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July 1999
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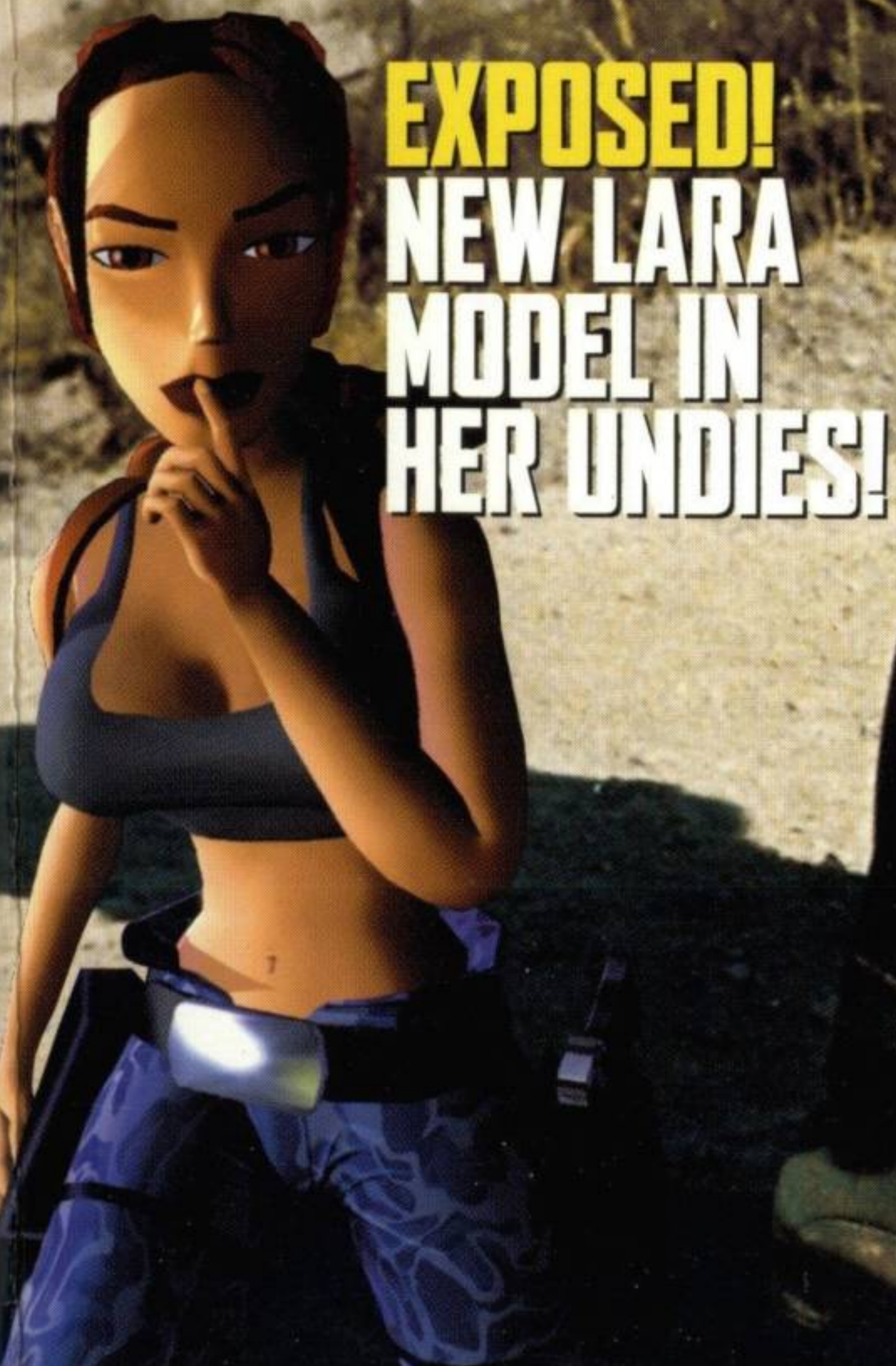
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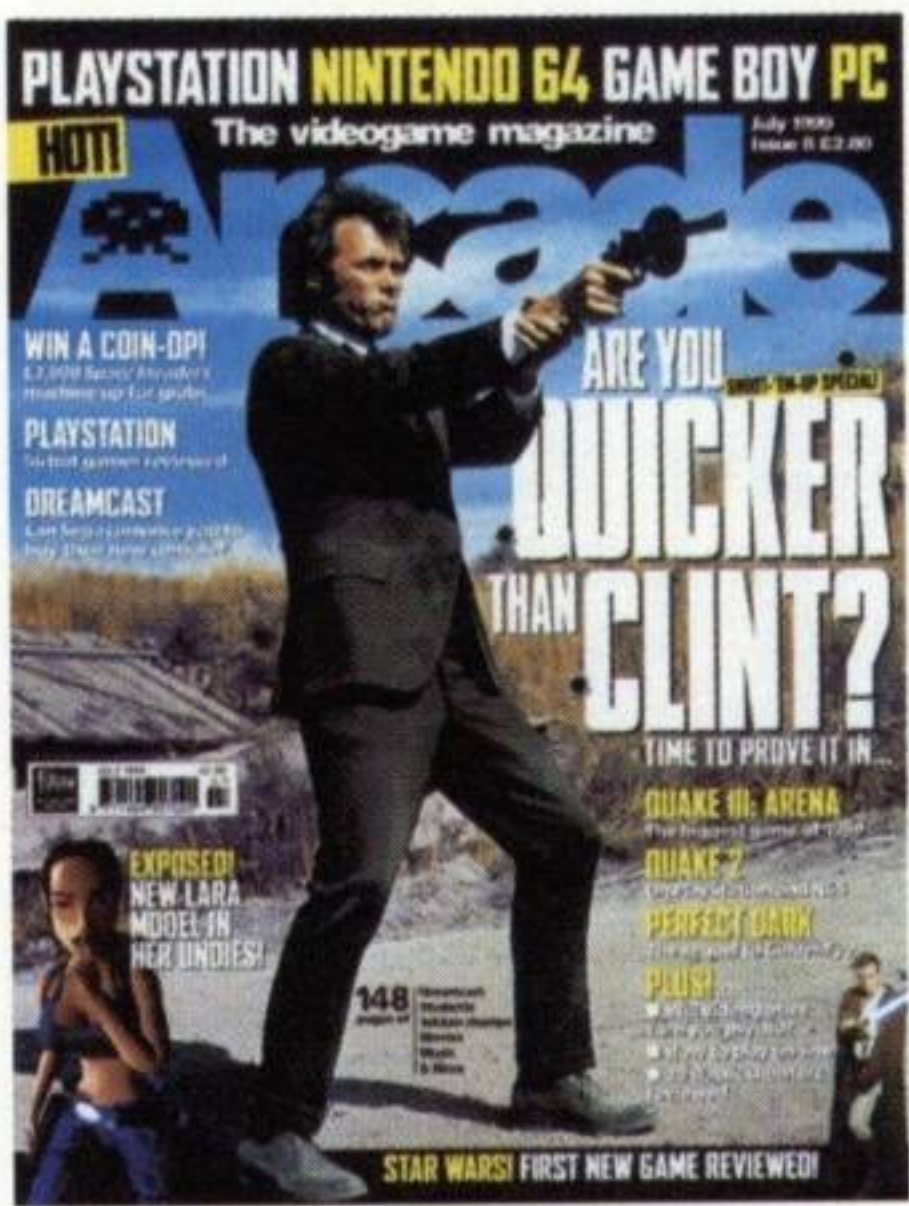

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July

Issue eight

3D SHOOTER SPECIAL!

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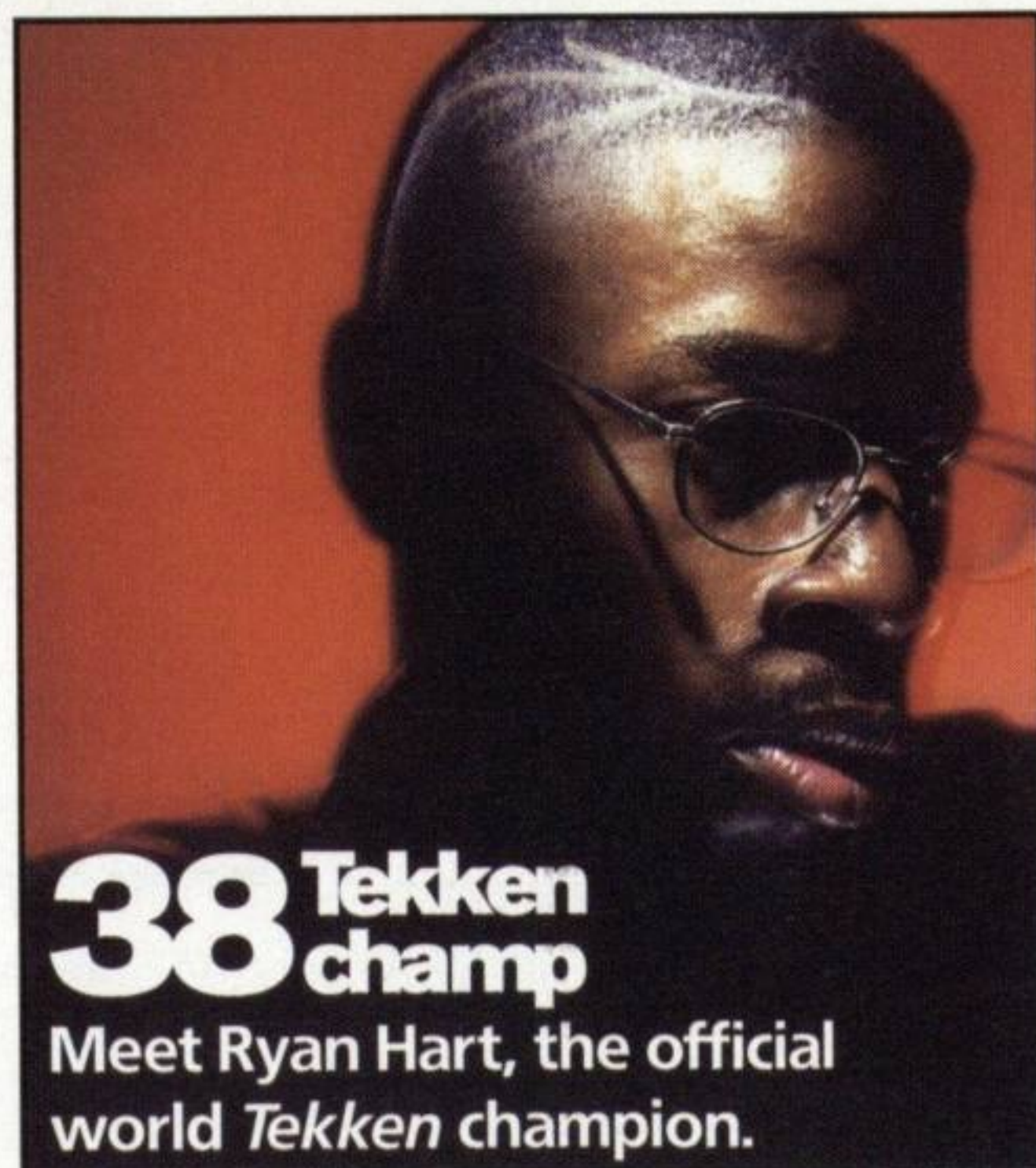
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■ Go wild in the Metal Country. Page 102.

Arcade

The videogame magazine

Editorial & advertising Telephone 01225 442244
Arcade magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Telephone 01225 442244
Fax 01225 732275 (edit) 01225 732282 (ads)
E-mail arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk
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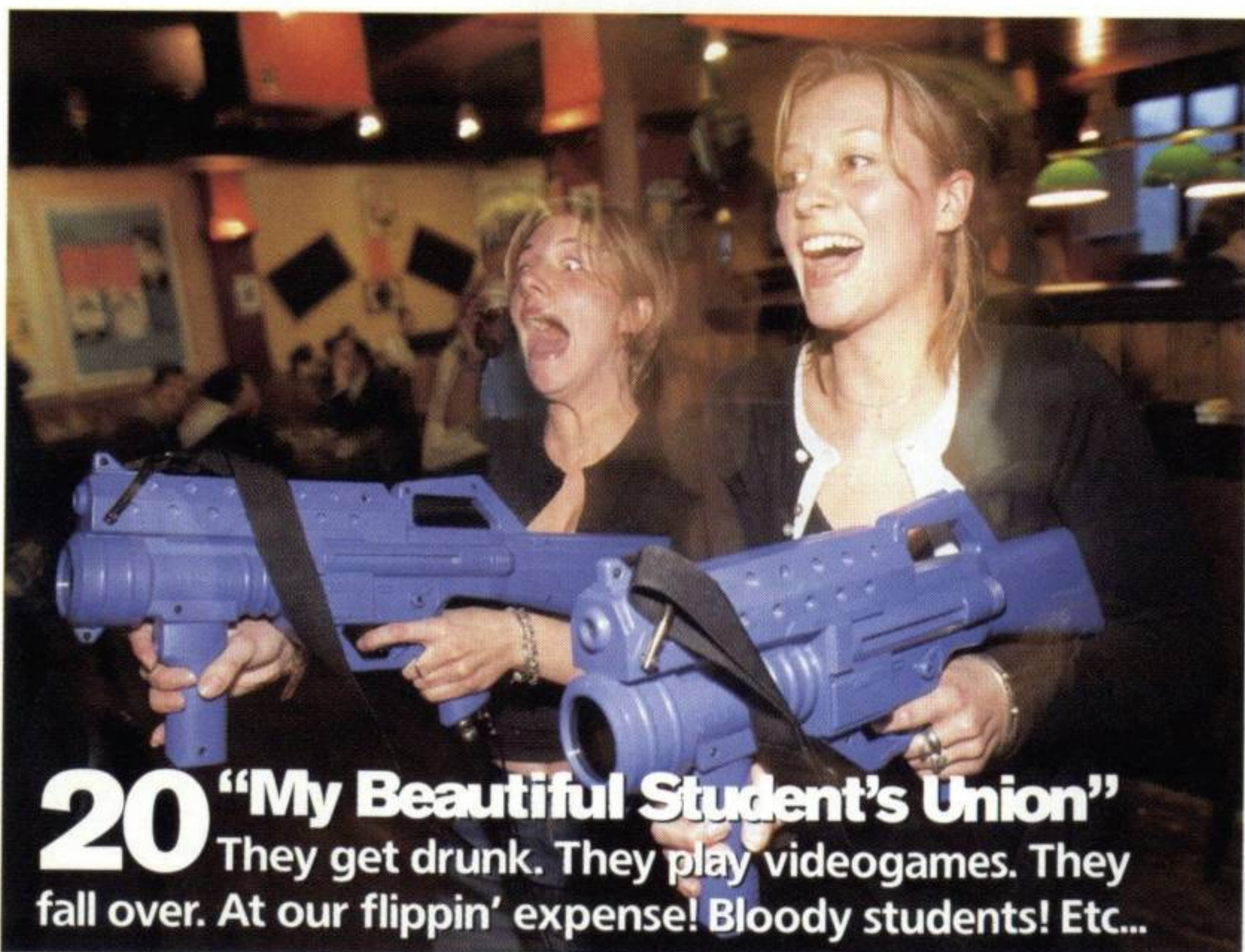
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Making music for videogames.



20 "My Beautiful Student's Union"
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New releases: *Syphon Filter*, *Trap Runner*, *Puma Street Soccer*, *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis*, *Grand Theft Auto: London 1969*, *Big Air*, *Aironauts*, *Triple Play 2000*, *Rampage*.
Budget releases: *Final Fantasy VII*, *Gran Turismo*.

100 New PC Games

New releases: *Official Formula 1*, *Wild Metal Country*, *Requiem*, *Tanktics*, *Lands of Lore III*, *V-Rally*, *Army Men II*, *Jack Nicklaus 6: Golden Bear Challenge*, *Baldur's Sword*, *Machines*, *Actua Ice Hockey*, *Jazz Jackrabbit 2: The Secret Files*, *Liath*, *Megaman X4*, *Puma Street Soccer*, *Railroad Tycoon 2: The Second Century*, *Sports Car GT*, *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Triple Play 2000*.

Budget releases: *Ultimate Race Pro*, *Gubble*, *Fair Play Pack*, *Actua Soccer 2*, *Hexen II*, *Monkey Island Bounty Pack*, *Tomb Raider II: Golden Mask*, *Extreme Assault*, *G-Police*, *Actua Golf 2*, *Under a Killing Moon*, *Fallen Haven*.

110 New N64 Games

New releases: *Star Wars Episode 1: Racer*, *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour*.

Budget releases: *F1 World Grand Prix*, *Lylat Wars*, *Mario Kart 64*, *Snowboard Kids*, *Wave Race 64*.

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EDITORIAL

It's an onion ring!



With Neil West, Editor

Bloody hell. You would not believe the amount of stick I've had this month. "Chewing gum not good enough for you, eh?" or "You might be a dickhead, West, but that's not where you're meant to put it." Tres amusing. So let's put the record straight once and for all: in that picture of me, the one printed above, it's not a condom. It's an onion ring, from Sainsbury's.

At least, that's my story. And I'm sticking to it. Besides, *Arcade* offers far more interesting things to consider this month than whether or not the editor is some kind of sexual/crispy snack deviant. The imminent arrival of a whole new generation of 3D shooting games, for one. Before the end of the summer, new games for all three major videogame platforms look set to have us wondering whether we shot five or six, and asking ourselves if we feel lucky.

Quake III: Arena for the PC from id Software is easily the most anticipated game of the year. *Arcade* visited id's HQ in Texas to bring you an exclusive look behind the scenes at how it's shaping up. You can read Mark Green's report on page 50. Then there's *Quake II* for PlayStation and Nintendo 64. Just because the original game is a few year's old don't think that the console conversions won't be state of the art. See for yourself on page 56.

Anyway, it's a packed issue of the world's best videogames mag, this month, and I'm going to leave you to get on with it.

Cheers,

Neil West Editor

Rants & Raves

Forget *Driver*, videogame piracy and your worries about how PlayStation 2 might change the face of consoles. We've got letters on all these subjects, but *Arcade*'s hottest topic this month is nude gaming. Meanwhile, there's something fishy afoot in Basildon...



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Gran machismo

Don't let anyone ever tell you that coin-op games aren't as much fun as they used to be. Just recently, one provided me with the most fun I've had since Russ Abbott sang "Atmosphere".

Here's how. My ugly, senile prune of a Granny insists on visiting me every Tuesday evening, and I've recently taken to dragging her to increasingly debauched locations in an effort to make her stay home next time and/or kick the bucket with shock at where we end up. A seedy, high street amusement arcade was just one of the many locations I thought might finish off the ageing bint once and for all.

It turned out that the arcade was a lot more respectable (and therefore less scary) than I'd bargained for, but what it did have was a boxing game, *Real Puncher* by Taito, which lets you paste your mugshot, or that of a friend, onto the face of the opposition fighter.

Well, I couldn't believe my luck. "Stand just here, Gran," I said, waited til the machine had taken a picture of her Charles Bronson-style mug, and then proceeded to smack seven bells out of her digitised gurning grotesqueness. I must have spent about twenty quid, pummelling my dear old grandmother until my knuckles were red raw from punching overload. Suffice to say, old blanket-features wasn't best pleased.

So, I say, long live arcades! And a big smack round the chops to anyone who disagrees.

David Kavanagh, via e-mail

*It's funny how the very best videogames often provide tons of enjoyment in ways the designers probably never dreamed of. We say you should take your fun where you can get it. Each month *Arcade*'s Kick Ass section features a selection of Gameplay Challenges, ways to play games off of the beaten path. You'll find some on page 88 of this issue.*



■ New gloves, Gran?

Write to us at

Arcade

■ Make sure we get it... write. Pen us your missives and pop them into the post, addressed to:

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The best letter each month wins an *Arcade* T-shirt, once again shown off to perfection by our own little piece of inflatable heaven, the Lovely Lisa™. The hot weather may be playing havoc with her valve, but she's still smiling. What a trooper.



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... here survival balances on a knife edge.



Rants & Raves²

On the side

I've just read the My Beautiful Ferry feature (Arcade 7) and couldn't help thinking the captain looks like Harry Secombe.

Dariusz Kozlowski, Poland

Yes he does, you're right.

Who does the voice for Lara Croft? And what does she look like?

Scotty Lee, via e-mail

Ooh, Core keep this information very secret indeed, although last year a major newspaper did in fact "expose" the real Lara Croft. She's now gone into hiding and we can't find her (we tried).

I really enjoy the Timewarp feature in your mag every month. Although it shows just how primitive videogames were in the 1980s, it also reveals how they form the foundation for today's successes.

Fergal O'Connor, County Kerry

Yes they do, you're right. It also makes us feel really old. Shame.

Nintendo's Howard Lincoln (Game Over, Arcade 6) says that regarding Nintendo's new console he is "pleased to say the software will not be on ROM cartridges". Does this mean he now concedes that Nintendo made a mistake using them in the N64?

Robert Gaskell, via e-mail

Howard probably wouldn't admit that himself. But it does look that way...

Is Mark Green ill? What's his problem?

Darren Briggs, Nottingham

No, he's fine. He just looks ill.

Anarchy in the UK

So I haven't played *Driver* yet, but I'm already dead excited. The only thing I would ask the Reflections people is why is a UK development team setting a game all in America? Obviously that's where most of the famous car chase films were set, but what about taking inspiration from *The Sweeney* or *The Professionals*? I saw a great *Professionals* episode on Granada Plus last week where the Chinese hit-girl assassin made a getaway in a yellow 2CV van. How cool would that be in the game, with Bodie in pursuit in his silver Capri?

Or maybe, just as *Driver* has been influenced by lots of different movies, they could have built in loads of TV shows. You could have Bodie's Capri racing Del Trotter's Reliant, Inspector Morse's Jag, Mr Bean's Mini and Ade Edmondson's Ford Anglia from *The Young Ones*. You could even upgrade your wheels at Arthur Daley's used car lot.

Will Jones, Bristol

It's a lovely idea, and although there are licensing problems here (you'd have to get permission from the TV companies to use their characters and intellectual properties), you could get past these okay. The only real reason why it will probably never happen is that games have to be designed with a global audience in mind. And, for better or worse, the Japanese and Americans probably wouldn't appreciate the comedy of it all. Their loss, though.

Do the maths

"Estimates suggest that on every video game that's legitimately sold in the UK's high street stores, there are between five and twenty copies off-loaded for as little as £3-5 a pop" you said in *Arcade 4* (PlayStation Piracy, page 16).

This makes no sense. *Crash Bandicoot* is a Platinum selling game, which means 250,000 copies have been sold. So, by these figures, between 1.25 and 5 million copies are available illegally in Britain. Yet there are only three million Playstations. There's clearly something wrong with your maths. And, secondly, do you honestly believe that games such as *Eliminator* (which you reviewed as one star) are copied at all? Bah.

But my real point is that I find it offensive when softies blame piracy for their high prices. Let's not fool ourselves. The prices of games are high so the people selling them can make money, and a lot of it. Here's what Codemasters had to say about the issue, back when they were budget specialists:

"Fewer people are going to bother hacking our games because they're cheap enough for anyone who wants a copy to just go out and buy one." Now, to me, this is a sensible way to deal with piracy.

Thomas Camfield, Cranleigh

You're picking an extreme example: Crash Bandicoot 2 is a great game at a cheap price and of course it's sold shed loads - people are happy to pay good money for it because it offers great value for money. Most PlayStation games, however, cost £40

and are nowhere near as good. These are the ones that make up the lion's share of a pirate's business.

A nice man, but...

I enjoyed your round-up of racing games (*Arcade 6*), but I have to protest at the pathetic treatment of *WipEout 64* in the What Cart? feature.

Jonathan Davies is clearly a very nice man, but he doesn't have a clue about the merits of *WipEout*. His rather sad (and weird) attempt to bring it down by suggesting the programmers couldn't make a game with wheels so "made do" with hover ships is pathetically incorrect. In fact, the opposite is true.

As any gamer knows, *WipEout* was a futuristic sci-fi race game with hover ships from the start. It was designed by Psygnosis (then a subsidiary of Sony) as a showcase game for the fledgling PlayStation in 1995 - it's certainly no coincidence that it represents a "new generation".

The worst type of game review (or any type of criticism) is when the reviewer allows his personal prejudice to lead him to write a bias piece rather than offering any constructive criticism.

WipEout has long been recognised since as an all-time classic game and it made me mad, and a bit sad, to see it relegated to last place in your test, obviously for no real reason other than Jonathan Davies doesn't like hover car games.

Cars do not need wheels. Gamesplayers do not need the same old "realism" time and time again.

Ian Fire, via e-mail

We agree with your points, but Jonathan happens to dislike WipEout and he's entitled to his opinion. Besides, if we'd asked any one reviewer to evaluate 12 different driving games, inevitably there would be one or two he had a controversial perspective on.

Incidentally, Jonathan is correct in pointing out that wheels are notoriously tricky things to get "looking right." And, over the years, this has accounted for numerous "Bugger it. We'll just set the bloody thing in space," incidents.

Something fishy

Believe it or not, the old sport of videogame fishing isn't quite the niche pastime you make it out to be. Long before it featured in *Zelda 64*, Capcom's *Breath of Fire III*, which is about as mainstream as you get in Japan, included a fishing sub-game which plays a fairly major part in the game, with towns selling rods and bait and a merchant who uses fish as currency. Fish can also be used as food, medicine or even explosives, depending on the type. Both of *Breath of Fire*'s SNES predecessors featured large degrees of fish procurement, so it isn't exactly a new idea either.

Greg Lamb, Basildon

Absolutely fascinating.

Full service

First things first. *Arcade* is fab. It's great to see a computer mag on the market that has lived up to its hype. I thoroughly enjoyed the recent

The Videogame Magazine Arcade

Issue seven

Editorial **Arcade**

Future Publishing
30 Monmouth St
Bath BA1 2BW

Tel **01225 442244**

Fax **01225 732275**

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

Editor **Neil West**

Reviews Editor **Robin Alway**

Staff Writers **Mark Green**

Rich Pelley

Sam Richards

Operations Editor **Emma Parkinson**

Production Assistant **Jamie Dolling**

Art Editor **Nick Moyle**

Deputy Art Editor **Alvin Weetman**

Editorial Contributors: **Cam Anderson, James Ashton, Ross Atherton, Sue Bartucca, Alex Bickham, Jes Bickham, Matt Bielby, David Bradley, Steve Bradley, Jason Brookes, Lindsay Bruce, Stuart Campbell, Chris Charla, Simon Crook, Gary Cutlack, Jonathan Davies, Russell Deeks, Mark Donald, Ben East, Duncan Forbes, Simon Garner, Kieron Gillen, Peter Hill, Neil Jackson, Chris James, Martin Kitts, Steve Merrett, Dean Mortlock, Wil Overton, Steve Owen, Jon Palmer, Dave Perrett, Matthew Pierce, James Price, Mark Ramshaw, Alex Tanner, Paul Tudor, Travis, Jason Weston, Pete Wilton**
Photography: **Rick Buettner, Marc Burden, Simon Dodd, Jude Edginton, Catherine Lane-Simms**
Illustration: **Matt Kenyon, John Richardson**

Advertising **Phil Bruderer**

Tel **01225 442244**

Fax **01225 732282**

E-mail: phil.bruderer@futurenet.co.uk

Business Development **Paul Lanzarotti**

Laurence Robertson

Tel **0171 317 2600**

Future Publishing Executive Staff

Publisher **Jackie Garford**

Managing Director **Jane Ingham**

Circulation Director **Sue Hartley**

Operations Director **Judith Green**

Chief Executive **Greg Ingham**

Non-executive Chairman **Chris Anderson**

Operations Staff

Pre-Press Manager **Martin Smith**

Assistant Pre-Press Manager **Brian Hook**

Pre-Press Co-ordinator **Rachel Spurrier**

Scanning & Imagesetting **Paul Airs, Andy Bodman, Liz Cheney, Simon Chittenden, Richard Davies, Mark Gover, Adrian Hemmings, Jason Hudson, Neil Owen, Jason Tittley, Jon Wakeham, Simon Windsor**

Production Co-ordinator **Derryn Vranich**

Print Services Manager **Matthew Parker**

Print Services Co-ordinator **Mark Constance**

Production Administrator **Fiona Deane**

Circulation **Pete Walker**

Subscriptions & Future Publishing Ltd

Customer Services **FREEPOST BS4900**

Somerton

Somerset TA11 6BR

Tel (subscriptions) **01458 271131**

Tel (customer services) **01225 822510**

E-mail: subs@futurenet.co.uk

Overseas Licensing Enquiries **Chris Power**

Tel **+44 (0) 1225 442244**

Fax **+44 (0) 1225 732384**

E-mail: cpower@futurenet.co.uk

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MICRO PROSE



Rants & Raves ³

CONTRIBUTORS

Four devilishly handsome individuals, plucked from the seething mass that is Arcade's contributors. So what are they playing at this month?



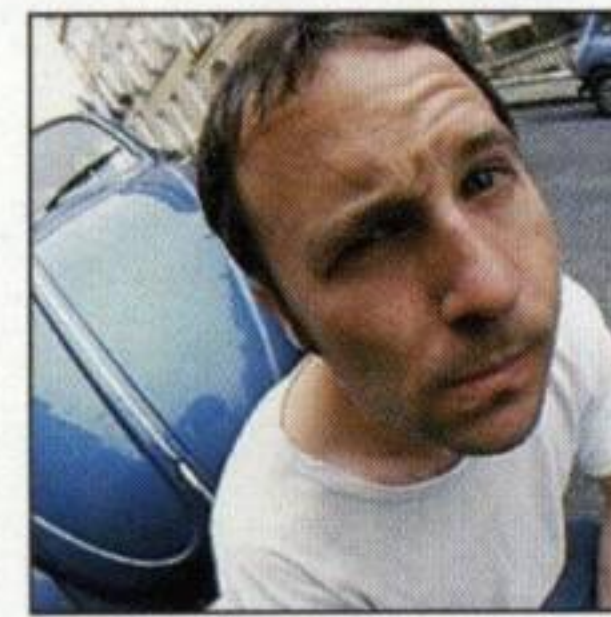
Andy Hutchinson

Hutch has been scribbling games-related words since the days when "3D games" meant Rubik's Cube, and was once attacked by angry parents on *Points Of View* after screaming "Let's see some blood and guts

on the floor!" on Channel 4's *GamesMaster* TV show.

This month, he explains how to play on-line in our first-person shooters special (page 40). "Internet gaming is a dangerous pursuit," admits Hutch. "I once tried to gather together the players in a deathmatch, so I could take an on-line 'team photo'. They all ran into the room and blew me to pieces."

Game of the moment: Sierra's rather special *Half-Life*. "There is no other game," Hutch bewilderingly claims.



Simon Dodd

Camera fiend Simon has expertly snapped such famous figures as Alan Shearer, Tiff Needell and England manager Kevin Keegan. This month, he hit a new career high when he took pictures of the *Arcade* team for the Games Night

Lottery (page 70). "I couldn't believe the ineptitude of it all," says Simon. "It was basically just six blokes having a laugh. The highlight of the day was seeing Mark make a complete idiot of himself on the *House Of The Dead 2* coin-op – although watching him eat chips was almost as funny."

Game of the moment: "Someone bought me a copy of *Tomb Raider II* at Christmas, and I've only just finished it. Probably because I'm always drunk when I play it."



Jam Keuhnemund

Ten-year-old Jam is just one of the characters from Atlus' *Snowboard Kids 2*, the game that's been dragging the *Arcade* team away from their desks this month. According to the game, Jam's a skilful fellow,

but production assistant Jamie disagrees. "Every time Neil chooses him, he spends the whole time with his face in the snow." Jamie's honesty is called into question when Neil appears from the games room, dancing the "I've just won. Again" dance (you know the one). He doesn't stop this childish behaviour until told to shut up and write his copy.

Game of the moment: *Snowboard Kids 2*. Obviously.



Chris Charla

Punk-loving Chris is the editor of America's *Next Generation* magazine, and the man behind the "American Express" section of *Games Insider* (page 34). How easy is it to squeeze all the latest USA gaming news into a quarter of a page? "It's

impossible," says Chris. "I enjoy researching it, though. I discovered that a guy who's very vocal in his opposition to videogames in the USA is actually a paid professional witness for an anti-videogaming lawsuit." Chris has recently been involved in the development of a Game Boy Color version of classic puzzler *Klax*. "It was interesting to see game design from 'the other side,'" says Chris.

Game of the moment: The *Next Gen* office PlayStation has had *Ridge Racer Type 4* glued into its slot all month. "Namco is the master of racing games," gushes Chris.

interviews with Danny John-Jules and in May's issue (*Arcade* 6) Jimmy White – what a geezer! More interviews please.

Also, My Beautiful *Arcade* is an inspired idea. I say you should check out the M4's Leigh Delamere service station, though my friend argues that on the M1, the Tosswell service station provides a more fully serviced, er... service.

Phil Gibbs, London

Cheers. Yeah, perhaps we should work on some kind of Arcade guide to motorway service stations around the country. We could even print up a little map so people can plan their routes around regular Time Crisis 2 fixes.

No, actually that's a stupid idea.

PlayStation paranoia

I wonder if I'm the only one who awaits the arrival of PSX 2 with more than a little trepidation. It appears to me that what we are seeing here are the beginnings of a videogames monopolisation. And monopolies are rarely good for innovation and development.

When a corporation of Sony's might and financial standing, coupled with immense technological research and development capabilities, lay waste to the competition in one fell swoop (and let's face it, they all but have), we run the very real risk of being left with no freedom of choice. Pretty soon we'll all have a nice grey PSX 2 box under the telly and what will we be playing then? Endless *GT*, *FIFA*, *Tomb Raider* and *Tekken* clones, with the odd "really good" RPG for a bit of much-needed variety. No *Zeldas*, no *Marios* and no imagination.

Sony might have the tech-specs to leave the opposition shagged, but I'd rather have some innovation and experimentation any old day of the week.

Craig Eastman, Falkirk

First off, there are plenty of worse fates than "endless GT, FIFA, Tomb Raider and Tekken", but we take your point. The good news is that there will always be Mario and Zelda games released – the business reality of it is that they make too much money to disappear forever. In Arcade 6, we spoke with Howard Lincoln, the chairman of Nintendo of America. He agreed that the monopolisation of the videogames business is a possibility, saying "It is conceivable that, at some point, you could end up with one box that basically is in everybody's house." And his response to this? "... at which point Nintendo would become a software company". In other words, Nintendo would make Mario and Zelda games for someone else's system.

Another life ruined

Mark Green is forever droning on about the games that have supposedly ruined his life (a regular feature of *The A List*, page 133). So far, we are led to believe that he lost one of his friends playing *Gauntlet*, lost his sanity playing *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, and lost a button out of his TV remote control so he couldn't read *Digitiser* any more – like anybody cares a jot.

Well, let me tell you about the game

that ruined my life – ruined my life, that is, to a far greater extent than the one that Mark Green whinges on about. I'm talking about *Ecco The Dolphin* on the Mega Drive.

I was living at home and it was a weekend when my parents had gone away and my older sister was away at university. I must have been about 16 at the time. I was feeling all hot and bothered (as teenagers do) and I figured that a nice cool bath would be the answer. I started running the bath, but then it occurred to me – and this might sound a bit poncey – that the relaxing notion of taking control of a dolphin and bobbing under the sea (in *Ecco The Dolphin*) would crush the aching in my over-active adolescent loins far more than a cold bath or, more obviously, even a wank ever could. Perhaps it was the 1990s equivalent to writing teenage poetry. I don't know. But either way I cranked up the Mega Drive on the big TV downstairs and spent a thoroughly enjoyable couple of hours. There I was, a bobbing and a swimming, with the sound turned up particularly loudly. I couldn't hear a thing from the outside world.

And then it started raining. In my living room. I'd left the bloody bath running.

I hold *Ecco The Dolphin* directly responsible for ruining my house, the marriage of my parents (who split up shortly afterwards), my education (all my school books got soaked) and, ultimately, my entire life.

So come on *Arcade*. When you say "The Game That Ruined My Life", I expect to read a story about a game ruining someone's life. Not "The Game Which Slightly Inconvenienced Someone One Sunday Afternoon Ten Years Ago". Perhaps Mark Green ought to get out a bit more.

Gavin Stringer, Ipswich

Okay, let's open it to the floor. Anyone else out there with their own stories of the games that ruined their lives? Prizes for the best one.

Nude gamer

You might just be able to save my life... well my reputation at least. Let me tell you how.

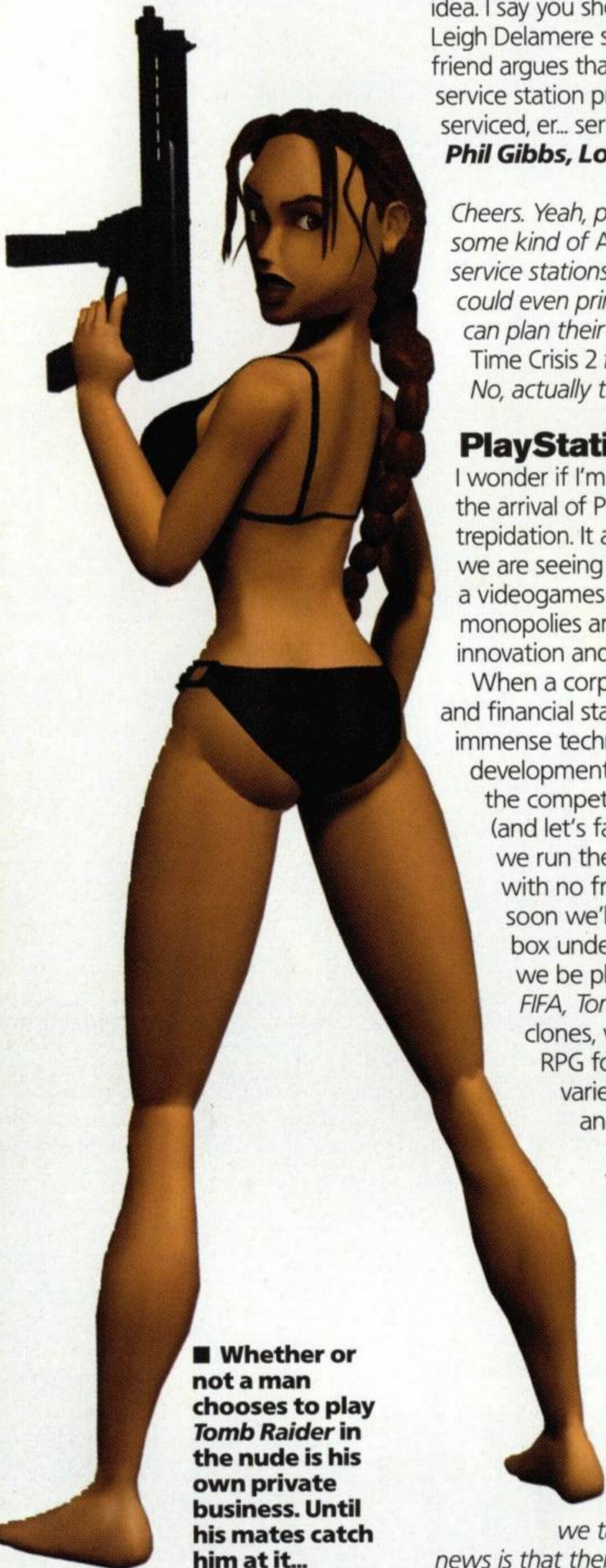
Last week I went down the pub to meet some mates for a lunchtime session. As I walked through the pub doors a huge cheer went up and everybody started laughing. After demanding to know what was going on, one of my so-called friends took me to one side and told me what was so funny. Evidently, the night before they'd popped around my house to see if I was coming out, and after getting no reply from the door decided to peep through the living room window. They saw me sitting on my settee in front of my telly, joypad in hand, enjoying a game of *Tomb Raider 3*. Now, it just so happens that I was also completely naked.

They thought this was bleedin' hilarious. And now all these wankers and half the town think I've got a thing about Lara Croft and am some kind of videogame pervert.

Anyway, could you tell these ignorant bastards that loads of people play games in the buff and it's completely normal after a hard day's work to "let it all hang out" and relax. I do it all the time.

Steve Brain, Macclesfield.

You're on your own here Steve. While we'd like to tell you that we all play in the nude, we – erm – don't. (For god's sake, man, just close the curtains!)



■ Whether or not a man chooses to play *Tomb Raider* in the nude is his own private business. Until his mates catch him at it...

Arcade exit poll

Arcade

■ 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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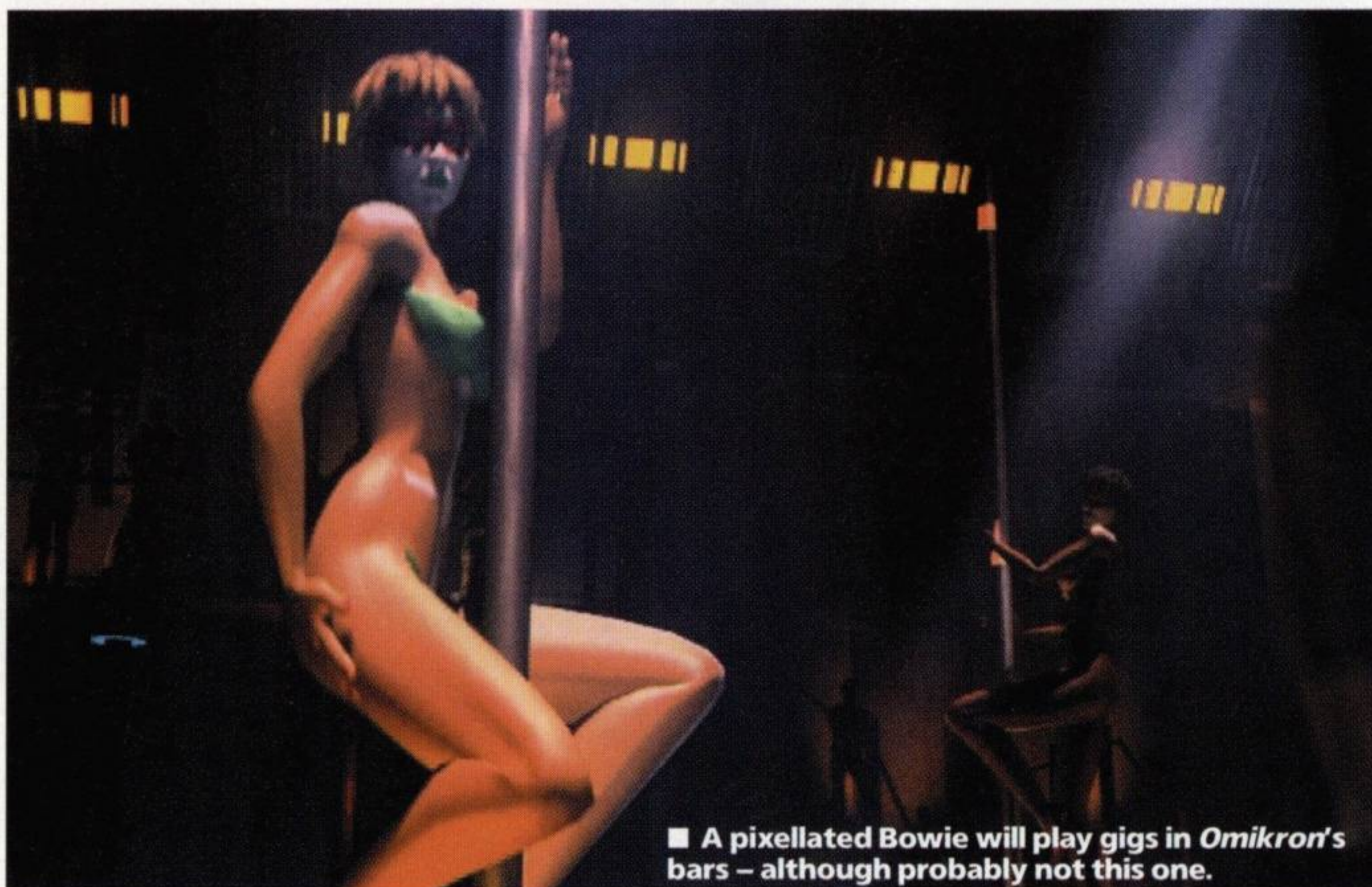
EIDOS

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

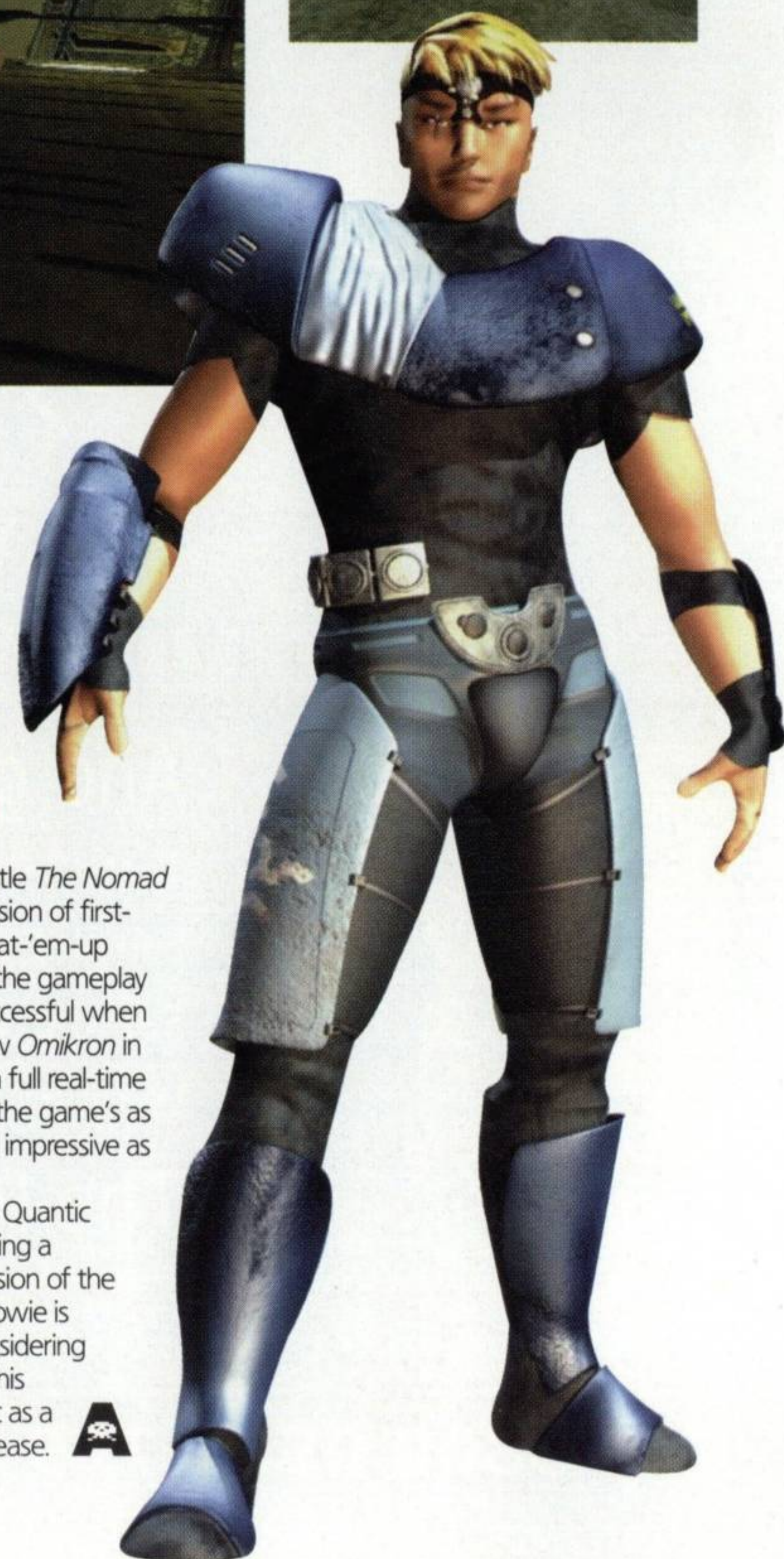
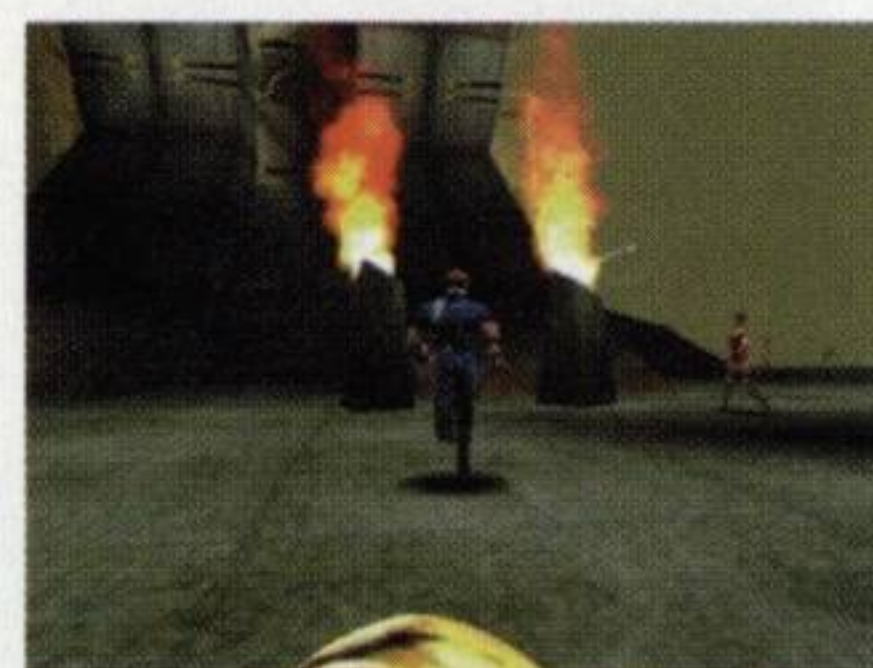


■ First drum 'n' bass and now videogames – Bowie's '90s renaissance continues

PHOTO: CORBISS



■ A pixellated Bowie will play gigs in *Omikron's* bars – although probably not this one.



LET'S DANCE

David Bowie's ground control to *Omikron*

New era for game soundtracks | David Bowie to write score

No PC action/adventure worth its salt these days comes without an original thematic score. Typically, these are the electronic nightmares of some hack game composer, but times are changing (maybe even ch-ch-changing). Interplay recently signed up *X-Files* maestro Mark Snow to add his eerie atmospherics to *Giants*, but EIDOS has scooped everyone with the announcement that David Bowie will be writing original material for

its forthcoming 3D adventure game *Omikron*.

No details had been confirmed at the time of going to press, but it has been rumoured that Bowie will contribute up to 20 tracks to the game soundtrack, half of which will be vocal. The former Ziggy Stardust and Thin White Duke has been dabbling in multimedia, although his interest in videogames is not documented. His latest projects have been collaborations with drum 'n' bass figurehead Goldie, so the music is bound to reflect the near-future setting of *Omikron*.

Bowie himself will actually appear in the game giving concerts:

one of *Omikron's* major points of interest is that your character is granted free-roaming access to entire cities and will be able to pick up a ticket for a Bowie concert, then wander along to watch the gig in person.

The involvement of such a major personality is part of EIDOS' strategy to make *Omikron* one of the biggest and most expensive PC games to date. Developed by Paris-based Quantic Dream, the game includes such ambitious elements as full character interaction and the ability to reincarnate your character, taking on the guise of other people you meet during the adventure

(hence its subtitle *The Nomad Soul*). The intrusion of first-person and beat-'em-up elements into the gameplay looked less successful when *Arcade* last saw *Omikron* in action, but as a full real-time 3D adventure, the game's as enormous and impressive as they come.

Amazingly Quantic Dream is planning a PlayStation version of the game, while Bowie is apparently considering the viability of his *Omikron* music as a commercial release. **A**



■ Sophitia and Taki: two of *Soul Calibur's* fighters.

FIGHTING FIT

Soul survivors

Namco's first Dreamcast title shapes up | *Soul Calibur* boasts sexy swordplay

We're smitten — not just with the alluring smile of teenage ninja Seung Mina, but with Namco's stunning Dreamcast conversion of *Soul Calibur*. This weapon-wielding beat-'em-up will be Namco's first game for the new console and it's looking fantastic. Playable versions were available at this year's Tokyo Game Show, where *Soul Calibur* was busy seducing all-comers despite being only 30% complete.

Since then, we've learnt that the Dreamcast version won't be

a direct port from the coin-op classic. Only ten fighters will be available in this new release, but additional features such as tag-team game modes and enhanced graphics have been added. The swords 'n' spells gameplay that made *Soul Calibur* a true original remains intact and we wouldn't be surprised to see each character gain a few special individual moves.

The fighters (or souls) who've made it across to the Dreamcast conversion include Seung Mina, who fights with a vicious lance she calls Scarlet Thunder; Maxi, the jumpsuited

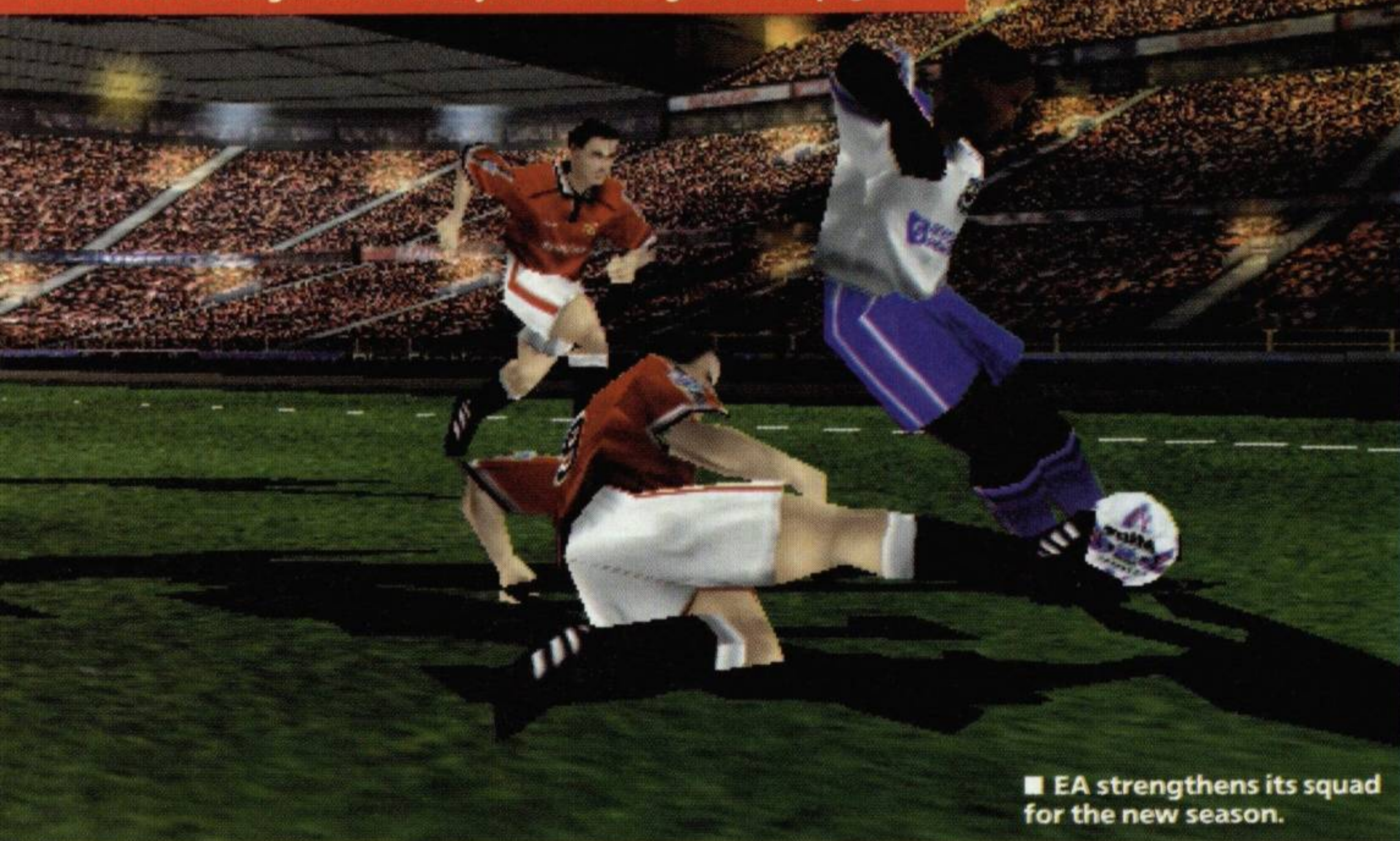
Elvis wannabe who's a dab hand with the numchuka; and Voldo, the sword-fingered gimp whose weapon is called the "Name & Shame".

We hope to see *Soul Calibur* reach British shores before the end of the year.



■ Swords and sorcery: the utterly gorgeous Dreamcast conversion of *Soul Calibur* wowed the Tokyo Game Show back in March: we now await a UK release.

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



COLLISION COURSE

Crash of the titans

Psygnosis' Destruction Derby 3 versus Accolade's Demolition Racer | Which one wrecks the best?

There was a rather ironic turn of events in the game world this month as the development team that was responsible for the excellent PlayStation and PC smash racer *Destruction Derby 2* launched a brand new automobile destruction game. *Demolition Racer* from developer Pitbull Syndicate (who parted company with original employer Reflections two-and-a-half years ago) will be published by Accolade for the PlayStation before the end of the year, and it's set to go head-to-head with the latest iteration of Reflections' old franchise *Destruction Derby 3*, now developed in-house at Psygnosis.

Destruction Derby 3 will be available for the PlayStation and PC, and is going to deliver more of the same metal-crunching madness as the previous releases. Your aim is to take charge of a souped-up motor and attempt to cause as much damage as possible to the other racers. An important new element is the ability to customise your car, giving you the chance to emulate the endearing amateur paint jobs sported down at your local dirt circuit. A glut of new game modes all emphasise the futility of actually finishing first, while underlining the brutality and need to render your opponents' vehicles unroadworthy. The races take place in a range of unlikely venues, including the particularly foolish rooftop arena.

Demolition Racer sticks to a similar gameplan, offering a Career mode as its main attraction, in which you guide your driver of choice through a range of competitive disciplines in order to accrue wealth and upgrade from a banger to a banger with a bigger engine. That's if you don't spend all your cash resurrecting your hopeless vehicle after the Suicide Race, the object of which is to drive headlong into oncoming traffic. Ouch.

The trappings of these two titles are so similar that the prize will be taken by the game which best translates the maniac aggression, brazen stupidity and sweaty fear of a real demolition derby.



■ Bangers and smash: *Destruction Derby 3* (top) and *Demolition Racer*.

NEW FOOTY GAME

EA's season never ends

It's footy, but not FIFA | *STARS* boasts full Premiership licence

If you thought June was the time to forget about the cut and thrust of the football season and instead concentrate on the gentle tap of leather-on-willow or the price of strawberries, think again. Like the traditionally frantic action of the close-season transfer market, the unveiling of new footy games doesn't stop just because the sun's blazing overhead and everyone's swapped their meat pies for Walls' Magnums. As if to confirm this, just in time for some serious summer



curtains-drawn action, EA Sports (obviously not content with the FIFA series sweeping all before it like an international all-star team with Pélé and Best up front) is set to release *The FA Premier League STARS* for PC and PlayStation.

Developed in the UK, EA is keen to stress that this new game is totally different to the FIFA series (which should, incidentally, be spawning a new child just in time for Christmas). No, *The FA Premier League STARS* will be based on a more obvious, pick-up-and-play interface, and the graphics and gameplay will be tinged with an arcade feel. The build-up play and tactics should be more considered

than in the FIFA games, and you can also expect the statistics of individual players to have a crucial effect on the game.

That's because the unique selling point of this game is the titular "STARS" system. As a player/manager, you're awarded points, or STARS, for your performance in each game. You can then use these at your leisure to improve the skill ratings of particular players or, if they're a load of donkeys, to buy some new ones. Better still, you will be able to save all the STARS data for your customised teams on to a PlayStation memory card or PC floppy and then take it round to your mates' houses for

some top head-to-head games.

This idea works in a similar way to the kind of "training" concept used to great effect in other genres of the videogame world, most notably *Pocket Monsters*.

The Premier League license is an important factor, enabling EA to include all major teams and players in their correct kits, right down to shirt sponsorship. Commentary is provided by the Sky Sports' team of Richard Keys, Martin Tyler and tactical zealot Andy Gray. *The FA Premier League STARS* will be released in time for the new season on 13 August. We'll let you know if it's a worthy contender for the trophy when we lay our hands on a playable demo. **A**



EVEN MORE FOOTBALL

Sega's Striker

First sighting of football on Dreamcast as Sega signs up Rage's new Striker game.

Getting in before the established footy brands of EA's FIFA, Konami's ISS and EIDOS' WLS is a coup for Rage as the company plans to unleash *UEFA Striker* as part of the first wave of Dreamcast software. This arcade-style footy game features the cream of European international and club sides, competing in fantasy competitions. Varied motion capture

should represent a wide range of realistic moves available to all players via a simple control method. Extra touches include a Situation mode (where you're thrown into games at a crucial stage), an Advanced Training option and a Spot the Ball sub-game to keep you amused during loading screens.

UEFA Striker will be released for Dreamcast and PlayStation at the end of September.



■ The Dreamcast needs footy too: here's *Striker*.

IT MAKES SENSE

Black & White wows BAFTA

Peter Molyneux unveils new game | Academy offer "full support"

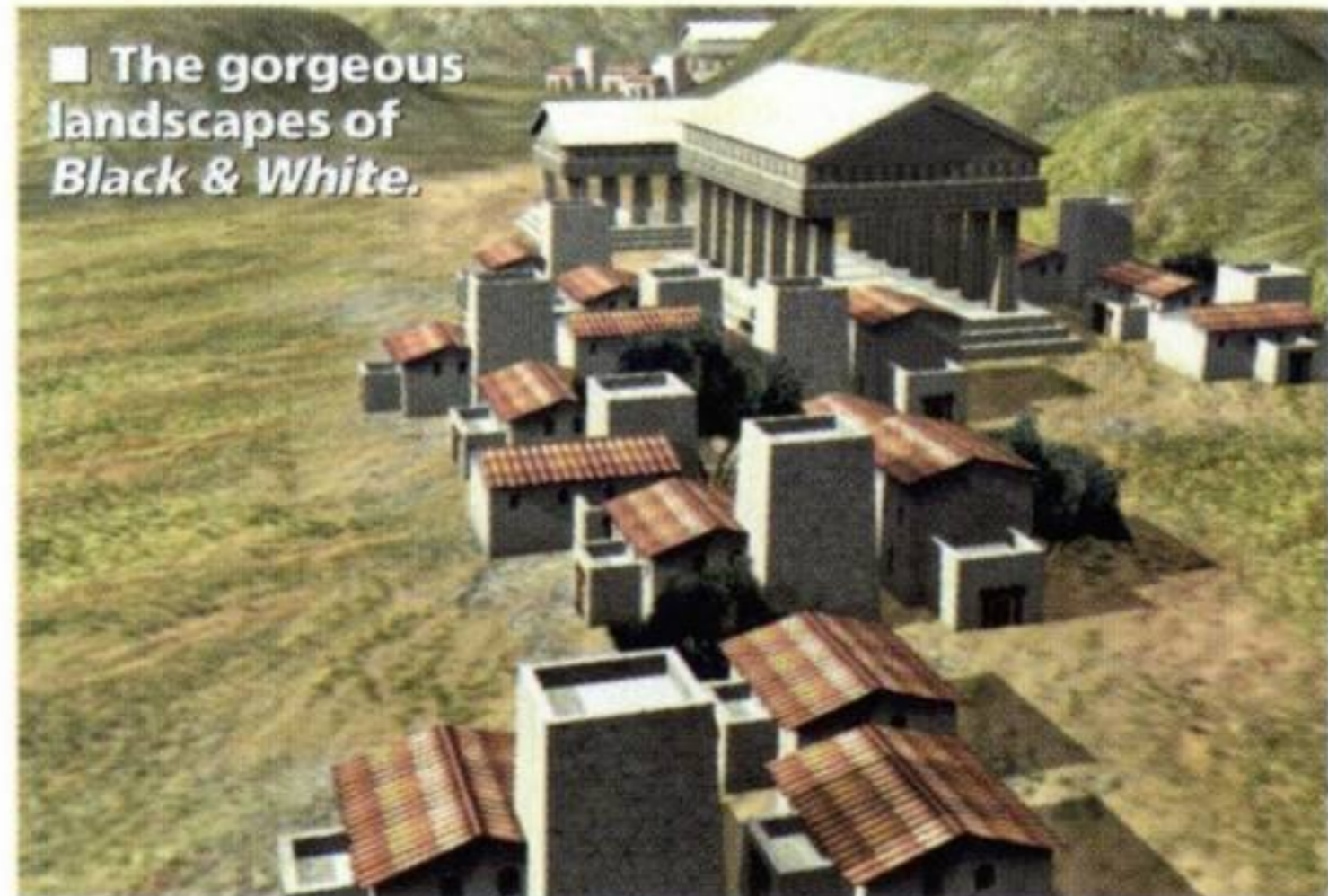
Making good on its pledge to support interactive media, the British Academy recently played host to the first UK showing of Peter Molyneux's *Black & White*. One of the industry's most anticipated strategy games, and the first launch from

Molyneux's hotly-tipped Lionhead Studios team, *Black & White* was demonstrated before a crowded theatre at BAFTA headquarters in London. Beginning with the disappointing news that the title is still a full nine months from completion, Molyneux discussed his inspiration for the game design, and then

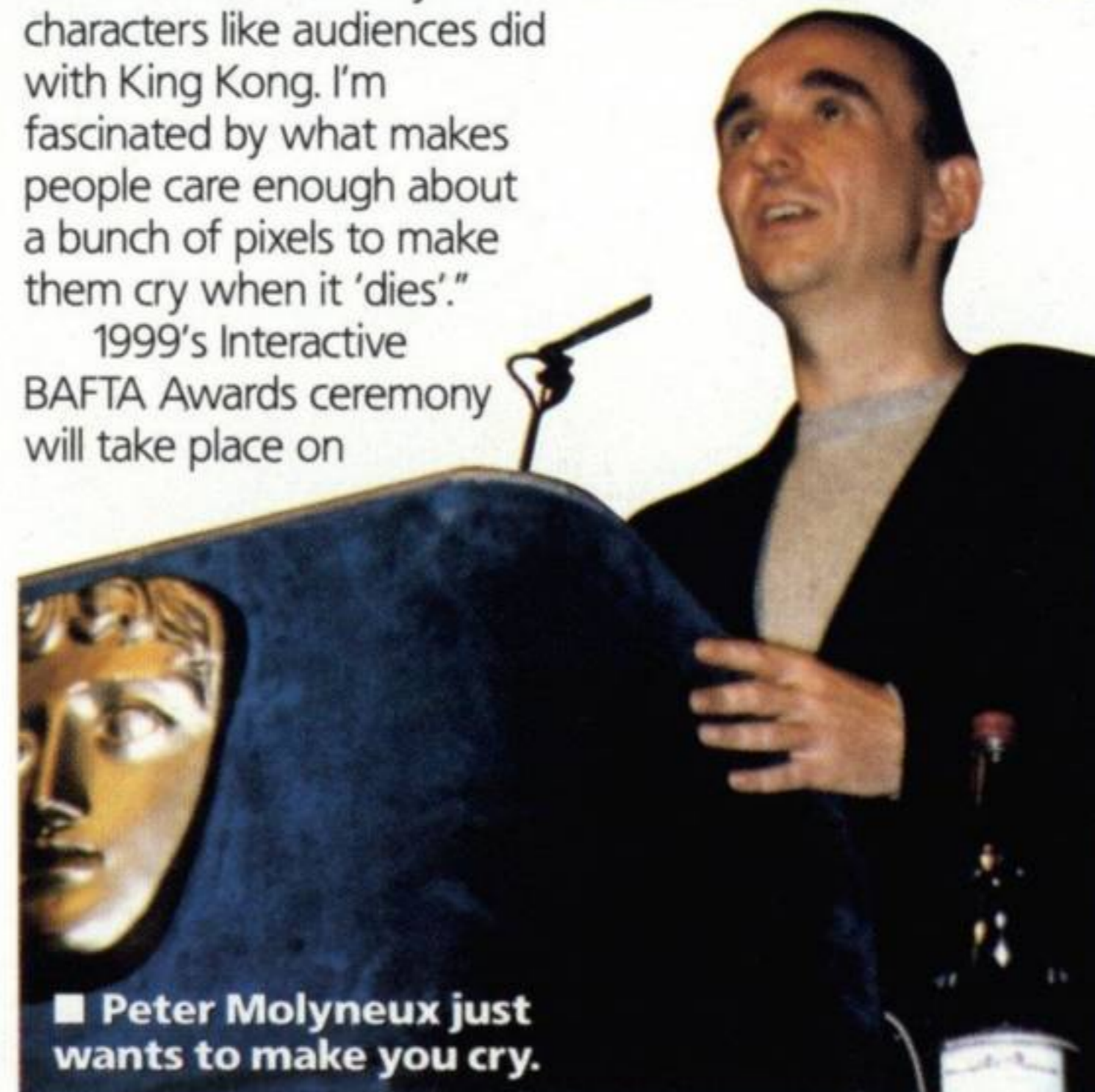
outlined some of the more complex issues concerning the industry. In keeping with the BAFTA philosophy that games should be moving away from their "sideshow attraction" roots and toward a more meaningful form of entertainment, Molyneux intends to capture the player's empathy. The object of *Black & White* is to make the whole planet believe in you as their god. Along the way you'll raise a giant creature whose AI personality will alter according to what it observes you doing to the little folk, encouraging you to think along moral lines. "I saw the film *King Kong* when I was young," explained Molyneux, "and by the end of the film people cried because the ape died. Their initial horror

turned to understanding. When I planned *Black & White* I wanted it to be not only a beautiful game, but also one where you become attached to your characters like audiences did with *King Kong*. I'm fascinated by what makes people care enough about a bunch of pixels to make them cry when it 'dies'." 1999's Interactive BAFTA Awards ceremony will take place on

20 October. Following the success of last year's event, several new categories have been added, including the Most Innovative Game award.



The gorgeous landscapes of *Black & White*.



Peter Molyneux just wants to make you cry.



SOLID SECONDS

Snake sneaks back for more

Metal Gear Solid encores with a mission disc full of stealthy new challenges.

Finished *Metal Gear Solid*? Wrung every last drop of enjoyment from wandering round in your stealth suit and snapping Meryl with her kecks down? Well Konami hasn't quite done fiddling with its greatest game to date and has created a new set of mini-adventures, based on the original title. *Metal Gear Solid Integral* will be sold as part of a special edition pack in Japan, although there are plans to bring it to Britain as a separately available add-on disc.

Metal Gear Solid Integral comprises 300 stages, all extensions of the VR Training mode. These missions include many new and unique puzzles, alongside what a Konami spokesman could only describe as "Weird, mystery stages". The new sections can be attacked from two different perspectives – you can either load up your Socom and blast your way through the lot or resort to Snake's more traditional sneaky methods. Advanced difficulty modes will require you to combine the two approaches.

Other intriguing elements of *Metal Gear Solid Integral* include PocketStation compatibility (enabling you to collect and swap the animal logos gained on completion of the original game), the ability to play as the Ninja against Solid Snake, and the option to replay *Metal Gear Solid* in first-person "Doom" mode. No final decision has been made on the elements for inclusion in the UK version, but we're hoping that *Metal Gear Solid Integral* will reach this country before the end of the year.

PHOTO: BRUCE JONES 1999

NEW GAME

Evil will prevail

Capcom announces more *Res Evil* clones | *Onimusha* is the samurai alter-ego

Some would call it making the most of a successful game engine; others would call it milking the cow dry, but Capcom's horror adventure division is working all hours. Under production in Japan are *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* for the Dreamcast, an N64 conversion of *Res Evil 2* and

Dino Crisis, a similarly morbid reptilian escapade for the PlayStation. New to the family are *Onimusha the Demon Warrior* and a new *Res Evil* title, both for PlayStation.

Onimusha is scripted by the *Res Evil* team and early screenshots suggest a similar feel. The difference will be in the fighting and the gameplay: hero Akechi



Samanosuke is a samurai warrior who must gradually become proficient in complex swordplay in order to defeat a legion of human-demon hybrid enemies. Mystery-solving

will play an equal part to fighting, and there'll also be terrifying bosses to defeat.

The Tokyo launch of *Onimusha the Demon Warrior* starred the New Japan Philharmonic

Orchestra, suggesting that a high-quality soundtrack will be an integral element of the game.

Resident Evil Nemesis is Capcom's "secret" project, and it's not known if it will be marketed as *Res Evil 3*. The main character will be Jill Valentine from the original *Res Evil* and the action takes place immediately before and immediately after the story of *Res Evil 2*, with the fact that Jill gets knocked unconscious in between accounting for her non-appearance in the last game. Confused? Us too, but we can't wait.

Smack my pitch up

We think of a game idea, then developers tell us to piss off and stop wasting their time.

No. 6: Farmergeddon

The pitch: Madness, mayhem, carnage and, perhaps, cabbage. Your character is a redneck yokel, fed up with bearded, gaiter-wearing rambblers wandering across his land – even though it is a public right of way.

In charge of a souped-up tractor, boasting fuel injection and 0-60 in under a minute, this game will see you roam through the fields of Somerset (complete with turnip-munching locals, all chasing sheep). Score loads of points for every

hapless hiker you crush or maim, and bonus points for destroying a neighbouring farmer's barley harvest.

The response: "I see conflict with rambblers, wild dogs, bulls and competing farmers with their minions and machines. I see a territorial feud to be settled The Old Way, fighting not just to keep the rambblers at bay but also to develop an expanding network of fields through all seasons, the campaign punctuated by some

simple challenges for good measure.

I see potential for exploiting attachments such as seeders, tillers, rollers, sprayers, rotary cutters, grinders, shredders

and rippers. I see fountains of blood, and body parts amidst the mud and vegetables."

Gary Penn, Creative Manager, DMA Design



SLOGANEERING

Data entry

Videogame stickers, posters and T-shirts with a difference...

You may have seen these distinctively designed slogans around. Here at *Arcade* we have them plastered all over our office, but until now, we had no idea where they came from. Then a fax came through the machine. It read: "Today's hectic schedules mean that often you feel that you deserve more from life, more from art, more from love. And that's because you do. At No Data we understand that computer games, far from being mere entertainment, can be a real and effective substitute for a meaningful life or a loving relationship. And that's why we've created No Data. Because we care. About life. About art. About love. Because we're bored, cynical, and we don't have any friends. Because we're just like you."

This information has been leaking from South West art collective No Data, whose members are best known for their work with Radiohead. The group has no manifesto and aren't trying to sell you anything; they are



FASHION IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAN WAR, FAMINE, DISEASE OR ART.

No Data's plan to slowly take over your mind.

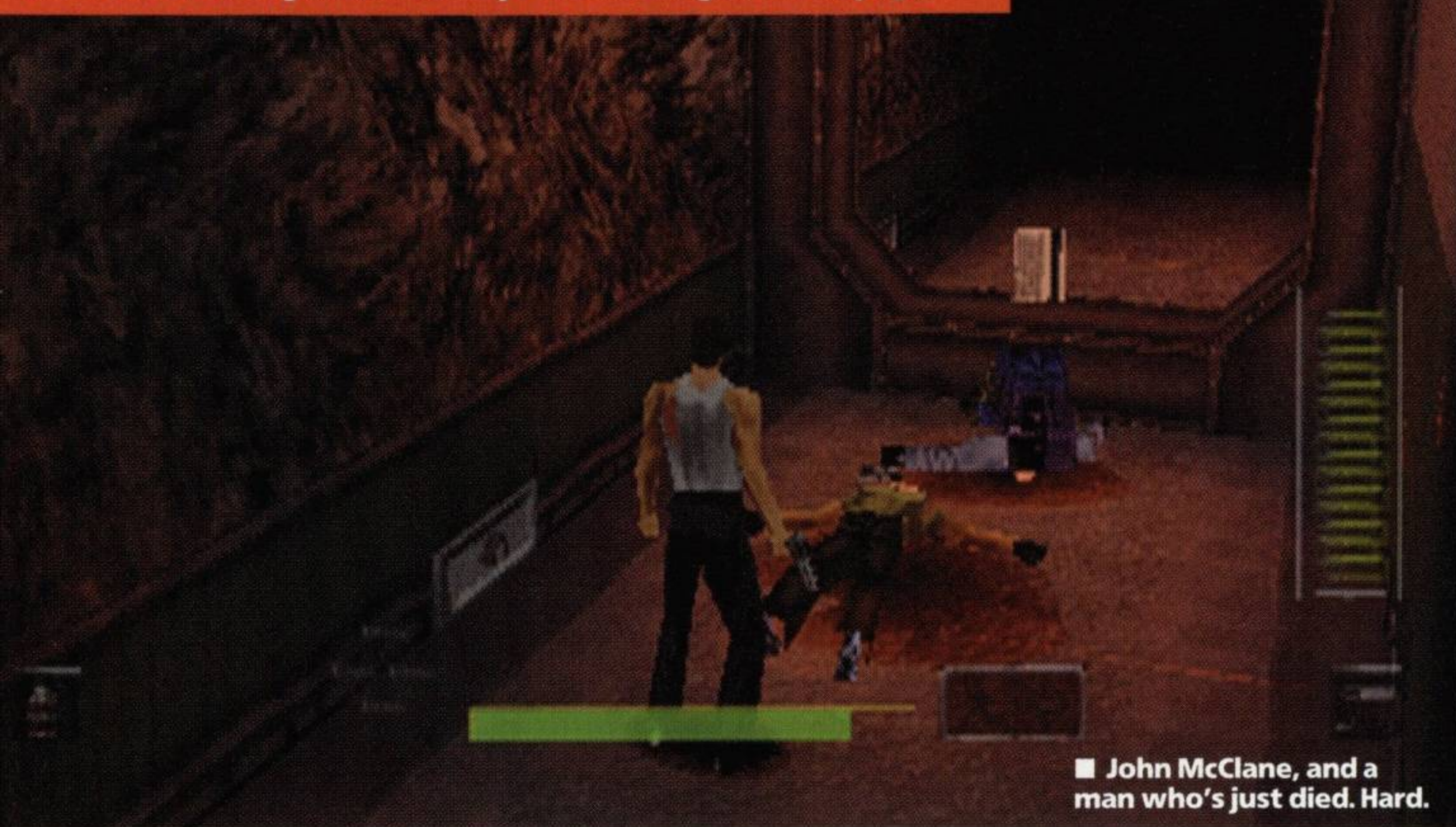
simply interested in exploring different avenues of communication.

According to spokesman Stanley Donwood, No Data is obsessed with videogames, and indeed all elements of interactive media, but wants to uncover the motivations at the root of people's addiction to videogames.

The slogans are not designed to be ironic or cynical, neither positive nor negative, just thought-provoking. No Data's sly program of infiltration via flyers, sticker campaigns and fax machines continues. You can also visit the group's survey at <http://www.watershed.co.uk/nodata/>.

IF I COULD TRAVEL THROUGH TIME I WOULD GO BACK TO YESTERDAY AND APOLOGISE.

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



■ John McClane, and a man who's just died. Hard.

NEW GAME

Die even harder

Die Hard Trilogy 2 | Three-in-one format returns

As one of the best videogame versions of a film licence ever created *Die Hard Trilogy* just had to have a sequel, even if it meant inventing an entirely new Willis-free plot and getting everyone all confused with the required numerology. Fox Interactive has obliged with the news that *Die Hard Trilogy 2* for PlayStation and PC will be released in the autumn.

John McClane is up against a group of international terrorists threatening to wipe Las Vegas from

the map. While some hardcore evangelists would have you believe that eradicating America's gambling capital is actually a good thing, we reckon the terrorists ought to be stopped in order to preserve the neon city and all its inhabitants, including Tom Jones. The action will again be divided into three distinct modes: an immense third-person adventure, recalling a trigger-happy *Tomb Raider*; a first-person fixed-target shooting mode similar to *Time Crisis*; and a truly pant-wetting night driving segment that'll be drawing comparisons with *Driver*.

Arcade has played a very early version of the game and it appears

that Fox hasn't messed with a winning formula. If it's as exciting as the original, nobody's going to be complaining about *Die Hard Trilogy 2* lacking originality.



LITTLE HORROR

Evil in your pocket

Resident Evil for the Game Boy Color – and it's not a platformer!

How many times has a big-name console title ported to the Game Boy and been reduced to just another 2D platformer or top-down farce? The announcement of *Resident Evil* for Nintendo's pocket system provoked the same fears, but newly-formed HotGen has surprised everybody by presenting the Capcom horror classic in its original form, that of a third-person

adventure, and early screenshots suggest that the impossible may have just been achieved.



The backgrounds are pre-rendered with impressive detail and as far as possible, the game recreates the same scene and story as the PlayStation original. Chris Redfield, Jill Valentine and your favourite zombie-

blasting heroes are included in the game, along with all their weapons of choice.

Understandably, *Resident Evil* will require more memory than used in any previous Game Boy cart. Some of this memory is going to be absorbed by the game's handy new feature – a Pause-Save option which will enable you to store current data for a temporary period after you've switched the Game Boy off.

Pocket-sized *Resident Evil* is set to be released by Virgin Interactive in November.



■ Goodbye 2D, hello pre-rendered khazi.

INCOMING

Buff up that crystal ball to catch a glimpse of what the future holds.

3 months



World Driver Championship

■ Nintendo 64 ■ Boss/Midway ■ August
The N64 gets its own Gran Turismo-style game. Thirty-three cars, ten courses, 20 Event modes and a Career Driver option. Neat.

6 months



Madden NFL 2000

■ PlayStation ■ EA Sports ■ Autumn
Tenth anniversary of the massive American football franchise, celebrated with new motion capture and an NFL Blitz-influenced Arcade mode.

1 year



Slave Zero

■ PC ■ Accolade ■ Autumn
This long-delayed futuristic blasting adventure should finally unload its cargo of robotic armoury and biochemical wastage in the autumn.

1 year



Donkey Kong 64

■ Nintendo 64 ■ Rare ■ Early 2000
More screenshots from the simian platformer, along with details of DK's mates (Diddy, Tiny, Chunky and Lanky) and an optimistic release date.

1 year



Furballs

■ Dreamcast ■ Bizarre Creations ■ Early 2000
The next project from creator of Metropolis Street Racer will be this cartoony shoot-'em-up. Pets with big guns are go.

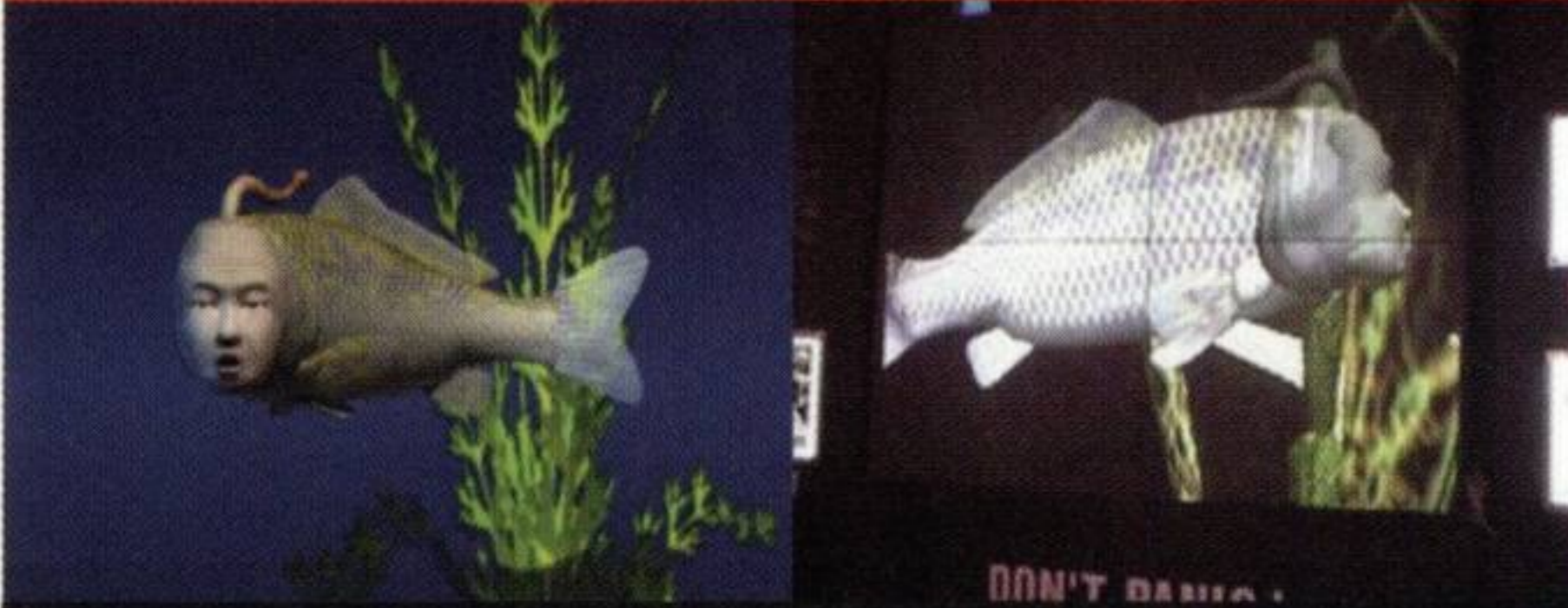
1 year



Rollcage Extreme

■ PlayStation ■ Attention To Detail/Psygnosis ■ Spring 2000
Hot on the tracks of the original 360° racer comes news of its sequel. More of the same, but better, plus a football sub-game.

Orient excess | It could only happen in Japan.



■ Japan loves virtual pets and *Seaman* is all over the place.

■ Say you lived in a very small apartment and you weren't allowed a pet, but your computer offered to give you a virtual pet to feed and nurture in the same way. What kind of animal would you choose? A border collie? A ginger tabby? Or a fish with the head of a disturbed child?

That's the option offered to Japanese gamers in developer Vivarium's new Dreamcast title *Seaman*. We've also seen this release subtitled as *The Forbidden Pest* although we sincerely hope they mean "pet". It's a voice recognition game that enables you to communicate with

your mutant creature via a microphone peripheral. The *Seaman* will talk back to you, and depending on how you breed it, the fish-man thing can grow into one of three different forms, all of which presumably flick two fingers at Charles Darwin. Just check out that skeleton.

The *Seaman* logo appears on game

posters along with the phrase "Don't Panic!" but to be honest, we're very, very scared – evolution wasn't meant to be this way. At least the "... and conquered worlds" boy from the PlayStation ad looks to have found more modelling work.

Seaman will never, ever be released in Britain. Phew.





■ The Wu-Tang Clan empire extends into the videogame world.

NEW GAME

Street fighting clan

■ Rip it up Shaolin style.



The Wu-Tang Clan get their own game | Rappers star as fighters

The world's premier hip-hop crew are also renowned gamers. They've checked Nintendo in rhyme, interrupted interviews to play *WWF Warzone* and installed *PGA Tour Golf* on their

tour bus. It was only a matter of time before the Wu-Tang Clan extended their empire and starred in a PlayStation game.

Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style is set to be released by Activision before the end of the year and looks to be a traditional beat-'em-up, but packed with Wu-flavoured treats.

The fighting style will be loosely based around the Shaolin branch of Kung Fu, the mythology of which has influenced the group since their inception.

Incorporated within this overall concept are special weapons and powers attributed to the nine Wu-Tang members who appear as playable fighters. A story mode

is expected take the form of a journey through the 36 Chambers that form part of the Shaolin legend. A four-player multi-tap option for team battles has also been mooted. Of even greater interest is the likelihood that the Wu-Tang Clan will record up to three exclusive new tracks for the game.



NEW GAME

Going ape

Two new titles from Fox, including *Planet of the Apes*

Fox Interactive is making the most of its movie links with two more titles. The first is the action/adventure *Planet of the Apes* which doesn't incorporate the storyline of the original movie starring Charlton Heston (nor any of its sequels – damn them all to hell!)

The game is set in the year 3000 and involves uncovering conspiracies in a race for survival. Although the first screenshots didn't inspire, the addition of real-time 3D and the prioritising of puzzle-solving over shooting should preserve the cinematic experience for PlayStation and PC owners.

We also expect news of a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* game soon. It's not known what form this will take, but our money's on a sexy, third-person slasher.

DUAKE NEWS

Apple has first byte

Quake III test version on Macintosh first | Early PC version leaked

Question: what's got 400 million legs and swears an awful lot? Answer: the world's PC owners when they found out the fully playable test version of *Quake III: Arena* would be available on the Macintosh first. The two-level demo arrived in late April, in a Macintosh-only guise, while a PC/Windows version followed a few weeks later.

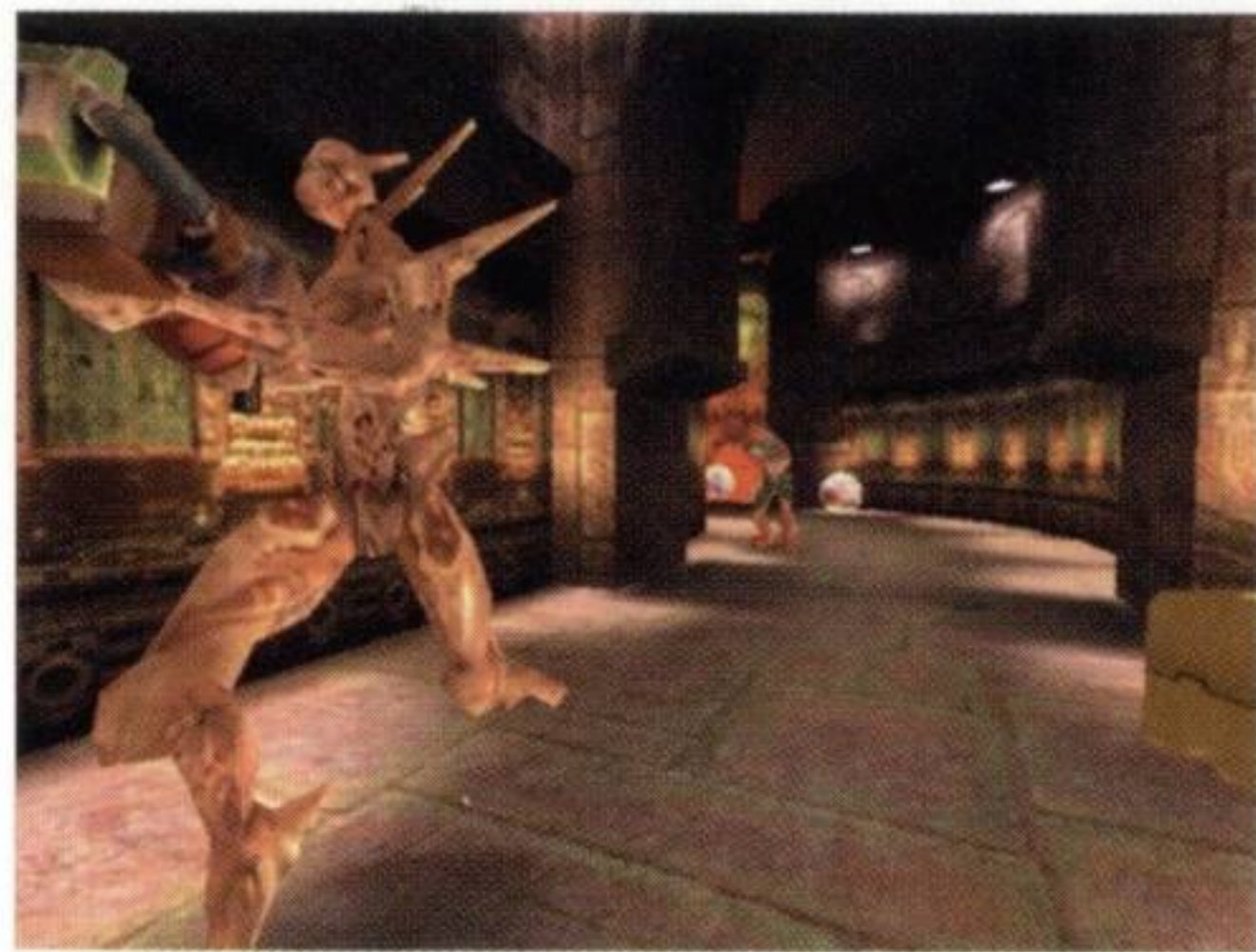
The official reason for the decision was id's desire to use the latest 3D accelerator cards for *Quake III*, which meant waiting for the PC card manufacturers to have their products certified by Microsoft. "With Macintosh, the hardware is built in and essentially the same for every Mac owner," explained designer Graham Devine. "On top of that, if there's

a huge problem with the initial test version, we'll be exposing a smaller audience to it."

Compensation of sorts for unscrupulous PC owners came in the form of a version of *Quake III*, illegally posted on the Internet. This high-spec release contained no real levels, annoyingly low frame rates and few of the final features of the full test version. To see what *Quake III* really has to offer, visit the official Web site, at <http://www.quake3arena.com/>.

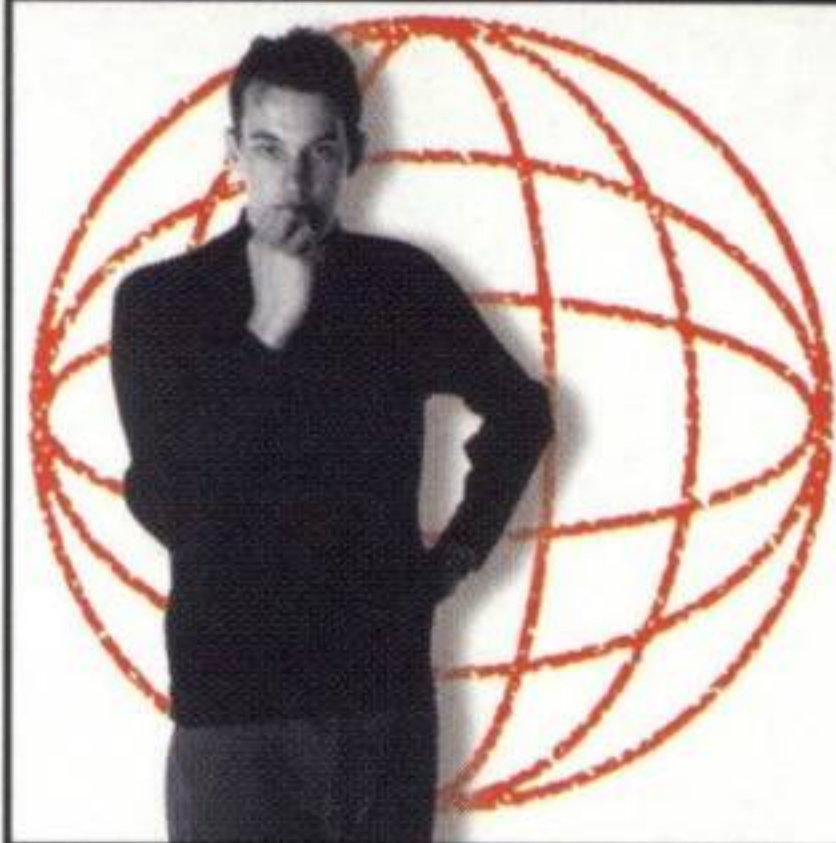
Meanwhile, Mac owners had further reason to dance naked in the streets when it was announced that Sierra would be using developer Logicware to help port *Half-Life* to the Mac. The mindblowing shooter should be thrilling Mac users before the year is out.

For the full story on *Quake III: Arena* see our Shooters feature, starting on page 42.



■ PC gamers getting scooped by their Mac-owning cousins? It's enough to send them on a vicious shooting spree. Via *Quake*, of course.

Sam Richards' World of Games



Nintendo: new porpoise

Early codenames for new consoles are always ridiculous. Dreamcast could well have laboured under the monikers Black Belt or Katana. Bandai was foolish enough to actually release the Wonder Swan. And no longer need we refer to Nintendo's next-generation console as "Nintendo's Next-Generation Console" as the company has finally invented a bizarre codename: all hail Project Dolphin.

Naturally, Nintendo claims that the graphics capabilities of the Dolphin are far more advanced than those of the PlayStation 2 and the disc-based machine should see the light of day in 2001.

Lord of the darts

Sega has released more news about its newest immersive adventure *Shen Mue*. The brainchild of *Virtua Fighter* guru Yu Suzuki, *Shen Mue*'s expansive, realistic world aims to do for the Dreamcast what *Zelda* did for the N64. The scope of the game is highlighted by the fact that within the first level alone, there are over 100 facially-animated characters, all with their own speech patterns.

Woven through the adventure of hero Ryo Hazuki are hundreds of fighting interludes, puzzles and sub-games. A couple of these sound scarily like a fraught Saturday night down your local: Ryo encounters a drunk who has to be tripped or pushed over before he bottles you; and there's also a darts mini-game. Bizarre but true. Mine's a bottle of Kirin.

Turok 2 to return

The trend for multi-player semi-sequels reaches the N64 with news of Acclaim's *Turok: Rage Wars*, an enhanced version of *Turok 2* with the emphasis on deathmatch play. With eight new weapons, 16 characters to choose from and a set of new levels specifically designed for deathmatch purposes, *Rage Wars* should be a game to check out. We're looking forward to levels specifically designed to improve on the foggy and claustrophobic feel of *Turok 2*'s split-screen mode. More info next issue.

PHOTO: RETNA

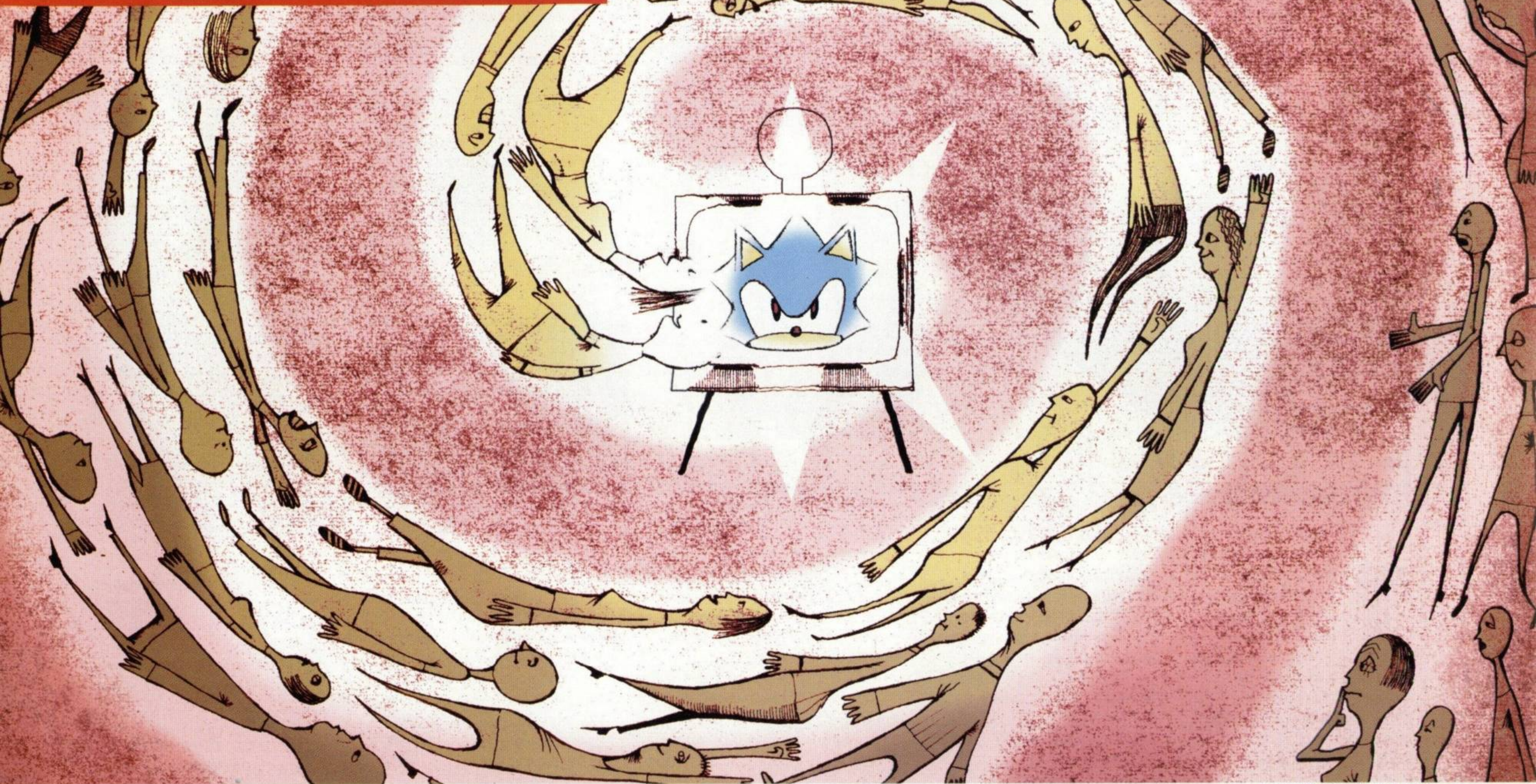


ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

NEWS ANALYSIS

Will Sega's advertising suck you in? Will you buy a £200 Dreamcast this summer?

23 September is when Dreamcast hits the UK. So how's Sega's new baby shaping up?

By Sam Richards

The date – 23 September – has been set. The spin doctors have been appointed. The multi-million pound sponsorship deal with Arsenal has been signed. The first photographs of celebrities clutching Dreamcast controllers in their paws have been released. Sega's new 128-bit console is almost here.

The company is preparing its assault on the British videogame market with military precision. It's willing to admit it made mistakes with Saturn – damaging Sega's good name in the process – and knows that with Dreamcast, it is steaming into an already bloody battlefield, and it needs to get the launch absolutely right.

Indeed, many experts within the videogame industry believe that Dreamcast is Sega's last chance. If this games machine fails the same way Saturn and Sega CD did before it, then the once-dominant Japanese games company will be forced back to the arcades from whence it came, perhaps never to return. Like Namco, it will then have to survive off of coin-op revenues and publishing its games on other companies' home systems. Probably Sony's.

Sure, Dreamcast is a sexy piece of kit. And, with PlayStation and Nintendo 64 both more than four years old, the videogame world is ready for a new favourite. But can Sega be the

company to step up and give gamers what they want?

The problems Sega faces are manifold. First, the strength of the competition is there for all to see. Sony's PlayStation may be long in the tooth, but 1998 was its most successful year to date. The grey box now nestles in the homes of thousands of new gamers, including many who don't know, much less care, about Sega's glory years with Mega Drive and *Sonic the Hedgehog*. And as for the Nintendo, while it may come a

poor second to the PlayStation in terms of

hardware sales, the enduring nature of games like *GoldenEye* and *Zelda*, along with the promise of *Perfect Dark* and *Super Mario 64 2*, will ensure its longevity in gamers' hearts. Besides, just how much more than current state-of-the-art titles will Dreamcast games offer? *Sonic Adventure*, *Virtua Fighter 3tb* and *Sega Rally 2* are top quality games, but they're not the leap forward that PlayStation and Nintendo 64 were from Mega Drive and Super NES.

Sega knows all of this, and so is thinking very carefully about different ways to make Dreamcast attractive to gamers. Most of

Sega's marketing strategy is still under wraps, but Conor McNicholas, of the MacLaurin group – responsible for handling the PR of the Dreamcast launch – is willing to elaborate.

"The core market of gamers is savvy to the whole idea of games consoles," he says, "and so Dreamcast has to – and will – offer something different. It won't simply be the most advanced games machine on the market by a long way, but a facilitator for communication."

It's clear from comments like this that Dreamcast's modem, bundled with the system when it



"Dreamcast has to – and will – offer something different."



Can all this marketing and promotion make Sega "cool" again?

launched in Japan last year, will play a big part in Sega's plans for Dreamcast in the UK.

And it may be a valuable trump card. The ability to play networked multi-player games, join newsgroups and surf the Web from a console would be something completely new. The question, then, is will the modem come bundled with Dreamcast or be available separately at launch?

"Launching peripherals from Day One may confuse people," says McNicholas. "Dreamcast is designed to grow and we'll reveal new elements as they happen." And this is all any Sega spokesman will say on the subject. Which would lead us to believe that the modem will either come as part of the core Dreamcast pack right from the beginning (in which case Sega had better come up with some compelling use for it pretty quickly) or else it will be launched as an add-on down the line (which means losing its one big competitive advantage against PlayStation and Nintendo 64 and risking the creation of a split in the Dreamcast market between those who do buy the modem and those who don't later on).

It's a tricky call to make.

"The question of whether to position Dreamcast as a piece of multimedia kit, with a bundled modem providing instant Internet access, or as simply the best games machine available, is a very thorny one," agrees Nick Alexander, boss of Sega Europe from 1988 to 1994, speaking in trade newspaper MCV. "History [of machines like 3DO] would suggest that a multimedia tag becomes a gravestone very quickly, but times have changed, consumers have become more knowledgeable and maybe this time it will work."

It's *Arcade's* belief that Sega should launch with the modem built in, but probably won't.

But what really matters, though, is the games. Sega knows this too and to this end, Sega company president Shoichiro Irimajiri has ferociously courted the cream of third-party software developers. In Europe, many respected software houses have leapt at the chance of developing for Dreamcast, including Liverpool-based Bizarre Developments. Managing director of Bizarre, Martyn Chudley, explained that the company declined to work with the Saturn, but welcomed becoming

associated with Dreamcast.

"Sega staff are gameheads right to the very top, which makes them very easy to work with," he enthuses. "Sega is beyond its problems with the Saturn, and Dreamcast is a true game programmer's machine, with bags of potential. The first wave of games will be nothing compared with what's to come." Martyn is confident of Dreamcast's success, and said that even people outside the rank of the game geek would notice the step up in performance the console offers. Other early Dreamcast releases will come from publishers such as Ubisoft, Infogrames and Acclaim.

Indeed, Sega already has a handful of cracking Dreamcast games ready for the system's UK launch, and more are on their way (see "Launch line-up" box, below). But a couple of heavyweight game makers, including names like Electronic Arts, have failed to go for the Dreamcast bait.

A faintly ominous press release from EA stated: "We are still evaluating the opportunities on Dreamcast and have not made a final decision at this time." And this means none of the world's favourite sports games (including FIFA) for Dreamcast.

Perhaps in compensation, Sega recently inked a deal (believed to be in the region of £12 million) with Arsenal, one of England's "Big Two" football clubs, which will see the Dreamcast logo

pasted across the shirts of Bergkamp and co – not to mention thousands of replica jerseys – for the next few years at least. The sponsorship agreement is the biggest ever secured by an English football club and has grabbed Sega plenty of valuable media attention outside the games world.

Other promotional activity has seen Dreamcast sponsoring the April West End premiere of David Cronenberg's videogame-related movie *eXistenZ*. Jude Law was one of the attendant celebs who put *Sega Rally 2* through its paces, and similarly low-key branding events have been planned for the rest of the year with the aim of shaping public perception of Dreamcast.

Will it all have an effect? Can all this marketing and promotion make the Sega name "cool" again? It hasn't worked in Japan. Having been on sale since late November, there is already a discrepancy between Sega's predictions and reality: the plan was to sell a million Dreamcasts by the end of March in Japan alone, but, in fact, the company has only shipped around 900,000 machines (that figure includes Asia and doesn't account for those actually sold, only those which have reached the shops). Like all statistics, this figure is disputed by virtually everyone who has crunched the numbers. Sega claims its targets have been

all but met, while some sources put the number of machines sold at less than 800,000. Even Japan's software charts make grim reading for Sega, with *House Of The Dead 2*, the only Dreamcast game in the top 30, sitting at number 17.

This apathy towards Dreamcast in game-mad Japan must be worrying Sega. The company posted massive losses of £234 million for the last financial year and promptly decided to axe 1,000 jobs. With a decline in coin-op revenue also contributing to these losses, the imperative on Dreamcast to perform in Europe and beyond is even greater now than ever. So can it pull it off?

Dreamcast will be the most powerful console on the market – at least for the two years before PlayStation 2 arrives. In any case, Sega dismisses Sony's new project as a distant enemy with little hope of launching at a reasonable price. Until then, it's down to you, as an eager, intelligent, perceptive game player, to vote with your wallet and decide if there's still a place for Sega in the world of videogames.

As Nick Alexander, former boss of Sega Europe says: "It's hard to believe that when PlayStation 2 comes Sony will get it all completely wrong, so all Sega can do is give itself as strong a lead as possible. And then it will have to pray!"



THE GAMES

Dreamcast's launch line-up

Ten games will be launched with the Dreamcast in the UK. Sega won't tell us which, so these are our predictions.

■ Of the ten launch games, Sega promises two surprise titles – which are being kept strictly under wraps. These are the likely other eight:

Incoming (Rage)

■ Arcade import review ★★★
■ Highly regarded PC flight blaster which still makes an uninspiring choice for a Dreamcast conversion.



Metropolis Street Racer (Bizarre Creations)

■ The first Dreamcast game from a European source, this should prove to be *GT* with balls. Expect top cars taking on beautifully drawn city courses.

Monaco Grand Prix (Ubisoft)

■ The faithful Grand Prix sim, and ideal for wannabe Schumachers everywhere, promising much-better-than-PC graphics on a console.



Power Stone (Capcom)

■ Arcade import review ★★★★★
■ It might be wishful thinking to stick this on the launch list, but there should be room for this original and vastly entertaining 3D beat-'em-up.



Sega Rally 2 (Sega)

■ Arcade import review ★★★★★
The coin-op classic has been absent from consoles for far too long. Expect gorgeous details, tons of tracks and the smoothest race around.



Sonic Adventure (Sonic Team)

■ Arcade import review ★★★★★
■ Sega's frenetic, furry talisman is back – and appears in 3D for the first time. Sonic stars in the fastest and best-looking platformer to grace a console ever.

Super Speed Racing (Sega)

■ Championship Auto Racing Team (CART) thrills at 200mph are all very well, but this is possibly one of the less inspiring launch games.



Virtua Fighter 3tb (Sega AM2/Genki)

■ Arcade import review ★★★★★
■ The excellent latest instalment in Sega's venerable beat-'em-up series, providing a depth of battle that's rarely seen in console fighters.

■ Following hot on the heels of the launch you can expect to see the following gems:

Blue Stinger (Sega)

■ Arcade import review ★★★
■ Expansive third-person horror/monster adventure set in future Tokyo.

Cool Boarders Dreamcast (Sega)

■ We know nowt about this. But to hazard a guess, it's snowboarding.

Dead Or Alive 2 (Tecmo)

■ Another gorgeous and detailed 3D beat-'em-up, drawing even more sighs than *Soul Calibur*.

House Of The Dead 2 (Sega AM1)

■ Arcade import review ★★★★★
■ Fabulous lightgun shooter adapted from the cool arcade version, packed with mutant rabid dogs and green-spewing zombies. Kill everything.

Marvel Vs Capcom (Capcom)

■ Arcade import review ★★★
■ Saturn was the ideal platform for the 2D beat-'em-up. Will Dreamcast continue the tradition?



Resident Evil: Code Veronica (Capcom)

■ The next instalment of the top-selling horror series.



Shen Mue (Sega AM2)

■ A sprawling, epic, realistic, near-future adventure in two parts, which some are calling the future of videogames.

Soul Calibur (Namco)

■ Gorgeous and detailed beat-'em-up from the coin-op sequel to *Soul Blade*. For more details see our news piece on page 13.

THE OFFICIAL LINE

Sega's not spilling the beans...

Here's what Sega will confirm so far:

■ Dreamcast will launch on 23 September
■ It will cost £199. This is compared to the equivalent cost of around £150 in Japan and roughly £130 in the US.

■ The Dreamcast spiral will be an electric blue colour, and not orange as it appeared in Japan.
■ The Sega logo will be very small, or non-existent, on the console.

■ There "may or may not" be a modem.
■ There will be ten launch games (see "Launch line-up" box).
■ And, officially, that's all the company's letting on.



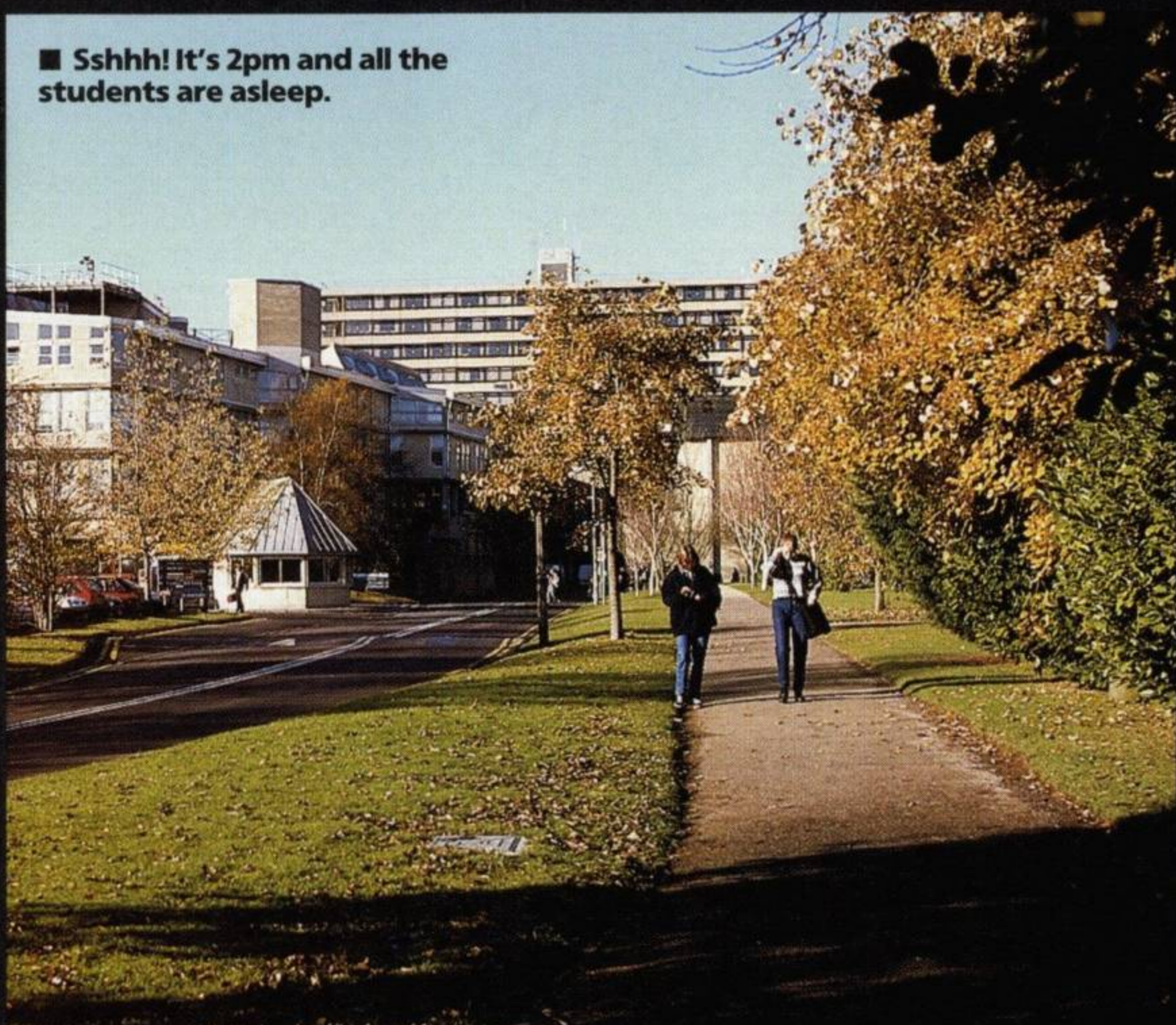
■ The strong, silent type.

"My Beautiful Students' Union"

Fifty pence a game? A pound a pint? Bloody hell. Arcade takes the opportunity to play videogames subsidised at the tax-payer's expense.

PHOTO: COLIN WILSON/IPU (BUCS) UNIVERSITY OF BATH

■ Sshhh! It's 2pm and all the students are asleep.



THIS MONTH

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON

University of Bath

It's so easy to stereotype students. So painfully easy to point out what a bunch of whinging, predictable, drunk, lethargic, sexually frustrated dossers they are. Yet it is these apparent ne'er-do-wells who – in years to come – will be running our country, writing our prescriptions, defending us in the courts and running our businesses. A few of them might even be writing for our favourite videogame magazines.

Besides, being a student is a great laugh. So a night out in the University of Bath Students' Union, where there are coin-ops a-plenty, seemed like a top idea. And maybe, we thought, just maybe we might even pull...

Slot check

- Place: **University of Bath Students' Union**
- Where: **Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY**
- Size: **too drunk to tell**
- Entertainment: **15 games, six pool tables, two bars**
- How much: **entrance to main bar is free; second (disco) bar £2-£4. Most games are 50p a go, a couple**
- are **£1. Pool is 50p. Cheapest lager is £1.40, premier lager £1.80, wine £1.20 a glass, shorts £1.20**
- Telephone: **01225 826826**
- Opening Hours: **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8am-1am; Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 8am-2am; Sun noon-10.30pm**
- Girl-to-boy ratio: **1:1, dammit!**

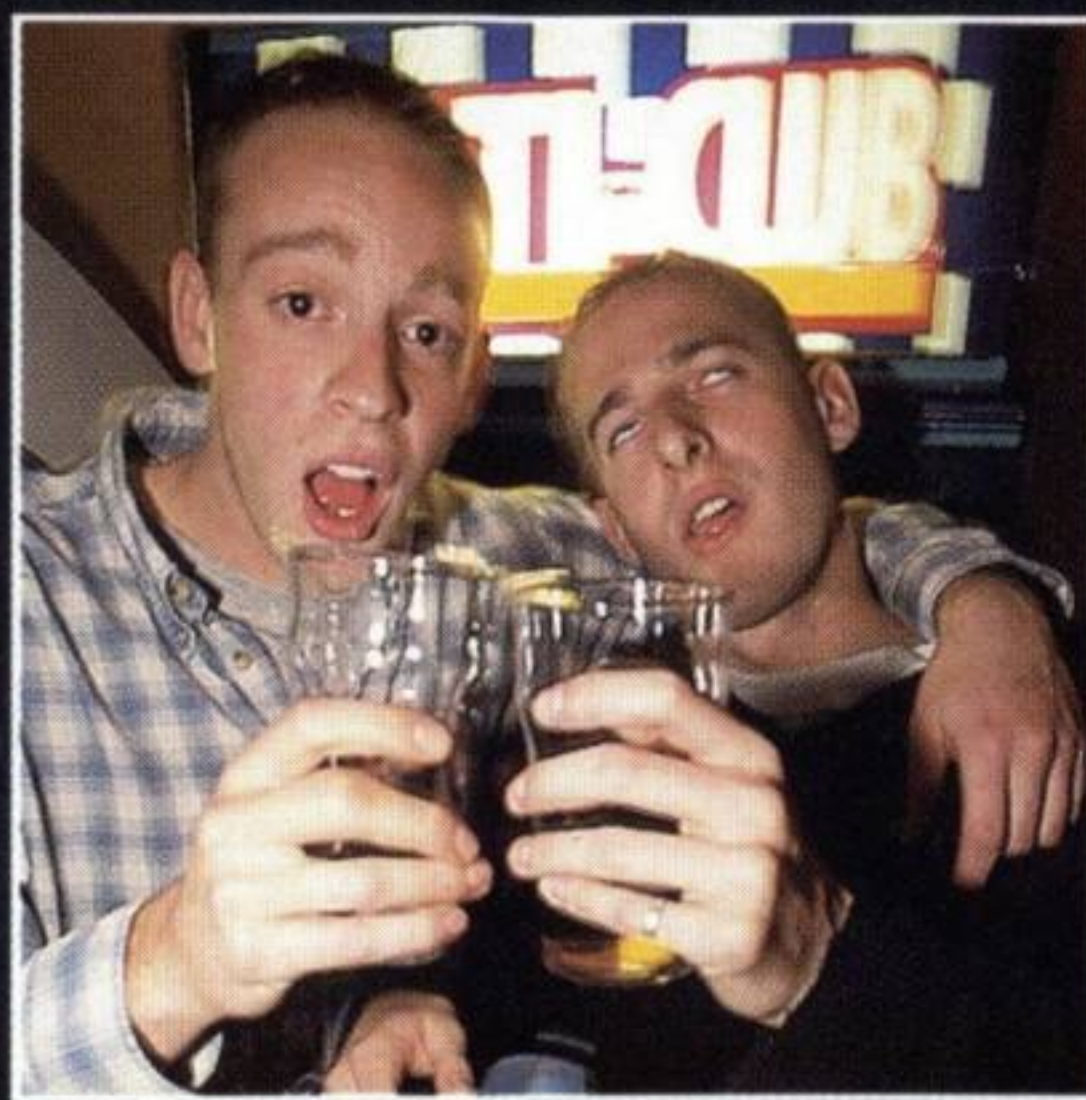


"You've got to be a good drinker when you're a student. Smoking's pretty important too."



Nick & Charlie

22 & 23, Politics & Modern Languages, Lager x 2



Hello. Aren't you too pissed to drive? "No. Yes. We only drink-drive on coin-ops, because then we aren't putting any real people at risk." [Charlie knocks pint on to floor, glass smashes everywhere.] "Whoops!"
Tsk. Bloody students. "Eh?"
Nothing. *GTI Club* looks a bit like *The Italian Job*, 'cos you get to drive a Mini. "Except you can cheat and pick a Lamborghini and win really easily. Look." [Points to handbrake.] "There's an actual handbrake attached to the machine."
Cool. "You'd have thought *GTI Club* would have been ripe for conversion to the consoles, but maybe they won't bother now 'cos of *Driver*."

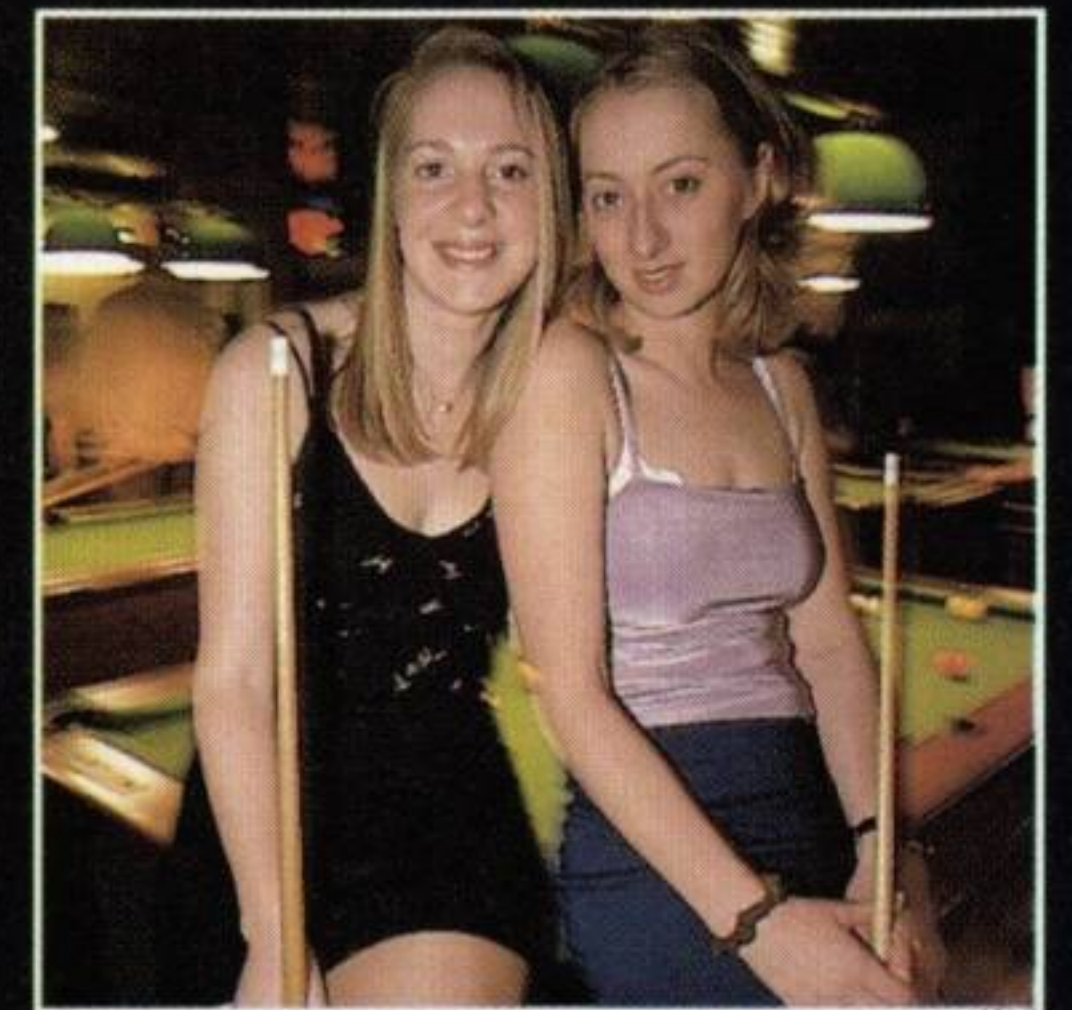
You seem very clued up. "We're big videogame fans. I've got an N64 and just bought *1080°*, but I still can't stay away from *GoldenEye*. Is there a sequel?"
Well, *Tomorrow Never Dies* is coming to PlayStation. *Perfect Dark* is the N64 follow-up to *GoldenEye* starring a girl called Joanna Dark. "Really?" [Burps.] "Have you seen the arses on those two playing pool?"
Yeah, maybe we'll go over and talk to them in a minute. [Both pulling face.] "Rather you than us. We're off to get another beer in."
Good plan. Bye.




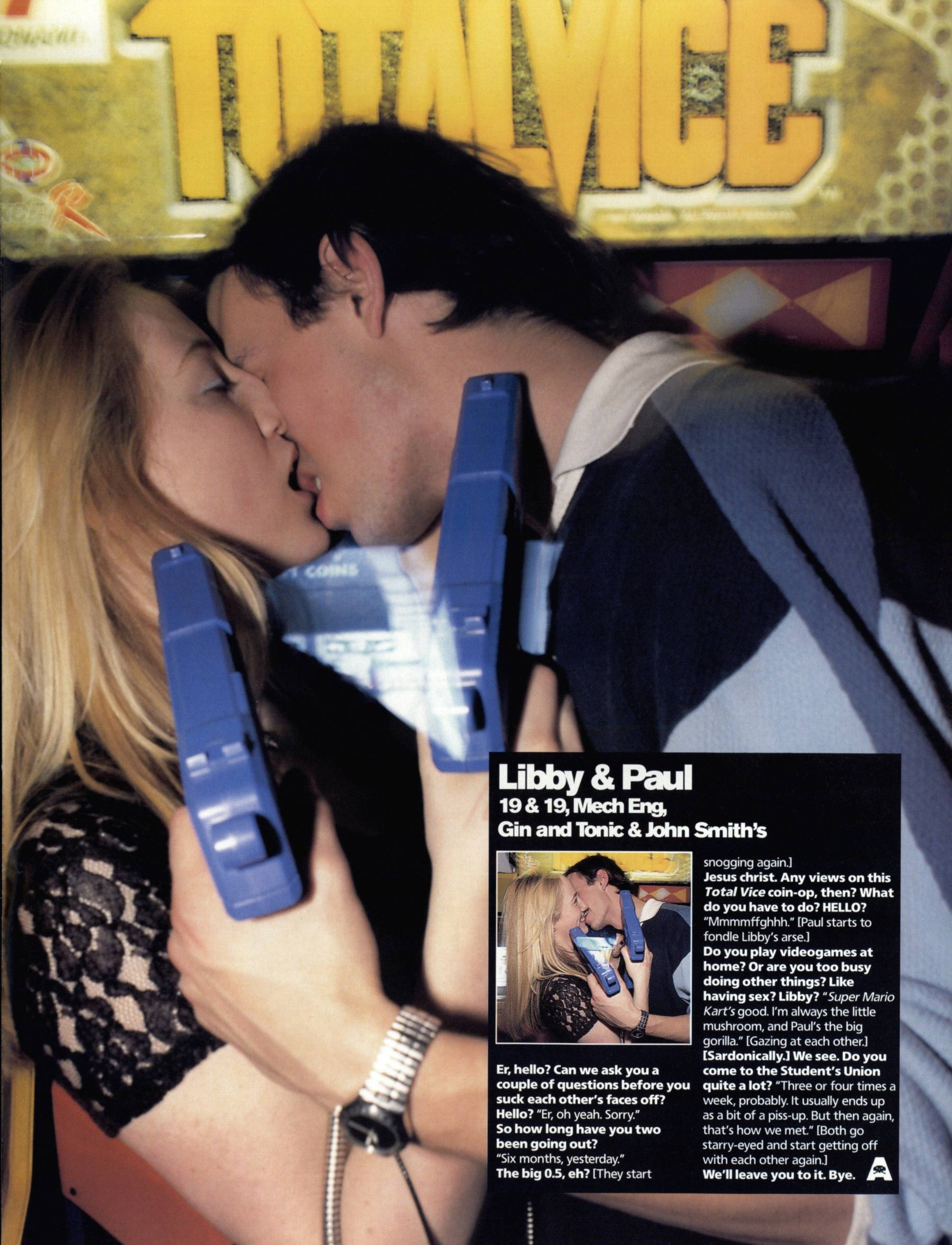
**“My Beautiful
Students’ Union”**
University of Bath



**Miranda &
Lindsay**
21 & 22, Business
Administration,
Dry white wine
& Fosters

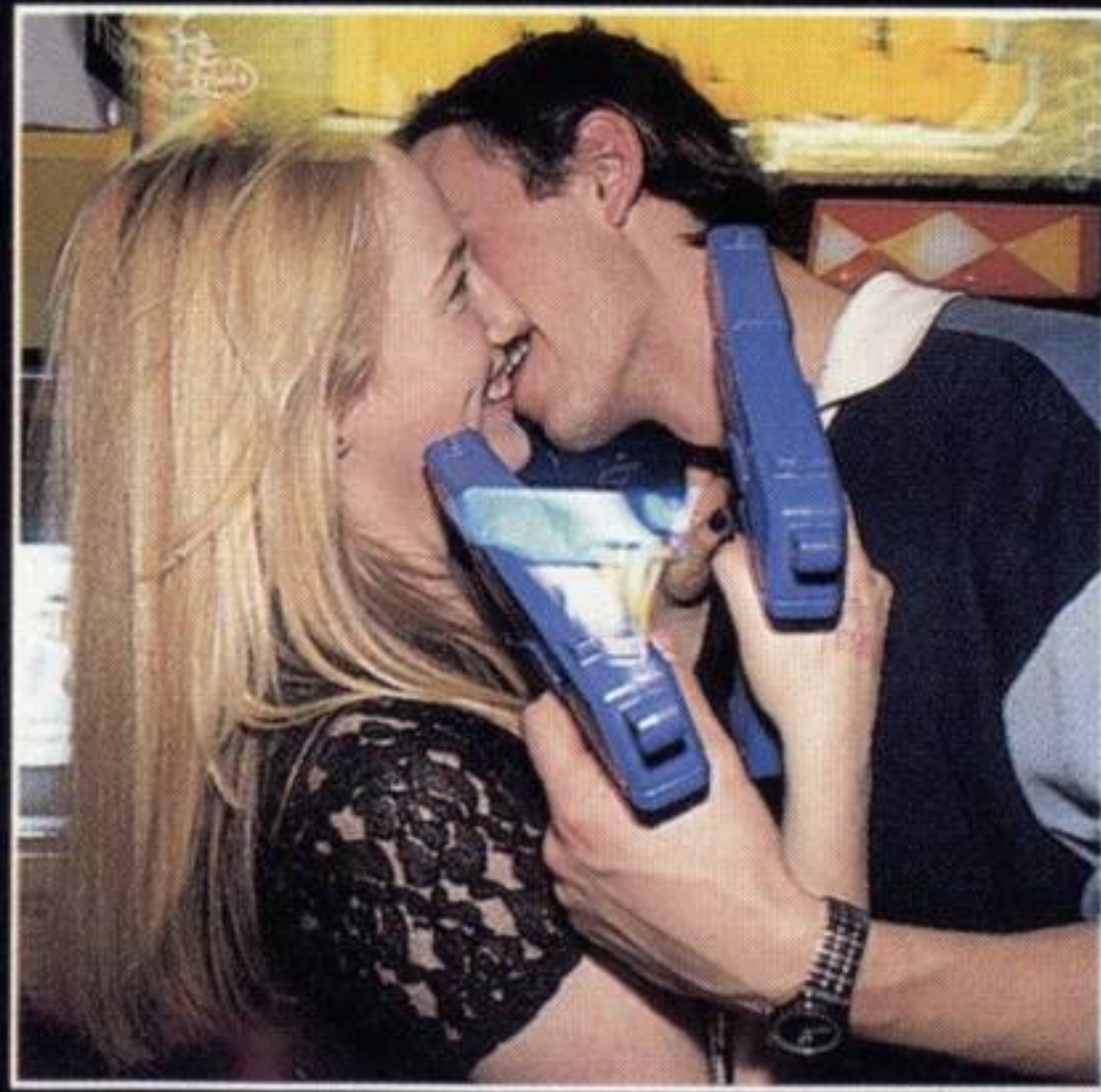


Yeooooo. This pool table’s covered in goo. Anyway, who’s winning? “Miranda. She’s good at getting it in at the right angle. Knowing where to shaft her cue.” [Giggling ensues.]
How much is a pint, then? [Girls down drinks.] “Are you buying? £1.40. Used to be £1.20.”
Tsk, disgraceful. Do they think students are made of money? Fancy a go on Daytona? “Sod off! We hate videogames. They take over your whole life if you’re not careful. If we caught our boyfriends with a PlayStation, we’d go barmy.”
Where are your boyfriends tonight? “At home.”
Having a Boy’s Night In, with a PlayStation, eh? [Eyes begin to wander.] Blimey, your skirts are short. “Do they make our bums look big?”
Don’t worry. Our photographer can work wonders. “We don’t normally wear this sort of thing. We thought it’d be funny to wear tarty clothes to tease the boys.”
Have you been chatted up yet, then? [Winking.] “Only by you, saucy.”
Err... Are you going to buy us that drink then?”
Suppose. [Fumbles in pocket for change.] Wait here, we’ll just go and get them. “See you in a minute.”
[To photographer.] Run! 



Libby & Paul

19 & 19, Mech Eng,
Gin and Tonic & John Smith's



Er, hello? Can we ask you a couple of questions before you suck each other's faces off?

Hello? "Er, oh yeah. Sorry."

So how long have you two been going out?

"Six months, yesterday."

The big 0.5, eh? [They start

snogging again.]

Jesus christ. Any views on this Total Vice coin-op, then? What do you have to do? HELLO?

"Mmmffghhh." [Paul starts to fondle Libby's arse.]

Do you play videogames at home? Or are you too busy doing other things? Like having sex? Libby? "Super Mario Kart's good. I'm always the little mushroom, and Paul's the big gorilla."

[Gazing at each other.]

[Sardonically.] We see. Do you come to the Student's Union quite a lot?

"Three or four times a week, probably. It usually ends up as a bit of a piss-up. But then again, that's how we met." [Both go starry-eyed and start getting off with each other again.]

We'll leave you to it. Bye.



“These rifles are far too heavy. They hurt your shoulders and make your boobs wobble.”

Lisa & Tanya

22 & 22, Graphic Design & Illustration, Kronenburg & Kronenburg Top



Girls with guns, eh? “These rifles are far too heavy. They hurt your shoulders and make your boobs wobble.”

All four of them? “Pardon? This game’s too loud and scary. Two huge dogs jumped out and screamed at us, then we died.”

So, the overall consensus is that *Terraburst* is too loud, the dogs are scary and it jiggles your breasts.

Anything else? “We like the fact that the guns vibrate.”

Any particular reason?

“You know. Innocent pleasures, like sitting on the washing machine.” [Examines gun.] “My Bomb button didn’t do anything for me. I think it’s broken.”

Do you play games at home?

“We both just bought Pocket Game Boys so that we can play link-up *Tetris*. It’s great.”

So what are your big plans after graduation, then?

“Get a job. Play videogames.”

[Excitedly.] You could come and work for *Arcade*! We need some more girls. It’d be fab! [Pause.] Can we get off with you? “No.”

Oh, okay. Thanks anyway. Bye.





“Beautiful Students’ Union”
University of Bath



Chris & Paul

18 & 19, Economics & Physics, Real Ale x 2

Fans of *Puzzle Bobble*?

[Nonplussed.] “S’alright.”

Have you got a PlayStation or N64?

“I haven’t bothered with videogaming consoles for years. I used to have an Amiga 500.”

That makes sense. Did you play *Rainbow Islands*?

It had Bub and Bob from *Puzzle Bobble* in.

Except instead of dinosaurs, they were small boys. “A bit.”

[Thinking.] **You have to pay fees to study now, don’t you?**

Do you blame the Labour

government? “It wouldn’t be so bad if the money went to the university. Having said that, you don’t have to pay to go to the gym on campus any more.”

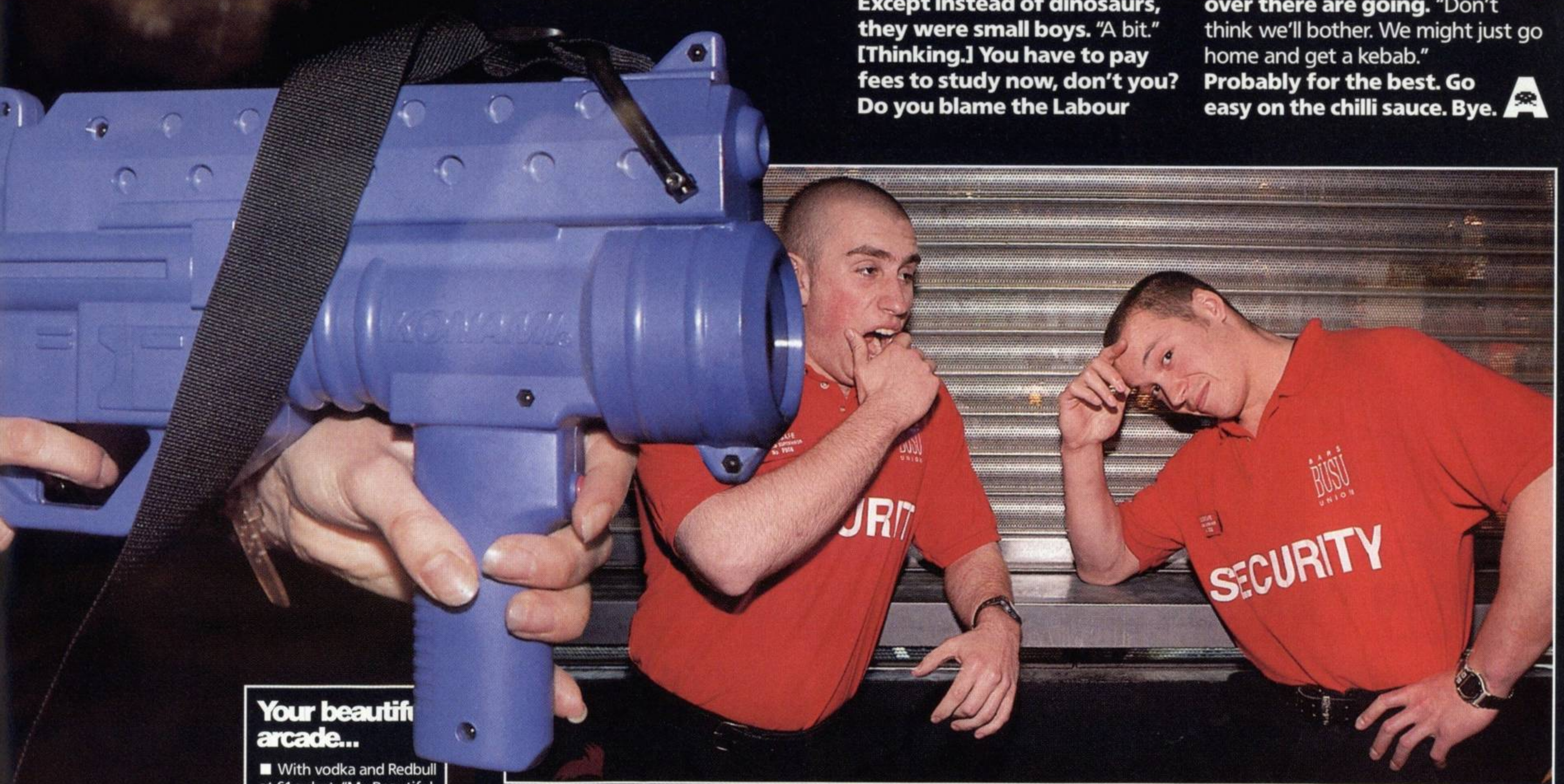
So have you ever been to the gym? “Certainly not.”

Off to the disco later, then?

Those girls in the mini-skirts

over there are going. “Don’t think we’ll bother. We might just go home and get a kebab.”

Probably for the best. Go easy on the chilli sauce. Bye.



Your beautiful arcade...

■ With vodka and Redbull at £1 a shot, “My Beautiful Arcade” was rendered a severe “My Beautiful Hangover” next morning. We should go somewhere a little more sober next month, so if you have a favourite coin-op haunt, maybe we could visit.

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

Oliver & Neil 20 & 20, On the door, No alcohol allowed

[Attention drawn to disco in next bar where, from our drunken vantage point, it appears that people are having a great deal of fun.] Can we come in to your disco please? “Certainly. We just need to see your NUS card.”

Er, we’re not students. We’re here on bushness. Business. [Sceptically.] “Business? What sort?” **We’re schtacking photos. Have Tanya and Lisa turned up yet?** “Who? Dunno, mate. If you want to come in, it’s £2 each.” **Can’t we get in fr’free?** “No.”

[Fumble in pockets for money and pull out feeble amount of small change.] Er, do you take cheques? No? Well, iss ought to about cover it. Wheresh the bar? “Christ! You’re worse than the bloody students.” **[Hiccups]. Cheersh!**



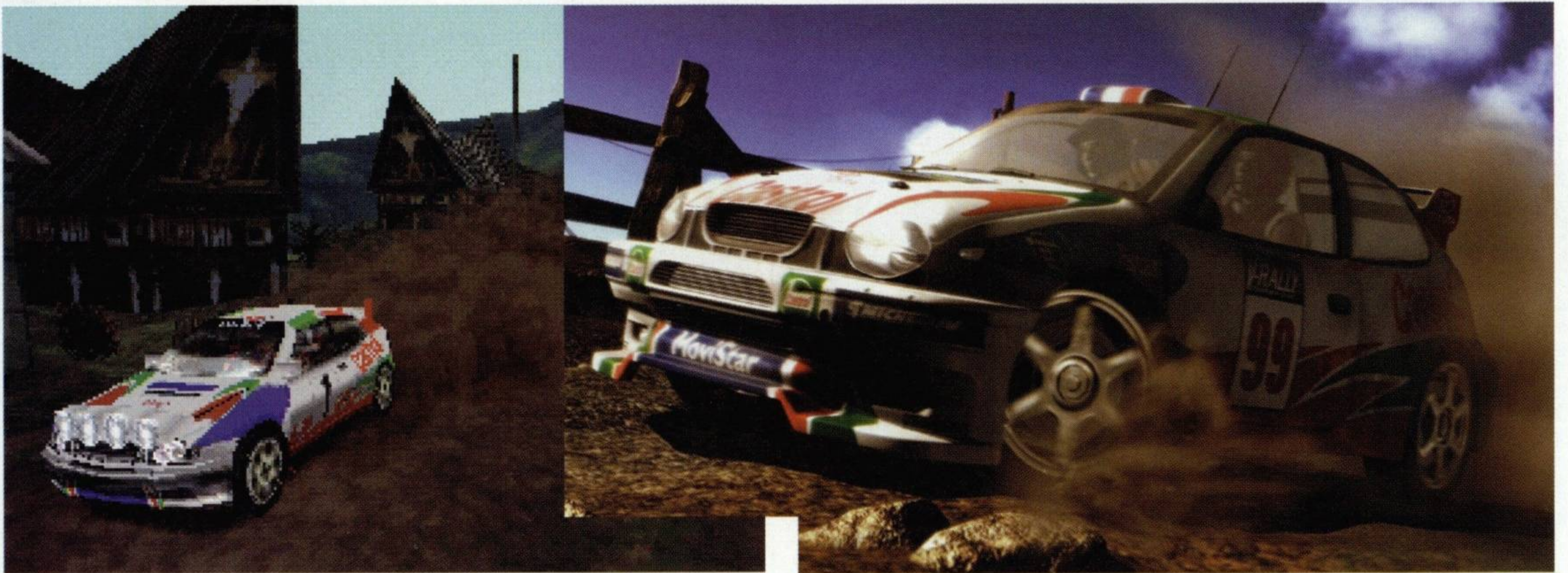
COMING SOON

A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ (Above) The handling's still being tweaked, but it's likely to be more forgiving than that of the original *V-Rally*.

■ (Right) Four-player races are paint-scrapingly fraught, despite an understandable loss in detail.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Eden Studios** | Publisher: **Infogrames** | Players: **1-4** | On sale in UK: **June**

V-RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

The PlayStation's original rally racer returns after a substantial tune-up

Will PlayStation gamers ever tire of the opportunity to throw caution to the wind behind the wheel of a virtual deathtrap? Every month seems to bring with it a fresh batch of racers, but, after the relatively disappointing sales of the excellent *Ridge Racer Type 4*, it could be that the phenomenon is slowing down. *Driver* is the only genuinely innovative car game of the year so far, but there'll always be room for a decent rally racer.

The good news, then, is that Infogrames' *V-Rally Championship Edition* (a confusing title, in that it sounds like an upgrade as opposed to a sequel) is about

to leave the pits and you will soon be able to throw a Ford Escort Mexico, a Mini Cooper or any one of the other 18 licensed rally cars from this year's World Championship into the nastiest corners you can find. And much more besides.

The original version of *V-Rally* delighted and frustrated in equal measures. It was a real seat-of-the-pants affair and only Arthur Daley would have the brass neck to class the cars' handling as "stable". Indeed who could ever forget the pain of attempting to negotiate a Subaru through a tight bend, only to hit a grass bank and somersault for 30 yards before coming to rest upside down? It wasn't that the handling was awful, it was just different from any other racing game. Obviously, this

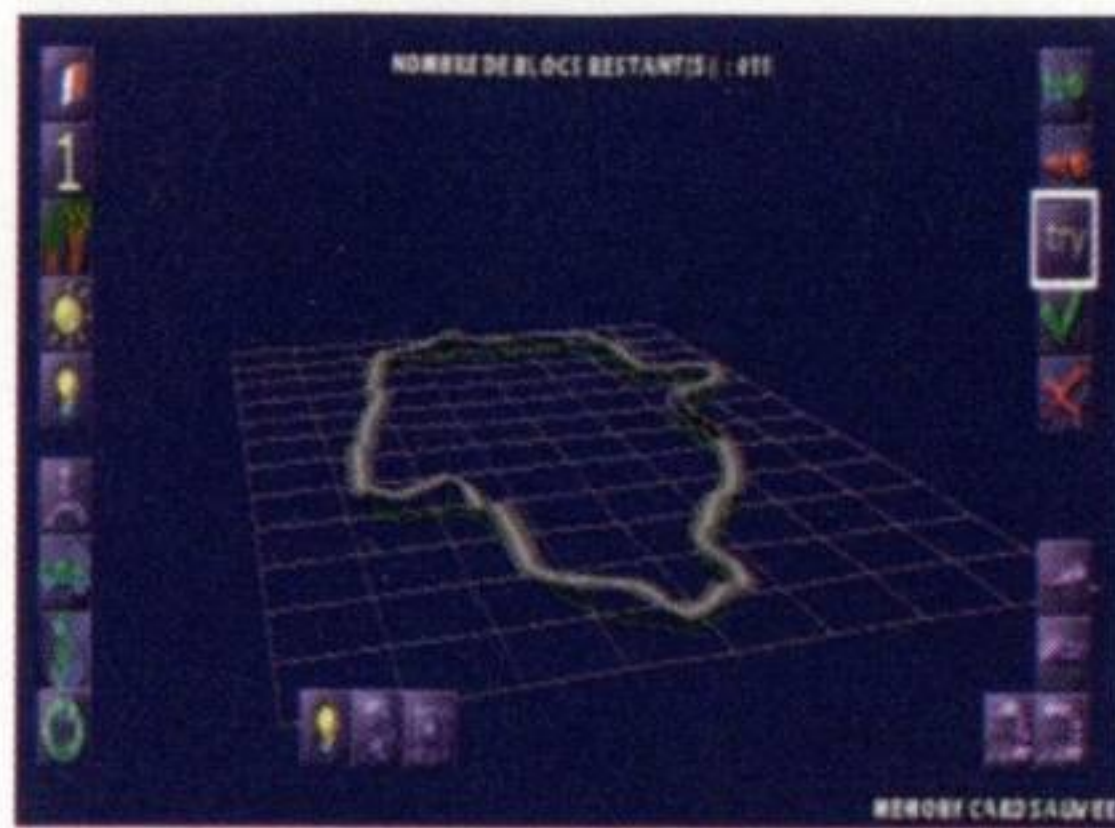
was an issue *V-Rally* developer, French company Eden Studios, sought to address in the sequel. Former rally champion and consultant Ari Vatanen lent his experience to recreating the feel of the real deal, and it seems to have done the trick. A gentle lap on one of the sequel's whopping 92 tracks reveals that these problems have been overcome. The cars in *V-Rally CE* handle like a dream.

When the original was released some two years ago, there was very little real competition on the grid, but Codemasters has since grabbed pole position with the imperious *Colin McRae Rally*. However, Eden's offering shouldn't be far behind come race time. Visually, the game is considerably improved. The cars are

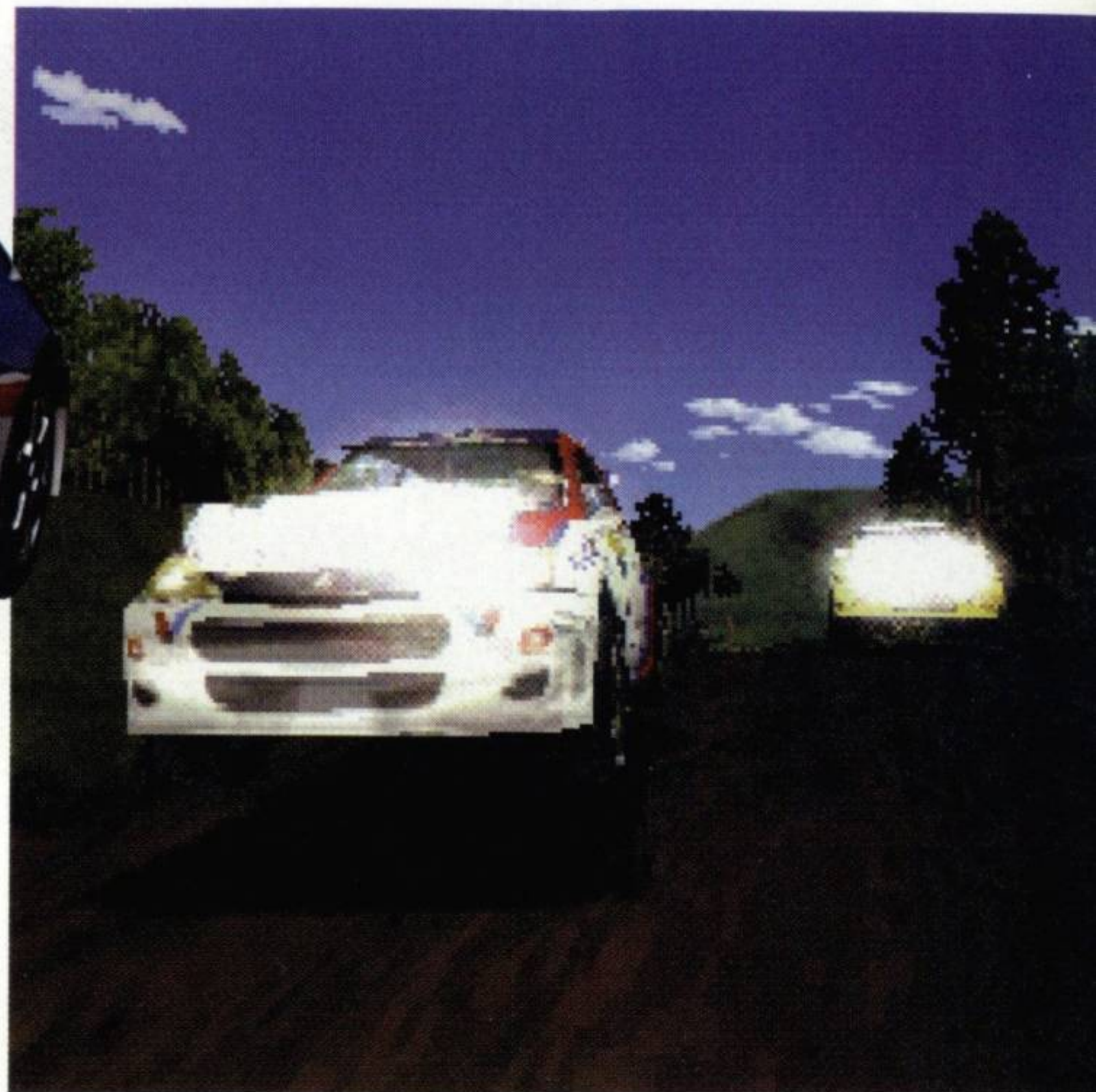
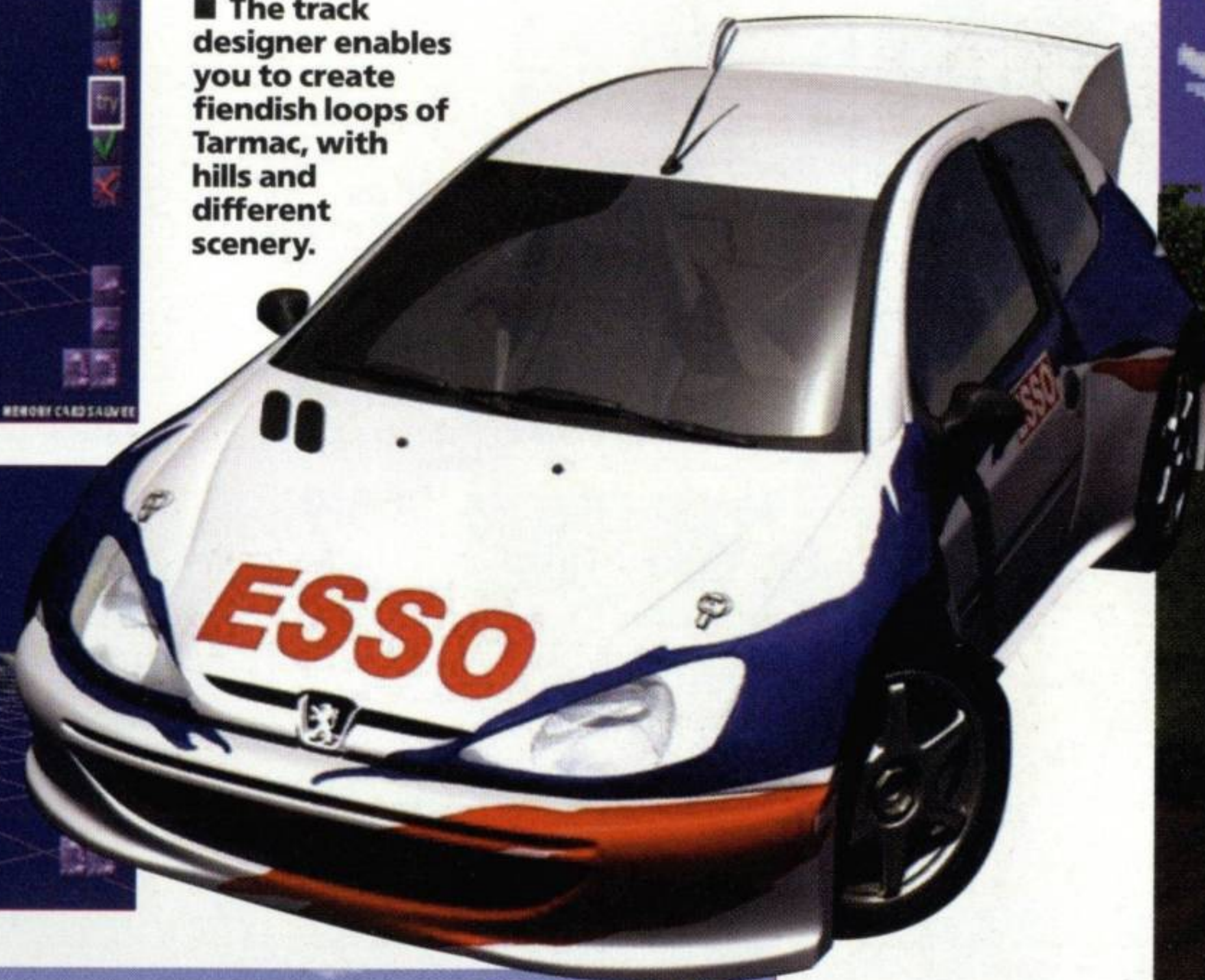
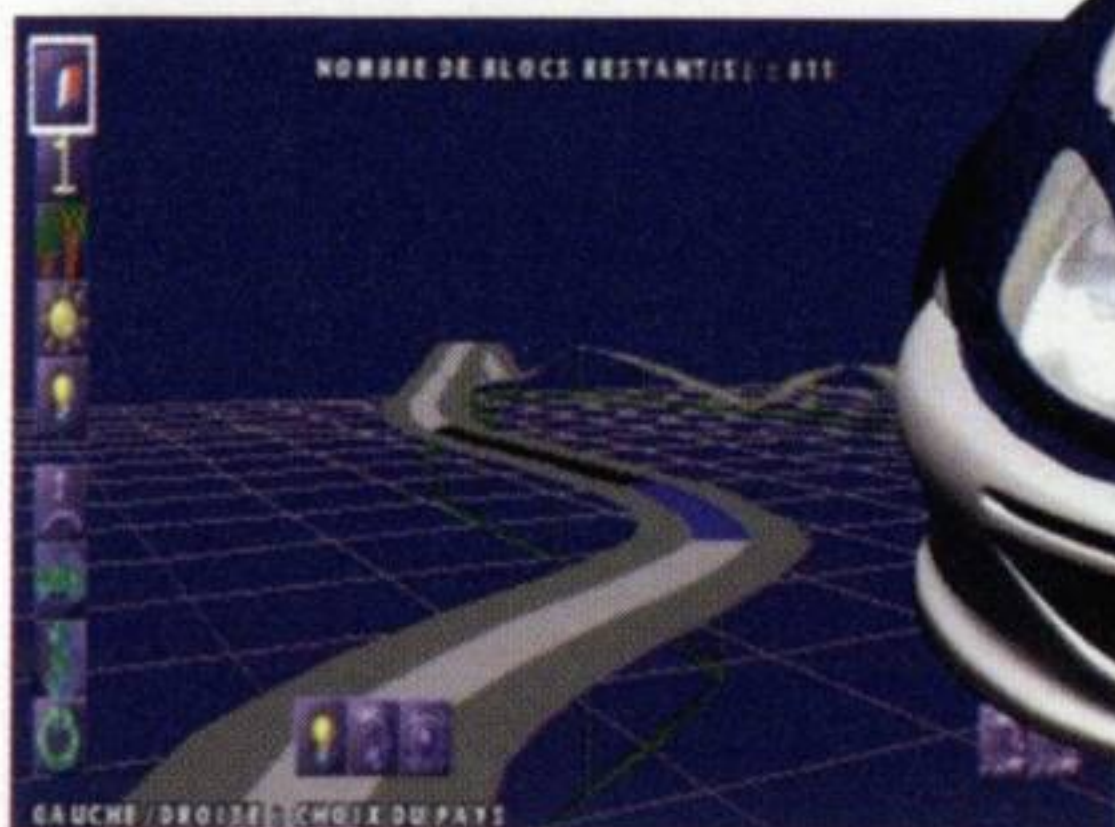
beautifully modelled (some 600 polygons apiece in the one-player game) and first impressions are that they're close to looking as good as the motors in *Sega Rally 2* on the Dreamcast.

You get your pick of Ford, Subaru, Renault, Mitsubishi, Toyota and Peugeot. And Skoda and Hyundai (in case your gran fancies a a race, presumably). Even in the heat of battle you can look into your car to see how the animated driver and co-driver are faring, and you also get to enjoy reflections of the scenery on the windows. As you hurtle along, the cars get progressively dirtier and more marked. Consequently, if you're a clumsy-thumbed driver you'll get the car into a right state.

There has been no scrimping on the circuits either, because Eden has packed in 92 tracks, in more than a dozen countries, including Finland, Germany, England, France and Sweden. Eden reckons there are more than 300 kilometres of road to test your skills over, with surfaces like snow, Tarmac, mud and gravel to deal with. Add to this a



■ The track designer enables you to create fiendish loops of Tarmac, with hills and different scenery.



■ (Left) Even after the obligatory pre-rendered intro, the in-game graphics are enough to make you swoon.

fine array of short-cuts and hugely variable weather conditions and you've got the most expansive racing game to date. Of course, bandying such impressive figures around often serves as an attempt to obscure the fact the game isn't too hot – a case of quantity over quality. But not this time. Eden has clearly taken the time and effort to ensure *V-Rally Championship Edition* is a new game, as opposed to a merely cosmetic refit.

An interesting touch is that you can design and build your own circuits in Track Editor mode. You can hump and bend 'til you're spent, then save your handiwork on a memory card, something you could do on *Tommi Makinen Rally* – which, notoriously, was difficult to play.

There are four gaming options: Arcade, Rally Championship, *V-Rally Trophy* and Time Trial. Arcade is the expected thrash around a single circuit, Rally Championship sees you take on three drivers, and the *V-Rally Trophy* tests your mettle over a number of circuits. There's also a driving

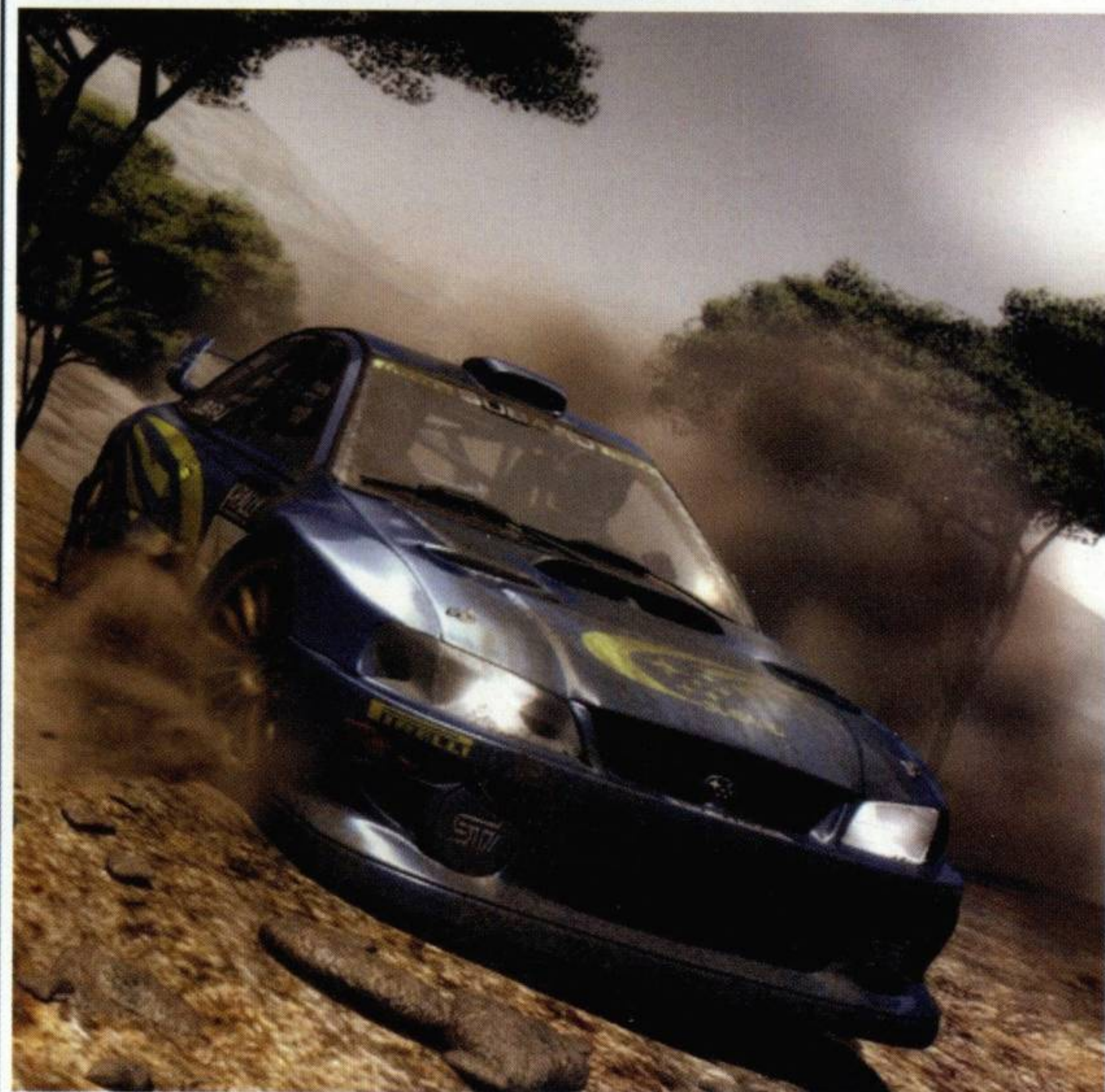
school, where you can be verbally abused while trying your damndest to weave through a selection of traffic cones. Thankfully, though, you aren't hectored with Colin McRae's barking Scots accent. You can also adjust the difficulty levels, but this is limited to directions you receive from the co-driver – something you can spot for yourself, anyway.

Any multi-player options? You'd better believe it. Up to four players can race on a PlayStation with a Multi-Tap. You get a four-way split-screen and, although you lose some degree of picture quality, the competitive spirit the racing generates more than makes up for it. In two-player mode, you can choose to split the screen either vertically or horizontally.

V-Rally Championship Edition is a significant step on from its predecessor, even in its unfinished state. The looks and the handling measure up to *Colin McRae Rally*, and the four-player option is sure to find favour. You'll have to wait until June to see it finished, though. **A**

WHO'S MAKING IT?

Meet the man in the *V-Rally CE* driving seat...



With the silicon-straining likes of *Gran Turismo* around, putting out a new driving game that doesn't seriously push the technical envelope is asking for trouble. *V-Rally Championship Edition* has no such problems, and throws picturesque European scenery past your shiny car with gay abandon – and that's all down to Eden Studios. Originally part of Infogrames' in-house coding department, Eden is responsible for Euro cartoon fodder like *Asterix*, *The Smurfs* and *Tintin*, as well as the rather phenomenally good-for-its-time, original *V-Rally*. *Arcade* asked chief designer Stéphane Baudet how he and his team set about recreating the rally experience.

What aspect of the game have you concentrated on most?

We spent time on the car handling simulation – the hardest part to get right in *V-Rally 2* – because it is a mix between gameplay, realism, physics and optimised programming. We also spent time on the 3D engine, which has been rewritten to go to the limit of the PlayStation's 3D performance.

Tell us about the "classic" rally cars you have included in the game.

The classic cars included in the game are some of the most famous rally cars of the last 20 years of rallying. Some of them, like the 205 T16, are even

more powerful than the cars on the current rally circuit. The complete list of these bonus cars will only be revealed when the game is released.

Which is your favourite circuit, and why?

So far the stages I like the most are the narrow Corsican stages and the English mountain stages.

What has been rally driver Ari Vatanen's input in the game?

We work closely with Ari Vatanen, who is still rallying at the top level even if he is not driving in one of the official teams this year. He has a lot of experience and is very good at teaching his knowledge. We also worked closely with three teams to get the technical side right: Ford, Toyota Team Europe and Peugeot. We had the chance to go with the teams during testing sessions to learn more about the rally car handling and set ups.

What did you think of *Colin McRae Rally*?

I love the game but I don't think it is a true representation of the sport. When I designed *V-Rally*, we had the idea to put only one car at a time in the stage like in real rally competition, but I thought this wouldn't prove appealing enough for the players and so we changed it. You can imagine the amount of detail you can include in a car if you only have to display one, as opposed to four!

COMING SOON
A WORLD OF... MONTHS AWAY



■ In the interminable battle to "do" *Mario 64* on the PlayStation, *Ape Escape* looks like coming the closest yet.



■ Your stun club looks like something out of *Star Wars* and the Dual Shock gives a Jedi-like level of control.



■ Tricky simians give *Ape Escape* a feel that's all its own.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Sony Japan** | Publisher: **Sony** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **August**

APE ESCAPE

There's monkey business going on at Sony HQ.

Monkeys get intelligent, escape from the lab and threaten to alter the course of human history forever. Stop us if you've heard this one. But no, *Oliver Stone's Planet of the Apes* remake is not coming to your PlayStation, instead we're setting the scene for *Ape Escape*, Sony's latest stab at a 3D platformer.

The first thing that's going to strike you about *Ape Escape* is its controls. It's the first game that demands that you have an analogue controller (preferably Dual Shock), as the gameplay requires you to use one stick for movement while saving the other for controlling devices such as nets, monkey

detectors, slingshots and your all-important light-saberish stun club. It's awkward at first, but the more you play, the more you will be able to see the logic in this division of labour. The early levels teach you to crawl, play dead, swim, net and shoot your way towards your ultimate objective of recapturing all of those pesky monkeys.

Actually netting one of the furry fellas is a lot harder than it sounds. While some are dopey, others are super-alert so that they scamper away the minute you come into view. Often they're protected by vicious hench-creatures or fiendish devices so that stealth, rather than all-out aggression, is the appropriate tactic. Even when you do get within range, the apes are fast and agile (which is where the dual stick controls

come into their own), and they are not averse to attacking you before you've time to stun and net them.

All this tracking and hunting action wouldn't be anything like as enjoyable if the apes themselves weren't so entertaining. Each sports a head-mounted light that informs you when they're unaware of your presence (strobing blue) or when you've been rumbled (flashing red). Get spotted by an ape and you'll trigger a high-pitched simian screech that, depending on said monkey's personality, results in them either preparing to attack or legging it in a flurry of slippery banana skins. As you advance through the 25 levels the monkeys gradually become more wary and getting to them becomes more difficult as ravenous

BEST BIT SO FAR:

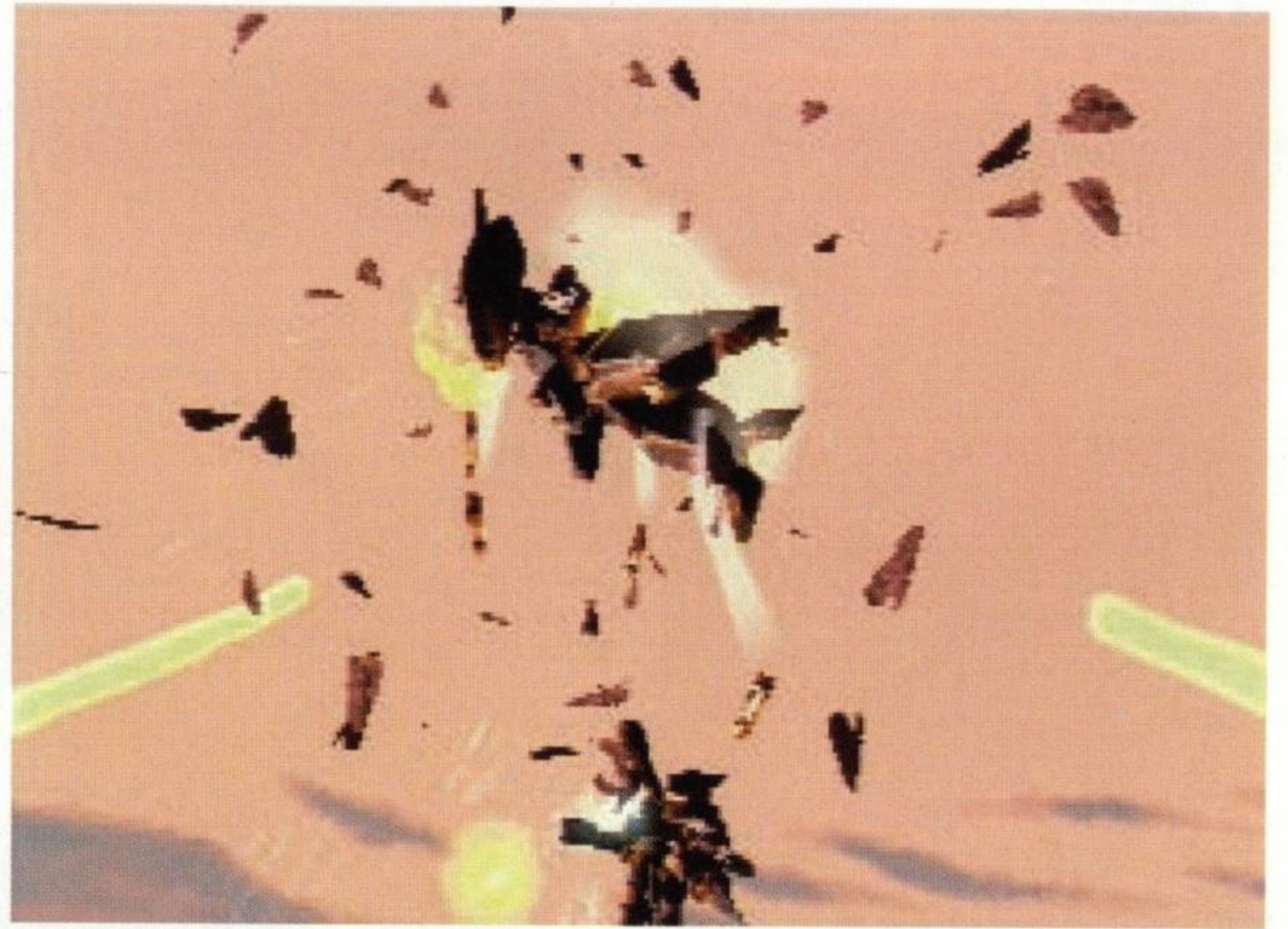
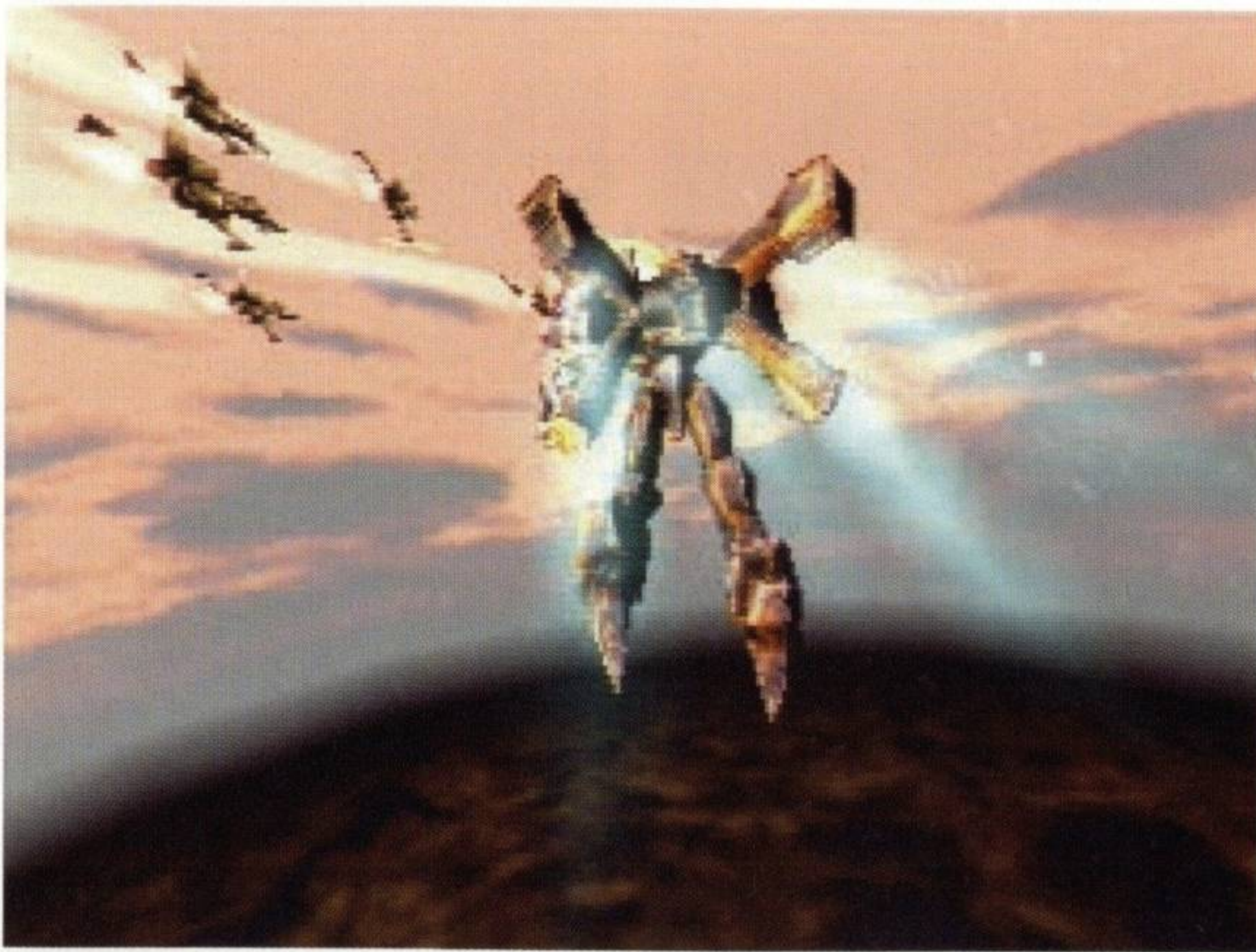
A cute breakthrough



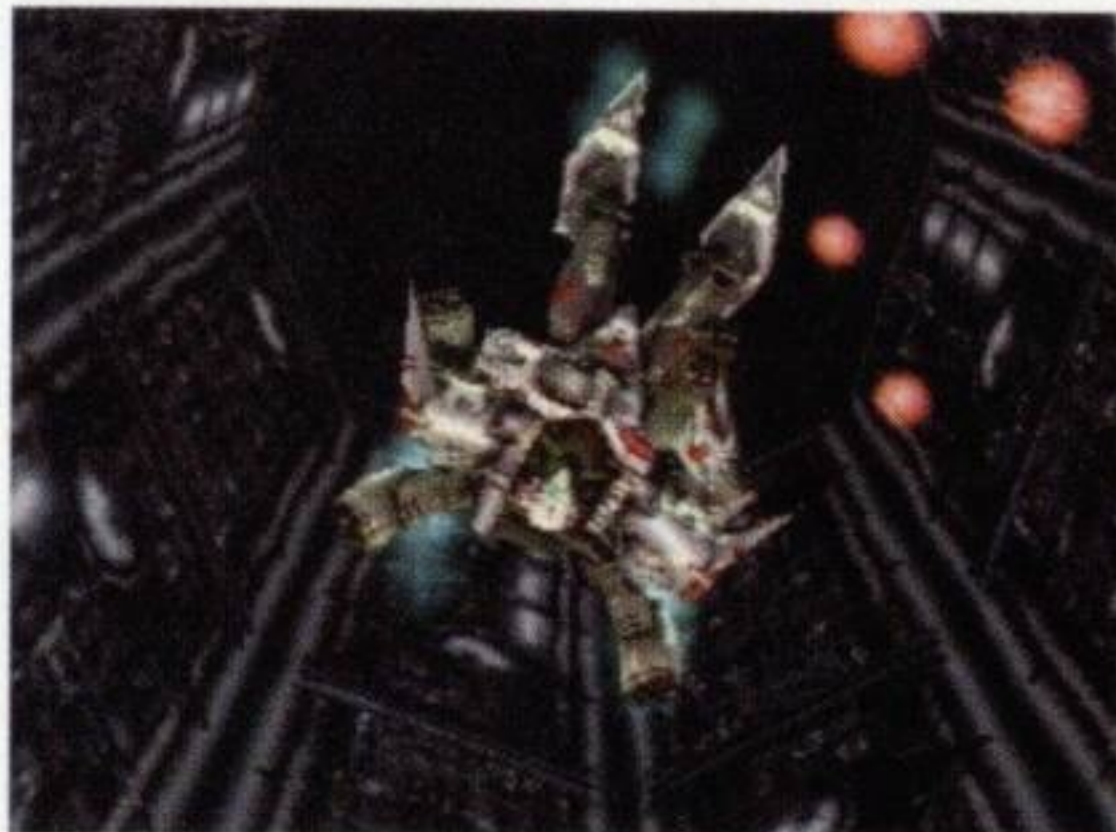
Historically, Sony's 3D platformers have struggled to come up with controls that are at once forgiving and sensitive. By opting for analogue-only control, *Ape Escape* looks likely to satisfy experienced gamers without alienating novices. After a while you simply forget you're using two sticks rather than the D-pad, you're just too busy stunning, shooting and netting those goddamn entertaining knuckle-draggers.

dinosaurs, flaming crabs and killer fish crop up to block your path. The longevity of the game lies in the fact that there are always more apes tucked away, out of your reach until you've acquired some flash new device.

It looks like PlayStation owners are finally going to get a 3D platformer to brag about. Brimming with originality, packed with gadgets and featuring the cleverest control system yet seen, *Ape Escape* should have your hairy palms bristling with anticipation.



■ The Japanese love of giant robots sent *Omega Boost* straight in at number one with a guided missile.



■ Your huge mechanoid targets shatter impressively.

■ Stomp your electric boots of death!



BEST BIT SO FAR:

The bloody huge bosses

In movies, the good guy tends to encounter the bad boss characters once, possibly twice. The first time the two meet is frequently the good-guy-nearly-loses point: the moment where the boss temporarily triumphs. In the movies, though, it takes only a touch of luck – or, in the case of the A-Team, two cans of petrol, an old tractor engine and a stack of corrugated steel – for the hero to eventually prevail, kicking his troublesome assailant into next week. Sorted.

In *Omega Boost*, however, you're never just dealing with one nasty piece of work – boss characters are ten-a-penny. And they're all gorgeously animated, and detailed down to the very last exhaust port or gun emplacement. "Oh, piss off!" you cry, disturbed by endless Star Destroyers, Transformers and such like. But it's hard to remain angry at the never-ending waves of nastiness for long, because the bosses really are ace. Only childish superlatives relate their glory with the enthusiasm they deserve.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Polyphony** | Publisher: **SCEE** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **June**

OMEGA BOOST

Car stars starstruck by shoot-'em-up shocker...

Although *Motor Toon GP* was hardly a defining moment in videogaming, developer Polyphony Digital is rightly regarded as a hot property. Polyphony is the developer behind the mighty *Gran Turismo*, and with cash cow sequel *GT2* on the horizon, it has decided to diversify a little. Surprisingly, the latest offering is *Omega Boost*, a shoot-'em-up. Now, that's a bit like Steven Spielberg announcing his intention to direct a soft porn film.

Shoot-'em-ups – we're referring to them in their flying-craft-against-the-universe context here – are currently considered to be deeply unfashionable by gamers in

the West. Often regarded as being synonymous with 8- and 16-bit gaming (and probably herpes, as well), these shooters have become the sole reserve of marginal, desperate or hopelessly optimistic publishers. *Omega Boost*, though, is a flamboyant, aesthetic and aural showpiece. Undoubtedly programmed with the Japanese market in mind – people still love the genre over there – it's a title that feels progressive in its styling.

It's ironic, then, that *Omega Boost* should hold old-school ideals dear. Despite its '90s niceties – narrative updates and endless (rather than occasional) boss characters – it's a comfortably mindless blaster to the end. Favouring sleight of finger and thumb over cerebral capability,

the design owes more to *Afterburner* than, say, *R-Type*. With full 360° movement, it's Sega's *Panzer Dragoon*, derailed and delectable to the discerning eye.

Unfortunately, it's hard to relate just how simple *Omega Boost* is to play. Attack waves (or boss characters) approach your position from a variety of angles. Graced with a handy three-dimensional compass, you can easily turn and address each assault in kind, using the D-pad or, preferably, the analogue stick. With rapid button presses, you can fire at a point indicated by an on-screen target. Alternatively, you can "mark" your assailants by moving the cursor over their position. That done, you can dispatch homing missiles – in classic *Afterburner* style – you just need to slap the requisite button and a hit is virtually assured.

As *Omega Boost*'s scenery twists and turns, its guitar-based soundtrack oddly metronomic, it's difficult not to be

gobsmacked. Polyphony proved with *Gran Turismo* that the pensionable PlayStation can still live up to its one-time "next generation" tag.

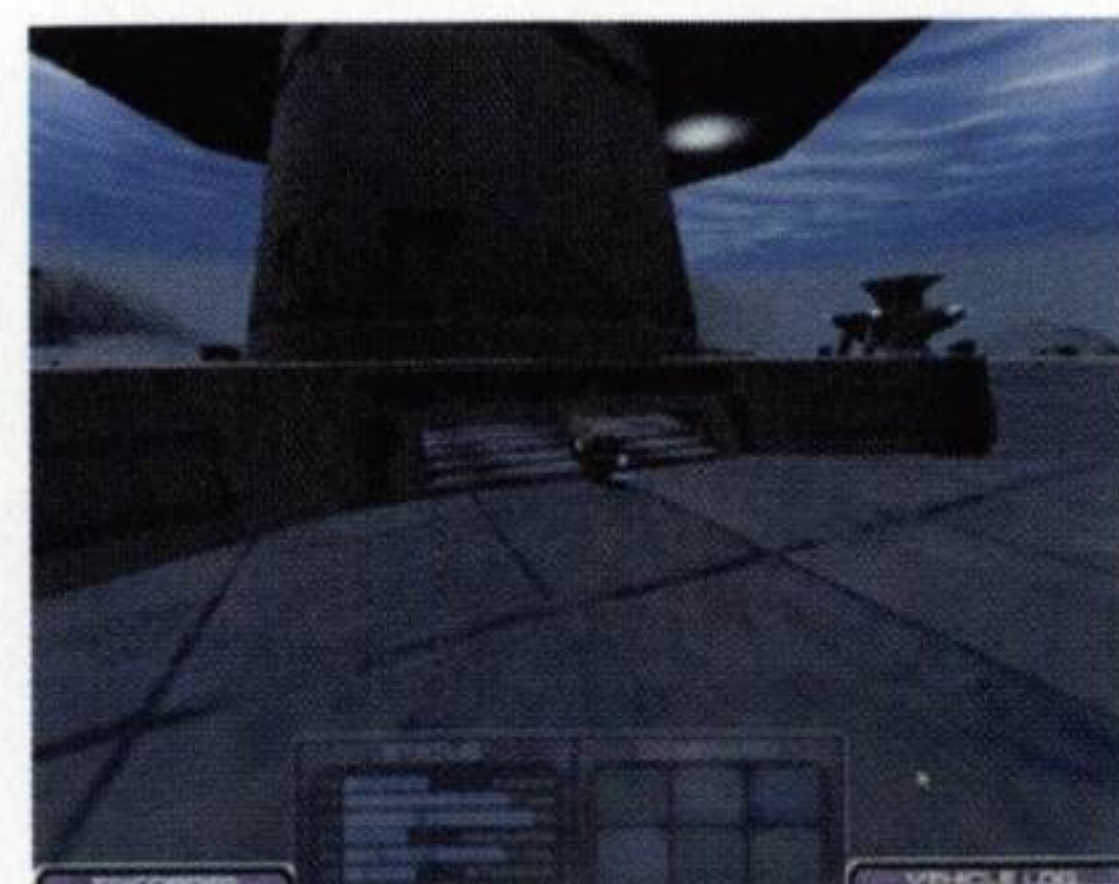
Omega Boost, visual excess its *raison d'être*, is less worldly, yet equally laudable. With a speedy frame rate and barely a trace of the poly clipping and warping that so blights many PSX titles, the game underlines Polyphony's mastery of Sony's evergreen grey breeze block.

Are a collection of indie tunes and an impressive countenance enough, though? Well, it's a revelation when *Omega Boost* sends you back to the start of a level after a careless death. The shoot-'em-up genre has always been exacting and demanding, but are Western gamers prepared to suffer such hardships once more?

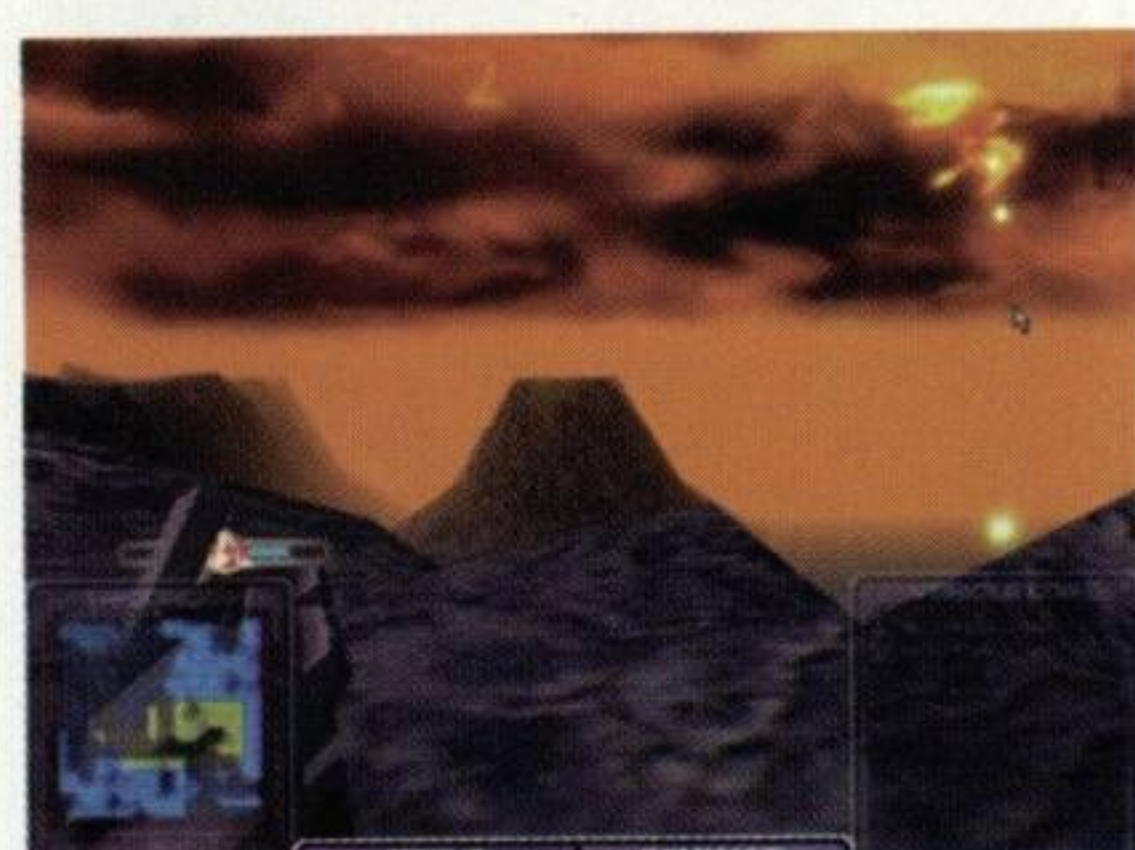
Almost retro at its core, will *Omega Boost*'s eye candy be sweet enough? *Arcade* admits to harbouring some slight reservations.



COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Spock horror! You're not going to find any of your fave *Trek* faces in *New Worlds*. Maybe the developer didn't have the budget. Even for Sulu.



■ Old skool *Trek*, it ain't. So you can just forget polystyrene rocks and grand cities populated entirely by highly tasty women.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Binary Asylum** | Publisher: **Interplay** | Players: **1-16** | On sale in UK: **September**

STAR TREK NEW WORLDS

"All of these worlds can be yours..." Oops, wrong sci-fi film

Star Trek fans are currently suffering a complete and utter embarrassment of gaming riches. Whether obsessed by the original series, *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager* or even the original board game, there's a PC title already in development to sate their desires. Yet *Star Trek New Worlds* is the only game to take a truly original slant on the franchise, with a title that goes some way to explaining its unique concept.

Unlike its brethren, *New Worlds* not only takes the action away from the respective bridges of the universe's various warring starships, but also away from the

depths of space itself. The focus of the game is on the immediate atmospheres of newly-discovered planets. And being as this is a ground-based, sci-fi game, that can only mean one genre. Yes, *New Worlds* is a real-time strategy title.

Being, as it is, a next generation (please excuse the pun) RTS, *New Worlds* eschews the standard fixed overhead perspective of *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* and its many clones, in favour of a full-on 3D, rotational landscape.

Like *Myth II: Soulblighter*, *Braveheart* and *Warzone 2100*, you can zoom into and out of the playing area, and spin it in any direction you like, to offer the best view. Yet unlike the limited field of previous 3D engine exponents, the magnification

feature in *New Worlds* is a hugely powerful tool. It enables you to pull back all the way into the planet's atmosphere, affording absolutely superb large-scale visions of the surroundings – an important feature considering that the enormous scale of the terrain offered on each of the 25 worlds puts most RTSs to shame.

The missions are divided up between three races – the Federation, the Klingons and the Romulans – and although very different in terms of their ships, languages and agendas, each is played in essentially the same way. After a Romulan experiment goes drastically wrong, the new worlds of the title are formed in the Neutral Zone. Naturally, the goody-goody Federation want to investigate them for science

purposes; the other two races, however, are rather more keen to tap them for their potentially lucrative resources.

Via dialogue boxes featuring the image of your commanding officer you are periodically sent objectives – along with warnings and information about the discoveries made by the opposing races. Unobtrusive, these pop-up menus are similar to the intuitive and discreet main menus that sit, minimised, at the bottom of the screen. Developer Binary Asylum has constructed an interface that's as simple to use as it is attractive – an oft underrated ingredient of strategy games.

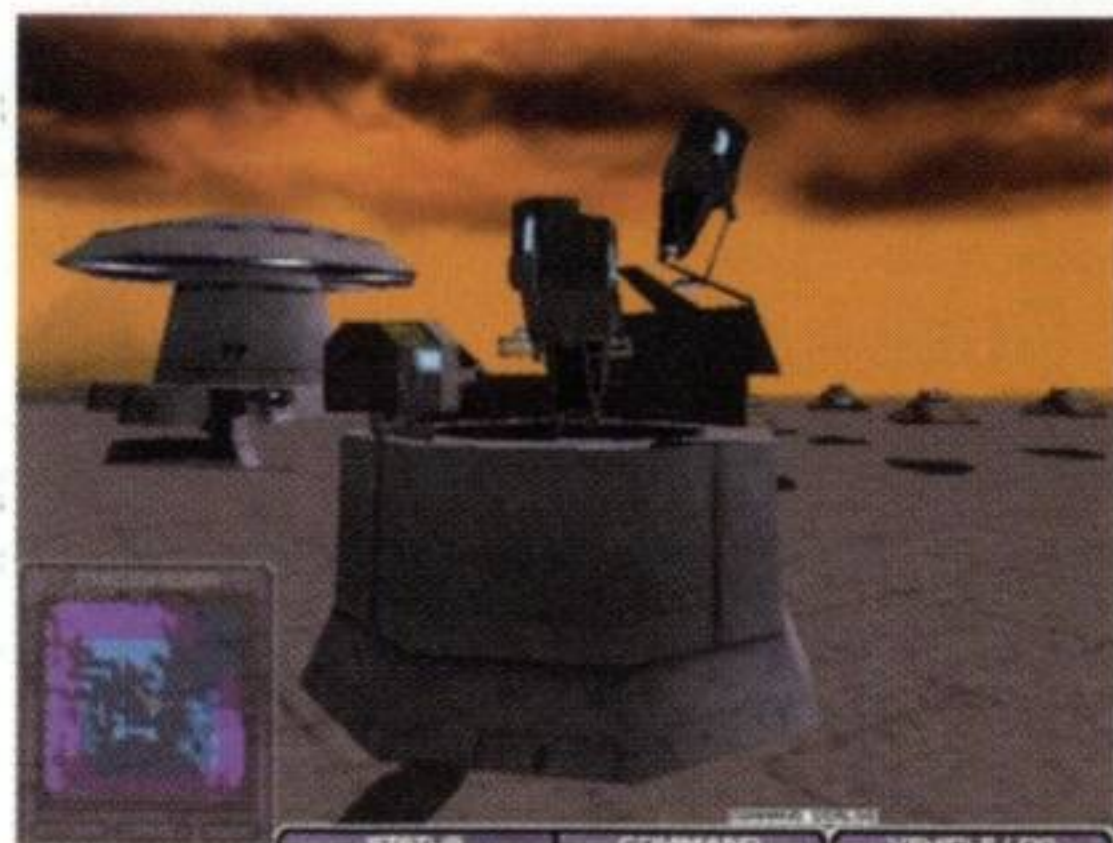
Almost entirely mouse-driven, clicking the appropriate interface tab, brings up the four main menus: Tricorder, Status bar, Operations or Selections. The first of these acts as a traditional 2D mini-map of the environment. Areas of high and low ground are shown with contour lines, along with any discovered enemy forces and your constructions. In order to colonise and maintain control of the worlds, you must



■ Battles in *Star Trek* have never, historically, been this exciting. Or this convincing to look at.



■ Spin around the landscape a bit and zoom in and out. Aah, 3D real-time strategy – it's the new black.



build assorted structures in typical fashion. You'll find yourself creating factories, mining for resources, researching new technology and producing units. However, it's the superbly implemented, and often huge-scale battles that have caught our eye.

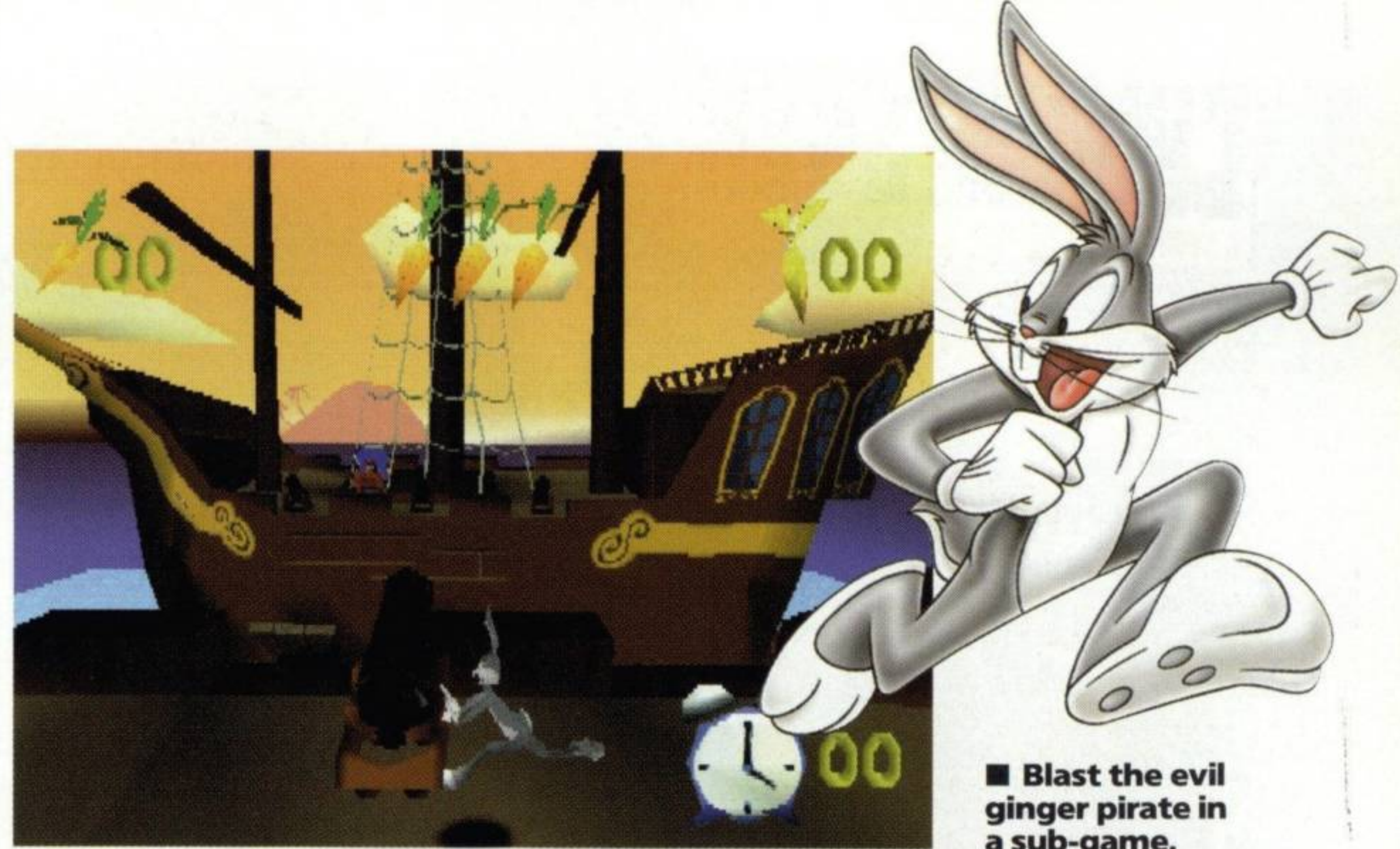
New Worlds uses craft that are alien to the *Star Trek* universe. Ships such as the high-polygon Klingon Mobile Disruptor Batteries and Federation Phaser Tanks hover smoothly across the surface of the planets – their design sure to test the beliefs of die-hard Trekkers. Nonetheless, they all exhibit the same feel as Gene Roddenberry's original vision and, coupled with the sublimely atmospheric visuals, fit relatively easily into the *Star Trek* canon.

It's still a little too early to say whether *New Worlds'* futuristic brand of real-time strategy is going to eclipse its rivals (or tempt the masses away from *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*). It's a certainty, however, that in the battle of the *Star Trek* titles, it's guaranteed to blow the competition away.

BEST BIT SO FAR:

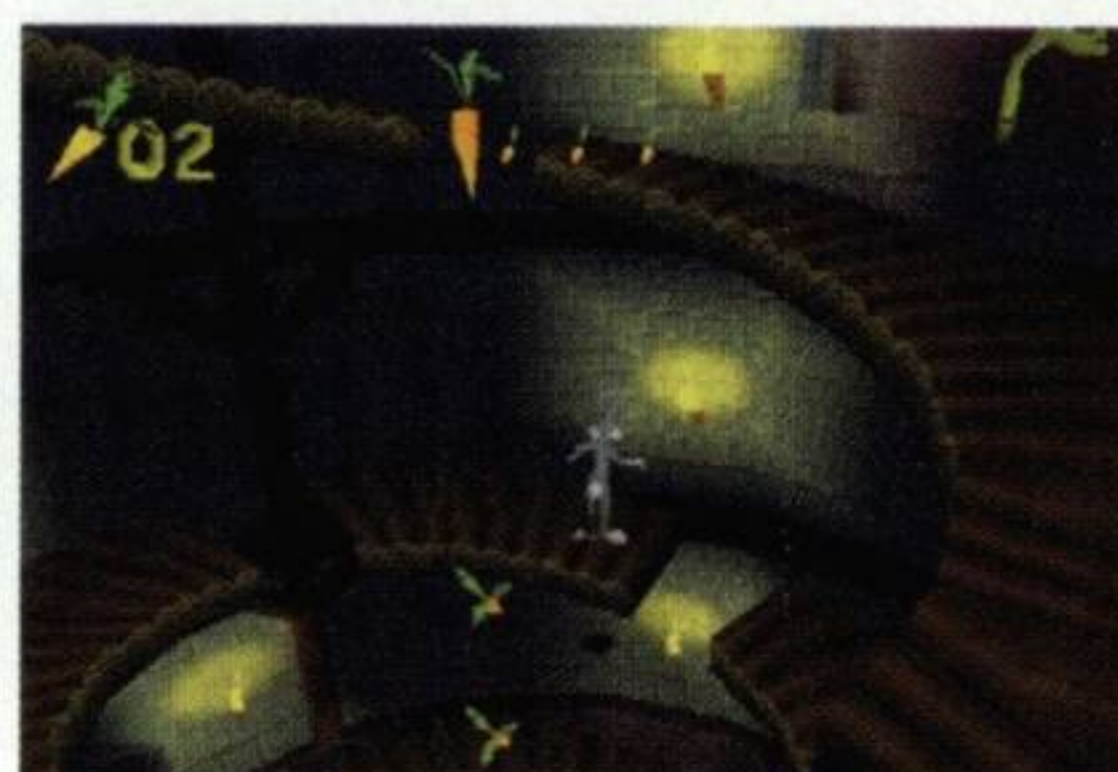
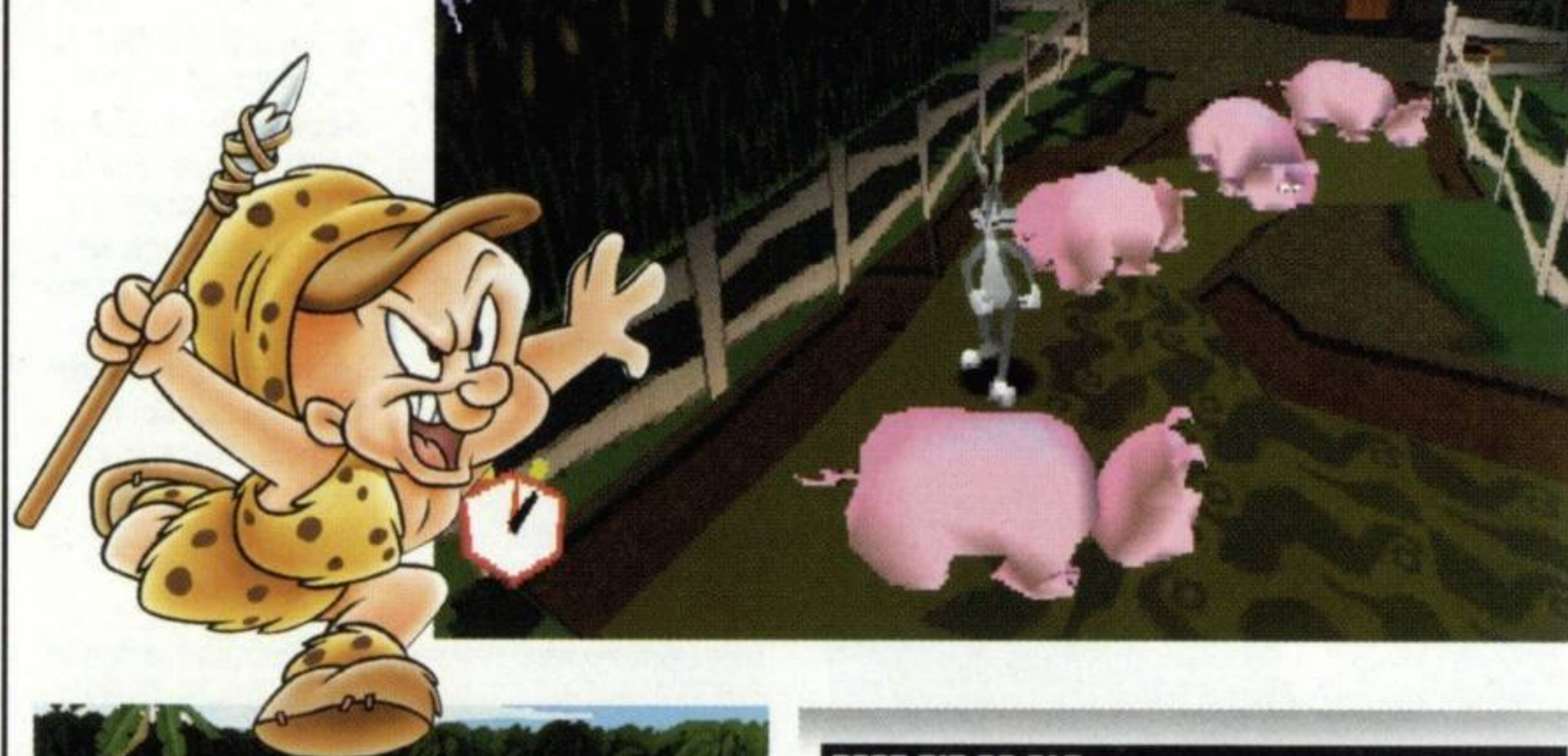
Kill them. All of them

By far the best bit of *Star Trek New Worlds* – or at least the best bit we've seen in the early preview code – is the battles. Having discovered your rival forces, a quick swish of the mouse will select all, and mobilise your units into battle, accompanied by a sweeping camera movement that presents the best viewpoint. Unlike *Star Trek* space battles, which are often tedious, drawn-out affairs, thanks to the enormous turning circles of the ships, *New Worlds'* combat is fast and furious. Groups of units run headlong into battle, exchanging phaser fire with gay abandon. Kirk would approve.



■ Blast the evil ginger pirate in a sub-game.

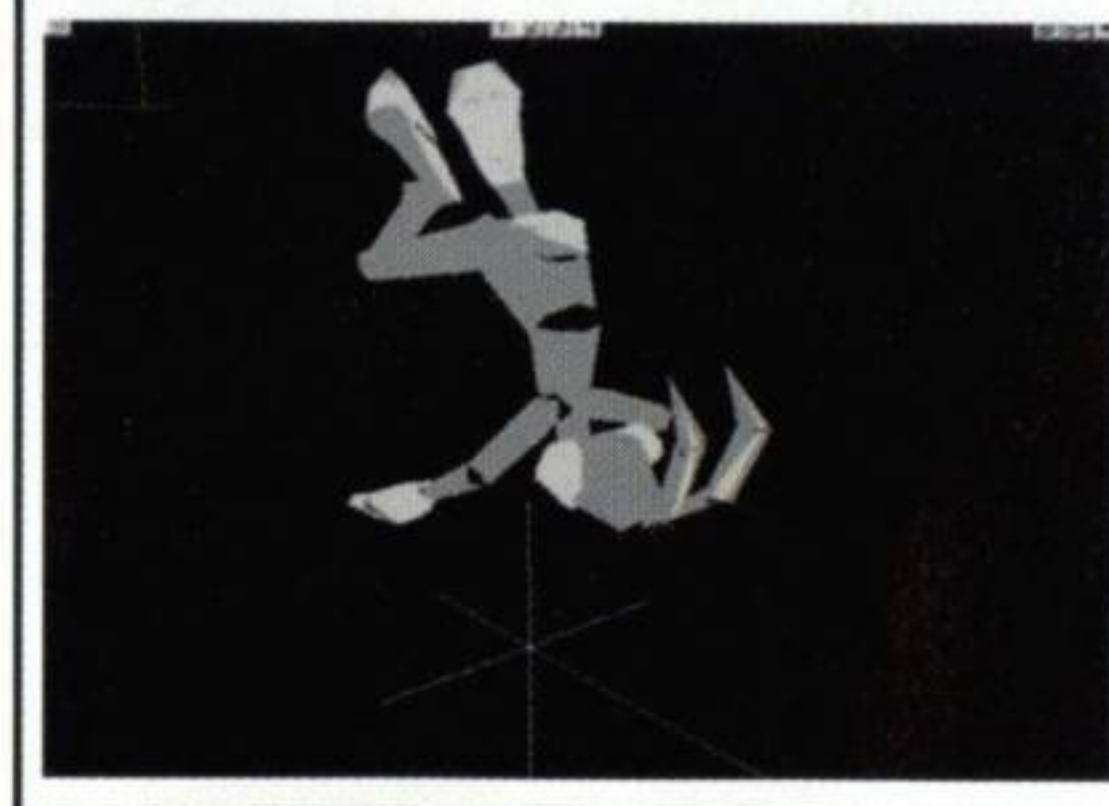
■ The stuttering wabbit hunter's in here, along with a tricky pig-herding puzzle.



BEST BIT SO FAR:

Introducing...

You already know Bugs of course, but take a while to learn his new moves. Obviously he can jump and pick up objects, but there's also a neat dive into a rabbit hole that enables him to pass under troublesome enemies. His landings can be smoothed by helicopter-ear assistance and he can tiptoe past enemies. If only the bunnies in *Watership Down* had been so well equipped...



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Behaviour Int** | Publisher: **Infogrames** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **July**

BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME

Animal platforming with Warner Bros finest

Disney might have annexed the hearts and minds of the world's under-tens, but for cartoons as nature intended – cartoons that even the Pope slyly sniggers at – you need to look to Warner Brothers.

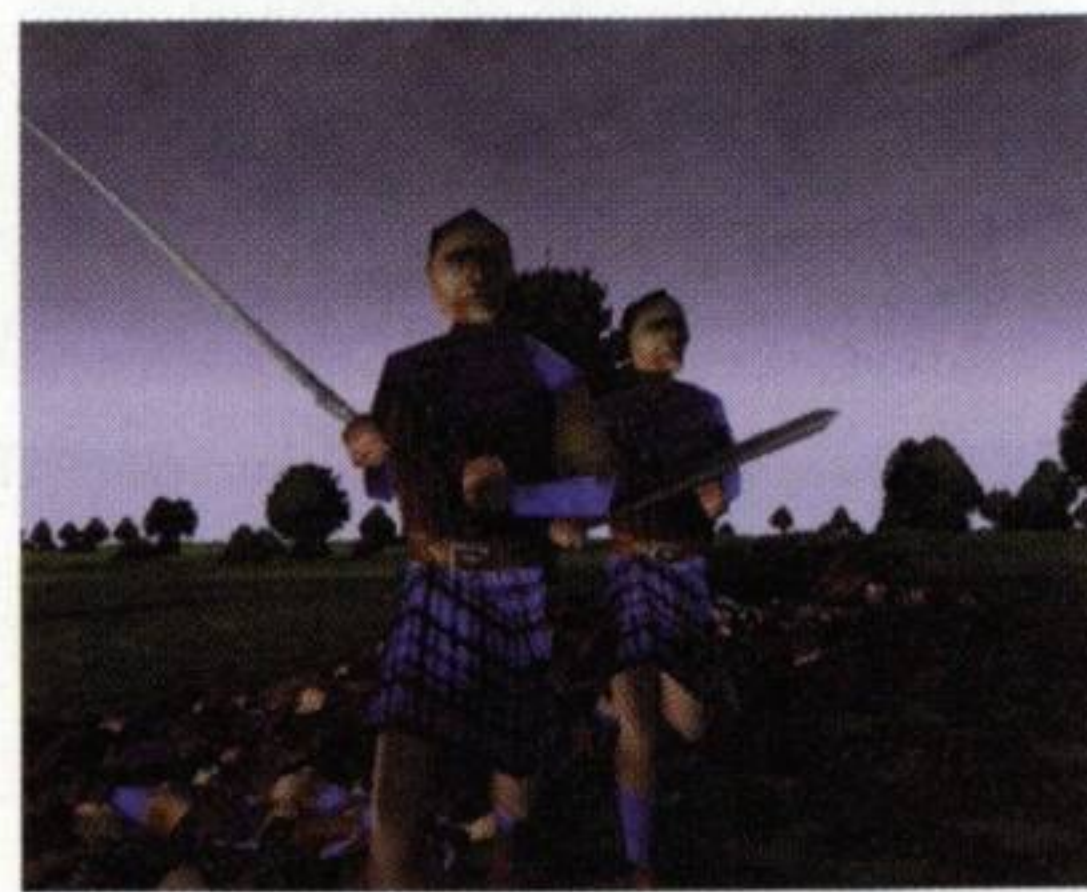
Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time might not be anything more than another 3D platformer, but at least it has the decency to look like something Chuck Jones would have signed his name to. Bugs himself is a fluidly animated star, replete with a selection of well thought out moves. Even better, the 22 levels have the off-kilter '50s appearance of the original animations and take in prehistoric, medieval, prohibition, pirate and future settings. Bugs' non-linear progress

between these periods is explained neatly away by a time-travel plot.

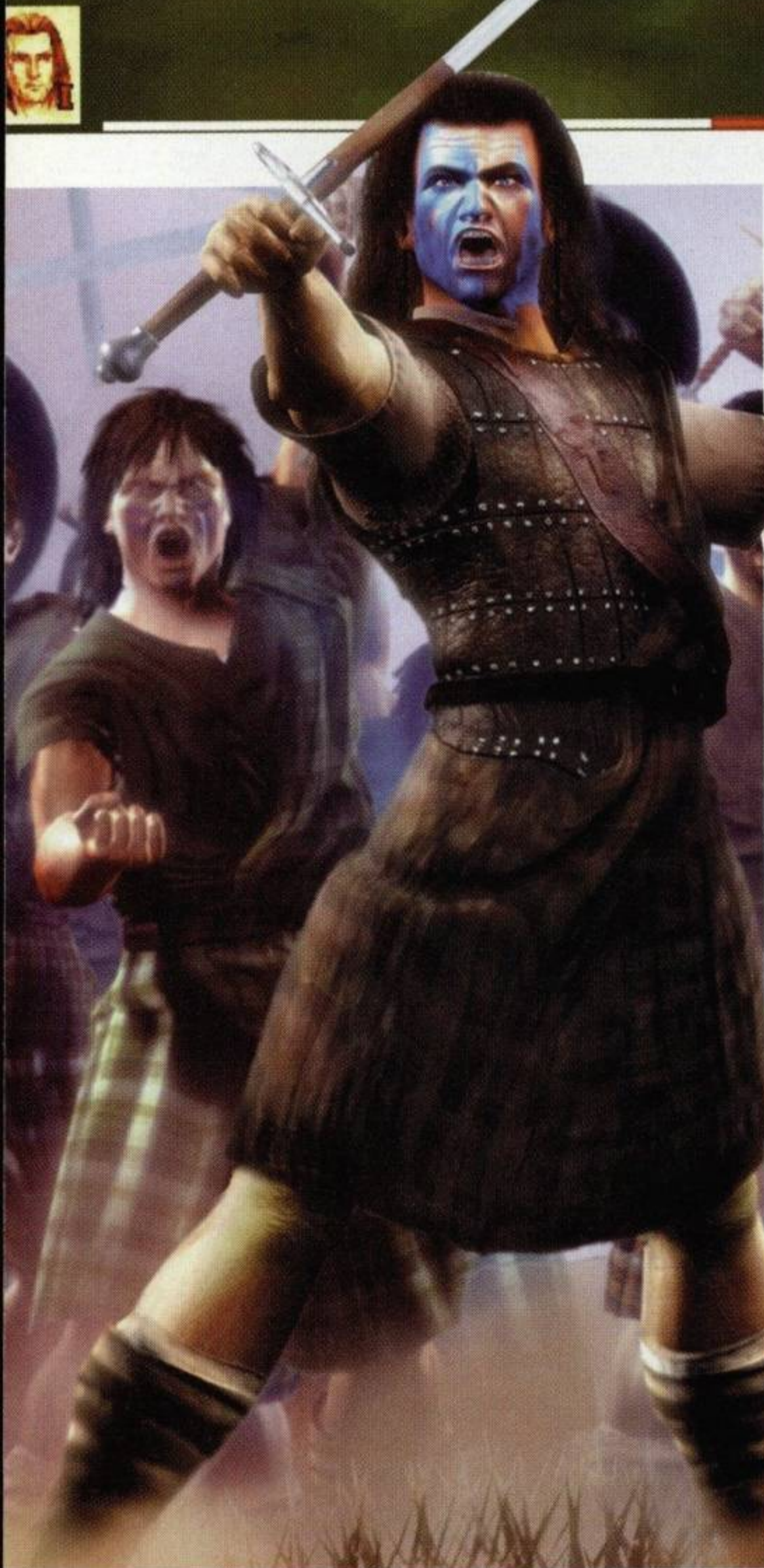
And there's a great supporting cast – Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam and Marvin the Martian all turn up – but really it's the platforming we're most interested in. Although the usual collecting and avoiding is very much to the fore, there are some neat sub-games (including a goat-riding section) and an emphasis on figuring out puzzles rather than just amassing carrots.

Given how often software houses try to flog their latest cutesy opus as "just like taking part in a cartoon", it's strange, that a few Game Boy offerings aside, Bugs and his friends have been sidelined by consoles. Let's hope *Lost In Time* marks their triumphant, wisecracking return.

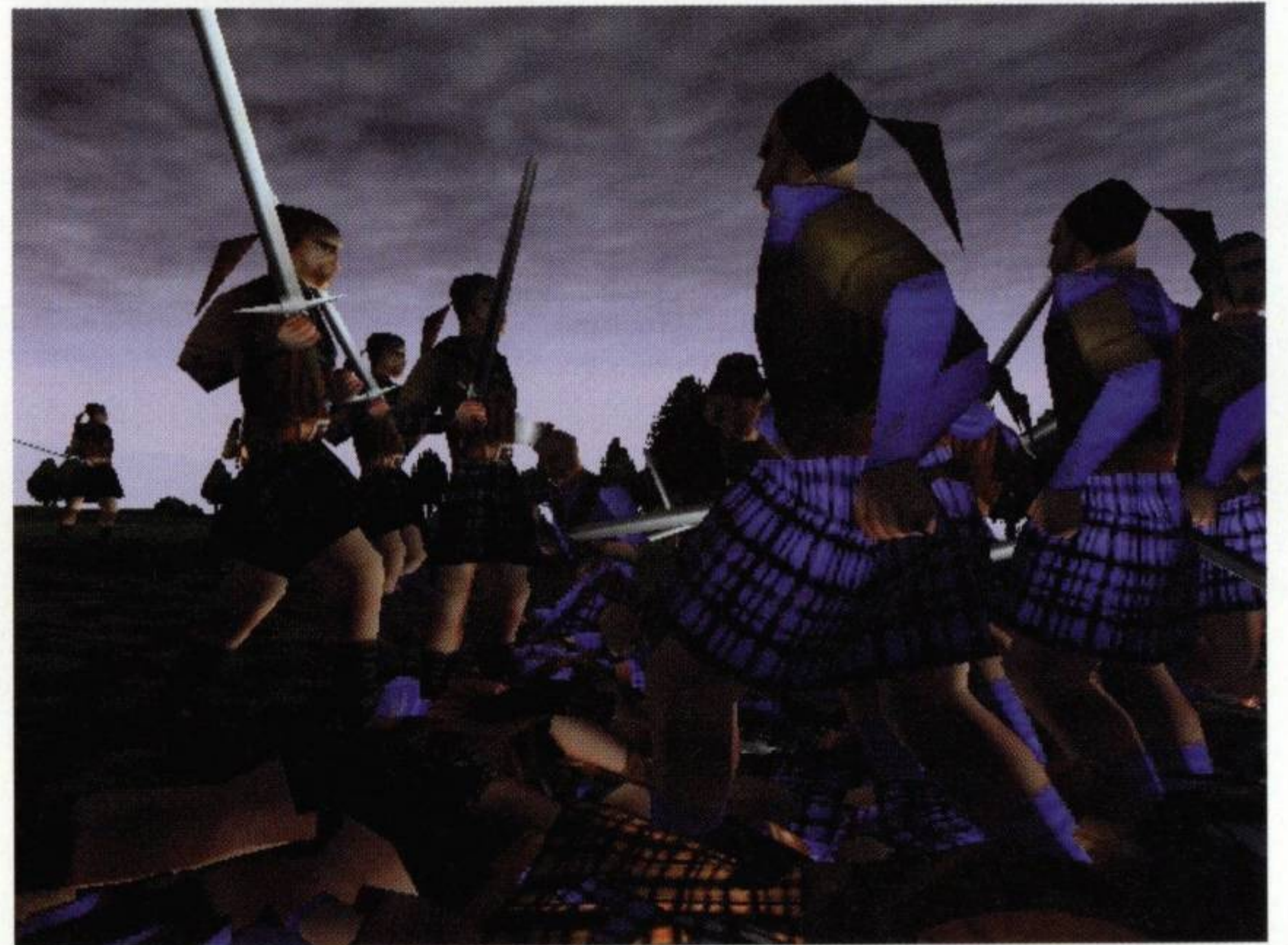
COMING SOON
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Because you're not moving little tanks and soldiers about, *Braveheart's* blood-spilling pitch battles have the potential to be incredibly involving and more than a bit upsetting when a trusted clansman cops it.



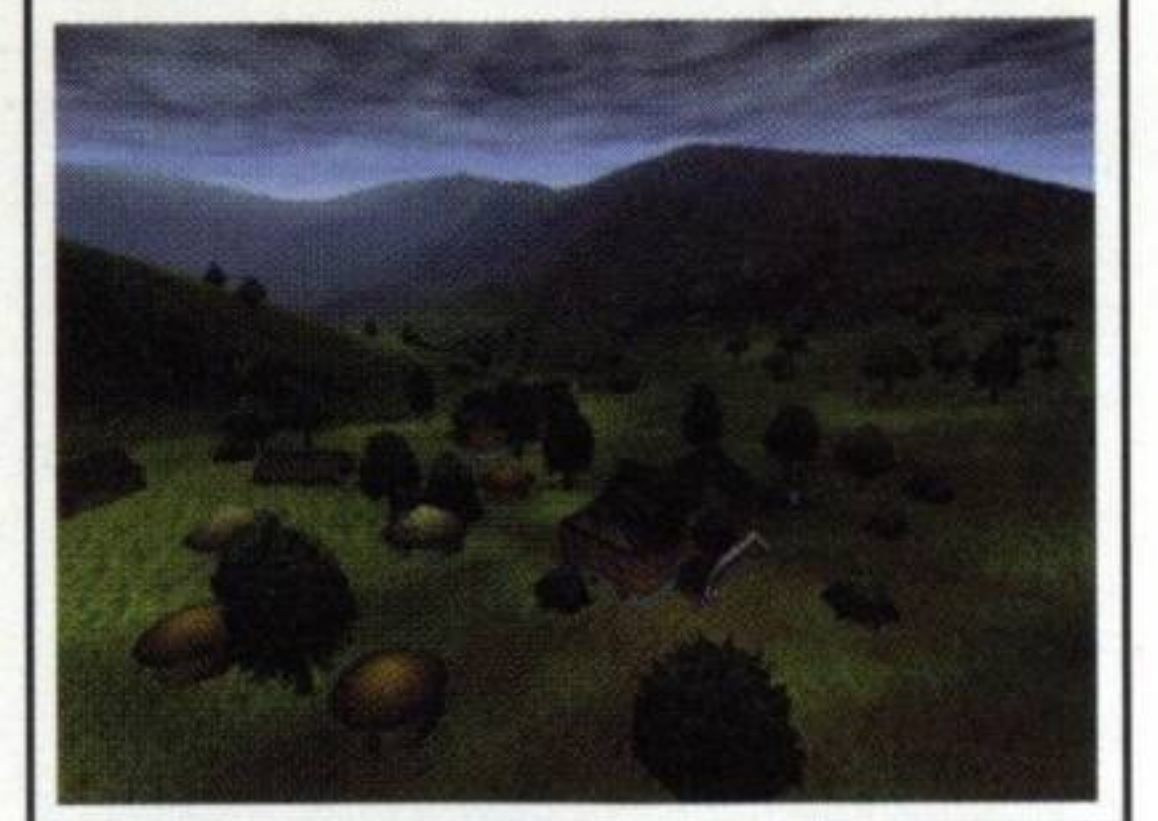
■ You'd think hordes of Scotsmen poking each other with spears wouldn't involve much in the way of battle tactics, but *Braveheart* takes full account of troop placement and on-the-fly strategy changes.



BEST BIT SO FAR:

Great view... aargh!

Braveheart's real-time 3D combat engine is massively impressive. The battles can take place in varying degrees of daylight, on a Highland landscape that's been accurately mapped to within 50 metres of our own fair isle. And it all looks so nice you'd fancy a picnic if it wasn't for the number of broadswords being swished about. The spectacular landscape plays a huge part in the fighting, and you can move the camera about to see enemy clans hiding behind hills. And then go and kill them.



there's a level of strategic complexity you wouldn't necessarily expect from 12th Century Scottish blokes with large swords. With no predetermined missions, your path to the Scottish throne (and the march on London that follows) is down to your bekkilt nous, creating a fine sense of character progression that could make other real-time strategy games feel like playing with toy soldiers and little tanks. Check out the full review of *Braveheart* in *Arcade* 9.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Red Lemon** | Publisher: **EIDOS** | Players: **1-8** | On sale in UK: **July**

BRAVEHEART

Highland views spoilt by widespread carnage in real home of the big Mac.

Don't think that the most interesting thing about *Braveheart* the game is Mel Gibson's brass rubbing-like face on the front of the box. Take a metaphorical peak under the kilt and full-on 3D sporrán of its warring Scottish clans and you'll find a radical, genre-welding game.

Braveheart dares to combine two of the PC's most cherished game styles – the real-time combat of games like *Command & Conquer* and the empire-building strategy of titles in the *Civilization* mould. Playing one of 60 clan chiefs vying for the Scottish throne, you'll return home from huge, bloody battles – played out on the

realistically mapped Highlands – to management screens where you marshal the resources of your village, forge alliances and spy on the enemy.

Showing just how far the world has progressed from strategy games played on abstract hex-based maps, the consequences of your every decision are depicted in gloriously smooth 3D. You can watch villagers construct a fortress for you (and see it reduced to smouldering rubble by the enemy), before rounding them up for a night-time ambush of one of 16 rival clans.

Potentially the most involving aspect of *Braveheart* is the way that even the smallest skirmish has knock-on effects in the turn-based management half of the game and vice versa. The quality of the men you go

into battle with is a direct result of how happy you've kept them at home, through skilful trading and distribution of resources. Suffer a defeat and it's not necessarily just a few bodies you leave on a rain-soaked battlefield. Your whole economic power base could be undermined by the loss of a resource-rich territory or the breakdown of a previously strong alliance.

Political skulduggery on a level that makes the recent Scottish elections look like the preserve of suit-wearing jessies is positively encouraged. Form a new alliance with the MacDonalds down the road and you can find yourself being attacked by their avowed enemies (and one-time drinking partners) the McDougals. As with seemingly every aspect of the game,

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Can't wait for that new game? Here's when you can get your hands on it.

JUNE

4th	Bloody Roar 2	Virgin	PSX
4th	No Fear		
	Downhill Mountain Biking	Codemasters	PSX
4th	Rampage World Tour	GT Interactive	PSX
4th	RC Stunt Copter	Interplay	PSX
4th	Speed Freaks	Sony	PSX
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	PSX
4th	Castrol Superbikes	Intense	PSX
4th	Discworld Noir	GT Interactive	PC
4th	Duke Nukem	GT Interactive	PC
4th	Tomb Raider II: Golden Mask	EIDOS	PC
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	N64
4th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT Interactive	N64
4th	F1 World Grand Prix 2	Nintendo	N64
4th	Flying Dragons	Interplay	N64
4th	Milo's Astro Lanes	Interplay	N64
4th	Battleships	Nintendo	CGB
4th	Caesars Palace	Nintendo	CGB
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	CGB
4th	Dungeon Warrior	Infogrames	CGB
4th	F1 World Grand Prix	Nintendo	CGB
4th	Holy Magic Century	Konami	CGB
4th	Jet Pack Jack	Infogrames	CGB
4th	Maya The Bee	Nintendo	CGB
4th	Missile Command	Take 2	CGB
4th	Silicon Valley	Take 2	CGB
4th	Three Lions	Take 2	CGB
4th	Tom & Jerry	Infogrames	CGB
4th	Wicked Surfing	Nintendo	CGB
4th	WWF: Attitude	THQ	CGB

11th	Anna Kournikova		
	Smash Court Tennis	Namco	PSX
11th	Attack Of The Saucer Men	Psygnosis	PSX
11th	Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Platinum	PSX
11th	Croc 2	Fox Interactive	PSX
11th	R-Type Delta	Irem	PSX
11th	WWF: Attitude	EA Sports	PSX
11th	Aliens Vs Predator	Electronic Arts	PC
11th	Homeworld	Cendant	PC
11th	Lode Runner 3D	Infogrames	N64
11th	Superman	Infogrames	N64
11th	Bust-A-Move 4	Acclaim	CGB

18th	Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	PSX
18th	Grand Prix 500	Funsoft	PSX
18th	Rainbow Six	Take 2	PSX
18th	Soul Reaver: Legacy Of Kain	EIDOS	PSX
18th	Breakneck	Electronic Arts	PC
18th	Broken Sword	Sold Out	PC
18th	Conquest Earth	Sold Out	PC
18th	Lost Eden	Sold out	PC
18th	Need For Speed: Road Challenge	Electronic Arts	PC
18th	Outcast	Infogrames	PC
18th	PGA Golf '99	Sierra Sports	PC
18th	Soul Reaver: Legacy Of Kain	EIDOS	PC
18th	Test Drive Off Road	Sold Out	PC
18th	Rainbow Six	Take 2	N64
18th	Top Gear Rally	Infogrames	CGB

25th	Driver	GT Interactive	PSX
25th	Parasite Eve	Squaresoft	PSX
25th	V-Rally 2	Infogrames	PSX
25th	Braveheart	EIDOS	PC
25th	Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	PC

25th	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	GT Interactive	PC
TBA	Codename: Eagle	Telstar	PC
TBA	Descent 3	Interplay	PC
TBA	Drakan	Psygnosis	PC
TBA	Dungeon Keeper 2	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PC
TBA	Lands of Lore 2	EA Classics	PC
TBA	MechWarrior 3	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Torment	Interplay	PC
TBA	Ultima Online: Second Age	Origin	PC
TBA	Unreal Tournament	GT Interactive	PC

JULY

2nd	Star Wars Episode 1: Racer	LucasArts	N64
9th	Ape Escape	Sony	PSX
9th	G-Police 2	Psygnosis	PSX
9th	X-Files: The Game	Fox Interactive	PSX
9th	WWF: Attitude	THQ	N64
9th	Daffy Duck	Infogrames	CGB
16th	Kingsley	Psygnosis	PSX
16th	Point Blank 2	Namco	PSX
16th	Tetris 64	Nintendo	N64
16th	R-Type	Irem	CGB
23rd	Cut Throats	EIDOS	PC
23rd	Jet Force Gemini	Nintendo	N64

TBA	Blade	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Carmageddon Rally	SCI	PC
TBA	Daikatana	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Heavy Gear 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Max Payne	Take 2	PC
TBA	Messiah	Interplay	PC
TBA	Quake III: Arena	Activision	PC
TBA	Slave Zero	Accolade	PC
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Tunguska	Project Two	PC
TBA	Ultima Ascension	Origin	PC

AUGUST

TBA	X-Com Alliance	MicroProse	PC
6th	Premier League Soccer	EA Sports	PSX
6th	Re-Volt	Acclaim	PSX
6th	South Park	Acclaim	PSX
6th	Re-Volt	Acclaim	N64
13th	Spiderman	Activision	PSX
13th	This Is Football	SCEE	PSX
13th	Spiderman	Activision	N64
20th	Command & Conquer 64	Nintendo	N64

27th	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PSX
27th	Shadowman	Acclaim	PSX
27th	Shadowman	Acclaim	N64
27th	Antz	Disney	CGB

TBA	Civilization 2: The Test of Time	Activision	PSX
TBA	Duke Nukem Forever	GT Interactive	PC
TBA	FA League Premier Manager 2	EA Sports	PC

TBA	FIFA 2000	EA Sports	PC
TBA	Giants	Interplay	PC
TBA	Premier League Soccer	EA Sports	PC
TBA	Prince of Persia 3D	Mindscape	PC
TBA	Rayman 2	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Shadowman	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Urban Chaos	EIDOS	PC

SEPTEMBER

3rd	Alien Resurrection	ElectronicArts	PSX
3rd	Gran Turismo 2	Sony	PSX
3rd	PocketStation	Sony	PSX
3rd	Xena - Warrior Princess	Sony	PSX
3rd	Alien Resurrection	Electronic Arts	PC
3rd	Hybrid Heaven	Konami	N64
3rd	Perfect Dark	Rare	N64

10th	Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	PSX
10th	Eagle 1: Harrier Attack	Infogrames	PSX
10th	Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	PSX
10th	UEFA Striker	EIDOS	PSX
10th	Um Jammer Lammy	SCEE	PSX
10th	Half-Life: Team Fortress 2	Sierra	PC
10th	Middle Earth	Yosemite	PC
10th	Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	PC
10th	Navy Seals	Yosemite	PC
10th	Looney Tunes Space Race	Infogrames	N64
10th	Banjo-Kazooie	Rare	CGB
10th	Resident Evil	Capcom	CGB

17th	NASCAR 3	EA Sports	PC
17th	Pharaoh	Mindscape	PC

23rd	Sega Rally 2	Sega	DC
23rd	Sonic Adventure	Sega	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	Silent Hill	Konami	PSX
24th	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	N64

TBA	Age of Empires 2: Age Of Kings	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Black & White	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Command & Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Driver	GT Interactive	PC
TBA	Flight Simulator 2000	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Interstate '82	Activision	PC
TBA	Prey	GT Interactive	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Secret Of Vulcan Fury	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Starlancer	Microsoft	PC
TBA	Starship Troopers	MicroProse	PC

■ RELEASE SCHEDULE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HMV



■ After agreeing to star in *Ape Escape*, Des Lynam became even more popular with the lay-dees.

Games Insider

What these guys don't know about videogames would fit in a Mario Kart. That has just been struck by lightning. Hang on their every word...



AMERICAN EXPRESS

Chris Charla

Videogames are blamed for another US slaughter, but who's shouting loudest?

Another day, another tragic school-yard massacre in America. Or at least that's how the media is making things seem in the wake of the recent tragedy in Littleton, Colorado.

The media in the States has wasted no time in airing stock footage of *Mortal Kombat* and insinuating that the murderers may have been influenced by violent videogames and the rock music of Marilyn Manson. Never mind that the killers were avowed Hitler fanatics (the killings took place on Hitler's birthday), that they specifically targeted "jocks" (in America, the term jock refers to sports players, not Scottish people) and that they had easy access to guns and bomb-making equipment – videogames must be to blame.

The shooting in Colorado is an inexplicable, mind-numbing tragedy and it's perfectly natural to look for explanations. That the kids who did this played *Doom* is an established fact, and it is valid to wonder whether or not the game had any influence on their behaviour. But, with emotions running high, many in the media and Congress aren't simply wondering – they're pointing fingers.

Leading the moral charge against videogames is retired Lt Colonel

David Grossman, who made an impassioned speech before the US Senate denouncing videogames as "murder simulators", and – not to be dissuaded by irritating little things like facts – claimed Nintendo makes an M-16 automatic weapon simulator that it sells to both the military and schoolchildren. Even

President Clinton has gotten in on the act, dusting off an old cue card from five years ago – the last time games were under attack in the US – and laying part of the blame for the shootings on games *Killer Instinct*, *Mortal Kombat* and *Doom*.

Clinton, of course, will read anything his advisors tell him the polls want him to read, but Colonel Grossman has other involvements in the world of games. Last year, there was another school shooting in Paducah, Kentucky. This year the parents of the victims of that attack filed a suit against, to all intents and purposes, everyone: id Software, Apogee, Activision, Midway, Nintendo, Sega, Sony and the producers of the movie *The Basketball Diaries* (from which the killer allegedly got inspiration) among many others, blaming each for their alleged role in the shooting and asking for more than \$150 million in damages. The Colonel is a paid expert witness in this case and claims it will be "the Lexington and Concord of the culture wars in America" – referring to the first battle site of America's War of Independence – but it sounds rather more like the beginning of the Spanish American war, which was caused, in large part, by the yellow journalism of the leading New York papers of the time.

There are violent videogames out there. There are also people who commit horrible, violent acts. Is there a link between people who play violent games and commit violent acts? None has ever been established, despite scores of international research studies and after the sales of hundreds of millions of computer and videogames around the globe. That doesn't mean to say research shouldn't continue, especially on the effects of violent media on marginalised or disturbed personalities, but blanket denunciations made by a man who stands to profit from the debate just don't ring true to me.

■ Chris is editor-in-chief of Next Generation, America's most widely respected videogame magazine.



TURNING JAPANESE

Jason Brookes

Disco-goers have some interesting habits in Tokyo.

For those Japanese who tire of sitting in front of the TV with gaze firmly fixed on a collection of moving pixels or polygons (and there aren't many of them), Tokyo has a bustling nightlife scene that pretty much never stops. Most of it can be found in Roppongi, a neon-lit mish-mash of cheesy club hustlers, tragic '80s rock bars (full of American businessmen getting down to it), teeny disco clubs and – if you're prepared to look hard enough – the occasional cool dance club.

One of the coolest, and easily the biggest, is Velfarre, a vast, multi-roomed affair that often sees visiting international DJs whipping the enormous crowds into a sweaty frenzy. However, any modicum of credibility it may have had has possibly been lost forever, because last month the venue played host to the *Dance Dance Revolution* Second Mix National Finals.

Yes the latest incarnation of Konami's boogie-em-up coin-op is so popular over here that a nationwide tournament took place to find the "best of cool dancers". And the place was completely rammed with geeks.


This kind of thing is quite common in Japan, with the participants in gaming contests – this one being no exception – taking things so seriously that many dress as characters from the games. In fact, there are separate "cos-play" events in Tokyo, where truly dedicated game fans (otaku) pay homage to their digital heroes by making their own costumes and taking themselves very seriously. These are the kind of deranged otaku you wouldn't want to upset on an overcrowded subway. Especially if you came across one who thought he really was Hagar out of *Final Fight*. He'd probably clobber you over the nonce with an iron bar (while eating a whole chicken) and then his mates in karate gear would dragon punch you in the lunchbox.

Fortunately, Velfarre's merry band of game impersonators are here to dance not fight, and – as

Clinton has gotten in on the act, dusting off an old cue card

every *Dance Dance Revolution* fan knows – the secret to success here is the ability to pull off combos. In layman's terms, that means you have to make sure you don't miss any steps. For the 92 experts who took part in the finals, this was a breeze, until a Super Fast mode (implemented just for the competition) sorted out the John Travoltas from the John Majors. This proved a doddle for overall winner Minoru Komori who received assorted small prizes, including a step board (like he needs practice) and a piece of art from the arcade machine (worth a million yen to an otaku).

Crummy prizes aside, the real glory was commanded by the show-offs who managed to pull-off combos without looking at the screen, even swapping sides with their partners without skipping a step. The implausibly named Dance Jiji and Nop were the winners here, and claimed their victory by setting their dance to Paranoia Max on Maniac Level in Versus mode, with the one-player side on Hidden and the two-player side on Mirror view. It's good to see they've been putting their spare time to good use.

But enough of this nonsense. What *real* Japanese gamers care about (the fantasy role-players who live a double life as Orknaud from *Albert Odyssey 2*) is the recent news of the latest RPG from SNK, *Koudelka*, developed by a group of designers originally based at *Final Fantasy* developer Squaresoft. This new game boasts some stunning in-game visuals and some great character designs, but what's really got RPG nuts frothing at the mouth (and it certainly made me look) was the news that it's the first RPG to be set in a convent. In Wales. Aberystwyth, to be specific. So that's RPGs knackered then.  See ya next month.

■ **Right now Jason's lying in a darkened room, trying to put thoughts of Welsh nuns from his mind.**



BACKSCREEN

Neil Jackson

If you gotta go, make sure that you go boldly.

The highly visible publishers at the top level of the games biz seem calm and optimistic once more, but beneath the surface – here at developer level – the usual violent turmoil of panicked activity continues unabated.

After another month of uncertainty and cloth-touching, we're still no closer to finding out our fate here at Binary Asylum. Three or four individuals, myself included, have been made redundant in an effort to bring the salary bill down to a level low enough for the company to survive until the game is finished.

So, ever wonder where the vast amounts of cash you pay for videogames really goes? So do we. While it's true that developing a top game can cost anywhere in the region of a million quid, far more seems to simply slip down the back of the publisher's sofa, never to be seen again.

The world has gone bonkers – it's official. Picture the scene – small development company, now strapped for cash thanks to nearly 18 months of what is known in the product acquisitions world as "fanning around". It's working on a major PC title, licensed from a vast American conglomerate and tied in with one of the biggest-selling and longest-running TV shows in history. And because nobody (at least, nobody with control of purse-strings) can make a decision in less than the lifetime of a Scots Pine, the whole thing is looking like it'll fall apart.

Despite months of patient waiting, eager calling, frantic following-up and now thinly veiled anger, the runaround continues: the UK arm of the publisher loves us, but has little cash and has to pass responsibility over to its richer US brother. The US, it seems, has recently woken up to discover it has inherited a great game in need of some TLC and polish, which is in the hands of an ailing UK developer. Should it kill the Limey company off and try placing the source code into the hands of another developer closer to home, in the hope it can unravel the hieroglyphics and finish it off? Should it bail out the

UK developer, which – it could be argued – is only in this mess thanks to mismanagement by its UK sibling anyway, and get the game finished? Or should it instead spend the better part of £10,000 flying three Quality Assurance guys all the way from California to Bath, putting them up in a top hotel for two weeks and setting up a temporary Test Department in the hotel's boardroom? All these methods – and other, far stranger ones – are regular solutions to this type of problem, and all explain why your fave games cost so much more than you think they should.

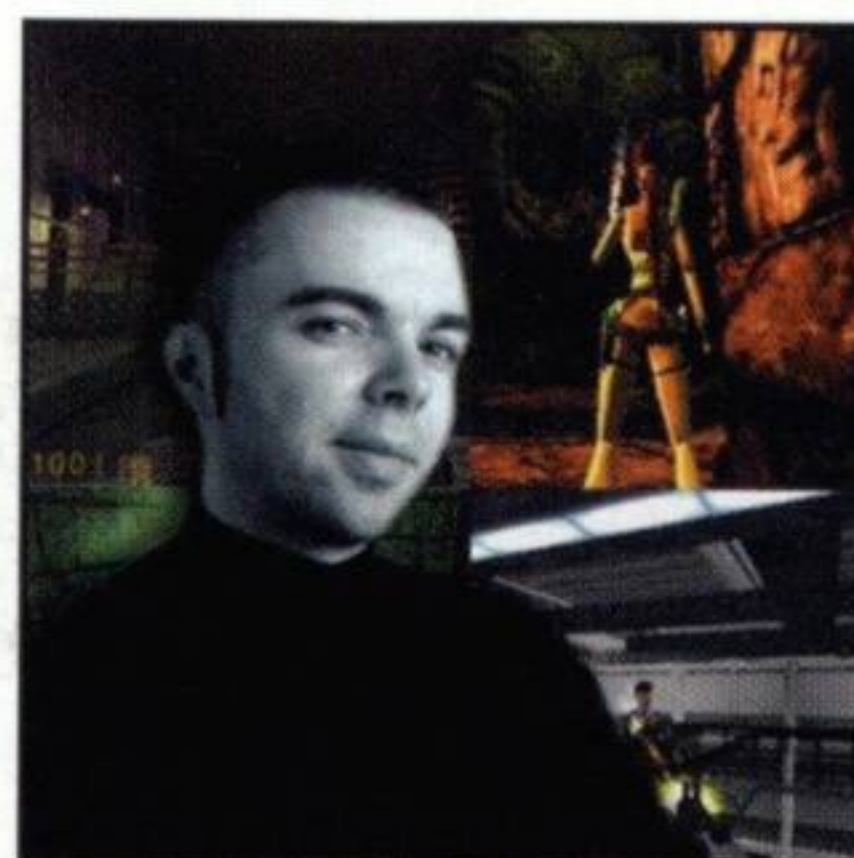
In Binary Asylum's case, the latter approach was chosen. Sure, having guys over from the States is cool, but it has to be the daftest way of evaluating a production ever known to man. Especially when you already own a UK subsidiary with these means at its disposal, all bought and paid for. Even more stupid, when you realise that the ten grand spent on the exercise would easily have covered the wages needed to pay the whole team, rather than a skeleton crew, to finish the game.

The trouble with such short-termism is that the unexpected always happens even before the benefits of your "patch-it-up-quick" scheme start to show. In our case, it's not just the fact that our bank-balance has been slowly whittled away while various well-intentioned software houses tell us they love us, but then don't return our calls after the first date. It's not just the fact that we're still waiting for a ton of in-game assets, like specially composed tunes and sound effects, to come back to us from the publisher for inclusion in the finished game.

No, the main problem is that, without any guarantee of future work once this game is finished, any programmer or artist with a brain starts looking for a fallback job. And with agencies digging up new opportunities each week, sooner or later someone in the crew will make the leap to something new, rather than risk running out of work in the month their masterpiece is finished. And once one or two go, the rest begin to realise it's a case of "last one out, please finish the game".

And the scariest thing of all? While we are desperately crying out for an injection of cash – nothing major, just around £50,000 a month for 20-odd people – the publishers all play for much higher stakes. Two publishers filed their quarterly accounts just days ago – one reporting the first-ever billion-dollar annual profit in the games market, with \$220 million made in the last three months alone. Meanwhile another publisher (and I'll leave you to work out which) reports, for the third time in a row, that it has lost around \$22 million in the same period. With boom-and-bust cycles this big, is it really any wonder that games are so expensive? 

■ **Neil is considering life as a freelance journalist. E-mail backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk to see how he's doing.**



THIS IS HARDCORE

Stuart Campbell

How that extra hour can be the making of a great game.

Gimme a "Hello viewers!" Gimme a – hang on, I've done this wrong.

Well, anyway. With the magic of Christmas still seven months away, it has been a slack few weeks for exciting new games. So uninspiring have been the numerous PlayStation games dropping through my door ("Ooh, another snowboarding game. Ooh, another football game using the WLS engine. Ooh, another Gex game. Ooh, another snowboarding game. Ooh, two new crap ice hockey games. Who the hell in this country gives a shit about ice hockey anyway?") that half of them are still sitting in their cellophane, waiting for someone to come round with a cattle prod, because that's what it'd take to persuade anyone with an ounce of self-respect to load them up and go through the motions of playing the stupid things – I mean, *Big Air*, what on Earth is the point?

As for N64 games, there haven't been any, and on the PC – well, the chap down at Games Exchange asked me if I'd played my copy of *Championship Manager 3* before bringing it in to sell, and I had to break his jaw with a display stand. Just exactly what kind of dullard loser did he take me for?


So – and here's the real twist – I've ended up spending the lion's share of my spare time this month playing *Game And Watch Gallery 2* on the Game Boy Color. You can shut up sniggering right now, because *G&WG2* is, in fact, a work of not inconsiderable genius.

Nintendo has made several attempts to bring collections of ancient *Game And Watch* titles to the Game Boy, and every one of them was rightly panned into the ground. After all, it's difficult to pack much replay value into games where nearly all you could ever do was go left and right and, after a five-second burst of nostalgia at seeing them, the appeal wore off and you were left

with a £25 paperweight that wasn't even very good at weighing down paper.

In this latest incarnation, though, Nintendo has packed the cart full of cute little secrets (museums, music rooms, whole extra games), which you unlock by earning bonus stars for achieving set scores on the individual games. At a stroke, games which were previously pointless, tedious exercises in getting double-figure high scores ("Ooh! I scored 23") have been transformed into tense, exciting battles. The adrenaline really kicks in when you try to reach a certain point in *Donkey Kong* (Original Version Hard Mode) and bank the crucial star that'll get you access to *Yoshi Ball*, or whatever. Honest.

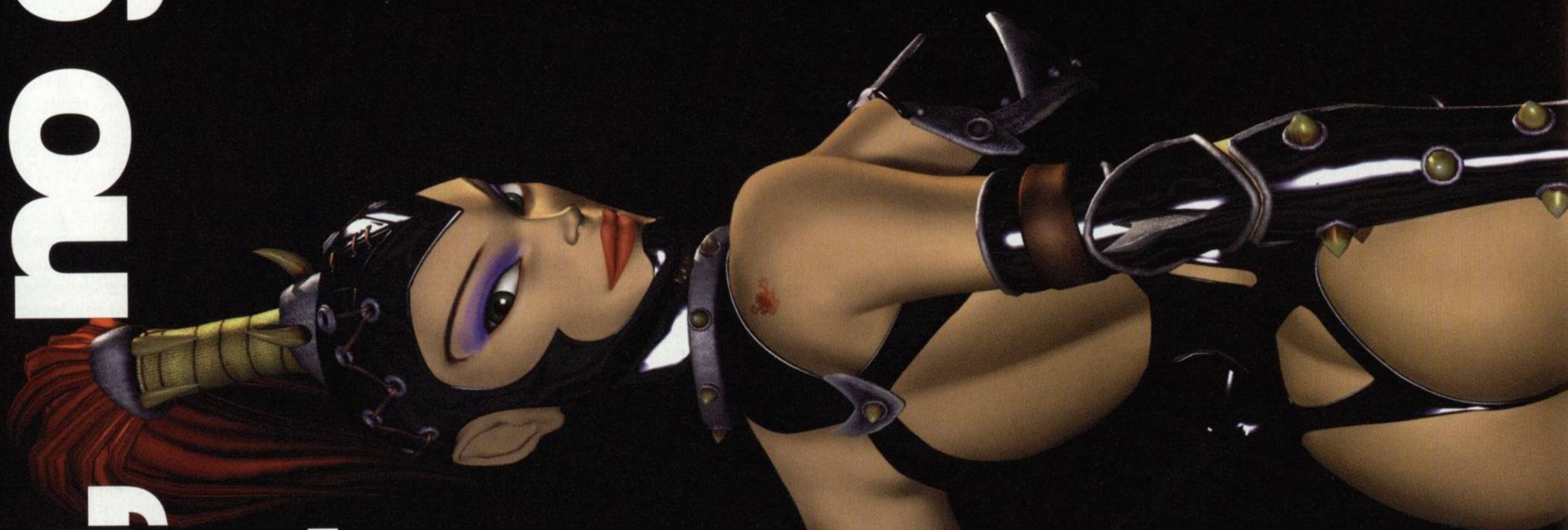
And since individual plays hardly ever last more than five minutes, and you have to play all of the 20 different game variants on the cart to get all the stars, you just never get the chance to get bored. As a play-on-the-bus Game Boy title, *G&WG2* is all but perfect. As a lesson in how to turn extremely limited basic gameplay into something hugely compelling and fun, it's nothing short of awe-inspiring.

My point is this: sometimes, the line between colossal success and idiotic failure is extraordinarily thin. Sometimes, a mere extra hour of thinking time put into the development process can turn a total stinker into a big chart smash like *G&WG2*. 

■ **Stuart is a freelance journalist and fanatical videogame player. He finds that the two make a perfect combination.**

No pain, no gain

Meet The Mistress. She works in a torture chamber. And her favourite hobby involves "small furry animals and untested cosmetics." A nice girl, then.



There's something in the genetic breakdown of the male XY chromosome that is responsible for the male libido. Not that a partner or female friend would ever swallow a scientific excuse for your Laddish Tendencies. Excuses, if anything, just makes it worst. A girl in a low-cut dress walks past. "Tsk! Anyone would think this was the south of France", you say, when quite clearly what you actually mean is "Blimey. I can nearly see down her top."

No, if you're going to stare at women you'd better have a pretty good explanation lined up as to what grabbed your attention. Luckily, the Mistress from Bullfrog's *Dungeon Keeper 2* offers several possibilities. "Surely that G-String can't be comfy?" you may say. Or, "Those spiky heels must play havoc on the shiny floors at Waitrose." Perhaps even "What's with the mask and pony tail? All her hair will have fallen out by the time she's thirty. If she hasn't caught a severe chill and been crippled by rheumatism by then, that is." When what you really mean is...

Well, you know.

Mind you, you'll have more than an irritated girlfriend to worry about if you do ever bump into The Mistress. She's a sado-masochistic expert in pain, you see, and spends most of her time in the uncomfortably warm Torture Room of *DK2*. Here she tortures captured heroes with the electric chair, the rack, and a particularly nasty contraption which dunks the victim simultaneously into boiling water and fire. And don't even think of running – with a crack of her whip she can unleash both lightning bolts and an icy freeze spell. She's got this torture business pretty well wrapped up.

Luckily for The Mistress, it's not all work, work, work. Being partial to a bit of pain herself, there are perks to the job of working in a dungeon. If there are no clients to service with her special skills, she'll grab five minutes on the rack herself. She even sleeps upright in a spike-lined iron maiden and her favourite food is raw chicken.

Sound like the kind of girl your mother warned you about? No. In comparison, The Mistress makes that sort of girl look like Little Red Riding Hood.

■ *Dungeon Keeper 2* will be performing all manner of sadistic acts on your PC in June and on PlayStation later in the year.





**“Let’s just say that I know
how to handle myself”**

Ryan Hart, Tekken 3 World Champion

Interview by Rich Pelley

Ryan Hart

He's the World Champion at **Tekken 3**. But he also likes cooking and dancing, which sounds a bit sissy. Mr Hart – come and have a go if you think you're hard enough.

Boss Brit beat-'em-upper Ryan Hart slapped down all comers in March to be crowned world *Tekken 3* champ. He even claimed not to have had time to practice before his victory, which netted him \$5,000. But what of the man behind this cool facade? Arcade cornered the 19-year-old and asked the questions that matter. Like, can he boil the perfect egg...

Hello. So, tell us about the other side of Ryan Hart. What do you do when you're not beating nine shades of shit out of Yoshi Mitsu, Eddy Gordo and the like?

I'm at college at the moment, studying health and social care. My plans are to go to university to study medicine and become a doctor. It's going to take five or six years, so I'm just hoping that I'll be able to handle it.

Don't you think people would be scared if they knew they were being operated on by a fighting fanatic?

[Not smiling.] It'd probably increase their heart rate and they'd die.

Um, okay. How did you get so good?

The first tournament I entered (and won) was the *King of Fighters '95* tournament when I was 16. After winning that I took part in seven *Virtua Fighter 3* tournaments and become the champion. Namco and Sony held a *Tekken 3* championship at Namco World, in London, which I won to become the English champion. After that came the world championships and I was invited along to see how well I could do. I won.

How did you get into videogames?

It all began a long time ago when I wandered into a minicab office and saw all these games with levers and buttons on and thought oh, I wonder what they are like. The first arcade game I ever played was *Golden Axe*. A few months later I got a Sega Master system and, after that, I was hooked.

Have you always known you were an above average gamer?

Not really, no. I was never especially good when I first started. It was only when games like *Street Fighter* were released that I started standing out. I learnt a lot from going down to the local arcade and watching other people play.

I'm pretty good at most beat-'em-ups. Or, at least, the ones I like. With enough practice, I could probably beat anyone at anything. They don't all appeal to me, though. I'm not a fan of the 2D games like *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat*. They don't seem to have that great a level of skill.

You're friends with Mo Imbrand, the *Tekken 2* champ. Who's best overall?

I actually came fourth in the *Tekken 2* tournament that Mo won. I only started playing it properly after the tournament, even though I managed to come fourth. We're probably as good as each other, now. Mo doesn't play *Tekken 3* at all.

Are you as good at the PlayStation versions of *Tekken* as you are the coin-ops?

The difference is pretty small. It's all in the joystick. If I have to use a joypad, then it makes things harder. I have to play the NTSC versions, because the PAL versions are slightly slower, which makes a world of difference to my gameplaying.

When you became World Champion you said you'd spend the \$5,000 prize upgrading your kitchen. Have you got round to it, yet?

Not yet. I blew some of it going to Japan to check out the latest coin-ops. I put some in the bank, and frittered quite a lot of it away. I am quite a good cook, though. I'm a man who likes results. It's exactly the same when I play a game.

So d...

Do I think that there is link between videogames and cooking? No.

Okay then. How long are you supposed to boil an egg for, eh?

Um...

Ha! Got you with that one, eh? Anyway. You won a *Tekken 3* coin-op, too. Is it in your kitchen so you can play and cook simultaneously?

No. No, I didn't put it there.

The Life of Ryan

■ This is the second time we have caught up with Ryan. The first was in Namco Station back in issue 5, when he was taking part in the *Tekken 3* world championship. At the time he said that he hadn't had very much time to practice, but even so, he went on to win, claiming that it was his experience that showed through.

The *Tekken 3* World Championship was his 11th games tournament victory. He has another championship in the next couple of weeks where he has to defend his *King of Fighters* title. And, well, that's it. He plays beat-'em-ups, likes cooking and is going to be a doctor. A regular Renaissance man.

We hear you're also a dancing games fan. Are you better than Steps? Could you be a champion dancer?

I like *Beat Mania* and *Dance Dance Revolution*. I don't think I'd make world champion, though. I'm not a particularly good dancer, but I do go clubbing a bit.

So, do you feel famous?

Only in the gaming world. People have stopped me in the street and said "Oh, you're the guy who...", but I'm used to it now. I'm not sure that the videogaming world is a place that you can be genuinely famous in. But it definitely opens the door for jobs in the industry.

Would you like to play games for a living if you don't become a doctor?

Yeah, but it would depend on what sort of money I'd get and what sort of games I'd be playing.

Would you be sponsored?

I was sponsored by Namco to play *Virtua Fighter* against this bloke from Denmark. After that I was supposed to take on these two guys from the States. Except one of them couldn't find his passport, and couldn't come. I beat the other.

So, does being the *Tekken 3* champion pull the lay-dees?

Not really. They don't tend to know what you're on about. I tend to go for more subtle approaches.

Are your *Tekken* skills something that you could teach? Could you be the Mr Miyagi to a new *Karate Kid*?

I've taught quite a lot of my friends how to play. But it's not that dramatic.

Are you hard?

Not really.

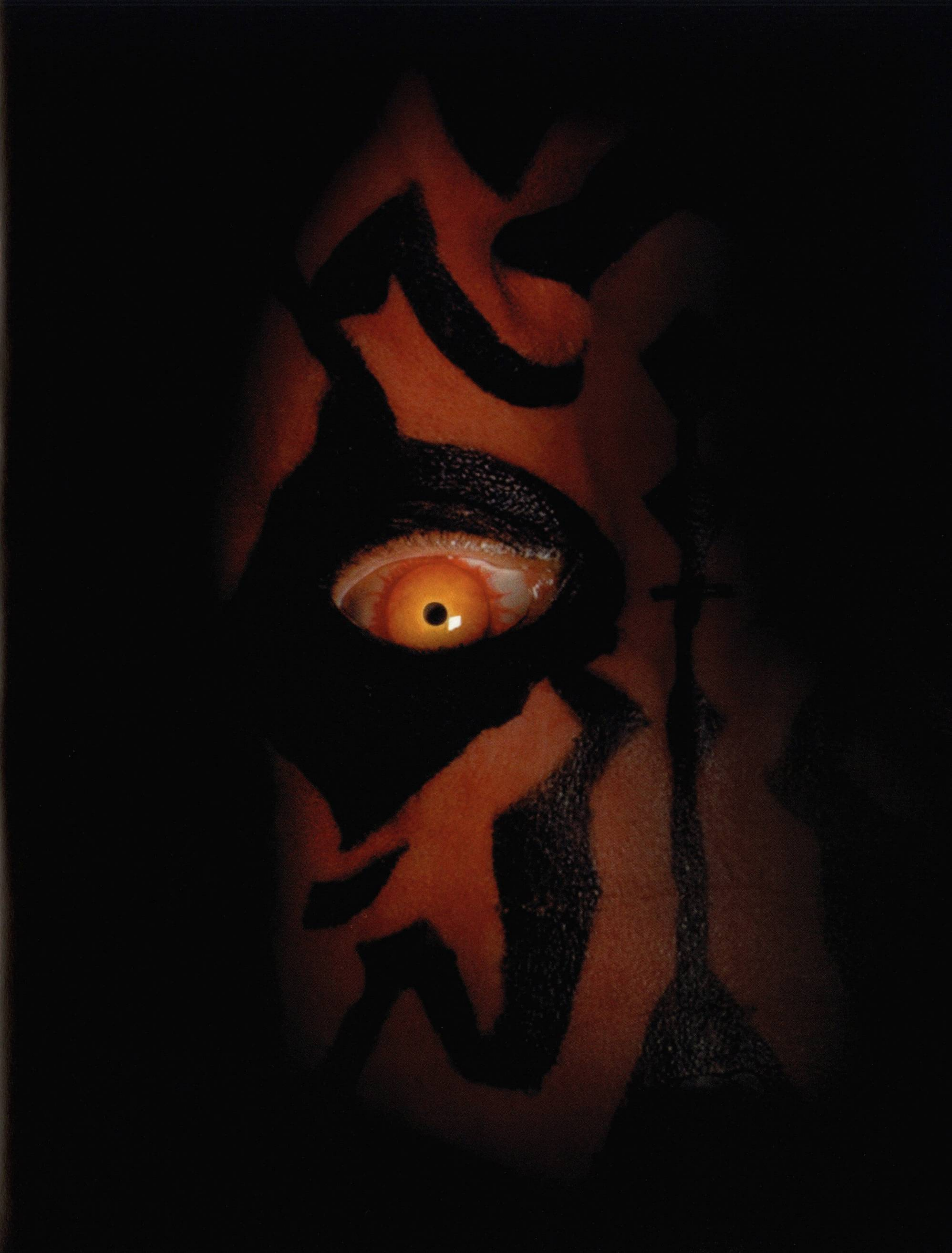
Have you ever been in a fight? Did you win? Did you kick him?

Let's just say, I know how to handle myself.

We're sure you do. Thanks!

My pleasure.





Wipe them out.

All of them.

STAR WARS EPISODE I **THE PHANTOM MENACE**



Live the saga – on PlayStation & PC CD ROM

**PC
CD
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SHOOTER SPECIAL!

■ Mr Bennet shot plenty of barns before he felt ready to take on the renegade outhouse.



GO AHEAD, P



PHOTO: KOBAL COLLECTION

UNK...



**JUST SHOOT IT!
SHOOT IT! SHOOT
IT! SHOOT IT!
IN REAL LIFE,
GUNS SUCK.
BUT IN GAMES
LIKE QUAKE,
DOOM AND
GOLDENEYE,
THEY'RE KINDA
COOL...**

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You should. It's 20 pages of videogame shooting fun.

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■ Play any first-person shooter and you're going to die. So have some real fun getting there...

20 GREAT WAYS TO DIE

Death | **Sam Richards**

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS ARE ALL ABOUT DEATH, WHICH IS WHY YOUR BLOKE COMES EQUIPPED WITH A LARGE GUN. SO WHERE BEST TO PARTAKE IN THIS GAMING CARNAGE? LET US POINT YOU TOWARD YOUR DOOM.

PHOTO: CORBIS

Play any first-person-shooter for the first time and pretty soon some bastard will have your kidneys for a trophy. You want revenge, so you play it again and waste a few guys before encountering a tougher opponent, who will kill you again, in a more disgusting, humiliating manner.

Thus runs the cycle of addiction in these kill-or-be-killed environments. If you fancy a piece of the action (or someone's lungs, liver or spleen) then here is our guide to the best first-person shooters available. Twenty games reviewed, rated and given the once-over with a sharp scalpel by *Arcade's* busy coroner.



Aliens Vs Predator
 ■ Fox Interactive ■ £40
 ■ ★★★★★

■ Combining the energy of two sought-after film licenses, *Aliens Vs Predator* features three rival factions (Marines, Aliens and the Predator) battling for control of a planet. The result is high-speed carnage producing an unrivalled sense of panic. See that huge green insect on the ceiling? It just ate your brain.

The game becomes frustratingly hard very quickly, so you'll need to persevere. Still, *Aliens Vs Predator* is a varied and exciting experience.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Those two-foot bite marks are not of this Earth, I'll wager. A nasty business."



Blood II: The Chosen
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £25
 ■ ★★★

■ One of the most violent and bloody shooters your grubby dollars can buy, this is the game for anyone who enjoys a good maiming. Which is everyone, obviously. Yet despite the appealing graphical content and ingenious level design, *Blood II* often feels like the same old wandering and shooting template. A good laugh, but it will struggle to hold your attention in the long term.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "He's spilt enough blood to keep the Blood Transfusion Service donor van off the road for weeks."



GoldenEye 007
 ■ Nintendo ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

■ Created by the people at Rare just for Nintendo, *GoldenEye 007* is the one first-person shooter to make PC owners jealous of their console-favouring brethren. The 20 missions offer some of the best entertainment available on any platform.

Stealth, shooting and puzzling are all equally important, making this so much more than a brainless blaster. The four-player deathmatch is also the best any console has to offer. Nasty, but classy.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "You only live twice, but not with a whole cartridge of bullets embedded in your groin."



Half-Life
 ■ Sierra ■ £35 ■ ★★★★★

■ Something strange is happening in the Black Mesa Research Facility after a nuclear experiment goes tits-up bigtime and sputum-spraying aliens start pouring through a portal in the space-time continuum.

Offers some of the most spectacular gaming experiences yet to grace a computer and is a contender for the greatest game ever created.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Hmm. He's been hacked, slashed and filled with bullets, his hair's crawling with alien lice and something's eaten his intestines. This fellow's been through quite a bit."



Requiem
 ■ Ubisoft ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

Ignore the quasi-religious mumbo-jumbo which makes this game on first impressions seem too much like a bearded RPG for comfort. *Requiem* actually provides a wider variety of gruesome ways to die horribly than any other shooter around.

This tends to compensate for its lack of true originality and deep similarity to *Blood II*. Kill with a clean conscience too – you're on the side of good against the forces of evil.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "He should have been wearing his crucifix – that supernatural thunderbolt raised his blood temperature to 350°C."



Shogo: Mobile Armour Division
 ■ Microids ■ £30 ■ ★★★★★

■ A surprise hit, the aim of *Shogo* is to find a robot suit, slip inside and blast the shit out of everything. You can even fulfil those childhood Optimus Prime fantasies by transforming into a vehicle. Yay!

The Japanese animé design is an original twist and the guns are bloody huge, although this can make for some confusing shootouts.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Even a foot-thick armoured suit couldn't save him after being rocket-cannoned at point-blank range."



Delta Force

■ Novalogic ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

■ A military shooter that dispenses with tedious strategy elements and lets you go haywire with Uncle Sam's finest team of rock-hard Special Forces troops.

Obviously there are missions and tactics (take two shots and you bite dust), but the emphasis is on action. Overcome the dodgy graphics and there's a great deathmatch to be found here, too.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Two bullets right in the chops. Now that's what you get for trying to be a hero."



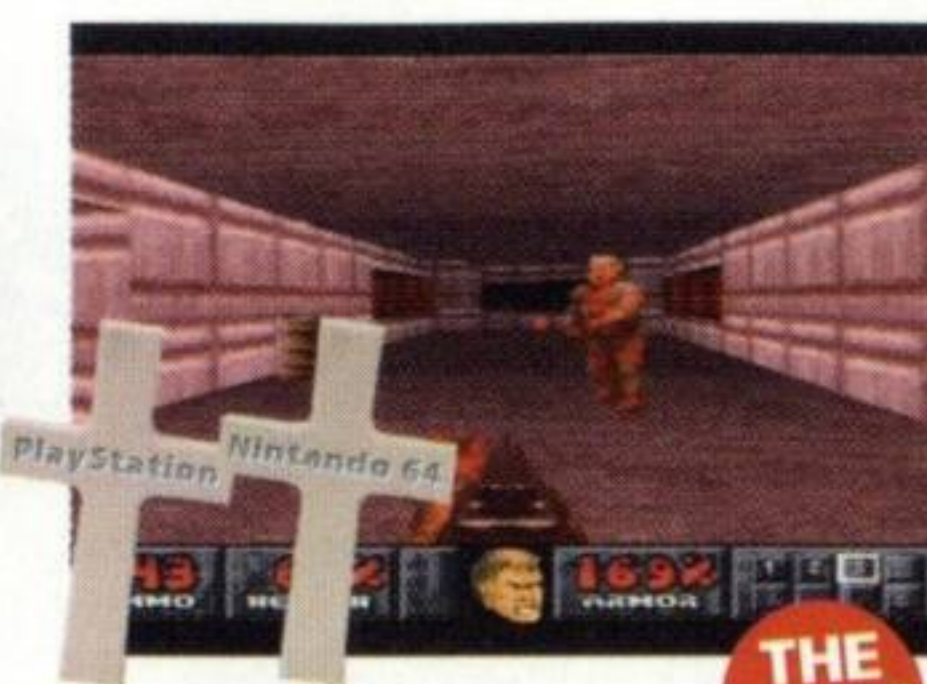
Doom

■ GT Interactive ■ £10
■ ★★★★★

■ The game that really started it all. Developer id's groundbreaking shooter is six years old now, and has since been surpassed by *Quake et al*, but taken as an entity in itself, *Doom* is still fabulous.

Distant howls, lava lakes and the slow descent into the bowels of Hell may have since become clichéd concepts, but *Doom* began the trend and it still has the capacity to put your heart in your mouth and shit in your pants.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "We found his stomach. It was embedded in the wall on the end of a rocket."



Doom II: Final Doom

■ GT ■ £20 ■ ★★★ (N64)
■ ★★★★★ (PlayStation)

This remains the best PC-to-console shooter conversion so far, despite its dated graphics. The sense of fear and excitement created in the PC version survives intact, along with superb gameplay. As with the PC game, there's another disc full of levels called *Final Doom*, available for £20.

The N64 port of this gory original master isn't quite so successful, but still worth a pop if you can find it at a budget price.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "He innocently opened a door and there were 20 Cyber-Demons behind it. I'd say heart attack."



Duke Nukem 3D

■ EIDOS ■ £15 ■ ★★★★★

■ Probably the first game to be labelled a "Doom clone", *Duke Nukem* introduced an element of gung-ho humour to the first-person shooter. Duke's macho asides, scenes set in a strip club and the ability to shoot toilets don't conform to everyone's idea of a great laugh, but it's still a mightily playable game. The whole thing can be approached with guns-blazing abandon.

Faithful PlayStation and N64 versions are also still available at £40 a throw, published by GT Interactive.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Strange. He was technically dead, but still threatening to 'tear me a new one'."



Jedi Knight

■ Activision ■ £15 ■ ★★★★★

The appealing universe where *Quake* and *Star Wars* meet. This is another hugely exciting 3D game, which picks up the baton from original *Star Wars* shooter *Dark Forces* and makes varied level design and ingenious puzzling its priority.

You don't see any of the main characters, just Greedo and a load of Stormtroopers, but the Jedi quest and lightsaber action make it feel like the real deal. Though recently surpassed by a new generation of shooters, it's still worth the budget price.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Feel the Force, my son, feel th... no, he's definitely dead."



Klingon Honor Guard

■ MicroProse ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

■ To get around the fact that the owner of the *Star Trek* licence won't allow anybody to make a game that involves annihilating the major characters, this is pure Klingon carnage. After all, nobody minds seeing those phlegmy pasty-heads copping some serious bullets, particularly when the beautiful *Unreal* engine is used to create the labyrinthine environments. The game has a few minor flaws, but overall it's a blast.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Does anyone actually care when a Klingon dies? Just lob him on the bonfire with the others."



Quake

■ GT ■ £25 ■ ★★★★★

■ The fast-paced original *Quake* introduced the concept of playing a shooter in true 3D for the first time. Featuring some of the finest level design ever to grace a computer game, this game is a masterpiece of intricately woven tunnels, sprawling castles and imaginative gothic architecture. It suffers from a perpetually grey colour scheme, but still remains a popular choice for fans of high-speed multi-player mayhem.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "You could always shovel him up and sell him as dog food."



Quake II

■ Activision ■ £35 ■ ★★★★★

■ The single-player game may have been eclipsed by *Half-Life*, but *Quake II* remains a visually stunning fantasy-themed shooter with arguably the finest weapons ever modelled. The Railgun, Chaingun, Rocket Launcher and Super Shotgun have since become staples of the genre.

Criticisms include the ropy AI and the ease with which it's possible to complete the game. But the multi-player deathmatches remain the most popular Internet gaming pursuit more than a year after its release.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "I'm afraid we lost his body somewhere in cyberspace."



Quake 64

■ GT ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

■ This is impossible to include in the same category as the PC version, since the reduction on to cartridge transforms the *Quake* experience. It's not all bad news, though, and still provides a thrill for console gamers as the epic game has been adapted to suit the medium. The multi-player mode offers only a two-way split screen, but it's still great, and the one-player adventure is addictive. Ignore the graphical limitations and go chew some broomstick.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Only his teeth and bones remain I'm afraid - don't walk into the hot slag is our lesson for today."



Sin

■ Activision ■ £40 ■ ★★★

An enjoyable, good-looking shooter, containing all the features you'd expect. Which is kind of the problem - *Sin* is simply too derivative.

Developer Ritual Entertainment uses the *Quake II* engine to good effect, and the well-designed levels are populated by a fine selection of ugly, murderous enemies. Unfortunately, it's all been done with more panache elsewhere.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "It would appear that after accidentally locking himself in the Bomb Room, he opened fire and then vanished in a puff of smoke. The twonk."



South Park

■ Acclaim ■ £50 ■ ★★

■ Pursuing the comedy deathmatch angle, *South Park* could have been hilarious. Sadly, it's quite the opposite as the few laughs provided by the wanton profanity and stupid cow-launching weapons soon descend into a blur of random action.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Oh my god, they killed the gameplay."



Turok 2

■ Acclaim ■ £40 ■ ★★★★★

■ See those dinosaurs? They want your intestines for spaghetti. Luckily there are all kinds of weapons littered around the place, from the surprisingly effective poison arrows to the legendary cerebral bore (which forces the unlucky recipient's brain out through its ear).

Turok 2 is more expansive than the original and the graphics are much crisper (particularly with an Expansion Pak on the N64), making for a more satisfying and frightening experience.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "See those pureéd remains he's lying in? That used to be his brain."



Unreal

■ GT ■ £35 ■ ★★★★★

■ We waited more than four years for Epic's "Quake-killer", and while the graphics didn't disappoint, the huge system requirements did.

It features set pieces of cinematic-quality, AI which see monsters retreating and ganging up on you, and enormous levels. The technology, however, feels distinctly unfinished - and only now, after many patches, has the multi-player aspect been sorted out.

■ **Coroner's verdict:** "Seems likely that they reached in and tore his heart out. Ruthless."

Add-on and on and on

■ Many PC first-person shooters suffer from limited replay value. It's sad, but there it is. Unless you can play over the Internet or connect your PC to a friend's, the multi-player option is useless. And once you've completed them, the single-player games generally hold little attraction.

Enter add-on packs. Usually offering a glut of new levels and weapons, they'll extend the life of your original buy for a fraction of the price. At least that's the idea.

Wages Of Sin (Activision, £20) - for *Sin*, obviously - does more by including both the enormous bug-fixing patch, and some seriously innovative vehicles in the shape of hoverbikes. Good stuff.

The *Nightmare Levels for Blood II* (GT, £20) is a similarly enriching package: loads of single and multi-player levels, new characters to play and even a football option. And of *Quake II*'s hundreds of add-ons, *The Reckoning* and *Ground Zero* (both Activision, £20) are the stand-outs in terms of great level design and new weaponry.





■ Money! Ferraris! Two young rivals! Miss Donna! The story of id Software has it all.

TEXAS!

Screenplay by | **Travis**
TV SOAP OPERAS DON'T GET MORE GLAMOROUS THAN THE REAL-LIFE TEXAS STORY OF ID SOFTWARE.

ILLUSTRATION: JOHN RICHARDSON

The story of the 3D shooter is the story of id Software, and the story of two men. Their story – a tale of computers, Ferraris and long-standing tension that would eventually drive them apart – would make a great TV script...

Scene one:

1991. A SMALL OFFICE IN WISCONSIN. NOT MUCH FURNITURE, A LONG-DEAD PLANT SITS ON ONE OF THE SIDEBOARDS. JOHN CARMACK, LEAD PROGRAMMER AND RESIDENT GENIUS OF ID SOFTWARE, IS ON THE PHONE TO ID'S PUBLISHER, APOGEE. BY HIS SIDE IS JOHN ROMERO, PROGRAMMER AND DESIGNER. BOTH ARE WEARING IDENTICAL BLACK T-SHIRTS AND TORN JEANS.

Carmack (ON PHONE) ...no, thank you, Scott. Gotta go. Bye. (HANGS UP, AND TURNS TO JOHN ROMERO). Well John, Scott Miller who, as you know, is the boss of our publisher Apogee, says our latest *Commander Keen* game is another shareware hit.

Romero: Hey, cool! The public sure love brightly coloured platform games, don't they?

Carmack: Yep, they're real popular. But I've got an idea for a game that'll really knock their socks off. Get Tom and the

other guys, we've got more work to do. Our next game is going to be in 3D! And you're going to get to shoot things!

Romero: Hey, cool! We can call it *Wolfenstein 3D*! If we work 20 hours a day for the next six months, we'll have it done in, err, no time. And if it's a hit then you might own that Ferrari you've always dreamed of.

Carmack (GOING ALL DEWY-EYED): Yes, John. A Ferrari of my very own. So, we'd better make sure *Wolfenstein 3D* is a hit! Come on, guys! Last one to invent texture-mapping's a poofster! Oh, and we're moving to Dallas, too!

Romero: Hey, cool!

Scene two:

SIX MONTHS LATER. A SMALL OFFICE IN DALLAS, BUT WITH A BIT MORE FURNITURE AND A DIFFERENT POT PLANT. STILL, ALAS, DEAD.

Romero: Hey, cool! It looks like our long hours have paid off! We've finished *Wolfenstein 3D* and it's the coolest thing ever!

Carmack: You're right there, ol' buddy. You see, I was always a fan of *Gauntlet*, and I figured that it would be great to do *Gauntlet* in three dimensions. It would be like you were actually there! I shall call this new

genre of gaming... the First-Person Shooter!

Romero: (THE PHONE RINGS. ROMERO PICKS IT UP) Yo, id Software? Oh, hey, Scott. No, I said id Software. It's short for "ideas from the deep." It's also a Jungian thing. Or is it Freudian? Uh... You'd better talk to John.

Carmack: (GRABBING THE PHONE FROM ROMERO) Hi, Scott. How's *Wolfenstein 3D* selling? Really? Great! (TURNS TO ROMERO) Great news, John! *Wolfenstein 3D*'s selling by the truckload!

Romero: Hey, cool! Does that mean we'll get more money?

Carmack: Uh, I don't know. I'll ask. (TURNS BACK TO THE PHONE) Hello, Scott? Does this mean we'll get more money? Excellent! I know what I'm going to buy! Er, how much money have you made, by the way? (LONG PAUSE) Wow. That many zeroes, huh? Well, that's great too, I guess. I'd better be going now. Bye. (HANGS UP PHONE)

Romero: What did he say?

Carmack: (THOUGHTFUL) Nothing. Come on, we're going shopping!

Romero: Hey, cool!

Scene three:

CUT TO THE OFFICES OF APOGEE SOFTWARE. THE SHAREWARE



■ After the success of *Doom*, young John Carmack and John Romero had the world at their feet.

GAZILLIONAIRE SCOTT MILLER, RECLINING ON A TIGER-SKIN CHAISE LONGUE, IS JUST HANGING UP THE PHONE. TO HIS SIDE IS HIS ASSOCIATE, GEORGE BROUSSARD. BOTH ARE WEARING IDENTICAL BLACK T-SHIRTS AND TORN JEANS, BUT VERY EXPENSIVE ONES.

Miller: Yeah, bye John. (HANGS UP PHONE) Damn it, George, I think we've got a problem. I think Carmack and Romero and the rest of them are getting itchy feet. They've had a sniff of big money and it's gone straight to their heads.

Broussard: But what will we do? *Wolfenstein's* the biggest hit we've ever had, and only those boys know how it was done! If they go, we're finished!

Miller: Don't you think I don't already know that? I might have invented the concept of giving away bits of games as shareware, then cashing in when people buy the full versions, and I might have made gazzillions of dollars out of it, but that's no good to me if Carmack and his friends do a runner. We'll just have to try and beat them at their own game.

Scene four:

CUT TO "JAY'S FERRARI EMPORIUM", DOWNTOWN DALLAS. CARMACK IS GAZING AT ONE OF THE CARS. ROMERO IS GAZING UP INTO THE SKY. THE SALESMAN IS STARING AT BOTH OF THEM.

Carmack: I like it. It's fast and it's sexy, and it's probably just enough to overpower my innate geekiness and love of equations so that I can score with hot chicks! What do you reckon, John?

Romero: It's... it's beautiful. So tall, so commanding. I must have it.

Carmack: What the hell are you talking about, John?

Romero: Over there (GAZES ACROSS DALLAS SKYLINE) The Chase Tower. One day I'll have an office in its glass penthouse.

Scene five:

CUT TO OBLIGATORY DREAM SEQUENCE. ROMERO IS SITTING

BEHIND AN ENORMOUS CHROME AND GLASS DESK. BEHIND HIM YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE OF DALLAS; HIS OFFICE IS IN THE TOP OF THE CHASE TOWER. THREE BLONDE MODELS COME IN, WEARING BIKINIS.

Model #1: Great news, John! You've been voted the world's best games designer!

Model #2: And the world's best games player, too!

Model #3: Is there anything we can do to help you, you know (WINKS)... celebrate?

Romero: Uh, could you get me a Mountain Dew?

Model #1: (INSULTED) 'Fraid not Romeo. Your buddy John Carmack's drunk them all.

Romero: Damn that John Carmack! No matter what I do he's always one step ahead...

Scene six:

FADE BACK TO THE FERRARI DEALERSHIP.

Carmack: (DROOLING OVER A CAR) This is the one for me, John. Hey, salesman!

Salesman: Look, kid. I'm having a busy day and I don't have time to be messed around by the likes of you. Tell you what, wash all the Ferraris for me and not only will I give you five bucks, I might also let you sit in the driver's seat for a minute. Do we have a deal?

Carmack: Uh, how about this? I'll dangle this enormous wad of cash in front of you for effect, then put it back in my pocket and head across the street to see if Dave's Porsche Ranch treats its customers with a little more respect. What do you reckon about that?

Salesman: How about if we forget what I just said, and I offer you a two percent discount to show there's no hard feelings?

Carmack: You got a deal. I'll take that one. Hey, John, quit staring at that tower! You gonna buy a Ferrari or what?

Romero (STILL STARING AT THE TOWER): Yeah, sure, whatever. I'll take the yellow one.

Salesman: What? You want the Testarossa?

Romero: Yeah, whatever.

Salesman: Well, you're the boss. (ASIDE TO CARMACK) Frankly, since they stopped showing *Miami Vice* re-runs I thought I'd never offload that one. So, what kind of business are you kids in to make all that money?

Carmack: We make computer games. Right now I'm thinking of quitting the company we make them for, and publishing them ourselves. Only problem is, none of us is any good at business stuff. It's a tricky situation, but if we did it right then there'd be millions of dollars in it for everyone.

Salesman: Tsk. So, let me get this straight... you need someone with a head for business so that you can get on with designing computer games while I, I mean some really clever businessman, rakes all the cash in for everyone? My name's Jay, by the way. Jay Wilbur

Scene seven:

FADE TO THE NEW ID OFFICES, ONE YEAR LATER. WELL-DESIGNED, WITH EXPENSIVE FURNITURE AND AN ARRAY OF WELL-MAINTAINED TROPICAL PLANTS. JAY WILBUR IS TALKING TO CARMACK, WITH A LOT OF SHOUTING GOING ON IN THE NEXT OFFICE.

Wilbur: So, John. How's *Doom* coming along?

Carmack: Great! This new graphics technology I've invented means we can have 3D levels that make *Wolfenstein's* look like Lego. And I'm putting in network code so that people can play *Doom* against each other! And I'm leaving the system nice and open so that people can make their own levels if they want to! Cool or what? We'd be doing even better if Tom and Adrian, two of our most highly valued co-designers and programmers, weren't fighting with each other all the time.

Wilbur: Well, as long as

Romero: (BURSTING THROUGH DOOR)

John! Jay! Tom's just quit! Adrian drew a wiggly line down his forehead while he was asleep to make him look like a Klingon, and he went mental when he looked in a mirror! He yelled at Adrian, Adrian yelled back, then Tom said he was leaving! I don't think he's coming back; he took his Dakh'tar with him!

Wilbur: Shit! Still, is *Doom* coming along okay?

Romero: Uh, sure.

Wilbur: Great! I'm sure Tom will find somewhere to go, but we've got a game to finish! Come on, back to work! Oh, and John?

Romero: Yeah?

Wilbur: We need some publicity. Do you think you could do some press interviews? Maybe grow your hair long as well. It can be your "thing" so everyone remembers you.

Romero: Okay. Anything else?

Wilbur: Do you think you could start referring yourself as just Romero? It sounds a whole lot cooler. Oh, and if you could learn some gangsta talk, that would be great.

Romero: Uh, you mean, 'sup homey? You lookin' at my bitch?

Wilbur: Perfect! Keep that rockstar act up! Now, let's finish *Doom*!

Scene eight:

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE OFFICES OF APOGEE.

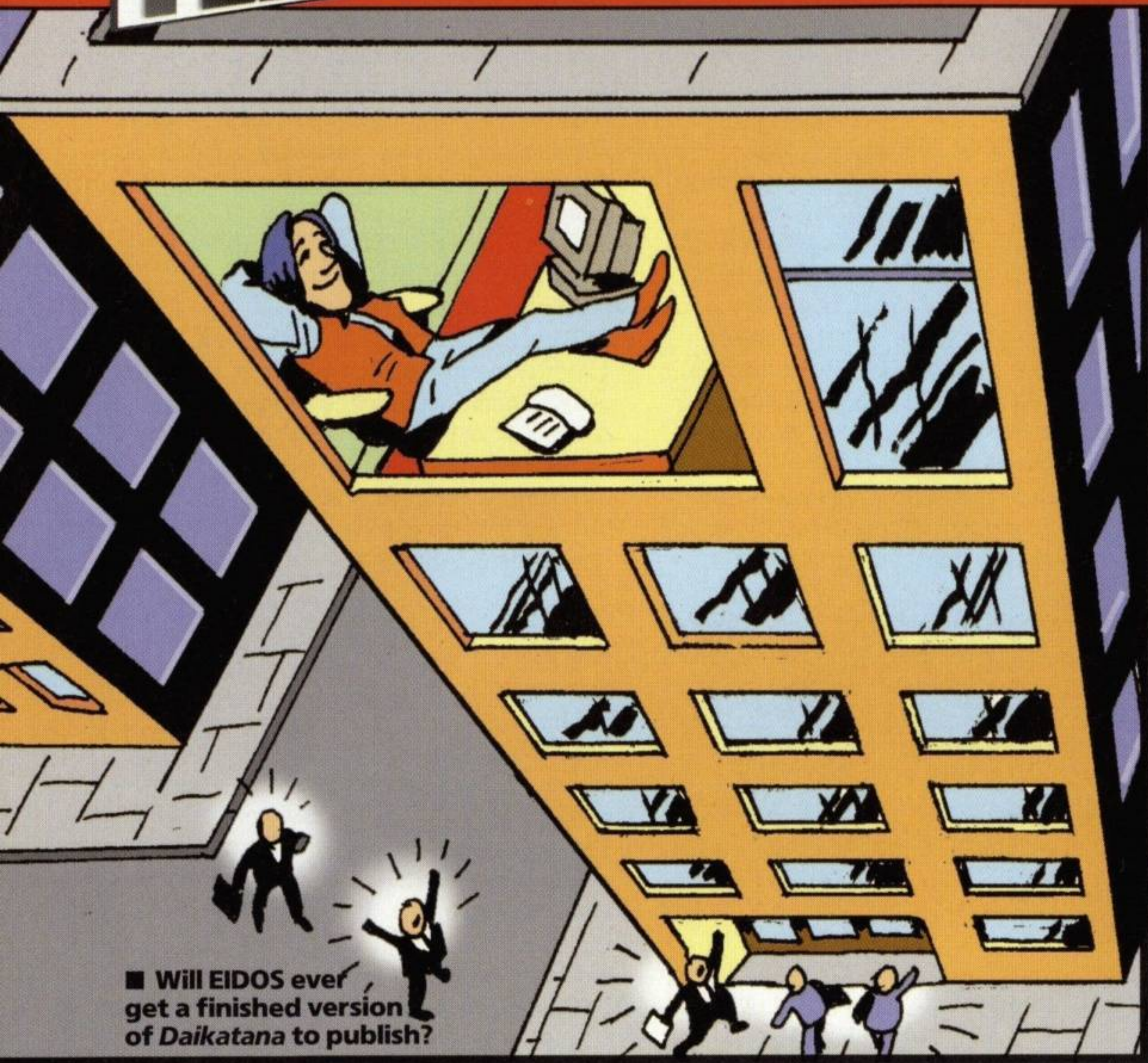
Miller: So George, what you're telling me is that one whole year down the line, we still haven't found anyone to make our very own *Wolfenstein* and beat those id boys?

Broussard: Well, not as such, Scott. We've got a load of programmers, but they're not sure what to do. If only we could lay our hands on just one member of id Software. Hang on who's that at the door?

Tom Hall: (RUNS GASPING INTO ROOM, THEN THROWS HIMSELF ON THE FLOOR) George! Scott! It's been

■ But could their friendship survive the pressure of success?





■ Will EIDOS ever get a finished version of *Daikatana* to publish?

terrible! That nasty Adrian has been so horrible to me! I've just walked out of id; it was the only thing my honour would allow me to do! Can I come work with you guys?

Miller: Well, Tom, I think that could be arranged. (TURNS AND LOOKS INTO CAMERA) At last, the final piece falls into place! First we will make *Rise of the Triad* and trample id into the ground, and then we shall wipe them out with my master plan: *Duke Nukem 3D*! Ah ha ha! Ah ha ha ha ha haaaaa!

Scene nine:

THREE YEARS LATER. THE ID OFFICES. MUCH THE SAME AS THEY WERE, BUT THE SHELVES ARE NOW LINED WITH ASSORTED "GAME OF THE YEAR" AWARDS. AN ANNOYED CARMACK IS PACING UP AND DOWN, WHILE MISS DONNA, ID'S OFFICE MOM, STANDS NEARBY, NERVOUS AND HOLDING A TRAY OF SOFT DRINKS.

Carmack: Jesus Christ! Where's Romero? *Quake's* supposed to be finished today, and I'm still waiting for him to come up with a storyline and all of his levels! What am I going to do, Miss Donna?

Miss Donna: There now, John. It's nothing a nice can of Dr Pepper won't fix. Here you are, now why don't you sit down and tell Miss Donna all about it?

Carmack: Oh, Miss Donna, I'm so glad we hired you to be our office Mom. It's just that Romero seems to be taking this whole rock star act too seriously. We've done well so far; we managed to smack down *Duke Nukem 3D* with the *Quake* test release and we're far way ahead of everyone else in the business. But John's not pulling his weight! I sometimes think he

spends more time doing interviews, deathmatching and washing his hair than he does contributing to the game. I mean, look at these death messages he wrote for the deathmatch: "Player accepts Player's shaft"; "Player rides Player's rocket"; and "Player pierces Player's ringpiece with his throbbing cannon".

Miss Donna: What? What was that last one?

Carmack: It doesn't matter, we're not using it. I don't know, maybe John and I just don't want the same things any more. Maybe he and I should...

Romero: (SWAGGERING INTO ROOM) Yo, homeys, s'happnin'? How's my hair chillin'? Still long and shiny? Maaan, that's real baad-aaaass hair, y'dig? Whoops, gotta split this joint! I'm



■ And, with *Quake III: Arena*, will John Carmack create the world's best game? Stay tuned...

wrapping an interview in five.
Carmack: John, what the hell are you talking about? And what about that storyline for *Quake*, and all those levels?

Romero: Man, you so tight you could be a stunt double fo' a duck's ass! (TOSSES CARMACK A ZIP DISK) There you go, now I'm outta here!

Carmack: Stop right there, Romero! I've had enough of this attitude of yours! I've been doing all the hard work and all you seem to do is pretend to be Snoop Doggy Dogg! Well, that's it! We're finished! You resign!

Romero: Uh, what? Surely you mean, I resign?

Carmack: Well, I'm sorry to see you go. Bye then!

Romero: Uh, hold on... did I just say that? Well, I'm outta here anyway! I'm going to set up my own company, and I'm going to call it Ion Storm, which means a stream of positive particles escaping from a black hole. Get it? Oh, screw you. I've got an idea for a much better game than *Quake*, anyway. (EXITS)

Scene ten:

ONE WEEK LATER IN ID'S OFFICES. JAY WILBUR BUZZES JOHN CARMACK ON THE INTERCOM.

Wilbur: John, I've got a bunch of developers carrying big bags of cash here to see you. They all want to give you huge amounts of money to license the *Quake* engine. Yeah, even your old friends at 3D Realms, even though they're working on their own *Quake*-killer by the name of *Prey*. Shall I send them in?

Carmack: Two minutes, Jay. (TO ROMERO, ON THE TELEPHONE) Yes, John, you can come and pick up that hairdryer you left. We'll leave it on reception for you. Was there anything else?

Romero: Um, can I license the *Quake* engine, too? I can pay; this new company called EIDOS has agreed to give me loads of money to develop some games, so Tom Hall, me and this guy Todd are going to do just that! We're going to live in the Chase Tower and make piles of money, but

it'll be easier if you let us use the *Quake* engine. Whaddya say? Buddy? Hey? Whaddya say?

Carmack: Oh, all right.

Romero: Hey, cool! We'll have *Daikatana* finished within a year! No hard feelings?

Carmack: No hard feelings. Bye, then, John.

Romero: Bye. Hey, last time you saw me, how was my hair looking by the way? Maybe I should go get the split ends seen to...

Carmack: (PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND RESUMES CONVERSATION WITH WILBUR ON INTERCOM): Jay, do you want to show these gentlemen and their money in?

FADES TO BLACK. END.

THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL EVENTS OR REAL PEOPLE, ALIVE OR DEAD, IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

To be continued...

It's a fascinating story, and - like all the best soaps - it's nowhere near over yet...



John Carmack went on with id to produce *Quake II* and is currently putting the final touches to *Quake III: Arena*. He now owns a large number of Ferraris.



John Romero is still working on *Daikatana*, which will probably be finished one day. His hair is still long and shiny.



Tom Hall is working on *Anachronox*. It's expected to be one of the best games ever; as long as EIDOS

doesn't move in before it's finished and shut Ion Storm down.



Jay Wilbur retired soon after Romero left id. Not long after, he un-retired to act as Imperial Advisor to Epic Megagames and mastermind the release of *Unreal*.



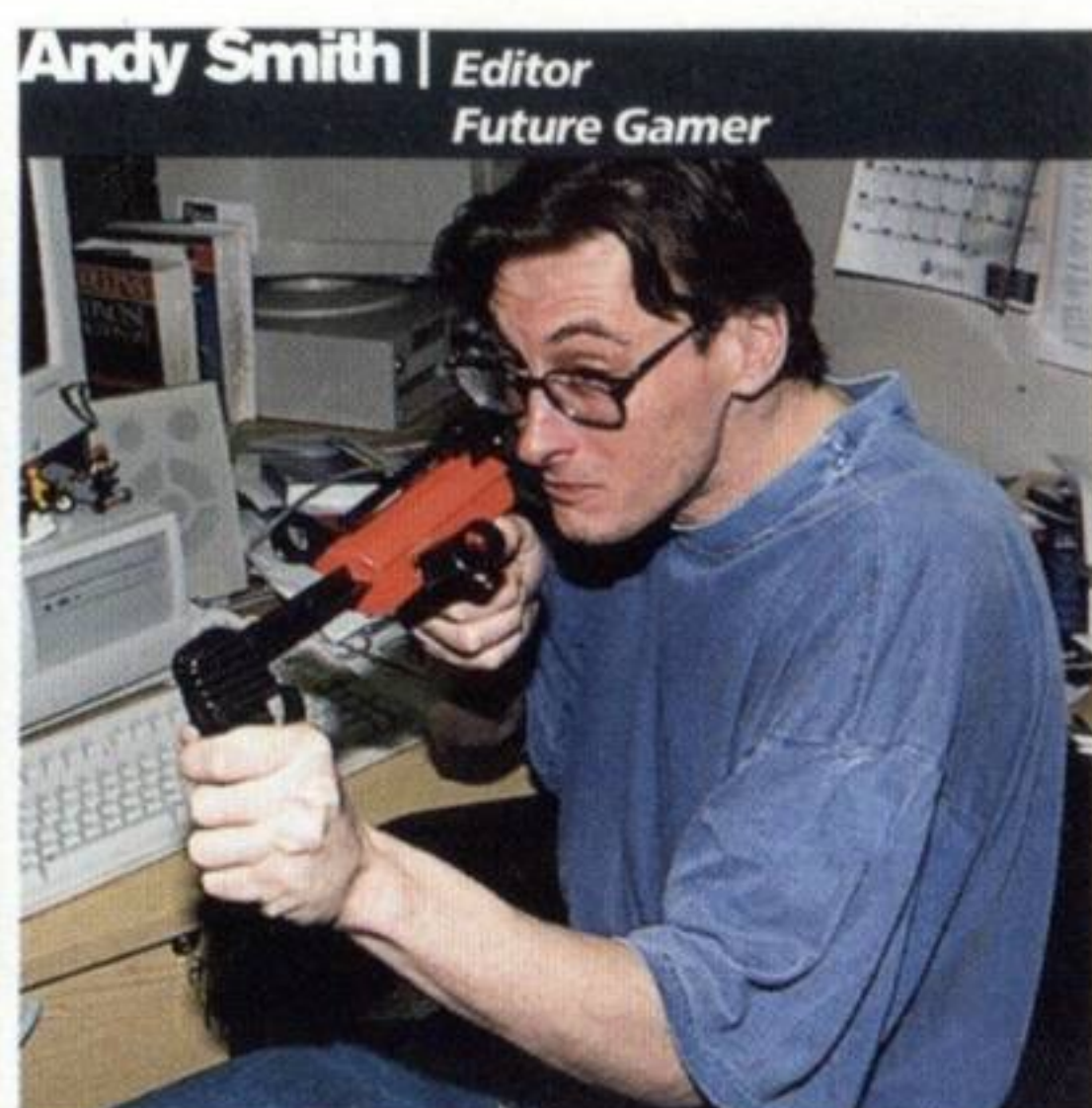
George Broussard and **Scott Miller** remain at Apogee/3D Realms. *Prey* remains unfinished and *Duke Nukem Forever*, originally slated to use the *Quake II* engine, has now switched to the *Unreal* engine.



Miss Donna remains at id. Her smiling face is the one that greets all visitors to suite number 666.

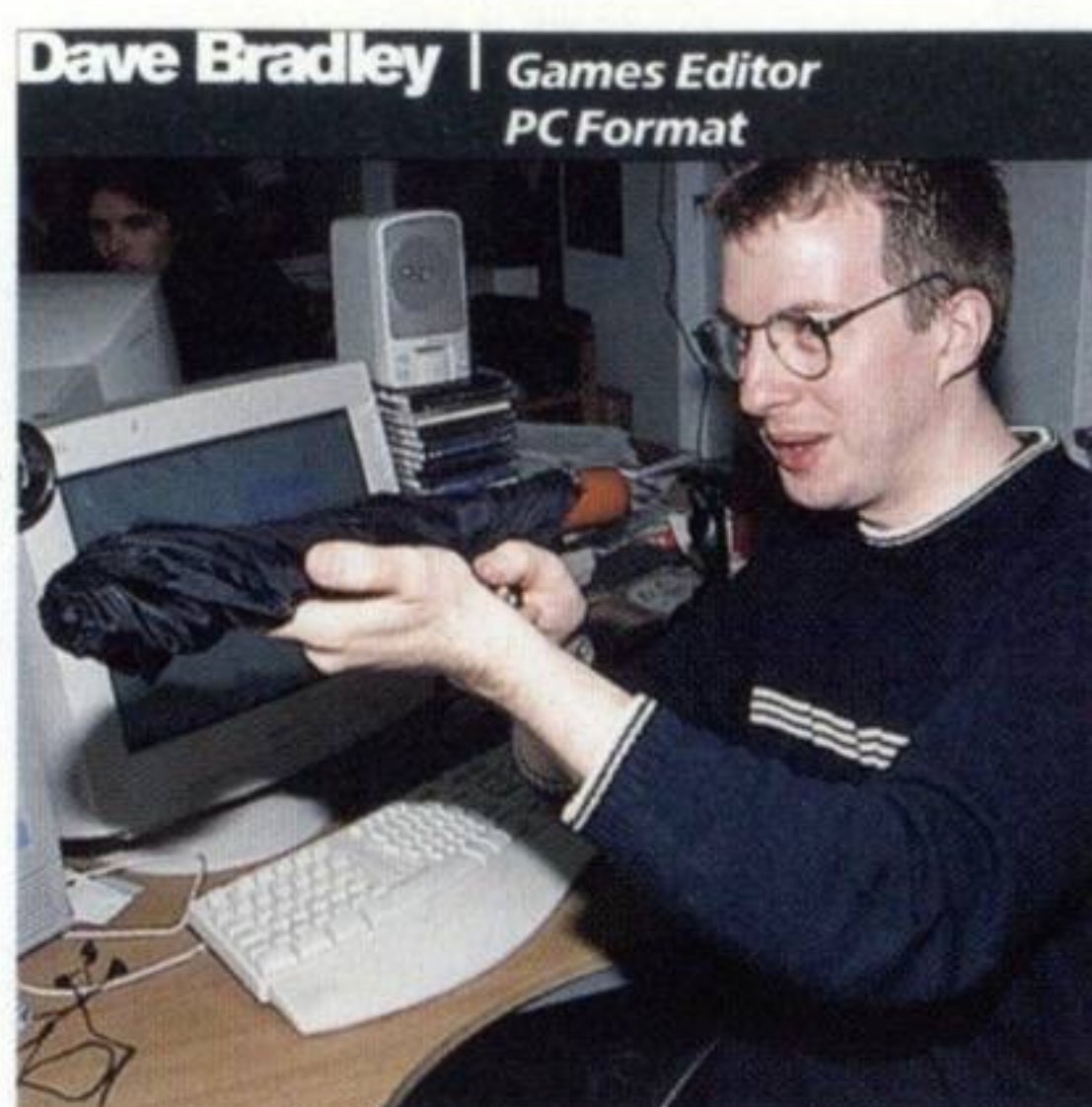
FAVOURITE FRAGS

Swaggering around a hostile environment armed to the teeth with bazookas, hand grenades and a sink plunger may not be big or clever. But it can be lots of fun. 15 videogame experts offer their favourite 3D shooter moments.



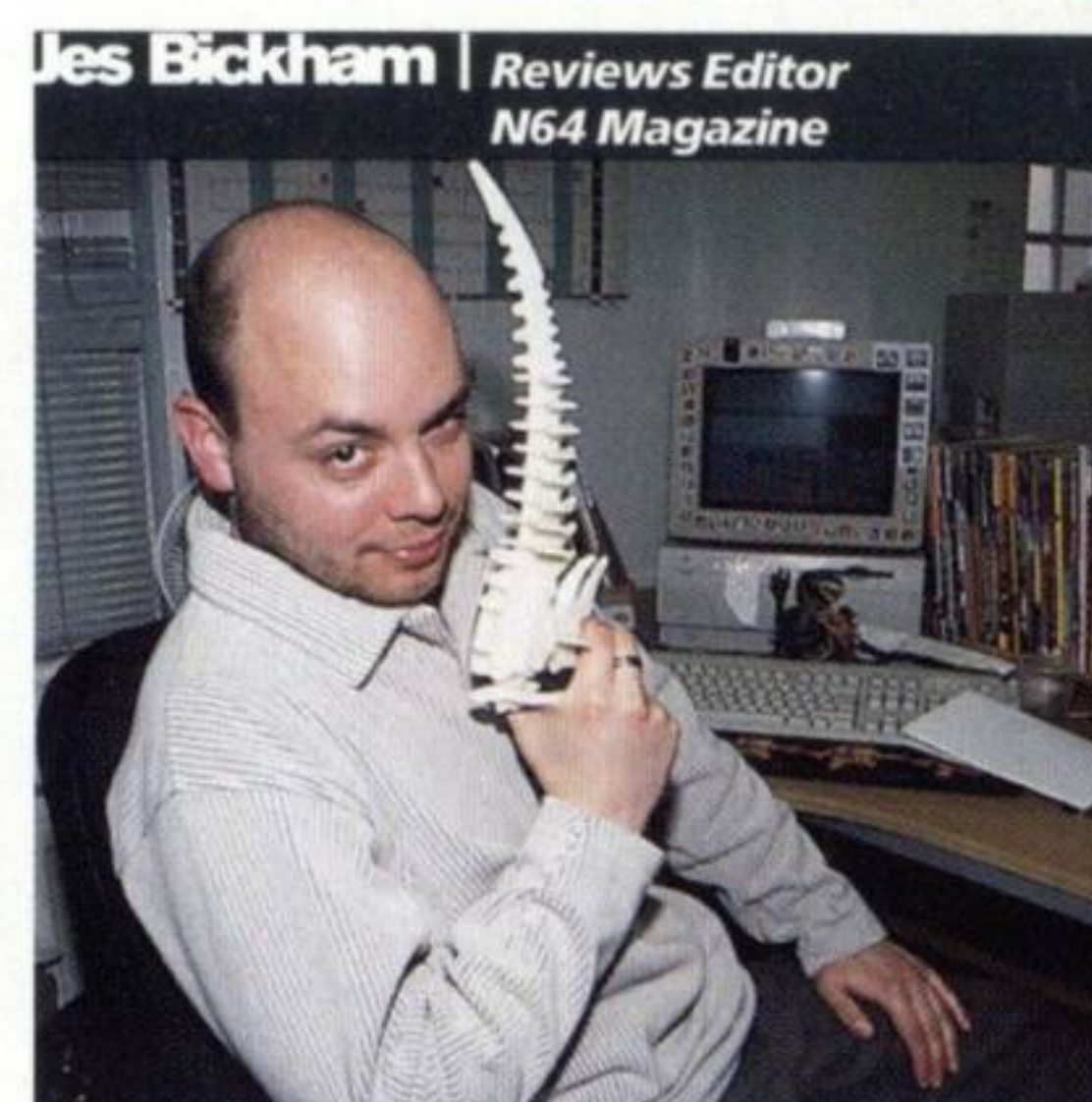
**Andy Smith | Editor
Future Gamer**

"Delta Force rewards all the dirty, low-down, sneaky tactics I love. You can sit atop a hill and watch someone through your scope. They run into a house to dodge a hail of bullets and just when they think they're clear, you pop 'em in the head. That gets you two points – lovely."



**Dave Bradley | Games Editor
PC Format**

"A good shooter has to totally immerse me – the best sign of this is when I hyperventilate through fear while playing. Half-Life is terrifying as it's full of smart opponents who can ambush you. Now I'm disappointed when computer characters don't put up such a good fight."



**Jes Bickham | Reviews Editor
N64 Magazine**

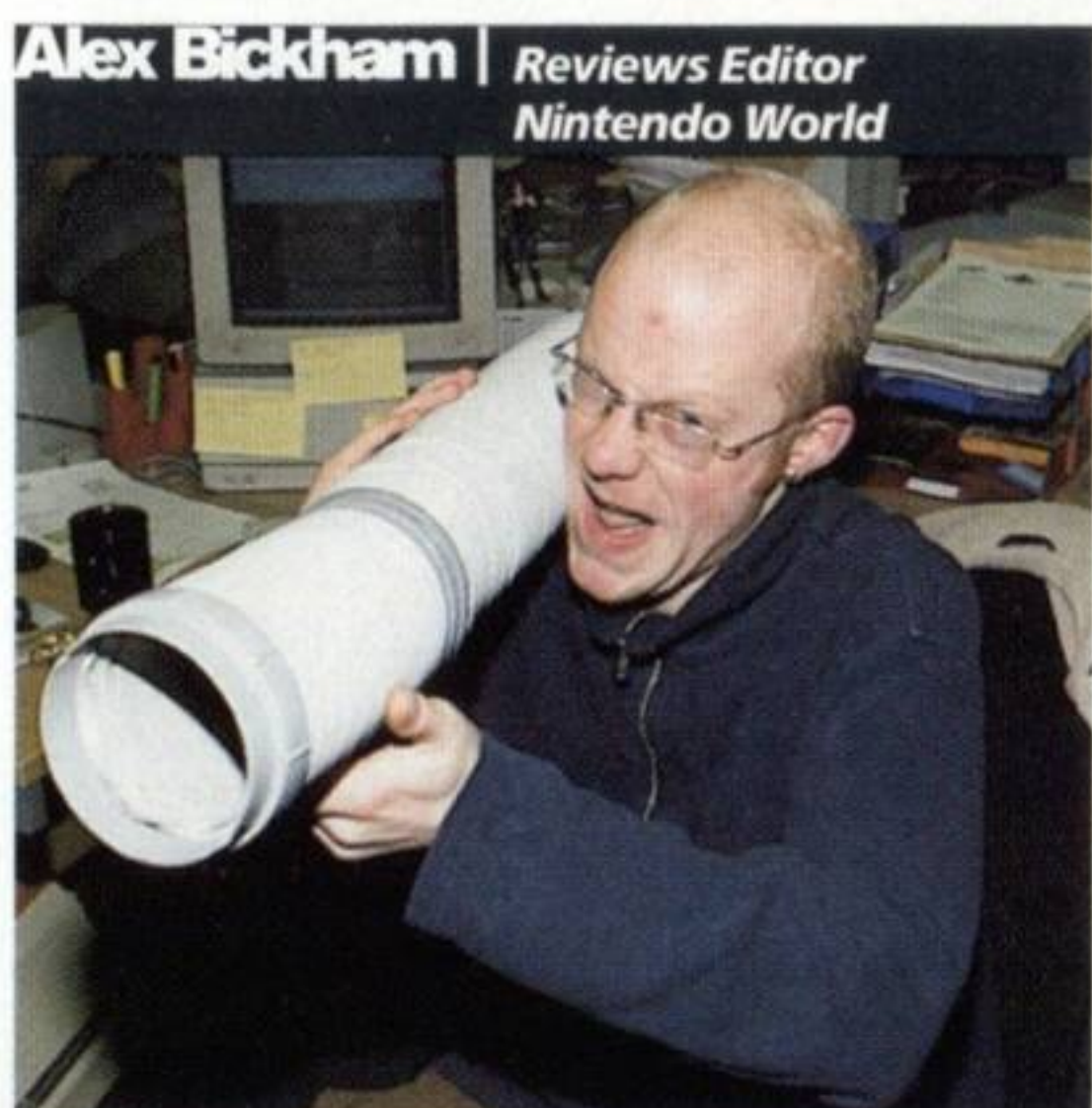
"GoldenEye 007 is the greatest first-person-shooter around. The focus on stealth, the one-shot kills, the exquisite mission objectives and level design, the peerless multi-player mode, the thrilling filmic feel... it's original and immersive. And you can drive a tank. Classic."

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK BUETTNER



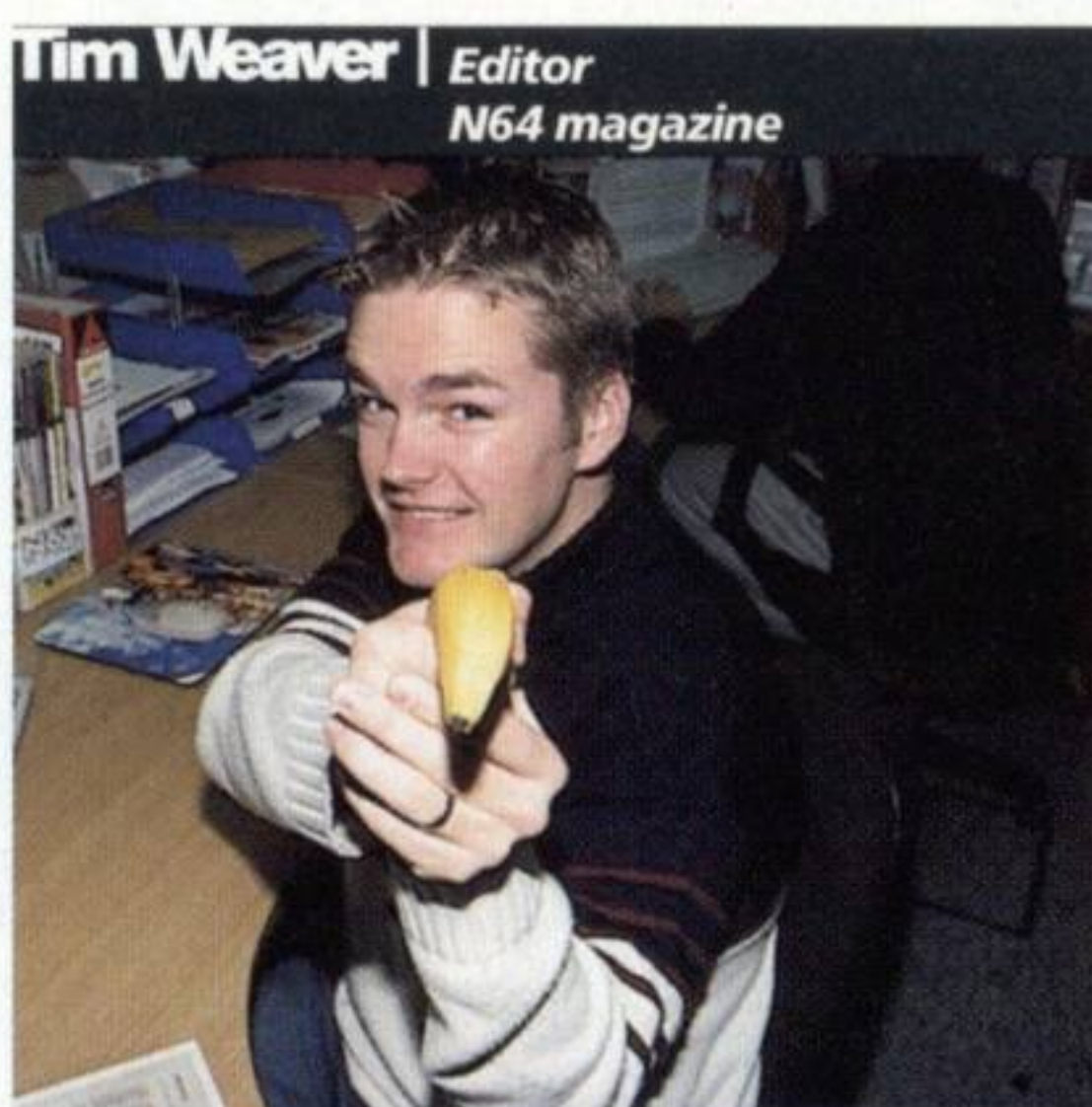
**Emma Parkinson | Operations Editor
Arcade**

"The gents' toilet scene in GoldenEye has to be a favourite moment. All those blokes taking a nonchalant piss while hell breaks loose in a firefight around them. And it explains a lot about the state of men's bogs the world over."



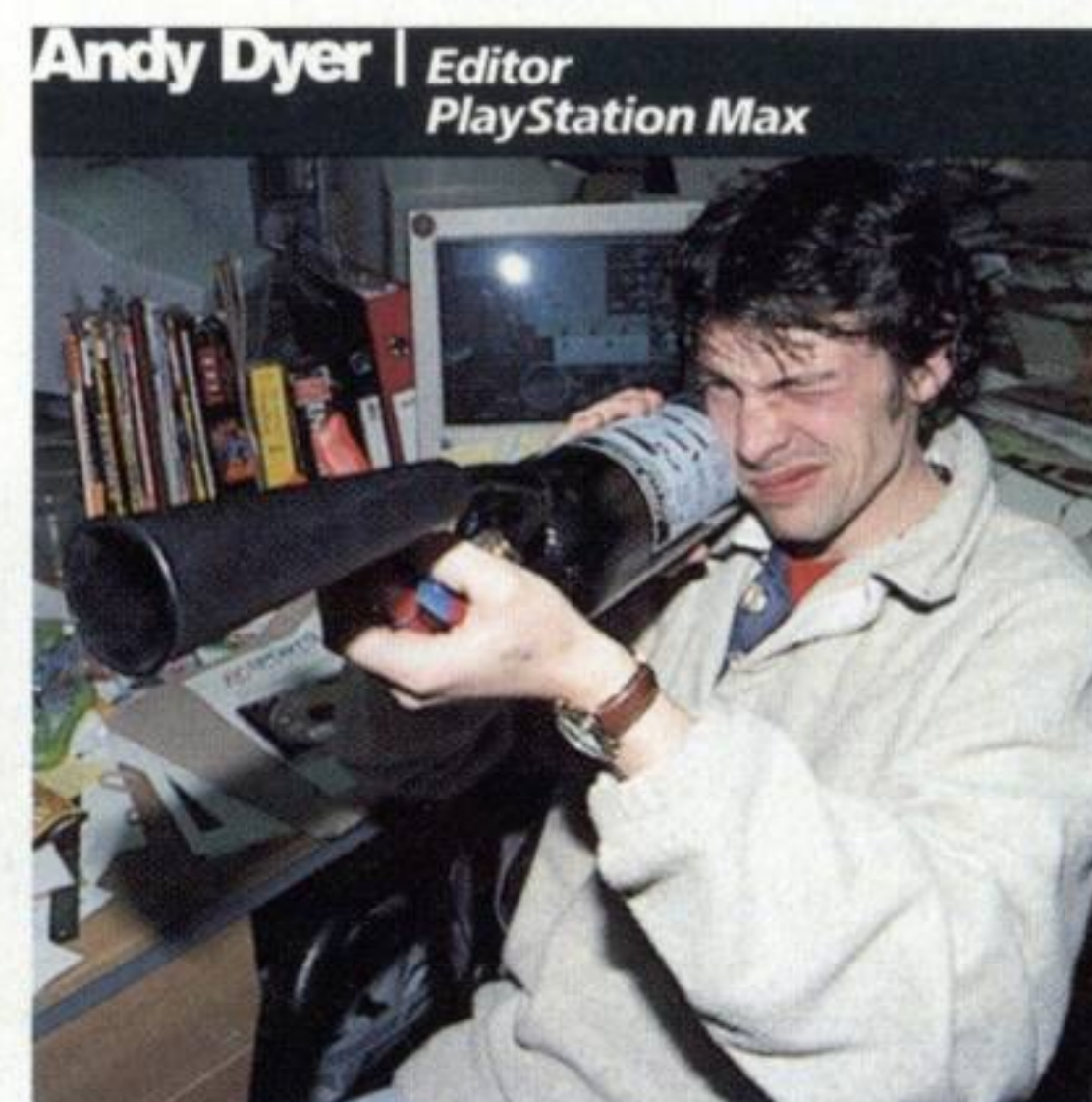
**Alex Bickham | Reviews Editor
Nintendo World**

"There's this bit in Half-Life when you suddenly realise that you can use the machinery at hand to target napalm strikes from above. An alien beastie – impervious to hand weapons – sits in wait. Simply line up the targeter, hit the fire button and death rains down from the skies."



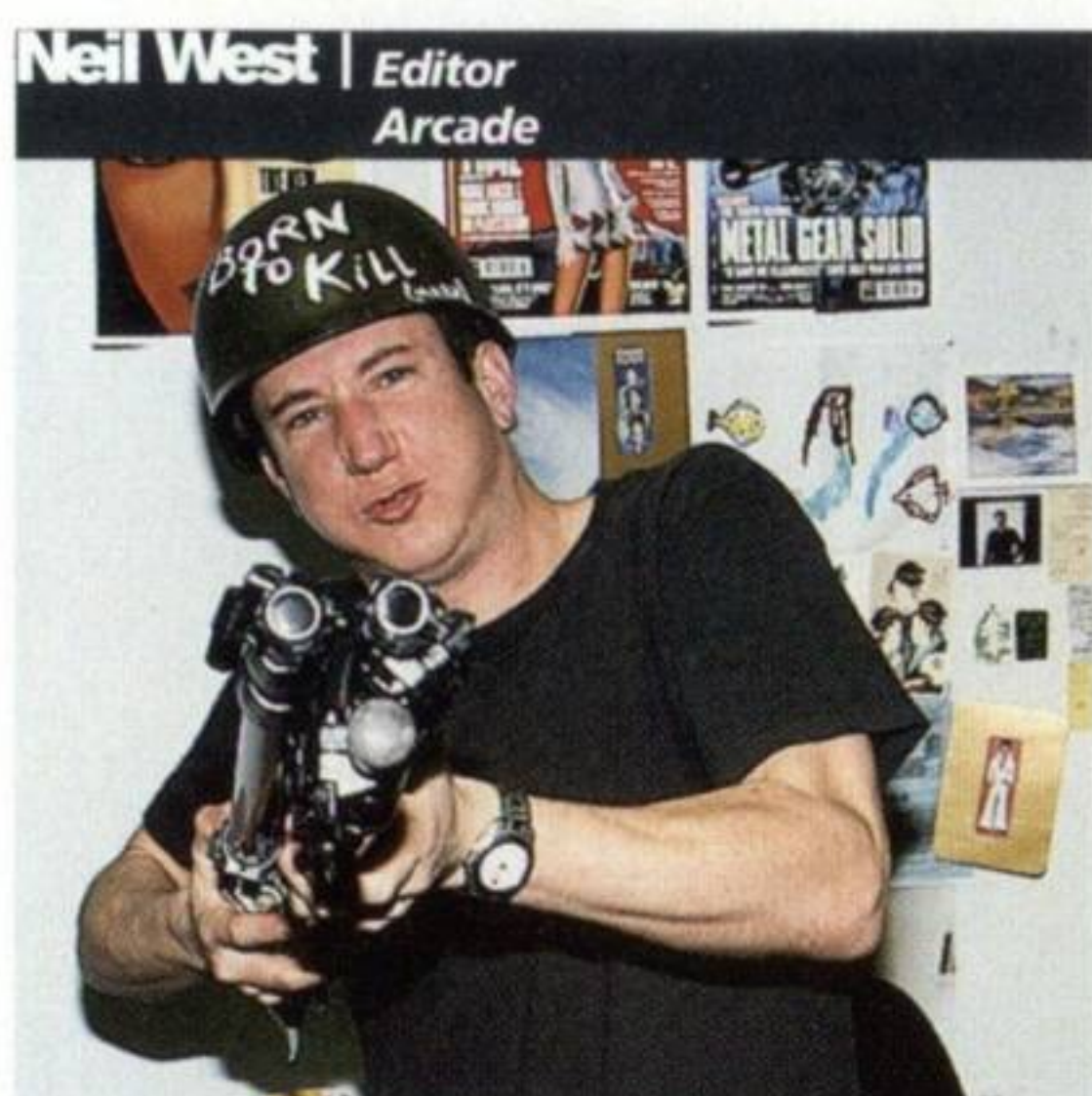
**Tim Weaver | Editor
N64 magazine**

"GoldenEye. It has Bond, it has gadgets, it has Jaws, it has the Sniper Rifle (the most brilliantly implemented weapon in videogaming history), but, even more than that, it has a breathtaking multi-player game, the like of which you'll never see again. Erm, until Perfect Dark, maybe."



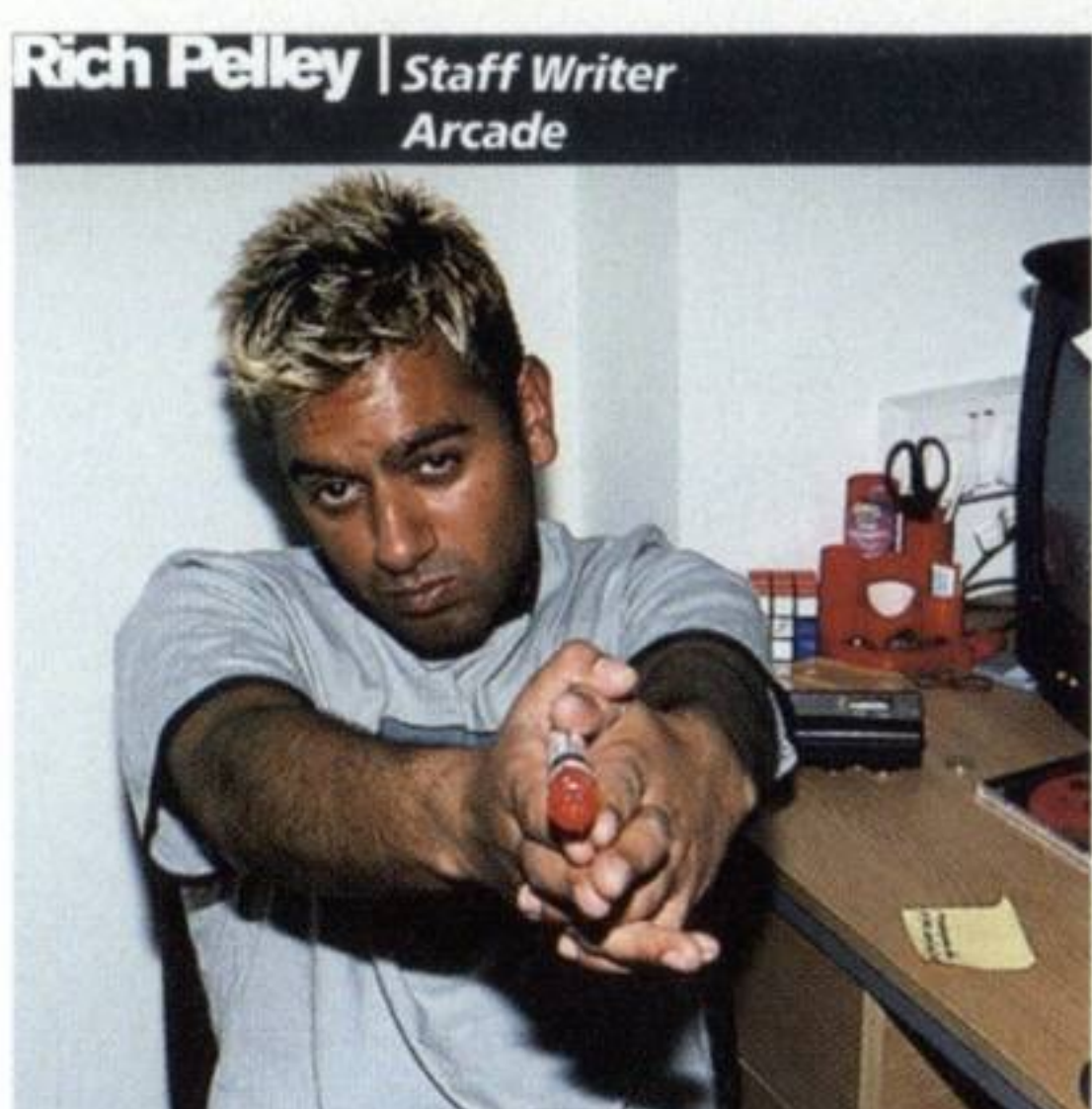
**Andy Dyer | Editor
PlayStation Max**

"I still have a soft spot for Doom and although no-one ever mentions it, Exhumed on the PlayStation was much underrated. It looked great and the levels were cleverly constructed. Not sure how rock and roll it is to go off on a quest to find some Egyptian sandals, though."



**Neil West | Editor
Arcade**

"I caught the second wave of Doom, with Midway's fine PlayStation conversion and it's still my favourite for the unrivalled feeling of being there and the sense of lurking horror that makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. A 100% videogame classic."



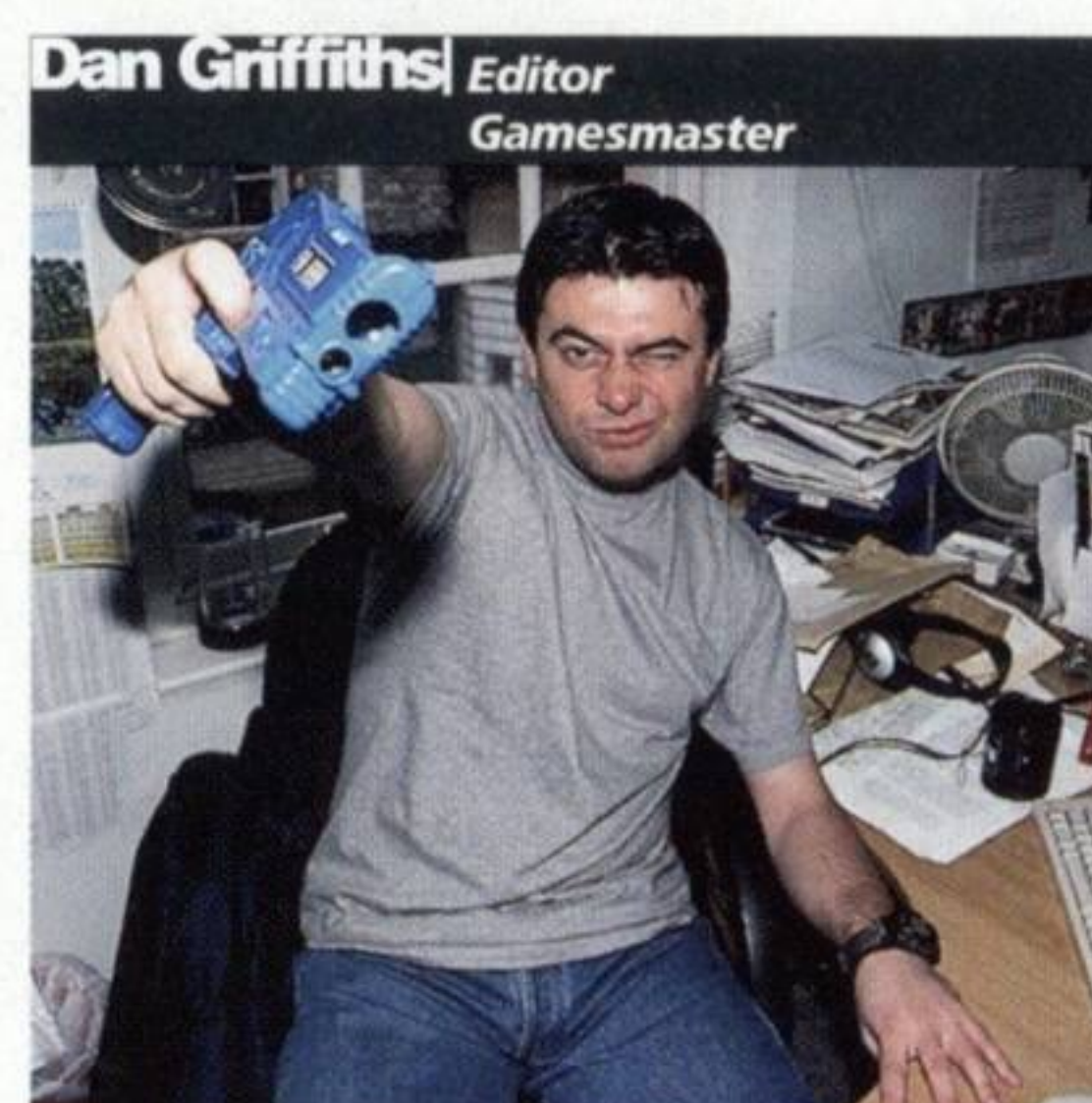
**Rich Pelley | Staff Writer
Arcade**

"I'm rubbish at shooters, I'm afraid. I joined in a huge network game of Quake when it first came out. I was trying to make screengrabs, so I called myself "Please-dont-kill-me-im-trying-to-make-some-screengrabs". But I was slaughtered within about five seconds."



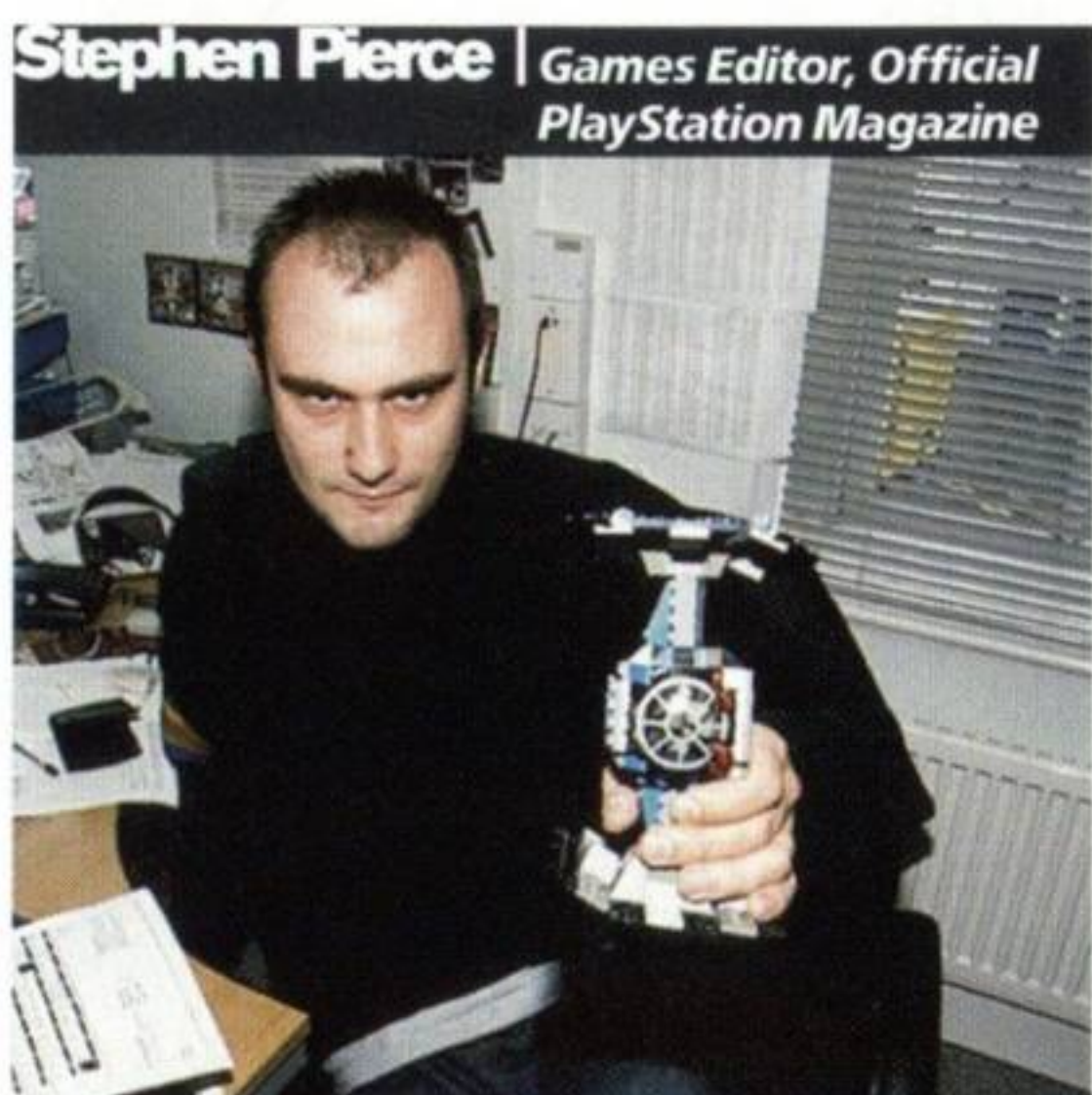
**Rich Hood | Art Editor
PC Gamer**

"With most shooters, everyone you meet is immediately out to kill you, which I find a little indiscriminate. I've recently played a Kingpin preview, where you can strike up conversation, suss the local knowledge, trade some fags... and then blow the bastard's head off."



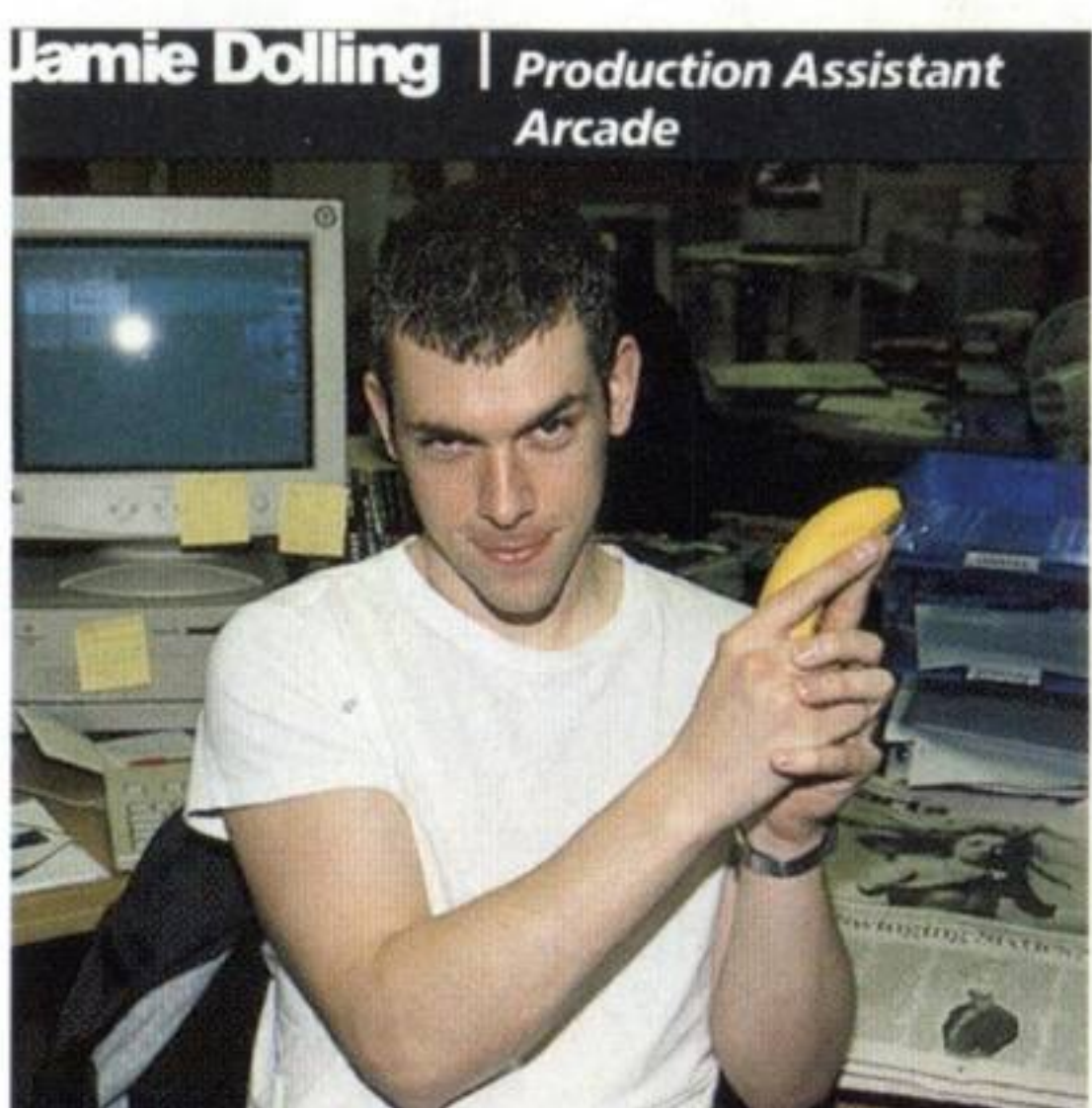
**Dan Griffiths | Editor
Gamesmaster**

"I was obsessed with Doom on the PC. I'd save the game before entering each new area and note down how much ammo I had left in each gun. Then I could repeat each level hundreds of times until I was sure I had killed everyone in the most efficient way possible. Brilliant."



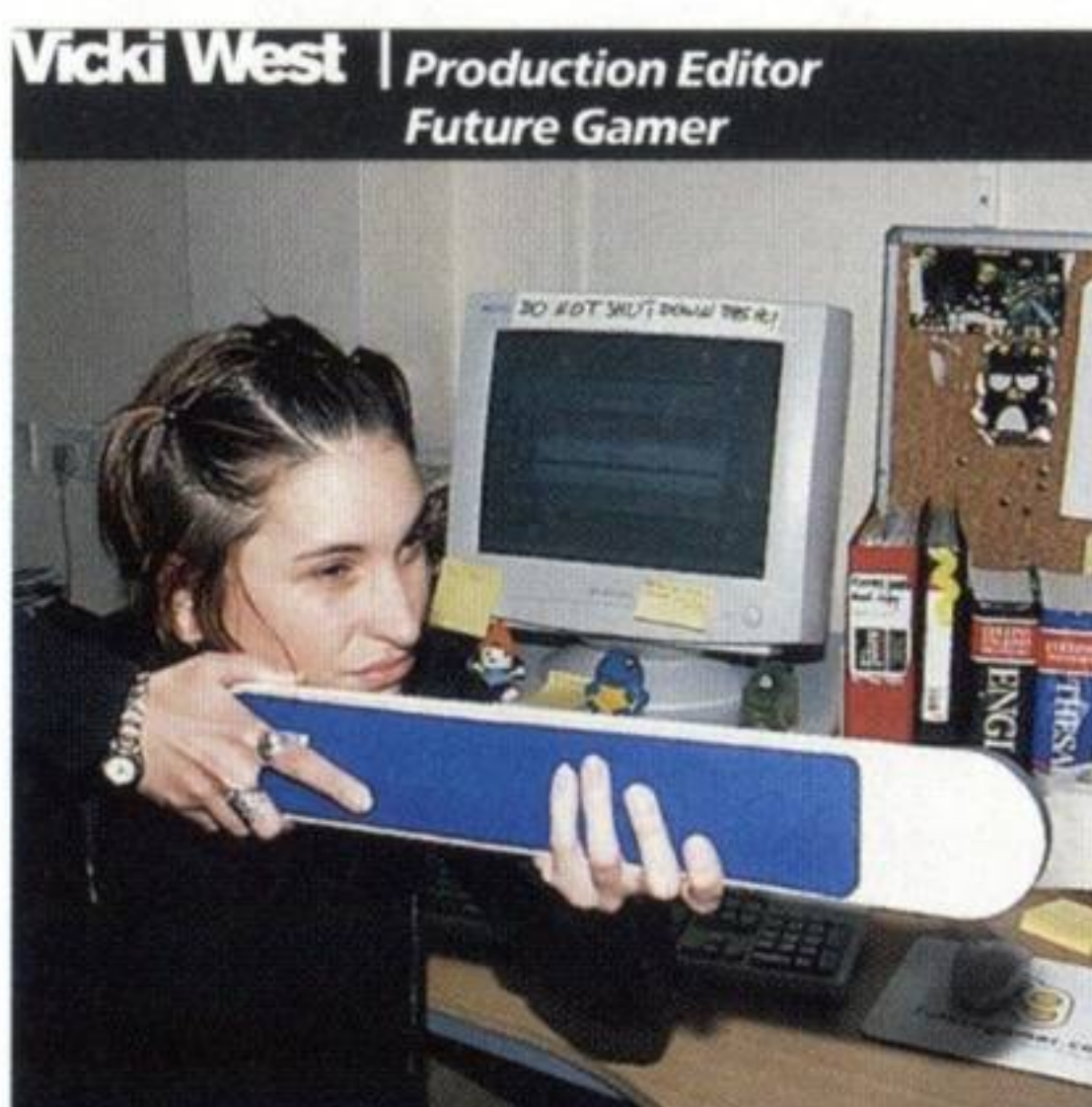
**Stephen Pierce | Games Editor, Official
PlayStation Magazine**

"Wolfenstein 3D. A fresco of minimal corridors, slow-to-open doors and irate Germans. Your pistol was enough to fell most annoyances, yet the confusingly familiar environments rendered crude pencil maps and utterly brain-scorching frustration de rigueur. Riveting boredom."



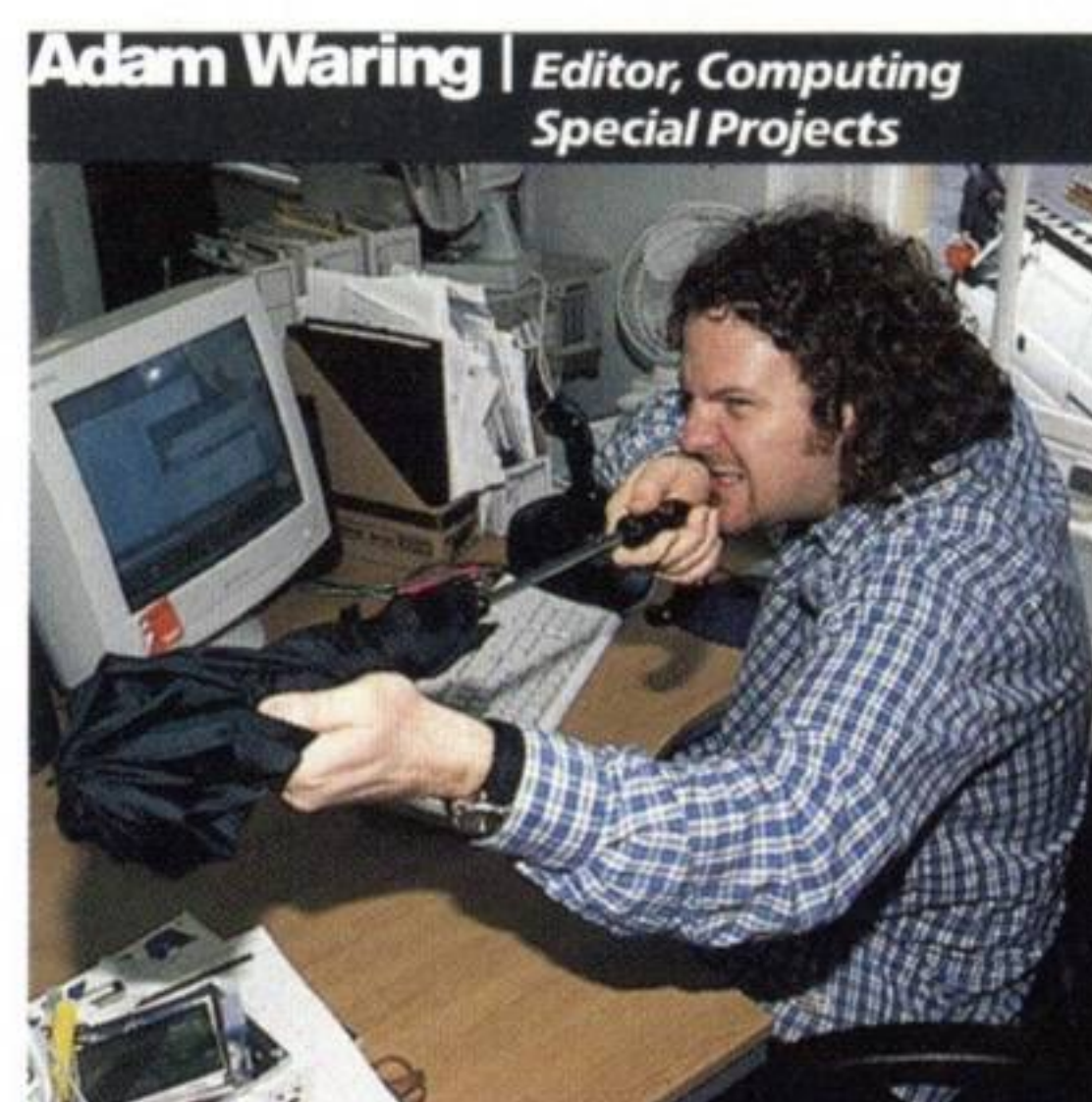
**Jamie Dolling | Production Assistant
Arcade**

"They had me on four-player GoldenEye last week. As an amateur, I found "skulking" to be the ideal policy. Hide behind a pillar in a corner of one the large arenas, watch two players slug it out, wait for their health to be depleted and then wade in and take both the kills. Touché."



**Vicki West | Production Editor
Future Gamer**

"I'm a fan of Turok 2, the thinking person's console shooter. You've got to know which weapon to use each time, but mostly I like the way the monsters dance about after being hit by an electric bolt. There's something darkly comic about such an ignominious death."



**Adam Waring | Editor, Computing
Special Projects**

"I'm still an acolyte of the first-person-shooter that started it all – 3D Monster Maze on the ZX81. Also, I'm quite animated at my computer and the first time I saw one of those big white monster fellas in Quake, I fell off my chair. I like a game where you can get emotional."

■ The security at this year's International Dentistry Exhibition was tighter than ever.



Story by | Mark "Tex" Green

QUAKE IT UP

QUAKE III: ARENA WILL BE THE BIGGEST GAME OF 1999. SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? READ ON...

Even if your knowledge of videogames doesn't extend much past knowing that *Tomb Raider* stars "some woman", you've probably heard of *Doom*. Six years ago this gory first-person shooter from Texas-based developer id kick-started a craze for shoot-'em-ups that still shows no sign of fizzling out.

Since then, id has had unparalleled success with *Doom* follow-ups *Quake* and

Quake II. Then, unexpectedly, id's Project Leader John Carmack announced that the next *Quake* game would be embarking on a radical new direction. Since then the PC and Mac community has been buzzing with gossip, rumour and counter-rumour about the third game in the trilogy.

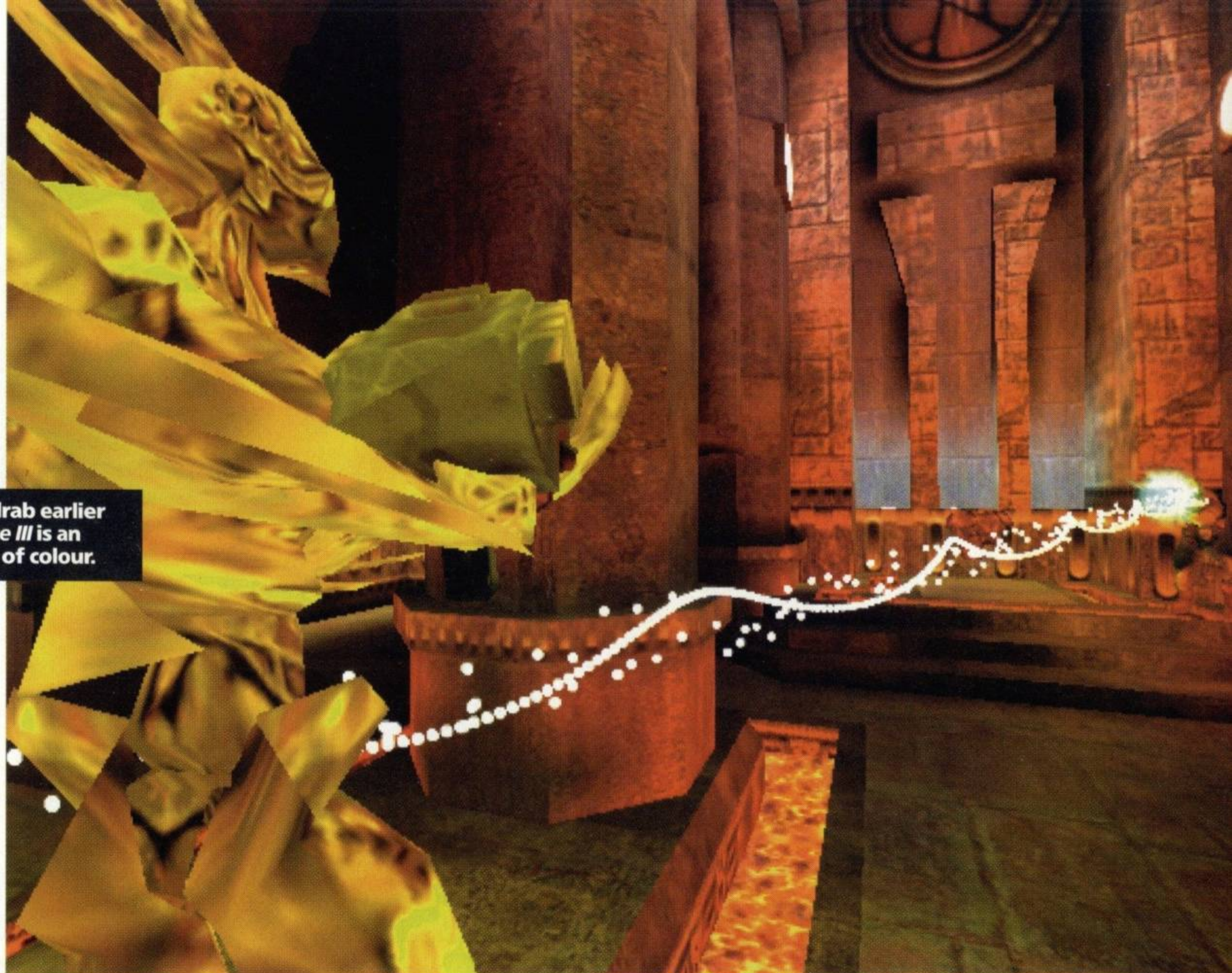
Mark Green visited id's HQ in Texas to bring back the following exclusive preview of the biggest game of the year.

It's been a long night. Beers have been guzzled, pizza has been finished and the neighbours have been round to complain about the noise. You and your fellow gun-toting maniacs have been stalking virtual corridors and emptying ammo from your on-screen weapons for hours, but now it's time to call an end to the deathmatch marathon. The last arena is explored, the clinching bullet fired and the final kill totals displayed. "I win!" you scream triumphantly, thrusting your hands into the air in a particularly arrogant display of machismo. "I am the best!"

But there's no-one there to hear you scream. Because you're not crammed around the N64's *GoldenEye 007* with three of your friends, or tackling *Doom* against a mate, via the PlayStation's link-up cable. You're playing id's *Quake III: Arena* – a deathmatch with a difference. The usual sprawling 3D maze-like



■ After two drab earlier outings, *Quake III* is an extravaganza of colour.



arenas are there, the over-sized weapons are present and correct, and the game aim is the same – run around, shooting bullets into your opponents. The difference is that you’re playing alone on your PC – against seven unsympathetic, blood-thirsty computer-controlled opponents, who look, sound, move and play exactly like human players.

Impressive, yes. But it might all start to sound like a rather lonely experience. Don’t worry, though, because there’s a world of human players out there, eager to snap your neck. Hook your PC up to another computer, using a chunky grey cable, your office PC network or the Internet, and you can put your one-player practice to good use in arenas brimming with other blood-thirsty *Quake III* owners. With easy-to-use link-up options, id is hoping *Quake III* will be the videogaming equivalent of *Trivial Pursuit*. The company’s aim is to get everyone playing it. And if you’re an N64 or PSX owner, don’t think you’ll escape – id is the trendsetter of 3D gaming, and all console development will take cues from whatever id does next.

When we went to the USA to get a sneak peek at *Quake III: Arena*, the game was running on a series of meaty, accelerated PCs, crammed into id’s poky Texas-based office. Seeing the silky smooth gameplay reminded us of the thrills that came with our first play of *Quake I*. id is undoubtedly still the master of breathlessly fast graphics, gratifyingly violent weapons and enemy-filled dungeons that have you simultaneously creeping round corners and jumping off your chair like a petrified three-year-old. If you haven’t played any games in id’s splendid first-person shooter series yet, you’re missing out.

The scarily realistic computer players (“bots”) are essentially a new addition to *Quake*’s arsenal. As we arrived at the id offices, a test version of the game was already up and running. Crowding the screen were eight computer-controlled fellas, armed with rocket launchers, and engaged in an eye-wincingly bloody mêlée. While we watched,

You’ll enjoy the characters best when they’ve been turned into flying meat chunks

the lead programmer jumped into the game as a weaponless human player. The bots ignored him, until he picked up a strength-enhancing power-up. Immediately, and unnervingly, several bots turned to face him, pummeling him with untold rocket death.

Programmer John Cash is the man who’s responsible for making the disturbing bots as authentically “human” as possible. “They all have different personalities,” he explained, as we watched one bot fire a rocket up another’s arse. “They won’t just find you and shoot you time and again. Their level of aggression will affect how likely they are to fight or run away, and their level of health will determine how desperately they look for medical packs. Real-life players act in different ways and have their own special ‘formulas’ for victory. We’ve tried to give the bots the same qualities, so a human player always feels like he’s playing against real people.”

Bots aren’t strictly a new idea – Net geeks have fashioned all sorts of autonomous, near-indestructible *Quake II* robots for themselves in the past – but *Quake III*’s are much more forgiving. “We’re making the game accessible to everyone,” says lead level designer Tim Willitts. “The skill levels of the bots will adjust to match yours, so you’re challenged at all times, but never suffering a 30-0 defeat.”

So the early levels will pitch you against a single weak bot in a simple arena. Further on, more bots will enter the fray, until you’re up against multiple sadistic opponents, in complicated arenas that the bots know like the backs of their hands. With 30 different levels, themed around spaceships, medieval

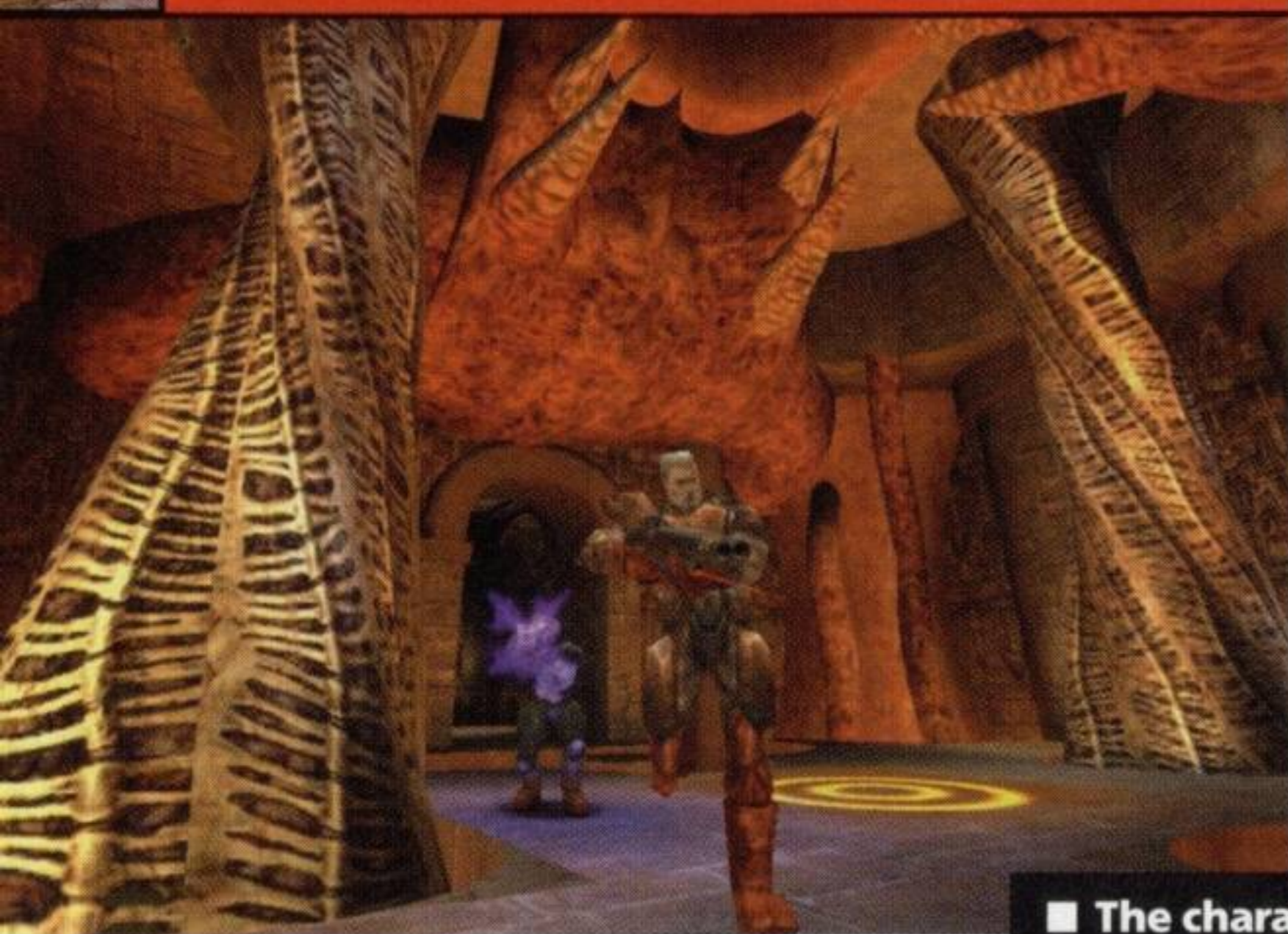
dungeons and the depths of Hell, there’s plenty of action to be getting on with.

If *Quake III*’s “one-player deathmatch” concept works out to be popular, expect to see bots cropping up in scores of new N64, PlayStation and PC games. But id is taking an enormous risk. Think of *Mario Kart 64*, *Bomberman* or *Monopoly* – all games that shine against human players, but are short-lived fun on your own. And consider all those gamers who’ve been weaned on the first-person shooting template that id itself created with *Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom* and *Quake*.

The aim has always been to make your way through each linear level, mission-by-mission, blowing apart anything that gets in your way. Because of this, *Quake III*’s bot-themed angle might not be enough to satisfy die-hard single-player *Quake* fans.

That’s why id is focusing most of its efforts on the link-up multi-player game. You’ll have to play either *Half-Life* or *GoldenEye* for your mission-based thrills, *Quake*’s developers say, because we’re concentrating on making the best and most accessible deathmatch ever. *Quake III* is designed to introduce one-player gamers to the multi-player experience (through the bots), act as an open door for everyone to enter the *Quake* community on the Net and – bravely – improve upon the near-perfection that defined the multi-player modes in *Quake I* and *II*.

The arenas, for example, have been designed and tested to perfection. Despite the all-new curved surfaces on the scenery, which enable the creation of arched ceilings and sloped terrain, the level designs are fundamentally “cornered” and symmetrical, containing very few places to hide. The second level of the test version of *Quake III* (available at <http://www.quake3arena.com/>) is a brilliant futuristic floating area, providing the opportunity to blast away at people who seemingly stand miles away. Another level we played (not available in the test version) was



■ The characters are expertly crafted. Blow 'em up! Blow 'em all up!



a more traditional, gothic-looking dungeon complex, packed with tension-building narrow corridors.

"We've introduced a number of tactical elements into the arenas," says Tim. "There's a green mist which people higher up can rise above for a tactical advantage, for example. The portal technology, too, is very advanced. Look." At this point, he walks his character up to a green rippling one-way mirror. Looking through, his character can spy, CCTV-style, on the level's entire central section. Choosing his moment, he then steps through the mirror, to warp directly into the area that he'd been looking at. It's not totally original (GT Interactive's *Unreal Tournament* has done it already), but it's a welcome tactical addition.

The controls are also honed to perfection. Your character's movement is *very* fast, but there's never the feeling of being out of your control. Using a combination of keyboard presses for movement and the mouse for turning, aiming and firing, it's only a few moments before you're strafing, circling, jumping and swimming with ease. Control in mid-air has been fine-tuned, too. Trampoline-like jump pads replace ladders and this means that being able to manoeuvre your hero on to ledges or accurately aim a rocket at the head of an enemy who's far below becomes a significant part of the game.

But we know what you really, *really* want. Big, meaty weapons, and lots of 'em. Fear not, because *Quake III* provides more than enough for your neglected trigger finger. Along with the requisite shotguns and space-age pistols, the rocket launcher and rail gun are back, providing the usual amount of blood spillage but with all-new spangly smoke trail effects. There's also a spiked mace for when ammo runs out, although this could well be replaced by everyone's favourite, the chainsaw, before the game's finished.



Quake III: Arena will have done everything. It will be the ultimate deathmatch

You'll also find the usual objects scattered around each map. There are new items, such as the personal teleporter (which enables *Star Trek*-style point-to-point travel) and the jet-pack (for flying around), and making their return are ammo packs, quad damage (which quadruples how much pain your weapons cause and envelops your character in a shimmering blue glow) and health-giving boxes. All the power-ups look great, featuring loads of graphical whizz-bangery.

We haven't really mentioned the graphics yet, have we? You see, it's all too easy to take the visuals of id's games for granted. But as you focus your eyes on that health pack – a little shiny cross spinning in a transparent cube – you find your awareness of *Quake III*'s stunning surroundings increasing, as though the camera is slowly panning back to reveal the game in all its glory. John Carmack claims that "focusing on multi-player has allowed us to steer away from the graphical thrills that bogged down *Quake II*'s development time," but his designers obviously haven't been listening. *Quake III: Arena* looks fantastic.

The gothic levels are full of imposing columns, huge pieces of rock jut from scenery, stone dragons sit atop pillars and – horribly – gaping mouths with writhing tongues adorn the walls. Rooms bask in different coloured lights, helping navigation, and practically every object, character and weapon emits its own special glow. There's no doubt that you'll need a high-spec Mac or PC and a decent 3D card to get the best out of the graphic engine – such as fully working room-length mirrors – but it'll be worth the

expense. Even the clouds in the sky above each arena are in properly rendered 3D, billowing past at an astonishing speed.

It's taken hours to animate the 20 different deathmatch characters, too, giving each their own personalised sequences for walking, back-peddalling, switching weapons, dying and even taunting enemies. "The character's body sections move realistically," says Paul Steed, model and animation artist, "if you look left, the player's head will move first, followed by the upper body, until finally the legs will turn." Despite this extravagance, you'll probably enjoy the characters best when they've been turned into flying meat chunks.

So, *Quake III*'s going to be great.

And it'll be even better when you're sharing it with others. Internet gaming used to be too complicated, unwieldy and error-prone to be fun for normal people, but with dedicated on-line gaming areas springing up, you've got no excuse not to join in (see our guide to on-line gaming, starting on page 56). Your phone bills will suffer, but until you've blown apart a chunky soldier with an accurate rail gun shot, then sent an "Up Yours!" message by modem to your rival, you haven't lived.

But can *Quake III* hold its own against such recent favourites as Sierra's *Half-Life Team Fortress* and GT Interactive's *Unreal Tournament*? The stakes have been raised since *Quake II*. We'll leave id's own Tim Willitts with the final words. "We've literally tried everything," he says. "If there are features missing, it's not because we haven't thought of it. It's because we've tried it and it didn't work. No one need make a deathmatch game ever again, because *Quake III: Arena* will have done absolutely everything. It will be the ultimate deathmatch." **A**

■ *Quake III: Arena* will be released "when it's finished" on PC and Mac, probably later this summer. It will be published in the UK by Activision. Console versions will follow...

■ This man put his childhood friend in hospital. If only he'd had a PlayStation.



Interview by **Niall West**

NUTTER!

CAN PLAYING VIOLENT VIDEOGAMES TURN YOU INTO A SERIAL KILLER?

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON

In the aftermath of the Littleton, Colorado, shootings, accusatory fingers have been pointed at videogames. But what's the evidence? And has any link between playing videogames

and violent behaviour ever been proven? **Arcade** talks to Professor Henry Jenkins of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT] in the USA for a fresh angle on the old violence/videogames debate.

What is your involvement with the world of videogames?

I am a professor and Director of Media Studies at MIT. Much of my work centres on popular culture and its place in people's everyday lives. As part of an increasing focus on the history of children's literature, media and culture, I've gotten interested in videogames. I've done some consulting work with various game companies trying to understand their perspective on game design and development.

What do you think of the politicians who would remove

violent content from videogames designed for children?

I don't think they're confronting the real problems. I think they focus on a symptom, instead. I think it's part of a larger denial of where the real violence in children's lives falls.

We have a whole culture of economic deprivation and domestic violence – and these are the real problems confronting children. But it's easy for politicians to throw up a smoke screen involving videogames and technology, rather than confront the real material problems that affect children's lives.

“There is a violence in play that goes way back.”

Henry Jenkins on childhood behaviour

So how would you go about taking apart the politicians' case against violent videogames?

To start with, parents often lament that their children are playing videogames instead of playing outdoors in the backyard. But the reality is that children's access to space has been severely constricted over the last 100 years and for many kids in the 1990s no play space is available.

What videogames provide is a “virtual” play space. They provide an environment that kids can enter into, interact with, explore and do many of the things that they traditionally did in the backyard, the empty field or down by the river in Mark Twain's *Mississippi*.

So videogames have replaced the areas where kids used to play and muck around?

Right, and so to understand what goes on in videogames we have to understand what play space has historically meant to children, especially boys, because they are the primary users of videogames. Historically, young boys always feel a need to break free of maternal constraints in order to become young men. From studies of the 19th Century we know that this involves pranks, stunts, acts of daring, competitions with each other, challenging each other, out-smarting each other and a kind of camaraderie, through competition and violence.

And videogames are just another way in which this age-old pattern of behaviour manifests itself?

Fist fights are hardly a development of the 20th Century. There is a kind of violence in backyard play – an aggressive part of coming of age – that goes back hundreds of years.

But now, in 1999, because videogames are played inside, the mother is exposed to and is aware of what the boys are doing in their play, and often she is shocked and outraged by what she's finding. She's finding out that her little boys are violent, competitive and aggressive. And she sees the parts of boyhood previously hidden from adult view.

And she is shocked by this element of her offspring's development?

Aggression is a natural part of childhood, and yet we continually try to deny it. I don't see a lot of real hard evidence that childhood today is any more violent than it was 100 years ago, and I don't see any signs that – try as we might – we are going to eradicate violence from our children.

And when, in 1999, we scapegoat a technology, it's just the same thing as when 200 years ago people might have said that children behaved “badly” because they were born evil and that the job of the parents was to beat the evil out of them, or that children were possessed by demons.

Today we say that “technology made them do it” or that “television made them do it”, but it's often just a

way of denying the reality of children's natural aggression. If anything, I would argue that a videogame is often more healthy than playing outside. Beating up a digital opponent is better than putting your next door neighbour in hospital, which I did as a young boy.

An argument often used against videogames is that by exposing kids to violent images, the kids in some way become desensitised to violence. Does this hold any water?

Studies seem to suggest that at an early age children make distinctions between fiction and non-fiction.

The violence that really disturbs them is the violence they can't break down – the violence that they see as real. This means that the type of media violence that is worst for children is nature documentaries where predators eat their prey, or news stories, or documentaries about historical events – all that stuff that teachers, educators and media-reformers think would be good TV for kids.

What about the often-quoted argument that “a kid watching TV is an observer, while a kid playing a violent videogame is more of a participant”?

A decade ago, the focus of the attack on television violence was to suggest that it left children in a position of passivity; the violence washed over them and they had no outlet for expressing those feelings which wasn't immediately destructive. We were urged as parents to find creative modes of expressing and exploring the feelings that violence produced. Now, we have an interactive medium that enables children to release their aggressive feelings through symbolic action, and the same critics are simply reversing their arguments.

So what do you think of the evidence that's been presented against violent videogames?

All we're given is a combination of anecdotal evidence of limited situations that we don't adequately understand – these situations are not described in sufficient cultural or psychological detail for us to really know what happened – or empirical research results that tell us very well how children watch television or play games in a laboratory. Such studies don't, however, tell us very much about how children watch TV or play games at home. They assume that children will behave the same in all social situations – clearly this isn't true.

And even these studies disagree among themselves. There's been no uniform agreement that there is a relationship between watching violent content and the increased likelihood of violence in real life. That's not to say we shouldn't be concerned or that there couldn't be a problem with individual kids, but the study results that we have are not grounds for a national policy or any sweeping generalisations by politicians. **A**

“Sound tactical employment of these models should give the desired result.”

Sergeant Dan Snyder, on the value of US Marines training with Doom

Written by | Emma Parkinson

GAME OVER, MAN

US MARINES ARE TRAINED ON A CUSTOM VERSION OF DOOM. AND YOU THOUGHT THAT 3D SHOOTERS WERE JUST FUN AND GAMES...

You're fighting for your life in unfamiliar territory. You're out in the open air and your M-16 still doesn't feel comfortable in your hand. You thought you were playing *Doom II*, but this is wrong, oh so wrong. Suddenly, out of the gunfire looms a dark figure. But it's not the demon you were expecting – the smouldering-eyed red bastard who wants your colon for a necklace. No it's far worse than that, as from the confusion you pick out the shape of a US Marine. A real US Marine, trained to be one of the most effective killers in the American military. And he's looking at you. Shit. This is not make believe.

The only consolation you have is that this guy is on your side. That he's not about to grin and blow your head off without breaking a sweat. But what the hell is he doing here?

Since 1995 the US Marine Corps has been investigating the use of Commercial Off-The-Shelf software (or COTS, in military speak) to train its troops. Fuelled by budget cuts and the pressure of being the smallest sector of the American armed forces – the Marines received only 4% of the US defence budget in 1997, a mere \$10 billion – anything that can supplement the costly field training that uses live ammunition on high-maintenance ranges has been deemed worth looking into.

And so enter *Marine Doom*, guns blazing.

Developed at the sinister-sounding Marine Corps Modelling and Simulation Management Office, based in Quantico, Virginia, *Marine Doom* was the creation of First Lieutenant

Scott Barnett and Sergeant Dan Snyder (who later received the Navy Achievement Medal for his work on the project). These two men took the original version of *Doom II* and, using tools provided as shareware by id Software, remodelled the game and created their own *Doom WAD* (playable by anyone who owns a registered version of *Doom II*, you can download it for yourself from <http://www.gam.ernx.com/>). Their aim was to produce a tactical simulation designed to train and then test the efficiency of a four-man Marine fire team, acting under pressure in hostile territory.

In the game you play a US Marine, and instead of the usual rocket launcher and chainsaw, you're equipped with an M-16 rifle, an M-249 machine gun and M-67 fragmentation grenades – the typical tools of the basic Marine fire team. You're in an environment far-removed from the straightforward Hell of *Doom*, and instead have to negotiate fighting holes, bunkers and tactical wire – the hell of a battlefield. Your enemies look like other soldiers and as Dan Snyder puts it “While the weapons behaviour is not accurate, sound tactical employment of these models should give the desired result.” Or to put it another way, this is the real deal. Fight well in *Marine Doom* – learn the strategies and support your three comrades – and you can learn to deal with a real enemy on a real battlefield.

While *Marine Doom* is not yet compulsory training for US Marines, it's still in demand by recruits. The game, and its follow up *Quake*, can be used to simulate real-life situations such as the layout of hostile embassies, or designed to keep troops battle ready at all

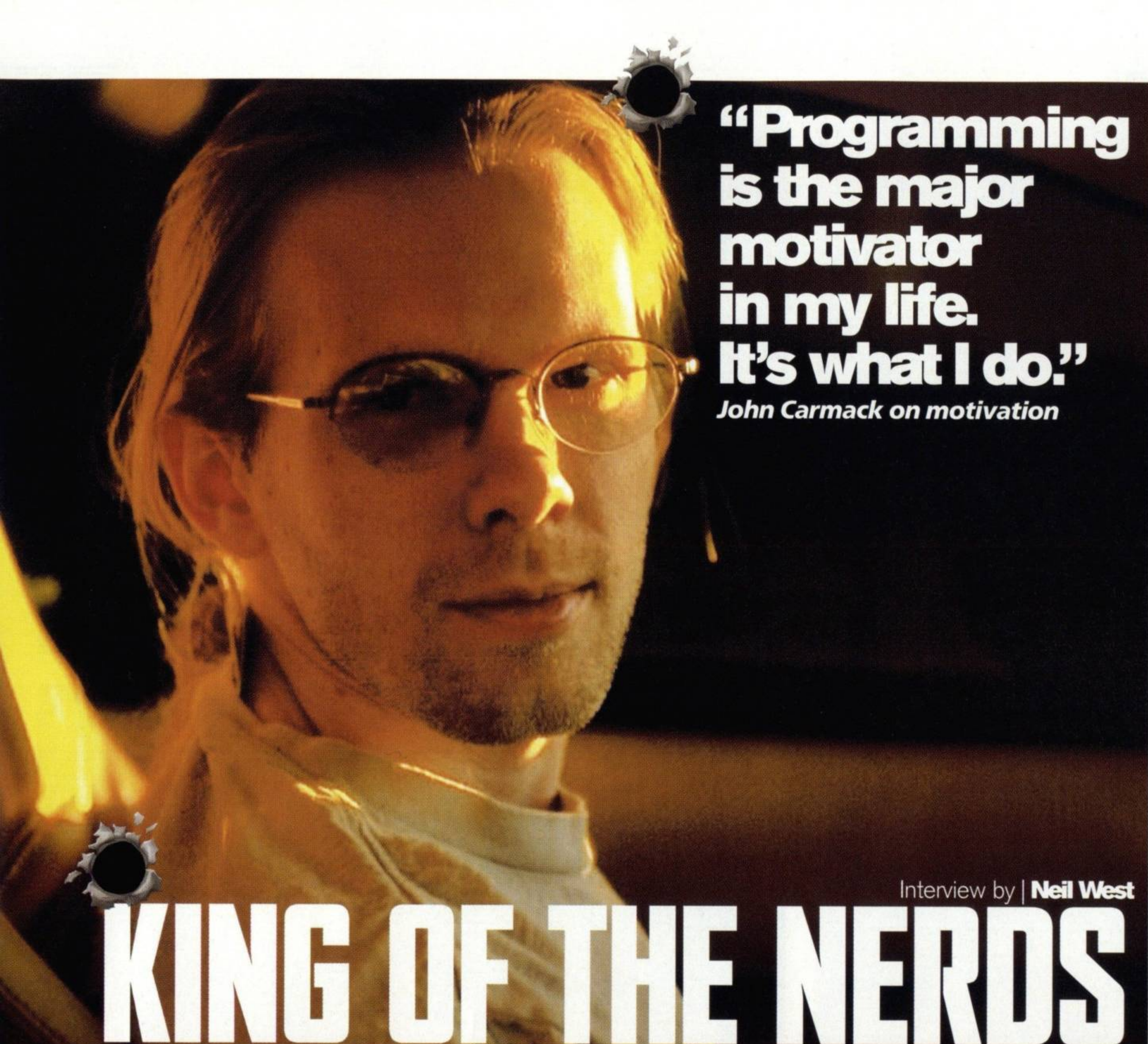
■ Ow! Ow! Stop! I've got my T-shirt caught. My mom's gonna kill me...



times – even on long sea journeys. As Colonel Gary Anderson of Okinawa base says, he wants to use the game “to get the Marines here thinking about warfighting every week.”

And of course there's a crossover into commercial videogames. For a start, all you need to play *Marine Doom* is a registered version of *Doom II* and the necessary WAD. But there's more than that. The software industry hasn't been slow to exploit both the military's need for cheap, tailored software and gamers' blood-lust for accurate fighting experiences. While most recent developments have been in the production of tactical/strategic software (tactical simulation *MEU 2000* from MAK Technologies is under simultaneous development for commercial release and the US Marines), there are already fruits to be reaped. For starters check out *NAM*, from GT Interactive, developed with the aid of Dan Snyder. “The tactics and weapons used in creating *NAM* ask players to ‘read and react’ correctly to different military scenarios” says GT's Holly Newman. Well we don't know whether we want our reactions honed to Marine-level, but with an assault rifle, grenade launcher, LAAWs rocket, machine gun, C4 and Claymores to play with, we'll have fun finding out. See you in Hell.

■ *NAM* by GT Interactive is available now. Look out for a review in *Arcade* next issue.



“Programming is the major motivator in my life. It’s what I do.”

John Carmack on motivation

Interview by | Neil West

KING OF THE NERDS

PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL MORDLER/NEXT GENERATION

ID SOFTWARE SUPREMO JOHN CARMACK IS THE MOST RESPECTED GAMES PROGRAMMER ON THE PLANET. BUT WHAT GETS HIM UP IN THE MORNING?

Most people making 3D-shooter games are motivated by trying to beat you. What gets you up in the morning?

I was thinking about that just a week or two ago. I was watching that Army commercial, “be all you can be” and all that. As corny as it sounds, that’s actually the way I’ve been for quite a while now. It’s been a long time since I have actually specifically looked at other people – companies, technologies, whatever – and said, “this is competition.”

Is this the secret of your success?

I work seven days a week. I work every day that I’m near a computer. It’s what I do. Programming is the major motivator in my life. It’s what I most enjoy. id is successful because we’re talented and hard-working. We’ve got focus to see it through. If I didn’t enjoy it, I could force myself to do it and make a lot of money. But the lucky thing is that I actually enjoy all of this. Every day I wake up excited to get into work and find the next thing, fix something up, get it done.

Can you separate John Carmack the programmer from John Carmack the person?

No, not at all. Programming is the central focus of my life. And I make no excuses about it. There’s always the time where you have people telling you to get a life, you know, “Don’t spend so much time

on this, you should be broader based.” But being well balanced is over-rated; I’m really, really good at what I do. I derive a lot of satisfaction from it. I’m able to push ahead on some new frontiers. And I’m completely happy with it.

Do you ever seek refuge outside of games?

I really don’t have much in the way of other hobbies. I read a huge amount. I take time every day to read. I usually have a couple technical books and a couple of non-technical books going.

And, of course, you’ve been known to rent the runway of your local airport to test-drive one of your Ferraris...

Yeah. I’ve spent almost a million dollars on exotic cars. But the great part is that every single day I enjoy them, at least on the ride into work and the ride home. Anything else that I could buy – boats or planes – I would never, ever use.

Do you ever see yourself getting bored of game programming?

That was a big issue early on at id. There was a fear that I’d be bored and go off to do something weird in operating systems research or something. But it turned out that I’ve been able to find so many interesting things just in the context of games. I’ve been able to cover a lot more ground than I expected.

Certainly, the audience for your work keeps getting bigger. And from the beginning, you’ve said you want *Quake III* to reach a broader audience than the established on-line community of hardcore 3D shooter fans. Why is this?

We don’t want to do a niche game. We want to do games that are popular; it’s nice to have a game that sells a million copies. And, as we look forward, making videogames more accessible as a popular sport, moving them into something that more normal people can enjoy and have access to, that’s the future. It’s important.

This said, *Quake III: Arena* is designed primarily with multi-player deathmatches in mind. This means playing against strangers on the Internet, which can be pretty intimidating for beginners...

I want the game to include a single player mode in which a new player can easily learn how to move the character, learn the basic skills, then play through some levels with a varying level of ‘bots. Something where they’ll start off really easy, build up their skill level and start to feel confident. Then they can play in public on the Internet or with their friends. *Quake III* will involve a level of player training we’ve never had before.

So, newcomers won’t have to learn the old-fashioned way – by logging onto a server and getting killed hundreds of times?

Hopefully not. There are so many people who are really good in the various on-line communities that if you’re a beginner you won’t have a very good time. You’ll be in levels that you don’t know how to run and you won’t know the proper strategies. For some people who persevere, who go through the long times of being absolutely pathetic in there, they’ll build up their skills. But we’d like to make it so the step of being pathetic in public doesn’t exist; we’ll give you a place where you can build up a set of skills at your own pace and get to the point where you’re comfortable with them before going out. We want it to be a game that you can give to your father to play.

What else are you doing to make *Quake III* easy for “dads”?

Some of the things that we’re doing along those lines are designing sets of levels that don’t necessarily require looking up and down. We’ve always pushed that ability, since we’ve moved away from *Doom*, as an example of “look what we can do differently.” But the honest truth is, it’s not an inherently beneficial part of the game.

Some hardcore gamers would disagree with you...

It’s one of those things. Sometimes when you get a strong game community, you get this unhealthy, inbred push, where the gamers want more and more sophistication, because all of the actions that are in the basic primitives are totally drilled into their minds – they’ve become second-nature reflexes. These gamers can be working with five fingers and a mouse, and they think it’s the most natural thing in the world. But they forget that when people start out in the game, it’s not second nature at all.

Many people have successfully built games on your *Quake II* graphics engine. Valve’s *Half-Life* is a recent example. How do you feel about this?

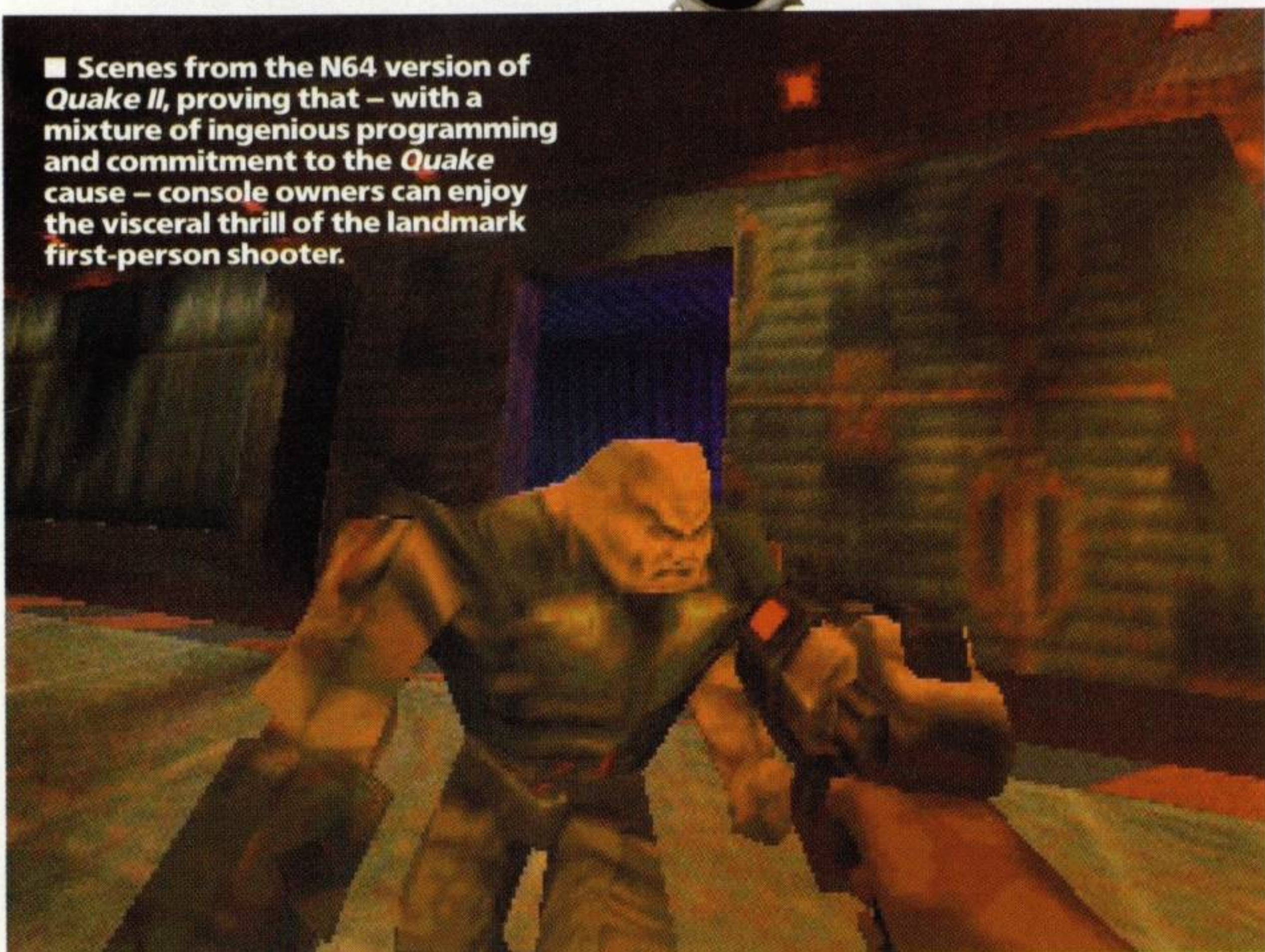
I take a good deal of pride in seeing games like *Half-Life* coming out and saying, “Okay, they’ve built on our foundation, and they’ve done a spectacular job.” I’m not sitting here kicking myself and thinking, “We could have done that game.” We’re busy doing our games, and they’re slightly different now, and I think we do things that best utilise our company’s resources. I’m extremely pleased with *Half-Life*. And the funny thing is, you know, *Half-Life* is the one that we were paying the least attention to. It’s interesting, because I think some of the developers in the Dallas area are sitting there going, “Oh shit.” And we’re thinking, “Hey, we get royalties off this. This is okay.”

And what will you be working on after *Quake III: Arena*?

Already, while we’re doing the technology that’s going to be the most appropriate thing for when we ship, in the middle of 1999, we’ve got a pretty clear idea of what changes need to be made to take advantage of the hardware that’s going to be shipping a year or two from now.



■ Scenes from the N64 version of *Quake II*, proving that – with a mixture of ingenious programming and commitment to the *Quake* cause – console owners can enjoy the visceral thrill of the landmark first-person shooter.



Written by **Sam Richards**

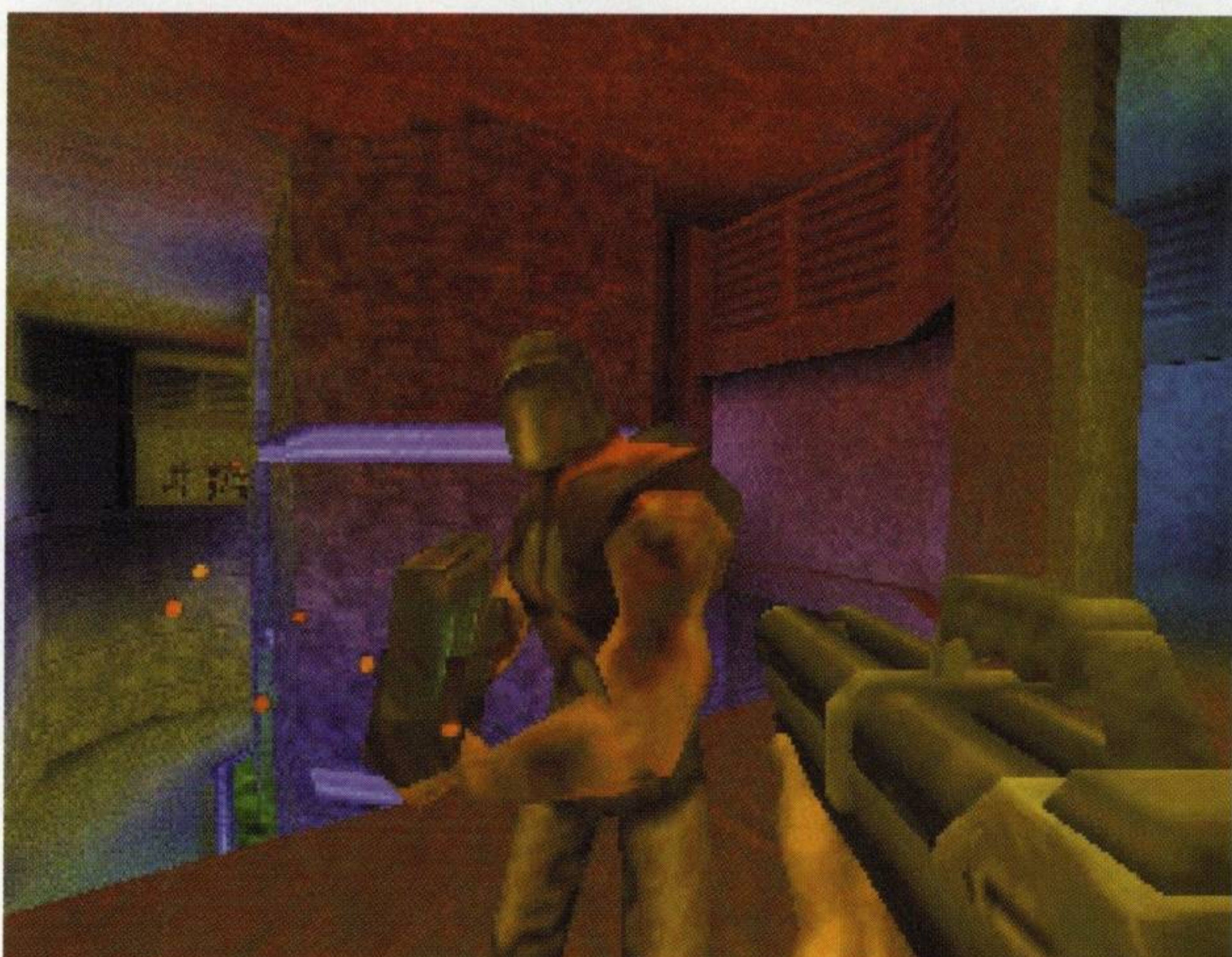
QUAKING ON THE SOFA

WE'VE TOLD YOU THAT RUNNING AROUND DUNGEONS, PICKING OFF ALIEN MUTANTS WITH A DEADLY WEAPON IS GREAT FUN, BUT THIS MAY STILL SEEM LIKE A THRILL RESTRICTED TO PC OWNERS. THANKFULLY, THE RELEASE OF QUAKE II FOR BOTH NINTENDO 64 AND PLAYSTATION SHOULD QUELL THE RIOTOUS DISCONTENT OF CONSOLE OWNERS EVERYWHERE.



■ Here are some consoles. There is *Quake II*. You know it makes sense.

■ Green! Red! Purple! Electric blue! The browns and greys of the original *Quake* are banished forever.



There comes a time when you've simply got to stop dreaming of romantic liaisons with that gorgeous girl or boy who smiled at you once while they were waiting tables in Pizza Express. Let's face it, they're way out of your league. It's time to get real and go for the person who you know fancies you – they may not be model material, but they're pretty cool and the sex would definitely be more fulfilling.

It's the same with videogame equipment: if you can't afford to buy a top-of-the-range PC and all its cumbersome peripherals and upgrades, you're in much the same situation. Why waste your time drooling over *Quake III* when you're never going to be able to play it in its full, mindblowing glory? Save up instead for the Nintendo 64 and PlayStation conversions of *Quake II*

and fulfil your fragging needs from the comfort of your sofa.

It may have taken 18 months to complete, but early playable versions of *Quake II* for the N64 suggest a potential *GoldenEye 007*-beater. The game has been carefully tailored to the needs of the N64 audience by Raster Productions; and with a host of levels not featured in the original PC adventure, it's clear that the package is not just another careless port.

Raster may be a new name, but the old face behind the company is Aaron Seeler, previously of Midway, who worked closely with id on the brilliant *Doom* conversion for PlayStation and the original *Quake 64*. *Quake II* is leagues ahead of its predecessor, however. Scenery is sharper and clearer, and the horror of 2D monsters has been eradicated – *Quake II* is riddled with a plague of convincing 3D enemies. More importantly, the deathmatch contest can now support four players in a split-screen battle that moves with

“Even PC owners will be surprised at how Raster has managed to protect the true spirit of *Quake*.”

more speed and agility than almost any other split-screen game on the console. Even PC owners will be surprised at how Raster has managed to protect the true spirit of *Quake*.

Less is known about the PlayStation version which is slipping back down Activision's schedules, but as – *Doom* aside – Sony's console is starved of decent first-person shooter action, *Quake II* in any form will be a godsend. The UK developer behind the conversion, HammerHead (creator of *Shadow Master*), again promises unique levels in an experience fully customised for the PlayStation.

Apparently, the company has worked hard to maximise the options of the PlayStation control system and this naturally includes making full use of the analogue sticks. Is the PlayStation community already ambivalent towards first-person shooters or will *Quake II* reactivate the genre? *Arcade* will bring you news of the game as soon as we've played it. **A**

■ The N64 version of *Quake II* will be released by Activision on 2 July. The PlayStation version is yet to gain a release date, although it should follow a few months later.



■ If you meet this man on-line, fire a rocket up his jacksy.

Words | **Andy Hutchinson**

JOIN THE ON-LINE WAR

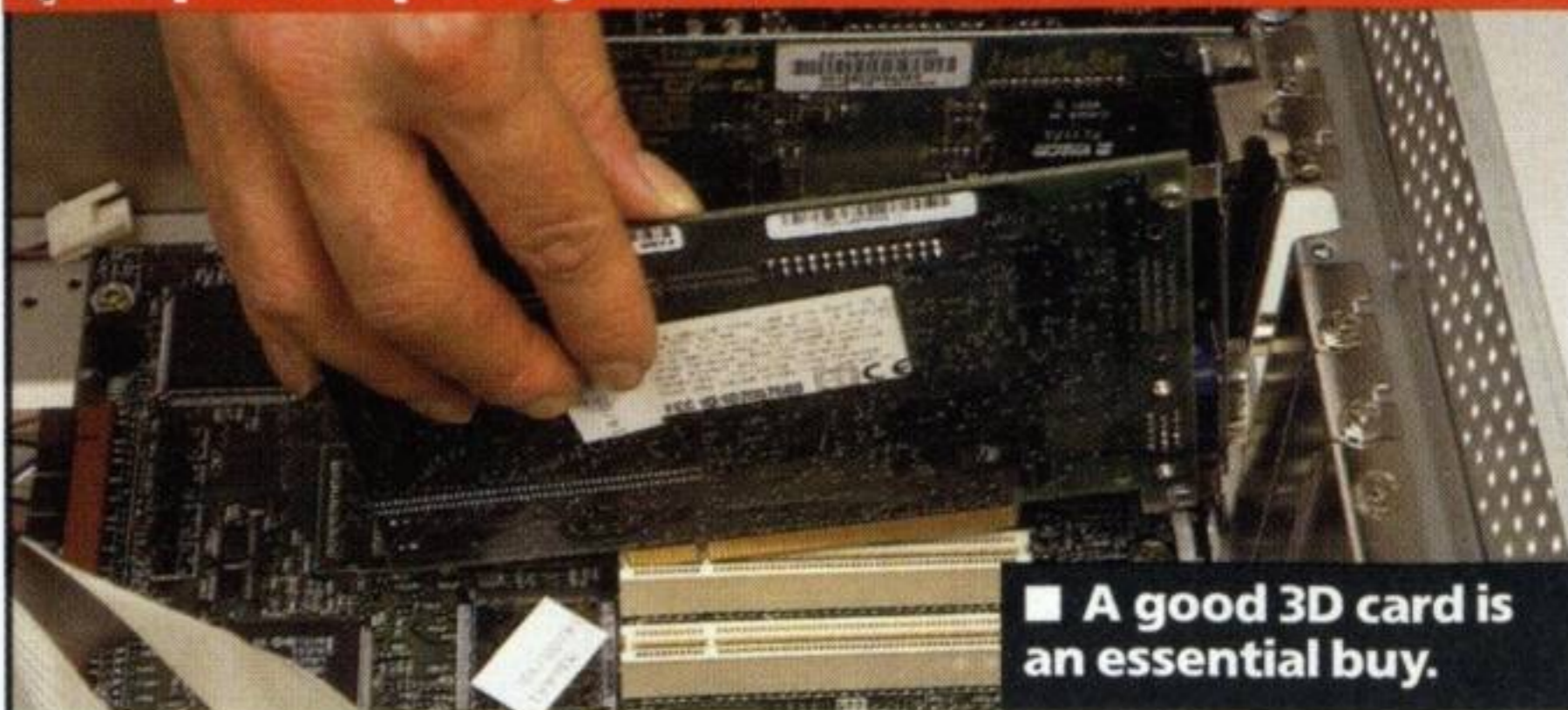
SIGNING YOURSELF UP FOR INTERNET MULTI-PLAYER GAMES MAY SEEM INTIMIDATING. BUT FEAR NOT, YOUNG SOLDIER: HERE'S ARCADE WITH YOUR EASY, TEN-STEP GUIDE TO GETTING ONLINE AND KICKING ASS WHEN YOU GET THERE.

Getting yourself a bit of on-line blood-spilling action can seem even more daunting than the monsters that you'll face in cyberspace when you get there. There's really nothing to fear, though, and it's getting cheaper to sign up all the time. Besides, *Arcade's* on your side with this essential ten step guide to not only getting on-

line, but also passing yourself off as a pro when you get there.

We've done our best to make sure this advice is fool proof. The idea is that even your dad could follow it. So if you come across a term or process you don't fully understand, don't panic – the chances are you don't need to know the ins and outs, just keep following the steps and it'll work out okay in the end. We hope.

Step 1: Prepare your PC



■ A good 3D card is an essential buy.

The gaming gear

The same rules apply to on-line gaming as do to one-player gaming, in that if you want the whizzy graphics, great sound and high frame rates then you'll need a poky PC (if you're buying new now, get a Pentium III or AMD K6-2-based machine). Buy as much RAM as you can – 64Mb minimum, 128Mb for preference, and make sure that your drivers are bang up to date by visiting the manufacturers' Web sites.

A good graphics card is absolutely essential – there's a new wave of cards about to hit the market, that can transform your

gaming experience. We recommend checking out the Voodoo 3-based cards (whatever the brand, they're all much the same) or, even better, the new Ultra TNT2 offerings. Creative Labs, 3Dfx and Diamond Multimedia will be happy to help.

If you've got an aged soundcard then you might like to consider upgrading it, because it'll slow down your games and lessen your chances of doing well. We suggest looking at Videologic's Sonic Vortex 2, the Terratec Xlerate Pro or the Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! – each of these has on-board processing power and Surround Sound features.

Step 2: Buy a modem

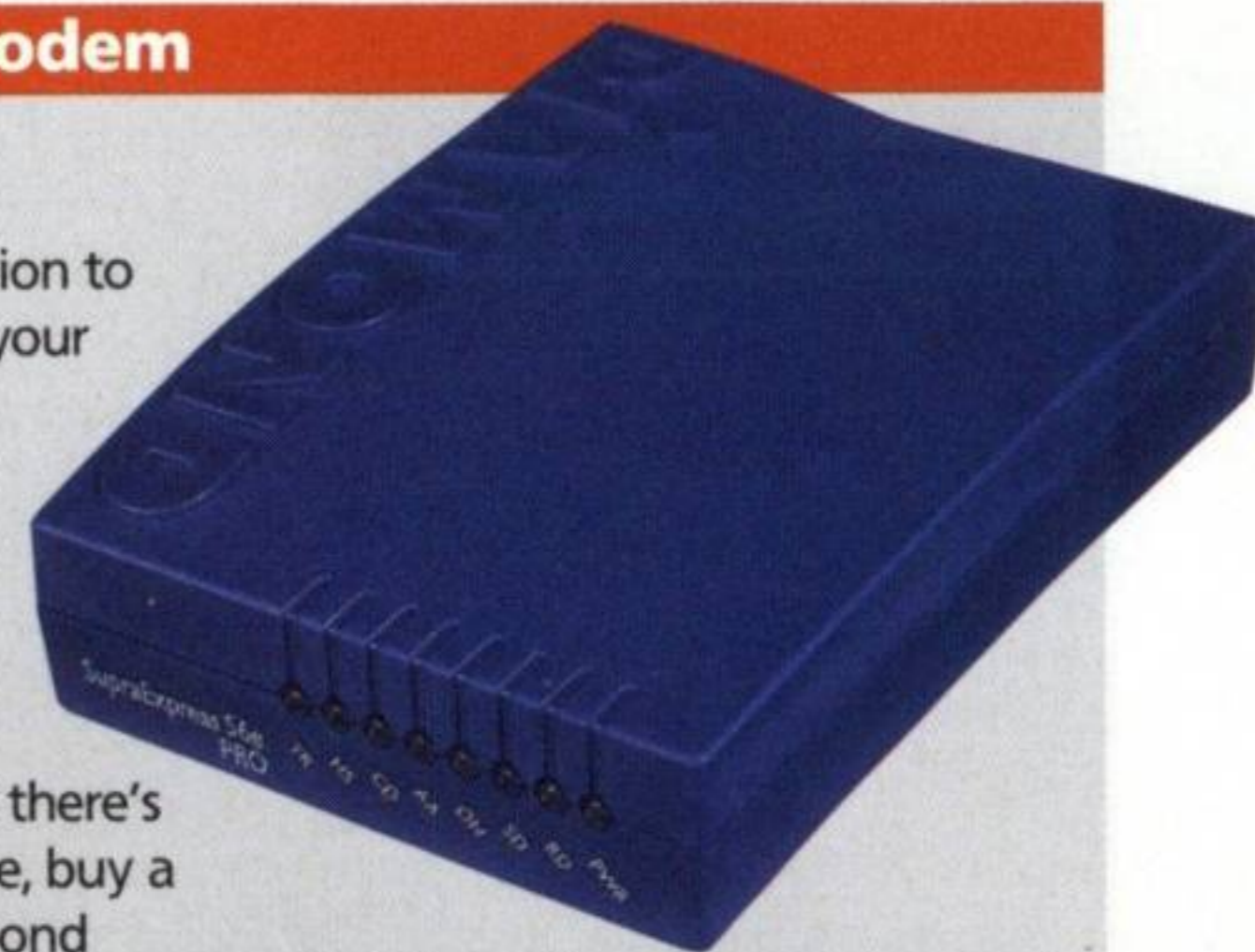
Get connected

The faster your connection to the Internet, the faster your games will run and the better chance you have of surviving for longer than five minutes. So here are the rules:

■ If you have only a standard phone line and there's no chance of an upgrade, buy a 56K modem – the Diamond Supra's the current speed king and it'll set you back £69.

■ If you can, upgrade to BT's HomeHighway service (one digital line and one ordinary phone line). This service offers a speed of 128K that's guaranteed, unlike the combination of a modem and standard phone line where the connection speed can vary. Call BT for details.

■ To take your connection to the ultimate level, you'll need two digital lines, and to do this you need an Integrated Digital Services Network connection

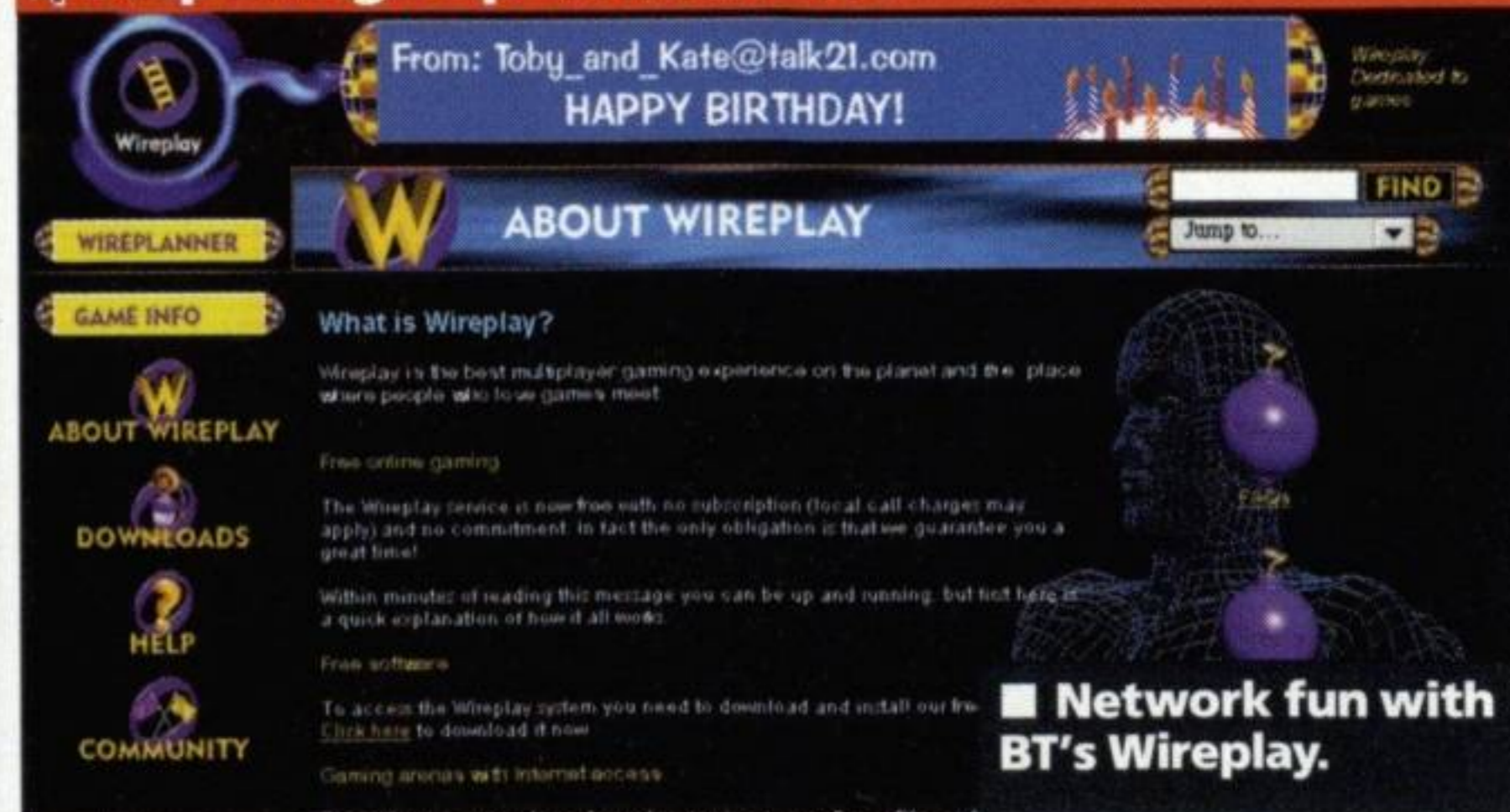


■ Make a fast connection with the Diamond Supra.

(ISDN, for short). ISDN offers two lines at 64K, but if you want to pay for two phone calls instead of one you can run both lines together and get 128K access speeds.

For full details of the benefits (and prices) of HomeHighway or ISDN chat with one of the bods at British Telecom – it's far too boring to explain here. Call BT on freephone 0800 731 3349 to get all the information you need.

Step 3: Sign up with an "ISP"



■ Network fun with BT's Wireplay.

Who to connect with

Once you've got all the kit, to actually get on the Internet you need to sign up with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). These people will also kit you out with Web access and an e-mail address. Computer magazines everywhere

come with CDs and offers from ISPs like AOL or Demon, but if cash is a problem, pop into Dixons and pick up a Freeserve CD to enjoy totally free Internet access. Alternatively, get hold of a BT Wireplay CD by calling freephone 0800 800918 and play games on BT's own network.

Step 4: Pick a game



■ *Half Life* is our multi-player game of choice.

What to play?

As you'll have gathered from everything you've read since page 40 of this issue, there are plenty of first-person shooters out there. Turn the page and you'll see many more that are on the way. However, if you're new to the whole concept of multi-player gaming then we strongly recommend you get

hold of a copy of *Half-Life*. The finest shooter for the PC (ever), *Half-Life* features a number of newbie-friendly game arenas (Boot Camp's a particularly good starting point), that enable you to get your bearings before being destroyed. Once you've got to grips with a training arena, you can move on to the more frantic world of *Quake*.

Step 5: Learn the lingo

Glossary of terms

Know what you're talking about.

- **BFG** – Big Fucking Gun; originally in *Quake*, but has come to mean any large weapon, so to speak.
- **Bot** – an add-on to a game (such as *Quake*) that enables you to play against simulated deathmatch opponents.
- **Camp** – to sit in one area where weapons or ammo appear.
- **Clan** – a team of gamers who play group deathmatch or capture the flag games against other clans.
- **CTF** – Capture The Flag; a game in which opposing teams attempt to capture the other side's flag.
- **Deathmatch** – kill everyone else and avoid being killed yourself.
- **Drop** – when you suddenly lose your connection to the server and the game freezes.

- **Elite** – the best of the best.
- **Frag** – a kill.
- **Gib** – short for giblets; to obliterate an opponent into a gooey mess.
- **Lag** – the speed of your server connection; see "Ping".
- **Lamer** – derogatory term, describing a dreadful gamer.
- **LPB** – Low Ping Bastard; someone with a fast connection.
- **Mod** – modification; a tweak for a game.
- **Ping** – the time taken to bounce information from client (you) to server (them).
- **Spawn** – to appear in the gameworld.
- **Strafe** – to blitz an opponent while moving sideways.
- **Tag** – a name or text message you can display or send to other players.

Step 6: Avoid any embarrassing faux pas

Beginner's etiquette

- Don't camp. You might be crap, but sitting in one place where weapons spawn will only serve to piss people off.
- Tags are fun, but use them sparingly – you're a *Half-Life* gamer, not a graffiti artist
- If you're doing really badly, avoid the urge to broadcast this to the other players. Knuckle down and improve your game instead of bitching about it.

- Don't take it personally. If one person keeps fragging you repeatedly, they're probably doing the same to other people.
- Don't shoot players who are standing motionless in a corner – they're talking to someone or have dropped their server connection.
- When you do spawn into the game, resist the urge to announce your superiority to the other players. They will gang up and kill you. Repeatedly.

Step 7: Forewarned is fore armed

Newbie tips

- Make yourself familiar with the gameworld (do this off-line by creating a local multi-player game); learn where weapons and health packs are located.
- Do not stand still for a second. It's harder for someone to shoot you if you're a constant blur.
- Learn to use the FreeLook option that's available in most first-person shooters. This enables you to pick off targets with ease.

- Learn the strengths of each weapon – some have hidden features that you may not have considered (the rocket jump in *Quake*, or Tau Cannon blast in *Half-Life* spring to mind).
- Even if your own health is depleted, pursue a retreating enemy as you've obviously done them some damage.
- Be aware of your surroundings – don't just charge down that canyon, have a good look around for any snipers.

Step 8: Get ready...

Ease yourself in gently

In order to play a game on-line, you'll obviously need to access its multi-player features. Once upon a time this was a real pain in the butt (you had to struggle with all manner of shenanigans, including entering obscure Internet Protocol addresses), but these days it's often as simple as running the game in the first place.

Many games, such as *Half-Life*, feature their own multi-player "Client". This feature looks up all the servers world-wide, assesses their speed and tells you how many players are currently on-line. All you then have to do is double-click on any server you like and off you go.

Unfortunately, some games still have a less enlightened attitude to user-friendliness (*Quake II* springs to mind), but it's still not too hard to get in on the action. You need to get hold of *GameSpy* (you can find it at <http://www.gamespy.com/>). This nifty shareware utility will search the world for game servers playing *Quake*, *Quake II*, *Half-Life*, *Tribes*, *Redline*, *Shogo*, *Sin*, *Blood II*, *Hexen II*, *Heretic II*, *Unreal*, *Turok 2*, *South Park*, *Descent III*, *Dark Vengeance* and *Baldur's Gate*. All you have to do, once *GameSpy* has sorted the list of servers, is double-click on the game you want to play and the software will fire it up for you.

Another useful tip, before you venture into the on-line gameworlds, is to familiarise yourself with the culture. All of the big on-line games (such as *Quake*) have hundreds of Web sites devoted to them, many of which concentrate heavily on the multi-player side of things. For instance, if you fancy your luck with *Quake II* (or *Quake: Arena* for that matter), head over to "Blues News" (<http://www.bluesnews.com/>) and see what the *Quake*aholics are talking about.

For news on a wide range of games (including *Starcraft* and *X-wing Vs Tie Fighter*) check out "Scorched" (<http://www.scorched.com/>) or take a look at "PlanetQuake" (<http://www.planetquake.com/>). Many of these sites feature helpful FAQ (frequently asked questions) files for beginners, as well as tutorials from hardened gamers.



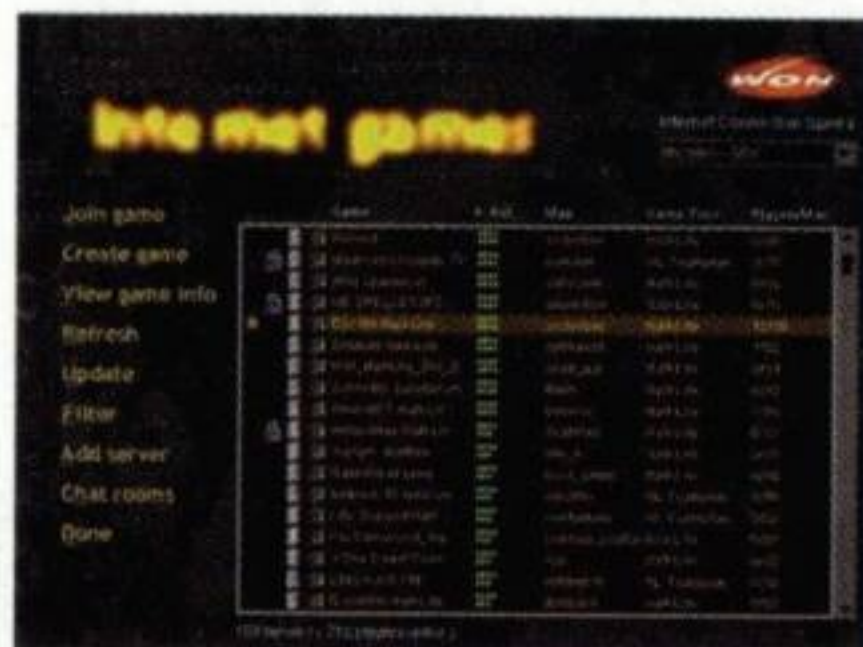
■ **Read all about the games you want to play before diving into the deep end. There are hundreds of web sites to check out.**

Step 9: Ready, steady, go

Your first *Half-Life* deathmatch



1) Before you boot up *Half-Life*, fire up your Internet connection. Now run the game, click on "Multi-player" from the main menu and then on "Internet Games". Hit the "Update" button and wait for the list of servers to appear in the large window, which can take up to five minutes.



2) Click on the word "Net" above the second column to list servers by speed. Sites with a low "ping" (speed of access relative to you) have lots of green lights, while sites with a high "ping" have red lights. When you've chosen a server (you can see which map's active), double-click on it.



3) The game will then attempt to connect you to the server you've requested. It sometimes fails to do this because the server's full or because it's simply lost track of it. If you manage to successfully connect, you'll see an on-screen confirmation and the level will then load into memory.



4) You will now appear ("spawn") into the gameworld and the first thing you should do is get hold of some serious weaponry. Head for an ammo and gun dump (you can learn about these by playing the multi-player maps on your own, off-line), get tooled up and charge into battle.



5) Avoid the urge to simply camp in one area, sniping at other gamers, but do use the platforms and raised areas to your advantage. Keep an eye on your ammo and reload whenever you get a chance. Don't worry too much about your health, because the main point is to take out other players.



6) Spend some time learning the sneaky tricks of the pros. Pick up a few trip mines and place them around corners at floor level – this is a simple and effective way to boost your frag score. Finally, don't get worked up – if you keep dying repeatedly, carry on trying. Everyone was a newbie once.

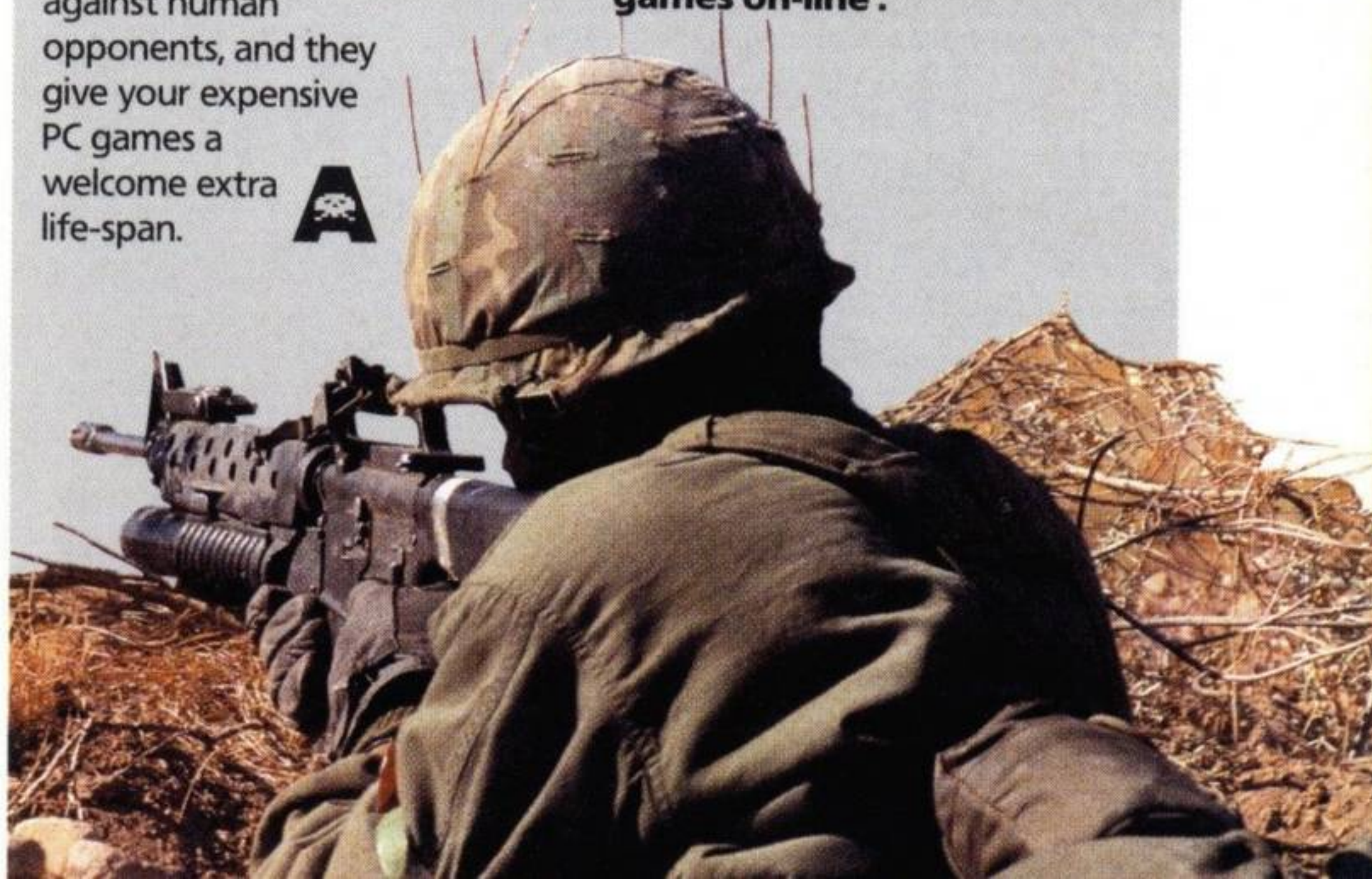
Step 10: That was easy. Now what?

Next steps

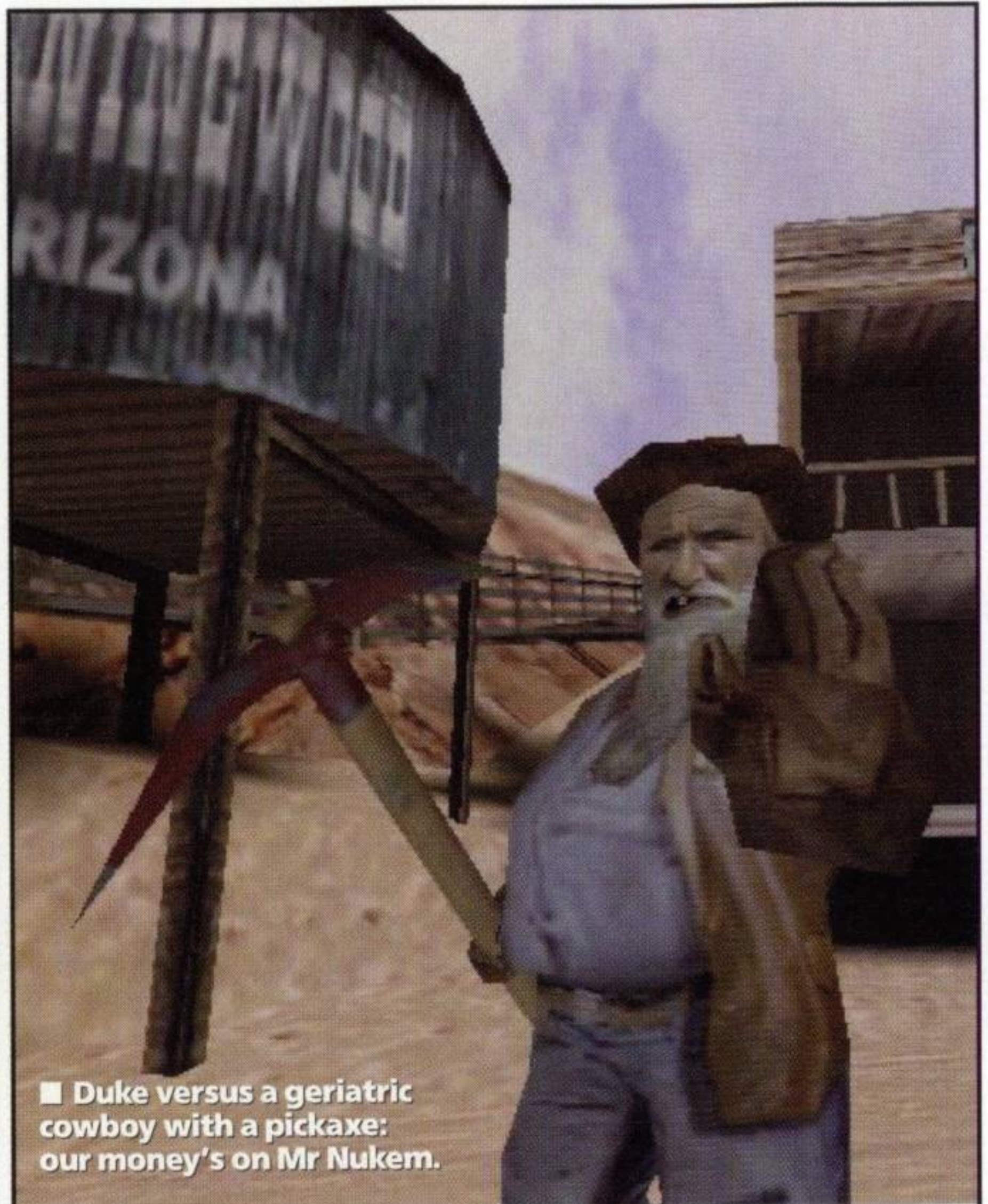
Now that you've taken your first brave steps out into the world of on-line gaming, why not dig out some of those older games on your shelves and see what they're like in multi-player mode. Titles such as *Command & Conquer*, *Motocross Madness* and *Heavy Gear* come to life when played against human opponents, and they give your expensive PC games a welcome extra life-span.



■ **It's not all shooting. Try playing your other favourite games on-line.**



■ Death can come in many gruesome ways. It's in the cards, you know.



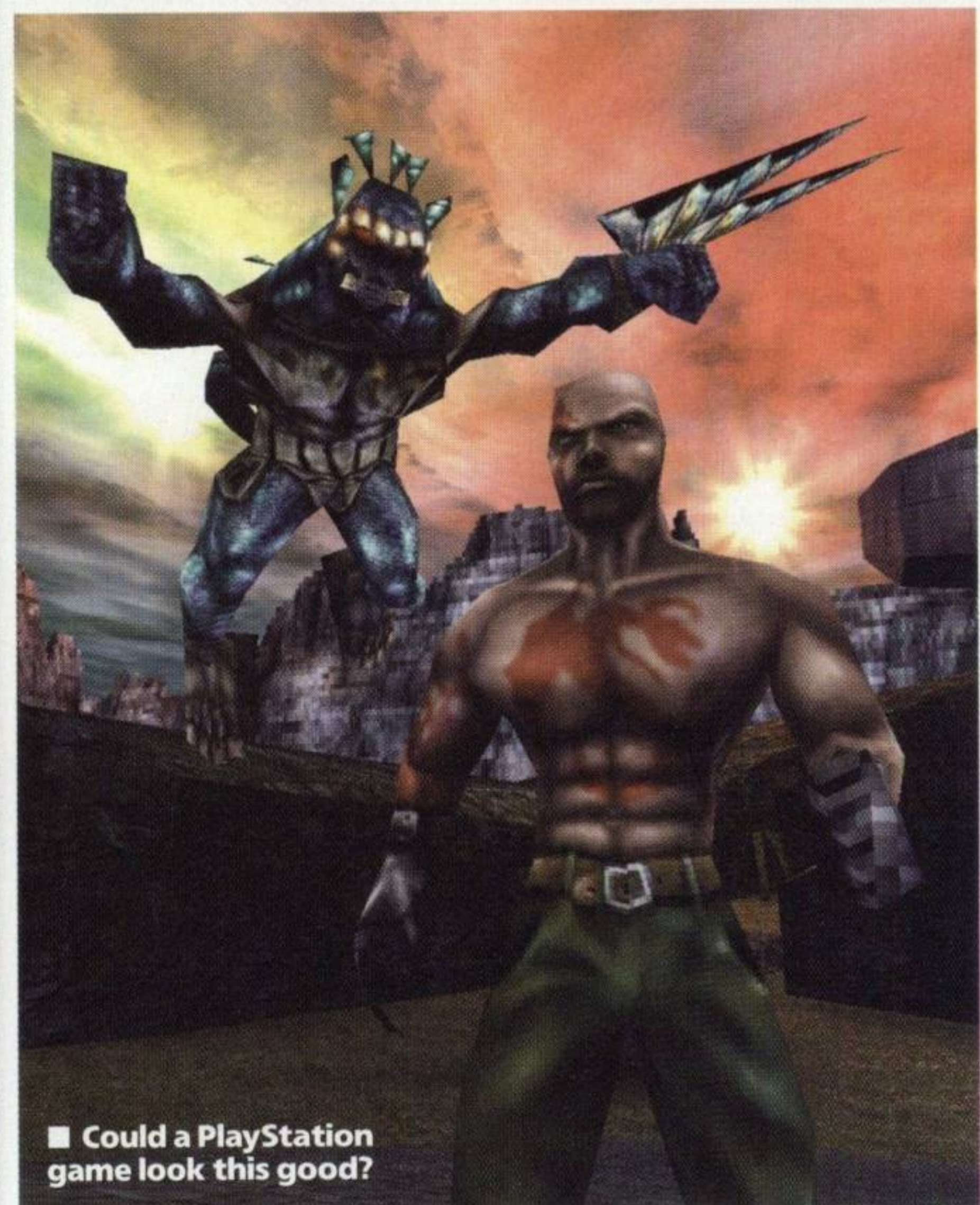
■ Duke versus a geriatric cowboy with a pickaxe: our money's on Mr Nukem.

Duke Nukem Forever

- Format: **PC**
- Developer: **3D Realms**
- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Release date: **2000**

■ The first sight of this game was at 1998's E3 show. Since then we've heard absolutely nothing and the Duke is keeping the details close to his muscle-bound chest. We do know that it uses the

Unreal engine and will continue the theme of previous *Duke Nukem* titles; bold, brassy, bawdy, brainless, but also tremendously exciting to play. We also know that Duke can ride around on a number of vehicles and choose from 40 different pairs of sunglasses. Not to be confused with the current third-person console titles, we'll give you more news on *Duke Nukem Forever* as it happens. **A**



■ Could a PlayStation game look this good?

Unreal

- Format: **PlayStation**
- Developer: **Epic MegaGames**
- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Release date: **November**

■ You thought the intricate and spacious graphics of the original PC title couldn't be squashed on to a titchy PlayStation disc, but

Epic is going to try to prove you wrong. At this point, we have no details either on the conversion or on what will have to go from the game for it to survive under console conditions. Let's hope that we're going to see a conversion every bit as stunning as the PC-to-PlayStation leap made by the original *Doom*. **A**

THE FUTURE OF DEATH

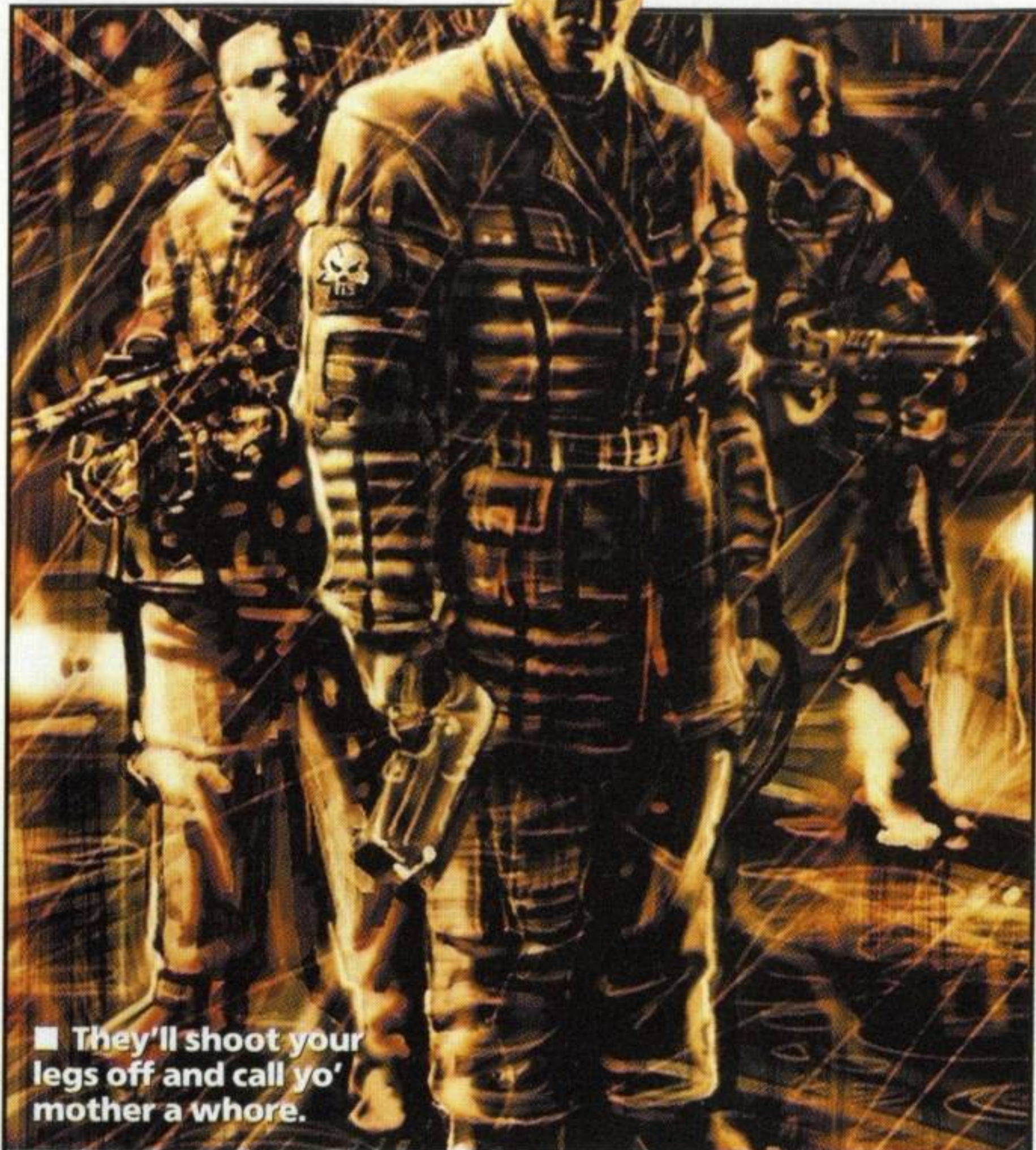
Written by | **Sam Richards**

IF YOU'VE EVER VISITED A TAROT-TOTING GYPSY AND TURNED UP THREE GRIM REAPERS, THEN THIS IS WHAT THE OLD CRONE WAS PREDICTING. SEVEN MORE SAVAGE AND INCONCEIVABLY MESSY WAYS TO CASH IN YOUR CHIPS.

The days when every new PC game was a 3D shooter have long passed, probably because a *Half-Life*-shaped bullet to the groin around Christmas sent panicking developers scurrying back to the drawing board. Thankfully, we're now left with only the biggies, the games which are

sure to give the current generation of shooters something to think about. *Quake III: Arena* is covered in depth elsewhere in this special, as are the forthcoming console conversions of *Quake II*. id aside, however, there are still a host of spectacularly painful deaths to look forward to.

PHOTO: MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY



■ They'll shoot your legs off and call yo' mother a whore.




Kingpin: Life Of Crime

- Format: **PC**
- Developer: **Xatrix**
- Publisher: **Interplay**
- Released: **June**

■ Swearing. We all do it, but in *Kingpin* you'll be mouthing off like there's no tomorrow. Battering strangers with a crowbar. Okay, we don't all do that, but in *Kingpin* the profanity and the violence go hand in hand. This is no future world packed with alien plasma attacks and ton-heavy nailguns, but a land where the *Quake II* engine spews out stinking back alleys and strip clubs populated with tramps, whores and predatory gangsters, all cruising to Cypress Hill's bong-loaded beats.

Kingpin has already been arousing plenty of controversy, something that's hardly surprising

given its realistic trappings. Confrontations are graphic and brutal, the deaths harsh and unforgiving. Yet it's refreshing to see a shooter that enables you to gradually build your own empire – you'll have to converse with the game characters, rather than simply open fire. Not everyone's an enemy, but you need to discover rapidly who's on your side. Weapons are bought or traded, not simply strewn around the levels.


The approach to the first-person shooter genre in *Kingpin* really is innovative and mature, with the consequences of your actions far more important than in any of the other *Quake* clones. However, it's the close-up nature of the violence and the level of obscenity that threaten *Kingpin's* very release. Interplay says June, we say wait and see. 

Daikatana

- Format: **PC**
- Developer: **Ion Storm**
- Publisher: **EIDOS**
- Release: **September**

■ It should be worrying for the developer when the story of a game's germination is more exciting than the plot of the game itself. To learn the full and intriguing history of *Daikatana* you'll have to turn back to our "Texas!" story, starting on page 44 of this issue, but all you need to know here is that *Daikatana* is the major project of Jon Romero, who split from the *Doom*-creating id team to form developer Ion Storm. *Daikatana's* been on the blackboard for a couple of years, but has slipped through the release schedule like a bald tyre on an ice rink.

Playable sections have been knocking around for a while and it seems that we should expect a thoughtful blaster, packed with demons, sorcery and ancient Japanese legends. Typically immense weaponry will shake hands with classic swordplay, including legendary blade the Daikatana itself. Levels are set in ancient Greece, medieval Norway and futuristic impressions of Kyoto and San Francisco. It's expansive, then, and should provide an experience that assimilates some of the best elements of shooters of lore. Equal emphasis is placed on the single-player and deathmatch variants and undoubtedly the Web will play an important part in spreading the game's popularity.

The only doubt that sneak previews of *Daikatana* has thrown up is that it's just too similar to *Quake II*. With the excitement surrounding *Quake III: Arena* building to a climax, can *Daikatana* hold its own? 



■ Another shooter relies on a high cleavage count.

■ *Prey*: undressed to kill, evidently.



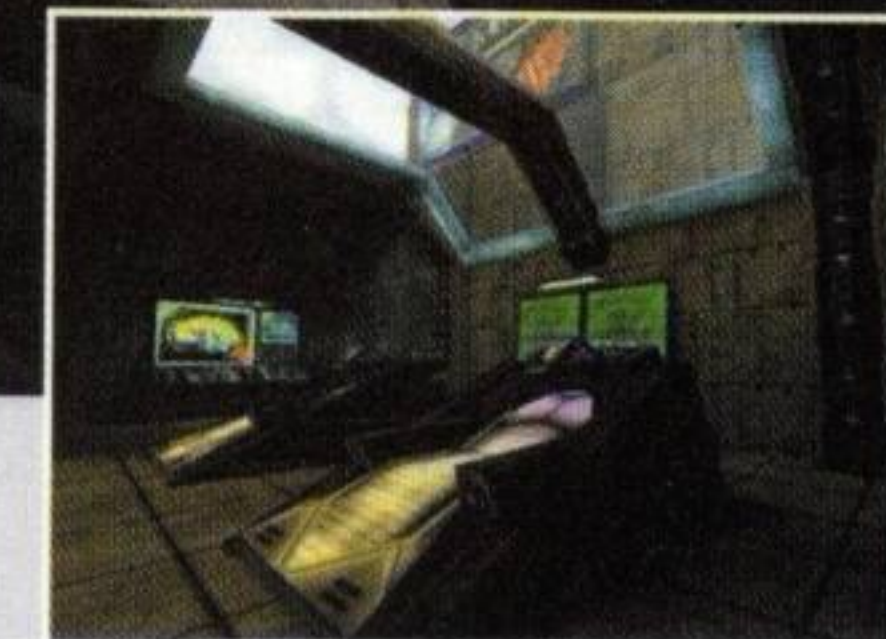
Prey

- Format: **PC**
- Developer: **3D Realms**
- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Release date: **2000**

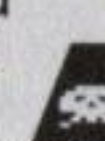
■ This is another game that's been hanging around in development for years with no sign of a release date in sight – more proof that as games become more complex, their development times soar. *Prey* aims

to introduce some original elements to the shooter genre, first by casting an Apache Indian as the lead character Talon Brave, and second by setting the initial levels in Arizona. Normal service is later resumed when Talon appears on the mothership fighting three different legions of aliens, enabling the 3D Realms team to show off its full arsenal of effects.

Interactive landscape is a key concern, and, according to 3D

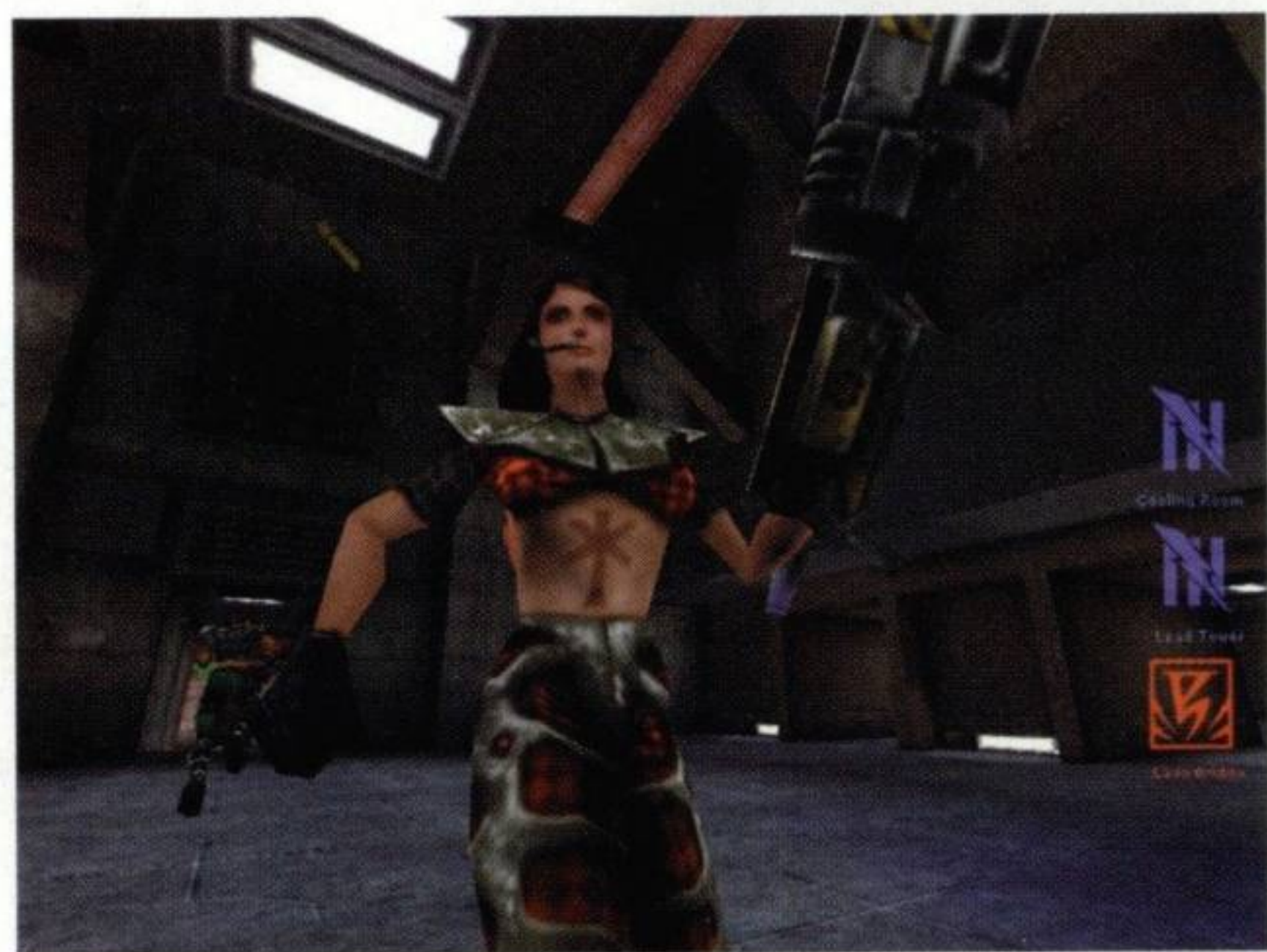
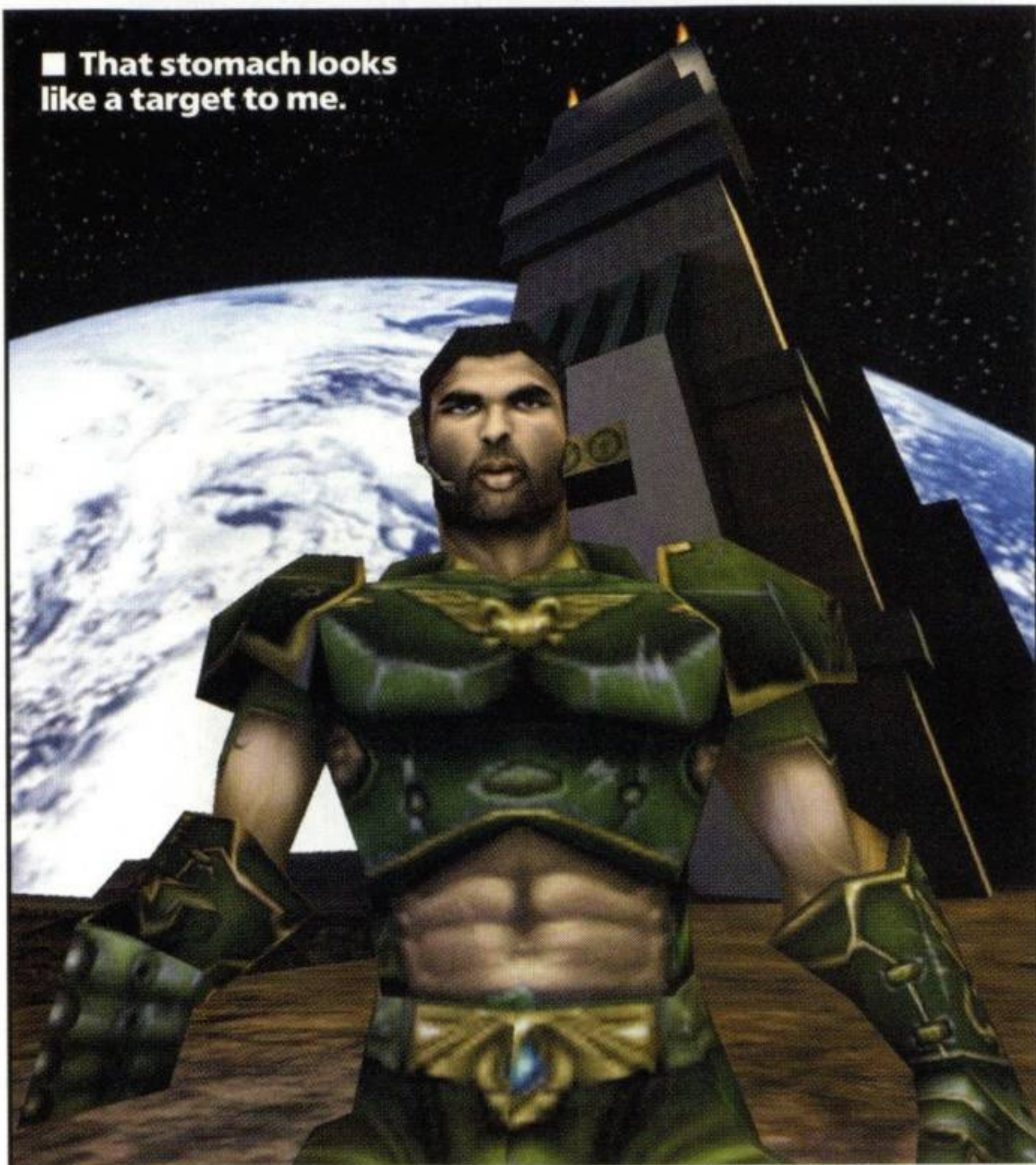


Realms, an element of this involves revolutionary "portal" technology. Sounds spooky.

When it arrives, *Prey* should prove to be a dark, mysterious shooter featuring all the single and multi-player options you could want, alongside a few intriguing touches of its own. 



■ That stomach looks like a target to me.



Unreal Tournament

- Format: **PC**
- Developer: **Epic MegaGames**
- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Release date: **July**

■ As is now becoming the fashion, *Unreal Tournament* is all about providing multi-player thrills without the need for expensive link-ups or Internet connections. *Tournament* is an add-on disc for the original game, but completely self-contained – on it you'll get 19 new levels, all using the *Unreal* game engine. The weapons available are also new, and the list

includes the "impact hammer" and the "redeemer". The specific effects of these are as yet unknown, although they're bound to be grisly.

There is no traditional single-player adventure included with *Tournament*, but instead you face computer players – bots that act as human players would in a deathmatch situation. In addition to a deathmatch, there are four other modes, including assault and the popular capture-the-flag game.

If you're a fan of *Unreal's* graphically stunning world, this is the perfect sequel.



■ The delectable Ms Joanna Dark and her perfect aim.

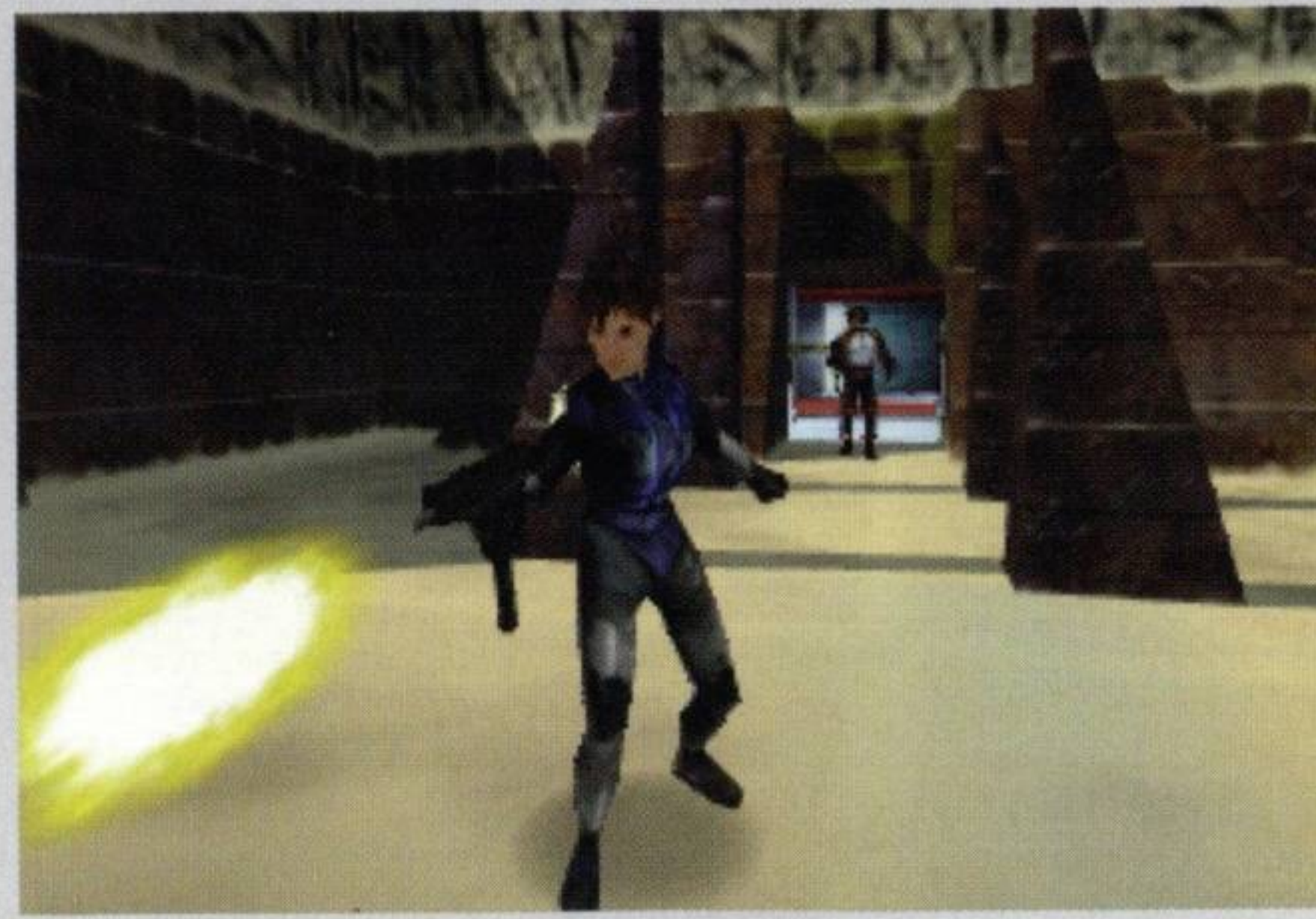


Perfect Dark

- Format: **N64**
- Developer: **Rare**
- Publisher: **Nintendo**
- Release date: **September**

■ Undoubtedly you will already be looking forward to this game with the fervour of a fat man at supertime. Rare is still keeping the full details of *Perfect Dark* under a black cloth, locked in a safe in the iron-clad vaults of an inaccessible and unclassifiable location, patrolled by shoot on sight Special Forces – but that's because it can. We don't need to know more – this is basically a sequel to *GoldenEye 007*, the greatest console shooter to date and still a massive office favourite (see page 45), and that's enough information to start us drooling.

But here's what we do know: the heroine is one Joanna Dark, smart, sexy, smooth and deadly – everything you'd expect from a female Bond, with a nice line in silk dresses. The year is 2023, the DataDyne company is the enemy and the conspiracy is universal. All kinds of frighteningly intelligent human and alien opponents will bar your way, testing your weapon selection and shooting



ability to the full as they do it. Expect the sniper rifle to remain in an improved form, plus two-handed shooting and ultra-rapid weapon focusing. Twenty-plus levels range from shipwrecked alien spacecraft to the roofs of skyscrapers, and each one should boast even more multi-route options than *GoldenEye*.

Perfect Dark will certainly support a strong puzzling element, set to elevate it above the level of brainless shooters. We're expecting to see the return of the split-screen deathmatch

and possibly a collaborative mode. As we begin to move into the realm of speculation, we're hoping for real-time lighting effects, realistic reactions from cunning enemies and a load more gore – Rare is now free from the restrictions of the Bond license, so no longer needs to pander to precious brand owners.

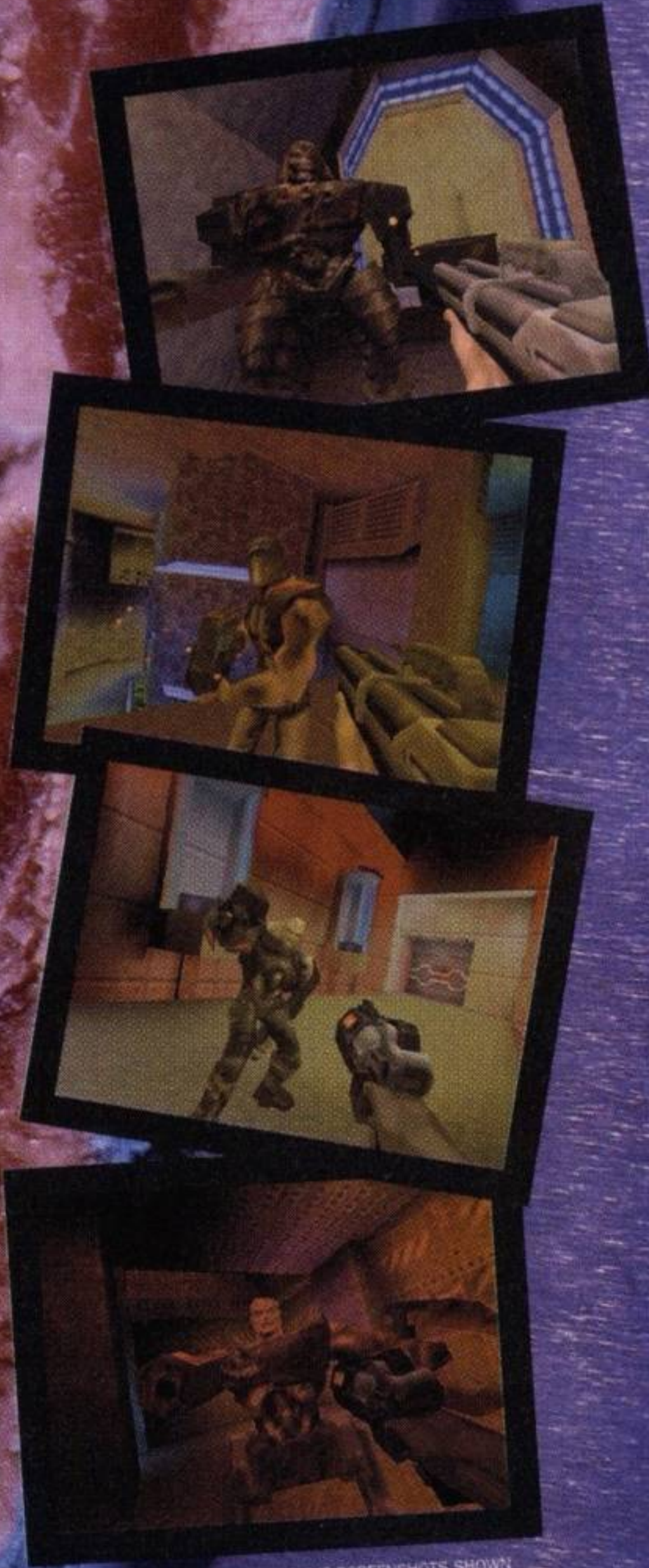
It's unlikely we'll see much of *Perfect Dark* in playable form before its actual release, which could easily slip towards Christmas. Keep 50 quid handy, though. This is a shooter you'll want to load up over and over.



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ID'S GUTS. YOUR SOUL.
SIMPLY PUT, THIS IS AS RAW AS IT GETS.

MEET YOUR MAKER ON AN ENTIRELY NEW PLATFORM. **QUAKE II™** FOR THE NINTENDO 64 FEATURES MORE NEW LEVELS AND TOTALLY REDESIGNED EXISTING LEVELS THAT HAVE IT ALL FLESHED OUT. ALL THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE PC WOVEN IN WITH THE SPECIAL EFFECTS AND SHADING OF THE NINTENDO 64. PLUS A GRITTY TWO- AND FOUR-PLAYER DEATHMATCH, FULLY CUSTOMISABLE CONTROLS AND SAVE GAME OPTIONS. ONLY ID SOFTWARE COULD MASTERMIND A VERSION SO INTENSE - AND ONLY THE MOST HARDCORE OF PLAYERS WOULD DARE UNDERMINE IT. AND YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE DONE.



NINTENDO 64® SCREENSHOTS SHOWN



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As whispers abound of a new Tomb Raider game, Neil West meets Lara Weller, the latest gorgeous model to don Lara Croft's emerald green vest-top

LARA!



With Lara Croft's public profile still rising by the day, competition for the role of the real-life Lara Croft is greater than ever. Lucozade ad campaigns, endless trade show appearances, relentless promotion of the *Tomb Raider* trilogy, not to mention a fourth game and a movie on the horizon – the model's life is almost as hectic as that of everyone's favourite game heroine, except without having to avoid the falling boulders, obviously.

The new living, breathing Lara Croft is a 24-year-old Dutch former diamond saleswoman who sullies her healthy image with the odd cigarette. But that's okay, because the last Lara Croft was a Yorkshire lass with a crew cut. The latest Lara not only has the hair, the looks and the adventuring spirit (if not quite the pneumatic bust); she was actually named Lara at birth. Neat, huh? *Arcade* discovers how Lara Weller became Lara Croft. ▶

■ Dutch courage: the new Lara fires bullets from Amsterdam.






You've modelled for *GQ* and *Men's Health* before, but have you had your eyes on the Lara Croft job for a while?

"My boyfriend loves playing videogames – which guy doesn't? – so that's when I first saw Lara. I thought it was cool to have a sexy woman as the star of a videogame. Luckily, I happened to be in England when the casting for the new Lara Croft model was taking place and I just *had* to apply. I look like her, I have the dark hair, and my name's Lara – so I think it was fate. Although there were a lot of girls at the auditions, I'm sure as soon as they saw me, they thought 'there's Lara Croft'."

We all know at least one tragic individual who has attempted – usually in vain – to persuade his girlfriend to dress up as Lara Croft in order fulfil some dubious fantasy. Your boyfriend must be loving it.

"Yeah, he thinks it's fantastic! He's always said I would make a good Lara Croft, so here I am." 

■ Could the next set of *Tomb Raider* merchandise include the Lara Croft fitness video? And bend, and stretch, and scale that vertical cliff...



Lara!

“Although there were a lot of girls at the auditions, I’m sure as soon as they saw me, they thought ‘There’s Lara Croft’.”

Lara Weller on being chosen as the new Lara Croft



■ Grrr: Lara scares off some advancing wolves.

Which qualities do you and Lara Croft have in common?

"She's tough, and I can be tough too, especially when something doesn't go my way. Lara's not a tomboy, she's strong and sexy at the same time, which is like me. And I love adventure."

So what kind of adventures have you had recently? Wrestled any wolves in the last couple of weeks?

"No, but I did a bungee jump not long ago, and that was amazing. I had no fear, so next I'm planning a parachute jump."

So does any part of your role as Lara Croft involve leaping over canyons or shooting tigers?

"Well the reality is probably even more scary – I have to go to trade shows and perform routines with stunt motorcycles in front of thousands of sweaty, screaming guys. Everyone wants their picture taken with me and in each photograph I have to show them that I'm the real Lara Croft."

And that tight costume can't be too comfortable after several hours in a stuffy conference centre...

"Yeah, it's very tight and sweaty – I wouldn't recommend it for a night out. When I'm at the shows I have to change several times a day, but I'd rather be hot than cool, I think."

Phew! Well, you've obviously embraced the role of Lara with relish, but was there anything about the task which troubled you? Lara's renowned for being – how can we put this? – absolutely stacked.

"Ha! Why do men always have to ask about breasts? But it's true, Lara is a double D cup or whatever and you can tell from that she's been invented by men, because no woman would create a character with natural breasts that size. I'm happy with mine! If they were as big as Lara's it would be painful, particularly if I was jumping about, swimming or even climbing... Ouch! Breasts aside, I do think Lara makes for a great role model."

Being from the Netherlands, how are you coping with embodying the essential Englishness of Lara Croft?

"I've actually lived in London for three-and-a-half years and I prefer it here. My favourite film is *Nil By Mouth*, I support Arsenal and I can cook great bangers and mash! I can't do Lara's posh accent yet, but I'm practising."

You seem very confident and happy in Lara's shoes – after your first photoshoot you were snapped wandering through King's Cross in the full get-up.

"It's exciting being Lara Croft and I love the attention. I really don't mind people coming up and saying 'Hello'. It's fine if they call me Lara because it's like they're talking to me and my character at the same time."



Archive raider

Just like Doctor Who, Lara Croft regenerates herself into a new form every so often. But who were the previous two incarnations of Lara?



■ Rhona ditched Lara to work with Dr Fox.

Rhona Mitra

- **Age:** 23
- **Lara tenancy:** April '97 – October '97
- **Previous career high:** known for getting her kit off in TV mini-series, *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous*.
- **Qualifying credentials:** dark hair, sexy pout, athletic figure, big attitude.
- **Defining features of reign:** it was the big attitude which caused problems between Rhona and Core. Take Rhona's point of view, and Core was misusing her talents by casting her as a trade show dummy when she really wanted to be doing more Lara-like stunts, such as climbing mountains and leaping from aeroplanes. Take Core's point of view, and she was a big-mouthed prima donna. Rhona also recorded a single in character. Entitled "Get Naked", it was written by beardy muso Dave Stewart (once of the Eurhythmics) and while it was a cult hit in Europe, it was deemed too shit to be released in the UK.
- **Life beyond Lara:** Rhona is best known for a stint presenting the *Pepsi Chart Show* and frequent appearances in *FHM*. Can also be seen in the poorly-received movie of 6th Century poem "Beowulf" if it makes it across from the US later this year.

Nell McAndrew

- **Age:** 24
- **Lara tenancy:** July '98 – April '99
- **Previous career high:** appearing on Chris Tarrant's terrible light entertainment show, *Man O Man*.
- **Qualifying credentials:** athletic figure, looked good in a wig.
- **Defining features of reign:** yep, when Nell landed the part, she was sporting a skinhead look, having shaved her hair while on holiday with her boyfriend. A generally more amiable Lara than Ms Mitra, Nell told us in Issue 2 of *Arcade* that wearing the outfit made her feel very powerful, although fans fought over the chair on which she had left a damp imprint after one particularly sweaty public appearance.
- **Life beyond Lara:** Nell recently dumped Brummie twit Jas Mann of Babylon Zoo "fame" to the relief of the sane world. Last seen modelling for the Jordan racing team and showing off her new barnet in *FHM*.

■ Nell ditched Lara to grow her hair blonde.



What you have to do:

To win a *Space Invaders* coin-op, you're going to have to do a little more than answer an insultingly easy multiple-choice question. We want you to design a coin-op system. That doesn't mean inventing a new game, or coming up with a luxury cabinet that feeds you milkshake through an intravenous tube. Your coin-op concept needs to be a professional, commercially viable product that would work in a proper arcade.

If you win, not only will you get your mitts on *Space Invaders*, you'll also get your coin-op idea turned into reality. Game Plan will design and manufacture it, then set about installing it in arcades and amusement parks up and down the country. So you'll need to make your cabinet's insides and outsides attractive to arcade proprietors, first time coin-op players, and baggy-trousered, puffer-jacketed arcade addicts.

Your coin-op system needs to run on a PC platform, using a 28-32-inch SVGA monitor. It should enable the game inside to be changed easily once the existing title's had a reasonable life span, and you should try not to restrict your coin-op to one game genre – driving, for example – so the cabinet can be re-used. Game Plan wants to know what you, the gameplayer, wants to see in the arcades. So get to work!

And even if you don't have an idea for a great coin-op game, you can still get your hands on a machine of your own. Okay, so you'll have to stump up the cash for it yourself, but Game Plan can supply anything your heart desires, from classics such as this *Space Invaders* cabinet, right through to the latest simulators. Got a hankering for your own *House of the Dead 2*? Well give Game Plan a call on 01275 791618.

Where to send it:

Once you've hammered out your concept (including what it looks like and how it works), organise it into A4 binder format, with illustrations and explanatory text to support your ideas, and send it off with your name, address and daytime telephone number to: Coin-op design compo. Game Plan, 69 Corner Croft, Clevedon, North Somerset. BS21 6DA.

Competition!



Please make sure that your entry includes the following information:

- 1. Visuals** – how your game and its cabinet will look.
- 2. Concept** – how your game and its cabinet will work.
- 3. Technical** – a description of the basic components required to create both your game and its cabinet.
- 4. Future** – we'd also like to know what direction you think coin-ops should be moving in. What should happen in the coin-ops of the future?
- 5. Your contact details** – including home address and daytime and evening phone numbers.

Your entry must reach Game Plan by 8 August 1999.

The rules

1. No purchase is necessary.
2. No Future Publishing or Game Plan employee or their associates may enter this compo.
3. The closing date is 8 August 1999.
4. The editor's decision is final.

5. There is no cash alternative to the competition prizes.
6. Absolutely no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition.
7. Individuals may only enter this competition once. And we will spot multiples.

Coin-op design compo.

Game Plan
69 Corner Croft
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 6DA

8. All entries must be sent to:

■ Six lucky lottery winners, determined to spend every last penny on videogame bargains.



Robin

Neil

Rich

Mark

Your host | **Rich Pelley**

It could

They're in the money

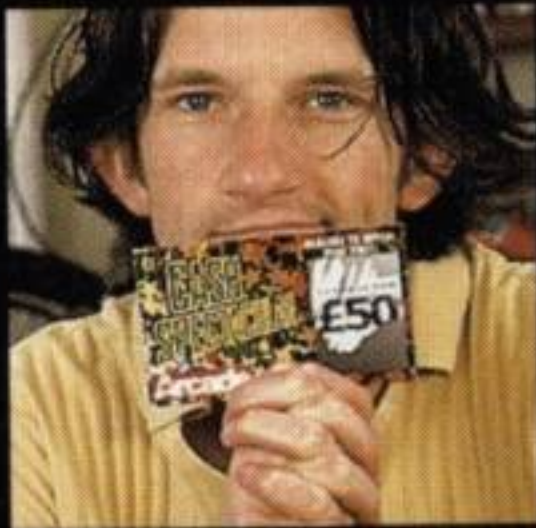
They've got a lot of what it takes to get along.



Mark Green
 ■ Job: Staff Writer, Arcade
 ■ Age: 22
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £1
 ■ Initial reaction: "That's nearly twice my yearly salary."



Robin Alway
 ■ Job: Reviews Editor, Arcade
 ■ Age: 26
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £10
 ■ Initial reaction: "Fantastic."



Nick Moyle
 ■ Job: Art Editor, Arcade
 ■ Age: 28
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £50
 ■ Initial reaction: "Do I have to have my photo taken?"



Neil West
 ■ Job: Editor, Arcade
 ■ Age: 29
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £500
 ■ Initial reaction: "Splendid."



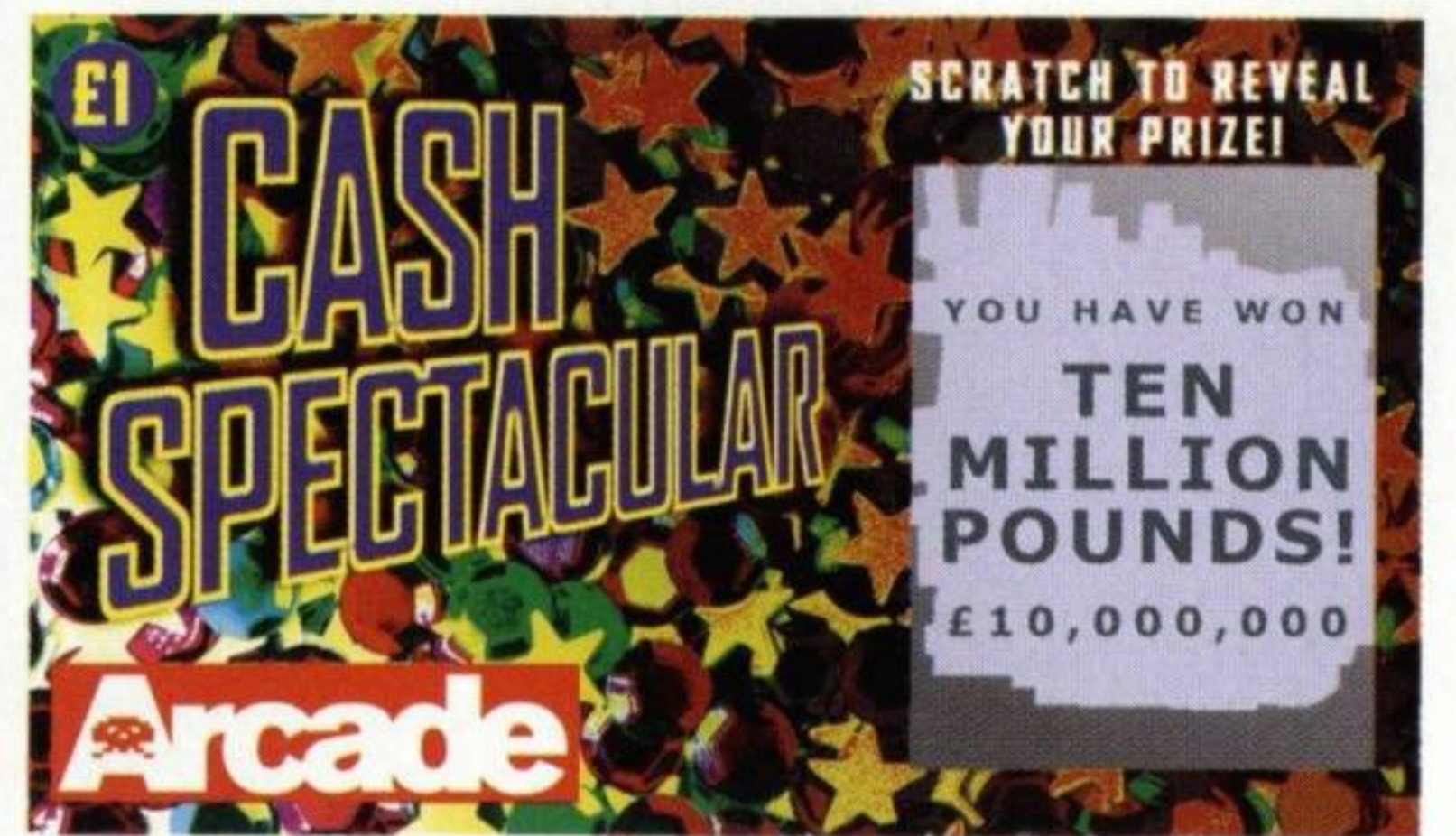
Sam Richards
 ■ Job: Staff Writer, Arcade
 ■ Age: 23
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £1,000
 ■ Initial reaction: "Cheers."



Rich Pelley
 ■ Job: Staff Writer, Arcade
 ■ Age: 25
 ■ Arcade Lottery win: £10 million
 ■ Initial reaction: "Blimey!"



Games night Lottery™



be you...

PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON DODD

And if it was, what would you spend your winnings on? Let The Great Arcade Games Night Lottery™ offer you a few videogaming possibilities...

It wouldn't make you happy, though, would it? Anything you wanted. *Anything.* Whenever you wanted it. Never having to work again. You'd tire, and realise what your heart really desired no amount of money could ever buy. Friends would treat you differently. Love would never be sincerely from the heart. You'd have no more ambitions. Your soul would be left empty. Scooping the Lottery jackpot would actually ruin your life.

Except, of course, it wouldn't really. Not you. You'd handle it. You'd invest it wisely and live off the interest. Buy a mansion. With a tennis court. And a swimming pool. Drive a Porsche. Or two. Get a girl. Treat her right. Die a happy man.

The chances are, however, that none of us will win the lottery. Some bloke we know down the pub told us that you're seven times more likely to be knocked down and killed by a car on your way to buying a ticket than you are of actually winning the jackpot. Which kind of puts it all in perspective.

But that's not to say that you won't win something. And if you do all of a sudden find yourself with a little extra cash in your pocket, what better way to spend it than on videogames? Actually, don't answer that. Just sit back and let us offer some possibilities of what we might do...



■ Mark's £1 didn't even get as far as the porch. But that's not because you can't have gaming fun for £1. It's because Mark's a gimp.

Mark

If you could have measured on a scale of one (suicide) to ten (joy) the disgruntled look on Mark's face when he scooped his £1 winnings, his score would involve a nought and a decimal point.

Recently back from a visit to Texas ("Where they have 20-foot billboards advertising trade shows about guns"), Mark's expectations of the *Arcade Games Night Lottery™* weren't high from the start.

"Sounds a shit idea to me. At least Dale Winton isn't involved. Er, he's not, is he?"

His worst suspicions were confirmed when he "won" a measly £1. And with only a shiny pound coin in his pocket (circa 1988, motto "Decus Et Tutamen"), his options for spending weren't that numerous.

Possibly, he could have picked up something videogame-related at a car boot sale. But, with a lack of understanding of how car boot sales actually work ("My car hasn't got a boot. I haven't even got a car. In fact, I can't even drive"), the only course of action available to him was to wander down to the local amusement arcade.

Monday, 8.26pm, Quasar

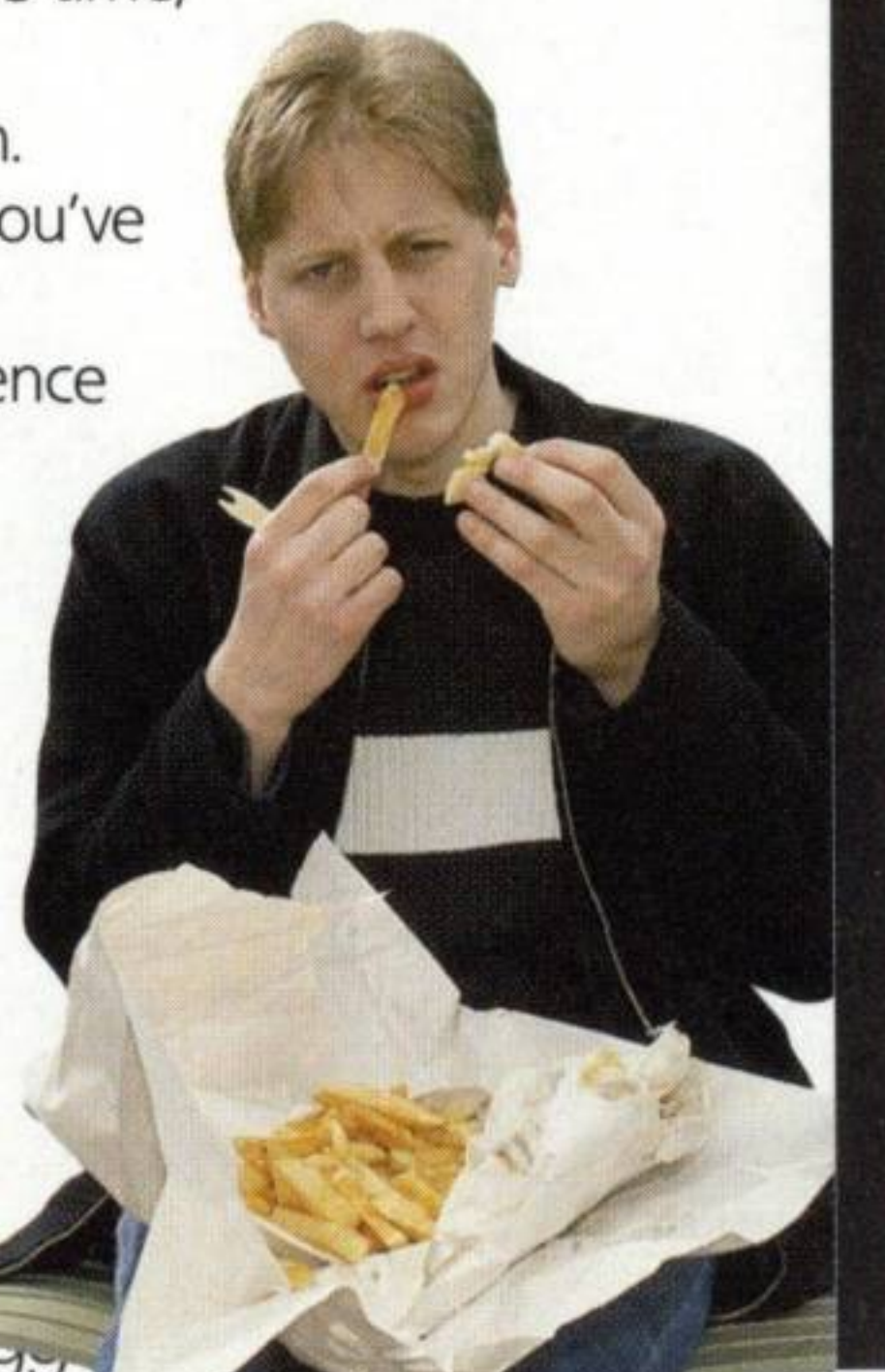
"Oooh, what's this one? *House of the Dead*? Looks scary. I can get two credits for a quid, so I can play with two guns at the same time, *Reservoir Dogs*- style."

Marks deposits his coin.

"Right, let's see what you've got, Zombie scum."

The opening cut sequence ensues, and Mark stares intently at the huge screen. The game starts but, unfortunately, he seems to think that this is still part of the introduction. A huge

■ Starved of success, Mark has to be bailed out with a 90p bag of chips.



zombie lurches forwards and slogs Mark over the head with an axe. He dies, without firing a shot.

"Continue? Insert Credits? I haven't even played yet. It told me to hold my fire. It never told me to start. What a swizz."

Mark is not a happy man.

"*House of the Dead*? I didn't even make it as far as the porch."

And then the anger gives way to remorse...

"This is exactly how I feel whenever I go to a party. All the fun's going on inside, and I'm left outside because I haven't actually been invited."

Mark leaves the arcade. Drizzle begins to fizzle through the air. With his head hanging, Mark certainly looks like he's the first victim of the *Arcade Games Night Lottery™* to let the money get to them.

"I'm bloody starving and I'm skint."

Never liking to see a man go home on an empty stomach, the Lottery Board grants a 90p bonus windfall to buy some chips. Mark retires for the evening "to watch a bit of telly and have an early night". Better luck next time, Mark.

Mark's shopping list

One game of <i>House of the Dead</i>	£1.00
One bag of chips (lots of salt, not much vinegar).....	£0.90
Total spent.....	£1.90

£1 the wiser

Coin-ops appear all over the place these days: pubs, clubs, service stations, ferries, airports – just the sort of places we visit each month in "My Beautiful Arcade" (see "My Beautiful Students' Union" on page 20 this issue). If you're in London and want to try out the latest games, we suggest heading to Segaworld in The Trocadero in Piccadilly Circus or the Namco WonderPark and Namco Station in Great Windmill Street and the old GLC building.

As for chips, back over to Mark for the final analysis.

"I've no idea what Burger King has done to its new King Fries™, but they seem to taste wrong. Personally, I prefer old-fashioned chips. The ones I've just had were a bit soggy, but maybe that was because it's raining. I'm going home now. I'm not having very much fun."



Robin

If you used to own a Spectrum, you may remember a magazine called *Your Sinclair*. At the peak of its popularity, *YS* (as it was known to its friends) attained a near cult-like status. "Nine out of ten people who read *Your Sinclair*" it has been quoted in retrospect, "didn't actually own a Spectrum at all."

As well as providing the template for videogame magazines today, *YS* also produced some of the best writers and personalities in the business. Quickly: Matt "Goss" Bielby was launch Editor on *Arcade*; Jonathan "Farty" Davies went on to edit *PC Gamer* and *N64 magazine*; "Dr" Marcus Berkman writes for *The Guardian*; David "Fab Macca" McCandless writes for *PC Zone*; and "Whistling" David Wilson works for EA. Flicking through a back issue of *YS*, we also discovered that the tips were done by one Rich Pelley. (Ten years later, and we wonder what he's doing now).

Robin used to write for *YS*, too. "I was the resident Sam Surgeon," he reminisces. "The Sam Coupe was this crap Spectrum derivative that no one bought. I didn't have one, even though I had to write a monthly column dedicated to the damn things. In fact, I only had a go on one twice."

So, what are you going to do with your winning tenner, then, Rob?

"Buy a Spectrum, obviously. And shit-loads of games. It'll make me a happy man."

So, with a spring in his step, it's off to the local second-hand shop for our Rob.

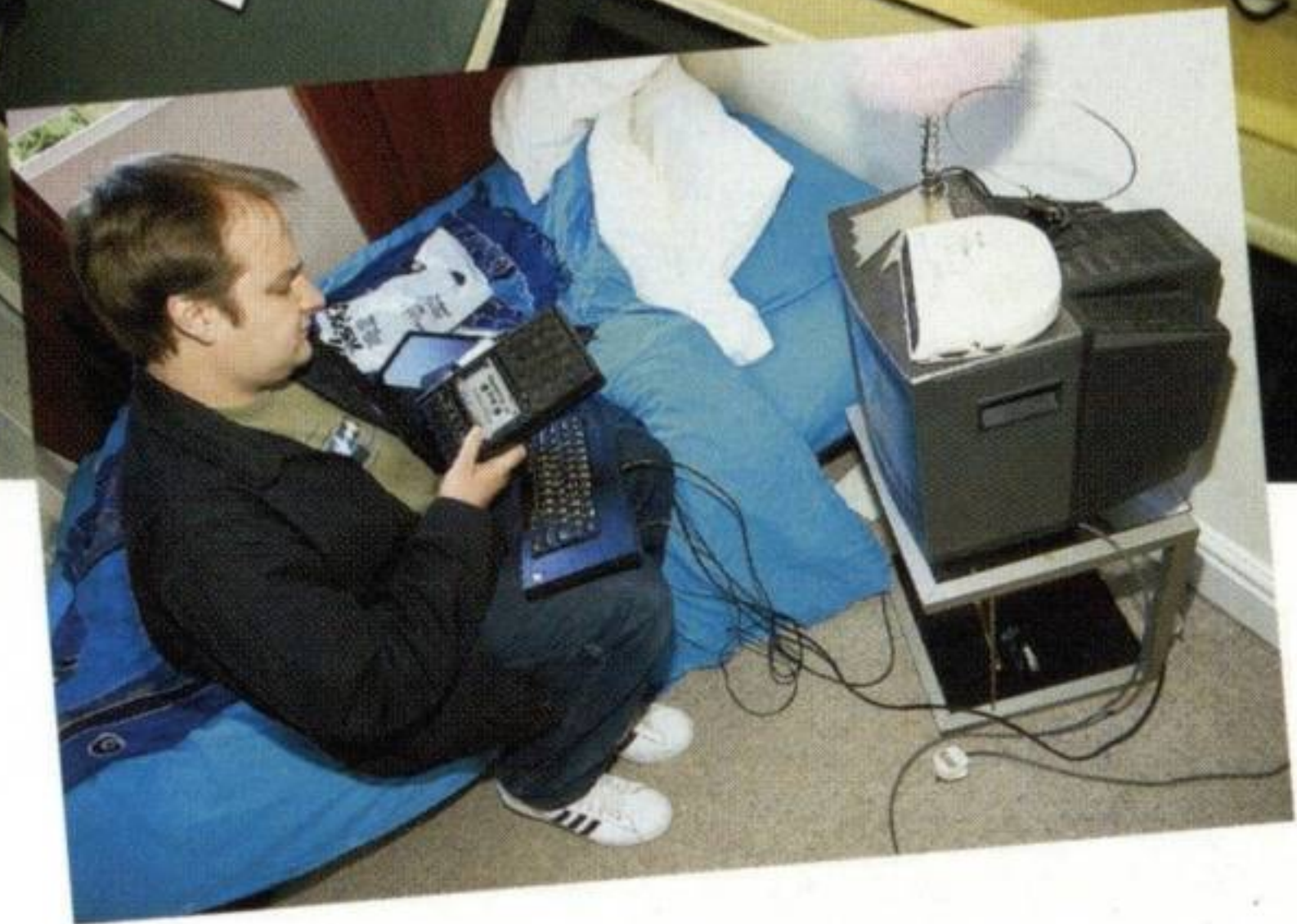
Tuesday, 4.40pm, 10/15 Music Exchange

"Fantastic! There's tonnes of old Speccy games here." [Plucks game from shelf]. "*The Great Space Race* was long considered to be the worst game ever. The instruction book is like a comic. At the time the game cost £14.99, double the price of anything else."

Not a man of many facial moods (other than "constant mild boredom"), you can nearly hear Robin's cheek bones snapping as he unearths a copy



■ An entire videogame system (complete with games) for under a tenner? If it sounds too good to be true, that's because it is.



of *The Hobbit* and breaks into a grin. "Blimey, *The Hobbit*." He leafs through the instruction booklet.

"Listen to this. 'Congratulations. You are about to play the most advanced videogame ever seen.' A text adventure? Ha! I never got very far. I remember getting stuck in this nightmare mazy section."

Rooting through a box of knackered old hardware, Robin raises his hands towards the heavens, and hums the "Hallelujah Chorus".

"A Spectrum! With powerpack, tape recorder, and all the leads. £10. Fantastic!" The only downside seems to be that it's covered in mould.

"Yeeuuch. This is disgusting. And I bet when I get this all home, I'll spend ages fiddling with the volume on the tape player and then nothing will load. It'll be just like the old days."

And guess what? He was right. Bad luck, Rob.

Robin's shopping list

Spectrum (used).....	£10.00
Games (<i>Valhalla, The Hobbit, The Great Space Race, Space Raiders</i> , and assorted, mainly mouldy, others).....	Free
Total:	£10.00

£10 the wiser

"I knew nothing would load" mumbles Robin. "I reckon that these games are so old, they've probably started decomposing. Good job they were free."

Indeed, buying any secondhand tape-based technology is a risky business. Far better, therefore, to sate your retro cravings by using a Spectrum emulator on your PC. Check out "The World Of Spectrum" at <http://www.void.demon.nl/spectrum.html> where you can download an emulator and practically every Speccy game under the sun. Alternatively, check out *Arcade's* sister magazine *PC Format*, where you'll find plenty of ads for Spectrum CDs, containing both the emulator and thousands of games.



■ Looking for a bargain? No better place to start than your local trade paper.

Nick

"Being Art Editor" says Nick, "I don't get to play many videogames. I'm pretty good at *ISS Pro*, though." [To Alvin, *Arcade's* Deputy Art Editor.] "What's that game I thrashed you at the other day? *Cool Boarders 3*. I rule at that."

So, what are you going to spend your £50 on then, Nick?

"When I was a student, my mate Dodge used to have a Sega Mega Drive. We wasted loads of time on *John Madden Football*. *Herzog Zwei* was another favourite – it was a sort of early *Command & Conquer*. Remember that thing that sat under your Mega Drive so that you could play CDs? Dodge had one of those, too. All the games were rubbish, apart from *Thunderhawk*, which was great. I've always fancied getting my hands on a Sega Saturn, though. To get one over Dodge."

Saturn is Sega's predecessor to Dreamcast. It was launched in the UK in 1995 at roughly the same time as PlayStation, but even though there

were some fine games released (and, for 2D games such as *Street Fighter*, it was a superior machine), PlayStation completely destroyed it. In Japan, however, it's shifted more units than the N64, and games are still being released. So it's not a completely unviable proposition.

Wednesday, 3.37pm, the local Newsagents

"Fifty quid for the machine plus five games? Yes please." A browse through the local *Trade It* free-ads paper, a quick phone call, and Nick was off.

Except, while waiting for the bus home, he dropped his new purchase.

"Bollocks. Oh well, it looks pretty sturdy to me. Weighs a flippin' ton. I'm sure it'll still work when I get it home."

Of course, it didn't. Never mind, Nick.



■ The waiting's nearly over, but not before Nick lets his Saturn slip.

Nick's shopping list

Sega Saturn.....	£50
Games (<i>Grid Run, Virtua Fighter, Dracula X, Panzer Dragoon Saga, Vampire Slayer</i>).....	Free
Bus fare (return).....	£1.40
Total	£51.40

£50 the wiser

With sales of PlayStations and N64s still on the up, you are unlikely to be able to pick either up second hand (in one of those ad papers like *Trade It* or *Loot* for much less than about £70. However, if you turn to the previous generation of consoles, £50 suddenly starts to feel like a lot of money.

Amigas seem to hang around for £30-£40, although you spotted one for a tenner – worth it for *Sensible Soccer* and *Gravity Power* alone. No one seems to want their Mega Drives or SNEses any more, either, and are willing to flog them with plenty of games for as little as £20. If you were thinking of buying a Game Boy (about £25 second hand), you might consider an Atari Lynx for around £30 instead. Make sure it comes with loads of games, though; it might be 20-times more powerful than a Game Boy Color, but the Lynx is now more obsolete than flat-top haircuts.

You can even buy a really crap PC for £50. You could find a 286, or even a 386 at a push, but don't expect to be able to play any game released in the last five years on it.



What do you mean, it won't fit? It's cost me £600 and I'll make it fit!



Neil

It's a hard job editing a magazine, especially one put together with as much love and care as *Arcade*. The drawn-out late nights, the stress, the wingeing staff. All this can get to a man. But only if the man in question is a lesser man than our Mr West.

What does get to Neil, however, is his 'Nam flashbacks. "They're all over me!" you can hear him squeal, as he ducks for cover under his desk. "Eat this, Charlie!" he exclaims as he offers crisps around the office. "When will the madness end?" he whimpers into his hands, during deadline week.

All of which would make some sense if it weren't for the fact that the "Nam" in question is, in fact, Chippenham. And the flashbacks come courtesy of innumerable bouts of childhood soldier-shooting on the coin-op *Operation Wolf*, enjoyed while holidaying with his family in Minehead.

"Wouldn't it be great," muses Neil, "to buy a coin-op. Then I could show Charlie what-for any time I fancied, from the comfort of my living room."

And £500 to the better, Neil put his Plan Of Action to work.

Thursday, 2.15pm, Outside Neil's flat

"Bugger me, this weighs a ton."

Moving the *Operation Wolf* machine is proving trickier than Neil had anticipated.

"Apparently, they put concrete in the bottom of coin-ops so that they don't topple over on you when you play. Why else would they be so heavy? It's only a screen and a bunch of circuitry. Is it to stop people nicking them? I don't bloody know."

With considerable help, Neil gets the machine out of the van he's hired, through the main door and into an inside corridor leading to the door to his flat.

"Er, hang on. Left a bit. Right a bit. I'll just open my door. And..."

The first rule of buying furniture is to always measure your doorway, to make sure that you can actually get your purchase in to your house.

"My door's too small! I'm going to have to leave it here. Has anybody got an extension lead?"

Neil may be happy but his next door neighbours now can't get into their flat (or out of it, if they were in beforehand). £500 well spent? We don't think so.

Neil's shopping list

<i>Operation Wolf</i> coin-op.....	£550.00
Van hire.....	£50.00
Total spent.....	£600.00

£500 the wiser

If you can afford it, buying a coin-op is a fantastic idea. Want to play *Roadblasters* while cooking tea? *Tron* when you're in the bath? Sleep in the cockpit of an old *Star Wars* game? Here's your chance.

Old, easily affordable coin-ops are available from Retro Arcade Machine, based in Manchester. "We've got all manner of original coin-ops for sale," says MD Jonathan Thompson, "the traditional stand-up ones as well as the tabletop, sit-down, pool-hall ones. All prices are open to negotiation and we'll even sort out the delivery for you."

Interested? Give Jonathan a call on 0961 886359 or e-mail ram@hotmail.com. Alternatively, check out RAM's Web site at: <http://business.fortunecity.com/ellrd/424/>.

Meanwhile, here's the price list:

Upright	<i>Scramble</i>£1150	<i>Monaco GP</i>£450
<i>Cosmic Invaders</i>£1300	<i>Space Invaders</i>£1500	<i>Moon Cresta</i>£650
<i>Defender</i>£2100	<i>Star Wars</i>£1950	<i>Pac Man</i>£650
<i>Final Fight</i>£350	<i>Superbug</i>£650	<i>Phoenix</i>£650
<i>Galaxian</i>£1350	<i>Tron</i>£1125	<i>Scramble</i>£650
<i>Gorf</i>£1750	<i>Xevious</i>£900	<i>Space Invaders</i>£750
<i>Moon Cresta</i>£550	<i>Zero Hour</i>£500	<i>Uni Wars</i>£550
<i>Operation Wolf</i>£550		
<i>Phoenix</i>£1150	Tabletop	Cockpit
<i>Pole Position II</i>£550	<i>Crazy Climber</i>£650	<i>Starblade</i>£800
<i>Puckman</i>£1350	<i>Galaxian</i>£800	<i>Star Wars</i>£2,750
<i>Return Of The Jedi</i>£1,700	<i>Gunsmoke</i>£300	
<i>Roadblasters</i>£550	<i>Hunchback</i>£550	



Sam

"That'll do nicely," rejoiced Sam on scooping a grand. And off he wandered to furnish his living room with the greatest gaming set-up money (or, at least, £1,000) could buy.

Friday, 11.30am, Electronics Boutique.

Sam: "Hello. I have one thousand pounds, which I wish to spend."

Man in EB: "Very good."

Sam: "First off I'll have an N64 with *GoldenEye* and *Zelda*. And *1080°*. And *Snowboard Kids*, *F-Zero*, *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Rogue Squadron*."

Man: "Well, the N64 comes with *GoldenEye* and *Zelda* for £129.99. For every N64 game you buy at the same time as the console, you save £10."

Sam: "Money, my good man, is not an issue here. I'd better take three more controllers, and Rumble and Expansion Paks. And, while your here, a PlayStation with *Time Crisis*, *NBA Live*, *Ridge Racer Type 4*, *Circuit Breakers*, *Bust-A-Move 4*, a G-Con 45 lightgun, another Dual Shock controller, a memory card and a Game Boy Color, camera and printer, *Warioland* and *Bomberman*. And a multi-tap. How much is that, then?"

Man: [Tippity tap]. "Er. £949.71, please."

Sam: "Is this PlayStation Glove any good?"

Man: "To be honest, Sir, no."

Sam: "I'll have it anyway. Along with..." [looks on counter] "this *Ridge Racer 4* tips book, three yo-yos, a copy of *Arcade* and, by my calculations, 15 packs of *Metal Gear Solid* trading cards."

Man: "That's £998.31, please. How would you like to pay?"

Sam: [Whops out wallet] "Plastic?"

It was all Sam's, for a few minutes at least.





■ I've got a hankerin' for some videogamin' and I'm willing to pay.

Unfortunately, Sam didn't get far with his booty (a bench only yards from the shop). A check with his bank revealed that the winnings credited to his account had been pounced on by the manager to offset the overdraft left over from his days at university. The EB salesman called him back in...

12.47pm, Electronics Boutique

Man: "No, Sir. You can't just keep all this unpaid for stuff and wash the dishes. We haven't even got any dishes. Please leave, or I'll be forced to call the police."

Sam's shopping list

N64 (with GoldenEye and Zelda).....	£129.99	Metal Gear Solid Limited Edition.....	£44.99
F-Zero.....	£29.99	G-Con 45 lightgun.....	£24.99
Banjo-Kazooie.....	£38.99	Dual Shock pads (x3)	
Rogue Squadron.....	£33.99		£44.97
1080°.....	£29.99	Multi-tap.....	£14.99
Snowboard Kids.....	£19.99	Memory card.....	£6.99
Expansion Pak.....	£24.99	Game Boy Color.....	£64.99
Rumble Pak.....	£12.99	Game Boy Camera and Printer.....	£74.99
Memory card.....	£12.99	Warioland.....	£19.99
N64 pads (x3).....	£44.97	Bomberman.....	£14.99
Sony PlayStation (with any game).....	£119.99	Ridge Racer 4 tips book	
Time Crisis.....	£11.99		£6.99
NBA Live.....	£29.99	Yo-yos (x3).....	£8.97
Ridge Racer 4 (with Jog-Con controller).....	£54.99	Copy of Arcade.....	£2.80
Circuit Breakers.....	£9.99	15 packets of MGS trading cards.....	£29.84
Bust-A-Move 4.....	£21.99	Total	£998.31

£1,000 the wiser

The price of videogaming is becoming lower all the time. Basic consoles are now ridiculously affordable, given their power and technology: around £99.99 for a PlayStation or N64 with one controller. The N64 usually comes with a game (currently GoldenEye), the PlayStation without. Games cost, with the odd exception, £39.99 for both systems. Electronics Boutique (also Dixons and Argos) do special introductory offers, where you can pick up extra games on the cheap if you buy them at the same time as your console. Electronics Boutique also offers a ten-day exchange policy and allows you to trade in old PlayStation and N64 games.



■ Would £10million go to a young game reviewer's head? You'd better believe it.

Rich

Sam Richards writes: Obviously, there wasn't actually a prize of £10 million. We'd never have fooled you into thinking we'd be able to claim that much for Games Night expenses. We know you're not that stupid.

Luckily for us, though, Rich is that stupid. After specially rigging the cards to ensure he scooped the "jackpot" (and reassuring him that the money would appear in his bank account the next day), he went a bit mad. After a couple of hours of debauched celebration, he decided to try to live out his lifelong nerd dream – to star in a videogame of his own.

Here's a snippet of the conversation that took place between our Rich and Codemasters' public relations man, Rich "Nice Guy" Eddy:

Pelley: [Enthusiastically]. "Hello. I've just won £10 million. Can I buy Codemasters?"

Eddy: "Er, no."

Pelley: "Can I buy a stake in Codemasters, and then tell you all what to do?"

Eddy: "We'd rather you didn't. Codemasters is one of the few games developers and publishers that's still privately owned.

Pelley: [Oblivious]. "Can you put me in Prince Naz's boxing instead of him?"

Eddy: "Go away. We only work with world champions for our sports titles."

Pelley: "But I'm absolutely wedged with cash! Can I buy the TOCA 2 development team and get them to write a game about me called *Richy Rich's Magical Adventure In Groovy Land?*"

Eddy: "Call it what? Er, maybe. But you'd have to get your design approved through Richard Darling. He's the Game Design Director."

Pelley: [Adopting conspiratorial tone]. "Can I buy Richard Darling's approval?"

Eddy: "I really don't think so."

Pelley: "How much will it cost to write and publish my game, then?"

Eddy: "Depends how complicated it is. But even if you did buy the TOCA 2 team you'd have to finance

people's wages for about two years. You'd then need to pre-produce around a million copies. Advertising costs would run into millions. And you'd have to contribute to the company's running costs."

Pelley: [Withering]. "Erm..."


Eddy: "You may make a return on your investment. But there are never any guarantees."

Pelley: "Might I have enough money to buy the whole of Codemasters, sack everyone and employ all my friends instead?"

Eddy: "No. You don't even have enough friends. Look, please leave me alone."

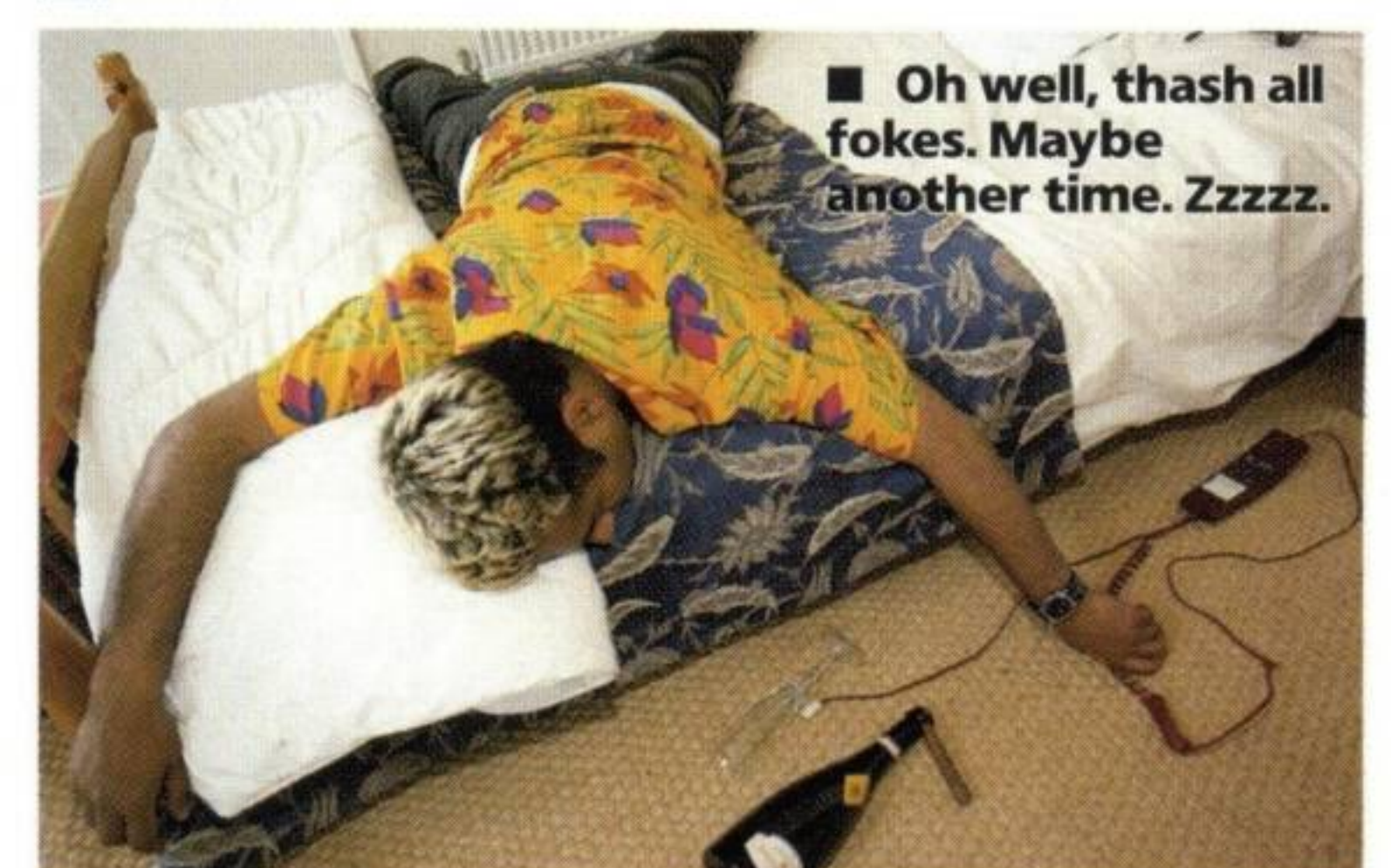
Click. Buzz. [Rich looks around in puzzlement then wanders down the pub and makes £10million indecent proposal to Robin's girlfriend.]

So Codemaster's didn't bite. But the fact is for £10million you could easily rent yourself some offices, hire a development team and make your own game. It probably wouldn't be very good, though. And Sony or Nintendo wouldn't let you release it.

We'll tell Rich it was all a joke in the morning... 

Rich's Shopping List

A development team's wages for two years.....	£2.6 million
Pre-production (half a million copies).....	£4 million
European marketing.....	£3 million
Miscellaneous costs.....	£0.4 million
Total	£10 million



■ Oh well, thash all fokes. Maybe another time. Zzzzz.

A Charts

Looking for a game? Here's what your fellow humans have been buying.

Official Top 40

Sales information from the merry month of May



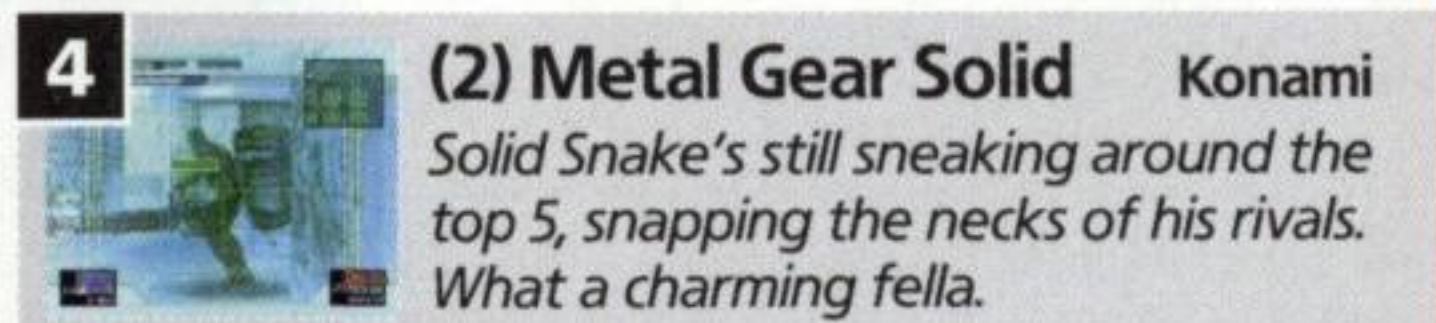
1 (-) **Ridge Racer Type 4** Namco
The most exhilarating PlayStation racer ever finally arrives, and it's accelerated to the front of the pack. Will it have pulled a Damon Hill by next month?



2 (3) **FIFA '99** EA
FIFA's recovered spectacularly from a momentary fall down the charts a few months ago. Goal!



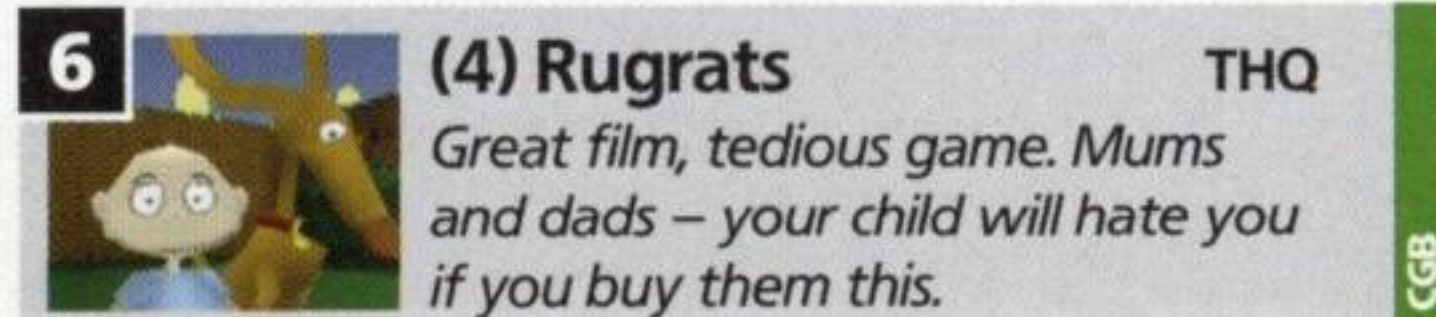
3 (1) **Champ Manager 3** EIDOS
Following an oh-so-short stint at the top, Champ Man's undergone a slight stumble. Er... Miss!



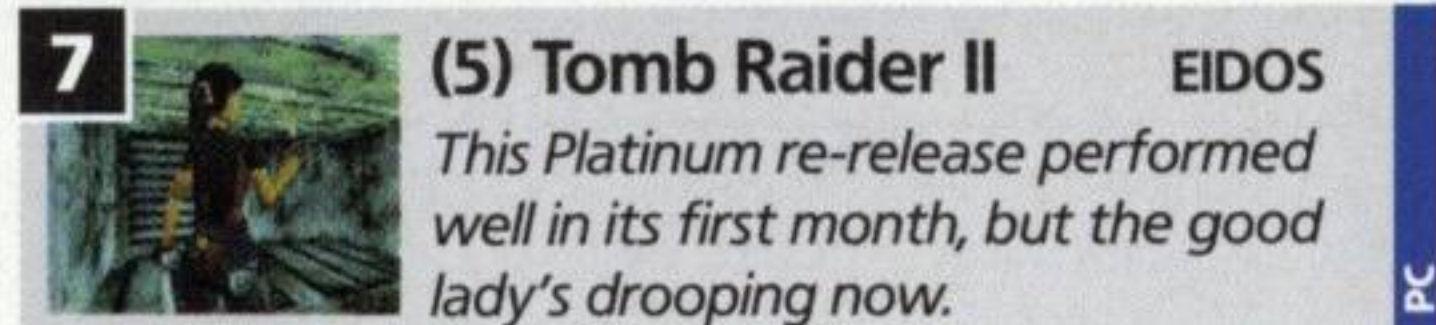
4 (2) **Metal Gear Solid** Konami
Solid Snake's still sneaking around the top 5, snapping the necks of his rivals. What a charming fella.



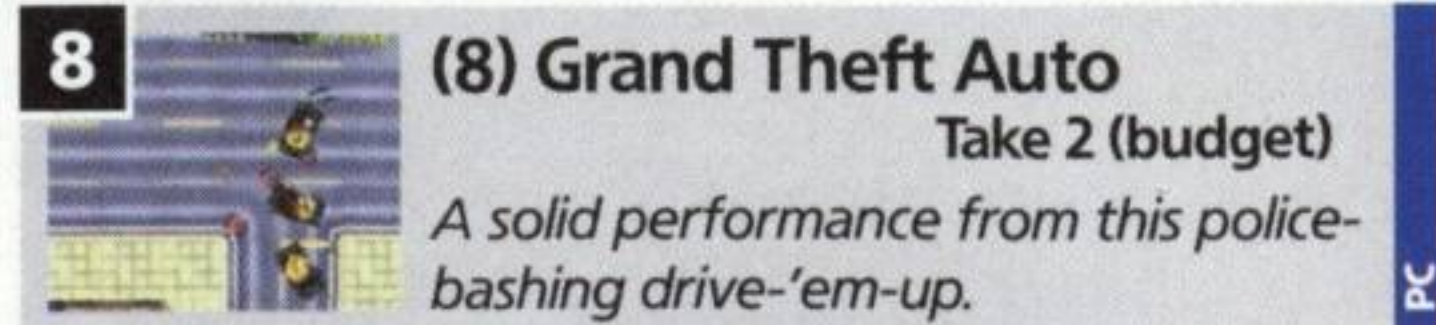
5 (-) **Crash Bandicoot 2** Sony
Hang on, what's he doing here? A stunning leap back into the top 10 for the orange marsupial.



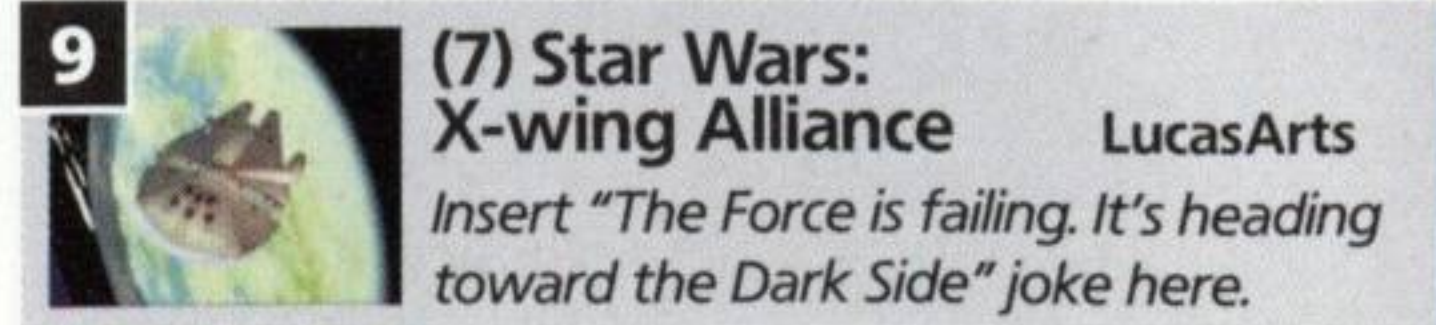
6 (4) **Rugrats** THQ
Great film, tedious game. Mums and dads - your child will hate you if you buy them this.



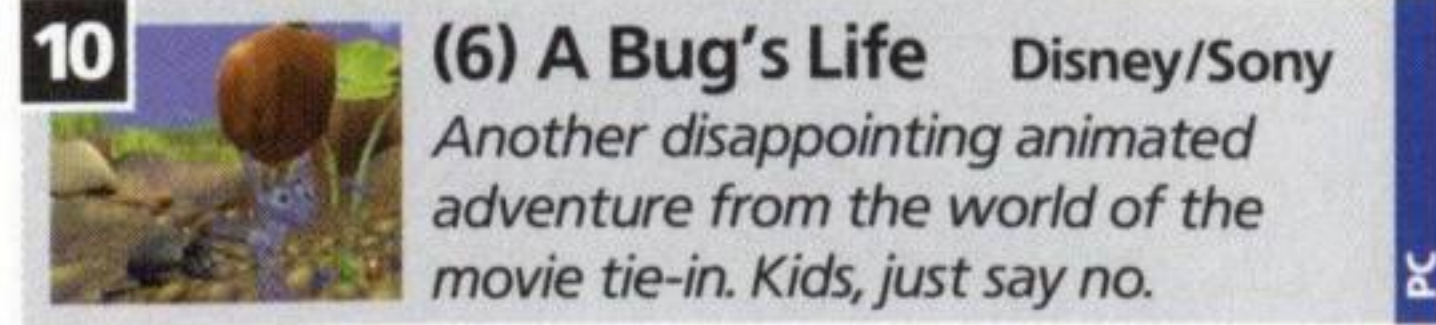
7 (5) **Tomb Raider II** EIDOS
This Platinum re-release performed well in its first month, but the good lady's drooping now.



8 (8) **Grand Theft Auto** Take 2 (budget)
A solid performance from this police-bashing drive-'em-up.



9 (7) **Star Wars: X-wing Alliance** LucasArts
Insert "The Force is failing. It's heading toward the Dark Side" joke here.



10 (6) **A Bug's Life** Disney/Sony
Another disappointing animated adventure from the world of the movie tie-in. Kids, just say no.

11 (-) **TOCA 2 Touring Car** Codemasters

12 (-) **Civilization 2** Activision

13 (-) **Civilization: Call to Power** Activision

14 (16) **UEFA Champions League** EIDOS

15 (12) **Rollercoaster Tycoon** MicroProse/Hasbro

16 (9) **Premier Manager '99** Gremlin

17 (26) **V-Rally** Infogrames

18 (11) **Rogue Squadron** LucasArts

19 (-) **Cool Boarders 2** SCEE

20 (35) **Superbike World Championship** EA Sports

21 (19) **Worms** Infogrames

22 (15) **Tomb Raider III** EIDOS

23 (-) **Jimmy White's 2: Cueball** Virgin

24 (10) **South Park** Acclaim

25 (14) **Brian Lara Cricket** Codemasters

26 (20) **The Legend of Zelda** Nintendo

27 (22) **Sim City 3000** EA/Maxis

28 (31) **Rayman** Ubisoft

29 (23) **Half-Life** Cendant

30 (39) **Theme Park** EA/Bullfrog

31 (-) **GTA: London** Take 2

32 (27) **TOCA Touring Car** Codemasters

33 (-) **Norton Antivirus 5.0** Symantec

34 (30) **Hercules** Sony/Disney

35 (28) **Resident Evil 2** Virgin

36 (-) **Tekken 2** Sony/Namco

37 (-) **Commandos: Call of Duty** EIDOS

38 (34) **Croc** EA/Fox Interactive

39 (24) **Die Hard Trilogy** EA/Fox Interactive

40 (-) **Vigilante 8** Activision



Import Zone | With Department 1 (0171 916 8440)



■ **Powerstone: Scrap! Scrap!**

■ Hello, readers, welcome to... hang on, what's that outside the... aaarghh! (Sound of window smashing) "Hello, it's me, Rhys!" Blimey, that was quite an entrance. "I'm here to tell you how the Japanese and American

import scene is going." Does that justify jumping straight through the window? "Er... well anyway, both *Blue Stinger* and *Powerstone* are the Dreamcast 'hot cakes', while on the PlayStation, *Sports*

Car GT and *Um Jammer Lammy (PaRappa 2)* are making us a whole pot of money." What about the Nintendo 64? "No action, I'm afraid. Right, I'm off." Are you going to fix that window on your way out? "No." Charming.

Vox-Pop | Let's go to the park

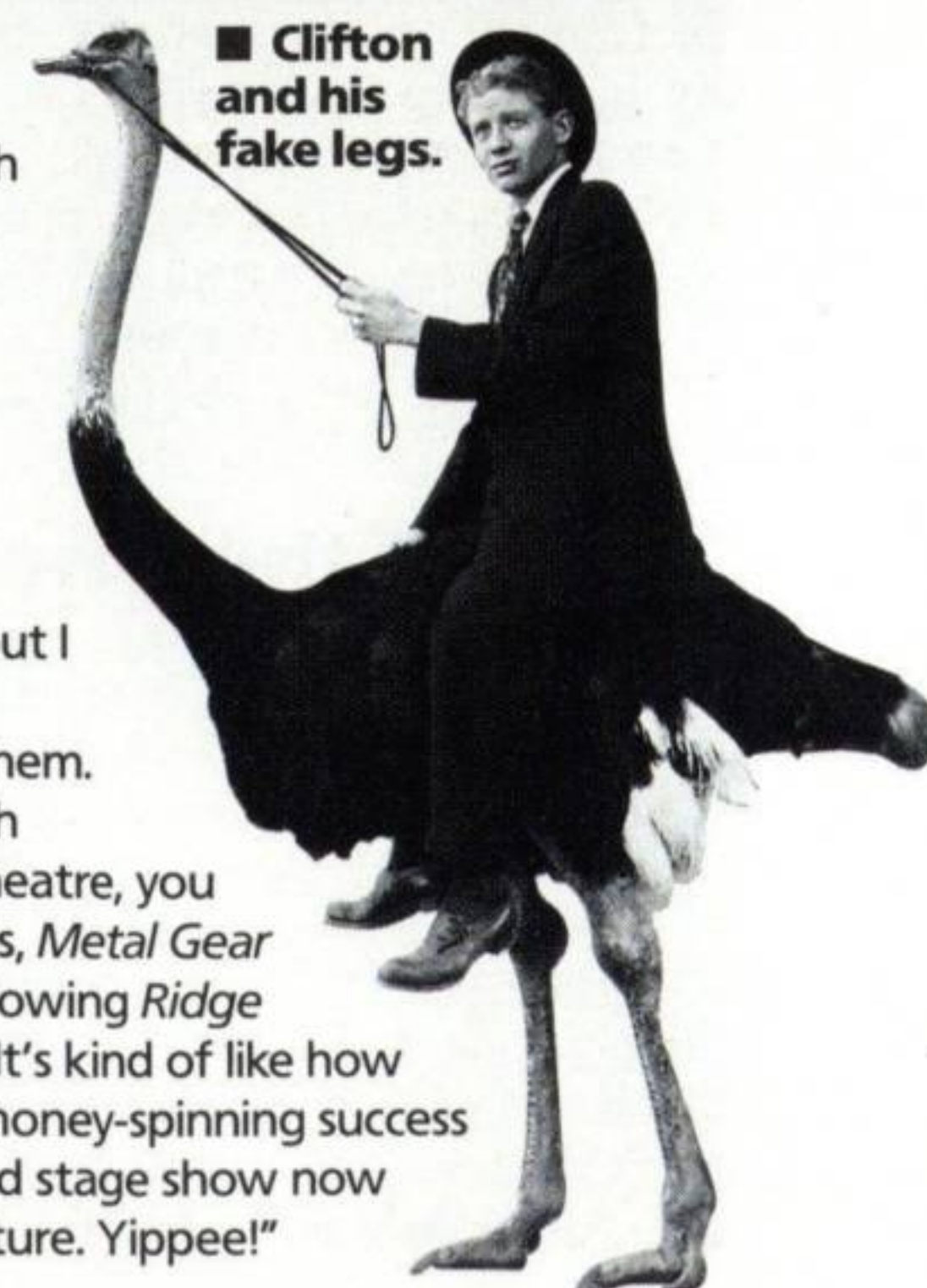


■ Hello. "Hello." Who are you? "Julian and Silvie. You're not from *The 11 O'Clock* show, are you?" No, no. We're genuine. "And Silvie doesn't have to take her top off?" No. We were just wondering if you like videogames? "Yes. Is that it?" Well, yes. "Tsk." Oh well, bye.

■ Hello. "Dach." You don't sound very English. "We are from Belgium." Do you have PlayStations and Nintendo 64s in Belgium, then? "Of course. We like Crash Bandicoot. He's funny. Have you been to Belgium?" Yes, we were strip-searched there, once. "Nasty." Bye. "Bye bye."

Chart Analysis | With "Bernie Clifton"

■ "Hello, everyone. Bernie Clifton here. Ostriches, eh? Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. As you can see from the picture, I've been riding an ostrich since I was a nipper. Most people think I use a fake ostrich for my performances. They're half right - I use real ostriches, but I slip Temazepam into their lemonade so I can control them. You can't have a wild ostrich running around a packed theatre, you know! In this month's charts, *Metal Gear Solid* has dropped down, allowing *Ridge Racer* to take the top spot. It's kind of like how I'm going to make a huge money-spinning success of my hilarious ostrich-based stage show now that Orville's out of the picture. Yippee!"



Japanese Top 10

- 1 (-) **Pokemon Pinball** GB, Nintendo
- 2 (-) **Dance Dance Revolution**
PSX, Konami
- 3 (-) **Super Robot War F Final**
PSX, Banpresto
- 4 (-) **Bust-A-Move 2: Dance Tengoku Mix**
PSX, Enix
- 5 (-) **Glaxion Complete** PSX, Unlimited
- 6 (-) **World Stadium 3** PSX, Namco
- 7 (-) **Saga Frontier 2** PSX, Square
- 8 (5) **Pocket Monsters Snap**
N64, Nintendo
- 9 (-) **Super Robot War F**
PSX, Banpresto
- 10 (-) **Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers**
PSX, Atlus

US Console Top 10

- 1 (2) **Pokemon Blue** GB, Nintendo
- 2 (4) **Syphon Filter** PSX, Sony
- 3 (3) **Pokemon Red** GB, Nintendo
- 4 (1) **Mario Party** N64, Nintendo
- 5 (8) **Silent Hill** PSX, Konami
- 6 (-) **Army Men 3D** PSX, 3DO
- 7 (-) **Need For Speed: High Stakes** PSX, EA
- 8 (-) **Frogger** PSX, Hasbro
- 9 (-) **Triple Play 2000** PSX, EA
- 10 (-) **Crash Bandicoot 2** PSX, Sony

Official UK PlayStation, PC, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy charts start on page 133 as part of the A-List, your guide to over 450 videogames.

The art of noise

The ten best videogame sounds.



Christians – get your own back on Satan's minions with id's *Doom*.

Rich chose the PlayStation's epic start-up noise as his Great Gaming Moment last

month. But the swooshy, tinkly Sony sound isn't the only piece of game-related audio to have a fan club. Here are ten videogame noises that always send shivers down our spines.

Ker-ling!

That cash register tinkle can only mean Sonic the Hedgehog's grabbed himself a coin. Give him five minutes and he'll crash into a spike and throw it away again.

Boom-clunk-click!

The delicious sound of *Doom*'s double-barrelled shotgun. It's also

the name of Wil Smith's next single (probably), and the sound made by someone fastening their seat-belt much too late.

Fheww-fhwnn!

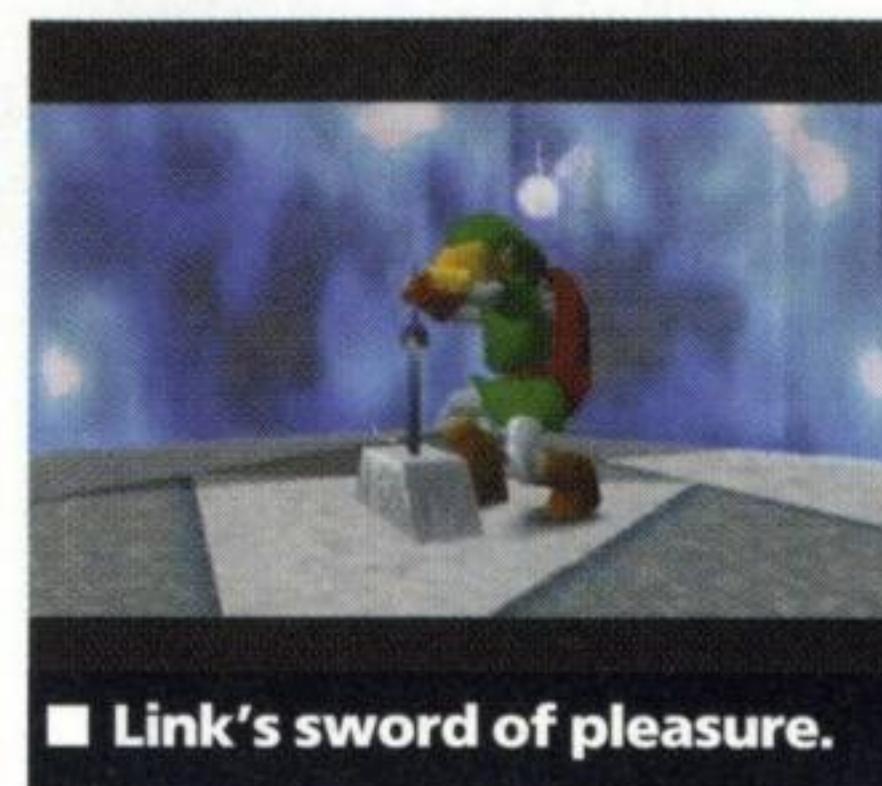
You might be sick of Mario's pathetic whoops and hollers, but it's impossible to tire of little Yoshi's indescribable bleating. He soooo cute!

Hup!

Lara Croft's sexy grunt as she strains to lift herself on to a high block sends little shivers right through us. It feels a bit like being electrocuted.

Kssshwweeeeeeeeeeeee!

Link warps through time in *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* to the accompaniment of a stunningly effective high-pitched whistle. Dogs the world over love it!



Link's sword of pleasure.

Blip... blip... blip...

No, not the tedious bleeping of *Pong*. It's the nerve-racking signal of the motion tracker in *Aliens vs Predator*, a noise to give grown men a trouser-soiling experience.

Oh my God!

The words Luigi and Wario use when they lose a mini-game in *Mario Party*. And they would've gotten away with it, too, if it hadn't been for those meddling American censors.

Zzhheoo, zzhheoo, zzhheoooo!

The aliens in classic coin-op *Defender* arrive with an immensely pleasing sound. Imagine Metal Mickey being sick and you've got the general idea.

Squeak!

Having the multi-coloured bubbles move one step closer in *Bust-A-Move* shouldn't be fun at all, but

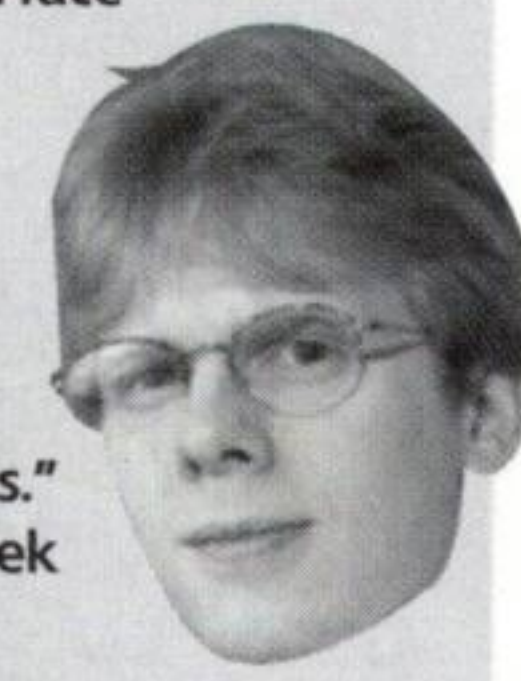
hearing the slightly comical rubbery squeak as they scrape past each other makes it all worthwhile.

Baoooooooooo!

More alien pleasure, as the bad guys in *Galaxian* swoop down in a bullet-firing frenzy. An honourable mention to the bone-rattling throb of the *Space Invaders* cabinet, too.

Ten quotes from id's John Carmack that our dictionary couldn't explain:

1. "Embedded DRAM laptop chip."
2. "Rasterization costs of specular highlighting using current blending."
3. "2000-bit wide bus."
4. "Nice integration with separate renders."
5. "Push the Z-buffer off."
6. "Awesome voxel renderer pick-up game logic."
7. "Entirely new client-side game logic multi-piece entity/event joining module."
8. "Fixed interface between separate DLL."
9. "Twin turbos, nitrous, ported, heads."
10. "Sheer geek thrill."



Q & A

Write to us

Arcade
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW
Fax us on:
01225 732275
E-mail us at:
arcade.mag
@futurenet.co.uk

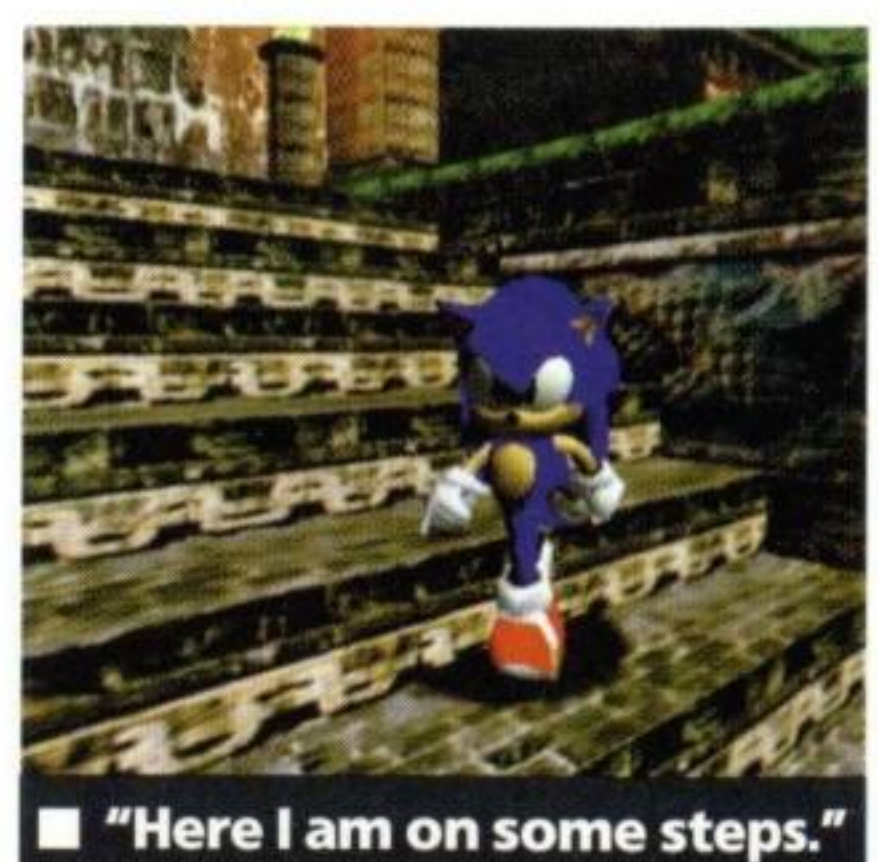
Mark Green deflects another batch of your questions.

Q Why doesn't the Japanese version of *Sonic Adventure* have a language option? Maybe you lot know what you're doing and have found an option to change the text into English, but I couldn't understand a word of the game. Maybe I should learn Japanese. Sorry to bother you.
Nicholas Teste, via e-mail



"Hello. It's me, Sonic."

A I get a lot of desperate people phoning me. "Mark," they say, "please help me finish this Japanese game I've bought, because I can't make head nor tail of it." I'm always quick to reply, "Then why the hell did you buy it? Next time, don't be so bloody impatient – wait for the English version. It only takes a few months to arrive, it's cheaper and you'll enjoy the game a lot more." That shuts them up.



"Here I am on some steps."

Q I've had my PC for over a year now and I've bought quite a few games for it. But I can't find a WWF wrestling game. Is there one out, or maybe one that I could purchase in the future? I have several friends.
Master R Robinson, Bonhill

A You might still be able to find Acclaim's *WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game* sitting unwanted in your local game shop's bargain bin, but it was actually released several years ago, making it hopelessly outdated. Apart from that little gem, our exhaustive three-minute Internet search didn't uncover any new WWF PC games on the horizon. You'll just have to make do with other PC fighting games instead. You know, like, er... well, never mind.

"Gizza 10p mum." Name that coin-op



The *Xenophobe* cabinet featured monstrous joysticks with two fire buttons, making it a phallic experience.

Q Hey! *Arcade!* Can you help me with the name of an old coin-op game that I saw a few years ago? You had to travel inside a spaceship and shoot gloopy green aliens. You could play against two other people, each with their own separate bit of screen. It had a really weird name. Please help me!
Paul Thornton, Newcastle

A Racking our expansive brains, we recall an arcade game called *Xenophobe*, released by Bally-Midway in 1987. In the game you did indeed travel through a multi-roomed spaceship, collecting artefacts

and lasering aliens (*Xenophobe* means hatred of aliens, you see).

The three-player mode saw each player wandering around the same spaceship, working together or shooting each other to bits. Each participant had a third of the screen devoted to them, which proved slightly frustrating for single players, who were then stuck with a pathetically squashed portion of the monitor to play on.

Xenophobe is best remembered for its splendid incidental music and hypnotic backing sounds, consisting of space-style bleeps and bloops that bore little or no relation to what was actually happening on screen. If you'd like to get more information on the game, visit <http://www.emux.com/>.

KICK ASS

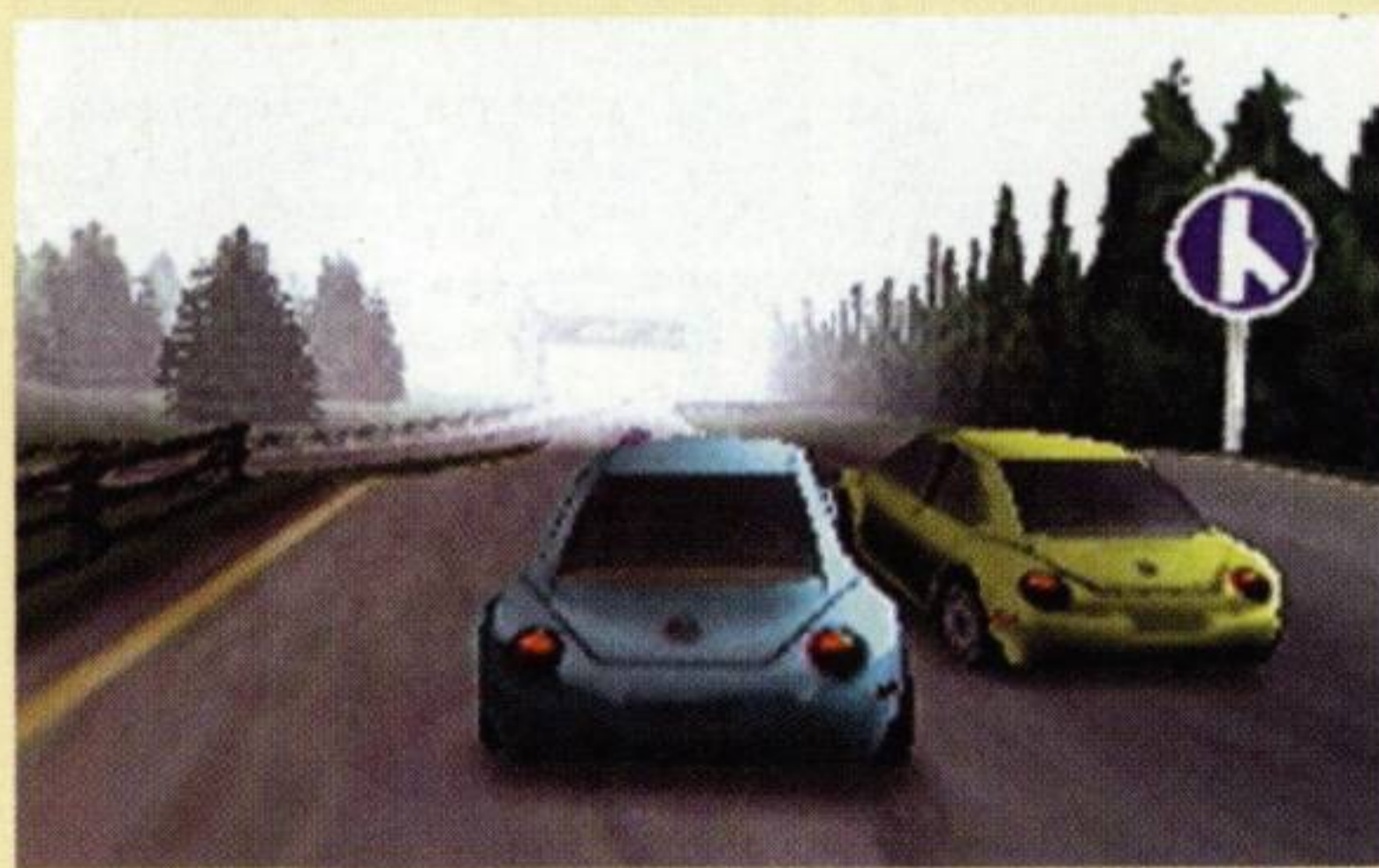
BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

HOW TO DRIVE LIKE HERBIE IN...

BEETLE ADVENTURE RACING

Format: **Nintendo 64** | Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Price: **£40** | Players: **1-4** | ★★★

Cheating is, as *Forrest Gump* never said, like a box of chocolates. Cheat, and you're never quite sure what you're going to get. *Beetle Adventure Racing* utilises cheating in something of a bizarre, but ultimately clever way. To open up the cheats (for use in *Single Player* or *Beetle Battle* modes) you must collect special *Flower Bonus* boxes. Here's how...



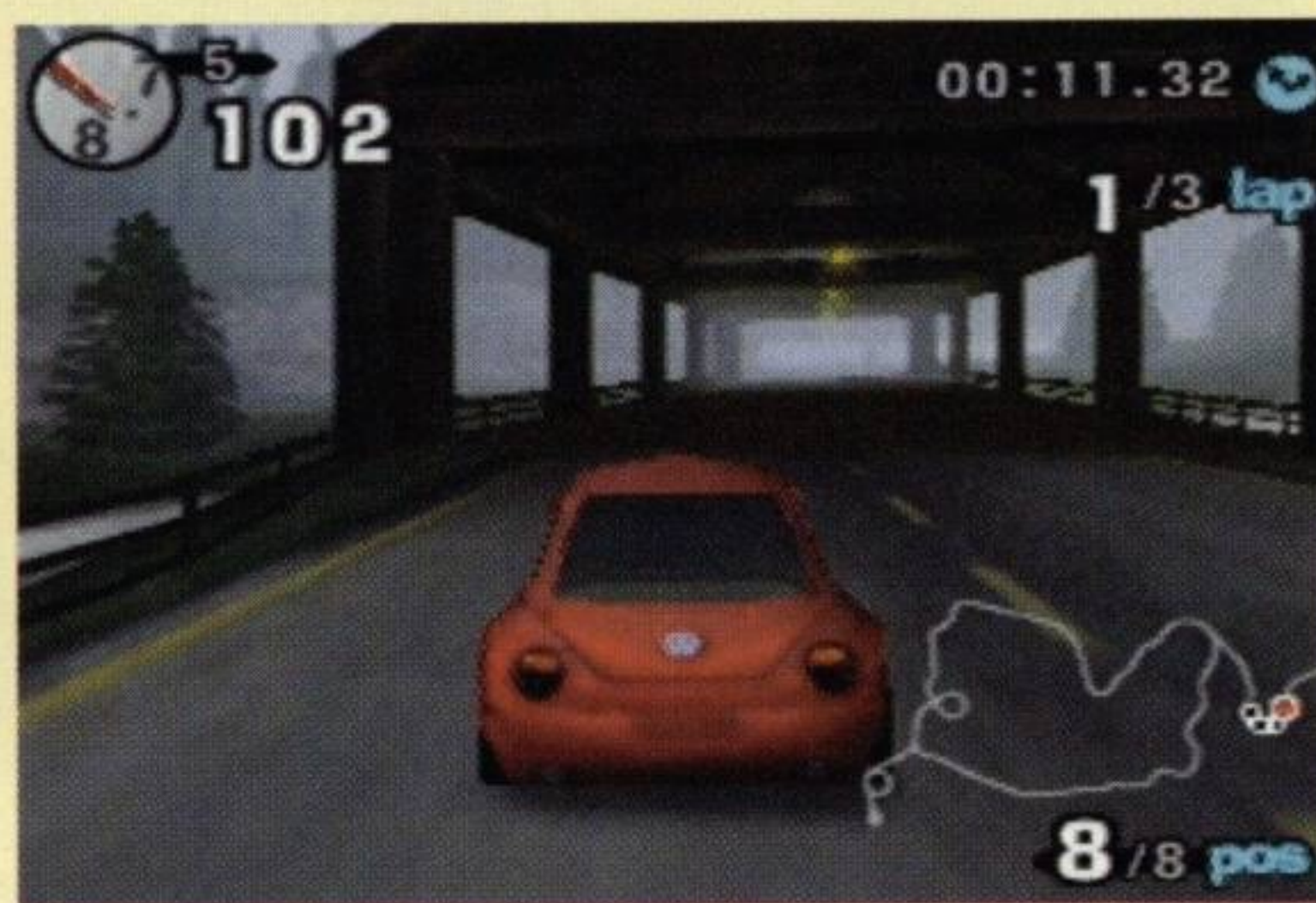
THE TRACKS

COVENTRY COVE



- In the area where arrows point right, hang a quick left and you'll jump and grab a box. You'll land on an island. Ahead is a ramp with a box. Crash through a *Flower Bonus* box behind a fixture on the left and go to the stage end, where you can get rid of the map in multi-player mode.
- Stop in Stonehenge, then drive along the coast to find the *Flower Bonus* box behind the stones. You can now control what comes out of the *Question* boxes in *Battle* mode.
- Go to the big junction. Cross the river, turn around and look for the grey fence. Drive to the cross, then enter the hole. In the fenced area is a *Flower Bonus* box. Now you can control the handicap for two-player races.

MT MAYHAM



- After passing the *Crystal Cave*, look for the opening to the deepest cave. Instead of going in through the bottom entrance, steer to the left and jump through the top. You should land on an upper floor (easiest done with the *Alien Beetle*). When the tunnel forks off, turn up to the right. After the bridge, make a sharp left and the *Flower Bonus* box is in the snow near the bridge. Now you can edit the music that plays when you're racing.
- Driving through the town, you have the option of going straight off the ledge or turning right, crashing through the window and driving down the ski ramp. Drive off the ledge, but do it angled toward the left of the screen. You should land on top of the snowy ledge. Turn around and search the area for the *Flower Bonus* box.
- Take the big jump to the upper section of the largest cave. Follow the right-hand path until you pass over the bridge. Stop immediately and look to your left for the *Flower Bonus* box. You will now be able to change your colour.

SNEAKIN' AROUND: HAVE FUN OFF OF THE BEATEN PATH



■ And here are the whereabouts of some of *Beetle's* sneakier shortcuts and fun moments:

- To ride along the roofs of the *Metro Madness* Buildings, choose the *Metro Madness* track and any *Beetle*. When you reach the *Roman Palace* hotel, head right before the jump. Hang a right off the hotel roof and you'll land on other roofs, arranged in a mini track formation. This is useful in two-player mode, since you

- can bash your opposition off the roofs.
- In *Coventry Cove*, go to the town after heading along the big bridge that goes past the waterfall. Immediately after the obvious shortcut, turn left and go over the boat in the water. There is an alley on the right, with a phone booth on the corner. If you hit the

- booth dead on, it will dent and someone will say "I'm sorry, your call won't go through."
- There's a sneaky shortcut on *Sunset Sands*, too. When you're racing through the inside of the temple that has exits on both the left and the right, stay straight – grab a *Nitro* box and jump the pit of

- lava. You'll land on top of a structure with a large red octagon. Brake quickly and stop your *Beetle* over the octagon. Honk your horn and a secret elevator will take you down to a cool shortcut that should get you ahead of the crowd in no time.
- *Beetle Adventure Racing's* computer drivers do take

- shortcuts, and will crash into you, but they're still law-abiding souls. Once you have unlocked the *Police Beetle*, hold down the left C button to sound your siren. If you get close, the other drivers will pull over to the side and stop their cars.

29 GAMES TIPPED THIS MONTH

It's no joke to spend your hard-earned wedge on a game, only to find out the damn thing is harder to get to grips with than a greased eel. That's where Kick Ass comes in: nine pages of gaming know-how, covering everything from Bomberman to Bust-A-Move so you can shed some of that shame.

PLAYSTATION

- P82 Civilization II
- P84 Warzone 2100
- P84 Guardian's Crusade
- P85 Silent Hill
- P85 Rugrats:
The Search For Reptar
- P85 Gex 3:
Deep Cover Gecko
- P86 Marvel Superheroes
Vs Street Fighter
- P86 Oddworld:
Abe's Odyssey
- P86 Resident Evil
- P86 Rayman

P86 Disney's Hercules

- P86 Theme Park
- P87 FIFA 99
- P87 Rollcage
- P88 Bomberman
Fantasy Race

NINTENDO 64

- P80 Beetle Adventure
Racing
- P84 Bust-A-Move 3
- P86 Snowboard Kids 2
- P86 Extreme GT
- P87 Super Smash Brothers
- P87 Battletanx

PC

- P84 Warzone 2100
- P86 Oddworld:
Abe's Odyssey
- P86 Resident Evil
- P86 Rayman
- P86 South Park
- P86 Theme Park

COLOR GAME BOY

- P86 Gex: Enter The Gecko
- P88 Rugrats

NOW PLAYING

You may think you've finished with a game, but there's more:

P81 Customise your motor in *Beetle Adventure Racing*.

P85 Find out what the creators of *V-Rally* would have improved.

P86 We help you to finish those old faves.

P88 Can you meet the Arcade challenges?

INFERNO ISLE



■ In the area that looks like a village, there's a house on the right with a flat roof. Jump your Beetle at an angle and land on

it. Reverse and break the Daisy crate for the bonus. The View Mode cheat will now be active in the Options menu, offering Normal, Fisheye and Tunnel view. ■ At the end of the race, when you are in the village during the lava flow, look for a house near the Finish line. Crash through to hit the Flower Bonus box. Finish the race and you can now set the time limit for the Beetle

Battle at anything between one and six minutes. ■ Turn right before entering the t-rex compound. Follow the muddy path and turn left on to the dock. Use the ramp to land on the house/island in the middle. In the rubble you'll find the Flower Bonus box. Finish the race. Now you can control how fast the Ladybugs change during a Beetle Battle.

SUNSET SANDS



■ Turn left at the first big pillar in the dunes. You should now be on a road that jumps on to a sand mound, and into the

top of the big temple. Do not go into the temple yet. Instead, explore the patio. You should find a Flower Bonus box in a far corner. Now you can control how powerful your Beetle's handbrake is, selecting from Normal, High and Insane. ■ When you initially reach the village, take the first turning on the right through the centre. The Flower Bonus box is

partially hidden behind some boxes. ■ Take the alternate road to the left and jump the ramp near the beginning of the level. Make your way until you jump on to the black and white floor. Instead of driving up the ramp to the switch, turn right and drive to the far-right corner, where you'll find the last Flower Bonus box.

METRO MADNESS



■ On the path that leads to the train race, instead of turning left to go up against the train, turn right and follow the track until

you reach the Flower Bonus box. ■ Some stairs lead to a two-point bonus box and the roof of a building. Go right, then straight ahead and you'll see a pyramid-shaped building. There will be a five-point box at the edge of the path, but instead of taking it, make sure you have enough speed, drive off of the right corner of the roof and you'll land on another building. Drive

straight ahead. Follow a wall on your left and go left to the other side when it ends. Go straight, and you'll hit the Flower Bonus box just before a drop-off. ■ In the area with cement ramps on both sides of the road, take the first right ramp, then the next, and you should come to a covered bridge on your left. Drive your car into it and you'll get the final Flower Bonus box.

WICKED WOODS



■ Take the alternative left route, located immediately after the town. You'll come to a Nitro booster and then a ramp that jumps you across a

small pond. Hovering in the air is the first Flower Bonus box. It may take a little time to get your speed and orientation right when you're going for this one, so be patient. Your speed needs to be between 90 and 105. ■ To get the second and final Flower Bonus box in this level, drive up to the church. Use the ramp to gain some major air in order to collect the five-point

box that's hovering at the opening, just below the ceiling. When you come out on the other side, make a left U-turn and you'll find the Flower Bonus box located right next to the building.

GET INTO THE GROOVE



■ Still here? Here's how to find the two Groovy boxes on Inferno Isle.

■ To get the first, follow the road until you reach the jungle area. Soon after that follow a dirt track off to the right and when you see a yellow glow, look to your right. There will be a small

rainforest hut and a ramp. Just before you hit the ramp, hold B and as soon as you hit the house (which shatters) hold C-Down to stop on the greyish platform. Turn around to your right and you should see a red Flower Bonus box. As you hit it, it will say "Groovy!". Press L to return to the main road safely.

■ To get the second Groovy box, enter the town from the dirt road or the main track. After making the first wide turn, aim right while jumping off the ramp immediately beneath the arch. You'll see a flat roof. Land on it, hang a sharp right and hit the Groovy box. Again, press L to quickly make it to the main road.

GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

NINTENDO 64

And the Beetle goes on...

Fancy yourself as a bit of a Beetle expert? One of the joys of the game is that it rewards you for your skills. But are you up to the challenge? You've got to play to win the goodies...

- Beat the Expert Championship and complete Metro Madness to receive the super-fast rainbow-coloured Beetle.
- Beat the Standard Championship and a new Bonus mode will open up.
- Beat Wicked Woods to get

the fastest car in the game: the Police Beetle.



CHEATS-R-US

■ Is all this talk of *having* to play through the game getting you down? Well, we've one final piece of advice to offer. Go to the one-player mode, select

"Championship", race on Coventry Cove and find the shortcut with the barn and two hay piles. Run straight into the hay pile closest to the road and you should hit a

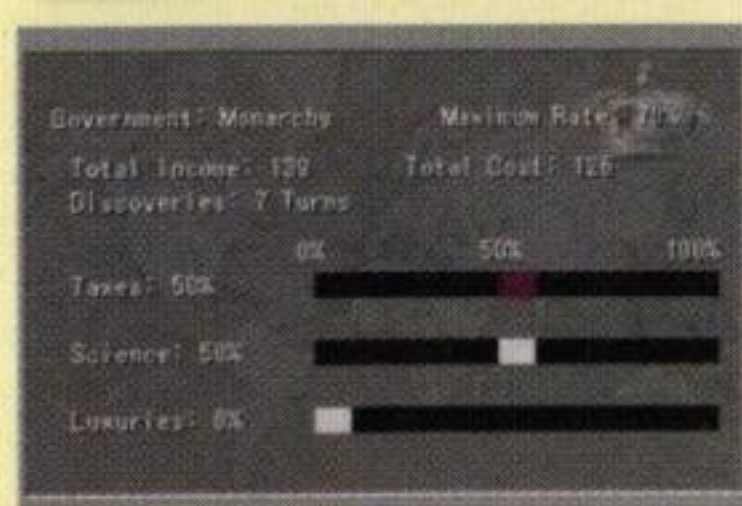
Groovy box (someone will say "Groovy!" if you do). Finish the race and then go to the Options mode; you'll now find an option called Cheats. Enjoy yourself.

HOW TO BECOME A RIGHTEOUS RULER IN CIVILIZATION II

Format: **PlayStation** | Publisher: **Activision** | Developer: **Firaxis** | Price: **£39.99** | Players: **1** | ★★☆☆

■ While *Civilization II* has been out on PC for ages, the newly-released PlayStation version has introduced empire building to a whole new joypad-chomping generation. Here's how to make sure you make the most of it.

LEVELLING OFF



Economy

The strength of your economy is governed by the quantity of Gold in your kitty. This pays for the upkeep of structures and, in emergencies, can be used for rush jobs. It is also important later in the game to bribe diplomats and spies.

Research

Research determines how fast your scientists make new advances. If you don't pump

enough funds into this field, you'll find yourself falling behind the competition. Keep this field cash-rich and you may end up in a situation where the enemy is attacking you with muskets and you return fire with thermonuclear weapons.

Luxuries

Luxuries only come into play later in the game, and even then should only be altered by an experienced leader. The higher the Luxuries Rate, the more Luxuries are pumped into your cities. It takes two units of Luxury to change an unhappy person into a content person, or a content person into a happy person.

■ All the money that comes into your tribe is divided in three areas: **Economy, Research and Luxuries**. These are important for different reasons, and juggling them efficiently will make the difference between winning and losing.

"HOW TO ADVANCE"

■ When it comes to getting ahead of your rivals, a lot depends on what Advances you research. As with Wonders, some are more important than others, so here is a quick list of what you should research first:

Monarchy

Enables: government of same name:

Reason: you should go for this as soon as possible since it increases the quantity of food you can produce.

Philosophy

Enables: free advance to first race to discover it.

Reason: it is always useful to get this before anyone else, as not only does it enable other more useful advances, it means you can get one of them straight away.

Sanitation

Enables: sewer system, which in turn allows cities to grow beyond size 12.

Reason: if your population is growing fast this becomes essential to make full use of your excess food.

Explosives

Enables: Engineers

Reason: Engineers are twice as good as Settlers in every aspect.

Railroad

Enables: construction of railroads and Darwin's Voyage Wonder.

Reason: railroads increase the production of resources and eliminate all movement costs.

Automobile

Enables: Battleship

Superhighway

Reason: this is very useful as

once you start building battleships, you are in control of the ocean.

Espionage

Enables: Spy

Reason: the Spy is the single most important military unit in the game as he can perform many different tasks.

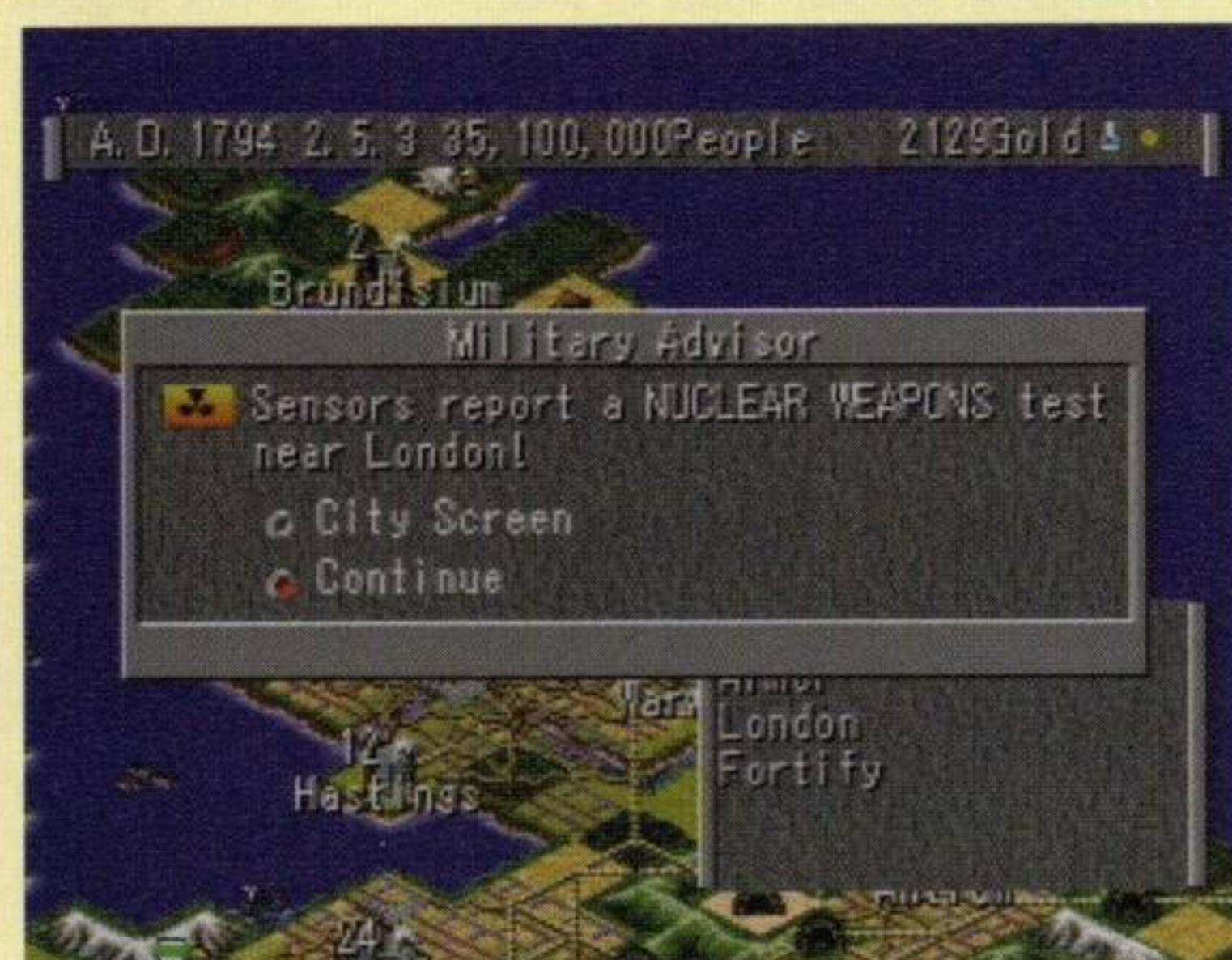
Mobile Warfare

Enables: Armour

Reason: Armours, or Tanks, are the best all-round unit. Ten for attack, five for defense and three-speed they are perfect for all situations.



GAMEPLAY STAPLES



■ Empire building can be a complex process, so it's best to build up a repertoire of surefire winning tactics. These will help you build a platform from which you can be more audacious. These bad-boys should hit the spot:

Drain the enemy's forces

Take a very good defensive unit, such as Alpine Troops or Mech Infantry, and move them to a strong defensive square – such as hill or mountain – just outside an enemy base. Your opponent will try to destroy the unit, weakening its own defences in the process. By doing this, you can stop any city increasing its defences.



Battle plans

Before embarking on a war, make sure you have enough money. Money can be vital to draft in back-up units, or to bribe enemy units to defect to your side. Also, ensure you have a steady government – preferably Monarchy or Communist, as if you are running a Democracy you'll be in for a rough ride.

When you actually come to advance on your target city, don't just rush one of your units straight into action. First, try to get a defensive unit on a mountain or hilly square and then move a

heavy offensive unit on to the same square. In this way you can protect your attack force from suffering an enemy counter attack.



Build Order

There are many improvements that you can make to your cities, and – although they all serve a useful purpose at some time or other – there is an established order in which you should do things to ensure their maximum growth.

When you decide the time is right to build a new city, take a defensive unit from an existing city along, too. Then build the following, remembering to delete the Granary once you are in a position to build the Pyramid:

Settlers
Granary
Marketplace
Library
Temple
Aqueduct

From this point on, what you build depends on your circumstances, but make this start the same for all of your cities. Remember that you should always try to have a minimum of two Settlers or Engineers per city.

WONDER-FUL LIFE

■ There are many, many Wonders available throughout *Civilisation II* – and they're all worth checking out. Some are handy, though not spectacular, if you've got a city with a lot of spare resources, while others are nothing short of vital for your burgeoning new civilization. Here's a run-down:



SEMI-PRECIOUS ASSETS

■ More Patsy Kensit than the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, these Wonders fall short of the miraculous, but they are worth a gander.

Magellan's Voyage

This enables you to move your ships, especially vulnerable transports, further, so they spend less time in dangerous areas. It gives you an extra two

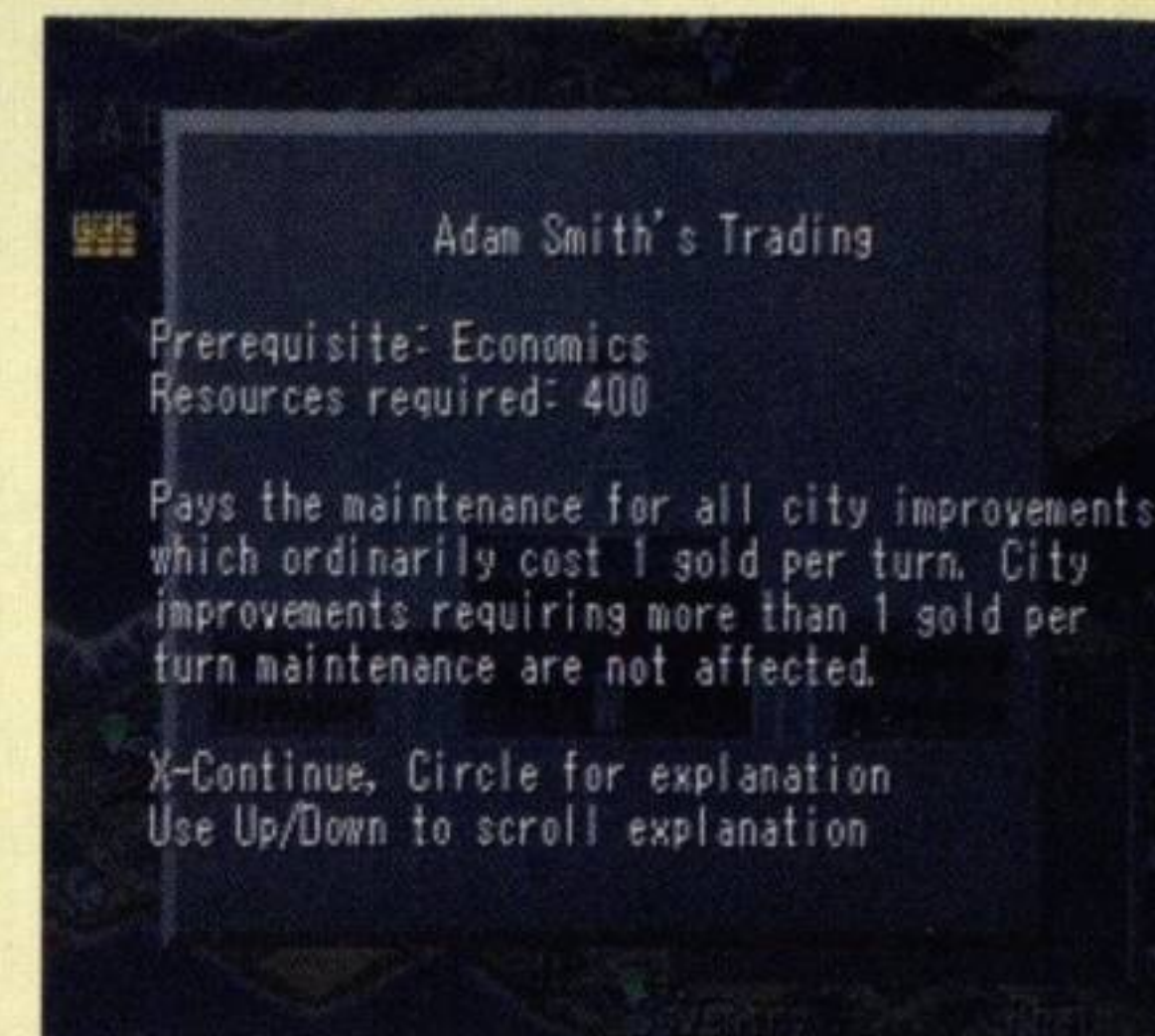
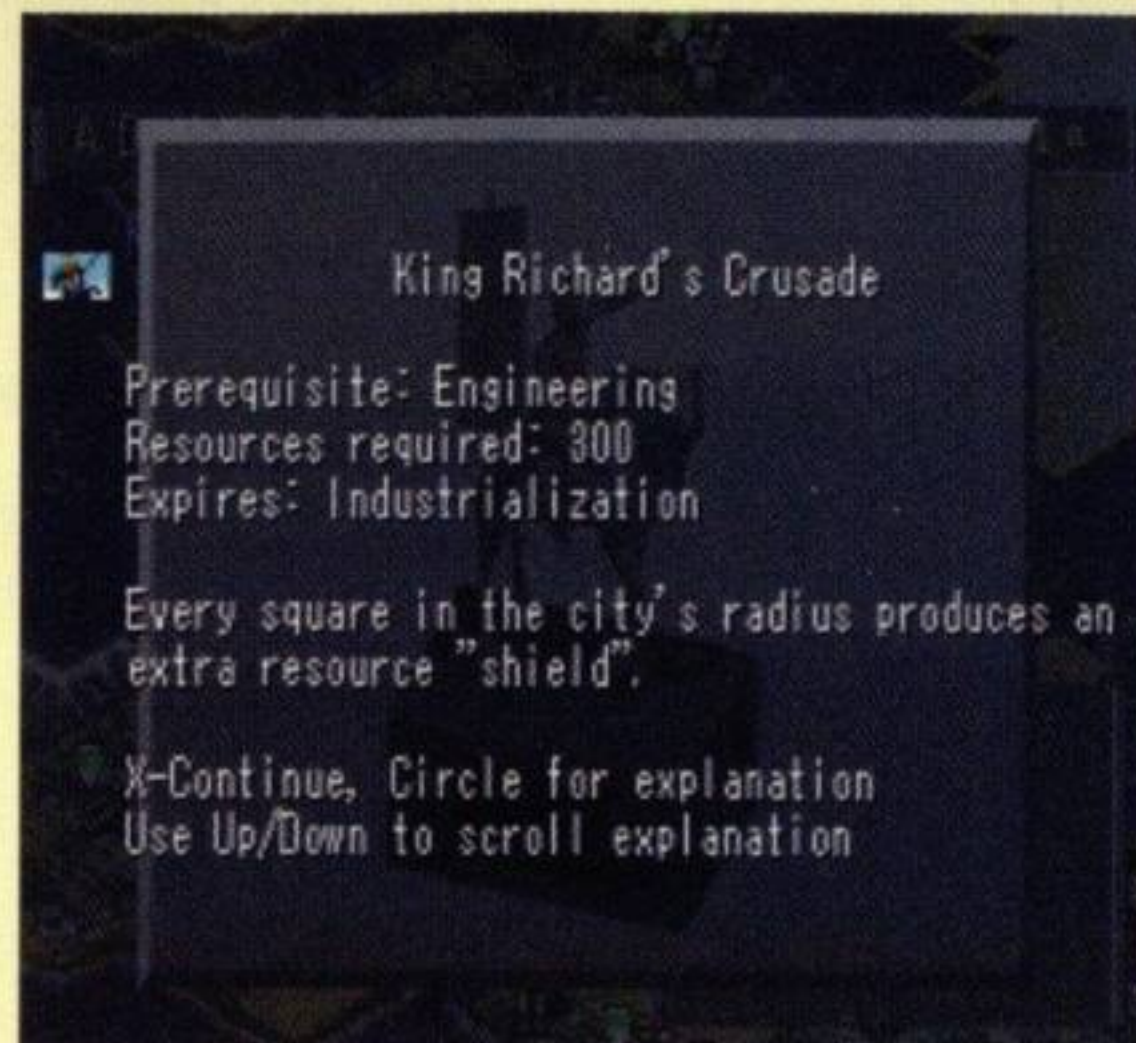
Movement points for all naval units, and the effects do not expire.

Adam Smith's Trading Co

Truly a Wonder, in that it enables you to change your tax rate and pour more money into research – very useful in the middle stages. This funds the upkeep of all improvements, which would normally cost you one Gold.

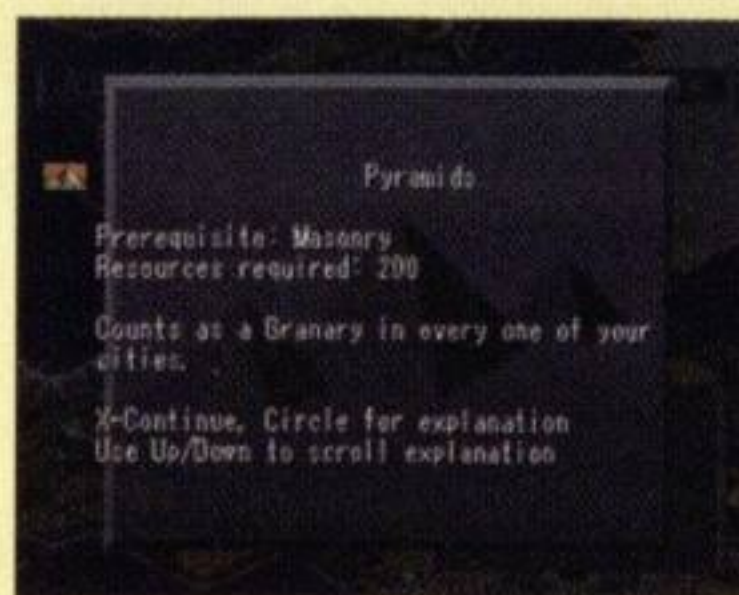
King Richard's Crusade

Very useful if you want to build Units – or other Wonders – fast. The effect is to add one Shield to every square in use in the radius of the city.



GOLDEN WONDERS

■ Stop the presses – these are must-have Wonders you'll be lost without. They're so important, it's worth building caravans just to complete them first – and that's saying something.



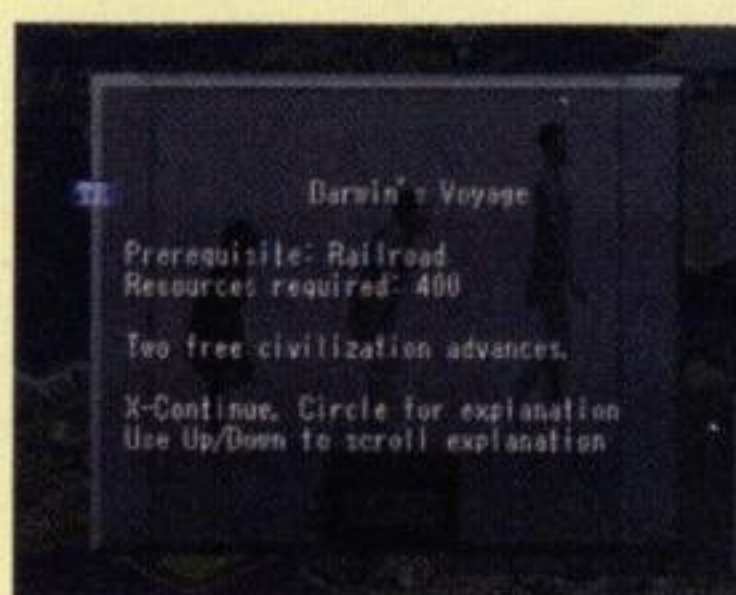
Pyramid

Counts as a Granary in each of your cities – and the effect doesn't expire. Building a Granary may sound dull, but it is useful as any enemy city you take over invariably has its own – which you can then sell.



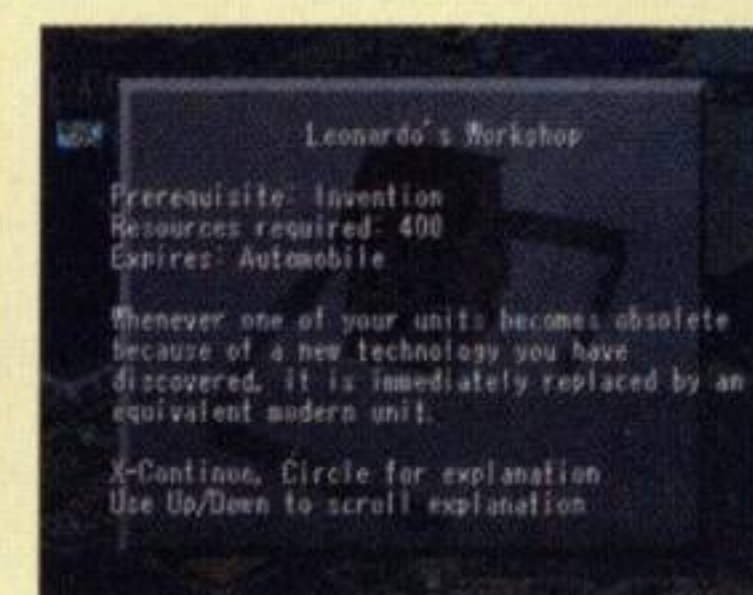
Great Library

With this on board, if two other civilizations acquire an Advance, then you gain it too. When you start on a continent without any other civilisations it stops other civilizations getting ahead of you.



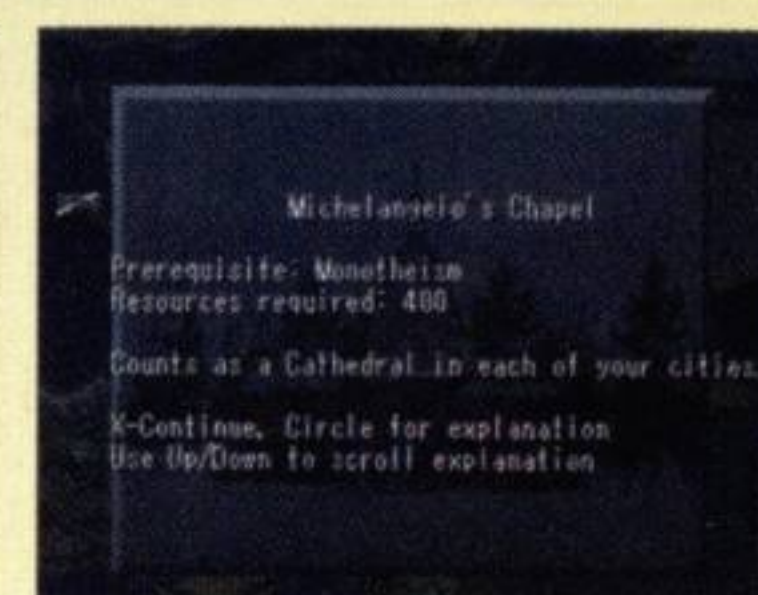
Darwin's Voyage

Produce this to furnish yourself with two free Advances, but for maximum effect wait until you have discovered something and build the Darwin's Voyage on your next turn.



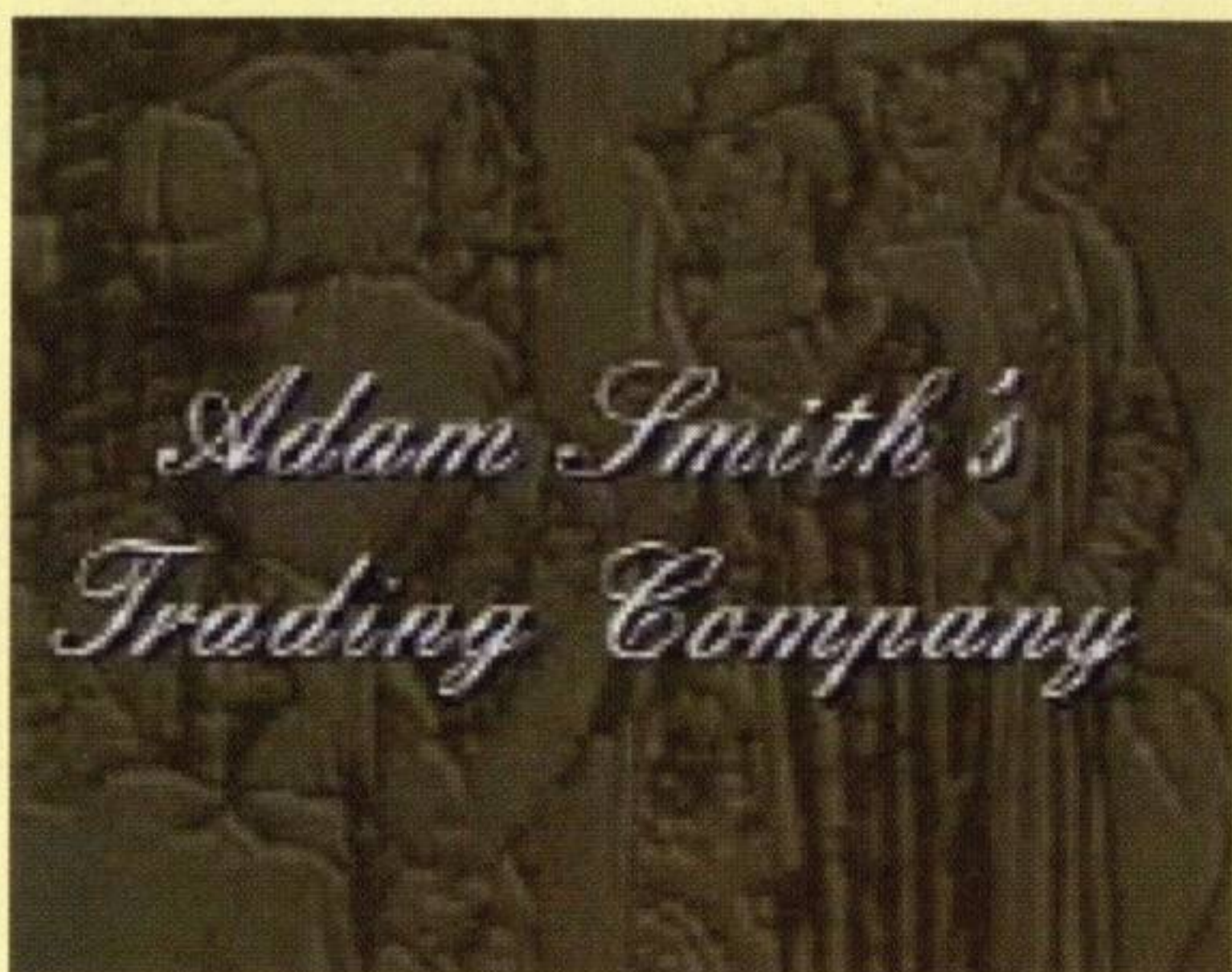
Leonardo's Workshop

Deploy this, and all units that have become obsolete are upgraded, free of charge. One of the most important Advances in the game as it also changes your Settlers to Engineers



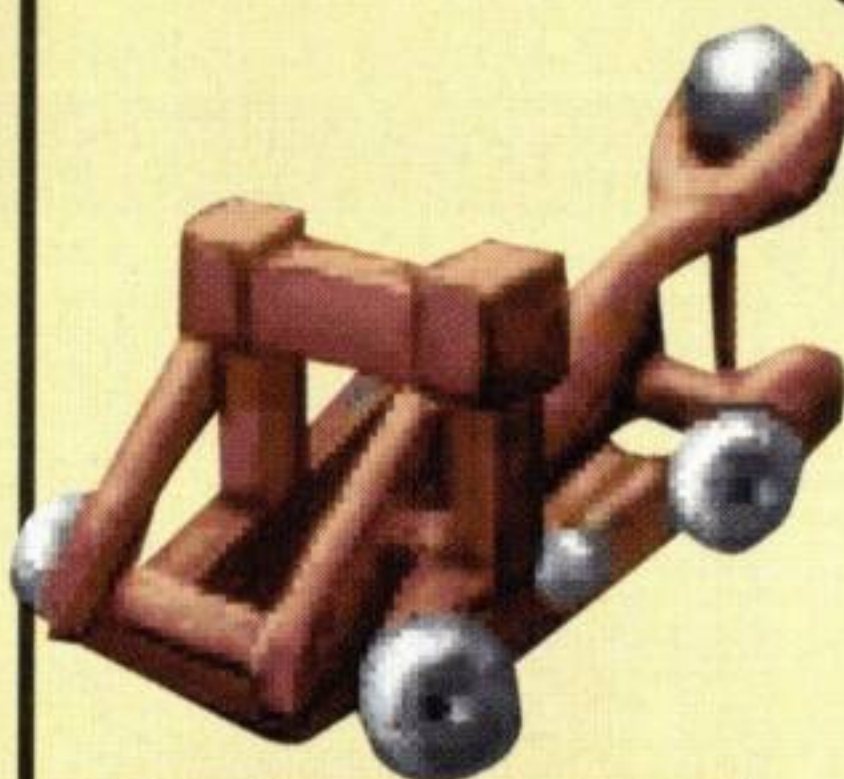
Michelangelo's Chapel

Counts as a Cathedral in all your cities and is very useful if you aim to become a Democracy. It keeps more people content and enables you to distribute more Luxuries.



DIPLOMACY

■ Diplomats and spies are a vital part of the game. They serve many varied and different functions.



Establishing embassies

When you share an embassy with another tribe, your sneaky fellas enable you to see all of the other tribe's cities, gauge the extent of their Wealth, military strength and Research. Nice work, Bond.



Stealing technologies

If a rival tribe has an Advance you are lacking, you can send in your Diplomat or Spy to steal it. Should your rival have more than one Advance over you, a Diplomat will pick one at random, but if you want a specific one, you'll need to use a Spy.



Destroying improvements

The Diplomats and Spies are your boys if you want to throw a spanner in the opposition's works. As with stealing technologies, Diplomats destroy an improvement at random, but with a Spy you can choose your target. You're only like to use this to destroy city walls.



Inciting revolt

If you have plenty of money, you can save yourself a massive war by inciting the citizens of a rival city to revolt and defect to your side. To do this, send in your boys with enough wedge to buy off the population. To avoid an international incident in peacetime you must pay double.



Planting a nuclear device

If you don't want to risk destroying your opponent's city walls, you can sneak in a nuclear device. This gets past any SDI defence they may have, destroys all their troops and enables an easy takeover. The drawback is that you halve the population of the city. Oops.

RAPID EXPANSION



■ If you want your population to boom, there is one very effective – but also very difficult – technique. Make sure you are not relying on martial law and that you have built all the happiness-improving buildings you can, such as Temples, Colosseums and Cathedrals. Also, make sure you have built everything you can that increases Luxuries, such as Marketplaces, Banks and Stock Exchanges. Next, change your tax rate so your totals are: three for Tax, four for Science and three for Luxuries. Then change your government to Democracy. While under a Democracy every city grows by one point per turn. This can lead to a city going from size three to size 13 in ten turns, as long as sufficient food is available. You'll also receive massive amounts of money as Democracy doubles all trade in each city.

HOW TO COME OUT SMELLING OF ROSES IN... WARZONE 2100



Out-of-this-world ways to be the king campaigner

■ Here are some tips on how to beat every campaign (except the first – come on, you can't be *that* bad).

CAMPAIGN 2

Arizona 1: Scavenger Raiders

The very beginning, so get used to all the controls and then get stuck in. Start off by building a base, consisting of an HQ, a research centre, a power generator and a factory. Seek out and destroy all the Scavenger bases and units. Make the best use you can of all available power resources and grab the four artefacts.

Arizona 2: Power Surge Detected

Defend the base against Scavenger attacks. Head south and destroy all the Scavenger bases and units. Grab the four artefacts. Then head straight on to Arizona 3.

Arizona 3: Locate and Recover Artefacts

Research the Power Module artefact and use it to upgrade your power generator. Load up the transport, search out the single artefact deep in Scavenger territory and return all forces to the landing zone for pick-up.

Arizona 4: Investigate Structure

Secure the landing zone against enemy attacks, calling in reinforcements as you see fit. Seek out the old research centre and the Scavenger base for two more artefacts.

Arizona 5: Encoded Signals Detected

Load the transport with a scout force. Secure the landing zone, then scout the map for enemy bases. Reinforcements will be made available once you've discovered an enemy base. Collect the four artefacts and destroy all the Paradigm units and structure.

Arizona 6: Enemy Attack

Defend the base against enemy attacks. Strike out to the east and destroy all the

Paradigm and Scavenger installations and units. There are four artefacts hidden somewhere in these installations. Lock down the areas as you go and be careful the enemy doesn't take control of vital power resources. Destroy the defences around the enemy landing zones to prevent further enemy transports from landing.

Arizona 7: Establish a Forward Base

Secure the indicated region by building something. Make sure you get at least four defence towers in place. Continue your defence against the incoming enemy transports and seek out and destroy the enemy units, watching out for potential ambushes.

Arizona 8: Enemy Transmissions Detected

Load the transport with a robust scout force to recon the New Paradigm base. Once you have been seen, proceed to and secure Landing Zone#2, and reinforcements will arrive. Destroy all the Paradigm units and installations, recover the three artefacts, and return to Landing Zone#2 for pick-up. Then move on up to...

Arizona 9: Synaptic Link Location

Load the transport and, once you have landed, secure the landing zone. Seek out and destroy the New Paradigm base and forces. Recover the four artefacts. Watch out for the enemy transports landing more hostile forces.

Arizona 10: Counter Attack

New Paradigm is landing major forces to attack your base. Seek out the enemy forces and destroy them all.

Arizona 11: New Objectives

Prevent the New Paradigm from recovering the artefact they are searching for in this area. When you get the next briefing, act quickly or the New Paradigm may get away. Destroy all the Paradigm forces and recover the artefact.

Arizona 12: Incoming Transmission

Destroy the major New Paradigm installations, and recover the three artefacts. Lock down the areas as you go to make full use of the new technologies.

Wasn't so tough, eh?

■ Show 'em who's boss. Don't take any shit. You know the kind of thing.



CAMPAIGN 3

Rockies 1: Establish a Forward Base

Build a new base to call in the reinforcements. Make sure you make the best possible use of the power resources available. Take out the Nexus forces and installations, and bag the two artefacts.

Rockies 2: Launch Site Coordinates

Load the transport and secure landing zone. Reinforcements are available should you want them. Make tracks overland to the missile silos and reduce them to rubble before they have a chance to launch. Escape to the valley before the warhead goes off.

Rockies 3: Welcoming Committee

Contact with the previous away team will now be

severed. The Gamma to the north is infected by Nexus. Destroy every Nexus/Gamma force and installation, nab the five artefacts and scarper.

Rockies 4: Team Alpha Reinforcements

Head south to Team Alpha's coordinates. Call in the reinforcements should you need them. Anti-aircraft units are recommended. Once you have contacted Team Alpha, return all your forces to the landing zone.

Rockies 5: NEXUS Takes Control

Watch for Nexus, who start to take over your units and structures. To stop further infection, plough major research into the resistance circuits and rebuild plenty of new structures to replace the infected Nexus ones. Eliminate

the Nexus forces and structures, and put the mission to bed.

Rockies 6: Beta Team#2 Meets Up With Team Gamma

Use the Gamma base units to escort the away team from Mission 2 safely to the Gamma base. You should now be in a position to use both the Home and Gamma bases to eradicate all the Nexus forces and installations. Bag the four artefacts.

Rockies 7: Fire From the Skies

Evacuate the Home base to Gamma base. Keep an eye peeled for LasSat strikes approaching from the north. Head south and capture the missile silos deep in Nexus territory. Recover the three artefacts near the silos.



Rockies 8: NEXUS Counter-Attacks

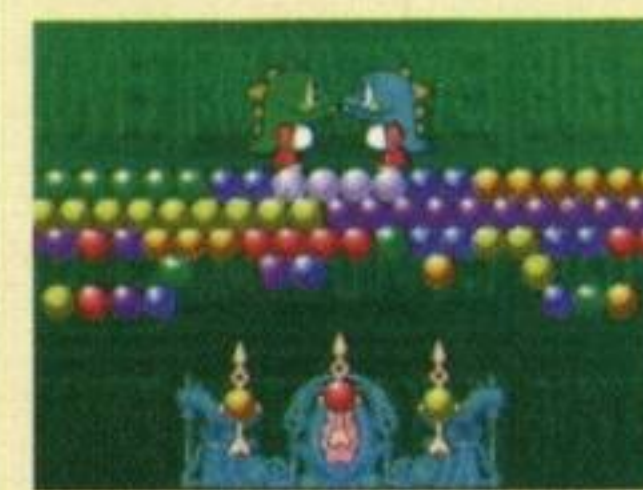
Your job here is to research the Nexus intruder. However, you soon learn that Nexus has been jamming the intelligence reports which are vital to the success of the project.

Rockies 9: Attack NEXUS Final Base

Establish a new base near the

site of the missile silos. Once built, load the transport with an attack force. On landing, secure the landing zone. Call in reinforcements as required. Head out to find the Nexus main base. Destroy the Nexus HQ and surrounding installations. Nab the three artefacts if you can and... my, well played – you've finished the game.

BUST-A-MOVE 3



■ Here's how to unlock a bonus, extra, you-don't-even-have-to-pay-any-more-money-to-get-to-it world. Ready? At the Title screen, press **B, Left, Right** and **B**. Got that? Good. Bye, then.

GUARDIAN'S CRUSADE



■ Here's how to cast the all-important Legend of Lt spell.

■ For starters, you'll need both the Legend and Peacemaker living toys. To get Legend, return to Dr Zeppeto with all 68 living toys and he'll give you Legend, then disappear. After that, return to Orgo and spend the night at your house. When you wake up, Nahani will tell you about some junk she and Knight found on the beach. Mr O'Neal will come out and tell you about the living toy Peacemaker and Nahani will realise that the junk was actually a living toy. Mr O'Neal will warn you, but when Nahani asks you if you want to know, say "yes". Now, take the new living toys to an extremely strong monster like Xisan and use Legend and then use Peacemaker. If Legend survives, he will cast the Legend of Lt spell. Afterwards you'll be completely healed and the enemy will be left with one hit point.

HOW TO FIDDLE, FIND AND FINISH... SILENT HILL

The quick way to become King of the Hill.



■ It's a big challenge to come out on top, but here are a few cheats to help.

■ During gameplay, hit **Select** to bring up the Item screen, then go to Options. Once you're in, press **L1, R1, L2, R2** at the same time. This opens a small menu where you can change the colour of the blood, reverse some of the controls and turn off the auto-aim.

■ In the last stage, Alessa will use lightning bolts to hit you. To avoid this attack, just press **Forward, Left** or **Right** and run. Harry will run in circles. After two or three you can stop and start shooting Alessa. When she starts another round of lightning, stop shooting and run again.

■ To find the Gold Medallion, go to the school. When you get to the room with the statue of the old man's hand, go into the room to the north and get the

chemicals. Go back to the statue and use the chemicals. Pick up the Gold Medallion and put it into the clock tower.

■ To get the Silver Medallion, the Gold Medallion must be in the clock tower. Go to the school. When you get to the room with the piano press, in order, the third (white), tenth (white), eleventh (black), eighth (white) and second (black) keys. They should all have been dead keys.

■ In the room with the signs of the Zodiac, click the digit according to the number of limbs in the picture (from left to right: Sagittarius: six, Taurus: four, Gemini: eight). For three health drinks, search the wrecked drinks machine on the first floor of the hospital.



NOW PLAYING

I DID THAT!

PLAYSTATION

V-RALLY

V-Rally's Product Manager tries not to look back in anger. But then again, why should he?

The PlayStation edition of *V-Rally* is still riding high in the charts. Smirks all round? We talked to Product Manager Michael Pattison to see if we could crack his grin.

Q So, Michael, what was the hardest bit of *V-Rally* to get right?

A There was a lot of talk about the difficult car handling. Contrary to everybody's opinion, *V-Rally* is the only PlayStation game to provide an extremely accurate car-handling simulation, far more accurate than *Gran Turismo* or *Colin McRae*. But, from a gameplay point of view, the most accurate car handling might be the best car handling. To be honest, I prefer the less realistic but more playable approaches of some other games.

Q Handling aside, then, which aspects of *V-Rally* have been overlooked by the ever-fickle gameplaying public?

A The landscape of the stages has probably not received the recognition it deserves. We spent a lot of effort making the scenery as detailed and coherent as possible. Next time you play, have a look at how many different types of trees and flowers there are at the side of the road.

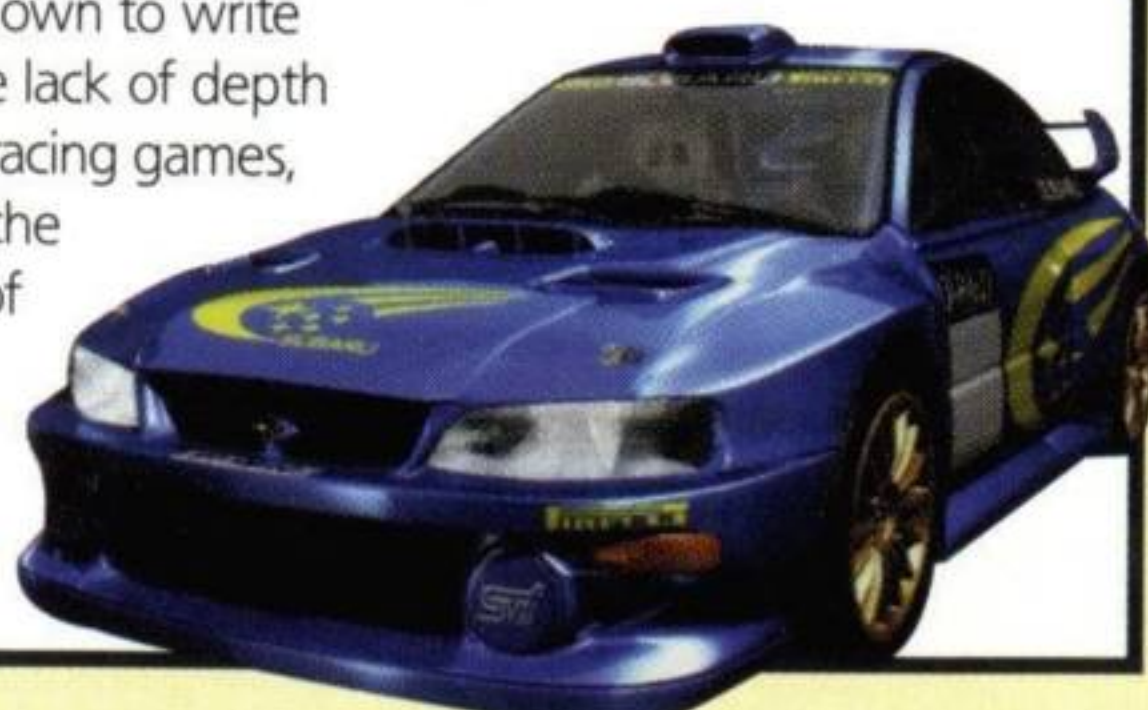
Q Which element of *V-Rally* makes the game different from other racers?

A One of our primary worries when we sat down to write *V-Rally* was the lack of depth of most other racing games, and especially the small number of tracks that some games offer. My previous

experience was in platform and adventure games, where the emphasis is on discovering things, and it was that aspect that inspired the exploration nature of *V-Rally*.

Q What part of the game would you go back and improve if you had the chance?

A It would have been nice to have been able to include a four-player Link mode and a track generator, but, as is so often the case, time beat us to it. It would have been good to have been able to spend a little more time pitching the balance between playability and realism a little better, too.



HOW TO GAIN EASY BROWNIE POINTS RUGRATS: THE SEARCH FOR REPTAR

Beat those cartoon cuties like you're their Daddy.



■ While *Rugrats* may look like a game for kids, the characters are perhaps best known for their slot on *Live and Kicking* – graced by the fragrant *Zoe Ball* – and, as such, deserve your respect.

■ While putting on the mini-golf course, hold down the **Walk** button and the aiming line will move a lot slower, making it easier to take aim.

■ When you are in the house, go to the top of the stairs and make sure you are facing down. Now you should be able to jump the whole staircase and it won't even hurt Tommy.

■ Go to the Grandpa's Teeth game. If you press **⊙** next to the playground equipment a small *Rugrats* movie will play.

■ You can play fetch with Spike outdoors by picking up the small ball, the bone and the stick.

■ For secret Reptar bars, go to

the basement and look on the right side of the computer. When playing hole eight on Ice Cream Mountain, go to the entrance on other side of the pyramid and explore. You will find a lot of Reptar Bars and Mr Friend's mummy.

■ There's a sneaky short-cut on Incident Isle 7. When you get to the plants, there will be three balloons tied together. Run into them and press **⊙**. This will take you to the middle of the board.

PLAYSTATION

GEX 3: DEEP COVER GECKO

■ To open the Vault in Mission Control, get all four of the Vault Collectibles from the secret level. These codes are then available:

Square, X, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Square
Ten lives

Triangle, Circle, Star, Square, Square, X
One life

Square, Star, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Diamond
Invincibility

Square, X, Triangle, Square, Star, Star
Play as Alfred

Square, Diamond, Square, Square, Triangle, Diamond
Play as Cuz

Square, Star, Star, Square, Triangle, Triangle
Play as Rex

Circle, Triangle, Square, Star, Diamond, Star
Gex video one

Diamond, Star, Square, X, Triangle, Circle
Gex video two



■ To beat Evil Santa, wait until he throws a present, stand to the right or left of the spinning gift and **tail-whack** it back at him. Repeat three times. For a couple of easy Remotes in Mission Control, go to the Wreck Room and beat all the obstacles for the first, and go **up the mountain** to the left side of the TV that takes you to The Pole for the second.



MARVEL SUPERHEROES VS. STREET FIGHTER

■ **Find the secret (if only slightly different) characters of MS Vs SF.**

■ On the main menu screen, quickly press **L1**, **⊗**, **Left**, **⊙**, **⊙** for a cheat menu. To play

as Armoured Spiderman, highlight Spiderman at the Character Selection screen, then hold **Select** and hit any button. To play as Evil Sakura, highlight Hulk at the Character Selection screen, then hold

Select and hit any button. To play as Grey Hulk, set up to play as Evil Sakura and choose Hulk as her partner. To play as Mech Zangief, Mephisto, Shadow or US Agent, highlight Blackheart, Omega

Red, Dhalsim or Bison on the Character Selection screen, hold **Select** and hit any button.



CLASSIC TIPS

Don't give up on those long-unplayed games gathering dust on the shelf. You may just have missed some of these cheat codes, so get them out and give 'em a new spin.



NINTENDO 64

EXTREME GT

■ Here's how to unlock the secret bikes. Enter as passwords:

868QCMH3H9HT Venom bike

55Hz1MH3H9H1 Wasp Superbike

W7LRGCQ9DP5 Spectre Superbike

■ And to cheat? Again, enter as passwords:

MISPLACE

Remove one engine from car

SPIRAL Spiralling screen

SPYEYE Spy Eye (overhead view)

XXX Fast racing

ROCK Play as a rock



PLAYSTATION

DISNEY'S HERCULES

■ To defeat the Centaur boss, ride him five times until he gets dizzy, then mega-punch him in the face.

■ In the first level you will see some dummies to hit. Jump on the log they are hung on, then jump again and use the mags by jumping, pressing **Down** and hitting. Phil will raise you higher and you will be able to get the coins and an extra life.

■ Enter one of these at the password screen to gain access to the following levels:

Hero's Gauntlet
Hydra, Medusa, Shield, Medusa

Centaur's Forest
Centaur, Herc's head, Minotaur, Archer



PLAYSTATION PC

ODDORLD: ABE'S ODYSSEY

■ On the PC, at the main screen, hold down **Shift**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Up** on the cursor keys to select your level. Alternatively, hold down **Shift** and enter **Up**, **Left**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right** + **Left**, **Right**, **Down** again at the main screen to select a movie.

■ To let rip with a green gas fart on the PlayStation, hold **R1**, **Up**, **Left**, **Right**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊗** while playing. To select your level, hold **R1**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left**, **Right**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **Right**, **Left** at the main menu.



PC

SOUTH PARK

■ For the Big Heads mode, go to the **Options** menu, click in the bottom left corner and type **EGOTRIP**. This will only work in one-player mode. For infinite lives, start a game as normal, press **Esc** and click on **Options**. Click the lower-left corner of the screen type **BEEFCAKE** for unlimited lives. For unlimited ammo type **SWEET**, instead of **BEEFCAKE**.



PLAYSTATION PC

RESIDENT EVIL

■ If you look at the pool table in the bar room of the guest house, you'll notice that the cue balls read 12, 6, 3, 9, and that there's a clock dial at the end of the table, together with two cue sticks. This represents a clock; the balls represent the numbers, and the cue sticks represent the hands. For Jill's storyline, it reads 3:45 and for Chris's storyline, it reads 2:15. You'll now find it easier to open the door with the numbered keypad lock in the beehive room. For Jill, enter **3, 4, 5** and the door will unlock. For Chris, enter **2, 1, 5**, and the door will unlock.



PLAYSTATION PC

THEME PARK

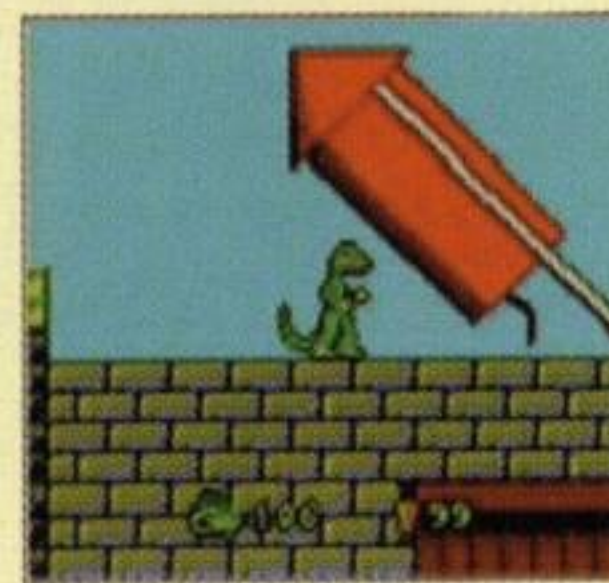
■ For instant access to all rides, shops and attractions on the PlayStation, enter your nickname as **BOVINE**. You can get more money by holding **⊙**, **⊗**, **⊙**. To access the God Park, enter your nickname as **BUD**. Then, when the Park Select screen appears, press **⊙**. This cheat will enable you to enter a park where you can push the costs of concessions, games and entrance through the roof.

■ Here's a little tip for both systems. Put the soda stand as close to the fry stand as possible. Lower the fries price and wait a bit. Every five minutes or so, raise the soda prices a little. Soon, the people will snap-up the cheap fries, get thirsty and head for the soda stand.

NOW PLAYING

GAMEBOY

GEX: ENTER THE GECKO



■ **Tame the gecko in double quick time with these pearls of gaming wisdom.**

■ For 255 lives (when you only have one left), enter a level that has a **bottomless pit** (such as **Scream TV: Smellraiser**). Fall down the pit and just as Gex is keeling over to die, exit the level with the **Start** button menu. You'll now have zero lives.

■ **Repeat this** and you'll have 255 lives. The downside is you'll need to find a new red remote control before you can get a working password. ■ To turn the Mona Lisa on or off, go to the bookcase near door on the first level. Do the **Tail Attack** on the books and the bookcase will retract. Flip the lever, then super-jump up to the Mona Lisa where you'll get an **Options** menu.

PLAYSTATION PC

RAYMAN

■ To get a Big Rayman on the PlayStation, after the UbiSoft logo appears, press and hold **L1**, **L2**, **R1** and **R2**. Keep holding these buttons until the animation of the brick wall appears. Continue to hold these buttons and press **Start**. Keep holding down everything, including **Start**, then release everything when the screen turns black.

■ When you've lost your last man and are down to two or fewer continues, press **Start** to continue your game, then press **Up**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left** for ten free continues.

■ For full power-ups and 99 Lives while playing, pause the game and hold **R1**, **R2** and **L2**. While holding these buttons, press **⊙**, **Right**, **⊙**, **Left** and **⊙**.

■ On the PC, try typing the following while playing. For entering numbers, do not use the keypad.

TRJ8P 99 lives

EN5GOL2G All powers

B76B708 Bonus *Breakout* game

86E40G91 Ten extra Tings

2X2RMFMF Golden Fists

O8FEH Level skip

KOM00GDK Restore health

■ To select your level on the PC, type **4CTREPFJ** on the Map screen. For Slow Motion, press and hold **Right** on the Loading screen until Rayman appears. For ten extra continues, press **Up**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left** at the Continue screen if you have three continues or less.

NINTENDO 64

SNOWBOARD KIDS 2



■ For all characters, boards and levels, get to the Title screen and press **Z**, **B**, **C**, **Up**, **Down** on the D-pad, **Left** on the stick, **Right** on the stick, **Up** on the D-pad, **R**, **Z** and **A**. You'll need to start a new game, though, so it won't work with saved games.

HOW TO GET THE UPPER FOOT IN...

FIFA 99

Ronaldo? Bald ponce. You're a lot more skilful.



■ All the clubs, all the leagues and all the cups – all a nightmare if you're low on skills. Read on and make like the playmaker you really are.

■ The first time you play the game, you may notice there is no Ronaldo. Where's he gone? He is actually an Inter Milan or

Brazil substitute player named A Calcio. Change his name in the Player Edit mode and put him into the Inter Milan or Brazil starting line-up as a right forward. Don't forget to save it on your memory card.

■ If you attempt a shot from distance, make the goalie push the ball round the post for a

corner by quickly pressing L2 or R2.

■ You can evade sliding tackles with the L1 button. The //Square// is used to slide tackle, but you risk being booked. Learn to use //circle// to tackle.

■ R1 is used to thread a pass forwards, but you can score with it as the accuracy is better than with //X//. When you go one-on-one against the goalkeeper slide the ball neatly home by pressing R1 and a direction.

■ Corners are your the best opportunity to score. Cycle your view by pressing R1 then press //X// to switch players to find your main striker, then try to do a bicycle kick. Usually works.

HOW TO SLAP 'EM UP IN...

SUPER SMASH BROTHERS

Thieve lives, unlock cheats and look good.



■ Nintendo's finest get their ganders up in a fighting game that pits the likes of Zelda's Link against the man Mario. Here's your chance to show these money machines who's boss...

■ If you get beaten while playing a team multi-player match and your team-mate has one or more lives to spare, you can swipe one by pressing **A**, **B**, **Z** and **Start**. It's best to ask

them first, though.

■ To unlock a special menu that enables you to twiddle with the multi-player options to your heart's content, go to Vs mode, pick any three computer players and your favourite character to play. Play the

Stock mode, and set the lives to ten. Change the computer handicaps to five. Play and win. Go to the Vs options, then go to Items. You can choose what items will show up and how often they do.

■ A nice little bit of trivia is that you can change your outfits by tapping the four **C** buttons at the character select screen. Er, great, eh?



BATTLETANX



■ If you want to impress the Queen Lords that roam through the post-apocalyptic future of *Battletanx*, here's what you've got to do...

■ To play as a Goliathtanx push **C-Up**. In order to derail it so that you can drive it where ever you want you must hold **C-Down**. This works whenever you have a Goliathtanx on your side. The downside is that once you derail the tanx, you can't put it back on the track.

■ In the multi-player Area 51 level, there is a UFO. If you shoot the UFO you get a gyrating light show. In between the upper left and upper right corners is another UFO. If you blow both of them up and drive into the light show, you can warp between the two points.

■ When you max-out your ammo on your weapon, press **A** and **B** at the same time to create a "Super" edition of your weapon. To get a War

missile and at least 15 Guided missiles, hold **A** and **B** down and guide your missile to its target. You can also shoot lasers out of the missile by pulling the trigger. Super Gun Buddies enable you to shoot six Gun Buddies (any more are useless) and press **A + B** to lay eight Super Gun Buddies.

■ In Annihilation mode, start a two-player game and have two computers enabled. It doesn't matter which team or clan you are on. Play the game normally but have someone lose their whole team very quickly. When the word "LOSER" pops up on your screen, it won't be circling like usual. If you move your analog-stick, you can take a tour of the streets, follow the other player as a lookout, or just watch the action as it develops.



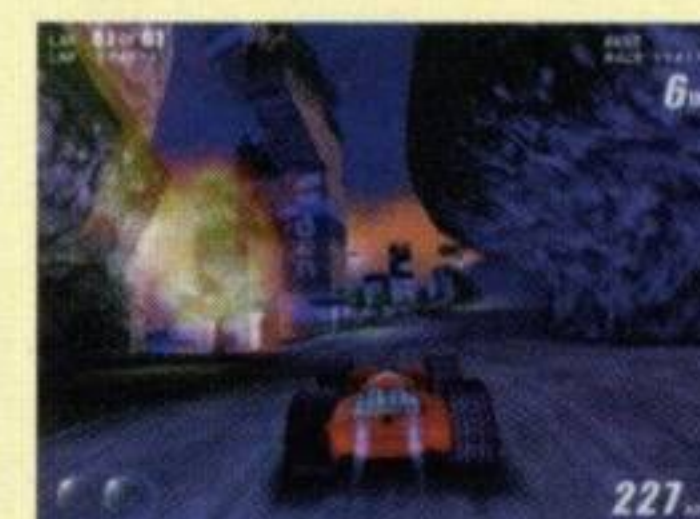
■ And here are the cheat codes. Enter them on the Password screen.

PLVRZM	All weapons
FRGZ	Frog mode
HVRL	Hurl mode
MSTSRVV	Invincibility
CRSTLCLR	Invisible tanks
CDPLT	Run story
TDZ1	Toad mode
CNCTHRTM	Trippy mode
LTSFBLTTS	Unlimited ammo
LVFRVR	Unlimited lives
LTSLSGNGS	Chose campaign
WMNRSRTR	All-Women Storm Ravens game

■ And the level codes? Oh, go on then.

FRHBWNTNTK	Level 1
LHTTTBKRLS	Level 2
RCJRWPLGGM	Level 3
VVSLGGVHRF	Level 4
LPFFLNHJJF	Level 5
CTMGPRWGBH	Level 6
HPJMKGMCV	Level 7
WHSNKNFRGS	Level 8
CRFPHGCTKP	Level 9
HHRBKPVVWGB	Level 10
WFHMKCFWLB	Level 11
SPLJTFLRFS	Level 12
LTSLSGNGS	Level 13

ROLLCAGE



■ Try entering the following as passwords:

MAXCHEAT	Unlock everything
AIRHORNS	Activate Select as an '80s air horn
BESTLAPS	View the developers best laps

■ And here are the locations of a couple of the more sneaky short-cuts.

Outworld Eruption Shortcut

■ When you see a tunnel at the right side of the road, enter it and immediately hug the wall (to avoid the train.) You will exit the tunnel near the Start/Finish line.

League: Harpoon Track: Paradise

■ When you reach the first straight where you can get weapons, go to the right side close to the wall. When you reach a dead end, go straight through it and you will enter a cave. When you get out you will be near the Start/Finish line.

League: Sapphire Track: G-Force

■ When you are in the straight after the tunnel, turn left and you will enter a very large tunnel. When you get out you will be on the last straight of the track.

League: Neoto Track: Park life

■ When you pass the arrows in the wall, do not go down. Go to the right and you will enter the park. When you get out you have already passed the two tunnels.

GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

Mastered a game? Reckon you're pretty clever? The following list of gameplay challenges will breath life into games previously "finished" and left to gather dust under your bed. So come and have a go if you think... etc



NINTENDO 64

GOLDENEYE

■ Challenge: **complete Bunker Two without using weapons**

■ Low-down, dirty, neck-snapping action all the way. Except for the bits where you have to take out the security cameras, when you may use the silenced PP7s – and only the silenced PP7s (you'll have to find them first). Kill the guards by waiting for them to take aim, circling round and chopping them on the back of their heads. Try it on 00 Agent mode if you dare.



NINTENDO 64

ISS 98

■ Challenge: **pull off a Pele or a Beckham**

■ You need you to pick the ball up from the kick-off, take a quick look up and thump it into the back of the net from inside your own half. The Pele method is to blast it from just inside the centre circle, the Beckham method is to float it over the keeper from the wing. Use a lob or shot with plenty of top-spin, a player with maximum power and accuracy, and the vertical camera angle. Easy.



NINTENDO 64

MARIO KART 64

■ Challenge: **master the Wario Stadium short-cut**

■ On Wario Stadium, you can use the hills just after the start to hop over the wall on the left and cut out almost all of the track. It's outrageous cheating – guaranteed to cause fights in a multi-player game – and all you need is a mushroom. Drive at full pelt up the hill, activating the mushroom just before you reach the top. Turn hard left, hop for all you're worth and... bingo! Now do it three times in a row.



NINTENDO 64

WAVE RACE

■ Challenge: **triple-flip stunt**

■ Flip not once, not twice, but a full three times. Yes indeed. It's possible, but only on certain courses. The best place to try it is on the huge ramp in Glacier Coast, where anything less than a double flip is a miserable failure. If you want to be sneaky about it, have a go on the ice sheet section, or the island in Drake Lake. You'll find you can actually flip forever, squashing your head on the polygon scenery.



PLAYSTATION

COLONY WARS VENGEANCE

■ Challenge: **pink is for girls**

■ Play the previous *Colony Wars* games and you'll know the best way to tackle an enemy is to knock out their shields with the anti-shield laser and finish them off with the main lasers. Easy, but how far can you get firing only pink lasers? No homing missiles and no other coloured lasers – just pink ones. We hereby challenge you to beat the first five missions exclusively in The Pink.



PLAYSTATION

METAL GEAR SOLID

■ Challenge: **finish the game three times in one day**

■ If you beat the game twice using your old data, on your third game Snake will change into his tuxedo, James Bond-style. On your third run, suing your old data, you can make the Ninja you fight in a weird crimson red get-up. But can you play through it three times in one day? At seven hours a stint, there's not going to be much time to change your own clothes. But we dare you.



PLAYSTATION

POY POY 2

■ Challenge: **hammer time**

■ If you've played *Poy Poy 2*, you'll be accustomed to the special moves, activated by picking up an object and pressing **R1**. One of the best special move weapons is the hammer, which enables you to clonk your way through the multi-player lobbing madness with an *Inspector Gadget*-style mallet. But can you win using nothing else? Just the hammer? By throwing no other objects?

Bet you can't.



PLAYSTATION

TOCA 2

■ Challenge: **drive backwards**

■ Anyone can drive a car. A bit of a practice around Sainsbury's car park on a Sunday afternoon and you'll be safer on the road than the majority of silver-haired old biddies who are still legally allowed to poodle around town at speeds that wouldn't floor a snail. But can you drive backwards? As the lights count down through the colours to green, hit reverse and divert your eyes to the rear view mirror. Now finish a race.



PC

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

■ Challenge: **head case**

■ Whichever species you choose to play in this horror tie-in from Fox, you're always heavily armed and armoured. But where's the fun in pumping a room full of grenades? And if you play as an Alien, it's all too easy to complete the levels by mindlessly hacking and slashing at your prey from behind. So here's a challenge: if you can't score 90% of clean head kills, you have to re-do the level.



PC

CARMAGEDDON 2

■ Challenge: **keep the streets clean**

■ With its freeform race-or-die gameplay, *Carmageddon 2* might prohibit any new assignments, but *Arcade* has devised one. It's no longer enough for you to trash all the other vehicles in each level; now you have to smash them and then shunt them into a neat little pile. Every time you knock an opponent out of the race, you must nudge the burning wreck to the centre of the map before moving on.

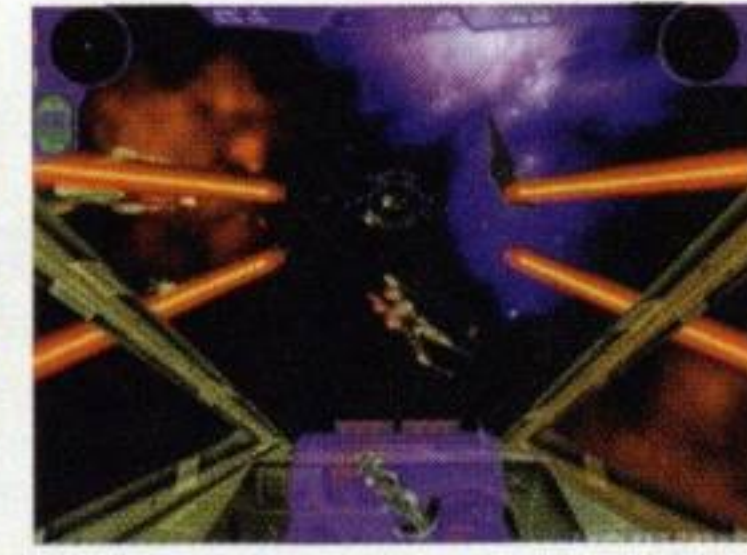


PC

RING

■ Challenge: **as surreal as it gets**

■ It should have won "Slowest and Most Pretentious Adventure Game of 1998". *Cryo* took Wagner's operas, set the stories in a dark cyber-Gothic future and turned the whole thing into a *Myst*-style puzzle game. So here's how to spice it up. Turn the sound down, switch off the subtitles and try to guess what you have to do. We defy you to get any further than the rail-bike in Alberich's Mine.



PC

X-WING

■ Challenge: **they won't thank you**

■ *X-wing Alliance* is due out this month, but since the classic *X-wing* is now available on budget with a remastered engine, there's every reason to try out some fancy moves in the original. Try to take out your own ships. Not the little fighter craft, that's easy. No. Without your wingmen, your new mission is to explode the giant Rebel ships you're usually designated to protect. Our tip: go for the engines.

PLAYSTATION

BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE



■ **Wanna get rich quick? Play the system and reap the rewards.**

■ To double your money, save your game in any memory block, then save again in another block. Go to

the bank and select Money Transfer. Transfer your cash from one block to the other to double it. Do it again (and again) to make you rich. To gain two hidden animals, buy all five kangaroos and all five dinosaurs. Once you've done so, two new animals will appear – a black kangaroo and a white dinosaur.

GAMEBOY

RUGRATS

■ Level codes? Suits you, Sir.

BVBYFJND	Train Crash
TQMMYQK	Hospital
RJDBCVRT	Light Woods
VNGBLJCV	Dark Woods
LJTBWQQD	Ancient Ruin
BJGSMVSH	Reptar



CLOCKING OFF

That's quite enough tip-foolery for one month. Remember, folks, that videogaming is one of few areas in life where cheats often prosper. So don't be afraid to pull that trick, dig that code, or push those buttons. It may not make you the number one entry on the highscore of life, but it will make your humiliated friends fume with anger. Hurrah!

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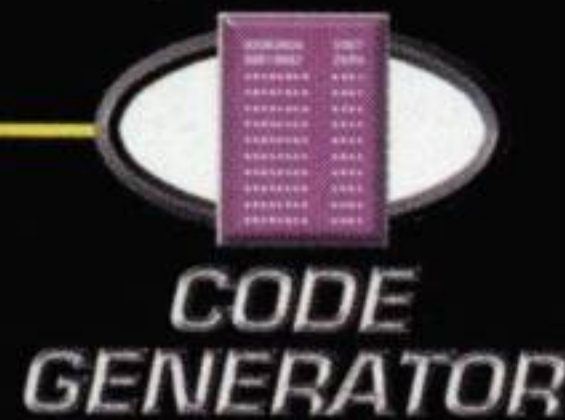
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THE WORD ON THE STREET

July 1999



A Review

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide



PAGE 110

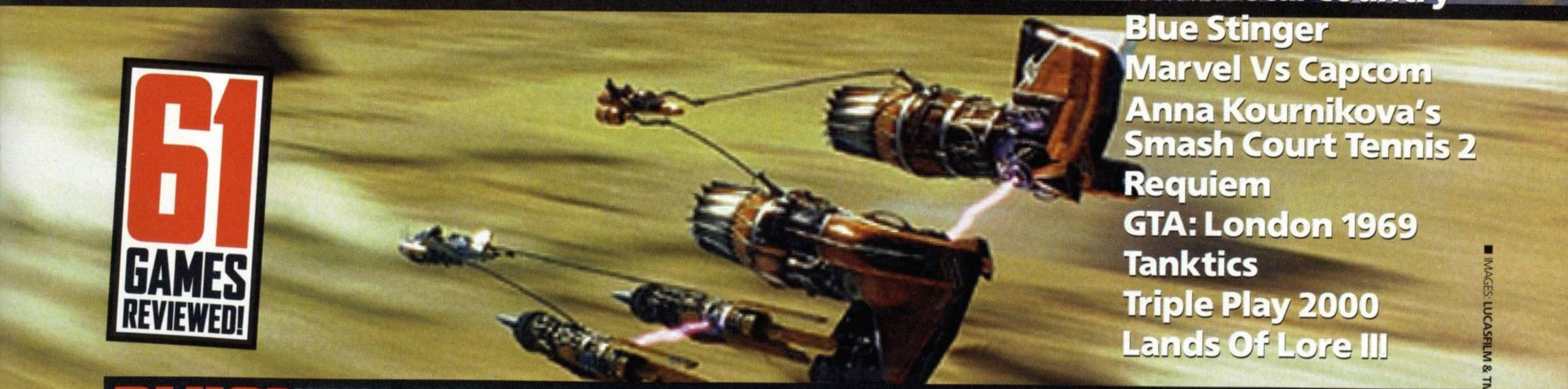
EPISODE 1: RACER

ANAKIN YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER...

INSIDE...

- Syphon Filter
- Official Formula One
- Duke Nukem: Zero Hour
- Trap Runner
- Wild Metal Country
- Blue Stinger
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- Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis 2
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- GTA: London 1969
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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.

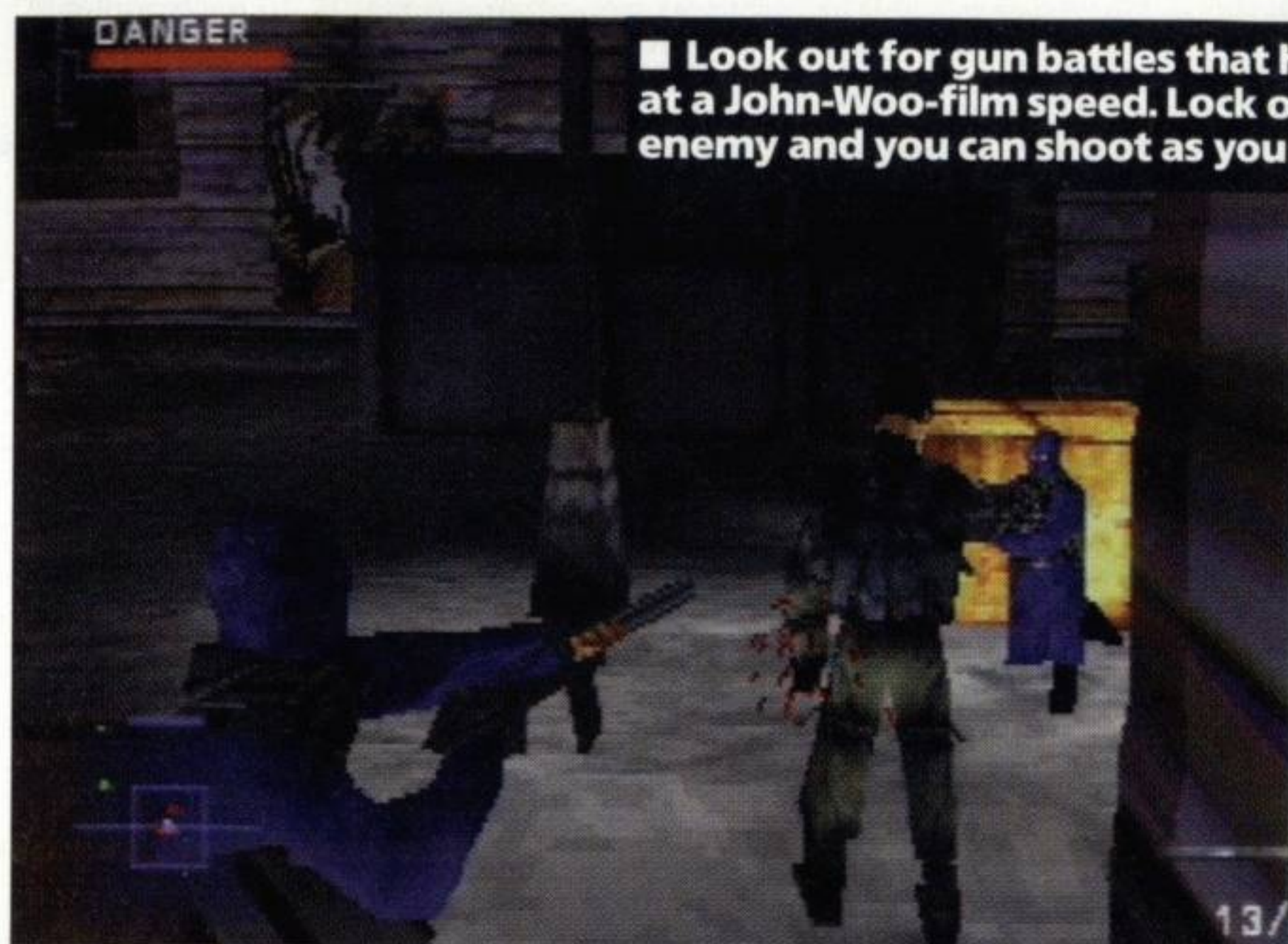
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SPY HARD

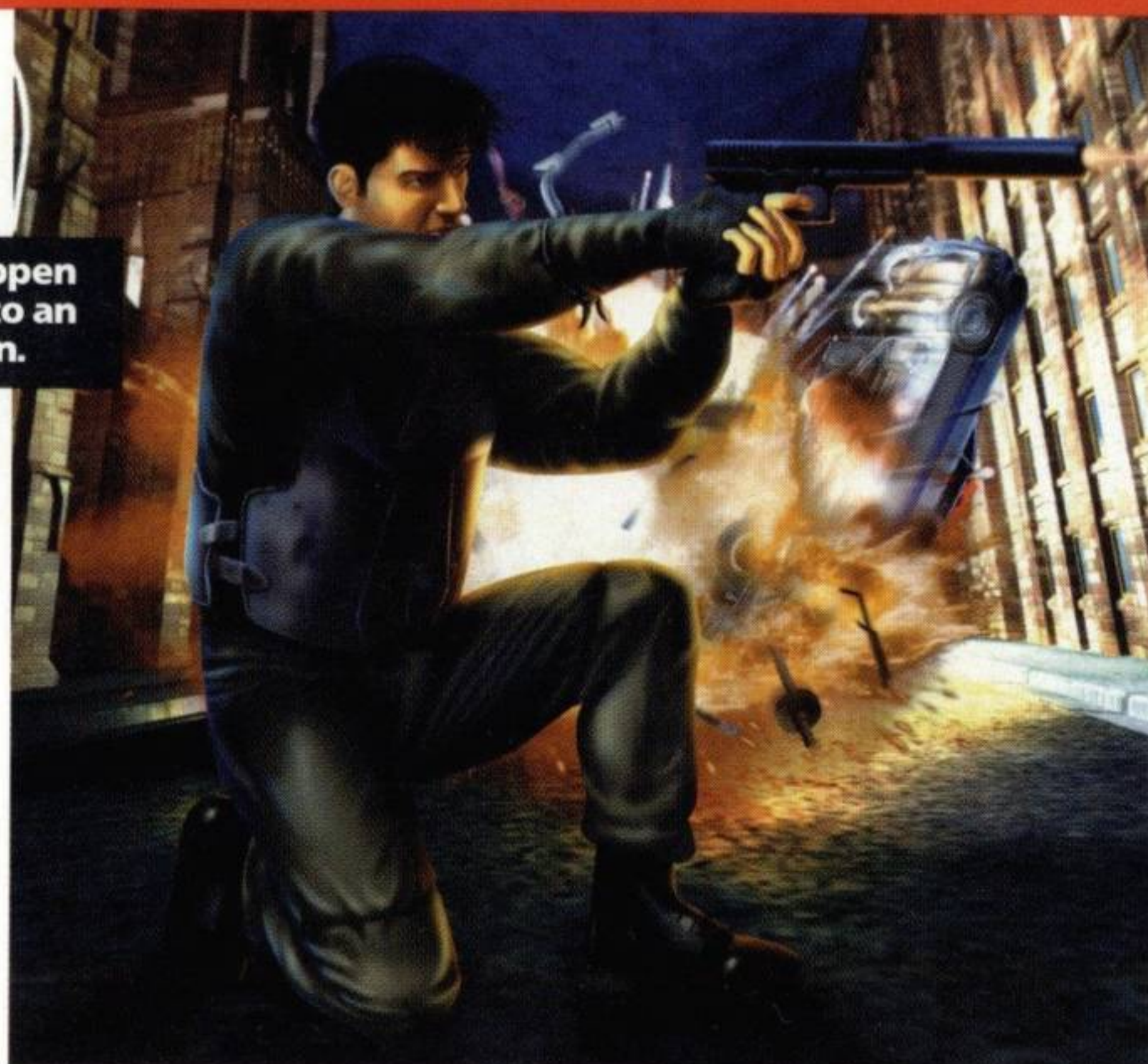
Arcade
PlayStation
Game of
the Month

LESS STEALTH, MORE SPEED?





■ Look out for gun battles that happen at a John-Woo-film speed. Lock on to an enemy and you can shoot as you run.



Syphon Filter

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **989 Studios/Eidetic**
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Release date: **July** Extras: **memory card**

American-developed espionage action game in the Metal Gear Solid mould. Also starring: Tomb Raider's camera and GoldenEye's head shots.

With their monster-truck racing and the compulsory issue of tartan slacks to anyone leaving the country on holiday, Americans aren't globally well known for their sense of subtlety. This isn't usually a disadvantage in the gung-ho world of gaming (which other nation could have created *Quake*?)

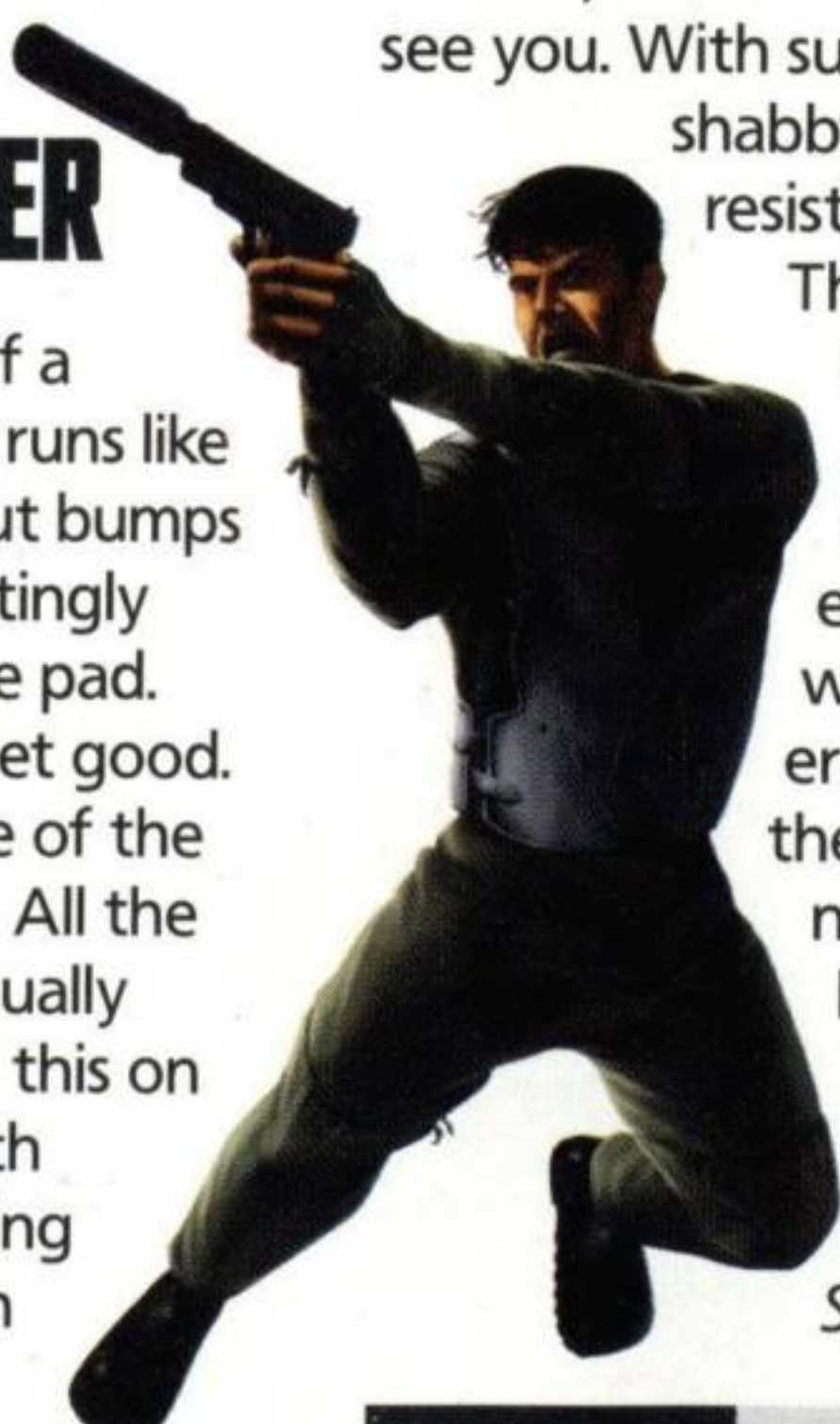
But when it comes to coding something as obviously inspired by the superbly refined *Metal Gear Solid* as *Syphon Filter* is, lovers of decent games shouldn't start winching their hopes up. After all, remove the sophistication, the stealth and the blood-freezing fear of discovery from *Metal Gear* and you wouldn't have one of the PlayStation's most memorable games. You'd have a cheesily plotted romp in clichéd action-film territory with a daftly named hero.

On the face of it, that should be *Syphon Filter*. And for the first hour-or-so of play, you'll see little to convince you otherwise. Playing Identikit special agent hero, Gabe Logan, you run around shooting terrorists from a third-person perspective. Blood flows theatrically from their chests, but your adrenaline remains unmoved. The stealth element seems to amount to pressing Cross and crouching down a bit, suggesting a fear of dusty fatigues on Mr Logan's part. What's more, the whole thing's depicted with the sort of

YOU'RE PROPELLED THROUGH AT A RATE THAT'D MAKE VAN DAMME REACH FOR HIS INHALER

grainy, unpolished graphics that put you in mind of a bashed-out *Tomb Raider* clone. Our hero not only runs like the boy who always got picked last for football, but bumps into things with regularity thanks to some frustratingly imprecise controls that take in every button on the pad.

But then, miraculously, *Syphon Filter* starts to get good. Once you've struggled up the steep learning curve of the control system, innovative killing options open up. All the weapons in the well-stocked armoury can be manually aimed with a first-person-viewed cross hair. Fixing this on an enemy soldier's head and dispatching them with one shot from your silenced 9mm is as close to being Bond as the PlayStation comes. The game's stealth quotient never approaches *Metal Gear* levels, but leaning round a wall and trying to shoot a guard before you're noticed is almost as thrilling as Hideo Kojima's



patented neck snap. *GoldenEye*-style long-range sniping's also catered for when you pick up the appropriate rifle. Indeed, there's an excellent tense moment when, with the aid of a night-vision sight, you save a hostage by picking off the glowing terrorist holding a gun to their head.

In another smart steal, full-scale gun battles with four or five enemies are possible, courtesy of *Zelda*-inspired lock-on targeting. R1 fixes your aim on the nearest terrorist and enables you to run away, firing over your soldier and rolling out of their shots. Alternatively you can blast any sniper from their vantage point as you run underneath. It works brilliantly and helps combat the inexact movement of the main character, giving you the sense that you're a playing a highly trained anti-terrorist operative, not a clumsy chancer.

It's the sense of involvement provided by *Syphon Filter* that sees it fulfil its promise of *Metal Gear* with the alarms turned off. The plot – stop terrorists releasing a deadly virus – is exactly what you'd expect, but the way you're propelled through it at the sort of action-assisted rate that'd make Jean-Claude Van Damme reach for his inhaler is rarely less than exciting. The pacing is compelling. There are no swathes of dialogue like those that slowed up *Metal Gear* and everything progresses interestingly, both in individual missions (as fresh objectives are radioed to you from base) and in the game as a whole (as you shoot your way through levels set in Washington DC, Paris and Kazakhstan).

The production values fall short of *Metal Gear*'s silicon-grilling majesty, but *Die Hard* shot on a Camcorder is still *Die Hard*. *Syphon Filter* might lack visual sheen, but there's a thrilling consistency to the game. Every window can be shattered, every bullet leaves a hole and every character reacts believably, whether they're a just-shot sniper falling off a roof or a guard who's found your hiding place running off to gather reinforcements. Prowl through a park at night and you'll find you can not only shoot the street lamps out for fun, but that doing so makes it harder for enemies to see you. With such an utterly coherent (albeit slightly shabby looking) environment reeling off the CD, resisting immersion will prove difficult.

The American games press has already gone on record to say, predictably, "This rocks!" And they're right. It really does pitch from side to side agreeably. There's some rough edges a few unwanted lulls in the action, when progress comes down to trial and error, and no original ideas to rock gaming in the way that *Metal Gear* did, but it's all very nearly there. As in a good movie, spectacular locations are used, great scenes are set up and epic gun battles happen. If you're currently sauntering around Antarctica in a stealth suit, make your next mission *Syphon Filter*. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**



■ The Taser hooks on to your enemies and electrocutes them 'til they combust. Nice.

↑ Uppers & ↓ Downers

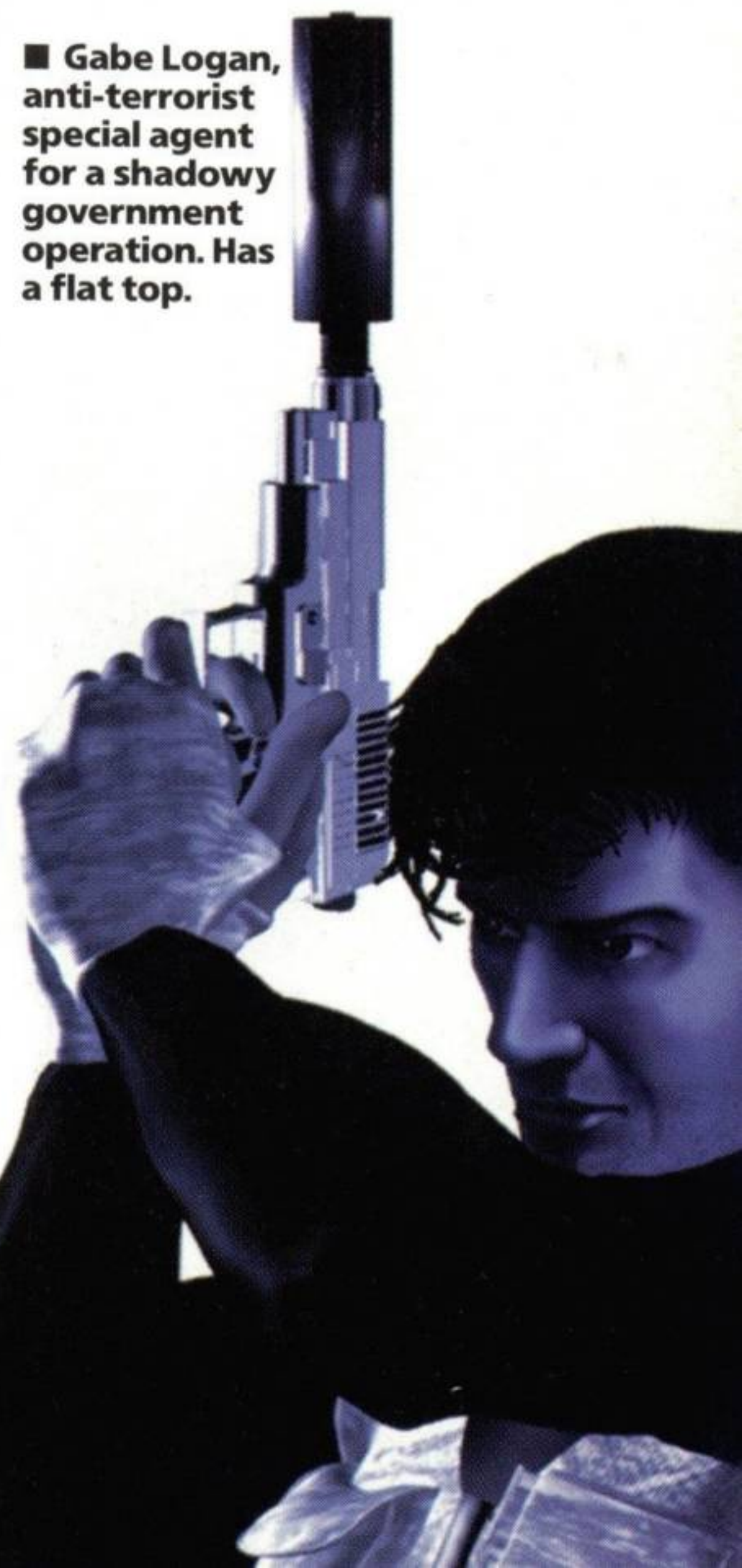
Snipe

- Action-movie pacing
- Great shooting controls
- Cool sniping sections

Pipe

- Shabby appearance
- Some frustrating levels
- You'll finish it in a week

■ Gabe Logan, anti-terrorist special agent for a shadowy government operation. Has a flat top.



Or you could try...

Metal Gear Solid
Konami ★★★★★
Short lived but majestic, MGS's clever stealth makes it an essential PlayStation experience.

Tenchu
Activision ★★★★★
Looks shabby but has you creeping around like a kung fu-slippered assassin.



TRAPPER'S DELIGHT

DEVIOUS SPLIT-SCREEN SKIRMISHES

↑ Uppers & Downers

Fragmentation mine

- Fiendish trap combos
- Variety of modes
- Excellent one-on-one action

Whoopee cushion

- Perspective problems
- Functional look

Trap Runner

■ Publisher: **Konami** ■ Developer: **Atlus** ■ Price: **£39.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

At first glance another unspectacular release for the most prolific of consoles, but delve deeper to find trap-setting addictiveness.

You know how irritating it is when your parents watch Top of the Pops and say that a new song sounds "just like" a Herman's Hermits' mid-'60s chart topper? Well, for the purposes of this review we are that smug git Dad. *Trap Runner's* split-screen trap laying will remind any dues-fully-paid-up gameplayer of the ancient *Spy Vs Spy* on Speccy and C64.

This actually turns out to be a good thing, whether you were around in the "Load" era or not. Rather than another retro rehash designed as a tax on those on a nostalgia trip, *Trap Runner's* more of a long-forgotten but undeniably great game idea, stylishly remembered. By Japanese people, naturally.

Played one-on-one with a split screen, you leg it around isometrically-viewed stages setting a variety of traps for your enemy to stumble upon. Each player's traps are invisible on their opponent's half of the screen, but if you activate the Detection mode, you can cautiously crawl about, disarming devices by tapping in a button sequence against a time limit.

Special weapons, hand-to-hand combat and a gun for each player add to the energy bar devastation, but the real

fun comes from setting combinations of different traps. As if giving your opponent the sooty face of the recently blown up wasn't enough on its own, you can also throw them across the screen onto a mine, the blast from which throws them into a remotely activated bomb that in turn releases poison gas, and so on. It's hard to suppress a cackle of evil laughter when your deviousness pays off. Because you're only ever a footstep from being blown sky-high yourself, the feeling of tension builds nicely between screen-shaking explosions.

In fact, you'll be so busy stealing feverish glances at your enemy's screen to see what he's up to that you'll at least partly ignore the problems *Trap Runner* has when it comes to displaying its fiendishly designed levels. The isometric perspective makes for some bafflement as upper platforms turn translucent and you try to work out where you are in relation to the scenery, all the while wrestling with the tricky controls.

Don't expect any sock-trembling displays of polygon majesty, but once the whole trap-springing concept has clicked into place, you'll start to see good things everywhere. The surveillance camera-like presentation, the fantastic sound effects, the almost *Metal Gear*-like mix of psychotic Japanese characters and modes for every one and two-player occasion show how well the simple concept has been fleshed-out.

Particularly recommended as a two-player battle of sneakery, *Trap Runner's* reworking of an old idea is as pleasantly surprising as finding a fiver in the pocket of a long-forgotten jacket. ★★★

Robin Alway

■ There's no better sight than seeing your opponent's energy bar taking a pounding.



Or you could try...

Unholy War
 EIDOS ★★
 Interesting, but flawed, action strategy game. Like a board game with projectile-based fights.

Bombberman
 Virgin ★★★★★
 Not the definitive version of the multi-player classic it should have been, but still endless fun.

MEAN STREETS

FIVE MEN AND A BALL... BUT FEW KICKS



Puma Street Soccer

- Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Pixelstorm**
- Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-8** ■ Extras: **memory card, multi-tap**
- Other formats: **PC**

Infogrames' interpretation of that wheezing man's folly, the five-a-side game, comes with four players per team and – wait for it – the unique gameplay that only a license from Puma can offer!

Ripe with promise, the *Puma Street Soccer* remit should comprise fast-paced play, some means by which you can perform self-indulgent trickery, and reasonable ball physics. Yet, like a postman nailed to a wall (for the want of a more relevant caustic analogy), it does not deliver.

In execution, *Puma Street Soccer* is abysmal. Its design brief is quintessentially right – there are not, after all, many five-a-side sims, and the potential exists for a truly great one – but *Puma* is so carelessly cobbled together that it beggars belief. The developers at Pixelstorm may be football fans, but their appreciation of how the game plays, what fans expect and



■ It's a goal – but Christ knows how it got there.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Let's buy Puma boots!

- It has an eight-player mode
- Hopefully, other developers will learn from its mistakes

No, Nike are better

- Invite seven friends round for an eight-player game of *Puma Street Soccer* and you'll soon need to find seven new friends.

This is the flaw that makes *Puma* more akin to some nightmarish pinball creation than the sport it purports to represent. In matches against the PlayStation, there are countless instances where even the most skilled player will concede a goal within seconds. From a lightning goalkeeper pass to an unmarked forward, the ball can travel with unpredictable speed and direction. You've no choice but to view and rue the resultant shot.

Puma's inclusion of on-the-fly tactics is thoughtful, if hardly novel. But does it make a difference? Why, no. For some reason known only to its developers, *Puma* gifts its two participating teams with a power-bar that increases following successive shots. Once this bar reaches its zenith, the team in question is awarded three insanely fast power shots with which even the most inept of players can score. So why, then, would you bother to struggle with the vagaries of *Puma's* clumsy passing system? Why not just bang the ball downfield until you get your next three power shots and, in all likelihood, goals?

We have no idea.

Puma Street Soccer resembles a twisted take on misguided retrogaming updates: its countenance is circa 32-bit, its gameplay rife with inadequacies that belong to the 8-bit era. And all this while Jon Ritman's once-lauded *Match Day* can still be played on any Spectrum emulator. ★ **James Price**

Or you could try...

FIFA 97
Electronic Arts ★★
It's old, and it's pants, but it does have a five-a-side mode.

ISS '98
Konami ★★★★★
No five-a-side mode, but a damn fine game of football.



Rampage 2— Universal Tour

- Publisher: **GT Interactive**
- Developer: **Midway** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **May**
- Players: **1-3** ■ Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

The 100-foot freaks return to take on the forces of law and order, level cities, and generally disrupt daily routines. The bastards.

■ The only point to *Rampage 2* is that there is no point. In the name of all things holy, is there really any sense whatsoever in resurrecting a decade-old coin-op that wasn't particularly good in the first place?

Rampage is based on every schlock-horror B-movie monster movie you've ever seen. From *King Kong* to *It Came From Outer Space*, in *Rampage 2* every rubber-suited misfit is guaranteed a warm welcome. You take control of one of three monsters and the aim of the game is wisepread destruction as you lollop around a series of remarkably similar towns.

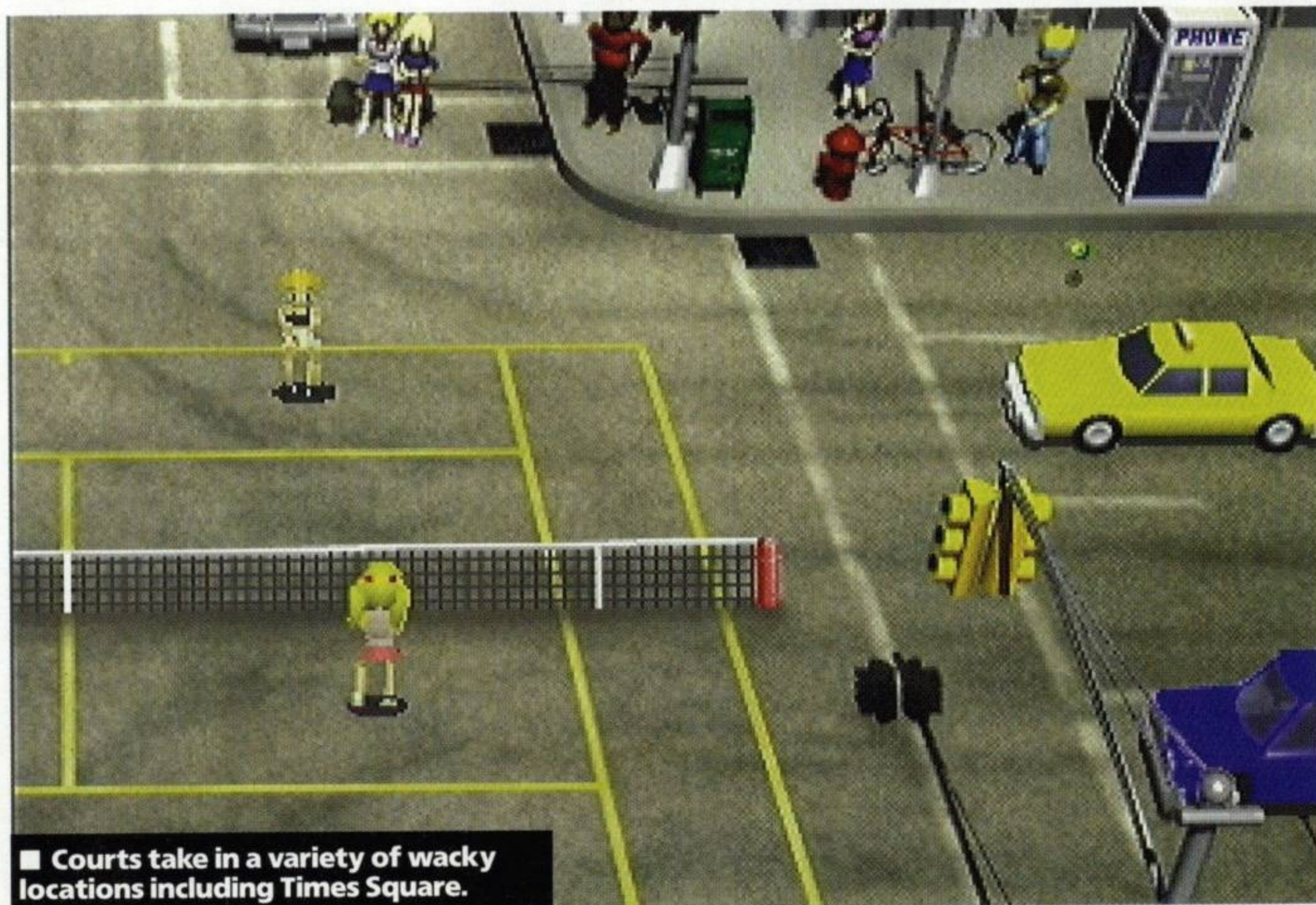
You climb buildings, eat people and demolish structures with a punch (very dull) or a hefty kick (slightly better). Tanks, bazookas and the like attack you from the ground, and helicopters and planes buzz you from above. Objects appear in broken windows and serve to help or hinder your progress. These range from humans (which you eat) and electrical items (which give you shocks) to what appears to be little more than a broken tap, which, naturally, has the power to throw you clean off your feet.

Unfortunately, the whole experience is as dull as an eye test. There was never a masterful game hidden away in *Rampage*; all it had going for it was fairly novel game design, impressive graphics (for its day) and a three-player option. The fun of this multi-player mode is that you get to knock each other off the buildings to claim the hysterical blonde – who you wolf down pronto – but it's the sort of fun that's fine for ten minutes and gets you praying for death after 20. A monster flop of epic proportions. ★ **Dean Mortlock**



SEXY TENNIS

KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON YOUR BALLS



■ Courts take in a variety of wacky locations including Times Square.

Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis

■ Publisher: **Sony** ■ Developer: **Namco** ■ Price: **£34.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras:
memory card, Dual Shock-compatible, Multi-Tap

Namco's popular tennis series enters the pro circuit. And Anna Kournikova's picture is on the box.

Namco's *Smash Tennis* presents a pairing to rival that of chalk and cheese: the glamorous rising star of women's tennis and a quirky, very Japanese videogame with little grounding in the real world. It's a doubles pairing that surely shouldn't work. But work it does, largely because Namco's mastery of arcade immediacy aces its rivals through sheer playability.

Despite Anna Kournikova's face on the box, *Smash Tennis* is far from a realistic view of the sport. Instead, the game revels in unusual aesthetics and instant gratification, as opposed to any serious recreation of lobs or 100mph serves. These shots are available – as are all the expected smashes, backhands and top-spins – but the cartoon sound effects and unique game locations prevent *Smash Tennis* from taking itself too seriously.

It's a little more "grown up" than in previous versions, though, and presumably this the divine Ms Kournikova's influence. The charming and funny animations that were sprinkled through the earlier games have been lost as a result, as have the squat cartoon players of the

EACH OF THE UNSEEDS GROUP BRINGS INDIVIDUAL OR ALL-ROUND SKILLS TO THE NAMCO CIRCUIT.

↑ Uppers & Downers

Aces

- Sublime control system
- Attractive locations
- Strong player AI
- Great fun to play

Double faults

- The missing touches of humour

original Super NES and PlayStation versions. Instead we have a dressing room full of differing talents but all cute, polygonal pros of which Anna is, of course, the best player.

Elements of the old games' humour remain, but even the venues of the stadia are more sensible. The mountaintop courts of the originals (complete with rock-climbing ball boys) have been set aside in favour of grass, clay and even marble surfaces in stereotyped city locations. Now, when players run to the rear of the court to counter a high lob in Italy, local lotharios scoot past on Vespas, while Great Britain features lush Wimbledon lawns.

Smash Court Tennis is the kind of game that built Namco's reputation and its success is down to a wonderfully intuitive control system. You use each of the PlayStation pad's face buttons to effect a different style of shot, and the timing and positioning of each return depends on your proximity to the ball and the precise timing of each button press. It's a familiar system, but one that gels better than others offered by existing PlayStation rivals. Little touches of AI also flesh the game out, with players automatically diving if a shot is just out of reach and then doing their utmost to find their feet in time for the inevitable return.

It has to be said that Anna Kournikova's presence serves little purpose other than to give the marketing department an easy ride and an excuse to expense Wimbledon tickets. PlayStation purists will also sneer at the lack of technical muscle on show, but that would be to miss the point. We guarantee anyone who walks away from a *Smash Court* session will do so wearing a smile. ★★★★★ **Steve Merrett**

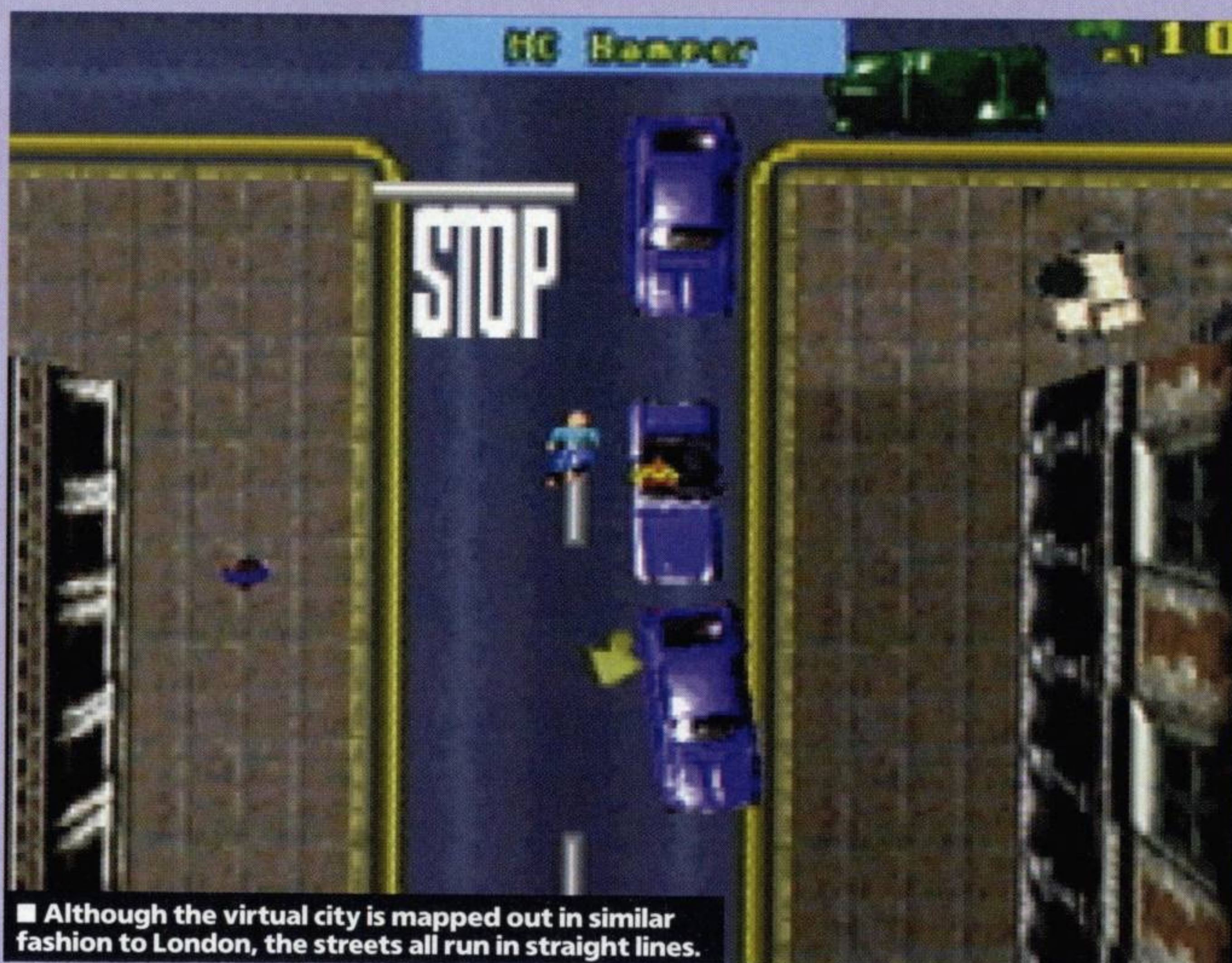
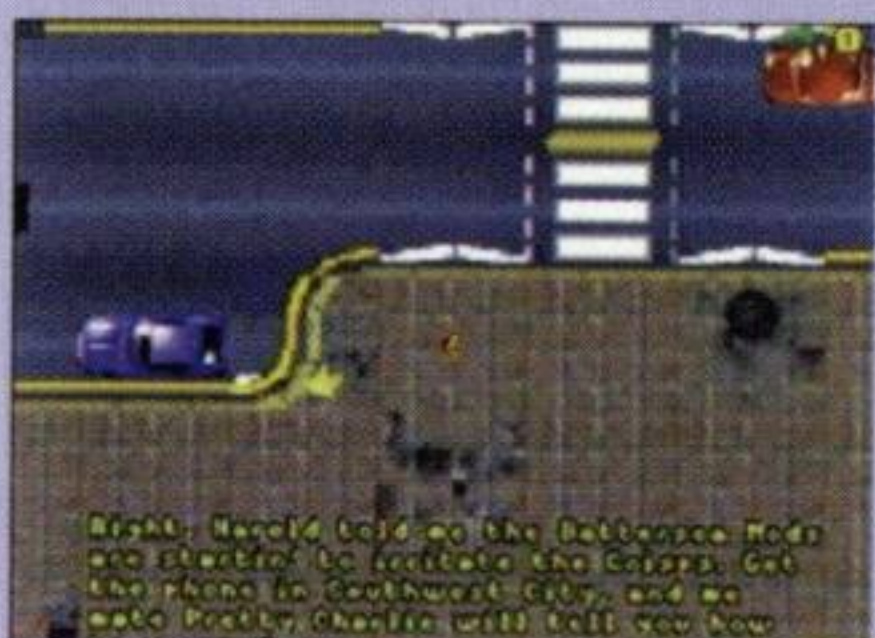
Or you could try...

Micro Machines V3
 Codemasters ★★★★★
 Insane four-player racing with cars dinky enough to stamp underfoot. Now at Platinum price.

Everybody's Golf
 Sony ★★★★★
 Takes a similar cutesy approach to another potentially dull sport with the same results.



■ Getting to grips with *Smash Court's* wonderfully varied stroke play is made easier by a comprehensive practice mode.



■ Mean streets? You bet.

■ Although the virtual city is mapped out in similar fashion to London, the streets all run in straight lines.

IT'S A STEAL TRANSPORTED BACK IN TIME

GTA: London

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Developer: **Rockstar** ■ Price: **£19.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **memory card** ■ Other formats: **PC**

Would you Adam and Eve it? Grand Theft Auto has spawned a mission disc (you can play this if you've got the original game) and this time it's set in London in 1969. So let's go half inch a motor...

When *Grand Theft Auto* was first released, its violent content caused a furore, largely because publisher GT Interactive hired controversial publicist Max Clifford to plant numerous stories in the tabloids, ensuring that the game received as much exposure as possible. However, the depiction of violence in *GTA* is fairly harmless, simply because the viewed-from-above perspective doesn't lend itself to the representation of gore.

Nonetheless, so well received was *GTA*, it has spawned a mission disc – the first for the PlayStation. The setting is London, 1969, and developer Rockstar has dropped in more than 32 missions and some 30 new cars. Or old cars, in this case. The streets of London abound with black cabs, red buses, Mini Coopers and E-Type Jags, and landmarks such as Big Ben have been added to the mix to give the whole shebang an authentic feel. There's lots of "Cor blimey! His sherbert dabs are all over the motor" one-liners, which add to the flavour. As in the original

GTA, you take on the role of a junior hoodlum, and as you progress through the missions, so your star rises in the underworld. Early tasks involve nicking scooters and locating drug stashes, together with the odd bit of threatening behaviour thrown in for good measure. The more crimes you commit, the tougher the next heinous act becomes. The Sweeney's on the case, though, so you need to keep your wits about you. Each mission you accept is clearly explained, but the action itself is open-ended. You can spend as long as you like cruising streets, half-inching cars and buses, and callously mowing down pedestrians for bonus points.

Whatever your moral stance on this type of game content, it's hardly in the *Mortal Kombat* stakes in terms of its visual violence. And much of the action is not as exciting as it might sound, because the driving aspect of *GTA* has always been massively overrated. Again, the overhead perspective is to blame for this.

Essentially, *GTA: London* enables you to do more of exactly the same things that you did in the original, all for an extra £20 (you need the original to play this incarnation). However, developer Rockstar has done a decent job of creating an authentic '60s feel, mainly thanks to the superb soundtrack. The company has licensed a host of original top tunes and you're sure to find yourself swapping cars, just to see what the next record might be. *GTA: London* is certainly slick, but it's one for devotees only. ★★★

Steve Bradley

Or you could try...

Driver
 GT Interactive ★★★★★
 Stunning-looking car-chase sim, set in real cities in the superfly '70s.

Micro Machines v3
 Codemasters ★★★★★
 If it's the driving you've come for, this is unbeatable, no-nonsense, mindless racing.

Uppers & Downers

Michael Caine
 ■ Authentic setting
 ■ Brilliant soundtrack
 ■ Free-thieving environment

Michael Paine
 ■ A bit samey
 ■ Basic visuals
 ■ Fiddly controls



Aironauts

■ Publisher: **Red Storm**
 ■ Developer: **Red Lemon**
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**

The Havanas are safe. Aironauts comes close, but no luxury smoking material.

■ Although it steals ideas from all over the place, *Aironauts* still manages to provide the odd pleasant waft of Bounce-like spring freshness. The premise of the game is filched from movies (*The Running Man*) and old coin-ops (*Smash TV*), and features a smug gameshow host who presents a show in which hardened criminals battle for freedom for the viewing pleasure of the masses.

The gameplay is familiar, too. You are strapped to a Victorian-style hang-glider and fly around small circular arenas, with echoes of *Pilotwings* (land on the correct pads for bonus points) and the infamous Saturn game *NiGHTS* (gliding through a complex series of hoops) ringing in your ears.

The game is split into ten sections, each of which has five levels. You fight your way through the first four levels and face a boss on the last. The levels are made up of ten different challenges – things like destroying ten mines in two minutes or racing a boss through a hooped tunnel – the order of which are mixed up in each section.

Although the challenges are good, straightforward fun, there's plenty of delight to be had in the simplistic, almost hedonistic, pleasure of just gliding around the levels – although this is tempered by the need to complete the task at hand in the allotted time limit.

On the whole, top marks to Red Lemon (a new developer, staffed by former Gremlin personnel) for producing an interesting game, despite its obvious influences. The care and attention to detail is obvious from every wonderfully-designed Option screen. However, you can't help but feel that *Aironauts* is a fine game engine that has been cramped into squashed arenas (as opposed to flowing, endless worlds) and that it suffers from limited game design. More gliding and less time limits in the sequel, please. ★★★ **Dean Mortlock**





Big Air

■ Publisher: Electronic Arts
■ Developer: The Pitbull Syndicate ■ Price: **£40**
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-2
■ Extras: memory card, Dual Shock-compatible

Board stupid? Then powder your nose and puff on the halfpipe phat air fans, for sliding across snow on skateboards without wheels is where it's at. Right, Goofy? "Woof...!"

■ A quick headcount reveals that *Big Air* is the eighth PlayStation game to feature snowboarding, be it as part of a compendium of pastimes, or as a sole pursuit. And do you know what? None of them even come close to the N64's absolutely excellent *1080° Snowboarding*. The previous seven PlayStation games line-up thus: *Chill* (rubbish), three *Cool Boarders* (the last two were decent), *Rushdown* (bloody awful), *Snow Racer* (quite enjoyable) and *Zextreme* (shockingly dreadful).

Big Air sets off well enough. You can choose from six

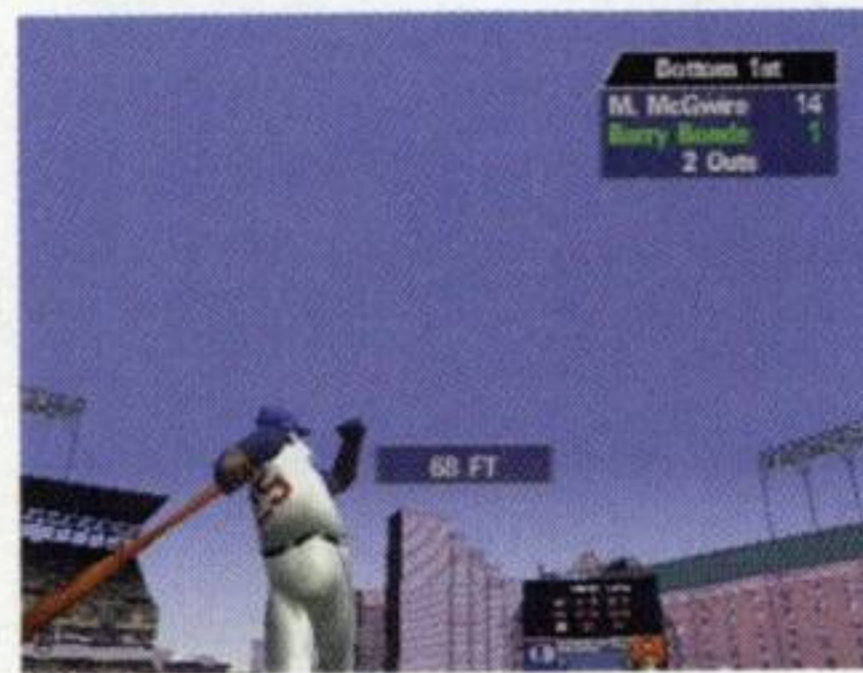
characters to play, and customise your clothes and your board; both of which are licensed. You can also customise the soundtrack, and there're loads of thrash bands to choose from with names such as Leatherface and Diesel Boy (Americans love 'em, apparently). All authentic, so far.

Into the game proper and you start snowboarding with three courses to choose from, and three more to unlock. All six courses have a multitude of events to enter, including downhill races (naturally) and trick events such as the halfpipe and big air. In the halfpipe, you scoot up and down snowy embankments while attempting to pull off radical tricks, but it's all a bit slow, and not well executed. In the big air competition, on the other hand, you swoop down a hill and fly off a ramp and try to execute as many mid-air moves as possible before you hit the ground. It's ten seconds of fun. Trouble is, when you click on "Try Again", it takes 20 seconds to load.

Visually, *Big Air* is patchy. The background detail and the shaded clothing are nice, but everything is so damned glitchy. Sadly, despite its wealth of slopes and events,

Big Air is no more than a barely passable simulation of the snowboarding experience.

Why is it that the PlayStation can spawn a wealth of the finest driving games known to man, but stick a fellow atop an ironing board at the summit of a snow-covered slope and everything goes belly-up? Given the poor product developers have come up with to date, it may be time they admitted to themselves that snowboarding games just aren't much cop. ★★ **Steve Bradley**



Triple Play 2000

■ Publisher: EA Sports
■ Developer: EA Sports
■ Price: £35 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extra: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible** ■ Other formats: **PC**

EA steps up to the plate alongside baseball's big hitters with another fully endorsed US sports title.

■ Historically, there have been two major factors stiling the growth in sales of baseball games in the UK. The first is the lack of interest in the sport on these

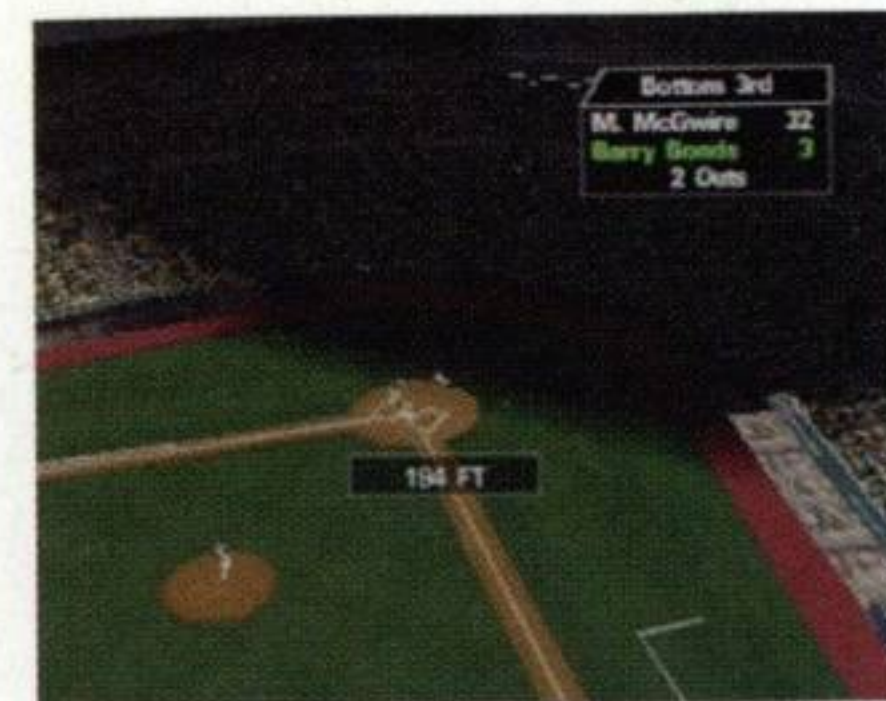
shores; the second is that the games have barely evolved since Accolade's *Hardball* series for the Commodore 64. Granted, today's officially endorsed efforts look better and feature motion-captured pros, but at the heart of all of them lurks the same limited control system. Until now, that is.

Coming into bat for EA – and truly the saviour of the baseball genre – is *Triple Play 2000*. Not only does it fulfil the criterion of boasting real pros in its rosters, but – gasp! – also tries something new with the control system.

If you're determined to remain ignorant of the charms of the sport, then this may not be the game to convert you, but fans of baseball should greet it like a Babe Ruth home run. And, amazingly, most of this success can be attributed to one factor.

EA has added new batting and pitching ideas that are so simple it's hard to believe they haven't been considered before. In addition to the usual bunting and "ordinary" bat swings, you can now use the square button to effect a more powerful swing (that's harder to target), and add height or bounce to the hit by pressing the up or down button on the D-pad. It's a simple enough idea, yet in practice proves tricky to master – instantly summing up the speed and skill of baseball.

From this one little acorn, the rest of the game grows. *Triple Play 2000* benefits from EA's now customary spot-on re-creation of a big game atmosphere – there are a host of different camera angles and a suitably diverse



range of sound effects from the crowd, which help convey a televised feel to the proceedings. The players also differ in stature and ability, and while their identities may mean nothing to most of us, the excellent team information ensures that, in time, you can benefit from the biggest hitters and fastest pitchers.

Everything in *Triple Play 2000* is honed to perfection. Passing from out-field players, stealing bases and pitching are all brilliantly re-created, and combine to create the most complete baseball game yet. The whole package is so convincing you can almost smell the hot dogs, beer and chewing tobacco, and it's a pity the sport doesn't have a bigger following in Britain, as *Triple Play 2000* deserves a wider audience than it will get. ★★★★★ **Steve Merrett**

PlayStation budget round-up

by Wil Overton and Robin Alway

Employing just a little help from the arcane dark arts (that's demonology, witchcraft and a touch of "That's magic" with Paul Daniels and the lovely Debbie McGee to you, squire) we bring you two fantastic games for the price of one. Yes indeed, yours for a mere 20 quid apiece we have two of the best offerings ever to grace the PlayStation. Now if you'll just sign this pact with the nice Mr D'Evil over there, we can begin...



Final Fantasy VII

■ Publisher: Sony ■ Developer: **Square**
■ Price: £20 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **memory card**

■ When *Final Fantasy VII* appeared on the PlayStation back in 1997 it was as if the Messiah himself had descended and blessed the console. Reports of millions of copies sold in Japan within days of *FFVII*'s release created a fever that swept the nation. The only problem came when many of those starry-eyed punters suddenly found themselves confronted with something that a) required you to stare at reams of numbers for much of the time; b) had an extremely disjointed and obscure storyline; and c) continually threw you into random battles that you had to fight using a system of menus. *Tekken* this was not.

The real truth about *FFVII* lies between the two extremes. The Japanese love their stories and essentially *FFVII* is an interactive



storybook with a combat system bolted on. You can't change outcome of the tale, but there are enough sub-plots and optional side stories to disguise its linear nature. Guiding your little polygon hero around the intricate pre-rendered environments (which are still state-of-the-art nearly two years on) you slowly unravel a story that takes in the usual manga linchpins of death, revenge, betrayal and the end of the world. You meet and recruit other characters, who also have a tale to tell, and indulge in such pastimes as snowboarding and racing giant ostriches. It's like a giant cosmic *EastEnders* (with huge robots and monsters thrown in).

The secret to enjoying *FFVII* is commitment. This is not a post-pub game. You have to let yourself become immersed in its world, relish the combat and enjoy tweaking all the little numbers that make up your team's attributes. In return *FFVII* will reward you with a surprisingly adult fantasy adventure. ★★★★★



Gran Turismo

■ Publisher: Sony ■ Developer: **Polys**
■ Price: £20 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **memory card, analogue-compatible**

■ Let's roll our sleeves up and get straight to the point: *Gran Turismo* is the best console racing game ever. And, thanks to the drunken man-like generosity of Sony, it's now 20 quid. "Away you go!" as Ron Pickering used to say on *We Are The Champions* before the kids went tonto on the inflatables in the pool.

GT is almost too classy to be sold at a knockdown price, fulfilling its Italian chat-up line of a title with a degree of technical finesse that relegates most other racers to the tyre-kickers and time-wasters of *Auto Trader* small ads. The



staggering replays alone are the best mate-impressing trick the PlayStation has to offer.

Perhaps more than any other racer though, *GT* has been designed as an all-encompassing driving experience. Foot-to-the-floor arcade and split-screen two-player games are balanced with an incredibly deep tune-up laden Simulation mode for you to dive into.

The muffler-tweaking, suspension-fiddling excesses and sheer number of different cars (there are 100 models and 146 grades) might initially seem like they require you to possess a dad-like knowledge of

motors, but *GT* always manages to remain accessible. Three driving tests structure the game, ensuring that you always have the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to handle the increasingly powerful cars you can buy as you progress through the game.

The key to *GT*'s greatness is its handling. Messing around underneath the bonnet of your car has demonstrable effects out on the eight circuits and, for once, you can actually feel the difference between cars. Even if your real-life driving experience only extends to a rusty Fiesta, the way *GT* has you gripping the pad as your tyres wobble indignantly round a hairpin bend is brilliantly believable.

Of course, the stunning graphics help, but even when the gloss of the freshly waxed cars wears off, *GT* is still a driving game for everyone. Don't let the *Haynes Manual*-style attention to gear ratios and the like put you off, *GT*'s real achievement is that – despite leaving no automotive option to chance – it's such fantastically good fun to play. ★★★★★



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or £19.99 each



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MEGASTORES

OFFICIALLY GREAT OVERTAKING ON THE INSIDE



■ The chaos entering the first corner after the start is entertainingly accurate.



■ There are far more camera options than you'll ever need.



■ Damon takes a rest in the sand. Still, at least he took out Schuey.

Official Formula 1

- Publisher: **EIDOS** ■ Developer: **Lankhor** ■ Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-12**
- Requires: **P90, 16Mb RAM, 85Mb HD space, 4 x CD-ROM drive, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **P200, 131Mb HD space, 3D accelerator card, modem for Internet play**

At last, sanity in the world of PC gaming. Look at the minimum specifications for Official Formula 1. Go on, they're just above this bit. No, that's not a printing error – this 3D racing game will run on a Pentium 90, and without a graphics card. Incredible.

Has the world gone mad? This is, after all, a game for the PC. Surely the programmers have designed it with only the latest bit of top-end graphics card wizardry and a Pentium III as the minimum system? Surely, with all this super-expensive kit provided free by its manufacturers (manufacturers keen for someone – anyone! – to find a use for their new widget), Lankhor has programmed *Official F1* to run like a tramp through treacle on every PC that wasn't bought (and upgraded) in the last three months? After all, this is the case with a huge



■ As any serious racer will tell you, the 'in cockpit' view is the only way to play any racing game. That said, the helicopter tours of the tracks (left) are superb.

percentage of PC games released these days.

Thankfully not. Despite garnering all the critical plaudits, games publishers who wonder why their latest opus has only sold moderately should sit back and realise that only a tiny percentage of PC owners actually own the facilities to play the newest games the way they should be played. On the other hand, virtually every PC gamer in the land has access to kit that will run *Official F1* and, better still, the game's reduced technical specs don't make it any less great. So could this reduction in the need for computing power be the way forward for PC titles in general?

It'd be nice to believe that EIDOS laid down the law from the very outset regarding *Official F1's* technical requirements. However, the real reason the game is such a compact piece of programming is that it's a conversion of *F1 World Grand Prix*, the Paradigm-developed title that six months ago appeared out of nowhere and bowled-over N64 owners. This history means that *Official F1* is skewed slightly in favour of arcade thrills, rather than strict simulation. Such is the scope of the game, though, it's only the most dedicated F1

fanatics that will find themselves running short of challenge towards the simulation end of things.

The game gains its "Official" status courtesy of a set of driver names and teams taken straight from Mika Hakkinen's 1998 championship-winning year. As a result, you'll need to make only a minor reshuffle of the drivers to bring the game bang up to date with the season currently in progress. The car models available are good representations of their real-life counterparts and if you're a fan of pit lane tinkering you'll find enough variables here to ensure that you can achieve big changes in your car's performance without becoming overwhelmed with technical minutiae. It's this balance between realism and fun – struck almost throughout the game – that makes it so entertaining.

Official F1 has plenty of novel aspects as well. In an interesting twist on the concept of a tutorial, you can opt to fly over each of the season's 18 tracks in a helicopter before the race begins. While airborne, a running commentary informs you of braking points, top speeds, through bends and where it's best to overtake. You can then opt to race in a bewildering number of ways, from three-lap arcade bursts (using braking, gear and steering assistance from the computer) to a complete (and very difficult) Grand Prix season.

It's easy to see where sacrifices have been made to ensure that *Official F1* is opened up to the more technologically disadvantaged. Even running on the best PC it displays a lack of peripheral detail, something that might offend the more literal minded (and anyone who's shelled out a wad of cash buying a top-notch system). However, F1 games are all about the driving and this graphical streamlining helps ensure that your car's handling remains smooth and consistent no matter where you are on the track or how fast you're going.

A real PC racing veteran may point out that *Geoff Crammond's GP2* is still the purest F1 simulation available on any format, and this certainly remains the case. But that doesn't mean there's no space for any other games. And as the ideal preparation for present-day race weekends, though (as well as a victory for common sense), *Official F1* definitely takes a place on the podium. ★★★ **James Ashton**

↑ Uppers & Downers

Miika Hakkinen

- Got a Pentium? You can play this
- Comprehensive options – race style, car set-up, cameras, everything
- Properly licensed

Miika Salo

- Lightweight compared to *GP2*
- Functional graphics
- A few track inaccuracies

RACE CLASSIFICATION AFTER 03 LAPS				
	Tyres	Nat	Race time	Speed
1	G	GER	0h06:21.750	116
2	B	FIN	0:01.529	115
3	G	GBR	0:04.379	114
4	B	FRA	0:13.704	112
5	G	FRA	0:17.016	111
6	G	GER	0:23.774	109
7	G	GER	0:26.056	108
8	G	GBR	0:28.934	108
9	B	AUT	0:35.896	106
10	B	ITA	0:49.724	102
22	B		03 LAPS	---



■ One of the cleverest things about *Official F1* are the computer drivers. Their driving is some of the most realistic you'll see in any racing game.

Or you could try...

GP2
MicroProse ★★★★★
Undisputed heavyweight champion of the F1 world. Unbeatable since its release ages ago.

Grand Prix Legends
Sierra ★★★★★
A historical perspective on F1, and a chance to drive cars from five decades of the sport.

MAKE TRACKS

GO WILD IN THE COUNTRY



■ One of those new fangled hover tanks.



Uppers & Downers

Armour-plated

- Great physics
- Super sound
- A real grower

Soft as shite

- Demanding graphics
- Slim game-wise

Wild Metal Country

■ Publisher: **Gremlin** ■ Developer: **DMA** ■ Price: **£29.99**
 ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **P166, 16Mb RAM** ■ Recommended: **P200**

Doppler shifting plus sample layering times hierarchical models equals fun squared. Or something like that.

■ The firing trajectory of your shells is set by how long you hold down the space bar.



It's conceivable that, one day, all computer games will be concocted in laboratories by men wearing white coats and brandishing clipboards. Take *Wild Metal Country*, for example. To create it, the boffins at DMA have combined three scientific developments hot off their blackboard.

First there's what they call 3DMA. This, they claim, offers the world "high polygon throughputs, extensive texturing and lighting effects and large numbers of hierarchical, animated models". Who knows what that means, but, looking at *Wild Metal Country*, it could be that's a scientific way of saying the terrain moves smoothly enough most of the time, but as soon as anything exciting happens it gets painfully jerky to the point where you've simply no idea what's going on. (That's on *Arcade's* sketchy PII 350. We had to settle for porky pixel mode.)

Next into the mix is a "physics engine". This contributes – wait for it – "gravity, traction, shot trajectory, magnetism and inertia". Again, it's a case of no speaka de Hengleesh, but it could be that this refers to the realistic way your tank trundles around. The controls are on the numeric keypad and independently move your two tracks forwards and backwards. After a little practice, this lets you tank along with some ease, inching agonisingly up steep slopes before

bouncing down the other side. It's very convincing. Presumably, the physics engine is also responsible for the way you launch shells from your cannon. Rather than simply zapping off in a straight line, they arc slowly through the air. So, if you see an enemy tank you've got to do a quick mental calculation, hoist your turret to the right angle and lob a shell in his direction, hoping it lands on his head before his lands on yours.

The final variable in the equation is "dynamic sample layering". The DMA eggheads mention this in the same breath as "dynamic Doppler shifting" and "environmental audio extensions", which suggests they may be talking about the sound, which is fantastic. Your first indication that danger threatens is generally the sound of a tank's engine rumbling in the distance. As it moves closer you start to hear gears whining, tracks clanking and its turret being brought to bear. Then all hell breaks loose, accompanied by the meatiest explosions you'll ever hear. The "Neighbours In/Out" option is a sensible inclusion.

It's science, then. But is it art? There's a vague structure whereby you collect power cores to move to the next level. But, like *Thrust* and *Asteroids* before it, *Wild Metal Country* relies on raw physics to provide the bulk of the fun. Of which, curiously, there's a hatful. The mere act of hammering up and down hills in a tank is surprisingly compulsive, and there are some nifty weapons to take advantage of the "shot trajectory" side of things. That sweet little physics engine also means you can pull off neat tricks. For example, if you roll upside-down, you can swivel your cannon to push yourself upright. And then there's the network game potential...

In fact, if you can persuade your PC to run *Wild Metal Country* without grinding to a halt every few seconds, it will be money well spent. ★★★★★

Jonathan Davies

Or you could try...

Battlezone
 Activision ★★★★★
 Beautifully done update of the coin-op classic with strategy elements. Like C&C in 3D.

M1 Tank Platoon 2
 MicroProse ★★★
 Proper barrel elevation-adjusting tank sim and as difficult as driving the real thing.



■ Decisions, decisions. Do you use a gun or a spooky supernatural power? Here, we've gone for the gun.



■ There are many ways to die. Here's a small selection.



V-Rally

■ Publisher: **Infogrames**
 ■ Developer: **Infogrames**
 ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Requirements: **P166, 16 Mb RAM, 150Mb HD space, 4 x CD-ROM drive, Win 95/98, 4Mb video card** ■ Extras: **3D accelerator card**

The much-loved living legend of a PlayStation racer turns up on the PC, looking decidedly second hand.

■ With some things you have to be grateful they just existed, because without them the world would be a duller place. However, the ageing process can single groundbreakers out for particularly harsh attention – Mick Jagger, for example. Some inspire, then expire.

Such it is with *V-Rally*, which – two years after it convinced the world that rally games are actually a good idea – finally hauls its tired frame on to the beach of PC gaming, only to have the vulture-like critics pick at its ragged flesh.

On the PC, the original was known for its demanding, yet convincing control. Somewhere along the line this has disappeared. Now your high-powered cars handle less like rally warhorses than they do Tonka toys in the sweaty fist of a hyperactive three-year old. You don't have to powerslide or brake your way round bends in the less powerful cars, you just ease off the gas. Powerful cars show a curious reluctance to go smoothly around bends, and each turn is bafflingly broken into jerky steps. You never feel like you are racing and you'll never feel like you're having any fun.

Looks-wise, *V-Rally* trails the rest of the pack by a big margin. While the design of the tracks and cars remains striking, the package sorely lacks the fancy graphic frippery of the better PC racers. White lines flash through the scenery with worrying regularity and scenery pops-up from nowhere on the near horizon.

At least you've still got the multi-player action to enjoy, and as well as the usual Internet and network-play options, you can go head-to-head on a split screen. This facility won the game one of its two stars, as such modes are becoming worryingly rare on the PC.

It could be that post-*Driver*, ideas of what's fun in a racing game have changed. Or maybe *V-Rally's* spiritual successors have rendered it obsolete. Most likely, this is just substandard fare – the gaming equivalent of trying to beat the track record running on bare rims. ★★

Kieron Gillen

SAY YOUR PRAYERS

WELCOME TO A PLACE WHERE DEATH ABOUNDS

Requiem

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft** ■ Developer: **3DO** ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 116Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 2Mb graphics card, soundcard, Win 95**
 ■ Recommended: **3Dfx or Direct 3D-compatible 3D accelerator card**

There are good angels and bad angels. Here, you're a good angel, which means that you get to smite the unholy, the unjust, and those who would make records with David Hasselhoff.

The great thing about human beings is that they're capable of dying in many entertaining ways, a theme that the lower-budget end of cinema has spent many years exploring. Humans can be shot to bits. They can be blown to bits. They can be turned to salt (rare). They can be taken over by supernatural beings and turned against their gun-toting friends. Their blood can be made to boil until they burst. I could go on, you know. I've been researching this one thoroughly; you see, the most important point to make about *Requiem* is

that it offers a greater variety of ways to kill the bad guys than any other game. It's almost a clinical study of comical death scenes. *Carry On Faces of Death*, if you will.

Enough, then, to raise it head and shoulders (not necessarily attached to one another) above the rest of the first-person crowd. Except that it then ducks back down again, shying away from too much individuality. Story-wise it has a lot in common with *Blood II: The Chosen*; a monumental struggle between Good and Evil (both of them capitalised, I'm sure you'll note). It also looks fairly similar, and though *Requiem's* 3D engine isn't the same one used in *Blood II*, it's pretty damn close. Graphically, *Requiem's* engine manages to pull off some impressive stunts, especially in the introductory level where you head through a truly horrific underworld, complete with bodies growing out of the walls and a weird, wobbly camera trick that there's probably a technical name for.

In the end, though, it's common-or-garden first-person stuff, with enough tricks up its sleeve to make it worthy of note, a control system that loiters slightly on the wrong side of clumsy and a chillingly evil soundtrack that might just give you the heebie-jeebies. At least it might, if you weren't too busy laughing as yet another enemy goon bursts on the sharp end of your supernatural powers. ★★★★★

Jim McCauley

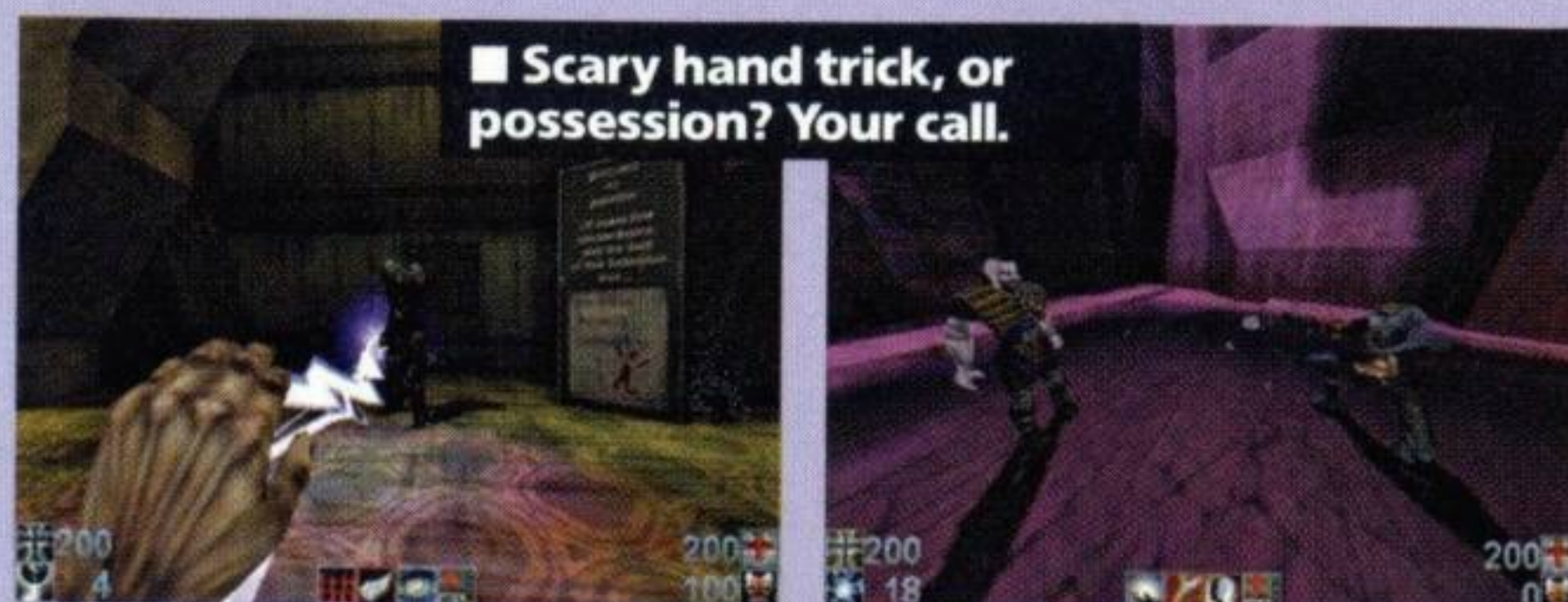
↑↓ Uppers & Downers

Pillar of salt

- Woo-ooo-oooo! Scary soundtrack!
- Hilarious supernatural powers to meddle with
- Oh, and some quite good guns as well

Feet of clay

- Off-clumsy controls
- Over-steep difficulty curve
- Far too many keys to get to grips with



Or you could try...

Blood II: The Chosen
 GT Interactive ★★★
Blood II and *Requiem* look pretty similar, so put them side by side and toss a coin.

Half-Life
 Sierra ★★★★★
 Still the champ, with nothing to touch it. Hideous mutant aliens and much more.

Next month

In August's

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- All four Episode One: The Phantom Menace games reviewed on PlayStation, PC and Nintendo 64
- Re-reviews of all the old classics
- It's enough to give Jabba heartburn

Get Arcade 9 on a planet near you on Wednesday 30 June



■ By combining different parts you can make tanks with varying defensive and attacking capabilities. Before you start thinking you're playing a serious game though, bear in mind you're controlling a pterodactyl dangling a magnet.

GUNS ON THE RUN

GOD SIM GOES BALLISTIC, WITH MIXED RESULTS

Tanktics

■ Publisher: **Gremlin** ■ Developer: **DMA Design**
 ■ Price: **£30** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Requirements: **P166, 16Mb RAM, Win95**

It looks like a pre-school building session, but Tanktics is DMA's most challenging puzzler to date.

Anything that issues forth from the Scottish offices of developer DMA Design is subjected to the closest of inspections. With the brilliance of games like *Lemmings*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Body Harvest*, DMA has proved its genius, which only makes *Tanktics* even more of a disappointment.

It's not that it's a bad game. Or even unoriginal. On the contrary, *Tanktics* tries so hard to be original that it forgoes tried and trusted control methods for something unique, and this is its biggest failing.

Rather than using a cursor for selecting and ordering units – as you do in the majority of strategy games – your mouse directly controls a flying object: for example, you get a pterodactyl in the first time zone. This beast of the air is then used to select friendly tanks, order them to move or attack and to pick up objects using a giant magnet. The primary use of the magnet is so that you can manipulate a variety of constituent parts – including a traction system, engine blocks,

weapons and a radar – to create your army of tanks. These parts can be found littering the landscape, or created using your Part-O-Matic machine – a giant construction device that feeds off anything you drop down its funnel – which you must protect at all costs.

Your task is to clear each of the 24 levels on offer of enemy tanks. As well as wiping these out you must also destroy receivers which beam in reinforcements from other time zones. Sadistically, your chances of success are complicated by insidious map design, courtesy of DMA's sickest minds. The game environment is just as structured as *Lemmings*, and includes boulders, resource blocks, power-ups and switches, all of which are just out of reach thanks to enemy tanks, gun emplacements, quicksand and water.

Both the level designs and an infuriating control system prevent you from nipping around the map as quickly and as accurately as you would like, which cuts down on the fun. That said, the originality of the game is certainly refreshing and the levels are exceptionally hard, but the surprising similarity of many of the maps means that you probably won't see it through to the end. ★★

Steve Owen

↑ Uppers & Downers

- Tanks**
- Original and innovative
 - Build your own monster tanks
 - Sheep are funny
- Ticks**
- Too little variety
 - Horrible control system
 - Graphics are already dated

Or you could try...

Populous: The Beginning
 Bullfrog/EA ★★★
 Structured and hugely varied strategy game from another great British developer.

Wetrix
 Infogrames ★★★
 A traditional Tetris-style puzzle game, all on one screen, but furiously addictive.



■ Pick things up with your magnet and drop them in your Part-O-Matic machine – sheep very much included. DMA dusts down its "You don't have to be mad to work here..." sign once again.



LAY DOWN THE LORE

FANTASY OFFERING ISN'T A DREAM ROLE-PLAYER

↑ Uppers & Downers

Merlin

- Four CDs-worth of adventuring
- Plenty of spells, weapons and objects
- Open-ended and very flexible

Paul Daniels

- Unstructured
- Old-skool visuals and control system
- Crushing average



■ The outdoor scenes are overly blocky, but the variety of locations offers some compensation for this.



■ Beware the variety of flat-sprite foes in the colour-challenged *Lands Of Lore III*.



Lands Of Lore III

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts** ■ Developer: **Westwood Studios** ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 450Mb HD space, 4xCD-ROM drive** ■ Recommended: **P233, 64Mb RAM, 3D accelerator card**

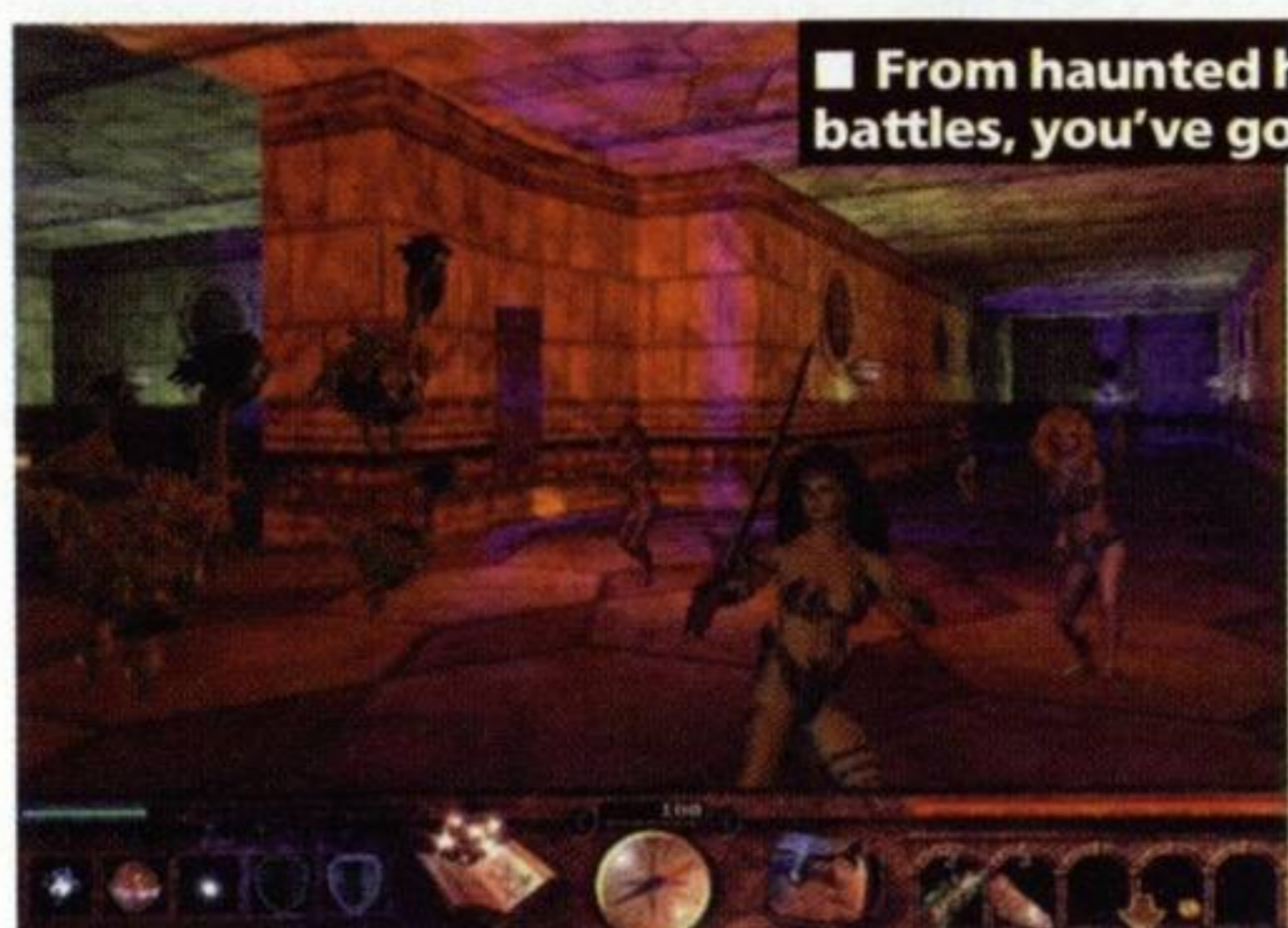
Westwood may be revered by wargame fans, but its attempts at fantasy role-playing have been rather less magical. Can the third in this series cast a more convincing spell?

Anything involving dragons, magical swords, spells and the like tends to get the piss taken out of it, and quite rightly so. Is there anything dafter than giving yourself some Tolkeinesque name and carping on about hit points, gauntlets of speed and guilds? It's strictly for nerds, right?

But most videogame plots are just as bad. Sports simulations aside, videogames are invariably based on puerile crap and feature equally childish protagonists. Snake

hiding in a box in *Metal Gear Solid*, moustachioed Mario bouncing through a variety of cartoon capers? Say no more. So, you should stifle any giggles at the prospect

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LOCATIONS HAVE THAT "BUILT WITH DAIRYLEA TRIANGLES" LOOK



■ From haunted house to bizarre battles, you've got to take the heat.



of *Lands Of Lore III*, a game with a hero called Copper, who must roam the game world in search of his soul – stolen by raiders from another dimension – casting spells and smiting his foe with magical weapons. It may be dumb, over-familiar fantasy nonsense, but it has worked well for countless other role-playing games, and it works well enough here.

Pity the same can't be said about the technology side of *Lands Of Lore III*. The trouble is that Westwood Studios has always been more of a gameplay innovator than a games developer admired for technical wizardry. That was fine for the *Command & Conquer* series, but a game like *Lands Of Lore III* needs a drop-dead gorgeous 3D engine, a seamless user interface and a finely gauged balance between right to roam and coherent, tightly orchestrated narrative.

In *Lands Of Lore III* Westwood tries really hard to manage this but falls down in a few areas. Even with automapping and other aids, working out exactly what's expected of you or where to explore next isn't always easy. While there are sparks of excellence in the level designs, there's a reliance on muted colour schemes, blocky textures and too few polygons, that leaves indoor and outdoor locations with that "built with Dairylea Triangles" look. Worse still are the characters and monsters inhabiting the game, each proudly displayed using heavily pixellated, flat sprites. Get too close to one and you'd be forgiven for thinking you were wrestling with epileptic Lego. Even with the epic sweep of the plot and wide range of locations, disbelief is less suspended than left to cling on by its fingernails.

It's just as well, then, that you can take a novice character, train him in the arts of one or more guilds – specialising in fighting, spell casting, thieving and, er, clericness – and kit him out with better weapons, new skills and spells. *Lands Of Lore III* piles on these role-playing staples like they're going out of fashion, together with all the usual puzzling elements, like talking to characters and lugging objects about. Consequently, while the presentation may be a touch pedestrian, everything eventually sort of pulls together. ★★★

Mark Ramshaw

Or you could try...

Thief: The Dark Project
 EIDOS ★★★
 Less role-playing, but a far better fantasy adventure.

Baldur's Gate
 Interplay ★★★
 A top-down view of exactly the same sort of thing.



Army Men II

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft**
 ■ Developer: **3DO** ■ Price: **£35**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, 80Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**

Plastic soldiers were all very well in 1980, but surely we've moved on since then?

■ There's a lot to be said for nostalgia. Where would we be without our memories of the 1966 World Cup, the Bay City Rollers or those happy Thatcher years? But clearly affectionate memories can be taken too far, as developer 3DO ably shows with

this completely unnecessary sequel to last year's execrable *Army Men*. Chances are that you have fond recollections of recreating famous victories with naught but a few handfuls of misshapen plastic soldiers. But we've graduated to bigger and better things, and the last thing the strategy genre needs is a retrograde move like this.

You see, it's not just retro in subject matter; overall the level of strategic challenge presented by *Army Men II* wouldn't trouble a 12-year-old, let alone a fully-grown gamer, particularly one with even a minor interest in strategy.

To play *Army Men II* you take control of a group of soldiers, but the only one who really matters is

Sarge – hero of the original game. He's the only man-jack of them who's any use, as he can carry a variety of weapons and bits of kit to use against the opposition.

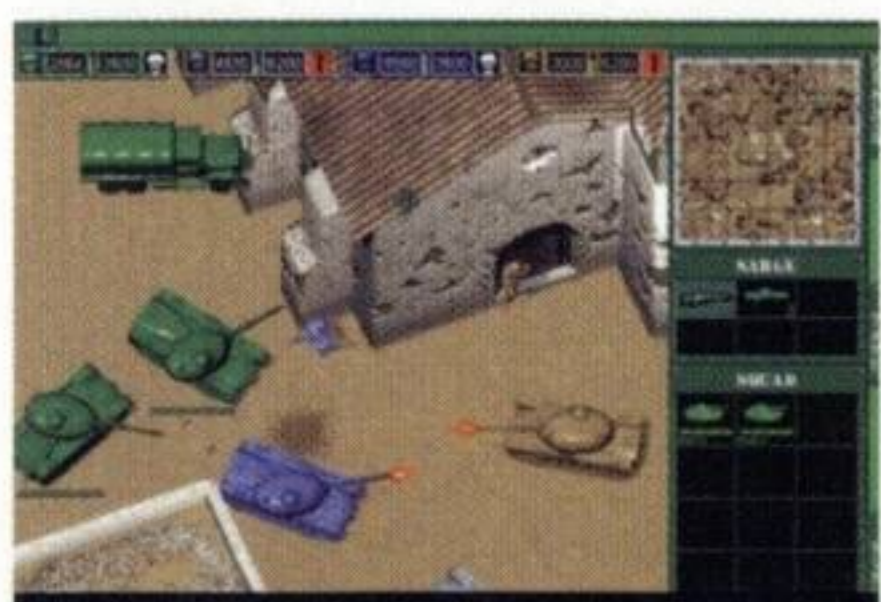
The missions you are sent on are occasionally entertaining, with some imaginative maps. A few are actually quite tough, but there is usually only one way to counter an enemy threat, so there's little entertainment value to be had from repeating missions once you've played through them for the first time.

Graphically, too, *Army Men II* fails to impress, despite the amusing "life-size" battlefields (gardens, kitchens and the like), but it is the artificial intelligence that you can expect to cause the

most gnashing of teeth. Group the soldiers under your command, then give them a movement order, and they flail around like thermoplastic break-dancers for a moment before careering over to their destination.

And don't even think about mentioning *C&C: Red Alert* or *StarCraft* in the same sentence as *Army Men II* (damn, we couldn't help it), because the depth and breadth of those games set them on a different planet, despite their starting from a similar premise.

Army Men II may hold some interest for kids who are just entering into the genre, and offer a brief blast of nostalgia for older strategists, but otherwise leave well alone. ★★ **Ross Atherton**



■ You and whose army? Eh?

And the rest... by Kieron Gillen

Every month a wedge of games are released for the PC, without pomp, ceremony or a launch party. Some are add-on discs, some are released at a budget price and many have debuted on other systems. Often they sport a lower profile than Peter Mandelson, but we've dug them out for you.



Actua Ice Hockey

■ Publisher: **Gremlin** ■ Price: **£34.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-4**

■ *Actua Ice Hockey* features Glaswegian post-rock heroes Mogwai on the soundtrack. This surreal feature alone has to be worth a star. In comparison to the increasingly sombre EA hockey games, *Actua* continues the laugh-riot pick-up-and-play style that makes it ideal for American *Swingers* to bond over. Alas, the dynamics of the simple controls are easily mastered, with little room for experts to shine. And the goalies are dreadful. It's approximately two fifths as good as that scene in *Chasing Amy* where bloke annoys bi-girl into screaming about her teenage sexual activities while on a date at a hockey match. So, average then. And we've decided against awarding that Mogwai-related extra star too. ★★

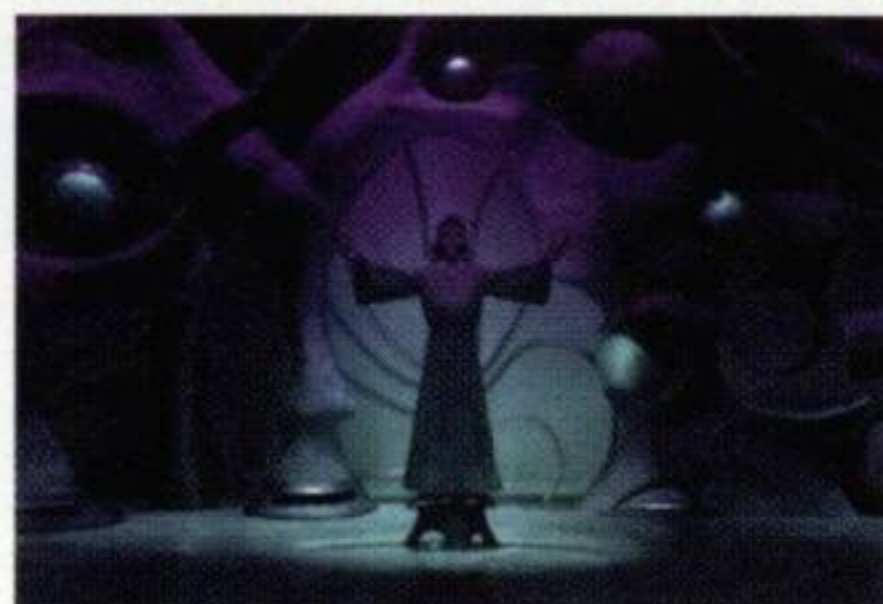


Jazz Jackrabbit 2: The Secret Files

■ Publisher: **Epic Megagames**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**

■ Oh good. Another retrogressive side-on platform game. Note that the important word in the sentence is "retrogressive". Just once it would be great to play a game that has returned from the gaming wilderness with the power-of-prophets in its eyes, its mind full of secret knowledge. However, what you get here is a platformer constructed from the grotesque remains of the past, ideas worn paper-thin and repeated for all eternity.

Jazz Jackrabbit marks a return to the concepts of 2D *Mario*, *Sonic* and *Earthworm Jim* spliced together with no consideration of form or beauty. And you play a character called Spaz. The gaming equivalent of an Ocean Colour Scene album. ★



Liath

■ Publisher: **Acclaim** ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ *Liath*, eh? Sounds like the name of one of those girls you meet on a trip abroad. The sort who if you're pleasant to them for three seconds, mutates into a deranged stalking obsessional monster who makes your life utter misery for the entire holiday. Then climbs into your suitcase and follows you back home to do the same there. A strangely well chosen title then.

Liath is an abomination, another in the endless list of rendered adventures with clichés dripping out of every bleeding orifice. The by-line in its advertisement is: "Solve the mystery of lost time". Done it, Miss. I lost my time because I'm getting paid to play *Liath*. You aren't. Stay away. ★



Megaman X4

■ Publisher: **Virgin** ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ Oh, it's *Megaman*, isn't it? *Megaman* on the PC. It's the platformer called *Megaman* where you collect gradually larger weaponry from the corpses of defeated bosses. It's the console-esque game that, while much loved, has never been a recipient of the mass adoration reserved for the likes of *Zelda* and *Mario*. It's the cartoon-fun game that never actually got around to reaching further than the bloody obvious. It's *Megaman*, but with the typically horrible gravelly graphics that all PC versions of arcade games possess. It's a ten-year old simplistic arcade game which you're going to play on a one-and-a-half grand machine. So it's *Megaman* then. Except, of course, it's not mega, man. ★



Puma Street Soccer

■ Publisher: **EIDOS** ■ Price: **£35**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

■ Many games have attempted to take the joys of a summertime kick-around and transfer them on to a computer. Depressingly, none have succeeded. However, none have failed as successfully as *Puma Street Soccer*. Hilariously anorexic sprites desperately limp around the pitch, pulling off brilliant Brazilian streetkid displays of ball control, then releasing the most fey-child shots. When another bug makes the computer crash you consider it a welcome relief. At least one writer every issue asks *Arcade* whether they can give a score of no stars to a game. This is my turn. Well? Can I? Go on... ★



Railroad Tycoon 2: The Second Century

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Price: **£20**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-Internet**

■ No-one has ever quite explained the mystery of how trains – things that in real life are the among the most life-threateningly tedious of subjects – when translated into the world of digital frolics can actually be quite entertaining. The original *Transport Tycoon 2* (obviously not that original, it being a sequel. And a sequel to a direct copy of another game anyway, but that's a different story) was a marvellously entertaining Lazy Sunday Afternoon game, enabling you to just sit back and casually piece together a majestic cross-continental train business. And this mission pack features some more well presented missions for it. ★★★



Sports Car GT

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-Internet**

■ Mediocre. Better than assembling a bedroom cupboard, true, yet not as exciting as watching *Day of the Dead* on video. Worse than dancing to "Love Shack" but better than dancing to "My Heart Will Go On". Better than things that are dreadful, but worse than things that are good. What a depressing fate.

Yes, this is another of the big-licence games rolling out of the monolithic Electronic Arts game factory. Moderately shiny graphics. Moderately large number of tracks. Moderately cute variation of cars. Moderate amounts of moderateness. Boys and girls: this review has been brought to you by the word "average". ★★



Street Fighter Alpha 2

■ Publisher: **Virgin** ■ Price: **£15**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

■ There are two generally held, yet opposing, views on the beat-'em-up *Street Fighter 2* series. One is that it's the most holy expression of pure gaming available, with all the potency of the first instalment distilled over innumerable episodes to the gaming equivalent of the elixir of life. Alternatively you could believe that Capcom is actually doing the gaming equivalent of a Manchester United, and changing its kit every three weeks to sell more to da kidz. You choose. And remember that this one, despite having all the Ultra-Alpha-triangle-aubergine combos, is hopelessly shoddy compared to most console versions. It doesn't even keep your options set when you quit. ★★



Team Fortress Classic

■ Publisher: **Sierra** ■ Price: **free**
 ■ Release date: **on the Net now**
 ■ Players: **Internet only**

■ This is one of the best things ever. It's a free expansion to the PC's most (in)credible game, *Half-Life*. Rather than the standard everyone-vs-everyone Internet game, in *Team Fortress* you divide into multiple teams who fight for a shared goal, such as capturing a flag or assassinating a hefty politician. To increase teamwork, you're given nine mutually-dependent character classes. Decide between the apocalyptic destruction of the HWGuy or the mobile poetry of the Soldier, the thrice-cursed deviousness of the Spy or the altruistic love of the Medic. But, most importantly, be sure to play this. This is the future. Repeat: this is. The. Future. ★★★★★



Triple Play 2000

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

■ Hopefully it's not just the company that *Triple Play 2000* is keeping this issue, but this rounders-for-Americans game actually feels rather good. Difficult to believe, isn't it? As well as all the usual EA sports game pomp and circumstance, *Triple Play 2000* possesses a warming patina of pure entertainment. The fielding system is particularly effective, allowing for efficient moving of the ball around the pitch. The batting perhaps shies too much on the simplistic side, but at least is accessible. Graphically there's a cartoony and well-animated vigour to the amusingly costumed sportsmen. Obviously it's all a little repetitive, but, hey, so is most marital sex. ★★



■ Not a golden bear in sight.

Jack Nicklaus 6: Golden Bear Challenge

■ Publisher: **Activision**
 ■ Developer: **Hypnos Entertainment** ■ Price: **£39.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 400Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**
 ■ Recommended: **P200, 64Mb RAM, 600Mb HD space**

Proving that bears really do do what comes naturally in the woods, the legendary golden oldie returns to the PC for a sixth crack at mastering the great game of golf.

■ Famously let go by EA Sports in favour of the more youthful and, arguably, more fashionable, *Tiger Woods*, Nicklaus' tie-in titles have historically been overshadowed by the superbly comprehensive *Links* series as well as Empire's *The Golf Pro* and Microsoft's *Golf*. This is a trend that's set to continue, too, despite *Nicklaus 6* being the best of the game's many incarnations.

Featuring six real courses designed by Nicklaus (including Shoal Creek and Muirfield Village), *Golden Bear Challenge* offers an aesthetically attractive walk, if an overly simplistic one.

Ambient sound effects set the mood (the usual "Ooh"s from the crowd and birds singing), and the player models are quality motion-

captured examples that move smoothly, if a little too sluggishly, on the putting greens.

In fact, everything you'd expect to find is here: mouse-click or mouse-swing control, brief course fly-bys, tips from the champ and a powerful user-friendly course editor. Yet the skill level of *Golden Bear Challenge* is rarely more taxing than the pinpoint timing of two speedy mouse clicks. Opt for the default aiming and club selection, and you'll soon find that achieving par or below on almost every hole becomes a certainty.

What wind there is has little effect on the flight of the ball, and negotiating the confusing front-end interface and ugly Windows-style pop-up dialogues initially

presents a tougher challenge than the golf itself. In Open Tournament mode the inclusion of 40 rival golfers increases the difficulty, but it's when you play marathon matches like this that the intrusive after-shot menu and repetitive sound bites start to annoy. Still, the scenery re-draw rates are fast for a golf game. Selecting animated water and high-quality textures affect the game performance a little, but by opting for only two real-time viewpoints as the ball travels, *Golden Bear Challenge* maintains a seamless feeling.

EIDOS' *Links LS '99* still reigns supreme, but *Jack Nicklaus 6: Golden Bear Challenge* at least proves the competition is catching up. ★★★ **Matt Pierce**

PC budget re-releases | by Sam Richards

"I have nothing to declare except my genius," claimed Oscar Wilde. "I have nothing to declare except my stinginess," announces Sam Richards, as he leaps headfirst into a pile of value-priced PC re-releases on a search for the ultimate gaming bargain.



Ultimate Race Pro

■ Publisher: **MicroProse Powerplus** ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Although it feels like a technology demo, Kalisto's shiny 3D racing game is very strong as a multi-player driving challenge. Originally designed to be bundled with VideoLogic's 3D cards to show what the PowerVR chip could do, this Pro version of *Ultimate Race* supports most forms of accelerator.

The game boasts loads of new, slickly designed courses and it handles perfectly with a range of (admittedly superficial) car options. It hasn't yet been surpassed for networked PC speed-thrill competitions and the only real downside is that, even a year later, it still needs a powerful machine to run it. ★★★



Gubble

■ Publisher: **PBH** ■ Price: **£4.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Some concepts never die, they just lie around waiting for a low-budget coder to turn them into a time-killer for the kiddies. Thus *Pac-Man* resurfaces, but in the 3D world of *Gubble*. Gubble is an alien who, instead of eating cherries, unscrews bolts.

The mazes are viewed from forced isometric perspective and Gubble must perform all his little DIY tasks before being whisked to the next level. The result is cheap, cheerful and utterly mind-numbing, although it has the kind of repetitive quality that some generous puzzle game fans might call "simple charm". For a fiver you could do worse, but then, you could also by a couple of pints. ★★



Fair Play Pack

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Life, say the ancient Oriental texts, is a balance between ying and yang – dark versus light, in perfect equipoise. Take 2's re-release compilation demonstrates this admirably. On the one hand you have the genius of *Grand Theft Auto*, a top-down car crime adventure, and *You Don't Know Jack*, one of the PC's funniest titles, a madcap game show for you and your mates to argue over when the pubs shut.

On the other side of the fence are *Three Lions*, possibly the worst football game ever made, and *Lula: Virtual Babe*, a soft-porn PC pet, a bit like a Tamagotchi but with naked cartoon women. Greatness and tat in one package. That's balance, y'see. ★★★



Actua Soccer 2

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Premier Collection** ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Before the *FIFA* games started getting good again, Gremlin had the 3D home football sim market sewn up. *Actua Soccer* spawned a sequel, which sadly isn't as revolutionary. Sure, the polygonal characters are smoother and the floating camera more intuitive, but it's still possible to make a long pass only to be disorientated by the perspective.

Additionally, the goalies are rock hard and the whole thing moves too fast. The control system is easy to learn and includes a speed button (a previous *Actua* oversight), so although it's not ideal for newcomers this is possibly the most thrilling footy game in this price range. ★★★



Hexen II

■ Publisher: **Activision** ■ Price: **£9.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ The *Quake* engine gets a fantasy overhaul in this swords-and-sorcery sequel. Magical staves and offensive spells take the place of rocket launchers in your quest to rid the realm of other-worldly evil. A new inventory system enables you to shift amulets and other handy items about making this a slower, more intelligent first-person experience.

The 3D is not up to the likes of *Heretic 2*, of course, and the hub-based level system is frustrating (you spend a lot of time wandering back through completed areas instead of progressing sequentially through levels), but if the latest crop of action games have bored you, this just might be the answer. ★★★



Monkey Island Bounty Pack

■ Publisher: **LucasArts Classics** ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

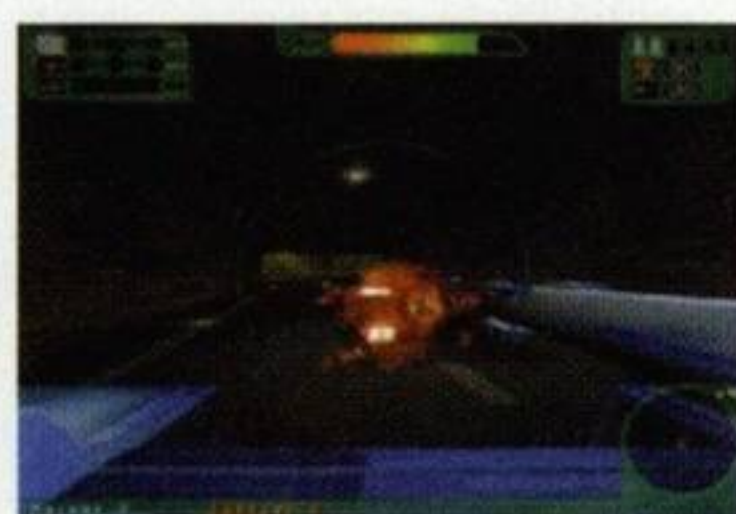
■ The finest, funniest adventure game series of all time, now in one place and including the recently released third episode. LucasArts' traditional 2D cartoon visuals, an overboard Caribbean voodoo setting and Hollywood pirate stereotypes appear in a trilogy which spans five years of Amiga and PC development. You control Guybrush Threepwood in his bid to thwart the ghost pirate LeChuck and marry lovely island governess Elaine Marley. Lucas in-jokes (references to *Star Wars* for instance), plus a sense of historical absurdity adds to the appeal. No fancy graphics means you won't need a turbo-bastard PC either. ★★★



Tomb Raider II: Golden Mask

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Premier Collection** ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Five new levels for *Tomb Raider 2*, plus the full version of the game. The supplementary levels are available for download on the Internet so this pack is only worth getting if you were planning to buy an old Lara Croft game anyway.

Apart from a few cosmetic differences, *Tomb Raider* games are basically the same and by now you know the drill: Lara leaps and fights her way across the world in search of endangered species to kill. These five extra scenarios see Lara hunting for buried gold, starting on a Bering Sea iceberg and ending up in the mystical Yeti-inhabited world of Shangri-La. ★★



Extreme Assault

■ Publisher: **Blue Byte** ■ Price: **£12.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
 ■ What really makes *Extreme Assault* hum is its software-rendering engine. At heart, this high-energy German offering is a poor man's *Incoming*, plonking you in various tanks and choppers with a single overall mission to "kill stuff".

It doesn't look anywhere near as polished as current 3D blast-'em-ups, but if you have yesterday's PC rather than tomorrow's, this is a mean example of what non-accelerated visuals can achieve. The missions are simply non-stop attack waves of enemy craft which drift into view for you to explode, but the locations are well designed and include underground sections and night missions. ★★★



G-Police

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis Argentum** ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ A fine showcase for Psygnosis' 3D technology, *G-Police* suffers mildly from fiddly gameplay and repetitive missions. It casts you as a government chopper cop, sorting out the low life on an Earth colony (and avenging your sister's death at the same time).

The city moves beneath you and dropping bombs on bank robbers' trucks is a pyrotechnic joy. The buildings, however, all have a shiny look-alike quality, and while the 'copter may look cool it requires patience to handle. *G-Police* is a game to go "Wow" at when you're in the mood for flights of fancy, and provides an acceptable mindless diversion. ★★★



Actua Golf 2

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Premier Collection** ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ The PC sequel to a PlayStation game (the original *Actua Golf* never appeared on the PC) Gremlin developed a flexible, mostly attractive golf sim which failed to compete on the shelves against established games such as *Links* and *Jack Nicklaus*.

Nevertheless, the courses, while not splendid, are detailed enough to be atmospheric and are complemented by excellent commentary from Peter Alliss. The range of driving actions – two or three click, plus a real-time mouse-swing control – should provide something for everyone, although all require frustratingly accurate timing. ★★★



Under a Killing Moon

■ Publisher: **EIDOS Premier Collection** ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ The character of Tex Murphy, star of *Overseer*, appears once again in a tiresome FMV adventure. Made with a huge budget, it stars Margot Kidder (Lois Lane from the Christopher Reeve *Superman* movies) and the voice of James Earl Jones (Darth Vader).

Set at Christmas 2042, your task is to save the world from space-borne destruction by watching lots of cut-scenes and clicking on some random objects. The plot is actually well planned with plenty of surprises, and there's no denying its supreme efforts at atmosphere, but it's let down by absent gameplay and a second-rate script. ★



Fallen Haven

■ Publisher: **Blue Byte** ■ Price: **£9.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

■ The clear, crisp forced-isometric visuals which front *Fallen Haven* belie the shallow nature of its in-game procedures. It's an old-fashioned turn-based sci-fi skirmish game, where you play as humans or Taurans in a race to conquer the planet Haven.

You research weapons and plan your next territorial incursion in a similar way to Bullfrog's *Syndicate*, but although the tactical sections are well animated, they're also awkward. There's no multi-player support, and the single-player battles grow repetitive, although the AI is good enough to offer a challenge to talented wargamers. All told, it's an average diversion that could have been much better. ★★

CLOCKWORK LEMON

MECHANICAL MEN RUN OUT OF STEAM



■ (Left) The ground-level view – useless. (Right) Normal view – much better.

Machines

■ Publisher: **Acclaim**
 ■ Developer: **Charybdis**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date:
on sale now ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Requires: **P200, 32Mb RAM,**
100Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM
drive, 3D accelerator card
 ■ Recommended: **P233, 200Mb**
HD space

Another C&C replica plops off the production line. But this one's more made in Taiwan than made in Heaven.

The Breville Waffle Wizard, the Triniton Trouser Press, and the Electric Bunion Buster are all machines that have failed to win our respect since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. To their number we must now add the entire cast of *Machines* – Acclaim's clumsy attempt to re-invent the real-time strategy genre for the 3D era.

Once again the brief is familiar. Take a small band of tanks (or similar) for a jaunt into enemy territory, build a base right under their noses and then nick their land if they're too dozy to stop you. This scheme has been tried once or twice before, though, and so Acclaim has bolted on a load of flashy mod-cons in an effort to bring their version bang up to date.

Most apparent is the true 3D graphics engine that enables you to rotate and tilt the landscape to view the action from any angle you like. Unfortunately, *Machines'* chief RTS-rival *Warzone* not only did 3D terrain first, it also did it better. Whereas *Warzone's* maps

are blistered with ambush-concealing mountain ranges, *Machines'* are about as dramatic as a croquet lawn. What's more, the graphics artists seem obsessed with exploring the grey end of their colour palette, creating a succession of bland and uninspiring worlds.

Ah ha! But *Machines* counters with a groovy first-person view. Now you can climb into any of your metal chums and relieve the tactical brain strain with a dose of mindless blasting. But, tragically, no one's bothered to integrate this feature into the rest of the game, so while you're off joyriding, the rest of the army's usually getting panned without you around to wet nurse it through.

And once you've stripped away these luxury extras, there isn't a lot left to recommend *Machines*. Granted, there's some entertaining weaponry available to you later on, and commanding your force is made easy with some nifty interface options, but that hardly compensates for the overwhelming list of defects.

Frustratingly, you'll struggle against lemming-like enemy AI, dull graphics, derivative missions and mirror-image armies that differ only in the colour of their paint job.

If you're into real-time strategy, *Warzone 2100* is the game to spend your cash on right now, while *Machines* should be consigned to the slag heap immediately. ★★ **Mark Donald**

↑ Uppers & Downers

Silicon implant

- Gratuitous weapons
- Innovative interface
- Leafy technology tree

Silicon eggplant

- Lacklustre graphics
- Identical races
- Moronic AI



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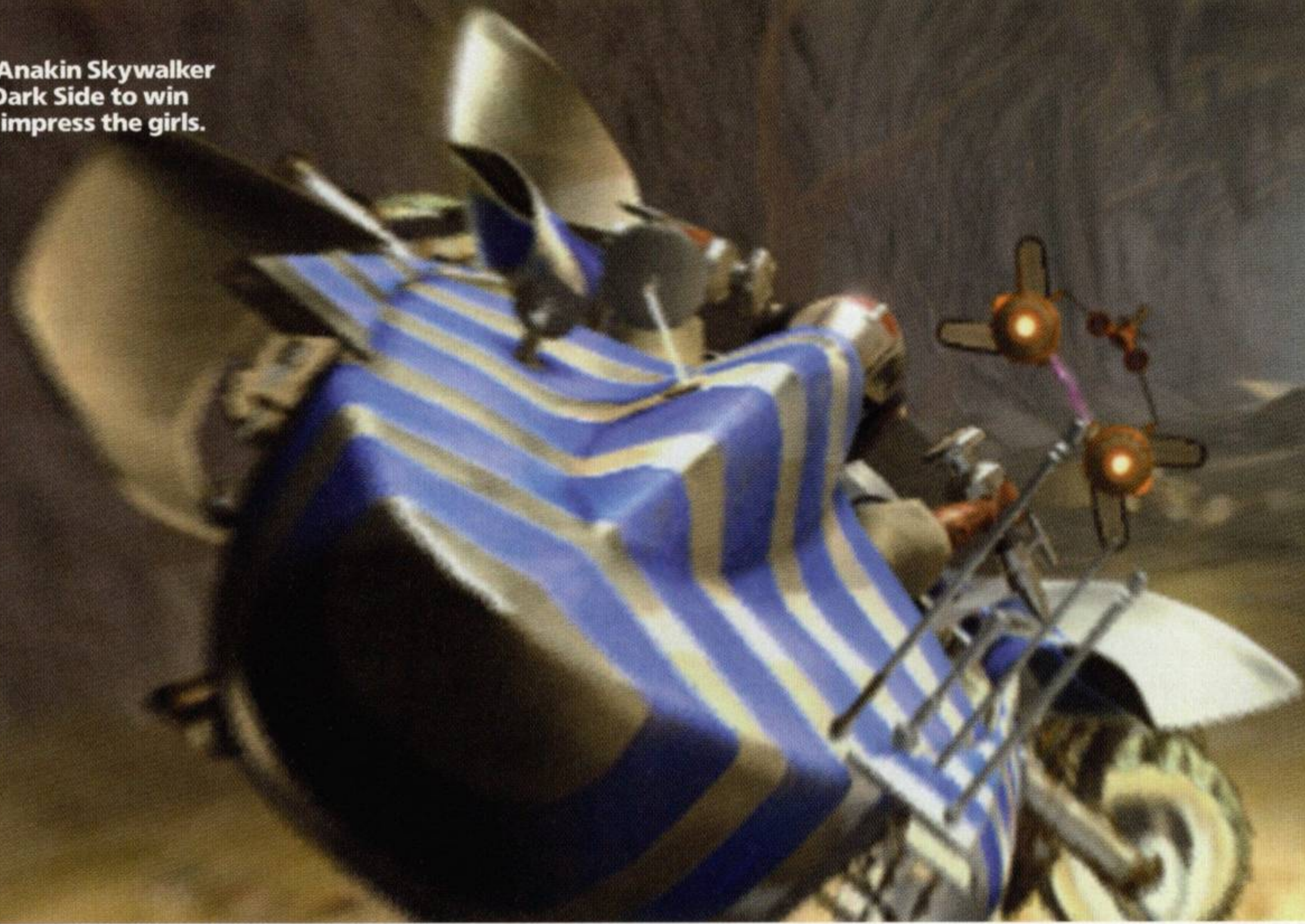
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Warzone 2100
 EIDOS ★★★★★
 Current king of the genre, boasting true 3D terrain and graphic violence.

Total Annihilation
 GT Interactive ★★★★★
 Slick but old. Has a massive multi-player following.

New Nintendo 64 Games

■ Young Anakin Skywalker uses the Dark Side to win races and impress the girls.



POD-U-LIKE

USE THE FORCE TO BEAT THE COURSE



■ Great craft, high speed. Top.

- Uppers & Downers**
- Obi-Wan**
- Great scenery
 - Cool craft
 - It's *Star Wars*!
- The Dark Side**
- No weapons
 - Repeated tracks
 - Too short

Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

■ Publisher: **Nintendo** ■ Developer: **LucasArts**
 ■ Price: **£50** ■ Release date: **4 June** ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **Rumble Pak, Expansion Pak** ■ Other formats: **PC, PlayStation, Mac**

The first game based on the hottest film ever uses The Force in a surprisingly playable way. Star Wars meets WipeOut, but can it outpace F-Zero X?

So, after 16 years and several million fan conventions, the new *Star Wars* movie is almost here. For the frighteningly obsessed Americans who spent two months camping outside cinemas in order to get tickets a day or two before their employed friends, the wait has doubtless been worthwhile. But how satisfied will Nintendo players be with the first videogame instalment of the hottest merchandising property ever?

The answer is, thankfully, delighted, because *Star Wars Episode 1: Racer* can hold its head high as a member of that most exclusive of clubs: a decent movie adaptation. While games like *Mission: Impossible* failed by trying to squeeze every event from

the film into the cart, *Episode 1: Racer* concentrates on one brief scene and then expands that scene into something highly playable and distinctively *Star Wars*.

The scene in question is a pod racing tournament organised by intergalactic crime kingpin and generally odious giant slug creature, Jabba the Hutt. The pod vehicles consist of two enormous engines, tethered to each other by a force field and towing a small chariot in which the driver sits. Think *Ben Hur* meets *Mad Max* and you'll get the general idea. Flying these contraptions at speed is beyond the reflexes of human beings, so the competitors are all physically superior alien types with names like Sebulba, Fud Sang, and Mawhonic. All but one, anyway, because this time a human child called Anakin Skywalker (a youthful Darth Vader, no less) enters and proceeds to blow the opposition off the track with his supernatural Force skills.

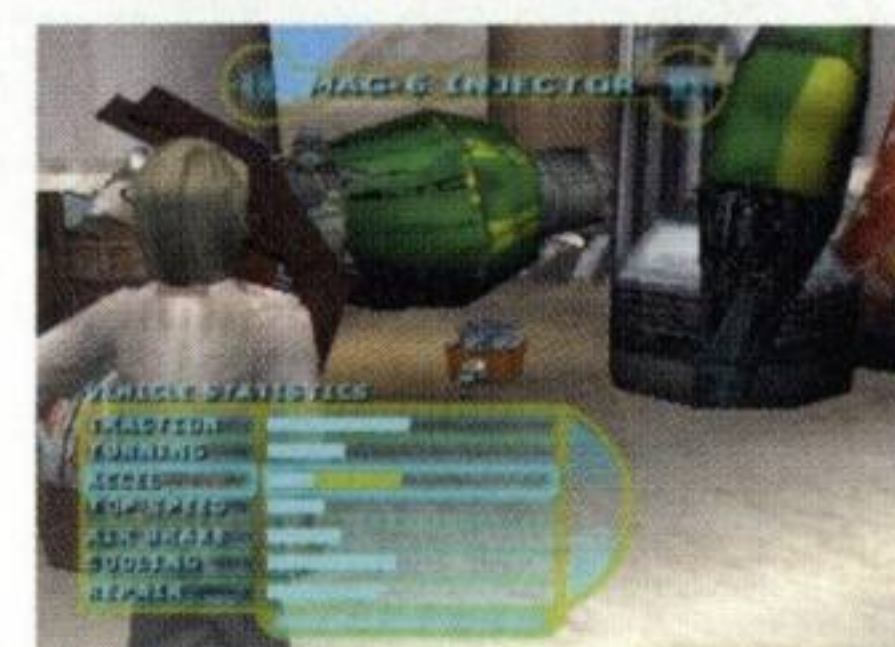
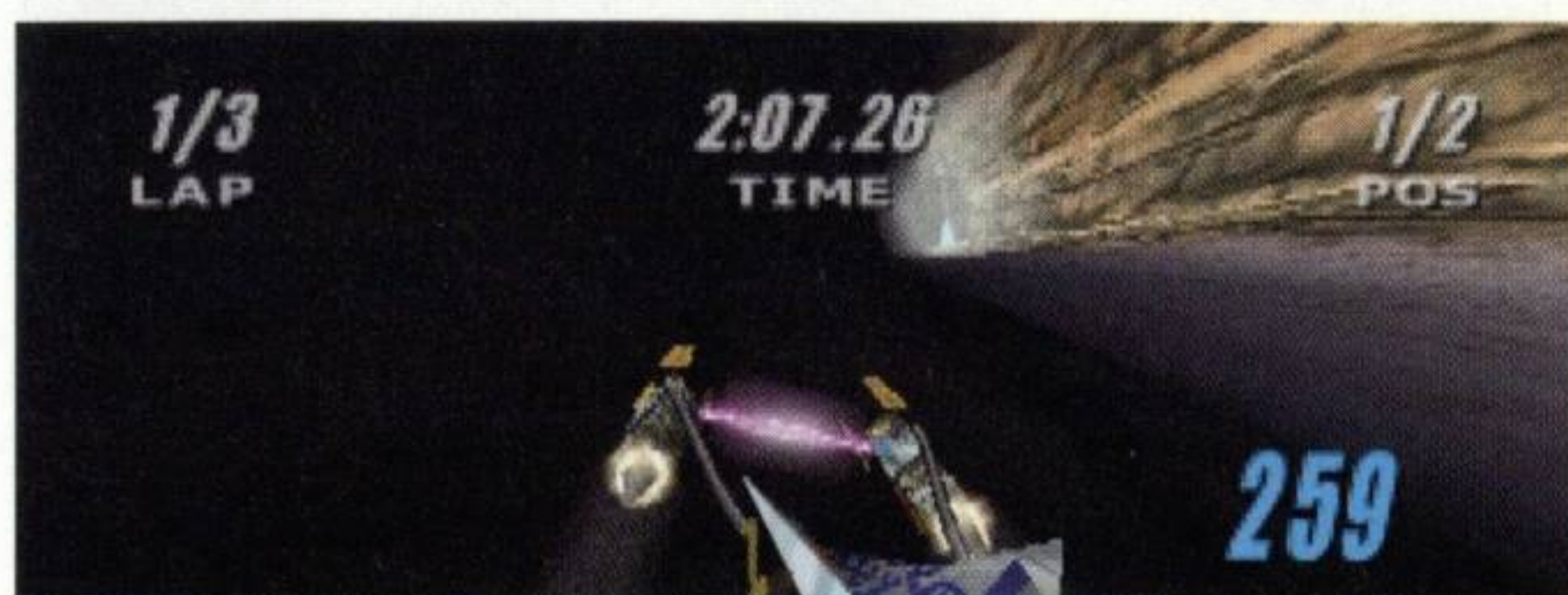
Well that's the film, or at least a tiny bit of it. The game is basically one giant pod racing tournament, that's set over various planets from the *Star Wars* universe, and it's turned

out far better than you might at first imagine, given its relatively brief development time.

You fly your chosen pod around 25 courses, grouped in four different leagues that increase in difficulty. Winning races earns

■ Lining up alongside you are eleven lean, mean racers. Only the top four get a cash prize.





you money (Truguts – the local currency), which you can spend on upgrading every individual aspect of your pod's performance, from the air brakes to the radiators.

The courses are certainly pretty to look at and, with an Expansion Pak installed, *Episode 1: Racer* is one of the best-looking games on the system.

The moment when you soar into a zero-gravity cavern on the sixth course, with huge lumps of rock hurtling towards you, is enough to impress even the most jaded gamer, and the minimal amount of pop-up should elicit a few nods of approval

FLYING THESE CONTRAPTIONS AT SPEED IS BEYOND THE REFLEXES OF HUMAN BEINGS

from any watching tech-heads. The frame rate is the one area where the game slips up a little, although with visuals this detailed it's hardly surprising that *Episode 1: Racer* doesn't make it into the *F-Zero X* league of smoothness.

Better than the courses are the pod craft themselves. They're huge things, bristling with home-made add-ons and other bits, and they really look the part. LucasArts has thoughtfully included a screen where you can swing the camera around your vehicle to inspect it from every angle, but still pictures really don't do justice to the way the chariot swings along behind the engines like a kite being buffeted in a strong wind.

In terms of gameplay, the programmers must have spent an awful lot of lunch hours playing *WipEout* when they were coding *Episode 1: Racer*. The track design and floaty handling are reminiscent of the Psygnosis game, although *Episode 1: Racer* is considerably more forgiving when it comes to collisions. There is an original turbo boost



system, though, which you activate by pressing the joystick forward to charge up the turbo, before you unleash the power by tapping and holding the accelerator. This method can take some getting used to, especially since the pod engines overheat and explode if you over use the turbo.

As is appropriate for a game based on *Star Wars*, *Episode 1: Racer* has its dark side: longevity – or the lack of it. For starters, beating the computer opponents is surprisingly easy. There doesn't seem to be much more to it than memorising the tracks and trying to get at least one clean lap. Even if you crash and burn a couple of times you can retain first place. Later on the opposition does become tougher, but most of the challenge remains in tackling awkward corners and other hazards rather than winning a straight battle of wits with the 11 other racers. Other annoying problems are that the tracks have a lot of shared sections, and when you slip into two-player mode you lose a lot of the graphical detail.

But *Episode 1: Racer* is a damn fine game while it lasts. The Time Trial mode will live on after the Arcade mode has died of old age, and the *Star Wars* licence gives the whole thing the kind of atmosphere that every other game on the shelves would kill to get. Buy it. ★★★★★ **Martin Kitts**

Initially, it's the quality of the in-game graphics that will attract you to *Episode 1: Racer*, but there's a fine racing game underneath all the glitter and gloss.

Play the game in hi-res and some of the special effects will blow your mind.



Or you could try...

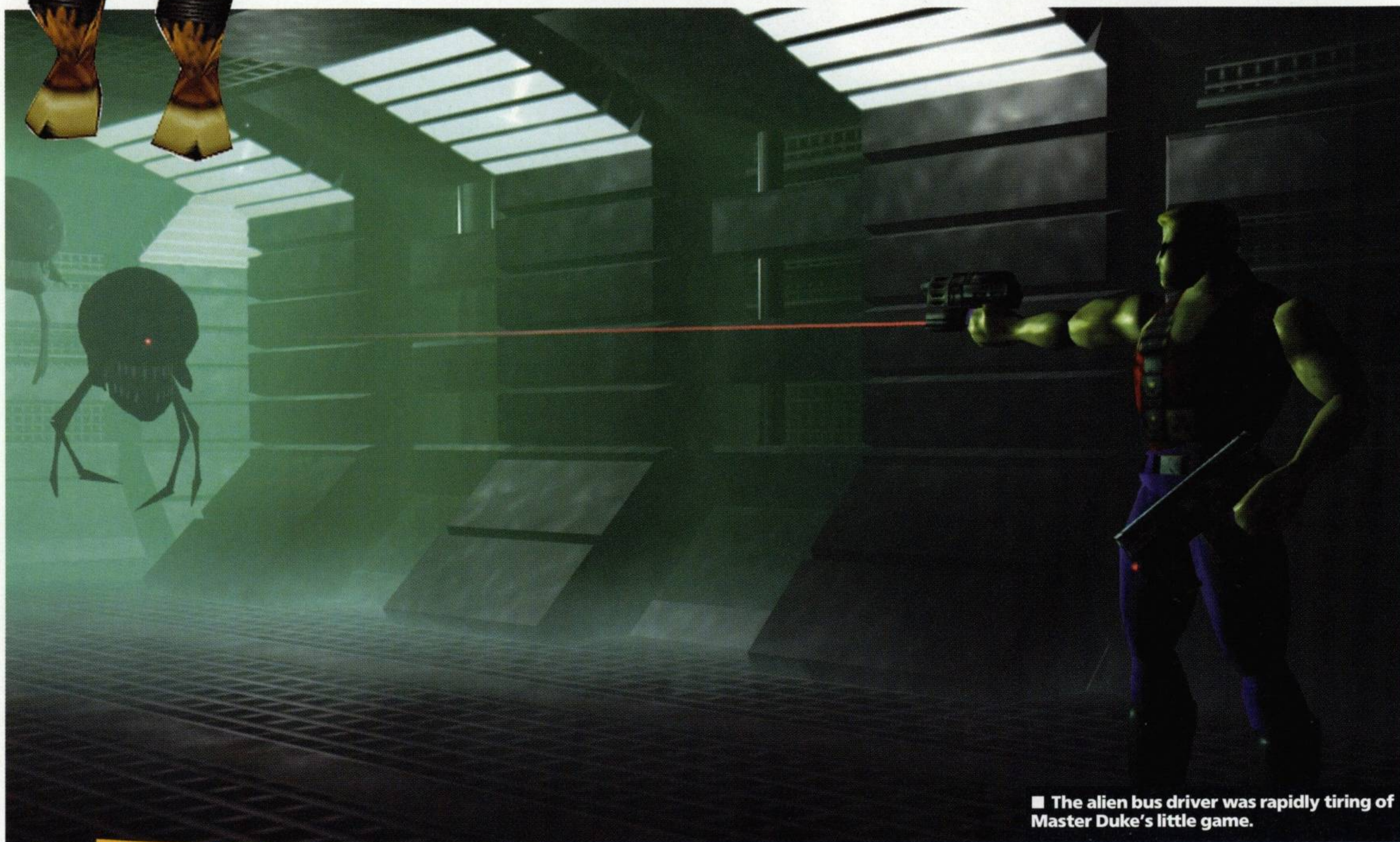
F-Zero X
Nintendo ★★★★★
Nintendo spent years designing the tracks and handling. The ultimate future racer.

WipEout 64
Midway ★★★
At its best on the N64, but it looks very dated in comparison with *Episode 1: Racer*.



NUCLEAR POWER

THE BAD MOUTHED BOY IS BACK IN TOWN



■ The alien bus driver was rapidly tiring of Master Duke's little game.

Arcade
Nintendo 64
Game of
the Month

Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Eurocom**
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **Memory Pak, Expansion Pak, Rumble Pak**

Duke returns in his first N64 game since 1997's Duke Nukem. And he has a truckload of big, big guns.

Duke Nukem, then. Daring, heroic and defiantly unreconstructed to some; a tired, tiresome, misogynist dullard to others – he's certainly a character designed to provoke a reaction. And the Duke is as insistent as ever with his testosterone-loaded catch phrases: "Your ass, your face – what's the difference?", "Come get some" and "Gonna rip 'em a new one" just a few of the many absurd declarations on offer. Would *Legend of Zelda* have been any more visionary, elegant and majestic with the addition of soundbite gimmicks along the lines of "Duke, I'm so glad you've... come" (no kidding)? Thought not. So it comes as a

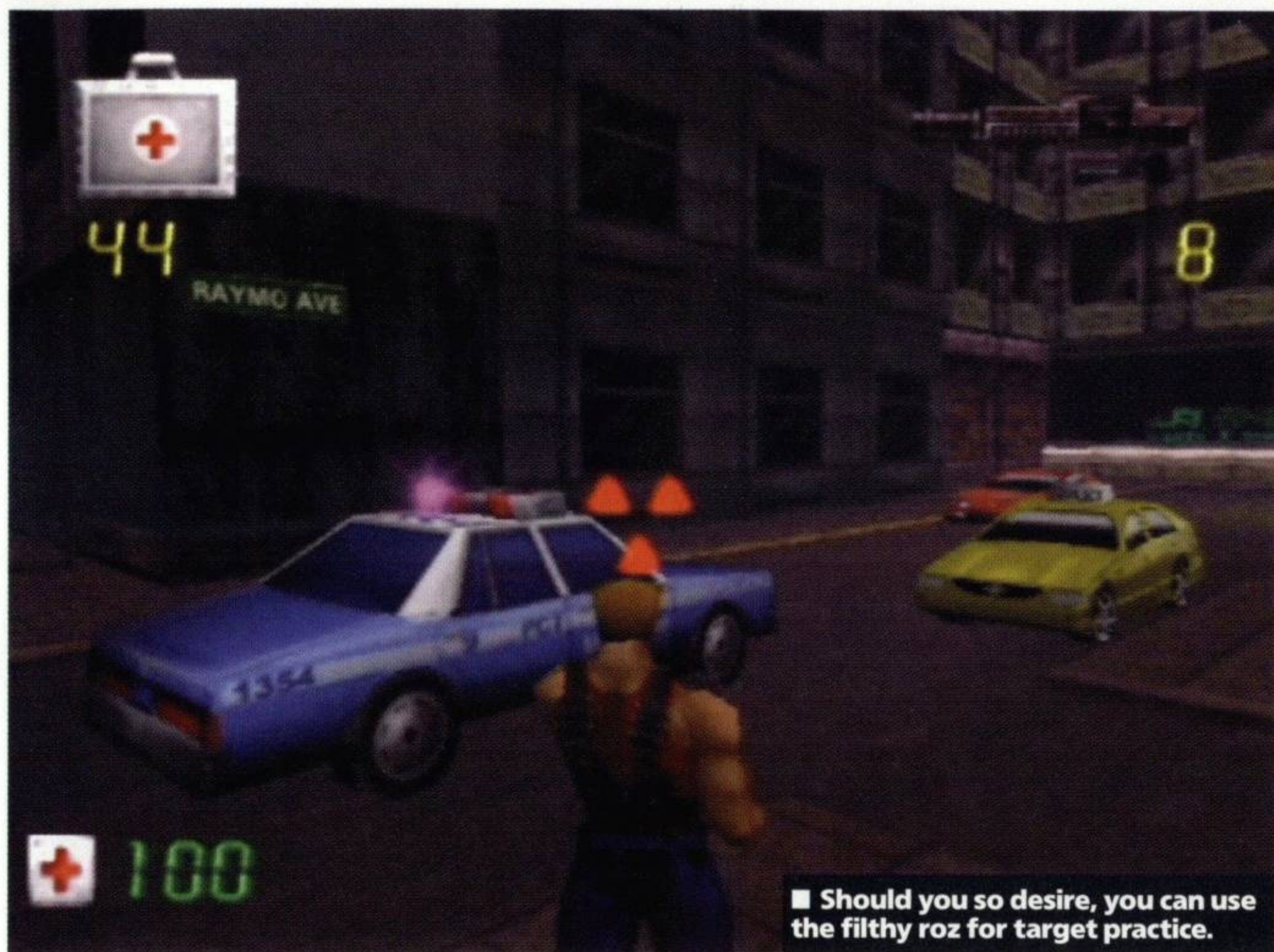
great relief to say that, regardless of irksome profanity and double entendre, *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour* is fantastic.

Forget the mediocre, lacklustre *Time To Kill* – the PlayStation-only third-person cousin to this newest offering – *Zero Hour* is basically a first-person shooter with a third-person view. Confused? Don't be. Developer Eurocom has understood that control is the most essential ingredient in any game, and has rumbled that the N64 joypad is the most concise and subtle of instruments. Thus, the company has successfully transferred the winning layout of such luminaries as *GoldenEye*, *Turok* and *Turok 2* (C buttons for movement, analogue stick for direction) to its own third-person game with resounding success, with the added enjoyment of seeing Duke angle himself properly for such tactics as strafing. Though this may initially appear to be an unsettling combination, you soon realise it works perfectly, especially with the addition of hoofing great crosshairs. The difference between silky-smooth N64 analogue control and clumsy, rotational, D-Pad-led PlayStation movement has never been more pronounced.

The game proper, despite being a straightforward shooter, is rich in imagination, enthusiasm and exuberance, all helped along by not a little mickey-taking (cue digs at and references to *Titanic*, *Monica Lewinsky*, the *Spice Girls*, *The*



■ The sniper rifle (above) is a thing of beauty, second only to the one in *GoldenEye*.



■ Should you so desire, you can use the filthy roz for target practice.



■ (Above) Back Duke into a corner and he fades out into a first-person view. (Left) Shoot him! In the head! Right now! It's the only way to be sure.

Simpsons and, yes, *Turok* and *GoldenEye*). The first level, while reminiscent of *Duke Nukem 3D* on the PC, is a well-realised, impressively interactive cityscape, complete with moving cars, buildings you are free to explore and opportunities aplenty for rooftop shenanigans. Thanks to the game's time-travel remit, you can wander back and forth in a creative way, enhancing the story as you go. You can move from a pea-souped Victorian London, complete with Duke in period dress, to cowboy antics in the Wild West (where you should watch out for a *Planet of the Apes*-style starring role for the Statue of Liberty).



As you would expect, weaponry features heavily. Aside from the usual pistol, shotgun and rocket launcher, you can try pipe bombs and grenade launchers on for size, along with outlandish alien armaments and period weapons, such as the frontier revolver. Best of all, though, is the sniper rifle: zoom in on a distant extraterrestrial's head, for example, and you can get a first-person look at its cranium as it is reduced to a splintered, bloody mess and explodes like a ripe melon. Gratuitous? Absolutely. Satisfying? Totally.

Throw in Expansion Pak-enhanced graphics and an enjoyable four-player deathmatch, and you'll find *Zero Hour* to be a highly accomplished, immensely entertaining romp. There's no fogging at all and, while some scenes may appear rather blocky and angular, that doesn't prevent the graphics being commendably sharp and crisp.

Take on your mates in a deathmatch, though, and *Zero Hour* loses its polished edge. Stick four players into the

scene and, as everyone hares around, the graphics become syrupy. That said, the multi-player game sticks to what it's good at, offering simple and brutally violent fun. This set-up succeeds in offering a more immediate, if admittedly inferior, alternative to *GoldenEye's* more advanced deathmatch options.

However, even considering the less impressive aspects of the deathmatch option, in the final analysis what we have here is a simply cracking game. Mission objectives make up for your having to endure the otherwise ordinary switch-pulling, and the sprawling, secret-ridden, exploration-encouraging environments do even more to spice things up. While some enemies do have an annoying habit of teleporting right in front of your face, showing little of the intelligence and animation that was so prevalent in *GoldenEye* and *Turok 2*, it's still hard to criticise.

Duke Nukem: Zero Hour is a success. It's chock full of ammunition-wasting violence, thrilling action and effervescent imagination. It's an unreserved triumph for GT, and even more so for Eurocom, a developer that appears to have an excellent grasp of the N64, and – more importantly – an innate understanding of what makes a game challenging, immersive and damn good fun. What are you waiting for? Come get some. ★★★ **Jes Bickham**

A DARING, UNRECONSTRUCTED HERO TO SOME; A TIRED, TIRESOME MYSOGYNIST DULLARD TO OTHERS

↑ Uppers & Downers

- The Bomb**
- Excellent, imaginative levels
 - Plenty to do
 - Splendid weaponry
- Bitch Slap**
- Hardly original
 - Some basic animation
 - Sketchy AI

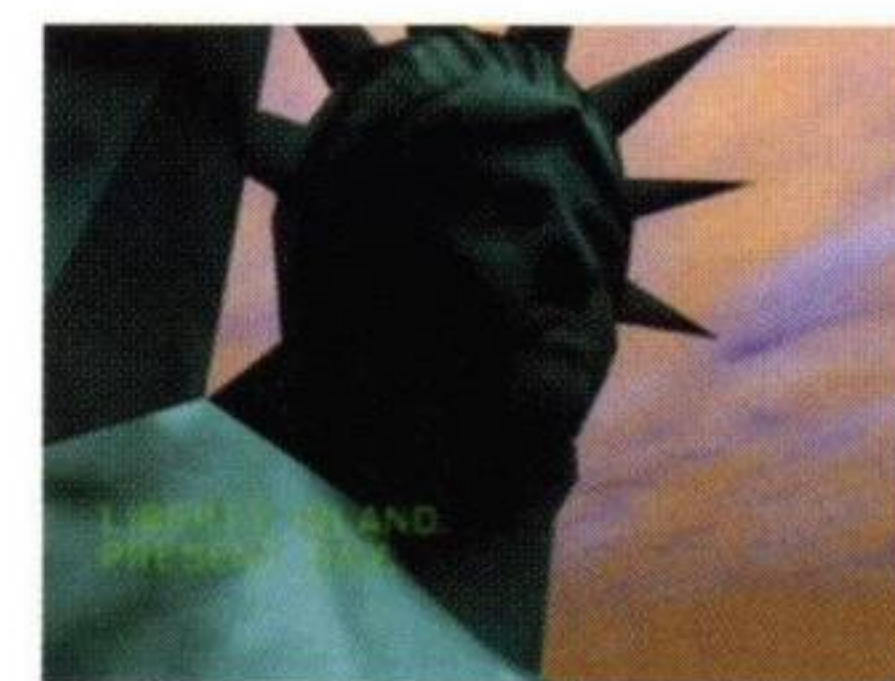
Or you could try...

GoldenEye
Rare ★★★★★
The finest first-person shooter in existence. And it features James Bond. Timeless.

Turok 2
Acclaim ★★★★★
Hyper-violent dino basher, with unbelievable hires graphics. And the Cerebral Bore. Tasty.



■ (Right) Look familiar? Thought so. Especially the ginger head...



■ (Top) The Statue of Liberty, in danger. Naturally. (Bottom) Nude women to be rescued. *Mais oui*. (Left) Enclosed-corridor combat. Of course.

N64 BUDGET

NINTENDO FOR NOWT

END OF YEAR CLEAR OUT OFFERS UP SOME ATTRACTIVE PROPOSITIONS

How much have you been paying? I tell you what mate, I know someone who could get his hands on that kind of thing for something like £30. His name? Well look, I shouldn't really tell you this, but it's Jonathan Davies... keep it to yourself.



F1 World Grand Prix

- Publisher: **THE**
- Developer: **Videosystem/Paradigm**
- Players: **1-2**
- Price: **£30**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Extras: **Rumble Pak**

Drive round and round in circles for an hour and a half – but on the N64.

■ The Nintendo 64 offers only a few out-and-out *serious* games, and *F1 World Grand Prix* is one of them. And to be honest, although it's an excellent game by any measure, it sits just a little uneasily in the N64's portfolio.

What it is, basically, is an ultra-accurate simulation of the 1997 Formula One season. It uses the N64's polygon-pushing power to good effect to reproduce the narrow streets of Monaco, the forests of Spa and the fairgrounds of Suzuka, bungs in all the drivers and cars and wraps it all up in authentic TV-style presentation. There is also a good two-player mode, which you may recall from the "Let's see that again" telly ads.

The result is one of the best F1 games on any system – better than any PlayStation rival and better, in many respects, than even Sir Geoffrey Crammond's mighty *Grand Prix 2* on the PC.

The thing is, though, it takes a special kind of person to enjoy playing an F1 sim. You've got to concentrate hard on your driving, far more so than in something like *Gran Turismo* or *Top Gear Rally*. You've got to brake at precisely the right moment for every corner, and you'll rarely overtake another car during the course of a race.

Another *Mario Kart*, *FWGP* is not, but if you want to re-live the antics of real-life F1 drivers, there's no better way of putting yourself in their Schus. (Sorry.) ★★★★★



Lylat Wars

- Publisher: **Nintendo**
- Developer: **Nintendo**
- Players: **1-4**
- Price: **£30**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Extras: **Rumble Pak**

The game that launched the Rumble Pak, Lylat Wars will shake your foundations.

■ An unfortunate propensity for rooting around in dustbins aside, Fox McCloud is the number one hero on the N64. Manlier than Mario, and funnier than James Bond, he saves not just princesses, nor even whole worlds, but entire solar systems. And *Lylat Wars* is the best N64 game he features in.

All right, so it's his only N64 game. But it is a superb, cinematic rocket ride of a 3D space shoot-'em-up that out-*StarWarses* *Rogue Squadron* and makes *Wipeout* look about as fast as a sack race run by tortoises.

You may have heard from less-than-trustworthy mates that *Lylat Wars* is easy to finish. But that's eyewash, people. Those so-called mates of yours might have finished the first level on Corneria, and gone on through the Meteo asteroid belt and a couple of other levels to defeat Andross at the end. But they'll have overlooked about two-thirds of the game. You reach the other levels by completing special tasks, including an incredible *Independence Day*-style dogfight beneath a giant UFO, a perspiration-inducing skim over a sea of lava and a spooky underwater section. There are also high-score challenges for the pros.

With the aid of some brilliant cut-scenes, seamlessly integrated into the action, *Lylat Wars* makes you the hero of a hyper-exciting sci-fi action movie. Though it is getting on a bit, *Lylat Wars* is still one of the top five games on the N64, and is a must. ★★★★★



Mario Kart 64

- Publisher: **Nintendo**
- Developer: **Nintendo**
- Players: **1-4**
- Price: **£30**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Extras: **Controller Pak**

It's only the lonely who'll fail to appreciate The King of all multi-player racing games. Uh-huh.

■ Yes, all right, so *Mario Kart 64* is rubbish in one-player mode. The computer characters cheat and you can finish it in an evening. And there's no reward for your trouble save a Mirror mode and the secret Koopa Trooper character.

But to play *Mario Kart* on your own is to miss the point. The point is to assemble three willing chums, whereupon you'll enter a whole world of fun.

There are 16 courses – just the right number so that, as you complete the 16th, the first seems new and fresh again. There's a masterful selection of power-ups, apportioned so only those to the rear of the pack tend to get the fearsome red homing shells. This allows amateurs to taste victory occasionally. But there are also Jedi-style skills to be learned, such as drift cornering and defensive use of power-ups, ensuring that the best man always comes out ahead in the end.

And if circumstance truly compels you to play alone, it's not all bad news. If taken seriously, the Time Trial mode can be endlessly compelling. Just as you think you've completed *Mario Raceway* as fast as humanly possible you'll find a sneaky new trick to shave another 0.2 seconds off your time.

At £30, *Mario Kart 64* would be an asset at any social gathering – and cheaper than a fondue set. (The secret Koopa Trooper doesn't exist, by the way.) ★★★★★



Snowboard Kids

- Publisher: **Racdym**
- Developer: **Atlus**
- Players: **1-4**
- Price: **£30**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Extras: **Controller Pak, Rumble Pak**

Fill your pockets with ice cubes and this'll have you thinking you're in the Alps.

■ Enjoyed *Mario Kart 64*'s four-player mode? Looking for more of the same (on snow)? Then here's your game. While it doesn't have weapons as fiendish as *MK64*, *Snowboard Kids* is – in every other sense – its party game equal.

In fact, in some respects it is better. For example, the courses run down mountains, so there are no laps. Instead, when you get to the bottom of the slope there's a hilarious scramble for the turnstile leading to the ski-lift. If you aren't careful, your hard-fought lead can be reduced to nothing in the flurry of elbows and you'll have to settle, fuming, for the last chair back to the top for the next run.

And as a one-player game *Snowboard Kids* is definitely better than *Mario Kart*. There's a much more pronounced difficulty curve, so you won't finish it in an evening, and there are extra boards and courses to seek out as you get better, along with extra Skill Games and a Stunt Mode.

Snowboard Kids is a far cry from the "it's, like, a state of mind" world of realistic snowboarding games, too. Its big-nosed cartoony stars can board over not just snow but grass, water and even sand, and the weapons are truly bizarre.

This game was a surprise gem when it appeared early last year. Hardly anyone bought it, so it's time to make amends. ★★★★★



Wave Race 64

- Publisher: **Nintendo**
- Developer: **Nintendo**
- Players: **1-2**
- Price: **£30**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Extras: **Controller Pak**

Laugh in the face of hosepipe bans this summer with Waverace, the game for indoor water babies.

■ If you're looking for concrete proof of the N64's formidable processing power, have a shuftly at *Wave Race 64*. Even the most elaborate Namco ride-on jetski coin-ops have you trundling over an unconvincing sheet of blue, but in *Wave Race* you're actually splashing about in real, ripplingly genuine water.

It's a marvellous sight to behold and makes for gallons of fun. Spy a particularly huge wave ahead and you'll need to violently swerve to avoid it, or risk being thrown into the harbour wall. Or, when you start to get the measure of the subtle control system, you'll find you can use waves to your advantage, "riding" them (to use the correct jetskiing term, probably) to gain you crucial milliseconds over your computer-generated opponents.

As well as the standard races around buoys, there's a compelling Stunt mode (spoiled by a cheat, which we won't reveal here for fear of wrecking all your fun). And, this being a proper Nintendo game, there are secret short-cuts and a rideable dolphin to discover. All that's missing is a four-player mode. But there is a two-player mode – so it's half way there.

Of the four racing games in Nintendo's end-of-line £30 clear-out sale, *Wave Race* is the best if you're likely to be playing alone. And if you aren't playing well, you can just sit and watch the tide go in and out. ★★★★★

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Marvel Vs Capcom

■ Publisher: **Capcom**
 ■ Developer: **Capcom** ■ Price: **£70 (import)** ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)**
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **VMS**

Capcom made "flat graphics" its own with *Street Fighter 2*. But that was nearly ten years ago, and the company is still using the same ideas.

■ Marvel and Capcom dream up great superheroes, and they're both adept at extracting money from their fans' pockets by recycling ideas time and again. As for *Marvel Vs Capcom*, get that cash cow into the dairy, Denzel: it's milking time.

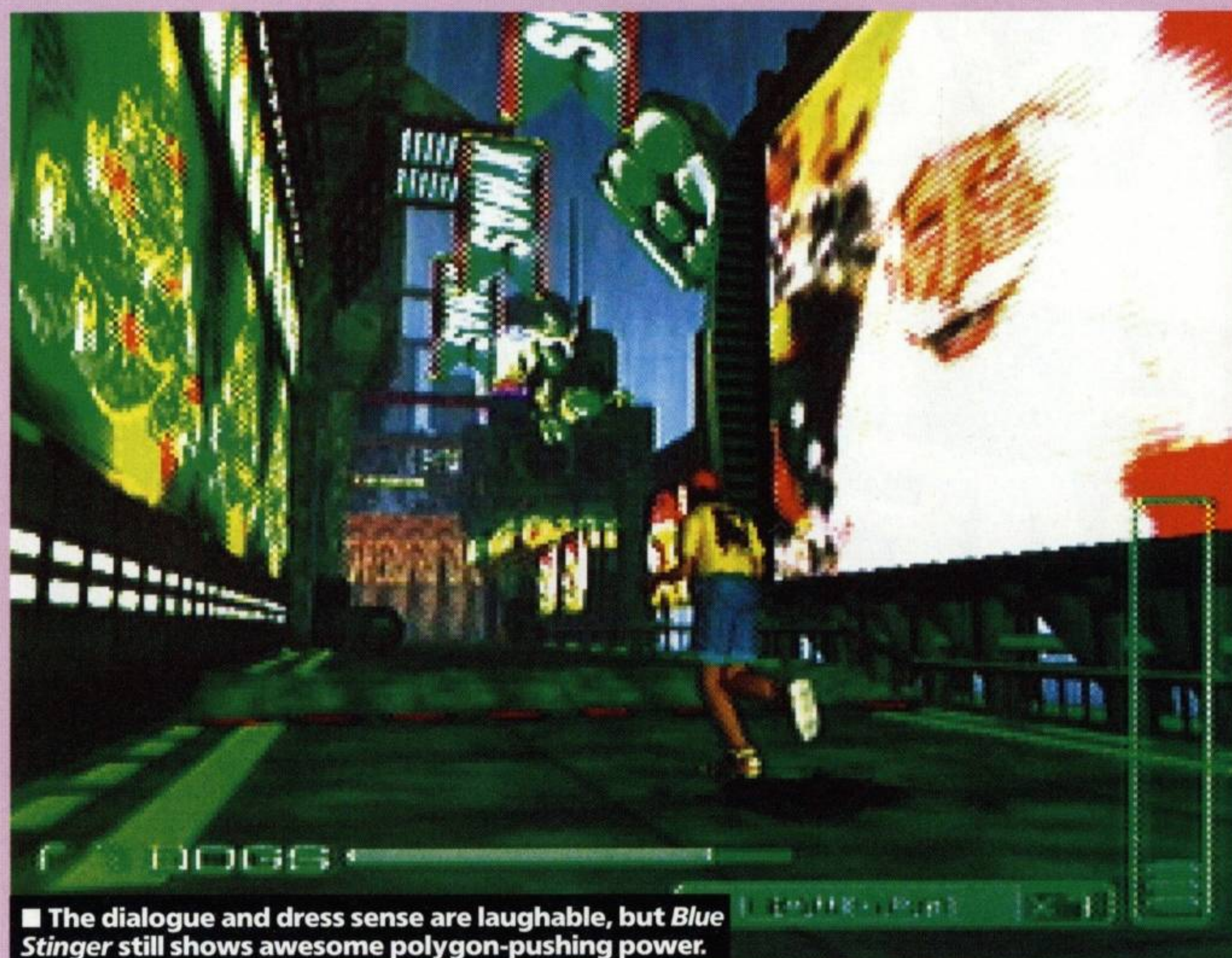
Marvel's own strengths have been over-diluted in its comics over the last few years, but its classic creations still stand up to scrutiny: Hulk is still awesome, Spidey's there for the more technical, proto-Ryu Captain America has never been cooler, and there's Ryu himself – this is a Capcom fighter, after all.

Marvel's characters have been treated with loving respect, caressed and gently squeezed fully intact into the Dreamcast, albeit "Capcomised" to fit the company's manga styling. And Dreamcast handles the action perfectly; no slow-down, glitches or missing animation here, proving again that the machine is capable of perfectly emulating today's coin-ops. Visually, at least.

The problem is the Dreamcast pad – it spoils the whole damn thing. If you are considering buying *Marvel Vs Capcom*, you have, no doubt, played the game in the arcade. Disappointment dawns as soon as you struggle to remap your brain and fingers to the sparse four up, two down button layout of the Dreamcast. The pad just can't handle a six-button fighter. The D-pad also leaves you struggling to hit the diagonals – very bad news in a Capcom game.

And there's nothing new here. Capcom's innovative juice seems to have dried up. In terms of gameplay, *Marvel Vs Capcom* falls between two stools: for fighting fans it's a case of been there, memorised the moves and got the calluses to prove it, but for new players things are too technical. The obscure back-catalogue of has-been characters doesn't help, either.

So, here's proof that Capcom can happily churn out jelly-mould fighters until the stress of having to generate new ideas kills it. *Capcom Vs Carol Vorderman*, anyone? ★★★ **Gary Cutlack**



■ The dialogue and dress sense are laughable, but *Blue Stinger* still shows awesome polygon-pushing power.



■ Don't expect any *Res Evil*-like moments of genuine fear.

MONSTER MASH

ALL MOUTH AND NO TROUSERS

Blue Stinger

■ Publisher: **Sega Japan** ■ Developer: **Climax**
 ■ Price: **£50** ■ Release date: **on sale now (Japan)**
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **VMS**

With PlayStation 2 just announced, Sega wouldn't be stupid enough to release an average *Resident Evil* clone on their newest console, would it?

First impressions of *Blue Stinger* aren't positive. And although the odd agreeable moment does crop up to raise the game from the realms of the diseased, there aren't enough of them to make it a classic. Here's the score: you are charged to look into the disappearance of a group of research scientists from a large base on a remote island. You quickly discover a mysterious handgun and large multi-limbed monsters climbing all over the shop (thankfully, in that order). Something, obviously, is "not quite right", and you're just the man to sort it all out.

You then flit between a variety of locations, upgrading your firepower, snatching security pass cards from corpses completing missions in which you have to do things like find and deactivate a computer in two minutes and pick up forged papers from a seedy, downtown bar. This is all good fun, but it lacks the intriguing plot, suspense and depth of games like *Resident Evil* and *Metal Gear Solid*.

Characters you meet join your team (once they're signed up, you can swap between them at any point) and, in order to bump up your health, you can buy food and drink from vending machines, using coins you collect as you move through the game. Although the game's

corridors, rooms and many bridges are beautifully created from the very finest polygons, the painful fact is that you have absolutely no control over the camera, not even the ability to scroll around your character. Now, although the swooping angles created for you are impressive and will raise the occasional "Oooh!", your view of the action can sometimes go skewiff and leave you, for example, grappling with some sort of enormous tentacle with no idea of where your adversary is.

That said, you can understand why Sega has grasped this game with both hands, as the team's pedigree is outstanding: Climax is an old Sega darling, having coded *Landstalker* for the Mega Drive and *Dark Savior* for the Saturn, and, as graphical demos go, this is up there with *House of the Dead 2* for showing off the visual muscle of the Dreamcast.

However, gameplay is what really counts and in *Blue Stinger* this seems to have taken a back seat to eye-massaging pixel power. The developers really should have noted that it wasn't just the originality in the graphics and the overall presentation of *Resident Evil* that made it a classic, there was also a bloody riveting game there, too. ★★★ **Dean Mortlock**

↑↓ **Uppers & Downers**

Stinger

- Good graphics
- Touches that are bound to impress
- Atmospheric tunes

Ringer

- Disappointing gameplay
- Too short
- Too easy, for some

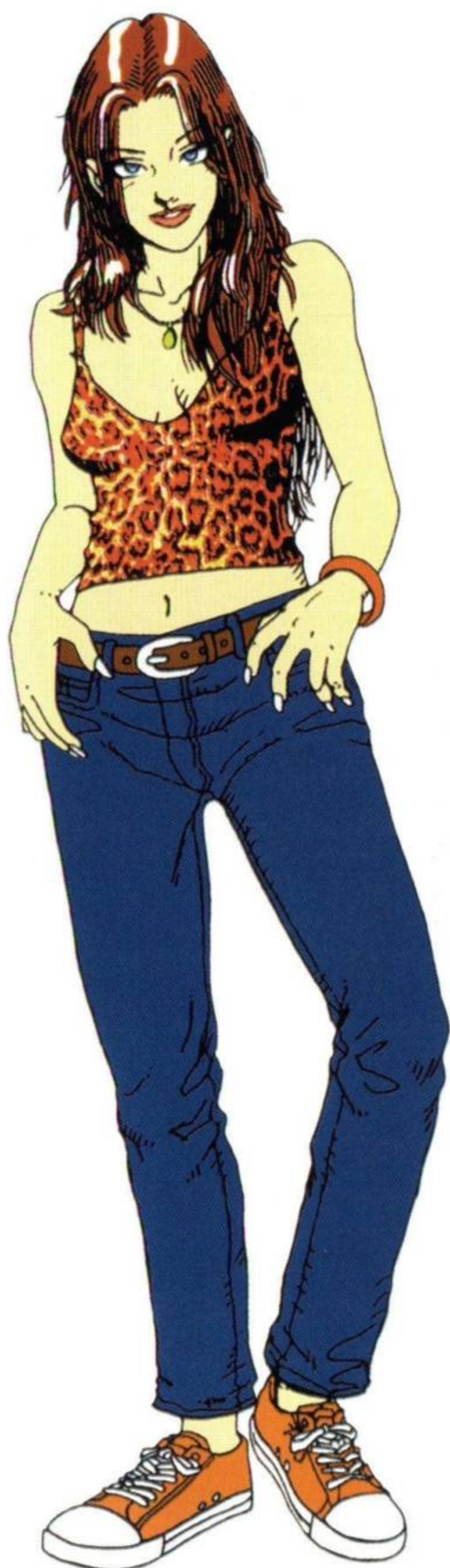
Or you could try...

Resident Evil: Code Veronica
 Capcom, due out late '99
 Potentially the best-looking game in Capcom's spine-wibbling horror film series

Carrier
 Jaleco, TBA
 Resident Evil on an aircraft carrier. It already looks stunning.



■ Cut-off jeans make game debut!

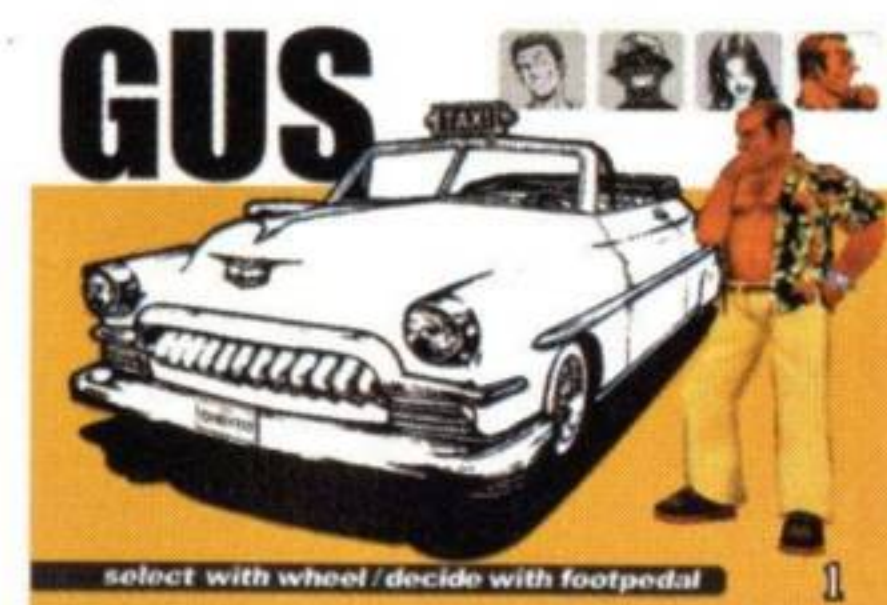
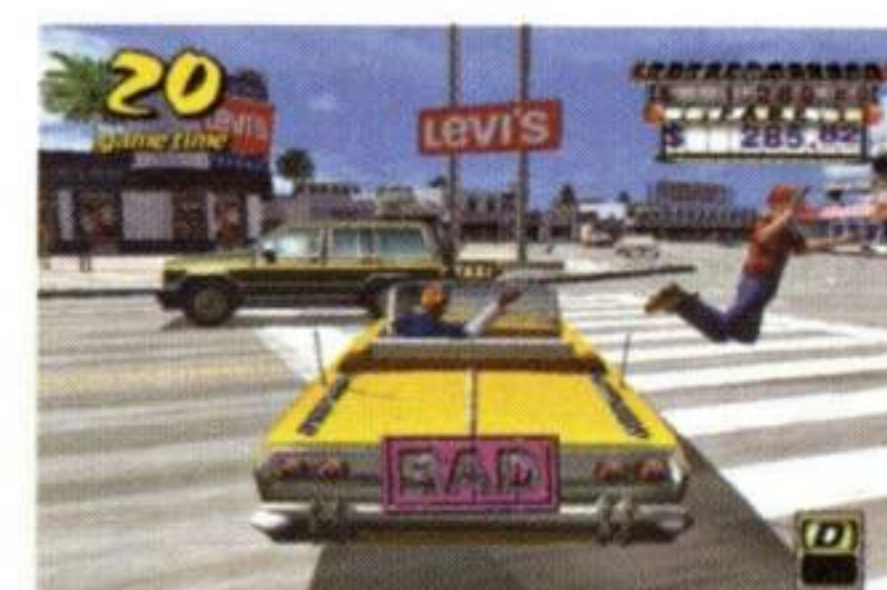


TAXI!

FARE GAME IN THE INNER CITY



■ As cab sims go, it's perfect right down to the greasy food.



■ You lookin' at me? Another charming taxi operative.

COIN-OP

Crazy Taxi

■ Publisher: **Sega** ■ Developer: **Sega AM3**
 ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **1**

"D'ya know oo I ad in the back of me cab this mornin'?" Don't just bore your fares – terrorise the hell out of them as you take to the streets with Sega's Crazy Taxi. Hang on to your Magic Tree!

We've all done it. Stood in the pouring rain, broly inverted by the wind, hand upraised in the hopes of getting a cab home. Cabbies! Love 'em or hate 'em, they're a fact of life. And now the guys at Sega have decided to turn the whole Hackney carriage concept into a game. Hmmm.

Crazy Taxi starts with the idea of racing, but then twists the genre like a Möbius strip. The aim of the game isn't to beat the track and your competitors; instead, you're looking at an even simpler premise. Jump in your cab, find a fare and take them to their destination. And don't spare the horses (or the pedestrians, or the other cars), my man.

The game draws heavily on previous Sega offering *Harley Davidson LA Riders*. As in that game, you pick one of a number of characters in *Crazy Taxi* with which to take the

wheel, and then you have to set your own course to the destination. There are no invisible rails to guide you, so you'll need to develop your Jedi-like Knowledge skills.

You can play as one of four drivers, although – whoever you opt for – the qualities of the vehicles remain largely the same. Once you have a driver, it's up to you to plough round a city modelled on San Francisco (apparently the designers wanted a "crazy" city to compliment the game's theme). The perfect course through the metropolis is made clear by the use of directional arrows, but this path is by no means obligatory. You might lose time taking another route, but what the hell – demolishing that bus queue was just too tempting, right?

You'll know you're doing well in your new profession when you're awarded extra time, cash (from your fares) and an improved driving licence. (Handy only if you want to show off to your friends. Like they'll be impressed.)

This quick cab ride around the game may sound a little flippant at first, but the fact is *Crazy Taxi* is one of the best games developed for the Naomi arcade board so far. It may be a little derivative, but it's fun and easy to play. Top this with wonderful graphics and a superb control-to-screen interface and you have an excellent game. Unfortunately *Crazy Taxi's* lack of blood 'n' guts may hamper it among the current crop of gory coin-op releases, but don't be fooled – this one's a winner. ★★★

Cam Anderson

↑ Uppers & Downers

Fare cop

■ Take to the roads, the pavements, the parks...
 ■ For sheer pedal-to-the-metal action this has got it all

Bang to rights

■ Short on depth
 ■ You can't see your fare scream in terror as the pedestrians scatter
 ■ Not being able to tell your mates who you had in the back of your cab (celebs next time please, Sega).



MACINTOSH

StarCraft

■ Publisher: **Blizzard Entertainment** ■ Developer: **Blizzard Entertainment**
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Players: **1- Internet**
 ■ Requires: **any PowerMac, 16Mb RAM, 80Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM drive**
 ■ Recommended: **32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, modem for Internet play**
 ■ Other formats: **PC** ■ Contact: **Softline on 0181 401 1234**

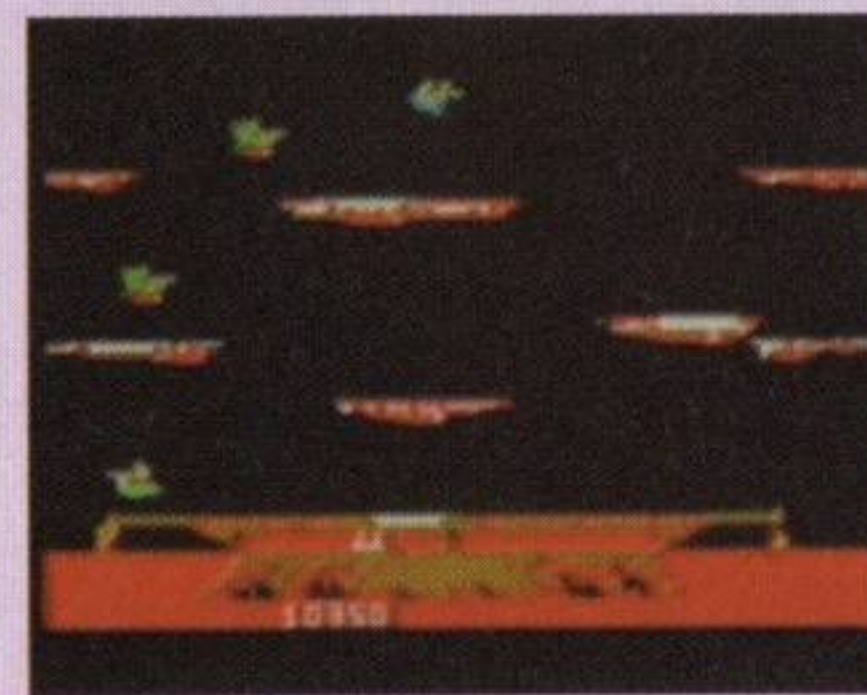
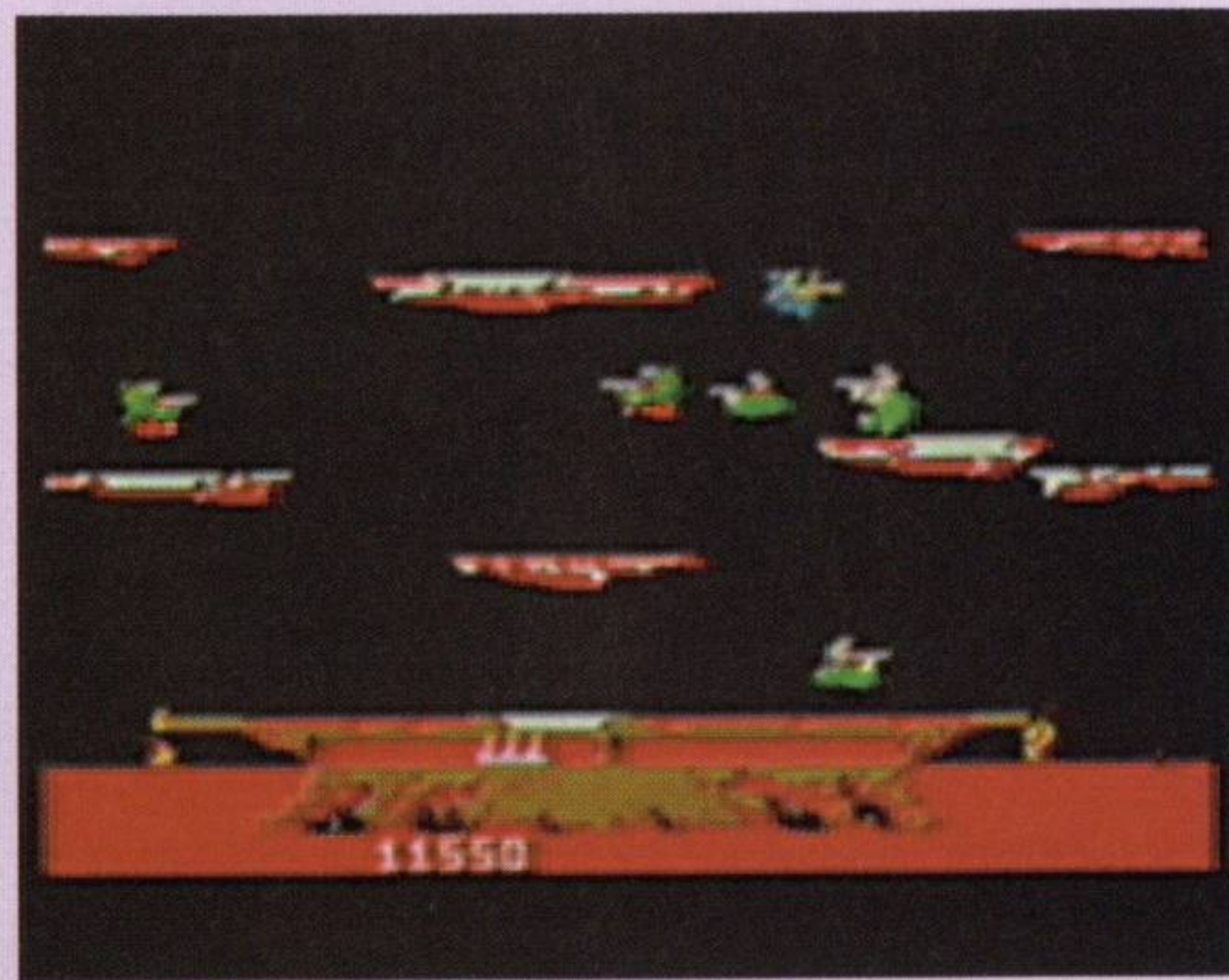
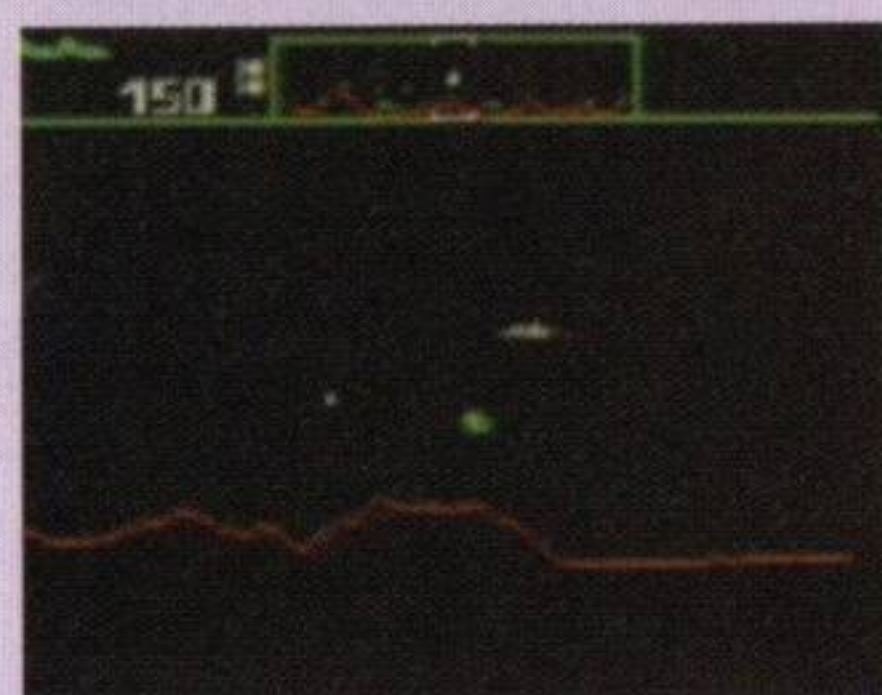
Go forth and expand the human empire, colonise worlds, build vast cities and further the species. Then blow up aliens who are trying to do the same thing.

■ *StarCraft* is basically *WarCraft* in space. Your goal is to build up your colony and armed forces faster than the enemy. Guidance is provided by several characters who pop up during the game. You're given a mission briefing with a bit of background story and a set of objectives.

You view the game from a 3D isometric perspective and an overlay window shows a map with the location of your forces. Before you can start building big guns and nuclear missiles, though, you must mine resources and construct support buildings. This enables you to develop better weapons. At the same time, you must defend your colony. The ultimate goal is to wipe your rivals off the map using a multitude of units, including infantry, tanks and space craft.

There are three campaigns to choose from: Tarren, Zerg and Protoss. You see each from the viewpoint of a different species, and the units and strategy change between them. Each scenario consists of a dozen-or-so levels that become increasingly difficult. Then there's network and Internet play. And if that isn't enough, *StarCraft* also comes with a level editor.

The graphics and sound are good, and the whole experience is addictive. The only big flaw is that when moving your units *en masse* they tend to bump into each other. The game's AI may interpret this as the unit being unable to take that route, so it sends your troops off to find another path to the location you specify. This can result in your units suddenly wandering off in completely the wrong direction. In battle this can be fatal, as the opposition takes joy in picking off your units individually, marring what could have been a classic game. ★★★★★ **Lindsay Bruce**



■ *Defender* (far left) is mayhem in miniature. Blast alien scum and save humanoids before they fall to their deaths. *Joust* is quite simply the world's only space ostrich-based jostle-'em-up and nearly as good.

ANTIQUES CODESHOW

LET THE GOOD TIMES SCROLL IN MINIATURE

GAME BOY COLOR

Arcade Hits: Defender & Joust

■ Publisher: **Midway** ■ Developer: **Digital Eclipse**
 ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **Link up available for Joust**

Two classic arcade games from the once mighty Williams shrunk down for Game Boy Color consumption. Pass the hankies, we've got something in our eye.

It be witchcraft! If you'd told early '80s gamers that the future would see whole coin-ops crammed into a device the size of a Kentucky Fried Chicken freshen-up towel (unfolded) they'd probably have started readying the ducking stool and preparing farm animal witnesses for your trial. At least in the West Country. But that's just what Midway has achieved with this classic arcade pairing.

One Game Boy cart holds two undisputed classics from the golden age of coin-ops. Both show original coding hero Eugene Jarvis at the height of his powers. *Defender* is still a fearsomely primitive side-scrolling shooter with viciously interesting enemies, the best game sound effects ever (although the GB's tiny speaker has problems delivering them note perfect) and the sort of reaction honing gameplay that makes a mockery of blokes in suits pumping a tenner into *House of the Dead 2*.

Joust, although not as legendary, is nearly as good. A fire-button-free flap-'em-up played on ostrich mounts with

↑ Uppers & Downers

Impressed girls

- Very close to the original coin-ops
- Two games per cart
- Classic arcade action

Bigger boys

- Not-as-good-as-you-recall factor
- No proper high-score tables
- The sound's not as perfect as the vision

more great sound effects, it's a work of abstract genius. Both games' uncompromising controls and giddy sense of inertia are just asking to be mastered in portable form and doing so will enable you to feel as cool as the fag-smoking youth who used to peer disconcertingly over your shoulder sniggering at your rubbishness back, ahem, "in the day".

And, unlike other recent retro activity on the GBC (*Frogger* and *Centipede*, for example), what appears on the screen after the turn-on ping is pretty much the original coin-op code right down to intro screens, scattering pixels and electronic burlings. There might not be proper initial-recording high-score screens (although the top score is saved), but you can change difficulty settings like a swarthy arcade owner with the cabinet keys.

The not-as-good-as-you-remember factor that makes similar retro releases on console and PCs frequently disappointing is partly deflected by the less graphically spectacular competition on the Game Boy and the sheer charm of being able to hold one-time arcade behemoths in the palm of your hand. While the year 2000 is unlikely to deliver the holidays on the moon and three-course meals in a single pill that science fiction used to promise us, we're happy to settle for the Game Boy Color being the ideal vehicle for miniature gaming nostalgia. Now, will someone do us *Elite*? ★★★★★

Robin Alway

Or you could try...

Frogger
Take 2 ★★
Stinky rewrite of early-'80s hop-'em-up. Never a classic in the first place.

Centipede
Take 2 ★
The Atari original isn't close enough to the coin-op to please nostalgia freaks.

WEENIE WINNERS

HERE YOU GO SONNY. JUST SLIP IT IN THERE. THAT'S RIGHT...

This month reviewer Alex Bickham steers his throbbing pocket pal to glory, battles the insect world, repels aliens, plays souped-up *Snap* and is driven to the edge of insanity by a *D&D* lookee-likey. The poor chap could use a quiet sit down.



Top Gear Pocket

■ Publisher: **Kemko** ■ Developer: **Kemko** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£30** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **B&W compatible**

Feel the force as the Game Boy rumbles on.

■ Racing games on the Game Boy have never really been a workable concept; our pocket pal's Z80 processor (the equivalent of a ZX Spectrum) just isn't capable of handling the pokey maths that modern driving games require. A knock-on effect of playing modern racing games on a speedy system is higher expectations on the part of the gamer; we like to see elements such as drift and chassis-roll in our races.

And there's the bite: the Game Boy just can't do those things. Even *V-Rally Color* – the best racing game ever to grace the platform – wasn't much cop.

Top Gear Pocket suffers from the same failings. You accelerate, brake, turn corners and skid, and that's really all there is to it. Of course, you can't judge Game Boy and, say, PlayStation games by the same standards, but you would expect similar amounts of oomph-per-dollar. In *Top Gear Pocket* you can choose between two cars and three tracks, with plenty more tracks and cars to uncover as you complete races. So you can go places, but the game is still simplistic.

The one feature that makes *Top Gear Pocket* stand out, though, is that it's the first Game Boy cartridge to sport a diddy Rumble Pak, which is deceptively powerful and requires an extra AAA battery. The cartridge is smaller than an N64 Rumble Pak and puts out considerable force. However nice it feels in your hands, though, the game remains flawed. ★★★



Maya The Bee And Her Friends

■ Publisher: **Acclaim Interactive** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Extras: **B&W compatible**

Float like a butterfly.

■ There's something you ought to know about *Maya the Bee And Her Friends*: it's a platform game. And it's not like there's, y'know, much choice in the way of platform games for the Game Boy.

But please, don't dismiss it on these grounds. Something else you ought to know is that *Maya* is not like any other platformer you'll have played. Instead of a very standard character jumping around in a scrolling environment, every level of the game is confined to a single smallish area. Also, you have three characters to play with on any given level: Maya, or her friends Flip and Willy. Each has a special skill. Maya, for example, is the only one that can pull levers, and Willy has a rubbery noggin, which the other characters can use to trampoline upwards to reach higher platforms. You switch control between the three and have to get them to work as a team in order to progress.

The aim of the game is to work through the levels and rescue Maya's other friends from the clutches of evil spiders. Each level contains a hapless bug friend bound in silky strands of web, and Maya is the only one qualified to hoik the levers that snap the webs. The levels are designed as a series of fiendish logic puzzles, so in effect it's as much a puzzler as a platformer, and an accomplished blend this makes too. A classic? May-bee. Ha. ★★★



Dropzone

■ Publisher: **Acclaim Developments** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Extras: **B&W compatible**

Kill aliens. Save people.

■ Right, let's get back to basics. Remember *Defender*? Well, you may also recall *Dropzone*, then; same concept, but with a little fella in a space-suit rather than a fancy ship. The game itself is a whopping 14 years old, making it a blast from the past in every sense.

Just like *Defender*, the object is to save people and kill the aliens. The levels are even presented as "waves" – an archaic, yet cosily nostalgic term. It's a side-scrolling shoot-'em-up where little humans (represented by blue rolling balls with flashy white bits, naturally) jiggle around on the floor with nothing between them and alien abduction but you and your boom-stick.

When you've picked up a person, you need to take him to the Dropzone, from where he'll scurry into a wee underground chamber. If you shilly-shally around and leave the little bloke exposed for too long, the aliens will whisk him away to do unspeakable things to. The only way to hold yourself time to do your job is to blast away with your lasers and smart-bombs.

The game runs fast and smooth, is true to the original and you soon get increasingly bizarre and unexpected aliens to fight. It's the perfect Tube-travel game: you can pick it up, have a blast and put it down again. It also slots neatly into the Game Boy's rather understocked shoot-'em-up larder. Just don't expect any depth. ★★★



Shadowgate Classic

■ Publisher: **Kemko** ■ Developer: **Kemko** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Extras: **B&W compatible**

Die, die, die, my darling.

■ Continuing the trend for games of yesteryear is *Shadowgate Classic*, which is back, with a lick of paint, for release on the Game Boy Color.

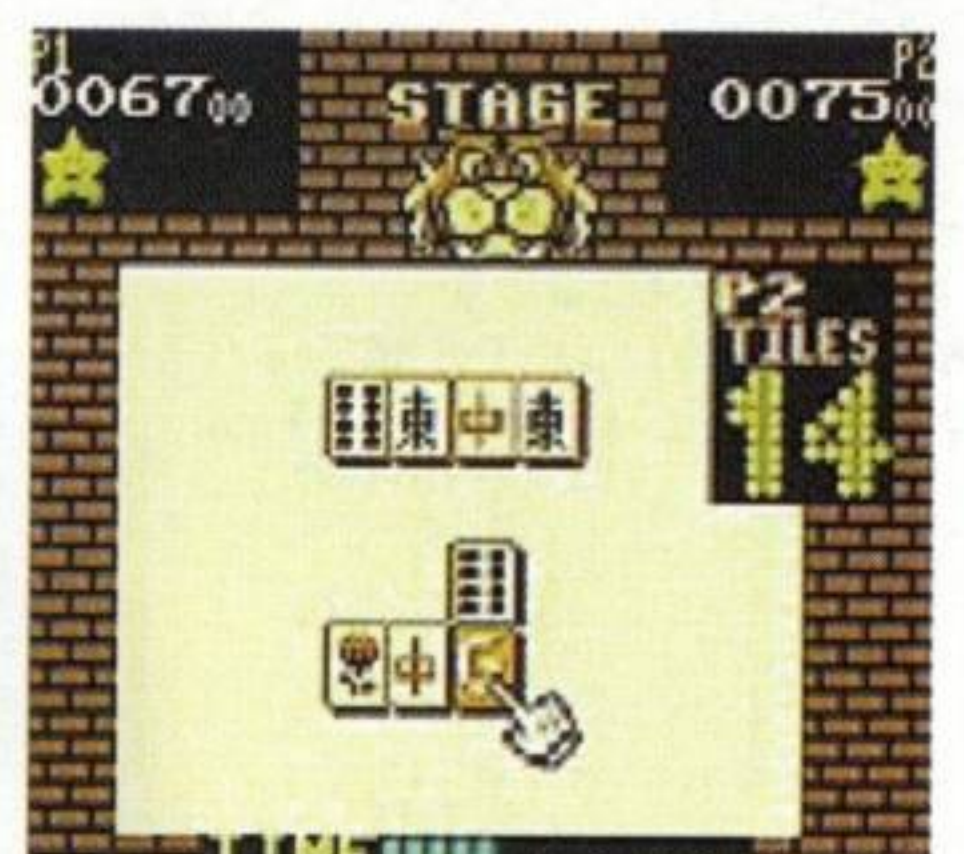
It's an RPG, but spurns the standard *Zelda*-style top-down view and places the action in the first-person. The format will be strikingly familiar to you if you have had even the briefest dalliance with the whole *D&D* phenomenon; it's a carbon-copy of *Eye Of The Beholder*.

There are howling banshees, puddles of corrosive slime and all manner of other Tolkien-derivative boggarts to contend with. You're required to find keys, open doors, interact with scenery and generally get your knightly ass through a maze-like series of trap-laden rooms and ultimately do battle with a pointy-hatted wizard.

All sounds rather good then, yes? It's even got a battery back-up so you can save your progress. But...

Any game that expects you to die three times on any given screen before you figure out the puzzle should be shot at birth. Situation: a room full of coffins. Open one, out pops a ghoul and eats your head. Game Over. Open coffin number two... it triggers a trap-door and you plummet to your doom. Game Over. Aargh!

That said, *Shadowgate Classic* looks good and has plenty of intriguing puzzles. But just try to get 20 minutes into it without wondering where your receipt is. Go on. ★



Shanghai Pocket

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Sunsoft** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Extras: **B&W compatible**

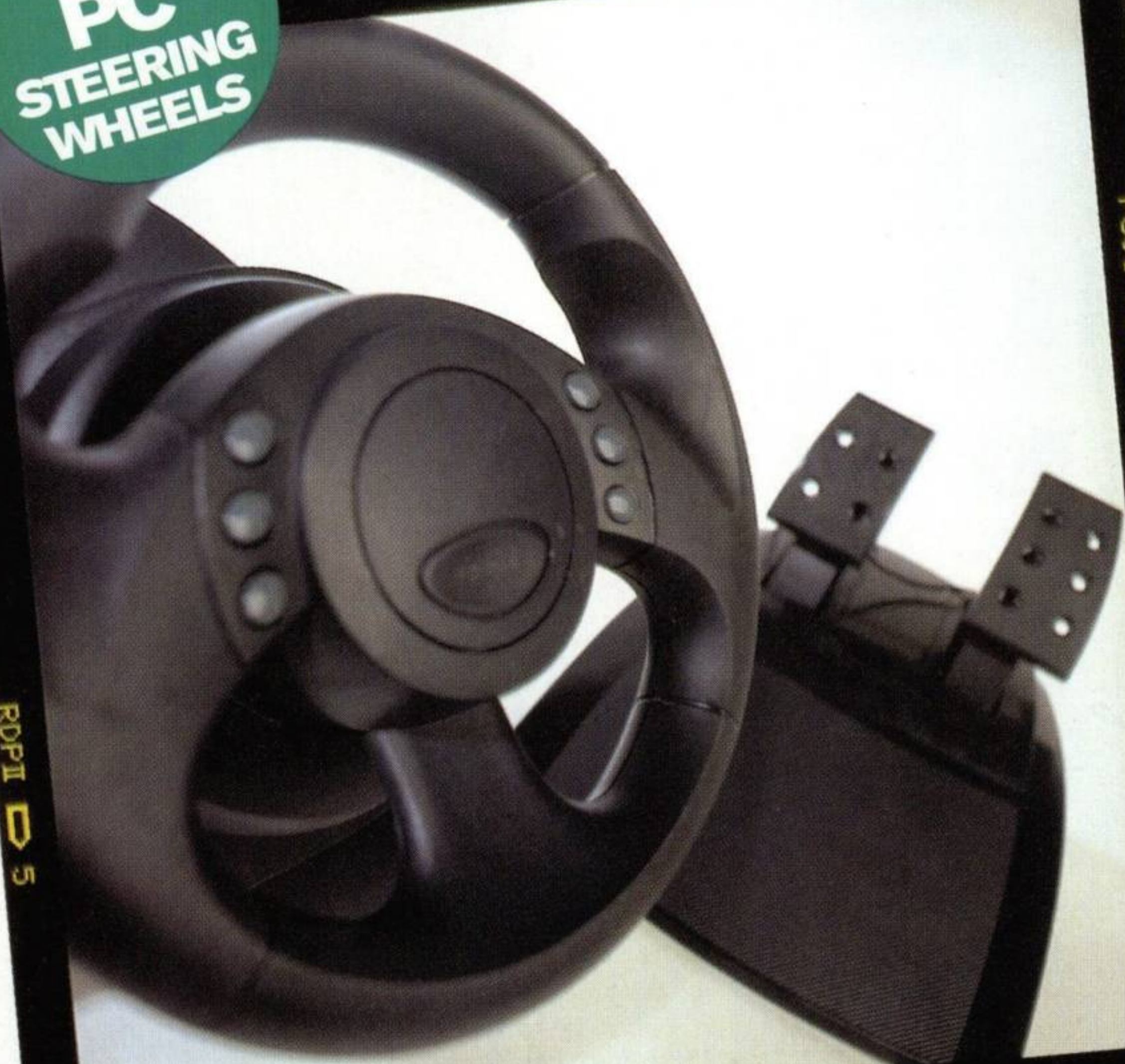
Souped-up *Snap* shenanigans set to make opticians a mint.

■ Game Boy Color is one of the wonders of modern technology. Sure, it's a very basic machine, but it's portable, there are some great games for it and it doesn't drain batteries like your Walkman does. In fact, our only real criticism is the size of the screen. And that's the first thing you notice about *Shanghai Pocket*; the playing screen presents too much for such a teeny area. It's the kind of game that opticians will make a killing from.

Shanghai Pocket takes the form of a table upon which a large number of tiles are stacked. The premise is utterly simple: think *Snap* and you're there. You have to click on two identical tiles with the cursor, and they disappear. It starts getting complex when you get large stacks of tiles and the ones on top start to hide those below. Also, you can only select tiles that have up to two adjacent sides that aren't touching other tiles. The idea is to clear the table.

Each tile has a different design, such as a symbol or a Japanese character, but things start to get hairy when you realise the variety of designs on offer. Compound this with the number of tiles on any given table, and you've got brain-grating confusion. The sad thing is that *Shanghai Pocket* a great little game that suffers because of the size of the screen. Oh, and it's impossible to play on the train: one jolt and you're suddenly looking at the wrong place. ★★★

WHICH
ONE'S BEST?
PC
STEERING
WHEELS



★ OUR CHOICE

Sidewinder Force Feedback Steering Wheel

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£160** ■ Available from: **Microsoft on 0345 002000**

■ Dressed in regulation charcoal, this Force Feedback wheel is all you would expect from a Microsoft peripheral – virtually flawless.

The wheel can be a bit of a dog to clamp to your desk at a comfortable angle, but this is its only fault. Once you start up the Sidewinder, you'll fall in love with the purr of the force feedback. It's just like a brand new Porsche in that sense – as soon as you twist the ignition, you instinctively warm to the familiar burr of fine engineering – if not any other. This, coupled with the classic design, is proof positive that this piece of kit means business. Sure, it may make a lot of noise, and some of you may rail against the ever-so-slightly-large turning circle, but this is *the* wheel, both to record the fastest times and to look like a demon race player. Stylish, sturdy and reliable. ★★★★★



Fanatec Monte Carlo

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£ 50** ■ Available from: **CentreSoft**

■ The label on the box tells you this is "advanced German gameware" you're messing with and so, in a stereotypical kind of way, you'd expect something sturdy and efficient. Well, as your parents told you, stereotypes exist for a reason. The casing of the Fanatec Monte Carlo is as robust as you'll find, and is more than a match for a hefty hammering.

The steering is crisp and confident on sharp corners and handling the wheel is a supreme pleasure. The tacky – that's slightly sticky, people – rubber exterior may reek, but this doesn't half ensure that both hands keep their grip on the wheel.

Unfortunately, this otherwise excellent wheel is let down by poor button response. As it doesn't come with pedals, you have to rely on the rudders for smooth acceleration and they're just too flimsy. In the final analysis, the Monte Carlo lives up to its name, as getting the best from your driving games with it is something of a gamble. ★★★

V4 Force Feedback Racing Wheel

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£100** ■ Available from: **Interact on 0161 7025000**

■ It may take you a while to get to grips with this bad-boy. At first glance the wheel seems to stand at an uncomfortable perpendicular angle from the base, but further investigation reveals that this handy setting enables you to clamp it to any height surface and still be able to drive like Michael Schumacher with a hellhound on his tail. The Force Feedback is pretty effective, too – enough to make you feel part of the race, without hurrying the onset of gameplayer's arthritis in your right arm.

At times, the V4 feels a touch lightweight and you may still have to grapple some to mount it to your desk, but it's still a nifty little number and comes at a very competitive price. ★★★



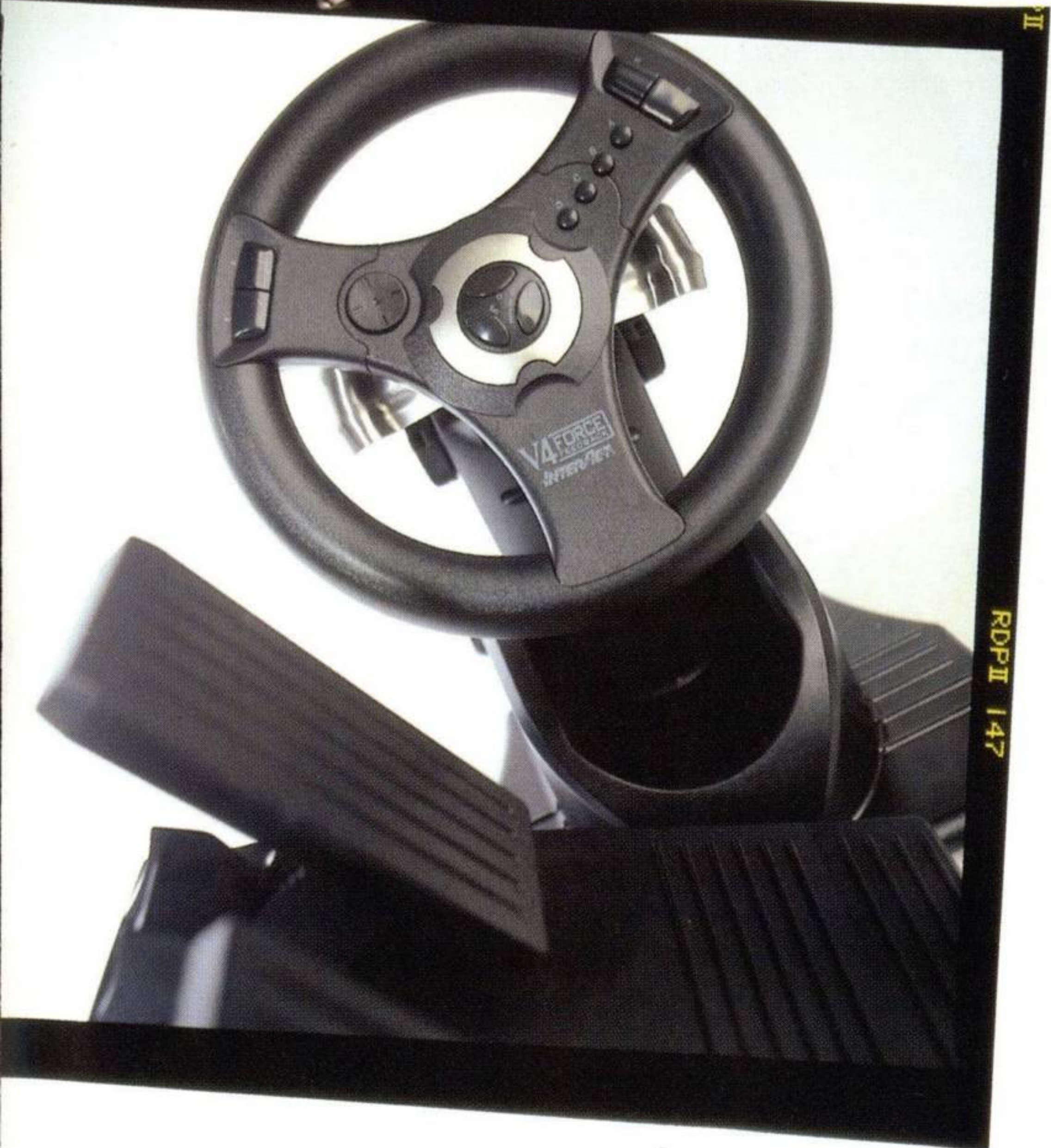
Wingman Formula Force

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£140** ■ Available from: **Logitech on 0181 3086582**

■ If you've ever wanted to impress your friends (and, of course, the ladies) with that boyracer vibe without having to kit your Ford Fiesta out with extra-bright fog lights, this could be right up your alley. Complete with a taste-free, loud red finish, the Wingman Formula Force does the job pretty well, although it looks somewhat incongruous should you play a serious Formula One sim.

Clamping it wherever you want is not a problem – you'll have to spend a while with the screwdriver to convince it to relax its hold on your desk, but this sturdiness is a mark of quality. The Force Feedback is also pretty impressive. You also get a significant amount of resistance every time you make a turn, and the wheel neither grinds nor rattles. Here's hoping they bring out a sister wheel with a leopardskin finish.

Pukka. ★★★



NASCAR Super Sport

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£69.99** ■ Available from: **Thrustmaster on 01276 609955**

■ NASCAR conjures up wonderful images of beautiful cars getting torn apart at high speeds, and, looks-wise, this wheel does its damndest to convey some of the same hopes and dreams. It's not going to capture your imagination in a big way, but it is good looking, robust and worth a try. It has a supposedly straightforward damping system, but you need the hand-eye co-ordination of a NASCAR champion to fix the bugger to your desk. Thankfully, there's a handy quick-release system when it's game over.

The wheel is a pleasure to handle and the pedals are realistic; the accelerator and brake are fixed for different tensions, which makes a refreshing change from the vague plastic flaps which usually accompany cheaper wheels. It's getting harder to compete in a market where Force Feedback is becoming standard, but this is one of the smallest wheels around and one of the most pleasurable to use. ★★★

ALSO ON SALE THIS MONTH



■ Play import games? Yes please!

Password Card

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Available from: **Gamars on 07050 076155** ★★★★★

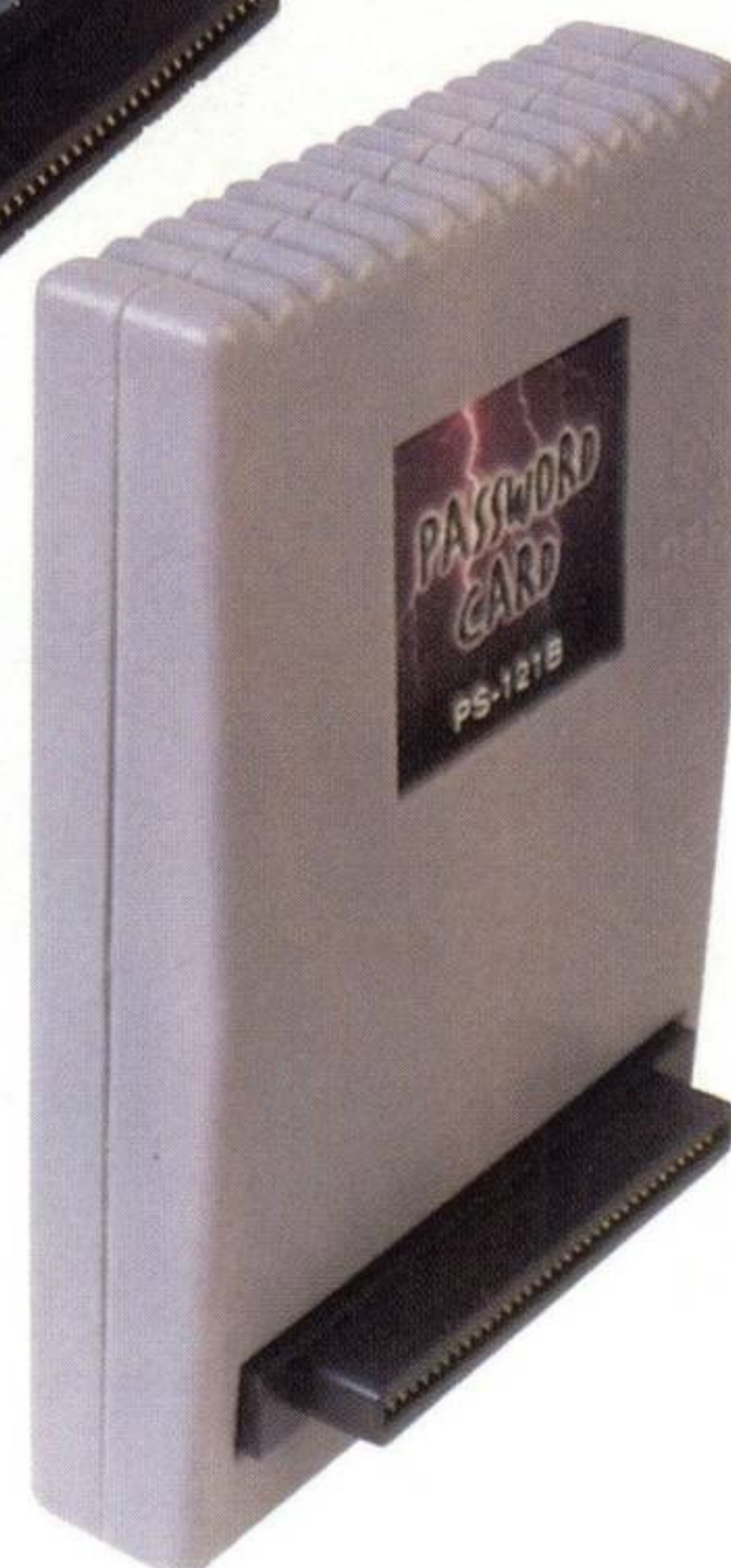
Game Enhancer

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Available from: **Game Gizmo on 01322 447217**

■ You might start your gaming career with *FIFA 99* and *Tomb Raider III*, but, if the power of PlayStation has any bearing on you, you'll soon be itching to play the latest games as soon as they appear in Japan rather than waiting for a UK release (that's if they appear over here at all). Japan had *Metal Gear Solid* and *Tekken 3* almost six months before us pasty Brits, but the craftier importers managed to get hold the games here early. Hardcore gamers will already know about "chipping", whereby you mess with the inside of your PlayStation and enable it to play Japanese, American or – whisper it – pirated gold discs. Until recently, it was as simple as getting in touch with Cheeky Fred's Console Emporium or one of the many independent games retailers you see advertised in the back of magazines. Now, Sony have put a stop to the fun – perhaps understandably – in an effort to stem the flow of games pirating. The newest batch of PlayStations are defiantly unchippable.

However, no matter what Sony tries to do, there will always be entrepreneurial companies out there ready, able and willing – for a small fee – to provide you with a product offering access to a whole new dimension of gaming fun. Both the Game Enhancer and the Password Card answer this description. They expand on the idea of a cheat card to bring you a cartridge which enables you to play imported or copied discs without tampering with the machine's insides, an action which immediately invalidates your Sony warranty. Okay, so you have to perform a disc swap and fool the PlayStation into thinking that its lid is closed when it's not, but to this end both products come with a handy spring which does the job well enough. Ironically, this works with all discs on all machines except with those which have already been (inexpertly) chipped.

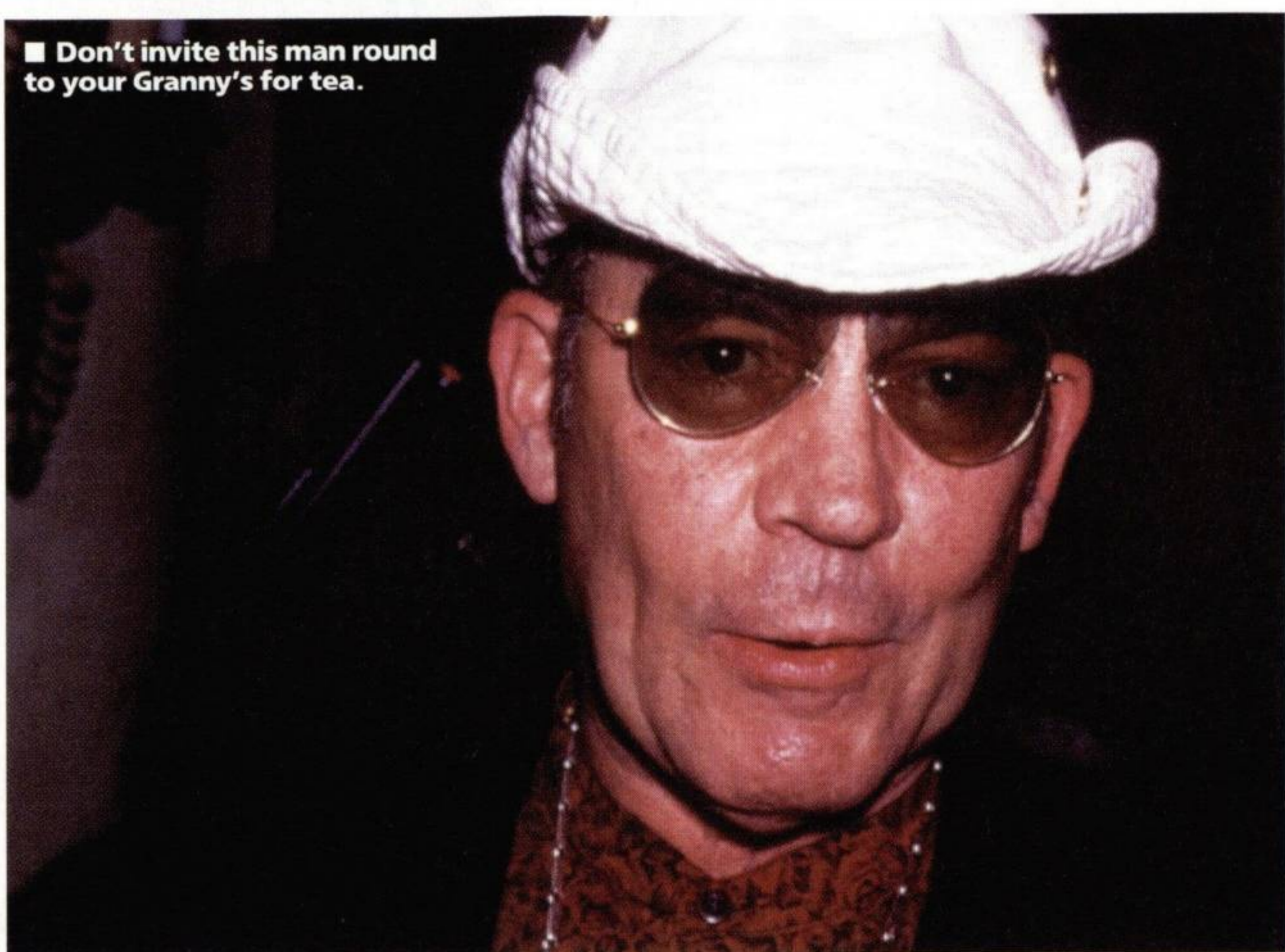
The two cartridges function as conventional cheat cards and come with a range of inbuilt cheats, plus the ability for you to download your own. Annoyingly, the Game Enhancer is stuffed full of Japanese game cheats as the makers haven't bothered to alter the product for the UK, but this doesn't affect the product's main function – to give you full PlayStation gaming satisfaction. ★★★



PHOTOGRAPHY: CATHERINE LANE-SIMMS

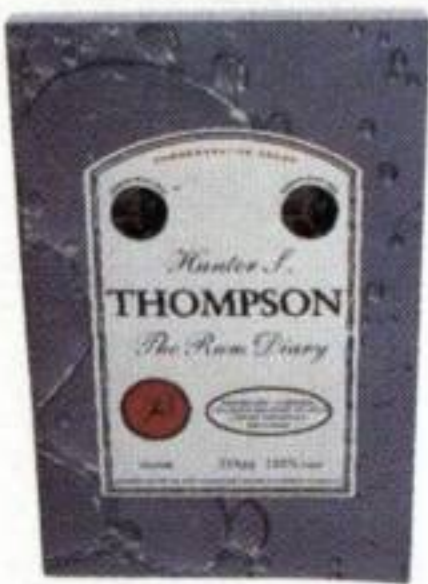
Book of the month

■ Don't invite this man round to your Granny's for tea.



HEAVY THINKING

BOOZE, BIRDS AND BOASTS



The Rum Diary

■ Author: **Hunter S Thompson**
 ■ Publisher: **Bloomsbury**
 ■ Price: **£6.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7475-4294-5**

Should you expect the drugs to begin to take hold around Barstow, on the edge of the desert, you may end up being disappointed with Hunter S Thompson's long-awaited novel, *The Rum Diary*. This is not one long acid-driven frolicsome narrative of 24:7 substance abuse, but rather an attempt by the 22-year-old Thompson to write the "Great American Novel". Clearly a case of lashings of Bacardi and not nearly enough coke.

Long-awaited? You'd better believe it. From as early as 1961 the relatively narcotic-free Gonzo-to-be was proclaiming his work-in-progress as "a high water mark for 20th century literature". The bullish self-confidence and Nevada Desert-sized ego were obviously already in place; the sociopathic excess of the *Fear and Loathing...* years lay ahead.

Such outlandish claims for *The Rum Diary* never came to fruition and the manuscript knocked about the desks of unimpressed publishers – and then duly disappeared. Only now, after a cosmetic spot of reworking, has the novel surfaced

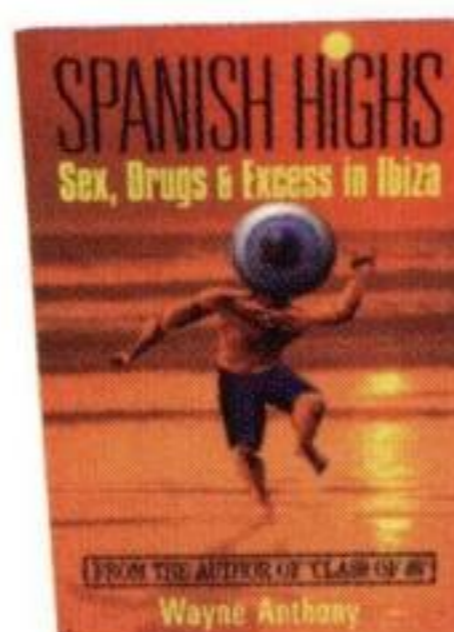
from the armed fortress of the Hunter bunker to see the cold light of day.

Despite obvious portents to the contrary, *The Rum Diary* reveals itself as a compelling read, and not simply a curio for the coffee tables of the Hunter collector. Particularly intriguing is the finely-executed portrayal of the tale's protagonist, Paul Kemp – a man after Hunter's own heart. Like many first novels, there is a large slice of autobiographical detail and the tale of a dissolute newspaperman decamping to Puerto Rico in the late '50s mirrors Thompson's early experiences, although (as far as we know) the ensuing tangle of love, jealousy and politics do not. What's more, rather than the maniac thrill and frazzled wordsmithery of Thompson's journalism, *The Rum Diary* treats readers to more considered and relaxed prose, which builds steadily to an affecting, visceral climax.

While you may find it hard to shake the feeling of Hemingway Lite, given the sharply observed characters, excellent plot and a location that has you scanning Ceefax for cheap flights to Paradise, who gives a monkey's? ★★★★★ **Gary Tipp**

Spanish Highs

■ Author: **Wayne Anthony**
 ■ Publisher: **Virgin**
 ■ Price: **£6.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7535-0302-6**



■ Sun, sea, sex, drink, drugs and banging tunes – Ibiza sounds quite appealing until you realise that everyone who goes there is

probably as unbearable as the author of *Spanish Highs*. Wayne Anthony is the man who brought us the appalling "Havin' It" house compilations and, while his appetite for partying is impressive, his writing is terrible.

Although this is a book about the Ibiza phenomenon, Anthony warns us in the prologue not to expect any kind of cultural analysis, which is a bit like a waiter bringing you a meal, then telling you it's going to taste like shit.

The dull and disordered anecdotes that follow prove what a mad! crazy! geezer! our Wayner is, but they really are excruciating to read and will put you off Ibiza for life. Spending the summer in a dark, sweaty office doesn't seem like such a bad idea after all. ★ **Sam Richards**

East Bay Grease

■ Author: **Eric Miles Williamson**
 ■ Publisher: **Bloomsbury**
 ■ Price: **£9.99**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7475-4363-1**



■ The book begins with drink, dope, a gang of Hell's Angels and a beating. At this stage the protagonist, T-Bird Murphy, is

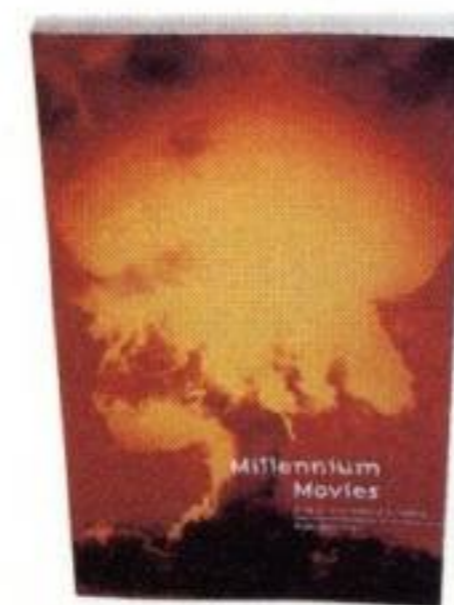
only ten years old, but he's already seen enough of life in San Francisco's Oakland ghetto to know that unless he gets a plan, he'll end up like the wasted bums who come and go in his Mum's house. When she disappears, he hooks up with Dad – fresh out of jail and resident in a trailer at the local gas station. T-Bird's plans flip-flop between thieving, bodybuilding, studying economics at college, becoming an entrepreneur and playing lead trumpet in the best school jazz band in the state. He's a little indecisive, you see.

Most of all, T-Bird's plan is to get revenge; revenge on the black and Hispanic kids who beat him up after class for being white, on his neglectful, violent parents and finally on the man he discovers to be his real father.

★★★★ **Sam Richards**

Millennium Movies

■ Author: **Kim Newman**
 ■ Publisher: **Titan**
 ■ Price: **£12.99**
 ■ ISBN: **1-84023-060-6**



■ Another month, another book about the impending millennium. To be fair, Kim Newman's tome is much more than a timely

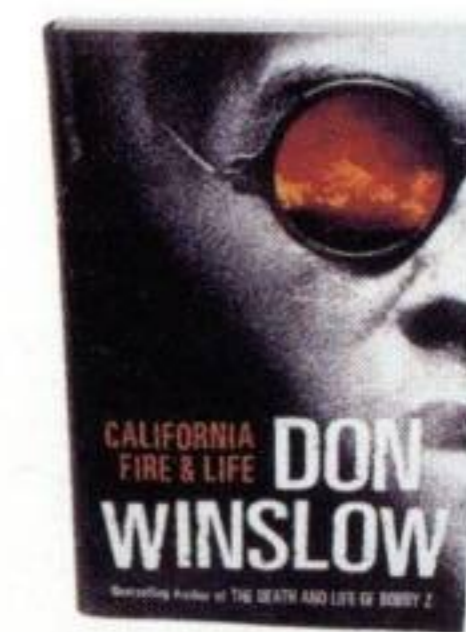
cash-in as his subject – cinematic representations of the Apocalypse – is a hardy perennial. From the most primitive alien invasion to politically-engendered biochemical destruction, Earth has taken all kinds of beatings on the silver screen (none of them, as yet, prophetic) and they're all covered here.

Newman is a horror writer, so it's no surprise that sci-fi, aliens and zombie takeovers feature heavily. The most interesting chapters, however, are on the movies that have deconstructed genuine public fears of Armageddon, including the powerful post-nuclear satires *Dr Strangelove* and *The War Game*. At times the book has an overly scholarly tone, and Newman occasionally descends into simple list-building, but, as is the mark of a fine film book, he makes a trip to the video shop seem essential.

★★★ **Sam Richards**

California Fire & Life

■ Author: **Don Winslow**
 ■ Publisher: **Century**
 ■ Price: **£10**
 ■ ISBN: **0-7126-8212-0**



■ The mighty novel and its less illustrious (but more profitable) cousin are inextricably linked. Such is

the power of Tinseltown that every work of cover-bound fiction is a potential movie.

While some books are destined to rake in Oscars, others might as well have been stamped "straight to video" at birth. *California Fire & Life*, hot off the prolific word processor of former movie theatre manager-turned-private investigator-turned-author Don Winslow, firmly falls into the latter category. The telegraphed plot and routine characterisation scream "cheap adaptation" from the off, but, as it happens, this isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Set in the pyromaniac-inhabited hills of the Sunshine state, *California Fire & Life* tells the story of anti-authoritarian Jack Wade, a fire investigator. The narrative follows one of his more grisly cases. It's a book which is funny and packed with action.

★★★★ **Gary Tipp**

Ozomatli

Ozomatli
 ■ Label: **Almo Sounds**



Admit it. In the back of your mind you always knew there was room in your record collection for a Latin hip-hop album, it was just that nobody had created a convincing hybrid until now.

Ozomatli boast a Scot and a Japanese guy in their (massed) ranks, as well as a bunch of Hispanic dudes and Cut Chemist and Chali 2na from old-skool revivalist rappers Jurassic 5, so this is a cross-cultural musical vision taken to its most advanced form. You'll also find Jamaican rhythms and touches of sitar infiltrating the grooves of *Ozomatli*, but the end result is never disorientating. What sounds at the outset like a bearded liberal world music experiment gone haywire actually makes for some exciting music.

The tunes ooze carnival dynamics and Ozomatli are undoubtedly a fearsome live spectacle. The hip-hop-heavy singles hide some pretty hardcore Cuban stuff, which may prove more difficult to stomach. ★★★

Pavement

Terror Twilight
 ■ Label: **Domino**



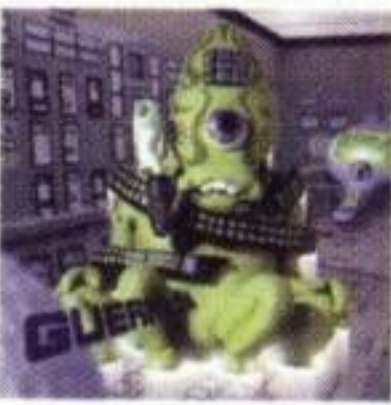
It's fifth-album time for Pavement, who have almost unwittingly become the most enduring alternative rock phenomenon of the decade. Their

ingenious method, as exemplified on *Terror Twilight*, has always been to cultivate a quiet enigma rather than force any contrived rock persona. That, and write a stack of superb songs. *Spit On A Stranger* is their best yet – a punch-the-air love song, insomuch as a lyric that advocates gobbing on strangers can be a love song.

Terror Twilight gets down and dirty with the psychedelic blues, but always emerges with a friendly, folksy grin on its face. Then there's *Carrot Rope* tagged on to the end like a mad uncle, a song that probably makes Pavement the only American group ever to mention wicket keepers and invite little boys to see what's in their pockets within the course of one song. Irresistible. ★★★★★

Super Furry Animals

Guerilla
 ■ Label: **Creation**



Super Furry Animals are easily the best band in Britain today, so it's disappointing to find their third, potentially world-beating album blighted by ill-advised outbreaks of ropery drum 'n' bass and lumpen glam rock. Gripes aside, *Guerilla* is touched by genius and a positive exuberance that manifests itself in the hyperactive harmonies of "Turning Tide" and "Chewing Gum", not to mention the brass band calypso soul of "Northern Lites" (perfect for barbecues).

Obsessions on *Guerilla* appear to be mobile phones, satellite earth

stations and the power of grass roots political protest. Super Furry Animals are an intense group, keen on upsetting logic and tradition, which is what makes them so attractive. It also means, frustratingly, that one of the album's best tracks is "hidden" (to be found by rewinding the CD back from track one). *Guerilla* is the sound of confusion, but you'll like it. ★★★★★

Various Artists

My Left Pussyfoot
 ■ Label: **Pussyfoot**



Set up a label for your mates to indulge their passion for creating leftfield electronica and you're going to end up peddling startling innovation and tedious trip-hop shite in roughly equal measures. So runs the plight of Howie B, vibemaster for U2 and Sly & Robbie, and the owner of Pussyfoot Records, of which this album is the latest selection of their output.

The man himself shows the way, "Five Days" being – as the best of his compositions are – the sound of a glorious symphony, heard through the haze of a thermonuclear hangover, accompanied by a dream about falling in love with an alien. Deep Cops' "Ol Diablo" is even more spectacular, while Dip's "Glands" manages to weld deep bass to an operatic vocal.

The rest of the album, though, is filled with instrumentals that range from hummably pleasant to offensively bland. ★★★

Album of the month

BEAT SURRENDER
 THE BROTHERS WORK IT OUT. AGAIN.



■ The Chemical Brothers: Lost in the woods? No way.

Chemical Brothers

Surrender
 ■ Label: **Virgin**

Big beat is dead and Norman Cook is wearing its corpse for a jacket. Thankfully, the Chemical Brothers have moved on and the result is an album which launches cruise missiles at your head and your heart, leaving your feet for later. It's not a dance record, although you will find yourself involuntarily creaking and jerking to its hefty rhythms – *Surrender* is a journey into the music of sound.

Cheeky single "Hey Boy Hey Girl" is a fine entry point, combining the hip-hop samples of old with shiny new electro beats. It's effortlessly beguiling and undeniably "pop!", while managing to wonderfully reflect the multiple directions the duo feel confident to tackle. Astonishingly, the Chemicals run the gamut from serious robot funk to astral calm (courtesy of guest vocalist Hope Sandoval), and from brazen experimentation to radio-friendly melody without ever dropping a beat. This is definitely an album, a whole, an entirety, requiring one intense listen rather than a few overheard snatches in a sweaty club.

If you've caught the whiff of Basement Jaxx's potent Sarf London brew recently, you'll love *Surrender*. If you've been swooning to the glorious crescendos of Mercury Rev, *Surrender* will slay you. If Oasis are boring you, "Let Forever Be" shows Noel what he ought to be doing full time. Let *Surrender* take you over. ★★★★★

Sam Richards

PHOTO: KEVIN WESTENBERG

Millennium Jukebox

The tunes on heavy rotation in the Arcade offices this month...

Isaac Hayes
Summer In The City
 ■ Hot damn, indeed. At last, something decent brought in by Mr. West.

PC Format
Interference From Next Door
 ■ Our neighbours torture us with Rolf Harris.

Precious
Say It Again
 ■ And don't deny that this is the greatest Eurovision song since Gina G.

Pavement
Carrot Rope
 ■ Wanna see my carrot rope, baby? Our favourite chat up line, anyway.

Various Artists
Female Of The Species
 ■ The oddest electronic burps ever committed to record, and all by ladies.

The Waterboys
The Raggle Taggle Gypsy
 ■ A disastrous, fiddly folk oversight. Ugh.

Dip
Glands
 ■ Icelandic beat scientists get operatic on our ass.

Paul Simon
Hearts and Bones
 ■ Now, don't deny your easy-listening fetish.

The Flaming Lips
The Soft Bulletin
 ■ Insane Yanks with hearts of gold and throats of honey.

Comic of the month

STRONG STUFF

Tom Strong

■ Writer: **Alan Moore**
 ■ Artists: **Chris Sprouse and Alan Gordon**
 ■ Publisher: **America's Best Comics**

The second book from Alan Moore is very different from the gothic *League of Unusual Gentlemen* (reviewed in *Arcade 7*), which featured classic horror characters ganging up to form a proto-superhero team.

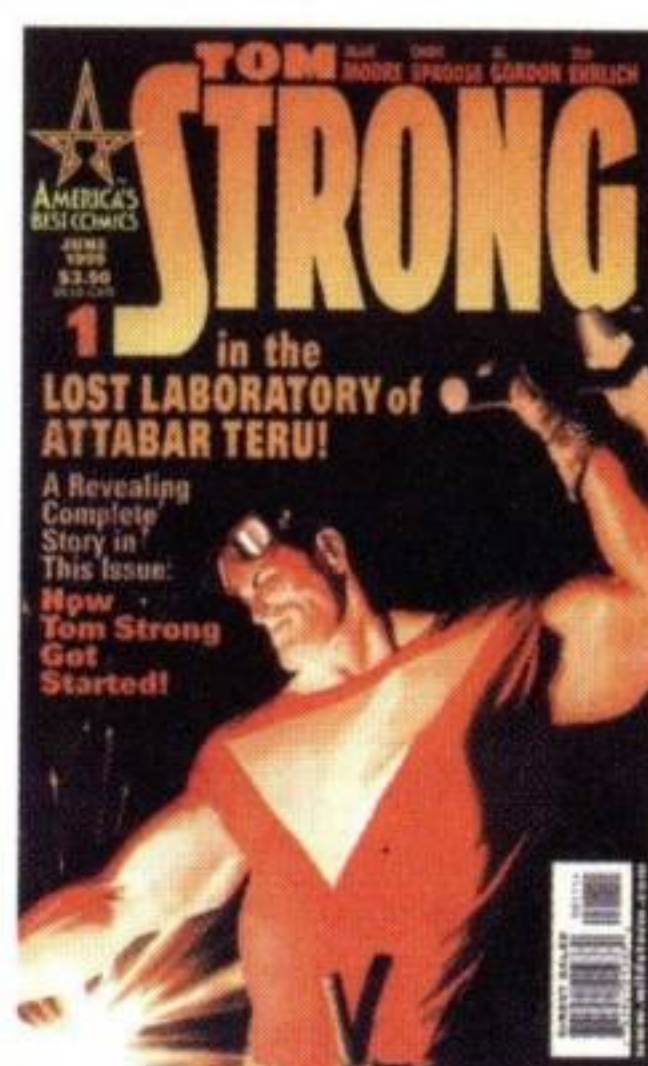
Tom Strong is a much sunnier affair – the story of a Western child born in 1899 and brought up on a remote jungle island by his scientist parents who, by raising him on a diet of mysterious plants while keeping him in a chamber pressurised to five Gs, turn him into a mental and physical superman. There



are obvious echoes of Tarzan, Doc Savage, The Phantom and other early pulp heroes here, but these have been amalgamated into a brand new "classic" character.

What strikes you first is the sheer weight of ideas crammed into the opening 30 pages. You learn about Tom's

origins, get to look around his '30s skyscraper dream of a modern US home and are introduced to the "Tom Strong family", which includes a steam-powered robot and a talking ape. There's even room for a rogues gallery, headed by the Moriarty-like supervillain, Paul Saveen. Not

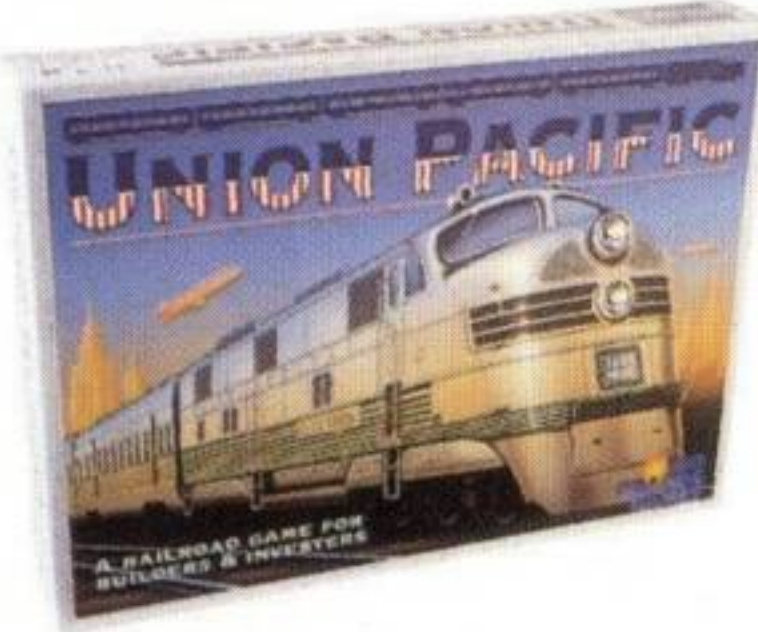
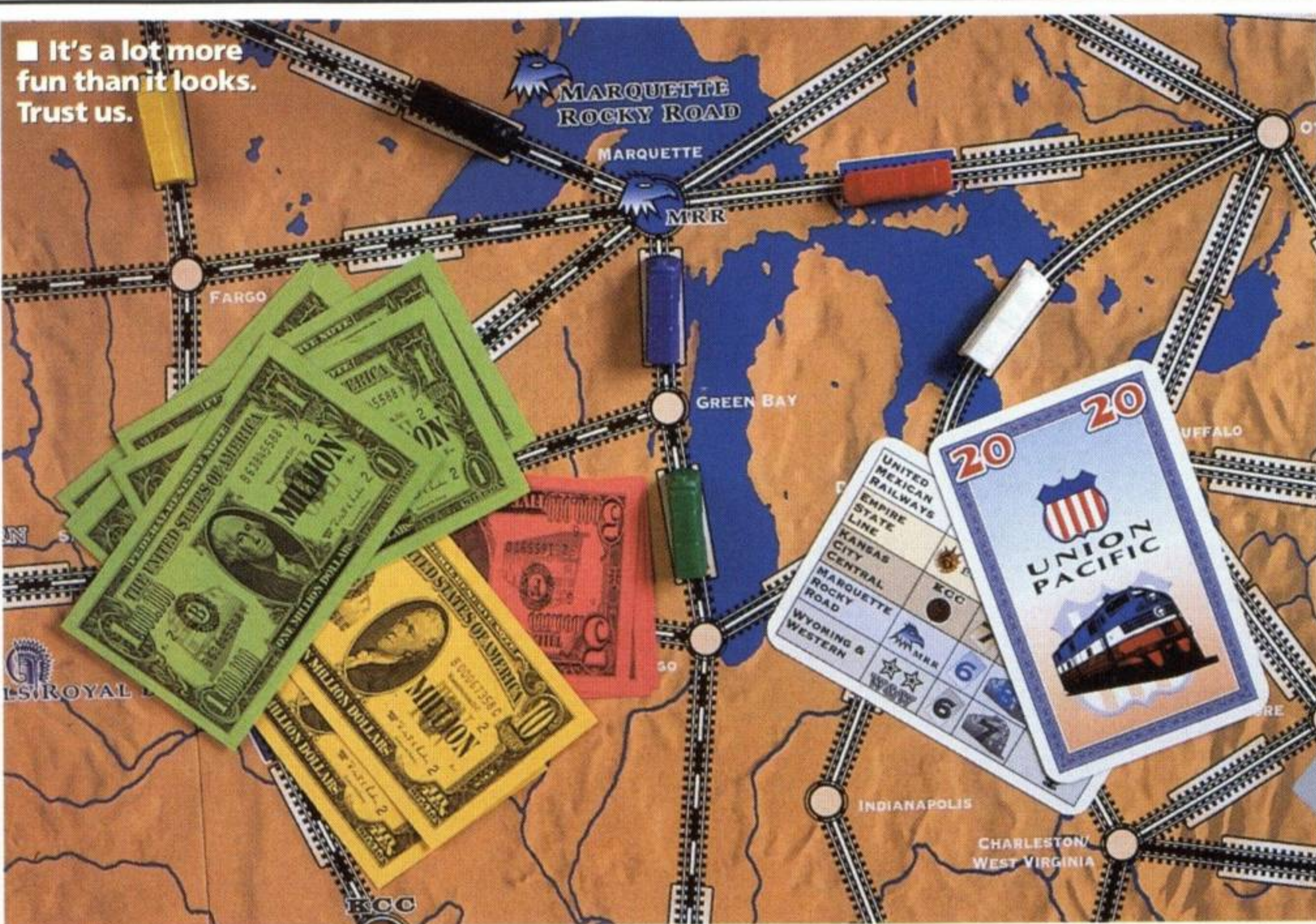


■ **Tom's Strong** by name and nature, in a classic sort of way.

since the heady days of the early Kirby/Lee *Fantastic Four* have so many concepts been crammed into so few pages.

The underlying mission of America's Best, according to Moore, is to "distil all that's great about comics." And in one book, he's done just that. ★★★★★ **Matt Bielby**

■ It's a lot more fun than it looks. Trust us.



WHISTLESTOP FUN IT'S LIKE MONOPOLY WITH TRAINS

Union Pacific

■ Publisher: **Rio Grande Games**
 ■ Available from: **Esdevium Games**
01252 326116 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **2-6**

It's a five! At last, a board game that deserves our highest mark. *Union Pacific* is *Railroad Tycoon* with your mates, or at least the investment aspects of it anyway. It's like *Monopoly* with trains, only it's more sophisticated.

The Union Pacific connects the cities of the United States by rail, but as America is quite big, the company deals with a number of smaller, local companies which provide the capillary networks from the nation's biggest cities.

As an investor, your goal is to make as much money as possible from

them by collecting dividends on your investments.

One of the beautiful things about *Union Pacific* is that the entire game works without the need for the random element of dice; everything you do is determined by the cards you play from your hand. With these cards, you may invest in the company or companies of your choice and also back up your portfolio by upgrading these companies' tracks.

This is very much a game for gamers, though; casual board gamers will most likely become frustrated by the complexity of the set-up and the rules. But if you do manage to get past this stage, you'll discover over the next 90 minutes a perfectly balanced board game that offers infinite possibilities for a winning strategy and plenty of scope to stamp all the gravy out of your mates' little pies. Great fun.

★★★★★ **Jon Palmer**



RISING HIGH COME FLY WITH ME



■ Admit it. You want one of these.

Remote Controlled Blimp

■ Available from: **Draganfly on 001 306 955 9907**
 ■ Price: **£183**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**

Coming at you all the way from Canada, the Blimp's not cheap (£180-plus for a flying plastic bag? Check Tesco's carpark in a gale, why don't you), but it's tons of fun. However, before you can get to the fun bit you have to find someone who'll sell you a big tank of helium – which is no mean feat.

Once you've done that, you've got to assemble the thing. The hardest bit is working out how many of the supplied washers and paperclips you need to tape to its underbelly to get the thing to float in mid-air rather than just bobbing about on the ceiling (and, please, test fly it inside before taking it out in the garden).

The Blimp is great for offices and common rooms everywhere: it's ideal for buzzing unsuspecting colleagues and classmates. The controls fall short of responsive, but this could be down to the fact you're driving a gravity-defying dustbin liner. This said, it still rules. ★★★★★ **Russell Deeks**

MMMBOP

POST-PUB RHYTHM TOMFOOLERY

Bop It!

■ Available from: **all good toy stores** ■ Price: **£19.99**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ We all remember Simon, the brightly-flashing memory

response game of yore. Now it's idiot brother has arrived.

Bop It! does not require knowledge, brainpower or logic. It pumps out a cheap big-beat rhythm interspersed with simple but persuasive commands. If Bop It! tells

you to "pull it", you pull the blue lever; if it tells you to "twist it", you twist the yellow knob; if it tells you to "bop it", you punch the central ball. When it says "pass it" you hand it over to the next player. The first person to mess up is the loser.

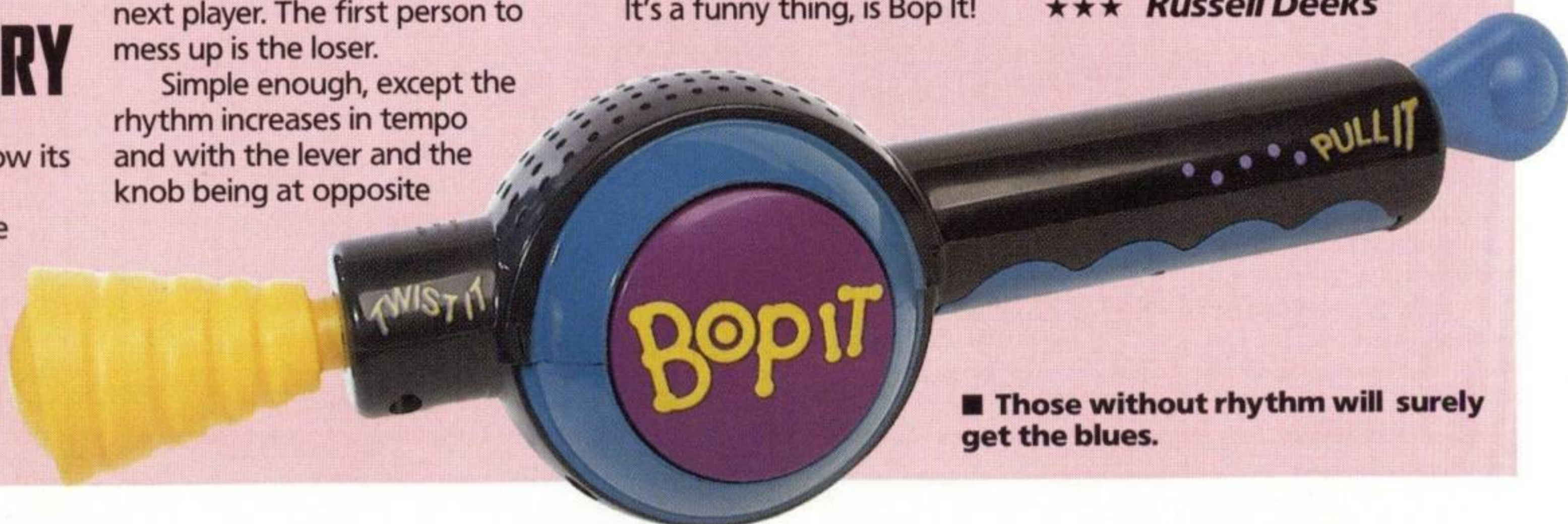
Simple enough, except the rhythm increases in tempo and with the lever and the knob being at opposite

ends of the toy, you're soon pulling when you should be twisting, an error greeted with a piercing scream from Bop It! and the sound of you crunching the infuriating thing against the wall.

It's a funny thing, is Bop It!

It's universally declared as "The Greatest Thing Ever" by everyone who first picks it up, and then loathed after five minutes. We use ours to see who's got to make the tea.

★★★ **Russell Deeks**



■ Those without rhythm will surely get the blues.

HOOKED UP NEVER BE LONELY AGAIN

They're getting smaller and smarter all the time. No, not children, you fool – mobile phones. Russell Deeks from *T3* magazine elaborates.

Accent/Ilium

- Available from: **Philips on 0645 282828**
- Price: **£150 with contract**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Welcome to a phone/PDA meltdown moment – the Accent/Ilium doubles as both a dog-and-bone and one of those personal digital assistant things. The Accent bit is the PDA and the Ilium bit's the phone. It differs from the others reviewed here by coming in two parts. The thinking behind this is that when you only need the phone, you're saved from lugging the assistant bit around with you, but this creates problems. Annoyingly, you can download numbers from the phone to the PDA but not the other way round. Then there's the fact that the two-piece design renders the Accent/Ilium combo bulkier and more cumbersome than it need be. That's not to say it's a bad piece of kit, though, because it's got some neat features: it's a GSM phone, so it'll work all over Europe, and the Voice Dial function enables you to ring your loved one just by shouting his/her name into the phone. Despite its bulk, the Accent/Ilium is still very impressive when you whip it out. ★★★



MC-G1 Communicator

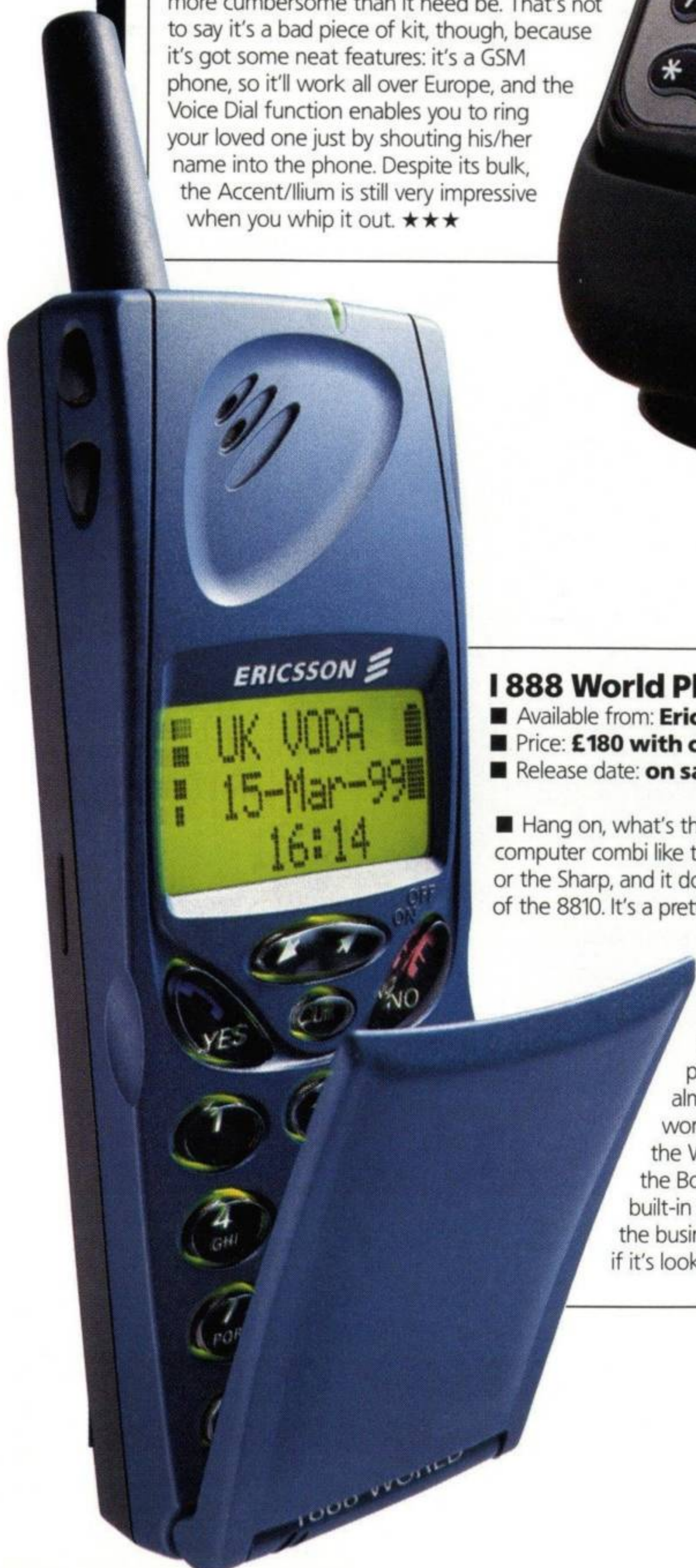
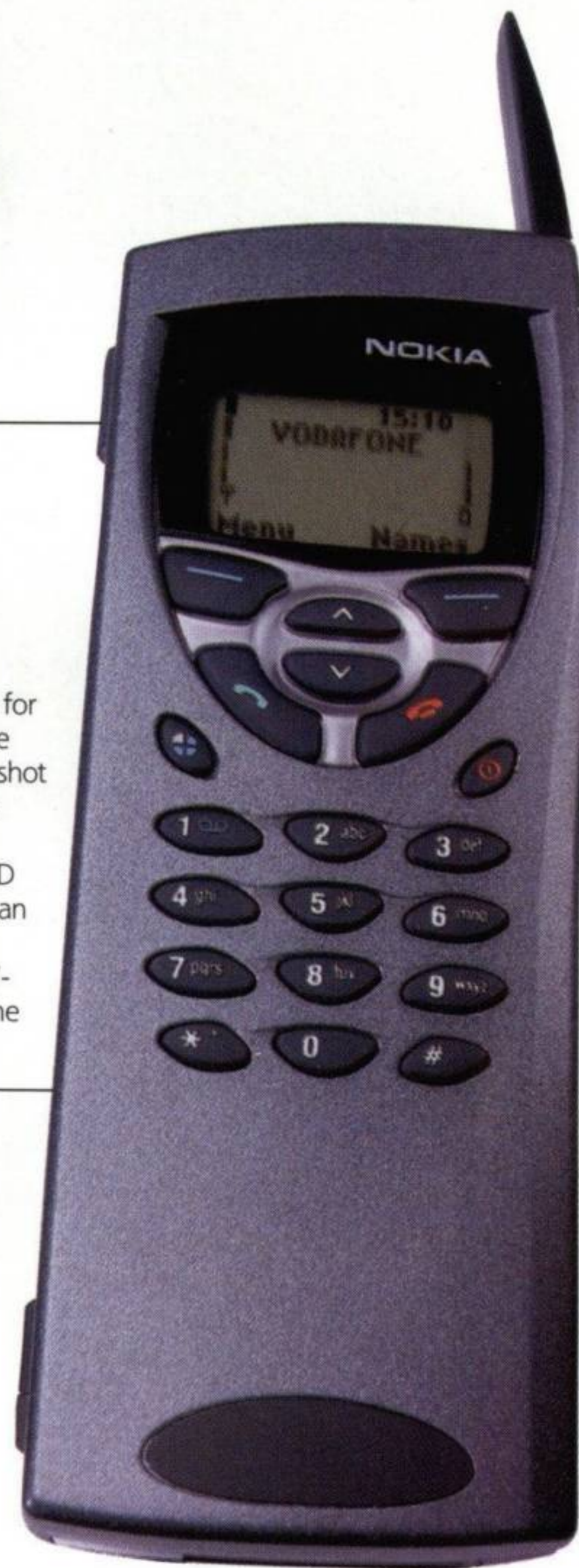
- Available from: **Sharp on 0800 262958**
- Price: **£300 with contract**
- Release date: **on sale now**

The MC-G1 Communicator has been around for nigh-on a year, but it's still impressive. It's a mobile phone/PDA, and the first thing you'll notice about it is that it has nothing so boring as a conventional keyboard or number pad. Instead, the MC-G1 features a touchscreen. To enter information into your appointments diary, send an e-mail or type in a phone number, you bring up a little on-screen QWERTY keyboard and point your way to happiness with a dinky little stick. Still hungry for gadget porn? There's a docking station supplied for transferring data between the MC-G1 and your PC. Woof. ★★★★★

9110 Communicator

- Available from: **Nokia on 01480 434343**
- Price: **£350 with contract**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Nokia's 9000 Communicator was the first mobile phone/handheld computer hybrid to hit the market. Unfortunately, while it aroused the interest of tech-heads for novelty value alone, it had one major drawback: it was the size of a house brick and not much prettier. The 9110 has shot up the must-have ranks thanks to a perceptive makeover. While it still sticks to the basic design of a mobile phone that magically flips open to reveal a mini keyboard and LCD screen, it's a darn sight smaller than its predecessor. You can use it to send and receive faxes and e-mails, browse the Web, and do all your usual diary/address book/"to do list"-type stuff. You can even download spreadsheets and some simple games for it. Cool. ★★★★★



I 888 World Phone

- Available from: **Ericsson on 0990 237237**
- Price: **£180 with connection**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Hang on, what's this doing here? It's not a phone/handheld computer combi like the 9110 Communicator, the Ilium/Accent or the Sharp, and it doesn't have the unadulterated sex appeal of the 8810. It's a pretty standard-sized, standard-looking mobile phone, and it's blue. So why pick it out as one of the hottest mobiles on the market? That'll be because it's about the most wide-ranging mobile you'll get for your money. Sure, you get GSM phones that'll work in Europe, but this is almost the only mobile that offers worldwide coverage. Admittedly, Bosch does the World 718 model, but this one's better – the Bosch is cute, but the Ericsson features a built-in modem. Being as it's aimed primarily at the business traveller, this is certainly a boon – but if it's looks you're after, try elsewhere. ★★★★★



★ OUR CHOICE

8810 mobile phone

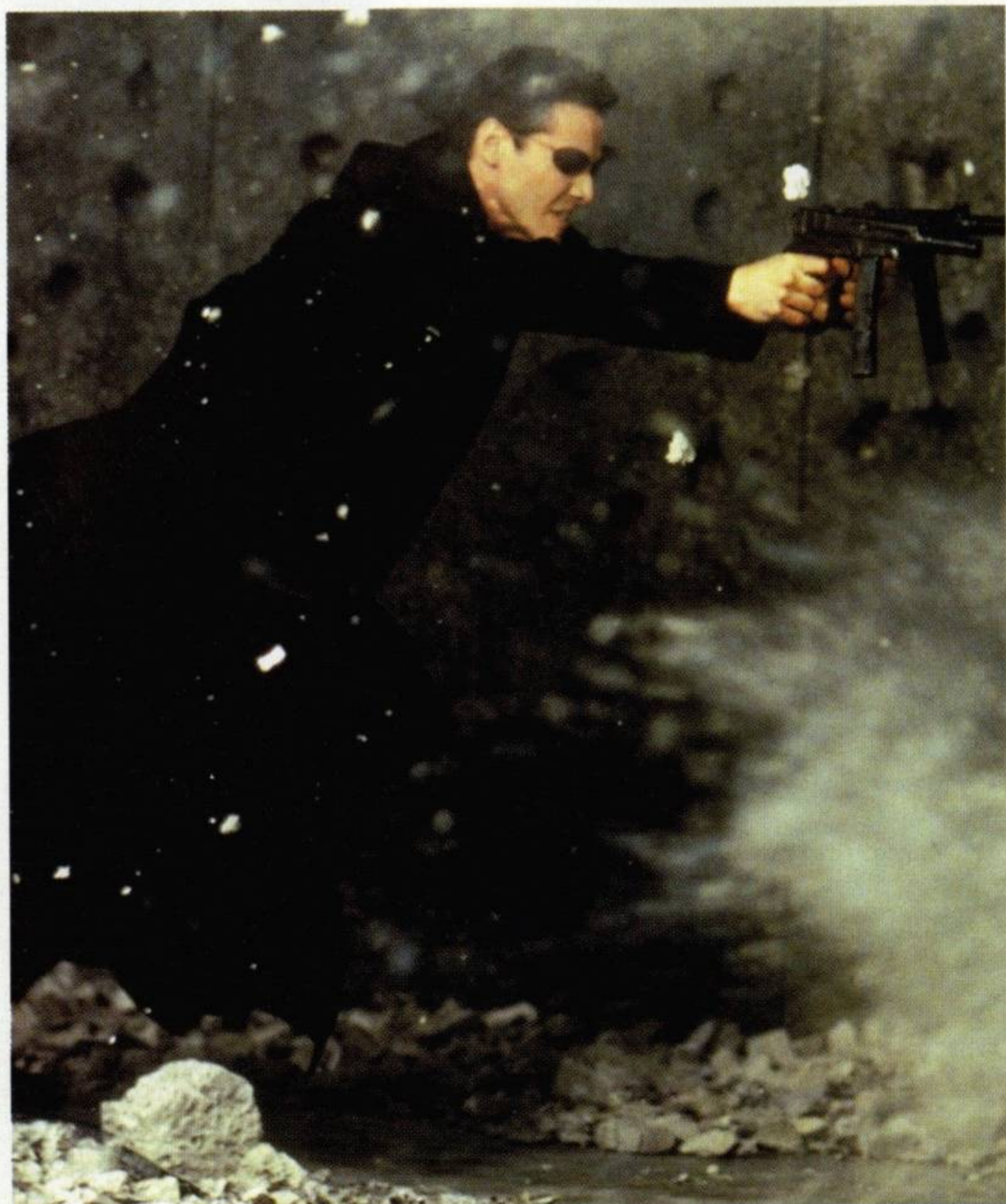
- Available from: **Nokia on 01480 434343**
- Price: **£350 with contract**
- Release date: **on sale now**

Okay, so this one's just a phone. It doesn't send or receive e-mails or faxes, it won't list your appointments and you can't browse the Web with it. It does, on the other hand, feature a calendar, a calculator and a number of very simple games for whiling away those hours stuck on public transport, but that's about it. At the end of the day, it's a mobile phone, pure and simple. But look at it, will you? Just look at it. Just a glimpse of the 8810 has been known to leave grown men teary-eyed and slumped over their pints intoning "I want one, I want one, I want one". The sort of kit the words "value" and "pose" were meant for. ★★★★★

Film of the Month

SHINY, HACKY PEOPLE

CARRY ON UP THE CYBER WITH KEANU REEVES

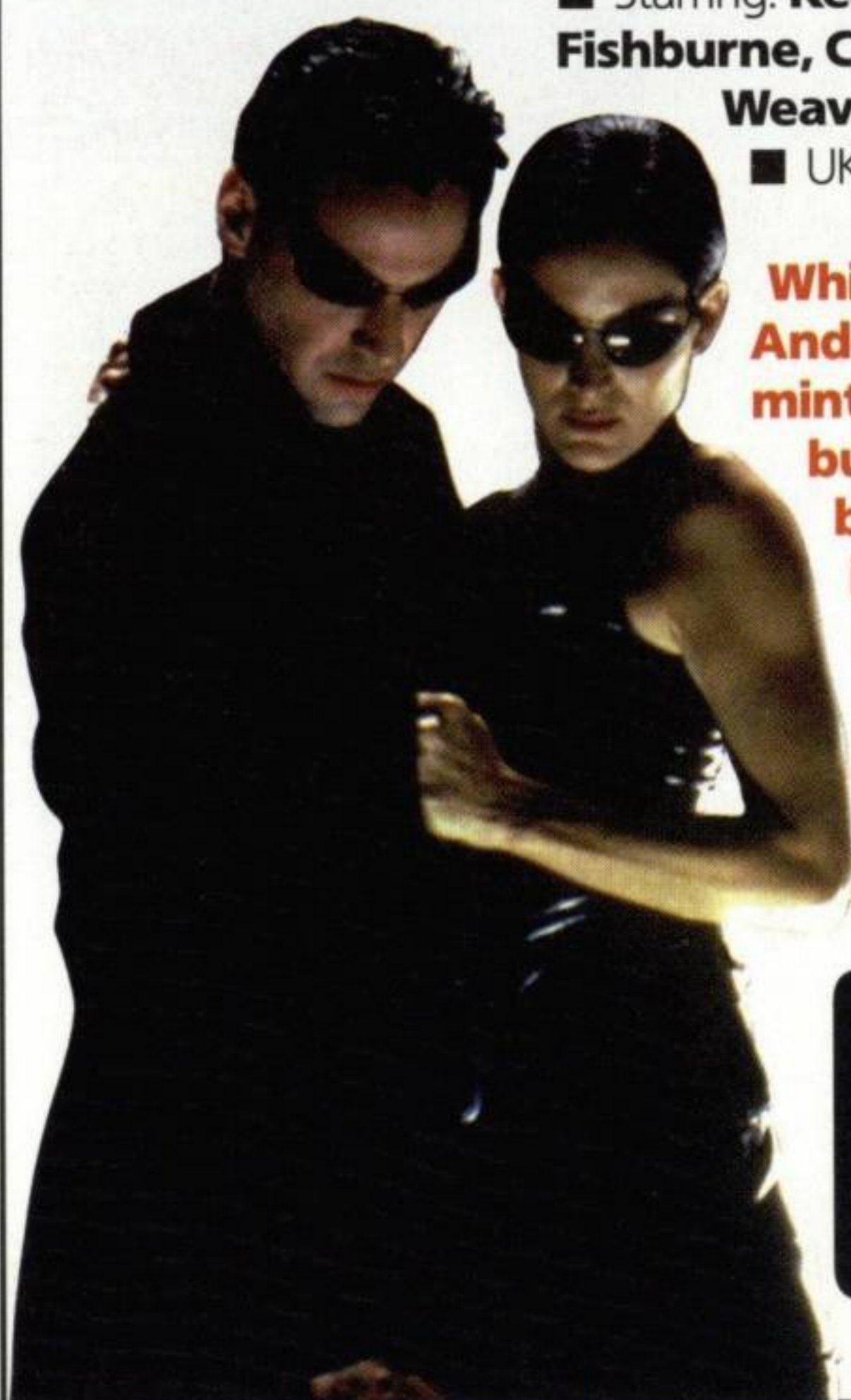


■ The script's not great, but there's no need to be that hacked off, Keanu.

The Matrix

■ Directors: **Andy and Larry Wachowski**
 ■ Starring: **Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving, Joe Pantoliano**
 ■ UK release: **18 June**

White-collar hacker Thomas Anderson (Reeves) is making a mint out of crashing networks, but then his computer talks back to him and he's plunged into a scary alternative reality. The answer to his paranoid behaviour comes in the form of a red pill, but the events that follow prove harder to swallow...



Cyberspace, secret agents, brain implants, big fuck-off guns and a cardboard Keanu. Anybody who has ever had the misfortune to sit through the moronic *Johnny Mnemonic* will suffer

the screaming *déjà vu* heebie jeebies once *The Matrix* cranks into action. But while this chaotic car-crash of a sci-fi movie has its cables firmly rooted in William Gibson's techno la-land, that's where all similarities between the two films end.

Despite *The Matrix's* blinding Stateside success, the producers have done their best to ensure punters don't find out too much about the film before parting with their cash and stepping into a cinema. This is a good idea, and I don't want to undo their work and spill all the beans. But it does make reviewing *The Matrix* a little tricky, as you can imagine.

The Matrix is based around a future battle between the remnants of mankind and a race of highly evolved machines, fought through the wires of a super computer. Just think *Terminator 2* reworked by the hacker community. The action boasts insectoid robots and cephalopod assassins, while the special effects are top drawer. But where *The Matrix* really excels is in its action sequences.

If you thought John Woo's slo-mo, balletic battles were the last word in choreographed gunplay, think again. The Wachowski brothers have mixed speed-ups, freeze-frames and swirling 3D camerawork with some splendid gravity-defying chopsocky fights to create what looks like a cinematic take on *Tekken*. The film seems to have been influenced as much by console beat-'em-ups as Bruce Lee, and takes the action genre to another level. As a result of this, some people have already hailed *The Matrix* as a sci-fi masterpiece, but it's not without its problems.

Clever though the script is, the movie seems so pleased with its central (secret) conceit that elements of the action take a long time to slot into a coherent whole. Of course, tracking the tangled network of twists is part of the fun, but the Wachowskis could easily have resisted some of the flabbier self-indulgences – most notably a pace-deflating trip to a *Total Recall*-ish Oracle.

Although the story is bafflingly complex, the same cannot be said of the performances. Raincoats flapping and guns blazing, Reeves and co may look great during the frantic set-pieces, but the disappointing comic-strip script rarely lets them rise above the status of action mannequin.

The Matrix somehow manages to be blisteringly original, frustratingly derivative, action-packed and curiously sluggish all at the same time. The confusing plot may make your brain hurt, but if you're looking for a shot of cinematic adrenaline you won't be disappointed. ★★★★★ **Barney Miller**



■ The best *Child's Play* yet.

Bride of Chucky

■ Director: **Ronny Yu**
 ■ Starring: **Jennifer Tilly, Brad Dourif**
 ■ UK release: **25 June**

■ Trashily inept and as dumb as they come, the *Child's Play* trilogy has been quite rightly relegated to the arse-end of the gimmicky slasher genre. So it comes as a substantial shock that this, the fourth in the series, is slicker, sicker and sillier than the three previous offerings shoved together.

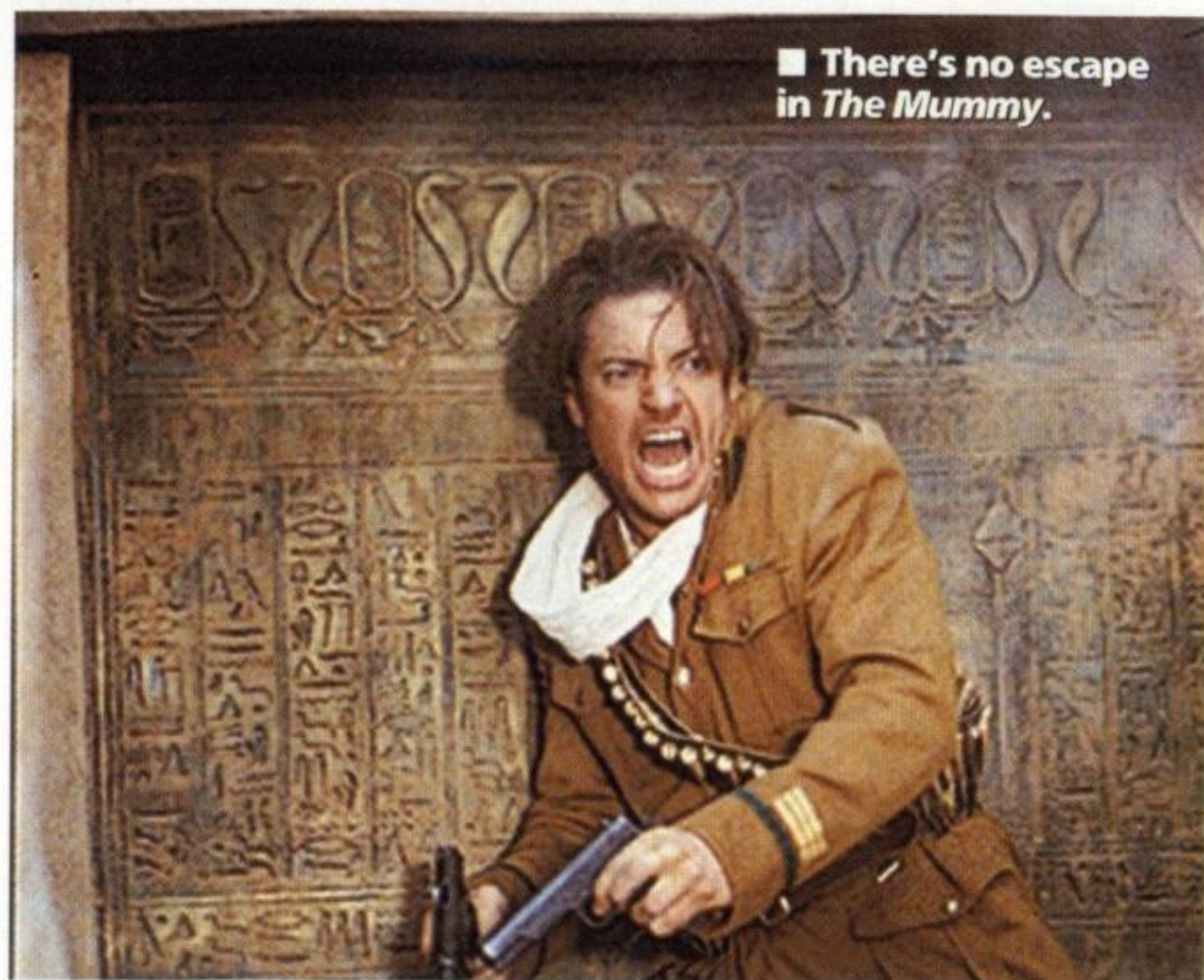
Here are the basics: squealy Meg Tilly is Tiffany, Chucky's old flame from the days before his soul was sucked into the body of a dolly. One night Tiff, who comes on like a slutty Betty Boop, breaks into her local cop shop to reclaim the Chuckster, with the aim of resurrecting her former lover using a book titled *Voodoo For Dummies*. However, it isn't long before the two fall out and Tiff finds herself trapped inside a plastic mannequin. Determined to find a fresh human to inhabit, Tiffany and Chucky then set out on a sleazy, gut-spattered killing spree...

Granted, it sounds terrible, but as the one-liners flow and bodies splat, it's hard to resist the film's audacious energy. For example, one of the movie's nastiest laughs comes when the Barbiefied Bonnie and Clyde engage in some disgusting doll sex leading to the immortal line: "Do I have a rubber? I am a rubber!". Throwing yuks and yucks in equal measure, this really is in the best possible bad taste. ★★★

Cruel Intentions

■ Director: **Roger Krumble**
 ■ Starring: **Ryan Phillippe, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Reese Witherspoon, Selma Blair**
 ■ UK release: **11 June**

■ Having milked the yoof-slasher genre dry with the painfully uninspired likes of *Urban Legend*, Hollywood's attentions are now turning to teenifying literary classics. Although first out of the box, Roger Krumble's modern-day remake of De Lacroix' 1782 novel *Dangerous*



■ There's no escape in *The Mummy*.



■ *Cruel Intentions* goes cruelly wrong.

Liaisons is by no means the best of the bunch.

Last seen in the monumentally dreadful *Studio 54*, Ryan Phillippe makes amends for his Golden Raspberry-bagging turn in this role, as sleazy seducer Sebastian Valmont. An obnoxious rich kid with more notches on his bed post than a demented whittler, Valmont engages in a wager with stepsister Kathryn (Gellar) that he can seduce the school's self-confessed virgin Cecile (Witherspoon). If he loses, Kathryn gets his sports car. And if he wins, he gets to shag Kathryn. Nice one.

The movie's main pleasures come from Valmont's attempts to weave his devious, manipulative and wicked scheme. Sadly, the movie goes and blows it with an unsatisfying and preachy climax that puts the nix on all the cynical seduction that's gone before.

True, *Buffy* buffs may get a cheap spark out of Gellar engaging in some lesbo tongue hockey, but the casual punter would be better off waiting for next month's superior *Ten Things I Hate About You*, a high school rehashing of *The Taming Of The Shrew*. ★★★

The Mummy

■ Director: **Stephen Sommers**
 ■ Starring: **Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, John Hannah, Arnold Vosloo**
 ■ UK release: **25 June**

■ What with last year's *Armageddon* and this month's *The Matrix*, Hollywood's latest crop of blockbusters have been worryingly poe-faced, so the tongue-in-cheek buffoonery of *The Mummy* comes as a welcome relief. More *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* parody than creature feature remake, what this self-consciously stupid romp lacks in originality it more than makes up for with cheeky, hyperactive gusto.

Admittedly, there's not much of a plot. The action opens with a blistering prologue that shows how the mummy and his curse came about. The movie then wastes no time in speeding Egyptologist Weisz, her brother Hannah, Indiana-lite hero Fraser and assorted mummy fodder towards the lost tomb so that they can resurrect the curse and unleash a Pandora's Box of special effects. As frantic set-piece follows frantic set-piece, the cliffhangers are decidedly hit and miss and the

mummy is as blatantly unscary as his bandaged predecessors.

But these are minor gripes. The actors are game, the humour broad, the flesh-eating scarab beetles revolting and the special effects truly jaw-on-the-floor astonishing. Check your brain in at the foyer and go see. It really is worth it. ★★★★★

Vigo

■ Director: **Julian Temple**
 ■ Starring: **James Frain, Romane Bohringer, Jim Carter, Diana Quick**
 ■ UK release: **out now**

■ With largely lobotomised blockbusters dominating the silly season releases, if you are an arty type seeking more visceral thrills, you may want to check out Julian Temple's unconventional biopic of the celebrated godfather of indie cinema, Jean Vigo.

As any film nut worth their weight in Halliwells knows, Gallic director Vigo shot two highly influential movies (*Zéro De Conduite* and *L'Atalante*) before losing a lifelong battle against tuberculosis, aged just 29.

Vigo plays fast and loose with its subject's short life and, while

Temple's highly stylised attempt to capture the free spirit that was Jean Vigo won't win any prizes for authenticity, it does get full marks for passion.

Rather than concentrating on the making of his two movies, *Vigo* focuses instead on the tender, occasionally combustible, relationship between Vigo and his Polish amour Lydu. Always irrepressible and looking elegantly emaciated, Frain is excellent as the doomed director. And he generates substantial and believable chemistry alongside the effervescent Bohringer, who is genuinely outstanding in her first English-speaking role. And respect is most definitely due to the scene-stealing Jim Carter, avuncular as ever as Vigo's tattoo-flashing anarchist uncle.

But while the performances are admirable enough, Temple's eagerness to cram in the events of Vigo's short-lived life prompts some impatient pacing, which too often causes the movie to lurch towards melodrama.

Vigo can't be faulted for its ambition, but, unfortunately, the end result is an uneven movie that's every bit as restless as Vigo's spirit. ★★★

Videos to rent



■ *Blade* stakes a claim.

Blade

■ **New Line**

■ Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the belfry, the vampires rise again. They're still vulnerable to garlic breath, the odd silver bullet and sunlight, but this time around they've (hilariously) discovered the benefits of sunscreen.

As new-age Dracula hunter Blade, Wesley Snipes takes his role far too seriously for a tongue-in-cheek action flick, and his evil counterpart Deacon Frost (Steven Dorff) is too much the stereotyped, bestubbled bad boy to be entertaining. The stunning cinematography, seamless special effects and over-the-top set-pieces make this worthy post-pub viewing. ★★★

Fear & Loathing In Las Vegas

■ **CIC**

■ Anyone who's read Hunter S Thompson's drugged-up, whacked-out novel of the same name, may have thought it unfilmable. Although it's often a struggle, Terry Gilliam has created a decent movie which remains faithful to the book's central themes (drugs, paranoia, the American Dream, more drugs) marred by two miscastings.

Johnny Depp is just too smooth for the ragged Raoul Duke, while his huge Samoan attorney, a major presence in the novel, is played by the scrawny Benicio Del Toro.

The story is reduced from being a vital, literary landmark to a simple tale of two guys getting elegantly wasted. ★★★

DVD | The biggest new releases



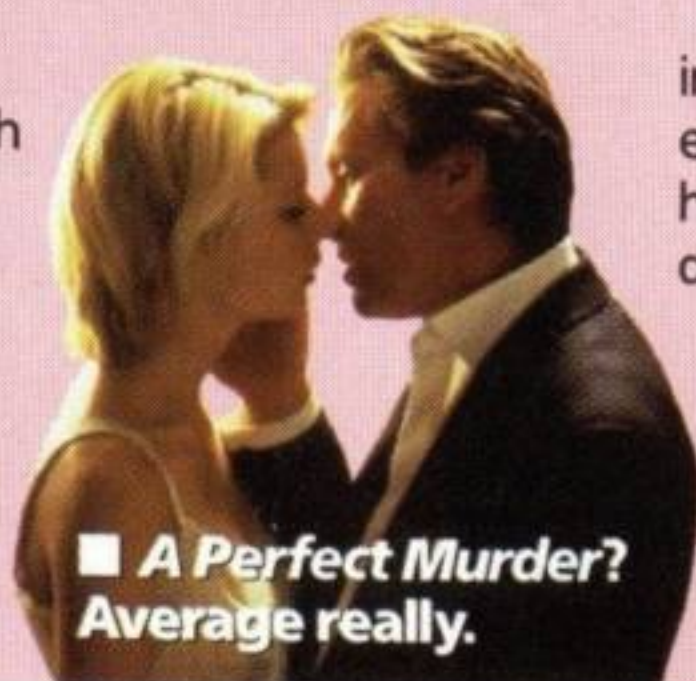
■ Yes Sir, you can Boogie.

Boogie Nights

■ **Entertainment In Video**

■ A wonderful film that coaxes stellar performances from Burt Reynolds and Mark Wahlberg. The excesses of '70s kitsch are celebrated – as are huge members – but the seedy '80s comedown is even more affecting. There's a cool disco soundtrack, too. DVD extras include a

brief interviews with Wahlberg, Reynolds, Julianne Moore, Heather Graham and Don Cheadle, among others. ★★★



■ *A Perfect Murder*? Average really.

A Perfect Murder

■ **Warners**

■ An average thriller which doesn't do justice to Hitchcock classic *Dial M For Murder*. Essentially, a jealous Michael Douglas pays his wife's lover a wad to bump her off. The plot is desperately contrived to ensure the action lasts longer than a few minutes. Gwyneth Paltrow looks nice, though.

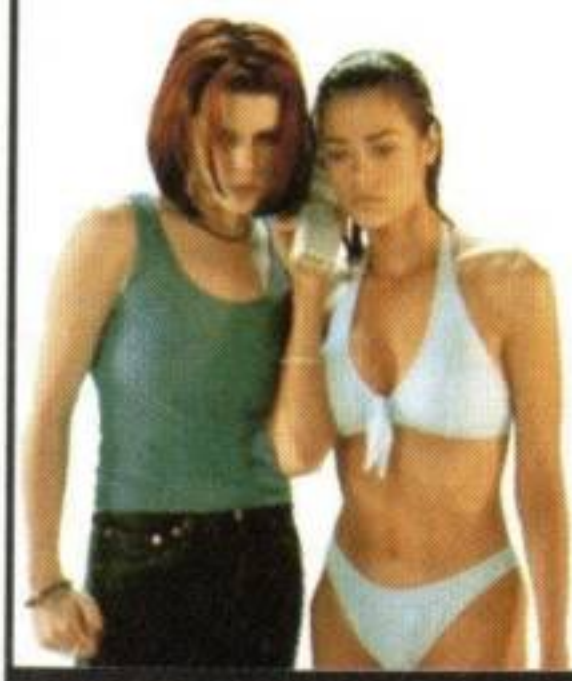
DVD extras include an alternative ending - which proves how unsure the director was about the original jerky conclusion - and a host of waffle from Douglas and the screenwriter, among others. ★★

Videos to buy

Wild Things

■ **Entertainment In Video**

■ Seeing as every director these days is taking the idea of glamorous teen dramas and turning them into postmodern thrillers, it's disturbing to note that there's nothing at all postmodern about *Wild Things* – the film that crawled in from



■ *Wild Things*, you make my heart sink.

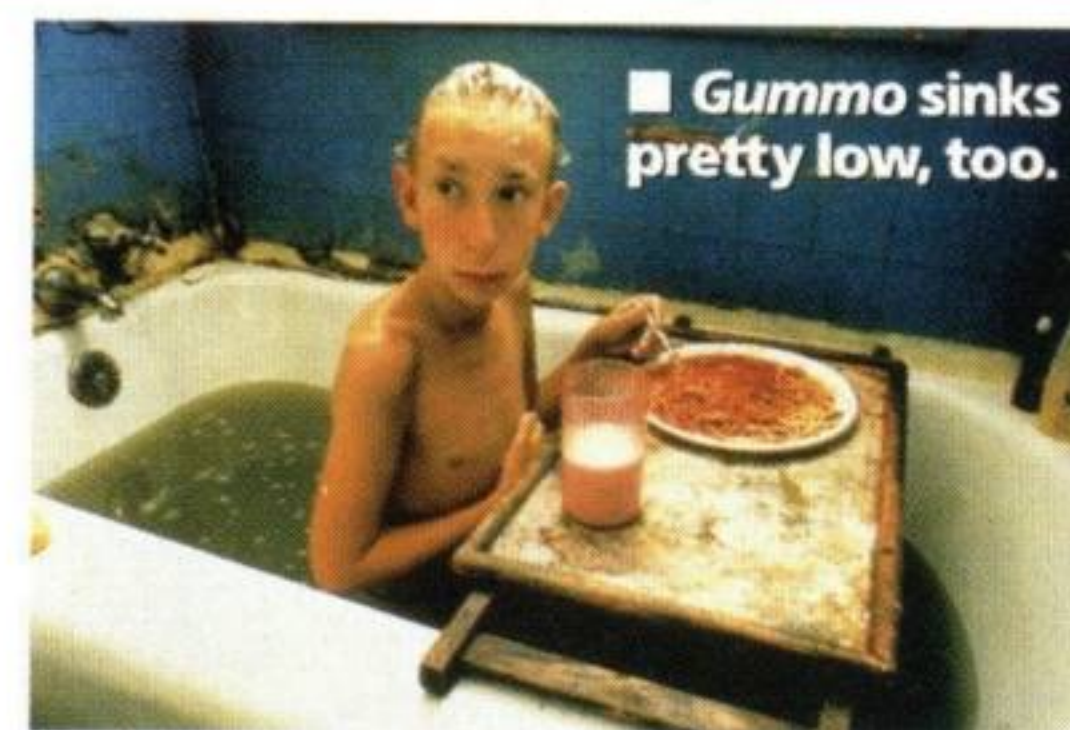
the '80s. Denise Richards and Neve Campbell are scarcely believable sixth form coquettes, while Matt Dillon is an equally unlikely high school guidance counsellor. The dialogue would shame Beverly Hills 90210 and you feel that if Baywatch Nights was to become a movie with a date rape and murder conspiracy sub-plot, it would be something like this. Wretched. ★

Gummo

■ **Entertainment In Video**

■ Harmony Korine is a film-maker who goes out of his way to shock. The writer of *Kids* has now turned his attention

to the misfits of smalltown America and saturates the screen with weirdos galore – rendering their impact negligible. There's a heavy metal-loving mute, glue-sniffing kids who kill cats for cash and a man who pimps his sister – who has learning difficulties – to minors. None of the characters have much to do with each other as there is no story, just a random collection of increasingly tedious incidents filmed in dirty kitchens. It's a technique which Richard Linklater's *Slacker* achieved with far more skill and humanity, so go and find that instead. ★★



■ *Gummo* sinks pretty low, too.

Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil

■ **Warner Home Video**

■ Any movie that boasts the talents of Kevin Spacey is worth a look-see, but sadly his presence is the only good thing. His performance as suave, Deep South socialite and murder suspect Jim Williams is

magnificent, and presents a character who is at turns serene and flesh-crawlingly unnerving. John Cusack is insincere, emotionless and unlikeable as the journalist investigating the killing, and despite some welcome comic relief from Paul Hipp, the story plods towards an unsatisfactory conclusion. ★★

On-line gaming

PlayStation 2 Info Center

- Home
- News
- Hardware
- Reviews
- Previews
- Codes
- Links
- Email

April 19, 1999
New version of this site coming out in May! [News]

April 16, 1999
I've answered a couple more questions and I've updated the FAQ. [FAQ]

Legend of Legaia

■ The early ideas for Sony's PlayStation 2 ad campaign needed a little work...

THE FUTURE OF GAMING?

PSX2 HQ

Last Updated: July 28, 1998

Sony PlayStation 2 HQ

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■ Fight your way through the marauding spongs and you'll find loads of good info at Slashdot.

■ Fight your way through the marauding spongs and you'll find loads of good info at Slashdot.

The PlayStation 2. If Sony gets its way, this box of tricks will take over the world of gaming. Why fight it? Opt for early assimilation over the Net.

Admit it. You've already cancelled your order for that grey import Dreamcast, haven't you? Sega's newbie might as well pack its bags and go home. The information released so far points to Sony going far beyond spoiling Sega's party – the likelihood is that the PlayStation 2 will gatecrash the joint, puke on the guests and wee in the punch.

Best to find out as much as you can about it before it arrives, then. And where better to start than PSX2.com (<http://www.psx2.com/>)? The site hedges its bets and calls itself both the world's number one PlayStation 2000 source and the premier PlayStation 2 news provider. That said, Sony will probably go and call the thing GameMan, or something – a tongue-twister to relish. But hey, who cares when this site presents as much as it can about possible specs and likely games, including *Final Fantasy IX*?

Uglier and less astute in its guesswork is The PlayStation 2 Info Centre (<http://psx2.webjump.com/>). Click the Previews button to find out what games are in store and you get a message informing you that, as yet, no games have been announced. Lazy sods. In a similar vein, you could opt to visit PlayStation 2 HQ (<http://www.consoledomain.com/ngc/psx.html>), which is easier on the eye, but even more sparing when it comes to content.

The best place to go hunting for PlayStation 2 facts is the epicentre of the nerd information universe. Slashdot ("News for nerds. Stuff that matters" at <http://www.slashdot.org/>) is an info clearing house for the geek community. Given that the PlayStation 2 will use Linux – the operating system of choice for the nerd brigade – the console earns several mentions. Ignore all the stuff you don't understand (there's a lot, unless you've earned your Spong Wings) and search for the PlayStation 2. There's loads of info here, as well as some cool *Star Wars* news.

The match box | Eternally Searching

■ We enter a game-related phrase into a search engine, then see what comes out the other end. This month: "Raccoon City" – the quaint location of *Resident Evil*.

<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Cauldron/1374/start.htm>

■ Kid Bandit welcomes you to his site, crammed with pictures of otters and some of his stories. One gem relates an episode when he turns into an otter. Then back again. The horror.

Raccoon City
<http://www.gti.net/mountarlington/RACMAR/raccity.html>

■ This man believes raccoons have their own city on Mars, and has all the detail at his fingertips. Don't stick around too long, for fear of being tracked by deadly raccoon technology.

Raccoon City Rampage
<http://pilot.msu.edu/user/faustre/rsbl/teams/rampage.htm>

■ This is a baseball team. But with the rules of baseball shrouded in secrecy to all but the most fiercely patriotic of Americans, it's unlikely you'll be able to tell whether they're any good.

Raccoon River Campground
<http://204.49.131.2/raccoon/>

■ Going to Florida? Well, camp

here. Raccoon River is within walking distance of lots of hideous tourist attractions and, this being the USA, you can – if we have understood correctly – watch cable TV in your tent.

Classes At the Raccoon City Police Academy
<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Hollow/2586/REMUSICAL.html>

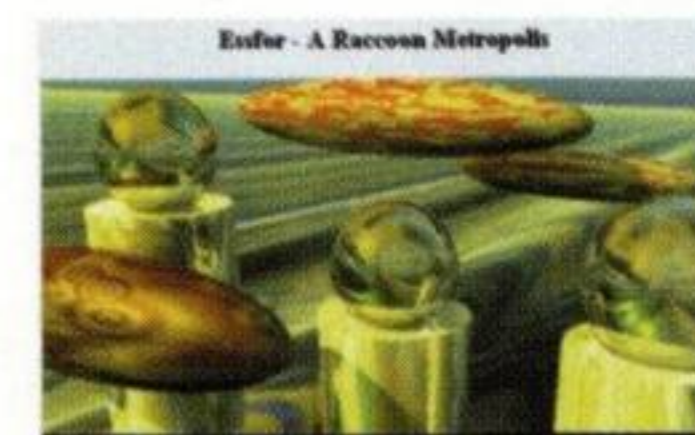
■ At last, a link to *Resident Evil* in the form of a list of ten things about the game that seem to have annoyed someone. It's crazy, side-splitting stuff.

Mardi Raccoon at Storyland
http://www.mardi.com/index_s.htm

■ "Mardi G Raccoon" it transpires is the Master of Ceremonies for the puppet shows at Storyland in New Orleans City Park! Hundreds of kids see Mardi every weekend! So, if you're ever in The Big Easy, you know where to go.

Welcome to Raccoon City
<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Realm/9858/residentevil/noframe.html>

■ Ooh, look! It's a *Resident Evil 2* page, with links to loads of other *Resident Evil 2* pages. Frankly, we preferred reading about Mardi G Raccoon. We want to know if he'll be our friend. Please, Mardi. Be our friend.



■ Raccoons on Mars.



■ It all started here.

CD-ROM of the month



■ Clean up your home vids and put Beadle on the dole.

VideoWave 2

■ Publisher: **MGI Software**
■ Developer: **MGI Software**
■ Price: **£79.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 45Mb HD space, soundcard, video card, Win 95**

■ Tarantino, Lucas, Spielberg – what do these greats have in common? Why, they all started their careers by editing home video clips on a PC, of course. Well, they would have done had *VideoWave 2* been around.

MGI takes the effort out of making home movies. Granted, you've still got to point the camera and remove the lens

cap, but once you have hold of some footage (via either a digital or analogue Camcorder, though you'll need a video capture card for the latter), making a watchable video proves easier than adapting an Elmore Leonard novel.

Through an interface that's more straightforward than the plot of a Schwarzenegger flick, you capture relevant clips, drag them on to a storyboard and then hack away to your heart's content. Adding soundtracks, sub-titles (handy for spicing up weddings or hardcore porn) and special effects is simplicity itself. And, once you're happy with your post-production efforts, you can save the final masterpiece on to your hard drive or a video cassette.

Bar the ability to edit video in the DVD-quality MPEG-2 format there's nothing really too revolutionary here, but in value-for-money and user-friendliness terms, *VideoWave 2* deserves to gain blockbuster status. ★★★★★ **Chris James**

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- Godzilla £8.99 • Antz £8.99

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- Ape Escape (JAP)
- Driver (US/UK)
- Ehrgeiz (US)
- GTA: London (UK)
- Omega Boost (JAP)
- Racing Lagoon (JAP)
- Silent Hill (US)
- Soul Reaver (US)
- S.Fighter Zero 3 (JAP/US)
- Syphon Filter (US)

JAP DREAMCAST

- Aero Dancing
- Blue Stinger
- Dynamite Deka 2
- Get Bass & Controller
- Highway Battle
- House of the Dead 2 & Gun
- King of Fighters '99
- Marvel Vs Capcom
- Power Stone
- Red Line Racer
- Sega Rally 2
- Sonic Adventure
- Soul Calibur
- Super Speed Racing
- Virtua Fighter 3tb

U.S. RPG'S

PLAYSTATION

- F. Fantasy Tactics
- Jade Cocoon
- Legend of Legaia
- Lunar: Complete
- Parasite Eve
- Persona
- Tales of Destiny
- Xenogears

OTHER SYSTEMS

NINTENDO 64

- Beetle Adventure Racing (US)
- Castlevania (US)
- Mario Party (US/UK)
- Micro Machines 64 (US)
- Quake 2 (US/UK)
- Smash Bros. (JAP/US)
- Snowboard Kids 2 (US)
- South Park (US/UK)
- Vigilante 8 (US/UK)
- World Driver Champ (US)
- Zelda (US/UK)

SATURN

- Magic Knight Rayearth (US)
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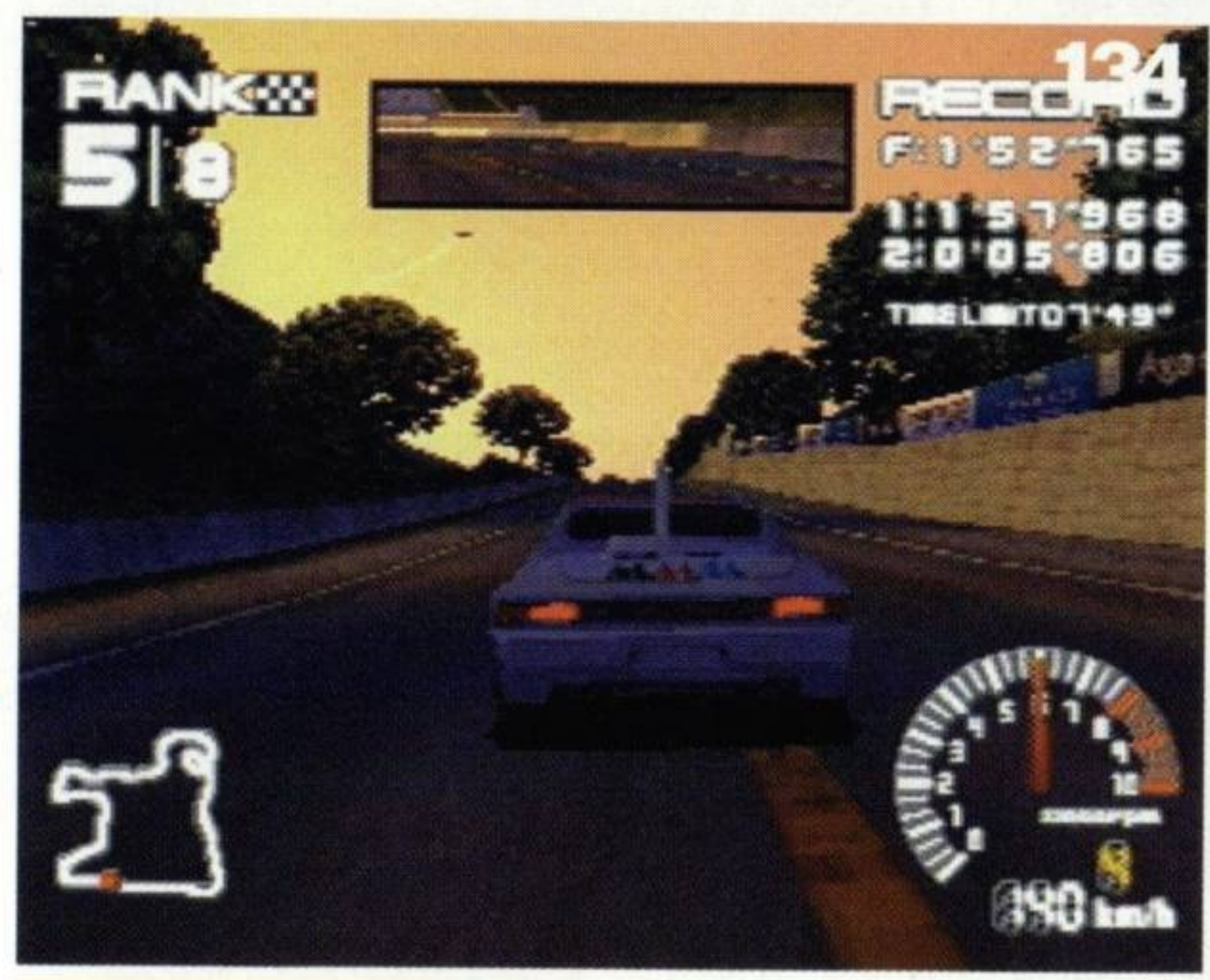
Nasty things, decisions. You can waste a lot of time weighing up pros and cons. Time when you should be playing games. So anxious are we at Arcade to make sure that you get Quality Gaming Time, that we test every game for you, taking the pain out of your next gaming choice.

Featured this month:

IN ASSOCIATION WITH 

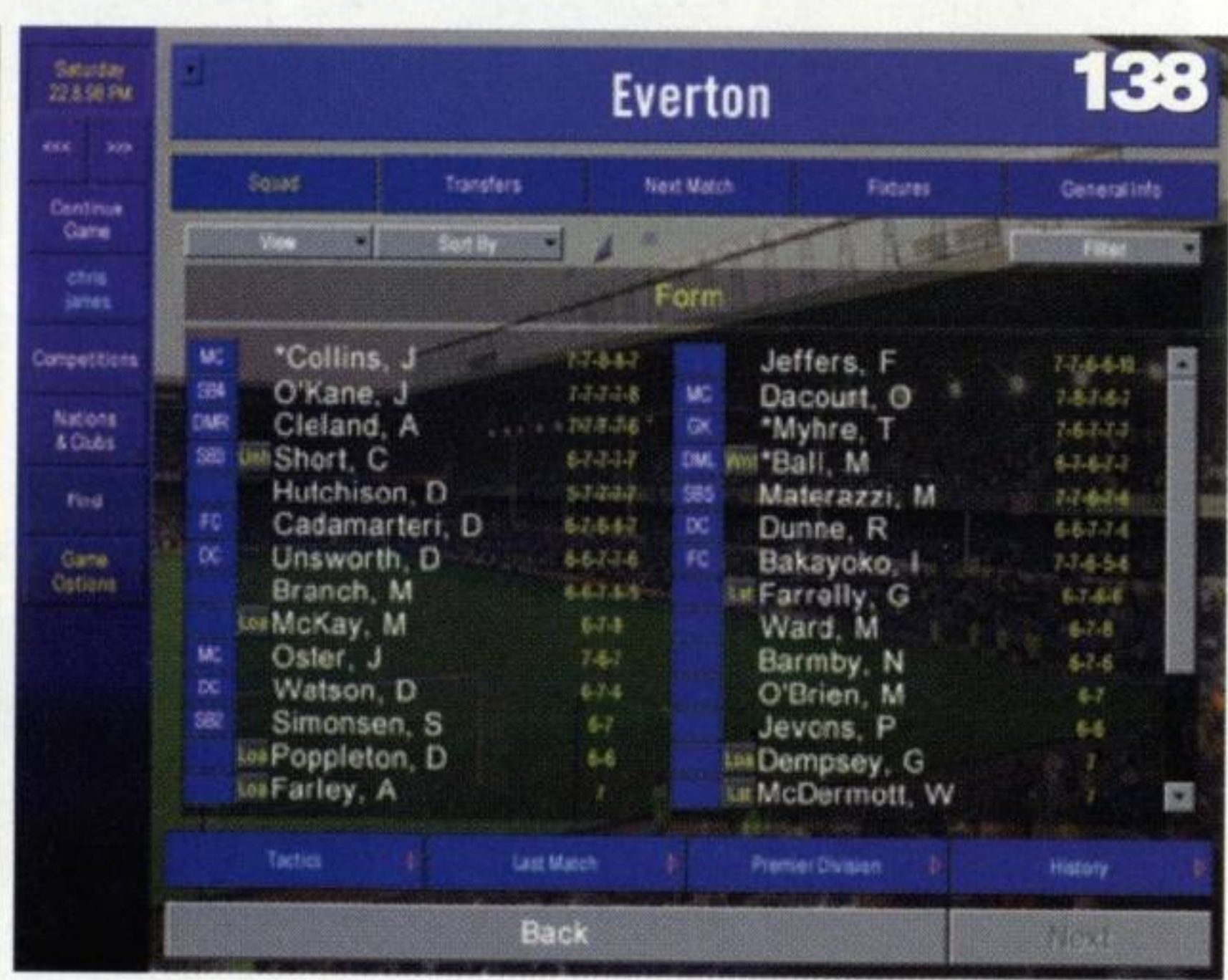
134 PlayStation

Over 133 games reviewed and rated, plus the Top 20 PlayStation games on sale right now. And watch out for some great bargains.



138 PC

The nation's Top 20 PC games, plus we take a look at more than 140 others that are available. Good or bad, you'll read about them here.



141 Nintendo 64

Want to know what you'll be playing next? Read about it here, along with the Top 20, and reviews of more than 65 N64 titles.



143 Game Boy

We've got 35 games for everyone's favourite purple pocket filler, as well as the Game Boy Top 5 chart.



136 Plus...

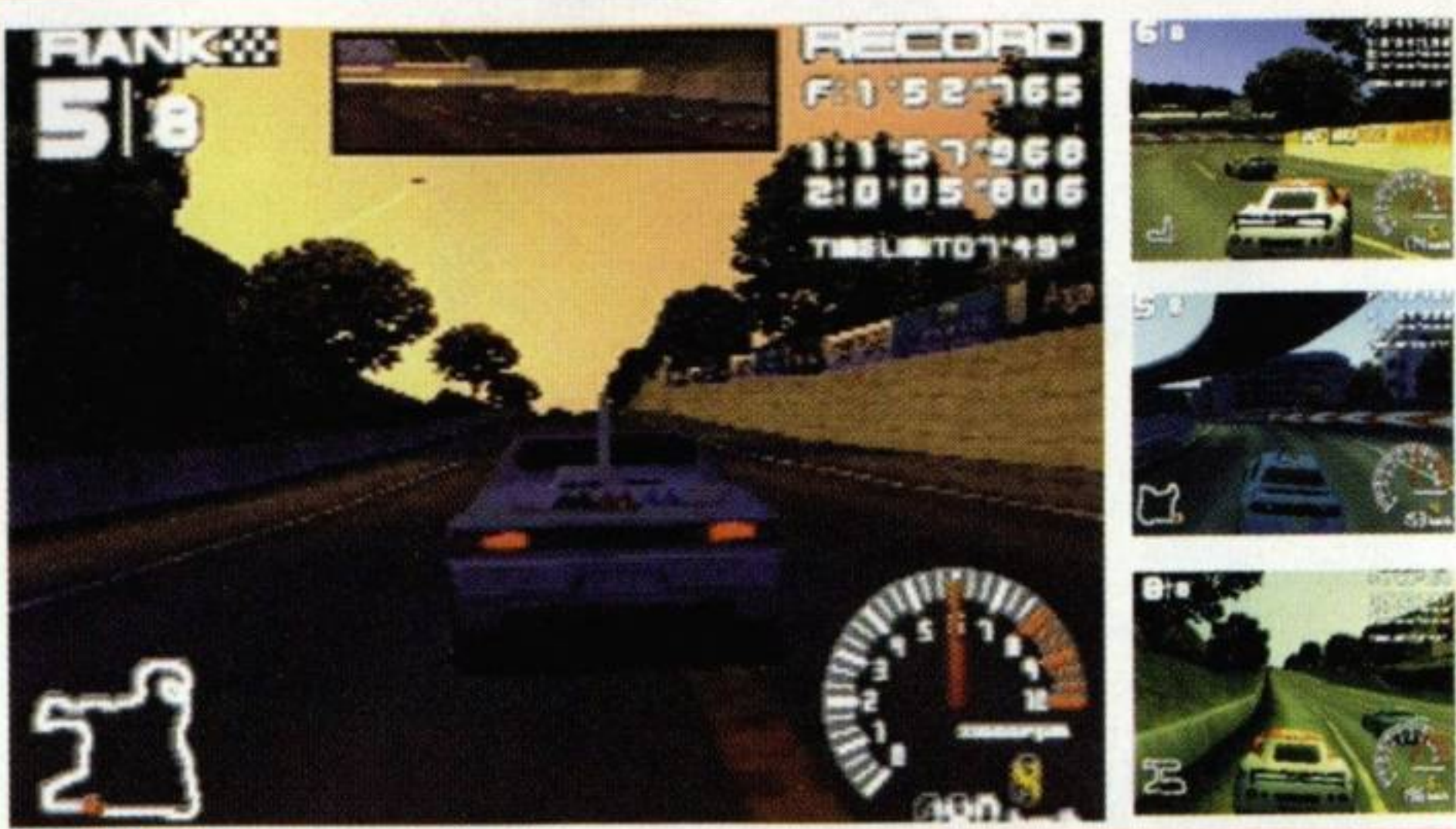
Mark Green has a nasty experience with an egg.

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

Should you shell out for the UK's best-selling games?



1 (-) **Ridge Racer Type 4** ■ Racing ■ SCE ■ £40
Super-fast racing There's no *Gran Turismo*-style engine tinkering here – the 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. ★★★★★



2 (1) **Metal Gear Solid** ■ Sneaker ■ Konami ■ £40
Infiltrate a shadowy enemy installation *Metal Gear* is brilliant – sneak around and avoid detection rather than blasting everything in sight. Despite the end screen coming around after little more than a few hours, you'll adore every single minute. ★★★★★



3 (-) **Crash Bandicoot** ■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £40
Maniac pseudo-3D antics Control a mad marsupial as he runs into the screen, collecting apples and avoiding the bad guys. The linear level format and disappointingly easy play don't help. ★★★



4 (3) **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, make this another classic. ★★★★★



5 (2) **Rugrats** ■ Platformer ■ 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 simple and repetitive for grown-ups. Avoid it, we say. ★★



6 (5) **FIFA 99** ■ Sports ■ 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 about football. More suited to beginners. ★★★

7 (-) **Civilization II** ■ Strategy ■ 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. ★★★★★

8 (6) **Grand Theft Auto** ■ Driver ■ Platinum ■ £20
Crime-added 2D driver The shoddy graphics and poor speed affect the appeal of kicking in civilians and driving whatever vehicle you care to purloin, but this is still an involving crim-'em-up. Don't compare the visuals that you'll see on the PlayStation to those on the PC. ★★★

9 (4) **A Bug's Life** ■ Platformer ■ Disney Interactive ■ £40
Ant-based adventures Faithful in part to the movie it's based on, with 3D graphics that initially impress, but the crude animation and repetitiveness of the running, jumping and punching gameplay will fail to enthral even the most easily pleased nipper. ★

10 (9) **UEFA Champions League 98/99** ■ Sports ■ EIDOS ■ £40
Accomplished European Cup football sim Past and present Euro teams are available, and there are bucketfuls of realistic moves available to string into dream combos. Exciting, but suffers from occasionally stodgy gameplay. ★★★★★

11 (-) **Cool Boarders 2** ■ Racing ■ Sony ■ £20
Snowboarding for the masses The racing game for the smart arse, with increasingly difficult stunts to pull off. The two-player mode and cocky computer opponent make this a vast improvement on the previous instalment. ★★★

12 (8) **Premier Manager '99** ■ Sports ■ Gremlin ■ £40
Footy management for everyone Endorsed by Kevin Keegan, this sim features more squads than you'll be able to fit into your brain – including a future-proof European Super-League – and good controls, however, you'll need patience to become the best. ★★★★★

13 (16) **Rayman** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20
Old-skool vertically-scrolling jumpathon Cheap, but it doesn't contain any ideas or visuals that wouldn't push an '80s console. It's horrendously difficult, packed with eye-wrenching colour, and its central character is detestable. ★★

14 (17) **TOCA Touring Car Championship** ■ Racer ■ Platinum ■ £20
One of the first proper racing sims Genuinely exciting racer that has decent speed and excellent tracks, coupled with a good sense of control and gorgeous real-time damage. The lack of options lets the whole affair down slightly. ★★★★★

15 (-) **Tekken 2** ■ Fighter ■ 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 (uncommon) and there are plenty of moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth into. ★★★★★

16 (18) **Croc** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20
3D crocodile runabout Lovely looking cutesy platformer, ruined by some 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. ★★

17 (12) **Die Hard Trilogy** ■ Shooter/racer ■ 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. ★★★★★

18 (15) **Hercules** ■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £20
Cute-as-a-button platforming mythology Disney's difficult, tedious and clichéd 2D running and jumping game. Unfortunately, it's identical to almost every other platformer that Disney has chucked out, just with appropriately different visuals. ★★

19 (-) **V Rally** ■ Racer ■ Infogrames ■ £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 a sound purchase. ★★★★★

20 (19) **Mickey's Wild Adventure** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20
Basic Disney-based running and jumping The graphics are pleasing, if a little old-fashioned, and there are a host of nice touches, such as the *Steamboat Willy* black and white sections. But the task of simply running from left to right is too simple. ★★

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. ★★★

Dark Stalkers 3
 ■ Virgin ■ £35 **Odd-looking beastly beat-'em-up** Eighteen monsters, but a lack of options and stilted play. ★★

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 with challenges a-plenty as well as opponents who actually learn, who's complaining? ★★★★★

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. ★★

Mortal Kombat 4
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **Frighteningly quick, gory fighting** Although it's in 3D, this bloody fighter fails to take advantage of the extra dimension. The simplistic, combo-heavy controls and exaggerated characters are becoming rather staid. ★★★

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, this caters for the all-round gamer. The moves are more easily pulled-off than in *Tekken*, but *Soul Blade* still offers some of the fastest, most beautiful beat-'em-up action on the PlayStation. An interesting one-player "story" mode maintains the longevity, making the whole package top fun for very little money. ★★★★★

Street Fighter Alpha 3
 ■ Capcom ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Street Fighter Collection 2
 ■ Virgin ■ £40 **Fun-filled retro fisticuffs** The original *Street Fighter 2: World Warrior* is fun despite its simplicity, thanks to the careful balance struck between the assorted pugilists. *SF2: Championship Edition* is good for similar reasons, while *Turbo Hyper Fighting* is also entertaining, but even faster. Arcade-perfect, uncomplicated enjoyment. ★★★★★

Watch out for

Games that are heading into the charts right about now.



Driver
 ■ 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 make for added fun. ★★★★★



Warzone 2100
 ■ EIDOS ■ £35 **Intuitive futuristic war sim** The excellent controls, which complement the on-screen menus perfectly, help lift this above the status of the usual C&C clone. With long-lasting missions, deliciously large weapons and explosions, and a pleasing depth of play, this is the PSX's best strategy game. ★★★★★



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. ★★★★★



Sports Car GT
 ■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Glitchy, ugly driving mess** Satisfying handling and a good choice of cars, but woeful presentation. ★★



Street Fighter Alpha 3
 ■ Virgin ■ £40 **Supremely polished 2D fighter** Each fighter comes in three variations, enabling you to pick one whose technique suits your style, and the addition of a meter showing your defences weakening is inspired. Including all your *SF* fave characters, this is the most enjoyable, *Street Fighter* game in years. ★★★★★

Tekken 3

■ 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 ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Tekken 3

■ Namco ■ £45

Accomplished slapping

A major improvement to the prequels in almost every way – graphically flawless and the new moves add something for both newcomers and veterans. 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 **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. It's a bit slow and sluggish, and lacks variety, but there's plenty to get your teeth into. ★★★★★

■ 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. It's a bit slow and sluggish, and lacks variety, but there's plenty to get your teeth into. ★★★★★

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

Bombberman 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

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. ★★★★★

Cool Boarders 2

■ Sony ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

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 ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Formula 1 '97

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Realistic**

F1 sim A much-needed follow up to the original *F1 '96*. All the stats, drivers, tracks and fag ads are there, along with increased responsiveness and much more realistic opposition. The two-player mode is disappointing. ★★★★★

Formula 1 '98

■ Psygnosis ■ £35

Purportedly accurate

driving sim Inadequate views, horrendous handling and a physics engine that's simply wrong. ★★

Gran Turismo

■ SCE ■ £45 **Probably the**

best racer in the world Take one measure of outrageously good graphics, another of near-perfect handling, throw in pinches of immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, add a dash of replay mode, and you've the recipe for an unmissable pleasure pie.

Sony has packed its little black disc with a hefty number of vehicles and courses and made sure it all plays perfectly. A masterpiece, and likely only to be bettered by the sequel. ★★★★★

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-clenching difficulty and niggling faults. ★★

Micro Machines v3

■ Codemasters ■ £20 **Tiny**

cars race around your living room The old top-down 2D game souped up into pseudo-3D for a modern audience, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a perfect overhead camera, plenty of amusingly behaved vehicles and a multi-player game that's as beautifully designed as Philipa Forrester. The speed is occasionally bewildering, but that's part of the game's 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 3

■ EA Sports ■ £20 **Pelt**

along avoiding the Fuzz Plenty of modes to make the game last longer, great graphics and a good sense of speed. The chance to leg it from the police and the two-player mode make this the best *NFS* so far, but the eight officially licensed cars and eight short tracks just aren't enough. ★★★★★

Need For Speed: Road Challenge

■ Electronic Arts ■ £40

Competent cop-chasing Once the novelty of being chased by the Fuzz has worn off, 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

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Rocket-**

speed arcade racing Improves upon its prequel no end, with a polished (solitary) track, faster speeds, better handling and gorgeous, rendered scenery. The racing that results is fast, satisfying, and very 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

■ SCE ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

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.* ★

Rushdown

■ Infogrames ■ £35 **Biking,**

canoeing and snowboarding Instantly forgettable. ★

Sports Car GT

■ EA ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

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 clunky tanks enjoyable. ★★

TOCA Touring Car

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

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 intense difficulty, this would be the perfect racer, with accurate courses and speed, and a smoothness 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

■ Infogrames ■ £20 **See**

"Top 20"

WipEout 2097

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Face-**

flapping space-age

hovercraft races A better bet than the original *WipEout* for the casual racer, as the learning curve is gentler, and with a new, more difficult racing class that 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 rough around the edges. ★★★★★



Sports

Actua Ice Hockey 2

■ Gremlin ■ £40 **Average**

frozen water exploits This looks and sounds impressive, and provides the option to up the game's tempo, but the lack of an official license might be a deterrent to purchase. ★★

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 ropery 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 and "bomb tennis" sub-game to pick up some limited laughs. ★★

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

Unique leather-on-willow

sim This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard half the time, but surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ★★★★★

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 your golf too seriously. And who does, apart from that Faldo chappy? ★★★★★

FIFA 99

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

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-upperry, 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! ★★★★★

Libero Grande

■ Namco ■ £35 **Original**

slant on footy Control just one player for the duration of an entire match. Glitchy and tedious. ★★

Madden NFL 99

■ EA ■ £40 **Admirable US**

footy sim Tons of stuff to do and alter, and options to skip the more complicated features. 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 have been recreated 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. ★★★★★

NHL 99

■ EA ■ £40 **Ice hockey for**

mother puckers Too many goals, married with too little action. Disappointing. ★★

NHL Face Off '99

■ Sony ■ £35

Comprehensive-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. ★★

Player Manager: Season '98/'99

■ Infogrames ■ £40

Comprehensive but

unwieldy coachmanship A huge UK and foreign player roster and detailed tactical options offer great scope, but the dummys menu system makes it the game unmanageable. ★★

Sensible Soccer: European Club Edition

■ GT Interactive ■ £30 **Old-**

skool soccer update Tedious footy, where shooting and passing are toe-curlingly difficult. ★★

Premier Manager 99

■ Gremlin ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

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. ★★★★★

UEFA Champions League

■ EIDOS ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

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 Interactive ■ £40

See "Top 20"

Akuji The Heartless

■ EIDOS ■ £40 **Voodoo-**

inspired puzzly platformer A creepy *Tomb Raider*-style romp with switch-pushing and ledge-jumping. Plenty of graphical wizardry, but tedious, simple gameplay. ★★

Batman & Robin

■ Acclaim ■ £30 **Lacklustre**

platform/puzzle tie-in A mixture of various gaming styles that doesn't gel. ★

Crash Bandicoot 2

■ SCE ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Croc

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

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 uninspiring 2D

platform fare The beautifully detailed backdrops and cinematic cut scenes can't rescue the frustrating trial-and-error gameplay. ★★

Hercules

■ SCE ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Jurassic Park The Lost World

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Dino Spiel**

Control your dino trudging across a dull 3D landscape. ★★

Mickey's Wild Adventure

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Ninja: Shadow of Darkness

■ EIDOS ■ £25 **Sneak about**

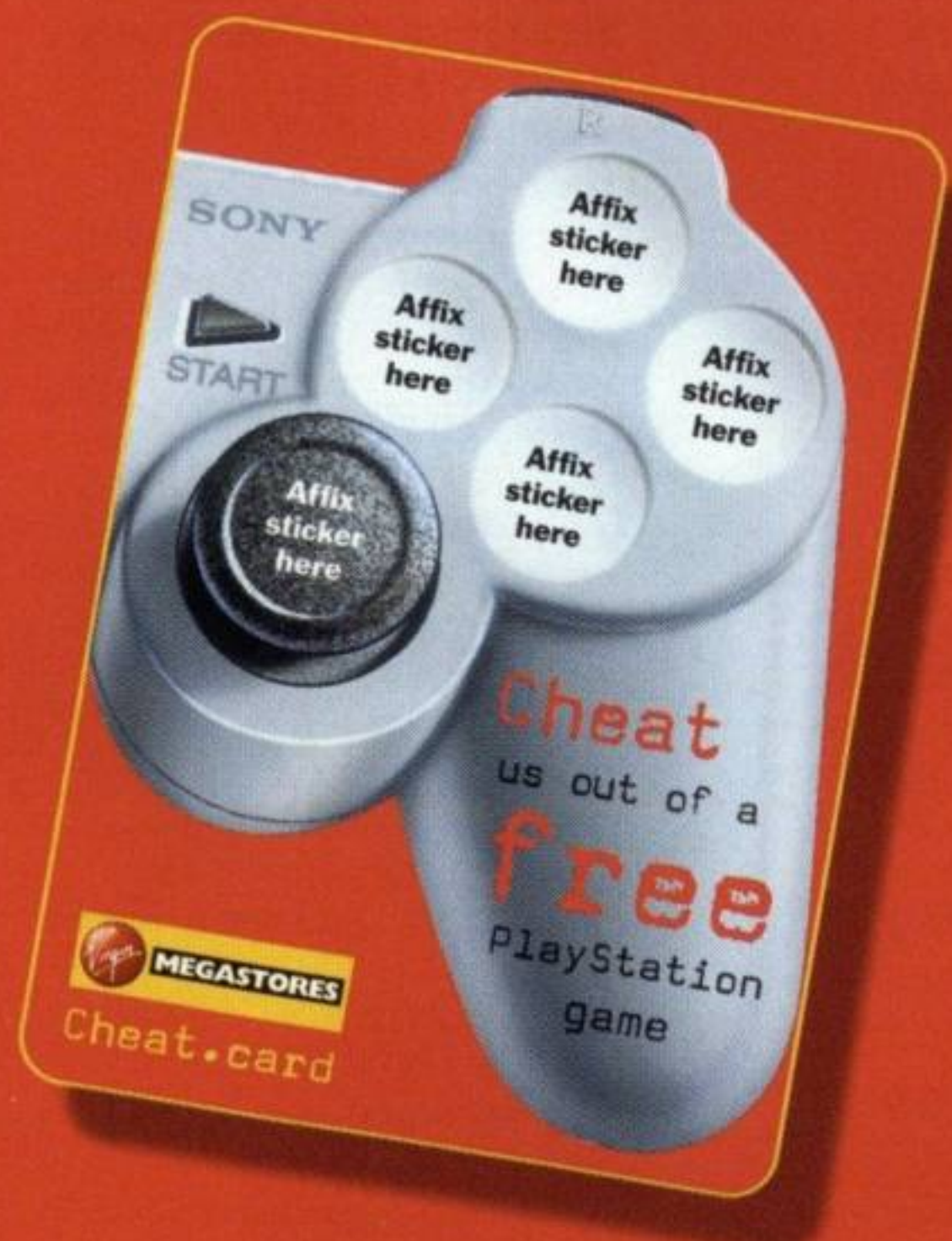
in a Tomb Raider stylee A third-person wanderer, with a great range of punches, kicks and magic. Enjoyable, but difficult, and with an odd camera system. ★★

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

■ GT Interactive ■ £20

Puzzly platformer with agile

Dare
you
cheat
on
me?



DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION AT



Tomb Raider III & Lara Croft © & TM Core Design Limited 1998.
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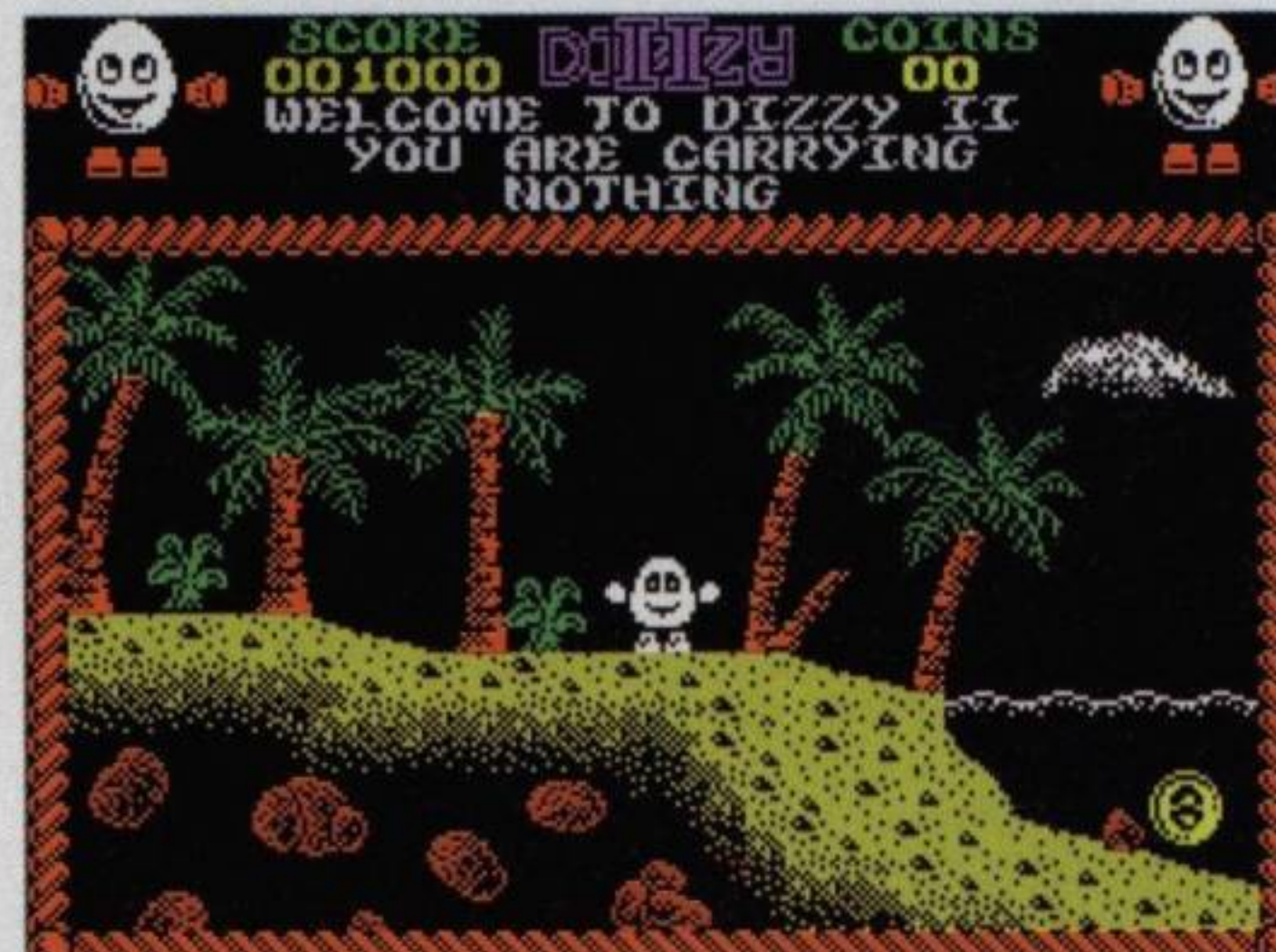


THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE

I'm so dizzy...

Treasure Island Dizzy leaves Mark Green with a pain in his brain and egg all over his face.

■ Spectrum ■ Platformer ■ 1986 ■ Codemasters



I'd never been a big fan of Dizzy, anyway. The bouncing egg with the wobbly arms and persistent inane grin started in a series of identical object-collecting platformers in the '80s, and it was their £2 price tag that had made a success of the shelled one. The only thing about the oval wonder that made me smile was the thought of the little sod being forcibly squeezed through and out of a fat hen's unmentionables.

As usual, my views made me a club with one member. So when my friend Owen suggested that we power up the Speccy and have a stab at *Treasure Island Dizzy*, the second in the series, I gave in, anxious to avoid the kind of humiliation that came when people discovered you hated the egg. My capitulation occurred, despite possessing the knowledge that Owen's "Let's have a go on Dizzy" would be translated in the Owen-to-English phrase book as "I'll have a go on Dizzy, and... well, you can watch."

Two hours. Two-hundred-

and-forty full minutes of watching my friend guide that bloody egg left and right, through forests and villages and lakes, collecting coin after coin after coin. And all the while, Dizzy's gloved little hands vibrated away, his ear-to-ear grin staring out at me, as if to say, "Who's the real idiot? An irritatingly happy omelette-to-be, or the boy who spends a sixth of his day staring at him trotting back and forth?"

I could at least console myself that there was a purpose to this tedium, as Owen needed only one more coin to complete the game. And then he died. But the pleasure of seeing Mr Egg scrambled by a set of deliciously sharp spikes was no consolation for having the faint light at the end of the tunnel suddenly snuffed out. Once again, as so often in life, I sloped home exhausted and disappointed. But not before Owen had forced me to sit through the whole of '80s teen comedy flick *Weird Science*. Where's the justice?

Shooters

Colony Wars: Vengeance

■ Psygnosis ■ £35 Epic space battling This sequel takes you and your spaceship through a variety of first-person missions and all-out explosive battles. It's off-puttingly methodical, but there's enough realism to make *Star Wars* fans wet their pants. ★★★★★

B-Movie

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 '50s-themed shoot-the-aliens game An amusing 3D shoot-'em-up with a mission-based slant and cartoony alien ships flying about. Odd controls and a high difficulty level ensure frustration. ★★★

Doom

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 Seminal first-person corridor shoot-'em-up Superb conversion of id's breakthrough first-person shooter. Just in case you've been wearing a blindfold for the last few years, *Doom* sees you playing a squaddie traipsing through futuristic dungeons, making bloody holes in whatever he meets. The graphics are years out of date, but this merely enables the excellent level design and gameplay to shine. ★★★★★

Duke Nukem: Time To Kill

■ GT ■ £25 Time-travelling alien blast Twelve levels of killage seen from a *Tomb Raider*-style perspective. Fun for a short while, but ultimately repetitive, dodgy looking and difficult to control. ★★★

Point Blank

■ SCE ■ £35 Light gun 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. Get your mates and some beer round, and 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 a ton of guns at a host of buildings, tanks and installations. Difficult, but fun. ★★★★★

Time Crisis

■ Namco ■ £20 Trigger-happy first-person fun The innovative "duck and reload" option is present, as are the G-Con 45 light-gun and the host of bad guys to pump lead into. Both make for exciting, bloody and flowing play that relies on pure speed. With bonus levels available as a reward for perseverance, don't worry about the longevity, just feel the power. ★★★★★

Strategy/God

Warzone 2100

■ EIDOS ■ £35 See "Watch out for"

Command & Conquer

■ Virgin ■ £20 The original real-time strategy A complicated but accessible point-and-click war sim, where it's up to you to 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 also starting to date. The design of the levels and speed of the action make it a bit of a bargain, though, so we advise you to get it in while you can. ★★★★★

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

■ Virgin ■ £30 Update of the above This sequel sees a number of improvements, including better graphics and a brilliant, though often neglected, link-up game. If you don't come to the massacre with a mouse, then knock a star off the score for the difficulty you'll have controlling your tiny warriors, but otherwise this is a fine strategy title with loads of missions. ★★★★★

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 if you have a link cable. Clicking on and navigating your troops has been made a lot easier than in *Red Alert*, and the graphics are clearer too, but it's incredibly 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 commendable translation of the PC title, which sees you forming tribes to worship you and destroy your enemies, is easily controlled and big enough to last weeks. It's pleasingly involving and the 3D visuals create a great sense of freedom. ★★★★★

The Hospital

■ EA ■ £30 Medical resource management This build-your-own-hospital-and-cure-comedy-illnesses strategy pales next to C&C and the like, and the lack of a PSX mouse can make it an absolute sod to play. ★★★

Warzone 2100

■ EIDOS ■ £35 See "Watch out for"

RPGs

Final Fantasy VII

■ SCE ■ £45 150 hours of epic adventure Takes all the usual RPG staples (moving around a landscape, chatting to locals, solving puzzles) and tarts them up with cut-scenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and a story that will have you emotionally involved. Even the linear plot and apparently random battles can't mar this near-perfect adventure experience. ★★★★★

Guardian's Crusade

■ Activision ■ £40 Isometric, action-based story A fast-moving RPG with plenty of interaction, in the form of chatting, killing and spell-casting. The interesting "raise-your-own-dragon" sub-game is great. ★★★

The Granstream Saga

■ SCE ■ £35 Pedestrian role-player set on floating islands A promising plot that reveals a set of obvious, simplistic puzzles. ★★

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

■ SCE ■ £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. ★★★★★

Hard Edge

■ Sunsoft ■ £40 Boring Resident Evil-alike Horribly complicated maps in this tedious puzzle-solver. ★★

Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 4

■ Taito ■ £30 Bubble-bursting brilliance A 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 and more frenetic play, and the story mode levels add some novel bits, too. Don't bother laying out any more cash for this if you already own an earlier version, though. ★★★★★

Devil Dice

■ SCE ■ £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. ★★★★★

Lemmings Compilation

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Multiple midget mayhem** Click on little men to help them avoid traps and get safely home, and then scream at the screen in frustration. All a bit dated now. ★★★

Live Wire

■ Sci ■ £30 **Dot-to-dot dullness** Compete squares to colourise tiles on a board. An unpleasant mess. ★

Sentinel Returns

■ Psygnosis ■ £10 **Classic '80s strategy puzzler** Absorb the Sentinel, who sits on the highest point on the 3D chequerboard 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, with successful moves affecting 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 **Interesting quest to match coloured balls** Rather more leisurely variant of Bust-A-Move, where the balls swing around at gravity's whim. It's eventually an insanely addictive experience, but you'll need real patience to master it. ★★★

Yo Yo's Puzzle Park

■ JVC ■ £30 **Fun bomb-blasting head-scratcher** Set off bombs to brutally maim your enemies, Bomberman style. The innocent quality of the play is endearing, but the differently-themed levels and power-ups make things complicated. ★★★★★



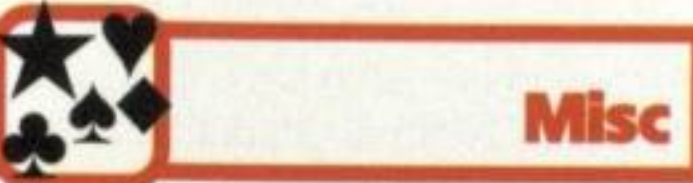
Party

Bomberman

■ Virgin ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Monopoly

■ Hasbro ■ £35 **Popular board game re-born** Why would you even bother? ★



Misc

Die Hard Trilogy

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Grand Theft Auto

■ Platinum ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Music: Music Creation for the PlayStation

■ Codemasters ■ £35 **Custom-build your own techno** Create your own toons by manipulating little chunks of music and pictures. Too difficult for novices and too insulting for pros. Worth contemplating for that post-club, too-knackered-to-race, chill-out session, though. ★★★

Poy Poy 2

■ Konami ■ £40 **Multi-player chuck-a-thon** Run around, pick up all sorts of stuff and then throw it at your opponents. Funny – especially with friends – but ultimately too confusing. ★★★

Wing Over 2

■ JVC ■ £40 **Stupidly simple shooting game** Sparse and unnecessarily ugly. ★

Spice World

■ SCEE ■ £20 **The fab five... er, four** Choreograph cartoon Spices to grating music. Lord have mercy on their popstastic souls. ★

SECONDHAND BARGAINS | Seen one of these? Snatch it up quickly!

Bushido Blade

■ SCEE **Pugilism for purists** Using trad weapons, and with characters who drop to the floor after just one hit, this is the beat-'em-up favoured by true purists. Once you've played other, more cartoony, scrappers it takes time to adjust to fighting this way, but there are rewards a-plenty if you persevere. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

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 it every bit as intuitive as its great predecessors. ★★★★★

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, wooaahhh!" 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 towards correcting this. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

Fade To Black

■ EA **Over-the-shoulder space-age adventure** Looking its age, but still a commendable mix of puzzles, running and shooting. 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 complete 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. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

SNAP IT UP

PaRappa The Rapper

■ Rapping ■ SCEE



■ Imminent PaRappa the Rapper sequel Um Jammer Lammy is good – don't get us wrong – but it can't come close to the first game in terms of sheer rapping delight.

Pumping the PlayStation's joypad buttons in time to the music would share the enjoyment factor of shelling peas, if it wasn't for the hilarious vegetable/animal characters and the ferocious funkiness of the tunes. Chop Chop Master Onion-Head's kung fu-inspired rap – including the inspired line "Kick! Punch! It's all in the mind!" – is probably the game's best, but your foot will also be tapping along to Inspector Mooselini's driving school song, and Cheap Cheap the Cooking Chicken ("I'm doing this for years, but don't ask me why"). An absolutely inspired offering. ★★★★★

SMACK IT DOWN

Worms

■ Party ■ Sold Out



■ Why? Why is Worms so popular? It's regularly to be found dogging up the peaks of chart country, despite starring spineless, slimy invertebrates who scream in the same teeth-clenching high-pitched tones that made the Chipmunks so irritating in the first place.

The game itself simply isn't any fun – taking turns to lob uninspired and unwieldy weapons at your opponent's wriggles is fiddly and repetitive, especially as it's so easy to blow your own worms into oblivion with a carelessly placed explosive charge. Worms' concept is a leftover from when simultaneous multi-player play was impossible to implement, and it's about time these annelids were quietly forgotten. ★★

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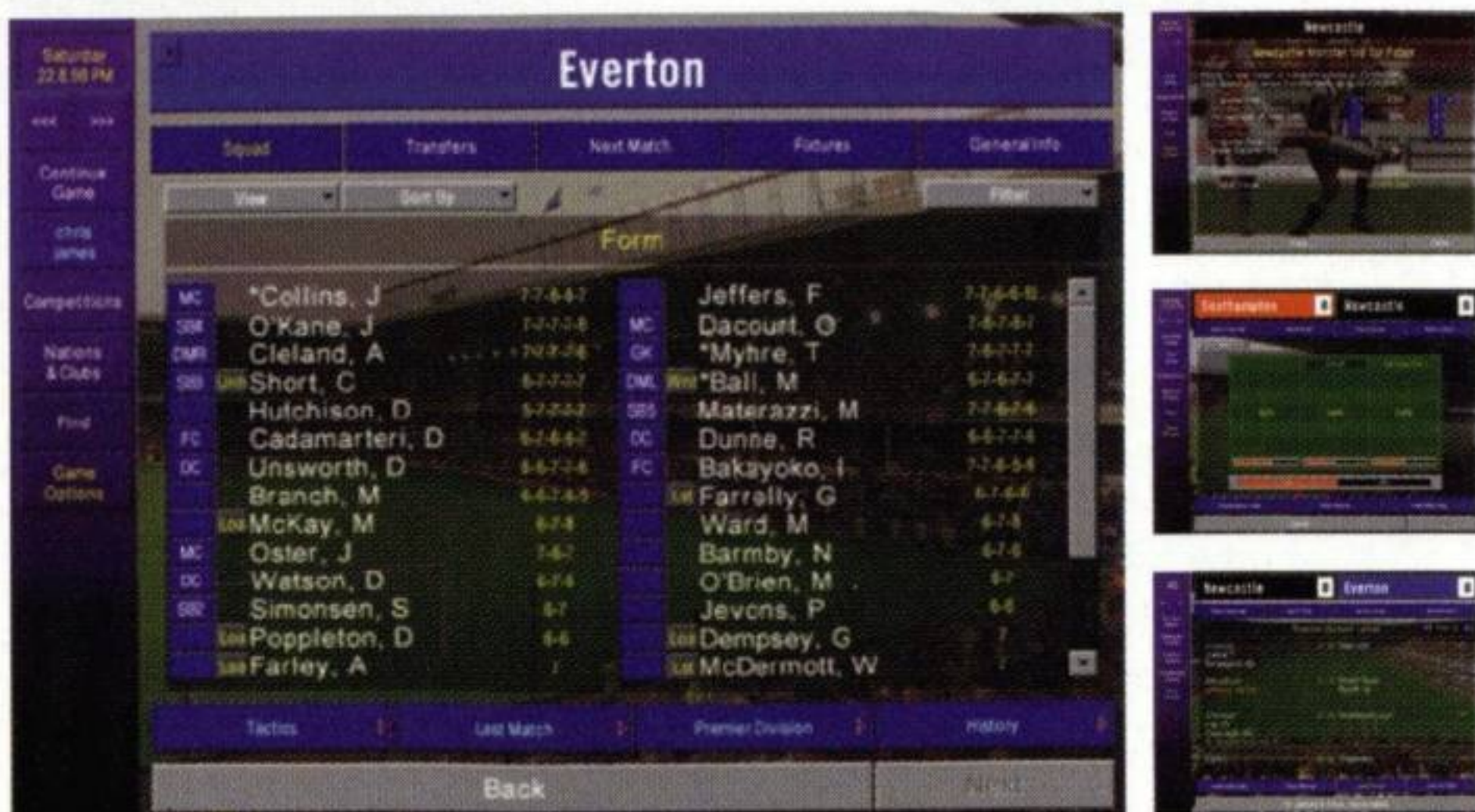
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PC Top 20

The most seductive games on the shelves this month.



1 (-) Championship Manager 3 ■ Sports ■ EIDOS ■ £30
Out-coach Hoddle No fancy graphics, but the 16 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, which uses a drop-down menu system, works a treat. With a comprehensive tactics editor on board, too, the opposition might as well hang up their boots. ★★★★★



2 (-) Star Wars: X-wing Alliance ■ Shooter ■ LucasArts ■ £30
A final outing for the classic universe At last, you get the chance to fly Han Solo's Millennium Falcon, and the intuitive interface and difficult missions make it very enjoyable. Add impressive detail and atmosphere, and you get the definitive Star Wars blaster. ★★★★★



3 (-) Civilization: Call To Power ■ Activision ■ £35
Real-time populace production Nurture a society from 4000BC to the future, indulging in a fair amount of all-out war along the way. A lasting challenge, no-one should be disappointed by this. ★★★★★



4 (3) 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. ★★★



5 (4) TOCA 2 Touring Cars ■ Racer ■ Codemasters ■ £35
Heavily realistic revs Even with 15 cars jostling for position in front of you, *TOCA 2* never threatens to look anything but stunning. The realistic handling makes free-wheeling over the varied courses a pleasure, and the added support races supply extra value-for-money. If you're not impressed with this, you'll have a hard job finding anyone to agree with you. ★★★★★



6 (8) Superbike World Championship ■ Racer ■ 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. With practice, you'll experience some thrilling racing. ★★★★★

7 (-) Jimmy White's 2: Cueball ■ Sports ■ 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. ★★★★★

8 (4) Sim City 3000 ■ Strategy ■ 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. None of the battles you'll see in so many strategy titles, but still old-fashioned fun. ★★★★★

9 (5) 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. ★★★★★

10 (-) Grand Theft Auto: London ■ Misc ■ 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 don't supply much excitement beyond that offered by the original. ★★★

11 (-) 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 this month because the Melissa e-mail virus is panicking PC owners. ★★★★★

12 (-) Grand Theft Auto ■ Misc ■ 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. ★★★★★

13 (-) Commandos: Beyond The Call... ■ Add-on ■ EIDOS ■ £20
Extra missions for the strategy shooter Eight new levels, as ludicrously difficult as the original *Commandos* game. A number of new abilities and puzzles, but no attempt to fix the faults of the original. ★★

14 (11) FIFA 99 ■ Sports ■ EA ■ £35
Long-running official footy update All the visual frills, but scoring goals is too easy – especially with the speedy players – and the programmers don't seem to care about footy. More suited to beginners than anyone looking for satisfying goal-mouth adventures. ★★★

15 (14) Delta Force ■ Shooter ■ 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. ★★★★★

16 (7) Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £35
A new beginning Re-create Earth's society with several clicks of a mouse. It looks dull, but it offers an endless challenge and is full of neat details that'll keep you on the edge of your seat. ★★★★★

17 (19) The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield ■ Adventure ■ Fox ■ £20
Novelty cartoon adventures A splendid version of the funniest TV show on Earth, with all your favourite characters putting in an appearance and a plot that reflects the intelligence and humour of the show. ★★★★★

18 (18) Theme Hospital ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £13
Ailment-based real-time strategy Assume the role of hospital manager in a quest to build the perfect emergency ward and cure your patients of comedy illnesses. Interesting at first, but gradually becomes more and more repetitive. And it just isn't funny. ★★★★★

19 (10) Baldur's Gate ■ RPG ■ Virgin ■ £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. ★★★★★

20 (15) 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, true pleasure comes from indulging in the tricky tasks proper. ★★★★★

Also on sale...
Fighters

Fighting Force ■ EIDOS Premier ■ £13
Brave but repetitive beat-'em-up This interactive 3D environment is fun, but ultimately clumsy. ★★

Virtua Fighter ■ Sega ■ £15
Speedy arcade punch-'em-up Smooth, fast version of a polygonal 3D beat-'em-up that many still regard as the best of the genre. Its quick, button-stabbing style of play is welcome, and its basic visuals don't matter a jot with so little competition on the PC. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

Destruction Derby 2 ■ Psygnosis ■ £10
Hit-and-run rivalry Fine as a normal racing game, but better as an all-out smash-'em-up that provides edge-of-your-seat thrills. Great tracks, genuine speed and smart computer cars, too. ★★★★★

Excessive Speed ■ Iridon ■ £15
Faulty isometric racer Weightless car-handling and 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. ★★★★★

Mad Trax ■ Black Friar ■ £30
Futuristic bottle-necking Bad handling, bad opponents, bad collision-detection, bad trip. ★★

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 the starting grid. ★★

Motorcross Madness 3D ■ Microsoft ■ £35
Motorbikes and dirt tracks A huge array of racing modes and more tracks than you can shake a Kawasaki at. No two-player, but a fair amount of racing thrills. ★★★★★

Rollcage ■ Psygnosis ■ £35
Wacky futuristic WipEout rival Annoying physics and frustratingly kamikaze racing. ★★

Watch out for

These are the games set to be chart-darlings any time now.



Expendable ■ Rage ■ £35
Old-fashioned top-down scrolling shooter Impressive graphics, but the 18 levels of blasting are dull, dull, dull. ★★



Lander ■ Psygnosis ■ £40
Futuristic shooting-cum-exploring flight sim Initially cumbersome controls give way to a frustrating 3D "collect the objects" game that owes more than a little to classic title *Thrust*. ★★



Redline ■ Electronic Arts ■ £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 either *Half-Life* or *Quake*. ★★★



Turok 2 ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Gloriously gory dino-hunting Identical to the N64 version, this fluid, complex shooter is made too easy by the combination of the PC mouse and the option to save at any time. ★★



South Park ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Horrendously poor TV tie-in Dreadful first-person shooter. ★

TOCA 2 Touring Cars
 ■ Codemasters ■ £35
 See "Top 20"

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 Ⓔ
 ■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Rubbishy go-kart racing** Rubbish. ★

Sports

Actua Soccer Ⓔ
 ■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Flawed football frenzy** Great commentary, good-looking graphics and loaded with atmosphere, but let down by fiddly controls and camera perspectives. ★★★

Championship Manager 2 Ⓔ
 ■ EIDOS ■ £15 **Take your team to the top** Attractive at its bargain price, but looking a little out-of-date now, and still far too easy. Nevertheless, it's engrossing and packed with details. ★★★★★

Championship Manager 3
 ■ EIDOS ■ £30 See "Top 20"

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 See "Top 20"

Jimmy White's 2: Cueball
 ■ Virgin ■ £30 See "Top 20"

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? ★★★★★

Madden NFL 99
 ■ EA Sports ■ £35 **Oval-shaped ball sim** A proper simulation of American footy, with all the options, tactics, bells and whistles included. Only really recommended to die-hard fans, though. ★★★

Microsoft Golf '99
 ■ Microsoft ■ £25 **Familiar-looking pitch-and-putt** Six beautiful courses with all the usual weather and skill options, and mouse click-driven gameplay that's sadly identical to the version released last year. ★★★

NBA Live 99
 ■ EA ■ £35 **Slam-dunking fun that's very well done** Although it's too easy, mainly because of the limited computer opposition, *NBA Live 98* never pretends to accurately represent basketball. It controls well, looks fantastic and provides a wealth of options. ★★★★★

NHL 99
 ■ EA ■ £20 **Big-budget ice hockey extravaganza** EA's bulging wallet has paid for strong team intelligence, a sensible learning curve and a superb look and feel. Despite the speed (which may upset some), the feeling of being in control of your team never deserts you. ★★★★★

Pool Shark
 ■ Gremlin ■ £30 **Run-of-the-mill spherical outing** Offers nothing new over other pool games, and stupidly replaces the accepted control system with an unwieldy and annoying power-bar system. Grrrr. ★★★

Savage Arena
 ■ Rage ■ £35 **Sociopathic, violent future sport** The pace makes for over-difficult play. ★★

Superbike World Championship
 ■ EA ■ £35 See "Top 20"

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 rearies. ★★★★★

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. ★★★

X Games Pro Boarder
 ■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Funky frozen freestyling** The graphics don't look particularly special, but there are enough crazy moves and tree-high flips to keep you amused. The multi-player suffers, though. ★★★

Platformers

Asghan
 ■ Grolier ■ £30 **Third-person hack-and-slash** Woefully poor. ★

A Bug's Life
 ■ SCEE ■ £35 **Disney-based 3D** Disappointing – a ropery, monotonous run-about. ★★

Deathtrap Dungeon Ⓔ
 ■ EIDOS Premier ■ £13 **Tomb Raider-style Dungeons & Dragons** Ugly, uninspiring and utterly unenjoyable. ★★

Heretic II
 ■ Activision ■ £20 **3D medieval marauding** A traditional three-dimensional 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. ★★★★★

Starshot: Space Circus Fever
 ■ Infogrames ■ £25 **Curious French 3D platformer** Leap gaps 'til you're sore. ★

Zool 2 Ⓔ
 ■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Painfully antiquated side-on platformer** Positively stunted by today's standards. ★

Shooters

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. ★★★

Commandos: Beyond The Call Of Duty
 ■ EIDOS ■ £20 See "Top 20"

Expendable
 ■ Rage ■ £35 See "Watch out for"

Half-Life
 ■ Sierra ■ £35 See "Top 20"

Hardwar Ⓔ
 ■ Gremlin ■ £10 **Exciting mix of trade and combat** Unofficially updates the great 8-bit space-trading game *Elite* for the late '90s. The environment is enormous, but the gameplay is hampered by too much waiting around. ★★★★★

Jedi Knight Ⓔ
 ■ Activision ■ £15 **Classic Force-d 3D** A timely re-release for this exciting *Star Wars* *Quake*-a-like. The Force itself crops up in a surprisingly meaty role, and the level designs and puzzles have had some genuine thought put into them. For both fans and enemies of the film. ★★★★★

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 See "Watch out for"

Quake II
 ■ Activision ■ £20 **Seminal first-person baddie-beater** More of the same, but that's 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 hang on 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
 ■ Electronic Arts ■ £35 **Tanks, guns, guns and more guns** An 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. A touch repetitive after a time. ★★★★★

Redline
 ■ EA ■ £35 See "Watch out for"

Shogo: Mobile Armour Division Ⓔ
 ■ Microids **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 perfectly 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 heartily big guns of *Duke Nukem*. Unfortunately, *Half-Life*'s done it all better. ★★★★★

South Park
 ■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Watch out for"

Spec Ops: Rangers Lead the Way
 ■ Gametek ■ £30 **First-person war soldier sim** Complete five missions where stealth and the need to learn tactics are vital. The graphics and AI are top, but you'll need a top-notch PC to go with them. ★★★★★

Star Wars: X-wing Alliance
 ■ LucasArts ■ £30 See "Top 20"

Thief: The Dark Project
 ■ EIDOS ■ £35 **Medieval sneak-'em-up** A first-person shooter with the brazen room-crashing and gun-toting replaced by *Metal Gear Solid*-style sneakiness. Atmospheric, but unabsorbing. ★★★★★

Trespasser
 ■ EA ■ £40 **Disappointing dino shooter** Blasting diplodoci is difficult, dull and depressing. ★

Turok 2
 ■ Acclaim ■ £40 See "Watch out for"

Unreal
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **Accomplished and moody first-person blast** This has to be the fastest, most enjoyable *Doom* clone available for 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. ★★★★★

Wages of Sin
 ■ Activision ■ £20 **Unappealing first-person fare** Cinematic mood and pacing, 17 missions and seven new weapons, but it lacks the tension of **Half-Life**. Good hover-bike deathmatch, though. ★★★★★

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 we'd 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

Anno 1602
 ■ Infogrames ■ £20 **Run-of-the-mill point-'n'-click stuff** Build villages, manage resources – it's all here, including land and sea-based combat and pretty 3D graphics. Sluggish, though. ★★★

Axis & Allies
 ■ Hasbro ■ £35 **Passable Risk-style board game** Take control of one of five superpowers and do combat with dice-rolls. Great for wargaming fans (specially when played over the Net), but dull for the rest of us. ★★★★★

Battle of Britain
 ■ Take 2 ■ £40 **Tedious war simulation** Determine the right planes and troops for the situation. So very boring. ★★

Beasts and Bumpkins Ⓔ
 ■ EA Classics ■ £13 **Carry On-style population builder** Smutty asides and dopey sound effects are negated by the challenging scenarios and intelligent learning curve. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

Cannon Fodder Ⓔ
 ■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Take control of miniature armies** The controls make guiding your little men across the World War battlefield intuitive, but not easy. Slightly dated. ★★★★★

Civilization: Call To Power
 ■ Activision ■ £35 See "Top 20"

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. ★★★★★

Close Combat III: The Russian Front
 ■ Microsoft ■ £35 **Montgomery-'em-up** Bark orders at military units, watch them advance over enemy lines, then listen to their horrifying death screams. More immediate than the usual tile-based war sims, this is easy to get to grips with, yet complex enough to satisfy. ★★★★★

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 varied units with individual skills and realistically-vulnerable soldiers. The emphasis on stealth creates absorbing play – 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 See "Top 20"

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 the sense of humour and finely-tuned gameplay will hook you. ★★★★★

Gangsters
 ■ EIDOS ■ £40 **Brain-hurtingly complicated mob control** This '30s-set mob-'em-up combines the best bits of both *Sim City* construction games and turn-based strategy titles. Tricky controls, but rewardingly complex. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

Incubation Ⓔ
 ■ Blue Byte Classics ■ £10 **Takey-turney 3D fare** Fantastic visuals and customisable camera angles help make the tired "save humans from alien attack" plot a little more exciting. Detailed and absorbing. ★★★★★

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 strategical step away from the action of previous *MechWarrior* games, *Commander* boasts clearly laid-out logistics, intricate detail and superb level design. ★★★★★

Pizza Tycoon Ⓔ
 ■ Sold Out ■ £5 **Run your own Dominos** Dated, cluttered and ponderous restaurateur sim, which fails to grip. ★★

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"**

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

EA ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

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's equal measures of good, head-hurting strategy and all-out shooting action. ★★★★★

Sim City

Infogrames ■ £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 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 **See "Top 20"**

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 Wars: Supremacy

LucasArts ■ £10 **Write your own plot** An R2-D2-with-the-top-removed-sized bin full of strategies, with overly complex gameplay. ★★

Theme Hospital

EA ■ £13 **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 resource-manage until you're blue in the face. The combat isn't up to scratch, but it's beautifully designed and fine-tuned. ★★★★★

This Means War

Sold Out ■ £5 **Isometric 3D warfare** More point-and-click action as you save the world from a computer virus, but it's fiddly and over-complicated. ★★★

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. ★★★★★

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 non-stop videos of the recent Gulf War-type incident, and the option to control battles from either the squaddies' boots or the commander's throne, *Wargasm* is a comprehensive death-'em-up. ★★★★★



RPGs

Baldur's Gate

Virgin ■ £35 **See "Top 20"**

Fallout 2

Interplay ■ £35 **Old-skool RPG** As you find your way around in 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

Cendant ■ £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 gives the game away. Still, it's approachable, easy to use and fun. ★★★★★



Adventures

Beneath A Steel Sky

Sold Out ■ £5 **Quaint old-skool adventure** Point and click to escape from a dark cyberpunk-style metropolis. A brooding atmosphere, and puzzles to rival anything from LucasArts. ★★★★★

Broken Sword

Sold Out ■ £5 **Gallic adventures** One of the best examples of the adventure game genre, where talking to people and clicking on objects to solve puzzles advances the storyline. The puzzles are logical, the story is involving, and the characters and conversations are amusing. As a bonus, it even succeeds in being funny. Treasure this fact. ★★★★★

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. Great to look at and to listen to, but a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly top notch. ★★★★★

Dark Vengeance

GT ■ £40 **Elfin adventure** Ruinous camera and controls. ★

The Guardian of Darkness

Cryo ■ £40 **Paranormal investigations** Question peasants and shoot-up ghosties. Painful and incoherent. ★★

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 this towering above everything else. The puzzles are obscure, but you'll forgive the game this, thanks to its neat touches, absorbing plot and downright loveliness. ★★★★★

Gruntz

Microids ■ £20 **Lemmings-style creature management** Get your Gruntz back home by instructing them to walk, fight or use items. Pedantic and frustrating – for puzzle obsessives only. ★★★★★

Resident Evil 2

Virgin ■ £30 **Zombie-filled scares** Shoot zombies and collect objects on a quest to get to the root of the G-Virus outbreak. Sufficiently scary and loaded with atmosphere, but the fixed camera obstructs gameplay. ★★★

Sanitarium

Mindscape ■ £35 **Crazy talk** Start the game trapped in a lunatic asylum and fight your way out. The text is stilted and linear, and the adventure infuriating, but it's still engrossing. ★★★

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. ★★★

Titanic: Adventure Out Of Time

GTE ■ £20 **Live-action adventure** Nothing at all to do with the film. Bad. ★

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. ★★★

Lands of Lore II

EA Classics ■ £13 **Adventure and action combined** Search for a cure to your character's animalism. Too much FMV and lots of unnecessary running and jumping, but the spell-casting and puzzles are well handled. ★★★



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 by placing time-bombs in their path. 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** One of the most addictive puzzlers 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 provides much more of a challenge than you'd think, with the particularly addictive two-player mode highlighting the overall brilliance of the idea. ★★★★★



Flight sims

Apache Havoc

Empire ■ £35 **Proper war flight sim** You're in a war, which will carry on regardless of whether you're actively 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 extraordinarily 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. Rather good, then. ★★★★★

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 last force acting on your aircraft, and planes designed to react to a clip with the ground in the same way as 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. ★★★★★

Flight Simulator '98

Microsoft ■ £40 **Ultra-realistic aeroplane antics** This isn't designed for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to get the hang of. In that it's supposed to be a true flying experience, the controls are difficult to use, however some of the graphics are less realistic than you might like. There's also a nightmarishly-difficult-to-control helicopter included as a "bit of a laugh", too. ★★★★★

Flight Unlimited 2

Eidos Premier ■ £15 **Buzz around San Francisco** Enough scope to keep armchair pilots entertained for months. Slightly anal, but with detailed scenery and a series of exciting adventure scenarios. ★★★★★

IF/A-18E: Carrier Strike Fighter

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're offered to do in future levels. ★★★★★

Jane's Combat Simulations: WWII Fighters

EA ■ £35 **The FIFA of flight sims** Both the vehicles and the ground look sufficiently realistic, and there's a host of planes available for you to crash. Damage and physics are both handled realistically, and there's the chance to put together your own missions. ★★★★★

SNAP IT UP

Frontier: Elite 2

Space combat ■ Game Tek



If you remember the days when *Technician Ted* seemed like a good name for a game, you'll remember the stunning space trading/combat game *Elite*. 1992's *Frontier*, the official sequel from *Elite* co-author David Braben, wasn't the faultless update *Elite* fans were hoping for, but it was close enough for most.

The freedom the game offers is the key to its compulsive nature, and there's an impossibly expansive, accurately mapped galaxy at your disposal, whether you're trading, blasting, or simply exploring in mind. The 3D graphics are stark by today's standards, and the accurate physics (which see your ship take a whole week to accelerate to a decent speed) can be annoying, but the sheer sense of liberation hasn't been bettered. ★★★★★

SMACK IT DOWN

Pandemonium 2

Platformer ■ Ubisoft



The first *Pandemonium* hardly received an ecstatic welcome, so why developer BMG wasted its time with a sequel is a mystery – although from the looks of the thing it only took a couple of days to knock out. The frustratingly restrictive pseudo-3D pathways are present and correct, as are the intensely dislikeable duet of central characters; a repulsive Jester and his sister, who's had her breasts surgically enhanced in a feeble attempt to ensnare the *Tomb Raider* audience. The gameplay is as grotesque as the good lady's over-sized bust – run, jump, run, bounce on enemy heads, jump, run, *ad nauseum*. Please, BMG, if the seeds of *Pandemonium 3* are fertilising in your mind, pour weed killer on them now. ★

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 archaic arcade antiques** The cold light of the '90s exposes these titles as woefully simplistic. ★★

The Biggest Names, The Biggest Games

■ EA Classics ■ £25 **Aptly-named six-pack** Theme Hospital, SimCity 200, The Need For Speed 2: Special Edition, Dungeon Keeper, Warhammer: Dark Omen and Nuclear Strike. If you're not a fan of god games or strategy titles, this collection loses much of its appeal, but otherwise you won't find a duffer contained within. The classic build-your-own-metropolis title SimCity is worth the 25 smackers alone. ★★★★★

Ultima Collection

■ EA ■ £40 **Seminal titles collected** Ten games from the last 20-or-so years, but this suffers the same fate as most retro groupings; yesterday's faves are inestimably dull compared to today's delights. ★★★

World of Combat 2000

■ Novalogic ■ £35 **Budget real-world combat sim** Fancy getting your hands on a military helicopter, jet fighter or tank? Of course you do, and this is the compilation for you. All the vehicles are based on genuine military specs, and the controls are 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, plucked from LucasArts' back catalogue and bundled together at a budget price. Rather than being standard licensed tat, these titles offer frenetic and exciting Star Wars-themed blasting and, as the first two instalments here have been rejigged and improved graphically, this compilation is a must. ★★★★★

Misc

Grand Theft Auto

■ Take 2 ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Grand Theft Auto: London

■ Take 2 ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

M1 Tank Platoon 2

■ MicroProse ■ £13 **Tin-can exploits** Keeping your eye on the map, while driving the tank, and shooting two lots of enemies with two different guns is certainly unwieldy, but it's also action-packed, good-looking and broad ranging. ★★★

The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield

■ Fox ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Nintendo 64 Top 20

The games appealing to N64 owners all over the country.



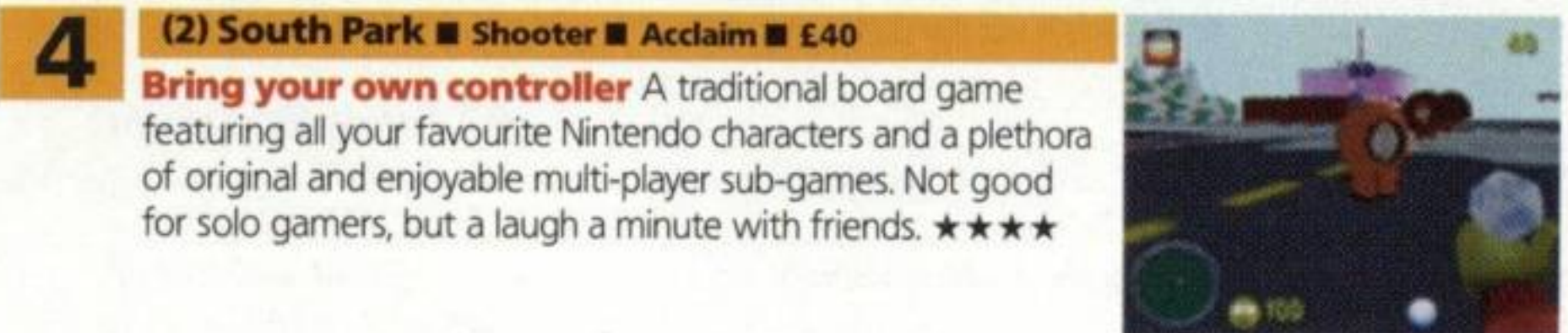
1 (1) FIFA 99 ■ Sports ■ EA ■ £40
Licensed balls-up Sadly, EA has wasted the fancy official stamp. Every team, kit and player is contained within, but sluggish controls, unconvincing visuals and disappointing simplicity are the main faults. Things have improved slightly since the last instalment, but it simply doesn't play a convincing game of football, and with the far-superior ISS '98 sitting on the shelves, you'd be a fool to plump for this. ★★★



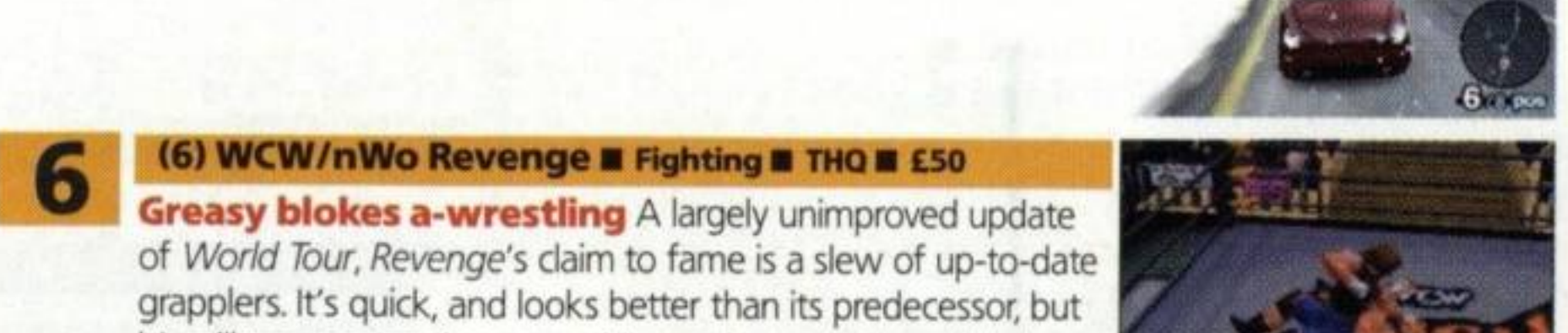
2 (3) Star Wars: Rogue Squadron ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £40
A 16-mission battle against the Empire Marries arcade excitement with authentic Star Wars visuals and sounds. The action is slow, but the ships, enemies and locations are there, and it's surprisingly involving. Star Wars fans will find little wrong with this. ★★★★★



3 (5) Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £50
The best game in the world ever Keeps all of the traditional Zelda hallmarks and wraps them up in a beautifully realised 3D world. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been fine-tuned until they're perfect. A marvel. ★★★★★



4 (2) South Park ■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £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. ★★★★★



5 (-) Beetle Adventure Racing ■ 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. ★★★



6 (6) WCW/nWo Revenge ■ Fighting ■ 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. ★★★

7 (-) Vigilante 8 ■ Racer ■ 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. ★★★

8 (4) 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. ★★★★★

9 (4) 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. ★★★★★

10 (13) 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. ★★★★★

11 (10) Body Harvest ■ Shooter ■ 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 a treat. ★★★★★

12 (16) F1 World Grand Prix ■ Racing ■ 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. ★★★★★

13 (11) 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. ★★★★★

14 (12) Banjo-Kazooie ■ Platformer ■ 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 manages to knock Mario from his perch. ★★★★★

15 (14) Super Mario 64 ■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
The king of 3D platformers A masterpiece, with huge levels, sublime controls and totally immersive gameplay. As with all Miyamoto games, it slowly sucks you in and refuses to let go, and its full-on 3D graphics still have the power to impress. ★★★★★

16 (9) Virtual Pool ■ Sports ■ Interplay ■ £40
Decent balls sim As exciting a version of pool as home 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 actively searching for a pool title. ★★★★★

17 (15) 1080° Snowboarding ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Snow-based racing A brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks to pull off, and loads of boards and courses for you to have a crack at. You get beautiful controls, brilliant replays and some suitably challenging racing. ★★★★★

18 (17) V-Rally ■ Racing ■ 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. ★★★★★

19 (20) 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. ★★★

20 (-) Automobili Lamborghini ■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Drive around racetracks A lack of options, decent course, and proper handling adds up to a driving experience worth forgetting, despite the cool cars on offer. ★★★

Watch out for

Keep an eye out for these sneaking into the charts any day now.



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. ★★★



Flying Dragon ■ Interplay ■ £40 **Competent arcade fighter** Two games in one: a "serious" option and a "super deformed" version with bulbous-headed cartoon characters. Good value, but the fighting itself is too limited. ★★★



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. ★★★★★



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 satisfying play. ★★★



Micro Machines 64 Turbo ■ Codemasters ■ £18 **Players Aged toy car racing** Top-down driving that's renowned for its unequalled multi-player fun. Unfortunately, it's almost too simple, and the format has already aged considerably. ★★★

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*. As with so many N64 games, it's too easy, but the excellent range of challenges ensures longevity. ★★★★★

Flying Dragon

■ Interplay ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Mortal Kombat 4

■ GT Interactive ■ £45 **Mad, bad blood-filled fist fight**

Simplistic fighting but a great deal faster than its rivals. An amusingly frantic pace keeps this loads of fun, but it's just too easy to pull off more complicated moves, and there's no innovation. Still a laugh-a-minute fighter, though. ★★★★★

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 **See "Top 20"**

Automobili Lamborghini

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Beetle Adventure Racing

■ EA ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

F-Zero X

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Quick-as-you-like space-age racer** The fastest, smoothest racer in the whole wide world, largely 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"**

Micro Machines 64 Turbo

■ Codemasters ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Snowboard Kids 2

■ Atlus ■ £60 **See "Watch out for"**

Top Gear Overdrive

■ THE ■ £35 **Devilish driving** The handling's a bit iffy, and it's all slightly unfair, but the track design, visuals and vehicles means that *TGO* serves up a funky four-wheeled treat. ★★★★★

Twisted Edge: Extreme Snowboarding

■ Nintendo ■ £45 **Slow races on white stuff** This is unattractive, too difficult, and lacks both speed and originality. ★★

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 G 2

■ 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. ★★★★★



Sports

All Star Baseball

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Realistic bat-on-ball action** Wide smiles all round for baseball fans, with smooth-looking players and gorgeous backgrounds. It's more of a straight sim than most other titles, and more thoughtful and challenging as a result. ★★★★★

All-Star Baseball 2000

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Comprehensive rounders-with-money sim** This leisurely interpretation of baseball is laden with options and astounding hi-res visuals. It's difficult, and the slow-paced play won't please everyone, but you can't fault the baseball within. ★★★★★

All Star Tennis '99

■ Ubisoft ■ £40 **Frilly pants and straws** 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. ★★★★★

FIFA 99

■ EA ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside

■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Basketball, but good** Effectively the *Madden* of basketball games, as it 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 beyond words. ★

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 enough options to enable you to shape the game to your requirements. It's tricky – defending, in particular, is a nightmare – but a sports game that's realistically difficult is a refreshing change. ★★★★★

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

Marvellous cueball interpretation As exciting a version of pool as home consoles are ever likely to see. The physics is faultless and the pleasingly spherical balls are very easy on the eye. As an actual game it's limited, but if you're actively searching for a pool title, you can't go far wrong with this. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★



Platformers

Banjo-Kazooie

■ Nintendo ■ £50 **See "Top 20"**

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 your long tongue** Unoriginal, boring and cumbersome. ★★

Gex 64

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **Rubbish reptilian roam-about** Laughable. ★

Lode Runner

■ Infogrames ■ £40 **See "Watch out for"**

Super Mario 64

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Mischief Makers

■ Nintendo/Treasure ■ £20 **Old school 2D plat action** Mad as you like, and decidedly old-school, but absolutely top-notch platforming action. Well-crafted levels, coupled with difficult-to-learn but effective controls, make for a whole crate full of fun. So who said 2D platformers were dead? ★★★★★

Mystical Ninja 2

■ Konami ■ £50 **See "Watch out for"**

Spacestation: Silicon Valley

■ Take 2 ■ £40 **Take control of animals** Kill animals and then manipulate their bodies to solve tricky puzzles. The graphics do their job well, the controls and puzzles are great, and the attention to detail is fantastic. ★★★★★

Starshot: Space Circus Fever

■ Infogrames ■ £30 **Weird French 3D jumpery** As usual, with 3D games, 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. ★★★★★

Yoshi's Story

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **2D platform antics with Mario's dinosaur mate** Largely an easier retread of the original *Yoshi's Island*, and subsequently suffering from few fresh ideas and a lack of initial challenge. But hidden areas and more difficult puzzles arise after determined play. ★★★★★



Shooters

Body Harvest

■ Gremlin ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Buck Bumble

■ Ubisoft ■ £45 **Honey bee-based shooting** Mission-based shooter with puzzle elements. There's a varied bunch of enemies, but the levels just aren't involving enough. ★★★★★

Doom

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **See "Top 20"**

Forsaken

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Futuristic space-tunnel hoverbike-shooter** The controls let this one down, but it's still a frantic and absorbing shoot-'em-up. Each tunnel is filled with robotic baddies for you to take out, at the same time as you try not to smash into the walls and die horribly. The graphics and the impressive lighting techniques will even impress your Mum. ★★★★★

GoldenEye 007

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **See "Top 20"**

Knife Edge

■ Microware ■ £30 **Into-the-screen action** Boring. ★

Quake 64

■ GT Interactive ■ £25 **Classic gory PC gun-fest** There's nothing really wrong with this, but 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 great fun is now taking a back seat to the rather more monotonous one-player game. ★★

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 **See "Top 20"**



RPGs

Legend Of Zelda: The Ocarina Of Time

■ Nintendo ■ £50 **See "Top 20"**

Castlevania 64

■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Platform-based drac delirium** It could have been great, but Konami's 3D version of its classic platformer is hindered by camera problems and inadequate game length. It's packed with atmosphere, though, and there's enough puzzling, jumping and vampire-killing to keep you interested. ★★★★★



Puzzlers

Bust-A-Move 3 DX

■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Multi-coloured spherical fun** So simple, and yet so utterly and hideously absorbing, this bubble-bursting sequel wipes the floor with most other puzzlers. There's a new four-player mode, and a ton of other options and challenges, although the story mode is a smidgen too easy. ★★★★★

SECONDHAND BARGAINS | Some of the best N64



Fighters

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. ★★

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

■ GT **Three speedy beat-'em-ups rolled into one** Diabolical, even given that there are three offerings rolled into one package. ★

War Gods

■ GT **Primitive fighter** A complete lack of moves and decent characters. ★



Racers

Automobili Lamborghini

■ Nintendo **See "Top 20"** A lack of options, decent courses and proper handling add up to a driving experience that's worth forgetting. ★★★★★

Extreme G

■ Acclaim **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. ★★★★★

F1 Pole Position

■ Ubisoft **Disappointing Grand Prix driving** Schumacher and friends shouldn't have to put up with this poor handling and terrible pop-up. ★★★★★

SNAP IT UP

Robotron 64

■ Shooter ■ GT Interactive



It's so very old-fashioned, and it looks awful, but *Robotron* is an enjoyable blast, especially if you're the kind of person who spent childhood Saturday afternoons with your hands wrapped around the double joysticks of the original arcade version. The game takes a while to get going – don't be surprised if you arrive at level 50 without the enemy having laid a robotic finger on you – and the incessant, banging hardcore soundtrack can become painful. However, there's an obvious pleasure that comes from gluing your finger to the Fire button and watching scores of metallic freaks explode in a shower of their own circuitry. ★★★★★

games – pick them up at a “bargain” price.



Shooters

Duke Nukem 64

■ **GT** ■ **Bad taste alien gunplay** No bare-breasted ladies this time, but still plenty of destruction and a decent four-player deathmatch. But isn't there a better first-person shooter out there? Some James Bond licensed thing or other? ★★★★★

Hexen

■ **Midway** ■ **Early goblin battler** Shoddy *Doom* clone that uses magic spells instead of guns. ★★



RPGs

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. ★★★★★



Puzzlers

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. ★★★★★

Tetrisphere

■ **Nintendo** ■ **£20** ■ **Tetris, in a 3D sphere** Less like the original *Tetris* than the name would suggest. 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. ★★★

Mario Party

■ **Nintendo** ■ **£40** ■ **See “Top 20”**

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. ★★★★★



Flight sims

Aero Fighters Assault

■ **Konami** ■ **Sky-based shooter from the team behind Pilotwings** Aerial dogfights against massive aircraft, and some huge submarines, but chock full of unforgivable flaws and levels you can complete in your tea-break. ★★



Misc

Blast Corps

■ **Nintendo/Rare** ■ **£20** ■ **Use a variety of vehicles to smash up buildings.** A truly unique game (the closest comparison is *Godzilla* emulator *Rampage*), and if you think knocking down buildings sounds like great fun, then you're right, especially when you have plenty of vehicles to control. It's easy, and you'll complete it quickly, but the additional goals will have you tearing hair out from all over your body. Yes, even there. ★★★★★

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? ★★★★★

SMACK IT DOWN

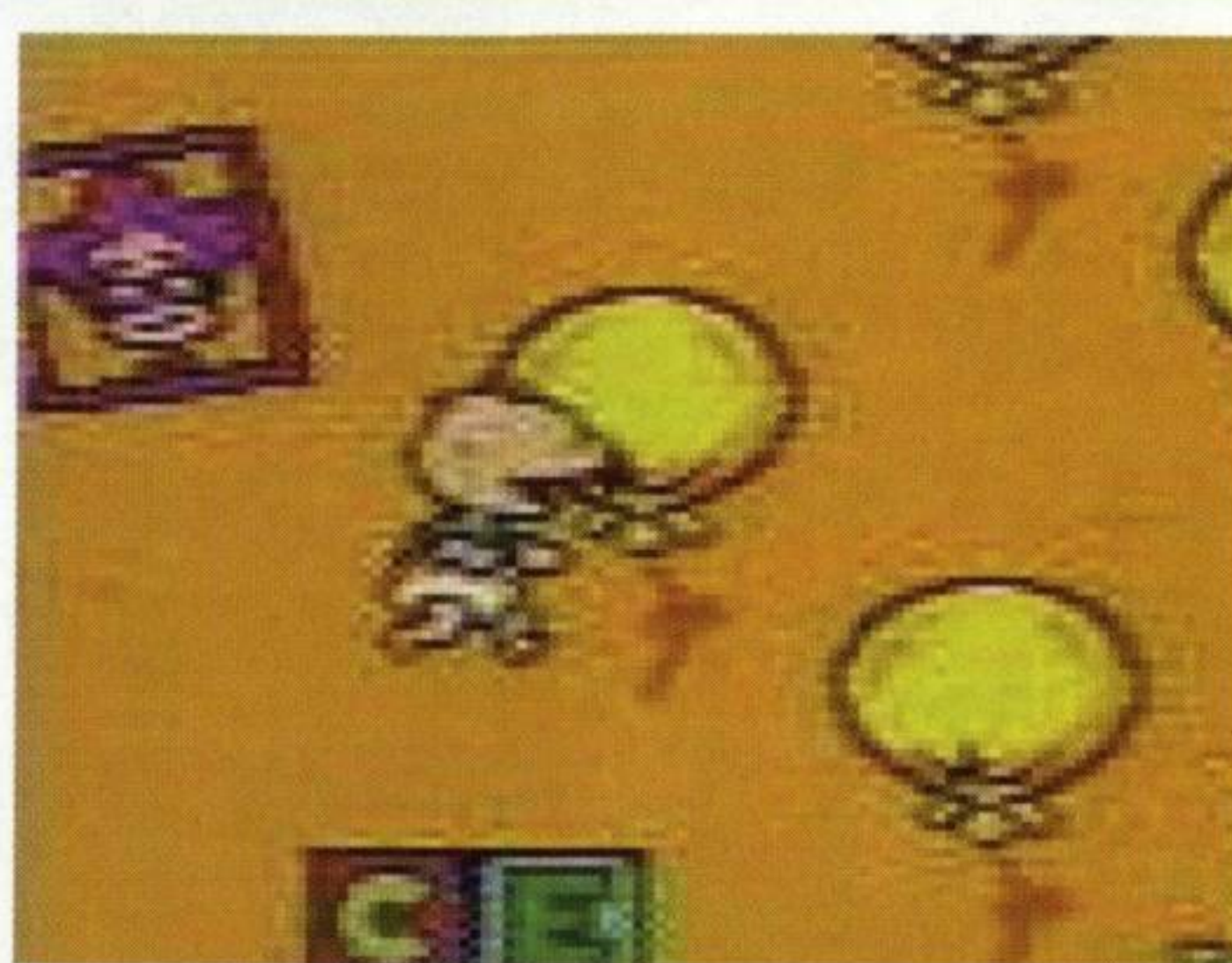
Quake 64

■ **Shooter** ■ **GT Interactive**



■ **John Carmack**, the brains behind id Software's original *Quake*, believes that the forthcoming N64 version of *Quake II* will be the most enjoyable console *Quake* ever. The original *Quake*, meanwhile, is a stark reminder that the cart-gobbling N64 is positively embarrassed when asked to match up to the PC's greatest first-person shooters. The unrelenting speed of the original remains intact, but the 3D polygonal enemies have been replaced by cardboard critters who move like toys, and there's an indescribable wrongness about the gameplay. And, of course, the multi-player game – the element that powered PC *Quake* to superstardom – is reduced to a proxy two-player deathmatch on the N64. No, no, no. ★★

Game Boy Top 5



- (-) **Rugrats** ■ **Platformer** ■ **THQ** ■ **£30**
Lacklustre cartoon tie-in A simplistic two-dimensional platformer that fails for exactly the same reason as the PlayStation and PC versions – it doesn't try hard enough. The colour is put to good use, as you'd expect, but the controls, character movement and level structure just aren't up to scratch. ★★
- (1) **Zelda DX** ■ **RPG** ■ **Nintendo** ■ **£25**
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? ★★★★★
- (2) **Game Boy Gallery** ■ **Retro** ■ **Nintendo** ■ **£10**
Five game-and-watch items Bundling five ageing unplayable handheld curiosities was never going to be a good idea, and even a set of updated versions with *Mario* and friends taking the starring roles can't make this any more interesting. ★
- (-) **V-Rally** ■ **Racer** ■ **Infogrames** ■ **£25**
Tip-top portable racetracks Eventful tracks, intelligent opposition and splendid scenery in this accomplished Game Boy racer. With four cars, 20 tracks spread over ten countries, and plenty of play modes, this'll last ages. ★★★★★
- (-) **Mario and Yoshi** ■ **Puzzler** ■ **Nintendo** ■ **£10**
Match-'em-up merriment An original brain-bender with a perfect learning curve and the best Nintendo characters along for the ride. Its shape-matching idea borrows from existing puzzlers, but that's no bad thing. ★★★★★

Also on sale...



Fighters

Mortal Kombat 4

■ **Midway** ■ **£25** ■ **Disappointing fight-'em-up** Old-style, with a very jerky feel. ★

Street Fighter II

■ **1 player** ■ **£15** ■ **Classic small-scale fighting** The graphics are great, but come at the expense of speed. Control is also tricky, since you have only two buttons to play with. ★★★

WWF Warzone

■ **Acclaim** ■ **£20** ■ **Rubbishy men-in-pants action** A bit of a looker, but with jerky animation and finger-snapping controls. ★★



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. ★★★★★

V-Rally

■ **Infogrames** ■ **£25** ■ **See “Top 5”**



Sports

NBA Jam 99

■ **Acclaim** ■ **£25** ■ **Comprehensive basketball sim** Plenty of options in this simplistic, arcadey interpretation of the sport. The constant to-ing and fro-ing gets a little tiresome. ★★

NFL Blitz

■ **Midway** ■ **£25** ■ **Arcade-style US football** Fast 'n' furious, with surprising depth, but – incredibly – the players suffer from the early-'80s problem of flicker, which makes tracking them across the pitch impossible. ★★



Platformers

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. ★★

Donkey Kong Land II: Diddy's Quest

■ **Nintendo** ■ **£25** ■ **Miniature monkey stories** Tries hard to squeeze the SNES game on to the tiny grey handheld, and doesn't do a bad job. The visuals require you to squint a bit, but the controls and secrets makes it a worthy *Mario*-style jump-about. ★★★★★

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. ★★★★★

Men In Black

■ **Interplay** ■ **£25** ■ **Film-licensed platforming tedium** Absolutely diabolical. ★

Montezuma's Return

■ **Take 2** ■ **£20** ■ **Unknown quantity, Max, returns** A little character jumping about. Too retro to be good. ★★

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 it's still frustrating, and lacks the original's lovely graphics. ★★

Pitfall: Beyond the Jungle

■ **Interplay** ■ **£25** ■ **Old-skool left-to-right gameplay** Leap over gaps, pick-axe scorpions, and so on. The super-precise jumps will annoy. ★★

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. ★★★★★

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 you gluing the Game Boy to your hand for a month. ★★★★★

Quest For Camelot

■ **Titus** ■ **£25** ■ **Swords and sorcery** Based on the cartoon, this *Merlin*-based quest is colourful and involving, but contains too much wandering. Second-best to *Zelda*. ★★



Puzzlers

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. ★★

Breakout

■ **Take 2** ■ **£20** ■ **Hit the bricks** Astonishingly straight conversion of the '70s coin-op. Why? ★

Centipede

■ **Take 2** ■ **£20** ■ **Shoot the insects** Ancient arcade game. Stupidly simplistic. ★

Frogger

■ **Take 2** ■ **Interactive** ■ **£25** ■ **Highway negotiation** Colourful, but so dated that it's hard to get excited about. ★★

Game & Watch Gallery

■ **Nintendo** ■ **£10** ■ **Four titles in one** These games are simple fun, but weren't the original handheld games always a bit rubbish? ★★

Game & Watch Gallery 2

■ **Nintendo** ■ **£20** ■ **Handheld retro** Five games and all enjoyable, especially the full-colour versions with *Mario* characters. ★★★★★



Misc

Hollywood Pinball

■ **Take 2** ■ **£20** ■ **Flippin' average** Some acceptable ball movement, but seven sparse, uninteresting tables. ★★

Rampage World Tour

■ **Midway** ■ **£25** ■ **Old-skool building-breaker returns.** Control King Kong and smash up buildings. Boring. ★

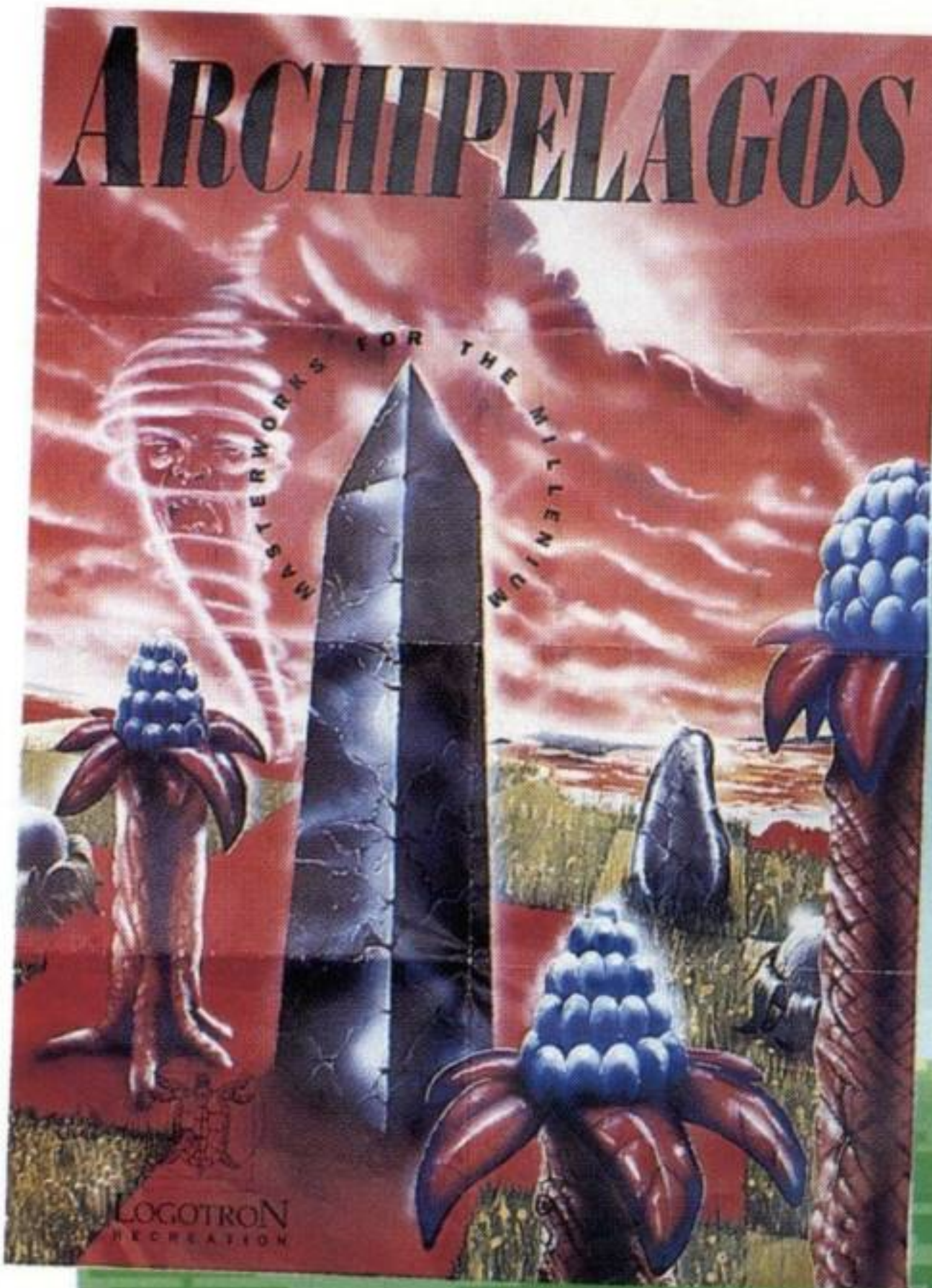
NEXT MONTH

■ So there you have it. A full 18,410 words of advice about the best (and the worst) games available in the shops now. That's a whole lot of words, and every one guaranteed to make sure you never spend money on a dud game again. **A**

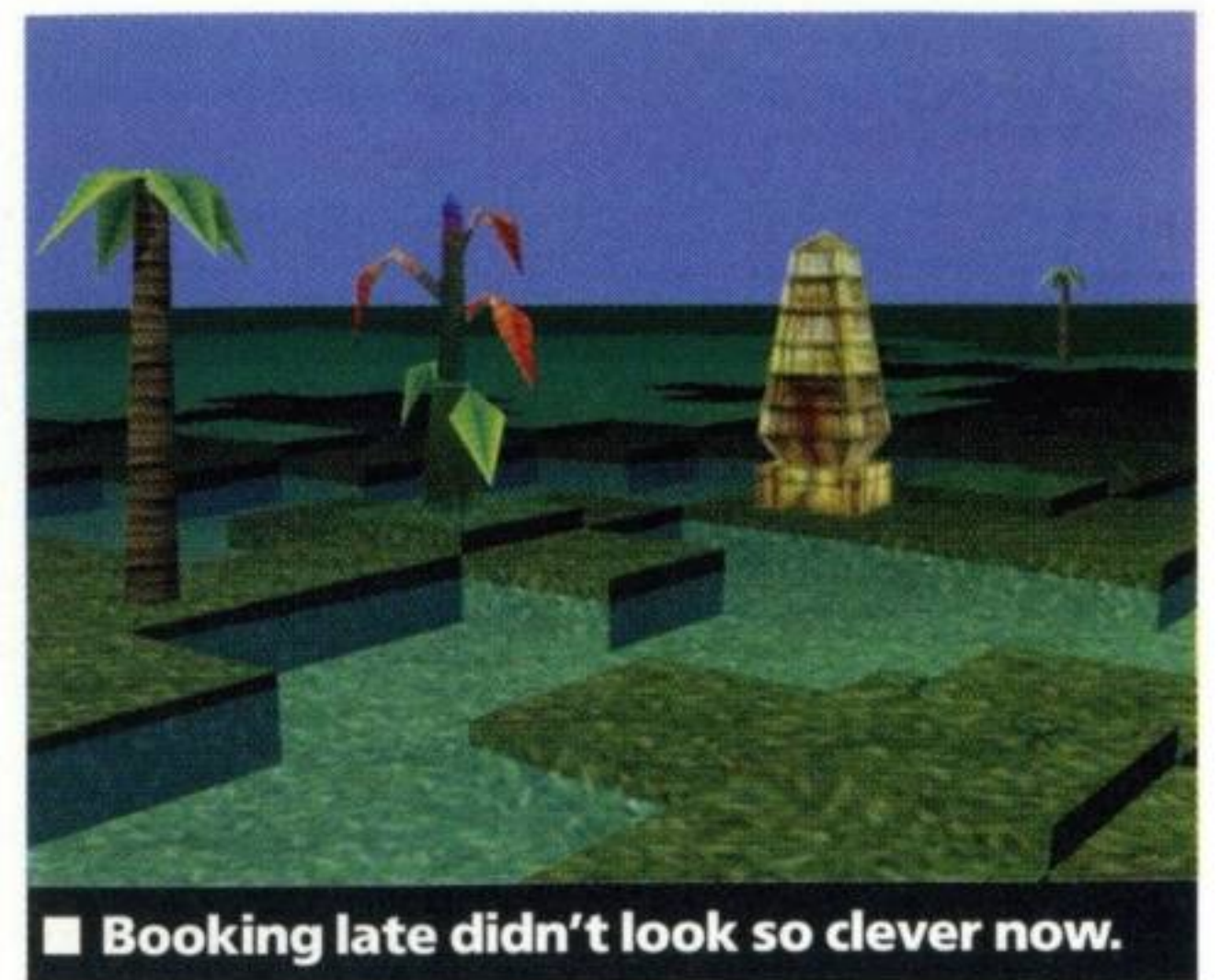
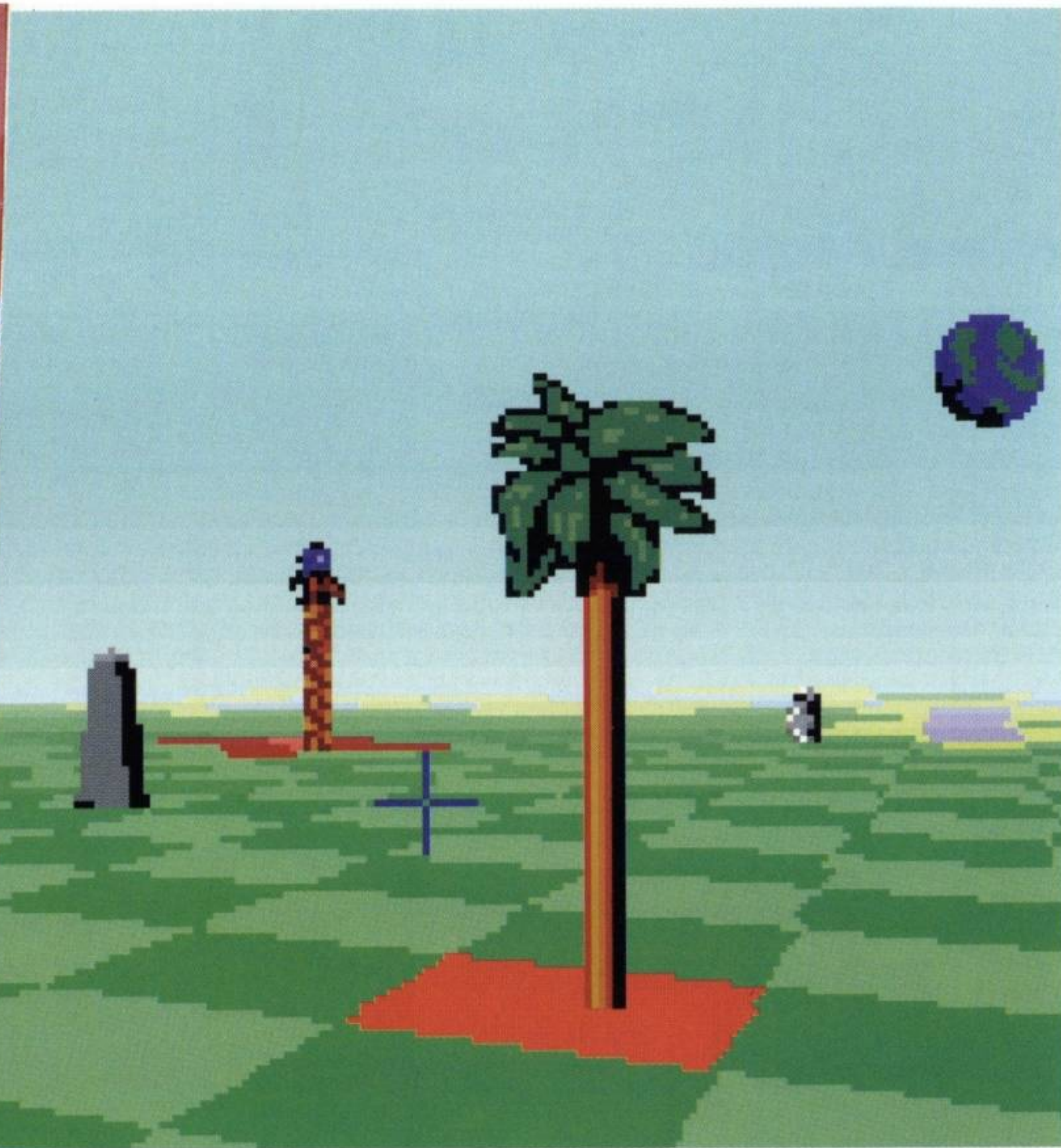
Compiled by | **Mark Green**

June 1989

Ten years ago today, the world was a place of robotic cops, whistling journalists and Sir Clive Sinclair (again).



■ *Archipelagos*, before the 1999 makeover. Ever heard of deforestation?



■ Booking late didn't look so clever now.

[Downend, developer on PC] crying with laughter on the way home after selling the idea to them on the strength of a hastily concocted screen mock-up. It featured a highly detailed 3D forest world packed with trees, bushes, plants, animals, clouds, buildings and God knows what else. I told them, 'This is what the game will look like,' and they bought it."

Ian Saunter, then at Logotron, quickly recognised the potential of *Archipelagos*: "My first reaction when I saw the game was 'It's weird, it's clever and it's very fast'. Paul and Ian had created a cool pseudo-3D system, the likes of which had never been seen before."

Nintendo's Super Nintendo console would boast similar "flat 3D" landscapes, but wouldn't arrive in Europe until 1992. "Writing a game in three dimensions was unusual at the time," recalls Paul. "I remember when my routines to create those 3D surfaces initially started to work. I couldn't believe my eyes."

So how did Paul manage to squeeze 10,000 distinguishable levels into the game? "Most were generated semi-randomly by the computer as you arrived, but every fifth level was pre-drawn by me and Ian. Some of them were sensible, like a wheel or a map of Britain, but a significant number were a bit more silly. One was a picture of a pig divided into its various meat cuts, while another was a representation of Mikhail Gorbachev's head."

Despite critical acclaim, getting *Archipelagos* into people's homes wasn't easy. "It's amazing and somewhat depressing to think how the games industry worked back then," says Ian. "A lot of it was held together with bits of string and sticky tape, and the whole process from game idea to hitting retail only ever worked because lots of enthusiastic nutters spent their lives running around like headless chickens to get stuff to happen. *Archipelagos* was no exception."

Did it sell well? "Very well indeed. It might have done even better if it hadn't been for *Populous*, from Bullfrog, arriving on the shelves around the same time, though."

So, what is Paul Carruthers doing now? Bizarrely, he's busy programming *Archipelagos*.

Exactly ten years to the day of the game's original release, an updated PC version is hitting the shops. "The gameplay hasn't changed at all," says Paul, "but now it works in full 3D, with animation, textures and lighting." Published by Sold Out, you'll find *Archipelagos 1999* in the shops for a mere £4.99. As Paul puts it: "Excellent value for money, I think you'll agree."

A slice of island life

Q **uestion:** from where have we pilfered this extract of text? "Sit inside a space and think, 'What is this place I'm sitting in?' Picture an island of palm and tropical sea, that's where it is you'd like to be. And if you wonder what's beyond that beach, just a little out of reach, just float there and you'll know." The next Spice Girls single? Nope. An essay describing the wonders of recreational drugs? Afraid not. It's actually the introductory paragraph from the manual to the extraordinary June 1989 Amiga and ST game *Archipelagos*.

Archipelagos (pronounced ark-ee-pel-a-go) was one of the games that gave 16-bit computers a leg-up on to the pedestal they occupied throughout the early '90s. The game's

simple-but-addictive concept – float around a patchwork map, building land bridges to connect rocks to a central obelisk – came coated in mesmerising, almost Dali-esque 3D landscapes (featuring eggs leaking blood and freakish "arboreal" trees) and a hypnotic soundtrack in the

"We cried with laughter after selling the idea using a hastily concocted screen mock-up."

vein of *Twilight Zone*. And – what with the promise of 10,000 unique levels – game fans couldn't help but be intrigued.

Before code for the game even existed, developer Paul Carruthers needed to get publisher Logotron interested in *Archipelagos*' unique – and therefore risky – concept. "I remember me and Ian

Archipelagos
 Publisher: Logotron
 Developer: Carruthers/Downend
 Genre: puzzle/strategy
 Platform: Amiga, ST, PC
 Players: 1
 Score: 910/1000 (Ace)
 "A delightfully-executed game that's fascinating from the first day."

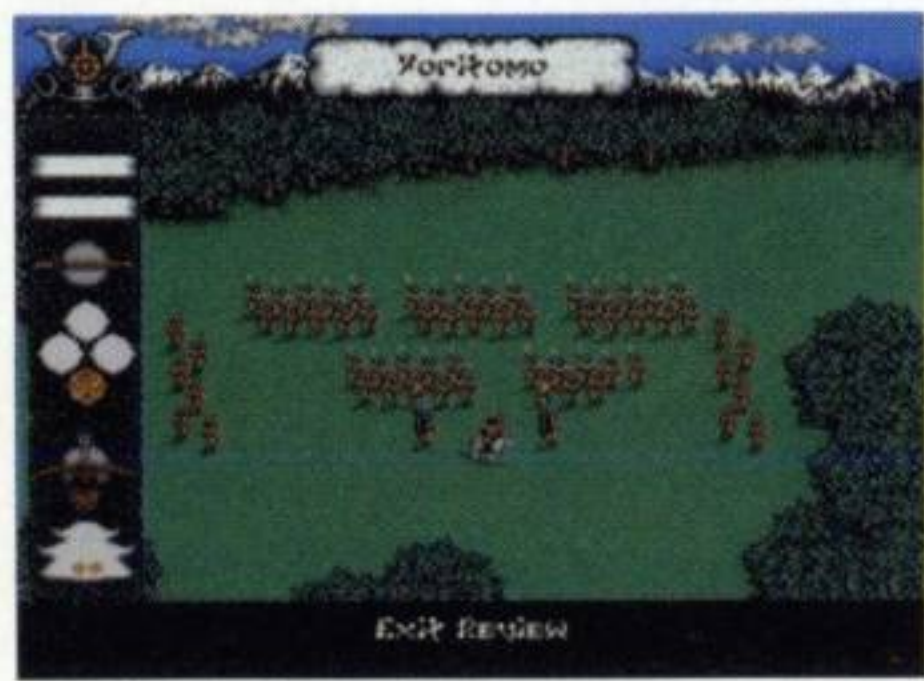
■ Terrifying tree time.

Games of the month | Horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups and... more horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups.



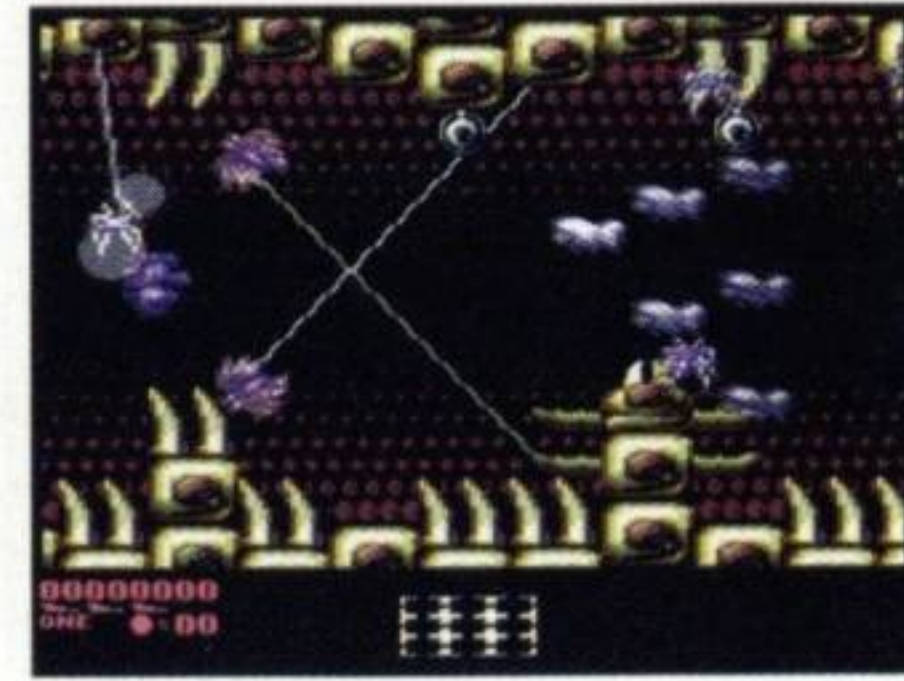
Blood Money

System: Amiga
Publisher: Psygnosis
 ■ In this horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up, Psygnosis combined fast gameplay with the company's trademark visuals and a sampled soundtrack. The two-player mode lifted it, but the price – £30 – was high for the time.
 ■ Score: 5/5 (New Computer Express)



Lords of the Rising Sun

System: Amiga
Publisher: Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft
 ■ Set in 12th Century Japan, this strategy/war game gave you the chance to storm castles and obliterate armies. The game relied on pictures more than involving gameplay.
 ■ Score: 4/5 (New Computer Express)



Phobia

System: C64
Publisher: ImageWorks
 ■ A horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up from renowned developer Tony Crowther, which offered little more than other shoot-'em-ups in the 8-bit computer world. Power-ups, gun turrets, aliens with claws and organic looks... yawn.
 ■ Score: 2/5 (New Computer Express)

Whatever happened to... Whistlin' Rick Wilson?

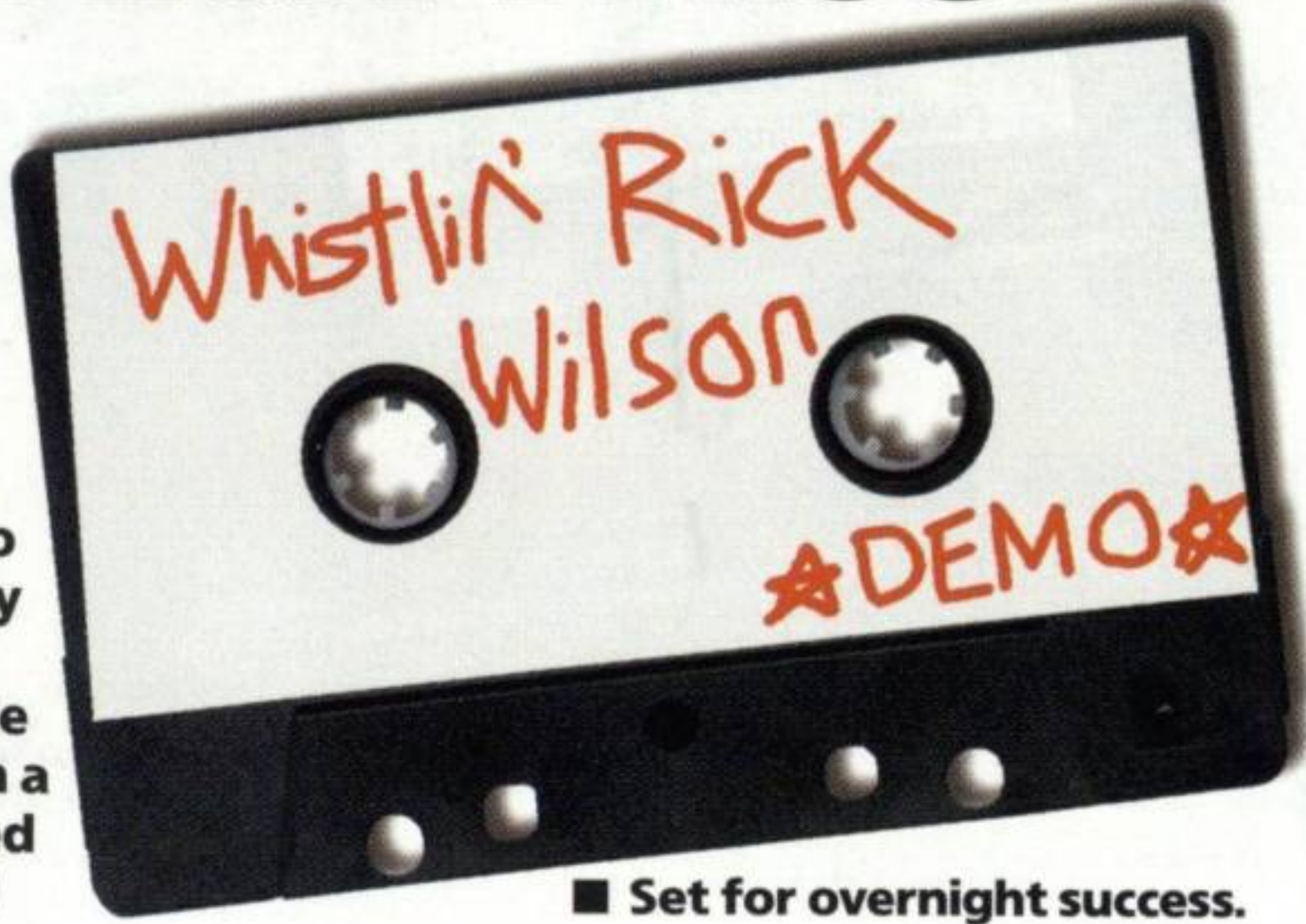
In the late '80s, 8-bit computer magazines got into the habit of recording games on to a cassette, which was attached to the front cover with paper-ruining sticky tape. The tactic worked – Spectrum and C64 owners flocked to newsagents to pick up their monthly fix of dismal games and demos. So why did *Your Sinclair* take up valuable space on the June 1989 cassette with a Rick Astley-style sing-a-long, warbled by a man with sideburns that would shame Engelbert Humperdink?

Step forward, Mr Dave Wilson, *Your Sinclair* staff member and the man behind "Hold My Hand Very Tightly (Very Tightly)". "Me and my friend were going to a wig party," explains Dave. "Rather than opt for an afro or other predictable hairpieces, we adopted stick-on side-burns and chest wigs." Thus, Dave's "crooning" alter-ego Whistlin' Rick Wilson was born.

It was only a matter of time before the fledgling star laid down a real-life track.

"My flatmate was Jim Wellman, a budding musician who served time with Diana Ross and The Brand New Heavies," explains Dave. "He'd come into possession of a Teak six-track portable recording studio, so we decided to write our own song." With Kylie, Jason and Rick Astley clogging up the music charts, manufactured pop seemed the way to go. "We decided to pen our own 'tribute' to all that," says Dave, "so Jim knocked together the tune while I wrote and performed the lyrics."

The resulting single was a minor classic. After a suitably forgettable bubblegum verse, full of "snuggling up" and "sugar honeys", Rick launched into the chorus. This central section was key, and saw the words "Very tightly" repeated four times, with



■ Set for overnight success.

a howling "Ooo-oo-oo" to finish. Then came a disturbing Paul Hardcastle-ish scratching break and the climax of the record had Rick living up to his name, whistling away a la Roger Whittaker.

Success seemed inevitable, but despite the quality of the tune and an airing on Philip Schofield's Radio 1 show, "Hold My Hand" was the last musical outing for Whistlin' Rick. Dave Wilson rose the corporate ladder to become European Head of PR at Electronic Arts, while *Your Sinclair* covertapes never featured audio tracks again. To find out more, see the tribute site at <http://homepages.enterprise.net/cavan/ysac/rick.shtml>, or enter our competition, below.

Win!



■ Misty-eyed nostalgia. Ahh!

Now you can hear the dulcet tones of Whistlin' Rick for yourself, with a chance to win an original YS issue 44 Megatape. Not only does it contain Dave Wilson's toe-tappin' tune, it also features two games for the Spectrum – *Skateboard Construction Kit* and a demo of *Buffalo Bill's Rodeo Games*. And, as if that wasn't enough, we've managed to talk pop star Dave into signing the cassette. Gaspl! So, to win this unique piece of Specky memorabilia, simply send us a postcard with the answer to the following question:

Which member of the *Arcade* team used to host *Your Sinclair's* Crap Game Corner?
a: Rich Pelley b: Dr Mark Griffiths
c: The Games Mule

For full set of rules see page 70. Closing date 15/07/99.

Gaming round-up | Also going on this month

■ Ocean's tediously formulaic movie tie-in *Robocop* smashed chart records with an 18-week reign at number one in the all-formats game chart, thanks partly to adverts placed on video copies of the film. As sales of videogames were undergoing a worrying dip at the time, the previous record-holder, 1985 charity compilation *Soft Aid*, still topped the bill sales wise.

■ Reports from Chicago's Computer Electronics Show put Atari's colour handheld (later to be named Lynx) well ahead of Nintendo's black-and-white effort, the Game Boy. "There's really no comparison between this and any other handheld," commented *New Computer Express*. "Atari's unnamed babe is a winner all the way



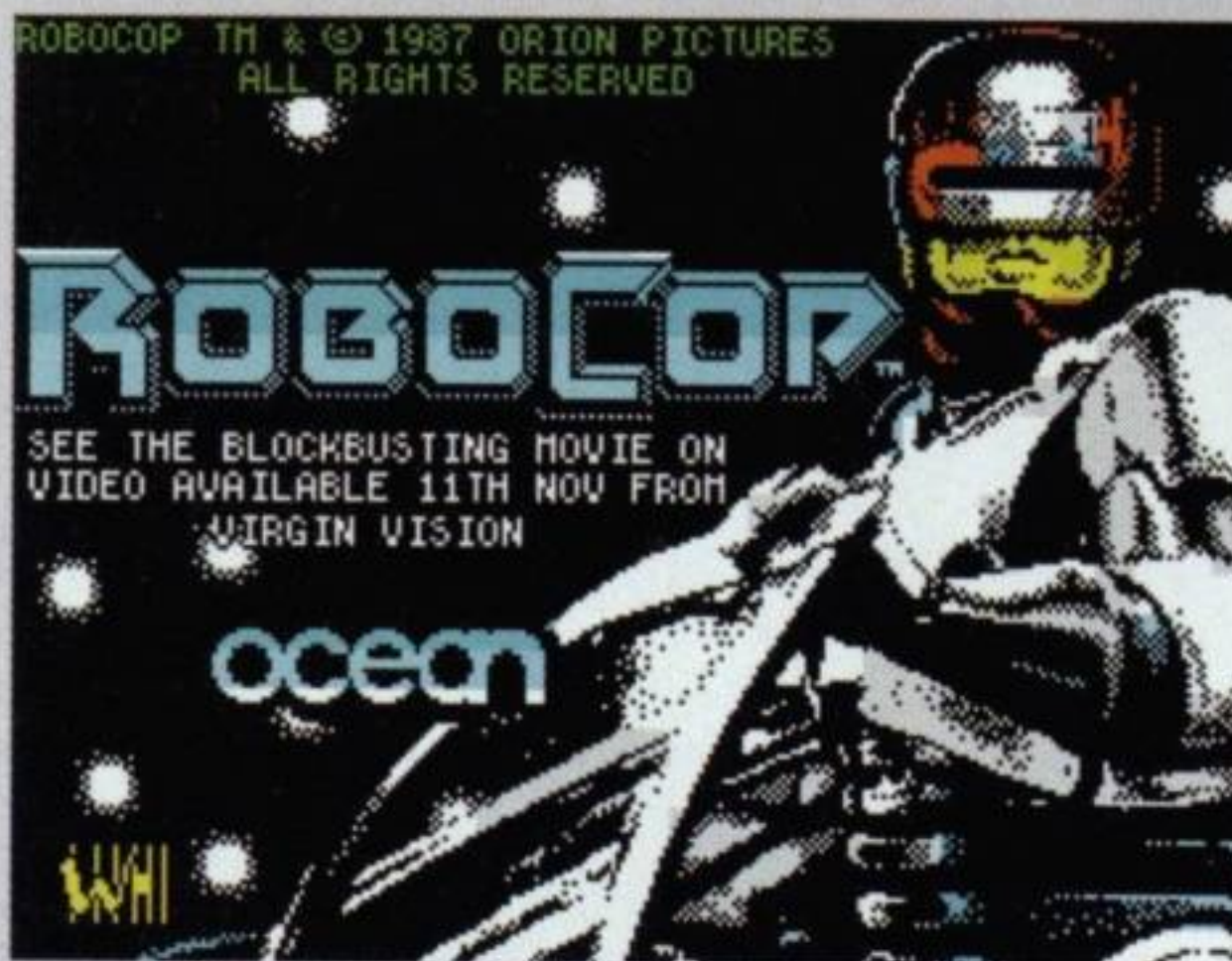
■ This month, Clive split up with his girlfriend. Then he shaved off his beard. With the C5, that's a faux-pas hat trick.

down the line." The Lynx's subsequent failure killed Atari.

■ Gremlin's *Elite*-style space combat sim *Federation of Free Traders* arrived after innumerable delays, coming complete with bugs galore. The later

Amiga version fixed many of the problems, but highlighted how crushingly dull the game really was. Oddly, David Braben's semi-official threequel to *Elite*, *Frontier: First Encounters*, had almost identical bug problems.

■ Sir Clive Sinclair split with fellow MESA member Bernadette Tynan after a few short months of good loving. Not only did the tabloids home in on the couple and fill column inches with tittle-tattle: *Your Sinclair* magazine covered a free badge proclaiming: "I Love Bernadette".



■ *Robocop*, the game. It was rubbish.

World news headlines

And here is the news...

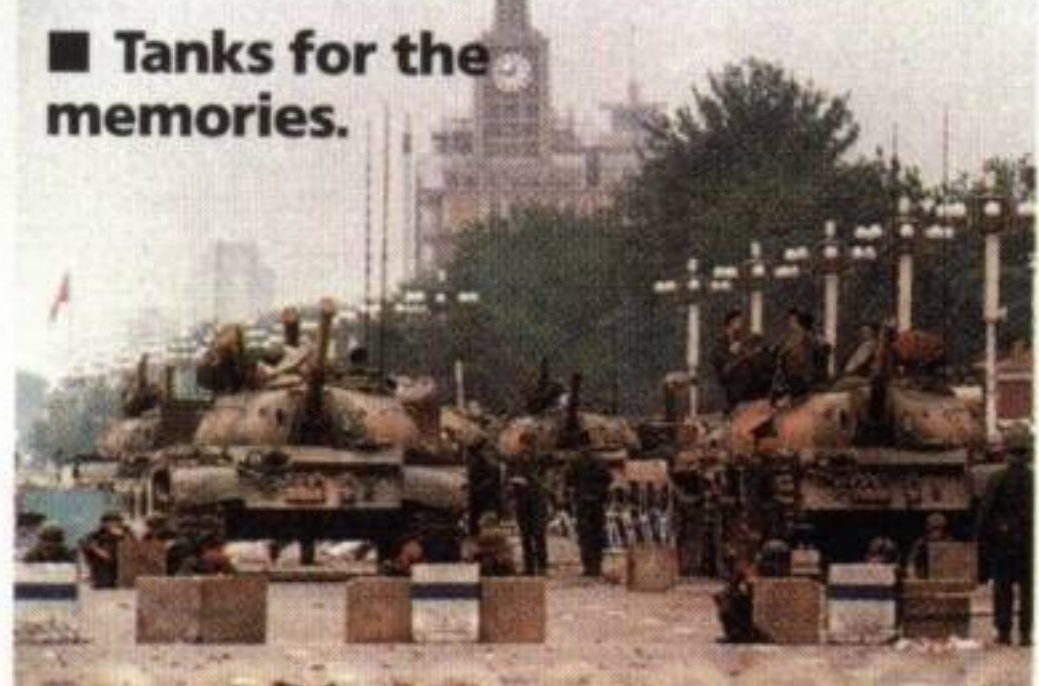
■ The by-now usual pictures of hundreds of commuters stranded on rail platforms appeared in the news, as British Rail workers staged another one-day strike. Of course, when normal service resumed the next day, thousands of commuters were stranded on rail platforms.

■ Chinese troops began to take a tougher

line with the country's student democracy demonstrators. As many as 2,000 protesters were killed after tanks rolled into Tiananmen Square on 4 June. The Chinese Government promised to crush the "counter-revolutionary rebellion".

■ More than three million Iranians gathered to bury the Ayatollah Khomeini, chanting "Death To America" as they did so. The Ayatollah, who died of a suspected heart attack on 3 June, was best known in the west for kidnapping 52 Americans and holding them hostage for 444 days.

■ Members of Poland's Communist party admitted they'd taken quite a trouncing, as Lech Walesa's pro-free trade Solidarity party saw huge vote gains in the first competitive elections in Poland for 40 years.



■ Tanks for the memories.

Music Charts

8 July 1989

- 1 Back To Life (However Do You Want Me) *Soul II Soul*
- 2 Sealed With A Kiss *Jason Donovan*
- 3 Batdance *Prince*
- 4 Right Back Where We Started From *Sinitta*
- 5 All I Want Is You *U2*

■ Information © CIN

Film Charts

24 June 1989

- 1 Licence To Kill
- 2 Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown
- 3 Beaches
- 4 Hellbound: Hellraiser II
- 5 Mississippi Burning

Top 10 Spectrum games

- 1 Robocop *Ocean*
- 2 Forgotten Worlds *US Gold*
- 3 MicroProse Soccer *MicroProse*
- 4 Run The Gauntlet *Imagine*
- 5 Dragon Ninja *Ocean*
- 6 Emlyn Hughes International Soccer *Audiogenic*
- 7 Football Manager II *Addictive*
- 8 The Running Man *Grandslam*
- 9 Crazy Cars II *Titus*
- 10 Silkworm *Virgin*

Top 10 all-formats

- 1 Robocop *Ocean (all)*
- 2 Silkworm *Virgin (all)*
- 3 Forgotten Worlds *US Gold (all)*
- 4 MicroProse Soccer *MicroProse (all)*
- 5 Dragon Ninja *Ocean (all)*
- 6 Emlyn Hughes International Soccer *Audiogenic (8-bit only)*
- 7 Run The Gauntlet *Ocean (all)*
- 8 Out Run *US Gold (all)*
- 9 Football Manager II *Addictive (all)*
- 10 Populous *Electronic Arts (16-bit only)*



Silkworm

System: Amiga
Publisher: Virgin Games
 ■ As you can tell, 1989 was the year of the horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up. Arcade conversion *Silkworm* injected a much-needed shot of originality by giving the player (and a friend) control of a jeep and a helicopter.
 ■ Score: 3/5 (*New Computer Express*)



Starglider II

System: Spectrum 128k
Publisher: Firebird
 ■ Craming a diskful of 16-bit delights into a humble Specky cassette can't have been easy, but the gameplay survived intact, demonstrating that the original Amiga/ST space shooter hadn't relied solely on its splendid solid 3D visuals.
 ■ Score: 85% (*Your Sinclair*)



Wicked

System: Amiga/ST
Publisher: Electric Dreams
 ■ From a time when "wicked" was a compliment, this shoot-'em-up boasted "happening" visuals and a "skill" soundtrack. The game differed from similar alien blasters in that to succeed you had to protect your own spore-like growths.
 ■ Score: 4/5 (*New Computer Express*)

Great Gaming Moments

Walk the dinosaur

Remembered by | **Jamie Dolling**

Rites of passage come in different guises. Like ***Snowboard Kids 2*** on the N64



T rue challenges in the '90s have been hard to find. Come the time this generation gets to sitting around reminiscing about the "Good old days" they face having little more than the night they indulged in unprotected casual sex with which to regale the young 'uns.

Things have reached the point where ideas like bringing back National Service have even been mooted by the under-30s in a desperate attempt to encourage some backbone in an otherwise apathetic youth. And the outlook for the British is poor, especially compared with contemporaries in glamorous spots like Asia, the Americas or Central African States. Earthquake, war, famine, and the prospect of your best mate losing the plot while in possession of a Kalashnikov are manna from Heaven for the

anecdote archive; rain, drunk squaddies, hosepipe bans and a disgruntled oik with a laser pen don't quite measure up.

Which is why videogames are a gift from the gods. And, when the seeds were sown for that particular strata of creation, it was only a matter of time before *Snowboard Kids 2* was spawned. At first glance the game looks little more than a cutesy racer with natty power-ups, but in truth it is nothing less than a trial of *The Running Man* proportions – and you'll have to stay sharp like Schwarzenegger to make it out alive.

The Story mode starts innocently enough, with a few races against computer opposition to whet the appetite. But then come the boss levels. Battling a giant snowman determined to turn you into a man of ice may seem a giggle, but it ushers in a world of pain for the unwary because, when you beat him, next up is the t-rex.

Now, this particular dinosaur isn't scary: she leaves eggs in your path and smiles, for pity's sake. No, the problem here is that she runs faster than Tony Blair in the face of negative public opinion and it's your job to beat her to the bottom of the course. As soon as the start is called, she disappears over the horizon and you've got about 150

Wanna play?

■ *Snowboard Kids 2* follows 18 months behind the glory that was Nintendo's *Snowboard Kids* and is headed straight for an après-ski schnapps in the Alpine lodge of the truly addictive. Only some blurry graphics and the sheer quality of 1080°, N64's other great snowboarding game, limited *Snowboard Kids 2* to ★★★★★ in the *Arcade 7* review, but just you wait. Currently only available on import, the game is doing serious business in the USA and is set to cross the Atlantic in a few months. Full o' fun and low on calories, it's the snack you can eat between real-life events without dulling your appetite for more, more, more.

seconds to weave flat out through the ovum left in her wake, nail the speed-giving power-ups and hope that maybe you'll get in range to slip a bomb up her prehistoric ass.

And it doesn't end there. She recovers from a slapping in seconds, gets up and readies herself to sprint to victory – leaving the frustrated gamer to trace the ragged edges of their despair as the story screen crawls by. But once you get your nose in front and the prospect of sweet, sweet victory thrills through you – culminating in an unparalleled slam of adrenaline as your board breaks the virgin plane of the finish line first – it all makes sense. Not just your efforts, but the whole thing, the big picture. Nothing happens in the game; no trumpets are sounded. All you get are a few more tracks to try out with your mates in multi-player mode.

But you know how you got that far, and you'll love yourself for it.



You'll have to stay sharp like Schwarzenegger to survive

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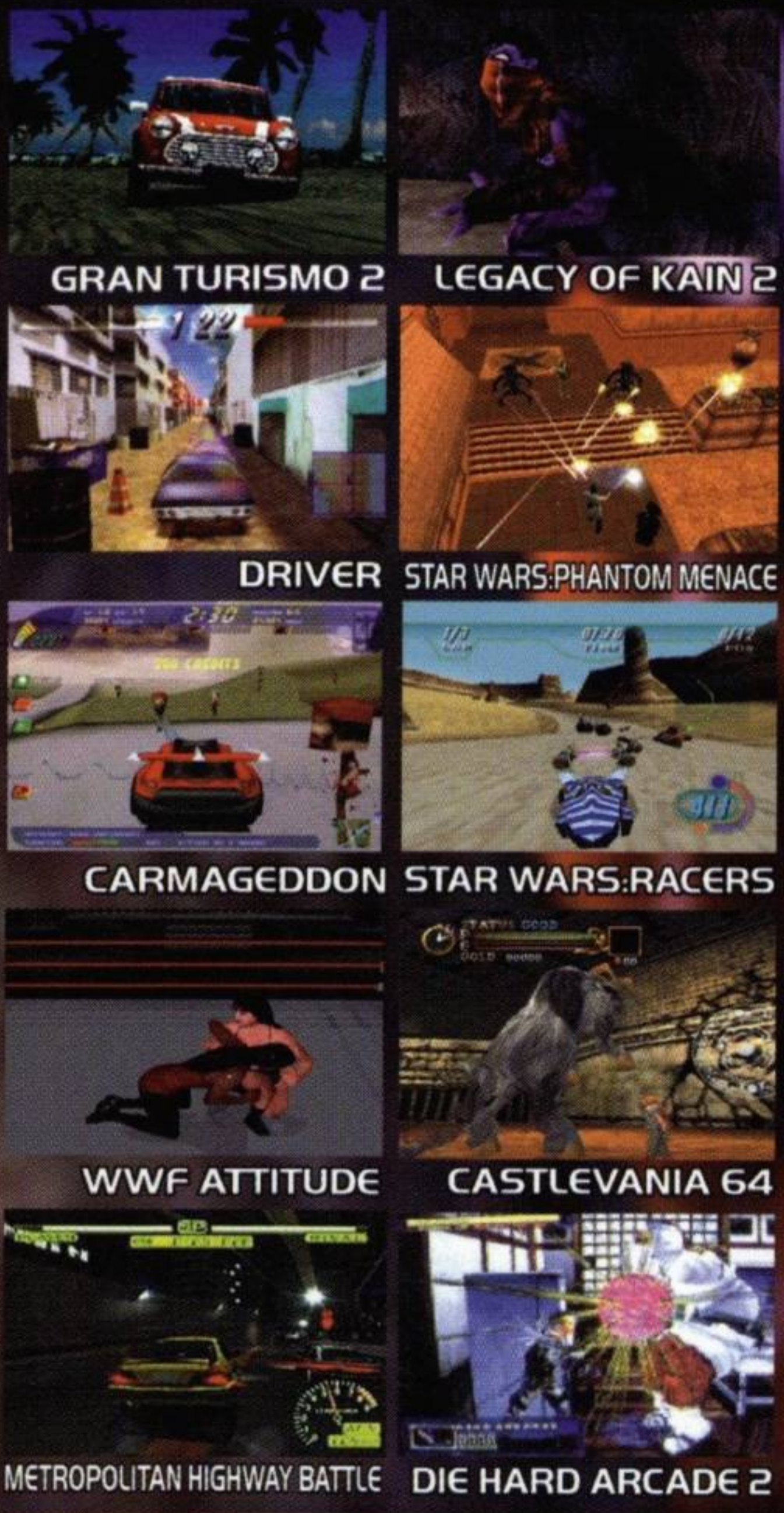
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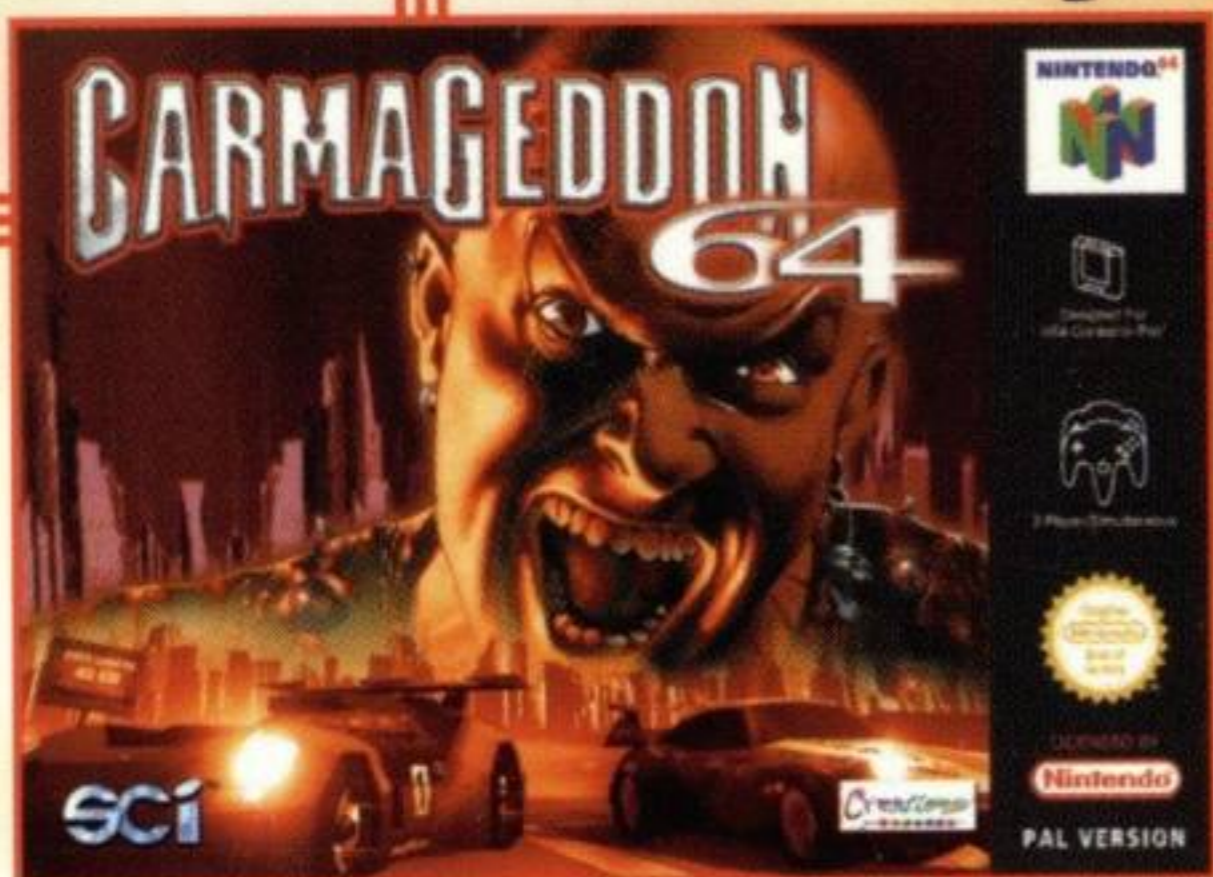
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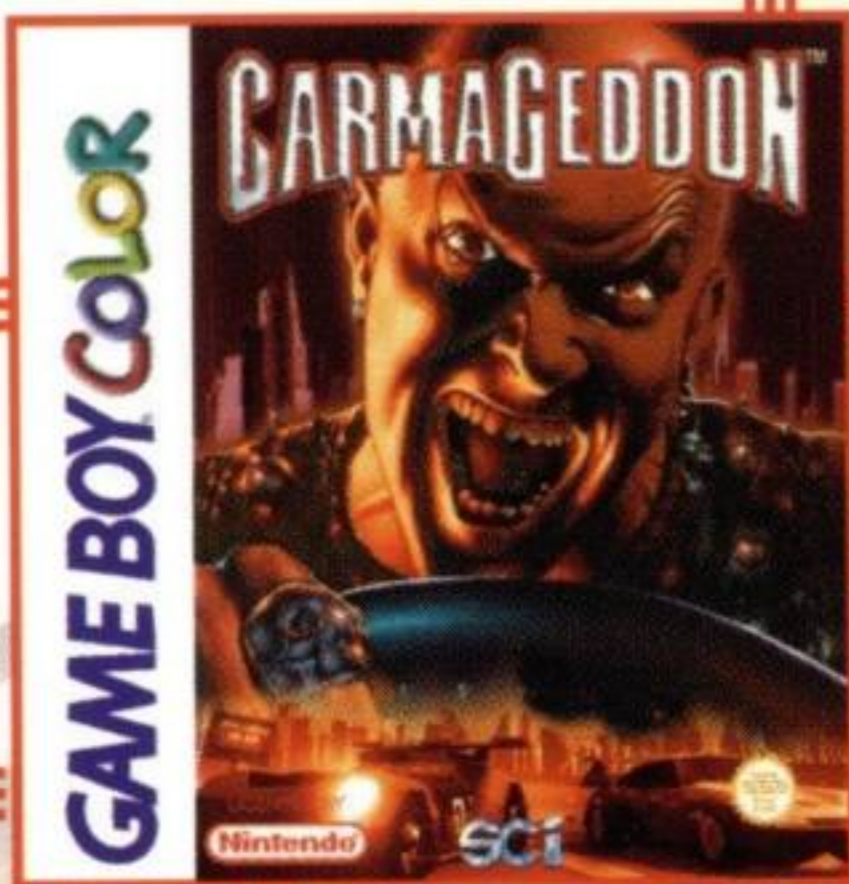
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