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December 1992

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***Inside Gaming:* An Exclusive Report From Tokyo on the Nintendo Show**

***News Bits:* New *Street Fighter II* Arcade**

MAPS AND TIPS:
Neutopia II, Part I

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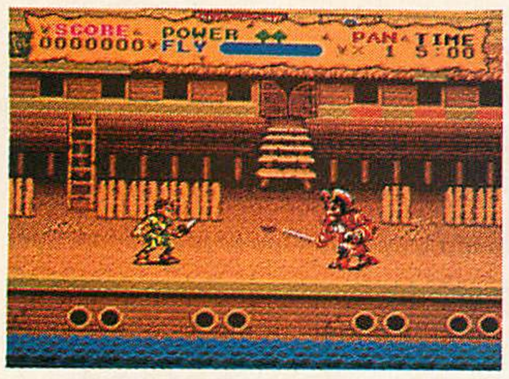

Hook fights dirty, so watch out for his tricks

Flying's your greatest power, but keep your eye on the flight meter

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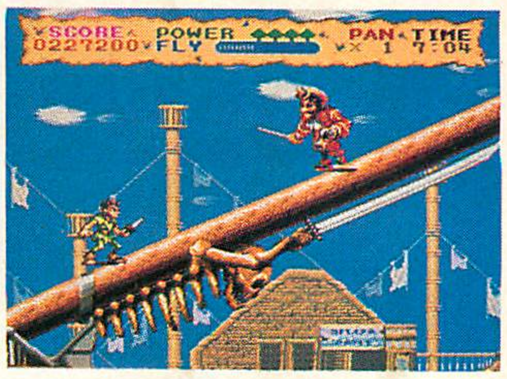

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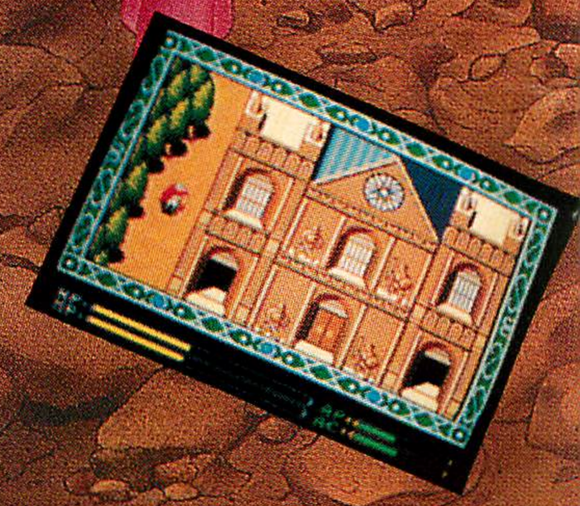

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: McDonald's heroes Mick and Mack are back in *Mick & Mack as the Global Gladiators.* Turn to page 40 for a review of this exciting new one-player game for the Genesis.

Cover Art: Jim McDermott

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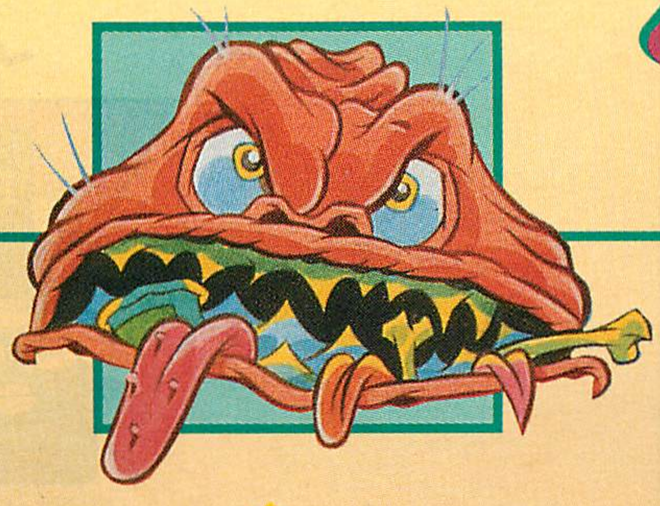

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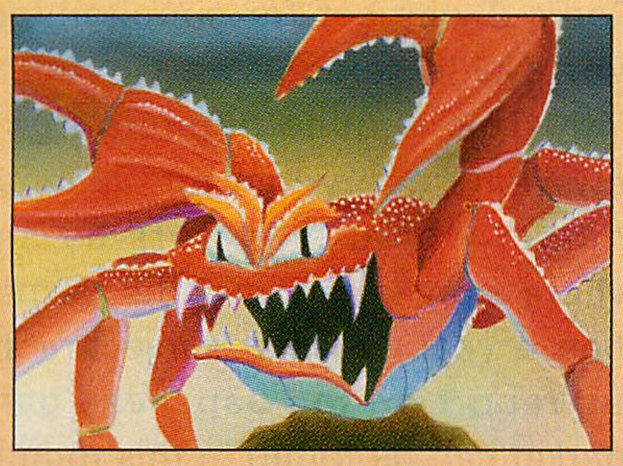

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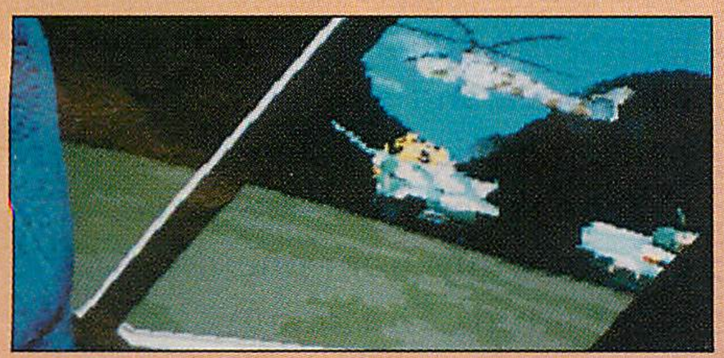

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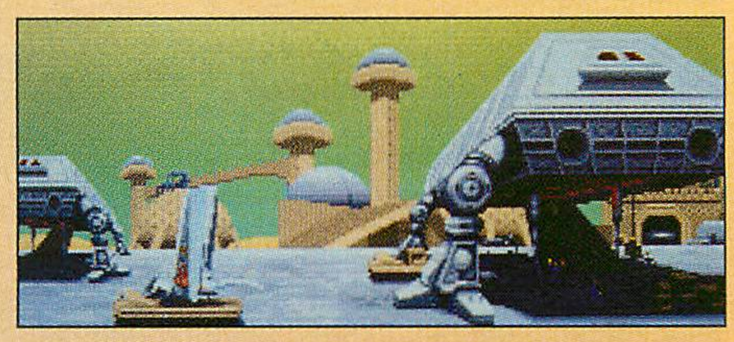

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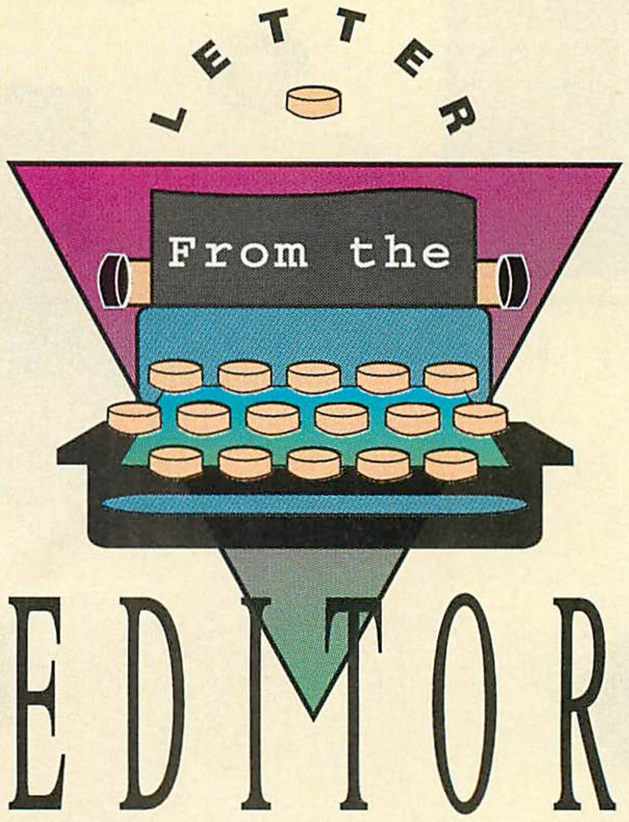
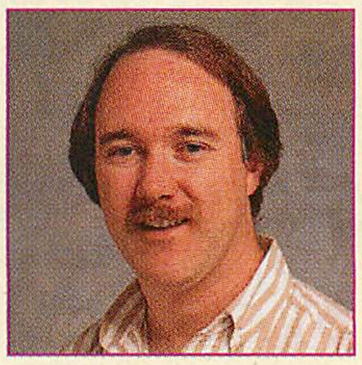


Recently, with some other U.S. game-magazine editors, I had the opportunity to visit Japan for a game competition. Bignet invited us to Sapporo to see its Sega CD game, *Black Hole Assault*, and battle against Japanese counterparts in head-to-head action.

In all honesty, fighting games aren't my cup of tea. As good as *Street Fighter II* is, I could never really get into it. With that in the back of my mind, I knew that in short order I would be blown out. As it turned out, all three American editors were soundly *whipped* in the first round (actually, the second round, because we were given first-round byes; I'm so embarrassed). Hey, I picked the wrong character to use, I had a bad control pad, the sun was in my eyes....



We did find redemption in "fun" matches after we were closed out—I guess a 100-yen coin and an American dime bet (totaling about 95¢) was too much for a friend at *PC-Engine Monthly*, Kiminori Nakamura. In all, it was a ton of fun for everyone, and thanks go to Bignet for its incredible hospitality.

Aside from the competition, we did get a chance to check out Sapporo a little bit—and, from a gamer's standpoint, there wasn't much either surprising or that exclusive from the American market. For example, *Super Mario Kart* was released in Japan a couple of weeks ahead of when we saw it here in the States. Similarly, as we reported in our October issue, *Sonic 2* was set for simultaneous, worldwide release on November 24th. This is quite different from a few years ago when the Japanese market would lead ours by anywhere from a few months to more than a year. On that subject, a status report on the Japanese game market can be found in this month's *Inside Gaming* column, written by a Japanese editor, Takahiro Eguchi.

While in Japan, I had a chance to play Sega's *Virtua Racing* arcade sit-down, which Mr. Eguchi mentioned. This is one killer machine, using 32-bit technology to make a supersmooth game with really hot graphics and action. The coolest feature of the game is that you can choose from four viewpoints—in the car, just behind the car, above and behind the car and a helicopter view. Pushing a button to change the camera view zooms in or out smoothly from one perspective to another. The game should be available in local arcades by the time you read this.

As always, we'd like to hear what you think of the material in VG&CE, and, as mentioned in the *Reader Mail*, we're planning some hot stuff for upcoming issues. Drop us a note at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Andy Eddy. Thanks.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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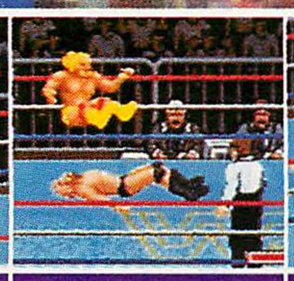
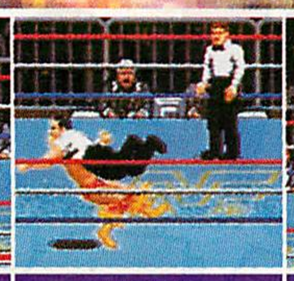


Hulk Hogan's™ Legdrop



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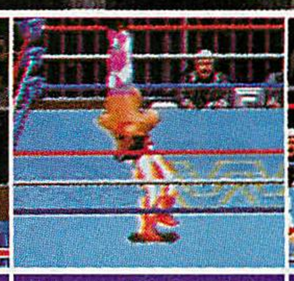
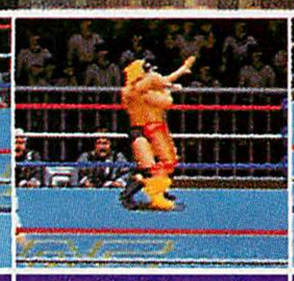


Shawn Michaels'™ Side Suplex



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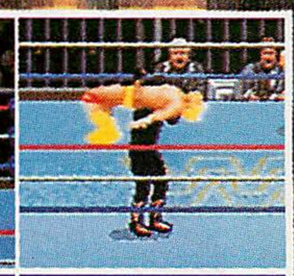
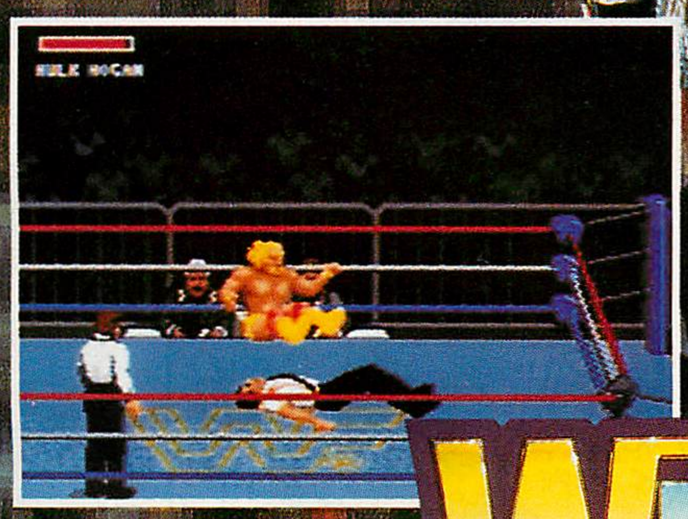
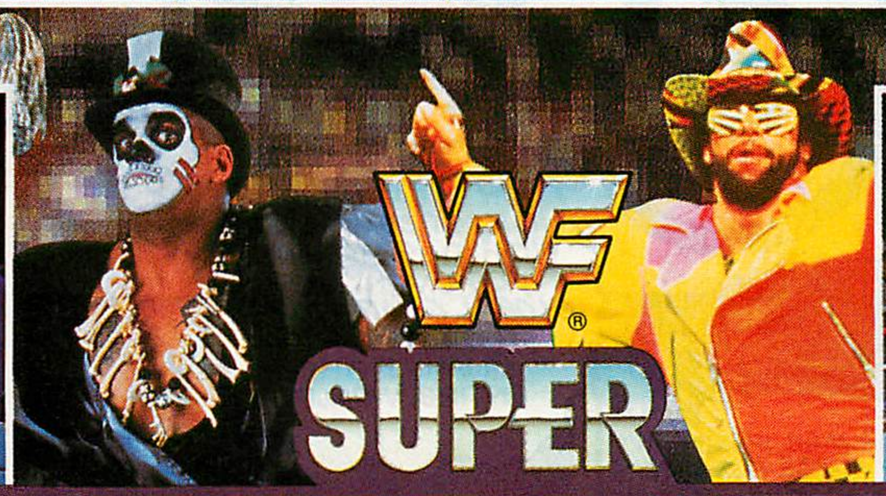


Papa Shango's™ Shoulder-breaker





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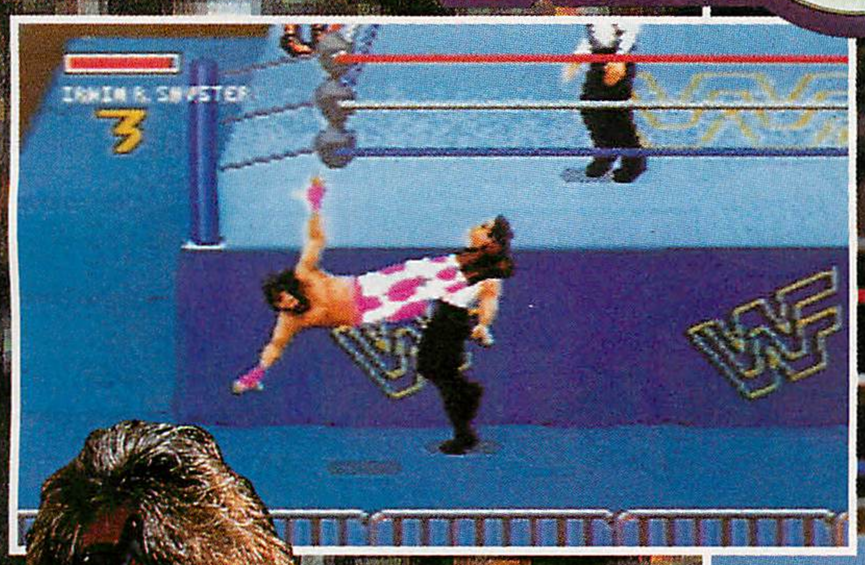

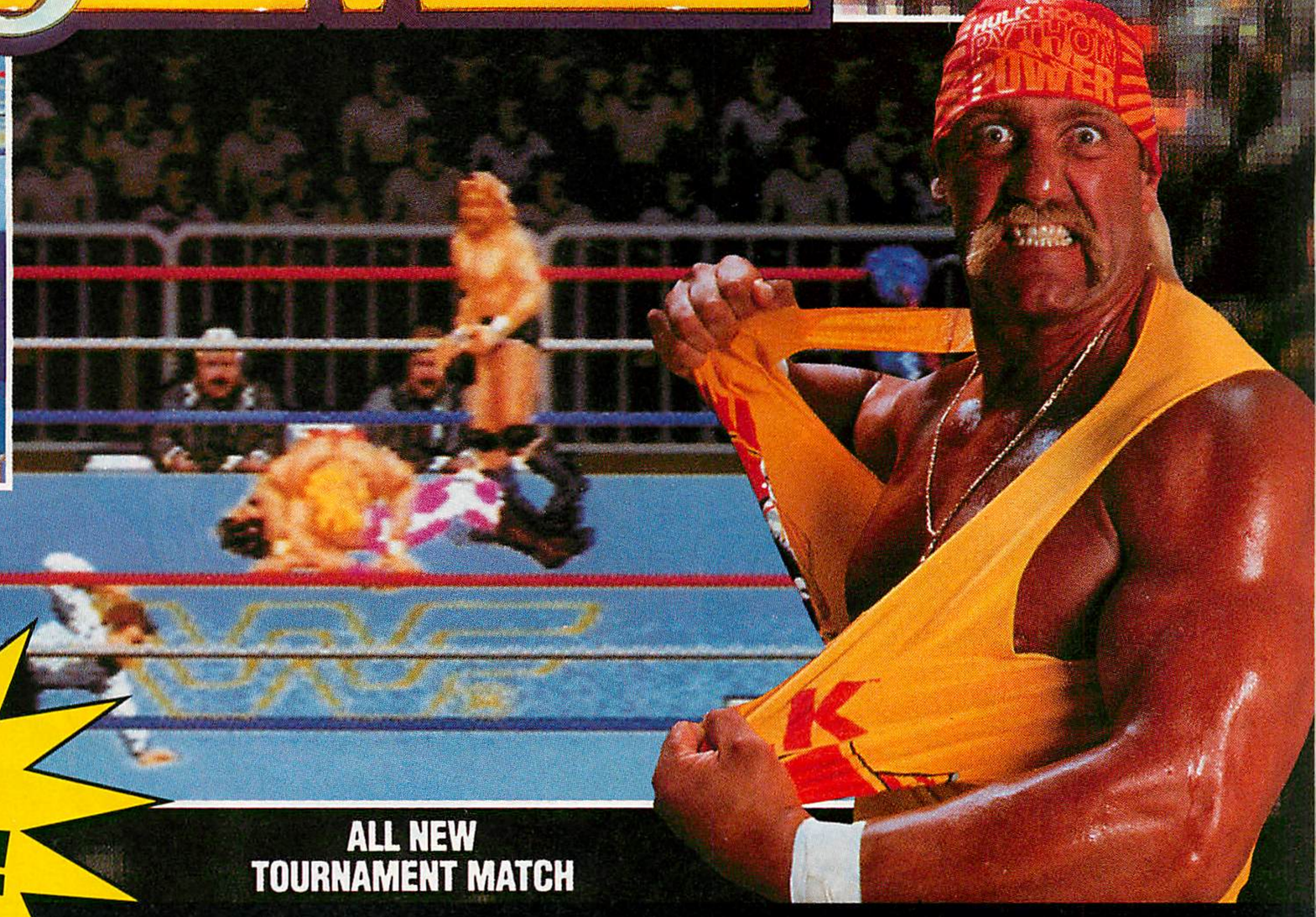

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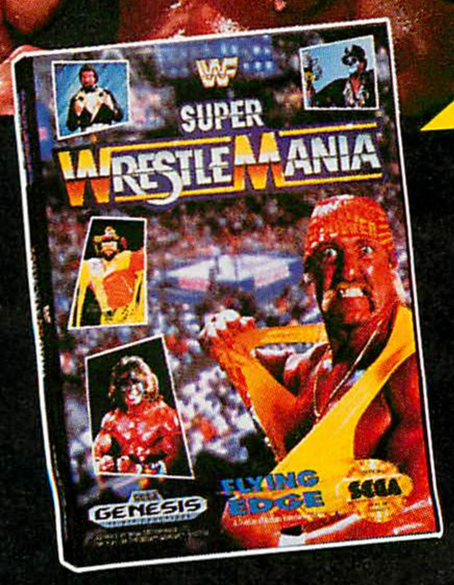

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SLIME FACTORY

THERE IT IS, DUDE!

WATCH OUT!

GLADIATORS UNITE!!

YEAH!

GOT IT!

WHOA DUDE, THAT WAS A LITTLE TOO CLOSE!

AAAAH!

OUCH!

UH-OH!

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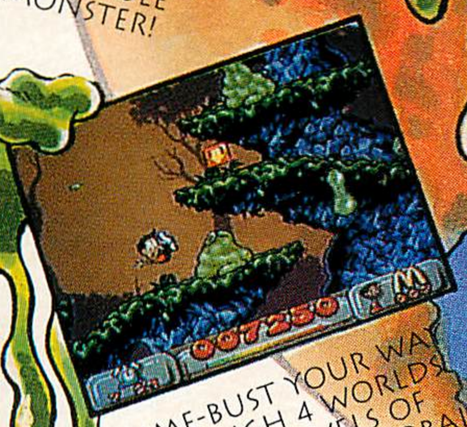

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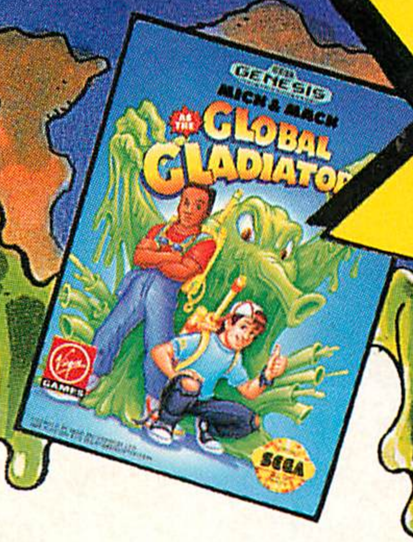

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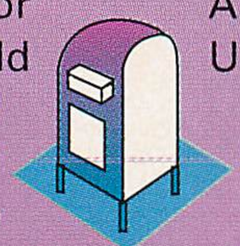
READER MAIL

STREET FIGHTER II ON DISK?

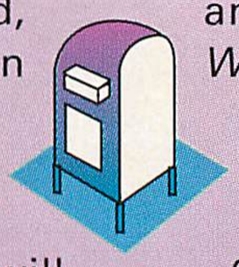
Street Fighter II is an amazing Super NES cartridge! It has two-player simultaneous play, large characters that are fluidly animated, responsive controls, detailed graphics and great stereo sound. All of this in a 2-megabyte game running on a 3.6 MHz 16-bit processor. Will we ever see a decent *Street Fighter II* for IBM compatibles? I have a 33 MHz 386DX IBM clone with 128K static RAM cache, and I have yet to see any game remotely like *SFII* for the PC. Let us examine why, and see if there is any hope for the future.

1) Processor power. No contest here. 33 MHz 386DX motherboards are very reasonable, and 33 MHz 486DX motherboards are starting to fall below $600. The Super Nintendo has a 16-bit processor running at about 3.6 MHz.

2) Video memory. No contest again. The Super Nintendo comes with 128K of RAM. One Mb of video RAM is quickly becoming the standard for PC compatibles. Unfortunately, video boards are usually plugged into a 16-bit slot running at eight MHz, and memory is addressed in 64K chunks. Hope for improvement? Yes, there should be a VESA standard for local bus video ratified soon that will bring video memory access up to speed. Current video chipsets support linearly addressed video, but current software does not utilize this feature.



3) Storage. Most Super Nintendo cartridges are one megabyte in size. PC games vary widely from those that fit on a single 360K floppy to *Wing Commander II*, which consumes 22 megabytes of hard-drive space. Hard drives access data slower than ROM cartridges, and current DOS software limits base memory to 640K. Memory is addressed in 64K chunks. Hope for improvement? Yes, future versions of DOS will eventually provide linear access to memory. Compatibility with current DOS applications will be limited, and this may be implemented on 32-bit machines only. Local bus hard-drive controllers will speed hard-drive operations significantly, and hard drives will continue to grow in size. CDs will eventually provide large storage capacity for SNES systems, as they do for PCs now.

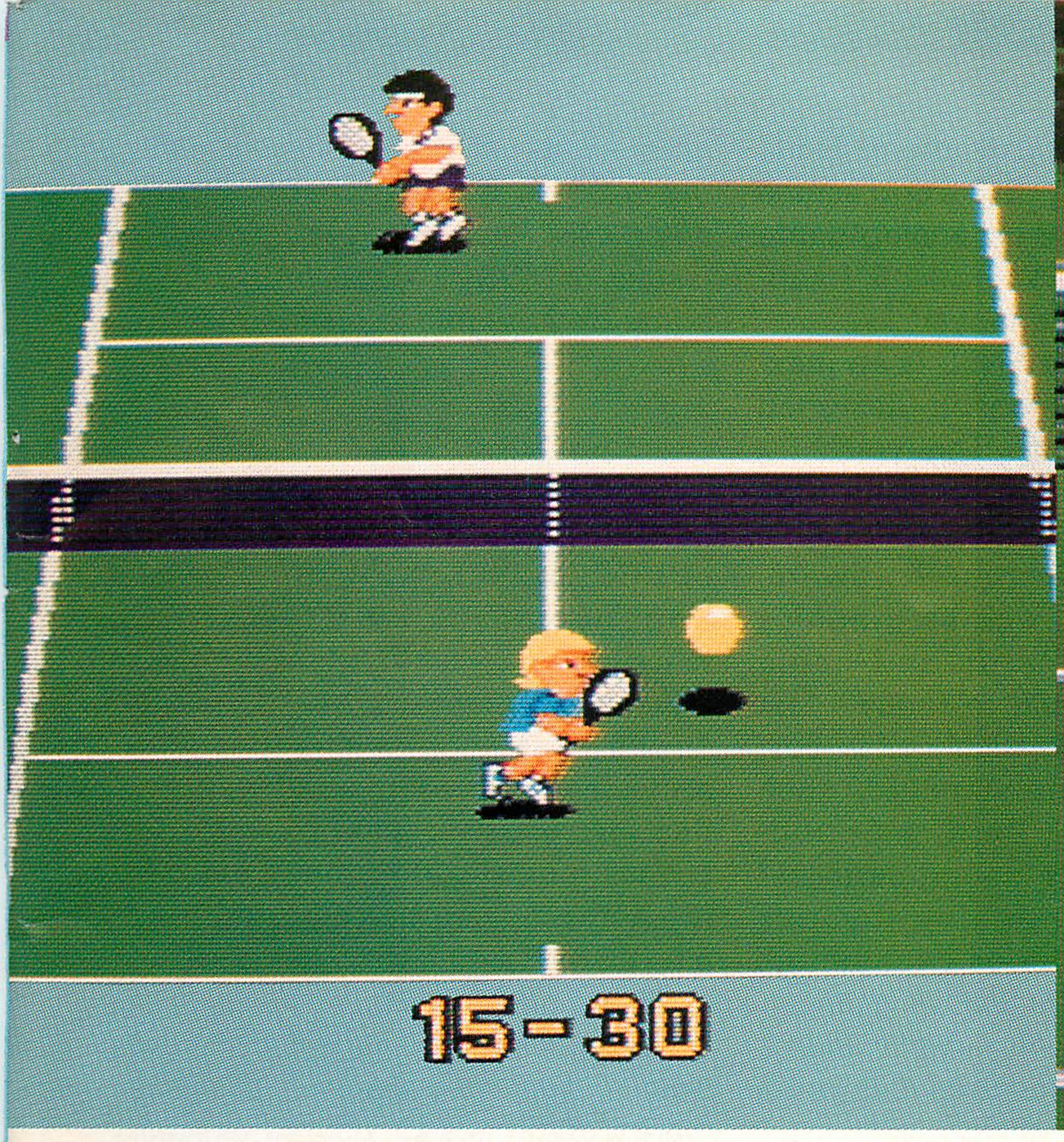


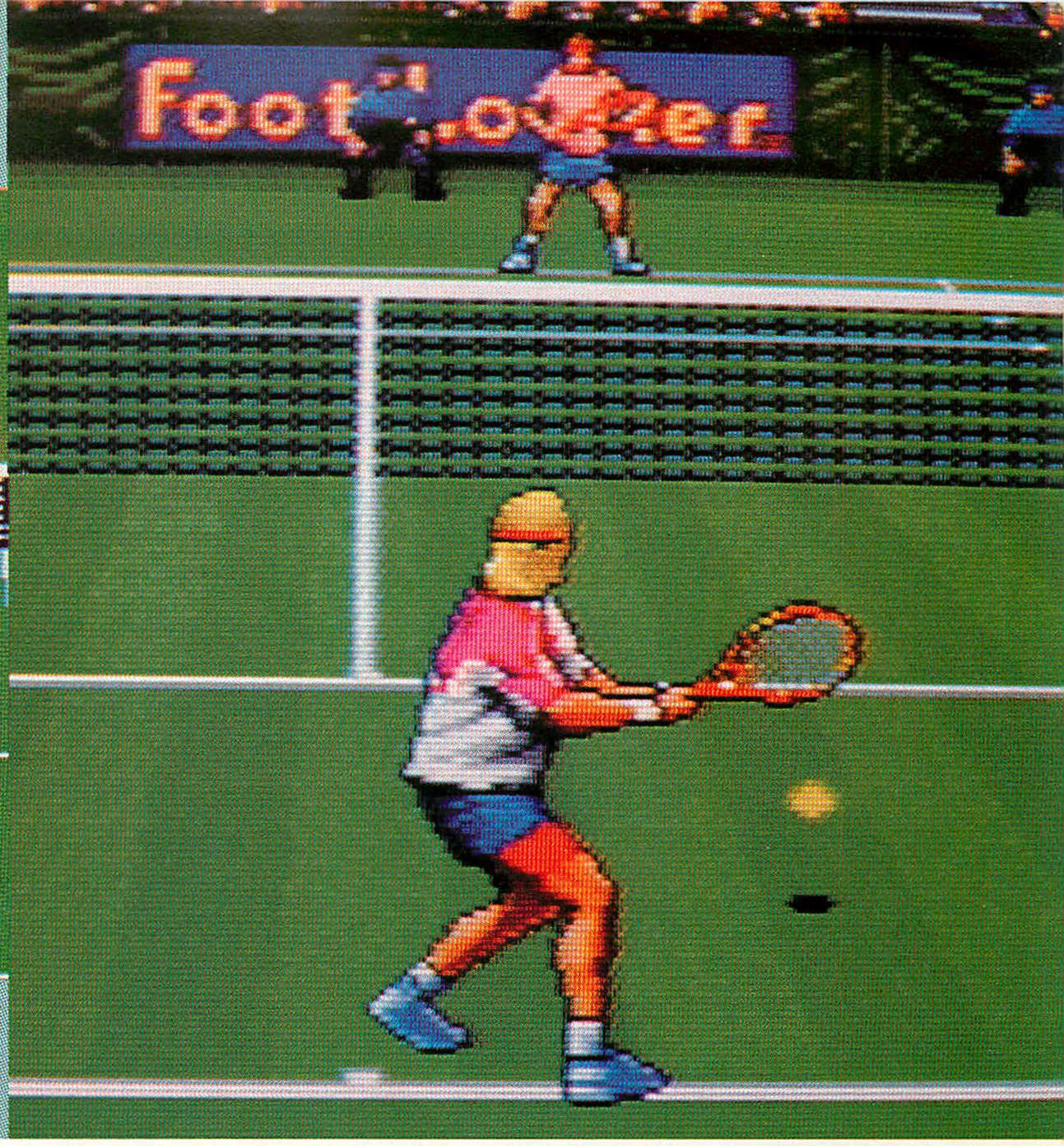
4) Sound. The SNES wins this one. It has built-in 8-voice stereo sound and a processor for digital signal processing. Most PC games are designed around the Sound Blaster standard, which supports 12 voices: 11 are produced with FM synthesis, and there is one channel for digital-to-analog conversion. It is monophonic. Hope for the future? Yes, newer cards, such as the Pro Audio Spectrum 16 and Gravis Ultrasound, provide 16-bit sampling/playback at 44 KHz, with 20-32 voices in full stereo. The Gravis board has not shipped yet, and full support for the Pro Audio 16 is almost nonexistent. *MS Windows* does provide device-independent sound support, and future DOS games should support the newer sound capabilities. The 8-MHz, 16-bit slot may be an impediment to advanced sound synthesis.

5) Animation hardware. The SNES wins this easily. The hardware scrolling, sprites, multilayer playfields, scaling and rotation make up for the slow CPU. VGA cards are dumb display buffers. The CPU does all the work. With fast CPUs and clever software, impressive results can still be obtained. Look at *Wing Commander II*. Hope for improvement? Some. Now that Intel has joined IBM in endorsing the XGA standard, we will finally see hardware blitting and line drawing. XGA provides only one four-color sprite, and no scaling or rotation. *MS Windows*, with its device-independent graphics display interface, is opening up the door to hardware graphics acceleration.

6) Display capabilities. The PC wins easily. Current SNES games use 256 x 224 resolution with 256 colors displayable from a palette of 32,768. Maximum resolution is 512 x 448, which would require an RGB monitor to see clearly. Nintendo is not encouragingg RGB usage with the SNES. They did not include a video pinout diagram with my SNES, and their technical support did not know what RGB was. The processor may be too slow to support the higher resolution anyway. Most PC games use 320 x 200 with 256 colors displayable from a palette of 262,144, though several strategy games support 640 x 480 with 16 colors. New *Windows*-based games are supporting 640 x 480 with 256 colors. Maximum resolution on a good SVGA card is 800 x 600 x 32,768, 1024 x 768 x 256 and 1280 x 1024 x 16. Affordable 24-bit color cards are on the horizon. Unfortunately, Super VGA is not a hardware

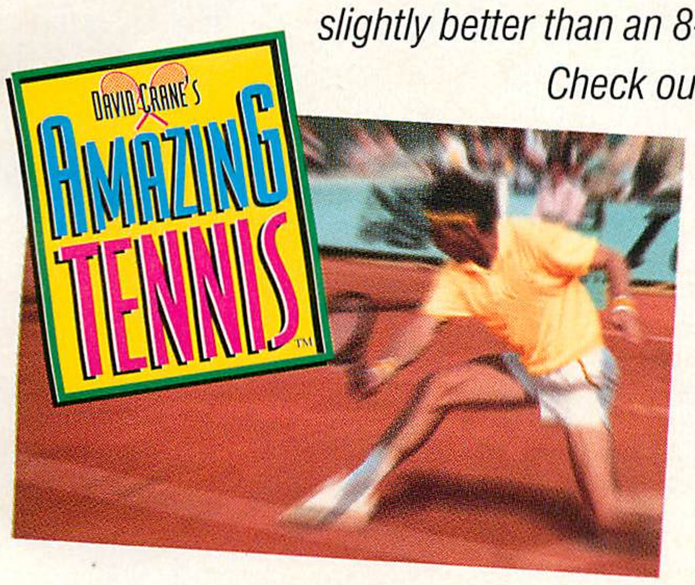
Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to: *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.





WHY PLAY THIS... IF YOU CAN PLAY THIS!

You've seen it all before. The short, squat, stubby cartoon-like players. The overhead view. The awkward feel. You've probably even asked yourself: Is this the best a 16-bit home video tennis game can be? With all that power available, do these games have to wind up looking only slightly better than an 8-bit cart? ***Of course not.***



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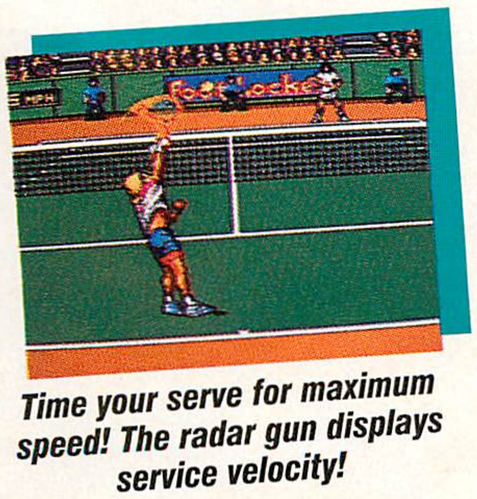
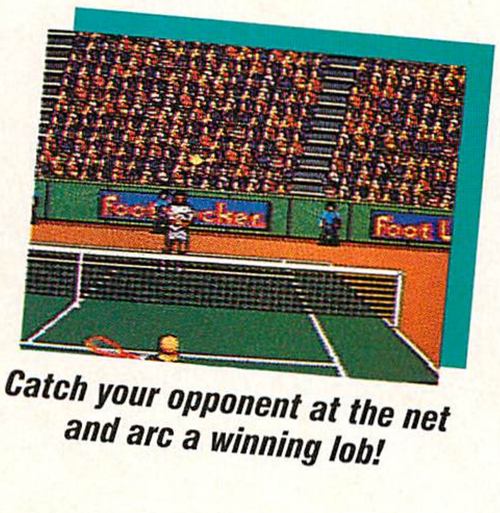
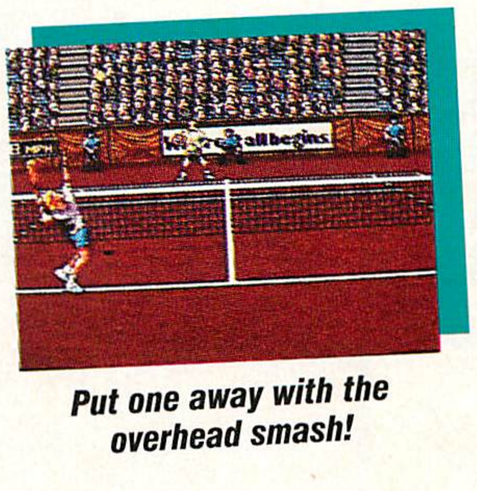


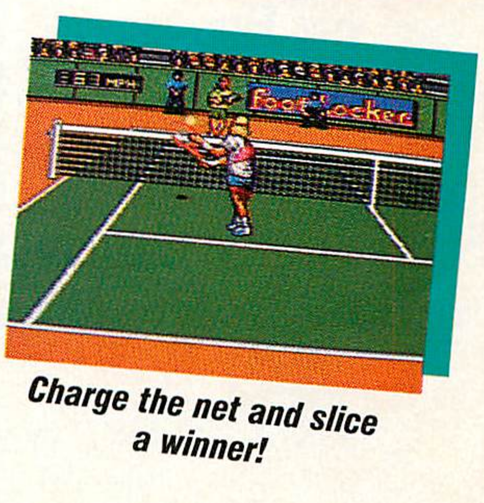
Time your serve for maximum speed! The radar gun displays service velocity!



Catch your opponent at the net and arc a winning lob!



Put one away with the overhead smash!



Charge the net and slice a winner!

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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

standard. VESA has defined a BIOS-level Super VGA standard. Hope for improvement? XGA has a hardware standard for 640 x 480 x 65,536 and 1024 x 768 x 256 resolutions.

7) Controllers: The SNES wins again. Support for two simultaneous, six-button, responsive digital controllers is standard. Replacements are unbelievably cheap ($12.99 at CompUSA). PC-type analog joysticks are good for flight simulators, but are not responsive enough for arcade-style games. Game cards now support two simultaneous joysticks with two fire buttons. Software that supports more than one joystick is limited. Gravis has finally introduced a digital GamePad for the PC! It has four fire buttons and emulates an analog joystick for compatibility; I do not believe two can be used simultaneously in four-button mode. Neither system supports four joysticks simultaneously, so arcade games like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* will never be as good at home. Hope for improvement? None that I know of. The IBM world seems to be locked into 8-bit analog game cards. *Microsoft Windows 3.1* supports two two-button joysticks.

In summary, the SNES is an inexpensive, efficient console designed for playing games. The typical PC compatible has a powerful CPU and sharp display capabilities, but little animation hardware. Peripherals such as graphics cards, sound cards and game cards are interfaced to today's fast CPUs through a relatively slow bus. Accepted hardware standards such as a VGA display card, a Sound-Blaster-compatible sound card and twin two-button analog joystick ports provide inferior capabilities compared to a $139 SNES system.

—Stewart W. Pierce
Carlsbad, California

Wowee, you sure did your homework on that one. How did you find time to play Capcom's Street Fighter II *after all those weighty comparisons? While we know of no plans to bring* SFII *to computers, we heard there is a* Street Fighter *game on disk. Can any readers tell us where to find it?*

FIRST ANNUAL HOLOGRAM RAVE LETTER

I just finished reading my collector's edition of VG&CE (October 1992), and I had to write you with my impressions. I am now sure it is the best gaming magazine I can purchase. This month's *Sonic 2* cover is great, and I hope hologram covers will be an annual event! From cover to cover this edition gave me everything a gamer could want in his magazine. Thanks a whole lot!

—Colin Shaughnessy
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

Thanks for the compliments, and for reading VG&CE. *We are looking at doing more holograms and other special things for our readers. Also, we're doing our best to keep the cost of the magazine very affordable—even with a special premium like a* Sonic 2 *hologram,* VG&CE *is still $3.95! Keep your eyes on future issues of* VG&CE *because we have some exciting things planned.*

WELCOME CHANGES

After reading the last few issues of VG&CE, I'd been thinking of letting my subscription lapse. You were stuck in a rut. Your reviews were as overblown as ever, your "news" was information other magazines had printed long ago and you had lost the befuddled-at-times but always fun to read Game Doc. Finally—and this was the biggest sin of all—VG&CE was just plain boring.

Then I got the October issue.

What happened? First off, your new reviewing system is great! It works, and that's all that matters.

Secondly, your cover looked great. Much better than the 256-color cartoon junk you have had in the past. Simple black, with a decent hologram. Excellent!

Finally, and this has got to be a first for VG&CE, you showed us lots of pictures of a hot new game before other mags got to it! While you were certainly not the first to show pictures of *Sonic 2*, you really went in-depth. I loved it. The CD feature was also excellent.

On the downside, however, what's up with *Inside Gaming*?

While I realize you want to give us inside views, the column was just a glorified Sega ad. I love my Genesis, but if you're going to give Sega free ad space you should probably do the same for Nintendo and TTI.

In spite of that, I'm renewing my subscription. Keep up the new look. You'll get a lot of business.

—Amar Pai
Las Vegas, Nevada

Thanks for the comments, Amar. Some readers said they liked the Inside Gaming *piece by Al Nilsen. It introduced them to the people behind the products. We'll do our best to be more insightful in the future.*

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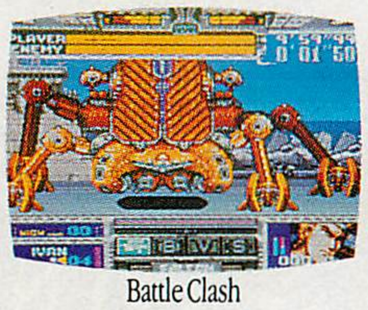
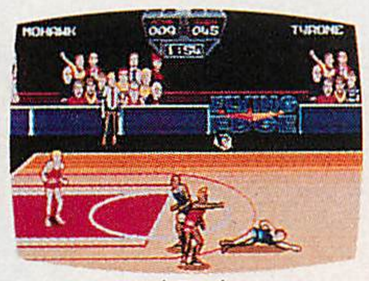
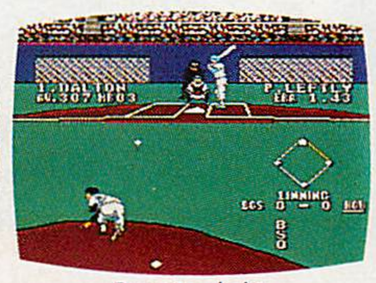

Battle Clash

Super Bowl


Arch Rivals

Return of Zelda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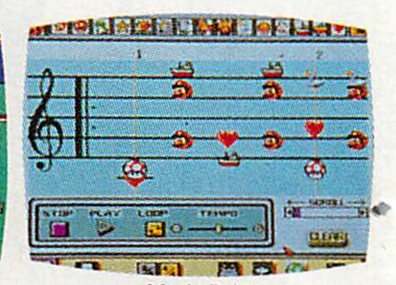
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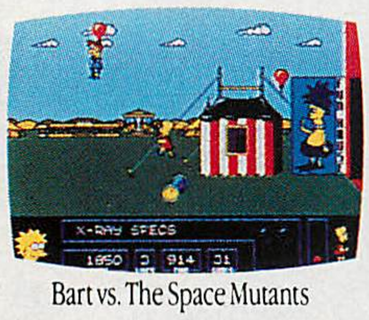
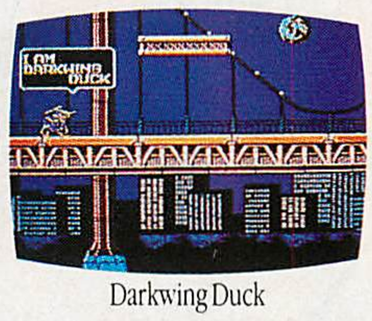
Kablooey

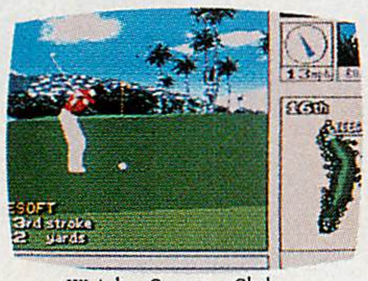

Bart vs. The Space Mutants

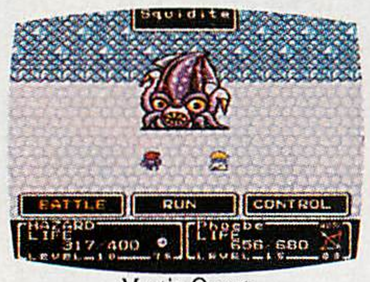
Contra III


Darkwing Duck

Desert Strike

Castlevania IV

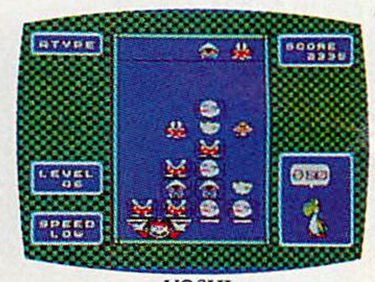

Waialae Country Club

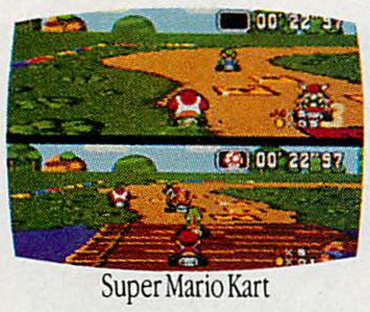

Mystic Quest

Super Off-Road

Suddenly, the place with the games everyone wants is Sears.

Go figure.


YOSHI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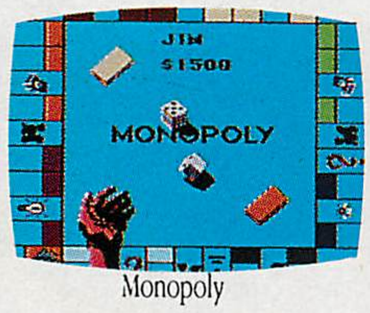
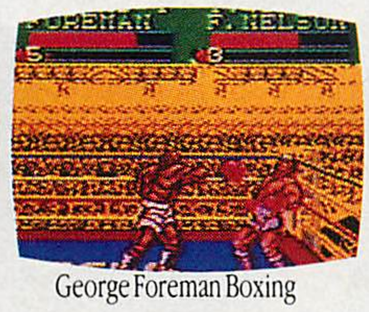

Monopoly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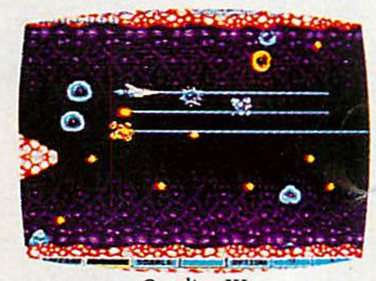
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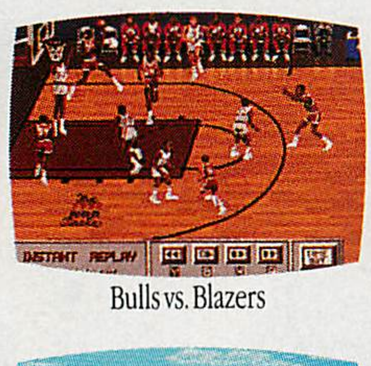
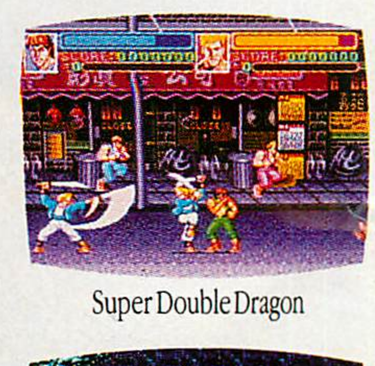
Magic Sword


Bulls vs. Blazers

Steel Empire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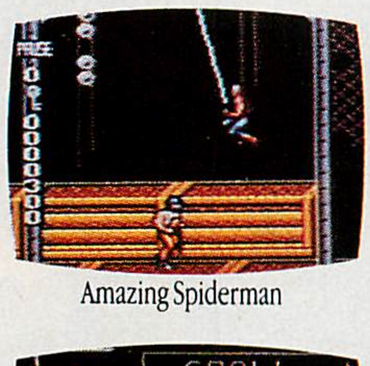
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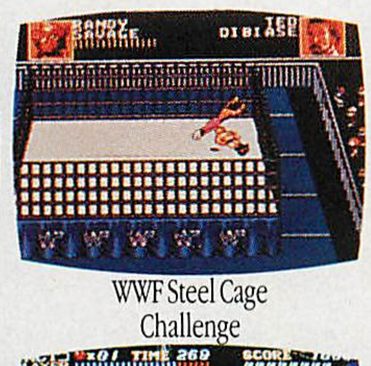
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III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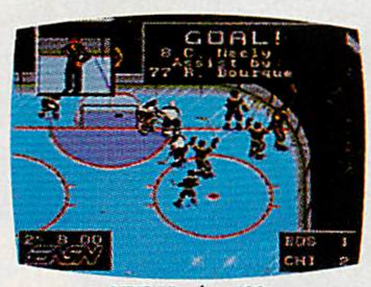
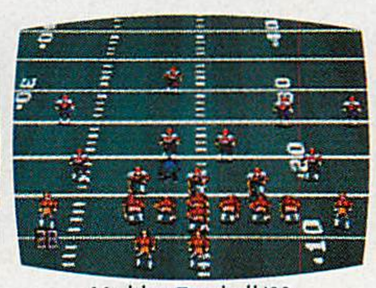
King Salmon


NHL Hockey '93

Super Bases Loaded

Act Raiser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T2 The Arcade Game

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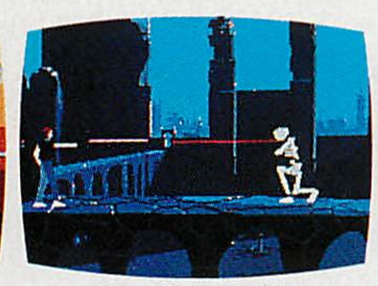
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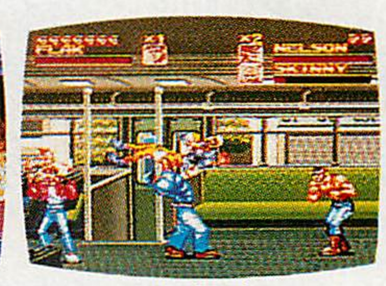
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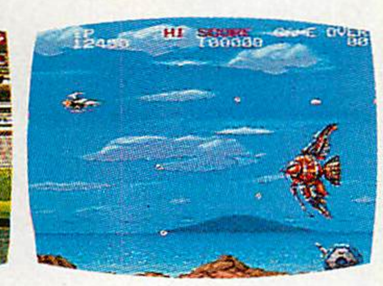
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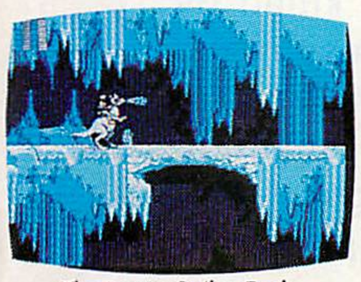
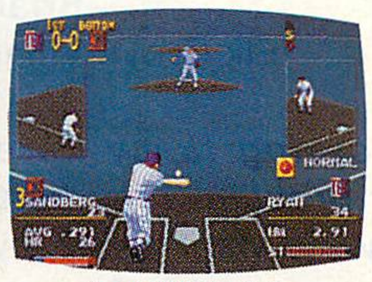


The Empire Strikes Back

Taz-Mania

Paperboy 2

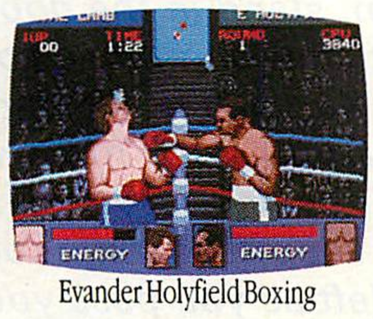


Sports Talk Baseball

Street Fighter II

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV

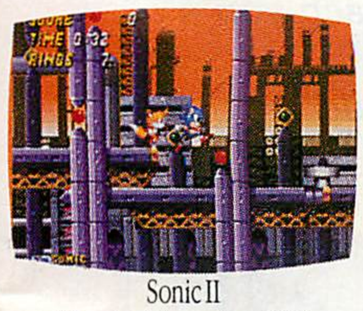
Top Gear



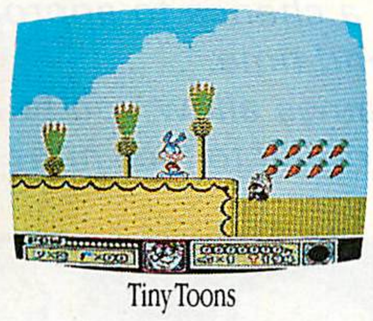
Evander Holyfield Boxing

Mystical Ninja

Road Rash II

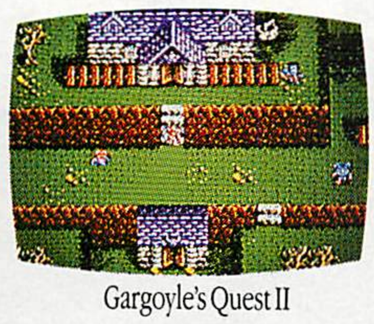


Sonic II
(Coming November 24th)

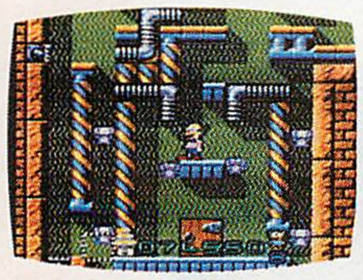


Tiny Toons

Jack Nicklaus Golf



Gargoyle's Quest II



Krusty's Fun House

Ferrari Grand Prix

Overnight, it seems, there's a place for video games like no other. It's called FunTronics, the new game department at Sears.

FunTronics is designed to have all the games you're looking for in stock. Incredible 16-bit games. By the dozens.

It has both Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo Entertainment Systems. Along with Game Boy, Game Gear and every accessory you could imagine.

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Nintendo

SEGA GENESIS

CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem with a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

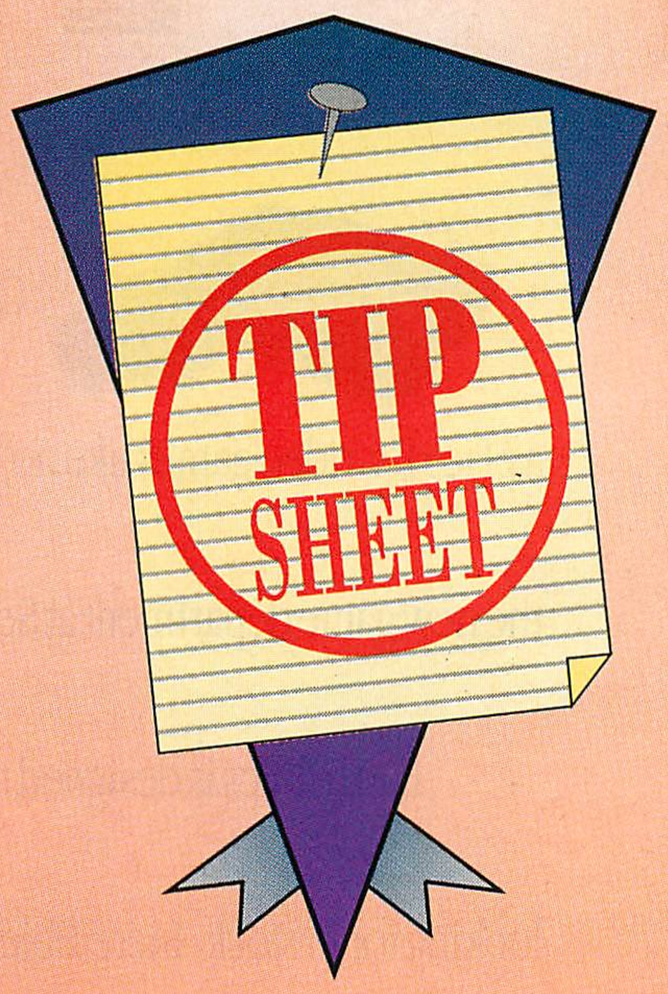
VG&CE,

9171 Wilshire Blvd.,

Suite 300

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: *Tip Sheet*



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BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

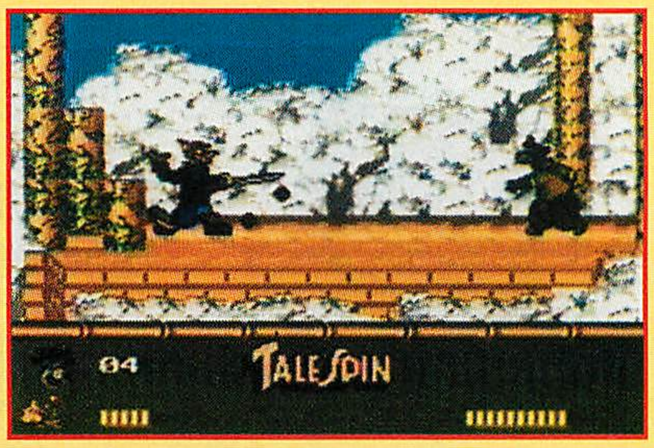
I enjoy playing *Tale Spin* on my TurboGrafx-16, but I have not been able to beat the game because I keep getting killed by Don Karnage, the last boss in the Ionian Air City. He moves so quickly, there's no way anybody can defeat him without getting hit a few times. I would appreciate any tips or techniques.

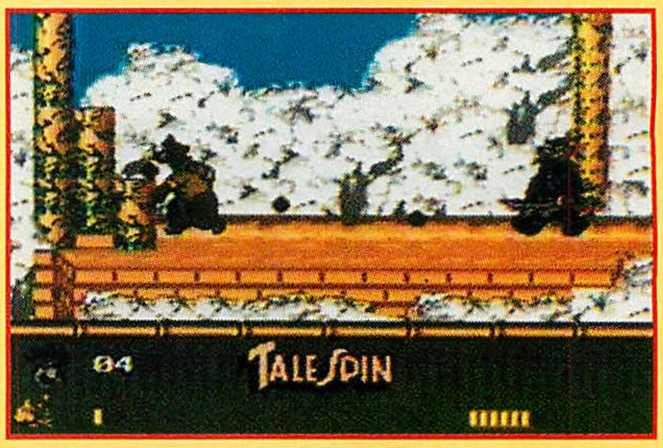
—Brian Dunham
Elk Grove Village, Illinois

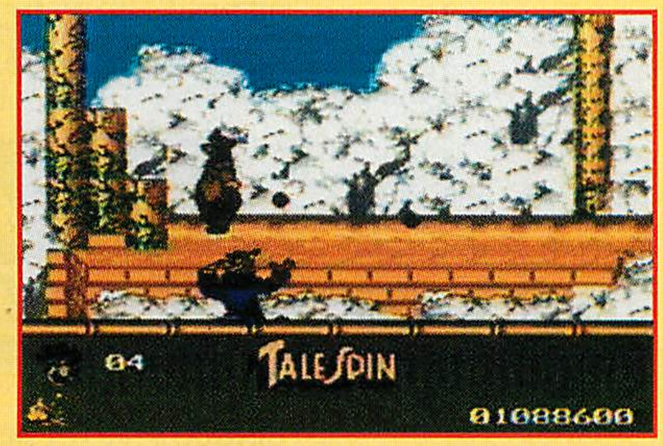
Nothing fancy here, Brian—your problem may be that Baloo is always near death by the time you can get his fur-covered butt up to Karnage's lair in the clouds. However, if you can make it to the end with enough points left on your health meter, it takes just seconds to finish off the "big boss" of Tale Spin.

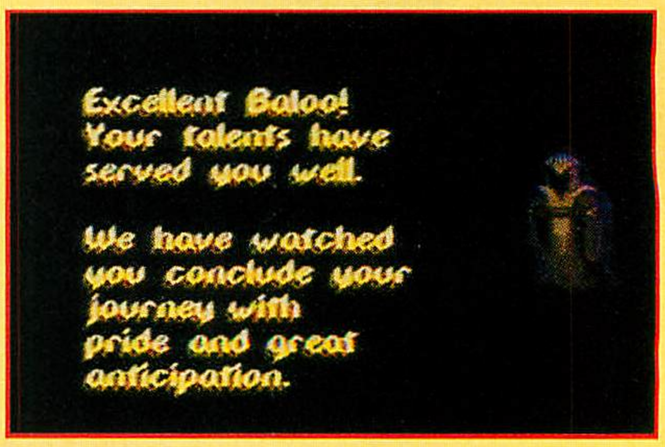
As soon as you enter the last room, stand in the doorway and start chucking those coconuts at Don Karnage. He'll start to come after you with his sword, but don't panic—just walk to the left and keep throwing coconuts to the left as you pass your enemy. The coconuts will bounce off of the wall and hit Karnage as he turns around to approach you from behind. With the auto-fire buttons all the way up, you should be able to knock him right out of the room before he gets a chance to approach you a second time.

This was an interesting one. How many games allow you to defeat the final boss character without even turning around to face him?









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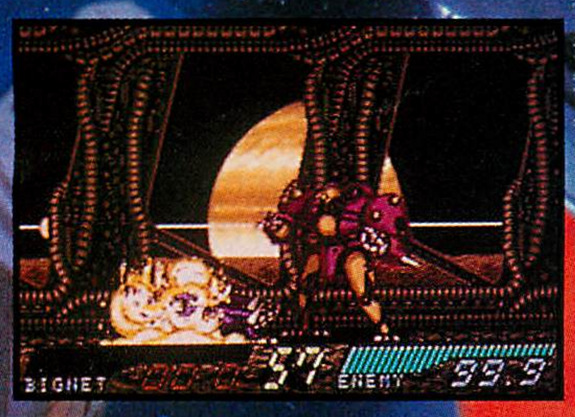
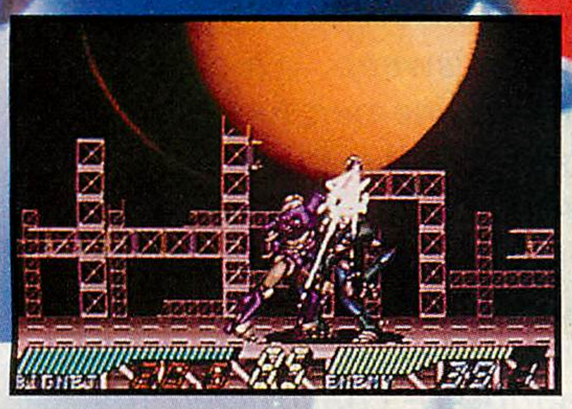
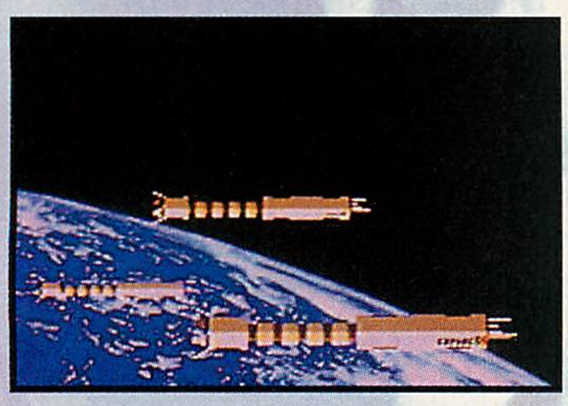


Battle an alien warbot on the desolate tundra of Rhea.



Challenge a fellow C.A.M.–rad on Satellite Phobos.



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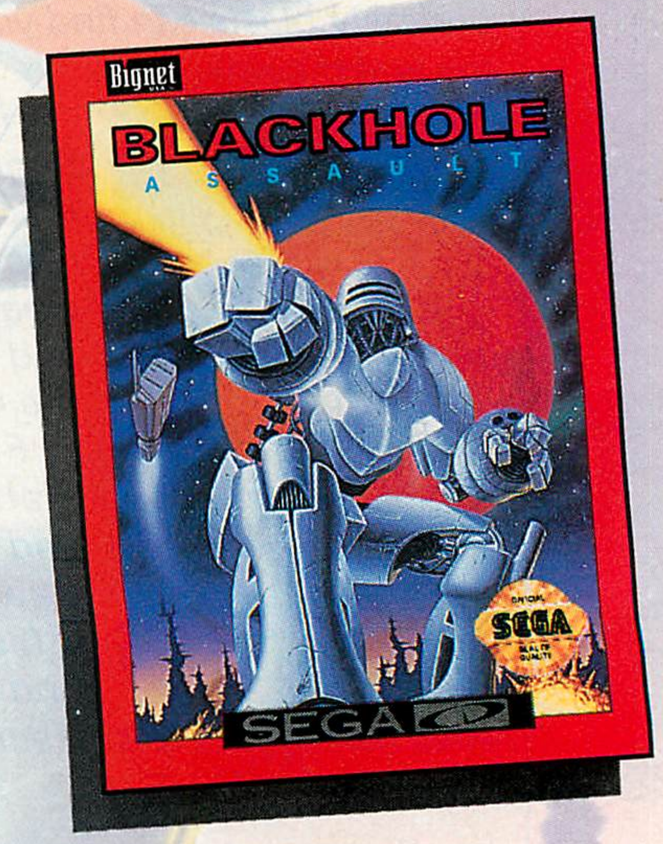

Bignet U.S.A., Inc.

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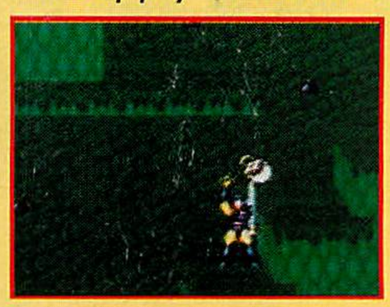
CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I'm having trouble with Sega's Game Gear game *Ax Battler: A Legend of Golden Axe*. I can't seem to get to the end of the Evil Cave without losing all of my power. Can you help?

—Jay Coleman
Flagstaff, Arizona

The difficulty level of Ax Battler *skyrockets when you reach the Desert of Death, so it's no surprise that you're having trouble in the Evil Cave. The easiest way to navigate through this challenging stage is to stock up on magic vases before you enter. If you hang around in front of the nearest town and pick fights with passing skeletons and Neo-Amazons—reentering the town to refresh with a new password whenever you get in hit-point trouble—you can earn a full supply in no time at all.*



Choose the Earth Magic before you enter the cave. Once inside, don't be afraid to use up those magic vases. I like to use the magic to take out the bouncing skulls, whose unpredictable patterns surely rank them among the most annoying video-game villains of all time.

Climb up the stairs to meet the first of the giant spiders, which can be avoided or destroyed with three quick blasts of Earth Magic.

Try to stay out of the flow from the waterfall—you'll be fighting a strong current if you choose not to jump up to the platforms above it. The first jumping fish creature can be killed with the Super Swing attack while standing on the platform, and the second one must be dispatched while you're hip-deep in the water.

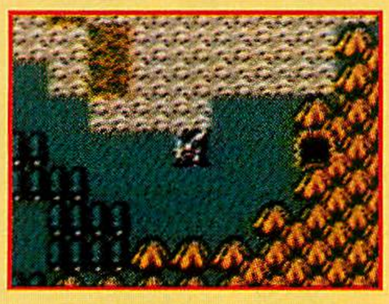
Proceed to the right, where you'll pass by another giant spider. Again, use magic to destroy it or simply sneak by while it's "reloading." You'll fall a good distance when you step off the right edge of the waterfall.

Don't waste any time fighting the first of the fuzzy pink creatures you'll encounter when you land. They can take a lot of damage but are easily avoided.

The next bit is tricky. Point the control pad to the left as you fall, and you can expect to be shot in the back with an arrow. The arrows move slowly, though, so you should be able to outrace most of them as you proceed to the left.

Watch out for the pink creatures as you cross the platforms, and consider using magic on the next spider. His untimely blasts can find you even after you fall off the edge to land in the water below.

Head to the right, dicing fish with the Super Swing and fighting the current. You'll reach a small room that's filled with various enemies. Find a spot where all of these creatures are on the screen at the same time, and set off four magic blasts in a row to clear the room of riffraff.



From here on, it's easy. Climb the platforms and sneak past one more spider and you'll be free to exit the cave. The bad news is that the next area is so heavily infested with bad guys that you'll probably end up in several battles even before your eyes can adjust to the sunlight. The next town's not far though, so keep moving!

One of my favorite Genesis games is *Joe Montana Football*, which has been driving me crazy lately 'cause my brother almost always beats me! Can your panel of experts give me some strategies on how to beat him once and for all?

—Charlie Mercer
Farmington, New Mexico

Just as the special teams are often underappreciated in a real-life contest, the kicking unit can give you an edge if you learn to exploit the weaknesses of certain teams. You should always control the angle of a kickoff or punt so that the ball sails to the right side of the screen. Most of the 18 teams in Joe Montana Football *have slower kick returners on the right side of the screen than on the left, and if you remember to kick in the same direction every time, even the speedier players will slow down by game's end.*

On offense, don't be afraid to execute a play differently from the way it's drawn on the play selection screen. My favorite switch involves the sweep, which pulls all of your offensive linemen to the right to "sweep" a path for the runner. When your brother sees you run the ball out of the wing formation, he should be expecting you to head for the right side, since both of the running plays available under the wing formation are constructed that way. So why not spin around and run to the left?

Finally, don't fight for a sack on every defensive down. The game's biggest flaw is that the computer won't allow you to switch control to a different player when you really need to. If your opponent is threatening to score, send your swiftest defenseman up the field to lurk in the secondary. This way, if a runner or receiver should break away from the pack, you'll still have a chance to prevent a touchdown because you'll have one of your fastest players between him and the goal line.

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KUMATE (for those who dare)

Train with heavy bag, moving pads and sparing

Select your style from over 60 moves

BEST OF THE BEST CHAMPIONSHIP Karate

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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

Top Coin-Ops for September 1992

Figures are courtesy of *RePlay* magazine based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Mortal Kombat* by Williams
2. *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* by Capcom
3. *Terminator 2* by Midway
4. *Double Axle* by Taito
5. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
6. *Space Gun* by Taito
7. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
8. *Turbo Out Run* by Sega
9. *Captain America* by Data East
10. *S.C.I.* by Taito

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *X-Men* by Konami
2. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
4. *Steel Talons* by Atari
5. *Mad Dog* by Betson
6. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
7. *Road Riot* by Atari
8. *Final Lap* by Atari
9. *Rad Mobile* by Sega
10. *Galaxy Force* by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *World Heroes* by SNK
2. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
3. *Aero Fighters* by McO'River
4. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
5. *Total Carnage* by Midway
6. *Raiden* by Fabtek
7. *King of the Monsters 2* by SNK
8. *Atomic Punk 2* by Irem
9. *Fatal Fury* by SNK
10. *Steel Gunner 2* by Namco

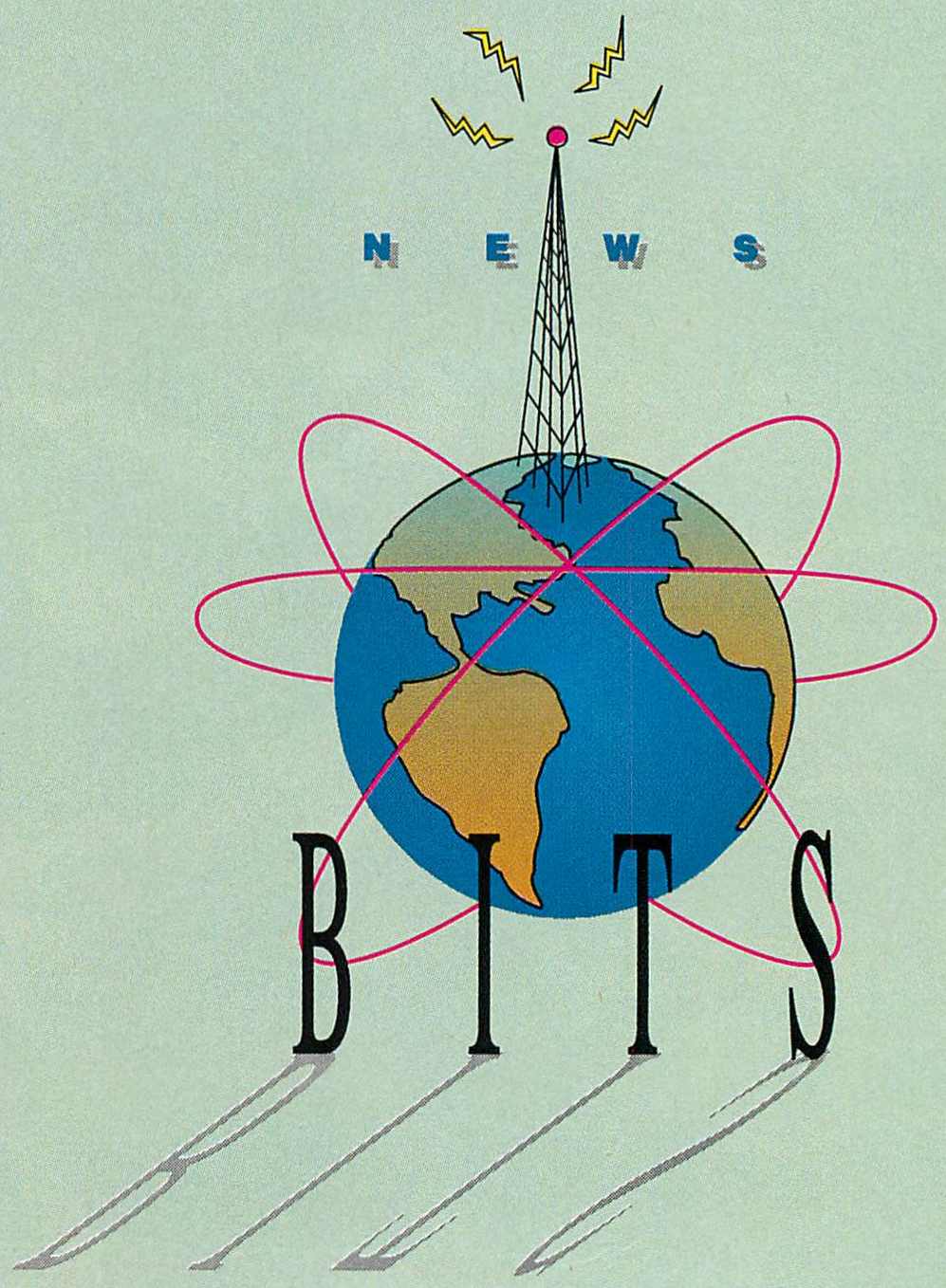
Top IBM PC Games for July 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, D.C., based on sales data received from Babbage's, Electronics Boutique, Software Etc. and Waldensoftware.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

1. *Aces of the Pacific* by Sierra On-Line
2. *Links* by Access
3. *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* by Lucasfilm Games
4. *Powermonger* by Electronic Arts
5. *Civilization* by MicroProse
6. *Hardball III* by Accolade
7. *Gunship 2000* by MicroProse

COMPILED BY DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ



Electronic Arts Buys Origin

Electronic Arts of San Mateo, California, has purchased Origin Systems Inc. of Austin, Texas, for 1.3 million shares of EA stock, which was worth $35 million at the time the deal closed.

Founded in 1983 by Robert Garriott and his brother Richard Garriott, the creator of the *Ultima* games, Origin has grown exponentially, mostly on the strength of the *Ultima* and *Wing Commander* series. The firm now employs 160 workers, who will remain at the current headquarters. Robert Garriott will continue as Origin's president and CEO in addition to becoming a vice-president at Electronic Arts.

Richard Garriott will also retain his position as Origin's senior vice-president/creative director and will become an executive producer for Electronic Arts as well.

Larry Probst, president of Electronic Arts, cited Origin's commitment to the CD-ROM market as a strong factor behind the purchase.

Star Trek: TNG Virtual-Reality Centers to Hit American Shopping Malls

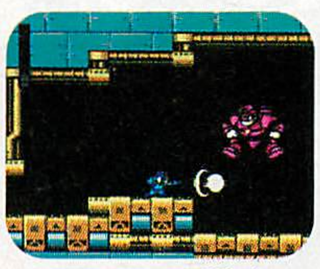
Paramount Pictures has entered into a licensing agreement with Edison Brothers Entertainment Inc. to develop shopping mall-based virtual-reality environments that borrow scenarios from the Paramount television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Visitors to the *Star Trek* centers will be able to choose which characters they want to play in set story lines, which feature ship stations such as the bridge, the holodeck, the transporter room and engineering.

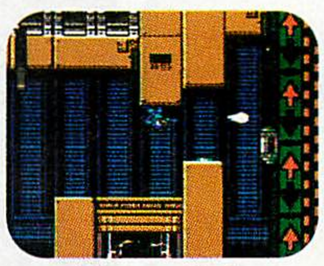
Spectrum HoloByte, which is currently producing a computer game

Help Mega Man turn Proto Man into spare parts.

Proto Man's got Dr. Light. But Mega Man is back—ready to put some heavy pedal to the metal to defeat Stone Man, Gyro Man, Star Man, Wave Man, Charge Man and other robotic goons. Use his Mega Buster and Super Arrow to make it to the castle and put Proto Man on the scrap heap forever.



Use your modified Mega Buster before this robot gets the jump on you.



When you hit the gravity chamber, it's hard to tell which way is up.

Catch a wave on your hydro-cycle and sink this robot for good.

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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

8. *F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* by MicroProse
9. *Dagger of Amon Ra* by Sierra On-Line
10. *Darkseed* by Cyberdreams

Top 10 IBM PC Education Games

1. *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
2. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* by Software Toolworks
3. *Where in the U.S.A. Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
4. *New Math Blaster Plus* by Davidson
5. *Playroom* by Brøderbund
6. *Algeblaster Plus* by Davidson
7. *Body Works* by Automap
8. *Mickey's ABC's and Sound Source Pak* by Disney
9. *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
10. *Your Personal Trainer for the S.A.T.* by Davidson

Top Video Games for August 1992

The lists of top-selling video-game software are provided courtesy of Babbage's.

Top 10 Super NES Games

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Mario Paint* by Nintendo
3. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time* by Konami
4. *Super Play Action Football* by Nintendo
5. *Bart's Nightmare* by Acclaim
6. *Soul Blazer* by Enix
7. *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* by Nintendo
8. *Super Mario Kart* by Nintendo
9. *NCAA Basketball* by Nintendo
10. *Super Bowling* by American Technos

Top 10 Genesis Games

1. *NHLPA Hockey '93* by Electronic Arts
2. *Team USA Basketball* by Electronic Arts
3. *Bulls vs. Lakers* by Electronic Arts
4. *RBI Baseball 4* by Tengen
5. *Super High Impact* by Arena
6. *D&D: Warriors of the Eternal Sun* by Sega
7. *Evander Holyfield's Real Deal Boxing* by Sega
8. *Taz-Mania* by Sega
9. *Alien*^{3} by Flying Edge
10. *MLBPA SportsTalk Baseball* by Sega

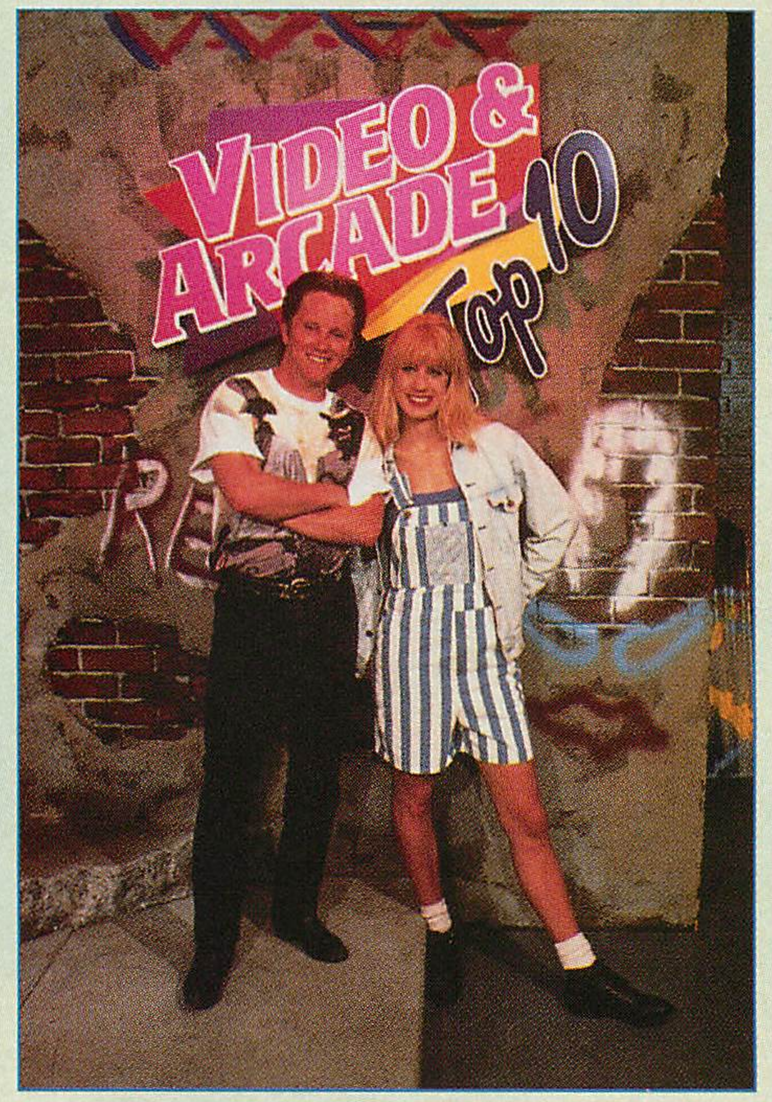
Top 10 TurboGrafx-16 Games

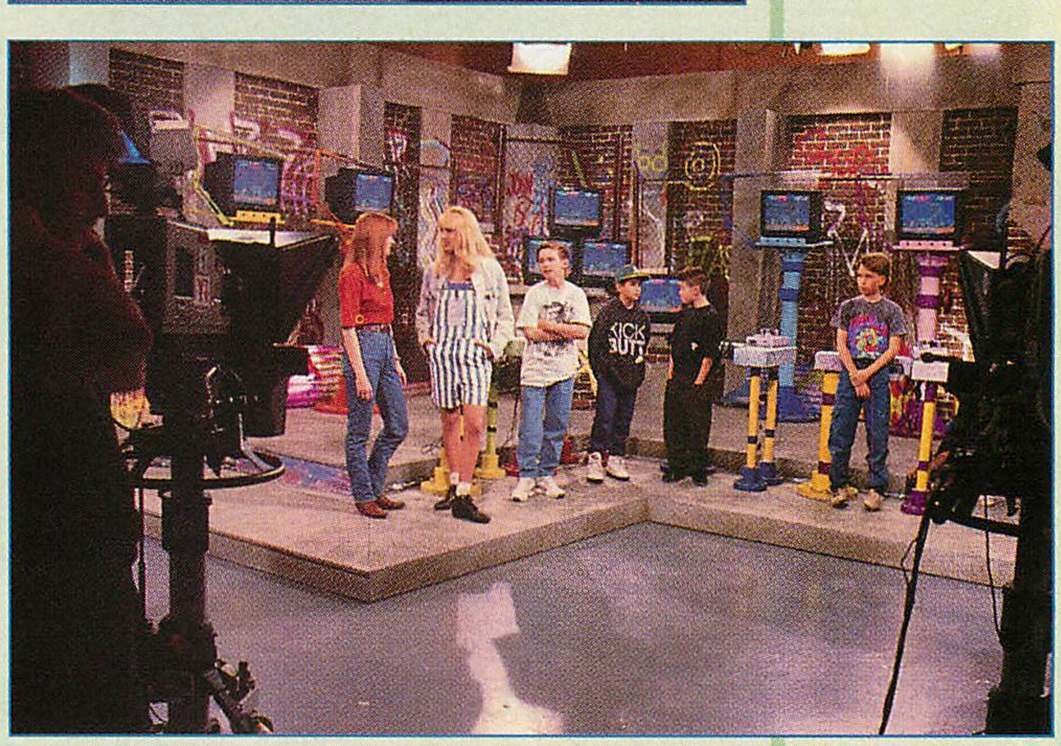
1. *Cosmic Fantasy 2* by Working Designs
2. *Neutopia 2* by TTI
3. *Lords of the Rising Sun* by TTI

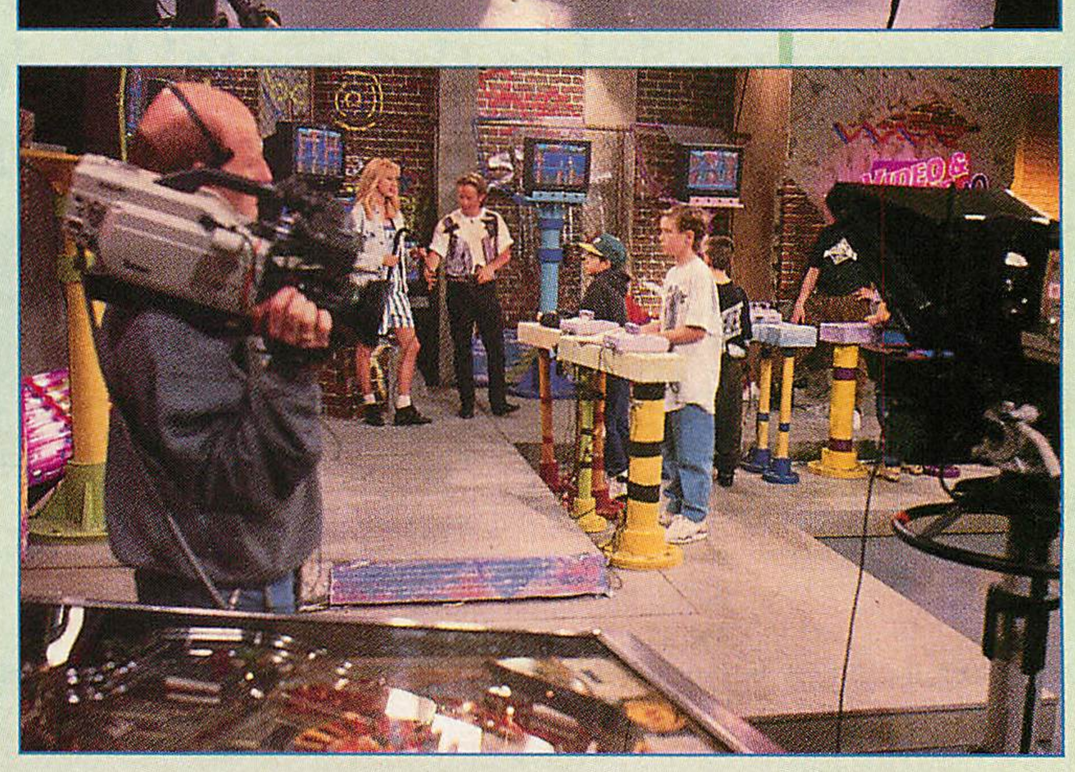
based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, will produce the software used in the simulations.

Canadian Video-Game Show Returns

The REO International/YTV co-production *Video & Arcade Top 10* has been renewed for its second season on Canadian television. Consisting of head-to-head contests, industry news, music videos, profiles of celebrities and other advances in electronic entertainment, *Video & Arcade Top 10* can now be seen by six million viewers.







Electronic Arts and JVC to Produce Software in Japan

Electronic Arts and JVC of Japan have announced a joint venture creating Electronic Arts Victor, a firm producing software for the Sega Genesis, the SNES, CD-ROM platforms, the NEC PC 9801, MS-DOS-based computers and FM Towns.

Electronic Arts will be the majority shareowner in the new 35-employee company located in Tokyo, Japan.

Video Games Featured in Historical Photograph Collection

To illustrate the changing (and *un*changing) relationship between television and children, the Harper Collins book *America: Then & Now* features a photograph of children watching *Davey Crockett* in 1955 opposite a shot of kids playing *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—The Arcade Game*. Both sets of children are dressed in clothes inspired by their form of television entertainment.

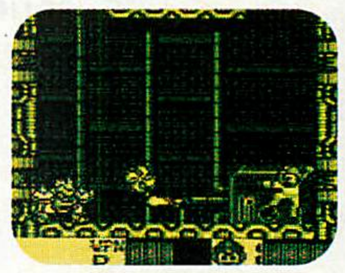
Ascii Refinances $250.5 Million Debt

Ascii Corp. of Tokyo, Japan, has received an emergency loan package from its banks to cover its diversification. Founded in 1977 by Kazuhiko Nishu, Ascii's central business of computer and video-game hardware and software production remains sound. However, the firm has been deeply hurt by the Japanese recession and accompanying drop in real estate prices.

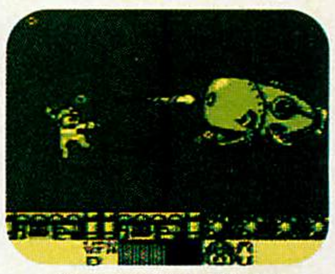
Ascii had also asked Industrial Bank of Japan to send an executive to assist in its running and restructuring, but, as of press time, the results of their arrangement had not been determined.

Now Mega Man must Really save the Earth.

What in the world is Dr. Wily up to now? He's drilling through the earth's crust to tap its energy and create his most powerful robot of all. And eight of his most famous robots are back in commission. The danger comes in waves for you and Rush on the way to Wily's underwater headquarters. Do you have what it takes to send Wily to an oily end?



With your Mega Buster you can turn Punk into junk.



Use your Mega Buster to turn this whale into a pile of useless blubber.

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CAPCOM®

CIRCLE #112 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

4. *Falcon* by TTI
5. *New Adventure Island* by TTI
6. *Neutopia* by NEC
7. *World Class Baseball* by NEC
8. *Vigilante* by NEC
9. *Final Lap Twin* by NEC
10. *Dragon's Curse* by NEC

Top 10 NES Games

1. *Tecmo Super Bowl* by Tecmo
2. *Super Mario Bros. 3* by Nintendo
3. *Super Mario Bros. 2* by Nintendo
4. *TMNT III: The Manhattan Project* by Konami
5. *Dr. Mario* by Nintendo
6. *WWF Wrestlemania Steel Cage Challenge* by LJN
7. *Dragon Warrior III* by Enix
8. *Tetris* by Nintendo
9. *Yoshi* by Nintendo
10. *Might & Magic* by American Sammy

Top 10 Game Gear Games

1. *Out Run Europa* by U.S. Gold
2. *Olympic Gold: Barcelona '92* by U.S. Gold
3. *Castle of Illusion* by Sega
4. *Aerial Assault* by Sega
5. *Spider-Man* by Flying Edge
6. *Joe Montana Football* by Sega
7. *Leader Board Golf* by Sega
8. *Chase H.Q.* by Taito
9. *Paperboy* by Tengen
10. *Ax Battler* by Sega

Top 10 Game Boy Games

1. *Super Mario Land* by Nintendo
2. *Kirby's Dream Land* by Nintendo
3. *WWF Superstars 2* by LJN
4. *Yoshi* by Nintendo
5. *Dr. Mario* by Nintendo
6. *The Simpsons* by Acclaim
7. *The Simpsons 2: Bart vs. The Juggernauts* by Acclaim
8. *Ultima: Runes of Virtue* by FCI
9. *Caesar's Palace* by Virgin Games
10. *Tennis* by Nintendo

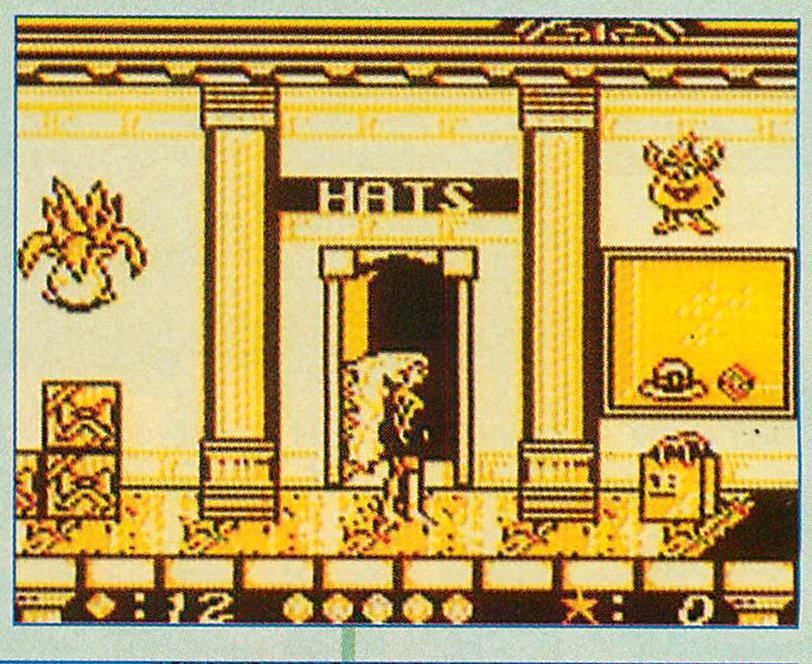
Top 10 Lynx Games

(All games this month produced by Atari.)

1. *Steel Talons*
2. *Shadow of the Beast*
3. *NFL Football*
4. *Gauntlet: The Third Encounter*
5. *Pinball Jam*
6. *Rampart*
7. *Batman Returns*
8. *Zarlor Mercenary*
9. *Blockout*
10. *Hockey*

Absolute Acquires Imagineering

Absolute Entertainment Inc. of Glen Rock, New Jersey, has acquired Imagineering Labs, producer of popular games including Acclaim's *The Simpsons: Bart vs. the World* and Hi-Tech's *Barbie Game Girl.*



Virgin and Sierra On-Line Resolve Kyrandia Conflict

In response to complaints from Sierra On-Line that Virgin is deceiving consumers into thinking that Westwood Associates had designed the *King's Quest* series, Virgin has agreed to place a disclaimer on the *Legend of Kyrandia* box stating that neither Westwood Associates nor Virgin played any role in the creation of the *King's Quest* series.

Sierra had objected to the statement, "If you liked *King's Quest*, you'll love *The Legend of Kyrandia*™, a whole new realm of fantasy adventure, the first in the *Fables & Fiends*™ series."

Capcom Releases New Street Fighter II Upgrade

Capcom has made available to arcade operators a new Turbo ROM Kit to upgrade the *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* machines.

The new *Turbo Street Fighter II* features 15% faster play, new powers for Chun-Li and Balrog and a slightly-easier-to-defeat M. Bison.

Sound Blaster to Gain E-mu SoundEngine

Creative Labs Inc. of Milpitas, California, has acquired exclusive rights to use E-mu Systems SoundEngine DPS technology in sound boards for the IBM PC/clone marketplace over a four-year period.

SoundEngine allows for playback of digitally recorded sounds that are stored in ROM. The technology also supplies the capability to play 32 different sounds at one time.

Creative Labs plans on having the SoundEngine-enhanced peripherals on the market by some time in 1993.

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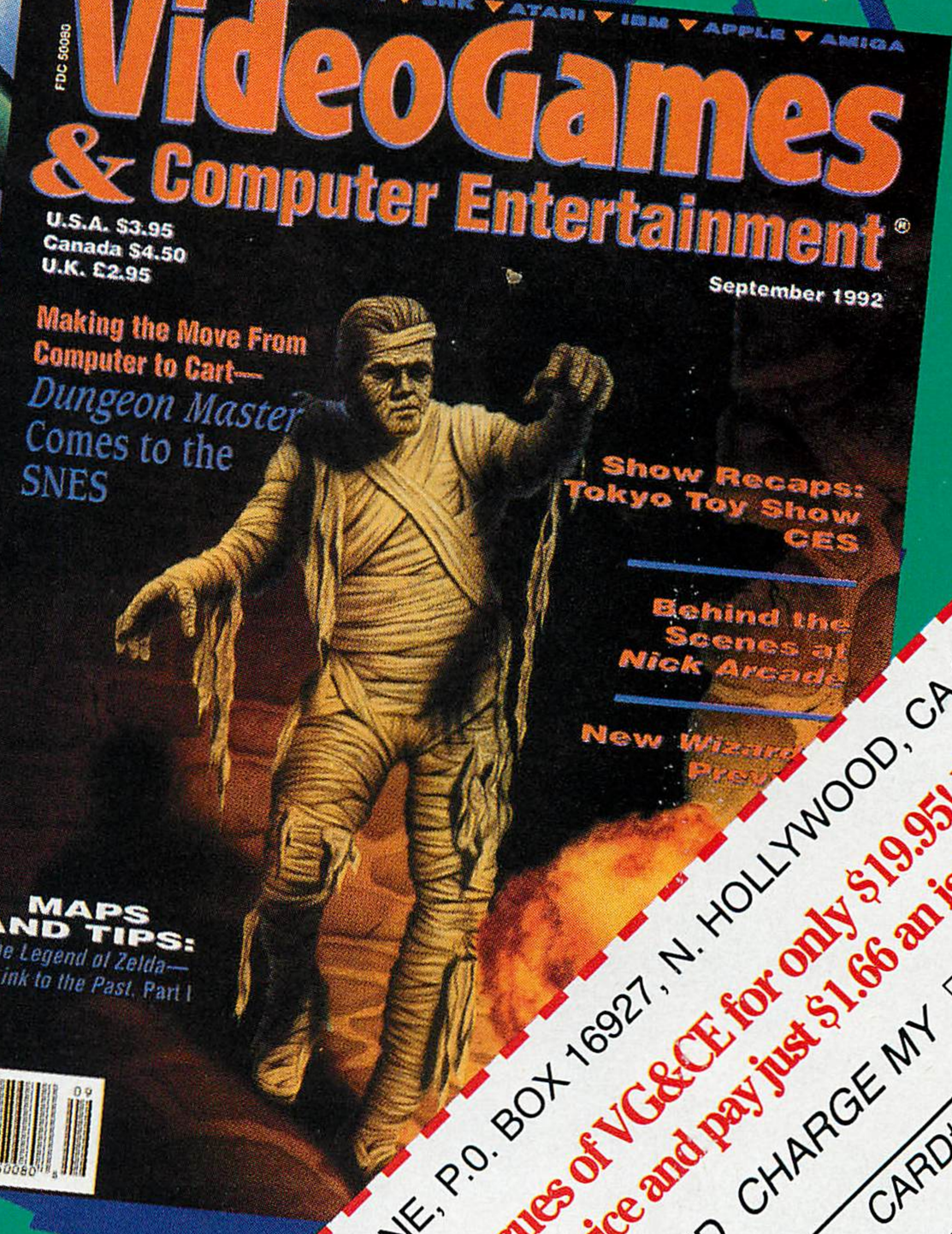

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Believe it or not,

An interview with
Scott Bayless, CD developer at Sega.

the brains behind Sega CD

What are the technical advantages of Sega CD?

Basically, it offers massive storage, which means we can now use real video action. A 16-bit cartridge could only hold a few seconds of motion video. But the CD holds over 500 megabytes, so you can now play for hours, interacting with real video.

don't wear pocket-

So the games will be more realistic?

Yeah, way more realistic. We have a second processor and a special graphics chip, so our zooming, scaling, and rotation is incredible. And we use a lot of real-life video you can actually interact with. Characters will speak to you and harass you.

protectors or glasses

What do you mean "interact"?

For example, there's a game called "Night Trap," that uses all real-life footage with real actors, and you control the action. You have to rescue girls from a house full of ghouls by operating a surveillance system, and trapping them in different rooms. It's like controlling the plot and the action of a real movie, from start to finish. It's pretty wild.

held together with tape.

Do you have a personal favorite CD game?

Yeah. I like the INXS music video game, where you can re-edit their videos with different special effects and graphics. The sound on all the CD's is pretty amazing; it's just as good as an audio component. Plus we're using a lot of original music. When you hook it up to your sound system, it's like playing in a whole new realm. It's really amazing. You forget where you are.

(Those guys work at Nintendo.)

SEGA™
GENESIS

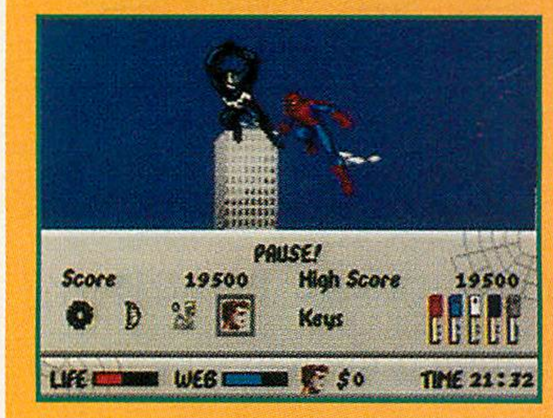
CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

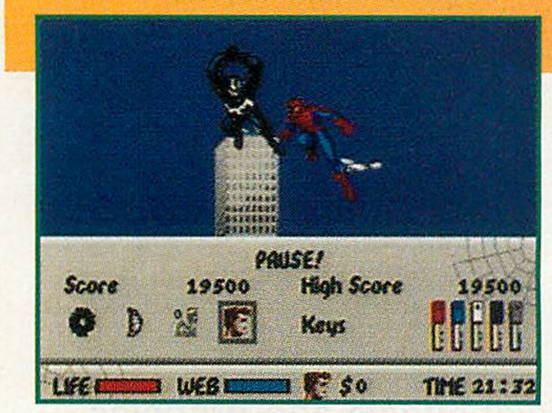
Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint is.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to: **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and complete address!*

The search for hot tips and codes continues! Look for powerful cheats and tricks for **Spider-Man, Thunder Spirits, FaceBall 2000, Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu** *and many others in this month's* **Easter Egg Hunt.** *Check out our new Game Genie codes, too—we've got previously unpublished codes for both the NES and Genesis Game Genies directly from Galoob, exclusive to* **VG&CE.**

BY
CHRIS BIENIEK





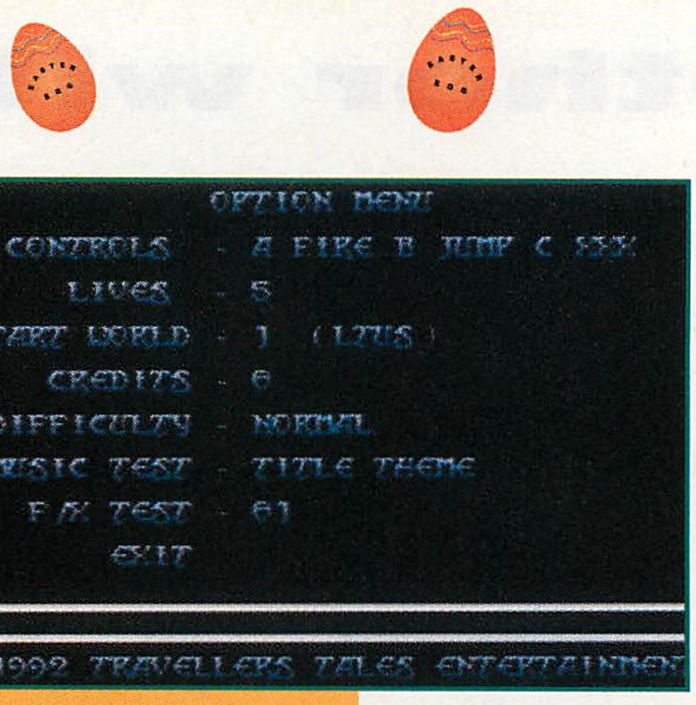
Spider-Man

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)

If you have two controllers for your Genesis, we've got a great "cheat" code for the web-slinger's first 16-bit adventure. Go to the "options" screen and leave Spidey next to the word "Level." Press and hold the **START** button on controller two, then press and hold the A, B and C buttons on controller one. While holding those buttons down, point the control pad of controller one up and then diagonally to the upper right position.

If you've done the trick correctly, the difficulty level should have three exclamation points (*!!!*) next to it. Once this code is in place, you'll be able to cheat at any time just by pausing the game with the **START** button. While the game is paused, press A to refill your web-shooter, B to refill your life meter, C for five seconds of invincibility or press all three buttons at the same time to warp to the next level.

A special thanks to San Francisco's mysterious Burt Ster for submitting this valuable Easter egg.



Galahad

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

VG&CE's own drinkin'-buddy game reviewer, Zach Meston, told us about this password for Electronic Arts' new hack-'n-slash Genesis title. Enter LTUS to start at World One with infinite lives.

Zach reports that the code also works on the Amiga version of this Psygnosis original, which appeared under the name *Leander* on that platform.

Space Harrier

(SEGA FOR THE GAME GEAR)

Mike Spencer of Green Bay, Wisconsin, wrote in to tell us how to change the difficulty level of this Game Gear classic. Hold down the 1 button while turning on the Game Gear and you'll see the word "HARD" flash on the screen as the Sega logo fades. Similarly, holding the 2 button during power-up gives you an "EASY" mode. Thanks, Mike.

continued on page 30

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 28

Thunder Spirits

(SEIKA FOR THE SUPER NES)

Our contacts have discovered a way to earn up to 99 continues in this blazing SNES shoot-'em-up. All you have to do is press the B button rapidly while the words "Push Start" are flashing on the title screen. Sounds easy, right?

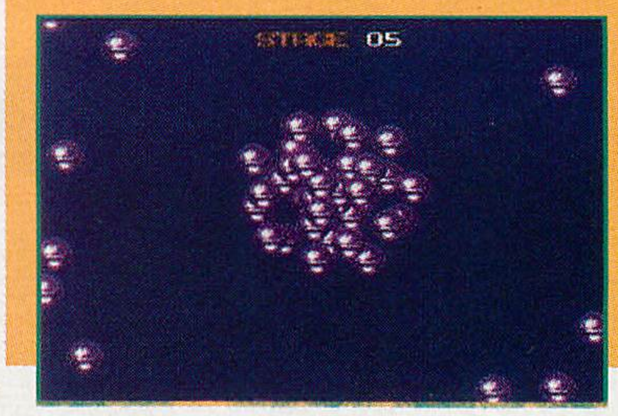
Well, there's a catch. In order to rack up the credits, you must hammer on that B button at an incredibly fast rate. Even the most hyperactive gamers will only be able to get two or three credits logged during the title sequence. You'll hear a laserlike sound each time an additional credit is registered.

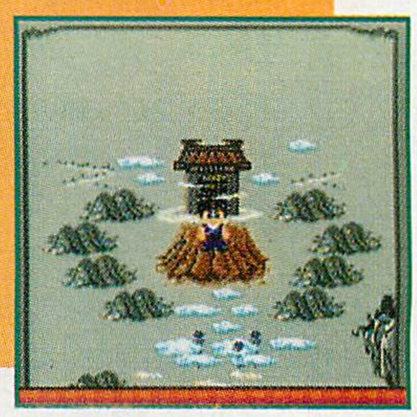
The good news is that you can repeat the trick each time the demo returns to the title screen, and the credits will continue to add up. Try to count the signals as you hear them, because the counter will reset if you go over 99 credits. Of course, if you have a control pad with rapid-fire (like STD Entertainment's SN ProPad or ASCII's asciiPad), you'll have no problem accumulating the extra continues.

Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu

(TTI FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16/TURBO DUO)

Here's a trick that will allow you to start at any of *Jackie Chan*'s five stages. At the title screen, press Up, Down, Left, Right and II. You should hear a chime if you have done it correctly—if you don't hear the chime, do it again. After you hear the chime, hold down the **SELECT** button while you press and hold **RUN**. A stage-select menu will appear.





LINKS 386 Pro

Rivaled only

This all new LINKS 386 Pro version of our award-winning LINKS golf game offers many dramatic improvements that make playing LINKS 386 Pro more enjoyable – and gives you exciting new golfing possibilities!

Super VGA Graphics and 386 Power!

The new *LINKS 386 Pro,* featuring Harbour Town Golf Links, is the first golf game specifically designed for the graphic capabilties and computing power of your personal 386/486 computer system. SUPER VGA 256-color graphics at 640x400 resolution display breathtaking views of LINKS Championship Courses. Your friends won't believe that your computer looks so good!

A lot of listening went into LINKS 386 Pro.

Many of the new features and improvements were added in response to direct requests from LINKS users like you! An exciting new feature is our Unique Computer Opponent. Play a round of golf and save your game. The new *LINKS 386 Pro* recorded every shot you made. Send your game off to your buddy and he can play against you right on the screen, shot for shot, as if you were right there next to him! We've also included pre-recorded games from worthy opponents, statistics, a variety of game play modes and much, much more.

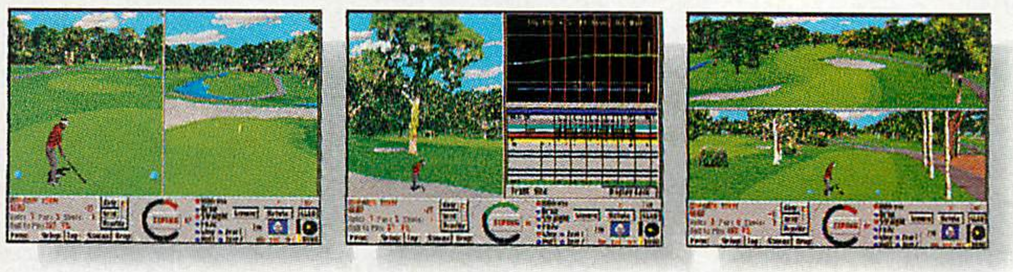
Texturing of fairways, rough, sand, and other surfaces adds an extra level of realism.

Male and female golfers.

You can use any of the 7 existing LINKS courses or upgrade your favorite course to the Super VGA version.

Over 345 combinations of Viewing Windows.

With the new *LINKS 386 Pro* you're not stuck with just one standard viewing window. With a few clicks of your mouse you can split the screen giving you a real-time reverse view of your shot to the green or add a scaleable top-view that displays the flight of your ball. Scorecard, club distance chart, terrain profile and other panels give you the flexibility to display what you want to view while playing and you can change your viewing setup at anytime!



**Actual Links 386 Pro Super VGA Screens*

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Dragon's Fury

(TENGEN FOR THE GENESIS)

You can change the background music in this supernatural pinball simulator by entering OMAKE-BGM01 as your password. Please note that the first character is a capital letter O and the next-to-last character is the number zero. Five different "alternate" tunes are available; just change the last character of the password to any number from zero to four.

GAME GENIE CODES

Bulls vs. Lakers and the NBA Playoffs

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

Only for use with Galoob's Genesis-compatible Game Genie Video Game Enhancer.

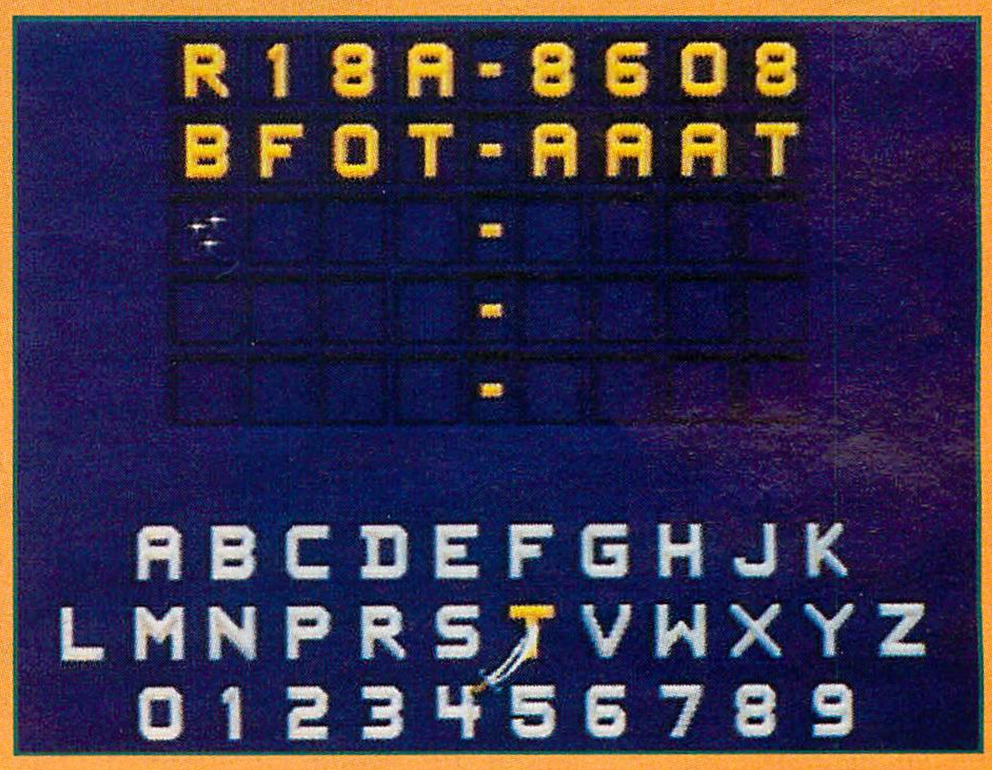
Note: In order to get these codes to work, you must also enter the Master Code as shown.

R18A-8608—MASTER CODE—MUST BE ENTERED

REJA-A6TN—Infinite time-outs for both teams

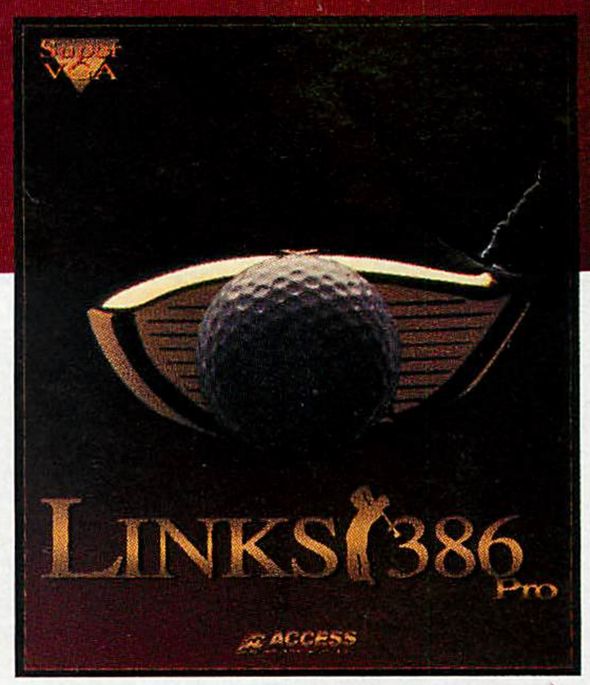
SFBT-DTZR—Team 2's baskets worth four points

BF0T-AAAT—All free throws worth nine points



continued on page 32

by the game itself.



Improved swing indicator to allow for more accurate putting.

Real-time split screen views of your shot. Great for making your approach shot to the green.

The Experience Continues...

The challenge doesn't end with Harbour Town. You can play each of the original LINKS Championship Courses (sold separately) with *LINKS 386 Pro*. Seven internationally-acclaimed golf courses on your desktop! Torrey Pines, Firestone South Course, Bay Hill Club, Pinehurst #2, Troon North, Dorado Beach, and Barton Creek with additional courses being released as fast as they are completed.

If you're a LINKS owner, you can purchase *LINKS 386 Pro* at a special introductory price. Call us today for more information.

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What Reviewers Are Saying about LINKS 386 Pro:

Strategy Plus:

"...with LINKS 386 Pro, *Access* has not so much pushed back the 'envelope' as redefined the term 'simulation.' Right from the opening screen it's clear that something special is happening here."

"...represents a new generation of computer game. Just play it and love it."

PC Entertainment:

"...for sheer, unadulterated realism, no golf simulation equals the performance of LINKS 386 Pro."

"...if you're serious about golf simulations, treat yourself to LINKS 386 Pro. And if you don't own a 386 to run it on, youi've finally got a real good reason to lay out the money for an upgrade."

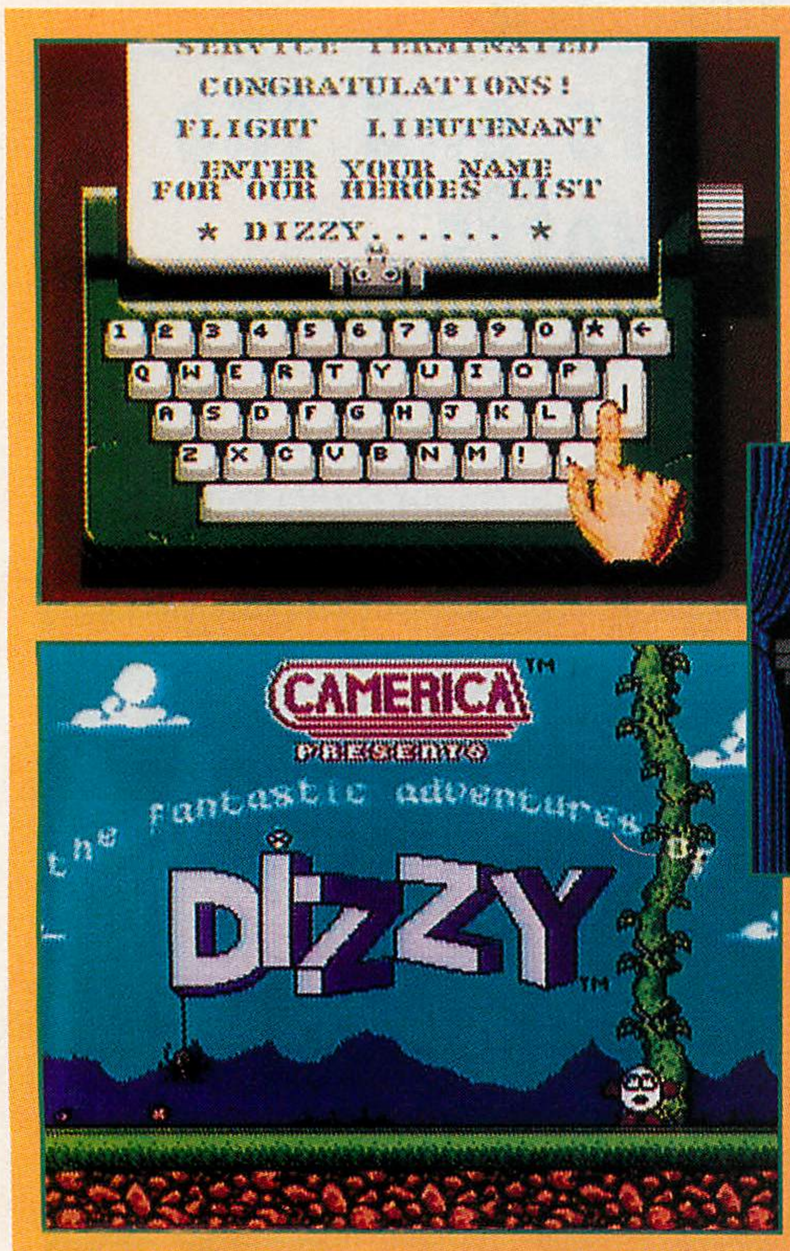
Computer Gaming World:

"...if you have a fast 386 or 486, think of LINKS 386 Pro as a Ferrari or a Corvette."

"...the ground texturing is dramatically realistic."

CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 31



Firehawk

(CAMERICA FOR THE NES)

VG&CE reader Tom Workman of Middletown, Ohio, came up with a couple of great Easter eggs for this hot action game. First, Tom reports that you can start on mission two of the game if you hold down the A button while pressing **START** at the title screen.

In an unrelated egg, if your performance is good enough to earn a spot on the high score table, you can get some interesting messages to appear on the list by entering your name as CAMERICA or MIG 29. Put in the name DIZZY and you'll get to watch a brief noninteractive demo of another Camerica game, *The Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy.*

GAME GENIE CODES

Dragon Warrior III

(ENIX FOR THE NES)

For use with Galoob's NES-compatible Game Genie Video Game Enhancer

The following codes work on a new game only, not an adventure in progress:

VNELAZGE—Start with 254 "luck" points

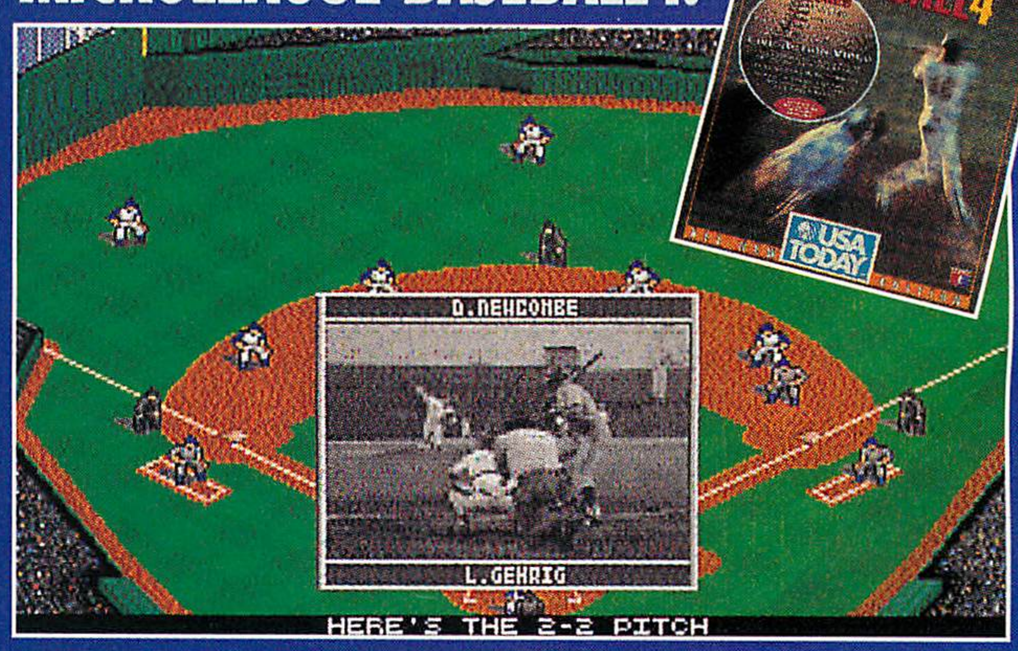
VYVUTZLE—Start pilgrim with 254 "strength" points

AZOZENNN—Start with Armor of Radiance

ACTION SPORTS SOCCER

Arcade-style action! European critics raved, and you will, too. Test your coordination—and your managerial skills—as you play for the European-championships. More than 170 actual clubs are included. VGA and EGA. Arcade, management and full simulation modes. Real life action: corner kicks, free kicks, trick shots. Much more! It's the best game yet for the soccer buff—and a perfect way for the novice to learn the game.

MICROLEAGUE BASEBALL4.



The newest and the greatest! Take your choice: manage 54 teams, past and present. With multimedia, digitized sound, 256-color, 3-D VGA Graphics. You control the players and all the action. More stats than ever! Plus: programmable computer manager, detailed Stadium Graphics. You can set up your schedule…"Quickplay" a season in minutes. Print out complete post-game summaries…much more! GM/Owner Disk available (separate purchase).

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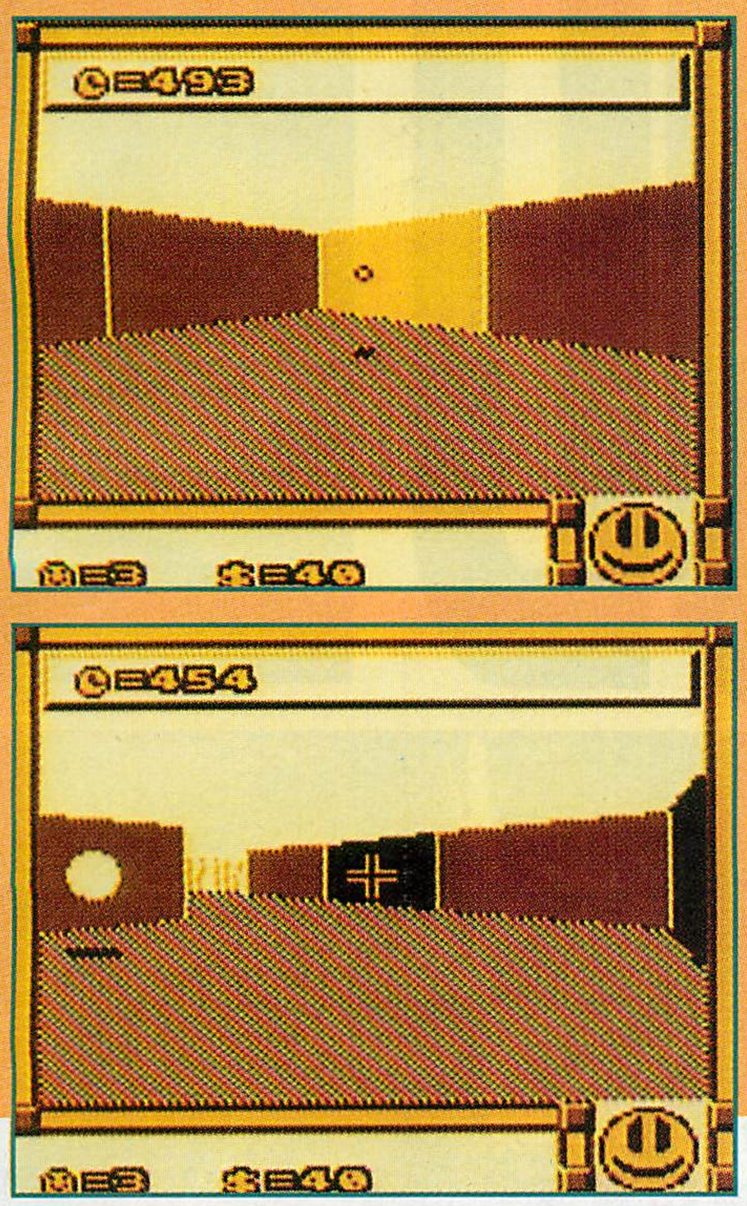
FaceBall 2000

(BULLET-PROOF FOR THE GAME BOY)



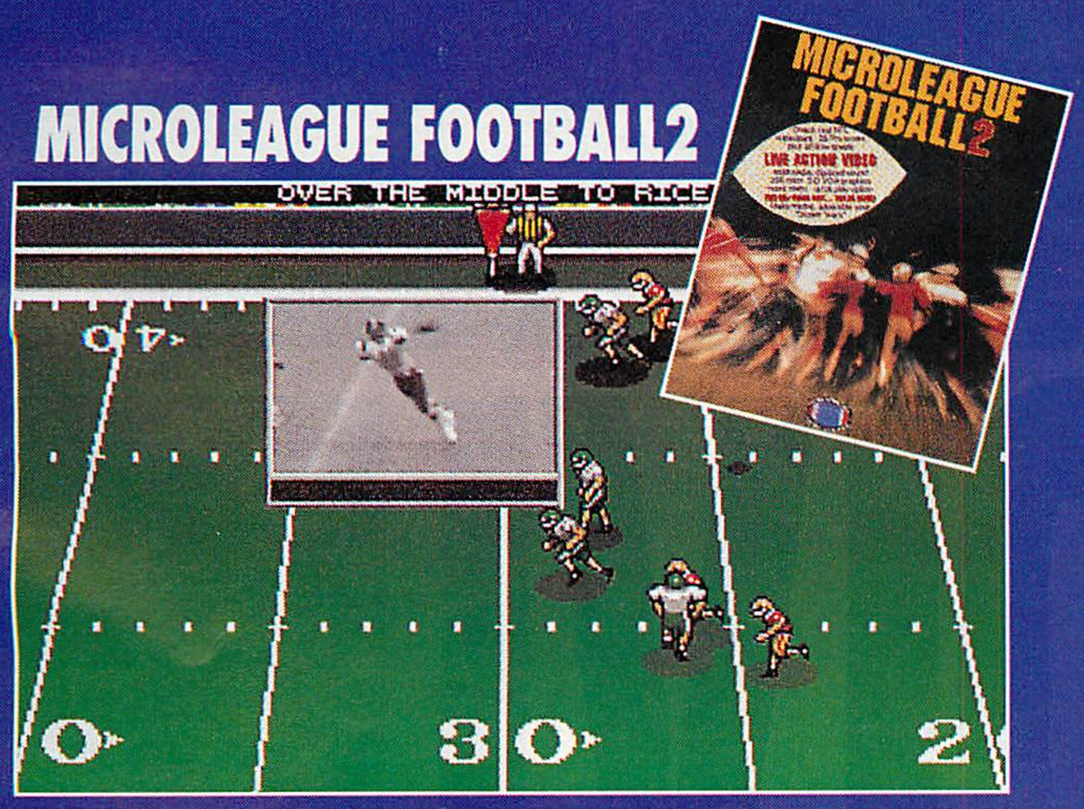
When you find the flashing exit in the first level of the Cyberscape game, don't go through the door. Instead, shoot at the exit five times. When the fifth shot hits, you'll be teleported to a special room where you can find a speedup pod, nine extra lives and warp doors that will take you directly to levels 10, 15, 20 and 25!

Magic Sword

(CAPCOM FOR THE SUPER NES)

Highlight the word "EXIT" on the "Option Mode" screen of this sword-swingin' coin-op conversion, then hold down the **START** and L buttons on controller two while you press **START** on controller one. You'll move to a secondary option screen that allows you to increase your character's health meter and start the game on any floor up to and including the highest level you've reached since you turned the game on.

MICROLEAGUE FOOTBALL2



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THE NAME OF THE GAME IS LEAGUE

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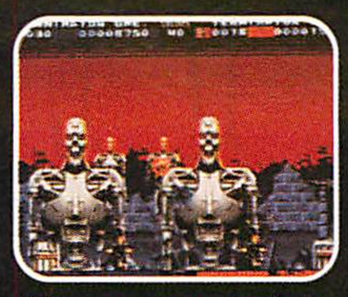
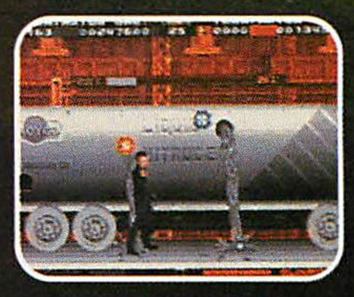
THE GOOD

THE UGLY!!



You are a warrior from the future...



...sent back to protect John Connor from the T-1000.

THE BAD

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Rescue hostages before they end up Predator trophies.

He's back, she's back and it's back!!! And they're hunting for *you* in these hot new sci-fi video game blockbusters. T2™: THE ARCADE GAME™ explodes with all the incredible action of the arcade smash! ALIEN 3™ pits you against deadly face huggers and acid-spitting aliens. PREDATOR 2™ is the final showdown between the intergalactic stalker and L.A.'s finest.

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VIDEO GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

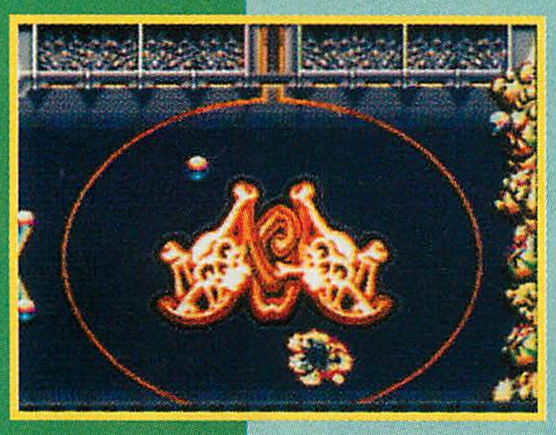
Crüe Ball

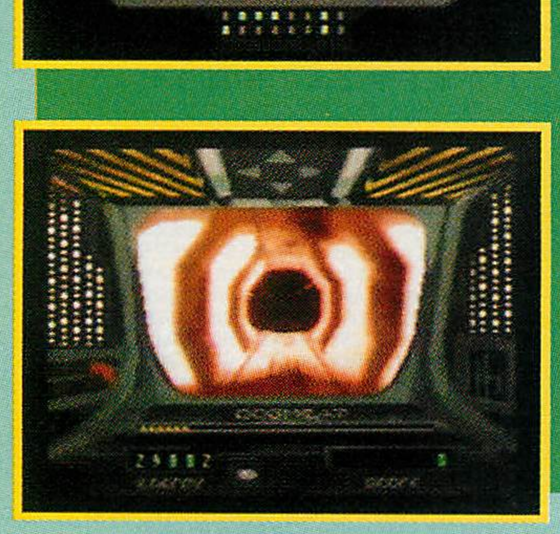
ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER '92

Its original title was *Twisted Flipper*, but now EA has signed a contract with Mötley Crüe to make *Crüe Ball* the first video-game pinball simulation to be endorsed by a heavy metal band. As of this writing, the game includes the likeness of the band's "mascot," Alister Fiend, as well as electronic renditions of popular Crüe tunes such as "Dr. Feelgood," "Live Wire" and "Home Sweet Home."

The pinball action features a futuristic table covered with such bizarre obstacles as centipedes, walking skulls and recording studio VU meters. Nine playfields are included, as well as bonus rounds that can only be reached by sending the ball up a special ramp, off the table and into space.





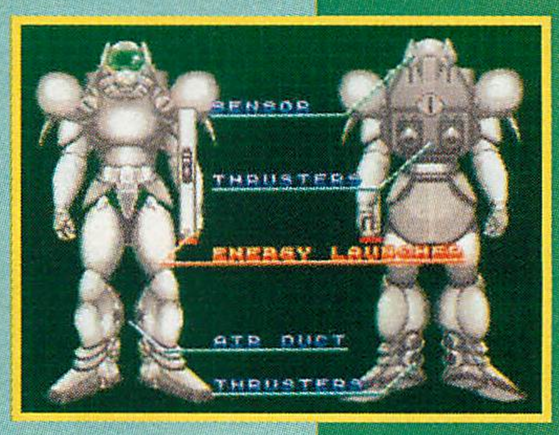
X-Zone

KEMCO
For the Super NES

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER '92

Owners of Nintendo's Super Scope will be pleased to learn that at least one third-party manufacturer is willing to support this relatively new peripheral. Kemco's *X-Zone* is a demanding first-person shooter that alternates between comin'-at-ya Mode 7 effects and side-scrolling *LazerBlazer*-style shooting gallery scenes.

One of the game's more interesting features is an on-screen cursor that eliminates the need to peer through the Super Scope's eyepiece—you can actually "shoot from the hip." There's no control-pad option, though, so it'll be interesting to see how the game is received by a limited audience.



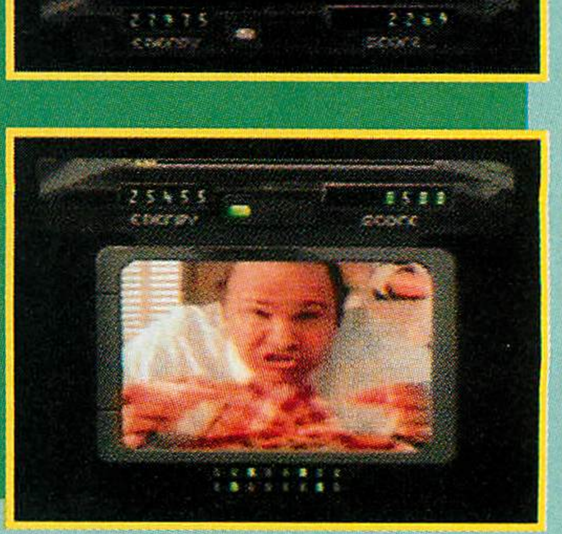
Sewer Shark

SONY IMAGESOFT
For the Genesis with Sega CD

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER '92

Boasting a ton of full-motion video with a faster frame rate than most of the Sega CD titles we've seen, *Sewer Shark* puts you in the shoes of the wisecracking tunnel-jockey Ghost as he pilots his fighter through a global network of sewers, chattering with his droid sidekick and taking orders from the slovenly Commissioner Stenchler.

The object of this post-nuclear first-person shooter is to deliver supplies to outposts that can't be reached by conventional means, navigating through subterranean mazes and blasting mutant rats at every turn. *Sewer Shark* is one of the first Sega CD titles to be released in America.



The Little Mermaid

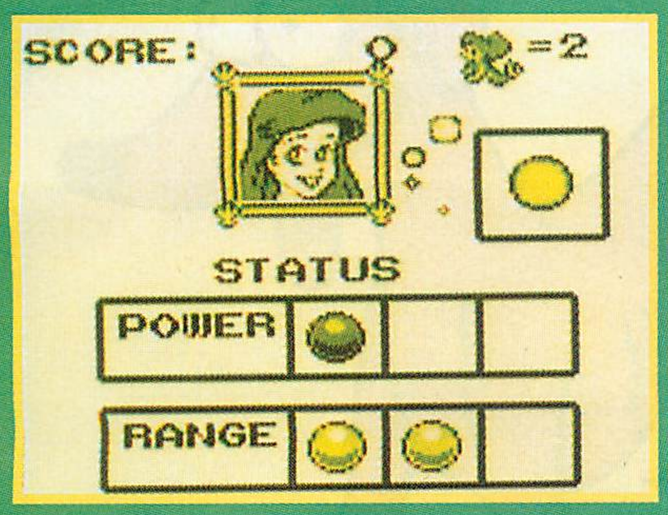
CAPCOM

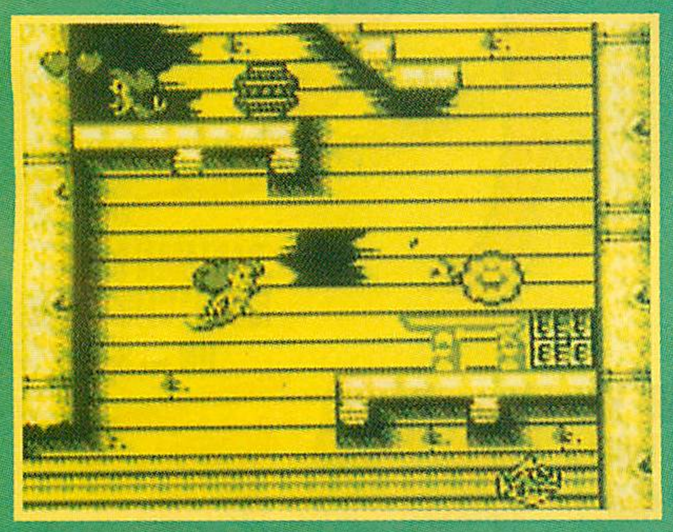
For the Game Boy

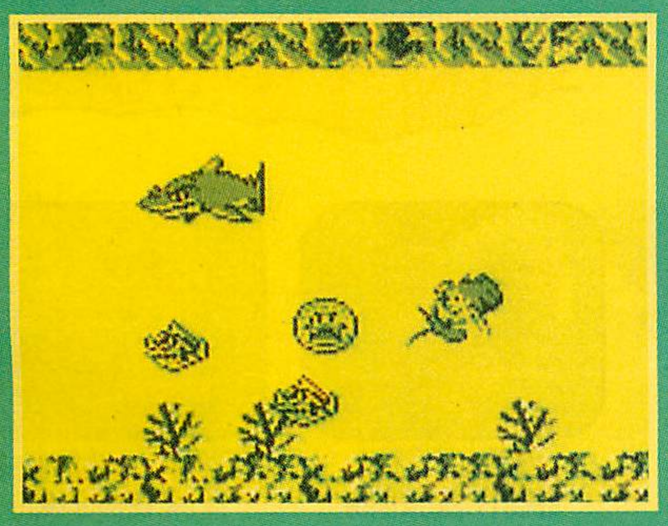
AVAILABLE: JANUARY '93

Described by Capcom as "an exact translation of the NES version," this Disney license brings the characters from the popular animated feature to the *small* screen. As Ariel the mermaid, players can swim through five levels of aquatic activities, discovering hidden treasures and slinging seashells at sharks and other unfriendly enemies.

Complete with intermission sequences and the cartoony boss characters from the successful NES cart, the Game Boy version of *The Little Mermaid* also includes a rendition of the film's Academy Award-winning song, "Under the Sea."







Viewpoint

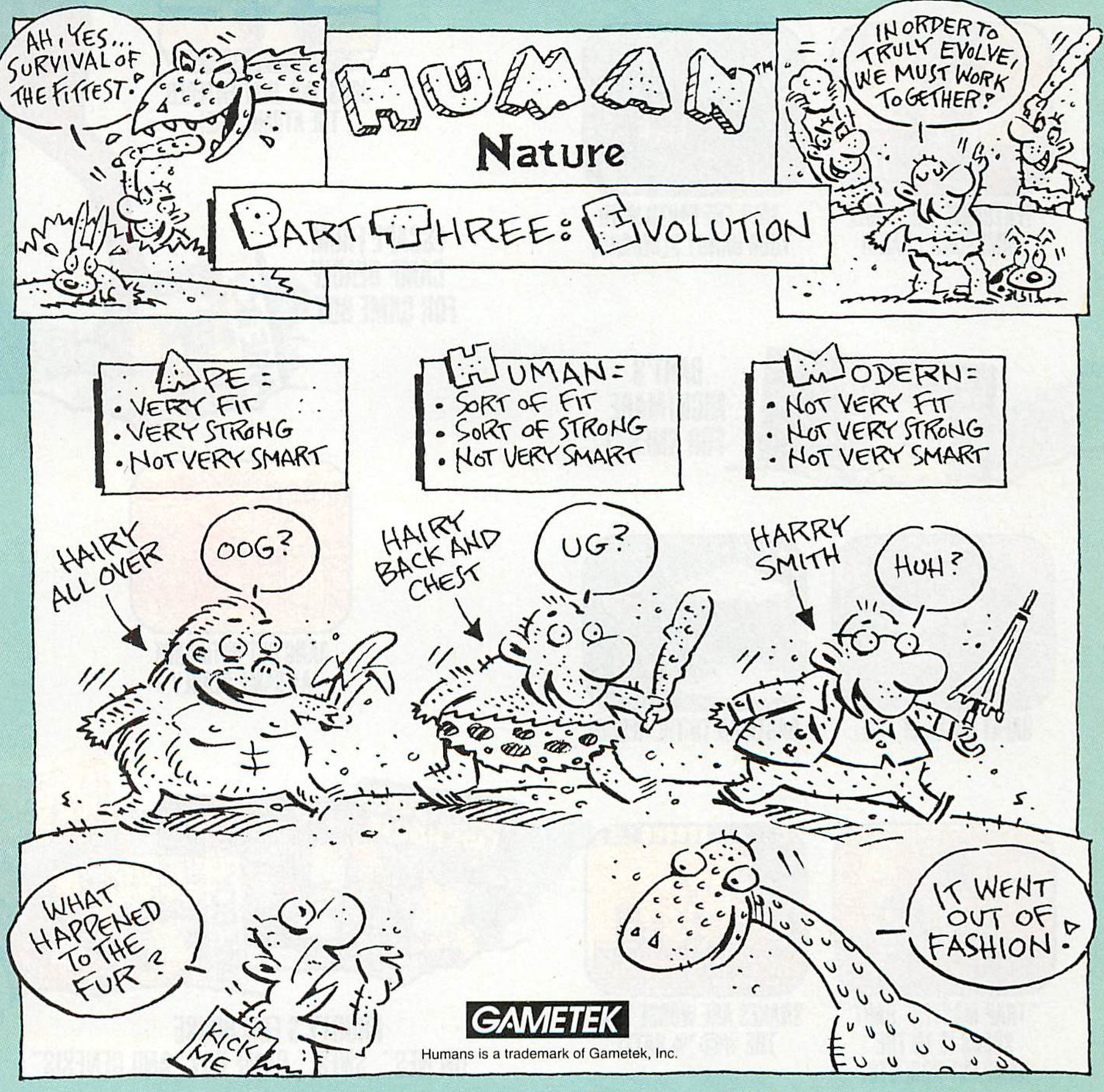
SNK

For the Neo•Geo

AVAILABLE: DECEMBER '92

Developed by the financially troubled Sammy Corp. for SNK, *Viewpoint* has appeared as a late entry on the American Neo•Geo release schedule. This colorful shoot-'em-up features background graphics that scroll diagonally, not unlike Sega's classic *Zaxxon* and *Super Zaxxon* coin-ops.

The original version came in at seven levels when it appeared in Japanese arcades earlier this year, but that number may change when *Viewpoint* hits the home system just in time for the holiday season.



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MORE FUN THAN ROLLIN

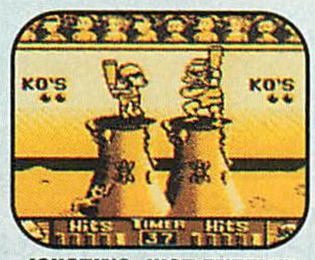
What could be more fun than rolling Homer in the snow? Well, nothing... but these outrageous Simpsons™ video games are really close.

It's an avalanche of Simpsons™ hits on every video game system! More action, excitement and fun than Bart, Ho-Ho-Homer, and Krusty can shake a candy cane at. Naughty or nice, let everyone know you want The Simpsons™ video games... otherwise you'll get socks and underwear!

(PSST, if you want to check out these games early... your parents hid the presents in the attic...again.)

BART VS.
THE SPACE MUTANTS
ON NES™, GENESIS™
AND GAME GEAR™!

BART VS. THE
JUGGERNAUTS
FOR GAME BOY®!



JOUSTING JUST ENTERED
THE ATOMIC AGE!

FEATURING THE WHOLE
SIMPSONS™ GANG!

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YOUR HANDY SLINGSHOT

ESCAPE FROM
CAMP DEADLY
FOR GAME BOY®!

BART'S
NIGHTMARE
FOR SNES™!

HANG OUT WITH BART
AT CAMP DEADLY

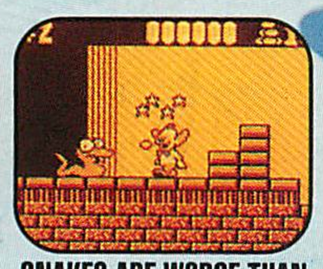
BARTMAN MEETS
RADIOACTIVE MAN
ON NES™!

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!

BARTMAN TO THE RESCUE

BART VS.
THE WORLD
ON NES™!

"TRAP MASTER" BART
SOCKS IT TO THE
RAMPANT RODENTS!



SNAKES ARE WORSE THAN
THE #@*% RATS!

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ON NES™, SNES™, GAME BOY® AND GENESIS™!

BRRR... IT'S THE
KRUSTY SNOWMAN

IT'S FIST AGAINST CLAW
IN DR. CRAB'S LAIR!

G HOMER IN THE SNOW!

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FEATURE REVIEW

Mick & Mack as the Global Gladiators

VIRGIN

For the Sega Genesis ($59.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Virgin has worked with McDonald's on a video game before *Global Gladiators* (we'll go by the short name to keep this review to two pages), the NES *M.C. Kids*. Like *Global Gladiators*, it features Mick and Mack in a scrolling arcade game with lots of running and jumping action.

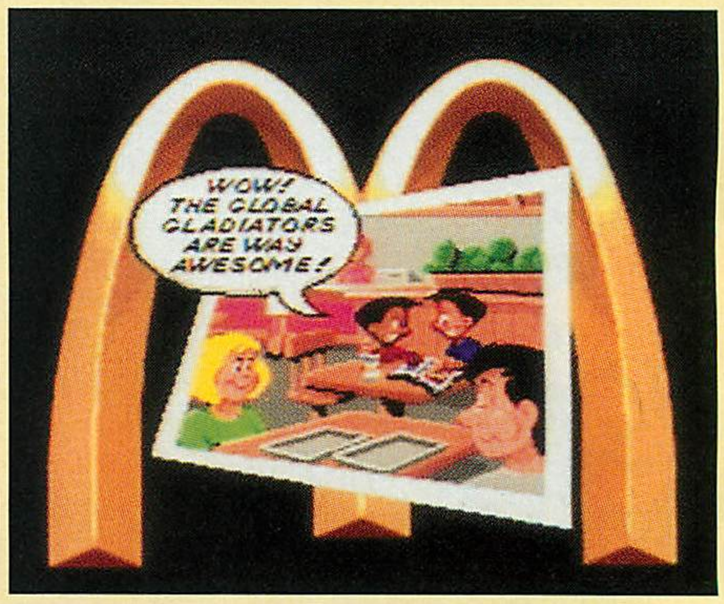
That's where comparisons end.

Global Gladiators on the Genesis is a beautifully crafted game, filled with tons of animation, colorful graphics and hilarious sound effects. It's also a game of the times, featuring a strong environmental theme. "That's fine," you're saying, "as long as it's fun." Trust me, it's *very* fun.

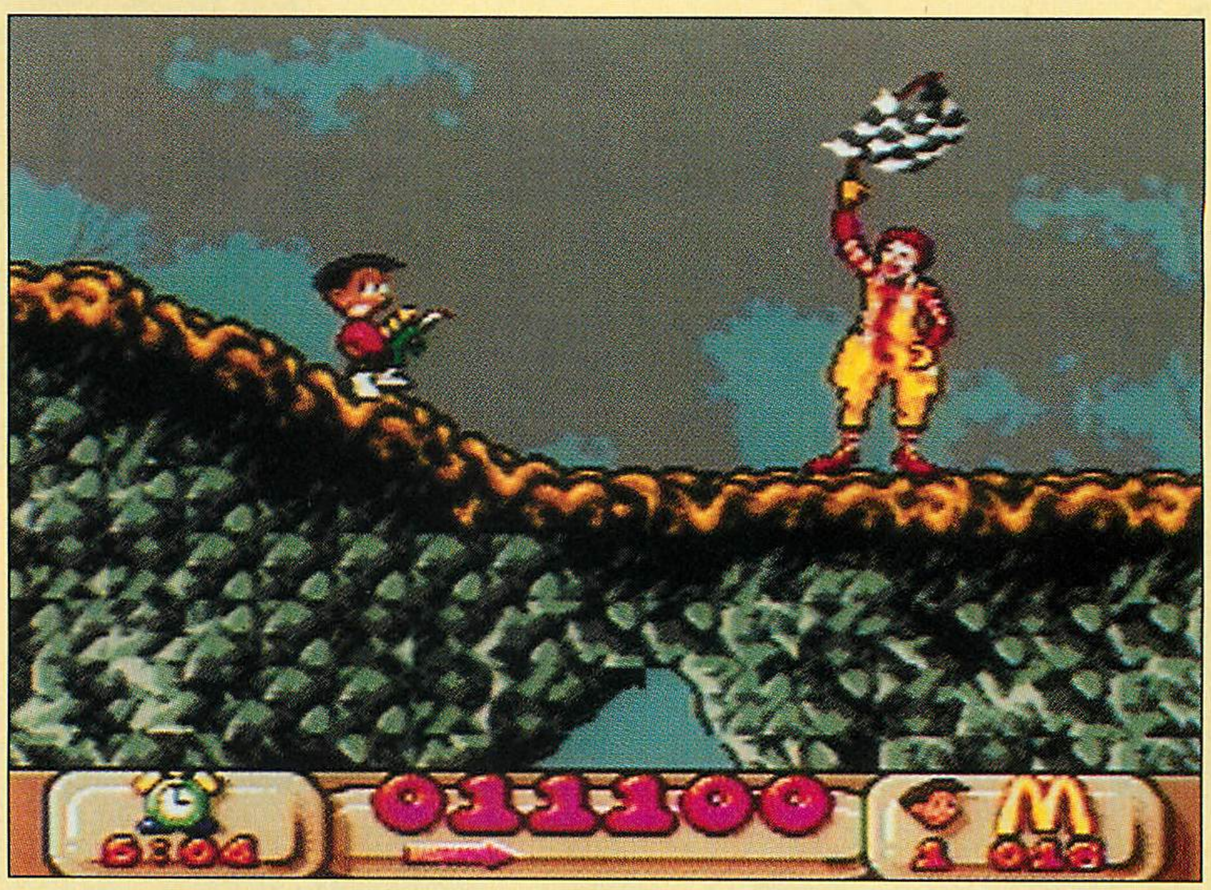
The story involves Mick and Mack visiting their local McD's, when they fall *into* a comic book containing heroes named the Global Gladiators. The kids become the Global Gladiators, and their mission is to rid four worlds (Slimeworld, the Forest, Toxitown and the Arctic) of polluting foes.

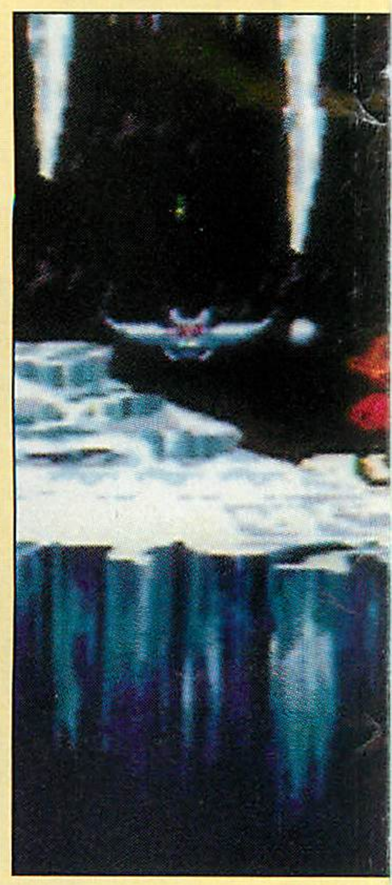
Global Gladiators is a one-player game, so at the start you pick which character you want. It looks like they have grown up since their NES adventure, and, thanks to the Genesis, their movements are cleaner and more articulate. Each of the heroes is equipped with a powerful "goo-shooter" that squirts a lethal liquid, which will serve to dispatch the game's many enemies.

For instance, Slimeworld is a land filled with sludge ponds, slime-spewing machines and gooey, green foes. Toxitown is the most intricate area, featuring a tangle of steel girders guarded by can-throwing trash cans, jackhammers and choking smoke clouds, among others. The journey ends by battling an abomination of a snow creature with an evil laugh.



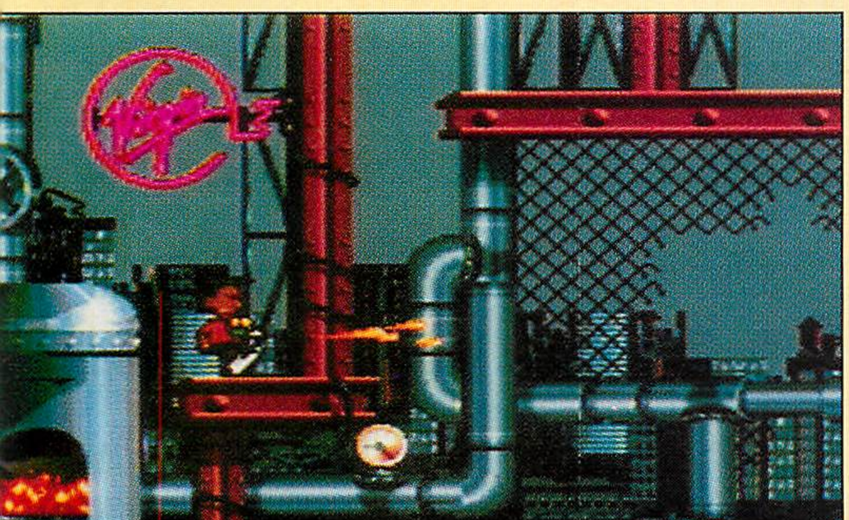
All levels (each of the four worlds has three levels, for a total of 12) are fairly linear, moving from left to right. How you get to the exit, however, is up to you, as there is a variety of loosely formed paths you can take. As a side goal, you'll traverse every square inch of each level in search of "arches"—as in "McDonald's arches." There are 100 of these little icons spread throughout each level, and, if you get 75 of them, you'll go to a bonus round when you complete the level. Often, these arches (as well as 1-ups, health-boosting hearts and alarm clocks that add to the timer) can be found behind objects or above the playfield. Invisible platforms and obscured sections can be very difficult to find.

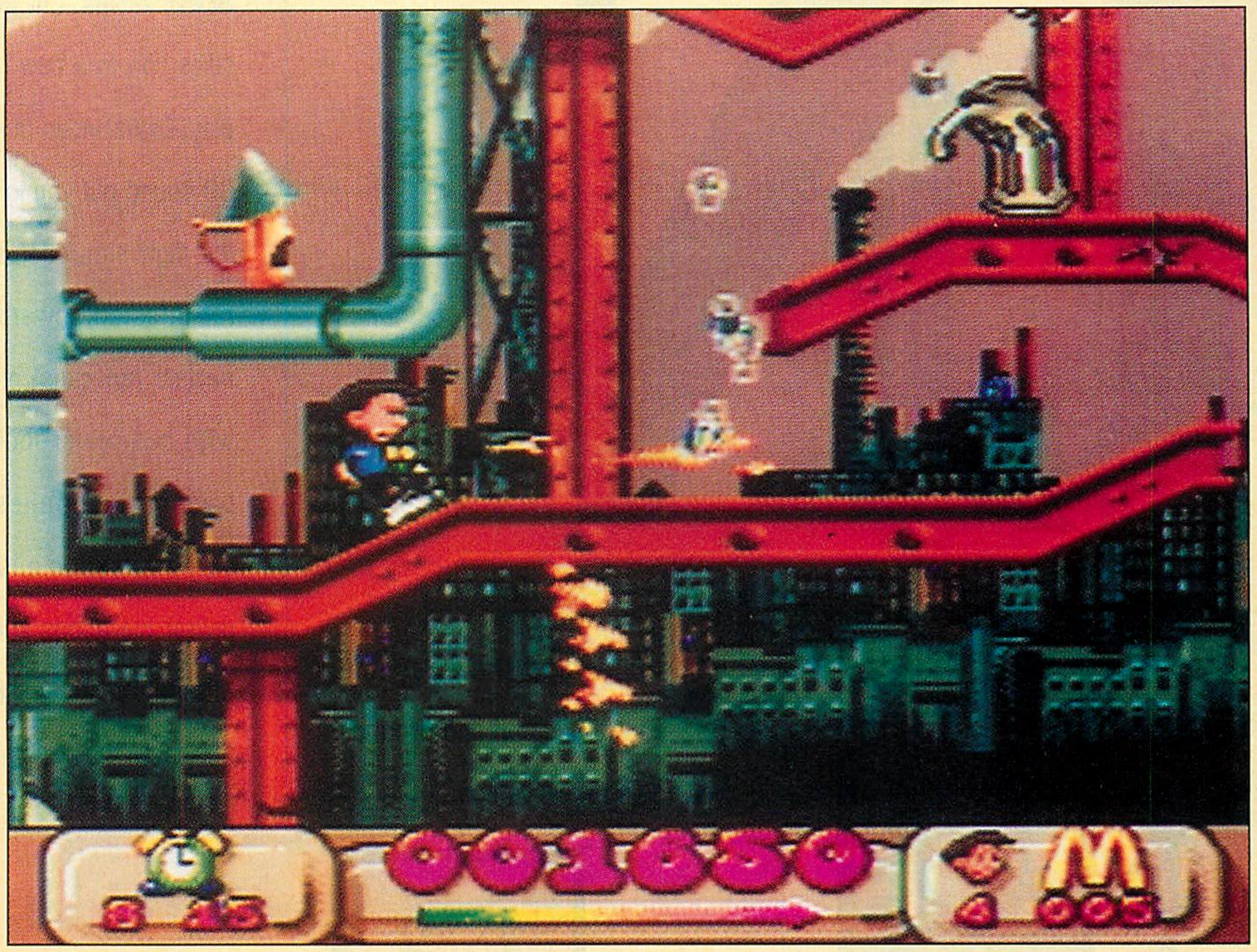




The bonus round is a recycling game, where cans, bottles and newspapers fall from the sky. They must be picked up before coming to rest and then placed in their proper receptacles. It's another opportunity to get bonuses—or a conk on the head by an anvil.

Global Gladiators is my kind of game, one that you can turn on and *immediately* enjoy. The sound is incredible, like the opening song, which is a mixture of the game's music, cartoonlike sound effects and voice prompts blended into a syncopated hip-hop. Heck, just powering up





is hysterical: At the Virgin logo, the developers parody *Sonic*'s sing-songy "Se-ga!" with a monotonous group intoning "Vir-gin."

Above all, *Global Gladiators* is packed with personality and detail. If you let your character stand idle, he'll twirl his gun and play with his gum. Virgin boasts that *Global Gladiators* contains *over 1,200* frames of animation to create its characters' smooth motion—and it's no surprise.

Complaints? Okay, the game is somewhat easy, but not so much so that you'll feel your money is wasted. You'll no doubt play it again just to find all 100 arches on each level. Also, quick movements—and the game is fast!—sometimes jerk the screen around uncomfortably. Finally, during scenes of heavy action, the music can noticeably change tempo, a sign of processor overload. Keep in mind that these are *minor* problems, but they do keep the game from rating perfect 10s. Word has it that the SNES version will really be hot, but we'll have to wait until spring for it to appear.

This holiday season, *Global Gladiators* will undoubtedly give *Sonic 2* a run for the money for play value and sheer comedic impact. As well, Virgin is donating a portion of the profits from each cartridge to Ronald McDonald House, residences around the country where McDonald's lets young cancer patients and their families reside during treatment. Great fun for a good cause. What more could you ask for?

—Andy Eddy

Virgin Games
18061 Fitch, Suite C
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8710

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE									●	
CB									●	
DM								●		
MD									●	

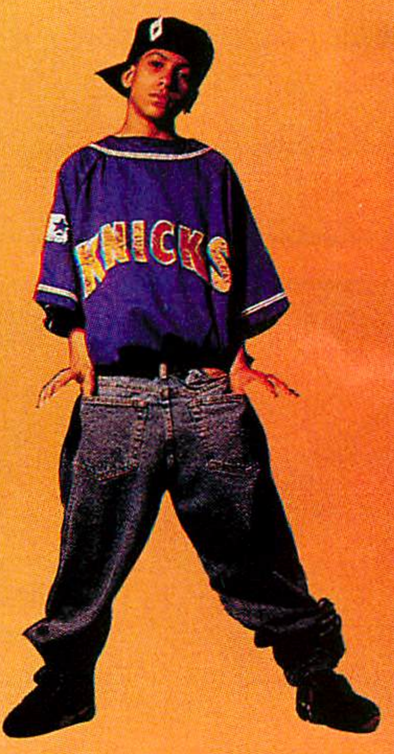
Chris wanted other weapons and bosses, but didn't think it could otherwise be improved much. Mike called it the most unusual use of a license he's seen.

UN

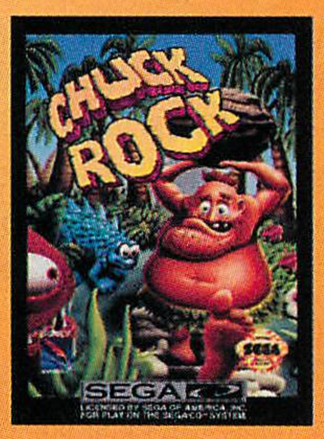
At Sony Imagesoft, we're revolutionizing the video gaming world with a totally unreal lineup of games for the Sega-CD. We're the first to put the power of music video creation in your hands with two music video games featuring smash music artists **Kris Kross** and **C+C Music Factory**. They'll blow you away with incredible CD sound, digitized live-action music video clips and the awesome power to direct, edit and produce your own music videos.

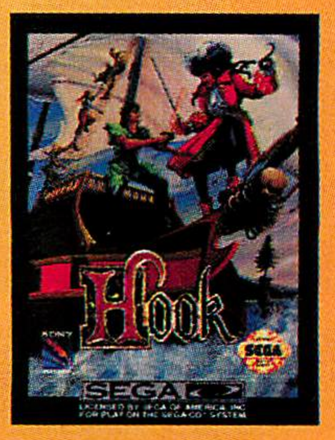
Sewer Shark, our action-shooter, takes you to a new realm of game play. Digital video of live actors and CD sound put you in the cockpit of this flight simulation shooter. Set in rat-infested sewers following a nuclear holocaust, you'll team up with ace sewer-jockey Ghost to transport supplies to human outposts. Your mission's clear: deliver the goods and fry the rats. Miss a turn and you're history. But make it all the way . . . and you're in Solar City, maxin' out to beaches, babes and awesome rays.

REAL!



We've also taken **Chuck Rock** and our own movie-based Hook and powered them up for the Sega-CD. With nine more levels than our 16-bit version, plus incredible new animation, Chuck Rock is definitely gonna kick butt and take names. And **Hook** for the Sega-CD, which features digitized scenes from the movie, never-before-seen computer graphics of Hook's ship, and CD-quality audio from the film soundtrack, takes our critically acclaimed 16-bit game to the next level. So if you're looking for a totally new, totally unreal video game experience, you found it. From Sony Imagesoft.





It's a whole new game.

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UNREAL CD SOUND

UNREAL ACTION

UNREAL VIDEO

UNREAL POWER

UNREAL GAME DEPTH

UNREAL SPEED

UNREAL CONTROL

UNREAL MUSIC

UNREAL PEOPLE

Road Runner's Death Valley Rally

SUNSOFT

For the Super NES ($59.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC								■		
GRAPHICS										■
PLAYABILITY							■			
OVERALL								■		

As a longtime Chuck Jones fanatic, I have a confession to make: When I first heard that Sunsoft's *Death Valley Rally* had players assuming the role of the Road Runner and not Wile E. Coyote, I saw disaster looming ahead as inexorably as an ACME catapult unhinged from its moorings. After all, the whole *point* of the Road Runner cartoons is that viewers are supposed to identify with the coyote—the bird is a cipher, a mere excuse for Wile E. to display his touching ineptitude. It was a pleasant surprise, then, to discover that *Death Valley Rally*, though far from perfect, conveys the spirit of Jones' master creation far more faithfully than I ever would have thought possible for a video game.

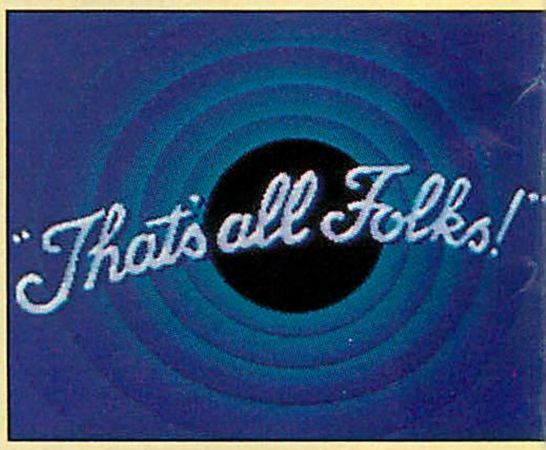
This cart, in fact, plays exactly like a classic Warner Bros. *Road Runner* cartoon—I'm not just talking about the vibrant colors or the fluid animation, but the fact that the Road Runner and the Coyote look, act and move as if they were plucked from the middle reel of a *Road Runner* film festival. The first stage alone contains details that appear to have been rotoscoped from actual 1950s cels—Wile E., for example, skimming along gracefully in his green Batsuit or chucking dynamite-loaded paper planes from an ACME balloon. Whenever you clear a substage, you get to see Wile E.'s latest contraption blow up in his face, followed by the occasional endless plummet off the inevitable cliff. The sound effects (though not the music) are dead on; Sunsoft even lets you "beep-beep" or "thup-thup" at will using the L or R buttons.

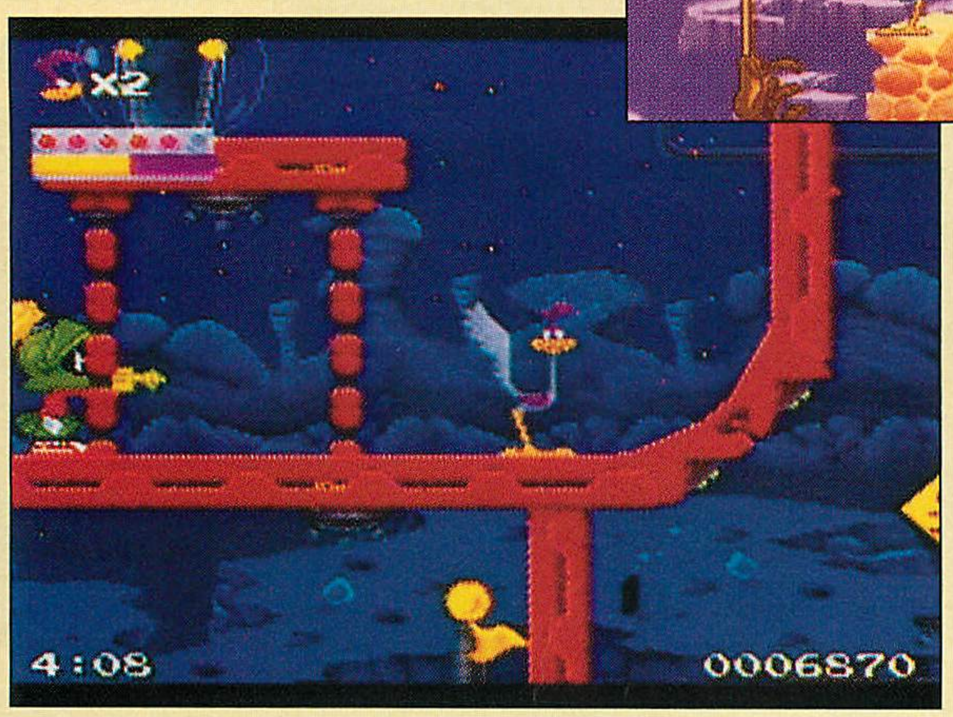
So what's the bad news? Well, this Road Runner is one hard chicken to tame—probably the fastest character yet to appear in a Super NES game: He skids, slides and leaps about seemingly at his own volition (imagine an action game set entirely in the "ice" stage and you'll have some idea how tough he is to control). Also, like another Warner Bros. license, *Taz-Mania*, there's lots and lots of platform-jumping in *Death Valley Rally*, obviously a concession to the expectations of the video-gaming audience, but mildly disappointing when you consider the originality of the source material. I mean, ledges and mesas I can understand, but when was the last time you saw a cartoon where the Road Runner hops on a moving platform in midair? Add to this the fact that the Coyote tangles you up at regular intervals (you can't get rid of him until the end of the stage) and that "continues" are harder to buy than ACME devices with legitimate warranties, and you have a cart that's just a bit more challenging than it absolutely has to be.

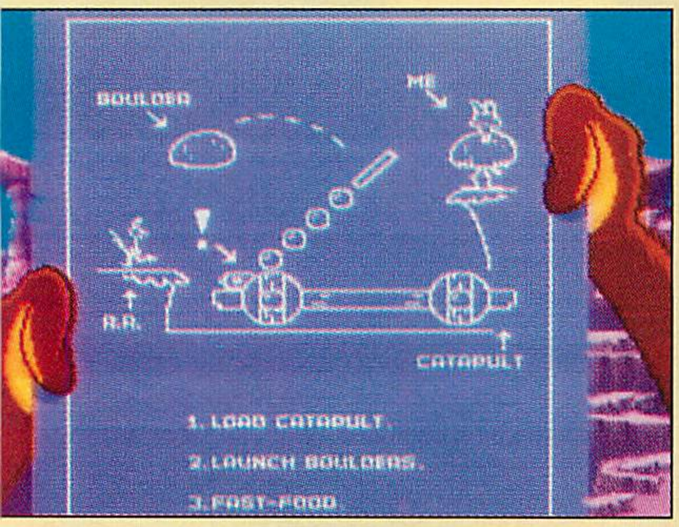
So, that's the verdict on *Death Valley Rally*—looks great, respectful to (no, *worshipful* of) the original, but not quite as much fun to play as you might have hoped. But, hey, you can always go rent the cartoons.

—Bob Strauss

Sunsoft
11165 Knott Ave.
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 891-4500



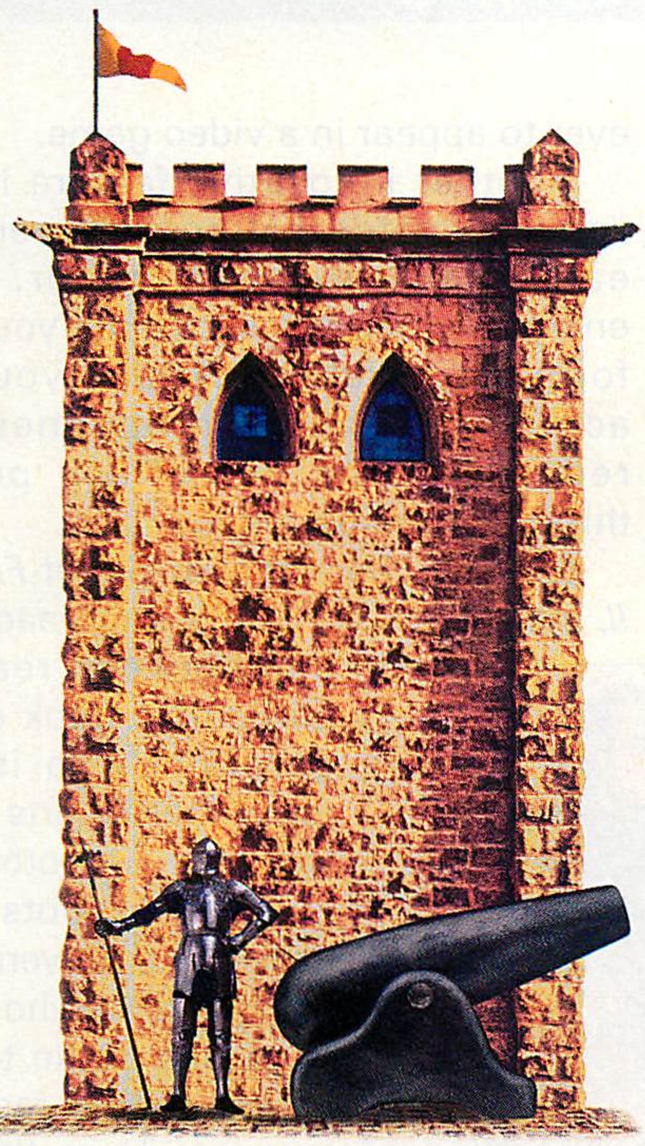


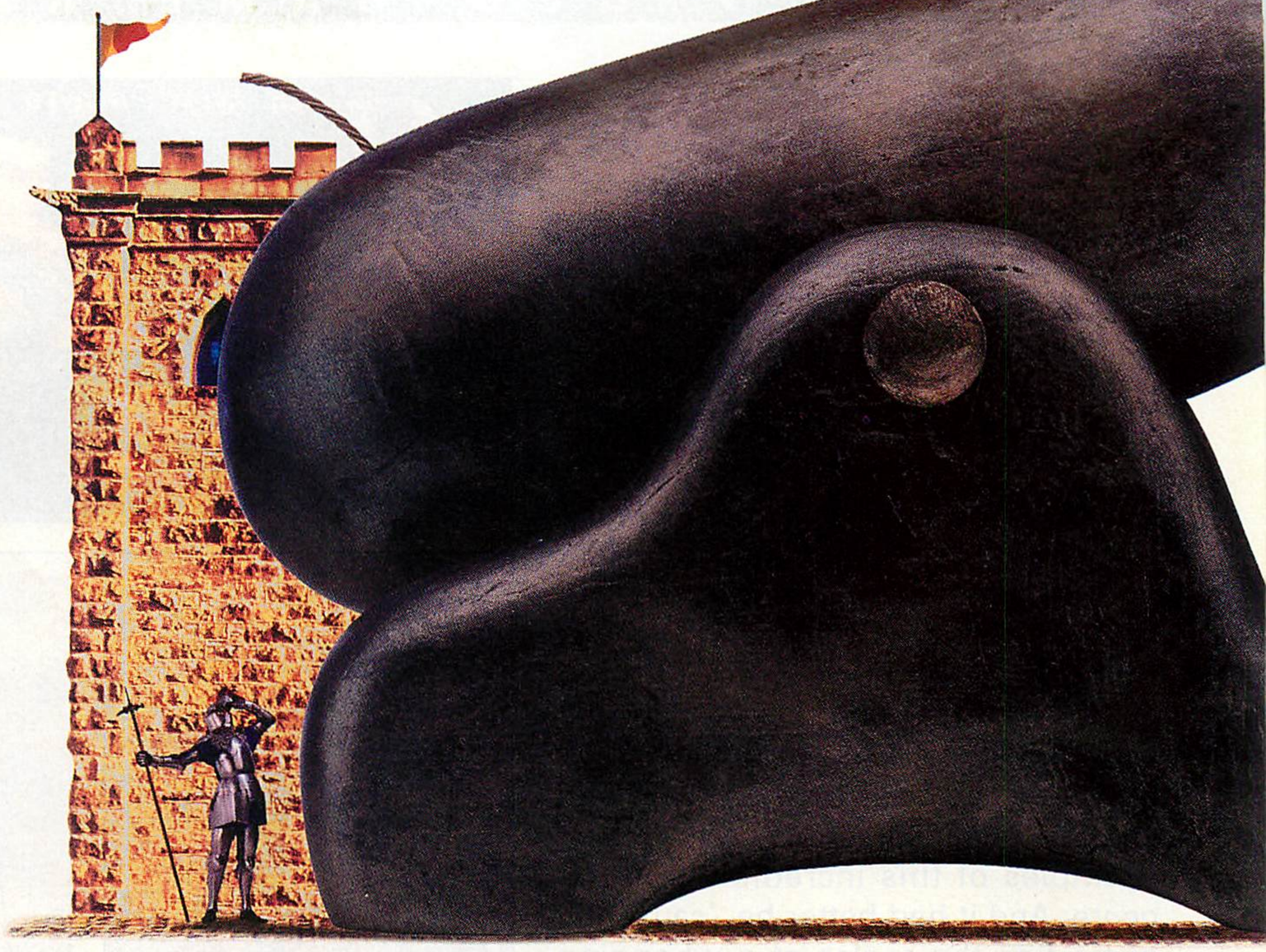


EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								■		
CB								■		
DM									■	
MD								■		

Dave and Andy both mentioned the difficulty of control, but Mike spoke for everyone when he said that *Death Valley Rally* captured the essence of the cartoon.





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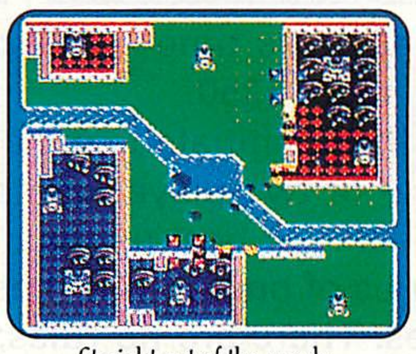
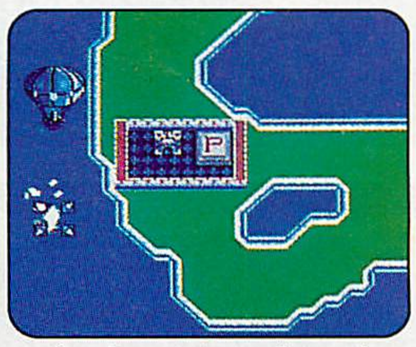


Straight out of the arcade, you get all the original action that made Rampart a smash hit.

Two player action means someone's going to walk the plank when all the smoke clears.



Super Rampart gives you Propaganda Balloons, Super Cannons and 15 huge, scrolling 3-D battlefields.

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CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

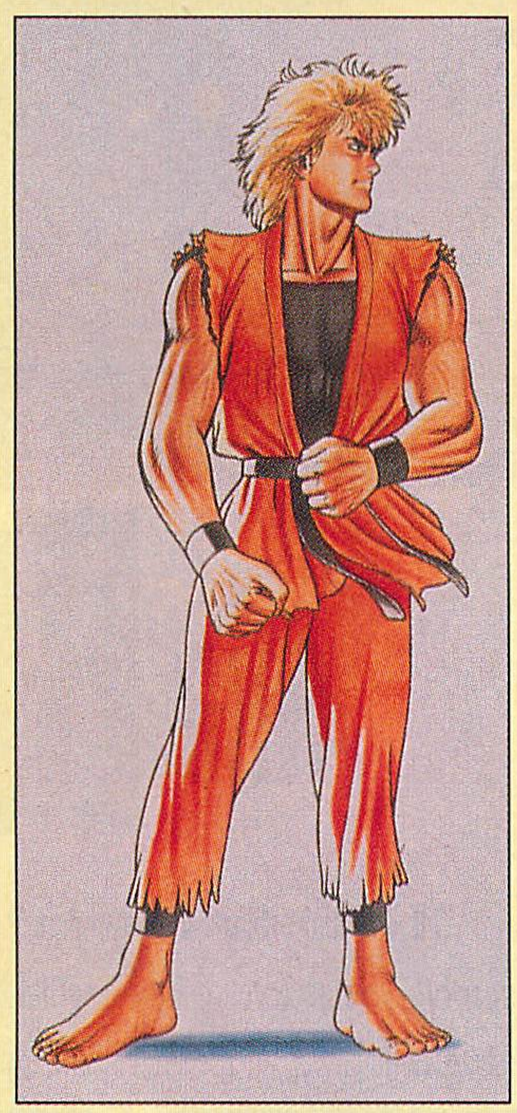
Art of Fighting

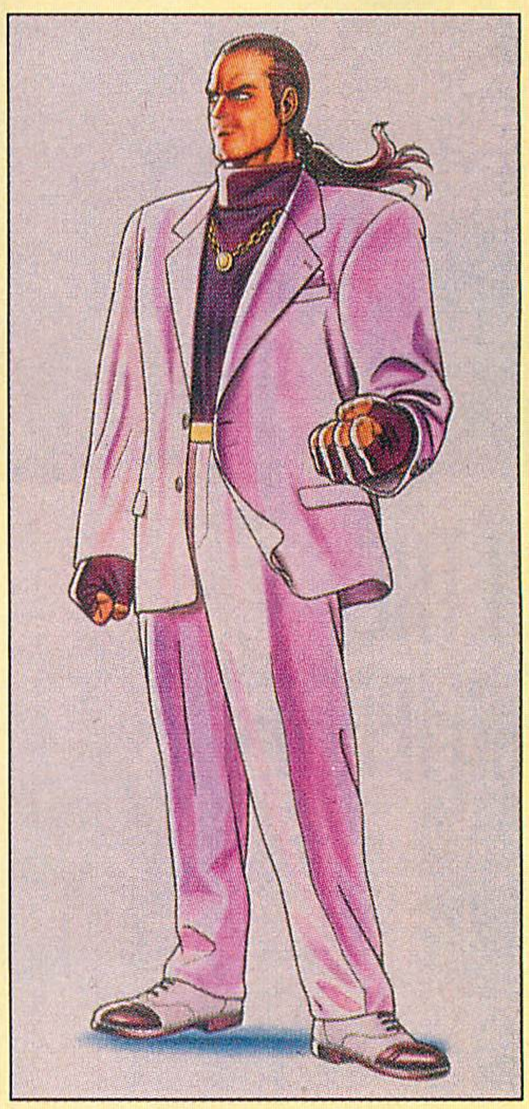
SNK

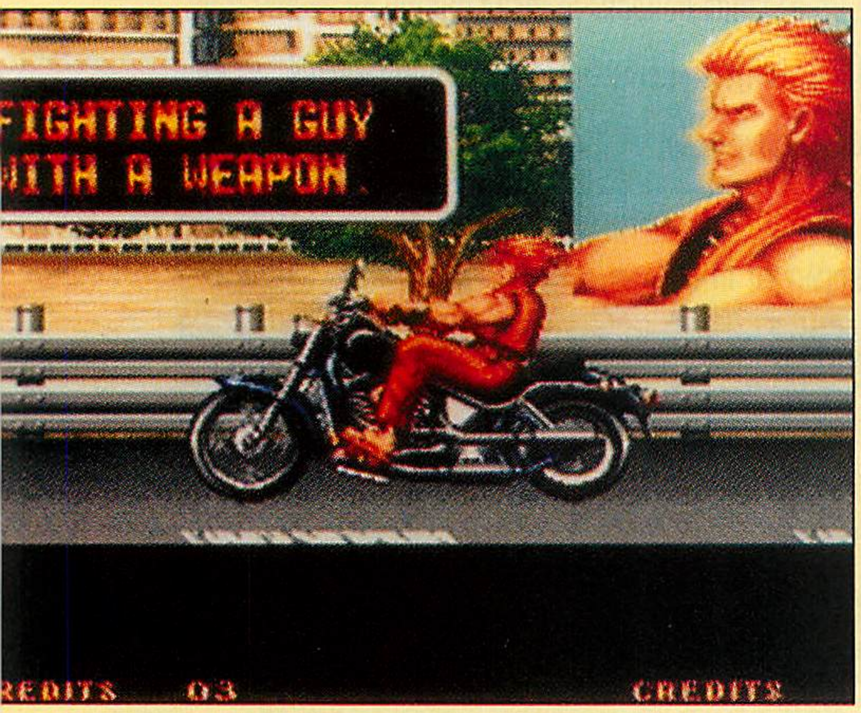
For the Neo•Geo (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

O.K., I give up! The *Street Fighter II* clones just keep on coming, so I might as well just grin and bear it. As uncomfortable as I am with the fact that this is the third street fighting game to be released this year for the Neo•Geo alone, I must admit that it's probably the best of the three, and perhaps qualifies as one of the finest examples of this incredibly popular genre. And it had better be, 'cause the game tips the scales at a whopping 106 meg and—though a suggested retail price had not yet been established at press time—it's expected to sell for about $250!







For the uninitiated, *Art of Fighting* is a one- or two-player game in which the object is to beat up your opponent in a series of one-on-one, best-of-three matches. There are no rules; you simply exploit the skills of your fighter to inflict pain on the other person, taking advantage of any special powers or weaknesses the characters may exhibit. The game includes plenty of "hidden" specialty moves to be discovered by accident and passed along in whispers from one arcade gamer to the next; this underground network of Easter eggs and strategies is the key factor upon which the entire *Street Fighter II* phenomenon is based.

Fortunately, *Art of Fighting* is unique enough to stand out from the crowd without alienating the audience that spawned it. The most obvious difference is the system scaling, which "zooms in" on the combatants when they're close to each other. The "zoom" view results in huge on-screen characters—the taller ones, like Mickey and Jack, are perhaps the largest player-controlled characters ever to appear in a video game.

Another innovative feature is the "attack" meter that appears beneath each player's health meter. This energy bar shrinks each time you perform a special attack, and you can actually taunt your opponent to reduce his or her attack power through intimidation.

Like the characters in *Street Fighter II*, the cast of *Art of Fighting* treads the line between realism and comic-book exaggeration. Ryo is the token martial arts master; Jack is a potbellied hulk in jackboots; and Robert is a Steven Seagal look-alike who rides from one battle to the next in a sleek, red Testarossa. Then there's King, who—like *Saturday Night Live*'s Pat—is sure to spark a lively debate about whether he or she is male or female. There is evidence to determine the gender of this disturbingly androgynous fighter, and, if you spend enough time playing the game, you will eventually witness a revealing clue.

It's hard to knock a game like *Art of Fighting* for its lack of originality—hey, even *Street Fighter* and its unstoppable sequel were not much more than high-octane interpretations of the original head-to-head fighting game, *Karate Champ*. I'd advise SNK to jump off of the *Street Fighter* bandwagon soon, though, and start working on original titles that can plug the gaps in its conspicuously single-minded software library.

—Chris Bieniek

SNK Home Entertainment Inc.
20603 Earl St.
Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 371-8555

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Chris, Mike and Andy agreed that *AOF* is a game the shows the potential of the Neo•Geo, while Dave thought that it was a disappointment after *World Heroes*.

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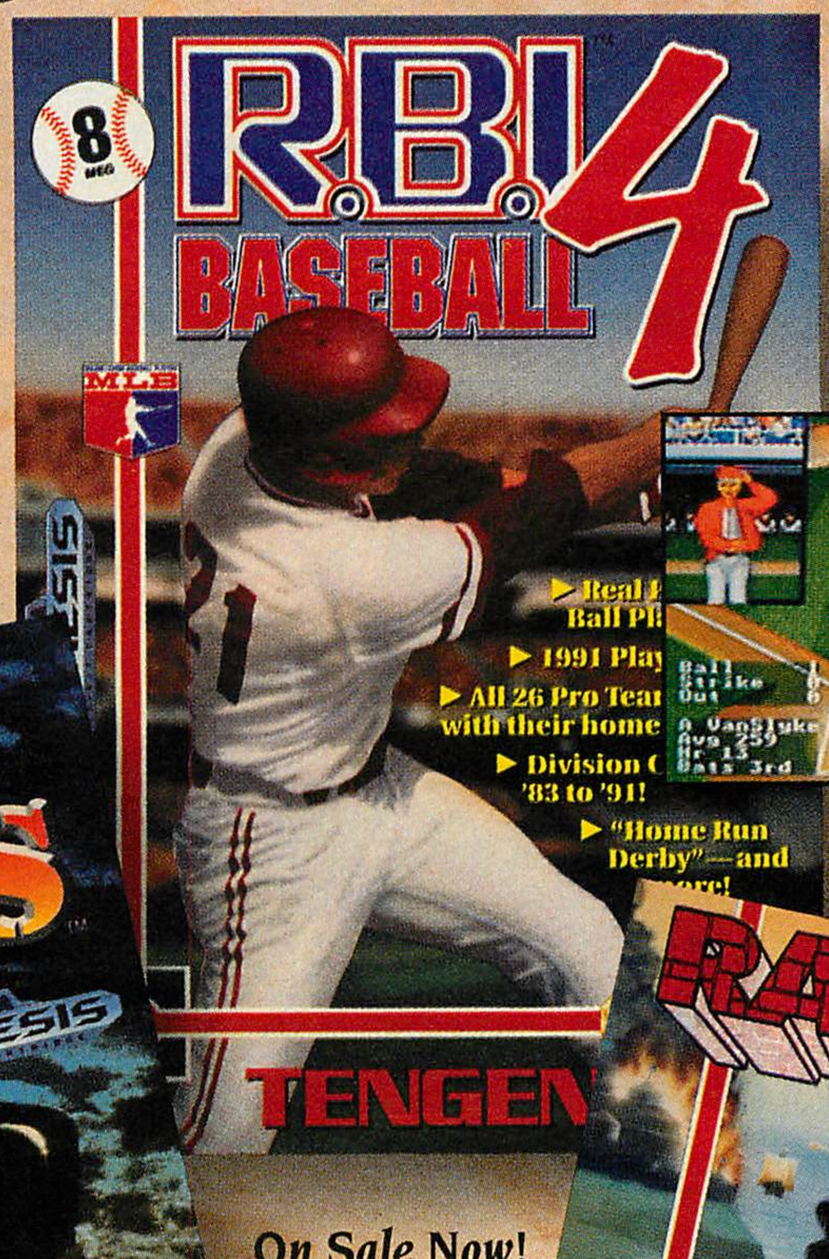

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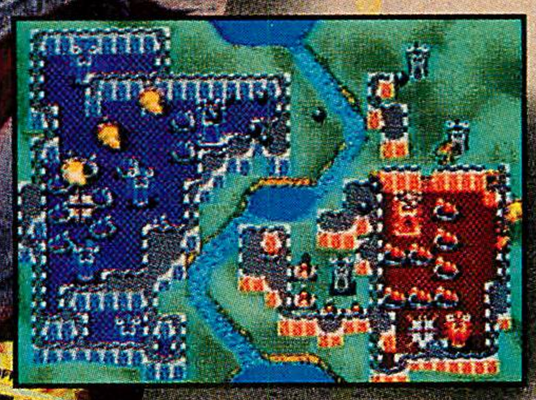

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CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

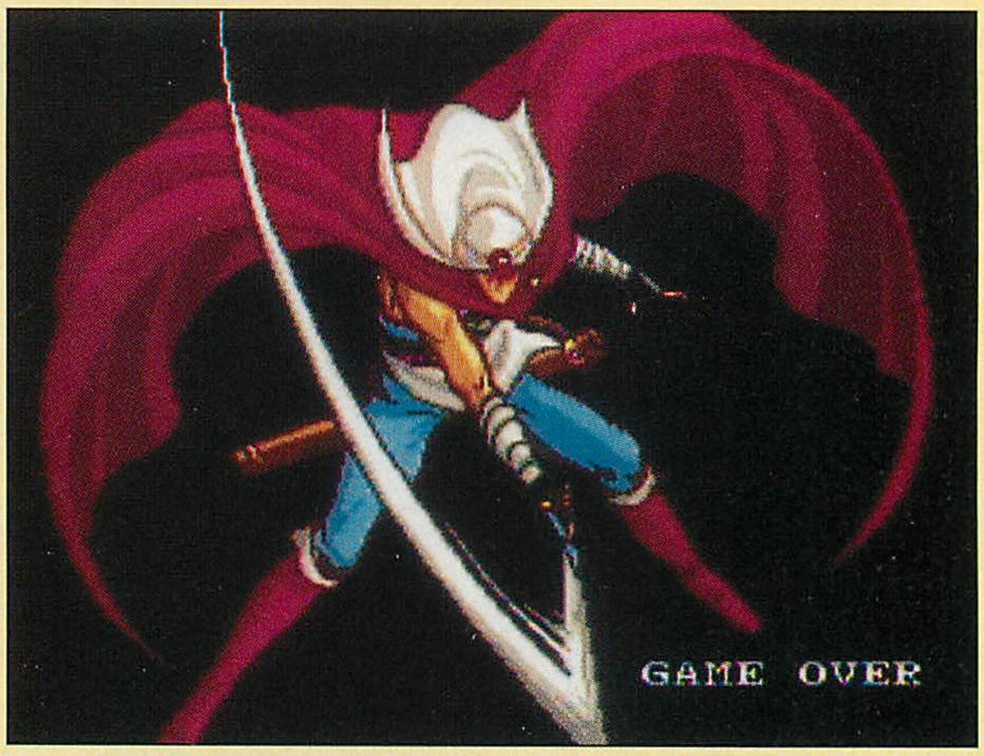
Exile

WORKING DESIGNS
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($54.99)
TurboGrafx-CD required

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Exile, a new CD-ROM game for the TurboGrafx-16, mixes role-playing segments with a healthy dose of action sequences, yielding a game that'll probably please a wide audience. While this mix of genres isn't exactly new (the *Ys* games, for example, use the same formula), it does help keep the game from getting bogged down in the role-playing elements, which tend to bore action-game fans.

Like most role-playing games (RPGs), in *Exile* you take on the role of a specific character, in this case a fighter named Sadler. Sadler was best known for overthrowing the Cerjeuk Dynasty, which had been holding the world violently captive to its religious beliefs. But, even now, with the Cerjeuk Dynasty felled, religious intolerance tears apart the land. Sadler is again charged with bringing back the peace.



As Sadler makes his way from scene to scene, he'll need to talk with townspeople, discover clues, fight monsters and buy supplies. Shops in the towns offer various items for sale, including all types of swords and armor, as well as healing tonics and magic-restoration tonics. Obviously, exploration is important so that you are sure that Sadler has talked with everyone and has visited all the shops.

In the wilds, Sadler must defend himself as best he can from his not-inconsiderable enemies. The better his weapons and armor, the better his chances against his foes. In typical RPG fashion, as he destroys monsters, his experience increases, bringing with it increases in level, which give Sadler more fighting power and hit points. Also, throughout the action scenes, Sadler will discover treasure chests containing items from healing tonics to caches of gold.

With all this fighting, you'd be right in inferring that staying alive can sometimes be a problem. Luckily, *Exile* provides a nonpassword game-save mechanism. (I'm a card-carrying member of the OAPVG, the Organization for the Abolition of Passwords in Video Games.) However, taking its cue from action-oriented games, you can save an *Exile* game only at specific points in the adventure, which requires you to start the most recent scene from the beginning, should you die.

Everything is not all fighting and exploring, though. As you advance Sadler from scene to scene, you'll be treated to noninteractive story segments featuring graphic images, animations and professional voice-overs, which help advance the plot and keep you aware of the unfolding story. Unfortunately, although the voice-overs are terrific, the accompanying graphics are a bit thin, with many static images that stay on the screen for long periods of time. There are a few animated sequences in these segments, but they tend to be simple and brief.

Still, *Exile* looks to be as good an adventure as most of the current RPGs for the TG-16, with competent graphics and music. In addition, its simple puzzles make it a good introduction to the RPG genre, not forcing novice players to spend hours trying to find elusive clues or hidden items, as well as giving them simple action scenes to break up the exploring. Of course, if you're an experienced RPG player, you'll probably breeze right through this one.

—Clayton Walnum

Working Designs
18135 Clear Creek Road
Redding, CA 96001
(916) 243-3417

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Andy, Mike and Chris all thought *Exile* was a good mix of action and role-playing elements. Dave didn't think it was that original, but called it "cool" and "solid."

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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Young Indiana Jones

JALECO

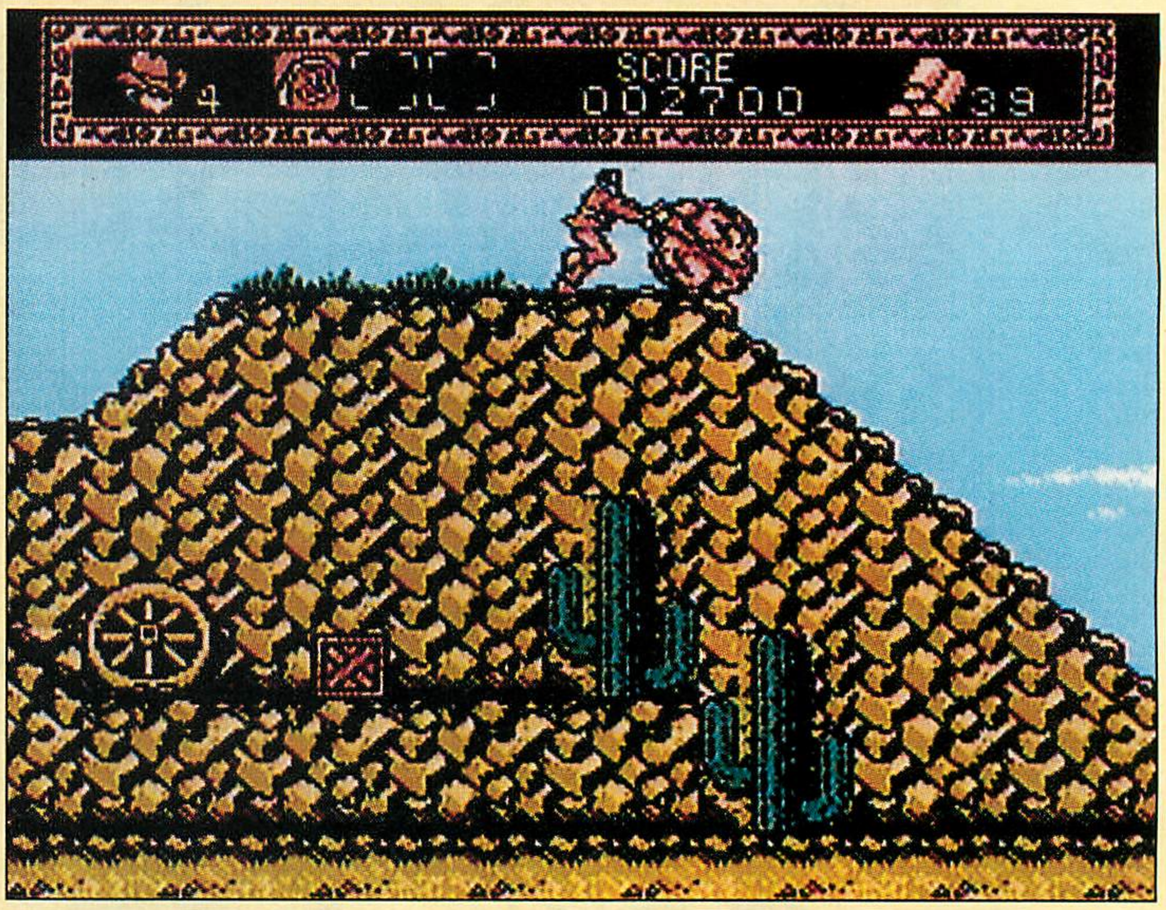
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

With a name like *Young Indiana Jones*, it shouldn't be hard to guess what this game is all about. The object is to try to spend at least three seasons on network television, battling time-slot competition from *Evening Shade* and the "Fresh" Prince so that you can advance to the lucrative Syndication Level and....

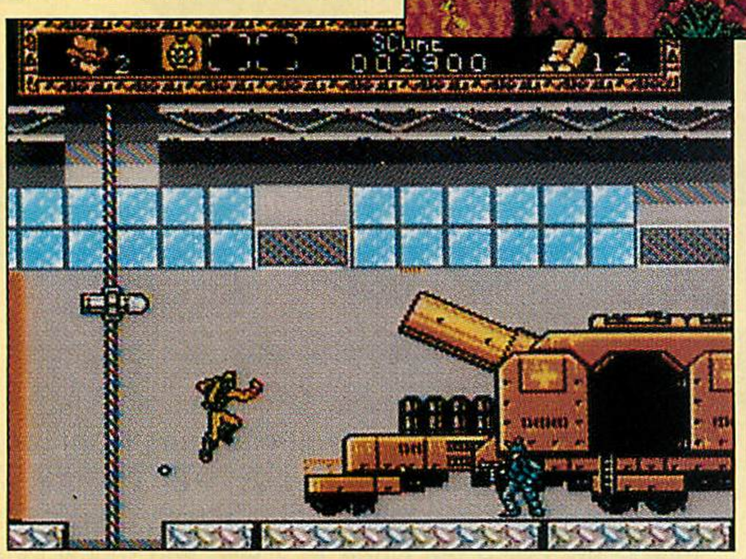
Alright, so much for cynicism. This inventive platform game from Jaleco actually puts you into Young Indy's boots for a series of globe-spanning adventures connected by brief dramatic scenes. Plotwise, the adventures are independent—the entire game doesn't lead up to a confrontation with any ultimate enemy.

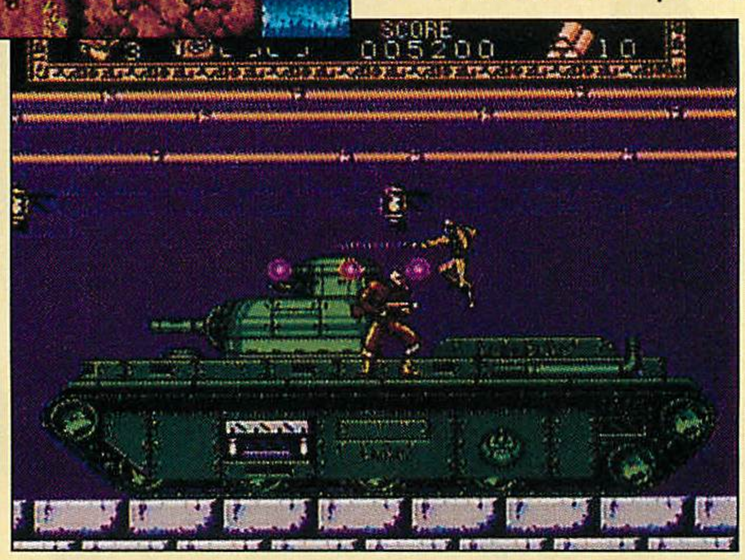
The game play is basic: You run, crawl, ride, jump and use weapons. You begin with your trademark whip, but you'll quickly find grenades, pistols, rifles, dynamite, rocks and conveniently situated boulders that roll down over your enemies—you name it. You can avoid some of the baddies, but you'll have to contend with the majority of them, and, in some cases, you'll need a particular weapon to do it. Weapons and items are found scattered throughout the game in crates, some of which are hidden in buildings, caves and other out-of-the-way locations.



You'll notice that li'l Indy has an annoying tendency to die. A lot. That's to be expected, since he goes up against a lot of firepower with little protection, but it's a pretty unforgiving world out there. Most of the bosses are *very* tough, and you'll find more than one in each level. Finding a hat will allow you to absorb one hit, and the next hit will either eliminate your weapon (if you're carrying one) or kill you. Fortunately, Jaleco's been pretty generous with the extra lives and continues—five of each, plus extra lives for collecting additional hats or for every 100 gold bars you find.

The game play is fast-paced and amusing. Each level has a distinct graphic flavor (Mexican deserts and caves, French and German battlefields, etc.) and a tidbit of plot background. The levels are further divided into sublevels, which present new subplots or mini-quests. And it hits a bull's-eye for difficulty. It's not so tough that I ever wanted to give up, but it was tough enough that I was constantly frustrated (particularly when trying to find a strategy to deal with each boss). This isn't likely to be a game anyone's going to solve the first day. The one aspect I didn't find: Almost no secret or hidden areas, though some visible areas were tricky to access.





Most of the game isn't especially detailed from a graphic perspective, but there are some nice details—dramatic lighting during some of the meanwhile scenes, occasional multi-level scrolling or scaling and so on. The music, however, didn't change often enough for my tastes.

Lots of original twists, a good sense of the frenetic, high-risk world of Young Indiana Jones and plenty of terrain to cover all add up to a very good, if standard, platform game. Now, if only they could *have found a* few Nazis to battle in the 1910s.

—Josh Mandel

Jaleco
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Dave thought *Young Indy* took a few levels to show its stuff, while Mike didn't feel it cut new ground. Chris likened it to *Shatterhand*, but thought it was powerful.

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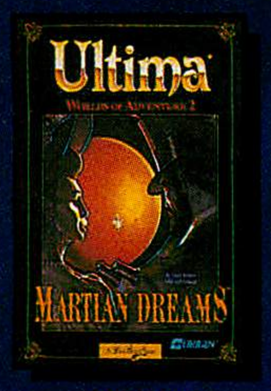

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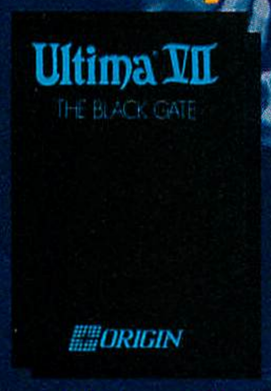

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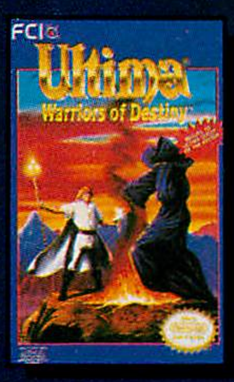
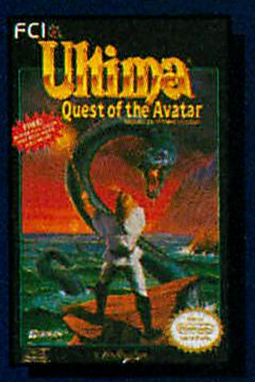


Ultima Warriors of Destiny



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CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Jimmy Connors Pro Tennis Tour

UBI SOFT

For the Super NES ($59.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC									●	
GRAPHICS									●	
PLAYABILITY									●	
OVERALL									●	

Sure, his name is on the box and in the game, and there is even a nifty digitized picture of him showing his pearly whites on the title screen, but can the game live up to the name? Surely.

Right off, let me say that the most important parts of a good tennis simulation are all here—it's easy to control both your player and your shot placement, and both without having to spend a lot of time learning the control mechanism.

There are a lot of features to cover, so let's get started. First off, a choice of either exhibition play, tour play, training or continuing a game is given. Exhibition play amounts to choosing one of six different surfaces (grass, hard, clay, indoor, desert and Antarctica), a match length of one, three or five sets and the number of players.

From zero to two players may participate, in both singles and doubles, in every possible combination of humans and computer opponents. If you are just looking for a quick game against a friend, this is the way to go. There are 16 players to choose from, with individual strengths and weaknesses to set them apart from one another.

The tour option puts you into the shoes of Jimmy, as you pick 12 tournaments that you want to compete in from 27 available throughout the tour. The tour covers a year, and your goal is to advance Jimmy into position as the number-one player in the world. Three opponent skill levels allow you to adjust the difficulty of the tour as your own skills grow.

The training mode allows you to practice your shots, as well as obtain help from any of the five trainers available. Beginner, advanced, professional, net play and service coaches offer their expert opinions on strategy and offer inside advice.

A continue feature allows you to pick up where you left off when playing in the tour mode. A password (36 characters long!) given at the end of each month of the tour lets you save your hard work and progress for a later date.

If you are new to the rules and ideas of tennis, you can use the thorough documentation to understand what's going on, and you can choose an "easy control" option that directs the computer to move your player into position, leaving you to simply press a button to make a shot. More advanced players will want to choose the "full control" option, which puts everything in the hands of the player.

Just about any type of shot you would want to make is possible, and the game play is great. The graphics are excellent, from the twinkle in Jimmy's eyes, down to the scaling of the ball's shadow as it arcs across the net. Excellent sound effects and music also contribute. Whether you just want a quick couple of sets, or to go on a 12-month tour in pursuit of that elusive number-one ranking, the action is fast and fun. If you are searching for great tennis action, look no further.

—Brent Walker

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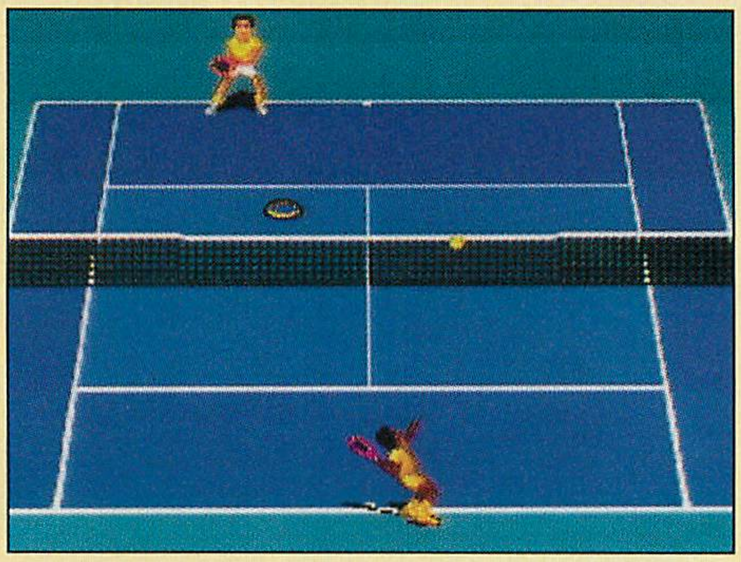

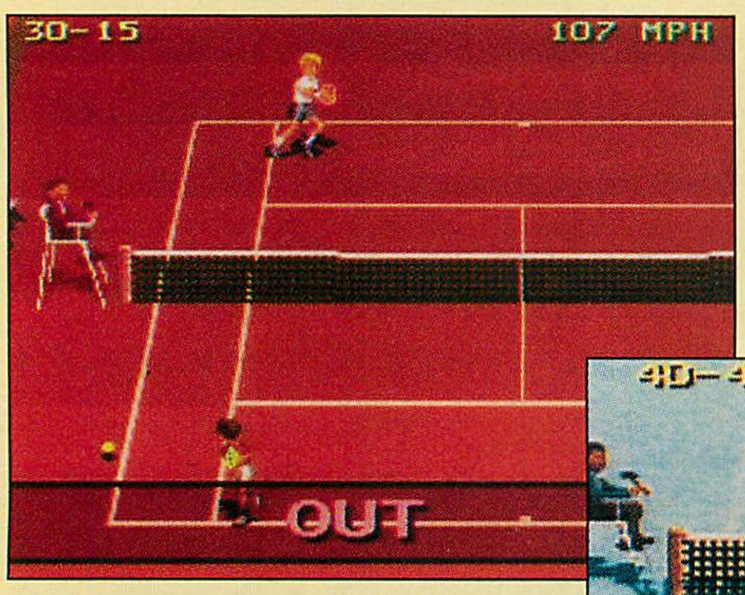

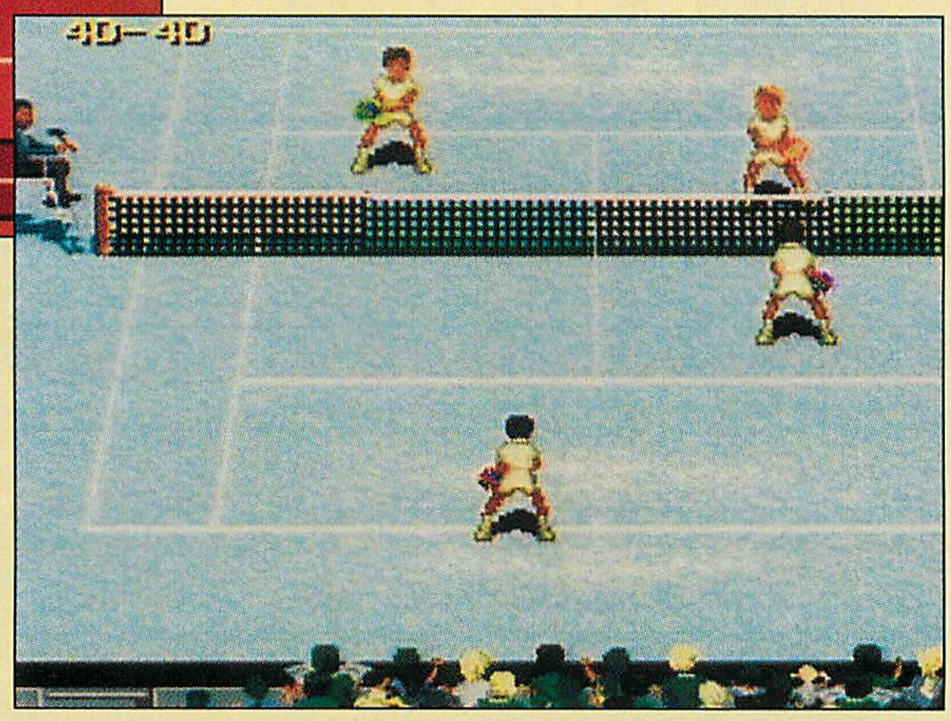

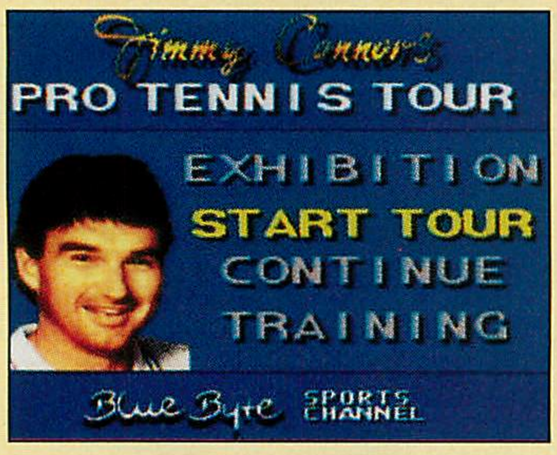

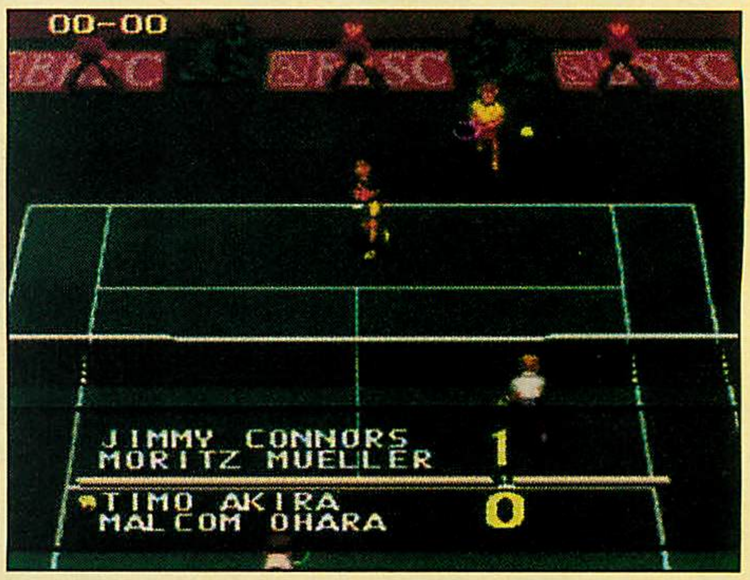

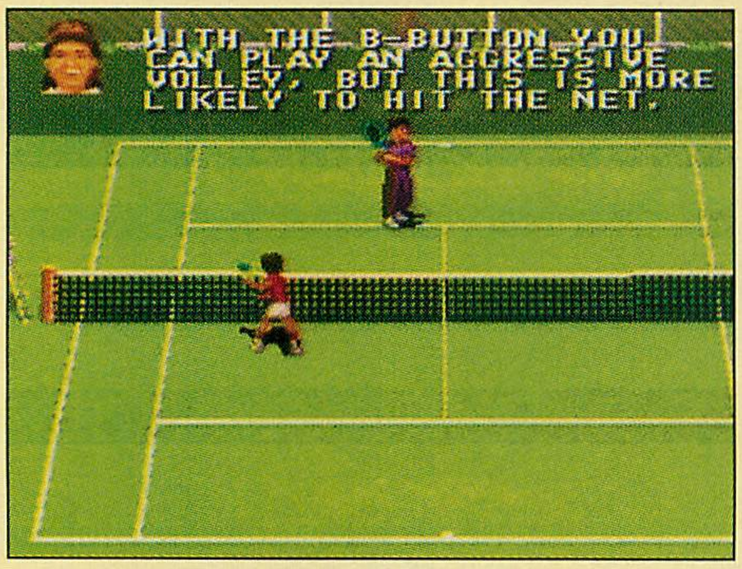

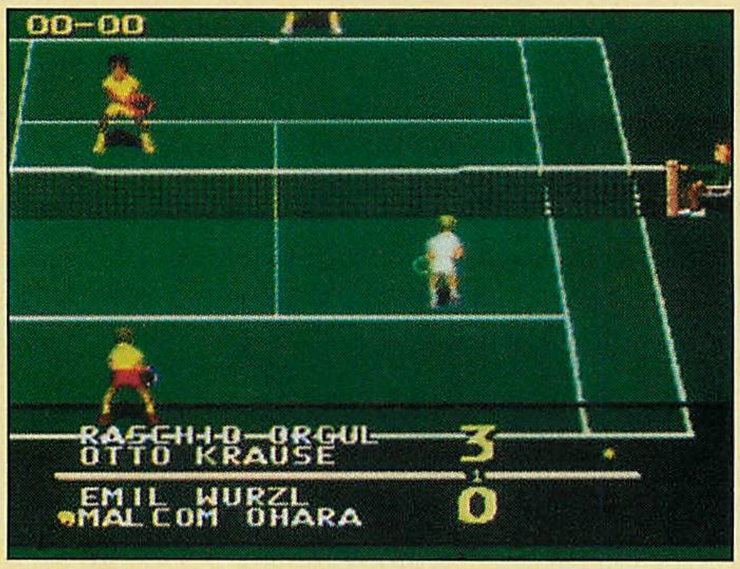

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE							●			
CB							●			
DM						●				
MD							●			

Chris made a good point in saying that *Pro Tennis Tour* might have a tough time competing against *Amazing Tennis.* Andy missed a human vs. human mode.

Chase H.Q.

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/ Turbo Duo ($44.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC					5					
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY							7			
OVERALL							7			

Chase H.Q.'s been showing up on a lot of handhelds; it's already out for the Game Gear and Game Boy. This new version for the TG-16 is apparently its first go-round on one of the Big Boys, and it makes superb use of the TG-16's capabilities.

Chase H.Q. refers to a special division of the New York City Police Department devoted to high-speed chases. (Are such chases even *possible* in New York? The game sidesteps that question by having the chases take place in the 'burbs and further away—outside the jurisdiction, one would guess, of the NYPD. Contrary to what the game may lead people to believe, there are *no* deserts or palm trees within hundreds—perhaps thousands—of miles of New York City.)

The object of each of the five "chases," then, is to drive like a maniac until you catch up with whichever suspect is hightailing it out of town, then ram his car until it catches fire and stops. Then, in an automated sequence, you place the suspect under arrest and proceed to your next assignment.

The chases themselves are rough and rowdy. There are usually three lanes of roadway, occasionally littered with garbage; there's a hefty amount of traffic and all sorts of trees and structures lining the road. There are alternate routes, tunnels and other hazards to contend with. Hills and valleys abound, but other than affecting your view of the upcoming roadway, they don't alter the game play—as opposed, for example, to EA's *Road Rash*, where you can actually use hills to your advantage. The controls of your *Chase* car are very sensitive, which is good, but you only have a choice between accelerating or braking; you can't maintain a constant speed. You have two gears and limited "turbo" boosts for temporary bursts of extra speed, but straightaways are few and far between.

The races are timed, and time seems to go *very* quickly when you're dodging traffic. Once you actually spot the suspect, you're in hot pursuit; the timer's extended to give you a better shot at battering the suspect's car into garbage.

Chase H.Q. ranks with the best race games graphically: Everything scales smoothly, the road snakes realistically, sparks fly when you scrape along the tunnel walls and the "innocent bystander" cars are clearly driven by authentic New Yorkers (that is, they totally ignore the fact that your siren's on!). Scenery changes dramatically from race to race, and even within each race. The only feature missing is a satisfying explosion when you've finally pounded the suspect's car into a flaming hulk, but I guess that would be taking the aggression thing just a bit too far. The sound is raucous and, at times, annoying, given the siren, the screeching tires and the *Peter Gunn*-style music with the heavy bass track. A couple of repetitive digitized voices punctuate the scenes between the races.

While the game is undeniably fun, it's questionable whether or not it has lasting value. Die-hard racing fans may be disappointed with only five chases, while casual players may quickly be frustrated with the high difficulty level.

—Josh Mandel

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Los Angeles, CA 90045
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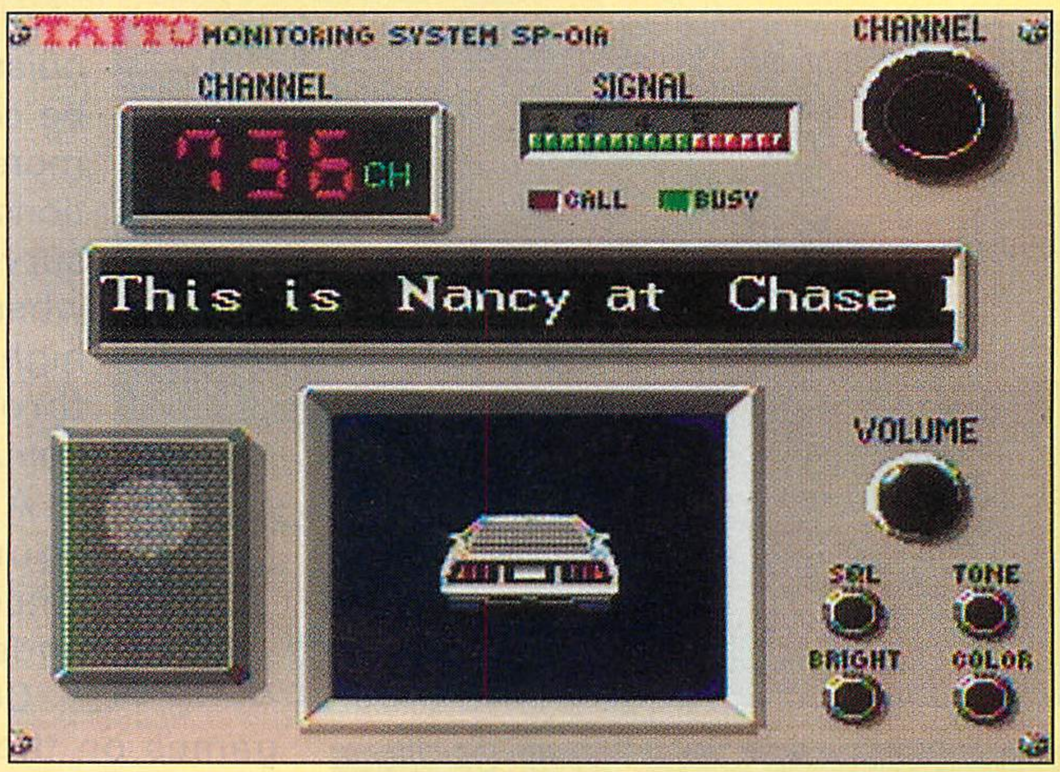

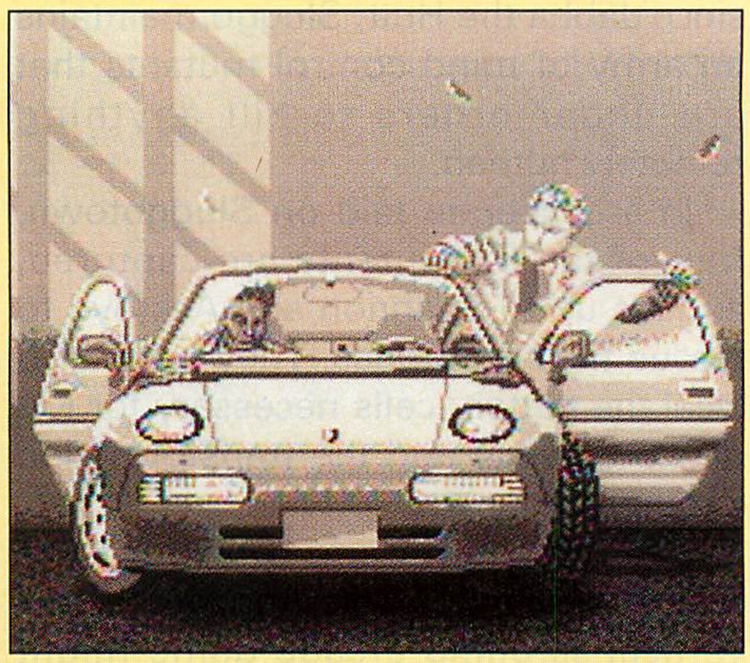

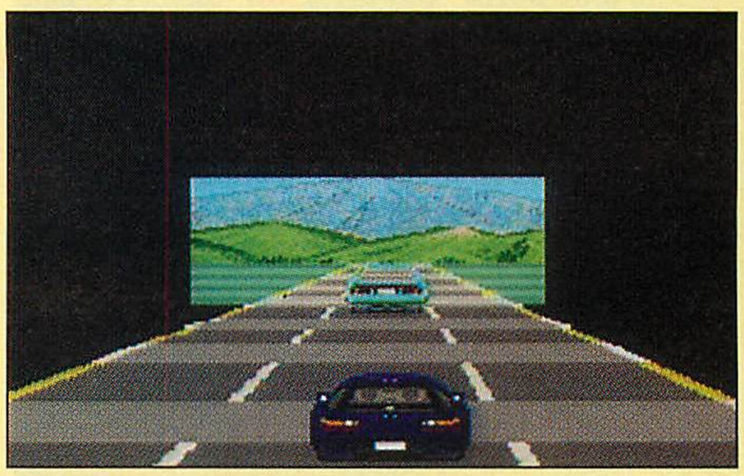

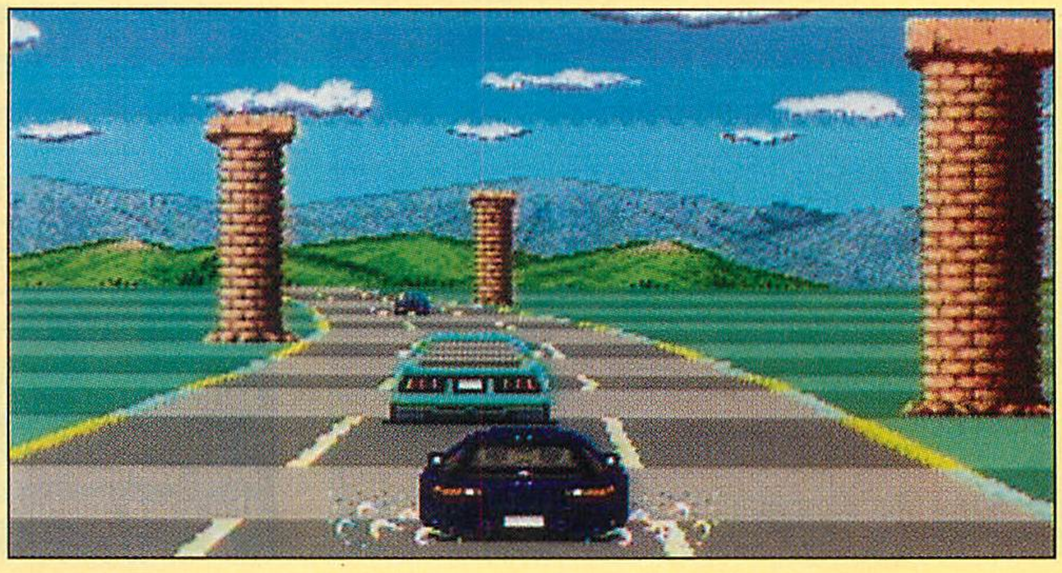

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE						6				
CB								8		
DM						6				
MD					5					

Mike, Dave and Andy took it to task for its lack of innovation and inspiration. Chris, on the other hand, called it "an instantly accessible driving game."

Ex-Mutants

SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Fans of Marvel comics know that mutants may be good or evil, beautiful and spandex-clad or physically repulsive, and they may have constructive or destructive superpowers. In Malibu Comics' *Ex-Mutants*, however, they are the hideous slimy products of man's chemical, biological and nuclear wars. In addition, they're all that's left of mankind. However, the benevolent cyborg, Dr. Kildare, has developed a process to turn the mutants back into humans. He selects six to regain their humanity and become the first "Ex-Mutants."

They might be happy, but Sluggo isn't. The grossest malformed worm since Jabba the Hutt, Sluggo maintains an army of mind control mutants that are under orders to kill anything remotely human.

In a desperate raid on Sluggotown, four of the Ex-Mutants are captured, and it's up to Shannon and Ackroyd to rescue their comrades. They must also steal the battery cells necessary for Kildare's survival and the transformation of other mutants.

Ready to jump and attack for the fate of humanity? This horizontal- and vertical-scrolling arcade game might not break new ground, but it's an admirable attempt to fully utilize the same old play mechanics.

Players assume the identity of either Ackroyd or Shannon—each with his or her respective strengths—and prepare to fight their way through 15 levels where the traps outnumber the mutants, but the mutants often outlive the players. Besides their main melee weapons (each with projectile power-ups), the last humans can find five types of secondary armaments: land mines, bouncing bombs, hand grenades, homing orbs and timed charges. Enabling the humans to kill at a distance, these add a nice touch of battlefield tactics to the action. Nothing beats the feeling of blowing up a mutant from the safety of a ladder above.

Ex-Mutants has three difficulty levels, though players on "easy" can only play half the game. For the most part, *Ex-Mutants* is not an excessively difficult game, but it has one nasty feature: When hit, characters flash, but do not become momentarily invulnerable. Reaction time is critical, and even the hint of panic can help minor injuries become mortal. This is especially nasty on levels that are nonstop traps.

In addition to power-ups, players also search for individual coins and bags of money. Earning 100 coins without losing a life will act as a 1-up. Why don't diamonds count toward this cash bonus? Maybe conventional economic wisdom went down with society.

Adding variety to the action are the speed levels, in which the heroes must face an onslaught of creatures and traps while staying aboard a moving object—not the best place to be constantly jumping. Even more than in the normal sections, memorization is key to surviving the speed levels, where character mortality is high the first several times through, but also where bonus items are plentiful.

A trip through the sound test is advised, since the best effects are underutilized.

Considering that most games on the market are clones of one another, *Ex-Mutants* is a pretty good start for Malibu Interactive. It should be interesting to see what they do with *Dinosaurs for Hire*.

—David S. Moskowitz

Malibu Interactive
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Westlake Village, CA 91361
(818) 889-9800

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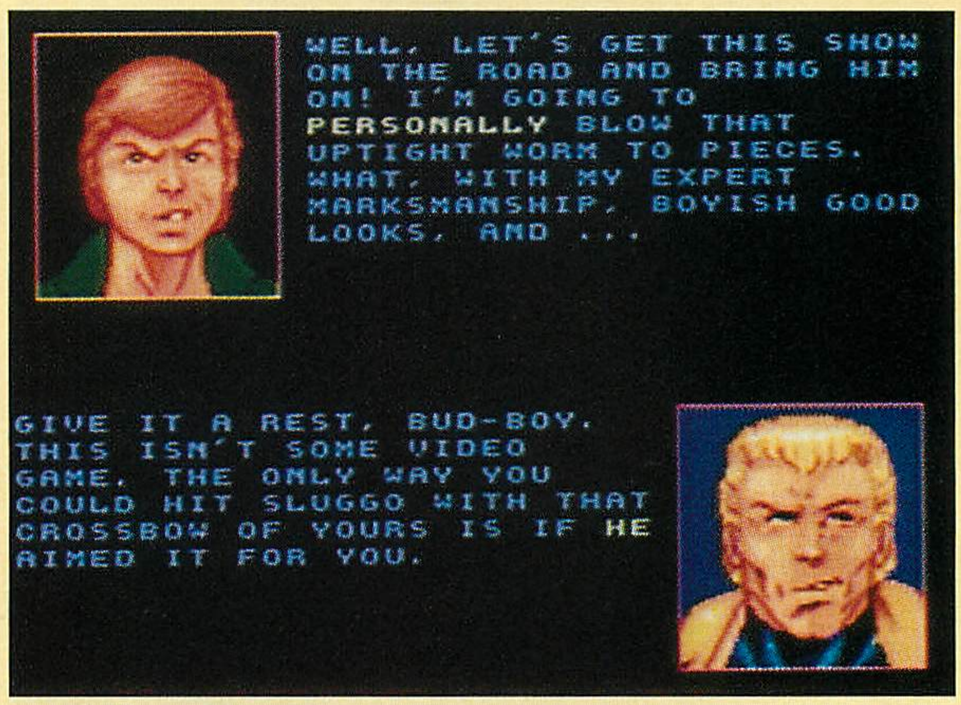


EDITORS' CORNER

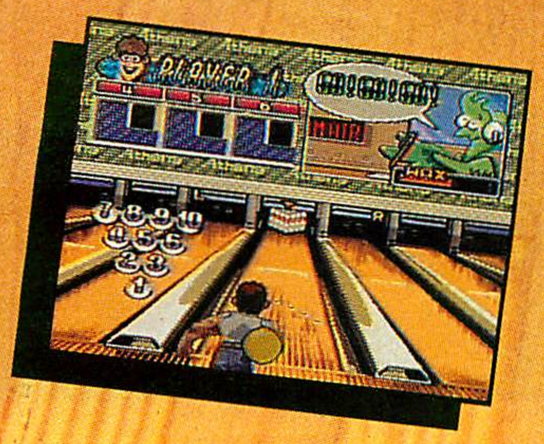
AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Mike felt it was a good game, but not that exciting, while Andy called it challenging and well-designed. Chris commented on the nice digitized voice effects.

Life In The Fast Lane.

Choose your weapon:
Left-handed 6-pounder... right-handed 16-pounder ...and everything in-between.

You're in charge:
Control Lane Position, Aim, Spin and Power to find the sweet spot and drop 'em all.



Check the conditions:
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CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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An attitude, tons of enemies, and a running mate with the mind of a four-year-old.

An interview with two of the creators of Sonic 2.

(No, it's not another presidential election.)

How will Sonic 2 be different from the original?

Sonic 2 will be much faster and have many more new moves. Like "Spin Dash," which will propel him forward really fast. You can play alone or two people can play with or against each other. And Sonic has a new friend called Tails, a four-year-old fox that has two tails and is almost as fast as Sonic. Tails can also use his tail as a helicopter propeller to help him fly.

Will there be more levels?

Yes. Over twenty different stages now. There are a lot of new challenges, like corkscrews and a chemical factory. Also, Dr. Robotnik is back and he comes with 25 different enemies. My favorite is the coconut throwing monkey.

How do you get your ideas?

All kinds of ways. For example, when Dr. Robotnik captures animals, he puts them in a metal shell. We got the idea for that from a movie we saw as kids, in which a giant gorilla is encased in armor. Ideas can come from anywhere.

How do you go about creating a game?

We start with a storyline, and then create the action and graphics. But we change the storyline a lot as we go, so we have a writer who works with us. For example, we added the Mechanical Zone after we decided to put the animals in the metal shells.

Is there anything you'd like to say to future Sonic 2 players?

Take care of Tails. Look for many hidden rooms. And have fun. Having fun is the most important thing.

SEGA™
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CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Harley's Humongous Adventure

HI-TECH

For the Super NES ($54.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL								8		

Harley, you wacky scientist, you. One minute you're playing with your experimental Shrinker device, the next you're the size of a bug, and the Shrinker's blowed up *real* good. Now you have to forage through 18 levels and gather the pieces of your Shrinker so you can return to full size (although, since you are in a Super NES game, why not just use Mode 7 scaling?).

Harley's Humongous Adventure is a side-scrolling action game with a visual twist: Many of the graphics are digitized pictures of "claymation" figures. You've seen claymation before—remember those TV commercial "stars," the California Raisins? (Speaking of which, whatever happened to the *California Raisins* NES game from Capcom?)

Claymation has already appeared in a few computer games (Cineplay's *Free D.C!* and Sierra On-Line's revamped *Quest for Glory I*), but this is the first time it's appeared in a console game. The claymation seems to be *Harley's* hook, because the game play is standard-issue, side-scrolling stuff. You run and jump, and shoot bad guys, in this case, insects and miniaturized fish (bees, ants, ticks, termites, piranhas and more). There's also a big, bad boss, "The Rat," that you encounter after every fifth level. My favorite enemy has to be the fly, which attacks by hovering overhead and spewing hurl down at you. Totally tasteless and totally funny. (Shows you where *my* sense of humor is at.)

To shoot the bad guys, Harley needs weapons, of which there is a bountiful selection: nails, tacks, rubber bands, marbles and firecrackers. The weapons have different characteristics, making them more or less useful against certain types of enemies. Harley also has to run around and grab metal nuts to earn extra lives: 100 nuts equals an extra life. You'll need the extra lives, too, because you only get one continue.

The claymation graphics are undoubtedly the highlight of the game, and they're certainly colorful (the fly vomit is a particularly *vivid* shade of green). The background graphics are a bit simplistic in places, but are also bright and cheery. The audio is much less impressive; the sound effects are sparse and muffled, and the music grows annoyingly repetitive. Don't turn it down, though, because there are several places where you'll get audio cues about upcoming baddies.

The verdict: *Harley's Humongous Adventure* sports spiffy graphics and plenty of challenge. There's nothing here that you haven't seen before in a zillion other run-jump-shoot platform games, but you're guaranteed to have some good, solid fun. This game's not an essential purchase, but a weekend rental would give you an excellent fun/fundage ratio.

—Zach Meston

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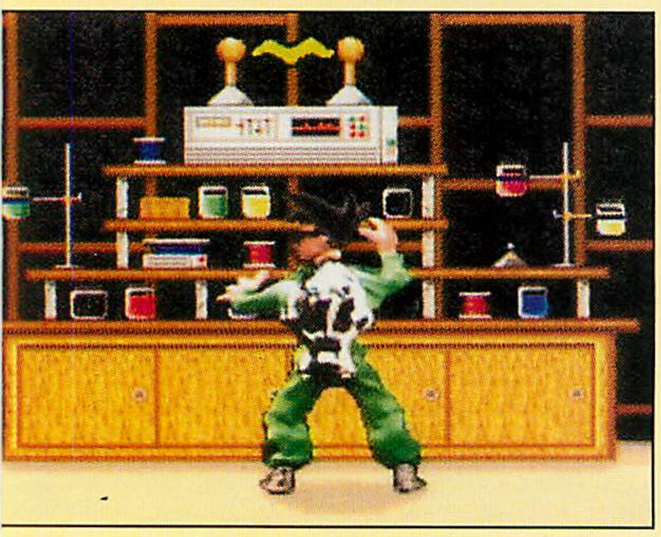

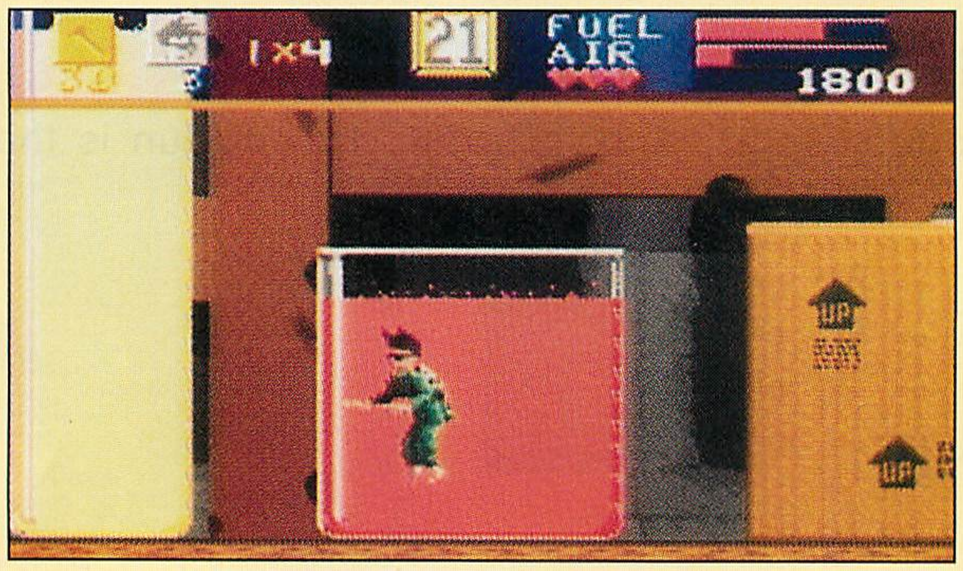

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								8		
CB										
DM										
MD								8		

Dave didn't think it pushed the SNES enough, but Chris and Andy both said it was fun and had a good sense of humor—like Atari's *Kung Food* on the Lynx.

NOW GAMERS CAN GO WHERE THEY'VE NEVER GONE BEFORE...*to their friend's house!*

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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Tecmo World Cup

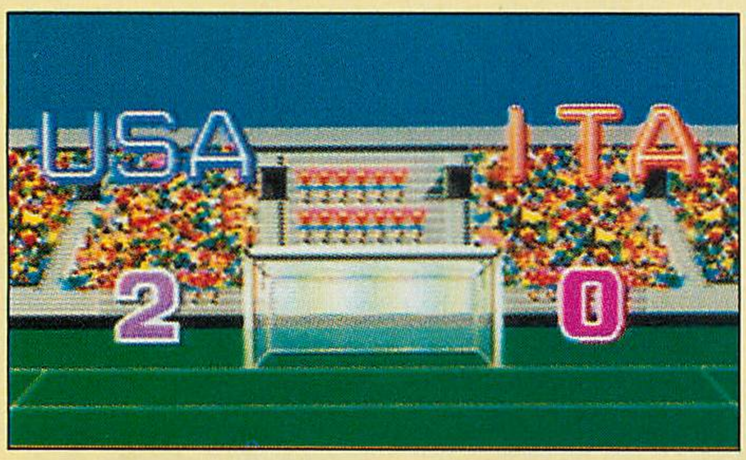
ATLUS

For the Sega Genesis ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

Tecmo World Cup? From Atlus? Talk about things that make you go "hmmm"! I haven't a clue as to why Atlus couldn't have changed the name to *Atlus World Cup*, but I'm even more clueless as to why it licensed such a subpar game in the first place. (Can you tell this is going to be a negative review?)

It's not any one massive flaw that makes *Tecmo World Cup* so lame; it's a variety of little things. Like the lack of penalties. Why couldn't there have been penalties with an option to turn them on or off? The disproportionate penalty area is also a flaw. You have to get ridiculously close to the goal before attempting a shot, and the goalies in this game are unnaturally skilled, with one humorous exception: They can block most hard-hit shots, but have a major problem with slow-moving kicks. I scored several goals by accidentally missing passes and watching them roll into the net at sluglike speed, while the goalie stood motionless.



Next problem: the lack of kick control. Goal kicks are tough to aim, and usually seem to head straight for the goalie instead of one side of the net. You also can't "curve" your kicks left or right. I had the same problem aiming corner kicks; they were usually intercepted by the opposing team long before they got near the penalty area.

Let's continue our tour of *Tecmo World Cup*'s bugaboos with the fact that the players on each team don't have individual skills. Each player's as good (or bad) as the other; if they *are* different, I sure couldn't tell. The manual doesn't even say which teams are better than others.

As for the graphics, the players (and the playing field) are decently animated and drawn. The penalty kick sequence, though...blech! What the heck happened here? Did the artist go on vacation, forcing the programmers to draw the graphics in his place? Lemme just say you will rarely see graphics this bad in a Genesis game.

There's nothing special about the sound and music; the sound effects do the job, and the music plays over...and over...and over...until you: (1) go mental or (2) turn down the volume on the TV.

Just for fun, I dug out my three-year-old copy of Sega's *World Championship Soccer* to see how it compared to *Tecmo World Cup*—and, despite having many of the same game play problems, Sega's ancient footie game was more fun to play.

My recommendation for Sega soccer fans would be to check out *World Championship Soccer* (which is so old you can probably buy a used copy for next to nothing) or Virgin Games' *World Trophy Soccer*, both of which have better graphics and better game play.

—Zach Meston

Atlus Software
17145 Von Karman Ave., Suite 110
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 757-1212

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Andy said that, while the animation isn't great, it's a good, clean soccer rendition. Chris called it fun, but wondered if the "bare-bones" treatment would be enough.

Dragon Slayer: The Legend of Heroes

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/ Turbo Duo ($49.99)

TG-16 owners: TurboGrafx-CD with Super System Card required

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							●			
GRAPHICS					●					
PLAYABILITY						●				
OVERALL					●					

Sometimes VG&CE's rating system just isn't detailed enough to do justice to a game as regal, as splendiferous, as *deep* as *Dragon Slayer: The Legend of Heroes*. To that end, I've decided to assess this RPG according to some of my own criteria, as follows:

Originality—If you built the biggest computer in the world and programmed it to come up with the most dispensable name possible for an RPG, chances are you couldn't do much worse than *Dragon Slayer: The Legend of Heroes*. Throw in a couple of dozen hackneyed place names (the Raging Sea, the Isle of Glen, Mortavia, Grimwulf) and some hilariously unauthentic British-by-way-of-Yokohama accents (give me a dime for each "yer" and "lad" on this disc, and I could quit this gig and retire in style), and you've got a game that might as well be sold in stores in a plain, white box with the legend "GENERIC JAPANESE RPG." Rating: 0.

Family values—An obscure category you might say, but an important one in this, a Presidential election year. You see, no matter how large your questing party gets in *Dragon Slayer*—I quit when I was up to four—they're all represented on-screen by a single character, a weird bit of parsimony that only makes sense when it's time to bunk at an inn and restore your energy. I guess the folks at TTI decided that the sight of four burly warriors piling into a single bed might strike the American game-playing public as a bit, well, *liberal*. Rating: 8.

Sense of humor—A hard category to judge, since there's so much found hilarity in any Japanese RPG imported into English—as much as I'd like to credit the line "Here's the prince! How's the quest for vengeance going?" to an aspiring Mel Brooks, I have the feeling it's just a clumsy translation of the original. But I do have to give high marks to a Marx Brothers routine at the inn where one character accuses another of groping around in the dark and "filching from his purse" (see "Family values," category above). Rating: 5.

Faithfulness to the capabilities of the Turbo Duo—Call it NEC, call it TTI, call it whatever you want—this is the company that completely screwed up the American marketing of the TurboGrafx-16, and, unless someone stops them (me, for instance), they're about to do the same with the Turbo Duo. The fact is, *Dragon Slayer* isn't nearly as much fun to look at or to play as the original *Phantasy Star* for the 8-bit Sega Master System, much less a dozen or so RPGs for the Genesis and Super NES that at least have the virtue of novel plot lines and big, detailed monsters (the creatures in *Dragon Slayer* are so teensy you wonder why the characters don't just smush them with their mythical boots). Apparently, TTI's strategy amounts to this: Rope consumers into buying the Turbo Duo with the spectacular *Gate of Thunder*, then swamp 'em with enough second-rate product to reduce them to loudly, and uselessly, defending the system at videogame parties ("But hey, guys! It has CD-quality sound!"). Rating: 2.

—Bob Strauss

Turbo Technologies Inc.
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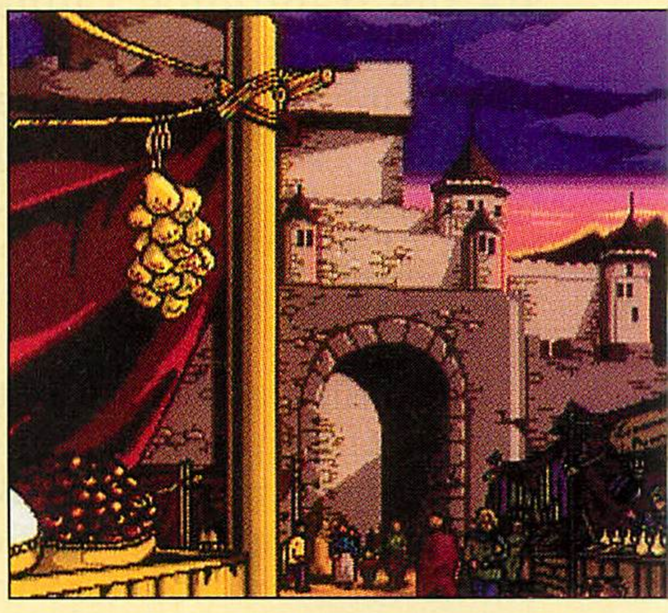
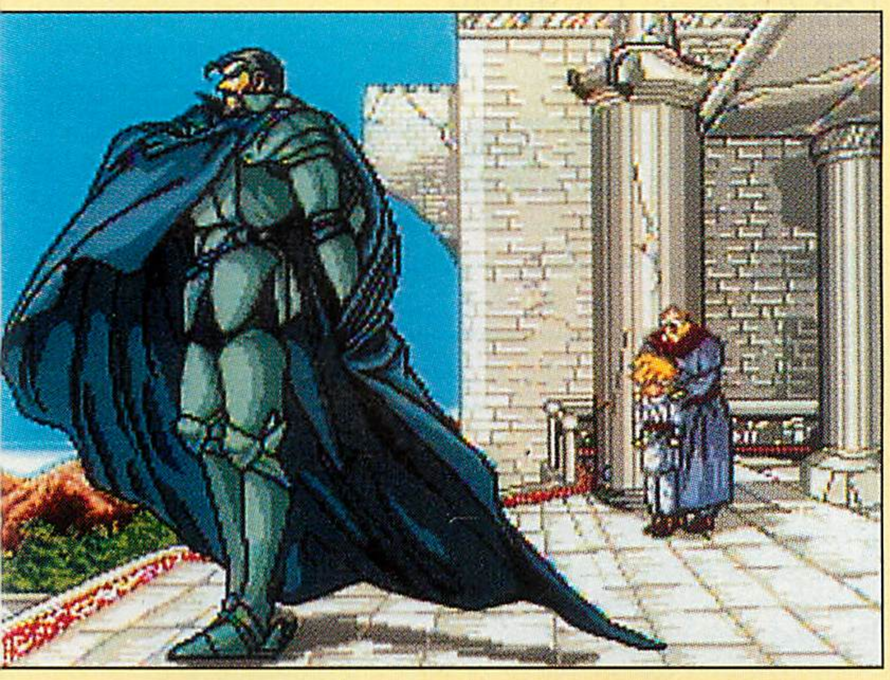
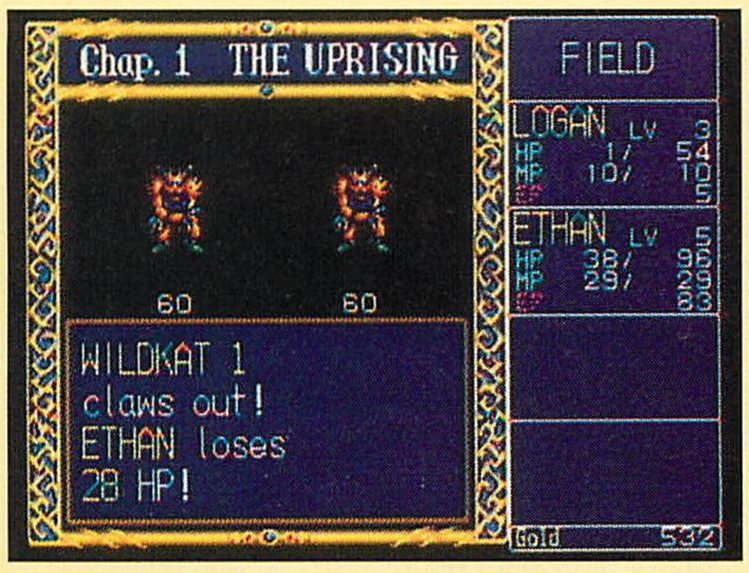
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 641-4622







EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								●		
CB							●			
DM								●		
MD								●		

Mike called it a good starter RPG, and the rest of the guys felt the auto-battle feature made battles much less tedious. Andy thought the story was good.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

ACTIVISION

For the Super NES (N/A)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC					5					
GRAPHICS						6				
PLAYABILITY							7			
OVERALL							7			

In *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye*, tile pieces stacked into patterns are removed in matching pairs by the player. A tile may only be taken off if it's not blocked either to its right or left by another tile. The object is to remove all the pieces from the board.

Sounds simple—and playing this offshoot of a Chinese tile game known as Mah-jongg is—but since there are two matching pairs for every board, deciding which two to remove is very important. Taking away the wrong tiles can result in a deadlock where none of the remaining pieces have a match that is unblocked. A little skill and the luck of the dragon is needed in order to win.

Speaking of which, besides the normal arrangement, the pattern that the tiles are stacked in can be changed to resemble one of 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac (monkey, rabbit, dragon, rooster and such). The complexity of play is increased with the more intricate arrangements.

A long menu list offers a selection of tile designs. There are the traditional Chinese characters, as well as the letters of the Western language alphabet. Playing cards, country flags, road signs and pictures of vegetables and animals add a touch of flair to Mah-jongg.

Choosing a different tile design changes the game's background music, too. But, despite the variety in pseudo-ethnic tunes, all of it sounds equally lame since the melodies are brief and become very annoying when played over and over again. Thank goodness the music can be turned off.

Games are played in one-player, two-player, tournament or time-limit modes. A help menu provides convenient "cheats" for the gamer, such as finding an available match, restoring a previously removed pair, shuffling the tile arrangement and adding a "wild tile" that allows the removal of a tile without its match.

A completely different tile contest in the game called Dragon's Eye features two players, a "dragon master" and "dragon slayer," competing. The dragon master's objective is to fill the playfield with tiles, while the slayer's is to remove matching pairs. The pace of Dragon's Eye is much faster than Mah-jongg's, and it's played directly against the CPU or another person.

Two problems set *Shanghai II* back. Although a lot of tile designs and arrangement patterns can be chosen, there is only one background picture to stare at, that of the Great Wall of China. And there's the bad music—why is there even any? Still, *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye* presents Mah-jongg in enough variations to keep this ancient Chinese game interesting, and it retains its simplicity without resorting to needless flash.

—Howard Wen

Activision
11440 San Vicente Blvd., 3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90049
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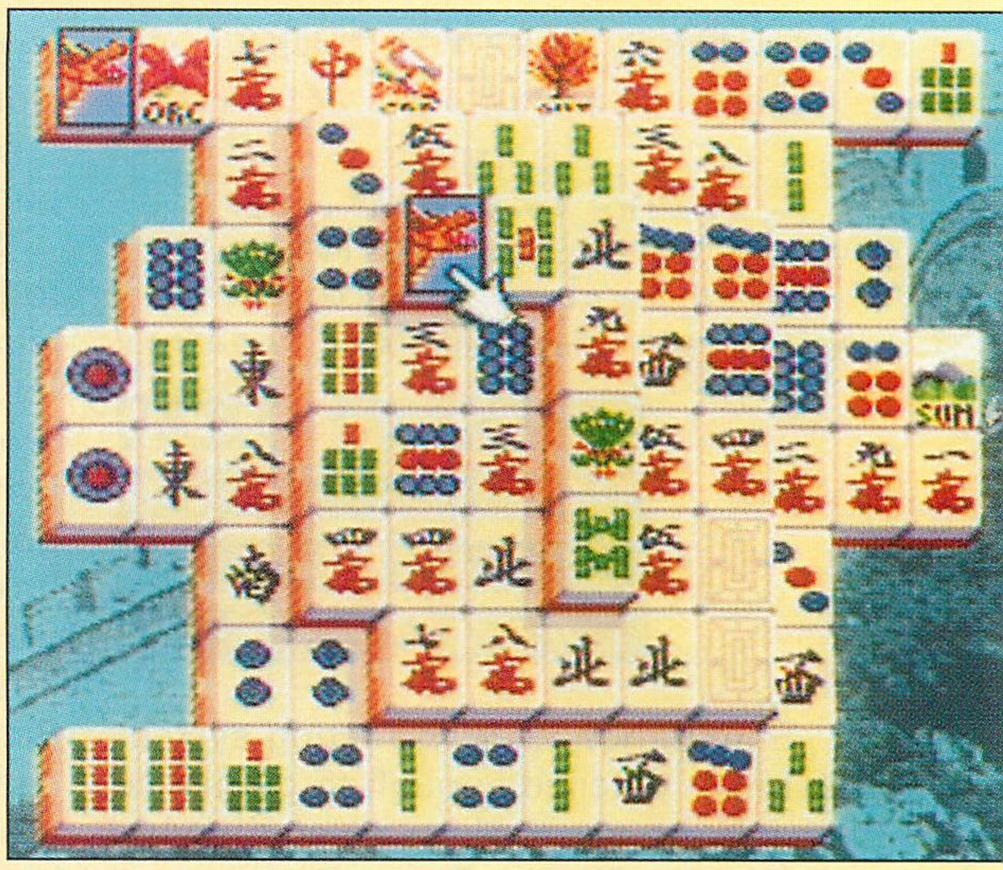

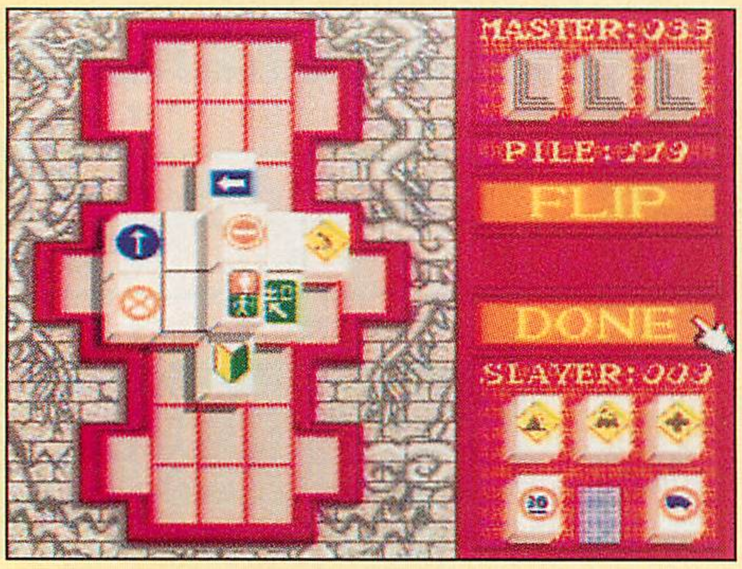

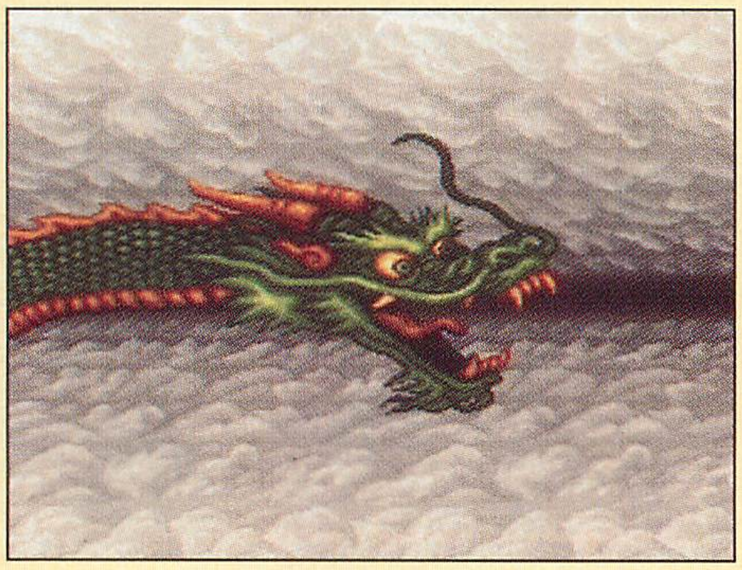

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE								8		
CB						6				
DM								8		
MD							7			

Mike called *Shanghai II* a "nice, quiet break from an overabundance of hack-and-slash games." Andy said the graphics were hard to distinguish in some modes.

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Gadget Twins

GAMETEK

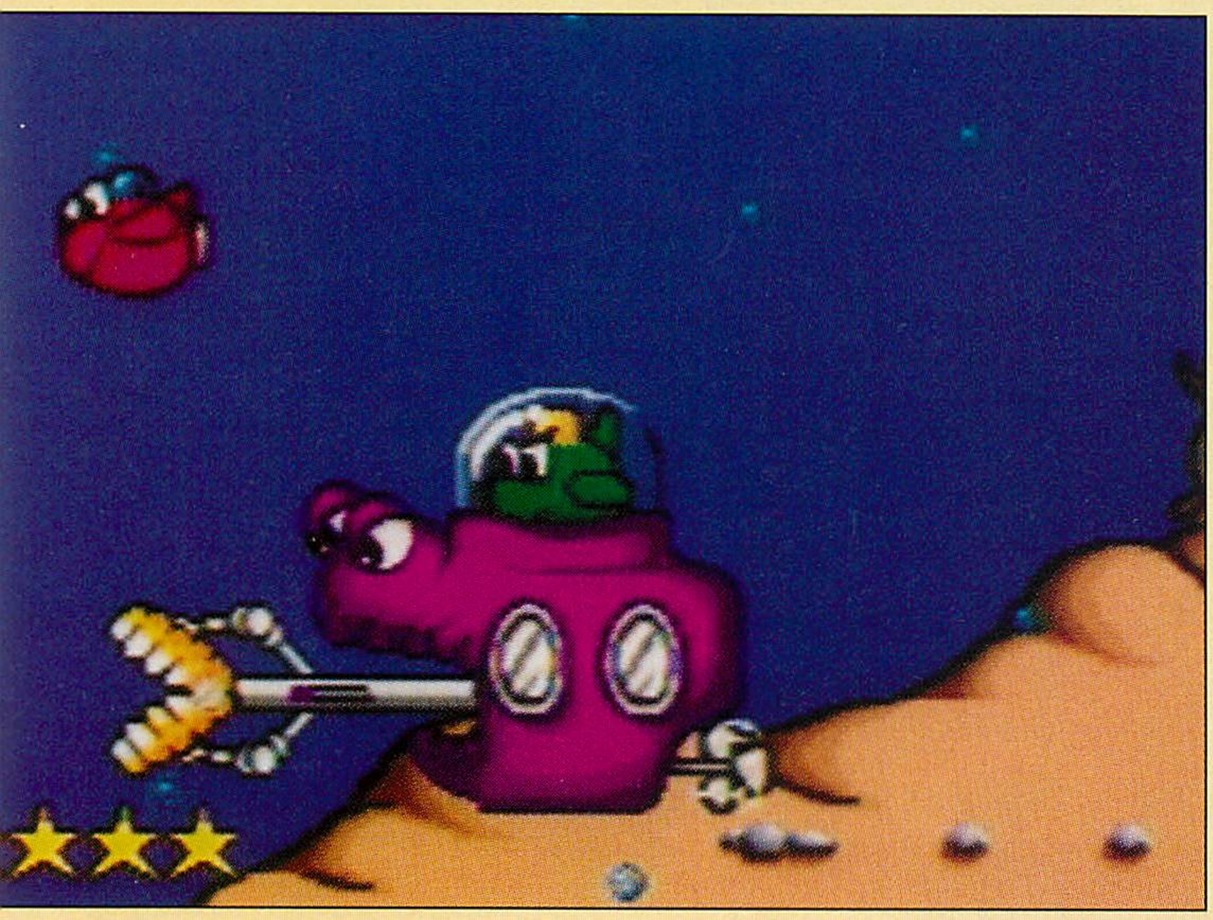
For the Sega Genesis ($64.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Gadget Twins is a lackluster side-view scroller. That's a shame, considering the designers of this title probably tried to put a spin on an overused genre. Yet there's no escaping the fact that, though *Gadget Twins* is by no means terrible, it does fall below the standards of the average shooter.

The title characters are boring, cookie-cutter-cute, airplanelike creatures. They fly through the air and dive into the watery depths of levels showcasing environments that resemble understated versions of the settings in the *Fantasy Zone* games, except everything looks puffier and bloated. There's a soundtrack that complements all the dull cuteness.

At first, the gadget pair does away with stuffed enemies by bopping them with boxing gloves. They can punch in any of four directions. K.O.'ed baddies leave gold coins, and bigger bad dudes drop larger coins. Picking up these coins adds credits to the player's expense account. Stores are found throughout the game, where players can shop for gadgets to retrofit the attack capability of their character. Collected coins are used to buy weapons like yo-yos and extending clippers.



Treasure chests that are opened grant extra life energy or enshroud the player's character with a protective bubble that lasts for a few moments. Should it come as any surprise that there are boss characters at the end of every level for the gadget twins to defeat? Of course not. Bosses are also littered throughout the stages within each level.

The screen scrolling of the levels is erratic. Often it's uncertain as to which direction the screen will

head as it changes unpredictably. One second it's scrolling to the right, then suddenly down, then to the left, then right again, then up. Colliding with enemies becomes frequent with this sort of free-form screen movement.

Two playing cooperatively enlivens things a lot, but then the challenge becomes easy. As a one-player shooter, *Gadget Twins* is dull gaming. With its emphasis on punching action, it's an unusual shooter that really isn't one at all.

—Howard Wen

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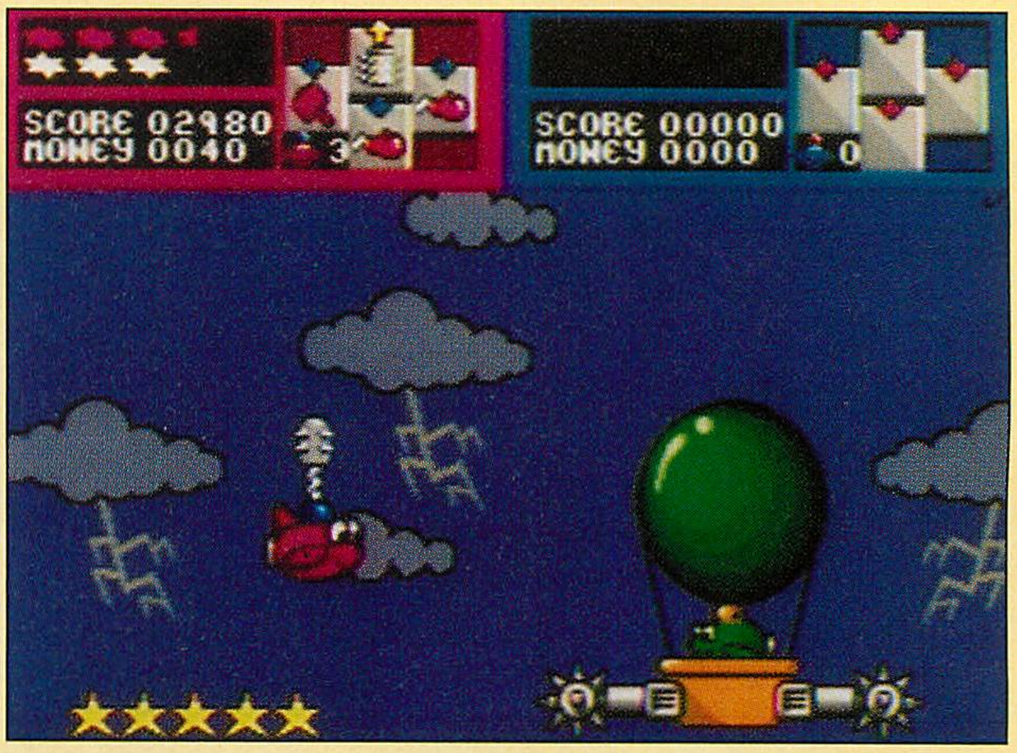

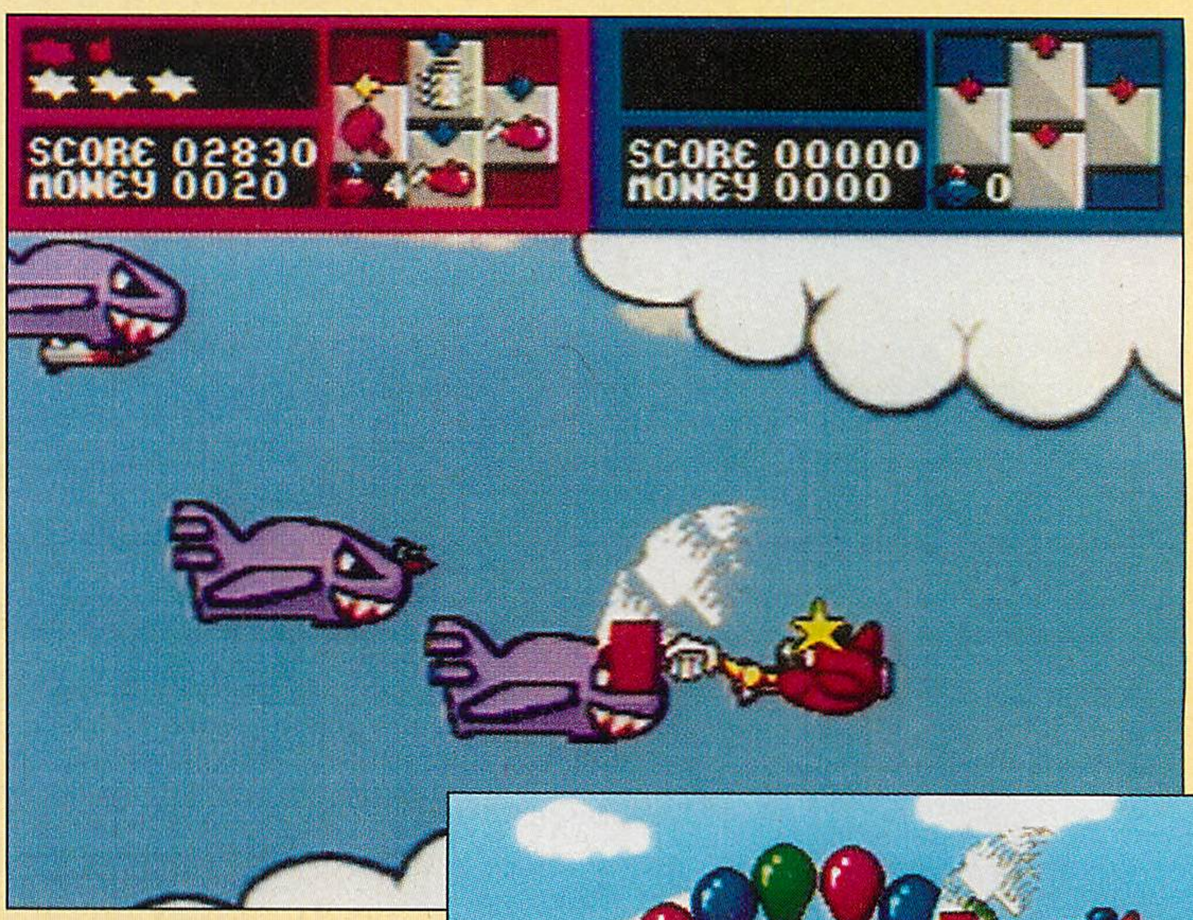

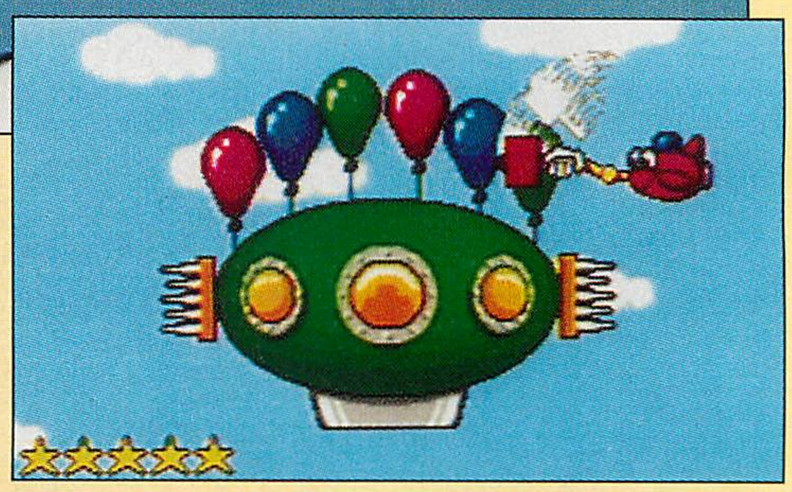

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Dave and Andy called *Gadget Twins* "good-looking," but also were joined by Chris in saying the control was poor. Mike thought it was mediocre.

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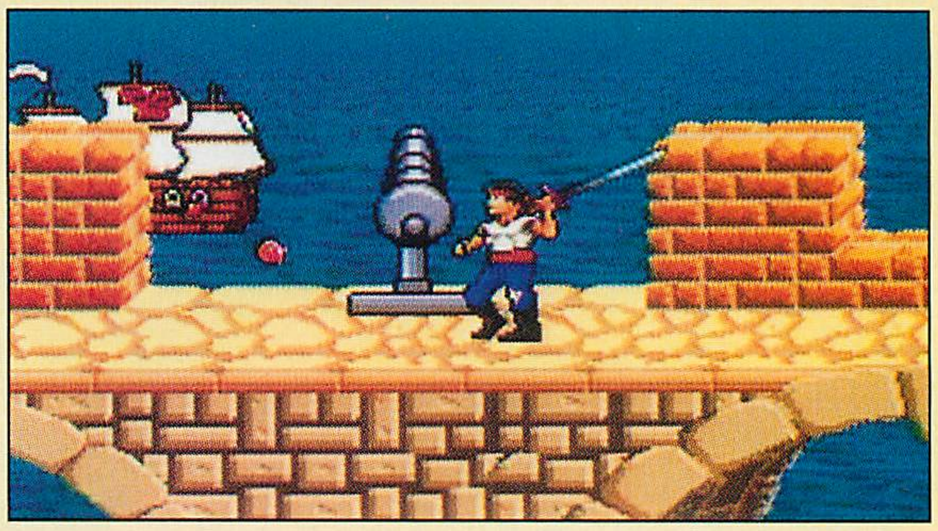
Sküljagger: Revolt of the Westicans

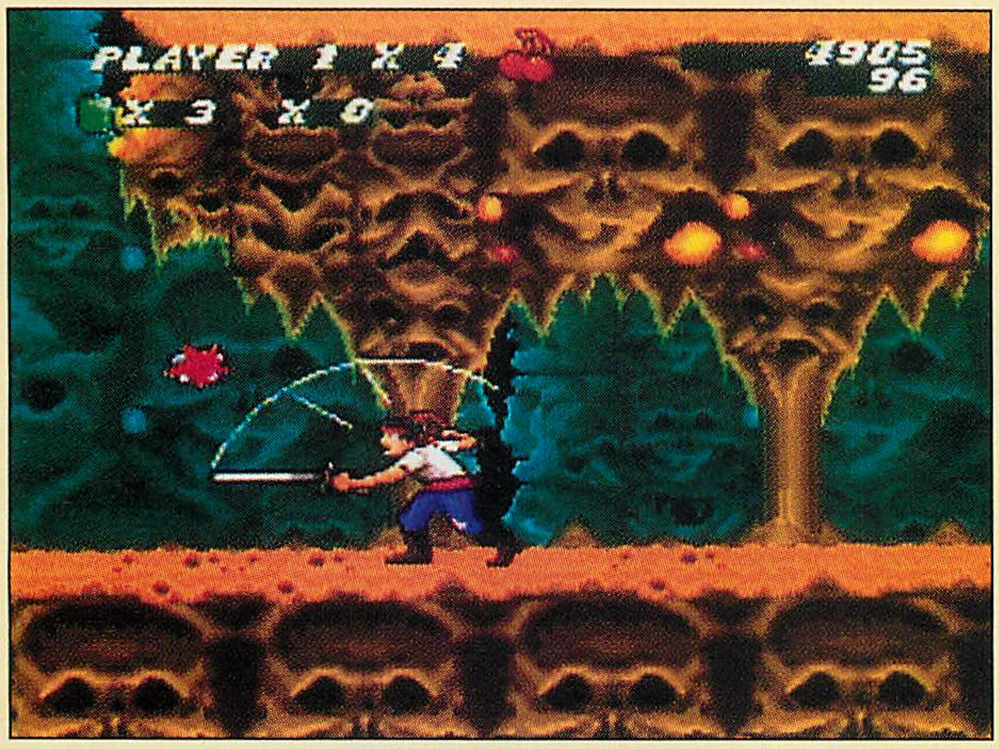
AMERICAN SOFTWORKS
For the Super NES ($59.95)

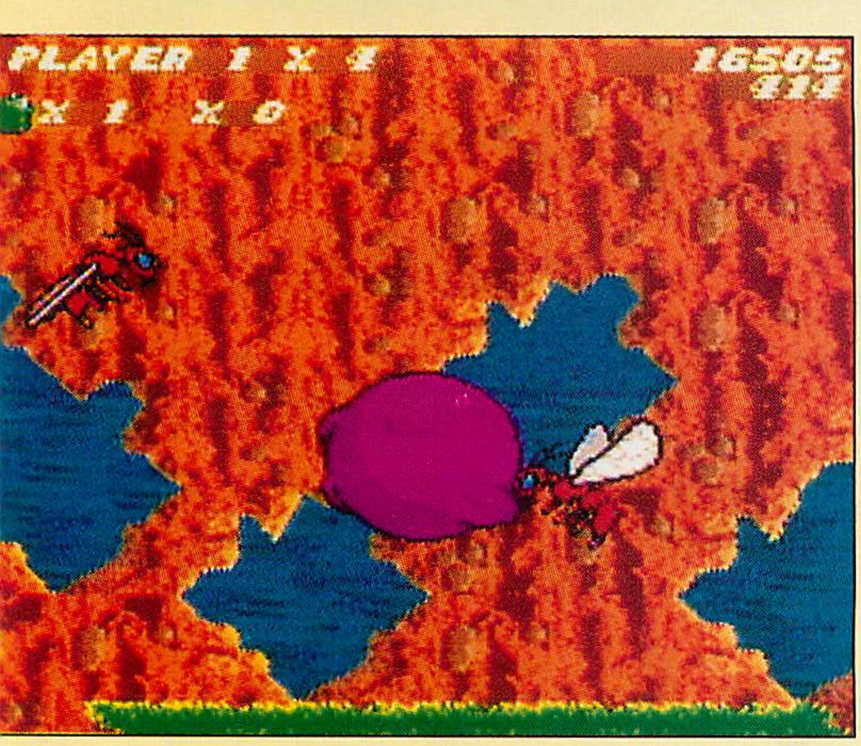
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

With *Sküljagger: Revolt of the Westicans*, hack-and-slash gamers get another chance to wield their swords in the everlasting battle against evil. This time around, you'll slice and dice the followers of the vicious Captain Sküljagger, who has reduced the population of Westica to slaves forced to work themselves to death in the jemerald mines. If you're fast, smart and skilled, you just may make it to the end of this challenging arcade battlefest.

As you battle your way through *Sküljagger*'s lengthy areas, you'll face off against a horde of angry enemies, including not only monsters like killer bees and slugs, but also Captain Sküljagger's cronies, who are under command to locate and destroy you as quickly as possible. To make your way through a level, you must climb ladders, leap from dangerous platforms, battle the aforementioned enemies and snatch up all the treasure you can locate.







Treasure includes jemeralds and bubble gum power-ups. (Bubble gum? Hmmm.) Jemeralds, which come in red, green, blue and giant blue, are especially valuable. Red jemeralds, for example, give you the ability to shoot power balls from the tip of your sword, which allows you to attack enemies from further away. Blue jemeralds, on the other hand, add time to your timer and mark the location from which you'll continue should you die. Finally, if you collect 25 green jemeralds, you'll earn an extra life, a valuable commodity in a tough game like this one. Also, as long as you have red or green jemeralds, you won't lose a life when you're hit. Instead, you'll just lose some of your jemeralds. But if you take damage when you're not holding jemeralds, you're dead meat.

The bubble gum power-ups come in four varieties: snap cherry, which lets you fly; Westican orange, which supplies you with grenades; sea grape, which makes you temporarily invincible; and island lime, which acts as a "Pow," killing all enemies on the screen. With the snap cherry and Westican orange power-ups, you're also protected from dying. If you're touched by an enemy while these power-ups are active, you'll lose only the power-up, not a life.

Perhaps one of *Sküljagger*'s most original features is its 80-page manual. Most of the manual (74 pages) is dedicated to a seven-chapter story, which contains important clues as well as fabulous color illustrations. Reading the story is not optional if you plan to find all the secret fantasy zones, power-ups and warp areas.

Sküljagger is a tough enough game to please even experienced sword-wielders, but, with practice, it can be enjoyed by any arcade gamer with a hankering to spill some monster blood. Its colorful, detailed graphics and hip musical score will keep you swinging and grinning as you battle inexorably toward your final confrontation with the horrible, one-eyed Captain Sküljagger. Good luck—you'll need it.

—Clayton Walnum

American Softworks Corporation
228 E. 45th St., 11th Floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 972-6262

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

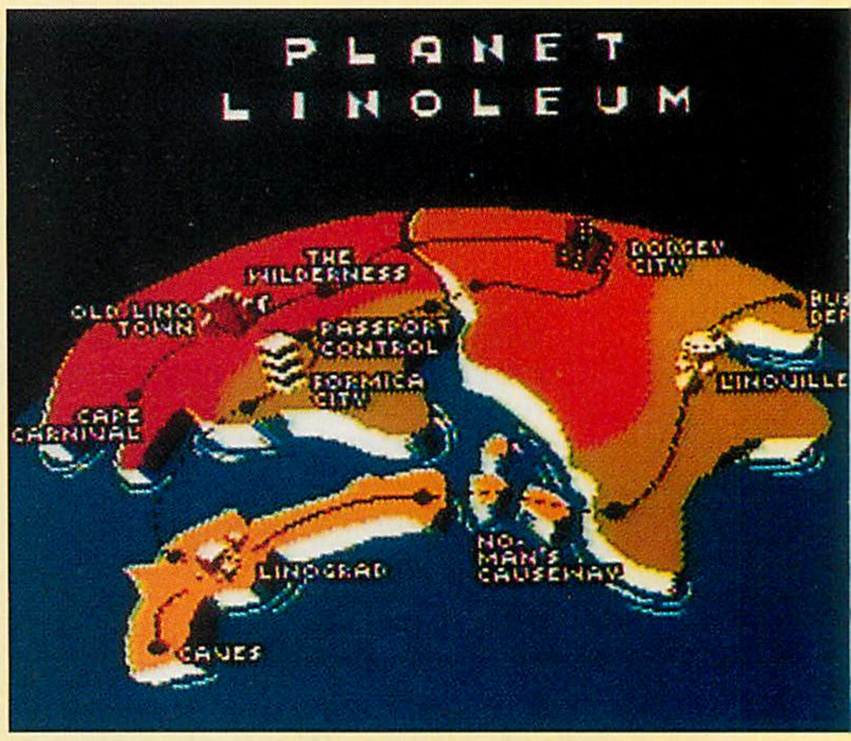
Everyone loved the fact that the game is filled with hidden stuff, but Dave felt too much attention was paid to that aspect. Andy thought it was an interesting twist.

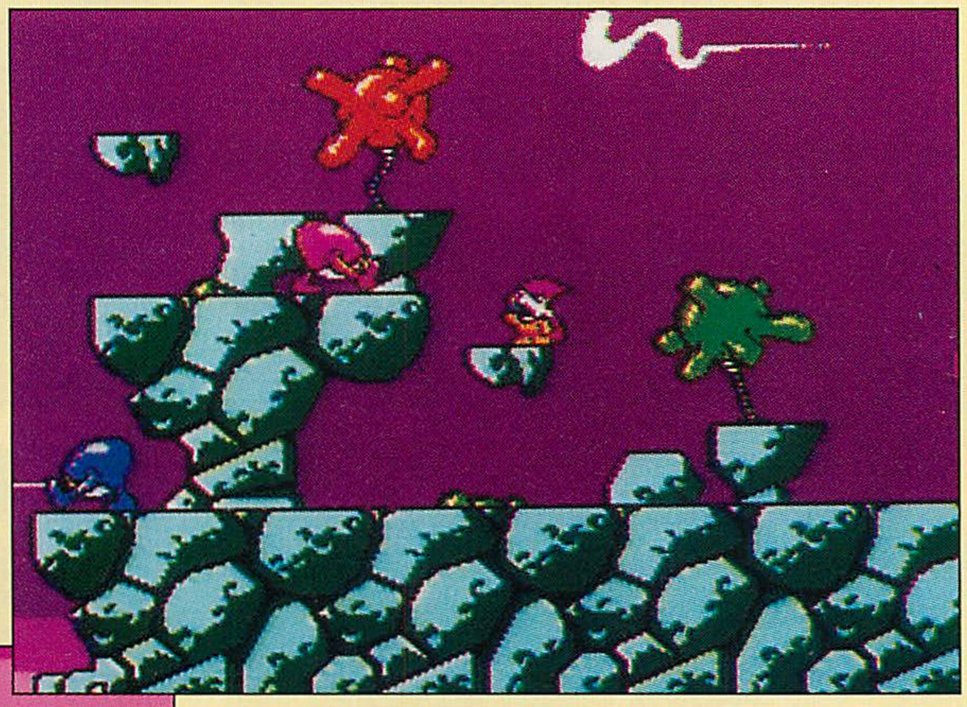
Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade

CAMERICA

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10





Linus Spacehead liked to drive fast. Whenever he got into his Cosmic Stingray 5.0, he put the pedal to the metal and screamed his way through the galaxy. Unfortunately for Linus, planets don't know how to get out of the way, so before he had a chance to say "Jumping Jiminy Jupiter!" he had crashed head-on into the planet Earth. But it wasn't all a disaster. Although he had smashed his vehicle, he had discovered a new planet. Too bad, when he returned home, nobody believed him.

This is where you come in. You get to help Linus buy a new car and find a camera, so he can gather proof of his escapades. In this hybrid game comprising adventure puzzle-solving and arcade action, it'll take both skill and wits to prove Linus' claim.

The game world in *Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade* is made up of many areas, with adventure scenes interconnected by arcade scenes. In the adventure areas, you search for objects, talk to people, use objects in various ways and, in general, try to solve the game's puzzles. In order to manipulate the objects in the game, you have access to five commands: Look, Pick Up, Give, Use and Talk To. By selecting an object and then using your controller to point to the command to use, you can solve the game's many problems.

After completing an adventure scene, you move Linus into an arcade section. In these areas, you must avoid enemies while you leap from one dangerous perch to another, all the while gathering Cosmic Candies. For every ten Cosmic Candies you gather, you're awarded a 1-up. The arcade sections require some practice, but once you complete a section, it vanishes forever, and you have direct access to the two adventure areas it connected.

Besides the main arcade segments, there are also several subgames included in *Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade*. For example, you can drive a bumper car around a race course, pilot your Stingray through an asteroid belt or try to take control of a robot factory gone berserk. Of course, gaining access to the subgames requires completing certain adventure puzzles.

The game's graphics are not spectacular. Neither, for that matter, is the sound and music. However, the visual and audio aspects are competent enough that, while they may not be impressive, they are also not intrusive, providing a reasonably appealing world in which to play.

Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade is different from most other games. While neither the adventure nor the arcade segments could survive on their own, the combination provides for an interesting diversion that'll keep most gamers busy for many hours.

—Clayton Walnum

Camerica Corp.
3415 14th Ave.
Markham, ON
CANADA L3R 0H3
(416) 470-2515

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

The editors agreed that the game was pretty slow and the controls awkward. However, Andy and Chris both thought *Linus* was interesting and different.

Best of the Best Championship Karate

ELECTRO BRAIN

For the Super NES (N/A)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC						6				
GRAPHICS						6				
PLAYABILITY									9	
OVERALL							7			

It's not really boxing, but it's not completely like your typical martial-arts contest either. It's kick boxing, and it borrows a little from both to provide an interesting alternative to a regular boxing match.

Best of the Best covers all aspects of kick boxing—from the training required for mastery and increased skills, to the ring where you must face increasingly powerful opponents as your money and trophies accumulate. As your status and skills rise, you may be invited to compete in the "Kumate," where the best fighters compete against one another, and where the only rules are: no rules!

As the competition begins, your fighter has been training from the age of six, and has managed to reach the rank of 16th in the world. The party is just beginning, however, as your training must continue and intensify as you take on the 15 fighters ranked above you, not to mention the six opponents waiting at the Kumate.

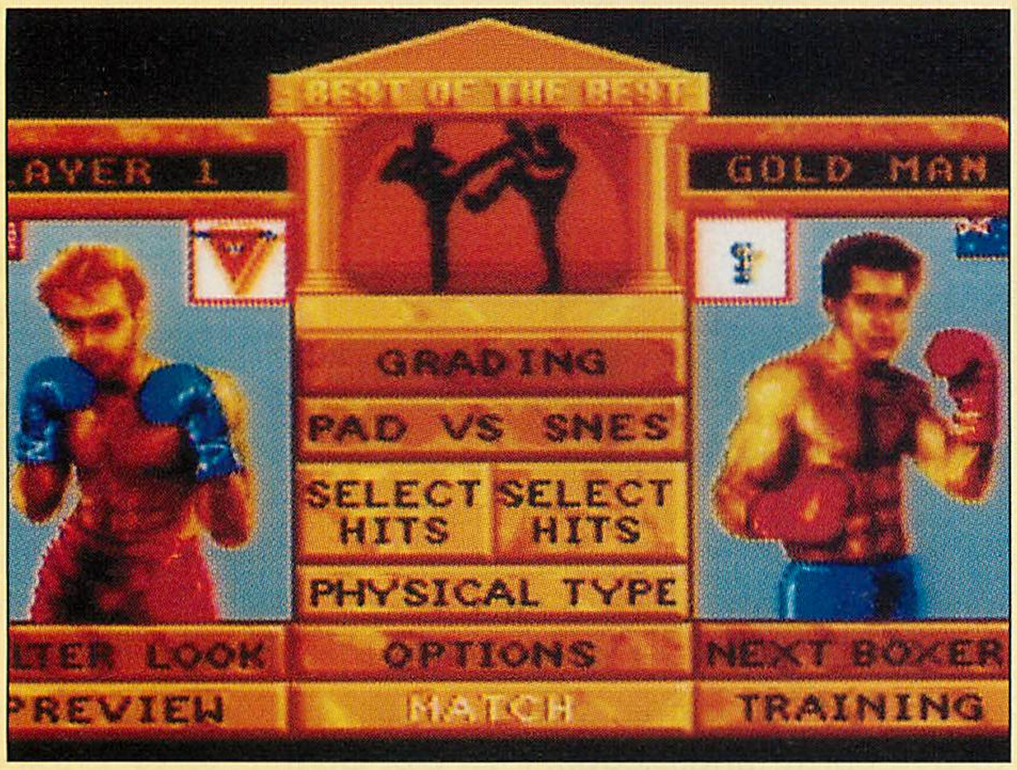
To increase your fighter's abilities, you must train in three different areas. By sparring with a partner, your fighter builds up his *resistance* to attack, and perfects his technique. A workout bag allows your fighter to build up his *strength* and power, and a kick pad comprising three pads at different heights lets your fighter practice his coordination to improve *reflexes*.

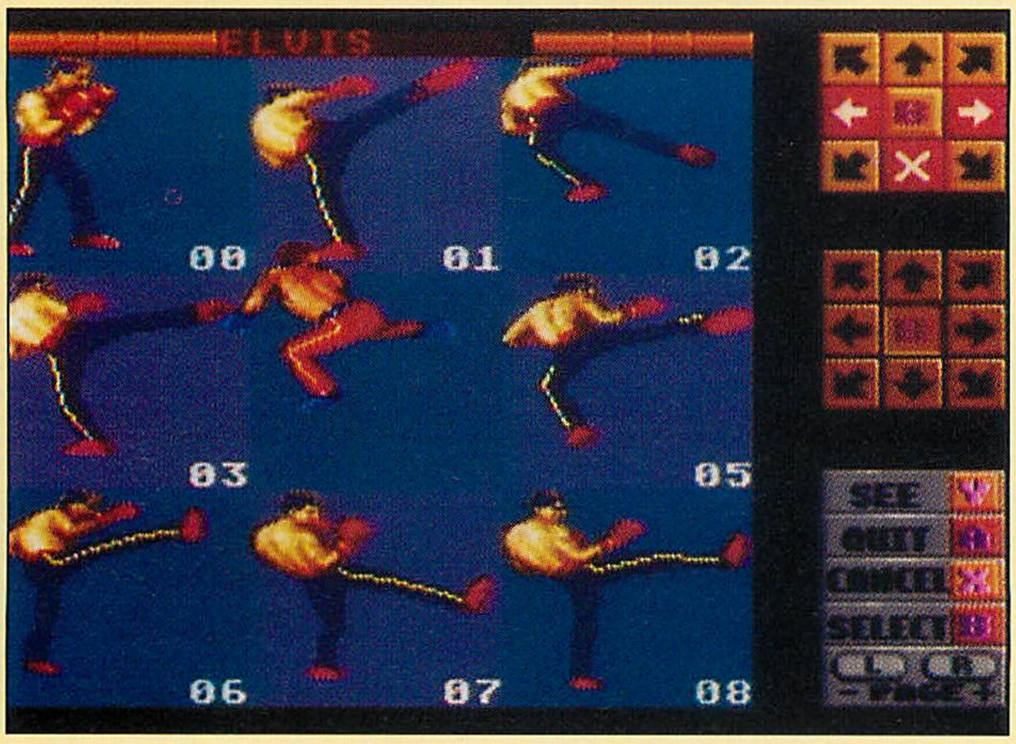
Each of these attributes is represented by a percentage that increases when your fighter either practices hard or fights well against an opponent. Lose a fight, and you'll lose some percentage points. If you train halfheartedly, you simply don't receive extra points.

There are 55 different moves available to your fighter. Of these, up to 13 may be selected for use by your player at one time, in order to avoid having to memorize too many button combinations. Each move may be assigned to any of the 13 button combinations, which is a great option. These choices aren't permanent, and may be changed between matches.

The match length may be set for either three, five, seven, eight or 12 rounds, with each round lasting one minute. The winner is determined either by knockout or by whichever fighter has the most health left at the end of the match.

A preview option comes in handy for scouting out the weaknesses and for examining the styles of your opponents, and, in addition to a few other minor features, it helps round out a nice game.





I'm not usually one for the one-on-one sports simulators, what with the glut of wrestling-type games out, but I really enjoyed *Best of the Best*. The fighting action is great, and the additional freedom of crafting your own personalized fighter with your own choices of attacks adds to the enjoyment.

The graphics consist mainly of menus, and then of the ringside during a match, but smooth graphic animation helps with the timing of attacks. The sound effects could have been enhanced by perhaps a few digitized yells or grunts, but they are O.K. A nice variety of attacks, and the solid game play made *Best of the Best Championship Karate* fun for me.

—Brent Walker

Electro Brain
573 E. 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 531-1867

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE										
CB										
DM										
MD										

All the editors were pretty disappointed by *Best of the Best*, especially in comparison with *André Panza*, its TG-16 predecessor; an SNES version should be better.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

SEGA

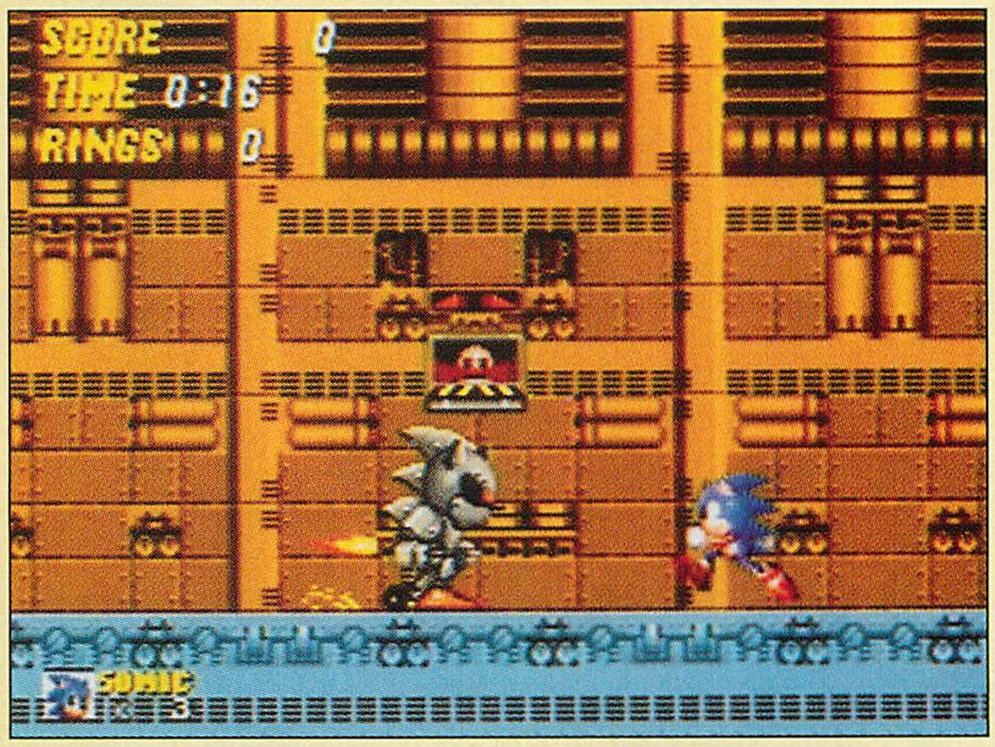
For the Sega Genesis ($54.99)

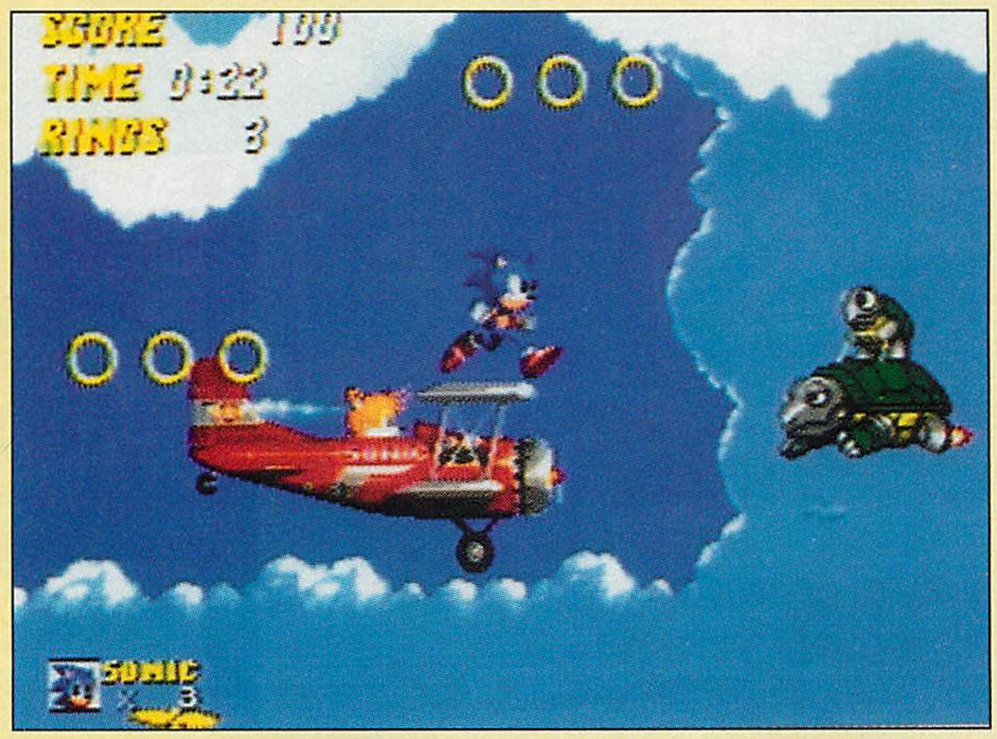
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

What's blue and round and works around the clock to clean up rings? No, it's not a toilet bowl cleaner—it's Sonic the Hedgehog, back with bells on for another glorious Genesis adventure. More than a year has passed since his first game was released, and Genesis owners have had plenty of opportunities to experience other *Sonic*-style epics, including such excellent offerings as EA's *James Pond II* and Sega's own *Kid Chameleon*. But now it's time for the entire 16-bit world to step aside, 'cause *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* is even better than its predecessor.

I say this because the game is chock full of new features, none of which detract from the charisma or playability of the original title. For starters, there's Sonic's new friend Miles Prower (a/k/a "Tails"), a two-tailed raccoon who always tags along with our hero whether he's being steered by a second control pad or not. In addition to the new enemies, new stages and new music, Sonic has a much larger variety of moves than before, with new animation that lets him flip over from front to back, pinwheel his arms and legs *three different ways* on the edge of a precipice and stretch out on the ground for a break if the control pad is idle for too long.

There's also a new bonus stage, with a different way to reach it. If you're holding 50 rings when you reach one of the lamppost checkpoints, you can jump into a special bonus area where Sonic and Miles run through a winding tunnel, avoiding obstacles and picking up rings to try to earn continues and Chaos emeralds. Looking for all the world like a deranged offshoot of Atari's *S.T.U.N. Runner* coin-op, this special stage is one of the high points of an already impressive contest.





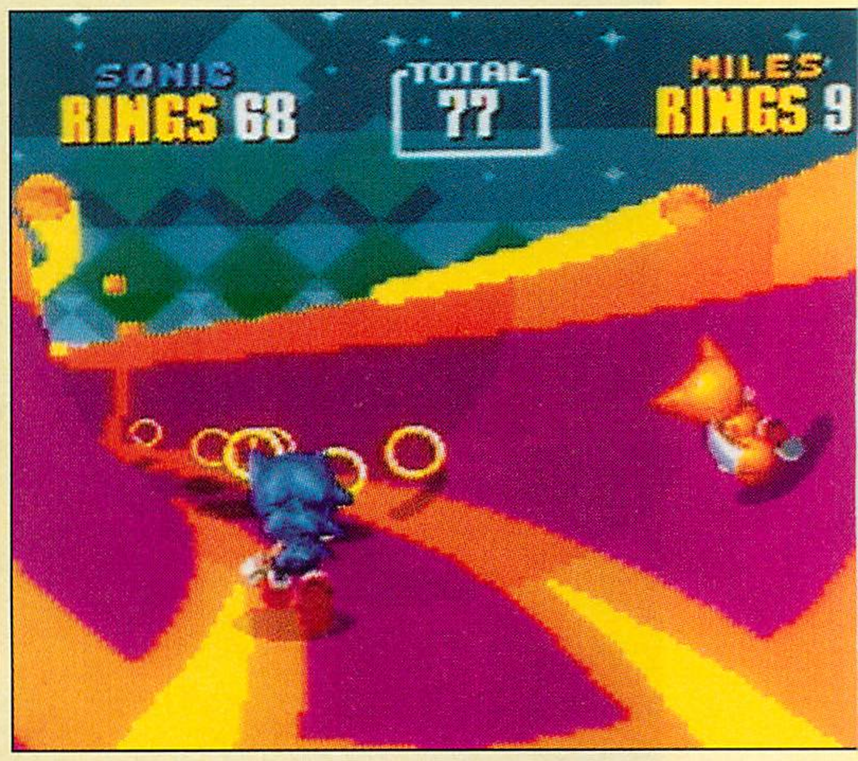
The game's only weakness is the two-player competitive mode, which squeezes two full screens of information into a pair of half-sized windows that track Sonic and "Tails" separately. Not only does this process fatten the characters to absurd proportions, but it's also hampered by quite a bit of slowdown.

Luckily, the rest of the news is good. The game is slightly on the easy side, but the experience is one you'll want to repeat often, since there's a lot of exploring to be done and the stereo sounds and near-3-D graphics are so beautifully done. Only one of the game's "zones" is broken up into more than two different stages, so there is less of a chance that the game will turn stale after repeated play.

Sega has high hopes for *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*. Not only is it counting on this title to mop up the competition in America during the holiday season, but the game is also expected to revive the sagging sales of the Mega Drive, the Genesis' Japanese counterpart. I won't be surprised if it exceeds all expectations in both countries. Behind all of the hype, hoopla and holograms, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* is still a stunning game—quite possibly the finest Genesis cartridge ever released.

—Chris Bieniek

Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800



continued on page 122

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Andy thought that the game greatly improved on the original and offered diversity. Both Mike and Chris agreed that *Sonic 2* is a beautiful game.

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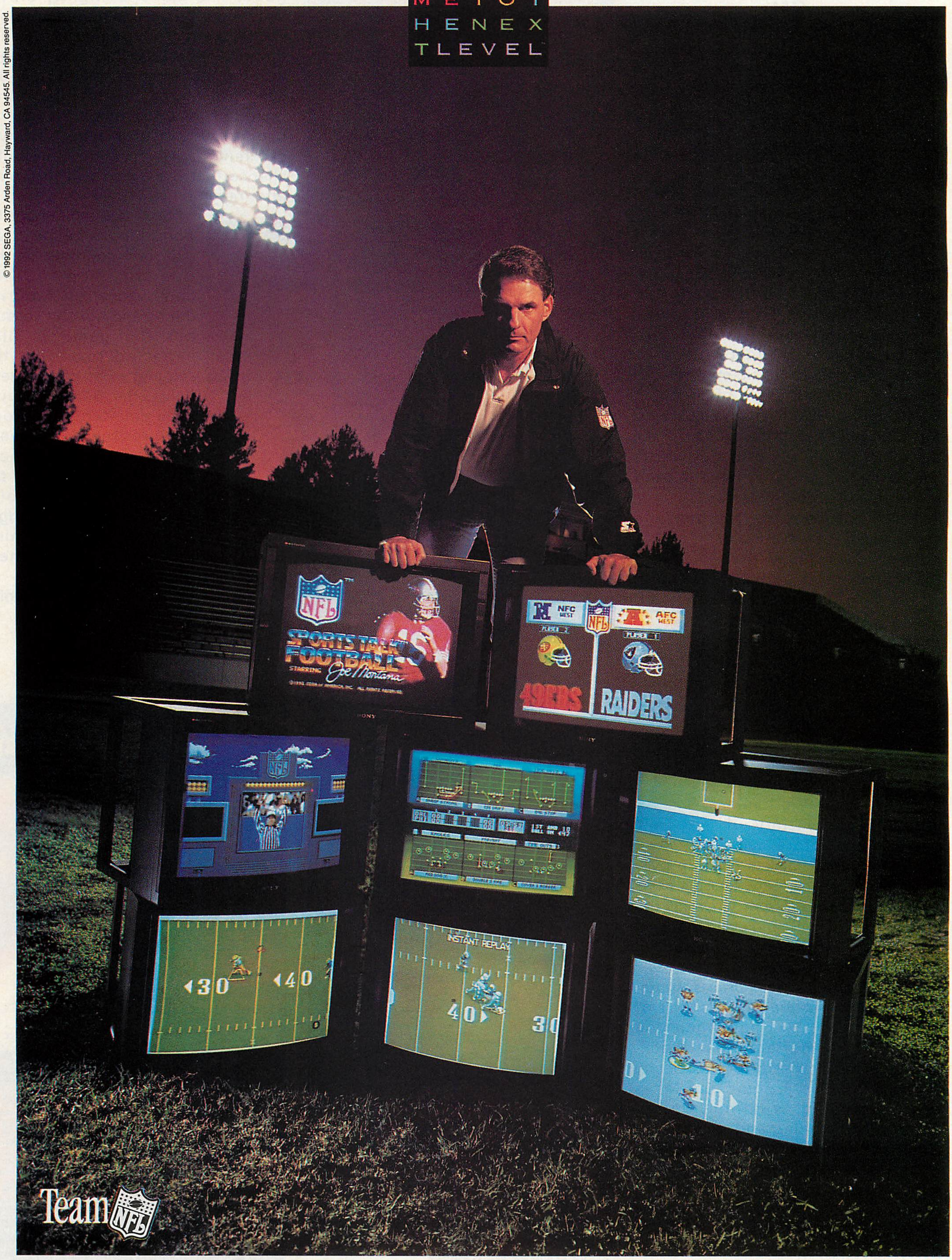
WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL



NO

An interview with Tom Walsh.
Raider's Asst. Coach/Co-Designer—NFL Sportstalk.

pain-killers.

How is the new NFL Sportstalk Football '93 better than the previous one?

For starters, we used a new process called digitized animation. It's about ten times more realistic, because we actually filmed an NFL player, Marcus Wilson, running through the plays. We then digitized the image, so it's virtual reality.

No contracts.

How are the plays different?

The previous game had 50 or so plays. The new one has thousands. I worked with Joe Montana to develop a play book based on the real NFL team plays, and each team's plays will be different. The more plays you know, the better you'll do.

No cheesey

So it's like coaching a real team.

Exactly, right on down to knowing the characteristics of individual players and teams. Your skill at choosing the right play at the right time determines whether or not you will beat the opposing team. Just like the real thing.

half-time entertainment.

Could it actually be used to train real players?

Actually, people have said that it would make a good coach's helper, kind of like a live textbook. I used to play football with the guy who developed the game for Sega. And when he approached me to do this, the goal was that it was to be the most realistic and authentic video sport game out there. I think we succeeded heavily. It's a really terrific game.

(Other than that, pretty realistic football.)

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INSIDE GAMING (JAPANESE SPECIAL REPORT)

A LOOK AT THE STATE OF ELECTRONIC GAMING IN JAPAN

BY TAKAHIRO EGUCHI

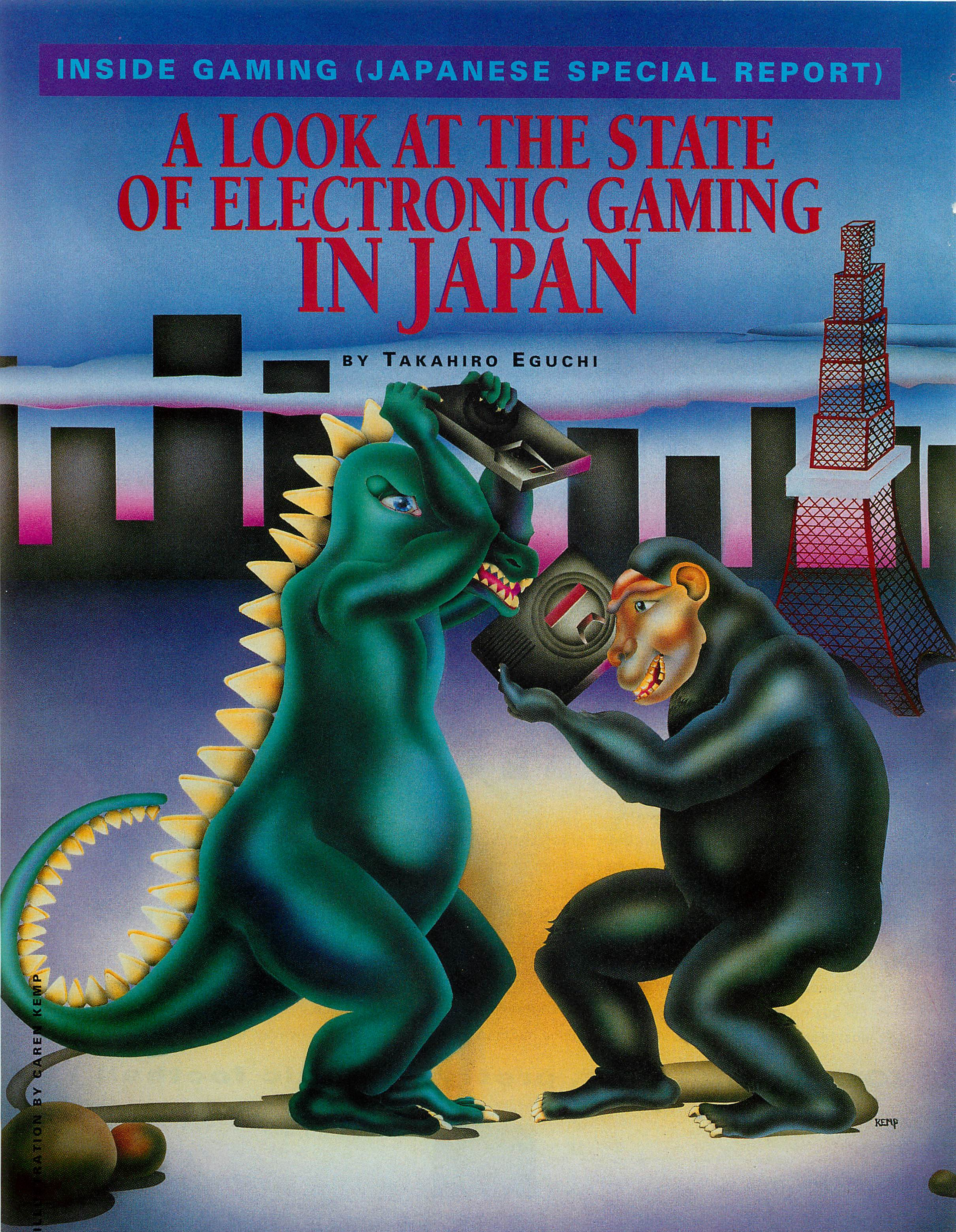


ILLUSTRATION BY CAREN KEMP

Konnichiwa, American electronic-game fans. My job is to write various articles and a column in a Japanese video-game magazine called *PC-Engine Monthly*. Also, I write software manuals for video games. My hobby is, of course, playing electronic games, including arcade, computer and video games. Whenever I have some time after work, I play these games.

I am going to talk about the state of electronic gaming in Japan and some of the shows that I attended here recently. First off, I want to explain what we here in Japan call "family game machines," such as the Famicom (NES), Super Famicom (SNES) and Mega Drive (Genesis).

Although plenty of video-game software has been sold in Japan recently, the game industry has been in a slump. There hasn't been a big software hit for a few months, and the number of games with large orders from software retailers has been in steady decline.

In this year alone, several game software companies went out of business, many are speculated to be *going* out of business in the near future and some have merged. Many of these companies you might have read about in VG&CE.

However, there is a recession, not only in the video-game industry, but throughout the whole of business in Japan, mostly because of the "bubble economy." This is a term used to describe an overly strong and inflated economy that could easily collapse or "burst" due to short-term investment. Some of the video-game companies that fell into financial difficulties made mistakes by investing money in short-term, easy-profit real estate, even though their software titles were selling successfully.

NINTENDO

In this economy, when I walk around the toy stores and discount shops, I notice that the most popular video games are still Super Famicom titles. Currently, Capcom's *Street Fighter II* and *Super Mario Kart* are the two most popular games. Nintendo is still the number-one company for Famicom games.

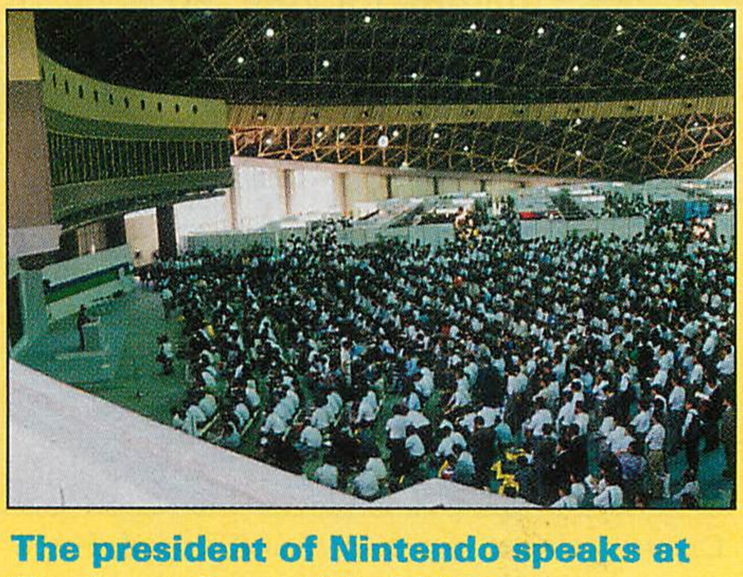
Speaking of Nintendo, a show called Famicom Space World '92 was held during the last week of August. It was the presentation stage for Nintendo's new games, in which all of its third-party developers for the Super Famicom, Famicom and Game Boy were together under one roof.

The most popular games at the show were *Super Mario Kart*, *Final Fantasy V* and *Dragon Quest V*. The *FF* and *DQ* series were very popular RPGs here in Japan. The day when those games were supposed to go on sale, gamers arrived the day *before* and camped out in line all night in order to buy them.

Japanese gamers try out some new games at Famicom Space World '92.

Another important announcement at FSW '92 was the new Super Custom Chip from Seta. This is a high-speed operations chip built directly into game cartridges. The program computation capacity of the Super Famicom will greatly be improved by the chip.

Currently, it is only available with the new Super Famicom games from Seta, but if it becomes possible to use it with games from other companies, it'll satisfy the gamers who have complained about slowdowns on the Super Famicom.



The president of Nintendo speaks at Famicom Space World '92.

The president of Nintendo, Mr. Yamauchi, gave a speech at this show in which he talked about the new CD-ROM for the Super Famicom. Nintendo will build the CD-ROM drive with a 32-bit processor.

Mr. Yamauchi also said that "CD-ROM games must be very, very special for this system. Otherwise, these games will be no different than those games created for the CD-ROM units designed by the two *other* companies.... And we are not going to sell any CD hardware until we really accomplish the advanced software."

I thought that the first CD-ROM game would be *Mario* or *Zelda*, but I guess I was wrong. I remember a brochure that was handed out by Virgin at the Summer CES for *The 7th Guest*. It stated that the game would be available for the Super Famicom. This game would be totally different from any game previously created for any CD-ROM-based video-game system. Maybe this title will be the first CD game for Super Famicom—I am only speculating though.

More details about the CD-ROM will be announced at the Summer CES in 1993, so I'm looking forward to attending that show.

SEGA

Now, how about the other family game machines and software? As I said before, sales are generally on the decrease. Games for the Mega Drive and Sega of Japan have especially suffered greatly.

The Genesis and its games are still extremely popular in America, but it hasn't been doing well in Japan. Many of the toy stores and video-game retailers have decided to drop the system and no longer sell it. On the other hand, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* will go on sale pretty soon in Japan, so the system may become popular again.

The CD-ROM drive (Mega-CD) for the Mega Drive is not doing well either. Most Japanese gamers think that it's a good system, but there are no good games being sold that justify buying it. New games that show its capabilities must be developed.

NEC

NEC, manufacturer of the PC Engine (TG-16) and the Duo, has brought CD-ROM to video gaming since its infancy. Currently, most of its software titles are CD-ROM based. Its games are still very popular, but sales have also slipped, though not as badly

as Mega Drive sales. In addition, because of the rise in the manufacturing costs, software publishers for the PC Engine are having a hard time. However, NEC has compensated by holding game tournaments and all kinds of PC Engine publicity campaigns all over Japan, and, because of this, gamers are still with them.

HANDHELDS

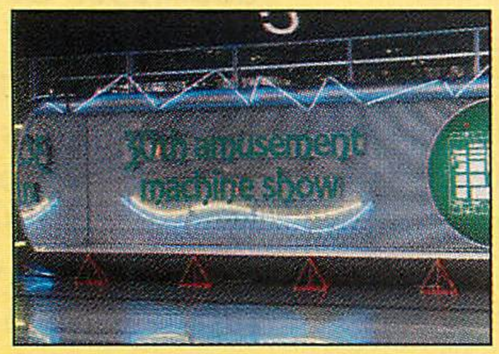
Handheld game machines are no longer as popular as they once were. Gamers are especially staying away from color LCD handhelds, such as Sega's Game Gear and NEC's PC Engine GT (TurboExpress). When Atari's Lynx was introduced (the first color LCD to be put on the market), game hobbyists were interested in it, but that wasn't enough to make it popular. Color handheld games are almost dead now; but, on the other hand, the Game Boy is still very popular.

That is the condition of the home video-gaming industry in Japan. Not very optimistic right now. How does this compare with the United States? Maybe the industries in both countries are suffering from the international recession.

ARCADE

The 30th Annual Amusement Machine show (JAMMA) was also held at the end of August at Tokyo's Makuhari Messe convention center.

There were lots of action games similar to *Street Fighter II* because of its huge success. A new game for the Neo•Geo, *A Fist of the Dragon* (*Art of Fighting*, in the U.S.), was displayed gaudily near the show's entrance.



The 30th Annual Amusement Machine show (JAMMA).

At the Sega booth, a 3-D racing game called *Virtua Racing*, which uses high-speed polygon graphics, was extremely popular. A major feature of this game is that by hitting a button while driving the car, you can switch to one of four different view angles instantaneously.

Gamers sample SNK's *Art of Fighting* at JAMMA.

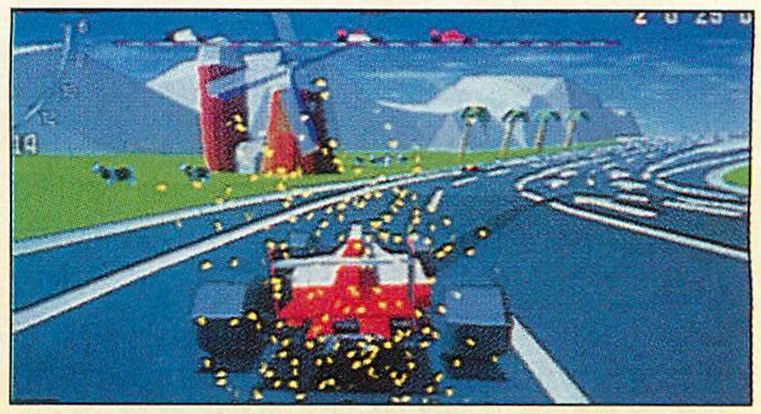
Of course, you can race against several players by connecting the machines by a communication system.

By the way, do you know what the most popular game at game centers in Japan is? As a matter of fact, it's not a video game. It's a "crane game" for catching stuffed animals, similar to the ones found in many American theme parks.

You play this game by operating the two buttons and using a crane to grab stuffed animals. This game is always located near the entrance to arcades and usually makes the most profit.

Until recently, the majority of the people frequenting game centers had been adolescent boys, but now lots of business men, women and young girls who normally don't play video games also come to play the crane-type games.

At this AM show, there were displays of many kinds of crane games and stuffed animals for the prizes. During the show, people could play the games for free, so each of the machines was mobbed with people.



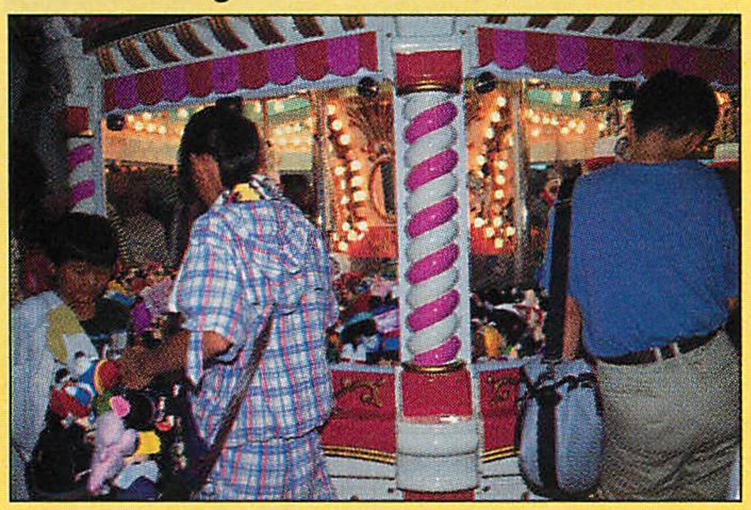
Sega's *Virtua Racing* was a hit at the JAMMA show.

The other popular type of game on display was the virtual-reality-style simulator, where you climb into a cockpit or box and it simulates the effects of travel. Taito had two games of this type on display, *D³BOS* and *IDYA*.

COMPUTER GAMES

There are many kinds of computer games in Japan. The most popular machine is the PC-98 series from NEC. This is a 16/32-bit MS-DOS-based machine that has a Japanese-designed architecture. Epson also has a PC-98-compatible computer. Another machine that is made in Japan, which many of you have already read about, is the 32-bit MS-DOS machine FM-Towns, by Fujitsu. It takes in the CD-ROM and is second to the PC-98 in popularity.

Until now, domestic Japanese computers were the most popular kinds of machines because of the thousands of complex Japanese alphabetic characters that each take two bytes to create. Japanese-designed computers were easier to deal with because of this.



Crane games are the most popular games right now in Japan.

The FM-Towns computer, by Fujitsu

However, these days, IBM PC/AT-compatible computers have become popular because of DOS 5. It has better functions and it's less expensive. In addition, it allows Japanese gamers to play the many interesting American games that we rarely play. Also, the Macintosh has been expanding its share of the home computer market by making improvements in the Japanese word capacities in addition to a large cut in price.

RPGs and simulation games were both popular just a short while ago, but RPGs' popularity is falling sharply now. One of the reasons is that there are many similar RPGs, so users are getting tired of them. Computer simulation war games are very popular, to the point where gamers are preordering them.

Computers on which you can install the game software on the hard disk have only recently come to Japan. While hard disk game installation has been common in the United States for a long time, in Japan, there are still many games that require you to change the floppy disk during game play. Japan is behind the United States in the arena of computer-game development.

HOW DO WE PURCHASE GAMES IN JAPAN?

The way gamers buy software in Japan is quite different from the way they do in America. First of all, when users want to buy a software title that has a very good reputation, most of the time they have to place an advance order. However, they can't have the discount price on the advance order, so they have to pay full retail price. Many people will stand in line all night long at a discount shop in order to buy a game. You'll see hundreds of people standing there, playing with handheld video games, passing the time away. Recently, many of these discount shops started passing out order tickets to discourage people from waiting in line all night long.

True, many people go to the discount shops to buy software, but there are also many stores that sell secondhand software. At these stores, people sell the software that they've already played and then buy other used games. The price is, of course, very cheap because they are used. There are many secondhand software stores in the Akihabara (a/k/a Electric City, a neighborhood in Tokyo devoted to all types of electronics stores). Many westerners and Japanese often go to Akihabara, including myself, because you can find just about anything electronic at a cheap price. However, recently many retailers have cut their software prices in order to compete with discount stores.

I have talked about Japanese electronic gaming and some of the circumstances that affect it here. As you can see, there are some differences, as well as some similarities to electronic gaming in the United States that are not always good—as others may lead you to believe. We are interested in your response and how you feel about it in comparison to the United States. So please let us know what you think. Write us c/o VG&CE, Attn: *Inside Gaming* (Japanese Special Report), 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

Takahiro Eguchi is a noted writer and columnist for Shogakukan Publications' *PC-Engine Monthly*, a Japanese video-game magazine that mainly focuses on the PC Engine system, but also covers other systems. Mr. Eguchi is department chief of *PC-Engine Monthly*'s "You Raku Sen Gyo Dan" arcade column. He has been covering the video-game industry in Japan for nine years and also writes for *PC-Engine Plus* magazine.

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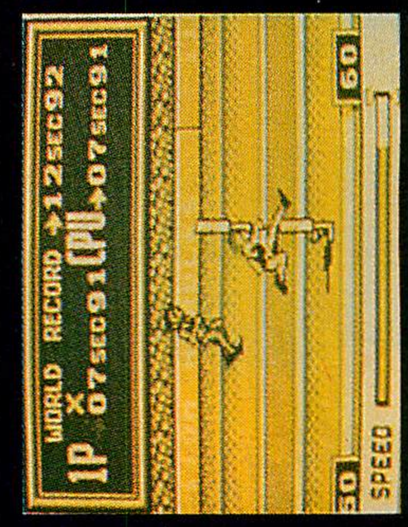

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A CRISIS IN PARADISE, PART ONE

FOR THE

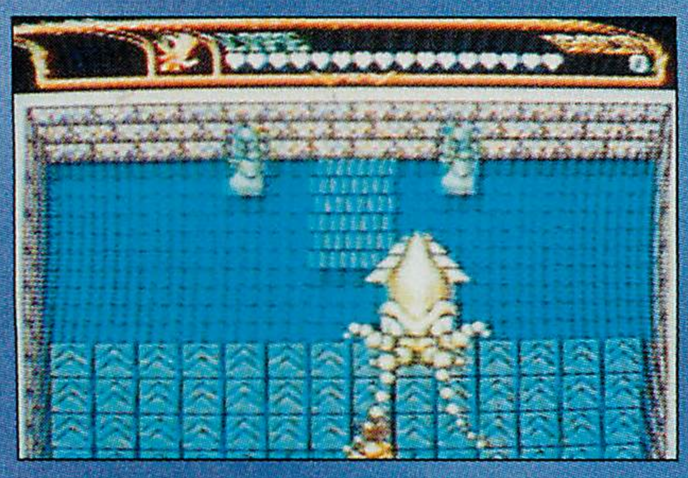
TurboGrafx-16

ILLUSTRATION BY KRIS DOE

A Player's Guide to Neutopia II

Neutopia is back, and lovers of the first game will find lots of new exotic places to explore in this sequel. Although the layout of the game is similar to the first one, you'll meet up with loads of new monsters and will need to navigate through many new dungeons before you complete your quest. In this month's strategy guide, we'll show you everything you need to know to complete the first four dungeons.

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

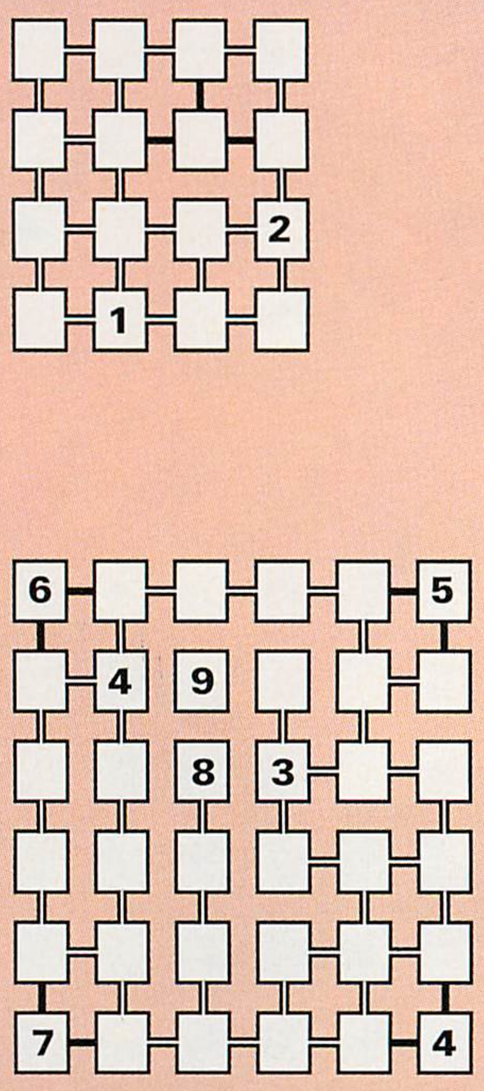


The game begins with a horrible vision.

Was it only a dream?

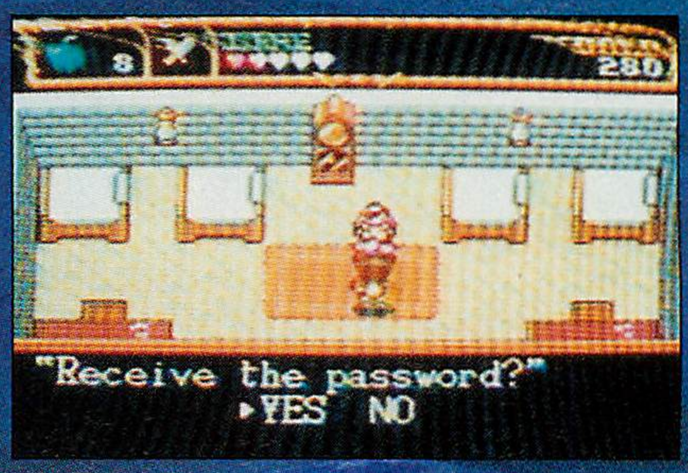
You set off to explore, killing monsters on the way in order to gain special items that will help you complete your quest.

DOUMA LABYRINTH



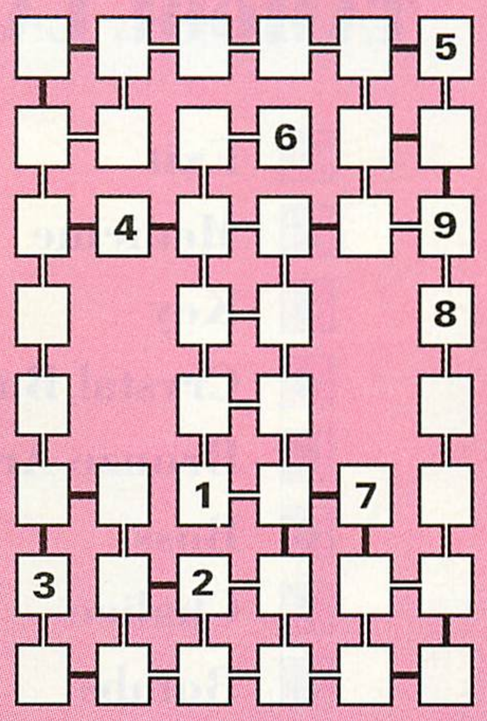
1. Exit
2. Entrance to Level 2
3. Exit
4. Medicine
5. Bombs
6. Silver Shield
7. Key
8. Boss
9. Rainbow Drop

When you move some rocks, they reveal secret stairways.



One of the first important places to find is the password room, where you can save your game.

As you explore a new area, make sure you talk to everyone, since they have important information to guide you on your way.



MANTON LABYRINTH

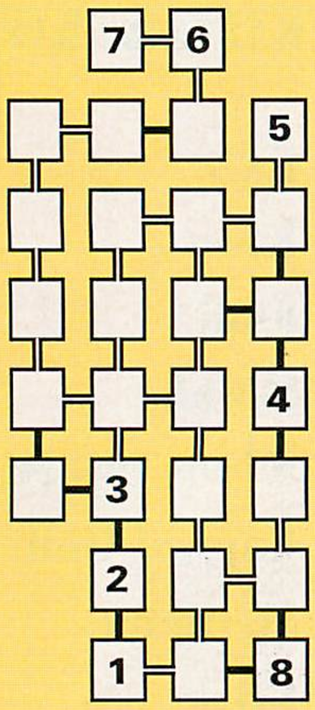
1. Exit
2. Key
3. Flail
4. Bombs
5. Silver Sword
6. Crystal Ball
7. Medicine
8. Boss
9. Aqua Lung

What's this? A pool of lava? You'll have to come back here later.

Look for special places on the walls that can be blasted open with bombs.

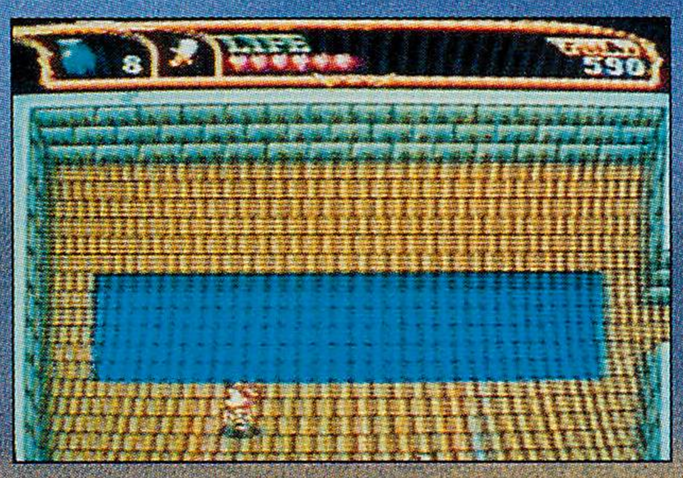
In some areas, killing all the monsters will reveal hidden stairways.

Another important room contains a citizen who can heal your wounds.

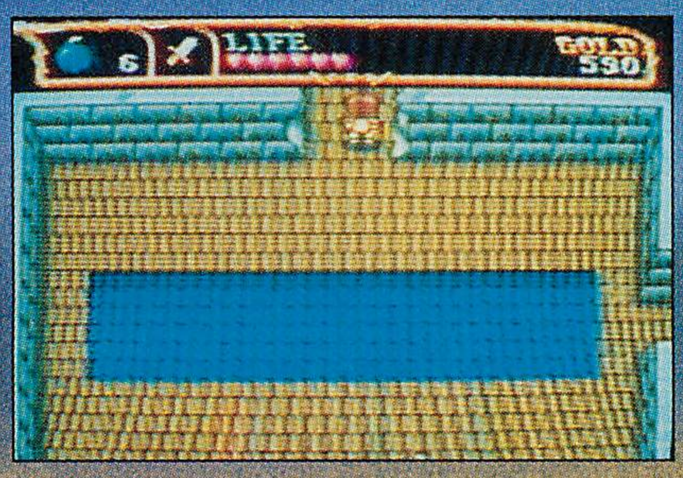


TAMOOL LABYRINTH

1. Exit
2. Medicine
3. Key
4. Crystal Ball
5. Bronze Armor
6. Boss
7. Chalice
8. Bombs

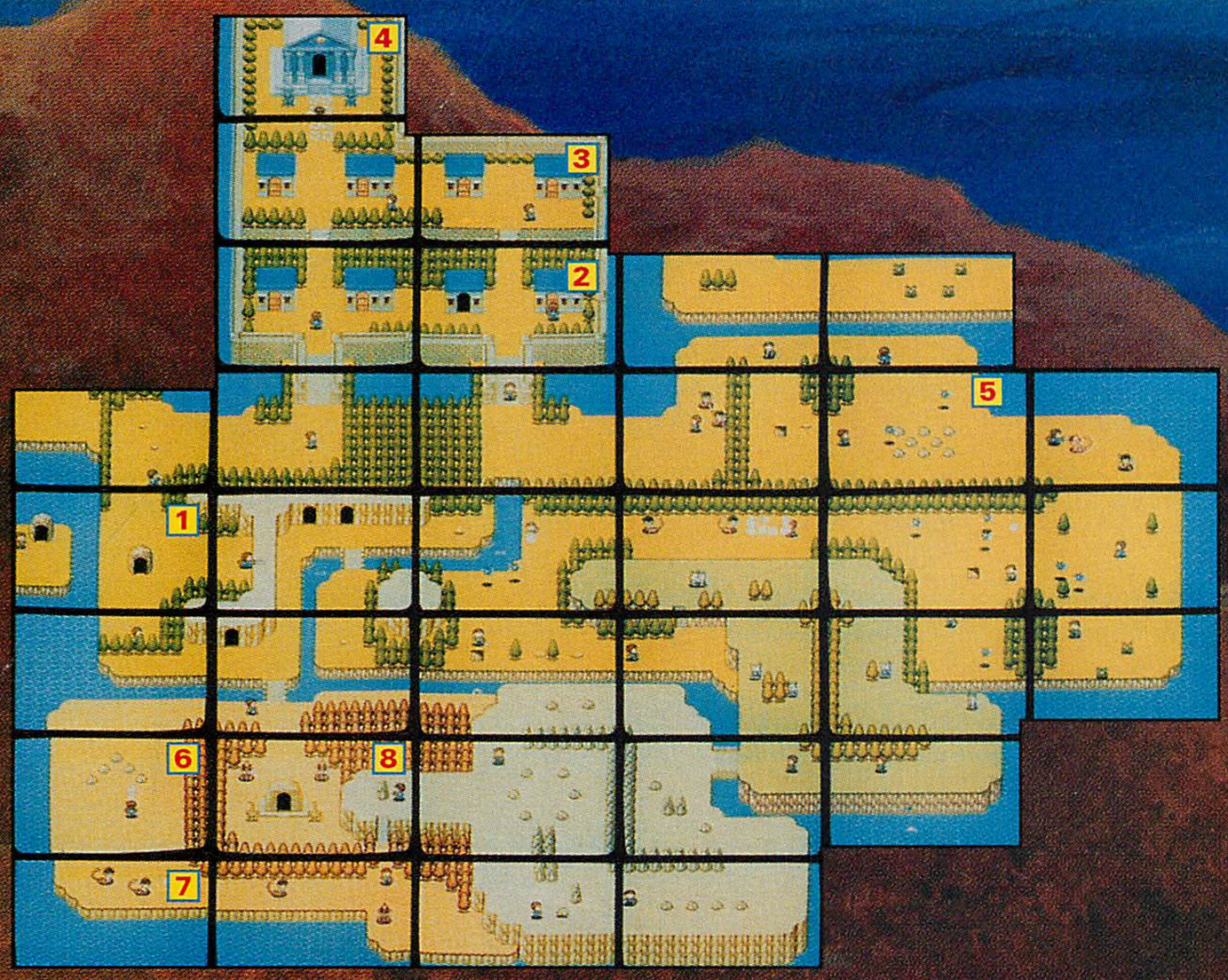


In the dungeons, you'll find lots of danger and many treasures.



Some walls in the dungeon, too, can be blasted open with bombs.

Every dungeon contains many treasure chests, each containing valuable items.

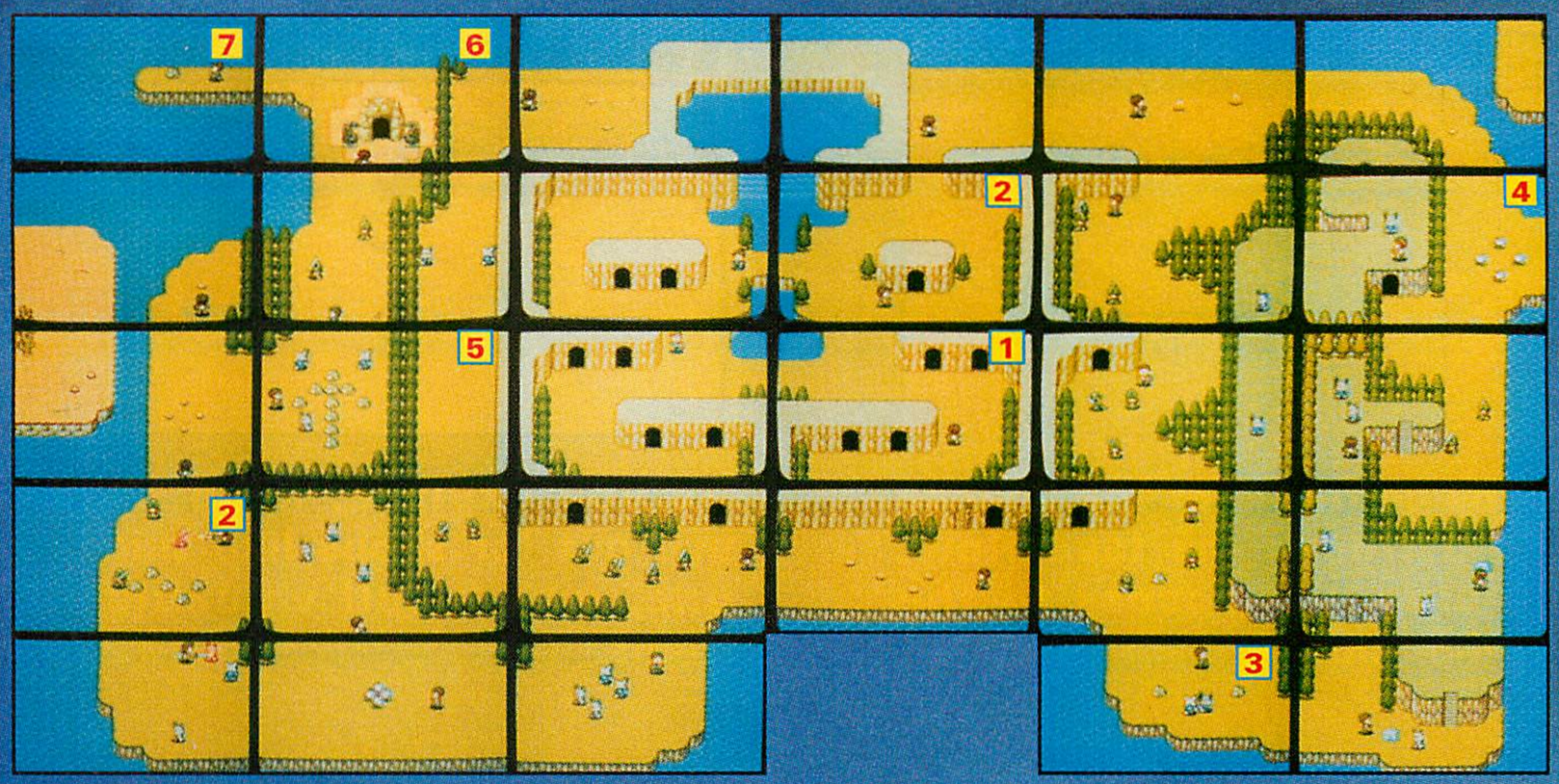


SHARUDA FOREST MAP KEY

1. Entrance & Exit
2. Boomerangs
3. Potion & Bombs
4. Palace
5. Fire Staff
6. Password
7. Healing
8. Shadow Labyrinth & Carry More Bombs

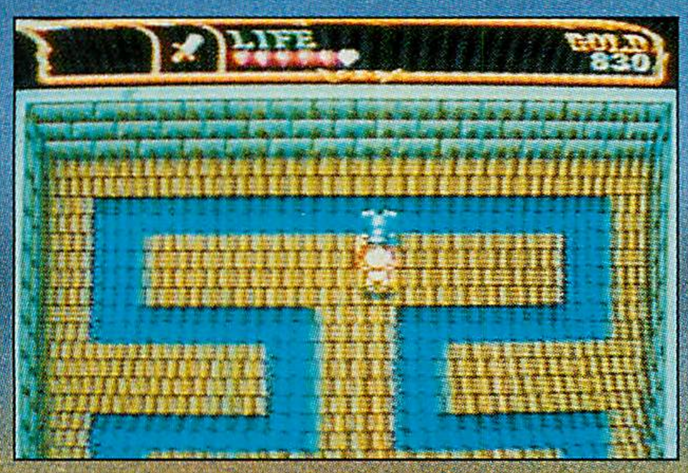
HOMUN ISLAND MAP KEY

1. Bombs and Medicine
2. Password
3. Bombs
4. Go right to get to Sharuda Forest
5. Healing
6. Tamool Labyrinth
7. Heart



Each dungeon also contains a key, without which you cannot open the door leading to the boss' room.

The crystal ball helps with your mapping by showing many rooms that you haven't yet visited.



Special items, like this armor, help you to avoid wounds or to fight better.

The monsters in the dungeons can be tricky to defeat. You must learn the ways in which they fight.

Every dungeon's major treasure is guarded by a boss monster that you must defeat.

In the first dungeon, the major treasure is the Chalice of Agony, which will open up new areas for you to explore.

The contents of the chalice will freeze the lava flow, giving you access to the other side.

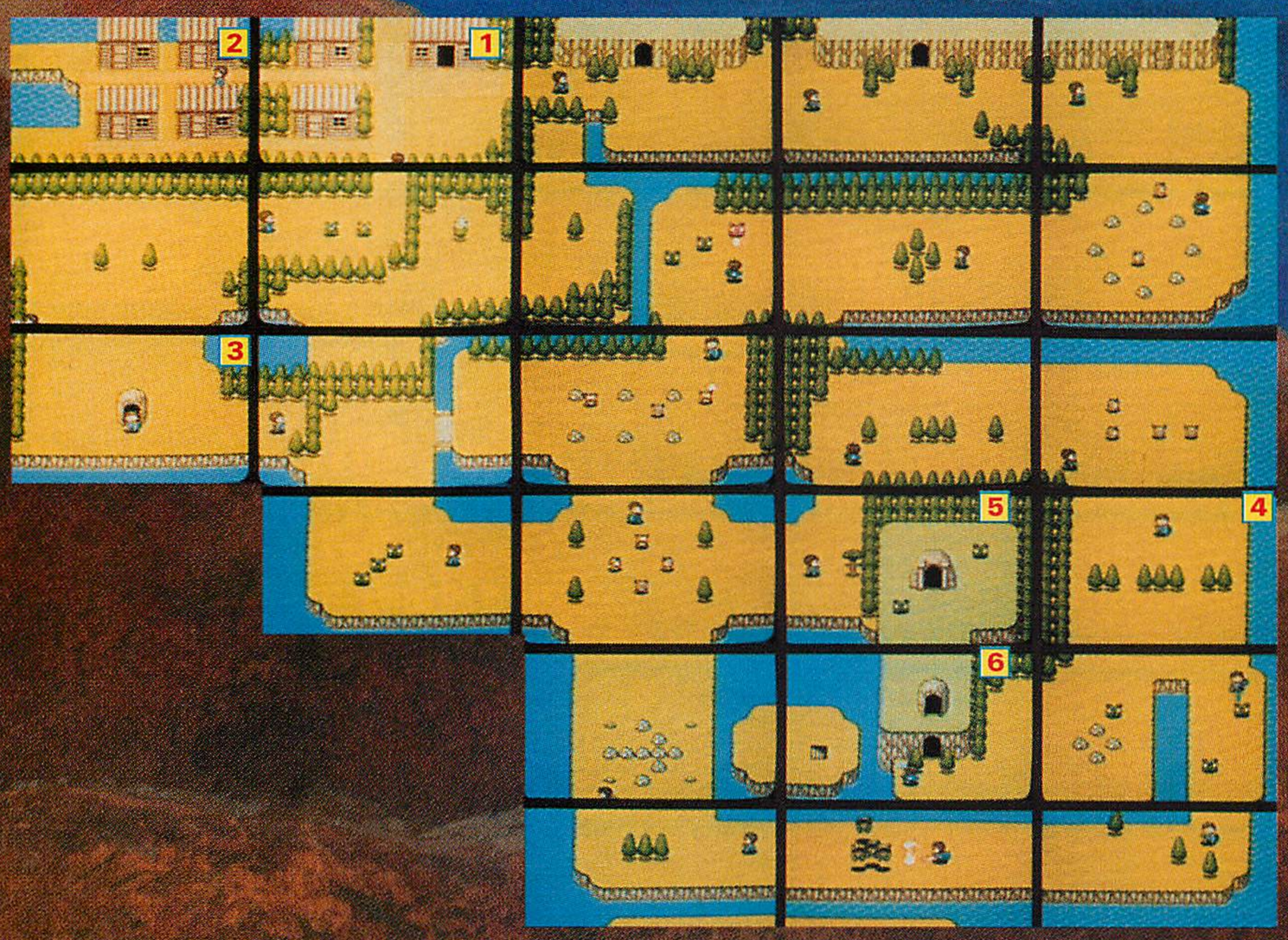
As you explore, keep an eye out for shops like this one, which sell valuable items.

Everywhere you go, there will be someone to help you on your way.

In the second dungeon, you'll find rooms filled with stones. Some stones can be moved, allowing you to open doors.

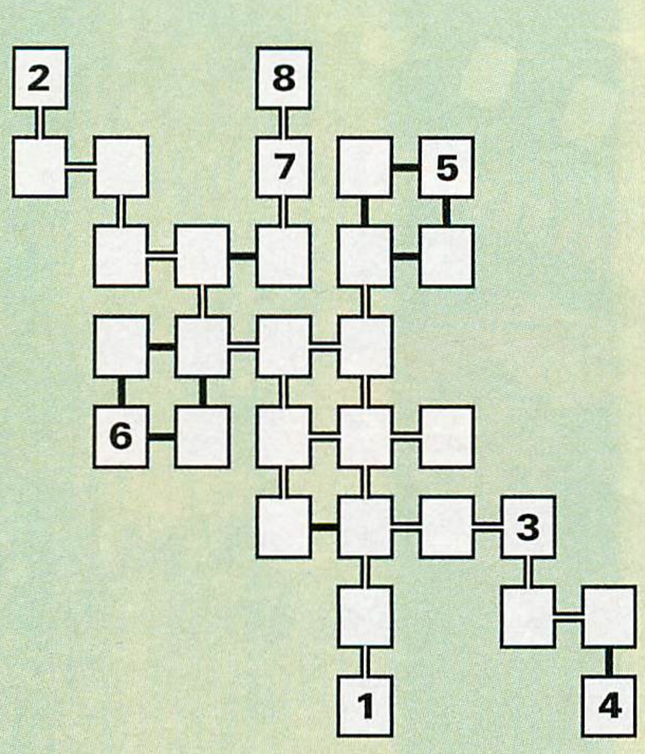
After completing the second dungeon, the chalice opens a path to a new area.

Before you get to the third dungeon, you'll have to find your way through a dark, cave maze.



SHIKOSSHI FOREST MAP KEY

1. Moonbeam Moss
2. Password & Bombs
3. Exit
4. Healing
5. Douma Labyrinth
6. Maze Cave



SHADOW LABYRINTH

1. Exit
2. Bronze Sword
3. Bronze Shield
4. Crystal Ball
5. Medicine
6. Bombs
7. Boss
8. Manipula Herb

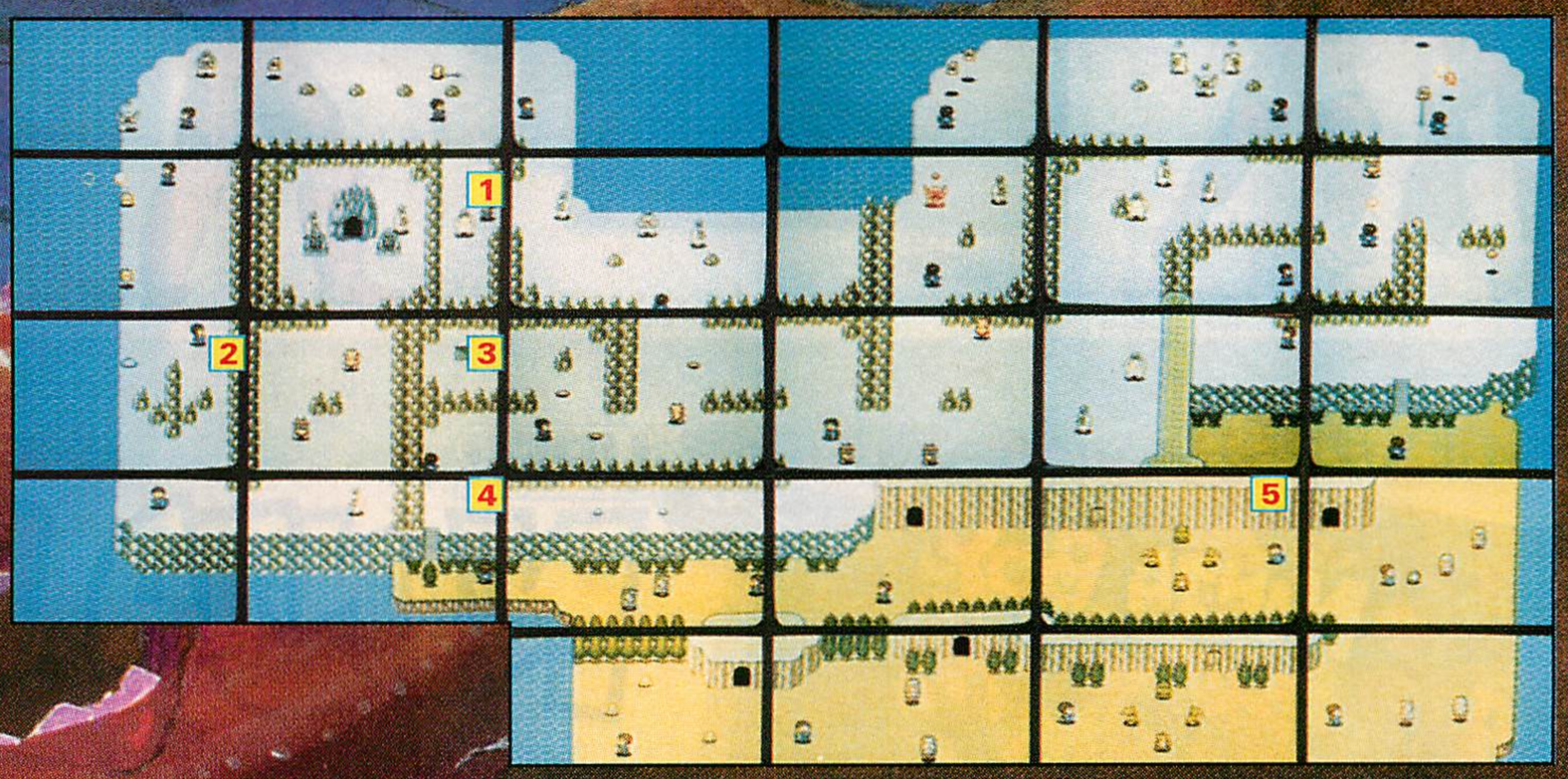
The Rainbow Drop lets you cross narrow waterways.

This boss, like many others, can be hit only when his insides glow.

The third dungeon's major treasure is the Rainbow Drop.

SHINORO MAP KEY

1. Manton Labyrinth
2. Healing
3. Password & Snow Boots
4. Carry More Bombs
5. Boomerangs



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3

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WIN THE TOURNAMENT!
UP TO EIGHT PLAYERS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE VS TOURNAMENT MODE!

UP TO EIGHT PLAYERS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE VS TOURNAMENT MODE!
MORE THAN 150 TECHNIQUES ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM OF COURSE.
YOU CAN ENJOY THE GAME BY YOURSELF OR WITH YOUR GOOD FRIENDS. PUSH THE START BUTTON! LET'S SEE WHO IS GOING TO WIN THE TOURNAMENT!

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THIS GAME HAS FOUR DIFFERENT MODES. FIRST, YOU CAN ENJOY EXCITING ATTACKS AND ARE NOT REQUIRED TO DEFEND YOURSELF IN FIGHTING MODE. SECOND, EXPERT MODE FOR FIGHTING MANIACS. IT'S GOT JOINT TWISTING, OVERTURNING, COMBINATION TECHNIQUES AND MUCH MORE! THE FIRST VIDEO GAME THAT LETS YOU PLAY A FULL SCALE FIGHTING GAME! FOR BEGINNERS AND THOSE PEOPLE WHO ENJOY THE STORY, THERE IS COMMAND BATTLE STYLE, ANIMATION MODE AND VS TOURNAMENT MODE THAT LETS UP TO EIGHT PEOPLE PARTICIPATE. IT'S A SUPER GAME SYSTEM!

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THE STIRRING FIGHTING MATCHES THAT HAVE A LOT OF FIGHTING TECHNIQUES CAN BE PLAYED WITH SIMPLE BUTTON OPERATIONS! EVEN BEGINNERS CAN ENJOY THE FULL SCALE FIGHTING ACTIONS!

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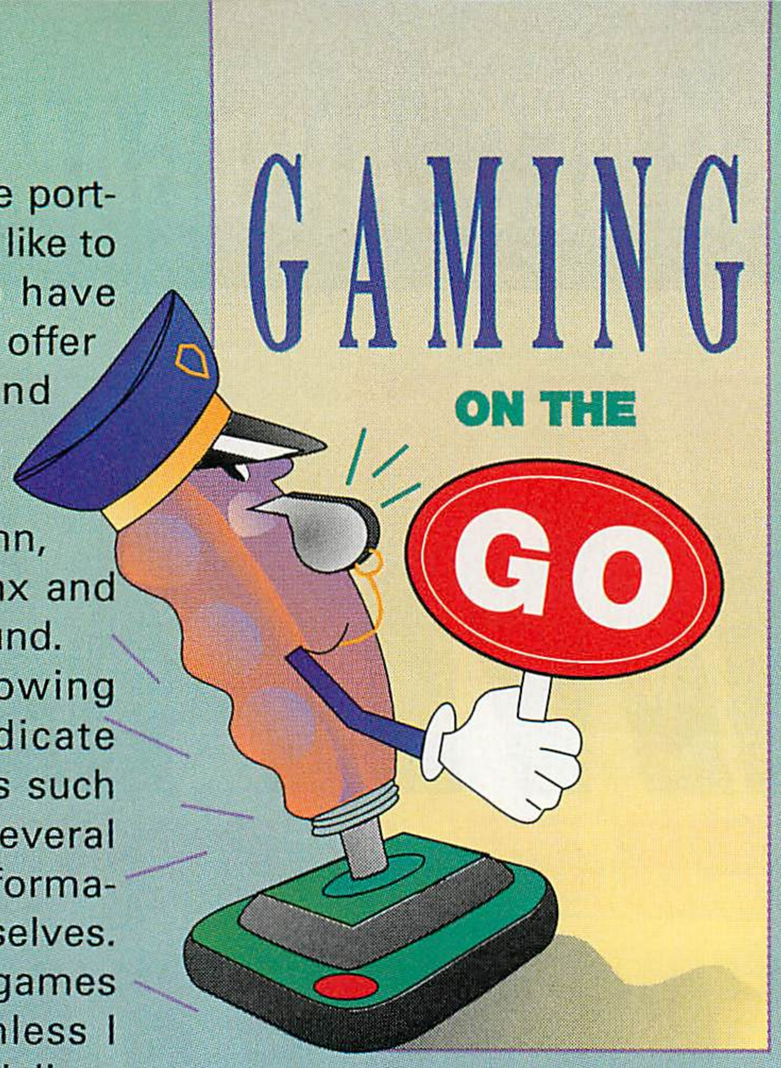
GAMING ON THE GO



BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

Before we open the doors to the portable playhouse this month, I'd like to thank the kind readers who have taken the time to write letters and offer their comments—both positive and negative—about *Gaming on the Go*. I have received quite a bit of feedback regarding the May 1992 column, which discussed the scarcity of Lynx and Game Gear titles with true stereo sound.

Though the format of the following reviews does not specifically indicate whether or not each game includes such a feature—an idea suggested by several readers—I do try to include this information in the text of the reviews themselves. That doesn't mean that all of the games covered have monaural sound unless I say otherwise, but if a game does deliver stereo music or sound effects, I'll almost always mention it.

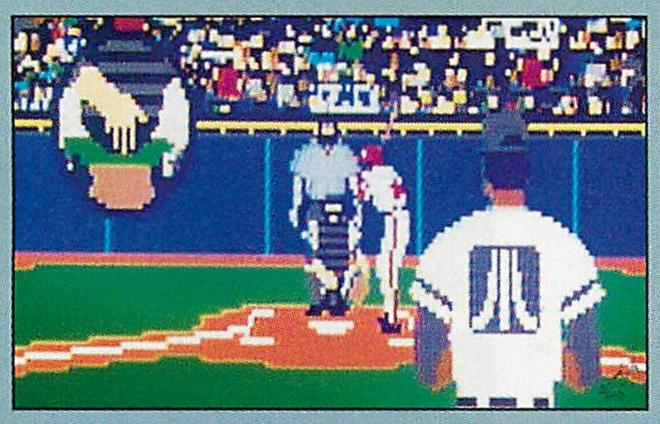
Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

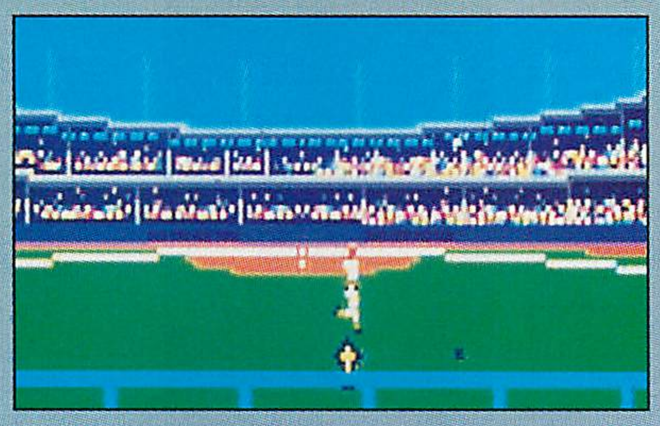
Baseball Heroes

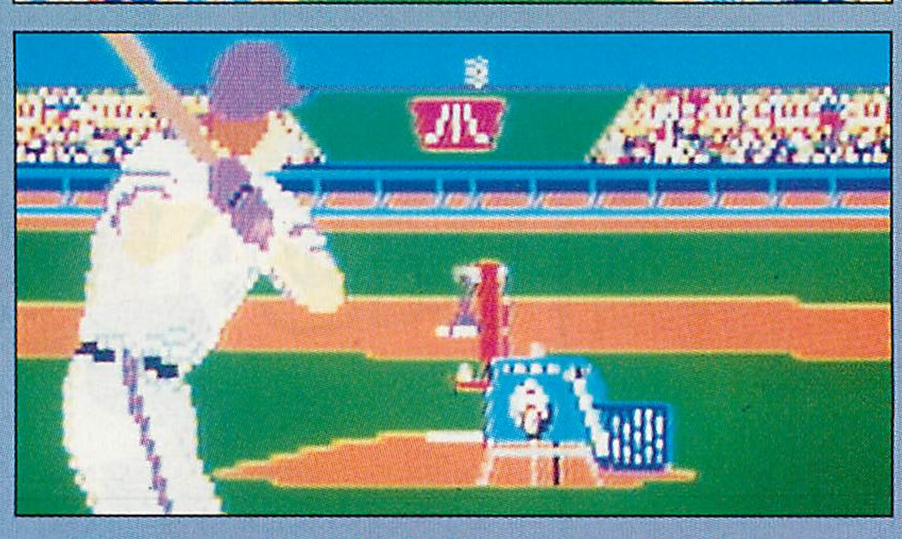
ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($34.99)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC			■							
GRAPHICS							■			
PLAYABILITY				■						
OVERALL				■						







Baseball Heroes for the Lynx: Was it worth the wait?

I've been playing Atari's *Checkered Flag* for over a year now. Every time I plug that auto-racing game card into my Lynx, I never fail to notice the huge billboards that appear on the side of the road during each race, most of which are plastered with ads for Lynx games. Many of these ads mention *Baseball Heroes*, a game which must have jumped back and forth between the beta-test stage and the back-to-the-drawing-board stage a dozen times.

As a fan of sports-related video games, I'm glad to see that *Baseball Heroes* has finally been called up from Triple-A Vaporville. As the only baseball title in a catalog that's conspicuously short on sports games in general, you can expect this one to sell—but I don't think there will be a lot of satisfied customers.

The problem with *Baseball Heroes* is that the game looks, sounds and feels dated. Not that it resembles earlier lackluster efforts like *Tournament Cyberball* or *Robo-Squash*; I dare say that some of the game's features are strongly reminiscent of the old granddaddy of cartridge-based baseball titles, Mattel's *Major League Baseball* for the Intellivision. Check out the garbled voice of the umpire as he coughs up the words "Yer out!" or the way the blocky players run in long shots of the field, looking for all the world as if their knees have been relocated to a position just above their ankles.

This one's not all bad, though, and the perspective of the pitching game (catcher's viewpoint on offense, second baseman's viewpoint on defense) is its strongest point. Indeed, the game is infinitely more entertaining when your opponent is up to bat. It's almost as if the pitching and fielding had been designed in a different era from the rest of the game, or at least after having taken a good look at the changing field perspectives and diving catches seen in LJN's *Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball* on Nintendo's game systems.

I wanted to like *Baseball Heroes*, and its baseball card-style player status screens and excellent pitcher animation deserve some praise. Unfortunately, poor play control, horrible audio and an overall slow pace have killed my enthusiasm for this one.

Atari Corp.
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
(708) 745-2000

Bonk's Adventure

HUDSON SOFT

For the Nintendo Game Boy ($29.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							■			
GRAPHICS								■		
PLAYABILITY									■	
OVERALL								■		

This is big news in the war of the videogame corporate mascots. The little caveman named Bonk has come to represent NEC's (and now TTI's) entire product line, and the games he's appeared in have been the flagship titles of the TurboGrafx-16 and Turbo Duo machines for a long time.

After a series of on-again/off-again decisions by Hudson Soft and its Japanese parent—which forced an eleventh-hour redesign of the company's elaborate booth at the last Consumer Electronics Show—Bonk is finally making his debut on a Nintendo system with the release of *Bonk's Adventure* for the Game Boy.

You can't fault Hudson's logic, for this is one fine game. Not only does it capture the prehistoric head-butting appeal of the original *Bonk's Adventure* on the TG-16,

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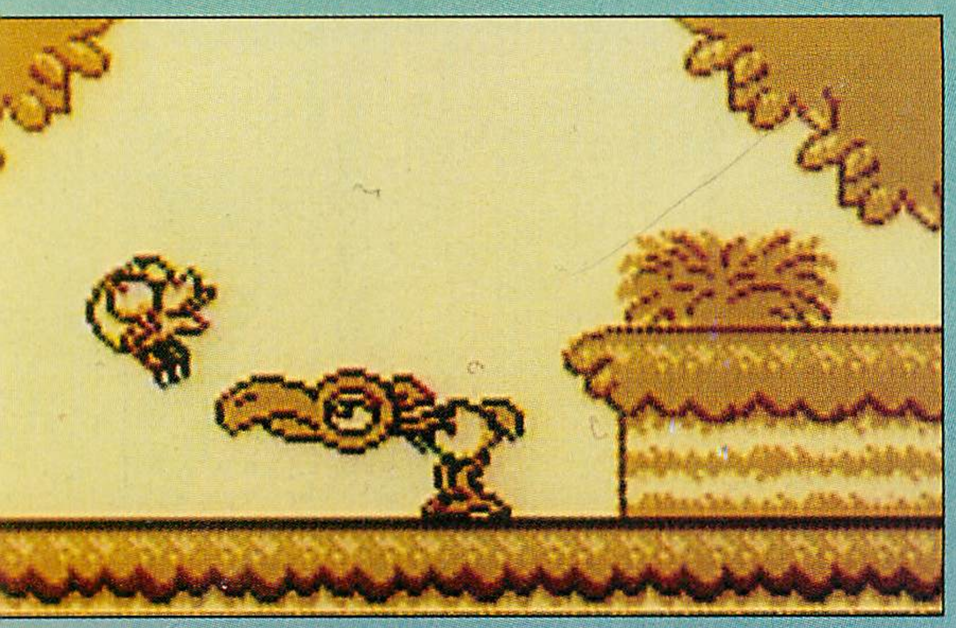
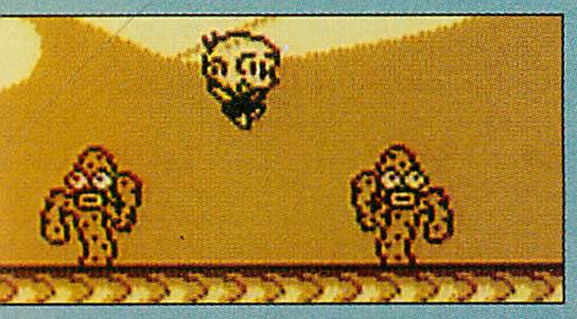
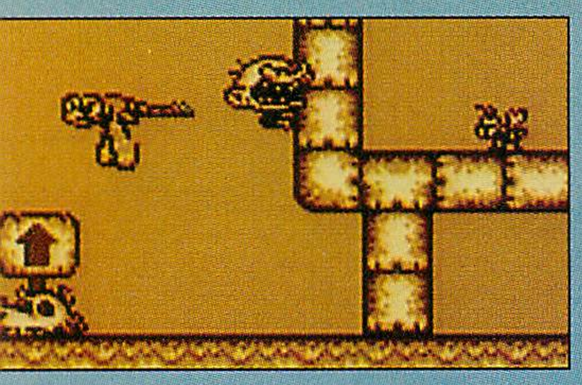






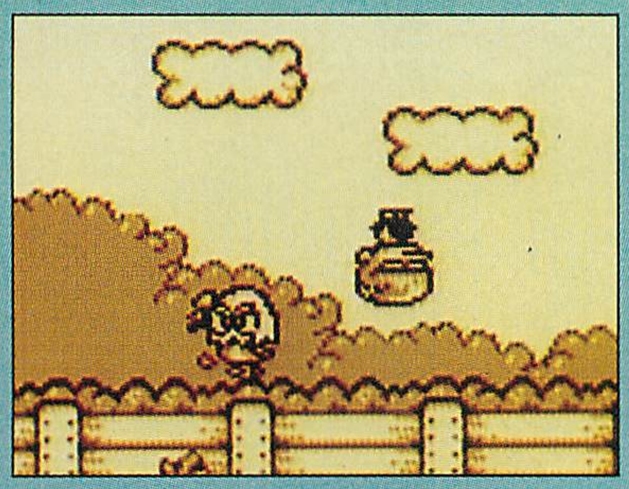
but it manages to supplement the character animation and play mechanics of that first game with the music, settings and bonus rounds of the sequel, *Bonk's Revenge*. Though it's strongly reminiscent of both titles, the layout of all of the game's areas is completely original, which makes it feel less like a carbon copy and more like Chapter 3 in the *Bonk* saga.

For those readers who still haven't grasped the significance of this release, let me put it another way. What if a third-party manufacturer released *Super Mario Bros. 3* for the Game Gear? Not just a quick knockoff of the game, but a great, playable version? The way it stands now, you have to buy a Sega machine if you want to play *Sonic the Hedgehog*...but TTI no longer has that type of exclusivity for its strongest character.

Personally, I think this release can only help the status of the TurboGrafx product line, perhaps the most underrated videogame machines of all time. There are an awful lot of Game Boy owners out there, many of whom are probably unfamiliar with Bonk or the TG-16. For now, though, you will still need Turbo hardware to play a Bonk game in color on the big screen—that is, unless Hudson Soft decides to go ahead and release the NES version of *Bonk's Adventure* that's said to be waiting in the wings!

Hudson Soft USA Inc.
400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 515
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 871-8895

Bonk's Adventure for the Game Boy? Believe it—it's here.



Predator 2

ARENA

For the Sega Game Gear ($39.95)

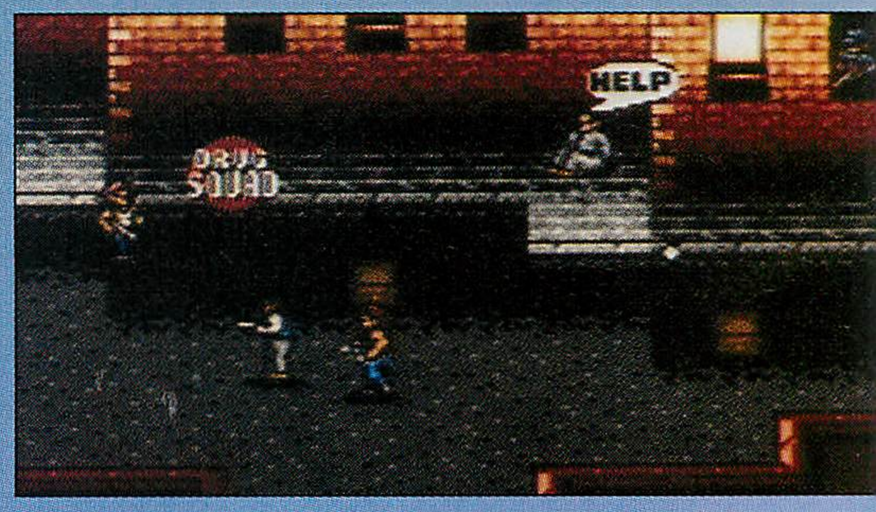
SOUND/MUSIC	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10
GRAPHICS	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10
PLAYABILITY	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10
OVERALL	1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10

Arena's *Predator 2* for the Genesis impressed gamers with a subtle variation on the *Commando/Contra* theme that featured good audiovisual effects. Moving through gritty streets and rooftops with as many guns and grenades as you could carry, your mission was to blow away drug dealers and rescue their hostages before the alien Predator could draw a bead on the innocents from his hidden perch above all the action. If you or anyone else fell into his infrared sights, your guts would explode and you'd perish in agony.

The above is a note-perfect description of Arena's Game Gear interpretation of the game, too—but the portable 8-bit *Predator 2* isn't nearly as entertaining as its full-sized counterpart. Practically every subtlety of the Genesis game, from the digitized "Yeah!" of a freed hostage to the occasional foreground silhouette of the title character lurking ominously over the playfield, has been left on the cutting room floor, so to speak. This Porta-*Predator* is a watered down shoot-'em-up that would come across as such even if it hadn't appeared in the shadow of an earlier, more powerful version of the game.

Not that there's no challenge involved; there are still plenty of gun-wielding goons taking potshots at you at every turn. But the confines of the small screen

Guns, hostages, drug dealers, vicious aliens—that's *Predator 2* for the Game Gear.



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UAB

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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

(coupled with one-directional "forced scrolling" scenery) make this one seem more like shooting ducks in a barrel—and you're the duck.

The graphics and sounds are good, but not great. The resolution of the characters is a bit too fine for the Game Gear screen to cleanly reproduce, and most of the game's text is smeared into unintentional rainbow hues.

This is nothing like what I had expected *Predator 2* to look like on Sega's portable machine, particularly after seeing reasonably faithful Game Gear versions of similar Genesis titles like Virgin's *Terminator* and Arena's own *Alien*³. Still, it's a fairly entertaining game for shoot-'em-up fans, one that'll make a better impression on your thumb than on your cerebellum.

Arena Entertainment
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 624-8888

Megalit

TAKARA
For the Nintendo Game Boy
($29.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

A strategy contest in the tradition of Game Boy puzzlers like *Kwirk* and *Catrap*, Takara's *Megalit* is a very basic block-pushing game for those who prefer brain exercises to control-pad workouts. Your character, alternately referred to as "the hero" and "the brave man" in the instruction manual, is a tiny blob with an expressionless face.

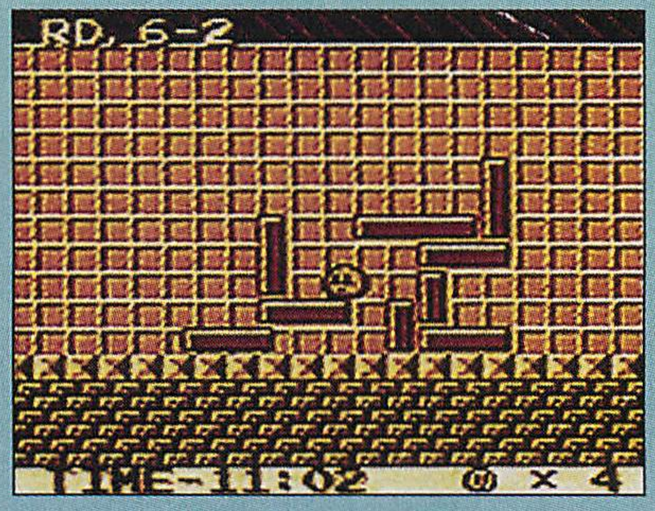
The task at hand appears to be a simple one. You must size up a pile of long and short blocks and figure out a way to disassemble the pile so that each of the blocks will drop to the ground. There are a few restrictions, though: In order to push or pull any block, you must be positioned directly beside it (not above or below it), and, if a block falls too far, it will shatter and disqualify that round.

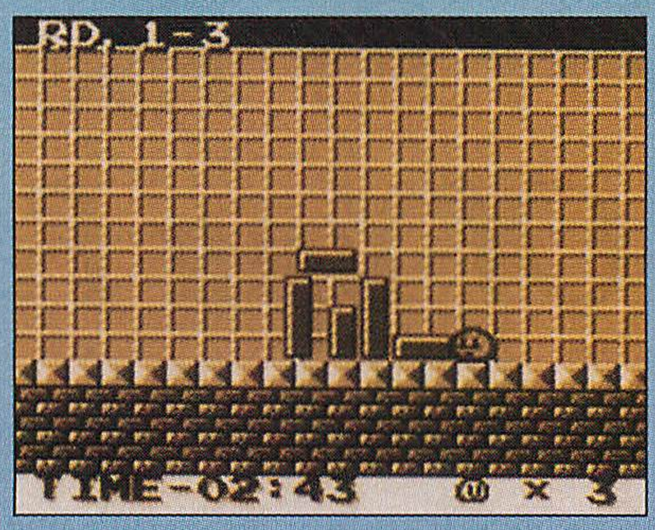
Hampered by a slow pace and an odd control scheme, *Megalit* never really gets off the ground. One of the game's most unwelcome features becomes apparent fairly early in both the "practice" and "quest" modes: It's possible to shift the blocks in such minuscule increments that an entire superstructure of pieces can be held up by balancing on the edge of a single block.

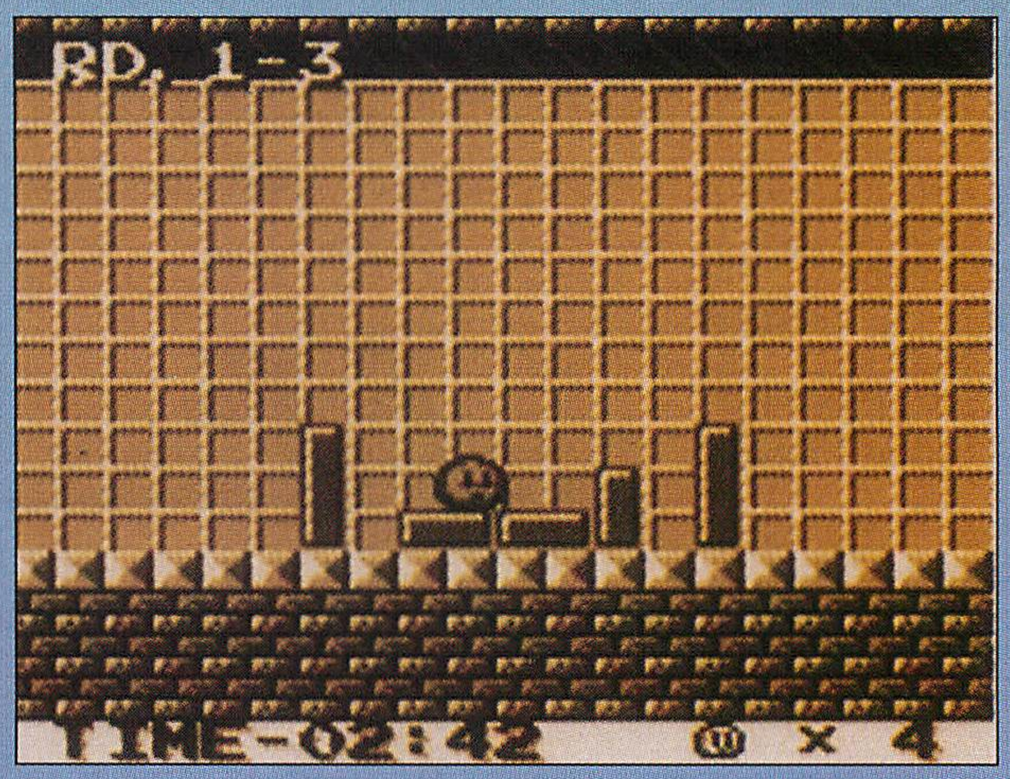
It doesn't bother me that conventional physics are being ignored, I just don't like the fact that the majority of the puzzles can only be solved by using some sort of trick that involves moving certain pieces a distance equal to half the width of one block. Even though this feature is clearly explained in the documentation, it interferes with the purity of the game's strategic elements so much so that it feels like cheating.

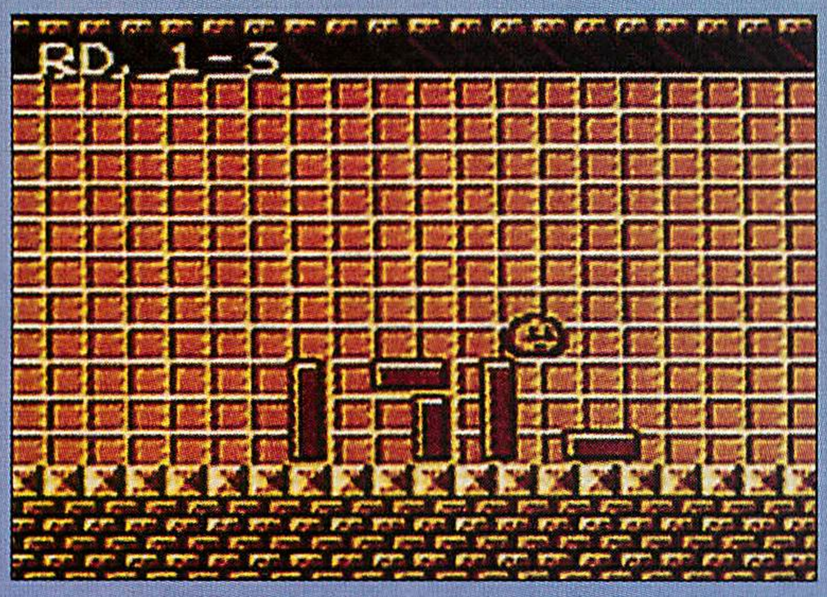
It's funny—the "cute" graphics and sounds are tailor-made for a younger audience, but the plodding brain work and high difficulty of some of the puzzles makes the game play more suitable for an older crowd. *Megalit* may find an audience somewhere between the two, but it would be a stronger game if it catered exclusively to one or the other.

Takara USA Corp.
230 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10001
(212) 689-1212







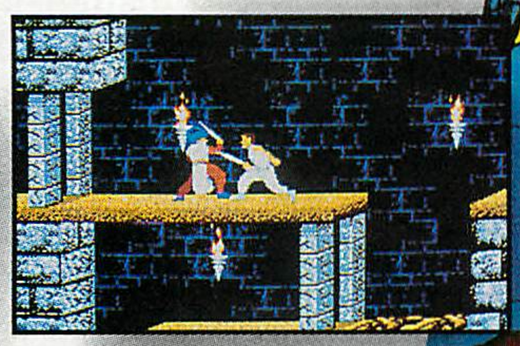


Pull the blocks to solve the puzzle and break the spell of *Megalit*, Takara's Game Boy debut.

Special thanks to Kelly Akers of Asmik Corporation for her kind assistance in the preparation of this edition of *Gaming on the Go*. We'll get off of the Lynx sports games next month, find out what's new on the Game Boy and hopefully give you a detailed look at the Game Gear version of *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*.

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VideoGames & Computer Entertainment, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to user name VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the public forum.

FUN ON THE GO!



Coming Jan. '93!

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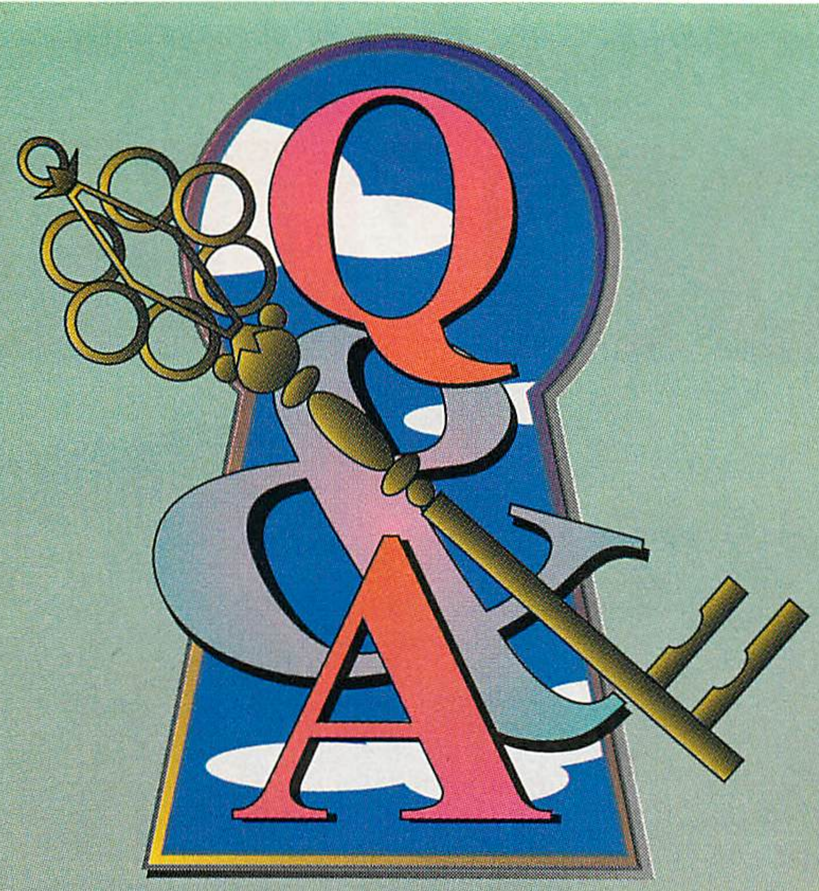
CIRCLE #135 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



If all those great *Q & A* letters keep coming in at the rate they are, VG&CE is going to have to let one of its editors go just so we can use his office for mail storage space. Your response has been great!

I recently got a glimpse of the design of the Super NES control deck, and, compared to the design of the Japanese Super Famicom, I think it's the ugliest thing I've ever seen in my life. I was wondering if you know of a way that I could purchase the Super Famicom and somehow find an adapter in the U.S. that would allow me to play the Super NES games on it.

—Robbie Brown
Grand Island, New York

While the circuitry in the SNES and Super Famicom is essentially the same, the plastic cartridges that hold the game circuit boards are different in design. As for the look of the systems, the VG&CE staff is pretty much divided on which one looks better. To date, almost none, if any, of the Super Famicom fans who've written to us have expressed anywhere near as negative an opinion of the Super NES as yours.

If you really want to play SNES games but can't stand the system's looks and don't want to try to decorate or hide the console, go through this magazine and start calling the cartridge warehouses; they sell converters in Europe. Or, for any other readers with this problem who might live in a city with a large Japanese-American population (e.g., San Francisco or Los Angeles), try one of the many electronics shops located there.

I would like to ask some questions and spread some rumors. What processor does the Neo•Geo have? Is it a 24-bit or a 32-bit CPU?

Also, I've been doing some research on old video-game systems, and I came across the Timex Sinclair. Is it a 2-, 4- or 8-bit system, and how many megahertz does it run at? How many colors does it have, and how many can be displayed simultaneously? Why did it fail as a computer—what was wrong with it?

On a different topic, I've heard rumors that NEC could be making a 32-bit CD system.

—Jaimie Sirovich
West Nyack, New York

The Neo•Geo is advertised as a 24-bit machine, but, in fact, it is a 16-bit processor coupled with a second 8-bit chip. Keep in mind that game systems should be purchased not on the basis of their technical specs, but on how well they play and the quantity and quality of existing games, as well as the potential for future games.

The Timex Sinclair was an 8-bit computer running at four MHz. It had a 16-color palette and could display all of them simultaneously. It failed commercially because it was released when the Apple II series was approaching its peak and IBM was beginning to market its PC line. It was not as flexible or powerful as the Commodore VIC 20, which was one of the smallest in horsepower of the commercially successful computers. The Timex Sinclair didn't stand a chance, even at its $99 price. Rather than invest additional millions into poor-selling product, Timex let the computer vanish. The Sinclair still has a small, but loyal, following, and anyone interested in acquiring a Sinclair or accessories should write: Sunset Electronics, 2254 Taraval St., San Francisco, CA 94116; or call (415) 665-8330.

An NEC 32-bit system? As reported in our October issue, Hudson of Japan celebrated its 20th anniversary with the unveiling of the HuC62. It was apparently too early in development for it to even refer to it as a "game" system. Nintendo, meanwhile, announced that it would not be producing a 16-bit CD-ROM player for the SNES. Instead, it will be going straight to a 32-bit CD-ROM unit, which will work with the 16-bit SNES. It's anybody's guess if Sega will have an increased advantage because of this extra time.

I've seen questions about the batteries in cartridges come up many times before, but there is one question I have yet to see: Will the batteries eventually begin to corrode and ruin the cartridge? As a video-game collector, this worries me quite a bit! I have an old Atari *Pong* that shows what damaged batteries can do.

On the same note, is there a reason batteries in game cartridges aren't built to be automatically recharged while the game system is on?

Before I sign off, I just want to mention that both the Atari 2600 and Vectrex had games with speech (*Quadron* and *Spike*, respectively), so get that Game Boy talking!

—Russ Perry Jr.
Omro, Wisconsin

We asked both Sega and Nintendo about their batteries. Nintendo says that the batteries are guaranteed to last three years (in both the NES and SNES), but field tests show that they can last up to seven. Sega batteries will last about five years. In either case, the batteries will not corrode, since they are essentially the same batteries used in watches. Also, both manufacturers decided against rechargeable batteries, figuring the necessary price increase would drive away too many potential customers.

Although it can handle far more complex games than its graphics suggest, the Game Boy is one of the more difficult systems to program speech into. If you don't mind a limited vocabulary, check out *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: Back From the Sewers* (Konami) and *The Simpsons: Escape From Camp Deadly* (Acclaim).

I have many questions that need answering, but I will limit them to a few.

1. Since the Super NES has been in existence, Nintendo has been creating sequels (such as *Zelda 3* and *Castlevania IV*) for it. Will Nintendo continue to make sequels for the NES, or will we have to purchase an SNES to play our favorite games?

2. Don Bluth has created many arcade legends, such as the *Dragon's Lair* series and *Space Ace*. Does he have any plans to continue the adventures of *Space Ace*, and does he have different games currently in the works?

—James Fountain
Barstow, California

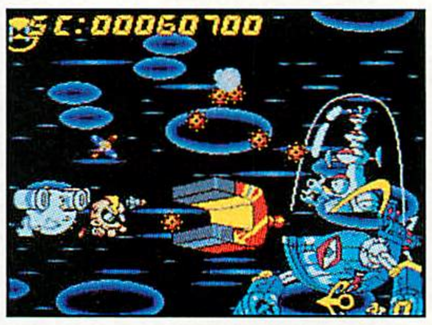
Reluctant to lower the prices on 8-bit cartridges for their licensees, Nintendo seems intent on letting the NES vanish; but not all of the licensees are. Available and upcoming sequels for the NES in-

EVERYONE IS REALLY EXCITED ABOUT ZONK.

[WELL, EVERYONE EXCEPT OUR PHOTOGRAPHERS.]

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then you'd better be a speed reader to catch this guy. Zonk is his name, and Air Zonk is his game. He's been sent into the future by that hard headed superhero Bonk to do battle with hoards of mutated cyber robots.

In this futuristic 16-bit setting, you'll soar through five different levels of intense action. And if you're feeling lonely, team up with one of Zonk's bizarre cyborgian friends to help you in your adventure. Each friend has different weapons and abilities that will come in handy. (And if nothing else, they're all really goofy looking.)



So focus your efforts on getting Air Zonk. He's the picture perfect video game hero. Well, almost.

Air Zonk™

TURBO 16 GRAFX™

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CIRCLE #136 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

clude Hudson Soft's *Adventure Island 3*, Capcom's *MegaMan 5* and Enix's *Dragon Warrior IV*. *Castlevania IV*, by the way, is by Konami, which recently published *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project* for the NES.

As for Don Bluth games, the classic *Dragon's Lair* will soon be coming to the SNES (Data East), and the British firm Oxford International has begun to convert *Space Ace* to the SNES. Scheduled for the IBM PC and possibly other formats are three original games: *Maelstrom*, a science-fiction strategy/arcade game developed by Pass Systems and distributed through Merit; *Tungsten*, a multilevel maze-arcade game similar to the classic *Lode Runner*; and *Sea Beast*, which was intended originally to be a coin-op project. Also in the works are *Dragon's Lair II* for the Genesis (ReadySoft) and *Dragon's Lair III* for the IBM PC, which is composed of unused footage from the first two adventures of Dirk the Daring.

Regarding future coin-ops, with the exception of *Street Fighter II* and its clones, arcade revenues are way down, and, considering the resources required to produce a good laser-disc coin-op, Don Bluth Multimedia is watching the market to see if it will justify another stand-alone undertaking.

Even if the market rebounds, big money coin-op projects are doubtful. As this went to press, Don Bluth had massive staff cutbacks at its American offices following the disappointing performance of the movie *Rock-a-Doodle*.

I've hooked up my NES, Super NES and Genesis to the same television at once. Some of my friends said that this can cause some damage to the systems or my television. Is this true?

—Pawel Opalinski
Brooklyn, New York

Well Pawel, you and your friends can breathe a sigh of relief. Hooking up multiple videogame systems to one television set won't damage your TV. That is, assuming that you're not splicing wires into your television.

I own a Sega Genesis, and I enjoy it. However, I have a few questions:

1. Is there any way to get stereo out of the ports on the rear, and, if there is, where would I get the schematic?

2. If there is no way to access stereo from the rear, would the CD-ROM have stereo and video output?

Your help would be most appreciated.

—Andy Lambrecht
Hastings, Nebraska

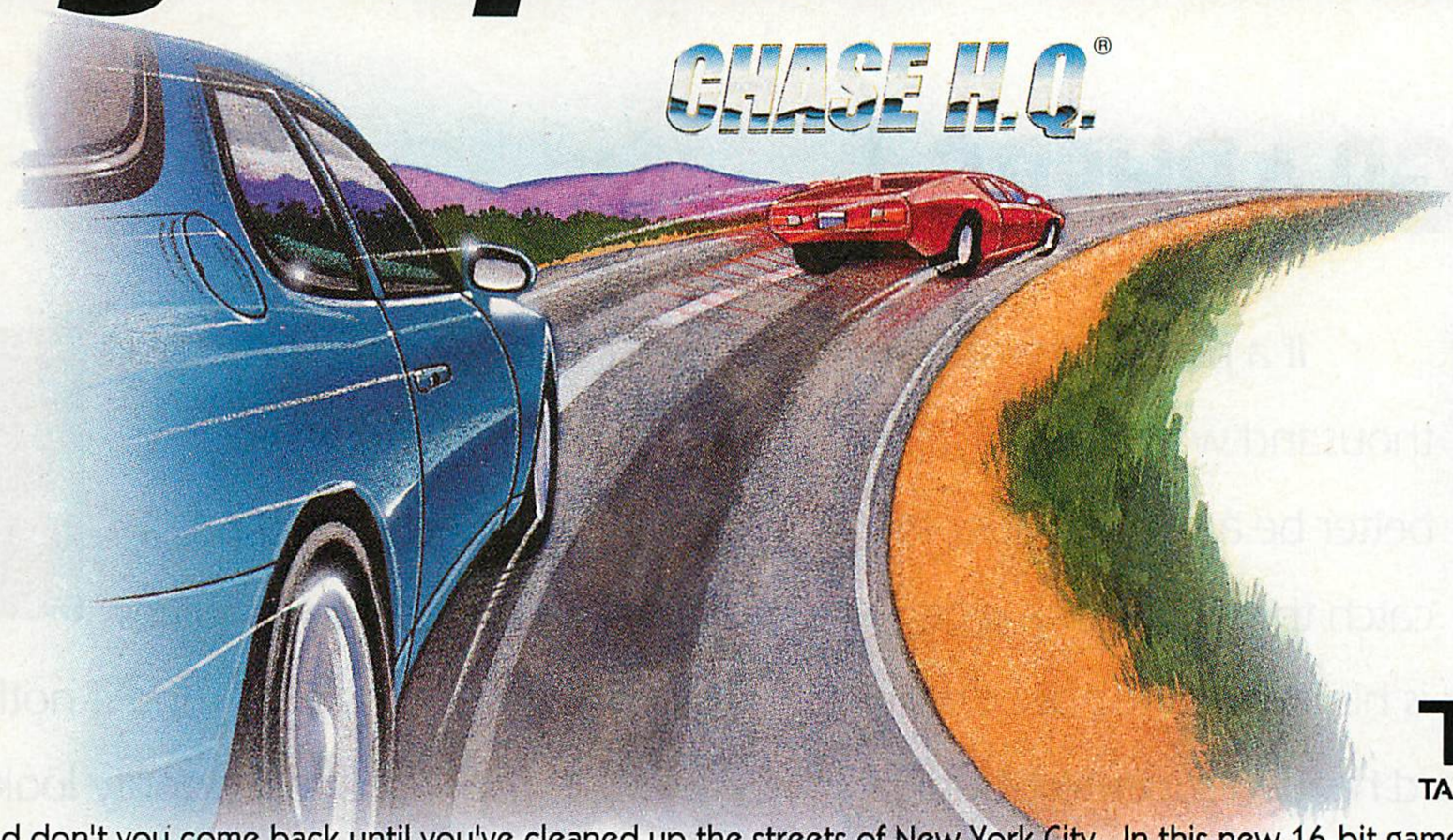
The Genesis does have stereo output, but most game manufacturers don't bother to use it. Check out *Batman* and the *Sonic* games for the best use of stereo. You don't need any complicated schematics to get the sound, just get a headphone jack that branches into two output plugs and hook it up to the stereo. The headphone jack at the front of the Genesis must be used to get stereo output. The adapter should be available at any electronics shop (e.g., Radio Shack).

To answer your second question, the Sega CD does have stereo capabilities and uses an RCA-type left and right audio jack cable.

I'm painfully unaware of videogame systems' capacities, so please bear with me on these questions. I just received a TurboGrafx-16 system with the CD-ROM, and I learned that the system can handle up to eight megabits. Is that with or with-

High Speed Chase.

CHASE H.Q.®



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Hit the road, Jack, and don't you come back until you've cleaned up the streets of New York City. In this new 16-bit game from Taito, slide behind the wheel of your own supercharged Chase 928S4 patrol car. Race through the streets of New York City until you locate the fugitive, and then ram his car so you can make your arrest. If you complete your missions successfully, you'll receive a special commendation. But if you fail, the only way you'll be cleaning up the streets is with a broom and a dustpan.

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out the CD-ROM? This bears on my next question, which is about the PC Engine Super CD-ROM game *Macross 2036*. I've been playing this game on my TG-16 and have encountered a system lag and inability to access the options at the beginning of the game. Is the game responsible for this? I have a version 2.0 System Card for my CD-ROM, while I suspect this game is intended to be played with the new, version 3.0 Super System Card. Is it my hardware that is unable to handle the game, or is my new CD game damaged in some way?

Also, I've noticed in some of my graphic design magazines that there are designers and illustrators who have "crossed over" in terms of careers and have had a hand in designing video games. May I ask how these professionals started in this business?

—Nathan Wong
San Dimas, California

Macross 2036 is one of the very few bicompatible games, meaning it can run on the standard TG-16 CD-ROM (version 2.0) as well as on the new Super System Card (version 3.0).

As for not accessing the menu option "unrivaled," this is actually the game's way of teasing you.

Selecting unrivaled will make you invincible, and you can gain this advantage with the following Easter egg: I, R, L, II, U, D, II, I, II, I. Thanks to Victor Ireland for that ticket to long games.

With the percentage of graphic design now done on computers, it's natural for the crossover to video games to be happening. Ideally, these designers are selected on the strength of their previous work and portfolios, which the game manufacturers have received through industry submission practices. More likely, however, they get their work like most everyone else in the video-game world—knowing the right people at the right time.

My brother received the IBM PC game *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge*, by LucasArts. When I attempted running it according to the manual's instructions, this is what I got on the screen:

A> Monkey2
General Failure error reading drive A
Abort, Retry, Fail? f
invalid drive specification
Bad command or file name

The same thing occurred when I purchased *The Simpsons' Arcade Game*. Both games have "1.4" on the little sticker in the lower left-hand corner. The lady at Radio Shack said that was the problem, but I don't believe her. Can my computer handle these games? It's a Tandy 1000 TL3 with a hard disk drive, VGM 200/300 monitor and a built-in VGA graphics adapter.

Help me, guys! I'm at the end of my rope, and I'm tired of returning all of my good games.

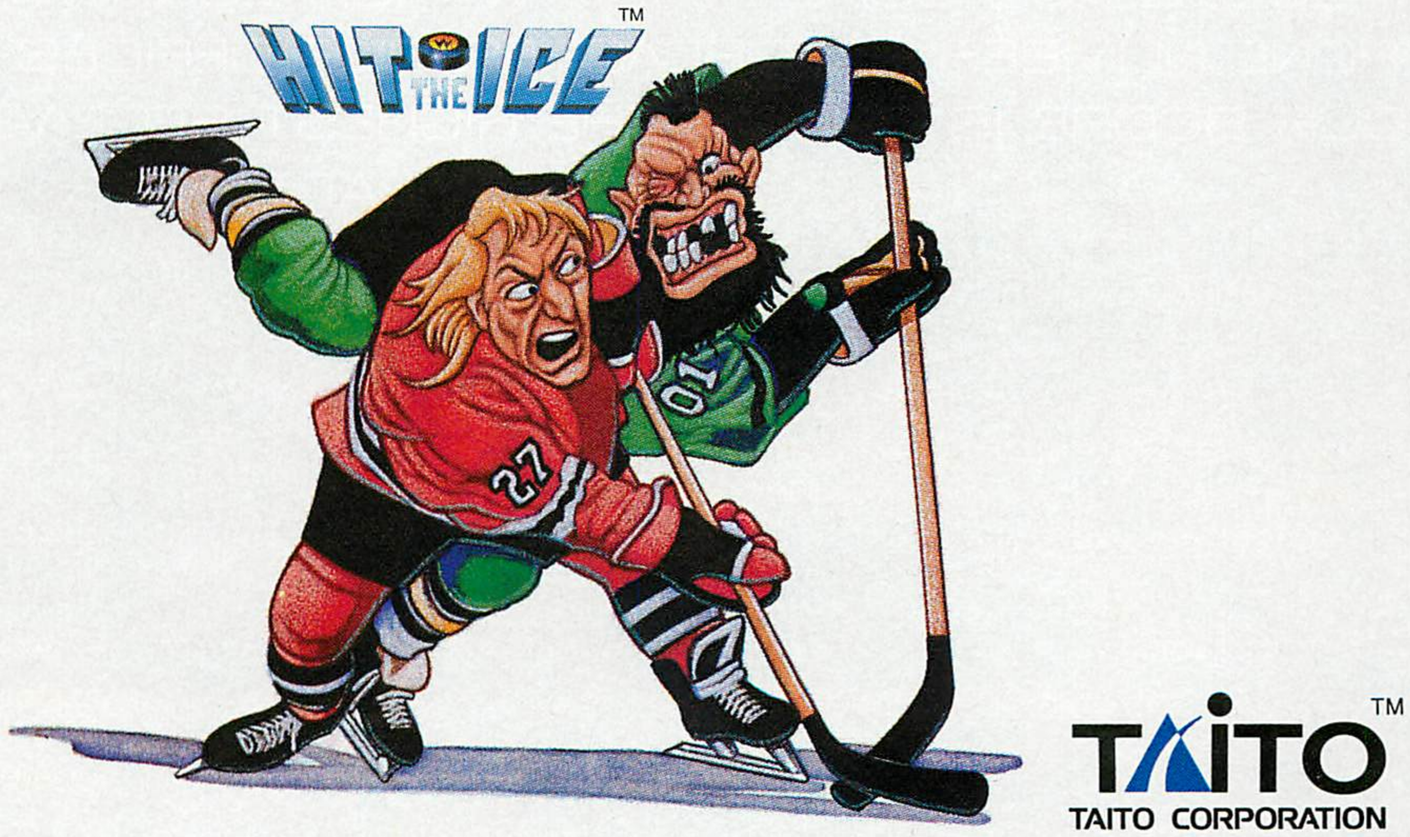
—Kelly Tindall
Marsden, Saskatchewan

The woman at Radio Shack was not lying to you. Your problem is that you do not have the high-density disk drive required to play the 1.44-megabyte 3.5" high-density disks. Don't despair, however. Konami will prepare special versions of the *Simpsons' Arcade Game* for your type of disk drive. Call (708) 215-5100, and ask for technical support.

You are out of luck, however, with *LeChuck's Revenge*. If you want to play it, you're going to have to get a high-density floppy drive.

Please send any questions to:
VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: Q & A
9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

HighSpeedCollision.



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Hold on to your bicuspids, because Taito has a smashing new 16-bit hockey game for your TurboGrafx-16. First, assemble your team from our all-star lineup of free agents. (Good looks, bathing, and teeth are optional.) Then hit the ice, where you can take your team to the championship tournament or face off in a penalty shot contest. It's a grueling, tooth-jarring battle, so may the best team win. And may the losers have dental insurance.

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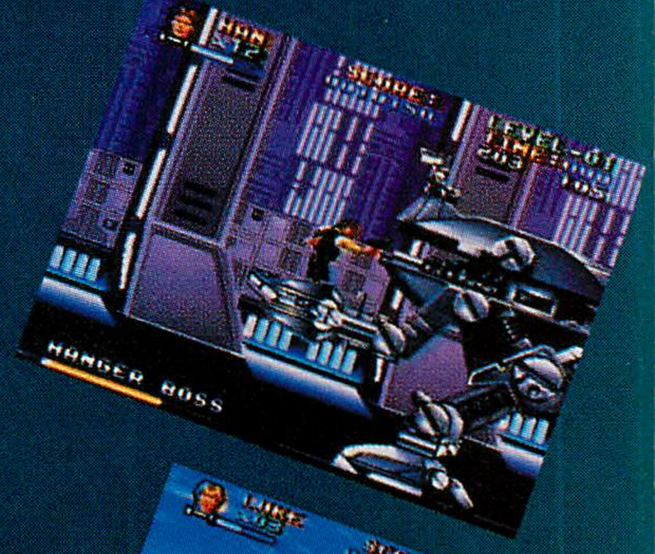
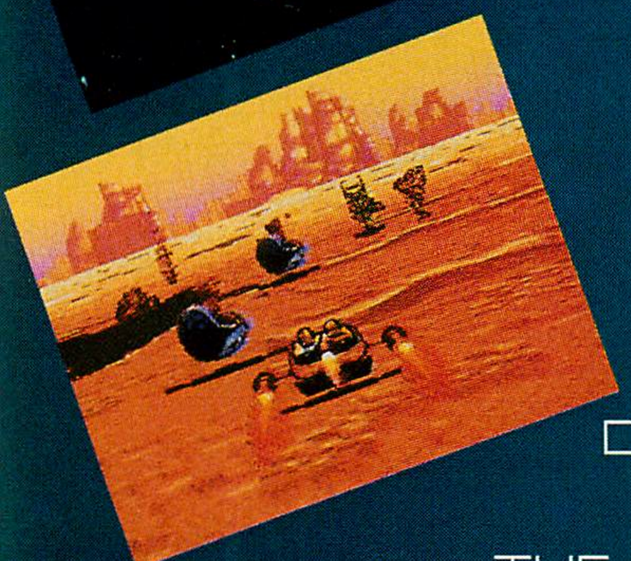
TO PUT YOUR JEDI SKILLS TO THE TEST IN OUR

SUPER STAR WARS™

CONTEST





USE
THE FORCE
TO STRIKE DOWN THE LAVA
PIT MONSTER, BLAST MOS EISLEY
DERELICTS AND SEND TIE FIGHTERS SPINNING
INTO SPACE! RACK UP BIG POINTS IN
THE NEWEST AND COOLEST GAME FOR YOUR SNES,
SUPER STAR WARS!
JUST SEND US A PICTURE OR A VHS VIDEOTAPE THAT SHOWS YOUR HIGH SCORE FOR *SUPER STAR WARS*, ALONG WITH YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER. IF IT REACHES OUR OFFICES BY JANUARY 15, 1993, AND IF YOUR SCORE IS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RECEIVED, YOU CAN WIN ONE OF THESE GREAT PRIZES:

GRAND PRIZE

The winner with the highest score will get a one-of-a-kind, professionally framed original piece of full-color *Super Star Wars* artwork by Peter Chan, the talented LucasArts creator who served as the lead artist on the Super NES game!

FIRST PRIZE

Players who submit the next three highest scores will each receive a boxed set of the three hottest videos ever made—the *Star Wars Trilogy*, including the original *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. The videos come in their very own *Star Wars Trilogy* case.

SECOND PRIZE

The next five high scores will earn an incredible holographic wristwatch that bears a 3-D image of Yoda, the revered Jedi master. With this exciting timepiece strapped to your wrist, you'll always be safe from the Dark Side!

THIRD PRIZE

The next ten top scores will get an official, original, 100% cotton *Star Wars* T-shirt.

Send your photos or videotapes, along with your name, address, and phone number *before January 15, 1993*, to:

Super Star Wars Contest
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Good luck—and remember, the Force will be with you…always!

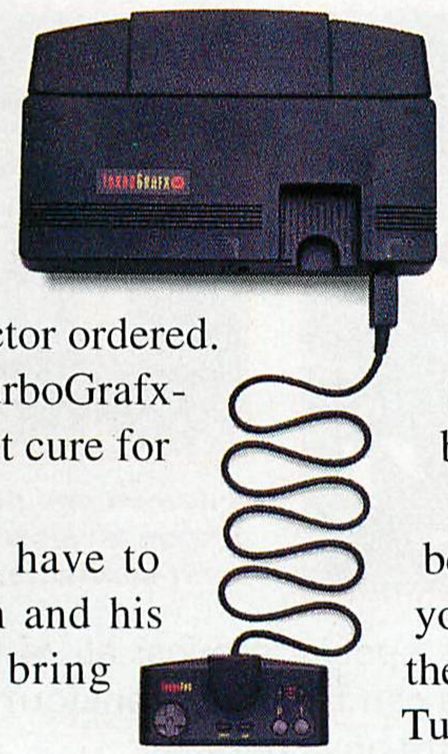
All entries must be received by January 15, 1993. Illegible or incomplete entries are not eligible. LucasArts, JVC, VG&CE and LFP Inc. are not responsible for late, lost or misdirected mail. Employees of LucasArts, JVC, VG&CE, LFP Inc., and of their subsidiaries and affiliates are not eligible to win, nor are members of their immediate families. All materials submitted, including without limitation photographs, videotapes and any other mail received at the address shown above become the property of VG&CE and LFP Inc. and will not be returned.

The use of any "add-on" devices that alter the default parameters of LucasArts/JVC's copyrighted *Super Star Wars* Super NES game is strictly prohibited for the purposes of this contest. VG&CE and LFP Inc. reserve the right to disqualify high scores that have benefited from the use of any such devices, including but not limited to, the Action Replay Pro cartridge by Datel Electronics.

Contest results will be determined by the VG&CE judges, who shall have complete and sole discretion in selecting the winners. All decisions are final. Any and all taxes on prizes are the sole responsibility of the winners. Winners release LucasArts, JVC, VG&CE and LFP Inc. and their subsidiaries and affiliates of any and all obligation in all matters relating to the ownership or use of the prizes.

Winners grant permission for use of their names, addresses and photos for advertising, promotional or editorial purposes without additional compensation. Contest void where prohibited by law, and otherwise governed by California law.

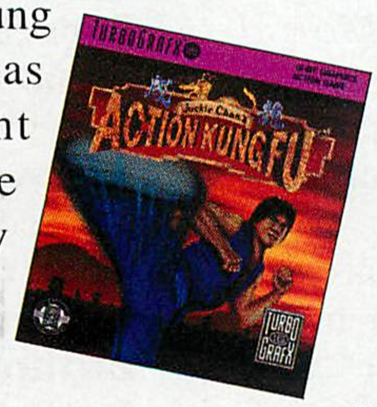
TAKE THREE OF THESE AND CALL YOUR FRIENDS IN THE MORNING.



We've got just what the doctor ordered. These three games for your TurboGrafx-16 game system are the perfect cure for the video game blues.

In "Neutopia II", you'll have to battle the Evil Demon Dirth and his band of monsters in order to bring peace back to the land of Neutopia.

"Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu" challenges your skills as you chop, kick, and fight scores of stupid fu's. Or take on the bad guys in "New Adventure Island", where you'll have to avoid enemies and obstacles on a South Seas island if you want to rescue your bride-to-be.



And while these games can be addicting, they won't harm your system. That's because they were made for play on the TurboGrafx-16 game system, the leader of the 16 bit revolution.

And TurboGrafx is at its lowest price ever, so make an appointment to get one soon. But hurry. This stuff is spreading fast, and your friends might catch it before you do.

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DESTINATION ARCADIA

COMBATING MORTAL KOMBAT

BY DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ

As anyone who reads VG&CE knows, the gap between arcade machines and home video-game consoles is closing up at a rate that's surprising most industry experts. Only one company, Midway, does not have a home software division. Without those potential home video-game sales, every cent spent in development has to translate into quarters. The software must be *more* than eye-catching.

When Midway decided to do a punch-and-kick game, it had to be different. For Williams, the success of *Narc* showed it had to be digitized and graphically appealing as well.

What went into making *Mortal Kombat*? VG&CE met with *Mortal Kombat*'s graphic designer, John Tobias, and programmer, Ed Boon, to learn the stories behind the people behind the screen and, most importantly, to learn the game's secret moves.

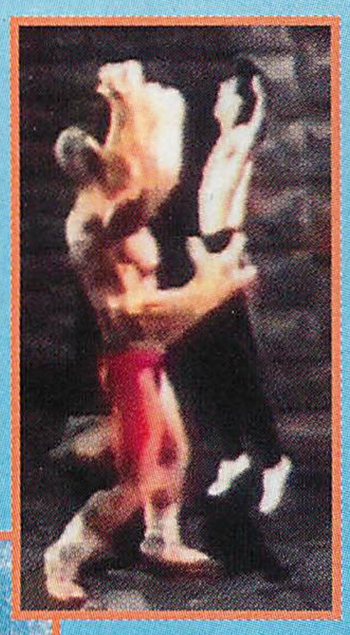
Tobias, a former artist for NOW Comics who also wrote and drew the comic, provided VG&CE with some exclusive early artwork. Keep in mind that these are only color guides, not the finished product that will be in the high-quality prestige comic format.

Mortal Kombat will not be sold in stores, but you may purchase a copy by sending $3 to:

Mortal Kombat Comic
1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 414
Chicago, IL 60613

THE STORY

The tournament is an ancient practice of Shaolin monks. One day, the demon Shang Tsung entered the tournament and, upon winning it, turned it into his feeding ground for souls. All those entering the tournament are unaware that they fight for more than their lives, that is, except for Liu Kang and Raiden.



Each battle is a best-two-out-of-three match, with the winner continuing and the loser shelling out another quarter to stay in. In the single-player game, players will fight all of the characters, and then endure matches in which they face two characters every round. Surviving that, they go up against Goro—half-man, half-dragon.

If they survived the four-armed beast, they go up against Shang Tsung.

A demon and half-dragon await tournament survivors.

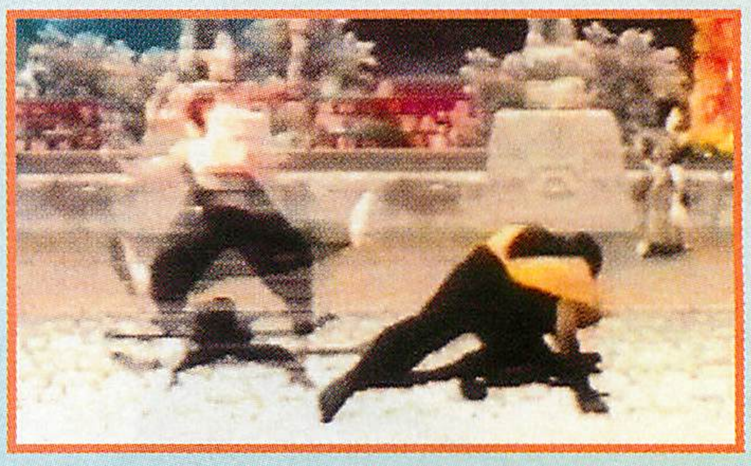
His special moves: all of them, for he can instantly transform himself into any character.

Players control their *Mortal Kombat* characters with a joystick and five buttons: high punch, low punch, high kick, low kick and block.

In addition to the standard secret moves, each character has a special "fatality maneuver" that can be attempted when "finish him off!" appears. This issue, we give you Liu Kang's. Look for more fatal moves in an upcoming *Destination Arcadia* installment.

What follows is a list of combination moves available to all players and a detailed description of the characters, complete with who played them and their secret moves.

Moves available to all: Foot sweep: back & low kick



The common "secret" moves can be the most useful of all.

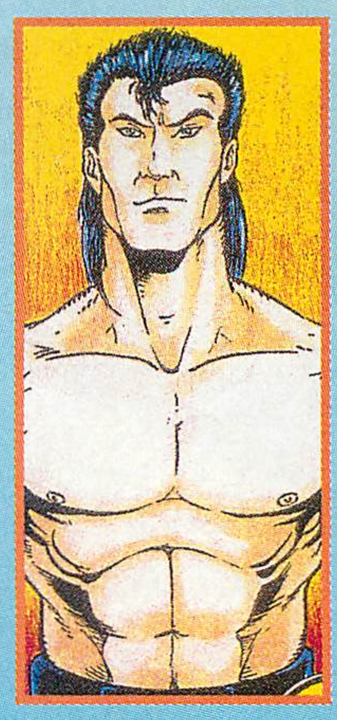
Uppercut: down & any punch

Roundhouse kick: back & then high kick

Throw: (must be close) forward & low punch

THE CAST

LIU KANG



Liu Kang may know what Shang Tsung is, but this is not a contest of knowledge.

Age: 24
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 185
Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown
Legal Status: Citizen of the People's Republic of China
Known Relatives: Lee Kang, father (deceased); Lin Kang, mother (deceased); Chow Kang, brother (whereabouts unknown)
Birthplace: Hunan Province, China
Background/reason for entering the tournament: A Hunan monk, Liu

TurboGrafx-CD Super System Card

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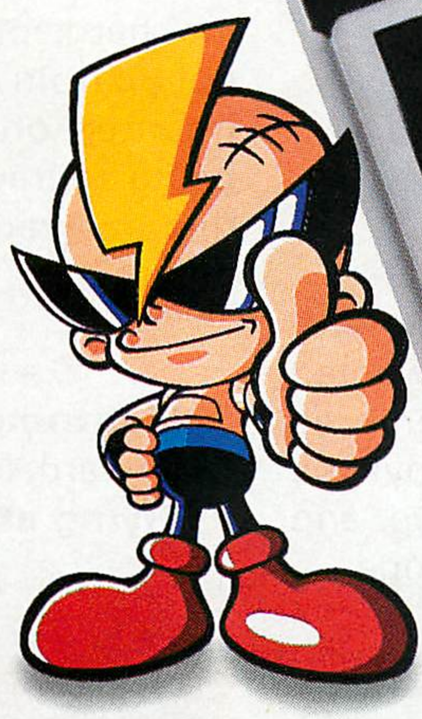

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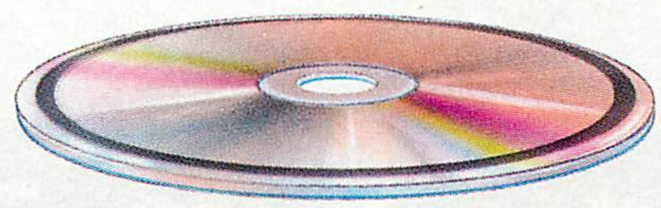

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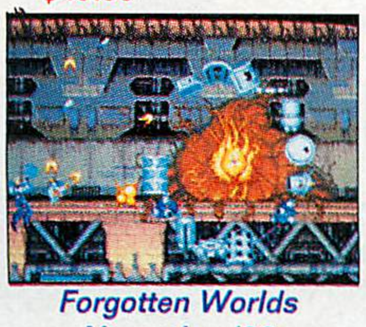

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is the only one besides Raiden who knows Shang Tsung is a demon, and he's trying to win back the tournament from his evil influence.

Actor: Hosung Pak

Hosung played Rafael in the *TMNT* movies. Also, during a break in the filming of *Mortal Kombat*, he began doing cartwheels, which became the basis of Liu Kang's fatal move.

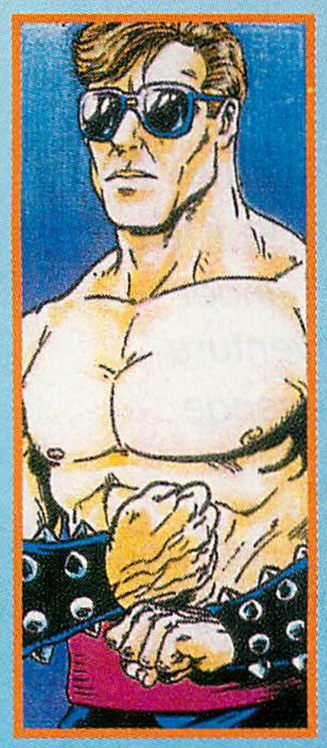
Special Moves

Fireball: forward, forward, high punch

Flying kick: forward, forward, high kick

Fatality: spin the joystick toward opponent

Johnny Cage



Is *Mortal Kombat* the true dream of Seagal, Stallone, Schwarzenegger and Van Damme?

Real Name: John Carlton
Age: 29
Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 200
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Blue
Legal Status: Citizen of the USA
Known Relatives: Robert Carlton, father; Rebecca Carlton, mother; Cindy Ford, ex-wife
Birthplace: Venice, California
Background: John Carlton is a major box-office star in the U.S. whose sole purpose in the tournament is to gain further notoriety.

Actor: Danny Pesina

Danny played several of the foot clan soldiers in the *TMNT* movies.

Special Moves

Green firebolt: back, forward, low punch

Shadow kick: back, forward, low kick

Groin punch: block & low punch. Note: This will not work on Sonya or Cage's double.

Kano

Listen for the "clang" everytime he uses his head butt.

Age: 35
Height: Six foot
Weight: 205
Hair: Black
Eyes: One brown, one infrared
Legal status: Unknown
Known relatives: None
Birthplace: Unknown
Background: A mercenary with the Black Dragon society, he's wanted in several countries and has entered the tournament because he enjoys the violence. Kano lost his right eye, and has replaced it with an infrared one.

Actor: Rich Divizio

Rich also worked as a foot soldier in the *TMNT* movies.

Special Moves

Spin: spin joystick. To spin in one place, push block, while spinning.

Knife throw: block & wiggle joystick back and forth

Head butt: high punch at close range

Raiden

Raiden's proof that gods travel any way they want to.

Age: Eternal
Height: Seven foot
Weight: 350
Hair: Black
Eyes: None
Legal Status: Whatever pleases him
Background: A thunder god in Japanese mythology, Raiden loves to fight and womanize.

Actor: Carlos Pesina

Raiden is patterned visually after one of the mythical beings in *Big Trouble in Little China*.

Carlos was too young to work on the earlier *TMNT* movies, but was the stunt double in *TMNT III* for Casey Jones.

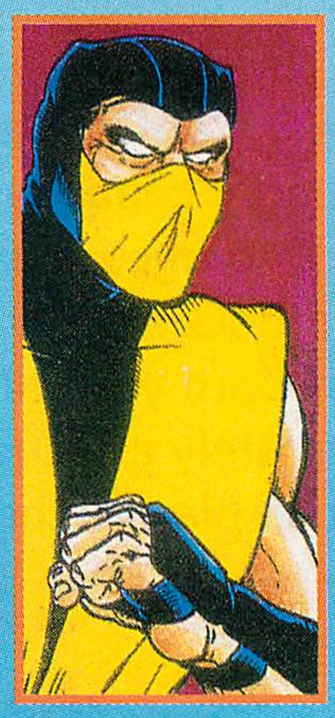
While filming *Mortal Kombat*, Carlos' hat kept falling off every time he got up from a knockdown. John experimented on the computer with him being redrawn from the feet up, and this evolved into Raiden's teleportation skill.

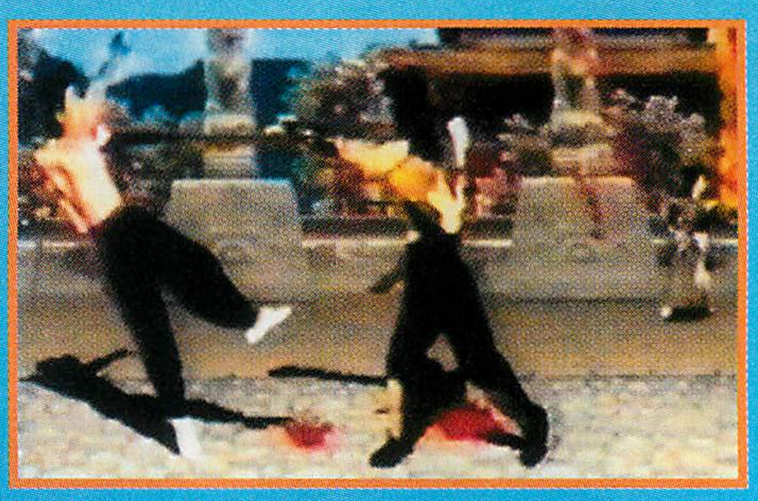
Special Moves

Lightning: quarterspin from down to forward, low punch

Flying attack: back, back, forward

Scorpion





Underneath that snazzy yellow costume is a body forged in hell.

Real Name: Unknown
Age: 32
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 210
Hair: Black

CATCH THE TAITO WAVE

There's bone crunching action for Sega Genesis too. Unless you want some free dental work you had better stick in the mouthpiece, strap on the pads and *CHECK* it out!

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While supervising the Button Pusher Division of Spacely Sprockets, George Jetson notices that the robots and computers are malfunctioning. With the help of Jane, Judy, and Elroy, George's mission is to find and stop the cause of this problem.

Fred uncovers a treasure map and sets off on a wild adventure to find the loot. Help Fred through seven adventure-filled stages in this journey.

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Eyes: Varies

Legal status: As a hellspawn creature, he has none.

Background: A peaceful husband and father in his previous life, he was murdered by Sub-Zero. Demons granted him a new body to avenge his death in the arena. His similar costume is intended to mock Sub-Zero's.

Actor: Danny Pesina

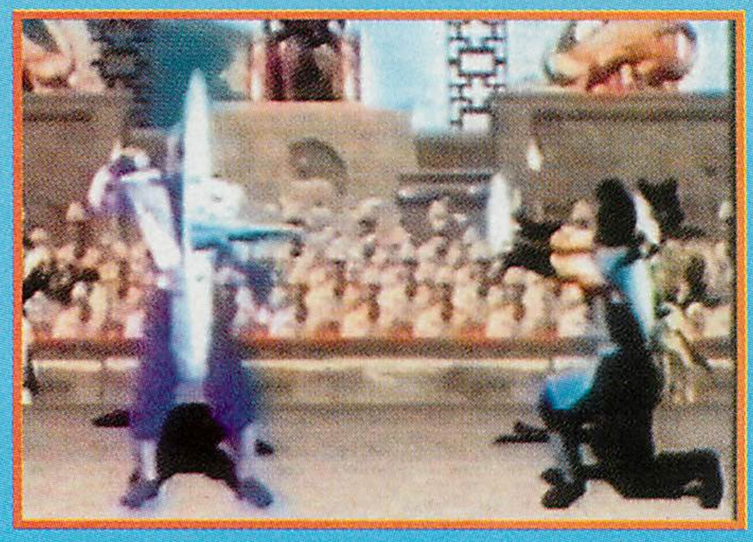
Special Moves

Harpoon: back, back, low punch

Teleport punch: quarterspin from low to back, high punch

The confrontation before combat.

Sub-Zero



It's visually unimpressive by comparison, but don't forget Sub-Zero's sliding attack.

Real Name: Unknown
Age: 32
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 210
Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown
Legal Status: None
Known relatives: None
Birthplace: Unknown

Background: Sub-Zero is a member of the Lin-Kuei assassins and has entered the tournament seeking glory and a chance to kill someone who might be a challenge.

Actor: Danny Pesina

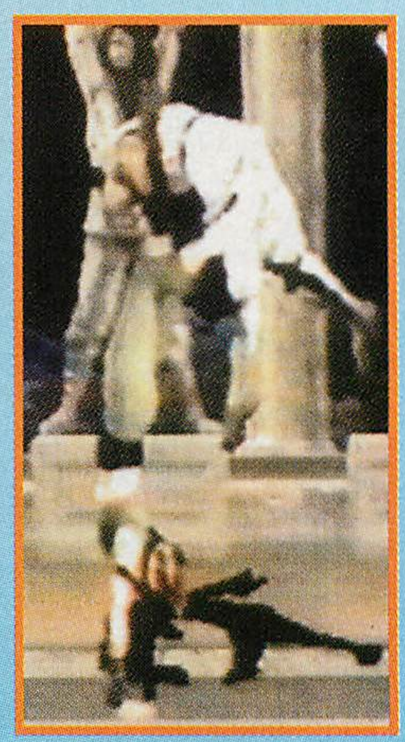
The Lin Kuei is an ancient Chinese sect, some members of which traveled to Japan and became the basis for "ninjas."

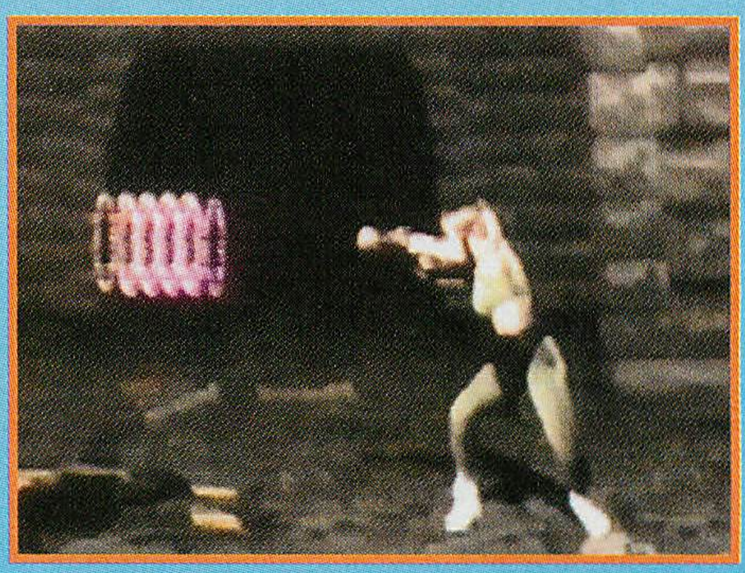
Special Moves

Freeze ray: quarterspin from down to forward, low punch

Slide: back & bottom three buttons

Sonya Blade





Her squad's souls depend on the accuracy of Sonya's sonic blasts.

Age: 26
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 140
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Blue
Legal Status: Citizen of the USA
Known relatives: Major Herman Blade, father; Erica Blade, mother; Daniel Blade, twin brother (deceased)

Birthplace: Austin, Texas

Background: A lieutenant in the U.S. Army, she was leading a special paramilitary unit investigating Shang Tsung, which was captured by the demon's forces. She's fighting for the lives of her comrades.

Actress: Elizabeth Malecki

Mortal Kombat originally had only the six male characters. The game was already in a few test locations when the designers decided to spend the extra month-and-a-half adding her. Elizabeth's an aerobics instructor and ballet student.

Special Moves

Leg throw: down & bottom three buttons

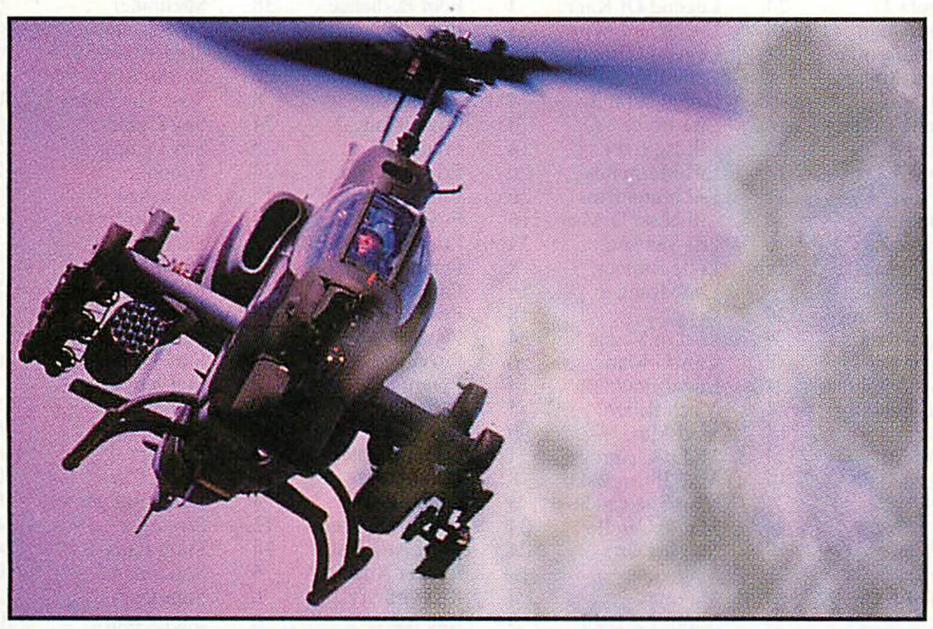
Flying attack: forward, back, high punch

Sonic rings: low punch, back, low punch

Special thanks to Dean Gamburd at C.A. Robinson in Los Angeles, David Eadington and Doselle Young for their help in preparing this survival guide.

Sorry, it's too late to back out now.

WORLD WAR II



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INSIDE NovaLogic

By David S. Moskowitz

After they've been in the business for a few years, most software developers pick up a house genre or style: Acclaim goes for the licenses; Sierra is almost synonymous with mouse-driven adventures; and SSI games can be instantaneously recognized by the weight of their rule book. NovaLogic began in 1985 mostly doing classic arcade conversions for Taito. When word of mouth turned John Garcia's submarine simulation, *Wolfpack*, from bargain-bin software to perennial best-seller, its next niche seemed to be in place. With the next three releases including battlefield simulators for tanks, helicopters and robots, its future path seems fully encoded. But NovaLogic is also doing a *Mario Bros.* arcade game for the CD-I.

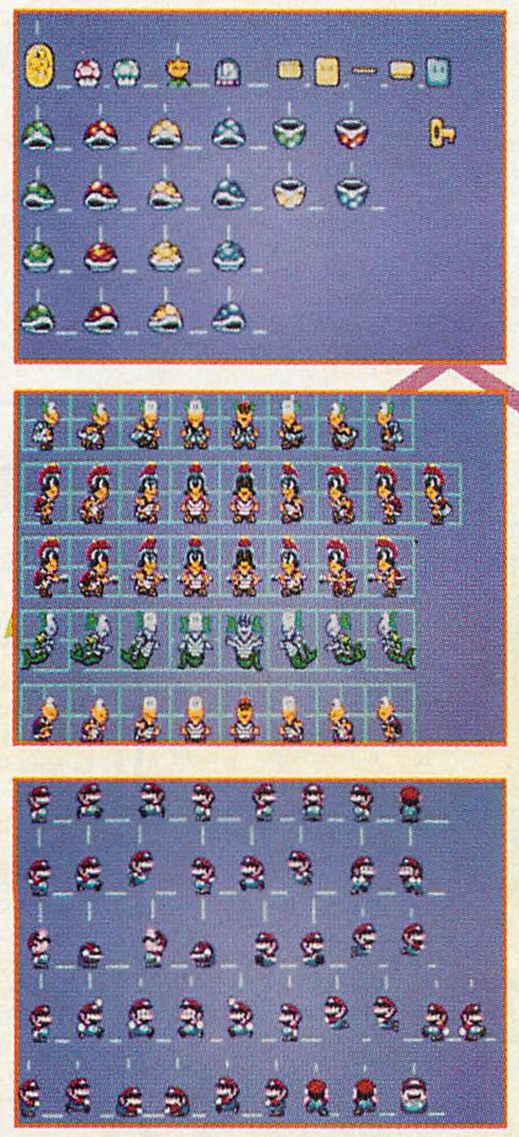
What gives? Well, VG&CE asked that same question at a special behind-the-scenes look at NovaLogic's offices, which included some graphics technology that is going to earn it the envy of any developer ever to use the term "virtual reality" on a game box.

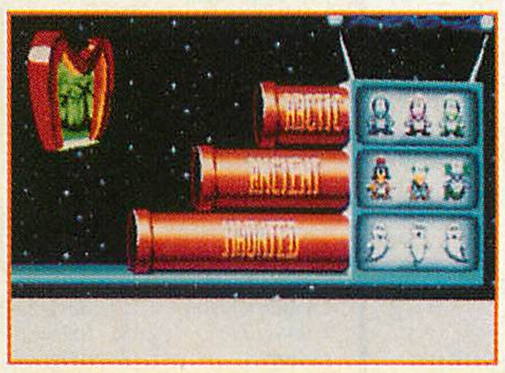
NovaLogic currently has 17 employees, and the average programmer has nine years experience, even though some are only in their early 20s. NovaLogic's president and founder is John Garcia. A graduate of the London Film School, John discovered his interest in programming while processing data for a bachelor's degree in psychology. His first commercial program was the personal-computer conversion of *Zaxxon*, which he programmed at Datasoft. Garcia refers to his *Wolfpack* as "the game that refused to die." Distributed by Brøderbund, it was virtually unnoticed until Brøderbund reduced the price to $19.95 and immediately sold out its remaining stock. Intrigued, it printed a few thousand more copies, which also sold out, and, to this day, *Wolfpack* makes frequent appearances on best-seller charts—and it's still $19.95.

The upcoming lineup of releases is uniformly solid, but easily the most exciting is the helicopter simulation *Commanche Maximum Overkill*. When designing it, Kyle Freeman and John Garcia realized that good simulators are composed of two parts: the terrain and the helicopter itself. Traditionally, simulators have been forced to render terrain in simple polygons, but *Commanche*'s surroundings look more like film than green and brown triangles. Creating it was a surprisingly simple process: Raw data from the U.S. Geological Survey, some of which is from the Lansat satellite system, was entered into the computer, which built the terrain based on recorded altitudes. The programmer then entered information such as climate, timberline (the altitude at which trees will no longer grow, due to low oxygen content in the air) and even the position of the sun! The end result is a map that not only is efficient in terms of disk space, but can be processed 500 times faster than any map of this detail using polygons.

For the information about the helicopter itself, NovaLogic turned to Frank Colucci. The editor of *Defence Helicopter* magazine, he not only provided information on the helicopter's flight performance, but insight on the pilots as well. For example, each helicopter carries two pilots, everything is duplicated in terms of controls and monitors. Players will be able to monitor the battle from two different perspectives simultaneously. If that redundancy seems excessive, consider this: Because the enemy often uses high-powered lasers to blind pilots, British helicopter aviators wear an eye patch so that, if one gets toasted, the other is left unharmed. While NovaLogic found this fascinating, they mercifully left it out of the game.

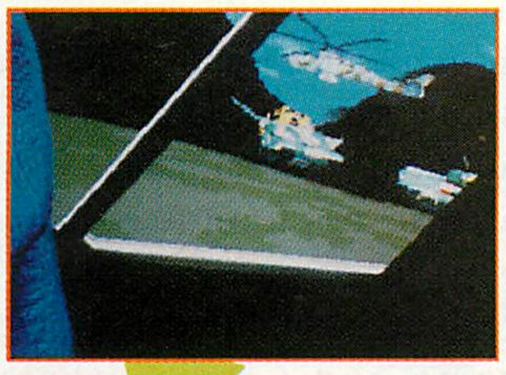
Versions of *Ultrabots* have been appearing at the CES for quite some time now, but it's taken a total of five man-years for designers David Seeholzer and John Butrovich to create and fine-tune the game. The premise is simple: Aliens drop robots onto Earth with instructions to eradicate humanity while their creators enter a 60-year orbit of Earth.





CD storage capabilities mean greater variety for the Koopa and worlds.

A COMPANY ON THE CUTTING



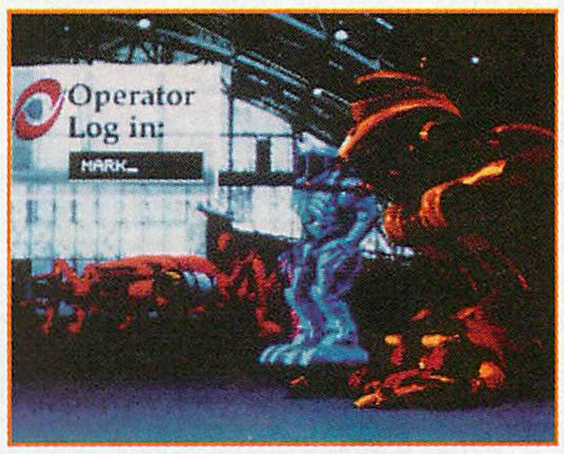
Mankind survived the first battle only by unleashing its nuclear arsenal upon the invaders. The aliens have returned—only this time their forces are met by reprogrammed and redesigned robots similar to their own, except these are used to protect the apelike beings that seem to be the obsession of every industrialized planet in the galaxy.

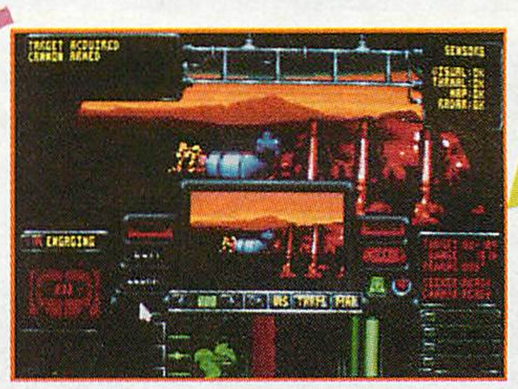
Besides controlling the robotic designs of Terry Shakespeare as they reduce each other to high-tech alloy scrap, players will also have to work out a battlefield strategy for the network of power nodes. The Ultrabots are energy hogs and cannot stray too far away from their power supplies. By destroying these networks, robots can cripple an entire squad of the enemy. Better yet, they can take over power nets, allowing them to move more robots toward enemy headquarters. Otherwise, they must risk sending out scorpionlike units to "lay" the network nodes down if their forces are to advance anywhere. For those preferring more contemporary slaughter, NovaLogic is producing *Battlefield 2000*, a tank simulator with graphics and controls similar to *Ultrabots*.

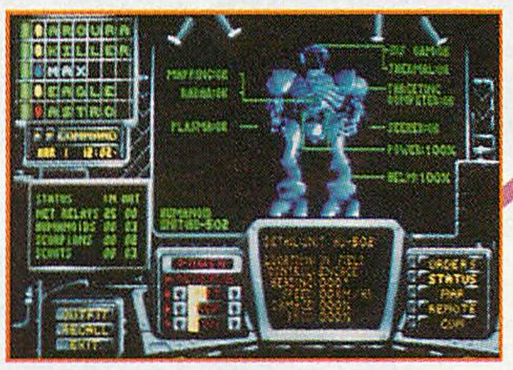
NovaLogic's programmers have worked on games for most consoles and computers, including the SNES. And it's the Nintendo character Mario that NovaLogic will be developing for the Philips CD-I. Originally concentrating on games like *Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective*, Philips realized that it needed to expand its market to more mainstream arcade players, so it obtained the license from Nintendo. The logical choice to lead the three-person team was Marty Foulger, a recreational hang glider pilot who's been designing games since 1981. Among his credits is being part of the team that created Don Bluth's classic laser-disc game *Dragon's Lair*. In 1987, he cofounded Tiger Eye Media, which specialized in all forms of compact-disc games, his biggest project being *The Case of the Cautious Condor*. Leaving Tiger Eye in 1990, he joined NovaLogic in December 1991.

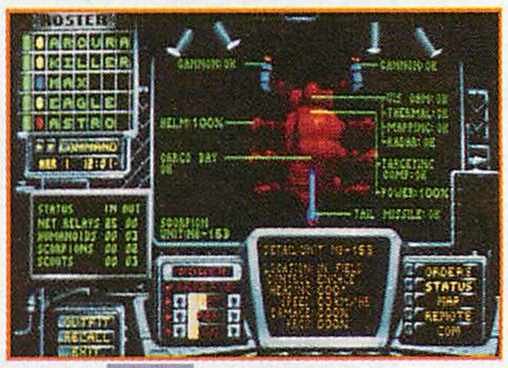
Translating Marty's ideas into code is John Brooks. A self-taught programmer who's also worked on the SNES, John's the hard-core gamer in the group. He has finished *Street Fighter II* set at Level 7 (the hardest), and, in his spare time, he likes to go to arcades and humiliate players who think Chun Li can't fight.

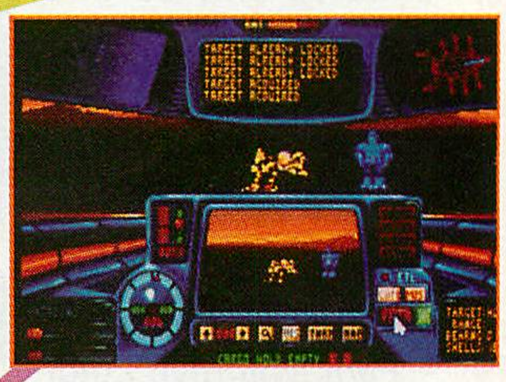
Commanche's detailed scenery makes the term "virtual" redundant.





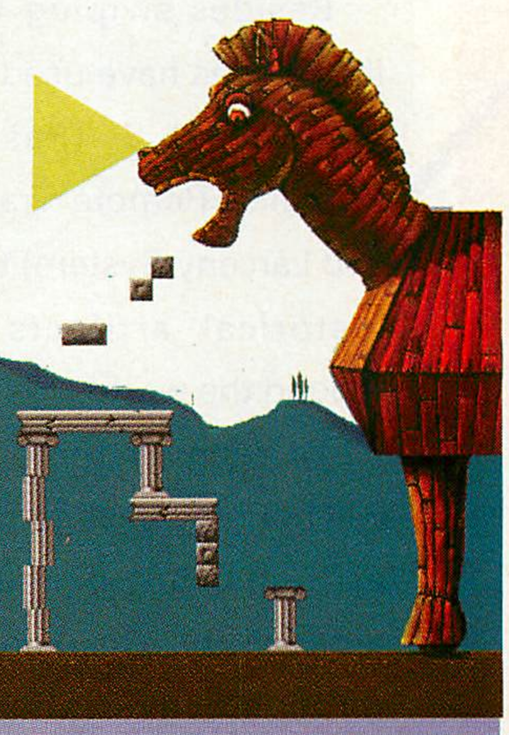


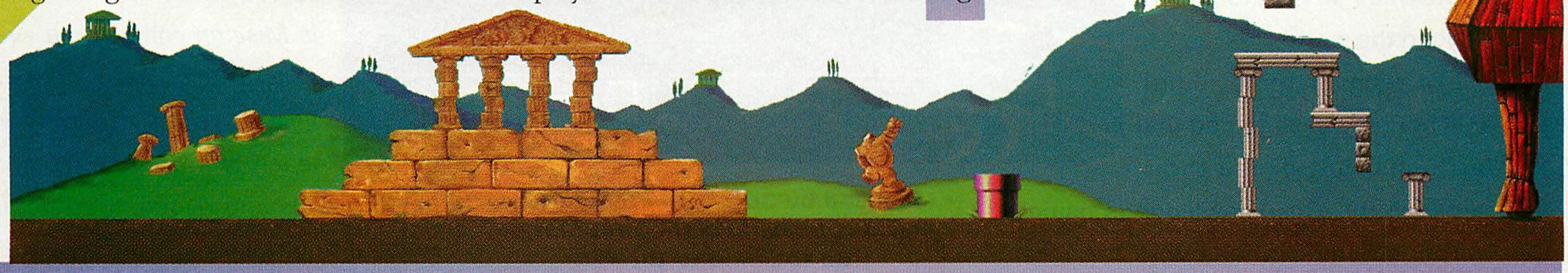




***Ultrabots'* battle for planet Earth has the humans using invaders' weapons against them.**

As the first programmer to work on a major arcade project for the CD-I, his job consists mostly of discovering the unit's strengths and weaknesses and exploiting and avoiding them, respectively of course. Not originally designed with *Mario*-type games, the CD-I does not use sprites or individual, pixel-based figures that are moved as a unit on the screen. This puts severe limitations on memory, so Mario will have neither his cape nor his dinosaur sidekick, Yoshi. Similarly, coin collecting will be part of the game, but this version will not have the coin-filled rooms littering the Nintendo projects. Those are the weaknesses, but what about CD-I's strengths? Since a laser disc has so much space, all characters and backgrounds can be unique from world to world. Creating the Koopas in regional costumes, as well as ghosts and other new





enemies, is Nina (that's right, she has no last name). A painter who works with a copy of *Gray's Anatomy* by her side, Nina must always keep in mind Philips' "eight-feet rule," that is, all games must be designed for easy vision at an eight-foot distance. One of her favorite tricks is color cycling, an incredibly efficient technique of changing the colors of stationary objects. This is what makes Ice World's aurora borealis so stunning (as if a skiing Mario wasn't enough), and shows great promise for Wacky World. Wacky World? Yes, Wacky World. Just think neon.

Nina's interest in Mario is more than artistic: She's currently working on an academic paper exploring the Mario world as modern mythos. After all, she points out, he never really dies.

NovaLogic might not be a name familiar to most gamers, but, with strong releases scheduled for the PC, video-game and CD-I markets, it might soon be difficult to *not* have heard of it.

MARIO HAS MOVED TO THE PC

NovaLogic isn't the only company with a license to the world's most famous Italian plumber. Software Toolworks has obtained a license for a line of educational software that will mark Mario and Luigi's first appearance on the IBM PC.

The first release, *Mario Is Missing: The Seven Portals of Peril*, will give Luigi his long-awaited chance to be the hero, while learning enough geography to locate his missing brother.

Besides swiping Mario, the Koopas have used magic P.O.R.T.A.L.S. (Passcode Operated Remote Transport and Larceny System) to steal historical artifacts from around the world.

To recover them, Luigi will not only have to find the artifacts, but prove their authenticity. This knowledge is gained through conversations with the local citizenry and by reading travel brochures and the newspaper. Luigi carries a laptop computer that automatically records all clues and even organizes them for easy use! To save time, cab fare and energy, Luigi may summon Yoshi via the globulator, once he determines to which city the Koopa teleporters have sent him.

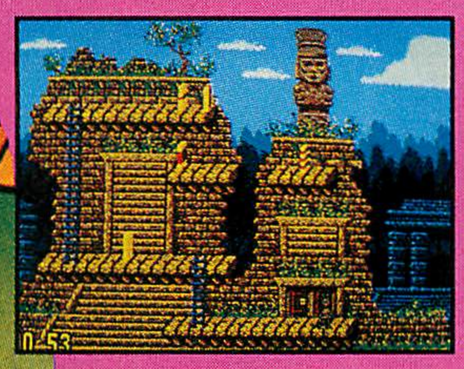
Licensed by Software Toolworks, *Mario Is Missing* is the first Mario title to come to the PC.

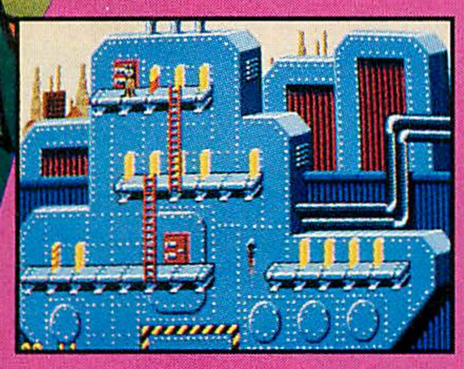
Successful recovery of artifacts will earn Luigi a key to the city, allowing him to unlock one of the magic PORTALS the Koopas use to commit their crimes. When all PORTALS are closed, Luigi will be able to free his brother, as well as learn a closely guarded secret about Bowser. *Mario Is Missing* will also be available for the SNES in 1993.

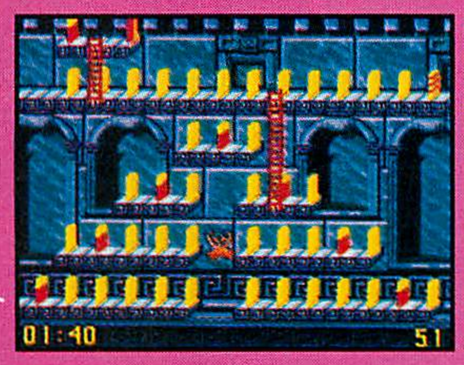
Future PC games will teach history, mathematics, reading skills and overall thinking and rationalizing skills.

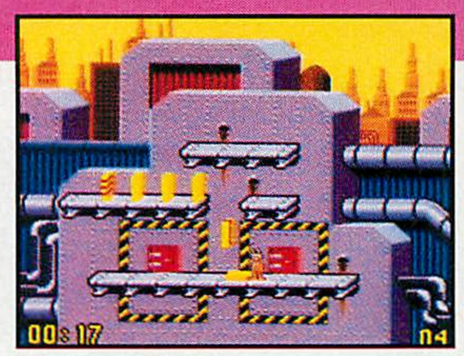
FOR THE AMIGA, IBM PC, AND SUPER NES SYSTEM

Challenge yourself to Push-Over, a game where quick strategy and cunning are of the essence. As G. I. Ant, you must place each domino carefully in a row. Get 'em ready and set up to "push over." But beware! Each domino is programmed with special powers and abilities. Don't be a Push-Over and let this backfire on you!









Top two screens shown above are from the IBM PC version of the game. Bottom two screens shown are from the Super NES version of the game.

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COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

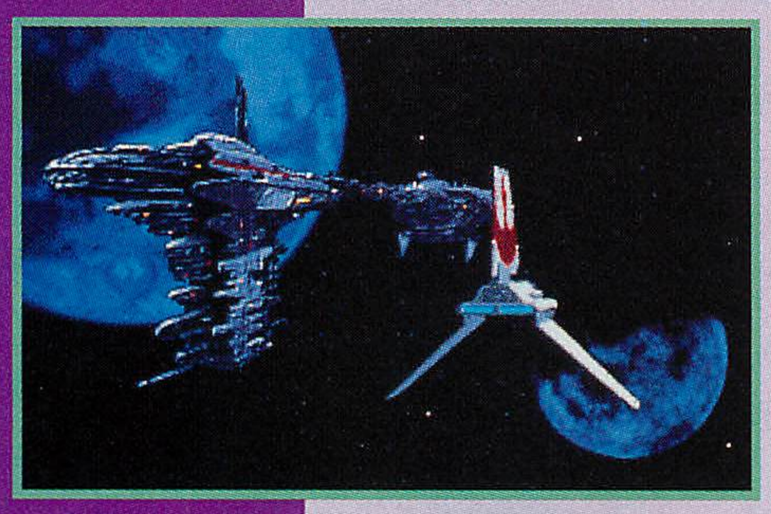
X-Wing

LUCASFILM GAMES

Version Previewed: IBM PC

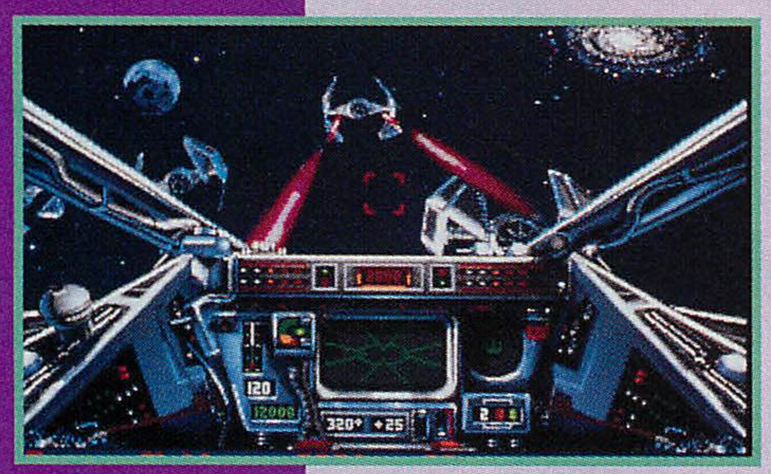
Anyone who remembers the merchandising blitz that followed *Star Wars* remembers the first *Star Wars* coin-op. Using simple white outlines to simulate space combat, it was one of the most exciting games of its time, but lacked the full-color grandeur of the movie.

Finally, 15 years after *Star Wars*' release, Lucas Arts has created *X-Wing*, a flight simulator with looks second only to its celluloid inspiration. Created by Lawrence Holland (*Secrets of the Luftwaffe* and *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*) and Edward Kilham, *X-Wing* combines both polygon and bit-mapped graphics, along with a cockpit displaying 17 different views.



For those craving more story, Lucasfilm has included *X-Wing*, a 96-page book containing both technical information and the illustrated story of how the young pilot is recruited by Mon Mothma.

Lucasfilm Games will also be releasing at least two new *Space Combat Tours*, as well as a sequel allowing players to fight for the Empire.



Cyber Race

CYBERDREAMS

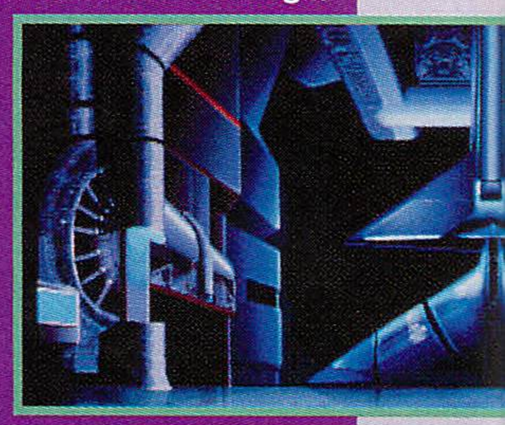
Version Previewed: IBM PC

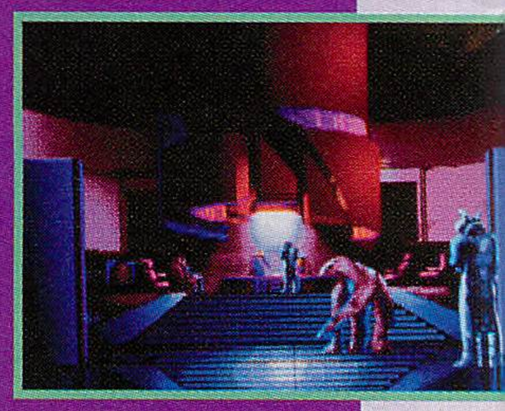
For its first game, *Darkseed*, Cyberdreams used the art of H.R. Giger, the man who created the *Alien* as well as some of the most disturbing biomechanical art ever produced. Now, for its second release, *Cyber Race*, it has turned to Syd Mead, production designer for films including *Tron*, *2010* and *Blade Runner*.

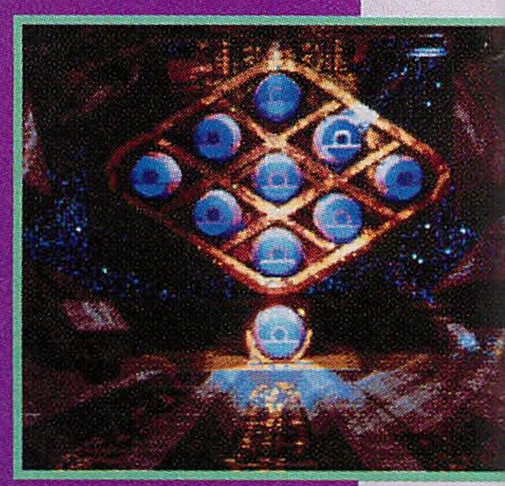
Cyber racing is a competition designed by the Terrans and Kalidasans as a way of settling their war without destroying any more star systems. After refusing the Terran recruiters, Clay Shaw discovers that they have captured his girlfriend. Forced to enter the same arena where his father was murdered, Clay faces Mugyor, an evil Kalidasan Lord.

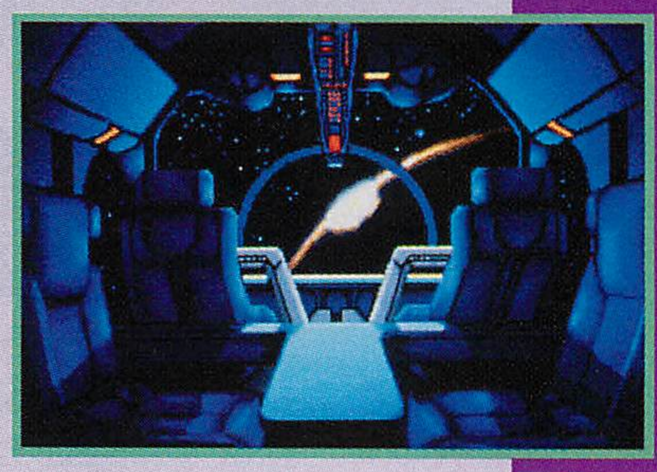
What follows is nine scenarios of arcade action, complete with 11 different endings, which should give the game replayability that is not found in most art-driven games.

In addition to dazzling background art, all human and alien characters will be filmed, and their digitized images will be accompanied by professionally acted dialogue.









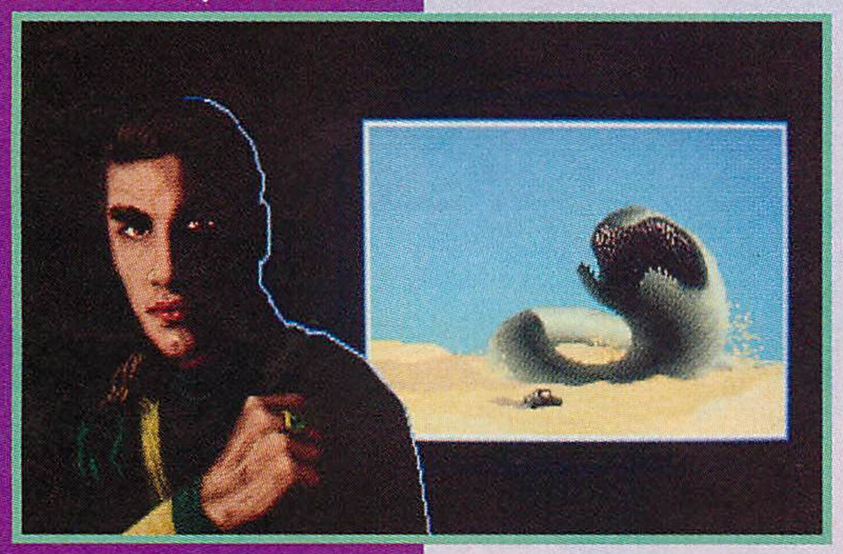
Dune II

VIRGIN

Version Previewed: IBM PC

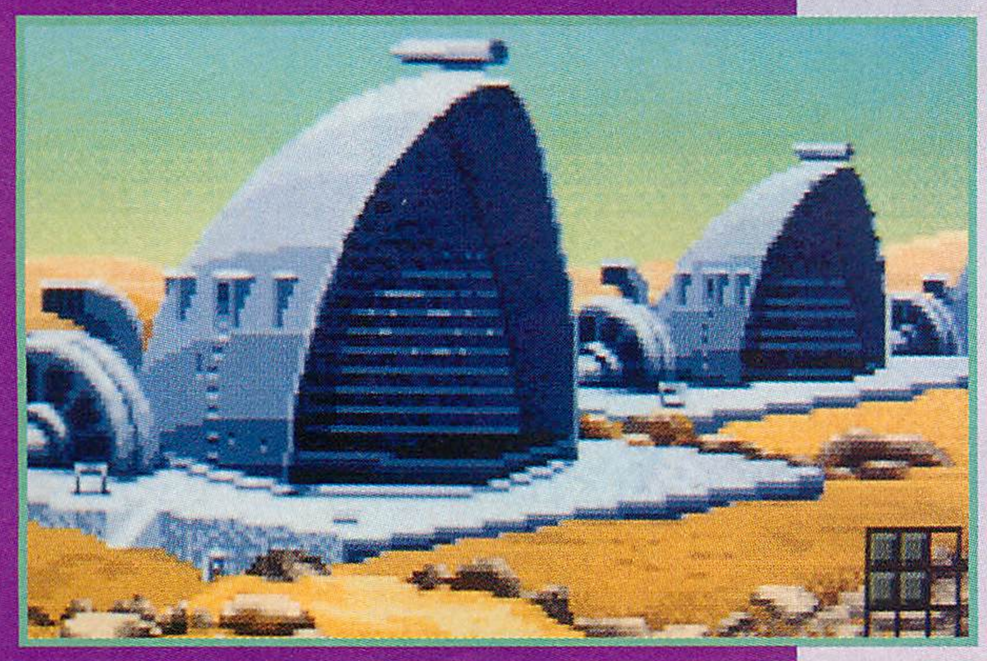
Cryo's excellent adaptation of the novel and movie *Dune* combined strategic elements with enough atmospheric effects to capture the metaphysical nature of the story. It is, however, difficult to make a strategy game out of a tale so linear, so, for the sequel, Virgin turned to Westwood, which is well known for its Advanced Dungeons & Dragons simulations.

With less glamour and more strategy than its predecessor, *Dune II* allows the player to be a member of the Atreides, Ordos or Harkonnen. They're all on Arrakis with one goal: Get as much spice to the emperor as soon as possible. There are no set territories on the planet, and no rules governing, let alone preventing, combat.



While spice may be the key to riches, everything needed to harvest it costs credits, making money management as important as positioning soldiers and Trike vehicles.

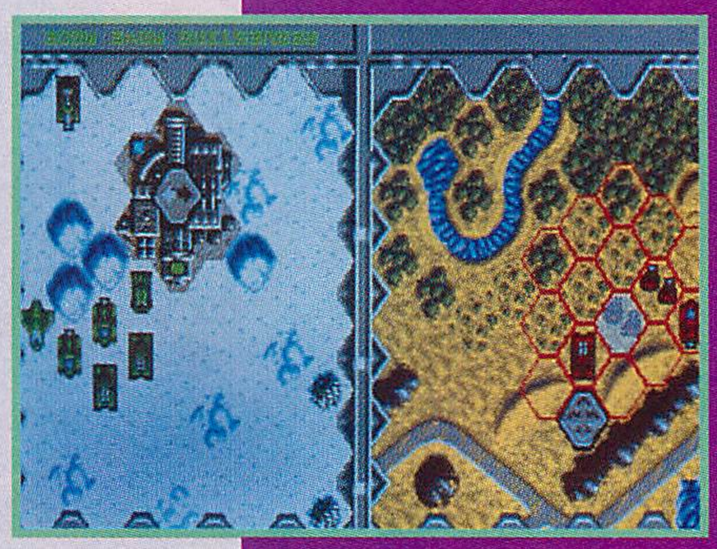
House mentats are available to provide information on everything from the opponents' vehicles to details of the specific mission. Players will still need to think for themselves, however. The logical mentats might be good at giving advice, but they require more facts than players will have in this game of subterfuge and overt conquest.

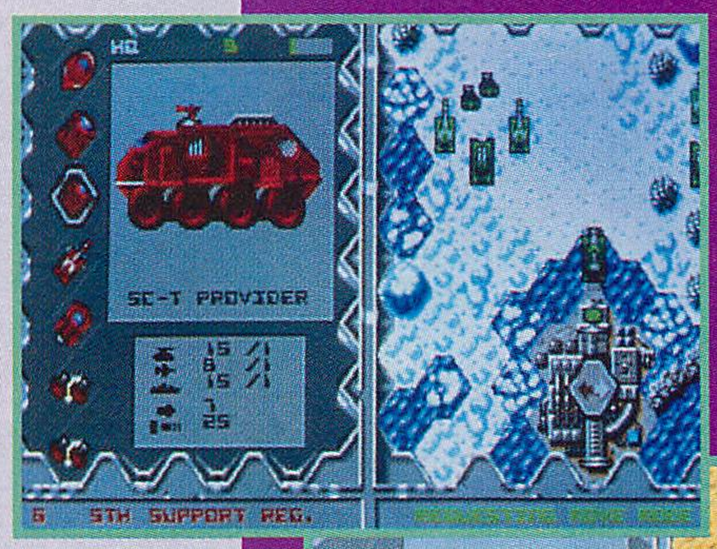


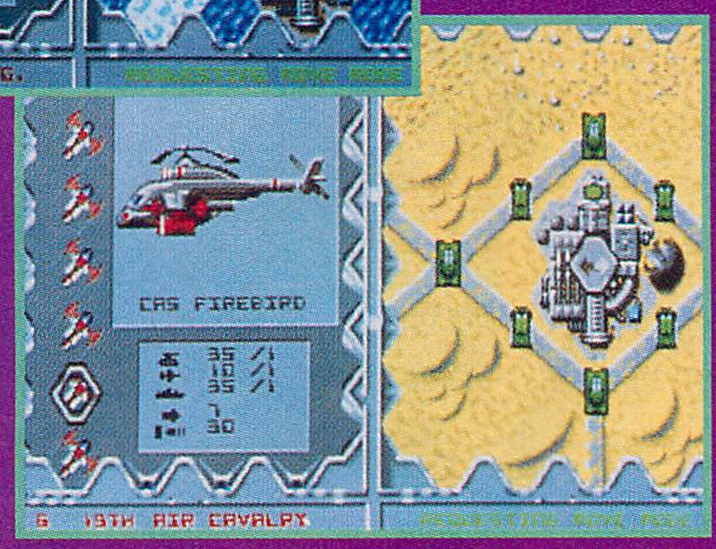
Battle Isle: Scenario Disk, Volume One

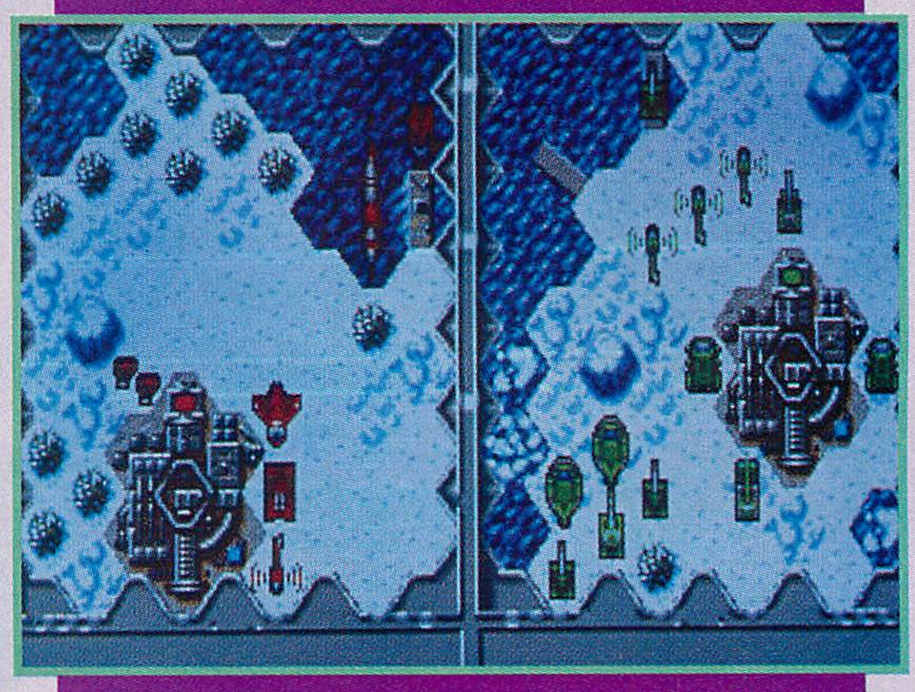
UBI SOFT

Versions Previewed: Amiga, IBM PC









Battle Isle is UBI Soft has decided to acknowledge the strategy game's legion of fans with an all-new scenario disk. Noteworthy for its in-depth story line, tactical play and animated battle sequences, *Battle Isle* tells the story of the Megacomputer Skynet and its violent behavior.

The scenario disk follows Katai Yanga and his efforts in the war. For those bored with *Battle Isle*'s lush, tropical settings, the new scenario disk adds polar and desert terrains. Also, mouse and joystick controls have been revamped, making them much friendlier.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
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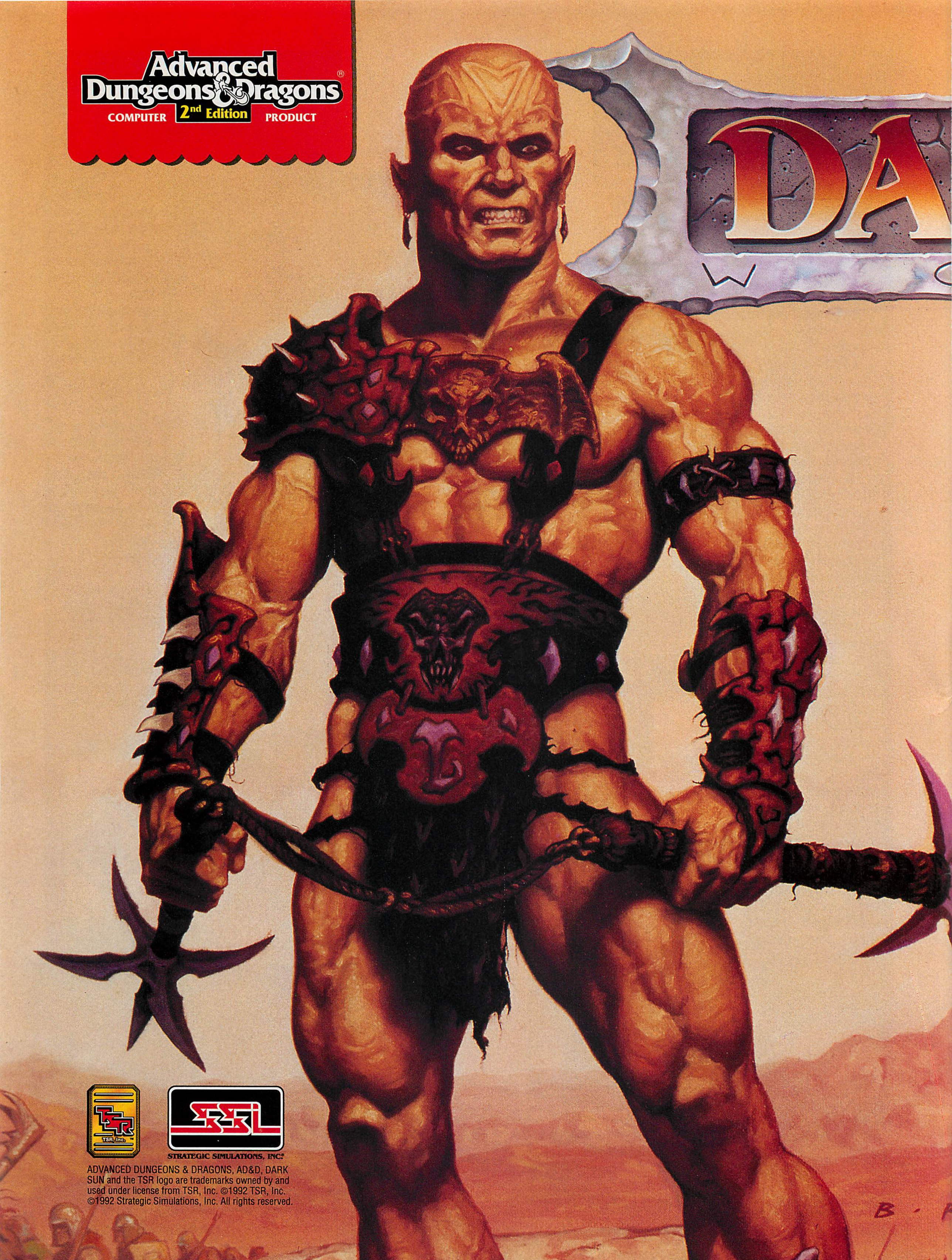

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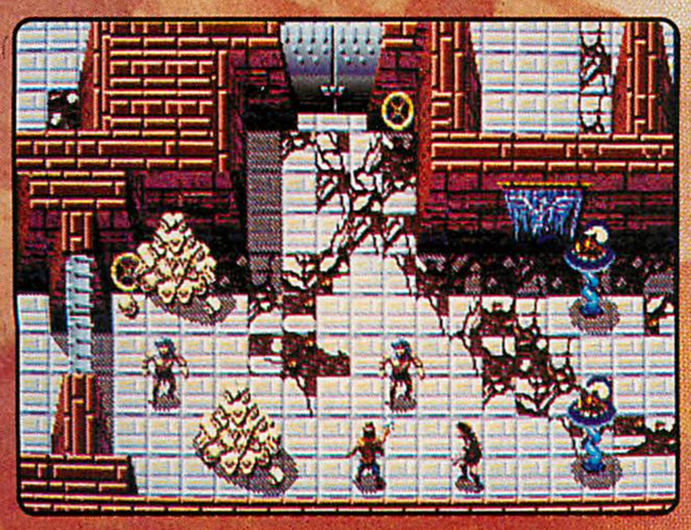

Screens shown: 256-color IBM VGA

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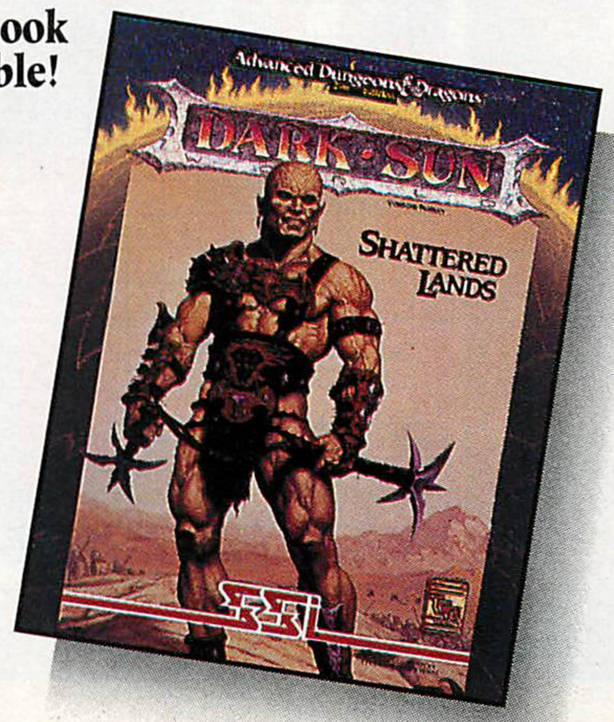

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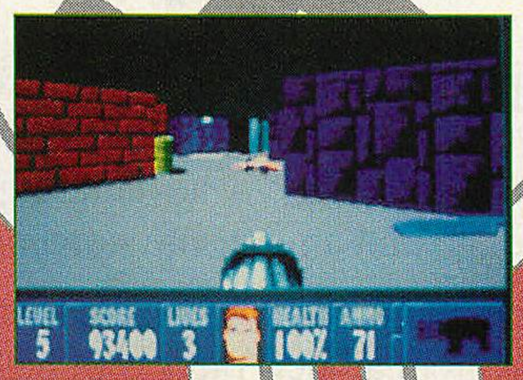
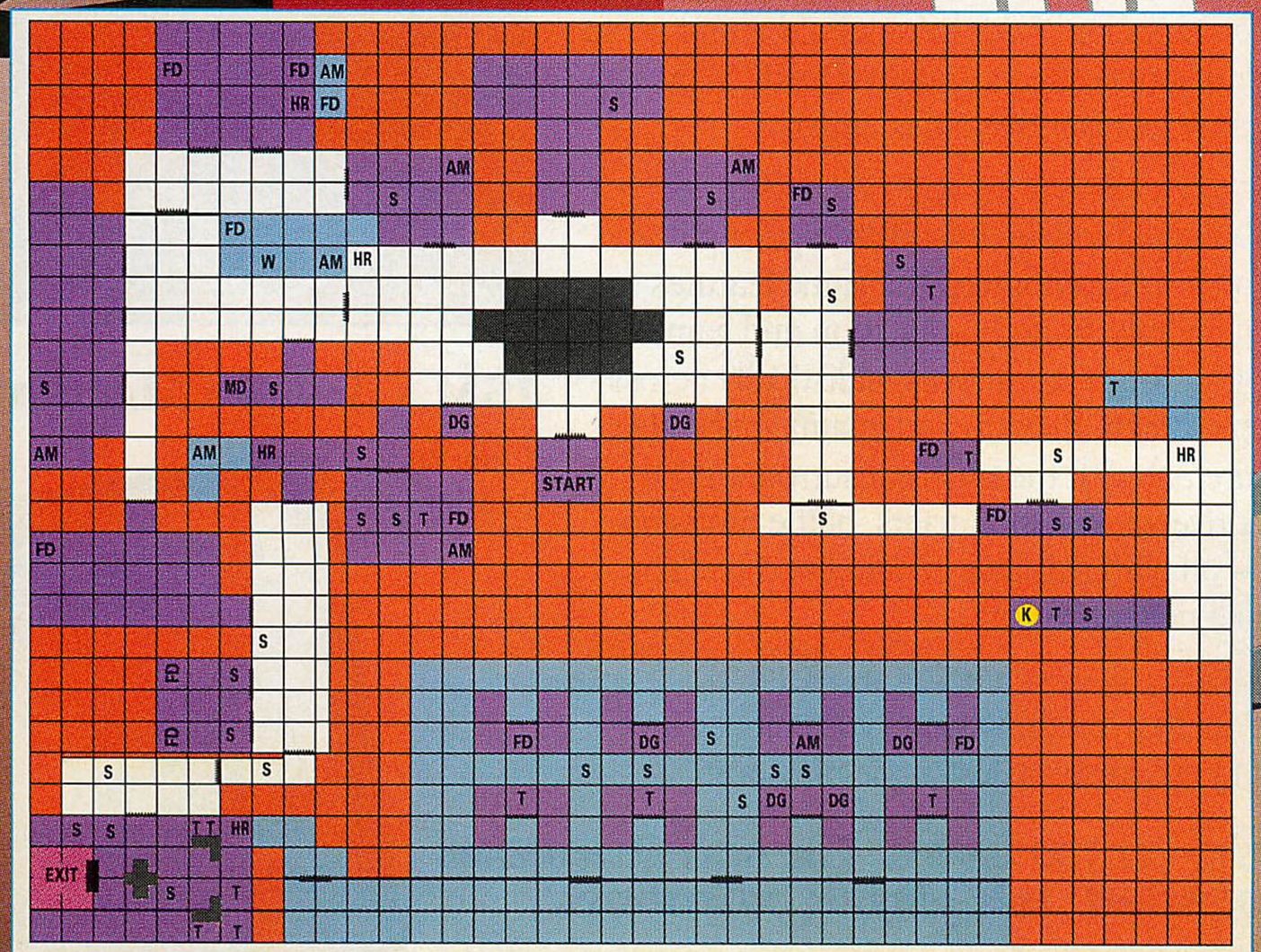


A simple, but crucial, tactic is to always pick a single direction to walk toward, up until you come to a dead end. By doing this, usually you'll avoid getting lost or coming to the same location twice.

On the left and right sides of the first door that you come out of you'll find two rooms with dogs in them. Let's warm up by taking shots at the pooches.



CODE KEY

- **AM** - AMMO
- **S** - SOLDIER
- **DG** - DOG
- **T** - TREASURE
- **K** - KEY
- **MD** - MEDICINE
- **HR** - HIDDEN ROOM
- **W** - WEAPON
- **EX** - EXTRA LIFE
- **EB** - END BOSS

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Teaching the Third Reich a Lesson in Escape From Wolfenstein, Part Two

APOGEE

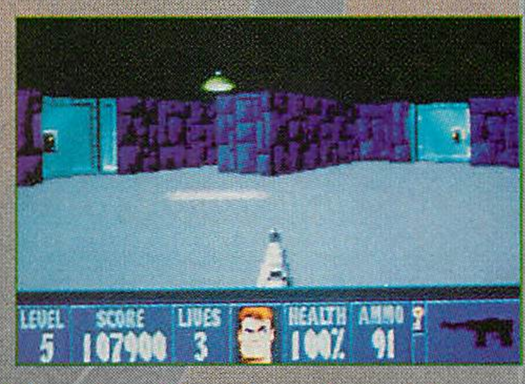
Last month we cruised through the first four levels of *Wolfenstein 3-D: Episode One* and showed you some simple strategies and tactics that are essential through all the episodes of the game. We continue this month with complete maps of levels 5-8 and show you how to finish off the end boss and escape from Castle Wolfenstein.

— Mike Davila

LEVEL 5

Head right and explore those areas first. You'll find the key to Level 6 and one secret room there.

You'll encounter fair to moderate resistance in the right areas of the map. The real challenge will come at the end of this level near the exit.



Now head back to the main area where you first started. Pick up any ammo and food along the way. Also, find the hidden room there. It's not in the most obvious of places.

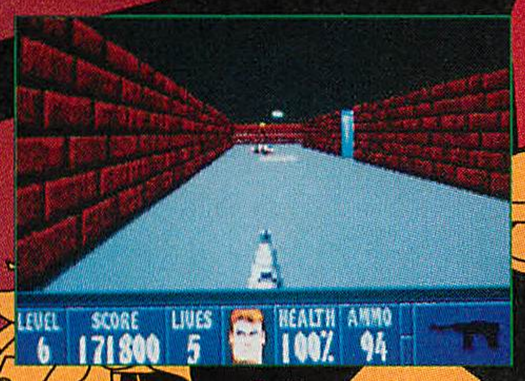
After exiting the hidden room, enter the first door to the right of it, but be prepared to shoot.

Before entering the room leading to Level 5's exit, make sure that you have plenty of ammo to meet the challenge.

Once all of the Nazis have been butchered, don't jump on the elevator to Level 6 yet. There's one more hidden room, which is the largest room in the game. You'll find all sorts of treasure and food—and *plenty* of soldiers and dogs (of course) to go along with them.

LEVEL 6

Be immediately prepared to run into a soldier as soon as the level starts.



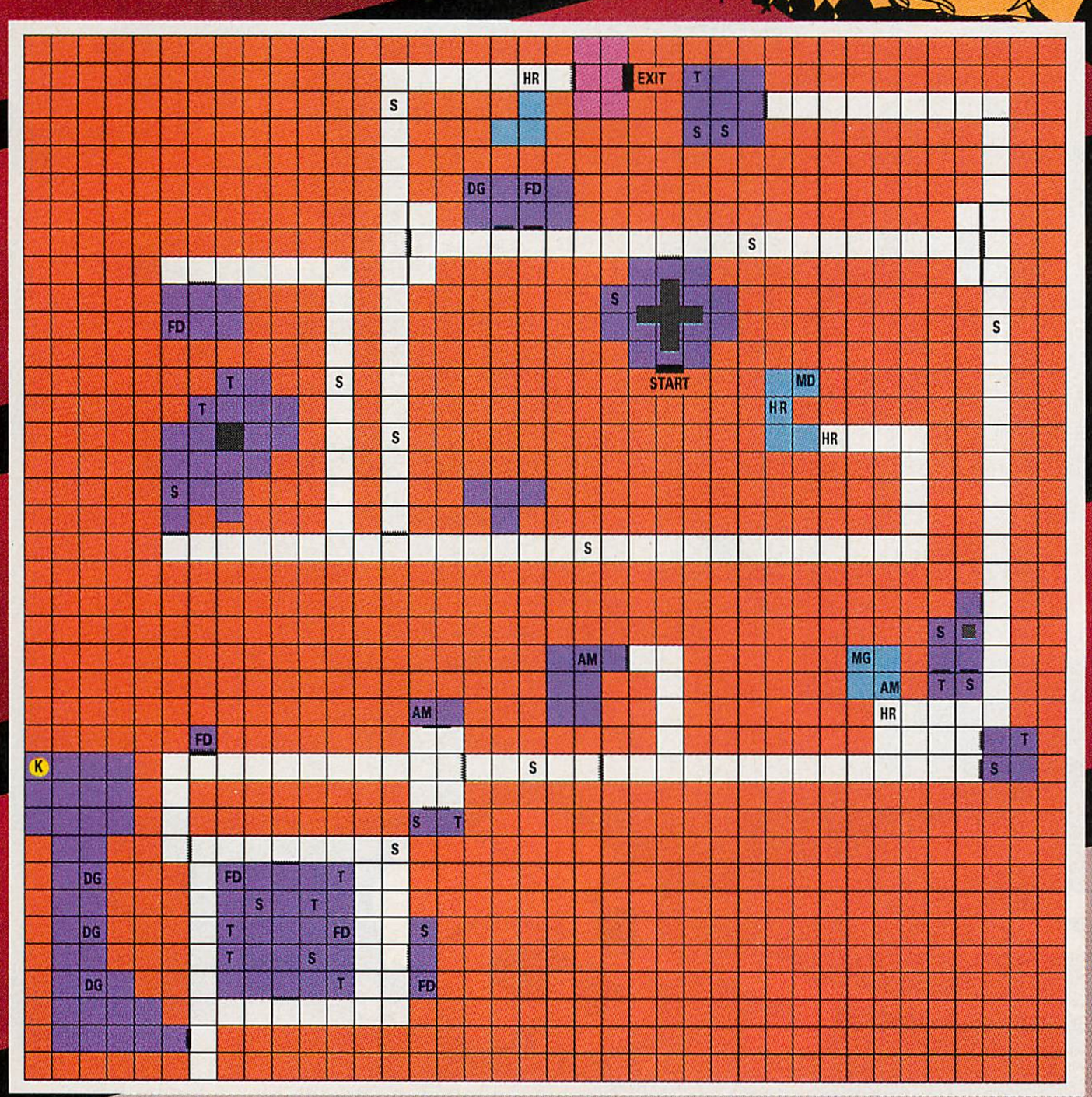
Unlike any of the other levels, this one is predominantly made of very long passageways and corridors, and is probably the easiest level of the last five.

There is also light resistance throughout the level, but don't let your guard down.

Corners are usually good places to hide rooms with goodies, since it's easier to accidentally miss its location.

If you're careful, you'll be able to nail one of the guards looking over this cache when he's not looking. There are also two entrances into the room.

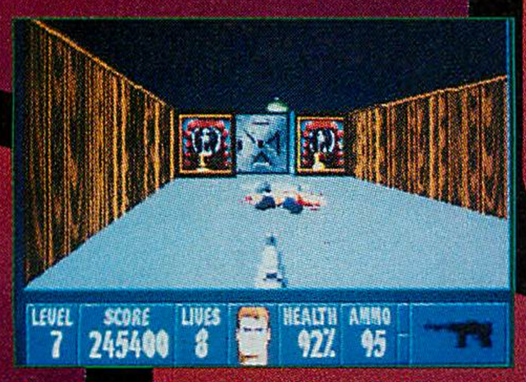
You'll have to get past the "hounds of hell" to secure the key to Level 7.



Usually, walls blocking the center of the room are too small in area size to harbor hidden rooms.

Ahhh! The exit to Level 7, but first find the hidden room to the right. You'll find an extra life there.

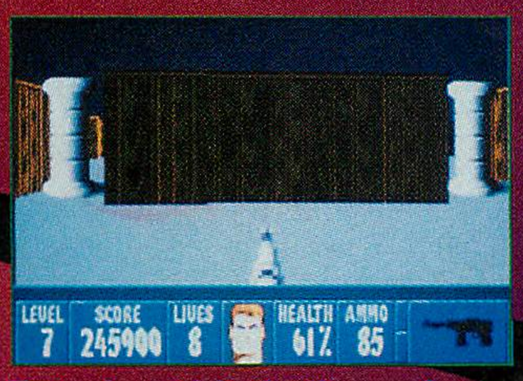
LEVEL 7



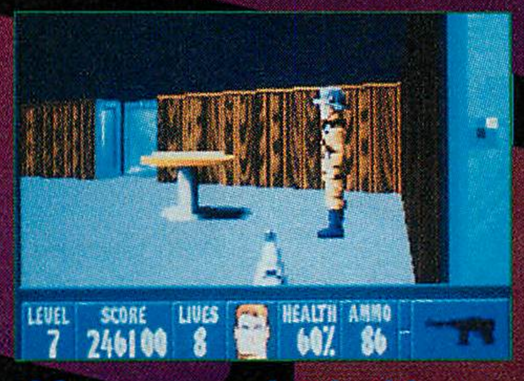
By far the hardest level, both in terms of enemies and labyrinth design.

It's usually important that you obtain the key(s) ASAP. Not only do they allow access to the next level, but they allow access into corridors that could shorten travel between rooms.

I know that the temptation to spray soldiers with an array of bullets from your machine gun exists, but it also depletes your ammo at an exponential rate. You're probably better off using the semiautomatic pistol for cleaner kills.

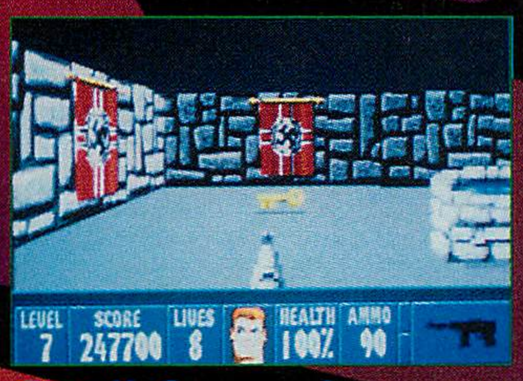


Entering this hallway from the entrance opposite the starting position could prove dangerous, and you could find yourself in a crossfire.

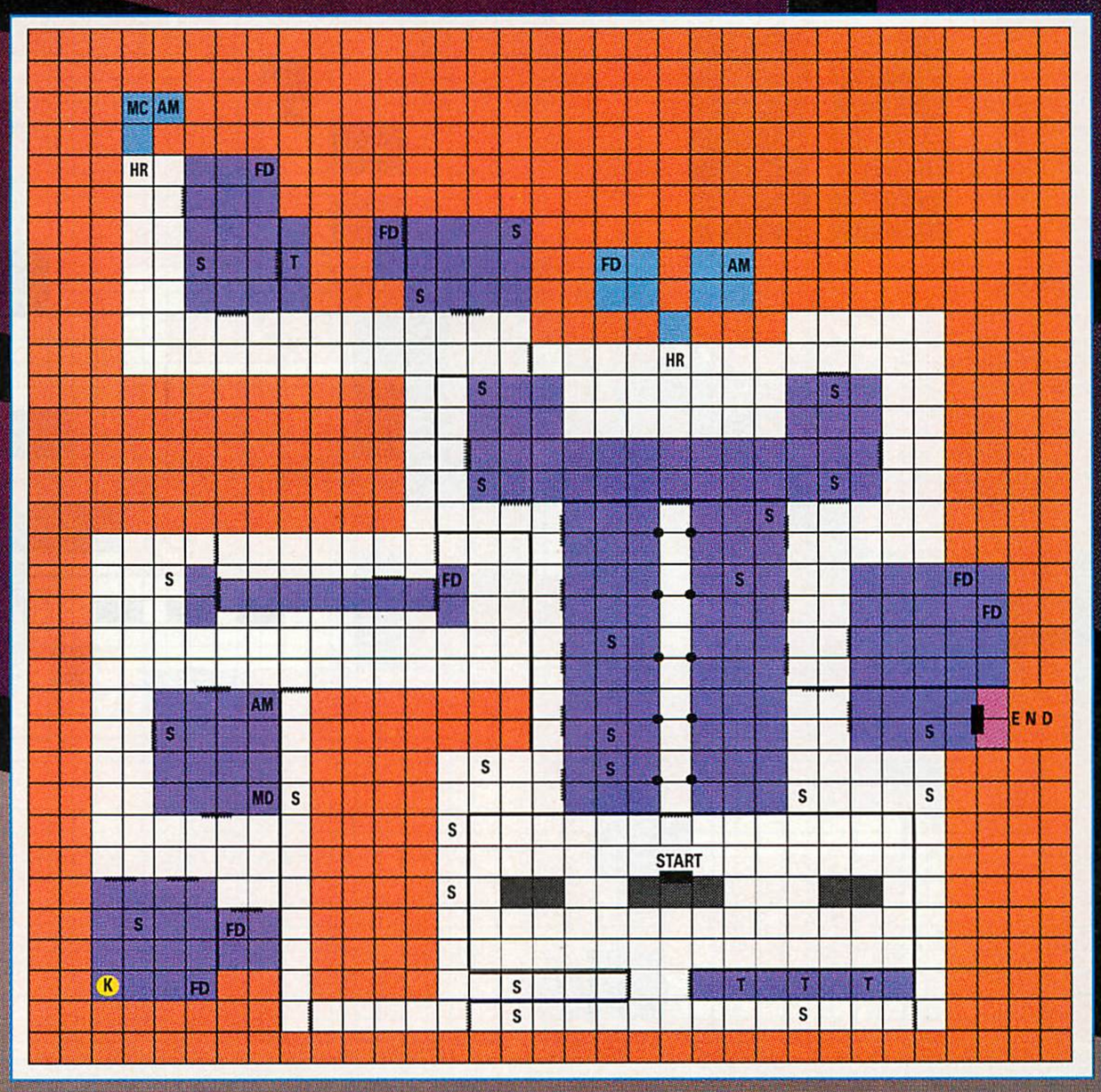


After you ambush this guy located in the north room at the end of the hallway with columns, shoot the soldier on the left and immediately charge at the other soldiers coming at you, before they fix in on your position.

Run a zigzagging pattern when charging enemies so they do not fix in on your position.

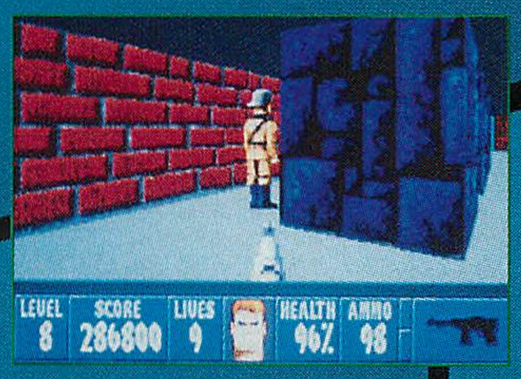


Good! Conserving ammo has paid off. Now that you've found the key, it's time to replenish your health before going on to Level 8.

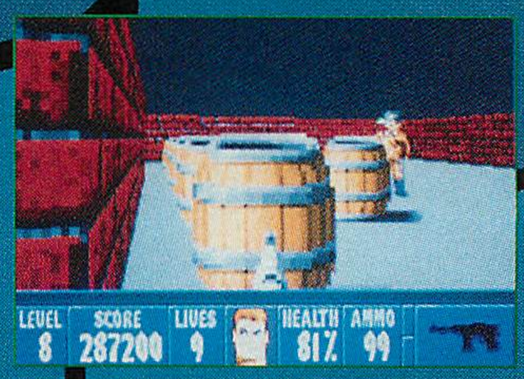


LEVEL 8

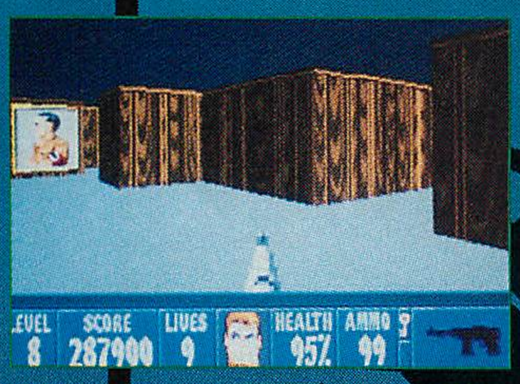
Don't let the elaborate layout of this level's design intimidate you. It's a lot easier than it first looks.



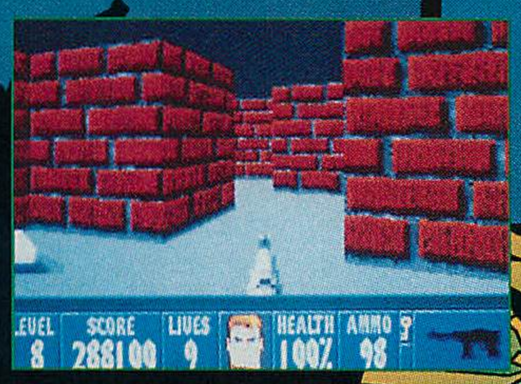
Once you come out of the first room, take out the guy standing behind the wall.



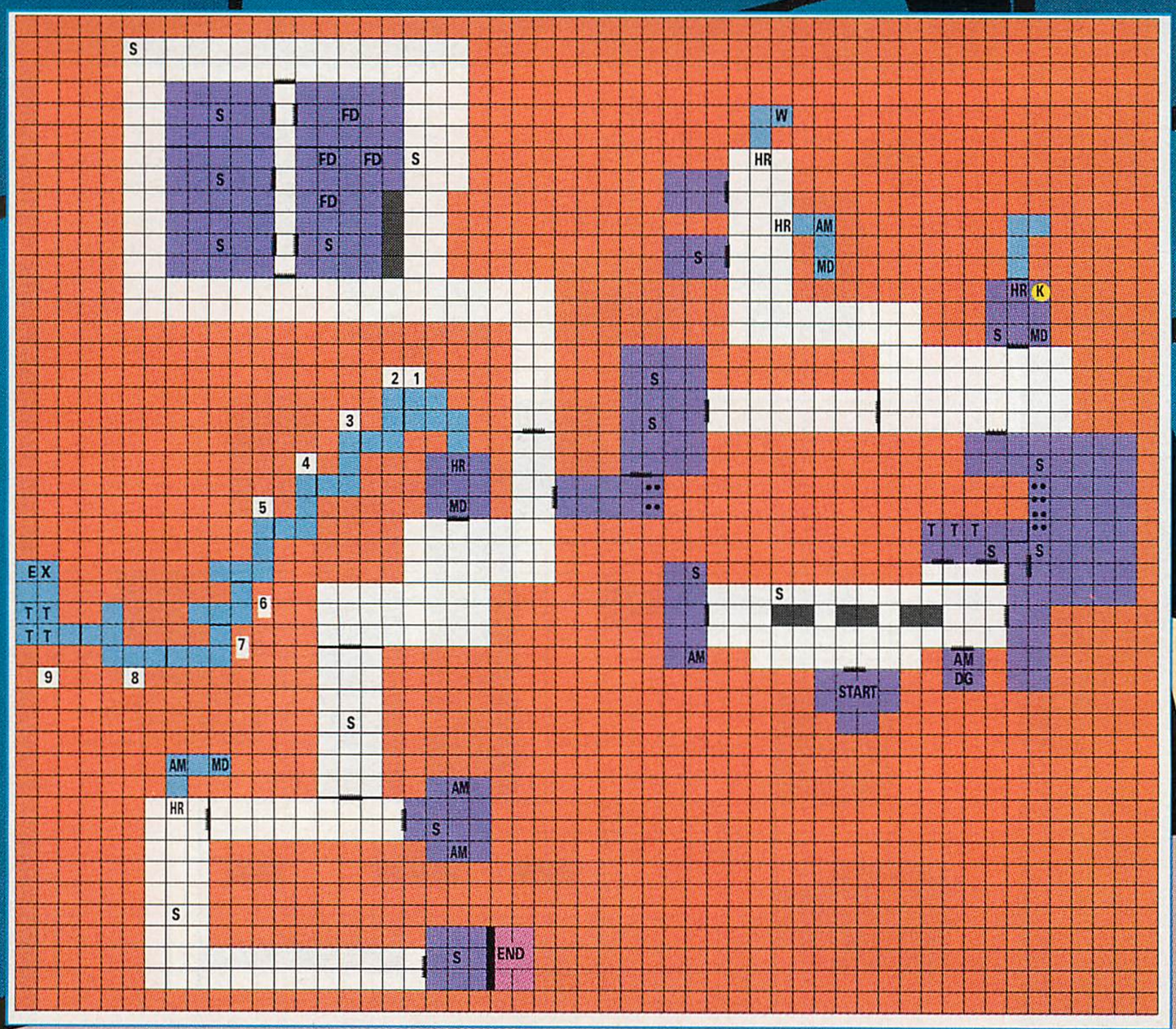
You might be able to easily shoot this soldier, but there's one standing on the other side of the canisters who will take shots at you while you are fighting the first soldier. Stay away from the big clearing during the firefight.

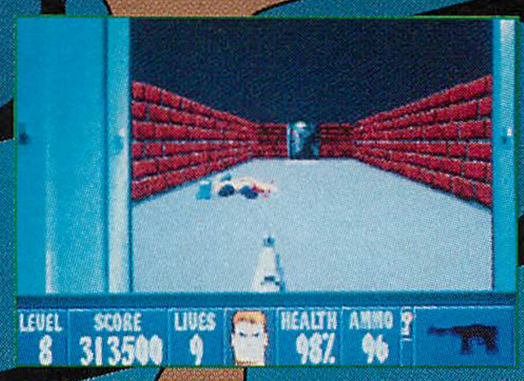


This level has more hidden rooms than any other level; use that to your advantage before entering new areas. Also, you won't find as much treasure as in previous levels.



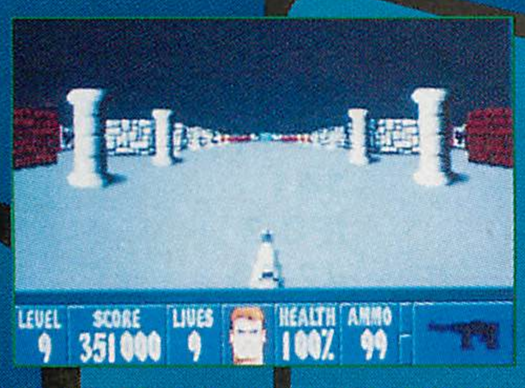
Don't stop here! Keep on pushing walls.



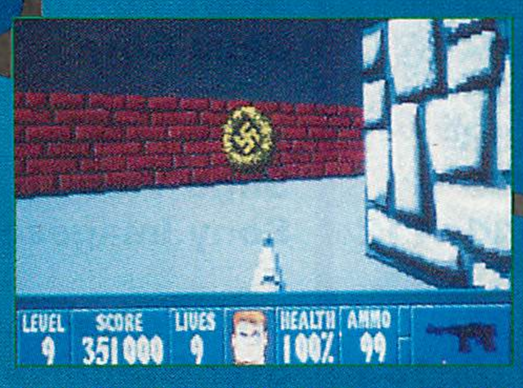


Great! The exit to Level 9, but first go back and max out your health and ammo, since we're going up against the end boss next.

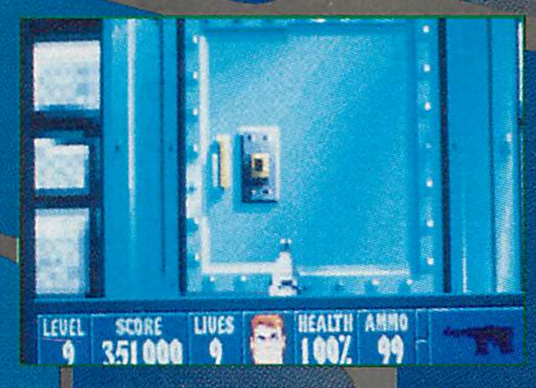
LEVEL 9



Take your time to familiarize yourself with the area, since there are no soldiers located here.

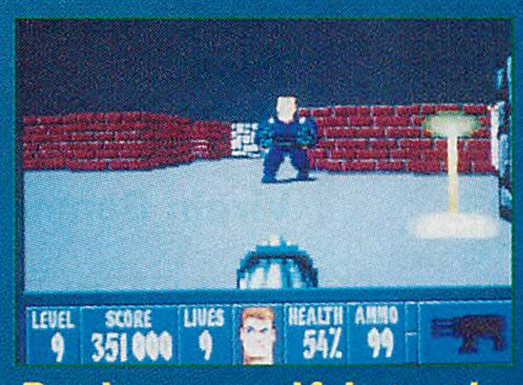


Find the hidden room located behind the third block on the left. You won't be able to defeat the end boss unless you have access to the good stuff inside.



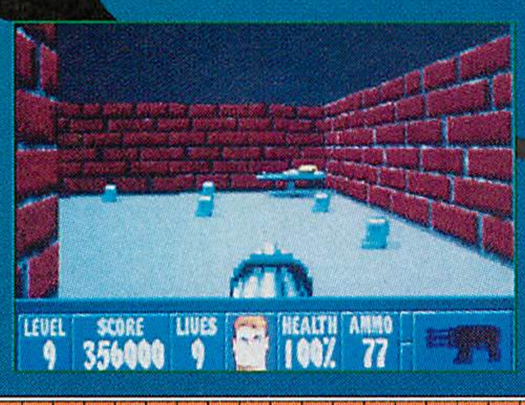
Now we're ready to go after Günther! Stand directly in front of the door at the north end of the hall.

Open the door and begin to fire continuously with your machine gun. As you fire, run backwards (hit and run).

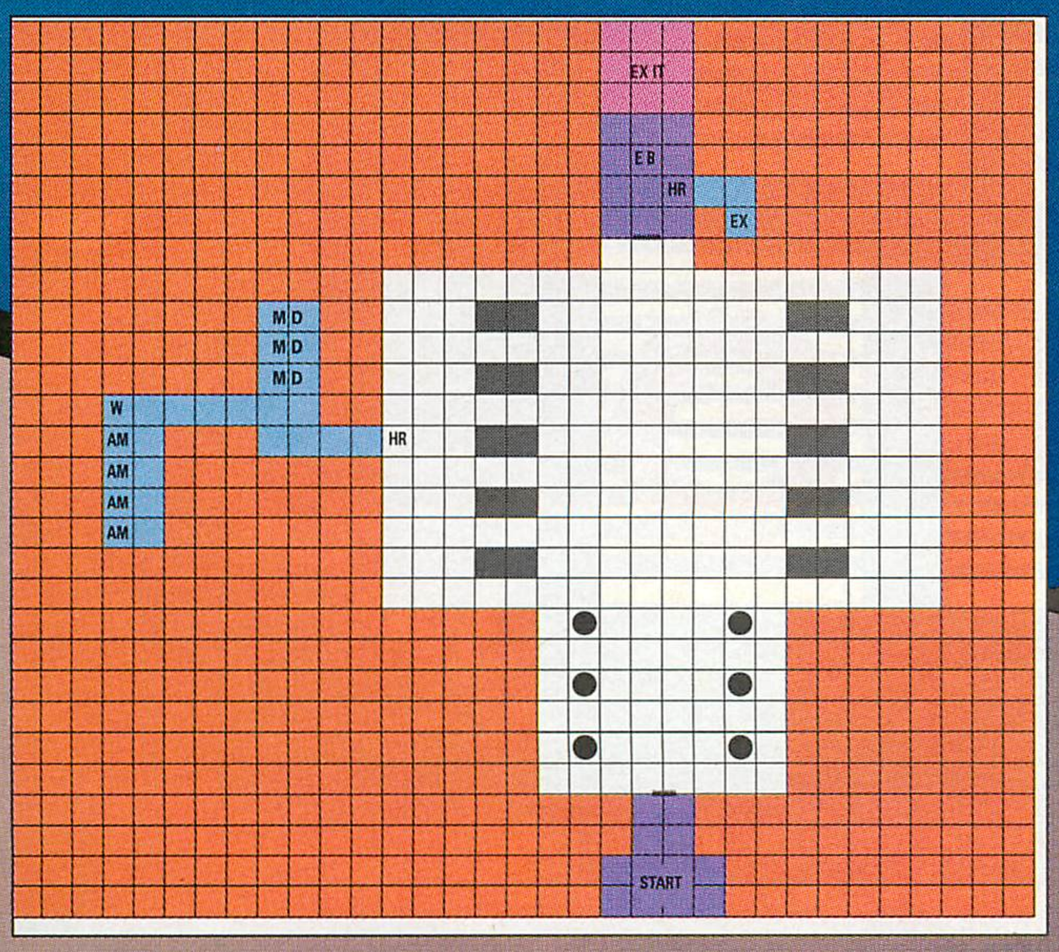


Back yourself into the southeast corner of the hall, behind one of the walls, and let him come after you. You have the speed advantage.

Your health should be less than 60% at this point. When you make visual contact with him again, fire and then head west, making a break for the hidden room.



Recharge your health and ammo, and then wait for him behind the corner opposite the machine gun.



Now! Let him have it with all you can dish out, but try to stay out of his line of fire.

If you succeed, freedom awaits!

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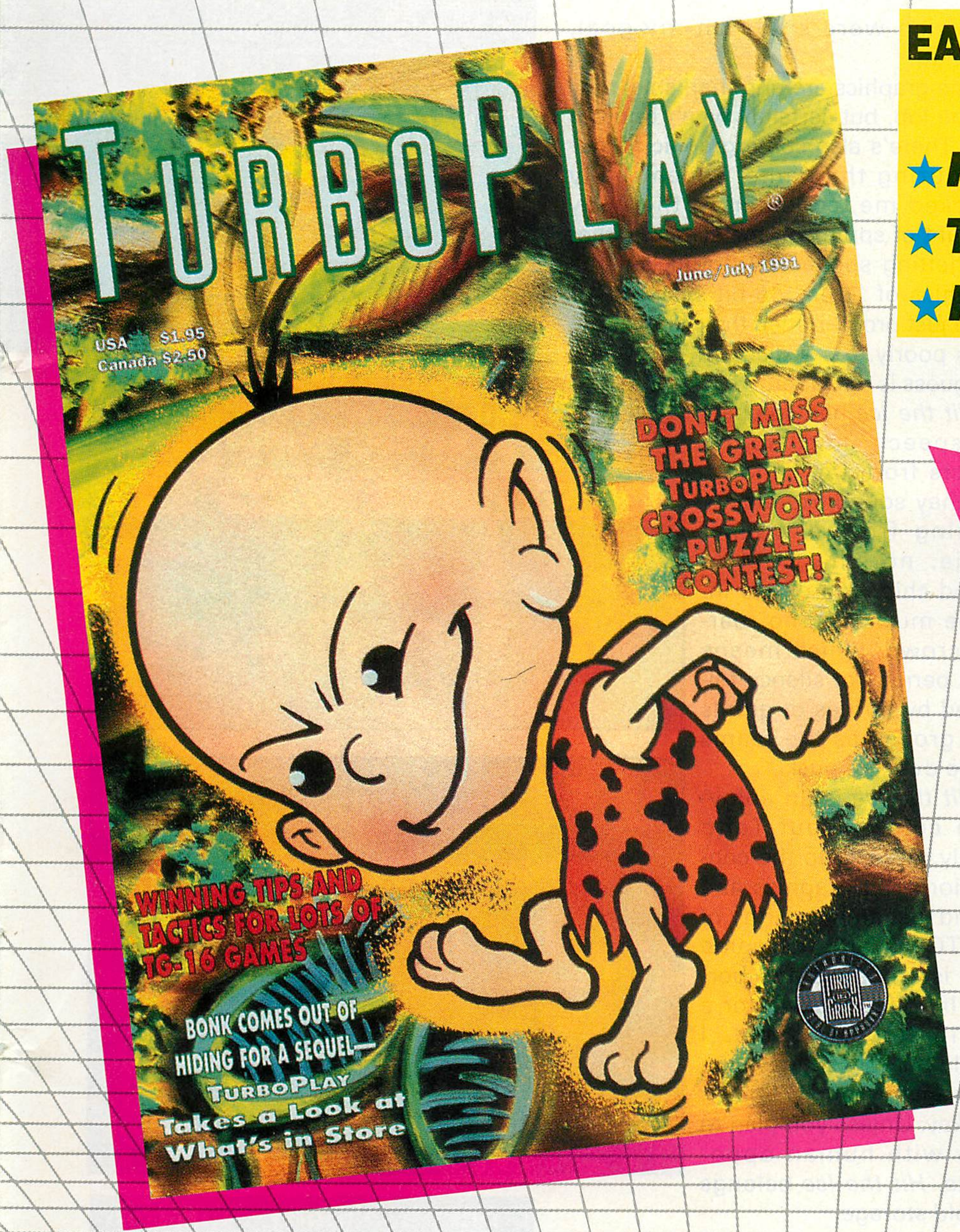

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CMYAW

Continued from page 69

Hit the Ice

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16/ Turbo Duo ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

I think happy thoughts about the coin-op version of *Hit the Ice*, mainly because I ordered a pizza just before running into it for the first time. The pizza was very good—a bit too much tomato sauce—but *Hit the Ice* was great. I never spent fanatical amounts of time or money on it, but I played it enough so that I was really looking forward to the TG-16 conversion. Can you say "major letdown"? I thought that you could.

Hit the Ice offers three modes of play: Vs. Play is a single game for one to four players (bust out that TurboTap!); Championship is a four-game tournament against computer-controlled teams, for one or two players; and Shot Race is a penalty-shot contest.

Each team is made up of two players and a goalie. You select your team from a pool of eight players and four goalies. Each player has a unique (and particularly nasty) "special move" that can be used to wallop an opponent. There are no penalties in *Hit the Ice*, and the gangly referee is in the game only for purposes of comic relief, so feel free to let the punches fly.

So, you've chosen your game, chosen your players and you've—that's right—hit the ice. That's when the game goes into meltdown. You spend most of the game madly smashing the buttons to smack your opponents and get the puck, only to have them smack you right back. Most of the game is spent duking it out in the middle of the rink, with very little time in front of either goal. I recall many more shots on goal in the coin-op (most of which were shots on *my* goal, damn it).

The graphics are unremarkable; they do the job, but certainly won't impress you. There's also some graphic flickering during the game, which really shocked me, considering the puny amount of sprites on the screen. Either I'm getting spoiled by the flicker-free graphics of "true" 16-bit systems, or Taito just programmed the graphic routines poorly. (As a die-hard TG-16 fan, my guess is the latter.)

Hit the Ice has snippets of speech and sound effects from the coin-op, but they sound like they're coming from a walkie-talkie, not the TG-16's sound chip. There's no in-game music and no roaring crowd, which means long periods of silence followed by flurries of grunts and groans as the teams battle over the puck.

Hit the Ice is an enjoyable coin-op, but Taito totally messed up the conversion. The graphics and sound just aren't worthy of the TG-16, and the game play is repetitive and boring. If you're looking for a TG-16 hockey game, I would humbly suggest you snag a copy of *TV Sports: Hockey*. Unless you plan to play with human opponents, *Hit the Ice* belongs in cold storage.

—Zach Meston

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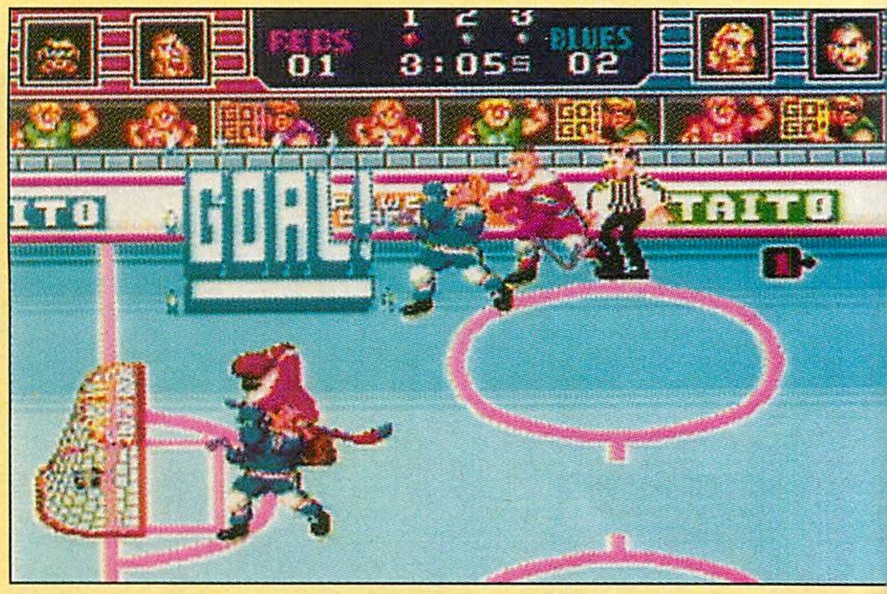

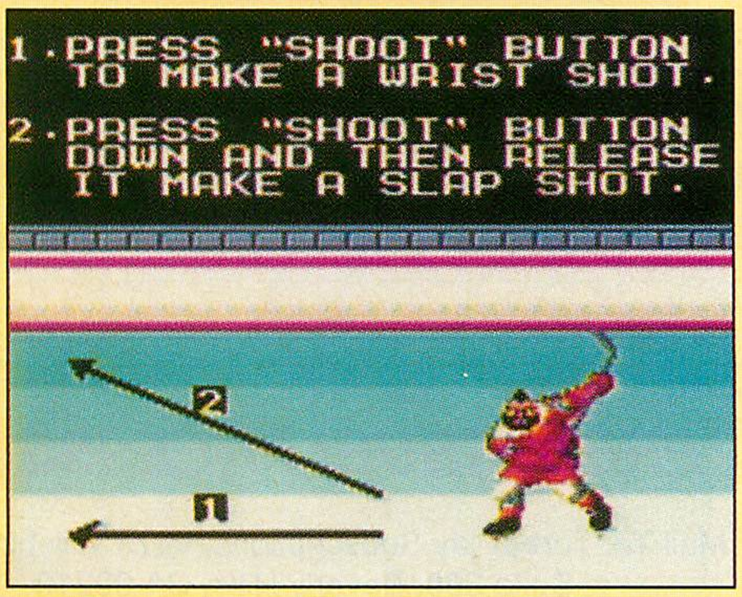

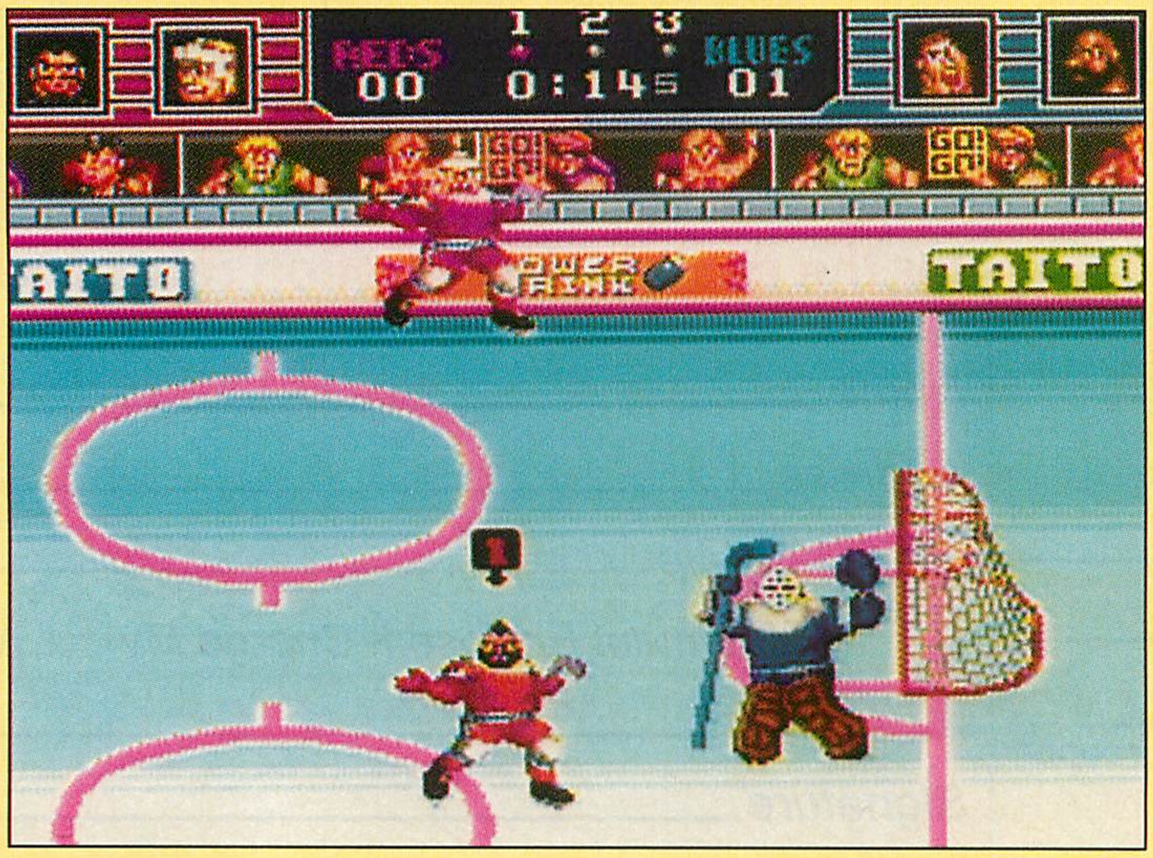

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Chris felt *Hit the Ice* really shined in four-player mode, while Andy liked the high scoring. Mike and Dave agreed that it was clunky and old-fashioned.

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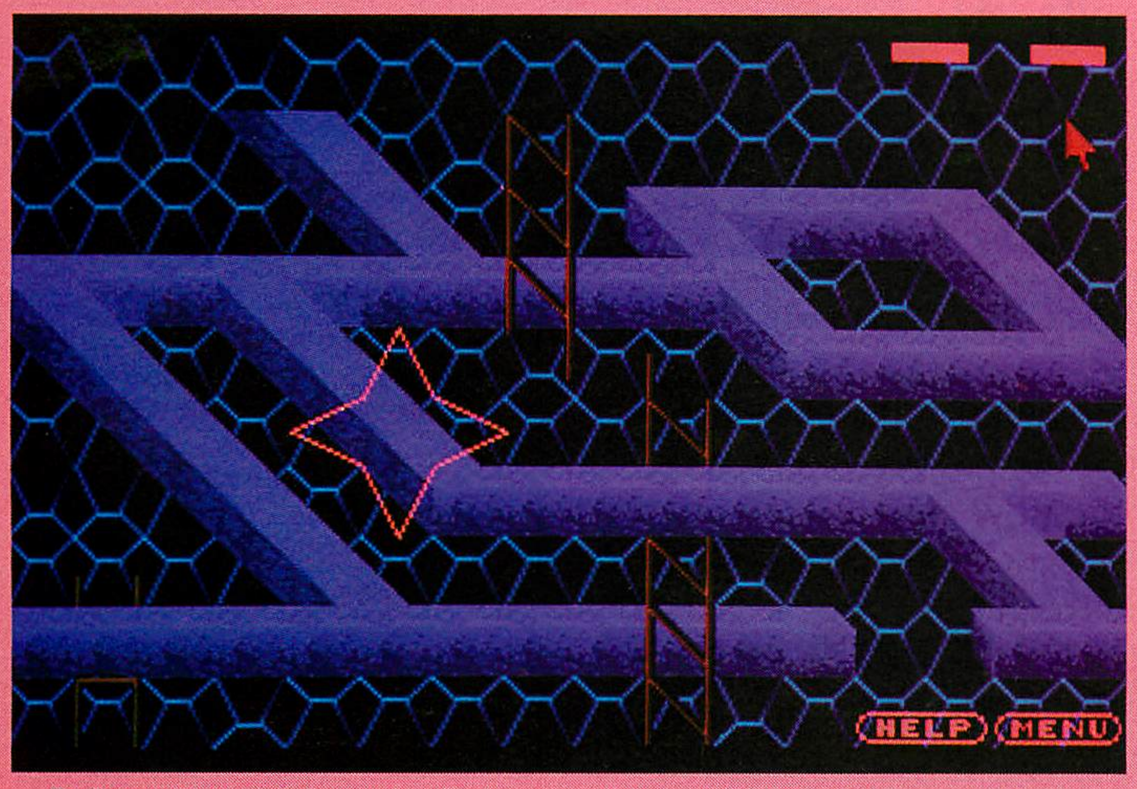

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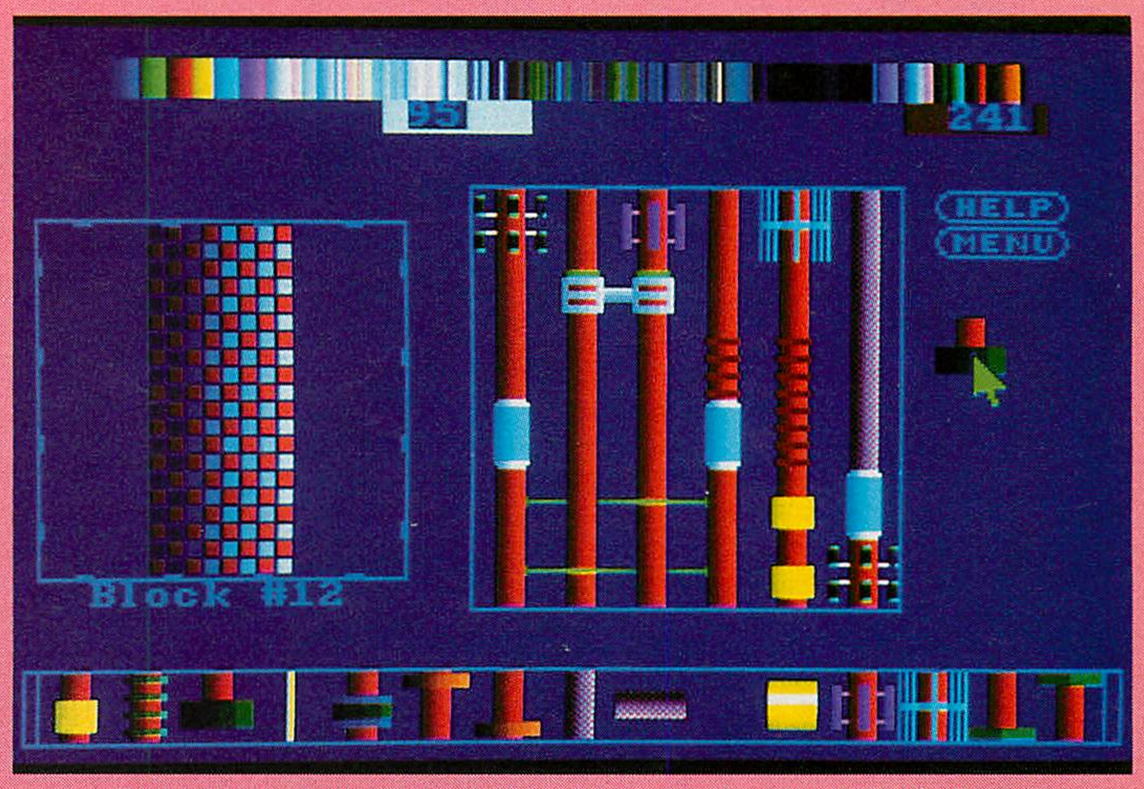
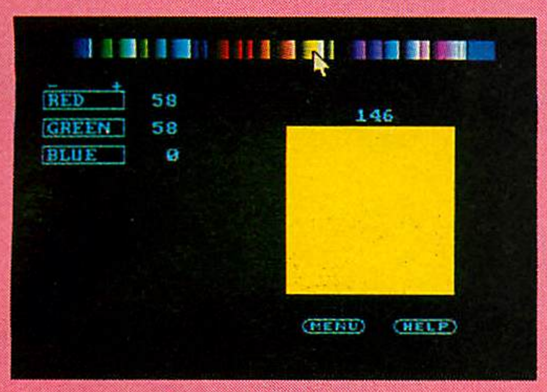
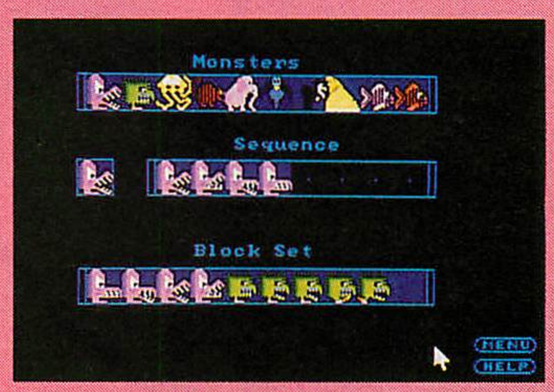


Draw pictures of characters, monsters, and scenes by creating picture blocks.

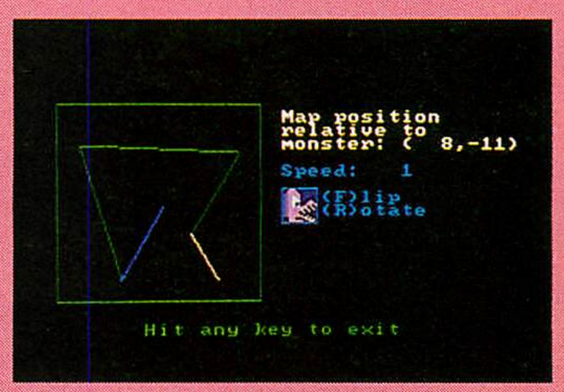


Design Palettes

Import Graphics



Animate Monsters



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FEATURE REVIEW

Star Control II

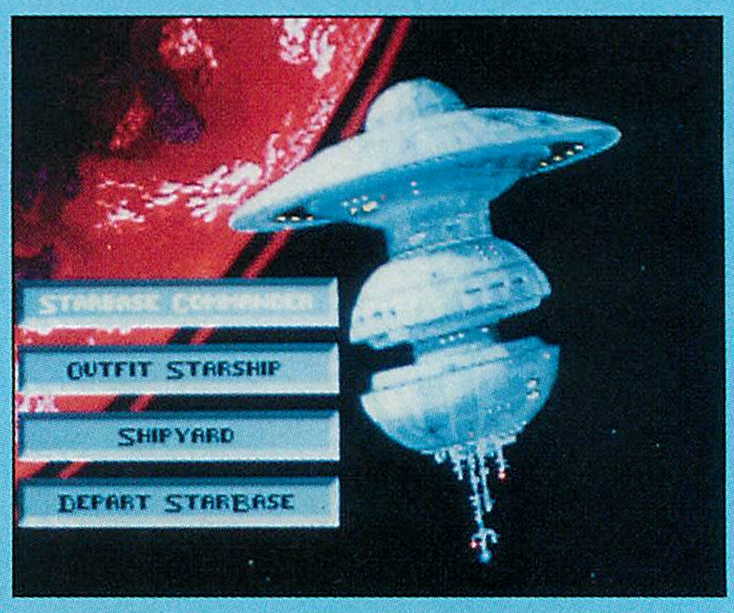
ACCOLADE

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC								■		
GRAPHICS							■			
PLAYABILITY									■	
OVERALL								■		

Way back in February of 1991 VG&CE gave *Star Control* the "Best Computer Science-Fiction Game" award. Accolade had successfully combined the elements of action/strategy and a rich science-fiction story in a game that was a direct descendant of the very first computer game, *Space War*, created by Steve Russell. A great deal of the game's creative success was due to its highly talented programming and design team of Fred Ford and Paul Reiche III (of *Archon* and *Mailorder Monsters* fame with Freefall Associates).

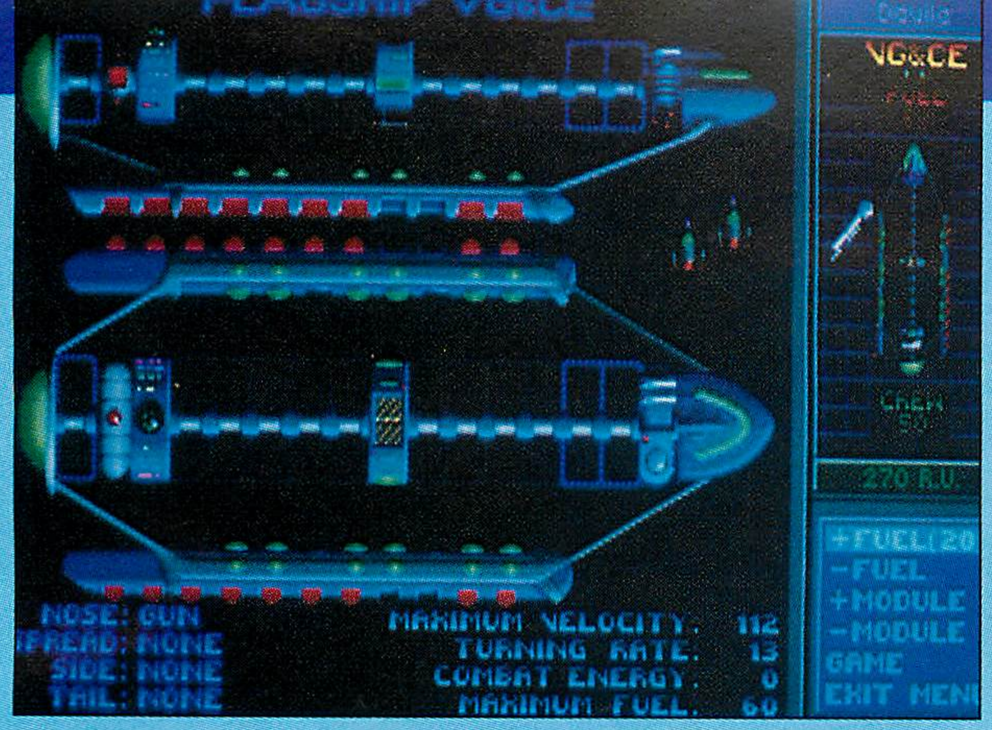
Star Control II follows in its predecessor's footsteps by continuing the heavy-laden science-fiction saga of the Ur-Quan Hierarchy and the Alliance. So complex is this story that 22 pages of the 90-plus-page manual are specifically devoted to either a story on interplanetary space history or alien race description.

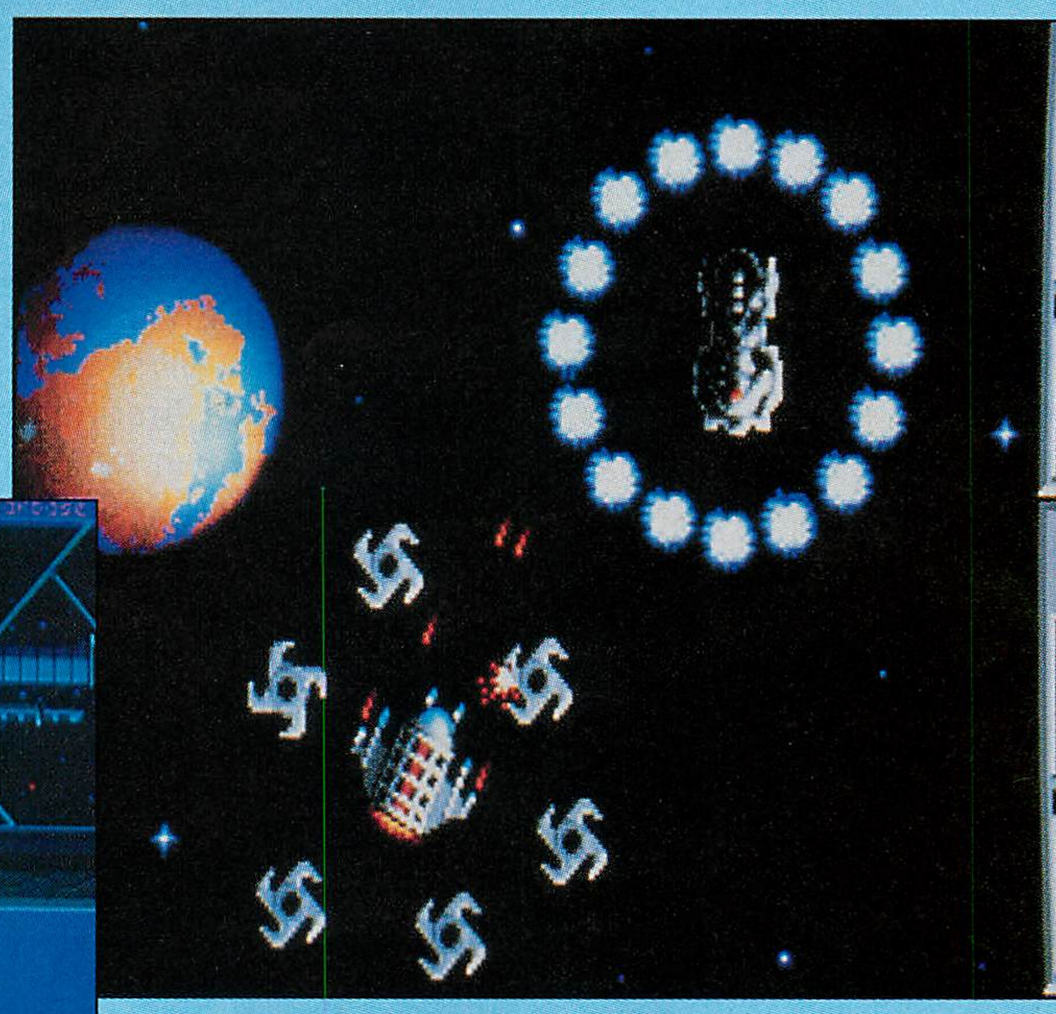


If you're familiar at all with the original game, you'll instantly recognize the Melee mode, now called SuperMelee. For those who are not familiar with *Star Control*, Melee mode is a ship combat, arcade-style sequence that pits the single player against the computer or another player. Also, you are no longer restricted to the preset seven ships, and you can create customized teams with up to 14 ships per team.

Gamers still have the option to play either the full hybrid strategic/combat game or SuperMelee only. New alien races with their own unique space ships have been added to the conflict, adding 11 ships to the availability of choices for a total of 25 different vessels.

The original *Star Control* suffered from a poor layout of the





keyboard control system. This time around, a keyboard utility has been included with the game, so users can set up the key layout to a configuration that works best for each individual preference.

Star Control II's strategic element has received a complete overhaul. The "hard to see" rotating 3-D star field, where you travel up and down its axis, is no longer part of the game. *SCII* now has an interface similar to EA's *Starflight*. The gamer travels from star system to star system gathering minerals and elements from different planets. After you fill the ship's cargo bay, you return to the starbase and unload it, for which you receive monetary compensation. You can then proceed to add (buy) ship modules, which enhance performance of the vessel. Fuel, crew members and battleships can be added to the manifest, so you can create a fairly powerful armada in due time.

Along the course of exploration, you will encounter many alien races,

some of which are familiar. The game automatically updates the star map, showing each of the aliens' sphere of influence or area under control by that race.

SCII is a very long game, and takes about 60 hours to play, according to Accolade. There are times when the game does get caught up in segments of redundancy (e.g., going from planet to planet, collecting minerals), especially when you can't engage enemies in combat because you don't have enough funds to form a formidable enough force to battle them and survive. Then again, this is more a trait of all games in this genre, not just *Star Control II*.

All in all, if you liked the original, and you're a fan of action/strategy games, then you'll love this one.

—Mike Davila

Accolade
5300 Stevens Creek Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95129
(408) 985-1700

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE										
CB										
DM										
MD										

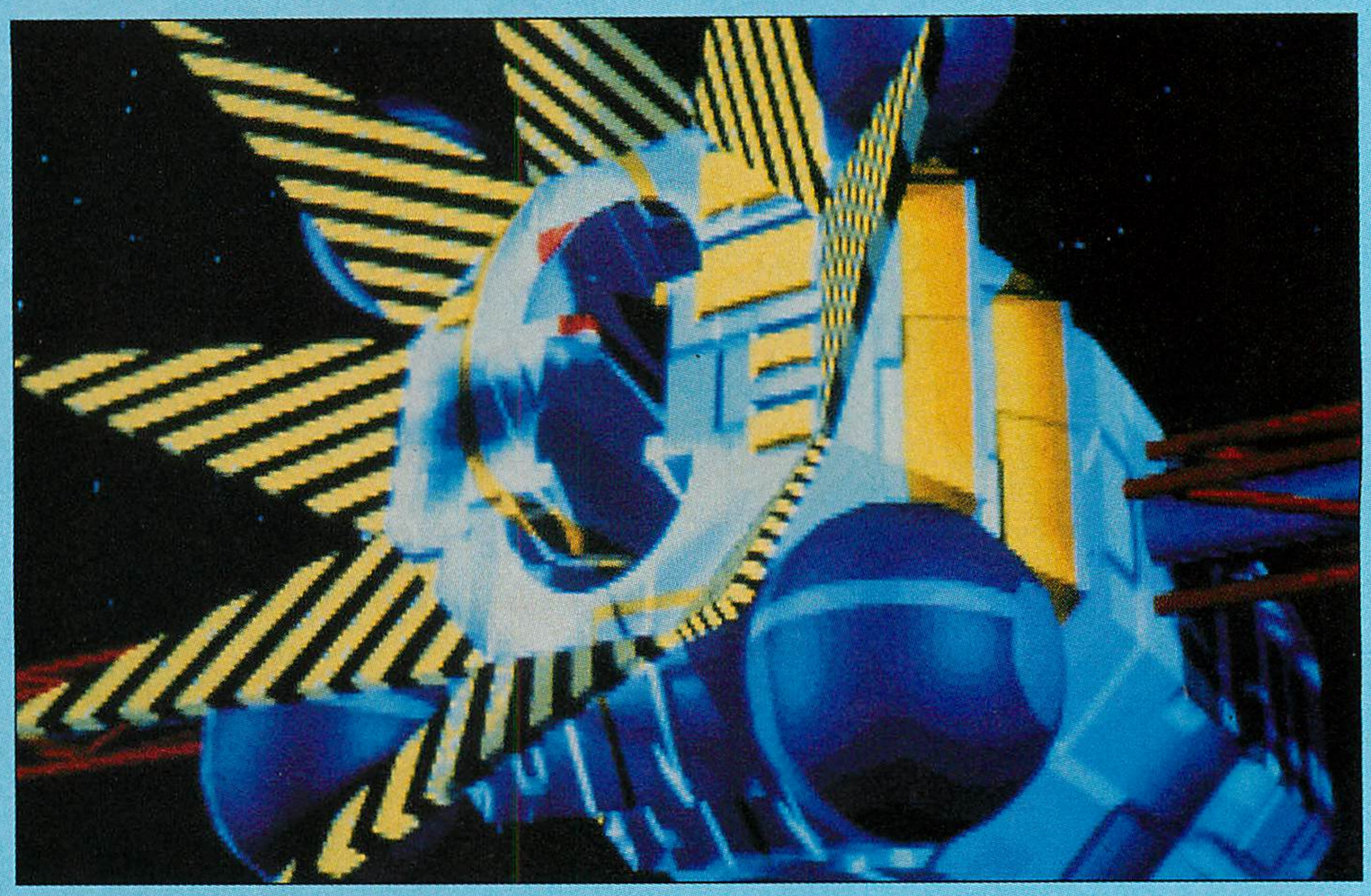
Andy said that the arcade and strategy elements were nicely connected by good animation. Dave and Chris both liked the balance between the two genres.

Mantis XF5700 Experimental Fighter

MICROPLAY

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

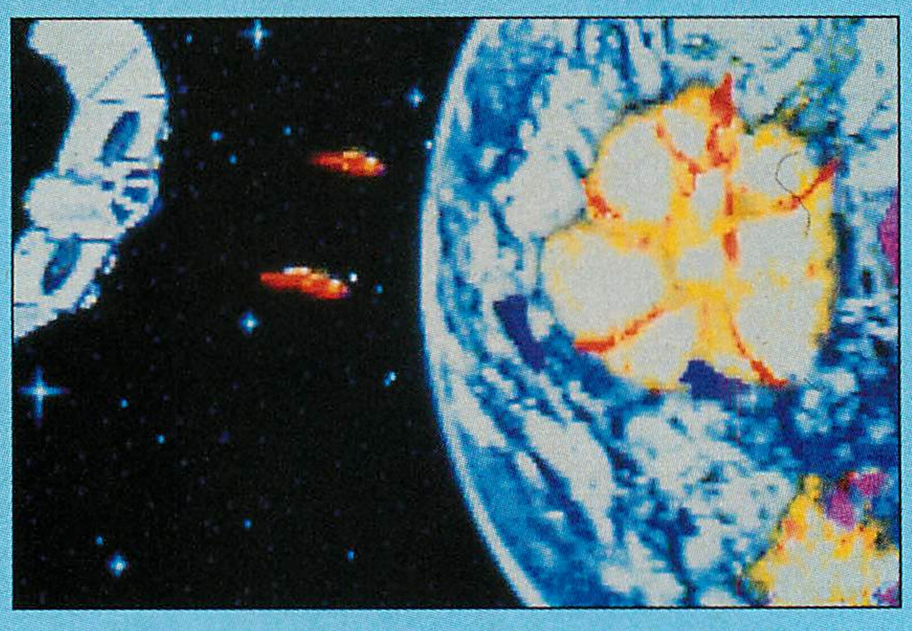
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10



Robert Heinlen's *Starship Troopers* used bugs, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* used bugs, and now MicroProse software has followed the Nebula Award blazed path as Earth once again fights insects from space in its new combat flight simulator, *Mantis XF5700 Experimental Fighter*.

The invasion begins, appropriately enough, with the evening newscaster, who "hatches" her bug in the coolest alien emergence since John Hurt's classic spaghetti dinner. Soon after, the Sirian space fleet nukes earth, taking out 3 billion potential hosts for their little darlings. The governments of Earth then unite to create the Fist of Earth (FOE). Players assume the role of Viper, a fighter pilot with bad taste in clothes but enough skill to warrant his command of the new Mantis space fighter.

While arcade combat is what *Mantis* is all about, continual missions without intermissions would grow monotonous. So, in between mission briefings, a few digitized graphic story lines have been added. Unfortunately, so much attention was paid to the visual presentation that the dialogue lacks the subtlety and logic it needs in most settings. The romance will have you ready to scream "get a room!" or "dump him/her!" while your teammates tend to be hypercritical, even if you consistently score far more kills then any of them.



The one exception is the Berserker subplot. A giant, apparently invincible, spacecraft, the Berserker likes to watch you "play" with the Sirian ships and will set up encounters, as well as destroy anything that annoys it. The Berserker even gives you a nickname, and being on a first-name basis with someone who can easily turn the war one way or another is especially eerie. Ironically, this mechanical creation gets the best lines of anyone in *Mantis*, and hearing it speak might be the best reason to get the CD version of the game, outside of the additional missions.

The toughest part about *Mantis* is flying. In space, there is no gravity to help you keep your bearings, nor is there any air resistance to slow you down.

Many of the early missions seem like cakewalks once missile aiming is mastered, but, later on, the true pilots get tested. When the enemies outnumber the missiles, it is up to the mass-driver cannons to polish the bugs off. Firing a glorified machine gun while hurtling through space is easy if all you want to hit is vacuum. Making it work often requires using the autopilot to get into "totally unsafe" range before veering away from the inevitable collision or missiles. The other way is to lay mines and lead the bugs into them. Again, not an easy task in space.

Those concerned about finishing the game too soon will surely return for their requisite hard time in the flight simulator. Space is not for the weak.

The combat graphics are a mixture of polygons and digitized images, which, theoretically, improves playing speed, but anyone with an older machine will probably want to try a few missions before buying *Mantis*.

Digitized sound effects add the requisite "fiction" feel to space combat, and, though the bugs' first casualty is a fine screamer, it's the squish of the birth that makes the opening sequence worth watching every time before taking control of the FOE's best fighter.

—David S. Moskowitz

MicroProse
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Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(410) 771-1151

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mike liked *Mantis*, saying it "filled the void left by *Wing Commander*." Andy said it was a high-energy simulator; Chris felt it was fun, except for the cheesy music.

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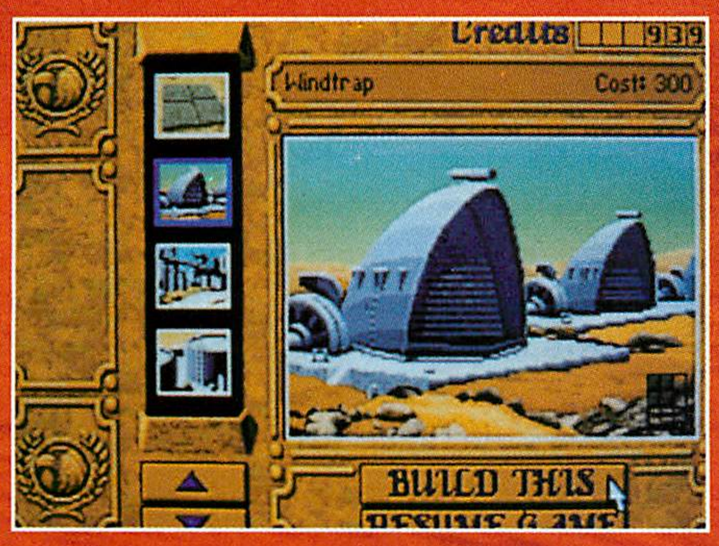

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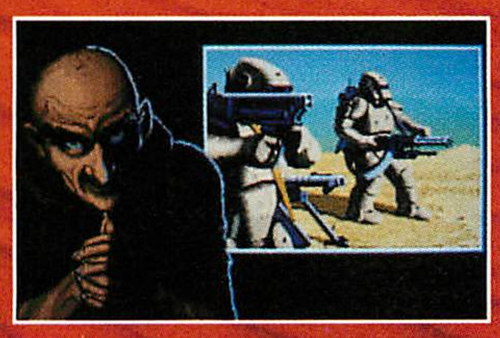

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Rex Nebular and the Cosmic Gender Bender

MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

First came Al Lowe's Leisure Suit Larry. Not too long afterward, Les Manley appeared on the scene. Well, now Roger Wilco has a similar doppelgänger on his tail, a spacejock for hire by the name of Rex Nebular. Like Roger, he manages in his own clumsy way to push all the right buttons for the wrong reasons. Yet, despite the basic similarities, Rex is a distinct enough character to make it quite comfortably, and humorously, on his own.

As the name suggests, *Rex Nebular and the Cosmic Gender Bender* is a wacky, spaced-out quest guaranteed to provide humor in animated adventure form. Rex, interstellar adventurer and womanizer, is hired to retrieve a priceless vase. While a simple task at first glance, our hero soon finds himself both under fire and underwater, shot down and shipwrecked on a not-too-friendly planet—one inhabited solely by women.

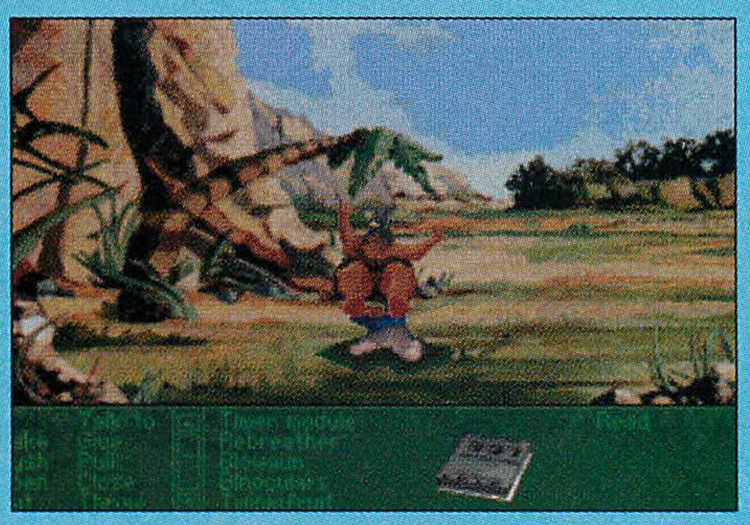
Now, this is not as pleasant a prospect as one might expect. During his stay, poor Rex will be clubbed, imprisoned, experimented upon, considered for breeding stock and have his gender altered on several occasions. In addition, he will meet an untimely (and usually gruesome) demise on numerous occasions.

Rex Nebular is an exceptional first effort animated adventure from MicroProse. Hopefully, it will continue Rex's exploits in future games, employing this same game engine. The intuitive, logically designed interface is fully mouse-driven, with game features accessed via the function keys. Only names for saved games need to be entered from the keyboard.

Graphics are beautifully rendered in 256-color VGA. Rotoscoped animation, however, is what really shines. It features smoother, more lifelike character movement than any other adventure to date!

Exceptional music and digitized sounds are present and accent game play, including atmospheric music reminiscent of *Rise of the Dragon*, and all of the major sound boards are supported.

Though death can be a frequent occurrence in this quest, the inconvenience edge has been removed. After Rex dies, he will automatically be restored to a position just prior to making his fatal mistake—a greatly appreciated feature. The player also has the option of selecting either nice or naughty modes of play. Default is naughty, though the difference between the two does not appear to be very significant.



The game's two negative points are the inability to bypass repetitive animated sequences and the predominantly easy nature of most puzzles in the game. The first is a simply addressed matter for the programmers. The latter requires a little more thought during the game design stage. Greater variety is needed in difficulty level from puzzle to puzzle.

In spite of the technical achievements, humor is what ties the game together as a whole. Being neither too corny nor too suggestive (for most), the humor employed is, by design, both verbal and visual. The only other adventures featuring such a rich measure of humor are those propagated by Lucasfilm.

So, unless one is offended by suggestive content (which can be controlled to a limited extent by changing modes) or has absolutely no sense of humor, *Rex Nebular and the Cosmic Gender Bender* will offer hours of entertainment value. What better way to make the universe a safe place and enjoy oneself at the same time?

—Chuck Miller

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Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(410) 771-1151

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mike and Andy both targeted the great sense of humor *Rex Nebular* is filled with, while Chris thought it was a cool adventure, though too text-heavy for his tastes.

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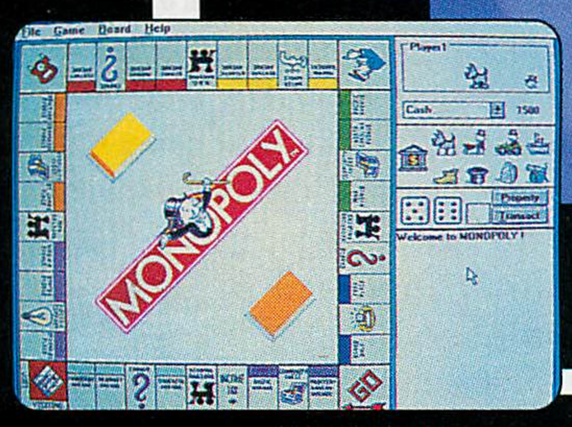
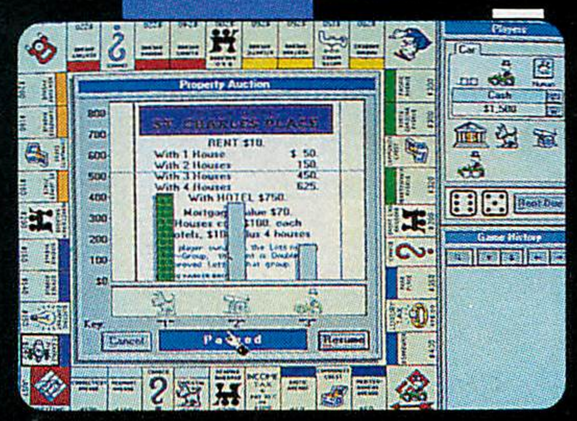
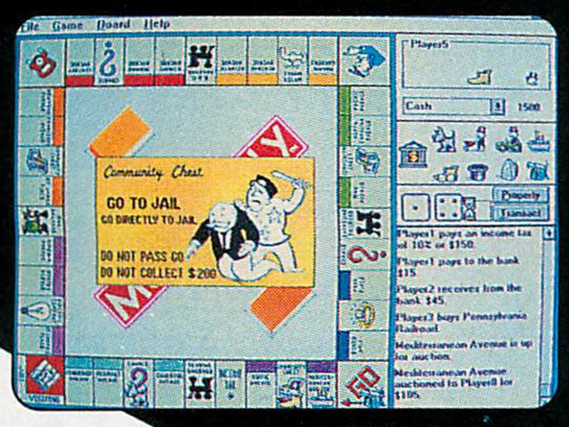


WINDOWS ™ version



IBM PC version



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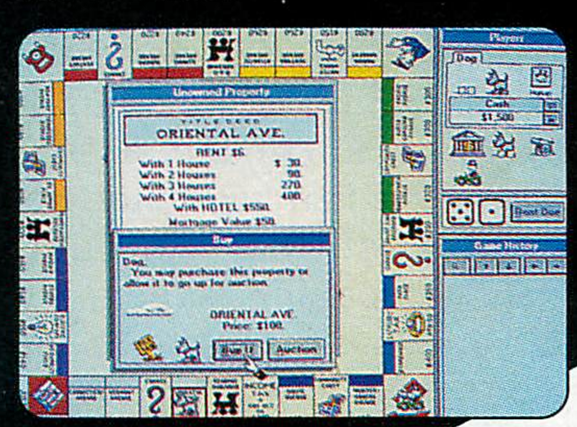

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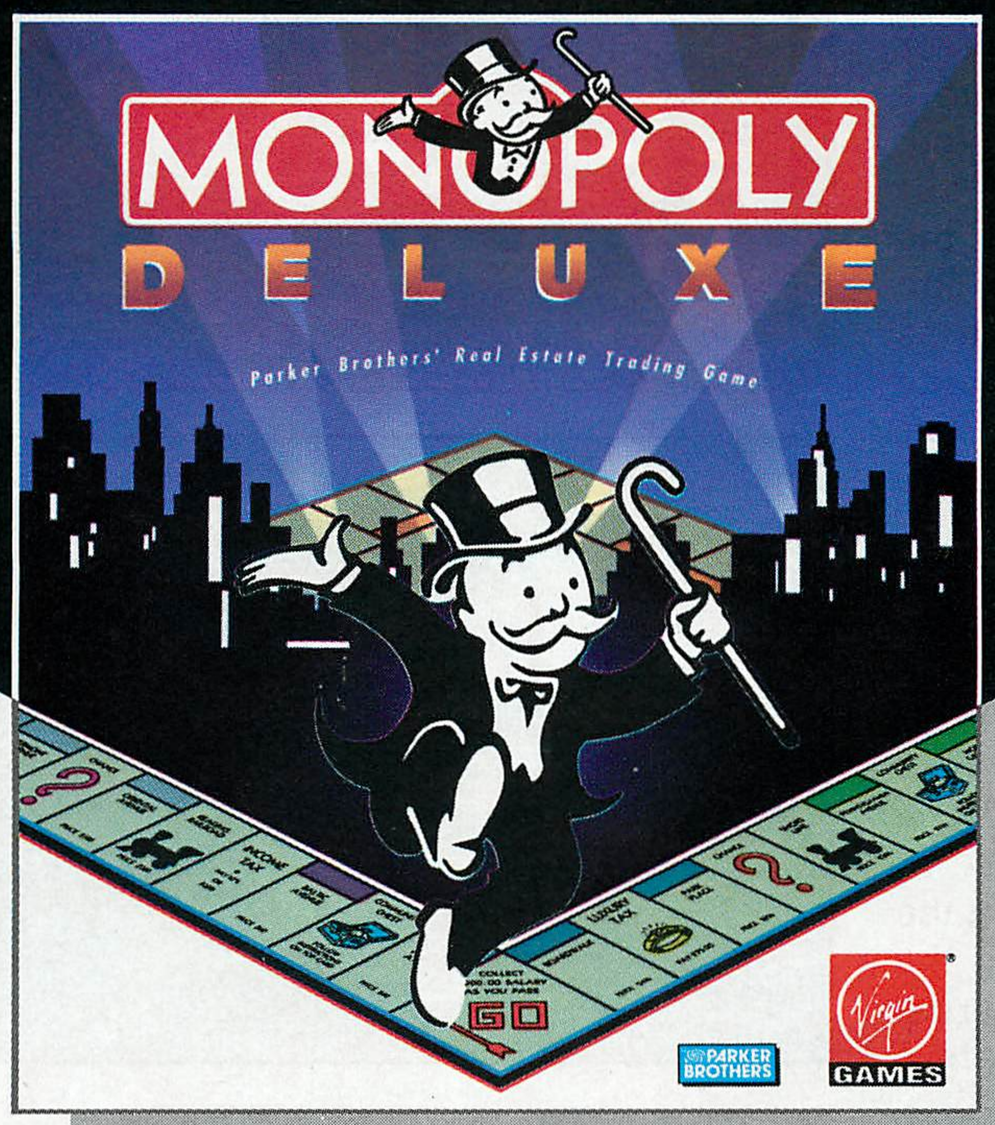

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CIRCLE #147 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Heaven & Earth

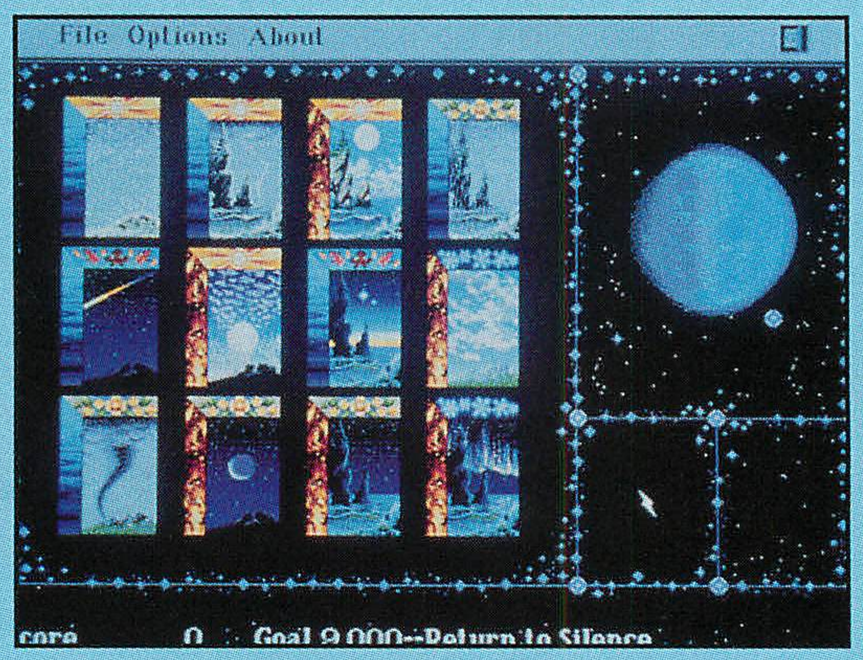
BUENA VISTA SOFTWARE
Versions: IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL								8		

Over the years, brain-stimulating computer games like *Shanghai*, *Ishido* and the classic game of *Go* have offered players a relaxing alternative to the usual array of arcade, flight simulation, sports and RPG games. The creators of both *Shanghai* and *Ishido*, once again, have conjured up an elaborate excursion for the mind with *Heaven & Earth*. Disney's Buena Vista Software takes you far away from its former style (e.g., *The Rocketeer* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*) to a more grown-up approach in gaming. *Heaven & Earth* consists of four sections: the Pendulum, the Cards, the Illusions and the Pilgrimage. The attractive opening screen, known as the Gateway, puts you in an alpine region containing three stone portals and, in the distance, a palace where your Pilgrimage experience begins. The portals are basically practice areas that one can choose to play at random.

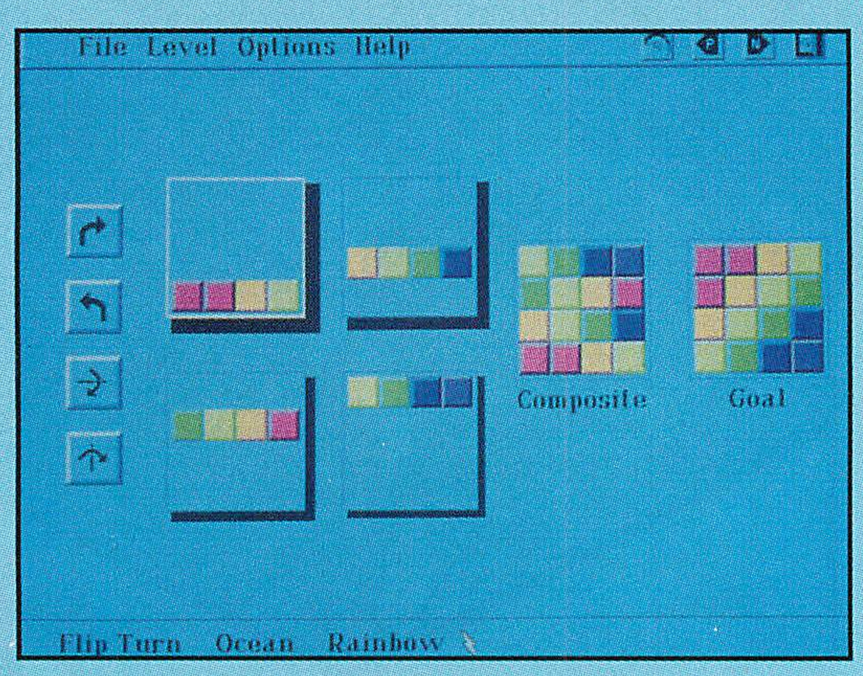
The Pendulum is an exercise in control. A swinging pendulum is suspended above a bowl-shaped field that contains energy vortices which lie below. Your objective here is to capture the positive vortices using the suspended pendulum. By moving the mouse, or using the keyboard's directional arrows, you generate a gentle breeze that affects the direction of the pendulum. When you get the pendulum to skim right above the vortex at an extremely slow speed, you will then capture it. Later levels introduce negative vortices, which, when touched, will send your pendulum in a swinging frenzy. This brings on frustration, as all the positive vortices you've mastered get reset, and, once again, the pendulum has to be brought down to a controllable speed.

The Cards is a game similar to mah-jong or gin rummy. Each card represents a handsomely painted landscape scene, such as a mountain or desert, while the top and side borders show symbols representing elements and seasons. The 48-card deck is divided into 12 suits. Each suit symbolizes one of the 12 months. The idea here is to create tricks with these cards. A trick is accomplished by matching card combinations to achieve the highest possible score. Some examples are: four cards of a specific month, three cards with the same season, two matching elements and other combinations. Certain cards contain a randomly generated celestial phenomenon. These events are presented with a delightful audiovisual display, such as shooting stars, tornadoes and rainbows. The celestial phenomena can either increase or decrease the point count.



The Illusions are a series of 12 different varieties of brainteasing puzzles. Some puzzles demand hand-eye coordination, while others require pure thought. Each illusion has four stages, and each stage has 12 scenarios. This adds up to a mind-boggling 576 different puzzles.

When you feel you're ready, you can enter the Pilgrimage. This ultimate experience combines all three games into a 108-step journey filled with all-new challenges. *Heaven & Earth*'s graphics are wonderful, especially the hi-res Super VGA mode. From the initial cosmic thunderclap, to the gentle sounds of birds and crickets, the audio enhances the serenity and beauty of the game (Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Tandy and Disney Sound Source supported). Sit back, relax and challenge your intellect with *Heaven & Earth*.



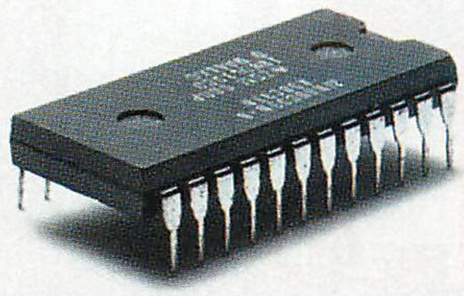
—Joseph Cataudella

Buena Vista Software
500 S. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521
(818) 562-1762

EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE									9	
CB					5					
DM								8		
MD								8		

Chris felt that it was "weird" and "aimed at too narrow an audience." Dave agreed that it was too esoteric, but Andy felt it hit the puzzle genre right on the nose.



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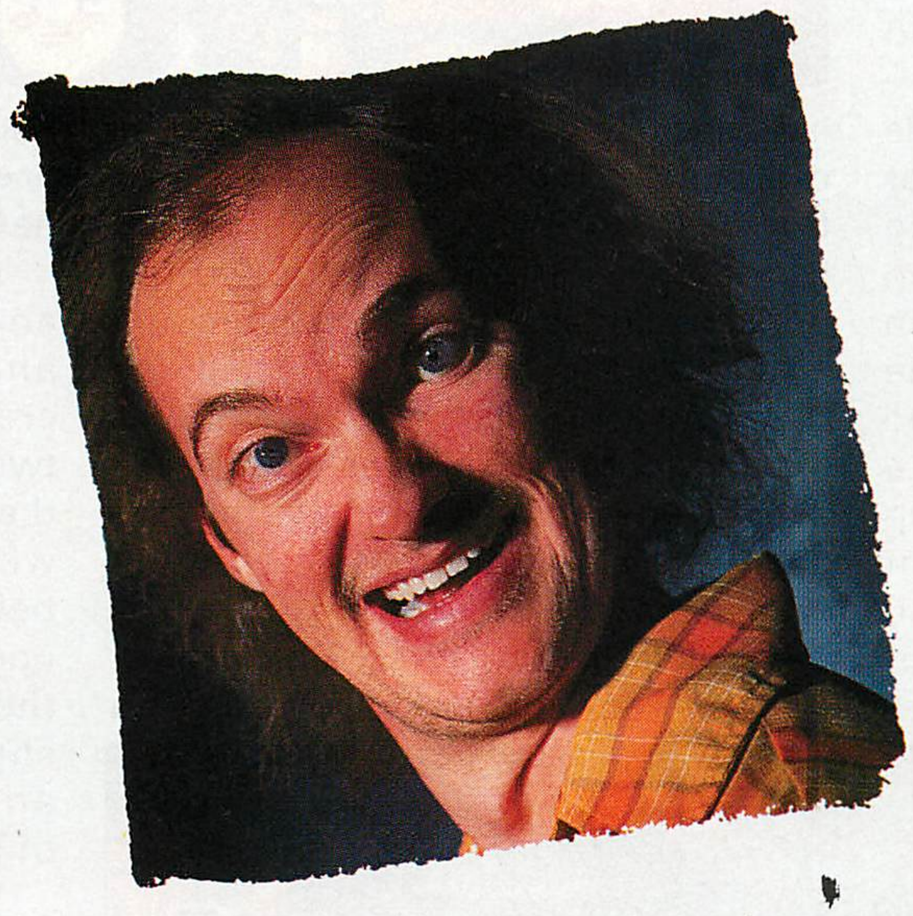

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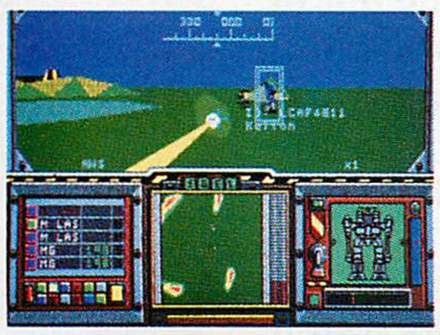

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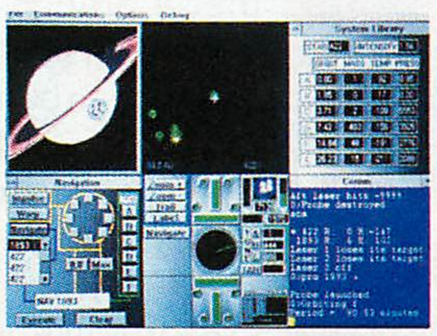

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Gobliiins

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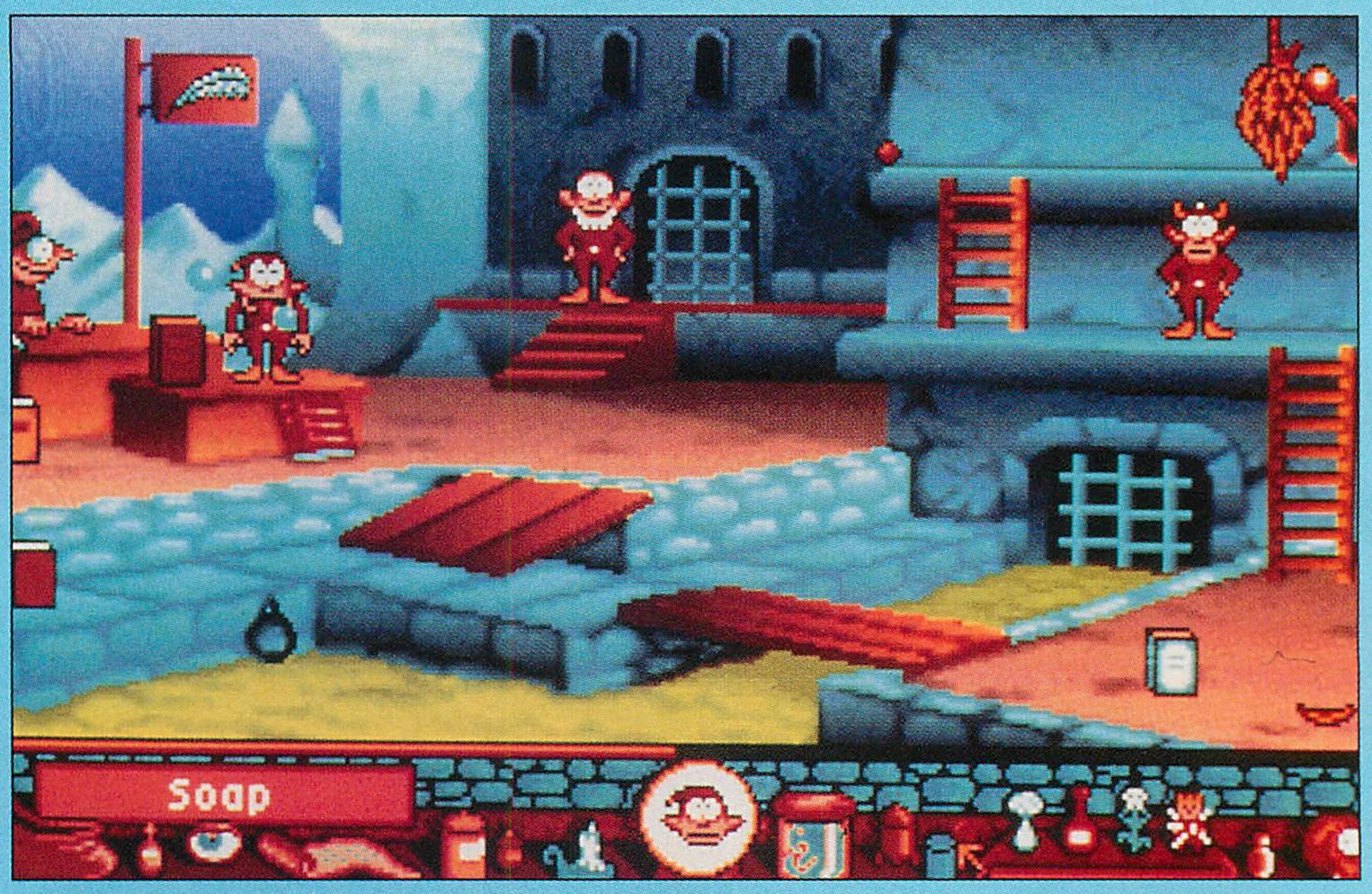
Version: IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

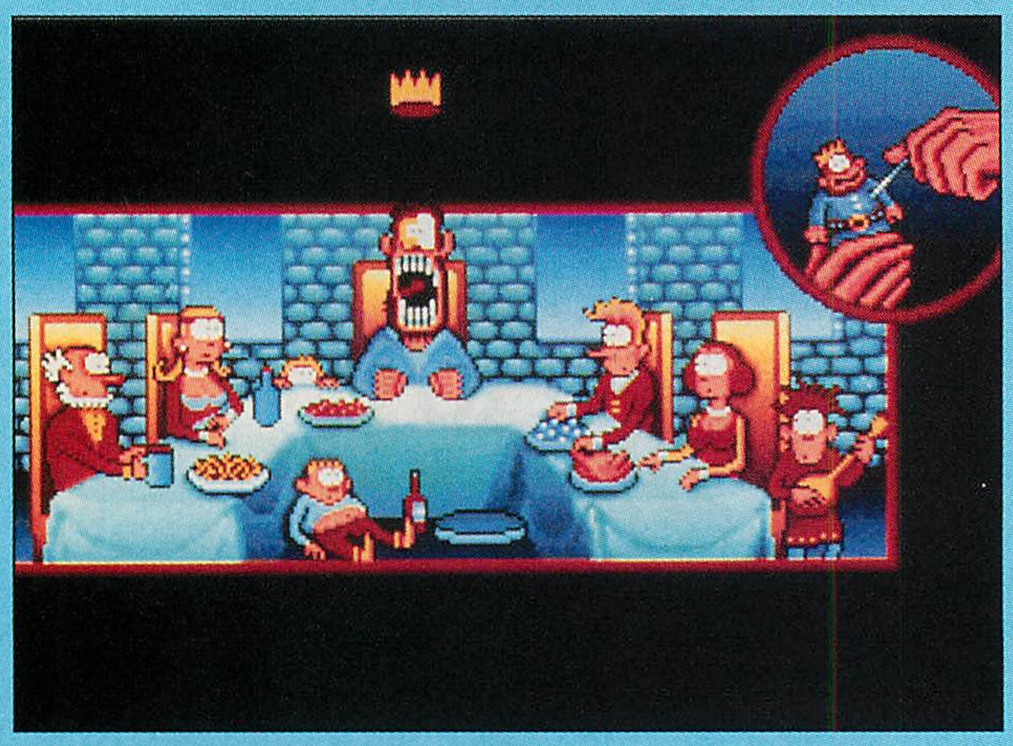


Think you're pretty clever? Figure you've got adventure games mastered to the point where even Sierra can't trip you up? Then have I got a game for you! *Gobliiins* (yes, with three i's) is a delightful mix of adventure and puzzle gaming that will leave your gray matter positively fried. This game is tough, folks, but being perplexed has never been so much fun.

In *Gobliiins*, you control three little guys, each of which has a particular talent. Bobo is a warrior, who, being skilled in most things physical, can punch and climb. The magician in your trio is named Hooter, and he casts spells that change objects into new forms. Finally, Dwayne, the technician, has a talent for picking up objects and using them in different ways. Using these three gobliiins, you must solve screen after screen of flustering fantasy fun.

Although each screen contains visual clues, you'll have to crank up your gobliiins and get them working hard, trying many combinations of commands to solve the current puzzle. Are there any objects that Dwayne, the technician, can pick up and use? If not, can Hooter, the magician, create an object for Dwayne to grab? And how about Bobo? Is there any place he can climb or anything he can punch? Trial and error is the key, but you don't have an unlimited number of attempts. Your three gobliiins are allotted a certain amount of energy, and when it's depleted, the game is over.

How tough is *Gobliiins*? Well, each scene varies, but let's look at the first scene as an example. (If you don't want to see a solution, skip to the next paragraph.) First, Bobo must punch a rock column, which causes a horn from the top to fall to the ground. Then, Dwayne must pick up the horn and blow into it, causing so much noise that a branch falls out of a tree. Hooter's spell casting abilities must then be applied to the branch, which changes it into a pickax (a tool you need in the next scene). Finally, Dwayne must pick up the pickax to finish the scene. Until you complete all of these steps, you are not allowed to proceed to the next puzzle.



Luckily, all this puzzle solving is anything but boring. Bobo, Hooter and Dwayne are enchanting creatures whose antics are sure to twist your face into a grin. Whether they're tapping their feet impatiently while waiting for their commands, being bopped on the head by some unexpected falling object or rubbing their ears after a particularly loud shriek, these fellows' expressions and reactions are a castleload of laughs.

When you combine Pierre Gilhodes' impeccable cartoon art with the game's wit, you wind up with a brainteaser that'll delight the whole family. In fact, although younger children will need a lot of help solving the puzzles, once they know what to do, you'll have a hard time getting your turn at the computer. If you've a hankering to put your wits to the test, *Gobliiins* is just the game to do it.

—Clayton Walnum

Sierra On-Line
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Andy called it a nice evolution of the *Lemmings* genre, but Dave brought up that *Gobliiins* is much more difficult too. Mike couldn't stop laughing.

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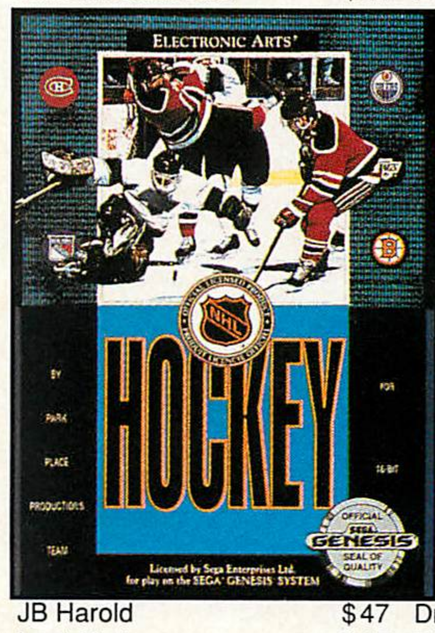

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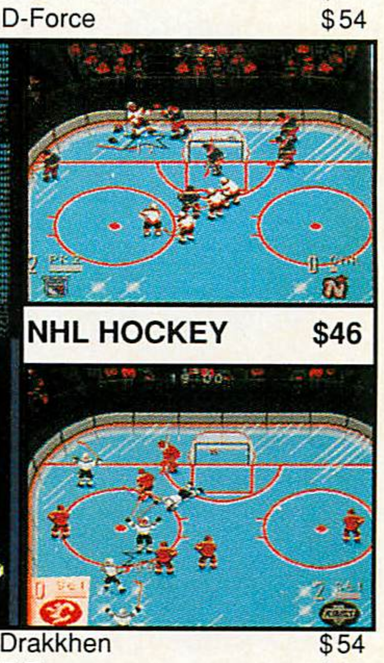

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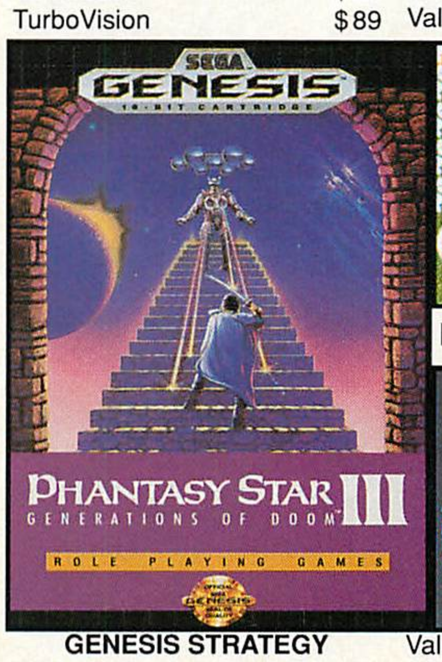

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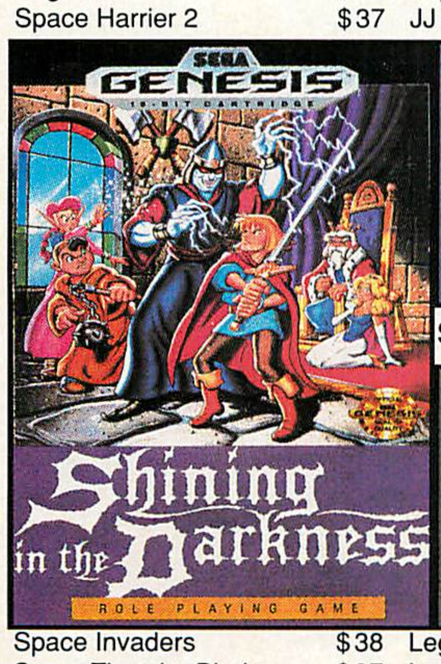

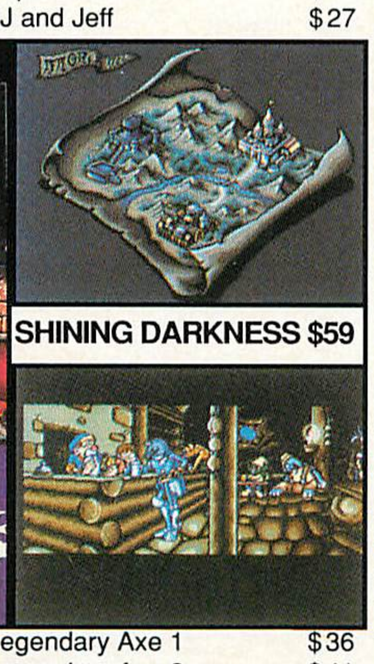

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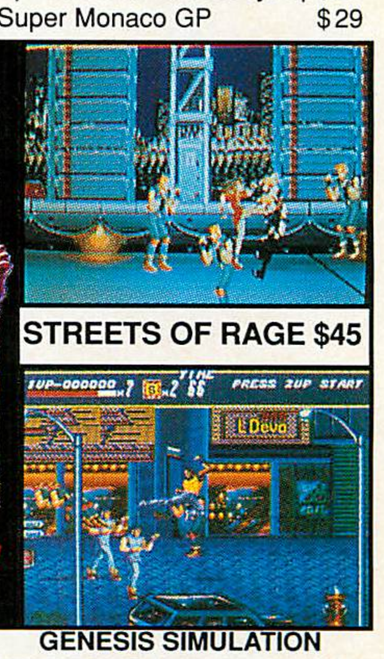

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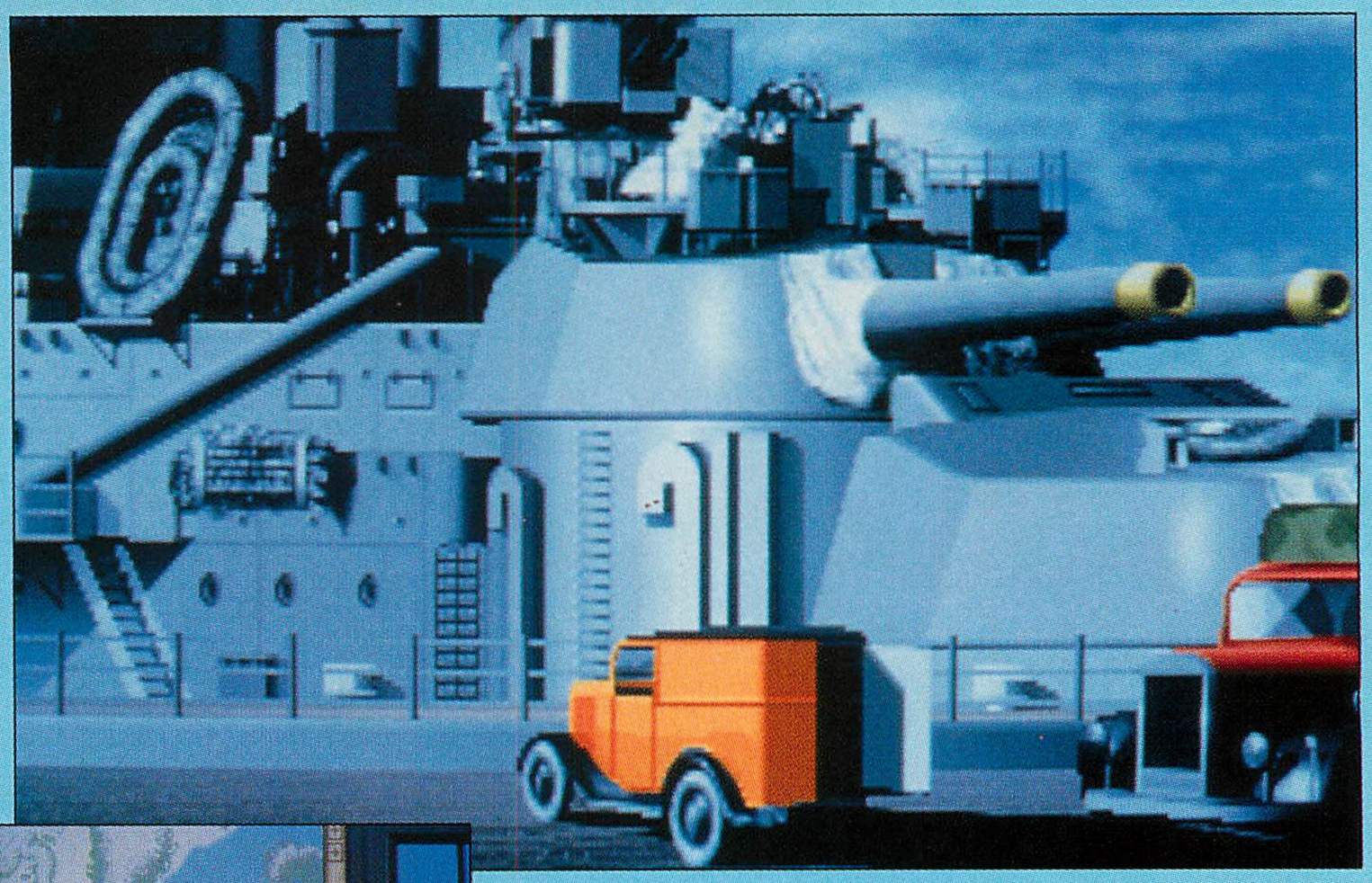
Great Naval Battles of the North Atlantic 1939-1943

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
GRAPHICS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
PLAYABILITY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
OVERALL	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Elaborate, historically accurate naval simulations must sell very well indeed; there have been dozens, dating back to the early days of computer gaming. They have gone from generalized sea battle games to narrowly focused time capsules. I wouldn't be at all surprised to someday see one titled *Great Sea Battles of the Bay of Fundy: April 5, 1942, 1900-1915 Hours.*

As a simulation, *Great Naval Battles of the North Atlantic 1939-1943* is very well done, with strategic depth that I couldn't even begin to plumb. It's less a game than it is a doctoral dissertation. The amount of detail is mind-numbing to me, but detail is what simulations are all about, and simulation players will love it. *GNBNA* uses the usual combination of maps and views of and from the ships, giving the player endless control over what's going on. The game does, thoughtfully, leave the amount of control up to the player; it can range from almost completely automated (for couch-potato players) down nearly to the bilge pumps. Depending on how much time you want to spend with it, you can either play a single scenario (there are many to choose from) or wage a full campaign. There's even on-line history so you can see how your efforts compare to historical reality.

The graphics in simulations started improving dramatically a couple of years ago, and *GNBNA* continues the trend. For the most part, the artwork is skillfully drawn and, in places, even dramatic. The animation, though, gets a little jerky when the game is sped up. The sound effects are adequate, but minimal. Of course, how many sound effects can there be out in the middle of the ocean? Overall, the game's production values are good, but there's certainly no original thought in its design. It has all been done before.

There are some things about *GNBNA* that I don't like. For instance, endless messages keep popping up to keep you informed about the damage, status and so on. I tried turning them off but still got more of them than I was interested in seeing, and I couldn't get them to go away until I clicked on them, hit the keyboard or waited for them to disappear. That's only a minor annoyance, however, compared to the manual. Like too many other simulations, the manual is filled with minutiae on the ships involved, the history of the period and information about the game menus and features. What it doesn't have is anything about how to go about *playing* the game. I suppose the game's designers assume that anyone who's going to buy a game like this already knows how to play it, but a tutorial or walk-through is sorely needed.

The problem with historically accurate war simulations like this one is that they are essentially boring for anyone who isn't an aficionado of the genre. If you are a fan, then *GNBNA* will give you months of enjoyment; if you're not, five minutes with it is too long. Last weekend, I scraped and repainted windows. This weekend, I played *Great Naval Battles of the North Atlantic 1939-1943.* Watching the paint on my windows dry was a lot more fun.

—Tom Malcom

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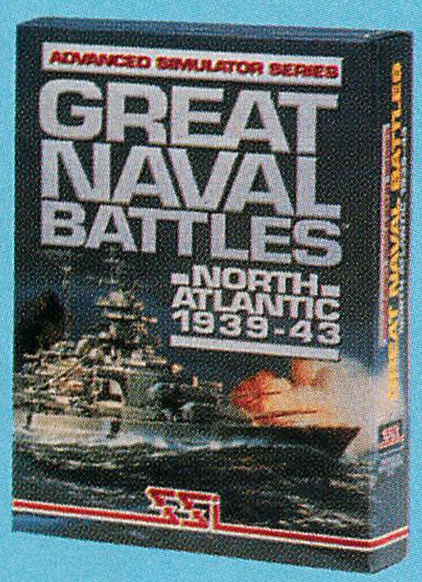
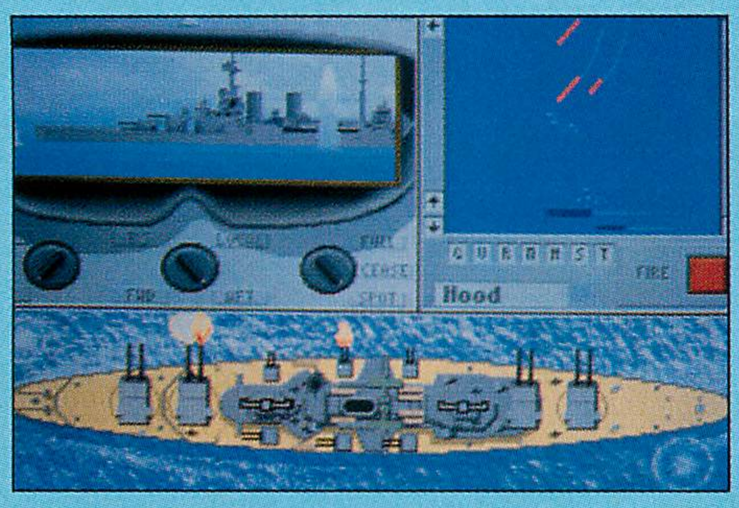
675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-2901
(408) 737-6800





EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
CB	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
DM	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
MD	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Most everyone made a comment about how *Great Naval Battles* is designed for the hard-core strategy fans; Dave noted that it's almost inaccessible to novices.

Shadow President

D.C. TRUE

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

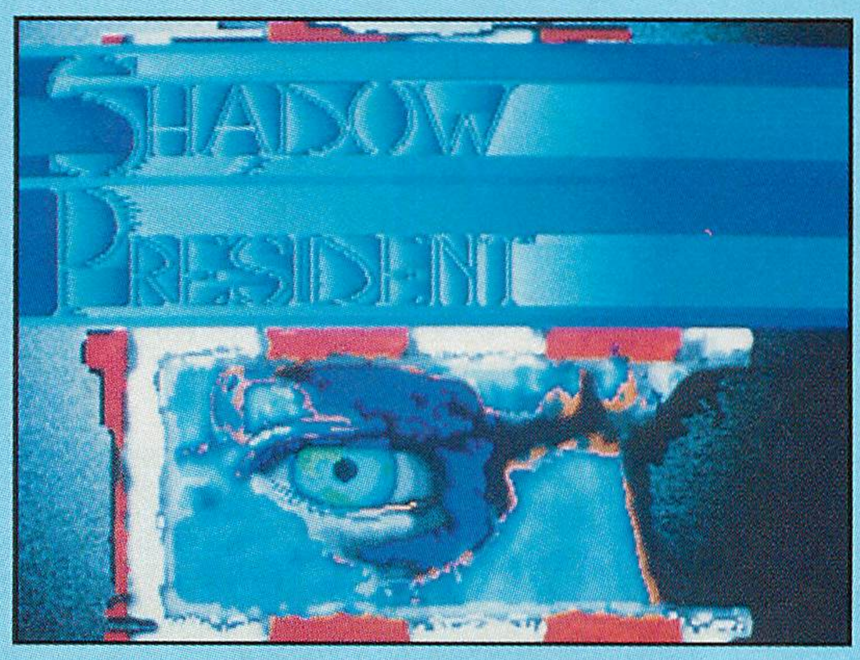
It was a dream come true: no congress, no conventions, no debates in front of the League of Women Voters, no embarrassing research into personal lives and no Sam Donaldson. One night, I was contacted by the Shadow Network and told I was President. Or at least according to *Shadow President*, probably one of the most ambitious games of its type.

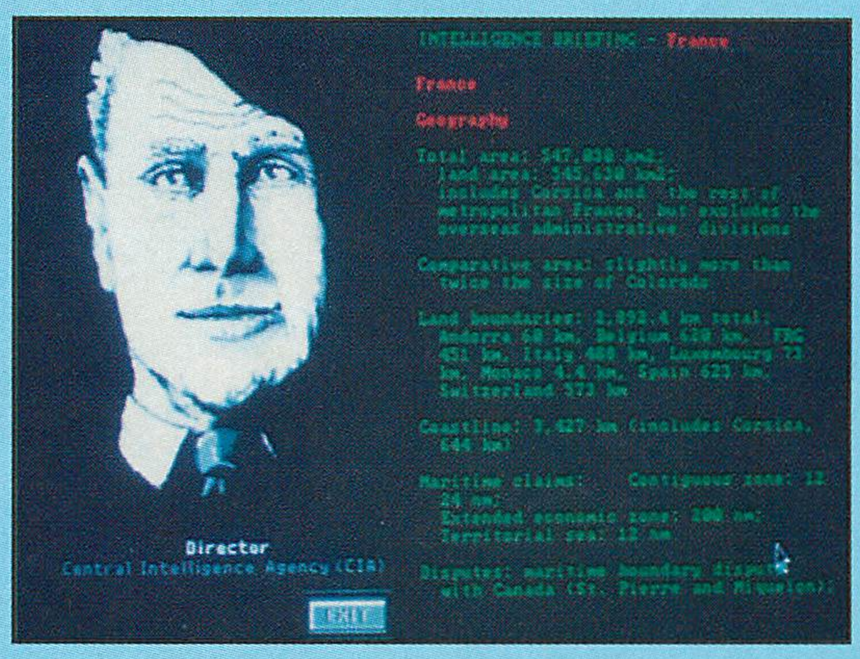
Using a mouse-driven point-and-click system, players can do everything from vary the amounts of aid given to a country—be it humanitarian, social, political, military or nuclear—to invade, adopt cultural exchanges, negotiate cease-fires or change a country's trade status. The effects of these actions must be duly noted, since a commander in chief has little time to establish credibility in between elections.

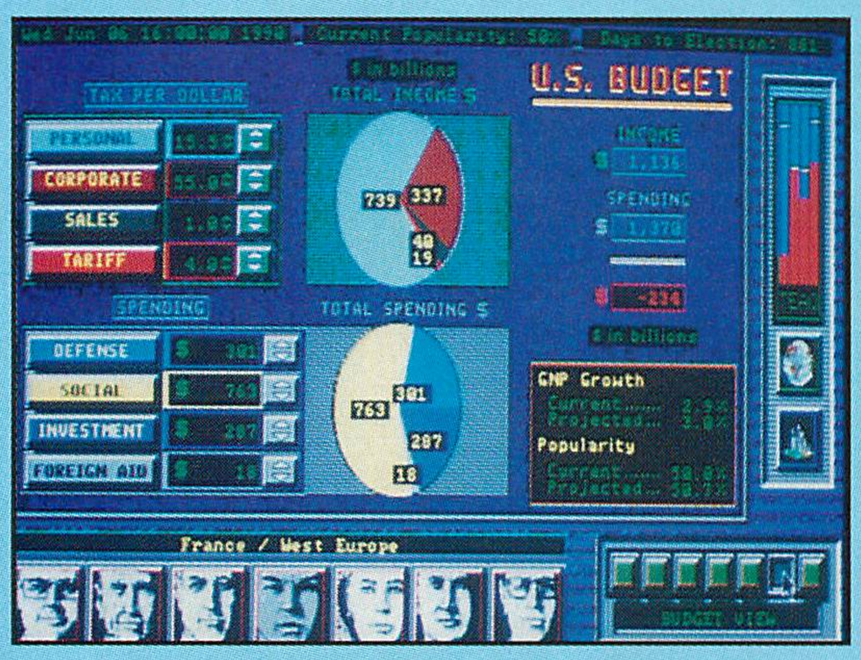
Global events are constantly flashing across the screen, and, most often, the best thing for the chief executive to do is mentally take note for future reference. Unlike *Crisis in the Kremlin*, the player's decisions determine the path of the country, rather than having every crisis demand a response. After all, at least in the intro scenario, the U.S. still is the dominant economic and military power in the world, and, besides the overwhelming responsibilities, that does allow the luxury of setting your own agenda.

While *Shadow President* cannot simulate the years of congressional and state experience it's supposed to take to become president, it does provide something that the White House occupant clearly needs: information. More importantly, all information is easy to access using what only *seems* to be an overwhelming choice of menus. Everything from strategic value to leadership philosophy can be presented on a global, regional or local map. A well-designed tutorial will make instant experts out of players who despise reading the documentation.

Helping players make every decision is the cabinet, complete with press secretary, national security advisor and other bureaucrats whose advice is normally wishy-washy and who get incredibly smug if your actions fail.







Because games like these tend to be dry beyond tolerance, D.C. True bothered to add just enough animated sequences and sound effects to keep things interesting. *Balance of Power* was too politically correct to dazzle us with mushroom clouds and charred skeletons, but *Shadow* at least has a nice launch sequence that is worth savoring the last few days before impeachment (or assassination).

The key to getting the full benefits of *Shadow President* is to approach the game with some form of agenda. Global conquest may not be possible, but, with enough money and gentle encouragement, formerly hostile nations can at least become less of a threat.

The inevitable drawback to *Shadow President* is timing. While the game has speed levels ranging from one hour per second to one day per second, none seem to work with the variable rate at which disasters happen.

Shadow President's initial scenario begins in June 1990, before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Soviet coup attempt. Other scenarios range from the disturbingly accurate (America descending) to the intriguing (Iran as a superpower). These provide much needed replayability, as well as more structured play experience for anyone uncomfortable with the game's free-form play.

Competent to the extreme, *Shadow President* manages to do something not normally possible (except for the senile and the hyperthyroid): make the world's toughest job enjoyable.

—David S. Moskowitz

D.C. True
1840 Oak Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201-3686
(708) 866-1864

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
DM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**

Mike called *Shadow President* "the perfect title during an election year." Andy said it was a great political simulator, and Chris liked its dry sense of humor.

Plan 9 From Outer Space

KONAMI/GREMLIN

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Plan 9 From Outer Space is arguably the worst movie of all time. It doesn't have much of a script and the acting is worse than bad. The movie does as much for the genre of science-fiction movies as a dog biscuit garnish does on top of a hot fudge sundae. Despite all of this, the film has attained cult status and can be found in video stores. It is unbelievable how bad this movie is, yet it can be fun to watch simply *because* it is so bad.

In Konami's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, the player doesn't get thrown into the plot of the movie, which involves foiling aliens who are resurrecting dead bodies on Earth. Instead, the movie's producer hires the player to track down six missing reels of the film. The player must go to different locations and collect items to help find the missing reels.

The game plays like many graphic adventure games. The player controls the action through specific commands in a menu. All a player must do is figure out what items to put into his or her inventory and how to use those items in the game.

The action in the game takes place in a window that takes up about one-third of the screen. Moving the mouse around this picture shows where each of the exits from a location is. Any other action, including looking at objects, is a selection from a menu of actions found in the lower right corner of the screen. This can get tedious, especially when the player knows what he or she wants to do, but has to find the right command to perform an action.

The game almost seems to play itself. Players have to search each room thoroughly to find items. When searching a room, a player cannot just examine items, but should also push them. This can get very tedious, especially when a room has 15 or so different items in it. Once a player finds an item, it just takes a little guesswork to figure out what to carry and how to use it.

Throughout the game, the same faces appear repeatedly. The game borrows these faces from some of the characters in the movie. These faces show up throughout the game and in the bits of digitized film footage. A player can watch pieces of the film he or she finds.

Plan 9 From Outer Space is just another adventure game with average graphics and sound; the only twist is that it involves one of the worst movies of all time. The dialogue and descriptions in the game can be entertaining, but are repetitive at times.

Be warned, however; if you hate bad films, *do not* watch the movie before you play the game. If you do, you might be tempted to try *not* to find the six missing reels of footage.

—John E. Schnyder

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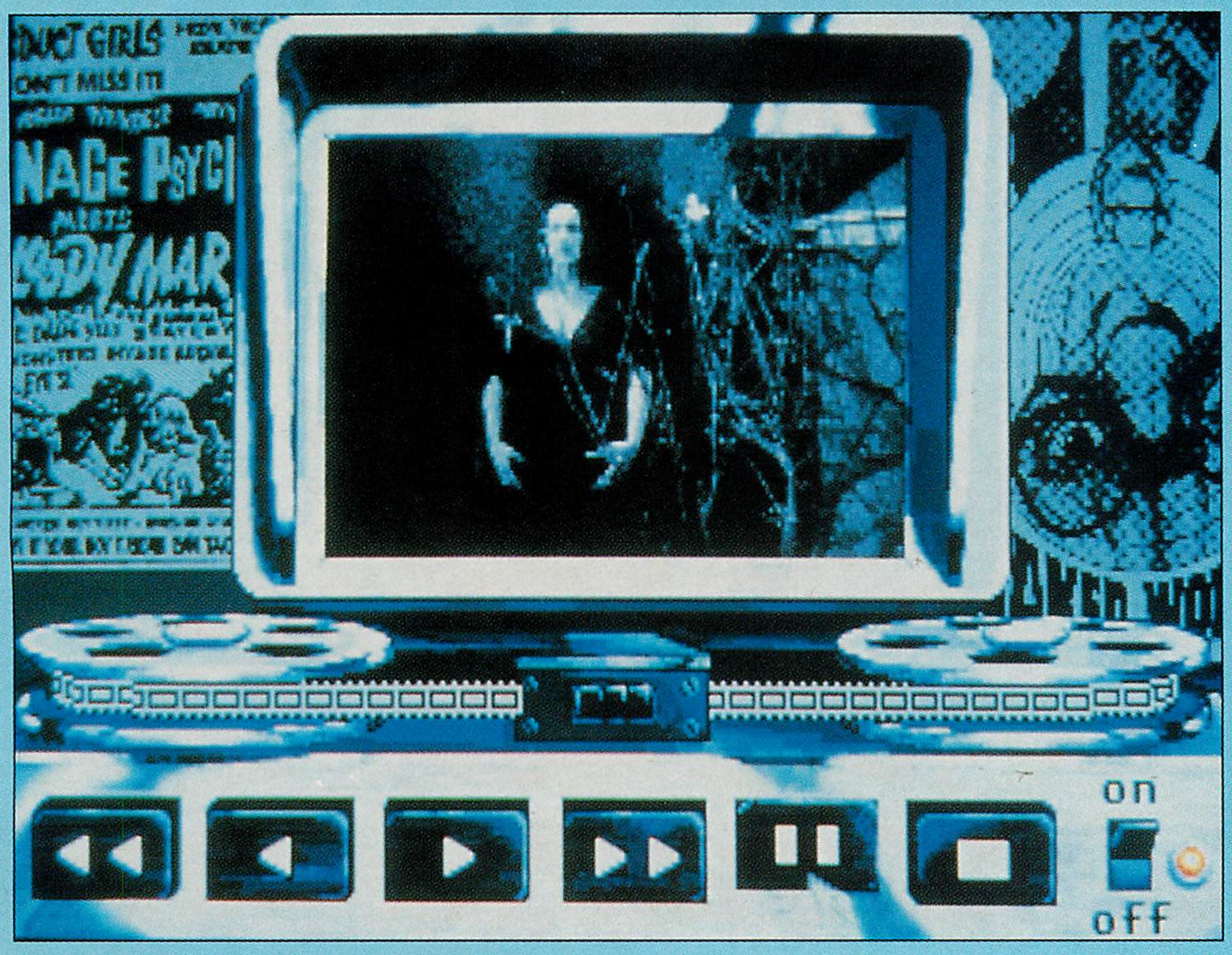

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
CB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
DM	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
MD	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Chris really liked the game for its close ties to the movie, while Mike and Andy were both disappointed with the size of the graphic window.

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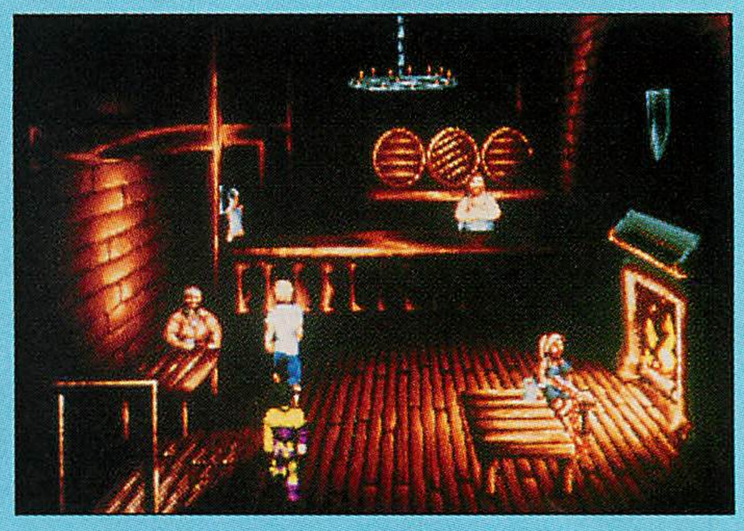
Lure of the Temptress

KONAMI

Version: IBM PC (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10
GRAPHICS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **9** 10
PLAYABILITY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10
OVERALL	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10



Many role-playing games are too similar today. You control characters chased by evil creatures or fight battles to increase your score. You know your objectives, the strange creatures to meet and what will happen even before the game starts. So where's the challenge? Virgin Games' *Lure of the Temptress* is definitely different.

This unique game is based on virtual theater, meaning that when playing this game, you live the part! You make decisions, engage in conversations, walk to places, etc. You must solve problems, so it tests your brain, not reaction time. What's also great is not knowing what will happen next. (Just like real life!) The game involves you right away in problematic situations where strategy and common sense are essential.

As the game begins, Selena (the evil enchantress) has taken over Turnvale. The diabolical Skorl (whom you will have to battle later) now rule. Your character, Diermot, rides off with the king to save the town. The fierce Skorl attack. Diermot falls, hits his head and awakens in a dungeon.

Items (and characters) are the first important aspect of the game. In the dungeon, several items are found that may help Diermot escape. As you move your mouse (or the keyboard equivalent), cross hairs indicate items. For usage options, you press either the left or right mouse buttons. You have to figure out which items are useful. Some objects can only be viewed after completing certain tasks. Clicking on characters lets you talk, ask a question or give something to them.

You must develop a strategy to free Diermot (e.g., trick the Skorl into going into the cell as Diermot runs out; but don't forget to lock the door behind you!). Diermot soon finds a locked door, but no key. Fortunately, characters like Ratpouch, if freed, can provide help. Once freed, Ratpouch can perform tasks for Diermot, and sometimes this is the only way out of a dilemma.

Sequence is also important. For example, if you don't free Ratpouch first, you'll be stuck. The status option displays descriptions of surroundings and items possessed. This is really useful when Diermot and Ratpouch proceed to the marketplace, village shop, tavern, etc.

Conversing with characters is vital. The prisoner, Luthern the blacksmith, Mallin the salesman, Gwyn the gossiper and so on provide hints on what to do or where to go. Listening to others' conversations (at the tavern, for instance) is also important. Characters can ignore you or offer help; some only help if bribed. Dialogue choices sometimes appear during conversations. Selecting the right answer is crucial, and sometimes the right one seems senseless initially. Talking to the wrong characters could be dangerous, since they could tell the Skorl about you, and you don't want that!

Many characters, statements and scenes provide comic relief. Humor is important and keeps the game entertaining as you progress through it.

The game can be difficult at first. Defending Diermot against angry Skorl is not easy. Finding Goewin seems hopeless. *Lure of the Temptress* can try your patience if you make a mistake and don't save the game often.

The full 256-color VGA graphics and brilliant animation alone make this game entertaining enough. Combine this with the concept of virtual theater, and you have an extraordinary game that provides hours of challenge and enjoyment. *Lure of the Temptress* may be just the game to lure you away from the others!

—Chris Saucier

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(708) 215-5111

EDITORS' CORNER

AE	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
CB	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
DM	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
MD	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Chris liked the clean screen design. Andy thought the user interface was comfortable, but that the adventure wasn't as smooth as some out these days.

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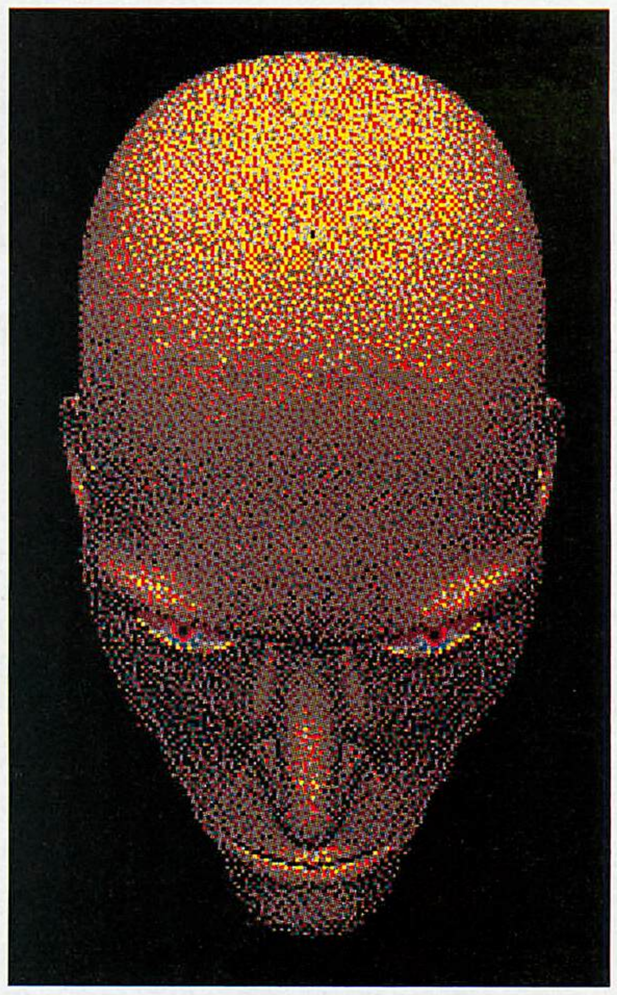

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Cyber Empires

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

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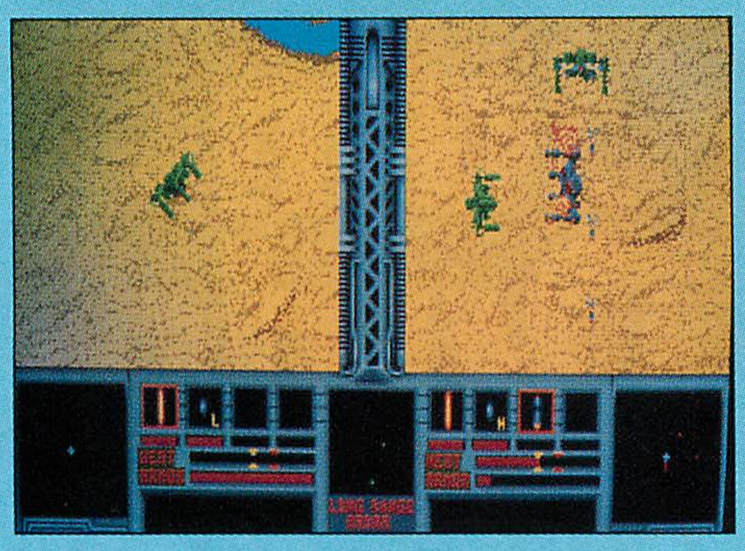
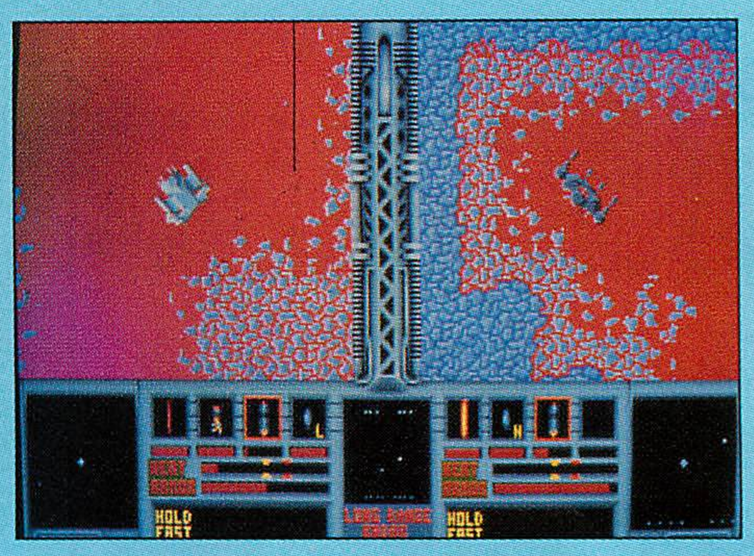
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC							7			
GRAPHICS								8		
PLAYABILITY								8		
OVERALL								8		



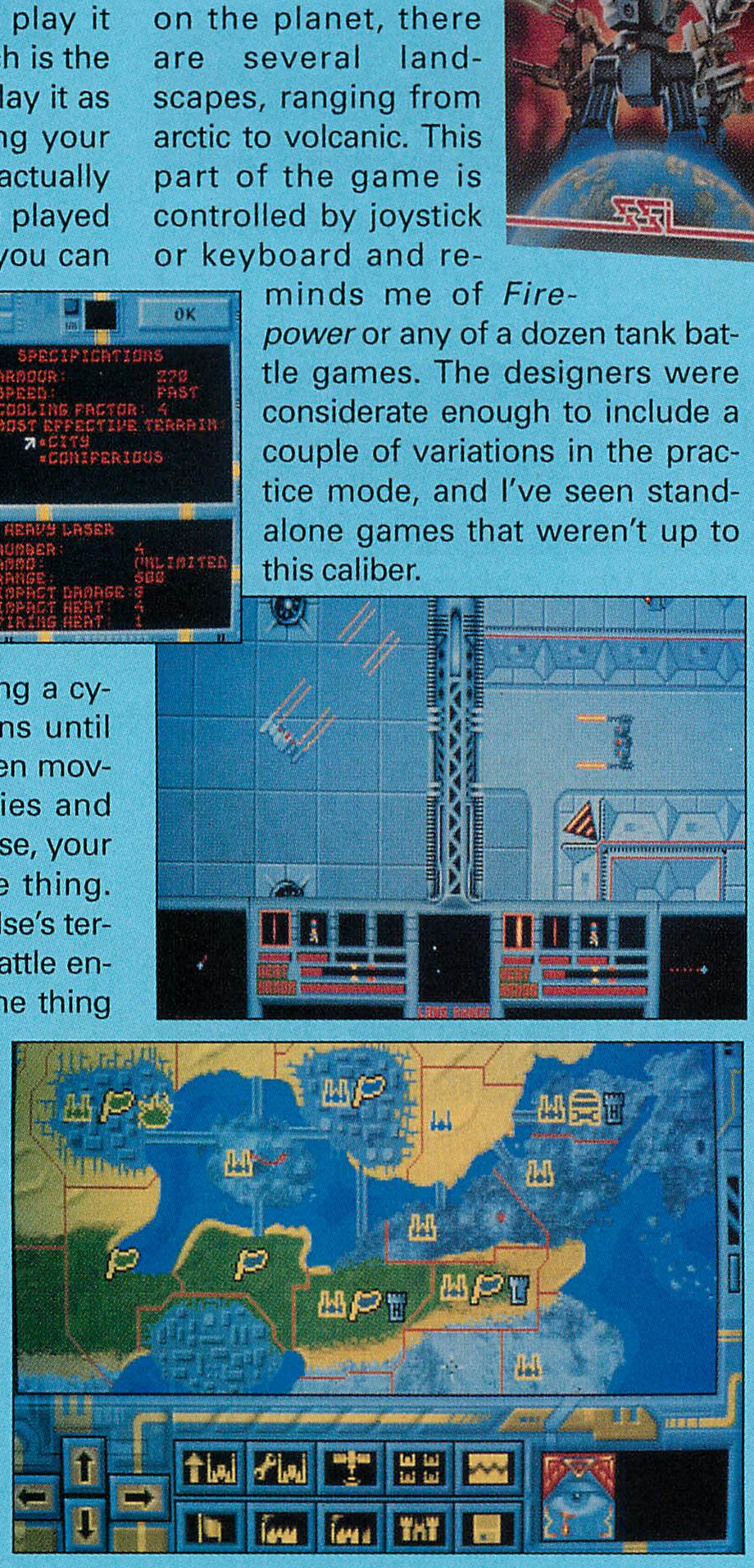


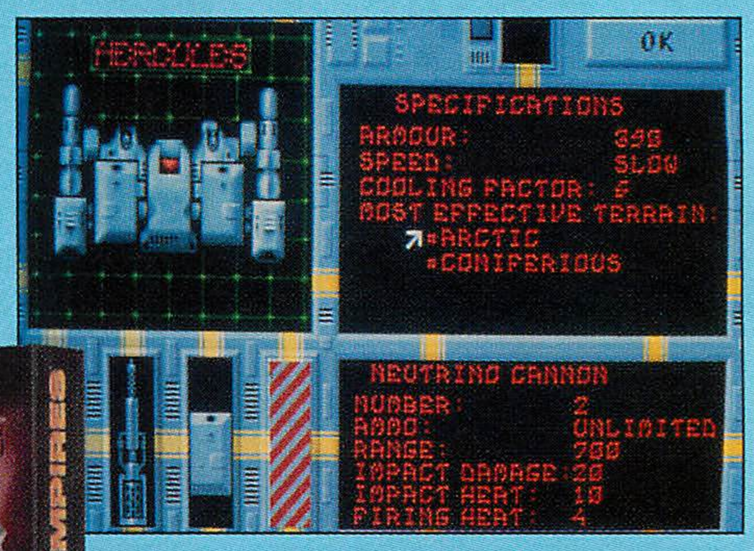
When I first booted *Cyber Empires*, I kind of groaned and thought, "Oh, no. Another *Risk* clone." I started playing with an attitude, and not a good one. As it turned out, that was the best way I could have approached the game. The more I played, the better I liked it, and my bad attitude gave me an edge over my computer opponent.

Cyber Empires is indeed a *Risk* clone, but set in the dim future and played with cyborgs instead of little wooden armies. There are three basic aspects of the game: You can play it simply as a strategy game, which is the most *Risk*-like option; you can play it as an animated battle game, pitting your cyborg against another (this is actually the practice mode, but it can be played as a game in its own right); or you can play it as a full campaign, combining the strategy and cyborg battles.

The basic flow of the game has you starting with one territory, establishing political control, building a cyborg factory, waiting a few turns until your cyborgs are finished and then moving them into adjacent territories and starting the process over. Of course, your opponents are doing the same thing. When you move into someone else's territory or they move into yours, battle ensues. Which brings me to the one thing about *Cyber Empires* that I dislike most: You don't actually get to see the battle in the strategy game. The game is played in turn, and, to end a turn, you click an icon to close some metal bast-door. The battles all take place behind the closed doors, and you only see the results when they open again for the next turn. I felt cheated. There are sound effects to let you listen to the battle, but the designers could have put in some animated sequences to let me see it as well. The graphics are better than I expected (though I did have a strange ripple across the screen when I scrolled around the map view), but some animation would have boosted the game considerably.

In the full campaign mode, you do get to wage your own battles and play them out on an overhead-view field. Depending on the planet you're on and where you are on the planet, there are several landscapes, ranging from arctic to volcanic. This part of the game is controlled by joystick or keyboard and reminds me of *Firepower* or any of a dozen tank battle games. The designers were considerate enough to include a couple of variations in the practice mode, and I've seen standalone games that weren't up to this caliber.





I do think the overall pace of the game could have used a little more work. Just like real life, everything in the game costs something: You have to buy factories to produce your cyborgs, then pay to produce the cyborgs, and that doesn't even get into fortifications. I found myself repeatedly ending turns without doing anything simply because my resources didn't accumulate fast enough to give me any options.

Cyber Empires will handle up to five players, human or computer. Unfortunately, there's no modem option though the game would be ideal for it. Combining the action with the strategy aspect produces the first game I might consider playing instead of *Risk*. I like the game as solo play, but I may just have to round up a couple of human *Risk* players, show them how to play *Cyber Empires*, nasty up my attitude and then trample them into cyber bits.

—Tom Malcom

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EDITORS' CORNER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE							7			
CB					5					
DM							7			
MD							7			

Dave thought that neither the arcade nor strategy elements were standouts, and Chris called it dry and unoriginal. It reminded Mike of the *Battlehawk* series.

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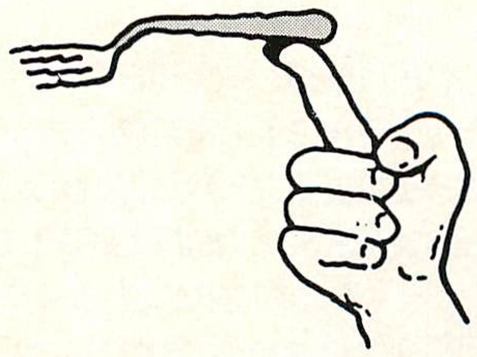

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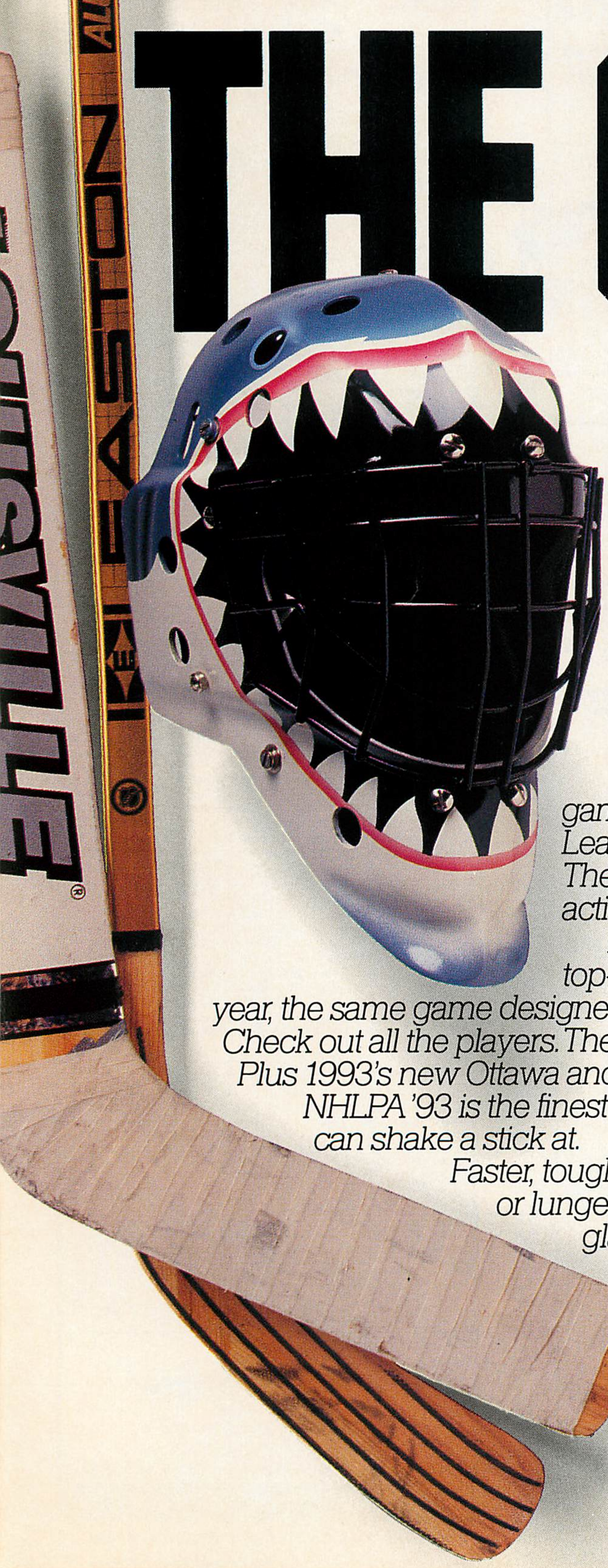

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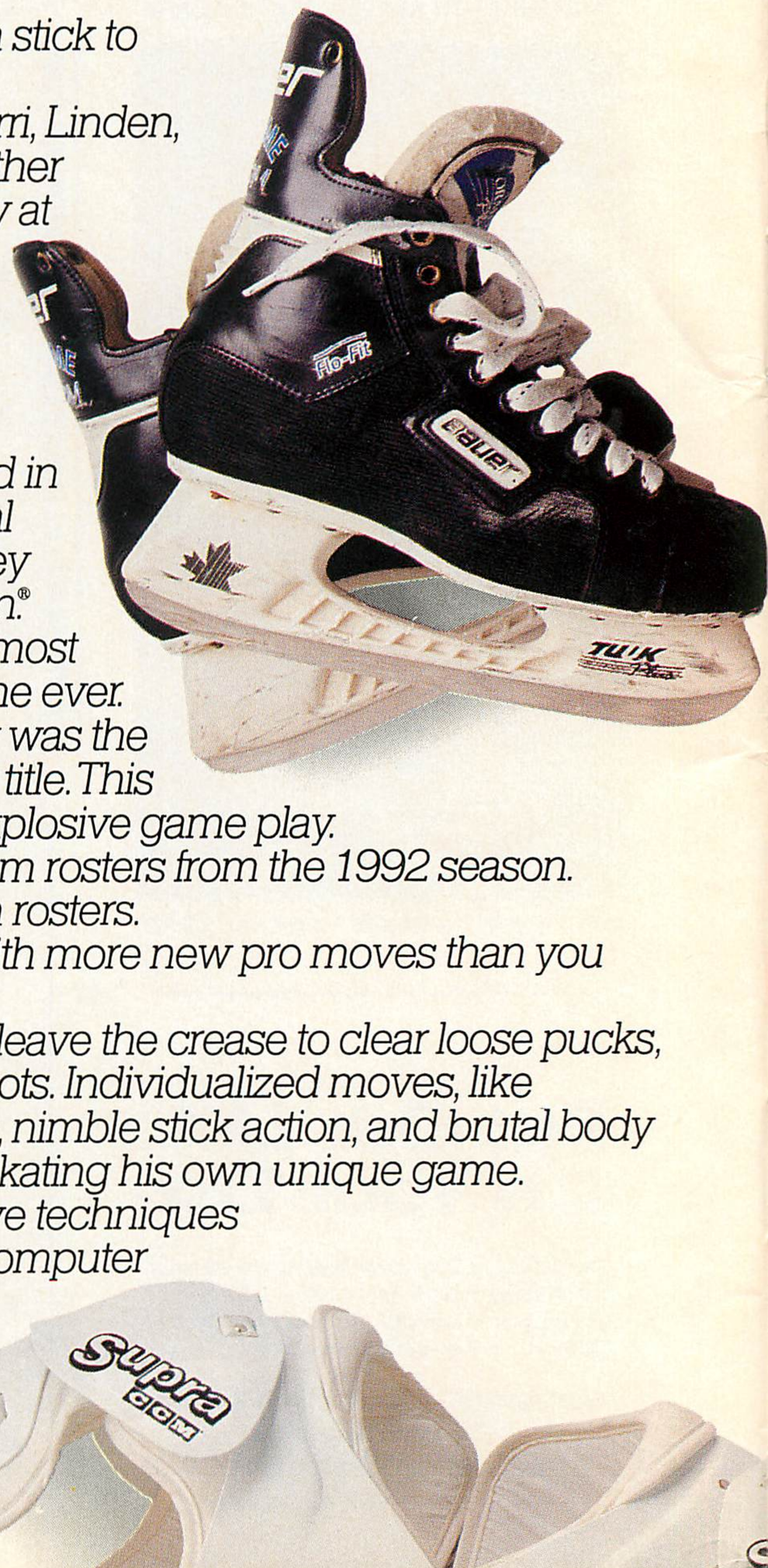

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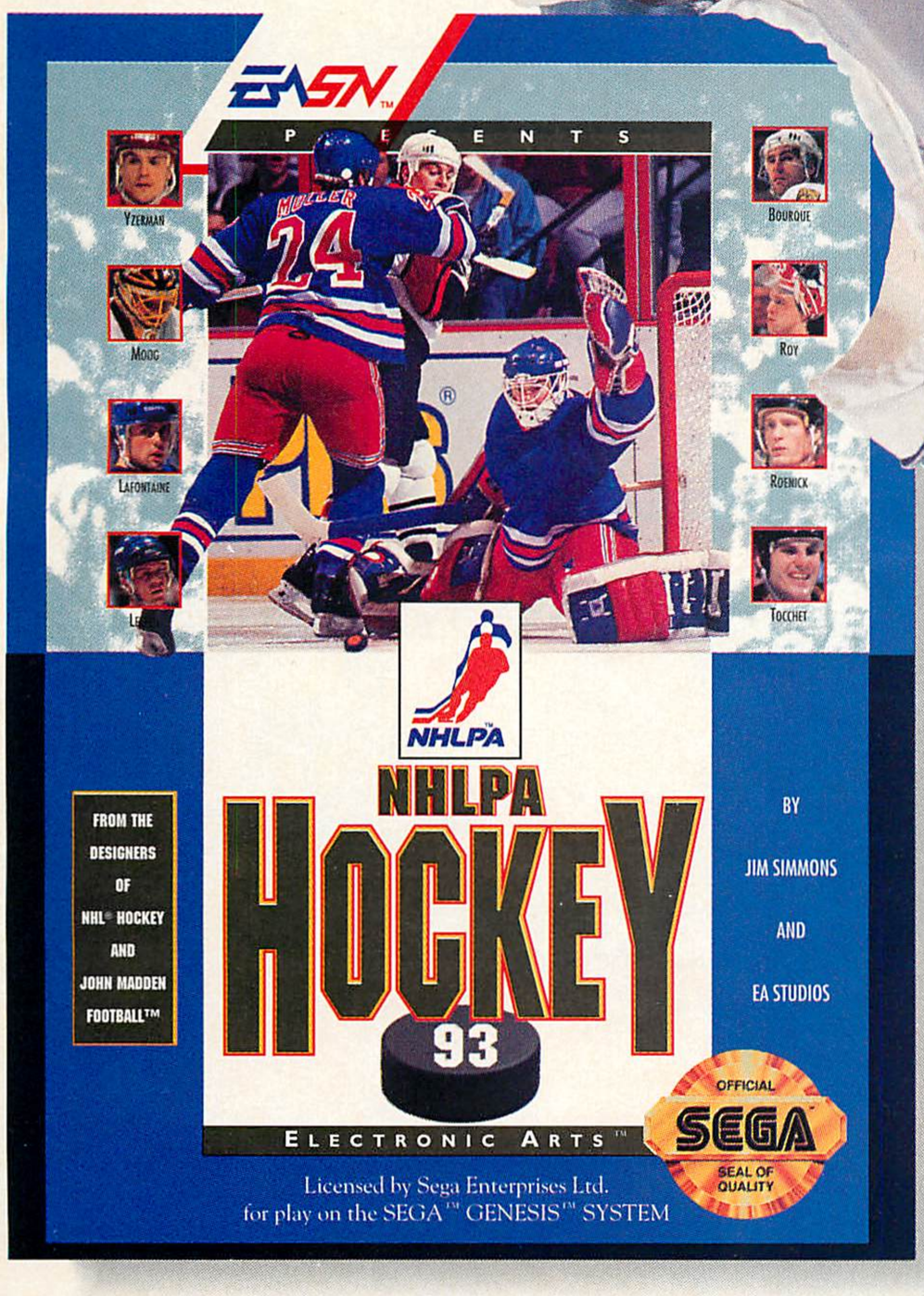

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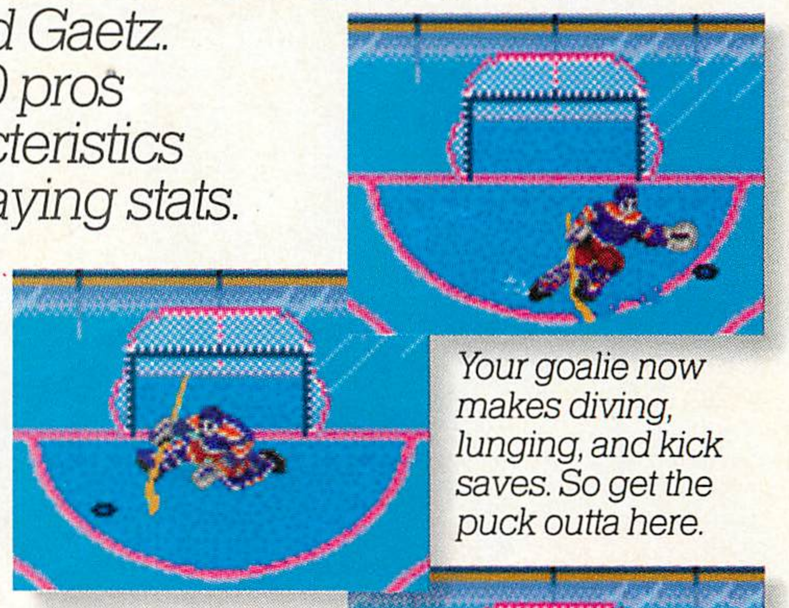
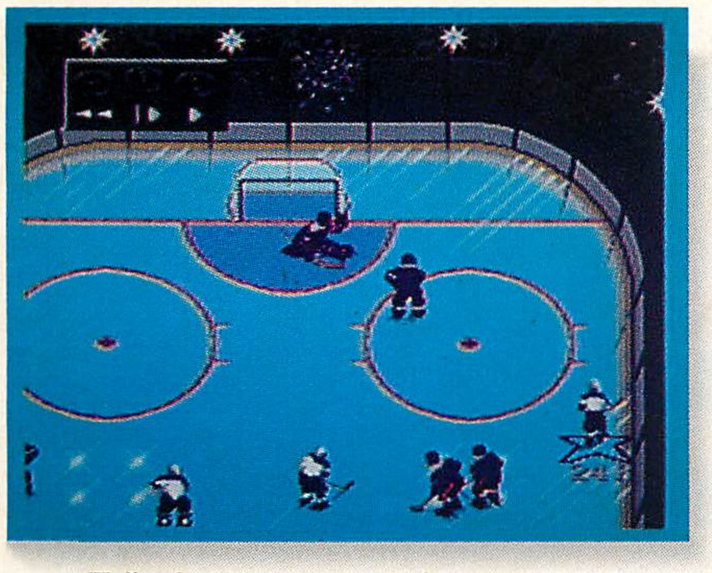


Your goalie now makes diving, lunging, and kick saves. So get the puck outta here.



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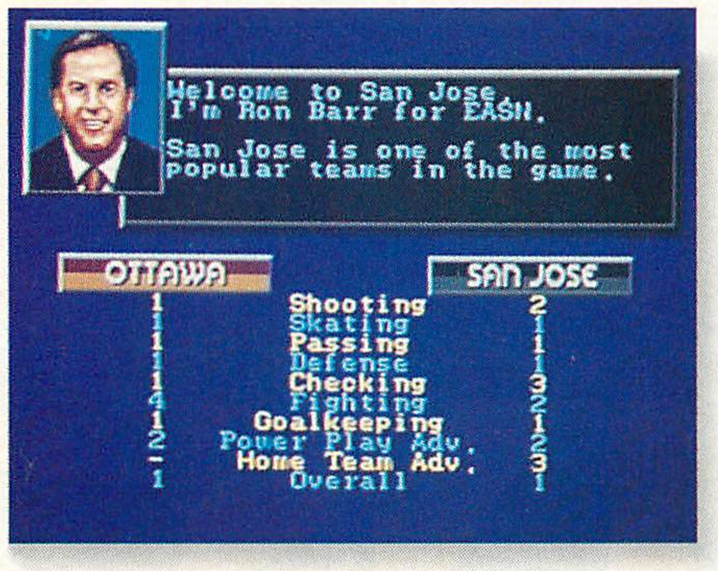

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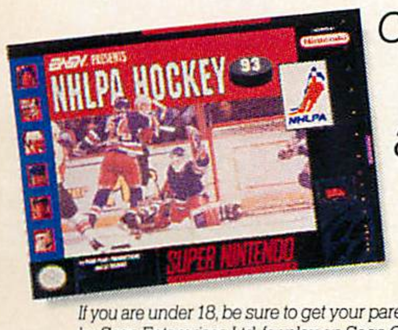

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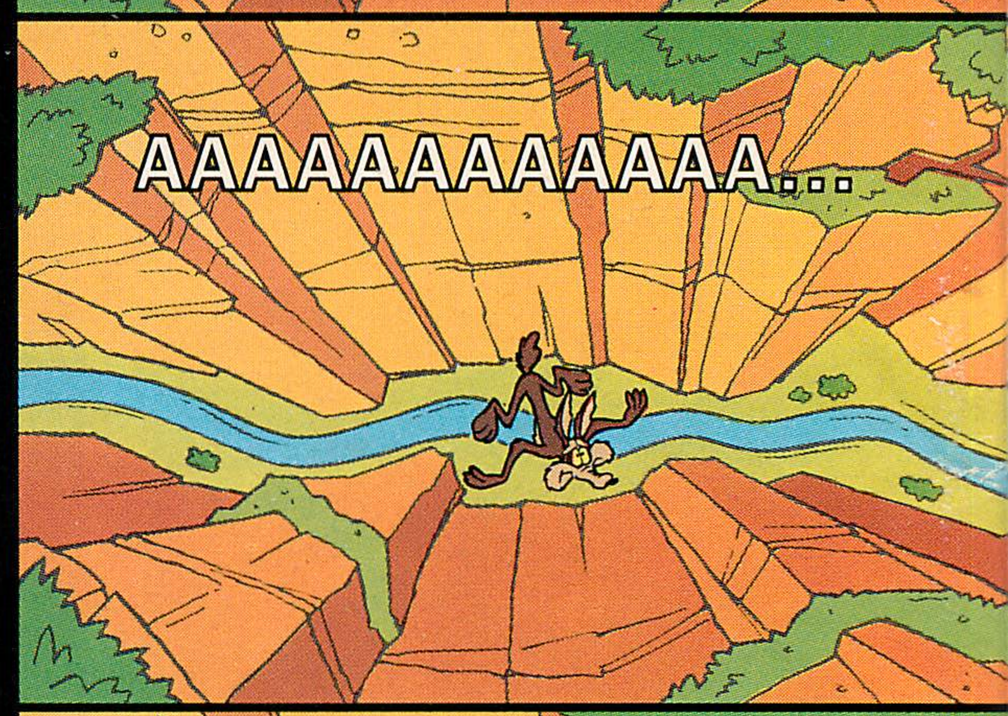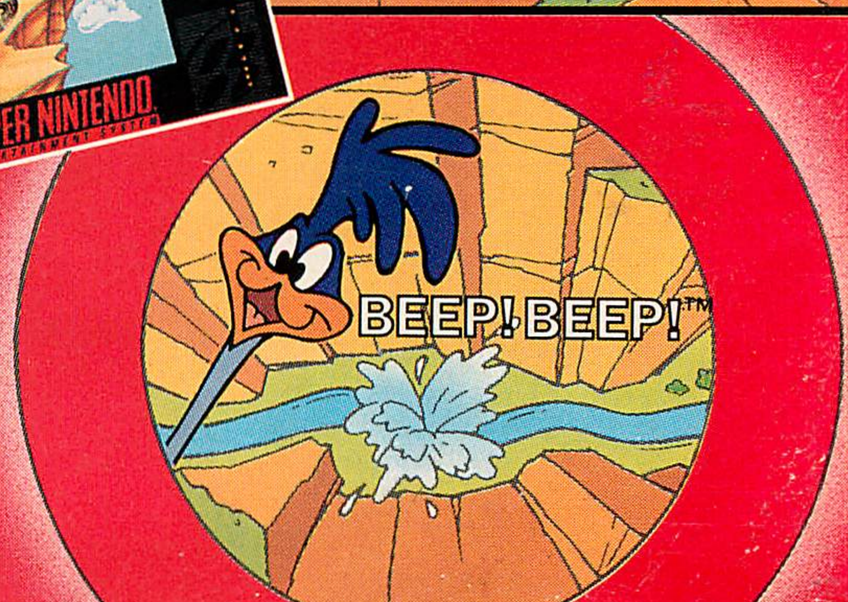
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