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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

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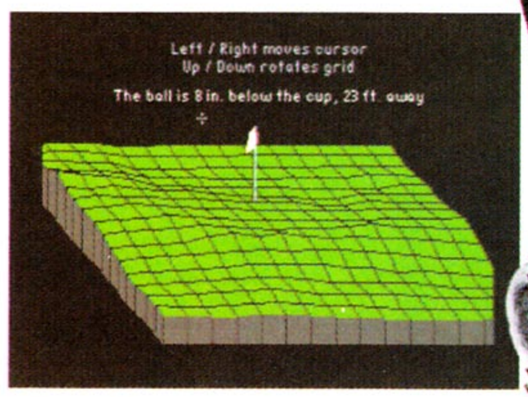

The 3-D putting grid rotates so you can see every wrinkle. Use it to read every green like a pro.

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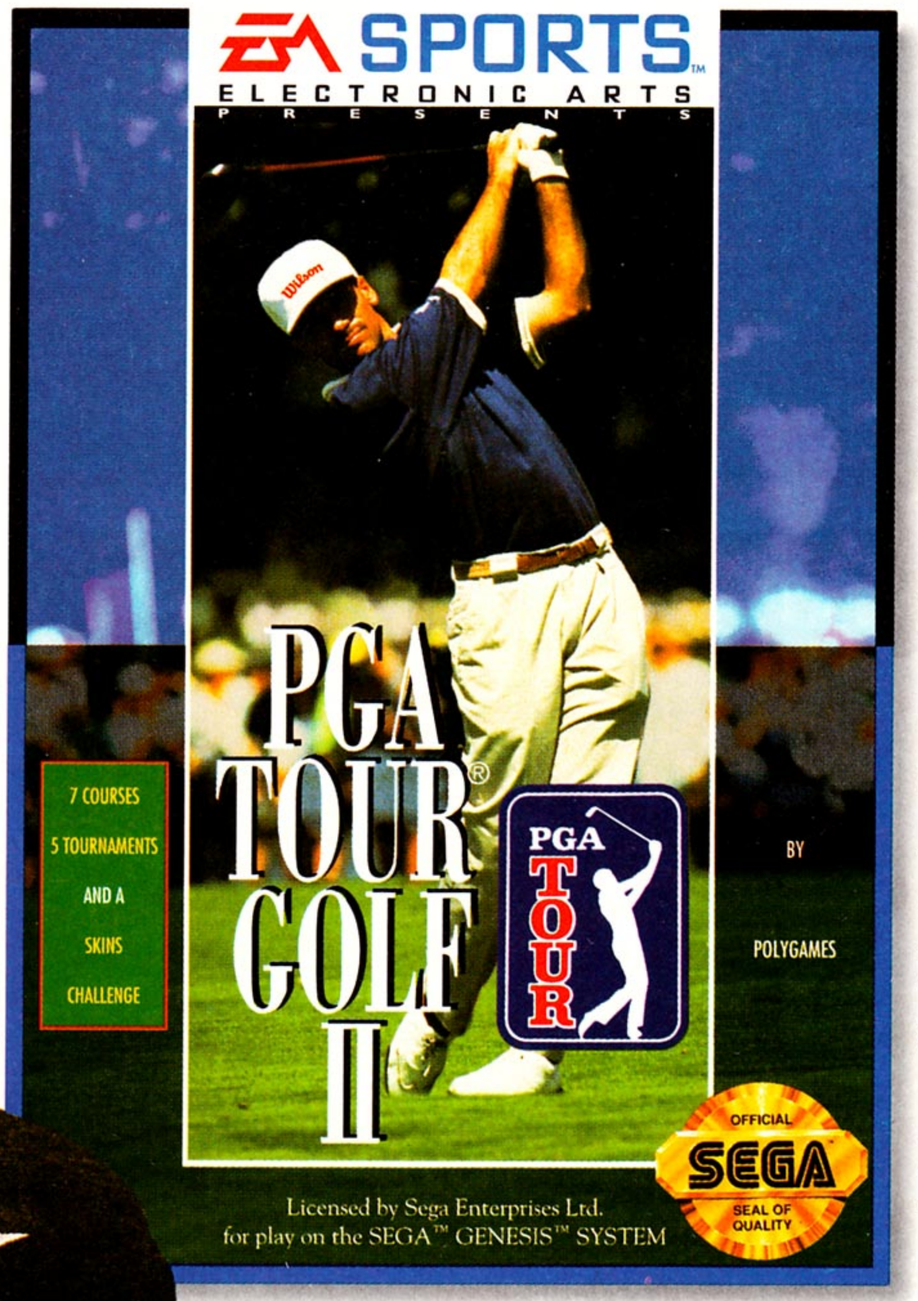

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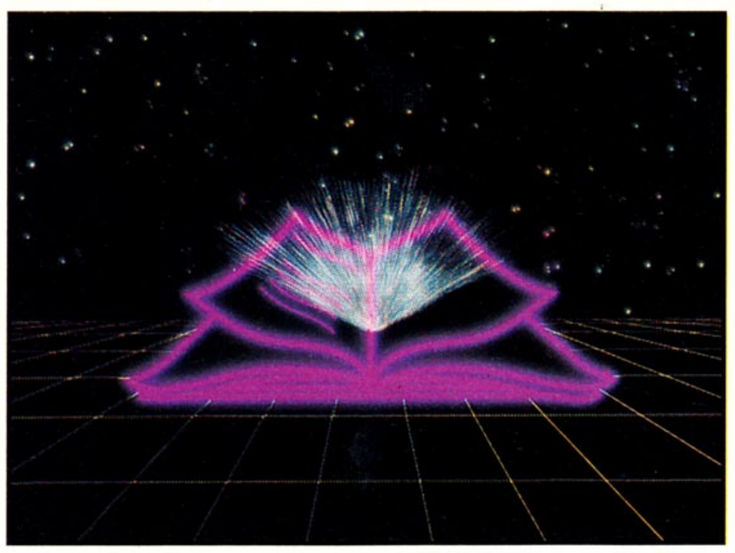

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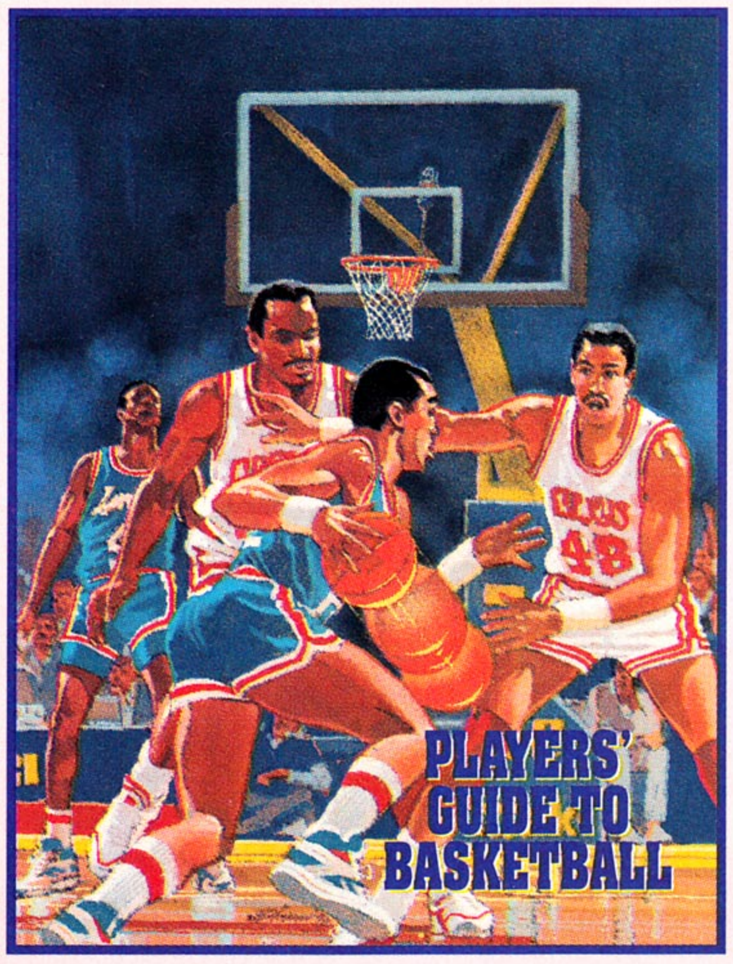

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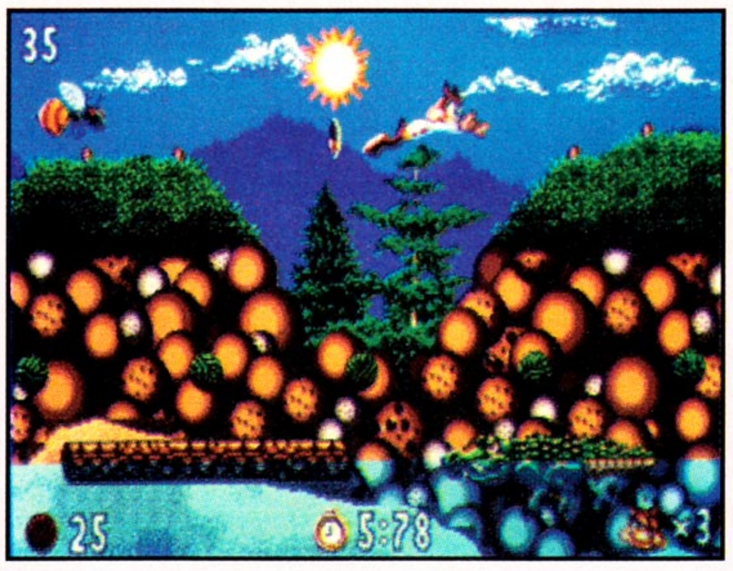

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About the art— We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Jeff Mangiat — Cover — Bubsy ©1993 Accolade, Inc. — Sonic and Tails ©1992 Sega of America — Blanka ©1992 Capcom
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Bob Forrest — Test Lab
Cliff Spohn — EG Interview
Bill Vann — Players' Guide Cover and Interior art for Players' Guide to Basketball

This issue was made possible by a grant from the "We're really too big to care what you do with our money" corporation. We thank them for not checking up on our activities, or our expense accounts. Future issues will be sent via hollow log, or another modern method of communication. Don't read this.

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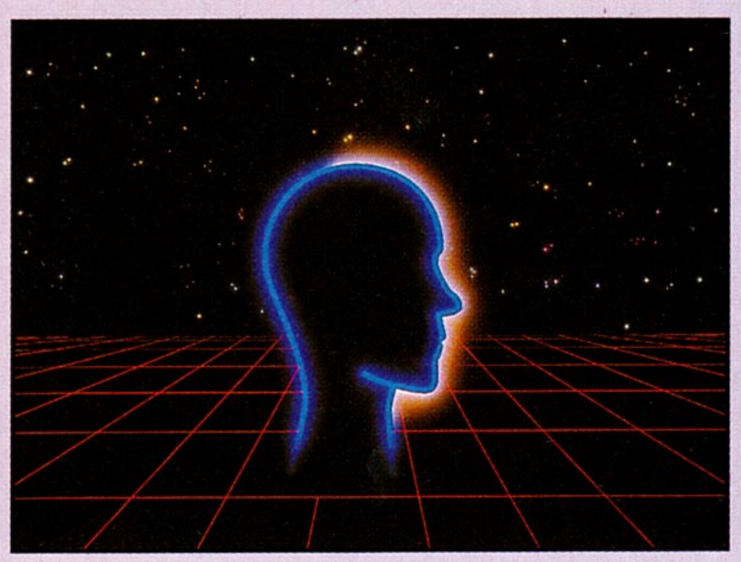

POWER ON!

Among My Souvenirs

Joyce Worley, the nimble news editor, often says that when she grows too ancient to scoop the competition every month, she'd like to spend those golden years as curator of a Museum of Electronic Gaming. No such institution exists yet, but I'm working on it. All that's needed is a ticket booth at the front door, and I'd be ready to enter the museum business.

I am writing this editorial, as I have all its predecessors, from my huge L-shaped office in my Las Vegas home. Outside, the cats Joyce insists on feeding frolic around the sparkling pool in the midday sun. I sit with my back to this splendor, across from the double French doors that lead to the living room. My Macintosh is in front of me on my desk, and my 386sx is at my right elbow. To the left of the doors is a two-screen entertainment center with a SNES, Genesis, NES, and Duo. (The Amiga, CDTV, CD-I and Vectrex (!) are in another room.) Out of sight around the corner of the "L" is the copy machine which churned out the first dozen issues of **Megagaming**.

Six shelf units fill the remaining wall space. What kind of books? A lot of science fiction, mysteries, and popular culture, along with a selection of current games and books about interactive electronic entertainment. One shelf holds copies of the games I've helped to design, and another of non-electronic games I sometimes enjoy playing. Thankfully, out of sight is the tower of unreviewed games waiting for my attention. And crammed into every free inch are all the things video and computer game companies have given me over the years.

Except for the clothing, of course. The t-shirts, pullovers and sweaters are in bedroom closets and drawers. My personal favorites are a maroon hooded sweatshirt from Sierra On-Line, and the t-shirt distributed by Nintendo at the unveiling of the NES. It has the robot on the front with eyes that light up. I once kiddingly told an industry audience that while I appreciated the shirts, underwear would be very useful. Imagine my surprise when a pair of **SimAnt** boxer shorts arrived.

My private museum has enough pens and markers to handwrite several issues of **EG**, a lifetime supply of logo-decorated golf balls, enough mugs and glassware to stock a fair-sized restaurant. If this magazine's fate ever depends on my having a pen shaped like a baseball bat (**MicroLeague Baseball**) or a carrot (**Reader Rabbit**), I've got it covered. There are yo-yos, buttons of every shape, and autographed baseballs from Pete Rose and Earl Weaver. Two sword-in-the-stone paperweights, one for **Conquest of Camelot** and the other from Accolade, flank the **Red Baron** wooden biplane and the **Dragonstrike** paper glider.

It's hard to pick a favorite, but it might be the rectangular wooden train whistle MicroProse gave me to celebrate publication of **RailRoad Tycoon**. It comes in handy when I want to blow off steam – or expend surplus hot air left over from these editorials.

– Arnie Katz

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MARCH, 1993

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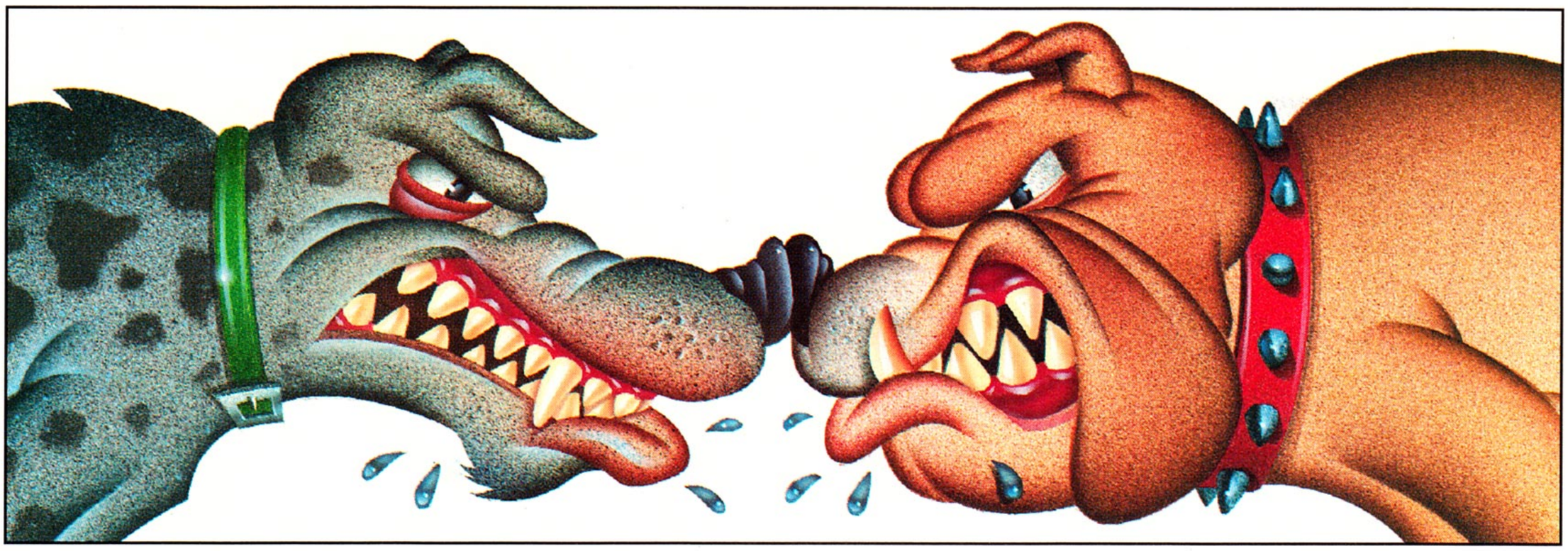

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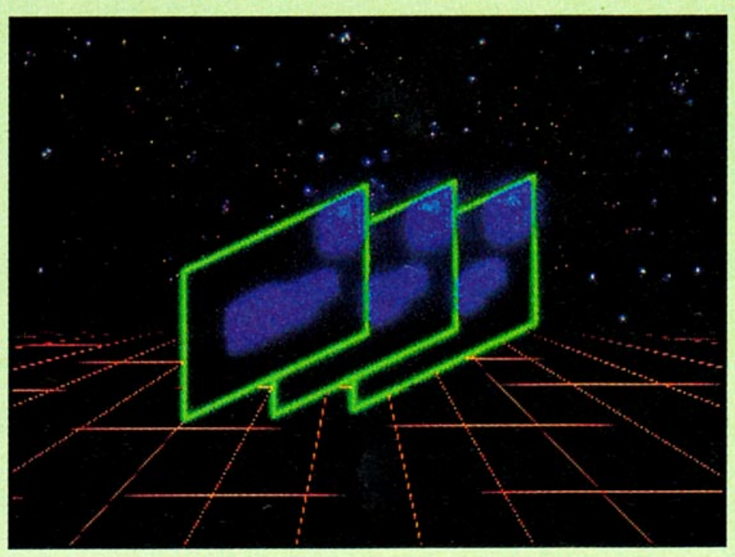

FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

First at Bat, Man?

I want to congratulate you for creating this great magazine. I am a proud owner of a Sega Genesis, a TurboExpress and an IBM PS/1, and also a collector of old video games machines like the Atari 2600, Intellivision II, ColecoVision, Odyssey, etc. I would like to ask you if there was ever a **Batman** game for the Atari 2600.

Charles Franklin Fernandez
Santa Clara, CA

Thanks for the kudos. As to Batman*, no; the only DC hero Atari brought to the 2600 was* Superman.

No More Kid Stuff

Finally! A video game mag that doesn't treat all its readers as if they were 12 years old, like different colored happy faces for game ratings! I realize most of the people who play video games are kids, but there are a lot of adults who also enjoy video games. So, for those of us who do enjoy them, your mag is a blessing.

Jason Tomlinson
San Diego, CA

Thanks! Just a second while we shred our idea for giving ratings in one to five pink mice.

Wants PC Data

I like the format of your magazine and have ordered a subscription, although there are some things that I feel could make it better. 1. On new PC products and PC reviews, put the minimum system requirements, RAM, sound boards, etc. 2. More pictures of new games, if you can. 3. Include interviews with the programmers of the games.

Robert J. Wright
Renton, WA

EG feels that anyone can look at the software package in the store for system requirements. You'll be seeing more pictures and interviews.

Anything But Long-Winded

Overall, I enjoyed your first issue. EG reads a little too quickly, and seemed a little sparse. Every page doesn't need to be filled, but the magazine was anything but long-winded. The reviews seemed a little short. Us "adults" like a lot of detail. The other articles were very in depth. I especially liked the treatment of the science fiction article.

Steve Fulton
Manhattan Beach, CA

We try to cover a lot, but we also like to stick to the essentials. Witness our next letter.

Doesn't Miss Tips

Eliminating the tips section (as Arnie alluded to in the second issue) is a good idea, given the overabundance of superficial tip rags on the stands. It definitely gives the magazine a unique place. I can't think of another mag without them.

M. Palisano
Norwalk, CT

You've got the idea, and we like to think that most of our readers will feel the same way. Those who really want those tips will find them out one way or another. Our next letter shows the same spirit.

Can Keep a Secret

Insert Coin is fascinating, and the Video Game Gallery is fresh! I like the fact that you don't give away any of the individual game's secrets or maps. The issue deserves a rating of 9—the highest rating I have ever given a video game magazine.

Robert Johannesson
New York, NY

Thanks for the high rating. As to the secrets, what's the fun if you can't ferret them out for yourself?

From Hype to Hi-tech

It's great to finally see an electronic gaming magazine targeted toward grownups. Other magazines do provide some good information but ... lack a mature perspective. Sometimes they get too involved in the hype.

Since you will be covering gaming across all types of platforms, I suggest that you standardize terminology [like using] bytes instead of bits when giving us the size of ROM storage used in game cartridges. After all, video game consoles, however specialized their function, *are* computers. I'd also like to see more technical aspects of gaming hardware. I'd like to see an article which gives all of the specifications of the various video game consoles and compares and explores their capabilities and limitations.

Barry A. Reeves
Tacoma, WA

You'll be seeing more technical details both from the Game Doc and Test Lab. These are the columns that really lend themselves to this type of information. But we're focusing on entertainment here, and that's where we really like to go into depth.

So until next time, keep those letters coming to:
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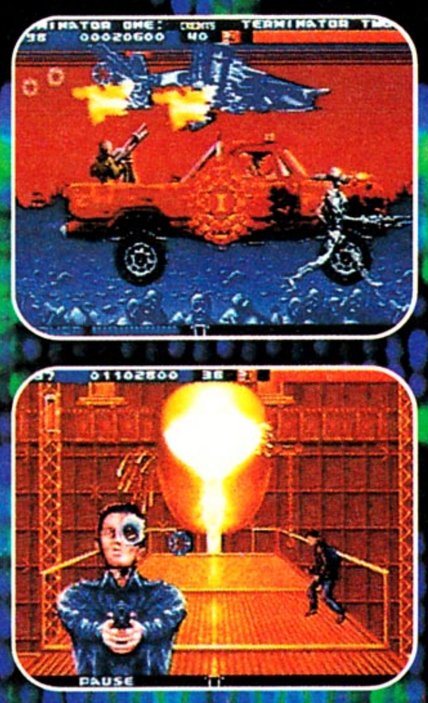

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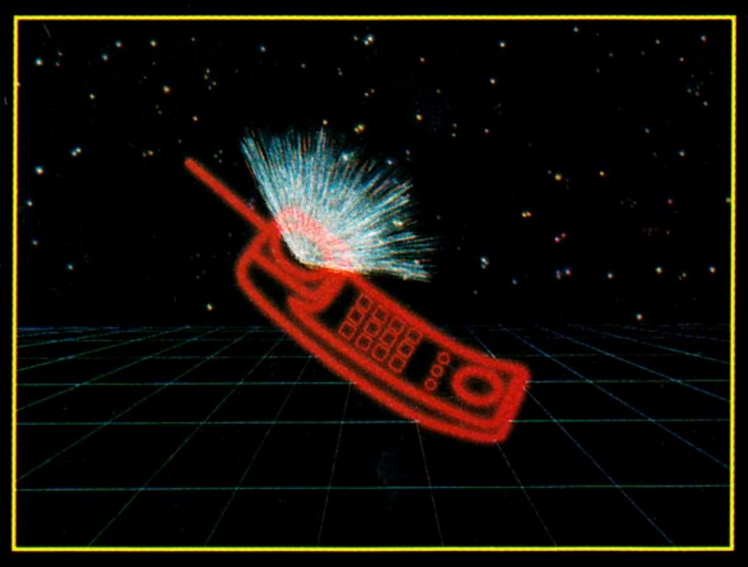


EG HOTLINE

Compiled by: Joyce Worley

Pioneer Introduces First Interactive LaserDisc Player

On January sixth, the day before the opening of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, Pioneer made home entertainment history by introducing the first LaserDisc player with interactive capabilities.

LaserActive™ is a multi-platform machine, developed in cooperation with SEGA Enterprises and NEC Home Electronics. The system consists of a combination LaserDisc compact disc and three optional control packs. The control packs give the system the expandability and power to play a multitude of existing software plus some all new "Interactive LaserDiscs" being developed especially for the system.

The Mega-LD pack was developed with SEGA Enterprises and will allow users to play all existing Genesis cartridges, SEGA CDs, CD+Gs, and new 12-inch Mega LD discs.

The LD-ROM² pack develped with NEC Home Electronics will play all TurboGrafx Turbo Chip games, CD-ROM and Super CD-ROM discs, CD+Gs, and 12-inch LD-ROM² discs.

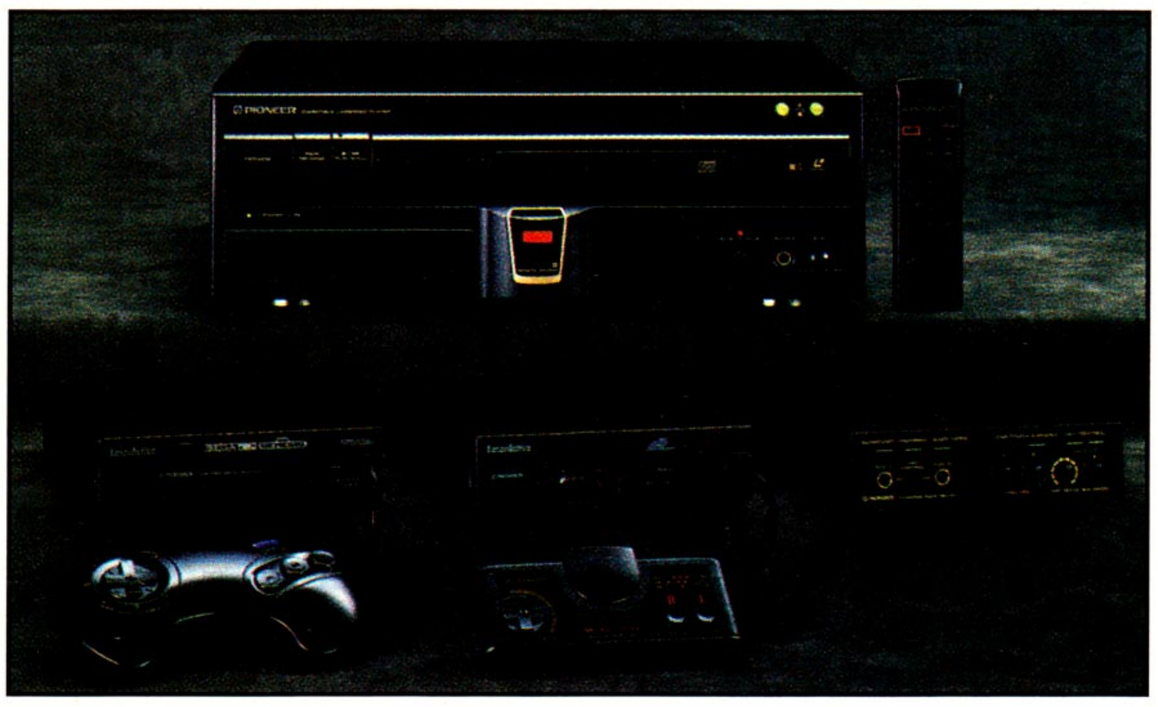
There will also be a LaserKaraoke pack which will be compatible with all existing LaserKaraoke titles.

While LaserDiscs have been around for 14 years, and LaserDisc games have appeared in arcades since the early 1980s, this marks the first time that such technology has found its way into the home video game market.

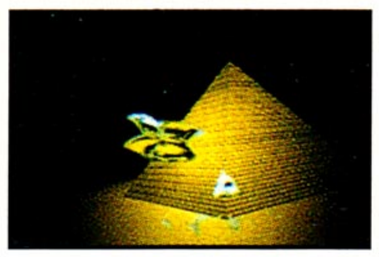
The advantage that LaserDisc has over standard CDs is in the way video images are handled. All video placed on a CD must first be digitized. Since the CD only has about 540 mega bytes of storage, in order to preserve memory sacrifices like fewer colors, a smaller screen size and fewer frames per second are necessary to create a long-playing game.

The LaserDisc has the benefit of using analog video instead of digital, resulting in motion picture quality video with full screen images, beautiful color, and smooth, unbroken motion.

Pioneer anticipates a large variety of interactive games, movies, music, educational programs, electronic publishing and "how-to" software.



LaserActive™



The strategy to align with such companies as SEGA and NEC is an attempt by all three companies to create "the definitive home entertainment product."

Tom Kalinske, president and CEO of SEGA of America, Inc. stated "This relationship has produced a technology which we believe is at the highest end of the electronics industry. We anticipated that the LaserActive player will create new demand for SEGA video games by drawing new players to the interactive arena."

Masahiro Tsukimoto, vice president of NEC corp believes that "LaserActive will definitely bring new life to the television-game market and have a tremendous impact on both the educational and audio-video industries."

SEGA Enterprises and NEC Home Electronics will grant respective licenses for their Mega LD and LD-ROM² formats and Pioneer will grant licenses for both. All three companies will encourage third-party development both here and in Japan.

The product is scheduled for release in Japan in July and in the United States in August. While the U.S. pricing has not yet been decided, the prices in Japan will be ¥90,000 for the base unit (approx. $650) and ¥60,000 for the expansion packs (approx. $430). Prices for the expansion packs. however, are expected to be lower for the U.S. release.

There are expected to be about a dozen LaserActive titles available by the fall.

Sega Announces Home Virtual Reality

Sega of America announced it will release a full color home virtual reality peripheral called Virtua Sega™, by Christmas of 1993. While details are still sketchy, Sega has announced there will be at least four games available for the unit in 1993, and it will unveil the device at the Summer CES in June.

Virtua Sega will offer "stereo-optic vision and depth perception" to immerse players in a 3-D gaming environment.

FailSafe Guards Game Files

Gamers who want to keep others from messing up saved games have a solution. Villa Crespo Software, usually a game producer and marketer, designed **FailSafe Computer Guardian** as a resident sentry against snooping eyes, sabotage or virus infection, or even accidental file deletions. It includes a file editor, along with system guards and basic protection from file changes.

Acclaim Announces Mortal Kombat!

Acclaim Entertainment has purchased the license to 1992's hottest arcade game, **Mortal Kombat**.

The fighting game is the successor to the craze started by Capcom's **Street Fighter II**, having recently rocketed to the number one position on both the Playmeter and Replay magazine charts.

The play mechanics are very similar to those in other one-on-one fighting games, but the digitized graphics add a new level of realism to the genre.

It is a fight to the death between seven of the world's strongest warriors, each of which have their own special skills and moves. The game culminates in a battle with Shang-Tsung, an evil warrior who has the ability to transform into all of the previous opponents.

While the game is still very early in the development stage, Acclaim anticipates it will be one of their best-selling titles ever. Already versions are planned for the Super NES, Game Boy, Genesis, Game Gear, and Sega CD.

While exact release dates have not been announced as of the Winter CES, the SNES version will be the first to ship, with the Genesis and Sega CDs to follow. The handhelds will be intermixed into the schedule.

All versions of **Mortal Kombat** are due in 1993.

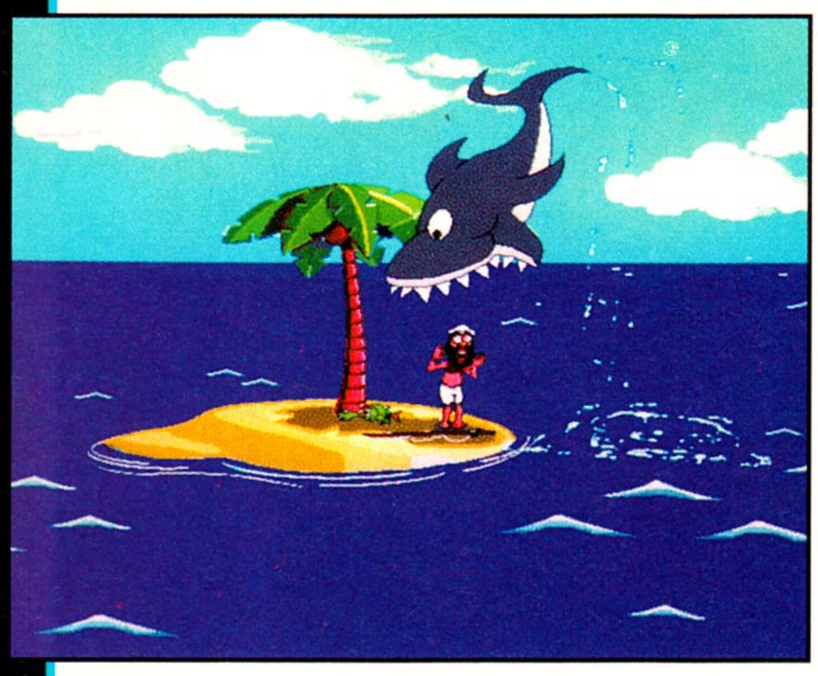
KQ Creator Gets Fortune Told

Sierra's Ken and Roberta Williams celebrated the success of **King's Quest VI** with a small get-together on December 15th at Sterling Castle in Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York. **KQVI** held the number one spot on the entertainment software charts at the time of the party and ranks as the most popular **King's Quest** game to date. It follows in the footsteps of some of the greatest computer adventure games ever developed.

A fortune teller at the party offered readings to guests based on their name and birth date. Roberta quietly sat for her reading at the end of the night while guests were leaving, but **EG**'s Russ Ceccola overheard the predictions. She read from the charts that Roberta was very creative (an undeniable fact!) and said she would soon be exploring new areas of technology. This seems to be a true prediction, considering that Roberta's first CD-only game is coming up next! With luck, it will contain the same intrigue and fantastic game play as the **King's Quest** series.

Games, Cartoons Go To Work

There's an increase in products that use entertainment themes to



enliven business computing. **The Trivial Pursuit Daily Planner** (Amaze!nc /MS-DOS) is based on the perennial party game. The same company dabbled in entertaining business wares with last year's **Far Side Calendar** (now updated as the **Far Side Daily Planner**).

Dynamix's **Johnny Castaway**, the innovative screen saver that tells an episodic story, has not yet been rivaled, but Berkeley Systems, whose **After Dark** series brought the world flying toasters and tropical fish aquariums, now has come up with **Star Trek, the Screen Saver**, with animated images based on episodes and characters from the original television series.

Ad Mag For Gamers

Now gamers who want to buy or sell games and hardware can contact each other through *The Videogame Trader,* an all-ad publication. Publisher Tim Duarte promises timely advertising, since the publication will be mailed bi-weekly, on the first and third Friday of each month.

An introductory offer gives a free issue and a 20-word ad for $1. Write to: The Videogame Trader, P. O. Box N664, Westport, MA 02790, phone 508-636-3674.

Fancy Boxes, Music For KQ6

Sierra took a page from current styles in book marketing, and made up multi-versions of the boxes for **Kings Quest VI**. Completists would have to buy four games to get the full set, since there are that many versions: red, blue, white, and black. The games inside are, of course, identical.

In other **KQ6** news, one love song from the score has been released as an audio disk. *The Girl In The Tower* may never hit the charts, but it is getting some air play.

The song, which plays throughout the adventure and during the closing credits, is part of **The Sierra Soundtrack Collection**, a collection on audio CD of 20 tunes from Sierra games, available now.

Virgin Joins Interplay Bundle

Interplay and Virgin Games, Inc., signed a key OEM agreement giving Interplay exclusive rights to bundle Virgin's offerings on all software formats. This means that computer manufacturers and marketers who wish to bundle with their systems top Virgin titles like **Monopoly Deluxe** or **Legend of Kyrandia** can go to Interplay Productions, Inc., for these as well as for the Interplay, Cineplay and MicroSports lines.

Jill Goldworn, director of contract sale for Interplay Productions, said, "Interplay is making a dedicated push in our OEM efforts. Virgin Games' products add to our existing focus as a key entertainment resource for hardware companies looking for bundling titles."

Controller For *Big* Gamers

Triax Technologies has an oversized version of its Turbo Touch 360 controller for the big time gamer who has everything else. Introduced in the holiday season, the fully working three-foot-wide unit, priced at $2,000, comes in versions for the Genesis or SNES.

The company is quick to point out the hand-held versions are generally available for under $35 for those who feel the giant controller is too big for the budget, or the living room.

Old Systems Worth Bucks

Old 16-Bit and 8-Bit systems never die, they bring discounts. They're accepted as trade-ins by TurboZone on new Turbo Duo sytems, while supplies last.

Fifty dollars is deducted from the price of the Turbo Duo on receipt of a TurboGrafx-16, Sega Genesis or SNES. The NES or Sega Master System counts as $30. Contact TurboZone for details at 800-995-9203.

A Look to the East...

by Marc Camron

Video Game Notes.

One thing that is not considered often enough is the music that goes into our favorite video games. Gone are the days of the plink and clunk soundtrack, and now entering the sophisticated 16-Bit and CD-ROM arenas are scores in Dolby™ Surround Sound and even Q-sound.

The work that goes into this music is considerable, and is composed in much the same way a movie score would be. It is up to the music to set the tone of the game, and to differentiate between segments. Music can make or break a game.

In Japan, people have begun to recognize the hard work and artistry behind this music and the composers have taken to arranging the game scores into symphonies, and recording them for public release, in much the same way a movie soundtrack would be here in the United States.

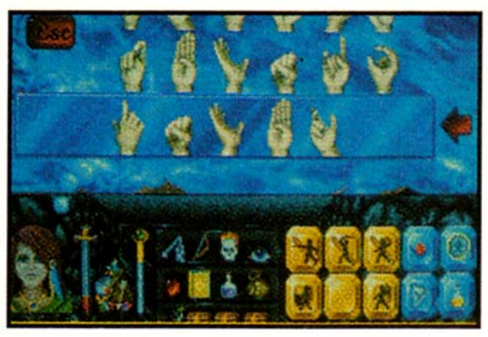
Among the games that have been converted to music CD, the most popular are role-playing games like **Ys**, **Actraiser**, and **Final Fantasy**. **Street Fighter II** has also been very popular, with no fewer than three different collections of the music.

Japanese composers receive the same kind of recognition that some of the finest classical musicians are privy to around the world. Premier game composer Yuzo Koshiro has the same type of following in Japan as Perlman or Pavoratti might in other parts of the world. His recordings of **Actraiser**, **Super Adventure Island**, and **Bare Knuckles (Streets of Rage)** have sold extremely well.

As games improve, so does the quality of the graphics and the sound. Who knows, maybe someday the New York Philharmonic will feature the music of Mario for one of their concerts.

Summoning and Dark Half Clues

Strategic Simulations Inc.'s clue book for **The Summoning** is the company's largest hintbook to date, with over 150 pages, 40 maps, and lists of all major items, encounters and treasures. The book promises to shed light on every maze, passageway, and puzzle in the game. The suggested retail price will be $19.95.



Capstone has a 30-page booklet with a hint section and walk-through for each stage of **The Dark Half**. Objects are listed by location and use, and the hintbook is divided into days to correspond with the game. Gamers can receive these helpful hints for a suggested price of $9.95.

SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE
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OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
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Crystal Ball

Daughter of Serpents, to be published by Millennium for PCs, is a period piece set in Alexandria, Egypt, in the 1920s, when major archaeological finds were being brought to light regularly. Animated, full-screen graphics evoke the period well. The player can be a traveler, Egyptologist, Occultist, Private Eye, Mystic, or Sleuth—and even pick specific areas of experience. An occultist, for example, might concentrate on alchemy, astrology, necromancy, or demonology. **Daughter of Serpents** maintains its period ambience pretty well and shapes up as an exciting graphics adventure that's a little bit out of the ordinary.

Electronic Arts' newest Genesis titles provide some scary chills along with the thrills. **Mutant League Football** has many standard sport features, along with some that have never been seen in any stadium. Described as 'football with a violent science fictional twist,' there are 19 teams of monsters on disk. Options include 19 stadiums with weird features like land mines, thin ice, and other pitfalls. It's similar in many ways to **John Madden Football**, but the gamer can bribe or even kill the ref, and wild plays include vomiting, gas, bad breath, littering, bombs instead of the ball, QB blast (he throws dynamite sticks) and many more.

Haunting casts the gamer as a ghost trying to scare a family from their house. The ghost can haunt on-screen objects (such as fishbowl, pictures, furniture) to make them frighten the person from the room. Haunting costs ectoplasm; if the ghost runs out, he dies, but more can be attained.

Games Soar In 3rd Quarter

Computer game sales in 1992 were 35% ahead of the previous year as the all-important fourth quarter began. A survey by the Software Publishers Association (SPA) puts sales for all platforms at $214.6 million for the first nine months of 1992. Sales totaled $152.8 million for the same period of 1991.

MS-DOS captured over 81% of the total. The growing support for Windows, reflected by a 276% increase, contributed another 7.5%.

The popularity of Macintosh games rose significantly, but didn't quite keep pace with the tremendous overall surge. Entertainment for the Mac was nearly 29% above the 1991 level.

EG Readers' Popularity Poll February 1993

Favorite Video Games:
1. *Street Fighter II/* Capcom
2. *Sonic the Hedgehog/* Sega
3. *Super Star Wars/* LucasArts
4. *NHL Hockey 93/* EA

Favorite Computer Games:
1. *Ultima VII*/Origin
2. *Police Quest*/Sierra
2. *Kyrandia*/Westwood
3. *Gunship 2000/* MicroProse

Favorite Multimedia Games
1. *Sewer Shark*/Sony Imagesoft
1. *Sherlock Holmes/* Icom
1. *Seventh Guest*/Virgin

Favorite Coin-Op Games
1. *Street Fighter II/* Capcom
2. *Mortal Kombat/* Williams
3. *Terminator 2*/Midway
3. *Star Wars*/Data East
3. *Race Drivin'*/Atari

Sprint Calls Roger Wilco

Sprint is sponsoring and advertising in **Space Quest V: The Next Mutation** as the result of an agreement by the telecommunications company and Sierra On-Line. Sprint's logo appears on communications equipment used by Roger Wilco and in the game's demo shown at retailer outlets.

While this is not the first time advertisers have promoted products within video or computer games, it is the first time for either Sierra or Sprint to enter into a sponsorship arrangement. The terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Calling Card for Modem Users

Now there are cards for just about everything, and modem users are no exception. Unlimited Systems, a manufacturer of computer/telephone connection products, and Metromedia Communications, the long distance carrier, inaugurated the Konexx Calling Card, a long distance card for modem, fax and telephone use on the road.

"This exclusive calling card is designed for customers of our Konexx family of adapters and couplers," said Larry Kettler, vice president of sales for Unlimited Sytems.

SPA Bats A Thousand

The Software Publishers Association marked and passed its 1000th membership milestone in the winter of 1992. Domestic and international members include publishers in all software fields, hardware manufacturers, disk duplicators, software marketers and localization firms.

Since its start in 1984 with 25 companies, the organization has prospered not only in size but in influence in its efforts on behalf of its members. The organization's battle against piracy has been particularly visible, with successful investigation and litigation against pirate bulletin boards and software copying that costs the industry (and, by extension, the players) untold millions each year. Increasing members will only help.

Darkside of Xeen Does Double Duty

New World Computing's fifth entry in its Might and Magic series, **Darkside of Xeen**, continues the game producer's penchant for extensive world creation with a new twist. Though a complete FRPG in itself, it can be played in tandem with the prior offering, **Clouds of Xeen**, by loading both at the same time, yielding one huge adventure game, **The World of Xeen**.

Tradewest to Team-Up Their Brightest Stars

Tradewest has made what is sure to be one of the more interesting announcements of the year. They have teamed up two of their best product lines, and have come up with Battletoads/Double Dragon for the NES.

The team-up will feature all of the favorite characters from both game series.

Rare has done the programming on this spring release.

16-Bit versions will follow.

CD-ROM for Amiga

Owners of the Amiga 500 can add a new CD-ROM drive to take advantage of the increasing CDTV interactive software library. Commodore Business Machines' A570 CD-ROM drive lets owners expand computer storage memory with up to 2 megs. It includes an expansion port and also a volume control and headphone jack for playing regular CDs. The suggested price is $399.

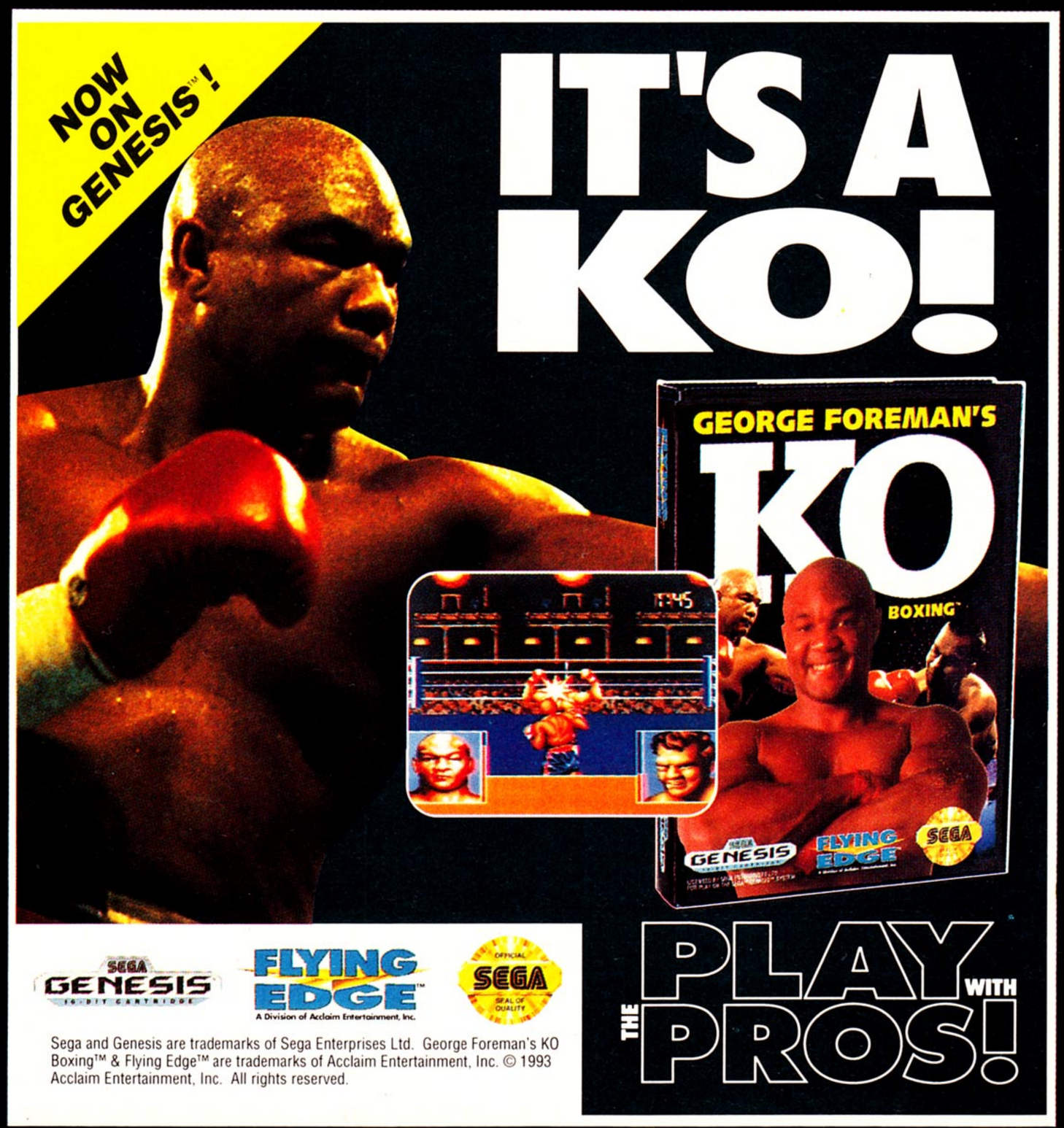
See the Century on CD

Software Toolworks signed with *Newsweek* and CEL Communications for two series of multimedia CD-ROMs to chronicle current events and the past century.

The first, with *Newsweek*, is a quarterly general-interest magazine available by subscription. Each issue uses motion video, audio, text, animation and photo essays to examine three to four topics of current interest, including material selected from the three previous months of *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*.

The first volume is free with the portable Sony Multimedia Player, and it is also scheduled to be available for the IBM PC/MS-DOS platform in April.

The first offering is an encyclopedic overview of the 20th century, based on CEL's **The Video Encyclopedia of the 20th Century** and other film archives, is scheduled to appear this fall. The as yet unnamed series will also include special topical editions on War, Disasters, Space and Science, Politics, and other important subjects.



Top Coin-Ops of October, 1992

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
3. *Streetfighter II:CE*, Capcom
4. *Terminator 2,* Midway
5. *Space Gun*, Taito
6. *Double Axle,* Taito
7. *Sunset Riders,* Konami
8. *Super High Impact*, Midway
9. *Steel Gunner,* Namco
10. *Turbo Out Run*, Sega

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
3. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
4. *X-Men*, Konami
5. *Steel Talons,* Atari
6. *Mad Dog II,* Betson/ALG
7. *Final Lap 2*, Namco
8. *Race Drivin',* Atari
9. *Hard Drivin',* Atari
10. *Four Trax*, Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Art of Fighting*, SNK
2. *World Heroes*, SNK
3. *Street Fighter II,* Capcom
4. *Neck N' Neck*, Bundra
5. *Aero Fighters*, McO'River
6. *Raiden*, Fabtek
7. *Wrestlefest,* Technos
8. *Irem Skins*, Irem
9. *Varth*, Romstar
10. *King of Monsters 2,* SNK

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Addams Family*, Midway
2. *Fish Tales*, Williams
3. *Terminator 2*, Williams
4. *Lethal Weapon 3*, Data East
5. *Cue Ball Wizard*, Gott./Prem.
6. *Black Rose*, Midway
7. *Dr. Who,* Midway
8. *Hook*, Data East
9. *Batman*, Data East
10. *Getaway*, Williams

Top-Selling PC Games for September 1992

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

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Kings Quest VI* , Sierra
2. *Wizardry VII: Crusaders Savant,* Sir-Tech
3. *Might & Magic: Cloud/Xeen,* New World
4. *Quest for Glory III,* Sierra
5. *Great Naval Battles,* Strategic Simulations
6. *Hardball III,* Accolade
7. *Links-386 Pro*, Access
8. *Wing Commander,* Origin
9. *Aces of the Pacific,* Sierra
10. *Civilization,* MicroProse

Top Amiga Games

1. *Civilization,* MicroProse
2. *688 Attack Sub,* Electronic Arts
3. *Leisure Suit Larry V,* Sierra
4. *Kings Quest V,* Sierra
5. *Police Quest III,* Sierra

Top Macintosh Games

1. *Prince of Persia,* Brøderbund
2. *Award Winners:KQV & Red Baron* , Sierra
3. *Microsoft Flight Simulator,* Microsoft
4. *SimLife,* Maxis
5. *Sim City Supreme,* Maxis

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *Battle Chess,* Interplay
2. *Cinemania,* Microsoft
3. *Wing Commander/Sec.Missions 1&2,* Origin
4. *Sherlock Holmes Detective,* Icom
5. *World View,* Brittanica
6. *Street Atlas USA,* Delorme
7. *Kings Quest V,* Sierra
8. *Murmers of the Earth,* Warner New Media
9. *Where in the World is Carmen...,* Brøderbund
10. *CD Game Pack,* Software Toolworks

Top MS-DOS Education Games

1. *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego,* Brøderbund
2. *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego,* Brøderbund
3. *Your Personal Trainer for the S.A.T.,* Davidson
4. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing,* Software Toolworks
5. *New Math Blaster Plus,* Davidson
6. *Algeblaster Plus,* Davidson
7. *Playroom,* Brøderbund
8. *Reader Rabbit 1,* Learning Company
9. *Mario Typing,* Interplay
10. *Reader Rabbit 2,* Learning Company

Tony La Russa Scores Again

Strategic Simulations plans to release **Tony La Russa Baseball II** and three expansion disks in time for spring training. Co-designed by Don Daglow of Beyond Software and Oakland A's manager Tony La Russa, the $59.95 main module combines arcade-style game play and improved statistical simulation.

A variety of viewpoints and perspectives are rendered in 256-color VGA graphics, with a number of detailed player animations, 1,040 "living legend" players and 11 classic ballparks. A complete season generator can create a full 168-game schedule for 2 to 28 teams.

The expansion disks include the licensed **MLBPA Teams** lineup of over 1,000 currently active pro players ($19.95) and **Stadiums**, with 28 major league ballparks ($29.95). The **Fantasy Manager** expansion disk ($19.95) provides draft capabilities.

Super Battletank Stars In U2 Special

Sharp-eyed rock fans caught footage from **Super Battletank: War in the Gulf**, Absolute Entertainment's SNES simulation, on U2's Zoo TV concert last fall.

One sequence in the concert featured U2's guitarist The Edge playing the game while discussing his feelings about computer and video entertainment.

Game Fans Can Scan

Plustek USA produced a pair of affordable sheet-fed scanners of interest to the gaming fanzine publisher.

Available for both PC and Macintosh systems, the 600-dpi ScanPlus Color 6000 lists for under $900.

The powerless ScanPlus PageReader, for black and white output, works off the power system of a PC and has a street price of under $350.

Both offer full HP Scanjet emulation, allowing compatibility with OCR (optical character recognition) and desktop publishing software from many developers.

Sound Source Does Windows

Disney's Sound Source, a stand-alone sound peripheral that connects to a computer's parallel port for voice, music and sound effects, now works with Windows 3.1 or 3.0 with Multimedia Extensions.

Applications which support Microsoft's WAV sound file standards and OLE (Object Linking and Embedding) standard, including a number of popular business programs, can play voice and sound through the unit, and Disney has also included a library of clip sounds for adding additional audio notes. Imagine having Mickey greet you in the morning!

Aladdin Enhances NES

There's new life in the old NES, with the Aladdin System by Camerica, the company behind the Game Genie. Developed by Codemasters, the Aladdin system uses a plug-in deck enhancer ($39.99 with a game, **Dizzy The Adventurer**, included.) Aladdin accepts special game cartridges ($19.99 each) that feature improved graphics. The combination, according to David Harding, Camerica president, "allows developers to produce profitable 8-Bit games with superb graphics at a more attractive price to consumers."

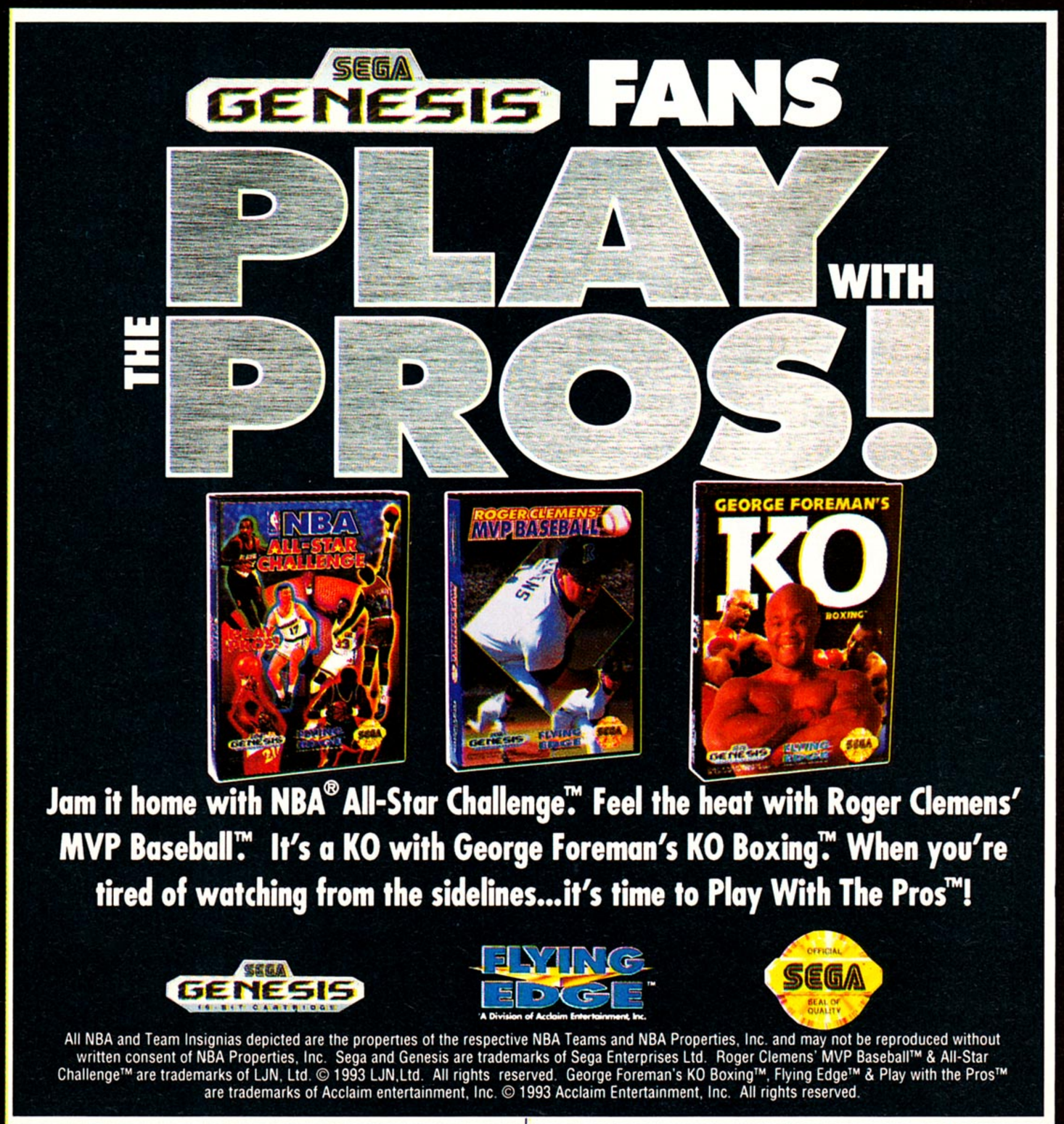
Aladdin marks a new implementation of an old approach to enhanced game capacity. A similar enhancer was available for the Atari VCS (2600). Originally called the Arcadia and later the Super Charger, a separate unit plugged into the cartridge slot of the Atari, then relatively high-powered games with enhanced graphics were loaded via tape cassette.

Seven Aladdin titles were released during the holiday season, and two dozen more are on tap for 1993.

LucasArts Still In Outer Space

Star Wars will live again, through the titles from LucasArts for PC, CD, and SNES. **Rebel Alliance** is a 15-level action game for PC-CD-ROM and Sega CD. It features training and combat against the Imperial forces, including the Death Star attack, all with full-voice and full-motion video cut scenes. The integration of the movie characters and plotlines to the gaming environment is handled splendidly, without creating disappointing drawbacks.

Super Empire Strikes Back, for SNES, will be ready in the last half of 1993, and doubles the capacity of **Super Star Wars.** With more levels than the earlier games, **Super Empire** features Mode 7, speech, and cinematic cut scenes, as players take the role of Luke, Han or Chewie to fight Imperial Walkers and Darth Vader himself, as they follow the plot of the second movie in the famous trilogy. The game will probably incorporate the same exciting game play as **Super Star Wars**, with some added twists.



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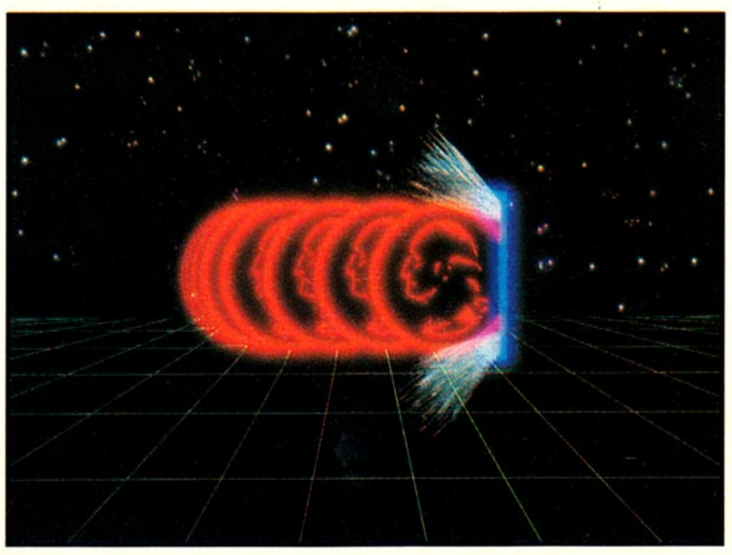

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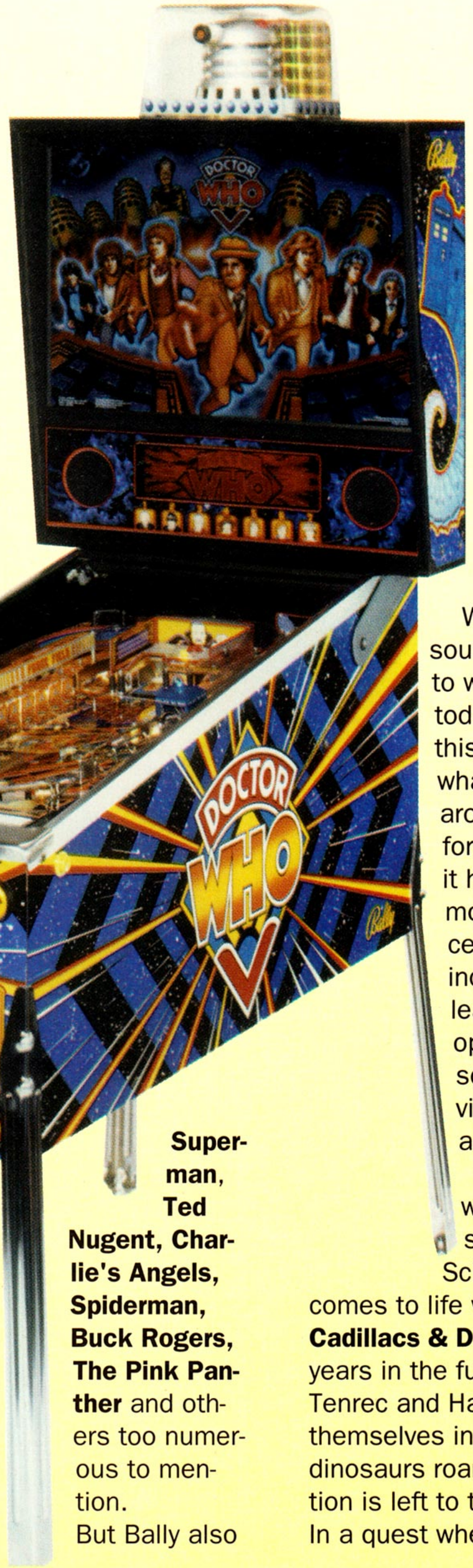
LICENSED TO THRILL

by Jay Carter

It's the designer label of the '90s...from breakfast cereal to apparel and everything in between, licensing has become a pervasive part of our culture. No longer is the concern just with whose name is on the backside of our jeans or what emblem appears on our luggage. Marketers and merchandisers have made this a moot issue. And nowhere is the impact most apparent than in the area of games–both home and coin-op.

For all intents and purposes, licensing became a driving force in the games industry when Bally found itself, in the mid-seventies, struggling to establish an identity as a viably competitive pinball manufacturer. In an effort to carve out a distinctive niche that would separate the company from the competition as well as increase awareness with the outside world, we witnessed the emergence of machines such as **Wizard** (tied in with the rock opera "Tommy"), Elton John's **Capt. Fantastic, Evel Knievel, Kiss, The Rolling Stones** and many, many others.

And since Bally's meteoric rise to the top of the mountain meant unquestioned success and notoriety, it was only a matter of time before other manufacturers saw the direction of their near-term future. Suddenly, with pinball fighting off the inroads being made in the still developing video game sector, the remaining companies in the field altered strategy to bring players a diverse collection of creations including **Muhammad Ali**, **Superman**, **Ted Nugent, Charlie's Angels, Spiderman, Buck Rogers, The Pink Panther** and others too numerous to mention.



But Bally also did something else to change the stakes of game development when it introduced **Tron** as a video game tie-in with Disney. In a relatively short period of time, **Star Trek, Star Wars, NFL Football,** celebrities, sports personalities, rock stars and other licensed properties found a ready and willing audience in the world of video game entertainment.

Well, if all of this sounds remotely familiar to what is taking place today, as we've stated in this space in the past, what goes around comes around and what's old is forever new, especially if it has merit, value and, most importantly, is successful. Licensing is, indeed, everywhere, and leading the way in coin-op this time around are some of the most recent vintage incarnations and adaptations.

Based on the award-winning comic book series from Mark Schultz, the Xenozoic Age comes to life with Capcom's **Cadillacs & Dinosaurs**. It's 600 years in the future and heroes Jack Tenrec and Hannah Dundee find themselves in a world where dinosaurs roam free and transportation is left to the power of old cars. In a quest where the underlying

message is that humanity must learn to co-exist with nature, the three-player horizontal scrolling action provides some vivid visuals, along with the more conventional joystick and button controls that typify this game genre.

Having enjoyed some initial popularity as a pinball machine last year, Steven Spielberg's movie *Hook* has been reprised by Irem for video gamers. Featuring Peter Pan, who is aided by lost boys Rufio, Ace, Pockets and Thudbutt, up to four players can battle against Captain Hook and his forces of evil to free the children of Never Never Land. Controls include an eight-way joystick and dual buttons for attacking and jumping, although combination moves can be done to heighten the action on screen through six different stages of game play including a banquet backdrop, the pirate ship and a confrontation by the bay.

From a galaxy far, far away Data East has taken its next inspiration to bring us the *Star Wars* trilogy pinball-style. Featuring artwork that showcases all of the familiar cast of heroes and villains, along with BSMT Stereo musical scores from the movies and speech from the films' stars, **Star Wars** offers an impressive package of game action. This game neatly balances some exciting graphic sequences on the dot matrix display with a playfield layout that incorporates a thumping R2-D2 and the evil Death Star that actually rotates during game play.

Pinball players must join the Rebel Alliance and attempt to defeat the Imperial forces. There's tri-ball play to master and the chance to score double jackpots and millions of points as well as manipulate an all new dual-direction shifter action handle and fire button that should make saving the universe anything but your ordinary pinball experience.

Midway Manufacturing has also turned to a licensed effort for its latest Bally pinball machine. Thirty years ago, a time machine disguised as a battered blue telephone box first appeared on television screens courtesy of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Doctor Who was born, becoming one of the most successful sci-fi shows of all time. Now, seven doctors later, **Doctor Who** is back (all of them) along with The Master, evil Daleks and Davros in a game that offers an intriguing build-up of features and scoring sequences.

Most notable on **Doctor Who** is a multi-level, mini-playfield "Time Expander" that rises up from beneath the game board to reveal areas for activating multi-ball play and the chance to score jackpots and special super jackpots that can total up to 300 million points. Also, although it has become much more of a component part to modern pinball via the dot matrix display, **Doctor Who** features a multiple stage video game mode that could rival some of the action found on conventional videos.

And although our main focus this time around has been directed at licensed games, obviously, original themes and characters still emerge from the creative ranks of the major manufacturers.

Hoping to capitalize on the popularity of its initial interactive live action video shooting gallery, American Laser Games is back with **Mad Dog II: The Lost Gold**. Old McCree has a new challenge in this gun-shooting adventure, where the player returns to yesteryear in the Old West, battling renegade Indians, ornery bandidos and Mad Dog's own henchmen in the attempt to get to the gold first.

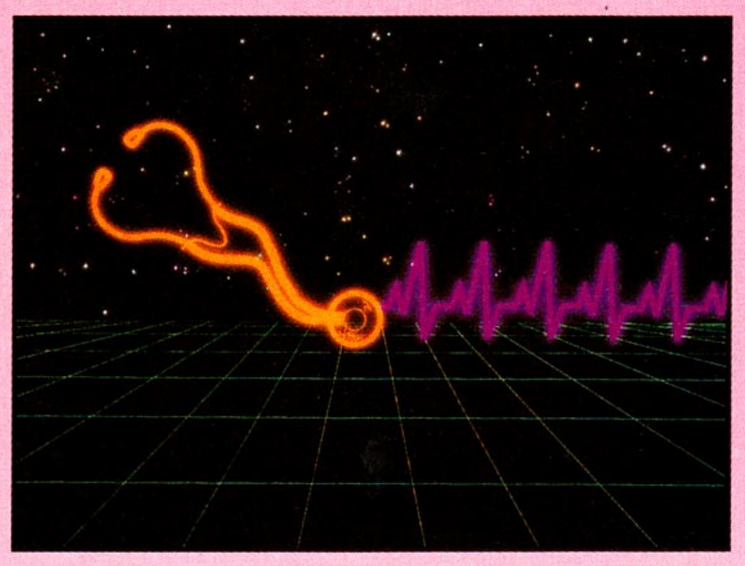
Golden Axe by Sega also enjoyed a devoted following of players and now a worthy sequel has hit the streets in the guise of **Golden Axe (The Revenge Of Death-Adder)**. A magical fantasy, there are four new, powerful warriors to select from, including the sword-toting Sternblade; Dora, a female Centaur tribe fighter who can kick-stop almost any enemy; Goah, a giant who teams up with Gilius on his back for added firepower, and Little Trix with his three-pronged attack weapon.

Utilizing Sega's System 32-Bit graphics, up to four players can team together against the evil forces of villainy with a joystick and attack, jump and magic buttons providing the action through the progressive stages of battle in an effort to restore peace to the lands.

Rounding out this month's collection of coin-op attractions is Gottlieb's **Cue Ball Wizard** pinball machine from Premier Technology. Taking what has become one of the all-time classic themes of pool, this game even features an actual eight ball and cue ball as part of the playfield, which is suitably embellished with a bit of country and western flavor.

There is a variety of different video game modes and even an appearance by The King (Elvis sightings can happen) himself if the player's lucky. But the real action here is knocking down fourteen drop targets and making one's way through seven different scoring sequences such as the No Way round, Rowdy Ramp round, spelling D-O-U-B-L-E where all values on the playfield are doubled or three-ball, and Pool Ball Mania which provides some exceptional scoring since every target is worth five million points.

All in all, times are great for coin-op gamers everywhere and the rest of the year is shaping up with even more excitement. So until next time, as always, keep playing those games, score high and try to have some fun!



GAME DOCTOR

Qs Scrutinized

by The Game Doctor

Greetings and salutations, seekers after gaming health. We have a lot of patients in the waiting room, as usual, so let's get right to our first Q...

Q: With the CD age here, how will peripherals like the Game Genie be able to work with disk games? Also, what, in your opinion, will the next media in electronic games be?

Mike Okishoff
Coon Rapids, MN

A: *The Game Genie system was designed to interact directly with ROM cartridges, so for now the answer is negative. Galoob held open the possibilities of further adaptation, but it doesn't seem likely that existing units will ever be able to interface with CD games. A controller-based game manipulation peripheral, such as IMS Control's Game Handler, probably stands a better chance of interfacing with CD-based software, but as of press time, we were unable to confirm this.*

As for the next media on which electronic games are likely to be produced, that's a real shot in the dark. After all, it may seem as if CD appeared almost overnight, but that isn't so. The computer and video game industries have actually been tinkering with various CD-based formats as data storage devices for half a dozen years or more. Because of the expense involved in producing and marketing such hardware, any new media would have to blow away existing formats in order to gain even a trial run.

Video games have been around for several decades now, and CD is the first alternate to ROM-based cartridges or boards to gain significant ground since their introduction. Computers are more flexible, however, and it is likely that any new formats would first appear here.

The next breakthrough in electronic data storage will probably arrive in the form of telephone-based uploads. This technology can not even be realistically considered, however, until North America's telephone technology is upgraded to one hundred percent optical transmission, an event that could be as far as a decade away.

Q: I just read your response to Tony Bueno's letter about the Game Genie and I agree with him. In your argument in support of the Genie, you mentioned that people should play games because they are fun, and not to "get it over with." Let me tell you what fun is: when **Ninja Gaiden** first came out, I played and played for a total of about ten hours and, after hacking through the last level about 100 times, I finally beat the game. Those were probably the funest ten hours I've ever spent playing video games. Had a Game Genie been out then, I might have been tempted to plug in an invincibility code and rush through in 20 minutes, looking at each cinema scene and saying: "Wow... Wow... Wow..." But then it would have been over; no more cinema scenes to look forward to, no more fun.

You mentioned that "the vast majority of gamers don't have the skill, time, patience and/or inclination to play through a game like **Super Mario World**." Well, if they don't have the time, patience or inclination, why did they buy a system? If they haven't the skill, they certainly won't acquire any by going through games while invincible or skipping levels.

The Game Genie and other such peripherals totally ruin games, as do cheat codes. Using one is like opening your presents before Christmas; you'd like to see them now, but it's more fun and rewarding if you wait. I hope the courts act on this, although since a decision has already been made, it is doubtful they will. If companies like Galoob want to make money, they should contribute to the industry by making games, instead of destroying them by marketing products that undermine the meaning and purpose of games.

Daniel Haffner
Bandon, OR

A: *You make some excellent arguments, Daniel, but your final analogy has a crucial flaw: whether one opens their holiday gifts on Christmas or before, Christmas ultimately arrives. The point where a player reaches the end of a video game is not guaranteed to occur, especially if the player has to go for ten hours at optimal skill in order to get there.*

Way back in the dark ages when people had just as much fun playing games that didn't require cinematic cut scenes in order to

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3 TIMES THE DANGER... ON GAME BOY

3 TIMES THE TERROR... FOR YOU!!!

ALIEN 3

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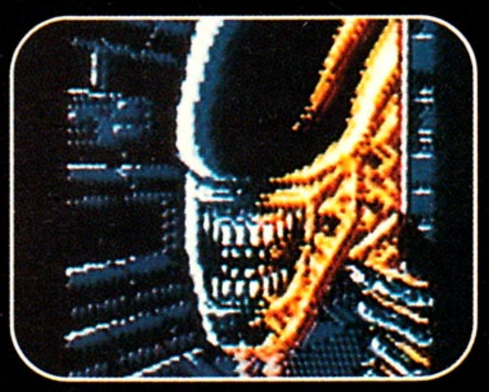

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Destroy all the eggs, but beware of deadly face-huggers!

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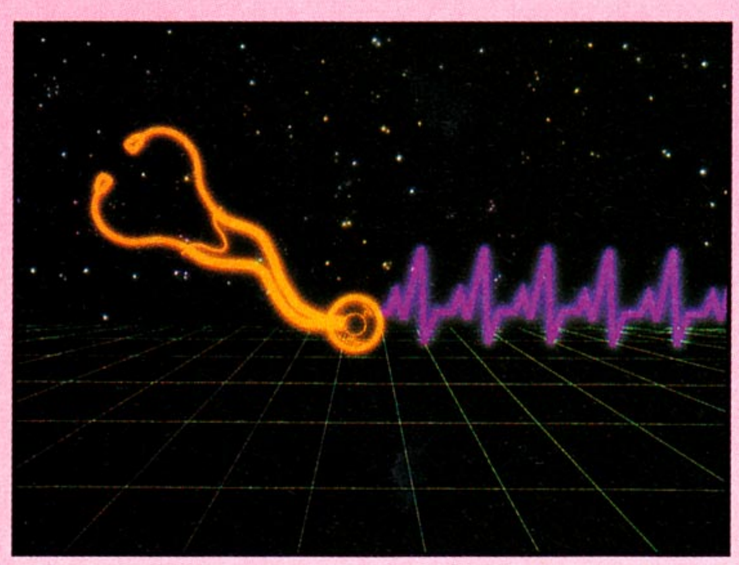

GAME DOCTOR

inspire the player onward, virtually all software came with variable skill settings. So tell me, if a game is played at the "Easy" rather than "Difficult" level, is the experience any more or less rewarding? Whether the gunslingers of gamedom like it or not, people have the option of buying a system despite their acumen; similarly, I feel they have the right to set the difficulty parameters through a device such as the Game Genie.

The courts have acted; nobody is forcing anyone to buy or use a Genie. And anyone who plays through game after game at the invincibility level is only cheating themselves, since they have then eliminated the "game" and kept the "video." What I don't understand is why anyone else would care. It comes down to a matter of personal choice, and there seems to be plenty people who are choosing to buy the Game Genie.

Q: I am a little unclear about CD-ROMs. I know they can store a lot of memory, but does this necessarily mean better graphics? Or does this just mean more of the same graphics that you can get from an existing engine? In other words, if the NES got CD-ROM then you could have 50,000 levels of **Super Mario Brothers** but it would still look like an NES, rather than, say, a SNES game? If that's the case, who needs CD-ROM? Imagine playing fifty years just to save a princess who would be on Geritol by the time [I saved her]!

More is not necessarily better.

Danny Livas
Inverness, IL

A: *Excellent insight, Danny. Let's look at this question in a little more detail. The prime advantage of CD-based formats is their ability to store large amounts of data. You are correct in assuming that more memory is no guarantee of superior graphics. On the other hand, certain sound and graphic techniques, especially digitized audio/video, have been largely impractical for pre-CD, ROM-based cartridge formats because of the amount of space they consume relative to the cost of that space. CD has no problem handling that additional memory, and as a result, most of the early CD game software has made lavish use of digitization.*

If the NES were to receive CD capability, you are probably correct in assuming that the majority of software released for it would not represent a quantum leap in terms of sound and graphics over existing NES quality. The system's inherent limitations would represent a nearly insurmountable barrier. In fact, Nintendo has already stated that it does not believe even 16-Bit technology can take real advantage of the CD format.

On the other hand, it would be unfair to dismiss the value of enhanced memory. Even if the gamer got nothing but existing software that played longer, the "value-added" issue would still have to be considered.

Q&A Special: For the past eight years, a couple of devoted electronic gaming fans, Jayson and Laura Hill of Knoxville, TN, have staged the annual Hill Video Game Invitational tournament. The Doc has been a big fan and supporter of the HVGI over the years and since I've just received this year's invitation, I thought I'd pass on the info to our readers.

According to the Hills, "[this] is just an excuse to have as many of our friends over as possible for an evening of socializing. At another level it's our way to share a hobby that [we] have come to enjoy very much: collecting and playing video game systems. Once a year we dust off our collection (now numbering 10 traditional game systems, eight computers, stand-alones, hand-helds, and over 400 game cartridges) and select those we'd like to share with our friends."

The competition is staged as follows: one game is selected every year, in secret, and the winner gets to take home a trophy. No one is compelled to compete; if you like, simply explore the Hill's video game museum and try a variety of modern and classic games.

If you live in the Knoxville area or will be visiting that neck of the woods and are interested in attending the 9th annual festivities, to be held Saturday, April 3 from 7:30PM until burnout, contact Jayson and Laura at 401 Gallagher View Rd. #260, Knoxville, TN 37919-5339. (You must be at least 21 years of age to attend.) Last champ, for the last two years, "Digital" Dwayne Barrett, will be looking to three-peat.

No word on what this year's tournament game will be, but Jayson hints that it's "the game that almost single-handedly sparked the huge popularity of arcade video games in the late '70s. We will be playing the first home edition (1980). The original game was by Taito." Excuse me, but do I hear a "thumpa-thumpa-thumpa" sound on my roof?

In any case, interested game mavens should contact the Hills for further information. A good time for all who attend is the event's number one tradition and **EG** sends the best of luck to all the competitors. Perhaps even the Game Doc himself will drop in if my caseload isn't too rough come April.

The Game Doctor (EG)
330 S Decatur
Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

In the meantime, keep your tongue out of the cartridge slot and keep your video games dry. See you all in four weeks! Aloha.

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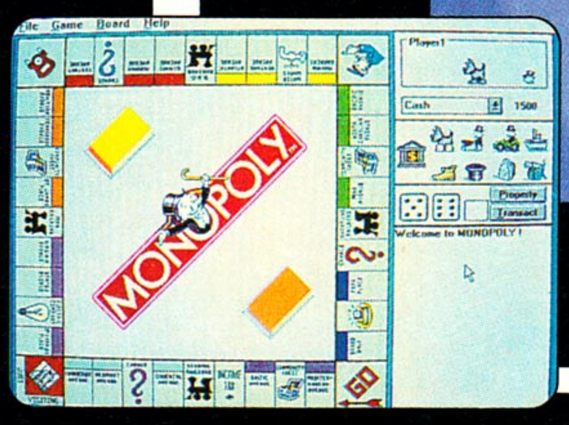

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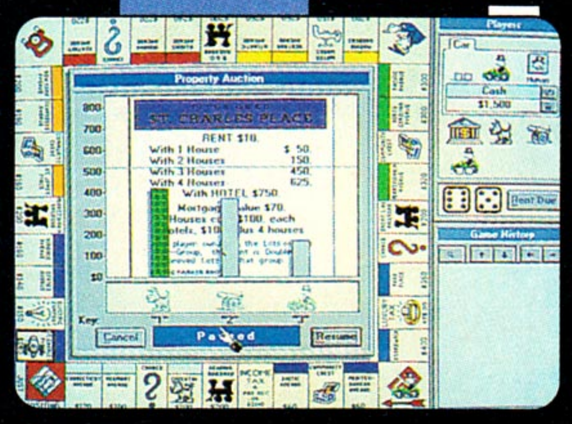
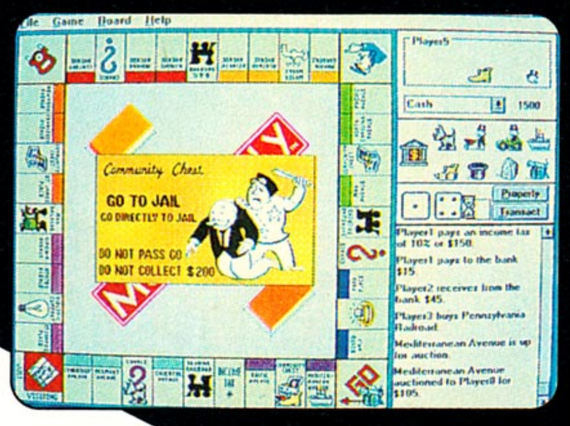


IBM PC version



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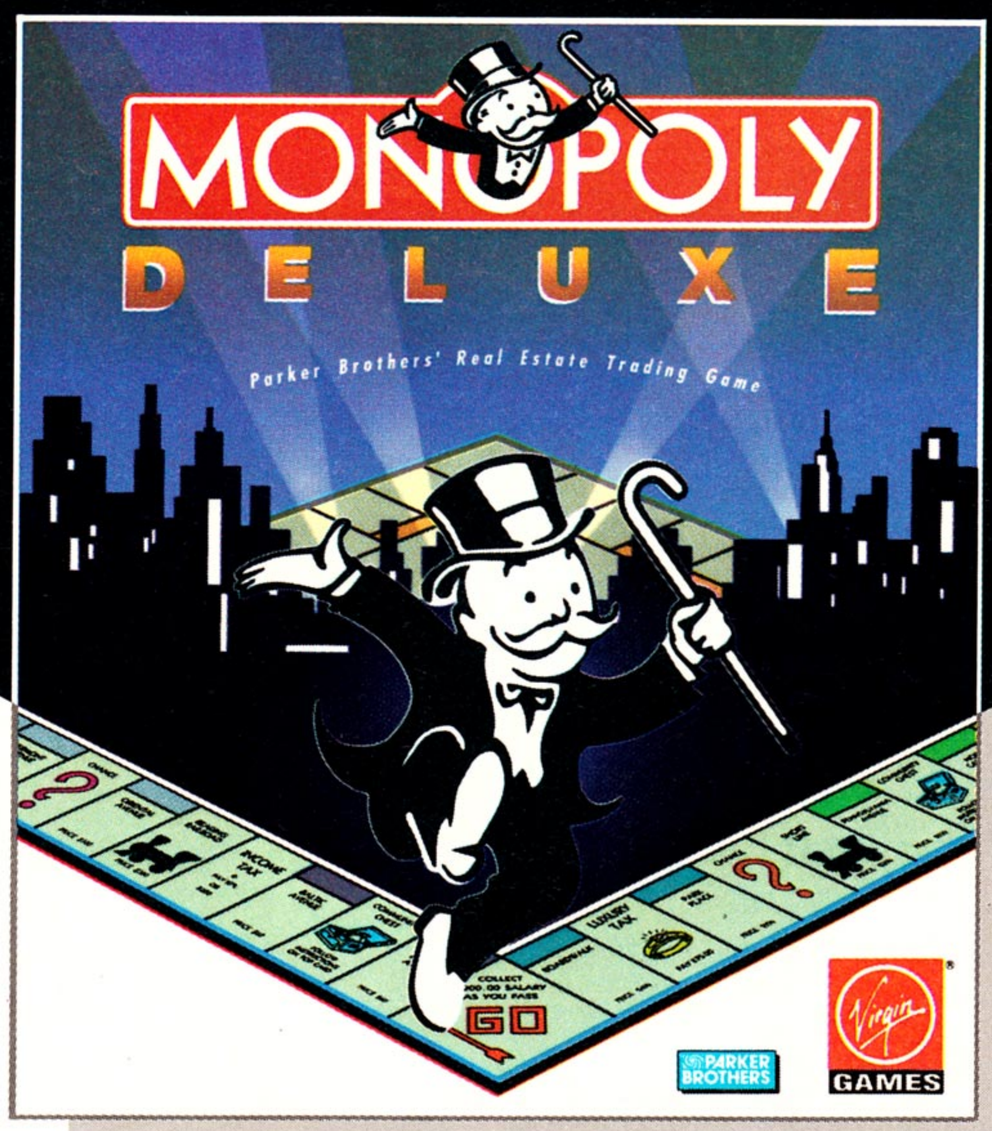

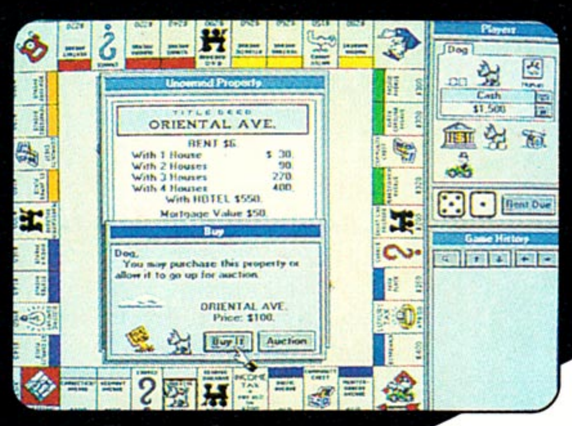

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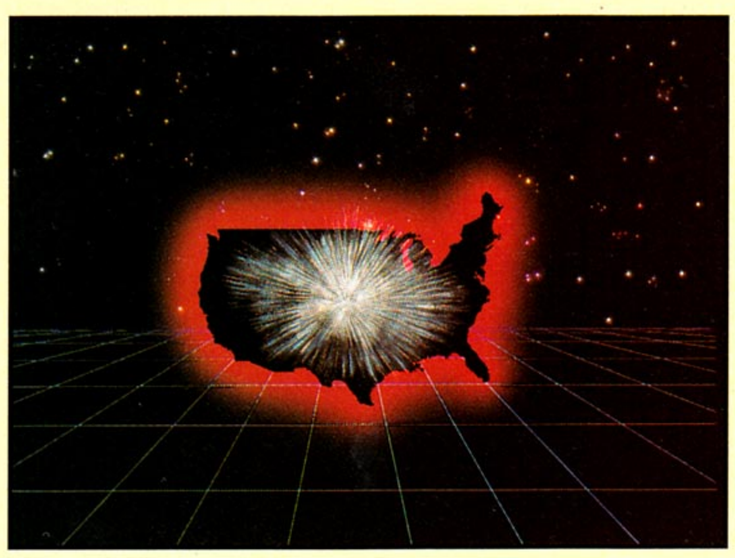

FANDOM CENTRAL

It's APA Time
by Arnie Katz

Sometimes circumstances frustrate the best-laid plans. An unfortunate casualty of the launch of **EG** was the idea of starting an amateur press association for electronic gaming fandom. Now that things have settled into a good groove, it seems like a good time to try again.

Amateur Press Associations (APAs) have existed for over a century. Currently, there are more than 200 known APAs involving 4,000 fanzine publishers. I'm president of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, one of the most venerable groups.

There are several setups for APAs. The simplest and most popular is the quarterly mailing format. Members send a specified number of copies of their contribution to an official editor, who assembles identical bundles and sends one to each name on the roster. Each member pays annual dues (usually about $10) and must contribute a minimum number of pages each year.

The advantages that make APAs so popular make the concept especially appealing to electronic gaming fandom. Producing a fanzine for an APA is much cheaper than doing a general circulation fanzine (genzine). The savings could allow many who feel they can't afford a genzine to participate.

A unique feature of APAs is the mailing comment, invented by longtime fanzine fan Jack Speer. Members print responses to zines in the previous mailing. The exchange of comments creates multi-participant conversations on various subjects.

EGAD (Electronic Gaming Amateur Distribution) is the name of the proposed amateur press association for electronic gaming fandom. For additional details, send a note with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address at the end of this column. Potential members will receive an information bulletin.

Meanwhile, let's look at this month's crop of new fanzines.

2600 Connection #13

Edited by Tim Duarte
P.O. Box 3993
Westport, MA 02790
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 8 pages

Thirteen is definitely not an unlucky number for this attractive, informative, and well-edited fanzine devoted to the machine that dominated video gaming in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The second annish (anniversary issue) shows how a diligent fan can work his zine up to a high level of quality by making improvements every issue and never resting on his laurels. **The 2600 Connection** has always been interesting; now it's virtually indispensible for anyone who is still enthralled by those classic cartridges.

Fittingly, the front page is devoted to Tim's essay on why he remains so committed to the 2600. Among his reasons: historical significance, ease-of-use, and personal nostalgia. Every fan should be glad that Tim has maintained his love of this classic cartridge console, because the fanzine field would be much poorer without his exceptional publication.

This issue's valuable sections include an installment of the company-by-company cartridge checklist, instructions for building a paddle controller, and a report on new 2600 games from England.

Even fans who haven't booted a 2600 cart this decade will like Tim Duarte's labor of love.

Video Universe #1

Edited by Chad Laubach &
George Wilson
7640 Woodbine Rd.
Macungie, PA 18062.
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue
11 pages

Fandom welcomes a new editorial tandem that has produced a very promising first issue. Chad and George will benefit from experience, and perhaps some study of other fanzines, but they've made a good start with this issue.

The uncredited artwork, possibly by art director Dave Blank, is way above average. Since the game screens didn't come through well, perhaps **Video Universe** should rely more heavily on drawings in future issues.

The writing is enthusiastic and fairly perceptive. The zine covers all the popular video game systems, including the Neo•Geo and the portables, plus coin-ops. The main item this time is a lengthy review of **Street Fighter II**.

The first issue is lightly printed in spots, but a new printer ribbon will surely cure that (we all know that cutting costs in the printing of a zine can sometimes be paramount). The page which lists the editors' 10 favorite video and coin-op games is filler. It would have been more interesting if they'd given the reasons for their selections, thus producing more information. Perhaps they will plan to do just that in the second

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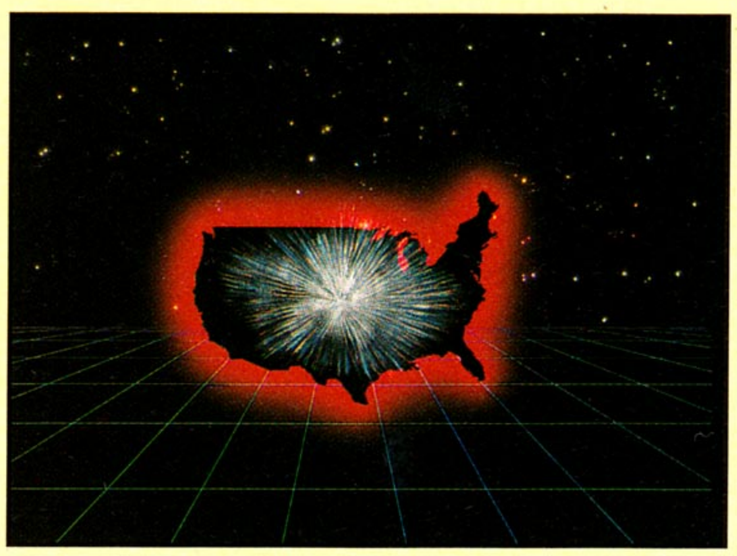

FANDOM CENTRAL

issue. It would give the rest of us a lot of insight into two of the most interesting neofans to come along this winter.

The Video Game Revolution #3

Edited by Nathan Hauke
2915 E. Allerton Ave.
St. Francis, WI 53235
Frequent, $1.50 per issue
34 Pages

In some ways, the most fascinating piece in the issue is the letter column, especially the one from Joshua Clevinger. It asks a lot of intelligent questions about fanzines in general and **VGR** in particular.

The one that caught my attention was Clevinger's query about how Nathan can charge $5.00 for a six-issue subscription when postage is 60¢ a copy. Pricing like that makes no sense for professional magazines, but it is the rule for *amateur* ones. After all, fandom is a hobby, not a profit-making enterprise. Fanzines seldom break even on reproduction and postage, much less compensate editors, writers, and artists for the work they lavish on them. Fanzines would not exist, except for the enthusiasm and dedication of the fans who produce them.

Joshua must've impressed Nathan, too. He also contributes a guest editorial. He makes some interesting comments about video game selling strategies for the holiday season

Short reviews fill the zine's largest section. The staff covers five carts each for SNES and Genesis, two for Neo•Geo, and one each for TurboGrafx and Game Boy in less than five pages. In most cases, the ratings blocks are as large as the text. The desire to cover as many games as possible is understandable, but **VGR** might be improved by mixing in some longer critiques with the brief ones.

A list of SNES games tops the list of other articles. These include news, a preview of video game multimedia, and a summary of hardware specifications.

The Video Game Revolution is a definite up-and-comer. This large zine isn't quite up with the leaders, but it's already quite readable and thought-provoking.

Saga #2

Edited by Jon Althouse
90425 Hwy 101
Florence, OR 97439
Frequent, $1 per issue, 11 pages

The second issue of this video gaming zine is a lot better than the first, and not just because Jon said such nice things about **Electronic Games** and "Fandom Central." The writing is better, and it's hard to say enough about how much Jon has upgraded the physical appearance.

Future issues will undoubtedly make better use of space, once the editor masters desktop publishing technology and adopts a slightly smaller type size.

"The Tipsters Turf" is **Saga**'s main section. The emphasis on tips is a little unusual these days, so many will relish the passcodes and hints. This neatly arranged section touches on 11 different cartridges.

Phanzine Star #4

Edited by Noah Dziobecki
4436 E. 5th St.
Long Beach, CA 90814
Bimonthly, $2 per copy, 35 pages

No fanzine demonstrates the connection between gaming and other aspects of pop culture than this eclectic fanzine. **Phanzine Star** covers all facets of electronic gaming, but also includes columns about current music and the latest movies on video. Purists needn't worry; there's plenty of game-oriented material, more than enough to make it a bargain at $2.

Content is more important than the format, of course, but **Phanzine Star** is rapidly becoming one of the most attractive fanzines. Imaginative headings, the editor's illustrations, and crisp typography create the inviting image that does credit to any fanzine. One suggestion: widen the text columns to reduce the white stripes down the center of each page.

Noah devotes his editorial to matters relating to the fanzine. He's almost defensive about the smaller size of this issue, and I do think he's worrying unnecessarily. Though I once committed a 100-page fanzine, I recommend quality over quantity. As Noah writes so accurately, the cost of a huge zine is prohibitive for most fans. The alternative is to use fewer pages with greater efficiency. No one could complain that this issue lacks material.

Noah seldom minces words. He backs his beliefs passionately, and this occasionally makes him seem intolerant of those with differing views. You'll probably disagree with some of his observations, but no one could ever call this zine dull. Several items, including "Electronic Darwinism," made me want to send a LoC (letter of comment) on **Phanzine Star**, so expect a lively readers column in future issues.

It would be impossible to describe all the little gems found in the latest **Phanzine Star**. Noah's clever timeline of gaming history is almost worth the price of admission by itself. All electronic gamers should find articles of interest in this highly recommended fanzine.

Attention Fanzine Editors. This is *your* column. If you'd like me to review your fanzine in a future issue of **Electronic Games**, send your zine to: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

The National Association of Electronic Gaming Enthusiasts (NAEGE) is the fan-run club for gamers. To join, send $10 to: P.O. Box 240523, Honolulu, HI 96824-0423. Make checks payable to Richard Karrp, NAEGE treasurer.

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CES EXPRESS

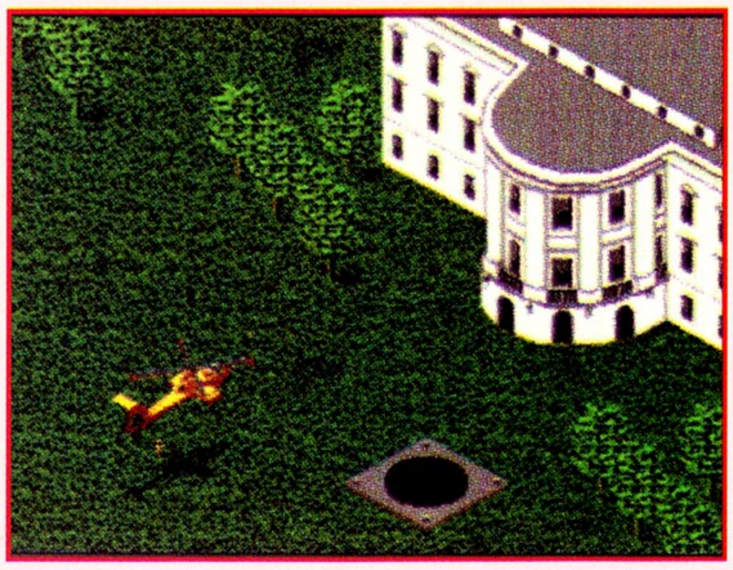
The EG Editors Pick the Best Games of the Consumer Electronics Show

by the Editors of Electronic Games

The twice-yearly Consumer Electronics Show is where electronic gaming struts its stuff. Coming on the heels of huge fourth-quarter sales, software companies made the 1993 winter edition the most outstanding product show in years. It took **EG**'s editors five days to visit every exhibit hall, booth, and hotel suite to see all the new video, computer, portable and multimedia games.

And when it was over, when the army of workers had completely emptied the vast halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center, our eight experts put their heads together and made some tough decisions. The results are visible on the next five pages: our picks for the outstanding electronic games premiered at CES. We think these are the best of the best, and we couldn't wait to show them.

Video Games



The team that brought you Desert Strike has returned for a new round.

Jungle Strike (Electronic Arts/Genesis), the sequel to **Desert Strike,** is still fairly early in its development cycle, but enough of the game was shown to indicate that EA has yet another hit coming on the Genesis. The final version will feature either four or five missions, three of which were running at WCES. The first scenario has the player manning the beloved Apache chopper in order to defend Washington D.C. from terrorists. Mission two is a nighttime jungle strike in which the only hint that the Apache has neared a target comes from following the tracer bullets as they streak up at it. The third scenario is a water rescue game in which the player must first shoot out the terrorist defenses, then board and pilot a hovercraft, which contains the same weapons arsenal as the Apache, in order to finish the job. EA also promises that a motorcycle will be involved in the as-yet-unseen portions of the game which, incidentally, has official U.S. Air Force approval, as well as EG's.

Star Fox is the first game to take advantage of the new Super FX chip.

Star Fox (Nintendo/SNES) is the first game to employ the heralded SFX chip. It's a pseudo 3-D space flight simulator with such audiovisual features as improved play speed, texture mapping, light source shading, 3-D polygon animation complete with rotation and scaling, and digitized speech and sound effects. The player, cast as Fox McCloud, is the leader of a band of space mercs known as the Silver Force, whose current assignment is to bring peace to the Lylat System, which is currently being put through major changes by Gallon's extremely unpleasant Emperor Andross. Fox and his fly-for-pay crew must fly missions on all ten planets in the Lylat System, from the homeworld of Corneria to Gallon itself. The game offers players a behind-the-ship view in addition to the traditional cockpit display.

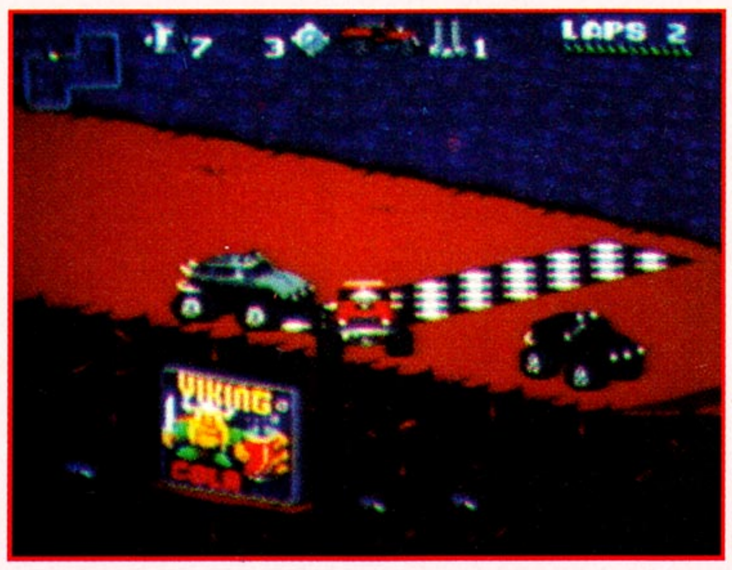
The novelty of an sf flight simulator on the SNES and user curiosity regarding the software-based SFX chip guarantees sales for this unique game.

This popular PC baseball simulator has worked its way to the Genesis.

Tony LaRussa Baseball (SSI/Genesis) offers the most satisfying blend of on-the-field action and statistical realism ever seen in a video game. Real teams and players were used to create a rich statistical base which will satisfy the most hardcore stat maven while the graphics are strong enough to keep the arcaders happy. Special features include a spotlight which is used to track the ball after it has been hit, stadium selection and true effects, as well as an on-screen bullpen. The game can be played in any number of different modes, from managerial to arcade, and all provide good quality. Every gamer can enjoy it. But it's when the stats and the bat swinging are brought together that **LaRussa** really hits a home run.

Marvel's most popular characters have returned for a new adventure.

X-Men (Sega/Genesis) stars Marvel Comics' mutant super heroes in a well-produced graphic sizzler. Primarily a horizontal and vertically scrolling action contest, **X-Men** makes good use of the mutants' various powers and respectfully follows the traditions of its source material. The team, which includes solid citizen Cyclops, the jaunty Gambit, the irascible Wolverine, and post-detente Russian hero Colossus, begins by working out in the famed Danger Room before moving on to seven levels of visceral control pad pumping, tempered with clues and puzzle-solving, as they struggle to rescue team leader Professor X. Gamers can control one X-Man throughout the game, or switch off to different members.



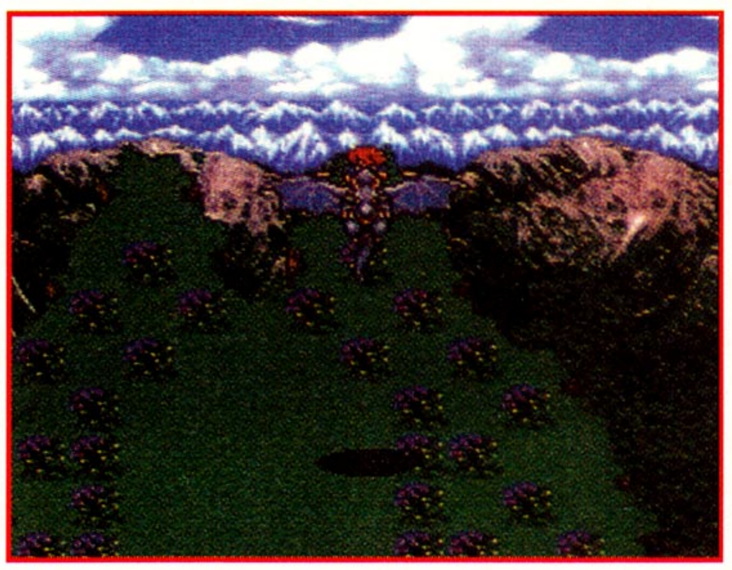
The galaxy is open to all those who dare accept this racing challenge.

Rock and Roll Racing (Interplay/SNES)

This is Interplay's second try at a 16-Bit racing game. **Rock and Roll Racing** takes the player outside of the everyday world of racing games and into a fast-driving, smash-and-bash contest of speed and skill.

There are six different cars to choose from, and over fifty tracks to test players' endurance. Gamers can equip a variety of weapons to help insure succes, including heat seeking missiles and land mines.

Rock and Roll Racing features an all-star soundtrack with *Peter Gunn* by Henry Mancini, *Born to be Wild* by Steppenwolf, and *Bad to the Bone* by George Thorogood. The game also features digitized voice of famous race announcer Larry "Supermouth" Huffman.



Final Fantasy III is a 16-Meg RPG for the series' growing following.

Final Fantasy III (Square Soft/SNES) is the next in the series of epic role-playing games from Japan. The latest version of the game is the longest yet, and features a full 16-Meg of memory.

The game continues the series, using the same interface made popular in **Final Fantasy II** for the SNES. While still early in the translation stage from Japan, **Final Fantasy III** will offer all of the same action found in the previous installment, with considerably more attention paid to the details of the quest, making the game longer and more challenging.

Final Fantasy III will be available in the fall of 1993.

Relive the fierce naval battles of World War II when playing P.T.O.

P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations (Koei/Genesis) is a strategic-level war game that encompasses the entire Pacific during World War II.

The gamer controls up to 16 task forces at a time, issuing strategic movement and battle doctrine to fifteen while directly guiding one. Task Forces can conduct amphibious assaults, attack enemy units, conduct moves to support other objectives, or head for a repair base.

The sweep and depth of **PTO** are so far unequaled in video gaming.

CES EXPRESS

Virgin introduces Cool Spot, a hero with a crystal clear effervescence.

Cool Spot (Virgin-Sega/Genesis) takes side-scrolling adventures to a new level. With brilliant graphics, wonderful sound, and great game play, **Cool Spot** will redefine how good a side-scrolling action game can be.

Spot is everybody's favorite soda pop icon who lives on the side of a 7-Up can. In this adventure, Spot must travel over hostile lands and into dangerous places, fighting the most amusing assortment of bad guys ever to grace the Genesis screen.

The animation in **Cool Spot** is fluid almost to the point of being flawless, and the backgrounds of the different levels are more colorful than one would think possible for a system with the limited color palate such as the one for the Genesis.

Cool Spot is so good, that Sega opted to distribute it themselves instead of Virgin, in order to make more copies available for purchase.

This game could be the surprise hit of the whole show. **Cool Spot** is the coolest game in a long time.

Bubsy Bobcat may prove to be the biggest third party character ever.

Video Game of the Show:

Bubsy Bobcat in: Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind
(Accolade/Genesis, SNES)

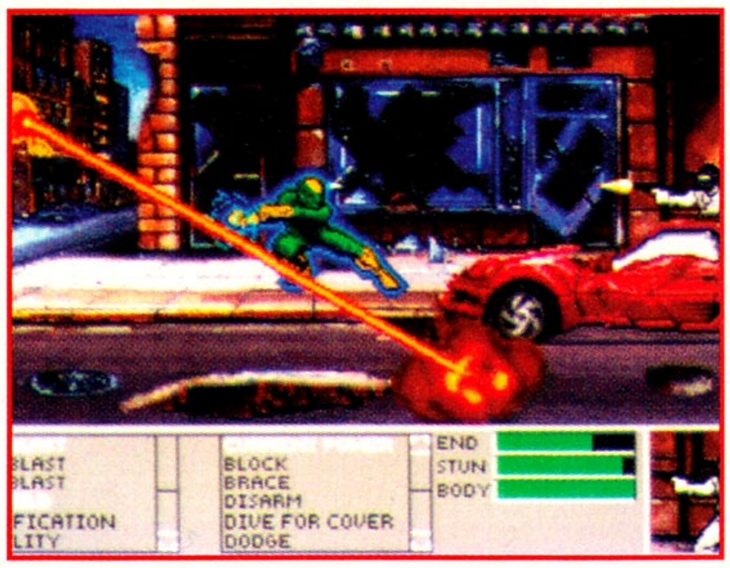
Legendary animator Chuck Jones would love Bubsy Bobcat. The running, jumping, flying feline comes on like a classic cartoon star in Michael Berlyn's action-packed sci-fi spoof.

The boisterous bobcat outspeeds the original **Sonic the Hedgehog** as he battles the Woolies through 16 levels, and five completely different worlds. More than 40 character animations, including 12 hilarious "death" sequences, make dying almost pleasurable in this challenging contest.

Quick-response command control, subtle parallax scrolling, and a superb sound track make **Claws Encounters** a can't-miss for both of the major 16-Bit consoles. This April release could become the biggest selling third-party cartridge.

Sometimes it seems that electronic gaming is license-happy, eager to adapt any pop culture icon to the play screen. **Claws Encounters** shows what imagination, attention to detail, and a design/development team with limitless talent can do when they create a character rather than simply rent one.

Computer Games



Champions lets players become exciting and powerful superheroes.

Champions (Konami/MS-DOS), has an original story spotted with false starts and agonizing delays. The problems are definitely all in the past, however, and Steve Peterson's adaptation of his own tabletop comic book RPG will bring its super-powered entertainment to compu-gamers in April. It's a safe bet that most lovers of four-color heroics will agree that the finished product justifies the unexpectedly long wait.

The program contains ready-to-go characters for those who want a quick start, but even these can be customized in many interesting ways, including powers, secret identity, supporting characters, and origin. For experts, there's a brilliant character construction module that's the next-best-thing to living in a real comic book.

Super heroes and heroines go on patrol, talk with non-player characters, and solve crimes. Two combat systems give the user a choice of real-time or round-by-round fighting. **Champions** should be a welcome change of pace for role-gamers and action fans alike.

LaRussa Baseball II features an updated interface and more options.

Tony LaRussa Ultimate Baseball II (Strategic Simulations/MS-DOS) uses beautifully animated large-sized players. The multi-view VGA graphics simulation features crystal-clear audio play-by-play commentary and has a fully-implemented instant replay option.

The main screen presents the view of the diamond from any of several angles, and small windows, one in each of the four corners of the screen, further illustrate the action. Each pitcher has 8 possible pitches. Flyballs (which pass out of view) are foreshadowed by an on-screen cursor, depicted as an oversized shadow of the ball, to indicate where they will come down.

The statistical underpinning is much more comprehensive than in the first game. Managers can even elect to have the numbers updated after each conest to reflect in-game performance. Tony LaRussa has earned a reputation as one of the sharpest baseball minds in the majors, and the game that bears his name benefits from the same kind of insightful understanding of the national pastime.

Live actors were digitized for the graphics in Interplay's Stonekeep.

Stonekeep (Interplay/MS-DOS) takes first-person perspective games a giant leap closer to the reality of full-motion video, but on today's disk-based computers. The crew that gave us **Bard's Tale** in the 1980s may retake field leadership in the 1990s.

Innterplay spent two years developing the technology that supports this dungeon-oriented RPG, but the results are stunning. The full-screen graphics and the atmospheric sound effects draw players into a richly detailed world. All of the monsters and characters are digitized, costumed actors scaled and video-captured for uncanny realism. Most importantly, the game's graphics scrolled quickly, with no hesitation or break-up.

Stonekeep may enable Interplay to leapfrog the competition with its first fantasy role-playing game with cinematic impact.

H.P. Lovecraft's stories come to the game screen in Alone in the Dark.

Alone in the Dark (I•Motion/MS-DOS) brings the genre of computer-generated horror to a new level. The game is based loosely on the gory and gruesome tales by H.P. Lovecraft. The game centers around a mansion in Louisiana that is reputed to be the home of a great and hideous evil.

You have been hired to take a look through the mansion and catalog all of the valuables of the former owner, Jeremy Hartwood. Hartwood recently committed suicide in the house, adding to its mystique. While the idea of entering the house is not a comfortable one, the fact that it holds many treasures, including a strange piano in the loft, are too great a temptation to resist. Setting out, you discover the horror that caused Hartwood to take his life.

The game uses a cinematic style to both scare and make the game easily playable. Polygonal graphics allow for excellent animation and realistic movement of the characters. The game can be played with the idea to kill monsters or combat can be avoided by intelligent action.

The anticipated Strike Commander will be released early in 1993.

Computer Game of the Show:

Strike Commander

Origin Systems (MS-DOS)

The long-awaited futuristic flight simulator from the creator of **Wing Commander** is finally ready to swoop onstage. A prequel to the **WC** games, **Strike Commander** boasts a multitude of automatic play options, camera angles and special effects. For the first time, players will be able to scan in all directions from inside the cockpit by simply moving the controller. The aircraft and landscapes have a gritty, realistic look, with terrain that ranges from jungle command posts to sweeping cityscapes, all rendered in amazing detail through the use of cutting edge graphic tools. (486 owners will be glad to learn that superior PC technology smooths out, rather than speeds up, game play, with users given extraordinary control in setting the visual detail dependent upon their system configuration and desired game speed.)

Strike Commander may be the most cinematic combat flight simulator ever produced and it is a virtual lock to take the gaming public by storm.

CES EXPRESS

CD-ROM Games

European Racers sports beautiful graphics and fast-driving game play.

European Racers (Revell Monogram/ MS-DOS-CD, Sega CD), out this spring, is strikingly original. Ed Hobbs and his team have wedded model-making to auto racing in the first product from a company best-known for car, plane and ship kits.

The software helps the user assemble the Bugatti EB110 that comes with **European Racers** and then test it on four world-famous courses. The disk also has a step-by-step tutorial for building the Lamborghini LP500S, the NAZCA M12, and the Porsche 911. Although these kits must be purchased separately, **European Racers** does let the armchair auto-maniac drive all four machines.

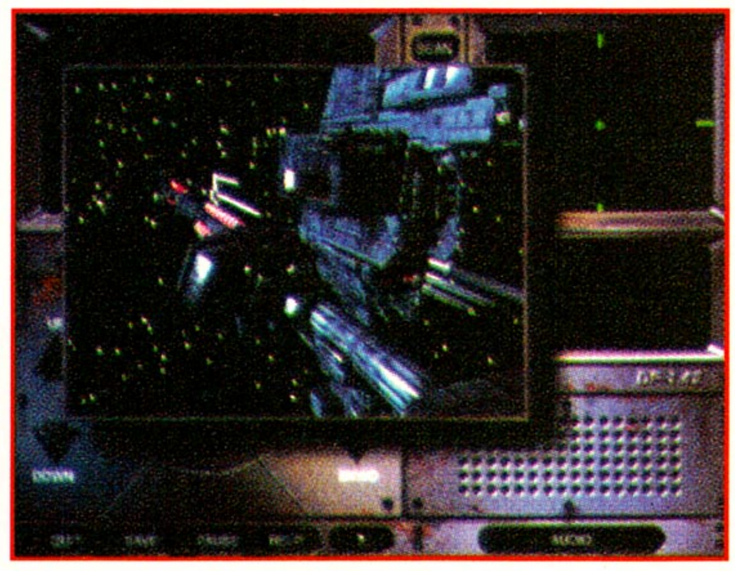
Before a newly-finished car puts tires to the track, the driver must drive through the streets to the race site in time. The well-acted multimedia police sequences make it worth getting tagged for speeding.

Every race is different, because weather, police, and machine-directed opposition are varied every time. The on-track portion of **European Racers** is so realistic that even those who don't want to put together the actual model will enjoy taking the wheel of the electronic version.

Return to Zork is an update of the now classic text adventure series.

Return to Zork (Activision/PC-CD, MS-DOS) shows that you can't keep a classic down forever. Ed Dombrower is in charge of the project to create a state-of-the-art sequel to the original Infocom text adventure trilogy. More than one hour of audio dialogue, a pop-up point-and-click interface, and beautiful artwork testify that Activision plans no simple rehash of the fantasy quest.

The player returns to the world of Zork half a century after the last adventure. All the magic has been removed from the world, but unfortunately, it has collected in the abandoned caves of the Underground Empire. When four enterprising people open the caverns as a theme park, the evil mystic force takes control of one of them. The player must descend into the mammoth cave system and brave the tricks, traps, and monsters in this **Return to Zork.**



The Iron Helix is an original game programmed especially for CD-ROM.

CD Game of the Show

The Iron Helix
Spectrum HoloByte
Macintosh CD, PC-CD

Spectrum-HoloByte's debut foray into the multimedia wilderness is a rare original product rather than a conversion of a pre-existing title. **The Iron Helix** is a first-person sci-fi adventure in which the player-character has been sent to stop a group of renegade aliens from developing a life-threatening biological weapon. The game is set onboard a crewless ship patrolled by a guardian droid which has been programmed to seek out and destroy all interlopers. The p-c has a major problem simply moving from room to room on this maze-like spacecraft: each room requires DNA-based security clearance. Fortunately, DNA traces of the crew remain, and it's up to the player to locate these in order to penetrate various security areas.

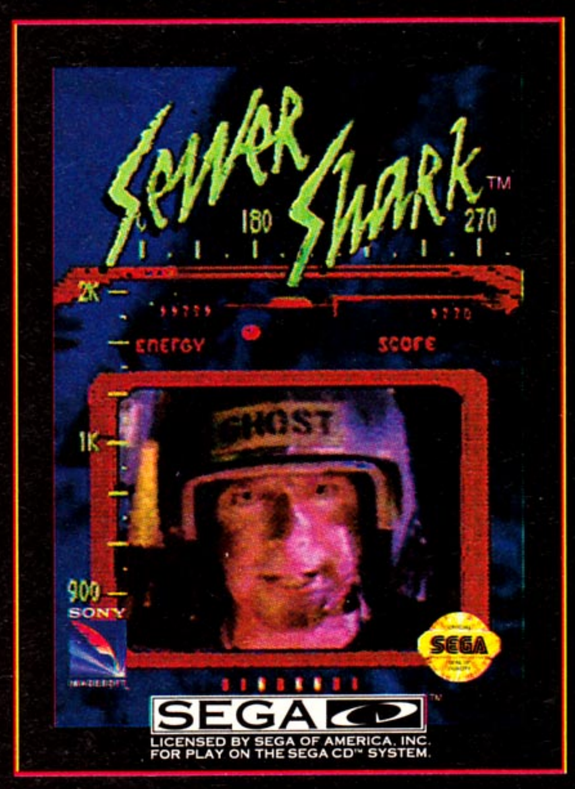
Iron Helix contains six levels and 30 rooms in 600 megs of sound and graphics. The visuals are stunning and the plotline is sufficiently non-linear to offer six different success scenarios.

"RELAX PRETEND IT'S A GAME!"

Sewer Shark for the Sega CD blasts you into a radical new world of gameplay with devastating digital video of live actors, explosive CD sound and the hyper-charged power of a simulation-shooter. Interact one-on-one with ace tunnel-jockey Ghost and the devious, fat-faced Stenchler. Your mission's clear: transport supplies to human outposts deep in the sewers...and fry anything that gets in your way. React with lightning-fast speed to flight instructions transmitted by your computerized droid. Navigate, fire and streak deeper into toxic tunnels. Miss a turn and you're history. But make it all the way...and you're in Solar City, maxin' out to beaches, babes and awesome rays! Sewer Shark for the Sega CD.

ACTUAL IMAGES

It's a whole new game.



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A HUNDRED POUNDS OF CLAY

by Russ Ceccola

Say "clay modeling" and most people think of the California Raisins, Noid and other popular Claymation characters brought to life in television commercials by Will Vinton Productions. But there's another place to see this technique. Some game companies have adopted clay as a means to produce animation.

Interplay jumped headfirst into clay modeling with **Claymates**, **Battle Chess 4000** and the upcoming **Clay Fighter** (working title). The software publishing company entered a distribution agreement with Cineplay Interactive, a subsidiary of Will Vinton Productions run by veteran designer/producer Kellyn Beck.

Interplay president Brian Fargo sees this as a healthy relationship and recognizes the benefits of working with Will Vinton Productions in other areas of game design. "We hope that they can help us in the clay aspect and we can help them on the computer end," he remarked.

Claymates is the most ambitious project of the Interplay titles that employ clay modeling. The Super NES video game features five animals that the player's character can become in his journeys as Clayton, a boy out to rescue his kidnapped father, Professor Putty. Clayton can turn into Oozy the mouse, Muckster the cat, Doh Doh the bird, Goopy the fish or Globmeister the gopher, with a blob of clay of the correct color. The clay characters create a neat atmosphere in the **Claymates** game world, an attempt "to have the consistency of something like the Flintstones in character and story," according to producer Michael Quarles.

Quarles is a six-year veteran at

Even Elvis gets into the act. He's singing about his Blue Clay Shoes.

The use of clay characters allows for different and interesting shapes.

Interplay with a long list of credits and experience in gaming, starting when he entered the Guinness Book of World Records with his score of 863,000 on Atari's arcade game **Crystal Castles**. **Claymates** landed in Quarles' lap almost a year ago and he was happy to use clay in a

Fighting With Clay

Clay Fighter is, in many ways, even more ambitious than **Claymates**. Once again, Michael Quarles produced the game and Greg Thomas's Visual Concepts designed it. Danger Productions provided the clay expertise, while going through almost 500 pounds of clay in the modeling stages.

Clay Fighter has the action of a popular fighting game, but it goes farther than the basics with the creativity, wacky characters and complete mayhem that clay allows. It takes place in the same town and uses the same **Claymates** characters to introduce rounds and battles. Quarles beamed that "What we are adding to the fight game genre are the clay and the humor. **Clay Fighter** has personality that you wouldn't believe."

Battles take place in many different arenas. For example, the game's clown character conducts his combat in a funhouse. From the taffy man to the Impersonator (an Elvis look-alike with hair that cuts his enemies in half), each of the fighters has a personality and special moves. But don't expect to see many tiny sculptures left over from the project. The animation of the characters often resulted in the complete destruction of the clay models involved.

Clay Fighter incorporates the latest claymation technology into a game.

Clay Fighter will turn the fighting game fans on their ears with its unique and humorous approach to the genre. Thomas commented: "I think our game is different enough to succeed. We've taken the fighting game aspects and added a lot of humor. There's always room for humor in video games."

From Rome Into Space

Kellyn Beck is an undeniable veteran of the electronic games industry, with stints at Epyx and Cinemaware and contract work to Activision and Electronic Arts on his resume. After designing and producing **Centurion** for Electronic Arts, Beck wanted to embrace new technology. At the same time, Will Vinton wanted to expand the capabilities of his company to encompass computer software. Beck learned of Vinton's wish and Cineplay Interactive was formed.

Detectron was a game Beck originally proposed to Activision before their corporate tumble in the late '80s. After Cineplay's formation, Beck revived the **Detectron** concept under the title **Free D.C.** The game, an admirable first effort for Cineplay, featured digitized actors and objects mixed with traditional bit-mapped graphics plus a couple of Claymation characters. Beck originally planned to model the robots in the game with a 3-D sculpting program, but took advantage of the Vinton Studios to turn them into clay models.

Harry the Subhuman, a lovable sewer dweller in **Free D.C.**, took his form as a Claymation model. Due to the limitations in technology at that time, Harry had to be scanned from single 35mm prints, rather than movie film. Beck remarked that "Now we can capture Claymation directly into video—much easier than with Harry the Subhuman."

Next up on the agenda was **Playmation**, a revolutionary spline-based animation program that let users create models in a process similar to Claymation, but done entirely on the computer.

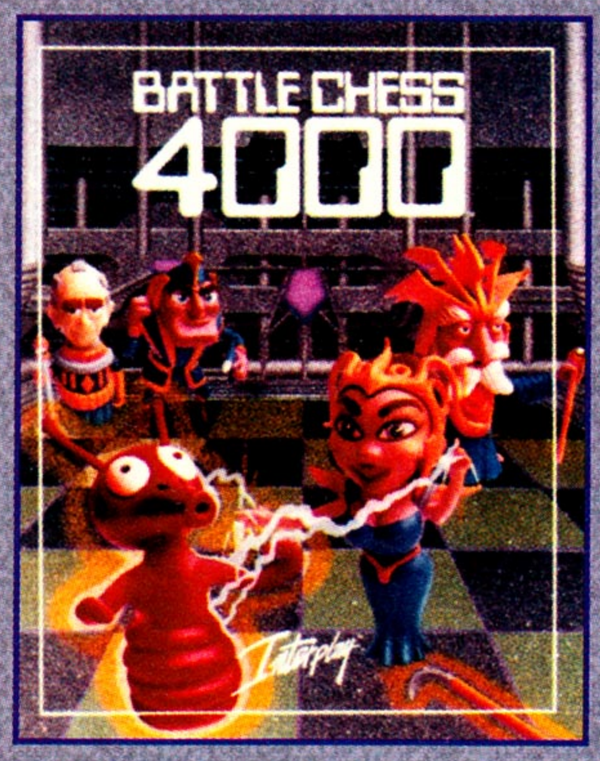
Cineplay's upcoming project is a space strategy game featuring original Vinton characters. The coupling of Beck's strategy-game design expertise with Claymation characters on today's powerful computers is sure to be a winning combination. Beck is excited about Cineplay and commented that "One of the things that's neat about this industry is that you have to work real hard to get bored!"

game design. "Clay is a great way to go. It looks like a cartoon and takes on three dimensions," Quarles commented.

The design of **Claymates** was the domain of Greg Thomas and his development company, Visual Concepts. The clay animation was handled by A-OK Animation, a design group that worked on such characters as Gumby and the Pillsbury Doughboy. Thomas created the concept for **Claymates** in a proposal for a game originally titled **Animal Exchange** for the NES. Thomas is excited about **Claymates** and said, "It's got the speed of **Sonic**, the maps of **Mario** and colors that have never been done before."

Claymates has many different types of game play. Each level has side-scrolling action that incorporates animal-transformation clay balls. Additionally, the overland maps contain their own unique challenges, similar to the **Adventures of Lolo** games. Finally, players take part in a shoot-'em-up that leads to the exciting conclusion. **Claymates** takes clay modeling to a new level of creativity with over 30 clay enemies and innovative transformations. Over forty 1.44 Meg computer disks of art are crammed into the cartridge.

Battle Chess 4000 is Interplay's computer title that uses creative clay techniques. Similar to the original **Battle Chess** in concept, it features futuristic combatants instead of the traditional chess pieces. As Fargo proudly affirmed, "The animations in **Battle Chess 4000** are hilarious." Each piece and fight sequence was sculpted in clay, and only two typical battles surpass the entirety of the original game's animation.



Playing chess with claymation figures can be a shocking time!

Claymates and **Battle Chess 4000** represent the start of Interplay's experimentation with clay modeling, but it will more than likely take flight in the new relationship between Interplay and Will Vinton Productions.

Thomas proudly stated that "Nobody has used clay as we have in **Clay Fighter** and **Claymates**, with popping, stretching and weird contortions." Fargo echoed Thomas's enthusiasm, and expects more work in the future "to do projects that utilize clay in the best way that they can."

InterPlay's Clay-Mates Come Out and Game

What will games produced with Claymation be like? Brian Fargo, president of InterPlay Productions, treated **Electronic Games** to an early look at **Clay-Mates**, currently in development for the SNES.

The contest is a horizontally scrolling, jump-and-punch epic. The gamer moves a ball of clay around a strategic map, which shows the game world in overhead perspective.

When the blue sphere enters a play-area, a side-perspective play-field, showing a fully clay-animated scene, appears on the screen.

The player can accomplish some activities in clay form, but the on-screen surrogate has the potential to transform from a lump of clay into a beautifully animated character. After all, what's the good of having raw materials if you don't make it into something?

Careful artistic production was used when creating each new figure.

Red power-ups float enticingly in the air at various points. Snatching such a power ball enables the clay ball to transform. For instance, the character becomes a feisty little cat after eating the red floater near the start of the first level. Another turns it into a scurrying mouse.

Making life miserable for the hero are a bestiary of dogs, bumble bees and such made out of clay. The cat must keep the hounds at a distance with its feline punch, because the dogs' strength and ferocity is lethal at close quarters.

Also scattered throughout the game are gems which the character must collect. This involves the usual tricky maneuvering around obstacles, of course.

The developers are sure to insert many additional complications, but **Clay-Mates** is already an action game that sticks out from the rest, because of its unique graphics.

The Vinton Touch

Will Vinton Productions is not just a Claymation house. Robert Terrell, a master designer at the Vinton Studios, explained that the company is making a concerted effort to learn new technologies that they can use in products for their clients. Producing animation on computers is one way Terrell sees the Studios meeting the demand for their talents. Although some artists might let computers do too much of the animation, he feels that the Studios' employees will be able to intelligently use sophisticated systems: "It's going to be interesting to see how characters will look on computer compared to techniques you're already used to seeing. The tough part is to take the people who do a certain part of the process well and get them to do the same task on a computer."

The interesting, but tedious process of claymation starts with 25-lb boxes of each clay color, which must be aged for two to three years so that the pigments set and the clay reaches a certain consistency. Terrell expects that computers will make it "easier to design some more exaggerated characters that are tough to physically sculpt because of skinny wrists, enlarged heads, etc."

Will Vinton expressed his enthusiasm for the new projects, saying, "Computer games and multimedia offer exciting new opportunities for using Claymation, because the medium of clay retains its warmth and character on a computer screen." He went on to indicate his pleasure in his company's role in entertainment software: "We're pleased that clay animation has become such a popular method for creating 3-D images in computer products."

Sierra's Clay Models

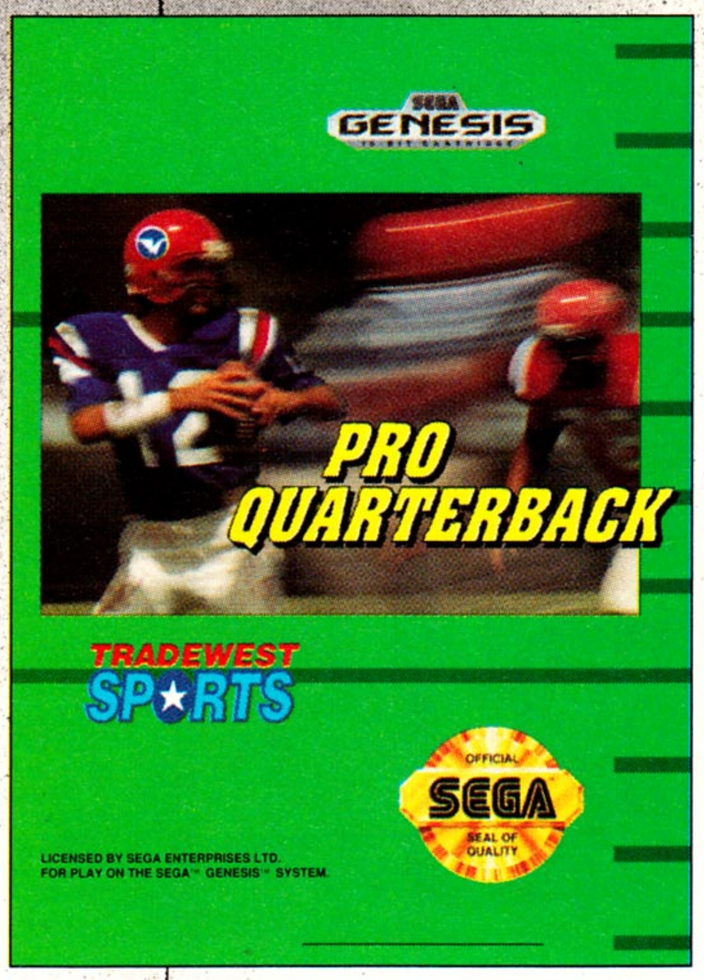
Sierra On-Line first tried clay modeling with some character animations in the VGA update of **Space Quest I**. The success of those characters led to Art Director Arturo Sinclair's desire to animate all of the characters for the VGA update of **Quest for Glory I** in clay. The impressive result totally revamped the game's look and feel. Sierra's latest game to contain effective clay models is **The Island of Dr. Brain**. In one room, players interact with busts of famous artists animated in clay.

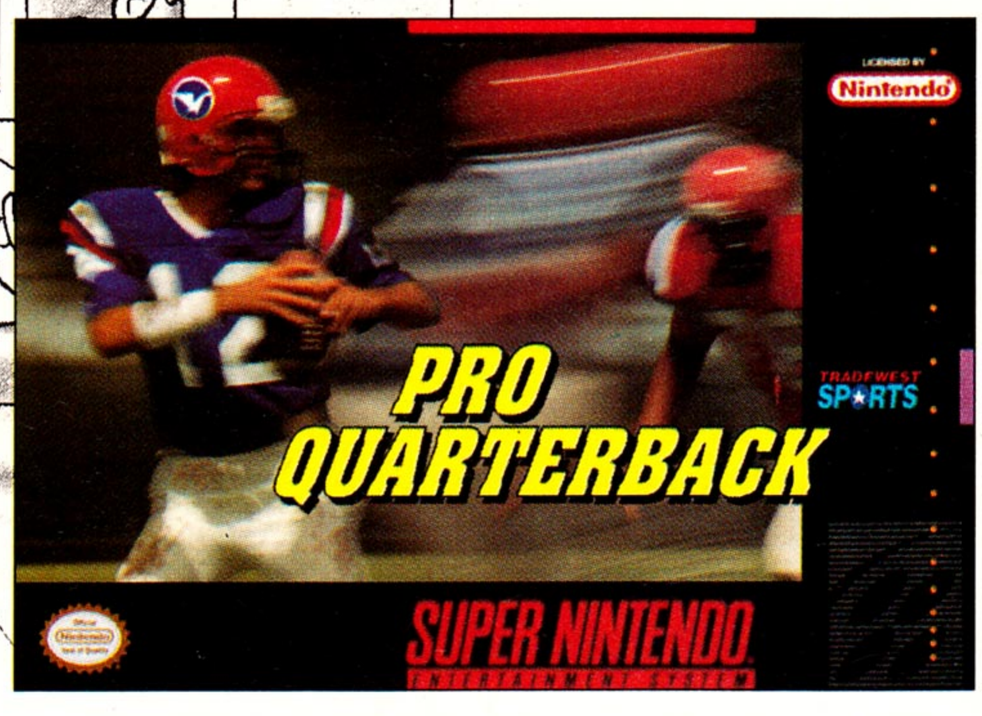
The game play of many adventures will be enhanced with clay figures.

Art Designer Jon Bock says that "clay modeling makes the characters look very realistic, because you're using real lighting, not an artist's interpretation of where the light should go." To produce the animation, Bock used in-house video programs and animation/coloring programs like **Deluxe Paint**. Eight mouth positions simulate the speaking artists, but the busts won't be correctly synched with voices until the CD version of the game.

Bock explained that the artists kept the clay models handy for reference in the studio. "Now that we're getting into real high resolution art, we can use just about any animation technique that works. Clay modeling has become part of the vocabulary of the company."

The Season's never over with Pro Quarterback





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OTHERWORLD HISTORY:

FANTASY GAMING THROUGH THE AGES

by Ed Dille

More than a third of the mainstream computer titles produced each year are either fantasy-based or have elements of fantasy in their roots. If one were to ascend the family tree to find the source of this burgeoning interest in the fantastic, J.R.R. Tolkien would undoubtedly be

Computer fantasy gaming continues to increase in popularity each year.

crouching on the uppermost branch, grinning like a mischievous gnome. Others might argue convincingly for different icons of literature, but none would deny the prevailing influence this master wielded over a generation of authors, programmers, designers and players.

The lower branches of the tree Tolkien planted bear the sweetest fruit yet, as new computer fantasy titles extend the genre in ways that would have been unimaginable even a few years ago.

It is the nature of humanity, unlike their Elven cousins, to quickly develop disdain for items once revered soon after better substitutes appear. Consequently, in the interest of rekindling proper reverence for titles of yore, EG has sifted the sands of time to record the history of this great (and fun!) branch of electronic entertainment.

The seed planted by Mr. Tolkien germinated when fans of the genre first conceived that fantasy worlds would be even more fascinating if one could interact with them in some form. This line of thinking led to the development of numerous pen and paper games, the most popular of which survives today in both its original format and a computer adaptation, TSR's **Dungeons & Dragons**.

During the mid to late 70s P.A. (pre-Atari 2600), D&D clubs sprang up on college campuses throughout the nation. Other age groups participated as well, but the college crowd was significant for several reasons. Many experienced their first exposure to fantasy gaming concurrent with another significant piece of the puzzle, their first exposure to computers.

At that time, computers meant mainframes, and most users would never even see the actual machine, as it was tucked away in an innocuous corner of some administration building. Interaction occurred through hard copy teletype printers. Nevertheless, it was a new and wondrous thing at the time.

Inevitably, some enterprising young enthusiasts decided to actually program (can you imagine) aspects of their fantasy games into the mainframes for use by fellow students. College administrations were publicly appalled at the intrusions. After all, these machines were funded for education...right? Behind the scenes, many professors and administrators became closet players, cloaked in secrecy behind passwords on their user files.

Guardians of silicon purity, who viewed these non-scientific uses as sacrilege, wailed in anguish when the best of the games spread to corporate computers, including the headquarters of GTE in Stamford, Connecticut (was nothing sacred?).

AD&D fanatics were delighted when the RPG came onto the computer.

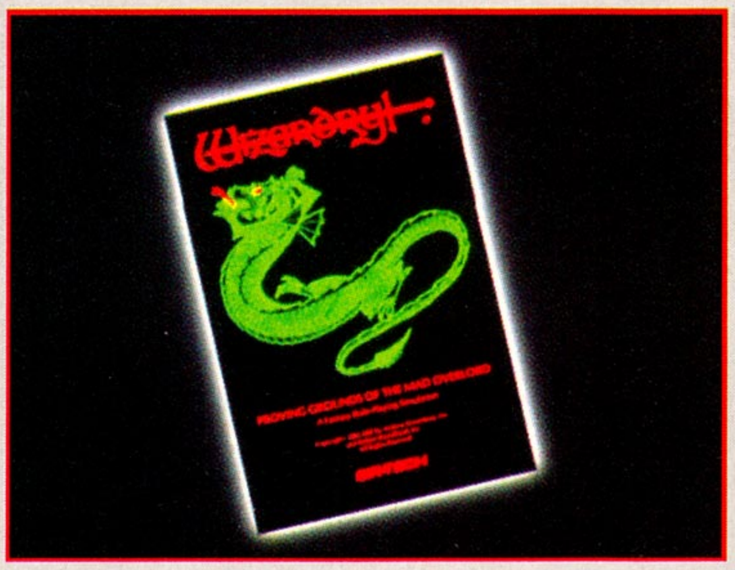
Games were limited to two forms during this period, exclusively text based adventures and top-down perspective dungeon mazes, with x's and o's representing the player character and opponents. These simple diversions established a user base for the first microcomputer fantasy titles that appeared in 1980.

It is not surprising that some of the innovators of that time are still actively shaping the industry today. In 1979, Ken and Roberta Williams founded a fledgling software company on their kitchen table that evolved into Sierra On-Line. Together, they developed a program that allowed 70 pictures to be crammed on a disk, placing the first nail in the coffin of pure text-based games. Their first fantasy title, **The Wizard and the Princess** (1980) was noteworthy in that it was the first game to use color graphics. Gamers everywhere clamored for more as they tasted the first fruit of the budding sapling.

In 1981, Sir-tech Software introduced the first installment in what

would become one of the most popular fantasy series of all time, **Wizardry**. **Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord** was unique in several respects, but the innovations it incorporated are central to the trunk of the tree, supporting all of the branches of fantasy role playing as we see them today. **Proving Grounds** was the first title to use a first-person perspective, allowing players the vicarious experience of viewing the world through their character's eyes. Additionally, this was the first use of phased combat, moving the genre away from depending on arcade dexterity to survive toward strategic planning and challenges for the mind. Players were forced to take the first step toward greater empathy for their characters and appreciation for the depth of story in the games they played. The first installment in the series remained a top seller for years thereafter, and has been recently converted for video game play by a new generation.

Between 1981 and 1984, the video game market boomed and then crashed, leaving a beleaguered computer gaming market with an uncertain future. The remaining markets consisted of the Commodore 64, Atari 400/800 series and Apple



Wizadry is one of the most popular continuing fantasy RPG scenarios.

computers. The 64k barrier remained largely intact, yet an amazing number of quality fantasy titles appeared. A second installment in the **Wizardry** series extended the story line; Richard "Lord British" Garriot developed Britannia as the first complete fantasy gaming world (in the first three installments of the **Ultima** series); and Roberta Williams designed the world's first 3-D animated adventure game, **Kings Quest I: Quest for the Crown**.

In 1986, with the release of **Ultima IV: Quest for the Avatar**, Richard Garriot revolutionized character development routines by basing character profession on player responses to a series of questions concerning the weight of specific virtues. Similar to a psychological exam, the questions presented players with difficult moral dilemmas in which a valid argument could be made for either point of view. By selecting one virtue as more important than another in the given situation (compassion over sacrifice, for example) the player's beliefs and philosophy became essential to the player-character. Not only did these lead to even greater player empathy, the game itself was designed to play differently based on each profession.

Also in 1986, Electronic Arts provided the first installment of the **Bard's Tale** series, which is currently in its third iteration and even has a construction set for budding fantasy designers to enjoy. **Bard's Tale I** was noteworthy for challenging puzzles and detailed character windows that widened the graphic expectations of players everywhere.

1987 was significant because the computer industry began turning away from supporting lesser machines (Commodore 64/128's and the Atari line), although some titles were still released in abbreviated form from their big brothers. Even 256k was dead in the water as programmers raced to take advantage of more capable hardware. The age of IBM, Amiga, Macintosh and Atari ST was beginning.

Bigger doesn't always mean better, but in the case of New World computing, it worked. **Might and Magic**, released in 1987, was the biggest fantasy role playing game to date and strong sales figures fixed this fact in the minds of designers everywhere. 1987 was also a landmark year for Strategic Simulations Inc., who signed a very lucrative licensing agreement with TSR that launched the Gold Box series of computer AD & D games.

In 1988, the talk of the fantasy gaming world was undoubtedly FTL's **Dungeon Master**. **Dungeon Master** utilized complex animation routines that had creatures lashing out at the player in first person perspective.

OTHERWORLD HISTORY:
FANTASY GAMING THROUGH THE AGES

The effect of the lumbering, slithering and slashing bestiary was ingrained in players' minds to the point that gamers would no longer accept static pictures of their opponents. EGA became the new graphic standard and products such as **Ultima V** took full advantage of the increased palette. Little did anyone realize that VGA would totally eclipse EGA as the standard of choice little more than a year later.

1989 will be remembered as the year of the sound card. Players rejoiced as the beeps and boops of their internal speakers were replaced by actual musical compositions orchestrated with multi-channel instrumentation. All of the major fantasy publishers began incorporating sound board support into their titles, but Sierra On-Line will always be remembered as the first to exploit the new peripheral. **King's Quest IV: The Perils of Rosella** won the Software Publishers Association Award in 1989 by containing double the graphic resolution of previous games and taking full advantage of the new music card technology via a fully-orchestrated stereo soundtrack.

1990 heralded a movement away from text parsers in both adventure and role playing games. Surveys found that a vast majority of gamers owned a mouse. Further, there was a growing discontent among players over the "find the right word" syndrome, a syntax based problem that precluded equivalent phrases from being accepted by the program. In response to user feedback, fantasy designers moved in two different directions. Some developed word menus, from which the player could select recognizable nouns and verbs to construct their sentences. Other developers took the leap to pure icon based interfaces, allowing point and click to evolve to its purest form.

Fans of the theatrical "trailer," film cuts utilized to whet the appetite of perspective consumers, may well consider 1991 a landmark for computer fantasy. Immense effort and countless bytes were devoted exclusively to the opening sequences of many titles, to be viewed only a couple of times before players focused on the game itself. **Ultima VI** holds the undisputed title for originality and sheer beauty during this period,

King's Quest 4 introduced a female as the lead character in a game.

with a fully animated film-like sequence that continued for several minutes.

New adventures feature stunning VGA graphics and great sounds.

Most recently, players have been treated to even more elaborate openings and cut scenes, as designers have been liberated from memory constraints via CD-ROM based applications. **King's Quest V** in CD-ROM mode dazzled players when the game's characters spoke to them in digitized audio. Additional accolades are due the designers at Blue Sky Productions, who produced **Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss**. **Underworld** was significant because it introduced a full 360 degree motion model to first person dungeon exploration. Further, the Stygian Abyss was the first true three dimensional gaming environment, completely escaping the flat plane constructions of other titles.

There were more watershed improvements to magic systems, creative forms of combat resolution and other such matters. But this outlines how fantasy gaming reached the point where it is today.

Indeed, additional musings should not be directed to the past, but to the future. Imagine, if you will, **Virtualworld** or a similar derivative of current technology. As new programming techniques are born, it's certain they'll find their way into fantasy gaming.

The Ultima Underworld series is full of lifelike monsters and mayhem.

The possibilities are as limitless as the imagination itself; one has only to believe in them patiently and the fruit is borne. In the interim, new seeds are sprouting throughout the grove of well-designed, interactive fantasy games.

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Boppin' with BUBSY

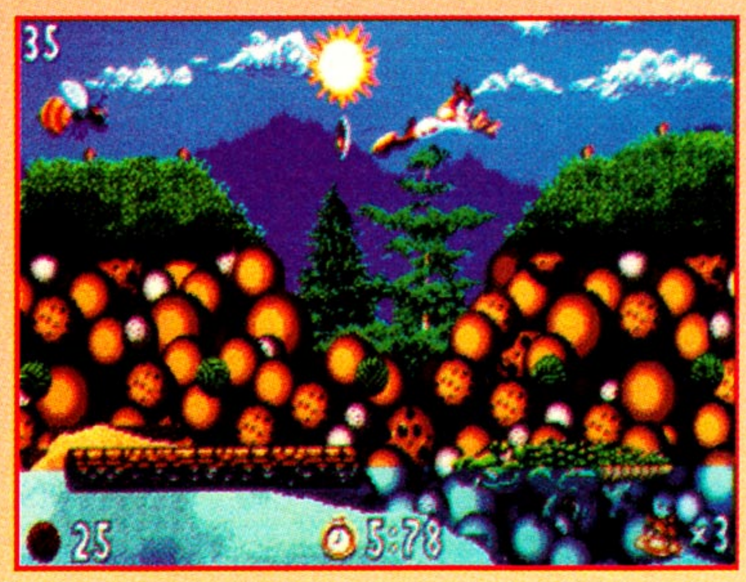
America's newest hero says, 'Cheese!'

by Arnie Katz

Every game publisher wants a character. Nintendo struck gold with boulder-hopping Mario, Sega slips through the stores with Sonic the Hedgehog and Turbo Technologies has been bashing public perception with their big-head caveman, Bonk. A universally recognized image can be the cornerstone for a whole cartridge line or game console. Look what Walt Disney did with one little mouse!

While Sega yearned for such a character during the 8-Bit era, it didn't find its star until after the Genesis reached the U.S. **Sonic the Hedgehog**'s exploits impressed gamers with the speed, graphics, and game play that are possible on a 16-Bit system. **Sonic 2** is selling even better than the original, raising hopes at Sega that the character will become a video gaming fixture. Until now, SNES owners could only look upon Sonic with envy. There's little reason for Sega to support the rival console by putting its mainstay on a SNES cartridge. The closest SNES owners could get to Sonic's breakneck bounding were Sega's omnipresent television commercials.

Enter Accolade. A team led by producer John Skeel and designer Michael Berlyn is putting the finishing touches on a super-speed SNES scroller featuring Bubsy Bobcat. Only time will tell if **Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind** is the start of a gaming legend, but fans will be debating Bubsy *vs.* Sonic for many months to come.



That fabulous feline is jumping his way onto game screens everywhere.

Though Michael Berlyn is best-known for adventures, with credentials that stretch all the way back to Infocom, he has looked for new worlds to conquer in recent years. After trying his hand at edutainment on Accolade's newest **Snoopy** product, he approached the publisher with the Bubsy concept in 1991.

He defined the Bubsy universe and set the (cheese) wheels in motion. Berlyn drew on his background as a science fiction writer to concoct this parody of the type of futuristic adventures he wrote a decade ago.

Bubsy is no rebel without a cause; he's a feline with a mission. When aliens called Woolies steal all of the

Earth's yarn balls, the brave Bobcat sets out on a high-speed campaign to get them back.

Producer John Skeel took command of the project in November 1991, when Accolade gave a green light. Michael Berlyn peeled off to work on another Accolade project

after the first year, but the team has carried through with the approach he established.

"We started with two guiding principles, two goals," Skeel recalls. "First, we took the horizontal scrolling game as a launch pad." The team studied **Mario, Sonic,** and other outstanding side scrollers like **Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion**—and set out to beat them.

"Second, we conceived Bubsy as an interactive cartoon," Skeel explains. "The graphics in **Super Mario World** look Japanese. We wanted the feel of a Warner Brothers cartoon. That's why it has 12 animations for Bubsy's death, each of which is in the spirit of the classic cartoons."

Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind is divided into 16 chapters, three each for five worlds and a grand finale. The one-cat assault begins in the Village and continues at the Carnival, before heading to the Desert, the River, and the Forest. The final episode sends Bubsy into the Woolies' mother ship to polish off the menace once and for all.

Really? "Absolutely," Skeel insists. "We're considering three storylines for the sequel, but none of them involve the Woolies. Whatever we do, it won't be a reprise of the first game." Whether the Woolies provide the opposition in another Bubsy saga depends on how strongly the players lobby for their return.

Cindy Kirkpatrick and John himself did a lot of the scripting, including many of the enemy placements, but the producer is quick to term the project a collaborative effort. "Everyone contributed things to the final version," he says.

Claws Encounters is not the work of one or two people. Many talents lent their expertise to the SNES version, and the Genesis edition to follow. Scott Williams headed programming, with Joel Seider as his chief assistant. John Schwartz, who won praise for his coding on

The design team that created Bubsy spent many hours in weekly meetings.

Beyond Dark Castle, is responsible for coding the Genesis cartridge.

The graphics grab the player right from the opening scene. The detailed animation, multi-layered parallax scrolling, and the visual personality of the star character are among the things Accolade expects video gamers to enjoy most.

"I managed to put together a top-notch graphics team, and I'm really happy with the results," notes Skeel with obvious satisfaction. The producer attributes the game's overall look and feel to Beckett Gladney. "She was the artist at the start of the project, and she's the one in charge of all art."

Artist Ken Macklin, says Steel, worked primarily on the main character. He went through 25 preliminary

Boppin' with BUBSY

versions of Bubsy Bobcat before arriving at the definitive one.

Also important contributors to the graphics were Adrian Bourne and Mike McLaughlin, who worked on animation and backgrounds. The cartridge includes over 128K of character graphics, a total of about 40 animations.

Bubsy's adventures will take him to many exciting places. Look out below!

The music, hardly less impressive than the visuals, was composed by Matt Berardo, like Skeel an alumnus of Mediagenic in the 1980s. Chicago-based Byte Size Sound put Berardo's compositions into the SNES.

Although he didn't want to spoil all the surprises that await players in **Claws Encounters**, Skeel did point out a few of the game's features likely to be of most interest to players.

Some of the highlights:

- Bubsy can warp to bonus zones in almost every chapter.
- The whole screen spins when Bubsy Bobcat rides the water slides.
- Bubsy exhibits remarkably free-wheeling movement, including the ability to launch into the air and glide to his next destination.
- The overall speed of the game is comparable to **Sonic the Hedgehog**.

Clockwise from left: Scott Williamson, Joel Seider, Mike Cihak, Matt Scott.

On the eve of the release of **Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind**, Bubsy Bobcat may be the promising newcomer on the brink of potential stardom. By the end of this summer, the feline may have moved into the pantheon of video gaming greats.

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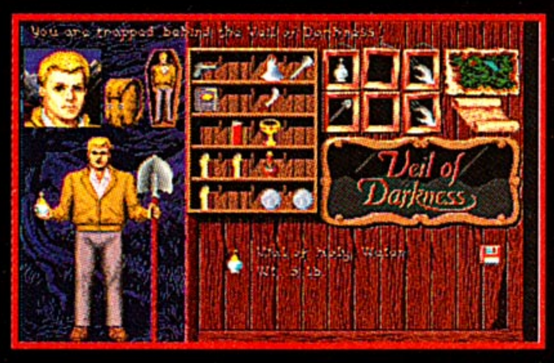

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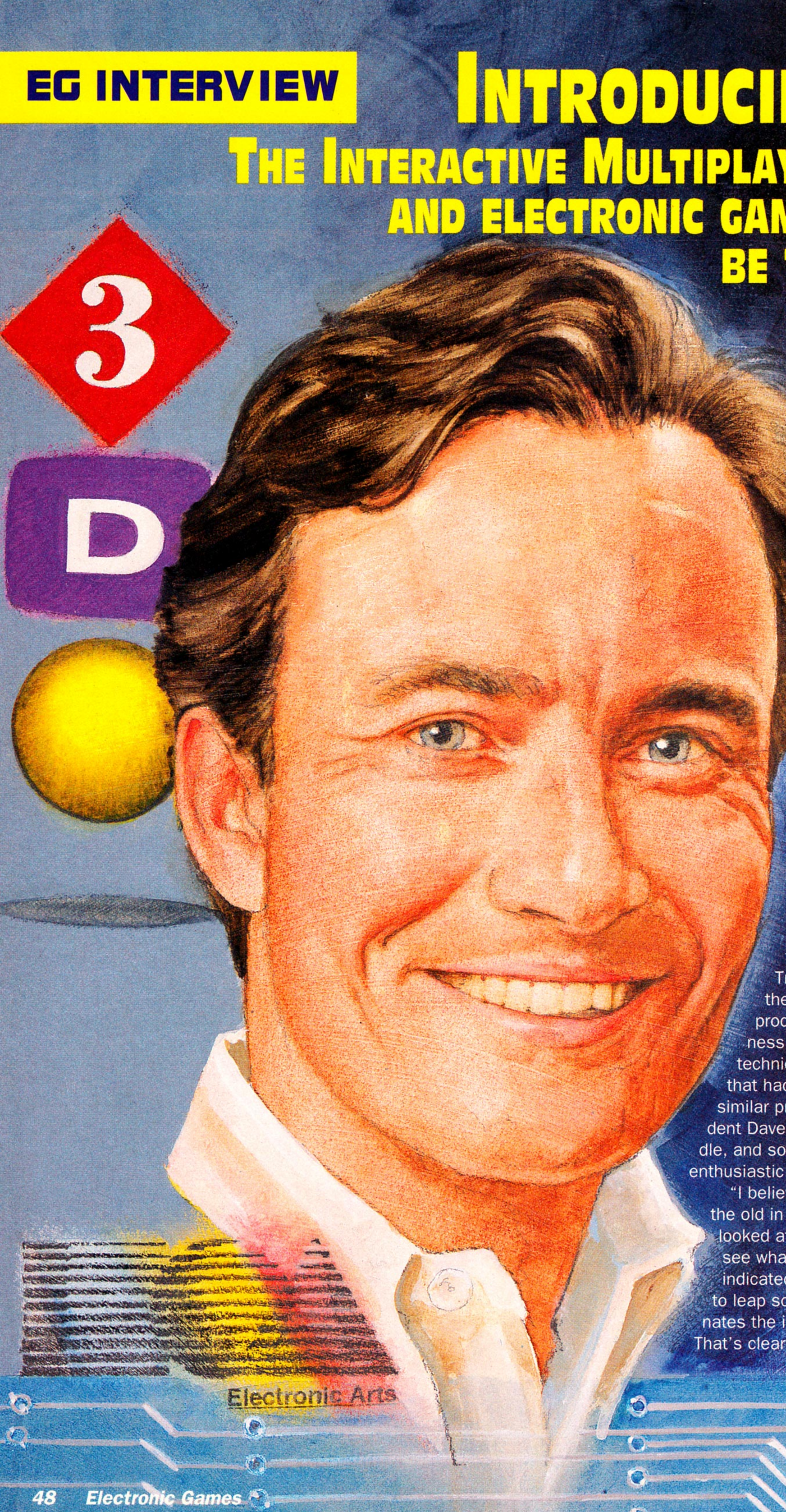
EG INTERVIEW

INTRODUCING... 3DO

THE INTERACTIVE MULTIPLAYER IS COMING... AND ELECTRONIC GAMING WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN



by Arnie Katz

Like a stirring volcano, the new 3DO has begun to shake the industry and flash portents of the incredible power about to be unleashed. When it erupts into the consumer market, this appliance multimedia system may have the power to sweep away everything in its path.

The closely guarded secret of a few insiders in 1990 and 1991, 3DO became the talk of the industry last fall. By next fall, it could be well on its way to dominance in interactive electronic entertainment.

"It all started three years ago," recalls Trip Hawkins, the Electronic Arts founder who is now president of 3DO. "I looked at the future for the consumer and the software industry, and I didn't like what I saw. In particular, what I noticed was the relatively slow forward movement of hardware technology and no progress in building a standard."

Despairing over the 100 different formats shown to him at Electronic Arts, Trip began thinking about the nature of the technology that would go into the right product, and putting together the right business model. "When I went out looking for technical talent, it turned out that the group that had founded Amiga was thinking about a similar product," he says. Former Amiga president Dave Morse, hardware architect David Needle, and software guru R.J. Michael became enthusiastic collaborators.

"I believe that creativity is the rearranging of the old in a new way," Trip explains. "So we looked at what everyone else has tried to do to see what worked, and what hasn't. Analysis indicated that one way to create a standard is to leap so far ahead technologically that it eliminates the issue of what the hardware should be. That's clearly one of the things we're trying to do."

Yet 3DO knew that technological superiority wasn't enough. "We wanted to come up with an aggressive business model that was fair and reasonable and through which everyone would make so much money that there wouldn't be any need to have something come along to obsolete it."

The companies of the 3DO consortium are powerhouses: Matsushita, Time Warner, AT&T, Electronic Arts, and Kleiner, Perkins. (The last-named, which may not be familiar to most gamers, is a venture capital firm. Its electronics investment winners include Sun Microsystems, Lotus, and Electronic Arts.)

Unlike originators of other systems, 3DO has no plans to manufacture hardware. It licenses hardware and software manufacturing rights to other companies. In line with the goal of making 3DO the standard for multiplayers, the company is cutting deals with many manufacturers. Already signed up to make 3DO platforms are Matsushita (Panasonic), AT&T, and Sanyo. More such deals will be announced before the project's October 1993 roll-out. The company expects sales of 1-2 million interactive multiplayers in the first twelve months.

The basic 3DO console, expected to retail for about $700, is a black box that hooks to any television set. As is, it plays audio CDs and is compatible with the Kodak photo CD standard. Relatively low-cost add-ons give it a MIDI interface for music applications, enable it to do video production, and attain full motion video capability on a par with Ampeg.

These varied capabilities led 3DO to designate its creation an "interactive multiplayer." It will even play recordings of TV and short films. Hawkins anticipates an improvement in CD disk technology by the late 1990s that will allow presentation of full-length movies from a single compact disk.

"If you want to make interactive entertainment into a mass market, something that is used in every household, then you have to make a big jump in the realism of the experience," Hawkins states. He believes that 3DO is that quantum leap.

The main strengths claimed for the machine are its realistic animation, a software-based full-motion video scheme that utilizes advanced data compression, and the double-speed CD drive.

Special features enable the 3DO to use its memory extremely efficiently. It can manipulate any image in three dimensions, and change light and color without affecting the graphics. Its fast pixel processing achieves the latter effect by painting translucent pixels over the areas which need to be darkened or changed in color. So when night approaches, the 3DO can progressively darken the scene, alter shadows, and shift colors without having to call up whole screens full of new graphics. "It's a much more cinematic approach," claims Hawkins.

The company reports great strides in the area of data compression. The system can store graphics in its frame buffer in compressed form. It doesn't decompress until the data is going through the video display path to the video display. This, along with other factors, cut access time 90%.

3DO is not just the same old computer in a new case. Most machines start with the central processing unit (CPU) and array everything else around it. "We realized that multimedia entertainment is driven by sound and graphics, so they are the focus of the architecture." The 3DO executes sound and graphics instructions first and processes the rest of the data in-between, which is the reverse of the way other video and computer systems do it.

He measures the 3DO advantage in two key areas: number of displayed colors and the graphics processing in pixels per second (pps). "The standard of comparison most people use is television. It can show in the neighborhood of 2 million colors and 6 million pps.

"Most of the 8-Bit machines fell into the same performance range. Typically, they had 16 colors and about 100,000 pps. Right there, you can see why it was basically a toy business, a hobby business," he notes. "The 16-Bit systems moved it up to 256 colors and about 1 million pps. A graphics co-processor might get you a 50% boost. Conventional 32-Bit architecture, like a 386 computer, might get up to 6 million pps.

"The consumer tends to ignore increases by a factor of two, but a factor of 10 is really significant." Hawkins paused dramatically. "Now let me tell you about 3DO performance. Our hi-resolution mode is 16 million colors, and the low-resolution has a range of 100,000-200,000 colors. The human eye tops out around 40,000 colors. The animation varies according to the application, but the range is between 36 and 64 million pps. Making that big of a technological jump should bury the issue of performance," he concludes with evident satisfaction.

The 3DO, Hawkins feels, can avoid the twin pitfalls that have hobbled sales of earlier appliance-type interactive systems. "There are two reasons why those systems are boring," he summarizes. "You have to wait a long time before something happens. The second reason is that that level of hardware doesn't have the animation power to move images around interactively."

Software is what drives any system. The interactive multiplayer held a developer's conference in November that drew representatives from over 200 companies. It turned out to be a success. More than 40 representatives have already committed their support to the system.

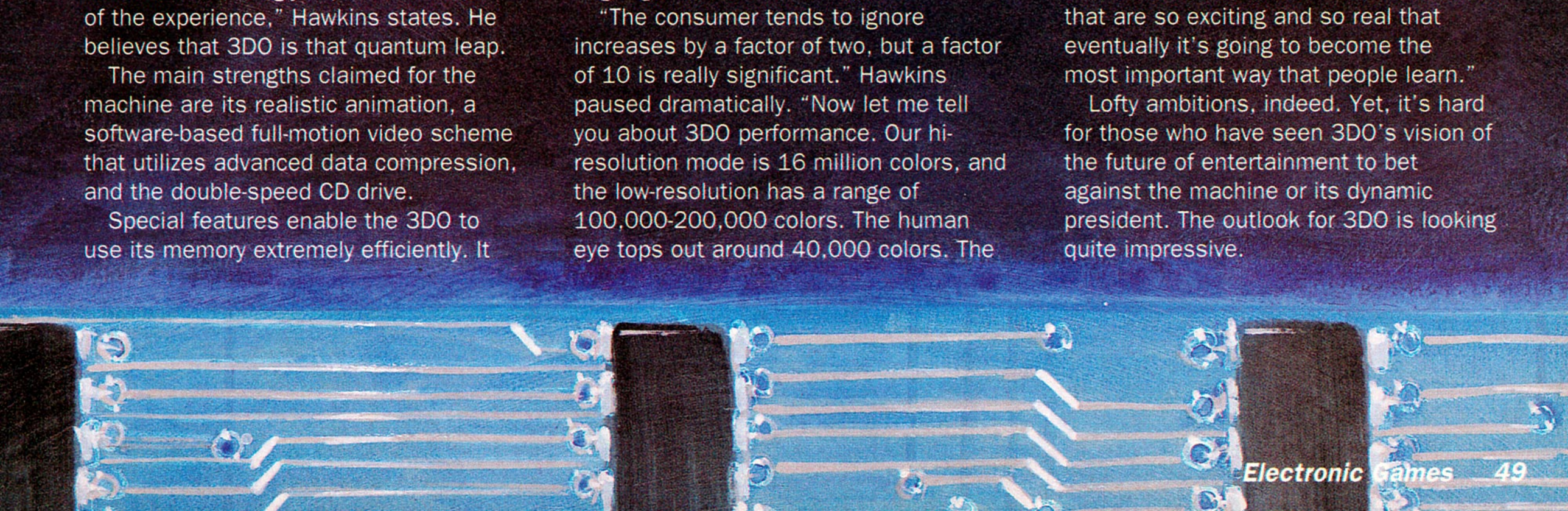
When the hardware debuts, there will be about 40 pieces of software available. A piece of 3DO software will cost $40-$60. The low cost of manufacturing will allow lower price points in the future (as in the floppy field), once the introductory period ends.

"We've advised software publishers to take the rifle approach. We've asked them to decide what is the hottest title they can make. Then, if they do more stuff, fantastic!" reports Bob Faber, the vice president of sales and marketing. "What's important is how good the titles are going to be. We'll have enough titles to show great performance in a lot of different categories.

"Some traditional categories, like flight simulators, will benefit a lot," says Faber. "Obviously, the world of polygons is not as satisfying as real images."

"I believe that 3DO will help an industry that has been in a childlike stalemate," Hawkins declares. "I think it will fulfill the dream I've always had about this medium. We are finally going to be able to deliver to consumers experiences that are so exciting and so real that eventually it's going to become the most important way that people learn."

Lofty ambitions, indeed. Yet, it's hard for those who have seen 3DO's vision of the future of entertainment to bet against the machine or its dynamic president. The outlook for 3DO is looking quite impressive.



PLAYERS' GUIDE TO BASKETBALL

EG Takes the Hottest Electronic Basketball Games to Court

by Bill Kunkel

Basketball is a complex blend of skill, strength, fingertip control and slam dunk power. It offers the illusion of propriety and the reality of brutality. Basketball is also the most urban of the major team sports, requiring a minimum of space and natural elements. It requires no field of dreams, no vast gridiron or frozen lake surface. Superficially a game of skill, it has evolved, from peach buckets to chain link nets, into an amazingly physical contest.

Originally created in 1891 by a Massachusetts college rugby coach named Dr. James Naismith as a phys-ed supplement for bored prep schoolers, a century later it is the prime athletic focus for inner-city youth. There is no need to buy expensive eqipment (a hockey player can spend more than $800 just for the basics!). In fact, all the player needs is a decent pair of tennis shoes and some gym shorts. Shirts are often not even used.

Pat Riley Basketball was noted for its use of large animated scenes.

Basketball is, in short, about contrast. The action swivels back and forth like lightning; a single sweep of a player's hand can signal a change of possession. Hoops action pretends to offer no direct physical confrontation, and most players do not wear pads or other protective devices. Yet the activity beneath the net sometimes seems more like ice hockey than incidental contact.

Roundball has been electronically recreated since the earliest days of the programmable video game. Programmers have used every available technology, from scrolling to Mode-7, to capture the essence of the sport. Simply keeping tabs on the latest developments in basketball simulation can make one feel like a five-foot-tall center in the NBA.

Video Game Vantage Point

Today's basketball video games make extensive use of statistics, player ratings and play mechanics. Virtually every NBA, Olympics-level or major college team has appeared in 16-Bit format, often with confusing results. **Pat Riley Basketball** (Sega/Genesis) was the first such simulation. It features a real NBA coach and made-up teams centered in eight major American cities. Playable at two speeds—slow and slower—it offers both solitaire play and head-to-head competition in either Exhibition or Tournament modes.

The players in **Pat Riley Basketball** are rated in four skill areas: speed, shooting, passing and defense, with stats indicating points scored, shots attempted and fouls committed. Gamers can also choose to play either man-to-man or zone defense.

Riley employs the visual perspective which dominated basketball simulations for almost fifteen years: the angled side view. The game toggles to close-ups for tipoffs and slam dunks. The problem with the angled side view is the difficulty the user has following the movement of individual players. Electronic competitors soon overlap one another, creating visual confusion and hurting the possibility of total fluidity in the play simulation.

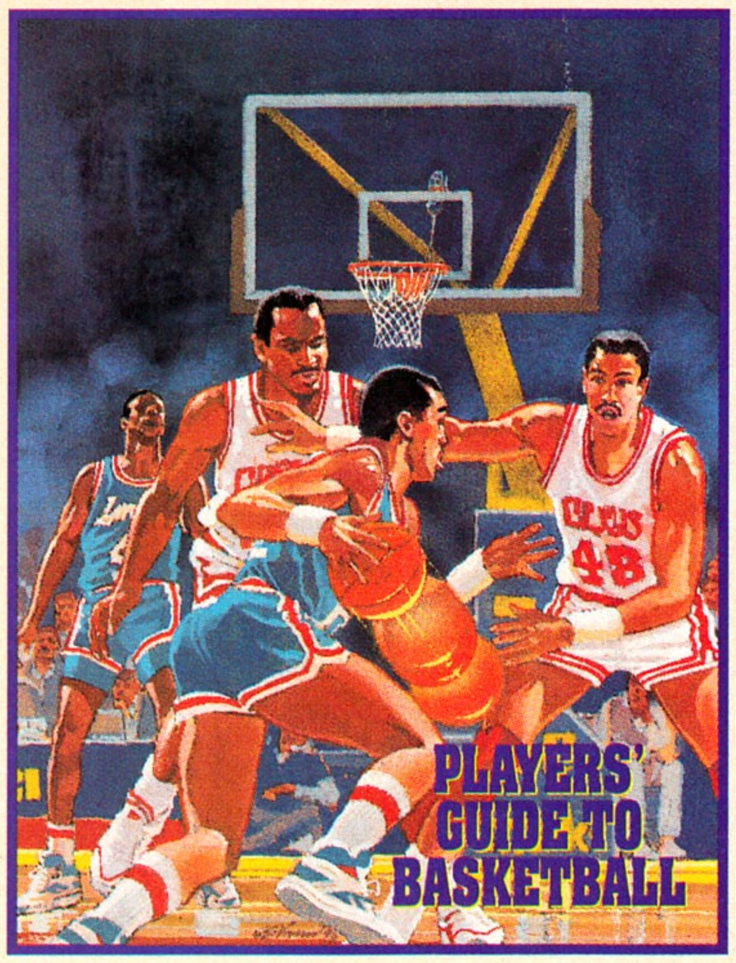
Electronic Arts' designers attempted to improve on this format with a trio of 16-Bit simulations based on its computer hit, **Lakers vs. Celtics**. **Team USA Basketball** (Electronic Arts/Genesis), **Bulls vs. Lakers and the NBA Playoffs** (Electronic Arts/Genesis) and **Bulls vs. Blazers and the NBA Playoffs** (Electronic Arts/SNES) all use a similar interface and presentation, with various

In Bulls vs. Lakers there is an option for any team to play themselves.

configurations of players and teams representing the primary variation among the titles.

Bulls vs. Lakers is based on the 16 teams that entered the NBA playoffs in 1991 while **Bulls vs. Blazers** focuses on the 1992 season. Both games also include the All-Star squads from those seasons. **Bulls vs. Lakers** introduced player-keyed signature moves, on-court team logos and added an alley-oop play for every team to the inventory of 16-Bit basketball features.

The more recent **Bulls vs. Blazers** title added user-controlled instant replay, player fatigue and substitution, passwords for saving tournaments-in-progress and a unique "T-meter." The T-meter is a timing-



based play mechanic which determines the power and accuracy of free throws.

Team USA Basketball allows users to guide the most famous dream team in basketball history against fourteen international teams under Olympic guidelines. Chris Mullin, Charles Barkley, David Robinson, Michael Jordan, John Stockton, Karl Malone, Magic Johnson, Patrick Ewing, Larry Bird and Scottie Pippen form the ultimate basketball SWAT team. Each player has his own

Relive Olympic glory with the finest roundball team ever assembled.

signature move. In the two-player and non-tournament configuration, players can select an All-World team or even play a team against itself.

All three games share a common options menu. Games can be played in either Tournament or Exhibition format, by one or two players in either cooperative or head-to-head mode. Gamers choose either the Arcade or Simulation models, with the latter introducing the element of player fatigue. Finally, they can be played at any of three skill levels: pre-season, regular season and play-offs, a.k.a. "Showtime."

David Robinson's Supreme Court Basketball (Sega/Genesis), relies on its audio-visual strengths to win the video game version of the full court press. Mr. Robinson's neighborhood features smoothly-digitized graphics which include 24 different shots, and incredibly realistic

Jordan vs. Bird lets players face off as one of the greatest players ever.

sounds, right down to the telltale squeak of sneakers on a parquet floor. Other than its star, however, this game does not include any real NBA teams or players, but offers an intriguing option: gamers can go an entire season controlling only Robinson. There's even an occasional smashed backboard when plexiglass meets the mighty Tomahawk slam dunk a little too closely.

NBA All-Star Challenge (LJN/SNES) is an even more offbeat simulation, employing a refreshing, across-court perspective reminiscent of the presentation used in the most successful basketball simulation of them all: the Electronic Arts classic, **Larry Bird & Dr. J go One-on-One**. Twenty-seven NBA All-Stars are available for any of five one-on-one contests, including free throws, 3-point shootout, and horse.

The latest video game iteration of full court basketball action is Nintendo's own **NCAA Basketball** for the SNES. This impressive recreation of top-level college hoops maximizes the Mode-7 special effects, with lots of scaling and rotation to give gamers the illusion of actually being on the court. Developed originally by Hal America, **NCAA Basketball** allows gamers to select from among 44 teams assembled from five major conferences. There are seven offensive and seven defensive sets, player substitutions and four save game/tournament options.

Full Court Computer Action

Computer basketball simulations have been somewhat more experimental than their video game cousins. **Larry Bird & Dr. J go One-on-One** broke ground as the first electronic sports game to use sophisticated computer models based on real NBA stars. Cinemaware's **TV Sports: Basketball** attempted to eliminate the visual overlap that plagued previous angled side-scrolling simulations by combining topdown and side perspective effects in a single viewpoint. And **Lakers vs. Celtics** introduced signature moves for its most famous NBA players.

Last year, Electronic Arts went shooting for another breakthrough with its highly experimental **Michael Jordan In Flight**. Like **NCAA Basketball, In Flight** employs cutting edge Super-VGA technology to bring the action down onto the court with an

including spectators. As a result, both games appear to be played on a court on the edge of forever, with only the darkness of oblivion beyond the painted borders of the hardwood.

PC technology has come a long way, however, in the brief time since the original **In Flight** was released. EA acknowledged this by preparing a totally new version of the game, using a technology called "Video-Sim" which allows full-motion video to be integrated into the on-court action. Using exclusive, digitized footage of Michael Jordan, users control the NBA superstar through a variety of 3-on-3 shootout situations. The game's title is inspired by the fact that the presentation is, in many ways, similar to what users have come to expect from state-of-the-art flight simulators.

Michael Jordan In Flight offers 24 NBA-level players with unique attributes, each rated in five skill categories: shooting, speed, leaping, aggressiveness and wind. Users can even create their own 3-on-3 tournament using real players. Gamers with unbounded ambition can choose to play against, rather than as, Michael Jordan.

At the end of each game, the EA Sports Announcer appears, interviews Jordan, and replays highlights from the astonishing number of camera angles and a three-dimensional presentation. In many ways, however, the game's reach exceeds its grasp. Unlike the SNES, the PC does not offer built-in features such as rotation and scaling, and the visuals suffer accordingly. Even *with* Mode-7, Nintendo was forced to cut down on "non-essential" visual elements, contest. During the game, an instant replay feature displays the action from virtually every angle imaginable, while a manual camera mode allows users to play cameraman. There's also a unique video-edit lab where users can make their very own highlight films.

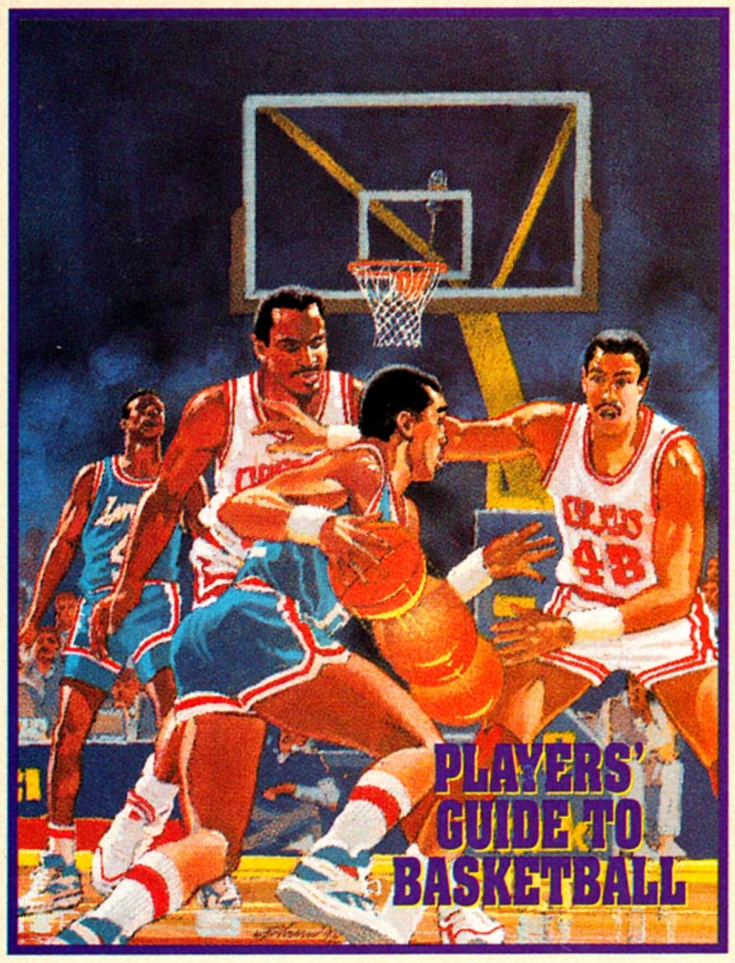
NCAA departs from the ordinary with a unique rotating perspective.

Off the Beaten Court

Video game fans who care less about an exacting simulation and more about action, brutality and thrills may want to check out **Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball** (Hudson Soft/SNES). One of the more unusual licenses in video game sports history, **Combat Basketball** is a vertically-scrolling, topdown perspective combination of roundball and rough-housing. The game was originally created for the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga computers and was marketed in Europe without Laimbeer's name as **Future Basketball**.

The storyline tells us that Laimbeer has been made NBA Commissioner at some undesignated point in the future. His rule changes are somewhat startling, though certainly in-character: He eliminates the referees, okays fouls, introduces weapons into the game play and transforms the hardwood court into a steel arena floor. Anyone familiar with Laimbeer's playing style with the NBA's Detroit Pistons realizes that this could be a dream game for basketball bruisers. There is a small on-screen display showing various player's positions throughout the court.

In this futuristic sports arena, players must use their brawn as well as their basketball skills to gain the advantage. As a matter of fact, the more powerful the button-pressing skills, the better the particular team will perform against the opposing bashers. Fists and elbows are enhanced with additional weapons. These appear randomly, including explosives and shuriken (ninja stars), but since players are garbed in protective body suits, getting shoved to the floor and hit with a bomb have approximately the same effect–the player is knocked down.



Users can play a single game or set up a full league, with options for trading and substitutions. **Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball** isn't the most creative or skillfully programmed action-oriented sports game around, but its offbeat concept and unique visual presentation are refreshing.

Basketball Yet to Come

As roundball mavens turn their eyes to the future, a pair of fascinating new projects appear on the horizon, one in video game format and the other for PCs. Though details about these two games could not be confirmed at press time, they both drew our notice.

There may soon be a CD sequel of David Robinson Basketball, by Sega.

Sega is rumored to have contracted with the developers of **David Robinson Supreme Court Basketball**, Acme Software, to produce a new CD-based basketball video game for the Genesis. The game, still untitled, uses a revolutionary new technology to cram over a thousand frames of animation, using a chroma-key capture technology, into a single game disk. The game, which will use real NBA teams and players, employs a previously-unseen visual presentation focused at center court.

David Robinson, meanwhile, is looking to take over the PC neighborhood courtesy of his **NBA Action Basketball**, a co-publishing venture from Sega (which holds the Robinson license) and Spectrum HoloByte. The developer for this project is Spirit of Discovery/Park Place.

David Robinson's NBA Action Basketball will offer not only an impressive array of audio-video features, but also perhaps the soundest statistical base of any roundball simulation. The success of each shot, for example, is determined by the attributes of the player taking the shot and the player(s) guarding him. These attributes are automatically reshaped based on the player's current performance.

Users determine whether they will play a 40 or 80 game schedule. They can then play as many of those games as they wish and the computer will simulate the rest, with the gamer able to reset the season at any point.

NBA Action Basketball promises to be easy to learn and fun to play, with an intuitive joystick/keyboard interface. Player and team stats are available for display during each game and can be updated at the touch of a key. An instant replay feature allows any replay to be saved as a game highlight, which can then be viewed at halftime and post-game intervals. There is also a pregame show and a halftime chat with Robinson himself.

The graphics will make extensive use of actual player footage in the creation of its Movable Object Blocks (MOBs) and the game will include an arcade version for simplified play.

Slamming it Shut

It has been over a century since Dr. Naismith settled for round-shaped peach crates as goals when the school janitor couldn't find any appropriately sized boxes. And it has been over a decade since Larry Bird and Julius Erving served as real-life models for a one-on-one computer simulation of hardwood heaven.

Basketball, both real and electronic, has come a long, long way.

Basketbrawl is one of the newest of the hand-held basketball contests.

Handheld Hardwood

Game players who like to take their basketball simulation on the go can select from among an impressive variety of handheld roundball software.

BasketBrawl (Atari/Lynx) offers a bizarre combination of halfcourt, schoolyard basketball and a gang rumble that's perfect for players who can't decide whether they want to play basketball or **Street Fighter 2**. The game uses an angled side perspective.

Double Dribble: 5 on 5 (Konami/Game Boy) is the latest incarnation of the popular Konami coin-op, **Double Dribble**, the game which introduced close-ups for slam dunks.

NBA All-Star Challenge (LJN/Game Boy), and **NBA All-Star Challenge 2** (LJN/Game Boy) both offer half court, one-on-one action reminiscent of **Larry Bird and Julius Erving go One-on-One**. Game options include a three-point shootout and horse.

David Robinson Supreme Court Basketball (Sega/Game Gear) is a scaled-down version of the popular Genesis simulation in which gamers have the option of playing an entire season as Mr. Robinson.

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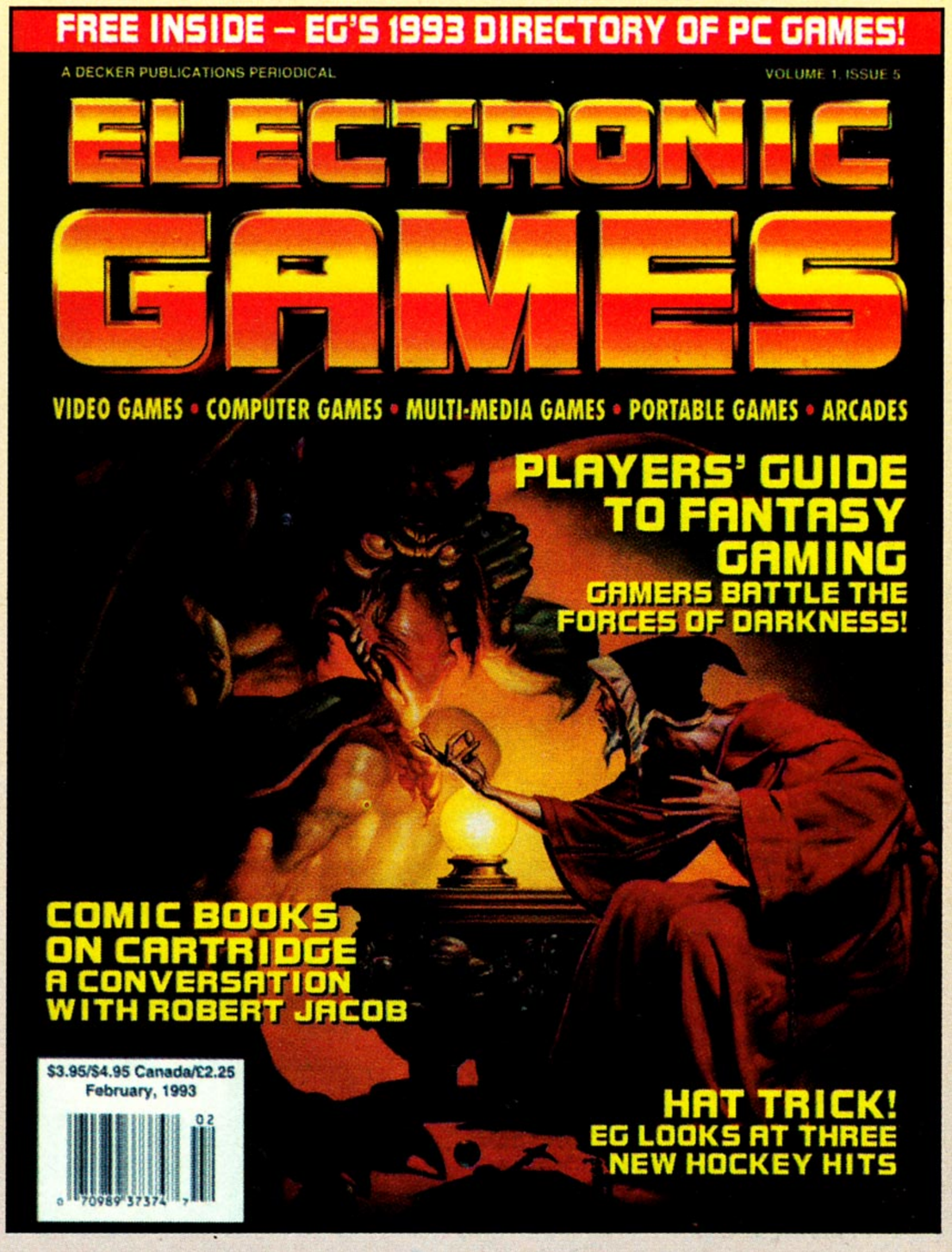

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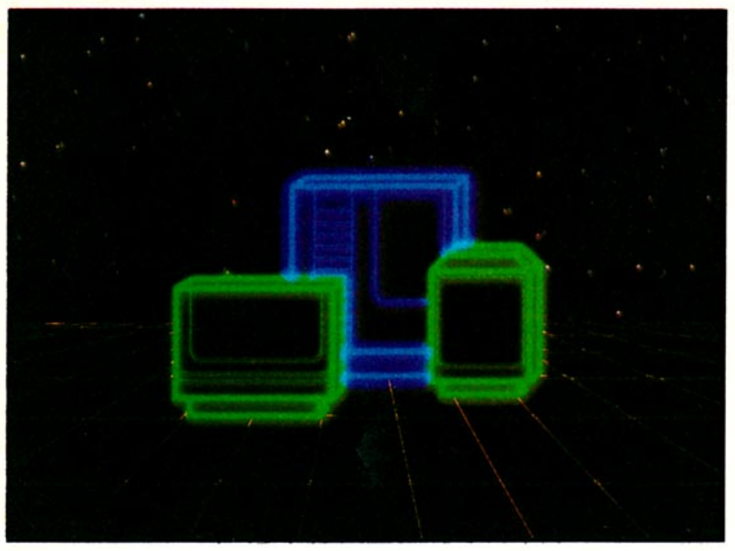


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Tiny Toon Adventures 2: Trouble in Wackyland

Konami
NES
1 Player

They're back! All your favorite characters from **Tiny Toon Adventures** have returned for the ride of their lives in the mysterious Wackyland amusement park.

The trouble begins when the characters receive an invitation from Mr. T.J. Funn (a.k.a. Montana Max). They are invited to the grand opening for a free day of rides. The new park features

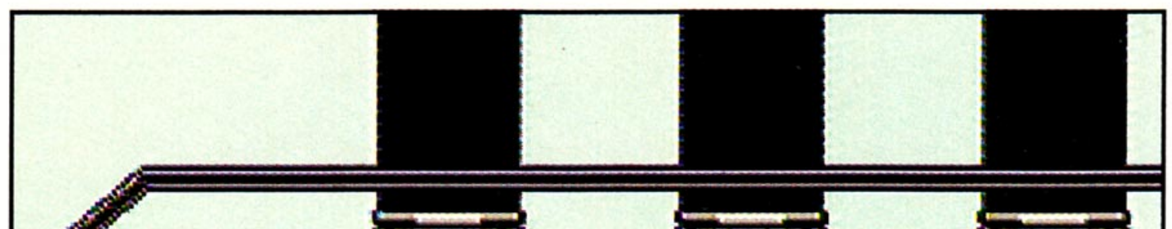
The rides in Wackyland can be ridden in any order, except the Fun House level.

Bumper Cars, Wild West Train, Log Ride, Roller Coaster and the Fun House. Sounds like a nice time, right? Well, maybe not. It seems that Montana Max has something other than "nice" on his mind for the Tiny Toon characters. Wackyland just might be the biggest trap Montana Max has ever set for Buster and his pals, and this might just be Acme Acres last laugh.

Tiny Toon Adventures 2: Trouble in Wackyland is a set of five rides. Four of these are sideways action, and one is overhead play. At each ride the gamer is given a hint of what he needs to do to survive. The player controls a different Tiny Toon character for each ride and each character has his or her own set of animations and special movements.

All the rides are fun to play, except for the bumper cars, which are hard to control and quickly become frustrating.

The graphics are polished and the animation is really cute. The controls are simple and easy to understand.



There is nothing that is unique or new in this game, but all of it is done well. There is enough variety in the rides to keep the player entertained, and it is challenging even for a veteran game player. The music is nice, and doesn't get boring or routine, making it an enhancement to the game.

The only things that could be added are a difficulty select and a way to continue the game with a password.

It's a definite asset that there are two ways to get to the final level, either with four gold tickets or 50 of the regular kind. The gamer starts with a few tickets, then accumulates more by collecting points on rides. The tickets are used for additional rides, and completing a ride grants the player a gold ticket. Four gold tickets allow entrance to the Fun House.

On the log ride, Furball must avoid being shoved off his log or hit too many times.

The fact that the gamer can play five different characters keeps it lively. Babs Bunny rides the roller coaster. Plucky Duck drives the bumper car. Hamton is aboard the train, while the log ride features Furrball, and Buster Bunny goes through the Fun House.

Other Tiny Toons are also scattered throughout. For example, Shirley the Loon is the ticket taker, Arnold the Pit Bull is the train's engineer, and Elmyra, Roderick Rat and Batsy are also here.

No one wants trouble, but **Trouble in Wackyland** spells big fun.

—Marc Cram

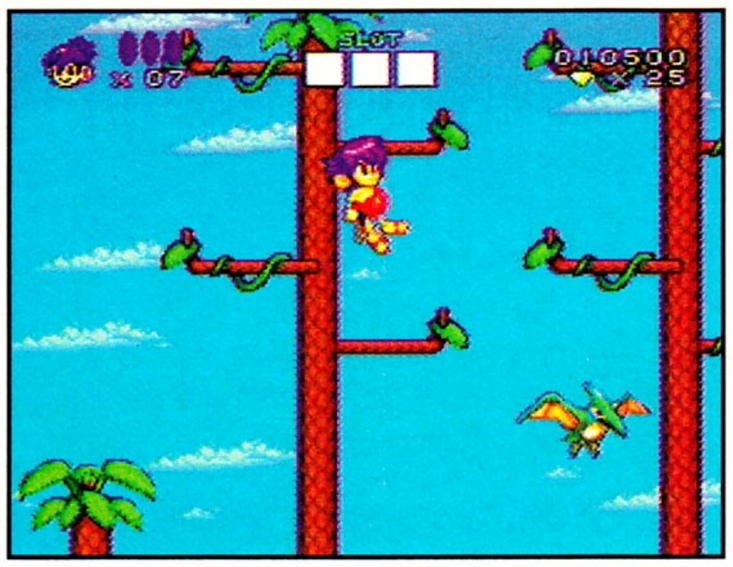
RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	82%
Sound	85%
Playability	72%
OVERALL	**78%**

Congo's Caper

Data East
SNES
1-2 Players

Look! Leaping through the jungle, swinging from vines and bashing pteranodons and fuzzynecks! It's... Congo!

Sure, it's another side-scroller, but it's fun. The music and the graphics are lighthearted, and if most of the elements seem familiar, there's a variation or two to enhance the fun.

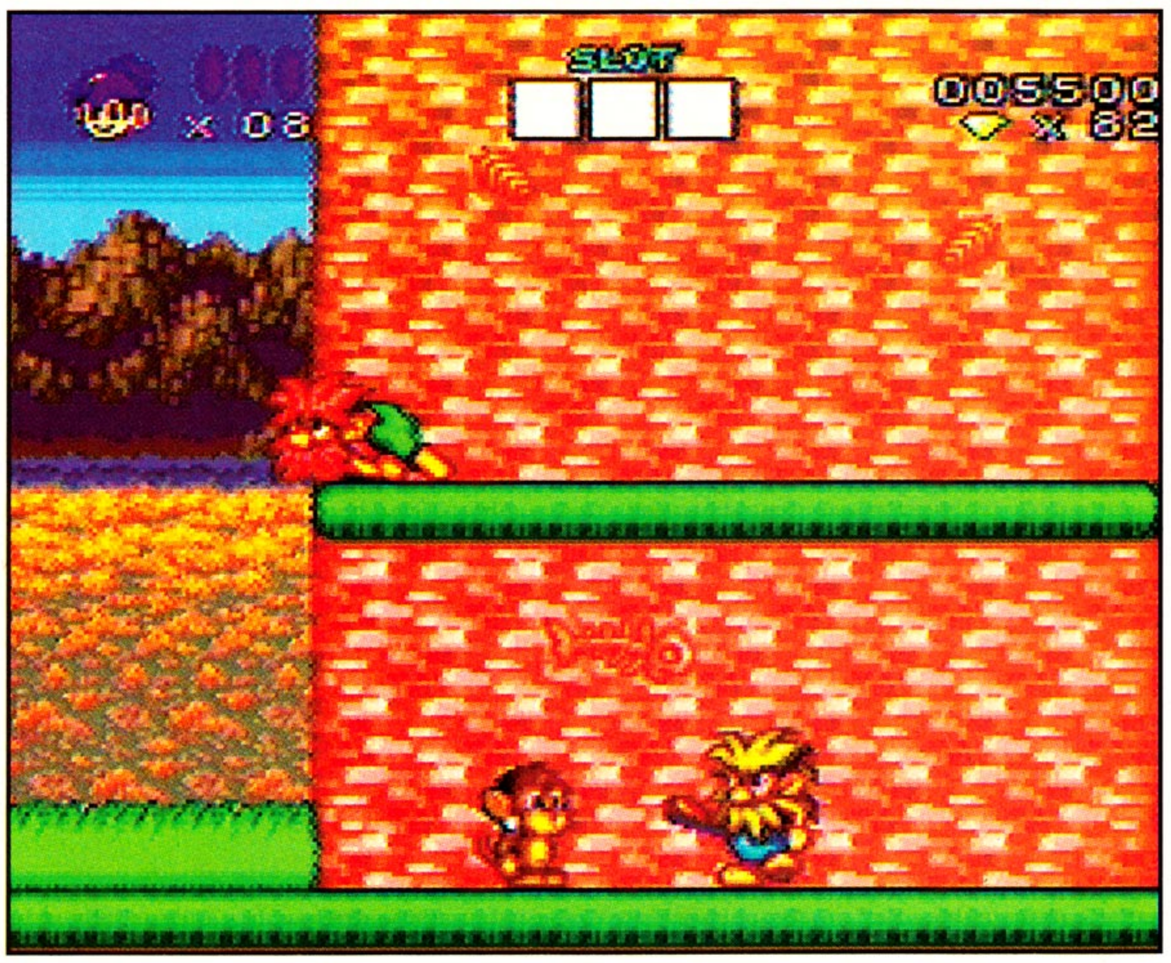


The characters in Congo's Caper have many abilities, like swinging from trees.

It seems that there were these two monkeys who were happily minding their own monkey business (which was mainly each other), when magic rubies fell out of the sky and turned them into half-humans with leopard-skin outfits. Congo and Congette have a few moments to gaze into each other's eyes before everything goes haywire. The formerly sunlit eden turns dark and gloomy. A devilish kid (pitchfork, horns and batwings) flies down, zaps Congo back to a monkey, and carries Congette away.

Whoever's in charge of magic rubies evidently sees the injustice of all this, re-zaps Congo back to half-human persona, and strews the jungle paths (and sky) with more magic gems. There are more rubies to turn him into Super Congo, or, if he's been bashed back into a monkey, restore his half-human Congoness. There are diamonds that restore life (it takes a hundred small ones or one large gem to give him an extra life), and there are sapphires that provide a special chance at extra lives.

This chance operates through a slot-machine window at the top of the screen. The score, lives remaining indicator, number of diamonds collected, and Super Congo's power gauge are also visible. Every time Congo picks up a sapphire, icons roll in the slot machine window; if three alike show up, he gets one to five extra lives, or even warped into another stage, depending on the icon. Of course, all along the way there are obstacles, traps, and enemies—mainly the Fuzzynecks, club-wielding cavemen determined to get in his way. Some flying critters called pteranodons, interfere with Congo's progress, but then there are also all the old standbys: chasms to leap or negotiate via floating platforms, and sharp rocks to avoid.



A nice touch is a bird that flies around trailing vines, which, once trailed, stay put. Congo can readily draw on his simian heritage to negotiate them. He can also, on occasion, leap astride a handy pteranodon and fly to another stage.

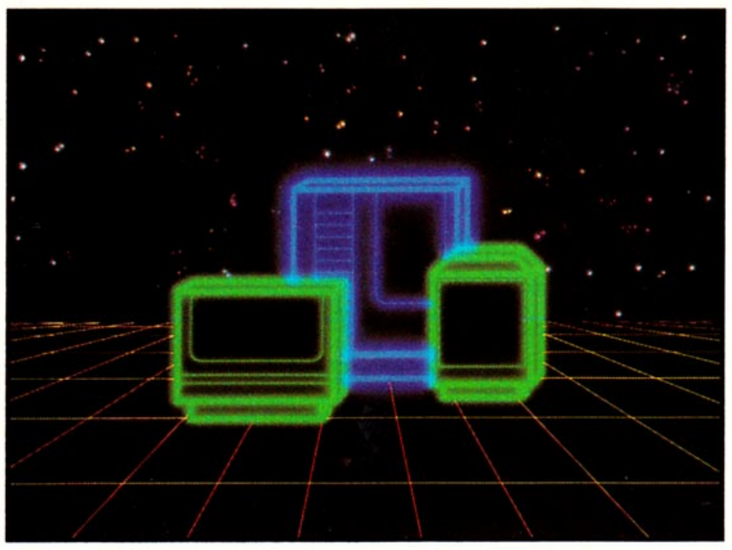
There are thirty-five game levels, of which ten are in secret stages. The rest are in segments called The Valley, Water, Speeding, Ghost & Ghouls, Modern Technology, and the Final Kingdom.

The graphics are fine and clear, definitely in the classic Japanese cartoon style. Congo sports a headband as well as the leopard-skin jacket, and trails a monkey tail behind him. There is very little flicker in the game and also almost no slowdown. When Congo gets hit, he will flash for a few seconds so that he can get out of the way of any other treats in the immediate area. This does not help if Congo dies by falling or by touching spikes or lava.

The theme of the game would appear to be an amusing amalgam of evolution and divine intervention (if rather a peculiar sort, depending as it does on gemstones), with technological progress tossed into the pot. But that's much too deep and serious a viewpoint to take on **Congo's Caper**. Take it for what it is, a good dose of light entertainment. Like most boot 'n bash scrollers, a sequence of tests of hand-eye-memory coordination that add up to adventure.

—Ross Chamberlain

RATING	
Complexity	**Average**
Graphics	**92%**
Sound	**89%**
Playability	**90%**
OVERALL	**90%**



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Alien 3

LJN
NES
1 Player

Those acid-bleeding, life-sucking creatures that scared the world in three movies provide all the player can handle in this horizontally and vertically scrolling action contest. There aren't many entertaining new games for the 8-Bit system these days, so this race against time to rescue captives is most welcome.

As Ripley, the player has crash-landed on a prison planet where criminals toil in subterranean mines to pay for their crimes against society. The situation couldn't be worse for the heroine. Her crewmates Newton and Hicks are dead, the aliens have hitched a ride to the planet, and the vile creatures are holding prisoners hostage in various nooks and crannies of the immense warren of the mining operation.

Although The Company wants to bring the aliens to Earth as part of a scheme to achieve world domination, Ripley cannot let such a horror come to pass. She must blast the ferocious adult creatures and the energy-sapping face-huggers whenever she encounters them during her attempt to rescue people.

Ripley has four weapons, which she chooses among with the Select button. Her arsenal contains a machine gun, grenade launcher, flame thrower and hand grenades.

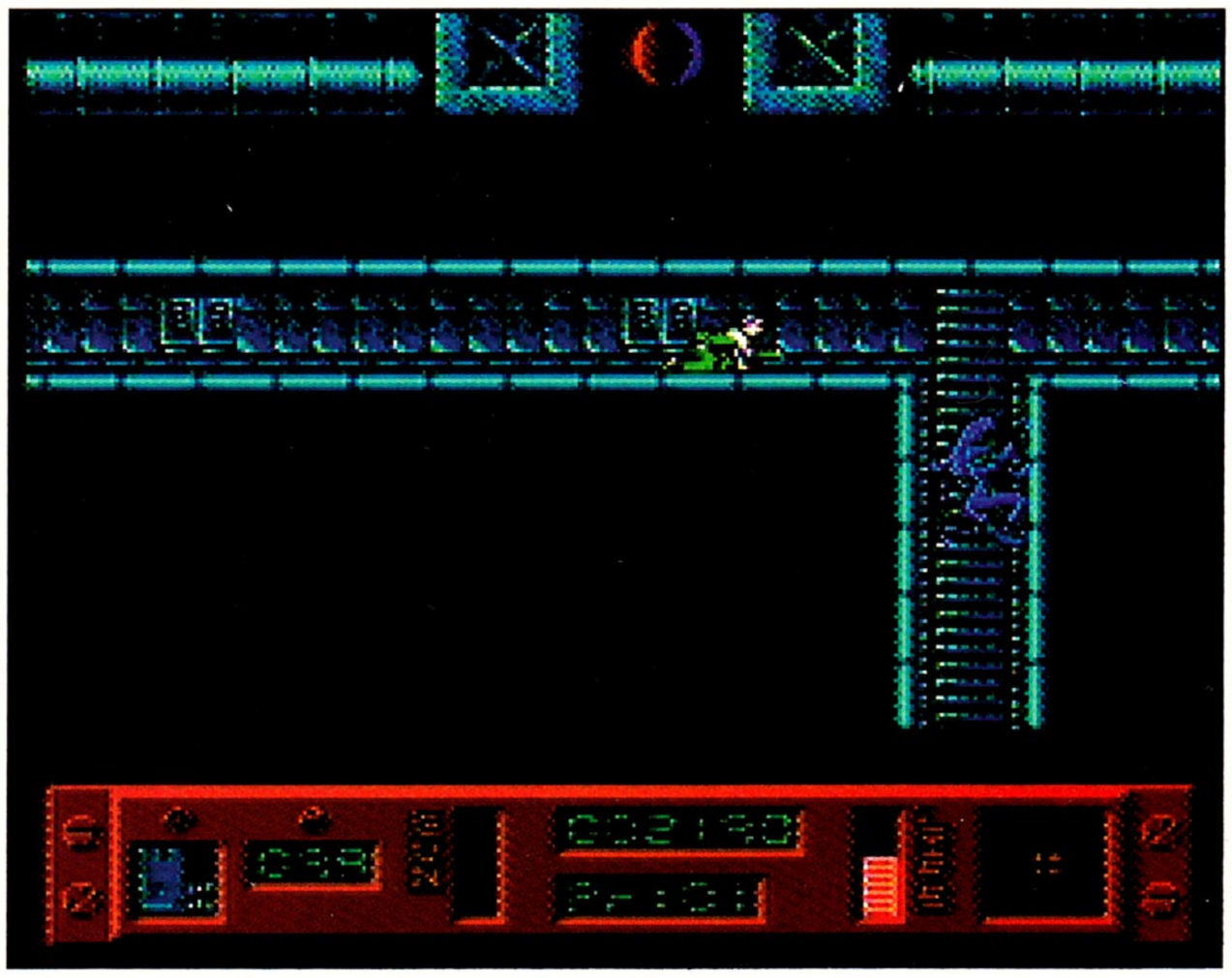
The game reports the supply of ammo available for the currently active weapon with a digital read-out to the right of the weapon box. Ripley can collect additional ammo lying around the installation, which is not quite as security conscious as the documentation claims.

As an added complication, weapons used too frequently in too short a time span can overheat and jam. The Gun Meter reports the condition of the active weapon.

The bottom center of the screen shows the score, time remaining in the round, and the number of prisoners left to rescue.

The lower right-hand corner of the screen contains a radar scope. It's very handy for locating the captives, but only after Ripley finds batteries to get it started.

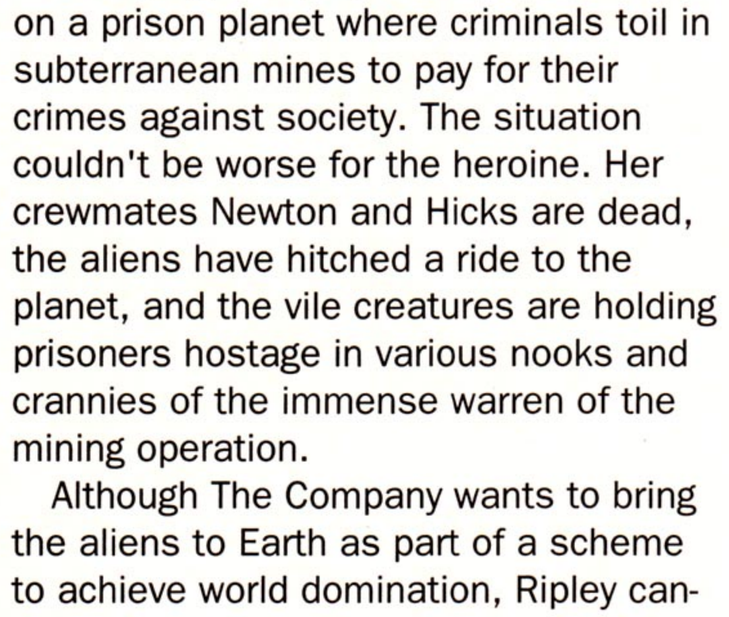
The control system holds few surprises for experienced video gamers. The direction disk moves the character left and right on the side-perspective playfield. The up and down directions enable Ripley to climb up and down ladders. (There are also staircases, but they work only in the downward direction.)



There are also elevators, which are a snap to use. Ripley hops on and hops off again when she reaches her destination.

The stout walls of the underground complex are impervious to firepower. Bulkhead-style doors block almost every passage, but Ripley can raise and lower them with the direction disk. The instructions fail to mention that the attempt must be made while the character is directly on the green symbol found on the wall near each such portal.

Alien 3's option screen offers a choice of three levels of difficulty. The user can further customize the skill level by adjusting the number of tries. The default is "3," but it can be raised as high as "9."



Players must run through the mazes and rescue the prisoners while there is time.

This is the screen that will greet players who can't manage to beat the clock.

Now that gamers have grown used to 16-Bit visuals, it is sometimes hard to appreciate NES art and animation in light of the system's capabilities. **Alien 3** is well above 8-Bit average in both sound and graphics. This cart proves that strong programming counts.

Game play is this cartridge's strongest suit, however. The player must work very rapidly, employing all four weapons, to finish the mission under intense time pressure.

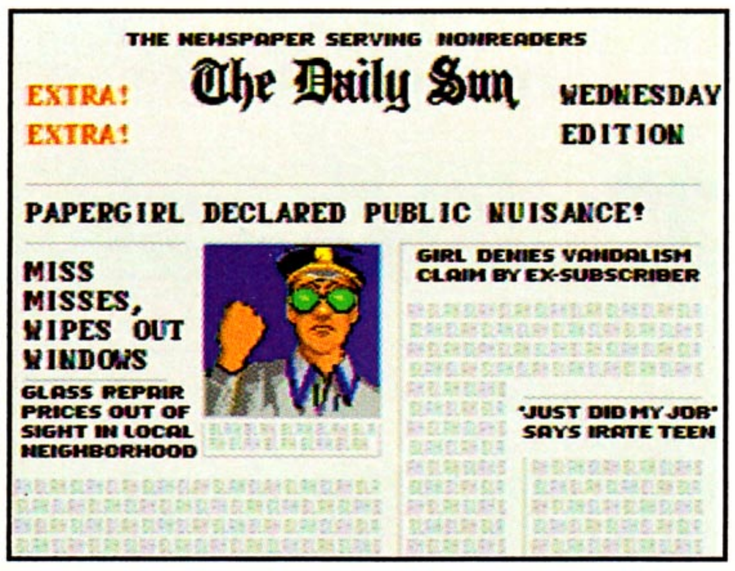
— Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	80%
Sound	85%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	85%

Paperboy 2

Tengen
Genesis
1-2 Players

Although waking up at six in the morning to fold newspapers and deliver them before the sun comes up may not seem like most peoples' idea of a good time, the **Paperboy** games for the Genesis actually make such a task appealing.



Between rounds players can read about their progress in the local newspaper.

In **Paperboy 2**, the player resumes the role of a news carrier. In this cart, however, the player can be a paperboy or a papergirl and deliver papers on a beginner, intermediate, or an advanced route.

When the game begins, a screen shows all the houses on the route. The houses to receive deliveries are yellow and the non-subscribers are blue. Don't worry about memorizing this screen, because once on the route, the player knows which house is to get a delivery by the blue newspaper box and the red welcome mat in front of each subscriber's home.

The object is to successfully deliver papers to all of the designated subscribers every day. A missed delivery results in a canceled subscription. The player must get the newspaper in the box or on the welcome mat to successfully make the delivery.

Along the way, a player can earn points by doing good deeds such as saving runaway baby strollers or stopping bandits. A player also racks up points by breaking non-subscribers windows and flower pots. If a player damages subscribers' properties, they'll cancel their subscriptions.

The game has three weeks of seven days each (Monday through Sunday) and each route has 18 to 20 homes. A player regains cancelled subscriptions by successfully delivering papers to all subscribers remaining on the route.

After one week is successfully completed, the player is promoted to a new route with fancier houses. Even a paperboy has to start at the bottom and work his way up.

In addition to the regular route, there is a bonus round training course at the end of each day. The BMX-style course allows the player to hone his driving skills and practice timing his throws.

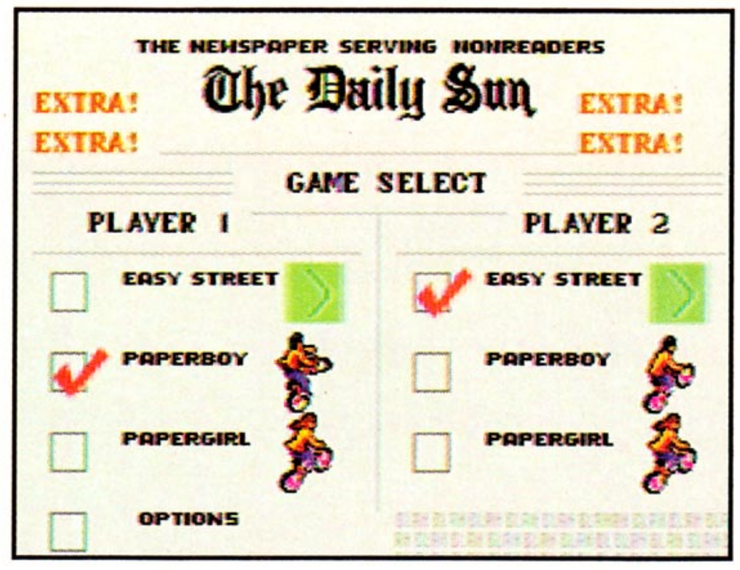
This game should have enough variations on the theme to satisfy fans of the original **Paperboy**. Those taking their first crack at **Paperboy** will find the game deceptively challenging.

Despite the cartoon-like looks and the whimsical theme, **Paperboy 2** requires a good deal of technique to master. A player shouldn't expect to pick up this game and conquer it in a few hours.

While pedaling along, an important tip for the player to remember is this: "People forget how fast you did a job, but they remember how well you did it." In other words, the player should take time and be sure to deliver to all the designated houses. It's difficult to recover lost subscribers.

Numerous obstacles also provide incentive to keep a steady, controlled pace throughout the game. If a player accelerates too quickly, he may suddenly find himself assuming the undesirable role of a hood ornament on a tiger-striped monster truck that periodically barrels down the street. Or a player may find himself doing a face splat to the ground after flipping over a picket fence.

For those who must travel at hazardous speeds, save it for the training course - the player does not lose a life when crashing on the bonus level.



New to this version of Paperboy is the option of choosing a Papergirl instead.

After a few play sessions, the player discovers that enemies such as the barking dogs or the ghosts from the graveyards have consistent attack patterns. Once the player learns the particular pattern of an enemy, he can time the speed of his bike to avoid any unpleasant confrontations.

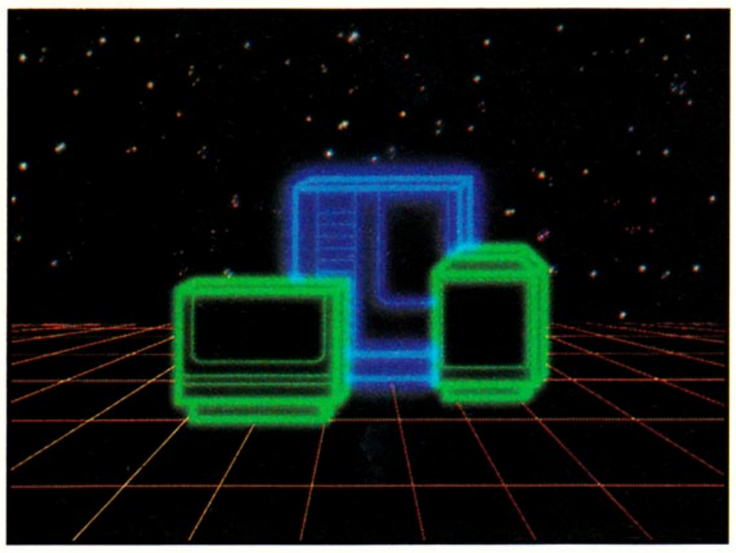
Although this cart has some vibrant graphics, it does not control as well as it should for a game requiring so much precision. One false tap of the direction button almost immediately results in certain death for the player. However, having a decent joystick does help enhance the playability.

On the up-side, **Paperboy 2** is a fairly hilarious game, with tons of different obstacles waiting to trip the player up. And there is a certain pleasure in throwing a paper through non-subscribers windows (and getting points for doing so).

Paperboy 2 is a decent arcade-style game, even if the format is essentially a rehashing of the original **Paperboy** with just a few new bells and whistles. There's nothing spectacular about it, but players who liked the first installment will probably like this one as well.

— Joe Funk

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	76%
Sound	77%
Playability	72%
OVERALL	73%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

PGA Tour Golf II

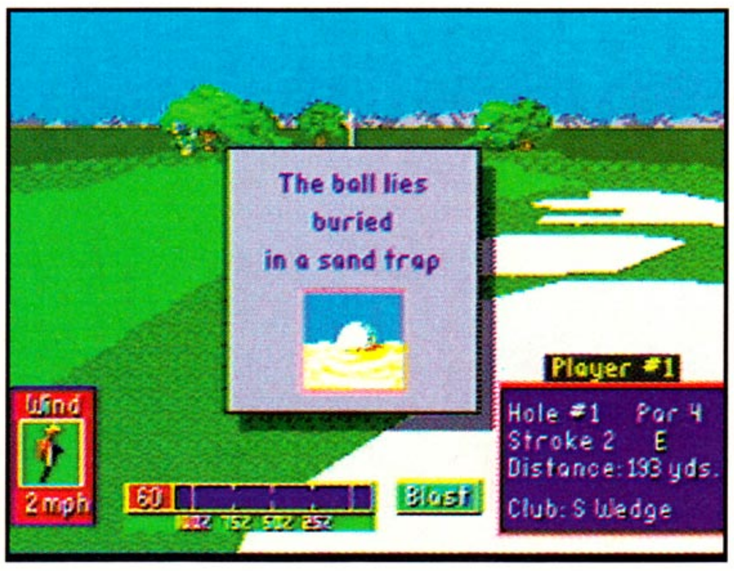
Electronic Arts
Genesis
1-4 Players

The original **PGA Tour Golf** on the Genesis set new standards for video game golfing both in terms of its impressive graphics and its ease of play. The upgraded version, **PGA Tour Golf II**, developed by Polygames, retains all the best features of the original while adding elements which should have considerable appeal to fans of the sport.

PGA Tour Golf II uses a computer game-style, point-and-click menu interface to set up play. Anywhere from one to four home-duffers can shoot a practice round, play in a tournament, face the Skins challenge or hone their skills on the driving range and putting green. Or, the user can select "no players," in which case the Genesis will run the pros through their tournament paces. The Options menu permits the player to eliminate any of the visual presentations, including **PGA**'s trademark fly-by view of each hole before teeing off.

Players also choose either pro or amateur tees and determine club selection. The electronic golf caddy can lug a total of fourteen clubs (including the putter) without applying for a truss, from a selection of seventeen available. Tournament courses Southwind, Eagle Trace, Scottsdale and Sawgrass provide an impressive and sometimes spectacular range of challenge.

PGA II's major innovation is its thorough integration of 60 real-life touring pros into tournament play, ten of whom the Genesis can actually produce and play on-screen: Paul Azinger, Mark O'Meara, Fuzzy Zoeller, Bruce Lietzke, Mark McCumber, Larry Mize, Tommy Armour III, Craig Stadler, Joey Sindelar and Fred Couples.



The lay of the ball, along with other information, is displayed between shots.

The gameplay is a virtual duplicate of the original, down to the intuitive, timing-oriented play mechanism. After all, if it's not broken, why fix it? A selection marker moves back and forth along a horizontal bar gauge; each shot's power is determined by hitting the action button at the instant when the marker hits the desired range. A second click determines whether the shot goes straight or if it veers to the left or right. This play mechanic works extremely well for drives and putts.

The sound and graphics show no significant improvement over the already-excellent original. Before teeing off on each hole, the player is treated to top-down and fly-by views of the entire hole. Thereafter, the player-golfer stands in the center foreground, driving or putting into the distance. On putts, an additional, wireframe view of the green is presented to give the golfer an idea of its lay.

The crucial question here is simple: if the player already owns the original version, will they want to buy the new game? For your standard video game golfer who is simply looking for an easygoing simulation of driving and putting against a nice selection of trees, sandtraps, water and background graphics, the original should suffice. However, if the user is also happens to be a huge links fan, the appeal of interfacing with all those new golfer's statistics may make a second purchase worthwhile.

—Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	83%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	**86%**

Terminator 2: the Arcade Game

Arena
Genesis
1-2 Player

The storyline is already part of American pop culture lore. On August 29, 1997, a computerized defense system known as SKYNET launches a nuclear firestorm on Earth, wiping out three billion lives in the process. In the thirty years since what is called "Judgement Day," SKYNET has ruthlessly sought to eliminate remaining traces of human life from the planet.

The two films detailing the saga of SKYNET's robotic assassins, its Terminators, and their efforts to abort the existence of John Conner, leader of the human Resistance movement in the future, are classics of the S.F. genre. In the original, SKYNET sends a muscular T-800 model to rub out Sarah Conner, John's mother, before he is even born. The plan backfires, however, and SKYNET must try again, this time recruiting a state-of-the-art T-1000—a nearly unstoppable, shape-shifting killing machine—to do the job. Humanity's last chance revolves around a plan to fight fire with fire by sending a reprogrammed T-800 Terminator to protect young John.

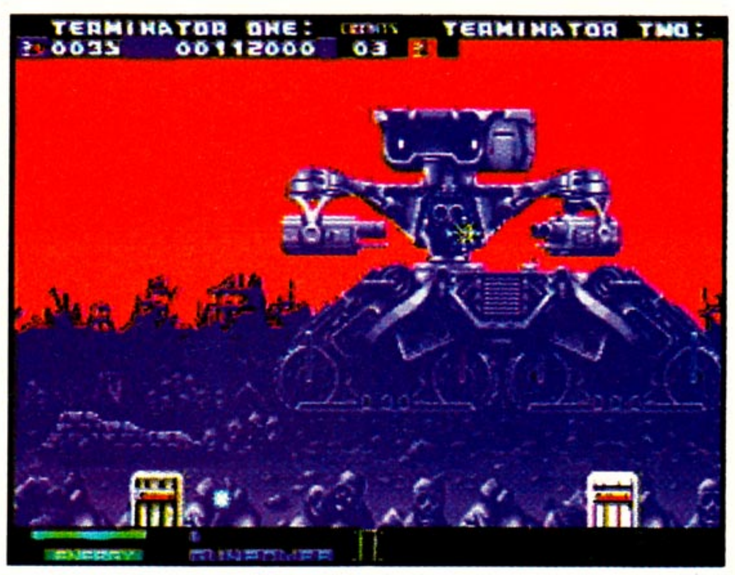
Of course, it isn't necessary to be intimately familiar with the movies in order to enjoy **T2: the Arcade Game**, a kinetic, hi-tech turkey shoot based on the smash coin-op from Midway. The game, fashioned for the Genesis by Probe, recreates plot elements from both films to create a dual-mission destruction derby with undeniable appeal.

One or two players, using the standard touch-pad controller or Menacer light gun, are cast as T-800 models reprogrammed to protect John Conner and stop the initial development of SKYNET by Cyberdyne Systems. The initial mission is set in Los Angeles in the year 2029, with various types of Terminators and other killing machines attacking the last outpost of organized humanity. The player(s) must use the on-screen cursor as an aiming device and, armed with both a machine gun and missile launcher, destroy as many targets as possible, ultimately penetrating SKYNET itself. The object: reach the Time Field Generator which can send them into the past (our present), breach the headquarters of Cyberdyne Systems, and terminate the project permanently.

In the second mission, the player(s) can add a shotgun and grenade launcher to their weapons arsenal in order to survive against Aerial Hunter-Killers, human SWAT teams and a morphing mass of shape-shifting menace known as the T-1000.

The game follows the path of the two films with impressive consistency, including a great shootout on the LA Freeway system, and a frenetic conclusion in a steel mill, where the T-1000 must first be immobilized by blasting open a tanker containing liquid nitrogen and then dumping it into a vat of hot metal.

The graphics are great, capturing all the high-tech appeal and visceral glamour of the source material. This is one shooting game where the player actually feels as if they are armed with deadly weapons capable of blowing apart anything they hit. The realism is enhanced by making virtually every on-screen object susceptible to destruction, including barriers and non-lethal machinery. Bonus weapons appear at regular intervals on the bottom of the screen in crate icons which can be opened by firing on them.



The first boss must be blown apart piece by piece. Aim for the hands first.

T2 plays better with a Menacer than a joypad, but even without it gamers should find this non-stop action thriller a real kick. It's no think piece, but **T2** *is* the strongest target shooting game ever released for home play.

Hasta la vista, bay-bee.

—Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	80%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	88%

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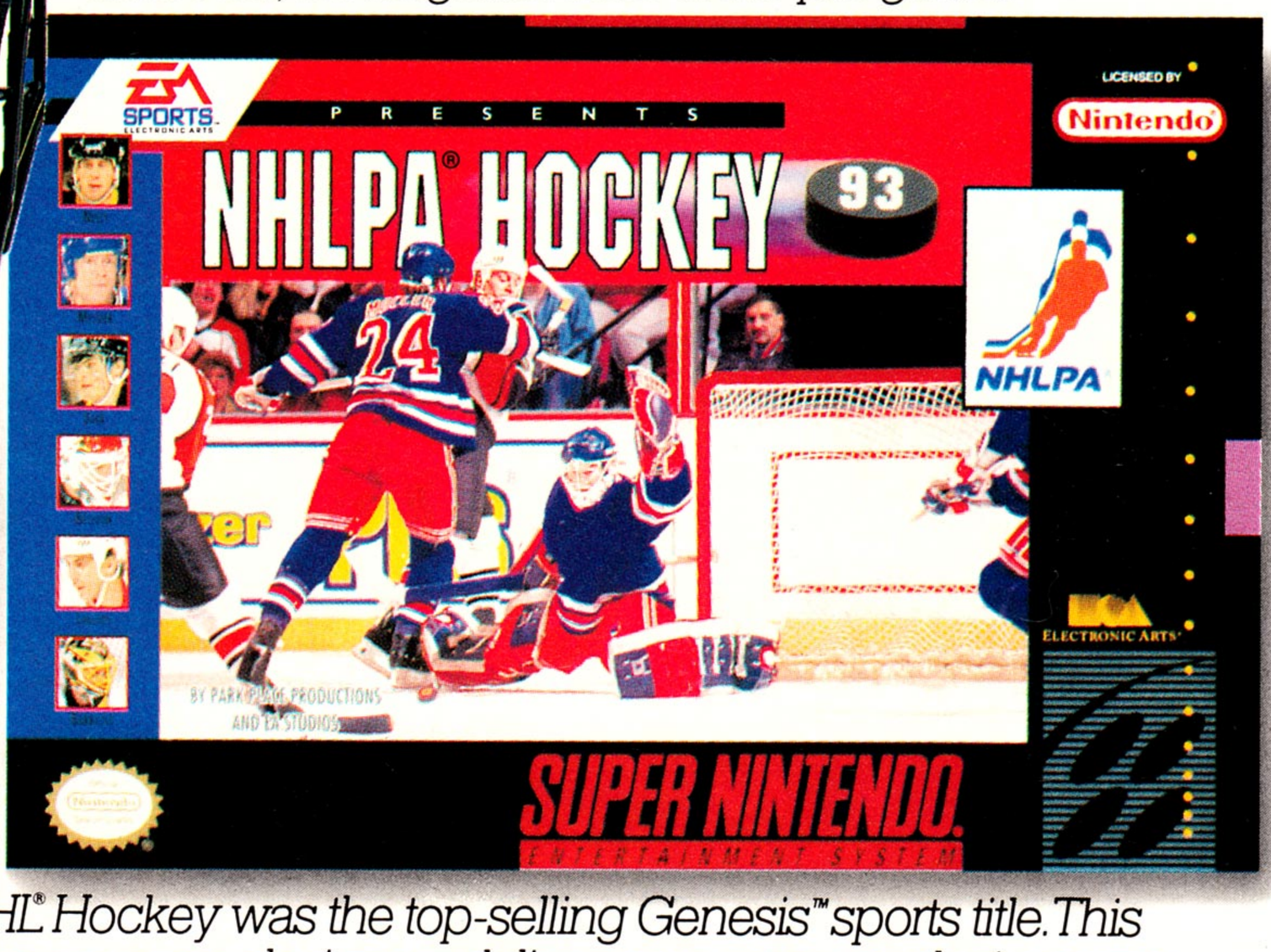

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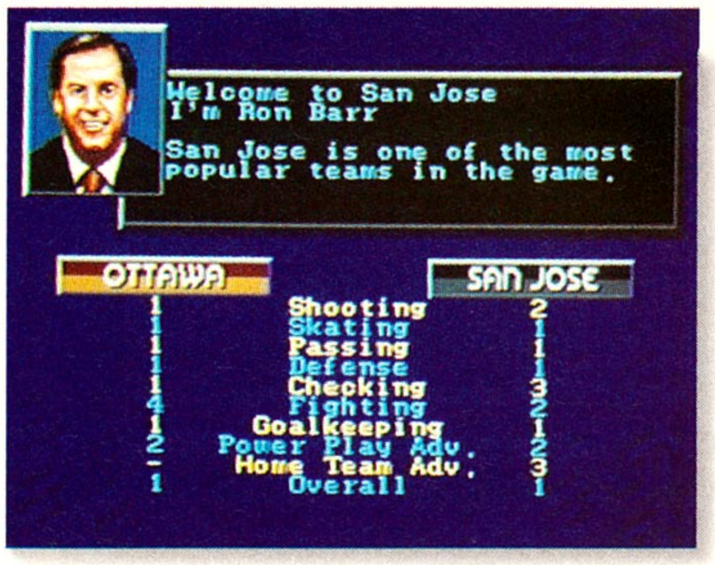

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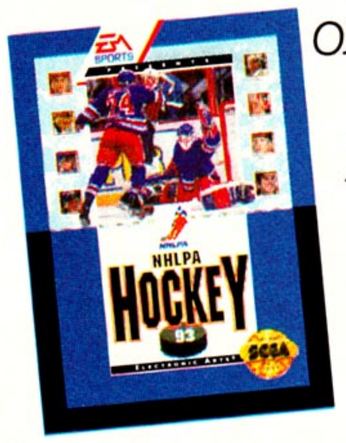

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NHLPA

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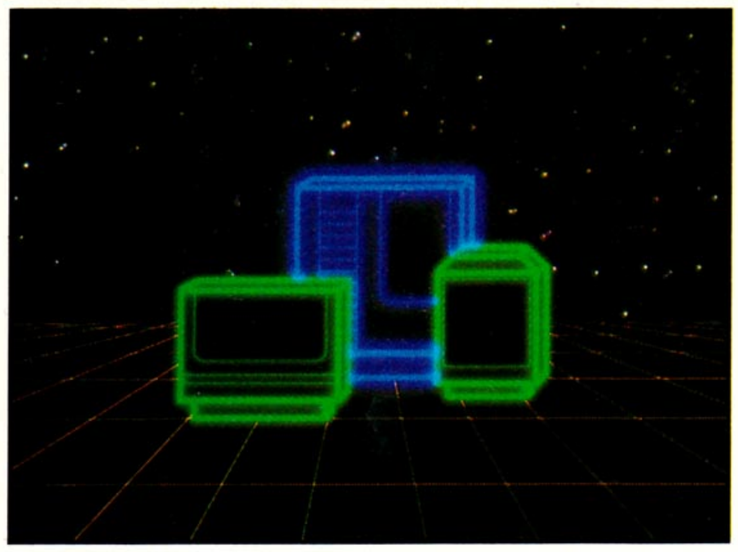


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Deadly Moves

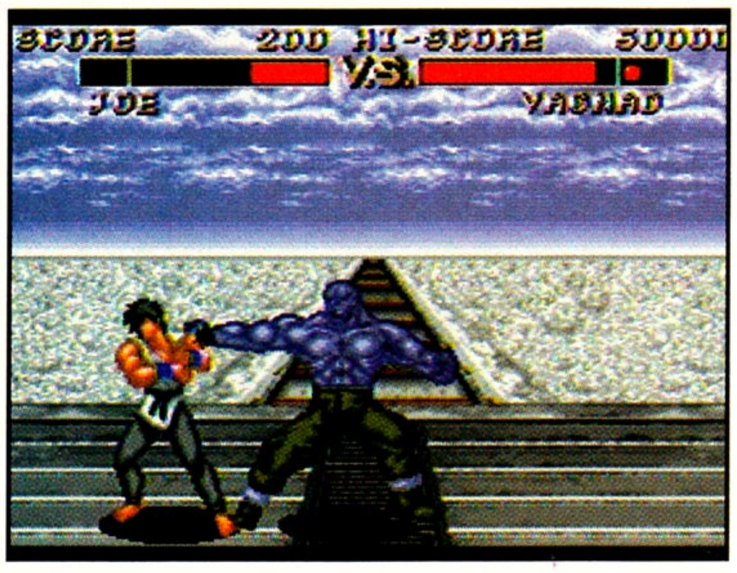
Kaneco
Genesis
1-2 Players

Martial arts is just a guy named Joe in this one-on-one fighting contest. The usual semi-literate story in the documentation describes a clean-cut American lad who has studied to be a champion. In this martial arts version of *Rocky*, Joe has the fighting spirit, but lacks the skill and experience to fulfill this ambition.

Enter the wise old Sensei. This man provides some practical instruction and a scouting report on each of Joe's prospective opponents.

Armed with a couple of deadly moves and lots of good advice, Joe sets off to thrash every last one of them, learn the special moves of the defeated fighters, and use his enhanced power to climb the ladder to the pinnacle of martial arts prowess.

Joe perfects his combat skills against seven champions. The young glory-seeker must prove his superiority over these



Deadly Moves is a great alternative for fans of Street Fighter 2 type games.

fighting masters to realize his ambition of becoming the martial arts champion of champions.

A welcome feature of **Deadly Moves** is that Joe can fight the champions in any order and as many times as desired until he beats them all. This helps the hero build up characteristics for the more arduous matches. Once he performs that feat, Joe can return to the U.S. mainland for the final confrontation against the one adversary whom all champions must inevitably face–himself!

Joe must win two rounds of a fight to earn the right to pursue his quest for ultimate combat supremacy. Every battle is to the death, and no ties are possible. Losing two rounds ends the game, though the cartridge allows up to six continues.

To the victor go the spoils. When he wins a match, Joe acquires one of the fallen foe's five characteristics (speed, jump, attack, defense, vitality), automatically learns the loser's deadly moves and gets a password that restores a suspended campaign to the point at which the previous session ended.

Each of the different characters has their own special attacks to get used to.

Matches take place on an animated stage. In the one-player mode, each opponent is associated with a particular backdrop. For instance, Joe and the Russian, Vagnad Rovnoski, come to grips on a flatcar that brings up the rear of a train thundering through the bleak Siberian landscape. There's just enough bouncing and rocking to give it a different feel than a match held on firm ground.

The full–screen display depicts the martial artists in slightly angled side perspective. The fighters move left and right, or into the foreground or background in response to direction disk commands. The button initiates a kick, a punch, and a jump. The gamer configures the exact arrangement on an option screen that is accessible from the opening screen.

Each fighter employs a few basic moves plus their specialties. The gamer can string together combinations of jumps, kicks, and punches to give the action some variety.

Joe starts the road to the championship with two deadly moves. He can generate and hurl a slow-moving, but lethal fireball. This distance weapon comes in mighty handy, especially against other competitors who have similar attack modes. The other special maneuver is a near-unstoppable leaping lunge that is frequently the best counter to an adversary with acrobatic skill. Other deadly moves include: moonsault kick, rolling hair attack, power bomb and dancing crash.

The large characters look great executing their maneuvers. When Joe launches into the air with a blur of motion, it's an exciting video gaming moment. Endowing the young challenger with a couple of powers at the start makes the early going more entertaining than it would've been if Joe started with only the rudiments.

The characters' shouts and grunts during combat have the proper ring of authenticity. The few spoken words weren't crystal clear, but they are intelligible. As always, the quality of the T.V. set's audio hardware may affect the overall sound.

The gamer can regulate the ability of the machine-directed opposition. There are eight possible settings, 0-7. The lowest difficulty levels are perfect for a few practice games before going after the champions in earnest.

Deadly Moves has a second play-mode for two-player bouts. Human participants can match any two characters against each other with any of the stages as the setting. As with games like **Star Control**, some pairings are too lopsided to use unless the human players have a huge skill differential, but all hold some interest.

Though it isn't bursting with new ideas, **Deadly Moves** is one of those gaming cartridges that succeeds through all-around solid implementation. While there has been an influx of fighting games since **Street Fighter II** emerged in the arcades, few are this playable.

The Japan-based development team deserves praise for a thoroughly professional job on this exciting, playable game.

— Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	83%
Sound	79%
Playability	92%
OVERALL	84%

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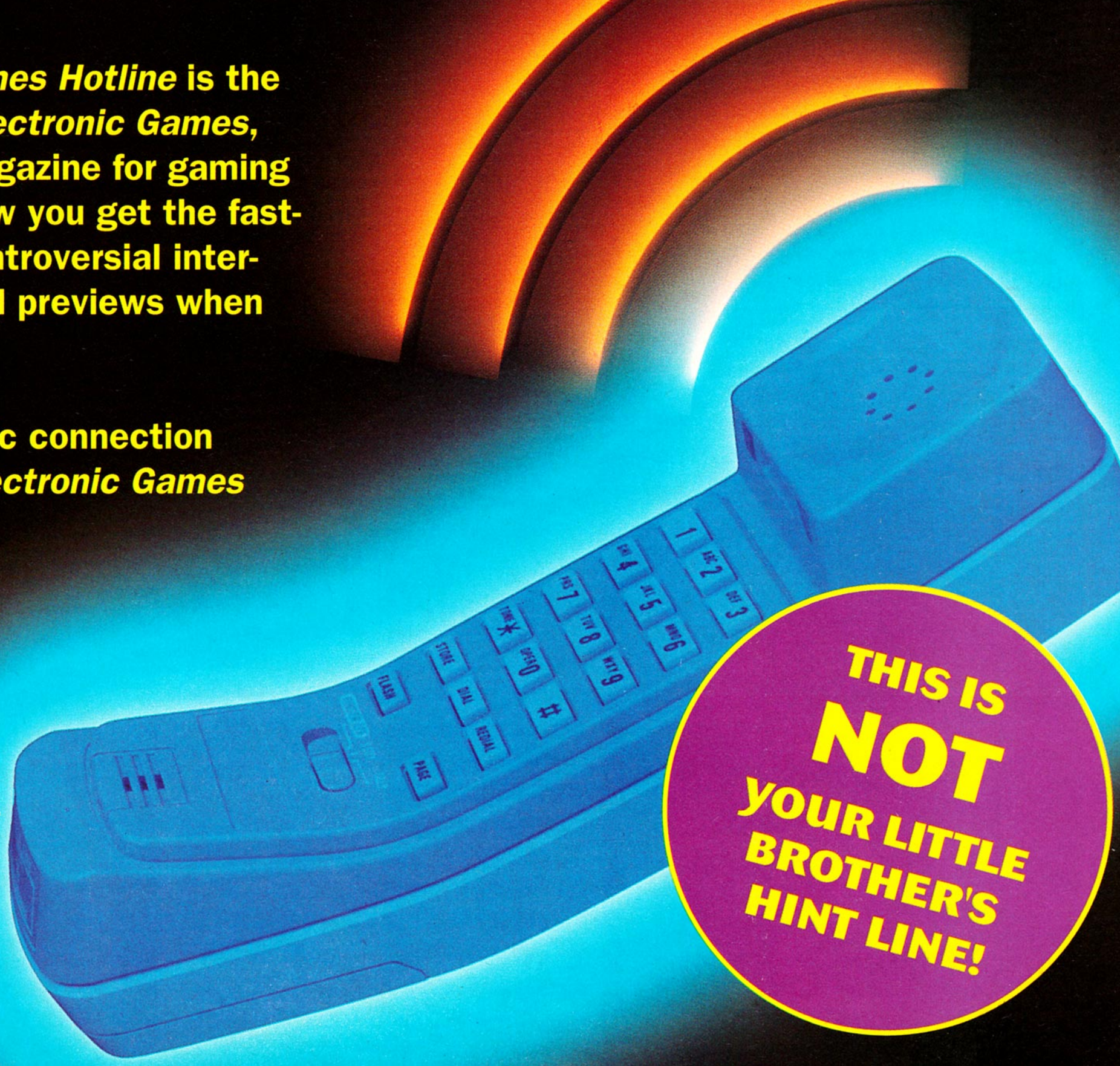

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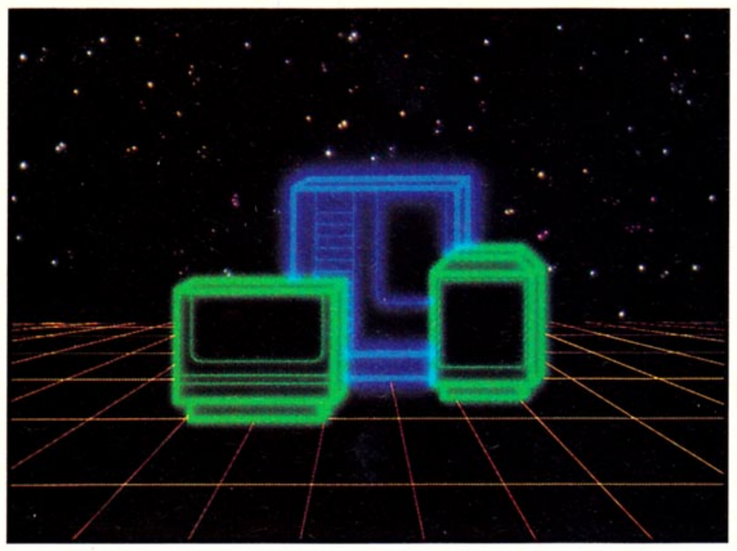


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Mega Man V

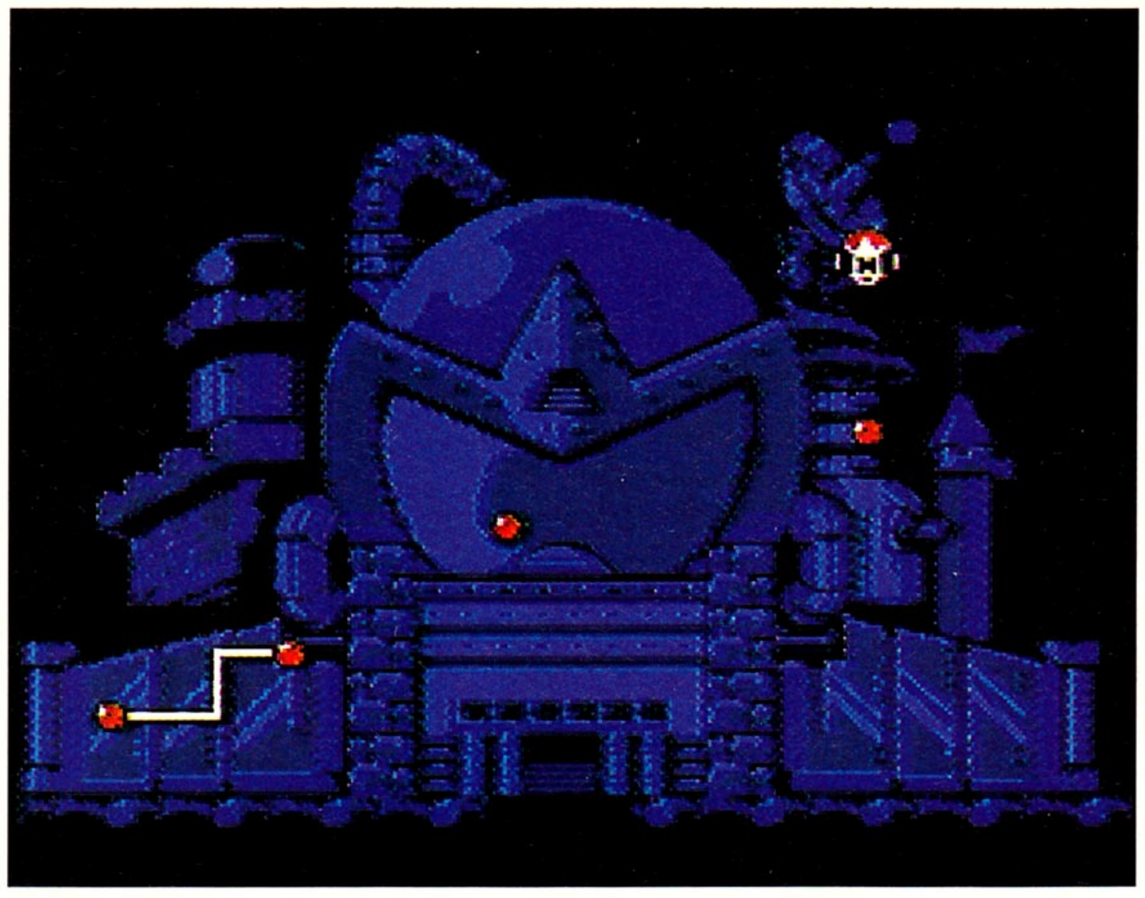
Capcom
NES
1 Player

The popularity of a character is often tested by how many sequels that character's game manages to spawn. Combining the Nintendo and Game Boy versions brings the **Mega Man** series grand total to eight! The only other Nintendo character that even comes close to this many starring appearances is Mario himself.

The reason for this success is fairly easy to pin down: the character is cute, the game play is phenomenal, and the games themselves remain interesting even though they do not change very much from installment to installment.

In his fifth go-round for the 8-Bit Nintendo, Mega Man returns along with his robot dog, Rush. The game will look immediately familiar to those who have played any of the previous Mega Man titles. The start-up screen displays eight boss robots: Stone Man, Gravity Man, Crystal Man, Charge Man, Napalm Man, Wave Man, Star Man, and Gyro Man. The player chooses the order in which to fight the bosses (there is a pattern as to which way is easiest, but any order can be selected) and then proceeds to clear the levels. At the end of each level is the Boss; Mega Man obtains his power by defeating him. There are also two extra powers, the Rush Jet which crosses areas too wide to jump over, and the arrow, which sticks to walls so Mega Man can climb.

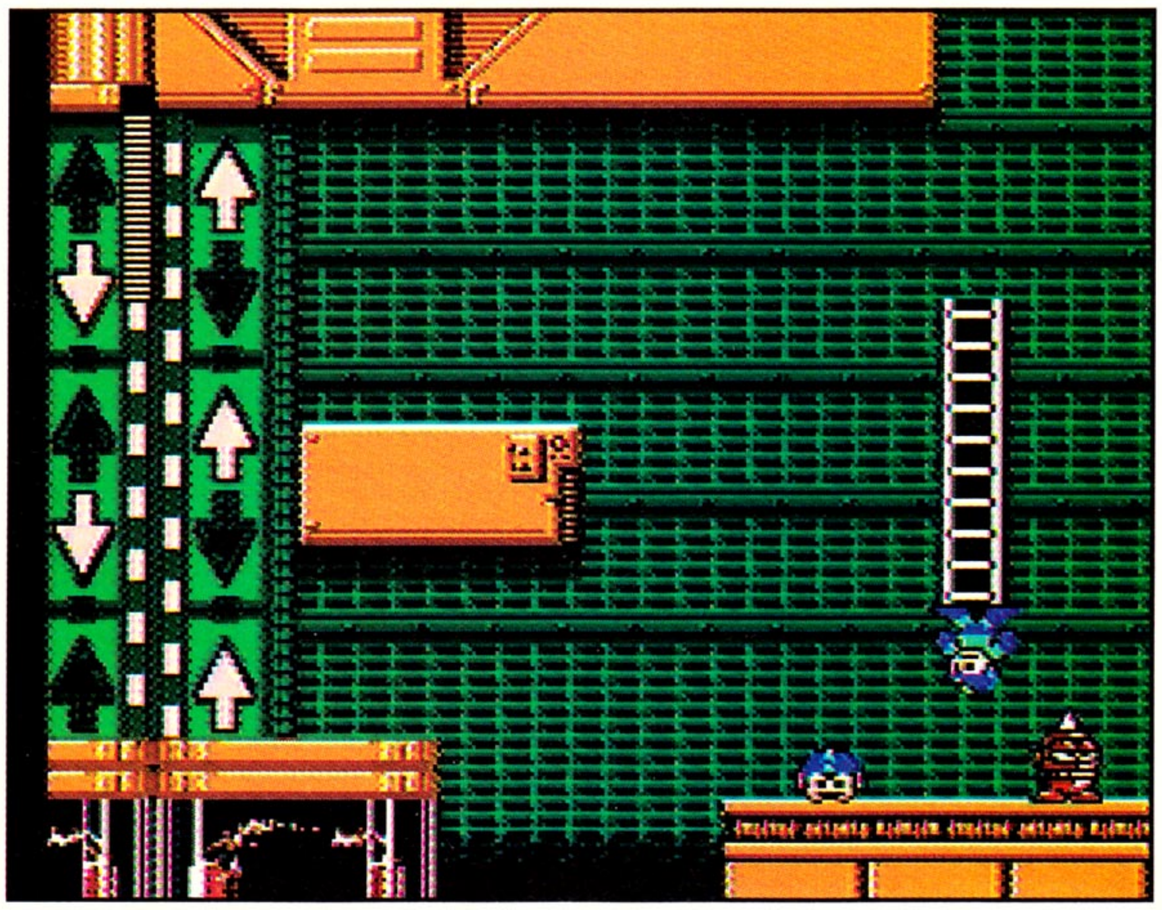
Each level is unique. For instance, in the Gravity Man level, there are sections of the maze that flip poor Mega Man upside down. He stays there, fighting and moving upside down, until he finds another reverse zone.



Veterans will find that jumping in space is very much like jumping under water.

The Star Man level takes place in outer-space where gravity is very light. When Mega Man jumps in space, he really jumps! To add to the difficulty of this level, there are spikes on some of the ceilings.

While neither the story nor the look of these titles seem to change very much, the originality in the different characters carries the game. It is fun taking Mega Man through the varied levels of action, to see what kind of strange, fantastic robotic bad-guys the developers and designers created this time.



The graphics are no better than the last couple of **Mega Man** games, leaving the impression that they've pushed the 8-Bit interface about as far as it will go. Still, the programming is clean and doesn't suffer from as much slowdown as many similar games do. Even the largest characters are smooth.

There was one noticable difference in this latest version of the **Mega Man** saga. There didn't seem to be as many really big enemies as some of the previous games, but the ones that are here are imaginative and amusing.

The sound is good and varied; not nearly as klunky as most 8-Bit music.

As said before, the game play is what keeps players coming back for more with this series. Mega Man jumps, slides, shoots, and at one point even rides a water-cycle through a level. The more levels cleared, the more powers are available for him. The only real thinking challenge this game offers is trying to figure out the best order to tackle the various levels. All that is offered here is a running, jumping, and shooting good time.

The only negative comment to be made here is that a 16-Bit version of everyone's favorite game-robot is long overdue. Let's hope that by next Christmas **Mega Man VI** will not only be available, but also adds the prefix **"Super."**

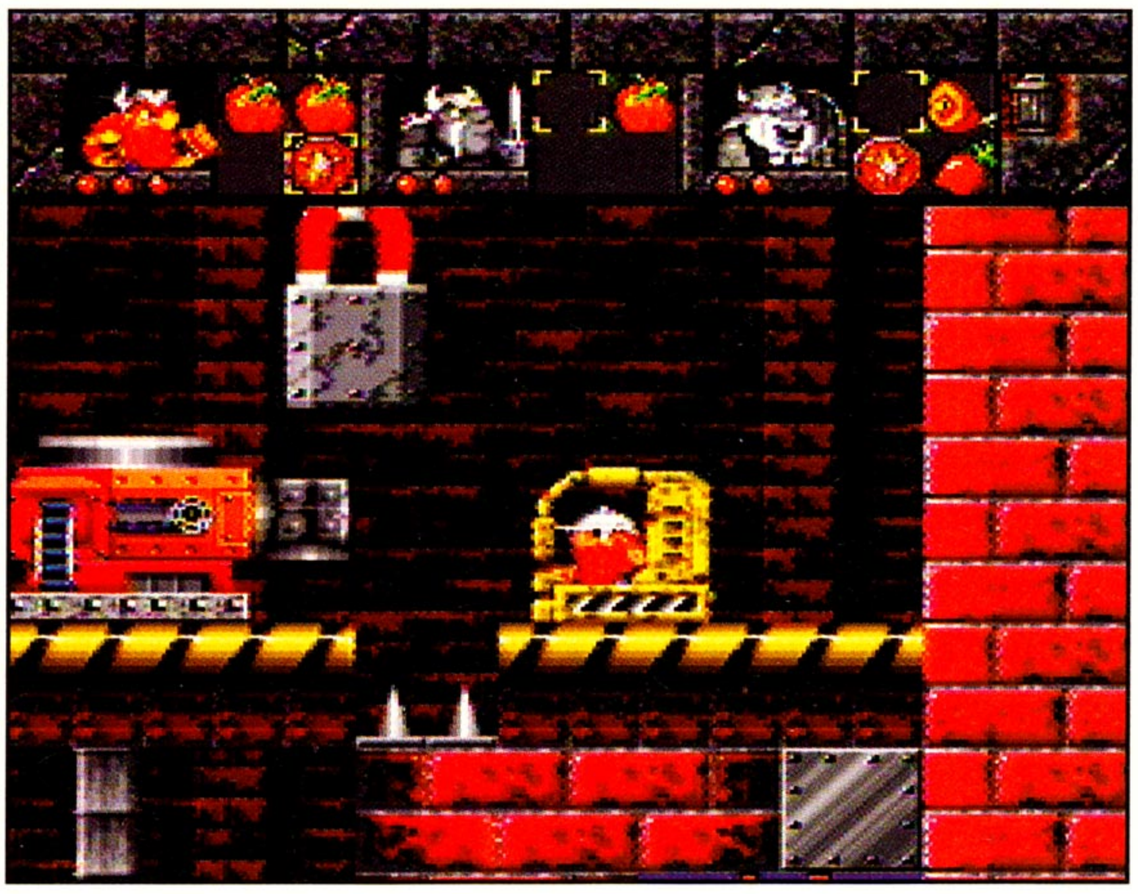
— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	**Average**
Graphics	**86%**
Sound	**81%**
Playability	**87%**
OVERALL	**87%**

The Lost Vikings

Interplay
SNES
1-2 Players

Enter the Vikings, Erik, Baleog, and Olaf, three brothers who wake up one morning to find themselves in a bit of trouble. It seems that the demented intergalactic zoo-keeper, Tomator, came to earth in search of some new exhibits. Good specimens being so hard to find, Tomator settled for what he could — the three Viking brothers. Now the Vikings must try to escape from the spaceship and find their way back to their own place in time. Many different types of worlds need to be explored, including



prehistoric times, ancient Egypt, and a factory world in a nameless time period,

The Lost Vikings is a new puzzle game from Interplay that takes some familiar concepts and blends them into a wonderfully original entertainment.

The player must control three vikings at all times. Erik the Swift, the fast viking, can run, jump, and bash things with his head. Erik is especially good for advance scouting.

Baleog the Fierce is a berzerker who is most at home with a sword and bow. This is the only character who can dispose of all the nasty monsters scattered throughout the game. Baleog also trips switches and performs other long-distance tasks with his arrows.

Olaf the Stout is the viking to have near when the arrows start flying. Olaf's large shield will block most objects and enemies flying in the direction of the heroes. Additionally, Olaf can raise his shield overhead to give Erik a boost, and even use it like a hang-glider to fly over large areas.

It is necessary to use the vikings in conjunction with each other in order to solve the different levels. The player is able to switch back and forth between the different warriors at any time, making tandem tasks relatively simple. It is also possible for two-players to cooperate by controlling one viking each, and then switching to the viking not in use as required. The two-player mode stresses cooperation rather than competition. If the players don't work together there is no way to complete the levels.

The graphics in **Vikings** are wonderful, with special attention paid to the animation of the characters. The backgrounds are interesting and scroll nicely, and the overall package has a crisp feel that's missing in many other games where everything sort of blurs together.

The music is enjoyable and changes from world to world. It's very bouncy, but doesn't get overly repetitious.

Vikings stands above all other puzzle-type games as far as game play is concerned. It helps that the characters are larger than raisins. Once the different skills are mastered, the challenge moves entirely to solving the level, not figuring out how to make the heroes work.

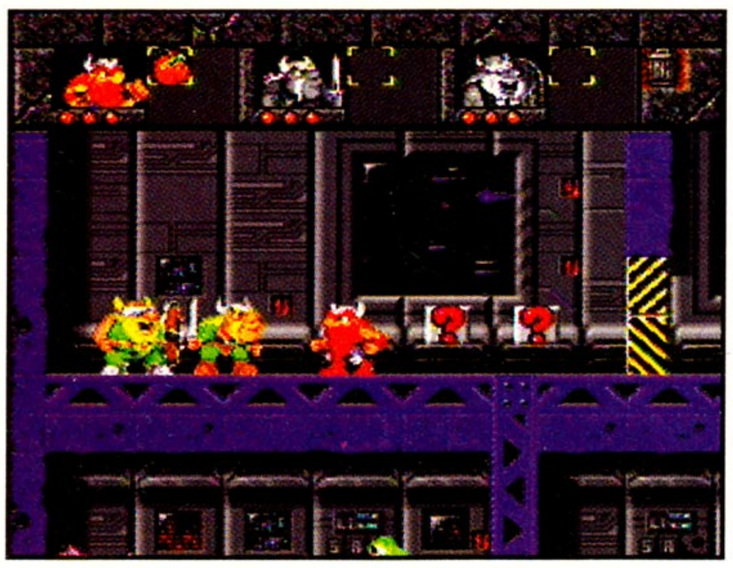
The levels offer a wide variety of challenges, with levers to pull, switches to trip, things to shoot, and even some heavy machinery to operate. The puzzles are difficult, but never frustrating. The solution is often in sight, and the task is finding the route to get there.

Best of all, the game carries with it a great sense of humor .

Vikings is a game filled with jokes, and many are aimed at an older crowd.

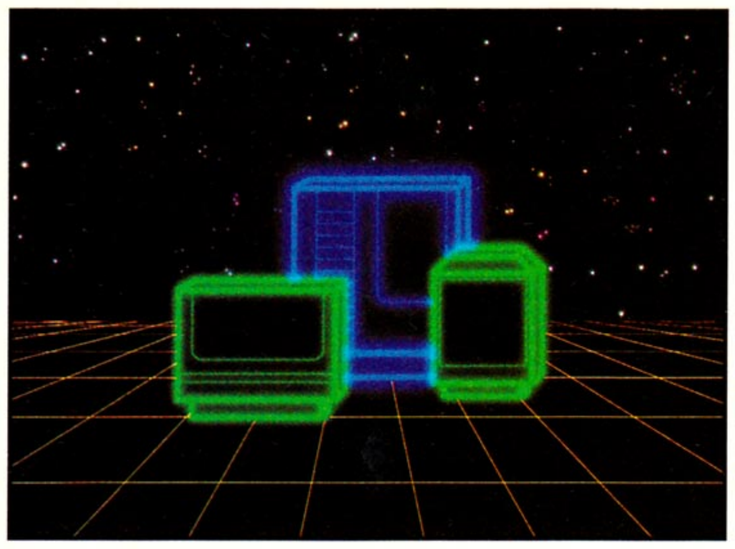
The Lost Vikings is a great cart for anyone who enjoys problem solving with a mixture of action and adventure. Easy to learn while still challenging, **Vikings** is a game worthy of any true warrior.

— Marc Camron



The key to success here is having the Vikings cooperate through the level.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	93%
Sound	92%
Playability	95%
OVERALL	94%



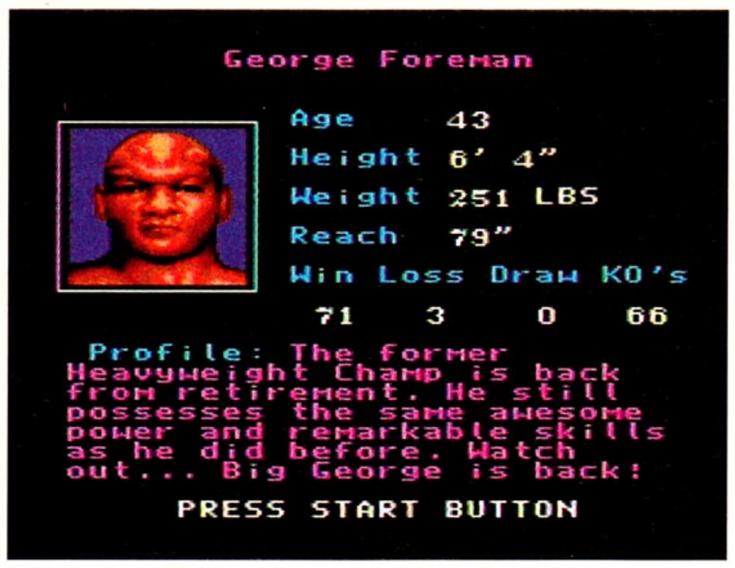
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

George Foreman KO Boxing

Flying Edge
Genesis
1-2 Players

George Foreman's comeback was one of 1991's most colorful sports stories, and now Big George stars in a fistic cartridge. Jokes about the former champ's weight notwithstanding, it's a good choice for a license. Foreman is one of the few pugilists who has maintained high profile popularity even after major defeats in the real-world ring.

The cartridge offers two types of solitaire play as well as a head-to-head option. The player can either fight a single bout or wade through the ranks of challengers to capture the title in one-player action. Passwords let the user resume the upward climb at the point



Help George recapture the coveted heavyweight belts he once wore.

reached in the previous play session. It's too bad that there's no choice of opponents for those who don't want to work toward the belt. Solo gamers could get mighty tired with trading blows with Lorence Luciano, who is the first rung on the ladder to the top.

Whether against a human or robot adversary, George Foreman always stands with his back to the player, at the bottom center of the main display.

George Foreman KO Boxing views the squared circle from a point behind and slightly above Foreman. The gamer looks over George's shoulder to see the other fighter punch, duck, and move.

This screen layout makes it easy to see what's happening in the ring. Unfortunately, it leaves ring generalship out of the game.

Tapping the direction disk moves the fighter to either side to evade otherwise devastating blows. A fighter must stay in the center as much as possible, because that's the only place he can throw punches.

George Foreman KO Boxing reduces the sweet science to a grand total of five possible blows. Pressing the A button fires a left hook while pressing B fires the same punch from the starboard side. Simultaneously pushing the direction disk while hitting either button triggers a jab with that hand. Pressng "Down" on the direction disk causes the fighter to attempt to block his opponent's blow.

The remaining button is reserved for the superpunch. When a boxer lands flurries of punches, he often earns a super punch. A boxing glove appears in the corner of the screen for each super punch in the fighter's arsenal. If thrown at the right time, this mysterious blow can send the other man crashing to the canvas.

When a fighter gets knocked down, only quick fingering can prevent a 10-count. The instant the fighter falls, the player presses the A and B buttons in rapid alternation.

The command control system is weak. Many will end up holding the controller in some uncomfortable, unconventional way to get a finger onto each button to facilitate rapid punching. The button bashing to prevent a KO is boring. It's one of those uninspired ideas that sneaks into games when the publisher thinks an additional element would help, and the developer can't invent something interesting.

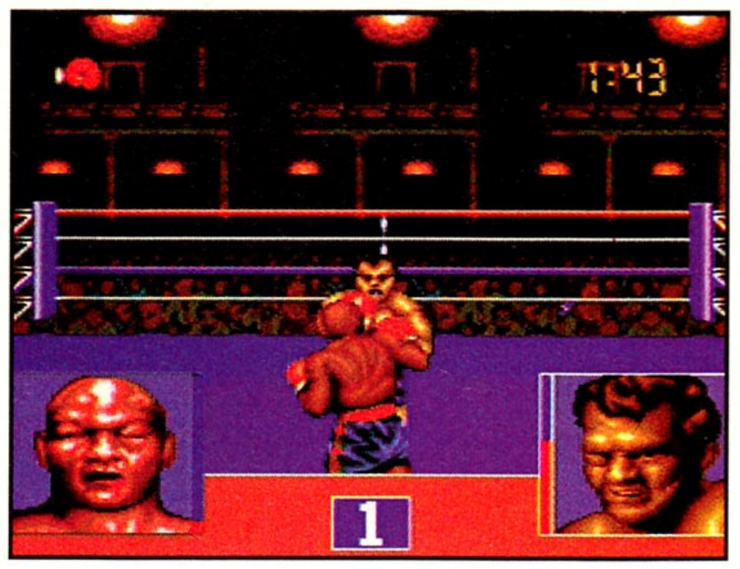
The lower left and right corners of the screen have small close-up drawings of the combatants. One edge of each box incorporates an energy meter. It shrinks when the fighter exerts himself or receives damaging punches. Resting recovers some lost energy. The frame around one of the portraits blinks when that man is in danger of a knockdown or knockout. If that happens, a special knockdown graphic replaces the normal drawing.

It's hard to imagine a less detailed boxing simulation.

Large, brightly colored characters are the main graphics feature. The fighters are well animated and look good mixing it up. The ring girl and referee are much stiffer and less impressive.

Having a blonde in a white bikini carry the round number sign into the ring before the start of a new three-minute period is a good idea. It would've looked much better if the woman wasn't rendered in the same squat, thickly muscled style as the boxers.

The audio, including the obligatory spoken comments by each pugilist, is not as intrusive as in some boxing cartridges. A few sound effects, such as the smack of leather, could be sharper, but this aspect of the contest is acceptable.



Foreman and his opponents will look as if they are taking a beating in the ring.

George Foreman KO Boxing won't excite many fight fans. Possibly, Flying Edge is aiming at people who like the glamor of the ring without caring much about the intricacies of the sport. This game is completely missing the pace, movement, tactics, and many of the situations found in boxing.

Yet **George Forman KO Boxing** won't please many action game lovers, either. The repetitive play-mechanics and slightly awkward control scheme blunt player interest and undercuts the cartridge's power to involve the video gamer in what happens in the ring. Its hard to want to stick with this long enough to learn it.

Like its namesake, **George Foreman KO Boxing** tries hard but just isn't up to the challenge of today's real heavyweights.

— Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	84%
Sound	78%
Playability	80%
OVERALL	78%

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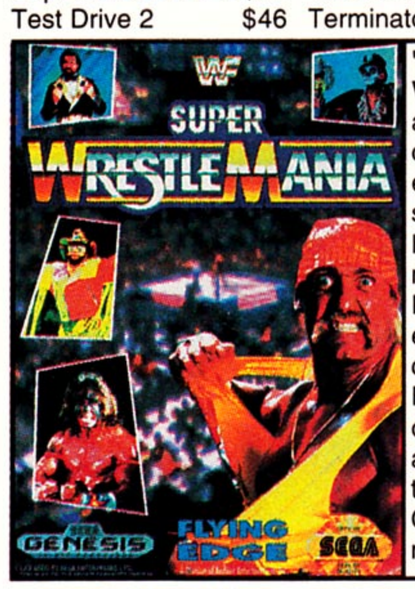

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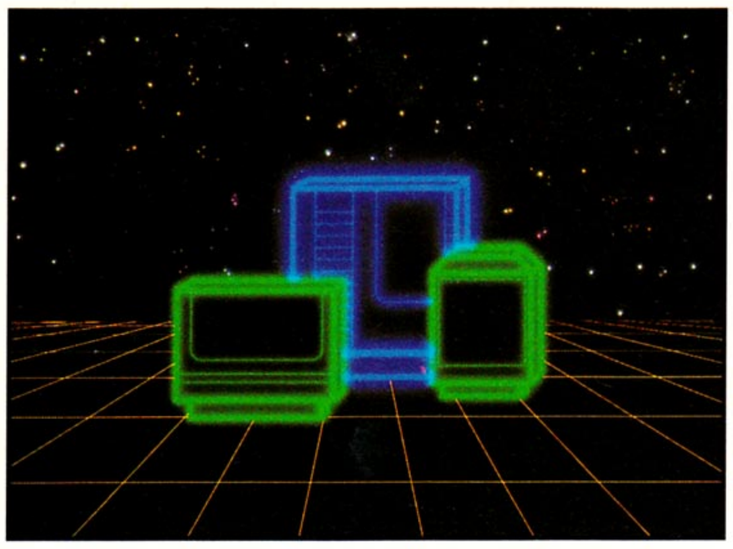


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stones

Flying Edge
Genesis
1-2 Players

"This new formless evil threatens the entire world."

This sinister statement opens the prerequisite pep talk that appears in the manual of many hack-'n-slash games. In this case, the sixty-four dollar question is whether the game designers are talking about the apparent lack of a robust story line, or the newest entry in the **Double Dragon** game series.

Unfortunately, formless might be the best word to describe **Double Dragon 3**.

From the story line (which contradicts itself), to the standard game play, uninspired missions, and the usual graphics and sound, this is just another run-of-the-mill combat game.

The alleged adventure this time is for Billy and Jimmy Lee to battle around the world, guided by their mystical mentor Hiruko, to recover three Rosetta Stones. Their quest makes them travel to five locations, with the final destination in Egypt to discover the mystery of the Rosetta Stones.

Apparently, this is where the formless evil aspect enters. There appears to be no evil potentate for the Lee brothers to prevent from seizing the stones. Upon completion of the game, no great secrets are unraveled (as stated in the manual), and in fact, the earlier story line is contradicted. Maybe this is an attempt at a tricky plot twist. It didn't help.

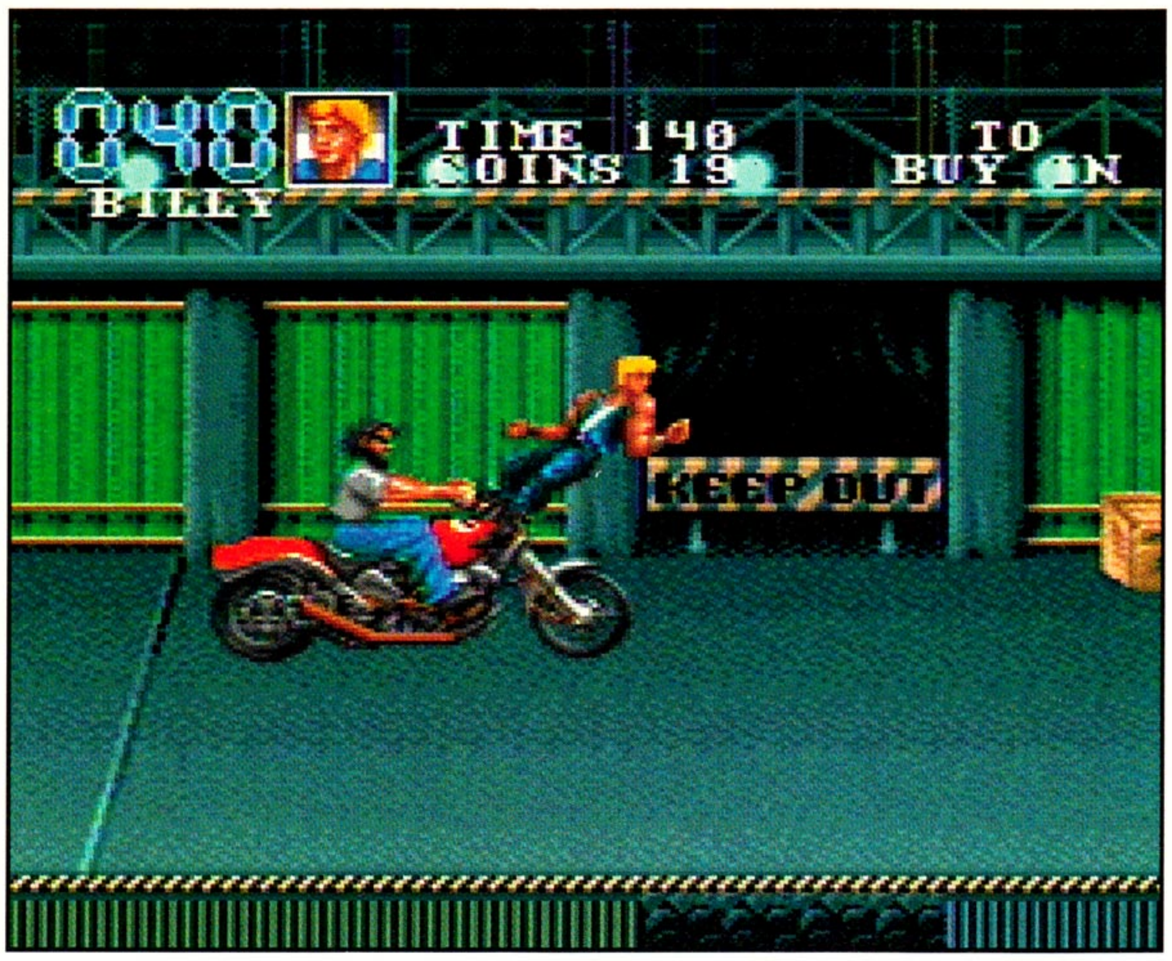
Game play doesn't go very far toward compensating for the other mediocre aspects of **Double Dragon 3**. Because the difficulty of **DD3** is easy compared to others in the genre, some gamers may find play time remarkably brief. The primary culprits responsible for this weakness are the short missions, and the fact that the potpourri of bad guys encountered appear to be too pattern-oriented. End bosses are especially pathetic. The approach is to corner them, and continue to rapidly attack with a simple punch or kick.

Other aspects, which otherwise might be identifiable as frustrations, add the only real challenge present in the game. Injury avoidance in close quarters is difficult. If villains surround the player, a knockdown is inevitable. Slow recovery from a successful attack compounds the problem. Thus, distant enemies take advantage of the opportunity to become close enemies. Similarly, the player who jumps away from a close opponent to escape harm will find this an unsuccessful tactic.

The player should also bypass special weapons. Reaction time is too slow to be useful when several foes appear at once.

Despite its average presentation, there are some features that improve the fun quotient. A certain number of continues are provided, with several additional credits awarded upon completion of each mission.

There are stores along the way that sell game enhancements, but they cost



continue credits. The purchase of extra guys adds friends to the foray, which yields three extra men per continue. Tricks are fun, but are lost upon player death. Once an enemy is knocked down, the player can stomp on him with a jump. **DD3** preserves the traditional two player option, but little else is noteworthy about this feature.

The success of the original coin-op inspired the translation to many platforms. Multi-vendor license restrictions were hurdled, to give gamers the freedom of two player dynamics.

The innovations found in the initial **Double Dragon** helped establish new vistas in video gaming. Regrettably, this is not to be the destiny of the third entry in the **Double Dragon** series.

— David Pokorny

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	80%
Sound	70%
Playability	73%
OVERALL	72%

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BE AN INSIDER READ... MEGAGAMING

SOFTWARE GALLERY

Spelljammer: Pirates of Realmspace

SSI
IBM and compatibles
Cybertech Systems
1 Player

It was only a matter of time before the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons creators at TSR would take their role-playing system into space. The **Spelljammer** system of games takes players from the **Forgotten Realms** world on the planet of Toril into the outer reaches of space aboard one of the class of schooners propelled by magic called Spelljammers. **Spelljammer: Pirates of Realmspace** is SSI's latest attempt to branch away from the tried-and-true approach to role-playing games and to take advantage of their unique relationship with TSR. **Spelljammer** is a flexible game that invites players to explore space as captains of their own Spelljammer spaceships and make the trade routes safe for other adventurers.

Spelljammer is less of a role-playing game and more of an exploration game

A creative character generation allows the player to choose among six classes.

with role-playing elements. Players create a captain as they would create a character in any other AD&D game. Beyond that there is no preparation; the game starts immediately.

Spelljammer consists of four distinct phases: travel, planet exploration and docking, combat and ship boarding. Travel throughout Realmspace takes place from a first-person perspective, much like many flight simulators. The starfield's motions reflect the ship's speed and direction. Players must "spelljam" to target planets and look for other interesting stopover points on the navigation map and in the viewscreen.

Visits to the planets and other key places reveal the plot of the game and challenges to the player. Combat also takes place from this perspective. Controls are simple; enemy ships will succumb to players with flight savvy. There is only a handful of possible combatants, but the enemy captains' skills will make the difference from battle to battle.

The game interface relies heavily on SSI's recently revised approach to game design, with less emphasis on word commands and more reliance on point-and-click buttons, graphical command icons and menu selections. Players almost don't need the manual because of the simple game system. They visit planetside locations like taverns, shops and meeting rooms by clicking on menu choices and following the game's responses.

After combat, it is possible to board and explore the enemy's spaceship. Exploration takes place in an overhead offset perspective in which the player guides his character around the ship much like other AD&D computer games. This mixture of interfaces and heavy usage of varied graphics styles keeps **Spelljammer** interesting and effortless to control.

The goals in **Spelljammer** vary from game to game because much of it depends on the way players approach problems, combat and trade. Lively graphics, varied sound effects and multiple alien races are largely responsible for the fun in the game. The ultimate goal is to destroy a Neogi slave base, but the journey there can be along many routes. Three difficulty levels make **Spelljammer** worth replay. This flexibility plus the malleable game interface ensure the success of yet another approach by SSI to capture the worlds of the AD&D environments in computer game form.

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity	**Player-Selectable**
Graphics	**80%**
Sound	**80%**
Playability	**90%**
OVERALL	**85%**

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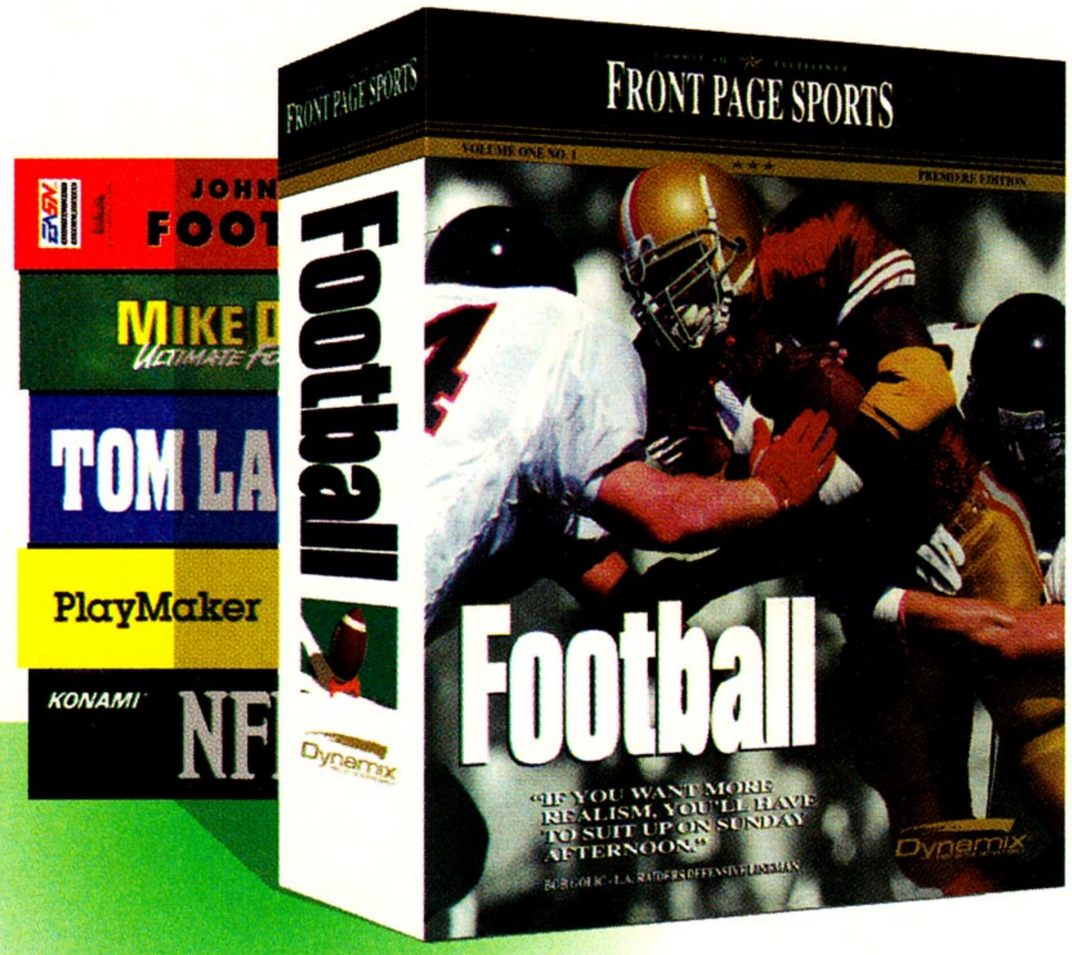

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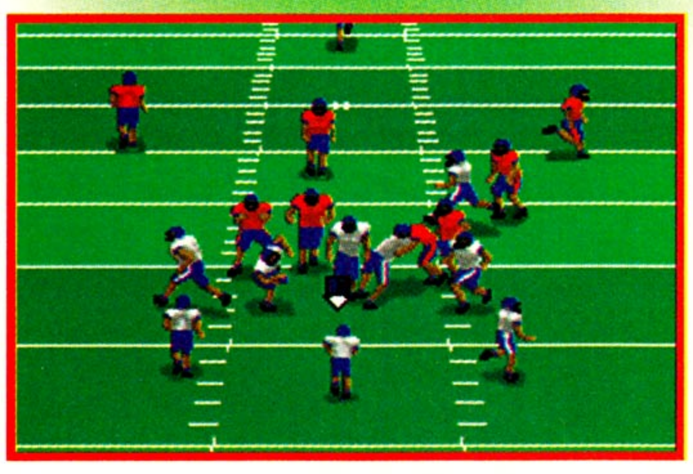

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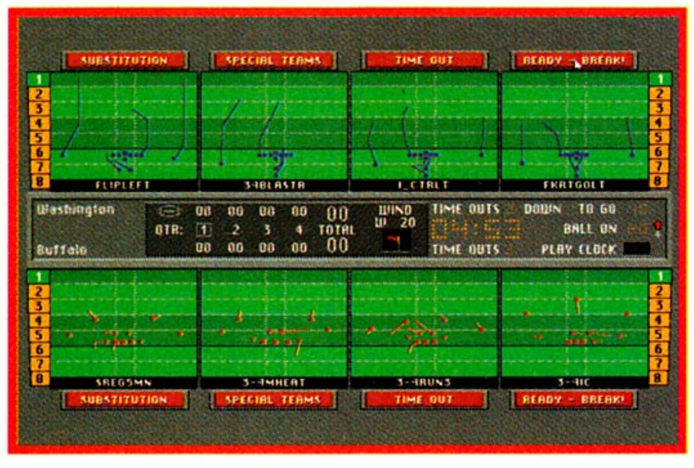

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

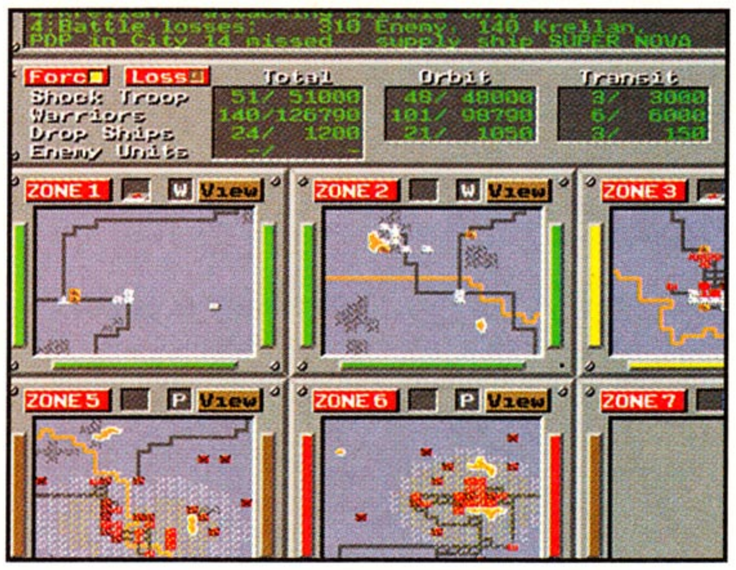
Star Legions

Mindcraft
Designed by: Trevor Sorensen
MS-DOS
1 Player

Star Legions is the third installment in the relatively popular Star Fleet series. The first two games, published by Interstel, placed players in the role of fleet commander for the UGA and Krellan Empire respectively, with the focus on starship combat. **Star Legions** is a stand alone game which addresses planetary invasions, previously a peripheral element of the series, in glorious and minute detail. Players begin at the Commander rank in the Krellan Empire and may advance to Prefect, General, Field Marshall and, if one proves to be sufficiently cunning and ruthless, can eventually become Imperial Tribune.

As an invasion commander, one has nothing to do with the preliminary stages of planetary conquest (i.e., eliminating the defensive fleet) and is awakened from stasis only when it is time to establish the first zones to be conquered. Initially, the player faces lower tech level planets, ranging from primitive agricultural through feudal medieval societies. These planets have nothing more than militia units to protect themselves and the player's main challenge is to complete the invasions in the allotted time frame. It is important to note that the time constraints are not arbitrary; they represent the arrival of a UGA fleet to rescue the planet under siege. The secret to success, therefore, lies in good resource management and ensuring that minimal troops are left idle.

Up to eight invasion zones can be managed simultaneously and, as each is conquered, planet morale is lowered. A zone is conquered when either all defending troops are destroyed or Krellan units hold all the critical installations in the zone. When planetary morale reaches zero, through conquest or destruction, enemy forces surrender.



The player must utilize many sub-menus to facilitate a lightning-quick attack.

Tech level six and seven planets have military units almost as capable as the players, as well as shields and planetary defense lasers which can shoot at ships in orbit. Fortunately, the player is usually given much more time to conquer the tougher planets. As such, one should focus on a maximum of two invasion zones at a time to avoid becoming overwhelmed or inadvertently stranding units on the surface without reinforcements. Eventually, the player progresses to invasions of the UGA home worlds, where encounters with UGA regular troops prove challenging to even the most seasoned commander.

The game interface is a very clever, six screen point and click menu system. Players access any screen from any other with minimal delay, which is critical given that one is constantly watching the clock. In the space of less than a minute (real time), players can alter the orbit of the fleet, drop and retrieve legions from the surface and issue orders to each of their zone commanders (ie: stand, protect, capture etc.). Mastery of the complex functions required of an invasion commander (not to be confused with the skill needed to win) comes simply, due to the amount of forethought that went into the design.

Other commendable features include liberal use of digitized speech, which is clear and distinct for each character as replicated on a Soundblaster card, and continuity for battle legions. The latter refers to a system of battle honors, in which legions who have distinguished themselves are named by the Emperor and become increasingly capable in subsequent battles, provided they do not suffer an inordinate number of veteran casualties. The system builds player empathy into the design as it is inevitable that each gamer will develop favorite legions.

One thing is certain, the elegant interface and addictive replay value of **Star Legions** will ensure that it won't remain in stasis for long: players won't be able to resist just one more conquest.

— Ed Dille

After conquering a zone, a member of your legion will request a withdrawal.

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	84%
Sound	92%
Playability	95%
OVERALL	90%

Great Naval Battles: North Atlantic 1939-43

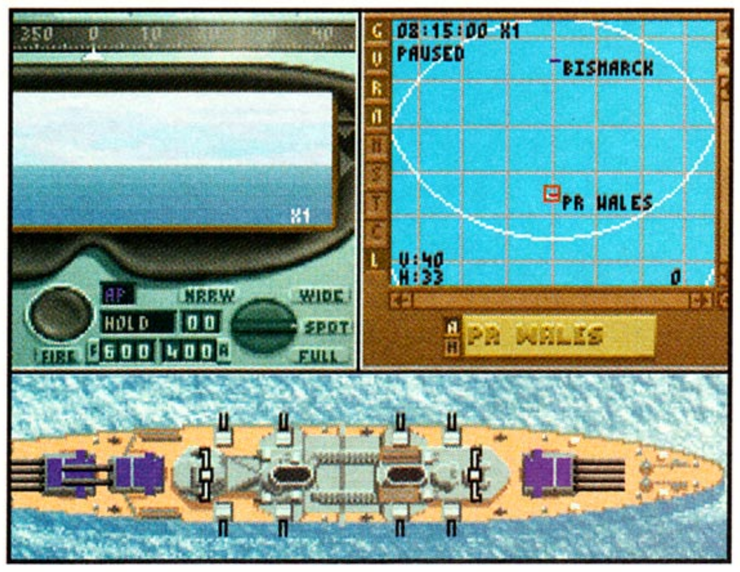
Strategic Simulations Inc.
Designed by: Roy Gibson
MS-DOS
1 Player

SSI offers a radical departure from traditional hex-based wargames with the release of **Great Naval Battles: North Atlantic 1939-43** (**GNBNA**). The first installment of a planned series, this release chronicles the struggle between the Kriegsmarine and the Royal Navy in the tumultuous early period of WWII, when Great Britain's survival hung by a tenuous thread that stretched across the Atlantic Ocean. Admiral Doenitz, during an interview for the *World at War* television series, stated "If we would have had more U-boats, we would have won the war." A similar argument could be advanced concerning a more judicious use of Germany's Surface Navy, which was often squandered in direct confrontations with Royal Navy dreadnoughts instead of focusing on convoy raiding. **GNBNA** offers players the opportunity to alter history as the Fleet Admiral of either Navy, interceding on a grand strategic, fleet tactical or individual ship engagement level.

GNBNA uses a graphic presentation similar to Microprose's **Silent Service II**, with individual ships rendered via digitized models. The command interface parallels that of another Microprose product, **Task Force 1942.** Players may elect to play single engagements, which are set piece historical melees, or take the helm for either the entire Atlantic Campaign or specific portions thereof, such as Great Britain's hunt for the *Bismark*.

At the campaign level, players must form task forces, plot movement and decide whether to shadow, avoid or fight whenever enemy forces are contacted. German task forces that are being shadowed are incapable of contacting convoys, their prime objective. Further, if they are within striking distance of England or her aircraft carriers, they are increasingly vulnerable to air attack while shadowed. Hence, German forces must seek to avoid contact with British patrols until they can escape the Greenland/Iceland/UK gap and enter the shipping lanes of the middle or southern Atlantic.

Individual engagements may be managed in several ways. Players may set all their ships to automatic, allowing the individual computer captains to make all decisions, or they may selectively control



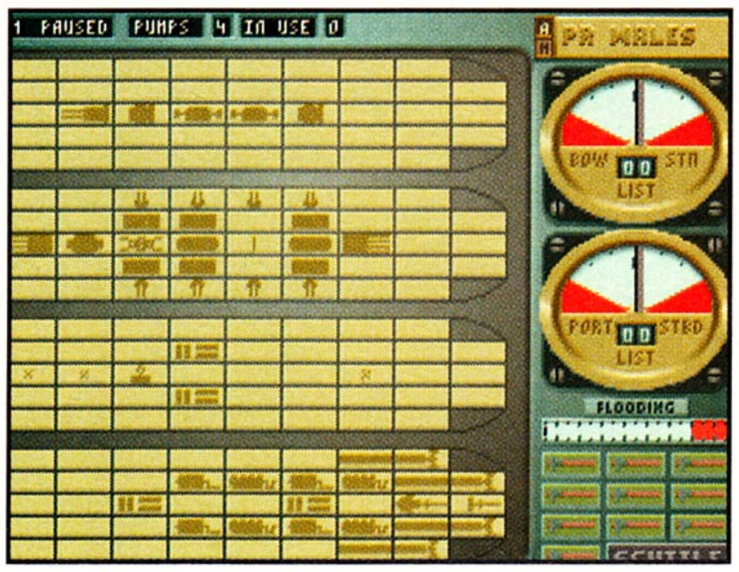
The player has complete control of his ship and crew. Try to sink the Bismark.

specific functions of any ship. As an example, the player can put a given ship in manual, switch the main target for gunnery and then return to automatic (or remain in manual if desired). The AI routines which control gunnery are fairly good, but they divide rather than concentrate fire when multiple enemies are present. Sometimes this works, but the player will often want to disable or sink a specific target before continuing to the others and this requires manual intervention. Additionally, it is wise to watch the accuracy estimates and manually switch to narrow fire patterns much earlier than the AI will, thereby ensuring more hits sooner and reducing the risk to one's own ship.

Another area where the AI just doesn't measure up is in the conduct of torpedo runs. Destroyer captains, left to their own devices, will often pursue their targets until the shortest, fastest torpedo setting can be used. This is fine if the target is an unguarded merchant, but the AI uses the same tactic against battleships, which will run from a screen of approaching destroyers and sink them in turn without having to avoid even a single torpedo. As such, the player may best utilize these assets by manually controlling them, spreading their approaches and angles of fire, and using all distance/speed settings to create converging spreads of torpedoes which are difficult to evade.

Finally, despite repeated phone calls to technical support, and numerous hardware reconfigurations, the program continues to lock up during time compression routines and experiences occasional memory divide runtime errors. Despite the bugs and occasionally inept AI routines, which will hopefully be corrected for subsequent versions, **GNBNA** is engrossing enough to reboot again and again after the annoying crashes. This says a lot for the concept, if not the execution, of a program which seeks to establish SSI's place in the simulations market.

—Ed Dille



Man the pumps! Every aspect of a great naval fight is present in this simulation.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	82%
Sound	72%
Playability	65%
OVERALL	75%

SOFTWARE GALLERY

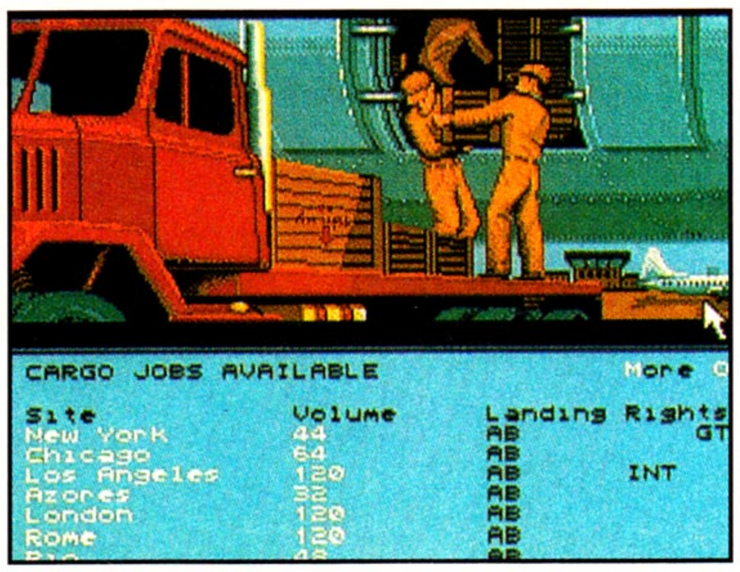
Air Bucks

Impressions
Designed by: Edward Grabowski
MS-DOS
1 Player

The concept of a game that details the expansion of commercial air travel seems appealing, given that Microprose established the viability of a similar game idea in **Railroad Tycoon**. **Railroad Tycoon**'s success can be attributed to several factors. Players were rewarded with nice visuals, the economic model was complex enough to require some planning yet not overwhelming, but the most important fact was that the game was simply fun to play.

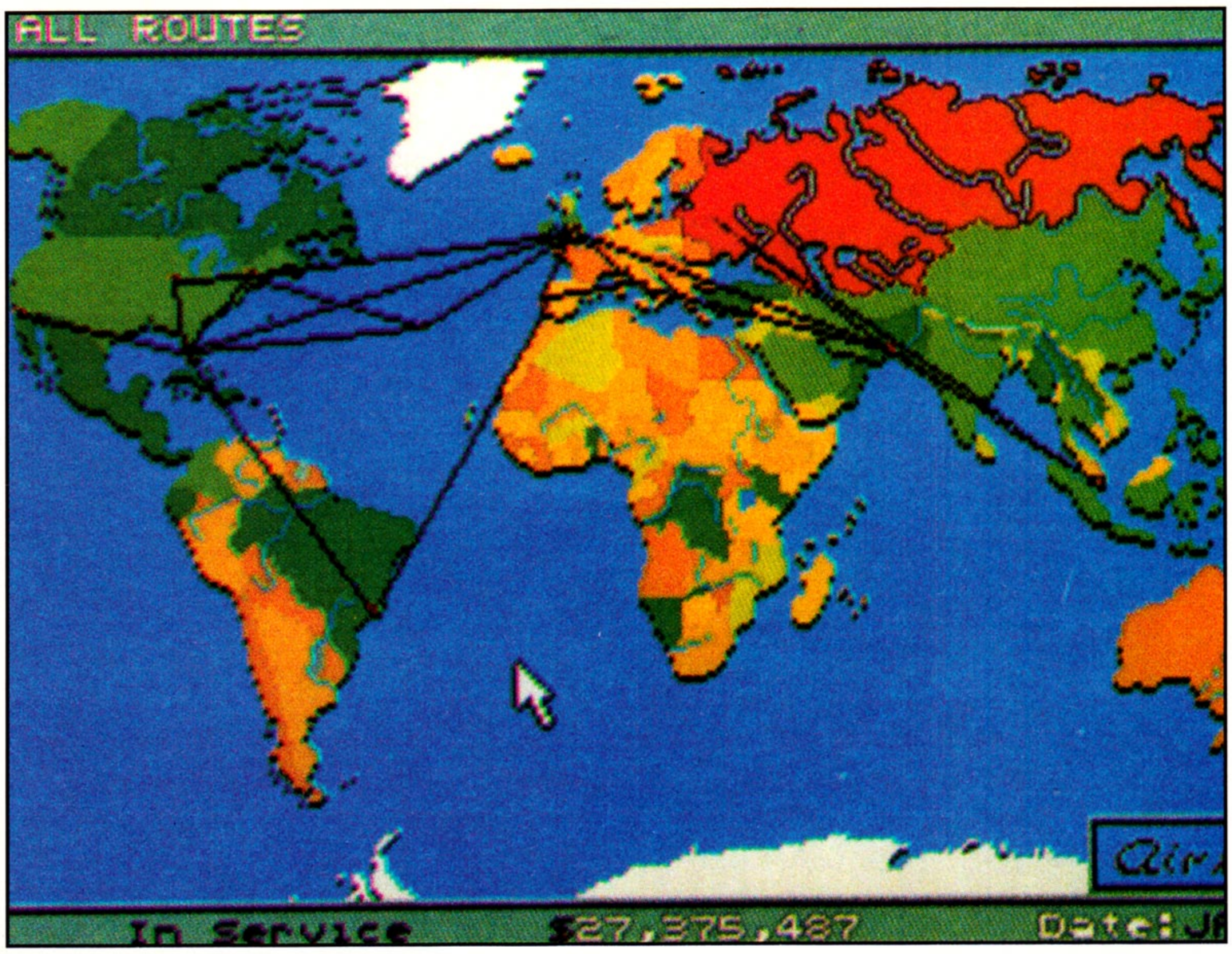
The first thing one notices about **Air Bucks** is that the graphic representation is limited to 16 color VGA and is uninspired. A version 1.2 upgrade is promised that will support a 256 color palette, but this improvement should be considered relatively insignificant since only five or six cut screens are utilized in the entire game. Most of the action occurs on a rendition of a world atlas map that displays the active air routes. Even this presentation is flawed in that the edges of the world are literal edges, making a San Francisco-Tokyo connection impossible without traversing the United States, the Atlantic Ocean and all of Europe. Additionally, the accompanying sound files should have been excluded altogether.

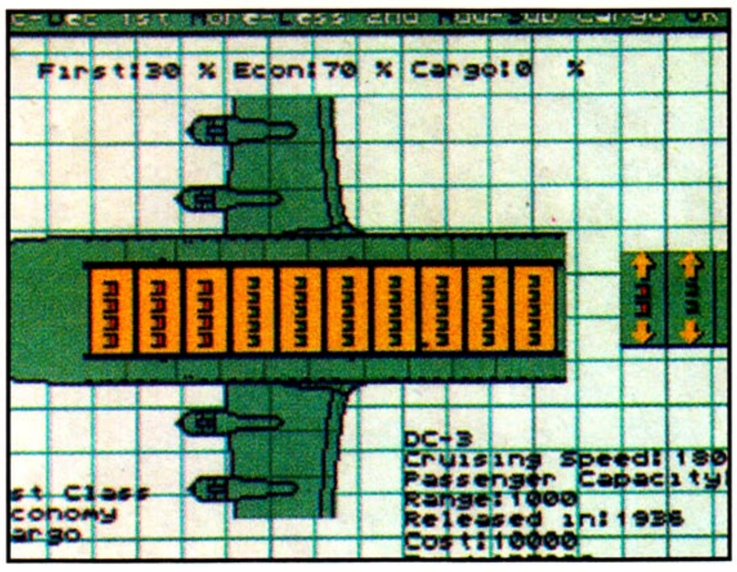
Initially, the player begins in Miami and must establish a local "milk route" to build a profit base for expansion. Securing landing rights for the major cities



Air Bucks allows the player to utilize all aspects of an operational airline.

(New York, Los Angeles etc.) should be a primary objective, as only two airlines are allowed in each city. As new planes become available, the player also has the option of investing in faster, longer range aircraft to serve the major routes, relegating the existing fleet to cargo runs





How many seats for coach class? Full control of each airplane is available.

(if a sufficient demand exists) or short hauls between medium and minor cities.

Price wars can erupt as competition heats up, with computer opponents vying for control of the best cities, and the player must watch his profit margin while striving to keep both employees and customers happy. Advertising is great but it is insignificant if consumers feel that the company's aircraft are unreliable due to poor maintenance practices, or that flight attendants are surly and unresponsive because they are underpaid. Paying close attention to marketing research can aid the player's decisions in all of these areas.

The objective is to balance all of these real world considerations and end up with the best financial balance sheet.

Version 1.0 allowed some of the economic models to be manipulated unrealistically by cunning players but, for the sake of fairness, these incongruities have been corrected in a patch disk.

Even in games like **Air Traffic Controller**, the Spartan approach and lack of programmed player reward lead one to question just how much fun the game really was. **Air Bucks** doesn't even leave it open to question. The play model's execution has limited appeal, despite the worth of the original idea. Impressions does deserve some credit for their responsiveness to user feedback but, for now, appearances are that **Air Bucks** might be grounded before it even gets a chance to take off.

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	70%
Sound	65%
Playability	75%
OVERALL	70%

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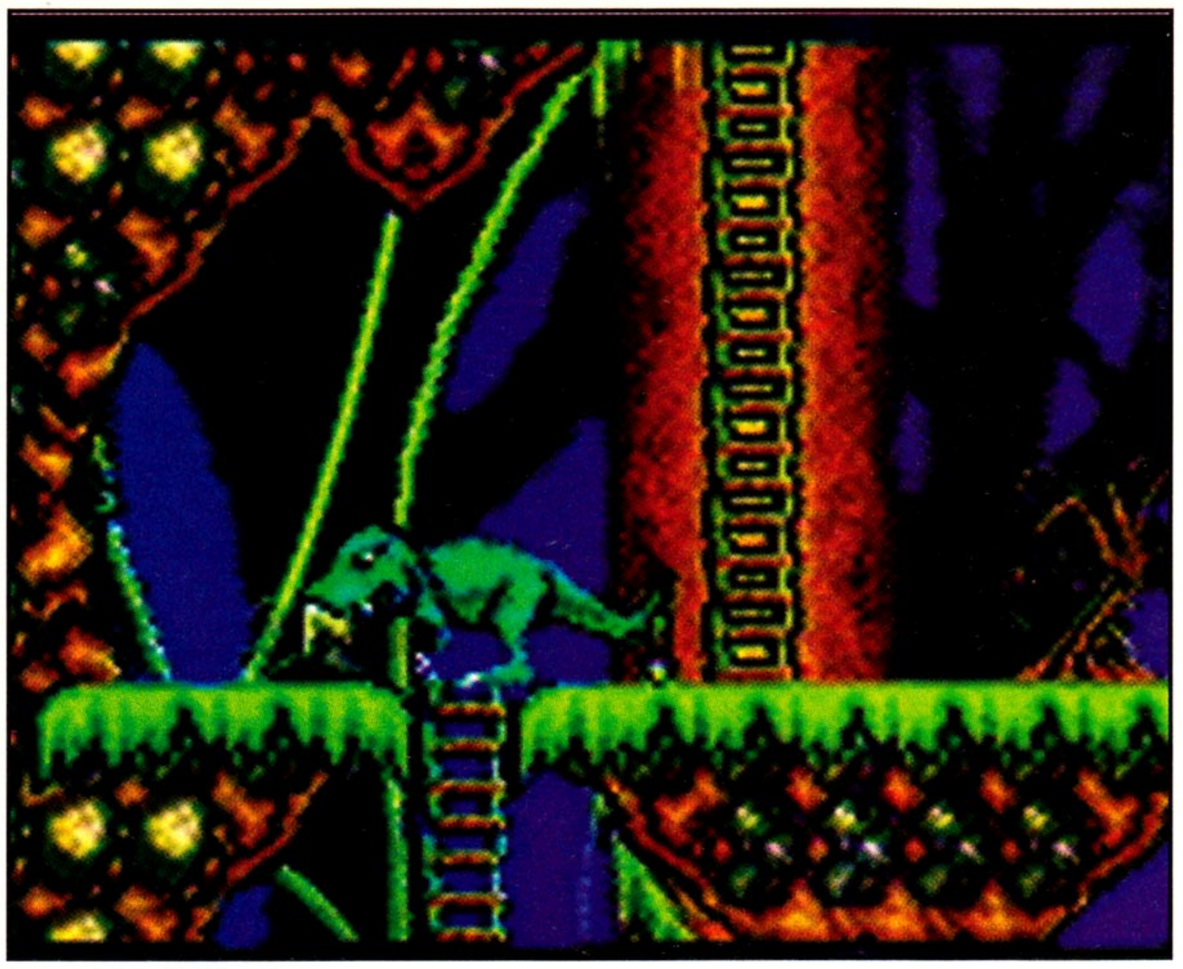
SOFTWARE GALLERY

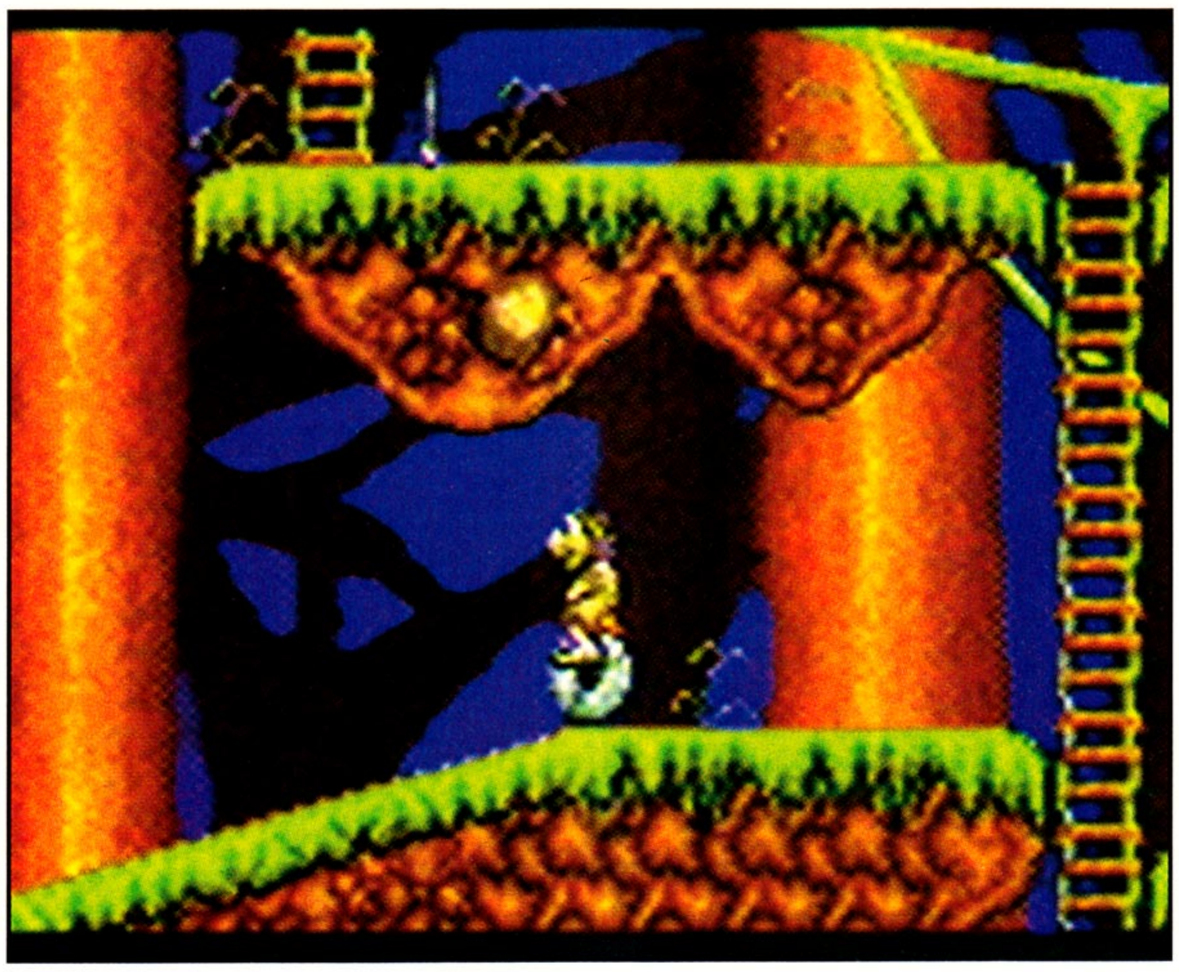
Humans

Imagitec/Gametek
Designed by: Rod Humble
MS-DOS
1 Player



The idea for a game like **Civilization** could never have developed in Sid Meier's mind had one of his ancestors not discovered the secret of fire. OK, so maybe Sid's tribe didn't have anything to do with it personally; the point is that real civilizations could not have developed without the impetus provided by technological improvements. In the Cenozoic period, some 66 million years ago, early man began to form crude hand implements and use these tools to shape his environment. Tribal societies evolved at a pace consistent with innovative applications of these tools. Tribes reluctant or unable to keep pace rapidly passed (or were driven) into extinction.

Approaching a bleak period of history with tongue in cheek, **Humans** casts the player as leader of a small band of slackers who, without guidance, would stand around and do nothing to better themselves. Each level has a specific objective, such as discovering an item (spears, the wheel, fire, etc.) or using a tool to accomplish an objective. Players begin with 12 tribal members and attract others after completing certain levels. Tribal members are lost through clumsiness, engaging in the practice of dry cliff diving, being toasted by fellow tribesmen who don't entirely comprehend fire safety and various other methods of comical demise. Because each level requires a minimum number of tribesmen to complete, the total population of the tribe does not exactly equate to player lives. Although player score is determined by difficulty of the level, the number of surviving tribesmen, and the amount of time remaining on the clock when each segment is completed, levels are designed to challenge intuitive thought rather than lightning reflexes. Survival of the fittest is determined by who can look past the obvious solution, which is never the right path in later stages of the game, to find the true secret of the level.



Whether successful or not, players are treated to a brief animated vignette at the end of the level, such as a caveman stepping on a spear and having it spring up and knock his teeth out.

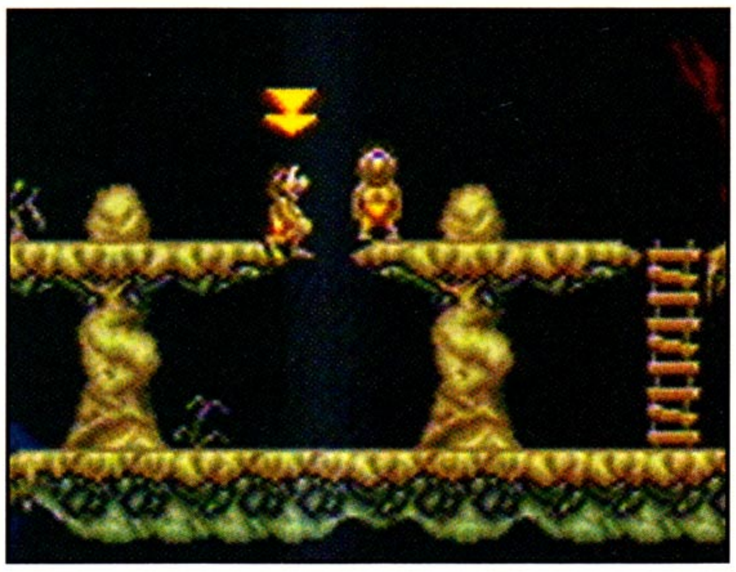
The interface is icon-based but supports joysticks *vice* a mouse. Although this may seem unusual at first, the combination of keyboard and joystick creates a good play mechanic. Players change the active character with the function keys and, depending on which implement the human is using, selects which action will be performed via the space bar. The system is simple and elegant, and allows players the precise movement control essential in many levels.

Whether pole vaulting on a spear or riding a wheel *B.C.*-style, players will be delighted with the originality of this release. **Humans** is a true rarity, a lighthearted thinking man's game in its purest form.

The only caution that must be heeded is not to run over the Witch Doctor's toe with the wheel...not more than once anyway. It's good for the funny bone but rough on the poor tribesmen.

Watch out for the Dinosaurs. They are a little out of place on the time line but hey, it is a game.

— Ed Dille



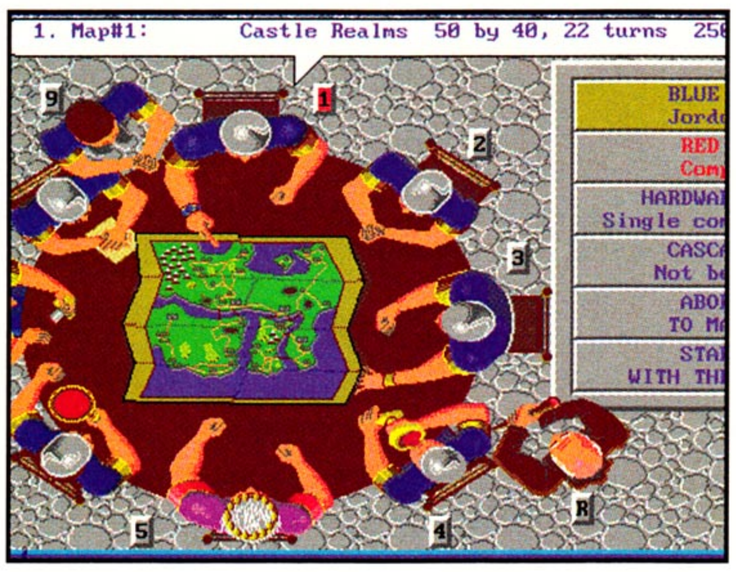
Teamwork and intelligence are what the player must supply to save the humans.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	86%
Sound	82%
Playability	88%
OVERALL	85%

Conquered Kingdoms

Quantum Quality Productions
Designed by: Bruce Williams and Thurston Searfoss
MS-DOS
1-2 Players

QQP's initial release, **The Lost Admiral**, was such a good first effort that it garnished several award nominations and significant media interest at the end of 1991. **Conquered Kingdoms** is QQP's latest addition to a growing list of strategy titles that share two common attributes, highly competent AI routines and infinite situational variety. These attributes combine to maximize player replay value and ensure that each title establishes a permanent address on the hard drive.

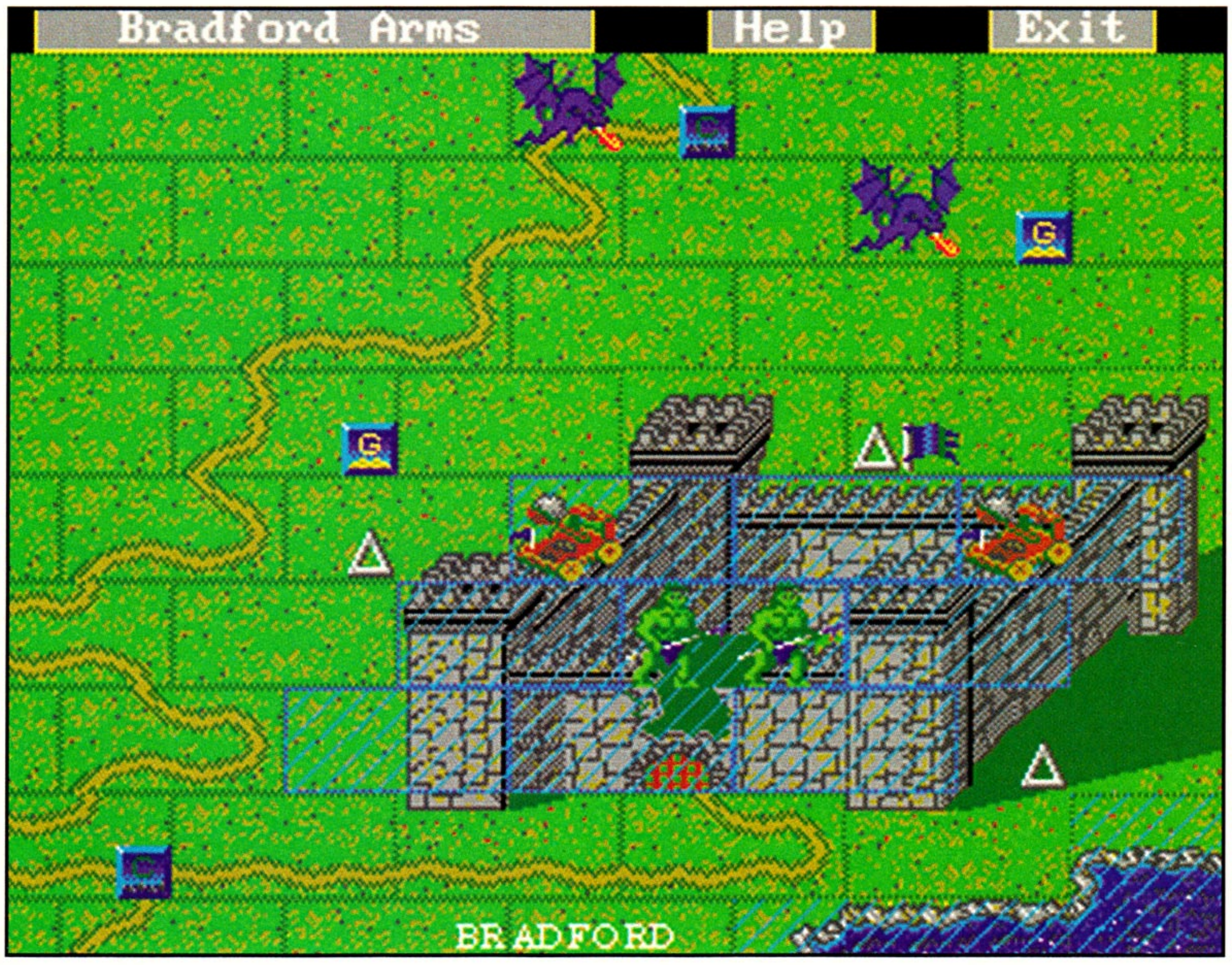


Careful planning and strategic tactics will ensure a quick and decisive victory.

Small, independent software publishing is always a risky venture at best. Not only do developers incur significant risk to their personal assets, they are often forced to lay their eggs in only one or two baskets. Further, their titles must entice consumers away from the plethora of competing software from bigger companies who have excellent retail distribution networks. The dilemma is that small firms can have the greatest design in the world and still go down in flames if they can't get it in front of consumers. The lesson is simple: if one feels strongly about the quality of a small publisher, bug the local retailers to carry its wares. **Conquered Kingdoms** is a product capable of generating that level of passion.

Conquered Kingdoms puts players in the role of the man who would be king but is forced to work his way up from lowly squire. Either single battles or the entire Cascatia campaign may be played, and each scenario begins with a set number of buy points to field one's armies. Two sets of unit types are included with the game, basic and advanced. Basic units include swordsmen, archers and other recognizable medieval military units. The advanced set includes fantasy pieces like wizards, dragons, trolls and the like. Each unit has unique attack abilities and at least one other type of unit against which it is virtually defenseless.

This design choice forces players to diversify the composition of their armies and give judicious forethought to their strategic approach. Things are further complicated by electing random combat results from the menu. This can lead units to miss or to inflict either greater or less damage than usual.



The battlefield is laid out with a 3-D perspective, allowing total control.

Battles are fought on one of nine beautifully rendered terrain maps. Each map contains cities, castles and various resources which produce reinforcement units. Replay of any given map reveals the true intricacy of its design. Each kingdom is created so multiple strategies are viable on either side. Further, many of these work only at the exclusion of other approaches by the enemy. Consequently, unlike many other strategy titles, long term players are incapable of refining the unbeatable approach, keeping every game fresh and challenging.

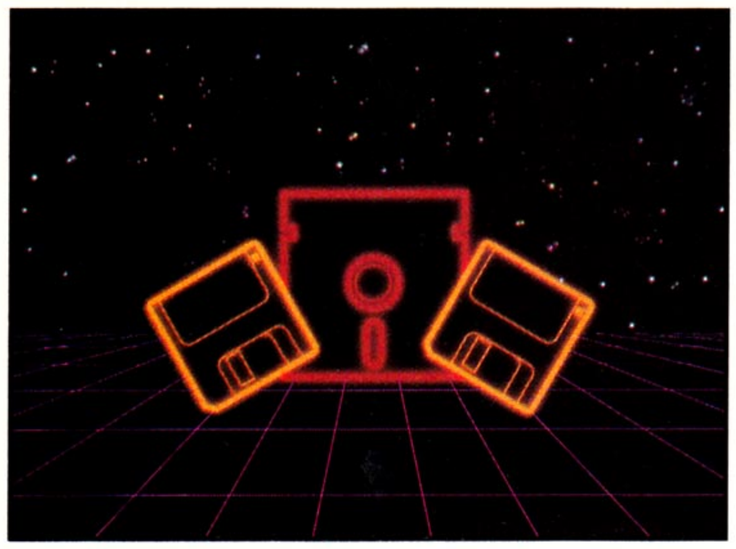
To become King of the land, the officer piece must stay alive and healthy throughout a long series of conquests. The program tracks the character's progress through a notch system which approximates conventional experience points. The most worthy difference is that notches can be lost through poor performance on the field of battle.

Other notable features include full modem support and even a play-by-mail utility that allows turn resolution via downloading and mailing of disks between non-modem equipped players. Features like this reflect QQP's visionary development approach, as well as their responsiveness to player feedback.

Conquered Kingdoms is worthy of feifdoms in households across the country, as well as a nomination for best strategy game of 1992. Pardon me for now, I have to man the battlements to break this siege!

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	86%
Sound	84%
Playability	98%
OVERALL	89%

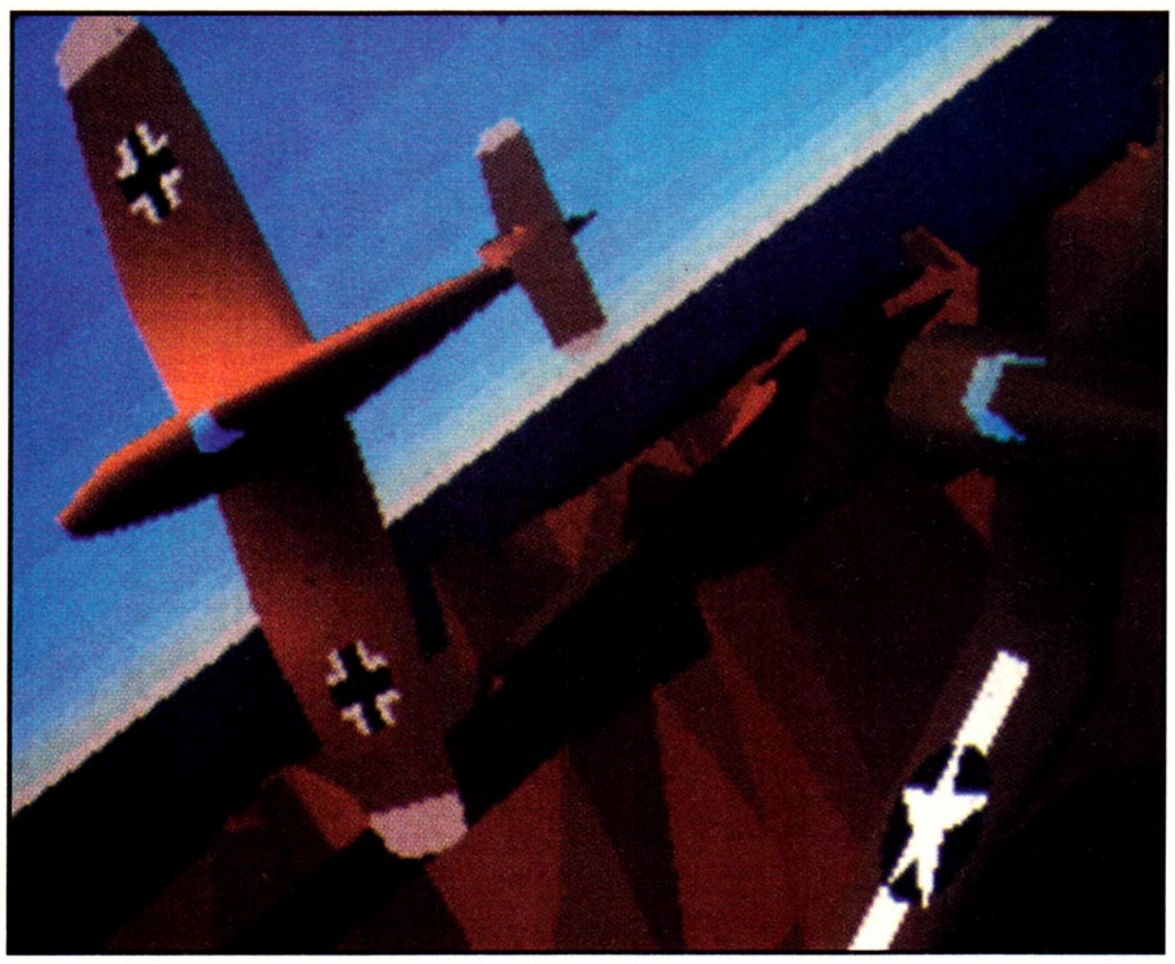


SOFTWARE GALLERY

Stunt Island

Disney Software
Designed by: Adrian Stephens
MS-DOS
1 Player

Just as Walt Disney Studios revived the animated motion picture with *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty & the Beast* and *Aladdin*, Disney Software takes a completely different approach to computer entertainment with **Stunt Island**. Part simulator, part 3-D toy and part film studio, Disney's latest game inspires creativity and challenges players to devise and successfully complete the most amazing aeronautical stunts they can imagine. These stunts can be replayed and edited with the program's handy interface and later saved to disk and traded for other players' feats. Gamers can control as much or as little of the action as they desire.



Stunt Island's main interface consists of a series of locations that house "offices" specific to a part of the film creation process. The most important of these are the production office (where stunts are put together and played out), the post-production studio (where film is edited and cut) and the airfield (where the player selects a flying machine to use in the stunt).

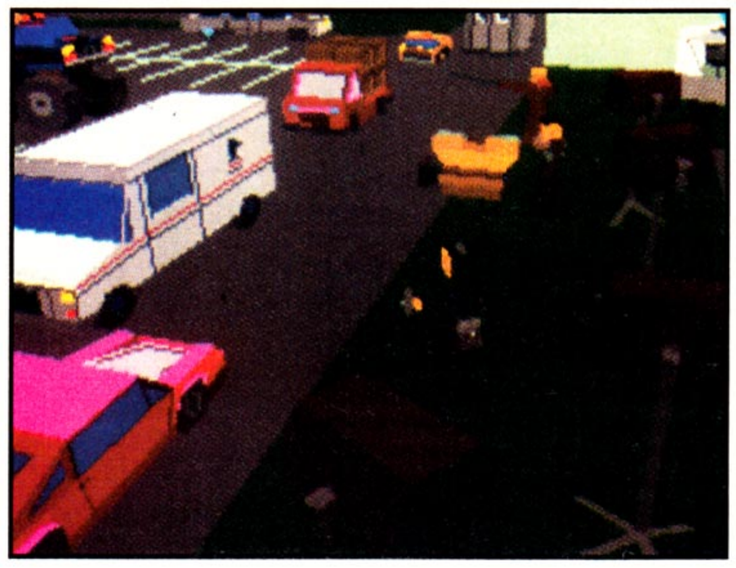
The program's locations are accessed and connected by road signs to complete the illusion of total containment of the stunts on the titular island. Players just hop into the cockpit of one of the many vehicles and try it out, edit their own stunt film of up to 20 minutes in length or even enter the Stuntman of the Year competition, a series of 32 events which offer monetary rewards and acclaim to the player's counterpart in Stunt Island.

Stunt Island would never succeed were it not for the simplicity bestowed upon the complicated process of film production in the interface. The game teaches players how to edit locations, set up events and control the vehicles' movements with tutorial information and lots of sample stunts that they can pick apart and reconstruct into something entirely different. Players set up events in **Stunt Island** with a simple menu-based command system which can be made to show the results of changes instantly in the editing windows.

The greatest amount of flexibility in **Stunt Island** comes from the piece-by-piece approach to stunt editing that breaks down the film into logical steps. Additionally, players probably won't get bored with the selection of objects, planes and locations in the game. **Stunt Island** boasts over 45 different aircraft, from WWI and WWII planes and bombers to the space shuttle and commercial jets. There are 34 different locations in **Stunt Island**, the variety of which makes the possible stunts more dramatic. Players can fly over and through Stonehenge, land and crash at LAX Airport and even storm Alcatraz or an ancient castle.

There are eight possible cameras in use for any given stunt to try to capture just the right look, and over 800 buildings, props and other objects to place in a film. Stunt Island even allows use of one of the objects as a "flexible" flyer, so that barns or cars can soar overhead for some interesting effects. An expansion disk is on the way from Disney Software, with more locations, objects and stunts for players to use and enjoy.

The greatest stunts in the world would be lifeless and boring if they didn't come across as real to the people watching them. Stunt Island excels in the graphics and sound areas to complete the illusion of film quality for interested viewers. The 3-D polygon-based graphics have the right level of detail to eliminate most of the choppiness inherent in moving polygonal objects. The colors and special effects like explosions and fire expand the canvas of stunt designers.



Exciting cinematic movie displays can be filmed, edited and viewed on-screen.

The sound effects and music are usually the last parts added to a film, but their inclusion makes an incredible difference. The program is flexible enough to allow user-supplied music and even voice-overs (for owners of SoundBlaster sound boards).

Stunt Island was an interesting concept from the start, but Disney's implementation of the idea will have players hooked on the film-making process and determined to create the neatest stunts to show off to all their friends. Users may want to check out the many bbs systems and networks for some incredible films made by other **Stunt Island** fans. Happy filming!

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	85%
Sound	85%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	90%

Air Support

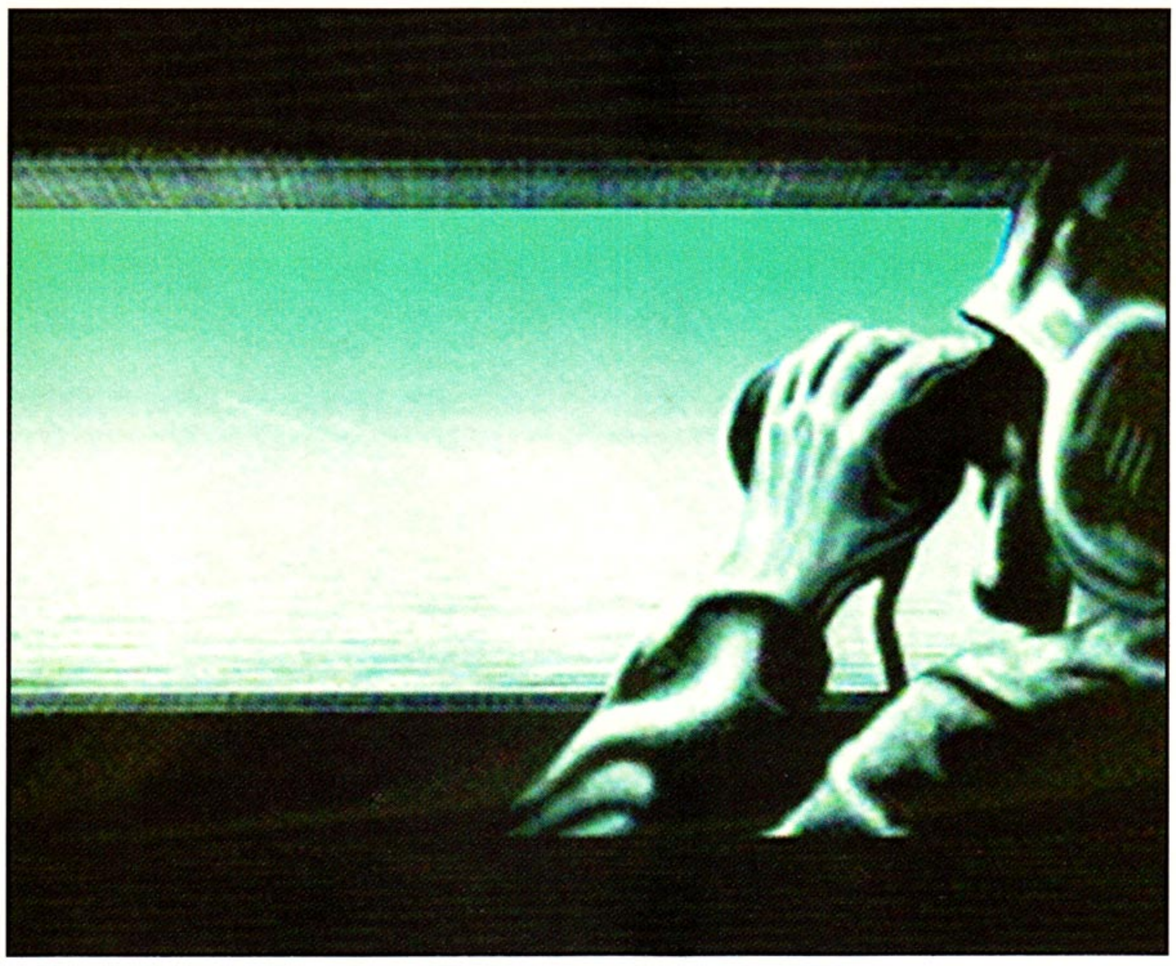
Psygnosis
System Reviewed: Amiga
Designed by: Alaric J. Binnie
1 Player

Don't be misled by its title and the illustration of twin Tornado ADVs soaring across the cover of Psygnosis' latest battle-in-a-box. **Air Support** is *not* a screaming, seat-of-the-pants combat flight simulator. It's more like a tedious and less enjoyable version of their own previous release, **Armour-Geddon**. It's a mystery why Psygnosis thought that a wire-frame strategic battle simulation was a step forward here in the age of fast, filled polygons.

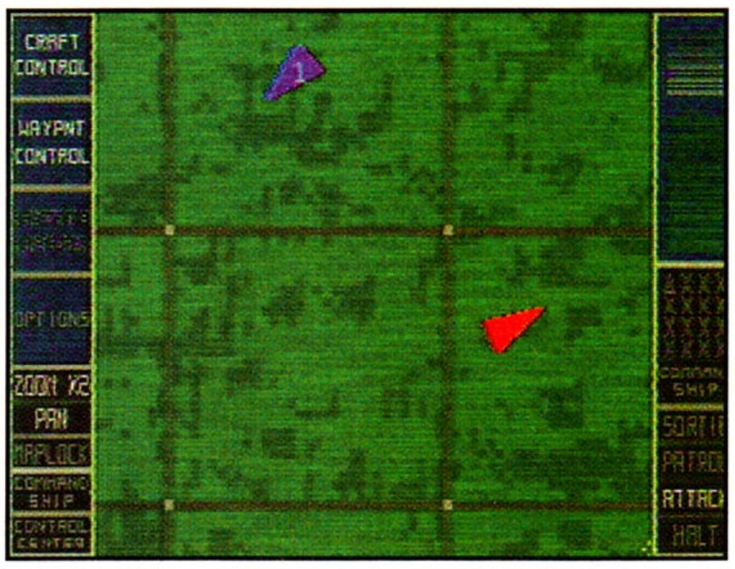
It seems war in the year 2050 is much too dangerous to be fought on actual battlefields, and weapons systems far too costly to be developed and tested in the real world. Consequently all of this fiddling about takes place via the Air Support Battlefield Simulation, the first in a series of battlefield scenarios designed by Military SimTech Command using the C-Corp Chaos 2050 mainframe which, for better or worse, can still be accessed by ancient, 20th Century Amigas and Atari STs.

To be fair, once the player buys into the concept, the wireframe graphics are actually somewhat engaging, in a virtual reality sort of way. Add to this the option of viewing the simulation in stereoscopic 3-D (Psygnosis supplies a pair of red-and-blue-lensed glasses) and something almost interesting begins to develop.

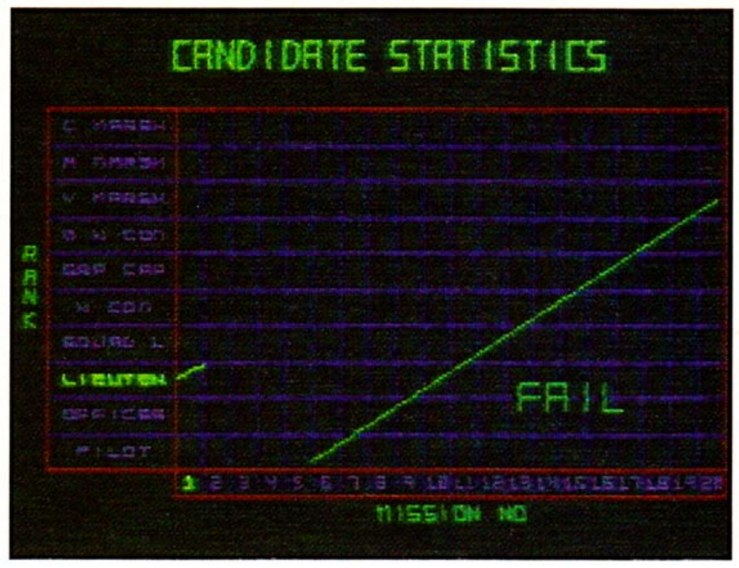
Air Support is basically a simulation of war between the Earth's Northern and Southern Hemispheres, majoring in strategy with a minor in tactics. Using the ASBS to build entire weapon systems as well as manipulate the environment and resources, the whole bloody conflict is fought from the safety of a computer keyboard. The player is in command of a single Defense Complex and all its components, including up to 16 programmable attack and reconnaissance craft. But before he can enter the full simulation he must complete 20 training missions. These are tackled on a pass/fail basis, growing progressively harder and awarding rank to candidates who show a consistent rate of success.



All major decisions in Air Support are made on the Main Map Screen which provides an overall view of the landscape, vehicle positions and headings. It also enables patrol assignments for all active warcraft.



Strategy is the key to planning missions and successfully conquering the game.



As missions progress, it is necessary to do better each time to continue passing.

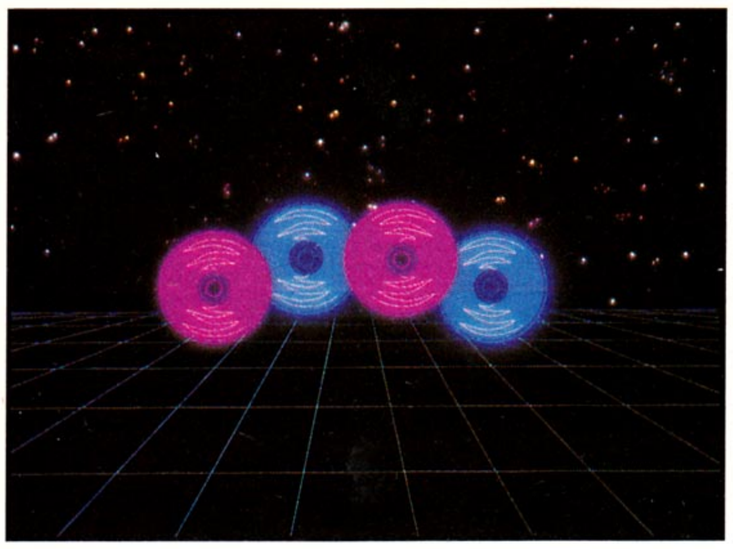
The Defense Complex, the core of military operations, consists of six different units: Headquarters, Power Generators, Factories, Missile Command Posts, Radar Stations, and Connections, the conduits through which all power and command decisions are transmitted. From the map the player may also design the layout of his Defense Complex to suit his strategic preferences. Attack craft must be assigned waypoints and may be set to patrol on auto or may be controlled directly by the player, who can jump in and out of any vehicle at any time with a first person, out-the-window, wire-frame vector display.

There are loads of options to enhance or simplify the simulation, including synthesized speech and multiple ways in which to view the map (contour or relief; overhead or isometric views).

Ultimately, however, the depth of the strategic element is let down by the graphics of the tactical. There's just no getting around the dated wire-frame display. With the splendid **Armour-Geddon** still available and rumors of **Armour-Geddon II** down the road, **Air Support** feels more like something run up the flagpole just to see if anyone would salute.

— Scott Wolf

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	55%
Sound	50%
Playability	60%
OVERALL	65%



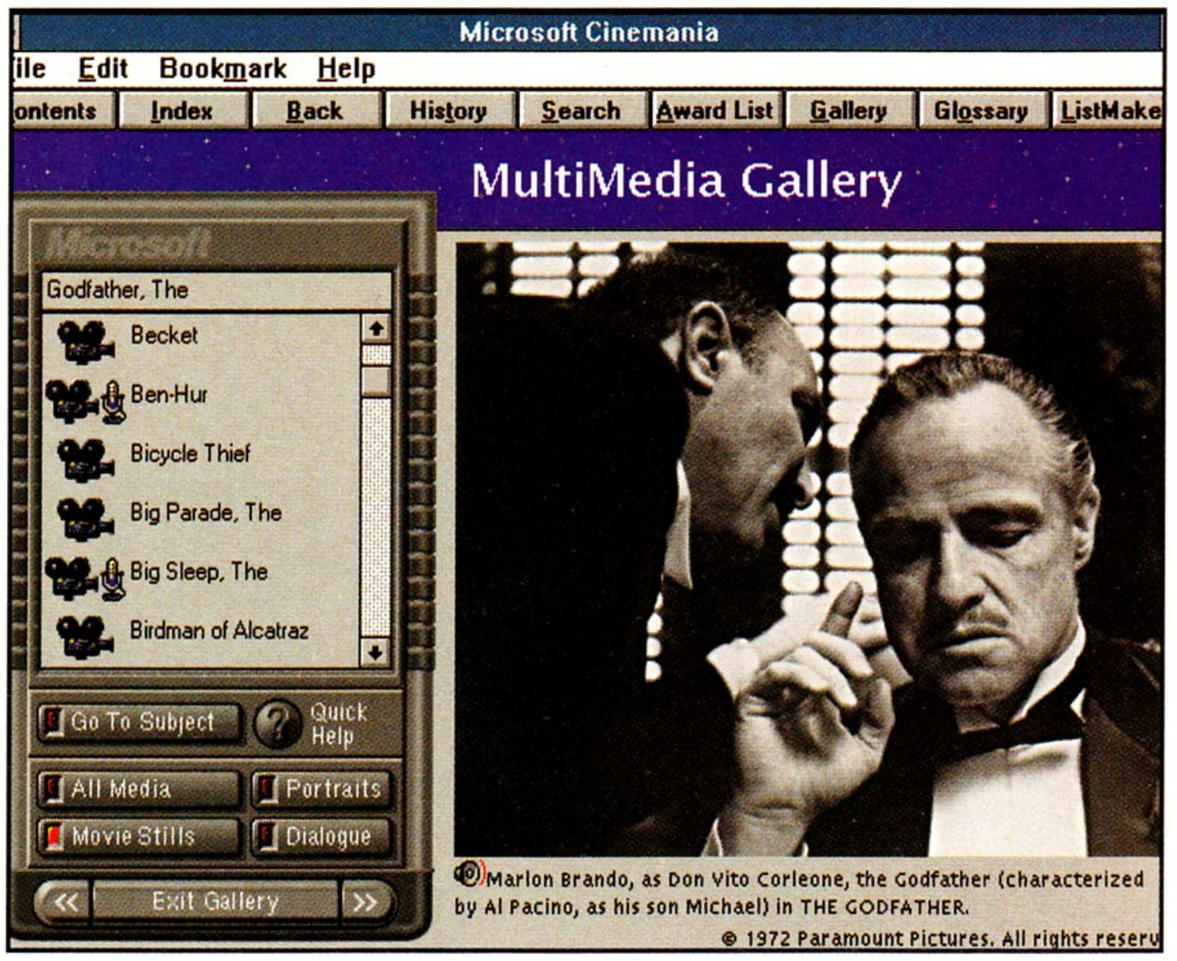
CD GALLERY

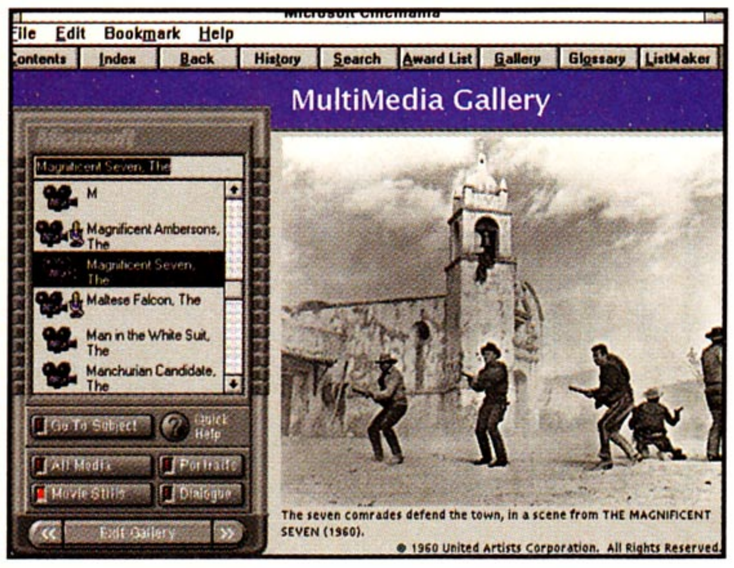
Cinemania

Microsoft Corporation
MPC IBMs and compatibles

The lines between fun and information were bound to dissolve once someone put CD technology to good use databasing entertainments. Microsoft did exactly that with **Cinemania**, an interactive movie guide that would undoubtedly sell many more copies if people had the chance to play around with the system for a while.

All entertainment fans have some interest in movies and **Cinemania**'s vast database of facts, lists and pictures might reveal their knowledge about actors and motion pictures to be deeper than they once thought.





Finally a movie guide is available that shows us what the movies look like.

Cinemania is a nice blend of multimedia with the motion picture world, all topped off with an interface designed to look like a television/VCR remote control. The program has many approaches to explore movies; these methods represent the buttons on the remote control.

Cinemania features capsule summaries from *Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1992* and other information from sources such as *The Motion Picture Guide* and *The Encyclopedia of Film.* Users easily find their favorite movies, actors, directors and genres. On the other hand, the experience is so pleasant, they may get lost in the celebration of the motion picture that is **Cinemania**.

The remote control interface is the doorway to **Cinemania**'s power. Click on the Movie Listings or Biographies buttons and then an entry from the list to get specific information about over 700 films, 3,000 personalities and 19,000 of Maltin's summaries. The Topics button accesses articles about filmmaking; the Glossary brings up definitions of such phrases as "best boy" and "gaffer."

Cinemania has a few options that are even more interesting and fun to play with. The Overview button starts an animated demonstration of **Cinemania** to impress your friends with the power of CDs and multimedia. Click on the Award button to access a list of Academy Awards up to and including the 1991 movies. **Cinemania**'s ListMaker utility groups movies for saving to disk and printing.

There are options to view things like the Academy Awards for reference.

The most entertaining feature of **Cinemania** is the Gallery option. It is there that the power of multimedia shines through. The browser can look at photographs and listen to sound clips of the most popular movies. The images and sounds jar the memory unlike any of the other information.

Cinemania is a wonderful program for CD drive owners with some motion picture interest. The flexible interface opens up the data to quick searches and listings, and displays similar information for each film (color/black-and-white, running time, MPAA rating), for total immersion into the magic of motion pictures.

All that's missing is the popcorn and the sticky floor!

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	85%
Sound	80%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	90%

Hook

Sony Imagesoft
Sega CD
1 Player

Sony Imagesoft has brought **Hook** to the game screen in several earlier incarnations, for the Super Nintendo and 8-Bit Nintendo systems. Now they have made their excellent movie adaption available to owners of the Sega CD.

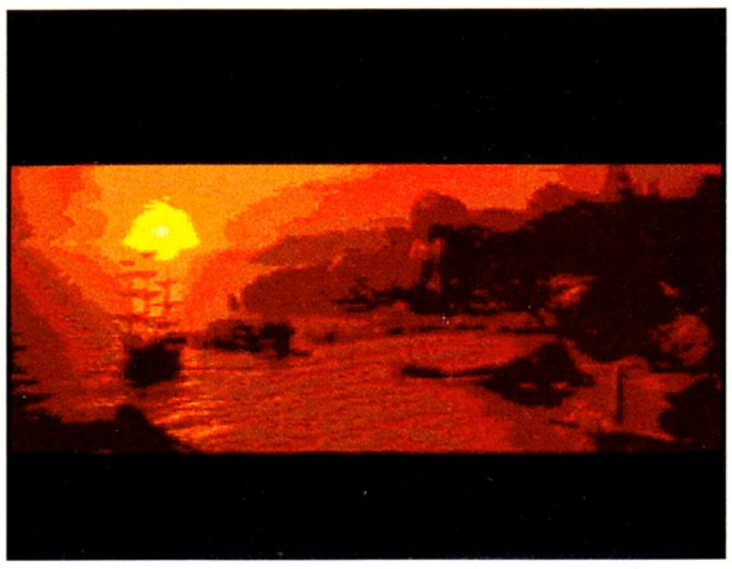
The game has not changed from the SNES version. Peter Banning is an average businessman, content with his job and his family. Then one day while visiting in London, Captain Hook emerges from Neverland and kidnaps his children. Peter is confused and doesn't understand who this Hook fellow is and why he would do such a thing. And when Tinkerbell shows up to take him back to Neverland, Peter is sure that something strange is going on. After all, Neverland isn't a real place, just something out of a storybook for children. Or so he thought.

So begins a twelve level adventure in which the player has the opportunity to become Peter Pan. The goal is to convince the Lost Boys Peter really is *THE* Pan, find Peter's children, and defeat Hook once and for all.

While all of the different backdrops are not straight out of the movie, the overall feel has been captured. Neverland is portrayed as a land filled with adventure and excitement of all kinds. The levels are filled with interesting enemies and wonderful scenery that should captivate players and draw them into this familiar fantasy world and allow them to experience some of the wonder and adventure that is why people like to dream about places like Neverland in the first place.

The graphics in the Sega CD version of **Hook** are crisp and clear, with bright colors and rich, multi-textured backgrounds. The characters are well animated, and move with no slowdown or flicker. Even when there are many objects on the screen at once, Peter can fly and jump without any interference.

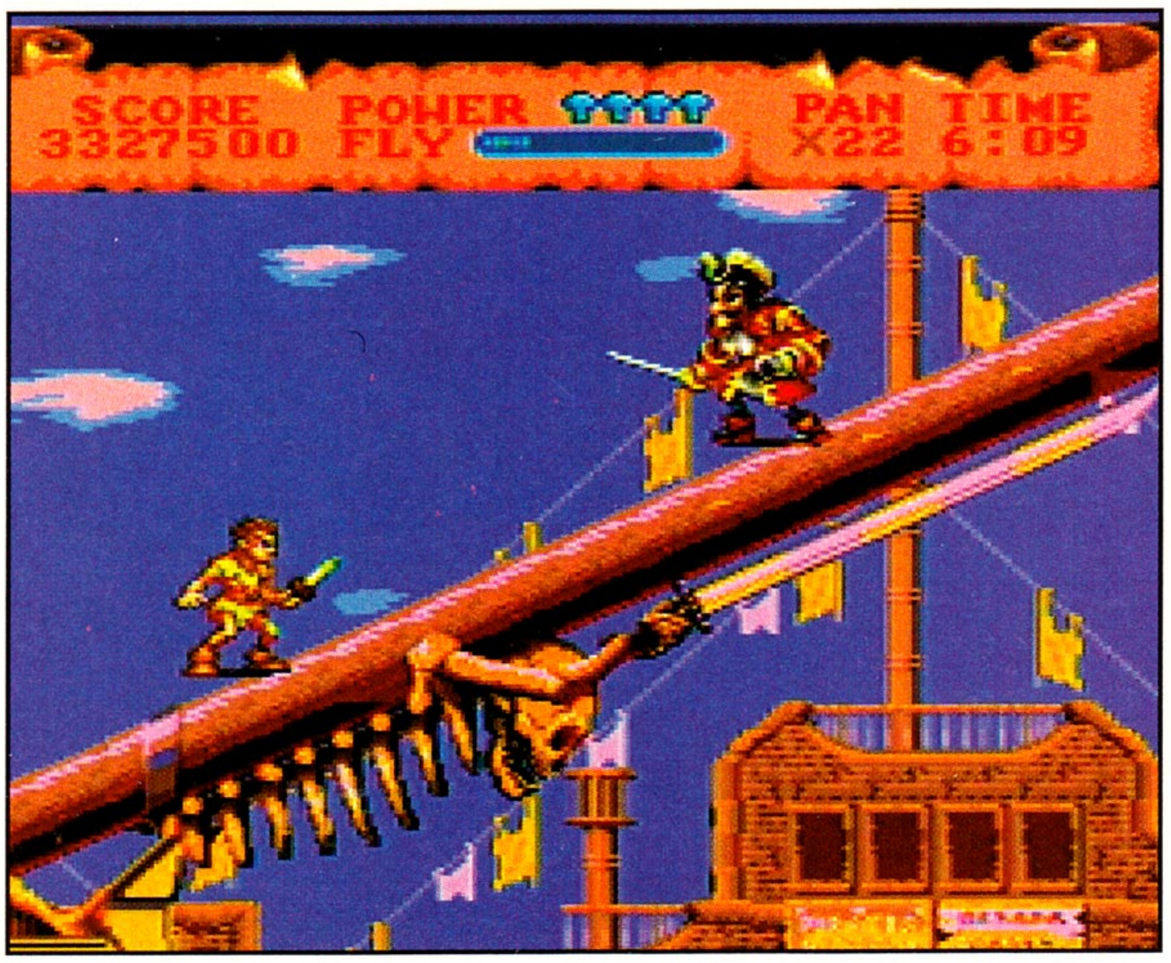
The game play is also solid, keeping the smoothness of the previous 16-Bit version. Peter still seems to float when



This is the best of the new cinemas. Most are very pixilated and hard to see.

he jumps, but that is fairly easy to get used to. Flying is still executed with a single motion, and maneuvering while in the air (or under water) is as simple as pointing the character in the direction you want him to go. There is no frantic button tapping to keep Peter afloat here.

While the game play and graphics remain virtually unchanged from the cartridge version, the music is another story. The beautiful movie soundtrack is here in all of its CD-quality glory. Sony has matched up the appropriate pieces to the scenes where they are best used, and has created a captivating score that soars beyond that of all but the finest games on the market.



While this version of **Hook** is undeniably a very good game, there are some things that will disappoint those who have been looking forward to some of the enhancements offered by the CD format.

There is very little speech included, as the only thing that was recorded was the same two or three segments represented by text in the SNES version. Also disappointing is the use of movie footage as cinemas. The quality of these pictures is shaky at best, and most of the time it is very difficult to even tell what the picture is of. The new computer graphic of Hook's ship is nice, but it is short and does not even appear in the body of the game, but rather in the introduction. It would have been nice to see the programmers take a little more time with these scenes, and if there was nothing better they could do with the exising pictures, they should have opted for some better animated cinematic art instead.

There is also a slight access time problem, but nothing so severe as to take away from the enjoyment of the game.

It does seem that there was not enough attention paid to the timing of sequences, and how long something would be on the screen before the computer automatically switches to the next scene. Some of the cinemas passed by in the blink of an eye. If a little more time was taken in programming, these problems would have been solved.

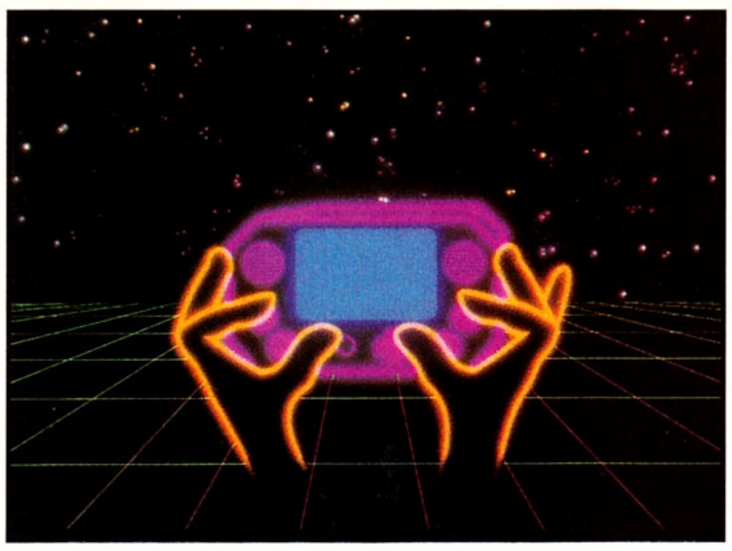
The game itself is filled with good graphics and amusing animations.

All in all, **Hook** is a solid version of an excellent game. Keep in mind that the game is easy to beat, and that those who are looking for a significant upgrade over the cartridge version will only find the same game with much better music.

Hook is one of those games that lets players be kids again for just a while.

— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	92%
Sound	97%
Playability	89%
OVERALL	89%



PORTABLE PLAYTIME

The Little Mermaid

Capcom
Game Boy
1 Player

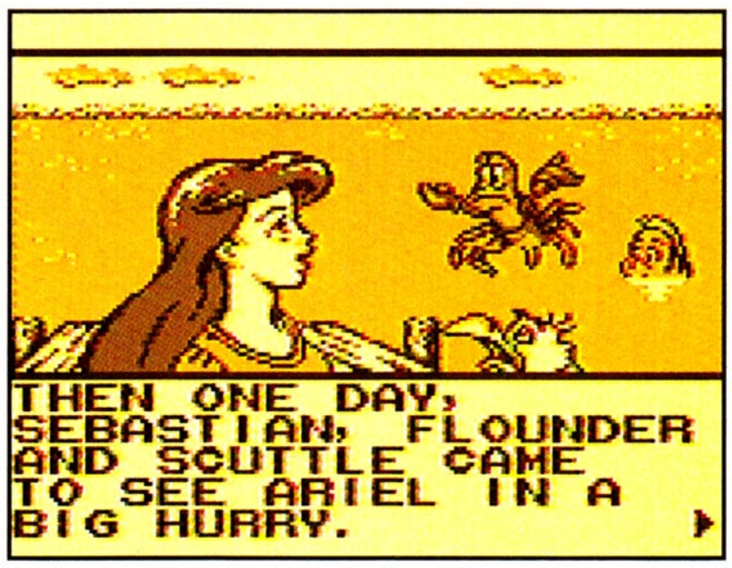
Capcom presents **The Little Mermaid** as an addition to their ever-growing list of Disney licensed titles. While this game takes the characters from the popular movie and presents them in interactive format, the story is unique and unrelated. In this version, Ariel becomes human in order to be with Prince Eric, and is living happily until some of her undersea friends inform her that the wicked sea witch. Ursula has cast a spell over all of the fish in the sea, making them do her evil bidding. If someone doesn't do something to stop her, Ursula will soon take over the whole sea.

So, Ariel explained the situation to her beloved Prince Eric, and went off to Ursula's castle to break the evil spell.

The object of the game is to help Ariel make her way to Ursula's castle, and defeat the Sea Witch once and for all, thus breaking the spell and making the sea safe for all her friends.

If the game sounds familiar, it's because it was previously released for the Nintendo. This portable version compares favorably to the Nintendo version, losing only the color.

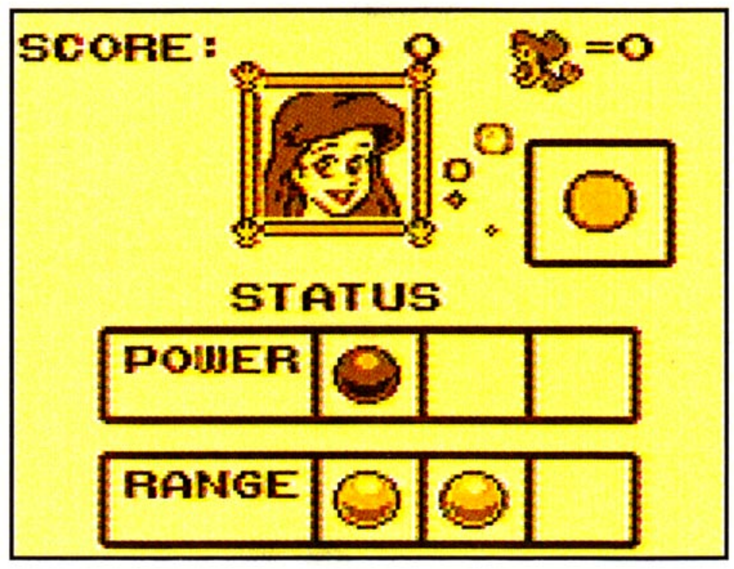
The graphics are good and the characters are quite recognizable. Even though the Game Boy is black and white, the programmers managed to get a good feel of the sea, including some really good backgrounds in the sunken ship sequence. The animation is fluid and there is no slowdown when multiple characters are on screen.



The Little Mermaid offers cinema scenes to advance the story between levels.

The sounds are also good, taking on a Jamaican beat. There is even a version of the award winning "Under the Sea" to liven things up.

Game play is smooth and straightforward. Ariel can swim, jump onto land, shoot bubbles around her enemies, and pick objects up. There are different items she can collect to make her bubbles stronger and give them a longer range.



Ariel can increase her shot's power and range, but when she dies it goes back.

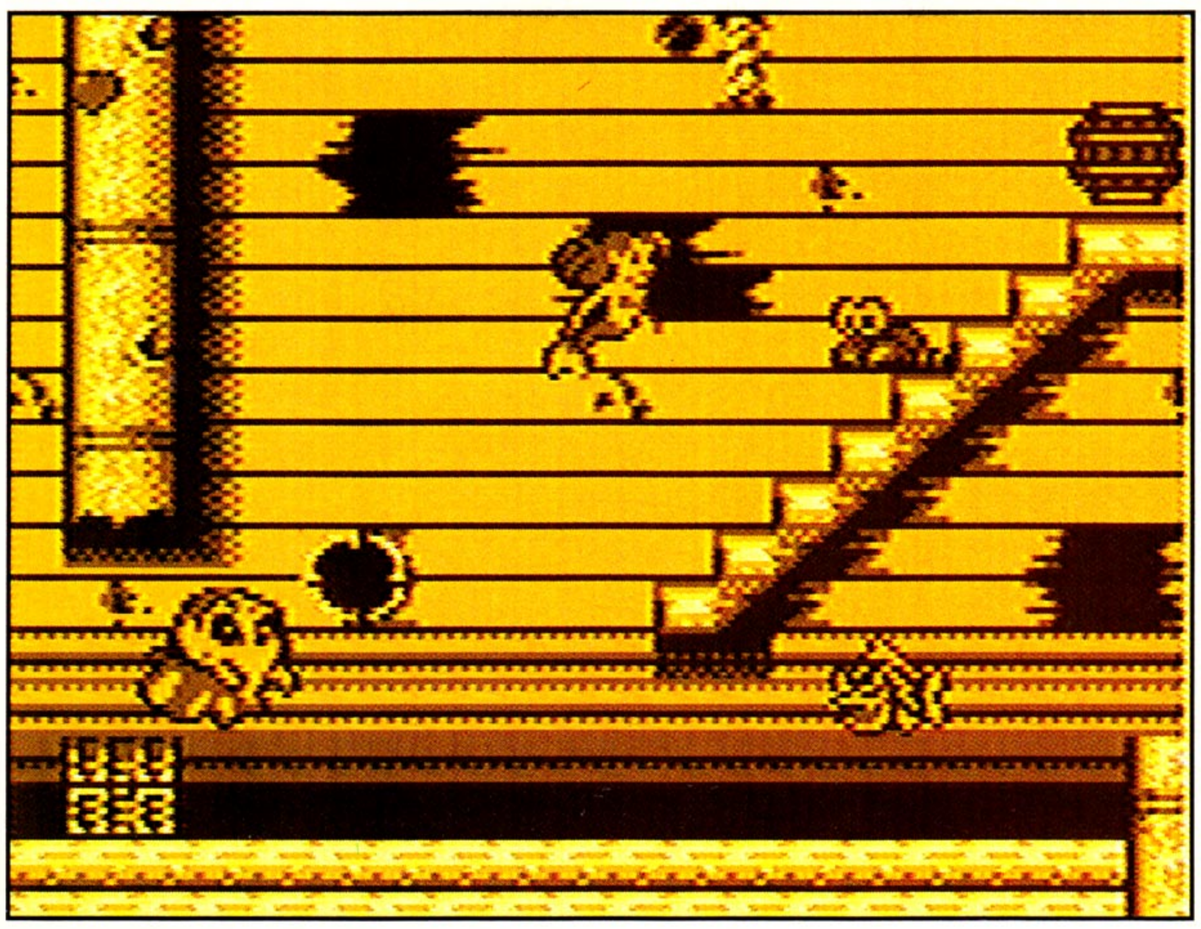
When fighting the bigger enemies, Ariel can turn fish into bubbles and throw them.

Obviously, this game was designed with children, particularly girls, in mind. The introduction of a female hero is refreshing, especially when most women in video games spend their time locked in some psycho-boss' castle.

It is also nice to see a company concentrating on games that the family can play together. While **The Little Mermaid** is not the most challenging game ever released, it is not the easiest either. It was designed so that the whole family could play together and have some fun.

Nothing amazing here, just a solid game from a company with a reputation for providing good games. Anyone looking for a fast, action-packed blood-fest, should look somewhere else. But for a laid back game that is a lot of fun, **The Little Mermaid** is a great catch.

— Marc Camron

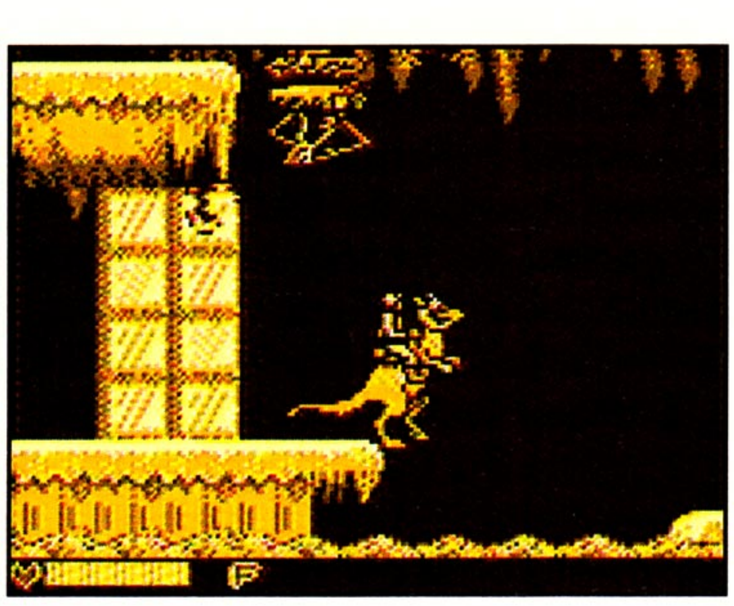


RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	82%
Sound	84%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	84%

1 The Empire Strikes Back

Capcom
Game Boy
1 Player

For the last fifteen years, *Star Wars* has been a household name in the United States. The three films are in the list of the top ten grossing movies of all time. There have been numerous novels; recently a new series of books continues where the movies left off. There is also talk about George Lucas gearing up to start filming the next series of movies, *Star Wars 1-3*.



Luke must guide his Tauntaun with care. Step in the water, and he'll die.

And for almost as long as there has been *Star Wars* movies and books, people have made games based on the series. There were several cartridges for the old Atari 2600, and an arcade game that blew people away in the early 1980s. More recently there were a couple of 8-Bit Nintendo games, one amazing Super Nintendo game, a computer X-Wing fighter simulator, and **Star Wars** for the Game Boy. Though the Game Boy version of **Star Wars** has only been available a short while, Capcom has already completed their next installment of the series, **The Empire Strikes Back**, also for the Game Boy.

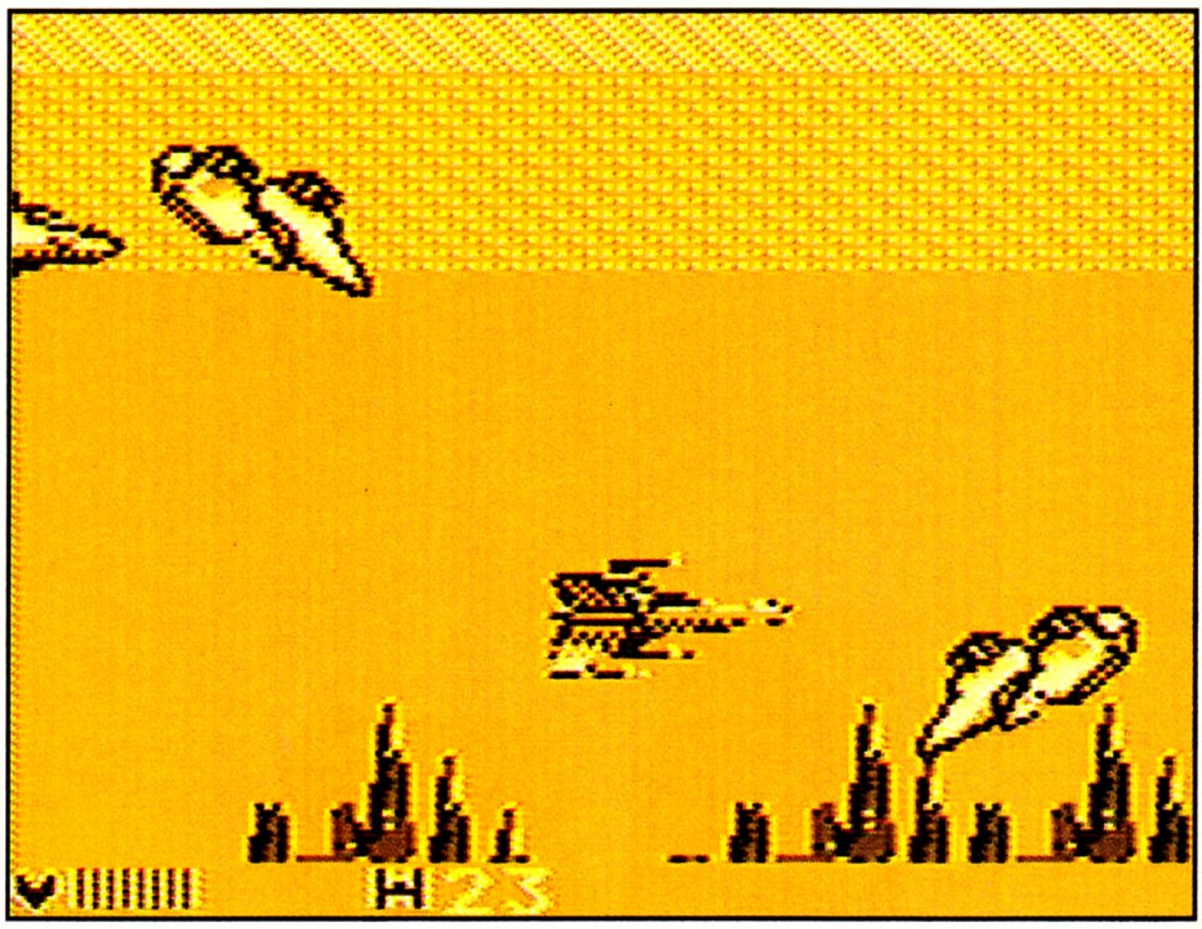
The Empire Strikes Back picks up where the first movie/game left off. The rebel alliance has destroyed the Death Star, and is planning further damage to the Empire. The rebels have established a base on the ice planet, Hoth, and are waiting for their next confrontation with the evil Darth Vader.

The game starts with Luke Skywalker on the back of his Tauntaun (a ridable creature that can withstand the cold temperatures) searching for the site of a strange meteor landing. In great space-opera fashion, the meteor turns out to be an Imperial probe and after Luke destroys it, the rebels must get ready for some company.

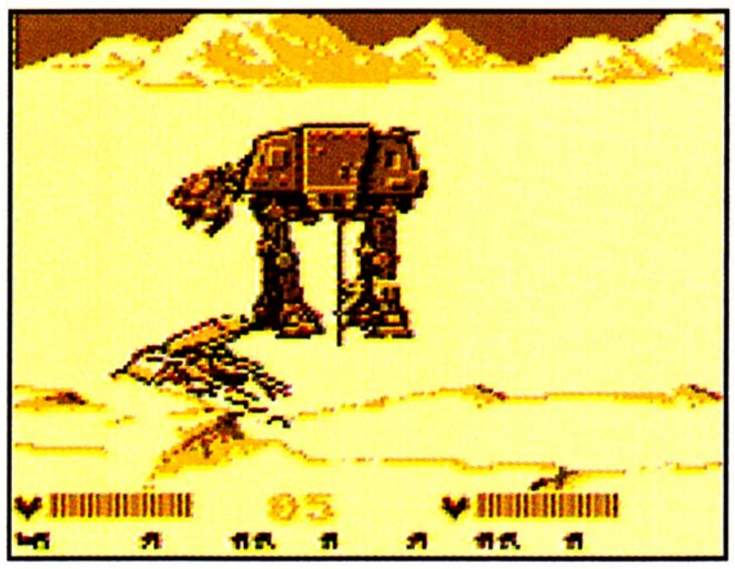
Before Luke can get back to the rebel base, he must fight off the Wompah (a.k.a. an abominable snowman) and escape from his cave.

The game continues through the various scenes of the movie, including: the snowspeeders fighting the Imperial walkers, the escape from Hoth, Luke's meeting with Yoda on Degobah, training on Degobah, some X-Wing fights around the cloud city of Bespin, and some scenes in Bespin itself.

The game gives wonderful attention to the story of **The Empire Strikes Back.** The graphics are good and the sounds are enjoyable. Unfortunately, the cart falls extremely short in the area of game play. The side scrolling scenes with Luke are jerky, with a stiff feel to them. It is difficult to fire the gun at an angle, and impossible to do so without moving in the direction fired. What is even worse is the fact that Luke can't fire forward while crouching down, making it far too easy to get hit by enemies.



Additionally, some scenes require such precise character control that the play suffers. On the first level, Luke, while riding a Tan-tan, must jump on ice platforms to cross a span of water. If the Tan-tan touches the water, he dies. Luke can touch the water a couple of times



The easiest way to destroy the walkers is to sacrifice the ship and go it on foot.

before using up his life meter (one wonders why a human is so much more resilient than one of the planet's indigenous work animals, but I digress) and must do his best not to slip on the moving ice floes.

The snowspeeder sequence also suffers from poor programming. The speeder flies well, but when confronting one of the giant walkers there is nothing more to do except fly back and forth, chipping away at it while avoiding its shots. Actually, it is much easier to let Luke be shot down, and then blow up the walker by hand. This can be accomplished in one quick movement, and requires much less work that the alternative. It's also a good move since, unaccountably, there is a new snowspeeder waiting for Luke just a short walk from each defeated walker. This sequence also suffers from some terrible slowdown when the snowspeeder and walker are both on the screen. Note that this was a pre-production copy and that this problem may be fixed.

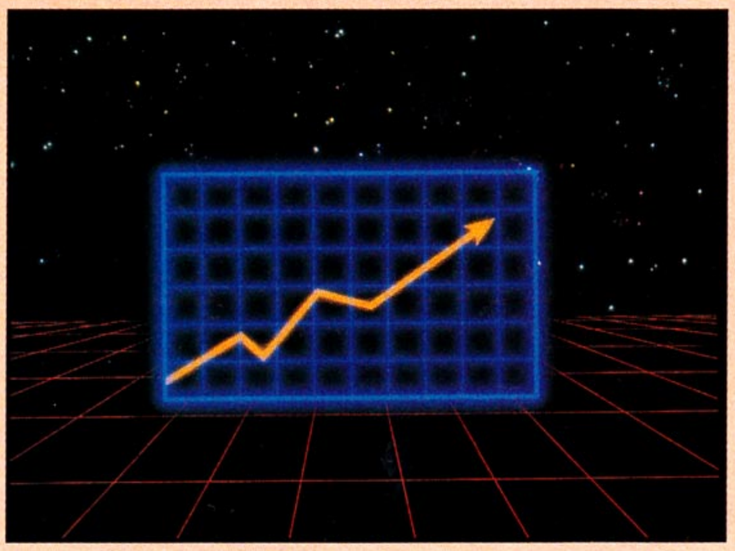
The most enjoyable part of the game was probably the X-wing fighting sequences around the cloud city of Bespin, yet even they quickly became repetitious and were much too easy.

While the game tries very hard to be a great translation of the movie, it falls too short for recommendation. This is one of the rare cases when Capcom didn't accomplish exactly what the design team wanted.

This time the **Empire** strikes out.

— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	72%
Sound	69%
Playability	53%
OVERALL	55%



KUNKEL REPORT

The Wider World of Gaming

By Bill Kunkel

What a difference a year can make!

As 1992 dawned, the electronic gaming universe appeared as close as it has ever been to the dream of system universality. In computing, the MS-DOS standard was unchallenged, with the 386 system designed to hold the fort for years to come. Although the Genesis had a big Christmas, the vast majority of video games were still being marketed toward the NES. And the Game Boy was the only other serious home gaming format.

From the perspective of 20-20 hindsight, however, we can see just how illusory this perception really was. While MS-DOS remains the only viable mass market computer format, for example, warning cries had already been sounded concerning the 386 standard. After spending years at the 286 level, the 386 had barely ceased its birthing cries before talk of the 486 as a far superior format started up. The 8-Bit video game, meanwhile, was enjoying its high noon as the NES prepared to drift off into the slumber of history. And in the hand-held field, Sega's release of the Game Gear version of **Sonic the Hedgehog** helped spur interest among third-party software developers for the system. Gamers even began to see evidence of a comeback for dedicated (i.e., non-programmable) standalones, a format long believed to be moribund.

But perhaps the most significant indicator of the new diversity in electronic gaming is the explosion of new formats being announced or developed. Both Philips (CD-I) and Tandy/Radio Shack (VIS) debuted new, non-compatible CD formats this past Christmas, during which period Sega spent as much of its promotional time and budget pushing its new Sega CD drive as it did hyping **Sonic2**. After all, with several compa-

The Sega CD was perhaps the most eagerly awaited product of the year.

nies already openly exploring the 32-Bit video game format, it was crucial that the Genesis retain its state-of-the-art panache.

Nintendo, on the other hand, has chosen to play a waiting game, which has resulted in even more market chaos. According to the Japanese game giant, 16-Bit technology is insufficient to maximize the potential of CD-based software, so and *its* CD drive will contain an upgrade to transform the SNES into a 32-Bit powerhouse. This interesting strategy wins Nintendo a trump card it doesn't even have to show anyone until Christmas of '93.

Not since the demise of the Atari 2600 has there been such a dizzying collection of alternative formats.

Not since the mass confusion created by the demise of the Atari 2600 and the emergence of the home computer market in the mid-80s has the electronic gaming hobbyist been confronted with such a dizzying collection of alternative formats.

And still the changes come. The Japanese market seems to have abruptly lost some interest in playing video game; not even the Super Famicom (the Japanese version of the SNES) has taken off in the Land of the Rising Sun, and Sega's CD-ROM drive has flopped like a one-winged duck. Europe, on the other hand, is suddenly a hot market; several Genesis titles, including **David Robinson's Supreme Court Basketball**, have made most of their money over there.

The most remarkable new development, however, could well be the appearance on the horizon of an American-designed and produced entertainment system. The 3-DO system, currently being designed and readied for production, has drawn the most consistently favorable reaction of any entertainment-based hardware system since the Nintendo revolution.

Software publishers also show considerable interest in Tandy's VIS, if only because of Radio Shack's awesome marketing muscle.

It's only been a year since the first quarter of 1992, but in many ways it seems more like a decade.

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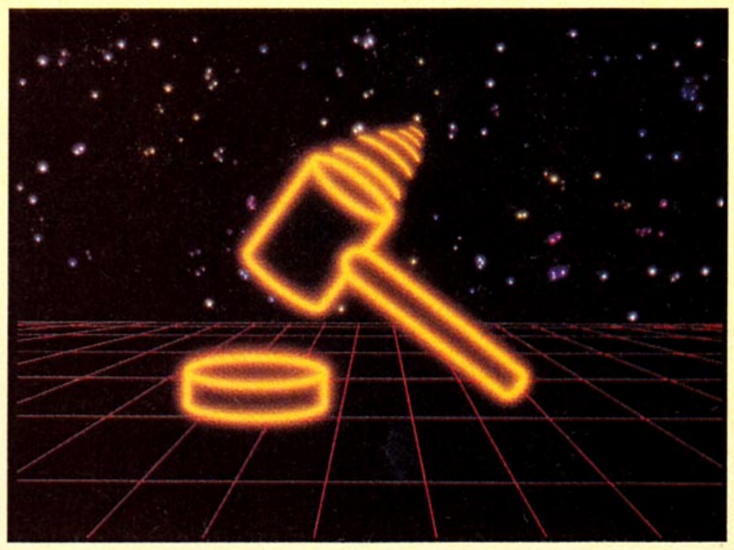


THE JURY

Gamers have strong opinions, as shown by this month's crop of reviews from the readers. The would-be reviewers have one thing in common: they don't pull any punches.

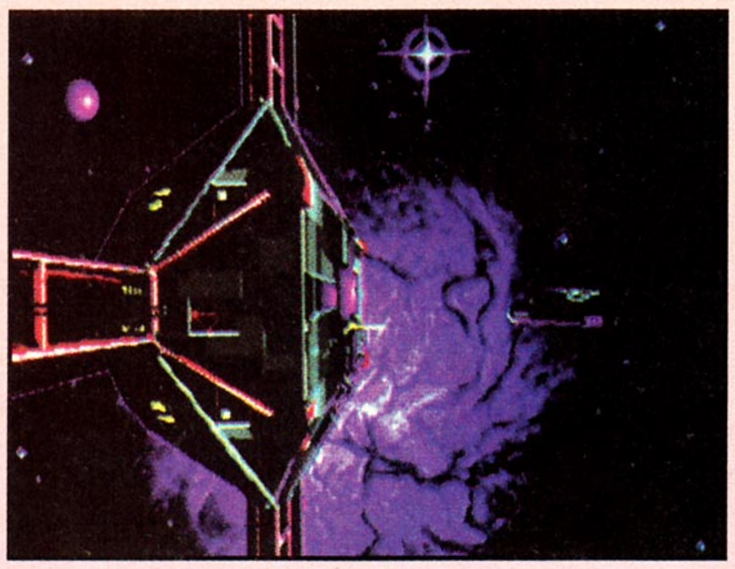
Congratulations to Dave Pokorny, winner in the February Jury. After he submitted an entry this month, he sold his first professional review, to the Video Game Gallery in this issue.

XF5700 Mantis Experimental Fighter

Paragon/Microplay
MS-DOS
1 Player

Winning Review
by Alex Reznor

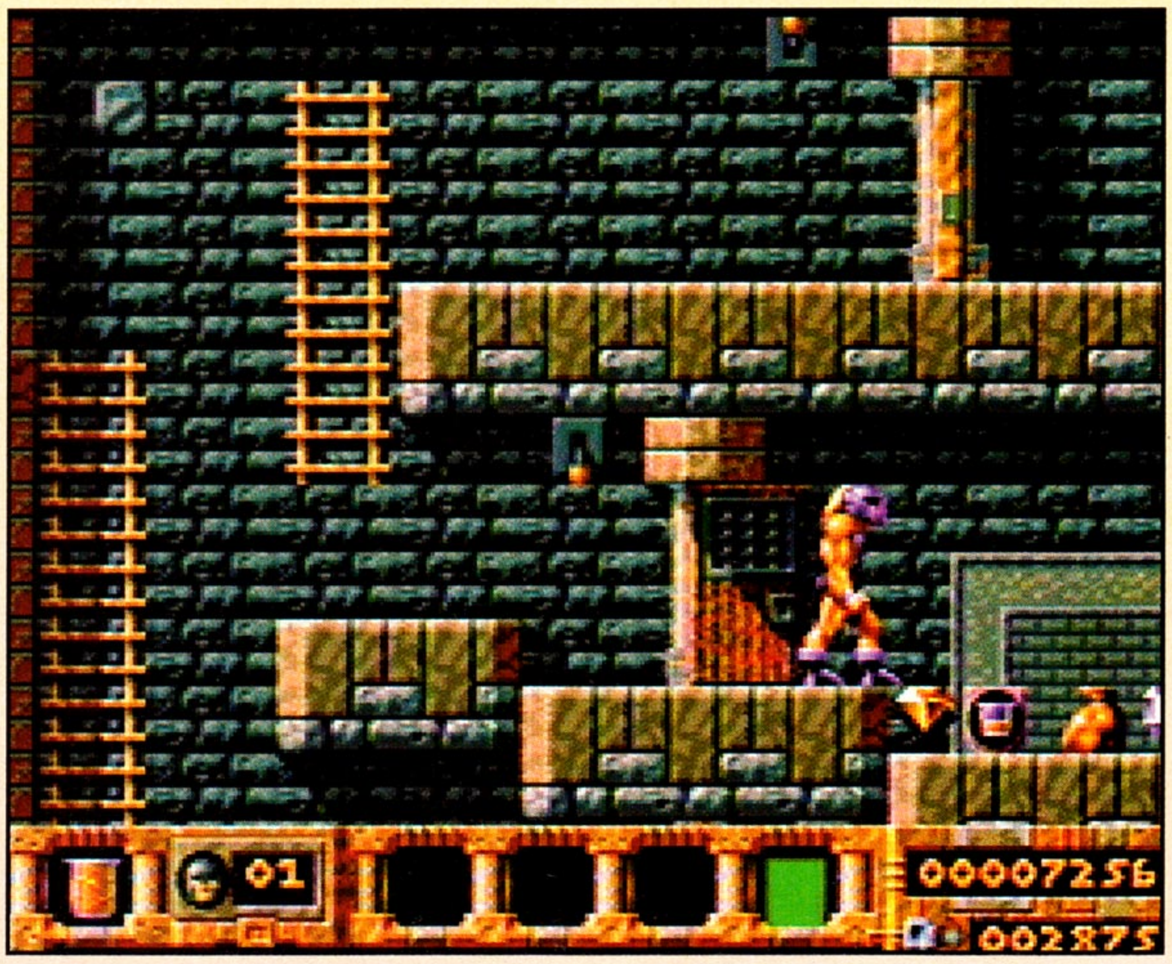
At first, **Mantis** was a disappointment. My initial expectations of a **Wing Commander** carbon copy with slightly darker overtones in the plot



If fast action space combat is your style, Mantis is the game for you.

proved false. Sure, there are some nicely done noninteractive sequences (such as the now-famous bug bursting from a newscaster's lifeless corpse), but they are too sparse to pull together a cohesive plot line.

The game play also was initially a disappointment. Unlike **Wing Commander**'s ground-based-style flight, **Mantis** adheres to the actual physics of space. This renders obsolete the customary dogfighting tactics. Targets change from dots in the distance to spaceships filling the windshield in a fraction of a second. (One should be prepared to suffer death by ramming several times before getting the hang of the controls).



After a while, though, the game can grow on the player. There are enough little mysteries in the game to keep you playing, and the combat sequences can be fun, although they are a bit repetitive.

CD-ROM owners would be wise to put down the extra cash for the CD version, as a full speech treatment would really enhance the combat scenes. Players of the PC version should consider purchasing the special speechpak for the same enhancement.

Gods

Mindscape
Designed by: Bitmap Brothers
Genesis
1 Player

Winning Review
by Allan Chu

Gods is a PC conversion of a game that originated from the UK. The Bitmap Brothers, the talented programming team behind **Gods**, was also responsible for their previous Genesis cartridge, **Speedball 2**. The underlying characteristics shared between these two games are intense action and gorgeous metallic graphics. Although the metallic look doesn't quite suit the Ancient Greek period, **Gods** is still visually stunning. Backing up the visuals is a great soundtrack with realistic sound effects.

As the story goes, Hercules must slay four evil guardians who have taken complete control over the Ancient City. Along the divine journey, menial tasks must be successfully performed before venturing into each guardian's lair. Upon defeating all the guardians, Hercules will be heralded a god and will possess the ultimate divine gift, immortality.

Unlike most platform games, **Gods** requires you to use both brains and brawn to progress. As the game

develops, the puzzle traps become increasingly difficult so that pressing one switch will not suffice in solving the enigma. By experimenting with a combination of switches, the obstacles in the puzzle will be eliminated eventually. Also, other tasks include recovering keys and missing artifacts. At the beginning, Hercules is poorly equipped to deal with the menagerie of foes sent forth from the guardians. To help you along your journey, weapon upgrades can be found or bought from the shops.

As it stands, **Gods** is a challenging platform game with lots of intense action and thought-provoking puzzles. The gorgeous graphics and brilliant sounds allow **Gods** to excel over other platform games.

Runner Up Review
by John D. Horsch

Gods is an adventure, action and puzzle solver all in one nifty cart. The player assumes the role of a classical hero who must fight and think through 4 levels, divided into 3 worlds each, full of odd creatures and mystical gods. As the hero, your hope is to attain the ultimate prize, immortality.

The graphics are well rendered. A cacophony of sounds play throughout, from doors creaking open to upbeat drums, to make this one look

There are some warps in the game to find bonus items and new levels.

and sound good. The hero character is also well drawn and detailed.

There are many keys throughout the game. Some are "must haves," while others allow you to pick up treasures and money to buy stronger weapons, invincibility potions, and, in one world, an extra life. Thieves can help with that seemingly unattainable key.

Considering the originality of this fine game I think most players will enjoy this cart. It is one of those rare games that after you turn off you're still thinking, "If I get that key and..." Any game that can make me muse in such a manner must have the intellect and playability I am looking for. **Gods** delivers.

Honorable Mention
by David Pokorny

Gods?! Or maybe **Gads**? Or perhaps the name of this game should be **Egads.** While the introductory sequence fosters anticipation in the player, actual game play will soon lead to disappointment.

Although the Bitmap Brothers score high marks for attempting to avoid genre stagnation, this effort misses the target. Combining highlights from left-to-right-scrolling kill-the-end-boss and puzzle games, **Gods** does neither especially well. Game play leads to a certain number of compulsory assaults on our hero's life force, due to anything from monster generation in the location upon which he stands, to unpredictable shots from off the edge of the screen that leave no time to elude injury. The puzzles are not logic games, but rather are comprised of a series of random lever flips, or events that may or may not be documented by the hint tokens. (As most puzzles are not solvable through reasoning, the gamer is advised to always leave the hint option active.)

Other nuisances include poor color blending that gives the graphics a washed-out appearance and repeated reentry of the level password for each replay.

Unfortunately, the formula for **Gods** of very challenging plus very tedious equals very annoying.

That's the crop of readers' reviews for this issue. We're looking forward to the next set we receive. It's a great way to let the publishers know what the players really think about their games, and also a way to let us at **EG** know your opinions. Give it a try, why don't you?

Join the Jury

Review a game in EG's monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games**' critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. For the first time in any gaming magazine, our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick two games each month, one computer and one video, and challenge gamers to review them. Then, in "The Jury," **EG** will print the best ones—and give free software to the winners.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated games.
2. Entrants can submit only **one** review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's two best reviews (one in each division), as determined by **EG** editors, earn the writers the currently available video or computer game of their choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Games for Contest #6:

Super Mario Kart/Nintendo (video game for SNES)
Dragon's Lair III/ReadySoft (computer game)

Deadline for this month's contest: **March 1, 1993**

Send entries to:

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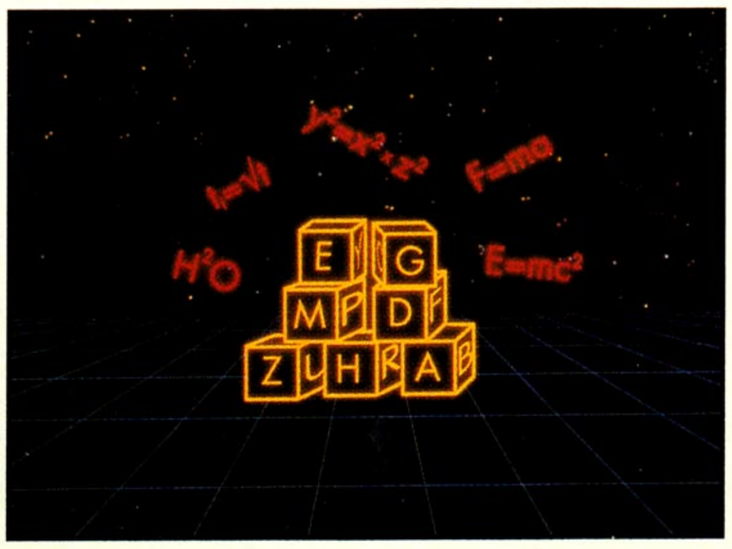


PLAYING IT SMART

Focus on Edutainment

by Joyce Worley

The sophistication of learning programs often equals their gaming cousins. This is especially true of the edutainments featured this month. Each, in its own way, represents an expert level of child education.

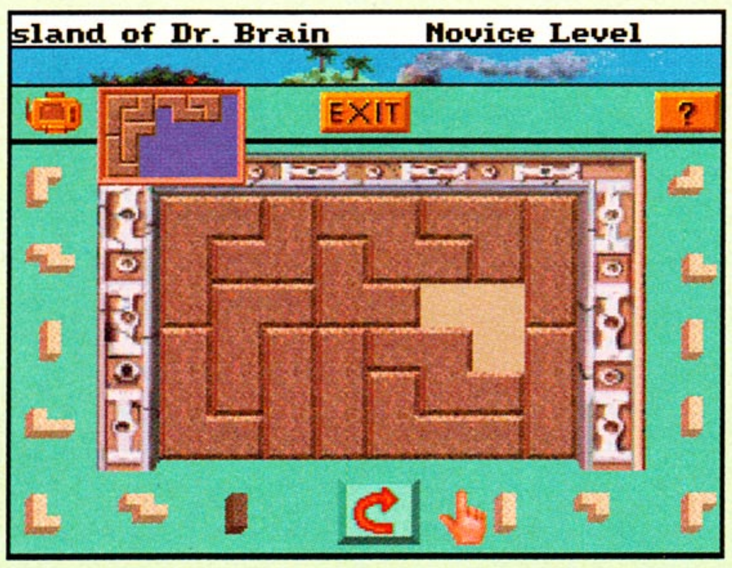
Rodney's Funscreen (Activision), designed by the artist/author Rodney Alan Greenblat and produced by Eddie "**Earl Weaver Baseball**" Dombrower, is a delightful romp for the youngest computerists. It features speech throughout, so only minimal parental assistance is required.

Five games feature colorful, if simplistic graphics, music, and chatter from the on-screen playmates. The best activity of the group, Dinky's House, requires kids to raise the window shade that hides Dinky. The real treat comes when the view shifts to the interior, where Dink watches T.V., uses his computer,

The colorful graphics in Rodney's Funscreen will draw in young players.

sleeps, brushes his teeth, bathes, etc. It's reminiscent of **Little Computer People**, but the child controls the cute resident.

Guess-O-Matic, a concentration-style game, requires the child to find pairs. Barber Joe is a sort of face-maker set that features heads of Joe, Jane and their dog Woof plus a variety of paint box tools.



The Island of Dr. Brain is meant to challenge both children and adults.

There are two overtly educational games on disk. Alphabeeps displays a picture at the top of the screen, a voice intones its name, and the child must pick its starting letter. Too Many Monsters has funny creatures floating on the screen to be counted.

This delightful collection, available for b&w or color Mac, MS-DOS, and CD-ROM, is a charming first game for preschoolers.

Broderbund's **Just Grandma And Me**, which turned heads in its Macintosh CD version, is now available for MPC Windows CD-ROM. Its designation as a "Living Book" describes it correctly. Mercer Mayer's delightful children's story is faithfully reproduced, with enhancements made possible by its glamorous medium. The story is in English, Japanese or Spanish, and the child can hear it read aloud, or play with it.

In interactive mode, almost everything on screen has a hot spot that comes to life with a charming animation. Birds fly, balls bounce, doors open– there are many active items on each of the pages.

Just Grandma And Me is a great preschool exercise, which lets kids read along with the spoken voice. But, more than that, it's a fine activity toy that every child will play over and over again.

The Island of Dr. Brain (Sierra/MS-DOS) is at the opposite end of the spectrum of edutainment software. Sierra has made this, the sequel to **The Castle of Dr. Brain**, a great package. It features graphics and game play as sophisticated as most adventures, and tests that challenge age 12 through adult.

Subject matter concentrates on science and math, but touches on art, music, language, programming, physics and more.

The gamer's first challenge is to find the island by entering map coordinates from the documentation. The first puzzle to open the cavern door requires arranging polyominoes. This is followed by a seemingly endless number of mind-testers, such as math blocks, number sequencing, graphs, parabolas, chain drives, ciphers, etc. Fortunately, on-line hints provide some help.

This sequel has a lot going for it. The graphics are Sierra-lovely, more like an adventure than education. And rightfully so, since the point of all the puzzles is to locate a vital component to one of Dr. Brain's experiments. It has definite elements of a quest.

The originality of the puzzles adds a sparkle that belies the educational nature of the game, and turns it into an all-age pleaser.

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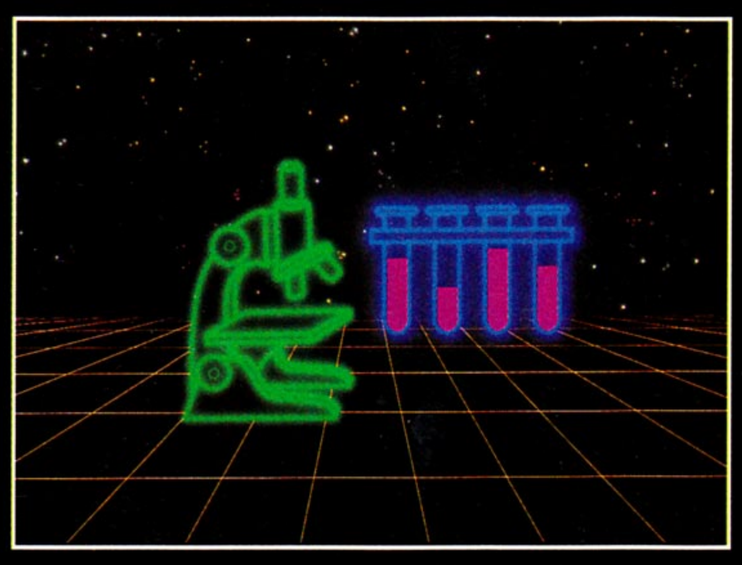


TEST LAB

Shadow or Substance?

by Ed Dille

The Turbo Duo
Turbo Technologies Inc.
$299.00 (with five games)

The introduction of CD-ROM for both computer and video game applications has sparked more discussion and debate than any other industry trend in the last five years. In the beginning, some journalists speculated that its development would lead to the next quantum leap in game design, touting its ability to store vast quantities of program code. With 500 megabytes capacity for each CD-ROM disk at their disposal, programmers would be free of traditional hardware boundaries to incorporate huge graphics files and fully orchestrated stereo soundtracks, which are traditional memory hogs. If a game as good as **Wing Commander II** could be done on 22 megabytes, the theory goes, imagine a game 20 times that good. For the sake of discussion, these proponents will be referred to as the "bigger is better crowd."

The opposing faction, loosely led by Gary Grigsby, renowned computer designer, espoused the belief that the limiting factor of game design is not the amount of program code that may be included, rather the ability of the CPU to process that code at an acceptable rate and limitations in the programming languages themselves. Twenty times bigger is not 20 times better.

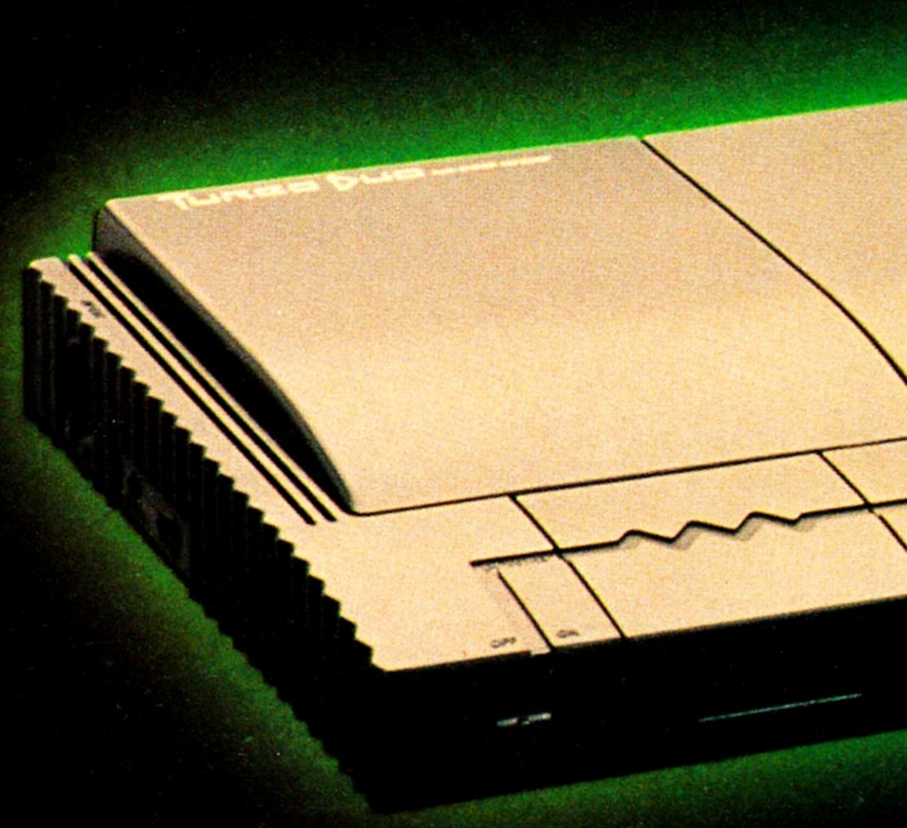
More industry insiders also feel that the current generation of CD units offer greater benefits to publishers and developers, in terms of reduced reproduction costs versus ROM chips or disk media, than they do to consumers via higher play value.

From a purely business standpoint, the rash of CD development may be viewed as a long-term marketing experiment, rather than a straight hype war designed to deceive consumers. Whoever establishes the largest market base of home CD units mated to a 16-Bit platform will be in the best position to exploit the 32-Bit architecture, provided it is downwardly compatible with the current generation of CD drives. The use of the word "downward" may be misleading if taken out of context, so some explanation of CD drives is in order.

A CD drive is a storage and retrieval device completely analogous to other drive types (i.e., floppy and hard computer drives). The chief technical difference is that data is printed and read optically instead of magnetically. Current drives are read-only (similar to owning a VCP instead of a VCR) using a laser stylus, and do not allow the player to alter the disk files.

As in other drive types, the limiting factor is the pace at which data can be retrieved, expressed in milliseconds (lower numbers are better). This is determined by two factors, disk rotation speed and the rate of stylus movement. Data is retrieved when called by the program and stored in a buffer for processing by the unit's CPU.

The CPUs of all current 16-Bit consoles operate slightly below 8 Mhz clock speed, roughly the equivalent of an old IBM XT (which is incapable of



running many of the games developed for computers in the last two years). The 386 and 486 machines now run at 25 to 33 Mhz, three or four times faster than their console counterparts. To successfully mate with a CPU, a CD

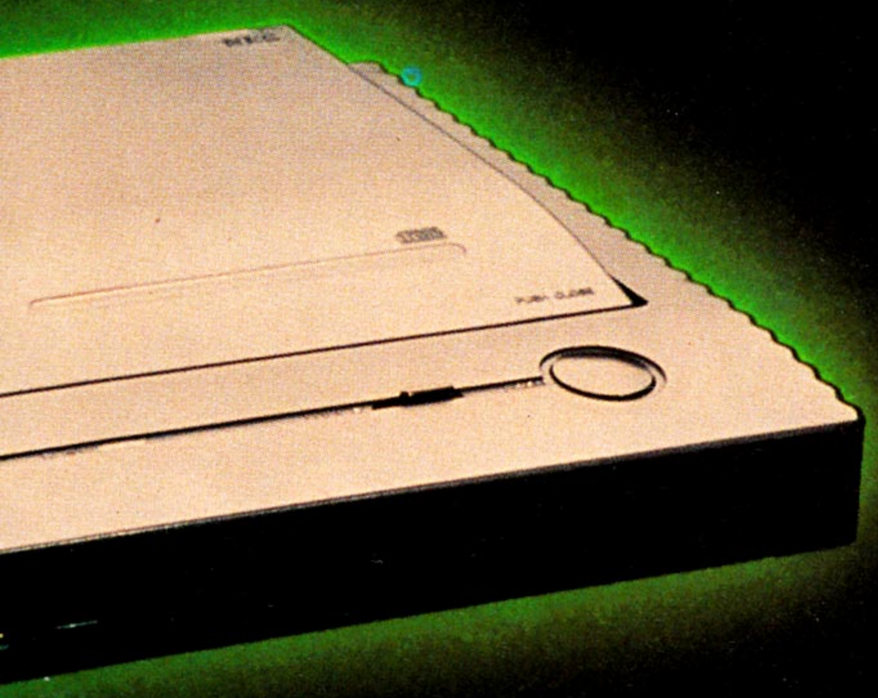
Whoever establishes the largest market base of home CD units mated to a 16-Bit platform will be in the best position to exploit the 32-Bit architecture, provided it is downward compatible with the current generation of CD drives.

drive must retrieve data fast enough to keep the CPU busy and not create annoying hesitations for the player.

Existing CD units could operate with proposed 32-Bit architectures without modification if a sufficiently large buffer is designed into the new consoles. Thus, the push to get as many of them as possible to consumers today is a marketing sleight of hand designed to set the stage for later presentations at the risk of alienating current users through poor execution.

NEC's early introduction of a CD unit for the TurboGrafx-16 was disastrous. Retrieval speed was too slow and there was a disappointing selection of software for the system.

The current battle is being waged between the Turbo Duo and the new Sega CD unit. Although some details are highlighted herein for the purpose of comparison, Sega's unit is still under evaluation at Test Lab, the results of which will be reported in a future installment.



TTI's Turbo Duo combines a conventional TurboGrafx-16 with an upgraded CD ROM drive in a single unit that is less cumbersome and more attractively packaged than its predecessor. Although TTI has chosen to call the CD drive CD ROM2 and "Super CD," implying to consumers another media format, the reality is that the only differences between the two drives involve buffer size and retrieval rate. The Turbo Duo uses a 256k buffer, roughly four times the size of the original CD unit. This allows the drive to retrieve larger chunks of data into ready service

New Super CD games like Gate of Thunder can be played on the Duo.

memory for the CPU. The resulting effect is reduced disk access delays, for improved scroll rate and uninterrupted game play.

Granted, buffer size and retrieval rate are the features that are both technically important, as noted above, and most readily noticeable to the consumer, but the decision to call a duck something other than a duck can only further consumer confusion.

TTI avoided alienating existing CD drive owners by offering a Super System ROM chip separately that allows the new CDs to be played on the old drive. Again, it is not that the new CD titles are a different format, simply that they are programmed to take advantage of the increased buffer of the Turbo Duo, so the older drives' limitations must be compensated for. Unlike Sega's CD drive, which incorporates dedicated graphics chips for zooming, scaling and rotation as well as a second 68000 Z80 processor (operating at 12.5 Mhz to jazz up the 7.5 Mhz console's presentation), TTI's new drive offers improvements to access time only. Consequently, there is no immediate reason for TurboGrafx-16 and first generation CD owners to completely scrap their machines and start over with a Turbo Duo.

One possible exception to that conclusion involves households which own a personal computer in addition to a TG-16 console. TTI intends to market a peripheral for the Turbo Duo which will make the CD drive compatible with all major computer formats. Scheduled to cost between $99 and $129, this peripheral could make an attractive alternative to purchasing separated CD drives for multiple systems. Further, it represents a long overdue move toward standardization of components.

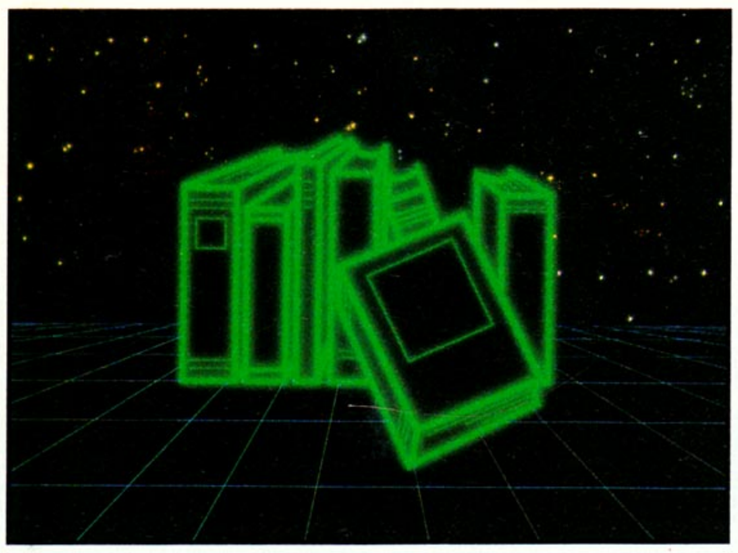
The Turbo Duo is compatible with all existing chip and CD games and comes bundled with five of the better titles from the TG-16 library. **Ys Books I** and **II** offer fantasy-based RPG fare; **Gates of Thunder** is a side-scrolling space shooter that rivals the best on the market, and TG's signature character, Bonk, appears in both existing installments of his series, **Bonk's Adventure** and **Bonk's Revenge**.

Sega also relied largely upon established titles in its bundle, but has already fostered strong third party support for its platform, including several titles incorporating full motion video (FMV) the best of which is **Night Trap**. The ability to handle FMV, seems to be the prevalent ideology against which new hardware is measured.

Despite the Turbo Duo's ability to simultaneously display a 512 color palette, none of the initial group of Super CD titles incorporate FMV. However, **Sherlock Holmes II** (developed by ICOM and scheduled for March delivery) does incorporate FMV. Eventually, FMV will be critical to virtuality-based applications.

Establishing a strong CD marketing base deserves the significance that it has been given. CD will become the storage media of choice as soundly as it replaced conventional vinyl recordings in the music industry. Further, as more capable computers and consoles are developed to showcase true innovations in programming, it will be the old consoles that get thrown away and not the CD drives that accompany them.

When this occurs, the true worth of CD storage capacity will be exploited and shadow will become substance. The current generation of CD units has sufficient retrieval speed to remain viable for years to come, provided that designers incorporate sufficient cache space in new consoles and computers to allow the drive to keep up.



LORE

Castlevania, the Official Hint Book

Donald & Kristin McCrary, Compute Books, 199 pages (softbound, $9.95)

Dracula's almost back, and it's up to various members of the Belmont family to prevent the demonic vampire from leading the land to destruction. This collection of hints covers **Castlevania**s **I** & **II**, starring Simon Belmont, and **Castlevania III**, whose hero is Trevor C. Belmont, all for the NES; **Super Castlevania IV,** for the SNES, featuring Simon again, and Game Boy's **Castlevania**s **I** & **II**, with Christopher Belmont.

Each chapter starts with a brief history or setting for the story, recounting some variation on the theme of Dracula's recurring menace, and introducing the Belmont whose job it is to deflect it.

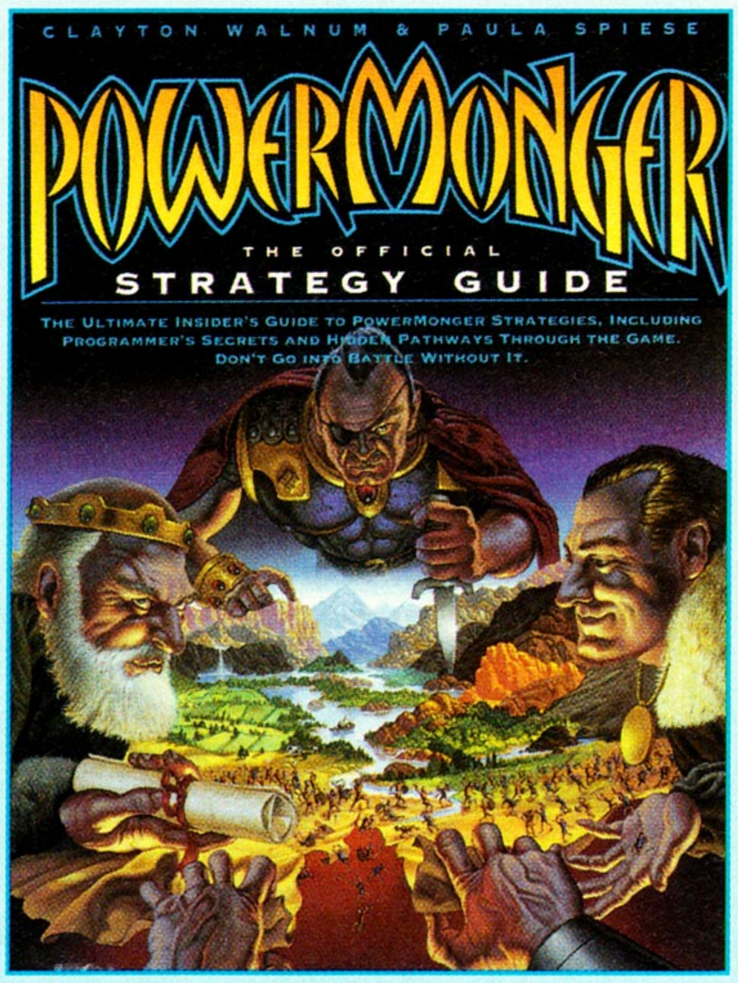
An overview of the game play follows. Though all are fairly standard side-scrollers, this does change somewhat from game to game. The NES **Castlevania II**, for instance, has some role-playing characteristics, with puzzles to solve and experience points to gain. Additional characters aid Trevor in **Castlevania III**, and a choice of different routes to the goal offers variety.

Time of play is estimated for each game. However, all but the two versions of **Castlevania I** offer codes that allow restarts at upper levels.

Next, the book shows maps, descriptions of weapons and all items, power-ups, enemies and bosses encountered. The sequences of levels or rooms are described in some detail, with black and white illustrations and specific techniques for overcoming the resident creeps. The writing is clear and straightforward, to the point of sparseness.

At one point the authors recommend, "Don't overuse this book." In keeping with the rest of the material, that's good advice.

— Ross Chamberlain



This new tome will show players the ins and outs of ruling the world.

PowerMonger: The Official Strategy Guide

Clayton Walnum and Paula Spiese, Prima Publishing, 332 pages (softbound, $18.95)

PowerMonger is a game of conquest that employs a number of diverse interrelated play elements to keep even veteran players challenged for months. The book's two main sections cover the following: first, basic and advanced techniques that apply throughout the game; second, a narrative chronicling the entire quest.

The first three chapters of Part I recap details on the interface provided in the original manual. Chapter 4 discusses the effects of the captain's posture on combat and travel, especially the level of aggressiveness when attacking towns.

Chapters 5-7 involve management of domestic affairs, including food caches, invention of new implements, forming diplomatic alliances and scouting new terrain. Alliances are fragile and can deteriorate at any time. A comprehensive table correlates inventions to posture, location, materials and other prerequisites, providing the player with a wealth of important information.

Chapters 8 and 9 address warlike issues that are intrinsic to the game (for example, movement in the vicinity of enemy armies may precipitate conflict whether desired or not), with critical insight into changing posture on the fly. Chapter 10 discusses the significant effects of weather on all aspects of the game, and Chapter 11 takes a look ahead to the World War I edition of **PowerMonger**.

Part II comprises the bulk of the book and begins with a general map of all the territories with annotated difficulty levels. Detailed terrain maps are accompanied by strategic hints and a narrative of "His Lordship's Quest." This section is organized to preclude revealing too much information. Printed on glossy stock to withstand heavy usage, the manual offers a single compendium of essential information.

— Ed Dille

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Monthly service fee/hourly charges; additional fees for some features.

Compuserve is the grandfather of professional BBS services and it charges according to its stature. Easily the most expensive service to maintain, Compuserve justifies the cost because it is business oriented with some of the most extensive databases around to support entrepenuerial needs. Indeed, for those who require them, the worth of these benefits far outweighs the cost.

Demographics show an extensive non-business user base, however. Compuserve is a national gathering point for many special interest groups, including dozens of user forums related to computers, electronic and online gaming. A major advantage is that its software allows mail to be downloaded, read and replies composed offline. This significantly reduces the cost to gamers whose prime interest is in communicating with others with like interests.

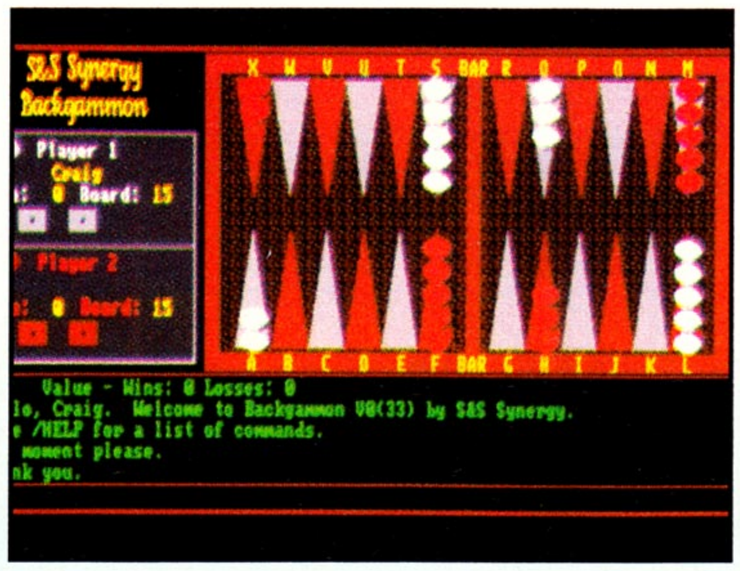
Maintaining Compuserve exclusively for multi-player online gaming, however, would tax the pockets of most players prohibitively. This is not to suggest that there isn't sufficient quality or variety in the games offered on Compuserve; nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, some of the titles have developed devout followers that log on religiously to maintain "legendary" status on the online leader boards.

Adventure-oriented players can explore a number of exotic lands, some of which have existed since the service first appeared, with others being added periodically. Titles in this section include **British Legends**, **Island of Kesmai**, **Black Dragon** (dungeon-type quests with fantasy settings) and **Castle Quest**, a gothic horror game based upon exploration of a Carpathian castle. **British Legends** is the only true multi-player offering of the lot, where one's actions impact upon other human-controlled players. Two classic adventure games are offered for solitaire play, **Castle Telengard** and **The House of Banshi** (a Compuserve rendition of the original **Zork**).

For strategy-minded players, Compuserve offers **Sniper!**, an online version of the popular Avalon Hill board game, **Squad Leader**. It's a real-time urban combat game that pits two 1943 era infantry squads against one another. Squad members are rated for various skills and experience and the player must properly manage the squad to win engagements. If one's taste is more futuristic, two galactic conquest games are available, **MegaWars I: The Galactic Conflict** and **MegaWars III: The New Empire**. It is not necessary to complete the first to enjoy the second, but both encourage cooperation and team building skills. **Space War** has a similar theme, but the emphasis is on fast-action, arcade-style space combat. Survive long enough and one might be recorded in the Annals, an online Hall of Fame.

Additional sections have sports-based games, such as football and golf, but none of these come up to par with similar games on other systems. Parlor and trivia games are commonplace on virtually all BBS services, and are well represented here.

On the whole, Compuserve's graphics are less sophisticated than those found on services like the Sierra Network, but they are adequate.



On-line parlor games will include many classics as well as new titles.

Compuserve will likely remain a prime gathering spot for electronic enthusiasts for several reasons. Among them are user forums for virtually every piece of hardware on the market, an online magazine called *Electronic Gamer* that is updated twice monthly (no affiliation) and a game publishers' forum supported by virtually all of the major houses: Electronic Arts, Spectrum Holobyte, Sierra On Line, Mindscape, Accolade, Mediagenic, Microprose, Lucasfilm and Origin. Logging into these areas yields insight into issues and topics affecting the entire industry, an option that is difficult to resist, even considering the cost.

Judging from its past, it's safe to expect continued growth and increasing diversity from the father of all BBSs, the Compuserve network.

— Ed Dille

The Electronic Games Reader Poll

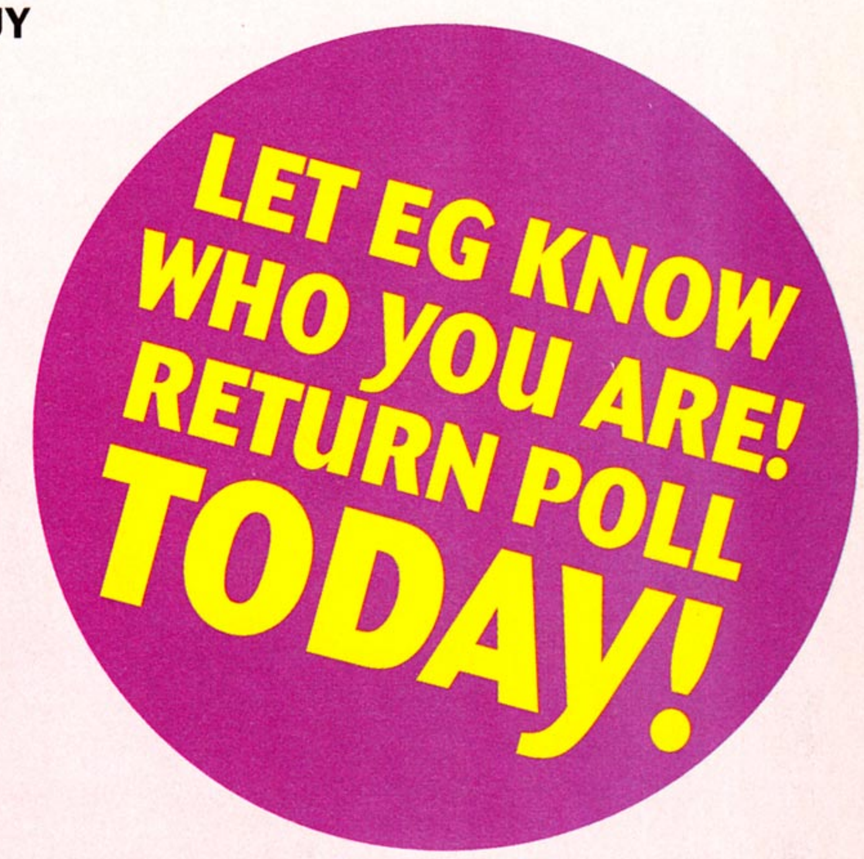
The editors of **Electronic Games** want to know about you, the reader, so that we can tailor the magazine to meet your particular needs. The monthly Reader Poll will let us know what aspects of the electronic gaming hobby are most interesting to you. We also want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month.

Just circle your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to:
Electronic Games Reader Poll, 330 S. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

Sex: Male Female
Age: Under 16 17-23 24-30 31-40 Over 40
Family Income: Under $20,000 $21,000-$35,000 $36,000-$40,000 Over $41,000
I regularly play: Video Games Computer Games Both
I spend _____ hours per week playing electronic games:
Under 2 2-5 6-10 More than 10
I spend under $_____ per week on computer and video games:
$20 $20-$50 $60-$100 More than $100

Please check all hardware you own or plan to buy in the next 12 months:

	OWN	PLAN TO BUY
Nintendo NES	____	____
Other 8 Bit Videogame	____	____
Genesis	____	____
Sega CD	____	____
Super NES	____	____
TurboGrafx-16	____	____
Neo*Geo	____	____
Game Boy	____	____
Game Gear	____	____
Lynx	____	____
Amiga	____	____
Macintosh	____	____
MS-DOS Computer	____	____
Other (write in name) _____	____	____



I will____ will not___ buy a Multimedia gaming system in the next 12 months.

I purchase my software at _____ Toy Store _____ Electronics Store
_____ Mail Order _____ Other

I own _____ video games and _____ computer games. (Please indicate number.)

I plan to purchase _____ video games and _____ computer games in the next year. (Please indicate number.)

Please rate the following game subjects from 1 (no interest to me) to 10 (very interesting to me):

Science Fiction _____
Fantasy _____
Arcade _____
Sports _____
Other (please write in category) _____
Martial Arts _____
Mystery _____
Military _____
Flight _____

Please rate your interest in these types of electronic games from 1 (not interesting) to 10 (very interesting):

Video Games _____
Computer Games _____
Coin-Ops Games _____
MultiMedia Games _____

My favorite video games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite computer games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite multimedia game is:
1._____

My favorite coin-op game is:
1._____

Coming Attractions...

In the April Edition of Electronic Games

The Players' Guide to Simulators

First-person perspective simulations of planes, boats, cars, helicopters and futuristic vehicles that defy description are the subject of next month's special section. **EG**'s editors will investigate the newest games, preview forthcoming ones, and salute the classics.

EG's Spring-Summer Gaming Preview

They're all here! All the video, computer, portable, and multimedia games coming in the next six months. You probably can't afford 'em all, so find out which ones are "musts," and which might be busts. This exclusive report will also examine the latest trends in hardware, controllers, and other peripherals.

Gamers Pick the Best of the Best

The voice of gaming has spoken! **EG**'s editors had their say in the January issue. Now it's time to salute the electronic games the readers have chosen as the best of 1992.

An Audience with Lord British

Richard Garriott raises his helmet visor long enough to give an exclusive interview to **EG**. Find out what makes this highly original mind tick—and get a preview of his next spectacular role-playing adventure.

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest High-End Gaming, Including:

- **Video Game Gallery**
- **The Game Doctor**
- **Software Gallery**
- **Power On!**
- **CD Gallery**
- **The Kunkel Report**
- **The Jury**
- **Portable Playtime**
- **Fandom Central**
- **Insert Coin Here**
- **Lore**
- **Test Lab**
- **Feedback**
- **Playing It Smart**

and don't forget all the latest news in **EG's** exclusive **Hotline** section!

Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands March 16, 1993!

"This game will set the pace for every future game on the market - A+, 100%, Guy's you did it!" **COMPUTER GAME REVIEW**

SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE

WARPED

SHRINK-WRAP TIME WARP

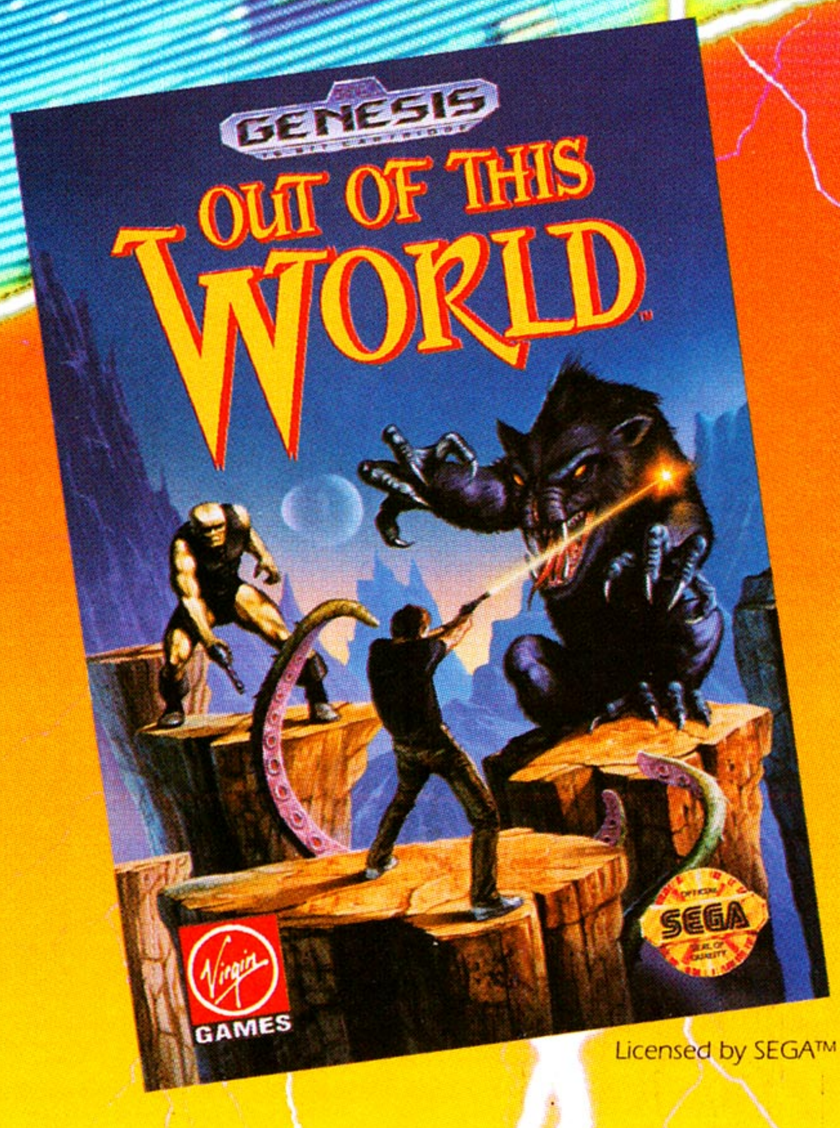
You're so intent on testing the particle accelerator you've invented that you hardly notice the crackling of a not-so-distant electrical storm.

Before you can say SNAP, CRACKLE, POP, a lightning bolt slams through you and your accelerator with deadly accuracy.

When you finally come to, you have no idea what time or place you're in, but you know you're not safe. Face it you're warped. Unless you want to start calling this place home, you'll need to dodge, outwit and overcome a host of deadly aliens, monster guards and bloodsucking leeches who think you're a delicacy. Now, that shouldn't be too hard for a Whiz Kid like you - right?

Out of This World Features

- Award-winning cinematically styled, rotoscoped animation
- State of the art real-time polygonal graphics
- Continual audio mix of digitized sound effects and musical score



Virgin GAMES®

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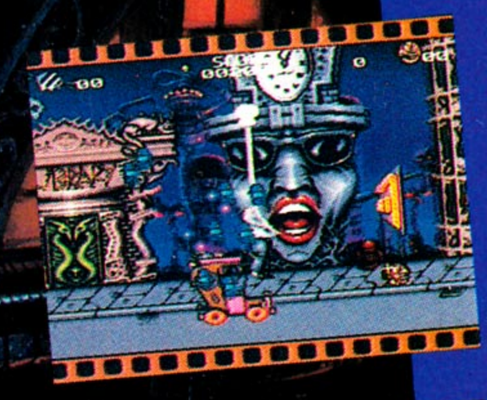
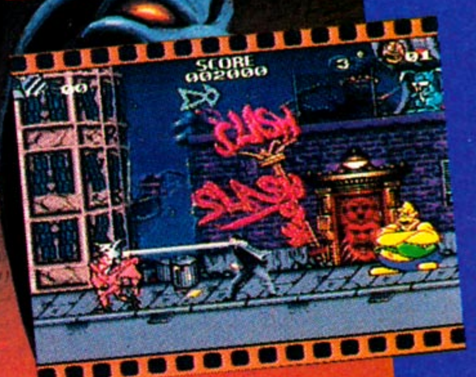
DELPHINE SOFTWARE

Licensed by SEGA™ for play on the SEGA™Genesis™ System.

HOLLI WOULD IF SHE COULD.

COOL WORLD™





Screens shown are from the Super NES version of the game.

It's an imaginary world where cartoon characters called Doodles are alive. In this bizarre adventure, the Doodles are disturbing the balance between Cool World and Real World. If the balance isn't restored quickly, both worlds will be destroyed! Pit your wits against Doodles like Holli Would, Vegas Vinnie and Slash. They're out to get you—it's up to you to stop them and save the world!

AVAILABLE ON VIDEOCASSETTE FEBRUARY 1993

The name of the game

ocean®

Ocean of America, Inc.
1855 O'Toole Ave., Suite D-102
San Jose, CA 95131

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

GAME BOY

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