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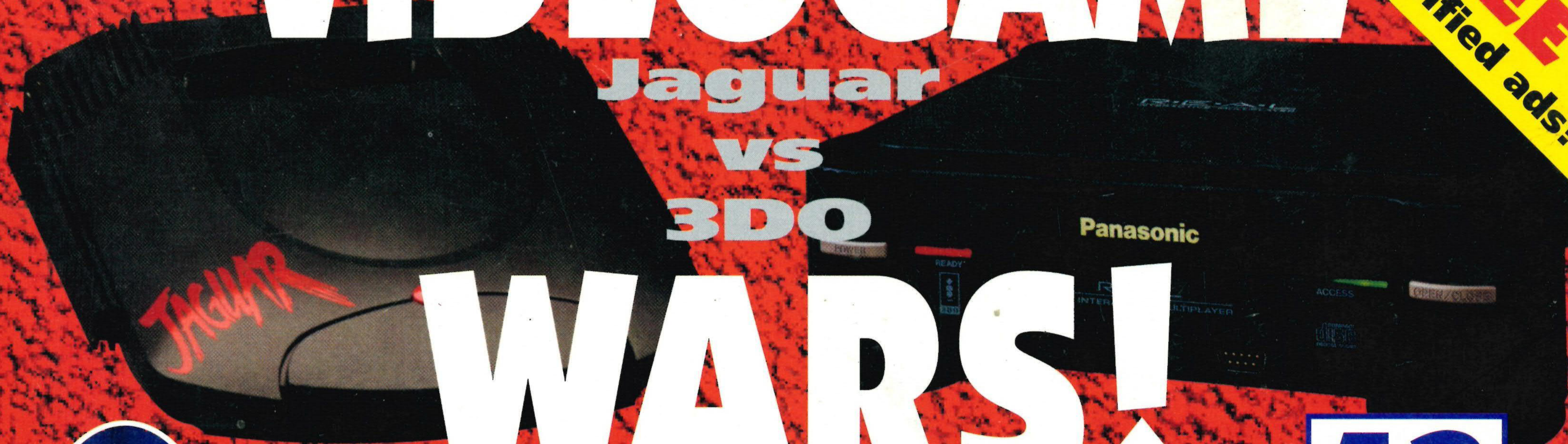
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VS
3DO

WARS!

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NEW GAMES REVIEWED INSIDE!



Voyeur
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STREET FIGHTER II



VS

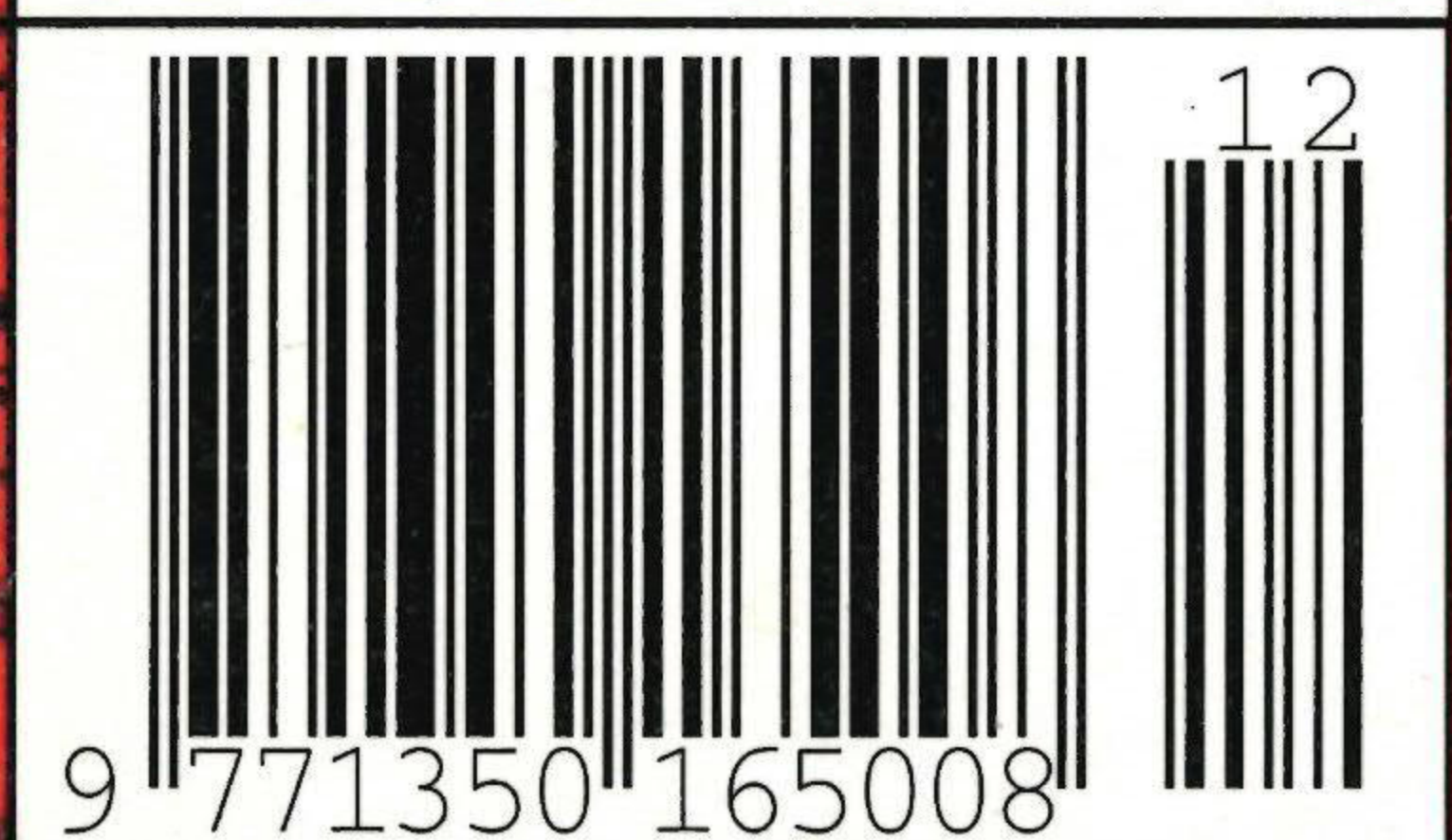
MORTAL KOMBAT

Buying a game this Christmas? Turn to Best of the Best now for the biggest guide to the greatest games around... page 53

all formats

- Mega Drive
- Super NES
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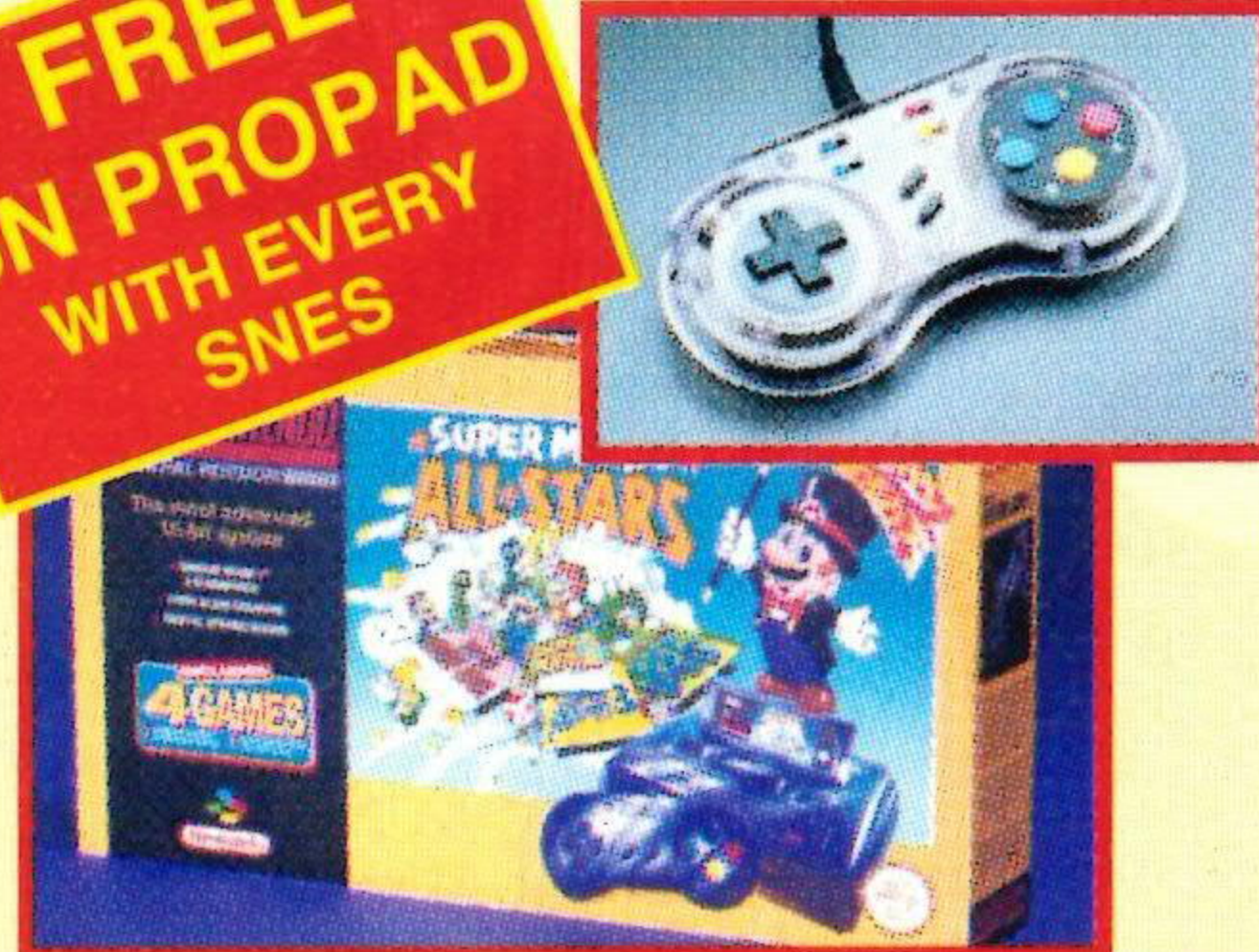
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Table listing various Mega CD games and their prices, including titles like Batman Returns, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Streets of Rage.

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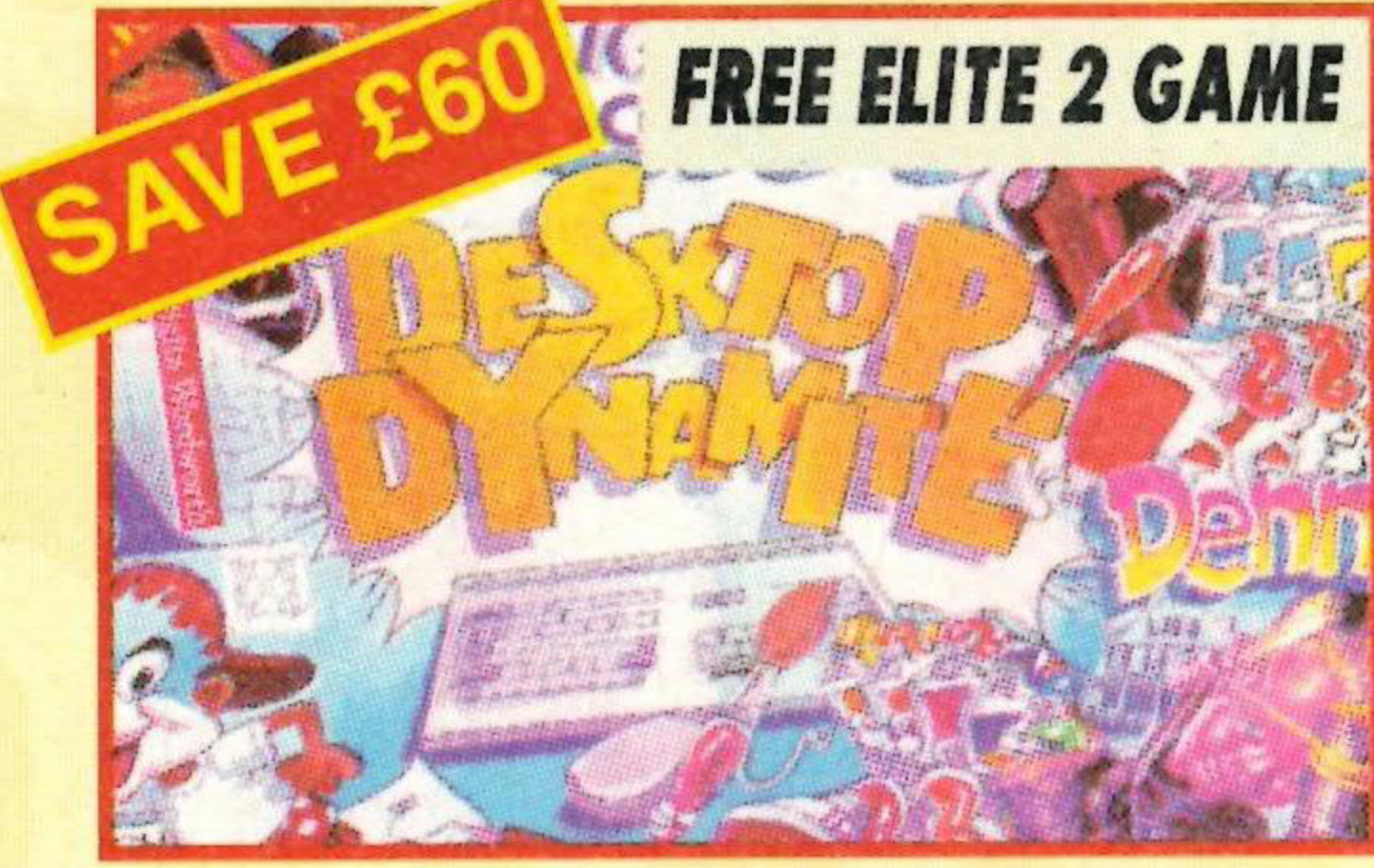
Table listing various Commodore Amiga CD-32 games and their prices, including titles like Alfred Chicken, Alien Breed, and Arkanoid.

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SPOILT FOR CHOICE?

To find out exactly what machine you should be asking for this Christmas, turn to page 10 for the Clash of the Titans: Jaguar vs 3DO vs CD-I



VGS

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Issue #1 • December 1993

WELCOME to VGS – VideoGames Shopper, the UK's best value multi-format games magazine. Our priority is to give you value, service and information. In this special introductory issue, for just £1.25 we bring you 43 games fully reviewed, a 12-page Best of the Best buyer's guide to all the top games this Christmas, a smashing five-page head-to-head battle between Street Fighter II and Mortal Kombat, PLUS tips, news, previews and everything else you demand from a dynamic videogames magazine. Thanks for choosing VGS magazine; if you have any suggestions, criticisms or comments, please let us know!

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Frankie says, Welcome to the pleasure dome



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VGSR

REVIEWS

We've packed an astonishing 43 games in this month. Every one reviewed and rated by our team of experts. The top games receive a VGS Best Buy, representing tremendous value for money. See what you should be purchasing on page 23.



VGST

TIPS

Stuck, confused, befuddled and bemused? Well let VGS Tips solve your worries and cure your blues. Every month we have the top tips PLUS the latest and greatest Action Replay codes for all machines.

VGSN

NEWS

If it's going to happen, then it'll be in VGS News. Turn the page for the latest, info-packed stories on all that's happening on every gaming format.



No-one else brings you the top games on all formats every month. If you're buying a game for Christmas, you need look no further than page 53 for advice.

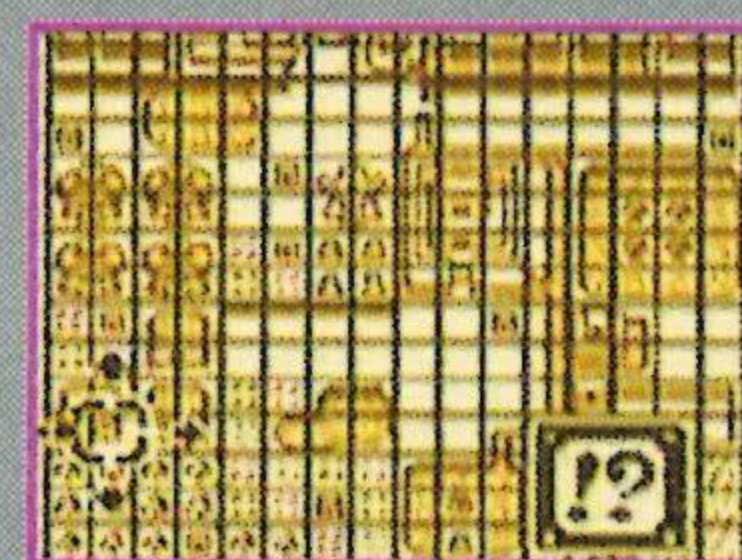
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STREET FIGHTER II vs MORTAL KOMBAT

Just which one is the best? We put them both through their paces, and bring you news of forthcoming challengers



MS owners now have a special Sonic version



Mega-squeeze for Link onto the Game Boy



Keep an eye on the neighbours in Voyeur



Enter the Eye of the Storm

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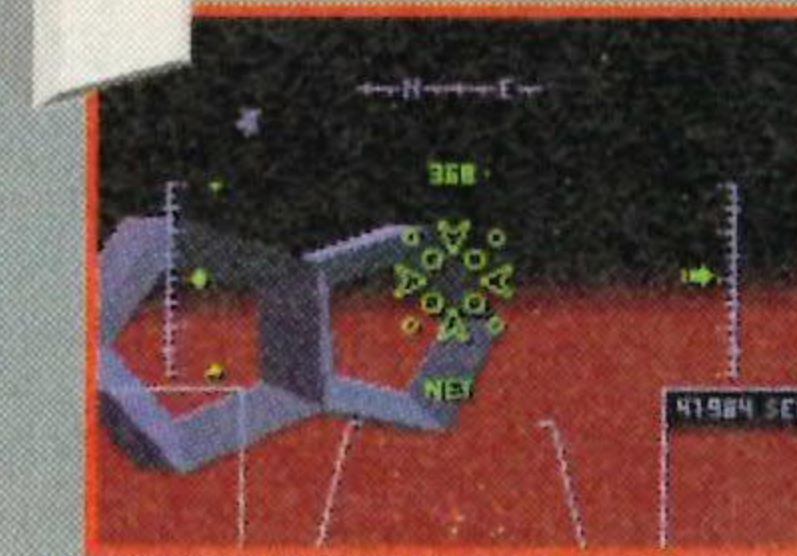
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V G S M

VIDEOGAMES SHOPPER NEWS

Sigma reel in a big one



Sigma Designs have just unveiled a new card which allows you to take advantage of the recently announced MPEG standard format for CD full motion video on your PC.

MPEG, standing for Motion Picture Experts Group, has become a standard data-compression technique in the video and audio industries. In technical terms, the MPEG encoder reduces the size of a file by as much as 200:1. This means that with adequate decoding hardware, you can use your PC's CD-ROM drive to watch digital full motion video while listening to a CD-quality soundtrack.

MPEG is being backed by other CD based products like CD-I and 3DO because it is an open standard. Philips, who invented the CD in the first place, want to make Video CD open in the same way that VHS video.

Eventually, all film CDs should use the MPEG format and thus be interchangeable between different

machines.

Visual resolution can be as high as 1024x768 and is played at 30 frames per second – much higher definition than an ordinary television picture. The *Reel Magic* card will even be able to deliver 32,768 colours on a machine with an ordinary 16-colour VGA card, as the new controller has its own independent graphics setup.

The new card also has its own processor on board, meaning it will function equally well in virtually any PC regardless of speed. Even a slow 16MHz 386SX system can transfer information from the CD at 150K per second with *Reel Magic* installed.

The possibilities don't just end with watching videos, however. A range of interactive games featuring full-motion sequences is planned. Sigma are giving away copies of Activision's *Return to Zork*

with the package. It's a graphic adventure game which contains loads of high-quality sound and video effects to show off *Reel Magic's* capabilities.

The future looks good for *Reel Magic* games. Developer David Foster of Readysoft commented: "We are convinced that *Reel Magic* will revolutionise the multimedia and entertainment market. Users will be able to participate in fully interactive, movie quality games like *Dragon's Lair* with astounding realism."

An even higher resolution MPEG standard, MPEG 2, is being developed for cable TV networks but isn't likely to become available on personal computers (although the Jaguar will support it). The reason being that it requires too much storage space for the five-inch CD to accommodate.

• Get hold of the *Reel Magic* card now by phoning Silica Systems on (081) 3091111



SEGA'S SWEET 16



Sega, in a sudden fit of responsibility, have realised that a lot of parents don't like their kids playing games with too much gushing

blood and severed limbs. Or perhaps they just noticed the marvellous effect publicity about violence had on sales for *Mortal Kombat*.

Whatever the reason, Sega are making sure everybody knows that Virgin's new title, *RoboCop versus Terminator* will have a "16" certificate rating slapped on it. This isn't down to the Board of Censors, who were responsible for the few Certificates handed out to video games in the past, but to Sega themselves.

Sega have already started classifying video games

in the USA, where they operate a tailor-made system of ratings. "GA" is the same as "U" for movies, while "MA-13" means there's some violence involved which might disturb under-13s. An "MA-17" symbol means that there's tons of extra-gratuitous violence and probably loads of other offensive stuff too. The MA stands for "Mature Audience".

Sega Europe aren't planning to adopt that system over here, but don't mind following a standard code of classification if one was introduced. Nick

Alexander, head honcho at Sega Europe said "we're delaying the Sega system so that at least everyone is singing from the same hymn-sheet". What a nice man.

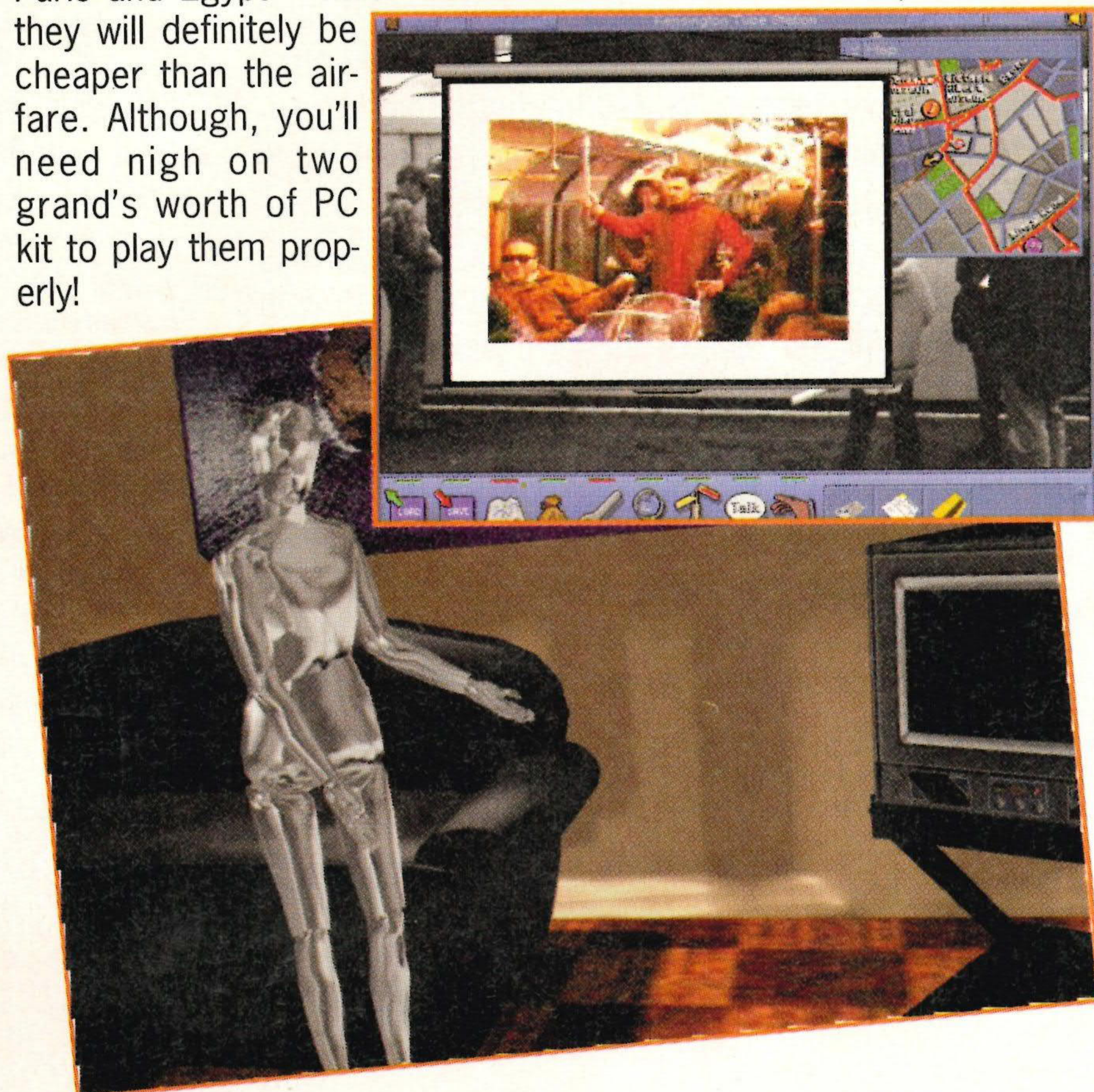


Virtual Albert Square

Canadian company Aditus has just released City 2000 - London for the PC CD-ROM. It's a bit like a Total Recall-type holiday-sim, but you take on the personality of Jon Daring, a typical American agent in the Chuck Norris mould. The game starts by showing you a little film clip of him completing a mission in a part of South America, which looks exactly like central Oxfordshire funny enough.

Basically, the game lets you wander all around Central London looking at places like the Natural History Museum and Madame Tussards, some of which you can actually go inside. There are loads of locations, with over 1700 stills of different locations. Trouble is, the game's sort of incidental to the walking around and looking at things. Good for the one or two Americans who haven't been to London yet. It'd be wiser (and a lot cheaper) for Brits to buy a train ticket and actually go there in person.

Aditus are currently working on versions of this game set in Paris and Egypt - which could well be worth a look at, because they will definitely be cheaper than the air-fare. Although, you'll need nigh on two grand's worth of PC kit to play them properly!



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Nintendo had a couple of hardware pack binges, there was the *Starwing* pack and the *Street Fighter II* pack. Now Sega have completely lost it and gone for an all-out pack attack. They're releasing **14** different combinations of software and machines in all, some with multiple software titles included.

Mega Drive combinations include the inevitable *Street Fighter II* and *Sonic* packs, a "wild and wet" pack containing five games including *Ecco* and *Tazmania*, and an economy pack with six sporty games including *EA Hockey* and *John Madden*. These three are going out for £149.

If you fork out a hundred quid you can now choose between three different Game Gear combos including a "puzzle pack" contain-

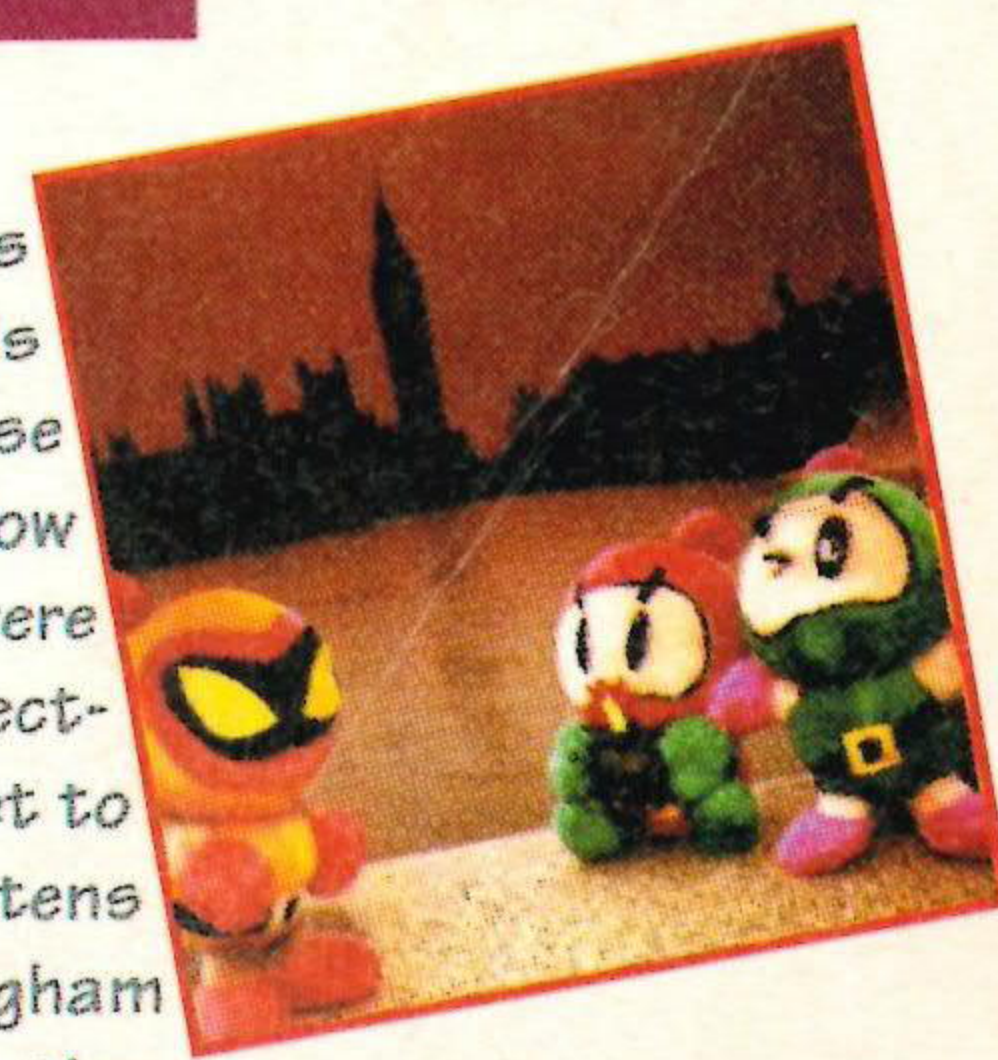
ing *Columns*, *Klax* and *Popils*.

They're also chucking out three Master System packs including one with four games at £69.

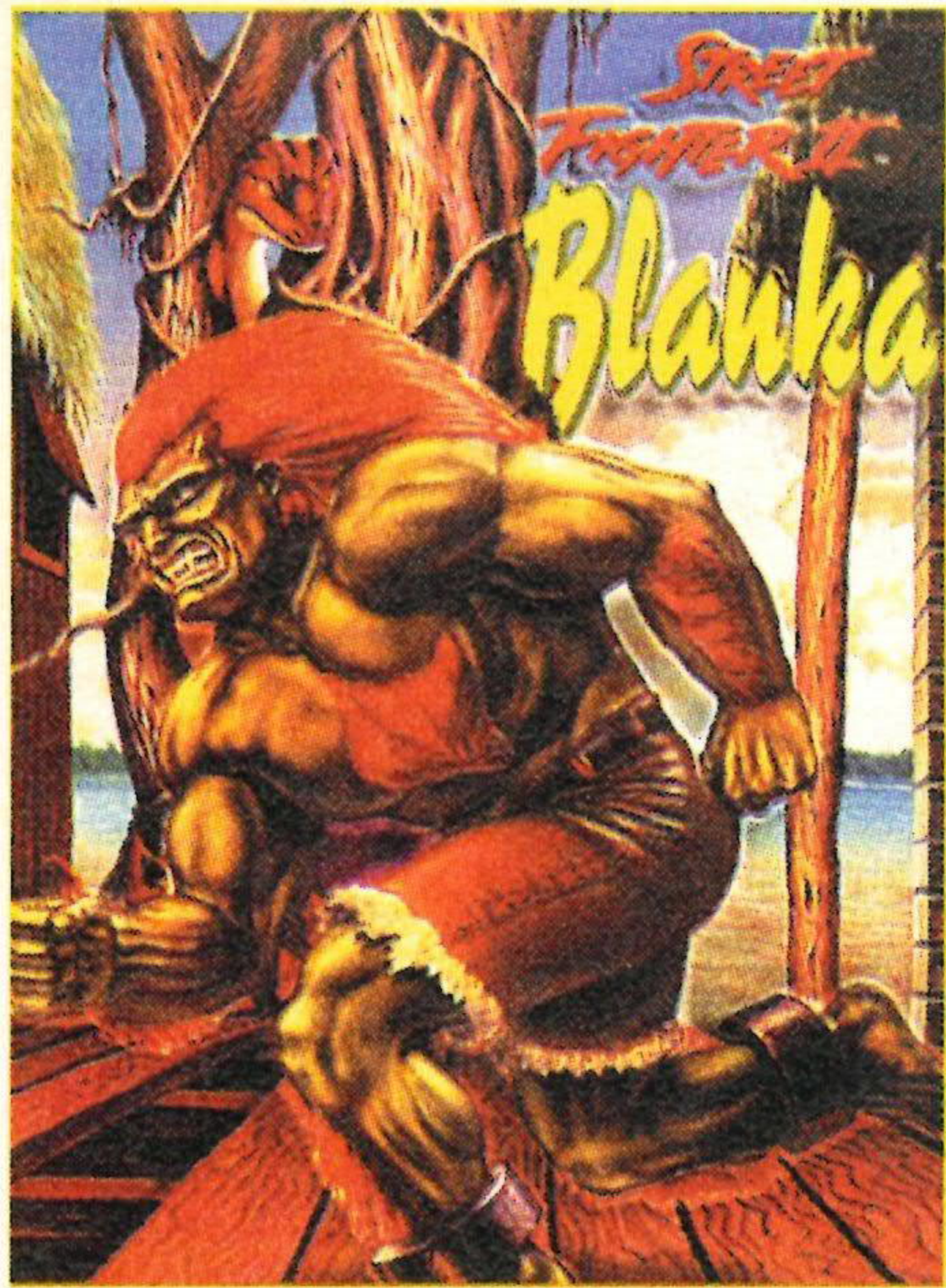
Most of these packs are designed to be limited editions, and Sega reckon that they've already just about sold out of some combinations.



In a shock announcement at Prime Minister's question time in the Commons today, Super Bomberman, the well known cuddly backbencher announced his plans to stand against Mr Major in the next leadership battle. A source close to the PM commented, "how can we compete with someone wearing a yellow space helmet with a fuzzy pom-pom on top... we're finished". Gunshots were then heard and the phone went dead. Mr Bomberman's policies include redirecting the "Chunnel" to surface in northern Scandinavia, so it's easier to get to Santa-World, and the compulsory wearing of little pink fluffy booties and mittens at all times. The Queen refused to comment when we telephoned Buckingham Palace for the Royal reaction.



Street Fighter fans watch out!



Another indication that the cast of *Street Fighter II* are more popular (and better looking) than *Take That* was unveiled last week. You can now get digital watches with a clip-on cover over the face sporting a little statue of your favourite player character in an action pose.

If you don't like the thought of having Blanka or Zangief staring you out every time you check how long it is to lunch break, then you might be better

off with an official *Street Fighter II* keyring, of which we have a couple in the office. They're little perspex boxes a bit like ice-cubes with the eight *Street Fighter II* player characters frozen inside. Of course, the highly mature and professional editorial



team here at VGS was desperate to get the little Guile out of his box so that we could play with him properly. It turned out to be a very difficult job requiring a rusty Stanley knife and a claw-backed hammer, and shouldn't be attempted at home even with a blunt pair of scissors and a qualified paramedic team on hand.

If you are really serious about your *Street Fighter II* spin-offs, get a "special edition" boxed set of "boss" keyrings (pictured below) featuring Vega, Balrog, Sagat and that bloke in the park-keeper's outfit. It's a bit steep at eight quid though.

If you want to be really hip, however, and have immaculate enough taste to move in the highest circles of culture, you won't want to be without the new 3-D *Street Fighter II* wall decor (left). You can get all your favourite characters staring out at you from a lurid colour plate with raised surfaces so you can create a little shrine to Chun-Li in the back garden if the mood takes you.

Someone in the US has even published a *Street Fighter II* comic. It's not clear what happens in it apart from everybody getting their face panned in – but, suffice to say, we'll have more details soon.

Terminator II: Judgment Holiday
Next time you buy a Virgin cartridge, look for a holiday sticker on it. In a surreal promotion, Virgin are giving away four and a half million pounds' worth of holiday vouchers tucked inside their game cartridge boxes. These will be mostly with new releases like *Terminator 2*, *Mortal Kombat* and *Cannon Fodder* and will get you £50 off any Virgin Holidays package. Virgin Holidays concentrate mainly on the USA including California and Florida. They also run Caribbean packages.

Mega phone

In the US, Genesis (the American Mega Drive) owners without any mates will soon be able to play *Mortal Kombat*, *Street Fighter II* (or any game containing a two-player option) with people who live hundreds of miles away.

How? Well, the US branch of Sega have teamed up with American telecommunications company AT&T to produce something called the Edge 16. It's basically a 4800 baud telephone modem which you plug into the top of your machine and connect to a telephone socket, which can be used to connect two consoles, no matter how far apart. The device also contains 128K's worth of RAM, which will not affect existing cartridges in any way, but are bound to be taken advantage of by software developers eventually if enough units are sold.



The most interesting development is that the Edge 16 also contains a system of "game enhancement cards" these are credit-sized cards 4K of RAM and up to 128K of ROM. They enable the user to store game data, and either give it to friends or transport it for use on another machine. Sega are planning a range of Edge 16 compatible games, and are adapting existing games for use over the telephone line.

plane cockpit design, but the alliance with Nintendo marks a significant jump over the ropes into the games arena.

It's going to be a long job putting to the new system though, with even the most optimistic Nintendo spokesman putting the release date somewhere in 1995. Nintendo are planning to knock out a few prototypes in the form of arcade machines before then, however, and they say these machines will give a good indication of the embryonic new system's potential. For now, they're not giving anything away except a very basic sketch of the machine's spec, which they dramatically named "Project Reality".

From the sparse information Nintendo have circulated, it seems that Reality's central engine will be a games-oriented version of the MIPS/Multimedia configuration, which will be controlled by a 64-bit MIPS RISC chip – a monster lump of silicon. This chip runs at 100 MHz; a speed inconceivable in video games systems. Even the slick Phillips CD-I can only get up to 15MHz (an impressive speed), with Atari's brand new Jaguar console and Panasonic's long-awaited 3DO running at 13.3MHz and 12.5MHz respectively.

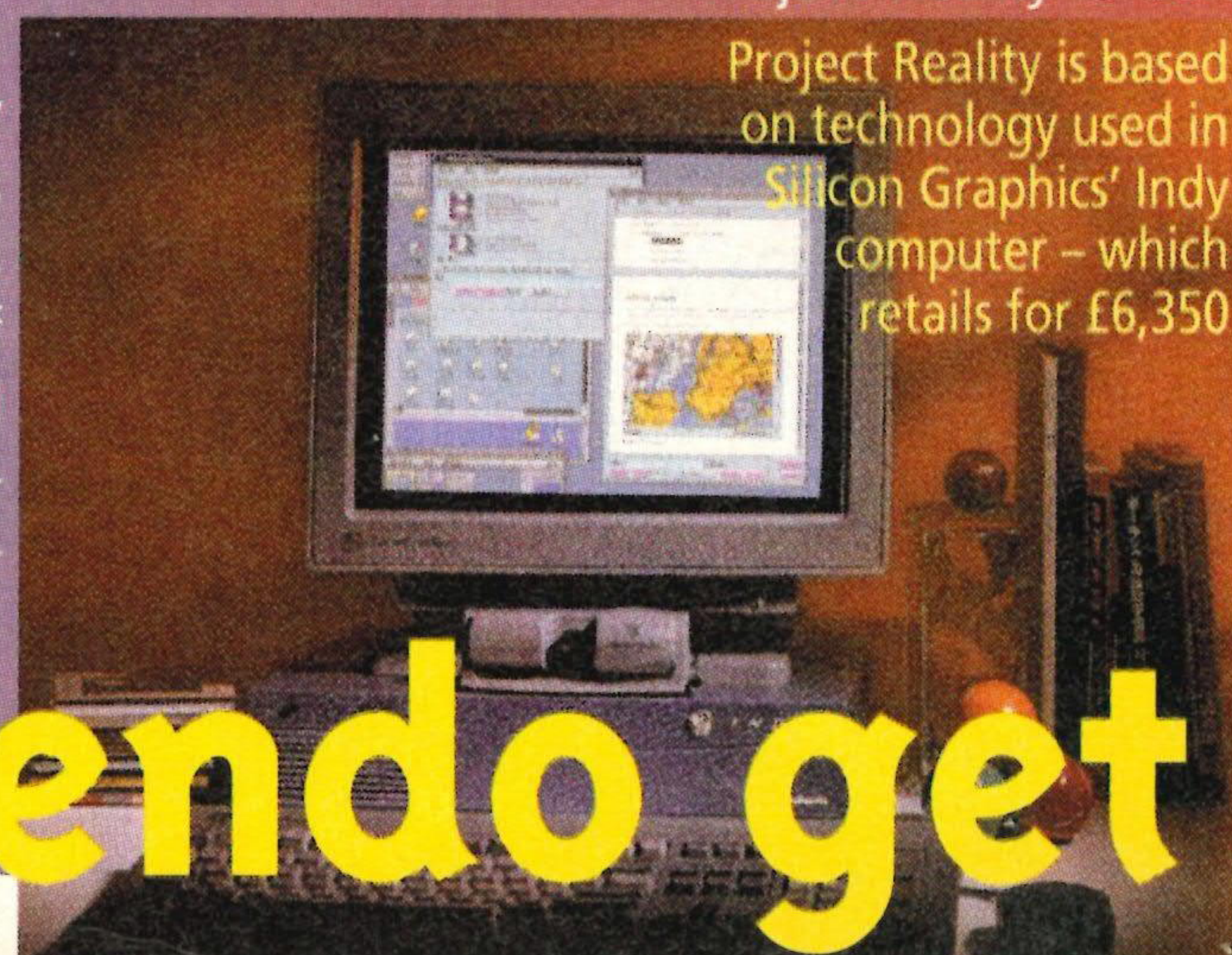
Project Reality is certainly grand in concept, but will it ever exist, and if it does, will it be as good as Nintendo are making out? Two years is a long time to wait for the answer, but if Reality shapes up, it'll be unreal.

With Herculean 32-bit monster machines coming out of every corner, and Atari's mighty 64-bit super console getting psyched up to step into the ring, it seemed that Nintendo wasn't even going to put the gloves on.

Then out of the blue they announced the creation of what could be the biggest hitter the console industry has ever seen.

Nintendo have made sure everybody knows about their alliance with Silicon Graphics, the US Company who are most famous for creating the "morphing" scenes in *Terminator 2* and *Jurassic*.

Silicon have recently applied their graphics technology (which costs tens of thousands of pounds) to industrial fields including molecular modelling and war-



Nintendo get real

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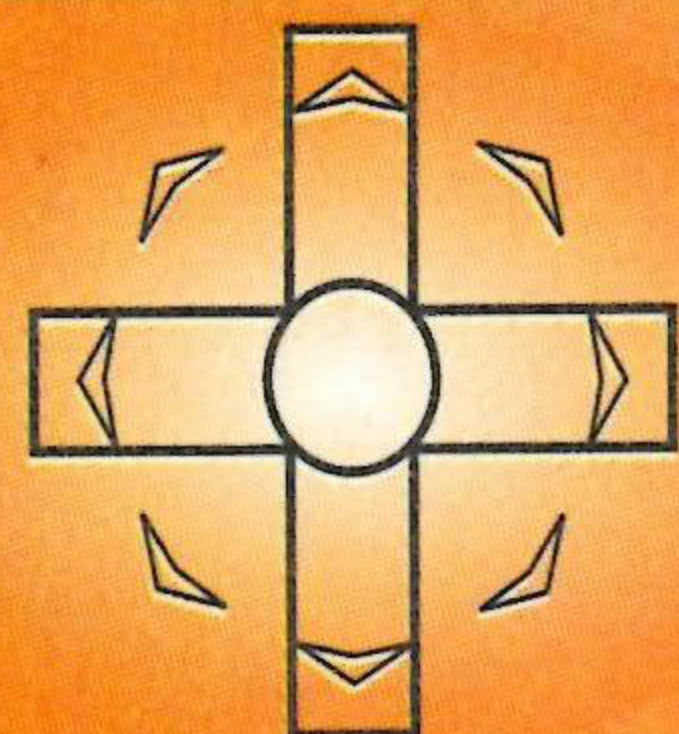
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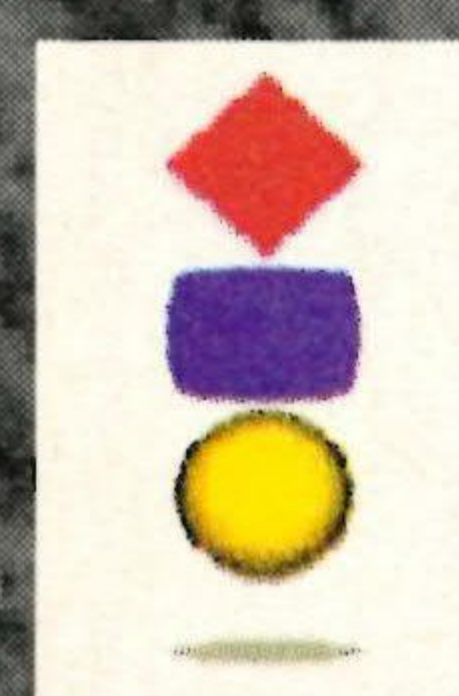
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There has never been a better time to have £400 in your pocket. (In fact, is there ever a bad time to have £400 in your pocket?) But the choice of what to buy over the past few months has become bewildering even to the most high-tech videophile. Turn your back for a moment and it seems someone else has just launched a new machine. Go on holiday for a month, and you'll have no chance of catching up with what new machines are compatible with what new software formats. Asking the people selling the machines is no good, they are as confused as you – and who can blame them? But, at the end of the day, all of this bodes well for you, the guy with the £400 in your pocket. It means you can get exactly what you want, at a price that is right.

November has been a particularly hectic month. It heralded the launch of two new machines – Atari's Jaguar and Panasonic's 3DO – and saw Philips start a major software and hardware campaign for their two-year-old CD-I machine. But unless you've actually seen the machines running, it would be hard to distinguish marketing fiction from machine fact.

VGS had a chance to road-test all the machines personally, without the imposing presence of an imposing marketing man. Here are our independent findings.



When details of The 3DO Company were released over a year ago, everyone agreed that its president, William "Trip" Hawkins, certainly had the acumen and flair to make it a success, but could he deliver the machine that he promised?

The 3DO Company was "formed to create a compelling new home interactive multimedia platform by developing technology that

achieves a breakthrough in audio visual realism at an affordable price." And by the end of March of this year, they had spent over \$15 million dollars pursuing that objective.

But money isn't something that has ever worried Trip Hawkins. We are talking about a man who took a small computer games publisher, Electronic Arts, and made them into the number one third party videogames publisher in the world. And you don't get that big without making a few influential friends along the way – like Time Warner, AT & T, Matsushita (Panasonic's parent company)... All of these companies, along with EA of course, were willing to invest their own cash in the 3DO to ensure its success. Hawkins hoped to develop the technology, and then license the innards of the machine out to third-party hardware producers.

According to plan, the first 3DO machine, Panasonic's FZ-1, arrived in late October. It was dark, sleek and pure NTSC –



Above, the hilarious 2 Stupid Dogs cartoon comes as a taster of the things to come from 3DO's close tie-in with Hollywood. Right, the warped racing game Road Race, which is totally unplayable on the demo. Left, many reference titles are lined up for 3DO.

which meant it was a real pain for UK importers of the machine to get it to display in colour on UK TVs (you have been warned!).

The US machine comes with two CDs:

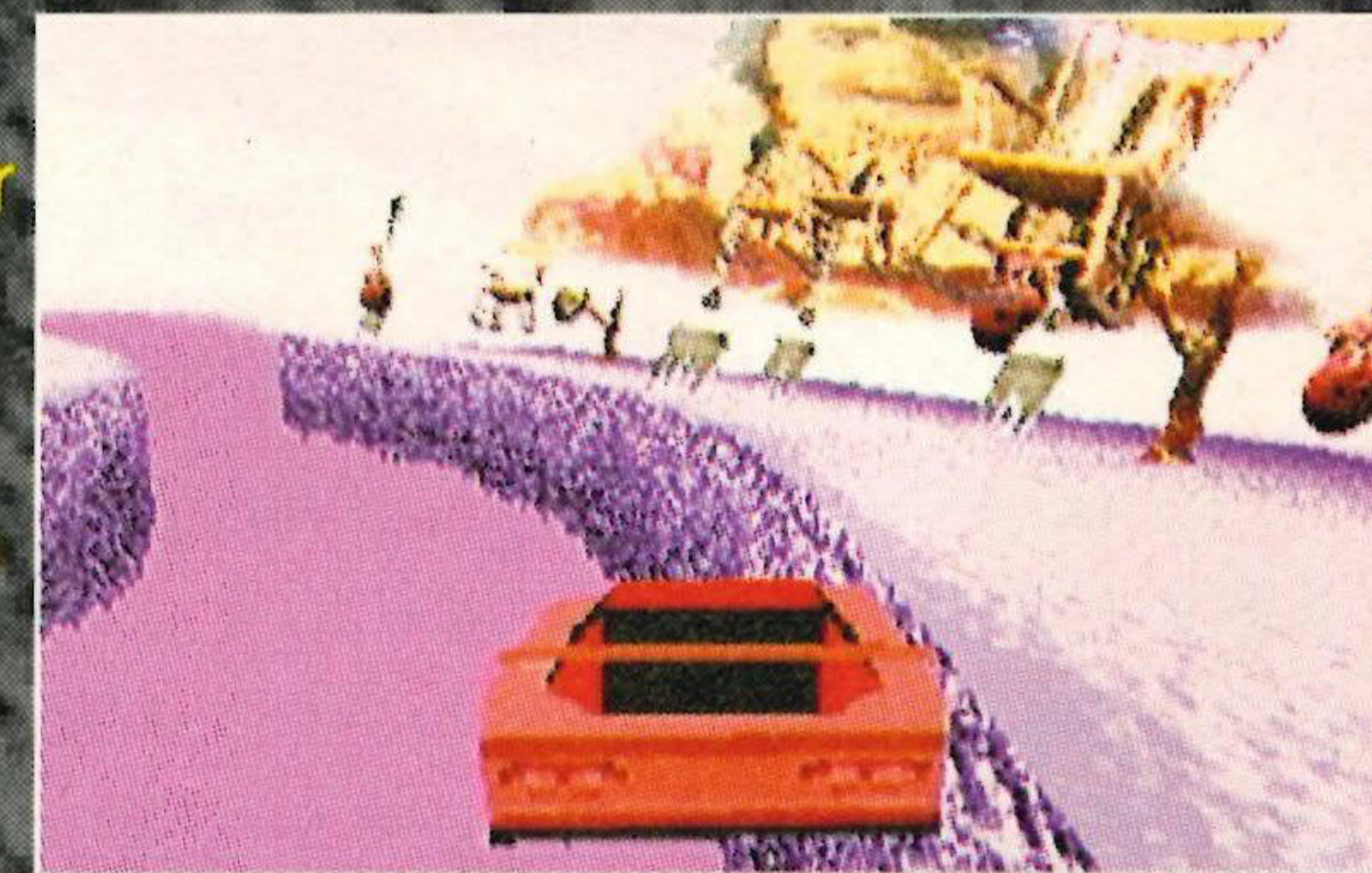


Panasonic's own Sampler CD, full of trailers for forthcoming products, and Crystal Dynamics' *Crash 'n' Burn*, which also has room on it for a couple of trailers.

You turn it on, open the disc tray, slap the disc in (*Crash 'n' Burn*, of course!), push the tray and you're off – reality, as they say, is about to hit your home (hide the cat!). The first thing that pops up is the 3DO logo, which, if you can be bothered to look at such things for long enough, bears a striking resemblance to Electronic Arts' logo.

Then the apocalyptic intro to *Crash 'n' Burn* goes into full motion. The buildings tumble, the flames roar, the sounds pounds... the animation jerks as the machine accesses the CD. So

choose your racer and get set. Yet again, the time lag as the CD loads in first the competitors' bios and then the track information is a little surprising. Slow access times isn't something you expect if you pay \$699 for a machine that claims to be the ultimate



play-station – reality has hit your home, and will be here in a few seconds, please wait... (*Crash 'n' Burn* is fully reviewed in page 41.)

On loading the Sampler CD, things look a bit

he TANNS



Premier games



Jaguar's Aliens vs Predator



3DO's Batman movie

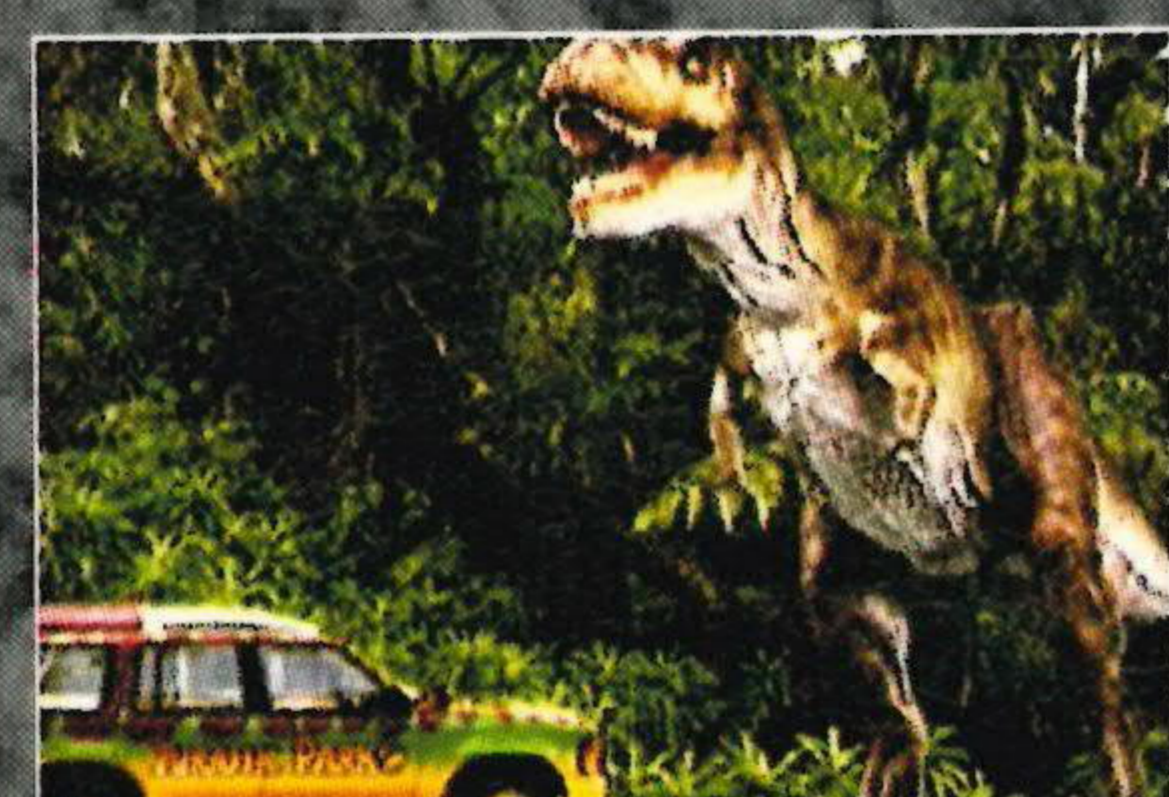


CD-I's Voyeur



Game shows go ballistic as Electronic Arts diversify their catalogue and take you inside a futuristic TV programme on the 3DO

more exciting. Go to the Diversions option and you have demos of *PGA Tour Golf*, *Batman*, *The Shell Game*, *2 Stupid Dogs*, *Road Race*, etc. *Batman* just screams to be looked at, and after a few seconds, the cartoon starts to unfold before your eyes – just like on TV. Turner's *2 Stupid Dogs* looks pretty crazy, and a sneak peek at that forthcoming attraction reveals a twisted comedy cartoon. Yeah, all these look good, but you can't actually interact with them. Why not pop down the shop and get a video instead?



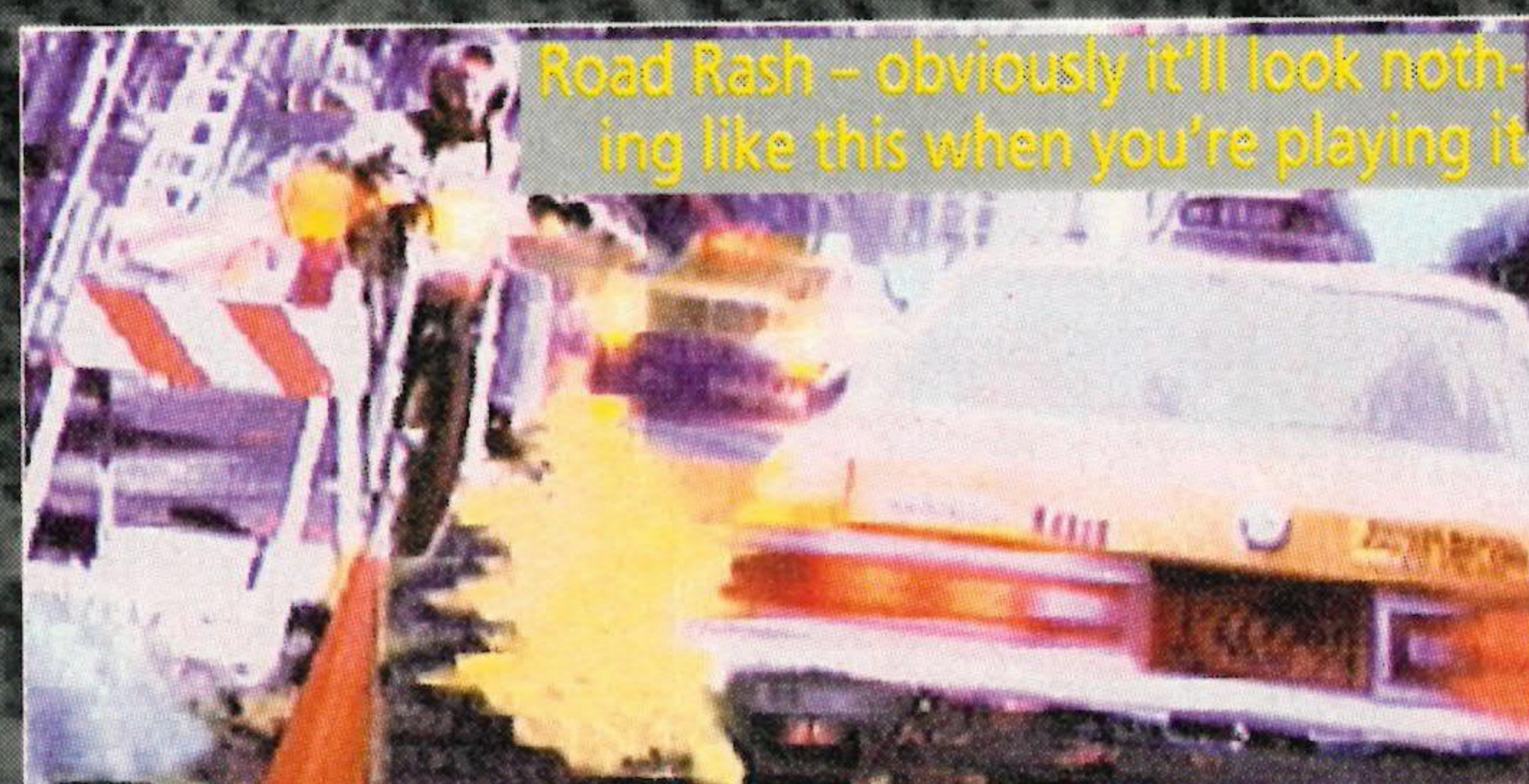
Jurassic on the 3DO? Well it had to happen. If this game still is anything to go by (which it usually isn't), this should be the best version yet (not difficult!)

The game demos are fairly predictable. *PGA* is just like all the other versions, but with improved graphics, of course. *Road Race* is a very strange, albeit unplayable, arcade racing game. So where's the excitement?

Going on the premise that all the other games had really intriguing titles, but bland gameplay, perhaps *The Shell Game*, with its

bland name, might have a really exciting game... Nope. It's just a super quick version of that game where you hide a pea under one of three nutshells, swap them all around and guess which one has the pea under it. Probably not for major release, methinks.

If you bought the 3DO now, you'd be bloody disappointed. First off, it's mightily expensive through import channels (a UK version is expected in the spring, though, prices quoted have been £299-£499). Software is very limited, with no games released with the machine, although titles like *Mad Dog McCree* appearing a few days after. Then there's the slow access time of the CD. This is probably due to poor programming, because with 2Mb of normal RAM and a clock speed of 12.5Mhz, there should be enough to cope. Thirdly, the real world doesn't have pixels in it, so if you want to simulate it in your own home, you must have a resolution high enough to cope. 640x480 just isn't enough. Quite often you see blocking graphics while playing 3DO stuff, and, like the Mega-CD, the resolution might be the machine's downfall. When the FMV (full motion video) cart comes next year, you'll be able to play Video CD films on the machine, but they won't look as good as on the Jaguar or CD-I, purely because of the resolution.



Road Rash – obviously it'll look nothing like this when you're playing it



Atari have a long, distinguished history in videogames. Looking back, they produced the first decent console, the VCS 2600, the first 16-bit computer, the Atari ST, the first and best full-colour hand-held, the Lynx, and now they have come up with the first 64-bit console. When it comes to technology, Atari could show the Japs a thing or two. Pity they couldn't actually SELL it to them...

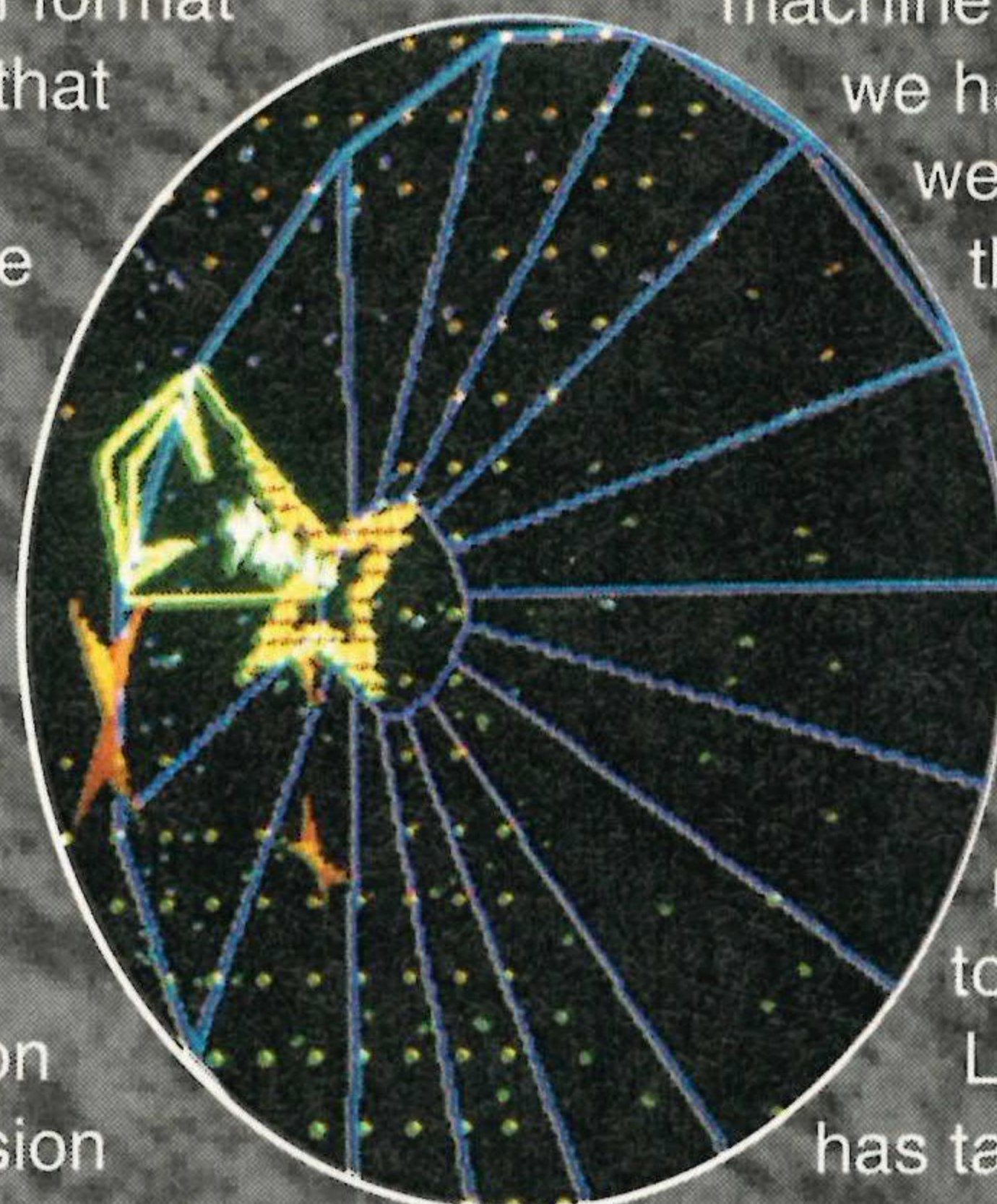
Atari claim the Jaguar has been in development for five years. While Sega and Nintendo claimed to have groundbreaking technology in the Mega Drive and Super NES, Atari were probably sniggering to themselves as they tinkered around with their 64-bit console. But laugh as we did over the meteoric demise of the Atari ST and Lynx, we couldn't accuse Atari of giving up.

The main difference between the Jaguar and everything else is that it's a console through and through. It makes no preten-

Cybermorph on the Jaguar



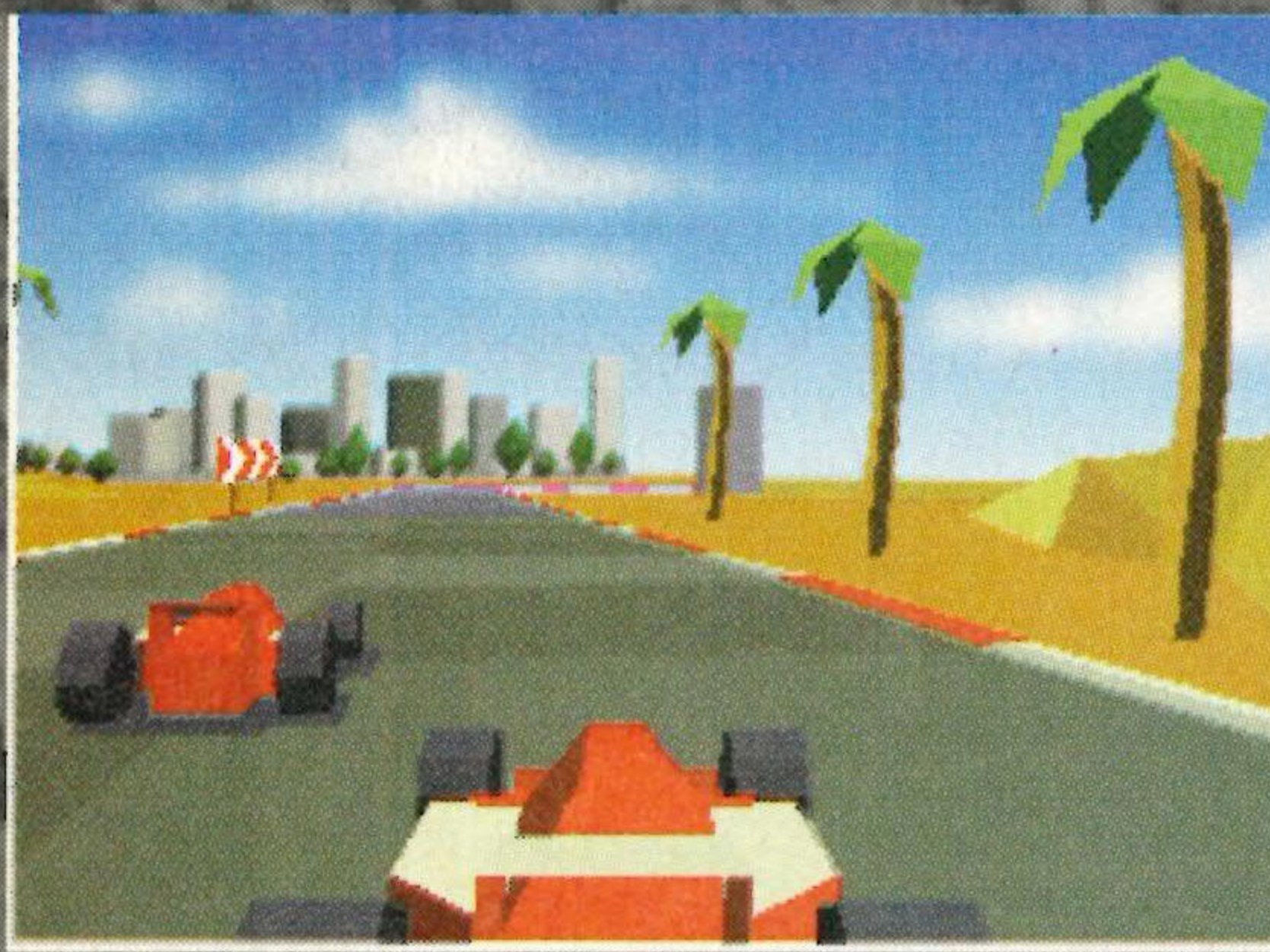
sions to being an AV machine (although it can do all that too), it is quite simply aimed at gamers. CD alone isn't the ideal format for games, but make a machine that has the speed of carts and the capacity of CDs and you could be onto a winner. The maximum cart size we've had so far is 24Mbits for *Street Fighter II* on the Mega Drive, but the Jaguar is launching with 48Mbit carts (although, like the original 8Mbit Sega carts, these will probably be surpassed). And before you start working that out, Atari reckon that by using their own compression techniques, they have squashed in almost 400Mbits of code into a cart. Considering most CD games use very little of the CD's capacity anyway, the Jaguar will have no trouble equalling any of the CD games around at the moment. But Atari aren't ignoring CD (with all the hype around it, how could



Tempest on the Jaguar. Surely Atari have better ways of spending their time than converting an age-old arcade machine – and not a very good one at that!

downfall: software. If you don't have the right software, no matter how you market the machine, no-one's going to buy it. So far, we have seen only two games of which we could say, "Wow, you won't see that on a CD machine". The rest are just supercharged versions of tried-and-tested formats: a ninja game, a shoot-'em-up etc. They've even got an age old arcade game called *Tempest*. What's the point of developing new technology if all you're going to use it for is to tart up old games? Luckily, one programming house has taken the Jaguar and said, "Hey,

let's see just how far we can push this machine!" Oxford-based Rebellion Software are just putting the finishing touches to *Chequered Flag II* (a game that will give the arcade version of *Virtua Racing* a run for its money) and *Alien vs Predator*. The latter is the only game to even touch on the Jaguar's hidden potential.

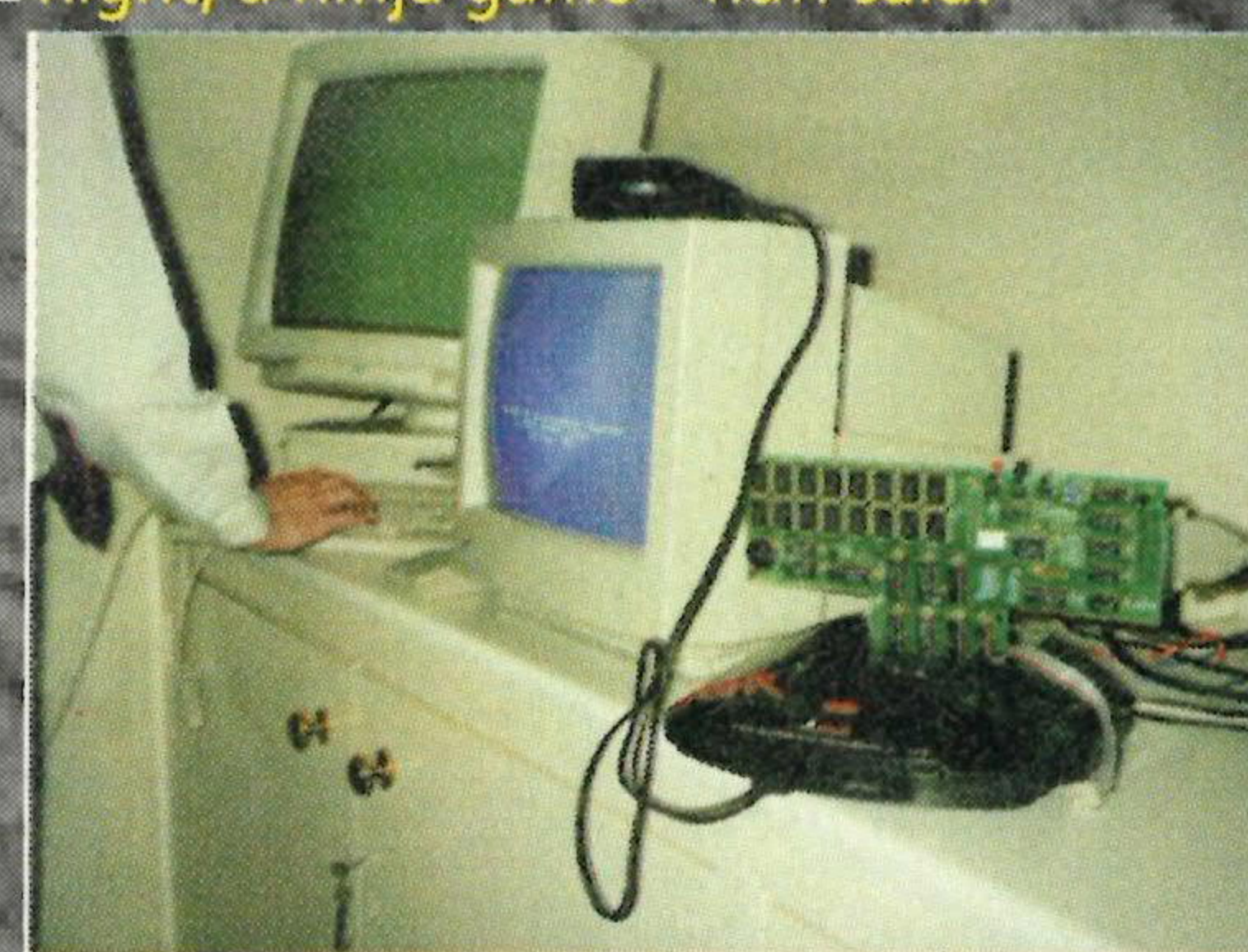


Left, *Chequered Flag II* on the Jaguar. Looks a bit like *Virtua Racing*, doesn't it? Well, it plays a lot like it too, even down to four different views! Below, the Jaguar development system in action. The computer on the left chucks all the data onto that massive board sticking out of the Jag. Atari assure us, the real carts will be a more manageable size. Right, a ninja game – nuff said.

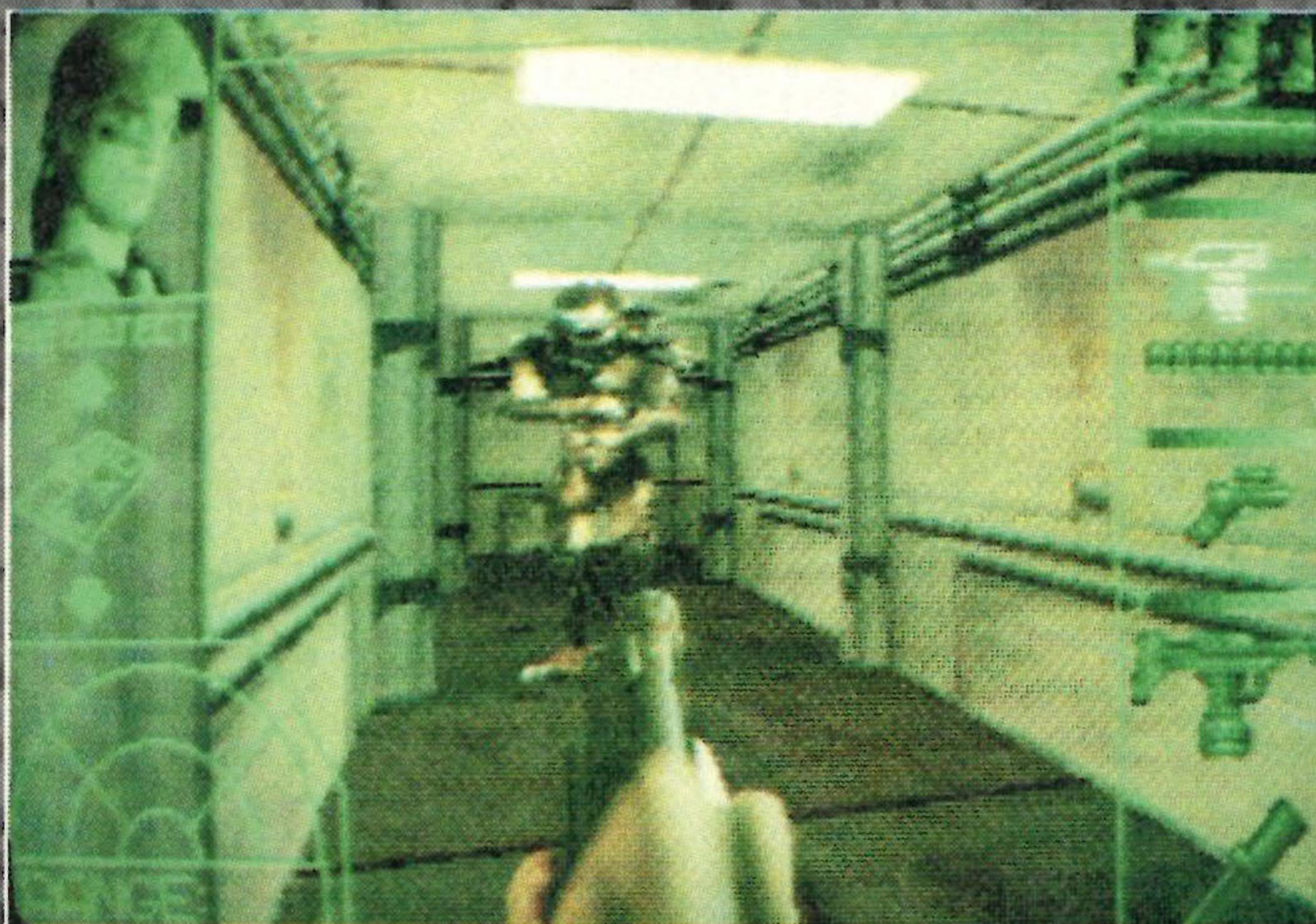


next year they are launching a CD unit at just \$100, and an FMV cart to allow you to play films etc.

But games is what the machine is about. If the programmers know what they're doing, 64-bit system architecture means the Jaguar can do everything a hell of a lot easier than either the 3DO or CD-I. In fact, the Jaguar is a programmer's dream console. Not only can they chuck data around a lot quicker, Atari have also built in special routines that allow morphing, object-mapping, zooming and rotating with ease. Essentially, this means that instead of the programmer working out how to do some Terminatoresque morphing (and thus filling up the cart with his routine), he can just say "morph this pig into this cow" and the machine will do it for him. This allows the main processor, which is already running at 13.3 Mhz, to concentrate on doing more complicated things.



Here you have true colour, full screen, hi-res graphics, beautifully rendered at astonishing speeds as you zoom around the inside of a space colony. Run, walk, shuffle wherever you like and as many times as you like. Rebellion have created a game environment, and what you do in it is up to you – not up to the CD



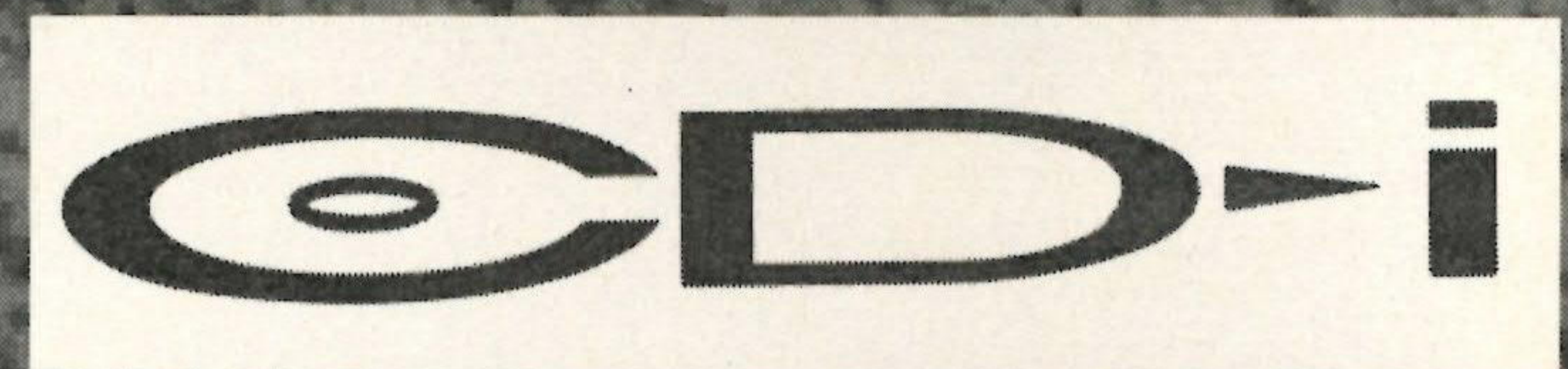
The brilliant *Aliens vs Predator* on the Jaguar – and why not?

deciding which bit of data it would be convenient to load next.

When Atari bring out the CD player and FMV cart next year, technically they will have the best machine for playing games and watching films. It's faster than the other machines, has a higher resolution, equalling colours, and, arguably, better expandability (Atari are already planning a keyboard and modem add-on). The question is, will Atari know what to do with it?



A Humans clone called *Dino Dudes* – yeah, just what the Jaguar needs



While everyone else was "waiting for the right moment", Philips invested the money, created the technology and stuck it out there on the shelves. It's quite surprising when you think that people had actual hands-on experience of the CD-I almost two years ago, before the Jaguar and 3DO were even heard of. Indeed, there have been a few CD-I

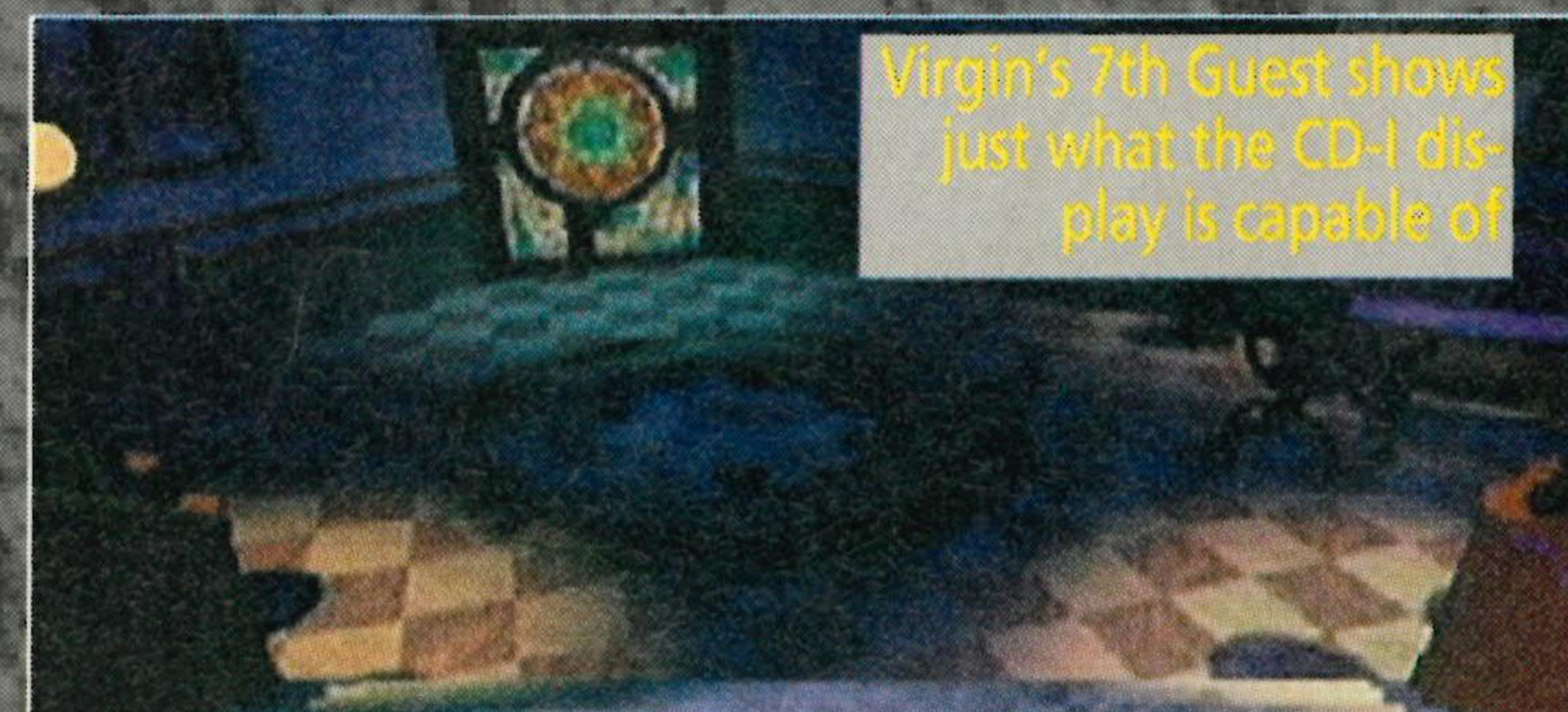


From *The Joy of Sex* Game to Psygnosis' *Microcosm*, Philips have the widest software range of any of the CD machines. There's something for everyone in the CD-I.

machines released already, but if you want the latest model, get the recently-launched CD-I 210, which retails at £399. Philips are already planning another machine for next summer, in which they hope to incorporate the Digital Video cartridge (FMV), which retails for £150 at the moment and plugs in the back of the machine. Also on the way are CD-I machines from Far Eastern companies like Samsung, so expect specification to increase and prices to drop next year (or so the theory goes).

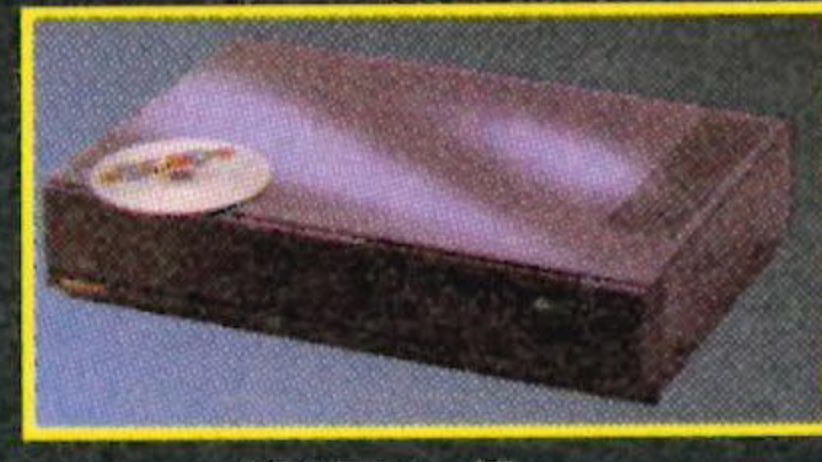
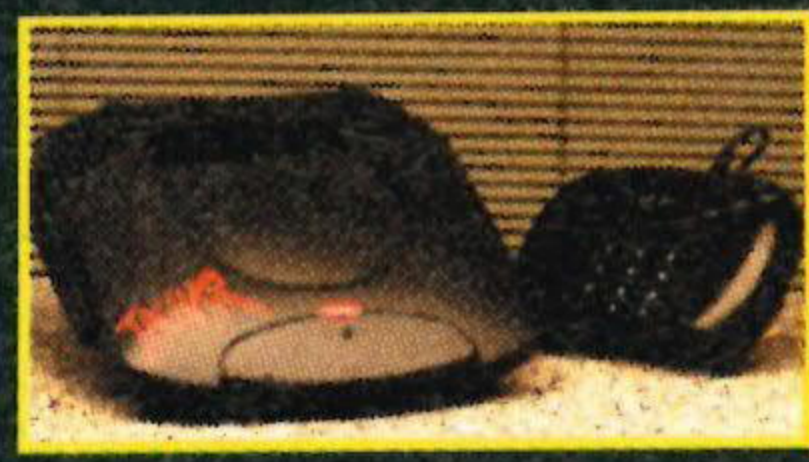
The CD-I is packaged like a video, and when you open it up that's pretty much what you get. It's midi-sized, and will perch quite happily atop your existing video recorder. But it's the gadgets that come with it that make the difference. First off the infra-red remote, which looks like something for a CD player, but has a thin joystick at the top. Then there's the joypad, which, sadly, isn't infra-red but can do all the useful functions of the remote, so goodness only knows why it's wired to the machine.

Switch on and you'll soon start to remember that this isn't a wacky console with bolt-ons, it's an audio visual unit. The controllers aren't very exciting and neither is the menu, in its inoffensive pastel colours. But if, like us, Philips gave you tons of free disks (which is unlikely, isn't it?), you'll soon start to realise what this machine is all about. The choice of software is vast and, most importantly for penetration into the homes of every family, varied. There are reference disks, educational pap, documentaries, arcade games, adventures, and now interactive movies and Hollywood films. The reason that Philips have managed to build up such a cornucopia of titles is that the machine's been around for so long, but Philips have been keeping quiet about it. To most of us, it's a new



Virgin's *7th Guest* shows just what the CD-I display is capable of

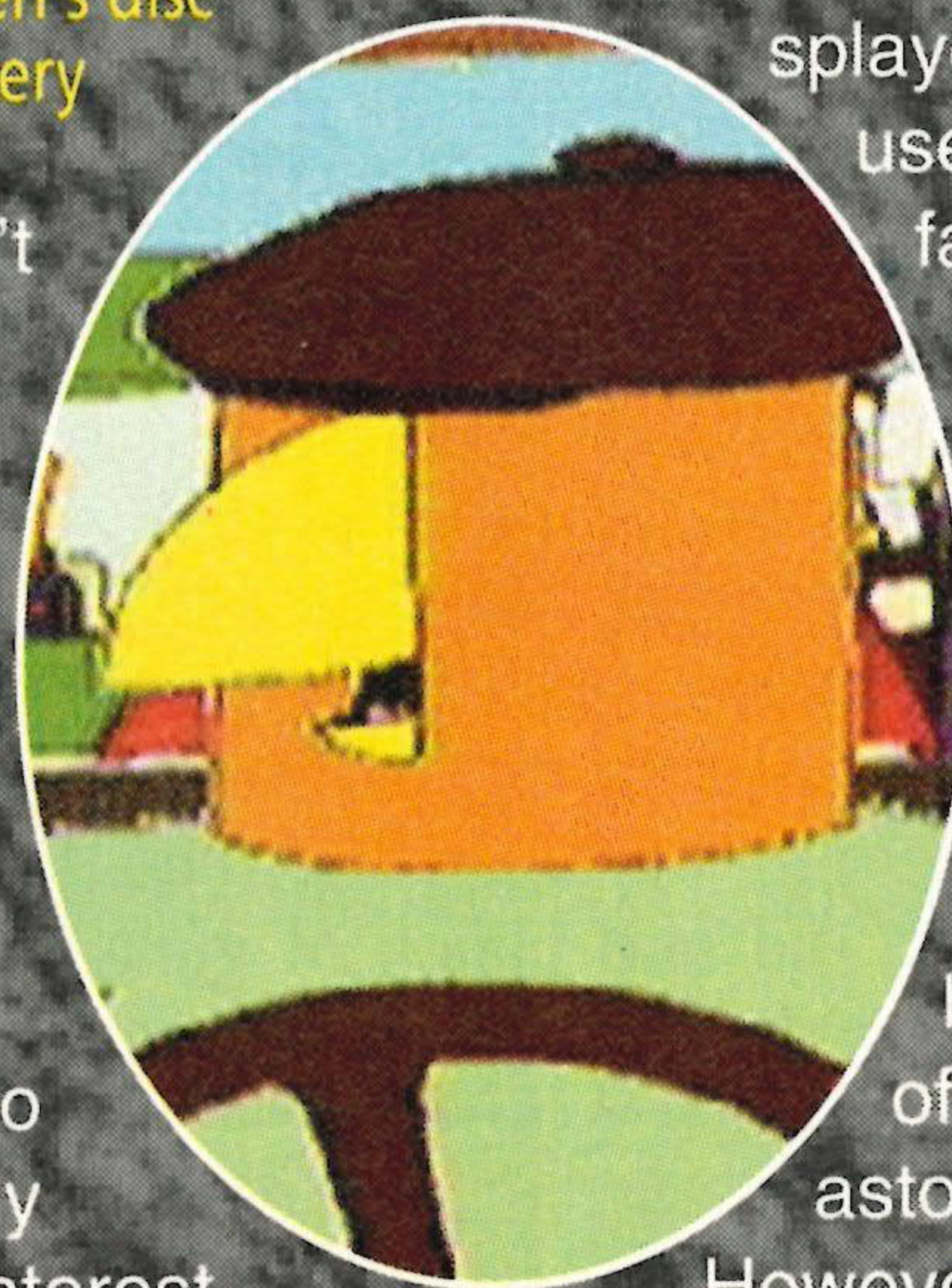
Boffin's bits



	Jaguar	3DO	CD-I
Processor	64-bit 68000	32-bit RISC	16-bit 68000
Clock speed	13.3Mhz	12.5Mhz	15Mhz
Highest resolution	768x576	648x480	768x560
Colour depth	32-bit	32-bit	32-bit
Maximum colours	16.7 million	16.7 million	16.7 million
MPEG compatibility with optional FMV cart	MPEG 2	MPEG 1	MPEG 1
Machine RAM	n/a	2Mb	1Mb
Machine battery backup	yes	yes	yes
Joypad ports	two (front)	pads are chained together	two (one front and rear)
AV connections	RF aerial non-standard RGB/audio	RF aerial phonos (video, audio) S-VHS	RF aerial phonos (video, audio) Scart
Headphone socket	no	in each pad	no
Others	DSP expansion (rear)	FMV (rear) AV expansion (side)	FMV (rear)



Reference and education on the CD-I, with the documentary *Skybound* and the children's disc *Wuzzo* – very weird...



and startling machine, and we haven't seen the dodgy learning curve that the software producers have gone through. Because the machine has such a choice of discs, Philips can choose to promote the best instead of pushing the few sub-standard ones that have been botched together for its release.

Sure, as its competitors are quick to point out, the technology is essentially two years old too, but Philips aren't interested in that, their roots are elsewhere. When Philips helped launch compact disc all those years ago, reviewers complained about the machines, saying they were bulky, too expensive and the output was no better than a good vinyl record. Which was true – then. The same might be said of CD-I, but with the sort of funds Philips have to put into this, and the long-term view they have taken for CD-I (they have a ten year plan for the machine, at the end of which they hope it will be as popular as the video recorder) they would have to seriously cock it up for CD-I not to be a success.

CONCLUSION

With the 3DO, Panasonic claim "reality has hit your home". Well, let's just take a look at that. For true life pictures, you need at least 16-bit colour, which all of these machines have. You need crystal clear sound, which they all have (although the Jaguar's is computer generated until it has a CD drive). You also need real-life response times – if you go through a door, you want to be in the next room immediately – which both the CD machines don't quite reach. Above all, you need a display so pixel perfect that it would be hard to distinguish it from the real thing – the 3DO doesn't quite make it here. So it would seem Coke still have the monopoly on *The Real Thing*.

All the machines are better than the one you

presently own, so which one is best for you?

If you're a 100% gamer and like to use good old fashioned

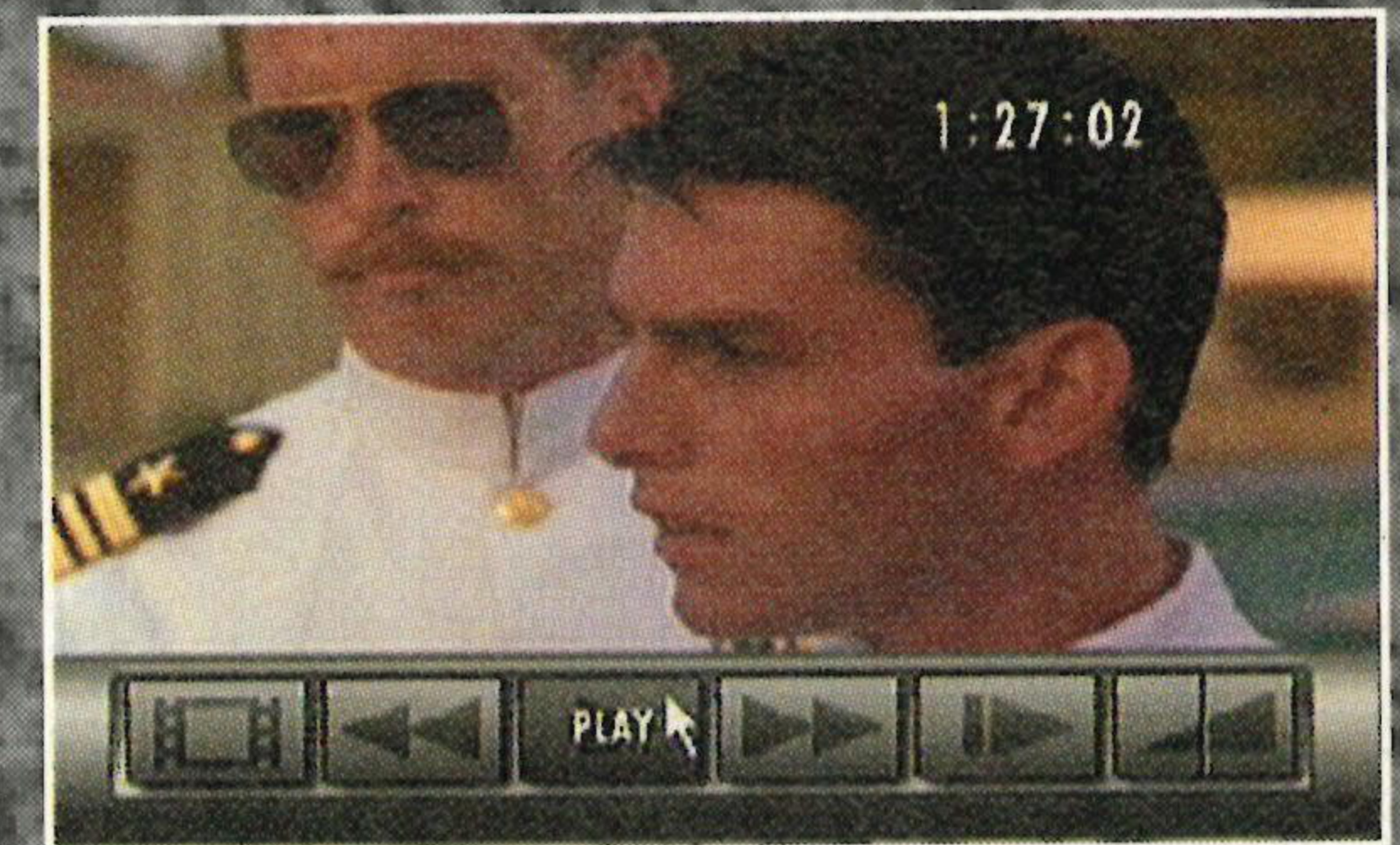
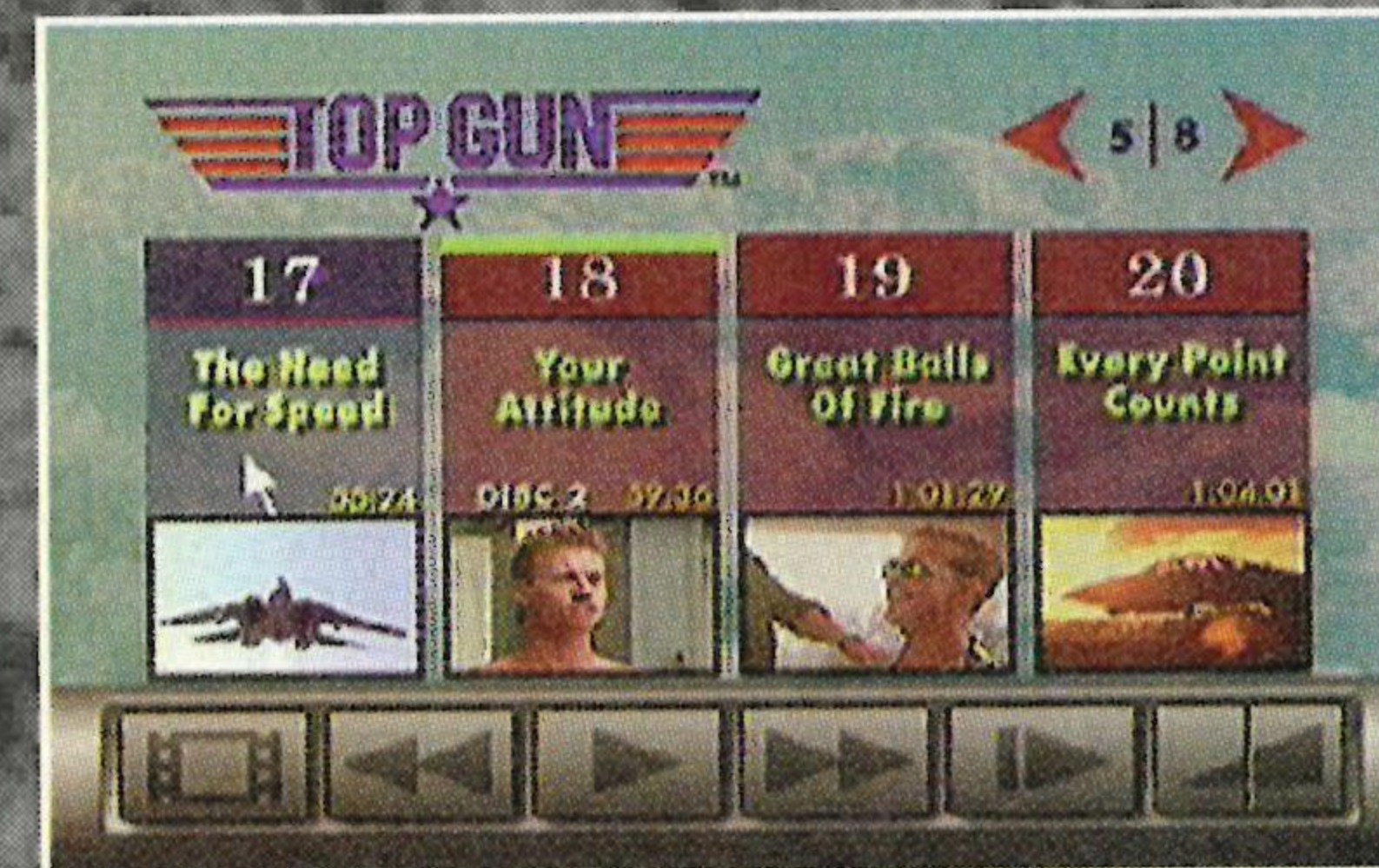
machines like the video recorder for watching films on and CD player for listening to music, then the Jaguar is the machine for you. Its power far exceeds that of the 3DO and CD-I, and for raw arcade games you won't be able to beat it. At half the price of the other machines, it represents astonishing value for money.

However, when it comes to making good machines sell, Atari's track record has been somewhat blemished by the Lynx and the numerous Jaguar prototypes that have made false starts off the drawing board. Still, we wish them luck, and if machines sold on what was inside them instead of what was outside them, Atari would win hands down.

Alternatively, you are probably the kind of user that wants a machine that gives you everything: great videogames, movies and also plays music. If that's the case and you want it now, you have no option but to get Philips' CD-I. What other AV manufacturers have talked about, Philips have done. You can have everything now. It beats the 3DO in every department, especially software. Philips can honestly market the CD-I as a machine for everyone in the family.

next month

If you're more confused now than when you started reading about these new machines, look out for the next issue of *VideoGames Shopper*, where we take a more detailed look at the new compact disc formats. For instance, did you know that soon you'll be able to play films on your PC and Amiga too? Reserve your copy now to be sure you don't miss out on the Video CD revolution.



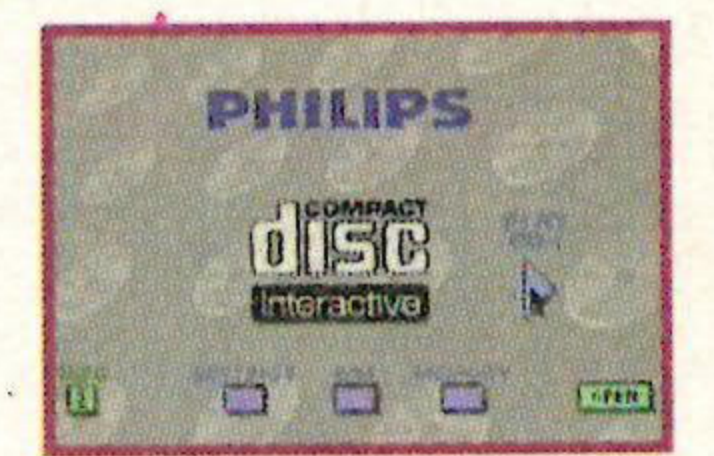
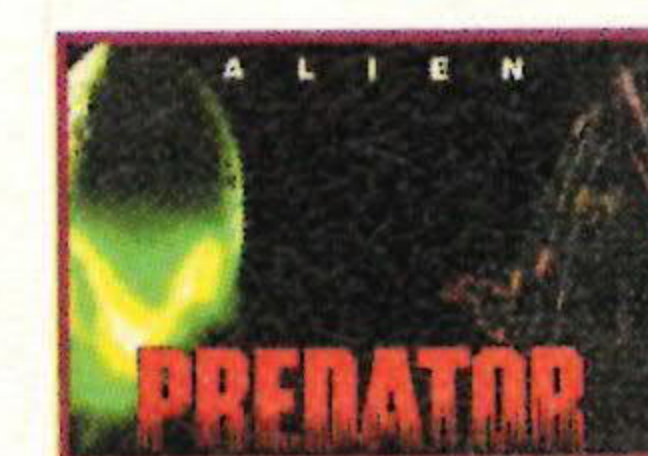
Video CD is THE format of 1994 – and at the moment only CD-I supports the format. The picture on the left is the contents for *Top Gun*, while on the right we have frozen a frame from the film. Along the bottom you can see the icons that pop up, allowing you to do such mundane things as changing the volume to playing the film in slow motion (yeah, we know, nobody uses trick effects in reality but it's neat to see). Philips have already signed up 50 of Paramount's back catalogue titles. By Christmas, you should be able to get *Top Gun*, *Patriot Games*, *Hunt For Red October*, *Naked Gun 2 1/2* and *Wayne's World* for just £15.99 each

3DO have a unit that has an unfamiliar design, and looks totally out of place next to your existing hi-fi set-up. It can neither give you the high quality films of the CD-I or the fast action games of the Jaguar. And if it's supposed to be part of the furniture, where's the remote control – or do they expect you to have wires trailing across the floor if you want to pause a Video CD?

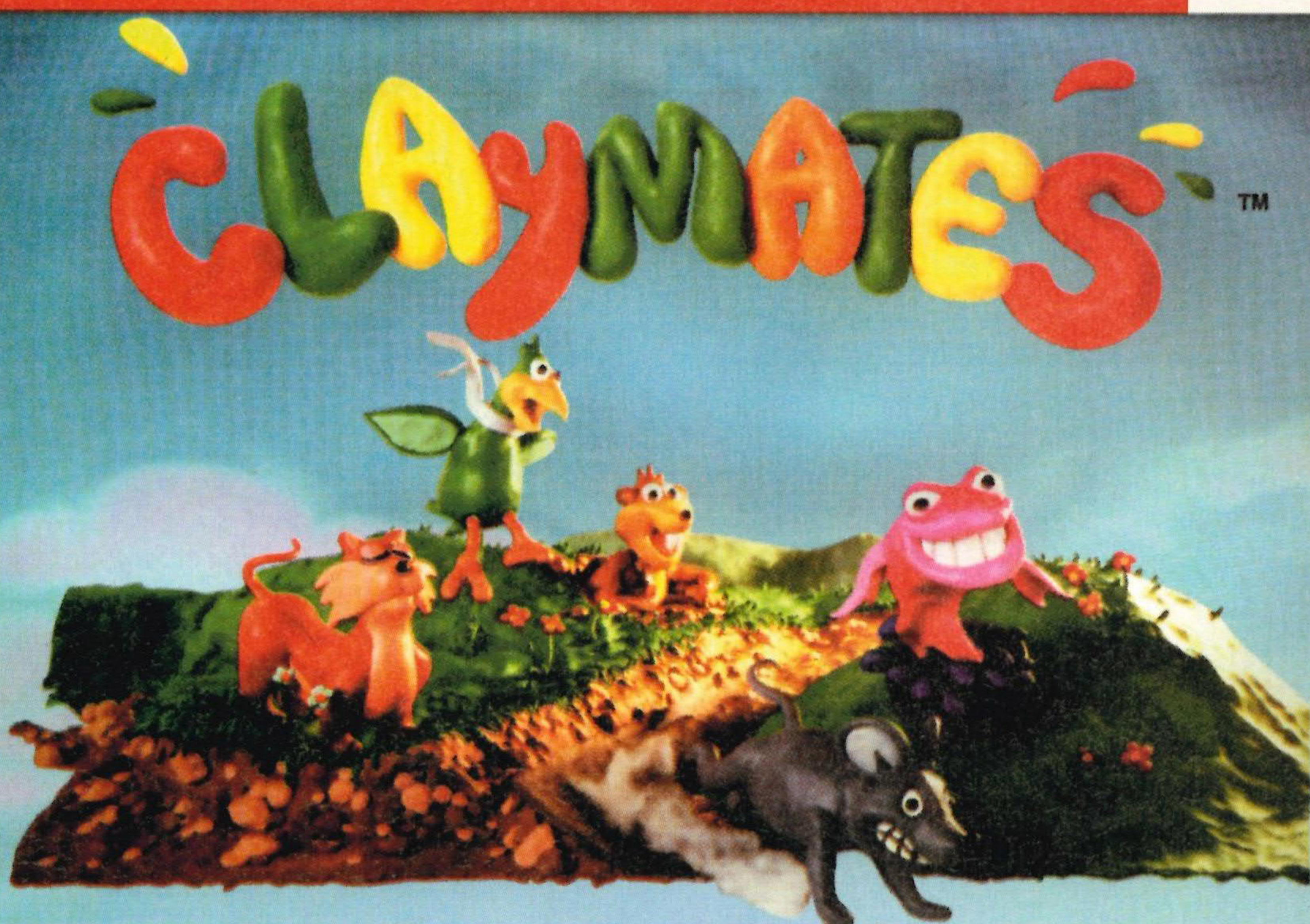
Jaguar has the muscle. 3DO has the market-



Layman's lazy guide



	Jaguar	3DO	CD-I
Hardware			
Access time	excellent	slow	okay
Controller comfort	good	good	okay
Infra-red remote	no	no	yes
UK availability	limited high street	importers	everywhere
Durability	good	good	good
Street rating	"cult"	"predictable"	"brave"
Audio CD	no*	yes	yes
CD+G	no*	yes	yes
Photo CD	no*	yes	yes
Video CD	no*	spring 94	yes
Price	£200	£700 (import)	£399
Additional CD unit*	£100 (spring)	n/a	n/a
FMV unit	?	?	£150
Software			
Titles by Xmas	ten	ten	70
Kids	no	spring 94	yes
Educational	no	spring 94	yes
Arcade	yes	yes	yes
Adventure	spring 94	spring 94	yes
Sport	spring 94	yes	yes
Simulation	yes	yes	yes
Adult	no	no	yes
Semi-interactive movie	no	December	yes
Music video	no	no	yes
Hollywood movies	spring 94	spring 94	yes
Price range	£30-50	£30-50	£10-50



Claymates

Producer: Interplay

Format: SNES

Price: TBA

Available: December

Everyone at Interplay's secret laboratory (which isn't so secret any more since everyone knows it's on the dark side of the moon) has been goofing around with little plasticine

to be a good job, because now he can change into five different characters with special abilities that will help him on his journey. These include Muckster the cat, who is good at climbing up trees and Oozy the mouse, who can run very fast. He can also transform into Goopy the Guppy should any swimming around become necessary, or Doh-Doh the bird if there is some flying to be done.

To be able to change into these alternative forms, Clayton has to find power-ups which are hidden in various places. *Claymates* is a kind of platform/puzzle game with 25 levels of play stretching through five worlds. These include hidden levels full of power-ups and secret items.

Claymates has its own complete musical

score, plus fully digitised sound effects. It looks like a winner, and could well achieve cult status from what we've seen so far.

men for the last few months. So what's the script? Well, someone who had been sitting up late at night (probably in a disgraceful state of drunkenness) watching old videos of Take Hart was suddenly struck by a marvellous idea. The little clay character Morph had definite digitisation possibilities. Hence 25 characters were painstakingly crafted out of plasticine, filmed at different angles and individually digitised.

Professor Putty, a renowned crackpot inventor, gets kidnapped by a psychotic witch-doctor. The only person up to rescuing him is his son Clayton, who, thinking one of his dad's machines might be able to help, gets himself turned into a lump of plasticine. This turns out

score, plus fully digitised sound effects. It looks like a winner, and could well achieve cult status from what we've seen so far.

Interplay's plasticine fun didn't stop there, however. They enjoyed themselves so much with *Claymates* that they decided to take the rip out of beat-'em-ups by creating a *Street Fighter II* style plasticine game. See this month's beat-'em-ups feature for more information on *Clayfighter*.



STAR TREK



you can kill 'em all using the Enterprise's huge arsenal of phasers and photon torpedoes. In self-defence, naturally.

Star Trek: the 25th Anniversary

Producer: Interplay

Format: Amiga

Price: £34.99

Available: now

Get ready to boldly go where no Amiga has ever gone before! The special space-flight simulation/graphic adventure of the cult science-fiction series is finally here.

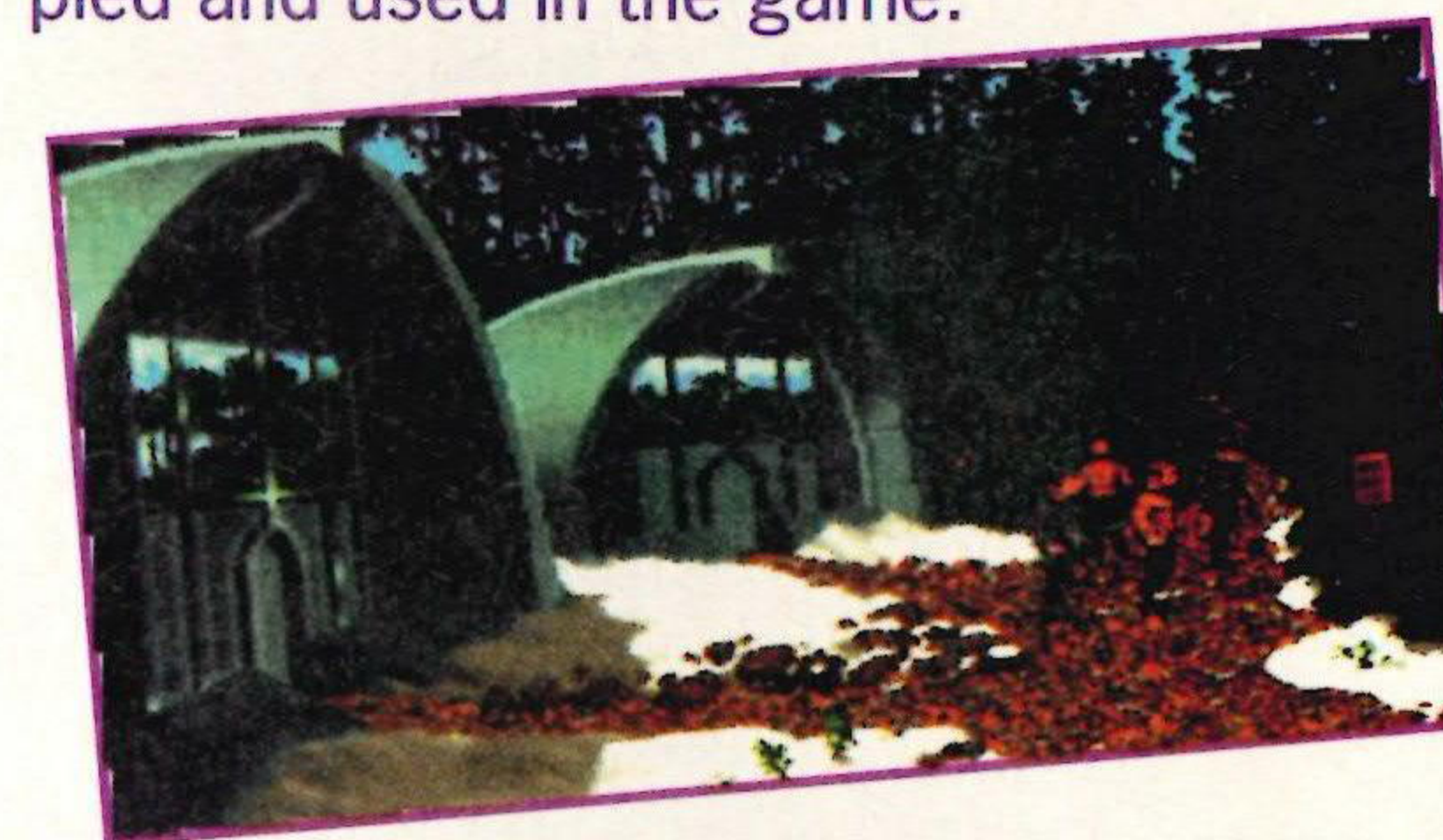
We have been assured by *Interplay* that every effort has been made to give the game a feeling of authenticity. This is helped by the fact that most of the development team are dedicated Trekkies for whom damaging the integrity of the series would be the most horrible and perverse act imaginable. It would be an even more deadly sin than questioning the reality of William Shatner's hairstyle.

Just like in the series, you meet various alien weirdoes in your journey through the more obscure parts of the galaxy, including the spaced-out Romulans, the Klingons (Communist scum) and the odd bunch of gung-ho space pirates. Just like in the series

Other features from the "real" Starship Enterprise include the force shields surrounding the ship, the teleport room and communication devices. Also represented is the warp drive, which gives them plenty of excuses to use the predictable Scotty samples.

The game takes the form of a number of interlinked episodes, clearly separated, but with strands running through them all, not unlike the series itself. The plotlines occasionally cross-connect to hold everything together. When you beam down to planets, there are puzzles to solve and bizarre alien civilisations to interact with... or destroy utterly.

The game contains enhanced Amiga graphics and untold numbers of 3-D digitised space scenes. Additionally, the complete musical score and actual sound effects from the series have been sampled and used in the game.



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- U90 STAR PRINTER DRIVERS - Full of 9 and 24 pin star printer drivers.
- U91 DCOPY 3.1 - Excellent copy program.

GAMES

- G1 ICE RUNNER - Applaudable platform caper.
- G9 FIGHTING WARRIORS - Brilliant street fighter clone.
- G10 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE - Gruesome hack'em up.
- G15 GNU CHESS - Strong chess playing program.
- G30 21 GAMES - An amazing 21 games on one disk.
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- G58 THE LAST REFUGE - Conflict Medieval style.
- G61 BLUE DIAMONDS 4 - Very good Boulder dash clone.
- G62 LCD DREAMS - Four classic remakes of old hand held games.
- G63 AMOS CRICKET 2 - Improved version.
- G66 GALAGA - Original Space Invader clone.

TOP DEMOS

- A40 FRAXION REVENGE - Series of mini horror movies.
- D46 +D47 DESERT DREAMS - Best ever demo and soundtrack.
- M46 RETINA EURO 1 - Explosive Hard Core sounds and techno.
- M47 MONOXIDE (A500 only) - Techno Rave with a Buzz.

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Eye of the Storm

Producer: Rebellion

Format: PC

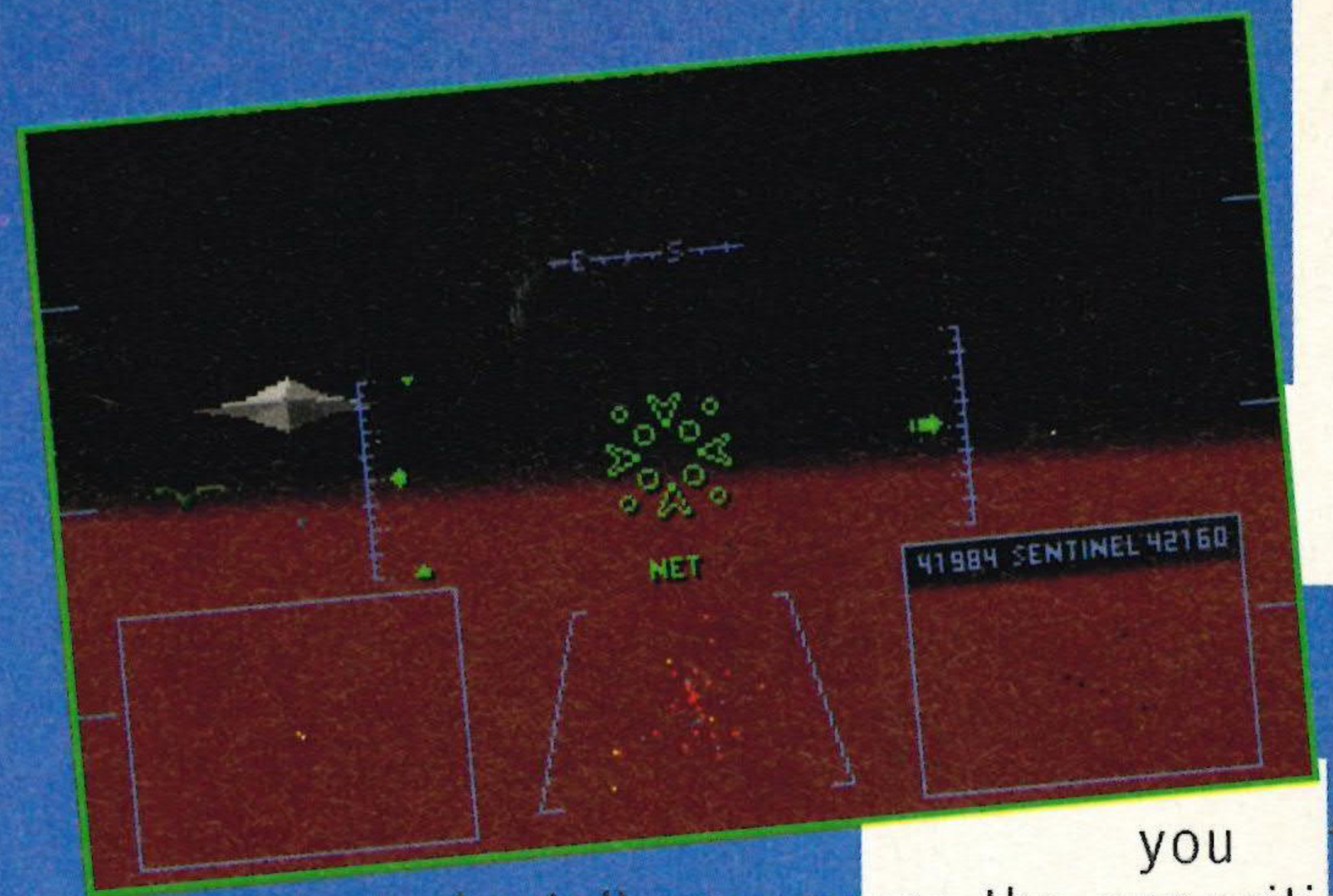
Price: TBA

Available: TBA

We've just received an early version of *Eye of the Storm*, and it's looking pretty hot. The PC game was developed by top Jaguar programming house Rebellion, the guys behind *Aliens vs Predator* and *Chequered Flag II*.

The year is 2124 and most of the

Eye of the Storm



you to brutally massacre the opposition whenever the mood takes you. You can even develop psychotic and extremely environmentally unfriendly tendencies and start blowing away all the flying whales yourself.

You can amass money and fame in the completion of various missions. This will allow you to buy advanced strap-ons for your spacecraft, which starts off "basic".

Eye of the Storm's intro graphics are beautiful and highly atmospheric, and the game itself looks like it's got real potential. Keep an "eye" on next issue for more info.



pendent orchids and other strange forms of plant and animal life.

Unfortunately, humans are there too in the form of mercenaries sent by warring planetary corporations to cause untold havoc for no apparent reason. They go around blowing away flying whales, driving above the

speed limit, and generally spoiling it for everybody else.

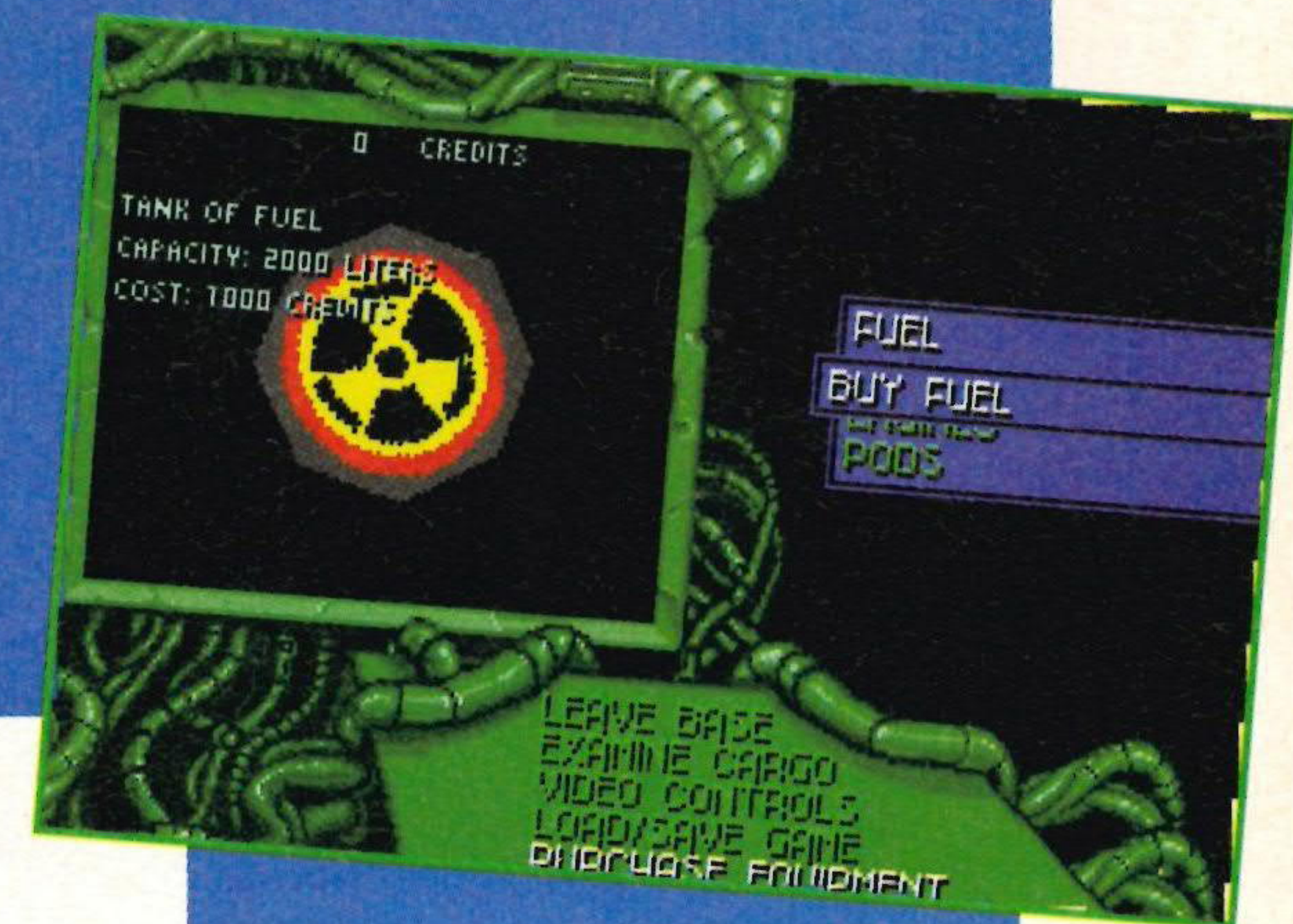
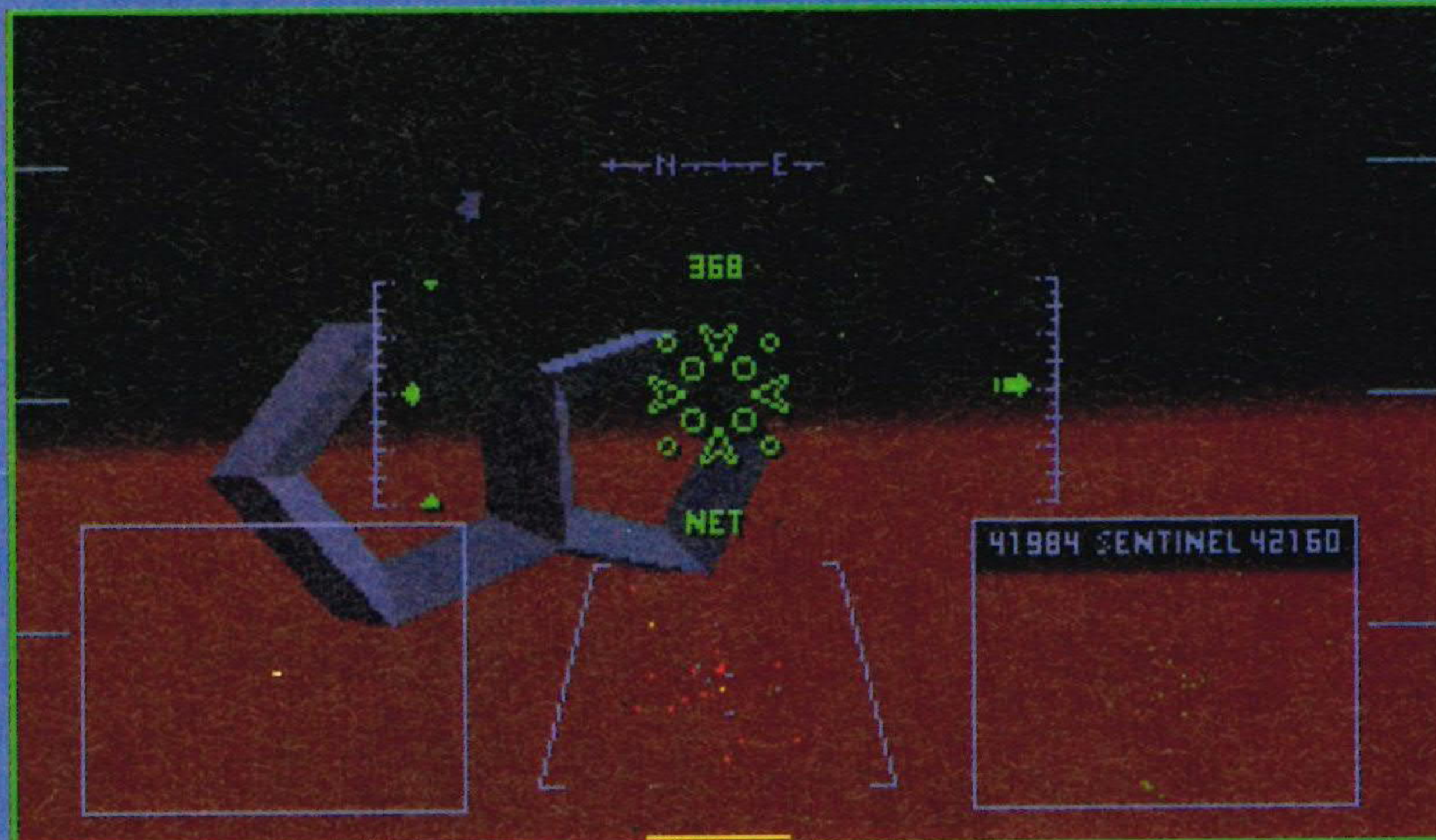
even be double-crossed by the very bloke who sent you on the mission in the first place; he might have a change of heart and send someone after you to do you in. As you fly around, you can use your ship's net to grab things which are floating around in the atmosphere. You will also be attacked by rogue mercenaries, but luckily your ship is loaded down with offensive weaponry including a laser, missiles and H-missiles (very big missiles). These enable

solar system has been colonised by Earth settlers. You are an agent for ICE, the Interstellar Conservation Executive, who are getting powerfully annoyed because certain of the solar-system's ecologically valuable areas are being exploited.

Jupiter's great red spot - the massive gas-storm thousands of times the size of Earth - has been found to contain a myriad weird forms of life, just like Carl Sagan said all those years ago. These include giant whales who float on the gas thermals, great sus-

speed limit, and generally spoiling it for everybody else.

Eye of the Storm is a kind of *Elite* type space flight simulation/adventure where you must go around looking for missions to perform, not all of which are totally ethical. You can



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Castles II: Siege and Conquest

Civil war was the most terrible of all, it could haunt a nation for generations.

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Poor looting, desecration, and fire.

"King Charles is dead."

Producer: Interplay
Format: Amiga 1200
Price: £29.99
Available: now

This new release sounds like a mediaeval invade-'em-up. Charles of Bretagne has pegged it and has absent-mindedly forgotten to leave a successor. In the Middle Ages this was considered a really good excuse for carnage on an industrial scale.

Rival lords from all over Europe are desperate to get their two bob's worth of the old bloke's kingdom. You on the other hand want all of it for yourself.

The only way to win is to build loads of castles, use extreme force on everyone and make sure you keep the church happy with the odd donation to the wives and orphans' fund. If you don't want to mercilessly crush all the opposition, you can forge diplomatic alliances, then treacherously stab your allies in the back for a laugh.

It looks like there are loads of things to do in *Castles II*, including laying siege to castles, spying on people, exploring unknown territories and generally having a good old mediaeval laugh.

The game has multiple computer players, each with different strategies for winning. It also contains digitised movie sequences. Could be interesting.



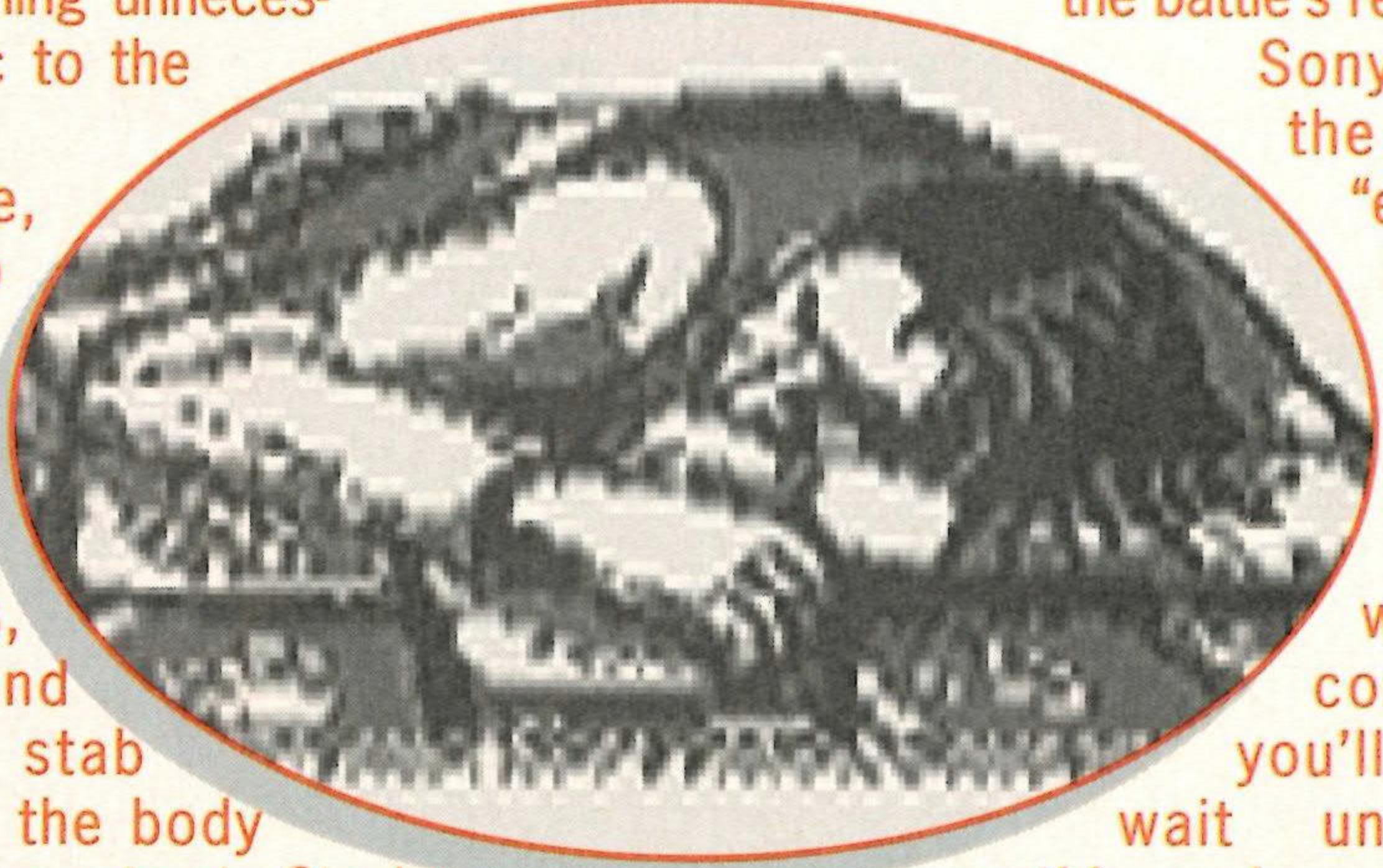
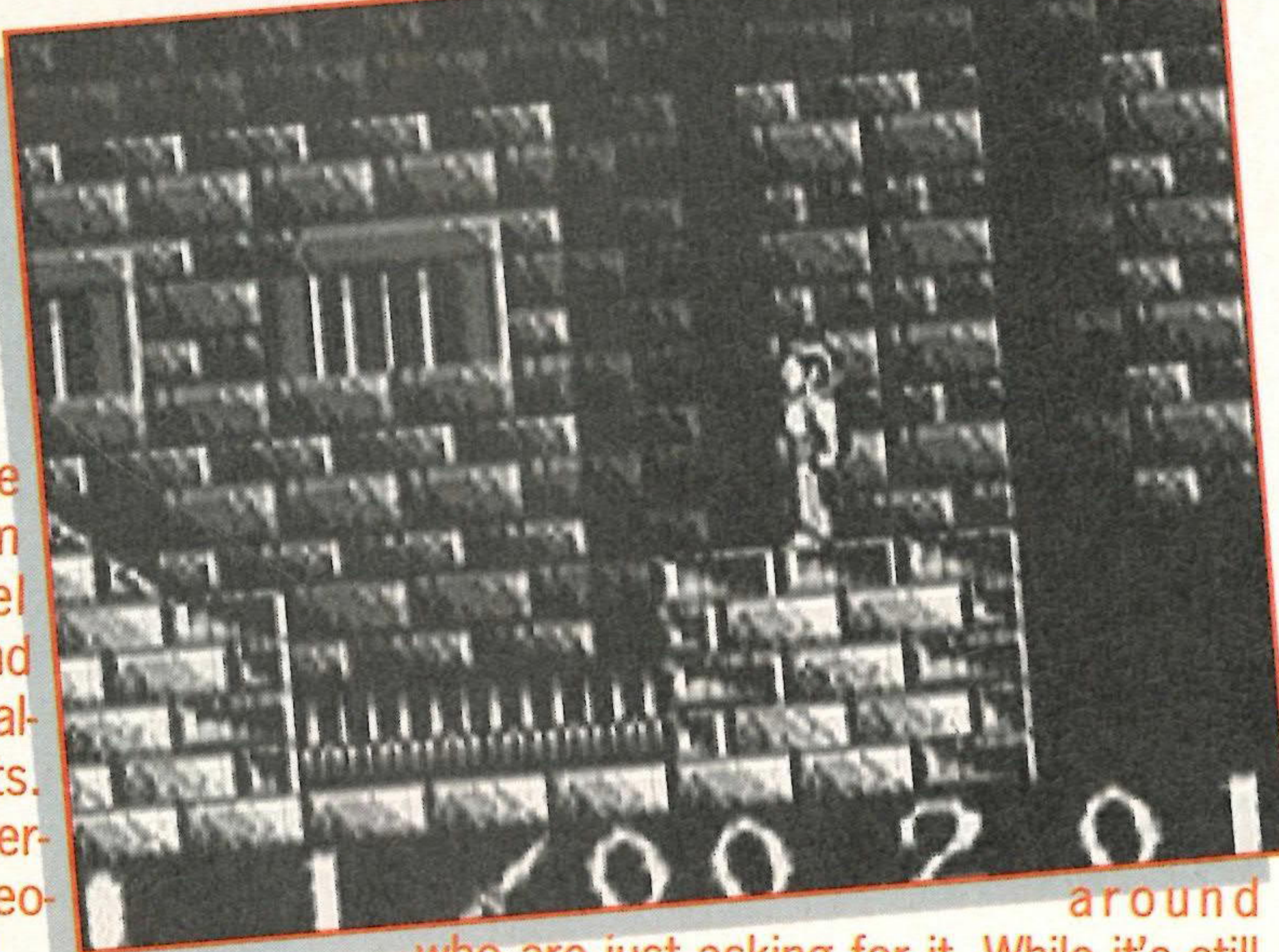
Dracula

Producer: Sony
Formats: Game Boy, Game Gear
Price: £24.99/£27.99

Available: now
A miniaturised game version of Bram Stoker's classic novel about Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder doing really good English accents. Oh yes, there was a pervert who liked biting people's necks in it as well.

You guide Jonathan Harker (last seen in *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*) in his epic quest to find Count Dracula and do something unnecessarily barbaric to the old boy.

In the game, you have to explore the scary Transylvanian woods looking for power-ups, weapons, and things to stab repeatedly in the body and neck with your trusty Stanley knife. There are loads of skeletons, bats and degenerate zombies walking



around who are just asking for it. While it's still light, you have to find all the stuff you need to do Dracula himself in, like holy water and stakes. When it gets dark the battle's really on.

Sony reckon the game "evokes the look and feel of the terrifying movie". Well, we've got a copy, but you'll have to wait until next month's review section to find out if it's any good.



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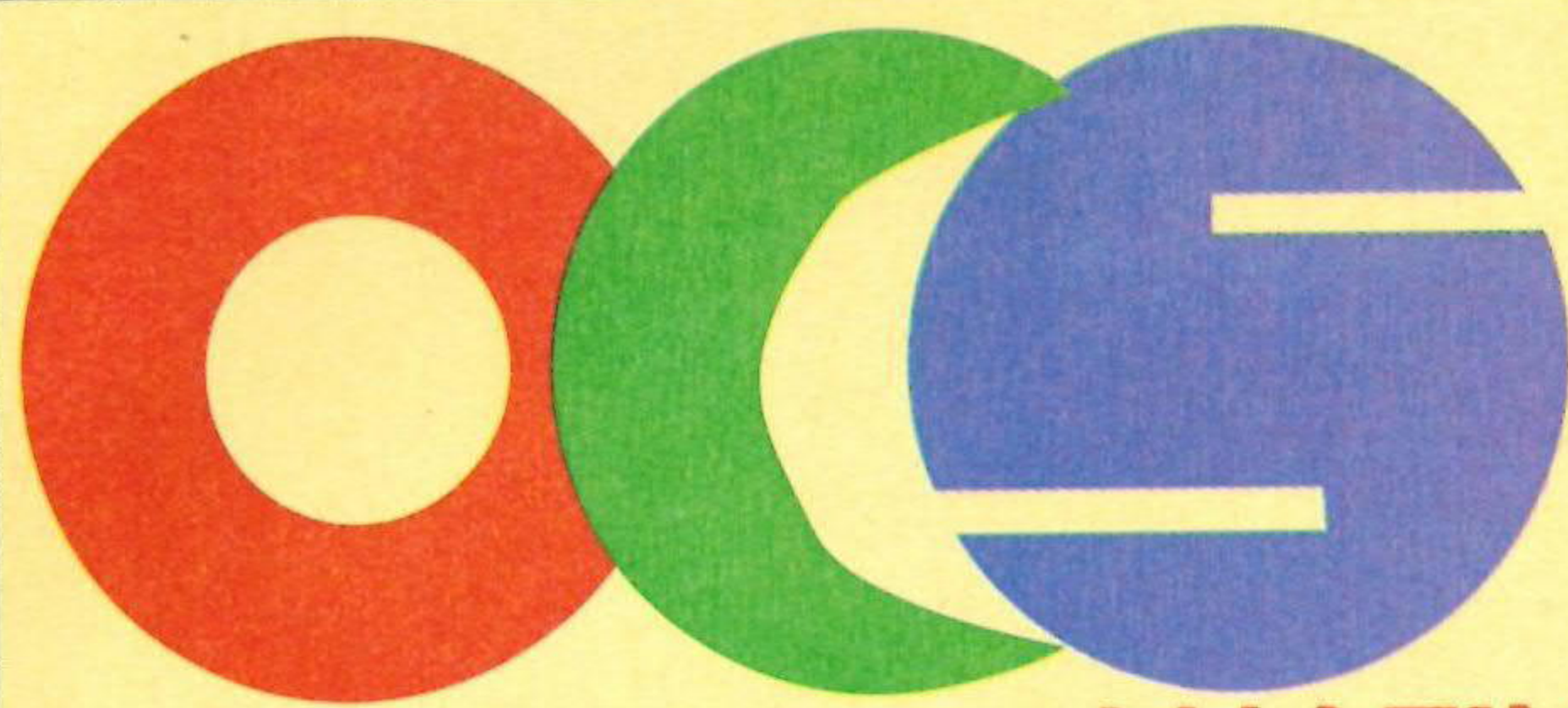
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Money, marketing and immortality

This summer's UK release of *Mortal Kombat* for the Sega and Nintendo machines was heralded by a media campaign unseen outside of the Sega and Nintendo's own releases. For the half a million quid it cost, Acclaim, the publisher, certainly got their money's worth.

Buckets of hostile media attention were prompted by the game's well-known gore element. Many parents thought *Mortal Kombat*'s graphic images of spurting internal organs would turn their kids into raving psychopaths, or that worse still, they wouldn't be able to find the "blood mode" code, and would do unpleasant things to the cat in frustration.

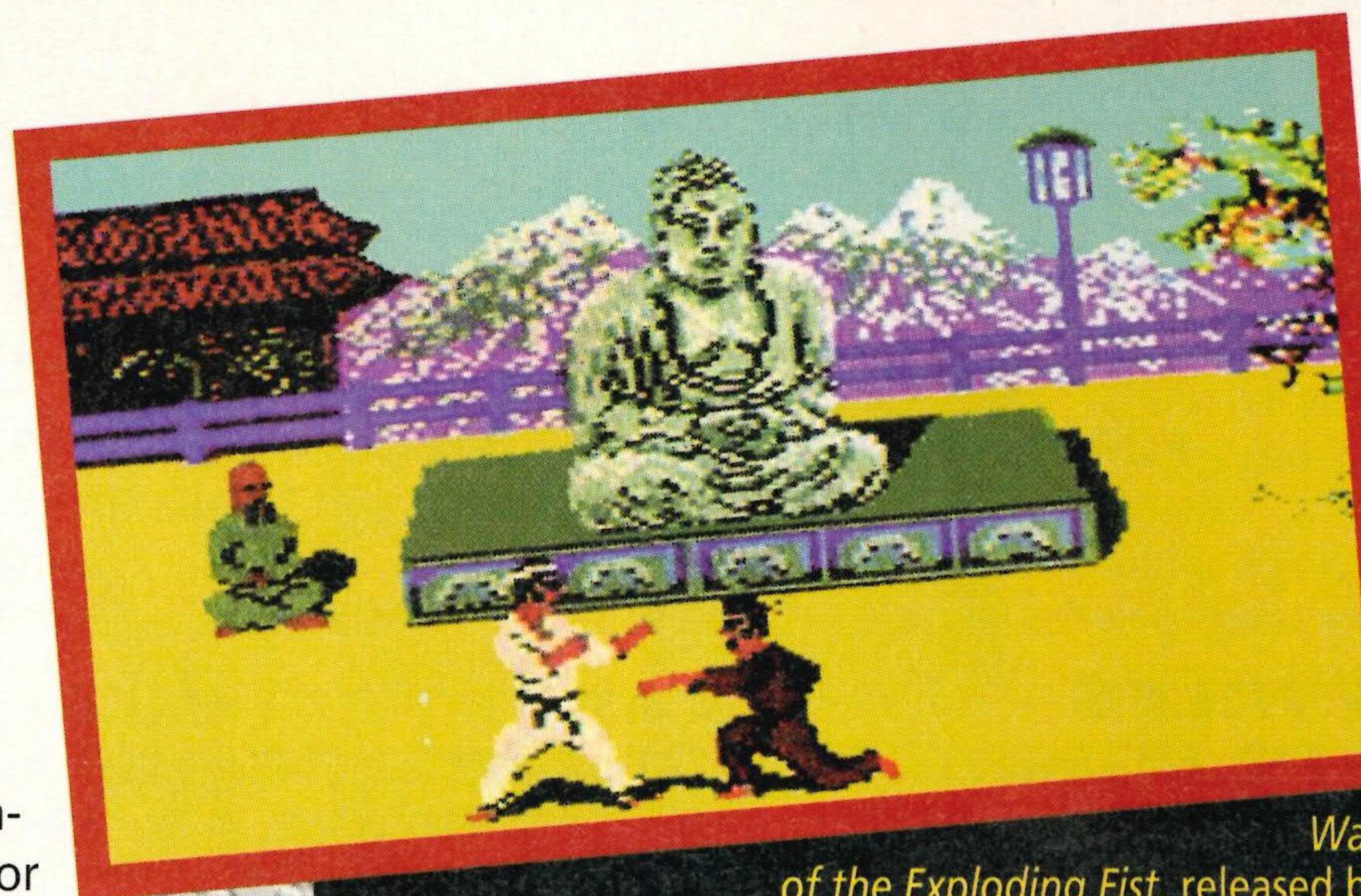
FINISH HIM!



Robert Partridge, who was employed by Acclaim to specifically handle marketing for the *Mortal Kombat* game alone, expressed his surprise at the direction from which the coverage came: "Of course, we thought it [*Mortal Kombat*] could possibly cause a hysterical *tabloid* response to something they hadn't even seen; we were just surprised when it was *The Observer* who led the attack".

Even though the official advertising campaign had steered away from the violence of the game (okay, Vinny Jones has been known to crunch a few balls in his time), Partridge could not deny the benefits on its sales after details of the "gore" factor were released. "No-one is denying the positive angle; *Mortal Kombat* is one of only about three games... which have

You just can't avoid 'em nowadays; everyone is into beat-'em-ups. Even *The Observer* paper and *The Late Show* TV show have been attracted by their raw appeal. Boxer Nigel Benn is said to have played *Street Fighter II* while getting psyched up for his last clash with Eubank - wonder which character he played? With *Street Fighter II* characters everywhere you look, *Mortal Kombat* appearing on intellectual discussion programmes, and weird beat-'em-up formulas increasing at an exponential rate, you begin to ask yourself, where in hell did they all come from - and where's it all going? VGS *Mortal Kombat* champion, Richard Arrowsmith, shouts, "Get over here!".



Way of the Exploding Fist, released by Melbourne House on the Spectrum and C64 (pictured) in July 1985, was the first beat-'em-up to gain cult status

entered the national vocabulary. I think that's an achievement of sorts." It is estimated that *Mortal Kombat* will gross over £20 million by the end of the

year, and let's face it, everyone buys it for the splatter. But is gore good?

Gore is good!

Some right-on students at Aston University have just done a big survey on the effects of beat-'em-up videogames on young people. The survey said that in children aged between seven and 16, 72% often lost their temper whilst



Another of Melbourne House's classic bashers, *Street Hassle* on the Spectrum, released in February 1988, featured a main character called Underwear Man!

playing videogames. Well, who doesn't? I'm 25 and still totally wig when I lose my last life on *Ecco the Dolphin*, which shows that getting moody isn't a result of a violent game so much as a natural (albeit immature) reaction to a challenging one. To their credit, however, the researchers decided that the players were able to tell the difference between real violence and mock violence, and that "when young people copied fighting from videogames this was not considered to be serious fighting".

The survey might also change many people's image of videogames players as sad gits with no life outside their console. It shows that only 30% of teenagers listed videogames as their favourite pastime, and a measly 15% admitted giving up doing other things to concentrate on them. Us gamers really are a lot more intelligent than people give us credit for.

The beat-up generation

All the hysteria surrounding beat-'em-ups is nothing new. The genre has been around almost as long as the videogames arcade. The best (some would say only) good thing about

YOU WANNA FIGHT?

Amiga

Despite the excellence of Team 7's *Body Blows*, *Street Fighter II* comes out on top because it has more variety in characters and combat moves. There's a certain something about *Street Fighter* that makes even a mediocre conversion that bit more fun because it has all the characters you've grown to know and love.

PC

Street Fighter II, no contest.

Mega Drive

The Mega Drive's *Mortal Kombat* is the best conversion for any machine. The "blood mode" survives intact, making it an essential buy for gore-hounds. In terms of gameplay, however, the release of *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition* has knocked *Mortal Kombat* off its position as best Mega Drive beat-'em-up.

If you play both games side by side, especially over a prolonged period, it becomes obvious that *Street Fighter II* is a far better game. The coolness of *Mortal Kombat* death blows wears a bit thin after you have seen them a few times. *Street Fighter II*, on the other hand, has 12 playable fighters to *Mortal Kombat*'s eight. It also has the Group play option, unseen in any other game.

But where *Street Fighter II* really wins is on tactics and com-

bos. It really does require skill to master the combination moves in *Street Fighter II*, while landing blows in *Mortal Kombat* is sometimes more a matter of luck than judgement.

Mortal Kombat was great while *Street Fighter II* kept getting delayed; but now it's here, and nothing else comes close.

SNES

If *Mortal Kombat* on the Mega Drive didn't measure up to *Street Fighter II*, then the sanitised and bloodless SNES version doesn't come close. The true test of both games is against the computer. In *Mortal Kombat*, the computer-controlled characters are, well, a bit sad at fighting. You can often cane them by using the same couple of moves over and over again. A computer-controlled *Street Fighter II* character would give you a right slapping if you tried that.

Master System/Game Gear

The programmers, Probe have done a fine job in getting *Mortal Kombat* on the 8-bit Sega's. Although you lose Kano (which is a shame as he's a cool guy), this is technically a far superior game to the MD version. The Master System is doing overtime chucking out the animation on the many moves, and far nearer to the limit than the comfortable MD game. It's neat on the Game Gear too, and, yes, you can still see the blood.

Game Boy

There are two reasons you ain't gonna get any gushing blood here: one is the fact that it's a Nintendo version, and the other's because the screen's in black and white (duh!). Even so, what choice have you got? Judging by the increasing size of *SF II*, I don't think a Game Boy version is feasible. Forget it, you'll be quite happy with *Mortal Kombat*. Practise your blows on the train, then get home and do it in colour.

Sonya Blade

Mortal Kombat

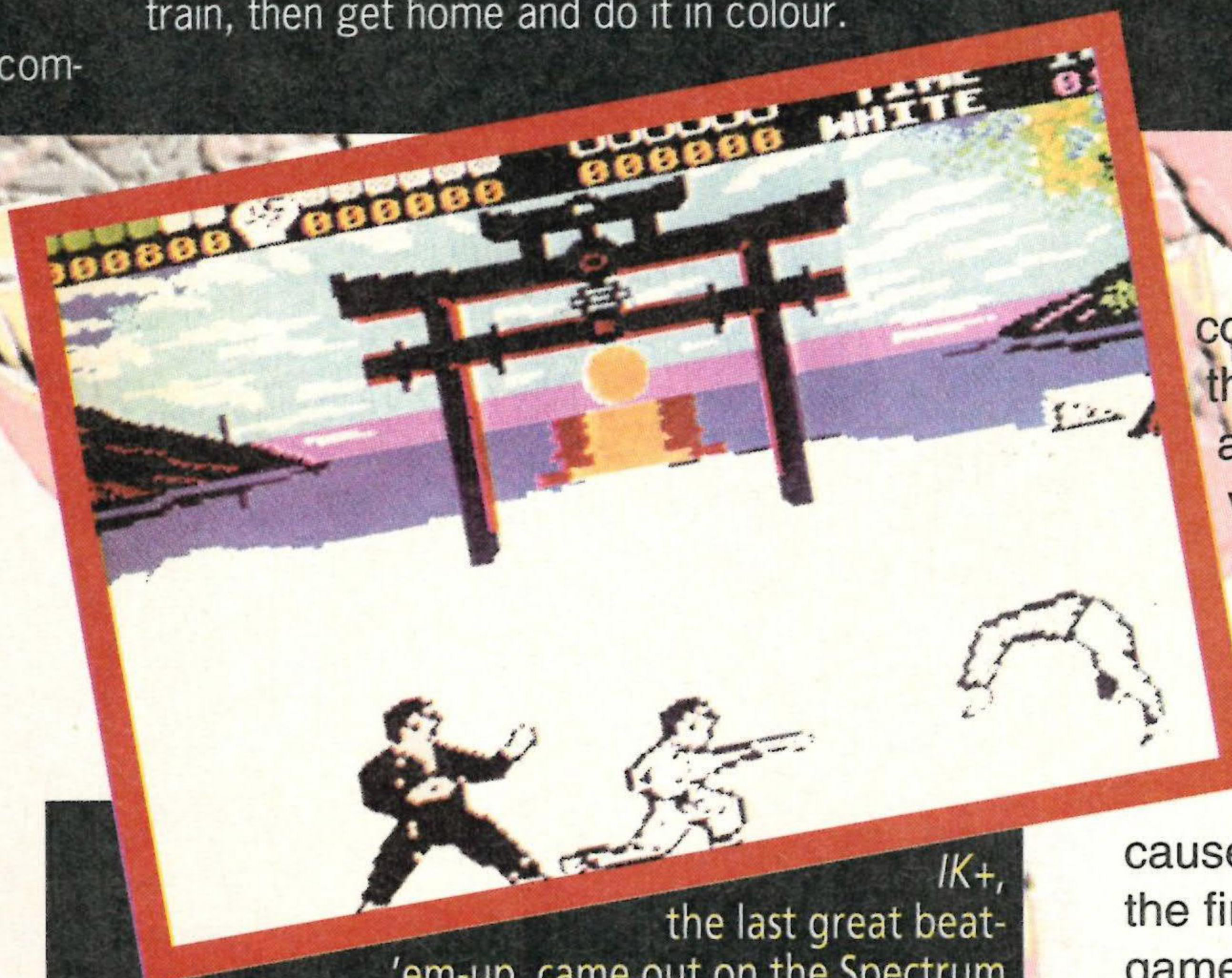
Voted by VGS, the ugliest chick in a beat-'em-up



the original *Double Dragon* coin-op was the part where you got to lay into whoever was player two. This powerful need everyone felt to knock the stuffing out of their best mates soon translated itself into coin-op boxing simulations like *Punch-Out* and *The Final Round* – alternatively, into a Doc Marten in the face outside The King's Head.

Meanwhile, outside of arcades, owners of the seminal Sinclair ZX Spectrum (with 48K of RAM!) were bashing their rubber keyboards about in a rabid frenzy of martial arts and chunky graphics in Melbourne House's *Way of the Exploding Fist* – programmed by Beam, the same folks who are now releasing *Shadow Run* on the Super NES! It was here that gamers first became familiar with such moves as the uppercut and roundhouse kick. At the same time, chunkier Commodore 64 users slapped each other around in Archer Maclean's *International Karate+*, released at the time by System 3.

Gore, though, never really came to the fore until Martech released *Barbarian* on the Commodore machines. It was equally as con-



IK+, the last great beat-'em-up, came out on the Spectrum way back in March 1988. It took four years till its gameplay was surpassed by *Street Fighter II*. It is still an essential purchase for all Amiga owners

troversial as today's *Mortal Kombat*, containing *Highlander*-type special moves allowing you to hack your opponent's head off in a splurge of lovely pulsating gore. And while it was at it, *Barbarian* also offended feminists by sporting a scantily-clad (is there any other?) Maria Whittaker in the advertising and on the box

cover. It was only then that people started to think about age classification for games – and, if memory serves me right, Martech voluntarily slapped a 15 rating on the game. Any publicity is good publicity, right?

Since the latest version of *IK+* on the Amiga (which came out, like, four years ago!), there hadn't been anything to cause a stir till *Street Fighter* came along. Even the first versions of *Street Fighter* (yes, the game you play at the moment is the sequel!) were roppy though. It relied on the tried and tested *Double Dragon* formula of walking along a street and fighting ruffians (who have either kidnapped your girlfriend, or killed your brother – probably both knowing your luck), hence the title. The best original *SF* version, though, was the PC Engine CD game called, oddly, *Fighting Street*. It may have jerked a bit, but the soundtrack was pumping and the action solid.

And then there was *Street Fighter II*... →

BEAT 'EM UPS

STREET FIGHTER FIGHTER II VER

With versions of *Street Fighter II* available on nearly all computers and consoles (including the PC Engine!), and *Mortal Kombat* quickly converting to everything (including the hand-helds), the choice for the poor beat-'em-up fan is as tough as the games themselves.

Both bashers are accurate conversions of the original arcade machines, both have varied characters with individual moves, and both have well-developed scenarios to make them more interesting. *Street Fighter II* is a softer, more sporting world event designed to find the toughest hombre (or chica), while *Mortal Kombat* is a slightly more obscure religious tournament. *Street Fighter II* has the feel of an American TV glossy sports extravaganza. *Mortal Kombat* has a creepy kung-fu/horror B-movie atmosphere.

The look

Street Fighter II features comic-character type sprites with colourful, detailed backgrounds, portraying elements of the country you are fighting in. The China backdrop has people riding by on bikes. India sports two rows of elephants. One of the USA locations is Las Vegas, featuring advertising lights, flying doves from a magician's hat and bikini'd girls. The characters themselves all have identities which have been designed so well that many of them have acquired a cult following – especially the bubbly Chun-Li among male players. Ryu's moody features can now be seen staring out from T-shirts, stickers and even lunch-boxes. How embarrassing if your girlfriend got you one of those for Christmas.

Mortal Kombat has the pixelated-from-life graphics associated with the arcade version, which makes the characters very realistic and human. This, along with highly convincing animation and some interesting backgrounds makes it a very good-looking game.

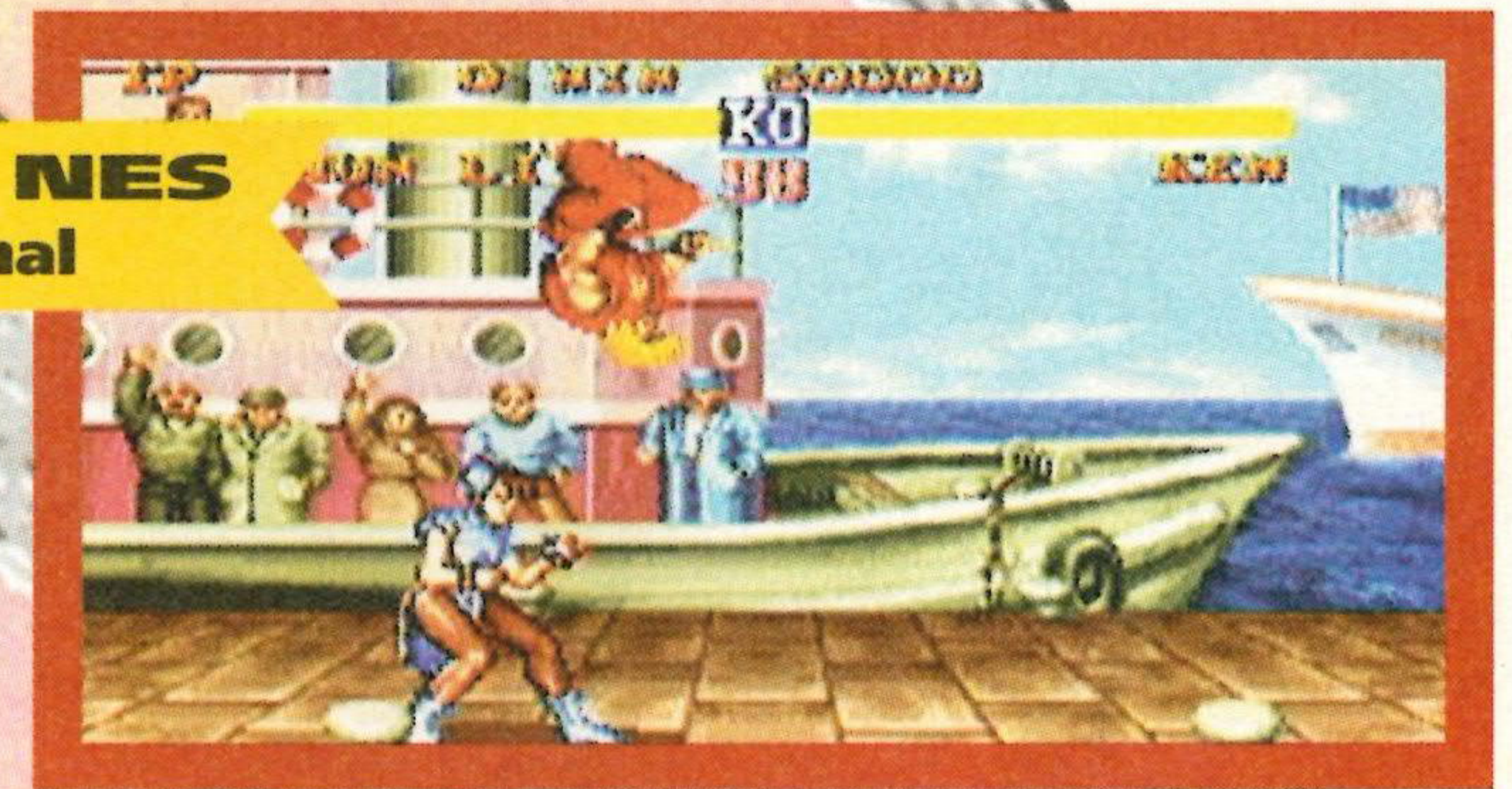
Unfortunately, the characters are so much less interesting than those from *SFII*, and their special moves are almost interchangeable. The game's designers, Bally Midway, have tried so hard to give the game a spooky and sinister

feel that they have forgotten to give the characters personalities – a bit like the scriptwriters for *Home and Away*. An attempt was made to fill in character histories, but it all seemed a little contrived and also a little pointless when you are unable to visit their home countries during the course of the game.

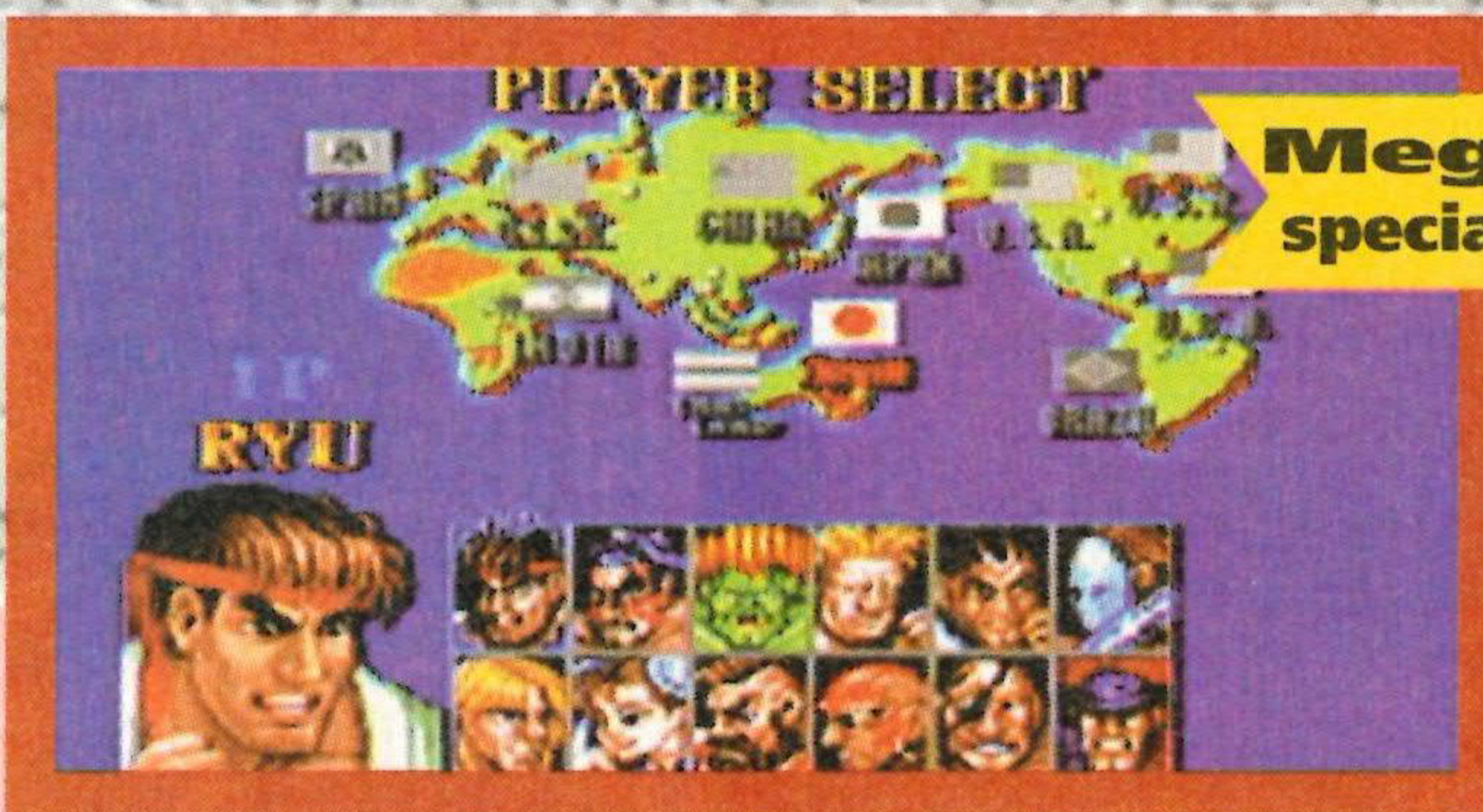
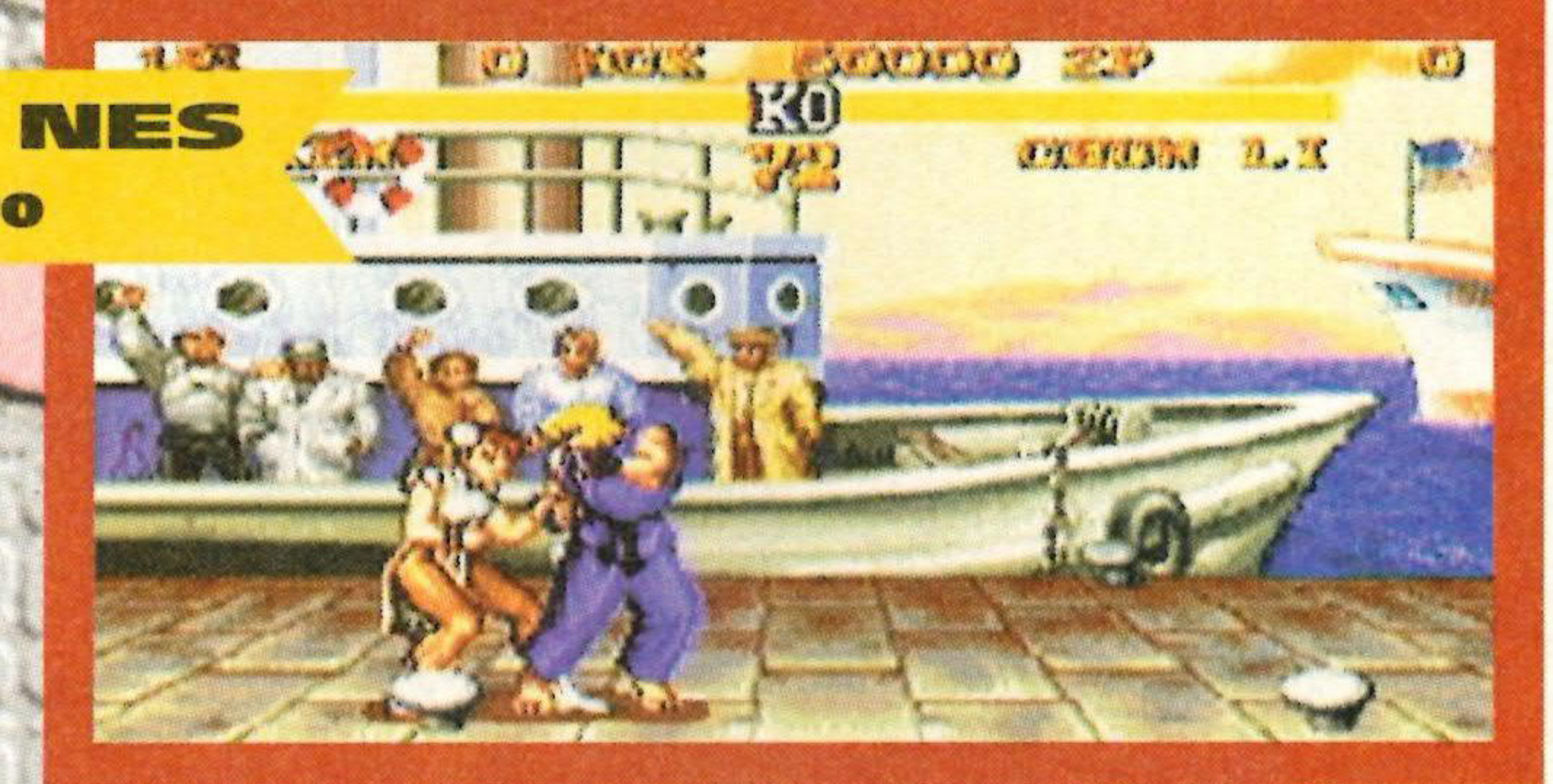
The vibrant, involving backgrounds and charismatic pugilists allow you to relate more to *Street Fighter II* than any versions of



Super NES original



Super NES turbo



Mega Drive special champion



Mortal Kombat.

Play it again, Sonya

Mortal Kombat has a roster of seven characters. All of them have special moves and a "death blow", which on the Sega versions causes an extreme example of the well-publicised splatter effect. Each character's death blow is different. Johnny Cage, for example, punches his foe's head clean off their shoulders in a spray of gushing blood – smart! Scorpion's death blow involves him ripping off his own face to reveal a grinning skull. He then breathes fire onto his opponent, burning them to a charred skeleton. Unfortunately, the infamous "blood mode" (once again, it's A, B, A, C, A, A, B [MD] or 2, 1, 2, UP, DOWN [MS and GG] on the "code" screen) did not survive conversion to the SNES, because of Nintendo's crazy no-blood policy. Luckily, the word is that the forthcoming

seven characters to play with, and two bosses who cannot be controlled by the players. The first hardnut is Goro, a blue, four-armed half-man-half-dragon effort who looks like a product of inbreeding between skinhead smurfs. He's very scary actually, and much harder than his master, the sorcerer Shang Tsung. Shang looks like the bad guy from *Big Trouble in Little China* with hair extensions and a tragically botched highlighting job. The worst thing about him is that he can change into any character he likes while you're fighting him – including Goro, which is something of a bummer.

Street Fighter II has a variable number of characters depending on which of its particular incarnations you are talking about.

Amiga: The basic original *Street Fighter II* with eight characters to use, and four bosses who you can't control. Although criticised for being a little slower than other versions (mainly



MORTAL KOMBAT

due to the pesky disks), this is still a very decent beat-'em-up, although the special moves are tough on the joystick

PC: Despite receiving icy reviews from the PC buffs, we reckon this isn't half a bad conversion. US Gold have radically changed the game-play, but retained all the character of the arcade machine. The eight players are a lot larger here, and unlike the console versions, the PC game has slowed down all the fighters. "Slower!" I hear you say in horror. Yep, but it's not that bad and just shows that even if the game isn't blindingly fast, it still has enough content to keep you playing. After all, nobody



speed to ten ridiculous levels. Impressively, this doesn't ruin animation quality. The game is further enhanced by Group Matchplay and Elimination options, unseen on any other version. They allow you to put together teams of up to six characters for a tournament, or just fight a winner-stays-on brawl.

Street Fighter II: Special Championship Edition is the biggest cart ever produced for the Mega Drive, weighing in at a heroic 24 megs.

• Full review on page 45.

SNES: There are now two versions of *Street Fighter II* for the SNES: *Street Fighter II* and

Ryu

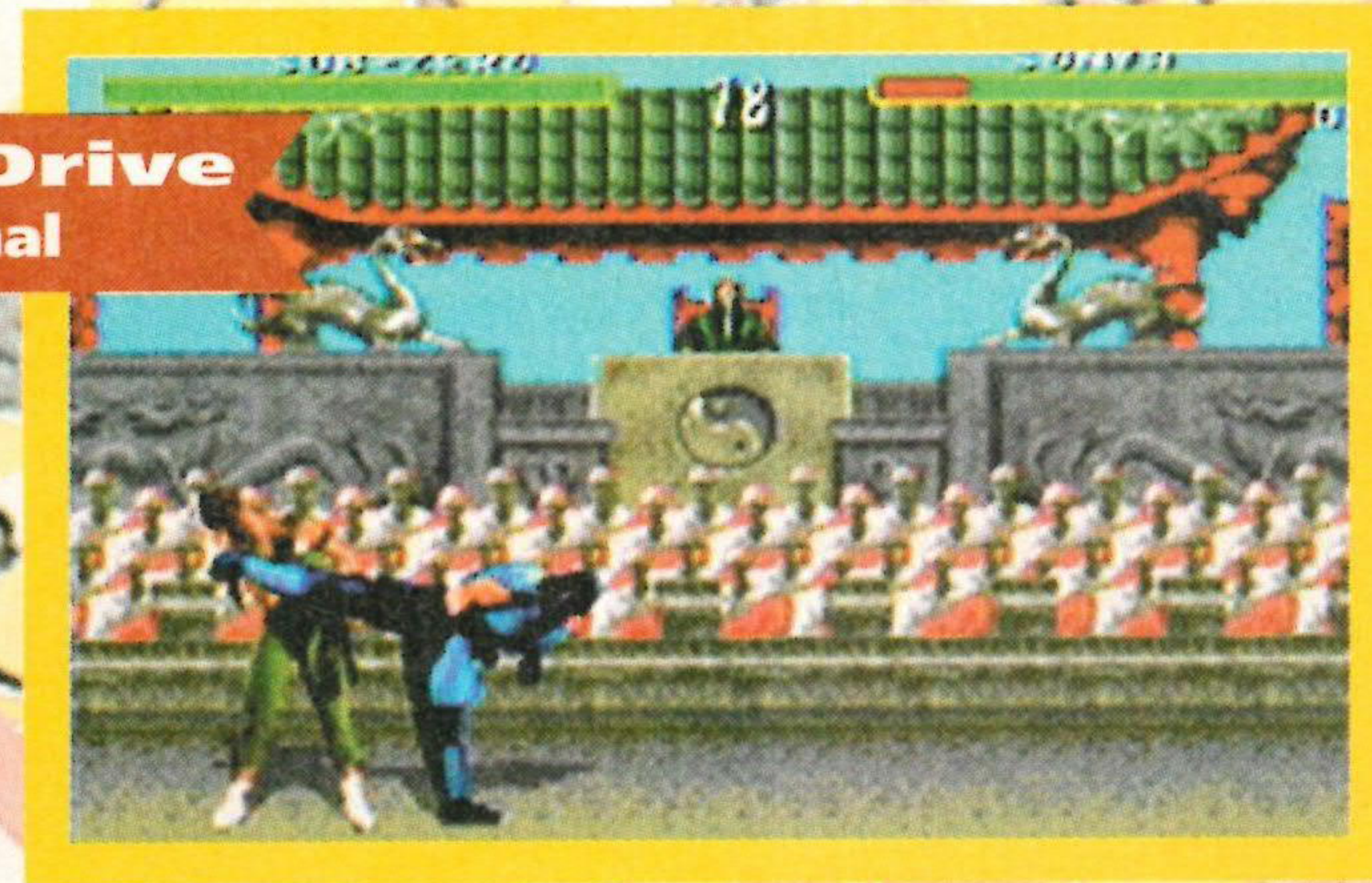
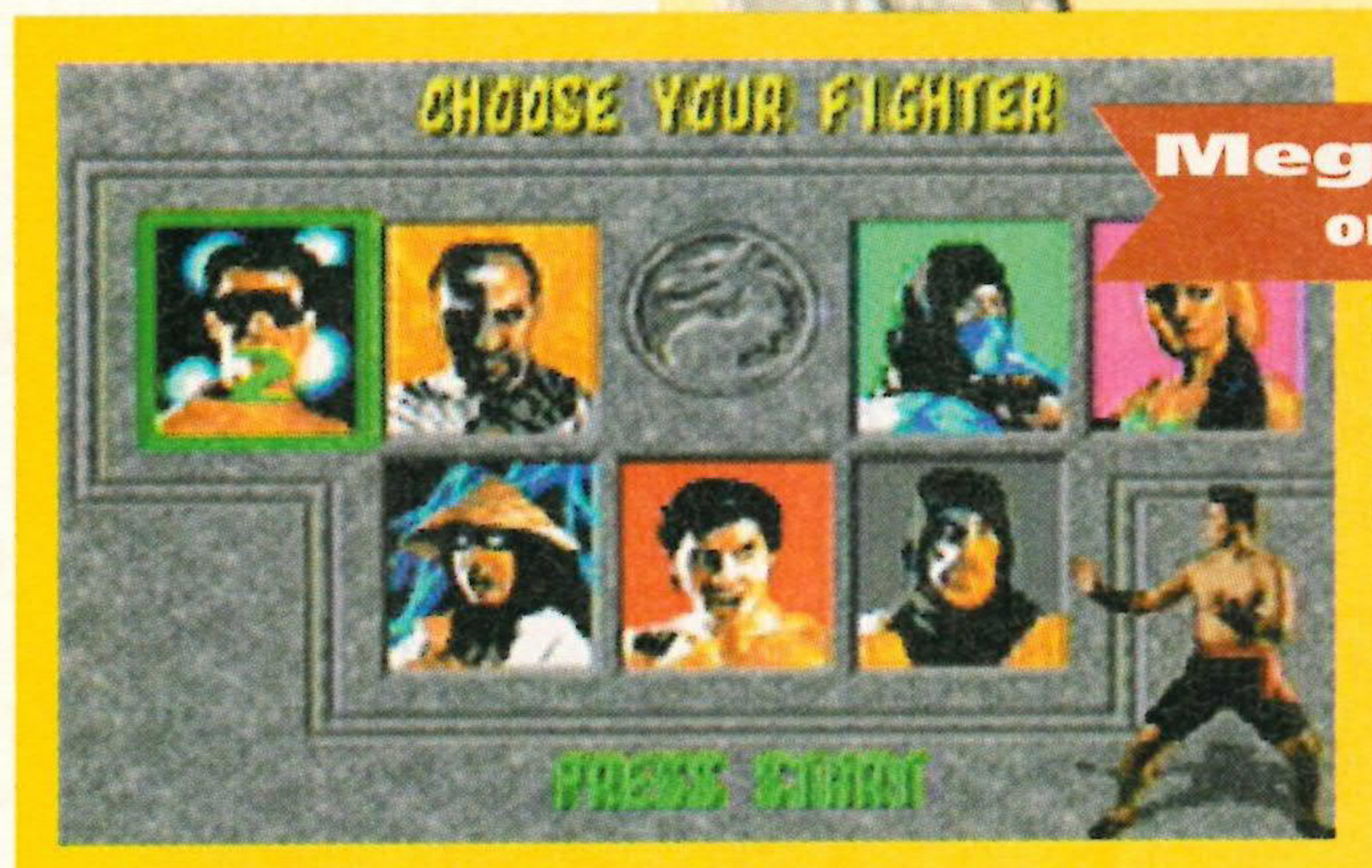
Street Fighter II
Voted most fanciable character by girls



a "yoga teleport" manoeuvre. Similarly Zangief is uprated, while Bison has been tempered a tad.

The new game is on a 20 meg cart, while the original was "just" 16. Capcom have justified the extra memory with improved graphics and better samples.

PC Engine: The PC Engine version of *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* is here, and it's not on CD! There was talk of a combination CD-ROM card release with digital sound, but the designers ran into problems with synchronisation. Instead, Capcom have somehow managed to cram 20 megs onto a little credit-card size HuCard. This is an inspired idea, as this makes the PC Engine's *Street Fighter* the only version in the world to be available for a handheld machine (via the PC/Turbo Express). Even though the sound is undeniably a bit cack, the graphics are equally as good as the coin-op, and the animation is convincing and fast. All the special moves are available and you can even be the bosses. The most accurate conversion of the arcade gameplay. One in the eye for PC Engine critics.



thought the original SNES version was slow till the *Turbo* version came out.

• Full review on page 43.

Mega Drive: The *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition* conversion has the eight original characters, plus the option of using the "bosses", including the ludicrously hard M Bison. This means there are a total of 12 playable fighters. Additionally, there is a Hyper Fighting option, which lets you increase the

Street Fighter II Turbo.

Street Fighter II Turbo is very similar to the Mega Drive's *Champion Edition*. It lets you play as the bosses and has an increased speed "turbo" mode with four settings (although you can equal the Mega Drive's ten via a cheat). The characters have been altered slightly to make them more evenly matched, which means Dhalsim, who was potentially the weakest character in the original edition, is powered up with

SUPER

While we've been scratching our heads trying to work out all the different console and computer versions of *Street Fighter*, other beat-'em-up experts have been frantically working away in Capcom's secret laboratories on the next *Street Fighter* baby. Now they have finally given birth to *Super Street Fighter II*. (hmm, catchy title). *Super Street Fighter II* contains

even more improvements than *Champion Edition*. The sound has been boosted, background graphics have undergone a serious redecoration, existing characters' special moves have been improved, and there are now four new fighters entering the fray.

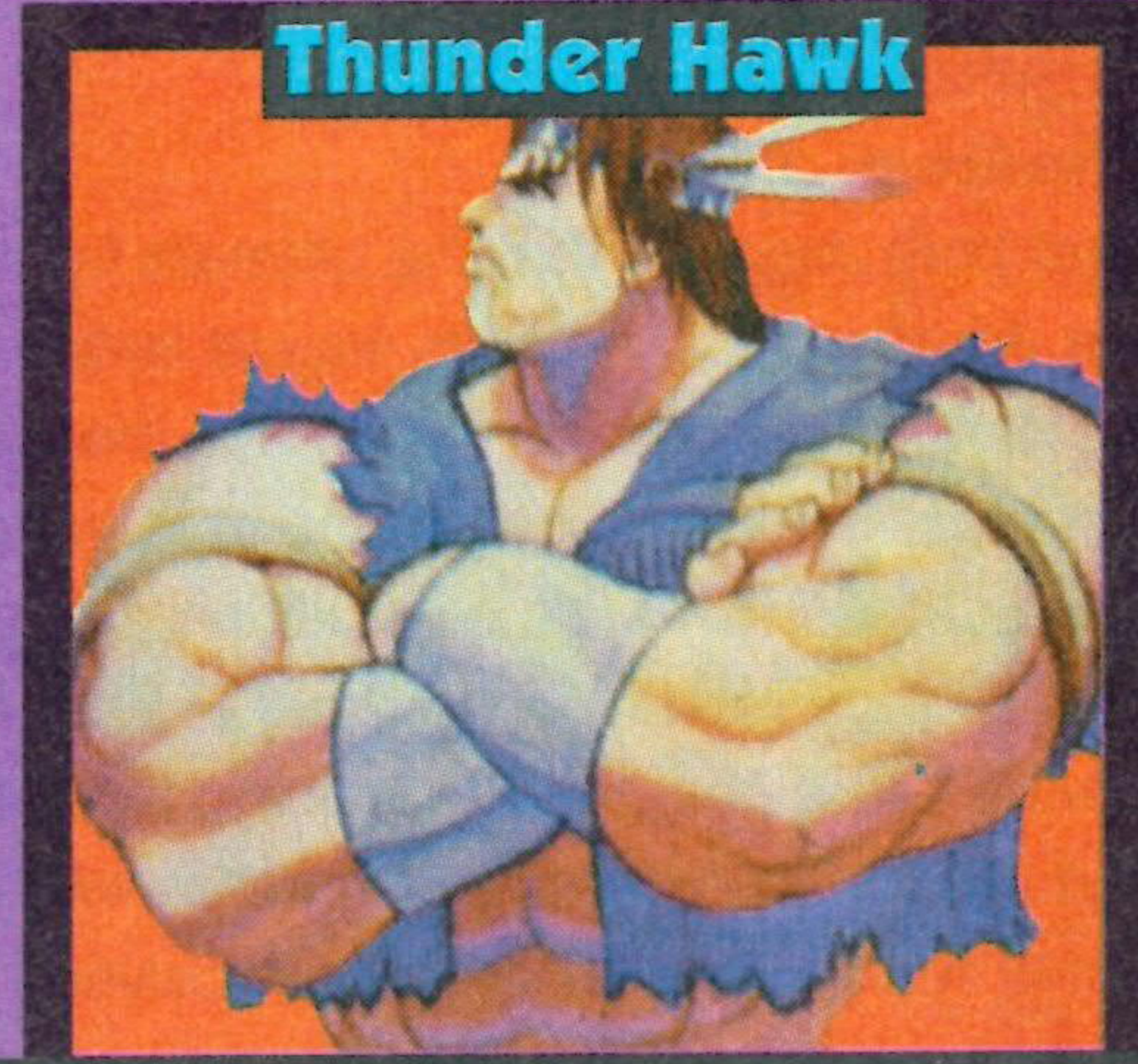
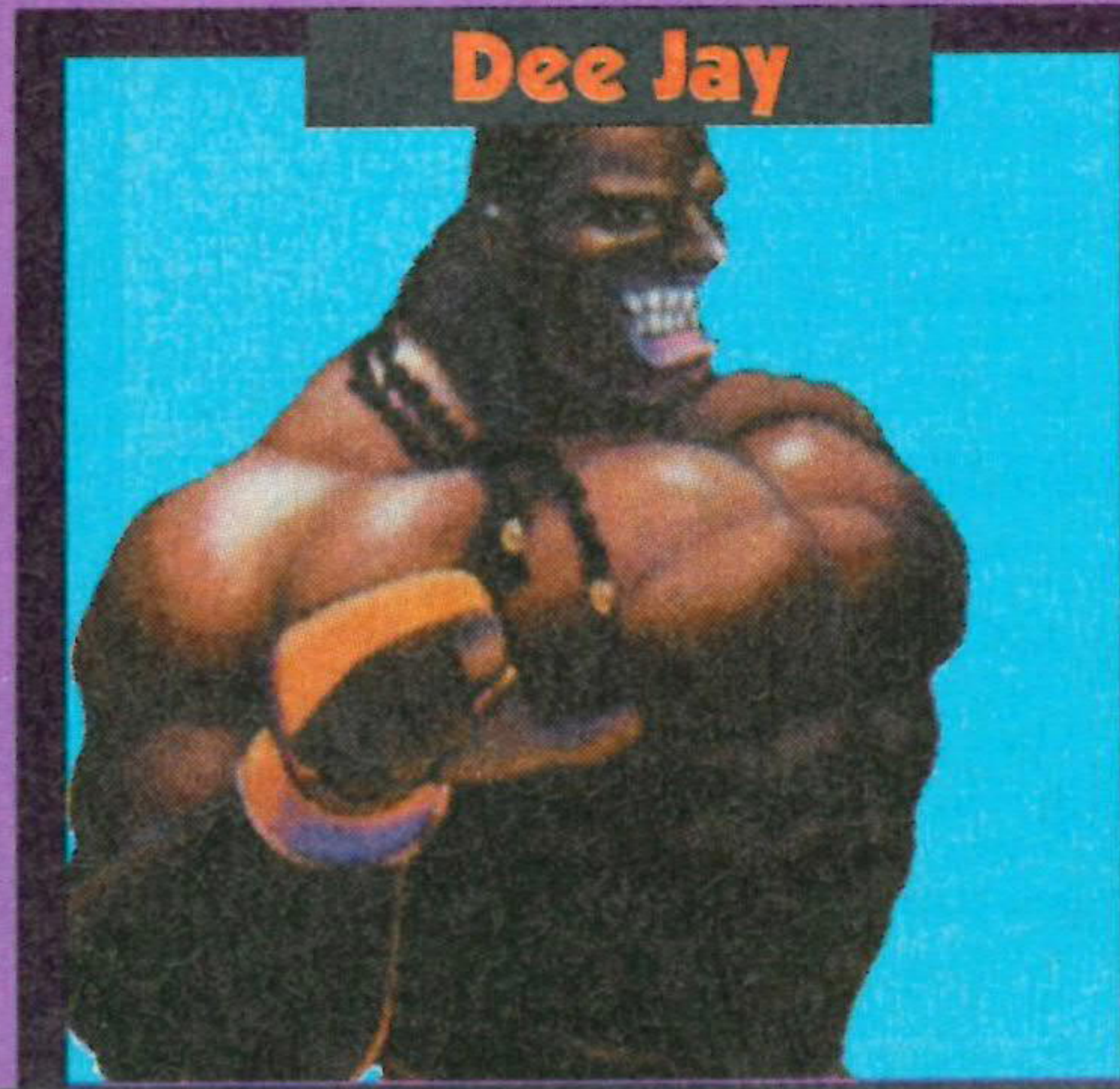
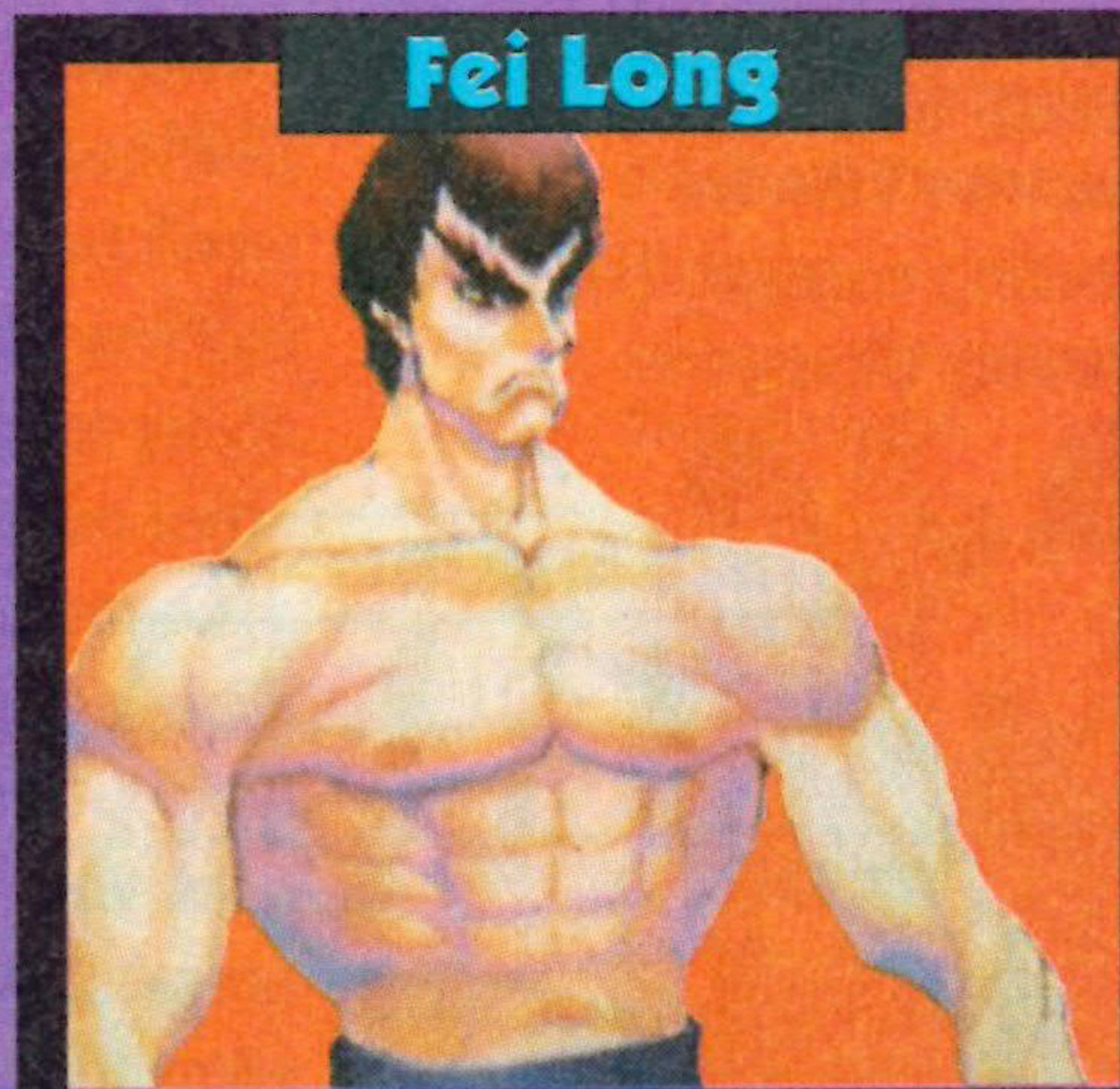
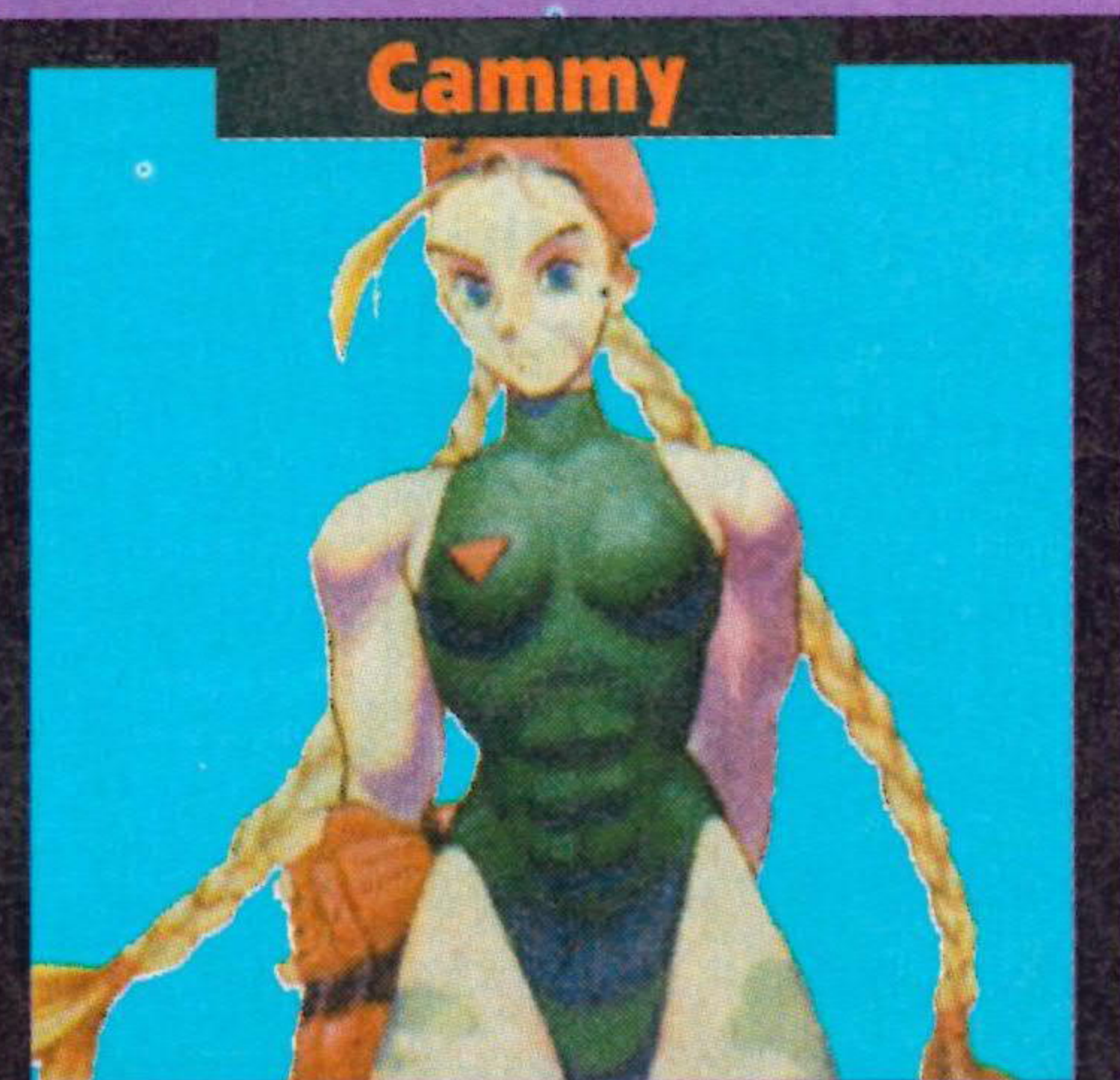
Unfortunately, *Super Street Fighter II* may have lost the speed of *Turbo*

and *Hyper*, but the main attraction of the game is the introduction of new blood. Leading the charge is Thunder Hawk from Mexico, a native-American chap in 501s who is extremely tough, but hard to control. Backing him up are Dee Jay from Jamaica, who is extremely quick with kicks and punches, and Fei Long

from Hong Kong, a pretender to the Ken/Ryu crown.

Lastly, Capcom have finally recognised old blighty as the breeding ground of champions. There's now an English challenger, Cammy, a kind of improved female version of Guile. She's immensely hard and arguably even more sexy than Chun-Li!

DUPER!





FUTURE FACE CRUNCHERS

VOTE NOW!



**you in
 FACE**

**WORLD HEROES
 (snes)**

It remains to be seen if Sunsoft's new SNES conversion of *World Heroes* from the original SNK coin-op, via the Neo-Geo, will come any closer to taking *Street Fighter II's* crown. It's got eight wacky characters, including Brocken, a cyborg stormtrooper. Also present is Rasputin, who has been dug up from somewhere in Russia (along with a few crusty old Boney M records). Each character comes from a different time-zone, which makes the backgrounds very diverse.

There are some bizarre special moves. Rasputin, for example, can dramatically increase the size of his hands and feet ready for a manic slapping and booting sesh. Not bad for a loony monk. Watch this space for more information on *World Heroes* and in the mean time be on your guard against blokes with long beards and huge glowing hands. You've been warned.

**CLAY FIGHTER
 (snes)**

Remember Tony Hart's old chum Morph? Well, Interplay have taken a bunch of cute plasticine figures, digitised them, and made them into characters in a violent beat-'em-up spoof of *Street Fighter*.

It's an inspired premise, and the characters have certainly got a lot of personality. There's Blob, a green piece of plasticine, who can turn himself into a buzz-saw to carve up his opponents or a huge bomb to blow them up. Ghost-Guy is a pumpkin-headed purple fellow whose head explodes when you do him in. Impersonator looks just like a plasticine version of a dead, famous overweight rock singer who was born in Memphis. He attacks by singing old smoochy numbers at you. If gameplay matches graphics and sheer weirdness, this could be one to watch.



**BURNING FISTS
 (burning fists)**

The latest from Japan is that the ultimate fighting game for the Mega-CD is on its way. It is, predictably, rumoured to be the first (make that second now that *Thunderhawk* is out) game to take full advantage of the machine's capabilities. Sega of Japan's *Burning Fists* is in the *Street Fighter II* mould, with varied characters including a super-fast ninja and a chick who pans your head in with a grappling hook. More information as we receive it!

**ETERNAL CHAMPIONS
 (mega drive)**

Sega have just completed work on a 24 meg monster of a beat-'em-up, which has been specially designed to wipe the floor with every aspect of *Street Fighter II*. Well, that's fighting talk if we ever heard it.

From what we've seen, the graphics are full-on. The backgrounds have an epic quality and include an erupting volcano, a jungle scene and an alien planet. There are 11 comic-book style characters to play. One of the fighters is a green, bug-eyed alien, another is an animated Mickey Spillane character complete with distressed trench coat. There are also two female characters including a kind of adults-only version of Chun-Li in thigh length high-heeled boots. All right!!

There's an oddly new-age background story to *Eternal Champions* involving a pan-dimensional fellow who embodies all the martial arts teachings and whose job it is to keep the balance between good and evil. Realising he is about to peg it, the old chap searches out the most ludicrously violent basket-cases in the history of the universe to slug it out for the extreme pleasure of having his job.

The game has a Dynamic Play Adjustment, which is like Hyper Fighting or Turbo mode in *Street Fighter II*. Like *Tuff E Nuff*, it also allows you to re-live dramatic incidents of horrifyingly excessive violence via an, er, educational action replay option.

Will *Eternal Champions* be the game to finally stomp *Street Fighter II* into a twitching mass of blood-spattered pulp? Well, the spec looks good, and if gameplay matches the graphics then we should at least be in for an interesting contest. Those boots have to be seen to be believed, though.



Now you know what the philosophising women down our local hostelry think of Ryu, we want to know what you think! Just who is the best fighter in *Street Fighter II*? We want your vote now! All editions are accepted on any machine (yes, even the new *Super Street Fighter II* arcade characters). From Cammy to Chun-Li, from Dhalsim to Dee Jay. Whether your reasons are purely playable or partly perverted, we won't ask. To place your vote, just phone us any time of the day or night on the **VGS** Readerline. It's a normal phone number (the 0865 bit is the code for Oxford; it is **not** a premium rate line) and if you don't actually get through to a real person (ie, one of us), we have a machine there to receive your vote.

**VGS READERLINE
 (0865) 202955**

There are no prizes, just the relief of entering a competition without using a 0891 premium rate line... We'll have the full results in issue three of **VGS**.



**SAMURAI SHODOWN
 (neo-geo)**

SNK have assured us that this brand new game won't be released on a cheapo 16-bit format six months after its Neo-Geo debut—in fact, it's exclusively for the Neo-Geo and won't be available for any other machine.

Samurai Shodown is a gruesome martial arts slice-'em-up on a grand scale. The basic idea is quite *Street Fighterish*, but allows you literally to hack your opponents into a mushy pile of soggy entrails. Now if you reckon Nintendo are going to allow that on the Super NES, you've got another thing coming...

MORE REVIEWS THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE!

VGSR

VIDEOGAMES SHOPPER REVIEWS

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mega drive

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super nes

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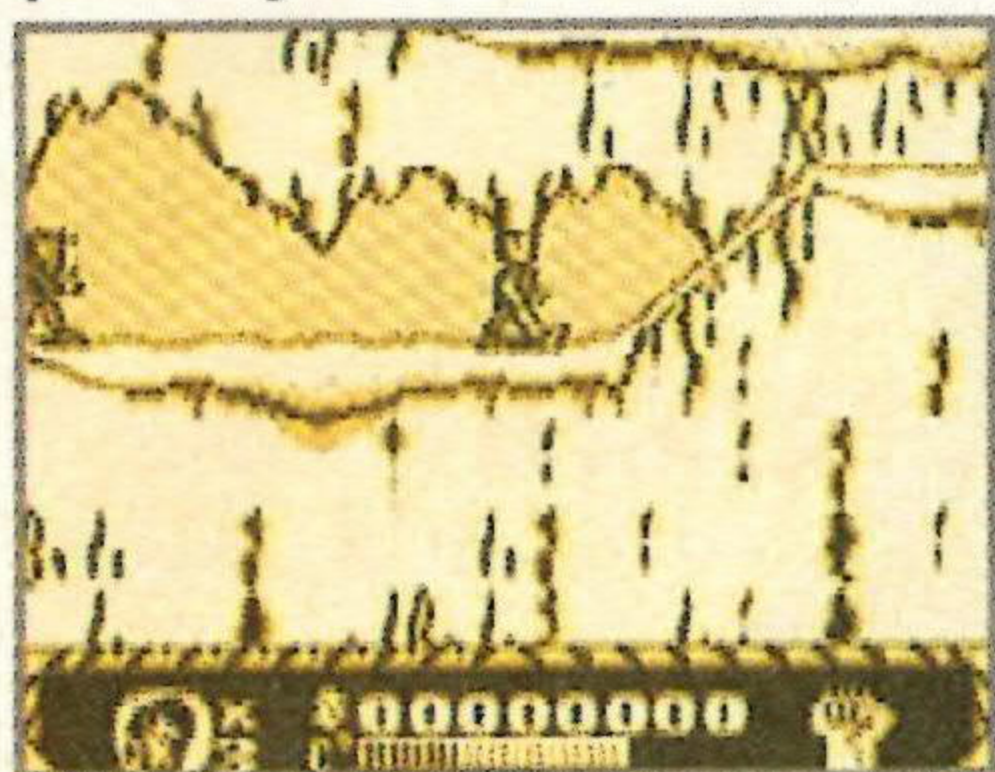
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REVIEW **CLIFFHANGER**

Cliffhanger – the game! Could it be a kind of climbing sim, where you have to choose different types of piton and plan your route up the mountain?

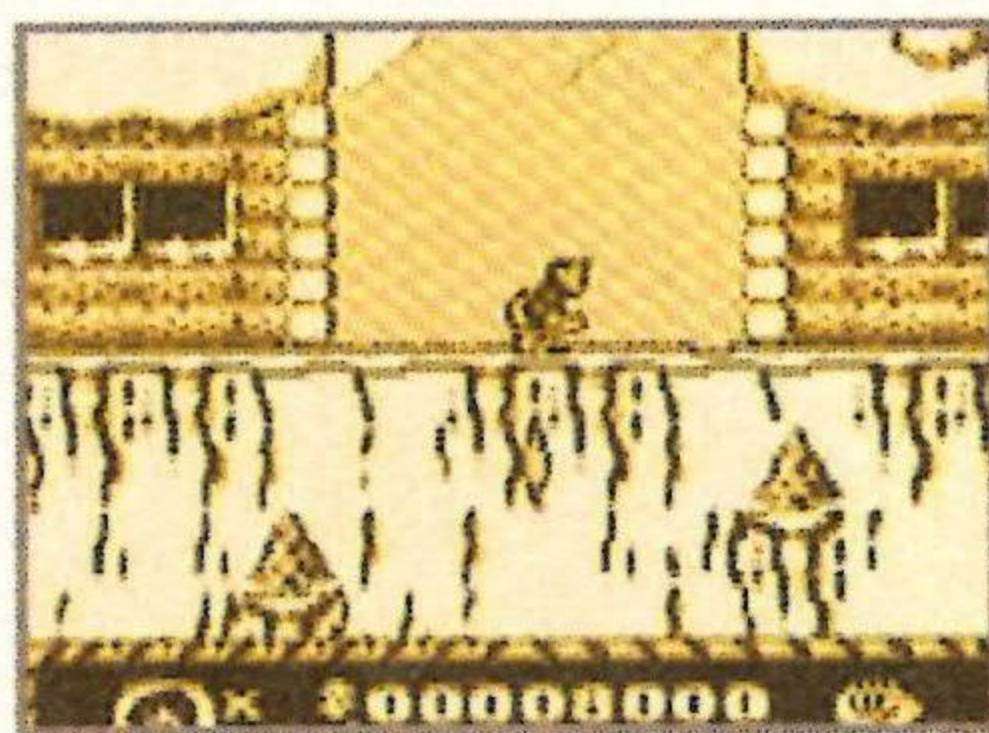


Open the window while playing *Cliffhanger* to create atmosphere the money and escape from the mountain?

Well, no, actually it's a platformer. You control a little Sylvester Stallone who has to walk among the icy peaks avoiding piles of snow which fall off roofs onto his head and kill him (snow kill Stallone?). Other hazards which old Sly has to face are wolves that appear on the screen and run into you, and flying chickens (?) who try to stop you jumping over chasms, which is a good, solid vocation for chickens in these uncertain times. Now what film were we talking about, again? You can also climb along ropes and fall off onto rows of giant metal spikes like the ones you *always* find up in the mountains. Okay, perhaps they might be construed as stalagmites.

The most striking thing about

Cliffhanger is that it's exactly like *Last Action Hero*. The lead character even



moves the same way as the film and then this and performs exactly the same actions to the same joypad moves. It's got the same basic idea behind it and the same sound effects. The most obvious thing it has in common with *Last Action Hero*, however, is that it's totally and utterly a by s m a l. There's nothing good about it at all.



GAME BOY
Producer: SONY
Price: £24.99
Available: DECEMBER

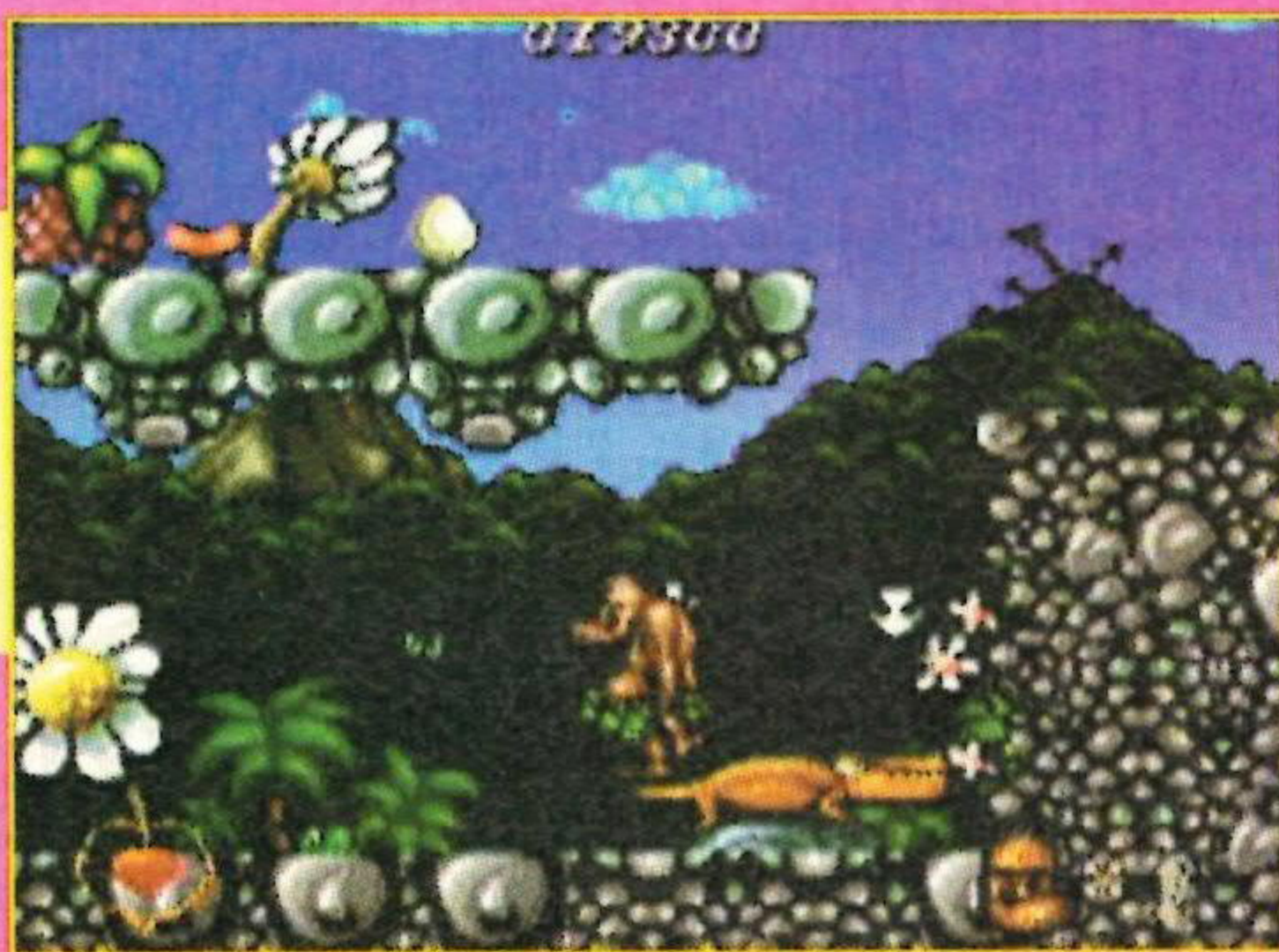
18%

chuck **ROCK**

Here's a surprise: a yonks old Mega Drive game coming out on the SNES. What a stroke of genius!

Chuck Rock is a platformer whose lead character looks like he's just had a heavy night out drinking 27 pints of Headbanger followed by three rounds of family-sized doner kebabs with plenty of onions and chilli sauce. He's a caveman, literally as well as metaphorically, and some other bloke has legged it with his woman! To get her back (well, there's cooking and ironing to be done!), he must negotiate five stages, each with several sub-levels. These include the inside of a volcano, a slightly naff underwater effort and a snowy Ice Age stage.

There are plenty of oddball hostile sprites to give our hero a hard time.



Chuck Rock: you've seen it before and you'll no doubt see it again

He can deal with these in one of three ways. First off, he can slap them with his huge beer-gut; if that doesn't work, he can treat them to a flying drop-kick in the privates. Lastly, he can pick up a huge boulder and fling it on their head. Unsurprisingly, that tends to deter most things.

At the end of each stage, there's – yes, you guessed it – a boss to fight.

These range from a triceratops with a plaster on its bottom (?) through a woolly mammoth to a big green thing with boxing gloves on.

It's all very standard stuff, but good as far as unsurprising platformers go. If the thought of more dinosaurs doesn't make you throw up and cry, you might be interested in this – it'll certainly take you a while to finish it.

SUPER NES
Producer: SONY
Price: £44.99
Available: NOW

77%



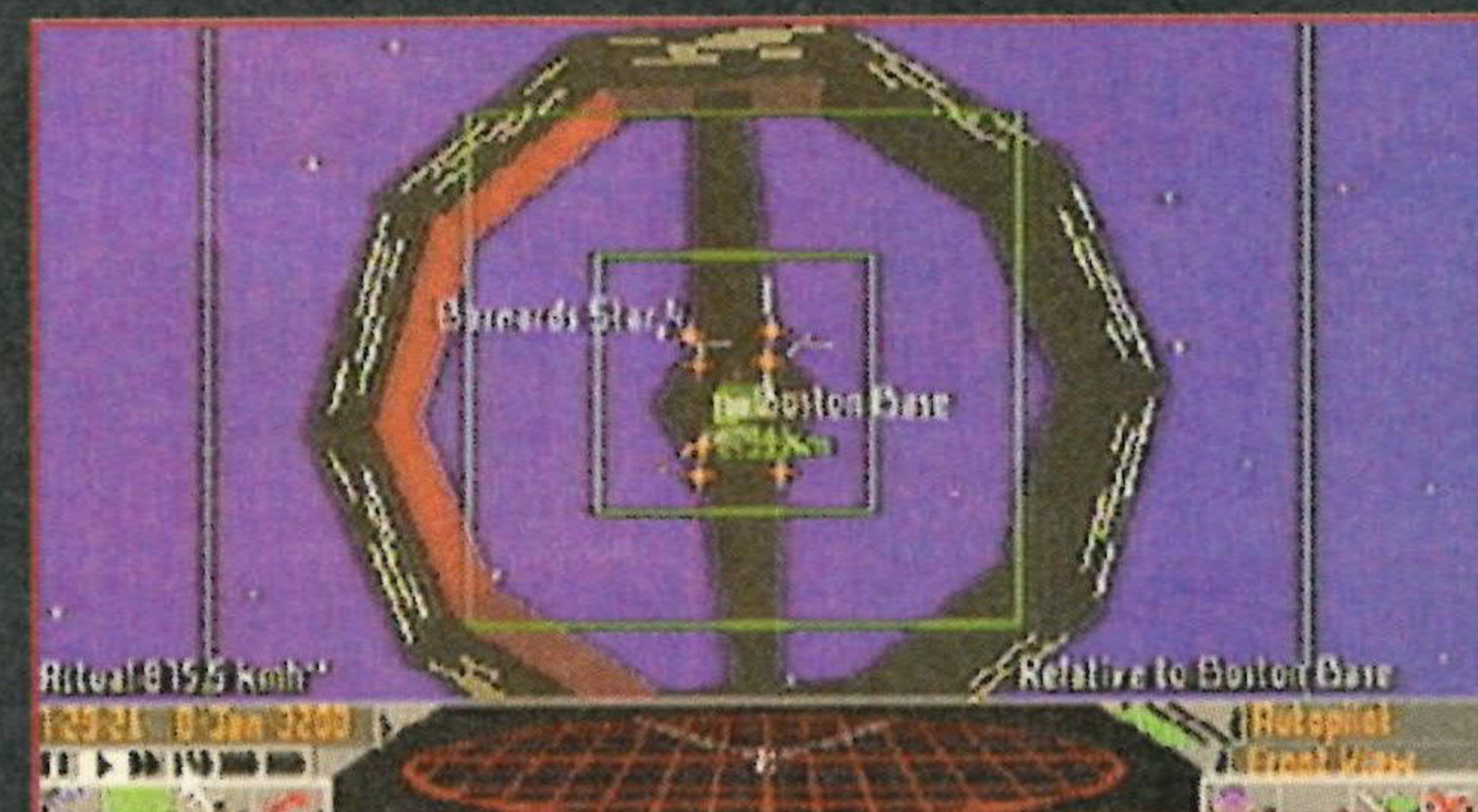
FRONTIER

ALL SPACE STRATEGY/adventure/trading games are ultimately descended from the old Game Designer's Workshop paper-and-pen role playing game *Traveller*. Many of the terms found in *Elite* and similar games can be traced to this ancient text. This is where the Core Systems were first explored. *Elite II*'s lead character is even called Jameson, who also featured heavily in the *Traveller* rules as an example character. There's even a picture of him in the old game's extended combat rules. He looks like he's eaten far too many of those cold cheese-and-onion pasties in the plastic wrappers that you find in corner news agent stores.

The first game of this nature that I can remember was *Trader* on the Commodore Vic 20 (with 16K RAM upgrade pack, of course!). It was so inconceivably lame that playing it for longer than ten minutes inevitably brought on fits of vomiting followed by unconsciousness and death. Luckily, the first version of *Elite* soon emerged from the secret labs of Acornsoft for the old Acorn BBC micro. It was unlike anything previously seen, and everyone with a BBC went on and on talking about it until their mates unashamedly burst into bitter tears of envy. Now there's *Frontier: Elite II* with "solid" graphics and vastly improved everything.

David Braben, the brain behind the original *Elite* has spent the past one and a half years programming the new game, and it's truly huge. Gametek give you a free map of the known universe with the game to prove that very fact.

The obligatory picture of the spinning space station in Birminghamworld – sell that ton of fish here



ELITE

The intro sequence for the greatest space trading game ever takes you through just how you ended up a loner, travelling the galaxy trading goods, doing deals, avoiding trouble...

The first thing that strikes you upon opening the tastefully designed box is the sheer hugeness of the instruction books. Many people have a psychotic reaction when confronted with bible-sized rule-books, but it turns out that only one of them's a manual. The first one is a little gazetteer with a "short" history of the period between 1950 and 2380, an outline of the

game's milieu, and articles on some of the planets you can visit. The other tome is a collection of decidedly lame Boy's Own-type stories about "life on the frontier". When you start the game, you are given the choice of three starting destinations: either the obscure planet Merlin in the Ross 154 system, Mars in the Sol system which is the capital now that Earth's been turned into a giant Disneyland-effort, or a lawless frontier world called Lave. It's best to start from Ross 154 because there's a guided mission in the manual to help you get the hang of how everything works.

This is a good thing, because the controls are murder when you first start. Unlike the previous *Elite*, the new model is controlled by icons which can be mouse or function-key selected. The system seems unnecessarily diffi-



TIER

best **V** buy
GS



board. Here you can pick up cash for transporting people or dubious packages to other systems, looking for missing persons or even assassinating heads of state. When you have enough money, you can improve your ship by buying add-ons found in various star-ports. This enables you to customise your ship to fit in with your character's chosen vocation, turning it into either a freighter, a gunship, a speed-machine, a mixture of all three, or something totally different!

You can choose destinations from a wonderful 3-D space map, which you can rotate in all dimensions for a better view. Zoom in on systems to have a look at the planets and find out their political orientation, their trade needs, and geographical and physical characteristics. Use hyperspace to get there quickly and guide yourself in on autopilot.

The only criticism I would have of *Frontier: Elite II* is that the combat sequences are a bit perplexing. Something attacks you, so you spend ages turning around looking for the blighter, and when you find him, he keeps slipping out of your range of vision. This isn't too serious, as this, like other aspects of the game, you will get used to after a while, although it helps to have a joystick plugged in as well as a mouse.

The original *Elite* achieved such a massive cult following that an *Elite* society was formed. This game is so vast and limitless, not to mention being completely fab, that it is bound to go the same way. *Frontier: Elite II* is a unique experience, and for £30 you'd be a fool to miss out on it.



Life on the frontier in the year 3200 is a lonely one for a space trader, who's known to moonlight as an intergalactic mercenary. Have you got what it takes to become Elite?



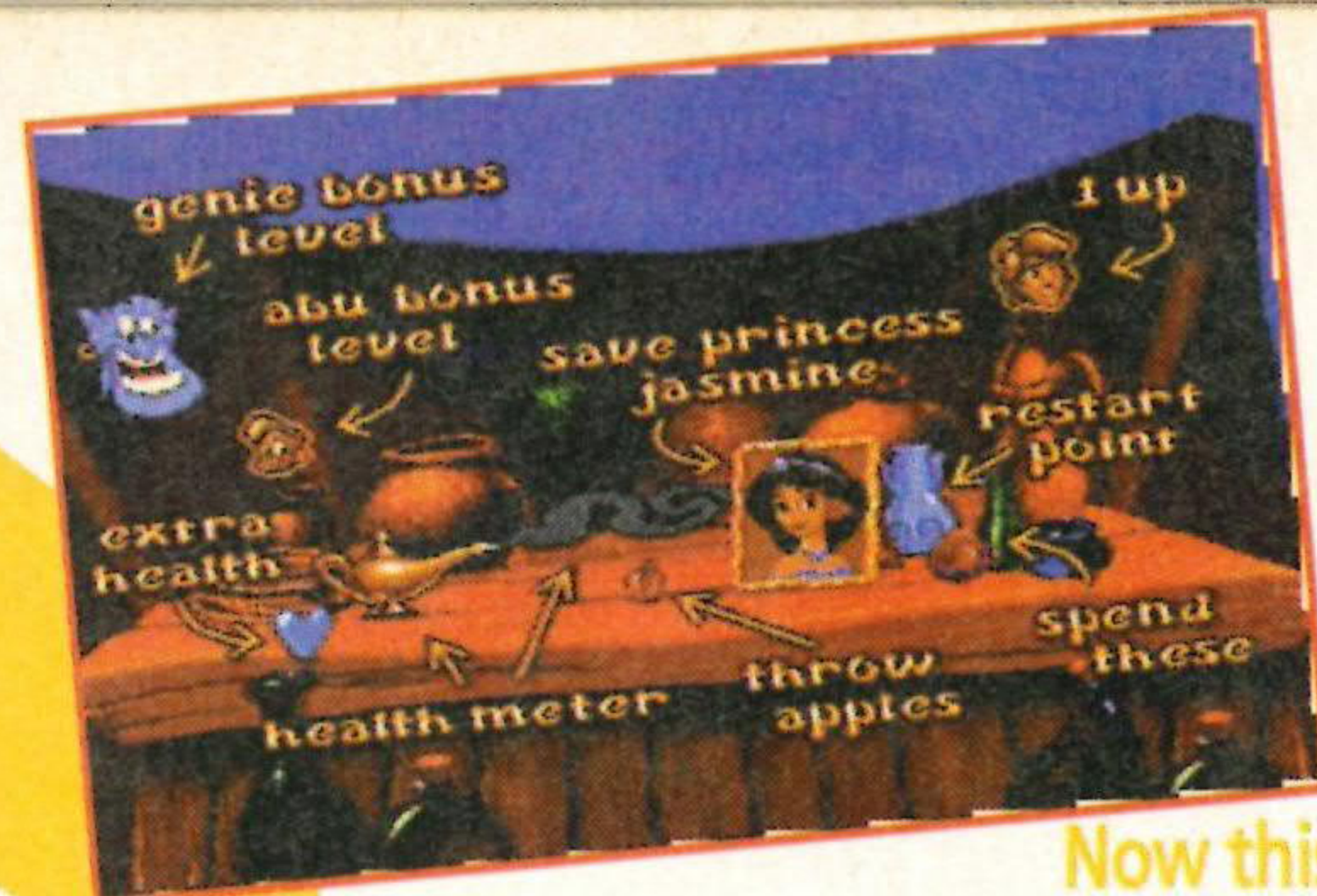
Before you go zooming off around the galaxy, have a look around Ross 154. Its vibrant colours and huge domes indicate it has a severe ozone problem. However, it's also quite a friendly place, so have a fly around and get used to the controls of your Eagle long range fighter. Once you've done that, close the sunroof, buckle up and head for the skies – you're outta there!

cult to begin with, but all the functions are vital to the game's depth, and you do get used to them eventually.

Finally, after a lot of crashing into gas-giants and accidentally shooting off missiles in the spaceport, you're hurtling off through space at monster speeds. This is when you realise that *Frontier: Elite II* is seriously excellent.

The best thing about the game is that there's nothing to stop you doing anything you like, going anywhere you like. There's no linear progression of events – what happens next is entirely up to you. You start off trading commodities between planets and work up to anything from interplanetary mercenary to space explorer to drug smuggler – anything you like, in fact.

While trading, you can engage in slightly more dodgy enterprises by contacting a starport's bulletin



Now this screen is taking the Mick...

Stop. Before you completely ignore this as just another review saying how blinking wonderful *Aladdin* is, and how it breaks all sorts of barriers, there are a few things you should know.

Aladdin was programmed by the same bloke who did *Global Gladiators* and *Cool Spot*, Dave Perry. And while both those games did set new standards in graphics, I have to say that our Mr Perry has been somewhat resting on his laurels of late. Basically, *Aladdin* is *Cool Spot* with different graphics. The whole structure of the game is exactly the same. To pay 50 quid

for *Aladdin* when you already have *Cool Spot* would be complete stupidity. So when all the hype has settled down, just remember that all the cute things in *Aladdin* have already been done in *Cool Spot*.

Aladdin's basically a platformer, but an interesting one. You are equipped with a sword for brutally hacking into your foes, and a pocketful of fruit (as opposed to bubbles) to lob at people's heads. There's no blood, though, just a puff of smoke as your enemy disappears tastefully.

Aladdin must slash his scimitar and chuck apples through seven spectacular levels. Continuing the *Spot* theme, the second level sees our chap strolling through the desert, just like Spot did on the beach. All the dunes are the same, and instead of crabs you get camels. Other levels include The Sultan's Dungeon, which is full of exploding skeletons and big spikes sticking out of the walls, and Agrabah Rooftops,

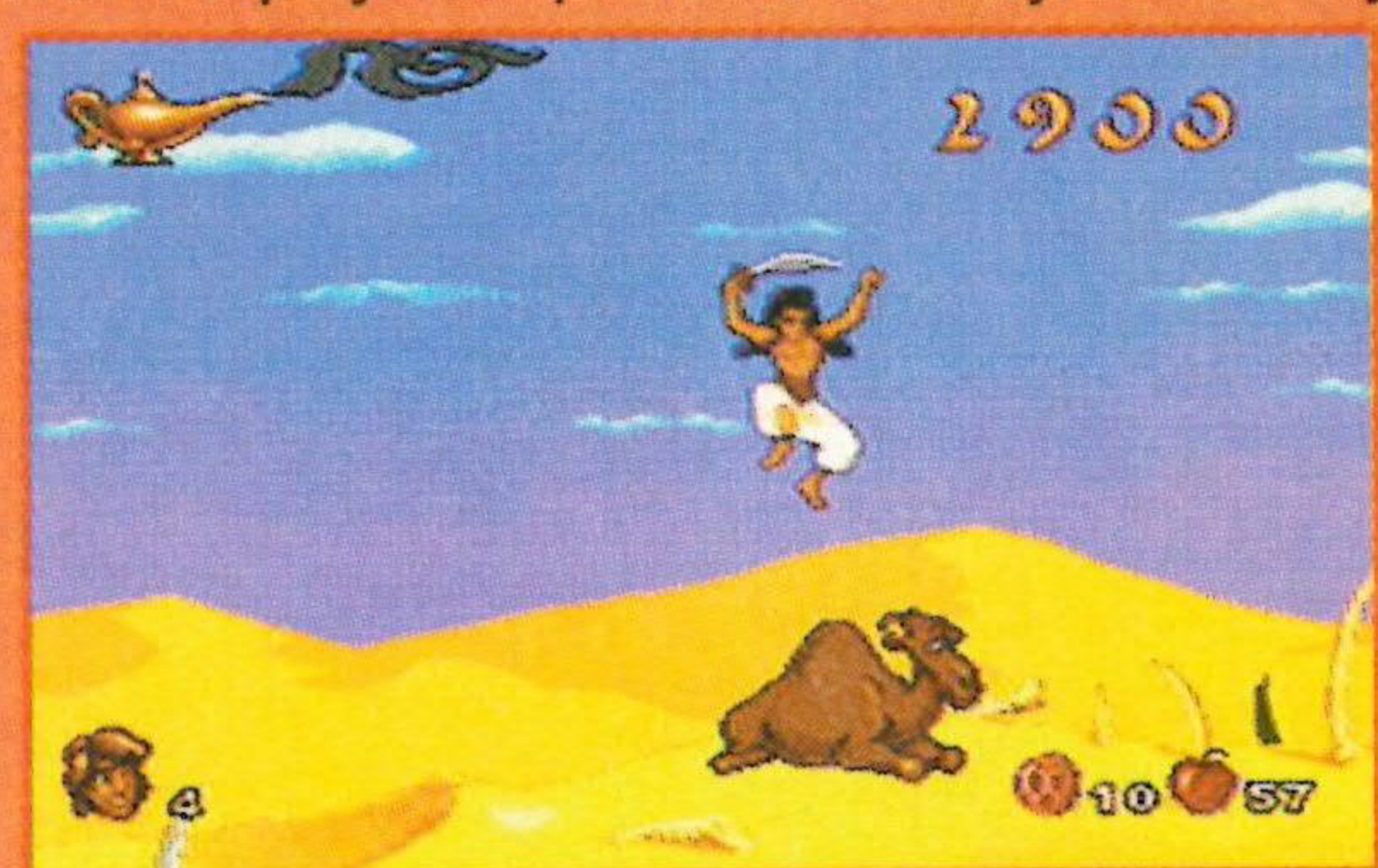
where you have to find a load of flutes in addition to making the palace guard drop his shorts (eh?).

There are loads of "nice touches", but the best ones are jumping on the back of a camel

Hey, hang on a mo'. This wasn't in *Cool Spot*. Oh yeah, what about the bottle-riding bit?



causing it to expectorate copiously onto a bystander, and the little knockout scene which occurs just after you've pegged



"Crabs, camels... ah who cares? I just jump on 'em. Spot who? Never 'eard of

it. In fact, all the same bits as *Cool Spot*.

After playing *Cool Spot*, and hearing and reading all the *Aladdin* hype, I am severely disappointed with Virgin and him, chum."

Dave Perry. I hope Mr Perry hasn't become a slacker, and trust his next game will have a bit of originality in it. We've seen and done the *Cool Spot* thing, Dave – now let's have something new for our £50!

You'd be happy too if you were raking in the amount of cash Virgin will make from *Aladdin* by charging £50 for *Cool Spot* in new clothing

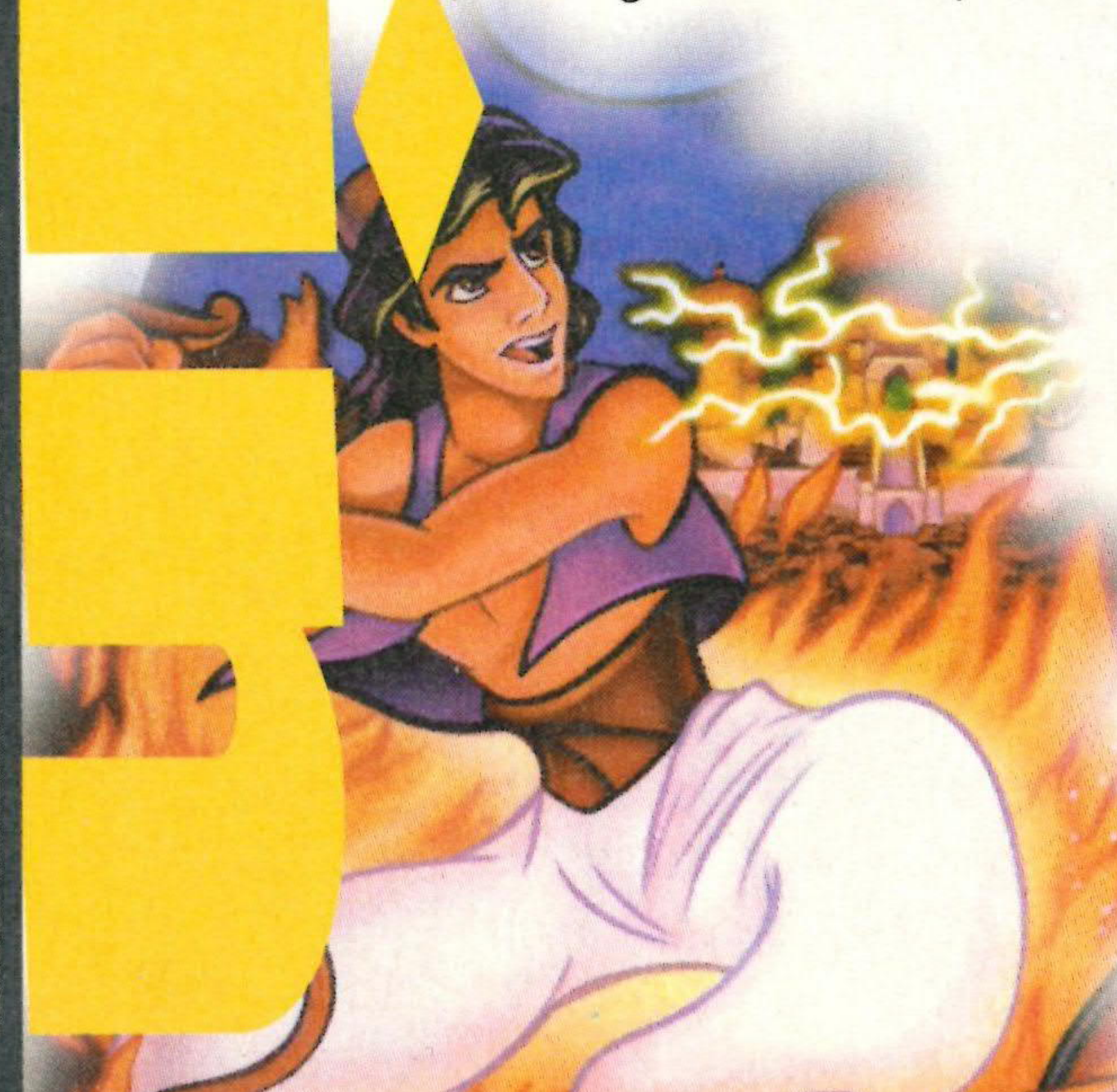


AMIGA
Producer: GEMTEK
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

97%

MEGA DRIVE
Producer: VIRGIN
Price: £49.99
Available: NOW

82%

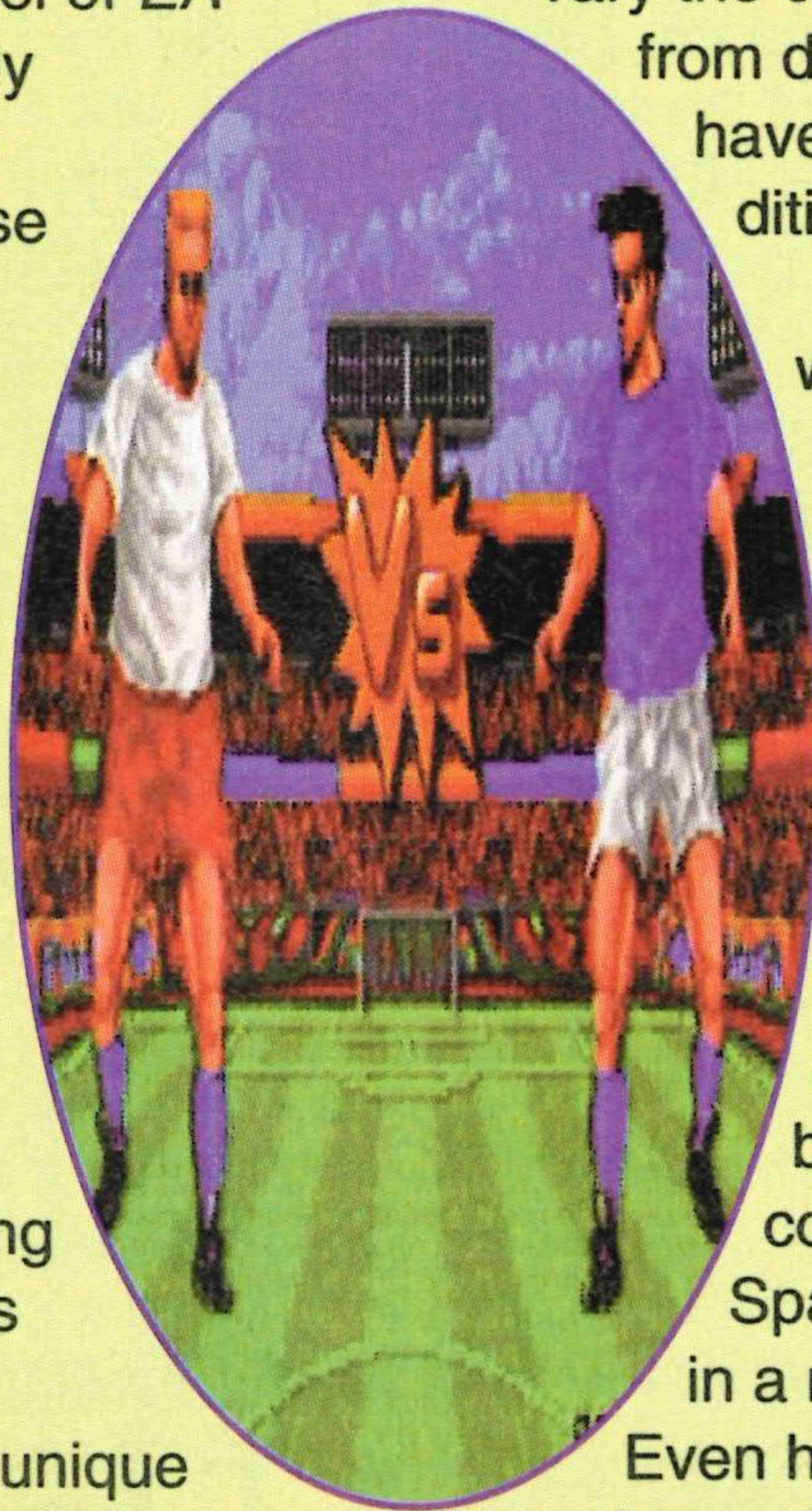


Sensible Soccer



SENSIBLE SOCCER IS A game specially made for English football nutters. It has a distinctly English flavour, unlike the very American feel of *EA Soccer*. It's absolutely overflowing with features. You can choose from a bigger variety of national teams than any other soccer sim, including sides like Albania, Croatia and the Faraoh Isles.

Decide whether to play a friendly, a tournament or a world championship. You can also take part in already-existing international matches like the Maastricht League. There is an unique feature which allows you to save entire league championships, and continue the tournament at a later date. If you are only interested in controlling the fortunes of one team, you can let the computer work out the most likely score for the other matches to see who you will have to face next to continue in



division matches with as much scope as you could possibly want.

There are loads of options to apply to the match itself. You can vary the condition of the pitch from dry to icy, and even have random weather conditions intruding on play.

None of the teams, whether national or international, are fixed – you can vary them as much as you like. You can even build your own custom team made up of your own custom players. Include yourself, your mates and the bloke behind the fag counter at the local Spar shop as strikers in a new super team.

Even have a team entirely made up of genetically engineered Sigourney Weaver clones. Alright!

When you have finally finished making a mockery of English football by totally abusing the customising facilities, you can play a match.

Your team's statistics are displayed on the screen and you can also choose to have a good look at the other team's before you start. You may also change the field positions of your players and alter the strategy. There are several strategy options including the good old sweeper.

At first sight, this game's presentation looks, well, uninspiring to put it mildly, especially if you've seen something like *EA Soccer*. The sprites are tiny and not very detailed, the pitch view is closer to over-

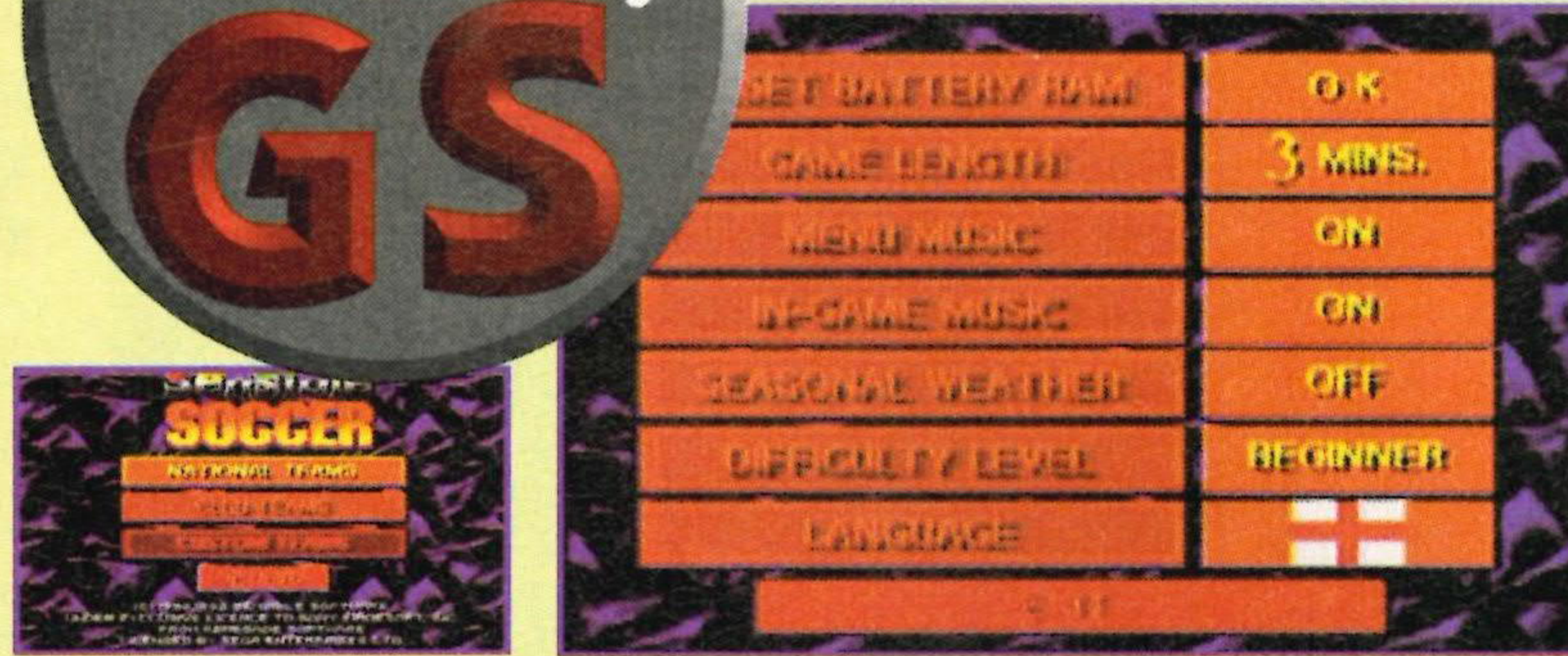
head than the successful EA three-quarter view. The sound is pretty standard too. So what is it that makes people rave

the bloke from behind the fag counter of the local Spar shop who just popped round for a quick game. Even more especially if they were being Germany.

Sensible Soccer is technically correct in every way. You won't see blokes hanging around off-side like you do in *EA Soccer*. Even when you get hacked down (this happens a lot when you are playing teams like Cameroon) or you hack someone else's player down (this happens a lot when you've had too many pints of Bishop's Finger down the Queen's Arms), the ref runs up and gives you a thorough ticking off, not to mention the yellow card.

The red card only comes out for a serious offence like taking the rip out of Gazza's beer gut.

The difference between *Sensible Soccer* and other football games like *EA Soccer* is a basic one: *Sensible Soccer* is for football purists who want every conceivable detail and authenticity brought to bear on a simulation. Anyone who is seriously into the sport would appreciate the thought that has gone into this game. *EA Soccer* on the other hand, is much more of a good-fun arcade-type football game for those who would rather get into the pitch drama and excitement. Decide which category you fall into before choosing between these two games. Ah, what the heck, get 'em both...



Options? You want 'em, you got 'em – tons of 'em. The top pic shows the game's overall configuration, the middle pic displays the kit customizing, while above you can see a small selection of the numerous teams in the game

about *Sensible Soccer* outside the unbelievably comprehensive range of options?

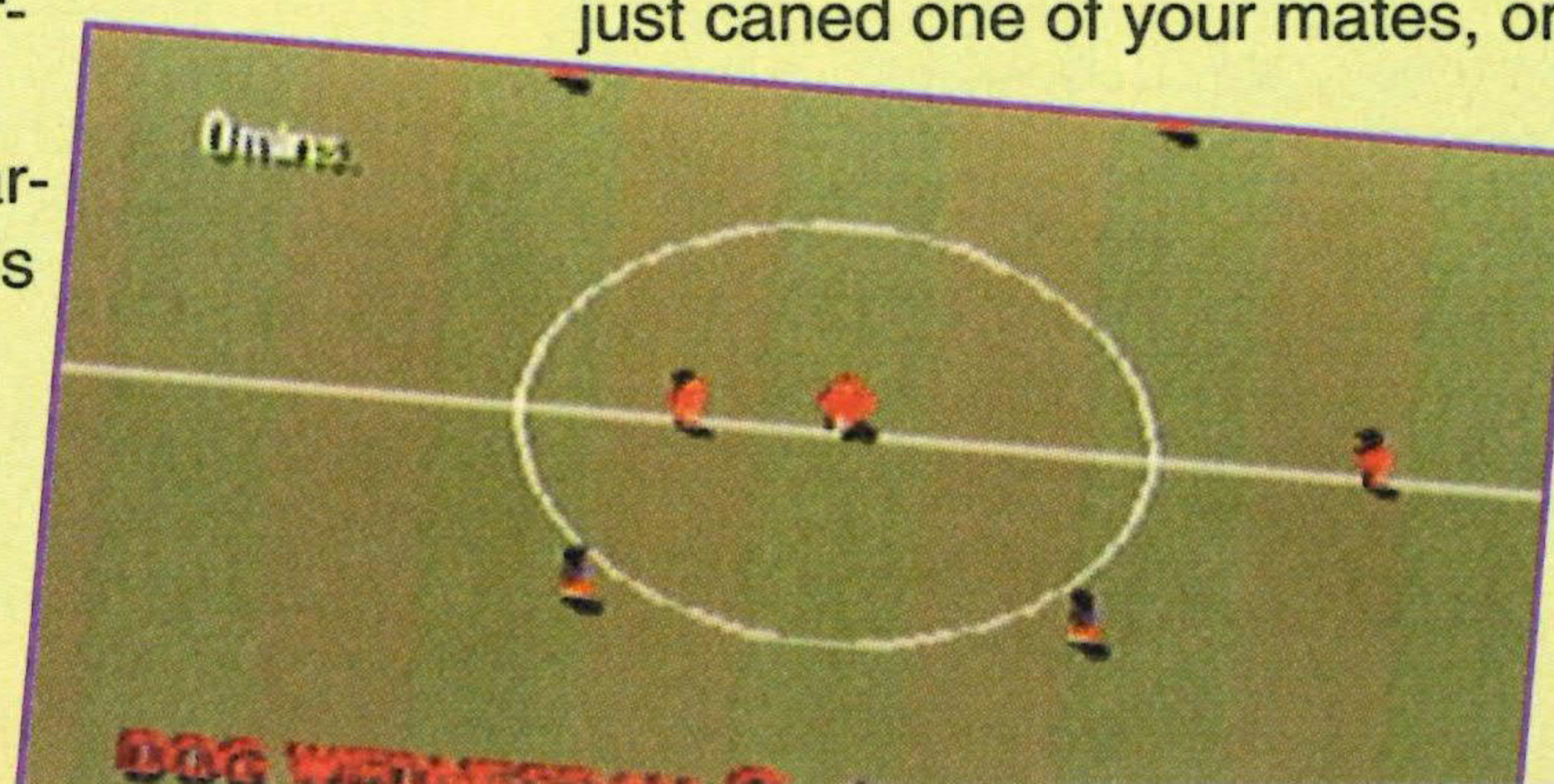
The answer is that this game really takes some playing. The gameplay is a lot faster and more intense than other soccer sims, and you have to be really skilful to be any good. In *Sensible Soccer*, you have total control of your players, none of the moves are computer-aided, and so making the ball go where you want and manoeuvring players is a lot more difficult. Because of this, the achievement of winning a match is heightened immeasurably, especially if you've just caned one of your mates, or



The graphics may be small but the gameplay is big, Big, BIG! You have total control over every character's actions

the championship.

The best thing about *Sensible Soccer*, though, is that it doesn't just concentrate on international games. It's also fully programmed with information on the current UK soccer scene, allowing you to play



MEGA DRIVE
Producer: SONY
Price: £16.95
Available: DECEMBER

91%

ELECTRONIC ARTS HAVE produced ground-breakingly exciting sports simulations of baseball, American football, basketball and ice hockey, but this is the first time they have turned their attention to a predominantly European sport. Luckily they didn't entrust the development of the game to a bunch of football-illiterate yanks, but sensibly moved the project here to England, the birthplace of the sport. (I'll try not to mention the World Cup.)

FIFA International Soccer gives you the chance to control any of 49 authentic national teams including England, Germany, Argentina and Italy in addition to more obscure sides like Ivory Coast and Australia. As with EA's other sims, team



members' statistics are displayed under a bewildering array of 13 headings including stamina, passing and aggressiveness. This breakdown even includes the player's ability at performing certain shots like slides, headers and bicycles. A quick glance at the table would tell you, for instance, that good old German midfielder Dieter Meyer has 76 speed, 90 reaction and 78 shot power. Seems fair.

The team is given an overall set of scores which include things like goalkeeping and passing. You can thus see straight away that Japan are absolutely hopeless at shooting (4), but have obviously been at it for ages practising their tackles (7). Cameroon on the other hand are unbelievably bad at goal-keeping (3) but ain't half

Game Stats

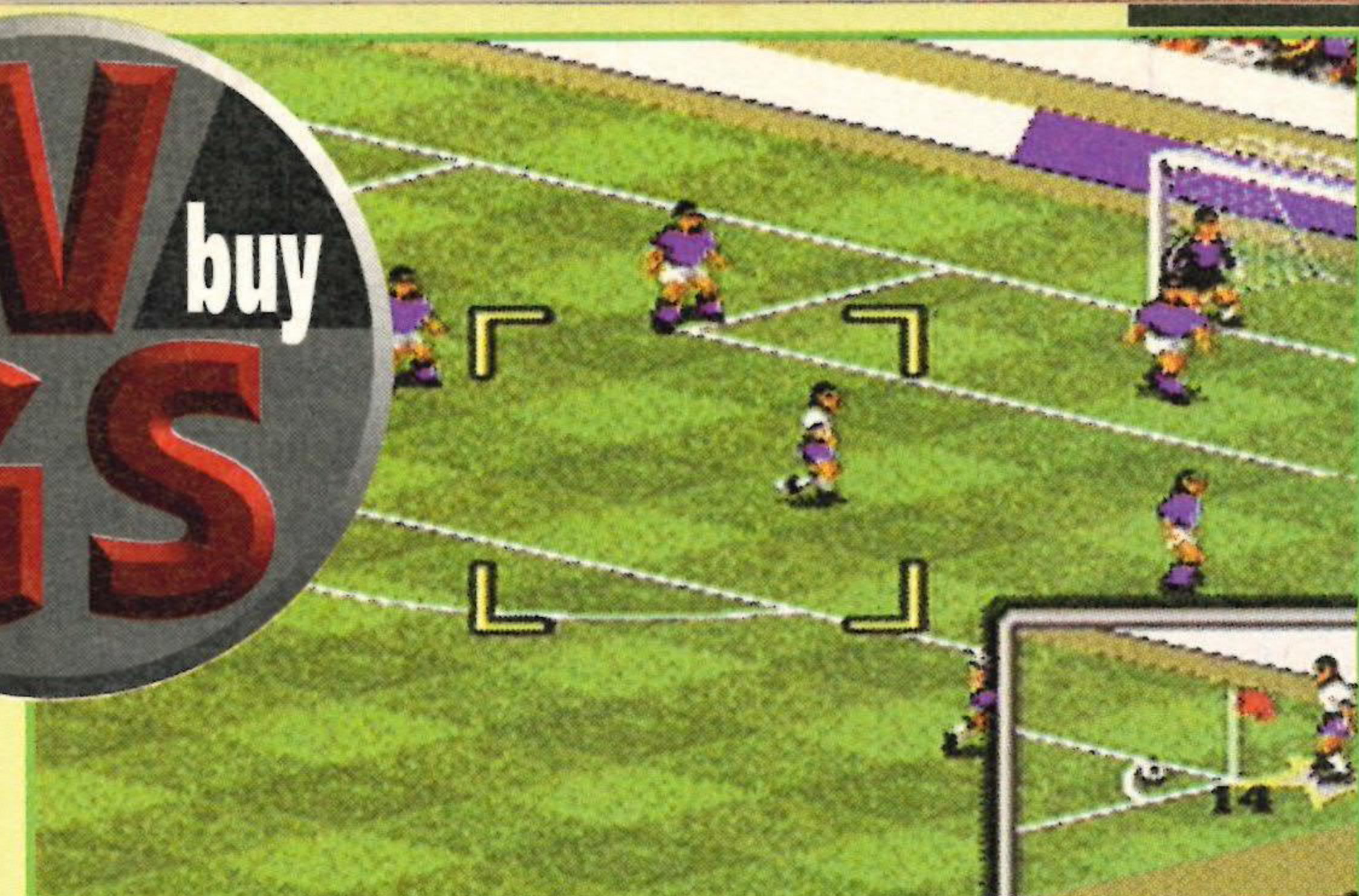
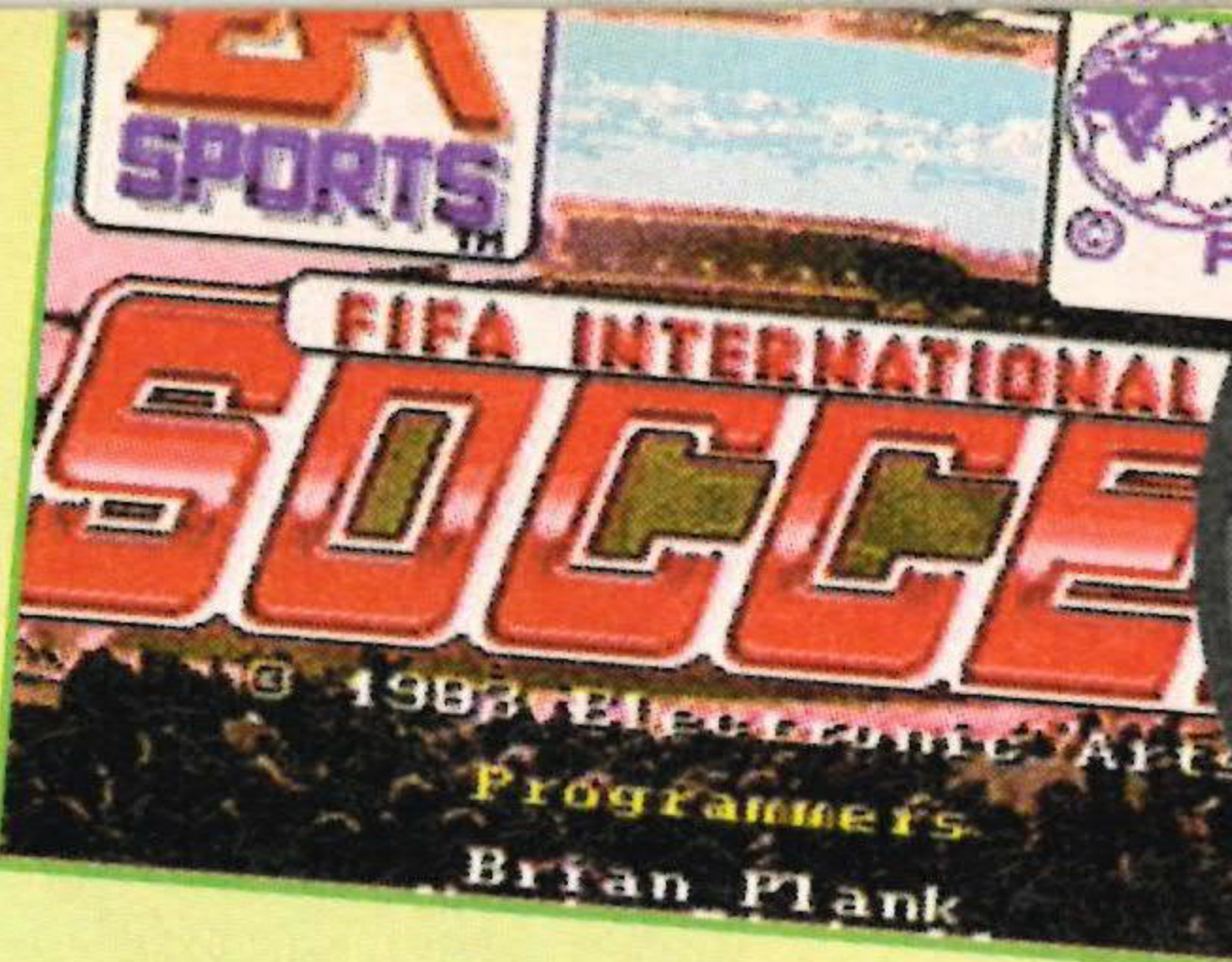
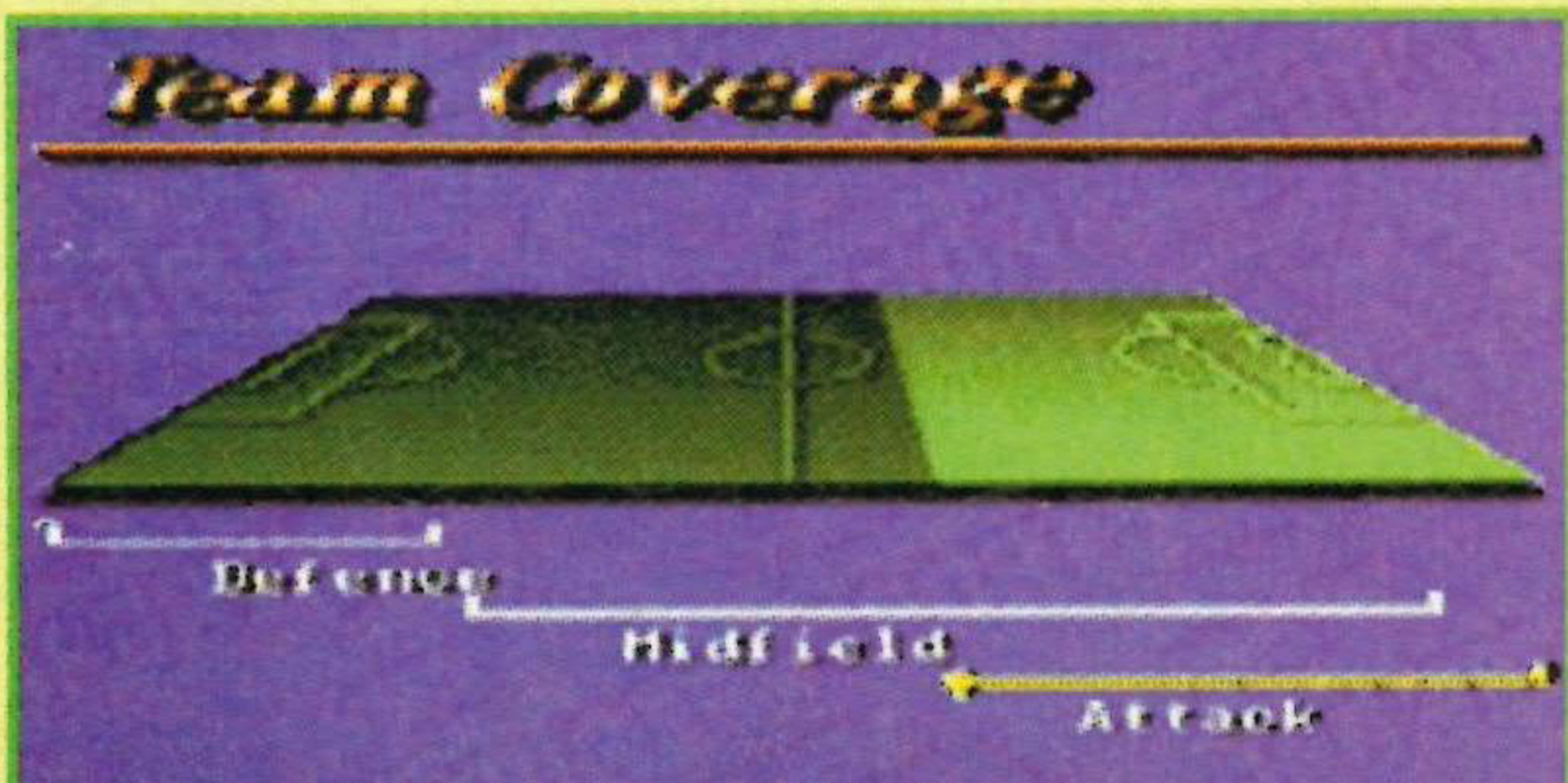
Score	0	1
Shots on goal	7	20
Saves	12	6
Corner Kicks	1	3
Minutes		
Attacking	0 25	0 45
In Play	0 25	0 45
Defending		

DPad: Scroll Up or Down

Substitutions

No.	Player Name	DRILL
2	Karl Schneider	82
10	Thomas Toller	80
16	Dieter Meyer	85
18	Rudi Jantz	85

Up/Down: Select
A: Pick
C: Change



Set plays, like free kicks, goal kicks or, as here, corners, allow you to access a scanner. Just position the box over the player you want to kick to et voila.

good at running fast (9). This means if you're feeling lazy you can give yourself Germany (9 for everything) and the computer Hong Kong (don't ask). Of course, if you're in two-player mode, you can both scrap over who is going to be Germany, since nobody's really that interested in being the slightly effeminate sounding EA All Stars (oh yeah, know them well).

You can alter most things in *FIFA Soccer* including pitch condition, which can be dry, damp, muddy or whatever takes your fancy. You can even select real or artificial grass (now that option's in there for the yanks!).

When you begin the game, you are introduced to the match by good ol' Ron Barr (and, yes, he does look like he's related to Roseanne), who gives you a few tips on the teams' strengths and weaknesses. A nice touch at the beginning of the game is the coin-throwing ceremony where you get to choose heads or tails before a dollar (not a good old 10p) is flipped to see who chooses kick-off or end.

FIFA International Soccer's

Yep, his one's got loads of options to, although you can't change as much as in *Sensible Soccer*

graphics are beautiful. The sprites are big and detailed with the team's colours plainly displayed; you can even see the crowd moving around behind the advertising placards as you are playing. There are some great details like strikers showing off after a goal and team members hugging each other like a bunch of cissies after the match.

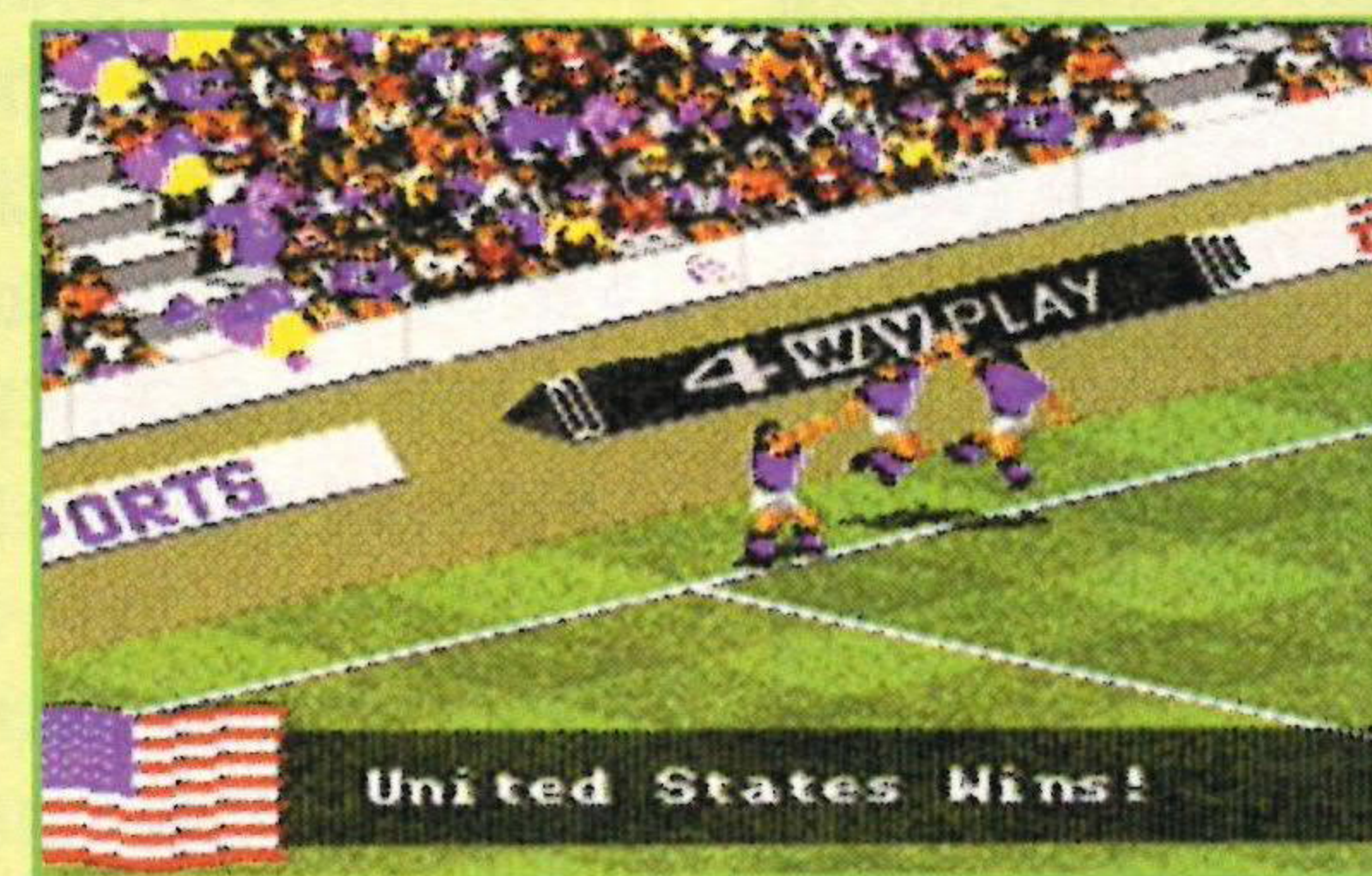
The sound is also a high point - it's the most realistic crowd sound on any sports sim, even complete with chants - obscene language removed, naturally.

Anyone familiar with EA's other

sport simulations will recognise the basic engine of the game. The action is computer-guided, like in *NHPLA Hockey*, which means the computer interprets moves of the



Score a goal (above) or win the whole match and the celebrations start



keypad into its impression of what that the move would translate into in a professional game. This means that embarrassing fumbles are few and far between and you won't score too many own goals (not by accident, anyway).

Gameplay is involved, fast and occasionally furious, especially in the two-player game. It's not uncommon for pitch violence to overflow onto the people holding the joypads. The availability of league and tournament games where you pick the participants ensures plenty of variety in both two- and one-player games.

FIFA International Soccer is accessible and very easy to get to grips with. It'll only take you a few matches to become fairly competent with the game's controls. This and the help you get from the computer doesn't mean you lack control over the players. Play is still entirely in your hands, and strategy is required to win a game. It also doesn't mean that play against the computer opponent is easy. Even if you give yourself Italy and the computer Nigeria, you'll still have problems winning when you first start, and it'll be ages before you can reverse that situation and stand any chance of survival. For pure exhilaration, EA have it.

England	United States
Shooting	4
Running	6
Passing	3
Defence	4
Tackling	3
Goal Keeping	3
Overall	5

He has just won the gold out of a stadium of 50,000 for today's contest between England and the United States.

FIFA

INTERNATIONAL

SOCCER

MEGA DRIVE
 Producer: EA SPORTS
 Price: £49.99
 Available: DECEMBER

91%

THE
ADVENTURES

OF



Dr Franken

Here's a platform adventure which is as massively weird as it is large in size. Mary Shelley's stitched-together character now sports a pair of black wraparound shades in addition to the traditional bolt-through-the-neck. His problem is that he tried to mail his girlfriend, Bitsy, to New York in pieces, to be re-assembled on arrival like an MFI wardrobe. Unfortunately, owing to the lousy postal service in Transylvania, bits of Bitsy have been mailed all over the world. Franky now has to go around finding them before it's too late.

Dr Franken has 20 levels of action which are spread through various world loca-



Franky spazes out at the end of his life - Duracells last long, Franky

tions including a temple in Greece, a Japanese garden



and a sinister Peruvian forest. Franky himself is a good fighter and has enough moves to qualify as a competitor in *SFII*. But he's much more than that, for he can also burn his enemies to a dried-up husk with thousands of watts of energy - although his power needs constant replenishment.

When you have located bits of a passport on any



level, you are shown the map and can then decide where to travel next. Each time you complete a level, you are given more choice over where to go.

Dr Franken also contains the odd puzzle element. Some of the chunks of Bitsy can't be reached by traditional methods, and require some ingenuity. One section requires you to use dockland cranes to reach parcels, while others have levers which you must use to control platforms.

Franken has one of the best rock-'n'-roll soundtracks on any SNES game, and the sprites are big and smart, even if the background graphics have a slight tendency towards chunkiness.

The only word of warning I would give about this game is that it's very tough. Lots of hostile sprites and a time limit for finding all the pieces on a level make it really difficult to get onto the higher levels. Get this one

for Christmas and I guarantee you won't have cracked it by Boxing Day.



The screen darkens as lightning strikes in the skies above

SUPER NES
Producer: ELITE
Price: £tba
Available: DECEMBER

90%

COOL

SNES OWNERS WHO ARE heartily sick of nauseatingly cute platformers take heed! This bloke isn't a forest critter and he's not having any of that Sesame Street soundtrack business either.

Spot is an animated version of the little red dot on the 7-Up bottle logo. He has now grown legs, arms, Converse trainers and a big pair of wraparound shades. He doesn't walk like ordinary platform characters, but kind of lopes along to the music whilst swinging his arms. He's so laid back that instead of making a groaning noise when he dies or gets smacked by something, he gives a little chuckling sound as though he were being tickled - what a bloke.

Finding a distress note at the beginning of the game which also doubles up as a quick instruction sheet for the player, Spot sets off on a mission to rescue his fellow spots. They have been rudely abducted by a chap called Wild Wicked Wily Will (some people have no manners). The action takes place along the Californian beach-front and stretches to 11 levels of chilled-out jumping around as Spot tries to rescue his mates from the little cages where they have been unceremoniously banged up.

Virgin have really produced a visual masterpiece this time. I mean, the Mega Drive version was a scorcher, but this far surpasses the original for image quality and

smoothness.

The levels have some of the most unbelievable background graphics ever seen on the SNES - they look as solid and smooth as an animated movie. The little red chap was programmed with 250 animated movements, and it shows: he's one of the most life-like sprites ever.

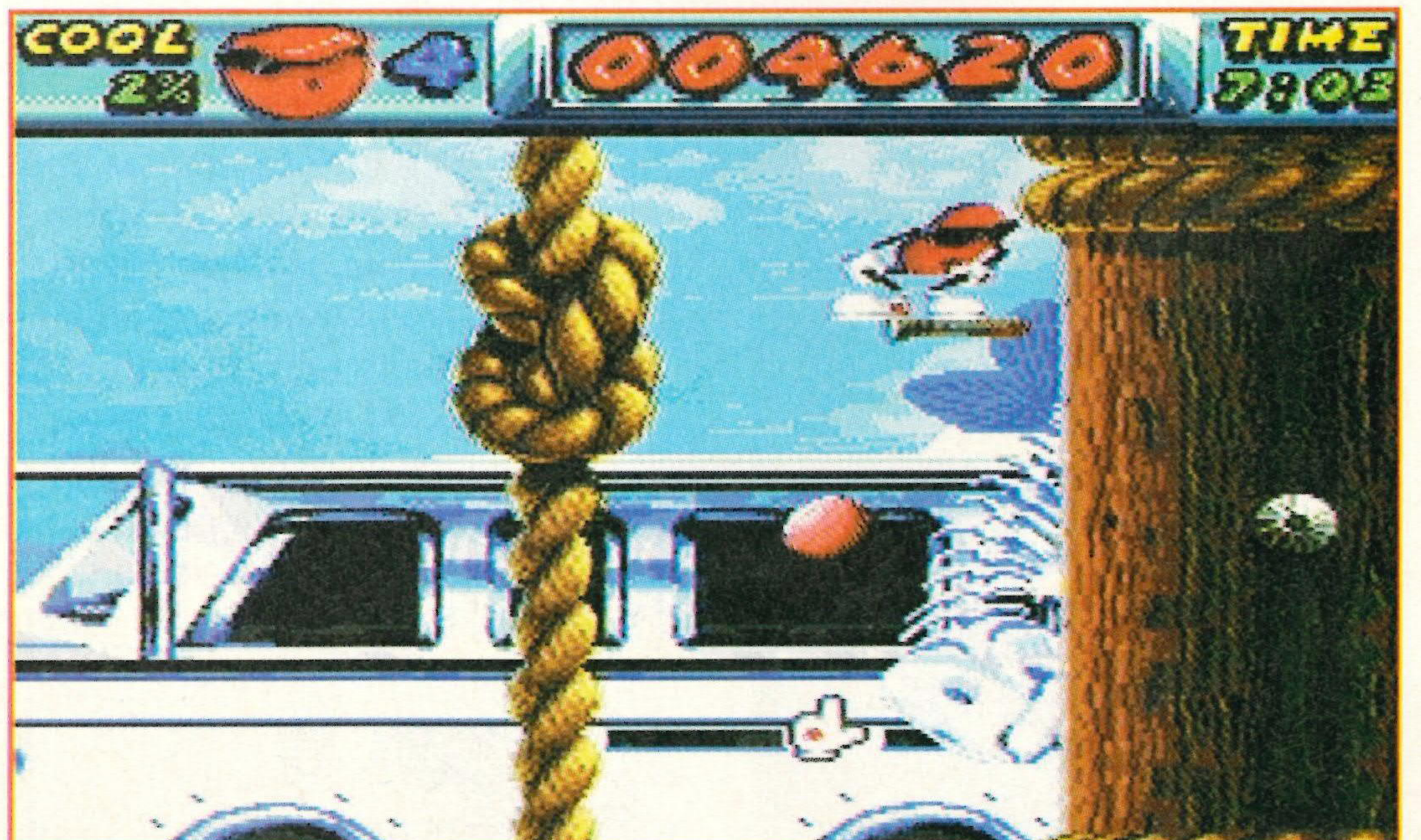
But it's not just graphics that make *Cool Spot* such a winner, the gameplay is right up there too. As you progress through the levels (which flawlessly scroll horizontally and vertically), you must collect floating spots which are



counted up at the end to give you a "cool rating" as a percentage. On your way you come across some utterly bizarre characters who are all intent on doing you in. These include buzzing wasps, hermit-crabs and pyjama-clad mice who fuzz big chunks of stale cheddar at your head. Luckily, being a soft-drink character, Spot is equipped with a fizzy self-defence mechanism; he can shoot bubbles at things.

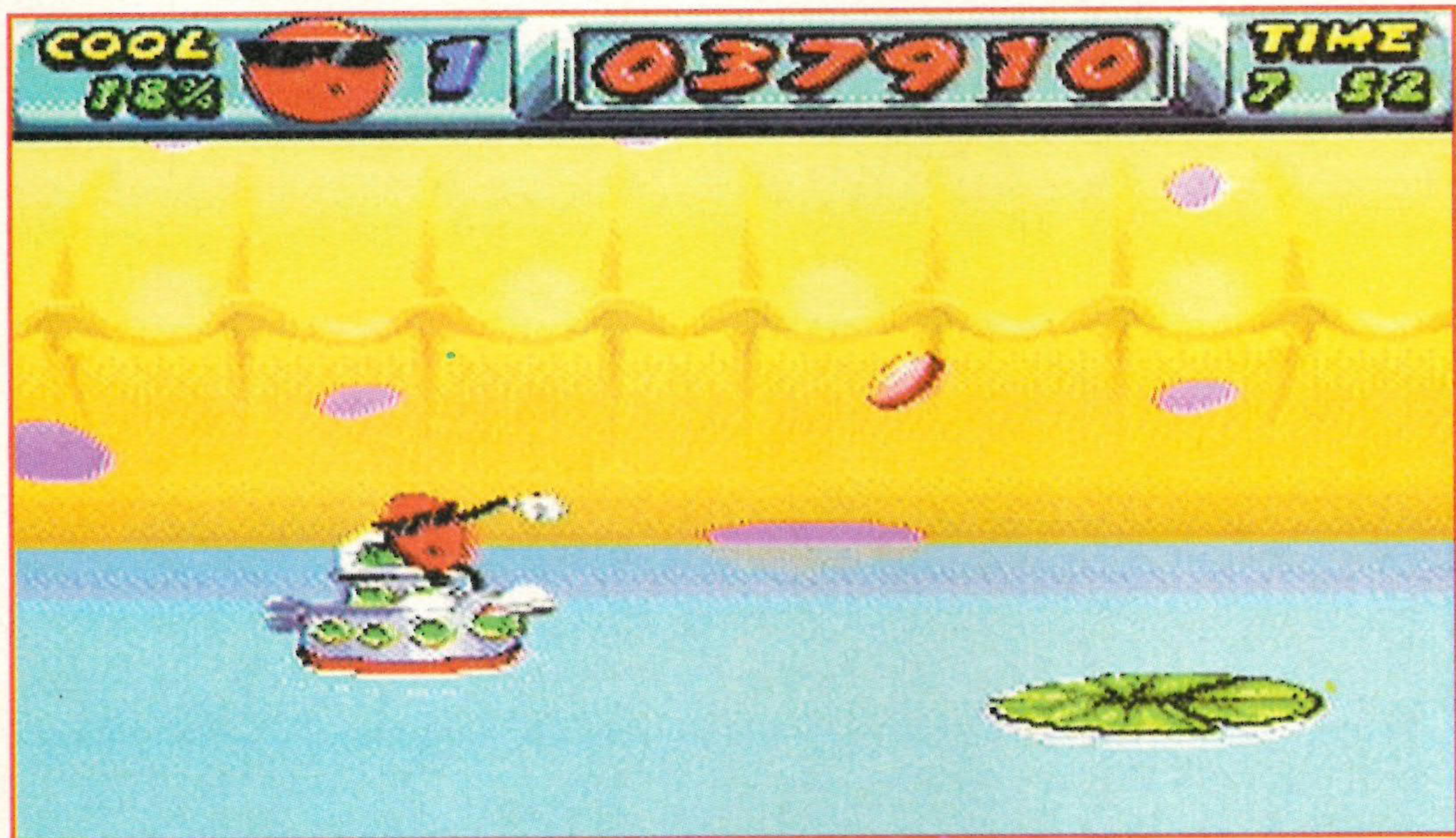
In addition to the 11 big levels, there are six varied bonus levels which occur from time to time. One of them takes place inside a 7-Up bottle where you have to jump on the bubbles to collect spots and increase your cool.

If you've never seen *Cool Spot* before, you're in for a visual treat. Zit, er sorry, Spot sways around and snaps his fingers while waiting



The second level takes the walking red dot onto the quayside. At the moment he's only got a measly 2% cooldom, but that red dot below him will soon bump that up.

SPOT

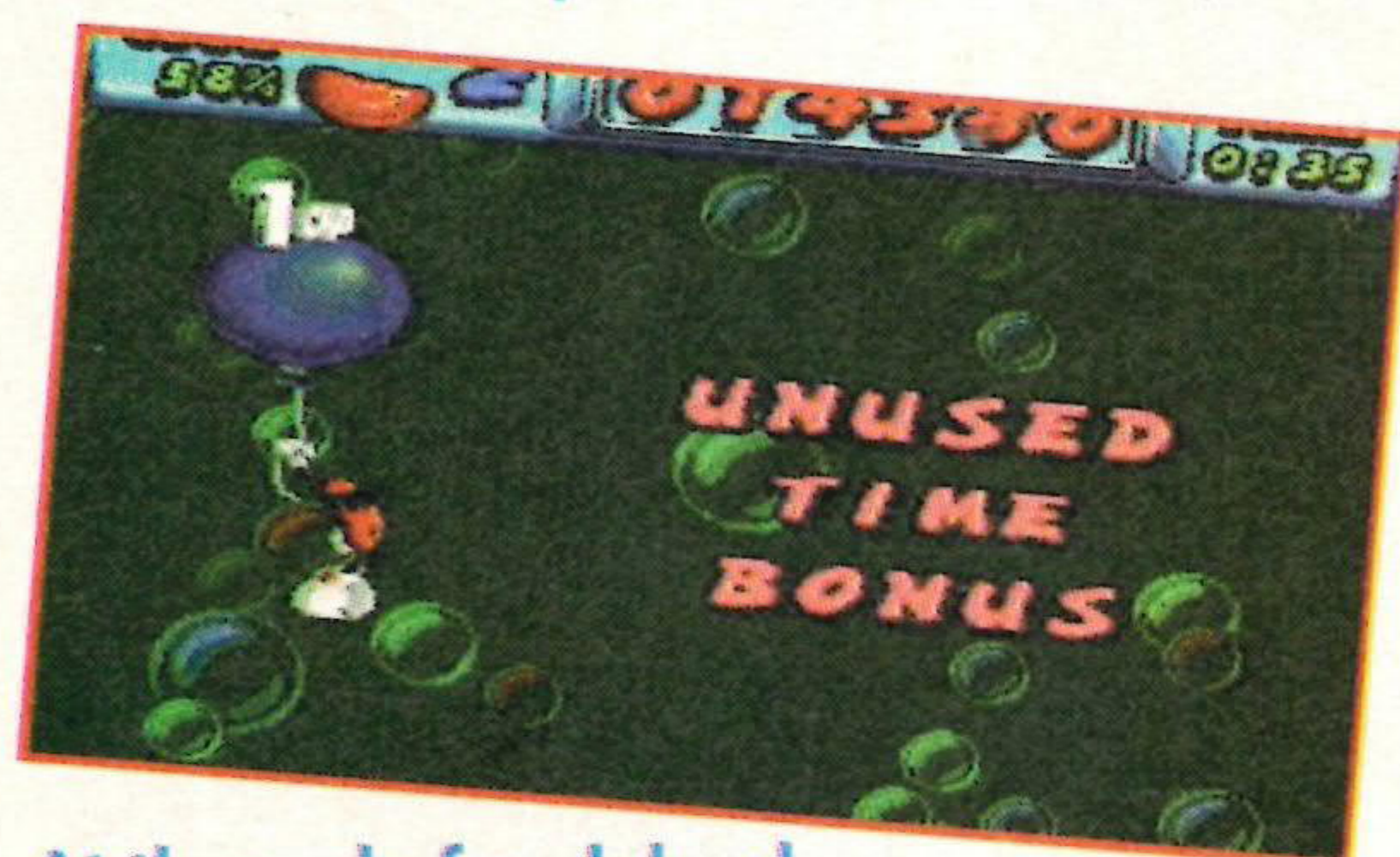


Woah, watch out Spot; those miniature boats are slippery little suckers!

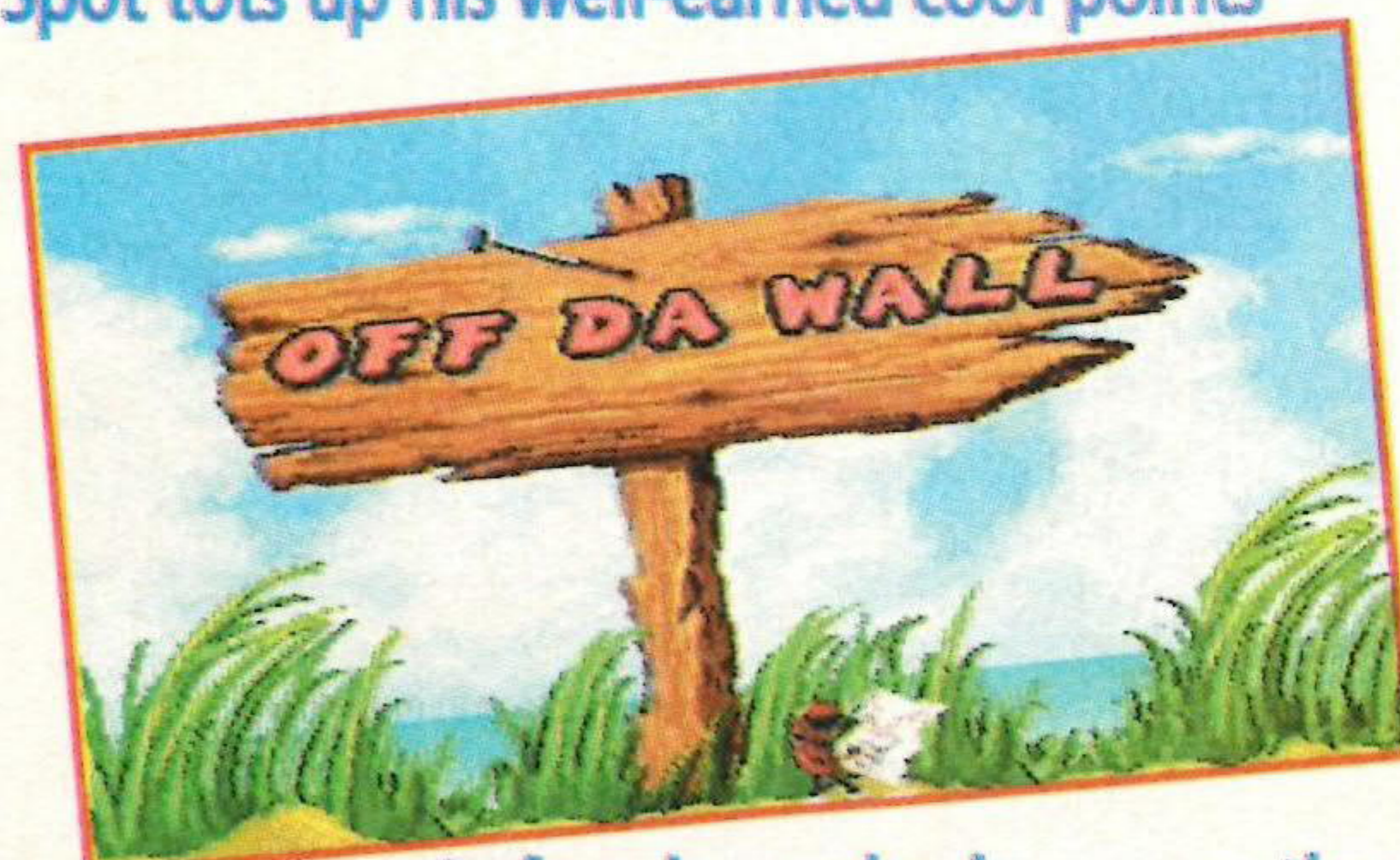
for you to do something, and the fellow dots you have rescued celebrate joyously when you pass a level. Also, when you bubble-blast the hermit crabs, their shells fly off and they are left standing there in their boxer shorts. Crazy!



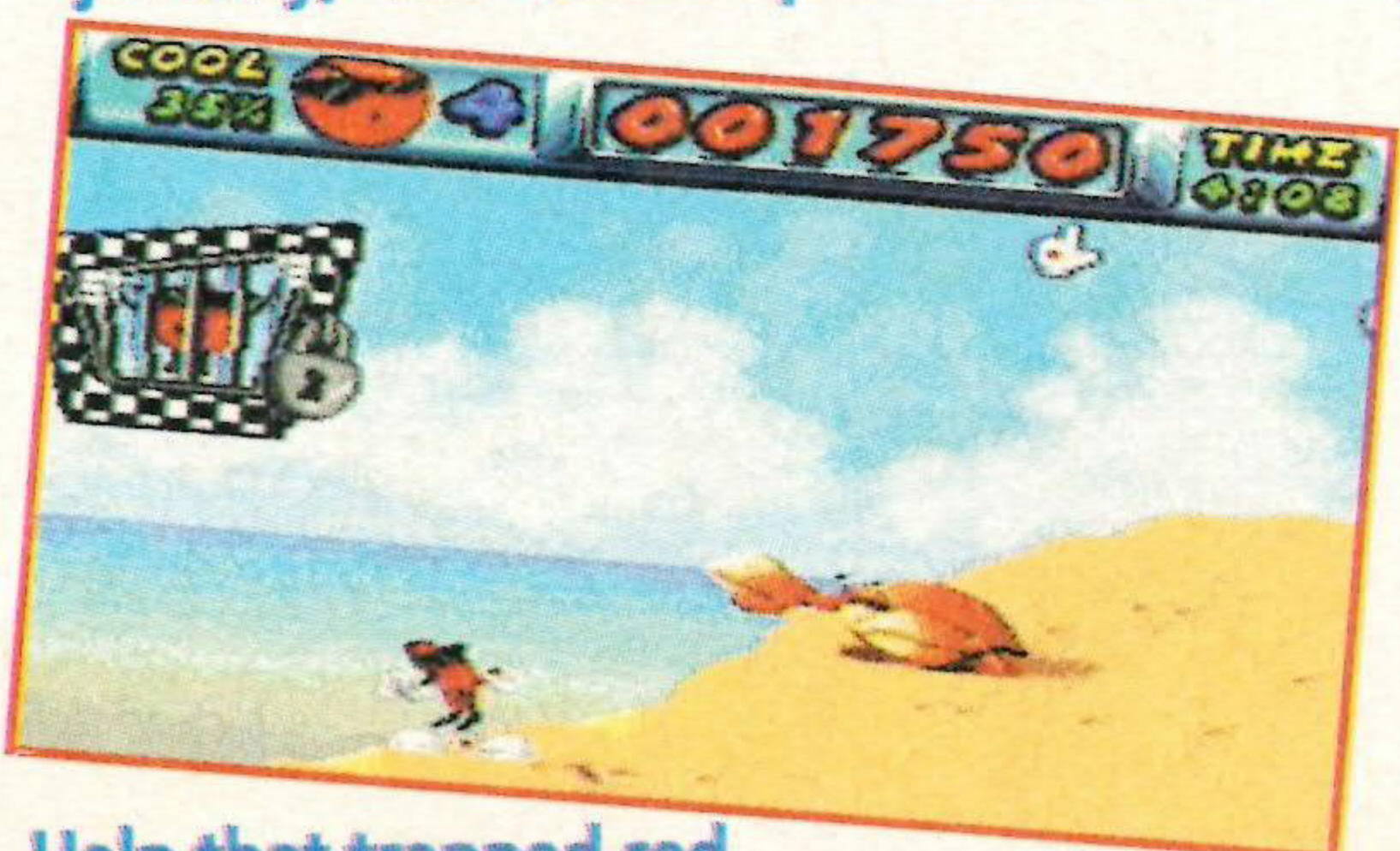
Spot rides in on a 7-Up bottle in the smart intro



At the end of each level Spot tots up his well-earned cool points



Before he embarks on another journey, the little chap checks out his map



Help that trapped red guy and he'll be a friend for life

Even the sound is quite exceptional. The slappy noise when Spot lands on his face after a badly-aimed jump, the sound of bubbles exploding on a hostile sprite, and even Spot's little jumping noise are pretty near perfect. The whole thing is backed by a Beach Boys-type soundtrack.

The only criticism I would have of *Cool Spot* is that some of the levels lack variety within themselves, so that sometimes you could swear that you've already been through certain sections. This has the effect of making some levels drag on a bit, as there's nothing new to see.

In the final analysis though, *Cool Spot* is not just cool, it's positively low-temperature. Its hipness is a very refreshing change to the cuddly-toy atmosphere of a worryingly large number of SNES games. The flaw I've brought up doesn't seriously damage the game's appeal, and our little bubble-blasting soft-drink friend looks set to become a household name.



SUPER NES
Producer: VIRGIN
Price: £49.99
Available: NOW

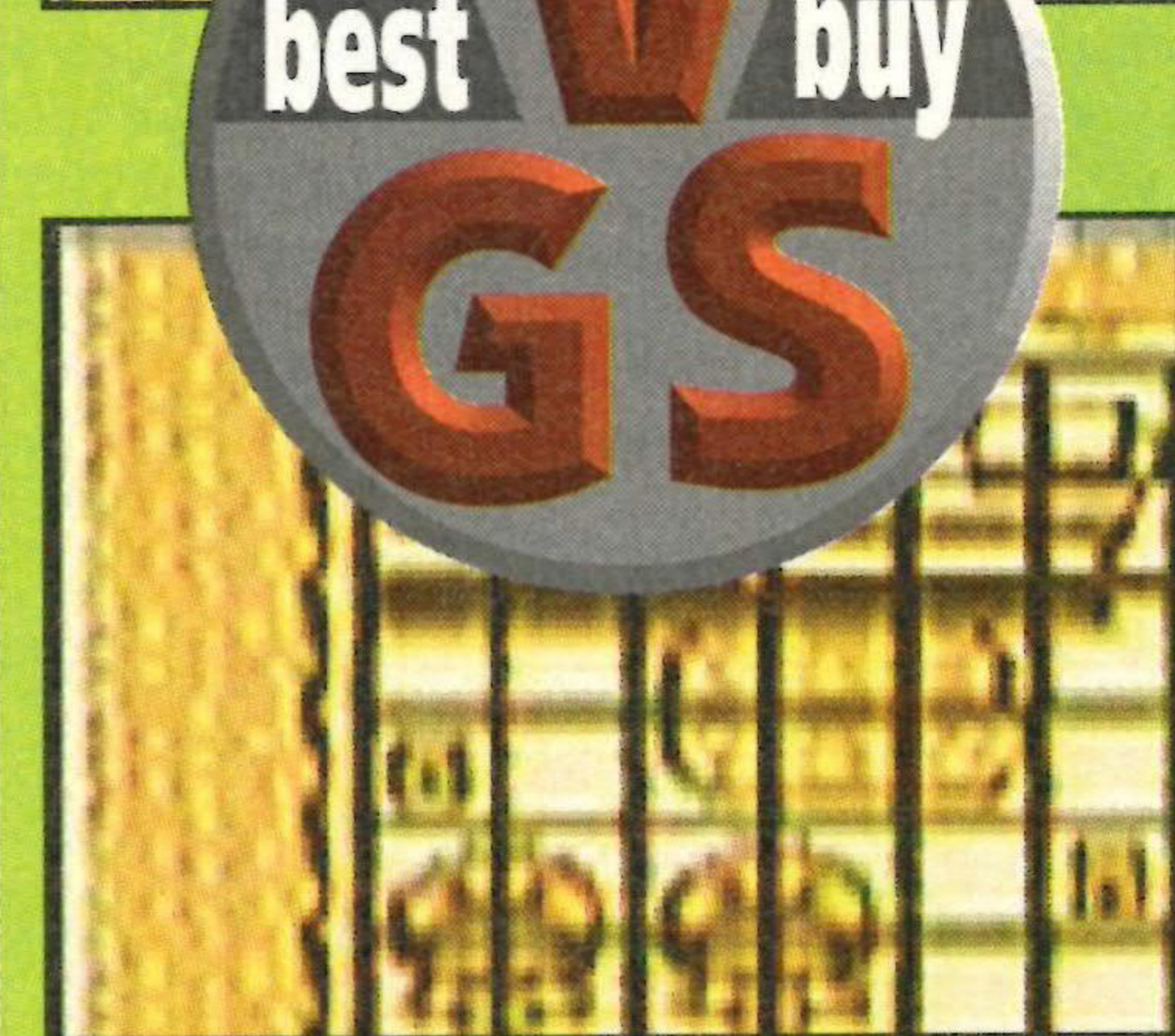
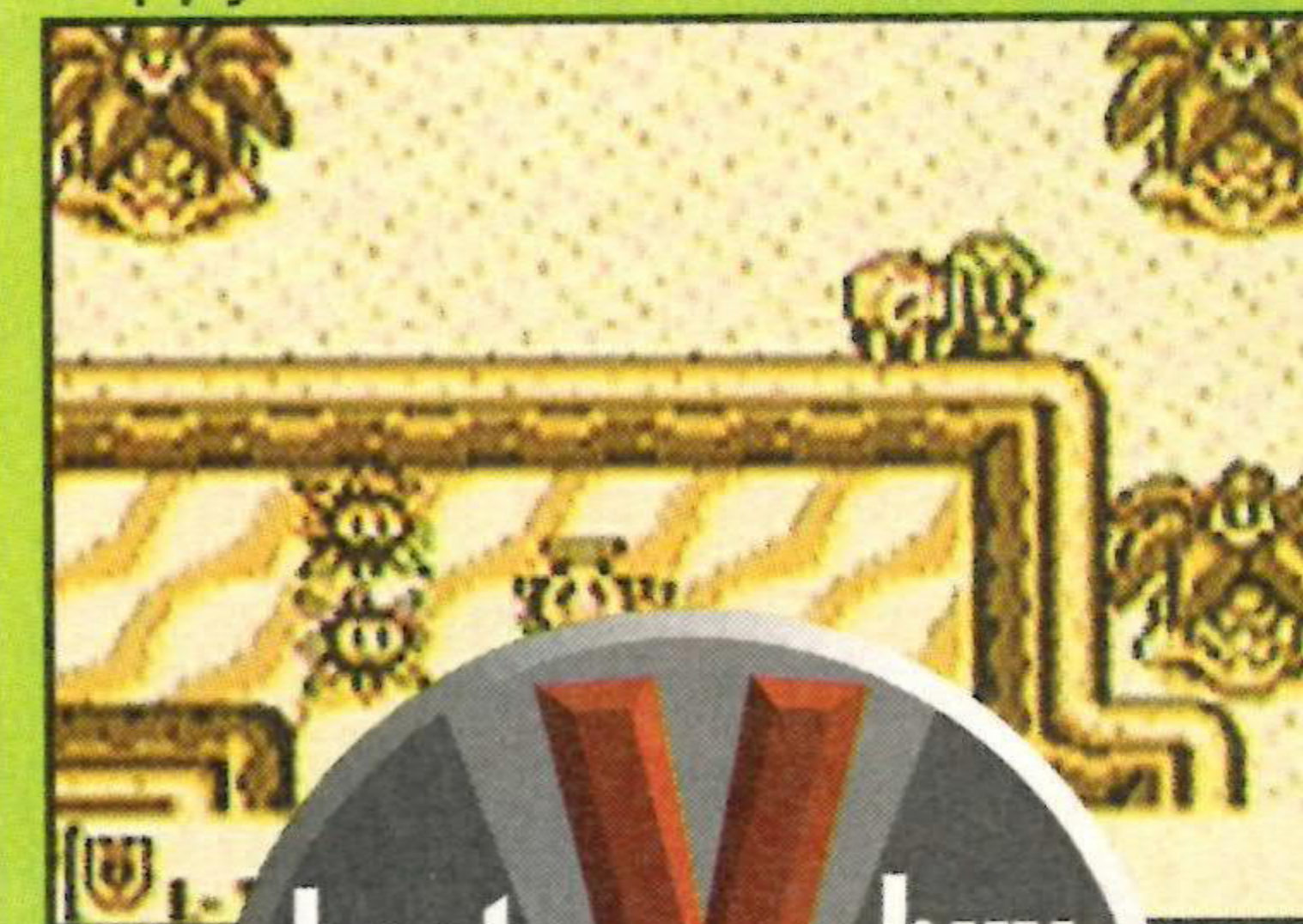
93%

the legend of ZELDA

You might be a bit dubious about graphic adventures on a screen as small as the Game Boy's, but this one's excellent. You control Link, from the earlier *Zelda* games, who this time has been washed up on the unimaginably odd island of Koholint. Link isn't anywhere near happy about this situation, and the



First place to stop off is the library inventory in which to store things to be used later— and with the right equipment you can do almost anything. Other nice touches include being able to enter your own name, which characters will call you



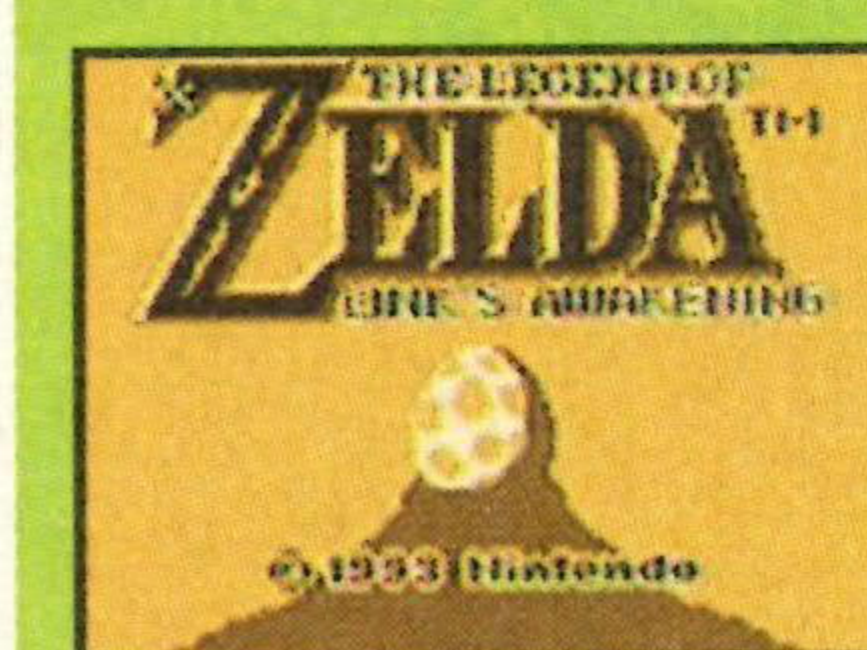
only way for him to get home is (obviously) to find musical instruments hidden in various dungeons around the island. These can be used to wake up the ancient, and extremely weird Wind Fish, who will be extremely helpful – probably.

As in most graphic adventures, you move around the screen having conversations with people, bludgeoning them to death with your shield or slashing them viciously with a sharp object. *Link's Awakening* is a bit more humorous

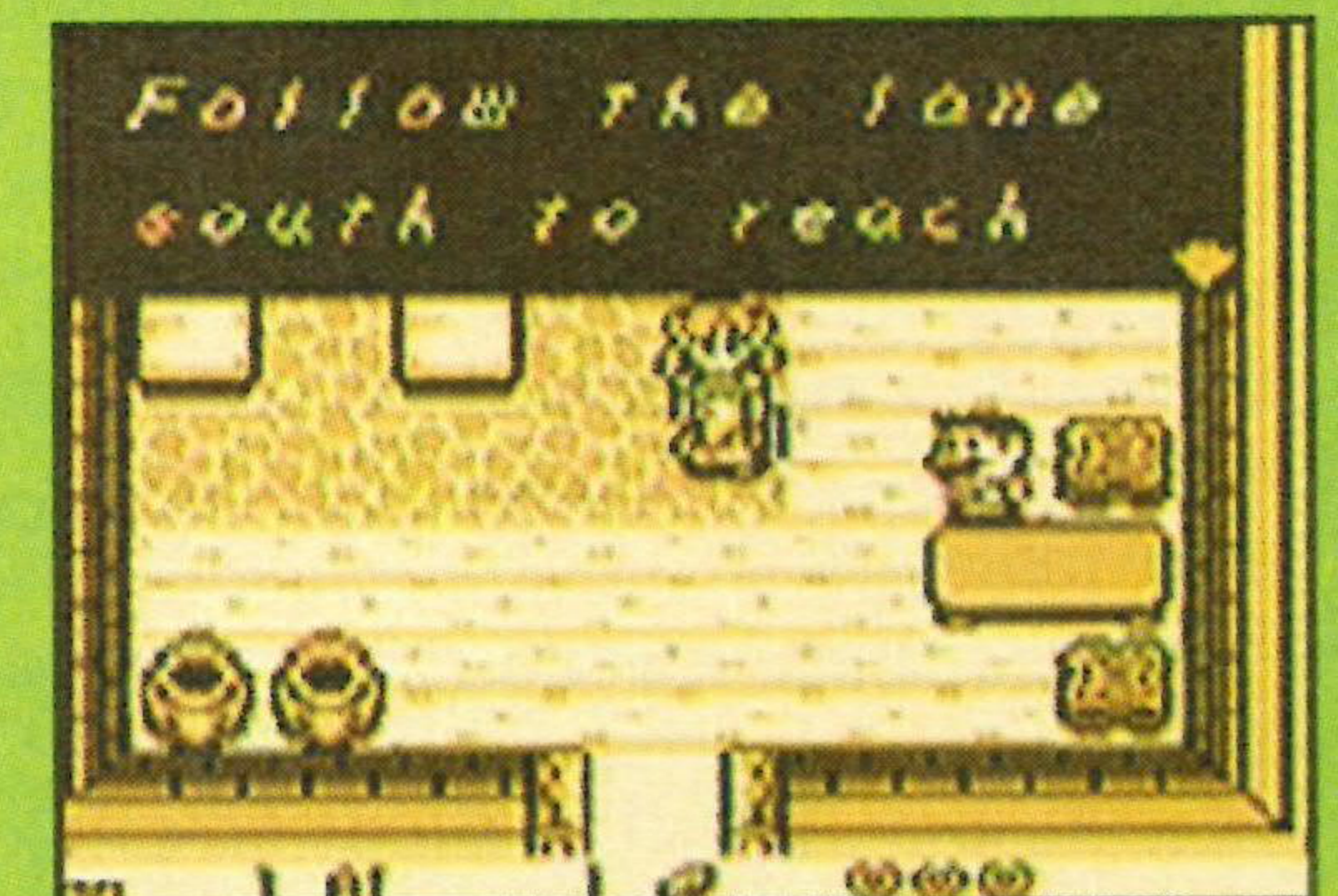


Some folks just blurt out info for reasons they don't even know!

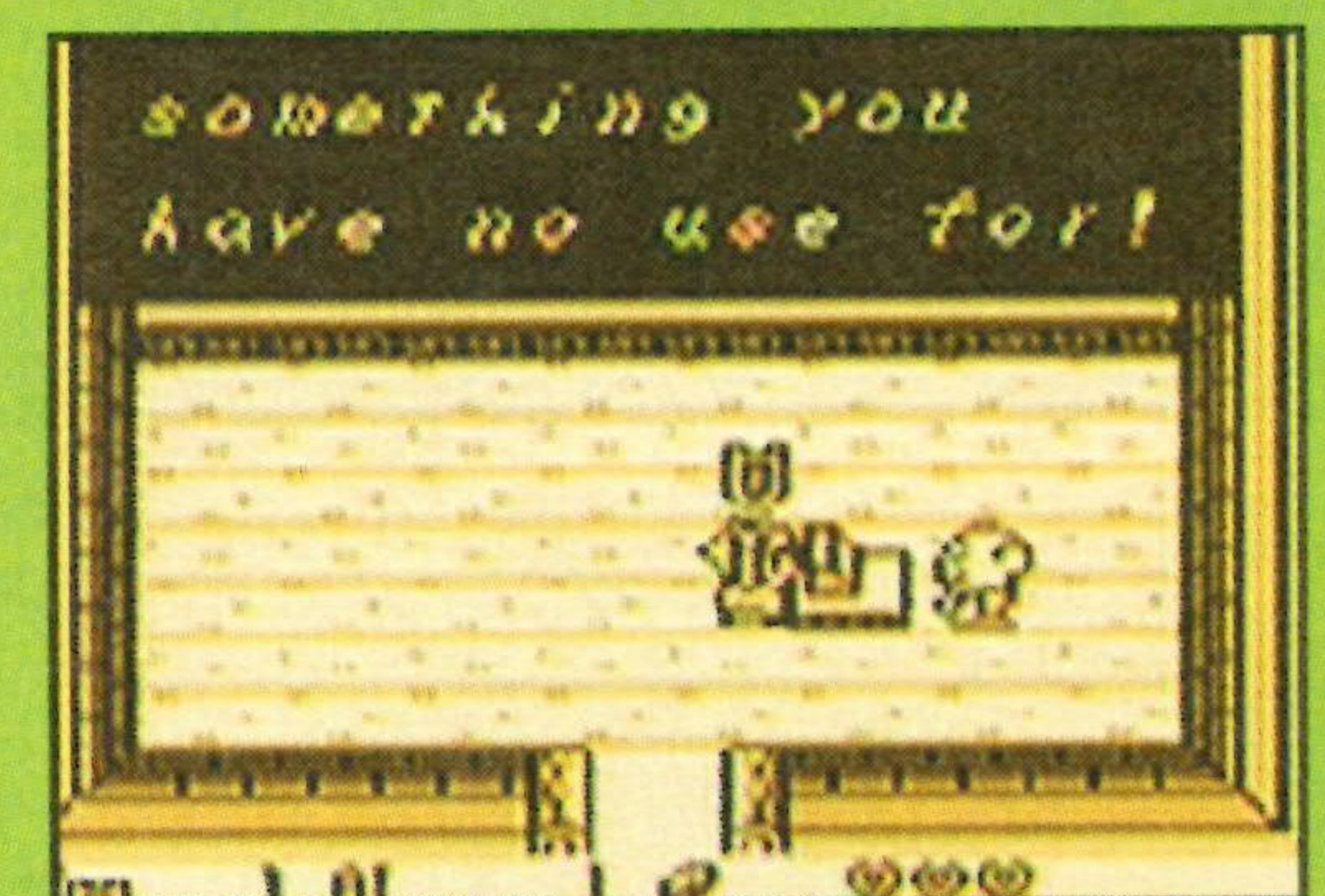
than the usual stodgy adventure fare, however. One character tells you: "If you want to save, just hold down all the buttons; don't ask me why – I'm just a kid". Later you meet a fluffy pet mutt who likes dressing up in women's clothes and complains about not having enough accessories.



There are loads of things to find as the game progresses. Link has a large



As soon as you start the game, some wise old chap is keen to help you.



throughout, and a battery-backed save facility so that you can instantly go back to where you left off.

Link's Awakening is a brilliant game, and its simple style and compulsive nature make it an ideal conversion for the Game Boy.

Tip: Something extremely odd happens if you keep attacking the chickens.



GAME BOY
Producer: NINTENDO
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

92%

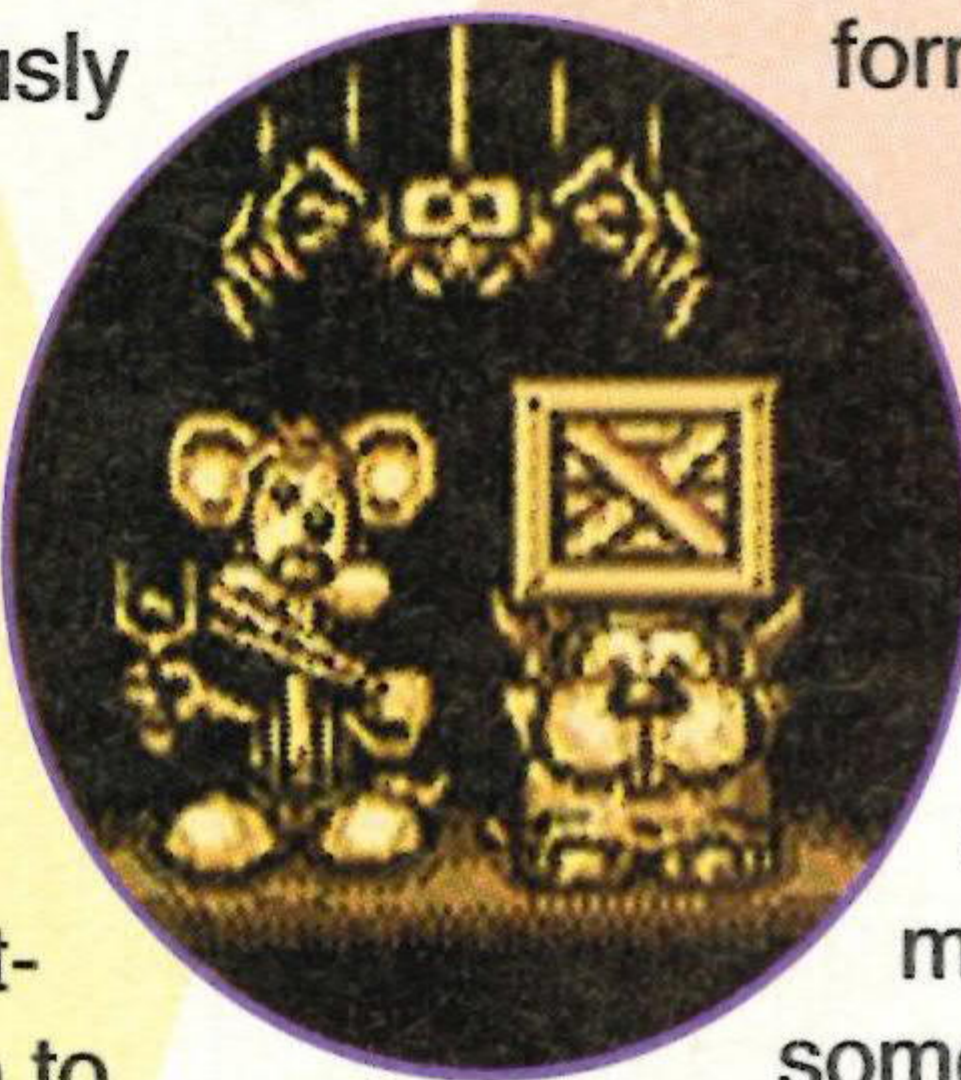
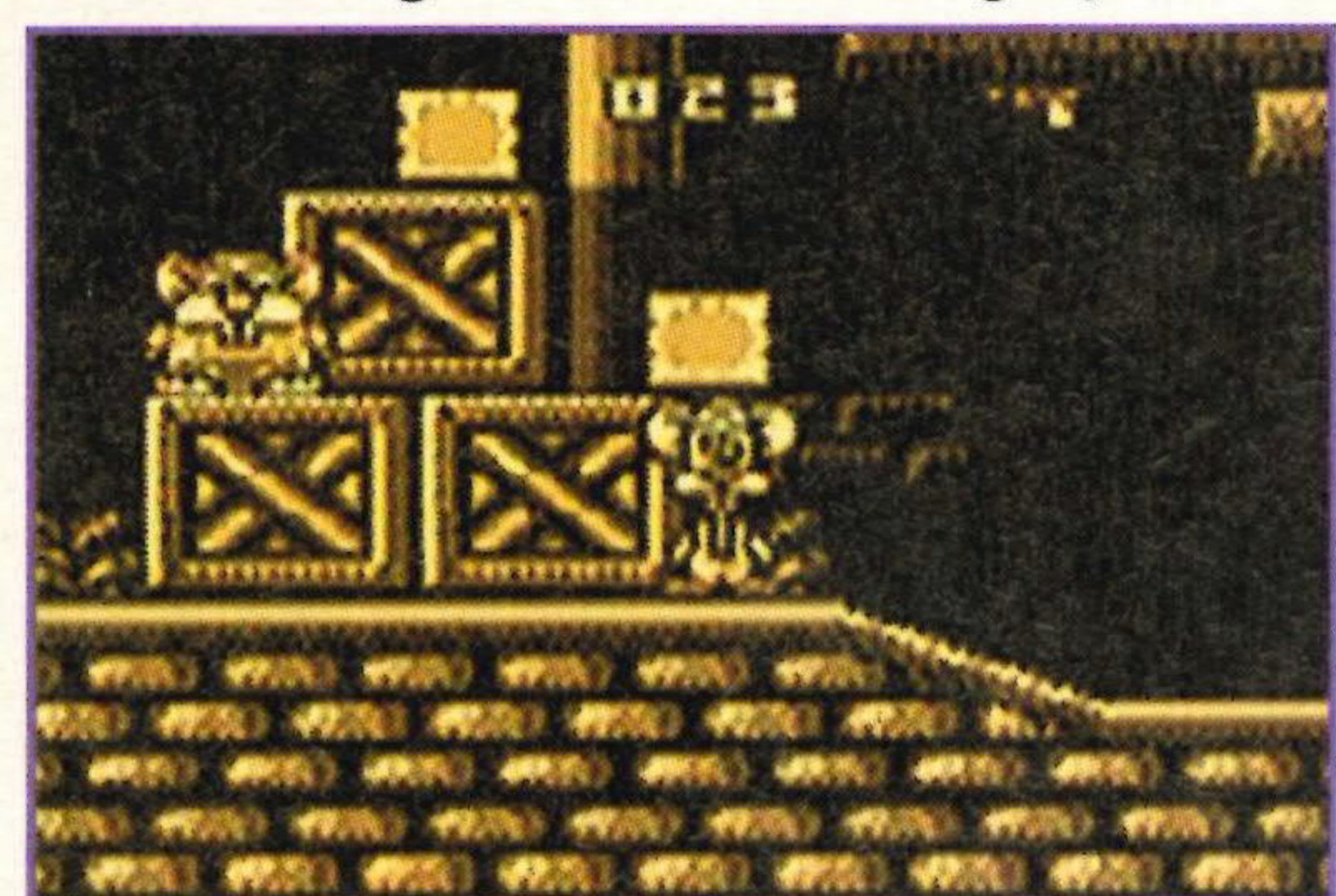
LINK'S AWAKENING



the FIDGETTS

The Fidgetts are two dubiously related mice who have to make their way through the docks in order to join their parents on board a ship and emigrate somewhere.

The Fidgetts is a hybrid platform/puzzle game. The platform parts are complicated by the fact that you have to guide two different characters through them. Freddie mouse is a squat fellow who is too short and obese to jump onto high platforms or over chasms, so his brother Frankie has to keep finding boxes for him to climb onto. Freddie isn't completely useless, however, and is strong enough to throw his brother into the air enabling him to reach high plat-



forms. Generally, *The Fidgetts* is a pretty good platformer, with some interesting and occasionally very challenging puzzles.

However, the platform sections put a little too much emphasis on the sometimes ludicrously low time limits. If you are annoyed by time-limit games, then you will take a gun to yourself before you get off the first level.



GAME BOY
Producer: ELITE
Price: £24.99
Available: DECEMBER

76%



My first thoughts were, it's ace! And no matter how much I play it, I still think *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* is the most original and exciting race game ever.

The first thing you notice is its seriously pulsating



Orange JAMS into first place! You start on this fairly simple course, but soon have to negotiate chicanes and jumps soundtrack. It starts off with a rendition of Born To Be Bad by George Thorogood and the Destroyers – really excellent! Also present as race backing are Black Sabbath, Duane Eddie and Steppenwolf's Born To Be Wild, as heard Easy Rider. It's the best music ever produced on the SNES.

Luckily, the music isn't the only striking thing about *R 'n' R*. You get a choice of four alien drivers to play. There's the Batman-ish Cyberhawk, the pointy-eared Tarquinn and some bloke who looks like Brad Willis from Neighbours. All of the drivers excel

Rock 'n' Roll RACING

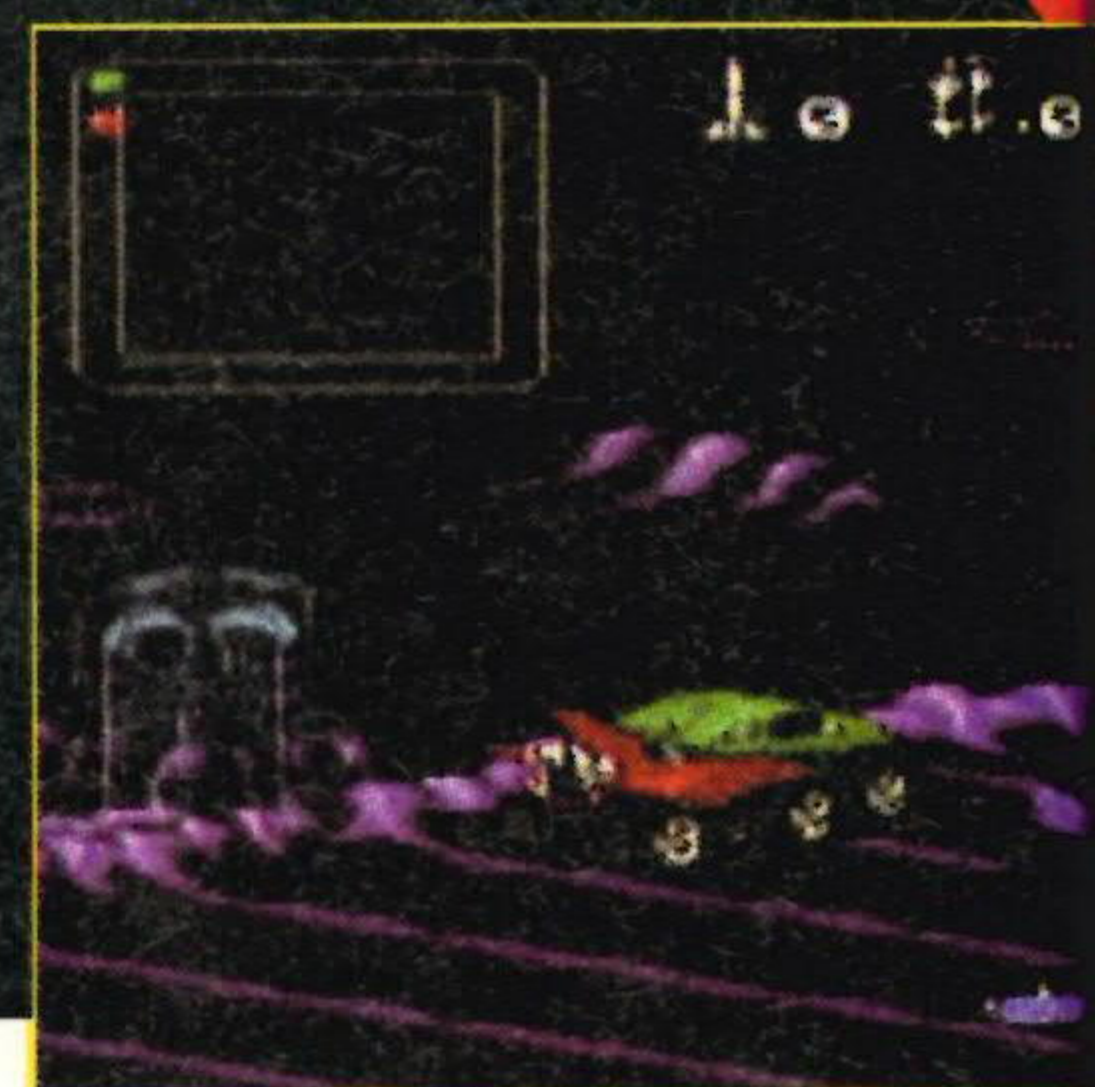
in a different area. For example, mohican-haired Jake Badlands gets +1 acceleration and cornering.

Next you get to choose your car. You can either have a fast blade-like machine which excels in speed, the meaty-looking customised Mustang, or the robust balloon-tyred VW which is also good at jumps. You can even decide what colour it's going to be painted.

The race itself starts with the voice-over commentator shouting, "Let the carnage begin!" He continues to offer oddball commentary throughout the race. Other comments include, "Snake jams into first place" and "Kat looks lost out there!"

It takes a while to get

After completing the first set of tracks you are transported by high-speed space shuttle to an alien world



SUPER VGA HARRIER

The original *AV8B Harrier Assault* received tons of adulation when it originally came out, but since then we've been treated to the latest instalment from Microsoft. Flight sims that aren't called *Flight Simulator* and don't come from Microsoft are purely released to exploit the thousands of people who can't wait till the next version



comes out from Microsoft. That said, there are always some neat models released in the interim, of which *AV8B* was certainly one. By chucking the old *Super VGA* prefix on it, I do feel as though Domark are milking it a bit. However, *Super VGA* does have one plus point over most other flight sims; you're not just flying planes, you're also planning attacks. It's sort of like *Player Manager*, but with expensive planes instead of expensive footballers. In fact, the whole thing's technically rather clever.

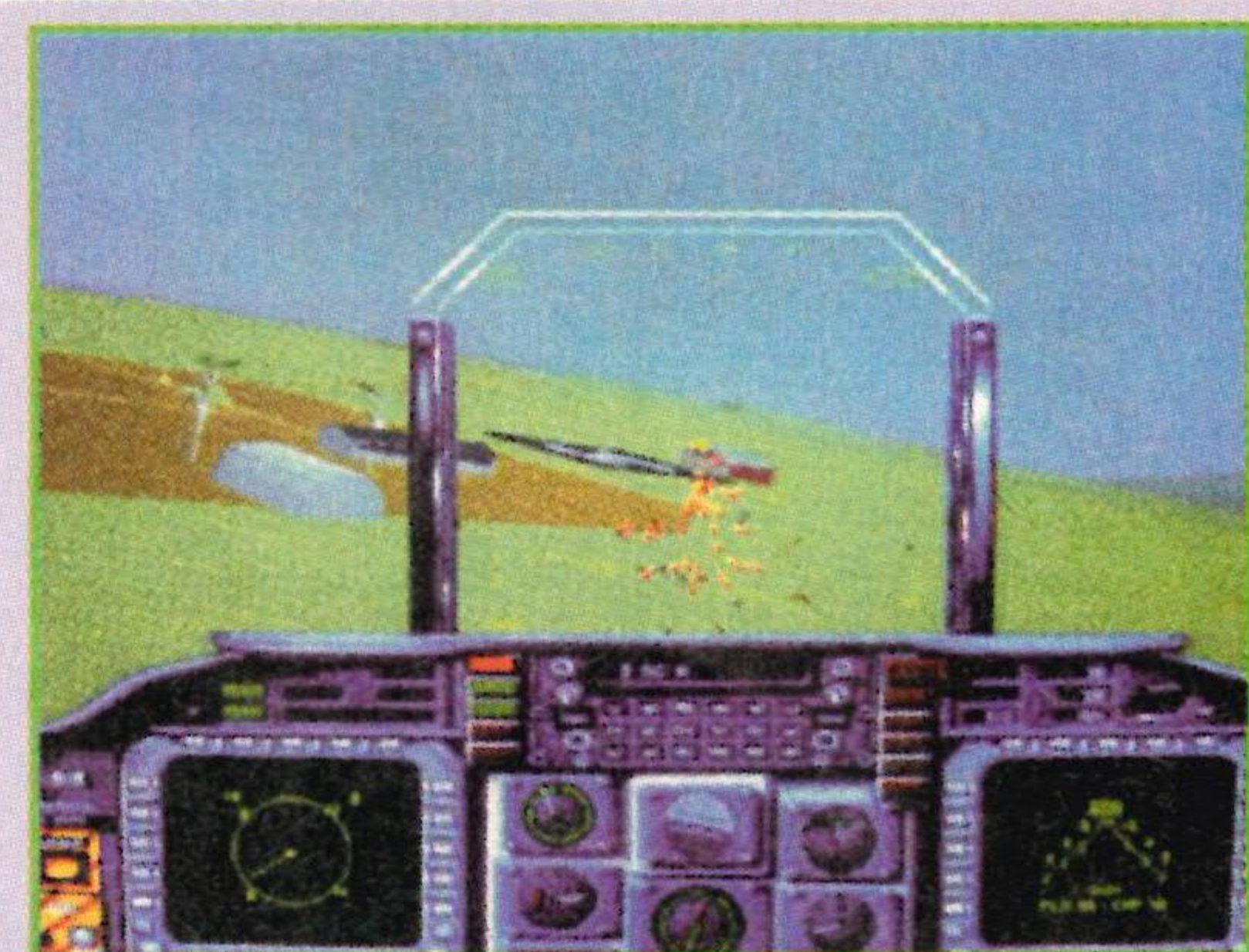
After accepting a mission, you can

tool up your various fighters and then send them off to do the dirty work. Then you just sit back and let them wreak havoc upon some small South American island. Alternatively, you can let them do all the boring flying, and just take the controls of the fighters when they get near to their targets. Or, perhaps, you love the thrill of zooming off the carrier, upping the undercarriage and jetting off by yourself: well, you can do that too, and if you want other planes to come along with you, you just tell 'em to – after all, you're the commander.

While the basic engine of the game is pretty much like any other PC sim, what makes this a bit more of a joy to

Splat those bogies out of the sky with high speed, high-res action from Domark

play is the hi-res graphics. This is particularly brilliant for a flight sim because it means you can identify things like farms, tanks, etc from



See objects from far away in VGA hi-res much further away. Watching your whole fleet sail into enemy territory is especially gratifying in super VGA mode.

But then, *Flight Sim 5* also has astonishing graphics, and a lot more detailed, varying and realistic than you'll find here. So if you reckon this is worth getting on the enhanced display mode alone, you're wrong. However managerial types will take much enjoyment from the immense, although highly complicated, mission making.

IBM PC
Producer: DOMARK
Price: £34.99
Available: NOW

80%

n' Roll ING

best
buy
GS



used to the controls, but if you've played this kind of race game before, you should pick it up fairly easily.

In *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* the object's not just to get around the track first, you should also try to cause as much damage as you possibly can to everyone else in the race. To help you achieve this, your car is equipped with laser guns which blast out of the front of the vehicle. You can also drop land-mines as you go along which explode when another vehicle drives over them, causing the



occupant to turn into a pulverised bag of chopped liver. There are also power-ups on your way around including money and medical supplies. You also get prize money if you win a race, and points towards rising to the next level. The more money you have, the more you can improve your car by adding bigger lasers, a more powerful engine, more armour or loads of other smart things. When you get enough points, you are transported to another planet where you face new competitors on a new track.



No other race game on the SNES has the thumping sound, gripping gameplay, or multi-player longevity of *Rock 'n' Roll Racing*. Top of my SNES shopping list this Christmas.

SUPER NES
Producer: INTERPLAY
Price: £24.95
Available: DECEMBER

97%

Domark have been a long time working on this conversion of the classic Mega Drive shooter – and it has certainly paid off.

The Madman is dictator of a certain Middle Eastern country, which, for sake of argument, we'll call Iraq. He has hatched a plot to nuke the West with a load of ICBMs and poison gas (some people have no manners). It's your job to terminate him "with extreme prejudice", while trashing as much of his country as possi-



ble in the meantime (well, what else does he expect?).

You are given a Commanche helicopter with piles of guns and missiles. There are four levels of action with several missions to complete on each one before progression to the next. These have to be performed in sequence. For example, level one requires you to destroy the radar stations, shoot up the power station, blast the air-fields into smoking rubble,

then rescue the co-pilot and the enemy agent whilst nailing the annoyed enemy tanks who are after you.

The graphics are good, and even though the sound is a bit embarrassing this doesn't affect gameplay adversely. The only other down point with *MS Desert Strike* is that it's often difficult to see if you're hitting the thing you're firing at if you switch to guns, but this you get used to after a while.

Desert Strike has been successful on every format it has appeared on, and this Master System conversion is no exception. Game Gear owners have exactly the same version, although the targets are a bit tougher to see on the smaller screen.

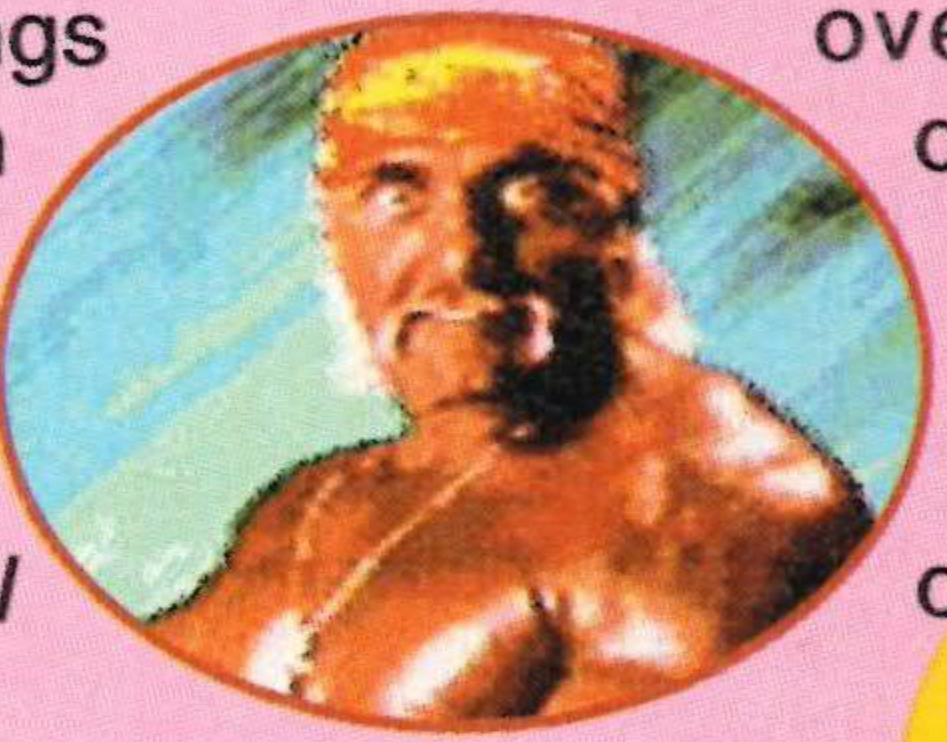
MASTER SYSTEM
Producer: DOMARK
Price: £29.99
Available: DECEMBER

89%

DESERT STRIKE

ROYAL

If you like WWF wrestling then you're probably the sort of person who laughs at *You've Been Framed* and exercises with one of those plastic abdomeniser things that you can only get from Innovations. That's why I was a bit worried when someone sent me a copy of *WWF Royal Rumble* last week. I was about to sue for defamation of character, but decided to plug the game into the Mega Drive first. Surprisingly, it's quite good.



Slimy, smiling git!

You can choose from 12 different well-known (so I've been told) WWF wrestlers, including that big sweaty suntanned bloke with the long moustache and the disastrously highlighted receding hairline. The one who appears, rather disturbingly, on a lot of children's programmes.

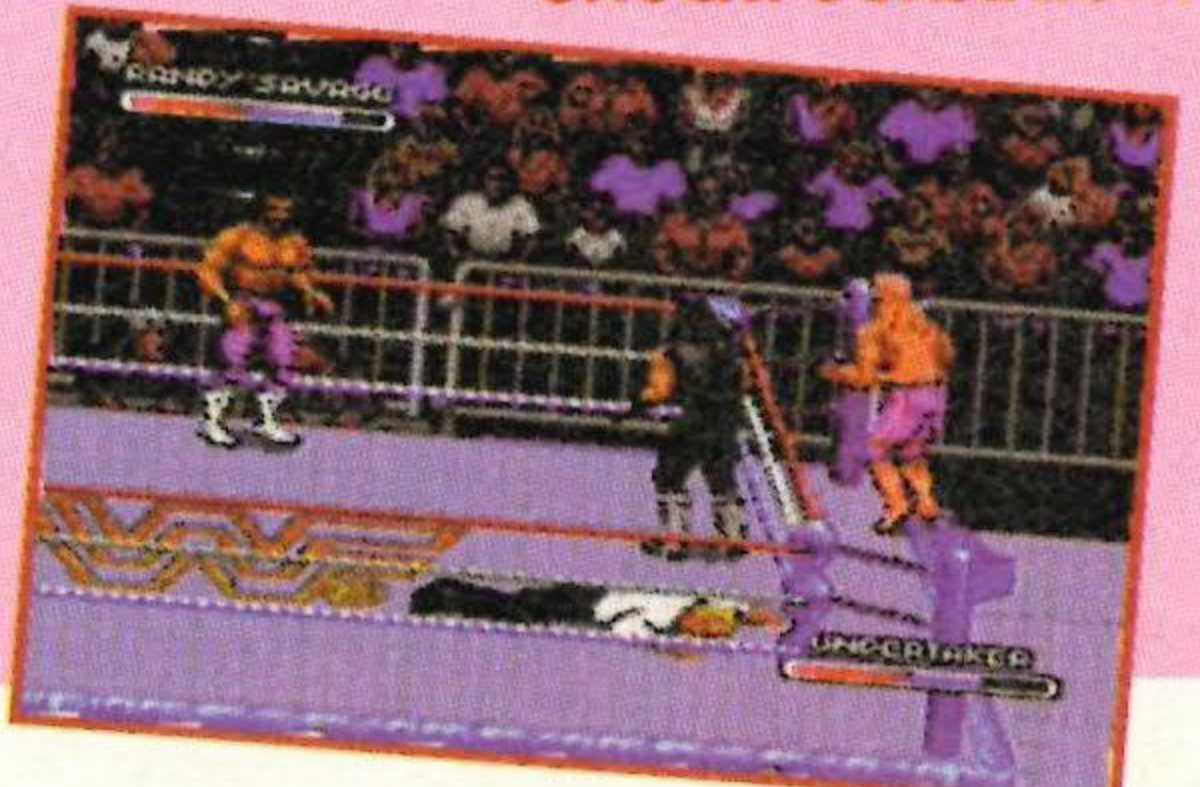
You can decide whether to put your bloke into a one-on-one bout or opt for a tag-team fight. If that's not enough you can go for a triple tag-team, which means two of the

blokes in each team stand outside the ropes until one of them gets tagged by the fellow who's in there fighting. Then they climb in and take over. If someone from the opposing team strays too close to the ropes, one of the chaps outside can grab hold of him while the other one puts the boot in. None of this is very sporting, but you know what these colonials are like.

The characters can kick, punch and grapple. The grapple is won by the player who can press buttons on their joypad fast enough. It also helps if your character's energy level is high.

Energy is indicated, as in most beat-'em-ups, by a coloured bar in the top corner of the screen. Low

Oh no, the ref's on the deck, and the fighters are going ape. Shock! Sensation!

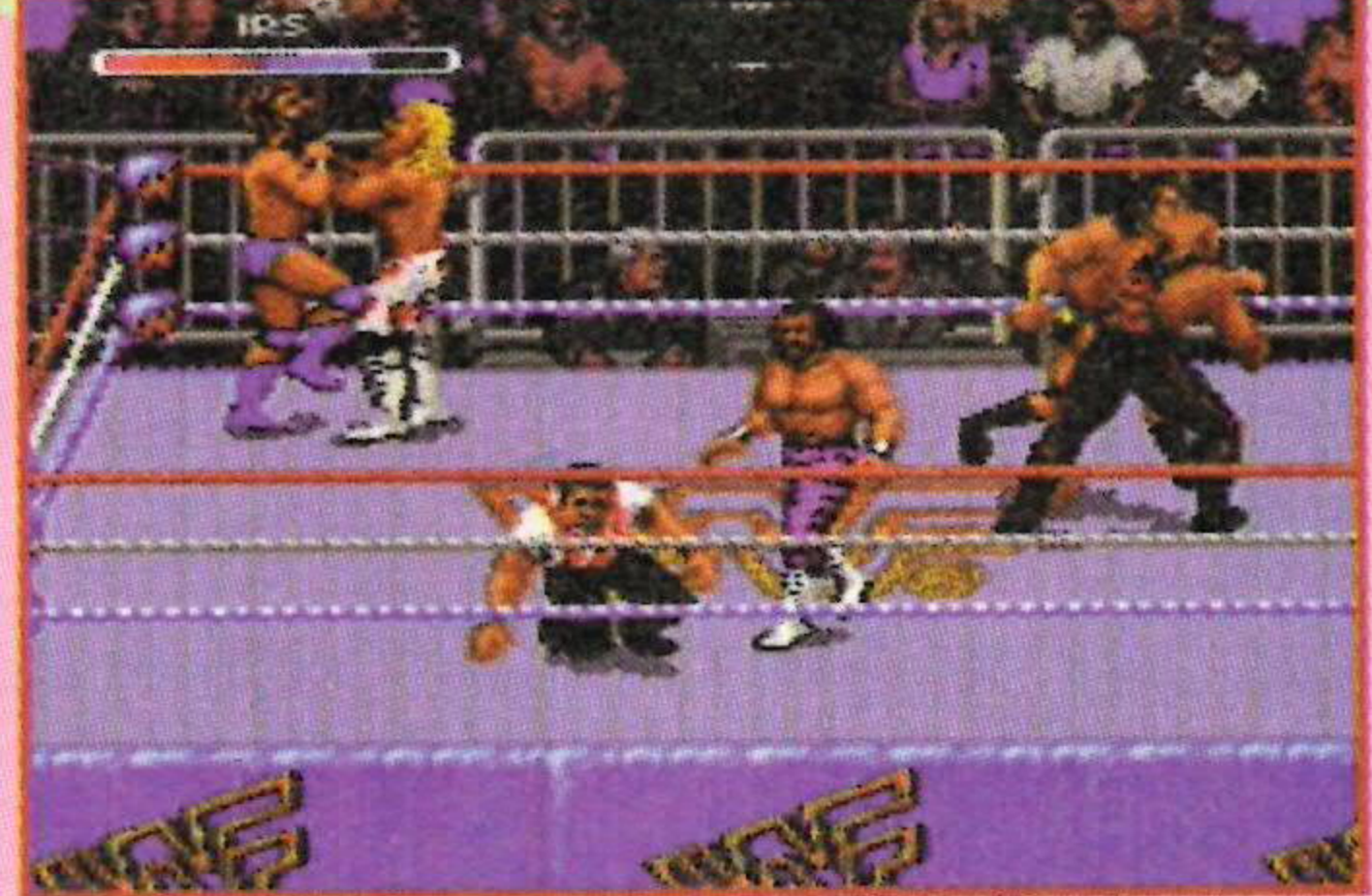


energy means your character moves slower and is unlikely to win grappling matches. Characters with low energy can also become dazed, which means they can't move for a few seconds.

Other things you can do to people include body slamming, kicking their heads in when they're on the deck, jumping off the corners of the ring to land on top of someone, and throwing people out of the ring. If you do this, you can climb out yourself and carry on fighting. Each wrestler also has a special move which is usually a weird throw.

The best part of *WWF* is the Royal Rumble itself. You choose a character, and go into the ring with five others for a huge brawl. New characters constantly come into the ring and the whole thing is chaos.

The trouble with *WWF* is that there's only one background, also the special moves aren't very special and there's only one per charac-



Take the fight one step further by choosing the Royal Rumble option. Up to six fighters can be in the ring at once. Shock! Sensation!

ter. Because nobody gets killed (or even gets their lipstick smudged, usually) in the real WWF, it means that the game kind of loses its thread after a while because nobody ever hits the canvas permanently. Because of this, and the fact that

gameplay's a bit slow, you soon find yourself getting bored enough to pick up the TV Times to find out when *You've Been Framed* starts.

Fun, satisfying, but short-lived.

MEGA DRIVE
Producer: FLYING EDGE
Price: £24.95
Available: DECEMBER

85%

RUMBLE

best
buy
GS



COSMIC

SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF those bands that nobody bothers to watch at Glastonbury, doesn't it? Well, in fact, it's the most spaced-out puzzle/platform/graphic adventure hybrid ever conceived in the warped minds of those blokes at Codemasters.

Cosmic Spacehead, having discovered Earth, now finds himself back on his home planet. The problem is that nobody believes his exploration stories, thinking he is some kind of sick nutter. Therefore Cosmic resolves to find his way back to Earth with a camera so that he can take loads of photos to prove it exists. Unfortunately he has no cash, no mates and no transport. Oh dear...

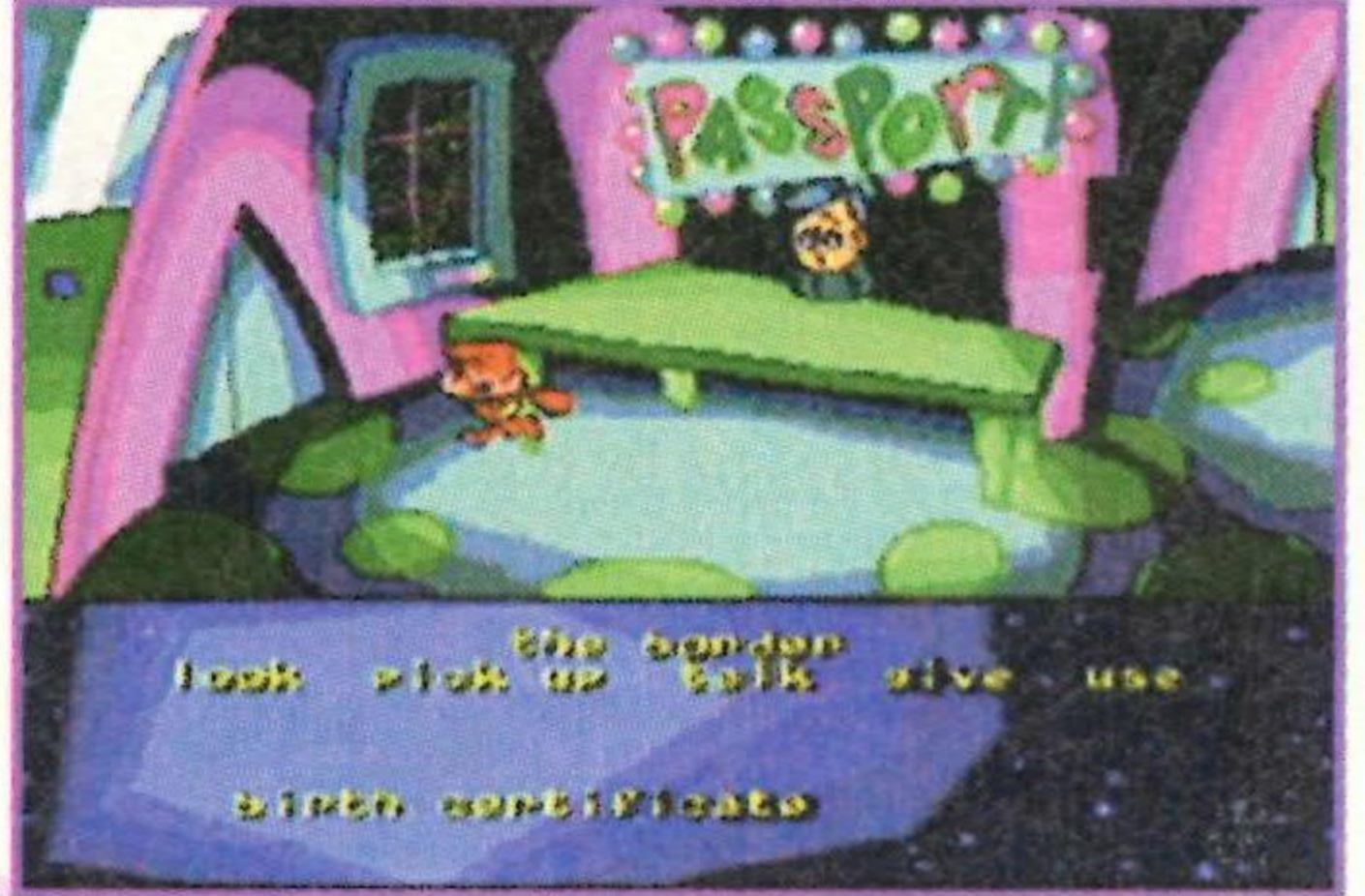


Stop off in the post office first for some crucial information and to write to your mates

Your job is to guide Cosmic around his planet visiting such groovy locations as Old Lino Town, Formica City, Linograd and Planet Detoitica in his search for various bits and pieces which will help in his quest.

Cosmic Spacehead has psychedelic, surreal graphics and one of the most psycho soundtracks ever heard on the Mega Drive. There are two types of level, the first kind require communication with other cosmic individuals, exploration of buildings and problem solving. The second type are arcade sections which require you to jump over strange beasts in a vaguely *Sonic*-ish landscape and collect sweets to increase your number of lives.

The adventure sections are very well



Before you go anywhere in *Cosmic*, it's advisable you get a passport

arranged. You keep finding or being given bizarre items; "you look ridiculous, so you can have this joke book". Most of these items will be useful for passing obstacles on your way to other levels. For example, the helium balloon given to you by the ticket seller in Cape Carnival can be given to a huge monster who blocks your way later in the game so that he floats away. You make money by gambling on slot machines or taking part in a car race. You can even correspond with your relative in Linograd via the post office. A lot of these objects work in a surreal way, so careful thinking is often required.

On these levels, you control what's happening by using a menu with commands like use, look at, pick up, give, etc. A little moveable arrow helps choose and construct commands like, "use" on "dragon". The controls take a bit of getting used to, especially working out how to scroll through your inventory, but are no problem once you have got the hang of things.

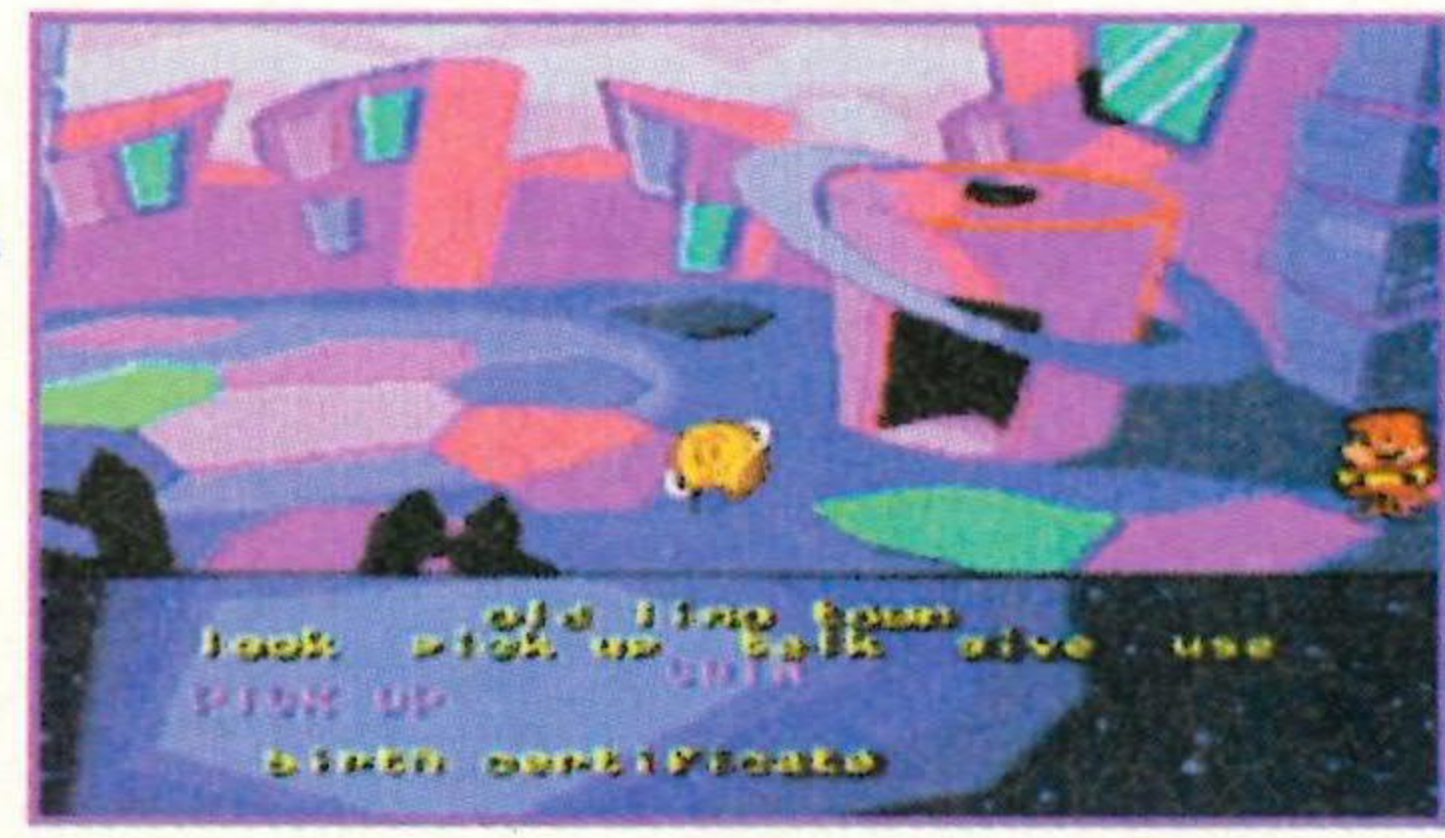
When you leave an adventure level by walking off either side or the front of the screen, you find yourself in one of the

Platform sections. Most of these are crawling with little egg-shaped jumping critters, walking springs and flying butterflies.

AThe platform sections are a bit easy to start off with, and will seem quite dull to experienced platform-heads because they don't vary much and are pretty straightforward and unsurprising. A few of the jumps you make also have a kind of leap-and-pray feel about them. You can't always see where you're landing, and sometimes a monster will be cruising into your landing area just as it comes into view.

CSince *Cosmic Spacehead* is a strictly non-violent game, you can't cane any of the monsters by jumping on their heads like you can in most platformers, and there's nothing to zap them with either. This means that the arcade sections are more of an avoid-'em-up than anything else. These sections are vital to gameplay, however, as they break up the adventure locations.

EWhen you have completed one of the platform levels it disappears, and if you take that route again, or back-track on

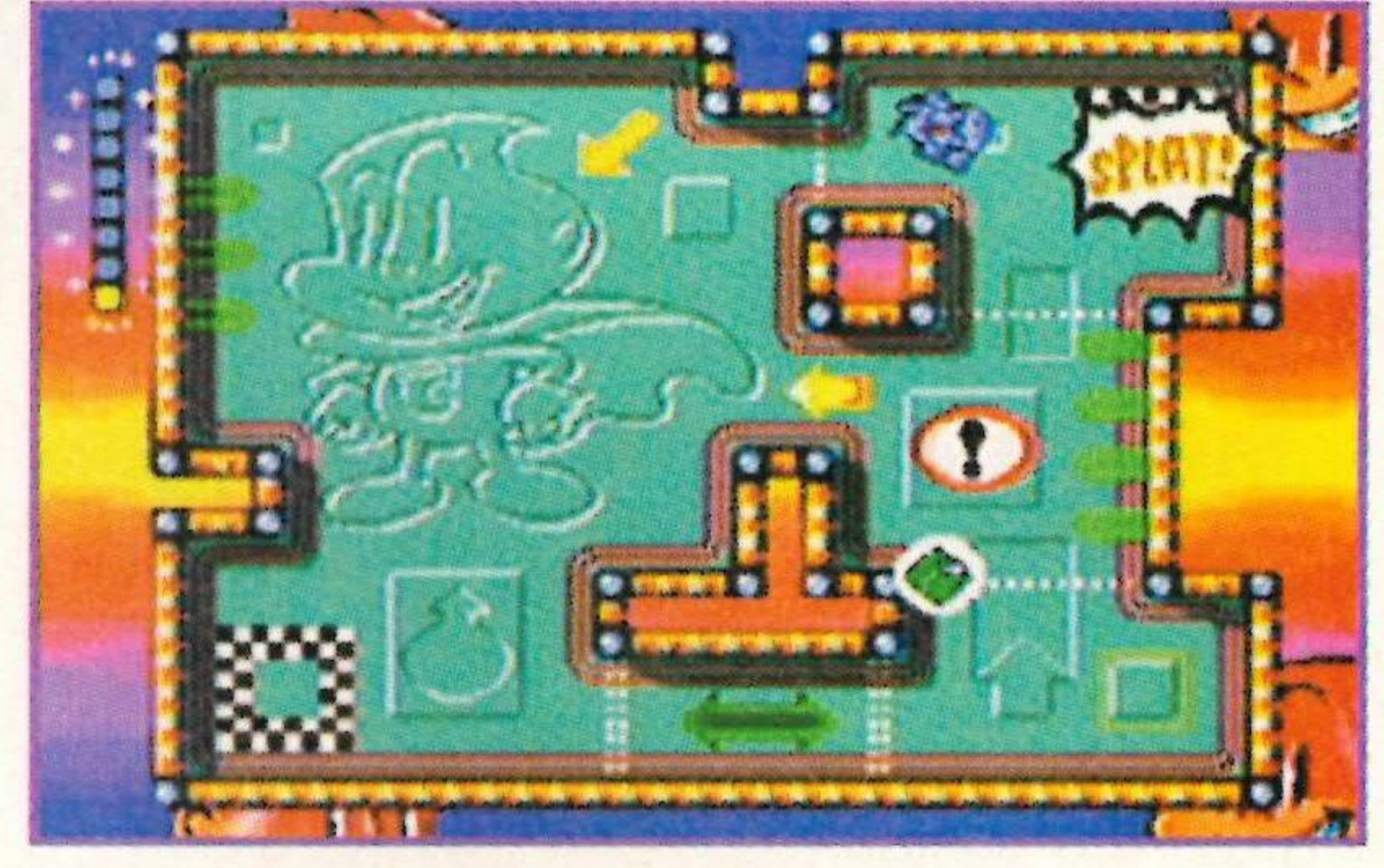


Above you can see the adventuring bit, but walk off the screen to the right and you'll end up in a platform area like the one below



to see a map of the planet instead with the adventure locations marked in.

You do a fair bit of back-tracking because changes occur at various



Just for fun, the nutters at Coders threw in a neat two-player pie-splating game - is there no end to this mayhem!

locations while you are away. You have to go back to Old Linotown to check if any mail has arrived at the post office from your relative in Linograd, for example. This is made easier by the teleport network. You find teleport keys at most locations which enable you to zap yourself there from a teleport booth elsewhere.

With *Cosmic*, Codemasters have stuck to what they know best: cute, wacky environments. Adding the adventuring bits at the expense of immense, challenging arcade sections was an incredible risk, but has certainly paid off. While each bit of the game isn't that original in itself, combining them all together has provided a fresh and enthralling product. I would recom-

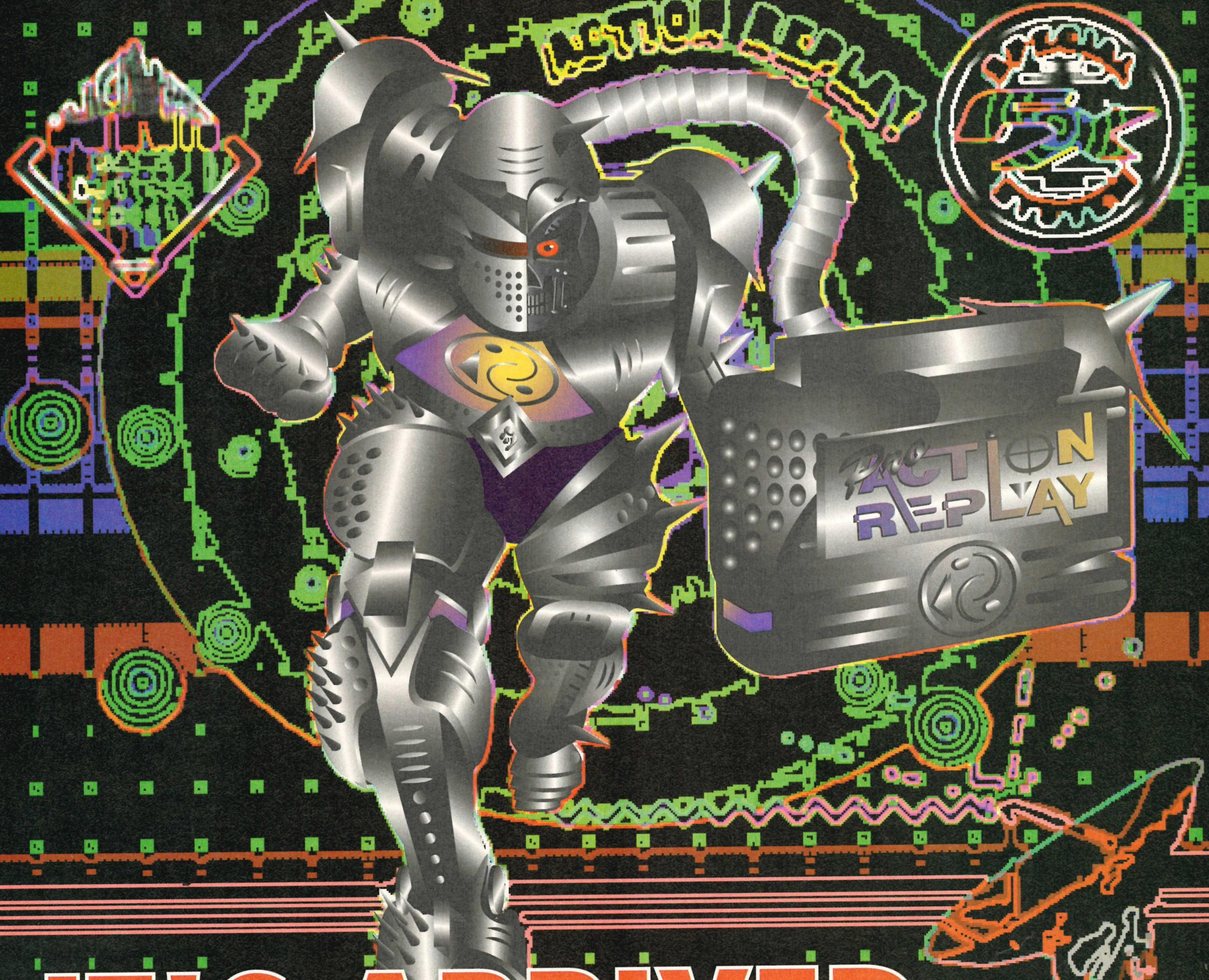
mend this to players of all ages without hesitation. It takes time to get into, but after ten minutes you really are hooked. What a smart game.

MEGA DRIVE
Producer: CODEMASTERS
Price: £39.99
Available: NOW

93%



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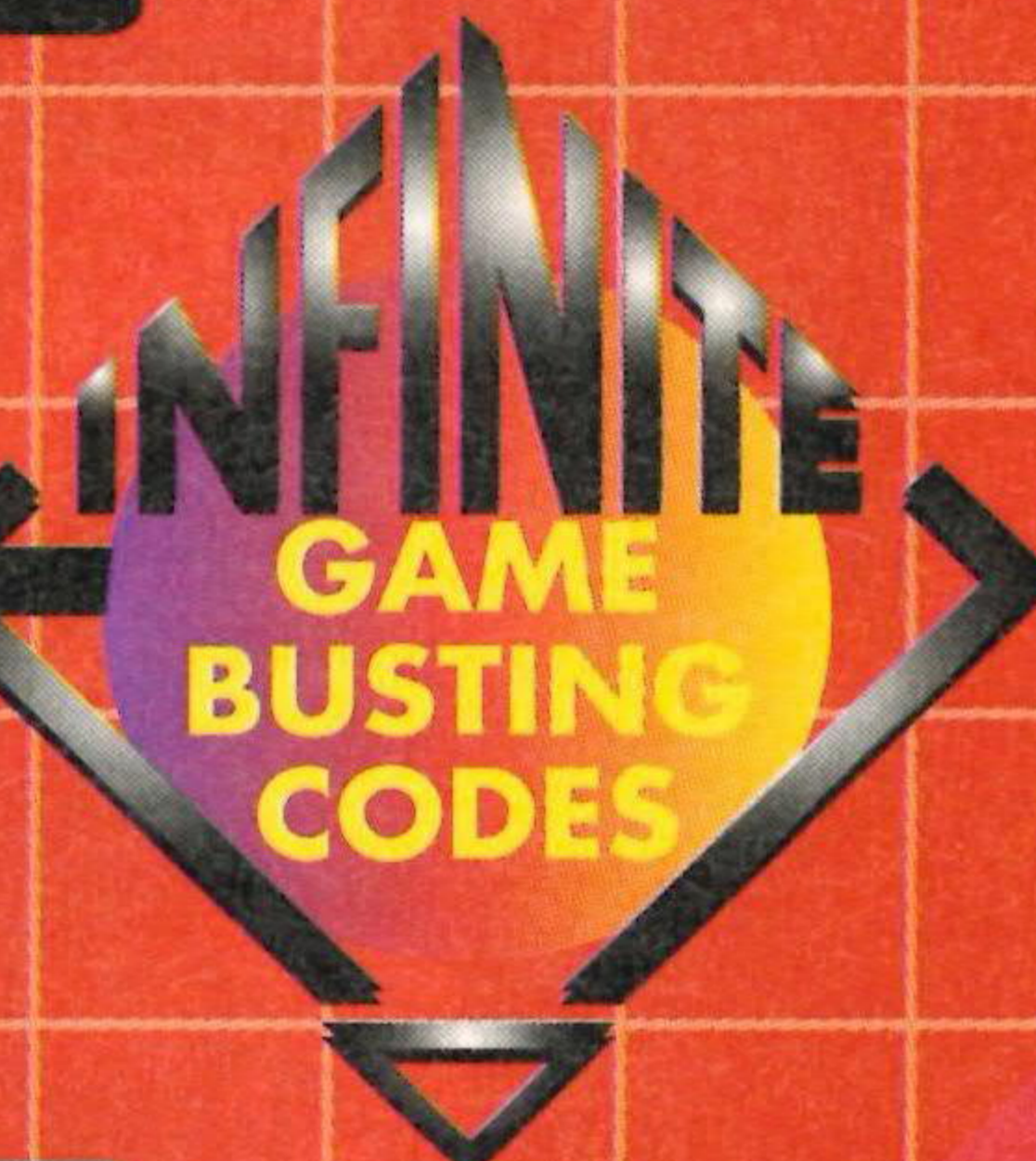
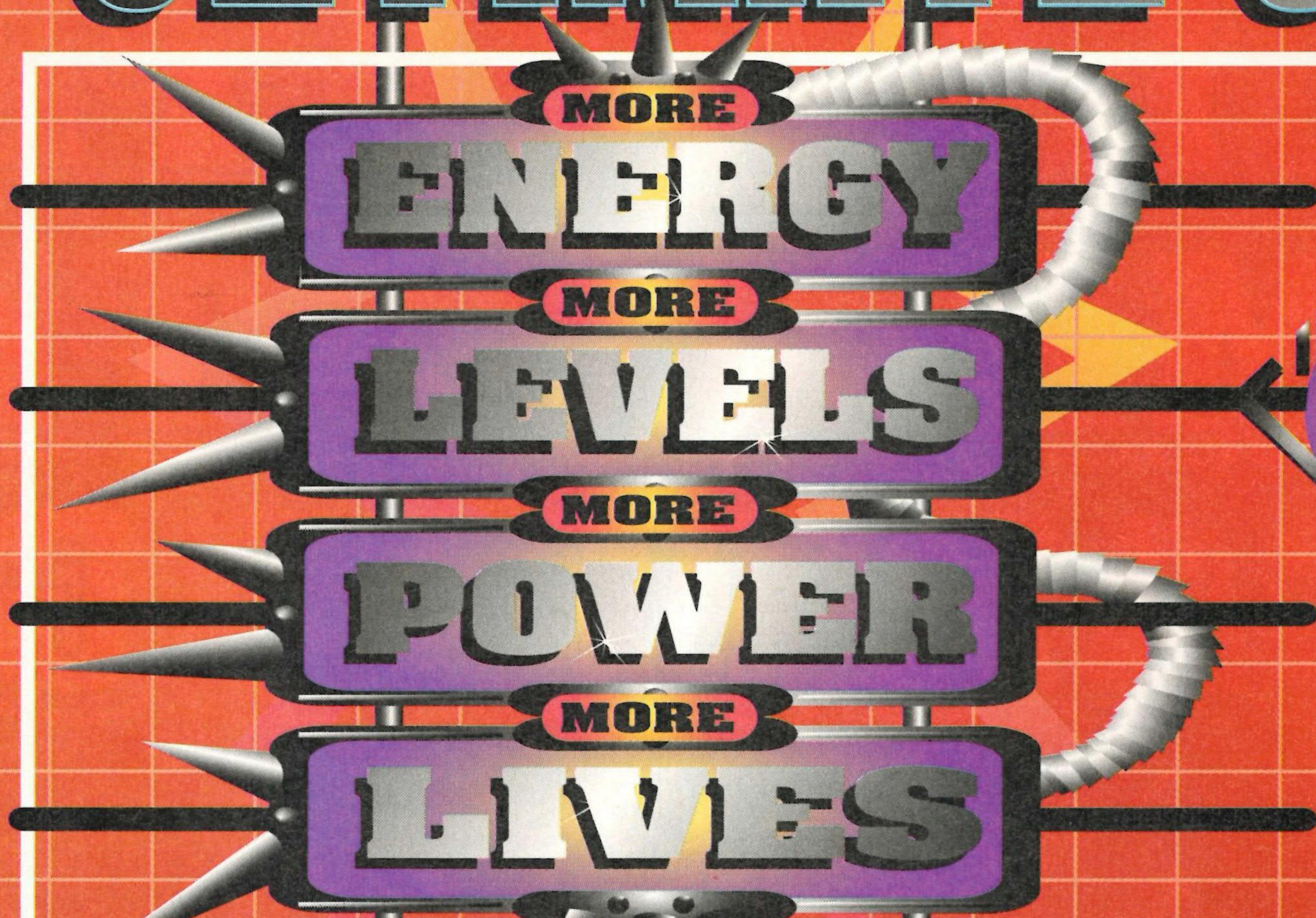
IT'S ARRIVED.....

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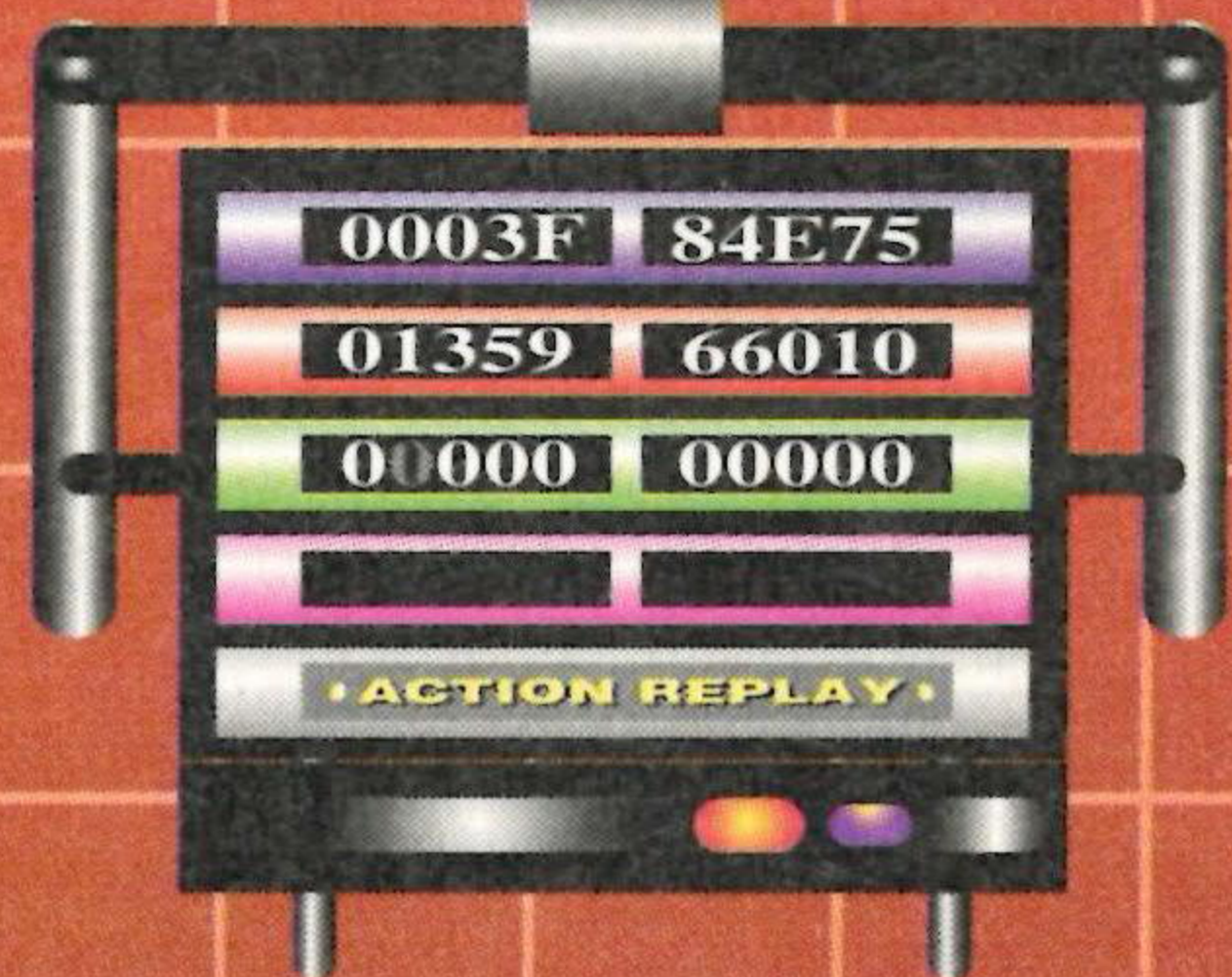
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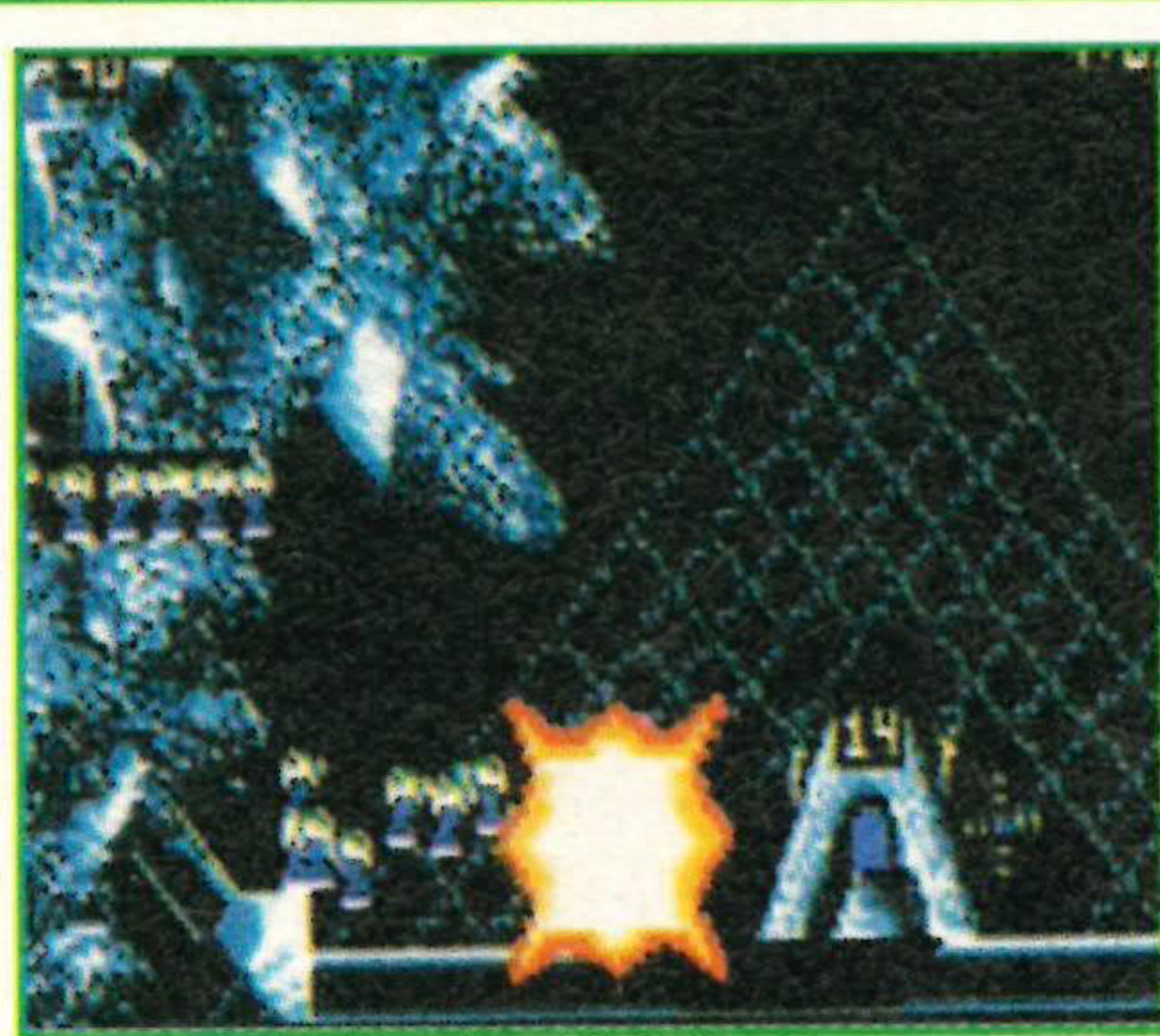
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LEMMINGS

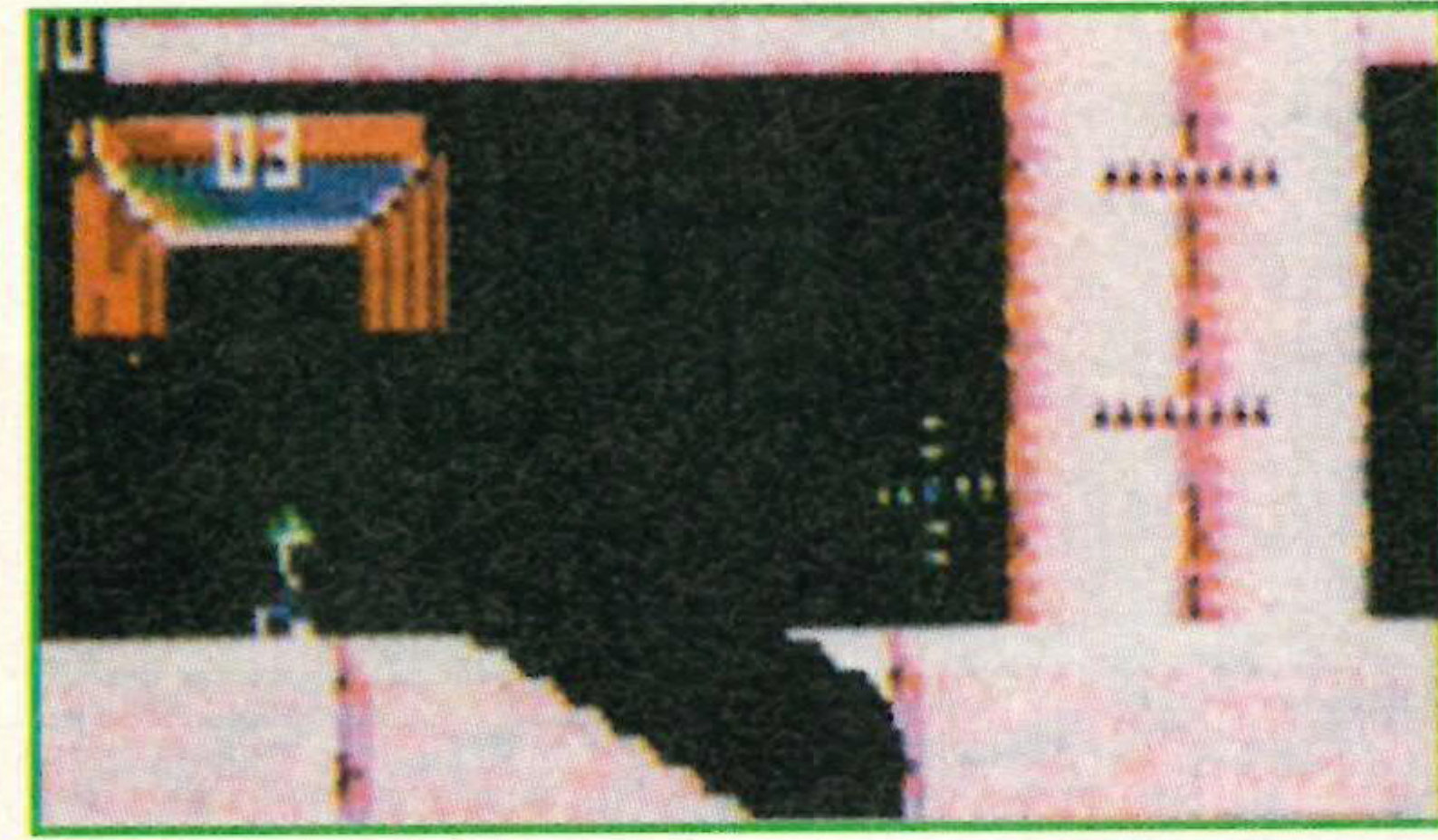
The most addictive and frustrating game ever conceived arrives on the Lynx. Lemmings is excellent, even though it'll drive you completely up the wall. At the beginning of each level a hatch opens at some point over the landscape and little green-haired jokers fall out at intervals and start wandering about. The trouble is that there are hazards like gaping chasms, fire pits and stomping-



Lemmings on the Lynx is the perfect hand-held puzzle game, but it's a bit too late for Atari!

is getting a bit long in the tooth, but it's a classic. It's easily accessible and highly compelling, not to mention very large. All these qualities make it the perfect game to convert to a hand-held machine.

The only criticism I would have is that one or two of the levels are a bit monotonous, but - hey - who cares when there are hundreds that will your mind more than Kenneth Cla



machines which your lemmings will carelessly wander into. As they are incapable of saving themselves, you must do it for them. True, Lemmings

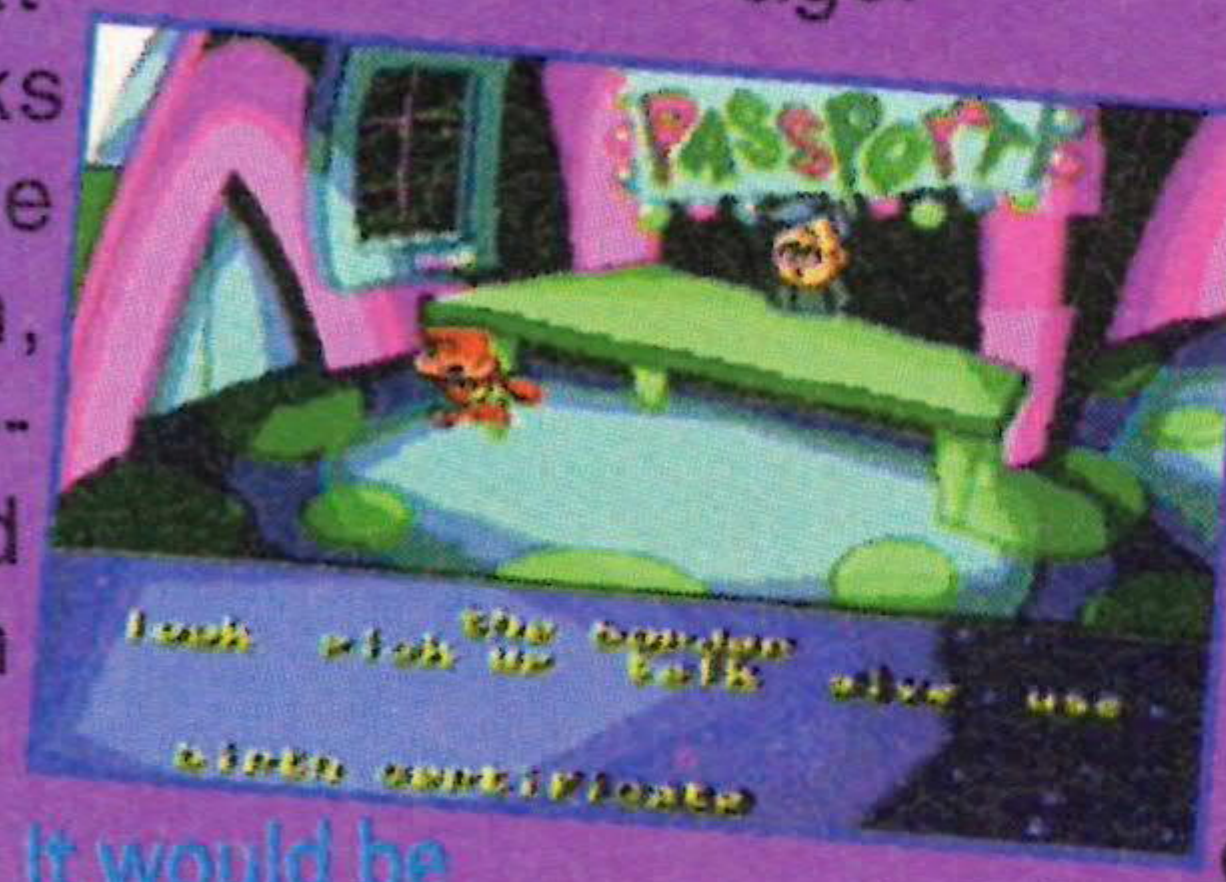
best V buy GS

LYNX
 Producer: ATA
 Price: £29.95
 Available: NOW
94%



cosmic V buy GS

Cosmic Spacehead is one of the best games I have ever seen on the Game Gear. It hardly loses anything to the Mega Drive version and is actually better in some respects. The simplicity of the platform elements works really well on the little Game Gear screen, and the adventure elements' command and inventory system have been marvelously compacted.



on trains, at work or even down the Blue Boar, only don't let Cosmic buy a round - he's under age.

Even the music's been translated pretty well and something about it reminds me of a cross between a 1950s space film and early 1970s psychedelia. In all, this is one smart package for the little Game Gear. Get Cosmic Spacehead - you never know when you might need to find your way back to Earth.

The other thing is, it would be tough to find a better adventure than Cosmic on the Gear. With a game as addictive as Cosmic Spacehead, it's nice to have the portable edition so that you can be pathologically unsociable

GAME GEAR
 Producer: CODEMASTERS
 Price: £29.95
 Available: NOW
97%

mr NUTZ

We've got mice, bobcats, hedgehogs and now... a squirrel! A bushy-tailed squirrel with great big stumpy Converse trainers and a little baseball hat.



his tail out and fizzes the offensive vegetable off the screen. For long-distance attacks our bushy-tailed pal has another ability. He can lob nuts at things, which is good for dealing with scary wasps and spiders.

Ocean have done a good job on this one. With lovely big sprites, mellowed-out sound, convincing gameplay and six reasonably-sized levels, Nutz is decent, wholesome fun - although people searching for originality should venture elsewhere.



The object of Nutz is to stop the world from being turned into a giant brass-monkey sanctuary by a big hairy fellow called the Yeti. He's decided to cover the planet in snow and create an evil empire, as you do. His little helpers include all manner of strange flora and fauna you would not normally expect to have aggressive tendencies. There are walking tomatoes, multi-coloured caterpillars and even little hedgehogs. Mr Nutz has several methods of dealing with these jokers. First off is the lethally cute tail-brush. A scary looking tomato comes up, obviously looking for trouble. Our crunchy friend doesn't bat an eyelid, but whips

SUPER NES
 Producer: OCEAN
 Price: £49.99
 Available: NOW
86%

GP-1 is a high-speed motorcycle racing game. You can compete against the computer or go for a two-player game. There are lots of options



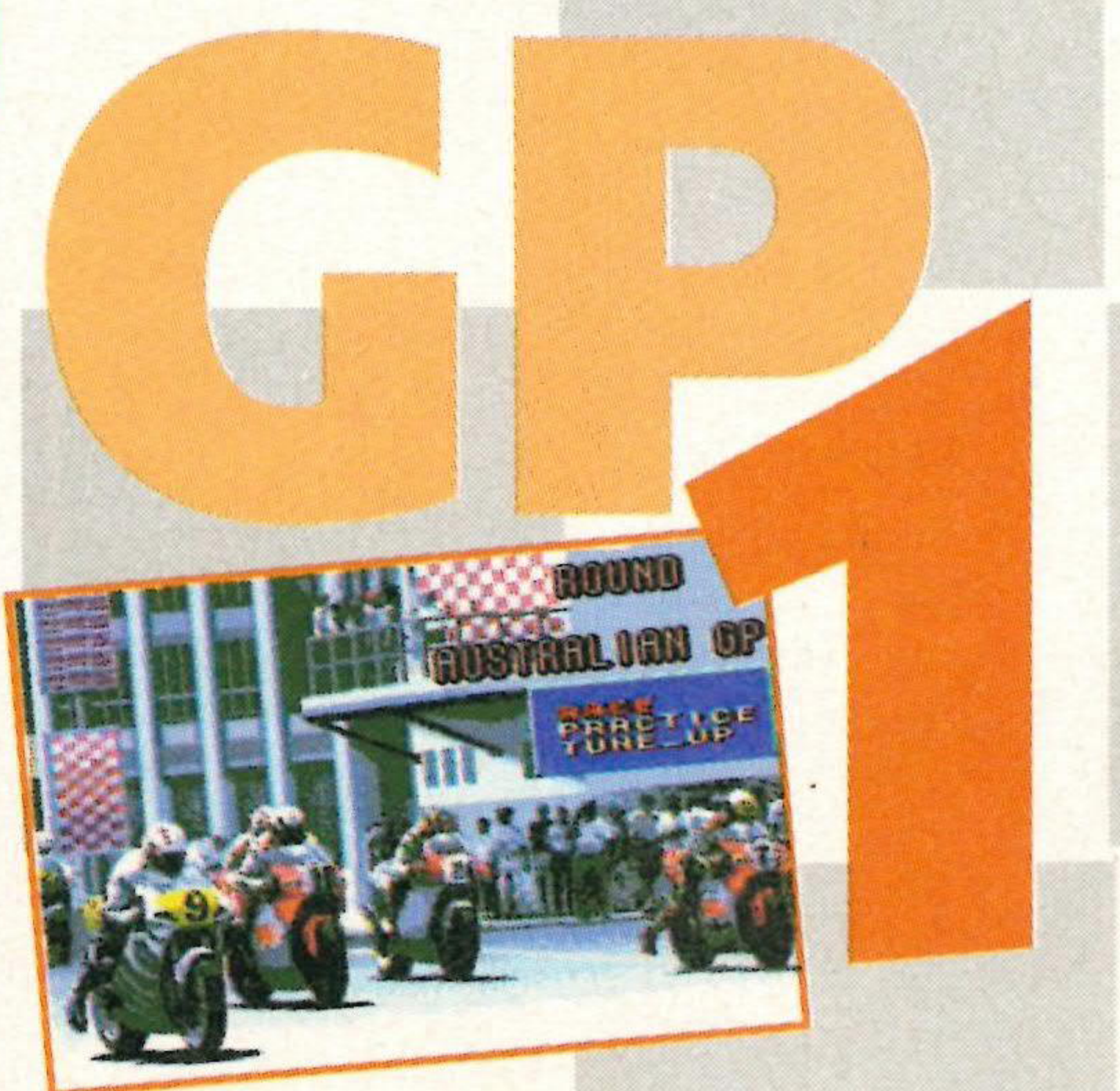
Fast - but flawed

including a track-select covering 13 of the world's famous tracks, even the Japanese one with the unpronounceable name. You can also choose your own bike from a range of six machines with varying properties and then select your own mechanic.

The object is to increase your world ranking as a GP rider. Winning lots of races nets you piles of cash in prize

money (and babes along with it), which you can use to power-up your bike to hideous levels of pose capability.

When you play the game, you get extremely excited powering your bike around the track at lethal speeds until you realise that no matter how hard or at what angle you hit a corner and go flying off the side of the track, you can't crash into barriers. You just keep going along throwing up loads of dust, get back on the track and carry on. This means everyone's playing tactic is to keep the throttle full-on all the way - which is a bit unprofessional. Admittedly, banging other bikes will make you go for a tumble, but even that doesn't slow you up too much. Pity really, that's its only major fault.



SUPER NES
 Producer: ATLUS
 Price: £16.95
 Available: NOW
65%

Back to the world of Sonic the Hedgehog, and guess what? Old Dr Robotnik has come up with another dastardly plan to turn all the little forest critters into loathsome mutants and cause untold environmental damage. He's ripped off the Chaos Emeralds again, hasn't he, and it's Sonic's job to recover them. Or, if you're bored with the spiky blue git, *Sonic Chaos* gives you the chance to play Tails,



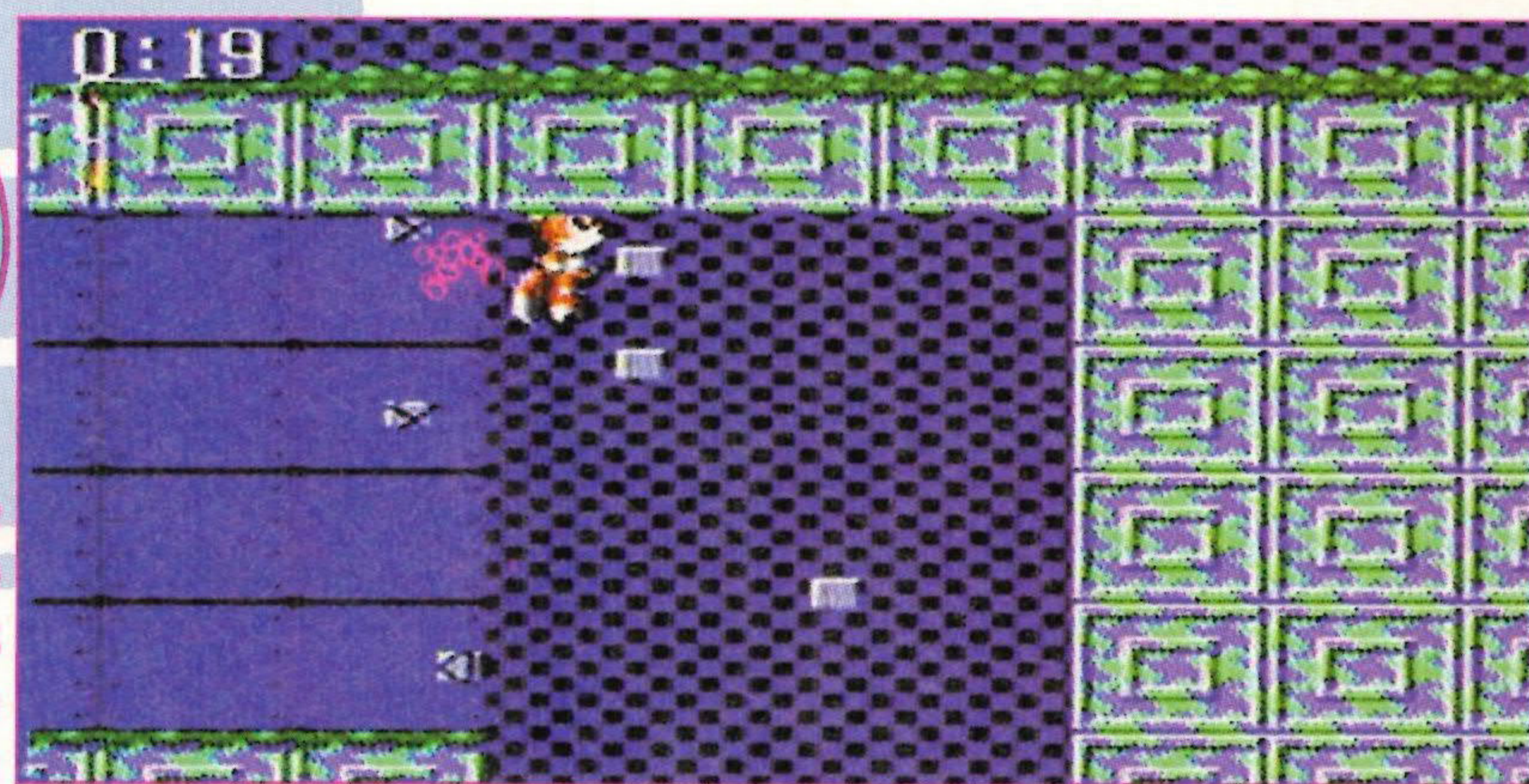
The bosses require little thought and even less effort in *Sonic Chaos*

Sonic's fox-like little chum. Tails (or Miles Prower, as his mum calls him) has the ability to perform short helicopter flights using his tail as a rotor-blade.

The new game has six levels comprising three acts each. *Chaos* has most of the elements from *Sonic 2* (like the Möbius strip), plus a few original ones like the jet-ski-board. New areas include the futuristic Gigalopolis Zone, the Sleeping Egg Zone, where you have to ram through solid-looking brick



The cheeky twosome are back – but this time the joke's on them



With all these features, it's a shame that *Sonic Chaos* still manages to be completely useless. It's so inferior to the original Master

System *Sonic* that makes you wonder what the programmers have been doing for the last two years. It was hard to believe how lame *Sonic 2* turned out to be, but *Sonic Chaos* makes that look radically amazing. *Chaos* is slower moving, has worse graphics, worse animation and worse gameplay. It has to be said that the sound's pretty good, but that's the only thing the *Sonic* team have managed to do right this time.

When you play *Sonic Chaos*, you get the feeling that it was knocked together with a few semi-original ideas here and there, and then the whole *Sonic* team went down the



Lamb and Flag for a massive session instead of playtesting it. Consequently you're far better off with one of the



MASTER SYSTEM
Producer: SEGA
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

68%

TUFF NUFF

Jaleco's coin-op conversion has all the qualities which make a smart beat-'em-up: lots of aggressive moves, varied characters and colourful backgrounds. And even a special be-the-bosses cheat (detailed in the instructions) means that there are now 11 characters to



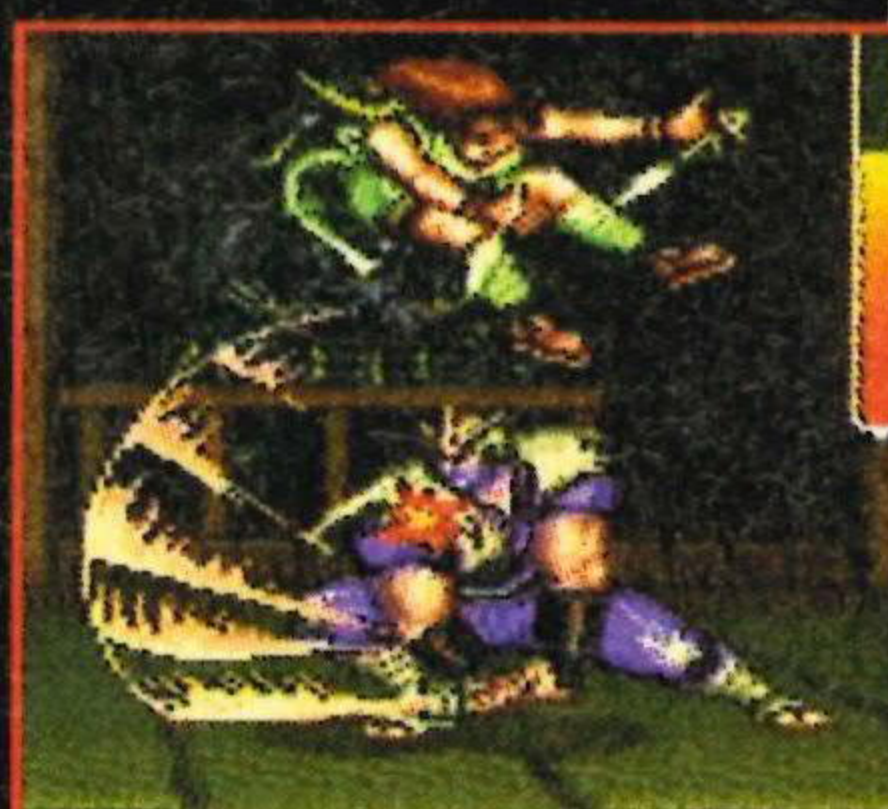
Street Fighter II in action, this looks slow and unconvincing. The backgrounds are nowhere near as interesting or detailed, there aren't as many features, and there are hardly any combination moves which are worth doing. It's a fun game, but *Street Fighter II* has no competitor in this arena. In fact, why does anyone else bother, Capcom have it sewn up.



play. Earth has returned to the dark ages after a nuclear war, and the world is now controlled by a geezer called The Fighting King. In the one-player mode, you have entered a tournament to try and win the right to hammer The Fighting King's face into a squishy mass of damaged tissue and ruptured blood-vessels. The two-player option lets you take out all the aggression on your mates instead.

The trouble with *Tuff E Nuff* is that if you've seen

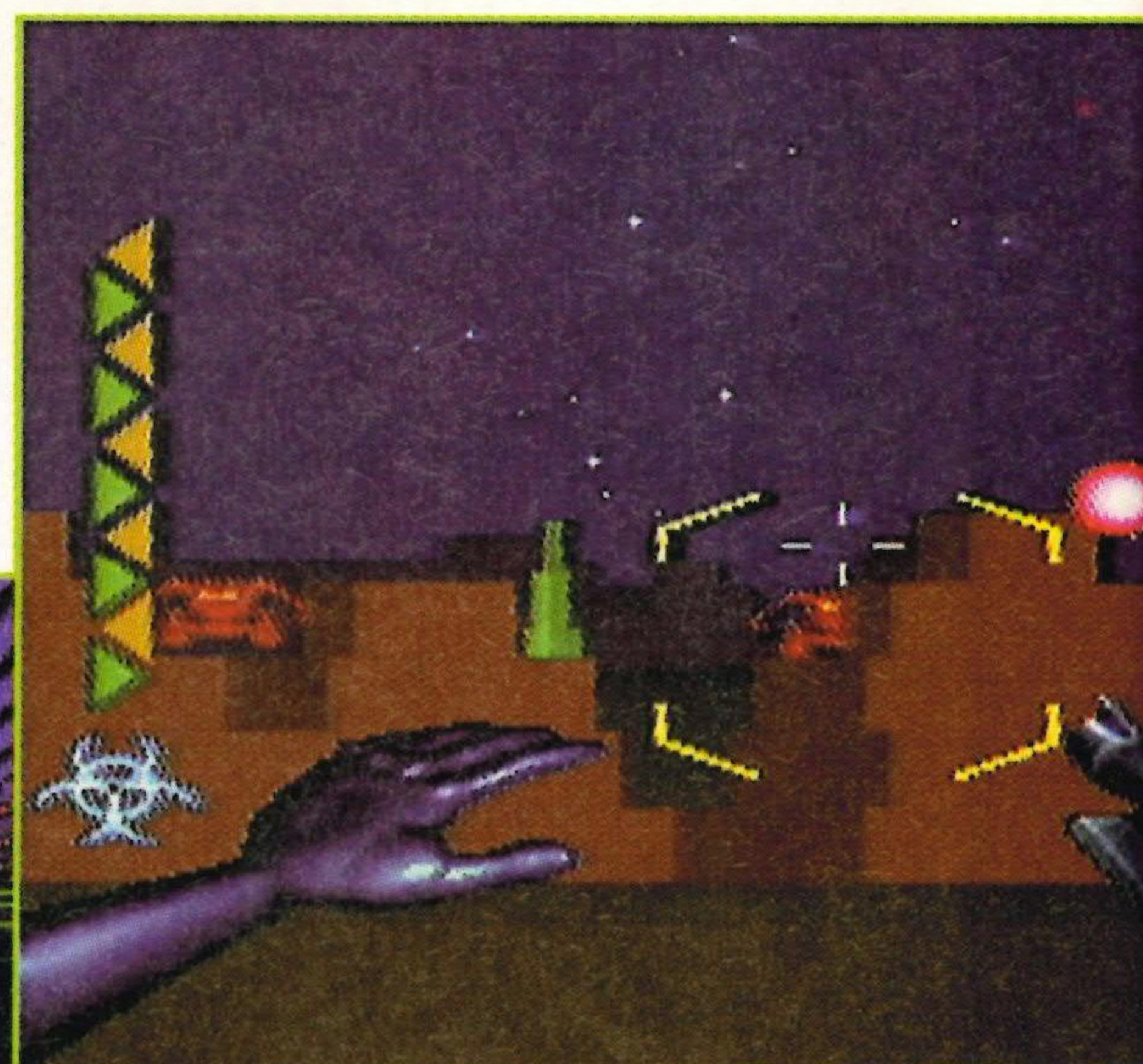
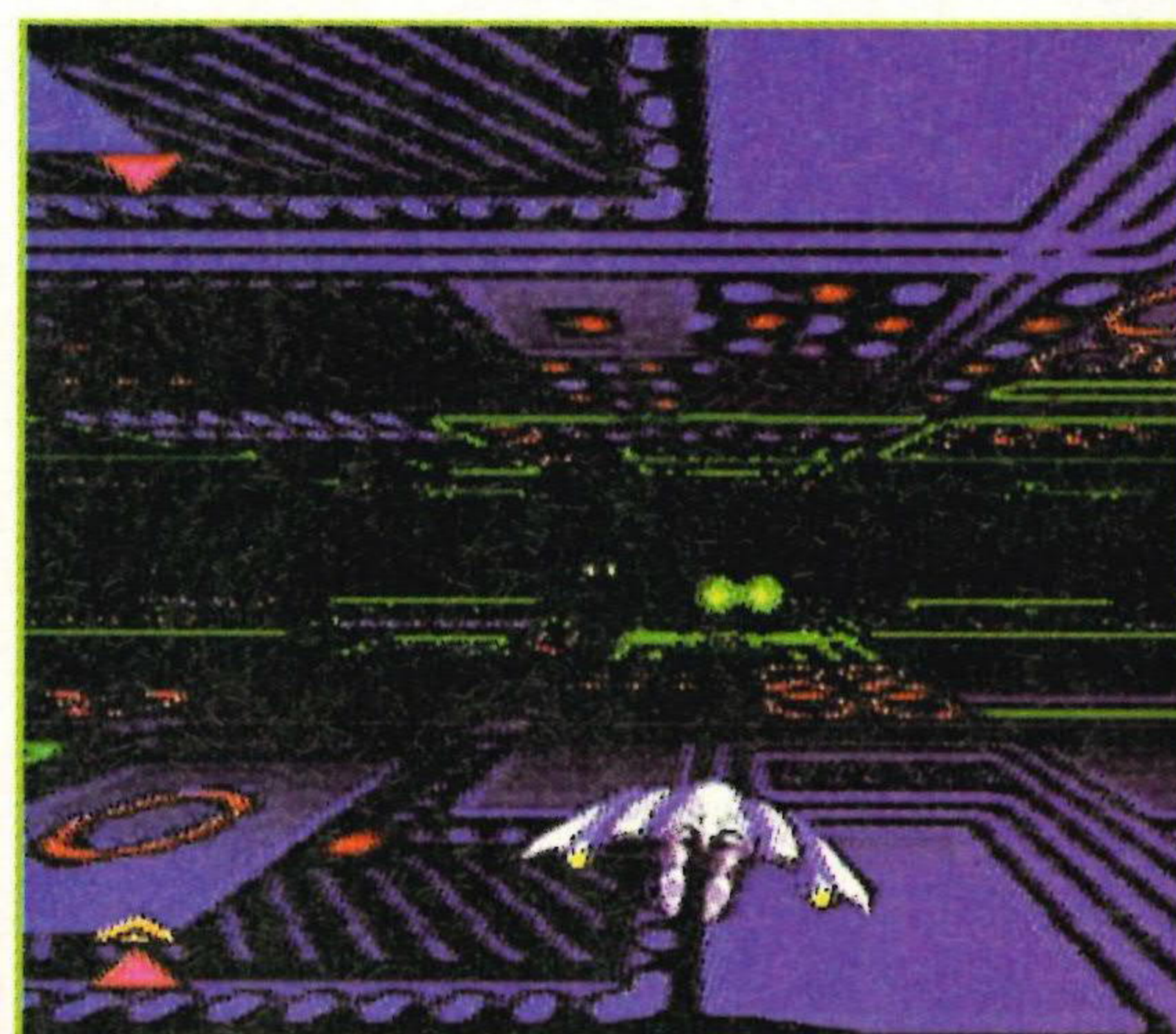
Street Fighter II needn't worry: *Tuff E Nuff* is good, but not that good – although it should be a lot cheaper!



SUPER NES
Producer: JALECO
Price: £tba
Available: NOW

73%

You would have thought that making a videogame based on a movie would be the same as basing a film on a book. Sometimes the achievement of the film far exceeds the original creation, as was the case with movies like *Bladerunner*. Unfortunately, videogames based on films are nearly



Looks great, doesn't it? It's only when you pick up and play *The Lawnmower Man* that its true self it revealed. If this is virtual reality, give me *Space Invaders* any day

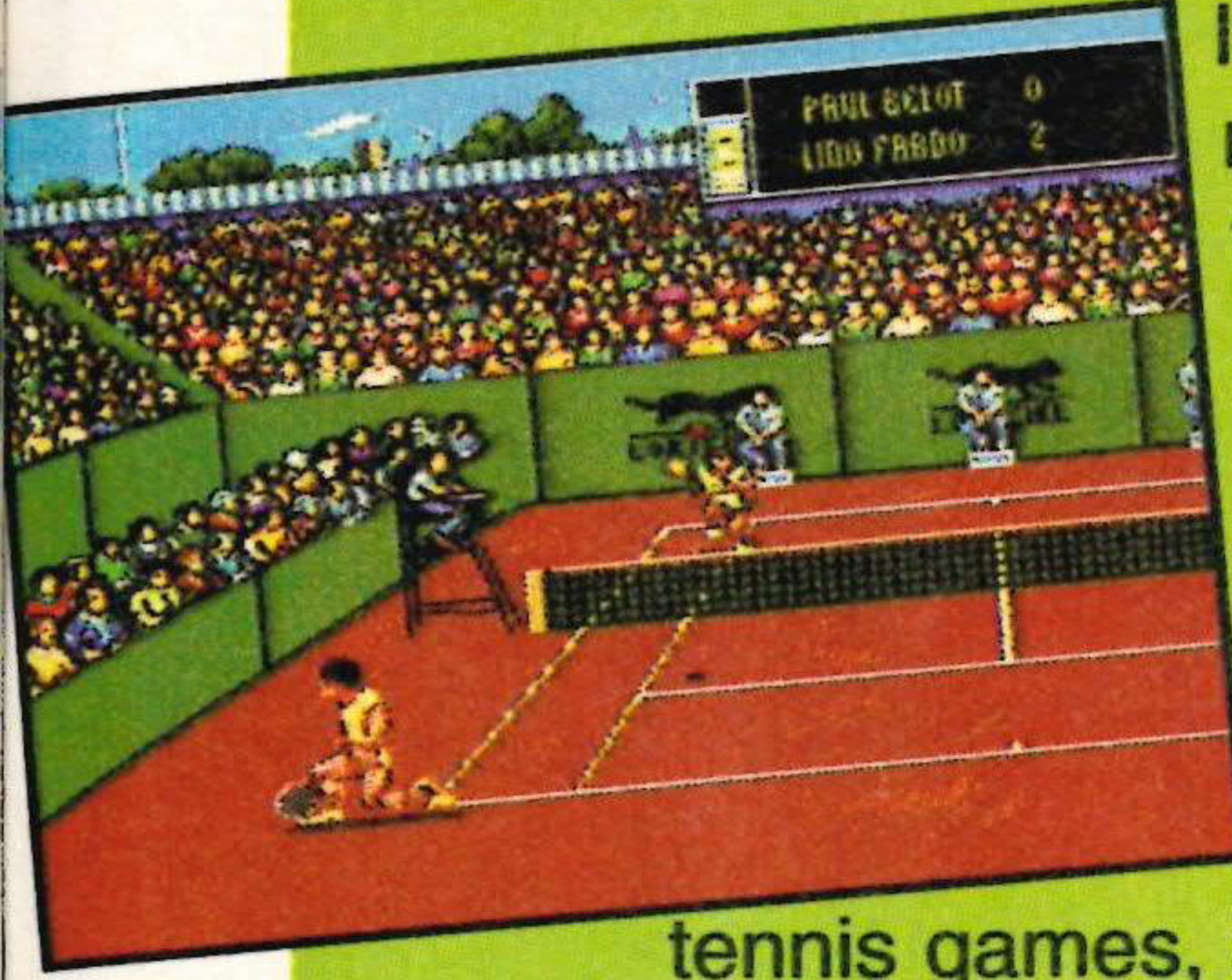
always abysmally boring and unoriginal. *The Lawnmower Man* is no exception to this rule. As with the other recent mind-numbingly dull videogame version of *Jurassic Park*, the designers were given loads of ready-made excellent ideas to work with. And also as with *Jurassic Park*, they half-heartedly played around with one or two of these ideas



You are about to enter virtual reality – then again, you could paint that wall you've been meaning to do

The Lawnn

International



If you love tennis games, then there's only one machine for you, the SNES. It's so flooded with brilliant

a training course, or do nothing. You are allocated \$20,000 to begin with and should remember that air-fares and courses all cost money.

International Tennis Tour is a good, fun tennis sim rather than a dramatically realistic one. It has nice big sprites, engaging gameplay and the most uncanny sound effects you're likely to hear.



tennis games, and here's yet another one! One of the best things about *International Tennis Tour* is that there are three intelligent difficulty levels. At Beginner level, all the work is done for you except serving, selection of return and deciding when to hit the ball. Amateur level lets you control the player's movements as well, and Professional level makes things very fast indeed.

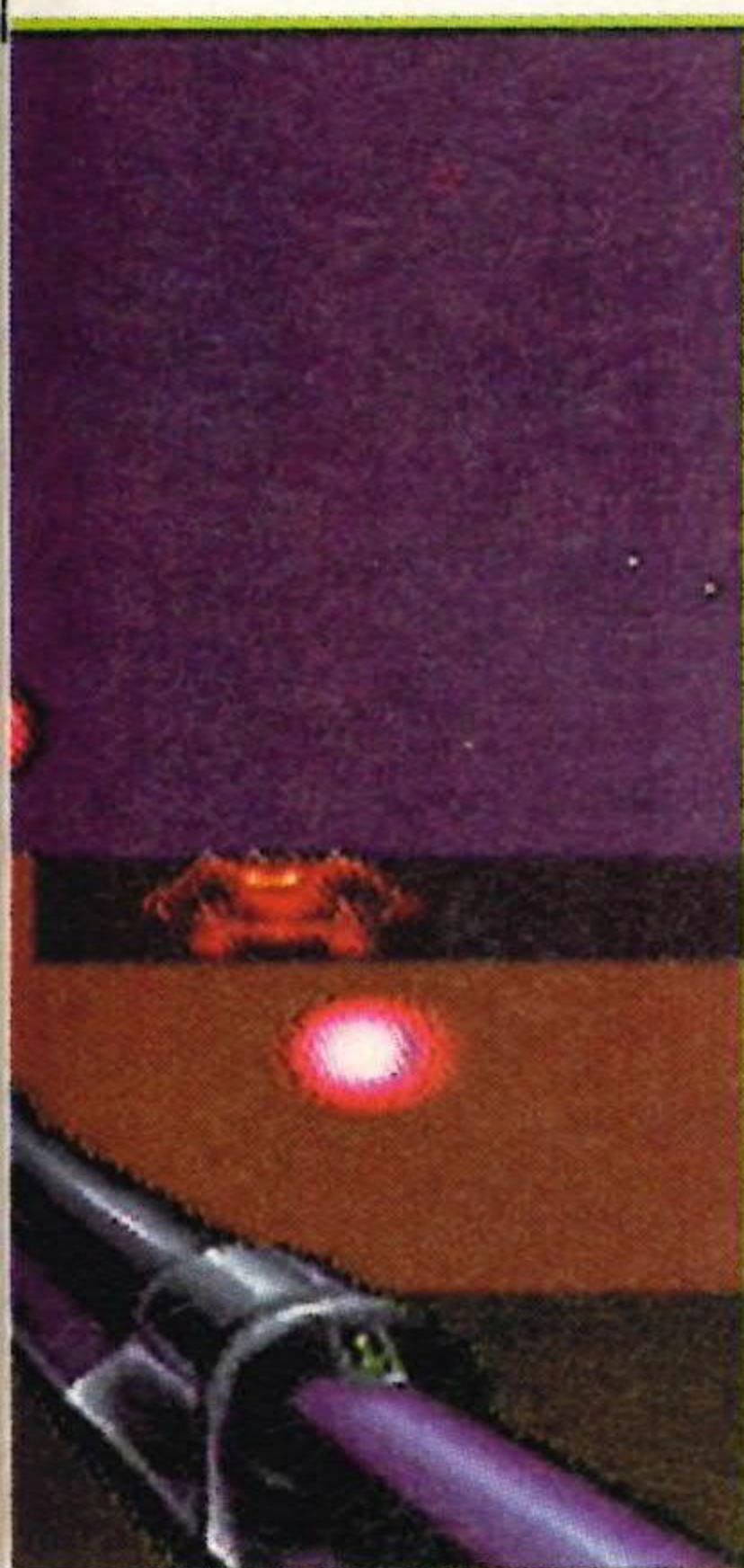
Another attraction of the game is the option to play a full world championship campaign. This introduces an element of strategy into the proceedings as you live through an entire year in the life of a professional player. Every week, you must decide whether to enter a tournament, go on

SUPER NES

Producer: LORICIEL
Price: £49.99
Available: NOW

88%

Tennis Tour



and then accidentally flushed the others down the pan along with the game.

The object of *The Lawnmower Man* is to get across town from your house in the suburbs to the sprawling VSI laboratory and waste some guy held in

some hyper-virtual-3D0-reality device. The journey

across town involves a car-chase game as well as the standard platform fare and a few excursions into pretend virtual-reality.

It's a cross between (surprise, surprise) a platformer and a 3-D effort. The platform sections are supposed to represent "reality" while the 3-D bits are "virtual-reality", which you can enter by leaping through portals dotted around the place.

The platform sections are so radically uninteresting that after playing for about five minutes the idea of switching off your SNES and watching paint dry for a few hours becomes extremely attrac-



and then accidentally flushed the others down the pan along with the game.

tive. The sprites are tiny, while the backgrounds and gameplay take me back to my Commodore 64 days.

The 3-D bits look really clever, and will have you going, "wow, that's really smart actually", until you realise that all you have to do is avoid crashing into things and shoot at the occasional "threat". After about 11 seconds, you start looking around for wet paint...



SUPER NES

Producer: SALES CURVE
Price: £tba
Available: DECEMBER

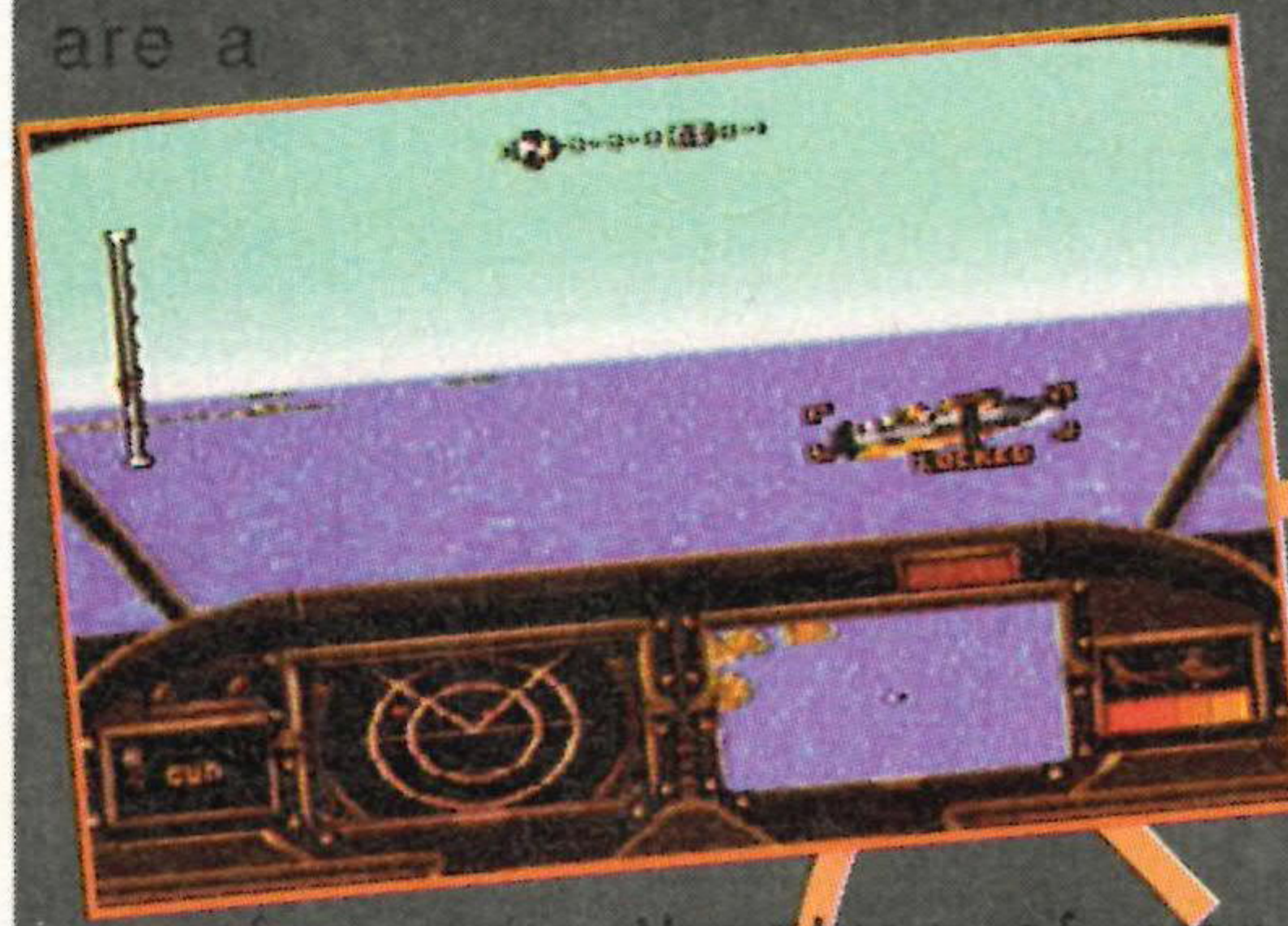
85%

ower Man

The monster helicopter scenario worked so well in Electronic Arts' *Strike* series for the Mega Drive, that Core Design have injected much more gratuitous violence, added a cockpit perspective, expanded the game's size and brought out *Thunderhawk*, the ultimate helicopter game for the Mega-CD.

Instead of concentrating on a single geographical area like the *Strike* games, *Thunderhawk* takes a world perspective. There are ten operations in various countries which comprise a total of 48 missions — huge!

Along with the old staples, like war in the Gulf and drug-related goings-on in South America, there are a



few new theatres of war. There's some piracy happening on the high seas near China, and mass destruction is obviously required, so *Thunderhawk* is called in to waste all the pirates and hammer their islands into glowing piles of slag.

You can also jet off to Alaska, where some blokes have run off with inconceivably dangerous bio-research. You have to teach them a lesson by hitting them with so much firepower that all evidence that they ever existed is permanently erased, except for a few charred teeth and the odd fragment of shattered bone lying around.

As you have probably gathered, *Thunderhawk* concentrates mainly on the homicidal aspect of flying a helicopter gunship; we are mercifully spared all the dull technical stuff. Your cockpit display contains an energy gauge and a radar showing you where to find things you are supposed to be destroying. It also tells you the positions of enemy aircraft and any missiles that might have been fired at you. Then there's the scanner showing an overhead view of the area you're in and a weapons select. The weapon can be switched quickly between gun, rockets and missiles.

Most ground targets, like boats and tanks, can be taken out using guns; it's best to save the rockets for use on huts and buildings where Old Testament style mayhem can be wreaked at the touch of a button — don't you just love being in control? If you're smart, you'll save all



the missiles to use on enemy aircraft.

Thunderhawk is definitely the first game to truly exploit the Mega-

CD's extra graphical capability on anything apart from a few embarrassingly lame film sequences or a trendy soundtrack. Core have made full use of the machine's new visuals chip, so the game is bristling with high speed 3-D rotation and scaling effects. The feeling of skimming over the treetops is effective enough, but try banking left and right to get the full benefit, it's mental! When you cut loose with all your weapons in a target-rich environment the screen erupts like November the fifth.

There are three levels of play, and the sheer thrill of the action will ensure you play each mission again and again. In fact *Thunderhawk* will probably be immovably locked to your CD drive for several months after you buy it.



Super NES owners will cringe when they see what can be done with the Mega-CD



MEGA-CD

Producer: CORE DESIGN
Price: £49.99
Available: NOW

92%

Voyeur

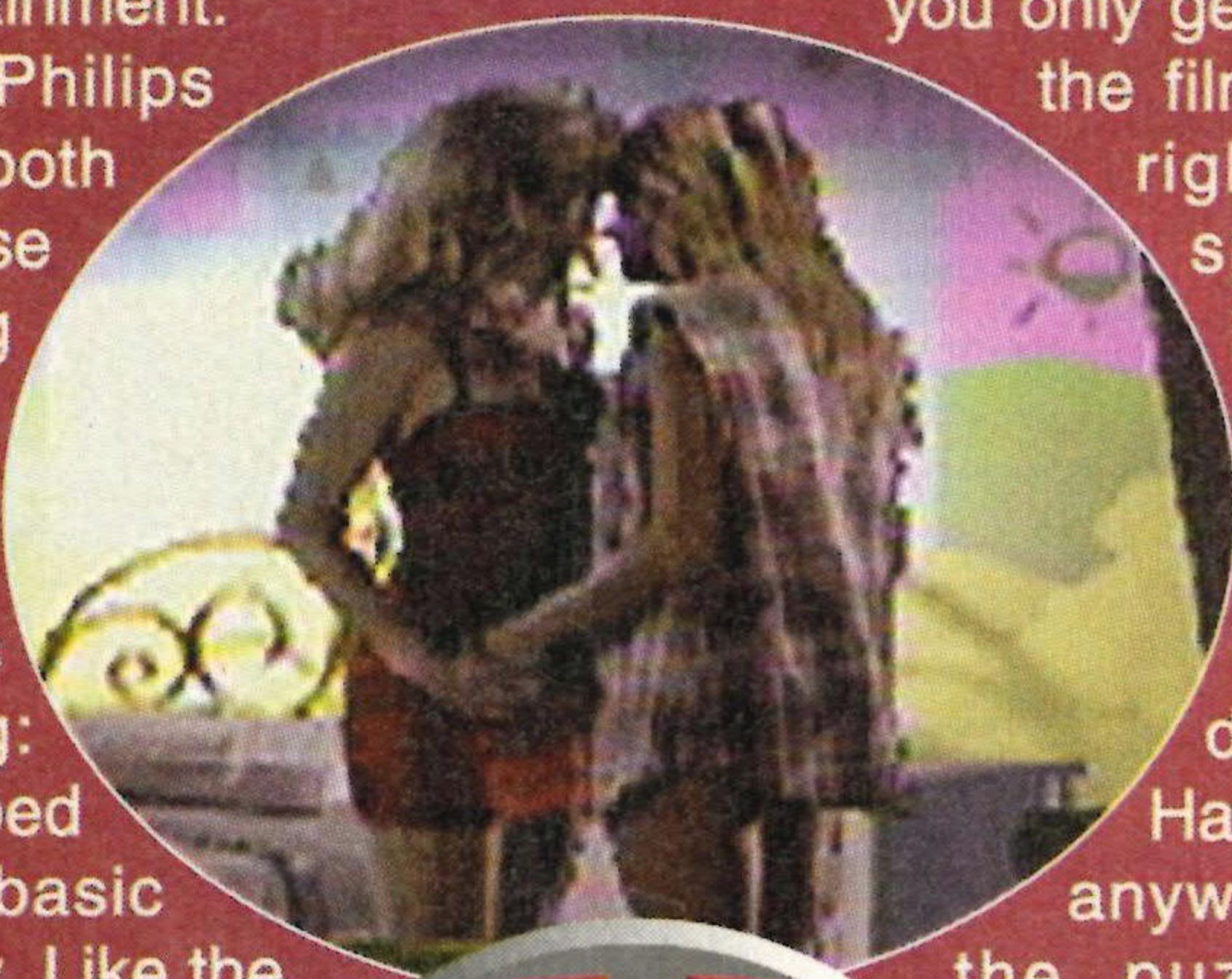


really have to actually DO much in *Voyeur*, like you don't actually DO anything when you watch a film, but the difference here is that



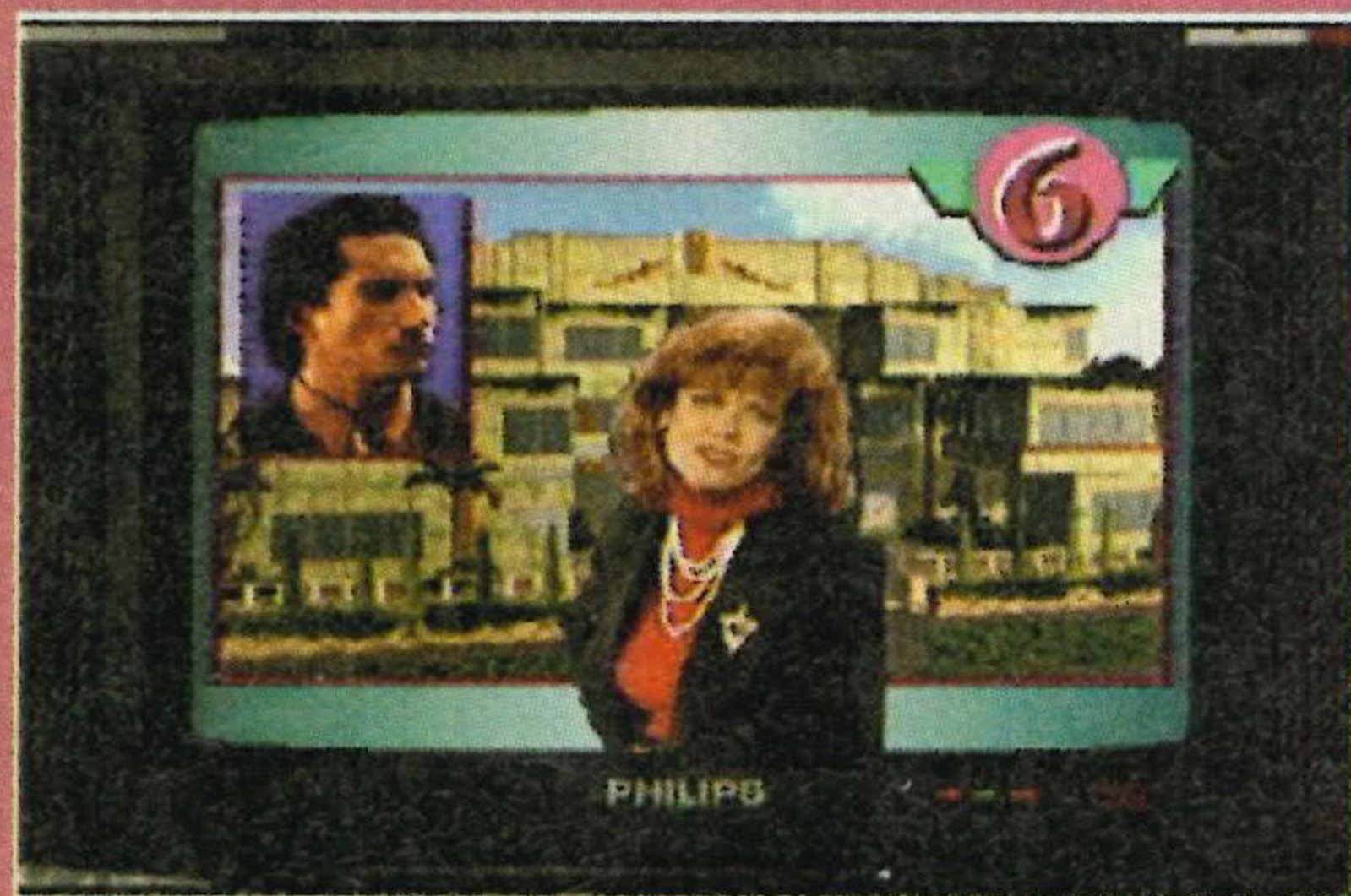
While the CD³², 3DO and Jaguar are treading the same old gaming ground, with an array of conversions and copies, Philips have relatively quietly plodded away on their format, producing interesting, if not exciting, alternative entertainment.

With *Voyeur*, Philips have combined both an original premise and an exciting plot, and created a new level of addictiveness. In fact, *Voyeur* is quite frightening: Philips have tapped into everyone's basic instinct to be nosy. Like the characters in Hitchcock's *Rear Window* and De Palma's *Body Double*, a normal person (like yourself) just can't take their eyes off the extraordinary events happening outside the window.



best **V** buy
GS

And just take a look at what is happening inside the plush confines of Hawke Manor. At the top of the list is Reed Hawke, a

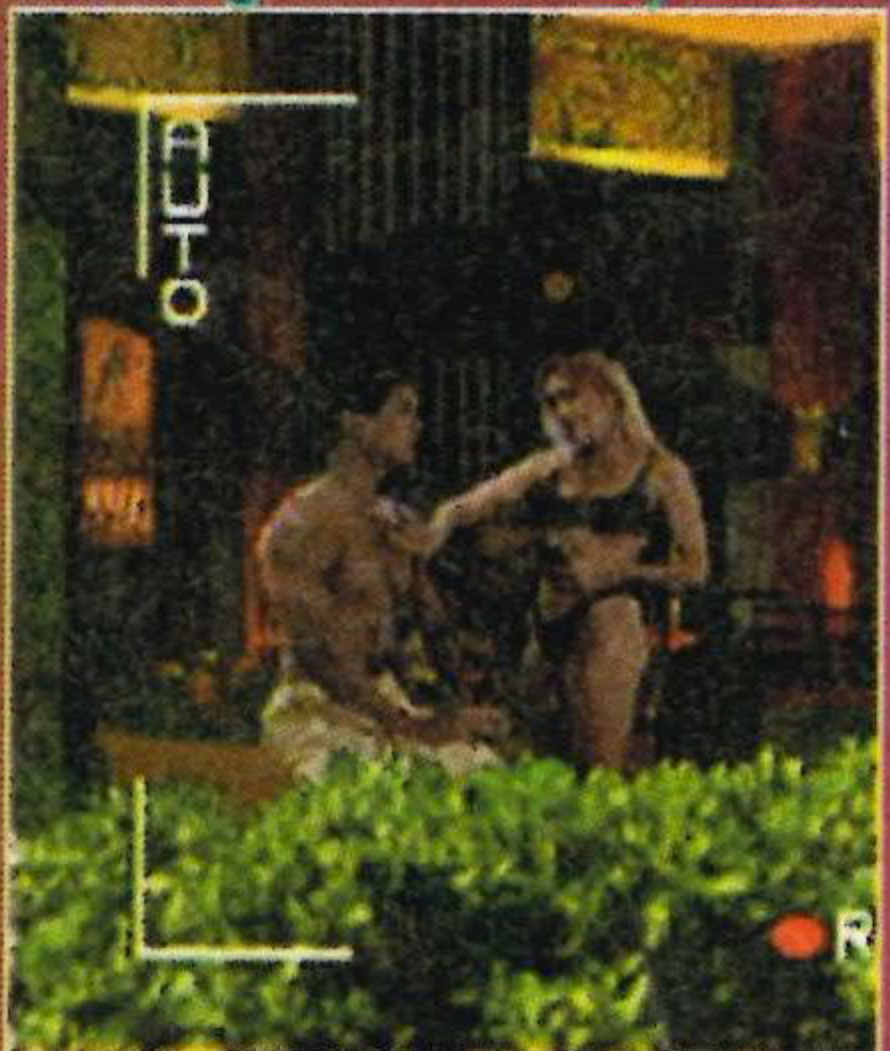


As the reporter tells you, keep an eye on the Hawkes - they're a dodgy lot

wealthy business man. He's not only running for president, he's also (probably) knocking off other members of his family in both the murderous and sexual sense. As a result, the rest of his family are very messed up. But just how much of their antics you see and hear depends on how far you're willing to go.

But it's not the plot here that's on trial; it's the technique Philips have used to create a videogame like no other. True, there have been adventure games like *Sherlock* and *Dracula*, but they're all pretty lame,

This chick is constantly flirting with everyone

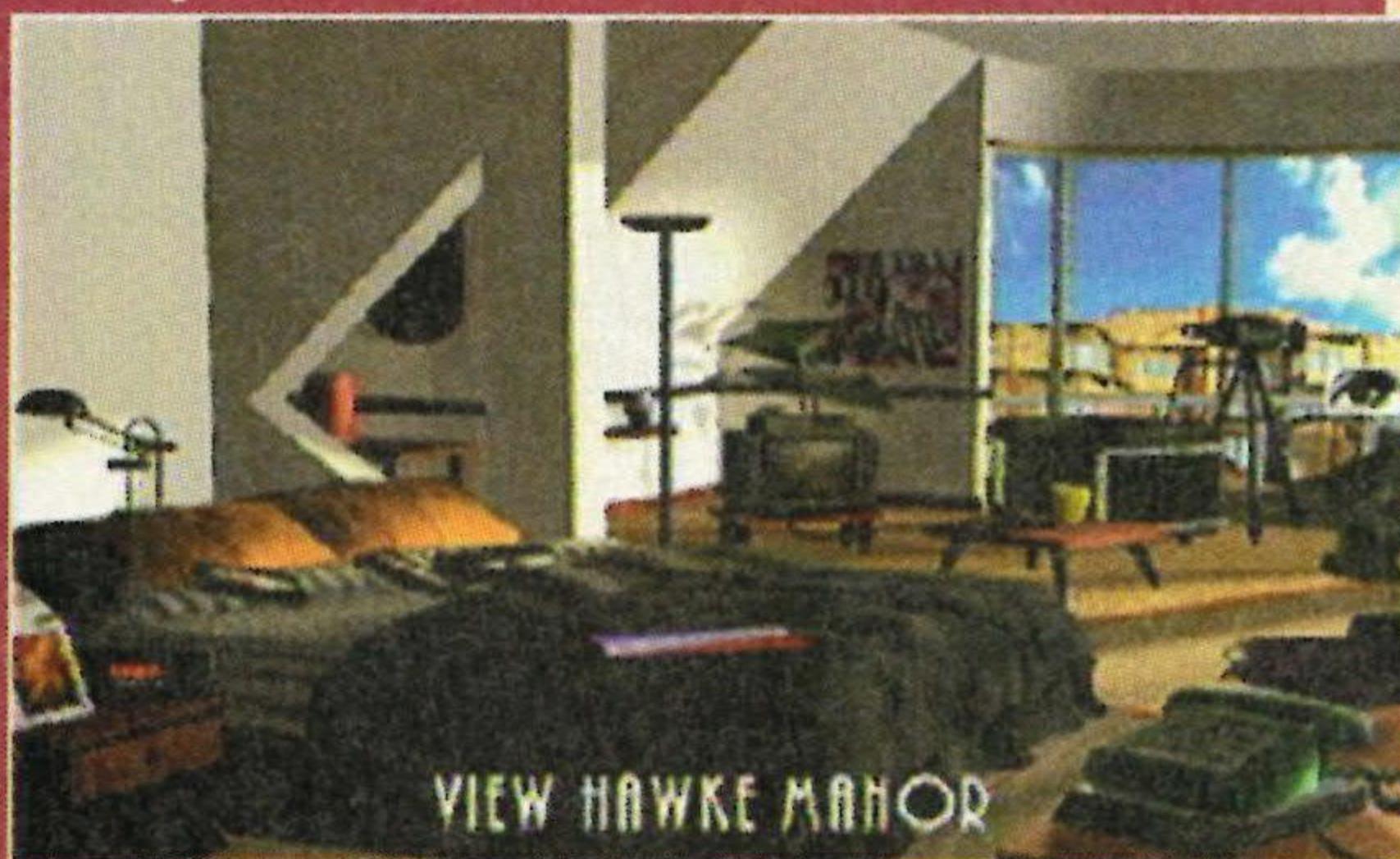


with their odd film clips in tiny windows. Here, Philips have created 60 minutes of full frame, full colour, full motion digital video and let it entertain you. True you don't

you only get to see the end of the film if you watch the right bits. Time you spend looking at half-naked women, while you should actually be looking elsewhere in the building to dig the dirt on Reed Hawke, won't get you anywhere near solving the puzzle. And when Monday morning comes, and the cops come around to check on your antics, they'll end up calling you a pervert instead of taking your video evidence and banging up Hawke (and, let's face, Hawke should be used to that).

True, most video clips do repeat themselves each time you play, but the ending isn't always the same. You won't just play *Voyeur* once, it'll be one of those discs that you get out at parties and still have fun with every time you watch it.

If you think *Voyeur* is a highly "interactive" adventure, you'd be wrong. What you have here, though, is pure entertainment. It's exciting, addictive, original and, above all, actually works. Top marks for originality.



Compile your evidence, watch the tape on TV, mail it to the victim, then call the cops

CD-I
Producer: PHILIPS
Price: £tba
Available: DECEMBER

90%

The arcade game of guiding little adventurer sprites around a really vast dungeon while waving vicious looking meat-cleavers or sparkling spell-casting wands in the air has finally been converted to the Mega Drive.

You get to choose from three characters with names like Valkyrie and Warrior, who sound as though they should be dressed in a funny costume and appearing on *Gladiators* instead of goofing around in a dungeon.

Basically, *Gauntlet 4* involves guiding one (or all in the four-player game) around a dungeon picking up treasure, killing monsters and drinking all sorts of weird potions. The overhead perspective gives the game a very action based feel, despite its roleplaying overtones, and you can zap monsters from a distance with multiple axe-throwing making it more of a shoot-'em-up than anything else.



The concept's getting a bit long in the tooth now, and although Tengen have created an arcade-perfect



copy, and even improved on the arcade game with a more interesting Quest mode, it still gets dull after a while. The only real point of interest is seeing what the next level looks like, but as they all look pretty much the same, there's not much to hold your attention for long. Sentimental value only.

MEGA DRIVE
Producer: TENGEN
Price: £39.99
Available: NOW

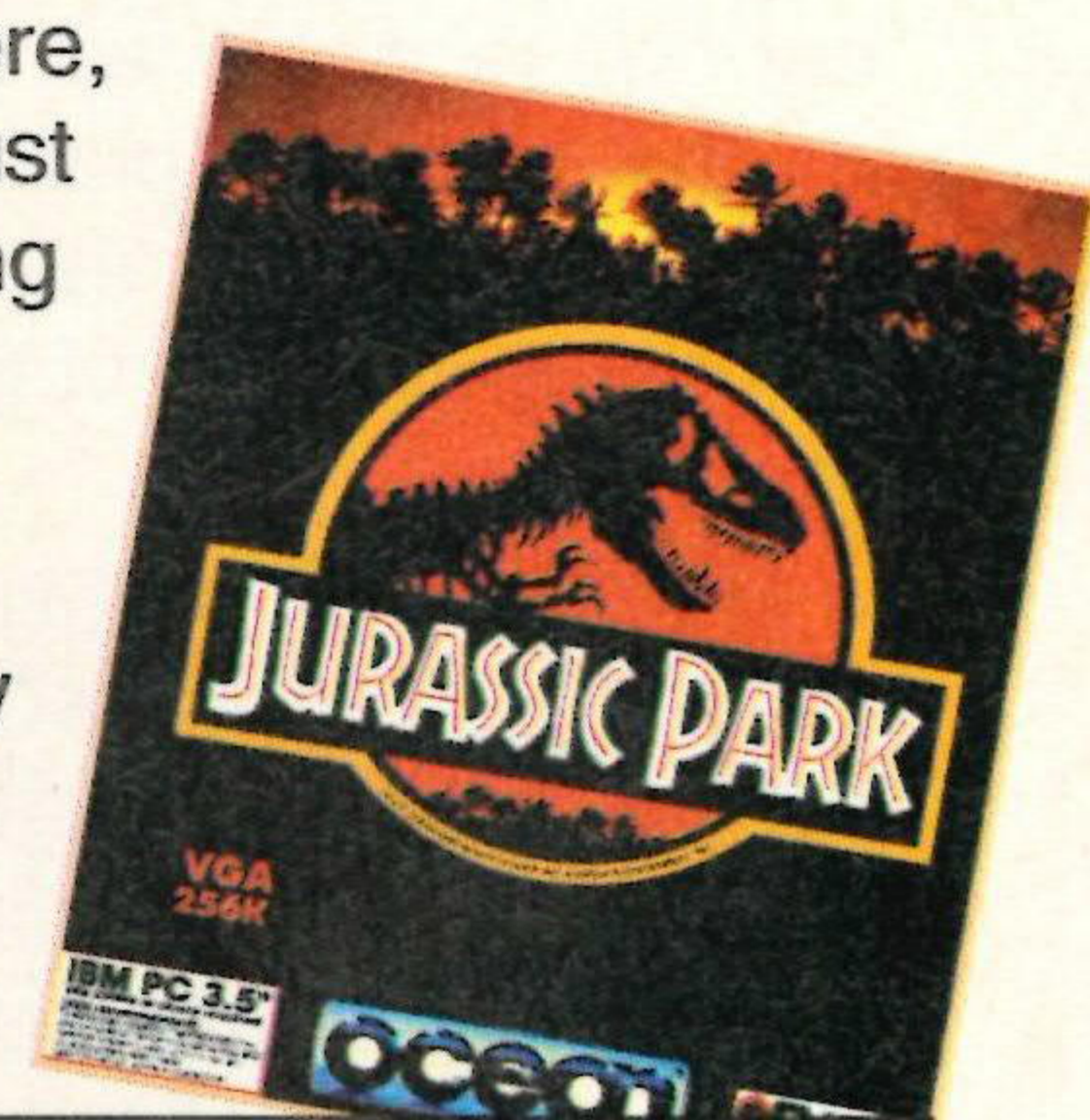
79%

jurassic P.A.R.K

I got quite excited when I discovered that the PC version of *Jurassic Park* was different to the appalling Mega Drive version. Perhaps Ocean could give the game the sparkle of the movie.

The object of the game is to rescue the two kids, Lex and Timmy, and guide them to the visitors' centre before all of you end up between two bits of bread in some prehistoric joker's lunch-box. So far, so good. The first level seems interesting and well-designed. Alright. Now all you want to do is go out and find some big lizards to blow back into extinction. It's at this point that you realise that the gameplay is somewhat uninteresting. Little dinosaurs run up and bite your bottom. Bigger ones run up and hoof you in the head whilst making noises like a chicken in the final stages of dementia. If you zap them once or twice, or shoot them with the hopelessly inaccurate machine gun, they shrivel up and disappear like Ming at the end of *Flash Gordon*.

It's a real shame that *Jurassic Park* is let down by its gameplay, as it had the potential to be a winner. The graphics, sound (nearly) and framework are all there, but the ideas just aren't interesting or original enough to sustain anyone's interest for very long. A pity.



IBM PC
Producer: OCEAN
Price: £34.99
Available: NOW

61%

Remember racing your little Matchbox model cars around the top of your school desk making "broom-broom" noises, and then receiving a smack around the head with a board rubber from Sir? Now you can re-live those races without the fear of being bashed with a hefty chalk-erasing device.

When you enter *Micro Machines*, you can choose either challenge mode, which means you race against three people, or head-to-head mode, which means you only have one opponent. You get to choose a character from 11 schoolies ranging from the cool-and-hard chap with shades

The desk race is too hard for its own good



Racin' in the bath...

on to a boss-eyed bloke called Dwayne and a girl who looks like Michelle from EastEnders. Then you choose your opponents, wondering if they have varying driving abilities and skills.

The first race is a qualifying round in the bath with miniature boats. It's a nice idea, and the soap-suds making up the course boundary look really good, with the finish line represented by one of those long metal soap-holding things that stretch over the bath. The first thing that strikes you about gameplay is that it's mindlessly easy. Even if, like me, you are about as good at driving as Dustin Hoffman in Rain Man, you

won't have any trouble at all thrashing the opposition here. Cut to your character looking happy and the others looking dejected.

Another of the races centres around little trucks on the breakfast table, the course boundaries are made up of lines of Weet-O's and you have to avoid skidding in puddles of milk or hitting stray Rice Krispies. This one is also remarkably easy, and you've virtually lapped the opposition by the time you steam in first.

Some of the screens, however, are disproportionately hard. The third race is toy sports cars on school desks. The course is made up of rulers, pencil sharpeners and other



desktop items – it's a challenge not to keep falling off the edge of the desk.

The game isn't helped by the fact that all of the computer's characters drive in exactly the same way, which means they tend to go around the track together in a big clump. The result is that if you make a mistake on one of the hard levels it's virtually impossible to finish in the first three, which is what you must do to carry on racing.

Micro Machines is based on a good idea and has some cleverly cute graphics around the courses, the desktop and beach screens are particularly good. When you take this away, however, all you're left with is a reasonable racing game – which, let's face it, the Amiga isn't exactly short of...

AMIGA
Producer: CODE MASTERS
Price: £29.99
Available: DECEMBER

72%

micro machines

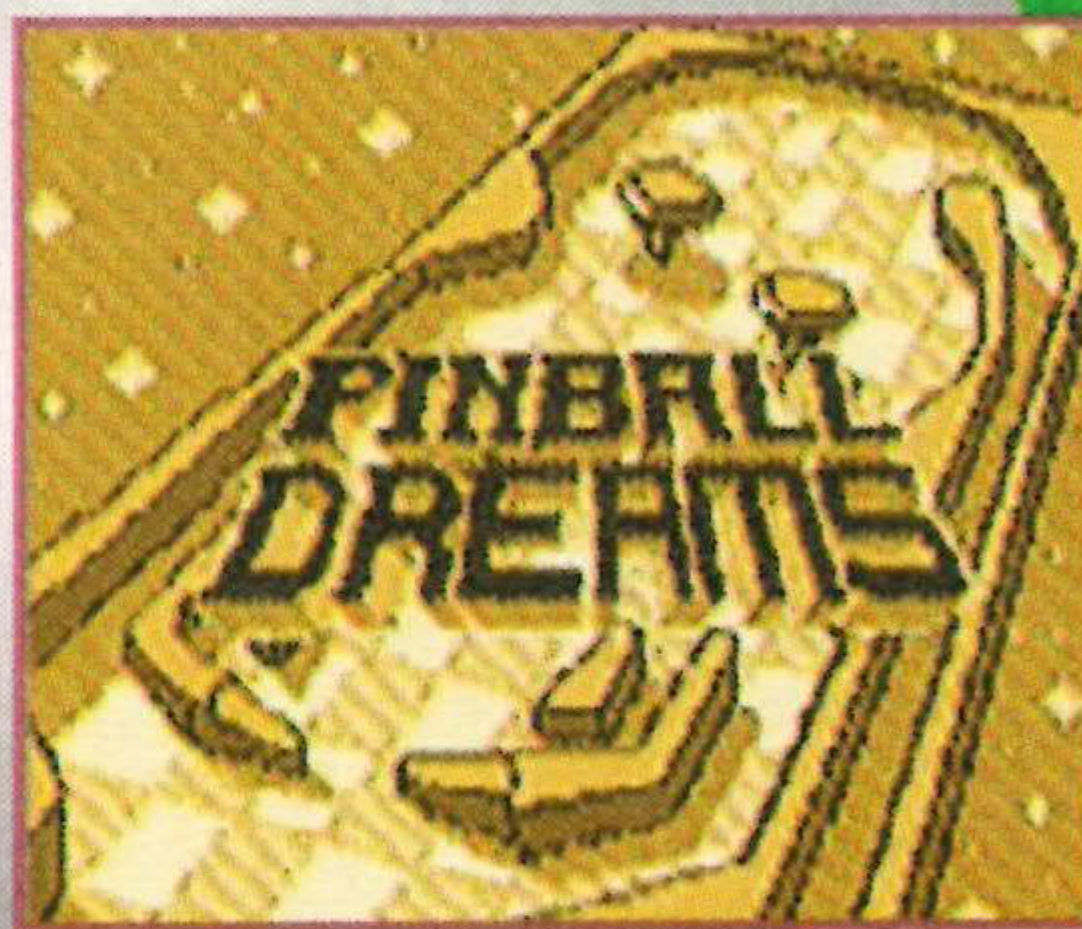


I have always been a bit dubious about pinball sims on consoles/computers. Why buy an unrealistic video version when you can go out and play the real thing, is my view on most sims. So when this miniaturised *Pinball Dreams* effort arrived on my desk, I wasn't a happy pixie. However, after what was supposed to be a half-hour check-out turned into an hour and three quarters; I had to admit that *Pinball Dreams* on the Game Boy is radically amazing.

Ignition is the first table, which is a 1950s inspired space table with lots of cosmic noises, tons of features and a message that says "lost in space" when you lose your last ball. Danger, Will Robinson!

The next table is called Steel Wheel and is a Wild West design. The table is massive, with wide open spaces like the West itself. Slam that ball into the trap repeatedly for bonuses in the millions.

The final fab flipper is Graveyard,



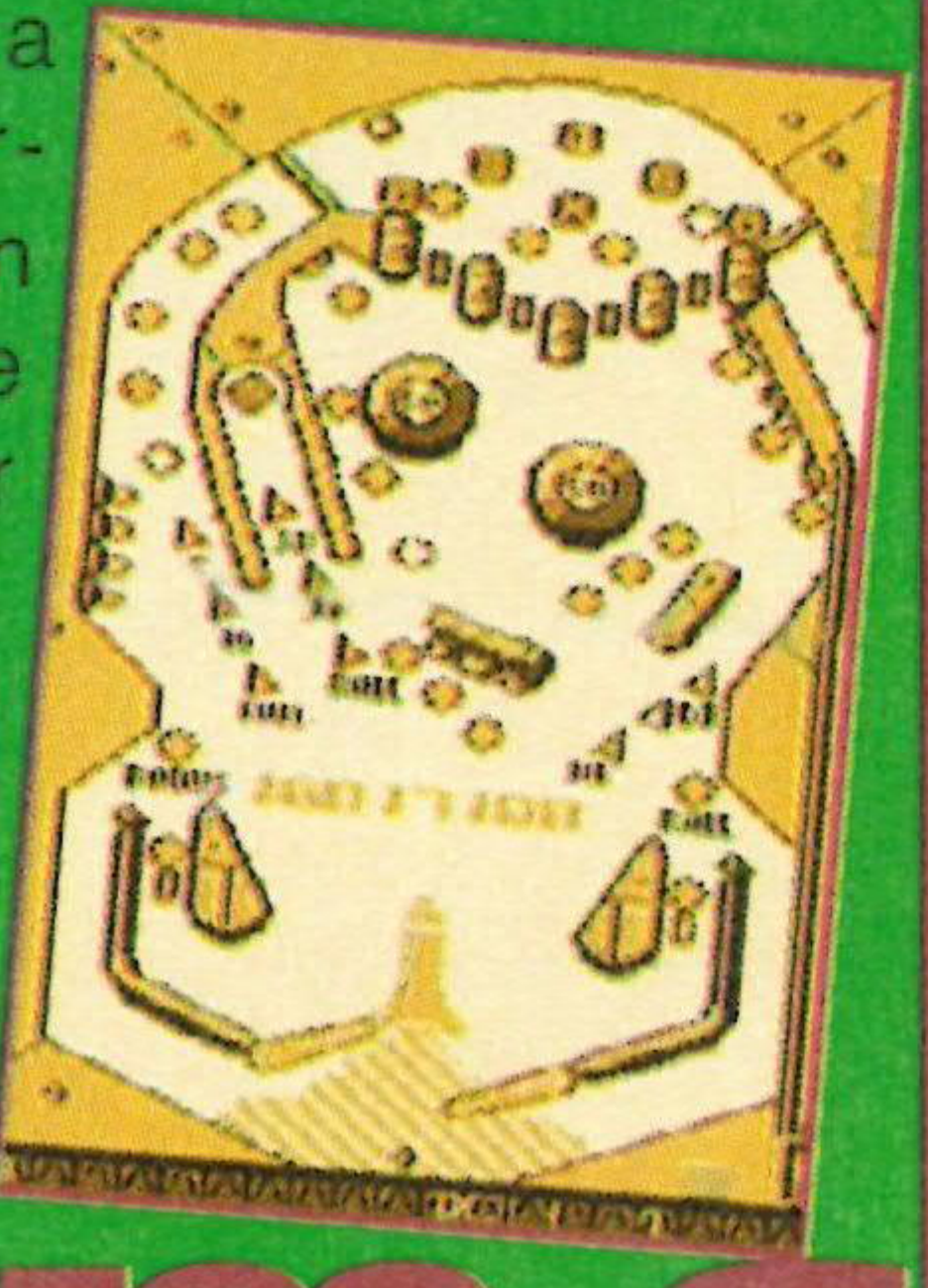
GAME BOY
Producer: GAMETEK
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

93%

which doesn't need much explanation. It's a very tough table with a difficult-to-access top zone. When you lose a ball, "scared stiff" flashes up on the screen.

The noises and light configurations on these tables have obviously been well researched, and the way the ball moves is unbelievably realistic. *Pinball Dreams*

is another game that almost seems made to be converted to a hand-held format. What an excellent game to have in your pocket.

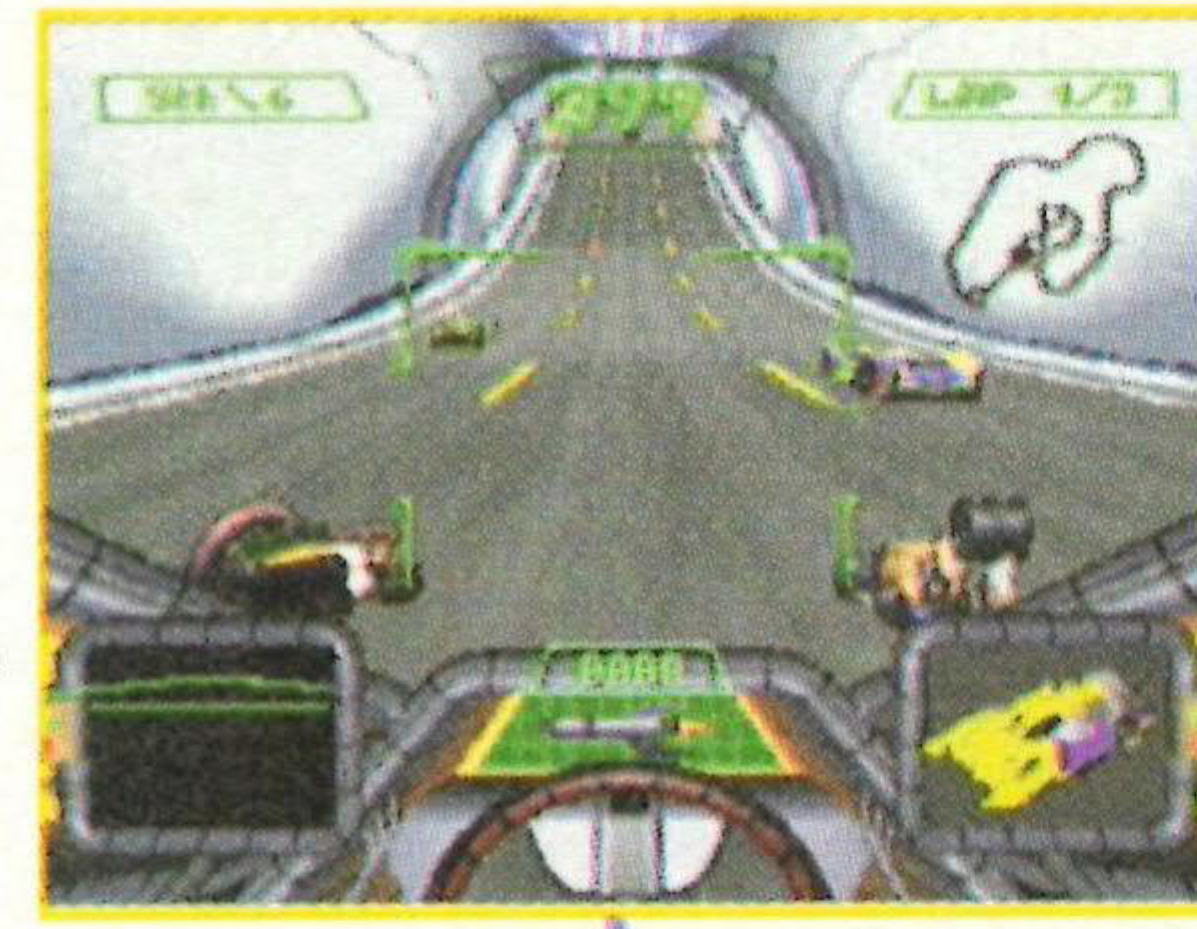


PINBALL dreams

When a new machine comes out, I want it do something no other machine has done. It must prove to me that an effort has been made to develop new and exciting software, or what's the point? That the manufacturers really do believe it's a step forward in gaming development. Acorn did it with *Elite* on the BBC and *Zarch* on the Archimedes. Nintendo had *F-Zero* and *Pilotwings*. These are games that were so different from what had gone before that you had to buy the host machine to play them.

Crash 'n' Burn, though, is a racing game; something we're not particularly new to. Sure, it would have been fine if it was amazingly quick and smooth – like *F-Zero* was – but it's not. Most of the time you race along at the same speed (it's not blindingly fast), oblivious to the CD, but then the graphics jump out of turn and you are reminded of the disc. Racing games are done far better by machines with raw processing power, like the SNES and Jaguar, than by machines that just dump graphics off disc as quick as they can.

As a racing game, what *Crash 'n' Burn* misses is 1) the chance to drive wherever you want, and 2) the feeling of inertia as you slide around the corners. You always get the feeling that the CD is pushing



you in a certain direction because that is what it wants to load next.

The problem is essentially with disc

access time. Whether Crystal Dynamics haven't worked out a quick compression technique, or whether the CD in the 3DO isn't that quick anyway, is unclear, but even when you flick around the options at the beginning of the game, it takes an inordinately long time to access the bit it's after.

The best race games on the Amiga, SNES, PC and Jaguar are much better than this. What's the point?

3DO
Producer: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
Price: FREE WITH US 3DO
Available: UK SPRING 94

68%

CRASH 'n' burn





screen isn't suited to this method of play. After a while, though, you'll soon get your eye in (and get a bad squint too, no doubt), but those crucial rallies are still few and far between.

Jimmy Connors' aesthetics certainly make it

Extraordinary speech throughout the game

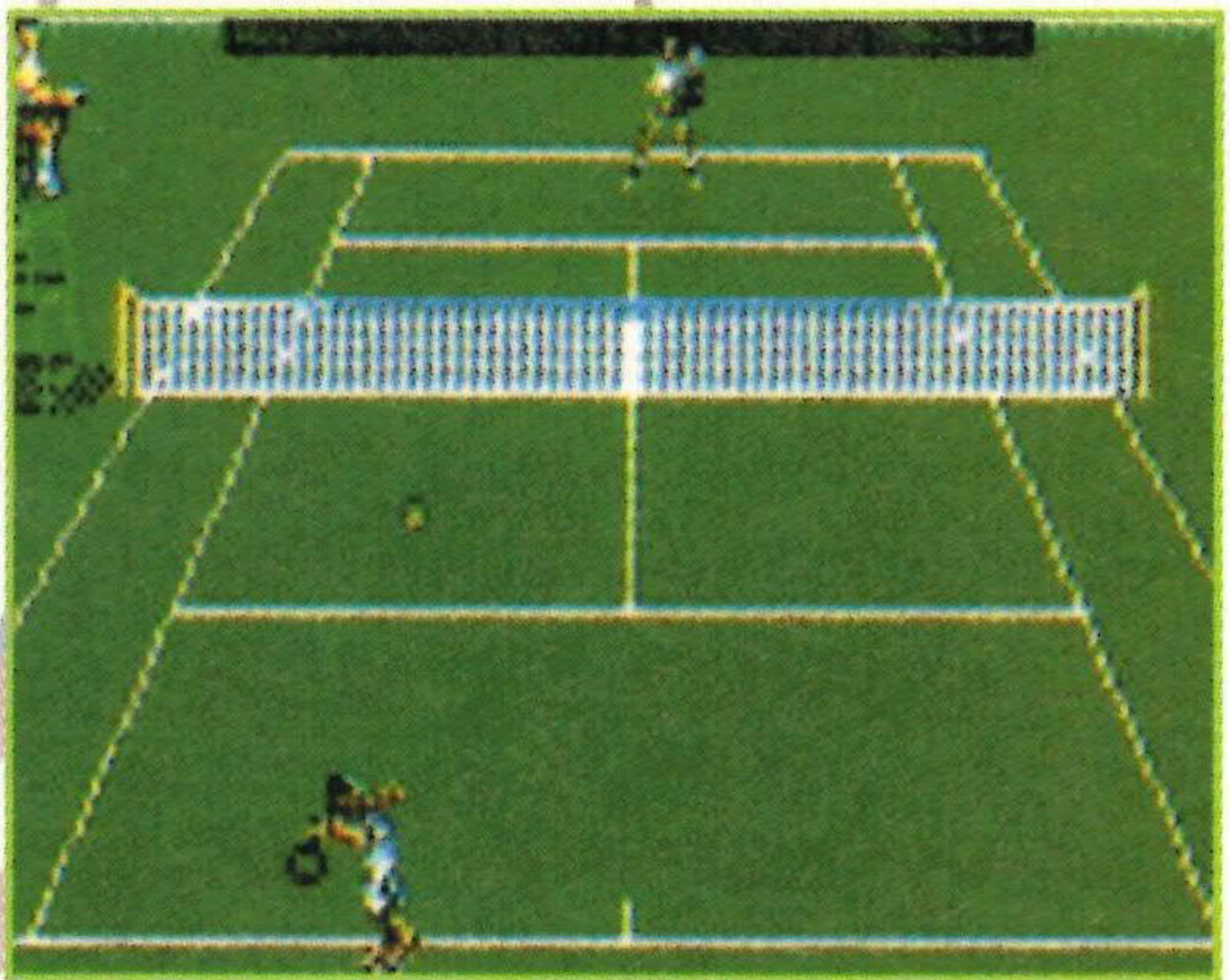
The first thing you will notice about Jimmy Connors' Tennis is its beautiful presentation.

The graphics are some of the best ever seen on the Lynx, with a pixelated image of Jimmy (who speaks to you) and great on-court detail and animation. In fact, this game is full of neat touches, of which the regular speech is top of the list.

Continuing the realism, there are tons of options. Along with the court specifics, you can also choose from a wide range of difficulties, multi-players and different tournaments.

At first, it takes ages to get used to the control method – usually meaning you're 4-0 down after a couple of minutes. The way you have to position your player on a floating box to hit the ball correctly

stand apart from something like Tennis on the Game Boy, although I'm not so sure it has the pick-up-and-play addictiveness of Nintendo's best-seller.



LYNX
Producer: ATARI
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

77%

Dracula Unleashed

"Let me be accurate in these thoughts, for there is a chance that if this is read by the casual reader I may be taken as insane."

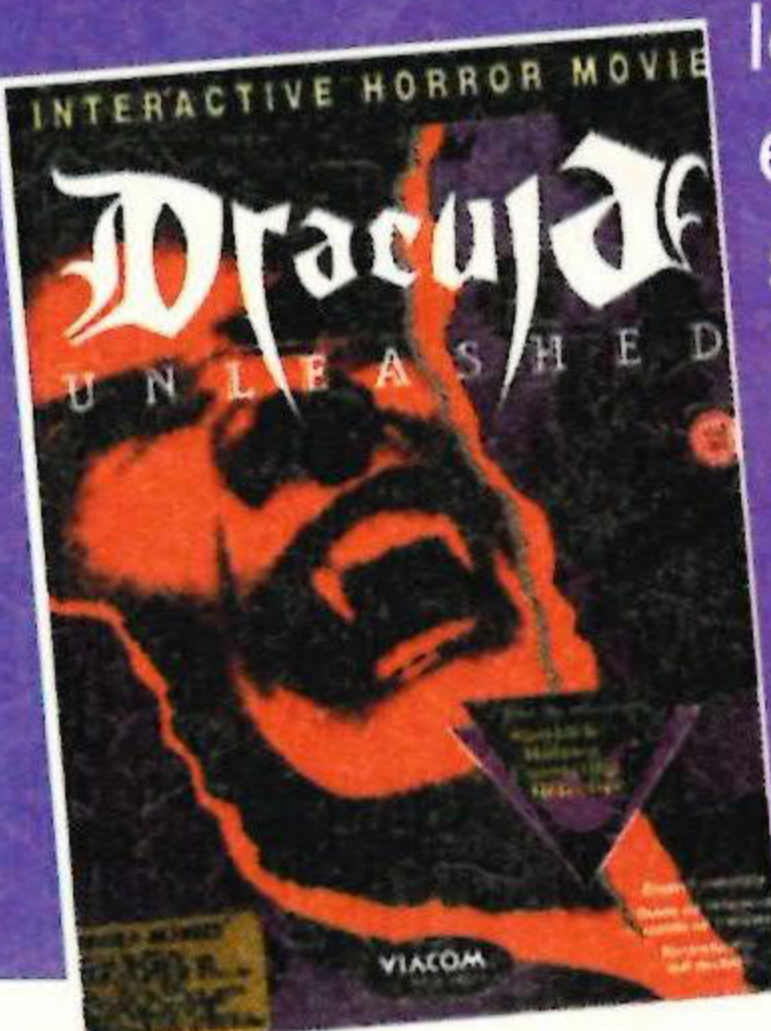
Viacom have done an admirable job in translating Stoker's original book onto CD. It would have been easy for them to take the more popular characters from the film and exploit fans of Coppola's interpretation, but by studying the novels closely they have added much more depth and credibility to the game.

Sadly, though, the novelty of this game format is beginning to wear a bit thin now. At first, you could put up with the ropy film clips, purely because they were as close to real-life footage as had been got on CD. Nowadays, I would have thought Viacom could have done a more polished job. The actual structure of the game is still no more advanced than Sherlock, which means there's

some sort of award.

In fact, some of the cabbies' accents are so bad that I couldn't bear to use them, and ended up jumping out of the cab and getting in the next one with a better accent.

The best bit of Dracula Unleashed is undoubtedly the documentation and footage from Professor Van Helsing. The guy has the perfect accent and is backed by some well-eerie music. Even so, these sort of games have a curiosity value and fans of the book will no doubt be intrigued.



lots of tedious travelling around the streets of London. The acting has certainly got no better and those cringe-worthy accents deserve

IBM PC CD
Producer: VIACOM
Price: £39.99
Available: NOW

68%

JURASSIC Park

Having been thoroughly depressed almost to the point of suicide by Ocean's Jurassic Park conversion for the PC (reviewed on page 40), I was understandably worried about the effects another lame dino-effort would have on my stressed brain.

The SNES version also boasts a smart opening sequence with a big T-Rex head looking out at you with an I'm-about-to-be-violently-sick type of grin on its face. Luckily what follows is somewhat more palatable.

Grant appears standing in the big gateway from the film. Cue voice over: "Welcome to Jurassic Park!". He's equipped with an electricity-gun, and you must guide him around the jungle zapping reptiles and trying to figure out what to do. The electricity-gun is only really useful for crisping-up the little dinosaurs that run along behind you and bite your butt. For the bigger variety you

need something more extreme. Luckily there is enough military hardware lying around to take over a small South American country. You can pick up a shotgun (blast-worthy), a grenade-launcher (very violent), and a rocket launcher (powerfully destructive). The

Pretty neat, eh? rocket launcher will take out most things including Raptors (for a while), but if the T-Rex shows up, you're still better off legging it.

Every so often a cue-card will flash up on the screen with either a tip like "don't shoot at the ostrich-things, because they'll stampede all over you," or an instruction like, "find the

Raptor eggs before they start hatching all over the shop".

The environment design of Jurassic is really clever, and you get a real sense of scale when you're wandering around in it. The only problem with this is that similarly to the PC version, it's very frustrating when you get killed and have to go about five miles through a section you've already done.

Entering buildings is surprising, because your viewpoint suddenly changes to a first-person perspective as you walk around the corridors. Ocean have achieved a passable virtual reality type section here, and it's actually quite scary opening doors, wondering what's on the other side. Inside the bunker you need infra-red goggles because it's so dark – well scary.

Jurassic Park on the SNES is a massive improvement on the abysmal PC effort, but it's



Trek inside the visitors' centre and the view switches to this.



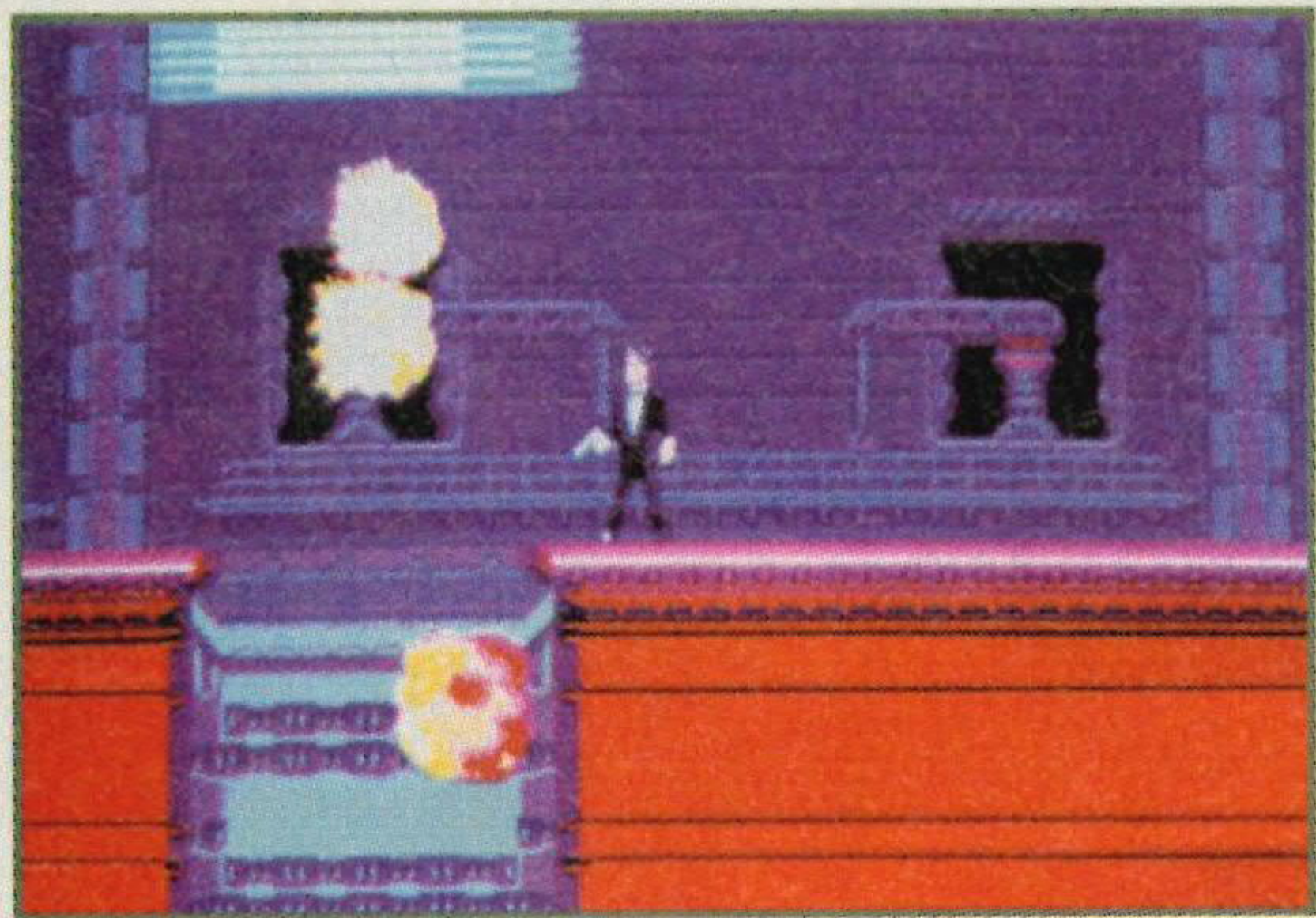
still let down slightly by gameplay. Although the graphics are good, and the musical score is really excellent, once you have played the game for a couple of hours you are unlikely to see anything new and will eventually get bored wandering around the screen shooting things.

SUPER NES
Producer: OCEAN
Price: £49.99
Available: NOW

72%

JAMES BOND

007 the duel



do shoot back, but most of them are hanging out of portholes, which means that for some reason you can't shoot them, which is very annoying. Also, some of the wooden boxes start dropping when they are off the top of the screen. This means you don't see them until they have crushed poor James' head to a horrible spongy mess all over the deck. Now that's not very sporting, is it?

Domark have done a good job on the title sequence to this game about that top-hole old boy from the Ian Flemming novels. Unfortunately that's the only impressive thing about it.

Your mission is to shoot everyone you see and pick up suitcases to get extra points. Most of the rest of the game consists of jumping around platforms on ships and various other Bond-type locations, while avoiding being hit by a big goldfish jumping out of the water (just like in the films...) or bashed on the head by a huge great falling wooden box.

Some of the blokes from SMERSH, or whoever it is,



James Bond is reasonable graphically, and the game gets better when you have learned to proceed with caution, but there's just not enough variation to sustain your interest for long.

GAME GEAR
Producer: DOMARK
Price: £27.99
Available: NOW

60%

super

BOMBERMAN



Bomberman has a long and distinguished history. It first came out years ago as a two-player game on the NES, but found its real home on the PC Engine where five players could blow up each other. Suddenly, last year, someone in the UK actually

the other three have died – by inducing severe panic by shrinking the play area when the time starts to run out by making the walls close in.

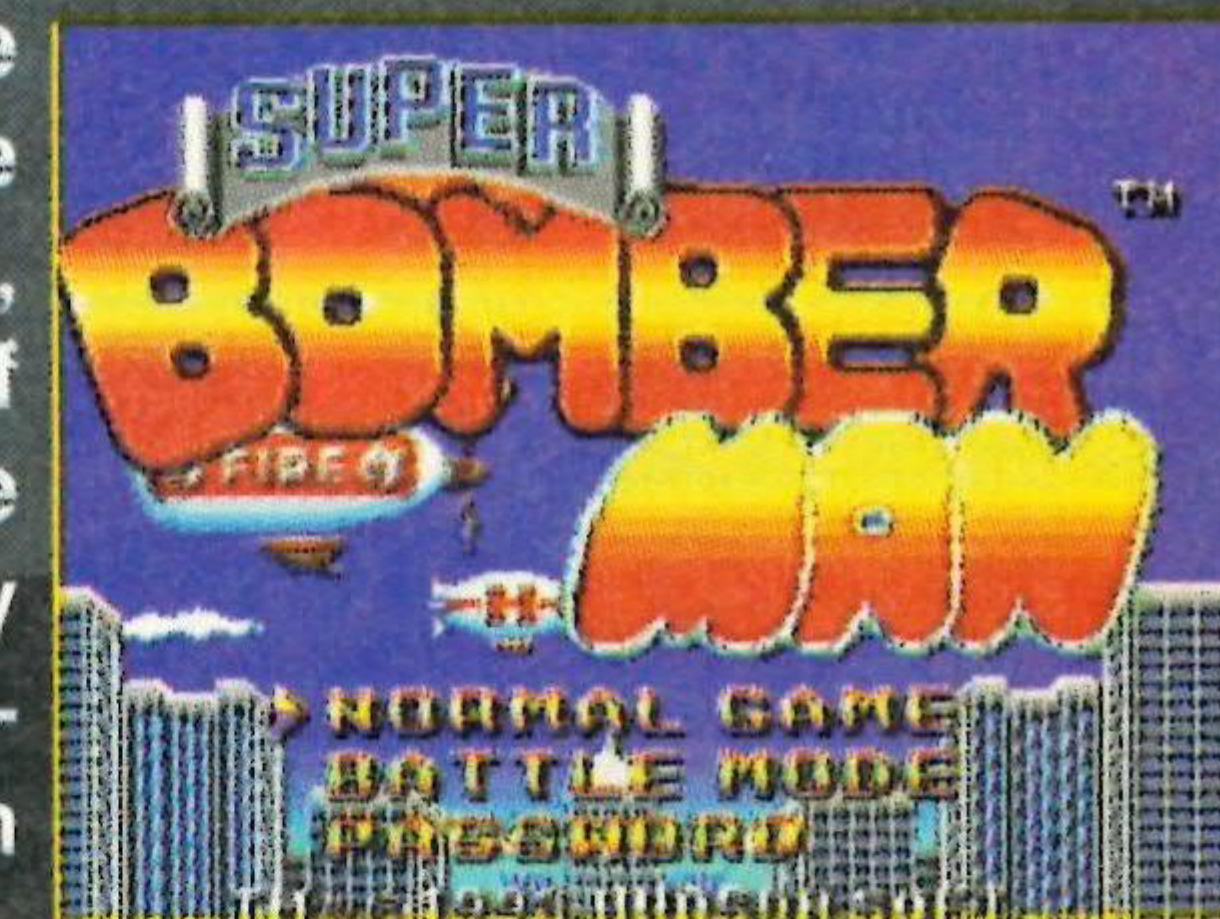
Virgin bombers need know very little to start playing. You are a bomber, and basically have to get the other bombers on screen before they get you. And while



Four-player action at its finest. Above the quarter of bombers are, remarkably, all still alive. That boxing glove icon in the middle of the screen will allow a bomber to punch bombs away from him – useful if you're still in a corner

anyone can prove a worthy bomber with just the basics – dropping a bomb – things get really interesting when you start to push or kick bombs around the screen. Duds provide a constant surprise, too, as do the tunnels where the computer players often hide a nice present for you!

At the end of the day, though, if you were incredibly destructive with the original, you'll be right at home here. The five-player adaptor works a treat, and is a must-buy for any one who gets the game. If you thought two-player sports games were fun, just imagine having five players let loose with limitless bombs. An all-time classic in every incarnation.



Every location has its problem. Here you can plant bombs in tunnels – but so can the computer!

SUPER NES
Producer: SONY
Price: £44.99
Available: NOW



95%



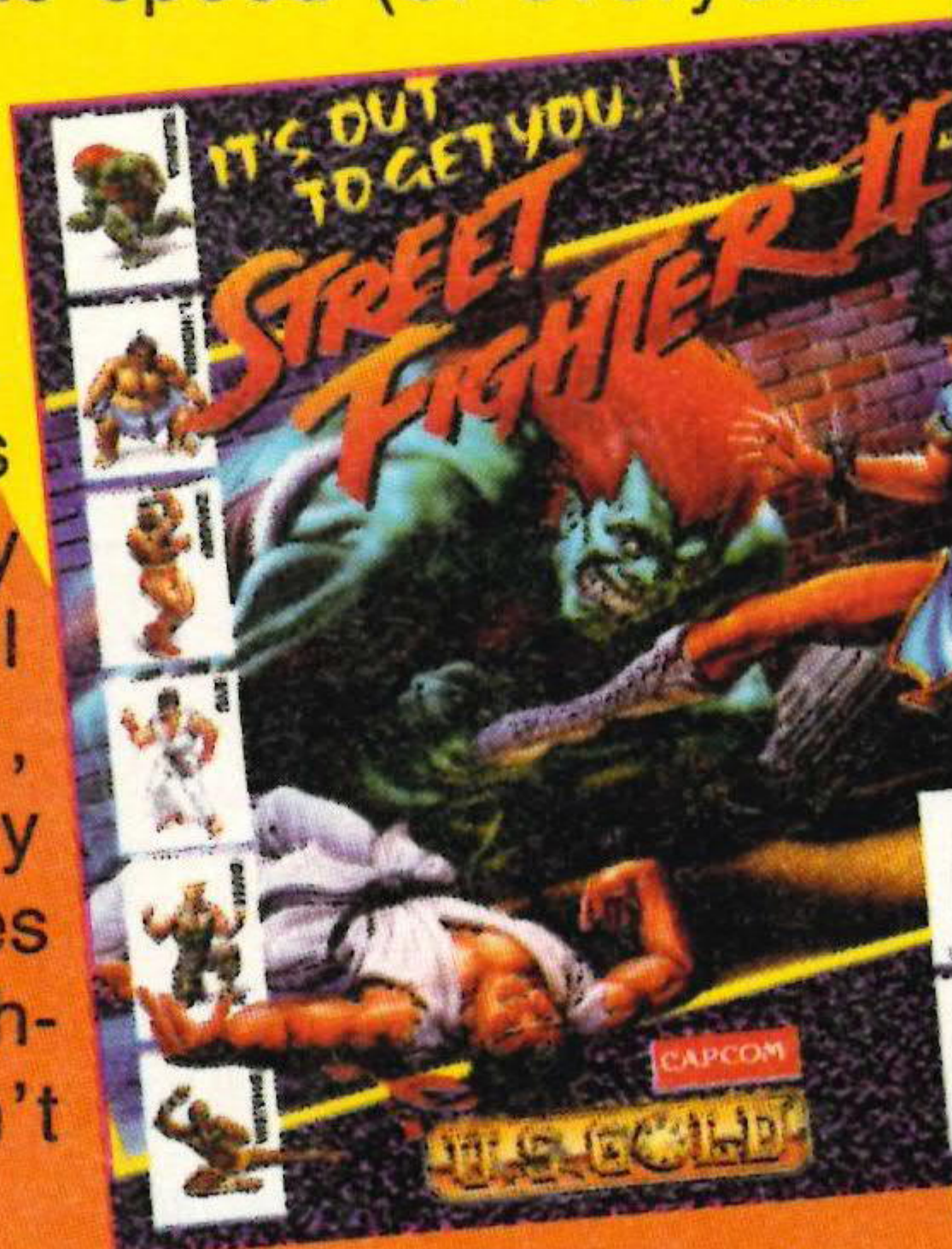
Gameplay is noticeably slower than other versions, especially if you've seen the new hyper-fighting games on the Mega Drive and SNES. This is only a

quick enough to stop. The only real problem with this version of *Street Fighter II* is that aerial moves are a little difficult to pull off, as your opponent can nip out of the way before you land. This tends to disadvantage characters who are good in the air, like Chun-Li and Guile.

Despite a few flaws, its array of characters and special moves make *Street Fighter II* an interesting purchase for fighting fans, especially as there's not too much around in this genre on the PC. The fact that it plays differently to the other versions is a refreshing change when you've played as much *Street Fighter* as we have.

problem if you were expecting super-fast speeds however, as this game plays just as well as any other incarnation of *Street Fighter II*.

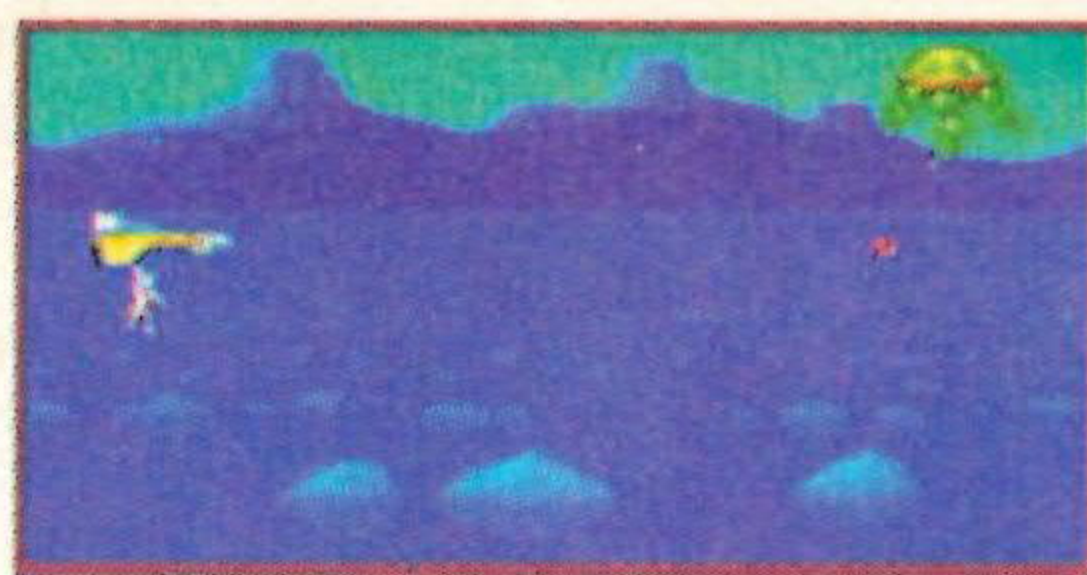
One strange effect of this slowed-up gameplay is that previously ponderous characters like bulky Zangief and snail's-pace Dhalsim have been brought up to speed (or everyone else has been down-graded, perhaps). Dhalsim is now a very powerful character, with his easy special moves which the others aren't



IBM PC
Producer: US GOLD
Price: £29.99
Available: NOW

90%

STREET FIGHTER II



Being one of the old school, what saddens me is the fact that they feel the need to add stupid things like aliens eight times the size of you, and a strange galaxy

OVERKILL

Stargate, Defender, whatever you call, this game format has been around since *Space Invaders*, and has a very loyal, dedicated band of followers. Archer Maclean created the seminal conversion, *Dropzone*



Are these aliens just too big for you?

on the C64, and since then I haven't found any other game that comes close for sheer frenetic action.

Overkill has obviously been programmed by someone who absolutely adores the arcade machine – you have to be dedicated to convert a ten-year-old arcade machine and then expect people to pay good money for it – and to give them their due, they certainly have captured the original's raw gameplay.

map progression system. Admittedly, I'd have probably complained if the conversion had been identical, moaning on about the programmers' laziness and lack of adventure. But the way I see it, either do a 32-bit version to the max – with a massive play area (perhaps 3-D?), every sprite towering over you, etc – or just do the plain, simple original in its perfect form. *Overkill* is like someone wanted to do the former, but couldn't let go of the original.

Still, this is completely over-the-top, blast everything in sight, up against the odds, action with explosive sound, lightning gameplay and challenging enemies. So, I suppose, I shouldn't complain...

AMIGA
Producer: MINDSCAPE
Price: £25.99
Available: NOW

82%

STREET FIGHTER II

SPECIAL CHAMPION EDITION

Capcom took so long about it that everyone was wondering if they were going to bother, but finally the curtains rolled back and there was the most prayed-for game in the history of Sega consoles – *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition*.

Beat-'em-up fans fed up to the back teeth with endless games of *Mortal Kombat* saw light at the end of the tunnel. Capcom have made sure everybody knows that it's in the biggest cart ever produced for the Mega Drive, but just how can they justify charging 60 quid for a Mega Drive game, albeit 24Mbit?

The familiar music has been well converted and comes across sounding like a Ray Manzarek electric



Fast? You'll be knocked off your feet with the Mega Drive version piano solo from one of The Doors' early 1970s albums. The characters are all present and cor-

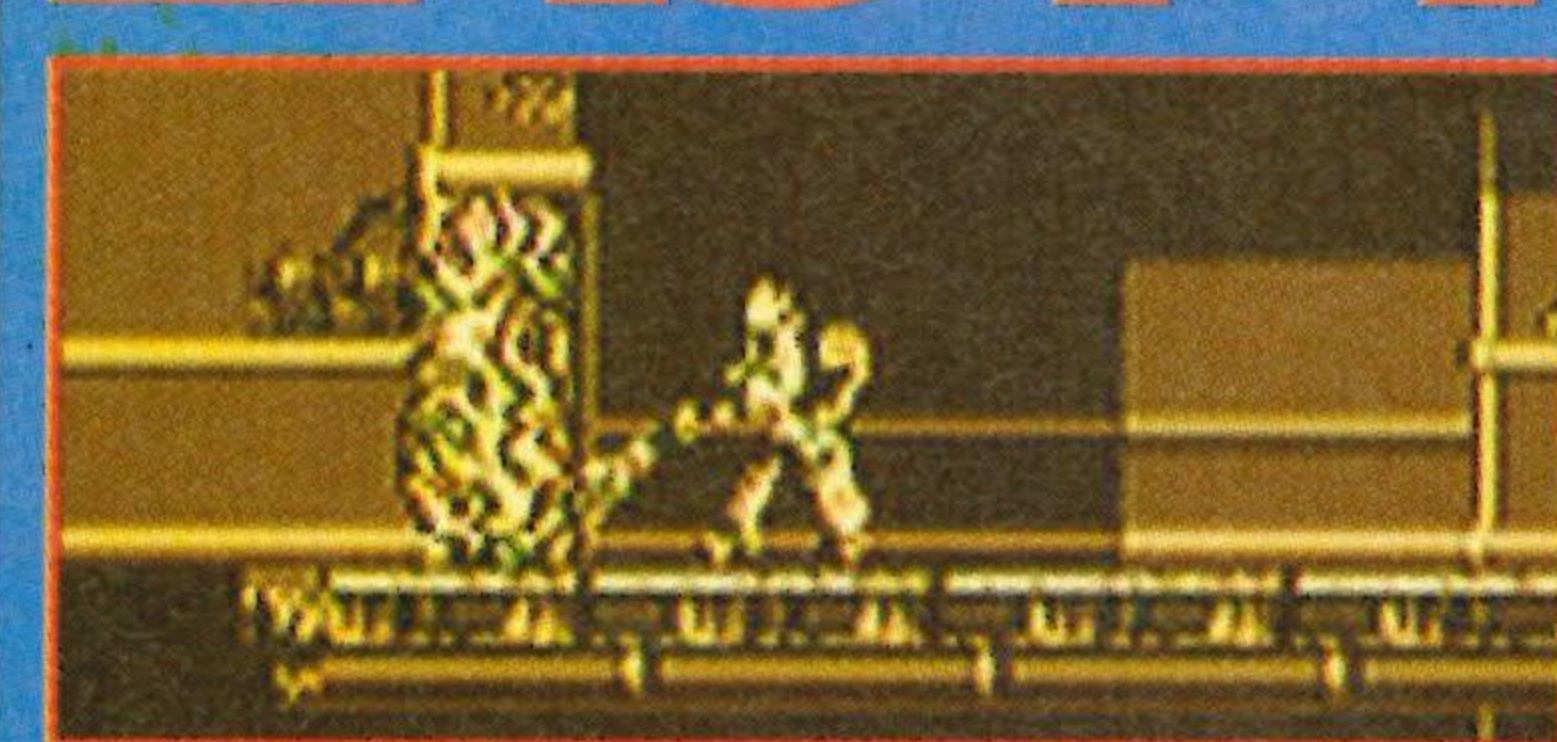
rect, including the bosses: Vega from Spain, who enjoys stripping you with a well-aimed steel claw or diving onto your head from a great height; Balrog, the Tyson-lookalike boxer with the mega punch; Sagat, the tall kick-boxer from Thailand; and the scary M Bison in his best bus conductor's uniform.

A lot of people were worried that the Mega Drive's colour palette wasn't up to recreating the backgrounds. Well they were wrong, the doubting fools! The backgrounds are easily as good as on any other format, and many of them look even better than the celebrated SNES version.

The speed is unbelievable; you can put the hyper-fighting speed up to nine stars, which is really too fast unless you have just drunk 26 cups of very strong coffee. If you try it in any other state of mind you'll be risking a triple thumb hernia. The best thing about it is that the integrity of the sprites is retained throughout – the speeded-up motion doesn't cause flickering as you might have expected.

There's also a feature on this version that no other format's got, the

LAST ACTION HERO



Arnie puts a fire out in Last Action Hero – yeah, right, just like Arnie

Last Action Hero, the movie, turned out to be better than a lot of people expected. That is, most people thought it would be dreadful and it turned out to be mediocre. There was a chance the same might be true of the game of the film. It was a chance I had to take.

You control Arnie, obviously, who has to fight his way through a building on his way to a really heroic act. The trouble is that there are a load of blokes who would rather he'd kept to films like *Kindergarten Cop* and *Twins* where there was no danger of a videogame tie-in because they were so lamentably poor. These blokes try to deter Arnie from his course by punching him in the face and shooting him. Arnie has to

try and kick them in the teeth first. The main part of the action in *Last Action Hero* consists of running around corridors catching pieces of paper, then putting out fires (just not like the movie). If you didn't collect all the pieces of paper, you can't put the fire out, which is so similar to real life that after playing the game I had to go and seek counselling because I could no longer tell the difference between fantasy and reality. It's difficult to describe what an utterly, unbelievably poor excuse for a game *Last Action Hero* is.

MEGA DRIVE
Producer: SONY
Price: £24.99
Available: NOW

15%

HERO

SEWER SHARK

This was programmed about six months ago, and has only just reached the shelves officially in the UK, so it's not likely to hold out against newer releases like *Thunderhawk*.

The game is preceded by a length video introduction with some woman who looks like Vasquez from *Aliens*, only not as sexy and nowhere near as good at acting. She shows you your ship and introduces you to your co-pilot, who looks a bit like Dennis Quaid, but with the reservations applied to the other character. This chap shouts all the time and explains that you're nickname is now "Dog Meat" for some reason.

You then shoot off down the tunnel and use the moveable crosshair in the middle of the screen to shoot cats, bats and rats who are hanging out in the sewers. Very occasionally, a tunnel branches off from the one you're going down. Sometimes an arrow lights up meaning you have to go down a tunnel in that direction if you have time to respond in the quar-



ter of a second it gives you. If you haven't already guessed, *Sewer Shark* is a complete waste of time apart from the promising background graphics. If you took away those, which are just CD recordings anyway; you'd be left with something resembling *Afterburner* on the Mega Drive, with worse graphics and no gameplay. A sad effort.



MEGA-CD
Producer: SONY
Price: £44.99
Available: NOW

32%

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GAME GEAR

MORTAL KOMBAT

00C48848 Infinite energy.
00C40B07 Infinite continues.

SHINOBI II - THE SILENT FURY

00C04004 Infinite lives.
00C02404 Infinite energy.
00C04109 Unlimited Ninjutsu points.
00C028FF Activate all new Ninja's.
00C027FF All crystals have been collected.
00C02005 Go straight to round 5 (enemy base).
00C04102 Infinite magic.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

00D29803 Infinite lives.

TERMINATOR 2

00DD0F04 Infinite lives.

GAMEBOY

ADVENTURES OF ROCKY & BULWINKLE

010251DD Infinite lives.
010357DD Infinite energy.

BLUES BROTHERS

010337C3 Infinite energy.

BONK'S ADVENTURE

01031ECD Infinite lives.

BOULDERDASH

0101C9D7 When Action Replay is enabled, collect 1 more crystal for level exit to appear.
04C7F0D7 Sets timer to 199.
010362D7 Infinite lives.

SWAMP THING

0840C7C1 Infinite energy.

TERMINATOR 2 - ARCADE GAME

0204D7FF Infinite lives.

TERMINATOR 2 - JUDGEMENT DAY

08E0BDD8 Infinite energy.
0A01D1D0 Go straight to exit.

THE FLASH

0103E5C0 Infinite lives.
084870C1 Infinite energy.
088F71C1 Infinite surge power.
070979C1 Infinite time.

TINY TOONS

0102C3C9 Infinite lives.
0102F0C9 Infinite energy.
0103F1C9 Infinite weapons for Bugs.
0103F2C9 Infinite weapons for Daffy.
0103F3C9 Infinite weapons for Porky.

TOM AND JERRY

01034ED5 Infinite lives.
043B1AD5 Infinite time (turn off at the end of each level).

WAVERACE

012650D0 Infinite time.

WWF WRESTLING

08A020C0 Infinite energy bar.

MASTER SYSTEM

GLOBAL GLADIATORS

00D0E905 Infinite lives.
00D0BA3F Infinite energy.

RASTAN

00C02064 Unlimited energy.
00C01703 Invincible.
00C14A15 Start at the final level.

RENEGADE

00C24BA0 Unlimited energy for player 1 and player 2.
00C3AB03 Infinite lives for both player 1 and 2.
00C21E0X Mission select. Replace X with 0-3.

R TYPE

00CE0103 Infinite lives.

SAGIA

00C82602 Unlimited lives.

SEGA ARCADE SMASH HITS

00C02104 Infinite lives for breakout.
00C02104 Infinite lives for Centipede.

MEGA DRIVE

AQUATIC GAMES EUROPEAN CART

00719652B8 Clock runs slower (100 metre splash)
00A78E52B8 Clock runs slower (kipper watching codes).
0016340703 Enter with code below to give 7 attempts at Hop, Skip and Jump.

0089320006 Use with code above.
009F8852B8 Clock runs slower (Bouncy castle).
00A3765C30 Style points X6 (Bouncy castle).
00832C6002 Feed Bag never goes empty (Feeding time).
008F2E52B8 Clock runs slower (shell shooting).
007E3E52B8 Clock runs slower (Tour De Grass codes).
007B0052B8 Clock runs slower (Leap frog codes).
001C10700X Bonus multiplayer is X.

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007B0052B8 Clock runs slower (Leap frog codes).
001C10700X Bonus multiplayer is X.

COOL SPOT

FF078A0039 Increase cool % fast.
FF078C0035 Unlimited lives.
FF07700001 Invulnerable.
FFF5120000 Higher Jump.
FFF57C0008 Unlimited power.
FF07140031 Stop the timer (turn Action Replay off at the end of each level).
FFF5E00007 Infinite energy.
FF07140038 Infinite time.
FF77700CD Slows timer.

JURASSIC PARK

FF003B00FF Unlimited blue banded darts.
FF003D00FF Unlimited stungun.
FF003E00FF Unlimited gas grenades.

STREET FIGHTER II (Special Champion Edition)

FF80C10000 Special moves in the air for player 1.
FF83410000 Special moves in the air for player 2.

FF80C10000 Special moves in the air for player 1.
FF83410000 Special moves in the air for player 2.

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FF83410000 Special moves in the air for player 2.

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FF83410000 Special moves in the air for player 2.

FF80C10000 Special moves in the air for player 1.
FF83410000 Special moves in the air for player 2.

FF972A0099

Stops the time.
FF804300B0 Infinite energy for player 1.
FF82C300B0 Infinite energy for player 2.
FF81DB000X Replace X with the character number 0-B to fight as player 1.

TINY TOONS ADVENTURES

FFF0B0B0003 Infinite energy.
FFF0900002 Infinite lives.
FFF0F00032 Gives 1 special helper each time you pick up a carrot (1 carrot=50 carrots). Switch the Action Replay off at the end of level and back on at the beginning of the next one.

FFF0B0B0003 Infinite energy.
FFF0900002 Infinite lives.
FFF0F00032 Gives 1 special helper each time you pick up a carrot (1 carrot=50 carrots). Switch the Action Replay off at the end of level and back on at the beginning of the next one.

ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGHBORS

FFFA7500FF Unlimited water for squirt gun (player 1).

SUPER NES

COOL SPOT

7E00D403 Infinite lives for Coolspot.
7E00D00F Unlimited energy for Coolspot.
7E00CEFF Unlimited time.
7E00AAXX Level select. Replace XX with 00-10 (these include bonus levels).

COOL WORLD

7E021B03 Infinite lives.
7E02C001 Invincible.
7E00ED09 Infinite money.

GOOF TROOP

7E1A5500 Allows the USA version to work on UK machines.
7E015703 Infinite lives for player 1.
7E01D703 Infinite lives for player 2.
7E011D06 Unlimited energy for player 1.

LOST VIKINGS

7E0FE906 Infinite lives for Eric.
7E0FEB06 Infinite lives for Baleog.
7E0FED06 Infinite lives for Olaf.

MORTAL KOMBAT

7E03B023 Slow motion.
7E0471FC Use with code below to go to the end of the game.
7E0472FF Use with code above to go to the end of the game.
7E00420X Replace X with stage number (0-B).
7E04B958 Infinite energy player 1.
7E19 6E02 Player 1 only needs one win to go through to the next stage.
7E00E205 Activates the reptile as the computer.
7E004601 No Weapons
7E00080X Replace X with background number (0-6).
7E012699 Infinite time.

7E0E9505 Unlimited plasma rifle.
7E0E9905 Unlimited bear claw mine.
7E0EAD05 Unlimited jump jets.

STREET FIGHTER II

7E0D8000 Fireballs at every super move.
7E0D1D10 No fire balls.
7E0CB201 No super moves for player 1.
7E0EB201 No super moves for player 2.
7E0C030C Auto fire balls, turn off once you win then on during next round.

STREETFIGHTER II TURBO

7E0530B0 Infinite energy for player 1.
7E0730B0 Infinite energy for player 2.
7E18F399 Stops the time.
7E054C22 Player 1 burns when hit.
7E074C22 Player 2 burns when hit.
7E054515 Changes the colour of player 1.
7E052D22 Player 1 has low jumps and special moves.
7E072D22 Player 2 has low jumps and special moves.
7E05D10X Chooses the character for player 1. Replace X with one of the following for the appropriate character, 8=Bison, 9=Sagat, A=Balrog, B=Vega.
7E07D10X Chooses the character for player 2. Replace X with one of the following

for the appropriate character, 8=Bison, 9=Sagat, A=Balrog, B=Vega.

7E05D001 Player 1 only needs to win one round. Turn Action Replay on before the stage and then off before killing the opponent.
7E07D001 Player 2 only needs to win one round. Turn Action Replay on before the stage and then off before killing the opponent.
7E1C880E Turbo Turbo edition.

7E05E609 Fast fireballs and Sonic Booms for player 1.
7E07E609 Fast fireballs and Sonic Booms for player 2.
7E05E509 Exchanges punch and kick buttons but not specials for player 1.
7E07E509 Exchanges punch and kick buttons but not specials for player 2.

7E05E801 Only special moves for player 1.
7E07E801 Only special moves for player 2.

7E05C609 Stops the counter on the continue screen if player 1 is killed.
7E07C609 Stops the counter on the continue screen if player 2 is killed.

7E00560X Use with below code to select stage and character to fight throughout the game (replace X with 0-B).
7E188E0X Use with above code.

7E05B300 Player 1 cannot be dazed.
7E07B300 Player 2 cannot be dazed.

7E05B300 Player 1 cannot be dazed.
7E07B300 Player 2 cannot be dazed.

7E05B300 Player 1 cannot be dazed.
7E07B300 Player 2 cannot be dazed.

7E05B300 Player 1 cannot be dazed.
7E07B300 Player 2 cannot be dazed.

7E05B300 Player 1 cannot be dazed.
7E07B300 Player 2 cannot be dazed.

7E05D300 Autofire for player 1.
7E07D300 Autofire for player 2.

7E05EA00 Allows player 1 to do special moves in the air.
7E07EA00 Allows player 2 to do special moves in the air.

7E05DC00 Player 1 is always in Turbo colours.
7E07DC00 Player 2 is always in Turbo colours.

7E052FB0 Throw player 1 into the air.
7E0530FF Player 1 dies.

7E052BB0 Player 1 drags along the floor.
7E00BFXX Replace XX with 01,02, 04, 08 or 10 to display different screens (ie. 7E00BF10 only displays the players sprites). You can also add numbers together for other affects, 10+04=14, 04+08=0C.

7E05CE00 Player 1 plays automatically.
7E07CE00 Player 2 plays automatically.

7E09A001 If player 1 starts bleeding it never stops.
7E054701 Auto block.

7E18AB01 You get to see the end of the game after 1 level.
7E188E0X Replace X with 0-E for level select.

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7E188E0X Replace X with 0-E for level select.

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This number will be manned *personally* from **3pm to 6pm** every weekday, when we will be glad to answer any questions you have about the magazine. **Please do not ask for tips, software/hardware problems, subscriptions or advertising on this number at this time.**

From 6pm at night to 3pm the following day, and all day at the weekend, we will be able to take messages on this number. Here you can leave your vote for the *Street Fighter II* survey (see page 22), deposit any tips you have found, or just vent your anger on our answer machine (although we've only just got it, so don't be too cruel to it). Do **not** use the moveable crosshair in the middle of the screen to shoot cats, bats and rats who are hanging out in the sewers. Very occasionally a tunnel branches off from the one you're going down. Sometimes an arrow lights up meaning you should go down a tunnel in that direction. You have time to respond in 10 seconds. Give us a call!

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Do not use the moveable crosshair in the middle of the screen to shoot cats, bats and rats who are hanging out in the sewers. Very occasionally a tunnel branches off from the one you're going down. Sometimes an arrow lights up meaning you should go down a tunnel in that direction. You have time to respond in 10 seconds. Give us a call!

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Over the next 13 pages we bring you the most comprehensive guide to getting the greatest games at the cheapest prices in the safest possible way.

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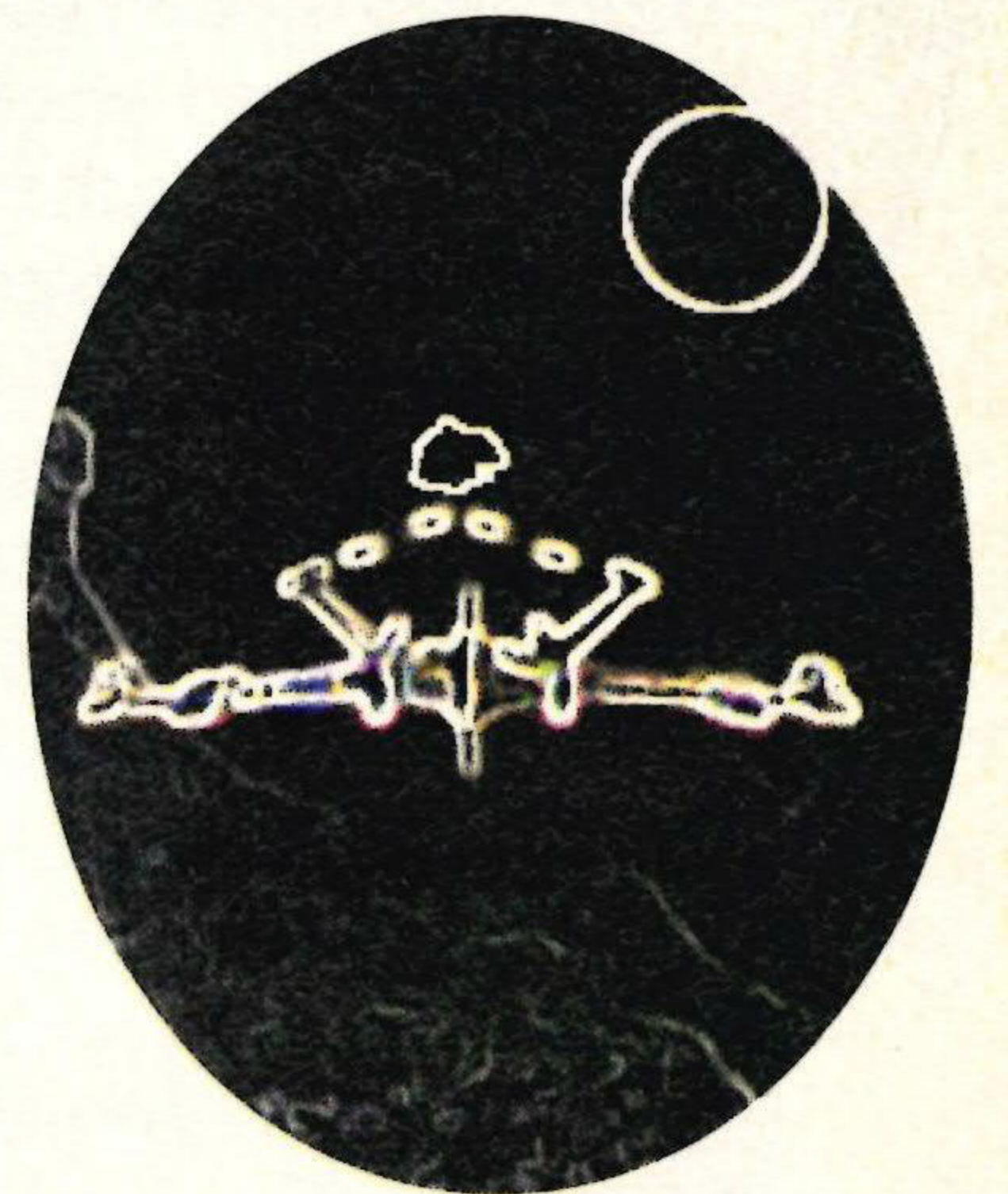
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beat-'em-up



shoot-'em-up



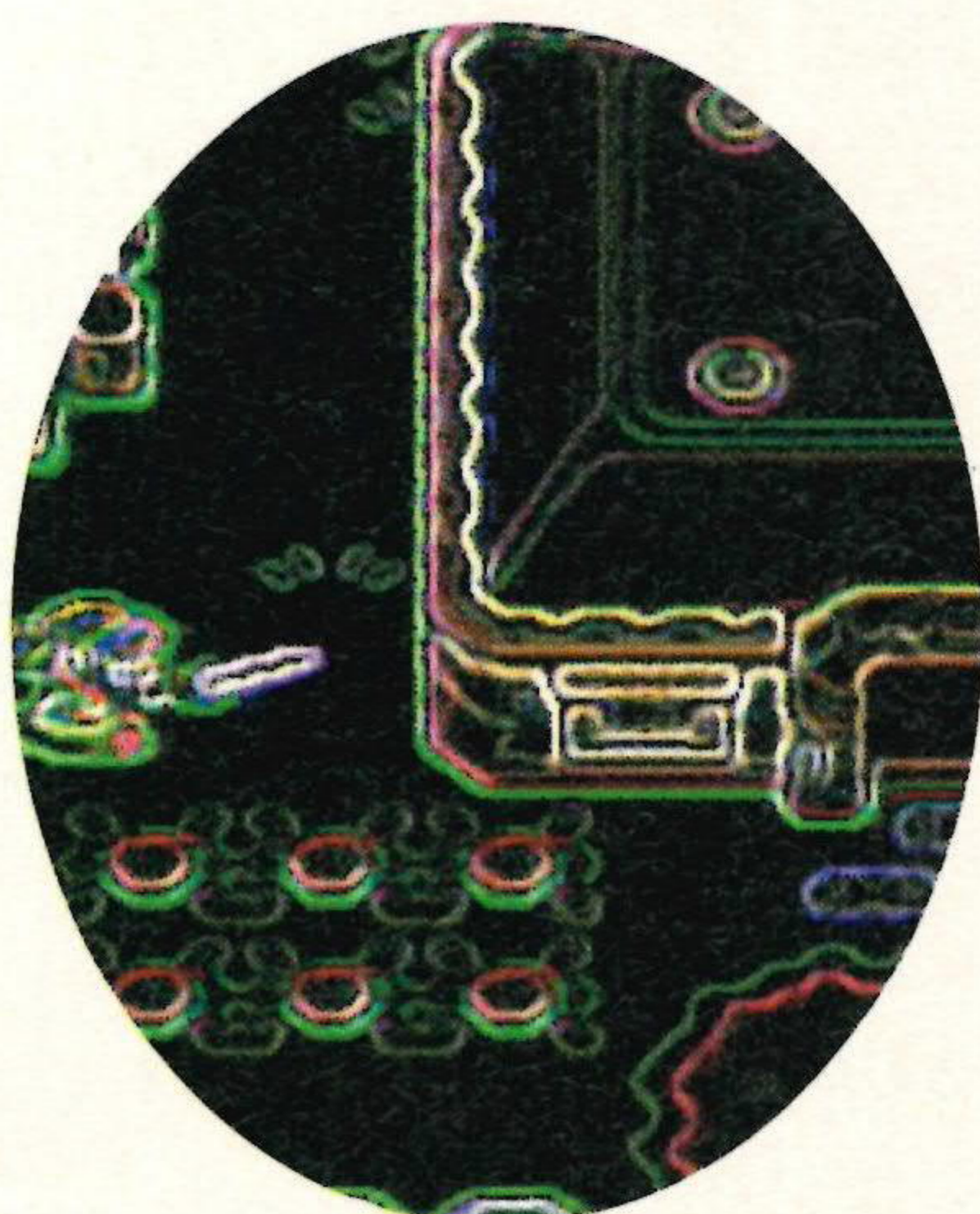
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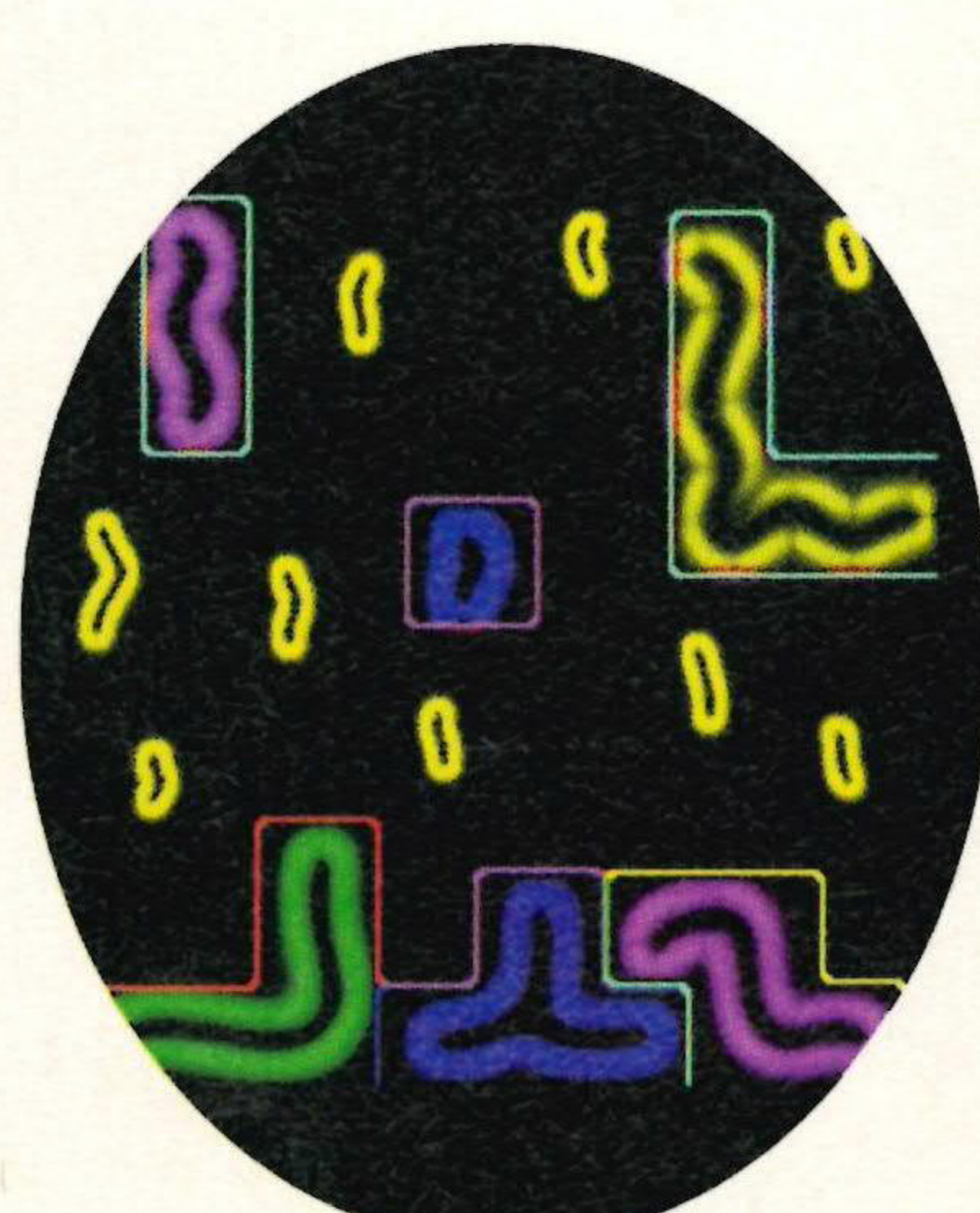
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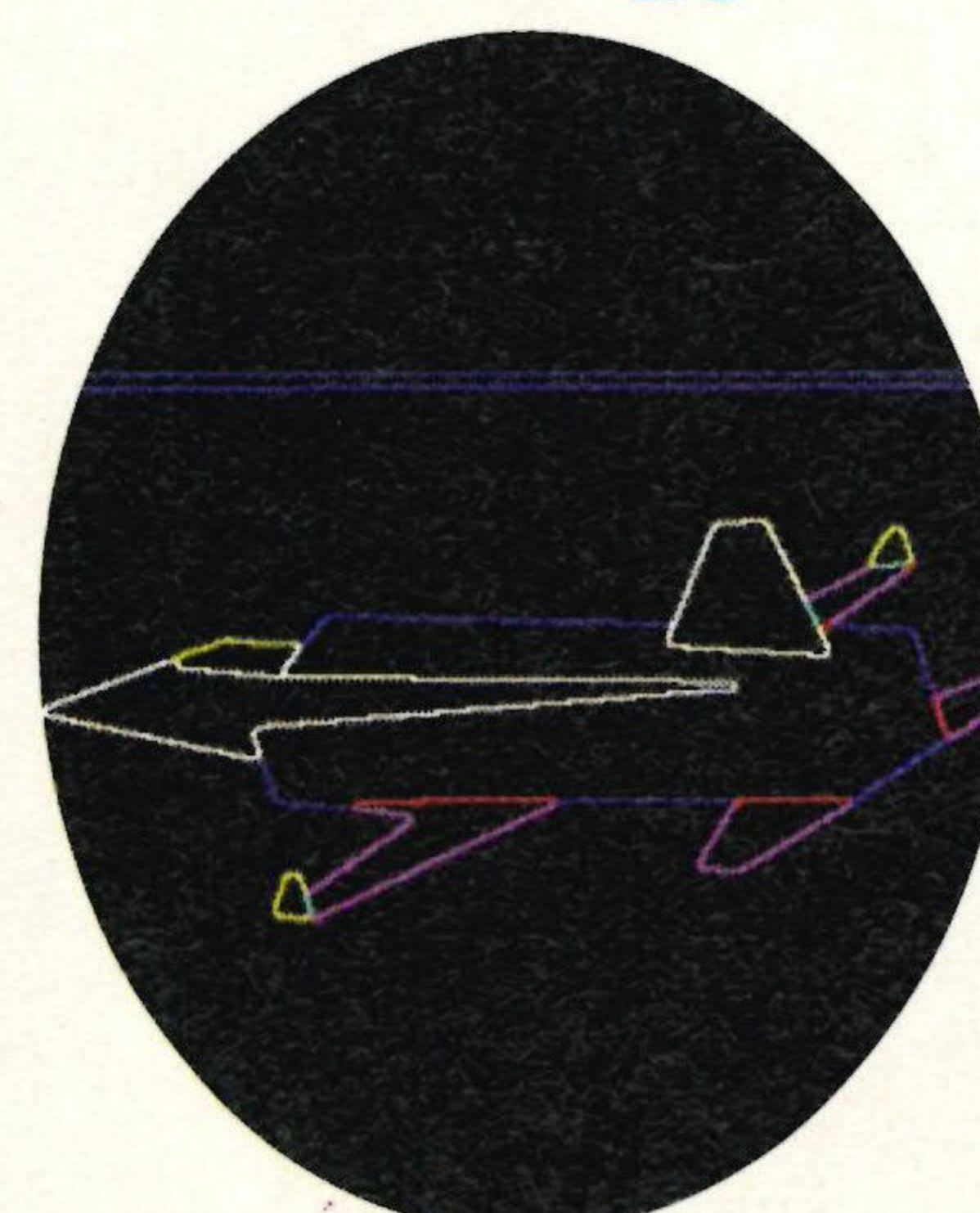
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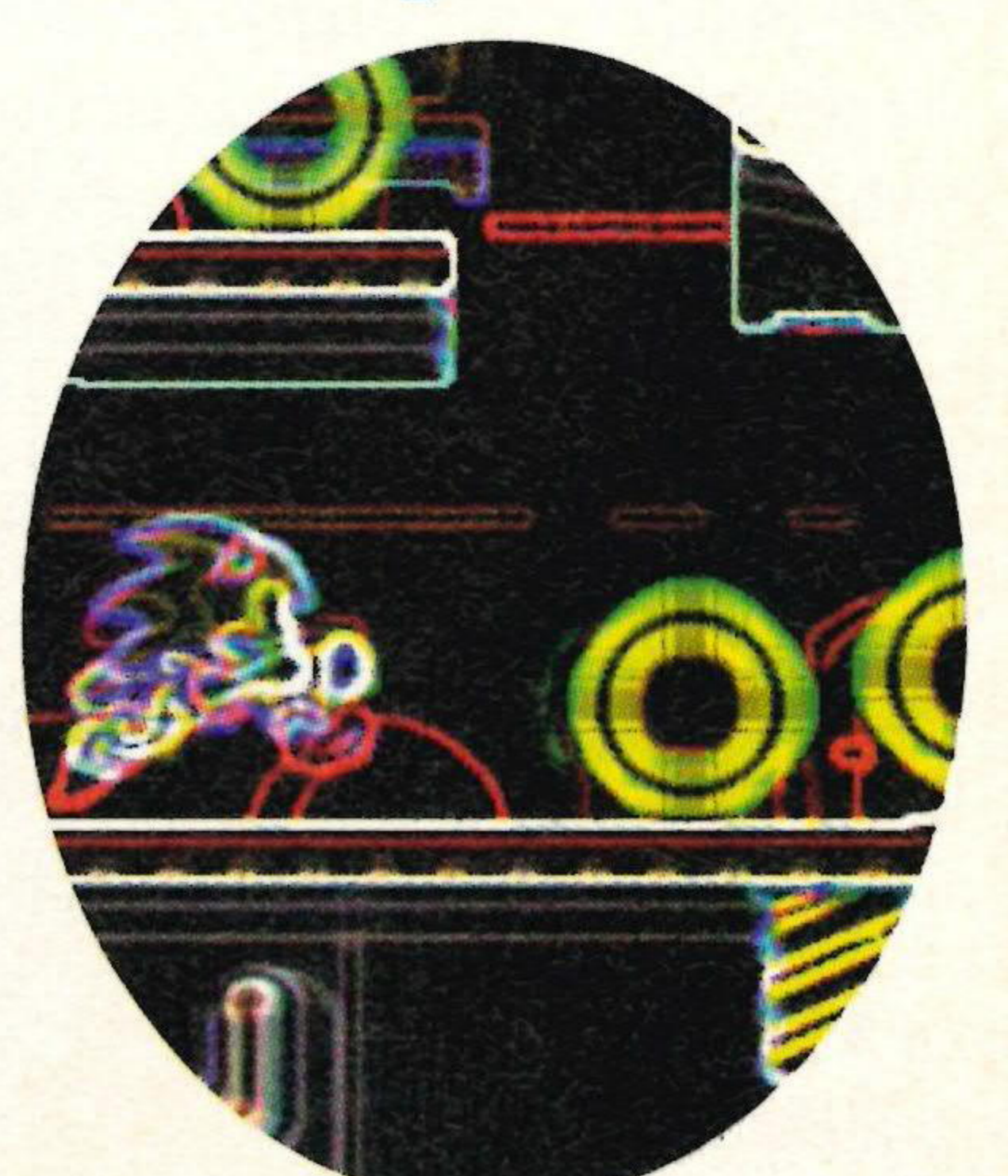
graphic adventure



puzzle



simulation



platform

SENSIBLE SOCCER 93

(Renegade)



Despite its initially uninspiring pitch design and diminutive sprites, this is probably the best soccer sim currently available on the Amiga. A closer examination reveals tightly controllable and highly absorbing gameplay with special skills available to the team in possession of the ball.

Other interesting points include TV facilities, such as instant-replay and a special feature which compiles highlights of the game to be shown at the end. Constant chart-topper since its release.

also recommended

Brutal Sports Football (Millennium)
PGA Tour Golf (Electronic Arts)

WIZKID

(Ocean)



The most surreal, off-beat and probably chemically-induced game ever to appear on your Amiga. You start off controlling a disembodied head which you must bounce around the screen, butting brightly coloured blocks and avoiding (or flattening) various enemies until you

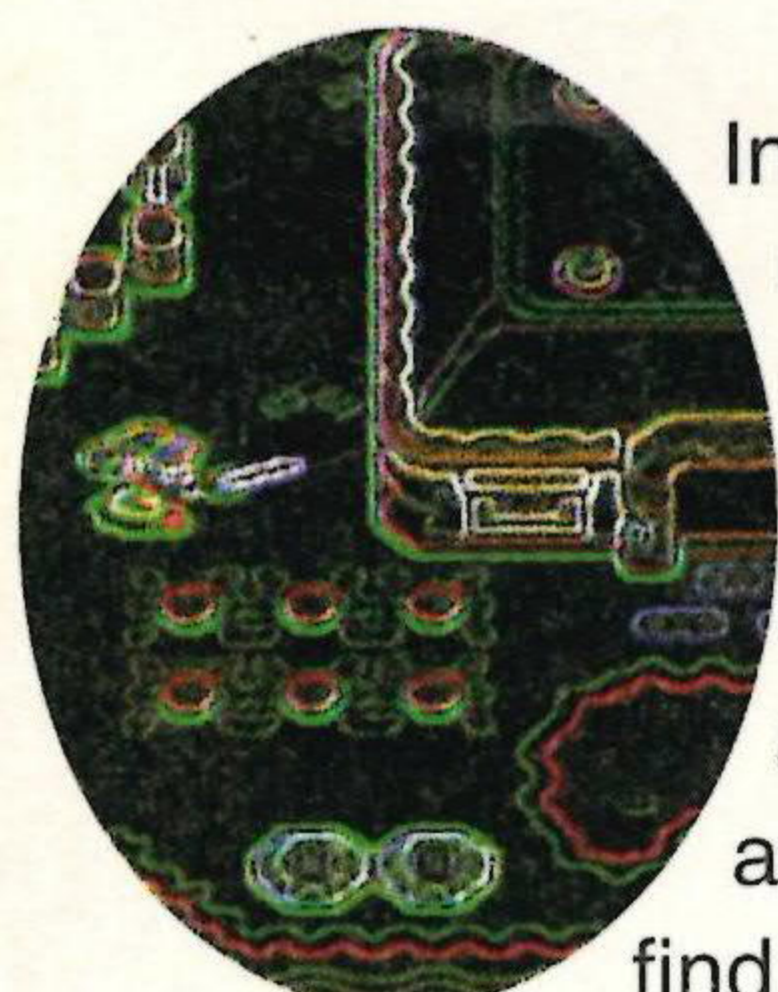
have amounted enough points to progress to the special stage, where the head grows a body and goes off to look for the hidden entrance to the next level. The special stage puzzles all have little clues to help you. *Wizkid* is excellent graphically, extremely addictive and utterly odd.

also recommended

Yo! Jo! (Hudson Soft)
Lionheart (Thalion)

ANOTHER WORLD

(US Gold)



In this huge adventure from US Gold, you control scientist Lester Chaykin, who has accidentally been zapped onto another planet after messing about with a nuclear accelerator. Understandably annoyed by this, Lester must now find a way to return to Earth before he

ends up as lunch for one of the planet's less amicable inhabitants. The game is visually beautiful, with convincing animated film episodes to illustrate certain areas. This is backed up by excellent mood-setting sound. Unlike other games of this immensity, *Another World* does not depend on screen icons to control the lead character; Lester is entirely joystick-motivated, which makes things a lot easier, although the moves take some getting used to. *Another World* is fascinat-

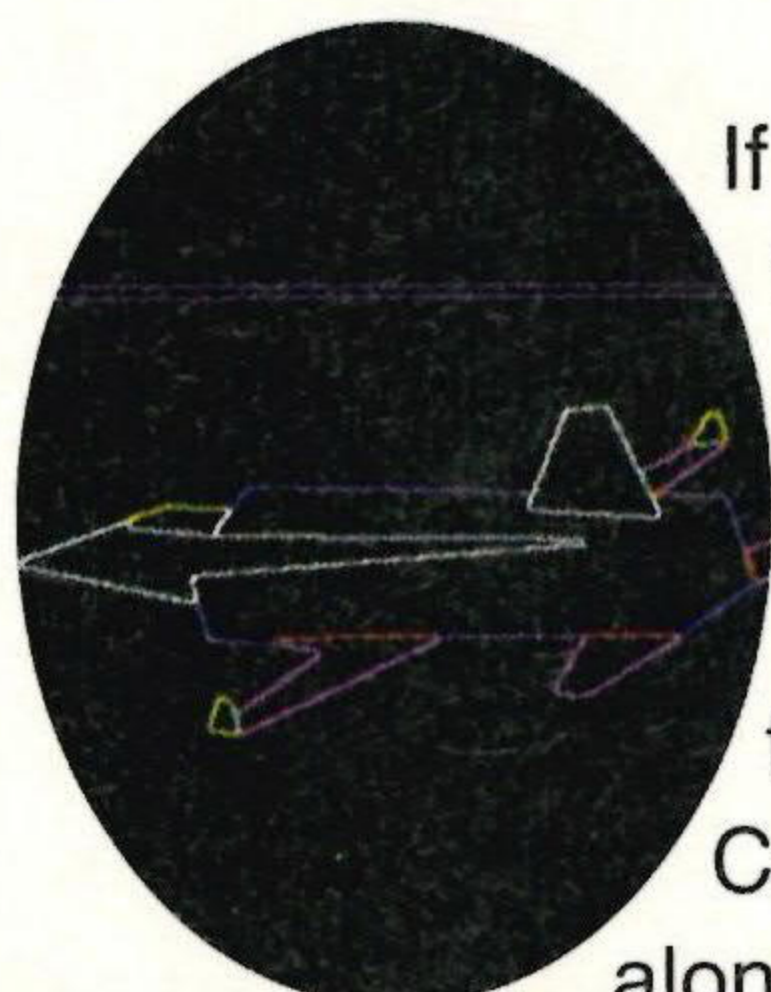
ing to play and will have you in the grips of a raging obsession before long.

also recommended

Flashback (US Gold)
Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (Lucasarts/US Gold)

DOGFIGHT

(MicroProse)



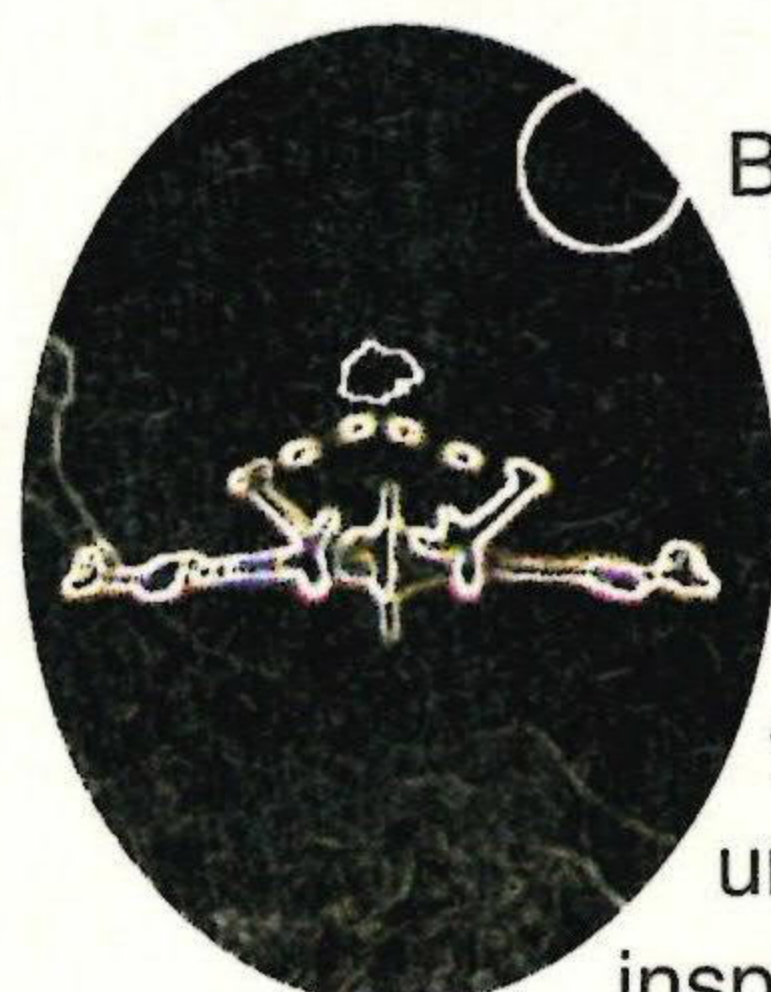
If you like your simulations head-to-head, then buckle up for MicroProse's tour de force in confrontation. With *Dogfight* they have taken all the agile planes from yesteryear (like the Sopwith Camel and Spitfire) and put them alongside high-tech fighter planes of today (like the Falcon). The possibilities are endless, and guaranteed to keep any self-respecting flying buff glued to the cockpit.

also recommended

Gunship 2000 (MicroProse)
B17 Flying Fortress (MicroProse)

SPACE HULK

(Electronic Arts)



Based on the famous Games Workshop boardgame, this furiously violent, but also mentally challenging science-fiction romp is set in the year 40,000AD, at a time when the human Imperium is under threat from hordes of Giger-inspired alien Genestealers inhabiting maze-like ships called Hulks. Your task is to lead a heavily armed squad of Terminator Marines into a Hulk to carry out various missions (which you get to choose out of about 50 on offer) and waste aliens. You can customise your troops with various close and long range weapons, of which there are a wide variety including choice items like the Chain Fist and Storm Bolter. The violence is superb, but there is also a well thought out element of strategy, as you have five Terminators to control at the same time. Even better than the board game.

also recommended

Desert Strike (Electronic Arts)
The Chaos Engine (The Bitmap Bros)

SYNDICATE

(Electronic Arts)



Kind of a strategy/god game/shoot-'em-up, *Syndicate* casts you as an aspiring world dictator. You are in control of a syndicate which must overcome rival groups in order to achieve world domination. To assume control of a country, you must kit out four agents with equipment and (naturally) stacks of weapons, then send them on a mission to do something like assassinate a politician or free imprisoned comrades. If the mission

is successfully completed, the country joins your empire. The missions usually involve ludicrous amounts of gratuitous physical violence, but must also be carefully thought out, as some of them are very challenging. This one will give you a power complex.

also recommended

Sim City Deluxe (Infogrames)
Dune 2 (Virgin)

STREET FIGHTER II

(US Gold)



Sexy Chun-Li with her lightning kick, the bizarre Dhalsim with his rubbery stretch punches and "yoga-fire" breath, and the big green Blanka, who likes to electrocute people and bite off their faces, plus five other odd characters are yours to control in what is unarguably

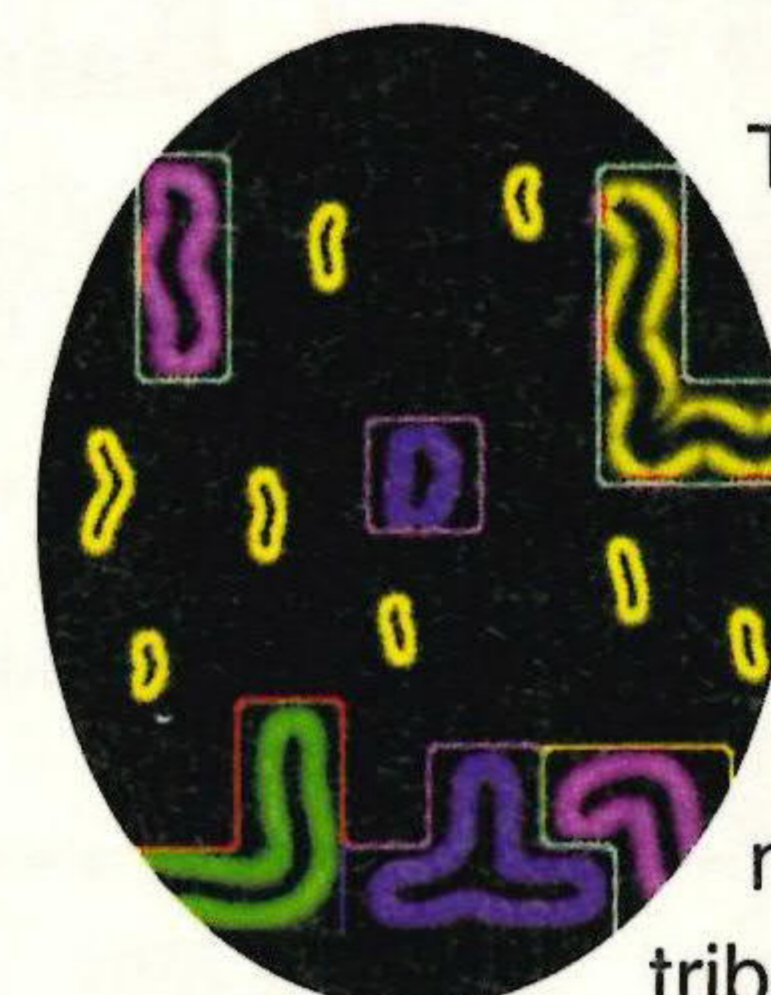
the smartest beat-'em-up yet devised. Every fighter represents a country on a the world map, and when you battle against the computer, your character flies to each country to meet that particular opponent. If you mash them all, a further three slightly tougher ones are provided, and if those are also beaten, the computer will throw the mega-hard Vega at you. When you have some mates around, you can switch it into two-player mode and knock the stuffing out of each other, which is hugely satisfying. Not as quick as the SNES version, but still highly enjoyable.

also recommended

Body Blows (Team 17)
IK+ (System 3)

LEMMINGS 2: THE TRIBES

(Psygnosis)



The opposite of a shoot-'em-up, this sequel to the classic puzzler requires you to keep as many lemmings alive as possible (again!), but this time there's a plot. The lemmings from the original game have now settled in 12

tribes, each of which has got a portion of the sacred lemming talisman which they now need in one piece to avert a mysterious but extremely serious disaster! You are the benign deity who watches over the tribes of hapless lemmings who seem accident-prone to the point of being suicidal. You can prevent their extinction by gifting individual lemmings with special abilities such as tunnelling and building bridges, and in this version there are high-tech lemmings who can fly, thus enabling them to prepare a safe passage through each level for their fellows and eventually piecing together the lost talisman. *Lemmings 2* has a vast number of levels and a password system which lets you skip the areas which you have already mastered.

also recommended

The Lost Vikings (Interplay)
Humans (Mirage)

Back to basics

To prevent loss of data if you have a power flicker, your computer still retains information a few seconds after it is turned off. To stop viruses spreading, turn your computer off for at least 20 seconds before changing game disks. Better safe than infected!

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 93

(Electronic Arts)



Still the best American football sim currently available, John Madden lets you choose a side from any of the 28 NFL teams. Some American football games slip up on the viewpoint, but Madden's is practically perfect, letting you see down the pitch far enough to know what's going on. Switching players is easy and there are a wide variety of differing plays obtainable with movements of the joypad. There are some neat atmospheric touches, like injured players being carted off in an ambulance and team members celebrating after a particularly good tackle, all of which set the game above conventional Am footy fodder. John Madden is the only game which adequately captures the sport's combination of skill, strategy and violence.

also recommended

Super Tennis (Nintendo)

Striker (Elite)

SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS

(Nintendo)



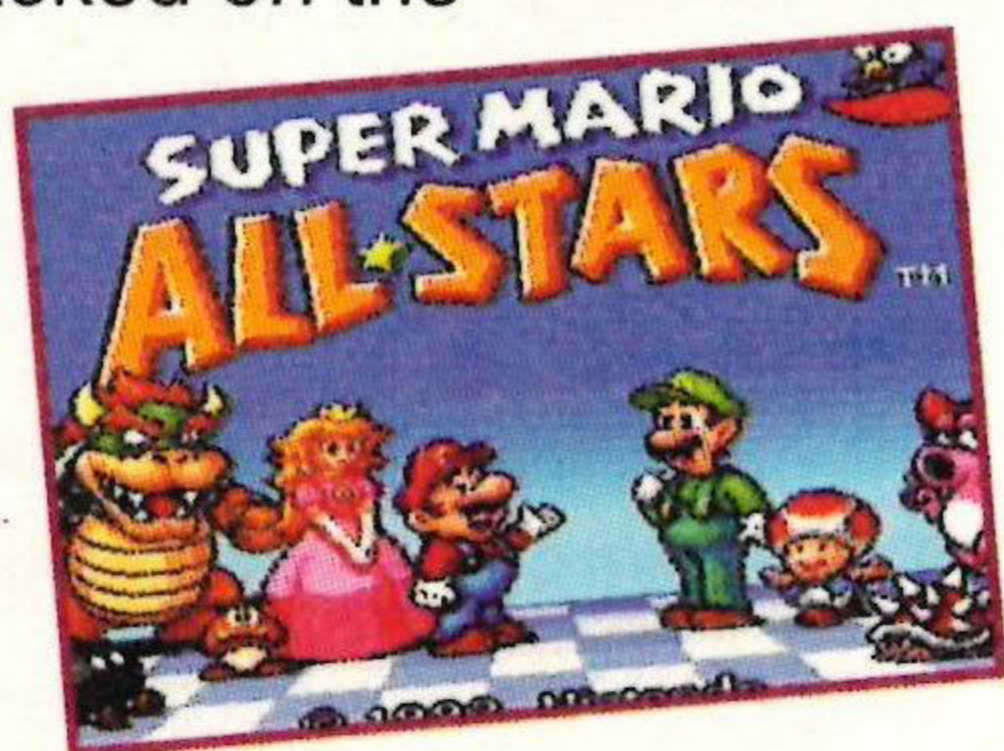
At last Nintendo have released all of the most famous NES Mario titles on one huge SNES cart, with vastly improved graphics and sound plus 16 save slots sprinkled throughout the four games. Packed on the cart are Super Mario Bros, Super Mario Bros 2, Super Mario Bros 3 and The Lost Levels (formerly called Super Mario Bros USA!). All the games work on the same basic principle, and often even contain the same nasties, like piranha flowers, Koopa Troopa squads, cloud-riding Lakitu and, of course, the anti-social wizard Bowser.

All the games have been souped up to exploit the extra graphical advances of the 16-bit machine, so don't expect any ropy old NES graphics here. Without doubt this represents the best value for money of any of the SNES carts.

also recommended

Super Mario World (Nintendo)

The Addams Family (Ocean)



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

(Nintendo)



First there was Mario and then came... Link, the freaky long-eared pixy. Link has had a tough old time of it on the NES, so his first adventure on the SNES tries to introduce new Zelda players to the format, while retaining all of the old games' appeal. As Link, you run around a massive countryside, interacting with other characters to gain information, and more often than not hacking them to pieces with one of the various weapons you find lying around. Zelda is very much an action RPG rather than one of the traditional variety, so don't look for Bible-sized rulebooks and ponderous

combat sequences, just compelling gameplay. A massive and brilliant adventure.

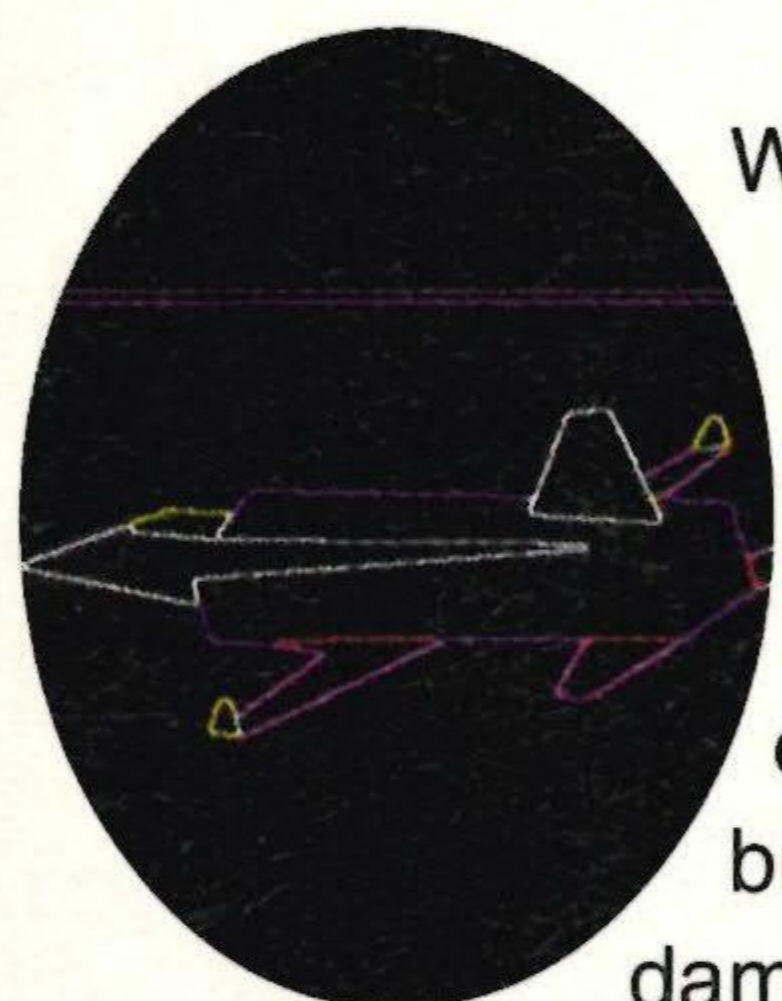
also recommended

Breath of Fire (Capcom)

Soul Blazer (Nintendo)

SUPER MARIO KART

(Nintendo)



When it comes to simulations, the SNES has an advantage over the other consoles due to its amazing Mode 7 rotational and scaling abilities. Of course, when you combine this with the Mario branding, you are bound to have a damn fine looking game that's

playable too. Mario Kart is a one- or two-player racing game, where eight popular characters from the Mario games (Princess, Bowser, Kong, etc) race under-sized karts around numerous fiendish off- and on-road tracks. Complete all the courses and you get to see another new set of tracks. Has plenty of two-player potential with a novel battle mode.



also recommended

Pilotwings (Nintendo)

F-Zero (Nintendo)

ZOMBIES

(Konami)



The world has been invaded by rejects from old horror B-movies, which, aside from the eponymous zombies, include psychotic aliens, decomposing mummies and even a Jason Vorhees-looking chap, complete with a very big chainsaw. There is a two-player

mode, so you and someone else can guide the two characters (a boy and a girl) around each level trying to rescue humans from ending up as lunch for the various undead beasties. To begin with, you are only equipped with a water pistol, but luckily there is a wide assortment of highly deadly weapons lying around. There is even a potion which will turn you into a hideously powerful monster. Zombies is highly original and loads of fun. A huge 55 levels will ensure you don't finish it on the first night.

also recommended

Starwing (Nintendo)

Super Smash TV (Acclaim)

POPULOUS

(Imagineer)



Ever felt like playing god? Then this could be the game for you. A myriad different planets populated by highly religious people are yours to dominate. The object is to annihilate the worshippers of your fellow deities, leaving your own followers in control of each world. The ways you can do this include earthquake, flood, volcano and various other natural disasters, or you can send your people into battle against the unbelievers

and knock seven bells out of them. You can help your population flourish by flattening mountains and raising land from the sea to provide habitable areas for them to live on; the higher your population, the more people pray to you and the higher your "manna" becomes. The more manna you have, the more unpleasant things you can do to rival religious groups. A great ego-booster.

also recommended

Sim City (Nintendo)

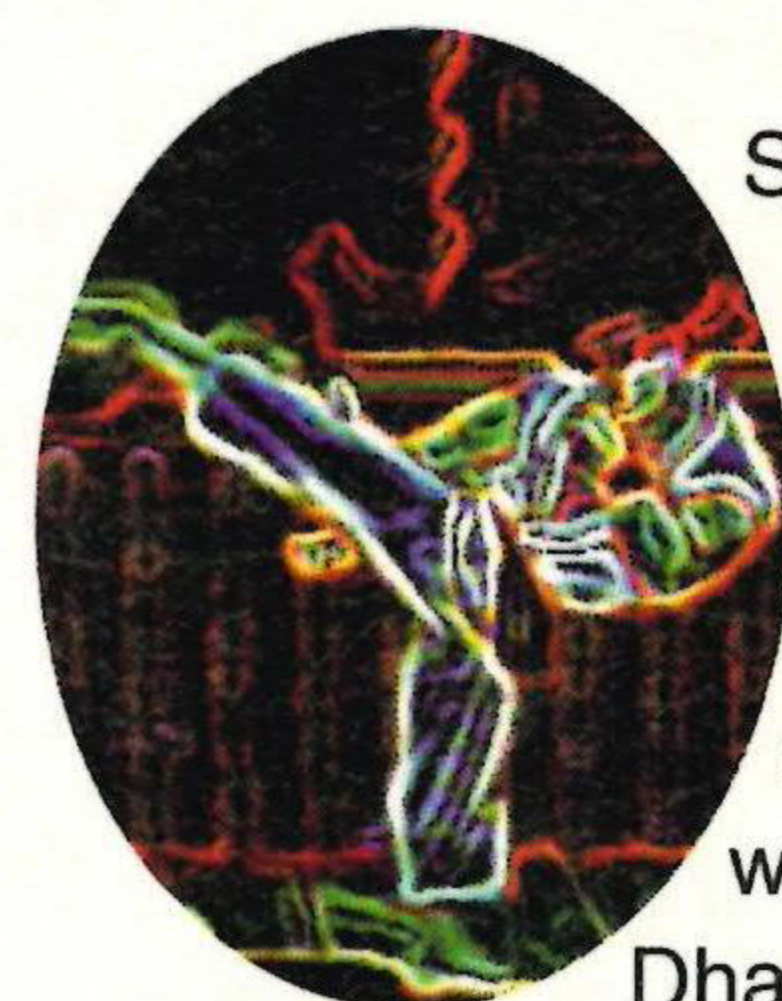
Powermonger (Imagineer)

Back to basics

Games with a battery back-up save and load information at a specific time. When you have finished a game, let it return to the title screen before you turn off the power or it may not save the info. Use the reset switch to start from scratch; if you turn the SNES on and off too quickly, it will erase all the game saved information.

STREET FIGHTER II TURBO

(Capcom)



Simply the greatest beat-'em-up yet released on any machine. Faithful to the original coin-op, you can choose from eight different fighters, each with their own special moves, including the sexy Chun-Li with her lightning kick, the bizarre

Dhalsim with his rubbery stretch

punches and "yoga-fire" breath, and the big green Blanka, who likes to electrocute people and bite their faces off. Each fighter represents a country on a world map, and when you battle against the computer, your character flies to each country to meet that particular opponent.

The turbo edition is a fiver cheaper than the original, roughly 20% faster, and allows you to control the other four characters who fought against you in the original. Simply the best.

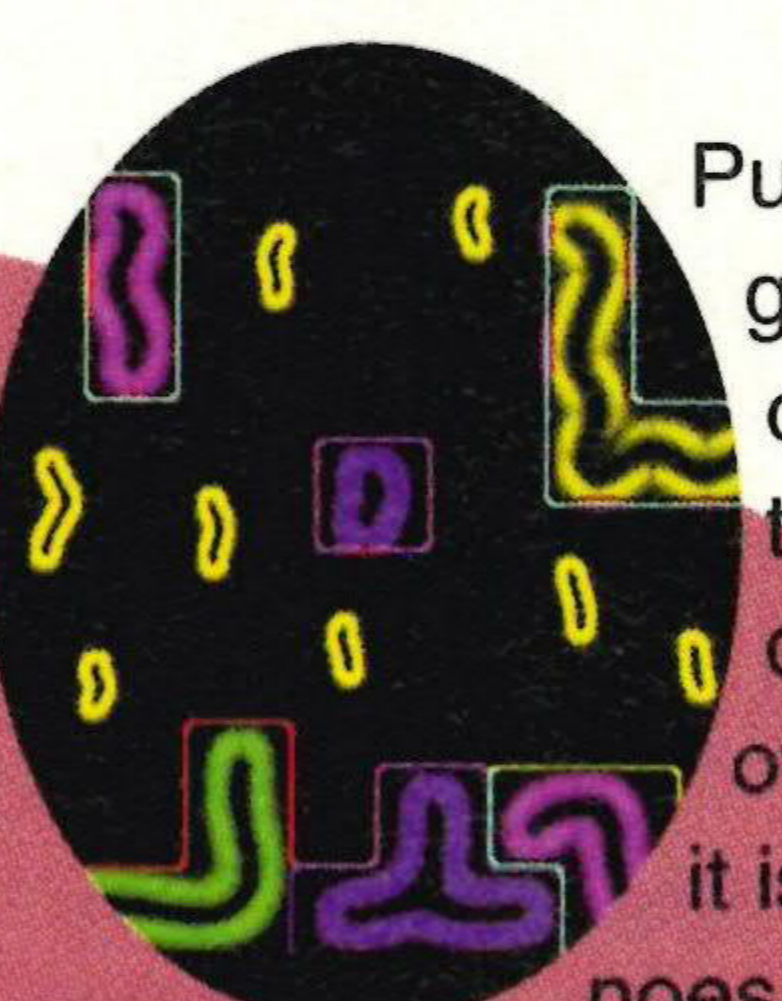
also recommended

Mortal Kombat (Acclaim)

Final Fight (Capcom)

PUSH OVER

(Ocean)



Push Over is a highly original puzzle game based on those old episodes of Record Breakers where people tried to construct very long lines of dominoes and then knock them all over. You control an ant whose job it is to go around arranging big dominoes on various levels so that when the first one falls, all of the others will be knocked over in a classic "domino effect".

Like the now-famous *Lemmings*, *Push Over* succeeds in creating an inspired new kind of game which will probably achieve cult status.

also recommended

Krusty's Super Fun House (Acclaim).

Lemmings (Sunsoft)

NHLPA HOCKEY

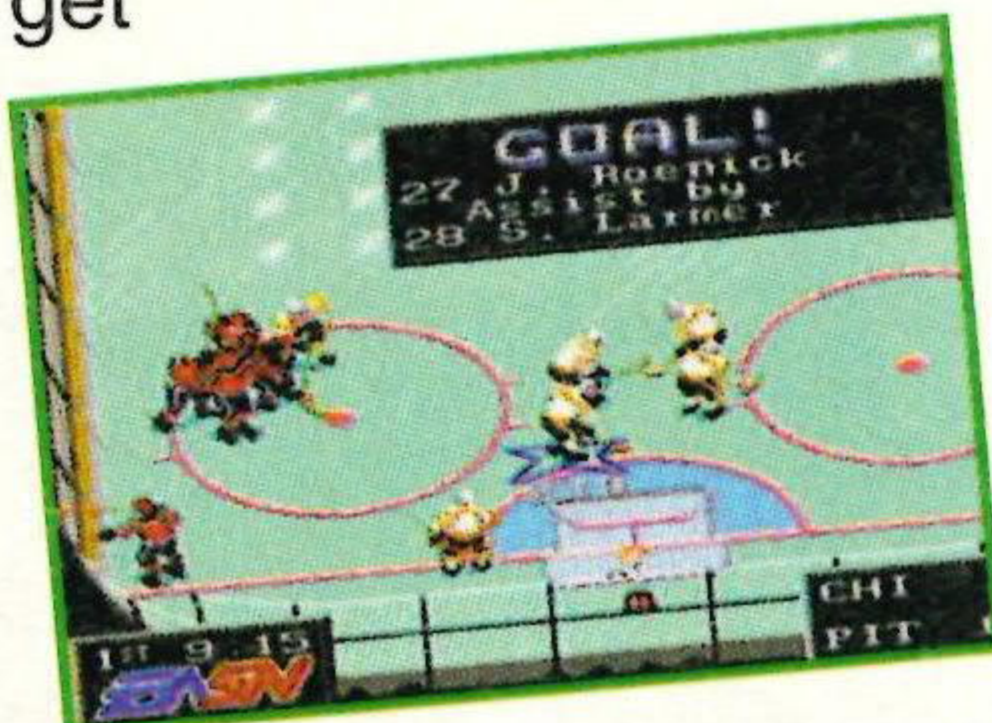
(Electronic Arts)



Choose an ice hockey team from the game's extensive library (all the existing US league teams are represented), and lead them into battle! The controls take a little getting used to as the game simulates the movement of skates over ice, so you must remember to allow

for momentum. Once you get used to it, however, you have excellent control of your players and will soon be performing virtuoso moves. *NHLPA Hockey* lets you customise your squad by selecting players from the team's options list, where each man's statistics are displayed in points according to speed, accuracy, aggressiveness etc.

The game has many noteworthy touches, including an instant replay feature, the opportunity to play extensive championship campaigns, and a stand-up fight mode which occurs when too much fouling has been going on.



also recommended

J League Pro Striker (Sega)
PGA Golf Tour (Electronic Arts)

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

(Sega)



If you like dolphins (and let's face it, who doesn't?), you'll love this atmospheric exploration of the wild blue yonder. In *Ecco the Dolphin*, you get to explore not only Arctic waters full of drifting icebergs, but also the antediluvian depths of prehistoric oceans, the ruins

of Atlantis, and even the home of some water-dwelling, dolphin-eating aliens. You will meet various other nasties such as toothy-looking sharks and the occasional level-boss, as well as friendly killer whales and fellow dolphins. The action is set to some of the best music ever produced on the Mega Drive. An inspired and fascinating game.

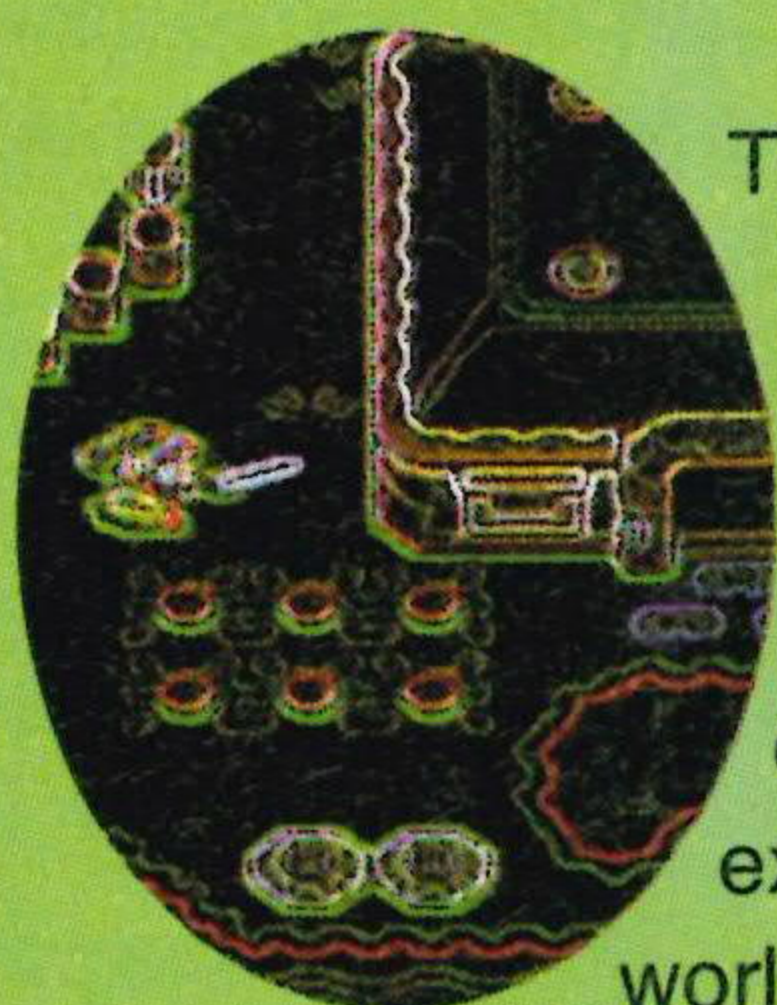


also recommended

ToeJam & Earl (Sega)
Sonic 2 (Sega)

FLASHBACK

(US Gold)



This monster of an adventure from US Gold features a scientist called Conrad who is stuck on an alien world and has to find his way back home using a subtle combination of puzzle-solving, agility and extreme physical violence. The alien world is beautifully rendered, beginning

with a jungle environment which progresses into industrial and futuristic scenery as the bad guys get harder and more numerous. There are some killer puzzles to work out, and plenty of nasty alien jokers

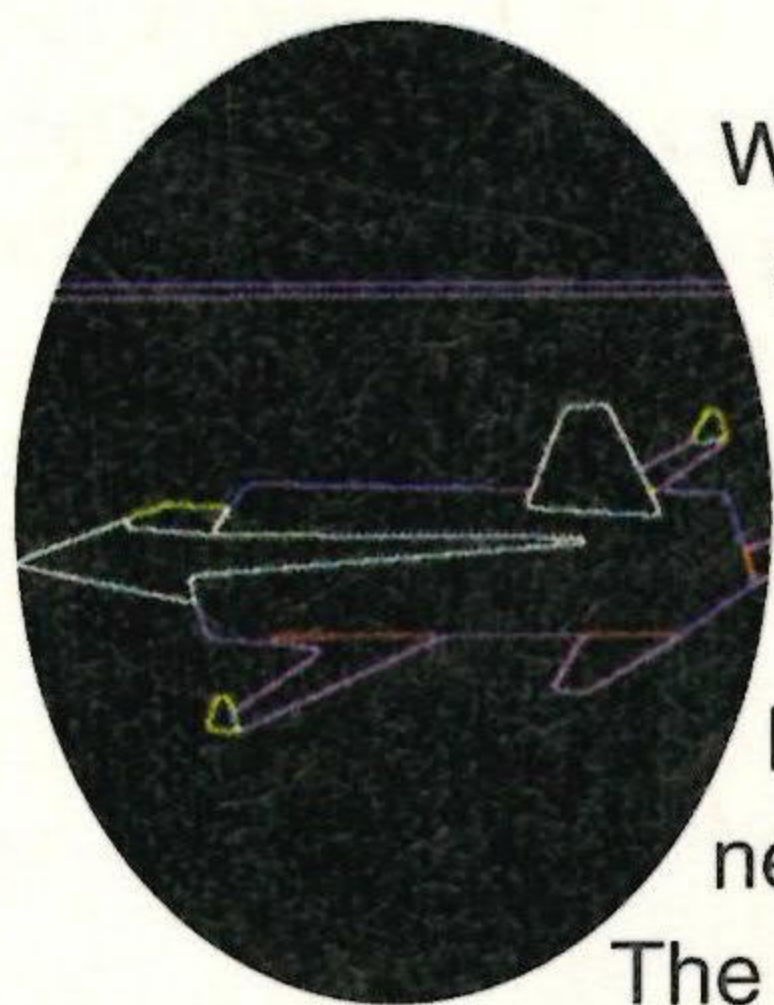
to be wasted, so it should keep you going for ages.

also recommended

Landstalker (Sega)
The Immortal (Electronic Arts)

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

(MicroProse)



When it came out on the Amiga ages ago, this was one of the first games to be converted from home computer to arcade. Since then, MicroProse have continually updated and revamped it for nearly every videogames machine.

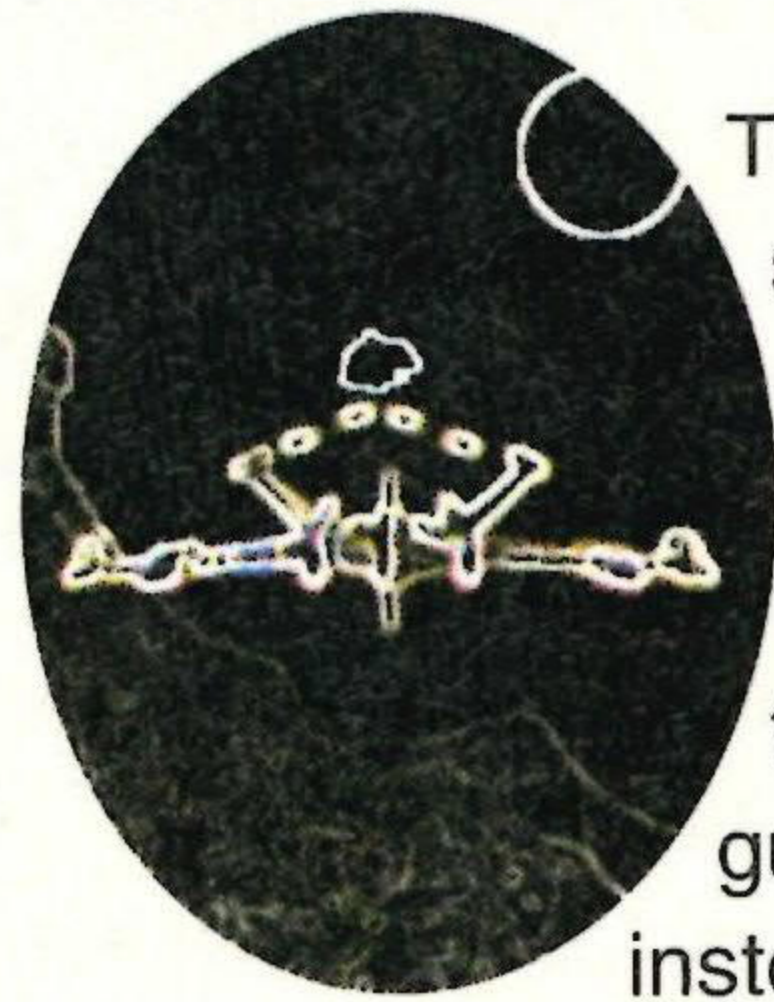
The Sega version fully utilises the Mega Drive's strong points (pulling off some neat tricks with the vector graphics), but also adapts the many controls of the original to the three-button joystick. This is the ideal game for beginners, as the game can either fly you through most things, or if you feel brave enough, let you take the controls at any time. Highly addictive.

also recommended

MiG-29 (Domark)
F-22 Interceptor (Electronic Arts)

JUNGLE STRIKE

(Electronic Arts)



The realistically moving and sounding helicopter gunship from *Desert Strike* takes to the air once again (with extra armour and go faster stripes, of course), this time to take on TWO mad guys, and now it's South America instead of the Gulf. With twice the

number of missions, *Jungle Strike* is a lot bigger than its illustrious predecessor but also has a more varied and complex landscape and a plethora of enemies. But you've had a step up too, because now you can also control a boat, motor-bike and even a stealth fighter.

Similarly to *Desert Strike*, this game's shoot-'em-up orientation is counterbalanced by a vital element of strategy – all the vehicles must be refuelled constantly, and have their armour and ammunition replenished. You'd be hard pushed to find a better blast.



also recommended

Super Fantasy Zone (Sega)
Alien³ (Acclaim)

POPULOUS II: TWO TRIBES

(Virgin)



Your chance to be an all-powerful deity in the new version of the original god-game. The aim is to trash the followers of your rival deities ensuring that your worshippers inherit the Earth. This mass carnage can be achieved by several methods including earth-

quakes, fires, floods and storms. You can even raise land from the sea and flatten mountains to provide

settlement areas for your people or favour individual members of your population by turning them into mighty heroes whom you can set loose on someone else's followers.

The action is controlled by selecting and positioning icons from a menu sheet, and victories are rewarded by passwords to higher levels. A truly massive game which will take years to get through.

also recommended

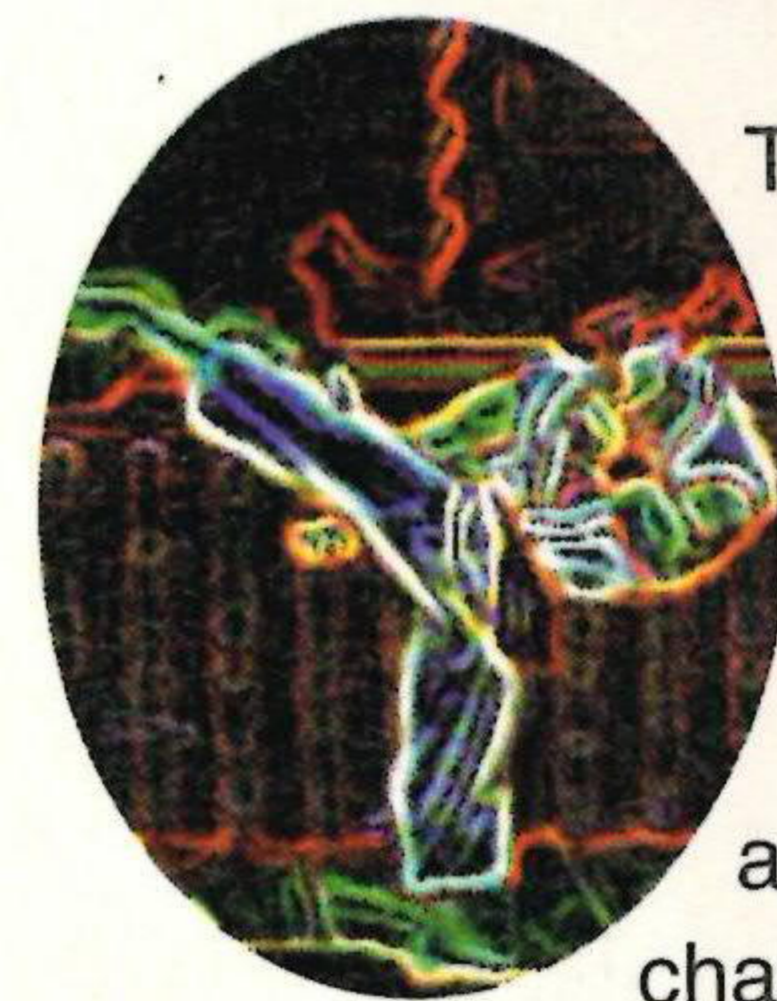
Mega-lo-Mania (Virgin)
General Chaos (EA)

Back to basics

Get the full stereo effect by plugging a pair of headphones or Walkman speakers into the front of your Mega Drive. Unfortunately, the AV socket at the back of the machine only outputs a mono signal, even if you're playing it on a stereo TV.

MORTAL KOMBAT

(Acclaim)



The notorious coin-op makes a comeback in this convincing version for your Mega Drive. Choose from seven very scary characters, each with their own special combat moves, and either battle against the computer for your chance to fight half-man-half-dragon

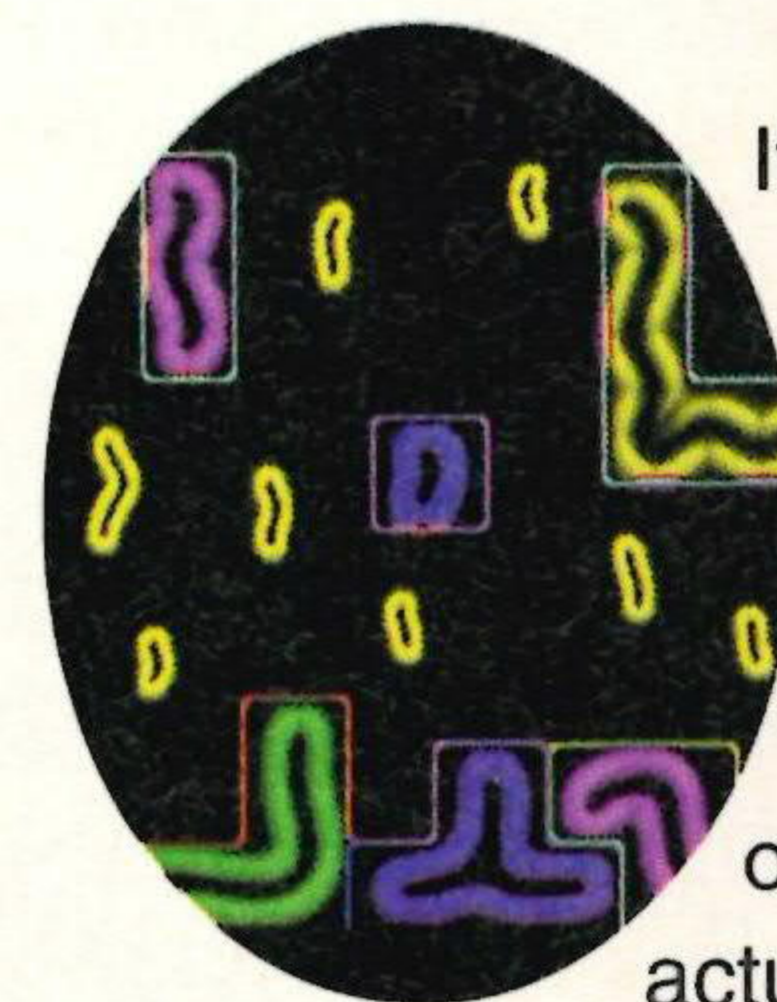
Goro and his master Shang Tsung, or beat seven bells out of your mates in the two-player game. Unlike the SNES version, *Mortal Kombat* on the Mega Drive retains the blood and gore of the original, making sure that the ketchup flies every time someone gets belted. On top of that, each character has a special combination of joystick moves which can be entered under the right circumstances to produce a unique death blow, which, depending on your character, can be anything from graphically ripping off your opponent's head and tearing out their spine, to frying them with a flaming "kiss of death".

also recommended

Streets of Rage II (Sega)
Two Crude Dudes (Sega)

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE

(Flying Edge)



If you're sick to the back teeth of *Lemmings* but loved it when you first played it, then this should inject a fresh perspective back into your puzzle-playing hours. Simpsons characters pop up all over the place, although you don't actually play any of them. You must

help the TV clown, Krusty rid his fun house of rats. To do this you have to use blocks and, just like the Pied Piper, convince the little rodents to walk directly to their demise. Death in this case is Bart Simpson and his terrifying crush machine. Another great cartoon tie-in that avoids the conventional arcade adventure formula.

also recommended

Lemmings (Sega/Sunsoft)
Clue (Sculptured Software)

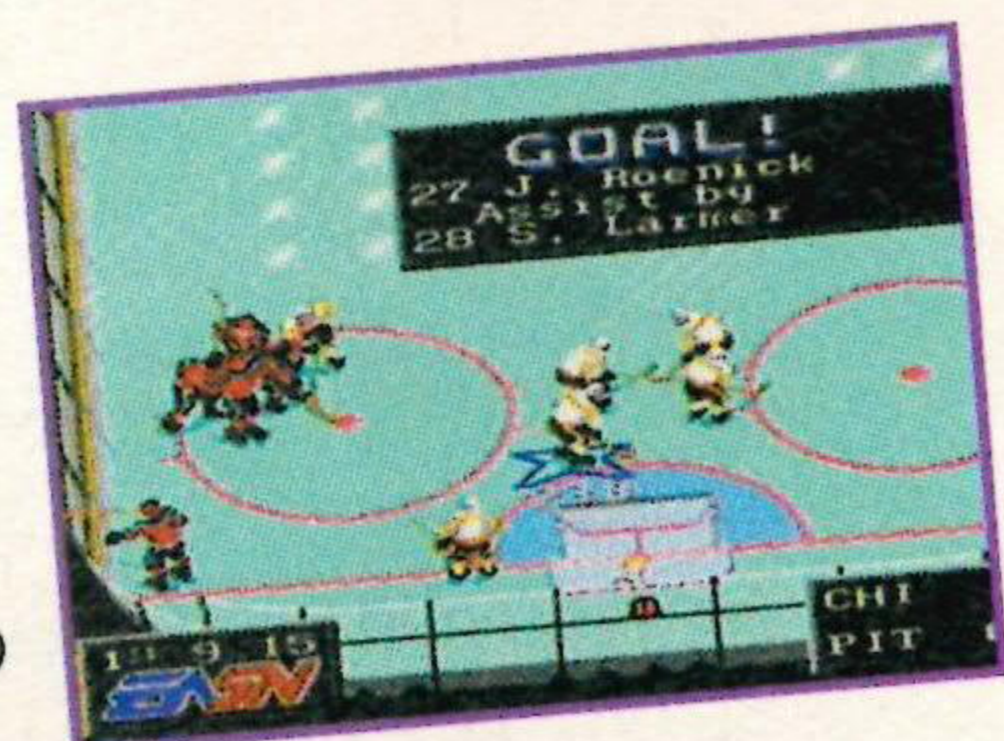
NHL HOCKEY



(Electronic Arts)

This is far and away the best ice hockey sim on any machine, and most probably the best sports sim on any computer/console. You can choose an ice hockey team from the game's extensive library (all the existing US league teams are represented) and lead them into battle! The controls take a little getting used to as the game simulates the movement of skates over ice, so you must remember to allow for momentum. Once you get used to it, however, you have excellent control of your players and will soon be performing virtuoso moves.

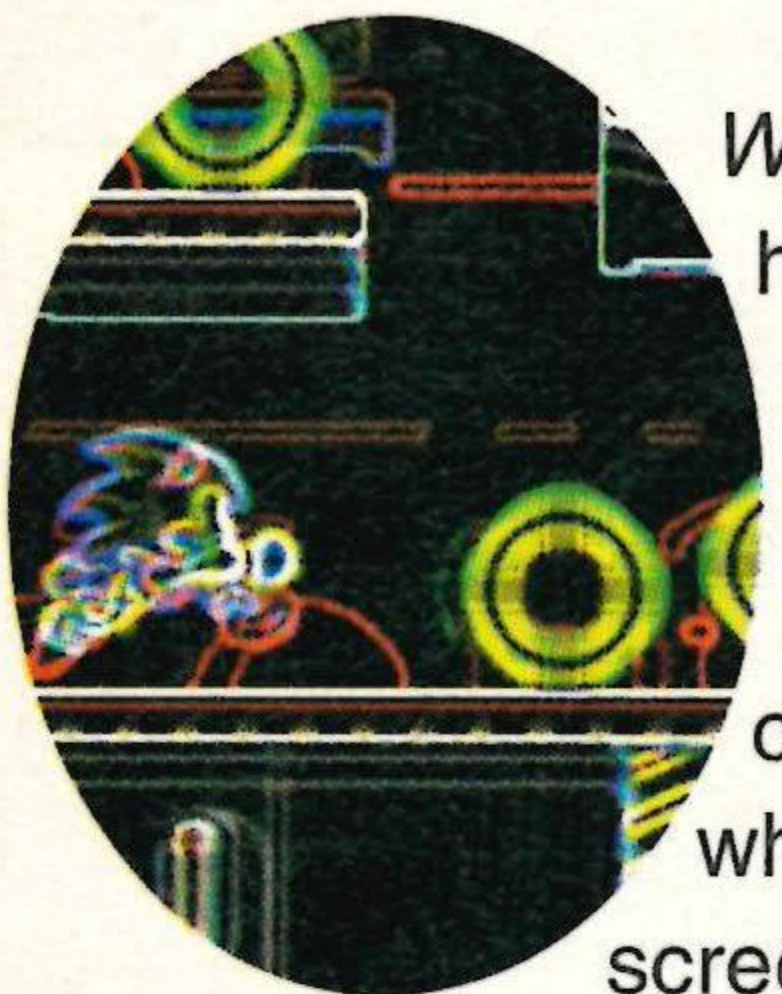
NHL Hockey lets you customise your squad by selecting players from the team's attributes list, where each man's statistics are graded according to speed, accuracy, aggressiveness, etc. The game has many neat touches, including an instant replay feature, the opportunity to play extensive championship campaigns, and a stand-up fight mode which occurs when too much fouling has been going on. You can even shatter the crowd protection screen if you slap the puck too hard!



also recommended

Formula One Grand Prix (MicroProse)
Sensible Soccer (Renegade)

WIZKID



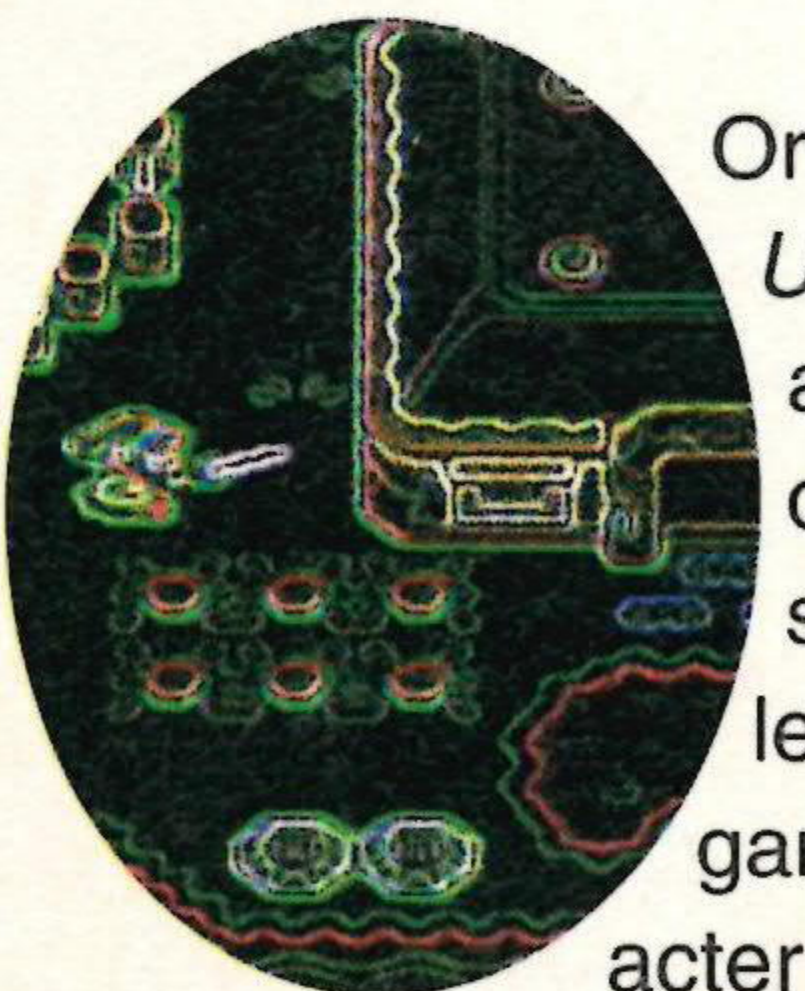
(Ocean)

Wizkid is an incredibly strange, but highly compelling platformer that looks as though it was written by someone under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs. It has you controlling a disembodied head which you must bounce around the screen, butting brightly coloured blocks and avoiding (or flattening) various enemies until you have amounted enough points to progress to the special stage, where the head grows a body and goes off to look for the hidden entrance to the next level. *Wizkid* is graphically splendiferous, extremely addictive and utterly odd.

also recommended

Prince of Persia (Domark)
Zool (Gremlin Graphics)

SHADOWCASTER



(Electronic Arts)

Origin's follow-up to the huge *Ultima Underworld* has a more action-based feel than its illustrious predecessor and is immeasurably more enjoyable. It's a lot less cerebral than most RPG games, having just one player character who can transform into various alternative forms, including a dragon, a tiger and a cloud, all with corresponding special abilities. This innovation is a great improvement on the multi-character system, as you don't lose track of all the people. Another interesting feature of the shape-shifter is that

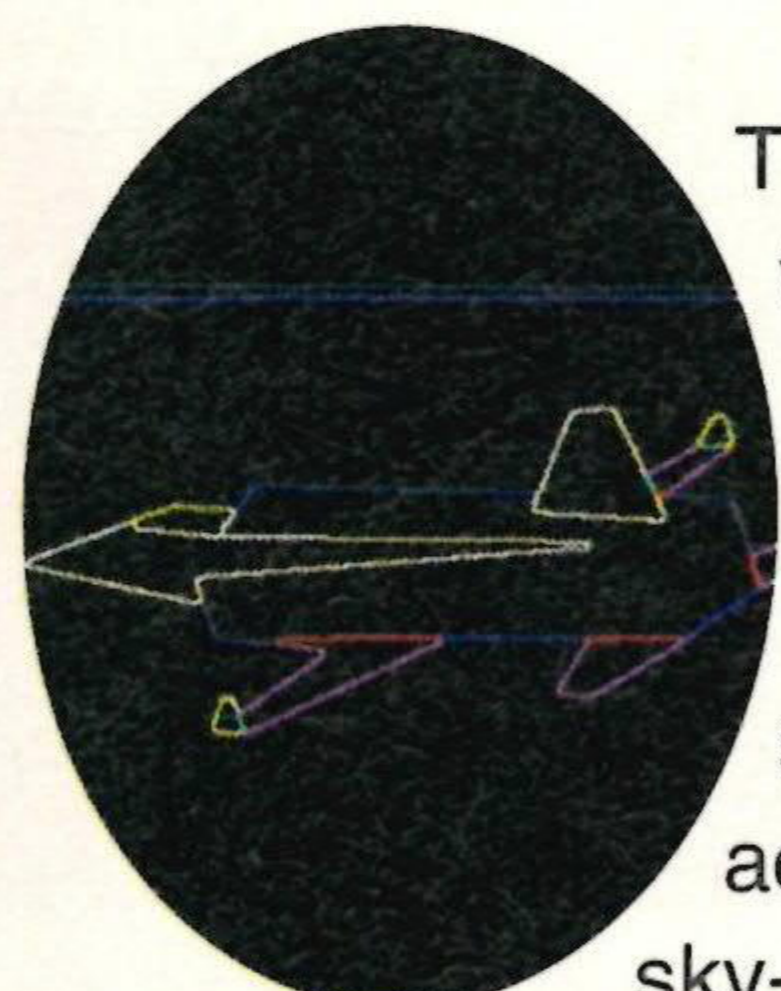
each form has its own viewpoint: for example, the cloud can see more of its surroundings because it floats above the level of objects which would normally block your view.

Shadowcaster is much more accessible than standard RPGs, but has managed to retain the depth and epic quality found in the best of them.

also recommended

Day of the Tentacle (US Gold)
Monkey Island 2 (US Gold)

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 5



(Microsoft)

The best, as they say, just got better. This is the original flight sim for any computer, and still the most complex, startlingly accurate sky-scorcher



around. Each time Microsoft bring out a new version, they push the line even closer to reality. This time they have digitised photos of the actual cockpit, and created a solid 3-D environment based on actual satellite pictures.

Just like a real simulator (if such a thing is possible), you can set up the game to teach you to learn how to fly or push you to your limits. After the flight you can analyse your performance just to see how you're progressing. Once you've mastered the in-built environment, you can fly further afield with the help of Paris and New York scenery disks.

also recommended

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat (Electronic Arts)
F-29 Retaliator (Ocean)

ROBOCOP 3



(Ocean)

An interesting shoot-'em-up which stirs in elements of flight-simulation and driving. *RoboCop* gets sent on various missions around the crime-infested city-scape, which mostly involve blowing people away with a huge gun. You also get to ram the bad guys off the road in your police car – and run people over! – but remember that you are supposed to be following the three prime directives from the movie. You will lose a lot of points if you stray too far from these rules. A very respectable yet utterly violent game which is way different from most film tie-ins.

also recommended

X-Wing (US Gold)
Wing Commander (Mindscape)

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



(Impressions)

A truly gargantuan galactic strategy system set in the 24th Century, *Rules of Engagement* places you in command of a federation starship amid the background of a raging civil war between two human factions, with a few hostile alien races thrown in for a laugh. You

Back to basics

You may have bought a 4Mb machine, but only a part of that is available for games. When the mouse, joystick, CD-ROM drivers etc have had their chunk, you may not have enough left for the game to run. Create a simple boot disk and start from a floppy instead. Instructions are in your manual.

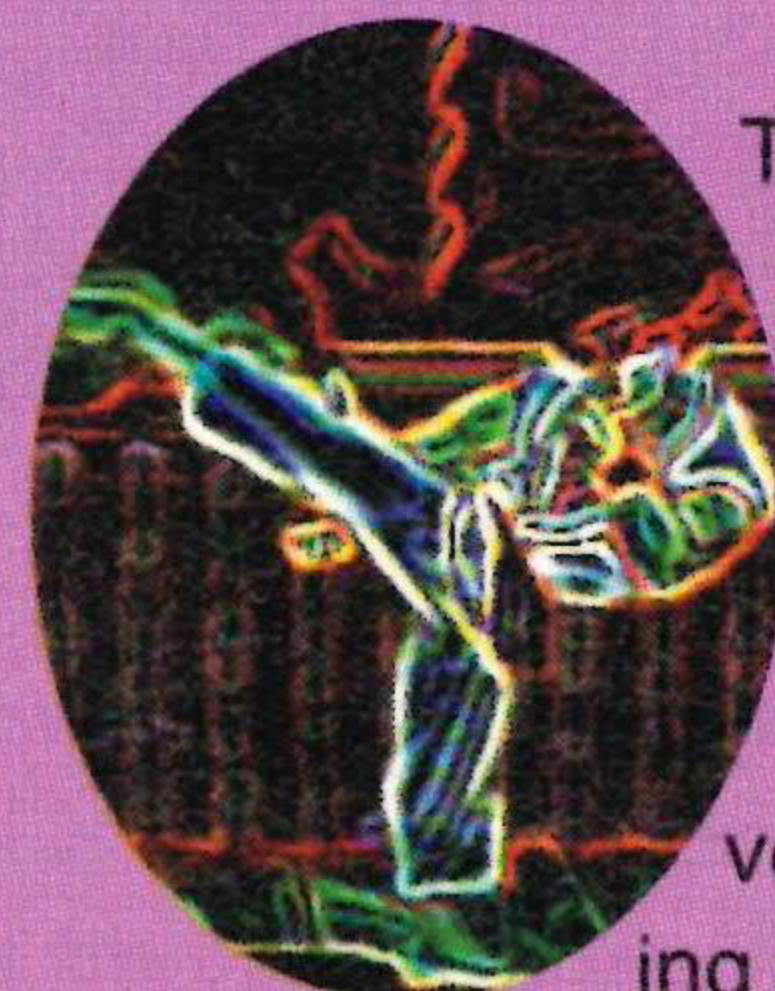
are not the only starship commander; there are 29 others from whom you must select candidates to accompany you on missions. They all have different characters – some are reckless, others cowardly, there are even some traitors – so you must think carefully when choosing who will be commanding the other ships.

The game offers you a choice of three full-blown campaign games, plus one practice mission for familiarising yourself with the system. A huge monster of a strategy game.

also recommended

Dune 2 (Virgin)
SimEarth (Maxis)

STREET FIGHTER II



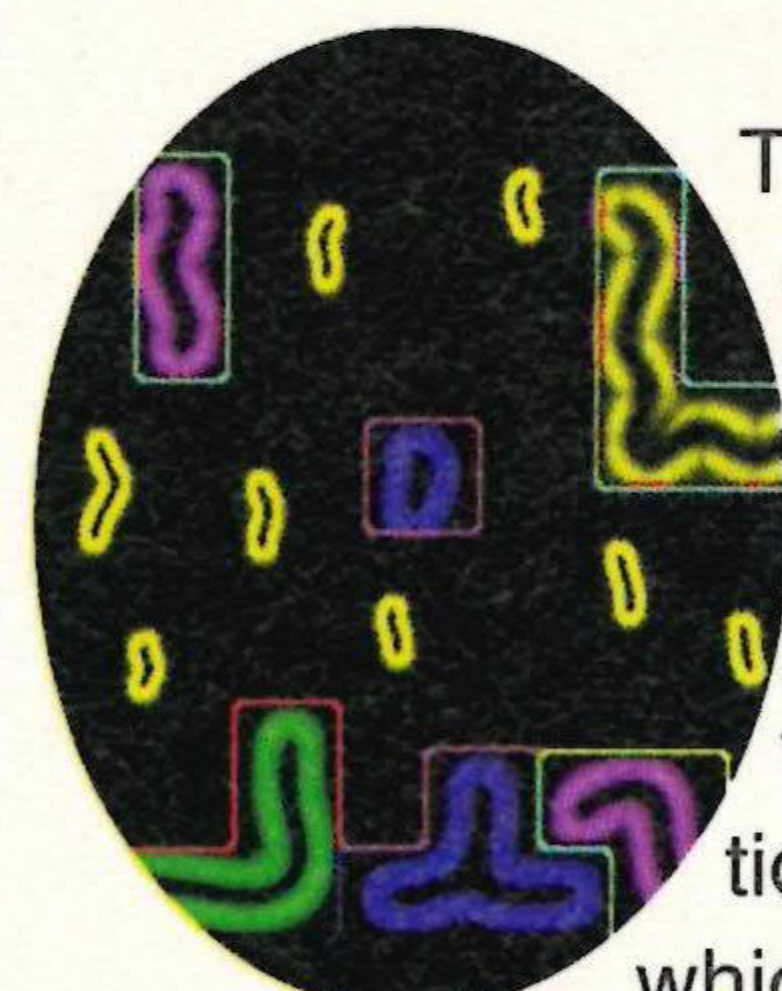
(US Gold)

There aren't that many decent beat-'em-ups available on the PC, and even what there is doesn't excite any console player. US Gold have done the best that could be expected with the PC version of *Street Fighter II*, including all the opponents and most of the moves – although they are very hard to access from the joystick. Where the PC version scores over the console attempts is in the graphical area. The main characters are massive – filling two thirds of the screen – and the backgrounds are sharp. Admittedly, the exponents do slow down occasionally (especially when you jump), but if you've been ultra jealous of everyone else's versions, then the PC version should cure it. Better than the Amiga, although not up to the SNES.

also recommended

First Samurai (Ubi Soft)
Body Blows (Team 17)

LEMMINGS 2: THE TRIBES



(Psygnosis)

The old life-saving has been enhanced with the inclusion of more levels, new abilities for the lemmings, and a plot! The lemmings have now settled in 12 tribes, each of which has got a portion of the sacred lemming talisman which they now need in one piece to avert a mysterious but extremely serious disaster! Your job is to guide the tribes of lemmings across the island making sure they don't accidentally kill themselves by falling down ravines etc. *Lemmings 2* has a vast number of levels and a password system which lets you skip the areas which you have already mastered.

also recommended

Push Over (Ocean)
The Lost Vikings (Interplay)



other formats

MEGA-CD

MASTER SYSTEM

GAME GEAR

GAME BOY

ATARI ST

PC ENGINE



SUPER LEAGUE CD
(Sega)

CALIFORNIA GAMES
(US Gold)

SUPER KICK OFF
(US Gold)

NIGEL MANSELL'S RACING
(Gametek)

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX
(MicroProse)

WORLD SPORTS COMPETITION

Super Kick Off (US Gold)
Master Chess (Sega)

The Chessmaster (Sega)
Wimbledon (Sega)

Tennis (Nintendo)
The Chessmaster (Mindscape)

Jimmy White's Whirlwind
Snooker (Virgin)
Sensible Soccer

Formation Soccer
Final Match Tennis



ECCO THE DOLPHIN
(Sega)

LAND OF ILLUSION
(Sega)

SONIC 2
(Sega)

BUBBLE BOBBLE 2
(Taito)

PARASOL STARS
(Ocean)

PC KID III
(Hudsonsoft)

Sonic CD (Sega)
Batman Returns (Sega)

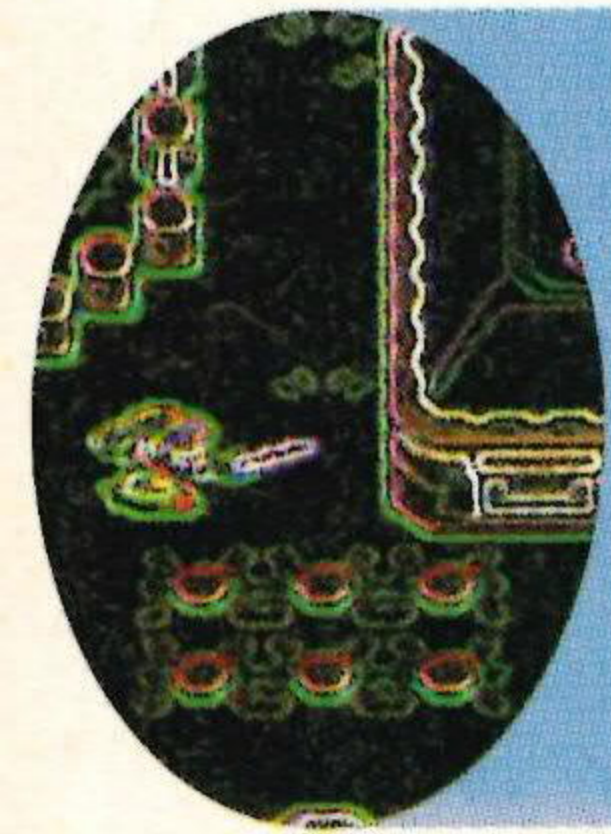
Taz-Mania (Sega)
Sonic 2 (Sega)

Land of Illusion (Sega)
Bart vs the Space Mutants (Flying Edge)

Super Mario Land (Nintendo)
Tiny Toon Adventures (Konami)

Rainbow Islands (Ocean)
Wizkid (Ocean)

Legendary Axe II
Son Son II



DUNE
(Virgin)

PRINCE OF PERSIA
(Domark)

DEFENDERS OF OASIS
(Sega)

DR FRANKEN
(Elite)

ANOTHER WORLD
(US Gold)

Y'S BOOKS I AND 2

The Adventures of Willy Beamish (Dynamix)
Time Gal (Sega)

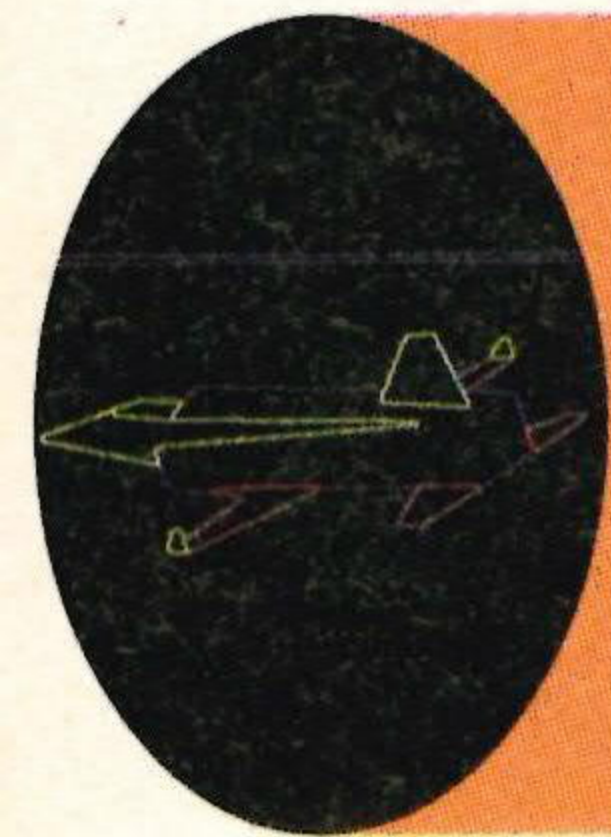
Phantasy Star (Sega)
Wonder Boy 3: The Dragon's Trap (Sega)

Crystal Warriors (Sega)

Battle of Olympus
Ultima (Origin)

Monkey Island (US Gold)
Lure of the Temptress (Virgin)

Neutopia II
Neutopia I



THUNDERHAWK
(Core Design)

G-LOC
(Sega)

G-LOC
(Sega)

nothing of note

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
(MicroProse)

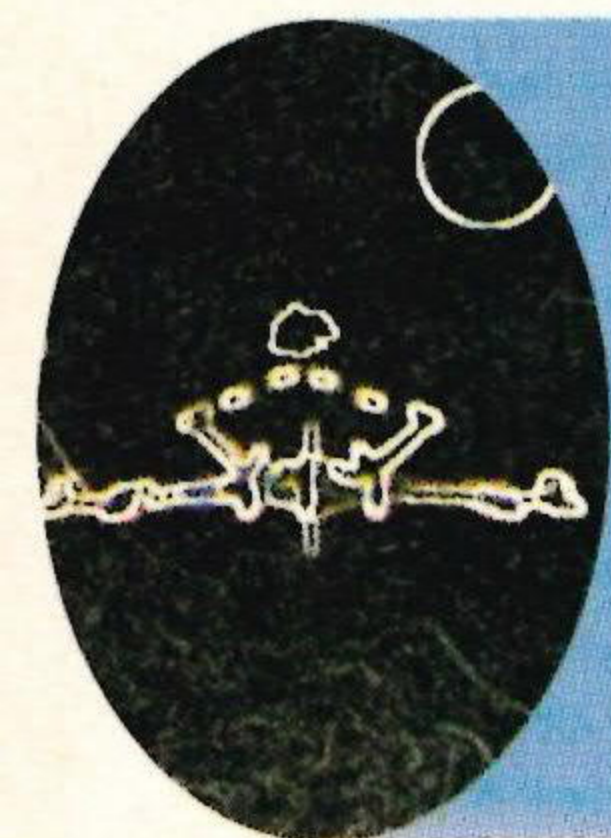
DEVIL CRASH

Cobra Command (Wolfteam)
Road Avenger (Wolfteam)

After Burner (Sega)

Falcon (Mirror Image)
Knights of the Sky (MicroProse)

Alien Crush
Time Cruise II



KEIO FLYING SQUADRON

ALIEN³
(Flying Edge)

TERMINATOR
(Virgin)

PROBOTECTOR
(Nintendo)

THUNDERHAWK AH-73M
(Core Design)

GRADIUS II CD

Sewer Shark (Sony)
Silpheed (Game Arts)

Fantasy Zone 2 (Sega)
Operation Wolf (Sega)

Alien³ (Flying Edge)
Halley Wars (Sega)

Nemesis 2 (Konami)
Battletoads (Tradewest)

Xenon 2 (Mirror Image)
Smash TV (Ocean)

Star Parody CD
Parodius



NIGHT TRAP
(Sega)

POPULOUS
(Tecmagik)

nothing of note

nothing of note

POPULOUS II
(Virgin)

NECTARIS/MILITARY MADNESS

3x3 Eyes (Sega)

Y's: The Vanished Omens (Sega)
SpellCaster (Sega)

Mega-lo-Mania (Virgin)
Sim City (Infogames)

Snatcher CD
Sim Earth CD



FINAL FIGHT
(Capcom)

MORTAL KOMBAT
(Acclaim)

STREETS OF RAGE II
(Sega)

TURTLES: THE SEWERS
(Konami)

STREET FIGHTER II
(Capcom)

STREET FIGHTER II
(Capcom)

Black Hole Assault (Sega)

Streets of Rage 2 (Sega)
Kung Fu Kid (Sega)

Ninja Gaiden (Sega)
Streets of Rage (Sega)

Turtles: Foot Clan (Konami)
Double Dragon 2

Pit-Fighter (Domark)
Final Fight

Fighting Street CD (Capcom)
Vigilante



SHERLOCK HOLMES II
(Sega)

SHANGHAI
(Sega)

KRUSTY'S FUN HOUSE
(Acclaim)

PINBALL DREAMS
(Nintendo)

PUSH OVER
(Ocean)

PUZZLE BOY

Sherlock Holmes! (Sega)

Columns (Sega)
Lemmings (Sega)

Popils (Sega)
Lemmings (Sega)

Solomon's Club (Nintendo)
Krusty's Fun House (Acclaim)

Lemmings (Psygnosis)
Klax (Domark)

Tricky Kick
Klax (Tengen)

getting the best deals...

Playing videogames is an expensive pastime: that's why we came up with VideoGames Shopper to aid you in those crucial buying decisions. However, the impact on your wallet, and the distress of wasting hard-earned dosh on a dodo can be decreased by taking a few crucial steps before you part with the cash.

The following guidelines apply to all games, no matter what format they're on and regardless of whether you buy in the high street or via mail order.

However, for more info on postal purchases, see Don't get ripped off! on page 61. For details of the intricacies of import games, turn over the page and read Compatibility worries.

1 Read the reviews

It may sound like we're blowing our own trumpet, but let's face it, we'll have played the games and you won't. Admittedly, we may get it wrong some of the time, but at least you'll have some idea of what the game's about and whether it's the thing you're after. But don't just take our word for it, browse through other mags occasionally to get another opinion. Funnily enough, us mags tend to agree on most games, although even we are affected by the hype some of the time.

However, there are always two unavoidably flaws with reviews, no matter what magazine you read them in. Say we get 30 games in to review for the December issue, no matter how you slice it, that means on average we only get one day to play each game. Sure, we have tons of reviewers who share the games around and pool opinions, but even that doesn't give us the time you'd have to play the game if you bought it yourself. Subsequently, arcade games are easier to judge than, say, simulations or strategy games (thankfully, we have fewer bad sims and strats than monotonous arcade blasters).

But getting the opinion of someone who's only played the game you're after for a day is better than nothing at all.

The second problem is the fact that every review is a personal opinion. On **VGS**, however, this isn't too much of a problem for every reviewer looks at every game, and we're not scared of impressing our opinions on each other. By having a varied review team – ranging from people who've been playing games for ten years to folks who only picked them up last Christmas – we hope we're catering for all tastes.

2 Play before you buy

We are still amazed when you walk into a shop and they won't let you play a game that you might part with 40 sobs for. Music shops will let you listen to a CD before you buy it, so it's just plain bad service to refuse you access to a videogame. However, shops aren't arcades, so don't push your luck by playing too many games for too long.

If a shop won't let you play on a game before you buy it, just smile pleasantly, flash your wad at them and smugly walk out. There are plenty of people out there who would bend over backwards for your money, so if someone won't even let you see what you're buying, how can they expect you to give them money for it? When playing the game in the shop, take a few things into account. Most probably, you'll be playing it on a monitor in the shop, but when you get home and link it up to your TV, the picture won't be as crisp. Arcade games are easy to pick up straight away, but if the game is a little more complicated, try to get someone to give you an explanation of what's going on. You might miss out on a deep, addictive game that you'd be playing for months, just because you couldn't be bothered to find out what the icons do.

If you get the chance, take a friend in with you and, if available, try out that two-player option. Games are often really boring by yourself, but the extra impetus of someone standing next to you often enhances them.

3 Shop around

You'd be amazed at how the prices of games vary. One moment a shop is selling the latest film tie-in for full whack, then the next it's in the bargain bucket because the bad reviews have just hit the streets and no-one's buying it.

High street chains offer you all the latest releases, but tend to put things at the RRP (recommended retail price). Discounting is harder for them because policy decisions like that come from head office. Independents compete with the comprehensive range of the larger stores by offering anything from 50p to £5 off new releases. Second-hand carts should also be considered (after all, a cart doesn't deteriorate; it either works or it doesn't!), but check them first and if you need the instructions, make sure they're included. If you're not too fussed, just getting the second-hand cart by itself may reduce the price by as much as £20!

Be



Whoops! Did you get two copies of the same game as a present? No problem. If you have the receipt for one of them and don't unwrap the plastic packing, you can easily exchange it for a game of similar value.

wary about second-hand floppy disks as they do suffer from wear and tear. Make sure there's a decent guarantee. If it seems slightly dodgy (photocopied instructions, etc), don't touch! You could get home, find it doesn't work and have no recourse whatsoever.

4 Faulty goods/returns



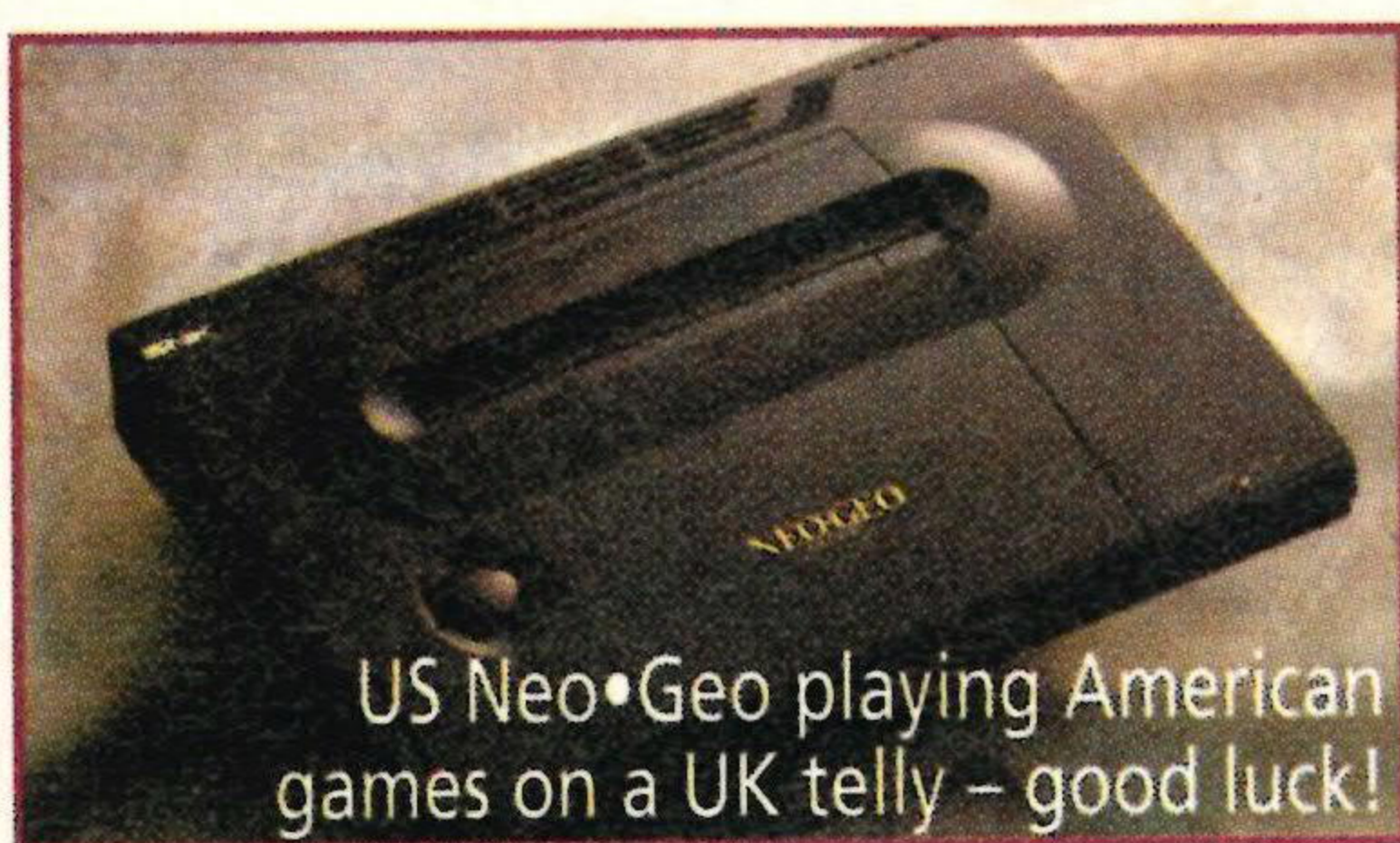
Second-hand carts are a great way to get cheap, reliable software. We picked up this cart of *SFII* for just £25

Rarely – very rarely – you get home and for some reason the game won't boot up. On some machines, like the Amiga and PC, it could be because you purchased the wrong configuration. If you've got an Amiga 500 and bought a game specced for the Amiga 1200 (which is easily done, so thoroughly check in the shop!), take it back to the shop and ask for a replacement of the same game. If this

doesn't work, software houses encounter this problem all the time, so you should be able to send it back to them for a swap. The same thing runs for carts, but you'd be pretty stupid to buy a Game Boy game for the Mega Drive. Either way, due to a few pirates, shops generally refuse changing games for different games. If you legitimately have received two copies of *Starwing* for Christmas and would like to swap one of them for something else, don't break the seal on the game and make sure the box is in pristine condition when you take it back.

And don't forget the golden rule: no receipt, no return. Shops have tough rules on returns, but with piracy so rife, you can't really blame them.

Compatibility worries



US Neo-Geo playing American games on a UK telly – good luck!

The reason behind encoding games to work on particular machines, is that Sega and Nintendo like to keep a track of what's being sold where. If, like Atari and Philips, they released world-wide simultaneously and made all the games compatible with any of their machines, there would be no problem. Believe it or not, though, Sega and Nintendo just aren't that organised and like the luxury of charging what they want in any country, knowing full well that people won't be able to play games meant for other countries on their machines.

However, there is a small band of efficient mail order companies out there who service the stable users interested in getting the latest technology whatever the cost – and usually, you will have to pay a little extra for the privilege of getting something ahead of the crowd. But making sure any game you buy for your machine will run on it requires a few guidelines.

Primarily, there are two things to watch out for: machine incompatibility and software incompatibility.

Avoiding machine messes

Basically, foreign consoles will not work in the UK without bit of twiddling. Firstly, there's a problem with the power supply. This can easily be solved by ditching the foreign transformer and buying one meant for a UK machine. Sometimes the connectors on the end may not fit in your machine, but you can easily acquire an adaptor from somewhere like Tandy. Secondly, there's the problem of TV system. Put simply, each country has a different TV system (NTSC for the US and Japan, Secam for France, PAL for the rest of Europe). To accept a TV signal from a foreign machine, you'll need to have a TV that is fully NTSC compatible. Most TVs are only partially compatible, which means you'll either get a black and white or rolling picture. If it's black and white, it means the telly is only receiving 525 lines, when it's looking for 625. If it rolls, it means the frame rate is too high. NTSC displays 30 frames a second, but PAL can only take 25 per second. Most TVs can lock onto the frame rate, but the number of lines is a little difficult. A plus point of the different frame rate is that playing a Japanese/US machine on a UK telly will run the game up to 20% faster

While the difference between home computer game are accurately detailed on the box – always check the small print to make sure it's compatible with your sound card, memory expansion, computer model, etc – confusing compatibility problems occur when you start buying carts that are meant for another country. Generally, this applies to just the Super NES and Mega Drive/CD, although new problems may occur with the release of the 3DO.



Confused? You need a specialist, they can solve all those embarrassing "Oh, yes, I bought it in Japan for £30 cheaper – but I can't get it working yet" problems than it should be.

Buying machines yourself from abroad (while on holiday, for instance) should be avoided. If you need a foreign configuration, go to a specialist, either locally or via mail. They deal with compatibility problems every day and should be able to construct a system to suit your needs. For instance, at VGS we needed a Mega Drive that you could easily switch between Japanese and UK setups, so the clever sods at Console Concepts added a special switch to one of their machines for us. Nintendo and Sega then added another problem to the equation, by designing some of their peripherals to only work on the machines they're supposed to. Getting the Mega-CD to work on a Mega Drive from a different country is impossible without a clever device called the CD-X from Datel, which susses out any

machine (and game for that matter) from anywhere in the world. Most of the problematic Nintendo stuff, like the mouse and light gun, is totally hopeless and probably available in the UK officially anyway.

Soothing software shakes

Once you've decided what machine to buy, the next problem you have is getting the software to run on it. Way back on the 8-bit NES, Nintendo encoded their carts for specific regions of the world (Asia, America, Europe, etc). They did the same thing with the Super NES and now Sega are following suit by encoding their Mega Drive and Mega-CD software.

Nintendo encode the Super NES software by putting a unique chip inside the cart to say what machine it should be on. Pretty clever stuff, you may think, but not as clever as the folks who have got around it. You can now get an adaptor which will fool the machine into thinking it's playing a game from a different country. This is done by plugging two Super NES carts into the machine simultaneously. The SNES first looks at a game which has the right chip to run on that machine, then the adaptor tells to machine to pop over to the other cart and load the rest of the game. Mega Drive games work on the same principle, but use a *software* routine to check what machine they're on. Therefore, all the adaptors do on the Mega Drive is fiddle around with the software a bit and negate the need for two carts in the machine. Much simpler, but still pretty ingenious.

However, Sega and Nintendo keep changing the specifications for their lock codes, so only by purchasing the latest convertor can you ensure total compatibility with all the games that are currently on release. However, the manufacturers of the adaptors have no way of ensuring that it'll be compatible with future releases because they never know what Nintendo and Sega might do next. The only way to feel safe is by getting a convertor from a well-known company who you are sure will keep updating your cart for the current software.

Customise

At the end of the day, when it comes to the dedicated gamesplayer, everyone has different needs. Some need a quick machine to play official games on; some just want all the Japanese releases ahead of everyone else; and some, like Mega-CD owners, have to look elsewhere for games because they don't have the choice in the UK. If your needs are a bit out of the ordinary, consult a specialist. Any decent independent store/mail order house worth their salt should be able to design a games system around your needs.

YOUR KIT

Getting the best deals...

Sometimes the range of games at your local stockist is just not enough. Or maybe he doesn't get those games in fast enough. Then again you could be stuck in the middle of nowhere and be without a local games shop. Ultimately, though, it may come down to the prices. Whatever your problem, buying by mail could be your answer. Make sure you get the best deals from the best suppliers, and buy safely, by following our GamesDirect guidelines...

1 Decide what you want

Have an objective in mind; it makes life a lot easier. Companies only work between daylight hours, and spending ages on the phone asking a company about all their stock costs YOU money at a premium rate! What's the point ordering a game that's a quid cheaper by mail if you spend ages on the phone ordering it. Most people forget this invisible expense incurred.

2 Compare prices

Look through all the adverts in VideoGames Shopper to get a good idea of the price of the game you're after. Suppliers generally make around 15% profit on a game, so if the price is a lot cheaper than the recommended retail price, tread carefully. There may be a perfectly good reason, like a supplier can give a better deal if he buys in more units of a game, but smaller companies aren't likely to have that sort of buying power.

3 Before you ring

If you're not using a regular mail order company already, you'll have to suss out a few before you make your choice of which to go for.

Remember, listed price isn't everything. There's no point saving a fiver if you need the game the next day and have to pay extra postage to ensure it arrives. If a company has something in stock, they should be efficient enough to get it to you within three days as a matter of course. When you've got your shortlist of companies, jot down what you're after so you can quiz them effectively. Now you're ready for the call.

4 Making that first call

Remember, you're sussin' them out on the first call, so have a few questions at the ready. Ask them if the game is in stock, if it's not ask them when it will be and ring back on that day to order it then. There's no point giving them your money any quicker than you have to. Don't be pressured into parting with your cash under the pretence of a deposit – there are plenty of people who don't ask for it and still send you the game on the day it's released.

Ask the company how long they've been going, what's selling well at the moment, how long do things normally take to arrive? Are they friendly? Do they sound busy? You'll soon get a feel for a reliable company, and can then ring them back and place your order.

5 Placing the order

Have the VGS GamesDirect form (overleaf) next to you. Fill in the relevant bits and go through each step, speaking clearly and spelling out any odd words. Make sure you cover everything on the form; bits which may seem irrelevant to you will make things easier for the person taking the order.

How to

Always pay by credit card. By the terms of the credit card company's merchant contract, a supplier is forbidden from debiting a credit card before despatching goods. If the company ceases trading after your account has been debited, you should contact your credit card company and explain what has happened. If the amount was over £100, there shouldn't be a problem getting your cash back. If the amount is less than £100, you may find getting your money back a little tougher, although credit card companies have been known to be sympathetic. On the whole, credit cards give better protection than debit cards, so always try to use Access or Visa. Do not use business credit cards as they have limited protection.

6 Confirm your order

Send off/fax written confirmation on the VGS GamesDirect form as soon as you put the phone down. Keep a copy of the form for yourself. Now you can be sure that they have your order.

7 Chasing it up

Any decent company should have your game on your doorstep within three working days. If it's not there, then start hassling. Ring back during the afternoon (it's cheaper to phone after 1pm!) of the third day and speak to the person

who took your order. Putting the responsibility on someone's shoulders makes them correct their mistake themselves, and not blame someone else. Don't be unreasonable, but don't take any bull. If they give some excuse like they're really busy and will phone you back, say, "no, I'd rather you sort it out now." You deserve just as good service as other customers. If you get no luck

from your original contact, speak to the manager. Explain that you were assured that the game was in stock and being despatched on the day you ordered it. Around 97% of first class post arrives the next day, so unless there's a postal strike you should have had it by now. Usually a lot of hassling will get you what you've been promised without calling in VGS.

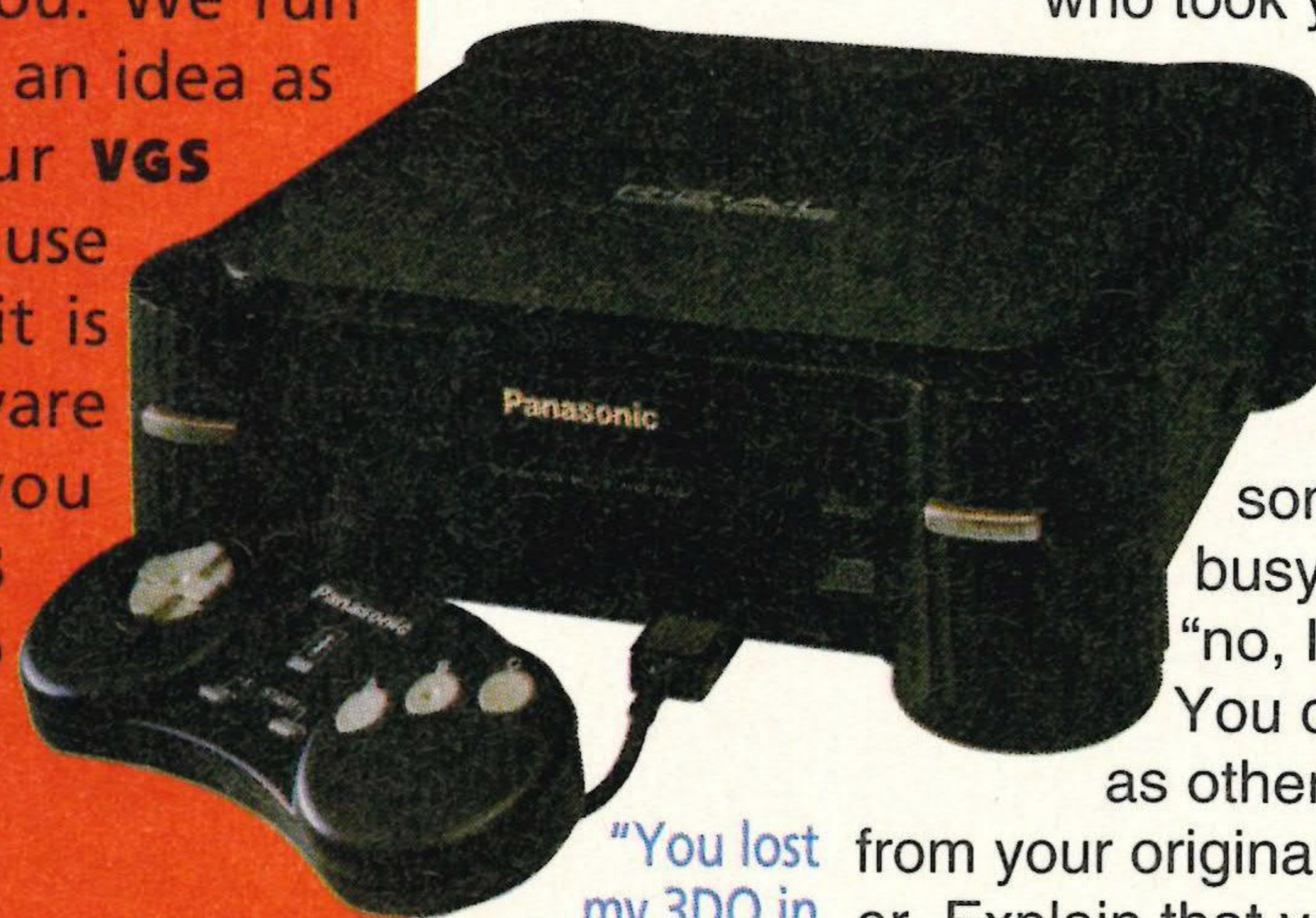
after 21 days

If you still haven't got your stuff, let us have a go for you. We run credit checks on all our advertisers, and as such it gives us an idea as to their financial standing. Send us a copy of your VGS GamesDirect form and we'll contact them directly. Because many other mags also carry ads from these companies, it is imperative that we have proof that you ordered the software as a result of an advert in VGS. This is why, even if you ordered by phone, you must have sent the VGS GamesDirect form off to the supplier and kept a copy to send off to us.

Enquiries will only be followed up if:-

- 1) You ordered through VGS
- 2) You supply us with a copy of the VGS GamesDirect form
- 3) 21 days have elapsed from placing your order

We are not, of course, a legal body...
but we can try to mediate between you and the supplier.



"You lost my 3DO in the post! You've got to be kidding!"



FIRST ACTION HERO

Last Action Hero would have been a nice heading, but there's no getting around the fact that the guys at Datel Electronics always do seem to be first with everything – from cheat carts to game convertors. First there was the Datel version... then everyone else followed suit, but always lagging one technological step behind. If you own an Action Replay, you'd be surprised at how many machines it is actually available for. VGS took a look at the whole range, from the good ol' Amiga favourite to the widdy hand-held Star Trek bolt-ons.

When the Action Replay was unleashed upon frustrated Commodore 64 owners way back in 1986, who would have thought that its developers, Datel Electronics would be where they are today, the biggest peripheral manufacturer in Europe? But users were soon spreading word of how the Action Replay cartridge was a dream come true, answering all their biggest wishes. Now they could fiddle around with a game's code, they could dump their favourite screens to a printer, and most importantly at the time, they could back-up their notoriously temperamental tape software. Heck, they could even chuck all their tape software onto disk, and have it load at 5-6 times normal speed. For £24.99, the C64 Action Replay represented tremendous value for money. Indeed, while software prices have quadrupled over the past eight years, the Action Replay has just doubled, with the highly-advanced Super NES version retailing for only £49.99.

If you've never seen an Action Replay in, er, action, then you're missing out on a vital part of playing games. What it does is so downright ingenious that once you've used it, you'll never want to be without it again.

What has made the Action Replay so popular amongst all computer and console users is the fact that every version is devised around the host computer. For instance, the Amiga version allows you to save screen pictures from games, while the Super NES one will also act as a very reliable game convertor for foreign carts/machines. But there is one common theme throughout the whole of the range: they make your life a helluva lot easier. Just what frustration it eases depends on what version you've got.

AMIGA

When Commodore 64 owners chucked out their machines to upgrade to Amigas, Datel upgraded with them. And as Commodore have upgraded their Amiga, so Datel have revamped the Action Replay (now on Mark III) to accommodate. This is the flagship of the Action Replay range.

Because the Amiga's such a quirky machine, getting it to do exactly what you want is difficult, even for experienced users. Datel have recognised this, and built in a very compressive range of enhanced and additional disk and memory commands.

Along with the improved disk commands (including a sector nibbler that helps copy your own programs and public domain disks), there are a plethora of options to help the gamesplayer. Top of the list is the trainer, now present in all versions of the Action Replay. See the box for a full explanation of how it works.

One intriguing option that is unique to the Amiga version is the ability to set the autofire

rate of the joysticks and change what pushing the different directions does. Street Fighter II is the ideal game on which to use this feature. Slap in two joysticks and, for instance, make up on the second stick simulate the keyboard space bar. You can also use this feature to full effect on flight sims, where you can swap over the up and down responses to dive or climb as you want. Used in conjunction with the trainer, this proves the ideal weapon to make your games easier – or tougher, for that matter! – than they were originally intended.

At the heart of the Amiga Action Replay is a comprehensive enhanced DOS command line. This has tons of useful features like a built-in virus checker, the option to turn that annoying clicking disk drive off, the chance to encrypt you disks (and decrypt other people's!), save and load compression, and a full monitor program to allow you to look at every single bit of info on the disk and resident in memory.

It also does other neat things, like explaining those odd guru messages when the machine crashes, fixing all the DOS bugs which Amigas have, and even searching the memory for music tracks, sprites and specific information.

With the Amiga version, Datel have got exactly the right balance of features for every Amiga owner. If you're just into games, then the trainer and joystick bits and bobs are a boon, and if you like to use the keyboard more than a joystick, the code-editing commands are essential.

Amiga 500 Action Replay Mk III: £59.99

Amiga 1500/2000 Action Replay Mk III: £69.99

Bring on

The trainer option in all the Action Replays is fundamental to its success. At present, no other manufacturer offers this facility in a cheat cart. If you want to cheat on your terms, as Graham Taylor would say, bring on the trainer.

The way the trainer works is so simple, even we can understand it. Hmm... now let's see if we can explain it.

Basically, every game is made up of bits of code stored in memory locations inside your computer/console. Each location has a number in it, some of which change, some of which don't.

Say you're looking for infinite lives: you turn on the trainer, play the game,

come back to the trainer and tell it your current amount of lives. It then scans the memory locations for that number and remembers where they are. Go back into the game, lose a life and return to the trainer. Tell it you lost a life, then it scans all those memory locations with your original number of lives in and checks which ones have decreased by one. Using a process of elimination, it finally comes up with the location that holds the number of lives. The rest is easy: the Action Replay just throws the biggest number it can in there and makes sure the game doesn't change it. Viola, 255 lives for the rest of the game – thankyouverymuch!

the trainer

MEGA DRIVE

This was the first console version of the Action Replay, coming out two years ago. When it first appeared, Mega Drive owners drooled over its ability to accommodate Jap carts in a UK Mega Drive slot and, of course, its main feature, the cheat codes. But did you know that to use the first Mega Drive Action Replay, you had to wait for Datel to find the game codes for you? After a couple of months, Datel soon realised the frustration everyone was having because players would get home with their latest game, plug



it in and then have wait weeks for Datel to get around to busting it (just like you have to do now

if you have a Game Genie). What a wonderful (infinite) life they could have if they could get their own codes, thought Datel, and so the Pro Action Replay was born. If the first one shifted like hot cakes, the Pro version shifted like free pound coins. People just couldn't believe it: they could cheat when they wanted, on what they wanted, and in whatever manner they wanted to do it. Chuck out the rulebook, Datel had put the power in the hands of the user.

Since developing the Mega Drive trainer option, Datel haven't looked back, implementing it on all Replays.

But giving us the power didn't mean Datel rested on their laurels, oh no. Now they try to find codes that do more than get infinite lives, energy, etc; they can use the cart to change a game's colours, speed up the action, even adapt foreign coded carts to enable them to play on a UK system.

Look up the word fiendish in the dictionary and you'll see a picture of the Action Replay.

Mega Drive Pro Action Replay: £49.99

MASTER SYSTEM

Why should Mega Drive owners have all the fun? The 8-bit Sega version does everything its big brother does – and why not? Datel have recognised that many young console owners will be confused by the complicated prospect of "hacking" through game code and have made all the console versions exactly the same to use.

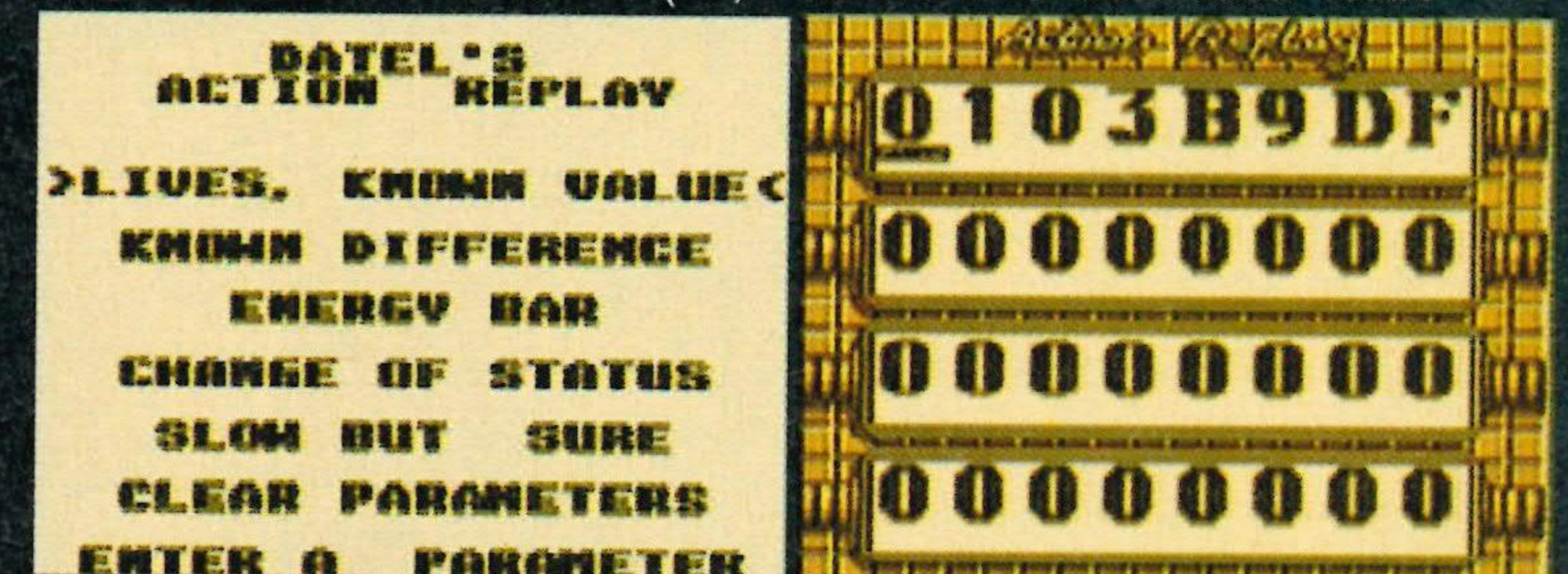
Turn on, get Action Replay boot screen and then choose whether to play the game, enter some codes or get to work in the trainer. It's as simple as that; no complicated commands or icons to deal with.

And before you ask, no, Datel haven't come up with a code that allows Mega Drive games to play on the Master System – now that WOULD be something.

Master System Pro Action Replay: £39.99

GAME GEAR

Arguably the slickest looking Replay of the whole lot, the matte black Game Gear version has all the code-hunting power of the big versions, yet takes up no more space than a normal Game Gear cart. Where it differs is a little red button on the top. As the GG doesn't have a soft reset button (ie, resets the console with-



The Game Boy version is really tidy. It took us about a minute to get this infinite lives code for Dracula

out losing the game's parameters), Datel have added their own. Works with just as much success as the MS version.

Game Gear Pro Action Replay: £39.99

GAME BOY

It's weird comparing the Game Boy version of the Action Replay with Hornby Hobbies' Game Genie equivalent: the Replay does everything the Genie does AND also has a game trainer in it, yet the Game Genie is around four times the size. You can fit the Action Replay on the back, plug in your game and still have a portable hand-held; plug the Genie on, though, and it

UNIVERSAL ADAPTOR

The Universal Adaptor will allow you to play imported cartridges on a UK Snes.

Plays Mario Kart, Pilot Wings, Play PAL - UK Games on your JAP/USA Snes.

The Universal adaptor is a Top Quality Product, cased, with full instructions:

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SUPER NES

The Super NES Pro Action Replay unit is currently outselling the Mega Drive unit by 5:1. Considering there are more Mega Drives than SNESes in the UK, it shows just what a desperate need there is for a cheat cart that also has a game convertor in it (the Game Genie version doesn't acknowledge that people want to cheat on import games, too – spoil sports). The main unit works exactly the same as the other successful Pro Replays, but the Super NES version scores highly because it is the most reliable, stable and upgradable cart convertor

around too.

Just plug your import cart in the top (eg, a Jap cart), plug a game that's coded for your machine in the back of the Replay (eg, a UK cart) and the Action Replay will force a UK machine to look at the UK cart for the country lock chip and then the top cart for the game information. It's just so simple in concept, it's sickening we didn't think of the idea ourselves!

But what makes the Replay one step better than the other dedicated convertors is that if the spec of the carts changes on a new game, if you've got a dedicated convertor, you're stuffed because there's no way to alter what the carts are doing. However, Datel can just wop in a few Action Replay codes and make the machine think all sorts of things. The poor old SNES gets a real ear-bashing from the Replay if it's giving any gaming grief.

Super NES Pro Action Replay: £49.99

COMING SOON

Datel are constantly updating the software on their carts (especially when a painful Super FX SNES game comes along), yet most changes are quite subtle to the end user. However, once in a while they give each cart a complete revamp. Next for treatment is the Super NES version, which is inheriting many of the commands from the Amiga version, plus more options to make entering tons of codes (on Street Fighter II, for instance) much easier.

Completely new carts on their way are an internal version for the Amiga 1200 (currently being developed in Germany, the birthplace of the original Amiga version), which should be available early next year, and an internal version for the PC, expected before Christmas. Both will retail for £69.99 and feature enhanced DOS, copying and trainer facilities.

VGS

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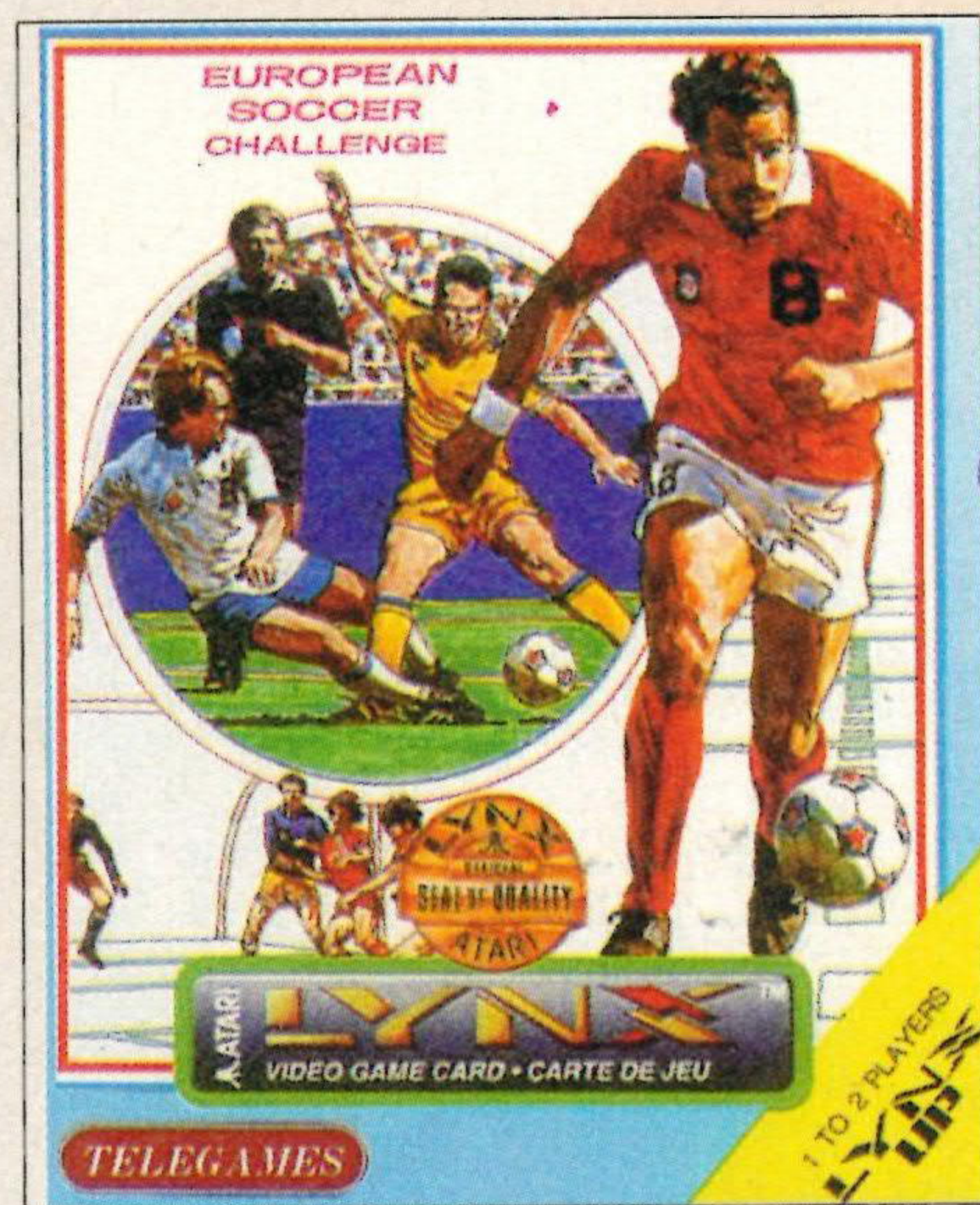
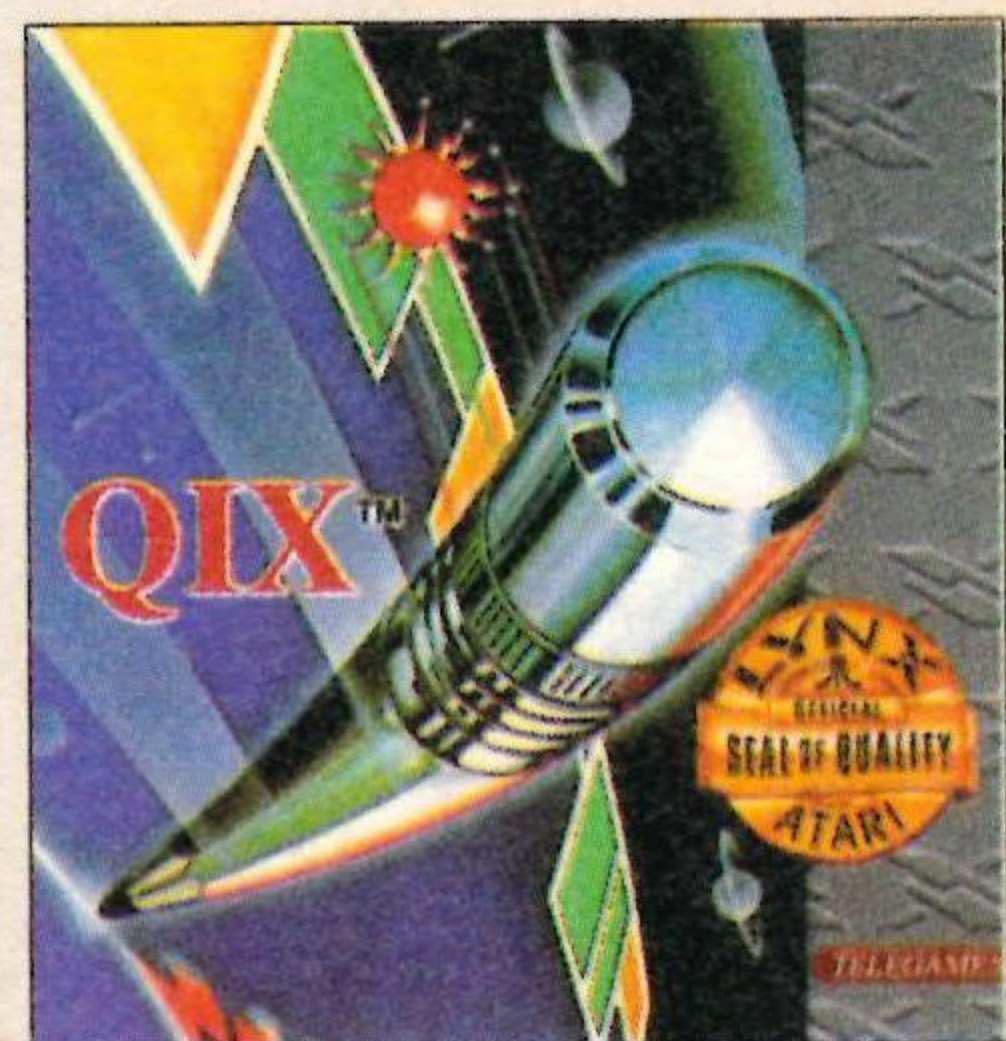
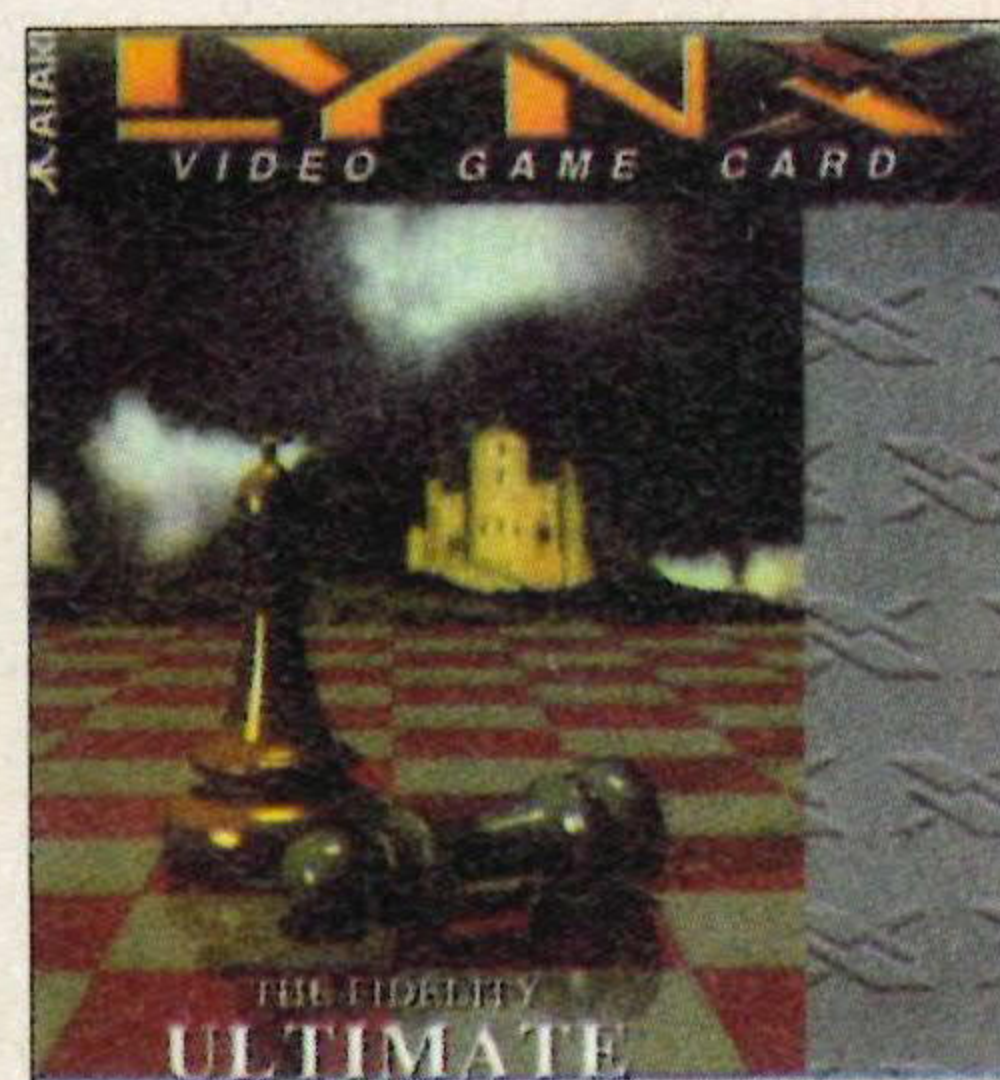
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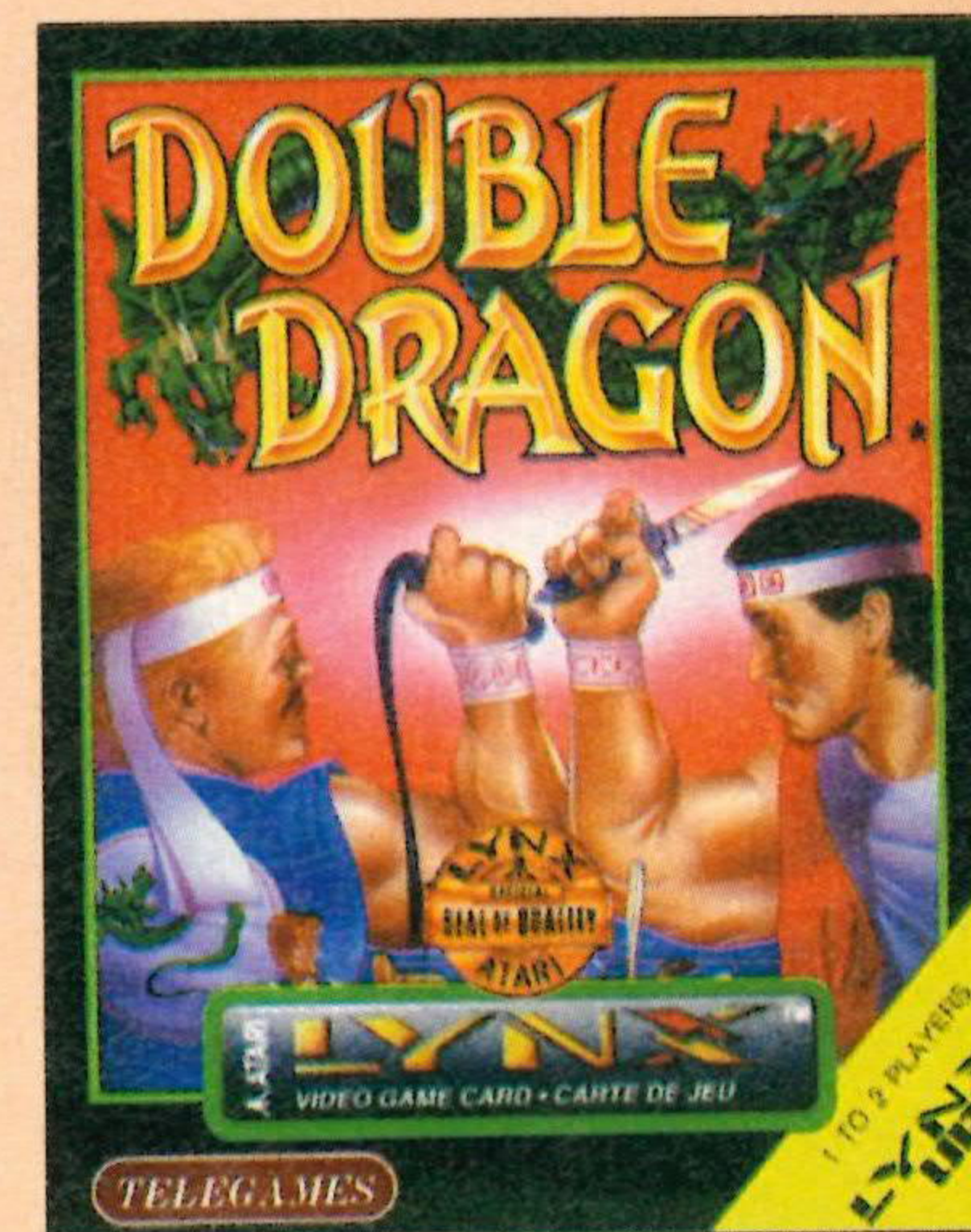
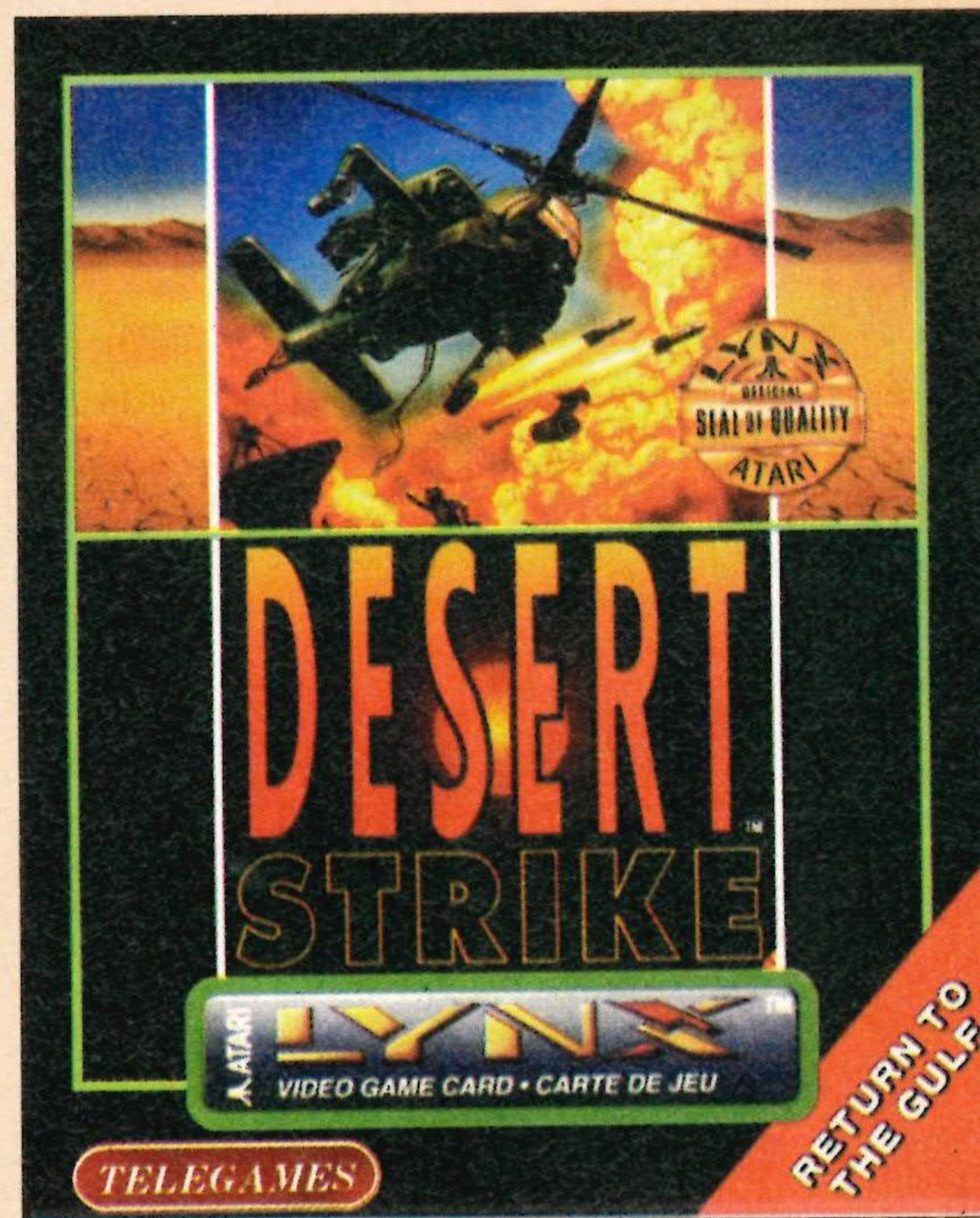
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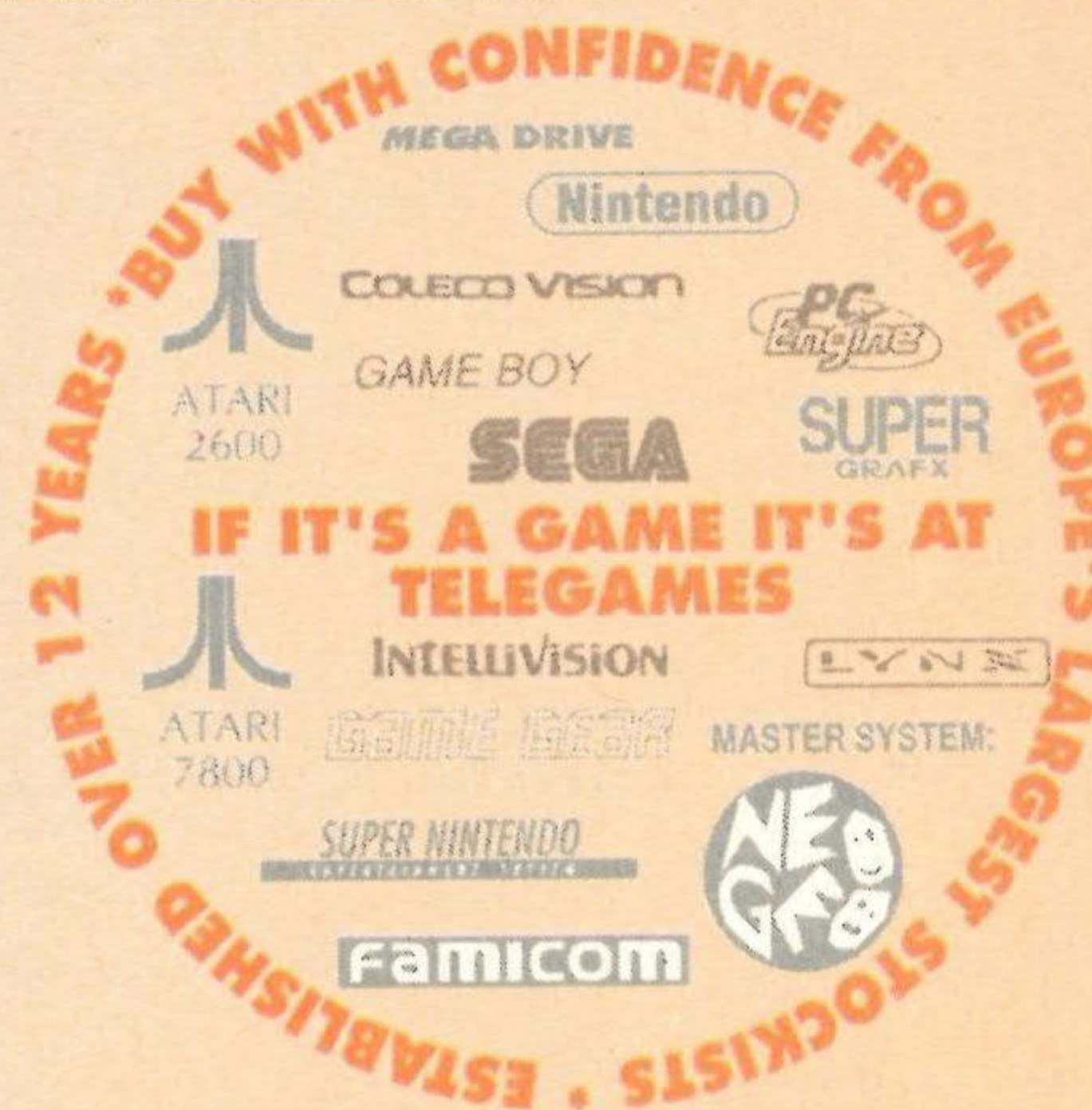
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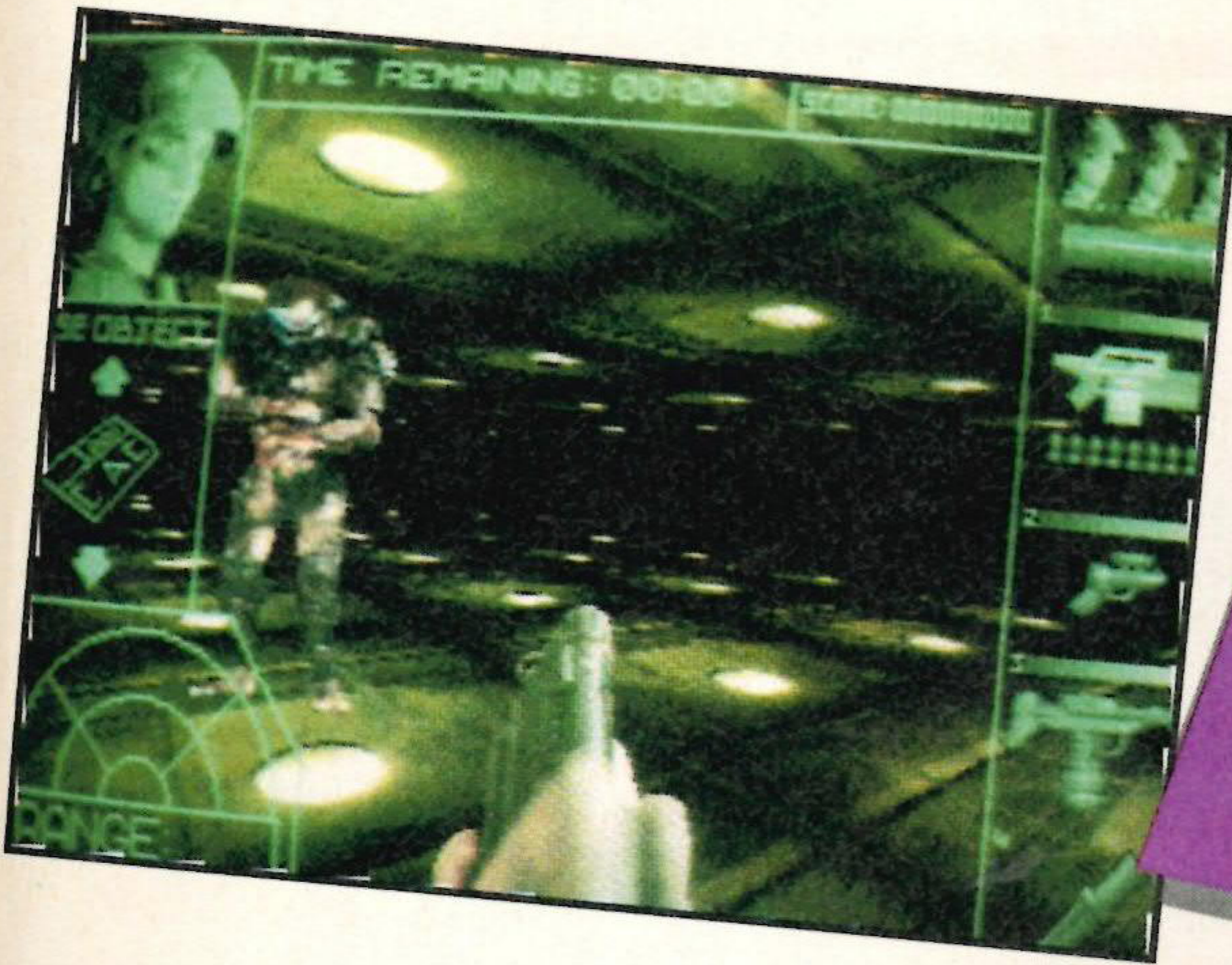


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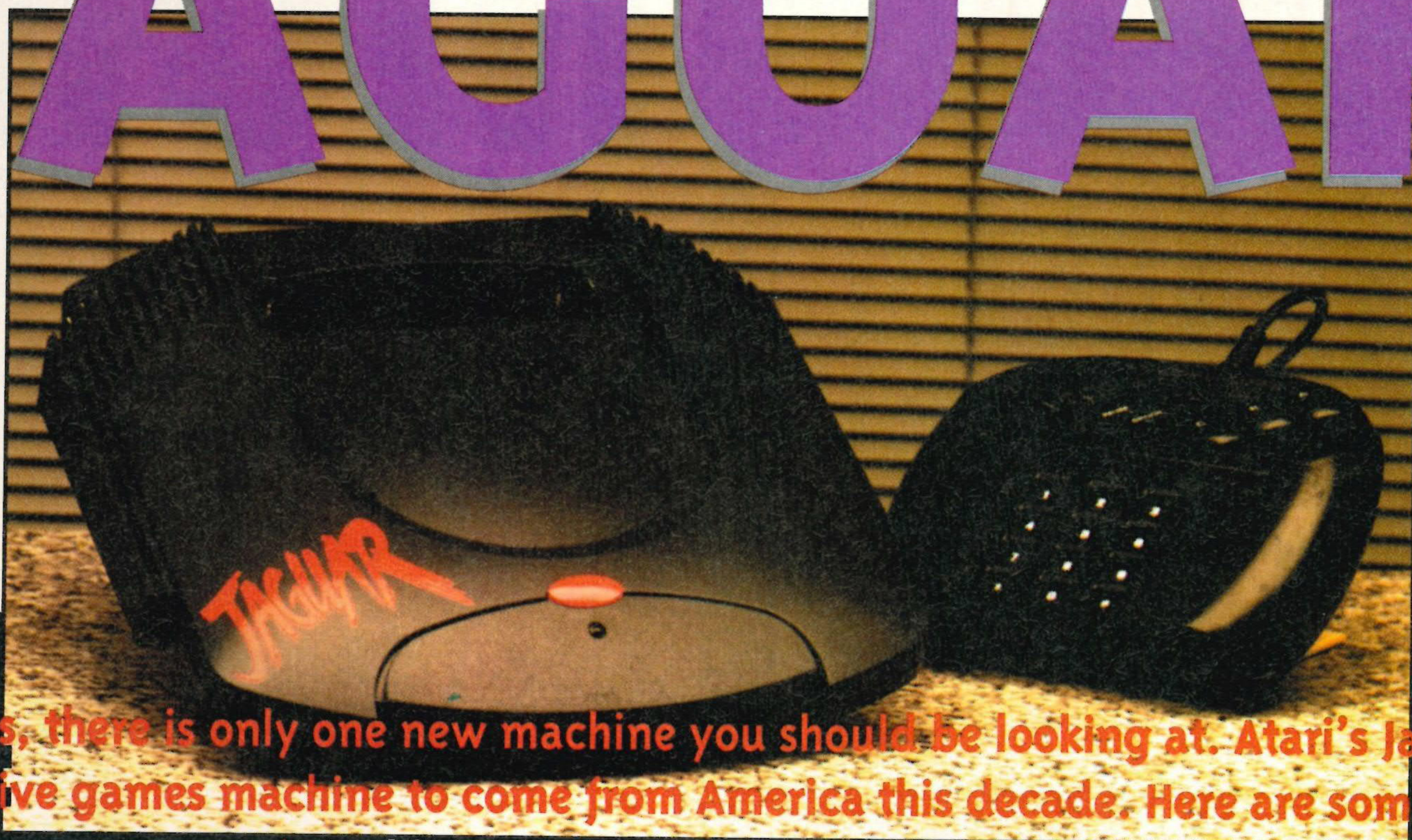
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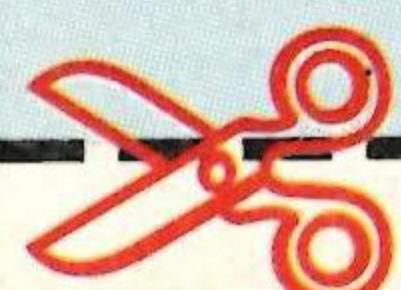
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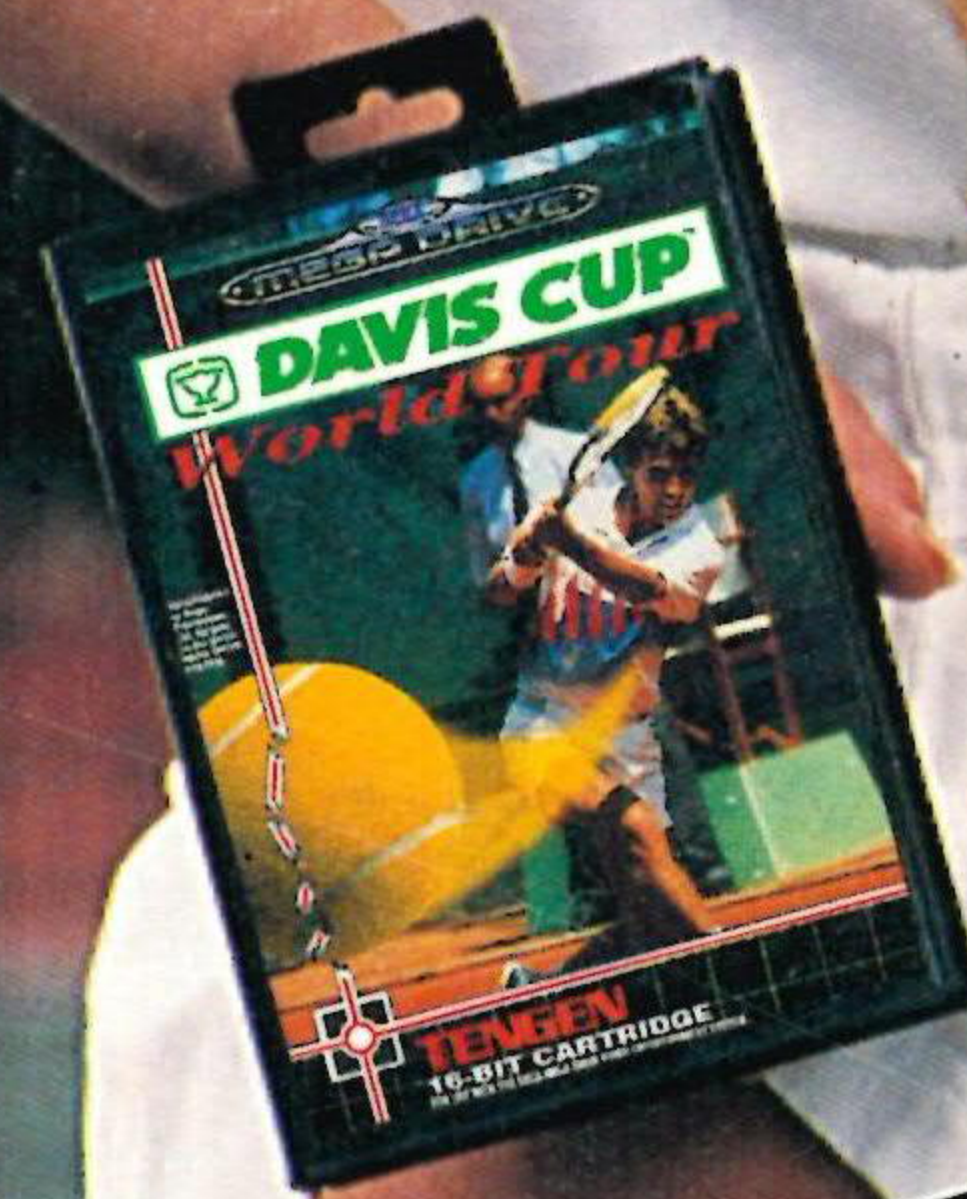
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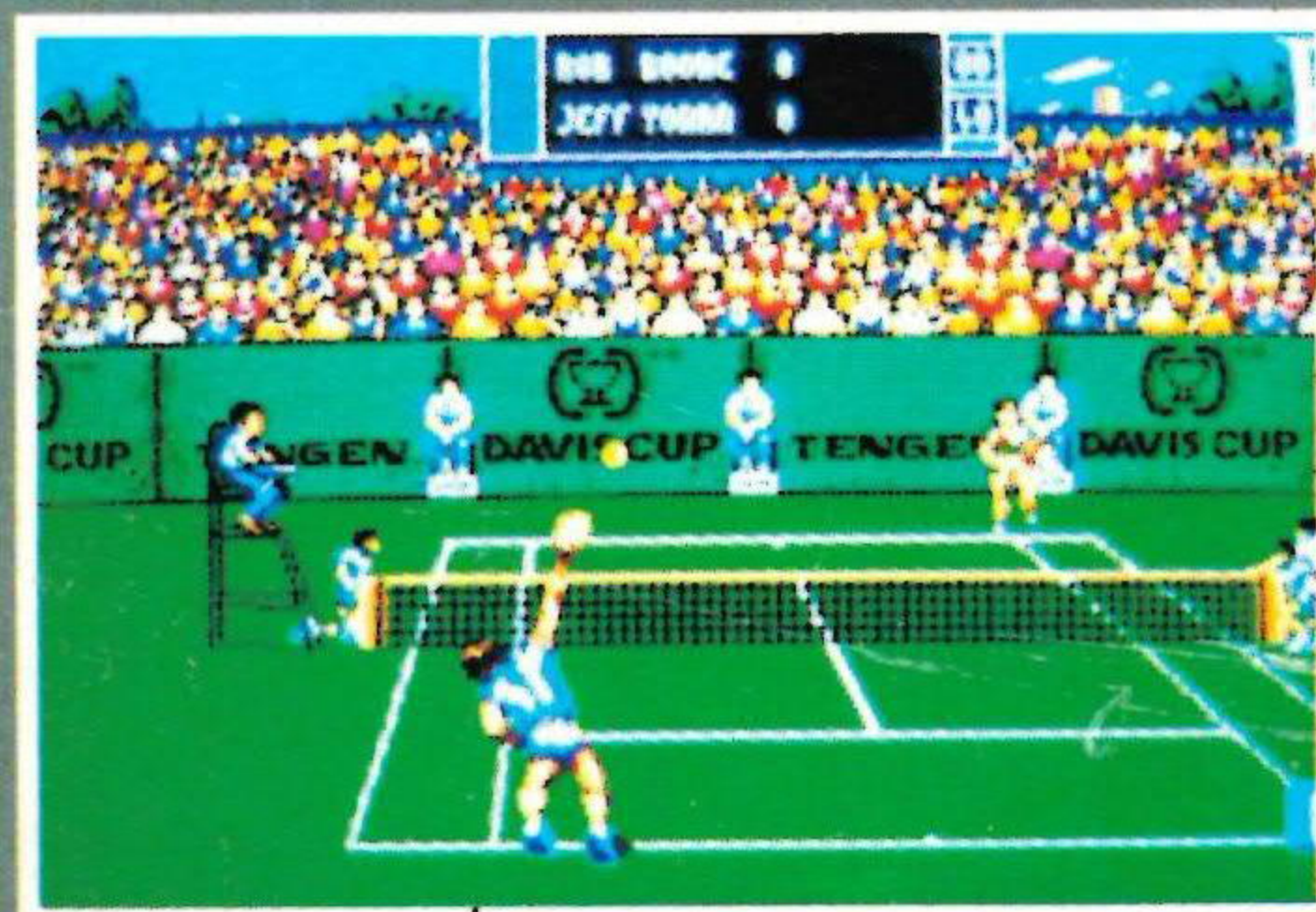
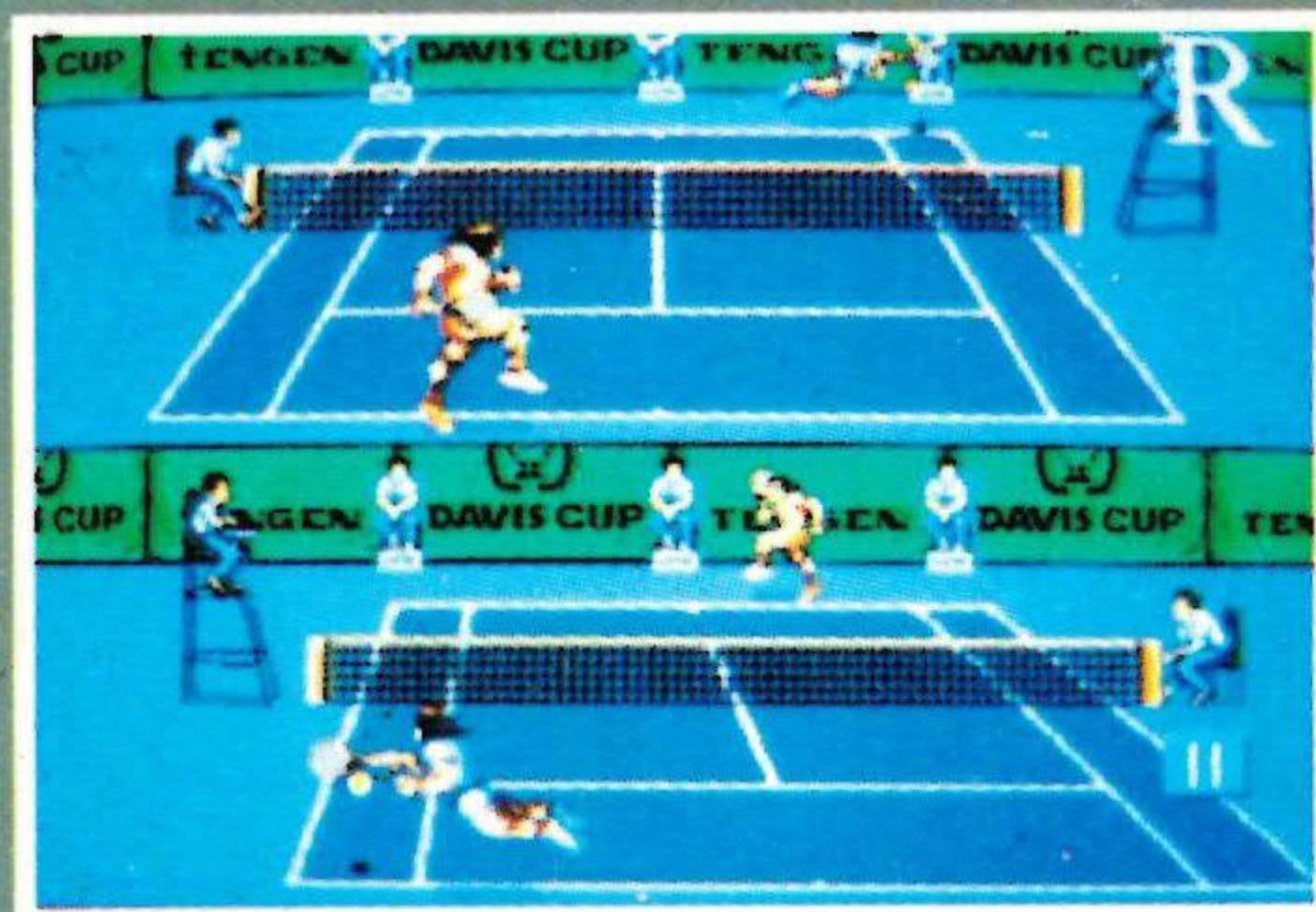
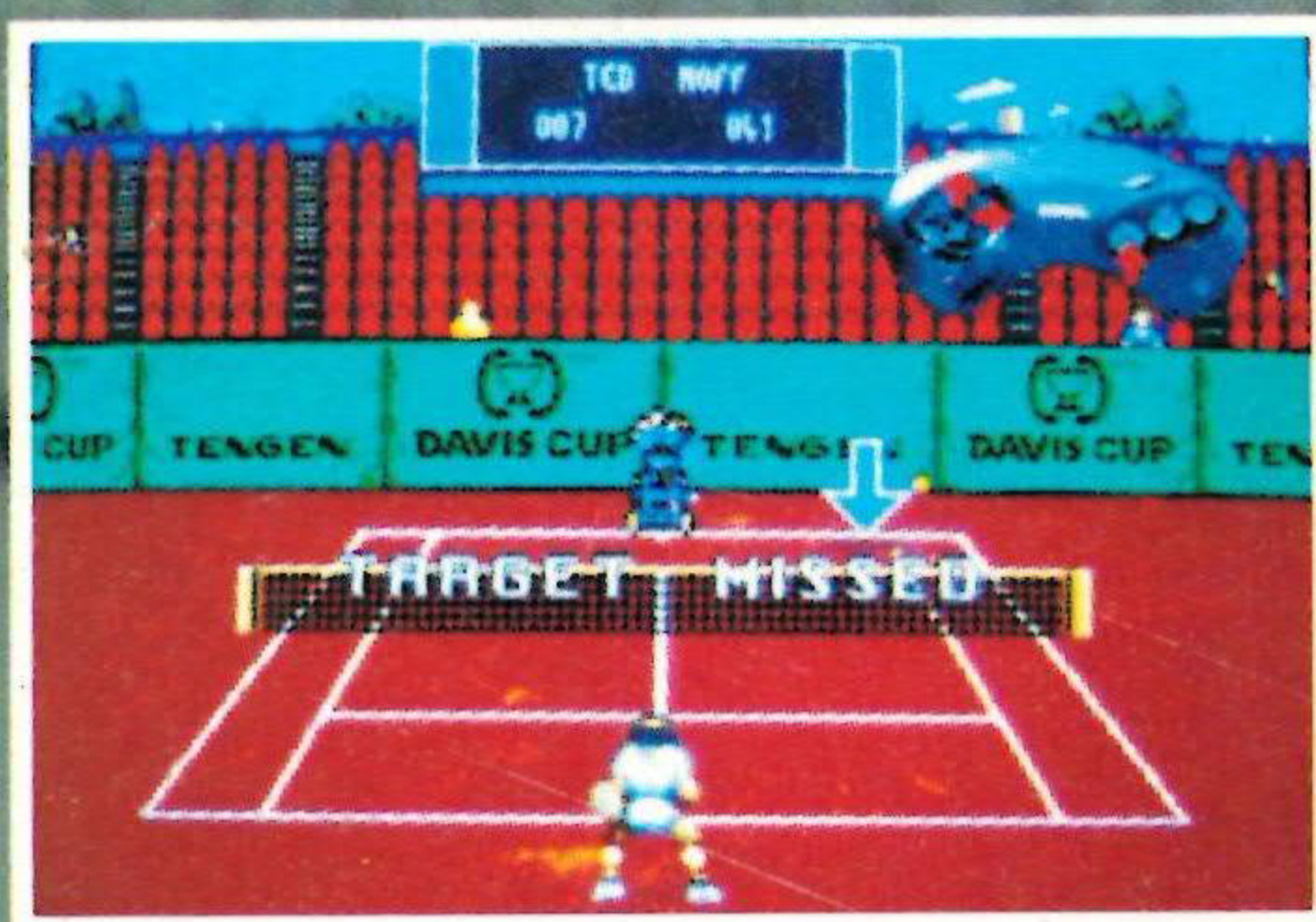
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