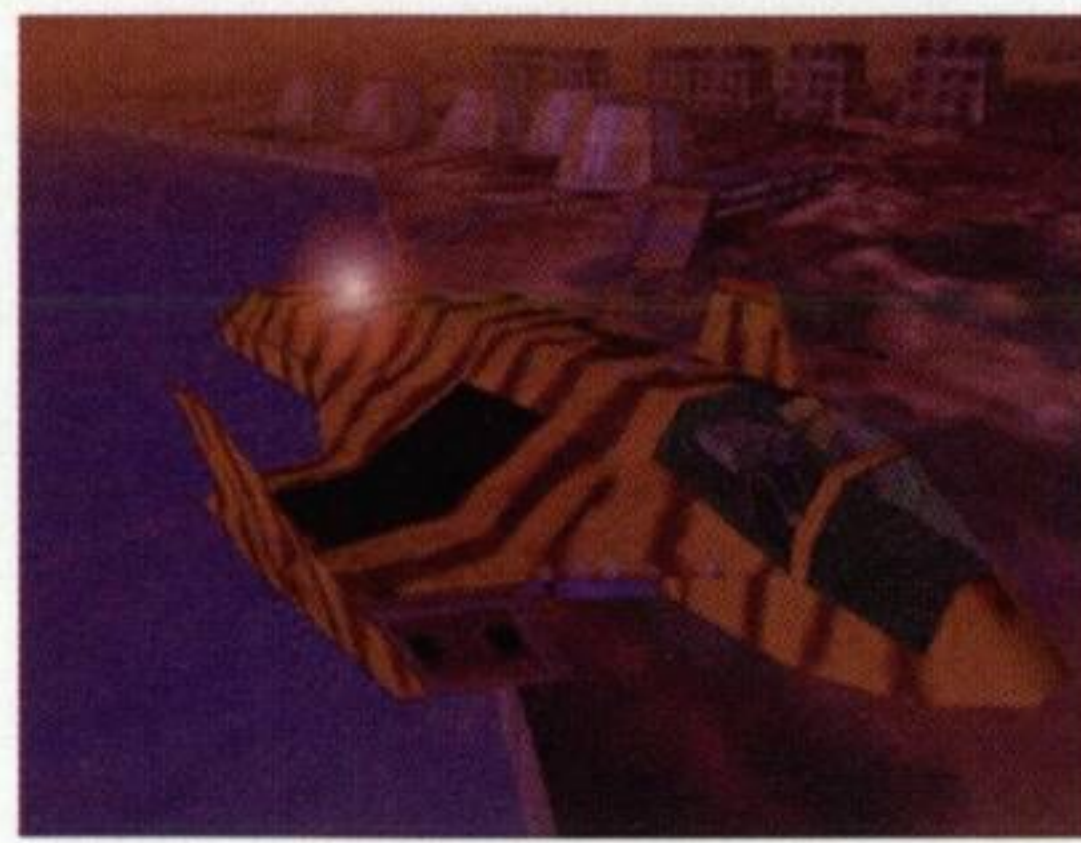


NINTENDO 64

7. Cutey

■ It's always nice to be complimented on something: your hair, your clothes and, less often, your odour. Looking like a digital Scully, the lovely, nay beautiful, Natalya from *GoldenEye* will follow you around like an obedient puppy, complimenting you on your shooting skills as she goes. You must protect her from enemy gunfire, of course, and should she get shot then... well, you'll just have to wait for the "Top 50 Saddest Gaming Moments" in a future issue of *Arcade*.

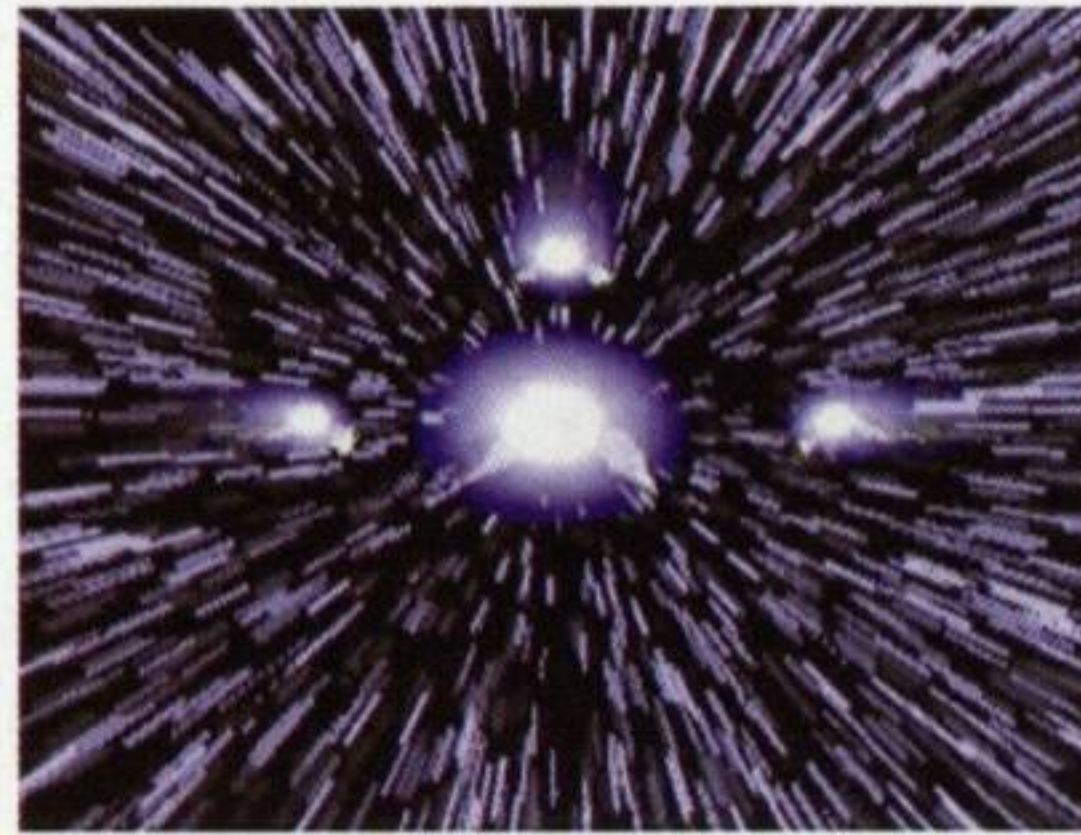
Arthur?
If you can
hear me, tap
twice.



PC

16. Peas in a pod

■ The pod in *Hardwar* enables you to transport both legitimate and stolen goods around with the ease of a shopping trolley. It comes with a free remote drone, which enables you to shoot down other pirates and salvage cargo from their ships. You can then sell your finds for a grossly exaggerated profit, and all in the tax-free haven of space. Fantastic.



NINTENDO 64

9. Peg it

■ Not since Chewbacca fiddled with the insides of the Millennium Falcon to blast the crew successfully out of Mos Eisley and into the debris of Alderaan has the feeling of hitting hyperspace been as welcome as it is in *Lylat Wars*. By the time you've negotiated the asteroids and flown through all the rings, blasting through the light barrier will be more of a relief than coming to the end of a particularly painful bout of constipation.



PLAYSTATION

6. Driving madness

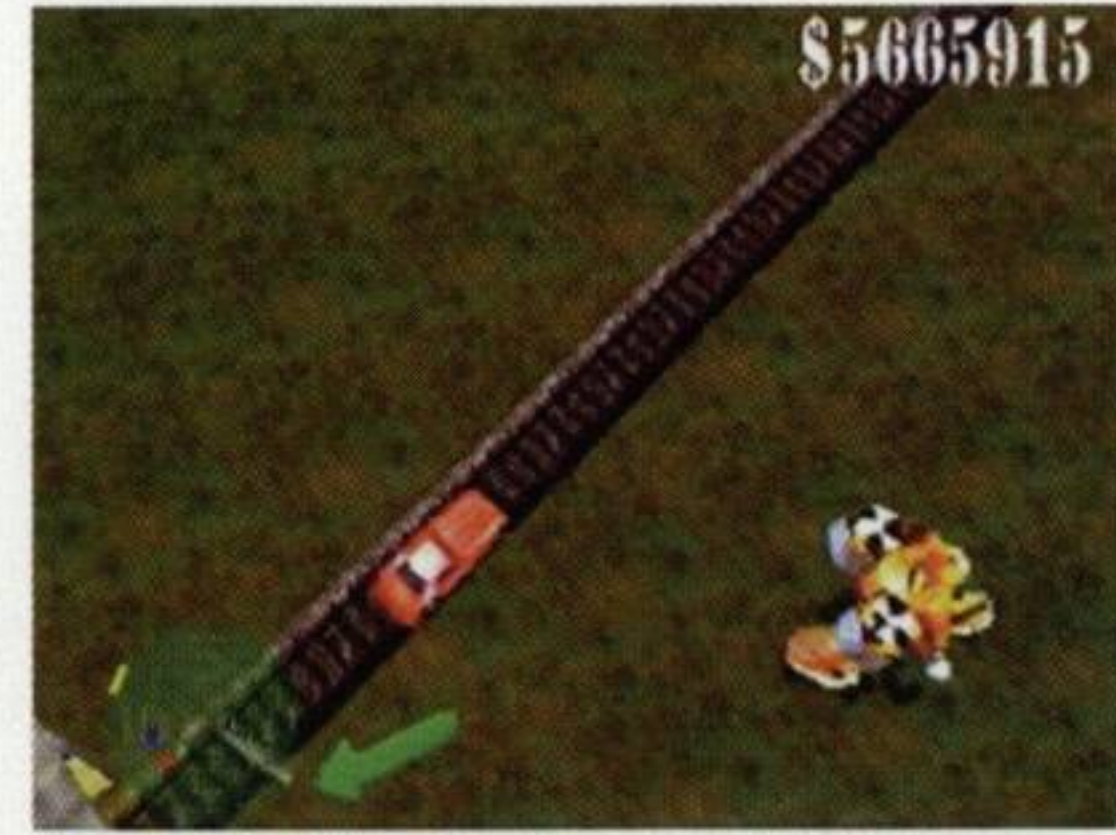
■ If you drive a car, there's one thing bound to annoy you for 95% of the time that you're out and about: other road users. They cut you up, tailgate, nick your parking space and generally have no respect. Although not legal, it'd certainly ease the tension knowing that you had a rocket launcher mounted on the front of your car, enabling you to blast the exhaust of any motorist who gets on your wick. Exactly like you do in *WipEout*, then.



PC

15. A friend in need

■ As soon as you become handy at raising orc strongholds and defending yourself against waves of flying beasts in *Warlords III*, word gets around and warriors turn up to join your cause. Keen to please, they'll perform specific tasks – such as searching ruins for treasure – that raise the morale of your armies. A warrior is a warlord's best friend.



NINTENDO 64

8. Life in the blast lane

■ Lacking only the Confederate flag on the roof, the orange car from *Blast Corps* is the nearest you're ever going to get to riding around in General Lee from the *Dukes of Hazzard* without flying over Texas way and saying "Hello" to Luke, Bo, Daisy, Boss Hogg, Rosco P Coltraine and (snigger) Enus for yourself. It even has the comedy musical horn.



PC

5. Body shivers

■ You know how there are some noises that make you go a bit funny? The sound of a fingernail scraping down a blackboard, a knife getting caught between the tines of a fork, or the screeching of Celine Dion coming in at the end of *Titanic*? Well, the hideous crunching noise that accompanies wood connecting with flesh as you smack your opponent in the leg with the club in the otherwise atrocious beat-'em-up, *Fighting Force*, will scare you more than the prospect of listening to the entire Celine Dion album.



PLAYSTATION PC NINTENDO 64

14. Flame-grilled

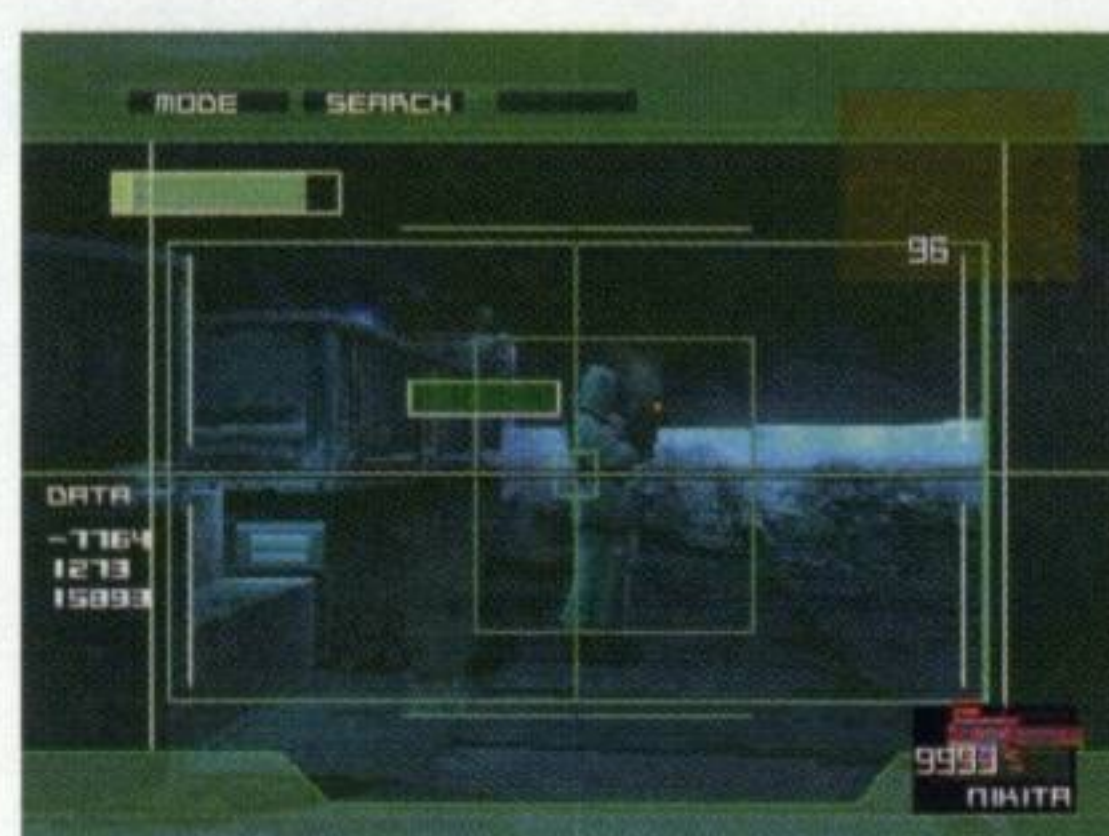
■ **Bomberman** relies on power-ups. There are many to choose from but, as documented in the *Rule Book of Life*, the simplest ideas are the best. Hence there's nothing more satisfying than charging up the firing range of your bombs, dropping one on the opposite side of the screen, then watching your soon-to-be-ex friend burn to a frazzle a screen-width away.



PLAYSTATION PC NINTENDO 64

13. Now *that's* magic

■ Getting old is great. At no other time of life can you pretend to be deaf to ignore people, rinse your hair blue and go to sleep whenever you fancy without appearing rude. In **Duke Nukem: Time to Kill**, you even get to take to the skies in what looks like a levitating bath chair, which floats you out of trouble and off to the Post Office to withdraw your pension.



PLAYSTATION

12. Aim to please

■ Lie back, light up a fag (to check for infrared security lasers, obviously) and wait for the fish to jump into the net. The Sniper rifle in **Metal Gear Solid** is the weapon of choice for the lazy man, scrolling smoothly and enabling you to take pixel-perfect shots at baddies. There are extra cringe points available for taking them out Lorena Bobbitt-style.



NINTENDO 64

11. Whirlybird

■ Sometimes you can't help but wonder what games programmers are on. Maybe it's the money. Maybe it's the fame. Or maybe it's just the fact that they *can*. Can, in the case of **Glover**, make your central character a glove, then leave magic potions all over the place, causing you to sprout rotor blades from the top of your head and take to the skies. Bizarre.



PLAYSTATION

4. Great balls of fire

■ It might be ancient, but very few power-ups have ever been able to beat **R-Type's** Force in terms of sheer jaw-dropping awe. Buried among the rear-shot power-ups, bouncing lasers and power boosts, the Force is a little ball that floats at the front of your ship. You can fire it at baddies, and then it faithfully returns. It's only a little white ball, but it'll save your life a million times.



PLAYSTATION

3. Cardboard heaven

■ We've harped on about it before, but that's only because you'll never have as much fun with a cardboard box as you do in **Metal Gear Solid**. You can climb inside it and hide. You can sneak past baddies under its cardboard shell. You can stick it in your pocket *Inspector Gadget*-style (even though it's bigger than you are), then take it out again. Always with a smile etched on your face.



PC NINTENDO 64

2. Physics isn't dull

■ Light Amplification by the Stimulated Emission of Radiation (that'll be a laser, then) provides a very intense light source, commonly used for precision cutting, especially in medical circumstances. This may sound tedious, but when you collect the ultra-rare Blue Beam laser in **Forsaken**, it's nice to take some time to consider the science behind your weapon before you use it to blast a baddie into two weeks next Tuesday.



■ The best place to use the lightning: Wario Stadium's giant leap. A great way to lose friends.

Ram your way through the miniaturised pack, reducing Luigi to a pool of green sick

NINTENDO 64

1. It never strikes twice

■ When an opponent uses the Lightning Strike against your kart, it's equivalent to someone's mum sticking her foot out in front of you as you're about to win the 100 metres. Or your egg suddenly hatching and falling off the spoon. But when you drive through a question mark and the fruit machine power-up system stops just where you want, granting you the power to shrink your rivals to tiny little specks, then you just have to smile. And then ram your way through the miniaturised pack, squishing Daisy like a pressed flower, reducing DK to a gorilla pancake and Luigi – the smarmy Italian – to a pool of green sick. If there's anything more satisfying in a videogame than picking up the Lightning Bolt in **Mario Kart 64**, we want to hear about it.

Charts

Edited by Rich Pelley

More topical than, er, a Topic bar. Cue Whole Lotta Love...

Official Top 40

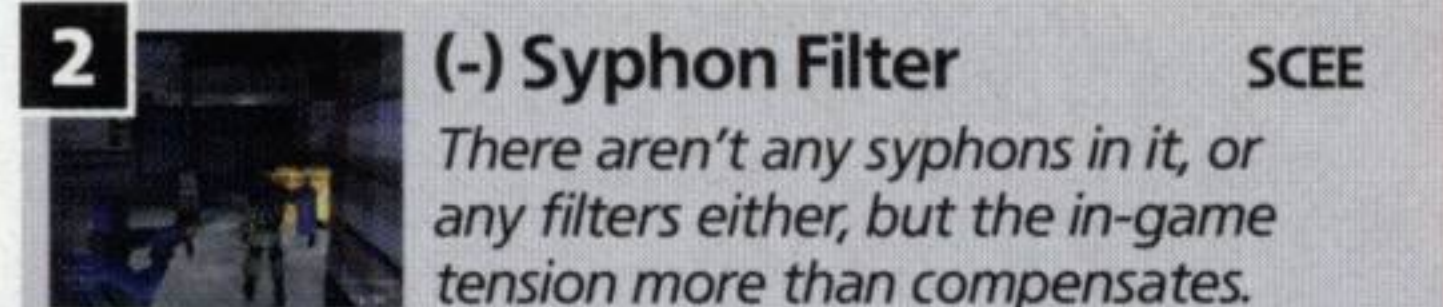
Brought to you with no sign of Mark Goodier whatsoever.

Import Zone

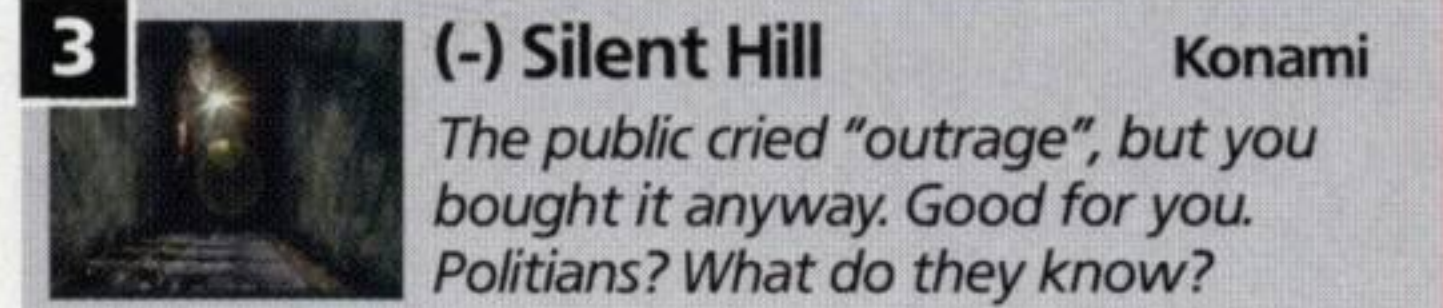
With Department 1 (0171 916 8440)



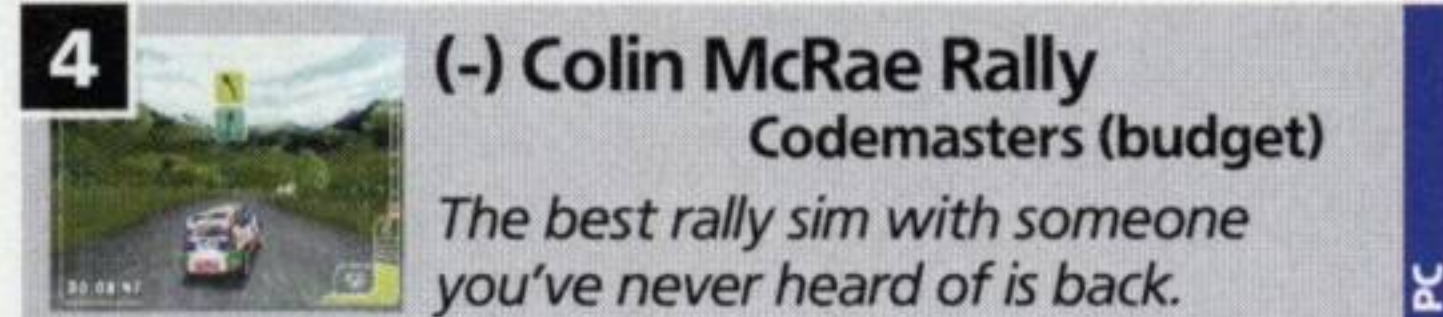
1 (-) **Driver** GT Interactive
Straight into number one, don't let the Bad Boy's driving games give you funny ideas, else you might find yourself on holiday at Her Majesty's Pleasure.



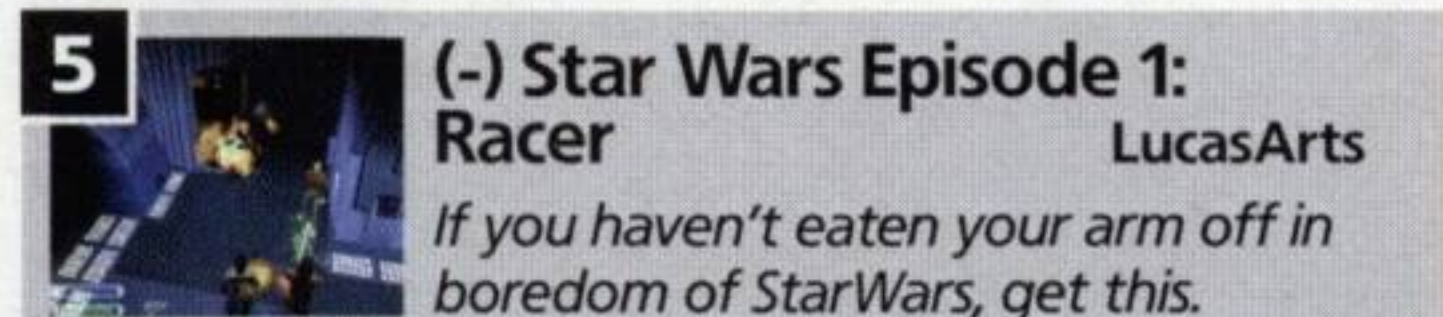
2 (-) **Syphon Filter** SCEE
There aren't any syphons in it, or any filters either, but the in-game tension more than compensates.



3 (-) **Silent Hill** Konami
The public cried "outrage", but you bought it anyway. Good for you. Politicians? What do they know?



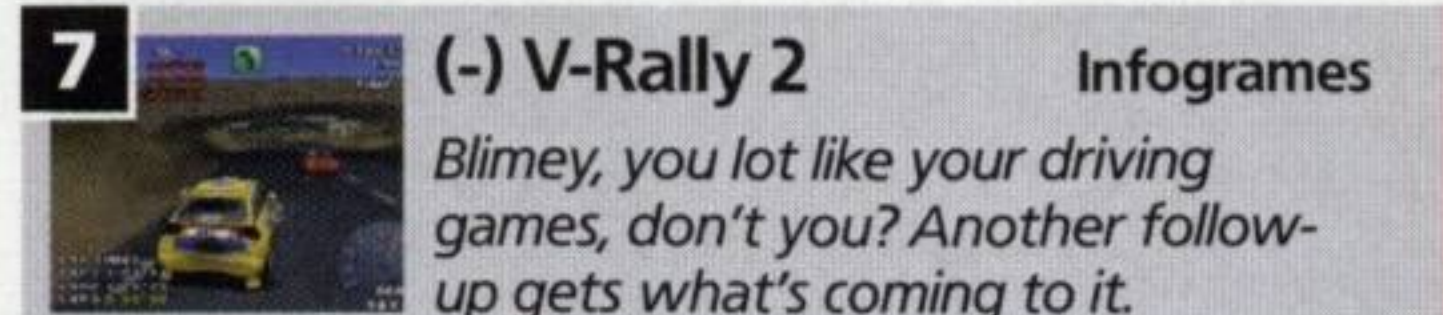
4 (-) **Colin McRae Rally** Codemasters (budget)
The best rally sim with someone you've never heard of is back.



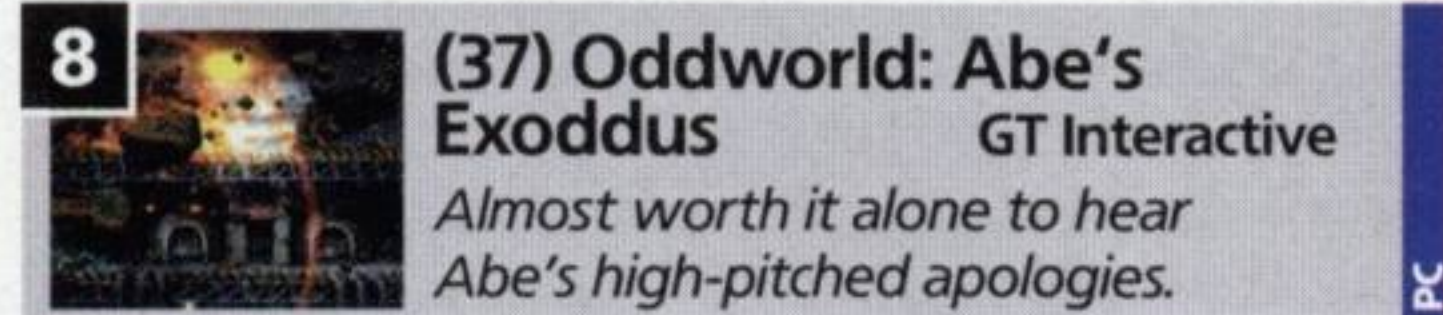
5 (-) **Star Wars Episode 1: Racer** LucasArts
If you haven't eaten your arm off in boredom of Star Wars, get this.



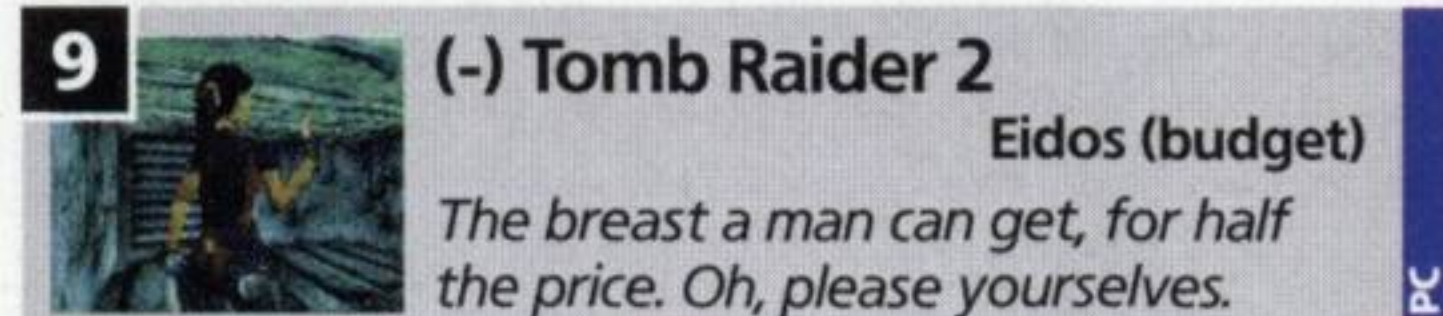
6 (1) **Gran Turismo** Sony (budget)
The best PlayStation game ever? At this price, a bigger steal than The Great Train Robbery.



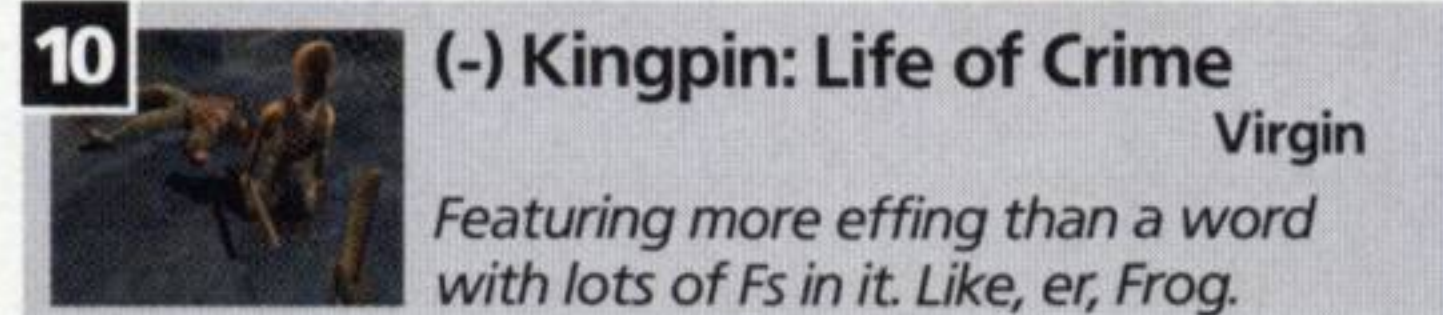
7 (-) **V-Rally 2** Infogrames
Blimey, you lot like your driving games, don't you? Another follow-up gets what's coming to it.



8 (37) **Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus** GT Interactive
Almost worth it alone to hear Abe's high-pitched apologies.



9 (-) **Tomb Raider 2** Eidos (budget)
The breast a man can get, for half the price. Oh, please yourselves.



10 (-) **Kingpin: Life of Crime** Virgin
Featuring more effing than a word with lots of Fs in it. Like, er, Frog.

11 (4) **Final Fantasy VII** SCEE (budget)/Eidos

12 (10) **Crash Bandicoot 2** SCEE (budget)

13 (-) **Hidden and Dangerous** Take 2

14 (39) **Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time** Infogrames

15 (5) **Grand Theft Auto** Take 2 (budget)

16 (-) **Aliens Vs Predator** EA

17 (9) **Star Wars 1: Phantom Menace** Activision

18 (16) **Tomb Raider 3** Eidos

19 (19) **V Rally** Infogrames (budget)

20 (12) **WWF: Warzone** Acclaim

21 (-) **Time Crisis** SCEE

22 (-) **Tiger Woods '99** EA Sports

23 (11) **Championship Manager 3** Eidos

24 (20) **Rugrats** THQ

25 (-) **Dungeon Keeper 2** EA

26 (6) **Brian Lara Cricket** Codemasters

27 (22) **Worms** Infogrames

28 (8) **FIFA 99** EA Sports

29 (13) **C&C: Red Alert** EA

30 (-) **A Bug's Life** Activision/SCEE/Disney

31 (-) **Small Soldiers** EA/THQ

32 (24) **TOCA 2: Touring Cars** Codemasters

33 (7) **GTA London 1969** Take 2

34 (-) **Braveheart** Eidos

35 (38) **Rayman** Ubisoft (budget)

36 (-) **Quake II** Activision

37 (17) **Anna Kournikova Tennis** SCEE

38 (23) **Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** LucasArts

39 (-) **Ape Escape** SCEE

40 (30) **Half-Life** Sierra



■ **Episode 1: Racer. Notably faster on import, apparently.**

fact that *Star Wars Episode 1: Racer* is still selling like hot cakes. [Pause] Want to buy a hot cake?" All right then. "See what I mean. People still want the import version because of the speed difference." Anything else? "Command &

■ Hello, who's that? It's Jason from Department 1. Except: what's that he's carrying? It's a big box of hot cakes. An explanation? "Oh, hello. I was just celebrating the

Conquer on the N64. Want a copy?" No thanks, we've just eaten. "How about *Buggy Heat* on the Dreamcast?" Really, we're stuffed. Anyway, thanks for having us, Jason. Bye!

Vox-Pop

At the London Planetarium



■ Blimey! It's Patrick Moore. Hey! You most know loads about games. You're the Gamesmaster, after all. Have you got your xylophone on you? Can you play *The Entertainer*? What are you doing in The Planetarium? Are you all right? Why aren't you moving? Oh well, bye!

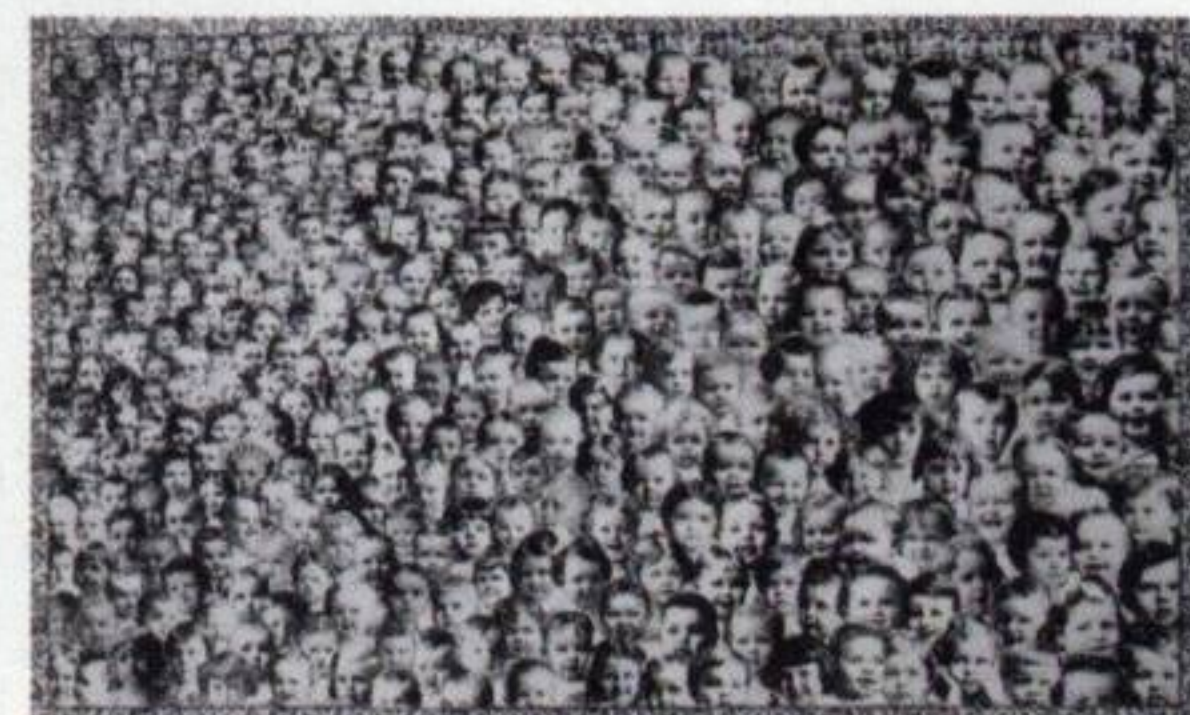


■ Hey! It's Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon. You've hardly aged a bit. Do you want to hear a space joke? What do astronauts have on their roast dinners? Gravy-ity! Oh well, please yourself. Tsk! Astronauts. Set foot on another planet and think they own the world.

Chart Analysis

With the Entire World

■ Hello! They say the world is a small place, and indeed it is. We've all gathered here on the Isle of White, or wherever it is, to cast a collective eye over this month's charts. We'll all be standing on each other's shoulders and stretching to Jupiter and back, or whatever it is, later on, and giving birth every 2.8 seconds or something - hence the crush of children at the front. But in the meantime, *Driver*, eh? Nneeeoooww. Into the top spot like a shot. Anyway, better be off. The world population of chickens is turning up at the weekend, and there are twice as many of them as us. Seeya later, then!



■ "And on three, everyone shout 'he's behind you...'"



Japanese Top 10

1 (-) Yuqioh II Dark Dual Stories	GB, Nintendo
2 (-) Dino Crisis	PSX, Capcom
3 (-) Saruqetchu (Ape Escape)	PSX, SCE
4 (1) Mario Golf 64	N64, Nintendo
5 (-) Street Fighter Zero 3	DC, Capcom
6 (-) Fire Pro Wrestling G	PSX, Human
7 (-) Vandal Hearts II	PSX, Konami
8 (4) Dance Dance Revolution	PSX, Konami
9 (-) Metal Gear Solid Integral	PSX, Konami
10 (-) Shutoku Battle	DC, Genki

US Console Top 10

1 (-) WWF Attitude	N64, PSX, Acclaim
2 (-) Pokemon Pinball	GB, Nintendo
3 (-) Mario Golf	N64, Nintendo
4 (7) Street Fiahter Alpha 3	PSX, Capcom
5 (2) Pokémon Red	GB, Nintendo
6 (3) Pokémon Blue	GB, Nintendo
7 (-) Ruarats: Scavenaer Hunt	N64, Nintendo
8 (1) Super Smash Brothers	N64, Nintendo
9 (4) Star Wars Episode 1: Racer	N64, Nintendo
10 (8) Syphon Filter	PSX, Sony

PlayStation, PC, N64 and Game Boy charts on p110.

Sibling rivalry

The brothers and sisters that never quite made it.



Bub & Bob. No sign of Bib.

Tsk. Anyone with an older sibling will remember how hard it was growing up –

forever living in the shadow of the elder. Yet the younger often gets it easy compared to the first born. So either way it's easy to get left behind. No wonder you've never heard of any of these poor unfortunates, then.

1. The Hedgehog Brothers

Unfortunately, fate for the rest of the Hedgehog litter wasn't as kind as it was to Sonic. Speedy was run over by a car. Swifty was run over by a bus. Spritely actually underwent negotiations with Sega back in the early '80s about starring in its new game, but was eaten by a fox. And Snazzy was kidnapped by Dr Robotnik, and when the ransom demands weren't paid, run over by some form of futuristic steam-roller.

2 Laura Croft

Lara's older sister was always the more reclusive of the family,

educated to the same standard but preferring to take the more mature, sensible decisions in life. Although still close, Laura now holds a very respectable position in the Civil Service. However, on the back of Lara's success, Laura has managed to secure a pretty impressive windfall with the News of The World to get them out in time for *Tomb Raider 4*.

3 Puc-Man

Coming to the entertainment industry just a few years too late, Puc has been working outside Abbey Road studios as replacement head for a Belisha Beacon right where The Beatles were photographed for their famous album cover.

4 Lorenzo Mario

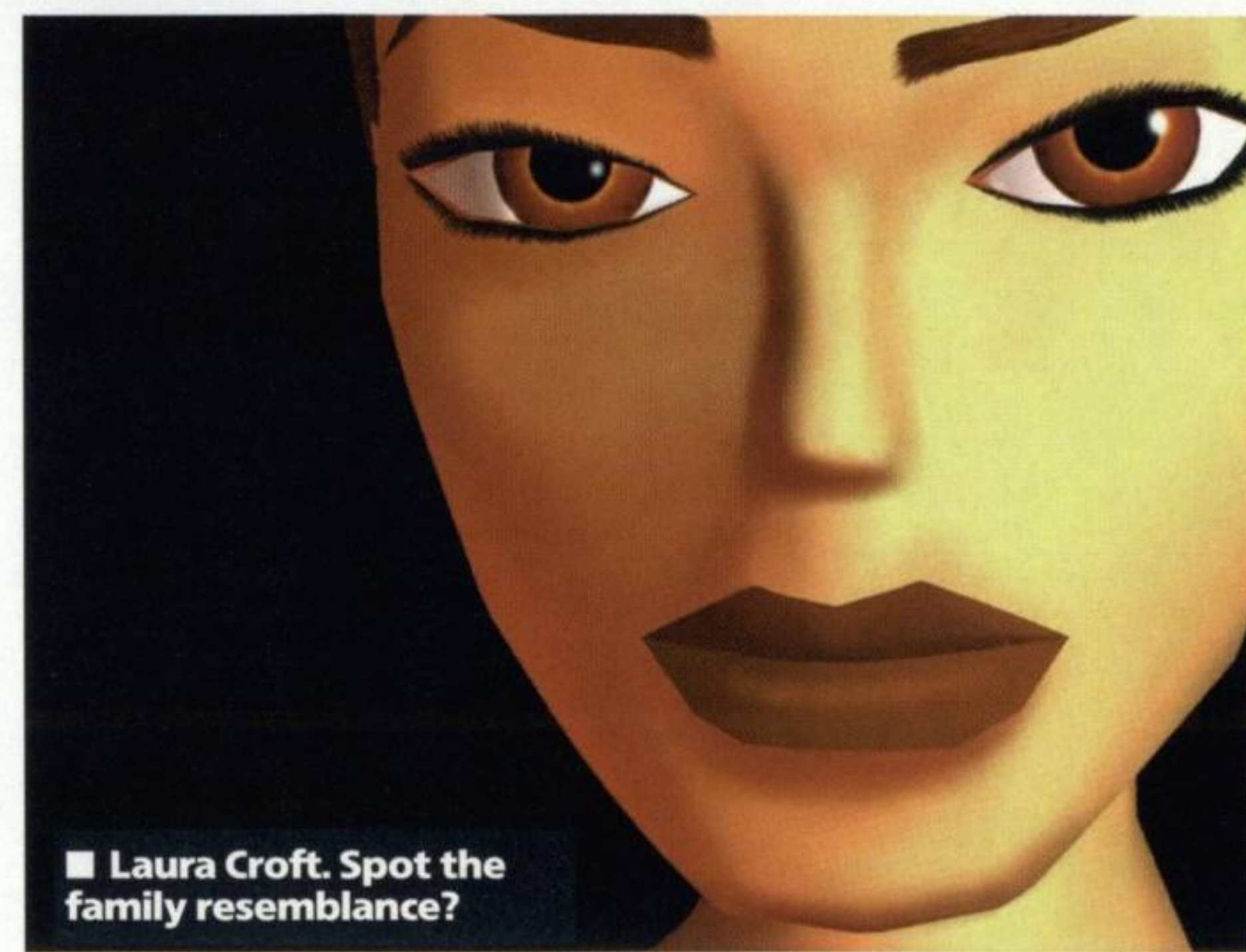
The Paul Gallagher of the Mario Brothers, oldest brother Lorenzo was originally highly dismissive of Mario and Luigi's quest for fame, but has since tried to cash in merely for personal benefit. He works for a local plumbing agency. He lives in Italy, with his wife Daisy.

5 Sharon Snake

Works in Tesco Metro in Covent Garden. Or at least that's what she tells everybody. Stunningly attractive, but, oddly, she has very small hands.

6 Spanky Kong

Perhaps it is no wonder that when introducing Donkey Kong's siblings Lanky, Diddy, Tiny and Chunky in the up-and-coming *Donkey Kong 64*, Spanky the Monkey was ruled out at an early stage.



Laura Croft. Spot the family resemblance?

7 Bib

Wanted to be in the *Bust-A-Move* series, but didn't hatch in time.

8 John

6'2" but eighteen stone. When Ken was out practising his kung-fu and dreaming of *Street Fighter* fame, John was inside, watching telly and eating hamburgers.

9 Camilla Bandicoot

Although her driving insurance was a lot cheaper than her younger brother's (both due to her sex and her Christian name), Camilla's desire to marry and lose her embarrassing surname (because – heck – does anyone actually know what a Bandicoot *is*) isn't being helped by her latest choice of boyfriend – Jet's older brother Jim Set Willy.

10 Dozy

Twin to Dizzy. Fell off a wall. And all the Kings Horses and all the King's men still couldn't put him back together again.

Top 10 ridiculous names for a new console

- Playpen 2000
- Entertainment Hammer
- Squirrel
- Hello Charlie!
- Project Tiny
- Hand Shafter
- Mind Dispersion XY4B Unit
- Duffbox
- Disk Accessor
- Dreamcast



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Rich Pelley wishes Mark Green had never left the mag...

Q Dear Arcade. Back in the days of *Mario Kart* on the SNES, Princess Daisy was known as Princess Daisy. I've seen *Super Mario Brothers* the movie for my sins as well, and she's definitely called Daisy in that. But these days every one refers to her as Peach. What's going on? Jules Clough, Reading



"Hello, boys."

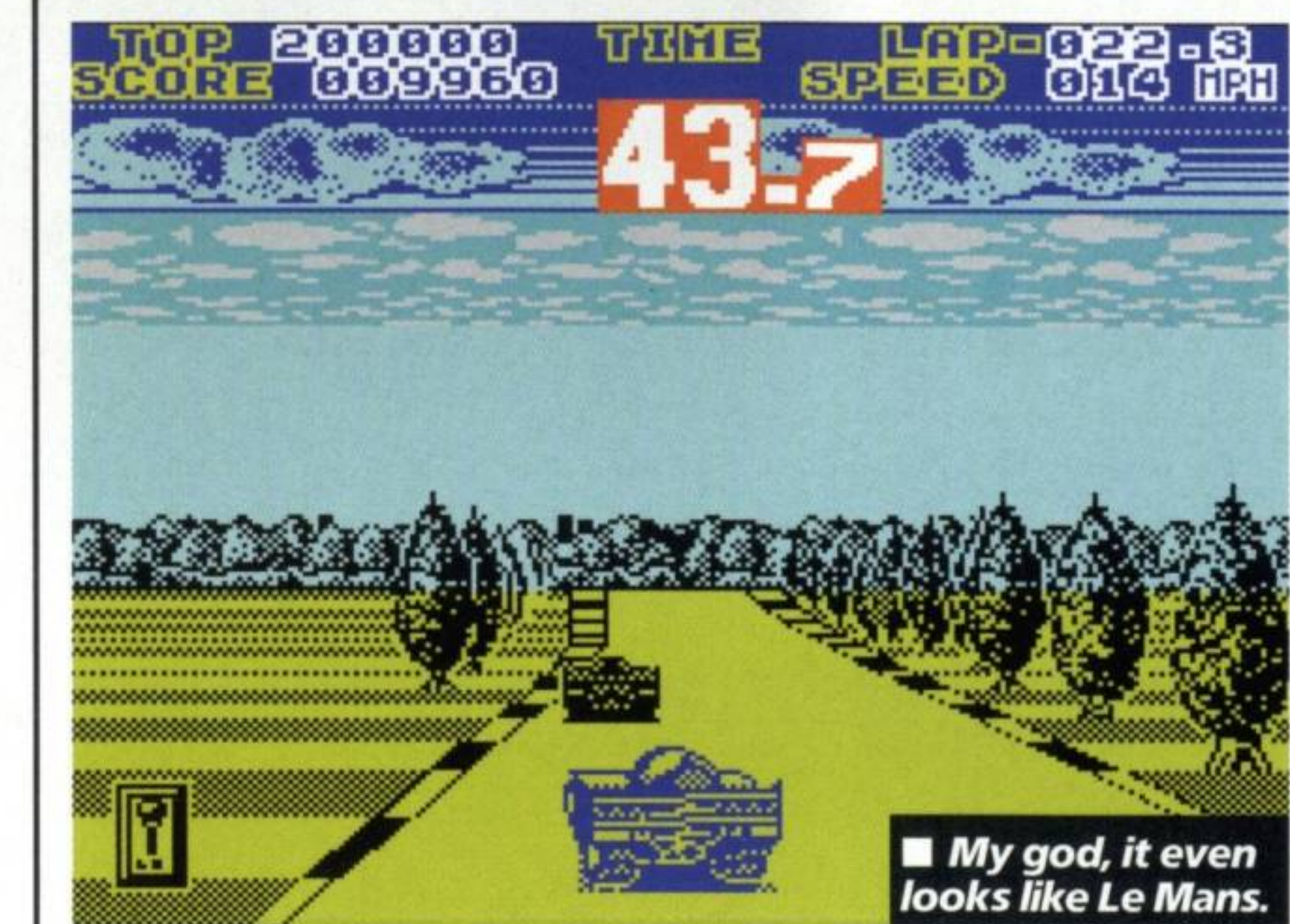
A Ah-ha. I know this one. Kind of. She was introduced into the story-line of the early Super Mario Brothers games as Princess Daisy. But, in Japan, once she became a choosable character, she became known as Peach. The trend has been to warm to this latter pseudonym to appease our Japanese cousins. Think of it like when Marathon changed its name to Snickers. No one quite knew why, and most people still say Marathon anyway. Er, so hope this has cleared things up.

Q Dear Arcade. I was wondering if you could help clear up a bet I've got with one of my friends. In the pod racing section of *Star Wars Episode 1: A Phantom Menace* (the

movie), I reckon I saw Manny from PC game *Grim Fandango* in the crowd. Sounds plausible to me – LucasArts and LucasFilm are part of the same company after all. But my mate won't believe me. Tell him I'm right. Tony Purnell, Cambridge

A You're right. He is there. Also, in the Galactic Senate chamber shortly after Queen Amidala calls for a vote of no confidence in Chancellor Valorum, you can see a bunch of ETs in the background. George Lucas is pals with Stephen Spielberg, after all. My mate says that there are a bunch of Wookies like Chewbacca there too. But I wouldn't trust him to open a can of baked beans.

'Gizza 10p mum!' Name that coin-op



My god, it even looks like Le Mans.

Q When I was about ten I used to play this great driving game where you got to sit in circular contraption with a monitor bolted on to the front which swivelled as you steered. It was around about the same time as *Operation Wolf*. But what the devil was it called? Philip Glossop, Newcastle

magazine N64. Speaks quietly. Can just about overhear end of conversation. "Thanks, Mark. Don't know how *Arcade* ever functioned without you" [Clears throat] Well, Phil, the game you are apparently thinking of is *WEC Le Mans*. It came out in 1986 and was by Konami. The best thing about it was, indeed, the unit which swivelled a full 360°. Along with *Afterburner*, it pioneered the idea of "stick a bit of a dull game in a swanky cabinet and everyone will play it" concept. Hence in the stand-up cabinets it wasn't half as good.

A Er. [Surreptitiously picks up phone and dials next-door neighbour



WIPEOUT

IN 1995 WIPEOUT REDEFINED HOME GAMING. FOUR YEARS ON AND THE THIRD CHAPTER IS SET TO TEST HARDWARE LIMITS WITH A GAME THAT CONQUERS NEW TERRITORY AS PART OF A SUPER HIP AURAL AND VISUAL PACKAGE. WIPEOUT 3 IS THE EPITOME OF ULTRA-MODERN VIDEOGAMING.

The Wipeout phenomenon

Behind the scenes of this ground-breaking series.

50 The music

Sasha, Orbital, Propellerheads, Underworld, Paul Van Dyk and The Chemical Brothers

56 The game

Introducing the new *Wipeout 3*: the ships, the tracks and the clever bits

54 The history

Travel down the *Wipeout* timeline

60 The graphics

The Designers Republic speaks





YOUR FREE CD

UK ONLY



Welcome to the biggest giveaway since someone told you that Laura Palmer was killed by her dad before the last episode of *Twin Peaks* had been broadcast. Yes, it's the fantastic soundtrack from *Wipeout 3*, in handy audio CD form and conveniently mixed together into one party anthem extravaganza. Plus! We talk to the DJs and bands behind the music.

■ Now then, where was I?

HE IS

There are only two jobs that involve twiddling knobs and pushing buttons, and being a DJ is one of them. *Arcade* talks tunes with Sasha above, and grills The Propellerheads et al on their gaming habits over the page.

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON



Interviews by | Rich Pelley

THE MUSIC MAN

Top Geezer and all-round famous DJ-type Sasha is the man who holds the title of musical director of *Wipeout 3*. That means he got to apply his mammoth musical mind to coordinating the soundtrack, roping mates from the world of dance music into doing tunes for the game, and contributing five original songs of his own. *Arcade* caught up with him just before he took to the wheels of steel at the *Wipeout 3* launch party at The New London Theatre to ask him how it all went, whether he played games, and whether or not that was his old school shirt he was wearing...

Hello. So, first things first, how did you get involved with *Wipeout 3*?

I was approached by Sony. Before *Wipeout*, most videogame music was nasty keyboard stuff. *Wipeout* was the first game to actually have a great soundtrack. However, all Sony had previously done was to license a load of big tracks that were around at the time. This time they wanted someone to actually write music specifically for the game, and coordinate the tracks into a proper soundtrack.

Why did you accept?

I've talked about doing the music for soundtracks and movies before, but I've never had to work to a visual. I saw it a really interesting project, really, and one that I really wanted to get involved with.

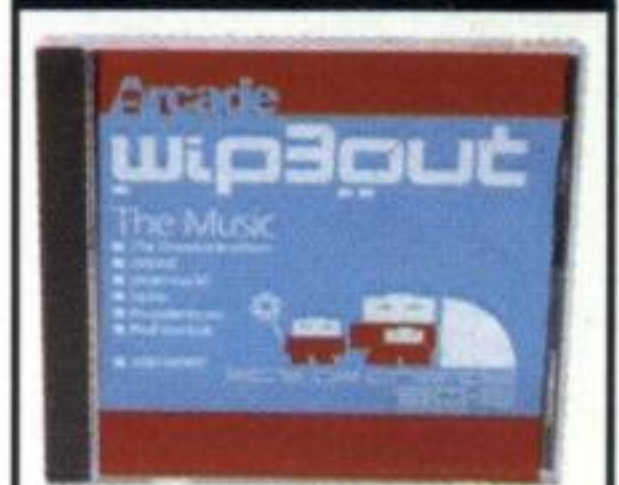
Do you think a link is developing between games and music?

Obviously not with things like *Super Mario* with its silly Japanese music. But with *Wipeout* – yes. The game was created with clubbers in mind anyway. It's very futuristic, very techno-looking, and visually very stunning, so I think that the music really reflects this. If they had just used some plinky-plonk soundtrack, the game wouldn't have been nearly as successful.

Did you have any problems?

The thing with videogames is that people play them to death, so the danger is that they will tire of the music, especially if they are already familiar with the tracks. What I tried to do was to really make things happen quickly. With the tracks that I've have written, the music is changes every eight or 16 bars.

DJ SASHA TRACKS ON YOUR FREE CD



■ Sasha tracks:
Feisar, Auricom, Piranha, Icaras, Goteki 45



WIPEOUT 3 THE MUSIC



■ Man alive, I like the look of her... I wonder if she'll look this way. If I can only get the beats just right... Bingo!

You've specially scored original material for the soundtrack. How was writing music for a game different to making a club record?

Most of the tracks are only three minutes long, but before I did *Wipeout* most of my intros went on for three minutes before the kick drum even came in. So I had to radically rethink my music-making. If you are making a good club record then you are constantly trying to build it up. But with a game you've got a three second intro and then it's – wallop. The key was cramming in enough ideas for a 15 minute song into three minutes. The music is constantly evolving, so hopefully people won't get bored by it.

The speed of the game must totally dictate the speed of the music. *Wipeout's* very fast, after all.

I've never worked on music this fast before. What was weird is that after a long stretch in the studio, I'd stop noticing how fast the music was. But when I'd go out and make a phone call or something and come back in it, it was – fucking hell this *is* fast.

Are you into games?

I used to have a Commodore 64, you know. And I had an Atari VCS, which I completely battered to death. But then games started getting complicated and I kind of dropped out. I've got back into them a bit more recently. *Virtua Fighter* and *Wipeout* are my favourites. Videogames have got back into being a lot more approachable now, which is great for someone like me.

And is that your old school shirt you are wearing? Oh, you've gone. Thanks anyway. Bye.



PROPELLERHEADS



They may be West Country boys, but they know games.

How did you get involved with *Wipeout 3*?

We're very busy at the moment. But I'm a big PlayStation fan, so I just said great plan, let's do it. Sony has got some very big music acts involved with *Wipeout 3*, after all.

Does your track suit the feel of the game?

It's a really uptempo tune, quite heavy. *Wipeout* tends to go for uppy, housey, technoey tunes. So hopefully it'll work! I'm looking forward to hearing it while racing round the track at 200mph.

Do you play videogames?

I do, I'm a PlayStation freak. [Other Propellerhead] Alex has got a Nintendo 64 as well, and I think he prefers that. When I get time, I do like a good racing game.

Is there a connection between dance music and games?

The PlayStation is a really good format to be able to get this type of music out to people who like it. They are the same markets, really. The people that will be buying *Wipeout 3* are the same people who we want to be selling records to anyway.

So it's a pretty good thing, then?

To be able to sit down in front of the telly and listen to your favourite tunes while playing one of your favourite games is great. This particular tune is off our first EP, that was never released in the UK, so it's great that it has found a way to get into people's living rooms.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Propellerheads track: **Lethal Cut**

PAUL VAN DYK



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES CUMPOSTY

The thinking man's DJ, Paul Van Dyk, talks shop.

Is there a connection between clubbing and games?

The atmosphere of *Wipeout* when you are flying through the spacey tunnels and a futuristic flying machine is mad. So to have some sort of energetic soundtrack underneath it just makes sense. So, yes, the combination of visuals and music make *Wipeout* very suitable for a clubbing audience.

Unlike in previous versions of *Wipeout*, the overall *Wipeout 3* soundtrack was overseen by Sasha. Was he the one who approached you?

The first time he heard the track he apparently loved it and burnt himself an acetate. So I felt really honoured when he asked me.

Did you think that it was a good idea to use one of your tracks in a videogame?

Definitely. A lot of people from the clubbing generation have a Playstation at home. But before *Wipeout*, if they wanted to listen to the music they liked when playing a game they'd have to put a CD in the stereo. But now they can just have the music as part of the game.

People who hear your track for the first time on the CD are hearing it in a very different context to people who hear it in a club, though.

I'll be very curious to see how it all works. I just hope my track doesn't only appear on the highest level otherwise no one's ever going to manage to reach it!

Don't worry – you can select the tracks at will. So, anyway, what are you up to at the moment?

"Avenue" is on the flip side of the new single, out in September/October. The new album out in the Spring. And DJ wise it's all over. Ibiza for Cream, Gatecrasher, the usual sort of thing.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Paul Van Dyk track: **Avenue**

GLOW RECORDS *GLOW*

They mixed your CD and contributed music. Show offs.

What did you actually have to do?

We had to edit the full-length tracks down to two minutes each, and then mix them together. Sounds simple, but it took a lot of programming. It was made even harder because the tempos varied by up to 25 bpm. Fun though. Lots of reverb and filters. It took us five nights hard graft in the end.

Was it fun?

Oh yeah! You get an awesome track listing like that to work with, it's got to be fun. There is so much interest out there for those new Sasha tracks it's unreal.

What other musical projects are you working on at the moment?

There's a possible U2 mix, and a Propellerheads remix in the bag. We also run a record shop in Liverpool – 3-Beat records – during the day, plus DJing duties at Cream and Amnesia and Cafe Del Mar in Ibiza.

Are you into games?

We've always been into them, who isn't? I've gone through three sets of thumbs since the PlayStation arrived. *Metal Gear* and *Silent Hill* are current favourites. *Time Crisis* always goes down a treat too.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Glow Records tracks: **Control, Down The River, Voices, Surrender**

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS



They aren't really siblings, you know. But they're good.

"An album that launches cruise missiles at your head and heart, leaving your feet for later," opined *Arcade* of The Chem's latest album in issue 8. *Surrender*, indeed, sounds like the Brothers Chemical had the top of their heads sliced off and the music scraped from the inside and laid down on CD. Possibly best not to ask, therefore, what they were under the influence of for the track here. And once you encounter it in the game, it truly sticks out as one of the finest moments in *Wipeout 3*.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Chemical Brothers track: **Under The Influence**
From the Album: *Surrender*

UNDERWORLD



They hail from Romford. They sing about lager. Arcade likes.

"Dance Music at it's most intelligent," was our verdict on *Beaucoup Fish* back in issue 5. It is an album that manages to deconstruct dance tracks beyond the experimental until they sound like they know exactly what they're doing. One of the few totally instrumental tracks on the album (lacking Underworld's usual mix-match of bizarre cut-up lyrics), "Kittens" sounds like a drum machine after one two many Red Bull and vodkas. Madness.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Underworld track: **Kittens**
From the Album: *Beaucoup Fish*

ORBITAL



Just what is it that these people are running from?

"There's so much depth to the *Middle of Nowhere*," we quite rightly said in issue 5, "that you'll make it a constant companion for weeks and not get bored of its conversation." Featuring such great samples as the end drum roll from *John Craven's Newsround*, the *Middle of Nowhere* sits firmly as one of the best albums of the year. "Know Where To Run" is a great place to start the adventure, and comes at the end of your free – yes, free – CD.



ON YOUR FREE CD

■ Orbital track: **Know Where To Run**
From the Album: *Middle Of Nowhere*

Sounds Familiar

A rough guide to game soundtrack hell.

■ Once upon a time, a few bleeps and a minimal bass parp was all the sonic titillation we required for an immersive videogame experience. These days game companies can stick whatever tuneage they desire on a soundtrack, but always seem to end up opting for one of this lot.



1. The Full Metal Racket

■ **What?** A piledriving dirge of lightspeed riffage and elaborate fretwankery.

■ **Why?** It's an ultra-macho off-road racing game, preferably with the word Max somewhere in the title.

■ **Who?** The kind of tattooed, throaty growlers who fill the pages of *Kerrang!* every month. Or in the case of *V-Rally 2*, some obscure French metal outfit with a penchant for preposterous soloing.

2. The Brain Fryer

■ **What?** A tinny two-bar jingle from another dimension of melody, repeated ad infinitum.

■ **Why?** It's a puzzle game. And if the infuriating (yet infuriatingly addictive) nature of the game doesn't send you insane, the tune will.

■ **Who?** A monkey accidentally stumbling across the keys of an ancient Casio organ.

3. The Wagner Wannabe

■ **What?** An overly portentous *tour de force* of orchestral grandeur.

■ **Why?** It's an adventure game with designs on becoming a new highbrow art form. And it's a bit scary.

■ **Who?** A deeply confused Royal Philharmonic under the baton of a megalomaniac game designer who suddenly believes he's Spielberg and Stravinsky rolled into one multi-talented – and yet shamefully overlooked whole.

4. The Lounge Swinger

■ **What?** Henry Mancini and Herb Alpert as played on a troupe of cheap synths.

■ **Why?** It's Japanese, and we've heard these kind of unexpectedly slinky grooves on everything from *Ape Escape* to *Point Blank*.

■ **Who?** A genius hiding his light under a bushel of keyboards. Frankly, the man who composed the *Mario Party* music deserves an Ivor Novello award.

5. The Big Beat No-Brainer

■ **What?** Faceless dance music vaguely resembling a popular club genre of the time. Cos the kids'll dig it.

■ **Why?** It's a game desperately trying to assert its hip factor, usually with dire results.

■ **Who?** PR people like to remind you that the music comes courtesy of the Ministry Of Sound. But this doesn't necessarily mean it is the product of Danny Rampling or Justin Robertson's fiendish aural imaginations, it could be that the caretaker knocked it up between washing sick off the bog seats.

6. The Retro Pop Smash

■ **What?** Surging, funky electro-pop

instrumentals, straight off the B-side of an '80s teen band single.

■ **Why?** The Japanese seem to think these make ideal themes for sports games. Check out the beauties on *Wave Race* and *ISS Pro*.

■ **Who?** Someone in a strangely inspired '80s time warp.

7. The Marching Band

■ **What?** The endless militaristic cacophony of fife and tambour.

■ **Why?** It's a war strategy. Obviously a few screeching fanfares are exactly what's needed to inspire you to massacre foreign troops on a grand scale – until the incessant drumrolls require you to spend all your energy on sending the band to Pluto.

■ **Who?** Some geezers sporting busbies.

8. The Fatboy Slim Special

■ **What?** *The Rockefeller Skank*. Or *Gangster Trippin'*. Or whatever else you've got lying around, Norm.

■ **Why?** Every game wants a Fatboy tune, suited or not.

■ **Who?** A company boss with a large wad meets a terrifyingly productive Brighton-based groove merchant who has hit paydirt. A match made in corporate heaven.

WIPEOUT 3 THE HISTORY



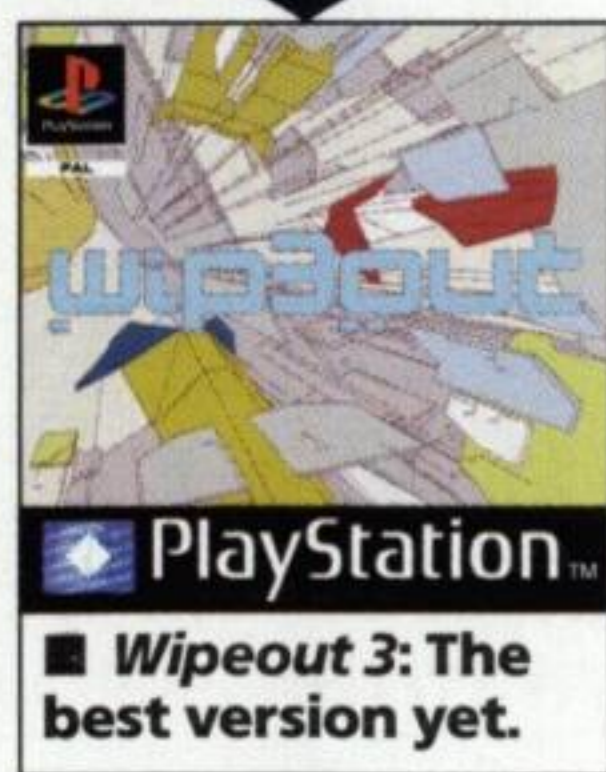
■ **Wipeout: It invented a genre.**



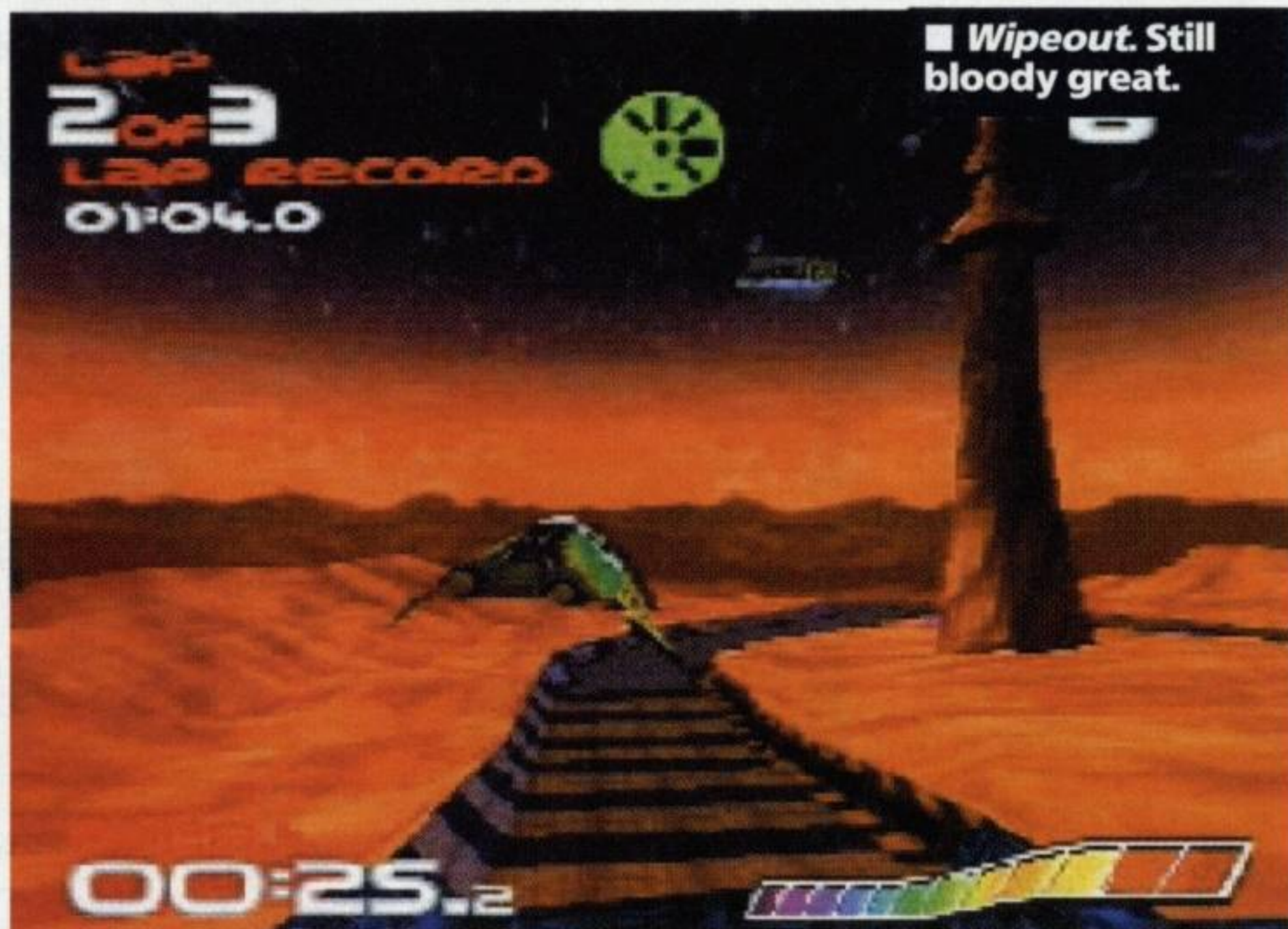
■ **2097: Faster, sexier and hi-res.**



■ **Wipeout 64: Not bad but flawed.**



■ **Wipeout 3: The best version yet.**



THE HISTORY OF WIPEOUT

Incredibly, the first *Wipeout* game was nearly never released. Actually, that's not true. But the genesis of one of the most successful games ever is an exciting tale nevertheless.

It had been a long and trying day in the Arcade office. As usual, the lion's share of available working hours had been frittered away in front of *Mario Party*. Night was drawing in, the cleaner was doing his rounds and we suddenly realised our *Wipeout 3* feature was missing one crucial element: a complete history of the game. And, despite our position as the most thorough, professional, committed and fantastically well-endowed games journalists in the known world, inspiration had deserted us.

"Now, *Wipeout 2097*," pondered Sean. "Wasn't that the same as *Wipeout 2*?"

"Rubbish!" contested Rich. "You're thinking of *Wipeout XL*. There never was a *Wipeout 2*."

"But there's a *Wipeout 3*, right?"

"I hope so, otherwise we've been sold a pup on this CD thing..."

The planning meeting was looking as though it was due to run long into prime drinking hours, when...

"Did you want to keep this?"

Eh? The cleaner was squinting at a coffee-stained scrap of paper.

"It was under all those dirty mugs. It says, ooh, *The Official History of...* What's that? Wippy-Oot?"

Wippy-Oot? What was he on about now? Hang on. We snatched it out of his hand. *The Official History of Wipeout*.

Brilliant! There'll be singing before sun-up. Ahem. *Wipeout*, then, we learnt, came into being in 1995, when the programmers at developer Psygnosis were playing with their secret PlayStation kit. Blimey. 1995. No wonder our memories were failing us. But it's all coming back now.

Wipeout was a racing game the likes of which the world had never seen. It was fast, futuristic, and a perfect demonstration of the new Sony machine's revolutionary polygon-pushing power. We were so excited when we first saw it that we almost failed our GCSEs, so just imagine what the atmosphere was like at Psygnosis as the game slowly took shape. Brilliant ideas for power-ups? Sneaky track designs? Let's consult *The Official History...*

"Attention turned to the ways in which the game could capitalise on the marketing methods of the music and fashion industries."

Eh? Capitalise on marketing methods?

"A number of marketing hooks were built into the product."

Hooks? Product? What do they mean?

"The intention was to place *Wipeout* firmly within the context of a fashionable, club-going, music-buying market. It was a niche market, but one with a high number of influential opinion formers."

No, hang on. Influential opinion formers? Are they talking about us game fans? Fashionable? Have they met Rich? Anyway, *Wipeout* was released, hooks and all, in 1995 – the same time as the PlayStation. Along with *Ridge Racer*, *Wipeout* swiftly established Sony's new machine as the definitive "next generation" platform. As a result, according to Psygnosis' figures, one in

Vox pops At the launch party of Wipeout 3



■ Hello. Are you having a nice time? "Pardon?" We said, ARE YOU HAVING A GOOD TIME? "Wicked, mate." Bit crowded, isn't it? "What?" Never mind.



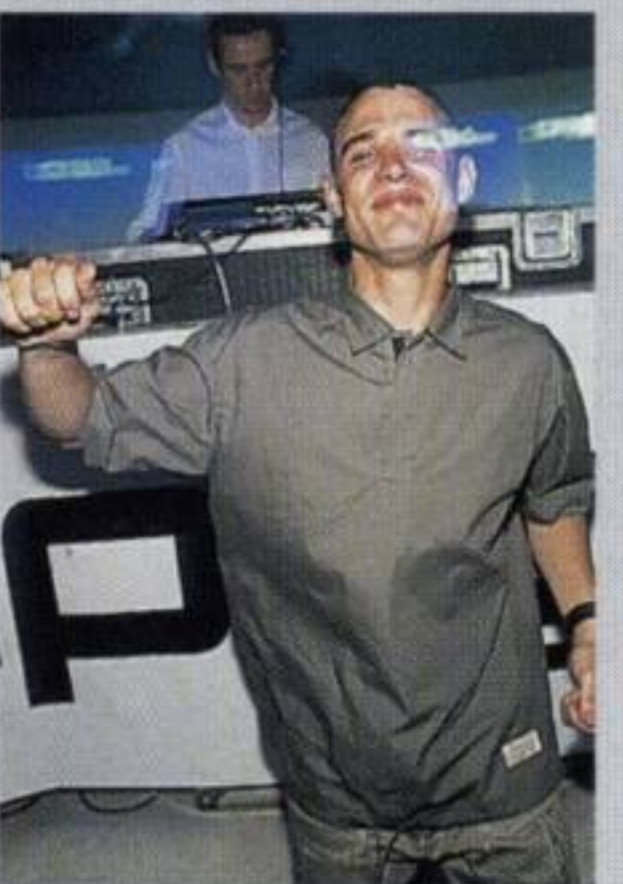
■ Hello, you two. What did you reckon of *Wipeout 3*, then? "It's blinding. Bloody fast, too. Gave us a bit of a headache, actually. Or maybe it's the beer."



■ Hello. What did you think of *Wipeout 3*, then? "The split-screen mode is good, innit? That's what was missing from the first two." Quite right.



■ Hellooooo. Here for the game, or for the drinks? "To see Sasha, actually." We just met him. He was jolly nice. Except he was wearing his old school shirt.



■ Calm down mate. Look! There's Sasha, with *Wipeout 3* behind him on a huge screen. "Give it up, mate." Eh? "Banging tune, this." Right. We're going now.



two PlayStation owners bought a copy of *Wipeout*. Pressing left and right a bit, and occasionally the fire button, had never been so much fun.

A sequel was inevitable, and in 1996 we caught our first glimpse of *Wipeout 2097*. Or *Wipeout XL*, if you were on the other side of the Atlantic. With whizzier graphics, souped-up explosions, an even more pseudo-Japanese feel, more tracks, more hover cars and nifty new weapons like the road-wobbling *Quake Disrupter*, *Wipeout 2097* made *Wipeout* look more like a Hoover racing game than anything else. What more could you ask for? Oh, hang on. What does it say here?

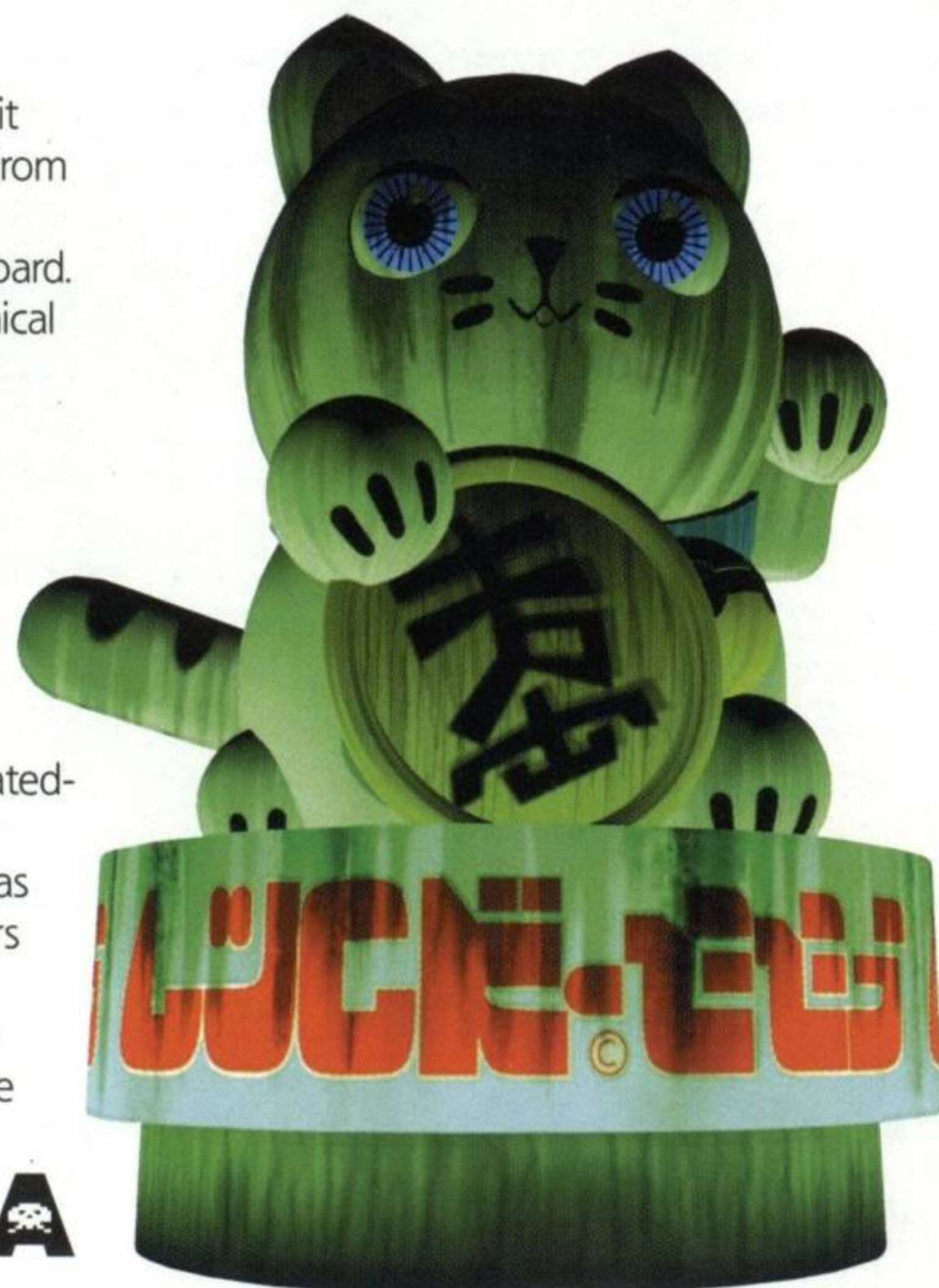
"Through the successful building of a brand, *Wipeout 2097* became far more than another good racing game. It came to symbolise a new maturity in the games market, and a new sophistication in the marketing of games themselves."

Rrrright. Okay. Let's just say *Wipeout 2097* won itself plenty of fans. And credit for that can go partly to backing music from real-life pop groups rather than a programmer in a room with a midi keyboard. The Prodigy, Cold Storage and The Chemical Brothers all contributed ditties, and the game got a further boost when it was adapted for the PC.

Which was all good, unless you owned a Nintendo 64. If that was the case, you had to make do with Acclaim's *Extreme G* for your hover racing thrills. *Cold Storage* wasn't an option. However, last year the now-liberated-from-Sony Psygnosis finally released *Wipeout 64*, with yet more new tracks, as well as the four-player mode N64 owners expect and demand.

And, with the arrival of *Wipeout 3*, it would seem the brand is destined to love on well into the next millennium. Watch out for those hooks, though. They could have your eye out.

"Pressing left and right a bit, and occasionally the fire button, had never been so much fun."



The hover family

Relax as Arcade's genealogists trace the hover game lineage for you.



F-Zero

■ Nintendo ■ SNES ■ 1991
■ The grand-daddy of them all. *F-Zero* was the game that introduced us to the SNES's Mode 7, with futuristic cars belting over 3D terrain at startling speed.



Wipeout

■ Psygnosis ■ PS ■ 1995
■ We're not going through it all again, so read the History. Go on – it's not that bad. Is it?



Slipstream 5000

■ Gremlin ■ PC ■ 1995
■ Did for the PC what *Wipeout* was doing for the PlayStation – threw 3D graphics in your face at alarming speed. Not very "club scene".



Hi-Octane

■ Bullfrog ■ PC/PS ■ 1995
■ One of developer Bullfrog's few moves away from strategy games, *Hi-Octane* was a workmanlike hover-racing offshoot of adventure game *Magic Carpet*.



Wipeout 2097

■ Psygnosis ■ PS/PC ■ 1996
■ See *Wipeout*.



F-Zero 2

■ Nintendo ■ SNES ■ 1997
■ Obscure mini-sequel released in Japan via Nintendo's weird satellite distribution system.



Extreme G

■ Acclaim ■ N64 ■ 1997
■ While Psygnosis was distracted by the PlayStation, Acclaim nipped in and gave N64 owners a hover racer of their own. Wheels, but a suitably hovey absence of handling.



F-Zero 64

■ Nintendo ■ N64 ■ 1998
■ Cruises comfortably above other hover-racers, many gamers would argue. Eschews flashy scenery in favour of millions of opponents and knuckle-whitening velocity.



Extreme G 2

■ Acclaim ■ N64 ■ 1998
■ Still no sign of the *Wipeout* brand in the N64 camp, so Acclaim was able to speed up its game and make the multi-player mode work.



Wipeout 64

■ Psygnosis ■ N64 ■ 1998
■ See *Wipeout 2097*.



Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

■ LucasArts ■ PS/N64/PC ■ 1999
■ Hover your way across Tatooine and other favourite locations. No *Quake Disrupter*, or any other weapons to speak of, and unfeasibly easy. But it's *Star Wars*! Or something.

WIPEOUT 3 THE GAME



■ Slightly rippled, but with a very smooth underside.



MY MATE WIPEOUT Written by | Ben East

It doesn't get much better than this. A PlayStation pinnacle has been reached – and you won't believe your eyes. Introducing the wonderful *Wipeout 3*.

“Let's be friends.” It's hardly the most gripping of slogans to promote the latest instalment of the most full-on, in-yer-face racer the PlayStation, or indeed any platform, has ever seen, now is it? You'd expect something like “Wipeout 3: come on!” or “Wipeout 3: mad for it!”, wouldn't you? But “Let's be friends”? It's weird. And what's weirdest of all is that it actually makes

a lot of sense. Ten minutes in the company of *Wipeout 3* and you'll be more than friends with it. You'll be inseparable buddies.

This refreshingly cute – yet understated – sloganeering flows from the hearts and minds of renowned design group Designers Republic, the Sheffield-based company behind the clean record sleeve art of The Shamen, Aphex Twin and The Orb. The company's influence on *Wipeout 3* is immense, traces of which are obvious from the minimalist menu screens to the ships – not forgetting the billboards, start signs and deeply cool logos along the way. In fact, so deep is the company's involvement that it deserves a feature all of its own (so we

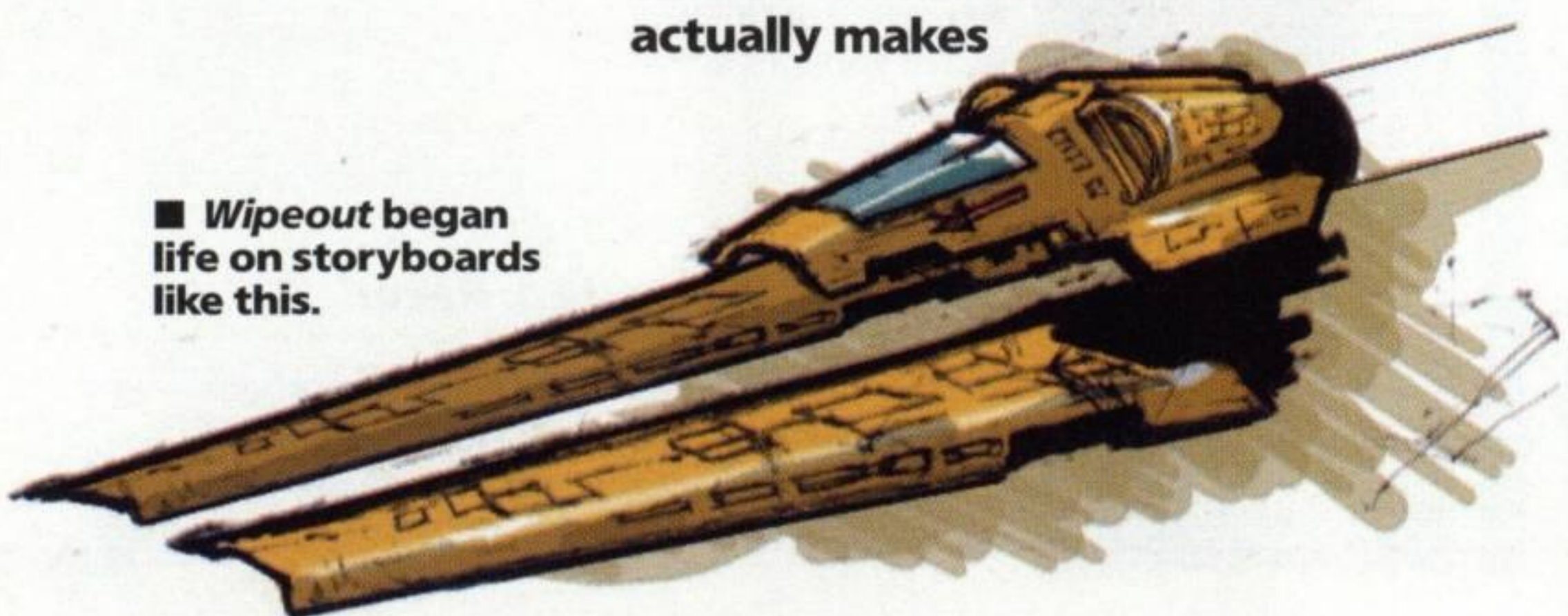
wrote it – see page 60), but perhaps the best you can hope for from any design is that it'll both capture your imagination and help crystallise your ideas about something.

And that's exactly what has happened. “understated” is a particularly good starting description for *Wipeout 3*. The first thing you notice is how, well, *grey* everything looks. This is far from being a bad thing: the cities you race through are hi-res, nightmarish visions of a metallic futuroscope; the ships sleek, lean and sharply manufactured. Take a short journey back to the world of *Wipeout 2097* after the merest of glances at this instalment, and you'll immediately notice how much more garish – even scruffy – the previous

incarnation looks. *Wipeout 3* is, by contrast, stunningly clean and free of clutter. It's difficult to imagine how the PlayStation in its

“Those who can't handle it need to find ways of dealing with it”

■ *Wipeout* began life on storyboards like this.





■ The only difference in two-player mode is the black sky.



"All of *Wipeout's* accoutrements are as much a part of the road to victory as the pure racing"

present incarnation can hope to better the sheer good looks of *Wipeout 3*. A pinnacle has indeed been reached.

But beauty's only skin deep, right? And without improved and sharper gameplay for 1999, all the neat cosmetic advances on show in *Wipeout 3* would count for nothing. Happily, this is without doubt *the* version of *Wipeout* to own if all you're interested in is playing the damn game. The feature that will grab most of the headlines is the split-screen two-player mode, criminally missing from the first two *Wipeouts*. Indeed, should you be one of the 27 people in Great Britain who have a link cable, you can take the option of embarking on a four-player game – provided you can get your hands on another copy of the game along with a PlayStation and a telly.

But back to the two-player game. The inclusion of another humanoid into the proceedings has done nothing to lessen the visual impact of *Wipeout 3*. It remains the fastest racer you'll ever play, even with the computer controlled players burning up the track alongside you. There are also a whole load of new weapons waiting to be picked up, and blasting your mates into oblivion as you scream into the lead on the final bend has never been so much fun. In the general scheme of things, it may seem unfair that those of you who can pull off lap after lap of perfect times should find yourselves the

victim of a furious arsenal of weaponry as you turn into the final straight. Well, tough... the power-ups, the speed, and the pit stops – in fact all of *Wipeout 3's* accoutrements – are as much a part of the road to victory as the pure racing. Those who can't handle it need to find ways of dealing with it.

Indeed, those very feelings of frustration may prove to be part of the added value that lends longevity to *Wipeout 3*. And alongside the iniquities of first-past-the-post gaming, there are a number of other challenges to keep you occupied. As you would expect, a championship mode, a one-player race mode and a time trial mode are all in place. But *Wipeout 3* also has three other classes of competition to keep you going long after everybody else has put their head down for the night: the race challenge, the weapon challenge and the time challenge.

The race challenge is relatively straightforward. If you finish in first place, you win an award and progress on to the next race. The weapon challenge sets you the task of nobbling other ships, and in a different menu heading there is a similar game, called the Eliminator, where you get points for taking out other ships and completing laps. But it is the time challenge that will rob you of sweet hours of shut-eye.

The way this works is that secret time bandings are set for each course, and you

Clever bits

Where the detail makes all the difference...



Pit lane indicator

■ The pit lanes are now much more important than in previous versions of *Wipeout*, in keeping with the developer's drive to increase the tactical side of the game. Depending on how long you dare spend out of the race, you can repair your ship, or – more importantly – top-up your speed burst banks. To help you spot the lane entrance, a handy arrow pops up at the top of the screen to show you the way in.



Air brakes

■ Initially you'll find the camera view from behind the ship the most accessible. And it has its own rewards too, in the form of witnessing the operation of the air brakes, which pop up a flap similar to one you might see on real aircraft as they come into land. In the general scheme of things this is a tiny, tiny detail, but – inevitably – it makes all the difference.



Proximity indicator

■ The AI of the computer competitors has been improved to such an extent that you'll need all the help you can get just to stay one jump ahead. Which is why the proximity indicator is such a godsend. It tells you exactly how far behind you someone is and to which side of you they are, so you can set your defensive weapons for maximum effect. This works particularly well with the mines.



Replays

■ Now that *Wipeout* finally has a split-screen mode, the one thing that follows as sure as night follows day is a *Gran Turismo*-style hi-res replay to taunt the loser. And the '99 incarnation certainly doesn't disappoint, as you finally have time to appreciate the backgrounds (everything flies by much too fast when you're racing). Let's see that again? Oh yes indeed.



Cockpit view

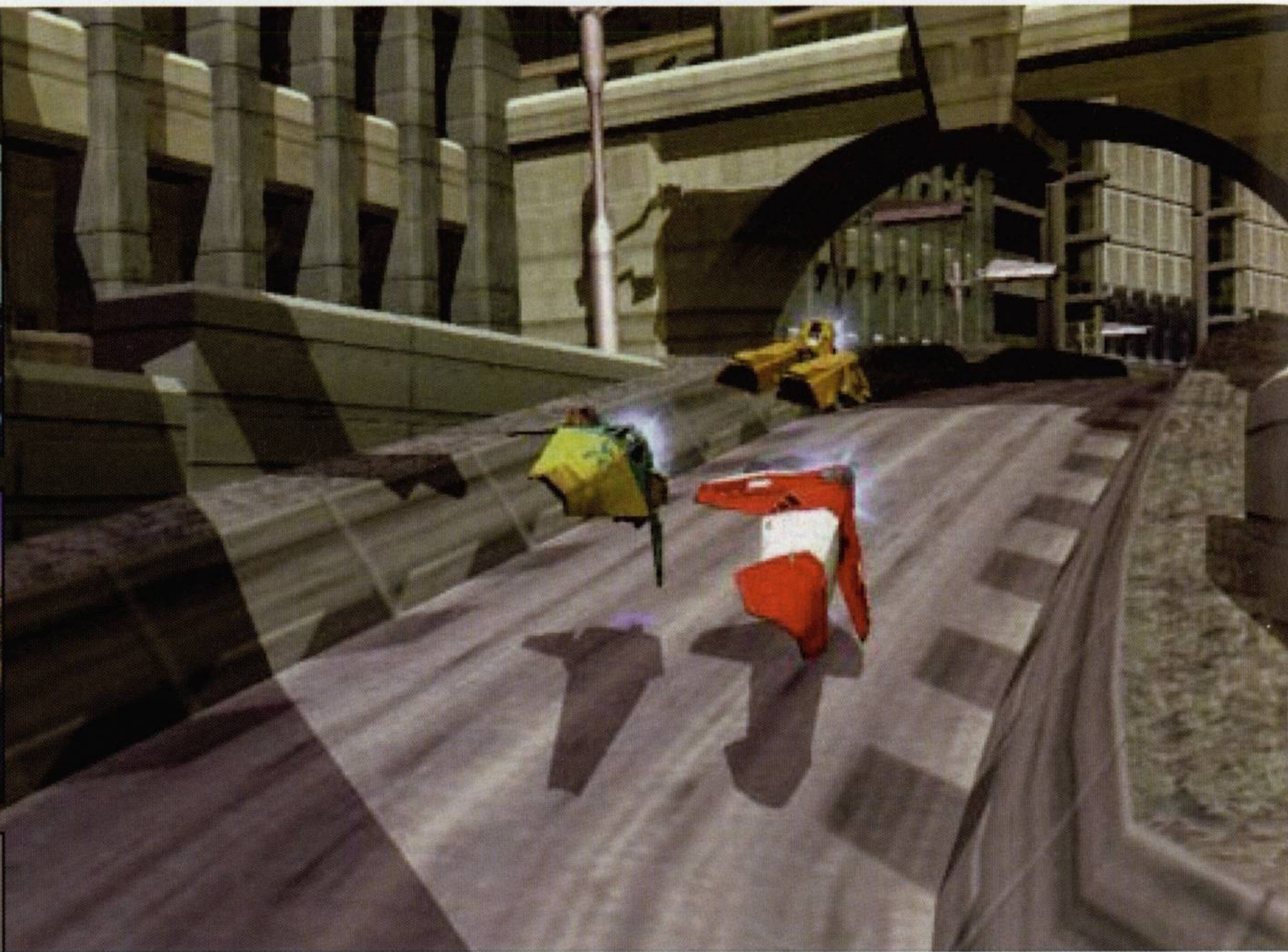
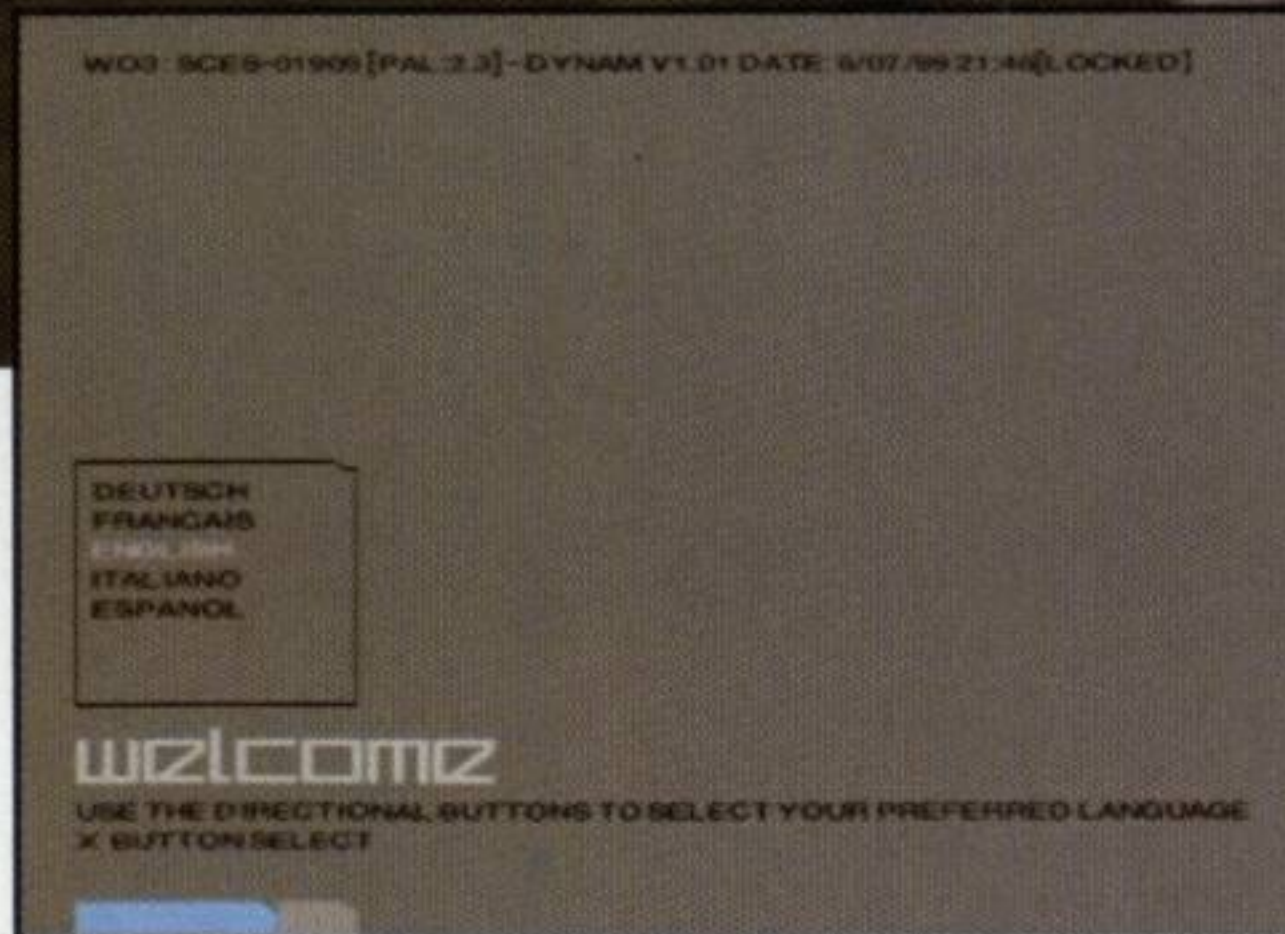
■ The cockpit view gives you a pilot's-eye view of the unfolding race and, like the in-car views in *TOCA* and *TOCA 2*, it's the hardest to use. However, it's the most rewarding in terms of the look and feel of the game. Try it once you know the track layouts.

must make it home in one piece – and within one of the bandings – to progress. It's quite easy to get bronze and open a new challenge, but a gold award requires huge amounts of practice and back-of-the-hand-style knowledge of the track.

It's this all-things-to-all-people approach which will please hardened *Wipeouteers* and newbies alike. Couple this with the now trademark *Wipeout* soundtrack, complete with beats from the likes of The Chemical



WIPEOUT 3 THE GAME



“You need to feel that fantastic rush of speed all for yourself...”

■ **The menus are classy. No, not boring. Classy. Like Benidorm, really.**

Brothers, Orbital and Sasha, and you've got a game that, if you're a gamer, will remind you of why you got into games in the first place; or, if you've previously shunned the pleasures of the joypad, make you wonder why you'd never played them before.

So there you have it. Or do you? This version of *Wipeout* has been given such a radical overhaul that it's almost impossible to highlight every single change. And, as Oasis sang when they were much poorer: "It's the little things that make you so happy". For example, it seems ridiculous now, but none

of the previous *Wipeouts* made use of Dual Shock technology. *Wipeout 3* changes all that, and it makes an incredible difference: somehow you feel more like you are piloting the ship, and the control system is more responsive to boot.

And then there are the vapour trails. Each ship has a different colour tracer which plots its course through the air, the effect of which is stunning as you jostle for position along the tortuous, twisty tunnels of the tracks. Then there's the way the tracks dip and climb, which generates a sensation of

height and out-of-control speed you won't experience this side of The Big One at Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

Some of the city tracks boast weather effects as well, and the lighting is unbelievably good. It would be over the top to say this is the best looking game on PlayStation, wouldn't it? But it is.

Get the picture? *Wipeout 3* is a very special game. To continue to describe it in all its fantastic detail would be almost spoiling it, and anyway, you need to feel that fantastic rush of speed all for yourself. Nothing can prepare you for it.

Wipeout 3 completely confounds expectations. Just give in to its charms and remember two things. One: it's out on 3 September. Two: If this is what they can do now, what on Earth is *Wipeout* on PlayStation 2 going to be like? **A**

The ships

One day, my son, we'll all be driving cars like this.

■ Like all *Wipeouts* before it, *Wipeout 3* uses the coolest hovercraft you've ever seen. None of your Dover-Calais antics here, these things can shift. Although they might well make you seasick if you're just watching.

AGSYS



■ **Agsys:** One that Nazi Germany might have developed. Geddit?

ASSEGEI



■ **Assegei:** Lush greens hide the fact that this runs on leaded fuel.

AURICOM



■ **Auricom:** The back end is like a Ford Focus. It's a bit faster though.

FEISAR



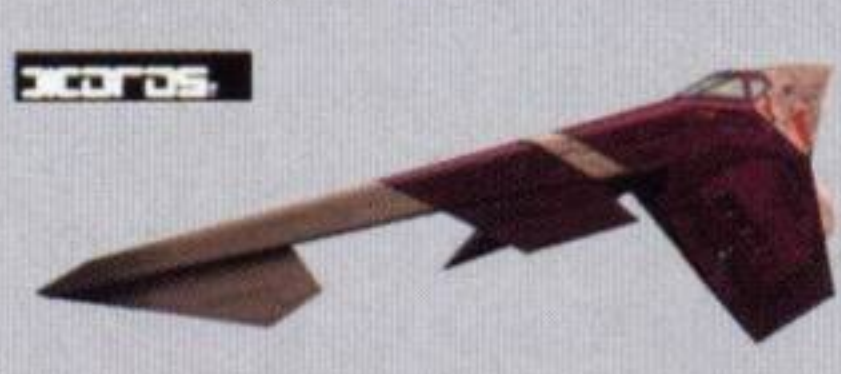
■ **Feisar:** Your bog-standard Nissan Micra: good to learn in.

GOTEKI



■ **Goteki:** Cool as. If only because the ventilation shafts are massive.

ICARUS



■ **Icarus:** The looker of the pack. Nice cockpit view too, we reckon.

PIRANHA



■ **Piranha:** The only one which looks like it couldn't fly. Moody.

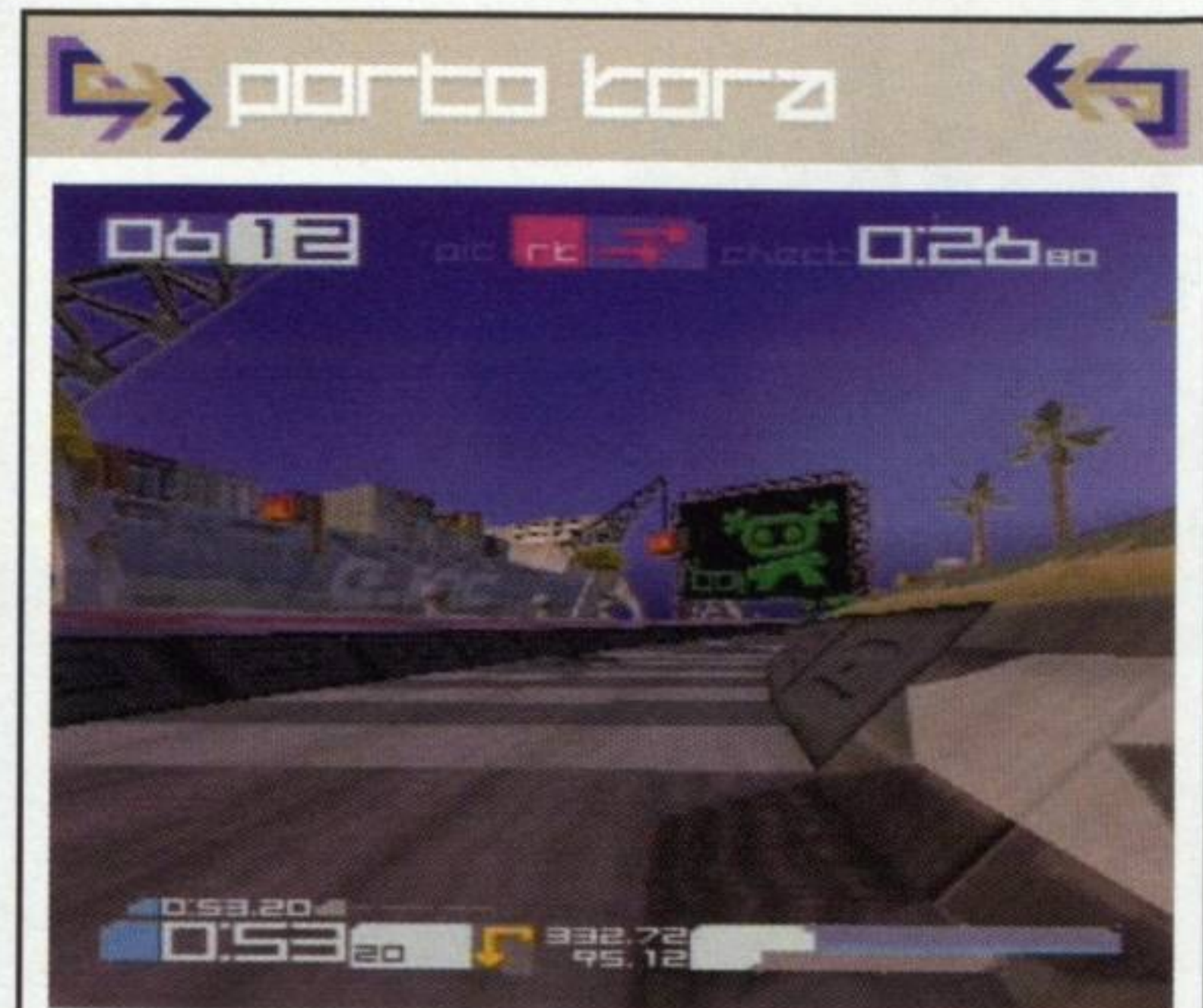
QIREX



■ **Qirex:** Reminds us of a science lesson. Or was that Pyrex?

The tracks

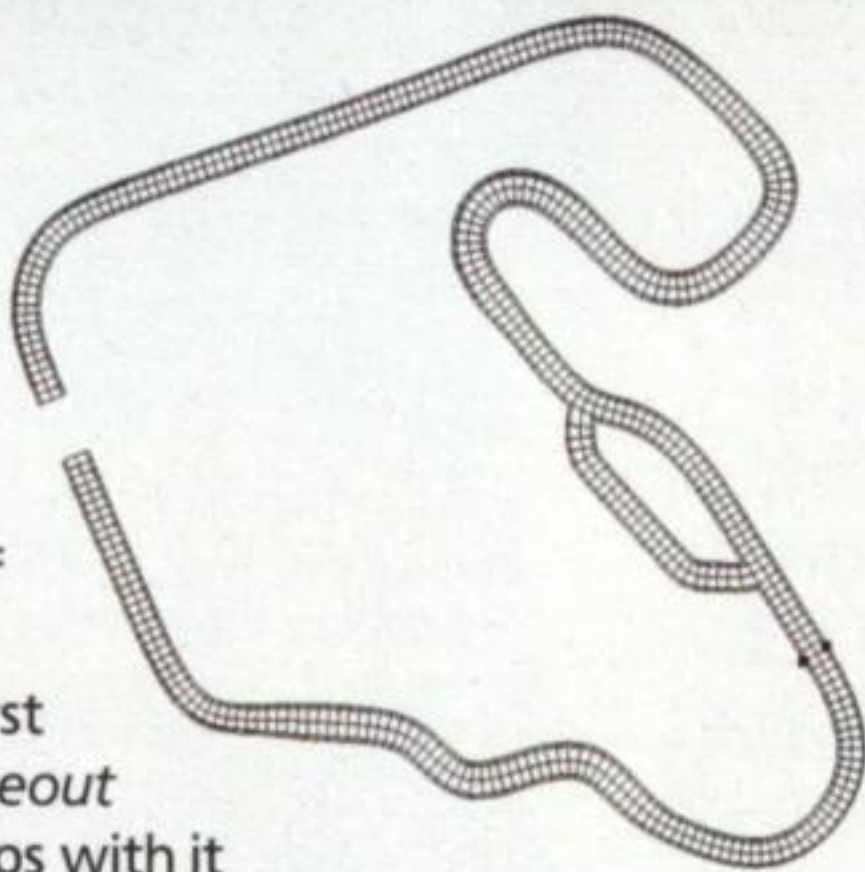
Like the ships, more tracks become available as you progress through the game. Here are the four that are available from the outset.



Porto Xora

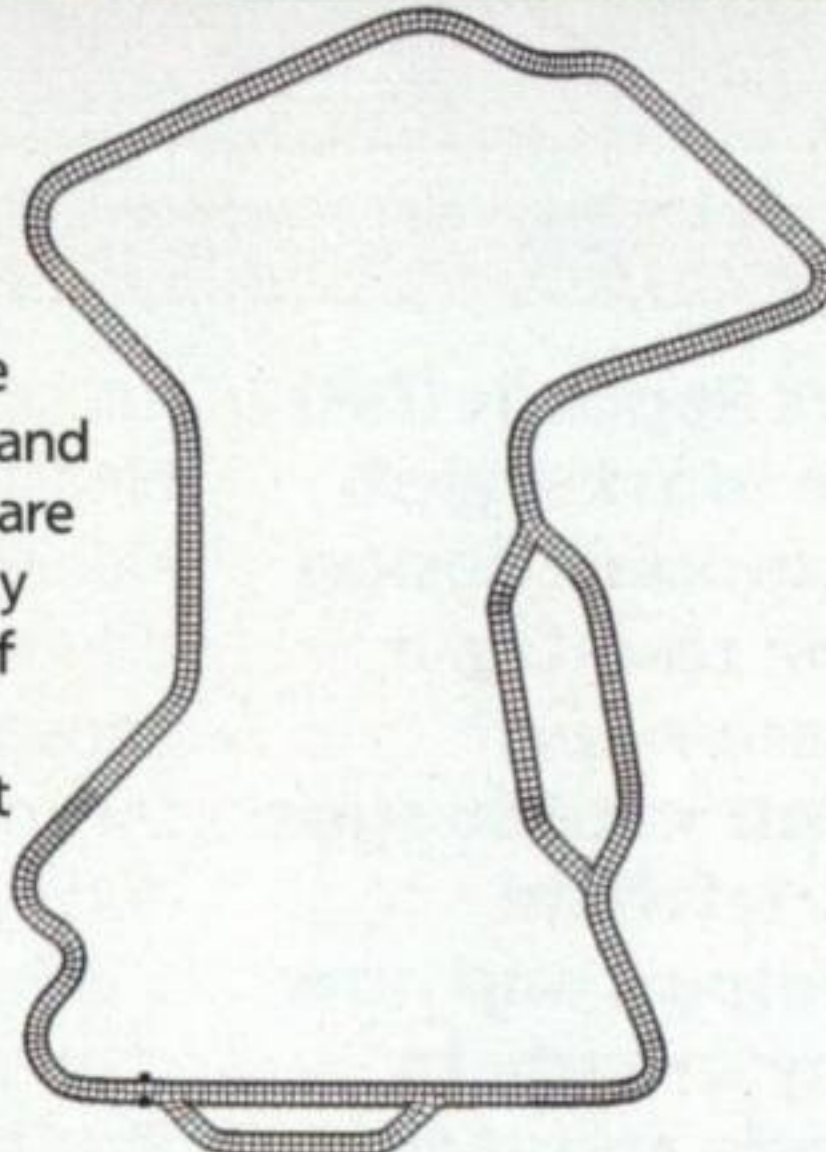
As its name suggests, this track is set around a futuristic port. The detail goes as far as to include seagulls crying and swooping up in front of your vehicle as you fly toward them. It's the first track, which means *Wipeout* virgins should get to grips with it relatively easily, while veterans should be posting impressive times right from the off.

Porto Xora is also notable for a train which speeds past as you head into the viciously fast tunnel section. It all adds to the sunny, seaside feel.



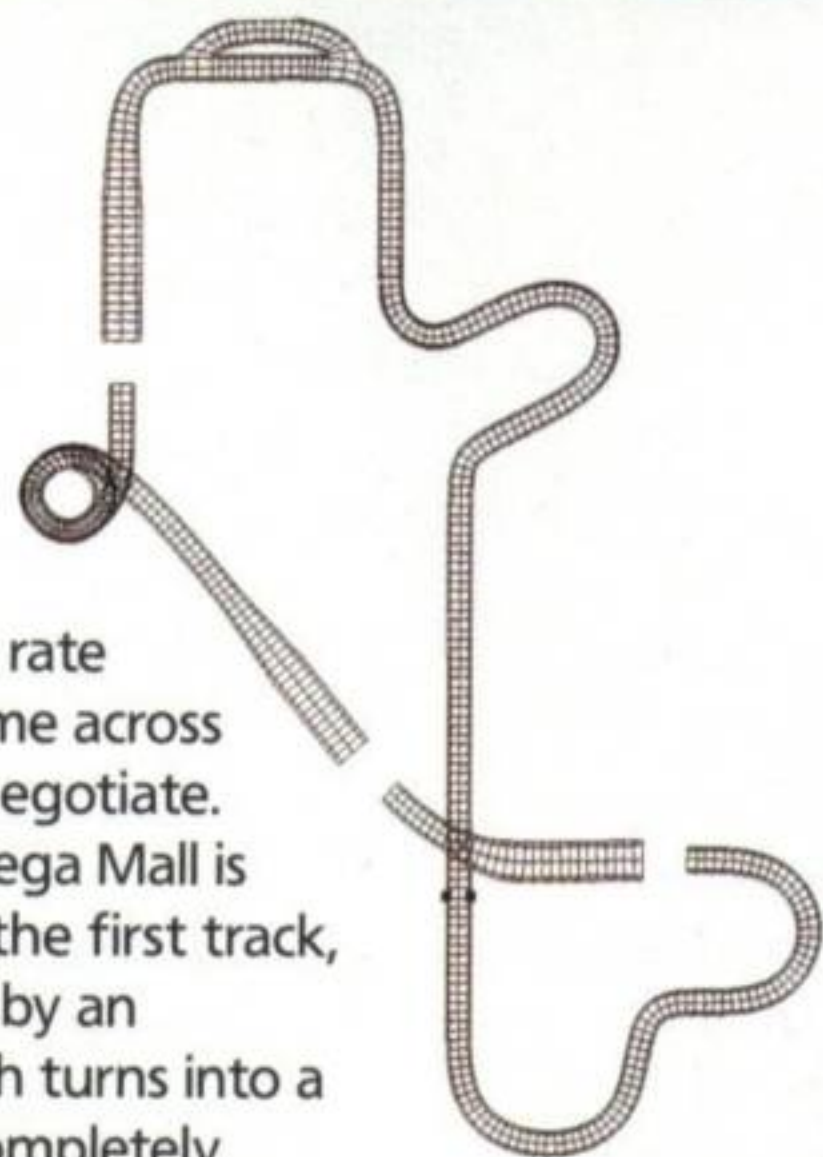
Sampa Run

Moody is the only word to describe Sampa Run. Set on the outskirts of the city, it's a frantic race through darkened tunnels and twisty sections. And there are some absolutely superb hilly sections, too. You're lucky if you're in control for more than a couple of seconds at a time, but at least it prepares you for the next track – this is where you'll learn how to use the air brakes. Oh, and all the action takes place amid a futuristic downpour.



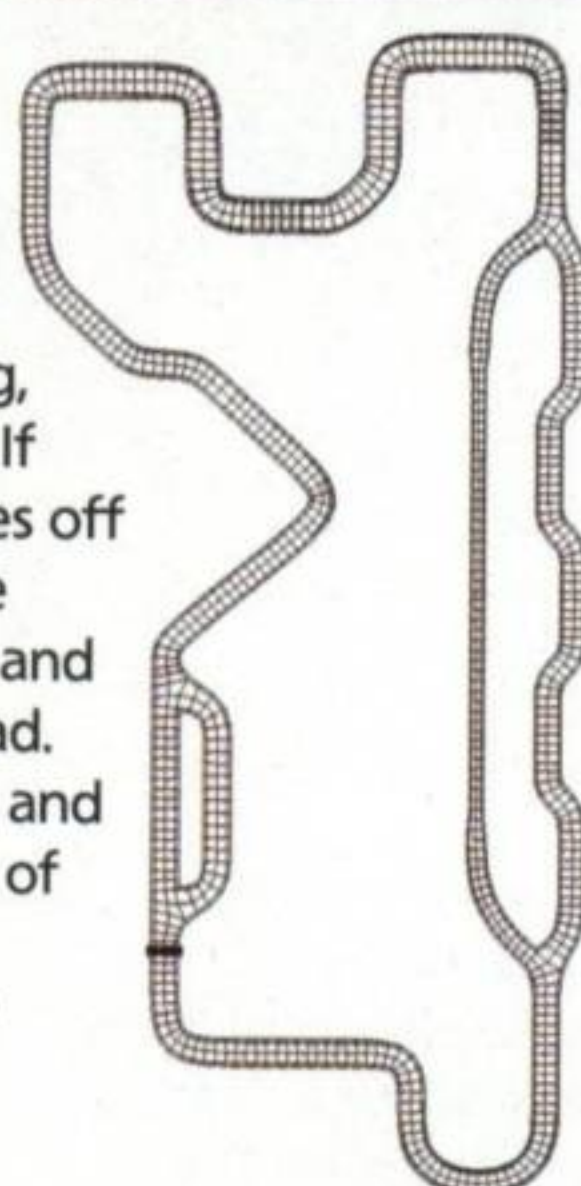
Mega Mall

Otherwise known as "the one with the spiral", this track occupies a 22nd century shopping centre. The major talking point is a huge corkscrew section of track which plummets down at such a rate that the first time you come across it, it seems impossible to negotiate. But, of course, you can. Mega Mall is more of a challenge than the first track, and is made even weirder by an advertising hoarding which turns into a mirror as you approach, completely throwing you if you aren't expecting it.



Stanza Inter

If Sampa Run was the trunk road on the way into the city, this is the maze of streets that make up the centre. It has got everything, and the difficulty is hiked right up. If you have the time to take your eyes off the track for a second, you'll notice washing hanging across the street and a tram line running above your head. The corners are air brakers at best, and the short cut down the narrowest of streets is nothing short of brilliant, especially when you're battling for position. Cool.



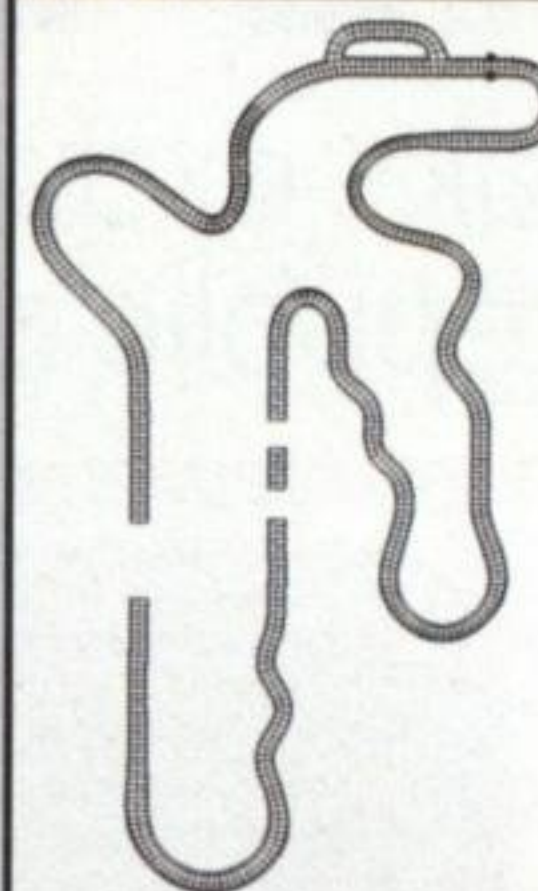
More tracks!

And here's a sneak preview of the other ones we spent all night trying to unlock.



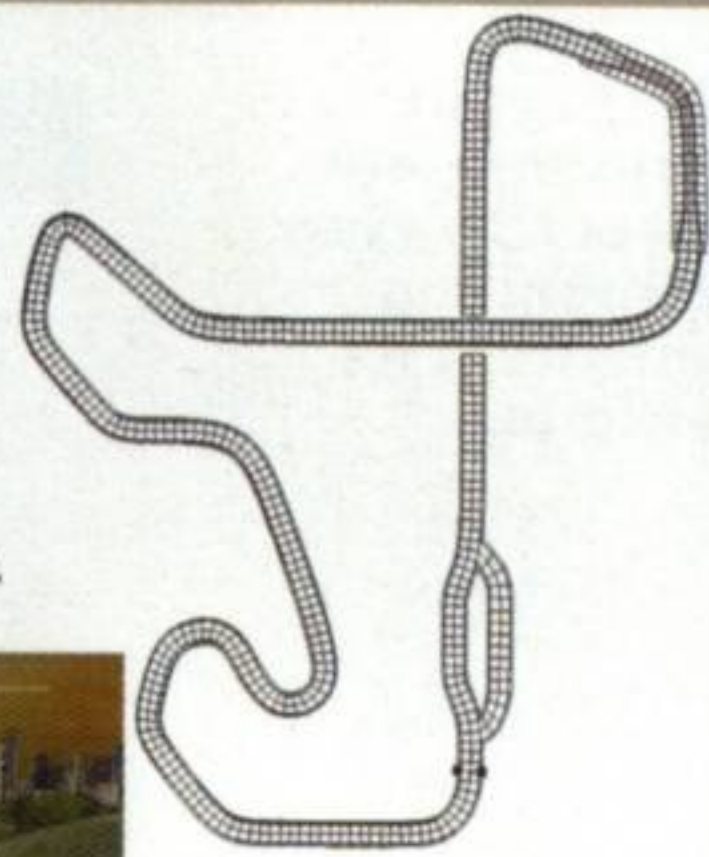
P-mar Project

It's a sunny day, but you won't enjoy five vicious U-turns on this twisty track. There're some cool jumps on a fast straight, too.



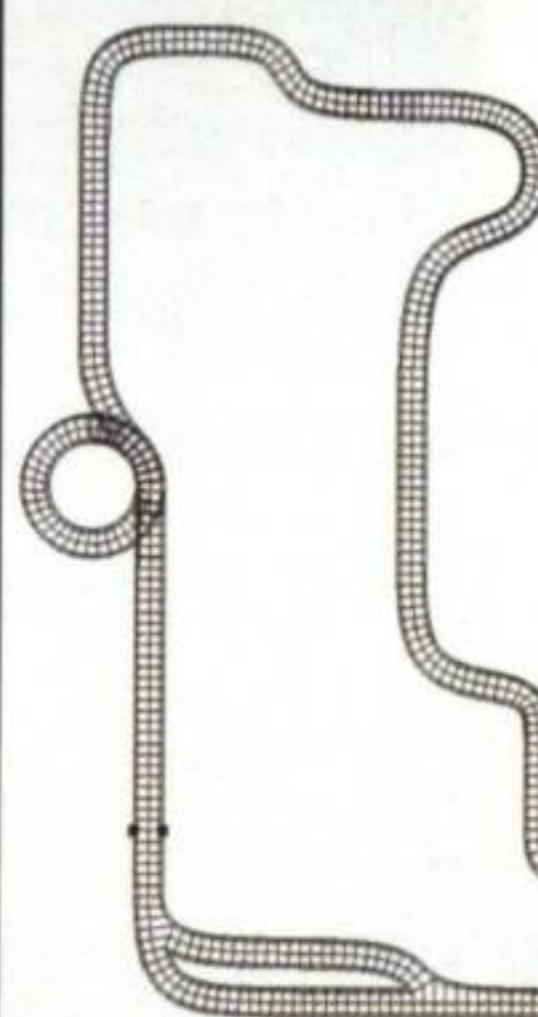
Hi-fumi

Fumi-ng's what you'll be doing after coming last again on this speedy track. One for the pros.



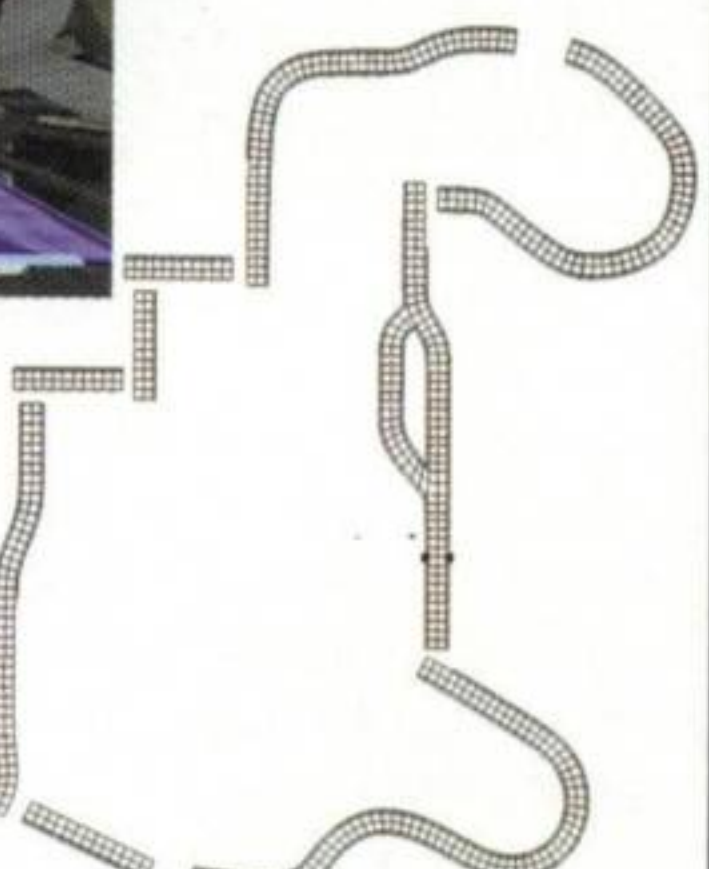
Terminal

Like Mega Mall, the spiral is the main feature of this track. Terminally boring it is most certainly not.



Manortop

A stunning race across the rooftops of the city you've been racing in, with some horrible right angles.



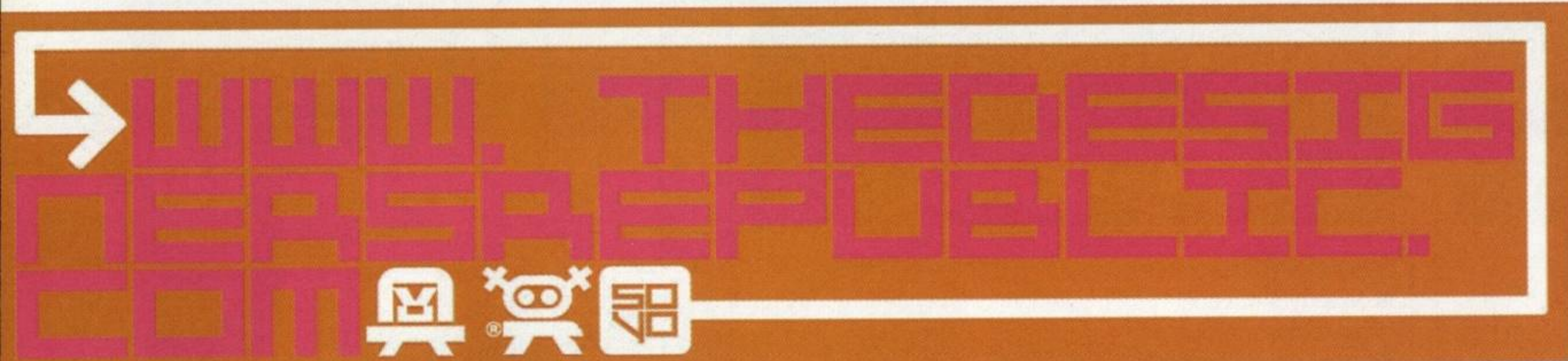
WIPEOUT 3 THE DESIGN



THE DESIGNERS REPUBLIC: GIVING WIPEOUT A SOUL

Written by | **Josse Bilson**

Arcade speaks exclusively to celebrated UK graphic design company The Designers Republic about its crucial role in the *Wipeout* series.



■ DR has put everything into *Wipeout 3* – even incorporating elements of its own logo.

The Designers Republic (DR) is one of the most stylish and prolific graphic design houses in the country. It has a reputation for ingenious, intricate images and a firmly leftfield political ideology, and now the company's ready to spill the beans to *Arcade* about the *Wipeout 3* graphics, on working with Psygnosis, and the team's gameplaying preferences. DR spokesman Ian Anderson tells the story from the start.

"The original contact for *Wipeout* from Psygnosis was simply the search for a solution to the problem that games packaging was in a *Dungeons & Dragons*

rut, stuck between air-brushed thunder-breasted amazons, flight simulation and kiddie cartoons. Basically, the problem was that conceptually and visually it was not appealing to the industry's potential target – the mass market of clubbed-up technology and cyber fans.

"Psygnosis had identified the need for change, and saw that the launch of the PlayStation platform was the optimum time to make the change, but it was unsure of the direction it should take. Initially, I imagine, it was thinking in terms of packaging, but our solution encompassed broader issues of the vision and approach, and attitudes of game developers and games marketing departments. For the change to be credible it had to be more than just a cosmetic makeover."



■ *Wipeout* T-shirt and record bags, the promotional clobber to be seen in this summer.

Luckily, the *Wipeout* development team was urging for similar changes, and, as members were fans of DR, got the design company on board. From that point, it was a natural progression that DR graphics be applied in-game to complement the packaging and promotional identity, and a further natural progression that the creative relationship would develop.

But given that DR had no idea that *Wipeout* would prove to be the massive success it is, what was it that attracted DR to getting involved in the first place?

"Interest in games? Yes. Creative challenge? Yes. New direction? Yes, but essentially we were projecting our existing philosophy into a project that was new for us," explains Anderson.

"Our involvement in *Wipeout 3* gives us the chance to further expand and develop the ideas explored in the first two versions of the game, allowing us to question, re-evaluate and fine-tune our earlier work."

Psygnosis's lead artist, Nicky Westcott, is the person DR worked most closely with on the project, and Anderson and his team clearly have respect for her vision.

"She is, with the exception of DR, the only person to be involved creatively with *Wipeout* from the start, and is someone with whom we have a shared vision of

Beyond Wipeout

There's a lot more to The Designers Republic than games.



■ Some of the most noteworthy projects to surface from The Designers Republic have involved bands – see the massive Pop Will Eat Itself campaign and the company's more recent Supergrass work, shown here. The album covers and specially commissioned banners

for art exhibitions designed by DR have gone on to sell as posters, and should stir up memories for twentysomethings who lived through the '90s. But here's a sneak preview, courtesy of DR spokesperson Ian Anderson, of what you can expect next from



the Sheffield-based design team.

"We're continuing working with Saatchi and Saatchi on the Powergen project," he explains. "We were



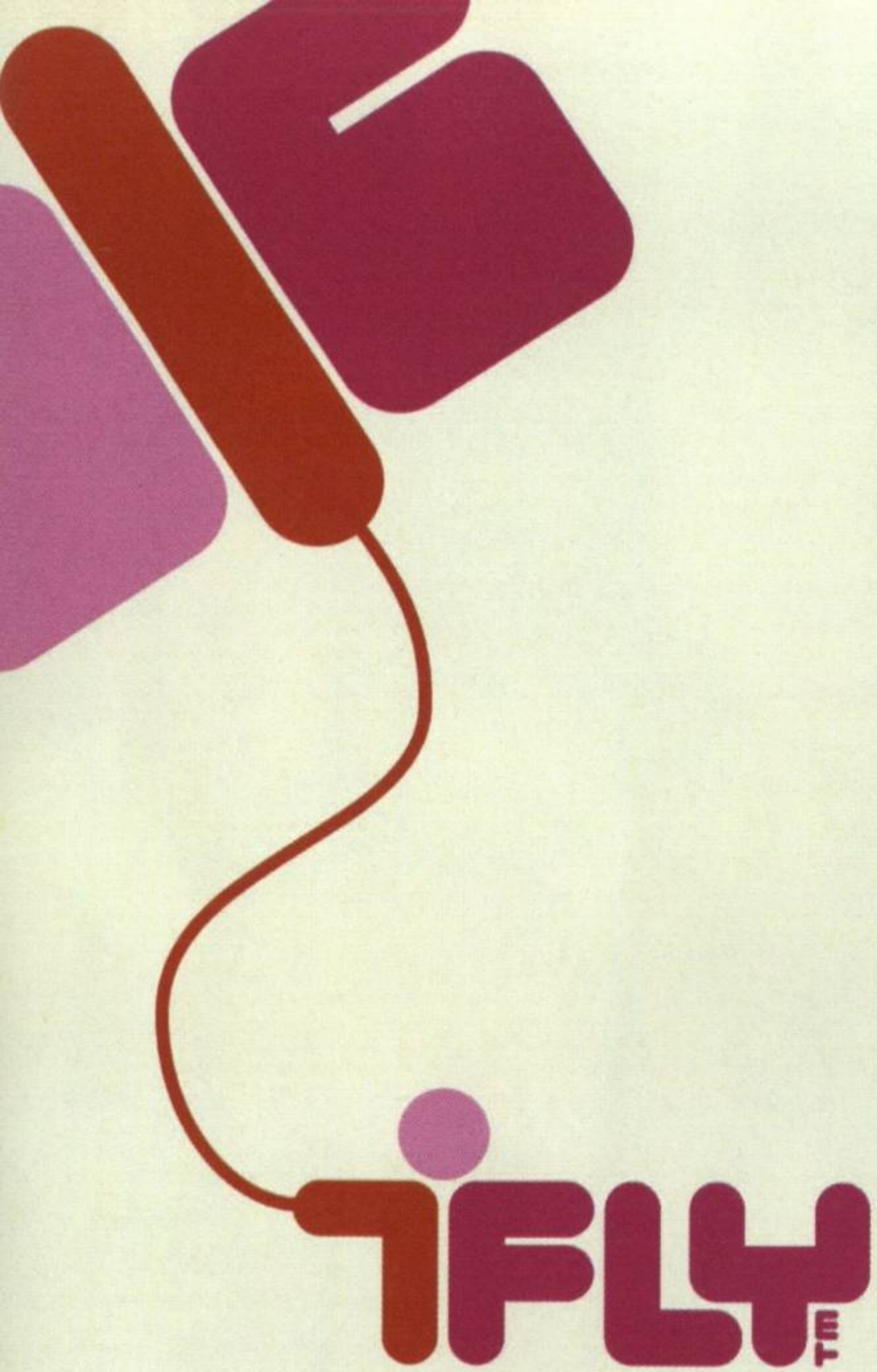
involved in the original electricity box ad and designed the actual box itself, and we're now designing a gas bottle.

"We've also just completed a beautiful cover for Satoshi Tomiie's album *The Full Lick* and are working on

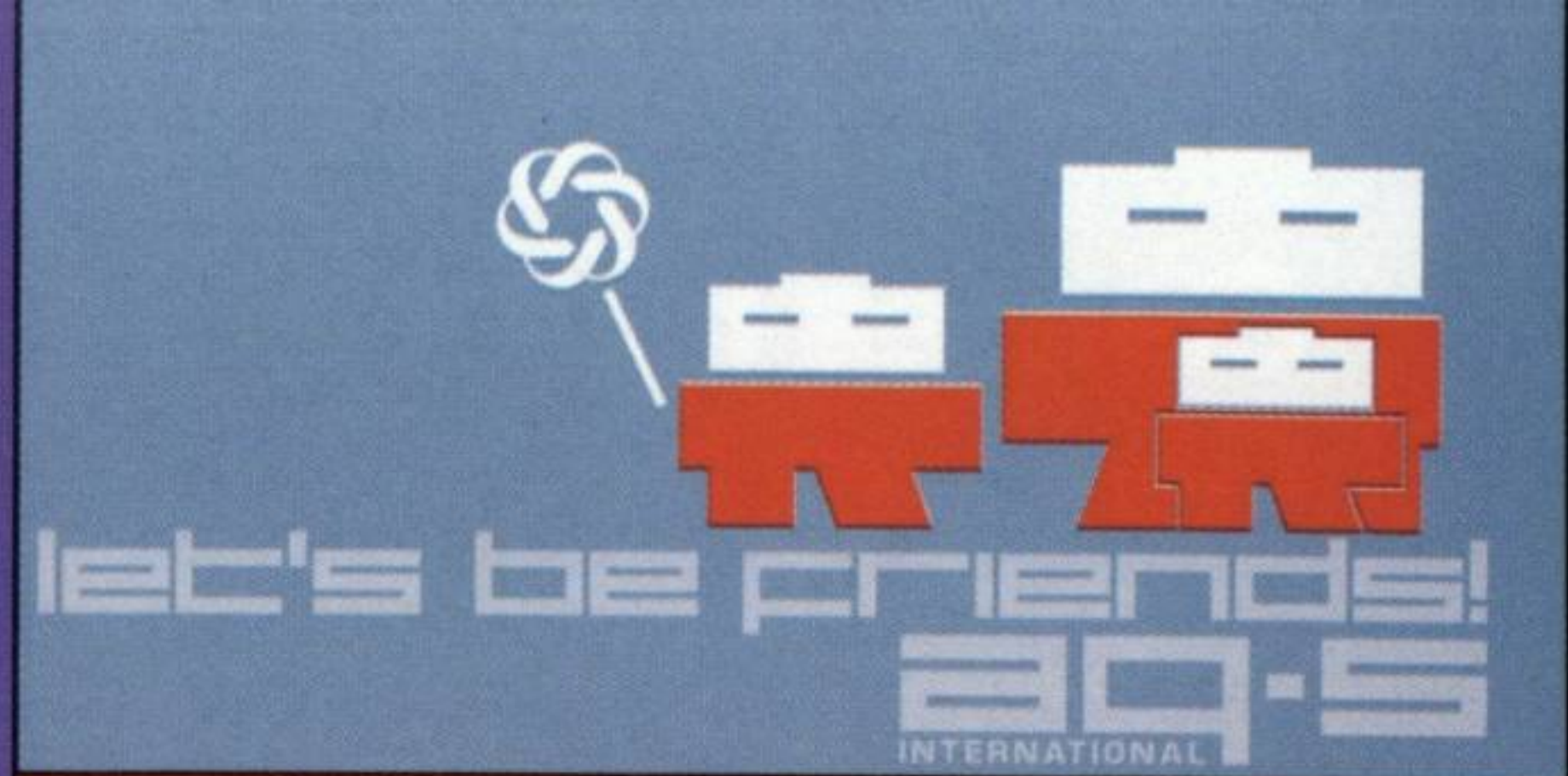
■ Album covers for Supergrass and PWEI, plus two more serious pieces of art – "Talent Borrows Genius Steals" and "Department Stores Are Our New Cathedrals".

Warp's 10th anniversary series of albums."

DR is also building The People's Bureau For Consumer Information Web site, and is about to manufacture new merchandise which will be available exclusively over the Internet.



■ DR displays its cutting edge design skills to the full on the game's racing team logos.



Wipeout's philosophy and a mutual understanding of the importance of design and our role in the game."

It is by giving free rein to ideas and professional relationships like this that Psygnosis has managed to be involved with so many well designed games. Psygnosis seems to understand that its role is to commission the best design company for the job and, once that is done, the job of designing can be left to the designers, while it gets on with its part of the project.

"*Wipeout 3* is slightly different to other jobs," explains Anderson. "That's because as DR is the creator-cum-curator of the visual language and identity of the game and its packaging, it's difficult for anyone to brief us other than to say 'Can we have some more?'"

"Projects like this tend to grow organically rather than having specific start points, in that we really start thinking about the project as soon as it's in the discussion stage rather than waiting for actual confirmation."

It seems the closer the third-party design team can work with the games developers, and the earlier the designers become involved, the better. It seems obvious, but once designers like DR understand what is possible within the limitations of gameplay technology their contribution to future game projects can be made all the more valuable. DR now considers itself to be in a position to give constructive, practical, creative advice and input from the beginning of a project to its completion and beyond, rather than being flown in to tart up the gameplay at the end of the process.

"Our pivotal involvement in the art direction and navigation system of the *Wipeout 3* Web site has given us a greater knowledge of how far we can push Internet technology and how we can successfully utilise it as a medium for the level of communication we are interested in,"

continues Anderson. "This has helped us in building our own sites and in working with clients looking to expand the identities we create for them on to the Net."

So where do these levels of excitement, drive and commitment come from? One answer seems to lie in *Wipeout* itself. The members of DR drive around the tracks and view their own in-game graphics with a mixture of pride and amusement.

"*Wipeout* is simply the best racing game ever, and *Wipeout 3* is the best, most advanced, most complete and most completely addictive expression of the original format yet," enthuses Anderson.

"It is the original, and the origin of the way games are now developed and perceived. It is the benchmark that others compare themselves to and experience has shown us that the only way it will be bettered is by *Wipeout 4*. Stylistically and in terms of gameplay it is still streets ahead of any competition, and makes would-be clones like *N20*, *Motorhead*, *Zero G* and *G-Police* look laughably poor."

However, despite the massive appeal of the graphics from the *Wipeout* series, other games firms don't seem to be falling over themselves to sign up DR. Does Anderson have any idea why?

"The majority of other companies seem happy to let their in-house teams put together versions of our work rather than working with us to create something new, in the way *Wipeout* was new. We have plenty of ideas, but I guess some of them are waiting to see *Wipeout 3* to find out what their designers should do next.

"As for the future, we've spoken at great length with Psygnosis about the development of a DR game involving DR Sissy, which was mooted at one point as being a PlayStation 2 flagship in the way *Wipeout* was for the original. But with

"Wipeout is the origin of the way games are now developed and perceived"

Sony's rationalisation of the Psygnosis operation that project is now on hold."

But wait, save your tears. There is at least one thing you can do before the fully-fledged DR dream arrives on a console near you – play *Wipeout 3* and revel in the canniest games design package you have ever seen. The game's not bad, either.

See more of The Designers Republic at the following Web sites: www.pho-ku.com, www.thepeoplesbureau.com and www.thedesignersrepublic.com.



What the DR ordered

These are some of DR's favourite things.

- **Favourite flight team?**
Feisar
- **Favourite tracks?**
Valparisso from *Wipeout 2097* and Terminal from *Wipeout 3*
- **Favourite characters?**
We like the ladies from the original *Wipeout*
- **Mike likes racing games –**
Wipeout 3
- **Nick likes scrappers –**
Tekken 3
- **Matt, Dave and Liz like survival horror games –**
Resident Evil 2
- **Ian likes Galaxian, Gauntlet and Space Invaders...**
...and Sian would rather watch TV
- **Who's the best Wipeout 3er at DR?** Sissy™



Games night Girls vs boys

Can the *Arcade* trio beat the girls from *BITS* and prove once and for all that boys are better?

Mark

Rich

Emily

Claudia



Battle of the sexes

Your host | **Sam Richards**

Braving the testosterone fog which typically engulfs the Games Night panel are Aleks, Emily and Claudia, presenters of the UK's premier videogame TV show *BITS*. When they invited us to a girls versus boys challenge on their home Glasgow turf, we thought it churlish to refuse.

Ever since we sat in the bath with our sister and realised that the human species came in two distinct models, the debate has raged. Which is best? Is it boys, with their football, bows and arrows, top trumps and dirty fingernails, or is it girls with their pigtails, Wendy houses and skipping? *Arcade* ponders this eternal conundrum often, so when the opportunity arose to visit the *BITS* girls in Glasgow, we decided to

answer the question through the medium of videogames.

The plan was to choose a game from the three staple console multi-player genres of fighting, racing and sports. A lean and hungry *Arcade* trio would then send the *BITS* threesome packing. However, *BITS* are using all the sneaky tricks which home advantage allows (specifically keeping us amused while completing the day's filming by plying us with lager). Eventually crowding on to the plush leather sofa of the distinctly cosy *BITS* set, battle commences. No hair-pulling allowed.

9.45pm

Anna Kournikova's *Smash Court Tennis* (PlayStation, Namco)



When strawberry punriets across the nation were downed in disgust at a British player's failure to trouble the

Wimbledon final yet again, we turned to our PlayStations in order to achieve the sporting triumph denied Henman and Rusedski by their perpetual underachievement. The game of choice? *Smash Court Tennis 2*, as endorsed by teenage service-line siren Anna Kournikova. With no quarter given to motion capture and ball physics, the cartoonish nature of the game would force the Lawn Tennis Association to choke on their collective cravat. Correct All-England Club attire or not, *Smash Court* is one of the most entertaining sports games around – tremendous depth, but simple for beginners. At least, it ought to be.

The fairer six

Engaging in gender warfare with the joypad as a weapon...



Aleks

■ Before *BITS*, Aleks travelled the world, worked in a psychiatric hospital for two years and did voiceovers for bacon and carpet ads. She thinks girls are better than boys "because they have breasts".



Emily

■ If Emily wasn't on TV, she'd still be teaching French or working to save the Irish peat bogs. She thinks boys are rubbish because they're like toilets: "either vacant, engaged or full of shit! Ha!"



Claudia

■ Claudia's got a Masters degree in business management and she used to be a catwalk model. She reckons girls are best because "they spend less time thinking about sex".



Mark

■ Before working on *Arcade*, Mark had never left his bedroom. He thinks boys are best because "without them there'd be no-one to appreciate the girls' cooking, washing and ironing skills".



Sam

■ Sam can take on all-comers at crazy golf or *Mike Read's Pop Quiz* but that's about it. He thinks girls are crap because "they take two hours deciding which film to watch and then choose *Notting bloody Hill*".



Rich

■ The boy Pelley knows all about high-temperature non-cuprate superconductors but a fat lot of use that is to anybody. He thinks boys are better than girls because "girls can't throw properly".

Games night Girls vs boys



Rich: "I've never played this before, but I believe an appreciation of the crosscourt pass and topspin lob will fare me well."

He is wrong.

Aleks: "I've never played this before, but I'm American and I can shout louder than all of you, so obviously I'm going to be great."

She is also wrong.

Without even bothering to knock-up with a few rallies while wearing white tank tops, our big-hitters go straight to work. There follows a display of inept tennis, the like of which hasn't been seen since *Monsieur Hulo's Holiday*.

Aleks makes use of some arcane English swear words before congratulating her own ability to score two aces. Except she is using the automatic serve button and scoring aces against Rich is like winning the roulette by betting on every number.

Claudia: "This isn't exactly Centre Court."

Mark: "It's more like

Court 14. On the first day. Of the under fives tournament."

Time for the pros to don the Slazenger headbands. It's me against Claudia. I serve four straight aces to win the opening game.

Claudia: "Hey, that's not fair! You've been practising."

Mark: "Isn't that the idea? You don't get Agassi losing and then complaining that Sampras has been doing a bit of sly training on his forehand."

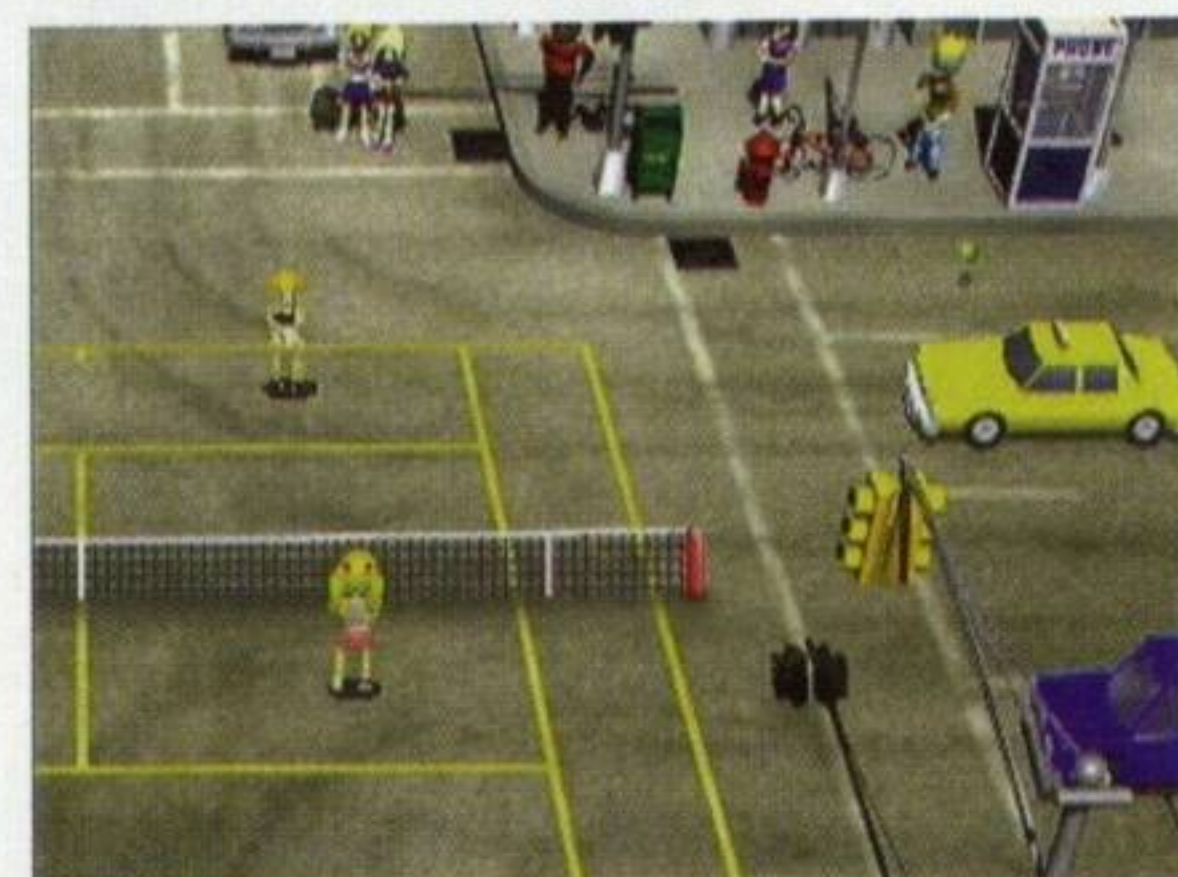
Claudia fights back with some wicked serve-volleying of her own, although a hard-fought set eventually ends with a slim Arcade victory.

Emily: "The player who hits their opponent more often in the groin should win."

Mark: "Isn't that Clive Sinclair on a C5 watching at the side of the Galleria Milano court? He's always watching over us."

■ Hey! I thought we said no cat-fighting!

Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis



■ All-England Club groundsmen jazz things up for Wimbledon 2000.

11.07pm

Street Fighter Alpha 3 (PlayStation, Capcom)



2D beat-'em-ups never die, they just require increasingly more frantic button-pushing from the uninitiated.

Claudia: "I love the *Street Fighter* characters, they're so funny."

Claudia admits that she's just reviewed this for the programme so she should be pretty hot.

Claudia: "Well I actually had to spend more time filming kick boxing moves in the gym than actually practising the game... That was the same day I filmed the review for *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking*, but for some reason I had to ride the bike uphill while talking to the camera on the car in front of

Claudia is transformed into a raging beast... letting rip with a stream of invective.

me. I was pretty tired that evening."

Mark: "I get tired after 20 minutes of *Quake II*. That's my idea of exercise."

Rich and Claudia reach for the joypads, and battle commences. Immediately, Claudia is transformed into a raging beast, wrestling with the joypad as though she were attempting to strangle a poisonous snake and letting rip with a stream of invective in a language somewhere between Scottish and German with the

■ Girls just wanna kick the arses of their male counterparts.



Street Fighter Alpha 3



■ Just keep pressing ⊗ and you're at least bound to beat Claudia.

Star Wars Episode 1: Racer



■ Did Anakin Skywalker crash five times each circuit and still win? Emily did.



■ We can't even begin to explain the story behind that rubber chicken...

Mark: "Can I state again that I don't care about *Star Wars* and I didn't even watch the original until about three years ago. It's like the kind of American made-for-TV crap that you see on Channel 5."

Emily: "You're only saying that to cover for your massive crush on Princess Leia. Or is it Chewbacca?"

But enough of the childish banter. A grudge is emerging between myself and Emily, stemming from an argument over who is forced to use the shoddy third-party joypad. With one victory apiece, we rev up for a decider on the aptly-named Executioner course. Emily is Anakin, I'm Selbulba. My aim is to reverse the outcome of the film with some nimble cornering and aggressive thrusting. After three laps of furious cat and mouse chase, I cruise complacently toward the finish line... as Emily boosts past me to win by mere hundredths of a second. Curses.

Emily [performing some kind of celebration dance]: "Yay! Even with the crap joypad! I need to smoke a whole packet of fucking cigarettes after that."

Aleks: "You guys are both sweating and

"Haven't we got Mario Kart? I can beat everyone in the world at Mario Kart."

dribbling. It's not pretty."

So maybe girls are better than boys at games after all. Or perhaps people are just better at games which they've played a bit before. This isn't science, for Christ's sake. It's Games Night, proving that a night in with a stack of multi-player videogames and a crate of beer is even more enjoyable when there's an age-old score to be settled. Oh, and it's nice to have some girls round for a change. Cheers.



occasional embellishment of Kung Fu slang. The *Arcade* team have never seen or heard anything like it before.

Claudia: "Aaaaaaah you crazy mo basta ooh aaaa gonna kick eeee iiiii you get hit bad shuckashucka noooooo bitch!"

Rich: "Blimey!"

Claudia: "Come on fukkaaaaa yaaaa nononono bang yes schoooo whack yiii... Oh, I lost."

Rich [sheepishly]: "I was only pressing the ⊗ button."

To prove it, he beats Claudia again by simply hanging back and kicking her several times.

Claudia [crestfallen]: "It took me ages to learn all the combos..."

However, Aleks is still confident of victory against Mark and views Rich's minimal tactics with disdain.

Aleks: "I think if your thumbs aren't sore after a few rounds of *Street Fighter*, you aren't playing it properly. I bust a nail playing *Rival Schools* and that's always a good sign."

Mark: "Do you think I'll appear any less hard if I choose to fight with Charlie?"

Aleks: "My character's got really pert breasts."

Mark: "You can't say that about Blanka."

Aleks plays with a similar animation to Claudia, although her language is strictly Anglo-Saxon. Lucky *BITS* is aired way after the watershed, then.

Aleks: "I can smell your fear!"

Rich: "I think Mark's just followed through."

Aleks wins. Mark sulks. Things are getting a little emotionally charged, and it's time to move on.

11.51pm

Star Wars Episode 1: Racer (N64, Nintendo)



Mark finds an old retro compilation and begins to play *Paperboy*. He is ritually tortured.

Mark: "Haven't we got *Mario Kart*? I can beat everyone in the world at *Mario Kart*."

Emily [surreptitiously replacing a cartridge on the shelf]: "No, we haven't got it. Never seen it, actually. Honest."

As is the tradition, Games Night is degenerating into a drunken circus of underhand tactics, petty jibes and swearing. Rich insists that girls are rubbish and tries to prove the point by making Emily cry.

Episode 1: Racer may not be the greatest racing game in the world, but it is fast, cruel and competitive. Particularly given that the lateness of hour and onset of lager-induced lethargy has made clear vision and rapid reaction an impossibility.

Mark: "If only I could see what on earth was going on."

Aleks: "The characters in the game have a really cruel laugh when they overtake you, and when I get near the finish it sounds like I'm being booed."

Rich: "That's because you're not very good."

Ouch. Then again, Rich has just beaten Aleks, even after crashing at the first bend, becoming disorientated and racing backwards over the start line.

Aleks: "This does make me want to see the film, which can't be said for *The Phantom Menace* game."

KICK ASS

BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

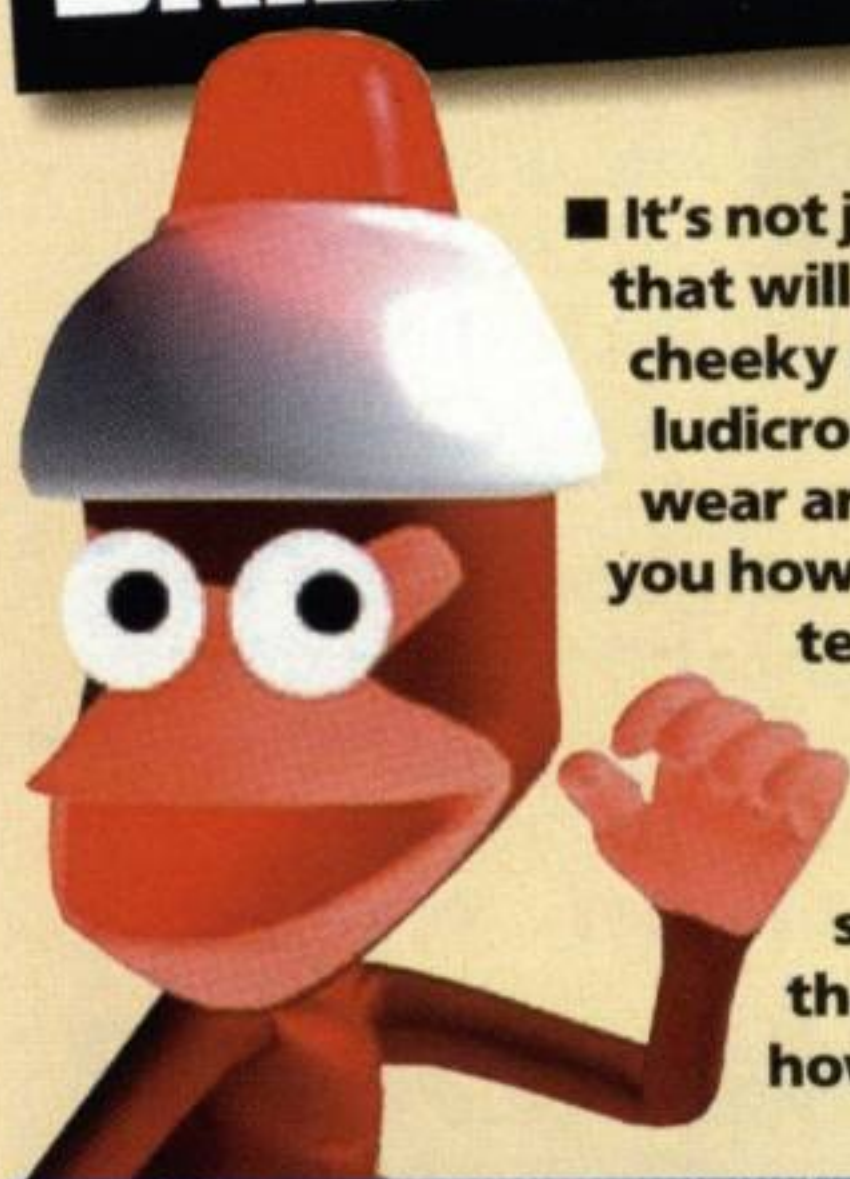
HOW TO CAPTURE THE CHIMPS IN...

KAPE ESCAPE

Format: **PlayStation** | Publisher: **Sony** | Price: **£40** | Players: **1** | ★★★★★

Imagine the cheekiest monkeys ever. Yes, even cheekier than the ones that wee in their own mouths. How will you catch them? With a net, a boxing glove, a radar and this guide, of course.

BRIEFS ENCOUNTER



It's not just the Monkey Radar that will help you spot those cheeky monkeys. The ludicrously bright pants they wear are colour-coded and tell you how hard – in streetfighting terms, naturally – a given monkey is. If you can't see the monkey, use the Monkey Radar to see the pant colour of the next monkey. Here's how to catch them all...



Blue pants

You won't catch these little buggers, so try to outsmart the hairy blighters by running away from them. This is because you'll usually find them running

around a building, or a pathway, and you will have to intercept them. Failing that, lay one on them with your slingback shooter. This should stun them, easing capture.



Black pants

These apes are armed and evil. Some fire missiles and others lasers. Don't jump the missiles as they're heat-seekers, and you can't run away. Catch the

monkeys by surprise, or they fire at will – with devastating effect. As for the monkeys with lasers, run alongside them and, when you're in front of them, swing that net.



Yellow pants

This is the dumb, slow and weedy ape of the pack and, as such, deserves everything he

gets. To eliminate this little monkey, simply walk up to him and catch him in your mighty net. Strollin'.



Red pants

These monkeys are as solid as the Arsenal back four and will knock you over if you get close

to them. Never walk straight up to a red pants, as you'll get decked. Instead, jump up and bring your Net down on them.



Green pants

These guys have eyesight sharper than the Grim Reaper's blade. They'll spot you as soon

as you are in the same room as them. So, hide behind pillars or crawl up to them, so they can't see you before you net them.

27 GAMES TIPPED THIS MONTH



Don't consign a favourite game to the shelf of no return until you've squeezed the maximum gameplay out of it. Simply check out Arcade's tips and play it with fresh eyes.

PLAYSTATION

P66 Ape Escape
P69 Puma Street Soccer
P69 Driver
P69 Rampage 2: Universal Tour
P71 V-Rally 2
P71 Evil Zone
P71 Silent Hill

PC

P68 Grand Theft Auto London 1969
P69 Hidden and Dangerous
P69 Midtown Madness
P70 Carnivores
P71 Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

NINTENDO 64

P70 Quake II
P71 Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

OTHER SYSTEMS

P71 Get Bass

COLOR GAME BOY

P68 Super Mario Bros DX
P70 Pocket Bomberman
P71 Lucky Luke
P71 Bust-A-Move 4

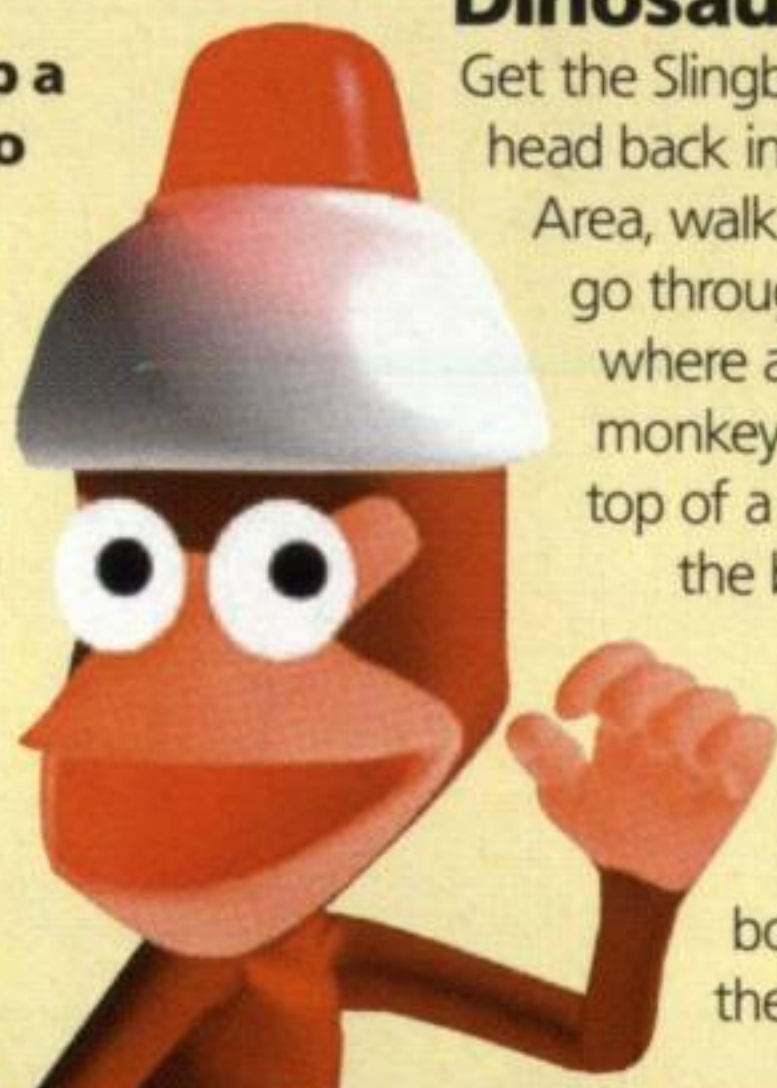
NOW PLAYING

There's more to every game than you think:

P70 Classic tips for *Unreal*, *Colin McRae Rally*, *Carmageddon*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Powerslide*, *Yoshi's Story*, *Ultimate Soccer Manager '98* and *Tomb Raider II: The Golden Mask*

APES OF WRATH

Not content with rocket launchers and bombs, there are some monkeys who take inflicting violence on poor little Spike to a higher level. Knowledge of pant pigments will do little for you when a monkey clambers up a tree, only to rip off one of its branches and brain you with it. So, here's a guide to the maddest monkeys out there.



Dinosaur Area

Get the Slingback Shooter, head back into the Dinosaur Area, walk up the stairs and go through the tunnel where a bomb-chucking monkey is perched on top of a triceratops. Bat the bombs back towards the dinosaur with your stun club. When the bombs explode, the monkey falls.



Thick Jungle

This is actually quite easy, it just takes a lot of patience. Through the first tunnel on your left, there is a monkey sitting by a tree. Walk up to him and he will leap into a tree and smack you with the its branches. What you need to do is, in a fit of nature hate, raze the tree to the ground by repeatedly shooting it with your slingback shooter. Once he's out of the tree, the monkey is easy prey.



Mysterious Ruins 1

At the top of Specter's many buildings is a doorway, blocked by boxes. Shoot down the boxes with your tank and enter for the toughest challenge you'll face in the whole game. The monkeys are climbing up the pipes, by a powerful wind turbine. Strangely, it won't kill the apes, but it will blow you away. So, place your remote controlled car on the switch to lower the lift and hold on by holding Forward. Then swing your net and catch the monkeys before the turbines get you. If you are getting into trouble, switch to the remote and put it back on the switch. Sounds easy, but you won't be able to see the car from your position on the lift.



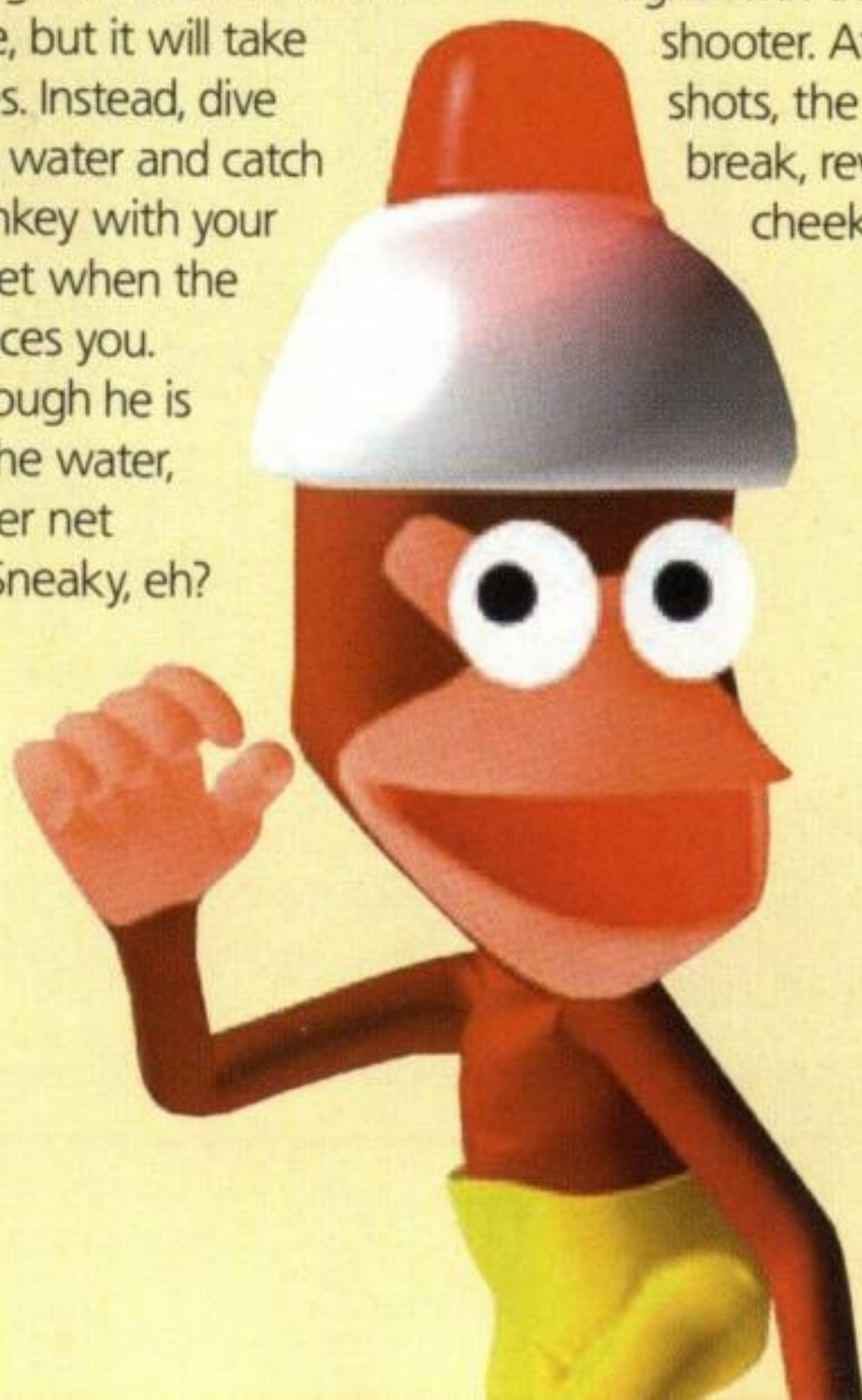
Primitive Ocean

Don't try to shoot the monkey off the back of the shark with your slingback shooter. It can be done, but it will take you ages. Instead, dive into the water and catch the monkey with your water net when the shark faces you. Even though he is out of the water, the water net works. Sneaky, eh?



Garburin's Island

Before you enter the monster's belly, shoot the door to your right with the slingback shooter. After three shots, the door will break, revealing a cheeky monkey.



BOSSSES



As you move through the game, you'll become so skilled in the art of catching monkeys that the bosses will be the only things to challenge you. (Oh, and those annoyingly thin walkways that you'll fall off a hundred times...)

Crumbling Castle

At last you face Specter. Or so you thought. At the last minute he runs off, leaving you with a massive robot for company. This tin terror zaps you with lasers, thumps the floor, produces killer shock waves and tries to walk all over you. Don't let him.

Simply run around him, avoiding his feet, and jump when he thumps the ground. Then, while he's recuperating from his efforts to shake you into submission, walk up to him and give him a whack with your stun club. Do this five times and that's one boss down. Four to go.

Specter's Building

Again, you're told to find Specter, and again he runs away at the first sign of trouble. Guess what comes next: another robot. Only this time, the robot is a ship which

fires mini UFOs at you and again uses the shock wave tactic. Hit the UFOs with your stun club and stand outside the square to avoid the lasers. When a green light flashes on the ship, destroy it with your slingback shooter.

Specter Square - Specter's Circus

Once you get to the top of the cage, waste no time in shooting the clown (not the ball) with your slingback shooter. When the clown falls down the cage, use your sky flyer to glide down the cage and arm your dash hoop. Run into the clown with the dash hoop spinning, and leg it when he rolls after you. Repeat this cycle five times to win.

Specter Square - Specter's Rally

The huge car fires miniature cars and bombs at you. Once again, use the dash hoop to

destroy all the cars and stand on the green patch to avoid the bombs - this also starts the car's engine. Wait until the car moves - or it stalls - and run out of the way. Now, hit the green switch on the back of the car to blow it up.

Sky TV Tower

Finally Specter faces you. Well, a big gun faces you and he stands behind it. To take out the gun, run to the right as it tries to lock on, then run to the left and smack it with your stun club.

Now Specter jumps into a massive robot and shoots you, punches you and fires lasers at you. Wait until the electricity starts crackling and run across the face of the robot to miss the laser fire. You can see the shadows of incoming bombs, so dodge them and, when Specter starts shooting, use your slingback shooter to hit the green switch on the arm of the robot. Do this three times to each arm to disable them.

Now destroy the body. When the robot fires, the segment of the platform you are standing on is destroyed. Stand just outside the middle segment, wait until the robot faces you and run into the middle. Then, as the robot recharges, hit the green switch on its body with your stun club. You won't have time to line up the slingback shooter.

The Final Showdown

Specter is back once again. This time he comes equipped with an astonishing fireball attack and a forcefield. Dodge the fireballs and hit Specter with your slingback shooter. Next, he puts up his forcefield. Shoot this until it weakens and catch Specter in your monkey net. It's all over.



HOW TO NICK SOME CARS, GUV'NOR, IN... GRAND THEFT AUTO LONDON 1969

Aaawwiight Guv? If you're straaglin' to nick decent motaahs wivvaah't gettin' caught by the fuzzi, here's haaaaw:



Enter any of the following codes as your name, then start playing. You can enter several different codes to set a multitude of cheats to work: simply enter the code, accept it, then go to Rename to enter another code. Enter as many codes as you like, then enter your name. The best code is **HAROLDHAND** which gives you all the levels, all the weapons, infinite ammunition, a get-out-of-jail-free card, loads of armour, points and lives and no bobbies on the

beat. However, if you're after something tamer, try these:

RAZZLE	All levels
MAYFAIR	Levels 1 and 2
PENTHOUSE	Levels 1-3
MCVICAR	99 lives
BIGBEN	9,999,990 points
SIDEBURN	5x multiplier
OLDBILL	Maximum wanted level
GRASS	No police
SWEENEY	Displays co-ordinates



GAME BOY

SUPER MARIO BROS DX



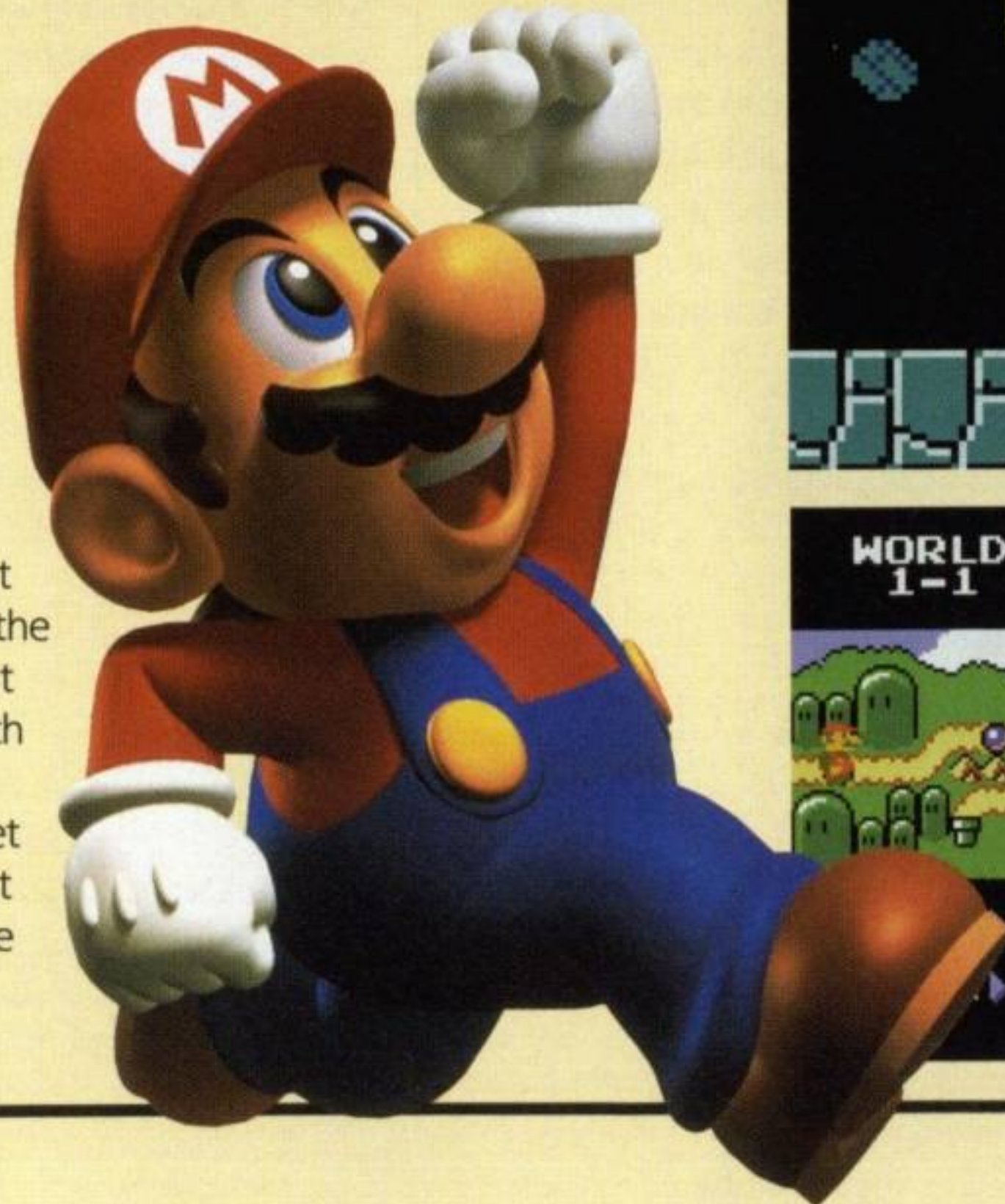
- Having trouble getting the 300,000 points required to access the Lost Levels? One easy way is to play the "Fortune Telling" game until you get the Princess' **Extremely Lucky 5-Up** bonus; then start a new game with your ten lives and play your way through. Stomp on every enemy and collect every coin, smash a few superfluous bricks here and there and always try to grab the top of the flagpole. Somewhere around World 5 you should have more than enough points to qualify.
- To gain access to the Lost Levels, get a minimum score of 300,000 points. On the Title Screen, select **Luigi** for the hidden "Original Super Mario Bros 2: Lost Levels" game. To gain access to the "You Vs Boo" bonus levels, score at least 100,000 points. On the Title Screen, select **Boo** for the "You Vs Boo" bonus levels.
- To fill your photo album, perform the following actions in any order:

- Clear World 8-4 (two pics)
- Get fireworks after a level
- Find a hidden 1-Up

- Find a beanstalk
- Kill a Goomba
- Kill a squid thing
- Kill Latiku (guy who throws Spinys)
- Kill a fish
- Kill a Hammer Bro
- Kill a bullet guy
- Kill a Koopa Troopa (any)
- Kill a beetle guy
- Kill Bowser with fireballs

- Play a Link Vs game with a friend to get a pic of Mario and Luigi playing Vs mode.
- Save Peach to get a picture of Mario getting a kiss.
- Trade high scores to get a picture of Toad and Peach trading scores.
- For some easy points, go to Stage 3-2. When you see the first turtle, hit it and kick the shell to the right. Immediately run after it, but don't touch it. If you keep up with it, it should hit a lot of enemies and then give you a 1-Up. Now let the turtle shell hit you and repeat the process. Continue until you've reached the desired score.

- For extra lives, before starting a new game, go to the Fortune Teller mode (in the Toy Box). Keep selecting cards until you get an **Extremely Lucky** card (it has Peach on it). This will give you ten lives to start with, instead of five.
- To make the Yoshi eggs easier to find, find an initial Yoshi egg and go to the Toy Box. In the Toy Box there should be a Yoshi picture. Click on Yoshi's head. You can then find out where all the other eggs are.
- To play as Luigi, press **Select** on the map screen. Press it again to revert to Mario.
- To build up lives, go to any level where you can get a 1-Up, for example Level 8-2. Collect the 1-Up, save the game, then when you start again you'll have an extra life. Repeat until your lives are over-flowing.
- To warp levels, get to Level 4-2 and stand on the right side of the first falling platforms. Stand underneath the three blocks. Jump up and there'll be some hidden blocks. Climb on these blocks and hit the one on the far left. A beanstalk will appear. Climb it, and you'll be offered the chance to warp to Levels 6, 7, or 8 via a mushroom land containing tons of coins.



HOW TO THRASH YOUR MATES IN... PUMA STREET SOCCER

Puma may not be everyone's favourite footy game, but its four-a-side fast and furious action throws up plenty of problems, especially if you're taking on a friend who's good at it. So, if you want to win, read on.

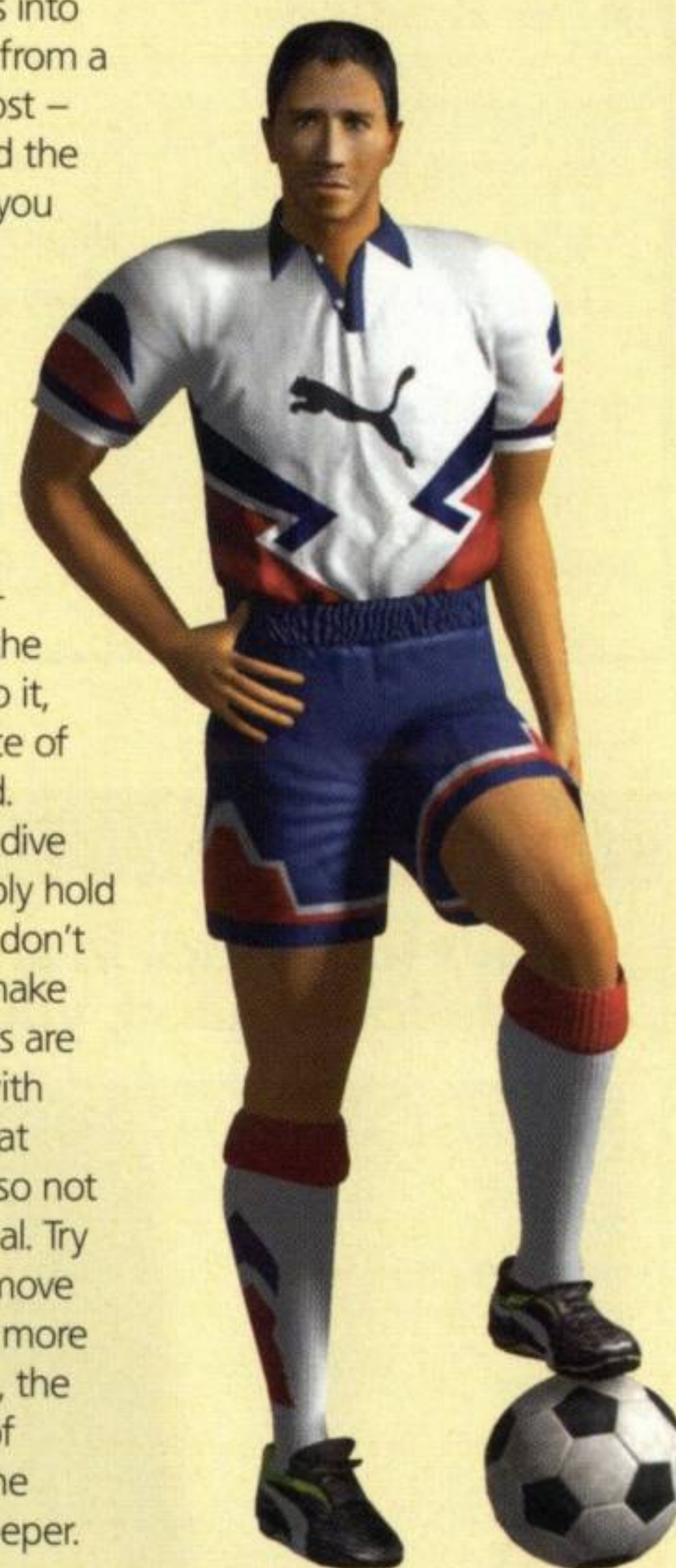


■ The first tactic to remember in *Puma* is to keep the ball. Sure, it's obvious, but if your opponent hasn't got the ball, he can't score. So make sure you pass the ball about among your team-mates as much as possible – every time you press **Pass**, the ball will go to one of your team-mates' feet, provided there're no opposition players in the way. So keep one eye on the scanner and check to see where your players are before laying the ball off to them. Of course, when you've got the ball in your own half, there's no need to keep passing it – as long as you're not pressured by the opposition, you can happily keep hold of it.

■ When attacking, don't be afraid to pass the ball about for ages before shooting. There's no point in having a dig from anywhere on the park – it'll usually just go straight into the 'keeper's hands, so make sure that you keep passing the ball around until you get to the edge of your opponent's semi

circle, then unleash shots into the corners of the goal, from a line parallel with each post – keep trying until you find the sweet spot from which you can usually beat the 'keeper. It's also wise to keep your eye on the supershot power bar at the bottom of the screen. When it's full, try having a shot from anywhere on the pitch – even if it doesn't go in, the 'keeper won't hold on to it, giving you a good chance of knocking in the rebound.

■ In defence, try not to dive into the opposition, simply hold them up to ensure they don't get a goal shot in, and make sure that all the attackers are marked – experiment with your tactics to ensure that everyone's marked and so not able to get a shot on goal. Try to stay calm, and don't move too fast: the slower and more composed your build up, the more chance you have of knocking the ball past the sprawling dive of the 'keeper.



PC

HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS



■ Once you've seen the beginning animation, and when it says "Choose campaign", type **unlockcheatmode** – you'll hear a clicking sound

which indicates you've done it correctly. Now type in any of the following codes while you're playing to achieve the desired effect:

BIGHEAD	Big head mode
KILLTHEMALL	Kills all enemies
MISSIONDONE	Complete current mission
OPENALLDOOR	Opens all doors
ALLAMMO	For all the weapons you'll ever need
PLAYERCOORDS	Displays your co-ordinates

PC

MIDTOWN MADNESS



■ While in one-player mode, simply press **Ctrl, Alt, Shift** and **F7** and enter one of the following codes in the text box that appears.

/NODAMAGE	Damage off
/DAMAGE	Damage back on
/DIZZY	Spinning sky
/FUZZ	Turns on police radar
/PUCK	No friction
/GRAV	Half gravity
/BIG	Large pedestrians
/TINY	Small pedestrians
/NOSMOKE	Turns wheel smoke off
/SMOKE	Turns wheel smoke on

■ Alternatively, enter any of these codes as your name and you'll get the desired effect. Beware though, some of the codes won't enable you to record a high score.

SHOWME COPS	Displays all police units
BIG BUS PARTY	All vehicles are city buses
TINY CAR	All vehicles are compact cars
WARP ELEVEN	All AI is 10 times faster



PLAYSTATION

RAMPAGE 2: UNIVERSAL TOUR



■ To access a tasty cheat menu in this slice of building-climbing monkey madness, all you need too is to enter **BVGGY** as your password. You'll now find a brand new option called Cheats on the option screen, which, believe it or not, will give you the opportunity to do pretty much as you will. Alternatively, you could play as different characters; try **B1G4L** for an odd alien, **SM14N** for George, **S4VRS** to play as Lizzy, **NOT3T** for Myukus, **SRY3D** to play as Nubus, or **LVPVS** to try out as Ralph.

PLAYSTATION

DRIVER



Enter, at the main menu:	Invincibility
L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1, L1	Long suspension
R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, L2, L1, R2, R1	Miniature cars
R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, L2, L2, L2	No police
L1, L2, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, L2, R1, R1, L1, L1, R2	Rear wheel steering
R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1	Upside-down driving
R2, R2, R1, L2, L1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, R2, L1	View credits
L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1	



NINTENDO 64

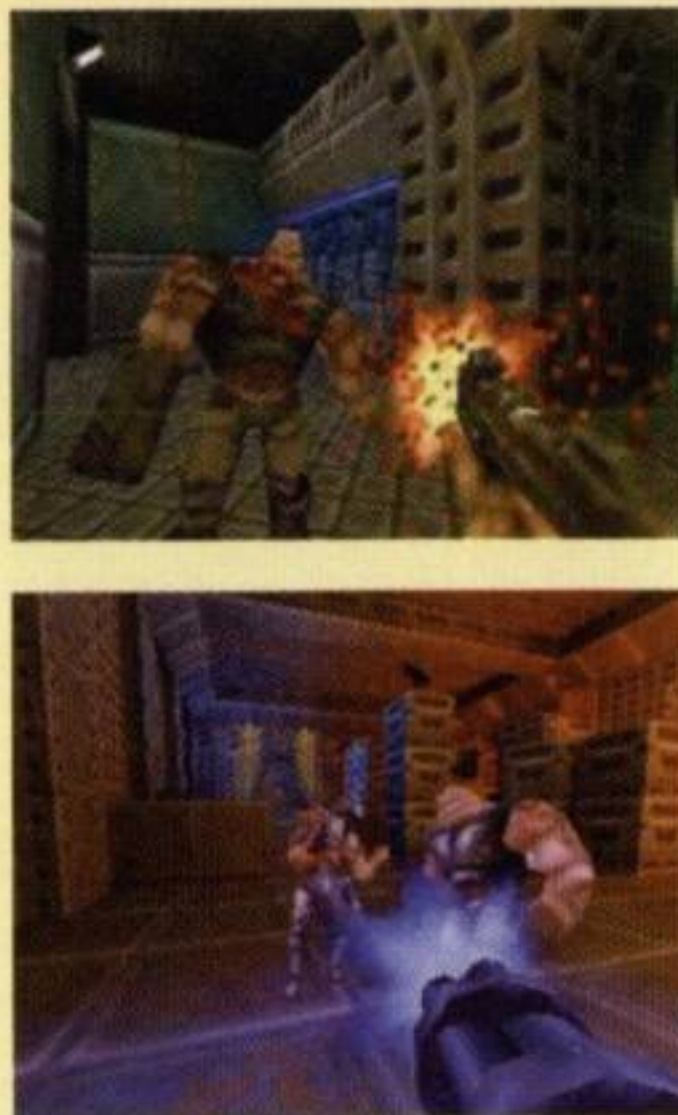
QUAKE II

■ Enter as passwords:

S3TC 00LC 0L0R S???	Alternate colours
FBBC VBBB FBBC VBF7	Access bonus levels
S3T1 N1N1 1T3S	Higher jumps in multi-player
S3TL 0WGR V1TY ????	Low gravity in multi-player

■ And for level passwords:

LEVEL 2	PGBG VF6B M0BH X3CF
FINAL LEVEL	F60? VQCH ?BHF DQQL



PC

CARNIVORES

■ While you're hunting, type **debugon** for unlimited ammo, a mode that lets you walk into the lava without damage, and the dinosaurs will ignore you until you shoot them. Then use these codes:

Shift AND S	Slow mode
CTRL	Run very fast
Shift and T	Clock mode
TAB	Map



CLASSIC TIPS

"Don't look back in anger," sang Oasis. And indeed you shouldn't. Because, with a little bit of a helping hand, you should, as Take That sang, be "Back for Good" instead.

NOW PLAYING



PC

UNREAL

■ Now out on budget, *Unreal* should be part of any 3D shooting fan's collection. However, even the best of you could find the game a tough proposition, so, to cheat, simply bring up the console with a tap of the **Tab** key, before entering these codes:

ALLAMMO	Gives 999 ammo for weapons
FLY	Flying ability
WALK	Stop flying
GHOST	No clipping
GOD	God mode



PC

POWERSLIDE

■ Enter these codes while playing, and hold down **Alt**.

BOMB	Fires a bouncing grenade
BURN	Sends out a ball of fire from the front of your car
JUMP	Pressing Alt to make the car jump
SUCK	Your car acts like a magnet
SLIPPY	Decreases your car's grip on the track
STICKY	Increases your car's grip
SLEEP	All the computer cars drive in a straight line
WARP	Computer cars slow down



PLAYSTATION

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

■ Just released on Platinum, the best rally game of its generation can make it very difficult to keep your car on the track. Here're some special effects that may help. Enter any of these as your name to achieve the desired effect:

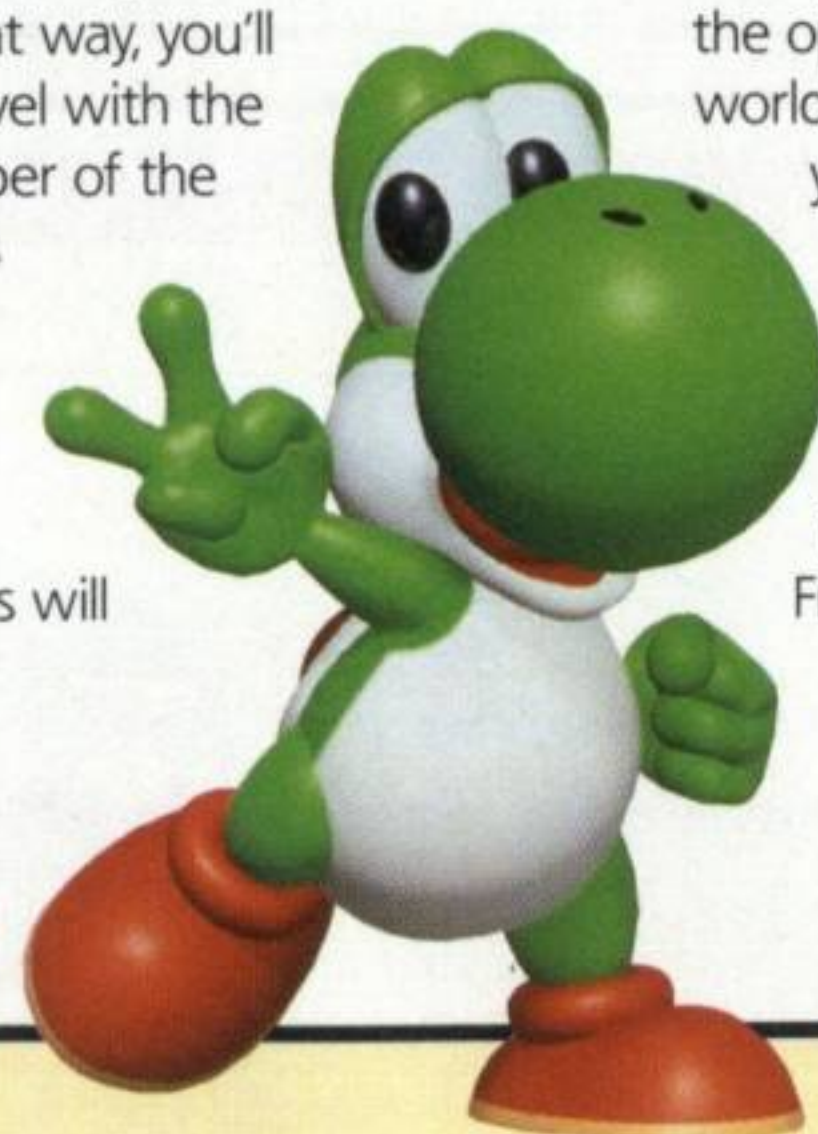
PEASOUPER	Fog mode
HELIUMNICKCO	Driver gets a high voice
KITCAR	Gives a turbo boost – press Select when green bar fills
NIGHTRIDER	Odd lighting effects



NINTENDO 64

YOSHI'S STORY

■ To bag infinite lives, simply press **Reset** just as your last dead Yoshi is being taken away to the castle – that way, you'll start the level with the same number of the little critters that you started with. Mind you, checkpoints will be lost.



PC

CARMAGEDDON

■ Just re-released, this sick pedestrian killing fest throws up more than a few enjoyable and different features. To access them, swiftly enter the code of your choice while you're playing.

CHICKENFODDER	Bouncing people
TRAMARESUPER	Extra pedestrians
GIVEMELARD	Free money
SPAMSPAMSPAMSPAM	Pedestrians get stuck
ILOVENOBBY	Pedestrians on map
GOGGLEPLEX	Drive under water



PC

ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER '98

■ To get £13 million every week, and the opportunity to buy some talented world players, simply increase one of your coaches' pay to £999,999,999 per week and then offer him a new contract. You'll get yourself stacks of cash and the chance to fill your team full of Brazilians. Or Frenchmen.



PLAYSTATION

CRASH BANDICOOT

■ To access all of the 32 levels all the keys and all of the gems in Crash's first outing, simply enter the following code at the password screen:

ⓐ, ⓑ, ⓐ, ⓑ, ⓓ, ⓔ, ⓕ, ⓖ, ⓗ, ⓘ, ⓙ, ⓚ, ⓛ, ⓭, ⓮, ⓯, ⓰, ⓱, ⓲, ⓳, ⓴, ⓵, ⓶, ⓷, ⓸, ⓹, ⓺, ⓻, ⓼, ⓽, ⓾, ⓿



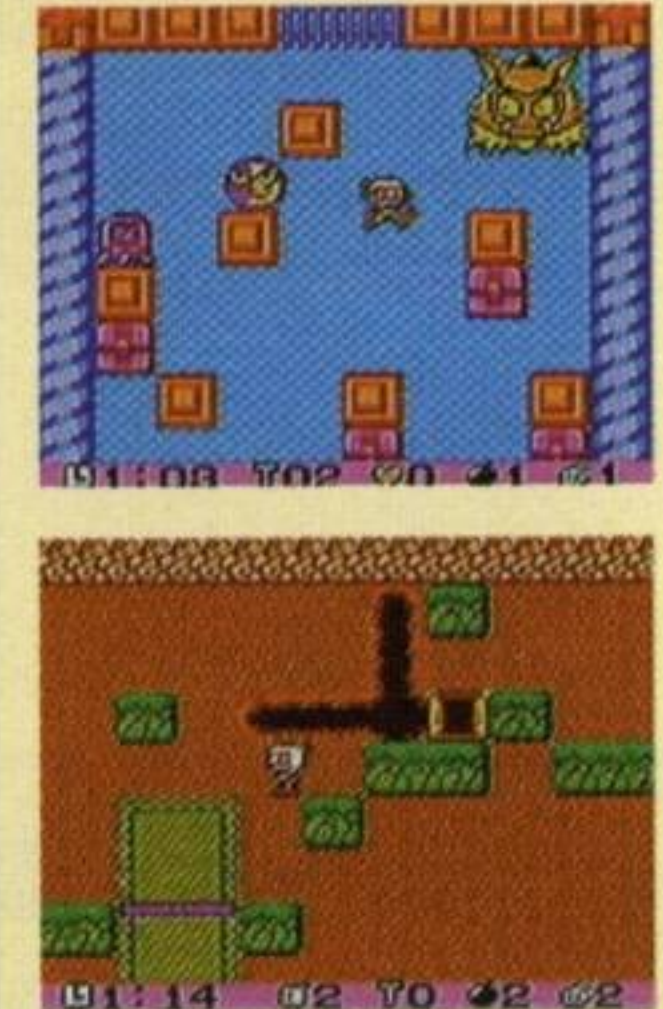
PC

TOMB RAIDER 2: THE GOLDEN MASK

■ Struggling on the new levels, or stuck on the old ones? Whichever is your chore, with a bit of practise, you should be able to pull off this move and so activate the level select. While you're playing, press **I** to draw a flare. Now walk one step forward, one step back, turn around three full times and then do a forward jump. And if you want all the weapons, draw a flare, then walk one step forward, take one step back, turn around three full times before executing a backward jump. If at first you don't succeed, keep trying; these cheats are difficult to activate.

GAME BOY

POCKET BOMBERMAN



■ Enter as passwords:

4622 All power-ups
5656 All items

■ And here are the level passwords:

Forest World	
LEVEL 1	7693
LEVEL 2	3905
LEVEL 3	2438
LEVEL 4	8261
BOSS	1893

Ocean World	
LEVEL 1	2805
LEVEL 2	9271
LEVEL 3	1354
LEVEL 4	4915
BOSS	8649

Wind World	
LEVEL 1	0238
LEVEL 2	5943
LEVEL 3	6045
LEVEL 4	2850
BOSS	8146

Cloud World	
LEVEL 1	9156
LEVEL 2	2715
LEVEL 3	4707
LEVEL 4	7046
BOSS	0687

Evil World	
LEVEL 1	3725
LEVEL 2	0157
LEVEL 3	5826
LEVEL 4	9587
BOSS	3752

GAME BOY

LUCKY LUKE



■ Here are the passwords:

- LEVEL 1**
Luke, Horse, Horse, Old Man, Luke
- LEVEL 2**
Coyote, Horse, Luke, Old Man, Old Man
- LEVEL 3**
Old Man, Coyote, Luke, Horse, Coyote

PC

STAR WARS EPISODE 1: RACER

■ When you're buying new parts for your Pod, press **Shift, F4** and **4** to get an extra wad of cash. Beware though, this can only be done five times, so make sure you prioritise the improvements that you make to your vehicle.



GAME BOY

BUST-A-MOVE 4



■ For some bonus characters, when the main menu appears, press **Up, Down, Left, Left, Right, Up, A, B, B, A**. For extra puzzles, at the title screen press **A, Left, Right, Left, A**.

NINTENDO 64

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

■ Enter, as passwords:

- DLVTRKBWPS All weapons
- DLVTRKBBD RD Bird mode
- DLVTRKBLVS Infinite lives
- DLVTRKBNRG Invincibility
- DLVTRKBLVL Skip levels

■ And to access the levels:

- Level 2 DVYLWKVYTO
- Level 3 GRYLKWWVCZ
- Level 4 DRYLSRWVZN
- Level 5 GVZLSRWQLS
- Level 6 DVZLBVSQNL
- Level 7 GRZLBVBQLL
- Level 8 DRZLBVBQLN
- Level 9 GVYNBVBQGD

■ For an alternate ending, get to Level 9 and press **Down** when you reach the area that the enemies are emerging from. This is a secret tunnel. Shoot the computer and destroy the incubator to view a different ending.



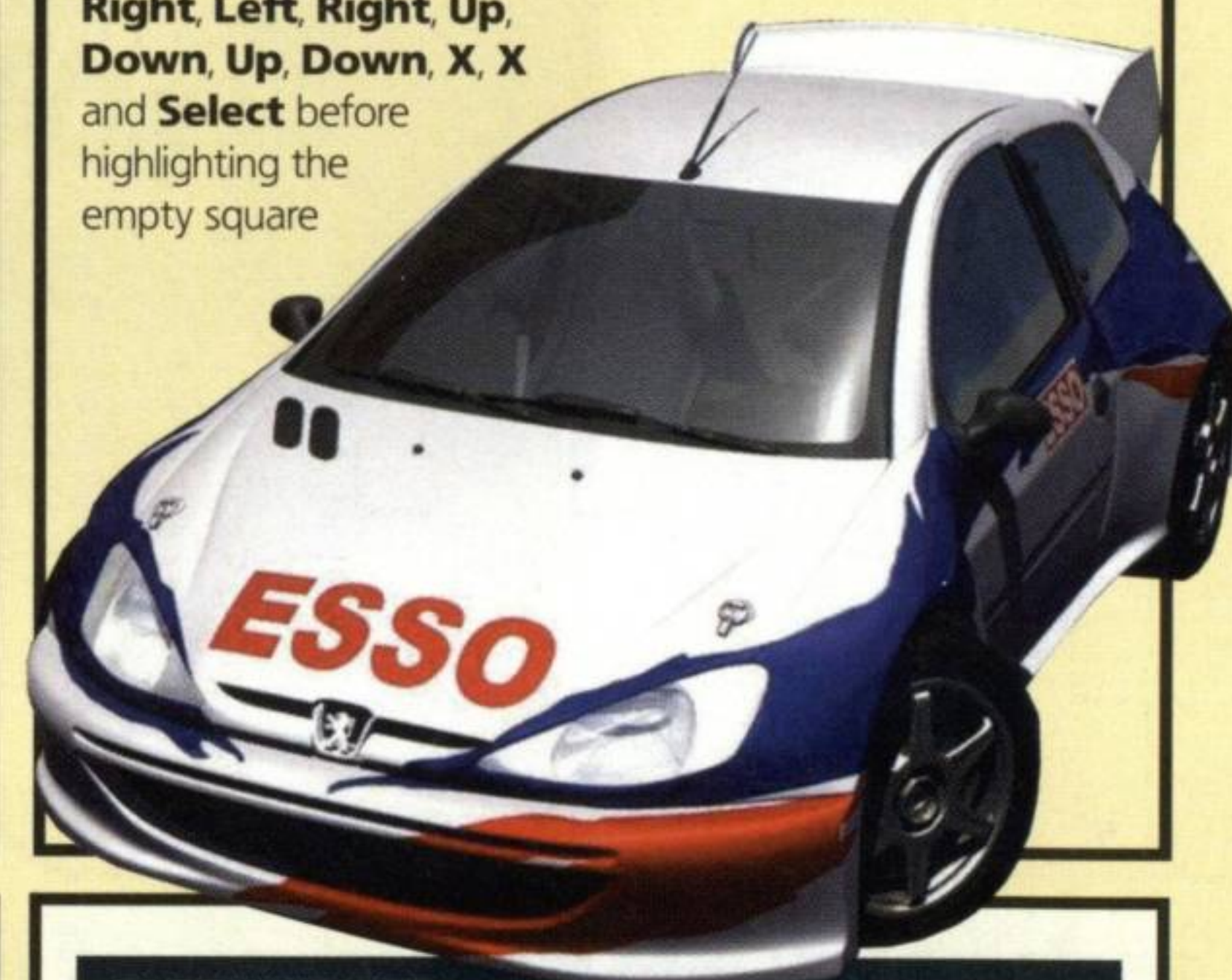
PLAYSTATION

V-RALLY 2



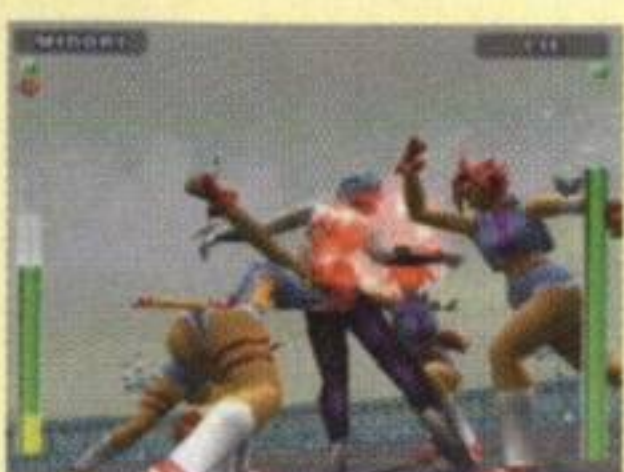
■ In the game progress screen, press **L1, R1, Left, Right, Left, Right, Up, Down, Up, Down, X, X** and **Select** before highlighting the empty square

and pressing **X** to unlock all the cars and trophies.



PLAYSTATION

EVIL ZONE



■ To play as the boss and access the hidden stage, complete the game with three different characters in Story mode. Every time you finish a Story mode game, you'll bag the extra costumes for that specific character too.

PLAYSTATION

SILENT HILL



■ At the options screen, press **L1, L2, R1** and **R2** and you'll bring up an extra options menu that'll enable you to fiddle about with your weapon, change the blood colour, alter the view and bring up the auto aiming select.

DREAMCAST

GET BASS



■ To access the bonus Palace level, finish the first two tournaments in Consumer mode.
■ To access the bonus Falls level, finish the last two tournaments in Consumer mode. Both new levels will be available in Arcade mode.

■ If you conquer the game in Arcade more than once, you'll also be treated to three more practise levels.

CLOCKING OFF

Well, that's Kick Ass just about wrapped up for another issue. Phew, eh? We've all learnt a thing or two, come to realise our strengths and our weaknesses and, at the end of the day, should be able to go home all the wiser. Either that, or we took all the best tipsters we know out for a night on the town, danced them into a daze and got their secrets the James Bond way. Perhaps.

Arcade

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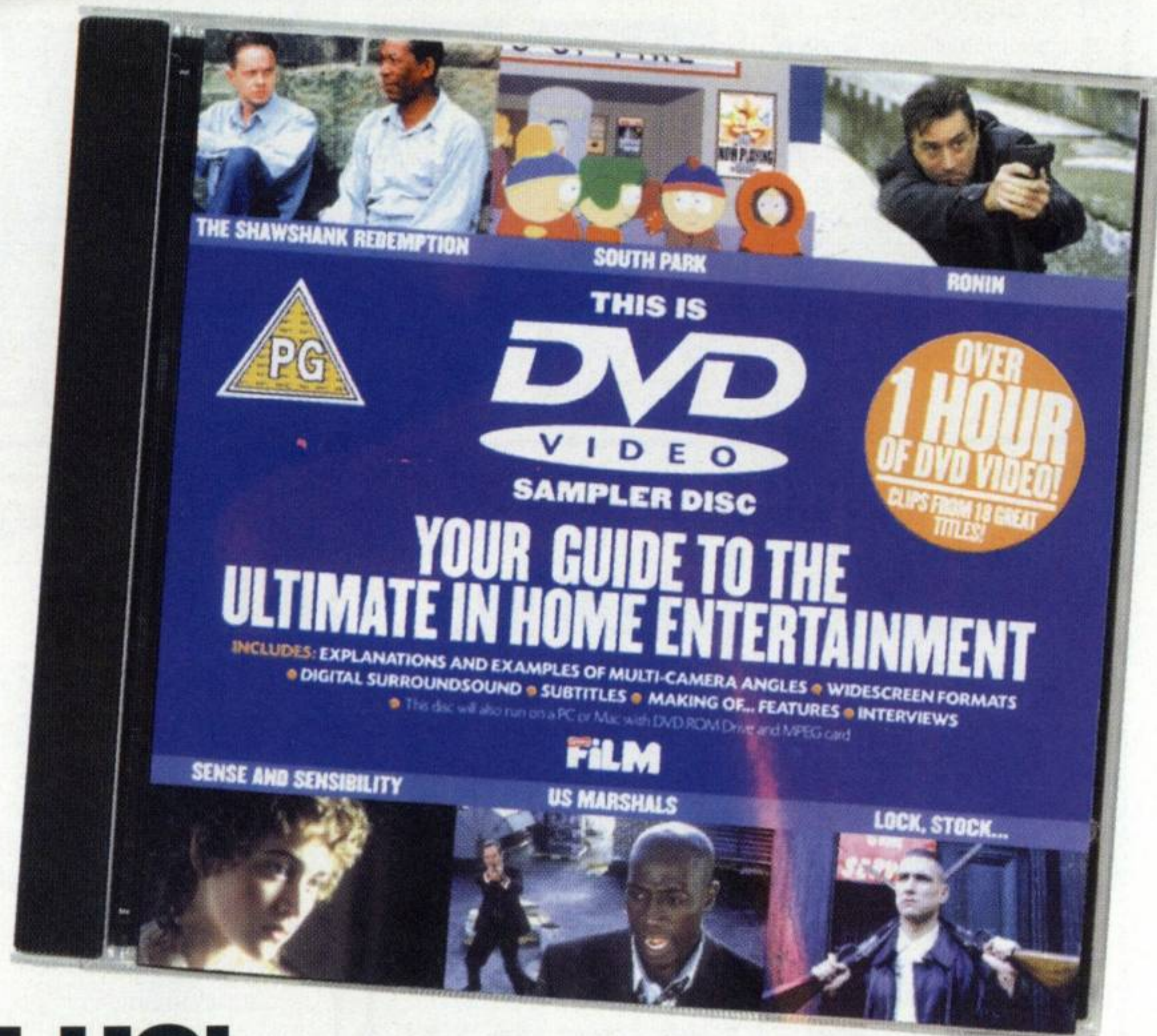
Simply use scissors to cut out this bit of paper, fill it in (with a pen) and then give it to your local newsagent. Newsagents can be found in streets.

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Dear Newsagent: Total Film is available from your local wholesaler.



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 - MIKE MYERS IN **AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME**
 - **THE 50 BEST BLOCKBUSTERS IN THE WORLD... EVER!**
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October 1999



A Review

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

INSIDE...

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SPEED FREAKS

MARIO KART ON THE PSX?

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GAMES
REVIEWED!

PLUS! VIDEOS/BOOKS/MUSIC/COMICS/INTERNET/TOYS/BOARD GAMES/GAME ACCESSORIES/FILMS/DVD/GADGETS

Star ratings

- ★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really must play.
- ★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- ★★★ Good stuff. Not a world-beater, but fine within its genre.
- ★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- ★ Awful. Avoid at all costs.



SPEED FREAKS

MULTI-PLAYER FUN RACERS ABOUND

Speed Freaks

- Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Funcom** ■ Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

Sony has spotted a gap in the PlayStation market. So, behold: a racing game. With an especially familiar air about it...

Sales of Darth Vader action figures have never been healthier, Coca Cola endures as the fizzy pop to be seen drinking, and – 22 years after Elvis's death – the faithful are still queueing round the block to get a peek inside his Graceland mansion.

However, hunt for *Battlestar Galactica* merchandise on the shelves of your local toy shop and you won't find so much as a poseable Boxey, it's hard to recall the last time work on *Arcade* halted for a Panda Cola break, and we're told Shakin' Stevens's career isn't what it was.

Given that this is the state of play these days, it seems there is some merit in advertising slogans such as "It's the real thing" and "The original – and best". Which makes you wonder why games like *Speed Freaks* keep appearing. The question is: why won't Sony just bite the bullet and release a PlayStation conversion of *Mario Kart 64*, the multi-player racing game?

The short answer is that *Mario Kart 64* is a Nintendo title, and that the company isn't about to hand its riot of a game over to a rival platform. Which is a crying shame if you only own a PlayStation, as you have to make do with wannabes – like *Speed Freaks*.

The similarities between the two? Well, *Mario Kart* features a cast of cute characters zipping around colourful cartoony circuits in go-karts. When you drive into a question-mark-emblazoned cube, you get a random weapon with which you can attack the other players. The game is broken up into a series of progressively harder cup competitions, each composed of four tracks. If you score enough points in each cup, you get to enjoy a glamorous podium ceremony at the end. As for *Speed*

↑↓ Uppers & Downers

Karts

- Triffic graphics
- Good characters
- Varied tracks

CSs

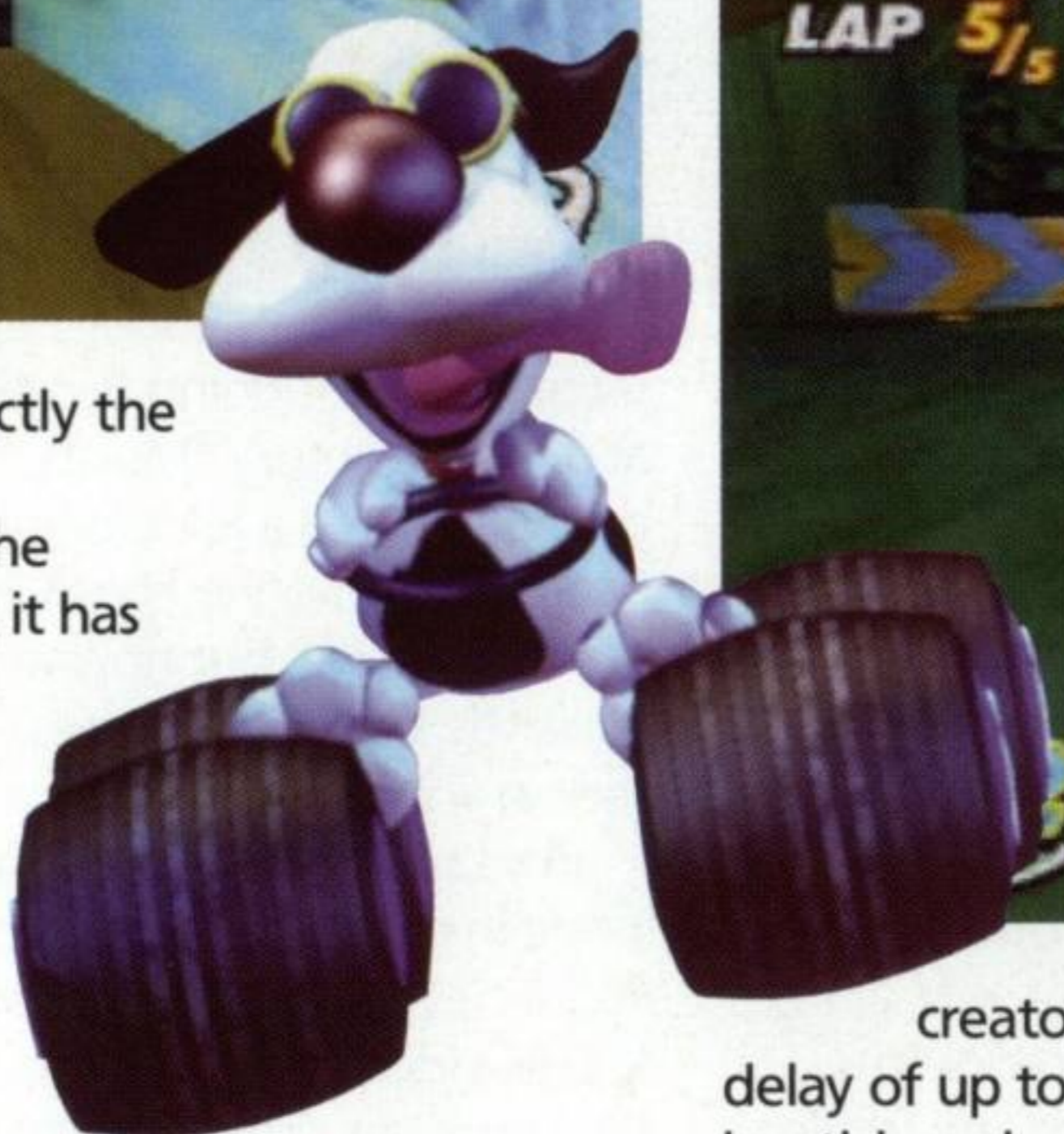
- Gruesome handling
- Annoying weapons
- Seen it all before



Freaks, well, suffice to say it's exactly the same. Well, almost.

While *Speed Freaks* sticks to the Nintendo blueprint pretty tightly, it has enough pride to display a few special modifications of its own. The first thing that will strike you is the quality of the graphics, which far outstrip those of *Mario Kart*. You get to speed through lush jungles, ride-packed fairgrounds and futuristic cities, all depicted in fantastic detail. The fairground rides go round and everything.

The next thing that will grab your attention is your kart's steering. Basically, it doesn't seem to have any. The pin-sharp, go-kart-style handling of *Mario Kart*, which enables you to deftly swerve around obstacles and take pixel-perfect lines through corners, isn't in place. Instead, the



creators of *Speed Freaks* seem to have built in a delay of up to three seconds between you pushing the joystick and your kart changing direction. Even after a couple of days' practice your kart will be criss-crossing the track as though piloted by an excitable five-year-old, and you will long for the comparatively gazelle-like grace of the cars in *Driver*.

Then your kart will probably explode. And you'll have no idea why. *Speed Freaks* emulates the weapons system of *Mario Kart* pretty closely. There are rockets, homing rockets and invincibility power-ups – all the same stuff you get in *Mario Kart*. But what makes the weapons special in the Nintendo game is that you can see what the other characters are packing before they hit you. You'll see Luigi come up alongside you with three red shells circling his kart and an evil smirk on his face and think, blimey, I'd better trail a protective green shell behind me sharpish. Or you'll see Kong up ahead towing a banana and ready yourself for evasive action should he drop it. Not so in *Speed Freaks*. A rocket appears from nowhere and you'll be taken out, and there's nothing you can do about it.

A ROCKET APPEARS FROM NOWHERE AND YOU'LL BE TAKEN OUT, AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO

What about multi-player mode? Four-player *Mario Kart* remains just about the most fun it's possible for four videogame playing people to have. So here, surely, *Speed*



■ Eh? Forget women drivers, invisible drivers are even worse.

■ *Speed Freaks*'s array of characters attempt to mimic the cuteness of *The Family Nintendo*™, but the familiarity just isn't there. Anyone remember what this girl with blue hair is called?



■ It's comforting to play alone, far better with someone else, but a veritable orgy with four people. The same goes for *Speed Freaks* – but don't forget, you'll need a multitap for four-way split-screen action.

Freaks can't go wrong. Well, you need a multitap for four to play, of course, so most people will be limited to two. Not the end of the world. After all, when only two are playing *Mario Kart*, Nintendo ensures there are six computer racers to compete against too. But *Speed Freaks*, curiously, seems to feel it's more fun to have both players racing around an otherwise empty track. Maybe you will too.

Otherwise, *Speed Freaks* sticks firmly to the *Mario Kart 64* model. The beach course, the "dodge" button for doing tighter turns, the turbo-start if you press the accelerator at the right time, the camera that tracks you around the circuit after you've crossed the finish line while a jaunty tune plays; it's all there, and yet somehow isn't quite as good.

six of them, including Buster the bully, Monica the sassy girl and Montgomery "Monty" Carlo the pro racer. All good characters, and a lot less annoying than those of *Diddy Kong Racing*. They're also spookily designed, with heads, bodies, hands and feet, but no limbs to join them together. Brilliantly inventive – unless you've already seen the same trick in *Tonic Trouble*.

In years to come, it will be the true originals that will lodge in people's minds and stay there. *Super Mario 64*, *Resident Evil* and *Gran Turismo* will take their places in our special videogame scrapbooks. And no-one will remember the countless *Crocs*, the innumerable *Nightmare Creatures* and the multitudinous *Grand Tourings* that followed slavishly on the heels of each.

So, while *Speed Freaks* looks lovely and is mildly diverting to play, it's a *Croc*. At least Shaky shook.

★★★

Jonathan Davies



■ Moooooody.

However, you do get a nifty system of collecting lightning icons to boost your speed bar. Press R2 and you'll get an extra spurt of speed. So that's good – if not entirely unfamiliar to players of the original *Super Mario Kart* on the SNES. You also get to race against a boss character if you complete each of the cups. Which is nice, if strangely comforting to anyone who's got *Diddy Kong Racing* for their N64.

The characters themselves are perfectly presentable. There are

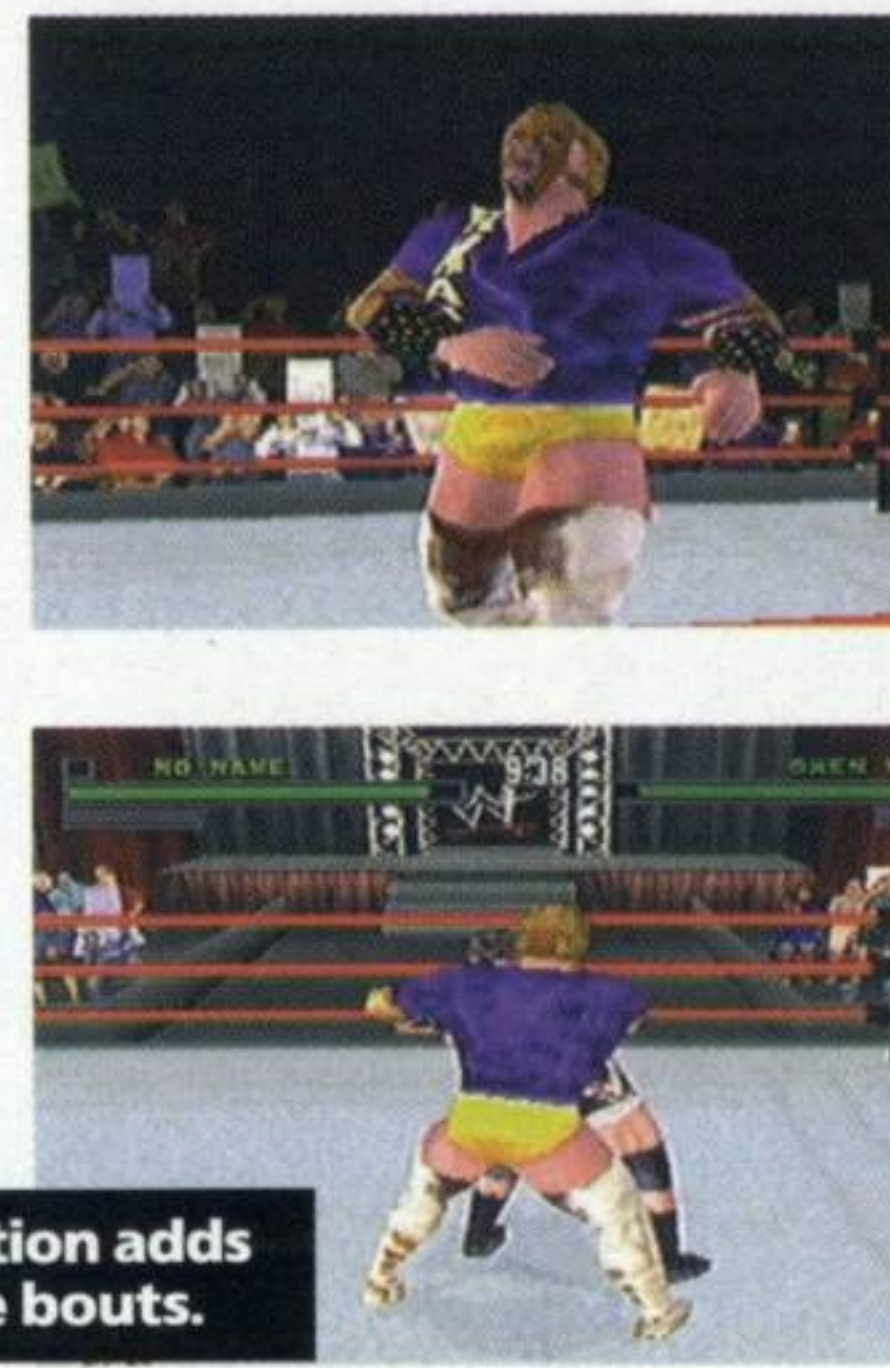
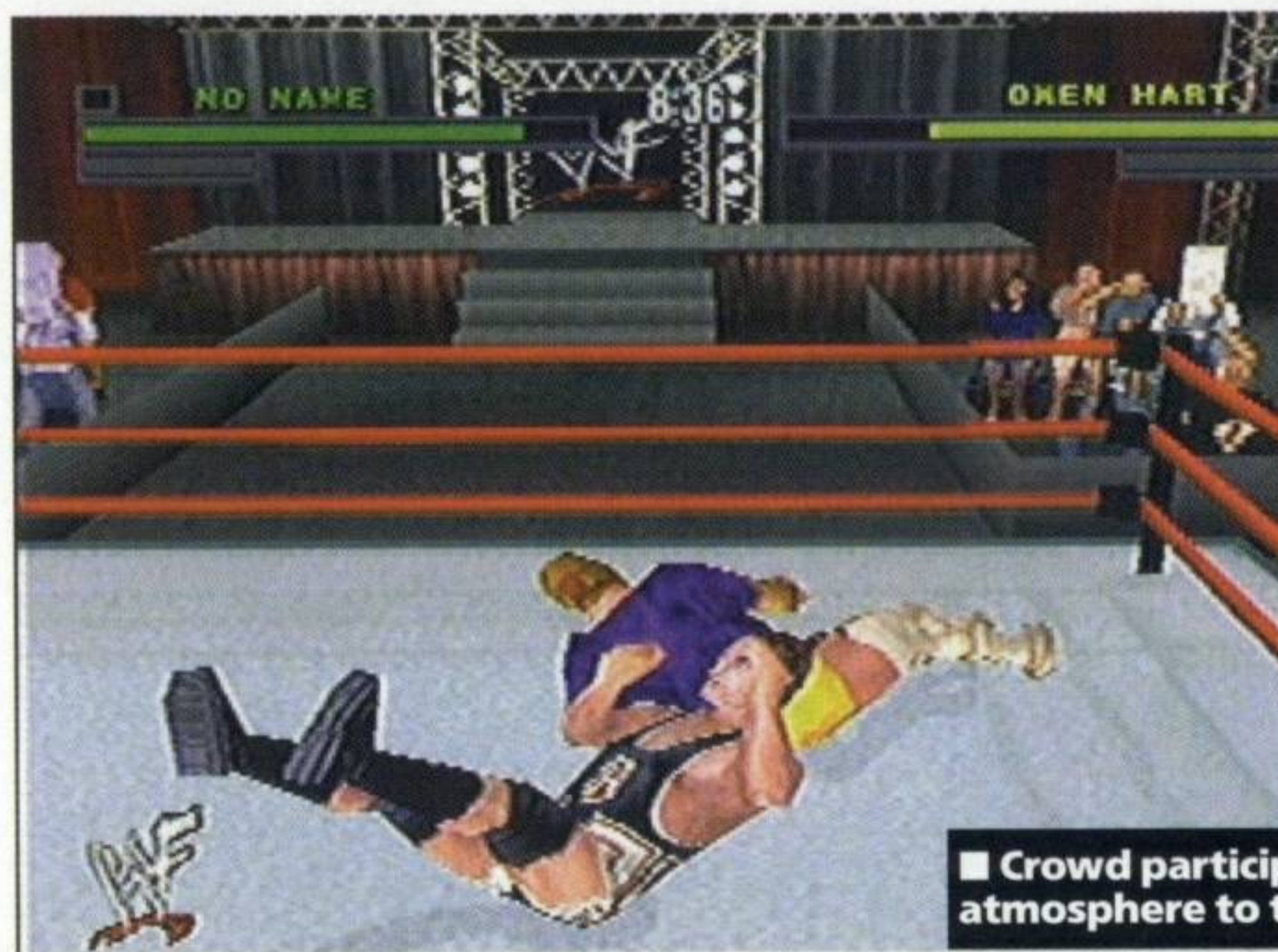
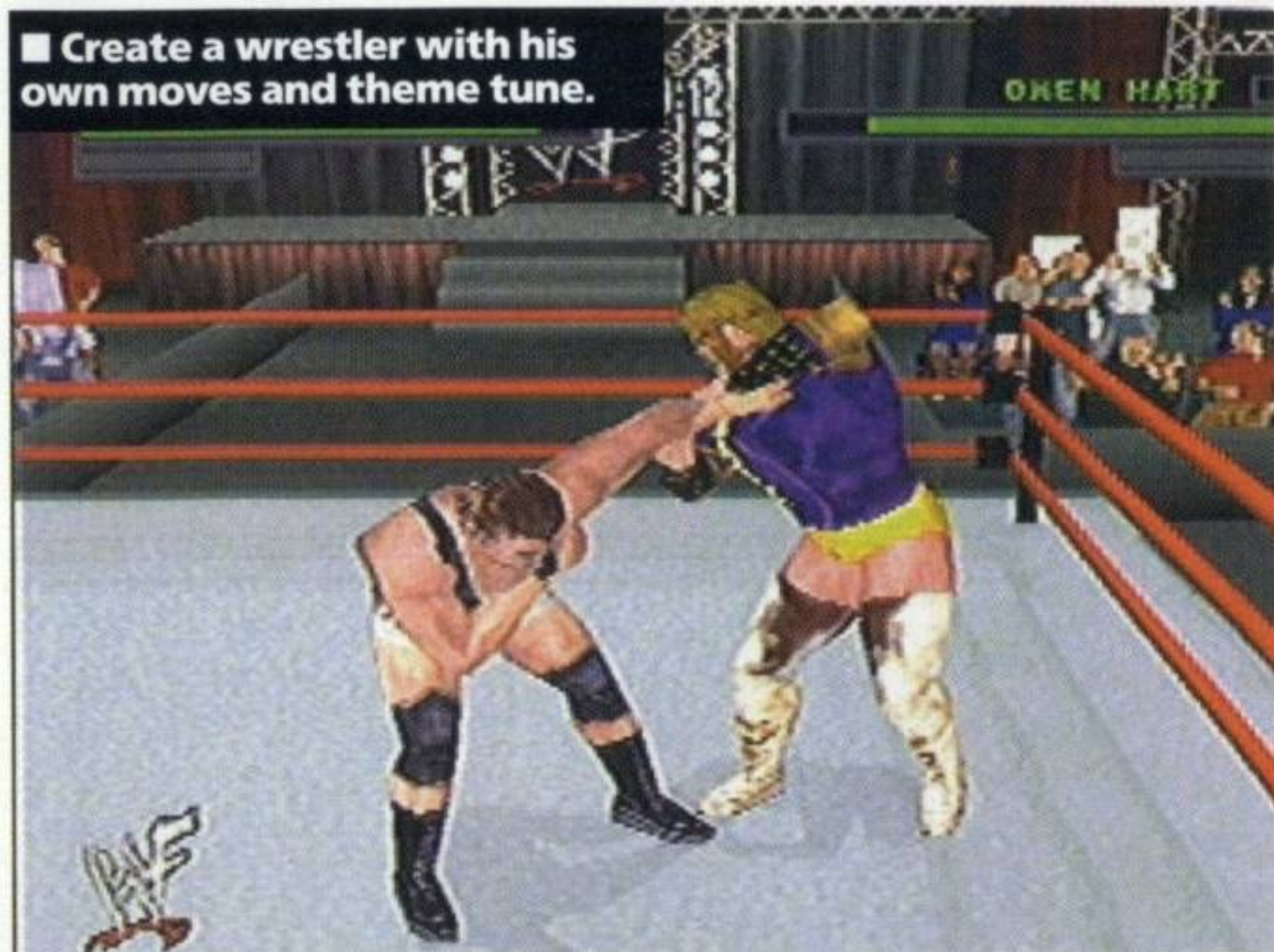
Or you could try...

Micro Machines 3
Codemasters ★★★★★
Tonnes more fun, just as cute and a bargain at only 20 quid.

Gran Turismo
Sony ★★★★★
If you haven't bought this yet, drop everything and make for the shops. Go!



■ Put on your sunglasses if you're susceptible to bright colours.



PERSONALITY CLASH

PUT ON THE GLITZ AND FIGHT!

WWF Attitude

- Publisher: **Acclaim** ■ Developer: **Iguana** ■ Price: **£34.99**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

His name is R-Kade. His theme tune is "Judge This". He is our champion. Do you dare spawn a ring demon of your own?

Wrestling is about one thing and one thing only: entertainment. We're not talking about the Graeco-Roman flavour of manhandling practised in Olympic circles. Nor do we mean the grit, teeth and sawdust school of Messrs Kellet, Glover and Roach. We are, of course, referring to all things WWF, the pumped-up glitzy TV-friendly franchise that would have turned the rest of Dickie Davis's hair white if he'd have gotten a peek at the vast revenues involved.

The truth is, all previous WWF games have had attitude, but only this *Attitude* manages to find the playability and looks to properly back up its posing. It manages to be at once mindless and somehow skilful, gaudily ridiculous and yet at the same time worryingly realistic. Like all grapplers, the idea is that you pummel your opponent into submission with slaps, holds and power moves until they can be pinned to the canvas. For once the timing is spot-on – you can still land kick after kick, but the chain of moves can be broken and more powerful moves require much better co-ordinated D-pad twiddling.

If you're mad-keen on individual wrestlers you can take on the frighteningly lifelike polygonal forms of Stone Cold Steve Austin, HHH, Mankind, Kane and the rest, and if you're of a creative bent you can design your own nut-cracker. This is satisfying in itself. If you were a wrestler what kind of mask would you wear? Would you favour body art or court the fashion vote with a natty waistcoat? There are, in fact, so many choices that you can create a truly unique freak – and in this era of equality ladybumps are no barrier to wrestlerdom (as Klondyke Kate proved decades ago). So good is this wrestler creation option that it'd be worth any

prospective WWF wannabe having a tinker before entering the ring – just to see if those trunks clash horribly enough with that jacket, or if choice quips like "my skill is sharp as a knife!" really can be heard above the baying of the crowd (you can choose sets of prerecorded taunts too).

From the moment each wrestler makes his (or her) entrance *WWF Attitude* pulls out all the stops to inject atmosphere and drama: Kane's satanic avenue of spluttering torches has to be seen to be believed. Then there are the commentators straight out of *Celebrity Deathmatch* "The idiot!" the voice of a pundit interjects "What is he doing?" The nice thing is you always know what you're doing. More or less. Unlike other wrestling games every move is beautifully choreographed, flowing into the next like some steroid-fuelled salsa of death. All this and it looks superb with, at last, proper texture-mapped wrestler faces instead of pathetically unrecognisable sprites.

This is about as close to the glory that is *Tekken* a wrestling game could hope to come on PlayStation. The irony is that, with Acclaim losing the WWF license to THQ this year, *Attitude* is the last of its kind – just when it'd got the formula right. ★★ ★★ **Pete Wilton**

Or you could try...

Kumite
Konami ★★ ★★
Not wrestling, but with lots of grabbing and countering it's still a solid fighter.

Tekken 3
Namco ★★ ★★ ★★
Bruce Lee distilled into gaming form. If you want a proper scrap then this delivers.



■ Bruce Lee in gaming form.

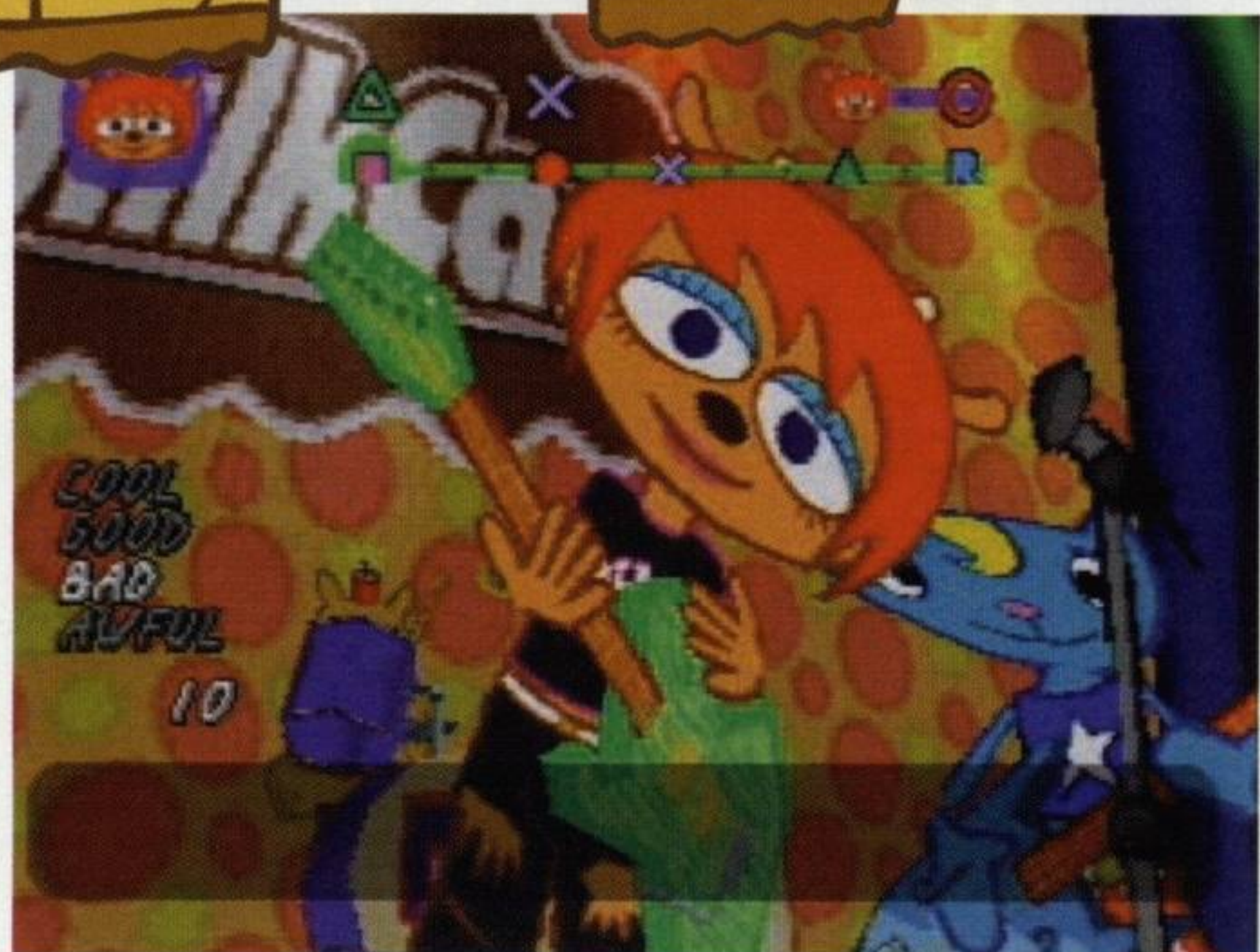
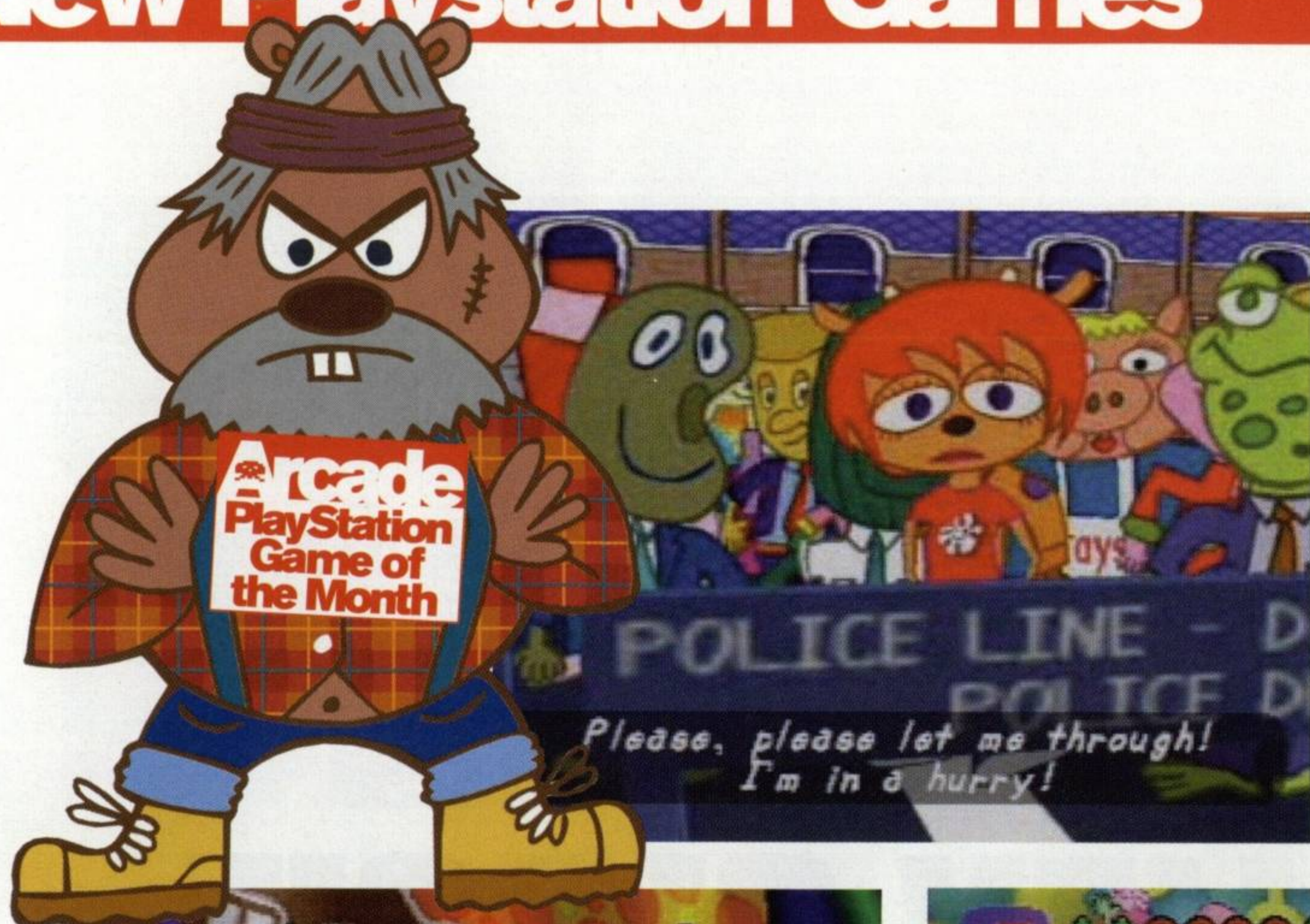
Uppers & Downers

Pinned

- Scarily photo-realistic stars
- Masses of options and moves
- Create your own grappler

Binned

- WWF-branded idiocy
- Can be slow to respond



■ If you thought *PaRappa* was odd, you'll search in vain for a word to describe the psychedelic madness of *Um Jammer Lammy*.

SHEAR GENIUS



MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH EWE

Um Jammer Lammy

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **NaNaOh-Cha**
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release date: **September** ■ Price: **£35**
 ■ Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

A game that takes pressing buttons in time to music beyond most people's experience of tapping along to Rolf Harris' Stylophone Masterclass.

You're not alone if you respond to the phrase, "Kick! Punch! It's all in the mind!" with little more than forehead-crinkling bemusement. The phrase comes from *PaRappa the Rapper*, a game which – despite starring a loveable rapping dog and a host of irresistible songs – sold something like 12 copies. Sony hasn't been put off, though, because *PaRappa* is back with a new character, fresh set of tunes and a load of geetar riffs.

Like its prequel, *Um Jammer Lammy* is essentially a tarted-up PlayStation version of the old electronic game,

Simon. While a song plays and on-screen characters jig around, sequences of button-presses scroll by at the top of the screen. It's your job to tap the corresponding buttons on the pad in time with the music. Lose the beat or miss a button-press, and the words "bad" or "awful" light up on-screen, while, inexplicably, the music is replaced by a chorus of quacking ducks.

Admittedly, if the only prize for accurate joypad jabs was the absence of noisy ducks, slavishly following a three minute-long list of button-presses would be about as thrilling as watching clothes dry. But each button press in *Um Jammer* corresponds to a different pluck of your on-screen guitar, so the *real* reward is hearing your finger-presses converted into seamless axe licks. Get it right, and you'll feel as smug as that kid at school who could strum his guitar along to any song in the Top 40.

Although the game's decision on whether you're jammin' "good" or "awful" is occasionally as frustratingly random as its predecessor, *Um Jammer* improves noticeably on *PaRappa*. The assorted guitar stabs flow neatly into one another, trumping the first game's fragmented, stuttering spoken phrases. And Lammy herself, the blushing female lamb who holds the game's guitar in her petite hands,



■ Slash-like jamming will secure you a rating of "cool".



■ The verdict on guitar-wielding Lammy? Not baaad at all.



■ This stage, set in hell, is the game's worst by a long way. Tuneless and frustrating.

makes a distant memory of the prequel's funky mutt. With giant eyes, endearing shyness and a butter-wouldn't-melt voice, Lammy is every man's dream sheep.

Despite the changes, *Um Jammer*'s appeal still relies on the same loveable cardboard visuals and off-its-head quirkiness of the original. In Lammy's world, baby-sitting caterpillars puke up pink goo as they speak, bears in pants hang around in treetops, and animals and vegetables walk, talk and live together in harmony. There's a host of truly funny set-pieces, and plenty of nudge-nudge *Scream 2*-style references to the first game – upon leaving a cinema showing of *Jet Baby 2*, Katy Kat insists that "The first one was good, too, but this one had more juice."

Musically, though, *Um Jammer* fails – just – to be quite as juicy as *PaRappa*. A disappointing start, with Master Onion from *PaRappa* featuring in a weak follow-up to the brilliant "All In The Mind" rap, sets *Um Jammer* up for a general lack of good tunes. The Isaac Hayes-soundalike fire chief belts out a reasonably funky tune, and there's a catchiness to the jabbering of the manic toddler in level three, but mostly it pales in comparison to *PaRappa*'s infectious beats. The penultimate song is the real low point – an out-of-tune, out-of-time mess that proves near-impossible to follow.

Still, the last level is much better: a rousing pop-rock number where distortion is set to 11, cymbals crash on every beat, and the bass player is permitted to slide up and down the frets on his guitar like a man possessed. As with the rest of the game, the lyrics meander between cringingly soul-

searching and downright incomprehensible – the section where Katy Kat insists that Lammy is "on the border now" is a real mystery – but don't be surprised if you're clapping and stamping your feet along with the on-screen crowd of squiggles-with-legs.

But even the fast, complicated button-press sequences of the game, which catch the player out with changes in rhythm and timing, can't prevent the credits sequence arriving an hour after you've picked up the game. That's part-and-parcel of the novelty value of *Um Jammer*, but if this annoys you, there's a fun two-player battle mode to mess around with and bonus levels starring PaRappa himself. His rap versions of the main game's tunes provide a mellower, more soulful experience than Lammy's screeching guitar, but it's hard not to draw comparisons with the boring remixes you find on tracks two to four of a CD single.

Um Jammer is a typical second album. Slickly produced, slightly more experimental, but ultimately lacking in the kind of decent tunes that made the original shine. But most of the less exciting tracks grow on you before too long, and, ultimately, you'll return to the same levels time and again, to re-experience the pleasure of listening – and playing along – to the tunes. Fun and funky, *Um Jammer Lammy* deserves a whole lot more than the shameful ignorance that greeted its prequel. ★★★★★ **Mark Green**

Or you could try...

PaRappa The Rapper
Sony ★★★★★
More of the same, but with rapping instead of guitar, and a better selection of tunes.

Bust-A-Groove
Sony ★★★★★
Use fighting game-style combos to keep your dancer jivin'. Shallow, but enjoyable.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Golden

- Gloriously quirky characters and songs
- Two-player modes are fun for a while
- Lammy is lovely

Fleeced

- Decision on whether your timing is off is occasionally unfair
- Several of the songs are awful
- Won't last long at all



OUTER LIMITS

ARRESTING SPACE COP SEQUEL

↑ Uppers & Downers

Pulling Gs

- Great new vehicles and weapons
- Easy learning curve
- Plenty of missions

Provoking Zs

- Lack of depth
- Seen it all before
- Some missions needlessly drawn out



■ New vehicles mean that the standard gameplay is enhanced.



G-Police 2: Weapons of Justice

- Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Psygnosis** ■ Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

Psygnosis' flight sim/blaster hybrid returns, with bits added in and, surprisingly, bits taken out. Yet it's all the better for it.

Now that the original *G-Police* has gone into early retirement, with a laser-powered pocket watch and a Platinum beat its reward for outstanding service (damn good value it is at £20), a new generation of space cops is patrolling the colonies of a future Earth, righting the wrongs of the evil Syndicate and its stop-at-nothing "corporate gain" programme.

Or, equally, *G-Police 2* is about more nifty space flying with plenty of shooty-shooty. With its premise and configuration practically identical to the first game, we're not talking huge strides in originality here. But what *G-Police 2* does, it does very well indeed, maintaining the compelling mix of blasting and brain usage of the original at just the right levels.

However, this is no reheated rip-off. As Vincent Vega observed so astutely in *Pulp Fiction*, it's the little differences that set things apart. Like not having the long Training level of its predecessor. This has been replaced by an in-flight help system, which enables you to jump in feet first and get accustomed to the action (which, boiled down to the essentials, is nearly always a seek-and-destroy mission of some kind) while on the job – always the best way.

New craft also make for an improved gaming experience, the bipedal Raptor and the sleek Rhino providing as much

fun and action on the ground as the airborne Corsair and Havoc do in the many dog-fights. All of them handle as impressively as they look, thanks to a control system that has been tweaked for the good.

Graphics-wise, *G-Police 2* graduates from the academy with honours, as the whole is pleasing on the eye, from the menus and cut scenes to the in-game effects. An added bonus to this prettying up is that you'll find it both easier and quicker to scan other ships than it was first time out.

But, ultimately, *G-Police 2* is simply a thoroughly entertaining retread of *G-Police* – a *Phantom Menace* to a *New Hope*, if you will. Which is no bad thing when you consider that the first game was as good as it was, and that this is Psygnosis doing its fast, friendly and highly polished cyberpunk thing so very well. Hard to argue with quality, so let's not bother. ★★★★★ **Cam Anderson**

Or you could try...

Colony Wars: Vengeance
Psygnosis ★★★★★
Slick, sassy space-set shooter. Phew.

WipEout 2097
Psygnosis ★★★★★
This should keep you ticking over until the arrival of the wondrous third.

■ Looks like ED-209. Acts only slightly less aggressively.



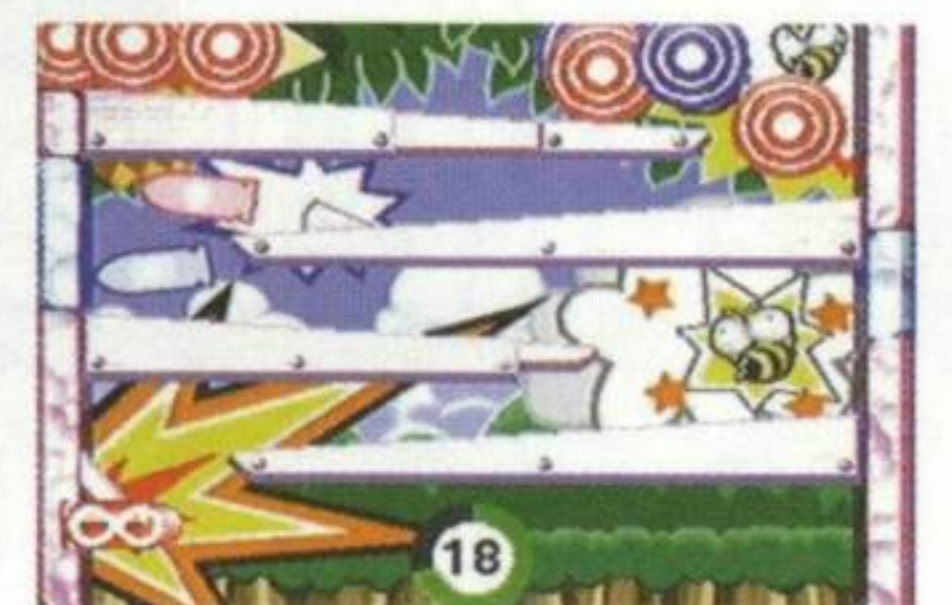
■ The old *Blade Runner*/*Aliens* visual combo thing works well.



■ Dr Don and Dr Dan visit *Point Blank 2* with their inimitable brand of slapstick japey. If they're not being pecked at by vultures, they're starring in their own fiendish boss game, *Cosmo Gang*.

JUST SHOOT IT!

MADCAP GUNPLAY THRILLS IN A WILD, WILD WORLD



Point Blank 2

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Namco** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players **1-8** ■ Extras: **lightgun**

Dr Don and Dr Dan return with more shooting gallery tomfoolery to remind you why you bought that lightgun in the first place.

Occasionally videogames offer us a glimpse of paradise. In a perfect world there'd be no drive-by shootings, bloody exit wounds, or high school massacres, because anyone with a gun would be too busy trying to shoot a purple octopus that occasionally peeked from an earthenware vase. Granted, things wouldn't be so rosy for the octopus, or the barman who watches in horror as every bottle on his shelf is shattered, or the owner of the smart red car, who sees his vehicle wantonly destroyed, but that's a small price to pay for peace.

This is the world of *Point Blank*, and its sequel continues in a similarly daft and lovable vein. Even when you're presented with a gritty urban scene, the bad guys are always quaintly referred to as "criminals" – and even then they're only inanimate cardboard cutouts. One game makes it clear that you should only shoot the men with guns rather than those innocently clutching a bunch of grapes. *Point Blank 2* is cute, silly and graphically infantile, but it's a near perfect definition of the word "fun".

If you're familiar with the original *Point Blank* you'll immediately recognise the structure of the game. In any mode you choose, you're presented with a shooting challenge which you must achieve within a specified time and with a limited number of bullets (needless to say, there is little sense in playing this game without a lightgun). These

challenges are often far from straightforward. Some, such as shooting the wool from the bodies of bleating sheep, are so instantly ludicrous that you may not be able to complete them first time around because you'll be convulsed with incredulous laughter; some require a rapid hail of ammunition; and some require you to solve puzzles along the way, such as shooting at the differences in two seemingly identical rustic scenes.

For the more adventurous, there's a faintly surreal story mode in which you enter a fairground in search of a missing princess who you must rescue. Tosh, but highly enjoyable.

At the end you're rewarded with a meeting with Dr Don and Dr Dan, *Point Blank's* moustachioed hosts, whose hapless clowning and petty one-upmanship make them a Chuckle Brothers for the digital generation. They'll challenge you to their self-appointed "toughest gun game in the world". The adventuring is limited, however. Indeed, the only real disappointment in *Point Blank 2* is the lack of depth, but you can always go back and compete at a harder level, eventually graduating to a standard the game rightly classifies as "insane".

There's much multi-player fun to be enjoyed too, as Drs Don and Dan have devised a number of Versus modes, some designed to accommodate up to eight players (although only two can ever shoot at once). They even suggest forfeits for the losers, ranging from "20 pushups, pronto" to "cleaning the winner's bathroom for a week". You could complain about the essential lack of variety inherent in every game mode, or even the fact that *Point Blank 2* is much the same as the first game. But that would be like refusing a tenner because you've got one exactly like it in your wallet. ★★★★★ **Sam Richards**

■ Here you get to shoot at straightforward targets, but often you'll be required to shoot birds, cats and a tower of wine glasses.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Sharp shooting

- Immediately satisfying
- Consistently hilarious
- You shoot stuff. Ergo, it's great

Firing blanks

- Not too dissimilar to the original
- Can become repetitive



■ The exhausted victim of another shooting frenzy.

Or you could try...

Point Blank
SCEE ★★★★★
The original party fun nonsense lightgun shooter.

Time Crisis
Namco ★★★★★
First-person arcade thrills – the only other lightgun game worth having.

■ It might be Dwight, it could be Cole – whatever, it's a goal. Again.



'SHIP WRECK

STARS IN EA SPORTS' EYES. BUT FOR HOW LONG?



■ The players found a quiet piece of the pitch to express their mutual admiration.

FA Premier League Stars

■ Publisher: **EA Sports** ■ Developer: **EA Sports** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **memory card**

Missing the football already? No, not the real thing – the virtual version. You aren't? Oh...

When EA Sports released three football games over 12 months in 1998, you could almost forgive the company. It had the World Cup licence to exploit, and then there was *FIFA '99*, a giant leap forward for soccer sims and a worthy Christmas number one. But *FA Premier League Stars*, to quote Mark Lawrenson's famous Football Focus Colemanball, is a different kettle of worms altogether. Not only is it a shameless cash-in on the over-hyped Premiership, it's also not anywhere near as good as its predecessors. But, hey, it's got all the new kits, so that's all right.

What's worse, the first in an undoubtedly long line of *Stars* games wasn't meant to be like this. Made entirely in Britain, the idea was to give *ISS Pro '98* a real run for its money by going for a more considered, realistic game of football than its FIFA-sponsored brother. But for considered, just read slow. And the realism stretches to the sponsors being on the kits and the stadiums looking good, which, while fun, doesn't add much to the experience.

The *Stars* feature of the title, whereby you are awarded a number of stars whenever you notch up a win, and can then assign to players to improve their performance or save up to buy-in new talent, has turned out to be

ever-so-slightly clunky. Given that the idea is to accurately recreate the no holds barred experience of wheeler dealing in the money-go-round of the Premiership, the system feels out of place – coy even. Whatever happened to the good old pound, as we all might be saying to our grandchildren in 20 years.

However, *Stars* is not a bad game. You have to work for your goals a lot more than in *FIFA '99*, which makes for a more satisfying experience. But once you've carved an opportunity out for yourself you will score almost every time, because the 'keepers are on the shoddy side of useless. And this is the crux of the matter; for every angel on one shoulder pointing out the undeniably good things about EA's new footy sim, there's a devil on the other saying, "but it's not *FIFA '99*, is it?"

Unfortunately, EA Sports has brought this comparison on itself. The company can point to different game engines all it likes, but the fact is that the passing is the same, the players look the same and much of the gameplay feels borrowed. And that, as Mr Lawrenson might say, opens up a distinctly ugly can of fish. ★★★ **Ben East**

↑ Uppers & Downers

- Sun**
- Stunning kits and stadia
 - Opts for non-arcade approach
 - Stars a good idea, initially
- Moon**
- It's *FIFA '99*, only slower
 - *FIFA 2000* is on its way
 - Too easy to score, as it were

A SHAMELESS CASH-IN ON THE OVER-HYPED PREMIERSHIP, BUT IT DOES HAVE ALL THE NEW KITS

Or you could try...

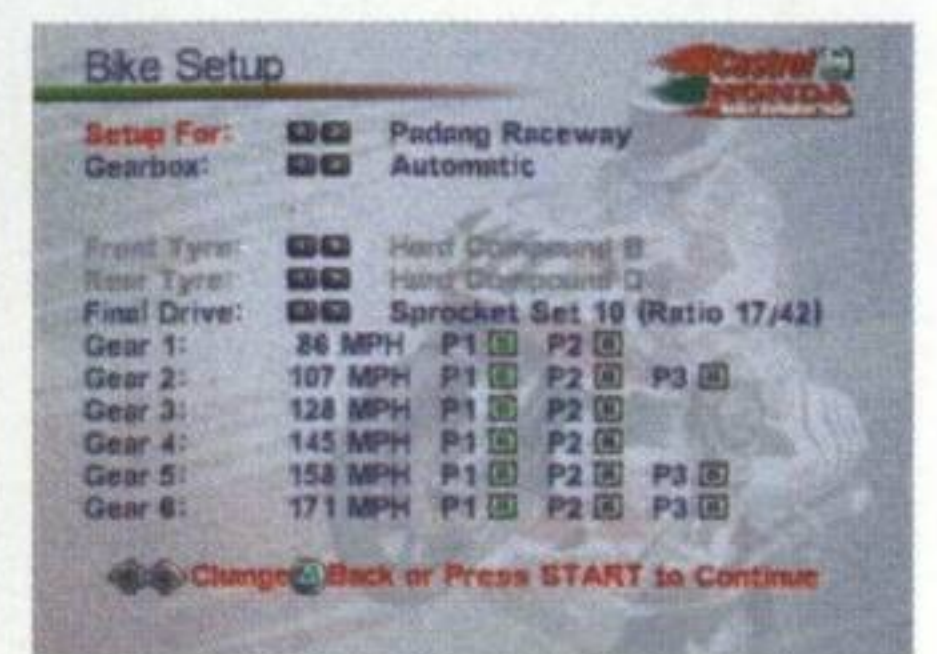
FIFA '99
EA Sports ★★★
Quicker and more fun than *FA Premier League Stars*, but beatable from the get-go.

ISS Pro '98
Konami ★★★★★
Just about the best, most realistic football game you will get your hands on.



■ Hack 'em down, whip 'em in... it's all coming flooding back.

WELL OILED BUT ARE YOU READY FOR A RIDE?



Castrol Honda Superbike Racing

■ Publisher: **THQ** ■ Developer: **Interactive Entertainment** ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **analogue compatible, Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

The sound of creaking leather, the taste of exhaust fumes, trying to find which zip is your flies in the middle of a crowded urinal – sound familiar? Then this could be your lucky game...

Basically there are two ways you can go. Either you can turn bike racing into an off-road arcade joke in which your bike bounces impossibly high, you never get impaled on a tree and can turn in mid-air, or you get serious. Thankfully, *Castrol Honda Superbike Racing* takes the latter route. But don't thank it just yet.

There's a price to be paid for a game that's so anal that it had to put the oil sponsor's name in the title.

A quick glance over your shoulder on the starting grid will show you that *Honda Superbike* doesn't have much in the way of competition. If you want to race something on four wheels you'd need a starting grid the size of France to accommodate your rival games, but plump for two wheels and there's, well, *Moto Racer* and *Moto Racer 2* really. And as both of these are games you should only bring out for an '80s-themed "remember those arcade bike games you used to get in service stations?" evening, *Honda Superbike* seems to have got it made. It's got a licence, it's got two famous-ish riders, it has a passable two-player mode – time for a celebration wheelie, surely?

Unfortunately, there seems to be something missing from *Honda Superbike*. For a bike game to really work you've got to believe you're squeezing a mean beast between your legs; you've got to feel like your ball sacks are inches away from bouncing along pot-holed Tarmac. Whacking up the difficulty level certainly helps, but not as much as it should. At least you can muff corners in

spectacular fashion and watch your rider do a Barry Sheene over the handlebars but, unlike games such as *Formula 1 '97* or *Gran Turismo*, neither is there the graphical polish to make you wince as the bodywork is dented, nor is there the kind of subtlety of handling that makes you feel like the mistakes are really your fault and not just the game punishing you for not bothering with boring practice laps. It's a simulation, fair enough, but it's a simulation with little to hook virtual riders who aren't already bonkers about two-wheeled motorsport.

Honda Superbike is fine, it's workmanlike and it's competent, but does it make your heart race like a powersliding Lizard saloon? Can it match the on-road feistyness of a Dodge Viper? How about the bowel-emptying speed of an F1 car? Nope, it plays it safe at every turn, and that's why it never graduates from being all right to being bloody great fun. ★★★

Pete Wilton

■ **Choosing an automatic gearbox makes everything much too easy.**

Or you could try...

Moto Racer 2
 EA ★★
 Arcade nonsense starring the Great Wall of China in a cameo role. Off its road.

Road Rash
 EA ★★
 Ride hard, hit each other with chains, repeat until bludgeoned into a coma.

Uppers & Downers

- Even**
- A true bike racer
 - Split-screen two player
 - 14 recognisable courses
- Evil**
- Never feels or looks fast enough
 - Only Hondas to ride
 - Coarse, awkward handling



PREMIER LEAGUE

CLASS DEATHMATCH ABOUNDS



■ Every single level is more than just that: each one is a work of art.

■ Oi! Croft! You're dead, you are.



Unreal Tournament

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Epic Megagames**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-16**
 ■ Requires: **P200, 64Mb RAM, 516Mb HD space, graphics card, sound card** ■ Recommended: **PII266, 3D accelerator card** ■ Extras: **OpenGL or Direct3D-compatible 3D card, modem for Internet play**

Waiting for Quake III: Arena to bring a deathmatch revolution to the PC? Too late! Unreal Tournament has got there first.

Cor, talk about backing a loser! I mean, how dim can you get? Everyone knows that there are two good things about first-person shooters: the first is the one-player game, an experience exemplified by the superlative *Half-Life*; the second is taking people on in a deathmatch, either across the Internet or on a LAN. So, what does *Unreal Tournament* think it's playing at? It's multi-player only, and its main focus is playing on a single machine against computer-controlled opponents. You can play it over the Net, but that's just a part of the game; one look at *Unreal Tournament* tells you that you're supposed to play it on your own. Are these people morons?

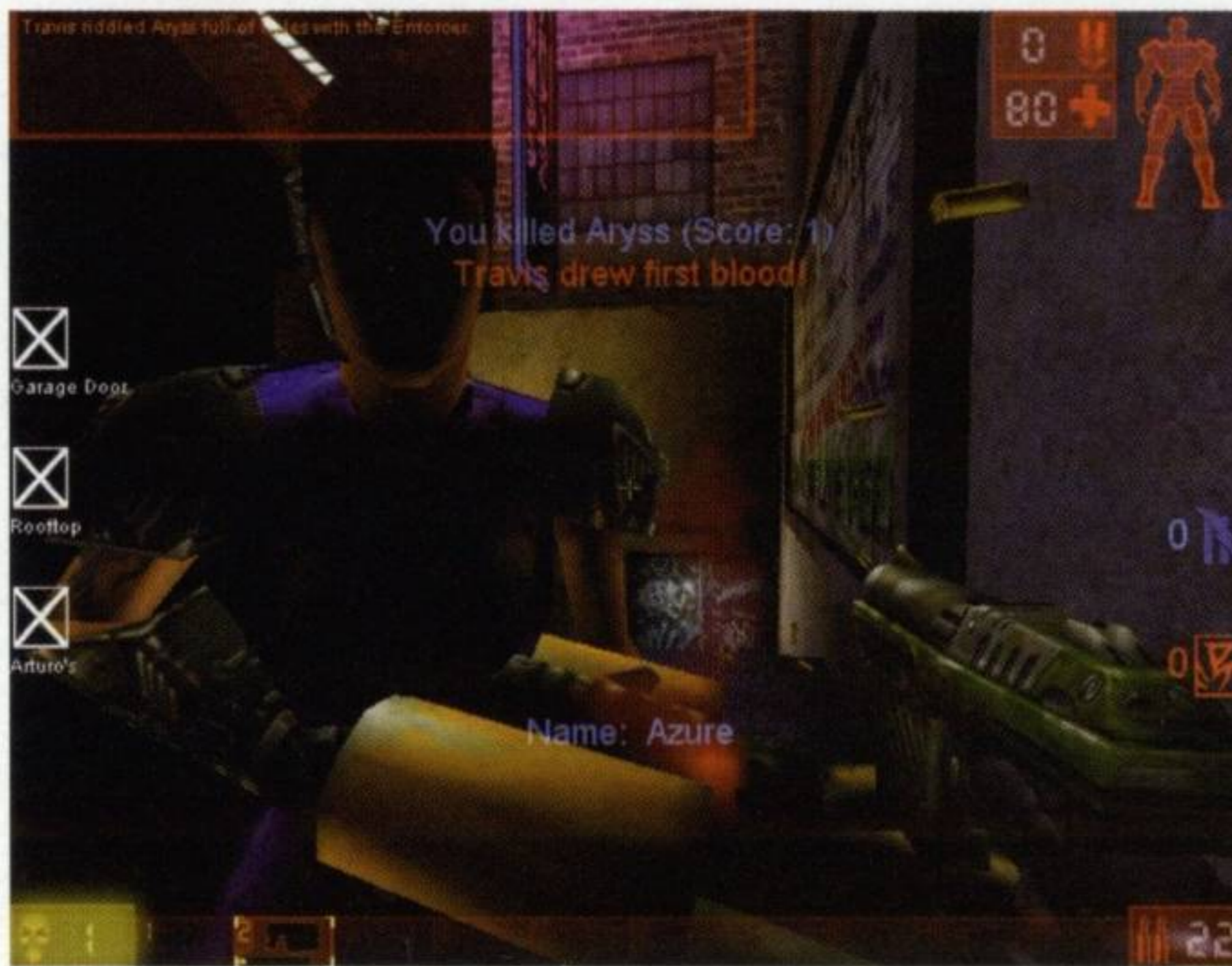
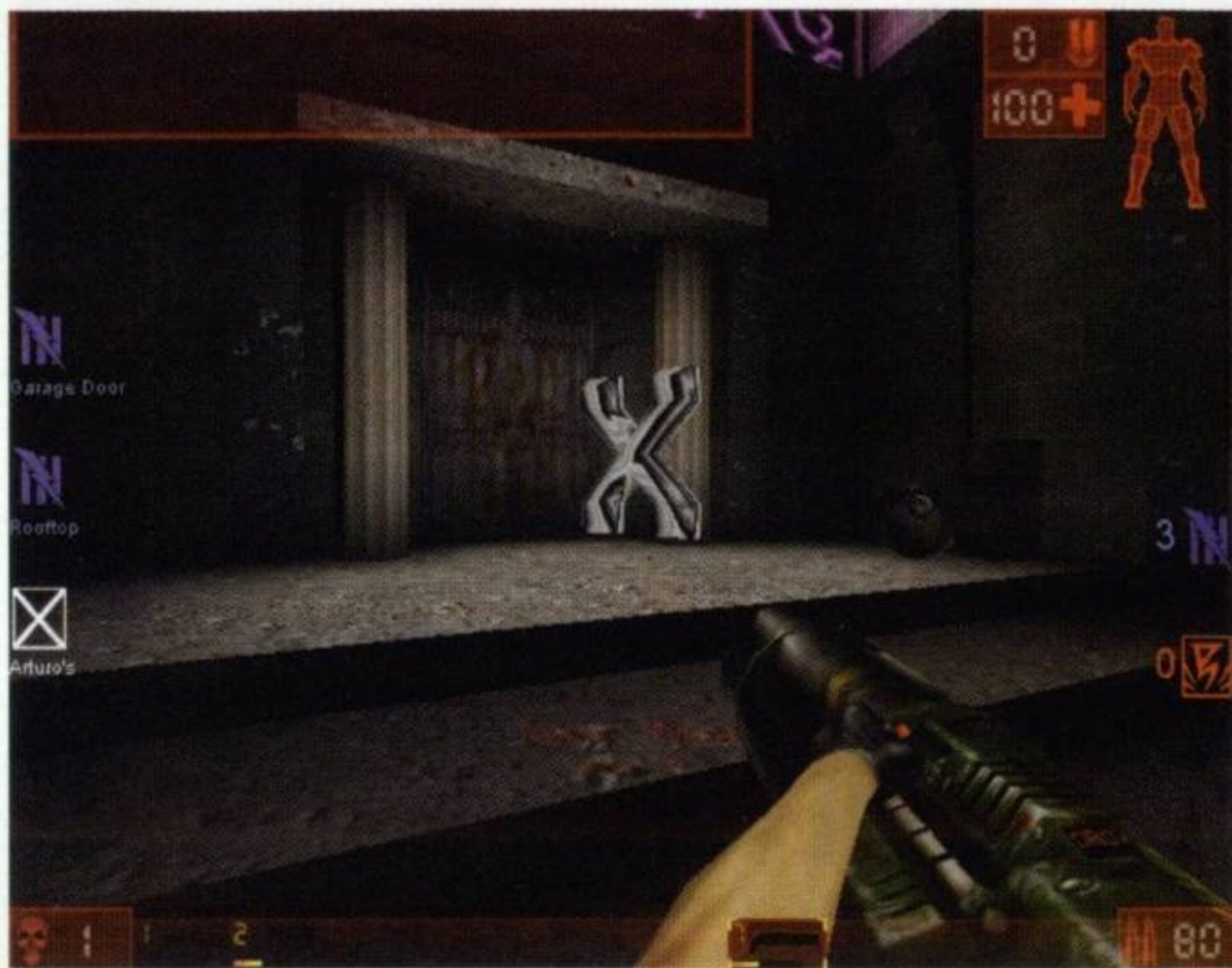
Or are they evil geniuses? This is the same route that *Quake III: Arena* is going down, and *Unreal Tournament* has got there first. And the more you

think about it, the more sense it makes. The games that last the longest are the ones with the best multi-player facilities. People still play *Quake* on-line, even if they don't bother with the one-player game any more. Who still plays *Duke Nukem 3D*? Not on the PC, anyway. So, eject the whole one-player game and invent a new one, drawing on the genre's strengths: fast combat against well-matched opponents. If it sounds like a lame cop-out from the task of designing a proper one-player quest, you're missing the point. If playing a series of deathmatches against a series of progressively tougher AI opponents sounds rubbish, you're missing the point as well. For pity's sake, haven't you ever played a beat-'em-up? *Unreal Tournament* is a classic beat-'em-up, except it's a first-person shooter.

Confused? In Tournament mode, you play a series of matches against gradually improving bots, starting off with one or two examples of artificial stupidity who can't even shoot straight, and heading on to hordes of sharp-shooting brutes. It's like the progression of *Street Fighter 2*, except with guns. And in 3D. With more characters. And locations.

And gameplay styles. Thrilling though it is, the appeal of non-stop deathmatch begins to fade after a while.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT IS A CLASSIC BEAT-'EM-UP, EXCEPT IT'S A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER. CONFUSED?



However, *Unreal Tournament* is ready for you: after you've won your first few deathmatches, a series of other games becomes available, all of which require you to work as part of a team. Domination drops you into an arena with a number of bases to be captured and guarded, with the opposition trying to do the same thing, Capture The Flag is, well, Capture The Flag, and the best of the lot is Assault.

Assault is bloody great. Your team has a mission to complete – for example, capturing the enemy train – and a time limit in which to do it. Once completed, the tables are turned and you have to play it again, but this time, you have to guard the train. Whichever team completes the mission is declared the winner. Simple, but highly effective. Domination involves a bit too much running backwards and forwards, Capture The Flag is an enduring favourite but also has you to-ing and fro-ing rather a lot, whereas Assault gives you a serious job to do and the challenge of getting it done the quickest.

Plenty of ways to play, then, and if climbing the assorted league tables of *Unreal Tournament* gets too much for you, you can opt for Practice mode, where you can

choose a type of game to play and set the skill, the map, the number of bots and oodles more to your exact specifications. Very handy for getting to know the many maps and plotting your strategies. And if that *still* isn't enough for you, you can plug in your modem, your LAN, your ISDN or ASDL line and do it all over again with real, human opponents and team-mates.

You'd be a fool not to. *Unreal Tournament* plays like a dream and provides ample killing opportunities to deathmatch virgins and grizzled old veterans alike. Plus, it's all wrapped up in graphics that squeeze the very best from your PC, especially if you're using a 3D accelerator card. Take a look at the Galleon level, the train Assault level, the "two towers in space orbiting a giant planet" level. Beautiful, the lot of 'em. *Unreal Tournament* is truly a thing of beauty, and the appeal is more than skin-deep. One even wonders if *Quake III: Arena* will manage to rain on its parade... ★★★★★

■ If it's big guns you're after, *Unreal Tournament* delivers them, from weedy little handguns to a useful portable nuke launcher.



Or you could try...

Starsiege Universe
Sierra ★★★★★
Forget the stormy robots bit and embrace a similar variety of deathmatch malarkey.

Quake II: Extremities
Activision ★★★★★
The deathmatch add-on for *Quake II* also boasts some impressive bot opponents.

↑ Uppers & Downers

King of the hill

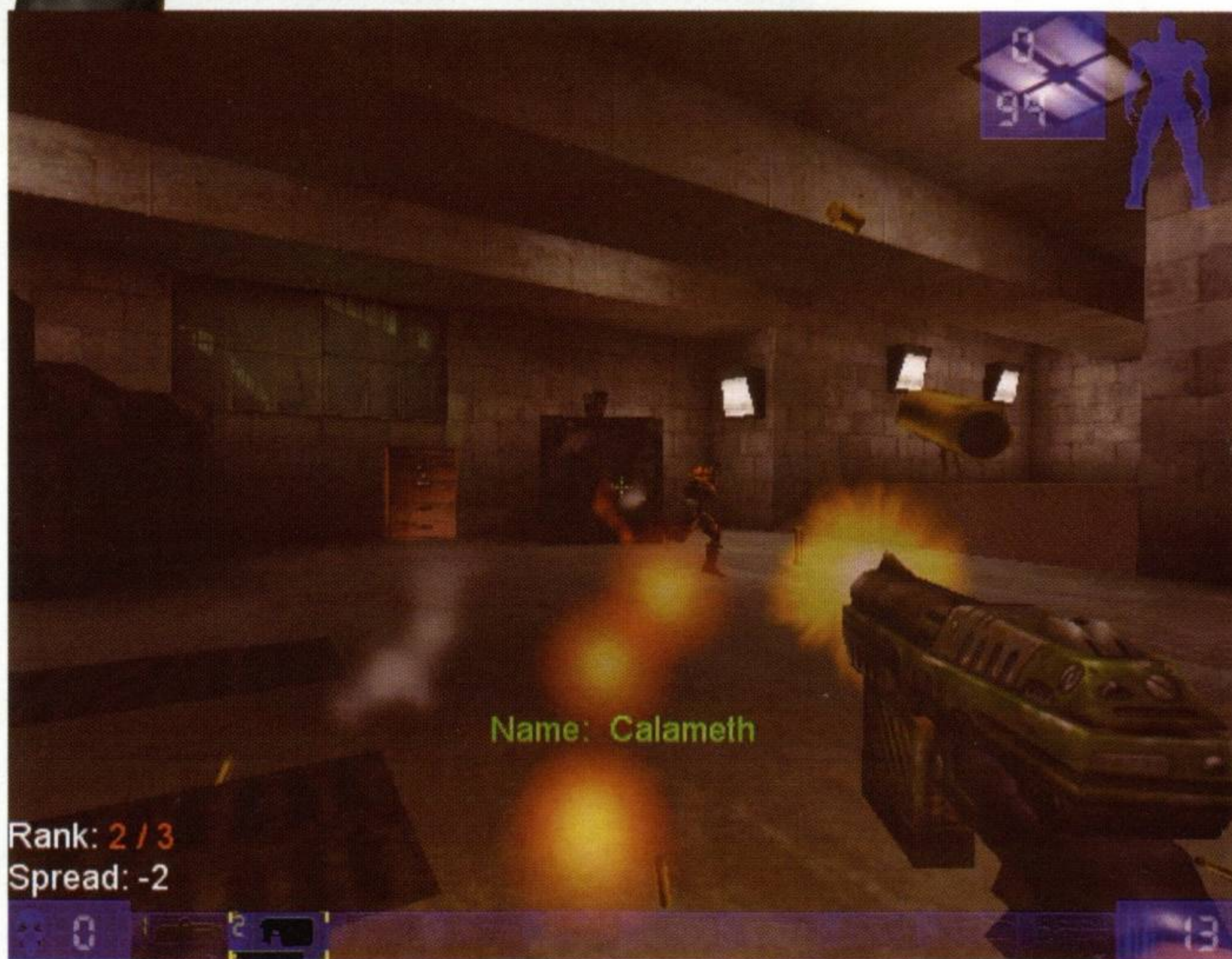
- Brilliant AI bots
- Plenty of big guns
- Loads of options

Queen of the fairies

- Hefty PC required
- Doesn't like non-3Dfx cards
- Almost too addictive



■ Mere deathmatch not enough for you? Are you completely insane? Well, try out *Unreal Tournament's* tasty side-plate of alternatives.





■ Full 3D battles show *Braveheart* in all its kilt-swishing glory. The strategy's surprisingly deep too.

GREAT SCOT!

THIS GAME WILL TAKE YOUR FREEDOM

Uppers & Downers

Free Willy

- Great battles
- Deep strategy
- Well combined

Jock strap

- Frighteningly complicated
- Very slow
- Bad accents

Braveheart

■ Publisher: **Eidos** ■ Developer: **Red Lemon** ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-12**
 ■ Requires: **P233, 32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, 200Mb HD space** ■ Extras: **PII 266, 3D card**

There's an Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman and you've got to bash the bejesus out of all of 'em.

Forget the film. Forget Mel. And forget Willy Wallace's all-action romp from the Highland bogs to the English Queen's privy chambers. *Braveheart* the game plays more like a tartan *Civilization*, spruced-up by some tasty real-time battle sequences.

But instead of building an empire, you get to champion your favourite clan. The idea is still the same though: keep your people happy, expand your settlements, recruit armies and nick thy neighbour's ass, sheep, land, and anything else you can lay your hands on. But, beware, most of the plotting, haggling, thieving and

scheming goes on in a series of management screens that are mind-mashingly complicated at first. There's so much happening right from the start it's difficult to know where to begin. Manual-phobes need not apply.

But if you can overcome the learning cliff you'll discover an engrossing strategy/action double-act, which becomes even more enjoyable when you realise how much your decisions in one part of the game can affect outcomes in the other. For example, instead of just starting a full-scale war with a neighbouring clan, you can try and weaken it first by ordering a secret mission to rob its food stores.

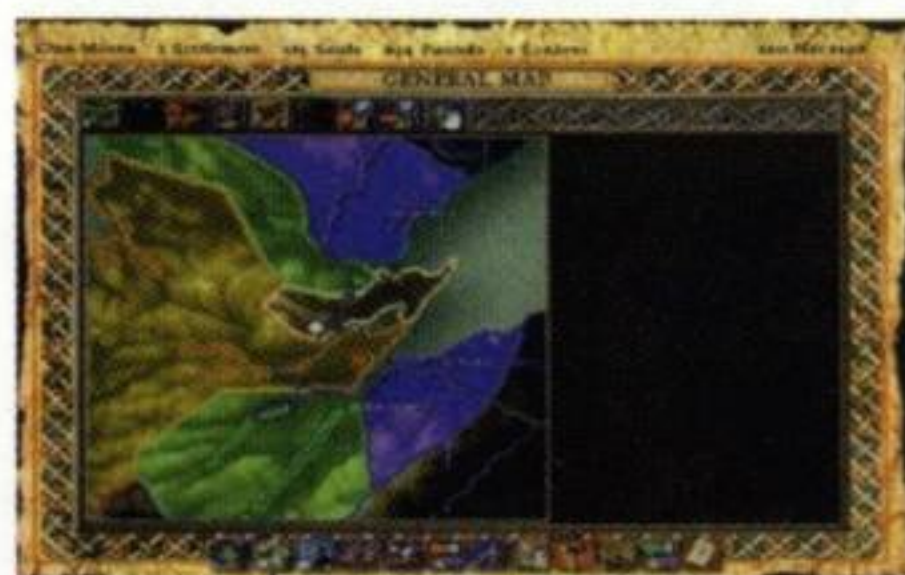
In *Braveheart*, you'll personally command this attack in full 3D, leading a small group of your finest jobs through the beautifully-drawn settlement, trying to find the storehouse in the middle of the night without waking the guards. But you can make it much easier by ordering a spy to infiltrate the enemy town. Once he's in, you can click

on the town from the map screens, and then *become* your spy. Wandering through the streets in the first-person, you can clock the layout and plan a route to your objective, before you send in your troops.

The battles themselves are carnage. Fulsome *Myth*-style 3D figures charge around forest and moor, laying into each other with rampant abandon. The only problem is keeping a grip on it all, as you've got a true 3D environment to cope with, and an excellent range of formation commands, on top of the usual RTS controls – but you can always practise against the computer in Skirmish mode.

Ultimately though, the battles are really just exciting interludes in what is otherwise a deep, but slow-moving strategy game. Quick-thrill merchants should think twice, but *Civ* fans need not hesitate. ★★★

Mark Donald



■ Looks like a shortbread tin.



Or you could try...

Myth 2
 GT Interactive ★★★
 If you want pure action, then try this real-time strategy hackfest.

Civilization 2
 Microprose ★★★★★
 But if pure strategy's your bag, it comes no better than this.

OH! OFF MY MANA

RETREAT INTO THE REALMS OF FANTASY



F-22 Lightning 3

- Publisher: **Novalogic**
- Developer: **Novalogic**
- Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-120**
- Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM, 220Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive**
- Recommended: **P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D accelerator card**
- Extras: **joystick, Force Feedback, modem for Internet play**

The flight simulation arms race reaches its ultimate conclusion with nuclear weapons on board.

■ Flight simulation veterans Novalogic and realism have never been the best of friends. With flight models from the Hollywood school of physics, and control systems acrimoniously divorced from the button-pressing, switch-toggling realism of a genuine cockpit, the company's aeroplane and helicopter titles have been given a wide berth by serious sim fans. Which is fine, because by cutting out the more complicated, awkward or tedious aspects of flight combat, Novalogic's aerial jaunts invariably prove a blast.

And *F-22 Lightning 3* is the blattiest yet, simulating as it does an aircraft so advanced that it's not due for active service until 2005, and which is so much of a multi-role monster that it's equally at home firing off a few Sidewinders as it is squeezing out a B1 thermonuclear device.

The game also goes all out to appeal to you even if you're a real simophobe, with automation of everything from take off, navigation and landing, to refuelling. And while the handling does feel reassuringly real, the rules of physics are never so strictly enforced as to make nose dives as regular an occurrence as in, say, DID's flight sims.

Bar unconvincing cloud cover, the visuals are top-notch. The missions have been designed for maximum impact, and the multi-player modes encompass huge matches over the free Novaworld Internet server, complete with microphone support.

Only the lack of depth that results from such a gung-ho approach to the genre disappoints. Dr Strangelove would have a ball, but otherwise you may do well to opt for Novalogic's similarly priced and specced *F-16/MiG-29* twin pack. Nuclear weapons are fun, but dogfighting will always win in the long term.

★★★ **Mark Ramshaw**



■ The fog of war obscures your vision. As do mountains. And myopia.



Total Annihilation: Kingdoms

- Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Cavedog**
- Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
- Requires: **P233, 32Mb RAM, 350Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive** ■ Recommended: **P300, 3D accelerator card**

Follow-up to smash hit sci-fi real-time strategy wargame, but with a twist: it has all gone fantasy.

What with genocide, terrorism and Ainsley Harriot, the real world can seem a horrid place to live. Which is why so many people retreat into the realms of fantasy. But why do all fantasy realms have to be so similar? They're always ruled over by bearded lords named K'Grah, or Adizoth, and populated by serfs, farmers and archers. Not to mention giant spiders, orcs and zombies.

Predictably, then, *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms* offers you nothing original by way of its setting. It's a sequel of sorts to the equally plot-derivative, albeit futuristic, *Total Annihilation*, and tells the tale of a fractured medieval kingdom, fought over by four megalomaniac siblings: Elsin of Aramon is Mr All-Round Infantry; Kirena The Sea Mage commands a mighty navy; Zhon wields spectacular magic; and, finally, sounding like a Brazilian gameshow, the necromancer Zokken is able raise an army of the dead. Or undead. Or whatever they're called.

There are three ways you can approach *Kingdoms*. You can opt for a quick skirmish, playing as any of the combatants on one of several battlefields, which are nicely fiddle-aboutable. Or you can do much the same against a human opponent. Alternatively, you can get stuck into the adventure mode: this gives you the opportunity to move through the game narrative and, eventually, play from the perspective of each of the antagonists.

The gameplay will be familiar if you've ever played a real-time strategy game. You have to manage your

Uppers & Downers

Lord of The Rings

- Huge adventure game
- Lots of original units
- Deep gameplay

The Neverending Story III

- Dull graphics
- Few new ideas
- Hackneyed setting

resources (magical energy, or "mana"), build a base, construct buildings, produce units and then go to war. Much of the focus of the game is on action and combat: the mana-manipulating is less involved than, say, the money and ore management of *Command & Conquer*: but this

enables you to be more of a general and less of an accountant – a welcome state of affairs.

As with its predecessor, *Kingdoms* boasts "3D terrain". Unfortunately, despite its 3D-card compatibility – which serves merely to provide special effects – this doesn't result in 3D graphics. Whereas the original *Total Annihilation* changed the genre with its realistic line-of-sight feature, *Kingdoms* is less impressive. While your units are unable to see past mountains, this means little when the action is viewed directly overhead, without even the slightest hint of depth. As a result, *Kingdoms* looks tired and dated. More worrying is that the game struggles on even the most pumped-up PC. As soon as your army grows to more than ten units and you engage in battle, the action slows to a crawl.

All-in this is a shame, as *Kingdoms* is very playable and some of the units veer towards the original. However, like pedal pushers and the Rubik's Cube, it's an anachronistic relic. We hope *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* is the genre-saving classic it promises to be. ★★★ **Paul Rose**

Or you could try...

Myth 2: Soulblighter
Eidos Interactive ★★★
Much the same sort of thing, albeit with prettier graphics.

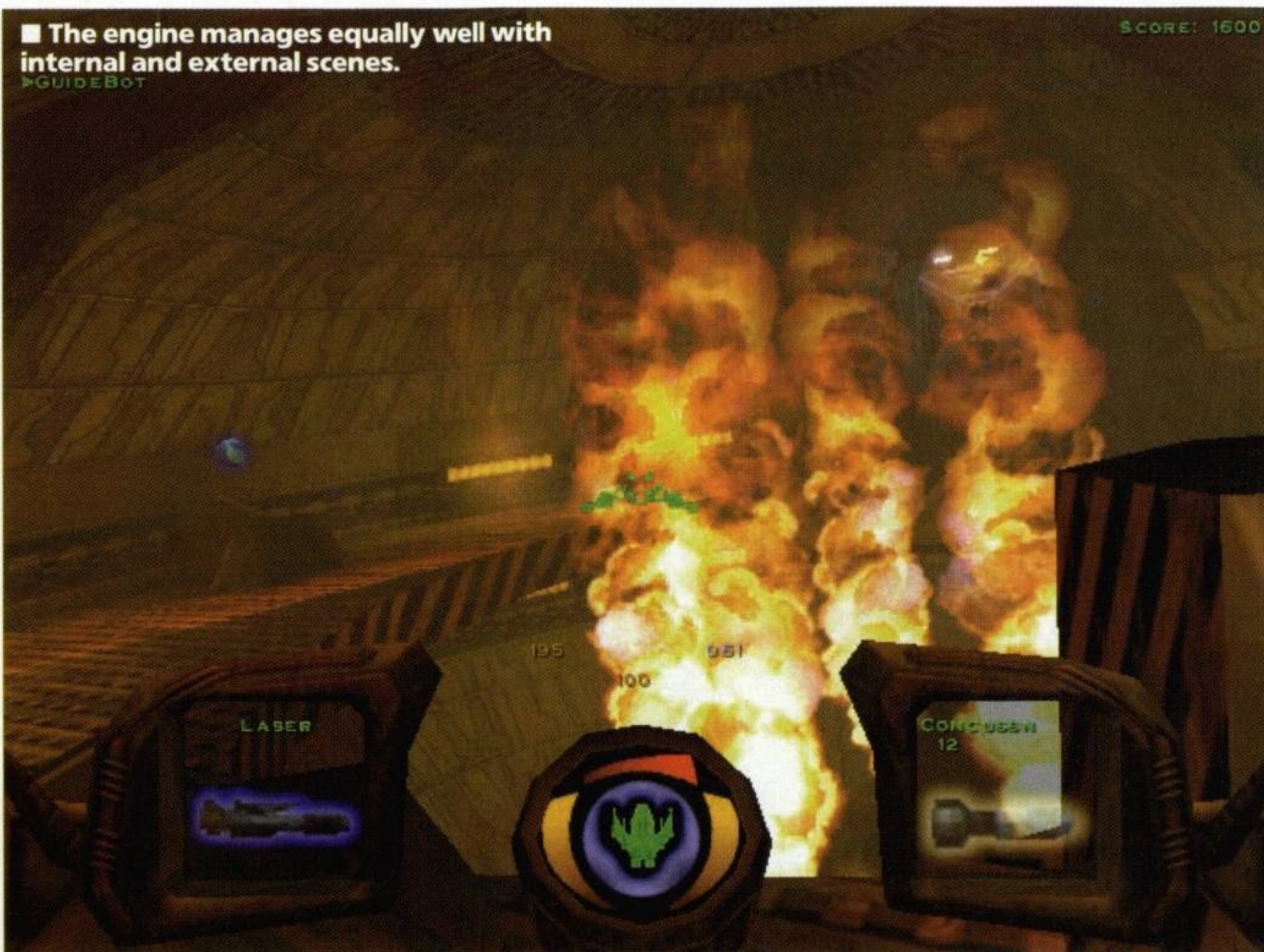
Command & Conquer: Red Alert
Virgin Interactive ★★★★★
The finest strategy game known to man. It still reigns supreme.



■ Units come in all shapes and sizes. Well, not all shapes...



■ The engine manages equally well with internal and external scenes.



GOING DOWN?

ENTER THE THIRD CIRCLE OF HELL

Descent 3

■ Publisher: **Virgin** ■ Developer: **Outrage/Interplay**
 ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8 (Internet)** ■ Requires: **P200, 32Mb RAM, 210Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 3D accelerator card**
 ■ Recommended: **P300, 64Mb RAM, modem for Internet play**

With Mechwarrior already in the bag and Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun still to come, the summer is shaping up to be one filled to bursting with long-awaited sequels. But can this space legend live on?

History can be a killer, and if *Descent* has anything, it's a past. The original appeared like the proverbial bat out of hell as part of a generation of games that made PCs look like an attractive, gonad-stimulating gaming proposition, even if you didn't enjoy the platform's traditional fare of flight sims and RPGs. While *Command & Conquer* was popularising the wargame and *Doom* was making action gaming more visceral than ever before, *Descent* was ploughing its own unique furrow.

Sadly, however, this sequel crumples beneath the weight of expectation. While much in *Descent 3* has changed, its core is identical to its predecessors. You control a spaceship in first-person perspective. You have to move through a claustrophobic maze of interconnected tunnels, unlocking doorways and wiping-out evil robots on your way towards your final destination.

For a game that was universally recognised as a pioneer in its field, *Descent* had a surprising number of detractors.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Heaven sent

- Full 3D movement still manages to excite
- The robo-drone is incredibly cute
- More accessible than previous versions

Descent

- Too compromised to be a real classic
- No tension
- The puzzles don't fit with the design

■ The little floaty droid is your friend. And like all friends he knows how to wreck a perfectly good game by his presence.

■ The robots you're up against tend to lack character in their design.



They argued that the fact your ship didn't right itself once you had worked yourself into a tight spot was too confusing. They said that the flying-through-someone's-intestines layout of the maps made getting lost inevitable. They thought that the need to escape from a level before it exploded was enough to drive a man mad.

Those people will be pleased to know that their complaints have been addressed. The ship now snaps in line with the direction of the room if you release the controls. An intelligent robo-drone guides you along the confusing route from destination to destination. And there are no more timed escapes. So hurrah, then, eh?

Well no, actually. The new features don't have quite the intended effect. Your drone, particularly – while loveable – removes most of the challenge of the game. You just have to tag along behind the gently bobbing thing as it moves through the labyrinth – reducing the process to almost the equivalent of a game walkthrough. Solve a few puzzles, shoot a few baddies and run away from the tedious bosses: that's all you get to do.

However, the *real* problem is that you have infinite lives. Yes, infinite lives. Which means that rather than taking your Stephen Hawking-smart foes to task, you can just fire your missiles, die, restart and repeat until you're successful, which – believe it or not – is just no fun.

Of course, there are some delicate touches that stop *Descent* slipping into sequel hell, but basically, in an attempt to move a slightly-left-of-centre game toward the *real* mainstream by making it less frustrating, the developer has excised the majority of its soul. ★★

Kieron Gillen

Or you could try...

Forsaken Acclaim ★★★★★
 What most of the team behind *Descent* did next. Gorgeous graphics and focused play.

Lander **Psychosis** ★★★★★
 This tunnel-based shooter is hard, frustrating and truly satisfying.



■ The sun is shining. Get out.

Heavy Gear 2

■ Publisher: **Activision**
 ■ Developer: **Activision**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-Internet**
 ■ Requires: **P166, 64Mb RAM, 450Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 3D accelerator card**

So, sir, what will it be then? Armani, Versace, or the natty metal number that will take you stomping around hostile areas, blowing other besuited folk to smithereens?

■ If the future pans out according to *Heavy Gear 2*, come

the 62nd century, far from sifting through radioactive dirt for pieces of chewable dead dog, your descendants will be strolling around in sophisticated metallic get-ups known as Gears. Smart.

Sleeker and sexier than the *Mechwarrior* series, these Gears enable you to romp around hostile environments firing guns to your heart's content.

The game opens with the Campaign level, which sees you single-handedly mow down weedy infantry and tanks, and you then progress to an involving system for enrolling mission colleagues. Here, you spend hours juggling team members and their kit in a bid to maximise your

overall threat rating – or battle hardiness. All of which makes as much difference as clambering under the table come the three-minute warning.

After tooling-up with laser, rocket and machine gun combos, you're ready to send the Gear team into action. There are several ways to handle conflict. First, you can take the orderly squad organisational tack and pay close attention to the tactical overview map. However, this takes far too long to draw, and a better choice is to refer to the workable in-cockpit command menus. A major stumbling block here is that your fighters have a tendency to let the side down by refusing to respond to your finely worked

battle plans. However, if you really can't be arsed with tactics, there's always the all-guns-blazing tack.

No matter what niggling shortcuts the game's combat unwittingly allows, you won't be left feeling cheated by its remarkably alive locations, which range from eerie swamplands with heavy rainfall and lightning, to previously untapped reaches of outer space where stupendous zero-gravity shoot-outs occur.

So, for looks and substantial immediacy, *Heavy Gear 2* does enough to convince you to join the 'bot boy gamers league, but whether its brain food is enough to satiate you if you're a would-be tactical genius is another matter.

★★★ **Mark Greenaway**

PC budget re-releases | by Sam Richards

You must have noticed how swans take an enormous run-up along a river as they try to establish sufficient momentum to get airborne. The reason? They're weighed down by dozens of budget PC games which they store in a little pouch under each wing. A true mystery of nature.



Addition Pinball

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ This started its budget shelf-life as part of *The Full Wormage* compilation pack last Christmas. Despite the inevitable silliness, it does stand out as one of the most innovative of recent pinball simulations for the PC. Two tables are available, both based on Team 17's back catalogue – as well as the *Worms* theme, there's a *World Rally Fever* set-up – and the 3D ball physics are impressively realistic. The wiggly pink table is the superior of the two (the car level is repetitive), provided you can put up with those squeaky sound effects, but neither stands up to the likes of Empire's superlative *Pro Pinball* series. ★★★



Daytona USA Deluxe

■ Publisher: **Sega**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

■ It looks old-hat now, but *Daytona* has done some good work in its time. Why "deluxe", then? Well, in this version the visuals benefit from a lick of digital paint, but you do get three new tracks. The result is a respectable circuit racing game.

As always with Sega, the tracks are well designed and the new levels (such as the desert) continue the tradition. There are options to slide under the bonnet and tweak your vehicle before you hit the Tarmac, but this is just a frill – the Arcade mode is what you want: an options-free acceleration-fest which can be played in split-screen mode against a mate. ★★★



Frogger

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ The only acceptable reason for owning this '90s makeover of the arcade classic is nostalgia. Its angular 3D objects and routine gameplay mechanics offer no delight to those of us used to *Half-Life* or *Total Annihilation*. The puzzle game formula (start at the bottom of a top-down terrain and get to the top as fast as you can without being squashed) is a no-brainer, and although some effort has been made to introduce new level designs, including multiple routes and steep drops, *Frogger* is the kind of game you enjoy for a few minutes, and then try to hide when your mates come over. ★★



Hedz

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-16**

■ *Hedz* was widely hyped as an innovative new type of competitive deathmatch game, and was even nominated for a BAFTA programming award... before it was released, and everyone saw how dismal it was. Blending polygons and voxel technology, *Hedz* casts you as a schizophrenic fighting your way around a convoluted 3D realm by switching personalities instead of weapons. One head change might provide you with the ability to fly, while another might give you a heat-seeking sheep. Sadly, it's gauche and badly constructed, and the head-switching process simply isn't entertaining. ★★



Lords of Magic

■ Publisher: **Sierra Originals**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ When developer Impressions grew weary of making dull historical strategy games, it decided to create a dull fantasy one instead. Despite some atmospheric touches, *Lords of Magic* – the swords-and-sorcery follow-up to *Lords of The Realm* – is still a chore to play.

You start out as a lowly adventurer in the country of Urak, and stomp around acquiring followers – eventually whole armies – who you train to help you defeat evil wand-waver Balkoth. The false-3D isometric visuals are detailed but the interface is clumsy, and battles tend to be click-and-hope muddles rather than epic confrontations. ★★



Panzer Dragoon

■ Publisher: **Sega**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ A ridiculous name foretells of a ridiculous game – in this case an awkward splat-'em-up. You ride on the back of a dragon and drift through a series of dreary fantasy levels pumping fireballs at predictable waves of flying enemies.

Some may describe the blunt presentation as charmingly old-school, others may call it badly animated rubbish. The dragon is unconvincing, and the odd flutter of wings is not enough to convey a sense of lizard-like power. The key gameplay elements are routine and you just pump your fire button non-stop. Not one of Sega's more admirable PC conversions. ★



Pro Pilot 98

■ Publisher: **Sierra Originals**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ Authenticity and fun; all too often they're at opposite ends of the gameplay spectrum, and *Pro Pilot* is a case in point. It has enough dials, knobs and buttons and in-flight checks to keep you happy if you're a flight sim freak, but if it's visual flair, interesting locations or (gasp) some sort of an aerial adventure you're after – forget it. If you want something with oomph, play *Flight Unlimited 2*.

While *Pro Pilot* may enable you to pretend to fly right across America, it's too hard to get into, sports flat in-game graphics and sticks doggedly to no-nonsense commercial routes. Boring. ★★

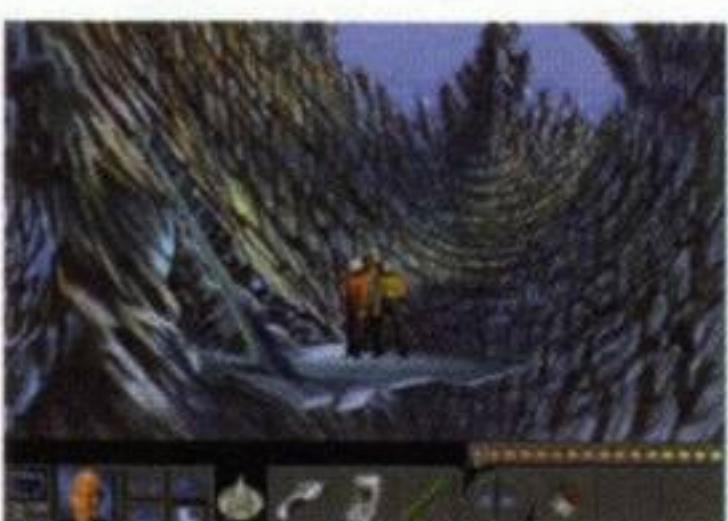


Quake

■ Publisher: **GT Replay**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-32**

■ *Quake*. The very sound of it is like the opening bar of a rousing trumpet fanfare. *Quake* is the first-person shoot-'em-up that followed *Doom*, the gaming concept that made the PC forever the envy of console-owning fops.

There have been attempts to port this 3D techno-fantasy frag-fest to other platforms, but none manage to maintain the sense of pace and rhythm that developer id Software stuffed into the original. Superb level design sets the standard for the two sequels and dozen clones which followed. You are not a hardcore gamer without your own copy of *Quake*. ★★★★★



Star Trek: a Final Unity

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ The first of two *Star Trek* tie-ins being re-released this month. *A Final Unity* is a 2D point-and-clicker based on the *Next Generation* series. While the game is old-fashioned, and suffers from run-of-the-mill puzzles, it has at least got some varied planetary locations on offer and sports some fine on-ship antics. Sadly, the character interaction of the TV series is reduced to stilted conversations, and your time is wasted by unconvincing cut-scenes.

Unattractive battle sequences manage to keep the action ticking over at a decent pace, but the meat of this adventure is as bland as hospital mince. ★★



Star Trek: Generations

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ No-one likes the term "interactive movie", but it's handy for describing this ambitious, but flawed, Paramount spin-off. The bonkers Dr Soran is searching for the Nexus, a band of energy which 80 years previously "killed" Captain Kirk, and to find it he's willing to destroy an entire solar system. You direct our *Next Generation* chums from the USS Enterprise 1701-D in their search for this lunatic. Some well-used cut-scenes will please *Trek* fans, but the 3D visuals are distinctly shabby, and a cluttered interface bombards you with information. It's briefly entertaining, but *Generations* lacks polish and is laborious to play. ★★★



Top Gun: Fire at Will

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ This is the second time this movie spin-off has received a budget outing (the first was back in 1997), but, compared to the likes of the recent flight sims from Novalogic, *Fire at Will* is antiquated. It's a mixture of FMV story scenes and aerial simulation and, surprisingly, the buddy-buddy subplots aren't nauseating. What lets it down is its reliance on atmosphere to disguise the rudimentary nature of the gameplay. Only beginners will enjoy the charitable flight mode – connoisseurs will be frustrated by unchallenging dogfights. Fortunately the whole ethos is one of brash fun and this is its saving grace. ★★★



Warcraft 2: Tides of Darkness

■ Publisher: **Blizzard Originals**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

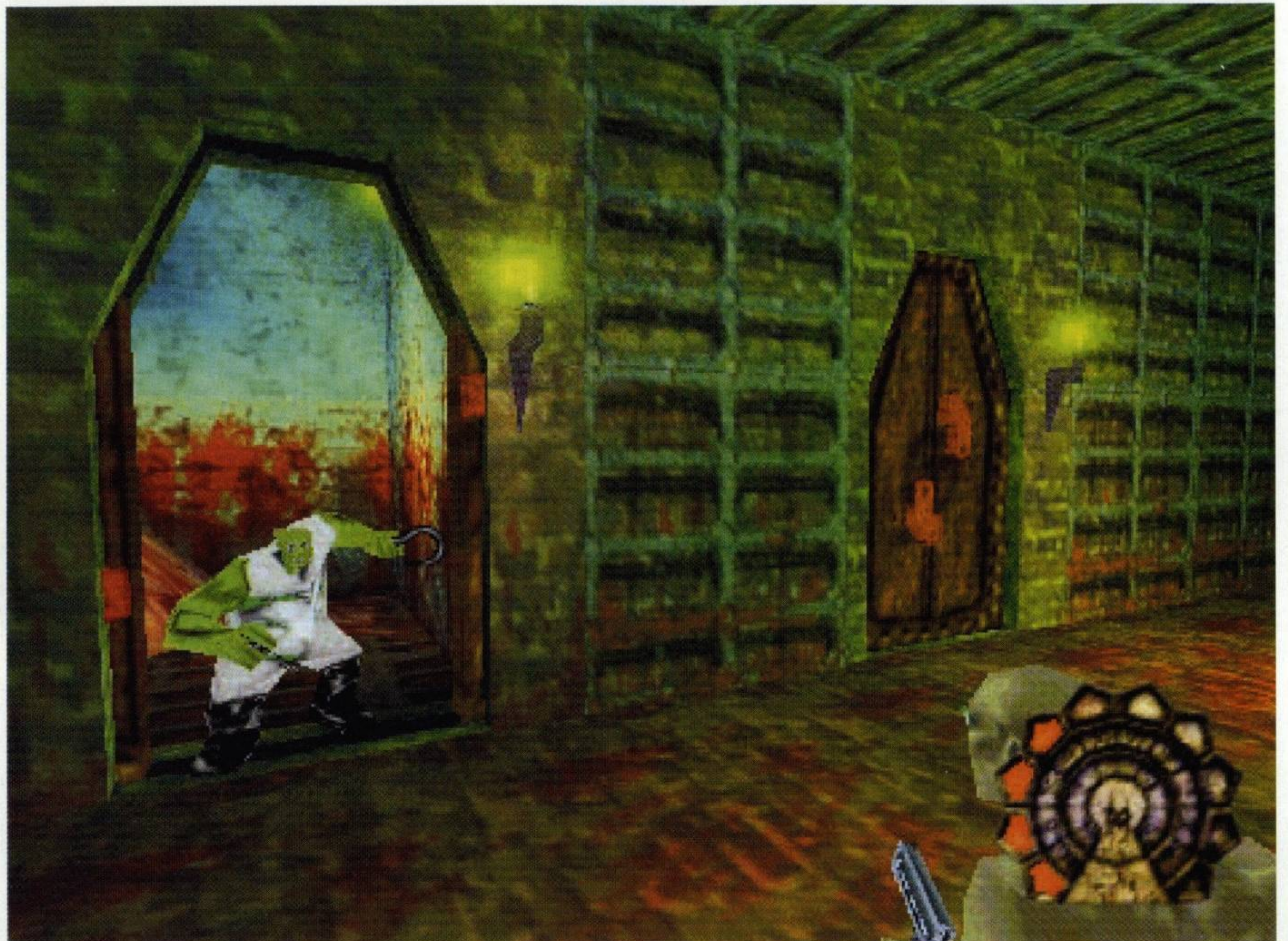
■ Although *Warcraft 2* is starting to show its age, it's in the same league as *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* and *Total Annihilation*. It's one of the seminal PC wargames, a fantasy epic which helped define the real-time strategy genre. Amid the cursor-controlled carnage there's enough humour to save the orc/human formula from being cheesily Tolkienesque. Well-implemented magic options and a full complement of land, sea and air units make for stimulating skirmishes. *WarCraft 2* is still a popular Internet game and it remains a minor classic. ★★★★★

New Nintendo 64 Games



■ (above) Shadowman with trusty shotgun. Don't leave home without it. (right) Don't get too close to these fellows – they'll rip you from limb to limb.

Arcade
Nintendo 64
Game of
the Month



DEAD OR ALIVE

MY NAME IS LEGION, AND I AM HUNTING

Shadowman

■ Publisher: **Acclaim** ■ Developer: **Acclaim Studios Teesside** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **1 September**
■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **Rumble Pak, Expansion Pak, Memory Pak**

Acclaim does the voodoo thing and comes up with a game chock full of serial killers and all manner of dark grisliness. Spook!

After three long years in development, you'd expect *Shadowman* to be either a) pretty damn good, or b) an overworked mess. Just think of *Zelda* and PC/PSX platformer *Heart of Darkness*, both games with protracted gestation periods. *Zelda* turned out to be The Best Game Ever, while *Heart of Darkness* is now a lacklustre and outdated platformer. So it's a great relief to report that *Shadowman* is closer to *Zelda* – much, much

closer. For a start, it's gigantic. Acclaim reckons the game has more than 70 hours of gameplay, and that isn't far off; *Shadowman* is a thing of epic proportions. It's heavily plot-oriented, involving a demon called Legion, five demented serial killers, a voodoo prophecy and a man that can exist in both our world and the world of the dead – Mike LeRoi, aka the eponymous Shadowman.

It's hard to describe *Shadowman* without recourse to plot explanation, as it relies so heavily on the story to tie it all together. Legion has enlisted the services of The Five (the aforementioned serial killers) to act as a vanguard to his conquering of the world. But Nettie, a voodoo priestess, has foreseen this Apocalypse, and sends Mike LeRoi to stop Legion in his tracks. And so the game takes place in two worlds – Liveside and Deadside. Mike LeRoi exists in Liveside, while his dark alter ego can enter Deadside, a sprawling and desolate place that houses the Asylum, a breathtaking, mile-high structure that Legion calls home. From here, Shadowman can enter The Five's Liveside hideouts (incorporating a mouldering New York tenement, a

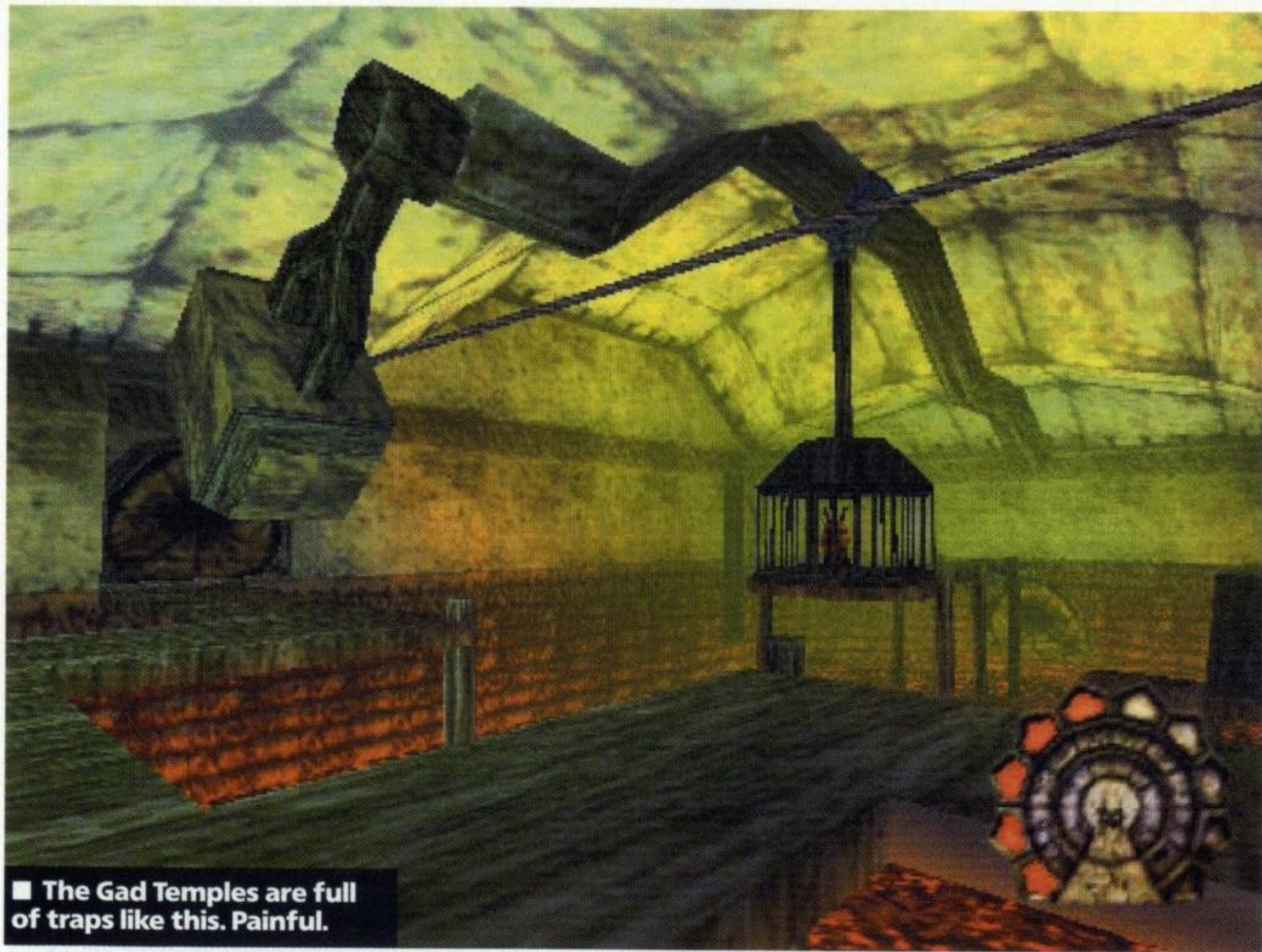
↑ Downers

Beating

- Incredibly big
- Superbly constructed
- Full of weapons, swearing and violence
- Ace hi-res visuals

Bleeding

- A little too big?
- Jerky at times
- Sometimes lonely



■ The Gad Temples are full of traps like this. Painful.



■ (left) The draw distance is vast, you can see way into the distance. Lovely stuff.



■ (below) Shadowman's enemies are all unpleasant folk. Especially this chap.

fantastically realised London Underground, and a splendid prison, in the midst of a riot).

And that's not all. Throughout *Deadside* you'll find a number of Coffin Gates, which lead to new areas and can only be opened using the requisite number of Dark Souls. There are 120 Dark Souls in all, and finding these enables you to proceed with your quest. And then there are the Gads, voodoo tattoos found in huge temples, which grant you special abilities, such as swimming through lava and walking over hot coals – activities that open up giant new secret areas themselves. Without them, you'll only see half of what the game's 20 levels have to offer.

All of the above merely touches on what *Shadowman* asks of you; each of the disparate environments of the game are vast. You can see as far as the horizon, and can trek there, something that's so far only been accomplished with *Zelda*. And there's no fogging, either, which is astounding considering the size of some of the cavernous rooms. While things can get lonely as you search *Deadside* for Dark Souls and Coffin Gates, and the game can be daunting in its size, Acclaim has constructed its dark adventure with such care and attention to detail that you never feel truly lost or hopeless. *Shadowman* is meticulously constructed, an amazing feat considering how large it is.

The control system is on a par with that of *Zelda*, and is blissfully free of *Tomb Raider*-style rotational clumsiness. You can make a plethora of different moves, and employ a splendid array of intriguing voodoo weapons – all of which have different uses – a superb camera, grisly FBI profiles on all of the serial killers, an hour's worth of speech (including some swearing – a first for the N64), and many more rich gaming flourishes.

Shadowman is an undoubted success. While it may feel a little empty at times – at least until you've found out how to get *Shadowman Liveside* and then confront The Five – it's the first game to weld the epic sweeping and lovingly fashioned gameplay of *Zelda* to a strong, psychologically dark and disturbing storyline. It's intelligent, rewarding and immensely challenging, and is utterly deserving of a lengthy time-investment. It also shows that Acclaim is fast becoming second only to Rare and Nintendo as a top games developer. Classic stuff, indeed. ★★★★★ **Simon Garner**

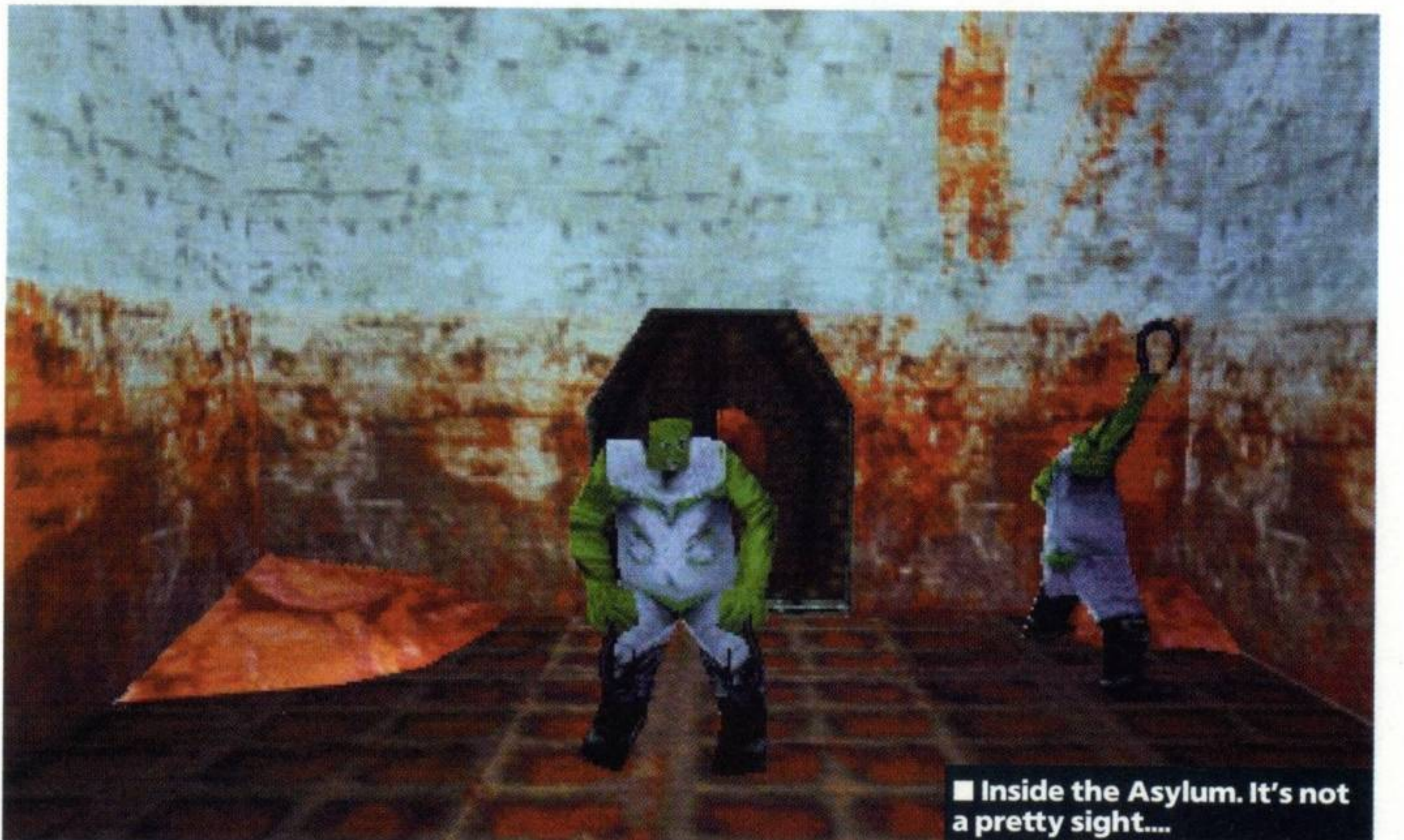
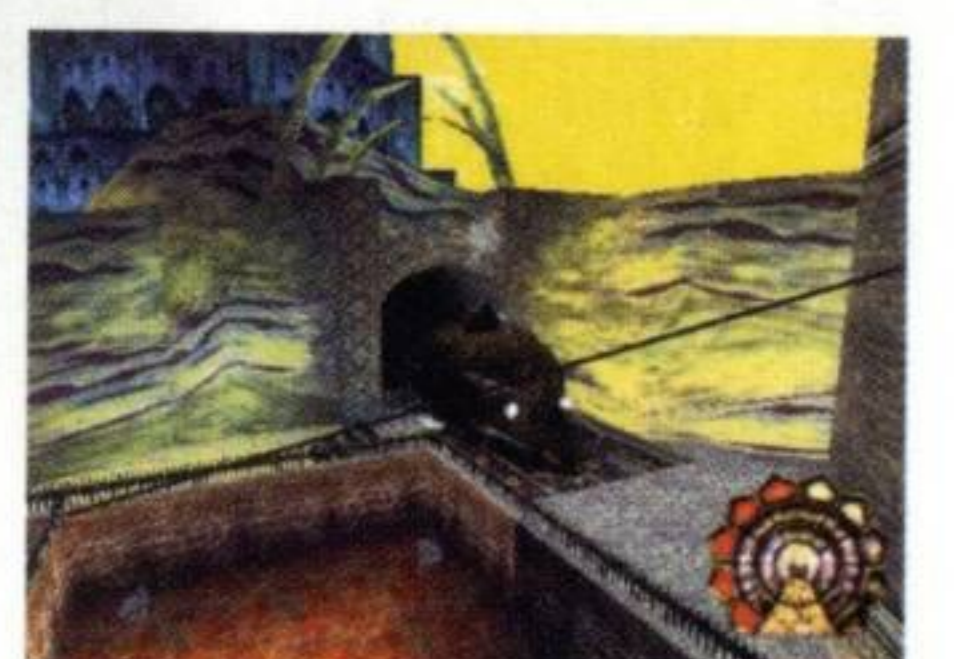
IT'S INTELLIGENT, REWARDING, CHALLENGING AND UTTERLY DESERVING OF YOUR TIME



■ (above) The Violator, possibly the Best Gun Ever.



■ Shadsy himself. What a charmer.



■ Inside the Asylum. It's not a pretty sight....

Or you could try...

Legend of Zelda
Nintendo ★★★★★
The Best Game Ever™. 'Nuff said.

Castlevania
Konami ★★★★★
Vamp-filled 3D action, but a bit short.

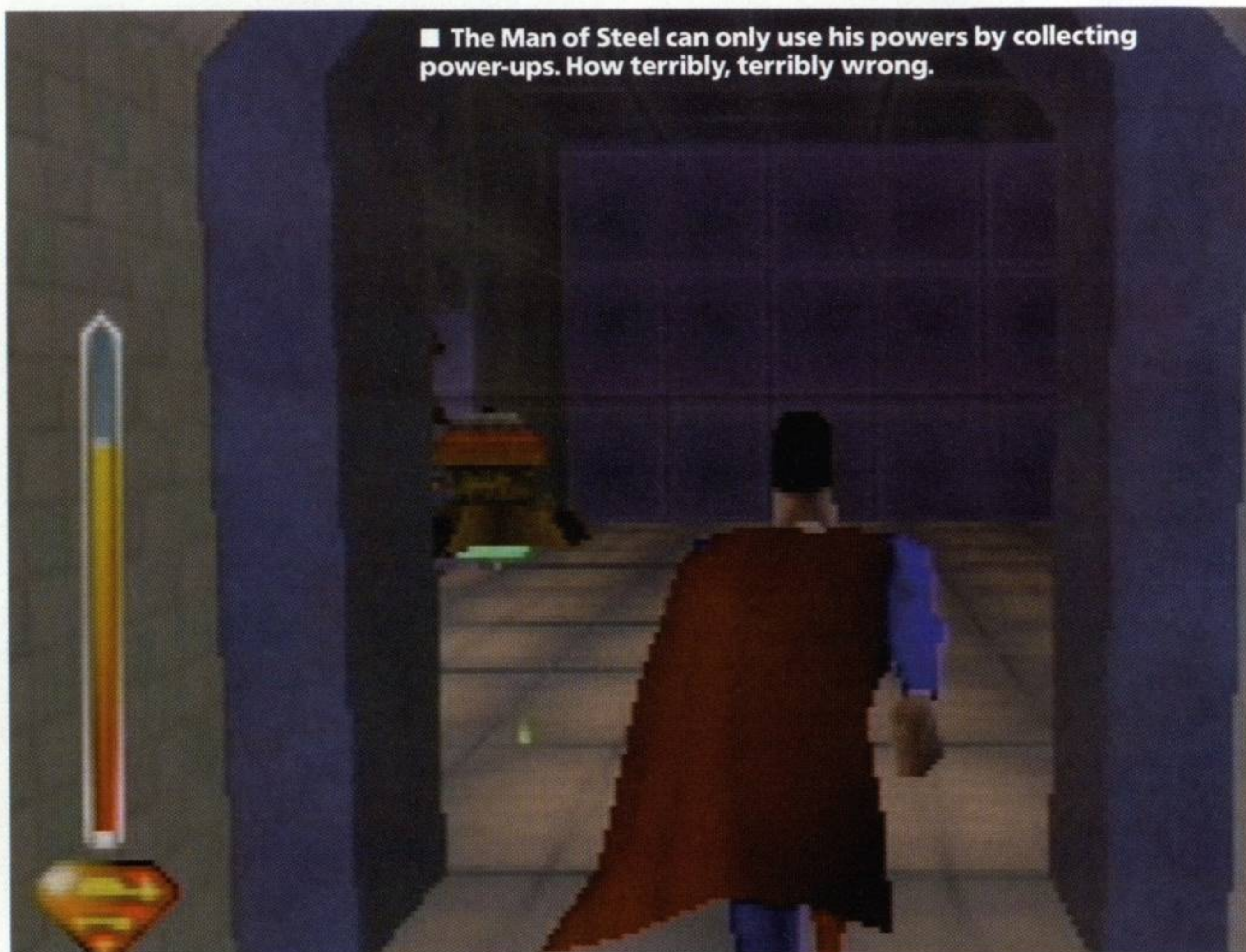


CRAPPED ON

SUPERMAN CRASHES BACK TO EARTH



■ We weren't expecting *Superman* to be quite so drastically terrible. It wasn't nice to find out that it was...



■ The Man of Steel can only use his powers by collecting power-ups. How terribly, terribly wrong.

Superman

Uppers & Downers

- Super**
- It's Superman!
 - And he can fly
- Pooper**
- Incredibly basic
 - Fog
 - Dull, dull, dull

■ Publisher: **Titus** ■ Developer: **Titus** ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **August** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **Rumble Pak, Memory Pak**

The Man of Steel falls to Earth in a humiliating manner, as Titus comprehensively screws up what should be a gold-dust licence.

Batman, of course, has always been far, far cooler. The fetching costume, *that* car, and the billionaire playboy/unhinged psychopath streak are all qualities that are far more preferable to the Man of Steel's overgrown boy scout demeanour. But Superman, naturally, can pretty much do anything he wants, so you'd expect that, by putting him in a videogame, you'd have a surefire recipe for success. It's a disappointment of bewildering proportions to find that Titus has ballsed it up.

Apparently, allowing Superman to use his powers willy-nilly would be too easy, hence the ridiculous plot: Lex Luthor, baldy megalomaniac, has imprisoned Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen and more of Clark Kent's journo chums inside – get this! – a virtual rendition of Metropolis. This is the excuse given for Superman's tiresome reliance on power-ups to fuel his super-powers. Use too much heat vision, for instance, and you'll have to find the requisite boost to refill the energy bar. It's not quite in the spirit of Krypton's favourite son, and hobbles any sense of larger-than-life fun that playing as the mightiest super-hero could impart.

And the mission objectives smother any remaining comic-book grandeur. In the first three levels you have to fly

through rings – à la *Pilotwings* – in an unnecessarily harsh amount of time. Miss three rings, and it's game over.

There are, however, moments where it seems Titus has almost grasped how to do justice to a Superman game. The actual act of flying is always enjoyable, as long as you ignore the rings and other pointless tasks. Other simple pleasures include the ability to pick up cars, fly off with them and hurl them to the ground, which comes close to making you feel like a man who can destroy mountains with his hands. But then, after the all-too-brief glimpses of something other than the pedestrian fare peddled throughout 99 percent of *Superman*, it's back to another brain-mashingly dull exercise.

The game also falls well below par in technical terms. Metropolis is – impressively – 3km square, but this is wasted as *Superman* is by far the foggiest game ever seen on the N64. Despite exhibiting the same ultra-stylised art deco sensibilities of the animated series, the architecture is lost in a suffocating digital smog. After such hardware-pushing classics as *Zelda*, it seemed as if the days of pop-up enshrouding mist were long gone. Clearly not...

The two multi-player options – a deathmatch and racing – are also feeble. Consider this: Superman can fly. Other playable characters include Darkseid and Apokolips, who, are similarly powerful beings. So, why are each of these titanic characters battling it out from behind the controls of their own personal flying machine? Nonsense.

Superman should have been enticingly epic in scale, with Metropolis as a huge playground for super-types to throw buses at each other in. As it is, this has little to redeem itself and misses the point entirely. ★

Jes Bickham



■ ...quite the worst multi-player game we've ever seen.

Or you could try...

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
 Nintendo ★★★★★
 No superheroes, but it's the Best Game Ever, so it doesn't matter.

Super Mario 64
 Nintendo ★★★★★
 Nintendo's very own superhero – who can fly – in a game that's close to true art.

LATE KICK OFF

FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT TURNS OUT FOR THE N64



Date	Training			
SUN 2 AUG 1998	Tim Weaver BRENTFORD			
	Fit %	Skill	Rest	Fitness
1 J Pearcey	96	***		
2 D Boxall	93	**		
3 I Anderson	85	***		
4 R Quinn	82	**		
5 H Hreidarsson	96	***		
6 L Townley	96	**		
7 G Mahon	87	**		
8 M Berthe	96	***		
9 D McGhee	85	**		
10 C Oatway	99	**		
11 P Evans	96	**		



■ It couldn't be, could it? Would Paul Daniels really have released the lovely Debbie McGhee from on-stage duties play centre-forward for Brentford?

Premier Manager 64

■ Publisher: **Gremlin/Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Gremlin**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **memory card** ■ Other formats: **PSX/PC**

It's not perfect, but it's about time. Come and meet Premier Manager 64 – just as the new season starts.

Mario-loving wannabe dugout kings, this is the day you have been waiting for: football management has arrived on the Nintendo 64. And, what's more, despite the fact the platform's database can't compete with the PC and its highlights engine falls short of the PlayStation's, *Premier Manager 64* is surprisingly impressive fare.

In fact, Gremlin has managed to cram a fine selection of players into the game, and the highlights engine rivals the PlayStation's for content. Could it be that the ascendance of King Kev to England manager spurred the company on, safe in the knowledge that the Geordie wonder would appear on the box, resplendent in white trackie?

Who knows, but what is clear is that despite the supposed "restrictions" of a cart – a problem that the likes of Rare, Nintendo and Acclaim seem to overcome on a regular basis – Gremlin has managed to include about three-quarters of what made the PlayStation version so good in this game. Premiership, First, Second and Third Division English football is at your fingertips, as is a random team selector which sets you up with one of eight sides sitting pretty at the lower end of the football league.

While this may not sound glamorous, it is the best way to learn your craft. Jump into the hotseat at Arsenal or Man Utd and you soon learn that *The Beautiful Game* can be exceptionally cruel, and that a 5-0 drubbing at home from Leicester doesn't half take the wind out of your sails.

Get into the swing of things at your Third Division mid-tables, though, and you start to get a feel for what's actually a very good game. The transfer market is well

structured and provides you with some superb opportunities to indulge in good old wheeler-dealing, and there is plenty of tinkering to be done on the statistics side of things – as you would expect from a football management sim. Another plus is that the usually yawnsome financial set-up has been restricted to dealing with ticket prices and sponsors. The size of your squad is also manageable: large enough to offer choice, but small enough to prevent hours of fiddly menu adjustment on the training ground, with little visible effect.

The overbearing chairmen who featured so prominently in the PlayStation version are also in place, and are forever sending you faxes informing you that you need to sell players to buy players. Then, once you've sold players, they tend to decide that you can no longer splash out on your squad. But this is something you learn to live with, and you soon realise that the key to getting round the bean counters is to replace like for like. Sound familiar?

Crucially, however, *Premier Manager 64* hasn't overcome the highlights problems of the PlayStation version. Incredibly, you still can't make substitutions while the match is on. Indeed, the transition to cart seems to have made watching your team even less involving. The highlights are supposedly running on the newly-adapted *Actua Soccer 3* engine, but you'll find that hard to believe. Matches move so slowly, and so predictably, that you resort to fixing your eyes on the fluctuating possession bars of the stats screen. Basically, while Barry Davies' commentary is excellent, the whole highlights package feels shabby and is a real let-down.

But, even though – staggeringly – the highlights no longer have any replays or scorer names, and the option to manage a Serie A side has been dropped for no apparent reason, there's more than enough good stuff here to ensure that you should happily welcome *Premier Manager 64* into your collection. ★★★★★

Tim Weaver

↑ Uppers & Downers

Keys

- The first management game on the N64
- Every English league club
- Tasty stats galore

Trevs

- Poor match highlights
- Annoying chairmen
- No Italian Serie A management option

IF YOU'RE A MARIO-LOVING WANNABE DUGOUT KING, THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.



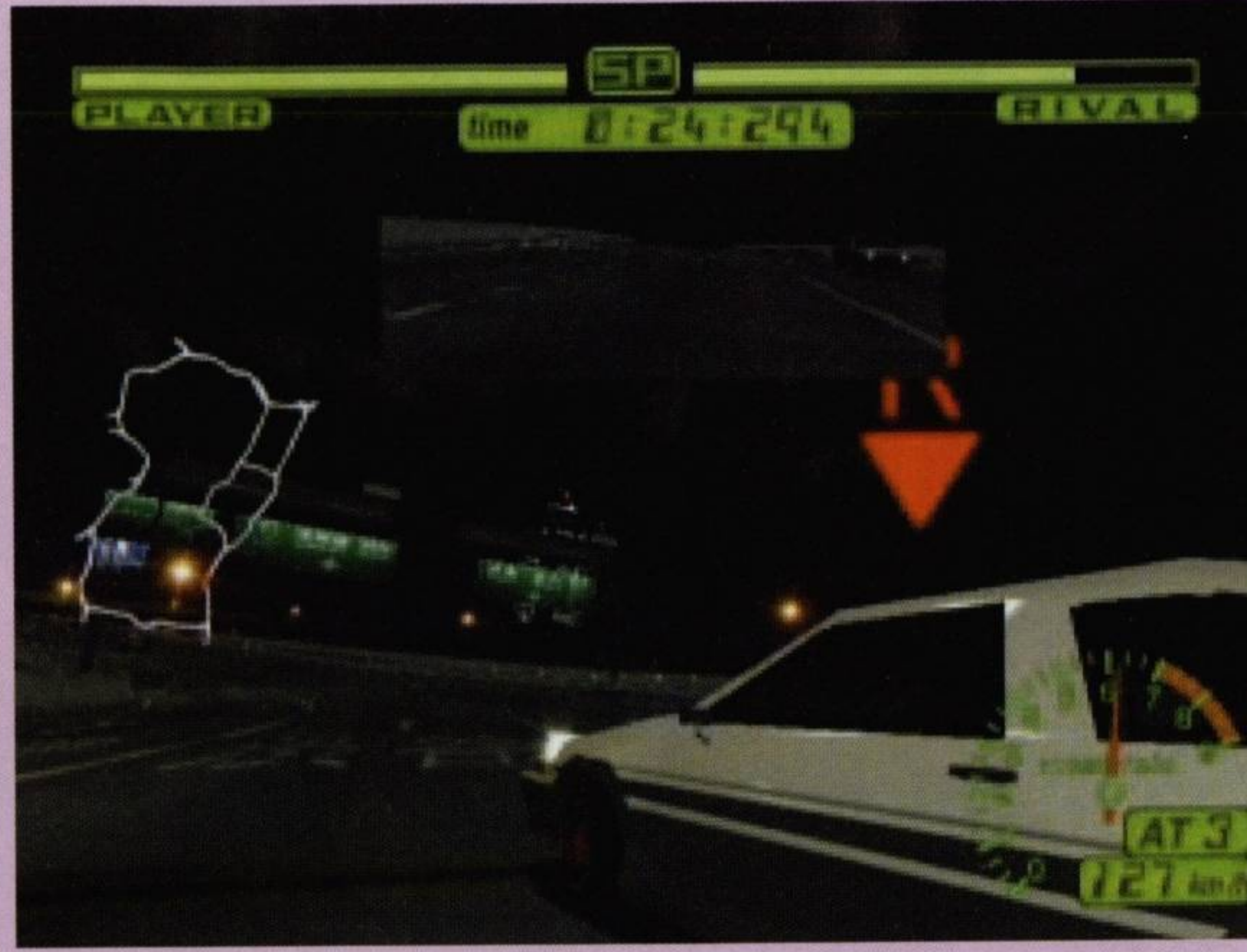
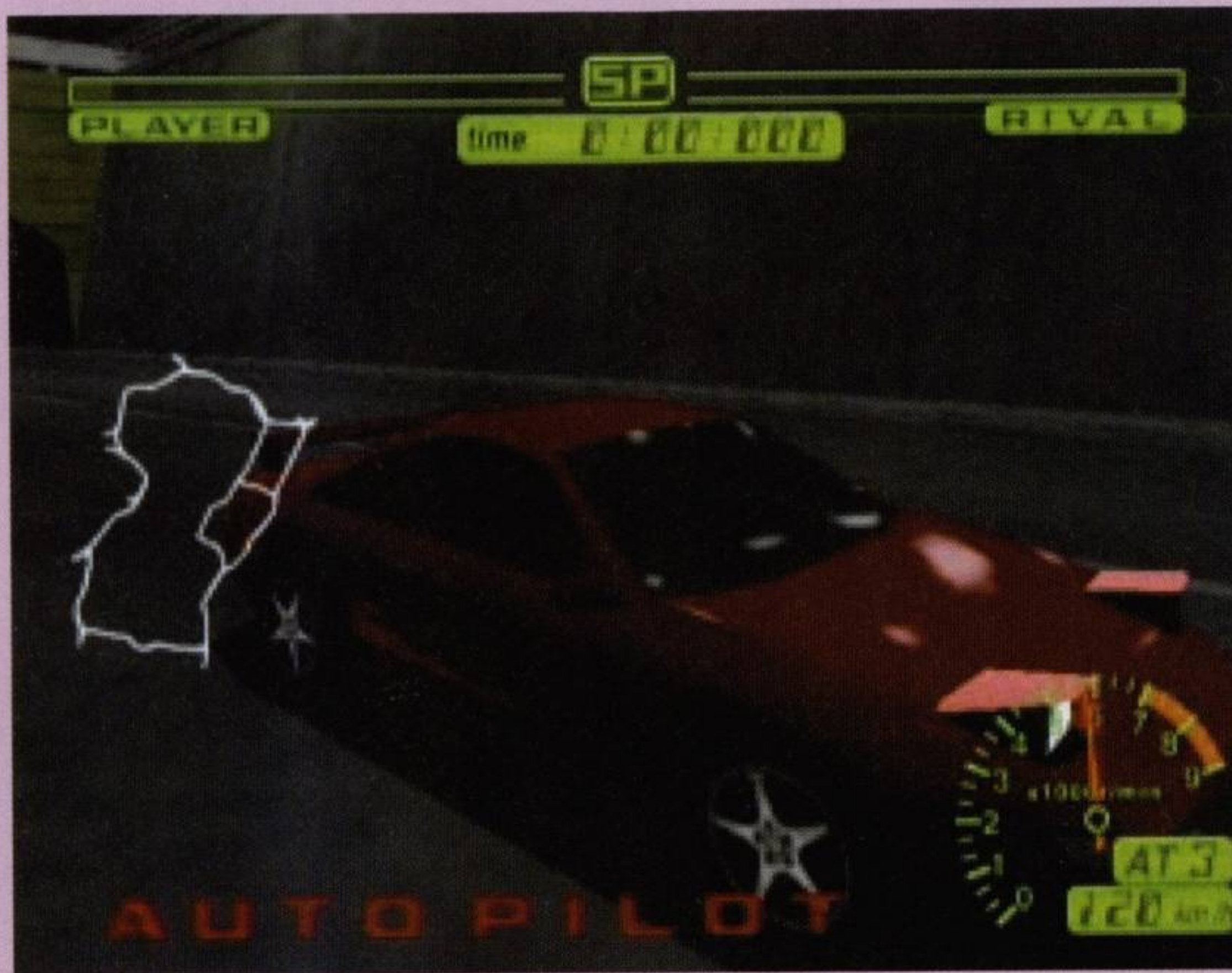
Date	PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY		Score	Opposition
MON 1 AUG 1998	Arsenal		0 - 0	Newcastle United
	W. Warburton	0	0	G. Galloway
	E. Silvers	0	0	W. Barton
	J. Pierre-Fanfani	0	0	S. Pearce
	C. Verner	0	0	G. Georgiadis
	C. Maguire	0	0	S. Henry
	Y. Jones	0	0	P. Abbott
	M. Delveve	0	0	D. Houston
	C. Charlton	0	0	R. Lee
	Y. Smooc	0	0	S. Shearer
	T. Vivaldis	0	0	D. Ferguson
	H. Arzoo	0	0	G. Speed

■ No subs allowed during play. Ferguson would love it.

Or you could try...

ISS '98
Konami ★★★★★
A genius slice of football, with a surprising amount of management.

FIFA '99
Electronic Arts ★★★
Average football, but powered up with that sought-after licence.



■ Natty looking cars such as this one can't make up for the overall boredom of driving around one dirty great circuit. Dullsville.

DREAMCAST

SCRAPPY

RACING ON THE HIGHWAY IS A CRIME, KIDS

Tokyo Highway Battle (Shutokou Battle)

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Genki** ■ Price: **£50**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **VMS**

Inner-city life takes on a new dimension with this super-fast racer set in the big smoke. If you like endless concrete and unresponsive cars to drive on it, this is right up your street.

The greatest feature of *Tokyo Highway Battle* is the battle. You can go head-to-head with either a chum or the CPU, and both cars in the battle have an "energy bar" which goes up or down depending on whether you're in the lead or not. Keep in front of your opponent and his bar will go down; slip back into second and you'll be the one with the shrinking gauge. It makes for plenty of ding-dong action, especially in two-player mode; but this great feature is the only one worth bothering with in the game.

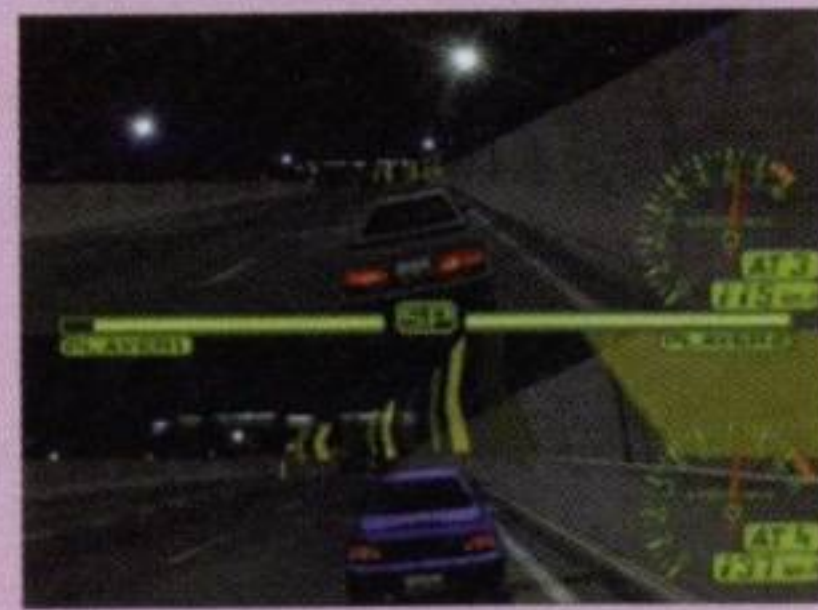
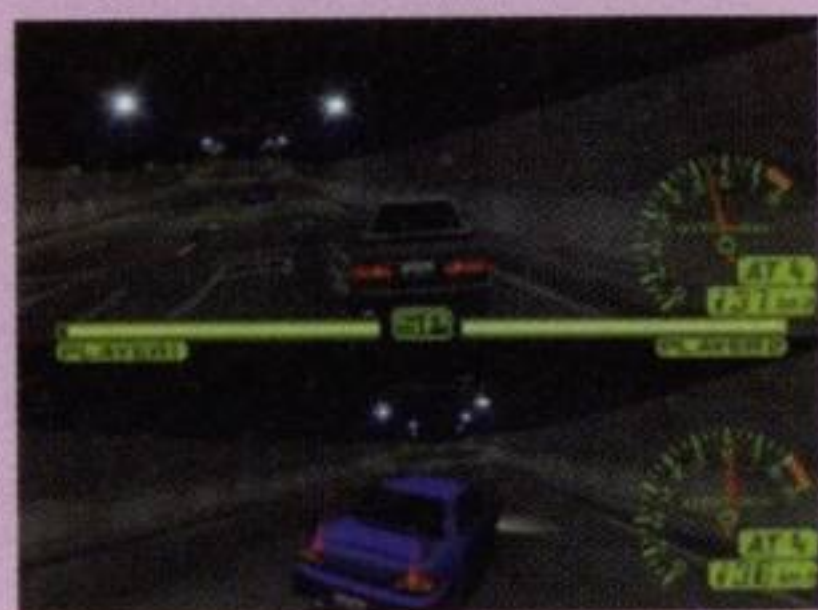
Taking place on a single night-time course – yes, there really is just one – where each circuit lasts a good four or five minutes, the main Quest game is the standard beat-the-other-cars-to-win-them affair, where you can win money to get extra parts for the vehicles. There are 137 cars to be won, and all you do is bomb around the city looking for rival gangs to challenge and then have a battle.

Every bit of the action is set in a splendidly-realised cityscape, reminiscent of the Clubman stages of *Gran*

↑↓ Uppers & Downers

Jeremy Clarkson
 ■ Battle mode's quite addictive
 ■ Lovely graphics
 ■ Very fast

Jeremy Beadle
 ■ Handling is not good
 ■ One track, for God's sake
 ■ Ultimately very boring



■ Two-player mode nips by at impressively high speed.

Turismo on the PlayStation. The skyscrapers whizz past smoothly at 60 frames per second and loads of lights line the route, creating a real feeling of speed.

However, the visuals aren't as good as they first appear. Your car has that annoying "hovercraft" quality, in that the wheels are hidden in shadow. The AI cars have wheels, so why your car has to float around is a mystery.

Not being able to get around even the gentlest of bends without using the brakes doesn't make for the most exciting of driving games either. Swooping between two other vehicles at top speed is always satisfying, but going around a corner at a snail's pace isn't.

Tokyo Highway Battle doesn't have a single thing to recommend it over the far-superior *Sega Rally 2*. Developer Genki was responsible for the excellent *Virtua Fighter 3*, so it knows how to get the best out of a Dreamcast, but on the evidence of *Tokyo Highway Battle* it should stick to beat-'em-ups. Despite the graphics and a high basic speed, this game is dull. ★★ **Cam Anderson**



■ Ancient proverb: groovy cars do not a good game make.



■ Nice day for it, at least. Alright, love, calm down.



■ Serves him right for turning up in his pyjamas.

COIN-OP

TEKKEN TO THE EXTREME

GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

Tekken Tag Tournament

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Namco** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

In the fourth in the Tekken series, Namco gives a nod to Capcom and borrows its tag team fighting game philosophy to take you on one of the coin-op's greatest alliterative all-action experiences.

Sony staged the *Tekken* World Championships in January, and although there was a lot of talk from the company at the event, there was a fair amount of disappointment too. In the consumer industry, it's pretty much a given fact that if you host a worldwide tournament of one of the video industry's biggest beat-'em-up brands, there'll be some news of a development at the event – even if it's just a nod and a wink to a sequel.

On this score the tournament failed to deliver, and more than one scoop-hungry journalist went away with the impression that maybe it was curtains for *Tekken*. But, fear not. Although Namco gave little indication to anyone outside of Japan that a sequel was in the pipeline, it has finally arrived.

Unsurprisingly, *Tekken Tag Tournament* – the latest addition to the *Tekken* family tree – apes Capcom's use of tag teams, and enables you to select two characters to switch between in the game. The on-screen scufflers include all your favourite faces from the first three *Tekken* titles, plus a smattering of new ones. The standard Namco time-released characters feature is also in place, whereby extra fighters crop up if the machine remains on-site for a certain amount of time.

So, what do you get for your money? Well, you get *Tekken*, a souped-up and more polished version of the graphics engine (although this isn't new hardware – simply the old System 12 used more effectively) and new characters. Which is all very well, but on the basis of this, *Tekken Tag* sounds like just another fighting game.

Which it isn't. Namco has worked long and hard at the R&D stage to ensure this isn't the case, and has come up with the "tag combo" feature. While individual characters can still perform their own trademark moves, different tag teams can finish off opponents in their own special way. If, for example, you have King as a partner, you can dash forward, press Left Punch and Left Kick and throw your opponent toward your jaguar-headed pal to finish the job.

This is possibly one of the most satisfying additions to a fighting game for a while and, for once, is a feature that relies more on improving the gameplay than the graphics. *Tekken 4* is still believed to be in the offing (wait for Japan's JAMMA show in September), but in the meantime *Tekken Tag Tournament* has the depth and the gameplay to keep you happy for ages. ★★★ **Cam Anderson**

↑ Uppers & Downers

- Fight**
- Tag combos – pick your opponent up, throw him to your partner, and let them do the hard work for you
 - *Tekken* branding – the *Street Fighter* of the '90s
 - Time release characters – bed down in the arcade
- Flight**
- Yet another beat-'em-up
 - Time release characters – great news for the operators, but an irritant (albeit a minor one) to some of you



■ Queen, the next generation.



MACINTOSH

Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now

■ Publisher: **Sales Curve Interactive** ■ Developer: **Stainless Software** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **133MHz PowerMac, 32Mb RAM, 270Mb HD space, System 7.6** ■ Recommended: **3D accelerator card, modem for Internet play** ■ Other formats: **PC**

The *Death Race 2000*-inspired game is back for another bloody instalment.

■ *Carmageddon II* is a racing game with a difference; death and destruction are guaranteed. In one-player mode, it has ten levels which each consist of three races and a mission. The object of a race is to win by completing all the laps (just surviving to the end is considered a win), or by destroying the other cars. The race is against the clock, and to complete a lap you must go through a number of checkpoints in the right order.

On most tracks, however, the action is off-road as the other cars go all-out to destroy you and each other. Money and time bonuses are awarded for killing pedestrians and animals, destroying other cars or performing spectacular stunts.

As you progress, other cars become available for you to buy – from jet cars to dumper trucks. The missions change according to level, but typically it's a case of running down a set number of pedestrians or destroying objects against the clock. If you get bored with one-player, run down your friends over network or Internet play on a track of your choice.

Carmageddon II is 3D based, and works with *QuickDraw 3D*, *RAVE*, *3Dfx*, or software rendering. The environment is detailed, and the tracks vast and varied. Driving through shops, offices, airports and log cabins (leaving carnage in your wake) is positively encouraged. Running over characters is bloody, while crashing into cars produces flying body parts and broken glass. There is an option to limit the amount of gore, but the game has an 18 certificate from the BBFC and is not for the faint hearted.

Despite the graphic nature of *Carmageddon II*, this different spin on a racing game makes it hugely entertaining. The action is fast, furious and compelling.

★★★ **Lindsay Bruce**



GAME BOY COLOR

SHRINKY DINK

LARGIN' IT!? WE PREFER SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZED, THANKS.

Robin Alway thinks the best things come in small packages. That's his look out.



F1 World Grand Prix

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**
 ■ Developer: **Video System**
 ■ Price: **£25** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **color only, link cable**

The N64's finest F1 game squeezes into a size 8. What's that quart, pint pot thing again?

■ *F1 World Grand Prix* is one of a new breed of GBC carts with funky clear casing, so you can see there's not much in one - a battery and some new-fangled microchips. Which only makes it all the more amazing that so much of one of the world's most complex motor sports has been squeezed into the cart - someone must have to sit on it, like a bulging suitcase, before they could screw it shut. Genius.

After an FMV intro, you're assaulted by so many options you'll understand why F1 drivers have traditionally taken solace in champagnme and "the ladies". This GBC version of *F1 World Grand Prix* matches its N64 big brothe, menu for menu. All the drivers, tracks and cars from the '98 season are included, and there's a similar spread of modes to work through, from a full 17-race championship season, to a quick blast around the circuit of your choice.

Sadly, the actual racing is disappointing. Like every GB driving game ever, it looks like you're snaking through an empty field on a narrow road. And, although you have 22 opponents, they tend to come one at a time.

But hit top gear and you can't help thinking that the blur of curb must be quite like the real thing. You won't find car damage, pit stops and five different types of tyre in any other GBC racer. Or the chance to rerun the '98 season sitting on the toilet. ★★★★★



Paperboy

■ Publisher: **Midway**
 ■ Developer: **Digital Eclipse**
 ■ Price: **£25** ■ Release date: **September** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **color only**

Worse than delivering 300 copies of *The Sunday Times* in the rain? At 7am? On a Sunday morning? For 65p? Not quite.

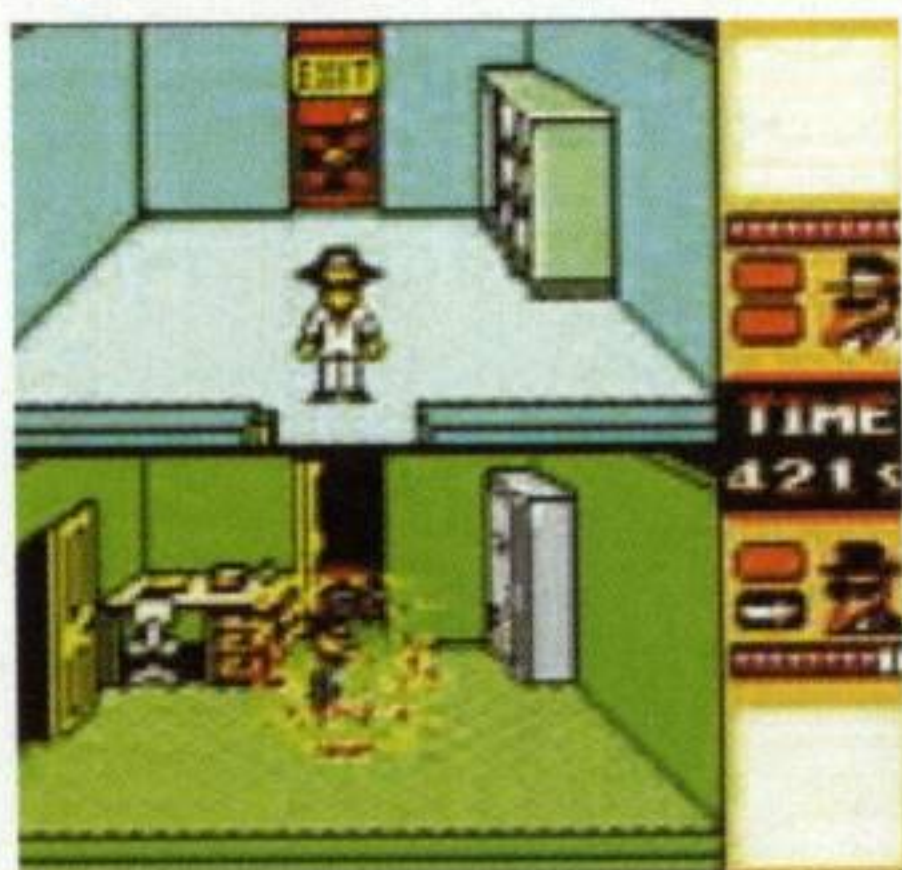
■ The next time you hear someone wibbling on about the good old days of videogaming, remind them that for every *Tempest* and *Marble Madness* there was a *Paperboy*. Back in 1986, when coders hadn't worked out that fast cars, sniper rifles and martial arts were the way forward, you got games based around the trials of periodical delivery in suburban America.

Grudgingly, you have to admit it has a quirky charm. There haven't been many games before or since where you're expected to chuck papers on people's doormats as you ride past on a bike, avoiding breakdancers, comedy drunks and dogs.

That said, this GBC version of the 1986 Atari coin-op isn't half as much fun as playing the original, which featured novelty handlebar controls. It could be that here at *Arcade* we're too old to relate to the paper delivery theme; but it's more likely to be the fact that this is a bog-standard version that lacks the sparkle of Midway's perfect *Defender/Joust* compilation.

The graphics are colourful and suitably dinky, but they slow down nastily at times. Imprecise controls make avoiding the many obstacles a pain and, for some reason, you're allowed to cycle ridiculously slowly.

Ultimately, there's not enough in *Paperboy* to keep anyone but the worryingly nostalgic occupied for more than half an hour. ★★



Spy Vs Spy

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**
 ■ Developer: **Kemco** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **color only, link cable**

A satire on the Cold War? Or two cartoon spies blowing each other up? You decide in the newly coloured version of an 8-bit classic.

■ There are more side scrolling platformers for the Game Boy than recovering alcoholics in Hollywood. Original ideas are as rare as a cashew nut in a cheapo bag of Bombay Mix. Which makes even the appearance of a 15-year-old Commodore 64 game - fondly remembered for being different - very welcome indeed.

Spy Vs Spy is so old that it feels new, particularly as no-one's really had the brains to, ahem, "be influenced" by its sneaky central idea. Playing either Black Spy or White Spy, you run around simple flick-screen room-based levels laying traps for each other as you search for four items.

The game's split-screen, one vs one design makes for much vindictiveness as you place buckets of water over doors to electrocute your opponent, or hide a bomb in a filing cabinet that you know they'll have to search. The map shows you which rooms have traps, which you can defuse with the right tool, but the deaths are so humourously animated that you'll keep one eye on your opponent's screen just to avoid the indignity of his Spy sniggering when you get blown up.

Up against a tight time limit and a crafty opponent (more so if you play a fellow human using the Game Link cable) *Spy Vs Spy* is frantic, addictive and likely to cause outbreaks of evil laughter whenever it's played. ★★★★★



All Star Tennis '99

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft**
 ■ Developer: **Smart Dog**
 ■ Price: **£25** ■ Release date: **September** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **color only, link cable**

Double fault from up-to-date Game Boy conversion.

■ Another full-sized N64 game meets the business end of GBC's shrinking ray. But this time the results aren't good enough to convince you that miniaturisation shouldn't be left to mad scientists.

Of course, it doesn't help that the original *All Star Tennis* was flawed. A curious mix of serious tennis sim and arcadey knockabout, it never offered the sort of crowd pleasing rallies needed to convince you that tennis games are a good idea.

This GBC version laudably keeps all the N64 game's modes - singles, doubles, arcade and bomb tennis (where each bounce of the ball leaves an explosive charge on court), and even manages some crackly speech to announce the score. But the most important part of any tennis game, the strokeplay, has problems. Not only does the ball fly off your racquet seemingly at random, and often straight out, but your doubles opponents are unable to return a lob.

In what looks like an attempt to up the excitement level (always a good idea in a tennis game), the ball zips about at a fair pace. Although this is satisfying when you smack a cross court winner, it means that it's hard to get in the same half of the court as the ball.

There's nothing in *All Star Tennis* that places it above *Tennis* - one of the earliest Game Boy releases, and still one of the best and most playable ball and racket games on any format. And that had Mario as umpire. And it looks great on the Game Boy Color. ★★



Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol

■ Publisher: **Midway**
 ■ Developer: **Digital Eclipse**
 ■ Price: **£25** ■ Release date: **September** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **color only**

More retro gaming for the small screen. Worth paying new money for?

■ Something has been lost in transit here. Everyone who remembers *Spy Hunter* can't help but describe it as lush, ace or even mint. And on paper, at least, it still sounds like something worthy of an 8-year-old's best adjectives. Driving a 007-style car up a super-fast scrolling, top-down viewed road full of enemy agent cars, ramming any hapless bikers into the verge and driving into the back of a truck to stock up on oil slicks, smoke bombs and missiles still sounds like fun.

But in this sloppily coded version, although the weapons truck still turns up, you have to force yourself to keep playing. The biggest problem is the controls, which are deeply unresponsive. Hold any direction down for too long and you'll spin off into oblivion with enemy cars bouncing around so erratically that avoiding them is pure luck.

The other half of this two-game collection, *Moon Patrol*, holds nowhere near the same place in most sad old gamers' hearts. It's a side scrolling shoot-'em-up where you race buggies over a bizarrely pink lunar surface. You jump holes and take out alien craft with your laser, but this game won't interest anyone other than game historians (coo, look at that primitive parallax scrolling!). This is a double disappointment, especially after the excellent *Defender/Joust* package coded by the same developer. ★★

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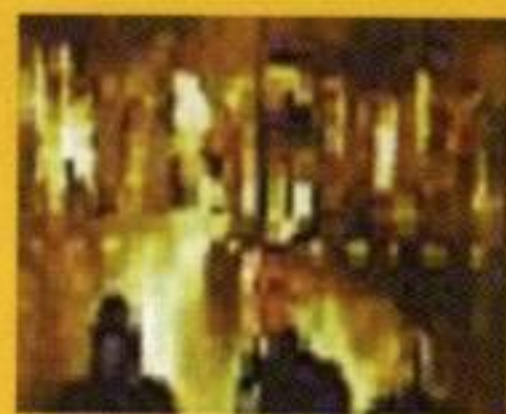
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NINTENDO 64

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SEGA DREAMCAST

Released 23/09/99. Released 23/09/99. Released 23/09/99

Buggy Heat...Call	Sega Rally 2...Call
Cool Boarders...Call	Sonic Adventure...Call
Dynamite Cop 2...Call	Soul Calibur...Call
Echo The Dolphin...Call	Take The Bullet...Call
Formula 1 Racing...Call	Toy Commander...Call
Metro Street Racer...Call	Virtua Fighter 3tb...Call
NBA 2000...Call	Virtua Striker 2...Call
Red Dog...Call	World League Soccer...Call
Sega Bass Fishing...Call	Control Pad..Call. V.M.S....Call

WHICH ONE'S BEST?
GAME BOY ADD-ONS



Game Boy Camera

Price: £30 Available from: Nintendo on 01703 623200

Arguably the greatest Game Boy cartridge of all time, the GB Camera is one of the finest pieces of videogame kit ever devised. Basically, it's a tiny digital camera, which can store up to 30 black and white pictures. Point it at other people or rotate the lens to take a self-portrait, press a button, and your image is captured. Then the fun begins. You can add comedy eyes, noses, ears and mouths from a large built-in selection, mutilate the picture using some simple tools, or use trick lenses to turn your family into a set of George Romero-style freaks. Plus you can add your own face to four amusing little games, and create music and animation. There are more things to do here than in anything else on the Game Boy, and in the future it will even enable you to put your own face, or those of your real-life foes, into *Perfect Dark's* deathmatches. A fantastic work of Japanese genius. ★★★★★

Game Boy Printer

Price: £40 Available from: Nintendo on 01703 623200

The Game Boy Printer is the natural companion to the Game Boy Camera, and, although it isn't an essential bit of kit, it adds an awful lot of value to the whole package. The Printer takes a roll of heat-sensitive paper and turns your masterpieces of mutilation into little stickers, with excellent results. Whether you opt to label your personal stuff in the communal fridge or simply to print out test messages, you're only limited by your imagination. Quite a few Game Boy games are now printer-compatible, including *Zelda DX*, *Pokémon Pinball* and *Super Mario Bros DX*, so you can print out your high scores and bonus pictures too. The only down side to the Game Boy Printer is the expense involved in actually using it – the unit itself takes six batteries at a time, and the rolls of paper work out at around £2 each for around 120 standard stickers. Ouch. ★★★★★



Action Replay

Price: £20 Available from: Datel on 0845 601 0015

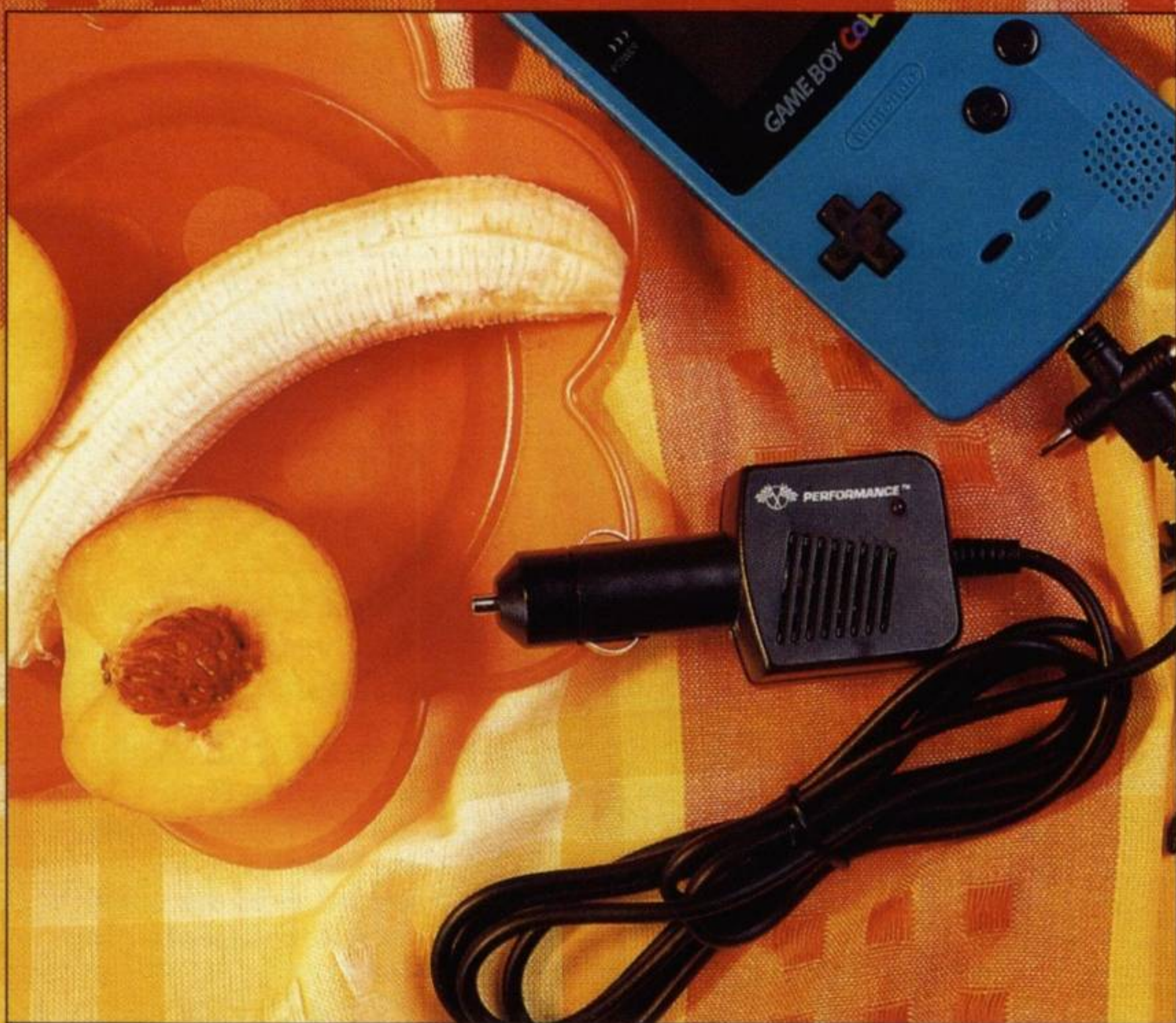
Action Replays and their predecessors have been around since the dawn of time, providing serial cheats out there with the means to accomplish their evil goals. Too lazy to finish *Zelda*? There's an Action Replay code that'll let you see the end screen at the touch of a button. Can't make the grade in *F1 World Grand Prix*? Just sit back and let the Action Replay slice a couple of minutes off your race time. To be fair, the device can also be used for less nefarious purposes, enabling you to change almost every aspect of every game. Bigger jumps, better weapons, altered graphics... the power is right there inside this tiny little cartridge. Of course, you'll have to have a lot of patience and more than a smidgen of luck if you want to create decent codes for yourself; but it can be done, and the results are often eye-opening. Do you feel cheaty? Well do ya? Punk. ★★★★★

Handy Pak

Price: £12 Available from: Interact on 0161 702 5010

This beast will transform the humble Game Boy from a masterpiece of compact design into a weighty monster, too hefty to fit into anything but the largest of combat trouser pockets. It takes two AAA batteries, which power a pair of fold-out speakers and twin night-lights and the front of the Handy Pak can be pulled out to magnify the screen. It works a lot better than it looks – the joystick is clunky but usable and the buttons are responsive. Tested with the excellent *Defender*, you get an authentic arcade feel, thanks to the loud stereo sound. Unfortunately, it clings to the Game Boy like an alien to John Hurt's face, and prising it from the machine left a nasty little scar on the bottom of the D-pad. Similar devices are available for the Classic and Pocket Game Boys, assuming you want to turn your portable console into a battle-worn, table-top mutha. ★★★





Car adaptor

■ Price: £7 ■ Available from: **Interact on 0161 702 5010**

■ Picture the scene: you're a passenger on a long car journey, studiously ignoring any attempts at conversation while you try to capture that last elusive Pokémon, or pip the high score on *Tetris*, when suddenly... nothing. You waggle the D-pad and jam the buttons, but there's no response. Your batteries are dead and you're back to square one. This little gadget could prevent that nightmare from ever occurring. Plug it into the lighter socket, and you can harness the power of the car's battery for the purpose of endless gaming pleasure. Handy, assuming the driver doesn't want to light a fag while you're playing. It comes with adaptors for both types of monochrome Game Boy, and for Sega's Game Gear. It doesn't fit the Game Boy Color, but, unless you're driving all the way to the moon, you're unlikely to run out of juice on the Color anyway. Battery-happy Game Gear owners can rejoice, however. ★★★



Carry case

■ Price: £5-£8 ■ Available from: **Nintendo on 01703 623200**

■ Almost every peripheral manufacturer makes a carry case for the Game Boy. There's a damn good reason for that too: every Game Boy owner should have one. They're an absolute must. Protected from the rigours of being lugged around in pockets, briefcases and schoolbags, a cherished Game Boy will look almost as good in five years' time as it did the day you bought it. No irretrievable crumbs stuck beneath the buttons, no unsightly scuff marks or dents, and no bits of sticky stuff wedged in the game link port. In fact, why don't you take a close look at your Game Boy right now? Any scratches on the screen? They wouldn't have got there if you had a nice soft pouch to put your machine in. Carry cases come in a variety of different designs, some with pockets to put cartridges in, but the minimalist approach scores maximum style points. ★★★★★

Rechargeable battery

■ Price: £13 ■ Available from: **Blaze on 01302 325225**

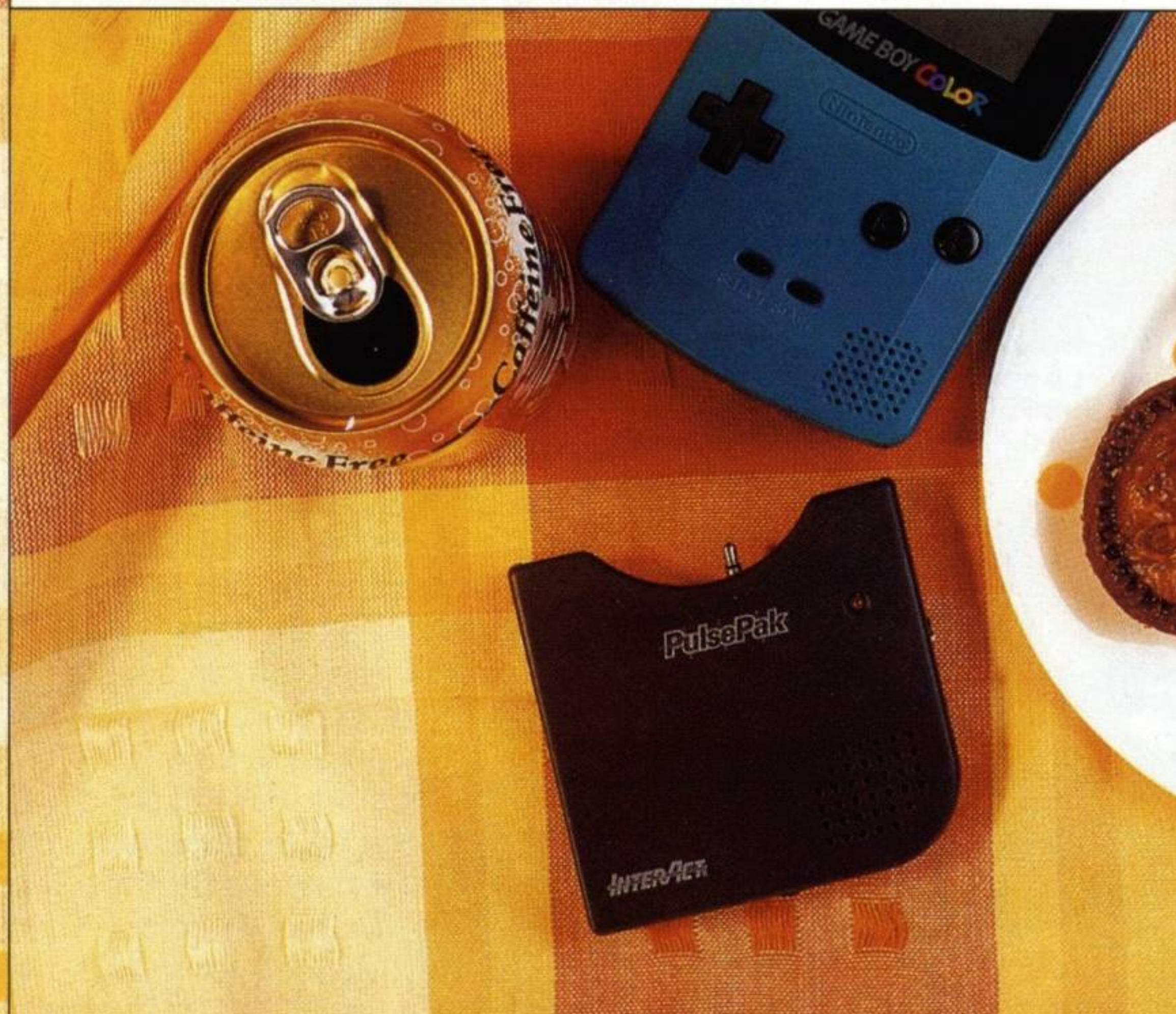
■ You can get all kinds of different rechargeable battery packs for every different type of Game Boy – fat ones, thin ones, colour ones – but some of them don't come with the essential mains adaptor, so you have to spend a lot more on a separate power supply before you can actually charge them up. This one comes as an all-in-one package, which makes a lot more sense. The battery pack replaces the cover on the back of the Game Boy, and sticks out ever so slightly. It's all "free" power though (assuming you charge it up using somebody else's mains supply), and you'll never again have to blow your cash on Duracells. Just think of all the money you'll save – four packs of batteries and the thing has practically paid for itself. Another four, and you can treat yourself to a new game. For nothing! But they don't last as long between recharges as real batteries. ★★★



Pulse Pak

■ Price: £10 ■ Available from: **Interact on 0161 702 5010**

■ Following the trend for Force Feedback in modern games, the Pulse Pak enables you to feel the "power" on a humble Game Boy. Don't get too excited though, because it's a bit crap. You plug the large plastic lump into the audio socket on the bottom of your console, and it responds to any in-game sound by vibrating. And we mean any sound. It wouldn't be so bad if it was smart enough to respond to simple things, such as hits in a beat-'em-up, or skids in a driving game, but the Pulse Pak starts buzzing at the slightest provocation. Bleeps on a menu screen make it thrum gently, and game music sends it into an uncontrollable jiggling fit. Basically, it buzzes all the time. Very annoying. You can turn down the sensitivity, in which case it hardly does anything at all, and you have to keep a tight grip on both it and the Game Boy, otherwise it just falls off. ★



Film of the Month

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND SHAMELESS



■ Long John Silver had a parrot; Pierce Brosnan has a Russo.

The Thomas Crown Affair

■ Director: **John McTiernan** ■ Starring: **Pierce Brosnan, Rene Russo, Denis Leary**
 ■ UK release: **20 August**

Colourful billionaire art thief meets his match in the form of a feisty female insurance expert.

The *Thomas Crown Affair* has long been a cherished project for actor/producer Pierce (Bond) Brosnan. If your film history is a little rusty, this is an unashamedly vamped-up-for-the-'90s remake of the rather dull 1968 crime caper starring the über-cool Steve McQueen and feisty Faye Dunaway as a millionaire bank robber and insurance expert respectively.

To the present then, and in a slight twist to the tale, Brosnan is a self-made billionaire who can buy anything he wants, is irresistible to women, but who has run out of challenges. Poor dear. He turns art thief for fun, and when a Monet goes walkies

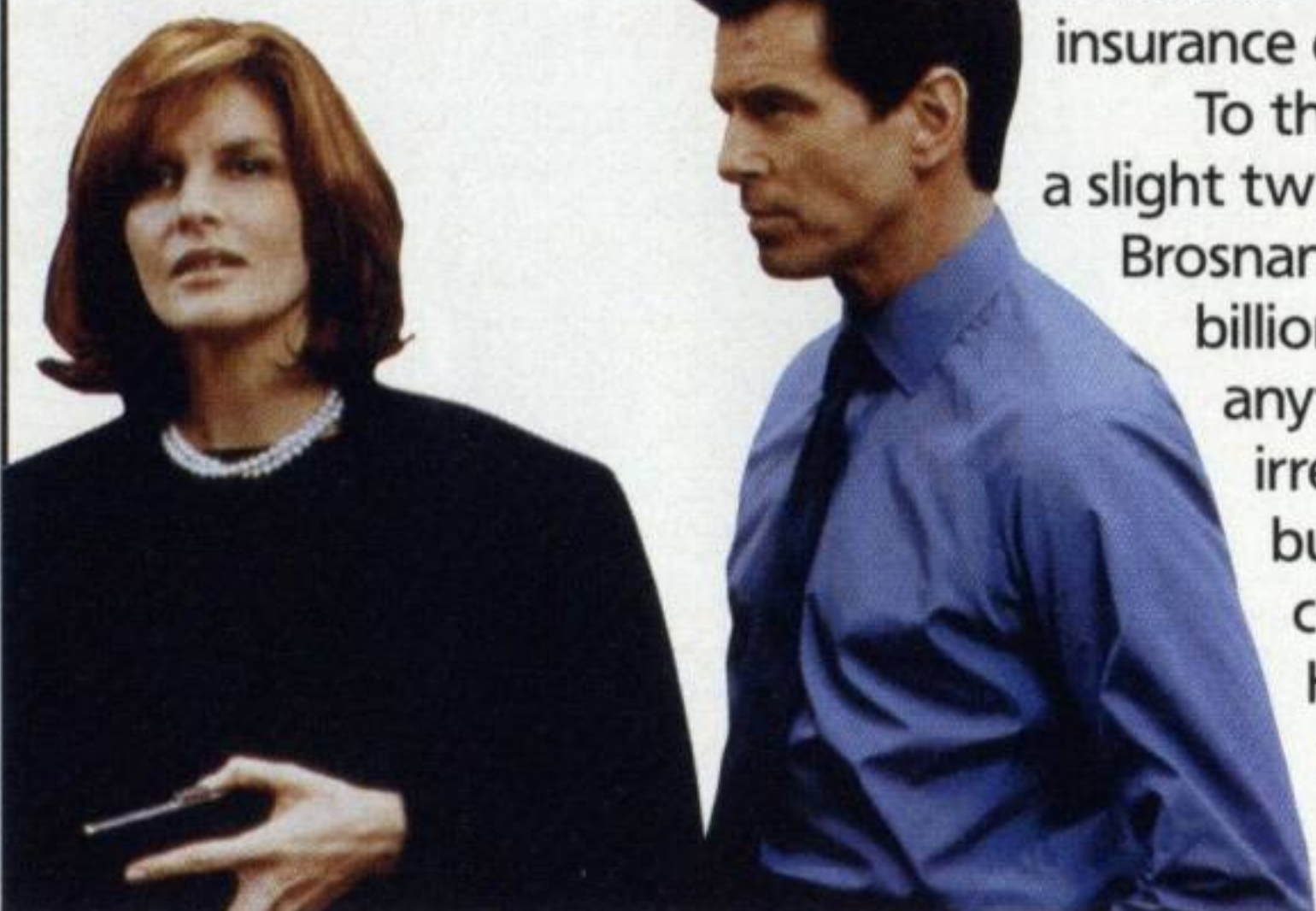
from a New York gallery, he's the last person the cops suspect – until Catherine Banning (Rene Russo), a crack art insurance expert, sniffs a motive and begins trailing him. But it turns out Banning loves the thrill of the chase as much as Brosnan's character, sexual sparks begin to fly and the psychological game raises itself to potentially dangerous levels.

Sharing some remarkable similarities to the bloated, mismatched near-turkey that was *Entrapment*, *The Thomas Crown Affair* is nevertheless a distinctly superior slice of celluloid for two reasons. First, Brosnan and Russo, both fortysomethings, manage to escape that sugar daddy thing that made the Connery/Zeta Jones pairing so ridiculous. Second, the action is mild, no-one gets killed and it's the sort of film you could take your Mum to – a slick package that never takes itself too seriously and proves all the more enjoyable because of it.

Far more a love story than the original film (and in a cheeky nod to its predecessor, Dunaway has a cameo role as Brosnan's analyst), director John "Die Hard" McTiernan fills the film with enough clever twists and turns and expensive-looking toys to keep the Z factor to a minimum.

Sure, plot holes and cheesy moments abound – watch out for a rib-tickling nude romp on a marble staircase – but the finished product is sharp, often inventive and makes for chilled out, one-for-all-the-family fare that should leave you wearing a smile. ★★★★★

■ Brosnan clenches his jaw and shoots Russo another Piercing look.



PHOTOS: IMAGE.NET, CORBIS-BETTMAN/SPRINGER



■ *The War Zone*: breaking up the family.

The War Zone

■ Director: **Tim Roth**
 ■ Starring: **Ray Winstone, Tilda Swinton, Lara Belmont, Freddie Cunliffe**
 ■ UK release: **3 September**

■ If you want to see something lighthearted and brainless on your next trip to the cinema, then *The War Zone* is not for you. Actor Tim Roth's directorial debut is an ultra powerful and shocking exploration of a family's disintegration into self destruction. Ray Winstone, Tilda Swinton, and newcomers Belmont and Cunliffe star in this shattering exposé of child abuse and incest. The film is seen through the eyes of 15-year-old Tom (Cunliffe), who has recently experienced his own sexual awakening. Tom is bored and lonely following his family's move from London to isolated Devon, but soon an ugly secret between his Dad and his older sister Jesse begins to reveal itself and Tom becomes obsessed with finding out the truth.

Starkly, if over-symbolically photographed, rugged scenery provides the backdrop for an horrific rites of passage tale that is superbly acted by the entire cast. The film succeeds in being both gripping and often unbearable viewing. Roth's direction is assured, the script is lean and potent and the resolution, while veering slightly into the melodramatic, rings psychologically true – and considering what has proceeded it, all too inevitable. A groundbreaking film that deservedly won plaudits after its successful showing at the Cannes, Berlin and Sundance Film Festivals. Strong stuff, but a brave and worthy film. ★★★★★

The Italian Job

■ Director: **Peter Collinson**
 ■ Starring: **Noel Coward, Michael Caine, Benny Hill**
 ■ UK Release: **10 September**

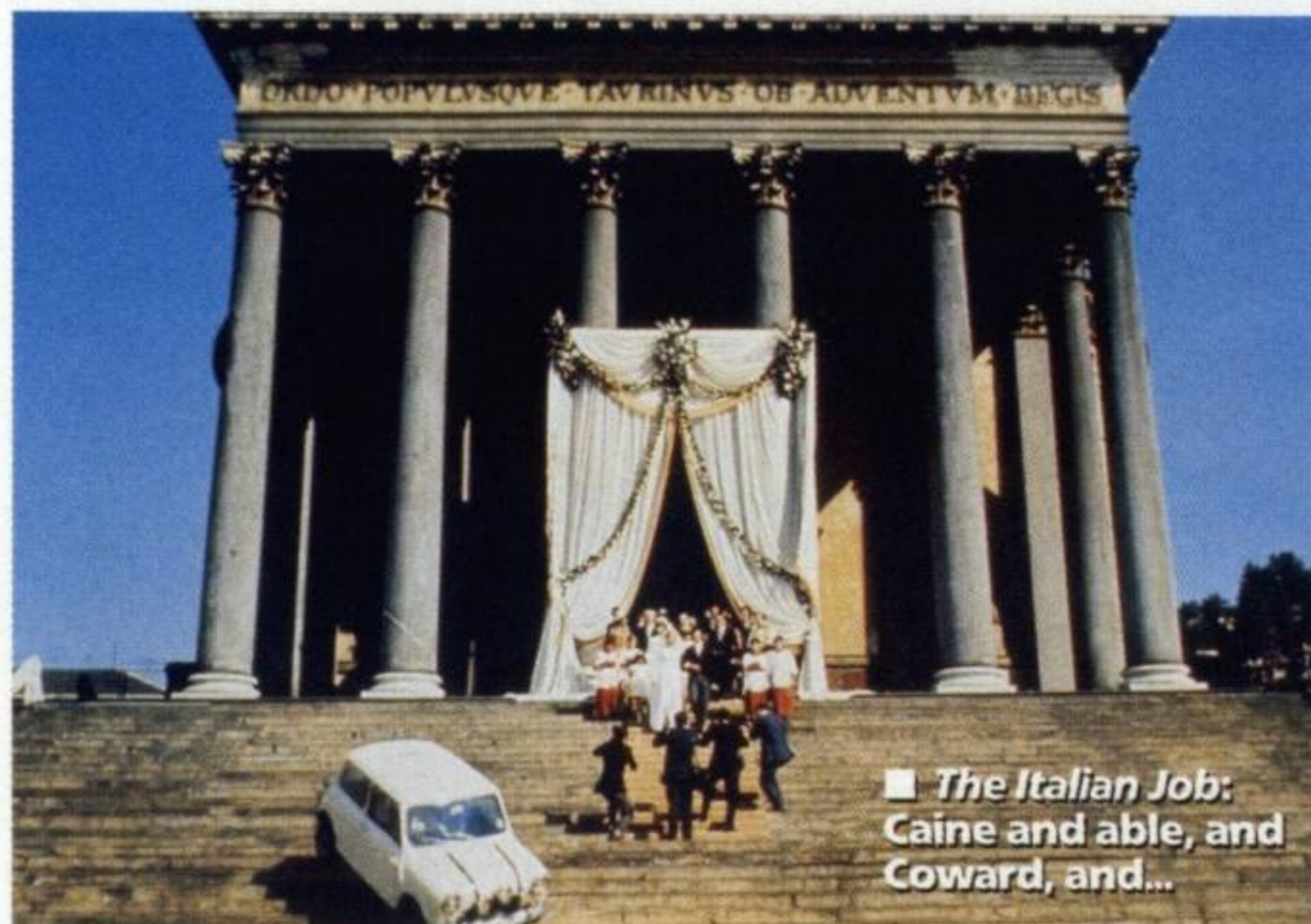
■ The assumption was that *The Italian Job* was being re-released in the cinema in a bid to cash in on the brilliant piss-take Martini advert. Not so, for in this the 30th year since its release, the film was actually scheduled to be out in May, but technical difficulties held it back until now. As a refresher,



The Italian Job was one of the great British comedy crime capers of the late '60s, and stars three minis careering around gridlocked Turin, plus the combined brilliance of Noel Coward, Michael Caine and Benny Hill.

Coward plays a criminal mastermind who plans a brilliant bullion robbery from inside chokey, by causing the biggest traffic jam in the history of Turin. But, aside from Coward's OTT performance and Caine's charisma, the actors were always going to take back seat to the stunning four-wheeled getaway action sequences that, three decades on, remain masterful in terms of technical invention, cheek and excitement.

Sure, the film has been pastiched to death over the years,



■ *The Italian Job:* Caine and able, and Coward, and...

but it's still a rollicking, fast, funny and bloody entertaining slice of absurdism that screams to be seen on the big screen. ★★★★★

A Midsummer Night's Dream

■ Director: **Michael Hoffman**
 ■ Starring: **Kevin Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer, Rupert Everett, Stanley Tucci, Calista Flockhart, Anna Friel, Sophie Marceau**
 ■ UK Release: **3 September**

■ The credentials appear impeccable. First, this oft-filmed Shakespeare remains a wonderful fusion of comedy, dreamy settings and cracking dialogue. Second, this particular big-budget offering stars a *Who's Who* of Hollywood names who seem to have been

cast to perfection. Third, filmed on both a massive flora and fauna-filled soundstage and the glorious beauty that is Tuscany, the visuals speak for themselves. Finally, add some neat little CGI-filled moments and how could this possibly fail?

But fail it does. Not badly, but enough (considering the above) for you to come away feeling distinctly disappointed. Why? Well, this particular film outing is a prime example of the sum of the parts failing to make a wondrous whole. The most obvious flaw is the production, which for all its high values, remains a pained, flat experience, woefully lacking in humour and genuine wonderment. And, for all its sizeable funding, the film attempted, but failed miserably, to

transcend the play's obvious stage origins. That it's nearly two hours long is yet another problem. In summary, while the fairy-filled visuals are sumptuous eye candy (Kevin Kline hams it up with wonderful gusto), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* proves lifeless. ★★

Ravenous

■ Director: **Antonia Bird**
 ■ Starring: **Robert Carlyle, Guy Pierce, Jeremy Davies**
 ■ UK release: **3 September**

■ Fresh from the spunky *Plunkett & Macleane*, Robert Carlyle is back, this time in *Ravenous*, an historical thriller/horror offering which tackles the prickly subject of cannibalism.

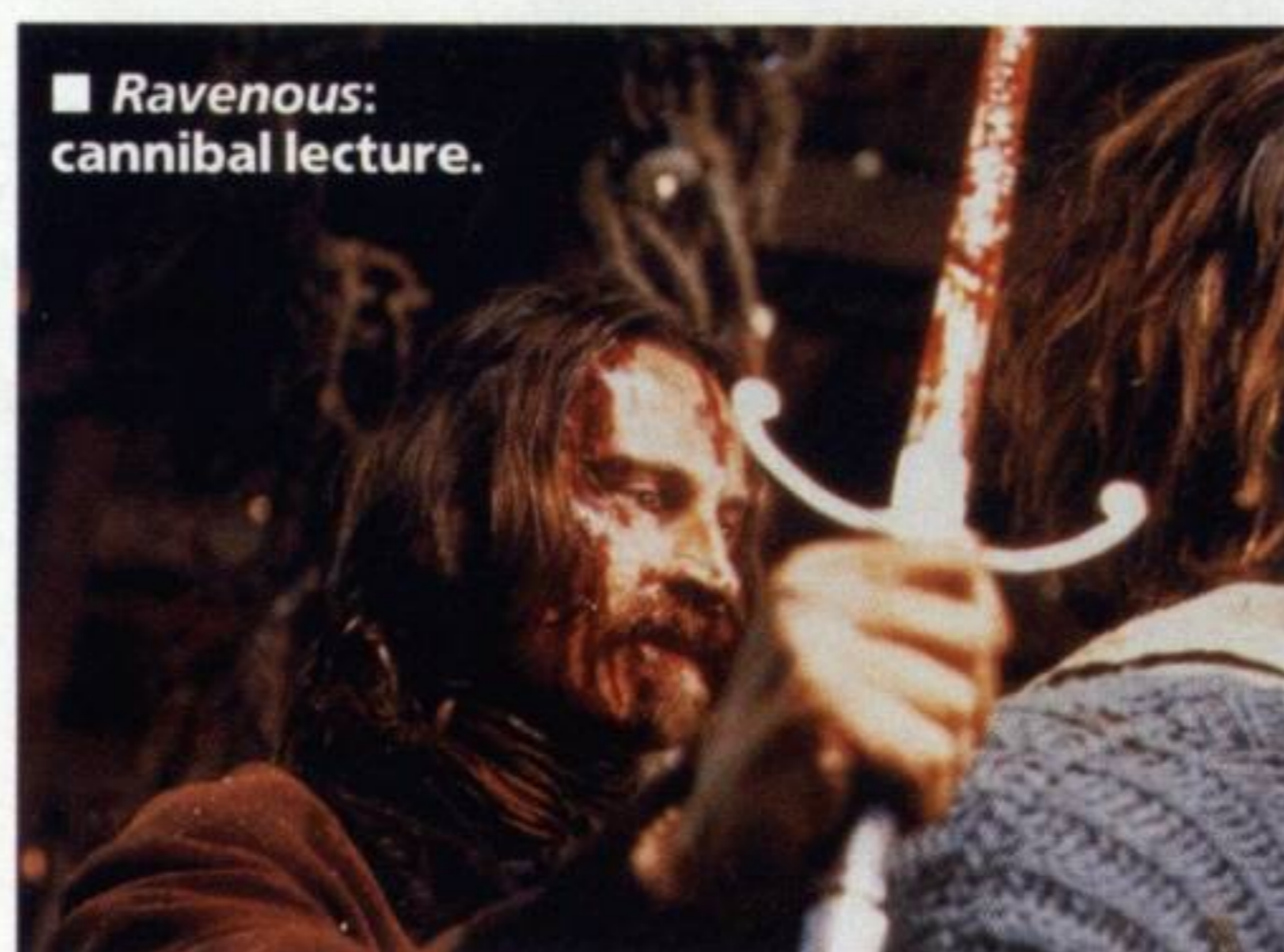
Set in 1847 in California's icy Sierra Nevada, Captain John Boyd (Guy Pierce) reluctantly picks up a motley crew of soldiers before an unhinged Scot Colqhoun (Carlyle) staggers into their midst, the only survivor of a group of settlers who got lost in the snowy waste. Grimly he reports that when the settlers ran out of food they were forced to eat each other to survive. But what he fails to report is that he's secretly addicted to the ancient Native American ritual of Weendigo, whose followers believe that dining on the dead lends life force to the living.

Directed by Antonia Bird, *Ravenous* is more interested in atmospherics than plot and proves to be visually stark, awash with dark humour and potent satire. Cleverly, the film also avoids most of the clichés of the vampire movie genre by using cannibalism as its central theme.

However, if you are easily offended (or vegetarian), you may find the grisly taboo-busting subject matter hard to stomach, which may relegate *Ravenous* to the interesting, shocking and energetic file – just be safe in the knowledge that this isn't the film for a multiplex first date. ★★★★★

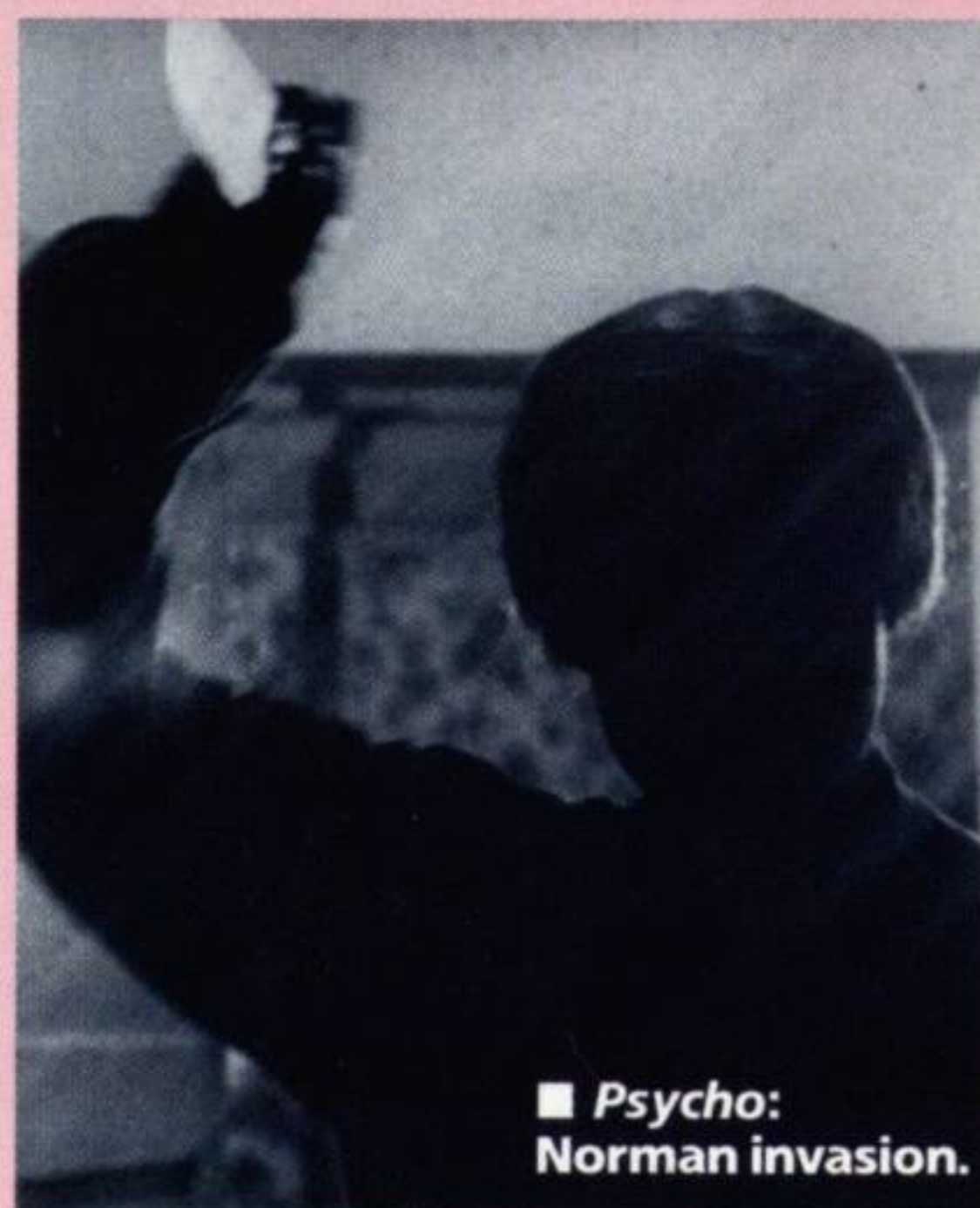


■ *A Midsummer Night's Dream:* boring as Puck.



■ *Ravenous:* cannibal lecture.

DVD | The biggest new releases



■ *Psycho:* Norman invasion.

Psycho

■ **Columbia Tristar**
 ■ Your first chance to see that creepy motel and that ill-advised

shower on the new format, accompanied by a brilliant original trailer in which Hitchcock himself is

almost as scary as Norman Bates. Extras: original trailer, filmographies. ★★★★★

Psycho '98

■ **Columbia Tristar**
 ■ Gus Van Sant finally achieves the triumph of style over content he has been working towards for all these years by remaking the Hitchcock classic frame-by-frame. Inevitably, it's far less effective than the original and so is destined to become nothing more than a cinematic curio. Why did he bother? Extras: director's commentary, documentary, screen savers, filmographies. ★★

Videos to buy

Snake Eyes

■ **Touchstone**
 ■ Brian de Palma flexes his Hitchcockian muscles while Nicholas Cage pulls out all the stops as the amoral cop in this high-octane thriller. The plot revolves around the assassination of the US Secretary of Defence at a boxing match. The 14,000 fans inside the arena become suspects, the venue is sealed and the investigation begins. What may appear to be a trite, clichéd plotline is transformed into a maddeningly enjoyable and intricate film far superior to the average whodunnit-thriller. Another gold star for both de Palma and Cage. Don't even think about blinking during the opening scene! ★★★★★



■ *Armageddon:* pricey nonsense.

Armageddon

■ **Touchstone**
 ■ Depending on who you listen to *Armageddon* is either escapist fun or dire nonsense. Either way it is definitely big, loud and expensive. Even if you did want to sit through the film more than once, the small screen is undoubtedly not the

place to do it. *The Simpsons* spoofed *Armageddon* when Springfield faced destruction from its very own asteroid, and managed in 20 minutes what the feature version fails to achieve in 145 minutes: to entertain and amuse rather than simply shout and wave its cash around. ★

Videos to rent



■ *Been anywhere nice?*

This Year's Love

■ **Entertainment In Video**
 ■ "Four Weddings meets *Trainspotting!*" screamed *The Sun*. If by this it meant a typically British romantic comedy with added nipple piercings, it wasn't far from the truth. Instead of Hugh Grant's bumbling foppishness, *This Year's Love* plumps for forced kookiness – among the leading characters are a tattoo artist, a slumming, gambling painter and a dreadlocked single mother who lives on a boat.

At least it's not slushy, packed as it is with arguments, fights and heartbreaks, tempered only by a vague undercurrent of romance. Yet the script is untidy and you get the feeling it was written by a committee desperately hoping a pick-and-mix of previous winning formulae would score them another Brit hit. ★★

Shakespeare In Love

■ **Columbia Tristar**
 ■ William Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) is in trouble: he's skint, he owes money to every theatre owner in London and he's got writer's block. That's until he sets eyes on ravishing aristocrat Vila de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), when the blank verse starts pouring forth faster than sewage through the gutters of 16th century London.

Soon *Romeo and Ethel, The Pirate's Daughter* is turning into the finest play of all time and Top Stoppard (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) has another Shakespeare smash hit on his hands. Funny, soaringly romantic and cleverer than a brain pie, if you're looking to buy a date movie this month, you've just found it. ★★★★★

You've Got Mail

■ **Warners**
 ■ With Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan as the star-crossed couple falling in love via e-mail and queen of romantic comedy Nora Ephron at the wheel, *You've Got Mail* has candyfloss pap written all over it. However, while this film does offer saccharine sentimentality by the bucketload, it manages to pull off some surprises and leave you with a vague sense of having enjoyed yourself. A polished and entertaining two hours with some deft touches and pieces of immaculate timing. ★★

Book of the month

MIXED VEG

US JOURNO WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR

■ Layer upon layer of sharp-witted observations on the headlines of life.

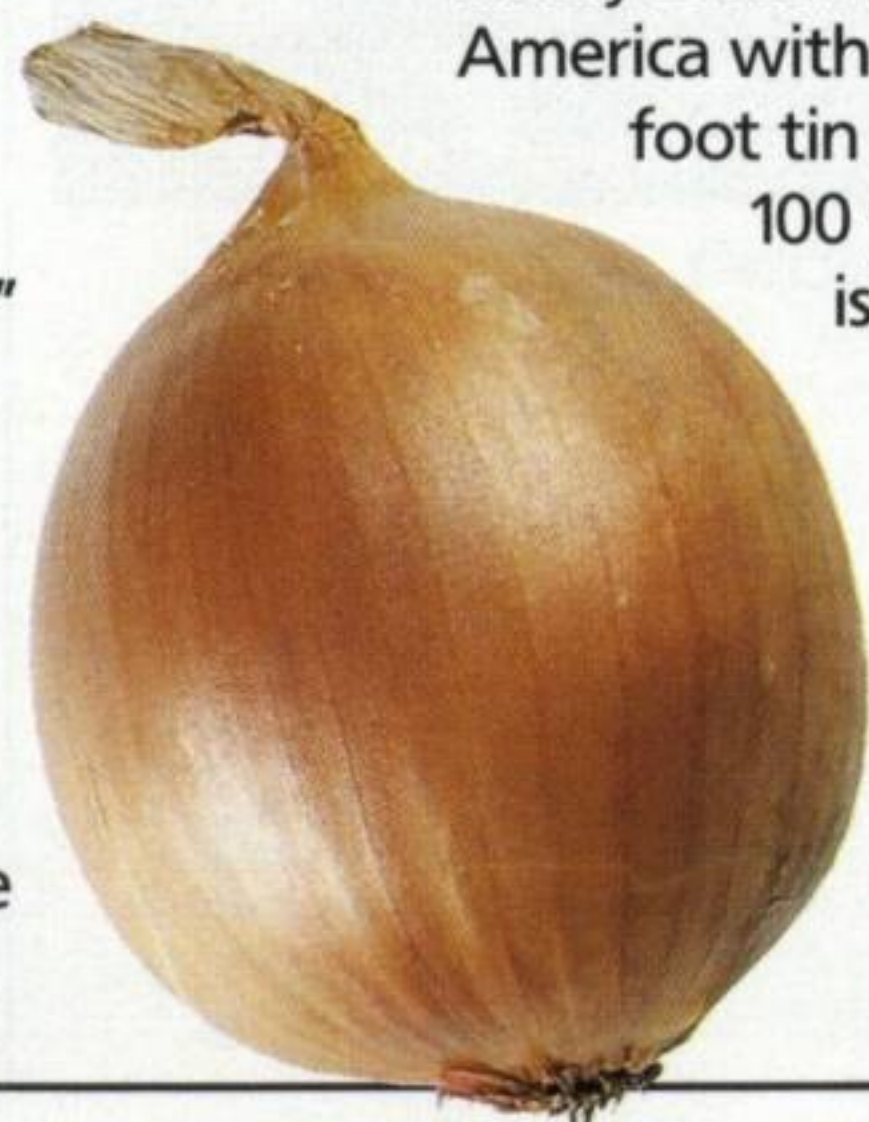


Our Dumb Century

■ Editor: **Scott Dikkers**
 ■ Publisher: **Boxtree**
 ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7522-1743-7**

As cynical media enterprises go, *Our Dumb Century* is one of the original and best. Forget overseas media moguls who use their papers to attack the political machinations of their host countries. Forget small-time newspaper editors who use their editorial to disgrace upstanding members of the parish council (with slightly sticky revelations about a long-standing subscription to *Health and Efficiency*) – these are tiny targets compared to the remit of satirical newspaper *The Onion*.

Yup, rich or poor, famous or staggeringly average, "America's finest news source" is ready to take on anyone and everyone. You don't have to be good, you don't have to be bad (though it helps), you don't even have to be breathing – you just have to be funny. And no-one is above this 100-year journal



of vicious humour. The story of how a 1981 Royal wedding "temporarily distracted the teeming, dirt-faced hordes of British commoners from their dreary, destitute lives" sits alongside tales of Jodie Foster's impending marriage to stalker and would-be Regan assassin John Hinkley Jr, and sordid goings-on between John Denver and a Muppet, leaving his musical career shattered. Everyone is fair game.

From January 1900, and headlines like "African savages taught ways of Christ by kindly British", through to a gleaming '50s America with Sputnik and "Bleeping two-foot tin ball threatens free world", 100 years of *The Onion's* writing is sharp enough to make you draw breath, while bringing a guilty grin to your face. It's a cynical and unpleasant world that *The Onion* guys inhabit. And it's bloody hilarious. Ah, there's no place like home.

★★★★★ **Emma Parkinson**

Chi

■ Author: **Alexander Beshar**
 ■ Publisher: **Orbit**
 ■ Price: **£10.99**
 ■ ISBN: **1-85723-682-3**



■ Beshar writes like the long-lost lovechild of William Gibson and the Dalai Lama, combining technology

and mysticism. In his future, it is possible to buy life-essence – chi – in chip-form, and have it inserted into your head. Fancy improving your brain power or even gaining a specific qualification? Just get an implant.

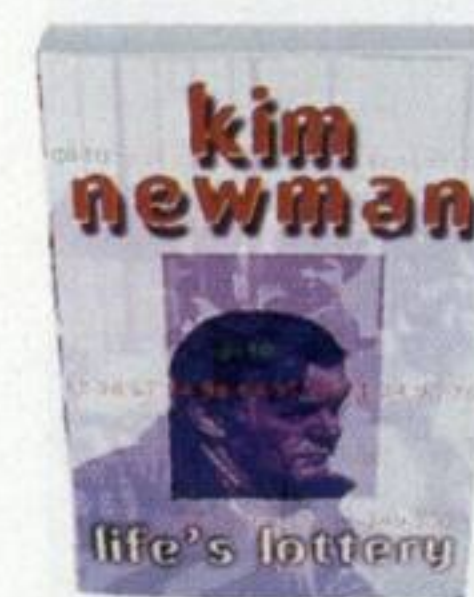
Wing Fat is a dealer in dodgy black-market chi, and he's just discovered an interesting new source. Meanwhile, Trevor Gobi, virtual reality investigator, is looking into the cause of strange mass hallucinations in Hong Kong, and a confused journalist is trying to find a man who was once an orang-utan. Slowly everything happening in the novel is drawn together to a rave on a beach in Thailand.

This follows on from Beshar's earlier novels *Rim* and *Mir*, and while you don't need to have read these to understand the brilliance of *Chi*, it certainly helps.

★★★★ **Miriam McDonald**

Life's Lottery

■ Author: **Kim Newman**
 ■ Publisher: **Simon & Schuster**
 ■ Price: **£16.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-684-84016-2**



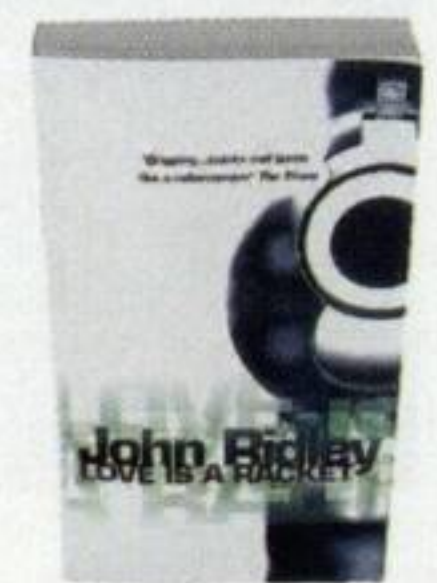
■ The blurb on the back welcomes you to "an entirely new kind of novel, an interactive fiction". One in which you,

dear reader, endeavour to plot your own path through the life of Mr Keith Marion in a Choose Your Own Adventure style. For those of you who remember the *Fighting Fantasy* series of the '80s, think Italo Calvino meets Ian Livingstone.

Experimenting with the form of the novel is always risky, but here, for the most part, the experiment is a success. Strong characterisation and effective plot devices make for an intriguing read that's a world away from goblins and gargoyles. This is a defiantly adult take on the interactive novel concept – some of the decisions required of you are severely uncomfortable, if not downright depraved: "Do you sleep with your sister? If so go to page 178". Is Newman nagging at your conscience or is he simply being sensationalist? As ever, you decide. ★★★ **Dan Myers**

Love is a Racket

■ Author: **John Ridley**
 ■ Publisher: **Bantam**
 ■ Price: **£5.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-553-81211-4**



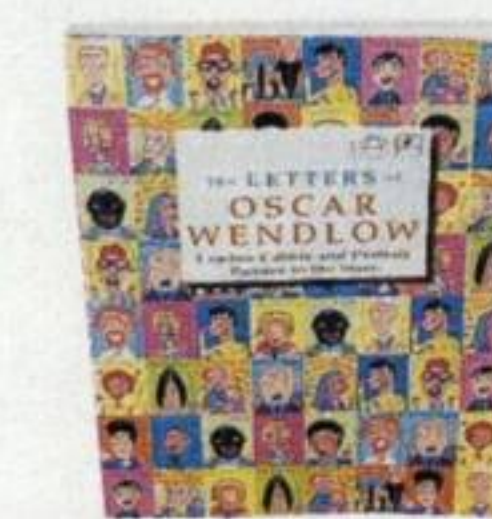
■ It used to be a many-splendoured thing; it can tear you apart; it's a drug; it's a battlefield; it's like oxygen; and, if you are to

believe a fan of a popular fragrant shrub, it grows where his Rosemary goes. Now, from the poison word-processor of John Ridley, we are reliably informed it is a racket as well. Love, eh?

In the deeply-dark clogged-up vein of his previous novel (*Stray Dogs*), Ridley's second stab at contemporary Hollywood noir is every bit as twisted. Our laconic and world-weary protagonist this time around is Jeffy Kittridge – a cheap scamster with gambling debts almost as large as his booze-swollen liver. Needless to say, his do-or-die attempts to pull that one last con meet with a cast of barely credible street-hardened characters, some predictably sharp dialogue, and no end of twisty-turny plot deviations. If you like your crime fiction a sour shade of black then *Love is a Racket* will appeal, however, if you want sweetness and light in your life, don't bother. ★★★ **Gary Tipp**

The Letters of Oscar Wendlow

■ Author: **Oscar Wendlow**
 ■ Publisher: **Boxtree**
 ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7522-1339-3**

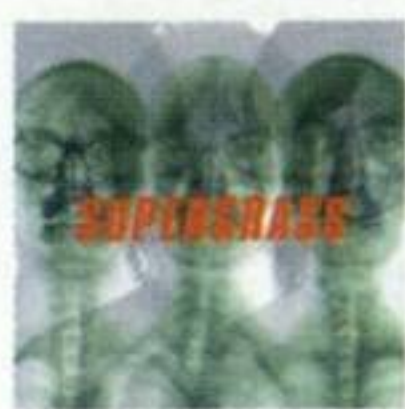


■ Cabbies always have a lot to say for themselves. Not least Oscar Wendlow,

taxi driver and painter of naive celebrity portraits in his spare time. Collected here are the letters and responses from Oscar's many attempts to impress his harebrained self-promotional schemes on well-known personalities. From attempting to set up a nightclub with Peter Stringfellow and Terence Conran to hassling Jeremy Paxman about the size of his nose, or nominating himself for an OBE, Wendlow is a prize comic pest. As the knockbacks pile up, his veneer of well meaning is chiselled away to reveal an embittered bigot, intent on preventing the spread of Indian restaurants in the UK, or snidely offering male comfort to Tracy Edwards' all-girl yacht team.

Wendlow may not have the punch of Dennis Pennis, but at least he gets one successful reply – in discovering how Number 10 Downing Street keeps its door so shiny. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

Supergrass
Supergrass
 ■ Label: **Parlophone**



■ They keep their teeth nice and clean, they know a place where the sun hits the sky and they are pumping on your stereo. Supergrass are the UK's premier advocates of good, clean musical fun and you should expect no radical departures on their third album. By holding their ground as lesser contemporaries have floundered, Supergrass now find themselves in a field of their own.

There's nothing as frantic as "Richard III" here, nor anything as immediately grinsome as "Caught By The Fuzz", but Supergrass have discovered a lush middle ground. Their songwriting is immediately classic, incorporating hints of Neil Young and Elvis Costello while the group's trademark manic energy remains in evidence on throwaway romps such as "Jesus Came From Outer Space". Supergrass is mature but not staid, wise but not cynical. A triumph. ★★★★★

Brand New Heavies
Trunk Funk (The Greatest Hits)
 ■ Label: **London**

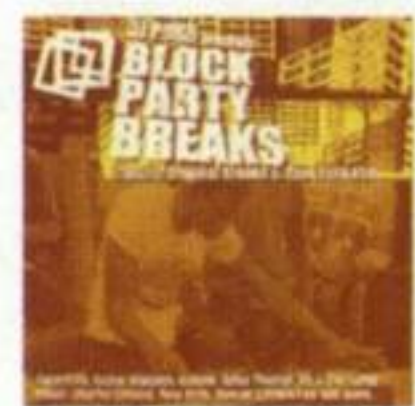


■ It's another of those Greatest Hits albums (see also: Shed Seven, Lightning Seeds) which creeps up on you without warning. The

band hang around for years without doing anything noteworthy and suddenly they've accumulated a canon of songs which are strangely familiar. "Midnight At The Oasis", "Dream On Dreamer", "You Are The Universe"... you'll be instantly humming the choruses as these nondescript yet insidious tunes worm their way out of your unconscious. Not that this is a true indication of their quality: the Brand New Heavies are adept at pasting a handsome melody to a bland, inoffensive shuffle which makes a perfect accompaniment to buying white jeans in Next.

The Brand New Heavies are to funk what the Lighthouse Family are to soul. Only one instrumental track, "Gimme One Of Those", boasts any kind of groove, and new tune "Saturday Nite" merely reveals that – sadly – the feistiness of new vocalist Carleen Anderson has been suffocated under a pile of waistcoats. ★★

Various Artists
DJ Pogo Presents Block Party Beats
 ■ Label: **Strut**



■ For those regular lulls when the dance scene becomes soulless and dull, it's worth checking out the current profusion of excellent funk, soul, reggae and afrobeat reissue compilations emerging from labels such as Soul Jazz and Harmless. You can now add Strut to that list.

This is the second excellent collection of rare '70s funk tracks

curated by one-man record library DJ Pogo.

The theme which links cuts from the Isley Brothers, Sly & The Family Stone and many lesser known (but no lesser talented) outfits is that they've all been chopped up and sampled by top hip-hop producers. Trainspotters can therefore spot the famous breaks while the rest of us can enjoy an album of superb party tunes in their own right, including the previously obscure "Got To Get A Knut" by New Birth who in eight astonishing minutes manage to invent the entire careers of De La Soul, Gang Starr, Propellerheads and every band on the Acid Jazz label. ★★★★★

Hybrid
Wide Angle
 ■ Label: **Distinctive**



■ Singing on dance tracks can be either completely annoying, or utterly

fascinating. Just like Everything But The Girl's re-invention with "Walking Wounded", Hybrid paces the balance between song writing and cutting a cool choon just right. Singer Julee Cruise takes "I Will Survive" to a plane higher than you've ever visited, while her voice on Massive-Attack-with-a-boot-up-their-arse-esque "Finished Symphony" can only make you want to try and get off with her, should you ever meet. It goes a bit more make-the-tune-up-as-she-goes-along on "Fatal Beating", but not to worry. A fantastic debut. ★★★★★

Album of the month

DANCE SUICIDE
BUT THE BEAT LIVES ON



Death in Vegas
The Contino Sessions
 ■ Label: **Heavenly**

Dance music is becoming as hard to categorise as the array of bizarre fruit and vegetables in Sainsbury's. If The Prodigy managed to make dance music The New Rock and Roll, then perhaps Thom Yorke and Richard Ashcroft's contributions on UNKLE's *Psyence Fiction* and Noelly G, Bernard Sumner and Mercury Rev's appearances on The Chemical Brothers' *Surrender* have managed to make Indie music The New Dance.

Hence there's now nothing wrong with setting Bobby Gillespie's Primal Scream tones against a tranced-up kazoo and a bass line your granny could play. Indeed, Death In Vegas do just that in "Soul Auctioneer", setting the tone for the whole album.

"Aisha" crunches in with a guitar riff and the tones of man sending a death threat down the phone that could only – and does – belong to Iggy Pop; and "Aladdin's Story" sounds like it might turn into a new single by The Charlatans, before the boys from Vegas veer away from that cool *faux pas*. One Dove's Dot Allison and The Jesus and Mary Chain's Jim Reid also make appearances, which makes *The Contino Sessions* sound like Death in Vegas hired out a mansion in the middle of the country and invited around their pop star pals for a knees-up.

But instead of a morning hangover, the result is one of the most varied, enjoyable and interesting albums to appear this year. It clocks in a bit short at just over 45 minutes, but heck! Stick your CD on repeat, and enjoy the trip into musical madness again and again. ★★★★★

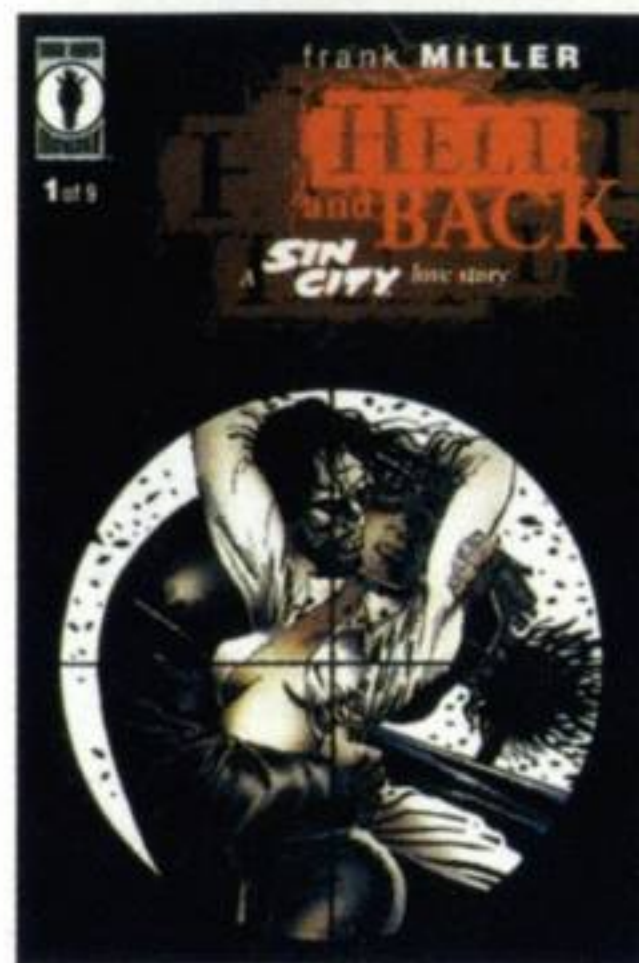
Rich Pelley

Comic of the month

LOVE HURTS

Sin City: Hell and Back
 ■ Creator: **Frank Miller**
 ■ Publisher: **Dark Horse Maverick**

■ Be thankful you don't live in Frank Miller's world: you probably wouldn't survive it. Miller is one of the guys who got the whole "comics are cool" thing rolling a decade ago (chiefly with the classic *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*), and he's got a turn of phrase and control of the medium that's better than anyone. In recent years his most regular work has been an ongoing series of brutal, black-and-white crime stories, telling tales of hard-boiled life in Sin City, his fictitious "town without pity". It's consistently powerful stuff, littered with gruesome imagery and



broken up by page panels that hit like a Mack truck. *Hell and Back* is a nine-part tale, the first to be subtitled "a Sin City love story". In the first chapter, Wallace (a lonely, struggling artist – who also happens to be a kick-boxing, Medal-of-Honor-winning ex-grunt) rescues a mysterious girl from an apparent suicide



attempt. But bad guys are on her tail, and things get messy. Sin City itself is a dark cartoon of LA, packed with hookers and serial killers, where everyone's an unbelievably competent fighter. You feel for Wallace, as Miller is obsessed with the ideas of heroic sacrifice, trial by fire, lost causes, and personal toughness. His



■ **Fights, women and hardship: just where is this Sin City?**
 heroes are invariably forced to endure unimaginable hardship, and they're usually dead by the time their mission is over. Safe in the real world, however, we're set for quite some ride. ★★★★★ **Matt Bielby**

Millennium Jukebox

No wonder no-one can hear us on the phone.

Tricky
For Real

■ Don't let this brilliant single fool you – the rest of his album's sadly bollocks.

Terry Wogan
Radio 2 Breakfast Show

■ The thinking man's Zoe Ball. We've already sent off for our TOG sweaters, have our names down for a round at Royal Troon and are pretending to be Irish.

Mu-Ziq
Royal Astronomy LP
 ■ A string quartet battles with neurotic synth squelches. Odd but beguiling.

Wipeout 3
Soundtrack
 ■ Worth risking tearing the front cover of this magazine in order to play – but don't tell our art editor. Rarely has something so free been so musically wonderful.

Groove Armada
At The River
 ■ Swoonsome summer melodies, favoured by departing staffer Mark Green. Ah, the music stirs melancholy memories.

Space Invaders
Ceaseless bleeps from the coin-op cab
 ■ Maybe housing the retro arcade machine in our office was a mistake. Will the 4,550 top score ever fall?



BRING THE NOISE YOU WON'T EVEN OWE ME

KAOSS pad

- Available from: **Korg on 01908 857100**
- Price: **£265**
- Release date: **on sale now.**

Bedroom-dwelling wannabe DJs rejoice. Welcome to one of the coolest bits of hardware you've ever seen, then revel in the fact that it costs less than three hundred of your hard-earned pounds – which is a mere bagatelle, when you consider what this little box of tricks can do.

What the KAOSS Pad does is to cram 60 different sound effects into one diddy silver box. Plonk it between your turntable and

mixer (or mixer and amp, as it has got both line-level and phono inputs), then trigger the various effects by prodding the touchpad, dragging your finger across it, tapping out a rhythm – whatever works for you, maestro. The effects available include filters for that Van Helden-esque wobbliness, modulators, reverb and delay. On top of that, you can take a five-second sample and – depending on what number you've chosen – muck about with it in various ways by manipulating the touchpad. Marvellous stuff.

And just think, as recently as a year or two ago you'd have had to spend thousands to get anywhere near this level of sonic trickery into your system. Buy one. Now. Fame beckons. ★★★★★

TOUGH TALKING WALK THE WALK, TALK THE TALK

TA-200 two-way radio

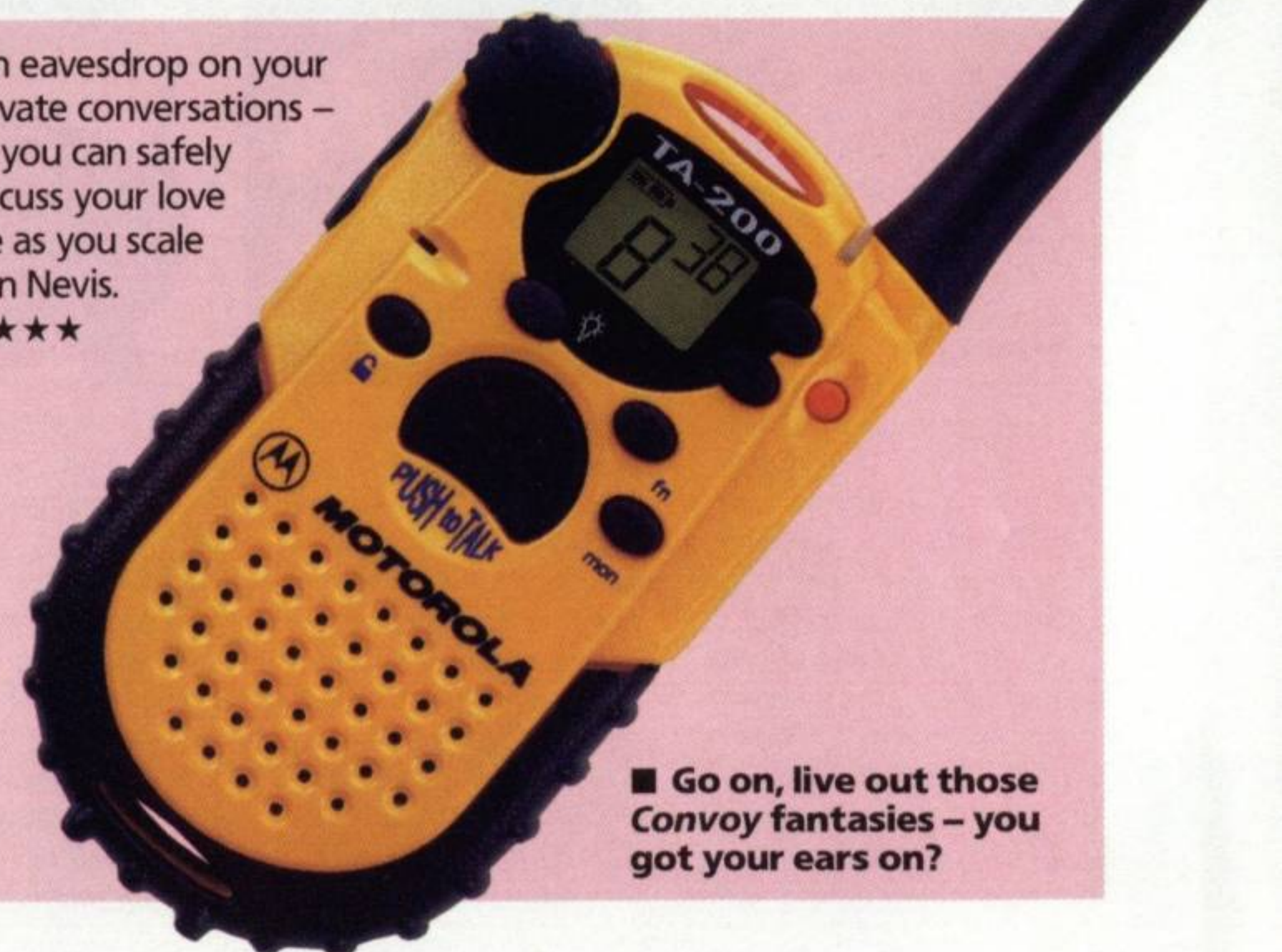
- Available from: **Motorola on 0500 555555**
- Price: **£99**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ Mobile phones are great, but there are times when it just isn't practical to be dialling numbers on one – like when you're stuck halfway down a cliff face while out yomping of a weekend. So Motorola has introduced this two-way radio, or walkie-talkie if you will, aimed at outdoor types like climbers, windsurfers,

potholers, divers and, well, anyone at all, really.

Hang on. Divers? Isn't taking a radio into the sea is a bit dangerous? Remember what your mum said about taking your trannie into the bathroom? Ah, but that's what's so cool about the TA-200 – it's completely waterproof. It is rubberised as well, so it can stand a fair degree of bashing about. It has a range of up to 3km and can operate on any one of 304 frequencies, which are assignable to eight voice channels. There are also 38 privacy codes, so you and your mates can ensure no-one else

can eavesdrop on your private conversations – so you can safely discuss your love life as you scale Ben Nevis. ★★★★★



■ Go on, live out those Convoy fantasies – you got your ears on?

BARKING MAD THERE'S LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET



■ Yup, this one does dream of electric sheep.

AIBO robot dog

- Available from: **Sony, but only in Japan**
- Price: **£1,300**
- Release date: **on sale now (Japan)**

There is a huge temptation to write a review of this thing that just goes: "It's a robot dog! How cool is that?". What else do you need to know? However, even gin-sodden, paid-by-the-word hacks must eat, so here comes the full spiel.

It's a robot dog! How cool is that? But wait, AIBO isn't just some automaton that runs around in circles until his (or her, if you wish) battery runs out. He's quite capable of interacting with his owners just like the real thing. Not only can he walk, run, lie down and sit, AIBO can respond to your shouted commands and, better still, can communicate how he is "feeling" by means of sound, body language and, er, some not very dog-like flashing lights.

Apparently the little blighter veers between happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear and dislike, all of which are generated in response to the information that AIBO picks up from his stereo microphone ears, digital camera eyes and distance sensors, and stores on his 8Mb Memory Stick memory – the clever little thing. Oh, and his name is Japanese for pal, which goes to show that, these days, a robot really is a man's best friend. ★★★★★

VIDEO TO GO

ALL-IN-ONE TELEVISUAL FUN

Use two pieces of portable kit to check out the latest film releases on VHS? "Not me," says Russell Deeks, of *T3* magazine. "I just plug in the new breed of easily manoeuvrable TV/video combis, and watch."

KI-14U71X

■ Available from:
LG Electronics on
01753 500400
■ Price: **£300**
■ Release date:
on sale now

■ While this isn't the greatest-looking telly ever, LG Electronics's model still garners itself a fair few points for its great picture quality and probably the best sound of any of the tellys here. It also has a rather nifty feature whereby the auto-tuning puts the channels in order (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, C4 and C5), which saves time once you've set it up. On the other hand, though, there's no VideoPlus+, and the aerial is one of those ugly telescopic jobs you used to get on old transistor radios. Those few drawbacks and the very basic design lose it a point, but the LG is still worth a look, especially as it's one of the less expensive models reviewed here. ★★★★★



★ OUR CHOICE

TX-T147

■ Available from: **Aiwa on 0990 902902**
■ Price: **£300**
■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ Now, this is more like it. While the Aiwa isn't quite as sexily-designed as the Philips model (the black-meshed, angled speakers are a little too reminiscent of those naff minisystems that look like Stormtrooper outfits), it's silver and looks fine. But it's in other areas that the Aiwa excels: it's the one telly here that's capable of being pushed to real neighbour-baiting volumes without hissing, and the picture quality and colours are spot-on. Best of all, it's NTSC-compatible, which means it'll play all those dodgy videos you smuggled back from that trip to Boston. Er, we mean home videos your auntie in Florida sent you. Hang on, that sounds even worse. ★★★★★



14PV-284

■ Available from: **Philips on**
0181 689 4444
■ Price: **£330**
■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ Top marks on the looks front for this one: the 14PV-284 (why can't they give these things more interesting names?) comes coated in the same kind of metallic, silver finish that's currently all the rage in the home entertainment market, and certainly won't disgrace whichever corner of your home you stick it in. Looks aren't everything, though, so you'll be pleased to hear that this Philips telly/video delivers on the quality front, too, with rich colours and a nice sharp image. It's well-featured, too, boasting Teletext, VideoPlus+ and a Long Play mode. It only loses a star because the sound tends to hiss a little at higher volumes. ★★★★★



TVP-33501

■ Available from:
Samsung on
0181 391 0168
■ Price: **£330**
■ Release date:
on sale now

■ In what can only be presumed is meant to be some kind of "lifestyle" gesture, Samsung produces this combi offering in a range of colours – not just the rather revolting yellow shown here. Which is a relief.

Unfortunately, though, that's about the most you can say for it. The picture quality isn't fantastic, and everything you watch on it seems to come accompanied by a frustrating background hum. There's also no VideoPlus+ function, and going back to the looks thing, the TVP (as we'll assume its friends call it) suffers from having all of its socketry stuck on the front panel. Avoid, unless you happen to have a canary yellow kitchen. ★★

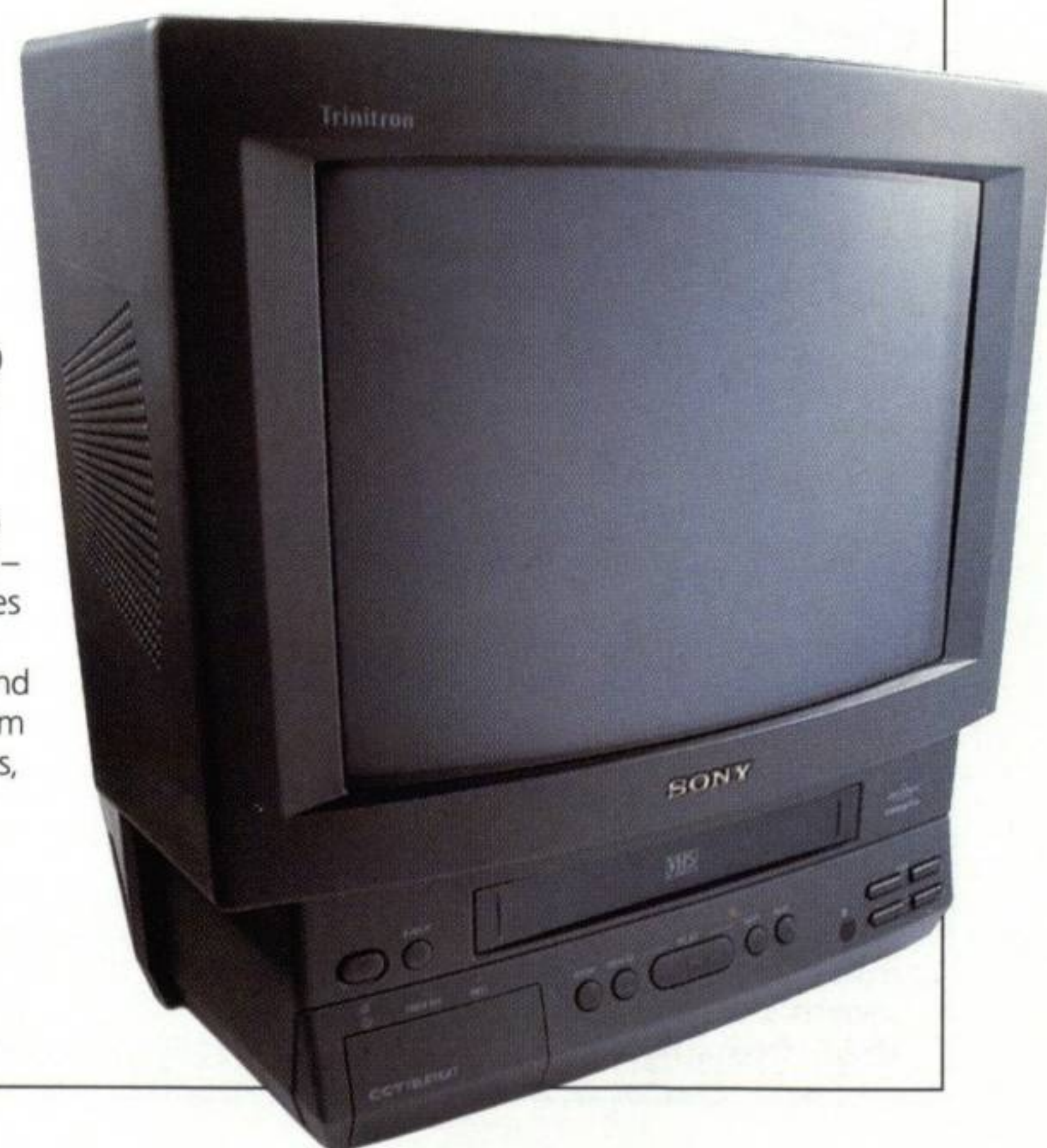


KV-14V5

■ Available from: **Sony on 0990 111999**
■ Price: **£350**
■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ Plenty of Sony gear has been reviewed on these pages over the months, and it usually scores pretty highly. Couple that with the fact that Sony has led the colour TV market with its Trinitron models for more than 20 years, and you'd probably expect great things from this little box. Sadly, you'd be disappointed.

The picture quality isn't up to much at all, and as for the sound – never mind hissing at high volumes – the Sony just hisses, full stop. It does offer VideoPlus+, Teletext and Long Play, but that doesn't redeem the lack of quality where it counts, particularly since it all comes wrapped in such an uninspiring, square, black package. ★★



Tunes on-line


NEW! THERE'S A POISON GOIN ON Available Now!!! **P.E. MAIL!**
you@public-enemy.com!

PUBLIC ENEMY

- SOLDIERS
- HYPE
- AUDIO & VIDEO
- ARCHIVES
- TERRORDOME

Public Enemy have been MP3 fans for ages, even though their record company tells them not to.

COPYRIGHT © 1999 PUBLIC ENEMY COMPANY



THE FUTURE OF MUSIC?



WinAmp is the only MP3 player you'll ever need.

Who listens to CDs any more? The music of the future is yours to be had on the Net, and it's free!

Nothing has ever had the music industry establishment wetting its pants as much as MP3 – CD-quality audio recordings you can download quickly over the Net and play on your PC. Who could resist? Very few of you, it would seem.

MP3 is possibly the perfect audio format. It sounds fantastic, but the music is highly compressed so that it takes up about a tenth of the space of conventional CD audio. And, naturally, the music industry is up in arms because it is so easy to copy, and, more importantly, the music industry doesn't own it.

But enough politics. More important is the question of where you can get your hands on this wonderful MP3 stuff. The first (and possibly the only) place to stop is at MP3.com, cunningly situated at <http://www.mp3.com/>. Not only does the site contain links to all you need to make your computer MP3-ready, it also boasts more than 100,000 tracks on MP3 in every conceivable style, from both well-known and unsigned artists.

The world's most popular MP3 player (for the PC, at any rate) is the all-powerful WinAmp (<http://www.winamp.com>), which can now play just about every musical format on the PC, as well as MP3s. Should you want a bit of assistance in actually finding MP3, you could have a go at MP3Spy (<http://www.mp3spy.com>), which hooks you up to a number of servers broadcasting live MP3 over the Net. But what if you don't want to sit at your PC while listening to music?

How about an MP3 personal stereo? The Diamond Rio is just that; you upload MP3s to it, then listen to them on the move. It's better quality than a cassette player, and because it's solid state, you don't get the skipping that CD and MiniDisc players suffer from. Take a look: <http://www.mp3.com/hardware/portables/rio300.html>. Or, if you want to be flash, how about in-car MP3? The Empeg player (<http://www.empeg.com>) can hold hundreds of hours of music – useful if you're taking part in the Paris-Dakar rally and can't be bothered with switching tapes.



Find live MP3 Netcasts with MP3Spy.



MP3.com is packed with more tunes than the world's biggest record shop. Possibly.

The match box Casting around

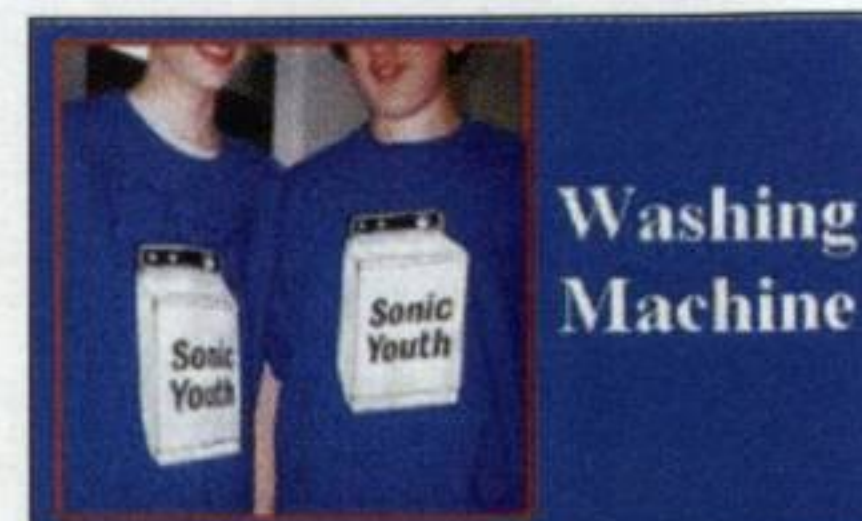
Sonic

Search

Sonic, as you well know, is a hedgehog. Unless you feed his name into some crazy search engine.

<http://www.sonic-systems.com/>

Apparently, Sonic Systems is a market leader in "acoustic-based Emergency Signal Priority and developer of other related technologies to enhance traffic and transit management." Useful.



Washing Machine

This is Sonic Youth's washing machine. Honest.

so it says on the Web site. Now, alas, defunct, you can still rifle through its archive of past articles.

<http://www.inter-sonic.com.tw/>

In-line skates and heart rate monitors: strange bedfellows, eh? Not if you're Inter Sonic International, manufacturer of in-line skates and heart rate monitors. Curious.

<http://www.power-sonic.com/>

Need batteries? That's lots of batteries for your industrial and electronic applications? You need to speak to Power Sonic; batteries are its business!

<http://www.sega.com>

Hurrah! It's Sega, home of our favourite blue hedgehog, shortly to appear on the Dreamcast. He's a hedgehog with attitude, don't you know...

<http://www.soulpimps.com>

Who are the funk gods of Seattle? Why, it's the Super Sonic Soul Pimps, and this is their Web site. Funkadelic, baby!

<http://www.ats-sonic.com/>

Darn those pesky hounds! Always vanishing in the long grass when you've just shot a grouse! Grab their attention with an ATS Sonic Bird Dog Beeper Collar. Just the ticket for the Glorious Twelfth.

<http://www.geffen.com/sonic-youth/>

That'd be Sonic Youth, the popular pop band, yes? And indeed, that is the case.

<http://www.sonic-boom.com/>

Sonic Boom was a popular mag dedicated to industrial music, or

CD-ROM of the month



Episode 1: everything you ever wanted to know.

Star Wars Episode 1: Insider's Guide

Publisher: LucasArts/Activision Developer: LucasArts Price: £25 Release date: on sale now Requires: P133, 16Mb RAM

It's here at last: the film you've been waiting a decade for – the film to end all films. It's finally here, and you've seen it eight times already. So, now what? There are two years at least between you and Episode 2, and a good 12 months before the Special

Edition version. You need a new Star Wars fix, you need the Insider's Guide.

The Insider's Guide applies the same exhaustive multimedia investigation to Episode 1 as Star Wars: Behind The Magic did to the original trilogy. All the characters, major and minor, have their own dedicated entries listing bibliographical details and placing them in the context of the wider universe. There's a similar depth of information on all the vehicles, weaponry and technology – all of which are showcased using rotating 3D models, 2,000-odd film shots and original, annotated art.

There's ample behind-the-scenes stuff, too. The complete screenplay is listed, there are interviews with the team, plus all the trailers. With slick presentation, the odd multimedia surprise and plenty of teasers for Episode 2, it's the ultimate way to ease post-Phantom Menace cravings.

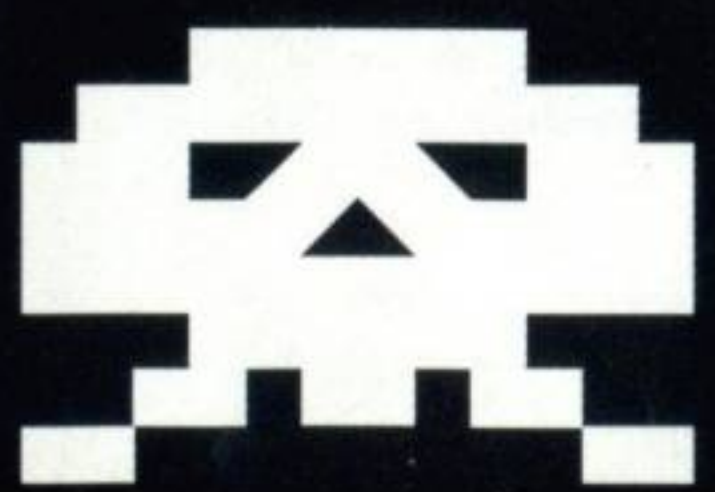
★★★★★ Chris James

Next month

Dreamcast Special

**Feeling
Super
Sonic?**

Sega's gutsy new dream machine finally hits the streets. Should you get one in?



Dreamcast on sale Thurs 23 Sept. Arcade 12 on sale Mon 20 Sept.

Arcade

Back issues

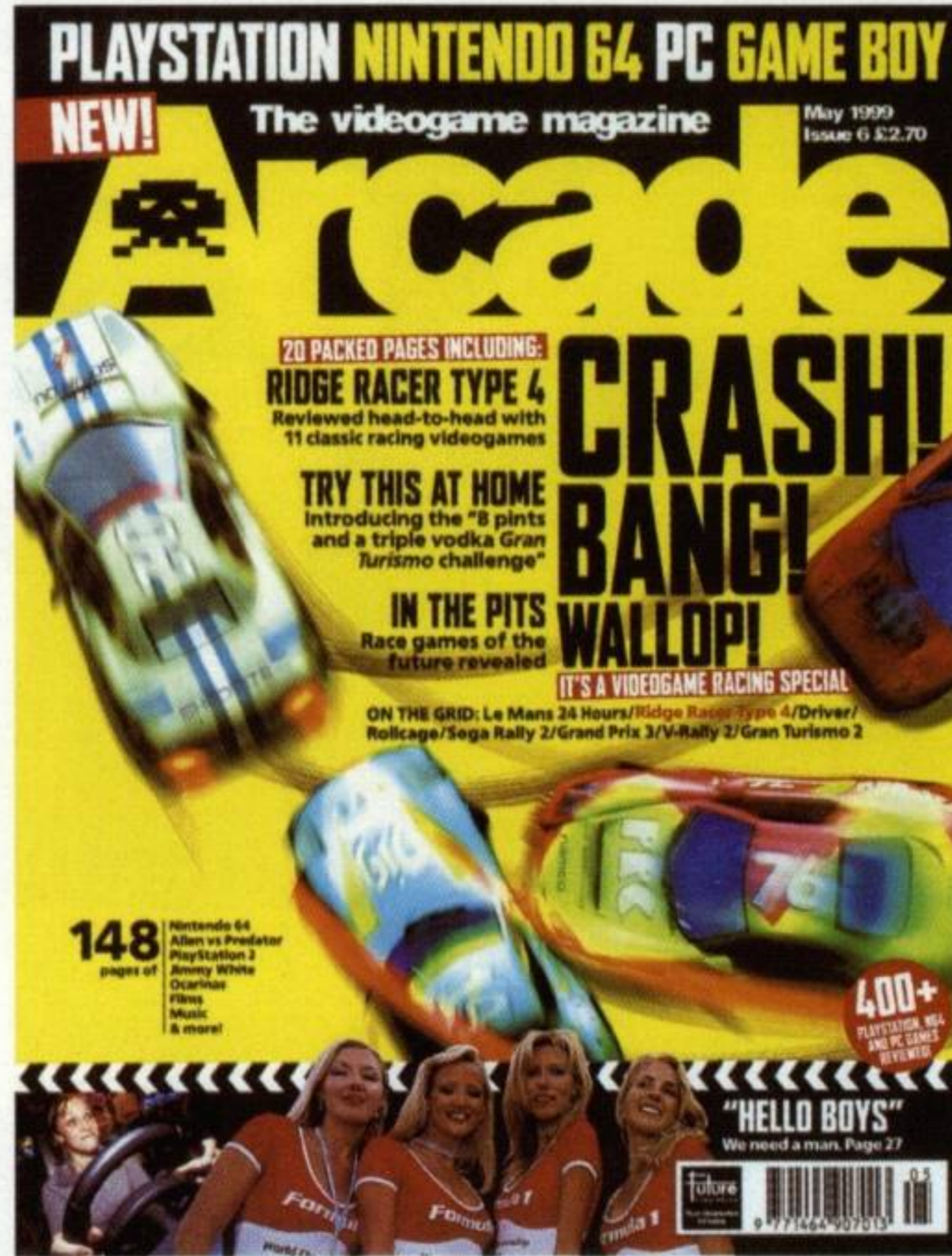
How time flies; one minute you're wondering at the coming spring and the next the summer is over. Happily, you need never miss another *Arcade* moment – we'll deliver you the past.

Issue 5 April



■ *Metal Gear Solid*, SAS interview, 50 most powerful people in videogames.

Issue 6 May



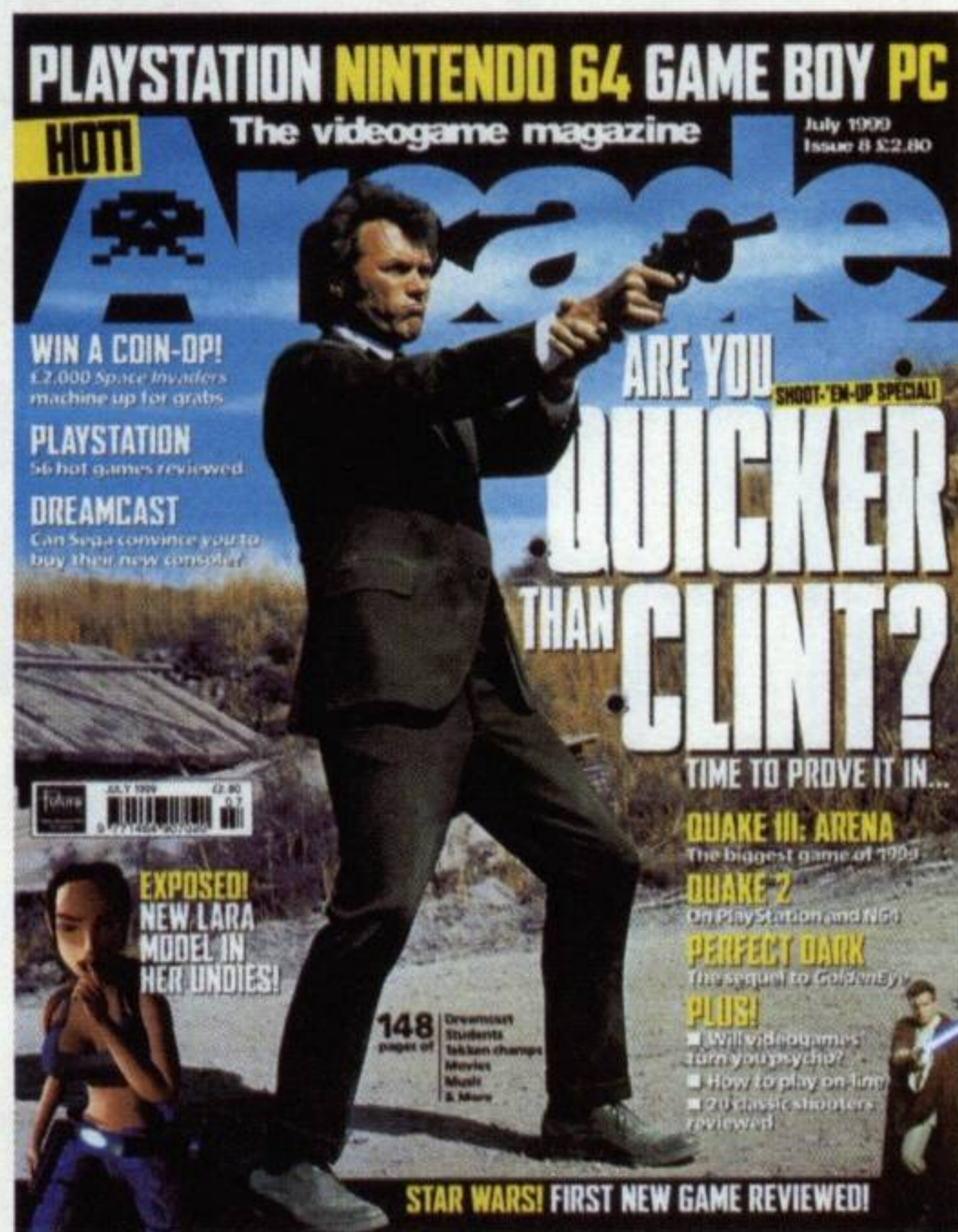
■ Racing games special, Jimmy White games night, free *Game Over* book.

Issue 7 June



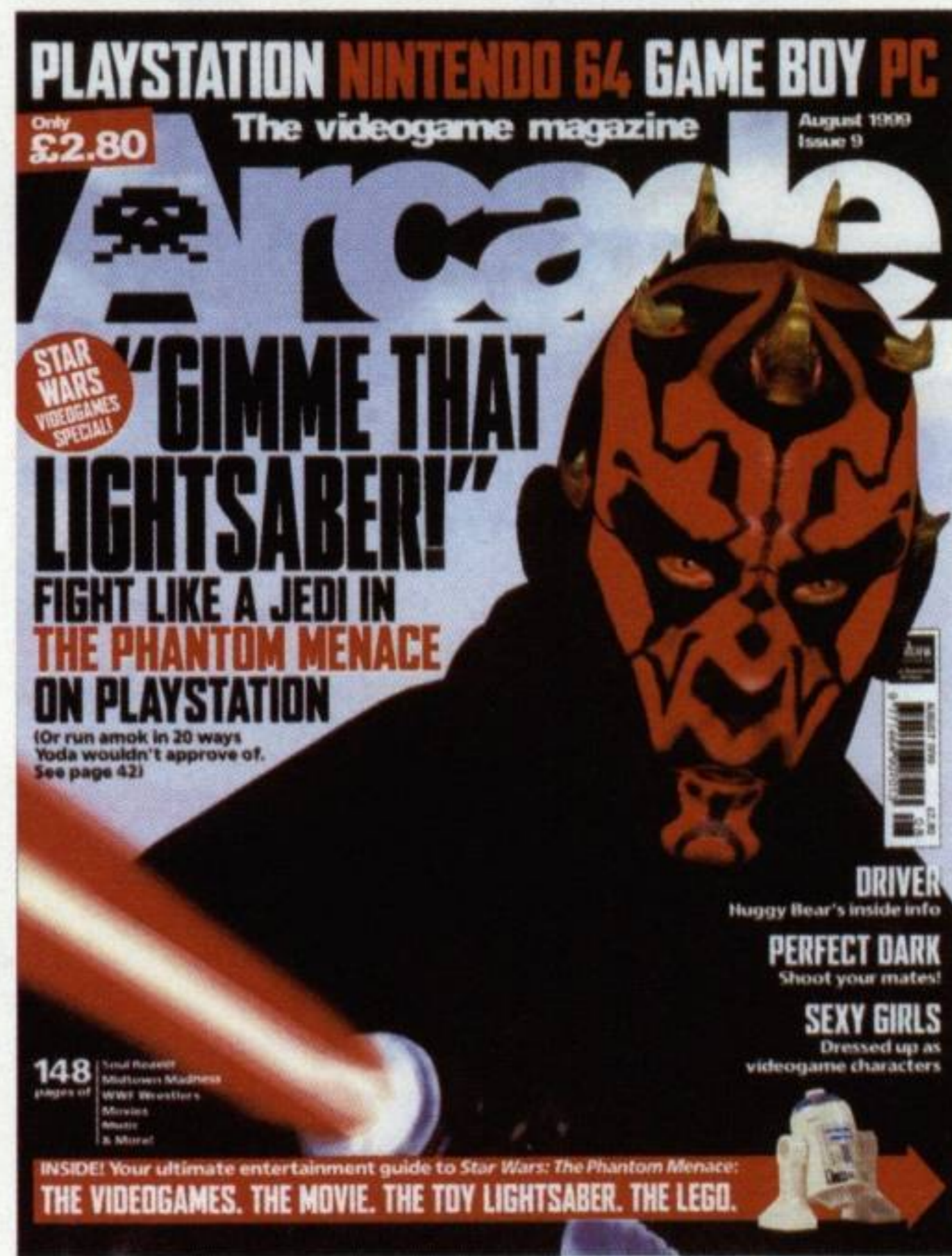
■ *Driver*, *Star Wars* game previews, My Beautiful Cross-Channel Ferry.

Issue 8 July



■ 3D shooter special, the new Lara unveiled, win a *Space Invaders* coin-op.

Issue 9 August



■ *Star Wars* special, games night with WWF wrestlers and sexy girls at E3.

Issue 10 September



■ Future of Gaming special, Game Boys in the park and Roger Mellie on rude words in *Kingpin*.

Back issues

If you fancy getting hold of a back issue, all you need to do is tick the relevant box on this coupon and fill out the details. Make sure you've remembered to put the wedge and the coupon in the envelope, and send the whole lot to: **Arcade Back Issues, Future Publishing, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6BR.** Overseas readers should send the form to: **Future Publishing Ltd, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, England TA11 6TB.** However, if you long for human contact, call the hotline on 01458 271126.

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YOUR GUIDE TO
380
GAMES

Edited by
Rich Pelley

A-list

It would take you years to playtest all 380 videogames listed in the mighty A-list. Which is why *Arcade* has done all the hard work for you, separating the winning nags from the also-rans and those that fell at the first hurdle. And we're happy to do it.

Featured this month:

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



110 PlayStation

The UK's top 20 PlayStation games reviewed and rated, plus your guide to 127 other titles, with a round-up of some of the best budget buys around.

114 PC

139 of your favourite PC games, including the UK Top 20 titles and five new games to watch out for.

117 Nintendo 64

A hefty 85 N64 games, including secondhand bargains of the moment and the UK's Top 20 N64 games.

119 Game Boy

The Game Boy Top 5, plus 29 other titles reviewed and rated for your pleasure.

112 Plus...

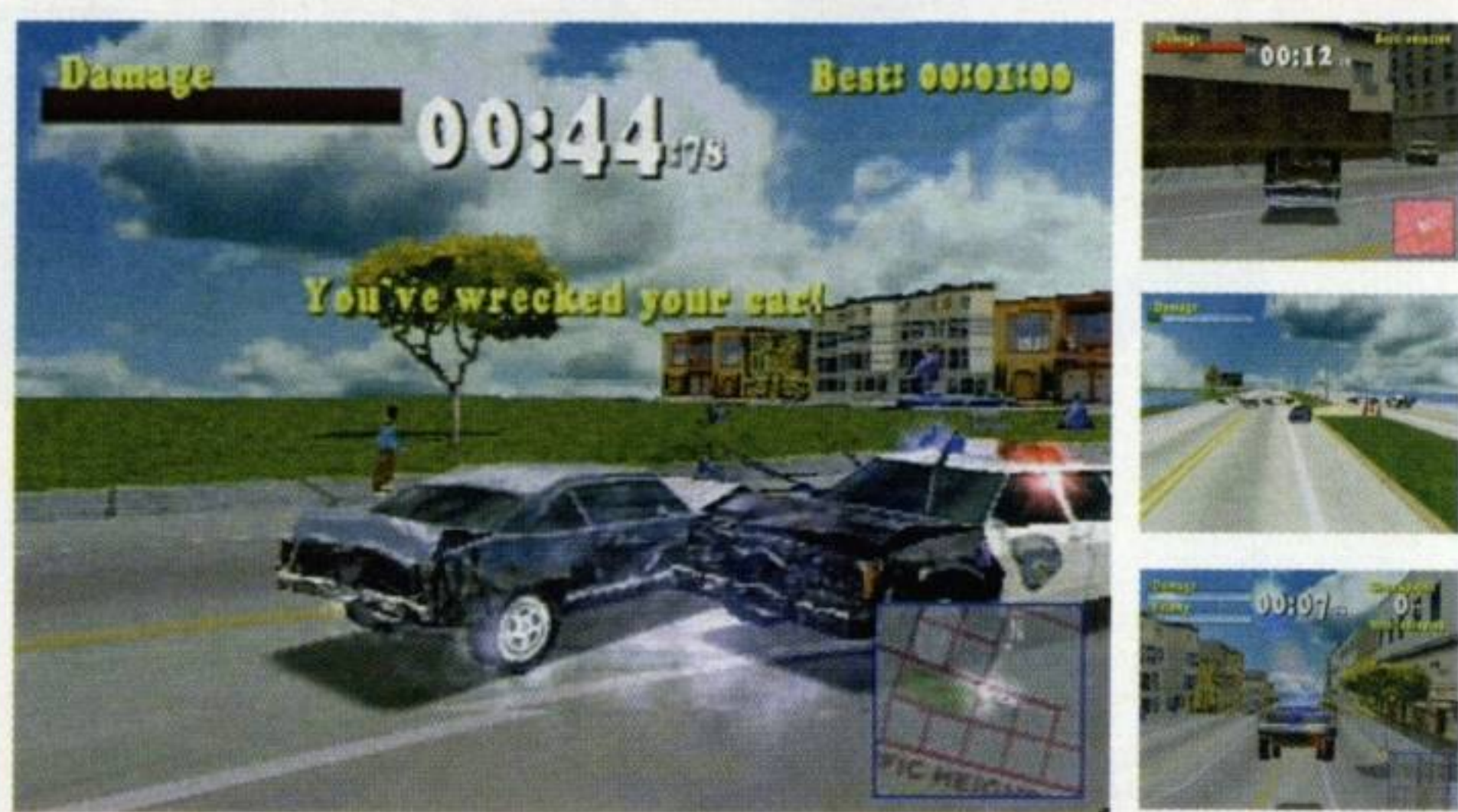
The game that ruined my life: Rich Pelley shares his *Speedball Blues*.



Star ratings

- ★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really should try.
- ★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- ★★★ Good stuff. Not exactly a world beater, but fine within its genre.
- ★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- ★ Really bad news. Avoid at all costs.
- £ Games now available at a budget price.

PlayStation Top 20 | The country's favourite games – on sale now.



1 (-) Driver ■ Racer ■ GT Interactive ■ £40
Stunning-looking '70s car-chase sim Rocket through real American cities, evading the Filth and causing upset for pedestrians. The missions don't vary much, but as a driving "toy", *Driver's* unbeaten. Smashing through piles of boxes is thrilling, and the replay editor makes for added fun. ★★★★★



2 (-) Syphon Filter ■ Shooter/adventure ■ SCE ■ £40
Accomplished third-person espionage action Stop terrorists releasing a deadly virus, in a game that almost matches the might of *Metal Gear Solid*. A coherent environment, great pacing and a comprehensive control system provide a real feeling of involvement, despite the visual rough edges. ★★★★★



3 (-) Silent Hill ■ Horror adventure ■ Konami ■ £39.99
Chillingly atmospheric scare-'em-up A seamless next generation *Resident Evil* clone. Grimy, decrepit, littered with hanging corpses and depressing enough to make you throw up a noose – all in splendid 3D. Only flawed by a few illogical puzzles. The disturbing, B-movie style camera flotation makes the whole experience spookily vivid. ★★★★★

4 (-) V-Rally 2 ■ Racer ■ Infogrames ■ £45
Four-player V-Rally sequel offering more of everything Super slick rally sim that boasts shed-loads of cars, myriad tracks, four-player split-screen and an amazing track editor. A gruelling test of endurance and ability puts this on a par with the mighty *Colin McRae Rally*. ★★★★★

5 (-) Colin McRae Rally ■ Racer ■ Codemasters ■ £20
Life-like rural driving sim A departure from the usual racing game, as your rally car rattles around countryside tracks with time and damage your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give real driving feedback. And it's a bloody bargain at £20. ★★★★★

6 (-) Bugs Bunny ■ Platformer ■ Infogrames ■ £35
Warner Bros' brightest star in 3D platformer debut Promising adventure that doesn't stand up to *Ape Escape* in terms of either challenge or innovation. Sadly, standard issue cartoon game routines occasionally drag *Lost In Time* into the realms of mediocrity. ★★★

7 (1) Gran Turismo ■ Racer ■ SCE ■ £20
Probably the best racer in the world Take one measure of outrageously good graphics, another of near-perfect handling, a couple of pinches of immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, and you've got an unmissable pleasure pie. ★★★★★

8 (2) Final Fantasy VII ■ RPG ■ SCE ■ £20
150 hours of epic adventure Takes all the usual RPG staples (moving around a landscape, chatting to the locals, solving puzzles) and adds cut-scenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and an engrossing story. ★★★★★

9 (6) Crash Bandicoot 2 ■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £40
Maniacal pseudo-3D antics Control a mad marsupial as he runs headlong into the screen, collecting apples and avoiding the bad guys. The linear level format and disappointingly easy play don't help Crash's cause. ★★★

10 (9) Metal Gear Solid ■ Sneaker ■ Konami ■ £40
Infiltrate a shadowy enemy installation *Metal Gear Solid* is brilliant – sneak around and avoid detection rather than blasting everything in sight. Despite the end screen coming around after only a few hours, you'll adore every single minute of play. ★★★★★

11 (-) Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus ■ Platformer ■ GT ■ £20
Puzzly platformer with agile alien Wander through 2D screens and rescue friends, solving puzzles along the way. Often infuriating, but neat touches and marvellous graphics make it a long-lasting and enjoyable challenge. ★★★★★

12 (3) Grand Theft Auto ■ Misc ■ Platinum ■ £20
Crime-addled 2D driver Shoddy graphics and lack of speed affect the appeal of kicking in civilians and driving, but this is still an involving crim-'em-up. Don't compare the PlayStation visuals to those on the PC, though – the outstanding PC quality will make you cry. ★★★

13 (13) Tomb Raider III ■ Platformer ■ Eidos ■ £45
The bitch is back More puzzle-solving and shooting with everyone's favourite woman. A new hi-res mode, some more well-designed puzzles and increasing difficulty are tempered by frustrating moments at the hands of the controls and camera. ★★★★★

14 (-) FA Manager ■ Sports ■ Eidos Interactive ■ £40
Officially licensed footy management sim Veee-rrr-yyy slow addition to the recent crop of manage-'em-ups. Assumes too much of the average punter's footy knowledge. Needlessly complicated and frustratingly slow, like a robot turtle. ★★

15 (4) Tomb Raider II ■ Platformer ■ Eidos ■ £20
The lovely lady explores again Eighteen levels, a few new moves and vehicles to drive, increased speed and better controls. The level designs, which in some ways surpass the original game's, make this another classic. ★★★★★

16 (10) Anna Kournikova Tennis ■ Sports ■ SCE ■ £35
Quirky racquet-play Cute polygonal pros battle it out in a game that's a little more serious than previous *Smash Court Tennis* titles. Sublime controls and an addictive multi-player feature. ★★★★★

17 (-) Ape Escape ■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £40
Satisfying simian search Catching panicky monkeys with nets refreshes the platforming genre, while the coin-collecting sub-quest and bonus games ramp up replayability. The true 3D world looks lovely, the controls are perfect and it's fun and challenging too. ★★★★★

18 (11) WWF: Warzone ■ Fighter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Lardy leotarded lovelies fight it out Moves and characters that make play interesting, and a great create-a-player section that enables you to custom-build your own fighter. Slow, sluggish and lacking variety, but somehow still enjoyable. ★★★★★

19 (-) Player Manager '99 ■ Sports ■ Anco ■ £40
Early proper racing sim Genuinely exciting races with decent speed and excellent tracks, coupled with a good sense of control. Real-time damage, too, but the graphics and lack of options let the game down slightly. ★★★★★

20 (7) Brian Lara Cricket ■ Sport ■ Codemasters ■ £40
Leather-on-willow simulator This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard, but surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ★★★★★

Also on sale...



Fighters

Bloody Roar 2
■ Virgin ■ £40
Animated animal pugilists The ability to transform into gorgeous, speedy beast warriors is a welcome one, but the fighting lacks variety, depth and finesse. ★★★

Evil Zone
■ Titus ■ £40
Anime-themed battles Well-rounded characters and wave upon wave of outlandish Japanese-inspired attacks, but not technical or attractive enough for *Street Fighter*/Tekken fans.★★★

Kensei
■ Konami ■ £45
Polished traditional beat-'em-up Less flash than Namco's *Tekken*, but the wide range of characters and depth of play make this admirably comprehensive. Visuals and humour are lacking, but there're plenty of challenges, and well as opponents who learn. ★★★★★

Marvel Superheroes Vs Street Fighter
■ Virgin ■ £35
Simplistic 2D cartoon combat Good selection of fighters and game modes, but too simplistic and lacking the much-needed Tag mode. ★★

Rival Schools
■ Virgin ■ £30
Teachers and students take to the ring Absolutely mad *Grange Hill*-style fighter, with over-the-top moves and a huge selection of modes and sub-games. Not technically great, but it's a whole heap of fun, thanks to its pleasingly easy-to-pull-off moves. ★★★★★

Soul Blade £
■ Platinum ■ £20
Big weapons fest Replacing the fist-bleeding fights of most fighters with weapon-clattering scraps steeped in folklore. The moves are easier than *Tekken*, but *Soul Blade* still offers some of the fastest, most beautiful beat-'em-up action. An interesting one-player "story" mode maintains the longevity, making the whole package top fun for little money. ★★★★★

Street Fighter Alpha 3
■ Virgin ■ £40
Supremely polished 2D fighter Each fighter comes in three variations, enabling you to pick one whose technique suits you. The addition of a meter showing your defences weakening is inspired, and the inclusion of all your SF faves makes this possibly the most enjoyable SF game in years. ★★★★★

Tekken £
■ Namco ■ £20
The original classic all-rounder This may have been usurped by its progeny, but the first *Tekken* combines slick visuals with a series of moves that would have your mother fainting on the floor. Plenty to do in one-player, and the two-player is only surpassed by its sequels. ★★★★★

Tekken 2 £
■ Namco ■ £40
Slick, pure beat-'em-up action The second in the series is as polished as we've come to expect from Namco, with fights that feel right. The one-player game is engrossing, which is a novelty, and there are plenty of moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth into. ★★★★★

Watch out for | Right about now – games heading into the charts this month.



Speed Freaks
■ SCE ■ £34.99
Mario Kart wannabe for PlayStation A fair attempt to emulate the genius of four-player *Mazza Kart* on PlayStation, but the derivative nature and a few fatal flaws prevent this from being a classic. Slightly fudgy controls, confusing weapons-up-the-bottom antics and a lack of real personality. ★★★



Um Jammer Lammy
■ SCE ■ £34.99
PaRappa sequel that ditches rap for guitar action There aren't many games where you play a girl ewe who has to play a guitar, along with a man with an onion for a head, but *Um Jammer* is up there with the best of them. It's pure nonsense, of course, but more fun than a big bag full of fun. ★★★★★



Point Blank 2
■ SCE ■ £34.99
More bonkers Namco shooting mayhem More of the same from those PlayStation geniuses. Loads more games, a couple of neat two-player options, but the age-old problem of having to shell out for a light gun, or possibly even two. Already furnished with a gun? Then add a star on to these four. ★★★★★



G-Police 2
■ SCE ■ £40
The futuristic flight sim/blaster hybrid returns (hence the '2') Great new vehicles and weapons, easy learning curve, stacks of missions, but all a bit familiar. A thoroughly entertaining retreat of *G-Police* – a *Phantom Menace* to a *New Hope* if you will. Which is no bad thing. ★★★★★



Capcom Generations
■ Virgin ■ £40
A bunch of your '80s favourites on four CDs *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, *Commando*, *MERCs* and 10 others sparkling gems for the retro-nut's pleasure. Incredibly playable, great variety, but, inevitably, some repetition. *Generations* is not so much a stroll down memory lane as a full-on street party. ★★★★★

Tekken 3

■ Namco ■ £45 **Adept slapping** Major improvement to the prequels in almost every way – graphically flawless and the new moves add something for both newcomers and veterans alike. A wide variety of sub-games, bonuses and hidden characters, as well as a frightening difficulty level, means there's so much to do that it's almost the *Mario* of fighting games. But without the cute stuff, obviously. ★★★★★

WCW/nWo Thunder

■ Eidos ■ £35 **Woeful wrestling tedium** Slow, unresponsive and ugly. ★

WWF Warzone

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

X-Men Vs Street Fighter

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Speedy collision of comic and coin-op** The great controls and 2D fighters that you'd expect from the long-running *Street Fighter* series, but otherwise repetitive, jerky and a bit shallow. ★★★



Racers

360

■ Smart Dog ■ £40 **Futuristic watery speeding** Hoverboats and weapons are combined in a confusingly-put-together racer. ★★

Big Air

■ EA ■ £40 **Snowboarding shenanigans** Six characters and six courses, but patchy, slow and unrealistic. ★★

Bomberman Fantasy Racing

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Slow, tricky animal racing** Vicious handling prevents you exploiting the power-ups to the full, but the two-player mode is maniacal fun. ★★★

Colin McRae Rally

■ Codemasters ■ £45 **See "Top 20"**

Cool Boarders 2

■ SCE ■ £20 **Snowboarding for the masses** The racing game for the smart arse, with increasingly difficult stunts. The two-player mode and cocky computer opponent make this a vast improvement on the previous snowboard instalment. ★★

Destruction Derby 2

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Smash-heavy racing sequel** Your opponents are happiest when slamming into your backside, so reaching the finish without your car falling apart is an achievement. Making good on almost all of the faults of the original, this sequel is fast, includes varied well-designed tracks and offers more crashes than you'd get from your average PC. The chaotic nature of the races doesn't suit everyone. ★★★★★

Driver

■ GT Interactive ■ £39.99 **See "Top 20"**

Formula 1 '98

■ Psygnosis ■ £35 **Purportedly accurate driving sim** Inadequate views, horrendous handling and a physics engine that's simply wrong. ★★

Gran Turismo

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Max Power Racing

■ Infogrames ■ £40 **Fun boy free-wheeling** Fancy graphics and a good impression of speed can't save this from its over-long tracks, finger-denching difficulty and nagging faults. ★★★

MicroMachines v3

■ Codemasters ■ £20 **Tiny cars race around your living room** The old top-down 2D game souped-up into pseudo-3D, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a perfect overhead camera, plenty of amusingly behaved vehicles and a multi-player game that's as beautifully designed as Philipa Forrester. The speed can be bewildering, but that's part of the charm. ★★★★★

Moto Racer 2

■ EA ■ £40 **Barely improved motorcross sequel** The track editor adds longevity above the 32 built-in tracks and 16 bikes, but the inadequate handling and badly planned difficulty curve cut short any enjoyment. ★★

NASCAR 99

■ EA ■ £40 **Circular-track banger racing** Thirty-seven cars, 17 tracks and a unique arcade-style feel to the racing. A good solid simulation, despite the awry handling. ★★★

Need For Speed: Road Challenge

■ EA ■ £40 **Competent cop-chasing** Once the novelty of being chased by the Fuzz has worn a bit thin, even the wealth of licensed cars can't make up for the game's simplicity. ★★★

Rally Cross 2

■ SCE ■ £35 **Tedious off-road racing** Three cars on just three types of terrain, too many crashes and awful handling. ★★

Ridge Racer Revolution

■ Namco ■ £20 **Rocket-speed arcade racing** Improves upon its prequel, with a polished (solitary) track, faster speeds, better handling and gorgeous, rendered scenery. The racing's fast, satisfying and difficult to master, with opposition cars that are only too happy to overtake you after every minor mistake you make. The all-new *Ridge 4* surpasses it in every way, however. ★★★★★

Ridge Racer Type 4

■ Namco ■ £40 **Super-fast racing** Thrills come from the breathtaking speed at which the eight gorgeous tracks rush past and the brilliance of the two-player mode. Master the powerslide and you'll unlock 320 unique cars. If you're after realism, though, *Gran Turismo* is for you. ★★★★★

Rollcage

■ Psygnosis ■ £40 **Chaotic futuristic racing** The crisp visuals, block-rocking beats and cars that can flip, turn and spin to accommodate any terrain and contour are great, but the speed and ease with which you will crash create a very random, unfair feel. Otherwise, it's an original and exhilarating race. ★★★★★

Running Wild

■ SCE ■ £35 **The first PlayStation on-foot racing game** Run around uninspiring tracks. *Very slowly.* ★

Sports Car GT

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Glitchy, ugly driving mess** Satisfying handling and a good choice of cars, but woeful presentation. ★★

Street Racer

■ Ubisoft ■ £20 **Mario Kart-style comedy** Awful. ★

Street Skater

■ EA ■ £40 **Tarmac skateboarding** Poor controls and tiresome simplicity. ★

Tank Racer

■ Grolier ■ £40 **Jerky Caterpillar-tracked racing** Even 22 tracks of destructible scenery can't make racing these clunky tanks enjoyable. ★★

TOCA Touring Car Championship

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Early proper racing sim** Genuinely exciting races with decent speed and excellent tracks, coupled with a good sense of control. Real-time damage too, but the graphics and lack of options let the game down slightly. ★★★★★

TOCA 2

■ Codemasters ■ £40 **Frighteningly fast driving sim** A garage-full of cars that all handle differently and embrace accurate driving physics. If it wasn't for the difficulty, this would be perfect, with accurate courses and speed that's scary. ★★★★★

Vigilante 8

■ Activision ■ £20 **'70s-influenced destruction driving** Blowing up buildings and cars using '70s vehicles sounds great, but when your reward is just more explosions per level, monotony soon follows. ★★

V-Rally

■ Platinum ■ £20 **The original countryside rallying sim** Even staying on the track is difficult, but with 60 tracks and a wealth of weather conditions that affect them, you'll be happy to stick at it. The addition of Dual Shock rumblings and another car make this Platinum re-release a sound purchase. ★★★★★

V-Rally 2

■ Infogrames ■ £45 **See "Top 20"**

WipeOut 2097

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Face-flapping space-age hover races** A better bet than the original *WipeOut*, as the learning curve is gentler, but the new, more difficult racing class should make veterans weep. It has excellent CPU opposition, more weapons and the twistiest tracks this side of Alton Towers, although – dare we say it – in comparison with some of today's gorgeous offerings, it's starting to look a little rough around the edges. ★★★★★



Sports

Actua Soccer 3

■ Gremlin ■ £30 **Polished pigs bladder kick-a-thon** Pleasingly difficult and wonderfully fluid, producing play that flows like a well-oiled Brazilian back-four. Let down by some occasionally ropey animation, but otherwise this is a solid – if largely unimproved – sequel. ★★★★★

Actua Tennis

■ Gremlin ■ £25 **Proper simulation of ball and racquet** Stilted and basic. ★

All Star Tennis '99

■ Ubisoft ■ £20 **Serious recreation of Henman's hobby** Fast and comprehensive, but the rather inadequate camera makes things difficult. Stick to the multi-player option and "bomb tennis" sub-game to pick up some limited laughs. ★★★★★

Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis

■ SCE ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Bloodlines

■ SCE ■ £40 **Fist-based future-tag** Run between swirly vortexes and beat up opposing teams. Too fast, too simple. ★★

Brian Lara Cricket

■ Codemasters ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Everybody's Golf

■ SCE ■ £35 **Cartoon-style stick-and-ball antics** Simplistic looks, but complex gameplay, with an arcade slant that injects a welcome burst of speed and a host of hidden extras. Great if you don't take golf seriously. ★★★★★

FA Manager

■ Eidos ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

FIFA 99

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Long-running official footy update** All the visual thrills, but it's too easy to score – especially with the super-speedy players – and the developer just doesn't seem to care enough about football. A game that's much more suited to beginners. ★★★

FIFA Road to the World Cup

■ EA Sports ■ £20 **Strong but out-dated football sim** Electronic Arts has once again shelled out for the official FIFA rights, giving you all the official teams, stadia and statistics. There's also an improved game engine for your money. ★★

ISS Pro

■ Konami ■ £20 **Masterful footy sim** There's little reason to buy this, now that its smarter sequel has reached the shelves. Still, with silky play, perfect motion capture, scores of teams and the most intuitive controls this side of a light switch, we couldn't blame you for handing your cash over for this Platinum release. ★★★★★

Jonah Lomu Rugby

■ Codemasters ■ £20 **Oval ball antics** An admirably accurate simulation of the sport, including plenty of options. The only choice for rugby fans. ★★

Knockout Kings

■ EA Sports ■ £35 **Boxing very clever** A simulation of punch-uppery, with a power-bar system to make sure you don't just stab the "Hit" button until your opponent falls. Plenty of modes, a create-a-player section and the chance to meet a virtual Muhammed Ali. Cripes! ★★★★★

Madden NFL 99

■ EA ■ £40 **Admirable US footy sim** Tons of stuff to do and alter, and options to skip the more complicated features. Some splendid motion capture and a bevy of realistic moves are married with a slow-paced feel that will satisfy simmers but not arcadesters. ★★★★★

Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

■ Eidos ■ £20 **Silky smooth wonderboy-licensed play** Ooh, this looks bad, with players skating around the pitch like Torville and Dean. However, you'd be hard pushed to fault *WLS '99* in any other way, because it plays like a dream. The finest details of footy are here with the Liverpoolian Boy Wonder in a starring role, and the intuitive controls, sexy combos and realistic difficulty level make this a fine interpretation. ★★★★★

NBA Live 99

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Well-rounded basketball** Sleek motion capture, proper gurning faces, and Simulation and Arcade modes that should satisfy both proper basketball fans and normal people alike. Rodman aficionados should also be happy with the cornucopia of stats and the create-a-player mode. ★★★★★

NBA Pro '99

■ Konami ■ £40 **Syrupy basketball interpretation** Ridiculously slow. ★

NHL 99

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Ice hockey for mother puckers** Too many goals, married with too little action. Disappointing. ★★

NHL Face Off '99

■ SCE ■ £35 **Complete-but-dull puck-'em-up** Everything's here, from stats to scrapping, but it ain't no fun. ★★

Pool Shark

■ Gremlin ■ £40 **"Baized" on the popular sport** Inexplicably replaces the friendly power-bar with a click-at-the-right-moment system (à la golf games). Take your 50p pieces down the pub instead. ★★★

Pro 18 World Tour Golf

■ Psygnosis ■ £40 **Complex and challenging pitch-'n'-putt** Accurately modelled courses and a plethora of well-known names, aided by a novel and interesting control system. ★★

Sensible Soccer: European Club Edition

■ GT Interactive ■ £30 **Old-school soccer update** Tedious footy, where shooting and passing are toe-curlingly difficult. ★★

Premier Manager '99

■ Gremlin ■ £40 **Footy management for everyone** Endorsed by Kevin Keegan, this sim features more squads than you'll be able to fit in your brain – including a future-proof European Super-League – and good controls. However, you'll need patience to become the best. ★★★★★

Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Decent fore-play** Easy to pick up and with lots of eye-pleasing real-life courses, *PGA Tour Golf* delivers a realistic, option-heavy simulation. The mechanics of play leave a little to be desired, but it's still worth your readies. ★★★★★

Puma Street Soccer

■ Infogrames ■ £40 **Abysmal five-a-side soccer** Badly put together and too fast. ★

Triple Play 2000

■ EA Sports ■ £35 **Innovative baseball sim** New batting and pitching ideas give refreshing results. The atmosphere is well-realised, and the clear player information makes detailed play possible. ★★★★★

UEFA Champions League '98/'99

■ Eidos ■ £40 **Accomplished European Cup football sim** Past and present Euro teams are all here, and there are bucketfuls of realistic moves available to string into combos. Exciting, but suffers from stodgy gameplay. ★★★★★

Virtual Pool

■ Interplay ■ £20 **Ball-cue collisions** Accurate, but you'd be better with *Pool Shark* – this isn't as extensive or attractive. ★★



Platformers

A Bug's Life

■ Disney ■ £40 **Ant-based adventures** Crude animation and repetitive play. ★

Akuji The Heartless

■ Eidos ■ £40 **Voodoo-inspired puzzly platformer** A creepy *Tomb Raider*-style romp with switch-pushing and jumping. Plenty of graphical wizardry, but tedious, simple gameplay. ★★

Ape Escape

■ SCE ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Batman & Robin

■ Acclaim ■ £30 **Lacklustre platform/puzzle tie-in** A mixture of various gaming styles that doesn't gel. ★

Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

■ Infogrames ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Crash Bandicoot 2

■ SCE ■ £20 **Pseudo 3D antics. Again** Control a mad marsupial as he runs into the screen, collecting apples. The linear level format and ease of the gameplay don't help. ★★

Croc

■ Platinum ■ £20 **3D crocodile runabout** Lovely looking cutesy platformer that's ruined by odd camera angles, poorly designed levels and a complete lack of originality. It's less of a true 3D environment than you're led to believe, too. ★★

Croc 2

■ Fox Interactive ■ £40 **Rescue Gonk-like Gobbos** Flick your tail, dash and jump about. *Croc 2* is tricky and woefully unoriginal, but also good looking and relatively involving. ★★

Gex 3D: Enter The Gecko

■ Take 2 ■ £20 **Lizard-lover's plat-fest** It's after *Mario's* crown, but *Gex's* running, jumping and collecting exploits don't feel as free-roaming as the Big *M*. Still, the level design almost matches Nintendo's and there are 125 moves at your disposal. ★★★★★

Heart of Darkness

■ Infogrames ■ £20 **Typically uninspired 2D platform fare** The detailed backdrops and cinematic cut scenes can't rescue the frustrating trial-and-error gameplay. ★★

Jurassic Park The Lost World

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Dino Spiel** Control your dino trudging across a dull 3D landscape. ★★

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**



Shooters

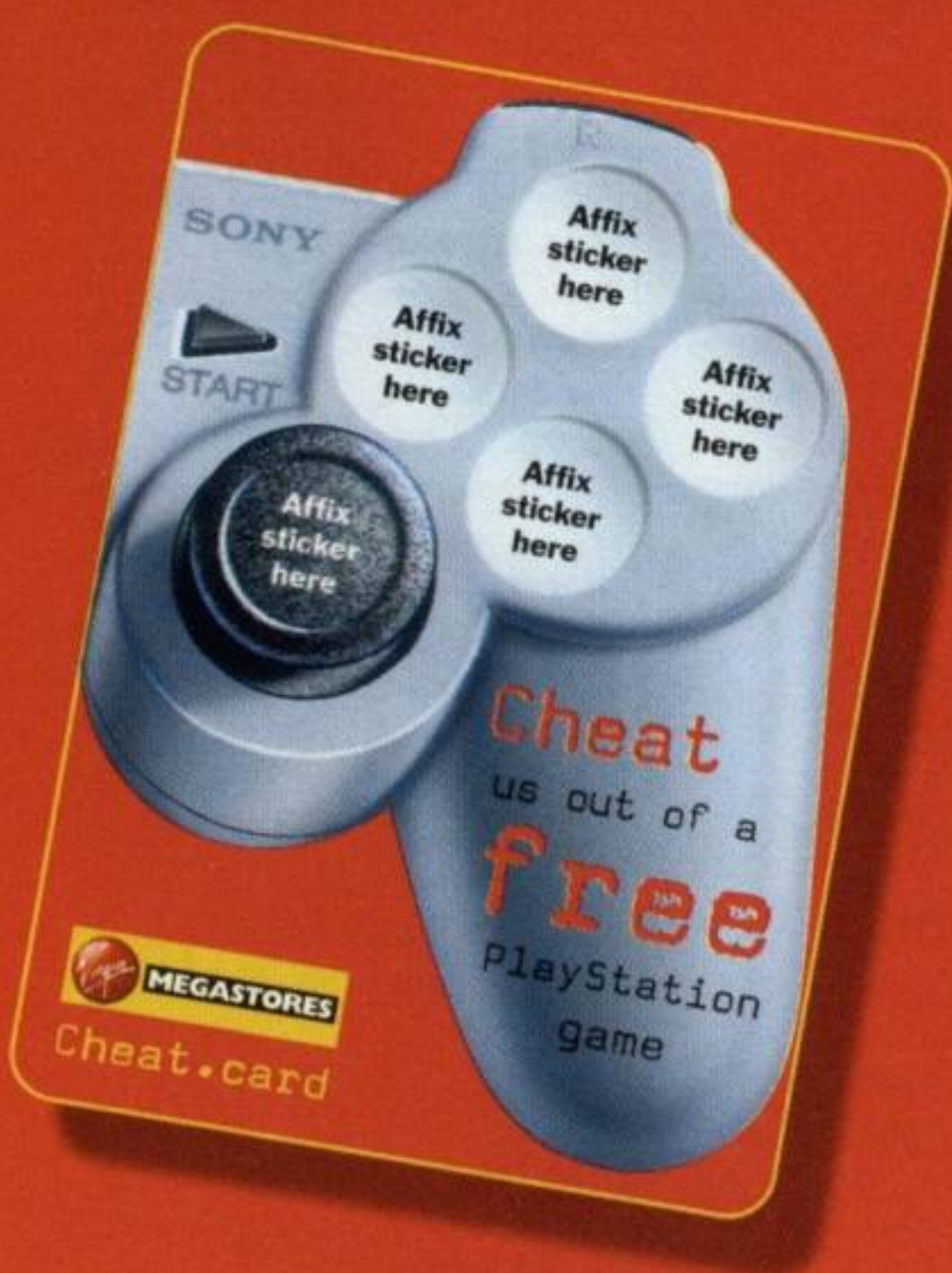
B-Movie

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **'50s-themed alien shooter** A 3D shoot-'em-up – it's mission-based, with cartoony alien ships. Odd controls and a high difficulty level ensure frustration. ★★★★★

Colony Wars: Vengeance

■ Psygnosis ■ £35 **Epic space battle** This sequel takes you and your spaceship through a variety of first-person missions and all-out battles. It's methodical, but with enough realism to make *Star Wars* fans wet their pants. ★★★★★

Dare
you
cheat
on
me?



DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION AT



THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE

Speedball Blues

Guess what? Rich Pelley plays a game and nearly fails all his exams. Again...

■ Atari ST ■ Futuristic sports sim ■ 1991 ■ Renegade



■ Regular readers of *Arcade* – Hi, Mum! – will be aware that my brain becomes particularly susceptible to videogaming addictions at the worst possible moment: exam time. *Mario Kart* on the SNES became as integral a part of my GCSE “revision” as parallel circuits and oxbow lakes. And when I should have been taking my A-Level Chemistry Paper 3, I was actually playing Amiga game *Parasol Stars* instead. What a chump.

The final Game That Ruined My Education came around a year ago, while I was at university. I was eager to appear cool by hanging around the Arts library talking to girls to hide my secret shame – that I was doing a geeky science degree. Having a computer back at my house, full of dossy art students, wouldn’t have fitted at all. So, should I need to use a computer, I’d have to sneak into the computer centre in the heart of Science City under the cover of darkness.

That was until I started my dissertation (Recent

Developments in High Temperature Non-Cuprate Superconductors – I told the girls it was on Darwin’s Theories into The Development of Children – to milk my caring side), and working from home became a must. So with a lack of a PC, there was nothing left to do but dust off my Atari ST.

But how could I resist? There it was, on the same disk as *WordPlus*. My Bug joystick still worked, even.

It was a toss-up. Trying not to appear too much of a keener by working on my dissertation behind closed doors; but longing to rack-up the goals in the Greatest Mix of Futuristic Basketball and Soccer in the World... Ever – *Speedball 2*.

At a whopping 10% off your mark a day, I owed them. It was more than a week late, and rated as the most rushed investigation into non-cuprate superconductors ever. But, somehow, no one noticed. I passed my degree with flying colours. And I landed a job on *Arcade*.

Doom £

■ GT Interactive ■ £20

Seminal corridor shoot-'em-up Superb conversion of id’s breakthrough first-person shooter. Play a squaddie traipsing through future-dungeons, making bloody holes in whatever you meet. The graphics are out of date, but this enables the excellent level design and gameplay to shine. ★★★★★

Duke Nukem: Time to Kill

■ GT Interactive ■ £25

Time-travelling alien blast Twelve levels of killage seen from a *Tomb Raider*-style perspective. It’s fun for a while, but then gets repetitive, dodgy looking and difficult to control. ★★

Omega Boost

■ SCEE ■ £35

Flashy 3D blaster Tasty graphics – check. Sore thumb from frenzied blasting – check. But the absence of power-ups and the sheer difficulty of it all disappoint. ★★

Point Blank

■ SCEE ■ £35

Lightgun shooting fun Only the Japanese could create a shooting gallery featuring ninjas and piranhas, stick in a four-player mode and still ensure that it has the most weirdly addictive gameplay ever. Laugh your socks off. ★★★★★

Retro Force

■ Psygnosis ■ £35

Unimaginative aliens attack Old-skool vertical shoot-'em-up that’s just plain dull. ★★

R-Types

■ Virgin ■ £30

Classic scrolling shoot-'em-up *R-Type* parts one and two; emulated rather than converted, and therefore closer than close to the originals. Lovely level designs, perfect power-ups and unbridled addictiveness, squeezed into your little portable TV. ★★★★★

Soviet Strike £

■ EA ■ £20

Chopper war missions Pilot a helicopter and fire guns at buildings, tanks and installations. Hard, but fun. ★★

Syphon Filter

■ SCEE ■ £39.99

See “Top 20”

Time Crisis £

■ Namco ■ £20

Trigger-happy first-person fun The innovative “duck and reload” option is present, as are the G-Con 45 lightgun and the host of bad guys. Both make for exciting, bloody and flowing play that relies on pure speed. With bonus levels available if you persevere, don’t worry about the longevity, just feel the power. ★★★★★



Strategy/God

Asterix

■ Infogrames ■ £40

Real-time war with Gaulish hero Tiresome and sluggish. ★

Civilization II

■ Activision ■ £40

Engrossing empire-building and battling Construct prehistoric cities and nurture them and their inhabitants through the ages, while dishing death on your competitors. Encompasses politics, trading, exploration and war to create unrivalled depth. ★★★★★

Command & Conquer £

■ Virgin ■ £20

The original real-time strategy A complicated, but accessible, point-and-click war sim, where you manage resources and decide where and when to send men to their deaths. C&C’s solid and involving nature has made it extremely popular, but sadly, it’s dated. The design of the levels and speed of the action make it a bargain, though, so we advise you to get it in while you can. ★★★★★

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

■ Virgin ■ £30

Update of the original real-time strategy game Better graphics and a brilliant, though often neglected, link-up game. A fine strategy title with loads of missions, but it’s difficult to play without a mouse. ★★★★★

Command & Conquer: Retaliation

■ Virgin ■ £40

The Soviets vs Europe Missions from the PC-based *Counterstrike* and *Aftermath* versions of *C&C: Red Alert*, and 100 two-player missions to play with a link cable. Clicking on and navigating your troops has been made a lot easier, and the graphics are clearer too, but it’s difficult, making it more suited to seasoned C&C fans. ★★★★★

KKND: Crossfire

■ Infogrames ■ £40

Lacklustre post-nuclear skirmish Frustratingly difficult point-'n'-clickery with a unique two-player mode. ★★

Populous: The Beginning

■ EA ■ £40

Be a god for the day This translation of the PC title, sees you forming tribes that worship you and destroy your enemies. It’s easily controlled, big enough to last weeks, pleasingly involving and the 3D visuals create a great sense of freedom. ★★★★★

Theme Hospital

■ EA ■ £30

Medical resource management This build-your-own-hospital-and-cure-comedy-illnesses strategy pales next to C&C. The lack of a PSX mouse can make it a sod to play. ★★

Warzone 2100

■ Eidos ■ £35

Futuristic war sim The excellent controls, which complement the on-screen menus perfectly, help lift this above the usual C&C clones. With long-lasting missions, deliciously large weapons and explosions, and a pleasing depth of play, this is the PSX’s best strategy game. ★★★★★



RPGs

Final Fantasy VII £

■ SCEE ■ £20

See “Top 20”

Guardian’s Crusade

■ Activision ■ £40

Isometric, action-based story Fast-moving, with plenty of interaction, in the form of chatting, killing and spell-casting. The interesting “raise-your-own-dragon” sub-game is great. ★★

Hard Edge

■ Sunsoft ■ £40

Boring Resident Evil-alike Horribly complicated maps in this tedious puzzle-solver. ★★

Monkey Hero

■ Take 2 ■ £35

Adventuring monkey magic Role-playing, fighting and puzzling huddled together, but with far too much bog standard switch-flipping and object-moving. ★★



Adventures

Metal Gear Solid

■ SCEE ■ £40

See “Top 20”

Resident Evil 2

■ Capcom ■ £35

Scary sequel to the original gore-fest The ability to control two characters is gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation, but *RE2* is better than the original in all other respects. The improved script and acting (and the wildly increased zombie count) will scare your skin off, and the cut-scenes, once again, are the highlight of a polished and creepy package that will leave you scared to be alone at night. ★★★★★

Silent Hill

■ Konami ■ £39.99

See “Top 20”



Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 4

■ Taito ■ £30

Bubble-bursting brilliance Fantastically addictive puzzle game, where the simple – yet infuriating – aim is to match coloured bubbles. It’s as easy to pick up and painfully compulsive as previous versions. The bubble-link feature makes for faster, more frenetic play, and the story mode levels add some novel bits, too. Don’t bother laying out cash for this if you already own an earlier version, though. ★★★★★

Devil Dice

■ SCEE ■ £35

Cuboidal conundrums This beautifully presented 3D dice-based version of dominoes isn’t for the casual gamer, but it’s tough to put down once you get your head around the astonishing speed of the thing and the utterly soul-numbing creepiness of the central evil pixie characters. ★★★★★

Kula World

■ SCEE ■ £35

Indecently addictive ball-based puzzler Ball-rolling-impossibly-on-floating-maze game. As head-bending as it sounds, but you’ll be hooked, thanks to the well-designed controls and tricky levels. ★★★★★

Sentinel Returns £

■ Psygnosis ■ £10

Classic ‘80s strategy puzzler Absorb the Sentinel, who sits high atop the 3D checkerboard landscape. A successful retro update at long last, with the graphics all kept deliberately low-key to maintain the feel of the original. ★★★★★

Super Puzzle Fighter II

■ Virgin ■ £20 **Superb Tetris-style puzzling** Mix *Tetris* and *Bust-A-Move*, add *Street Fighter* kiddie characters and you have one of the best puzzlers of all time, where successful moves affect an on-screen battle. It's insanely addictive in two-player, but try one-player mode and you'll have the family banging on your bedroom door, wondering where on Earth you've been for the past month. ★★★★★

Swing

■ Software 2000 ■ £35 **Quest to match coloured balls** Leisurely variant of *Bust-A-Move*, where the balls swing at gravity's whim. It's an insanely addictive experience, but you'll need patience to master it. ★★★

Trap Runner

■ Konami ■ £40 **Devious split-screen skirmishes** Set traps for your enemy to stumble upon in an isometrically viewed arena. *Trap Runner* is tension-packed and polished, although the tricky controls could initially confuse. ★★★



Party

Bomberman

■ Virgin ■ £40 **Old-skool bomb-throwing maze game** Tiny characters in a top-down TNT tournament. It looks years out of date, but the wealth of power-ups and extensive options add to the already addictive play. The loading delays are particularly annoying, though. ★★★★★



Misc

Aironauts

■ Red Storm ■ £35 **Novelty hang-gliding challenges** Good, straightforward tasks to pull off in your soaring craft – including destroying enemy mines and flying through hoops – but it all tires quickly. ★★★

Die Hard Trilogy

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Three action games in one** Excellent value for money, this triple bundle includes a *Tomb Raider*-style shooter, a *Time Crisis*-like and a driving game. Effort has been expended on each section, and it's tricky enough to last you for ages. ★★★★★

Grand Theft Auto

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

GTA: London 1969

■ Take 2 ■ £20 **Cockney-style '60s add-on** A London setting, 32 new missions and 30 new cars comprise this mission pack for *GTA*. The missions are open-ended and the new-look London visuals are splendid, but the fiddly controls and overhead perspective ruin the fun that comes through simply driving about. ★★★

Music: Music Creation for The PlayStation

■ Codemasters ■ £35 **Custom-built techno** Create tunes by manipulating little chunks of music and pictures. Too difficult for novices and too insulting for pros. Worth contemplating for that post-club chill-out, though. ★★★

Poy Poy 2

■ Konami ■ £40 **Multi-player chuck-a-thon** Run around, pick up stuff and then throw it at your opponents. Funny – especially with friends – but ultimately too confusing. ★★★

Rampage 2 – Universal Tour

■ GT Interactive ■ £35 **B-movie-style monster mash** Dull, repetitive smash-'em-up nonsense. ★

Rugrats

■ THQ ■ £40 **Faithful but poor cartoon tie-in** Confusing controls and flawed camera angles ruin this odd puzzle-oriented animated adventure. It seems too complicated for children, yet too simple and repetitive for grown-ups. Avoid it. ★★

SECONDHAND BARGAINS | Found one of these for a bargain price? Grab it now!

Dead or Alive

■ SCEE **Slick high-res beat-'em-up** Barren-looking, but with quick-as-you-like visuals, this is a slick deviation from the more usual *Tekken*-style fighting, with its clever use of counter-attacks and emphasis on grabbing your adversary and throwing them into the heavens. ★★★★★

Fade to Black

■ EA **Over-the-shoulder space-age adventure** Looking its age, but still a commendable mix of puzzles, running and shooting. Very good fun for the price. ★★★★★

Klonoa

■ Namco **Cutesy dog jumper** This is more involving than your average platform game. It's well-designed, but you'll finish it far too quickly. ★★★★★

NFL Blitz

■ GT Interactive **US footy simplified and made fun** Abandoning the usual American football style (overloading on thousands of rules and stopping for a rest every other minute) and moving to something that's rather more worthwhile (emphasis on speed, simple controls, usage of fists), this is top fun. ★★★★★

Rage Racer

■ Namco **Face-flapping arcade racing** The third in the *Ridge Racer* series is speedy, good looking and option-laden. This is the definitive racer if you like your cars a bit more "Woa, woah, woaaahhh!" than *Gran Turismo*, with powersliding and rocketing down straights at 100mph all part of the fun. Let down only by the lack of a split-screen option, but the link-up facility goes a long way toward correcting this. ★★★★★

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

■ Capcom **Fast version of the long-running series** Conversion of the first 3D *SF* coin-op, with loads of lovely extra bits chucked in. Excellent speed and good backgrounds, as well the pleasingly familiar moves and style, make this every bit as intuitive as its great predecessors. ★★★★★

Wild Arms

■ SCEE **Huge role-play adventure** A strong RPG, eclipsed by Squaresoft's seminal classic *Final Fantasy VII*. It suffers rather from *FF*'s random battle syndrome, and the slick-but-retro-looking visuals strip away much of the feeling of involvement, but it's still absorbing. ★★★★★

WipEout

■ Psygnosis **Futuristic hovercraft action** The game that made PSX the console of choice, with the soundtrack that helped make gaming cool, but the opposing craft mean you'll need to persevere to succeed. Your reward is the opportunity to career down classic neon tracks, massaging the sensible controls and throwing up your lunch. ★★★★★

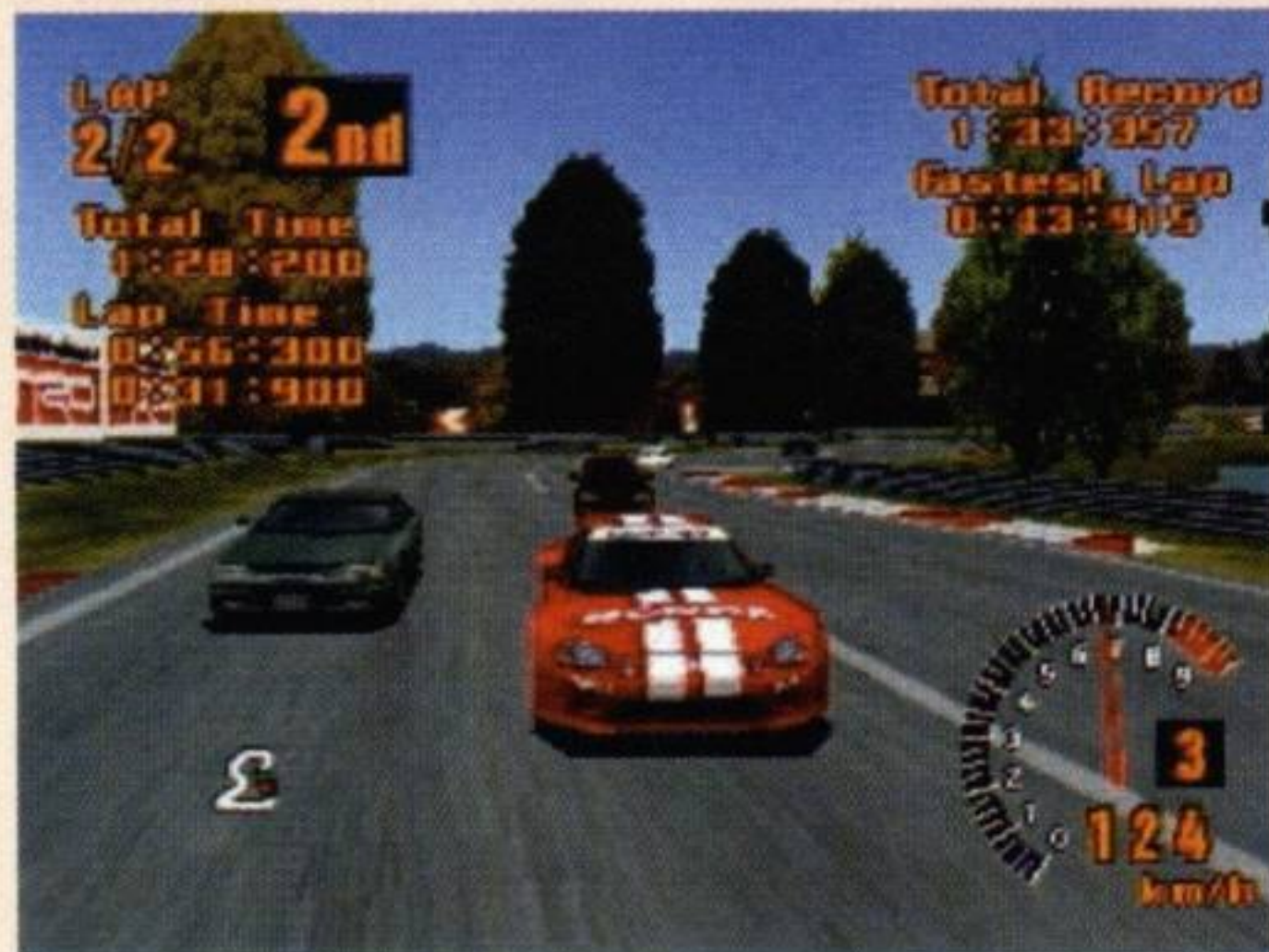
PaRappa The Rapper

■ SCEE **Puppy love songs** It's time to join the rapping dog with "attitude", and tap buttons in time to some outrageously bizarre rap tunes. The selection of songs is fantastic, helping to make this brilliantly funny and completely original. You'll finish the game in an afternoon, but you'll still have tons of fun with it. ★★★★★

SNAP IT UP

Gran Turismo

■ Racer ■ SCEE



■ The game that stunned the games playing public with its silky looks, ground-breaking replays, ridiculously generous array of cars and two-player addition levels never before experienced outside of the traditional sports sim boys' night in – and it can now be snapped up for a blatantly-rude-not-to-£20. And it's not just shallow eye candy that'll have you nipping downstairs at 4.00am for "just one more go". Oh no. The handling and variety between the different car models makes the need to test drive a Nissan Skyline or a Mazda MX5 in real life completely redundant. This is the way arcade racing is supposed to be – fast, furious, realistic and brilliant.

SMACK IT DOWN

Hugo

■ Travesty ■ Media Con



■ Remember those phone-in "videogames" on Saturday morning whereby a nipper nervously whispers "Left. Up. Down." to the ever-so-slightly deaf presenter and the primitive sprite on screen bumbles toward a tomato or something? Even with Zoe Ball in the equation it was dump telly. Now imagine you've just paid £40 for it and the game mechanics and presentation are in no way improved. Yep, that's *Hugo*! Quite possibly the worst game ever released for PlayStation. This is one title that has absolutely no redeeming features. It's a gaming crime and an insult to anyone who's ever even glanced at a platformer. Avoid (in the same way that we avoid clichés) like the plague.

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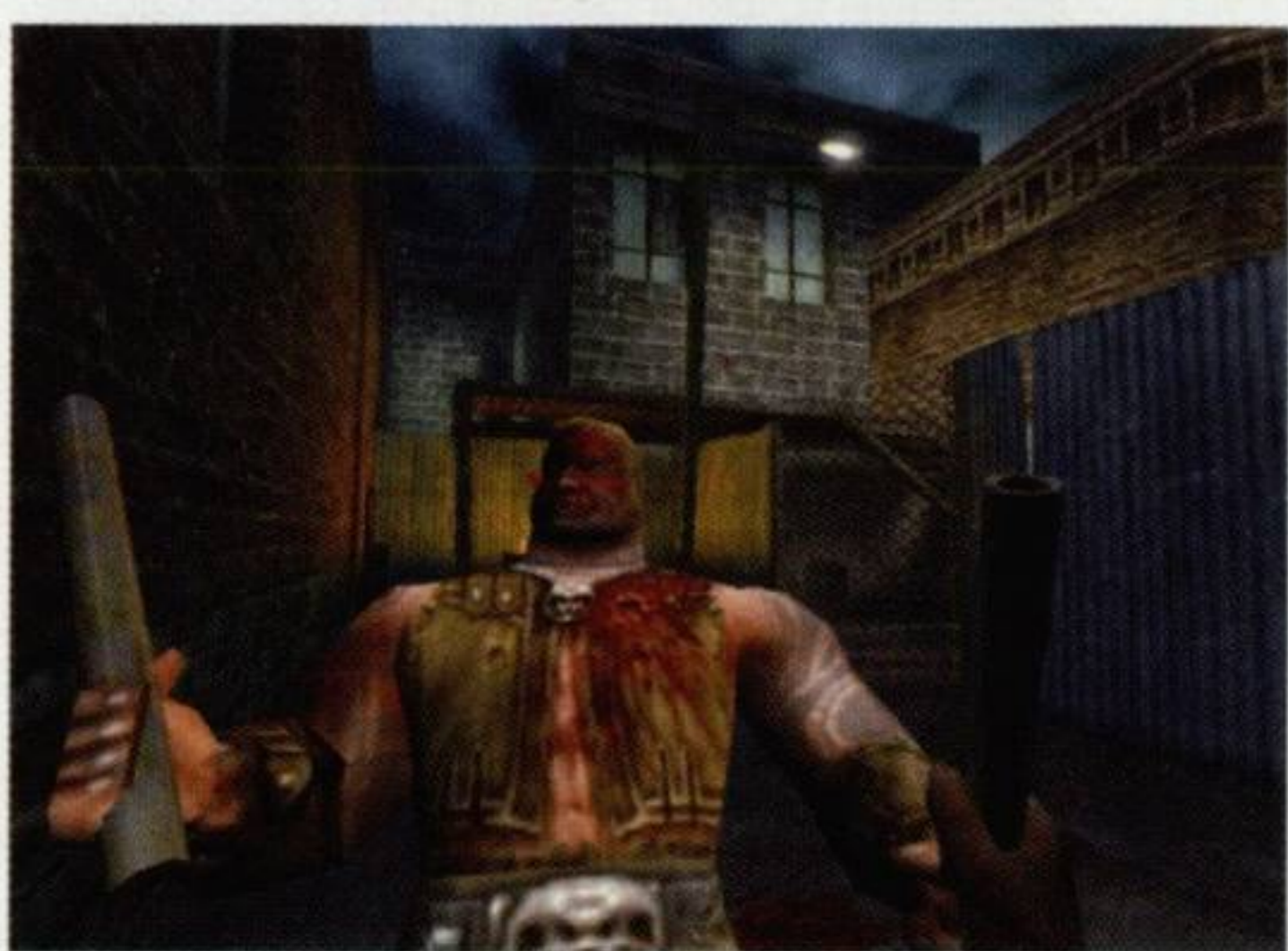
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PC Top 20

Resist everything but temptation – and these gorgeous games.



1 (-) **Kingpin: Life of Crime** ■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Interplay ■ £30
Pop a cap in you momma's ass, bitch Kingpin is unlike any other first-person shooter. This is an ultra-violent, ultra-sweary, retro-futuristic gangster romp. In fact it's funting great, you cusk! One-player is totally immersive and you feel proud to finally be playing a proper "grown-up" game which in fact is utterly childish. Meet the game that's more *Reservoir Dogs* than comedy bowling movie. ★★★★★



2 (-) **Alien vs Predator** ■ Shoot-'em-up ■ EA ■ £40
She's a bitch, he's invisible and they're expendable So much more than a *Quake* clone. Atmospheric, gorgeous, truly frightening, bloody hard. Play as a marine and your motion tracker will beep in constant panic – worth the asking price alone. ★★★★★



3 (-) **Hidden and Dangerous** ■ Strategy ■ Take 2 ■ £40
World War II-themed strategic shooting Lead SAS assassins through 23 missions. Masterful mission design and tense gameplay (aided by the realism of the game environment), make for a superb action-strategy game. The limited multi-player lets it down a little. ★★★★★

4 (-) **Dungeon Keeper 2** ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £34.99
Prepare to unleash the beast within This strategy masterpiece bubbles and seethes with a pitch-black humorous atmosphere. And it's non-repetitive! If you're going to open one intellectual bottle this year, *Dungeon Keeper 2* is really the one to savour. ★★★★★

5 (1) **Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace** ■ Adventure ■ LucasArts ■ £35
Faithful movie tie-in Run, jump, swing and lightsabre your way around isometric-ish environments, ripped straight from the movie. The camera angle is unhelpful, the graphics "okay", and the puzzles tedious – pushing switches and cutting robots in half with your glorified strip-bulb is about it. ★★★

6 (15) **Championship Manager 3** ■ Sport ■ Eidos ■ £30
Out-coach Hoddle Sixteen global leagues, 35,000 players and fine detail make this the definitive management title. There's a sensible control system, your decisions affect every match and the interface works a treat. A comprehensive tactics editor too. ★★★★★



7 (-) **Discworld Noir** ■ Adventure ■ GT Interactive ■ £35
Pratchett's finest gets the 3D treatment A tossed salad of murderous movie moments. Still cursor-driven, but thankfully now in 3D to liven things up somewhat. Sadly, as a graphic adventure game it's too laborious to truly entertain. ★★★

8 (5) **Star Wars Episode 1: Racer** ■ Racer ■ Activision ■ £35
Anakin takes to the track The 25 courses are varied and pleasingly stomach-churning, and the speed is mind-blowing, but the complicated controls and detached hovering feel means it doesn't work all that well. ★★★

9 (-) **Total Annihilation Kingdoms** ■ Strategy ■ GT ■ £35
Retreat into the realms of fantasy A sequel of sorts to the innovative *Total Annihilation* that suffers from being too derivative, *Kingdoms* not only looks tired and dated, but struggles on even the most pumped-up PC. An anachronistic relic. ★★★

10 (6) **Tomb Raider II** ■ Platformer ■ Eidos ■ £20
The luscious Lara returns The original *TRII* plus five new levels. A must-buy if you don't already own a copy, but not good value if you're already initiated. ★★★★★

11 (7) **Rollercoaster Tycoon** ■ Strategy ■ Microprose ■ £40
Build a theme park Constructing death-defying rides and keeping the public happy is interesting for a while, but it was all done much better by Bullfrog's *Theme Park*. This is detailed and comprehensive, but also dull and fiddly. ★★★

12 (-) **Outcast** ■ Shooter ■ Infogrames ■ £35
Zelda/Tomb Raider/Half-Life hybrid Starts off dreadfully dull. Moves on to disappointment. And then – when you've finally worked out exactly what's going on – *Outcast* becomes simply brilliant. By no means perfect, but touched with greatness. ★★★★★

13 (9) **Half-Life** ■ Shooter ■ Sierra ■ £35
Stunningly atmospheric first-person shooter Built with a terrifyingly believable environment and logical puzzles, and incorporating mind-bogglingly intelligent bad guys and a decent amount of gorgeous all-out alien-blasting. ★★★★★

14 (20) **Worms** ■ Party ■ Sold Out ■ £5
Gung-ho army squad action Realistic simulation of battles, this time with a mission-based structure. Although it is possible to embark on a crazed killing spree, the true pleasure comes from indulging in the tricky tasks proper. ★★★★★

15 (8) **Norton Anti-Virus** ■ Virus checker ■ Norton ■ £30
Bust those bugs The PC's most popular virus-checker, with an Internet-based update file that's refreshed every week. Making an appearance in the charts again because the *Melissa* e-mail virus is panicking PC owners. ★★★★★

16 (13) **Official Formula 1 Racing** ■ Racer ■ Eidos ■ £40
Challenging racing sim A conversion of the N64's *F1 World Grand Prix*, skewed in favour of providing arcade thrills over strict simulation. Although graphically sparse, *Official's* comprehensive options, good controls and proper 1998 license are right on the button. ★★★★★

17 (3) **Star Trek: Birth Federation** ■ Strategy ■ Hasbro ■ £35
Civilization for Enterprise fans Turn-based galaxy resource-building in a *Star Trek* style. Its looks and interface are clumsy, but the well-researched depth makes it a challenging experience. Needless to say, if you're not a *Trekker*, you'd best look elsewhere. ★★★

18 (-) **Star Wars Episode 1: Insider's Guide** ■ Misc ■ Activision ■ £25
Another Star Wars fix A multimedia exploration of everything *Episode 1* for those of you who simply can't wait for the video release next year. Ample footage and very well presented. ★★★★★

19 (14) **Blade Runner** ■ Adventure ■ Activision ■ £20
Replicant-hunting adventure Take control of a government bounty hunter, who's on a quest to smack up cyborgs. Stunning 3D worlds, plenty of puzzling to keep you occupied, but the characters are a little shallow. ★★★★★

20 (2) **Championship Manager 2** ■ Sports ■ Eidos ■ £20
Be Kevin Keegan With *Championship Manager 3* imminent, this prequel has appeared at a bargain price. Looking a little out-of-date now, and still far, far too easy, it's nevertheless engrossing and packed with neat details. ★★★★★

Also on sale...



Fighters

Street Fighter Alpha 2 ■ Virgin ■ £15
Famous fighting fun Hopelessly shoddy compared to console versions of the long-running beat-'em-up series. ★★



Racers

Boss Rally ■ Southpeak Interactive ■ £35
See "Watch out for"

Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now ■ Sales Curve ■ £30
Violent pedestrian-squishing car action The controversy addled road-rager is back once again. With the game structure improved to include races, deathmatches and some interesting power-ups, it's a pleasing time-waster. ★★★

Colin McRae Rally ■ Codemasters ■ £45
Convincing hills and dales driver With time and damage your only opponents, this isn't your run-of-the-mill arcade racing game. Plenty of tracks and cars, authentic handling and responsive controls make for realistic driving. ★★★★★

Excessive Speed ■ Iridon ■ £15
Faulty isometric racer Weightless car-handling and unfortunately limited course design. ★

Grand Prix Legends ■ Sierra ■ £25
Historical pointy-nosed vehicle races A pure simulation of 1967 Formula 1 racing that's aimed squarely at enthusiasts. Eleven incredibly difficult courses, five very different cars and suitably realistic physics create a commendable feeling of sitting in the cockpit and moving at trouser-wetting speeds. Difficult to fault, although it's missing some real-life drivers. ★★★★★

Midtown Madness ■ Microsoft ■ £35
Maniacal city streets racing A perfectly-recreated Chicago, its streets packed with intelligent traffic and a heavenly range of vehicles make up a breathlessly exciting racer, where collisions are as involving and exciting as the actual racing. ★★★★★

Monaco Grand Prix ■ Ubisoft ■ £20
Unofficial take on F1 racing A retro '60s mode and the option to play arcade-style or as a simulation are fine, but the 2D scenery and lack of an official licence leave this one on the starting grid. ★★

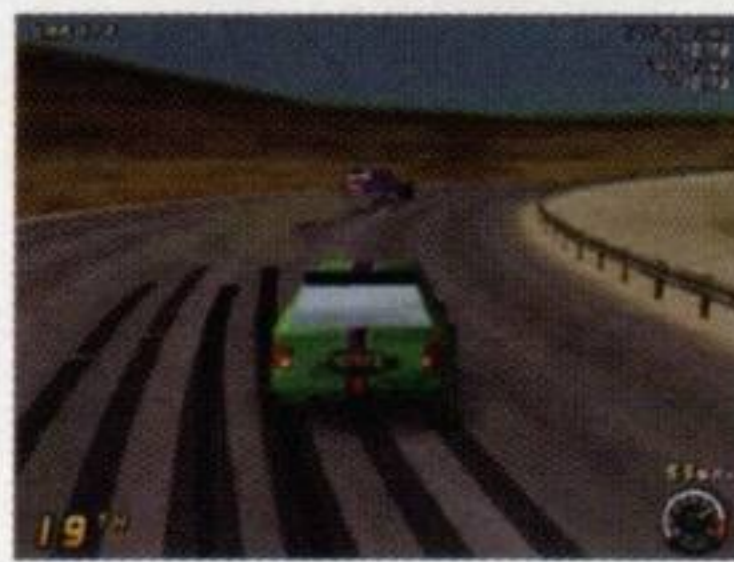
Official Formula 1 ■ Eidos ■ £40
Challenging racing sim A conversion of the N64's *F1 World Grand Prix*, skewed in favour of providing arcade thrills over strict simulation. Although graphically sparse, *Official's* comprehensive options, good controls and proper 1998 license are right on the button. ★★★★★

Rollcage ■ Psygnosis ■ £35
Wacky futuristic WipeOut rival Annoying physics and frustratingly kamikaze racing. ★★

Slipstream 5000 ■ Sold Out ■ £5
Futuristic hovercraft racing High speed racing thrills, but the opponent AI is appalling. ★★

Watch out for

Keep your eyes peeled, these beauties will be hitting the charts soon.



Boss Rally ■ Southpeak Interactive ■ £35
N64 racing port Hovers between mediocre and atrocious, with repetitive tracks and insane opponents. The vehicle handling is impressive, though. ★★★



Thrust, Twist & Turn ■ Take 2 ■ £30
Space-age nightmare riding Network play and a track editor are included, but it's not the rollercoaster ride the developer would have you believe, thanks to unresponsive controls and a general blandness. ★★★



Unreal Tournament ■ GT ■ £40
A pre-Quake III deathmatch revolution Gorgeous, quick, frantic, brilliant. Tremendous AI bots, plenty of big guns, loads of options – everything. But be warned, hefty PC required to do the masterpiece any kind of justice at all. ★★★★★



Tunguska: Legend of Faith ■ Project 2 ■ £40
Frustrating third-person shenanigans Repetitive puzzles and overly simplistic combat. ★



Ed Hunter ■ EMI ■ £25
Linear mouse-click zombie shooter Probably the worst game ever. ★

Sports Car GT

■ EA ■ £35 **Big-licence racing thrills** Shiny graphics and multiple tracks don't necessarily make for a good game. ★★

Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

■ Activision ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Superbike World Championship

■ EA ■ £35 **Motorcycle merriment** The heavily-licensed nature of this biking sim makes it far more realistic than others on the market, but it's unforgiving if you're still struggling with L-plates. Practise, though, for some thrilling racing. ★★★★★

Thrust, Twist & Turn

■ Take 2 ■ £30 **See "Watch out for"**

TOCA 2 Touring Cars

■ Codemasters ■ £35 **Heavily realistic revs** Even with 15 cars jostling for position in front of you, TOCA 2 always looks stunning. The realistic handling makes free-wheeling over the varied courses a pleasure, and the added support races supply extra value-for-money. ★★★★★

V-Rally

■ Infogrames ■ £35 **Aged-looking four-wheeled fun** Slippery handling and average graphics, but there's a decent multi-player mode. ★★

Viper Racing

■ Sierra ■ £35 **Screaming sports cars** Over-realistic car mechanics give way to some frighteningly comprehensive racing, that's added to by great network multi-player options and individual tweaking. ★★★

Virtual Karts 3

■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Rubbishy go-kart racing** Rubbish. ★



Sports

Actua Golf 2

■ Eidos Premier ■ £13 **Competent club-and-ball** A flexible, mostly attractive golf sim, which fails against *Links LS* and *Jack Nicklaus*. The courses are detailed, and the Peter Alliss commentary is excellent, but you'll need frustratingly accurate timing to play successfully. ★★

Actua Soccer 2

■ Eidos Premier ■ £13 **Lacklustre 3D footy** Smooth polygonal characters and an intuitive floating camera, but the perspective is often disorienting, and it's all much too fast. ★★★

Brian Lara Cricket

■ Codemasters ■ £35 **Leather on willow** A plethora of options, up-to-date players and teams, and a selection of real-life grounds, create an authentic feel, although the difficult controls do make for a slightly frustrating game. Otherwise, this is a very successful simulation. ★★★★★

Championship Manager 2

■ Eidos ■ £15 **See "Top 20"**

Championship Manager 3

■ Eidos ■ £30 **Out-coach Huddle** Sixteen global leagues, 35,000 players and fine detail make this the definitive management title. There's a sensible control system, your decisions affect every match and the interface works a treat. A comprehensive tactics editor too. ★★★★★

Cricket World Cup 99

■ EA Sports ■ £30 **EA's official cricket offering** Well-presented, with an authoritative, genuine feel and good control. Strangely, however, CWC omits the option to control fielders, and the behaviour of the bat and ball are highly suspect. ★★

FA Premier League Football Manager 99

■ EA ■ £20 **Well-executed coaching simulation** Including both Scottish and English divisions, and with plenty of coaching and business matters to deal with, this is the most realistic management title out there – your decisions really affect the games. ★★★★★

FIFA 99

■ EA ■ £35 **Long-running official footy update** All the visual frills, but scoring goals is much too easy, especially with the speedy players. More suited to beginners. ★★★

Jack Nicklaus 6: Golden Bear Challenge

■ Activision ■ £40 **Aesthetically pleasing golfing thrills** Six real courses, motion-captured players and the usual mouse controls, but intrusive menus and low difficulty level mean this game can't match up to *Links LS*. ★★

Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Whirlwind-endorsed balls** The large pool room – complete with fruit machine, jukebox and dart board – has atmosphere, but it's the accuracy of the pool itself, and the intelligence of the computer opposition that makes this such an unputdownable outing. ★★★★★

Links LS '99

■ Eidos ■ £35 **Authentic golf action** The visuals are lovely, but it takes time to draw the scenery and – predictably – *Links* uses the same power-bar system as all other golf games. Still, with four courses, eight players at your disposal and 30 modes of play, who's complaining? ★★★★★

Microsoft Golf '99

■ Microsoft ■ £25 **Familiar-looking pitch-and-putt** Six beautiful courses with weather and skill options, and mouse click-driven gameplay that's identical to the last year's version. ★★★★★

NBA Live 99

■ EA ■ £35 **Slam-dunking fun that's very well done** Although it's too easy, because of the limited computer opposition, *NBA Live 99* never pretends to accurately represent basketball. It controls well, looks fantastic and has a wealth of options. ★★★★★

Pool Shark

■ Gremlin ■ £30 **Run-of-the-mill spherical outing** Offers nothing new over other pool games, and stupidly replaces the accepted controls with an unwieldy and annoying power-bar system. Grrrr. ★★

Superbike World Championship

■ EA ■ £35 **Motorcycle merriment** The heavily-licensed nature of this biking sim makes it far more realistic than others on the market, but it's unforgiving if you're still struggling with L-plates. Practise, though, and you'll experience some thrilling racing. ★★★★★

Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Satisfying fore-play** Easy to pick up and with lots of eye-pleasing real-life courses, *PGA Tour Golf* delivers a realistic, option-heavy simulation of the game with the grass. The mechanics of play leave a little to be desired, but it's still worth your readies. ★★★★★

Triple Play 2000

■ EA ■ £35 **Acceptable rounders-for-Americans** An effective fielding system with simplistic and accessible batting and cartoony graphics. It's a little repetitive at times, however. ★★★★★

Viva Football

■ Virgin ■ £35 **Fast-paced ball control** The high speed of the game limits the control you have, although you'll forgive it for its lovingly-crafted looks. ★★★★★

Worldwide Soccer

■ Sega ■ £15 **Football sim from the Saturn** The 3D is ropey and the pace is leisurely, but the tactical nature of the game is satisfying, even if the whole thing's a little easy. ★★



Platformers

A Bug's Life

■ SCEE ■ £35 **Disney-based 3D** Disappointing – a ropey, monotonous run-about. ★★

Starshot: Space Circus Fever

■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Curious French 3D platformer** Leap gaps 'til you're sore. ★

Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace

■ LucasArts ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Tomb Raider II: The Golden Mask

■ Eidos Premier ■ £12 **See "Top 20"**

Treasure Island

■ Crystal ■ £20 **Skull-and-crossbones run-and-jump** Overly-difficult, with ropey graphics. ★

Tunguska: Legend of Faith

■ Project 2 ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**



Shooters

Alien vs Predator

■ EA ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Asteroids

■ Activision ■ £13 **Old-skool rock shooting** Exactly the same as the original. ★

Battlezone

■ Activision ■ £13 **Retro tank battling** The gameplay is lightly based on the classic monochrome tank coin-op, but manages to throw in plenty of novel elements. A well executed mix of in-cockpit combat and resource management, with cleverly designed missions and plenty of variety. ★★★★★

Blood II: The Chosen

■ GT Interactive ■ £25 **First-person bloodiness** 3D wandering with some of the most violent and amusing blood-spillage this side of American wrestling. A strong story and good variety in the map layouts. ★★★★★

Ed Hunter

■ EMI ■ £25 **See "Watch out for"**

Expendable

■ Rage ■ £35 **Old-fashioned top-down scrolling shooter** Impressive graphics, but the 18 levels of blasting are dull. ★★

G-Police

■ Psygnosis ■ £10 **Mission-based future-cop antics** A fine showcase for Psygnosis' 3D technology, but the fiddly gameplay and repetitive missions cost it stars. Tricky handling means you'll need to be patient. ★★

Half-Life

■ Sierra ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Heretic II

■ Activision ■ £20 **3D medieval marauding** A traditional 3D shooter, that sticks the main character on the screen, shoves in a set of offensive and defensive spell-casting, and makes sure that the controls, damaging weapons and graphics are all in place. It works. ★★★★★

Hexen II

■ Activision ■ £10 **Medieval fantasy fire-power** Magical staves and offensive spells replace rocket launchers, but the 3D isn't up to the latest examples and the repeated wandering back-and-forth is frustrating. ★★

Kingpin: Life of Crime

■ Interplay ■ £30 **See "Top 20"**

Klingon Honor Guard

■ Microprose ■ £20 **Pasty-headed Doom-style exploits** A full complement of niggling factors in this *Star Trek*-based 3D shooter – such as suddenly completing levels without realising you were anywhere near the end of a mission – are negated by the sheer intensity of the big-weapon shooting action. ★★★★★

Lander

■ Psygnosis ■ £40 **Futuristic shooting-cum-exploring flight sim** Initially cumbersome controls give way to a frustrating 3D "collect the objects" game that owes a lot to classic title *Thrust*. ★★

Quake II

■ Activision ■ £20 **Seminal first-person baddie-beater** More of one of the finest games in the world. *Quake II* is best played over a network and offers bigger and better (although not cleverer) monsters, massive guns, improved level designs and a customisable game engine. The deathmatch-based sequel, *Quake III: Arena*, is imminent, so you may want to wait for that. ★★★★★

Rainbow Six

■ Red Storm ■ £30 **Stealthy first-person hostage action** Starring SAS-style combat heroes, this third-person shooter is set in real-life terrorist situations. The healthy dose of realism works well and the overwhelming amount of strategy makes it more cerebral than your usual shooter. ★★★★★

Recoil

■ EA ■ £35 **Tanks, guns, guns and more guns** Arcade blast in the purest sense. Trundle your zippy tank through a series of cleverly designed levels, all packed with varied terrain and secret areas. Repetitive after a bit. ★★

Redline

■ EA ■ £35 **Unremarkable walking/driving 3D combo** Wander about with a gun or hop into a fully-armoured car – either way, *Redline's* disgustingly bloody gameplay is shallow when compared to that of either *Half-Life* or *Quake*. ★★

Requiem

■ Ubisoft ■ £40 **Ever-so-violent first-person shooter** Guide a good angel around some hellish environments, smiting all and sundry with your deadly arsenal. *Requiem's* unoriginal, but it has enough tricks up its sleeve to make it worthy of note. The sheer range of deaths make up for the clumsy controls. ★★★★★

Shogo: Mobile Armour Division

■ Microprose ■ £15 **Big robots with guns** A first-person shooter distinguished by both its anime styling and the opportunity it provides to dress up as a robot. Getting about in a hulking great metal suit is easier than you'd think and the visuals complement the intelligent level design. ★★★★★

Sin

■ Activision ■ £20 **Traditional first-person shooting action** The splendid graphics of *Quake II*, the intelligent mission style of *GoldenEye* and the big guns of *Duke Nukem*. But *Half-Life's* done it all better. ★★

South Park

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Horrendously poor TV tie-in** Dreadful first-person shooter. ★

Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance

■ LucasArts ■ £30 **A final outing for the classic universe** At last, you can fly Han Solo's Millennium Falcon, and the intuitive interface and difficult missions make it enjoyable. Add impressive detail and atmosphere, and you get the definitive *Star Wars* blaster. ★★★★★

Trespasser

■ EA ■ £40 **Disappointing dino shooter** Blasting diplodoci is difficult, dull and depressing. ★

Turok 2

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Gloriously gory dino hunting** Identical to N64, this fluid, complex shooter is made too easy by the combination of the PC mouse and the option to save at any time. ★★

Unreal

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **Accomplished and moody first-person blast** The fastest, most enjoyable *Doom* clone on the PC. It's packed with luscious scripted moments, a fully pumped-up atmosphere, strictly intelligent denizens and enough eye candy to rot your lashes, although the slightly poor weapons do sometimes give the feeling that you are defending your corner with nothing more dangerous than a pair of curling tongs. ★★★★★

Wild Metal Country

■ Gremlin ■ £30 **Curious tank-based violence** A convincing physics engine has your tank tracks and shells acting in a very believable manner, and the excellent aural enable you to hear enemy machines trundling towards you. Good weapons and useful controls add to the fun. ★★★★★

Wing Commander: Prophecy Classic

■ EA Classics ■ £15 **Epic space battling** As your brave space pilots face an unidentified alien threat, *Prophecy* presents less monotonous video footage and more 3D shooting than you might expect from this occasionally tedious series. At its best, the game looks like a particularly thrilling episode of your favourite sci-fi TV show, with only the occasional on-screen stats display spoiling an otherwise perfect space opera. ★★★★★



Strategy/God

Caesar III

■ Sierra ■ £35 **Roman-based strategy antics** There are two ways to play this: either as a *Sim City* rip-off where you build your own empire or as a mission-based Roman Emperor-'em-up. It's complicated, and the amount of stuff to do may bring on a "Caesar", but stick at it and you'll find it involving and addictive. ★★★★★

Civilization: Call to Power

■ Activision ■ £35 **Real-time population production** Nurture a society from 4000BC to the future, indulging in all-out war along the way. A lasting challenge, no-one should be disappointed by this. ★★★★★

Civilization 2

■ Microprose ■ £13 **Excellent real-time strategy** Choose an ancient race and set off to conquer the world. Build great cities, arrange political coups, manage your crops and then stomp on neighbouring nations. The interface is showing its age, but this is a must-have if you're serious about PC fun. ★★★★★

Command & Conquer Classic

■ EA Classics ■ £15 **Real-time war veteran** Pick an army, then point-and-click to build up resources and guide your troops into battle. It's since been surpassed, but is ideal if you're a real-time-strategy virgin. ★★

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines

■ Eidos ■ £35 **Take charge of WWII scraps** Real-time strategy with clear isometric graphics, all boosted by the inclusion of units with individual skills and vulnerable soldiers. The emphasis on stealth is absorbing – it's just a pity not to see a multi-player option. ★★★★★

Dark Reign

■ Activision ■ £10 **Another futuristic battle sim** The future-bound setting of this real-time battle title, the intelligence of the missions and the clear interface make for a pleasurable experience. Buy it at this budget price, and you can't go wrong – even if the visuals and sound leave a little to be desired. ★★★★★

Delta Force

■ EA ■ £40 **Gung-ho army squad action** Realistic simulation of battles, this time with a mission-based structure. Although it is possible to embark on a crazed killing spree, true pleasure comes from indulging in the tricky tasks proper. ★★★★★

Dune 2000

■ EA ■ £20 **The granddad of real-time strategy returns** This new build-your-own-empire game houses 27 levels and three "tribes", but it's too simple. ★★

Dungeon Keeper

■ EA Classics ■ £13 **Run your very own dungeon** Manage your murky torture chamber in this strategy-laden epic. Difficult at first, especially with the mix of game modes and cameras, but soon the sense of humour and finely-tuned gameplay will hook you. ★★★★★

Dungeon Keeper 2

■ EA ■ £34.99 **See "Top 20"**

Heroes of Might & Magic III
■ Ubisoft ■ £40 Enjoyable medieval turn-based play As usual, you must develop castles, gather resources and build armies. The 3D graphics are merely functional, but the game is elegantly intuitive, with an expanded combat system that helps supply more than enough strategic challenge. ★★★★★

Hidden and Dangerous
■ Take 2 ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Jeff Wayne's War of The Worlds
■ GT Interactive ■ £20 No one could have believed... that marrying C&C-style combat with a *Risk*-like map could have been so completely dull. ★★

Magic & Mayhem
■ Virgin ■ £20 Swords and sorcery in strategy shocker Featuring knights and wizards, this real-time strategy gives you a great spell-casting, creature-creating environment. The main characters are well-designed, the story sucks you in and the 30 maps are realistic enough to make you feel you're there. ★★★★★

MechCommander
■ Microprose ■ £20 Real-time strategy, management and big robots Based on the *BattleTech* board game, but a strategic step away from the action of previous *Mechwarrior* games, *Commander* boasts clearly laid out logistics, intricate detail and superb level design. ★★★★★

Mechwarrior 3
■ Hasbro ■ £35 Giant robots in Earth-shattering battles Sophisticated strategy, hot first-person robot-on-robot action, and atmosphere so dense you'll have trouble breathing. Dubious enemy AI can't ruin the beautifully complex robot wars. ★★★★★

Populous: The Beginning
■ EA ■ £30 Omnipotence thrills You're a god! Build huts, breed warriors and braves, get new spells to alter the land, fight and conquer enemies, and all that. Essentially the original all over again, but it's a lot easier and, of course, it's all 3D. You'll be playing for hours. ★★★★★

Railroad Tycoon II
■ Take 2 ■ £30 Comprehensive train-track management An improvement on the original, with financial management and train direction given more emphasis at the expense of tedious railway construction. There's a pot full of time zones and trains to play with, and the range of options leaves you with scope to customise the game. Chuffing great. ★★★★★

Rival Realms
■ Digital Publishing ■ £30 Hefty dose of swords and sorcery A reasonably happy marriage of real-time strategy and role-playing. The fiddly controls and character intelligence mess it up bad, though. ★★★

Rollercoaster Tycoon
■ Microprose ■ £40 See "Top 20"

The Settlers III
■ Blue Byte ■ £35 Sim City-style strategy This threequel enables you to build cities for a variety of distinct races, and then resource-manage until you're blue in the face. The combat isn't up to scratch, but it's beautifully designed and fine-tuned. ★★★★★

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri
■ EA ■ £35 A new beginning Re-create Earth's society with several clicks of a mouse. It looks dull, but offers endless challenge and is full of details that'll keep you on the edge of your seat. ★★★★★

Sid Meier's Gettysburg!
■ EA Classics ■ £15 Re-live obscure American battles Sid Meier turns out another fun, real-time strategy game. Take control of either side in the American Civil War. There're equal measures of good, head-hurting strategy and all-out shooting action. ★★★★★

Sim City
■ EA ■ £15 Construct 'til you're sore A timeless classic that does without pretty graphics and over-the-top complexity, but packs in simplistic gameplay that's as engrossing as anything available in its younger siblings. Play is more difficult without the pages of help on offer in *Sim City 2000* and *3000*, but you should know the drill by now. ★★★★★

Sim City 2000
■ EA Classics ■ £15 Classic build-'em-up Extremely intuitive to play, but hard to master. Design a town from an isometric 3D perspective, allocate funding to transport and policing, then watch it flourish or fall apart. It's slow and unattractive, but also creative and pleasingly open-ended. ★★★★★

Sim City 3000
■ EA ■ £35 City-'em-up Initially disappointing, but lurking underneath the familiar features are some far more intuitive controls, and the joy of seeing your creation grow. There are none of the battles you'll see in so many strategy titles, but *Sim City* is still old-fashioned fun. ★★★★★

Starsiege Universe
■ Sierra ■ £45 Pleasingly violent robot-battling Two games – *Starsiege*, which packs in a bewildering array of mech-customising options, and *Starsiege Tribes*, a multi-player first-person shooter that combines weapon construction and tactical teamwork brilliantly. ★★★★★

Star Trek: Birth of The Federation
■ Hasbro ■ £35 See "Top 20"

Star Wars: Supremacy
■ LucasArts ■ £10 Write your own plot R2-D2-with-the-top-removed bin full of strategies, with complex gameplay. ★★

Total Annihilation
■ GT Replay ■ £15 Futuristic strategy nonsense More intense than your C&Cs and the like, and as easy to use as an inflatable sheep (straightforward for beginners and yet challenging for experts), the battles are great and there are plenty of additions available on the Web. ★★★★★

Total Annihilation Kingdoms
■ GT ■ £35 See "Top 20"

Uprising 2
■ Ubisoft ■ £35 Failed strategy-action hybrid Be a tank driver. Too long-winded. ★★

Warcraft
■ Sold Out ■ £5 Wizards and warriors Amusing yet complex, *Warcraft* has long been bettered, but this re-release still provides some challenging and atmospheric real-time strategy, with all kinds of wizards and knights at your disposal. ★★★★★

Wargasm
■ Infogrames ■ £20 Ultra-realistic war sim With graphics that'll have your family convinced you've taken to watching videos of the recent Gulf-type incident, and the option to control battles from either the squaddies' boots or the commander's chair, *Wargasm* is an extensive death-'em-up. ★★★★★

RPGs

Baldur's Gate
■ RPG ■ £35 Dungeons and dragons Control a motley band of thieves, elves and wizards in this old-fashioned role-playing game. The controls take time to get the hang of, but it's choc-a-block with sub-quests, exciting real-time combat and some impressive isometric 3D graphics. ★★★★★

Fallout 2
■ Interplay ■ £35 Old-skool RPG As you find your way around this apocalyptic city, you'll be shocked by the isometric 3D, turn-based combat and an overload of stats, but *F2* will still win you over with its simplicity. The intelligent unfolding of the plot merely adds to the pleasure. ★★★★★

Final Fantasy VII
■ Eidos ■ £20 PlayStation's best RPG arrives on PC A great story, lavish graphics and brilliant selection of spells. It's a little confusing, rarely enabling you to see your opponents before you get into a fight, but put this down to Japanese quirkiness and you're on to a winner. ★★★★★

King's Quest: Mask of Eternity
■ Candant ■ £30 Third-person romp A graphically impressive game that attempts to disguise its RPG nature by using fancy effects. Sadly, the combat and puzzle-finding action give the game away. Still, it's approachable, easy to use and fun. ★★★★★

Adventures

Curse of Monkey Island
■ LucasArts ■ £30 Fantastic point-and-click adventure Amusing, and with clever puzzles, *Monkey Island* scores well for its controls, which make exploring and examining as easy as possible. It's great to look at and listen to, if a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly top notch. ★★★★★

Discworld Noir
■ GT Interactive ■ £35 See "Top 20"

Grim Fandango
■ LucasArts ■ £35 You look like Death warmed up The style, presentation and content of this odd, amusing adventure – where you play a travel agent who shuffles people between the living world and heaven – leave it towering above everything else. The puzzles are obscure, but you'll forgive it, thanks to neat touches, absorbing plot and downright loveliness. ★★★★★

Lands of Lore II
■ EA Classics ■ £13 Adventure and action combined Search for a cure for your character's animalism. There's too much FMV and lots of unnecessary running and jumping, but the spell-casting and puzzles are well handled. ★★

Lands of Lore III
■ EA ■ £35 Hardcore fantasy role-playing Search for your stolen soul. There's plenty to do and it's sufficiently large, but the muted colour schemes, confusing layouts and average gameplay let it down. ★★

Liath
■ Acclaim ■ £40 Cliché-rich rendered adventure An abomination of adventuring. ★

Outcast
■ Infogrames ■ £35 See "Top 20"

The Fugitive
■ Crystal ■ £20 An isometric Great Escape Time your prison breakout to correspond with the workings of the living, breathing gaol where you are imprisoned. Charming, but under-developed. ★★★

Warhammer: Dark Omen
■ EA ■ £40 Fantasy role-playing This suffers at the hands of its controls and is confusing overall. Having to repeat missions will get on your nerves. ★★★

The X-Files
■ Fox Interactive ■ £30 Spooky cash-in tie-in? It may be a pile of video clips stuck together with VirtualCinema glue, but the seven weeks of exclusive filming and freedom of movement elevate this above the herd. ★★★

Party

Atomic Bomberman
■ Sold Out ■ £5 Deceptively simple top-down maze game Arguably the best multi-player puzzle game ever. Take control of a Bomberman and run around a top-down maze trying to blow up your opponents. Splendid power-ups and fiendishly-designed levels help make this a must, although it's limited in one-player. ★★★★★

Worms
■ Sold Out ■ £5 See "Top 20"

Worms: Armageddon
■ Hasbro ■ £30 Takey-turney slap-'em-up Destroy your opponent's pink 'uns with an arsenal of both serious and comedic weapons. As with earlier incarnations, this loses much in one-player, but flawless controls and eye-popping visuals create a multi-player gem. ★★★★★

Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 2
■ Acclaim ■ £10 Match bubbles, go mad The most addictive puzzler since *Tetris*, bringing its match-coloured-bubbles-to-get-rid-of-them idea to your screen in an explosion of rainbow-hued visuals. It's a simple idea and has an addictive two-player mode that highlights its overall brilliance. ★★★★★

Flight sims

Apache Havoc
■ Empire ■ £35 Proper war flight sim You're in a war that carries on regardless of whether you're controlling your troops or making a cup of tea. The missions are increasingly complex, tricky and time-limited for added tension, and it's all wrapped up in some splendid visuals. ★★★★★

F-16 Aggressor
■ Virgin ■ £40 Stunningly accurate African flights Play an ex-USAF pilot flying for a mercenary squadron in war-torn Africa. Fluid and fast, with realistic handling, but it's the quality of the graphics that will leave you truly astounded. ★★★★★

Falcon 4
■ Microprose ■ £35 Long-running air manoeuvres Only one craft to fly, but it's all so realistic, with accurately-mapped terrain and a pilot and engineers employed to advise on the simulation's finer details. Hardly a game, more of a proper realisation of mid-air flying. ★★★★★

Fighter Squadron: The Screamin' Demons Over Europe
■ Parsoft ■ £35 Be a '20s Tom Cruise Almost too real, with floating-point maths used to simulate every force acting on your aircraft, and planes designed to react to a clip with the ground just like the real thing. Plenty of vehicles and a diverse range of missions, but only for fanatics – there's no arcade flying-about-and-shooting-things here. A fantastic simulation. ★★★★★

SNAP IT UP

Jimmy White Cueball

■ Sports ■ Virgin



Frankly, you wouldn't trust Jimmy White with your £30, lest he make the off-licence manager's and bookmaker's days within minutes. Thankfully, you can trust Archer MacLean, the programmer who has made it his life's work to tap The Whirlwind's maverick genius and market it as a series of brilliant videogames. This most recent version is worth three tenners of anyone's money. Entering a couple of soft-lit lounges boasting such extra-curricular activities as darts and draughts, you encounter bodiless opponents queuing up to thrash you at snooker and every form of pool known to man. The control system is gloriously smooth, and with ball physics as accurate as this, your actual gamewill improve tenfold. Class. ★★★★★

SMACK IT DOWN

Puma Street Soccer

■ Sports ■ Eidos



The Arcade five-a-side team is a force to be reckoned with. Having seen off *PC Gamer* and having only lost to *PlayStation Power* in recent weeks, there's nothing we'd like better than to recreate our trademark one-touch passes in videogame form. Unfortunately, *Puma Street Soccer* is a slight on the intricacies of this endearing miniature version of The Beautiful Game. Your 'keeper rolls it out, you pass it, you turn and shoot. Sometimes it goes in, sometimes it doesn't. Unless you're playing a CPU team, in which case it'll perform an impossible move and score every time. This is as limited and frustrating as the worst *Game and Watch*. The horribly blocky sprite graphics don't help, and when it crashes (as it often does), you're loathe to load it up again. ★

Flight Simulator '98

■ Microsoft ■ £40 **Ultra-realistic aeroplane antics** Not for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to get the hang of. It's supposed to be a true flying experience, so the controls are difficult to use, however some of the graphics aren't very realistic. There's also a difficult-to-control helicopter included as a "bit of a laugh", too. ★★★★★

IF/A-18E: Carrier Strike Fighter 3

■ Interactive Magic ■ £20 **Fly theoretical aircraft** Simulating a plane that won't be flying for some five years, for the most part *Strike Fighter* looks gorgeous. The missions are varied and convincing, and your degree of success alters what you can do in later levels. ★★★★★

Pro Pilot '99

■ Sierra ■ £35 **Fly high in the sky** Functional graphics and mostly flat cities make pointing your plane in a certain direction and watching the scenery go by generally uninteresting. ★★★

1 2 3 4 Compilations

Atari's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection 2

■ GT Interactive ■ £30 **Six arcade antiques** The cold light of the '90s exposes these titles as woefully simplistic. ★★

World of Combat 2000

■ Novalogic ■ £35 **Budget real-world combat sim** Fancy getting your hands on a helicopter, jet fighter or tank? Then this is the compilation for you. All the vehicles are based on genuine military specs, and the controls remain easy to use, while still managing to provide a complex experience for the expert. The visuals suffer slightly, but that doesn't matter a jot. ★★★★★

X-wing Collector Series

■ LucasArts ■ £30 **You must face Vader again** *X-wing*, *TIE Fighter* and *X-wing vs TIE Fighter*, plus all their mission packs, bundled together at a budget price. Rather than merely being standard licensed tat, these titles offer frenetic *Star Wars*-themed blasting and, as the first two instalments here have been improved graphically, this compilation is a must. ★★★★★

Misc

Grand Theft Auto

■ Take 2 ■ £20 **Drugs, death and driving** Notorious for its lack of scruples, *GTA* encourages the killing of bystanders and the trafficking of drugs. The graphics are disappointing and the missions repetitive, but the freedom to drive around cities and dodge the cops gives a great buzz. ★★★★★

Grand Theft Auto: London

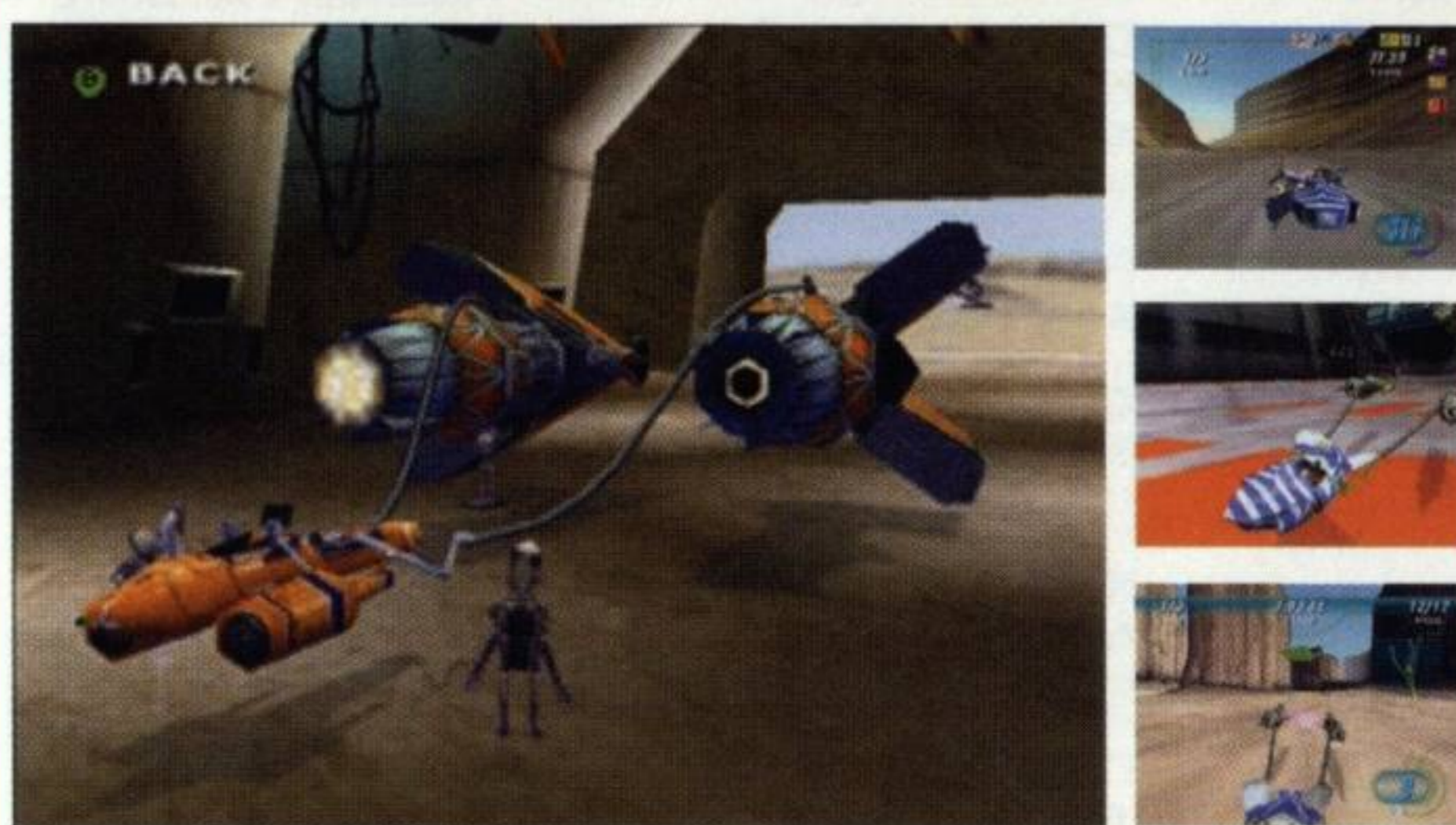
■ Take 2 ■ £20 **Mob your way around '60s London** Drive around, killing pedestrians and stealing cars using this *GTA* add-on pack. It's a great idea, but the missions are limited and too much like the original. ★★★

Star Wars Episode 1: Insider's Guide

■ Activision ■ £25 **See "Top 20"**

Nintendo 64 Top 20

The nation's favourite N64 purchases.



1 (1) Star Wars Episode 1: Racer ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £50
Force-based pod racing Great scenery, cool racing craft and – most importantly – speed. And a *Star Wars* licence, of course. The option to upgrade the pod is cool, and the similarity to *Wipeout* isn't a bad thing, as the handling is more forgiving. No weapons, though, and too short. ★★★★★



2 (5) F1 World Grand Prix ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Damon Hill simulator Looking as good as real-life, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and other nonsense. Whether you're an arcade racer or a true F1 fan, there's something here for you, with a two-player option to round it all off nicely. ★★★★★



3 (-) Quake II ■ Shooter ■ Activision ■ £50
Travel to Stroggos, massacre its people Non-stop action, plenty of secrets and a more than worthy sequel. Unfortunately the single-player lifespan is a disappointment and the joy pad isn't as effective as keyboard and mouse. In deathmatch terms, *GoldenEye* may have the brains, but *Quake II* has the brawn. ★★★★★

4 (2) Star Wars: Rogue Squadron ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £40
A 16-mission battle against the Empire Marries arcade gaming with authentic *Star Wars* visuals and sounds. The action is slow, but the ships, enemies and locations are there, and it's surprisingly involving. *Star Wars* fans will find little wrong with this. ★★★★★

5 (6) Mario Kart 64 ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Cute characters go to the races The original comedy racer returns. The one-player game is a lonely experience, but the time-trial adds longevity and the multi-player game is arguably the greatest on any platform. ★★★★★

6 (8) V-Rally ■ Racer ■ Infogrames ■ £40
Roads, revs and racers The cars skid and flip into trees if you don't use the brake, making *V-Rally* difficult to learn but pleasing to master. Not outstanding, but the graphics and velocity are adequate, and there's a wealth of challenge available. ★★★★★

7 (3) The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £50
Best game in the world Traditional *Zelda* hallmarks wrapped up in a beautifully realised 3D world. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been fine-tuned until they're perfect. ★★★★★

8 (5) F1 World Grand Prix ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Damon Hill simulator Looking as good as real-life, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and other nonsense. Whether you're an arcade racer or a true F1 fan, there's something here for you, with a two-player option to round it all off nicely. ★★★★★

9 (4) FIFA 99 ■ Sport ■ EA ■ £40
Licensed balls-up Every team, kit and player is here, but sluggish controls, unconvincing visuals and disappointing simplicity are the main faults. Things have improved slightly since the last instalment, but it simply doesn't play a convincing game of football. ★★★

10 (11) WCW/nWo Revenge ■ Fighter ■ THQ ■ £50
Greasy blokes a-wrestling A largely unimproved update of *World Tour*, *Revenge's* claim to fame is a slew of up-to-date grapplers. It's quick, and looks better than its predecessor, but it's still too easy and samey, with over-long matches. ★★★

11 (19) WWF: Warzone ■ Sports ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Leopard-tastic Despite the good looks, it's boring in one-player. Get your wrestling-loving mates to join in and you can enjoy four-men-on-the-floor action. A novel create-a-player section rounds it off. ★★★★★

12 (12) GoldenEye 007 ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Stealthy first-person shooter A believable and immersive 3D world, with 20 challenging missions taking you from gorgeous snow-covered wasteland to grubby men's toilets. One of the best multi-players that money can buy, too. ★★★★★

13 (-) All-Star Tennis '99 ■ Sports ■ Ubisoft ■ £40
Frilly pants and strawbs This looks and plays reasonably, but with realistic players pulling off over-the-top shots, *All Star Tennis* can't settle between serious play and light-hearted fun. ★★★

14 (15) Turok 2 ■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Dino hunting This looks stunning, and the game itself is helped by impossibly large guns and an end to the precision jumping nonsense that marred the original. The tasks may appear familiar if you're a *Doom* fan, though, and it's occasionally too difficult. ★★★★★

15 (7) Mario Party ■ Party ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Bring your own controller A traditional board game featuring all your favourite Nintendo characters and a plethora of original and enjoyable multi-player sub-games. Not good for solo gamers, but a laugh a minute with friends. ★★★★★

16 (10) South Park ■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Oh my God! It's rubbish! A cynical cash-in at the expense of fans of the TV show. The voice samples might be funny, but the visuals are shrouded in fog, the weapons are unsatisfying and the gameplay never extends beyond throwing snowballs at turkeys and the like. ★★

17 (18) Doom ■ Shooter ■ GT Interactive ■ £20
Seminal PC shooting-in-corridors Nothing wrong with this conversion, but the alien-blasting gameplay has been knocking about too long to push the N64's graphical power. ★★★

18 (-) Extreme G ■ Racing ■ Acclaim ■ £45
Futuristic motorbike racer *Turok*-style misting enables this to run at a phenomenal speed, and the experience of pounding along tracks with 90° turns while beautiful scenery flicks past is a pure adrenaline rush. ★★★★★

19 (-) Forsaken ■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Futuristic space-tunnel hoverbike shooter The controls let it down, but it's still frantic and absorbing. Each tunnel's filled with baddies for you to take out, at the same time as you try not to smash into the walls. Impressive graphics and lighting techniques. ★★★★★

20 (17) Mission: Impossible ■ Platformer ■ Infogrames ■ £30
Tom Cruise in 3D roamabout Not bad looking, with some great ideas that should've turned this 3D stealth-'em-up into a potential *GoldenEye*-beater. But it's just too bland and under-developed. ★★

Watch out for

And-a-sneakin' into the top 20 in front of your very eyes...



Mystical Ninja 2 – Starring Goemon
■ Konami ■ £40 **Odd retro-style 2D fare** The opportunity for RPG elements in the pretty between-level villages is wasted, and the basic platform stages themselves are monotonous. ★★★



NBA Pro '99
■ Konami ■ £40 **Frustrating basket-and-ball action** A stuttering frame rate, unconvincing players and irritating simplicity. ★★



Charlie Blast's Territory
■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Move crates around... yawn** Shunt boxes of explosives about and blow 'em to kingdom come. Tedious screen-by-screen fare. ★★



Rampage 2 Universal Tour
■ Midway ■ £35 **Structure-smashing retro update** Spectacularly dull monsters game. ★



Duke Nukem: Zero Hour
■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **Violent third-person adventures** The winning control layout, splendid weaponry and excellent, imaginative levels make for an addictive, involving shoot-'em-up. The time-travel angle gives scope for varied environments and interesting missions. Top. ★★★★★

Also on sale...



Fighters

Fighters Destiny

■ Ocean ■ £20 **Probably the world's best N64 fighter...** Well-defined characters and plenty of moves make this, by default, the N64's *Tekken*. It's too easy, but the excellent range of challenges ensures longevity. ★★★★★

Rakuga Kids

■ Konami ■ £35 **Pastel-based punch-'em-up** The fighting hiding underneath these crayoned crazies is surprisingly solid, even if it's often difficult to work out whether you've made contact with your opponent. ★★

WCW/NOW Revenge

■ THQ ■ £50 See "Top 20"



Racers

1080° Snowboarding

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Snow-based racing** A brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks, and loads of boards and courses for you to have a crack at. You get beautiful controls, brilliant replays and challenging racing. ★★★★★

Beetle Adventure Racing

■ EA ■ £40 **Disappointing Herbie-'em-up** Ludicrous jumps and nitro-aided speed-a-plenty here, but the dense computer opposition and time-wasting shortcuts fail it. ★★

Extreme G

■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Top 20"

F-Zero X

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Quick-as-you-like space-age racer** The fastest, smoothest racer ever, thanks to its lack of graphical detail. The controls are sublime, the handling fantastic and the tracks horrifically difficult. ★★★★★

F1 World Grand Prix

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Iggy's Reckin' Balls

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Incredibly ugly spheres roll for their lives** Racing without cornering. It doesn't work. ★★

Mario Kart 64

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Top 20"

MicroMachines 64 Turbo

■ Codemasters ■ £40 **Aged toy car racing** Top-down driving that's renowned for its unequalled multi-player fun. Unfortunately, it's too simple, and the format has already aged considerably. ★★

Snowboard Kids 2

■ Atlus ■ £60 **Mario Kart of the slopes** Race on everything from grass to the keys of a giant piano, relying on comedy power-ups to out-do your cutesy competitors. The fuzziness of the visuals is disappointing, but the multi-player mode excels. ★★★★★

Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

■ Nintendo ■ £50 See "Top 20"

Vigilante 8

■ Activision ■ £40 **All-out automobile attack** Flattening buildings and killing your competitors with 12 tooled-up '70s cars is enjoyable for a while, but finishing each level takes too long. Jerky multi-player, too. ★★

V-Rally

■ Infogrames ■ £40 See "Top 20"

XG2: Extreme G2

■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Space-age motorbike sequel** Iguana hasn't done much to improve on the faults of the original game – you never feel completely in control and the frame rate still dips dangerously low. ★★

Wave Race 64

■ Nintendo ■ £30 **How jet-ski games should be done** Water-based frolics that are second to none, even compared to coin-op titles at a thousand times the price. The tracks are beautifully designed, and the controls are as responsive and intuitive as you'd expect from Nintendo. Just remember to keep a bucket handy for the seasickness. ★★★★★



Sports

All-Star Baseball 2000

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Rounders-with-money sim** This leisurely interpretation of baseball is laden with options and astounding hi-res visuals. It's difficult and the slow play won't please everyone, but it's great baseball. ★★★★★

All Star Tennis '99

■ Ubisoft ■ £40 See "Top 20"

FIFA 99

■ EA ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Basketball, but good** The *Madden* of basketball games, this provides an easy-to-use control system, coupled with gameplay that behaves properly. But who the hell is Kobe Bryant? ★★★★★

Milo's Astro Lanes

■ Interplay ■ £40 **Space-age ten-pin bowling** Dreadful. ★

Nagano Winter Olympics

■ Konami ■ £45 **Sim of snow sports** Utterly boring. ★

NBA Jam '99

■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Option-heavy basketball sim** Looks good, plays fast and contains loads of options. It's tricky – defending is a nightmare – but a sports game that's realistically difficult is a refreshing change. ★★★★★

NBA Pro '99

■ Konami ■ £40 See "Watch out for"

NFL Quarterback Club '99

■ Acclaim ■ £45 **Stateside soccer** Visually more detailed than the real thing. Tackling and defending are as user-friendly as possible – only the passing system causes frustration. ★★★★★

Virtual Pool

■ Interplay ■ £40 **Decent balls sim** As exciting a version of pool as consoles are ever likely to see. When it comes to physics, it's all faultless, and the pleasingly spherical balls are very easy on the eye. It's limited, but good if you're searching for a pool title. ★★★★★

World Cup '98

■ EA Sports ■ £20 **The officially-licensed Coupe de Monde** The sluggish controls and rather disappointing visuals mean you'll be left with a sense of bitter disappointment. ★★

WWF: Warzone

■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Top 20"



Platformers

Banjo-Kazooie

■ Nintendo ■ £50 **Bizarre bear-bird crossover** Beautiful levels that beg you to explore, a genuine challenge with plenty of variety, and the first Rare game not to feature an eye-wincing amount of cute. Almost knocks Mario from his perch. ★★★★★

Chameleon Twist

■ Ocean/JSS ■ £25 **Jump, run and tongue** Interesting platformer, but the camera and simplicity damage it. ★★

Chameleon Twist 2

■ Sunsoft ■ £40 **Gad about with a long tongue** Unoriginal, boring and cumbersome. ★★

Gex 64

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **Rubbish reptilian roam-about** Laughable. ★

Lode Runner 3D

■ Infogrames ■ £40 **Age-old hole-digging hero returns** A lovingly crafted retro update that maintains the addictive gameplay of the original. The fiendishness of each puzzle makes for hugely satisfying play. ★★★★★

Mission Impossible

■ Infogrames ■ £30 See "Top 20"

Mischief Makers

■ Nintendo/Treasure ■ £20 **Old school 2D plat action** Mad as you like, but top-notch platforming action. Well-crafted levels, coupled with difficult-to-learn but effective controls, make for a crate of fun. ★★★★★

Mystical Ninja 2 – Starring Goemon

■ Konami ■ £50 See "Watch out for"

Spacestation: Silicon Valley

■ Take 2 ■ £40 **Take control...** Kill animals and then manipulate their bodies to solve puzzles. The graphics do their job well, the controls and puzzles are great, and the detail is fantastic. ★★★★★

Starshot: Space Circus Fever

■ Infogrames ■ £30 **Weird French 3D jumper** The necessary unwieldy camera and over-fiddly controls are present and correct. You'll also find a great deal of wandering between one place and the next. ★★

Super Mario 64

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **The king of 3D platformers** A masterpiece, with huge levels, sublime controls and immersive gameplay. As with all Miyamoto games, it slowly sucks you in and refuses to let go, and its full-on 3D graphics still impress. ★★★★★

Yoshi's Story

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **2D antics with Mario's mate** An easier retreat of the original *Yoshi's Island*, and suffering from few fresh ideas and a lack of challenge. Hidden areas and difficult puzzles arise after more play. ★★★★★



Shooters

Body Harvest

■ Gremlin ■ £20 **Bug-blasting B-movie invasion** Lots of aliens, loads of weapons and vehicles, and five varied levels. The graphics are ropey, and the character dialogue terrible, but the mix of RPG and intense, panicky alien shooting works well. ★★★★★

Doom

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 See "Top 20"

Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 See "Watch out for"

Forsaken

■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Top 20"

GoldenEye 007

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Knife Edge

■ Microware ■ £30 **Into-the-screen action** Boring. ★

Quake 64

■ GT Interactive ■ £25 **Classic gory gun-fest** With no more than two players able to take part in the roaming blaster at any one time, the multi-playing that made the original such fun takes a back seat to the more monotonous one-player game. ★★

Quake II

■ Activision ■ £50 See "Top 20"

South Park

■ LucasArts ■ £30 See "Top 20"

Star Wars: Rogue Squadron

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Turok 2

■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Top 20"

Vigilante 8

■ Activision ■ £40 **All-out automobile attack** Flattening buildings and killing your competitors with 12 tooled-up '70s cars is enjoyable for a while, but finishing each level takes too long. Jerky multi-player too. ★★



RPGs

Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time

■ Nintendo ■ £50 See "Top 20"

Castlevania 64

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Dracula delirium** Konami's 3D version of its classic platforming series is hindered by camera problems and inadequate game lengths. It's packed with atmosphere, though, and there's enough puzzling, jumping and vampire killing to sustain your interest. ★★★★★



Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 3 DX

■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Spherical fun** So simple, and yet so utterly absorbing, this bubble-bursting sequel wipes the floor with most puzzlers. There's a new four-player mode, and a ton of other options and challenges, although the story mode's a smidgeon easy. ★★★★★

Charlie Blast's Territory

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Watch out for"



Party

Mario Party

■ Nintendo ■ £40 See "Top 20"



Misc

Rampage 2 Universal Tour

■ Midway ■ £35 See "Watch out for"

SECONDHAND BARGAINS | Keep scanning out the second-

Aero Fighters Assault

■ Konami **Sky-based shooter from the team behind Pilotwings** Aerial dogfights against massive aircraft, and some huge submarines, but ultimately it's chock full of unforgivable flaws and levels that you can complete in your tea-break. ★★

Automobili Lamborghini

■ Nintendo **Drive around racetracks** A lack of options, decent courses and proper handling add up to a driving experience that's worth forgetting. ★★

Bust-A-Move 2

■ Acclaim **Addictive bubble-matching puzzler** Hardly the best-looking game on the N64, but the simplicity of the idea makes for a ridiculously addictive experience when played against a friend. Arrange for someone to phone you at sporadic intervals to remind you to eat and sleep. ★★★★★

Dark Rift

■ Vic Tokai **Low-lit beat-'em-up** Dark they say, and dark it is. There are some good graphics hiding beneath the blackness, but there's a lack of the kind of moves and inventiveness that you'll find in *Fighter's Destiny*. ★★

Dual Heroes

■ Hudson **Boring robots fighting** A good complement of moves, but no challenge in one-player. ★★

Duke Nukem 64

■ GT Interactive **Bad taste alien gunplay** No bare-breasted ladies appearing this time through, though there's still plenty of destruction and a particularly decent four-player deathmatch. But isn't there a better first-person shooter available out there? Some kind of a James Bond licensed thing or other? ★★★★★

Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 See "Watch out for"

Extreme G

■ Acclaim See "Top 20"

F1 Pole Position

■ Ubisoft **Disappointing Grand Prix driving** Schumacher and his friends shouldn't have to put up with this poor handling and terrible pop-up. ★★

Hexen

■ Midway **Early goblin battler** Shoddy *Doom* clone that uses magic spells instead of guns. ★★

Lylat Wars

■ Nintendo ■ £30 **On-rails 3D space blast** Loosely based on *Starwing* on the SNES, and intended to be an immersive, movie-like experience, with cut-scenes that ape films like *Independence Day*. It's too easy, and the inclusion of a level select would have improved the game, but it's still addictive, well-crafted and frantic. Better still, it features some pure blasting action at a time when such opportunities are relatively rare. Brilliant speech, too. ★★★★★

Madden 64

■ EA **Latest in the ubiquitous US football series** Looks sparse, especially without the official logos that *Quarterback Club* offers, but the controls and game mechanics are so intuitive that you'll feel like you actually understand what's going on. Hut, hut, hut! Or something. ★★★★★

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

■ GT Interactive **Three speedy beat-'em-ups rolled into one** Diabolical, even given that there are three offerings rolled into one package. ★

SNAP IT UP

1080° Snowboarding

■ Sports ■ Nintendo



■ The influx of new games into the office here at *Arcade* is as regular as bowel movements after a bucketful of Special K. So it takes something special for a game to remain an Office Favourite. Yet, half a year after its release, *1080°* remains firmly lodged in our N64. Perhaps it's the graphics – smoother and more atmospheric than anything snow-wise you've ever seen in an arcade. To the games player, maybe it's the handling of the board – as sensitive as a girlfriend who's just been dumped by her two-timing boyfriend. But to us, *1080°* simply encapsulates everything that's great about the N64. It's got more depth than the Grand Canyon, features fully-explorable tracks and is simply addictive. ★★★★★

hand shelves to discover these bargains...

Mystical Ninja

■ Konami **Surreal adventure with a blue-haired maniac** More of an RPG-platform game than anything, the fundamental unfolding of the story is coupled with a range of Mario-style platforming tasks, and is all the better for it. The only downer is that once you've finished, there's not enough to keep you coming back for more. ★★★

NBA Hangtime

■ GT Interactive **Over-simplified basketball.** Again Strip away 80% of the players and you end up with this take-turns-to-score farce. ★★

NBA Pro '98

■ Konami **Realistic, speedy basketball** Another sports game for the minority audience. A lack of any intelligence in the computer-controlled players, along with a more general list of niggling faults, lets this one down. ★★★

NHL Breakaway '98

■ Acclaim **Ridiculously fast ice hockey** This sim fails to present anything that's either exciting or polished. The computer-controlled players are decent opponents, but you'll be scuppered by the speed of the game. ★★★

Pilotwings 64

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Fly about a bit and cry at the difficulty of it all** Along with Mario 64, this is the game that launched the N64. It boasts beautiful, realistic scenery and some of the hardest tasks this side of Mensa – including piloting a jet-pack through an underground tunnel. Basically, it's a truly unique flying experience; after all, where else do you get to spring-boot up to a terrifying 100 feet? ★★★★★

San Francisco Rush

■ GT Interactive **Big cars, mean streets** Rush's handling and controls simply aren't what you'd expect from a PlayStation racer, especially coupled with the Cellophane-over-the-screen blurry visuals we've come to expect from the N64. But it's fast, has excellent handling and a top two-player mode. ★★★★★

Tetrisphere

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Tetris, in a 3D sphere** Trying to manoeuvre blocks into a sphere to free little robots is a great way to get incredibly annoyed and bring on a lovely thumping headache. ★★★★★

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter

■ Acclaim **Make dinosaurs extinct** Irritating aspects such as the fogging and precision jumping are soon forgotten in the face of velociraptors and nuclear guns. ★★★★★

War Gods

■ GT Interactive **Primitive fighter** A complete lack of moves and decent characters. ★

Wayne Gretsky 3D Hockey '98

■ GT Interactive **Update of original ice hockey sim** Fast and smooth enough to make for an accurate interpretation of the too-quick-to-watch sport. ★★★★★

Wetrix

■ Ocean ■ £30 **Build lakes and fry 'em with fireballs** More of a successor to Tetris than Tetrisphere, initially this is difficult as hell. Stick with it, though, and the clear – if rather limited – tactics quickly become obvious. A Tetris-like addictive state will then take control of your life. Again. ★★★★★

Game Boy Top 5



1 (1) Super Mario Bros DX ■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £25

Seminal Mario platformer Uncomplicated, hugely enjoyable platform brilliance, transferred to our portable friend after 14 years. Running, jumping and gobbling mushrooms has never been so much fun, and a shedful of extras ensure that the simplistic gameplay won't pall. ★★★★★

2 (-) A Bug's Life ■ Platformer ■ Disney ■ £25

Cute but soulless platformer Adequately captures the atmosphere of the movie, but doesn't exploit this golden license by adding anything worthwhile. The phrase "just another platformer" springs to mind. ★★★

3 (2) Rugrats ■ Platformer ■ THQ ■ £30

Puzzle-solving with your fave elf An involving plot, coupled with beautiful graphics, and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as FFVII. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges. Can Zelda do no wrong? ★★★★★

4 (3) Zelda DX ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £25

Puzzle-solving with your fave elf An involving plot, beautiful graphics, and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as FFVII. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges. ★★★★★

5 (-) Conker's Pocket Tales ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £25

Rare in average game shocker! A Zelda DX-style top-down RPG with adventure, puzzle solving and the usual baddie-boshing. But the puzzles are simplistic and it looks more than a bit ropery. It's no Zelda. ★★★

Also on sale...

Fighters

WWF Attitude

■ Acclaim ■ £25 **Here come the Men in Pants** Scaled-down version of the PlayStation/N64 game, and it ain't half bad. The graphics are beefy, there are a few tasty moves and there's a good sense of involvement. There's too much emphasis on simple punches, though. ★★★★★

Racers

Super R.C. Pro-Am

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Dinky driving** This re-release of Rare's frantic remote-controlled car racing game looks primitive, but the races are a joy. The chance to both use weapons against the ruthless opponents and upgrade your own car as you go are great. ★★★★★

Top Gear Pocket

■ Kemko ■ £30 **Simplistic pocket racing** Two cars and three tracks (with more to discover), and a Rumble Pak built in. Sadly, driving on Game Boy is always woefully simplistic. ★★★

Bugs Bunny Crazy Castles 3

■ THE ■ £25 **Warner Bros-themed platformery** Ladders and drainpipes replace the usual jump-up-and-down motion, creating a surprisingly addictive if simplistic, experience. ★★★★★

Platformers

Gex

■ Interplay ■ £25 **Soulless 2D reptilian platforming** Twenty huge levels, with three missions per level, but the running and jumping on offer is so very uninspired. ★★★

Loony Tunes

■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Animation-inspired adventures** All the Warner Bros characters have made their way on to the Game Boy for this attractive, varied platformer. A little more use of colour would have been nice, but after the gaming dross the Game Boy has had to cope with, this offering is platform-based heaven. ★★★★★

Lucky Luke

■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Rootin' tootin' jumparound** Skip around the screen shooting gringo scum and avoiding giant tumbleweeds. Some nice touches, but it's nothing new. ★★

Maya The Bee and Her Friends

■ Acclaim ■ £25 **Platforming with a difference** Played on single screens rather than in a scrolling environment, with three uniquely skilled characters to switch between on each level. The fiendishly logical levels are married to a pleasant platforming feel. ★★★★★

Obelix

■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Run and jump with Asterix and friends** Collect items to impress Caesar. Pretty, but shallow. ★★

Oddworld Adventures

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **Save your alien chums** Abe's ability to run, jump, tiptoe, fart and possess enemies has survived intact from the PlayStation version, but this is still frustrating, and lacks the original's lovely graphics. ★★★

Rugrats The Movie

■ THQ ■ £25 **Nappy-wearing big movie license** Faultless presentation and excellent use of colour, with varied collect-the-objects gameplay. Eventually uninspiring. ★★★

The Smurfs' Nightmare

■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Colourful midget fun** Another simple Game Boy platformer with little, if any, innovation. It looks lovely, though, making full use of the "Color" features. ★★★

Super Mario Land

■ Nintendo ■ £15 **The pipe man cometh** One of the Game Boy's original releases, Super Mario still excels in most areas, despite its now having reached a very elderly nine years old. The graphics are simple, but the subtlety of control and excellent level designs have been carried over to the bijou Nintendo with aplomb. ★★★★★

Turok 2

■ Acclaim ■ £25 **Dinosaur-shooting extravaganza** Excessively difficult side-scrolling platformer, with too much jumping. ★★

Tweety & Sylvester: Breakfast on The Run

■ Infogrames ■ £20 **Canary capers** Impressive visuals, but the 2D puzzle-solving is insultingly simple. ★★

RPGs

Harvest Moon

■ THE ■ £20 **Down on the farm...** Clear your land, till the soil, plant some seeds – there aren't many farming sims out there, but Harvest Moon proves that they should be more popular than Lara. Managing the animals and crops is trickier than you might initially think, and the detail is astonishing. The amount of stuff that there is to do will have the Game Boy stuck to your hand for a month. ★★★★★

Shadowgate Classic

■ Kemko ■ £25 **Yesteryear's role-playing** Find keys, open doors. Deadly tedious trial-and-error play ensues. ★

Quest For Camelot

■ Titus ■ £25 **Swords and sorcery** Based on the cartoon, this Merlin-manoeuving quest is colourful and involving, but contains too much wandering. Second-best to Zelda. ★★

Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 4

■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Near-perfect bubbly puzzling** Simple but immeasurably frantic puzzle fun where you match similarly coloured bubbles and prevent the screen from filling. The added challenge modes and pulley systems make things devilishly tricky, but challenging. You won't want to put it down. ★★★★★

Hexcite

■ Ubisoft ■ £25 **Pick up polygons** Fit shapes together and score points for the closest fit. Hexcite isn't likely to displace Tetris – it lacks that title's immediacy – but it's frantic, head-scratching fun, that's curiously compulsive when played against a friend. ★★★★★

Tetris DX

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Brick drop return shock!** The graphics, sounds and modes might have changed, but this is still the same old Tetris, known worldwide as the most addictive version of the Russian puzzler. Stemming the rising wall of bricks is, in fact, all the better for being able to save your high scores at long last, but sadly the game doesn't work well in black and white. ★★★★★

Retro

720

■ Midway ■ £25 **Difficult skate stunting** Skate around town, pulling stunts that '90s kids have long forgotten. Unfortunately, the Game Boy's D-pad doesn't lend itself to skateboard action. Disappointing colour, too. ★★★

Arcade Hits: Defender & Joust

Midway ■ £25 Old coin-ops for your pleasure

A double helping of retro arcade fare: a splendid side-scrolling shooter and a rather good fire-button-free flap-'em-up played on ostrich mounts. There's a tear-jerking joy to be gleaned from the experience of holding old coin-ops in your palm. ★★★★★

Breakout

Take 2 ■ £20 Shoot insects

Ancient arcing. Stupidly simple ★

Centipede

Take 2 ■ £20 Hit the bricks

Astonishingly straight conversion of the '70s coin-op. Why? ★

Dropzone

■ Acclaim ■ £25 **Kill aliens, save people** Defender with a bloke in a spacesuit, fresh from the Commodore 64 era. Killing waves of aliens in the side-scrolling levels is fast and smooth, and the baddies become satisfyingly bizarre on later levels. ★★★★★

Frogger

■ Take 2 Interactive ■ £25 **Highway toad** Colourful, but so dated that it's hard to get excited about. ★★

Game & Watch Gallery 2

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Handheld retro** Five games and all enjoyable, especially the full-colour versions with Mario characters. ★★★★★

Misc

Rampage World Tour

■ Midway ■ £25 **Old-skool building-breaker returns.** Control King Kong and smash up buildings. Boring. ★

SMACK IT DOWN

Rampage 2

■ Monster game ■ Midway



■ Anyone legally allowed into a pub should have a fond memory of the original Rampage, in either its deafening coin-op form, which included the sound system of a small nightclub, or its multi-player frenzy three-player-at-a-time even-on-the-Spectrum conversion. The fact that all you were doing was destroying skyscraper after skyscraper dressed in an unconvincing King Kong costume was by-the-by. Until, that is, Rampage 2 arrived on the N64 a decade later. The graphics are abysmal, and the gameplay hasn't changed a bit. Bored? You will be, after ten minutes. And you'll feel more cheated than Jerry Hall, angry at your N64, furious with Midway, and disgusted by your stupid memory. Smack it down now. ★

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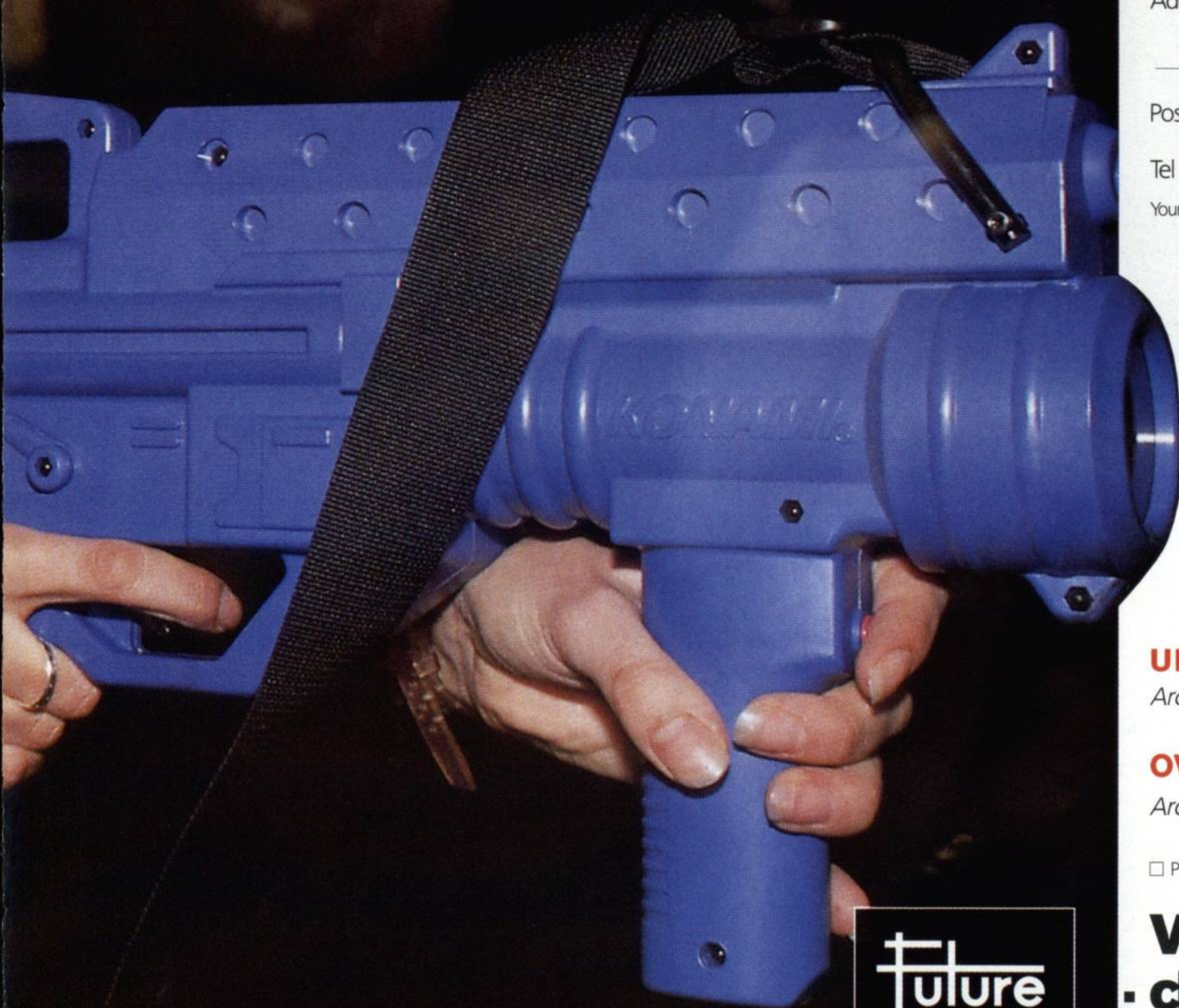
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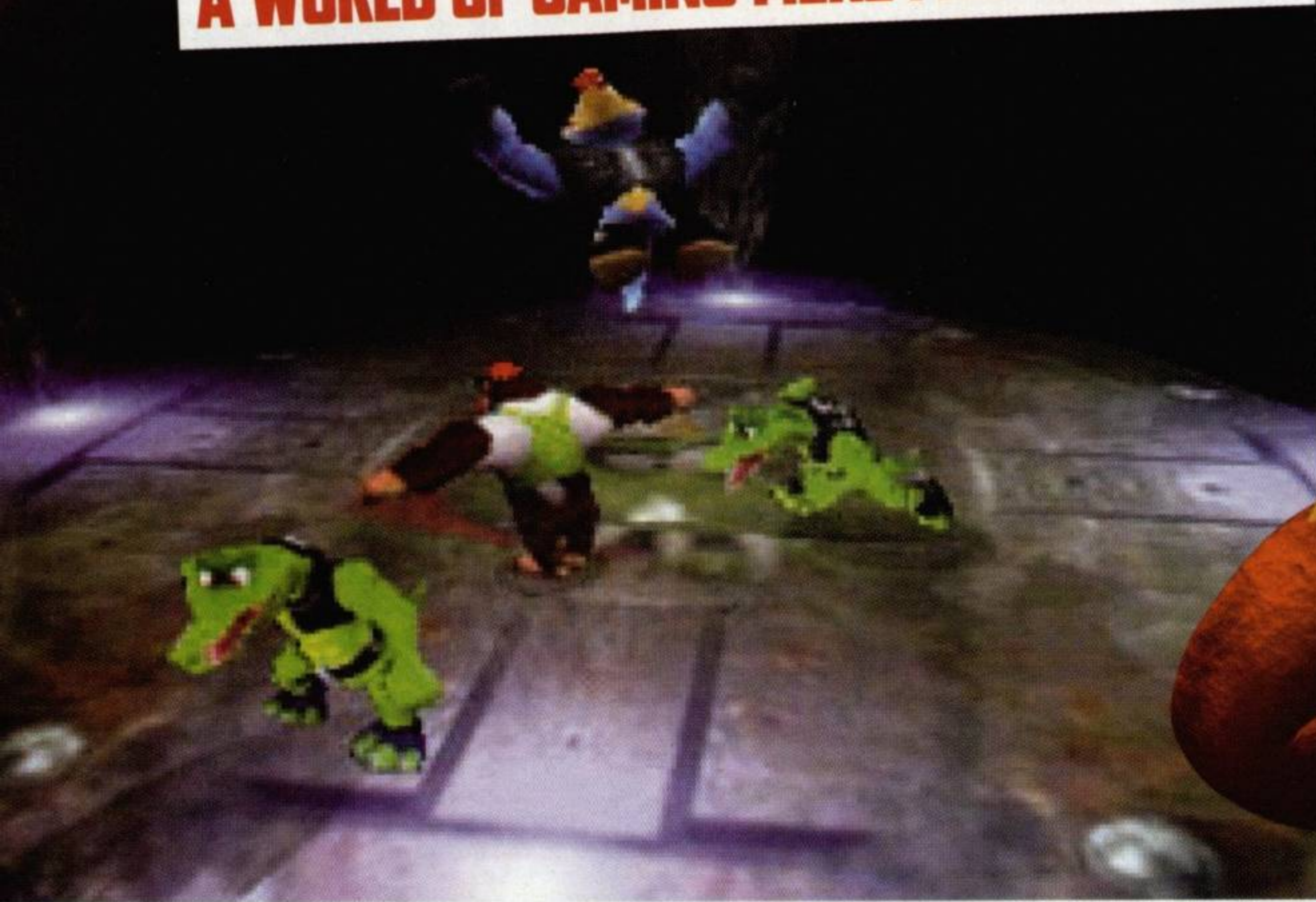
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COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ This ape's making his escape.



■ He may be 20 years old now, but DK can still swing with the best of 'em.



BEST BIT SO FAR

Micro machines

Few who played *Donkey Kong 64* at this year's E3 could avoid mentioning the Scalextric race. It could even be argued that this sub-game surpasses some complete offerings on the N64. The Scalextric game sees Tiny Kong, the female member of the troupe, take to a remote-controlled car to race a Kremling (the Kongs' reptilian arch-enemy) through perilously twisty tunnels and past luminous roadside signs. It's blisteringly fast, and the tension is raised tenfold by obstacles and debris littering the track, requiring Tiny to switch slots at a moment's notice. The only real niggle is why hasn't anyone thought of this before?



Format: **N64** | Developer: **Rare** | Publisher: **Nintendo/Rare** | Players: **1-4** | On sale in UK: **November**

DONKEY KONG 64

This November the sales battle will be dominated by gorilla warfare.

With *Super Mario 64 2* seemingly stranded somewhere in development hell, it's up to Rare to supply the next big chunk of 3D platforming for the Nintendo 64. Thankfully, the wide grins and far-away stares of everyone who played *Donkey Kong 64* at the E3 show in America this year suggest that Nintendo owners are in for a particularly potent dose of Rare magic.

Inevitably, *DK64* bears more than a passing resemblance to Rare's earlier platformer, *Banjo-Kazooie*. But this time, rather than one character masquerading as two, there are five unique Kongs to control,

each with their own particular strengths, weaknesses, moves and sub-games. For example, Lanky's flailing arms give him a variety of slapstick moves to pull off, while young Diddy – who was last seen in Rare's own *Diddy Kong Racing* – has the ability to rocket into the air using burning barrels. Interestingly, there are also shotguns and bazookas scattered around the game to add a sprinkling of shoot-'em-up-style mayhem.

The jungly environments that the apes are thrown into are nothing short of breathtaking, with banana-laden forests, submerged caverns, mineshafts, and even racetracks, all rendered in astonishing detail. *DK64* won't work without Nintendo's 4Mb Expansion Pak (whispers abound that a Pak

will be bundled with every copy of the game), which is used to complement the stunning scenery with eye-popping explosions, shadows and real-time lighting effects. Put simply, *DK64* will be the best-looking N64 game ever.

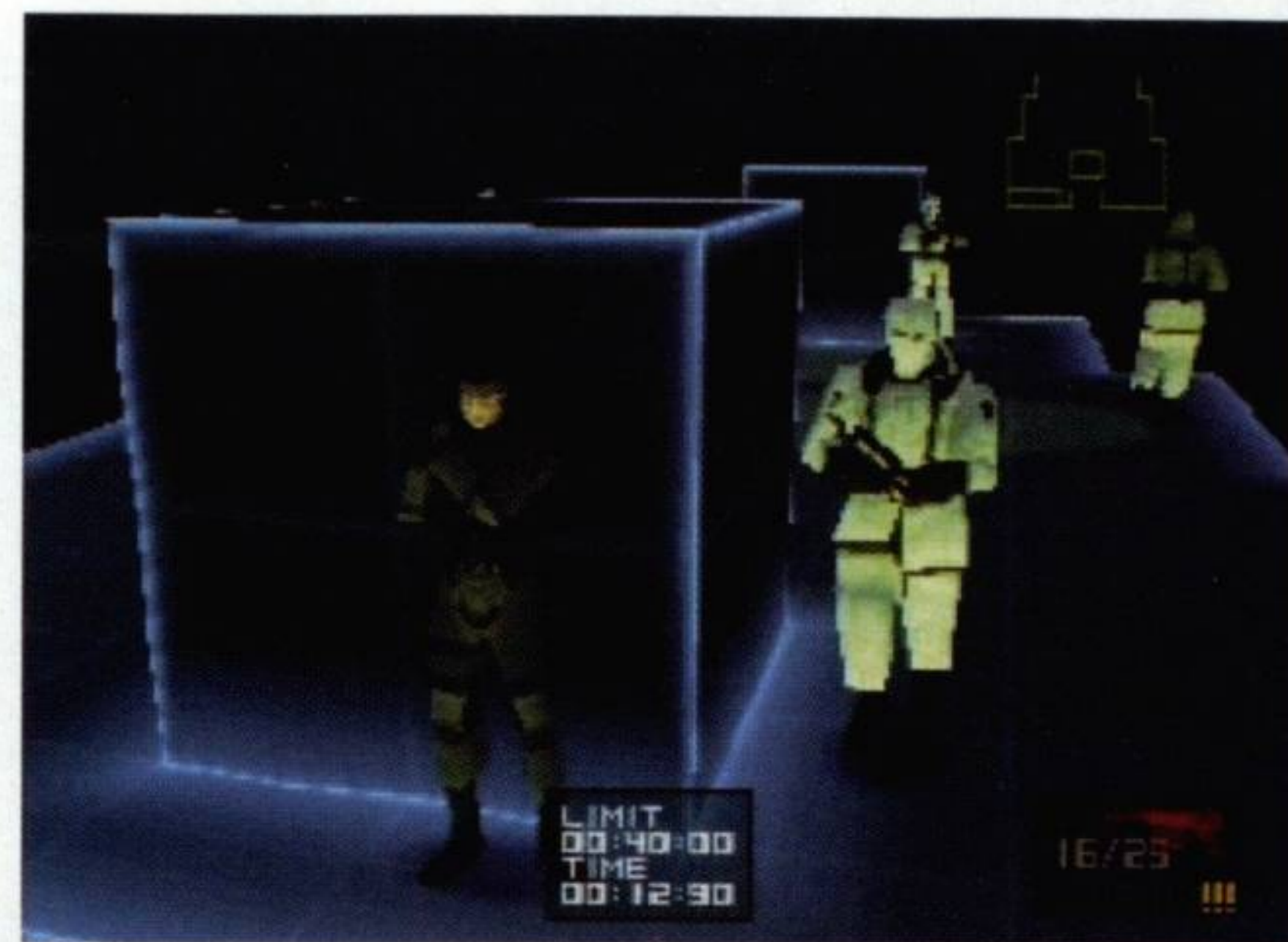
Inventive set pieces are a Rare hallmark, and *DK64* is overflowing with them. Aside from the horrifically fast mine cart ride – lifted directly from earlier SNES *Donkey Kong* games – and Tiny Kong's Scalextric race (see "Best bit so far" box), there's a fairground-inspired crocodile bash, a boat chase, and battles with bosses who range from tortoises to an oversized jack-in-the-box. And, this being a game about monkeys, you should expect a fair amount of tree-climbing and vine-swinging, too,

made possible by some carefully fine-tuned and intuitive controls.

The finished game will also feature a four-player deathmatch, but news of this has been kept strictly under wraps. This is a typically hype-inducing Rare tactic – tease with a few screenshots here and a little information there, and watch anticipation levels rocket. As always, it's working, but *Donkey Kong 64* looks set to live up to – if not surpass – our expectations. **A**



■ The new version of *The Body in the Library* was looking very tasty indeed.



■ "Shoot me twice in the heat of combat, will you? I'm having those boots right now, oh yes."



■ Giant emeralds were of no use to a man who needed ammo, rations and a nice kip.



■ Snake's self-portraits in charcoal and oils were the talk of Milan this year.



■ It's strange to see Snake in this kind of scenery, but it works.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Konami** | Publisher: **Konami** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **October**

METAL GEAR SOLID: INTEGRAL

It's mainly about, erm, training. But don't let that put you off.

Cheeky cash-in or ingenious, non-sequel brand extension? *VR Missions* or *Integral*? Hidden first-person mode and new bad guys? Such is the popularity of anything with the words "metal", "gear" and "solid" in it, that the news of the further adventures of Snake Solid has set more tongues wagging than a heatwave at an Egyptian dog kennels. During a water shortage. Hence the confusion as to what exactly Hideo Kojima's latest project is all about.

Essentially, it's 300 brand new mini-missions in similar vein to the virtual reality training exercises found in the Training

mode of the *Gear*. Thankfully, this is much better than it sounds. Snake is asked to use all of his vast arsenal in a slew of clever tasks, he plays detective in a mystery mode, and certain missions have you in charge of the Ninja. And that's cool.

The Japanese edition of *Integral* is bundled with a version of the original game which has been tweaked so that on completion of the main game, a first-person mode is unlocked that enables you to play through, ahem, Snake's eyes. As mouth-watering as this sounds, it's not an opportunity to take on Liquid Snake and the rest in true first-person perspective, but is actually just the option of switching the view after every linking screen to something approaching first-person. Slightly

disappointing perhaps, but another notch for Snake's belt nonetheless.

A nifty extra is the increased use of the camera. Whereas in the first game, snapping Meryl in her smalls was merely a bonus for the perverts, several of the mini-games in *Integral* require you to use the camera in clever ways to get close to the aforementioned Dr Silverburgh and the equally-lovely Mei Ling.

As *Arcade* went to press, Konami couldn't say whether this *MGS* special edition would be bundled with *Integral*, but as the price is rumoured to be a wallet-friendly £24.99, it's unlikely (US gamers will only be getting the mission disc). However, if you're a fan of *MGS* you'll find plenty in *Integral* to keep you happy. **A**

BEST BIT SO FAR

Eastern promise

Playing as the Ninja is a nice touch, especially as, if you recall, he was a bit tasty during his fight with Snake in the early stages of *Metal Gear Solid*. You do actually have to get through quite a few of the 300 missions in order to qualify for the donning of a samurai suit and a sword, but this is another of the leftfield twists that Kojima-san is renowned for. And, after all, Snake is a bit of a do-gooder, so stepping into evil boots makes a nice little breather, doesn't it?



COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY

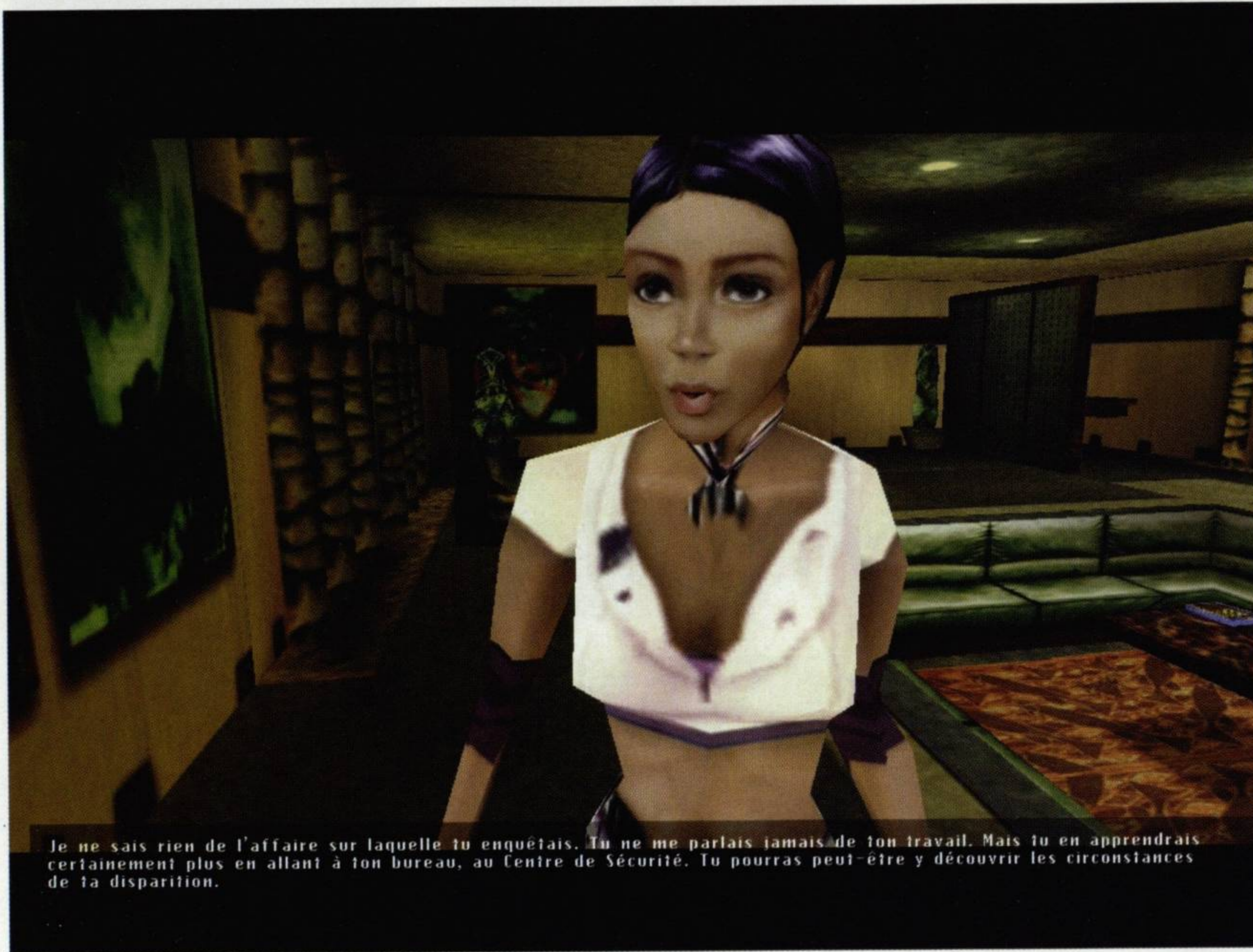


■ Impressive art direction gives *The Nomad Soul* an unmistakable ambiance.

■ You play Agent Kay'l, the Captain Scarlet lookalike in the beret.



■ It's a bold mix of playing styles, but will it appeal to all types of games player?



Je ne sais rien de l'affaire sur laquelle tu enquêtais. Tu ne me parlais jamais de ton travail. Mais tu en apprendrais certainement plus en allant à ton bureau, au Centre de Sécurité. Tu pourras peut-être y découvrir les circonstances de ta disparition.

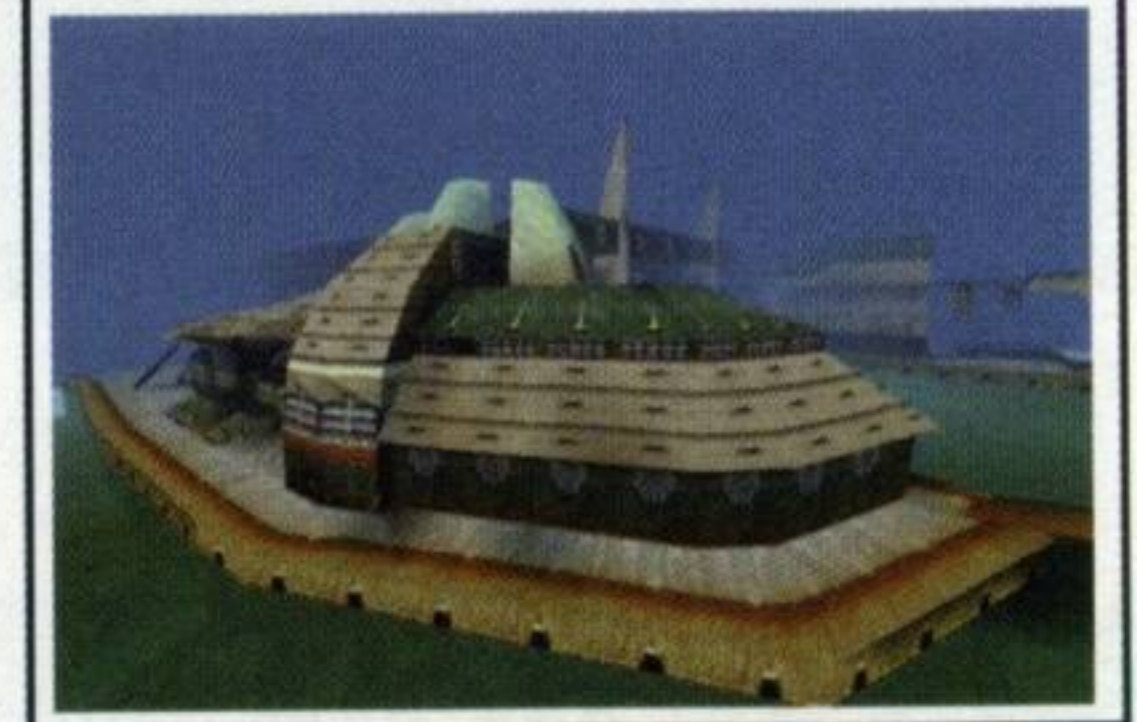


■ Will the over-ambitious design result in an *Outcast* clone with little long-term appeal?

BEST BIT SO FAR

In the mood

The Nomad Soul flexes its atmospheric muscles from the off and offers up one of the finest compelling opening scenes around. Lightning flashes. A stunned figure drops out of the ether into a warehouse and is promptly attacked by a shadowy presence, which could be Satan himself. A police robot steps in to save the man, who turns out to be the character you play, and you suddenly find yourself alone in the warehouse with no memory, and only the thin notes of an originally composed Bowie track to keep you company. The whole sequence is attractively presented, but, more importantly, it sets the ostentatious tone of the whole game.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Quantic Dream** | Publisher: **Eidos** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **October 1999**

THE NOMAD SOUL

Fancy immortality? Even if you have to live in an alternative universe soundtracked by Bowie?

To start by mangling a proverb, the spirit is willing even when the flesh is wasted. The concept of an immortal soul entered Western philosophy through the writings of Plato, but it exists in many cultures across the globe. Beliefs such as reincarnation and possession require that the soul be considered separate and independent from the physical body. But why should you care, beyond the occasional drunken metaphysical debate?

Well, two huge games are set to strike the PC this year which take the transfer of souls between living bodies as their theme. One, *Messiah*, is in development at Shiny

and may be available at Christmas. The other is *The Nomad Soul*, a French cyber-fantasy which, according to creator David Cage, is not only a game about "virtual reincarnation" but also a novel and a pop concept album. It sounds conceited and it is, but the early code reveals an action-orientated RPG which benefits atmosphere-wise from its dose of pretension.

While the game's backstory sounds like the start to a Tolkien clone, what with a demon – Astaroth – being defeated by a legendary sword of souls, *The Nomad Soul* is actually a gloomy, futuristic tale with more than a feel of the *Blade Runner* about it. As it turns out, Astaroth has been biding his time since his defeat, and the parallel realm of Phaenon has become a

land of hover-vehicles and neon-trimmed city blocks. Four sprawling cities make up the gigantic game map, and the one you start in, Omikron, was the working title of the game. You play Kay'l, an amnesiac police agent who awakes, stunned, in Omikron just as Astaroth begins causing trouble once more.

The Nomad Soul offers a surprising blend of 3D gaming styles: most of the action is followed from third-person perspective, with first-person shooting scenes, and even side-on beat-'em-up elements cropping up when occasioned by your exploration. You have complete freedom to roam the real-time planet – passers-by, speeding vehicles, shops and apartment buildings all maintain a daily

pace as you trog about. If you're in a real hurry you can opt to hail a cab.

Currently four hours of dialogue, including more than 1,200 phrases, have been recorded so you can converse with the folk Kay'l encounters.

The visual flexibility of the game makes for context-sensitive changes in gameplay. Should you decide your talking partner would be better off dead, you can switch to first-person mode and gun them down. If fisticuffs is more your bag, you can swing the camera around to *Tekken*-o-vision and execute familiar punch-kick combos. Reincarnation kicks into gear when you succumb to a villain's superior combat skills... your soul is permitted to take over the body of anyone in the vicinity. After the



■ Sadly, many of the NPCs in the city all look the same. Except, of course, for David Bowie's flamboyant character.



switch, you keep some RPG-style attributes, but your physical form in the world changes as you gain control of anyone from a prisoner to the hired killer who offed you.

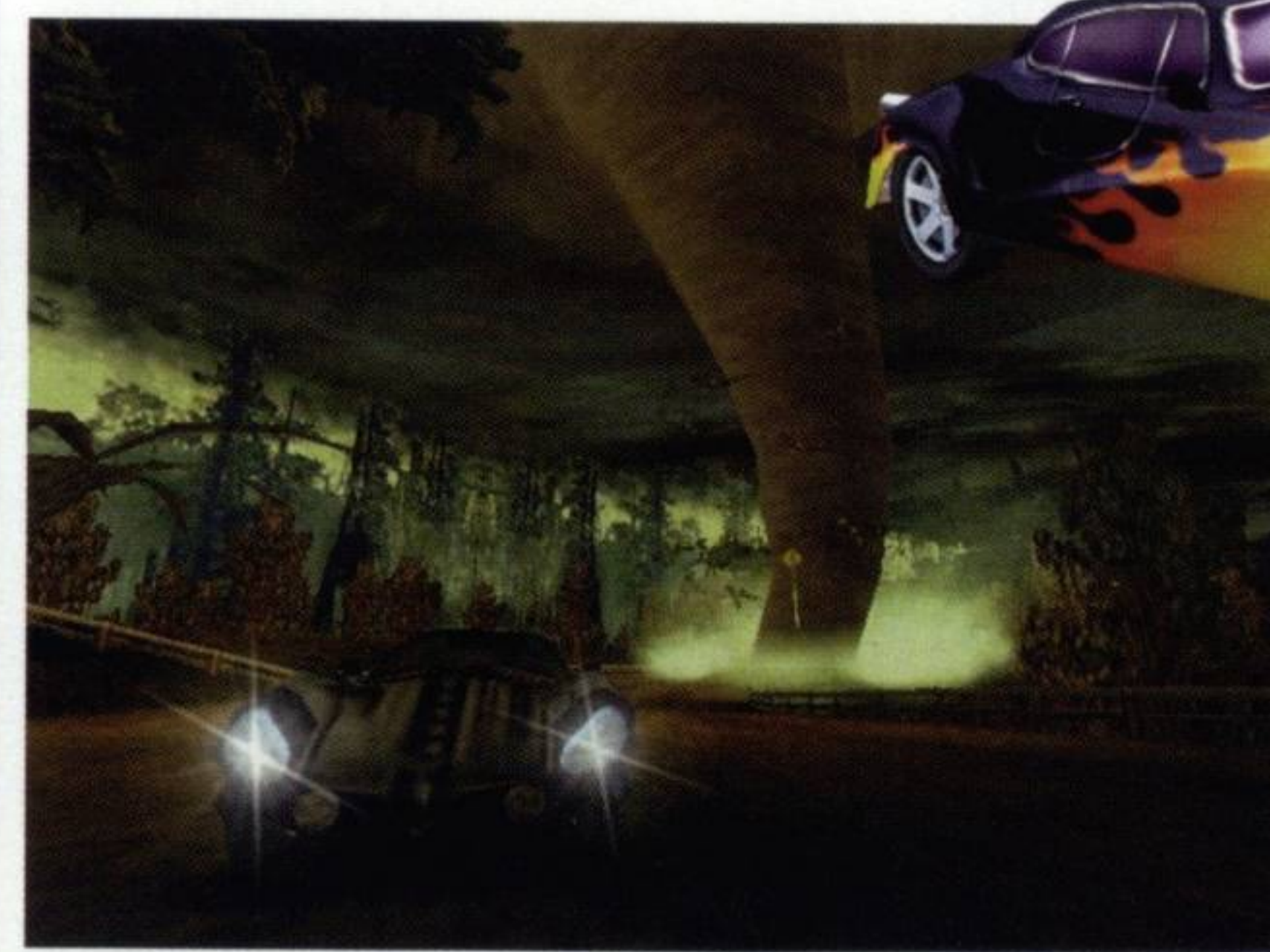
The project sports a distinct 3D appeal, thanks in part to a new facial motion-capture technique. More than 130 different characters inhabit the cities of Phaenon, and watching one of them speak reveals an unusually fine attention to detail in the animation. Lips stretch to mouth words which are synched to dialogue, and eyebrows rise and fall in tune with the discussion. The clunky, gloom-laden environment is the perfect backdrop to characters such as violent kidnapers, exotic lap dancers and a musician named Boz, played by David Bowie himself.

Bowie has also provided some of the game's music, and is planning an album themed around the city of Omikron. While that may reek of hype, it's the kind of overt pomposity that characterises this ambitious title. Expect to hear *The Nomad Soul* described as though it were Art.

WHO'S MAKING IT?

The dream team

Former musician and crazy game designer David Cage first began writing the plot of *The Nomad Soul* as a novel called *Omikron*. Halfway through he realised it would make a great videogame, and the Quantic Dream team was born. The team now has 35 members, including French artist Loic Normand. The most similar concept to *The Nomad Soul* in terms of vision is *Outcast*, which may point toward a new hallmark of Continental game design: huge, real-time worlds in which character development is as much a question of philosophy as fast reactions.

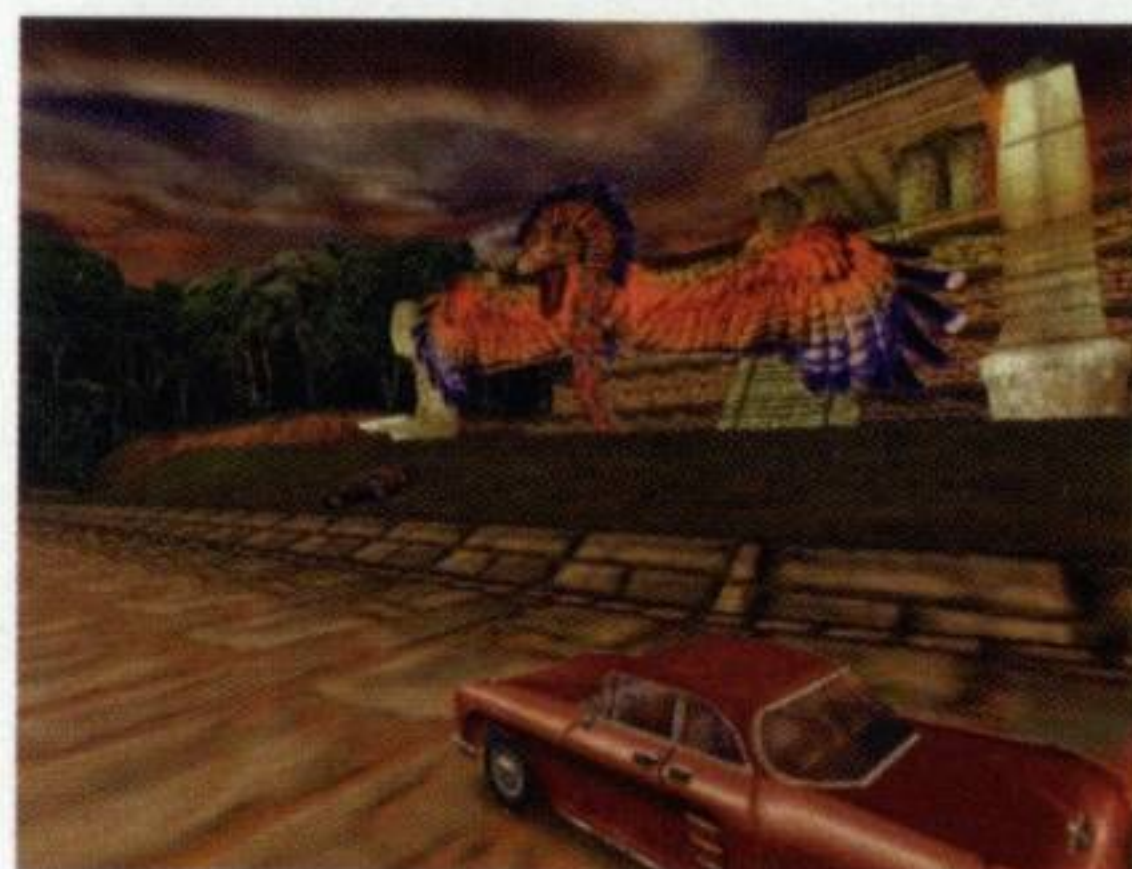


■ On the Louisiana course you do battle with a tornado.

■ Dreamcast technology allows for smart lighting effects.



■ Volcanoes and UFOs are obstacles.



■ Innovative multi-player options include chases where points are scored for the length of time you lead your opponent during the circuit.

BEST BIT SO FAR

You bet

Like most racing games these days, *Speed Devils* features a career mode where victory brings cash brings upgrades brings victory brings better cars to unlock. In *Speed Devils* the system is a little more innovative. Opt for Championship mode, and a distinctly dubious geezer wearing a permanent five o'clock shadow will come tapping on your garage door asking if you'd like to gamble on the forthcoming race (although you can only bet on yourself – he's not *that* dodgy). As well as an outright win, you can bet on the quickest lap, the amount of time spent leading the race or the fastest speed through a designated checkpoint. And no, you don't have to pay tax on the winnings.



Format: **Dreamcast** | Developer: **Ubisoft** | Publisher: **Ubisoft** | On sale in UK: **24 Sept** | Players: **1-2**

SPEED DEVILS

Drive like a demon

No third-party publisher is doing more to bring the Dreamcast closer to Europe than Ubisoft. It has already completed an impressive PC-perfect conversion of meticulous F1 sim *Racing Simulation: Monaco Grand Prix* and is working on its motorbike equivalent, *Suzuki Alstare Racing*. *Speed Devils* is the company's antidote to so much realistic wheel-gauge tweaking, and will hopefully be launched with the Dreamcast in September.

If the concept of ludicrously decorated American muscle cars tailgating each other along comedy multi-route courses is familiar, you may have played the rather fine

Speed Busters on the PC. *Speed Devils* is essentially the same game, but six months additional time in development has imbued it with an intuitive arcade feel, which tallies with the aims of Sega's new console.

You get to choose your steed from a range of hulking upgradeable motors, but greater ingenuity is to be found in the range of courses. From neon-lit Hollywood to snowy Canada, each has numerous secret routes and bizarre obstacles.

And the multi-player mode goes further than simply providing a split-screen first-past-the-post option; all manner of cat-and-mouse chases are available.

Essentially, *Speed Devils* is a decent, easy-to-play, knockabout post-pub racer with some sassy twists.

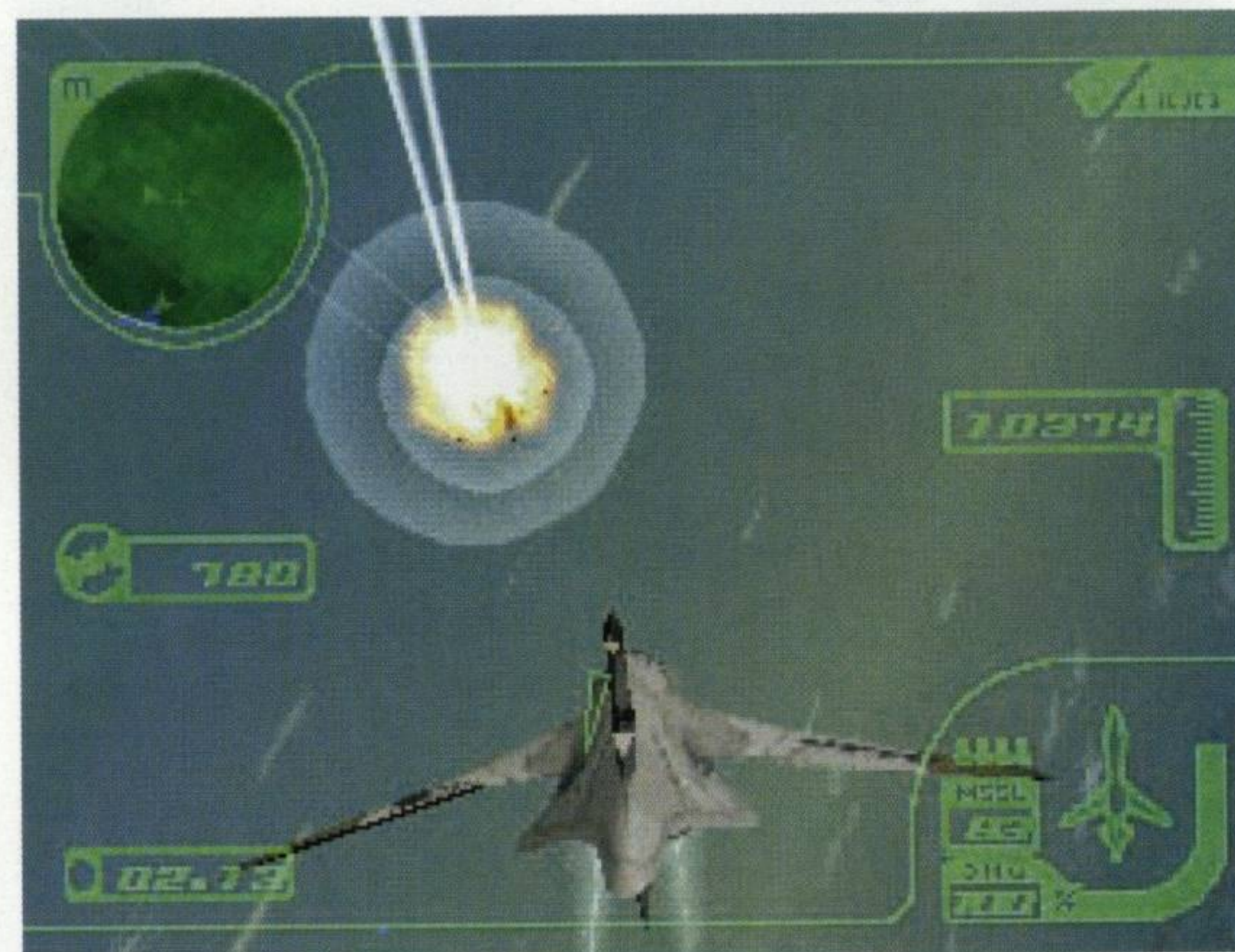
COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ One of the best features is the use of the analogue sticks. One is what you'd expect – it turns the plane in the direction you want to go. But the other enables you to turn your "head" to see what else is about. We like that.



■ Initially at least, cruelly blasting enemies out of the sky is easy enough. Simply wait for the lock on, fire off two missiles, and watch!



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Namco** | Publisher: **Sony** | Players: **1-4** | On sale in UK: **February 2000**

ACE COMBAT 3

Arcade aerial combat for the next millennium.

Ace Combat 3 isn't even on Sony Europe's release schedule yet, but the latest in the Ace Combat saga has caused quite a stir over in Japan. Why? Because it's the best flight sim on the PlayStation. Full stop.

Well, maybe the word simulation is being a mite generous. Ace Combat 3 is nothing if not all-out arcade combat; think Afterburner and you're halfway there. The shoot-'em-up elements are so much in the foreground you can even let your plane hit the ground and bounce back up again. Realistic? Let JFK Jr be the judge of that.

But, well, who wants to play a tedious flight sim on PlayStation anyway? If you're really desperate you might find Wingover 2

a bargain basement winner for a day or so, but you're much more likely to get a whole lot of fun out of Ace Combat 3.

The storyline is surprisingly good. It's set a few years the other side of the millennium, and features two rival corporations battling it out across the skies of the world. Pretty standard stuff, until you find out that you can actually swap sides halfway through, should you fancy it. All of which means there are at least five different endings and, well, that's all we could work out from the Japanese. It's certainly not a no-brainer though.

There are a huge number of missions – from dogfights to ground attacks, chases to convoys. And the scenery, especially in the cities at night, looks absolutely

stunning, taking the PlayStation flight sim into the lush world of Ridge Racer Type 4-style hi-res.

But, best of all, the planes – and this counts for all of the 30 models on offer – handle beautifully. Full rolls and sharp turning circles, which were criminally absent from Ace Combat 2, make their long-overdue entrance. And even if you're a raw beginner, you should be able to pick up the joystick and fly. This intuitive feel, combined with Namco's now famous slick presentation, makes Ace Combat 3 look like it will be a winner, perhaps the only thing that's missing at the moment is some English text. And, according to Sony sources, we should expect that very soon. One for the New Year, then.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Night raider

The night missions are impressive. After a few drab daytime ones, you're launched into the airspace of a none-too-friendly city. The street lights twinkle, the roads are mapped out, and the anti-aircraft fire blazes into the night sky, all adding to a tense couple of minutes as you get your bearings, furiously avoiding surface-to-air missiles. And when you do, locking on to a target, flying in between two skyscrapers and letting your arsenal go is brilliant. It looks, and feels, real. And there can't be better praise than that, now can there?



RELEASE SCHEDULE

Videogame journalists, eh? Always on about a game you can't buy yet. Here's when you can.

SEPTEMBER

3rd	Alien Resurrection	EA	PSX
3rd	GT 2: Gran Turismo 2	Sony	PSX
3rd	Indiana Jones and The Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PSX
3rd	LMA Manager	Codemasters	PSX
3rd	No Fear		
3rd	Downhill Mountain Biking	Codemasters	PSX
3rd	Shao Lin	THQ	PSX
3rd	Star Wars Episode 1	LucasArts	PSX
3rd	Star Wars Episode 1: Racer	LucasArts	PSX
3rd	Alien Resurrection	EA	PC
3rd	Hybrid Heaven	Konami	N64
3rd	WWF: Attitude	EA	N64

10th	Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	PSX
10th	Rainbow Six	Take 2	PSX
10th	UEFA Striker	Eidos	PSX
10th	Um Jamma Lammy	SCEE	PSX
10th	Unification	GT	PSX
10th	Wipeout 3	Psygnosis	PSX
10th	FA League Premier Manager 2	EA	PC
10th	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
10th	Magical Tetris	Capcom	N64
10th	Rainbow Six	Take 2	N64
10th	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	N64
10th	Road Rash 64	EA	N64
10th	Starcraft 64	Nintendo	N64
10th	Super Smash Bros	Nintendo	N64
10th	Tetris 64	Nintendo	N64
10th	Banjo-Kazooie	Rare	CGB
10th	Resident Evil	Capcom	CGB

17th	Carmageddon	SCI	PSX
17th	Prince of Persia 3D	Mindscape	PC
17th	Rogue Spear - Rainbow Six 2	Red Storm	PC
17th	Carmageddon	SCI	N64
17th	Jet Force Gemini	Nintendo	N64
17th	Michael Owen's WLS '99	Eidos	N64
17th	Carmageddon	SCI	CGB

23rd	Premier League Manager	EA Sports	PSX
23rd	Blue Stinger	Sega	DC
23rd	Cool Boarders DC	Sega	DC
23rd	Expendable	Infogrames	DC
23rd	Sega Rally 2	Sega	DC
23rd	Sonic Adventure	Sega	DC
23rd	Soul Calibur	Namco	DC
23rd	Trick Style	Acclaim	DC
23rd	UEFA Striker	Eidos	DC
23rd	Virtua Fighter 3tb	Sega	DC

24th	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PSX
24th	F1 '99	Psygnosis	PSX
24th	Prince Naseem Hamed Boxing	Codemasters	PSX
24th	Quake 2	Activision	PSX
24th	Silent Hill	Konami	PSX
24th	This Is Football	Sony	PSX
24th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT	N64
24th	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	N64
24th	World Driver Championship	Midway	N64
24th	Asteroids	Activision	CGB
24th	Yoda Stories	LucasArts	CGB

TBA	Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Black & White	EA	PC
TBA	Carmageddon Rally	SCI	PC
TBA	Daikatana	Eidos	PC

TBA	Driver	GT	PC
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	Microprose	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Secret of Vulcan Fury	Microprose	PC
TBA	Starlancer	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Ultima Ascension	Origin	PC
TBA	Unreal Tournament	GT	PC
TBA	Urban Chaos	Eidos	PC

OCTOBER

1st	Space Invaders	Activision	PSX
1st	Tony Hawke's Skateboarding	Activision	PSX
1st	Diablo 2	Blizzard	PC
1st	Ultimate Soccer Manager 2000	EA Sports	PC
1st	Tony Hawke's Skateboarding	Activision	N64
1st	Street Fighter Alpha	Virgin	CGB
1st	TOCA Touring Cars	Codemasters	CGB

8th	Chocobo	Squaresoft	PSX
8th	Tarzan	Nintendo	PSX
8th	Tenchu	Platinum	PSX
8th	Pokémon Blue	Nintendo	CGB
8th	Pokémon Red	Nintendo	CGB
8th	Re-Volt	Acclaim	CGB
8th	Star Wars Episode 1: Racer	LucasArts	CGB

15th	Destruction Derby 3	Psygnosis	PSX
15th	ISS Pro: Evolution	Konami	PSX
15th	Mario Golf	Nintendo	N64
15th	Destruction Derby 64	Nintendo	N64
15th	Tarzan	Nintendo	CGB

22nd	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
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28th	Music 2	Codemasters	PSX
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29th	Special Forces	Acclaim	PSX
29th	Resident Evil 2	Capcom	N64
29th	Twelve Tales: Conker 64	Rare	N64
29th	Power Stone	Sega	DC

30th	Constructor	Acclaim	PSX
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TBA	Asterix	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Battlezone 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Giants	Interplay	PC
TBA	Max Payne	Take 2	PC
TBA	Quake 3	Activision	PC
TBA	The Sims	Maxis	PC

NOVEMBER

TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	PC
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5th	Final Fantasy VIII	Squaresoft	PSX
5th	Spyro 2	Sony	PSX
5th	Get Bass	Sega	DC

12th	Apocalypse	Platinum	PSX
12th	Jimmy White's Cueball	Awesome	PSX
12th	Nightmare Creatures 2	Activision	PSX
12th	Jimmy White's Cueball	Awesome	N64
12th	Nightmare Creatures 2	Activision	N64
12th	Magical Tetris	Capcom	CGB
12th	Jimmy White's Cueball	Awesome	DC

19th	South Park - Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	PSX
19th	WWF	THQ	PSX

19th	Half-Life: Opposing Force	Sierra	PC
19th	Half-Life: Team Fortress 2	Sierra	PC
19th	Armourines	Acclaim	N64
19th	Nuclear Strike 64	EA	N64
19th	South Park - Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	N64
19th	Space Invaders	Activision	N64
19th	Turok: Rage Wars	Acclaim	N64
19th	WWF	THQ	N64
19th	Mario Artist	Nintendo	CGB
19th	Turok: Rage Wars	Acclaim	CGB
19th	WWF	THQ	CGB
19th	Snow Surfers	Sega	DC

23rd	Metropolis Street Racer	Bizarre	DC
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26th	Die Hard Trilogy 2	Fox	PSX
26th	FIFA 2000	EA	PSX
26th	Knockout Kings 2000	EA	PSX
26th	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Capcom	PSX
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	PSX
26th	Tomorrow Never Dies	EA	PSX
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	PSX
26th	Wu Tang Clan: Taste The Pain	Activision	PSX
26th	FIFA 2000	EA	PC
26th	Donkey Kong World	Rare	N64
26th	Knockout Kings 2000	EA	N64
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	N64
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	N64
26th	Worms	Infogrames	N64
26th	Worms	Infogrames	CGB
26th	Die Hard Arcade 2	Sega	DC
26th	House Of The Dead 2	Sega	DC
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	DC
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	DC

TBA	Carmageddon 3: Death Race 2000	SCI	PC
TBA	Duke Nukem 4ever	GT	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones and The Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Obi-Wan Kenobi: Dark Forces 3	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Soldier Of Fortune	Raven	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Insurrection	Microprose	PC
TBA	Theme Park 2	EA	PC

DECEMBER

3rd	Road Rash: Unchained	EA	PSX
3rd	Saboteur	Eidos	PSX

17th	Crash Bandicoot Rally	Sony	PSX
17th	Perfect Dark	Rare	N64

18th	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	PSX
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TBA	A-10 Warthog	EA	PC
TBA	Conquest: Frontier Wars	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Drakan	Psygnosis	PC

■ RELEASE SCHEDULE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HMV

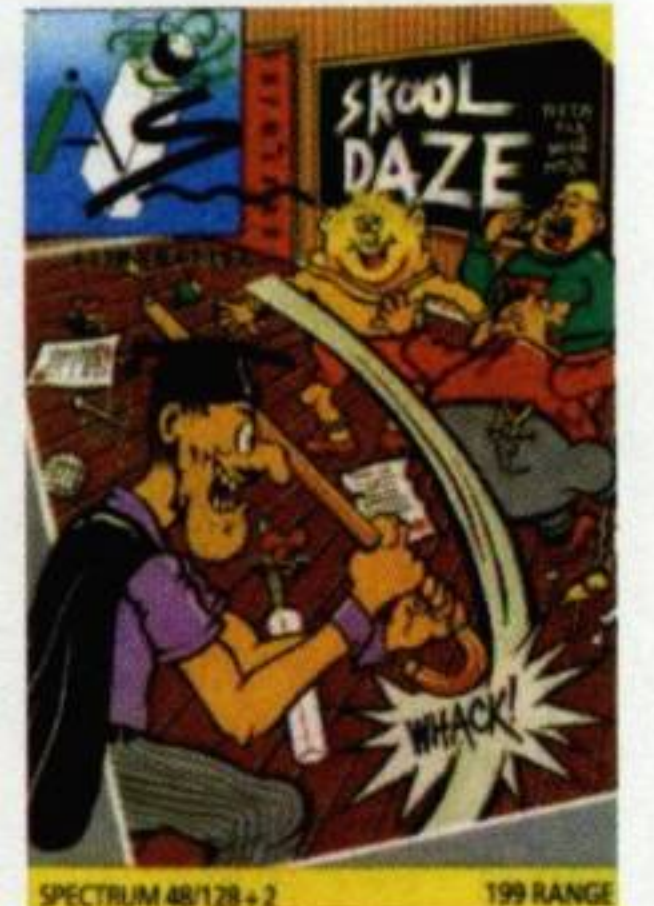


■ Um Jammer Lammy hits the streets on 10 September.

Compiled by | Mark Green

September 1986

Blundering boffins, beleaguered balls, and Botham bouncing back were just a few of the big things happening **13 years ago.**



■ Above: the risky copyright-infringing inlay cover of the '86 re-release.

Best daze of our lives

To be honest, this is a bit of a cheat. September 1986 marked the re-release of Microsphere's Spectrum classic *Skool Daze* – it made its first appearance way back in December 1984. But it is about time that one of the finest titles in videogame history was covered, and so the decision was made to track down the man responsible for it. It took a while, but he eventually surfaced after hours spent on the phone questioning former neighbours and clueless local library assistants.

David Reidy has now moved away from the London home where he wrote and published Microsphere's entire catalogue. He quickly puts paid to the 8-bit legend that claims he's an ex-teacher ("Perhaps you're getting me confused with my wife"), and is slightly mystified by the cult status of *Skool Daze*. "I'm aware that people remember the game," he concedes, "I still meet and chat to people who are fans. But they're talking about stuff I was doing more than 15 years ago, which I find a bit odd."

Skool Daze starred Eric, a schoolboy on a quest to steal his less-than-satisfactory end-of-term report from the staffroom safe. But

there was mountains of fun to be had along the way, thanks to the fully-functioning school that Eric spent his days in. Teachers could be catapulted, classmates could be punched, and – most famously – blackboards were free to be scrawled upon. In short, it was every schoolboy's dream come true, and made all the more involving by the fact that school life carried on around you whether or not you forged on with Eric's task.

"Everything was based around my admittedly shaky recollections of being a schoolboy," says David. "So you'd get chased by the master, who could always run quicker than you, and the teachers and children were all stereotypes. The crazy chemistry professor, the mad history teacher who forgets everything, the local bully and the swot were all there, and I tried to make things more personal by allowing the player to change the names to match their own school."

David admits that programming *Skool Daze* was fun, but challenging. "*Skool Daze* was intended to be a game where you could do what you liked," he explains. "You could just ignore the object of the game, wander into classes and see what was going on. Both this idea and the game's subject matter were new – there were no existing games to base it on. It was just a case of making it work, and getting the look and feel which I'd

imagined to come out on the screen. Luckily, the graphic artist, Keith Warrington, could turn my words into pictures quite successfully."

Following the sequel, *Back to Skool*, in which girls were thrown into Eric's life, the young hero's education came to an end. "There was going to be a third game," admits Dave, with a twinkle in his eye. "It was going to be called *Eric and Hayley's Decathlon*, after a game which I never played. But by the end of 1987, when I was thinking about

"It was every schoolboy's dream come true..."

programming it, the Spectrum market had largely gone down to a budget price. I programmed a three-dimensional crossword program and a few other unreleased games in the early '90s, but following that I went back into engineering."

So, which of the children in *Skool Daze* was David most like at school? Einstein the swot, Angelface the bully, Boy Wonder the tearaway, or an all-rounder like Eric? "Without a doubt, I was Eric," grins David. "I had to be him, in order to know that all the other types of pupil existed. I think coming across bullies, swots and tearaways is an experience that everyone's had at school, and that's probably why I have such fond memories of creating *Skool Daze*."

Skool Daze
 Publisher: Microsphere
 Developer: David Reidy
 Genre: Platformer
 Platform: Spectrum, C64
 Players: 1
 Score: **8/10** (Your Sinclair)
 "A classic with its good humoured style. You must have it."

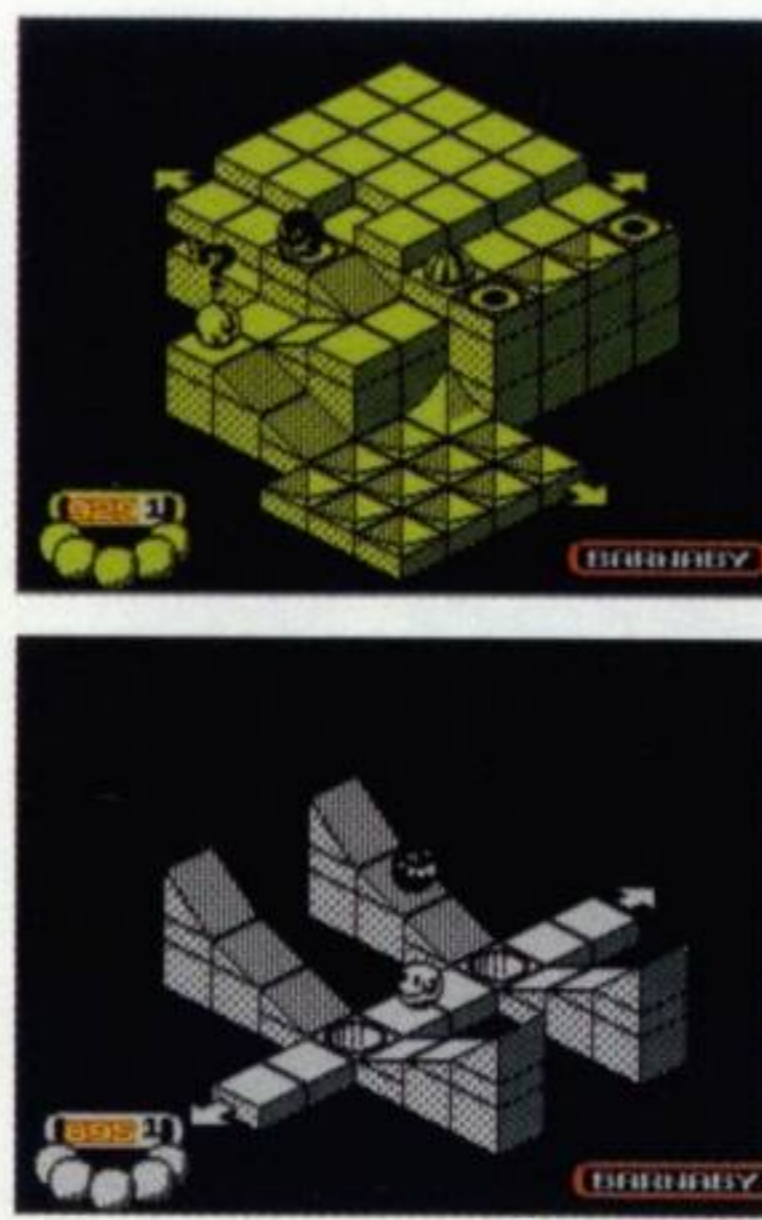
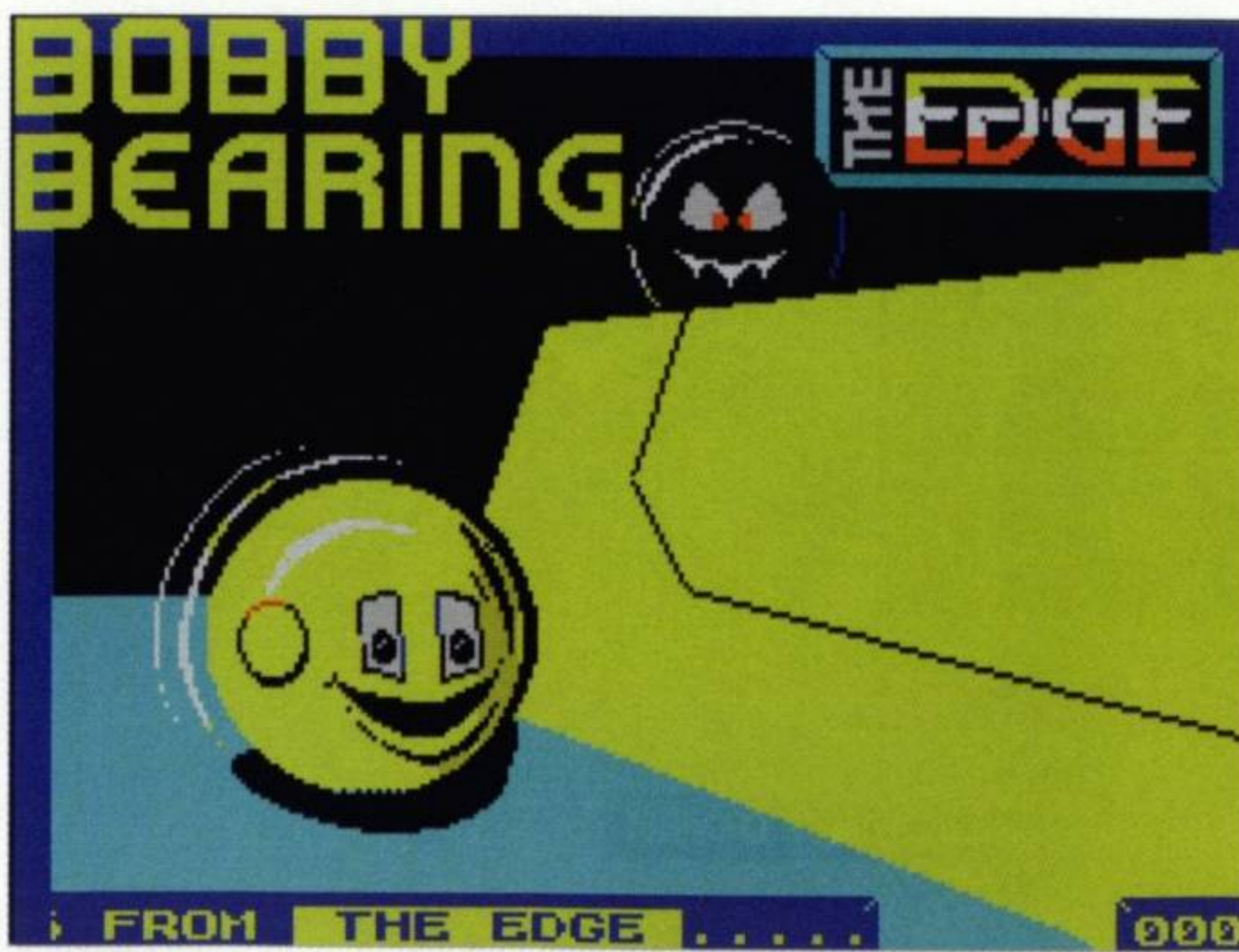
■ '80s cult classic.

Games of the month | You didn't need singing sheep to have fun back in 1986.

Ghosts 'n' Goblins
 System: C64/Spec/Ams
 Publisher: Elite
 ■ What Capcom was doing before it realised that flying fists and somersaulting girls in short skirts would set the profit ball rolling. This polished scrolling platformer was set in a world of zombies, demons and heroes who ran around in their pants after getting hit.
 ■ Your Sinclair: 9/10

Green Beret
 System: C64/Spec/Ams
 Publisher: Imagine
 ■ From Konami, *Green Beret* was *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* set in a modern, fast-paced, war-torn world. With only your trusty blade for company, the aim was to clamber on to platforms and punch holes in the local bad guys. Smooth, fast and difficult, it was an instant hit.
 ■ Your Sinclair: 9/10

Rebelstar
 System: Spectrum
 Publisher: Firebird
 ■ Early in the '80s, a slow, takey-turney strategy title emerged. *Rebelstar Raiders*'s futuristic plot, approachable controls and clear presentation was soon followed by *Rebelstar*, which, complete with arcade-friendly visuals, was a popular Speccy title.
 ■ Your Sinclair: 7/10



■ Bobby's shaded 3D visuals were a real treat.

Bobby's whirl

Strangely, the humble ball has consistently been one of the most popular heroes of videogaming. Aside from an evergreen range of sporting simulations, the rotund wonders have starred in racing games, top-down maze games, platformers, and even beat-'em-ups.

Bobby Bearing, for example, featured one such spherical superstar, and appeared on the Spectrum in September 1986. Publisher The Edge's publicity often aped the mysterious, secretive fare made popular by Ultimate Play The Game, with wordless ads and a reluctance to talk to the press. The quality of the 3D rollaround action of *Bobby Bearing* also suggested it might be able to match the continued brilliance of Ultimate's output.

Although *Bobby Bearing* owed much to Electric Dream's *Spindizzy*, with its isometric visuals and treacherously hilly levels, The Edge created challenging, involving play to match the fancy graphics. Where *Spindizzy* asked the player to simply reach every room on the map, *Bobby* had a proper quest: to find the young ball's brothers and shunt them all the way back home.

Much of the game's charm came as a result of Bobby's expressive face. If his default innocent grin

was enough to melt our hearts, the blank eyes, frown and floating question mark accompanying his death were sure to bring tears to your eyes.

Bobby Bearing's above-average presentation didn't disguise a below-average game. The fine-tuned controls and accurate physics allowed Bobby to roll under, over and around the detailed landscapes with a pleasing sense of realism, and the obstacles put in his way – including evil razor-toothed balls and the dreaded crushers – made successfully bringing the Ball siblings home a keyboard-smashingly difficult job.

Bobby Bearing also introduced a new loading system, Alkatraz. Back in 1986, games took several minutes to load, and publishers developed increasingly complex loading methods to make the delay fly by (and thwart pirates). Alkatraz enabled The Edge to flood the loading screen with a colourful picture, complete with smoothly scrolling welcome message. The Spectrum's familiar yellow and blue loading stripes were eerily absent. The advances made by this pre-play sequence made it almost as popular as the actual game.

Sadly, despite 90%+ scores from most magazines and enough sales to catapult the game into the Top 10 sales chart, *Bobby* never reappeared on the Spectrum.

World News Headlines

And here is the news...

■ For the first time, the USSR allowed Western inspections of its military capabilities. In a growing atmosphere of reconciliation between Russia and the West, then USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to the move at a Stockholm summit.

■ An enquiry into the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in April put the blame on careless power plant staff. Emergency cooling systems and a host of other safety measures had been switched off or bypassed in order to conduct a "needless" experiment. Scientists predicted 70 more years of local radiation-related deaths.

■ Bloody riots broke out on a Sealink ferry to Holland. The fights between Manchester United and West Ham fans endangered hopes of FIFA lifting the post-Heysel Stadium ban on English clubs participating in European competition.

■ Cricketer and *Question of Sport* wit Ian Botham arrived back on the English Cricket Team after a two-month suspension. Hopes were high that the moustachioed one, who'd been banned for drug use, would help England to a rare victory.



■ Botham: just say no.

Music Charts

6 September 1986

- 1 I Want To Wake Up With You *Boris Gardiner*
- 2 Don't Leave Me This Way *The Communards*
- 3 We Don't Have To *Jermaine Stewart*
- 4 Brother Louie *Modern Talking*
- 5 Glory of Love *Peter Cetera*

■ Information © CIN

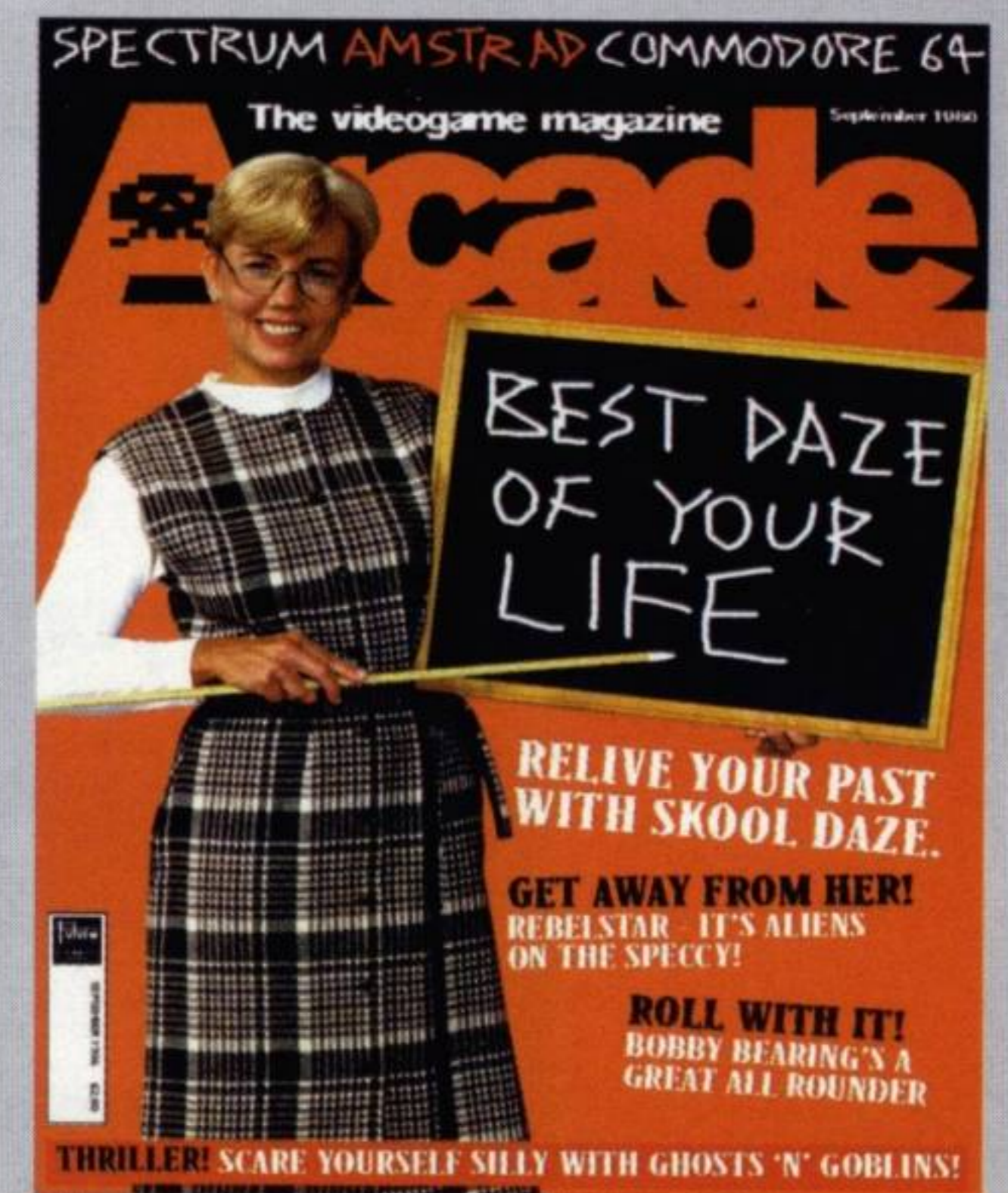
Film Charts

6 September 1986

- 1 Aliens
- 2 Highlander
- 3 Hannah and Her Sisters
- 4 A Room with a View
- 5 Target

■ Troubled US Gold title, *World Cup Carnival*, finally arrived. After the original programmers let it down, US Gold re-packaged a slightly-improved version of age-old Artic title *World Cup Football*. The industry reacted in horror to this sneaky re-release, but the game shot to the top of the charts – although US Gold and Artic were later sued by a rights-holder to *World Cup Football*, leaving no money for the programmers' own wages.

■ A furious round of bidding resulted in the home conversion rights to the biggest coin-ops of the year being finalised. Elite got its hands on Sega's *Space Harrier*, an into-the-screen shoot-'em-up, while Software Projects ambitiously decided to bring the laser disc-based interactive cartoon *Dragon's Lair* to home

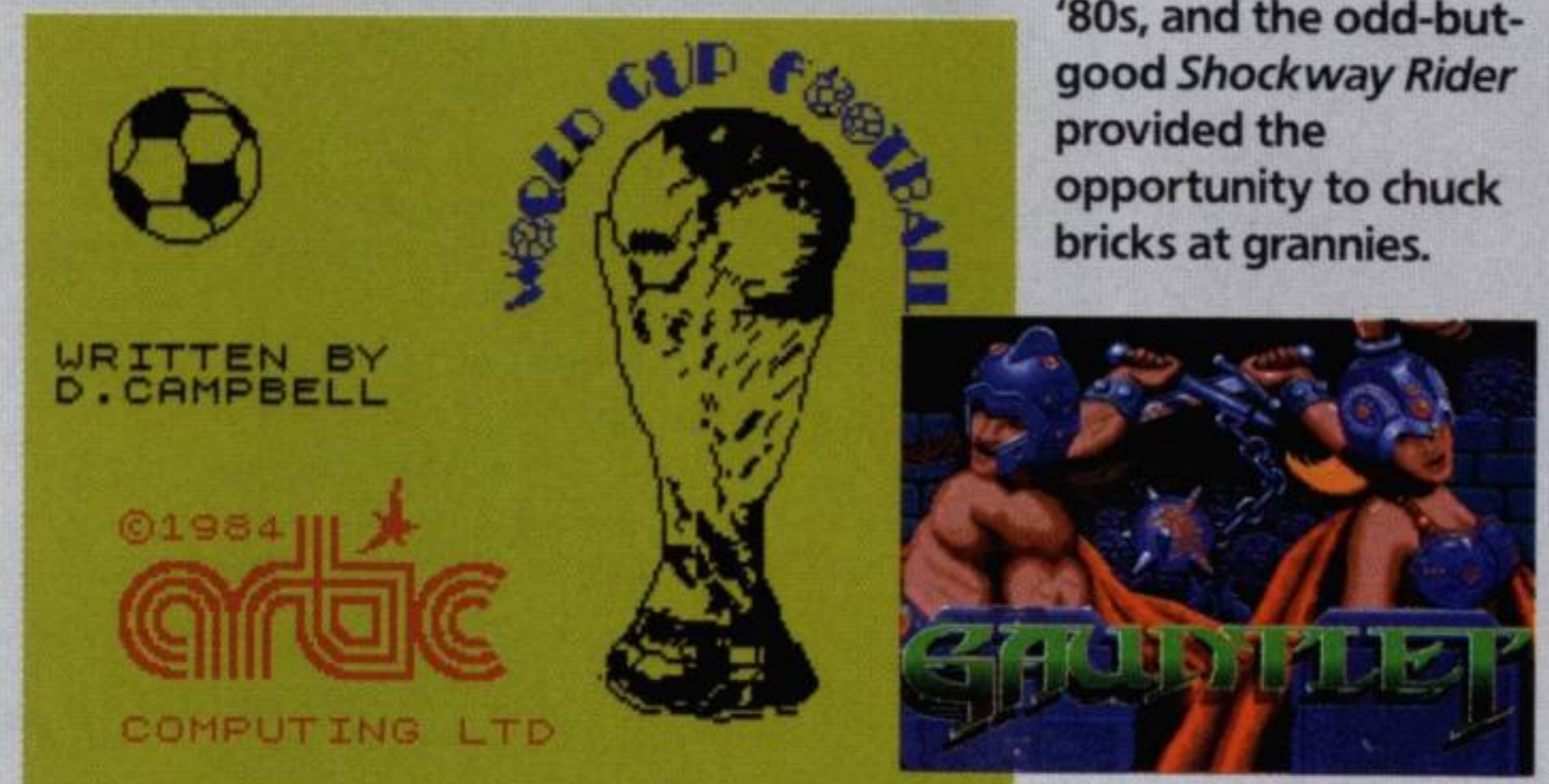


■ Say what you like about school, but we certainly wouldn't mind receiving some discipline from this particular teacher.

computers. US Gold, however, secured the most lucrative deal by winning the rights to *Gauntlet*, the hugely popular top-down dungeon adventure.

■ Gargoyle, best known for the atmospheric Gaelic adventures *Tir Na Nog*

and *Dun Darach*, branched out with a new, arcade-based label, called *Faster Than Light*. The first two games suggested output to match the quality of Gargoyle's own: *Lightforce* emerged as the most frantic and colourful shoot-'em-up of the '80s, and the odd-but-good *Shockway Rider* provided the opportunity to chuck bricks at grannies.



■ The original *World Cup Football*: basic.

■ It's a top-down dungeon. Ooh er.

Your Sinclair spectrum top 10

- 1 Kung Fu Master *US Gold*
- 2 Jack The Nipper *Gremlin*
- 3 Ghosts 'n' Goblins *Elite*
- 4 ACE *Cascade*
- 5 Ninja Master *Firebird*
- 6 Molecule Man *Mastertronic*
- 7 Theatre Europe *PSS*
- 8 Knight Tyme *Mastertronic*
- 9 Bobby Bearing *The Edge*
- 10 Green Beret *Imagine*

Zzap 64 top 10

- 1 Uridium *Hewson*
- 2 Paradroid *Hewson*
- 3 Mercenary *Novagen*
- 4 International Karate *System 3*
- 5 Hardball *US Gold/Accolade*
- 6 Summer Games II *US Gold/Epyx*
- 7 Winter Games *US Gold/Epyx*
- 8 The Eidolon *Activision/Lucasfilm*
- 9 Bounder *Gremlin Graphics*
- 10 Commando *Elite*

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLSPORT



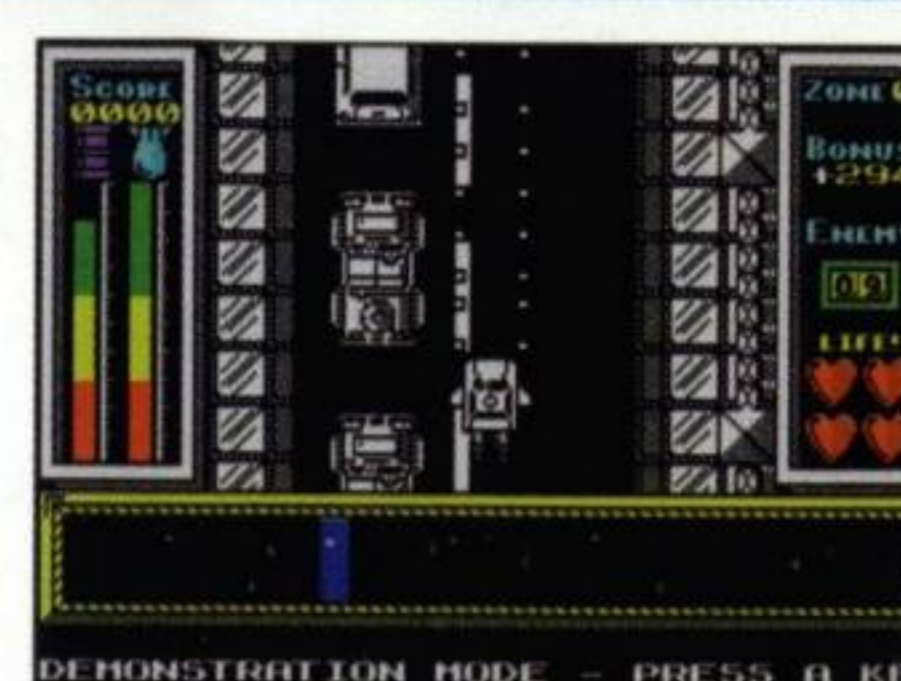
Sbugetti Junction

System: **Spectrum**
 Publisher: **Bug Byte**
 ■ *Sbugetti Junction* had you standing at a crossroads wearing a fluorescent sash, directing rush-hour traffic. The fiddly controls made avoiding a pile-up hugely challenging, but success meant jetting off to a junction in Italy. Where the cars drove backwards.
 ■ **Your Sinclair:** 8/10



Heartland

System: **Spec/Ams**
 Publisher: **Odin**
 ■ An odd little platformer from Ultimate-wannabes Odin, starring a man in a top hat, some zombies, a great deal of pretty scenery, and plenty of running and jumping. Rapturously received at the time, it feels stodgy today, but the visuals still impress.
 ■ **Your Sinclair:** 9/10



Stainless Steel

System: **Spectrum**
 Publisher: **MikroGen**
 ■ Created by Dave Perry (now CEO of Shiny Entertainment), *Stainless Steel* was a departure from the usual platform fare from MikroGen. Although the mix of walking and driving didn't gel, the technical whizz-bangery pointed to great things for the author.
 ■ **Your Sinclair:** 8/10

Great Gaming Moments

Leaf me alone

Remembered by | Jonathan Davies

Genuinely fear for your life in the ideally titled **Deathchase**.



O

n Sector 3 they were merely an irritation. By Sector 6 they'd turned nasty. Now, on Sector 8, the trees want to kill you. The trees are your enemies.

So you're staring, unblinking, at the telly as your Spectrum works overtime throwing obstacles in your path. Your whole body is rigid with concentration. Impossible quantities of red and magenta tree trunks are rushing towards you. With almost imperceptible taps of the 1 and 0 keys you're steering your bike between them. The tiniest mistake and "BEEEEOOOW!"

Blast! You close your eyes. And then open them again just in time to avoid another tree. Okay, last life. (You lost the first on Sector 5 when some idiot tried to tell you your dinner was ready.) Ahead of you is a blue motorcyclist. You fire at him, but your shot goes wide. You swerve left around a tree, then jink to the right past another. You

fire again and get him. His bike explodes in a puff of attribute clash. "Breeew, brrreew, brrreew," goes your Speccy's tiny loudspeaker as the sun sets.

"Night Patrol," announces the screen.

You're sweating hard now. The trees are whizzing hypnotically past you, more of them than ever before, seeming to go faster and faster. Left, you go. Right. Left. Hngh-phew. That was close. Left. Right.

Ahead of you, through those damned trees, you can see a yellow and a blue biker. You need to kill them both. They get closer and closer, and then your Range indicator starts flashing. You open fire and straight away a lucky shot gets the blue one. Okay. Just the yellow one now. But he's right over there, and there are so many trees. So many trees. Here he comes. Left past a tree. Left. No – right! Right. Oo-eeek. Left. Fire. Got him!

The screen freezes.

There's an awkward pause as a tank finishes trundling across the horizon.

The sky goes blue. Then red. Then magenta. Then cyan. How, you're thinking, could Sector 9 possibly have any more trees in it than Sector 8?

But wait, what's this? "Bonus!" flashes up on the screen. Your score whizzes upwards: 44,037, 45,037, 46,037...

Wanna play?

■ Unless you can find a Sinclair Spectrum in your attic along with a cassette with the game on it, you can't play *Deathchase*. Not without falling foul of the law, anyway. You absolutely shouldn't, for example, download an emulator-like Spec from the Internet, along with a snapshot of *Deathchase*, and type C:\SPEC\DCHASE.SNA into the Run box of your PC. Because that would be naughty.

"Day Patrol," says the screen. And then, as you ride on, the trees gradually thin out until (and here comes the moment)... there are no trees.

Whuh? No trees? But yes. The trees have gone. You breathe out. Your whole body relaxes. They've gone! Ha ha ha! You do big, swooping turns across the grass. No trees! Hee hee. You're free at last. You're back in Sector 1.

This is the same feeling of ultimate release you get when you jab the key into the front door after a long taxi ride home from the pub, rush upstairs, slam the bathroom door and let six pints flow freely from your distended bladder. No, it's better than that. It's like the bell going at the end of the last lesson on the last day of the summer term. It's like finally getting to meet Philippa Forrester and discovering she's not as nice as you'd imagined, and it doesn't matter that you'll never get to go out with her. Erm, probably.



It's like the bell going at the end of the last lesson on the last day of the summer term

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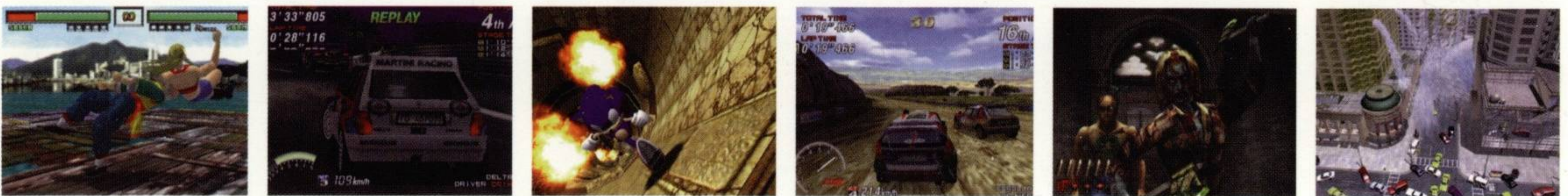
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