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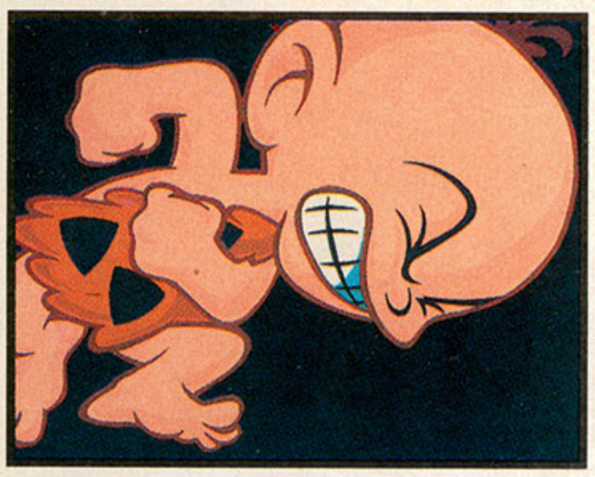
THE LEADING MAGAZINE OF VIDEO AND COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT



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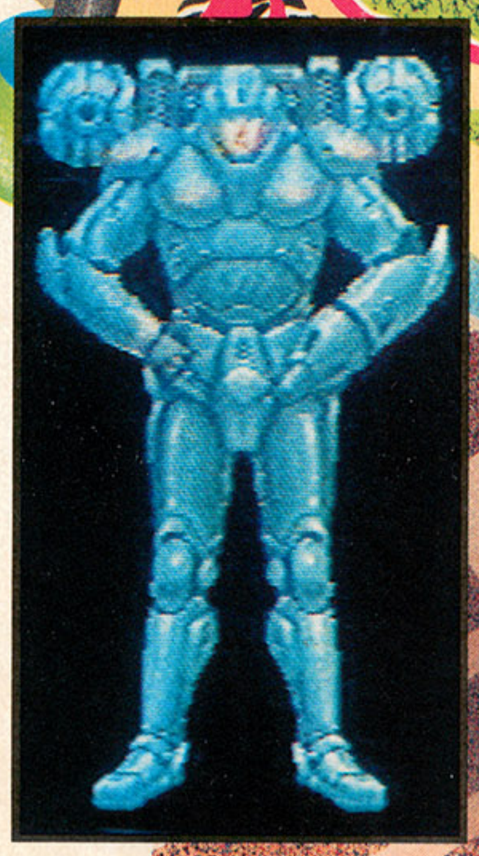

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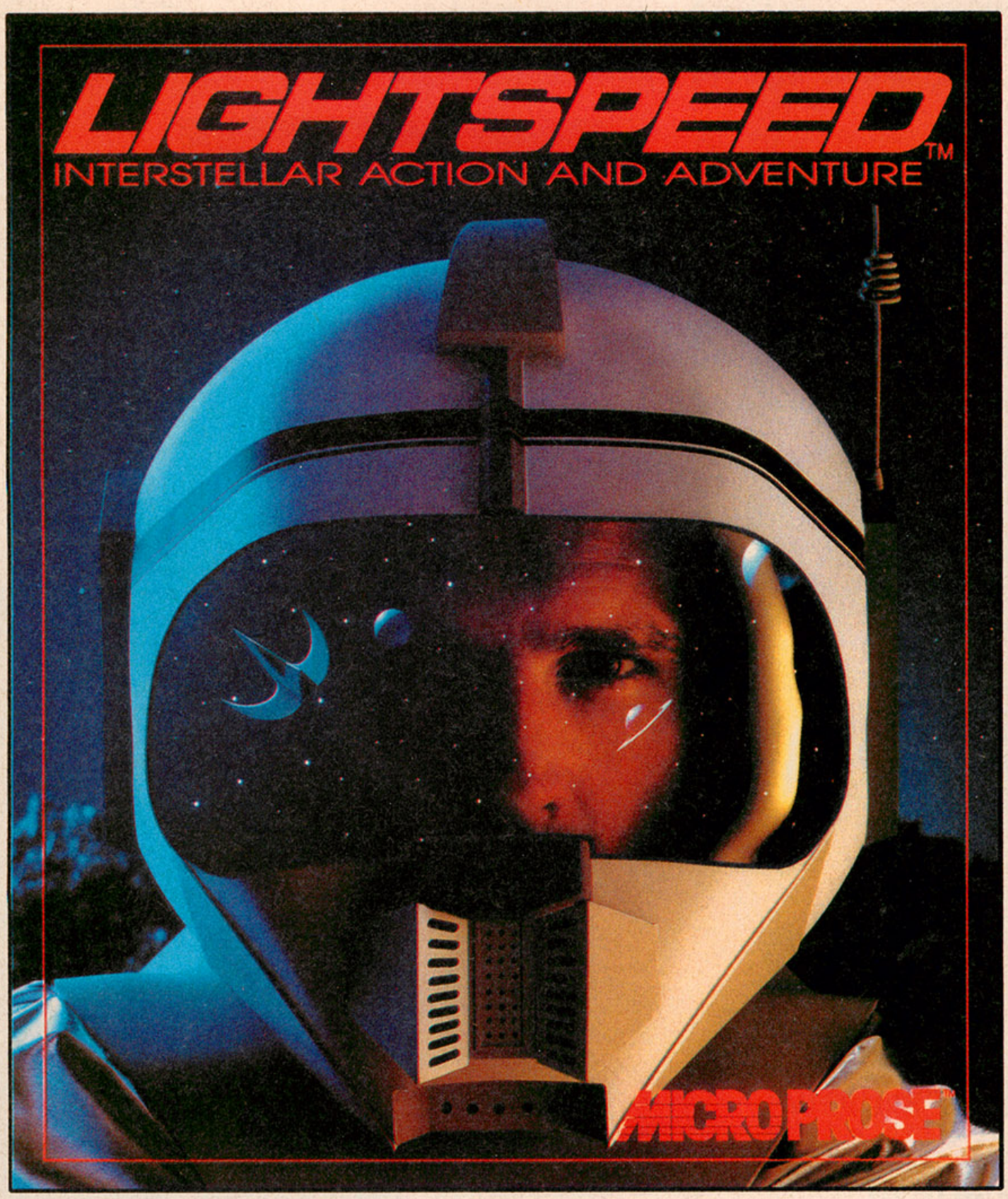

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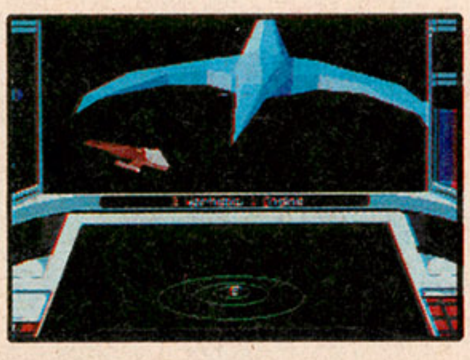

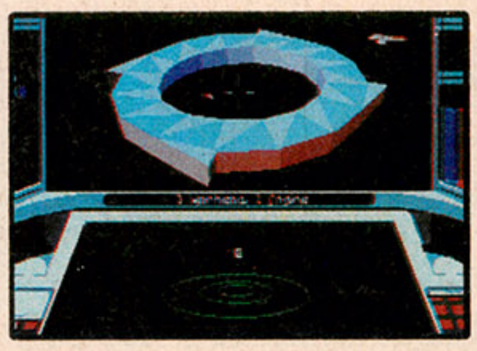

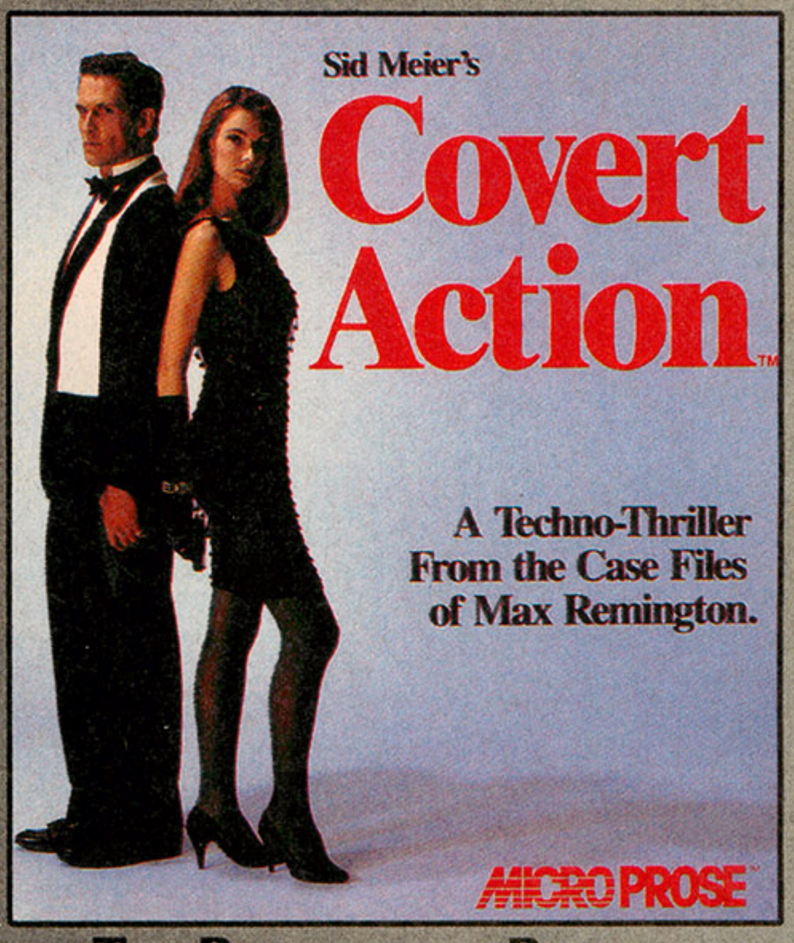

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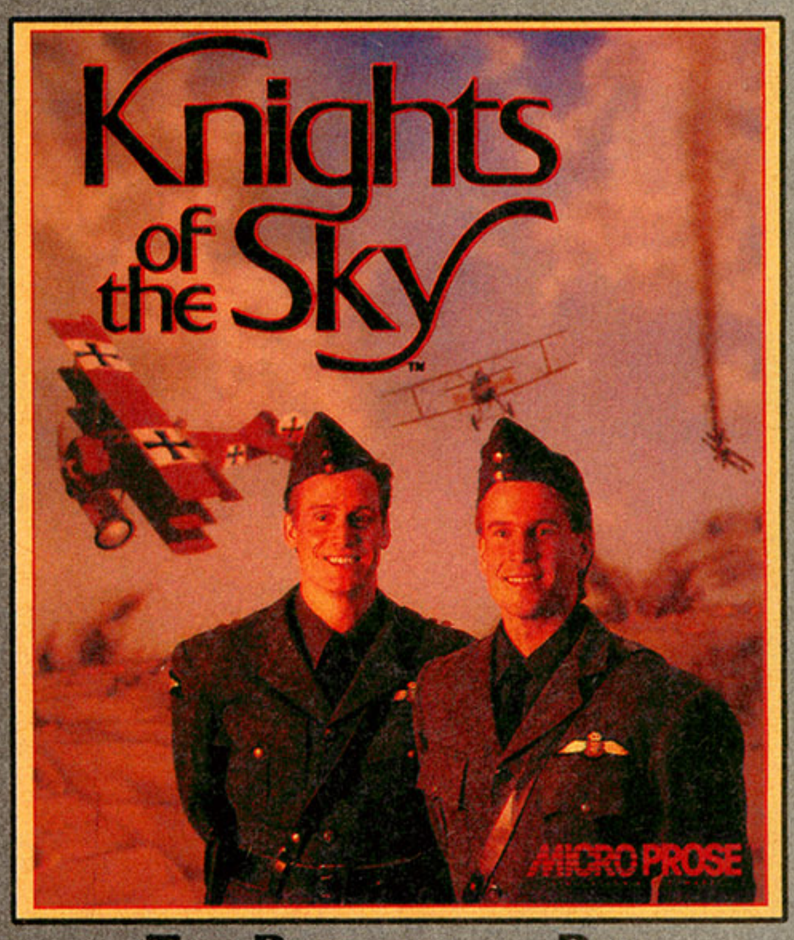

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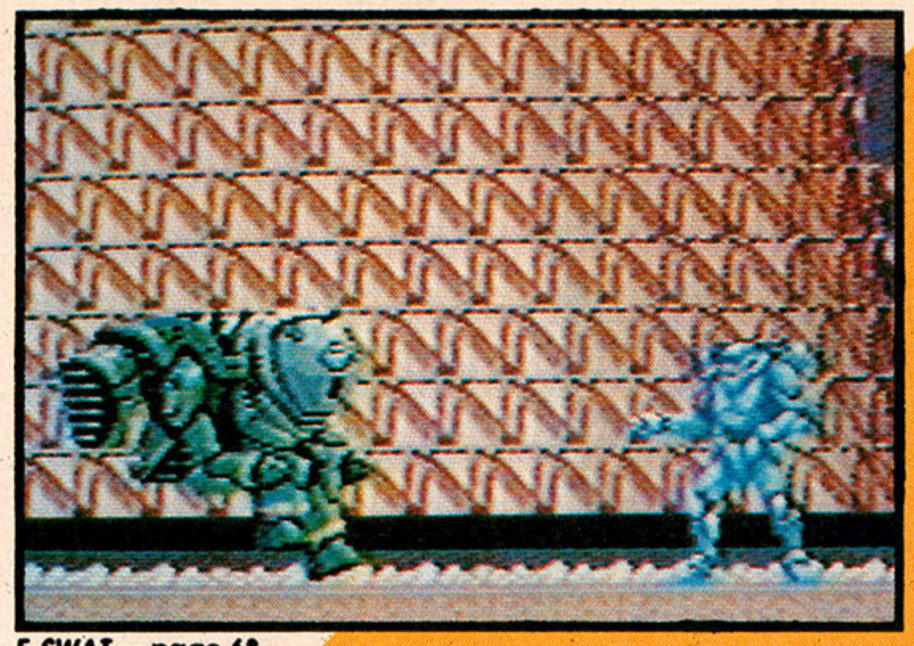

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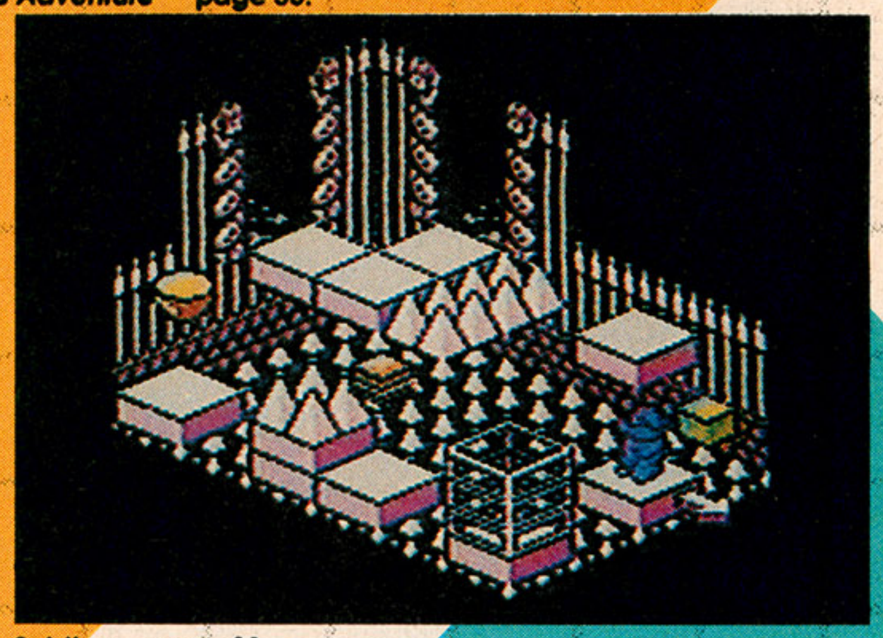

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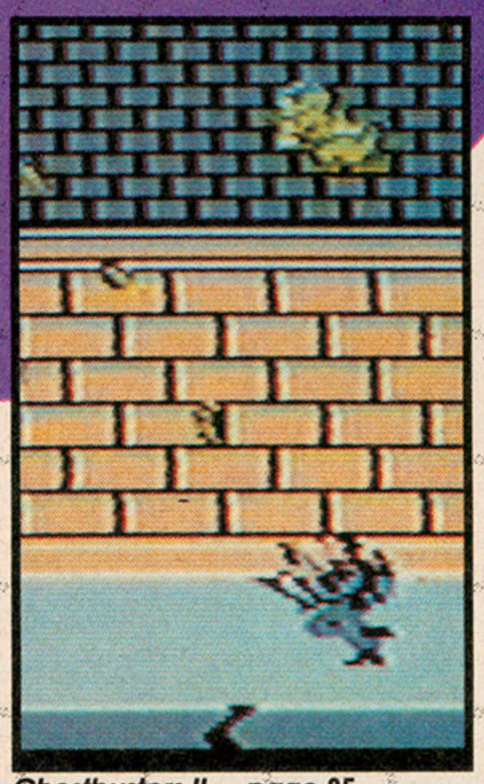

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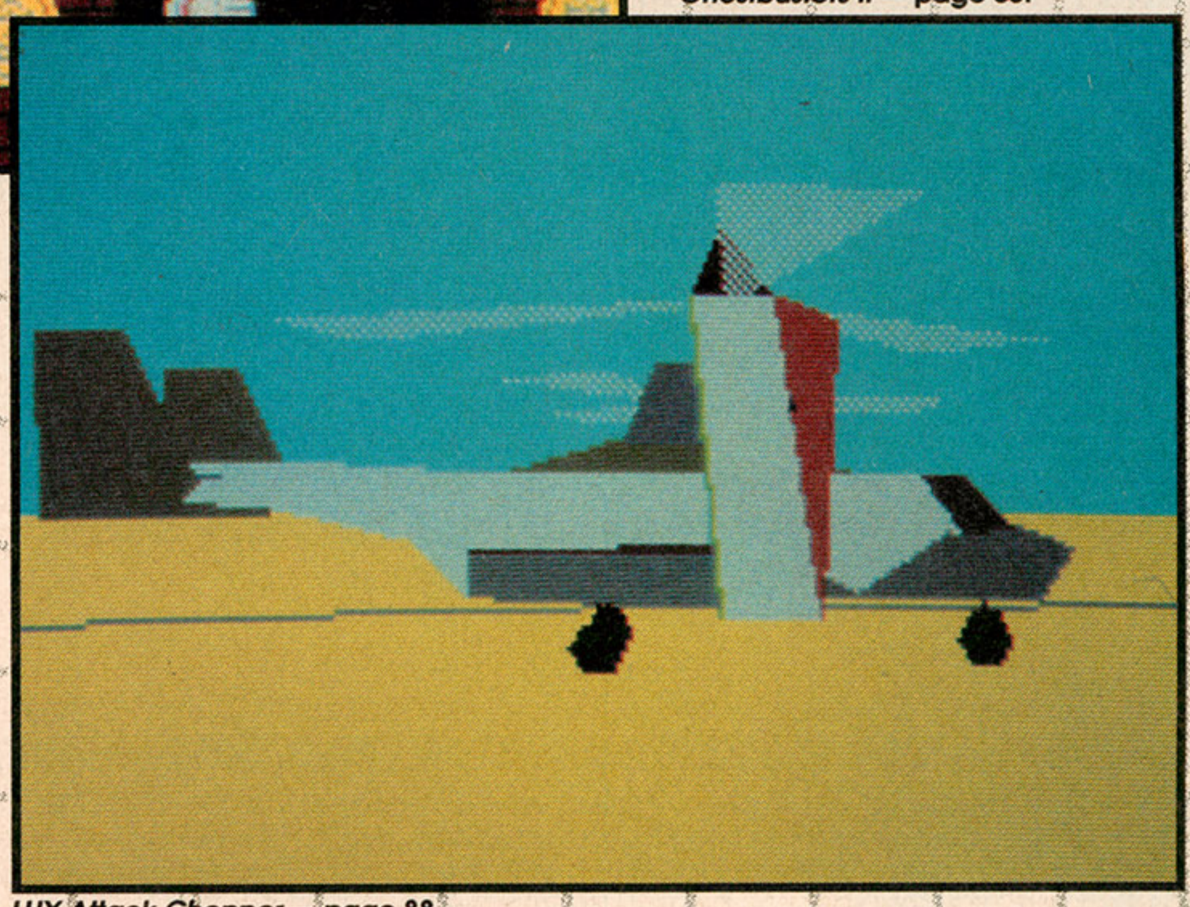

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The EDITORS VIEW

In this month's "Nintendo News" column (page 18), you'll read about the long-awaited introduction of Nintendo's 16-bit videogame system in Japan. Delayed for more than a year, the Super Famicom is now expected to be available to Japanese game players in November. One of the first titles scheduled to be released for the system is *Super Mario Bros. 4*.

The Super Famicom is not exactly the best-kept secret in the videogame industry. We first talked about it in *Game Player's* one and a half years ago, and it's been covered practically everywhere. By all accounts, the Super Famicom will be a fantastic successor to the eight-bit Nintendo. It offers faster animation and is capable of displaying more than 32,000 colors. However, we'd like to sound one note of caution: Don't jump to conclusions based on what happens in Japan.

For one thing, there will probably be a considerable lag time between the Super Famicom's introduction in Japan and its release elsewhere. We think there's a good chance it will be available in the U.S. by the fall of 1991, but some industry experts think it could be withheld until 1992. It's all up to Nintendo, and Nintendo's lips are sealed. As long as the eight-bit Nintendo Entertainment System continues to sell, Nintendo really has little reason to bring out another game system that might compete with the company's own products.

Some people think Nintendo will be pressured into introducing the Super Famicom in the U.S. by rising sales of its 16-bit rivals, the Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16. But that's not what has happened in Japan. Both of those competing machines have been sold there for years, along with other 16-bit game systems such as NEC's SuperGrafx and SNK's Neo-Geo. Yet Nintendo is determined not to release the Super Famicom in Japan until it's good and ready.

This should come as no surprise to devoted Nintendo-watchers. Ever since Nintendo almost single-handedly resurrected the home videogame industry from its crash in the mid-1980s, the company has shown a remarkable ability to lead the market. Nintendo is not a company that's easily blown off course by the breezes of fashion.

Another reason why American game players should regard the Super Famicom a little cautiously is that it's almost certain to change before it's released over here. Externally, of course, you can bet it will look completely different. If you compare the American versions of Nintendo, Sega, and NEC game machines with their Japanese counterparts, you'll be amused to discover that the American machines have been repackaged in larger plastic cases — sometimes much larger. (The TurboGrafx-16 is about twice as big as the PC-Engine, as it's known in Japan.)

We wouldn't be surprised to see the Super Famicom undergo some internal changes, too. Consider this: By the end of 1990, there will be about 30 million Nintendo systems in the U.S. alone. What if Nintendo designs a special version of the Super Famicom that attaches to your NES and allows you to play the new 16-bit games on your existing system? There's no technical reason why it can't be done, and this strategy could greatly influence 30 million Nintendo owners to upgrade to Nintendo's 16-bit system instead of somebody else's. As the market leader, Nintendo has many options that are not available to its competitors.

So even though the introduction of the Super Famicom is exciting news in Japan, the rest of the world needs to view it in perspective. A lot of things can happen in the next year or two.

Tom R. Halfhill
Editor, *Game Player's*

GP

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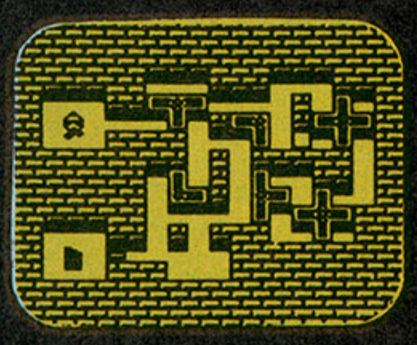
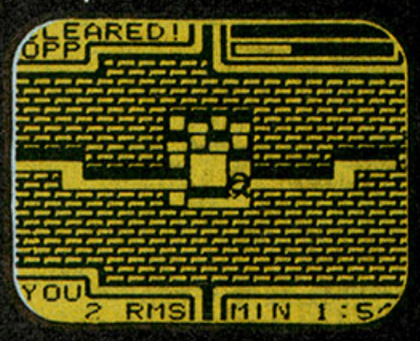


And just when one labyrinth seems to be licked...an even trickier one appears.

So put on your shades, get your thinker in gear and join the a-maze-ing Kwirk in his quest to solve this puzzling predicament. And remember, Tammy's only got one hope...you!



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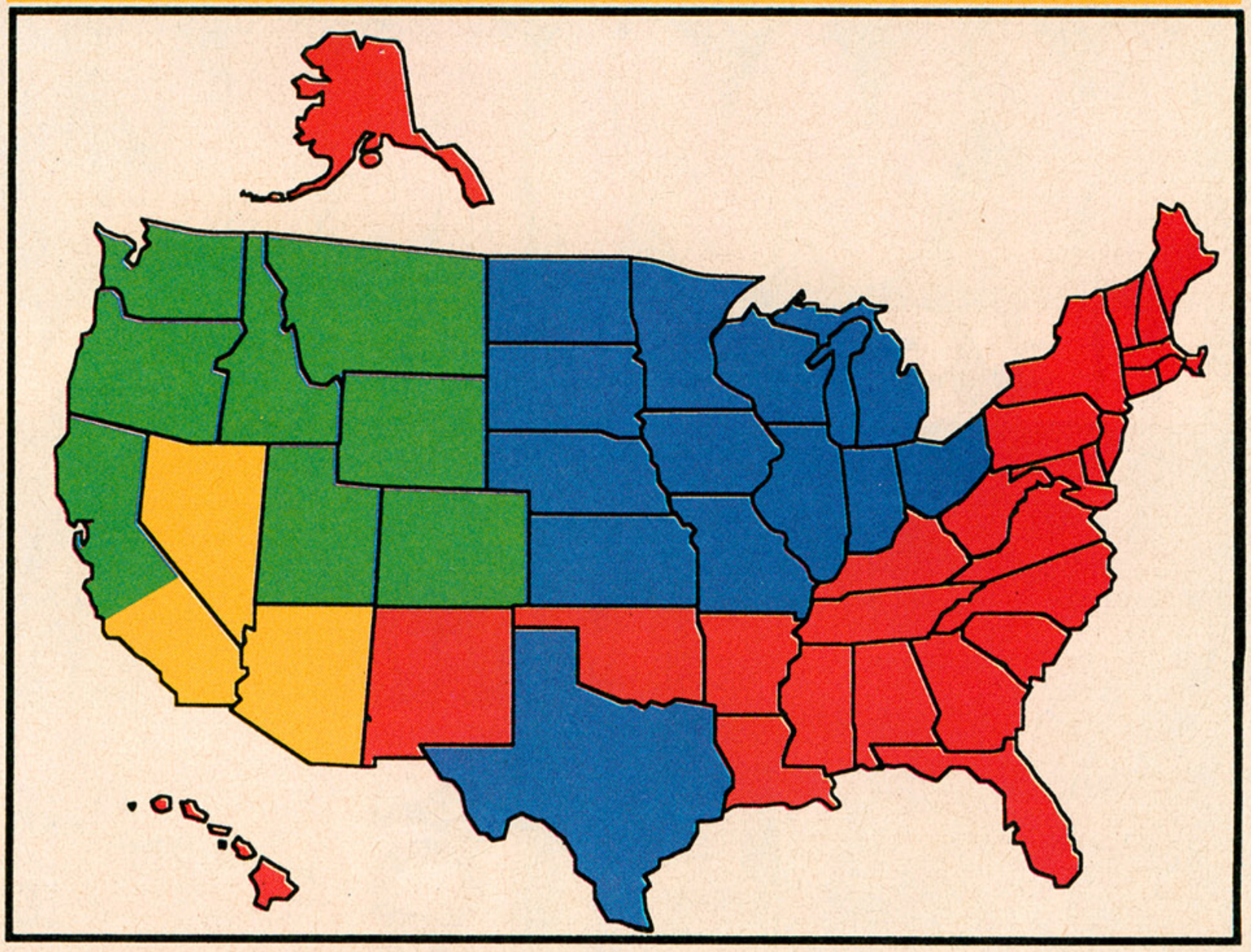

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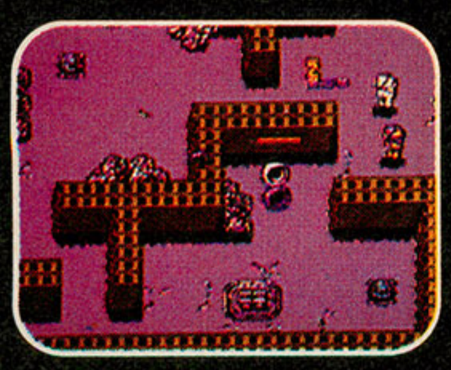

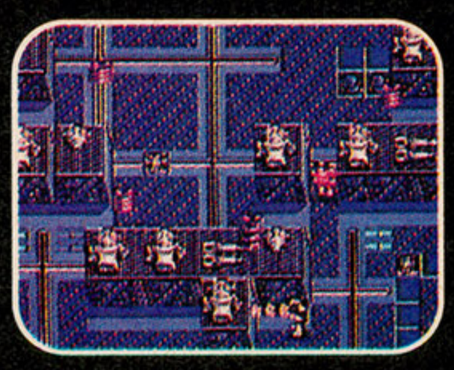

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IronSword

We can't figure out where the golden fly is in *IronSword: Wizards and Warriors II* for Nintendo. We need to give it to the frog before we can go to the water element.

Keola Kosuga
Hawaii

First, climb as high as possible toward the upper right corner of the third stage. When you've gone as high as you can, use the waterspout spell to go even higher. As you ascend, you'll be able to grab the fly. Then just hand it over to the frog.

TIP SHEET

Do you have any questions about your favorite video-games or computer games? Or do you have any hints and tips to share with your fellow game players? If so, write to The Tip Sheet, Game Player's, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, NC 27429. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret that we cannot reply individually by mail to game questions.

Code Name: Iceman

I'm having trouble controlling the submarine in Sierra's *Code Name: Iceman* for PCs. When the man told me to dive, I closed the open hatch and dived deeper. But every time I dive, he tells me to watch my depth. Please tell me how deep I should dive.

Daniel Sayson
Pennsylvania

The control panel of the submarine Blackhawk *looks intimidating, but remember that you're actually concerned with very little of it. For basic navigation, simply control the depth of the sub with the up and down cursor keys or by clicking on the dive lever. Control your speed with the plus and minus keys (+ and -) or by clicking on the engine lever.*

If the captain keeps telling you to watch your depth, you're probably not stabilizing the sub. Except for silent running, you never need to go below 500 feet, so stay in the 150- to 200-foot range unless the captain tells you to dive deeper. Avoid steep dives — keep the dive and engine levers one notch above or below center while you're diving, then center them to stabilize the vessel.

King's Quest

I'm completely stuck on Sega's *King's Quest* for the Master System. Can you please tell me where the mirror, the shield, and the chest of gold are? And can you get the chest from the giant in the clouds?

Darren Hilario
Ontario, Canada

Since the whole point of King's Quest I: Quest for the Crown *is to find the Shield of Achilles, the Chest of Gold, and Merlin's Mirror, completely answering your questions would give away the whole game. Many clues which point toward the solutions are scattered throughout the kingdom. However, we can give you a few hints. You can find the mirror at the bottom of a well, the shield in a hole, and the chest — well, if you know about the giant, you've already found the chest. Wait until the giant falls asleep, then steal it from him.*

RoboCop

On the second level after the second staircase in *RoboCop* for Nintendo, there is a room with a big spiked, moving plate. I can destroy the spiked plate, but I

can't get out of the room without dying. What should I do?

William McKinney
California

Keep punching the wall on the right. You'll find a secret passageway through which you can escape.

Legendary Axe

Here are some tips for *Legendary Axe* for the NEC TurboGrafx-16. When the game begins, let your first two men die. When the second one flashes before disappearing, hold button I and the Select button while pushing left on the directional pad. This will allow you to continue the game for as many times as you hit the directional pad.

In section 3-B, ride the second log when you get to the waterfall, then jump to the right. Hit the idol to expose a key. The key will then make the water on the right disappear and expose more idols and a chance to increase your axe power.

Mark Trail
West Virginia

Thanks for the tips.

Strider

I am having trouble finding three items in *Strider* for Nintendo. I would really appreciate it if you would tell me where to find the aqua boots, key 2, and message disk 3.

Duane Hortman
Georgia

In Egypt, cross the phantom train, then go over the pyramid and enter it on the right. Work your way up and over to the left to find the aqua boots. You'll need to make a tricky jump onto a ramp. If you miss the ramp, you'll end up in a dungeon where a chute takes you back outside the pyramid.

SPLATTERHOUSE

Once you have the aqua boots, you can safely cross the water in the bottom of the pyramid. Just past the water is a tricky triangle jump. It's tough, but you'll find the second key near the top of the ledge.

When you leave Egypt, go back to Kazakh. In Section 2 of the base, you'll find Kain and earn the third message disk, which sends you to Japan. The Mecha Turtle is hiding on a rooftop at the end of level 3. Stock up on missiles — you'll need a bunch of them to blast through all of the barricades lying between you and the roof.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

I can't find Mecha in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for Nintendo. Can you help me?

Jimmy Kerr
Florida

Super Mario Bros. 3

A strange but delightful thing happened to me after beating *Super Mario Bros. 3* and I thought I would share it with everybody. After beating the game, I enjoyed playing it so much I decided to play it over again. After the final curtain came down and "The End" appeared on the screen, I held down the A button while pushing Start. The game went back to world 1 and I started playing.

Then I decided to check my supply of power-ups at the bottom of the screen. To my surprise, there were 28 "P-wings" carried over from the first game!

I know it wasn't a mistake because it happens everytime I beat the game.

Michael Bujnovsky
Pennsylvania

Thanks for the tip!

GP

is coming.

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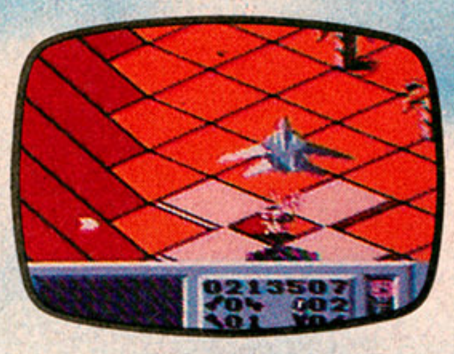
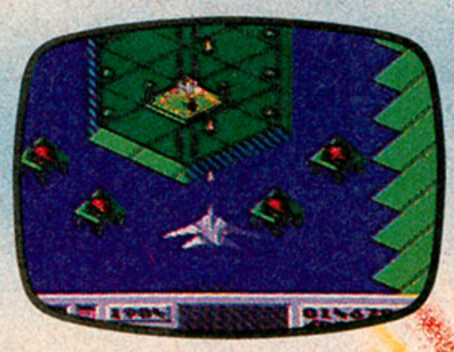


Air Drop Supplies



Rescue Scientists

Destroy Aliens

Nintendo

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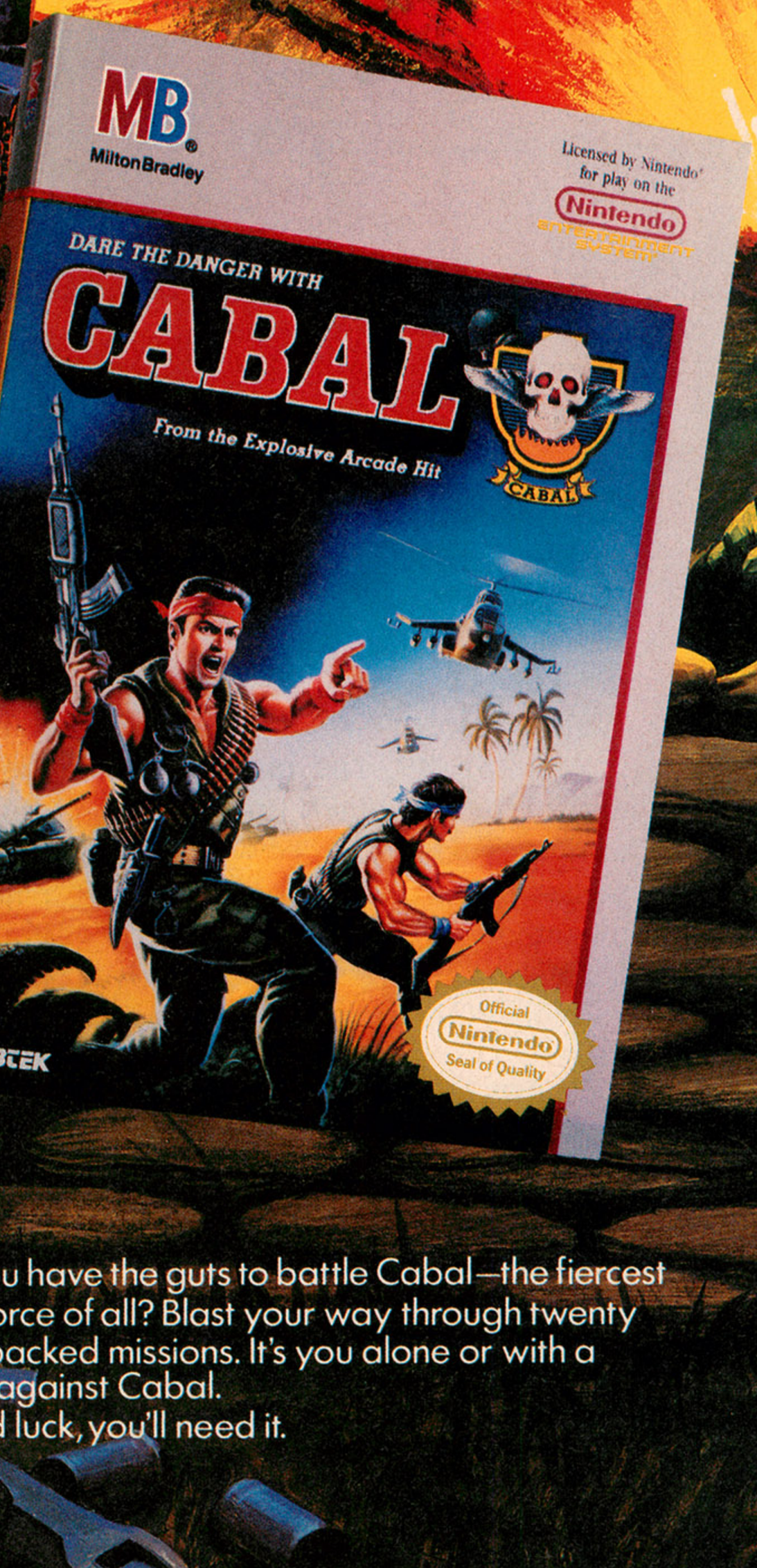
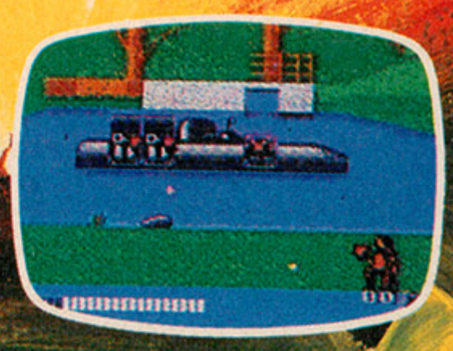
Strap yourself into the hottest fighter ever. No other game has more weapons and more missions over more terrain than this ace. Now air combat soars to incredible new heights with Captain Skyhawk.

HIT 'EM LOW WITH CABAL.

GET DOWN AND DIRTY IN THE TOUGHEST WAR GAME AROUND.





Sink Subs

Blow Up Tanks

Destroy Jet Fighters

Do you have the guts to battle Cabal—the fiercest terror force of all? Blast your way through twenty action packed missions. It's you alone or with a buddy against Cabal.

Good luck, you'll need it.

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No Games Hit Harder.

PLAYERS WORLD

IBM'S NEW PS/1 HOME COMPUTER

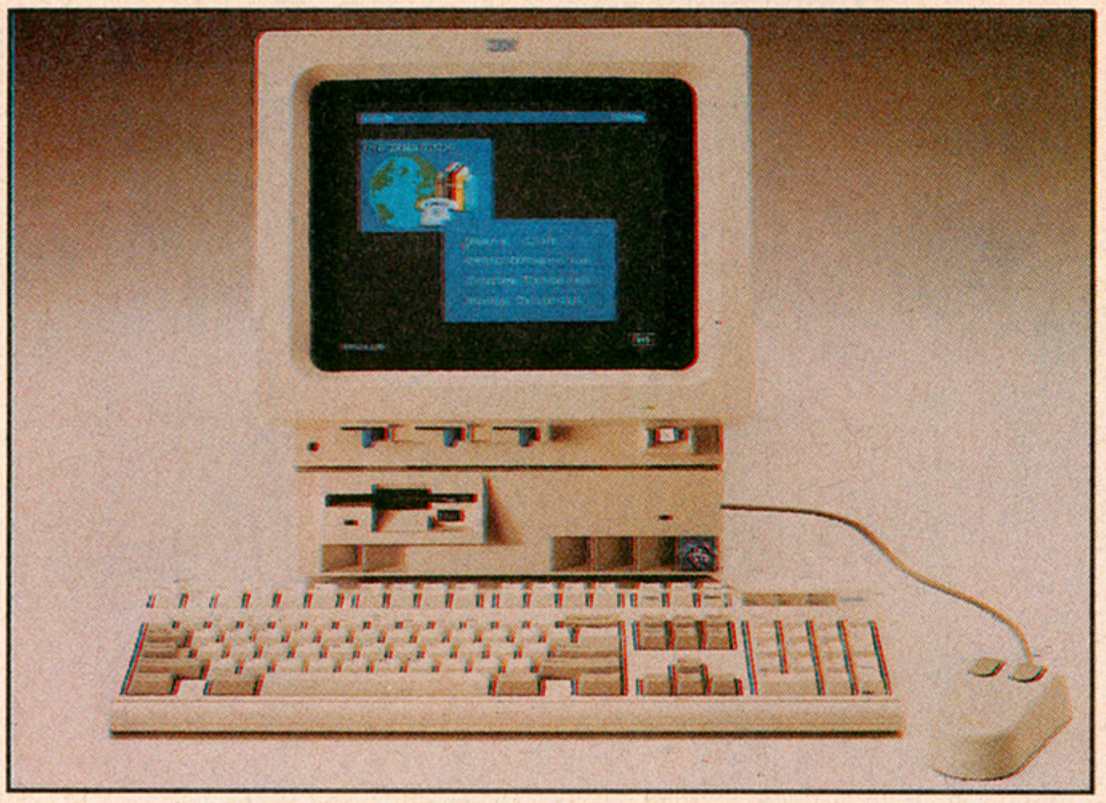
Tom R. Halfhill

For the first time since the ill-fated PCjr in 1984, IBM is entering the consumer market with a home computer.

IBM's new PS/1 is similar to the company's discontinued AT, which was supplanted by the PS/2 line in 1987. It is compatible with virtually all MS-DOS software made for IBM personal computers and clones. Depending on the configuration, the PS/1 ranges in price from $999 to $1,999, though dealer discounts yield somewhat lower street prices.

The PS/1 offers several enhancements over the old AT, including built-in VGA graphics and peripheral ports, an internal modem, bundled software, and about twice the processing speed. Unlike the AT and most IBM clones, however, the PS/1 has no internal expansion slots. For those who want to add boards, IBM offers a three-slot external expansion box.

Standard PS/1 features include an 80286 microprocessor running at a speed of ten megahertz (with one wait state); 512K of random access memory (RAM); a 1.44-megabyte, 3.5-inch floppy disk drive; built-in VGA graphics; an RS-232 serial port occupied by a 2400 bits-per-second modem; a parallel printer port; a 101-key keyboard; a mouse; a real-time clock; DOS 4.01 in read only memory (ROM); and IBM's PS/1 DOS shell in ROM.



The PS/1 is IBM's latest attempt to produce a low-cost computer for consumers.

The base model PS/1 comes with a 12-inch black-and-white monitor capable of displaying VGA graphics in shades of gray; the suggested retail price is $999. With a color VGA monitor, the price is $1,449. The next higher model has a black-and-white monitor but is equipped with a 30-megabyte hard disk drive and one megabyte of RAM; the retail price is $1,649. The top-end model adds a color VGA monitor and costs $1,999.

All PS/1 computers come with a PS/1 system tutorial; a copy of Microsoft *Works* 2.0 (an integrated software package that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, database manager, and telecommunications program); all necessary software for accessing Prodigy, an online service founded by IBM and Sears; and an introductory package for accessing Promenade, a new online service starting this fall.

IBM offers several options for the PS/1, such as 512K RAM expansion cards ($199); a second 3.5-inch floppy disk drive ($249); a 30-megabyte hard drive for those who start with a floppy-based system ($599); 5.25-inch floppy disk drives ($299); and a color VGA monitor for those who start with monochrome systems ($699). The external expansion box that's required for adding cards is priced at $169.

Game players and musicians may be interested in two more options: IBM's PS/1 Audio Card and PS/1 joystick. The $129 Audio Card (which plugs directly into the computer and doesn't require the expansion box) improves the computer's sound and music capabilities when used with programs that support it. The Audio Card also has a MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) connector for attaching music keyboards and other devices.

The PS/1 joystick costs $39 separately, or $249 with the Audio Card and three programs: *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* from Broderbund; *Silpheed* from Sierra On-Line; and *Cakewalk Apprentice* from Twelve Tone Systems.

GP

WIN WIN WIN

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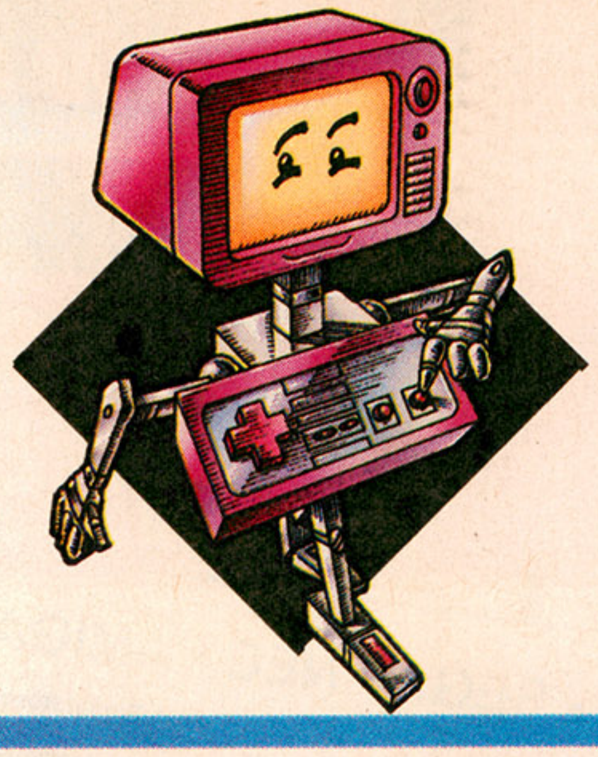


NINTENDO NEWS

NINTENDO VERSUS THE GAME GENIE

Tom R. Halfhill

It's been a long, hot summer, but it hasn't been boring. If you've been shuttered up in a cool room playing Nintendo, it's time to step outside and bring yourself up-to-date on all the news that's been happening:

- Nintendo of America, Inc. won a court order to keep the Game Genie from being sold in the U.S., at least temporarily.
- After a year-long delay, Nintendo is finally introducing its 16-bit videogame system in Japan this fall. However, no date has been announced for introducing the machine in the U.S.
- A new videogame TV show called *Video Power* is starting this fall. It features a live host and animated action with characters from Acclaim videogames.
- Among the many sequels to be released this fall is Konami's *Castlevania III*. We'll give you a sneak preview of the impressive graphics in this eagerly awaited game.

The Case Of The Disappearing Game Genie

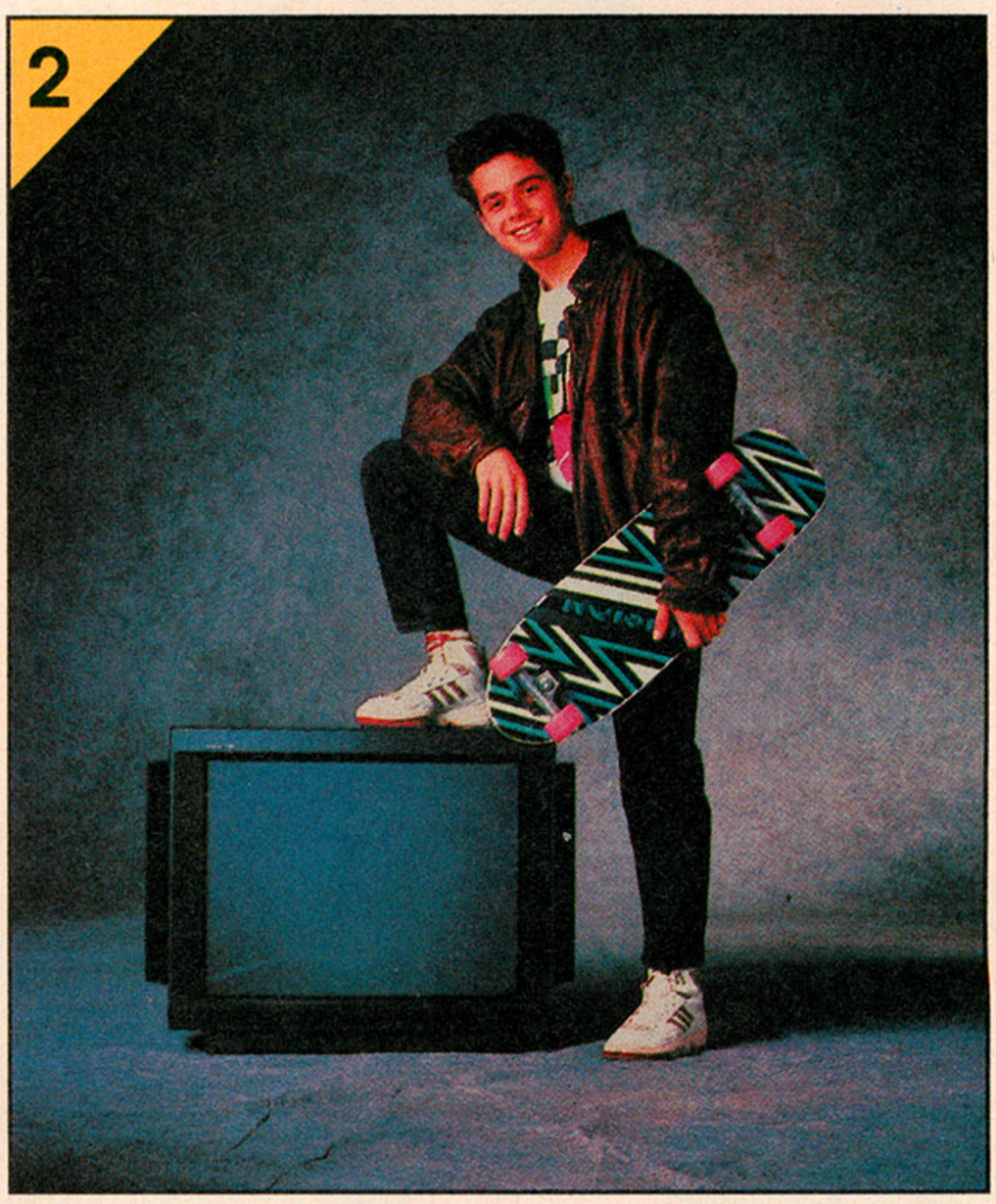
If you've seen the last two issues of *Game Player's*, you already know all about the Game Genie. (See "The Editor's View" and "Nintendo News," August, and "The Editor's View," July.) The Game Genie is a cleverly designed device that makes it possible for you to change the way your Nintendo games play. After plugging any Nintendo cartridge into the Game Genie, and then inserting the Genie into the cartridge slot of your Nintendo Entertainment System, you can enter up to three special codes to modify various aspects of the game. Among other things, for example, you can start a game on any level, gain unlimited lives, or give your on-screen character new abilities.

When officials at Nintendo of America, Inc. first heard about the Game Genie, they were concerned that it might violate Nintendo's copyrights and trademarks, and also that it could harm Nintendo's business. So last spring, Nintendo's attorneys sent warning letters to Galoob Toys, the company which is planning to sell the Game Genie in the U.S. (The Genie was actually invented by a British company named Code Masters, but Galoob Toys has the U.S. marketing rights.) Nintendo warned Galoob that legal action might result if the Game Genie went on sale.

Alarmed by the letters, Galoob sued Nintendo in U.S. District Court. In its lawsuit, Galoob denied that the Game Genie violates any of Nintendo's copyrights. Galoob

1

2



1 Now you see it, now you don't — whether you'll be able to buy a Game Genie anytime soon depends on what happens in federal court.

2 Fifteen-year-old Johnny Arcade is the star of *Video Power*, a new TV show starting this fall.

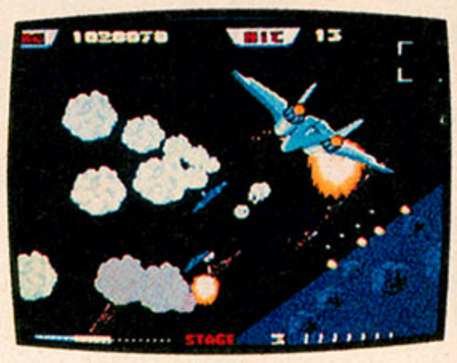
GENESIS®

DOES

WHAT NIN

INTRODUCING AFTERBURNE

1. Battle over the desert, keeping an eye on the number of missiles left, in bottom of screen.



2. The thrill of night combat creates new challenges and new dimensions.

3. Execute a victory roll on final approach to a carrier landing.

Take command of two of the hottest arcade hits around. Jump into the cockpit of the fastest tactical jet fighter in the world. Or put your hands on the wheel of a sleek Formula I racer. And prepare yourself for the ultimate in raw speed.

Feel the intensity of aerial combat as you lock your missiles onto the enemy target and fire away. Experience the near vertigo as you kick-in the afterburner and roll into a 360 degree loop to avoid the onslaught of six relentless enemy planes.

In your rear view mirror, you see another Formula I car closing in on you. With your adrenaline flowing, shift into 7th gear and hit 220 mph on the backstretch at Monaco. Your tires screech as you hit the chicane and enter the tunnel on your way to the checkered flag.

And with new Arcade Power Stick™ your points will add up faster thanks to the triple

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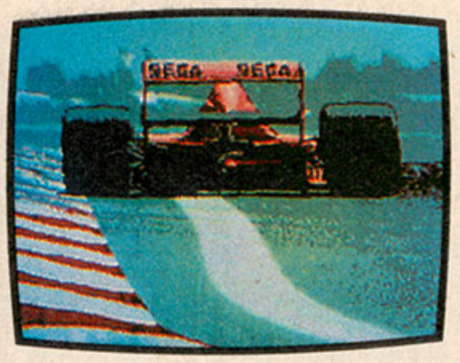
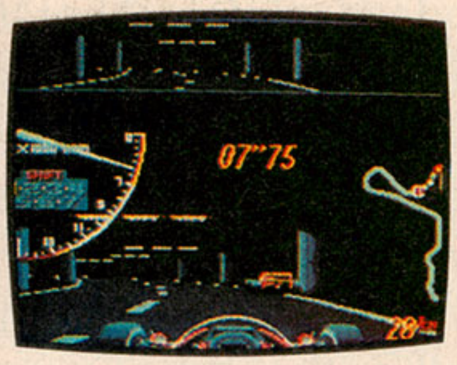
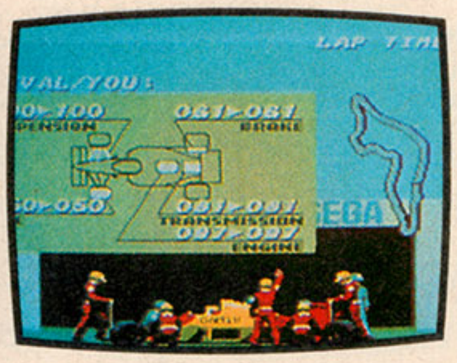
R II™ AND SUPER MONACO GP.™



1. Downshift for the tight hairpin turn, keeping your RPM's up on the tach.



2. Make the rapid adjustment to total blackness as you enter the tunnel.



3. Your pit crew puts on a new set of rubber and tops off your tanks.

Megafire™ control. The arcade quality joystick and fire buttons are built to last through the most challenging games.

Super Monaco GP, Afterburner II and the Arcade Power Stick. This is arcade experience.

Only from Sega.® The masters of arcade entertainment.

REAL ARCADE ACTION WITH THE NEW ARCADE POWER STICK.

NINTENDO NEWS

also asked the court for protection against any attempt by Nintendo to stop the Game Genie from being sold.

A few weeks later, Nintendo countersued Galoob in the same federal court. Nintendo's lawsuit charged that the Game Genie does indeed violate Nintendo's copyrights and trademarks, and that Galoob shouldn't be allowed to sell the Genie because it would hurt Nintendo.

Galoob had planned to begin selling the Game Genie nationwide in early July. But at a court hearing on June 29, Nintendo won a temporary court order which stops the Genie from being sold within the U.S. According to the judge's order, thousands of Game Genies that were air-freighted from factories in the Far East must remain locked in warehouses until the court holds another hearing to decide on Nintendo's complaints.

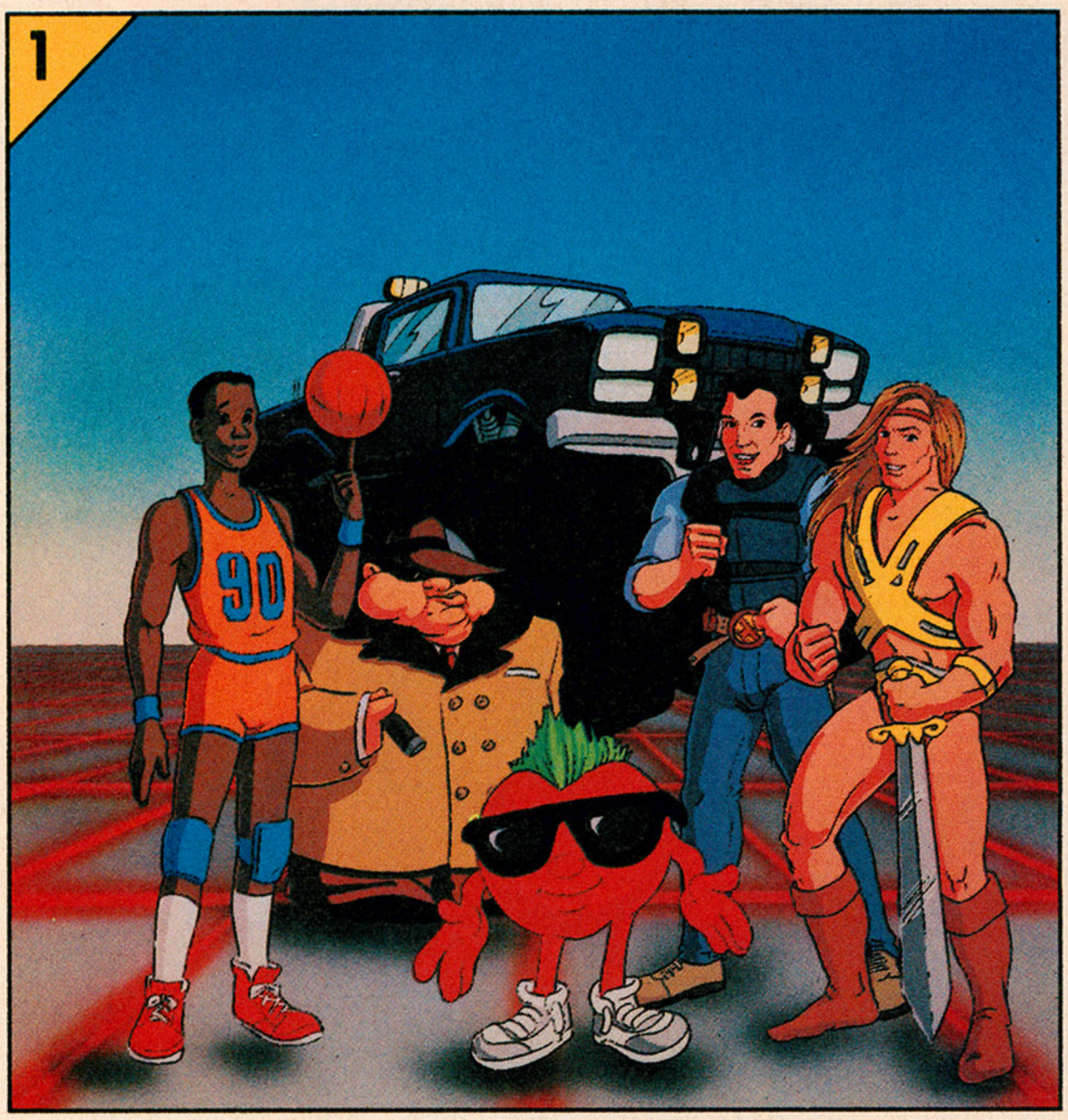
The sudden turn of events caught Galoob by surprise. "We weren't expecting this to happen," a Galoob spokesman told *Game Player's*.

Interestingly, though, Nintendo so far has not taken similar legal action to stop the Game Genie from being sold in Canada. The June 29 court order, issued by the U.S. District Court in San Francisco, has no power outside U.S. borders. As a result, the Game Genie might be available in Canadian stores by the time you read this. (A Toronto-based company, Camerica, owns the Canadian marketing rights to the Genie.)

Meanwhile, Galoob's lawyers appealed to a higher federal court in an attempt to get the June 29 court order reversed. If they succeed, the Game Genie could be sold in U.S. stores while the court case continues.

If Nintendo eventually wins the case, the Game Genie could be pulled off the market forever, at least in the U.S. If Galoob wins, the Genie would be protected against further legal efforts. As this issue was going to press, the next court hearing had not yet been scheduled, though it was expected to take place in July or August.

The outcome of the legal battle could also affect Galoob's plans to sell versions of the Game Genie for other videogame systems. Code Masters is already working on a Genie for the Sega Genesis and says additional versions could be made for the Game Boy, NEC TurboGrafx-16, Sega Master System, or any other videogame machine. Until the Nintendo case is resolved, however, it's unlikely Galoob will run the risk of provoking any more costly lawsuits.



1 *Video Power* also stars characters from Acclaim videogames: (from left) Tyrone, Mr. Big, Kwirk, Max Force, and Kuros. Behind them is Bigfoot, the monster truck.

Super Famicom

It's no secret that for the last few years Nintendo has been working on a 16-bit home videogame system to compete against the Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 (known in Japan as the Mega-Drive and PC-Engine, respectively). In Japan, Nintendo's 16-bit machine is called the Super Famicom to distinguish it from the 8-bit Famicom, or Family Computer, which is known in the U.S. as the Nintendo Entertainment System.

The Super Famicom was originally expected to be intro-

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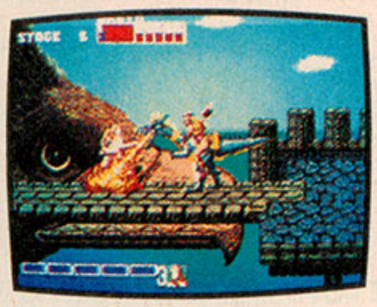
ARCADE GAMES: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Space Harrier II™

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Super Thunder Blade™

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Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™

Altered Beast™

Ghouls 'n Ghosts™

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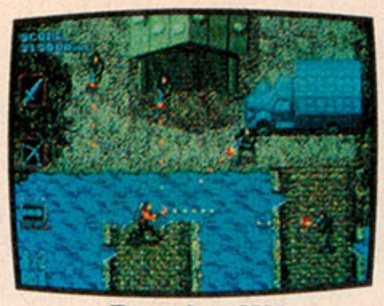
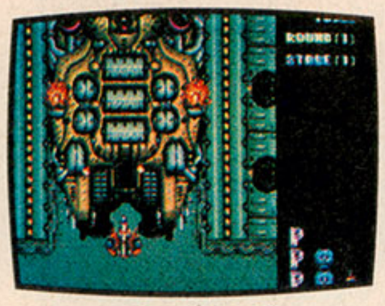

Rambo III®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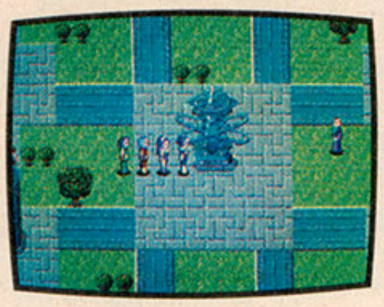
Strider™


Phantasy Star II™

The Sword of Vermillion™

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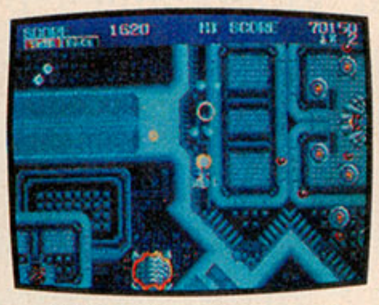
ACTION GAMES: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Ghostbusters II™

Alex Kidd: Enchanted Castle™

Last Battle™

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STRATEGY/PUZZLE GAMES:

Zoom!™

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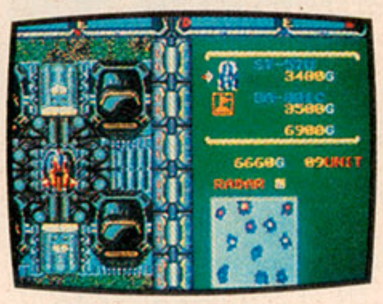
Herzog Zwei™

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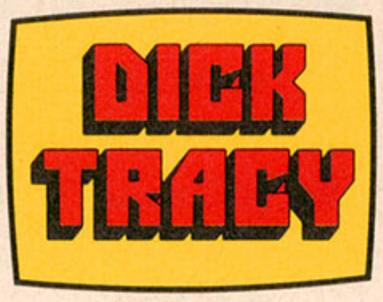

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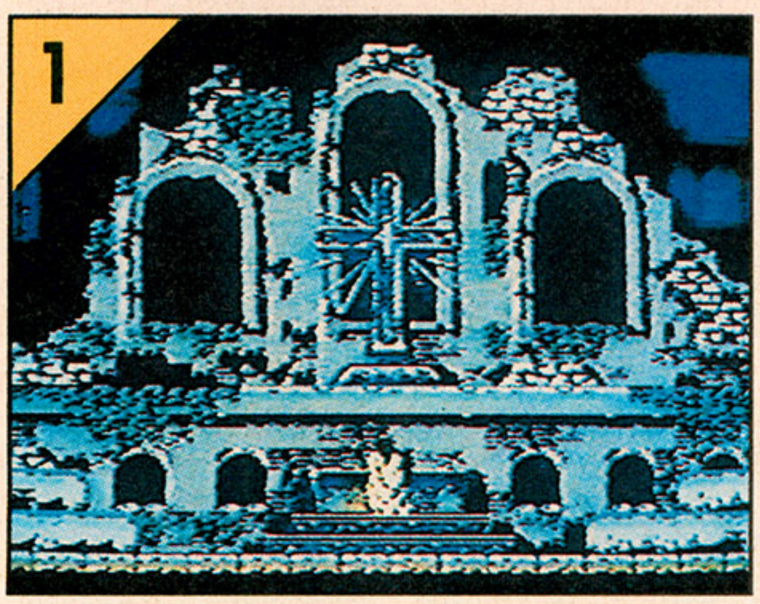
NINTENDO NEWS



duced in Japan in late 1989. But in July 1989, Nintendo announced that the machine would be delayed at least one year. Now comes the latest word from Japan: the Super Famicom will be released there in November.

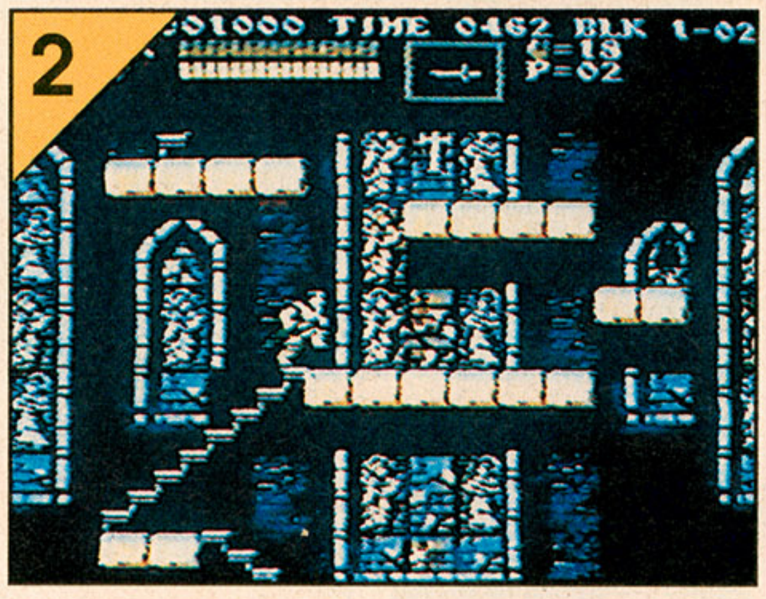
This news will probably have little impact on Nintendo fans in the U.S. and Europe, however, because Nintendo still won't say when the Super Famicom will be available outside Japan. Various industry soothsayers predict it will be launched in the U.S. sometime in 1991 or 1992. (At *Game Player's*, our best guess right now is that the American version of the Super Famicom will be unveiled at the 1991 Summer Consumer Electronics Show in June and released in the U.S. by September 1991.)

There's no doubt that the Super Famicom offers vastly improved graphics and sound over the 8-bit Nintendo. In addition to greater screen resolution, it's capable of displaying more than 32,000 colors, compared to only 52 for the NES. And it can handle many more animated objects on the screen without flicker.

As always, though, the popularity of a videogame system depends largely on its game software, not its hardware. (The Sega Master System has better graphics than the NES, but the NES outsells it ten to one.) To make sure the Super Famicom is supported by software that measures up to its hardware, one of the first games Nintendo is releasing for the machine is *Super Mario Bros. 4*.

Nintendo is also busily signing up independent companies to produce Super Famicom games. The first U.S. company to get a Super Famicom license is Mediagenic, which produces such NES games as *Ghostbusters II*, *Stealth ATF*, and *Archon* under its Activision label. Mediagenic's first three titles for the Super Famicom will include an air-combat flight simulator, a sports game, and a game based on *Battletech*. They'll be available only in Japan, however, until the Super Famicom is released elsewhere.

There's also a possibility that the Super Famicom will be redesigned for the U.S. market. It's a virtual certainty that the name and outward appearance will change — none of the Japanese game systems sold in the U.S. look anything like their counterparts in Japan. But Nintendo may also modify the internal hardware.



Why? Because as it stands now, the Super Famicom is reportedly not compatible with 8-bit Nintendo cartridges. This is sure to disappoint some 8-bit Nintendo players. To take advantage of the wide selection of existing Nintendo games — and to maintain the loyalty of the 25 to 30 million Americans who already own an NES — Nintendo could either make 8-bit compatibility a standard feature of the American machine, or sell an optional converter similar to the Power Base for the Sega Genesis (which allows Genesis owners to play Master System games).

Nintendo won't talk about future plans for the Super Famicom, so definite answers to these questions won't be forthcoming for many months. But whatever Nintendo does, they're sure to be closely watched by gamers the world over.

Video Power Is Coming

We've already seen how popular TV characters like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles can be turned into Nintendo videogames. What about turning popular Nintendo game characters into a TV show?

That's the idea behind *Video Power*, a new show scheduled to premiere in cities throughout the U.S. on October 1. *Video Power* will star a live host and animated characters from videogames by Acclaim Entertainment.

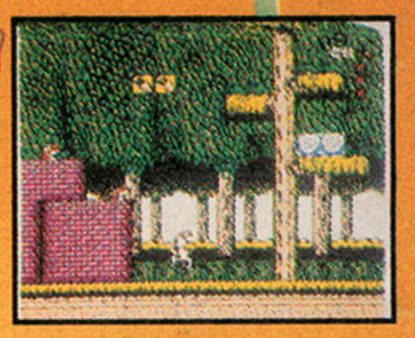
Each half-hour show begins with an introduction by Johnny Arcade, a 15-year-old videogame expert. Among other things, Johnny will talk about new videogames and pass along tips for playing your favorite games.

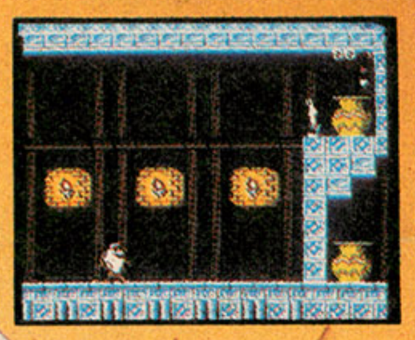
1 *Castlevania III* begins with your character, Trevor Belmont, kneeling before the altar of a shattered medieval church.

2 Stained-glass windows form a beautiful backdrop as Trevor makes his way up this stone staircase.

GETTING TO THIS PARTY ISN'T EXACTLY A PIECE OF CAKE.

A major party has been planned for Bugs Bunny's 50th birthday. Trouble is, none of his jealous Looney Tunes™ friends were invited. Now all 25 of them are out to keep Bugs from getting to the fun. It's up to you to outmaneuver and outwun those wascals through 18 different skill levels. You'd better be good — because The Bugs Bunny™ Birthday Blowout® party is an invitation to trouble.





Happy Birthday Bugs

THE BUGS BUNNY™ BIRTHDAY BLOWOUT

LICENSED BY NINTENDO FOR PLAY ON THE Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

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This official seal is your assurance that Nintendo® has approved the quality of this product. Always look for this sea when buying games and accessories to ensure complete compatibility with your Nintendo Entertainment System.®

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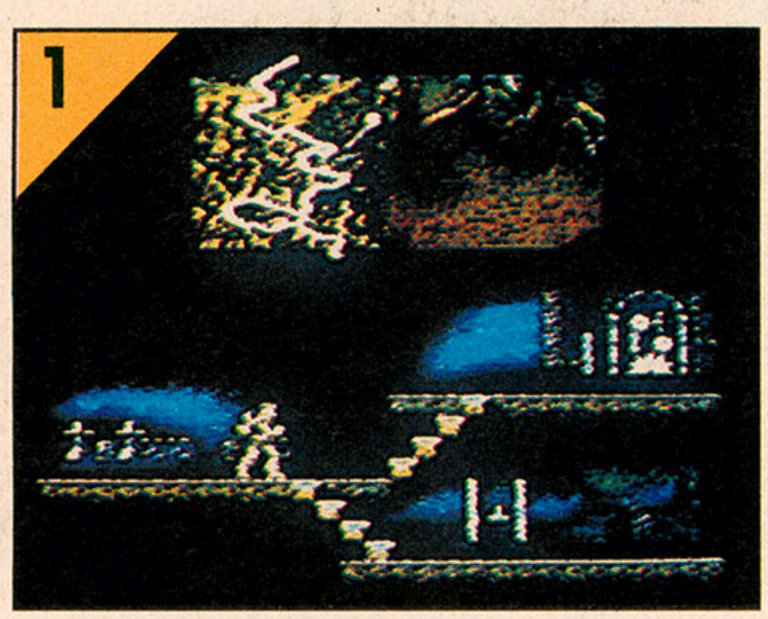
NINTENDO NEWS



Following this will be a 15-minute episode starring characters from Acclaim's Nintendo games: Kwirk (the walking vegetable from *Kwirk: The Chilled Tomato*); Max Force and Mr. Big (the good guy and bad guy from *Narc*); Kuros (the knight from *Wizards & Warriors* and *IronSword: Wizards & Warriors II*); Tyrone (the basketball player from *Arch Rivals*); and Bigfoot (the monster pickup truck from *Bigfoot*).

The general storyline of the animated episodes is that Kwirk, Max Force, Kuros, Tyrone, and Bigfoot form a team to foil Mr. Big's evil plans. After each episode, Johnny Arcade returns to close out the show.

Video Power will appear five days a week, Monday through Friday. Because it's a syndicated show (not carried by a network), it will appear on different channels at different times in each city. In most places, it will appear at either 7:30 or 8 in the morning, or 4 or 4:30 in the afternoon. The company producing the show, Bohbot Productions, predicts an audience of 2.2 million viewers.

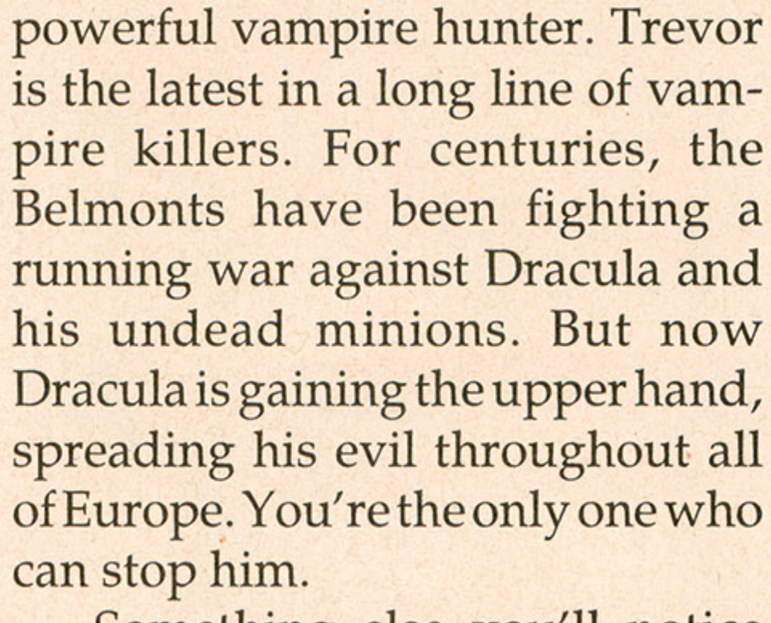
To promote *Video Power*, Bohbot is sponsoring a sweepstakes. Two winners will receive a free trip to New York (with their parents and a friend) to appear on the show. Two other winners will get coin-op arcade machines worth up to $4,000. To enter the random drawing, send a postcard with your name, address, age, and favorite videogame to: Video Power Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 521, Church Hill, MD 21690. The deadline is September 14, and winners will be announced on the premiere episode of *Video Power* on October 1.

Castlevania III

Several big sequels are awaited by Nintendo fans this fall: Capcom's *Mega Man 3*, Enix's *Dragon Warrior II*, FCI's *Ultima II: Quest of the Avatar*, Electronic Arts' *Skate or Die 2*, Hudson Soft's *Adventure Island II*, Culture Brain's *Flying Dragon II* and *Magic of Scheherazade II*, LJN's *Back to the Future 2* and *3*, Mindscape's *Gauntlet II*, and Ultra's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II*.

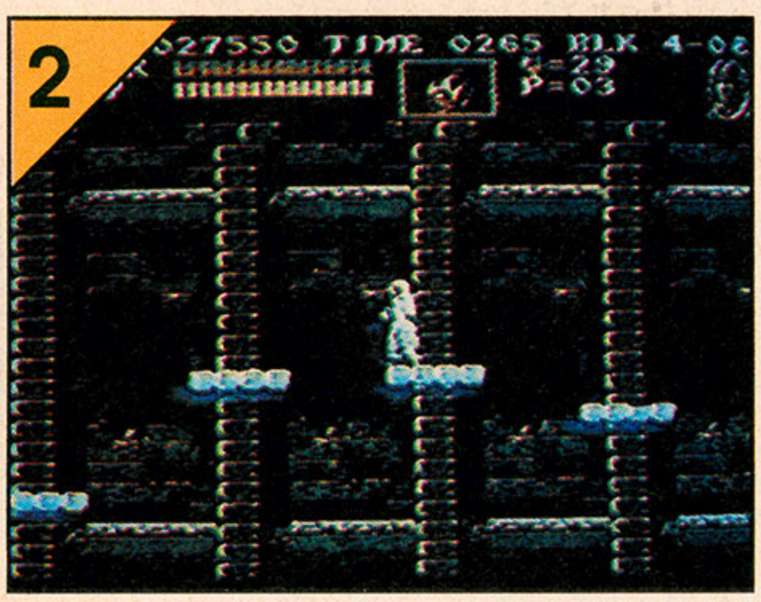
For vampire hunters, though, there's only one sequel that counts: Konami's *Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse*. It's the followup to the immensely popular *Simon's Quest: Castlevania II* and the original *Castlevania*. (There's also a version for the Game Boy, *The Castlevania Adventure*.)

One of the first things you'll notice in *Castlevania III* is that your main character has changed. Instead of playing the role of Simon, the star of *Castlevania* and *Simon's Quest*, you play Trevor Belmont, a powerful vampire hunter. Trevor is the latest in a long line of vampire killers. For centuries, the Belmonts have been fighting a running war against Dracula and his undead minions. But now Dracula is gaining the upper hand, spreading his evil throughout all of Europe. You're the only one who can stop him.



Something else you'll notice right away in *Castlevania III* is the outstanding graphics. The highly detailed backgrounds exude a spooky, musty atmosphere. In fact, *Castlevania III* looks better than some games we've seen for 16-bit systems.

A major reason for the improved graphics is that *Castlevania III* is one of the first cartridges to use Nintendo's new MMC-5 chip. Among other things, the MMC-5 allows moving objects to have more colors, allows games to have more moving objects on the screen at the same time, and permits games to have better music. *Castlevania III* offers proof that the 8-bit NES can hold its own against 16-bit systems.



GP

1 When you finish each stage, a map shows where you're going next.

2 These floating platforms require carefully timed jumps.

3 Glowing eyes in the dark forest quickly turn into flying monstrosities.

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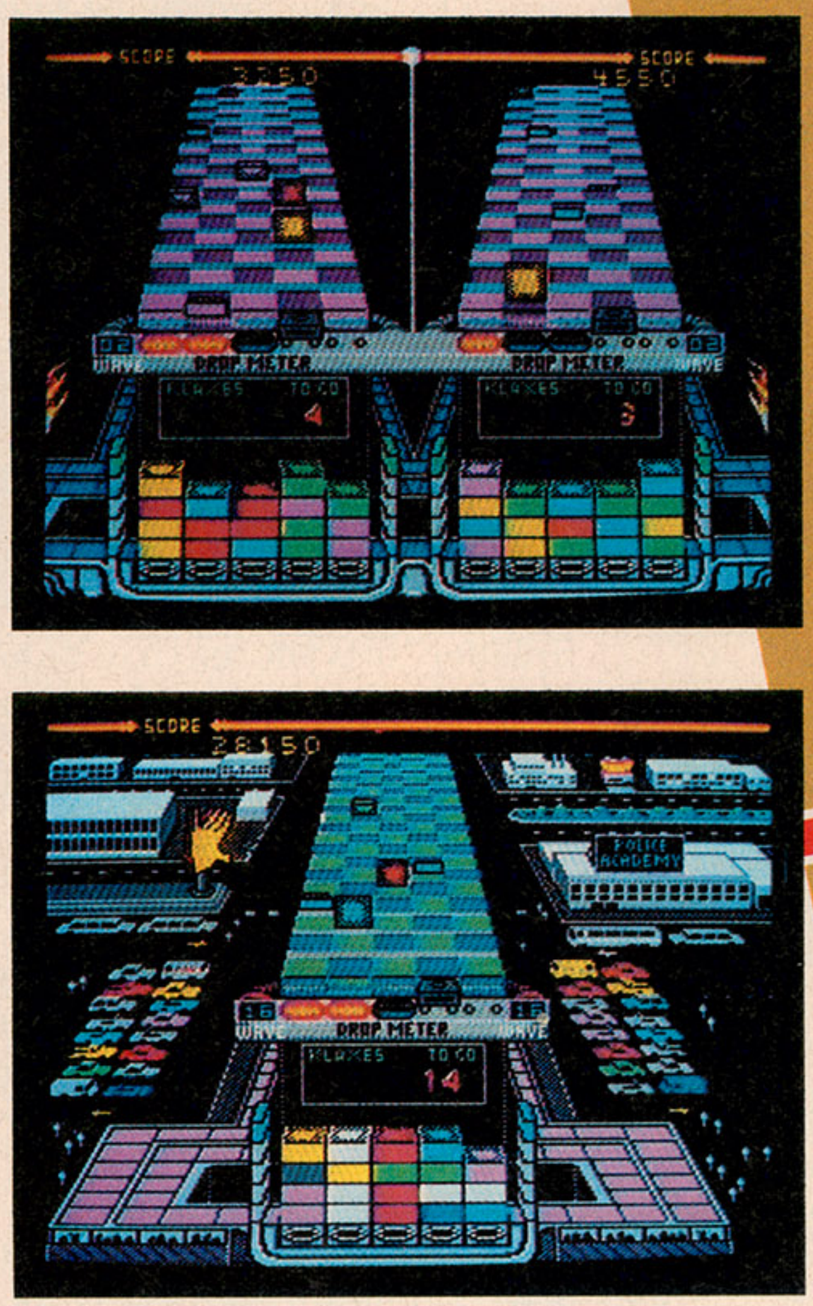

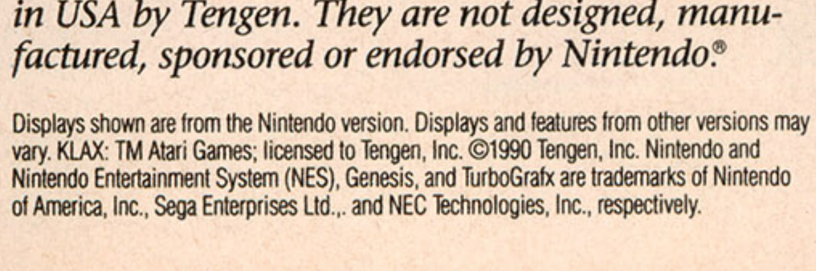

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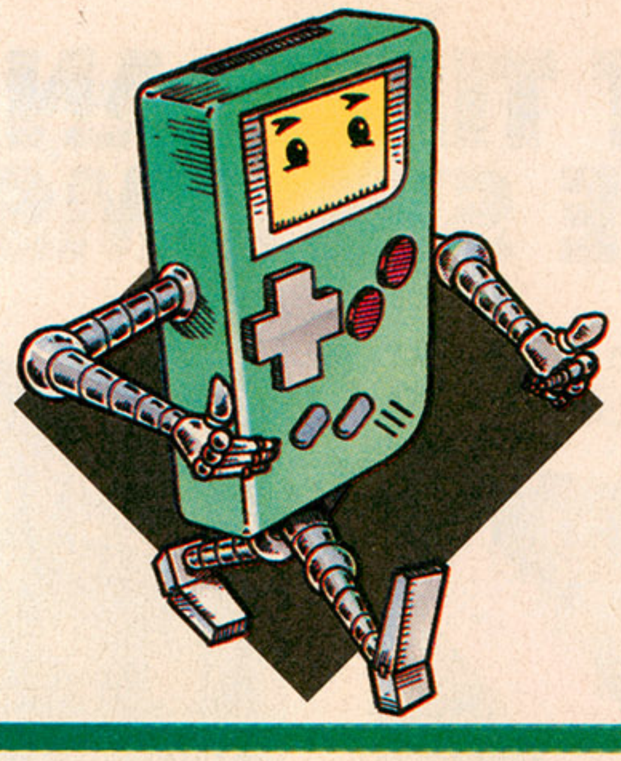


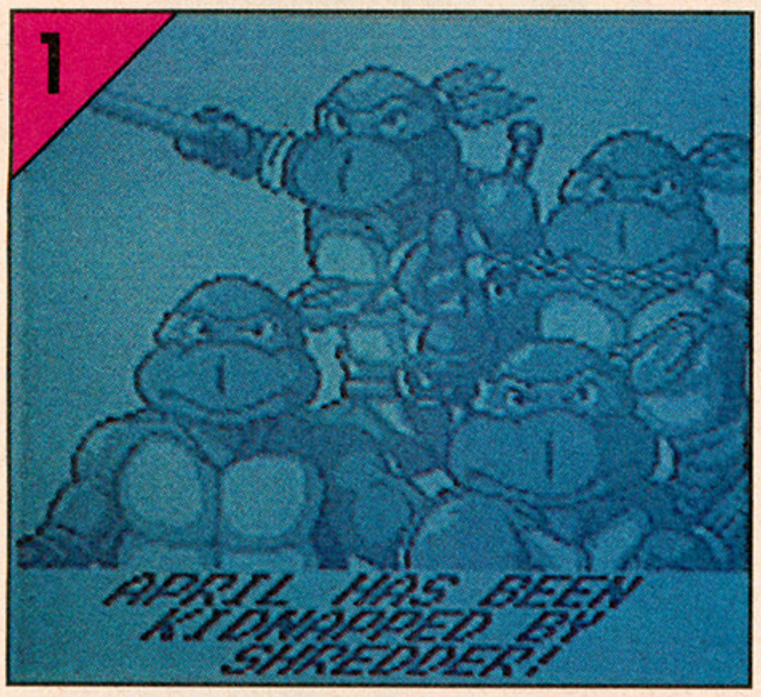
GAMEBOY PLAYERS

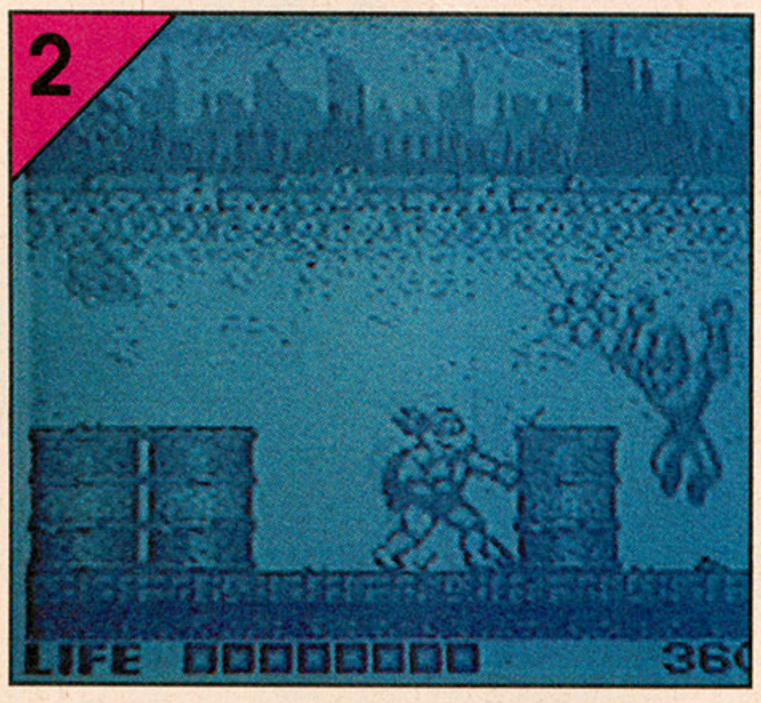
HEROES ON THE HALF-SCREEN

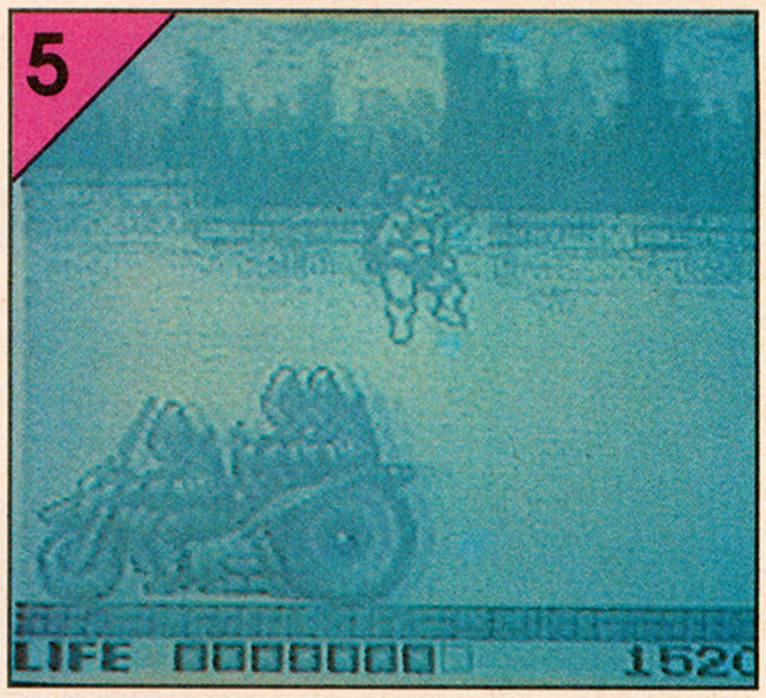
Matthew A. Firme

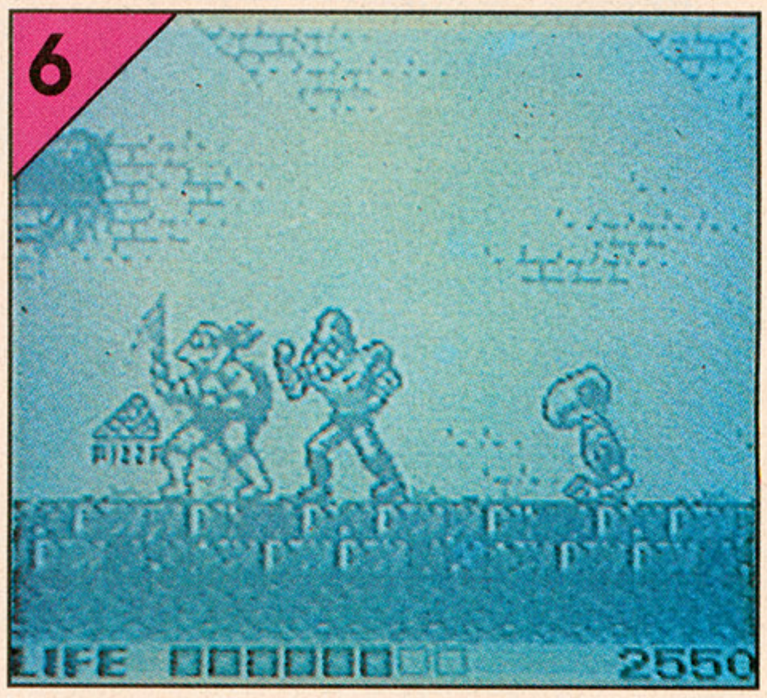
The fearsome foursome of phenomenal superstars whose daring exploits are dazzling the nation — and of course we mean the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles — have made their inevitable appearance on the Game Boy. Ultra's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan,* the latest videogame featuring the four mutant heroes, is an all-new adventure of good dudes versus bad dudes.

In this game, the nefarious Shredder has managed to capture beautiful April O'Neill, TV news celebrity and friend to the Turtles. Enraged, they set out to rescue her. But Shredder's army of foot soldiers is ready, guarding the path you'll have to travel to find April. You'll be thrashing evil every step of the way, battling such baddies as Roadkill Rodney, the Not-So-Great Balls of Fire, the Tubular Transports, and the Nitro-Burning Doughnut (whose frosting is









1 Shredder, with the help of alien archfiend Krang, has kidnapped April O'Neill! It's time to choose your champion and swing into action.

2 Be fast with your weapons, because the bad guys don't believe in fair play. Try hitting the barrel behind you — it reveals a bonus stage.

3 Your mentor and friend, Splinter, offers you a chance to earn extra points. You'll have to guess a number between 1 and 999.

4 Splinter gives you ten chances to guess the number and lets you know if you're "hot" or "cold." Look for other bonus stages in the game.

5 There's no way to stop the Brawling Bikers, so don't waste time trying. Just leap and let them pass under you, but be ready for them to make another pass.

6 After a long stretch of street action, you'll swing down to the sewers and pick up April's trail. The slice of pizza restores two life points.

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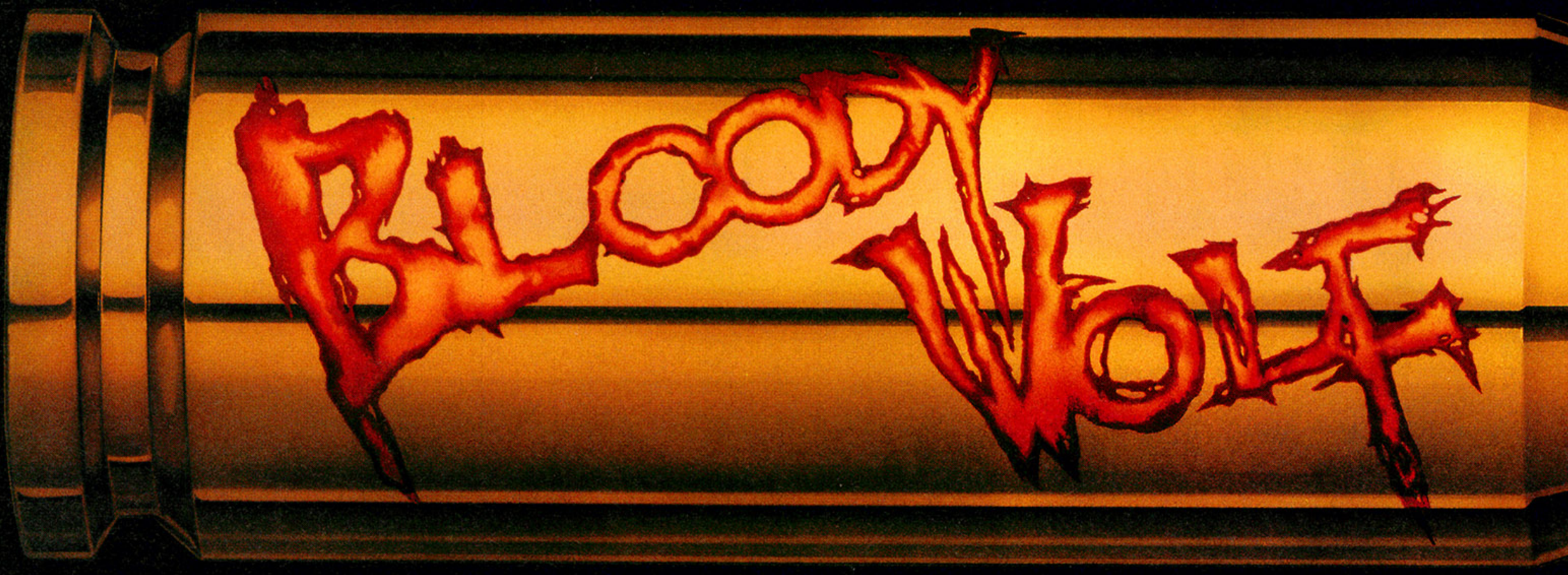

THEY'VE KIDNAPPED THE PRESIDENT.

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You'd better eat a good breakfast.

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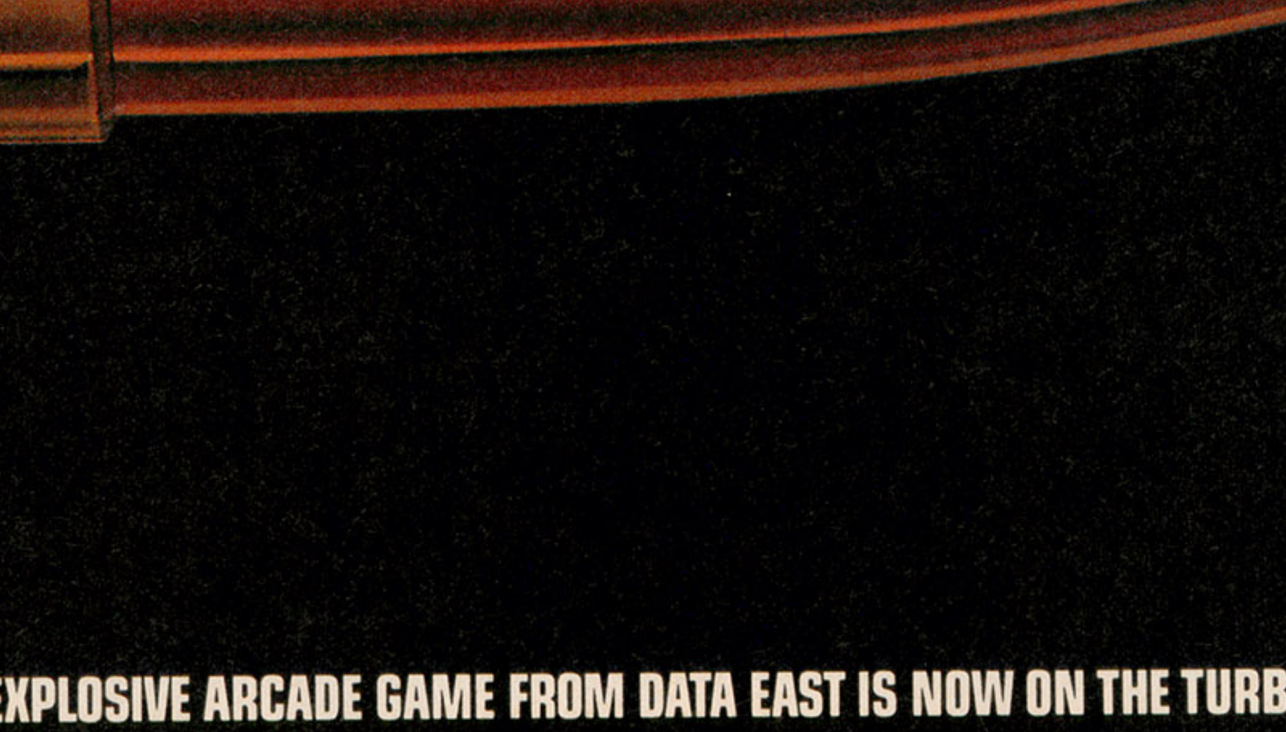
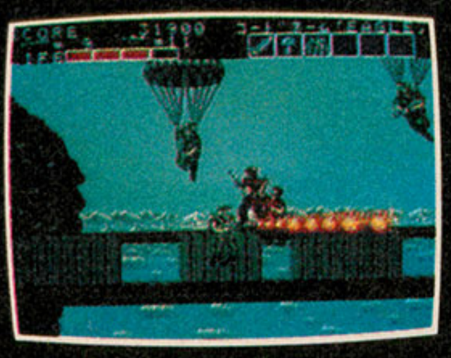
The world's most elite counter-terrorist organization is looking for a few good gamers.



So this is what they mean by "death from above!" Keep moving and shooting until this bird is cooked, and you're on the way to your next battle.

Ahh, the smell of napalm in the morning. Keep moving or the flame thrower boss will dry roast you.

The odds are hundreds-to-one against you. Steal firepower from enemy ammo dumps.



When it rains terrorists, an umbrella won't do you much good. But a flame thrower will.

Hope you like heavy metal. Blow this tin can to bits, or die.

This has not been a good day for your Commander-in-Chief.

TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

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Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the TurboGrafx-16 system is $159.99.

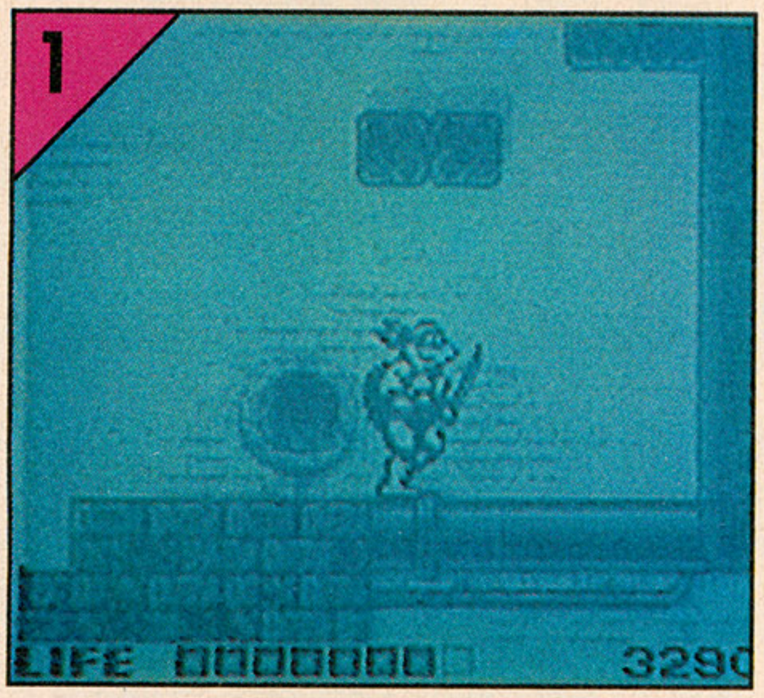
murder).

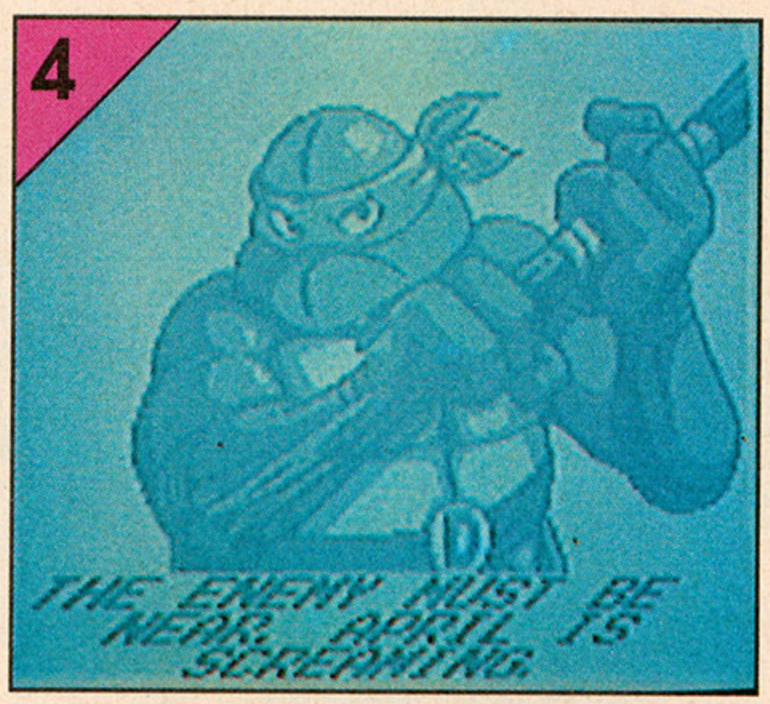
Fall of the Foot Clan has five levels, each distinctly different. Your search for April will take you from the streets of Queens through sewers and waste dumps to the tops of a speeding convoy of 18-wheelers. You can choose to play as any of the four Turtles: Donatello, Michelangelo, Raphael, or Leonardo. Each Turtle has his own strengths, and when these four heroes get together, you can bet they'll really whup old Shredder.

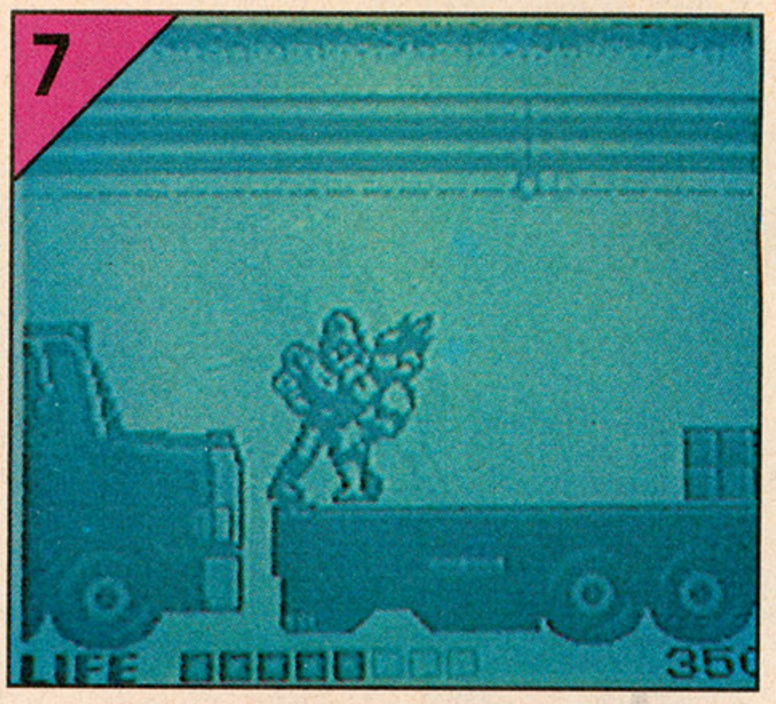
You choose your Turtle at the beginning of the game and before each new level. Once you choose a Turtle, though, you're stuck with him until you either clear the stage or run low on life and are captured. If this happens, all is not lost. You can select another turtle, return to the action, and press on.

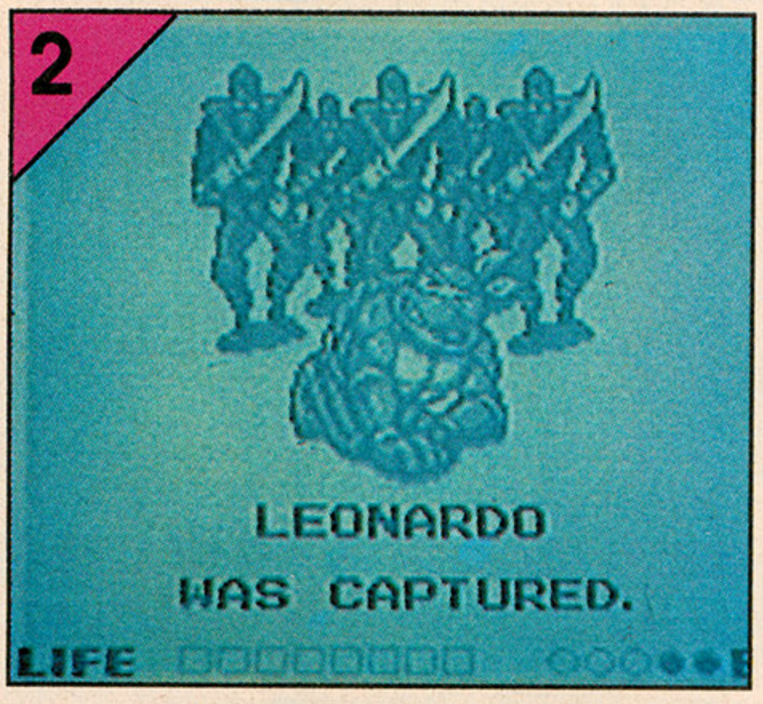
Once all the Turtles have been captured, the game is over. And it's easy to lose your characters to the hordes of leaping, rolling, whirring enemies you'll have to face. The bad guys are everywhere, and they just keep getting tougher. In fact, this can become a bit frustrating and repetitive. But then, fast action and perseverance are what the Ninja Turtles are all about. If you're not looking for a challenge, dudes, then don't bother with this game.

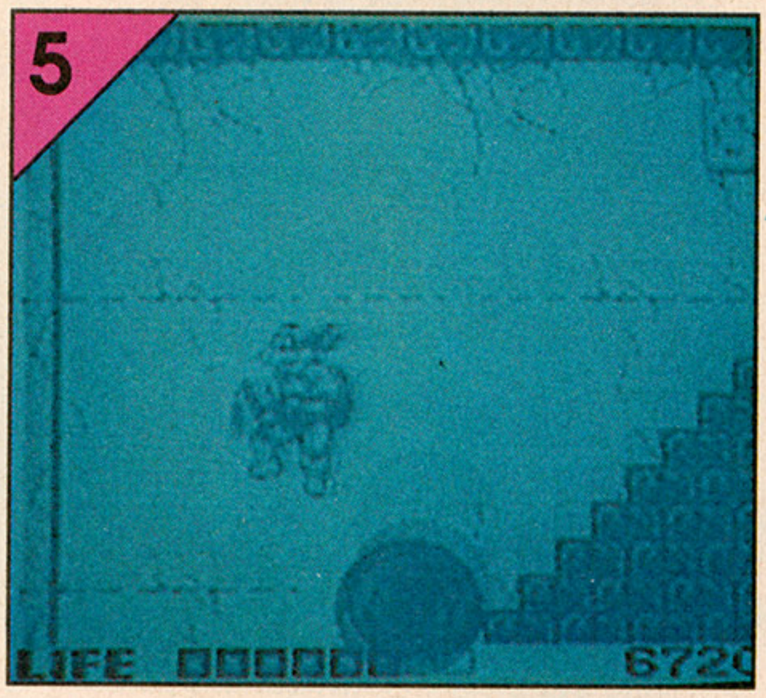
Fans will happily notice that almost nothing has been lost in

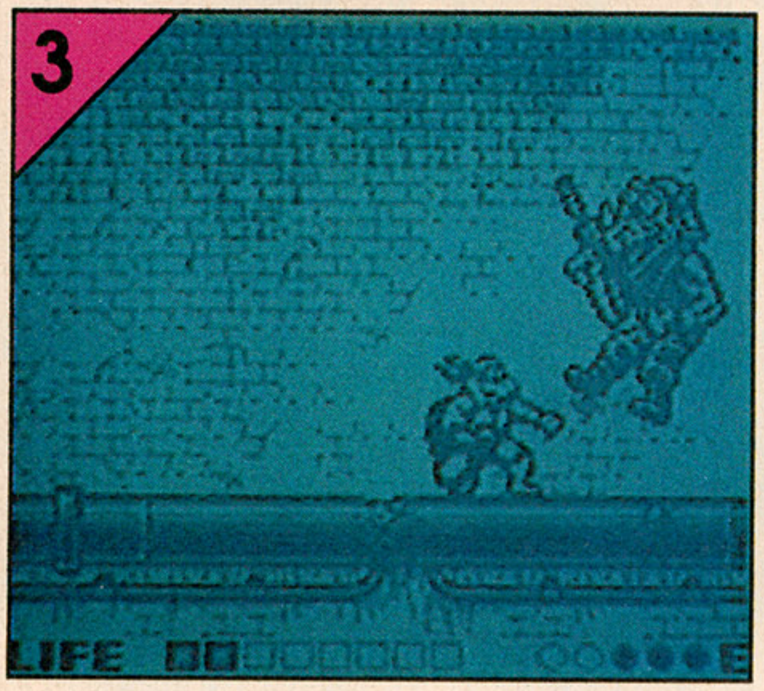


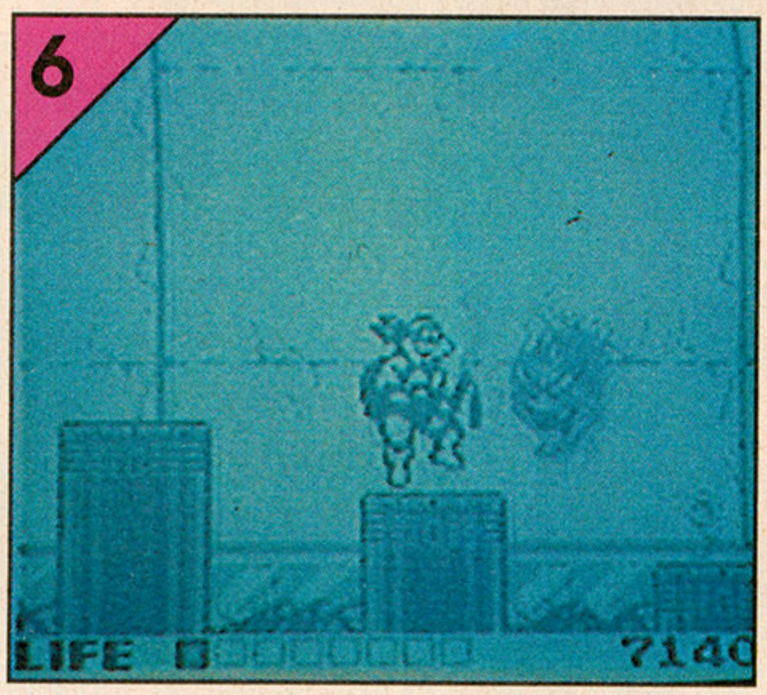












1 Watch out for falling objects as you cruise the sewers. Advance carefully and stay alert.

2 If your Turtle loses all of his life points, he'll be captured. You must pick one of the remaining Turtles if you wish to continue.

3 Be-Bop is the boss of the first level, and he's not as tough as he thinks he is. Get close and keep swinging.

4 Every stage brings you closer to Shredder's secret hideout — and closer to rescuing April.

5 Don't charge up these stairs. Move slowly and be ready to jump. You'll make slow but safe progress.

6 Great balls of fire! These guys don't give you much warning, and they like to attack when you least expect it.

7 On level 3 you battle foot soldiers across a line of trucks rolling down a highway. Some of the enemies hurl iron girders.

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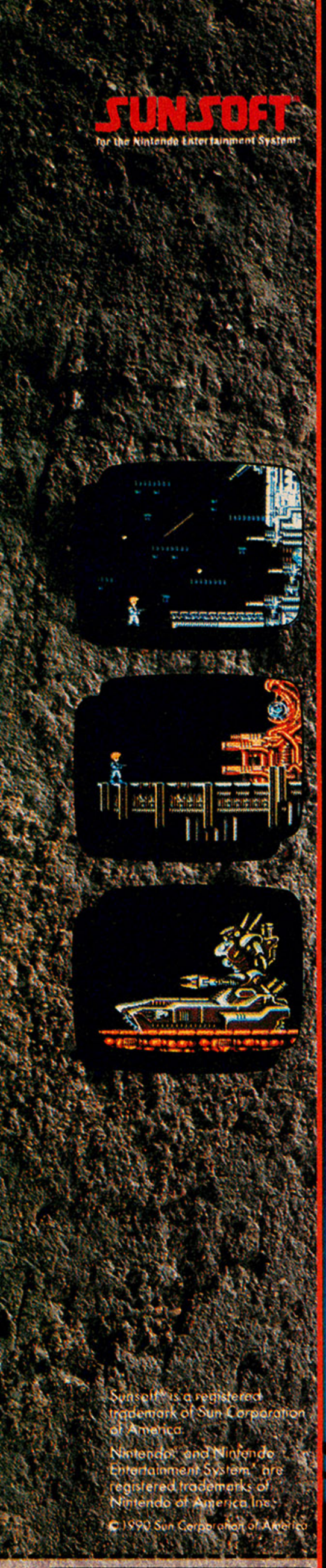

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GAMEBOY PLAYERS

whittling the Turtles down to Game Boy size. In fact, *Fall of the Foot Clan* demonstrates once again how surprisingly detailed a Game Boy screen can be. The graphics are sharp, the characters are clearly recognizable, and the backgrounds are uncluttered and attractive.

The action is easy to follow because the characters are big, especially the bosses. You won't have any trouble recognizing your favorite Turtle. Each carries his customary weapon and wears the proper initial on his belt.

Graphically, in fact, *Fall of the Foot Clan* is even better than the original version for the Nintendo Entertainment System—a feat also accomplished by such Game Boy titles as *Batman* and *Double Dragon*.

Fall of the Foot Clan also has a terrific soundtrack that demands to be heard through the Game Boy's stereo headphones. The familiar TMNT theme greets you as the game begins, and the stereo music and sound effects continue throughout the adventure.

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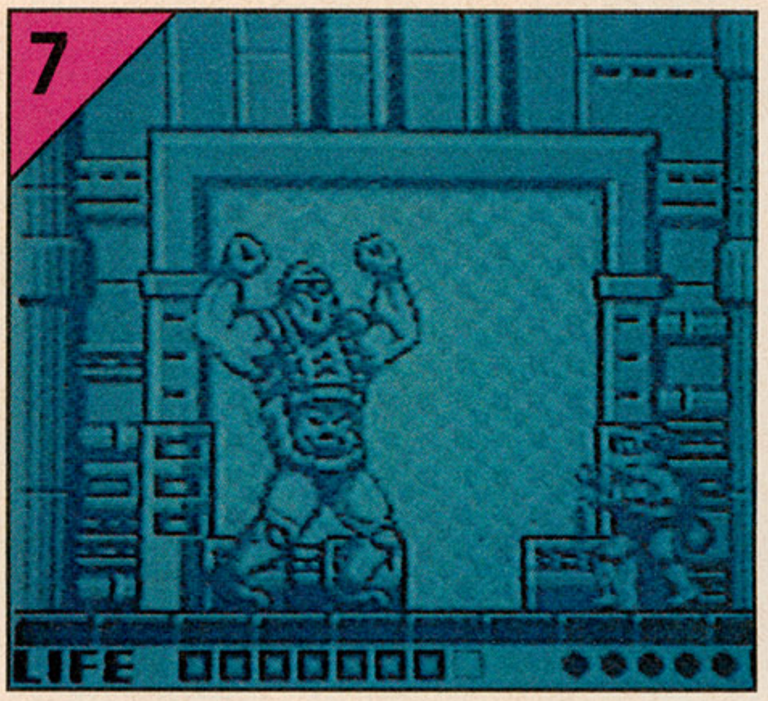
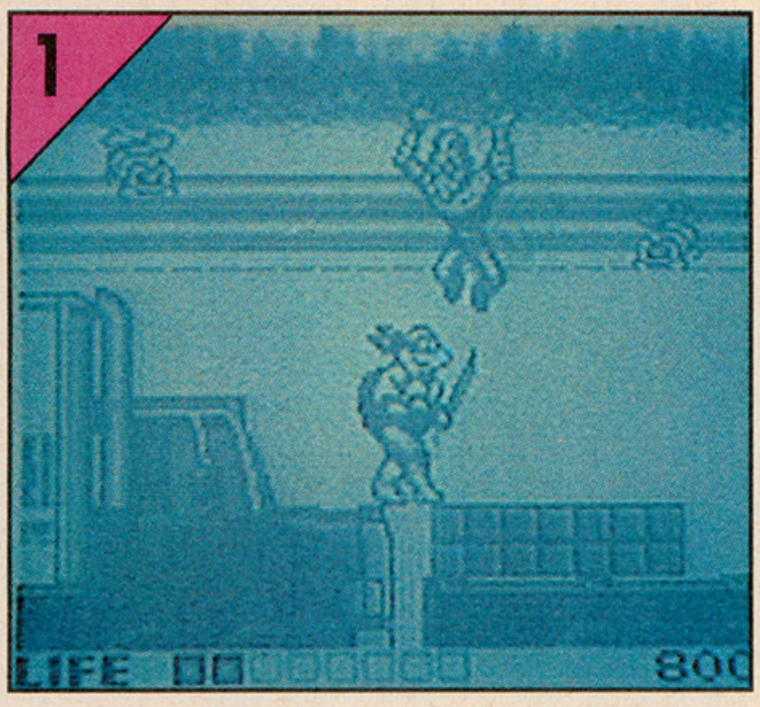
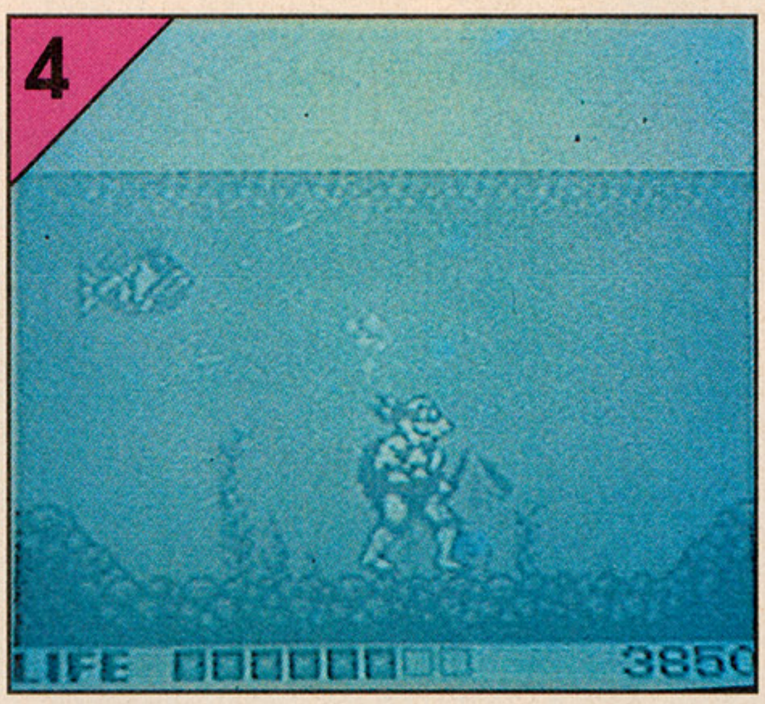
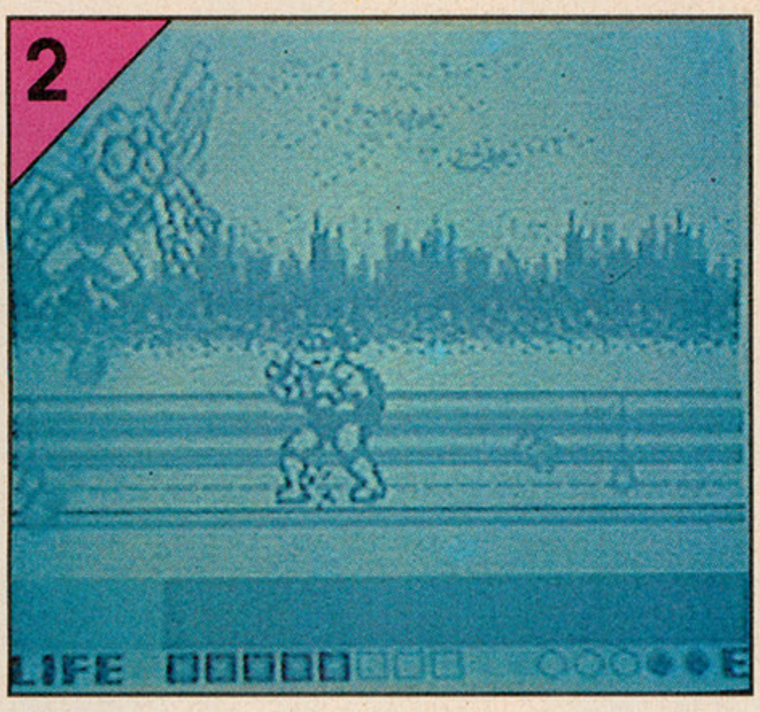
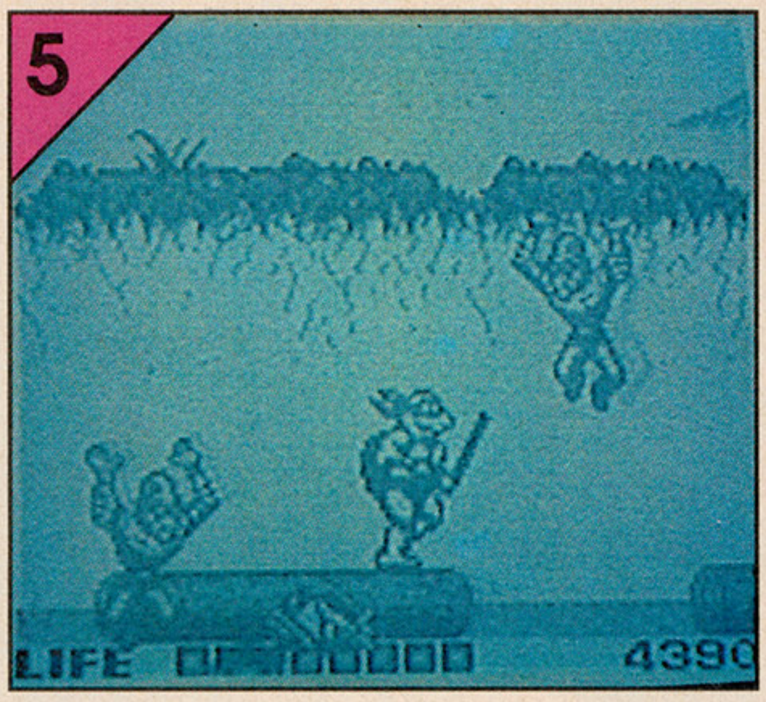
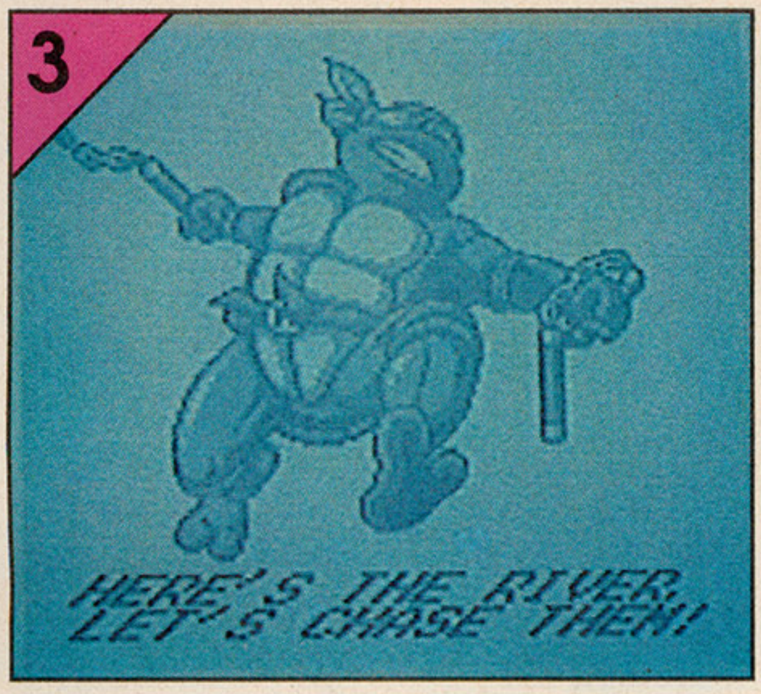


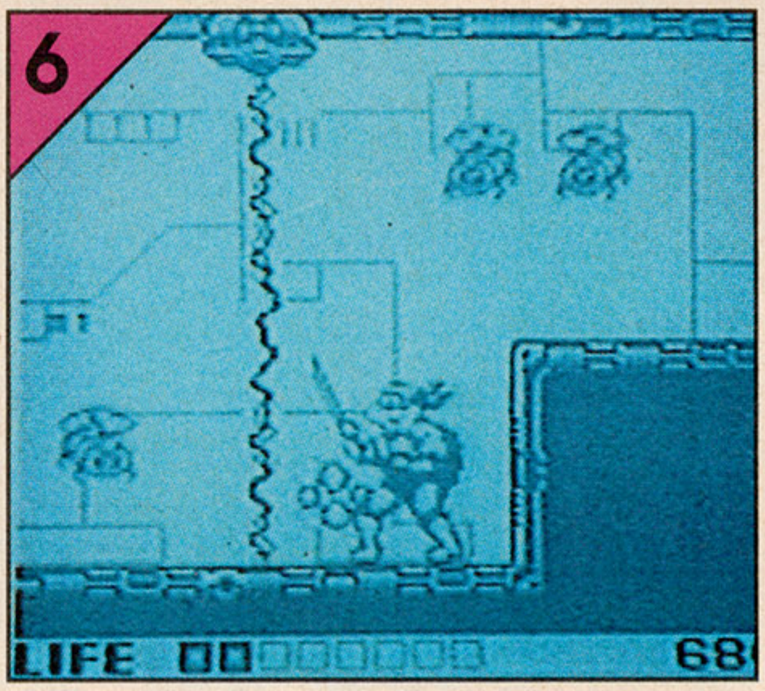












1 As if things weren't bad enough, these Tubular Transports zoom down and try to buzz you. They move very fast and usually attack in pairs.

2 This guy swoops back and forth, firing at you with a steady but predictable volley. Leap into the air, dodge his onslaught, and kick him as many times as you can.

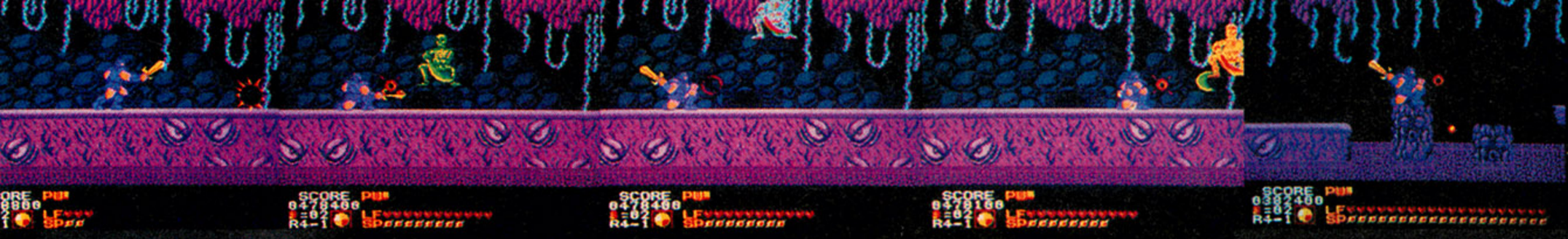
3 A swim might seem like a good idea, but you'll find more than just bluegills in the water.

4 Don't let that fish latch onto you — he'll sap your energy until you shake his grip.

5 Because the waters are so dangerous, stay on the logs as much as you can. Teams of foot soldiers try to knock you off.

6 You're almost there — and the fighting is getting heavy. In addition to the Tubular Transports buzzing all around, there are lasers mounted in the ceiling.

7 The hideous Krang leers at you. All your training is about to be tested. Remember, you are April's last chance.



The legend lives on.

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The name is **Astyanax**™—à-STĪ′-à-năx—and the game is unrelenting, mind-boggling action. Trapped in the nightmare world of Remlia, his only path back to reality is blocked by a hostile army of incredibly large and hostile monsters. His only hope: rescue Princess Rosebud from the clutches of the evil wizard Blackhorn.

A story in 12 stages of countless characters.

How do you kill the Living Dead? Put out the fire of the Flaming Polyp Plants? Chop off the heads of evil Caesar's mutant bodyguard? That's just a sampling of what **Astyanax** faces, and that's just Stage 1!

3 magic spells, fueled by 5 mystical power sources.

At your command are: Bind, to freeze your enemies in their tracks; Blast, a furious fireball which few can survive; Bolt, an awesome charge of deadly destruction. Choose your weapons carefully—axe, spear or sword. Wield them mightily to smash the Gold Statues and collect their power items: Power Supply increases your striking power; Potion restores lost life; 1-Up gives you an extra life; Wing enables you to swing your weapon faster; Cutie changes weapons or increases spell power.

Astyanax is filled with large, realistic creatures that rival the most detailed 16-bit characters on the screen today. There are 12 exciting stages of play and vertical and horizontal scrolling levels that constantly expand the kingdom of Remlia—features that place **Astyanax** high on the Nintendo Power Player Meter.®

If you'd go to the ends of the Earth in your search for the perfect video game for your NES,® you're certain to find a home in Remlia. With **Astyanax**.

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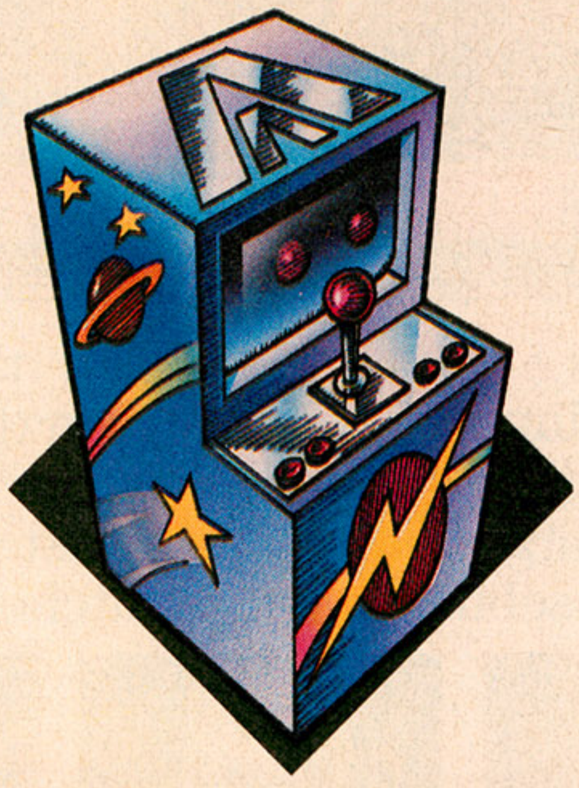


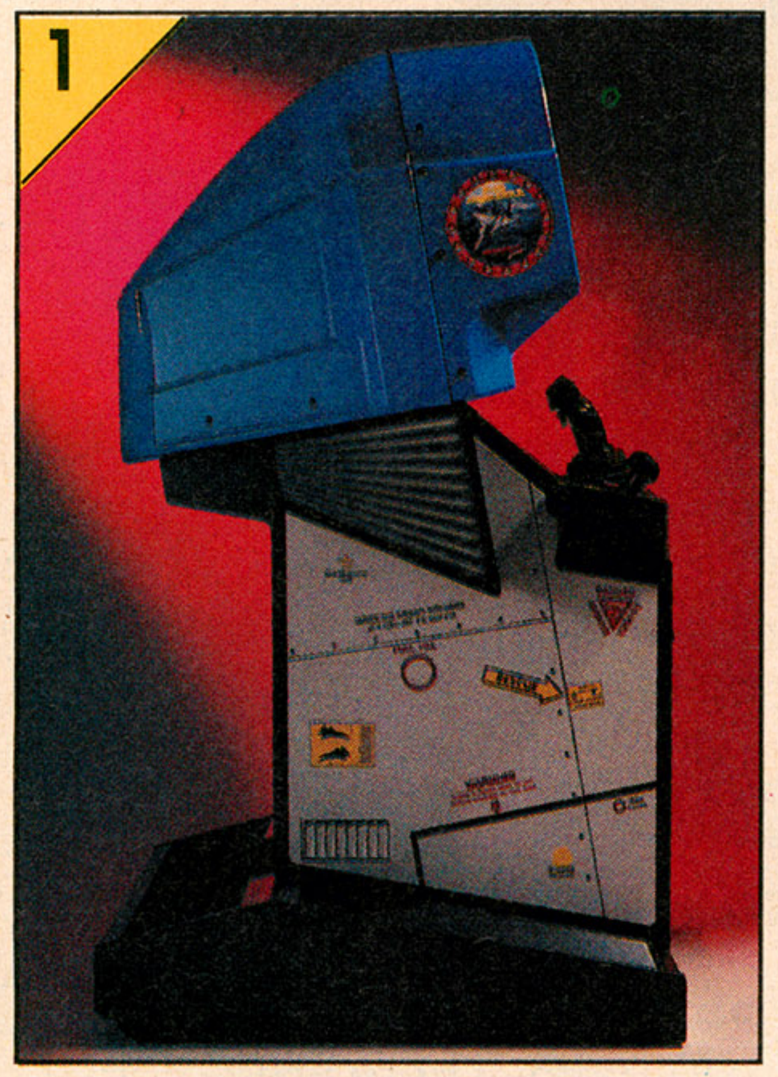
ARCADE ACTION

F-15 Strike Eagle

Scott Wolf

We all know the feeling — that anxious anticipation of a home computer version of our favorite coin-op arcade game. But when was the last time you eagerly awaited the *coin-op* version of your favorite *home computer* game? With very few exceptions (such as *Tetris*), it's quite unusual for a home computer game to possess the delicate combination of simplicity and addictive game play that merits a coin-op conversion.

F-15 Strike Eagle by MicroProse is just such a bird. Over the past few years, this combat flight simulator has been converted to virtually every home computer format, selling more than a million copies



worldwide. And the coin-op version is not just another airborne shoot-em-up — it's the first true flight simulator ever seen in the arcades, and the closest thing to real air combat that you're likely to find outside of a military training program.

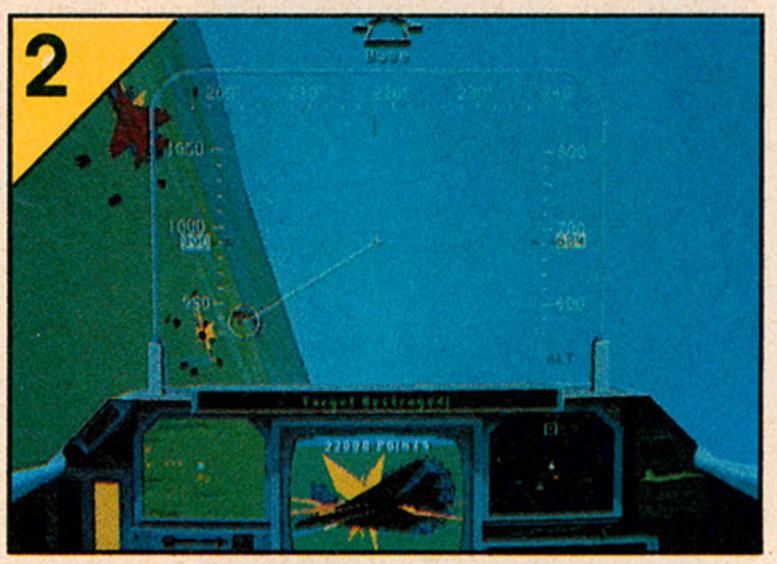
Unlike other air combat games, *F-15 Strike Eagle* doesn't limit you to following a narrow flight path that leads you by the nose to your objective. You are free to fly anywhere in the game's vast world at any speed, altitude, or attitude (even upside-down!). You can perform loops, rolls, and any other aerial maneuver that's possible in a real F-15.

Bearing in mind that most of MicroProse's computer simulations come with instruction manuals 40 to 100 pages long, you have to admire the way the designers have simplified *F-15* for the arcades while keeping it sophisticated enough to challenge the most jaded computer jocks.

Control is simple: You grab a throttle lever with afterburner button in your left hand, and a beefy control stick with a cannon trigger, missile-release button, and target-select button in your right hand.

The target selector is the most important feature to master. Nestled on the left side of the control stick, this little gizmo locks your missiles onto your target, no matter what you're looking at through the canopy. If your primary target is staring you in the face but you're locked on to a MiG, you're going to shoot the MiG unless you select the primary target. This is quite different from other games in which you simply shoot what you see.

After the target selector, your next best friend is the decoy release. When an enemy missile is eager to make your acquaintance, fire a decoy and jink your plane. If you're good enough, you've got a pretty good chance of escaping unscathed.



If you're not good enough, maybe you should select a lower difficulty level. *F-15* lets you choose a skill level before the game starts. The easier levels restrict your aerobatic maneuverability at first to allow you to become familiar with the jet's cockpit displays and handling characteristics. Most noticeable is the large head-up display (HUD) which provides such critical information as your heading, altitude, and speed. The HUD also lets you aim your weapons.

Below the HUD are fuel and damage gauges, a miniature map of the immediate area, missile and

1 *F-15 Strike Eagle* is the first true flight simulator for coin-op arcades.

2 The cockpit's head-up display (HUD) shows your altitude (right), speed (left), and heading (top).

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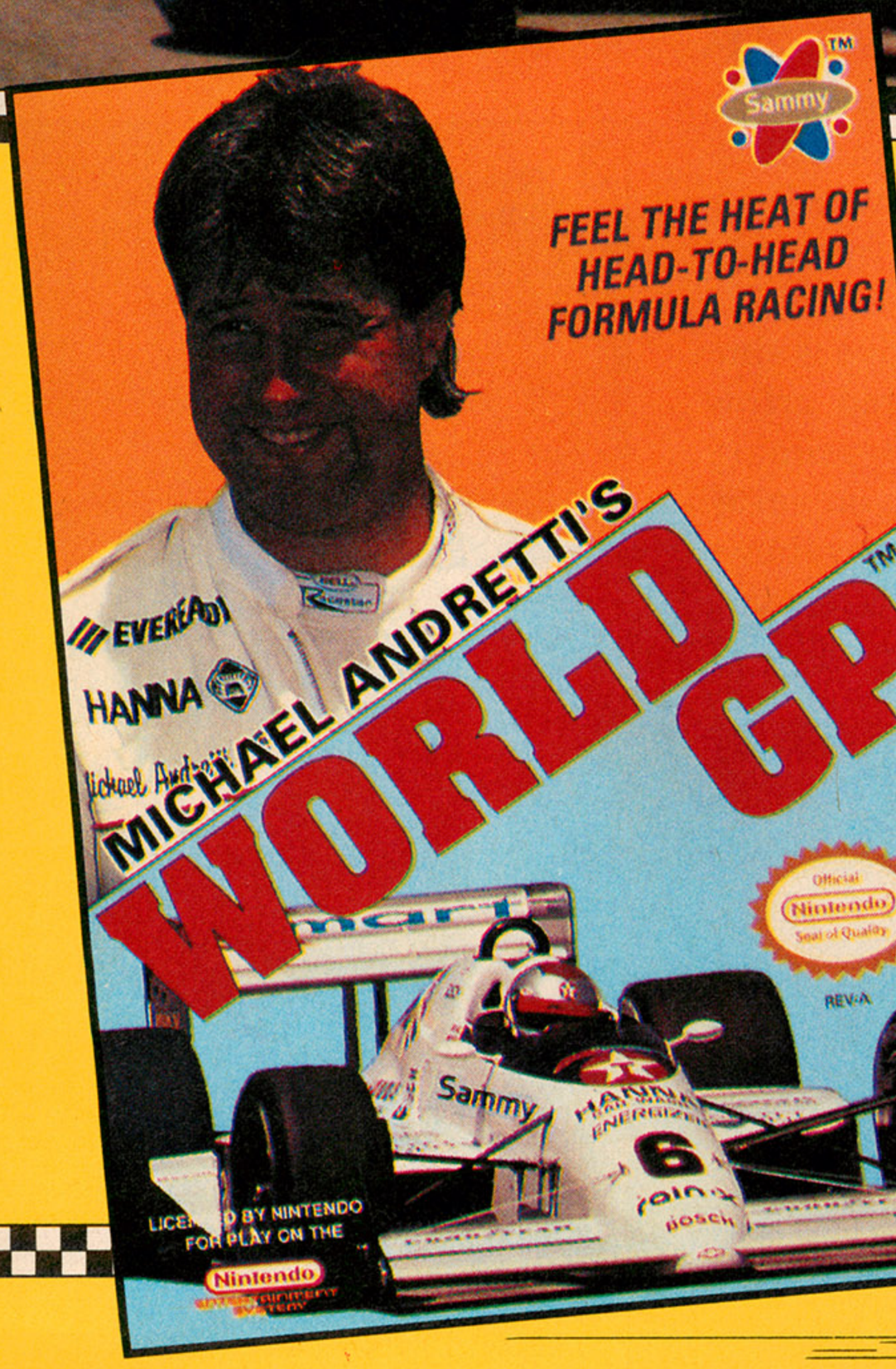
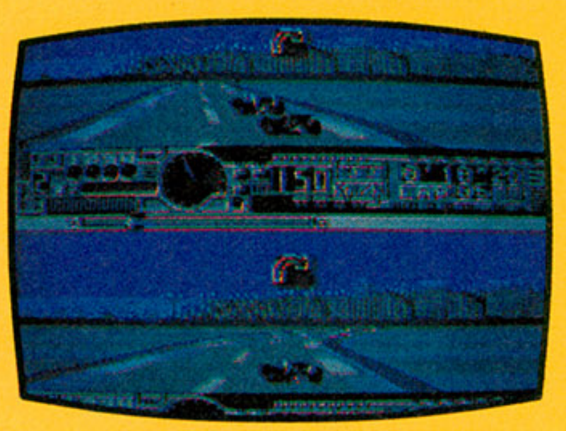


Michael Andretti will give you a few hot tips on Grand Prix circuit racing!



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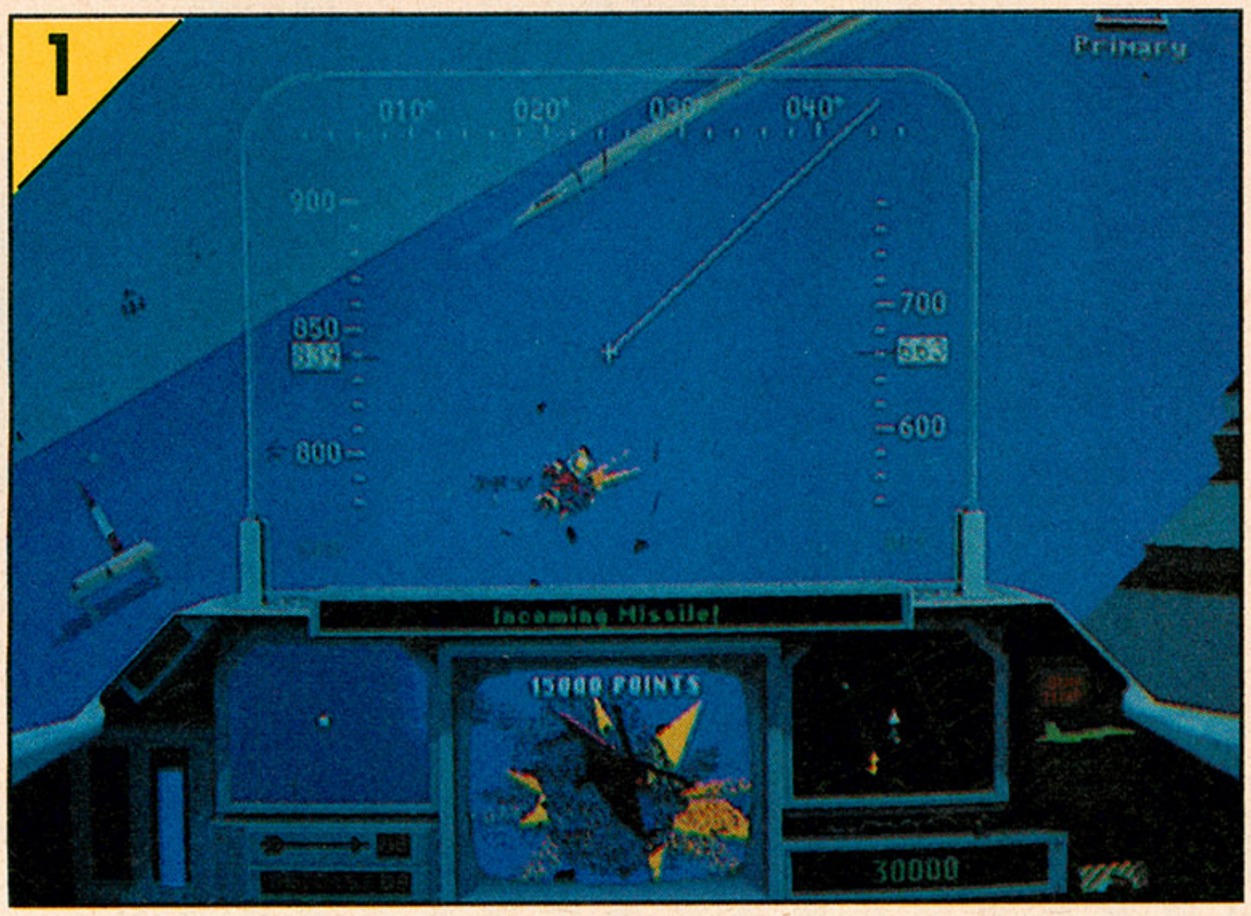
ARCADE ACTION

neuvers such as the Split-S and Immelmann — you name it.

F-15 Strike Eagle has six different combat areas, each with a distinct primary target and its own support units. Enemy actions are realistic and intelligent. You start with three lives, ten missiles, five decoys, and half a tank of fuel. But *at any time*, you can insert more quarters and *buy* whatever you need — from missiles to damage repair. You have unlimited cannon fire, but your guns will overheat if you squeeze the trigger for too long. And, in what appears to be a breakthrough in aerospace technology, you can actually absorb the fuel which escapes from any tanker truck you blow up.



decoy counters, a long-range target identification screen, and a threat indicator which shows the position of enemy aircraft and missiles. All this may sound a bit overwhelming at first, but you'll soon find it second nature to scan quickly for the information you need.

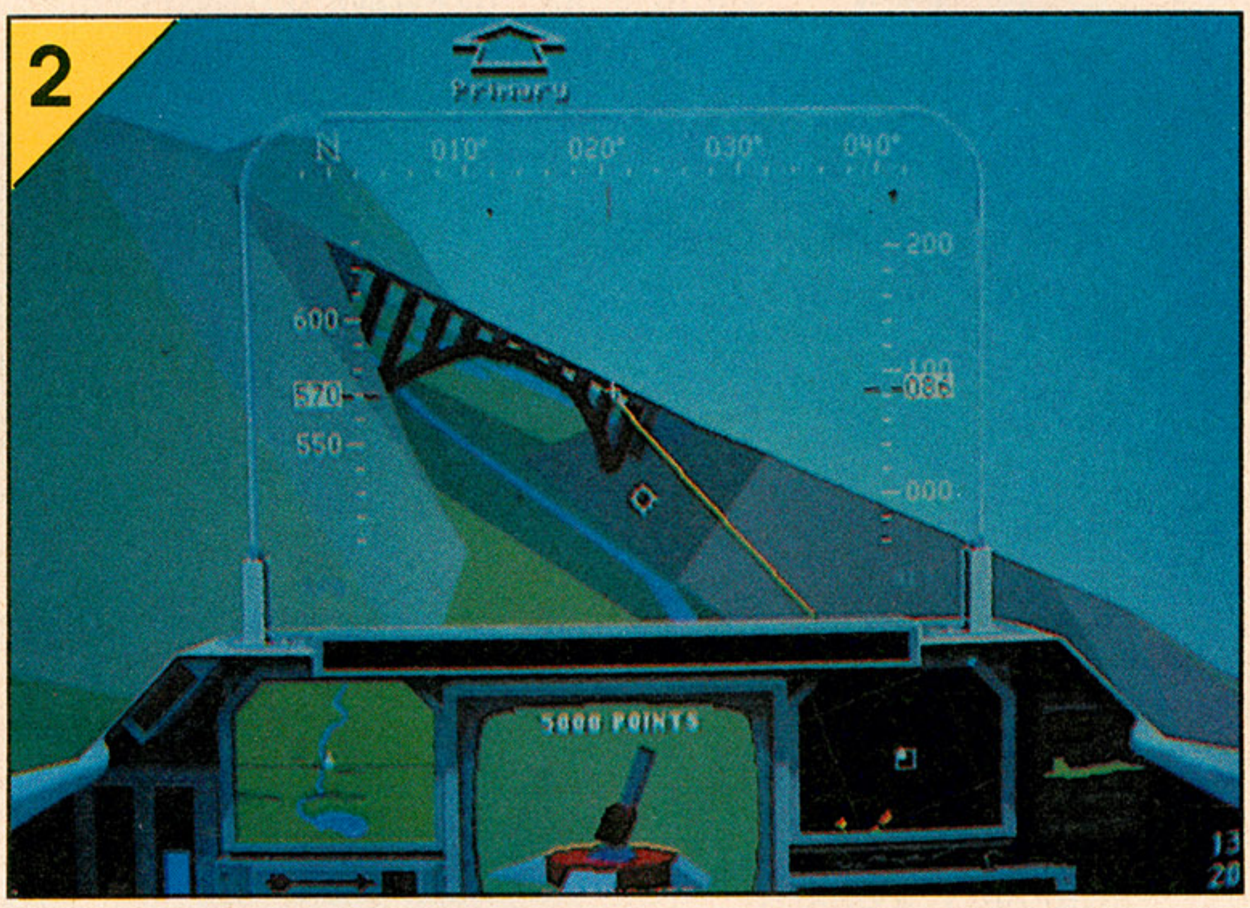
You'll also find that while the control stick is quite sensitive, the Eagle flies as smooth as silk. It takes an iron hand to make this baby misbehave.

If you play on the ace level, you'll see what the Eagle is really capable of doing. You can burn through a break turn, perform barrel rolls and vertical loops, and even execute more complex maneuvers such as the Split-S and Immelmann — you name it.

Finding your objective is simplified by a flashing red arrow which points out the primary target's direction. Once you've destroyed the target, the arrow shows the way home. *F-15* also lets you know what's going on by way of digitized speech: "Missile alert!", "Bogey on your tail!", and — if the machine thinks you're disengaging too soon — "Get back in there and fight!"

If you get nailed, an instant replay shows where you went wrong. If you succeed, you'll be promoted and awarded a medal.

So what do you think, ace — have you got what it takes to bring home the Congressional Medal of Honor?



1 The target identification screen (bottom center) shows a close-up view of your target and warns you about incoming missiles.

2 Ground targets are important but dangerous objectives in *F-15*. The target ID screen reveals that this bridge is well defended by anti-aircraft weapons.

3 After you unleash a barrage of air-to-ground missiles, a Mideastern oil refinery goes up in smoke.

GP

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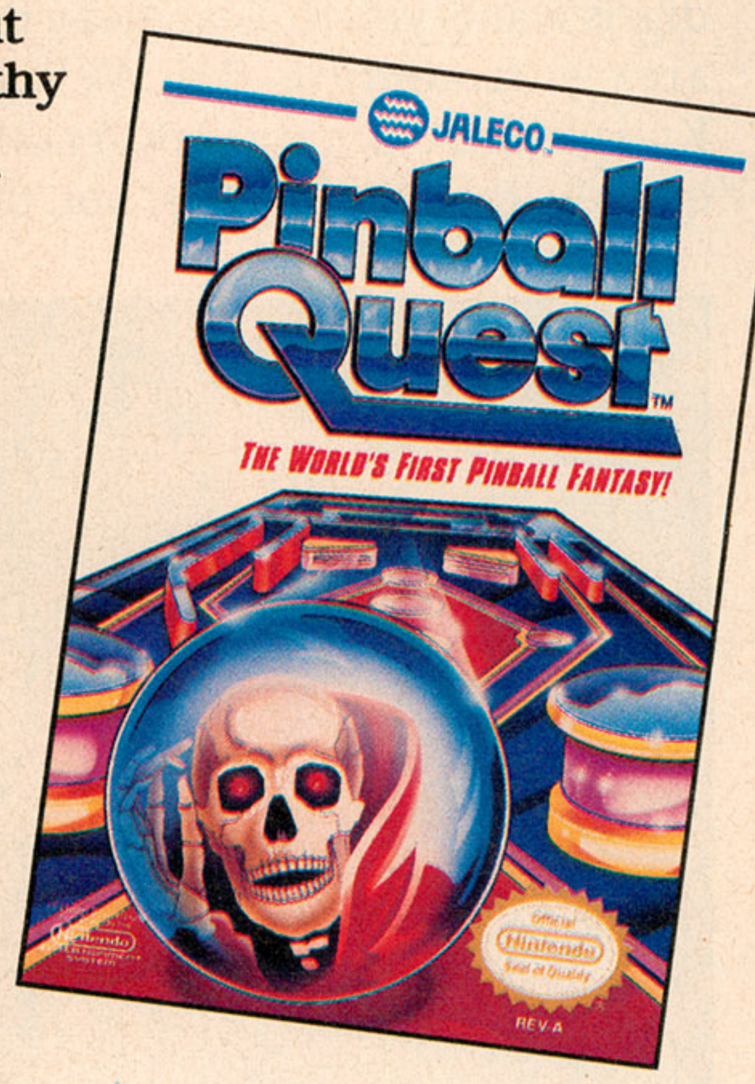
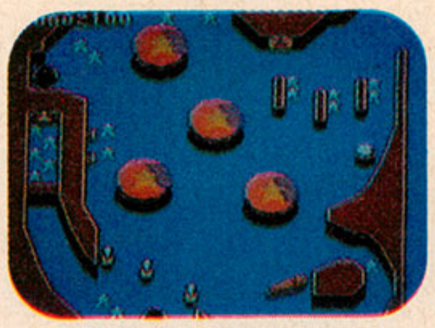
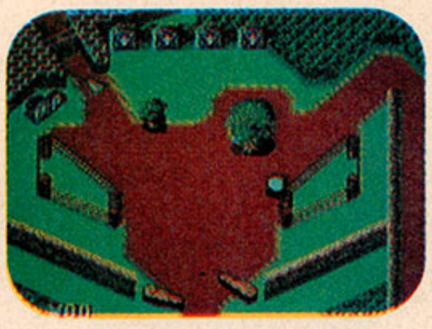


Pinball Quest





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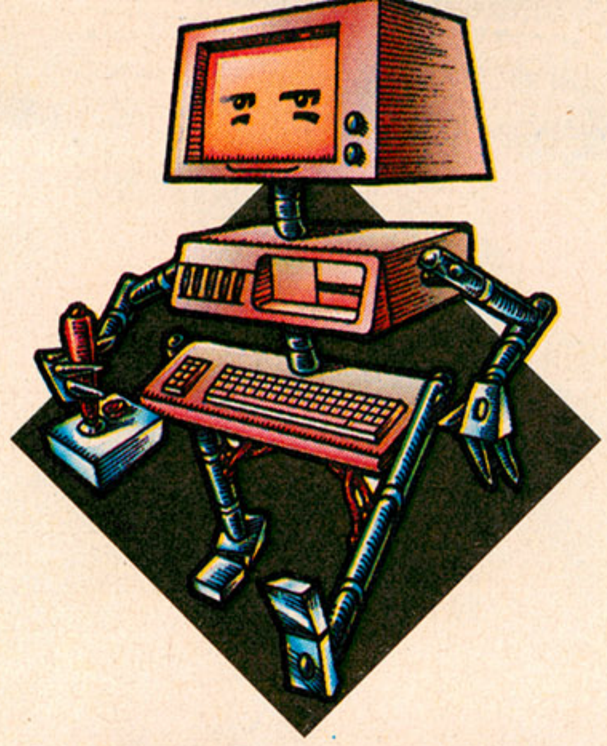


PC PLAYERS

RETURN TO THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

Neil Randall

After a diversion into the popular world of the *Dragonlance* sagas with *Champions of Krynn* ("PC Players," June 1990), Strategic Simulations' *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* series returns to its original setting. *Pool of Radiance* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds* — the first two games in this series — were both set in the Forgotten Realms, and *Secret of the Silver Blades* is the sequel to those best-sellers. If you missed the Phlan-Tilverton connection, *Silver Blades* gives you another look at this troubled world.

This time around, the locale is the Dragonspine mountains, in and around the town of Verdigris. You don't wander about trying to find adventure in this episode; in fact, when the game begins, you are magically transported into Verdigris at the summons of the townspeople. You arrive naked and without weapons, but those problems are quickly solved. After a quick briefing, you're off to solve the new quest.

As *AD&D* players have come to expect by now, the quest you begin is not the quest you eventually undertake. The mayor of Verdigris wants you to clear away the area surrounding the Well of Knowledge, but you discover fairly quickly that the well is not the main problem. Indeed, it has acted as a cloak, concealing a much larger and deadlier conspiracy perpetrated by the evil Black Circle troops and mages. By clearing the well, you can find your way into the Black Circle's inner sanctum and piece together the real plot.

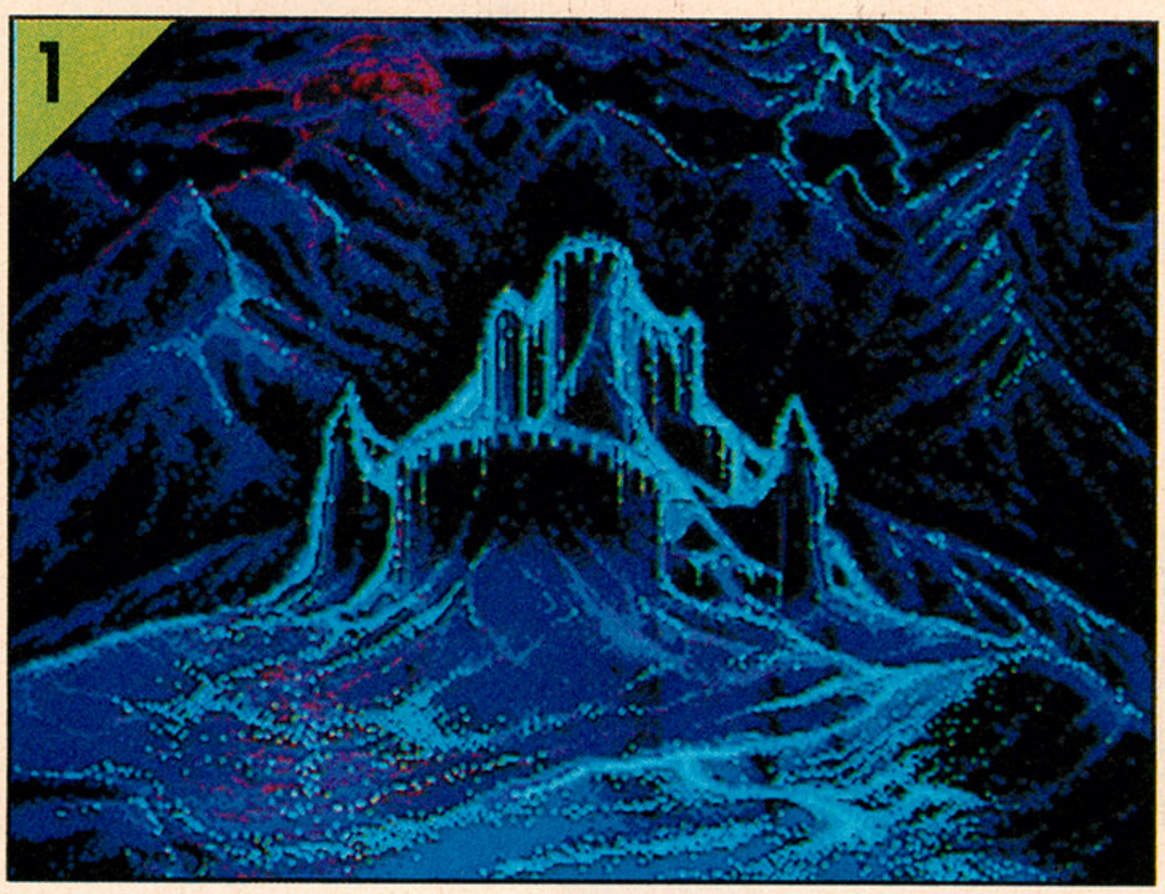
If you've played any other *AD&D* games, you'll have no trouble at all getting started with *Silver Blades*. The game system is virtually unchanged, save for continuing enhancements. *Champions of Krynn* allowed you to choose a difficulty level, and that feature is included (and is more than welcome) in *Silver Blades* as well. The graphics continue to improve, and adventurers who have fallen on the battlefield are now easily identifiable. The whole system is extremely clean, with many strengths and few annoyances.

But the annoyances haven't been entirely removed, and three of them need immediate attention.

First, in order to quit the game you're playing and load a saved game (or even restart, for that matter), you must go back to DOS and rerun the program. This is time consuming and annoying, especially since the program asks you to look up a keyword in the manual each time.

1 The opening screen shows your ultimate destination: a castle encased in ice.

2 Your adventure begins with a view of the town of Verdigris and the ominous countryside surrounding it.



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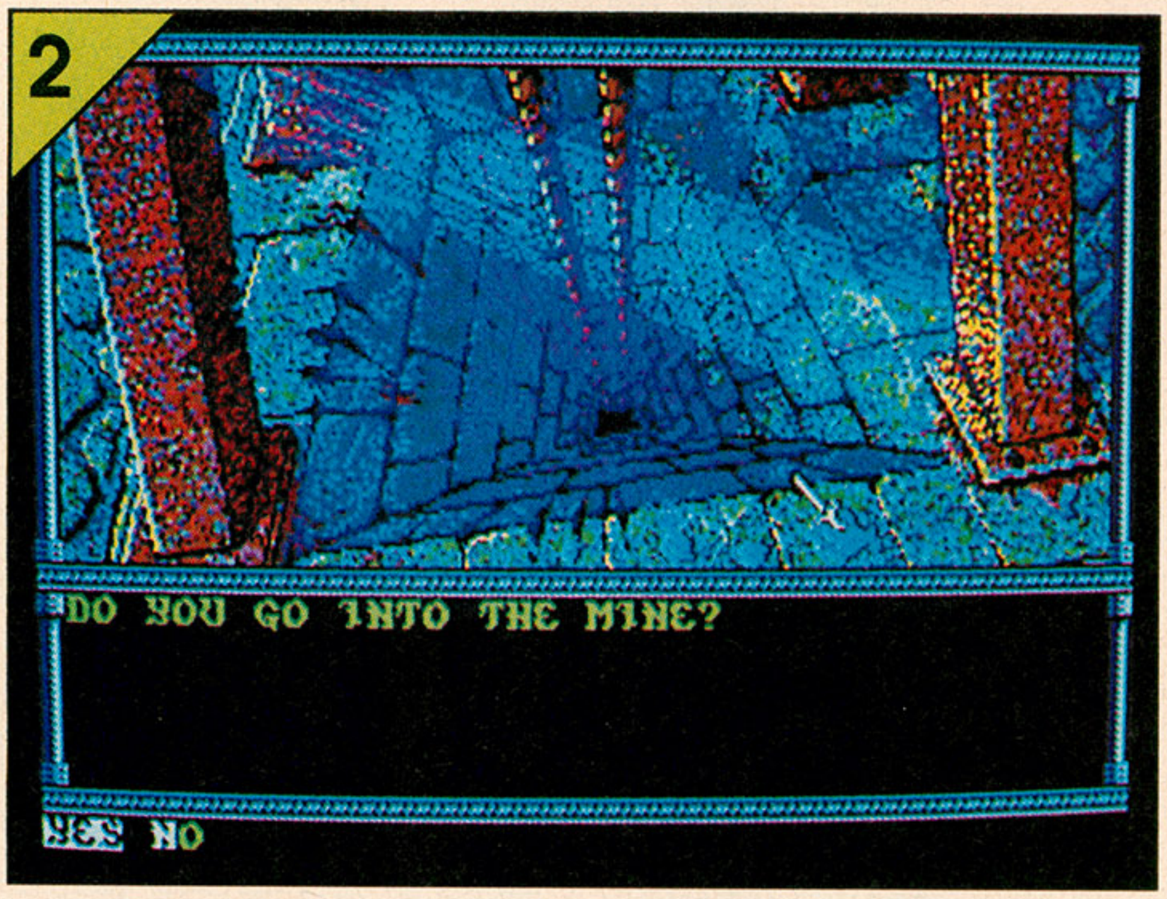


AD&D combat is full, rich, and admirable, but it also guarantees that battles will take a considerable amount of time. This wouldn't be a problem if the battles weren't so numerous. While exploring the mines in *Silver Blades*, for example, battles are frequent, and they're almost always against significantly inferior opponents (which means they aren't very interesting). Sometimes you can avoid battles by fleeing and then continuing in your original direction, but often the monsters simply attack and there's no choice but to fight.

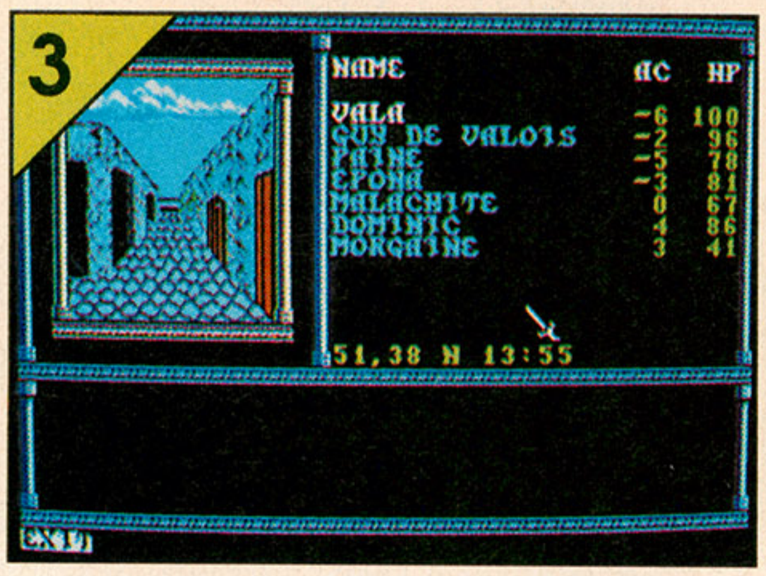
Why not make tactical combat an option for each battle? That way, if you exercised the option of allowing the computer to control all combat, you'd simply get the result after it's over. This would let you pursue the quest without getting bogged down in fight after fight.

Second, although looking up a keyword at the beginning of a game is an understandable and tolerable form of copy protection, SSI's games ask you to look up keywords at various places *throughout* the game as well. In particular, *Silver Blades* demands a keyword from the manual whenever you want to save a game. This means you can play for hours and then lose all your efforts by not having the rule book at hand, or — worse — by misspelling the keyword three consecutive times.

The third and perhaps most obtrusive annoyance in *Silver Blades* is its tactical combat system.

Strategy Tips

Newcomers to SSI's *AD&D* series will find *Secret of the Silver Blades* an enjoyable starting point. Thanks to its enhancements, it's actually a better introduction to the series than either *Pool of Radiance* or *Curse of the Azure Bonds*. The following tips will help you get started.



The first time you run *Silver Blades*, select Load Saved Game from the startup menu. An "A" will appear at the bottom of the screen; so far, it's the only saved game. Select the "A" to load SSI's pre-generated characters. After you gain more experience with *Silver Blades* you can go back and create your own characters if you wish, but the game is thoroughly playable with the standard characters.

When the game begins, you'll find yourself in the mayor's house

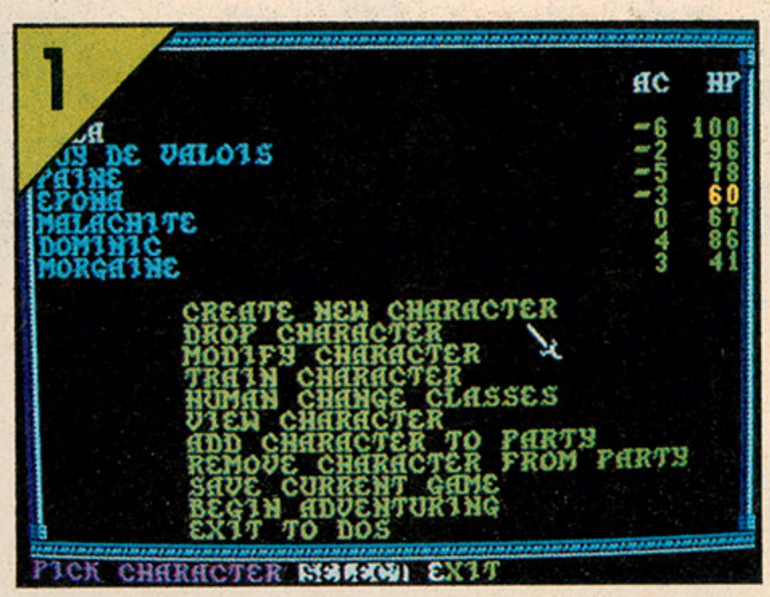
1 After recovering all the pieces of the staff, head back to Derf the Dwarf in the temple. He will offer additional help.

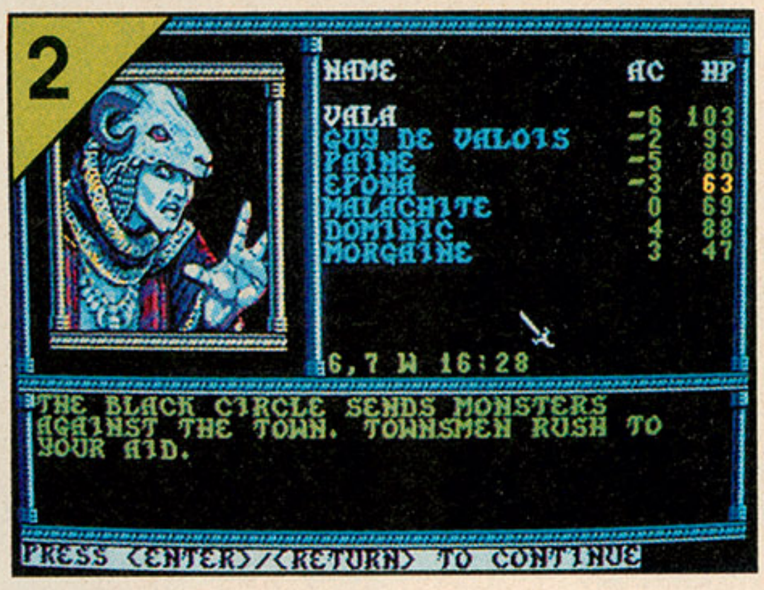
2 Screens like this appear throughout the game and always lead to something important.

3 The color of the sky changes as night gives way to day. At the entrance to the mines, several doors lead off to one side.

4 In Verdigris, the armory supplies the equipment you need to keep going. The arrows and darts are real bargains.

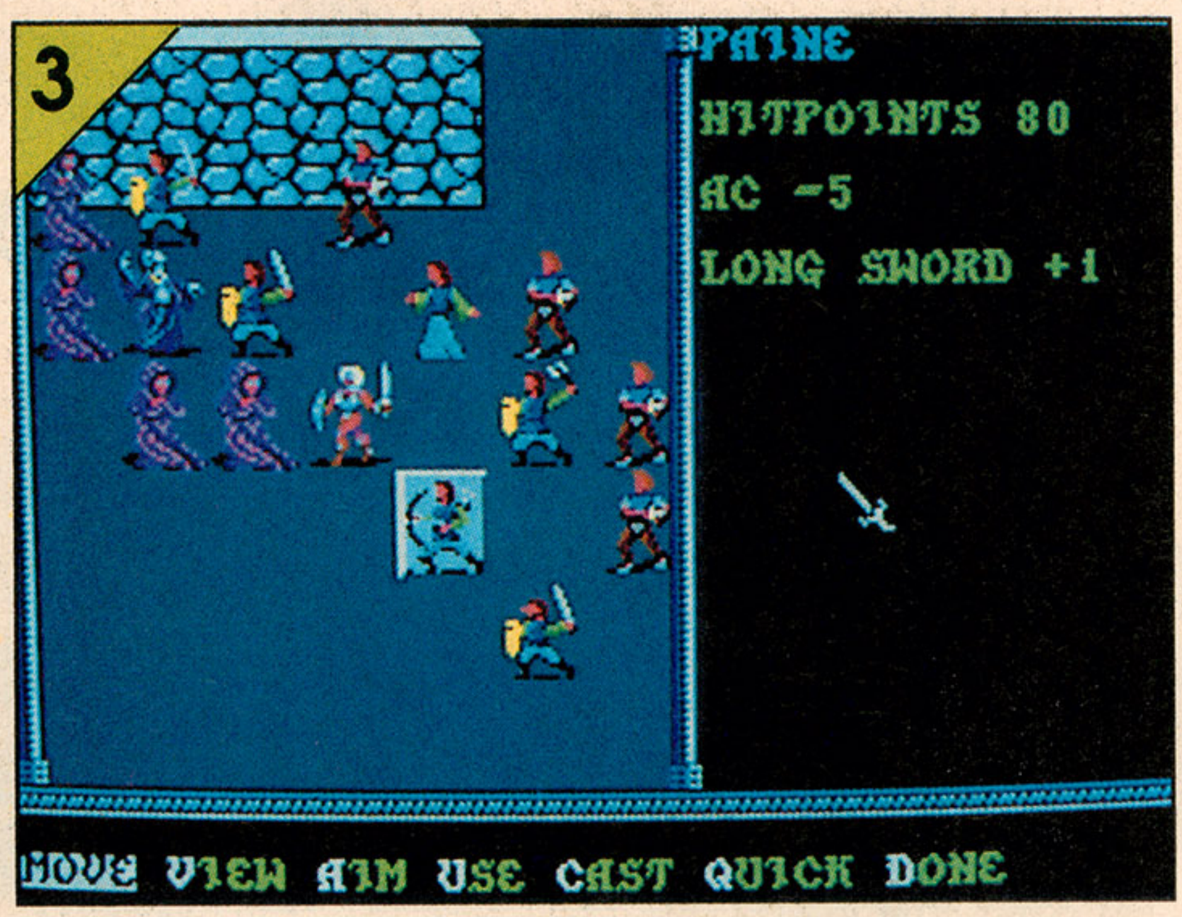
5 Deposit your hard-won treasure in Verdigris' vault or trade for gems. You'll need gems to appease the Well of Knowledge, so carry plenty with you.





in Verdigris. Listen to what he says and read the journal entries he points out to you. When he's finished, the treasure screen appears. Press "T" to take the treasure. Press "M" to get the money, and choose "S" to share it among the members of your party. Press "I" to get the items, then distribute them selectively. Give your best fighter the halberd and the strong plate armor, then choose another character to carry some other equipment, and so on. Scrolls and wands go to the magicians, while bows and arrows go to the thief in your party.

Once you've taken all the treasure, prepare your party. Press "E" for Encamp, then choose Alter, and finally press "O" to change the marching order of the party. Put your best fighter up front, your archer fourth in line, and keep your magicians to the rear. From this

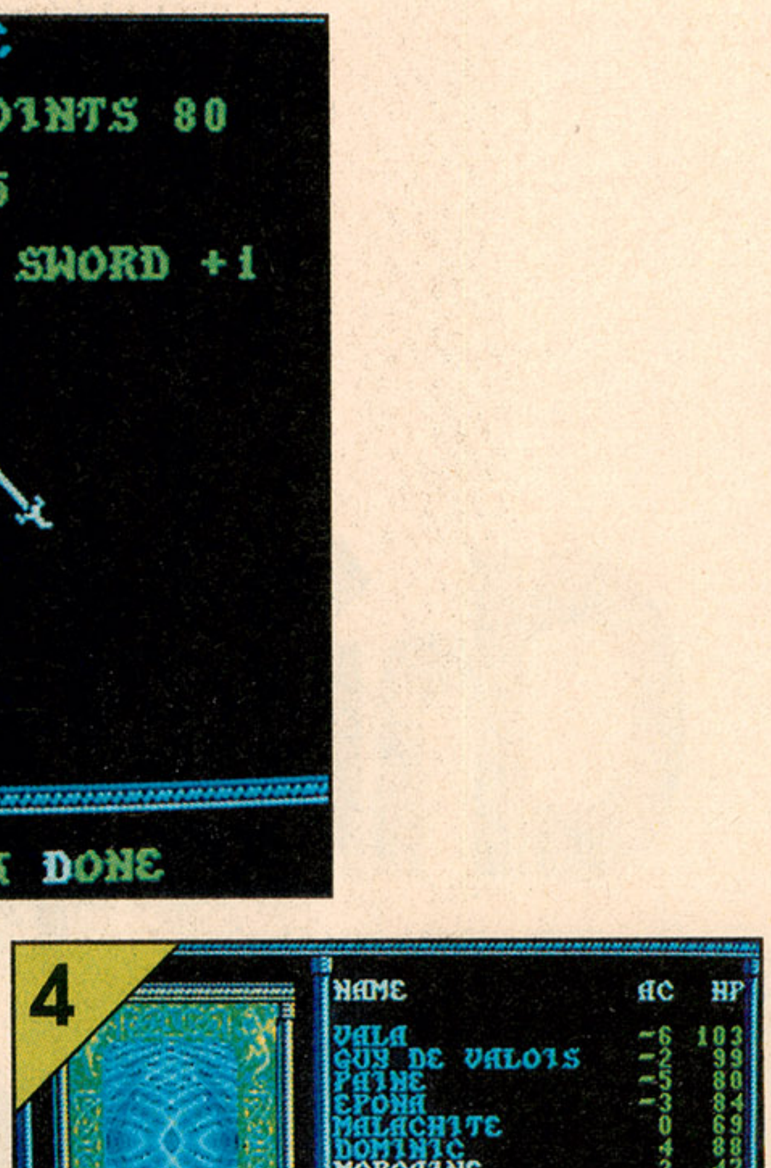


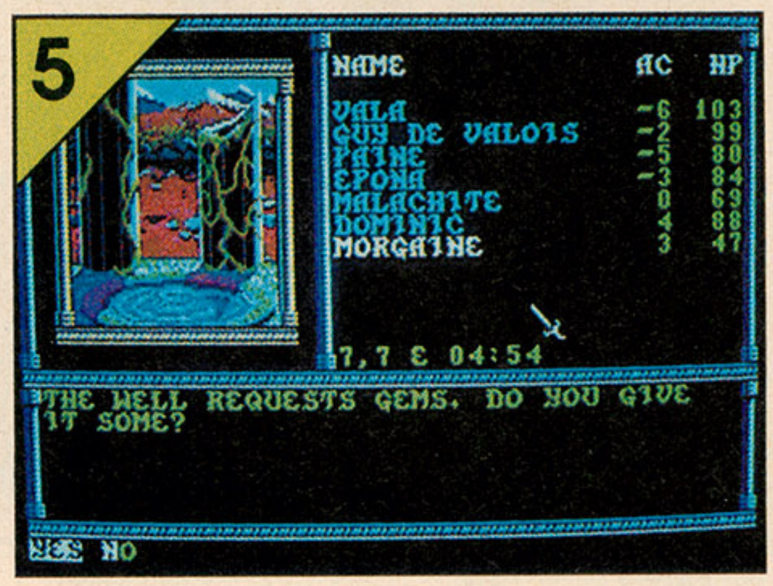
menu you can also change the difficulty level.

After leaving this menu, move the highlight down to the magicians and choose Magic. Select Memorize, then choose which spells your magicians will carry with them (you must do this for each magician, one at a time). Healing spells are superb for clerics, and Raise Dead is almost essential. For mages, take as many Fireball spells as you can. The fifth-level Hold Monster is indispensable as well. After selecting these spells, exit the submenu and choose Rest. When the rest time appears, choose Rest again. The magicians will memorize their spells. Don't forget that rangers and paladins can memorize spells as well.

Save the game by selecting Save and "B" (leave the original game "A" alone until you need to erase it later). Begin exploring the mayor's house, but don't enter the portal yet. Use the Area command to get an overhead view.

Next, head out into the streets and familiarize yourself with Verdigris. Deposit money at the bank, go to the armory to buy some darts for the magic-users and arrows for the archers, visit the pub for some beer and information, find out what happens in the temple, and so on. Don't go through the arch that leads out of town, though,





1 At the Hall of Training, see if your characters have gained enough experience to advance to the next level.

2 The evil Black Circle has penetrated even the peaceful town of Verdigris.

3 The enemy force includes numerous magic-users, but townspeople from Verdigris are chipping in to help.

4 Several portals lead to the area near the Well of Knowledge. If you don't use them, you'll have a tough time finding your way around.

5 The Well of Knowledge offers a great deal of useful information, but the cost is high. Keep your gems, or you'll learn nothing.

Warning: The Foll
Chills, Dizziness And

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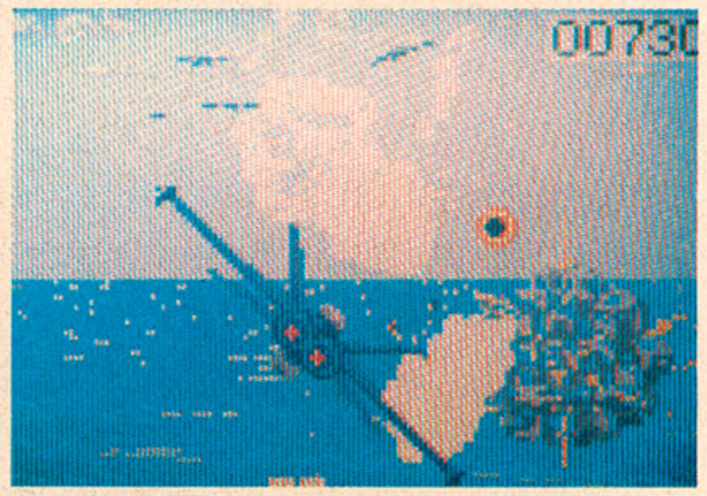

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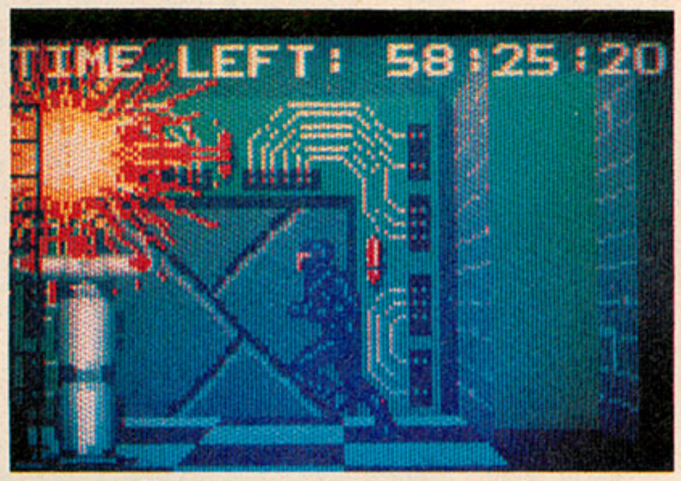

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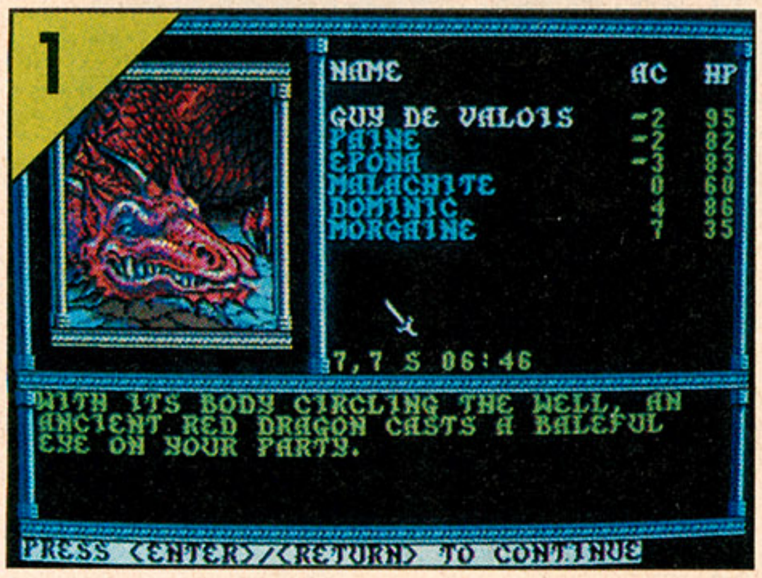
PC PLAYERS



because there's a quicker way to where you want to go. After you're done exploring, return to the mayor's house.

At the north end of the mayor's house you'll find a room with a portal. Save the game before entering the portal, then jump in. This takes you near the Well of Knowledge. On page 2 of the Adventurer's Journal you'll find a map of the area. This map, combined with the overhead Area display, helps you get oriented.

You'll fight lots of battles here. Save the game after each fight, then encamp, use the Fix command to heal your wounds, and remember your spells. In battle, always try to destroy the enemy magic-users first, even if it means using a precious Fireball spell. Aim arrows in their direction and try to move your fighters close to the enemy. Your fighters are strong enough to defeat the enemy soldiers, but their mages are deadly.

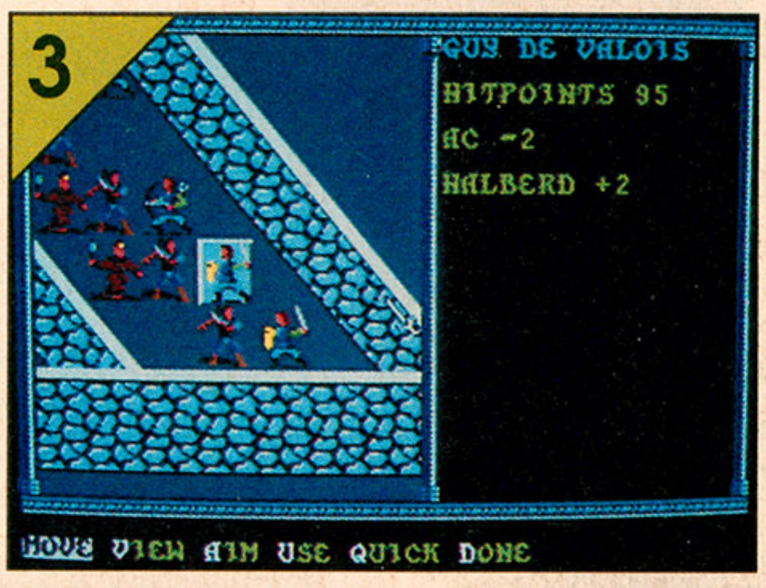
Keep working your way toward the Well of Knowledge. You'll fight guards, magicians, and small dragons, but the Well is the prize. After you've defeated the red dragon at the Well, note everything the Well reveals. Then save the game and head back to Verdigris using the maps on pages 1 and 2 of the Adventurer's Journal.

When you've returned to Verdigris, visit the Hall of Training to increase your experience level. Finally, head through the portal again and work your way either to the Black Circle's inner sanctum or the mines. You'll need to visit both places eventually, and the Black Circle is the tougher nut to crack.

By the time you've made it to the Well of Knowledge and beyond, the mechanics of playing *Secret of the Silver Blades* should be second nature. All you need after that is perseverance. By saving the game at each crucial point, and carefully mapping each mine and dungeon, you'll find your way through this intriguing game.

Incidentally, "Silver Blades" refers to you, not some unknown group. Just find Derf, and he'll let you know.

GP



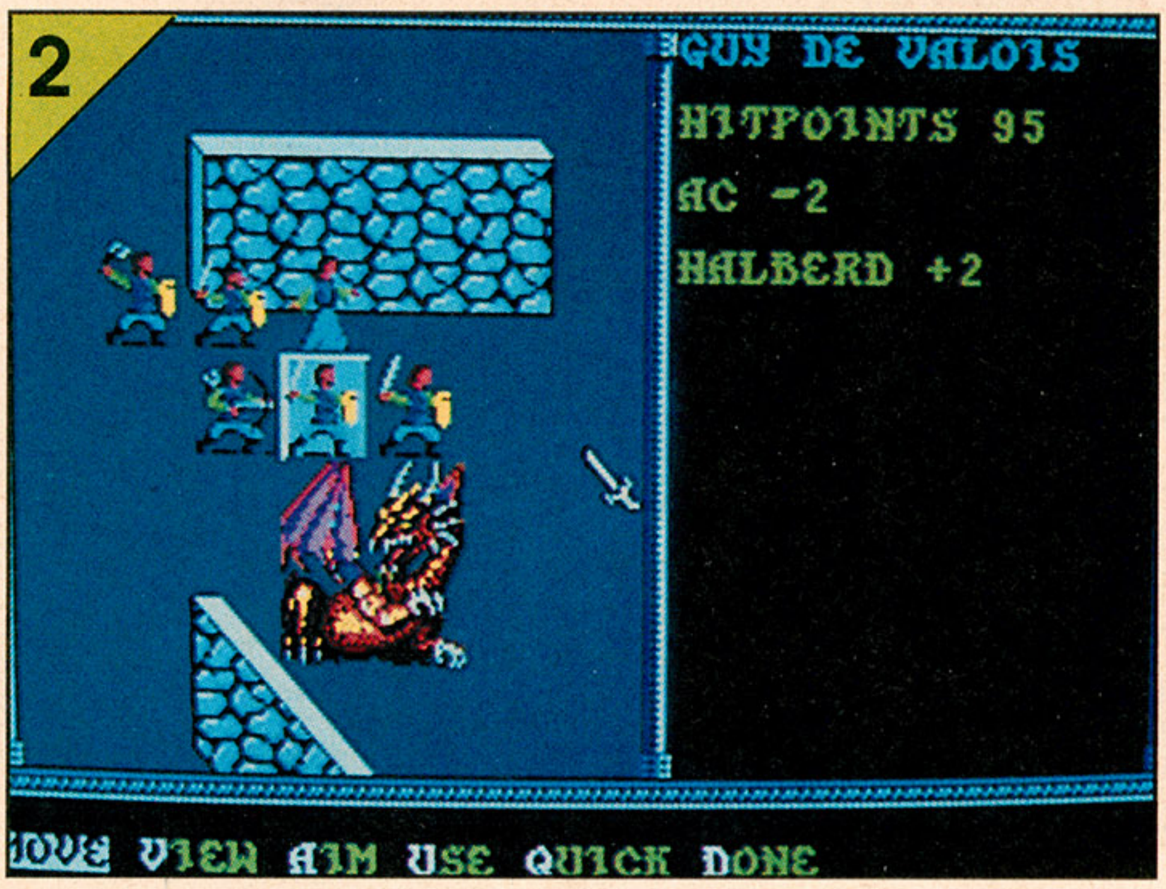
1 An old red dragon guards the Well of Knowledge. Don't take this beastie too lightly — a little dragon breath and all is lost.

2 The trick is to hit the dragon early and often. If possible, don't let him attack you at all. (Remember your magic-users.)

3 While trying to get away from the well, you've been attacked by Banites. Fight their magic-users first, because they can do the most damage.

4 Your fighters move toward the umber hulk. Only one hulk remains, but some of your party members are injured.

System requirements: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 512K minimum memory; CGA, EGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse or joystick optional; supports Ad Lib, Game Blaster, and Sound Blaster sound boards.



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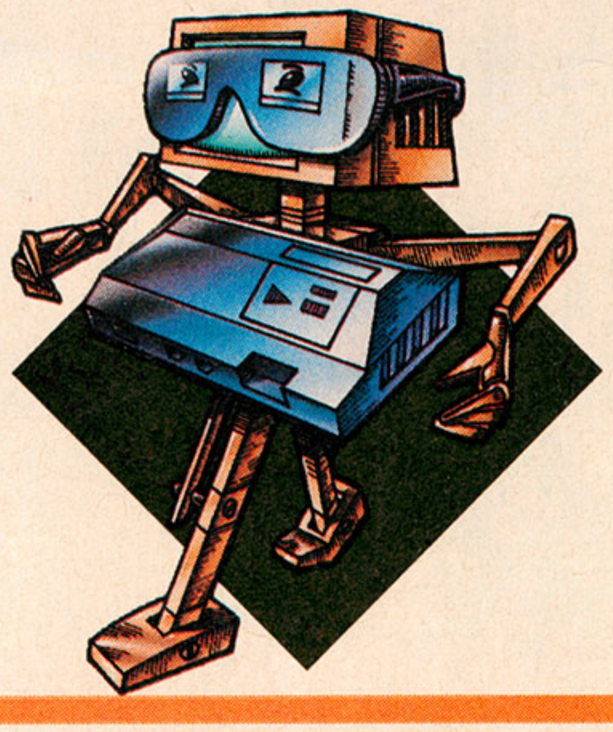


SEGA PLAYERS

New Joysticks, New Games

Matthew A. Firme

Not everyone has the same tastes in videogame controllers. There are some who swear by their control pads, now the standard with today's home videogame systems, while others prefer the more traditional joysticks. Wireless controllers are growing in popularity, and for many players anything will do as long as it has a turbo-fire feature.

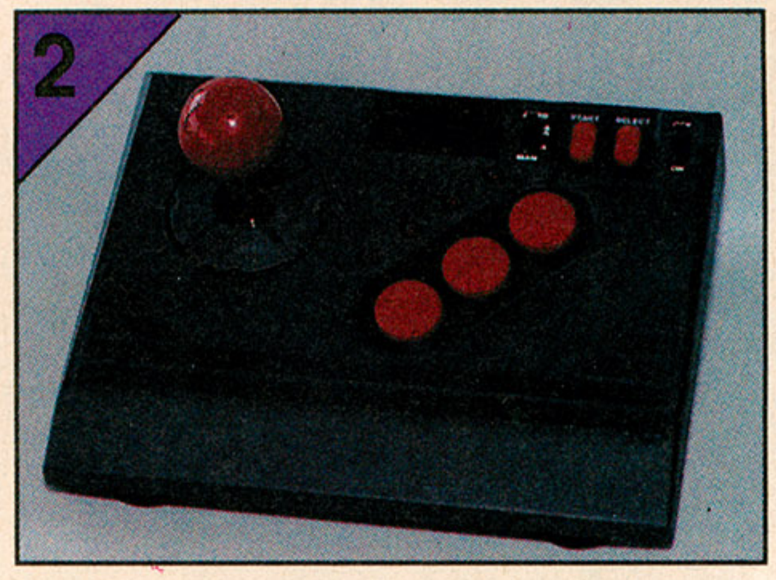
A number of new controllers are becoming available for the Sega Genesis. We've tested three of them: Sega's Arcade Power Stick, the Suncom Tac-50, and the Acemore Freedom 16. All are joysticks, though the Tac-50 is an aircraft-styled handgrip.

Thanks to its aircraft design, the Tac-50 works best with flying games like *Space Harrier II* and *Air Diver*. Two of the three buttons normally found on the Sega control pad are located on the stick. One is at the top of the stick, under your thumb, and the other is in the trigger position, under your index finger. The third button is on the base (in two different positions, so the controller works as well for left-handers as for right-handers).

This configuration is no problem at all in games like *Space Harrier II* that require only moving and shooting. But when you're playing a game like *Golden Axe* — in which each button controls a separate function (attack, jump, and magic) — things can be confusing at first.

As the Suncom box prominently states, the Tac-50 is an "audible controller" featuring "microswitch array technology." In other words, the stick clicks when you move it. The theory behind this design is that it gives you immediate audible and tactile feedback. Some players like this feature, while others may find it annoying.

One drawback of the Tac-50 is



1 Suncom's Tac-50.
2 Acemore's Freedom 16.

that it doesn't have turbo-fire (the ability to fire multiple shots while holding down the fire button). Turbo-fire is usually one of the most desirable features of an accessory controller.

The Acemore Freedom 16 is the first wireless controller for the Genesis. It's an infrared system consisting of a receiver (which plugs into the Genesis console near your TV) and the joystick itself, which is powered by four AA batteries. The controller is a fairly standard arcade-style joystick with buttons on the right and the stick on the left. The stick and base feel a bit fragile, especially during hard play.

Although the Freedom 16 has turbo-fire, you can't individually select turbo for each button — it's all or nothing. This is a definite drawback in some games. For example, if you select turbo-fire to give your character a rapid-fire weapon, he might hop uselessly up and down when you try to leap.

The infrared sensor on the Freedom 16 is rather touchy. It works best when the controller and the sensor are directly in line with each other. If you move them out of alignment during the heat of action, the sensor won't pick up your commands. The controller base has suction cups to help keep it from sliding.

The Arcade Power Stick from Sega of America is a veritable titan — a solid, heavy-based, arcade-style stick with very smooth and positive response. Thanks to its sturdy design and exact control, it

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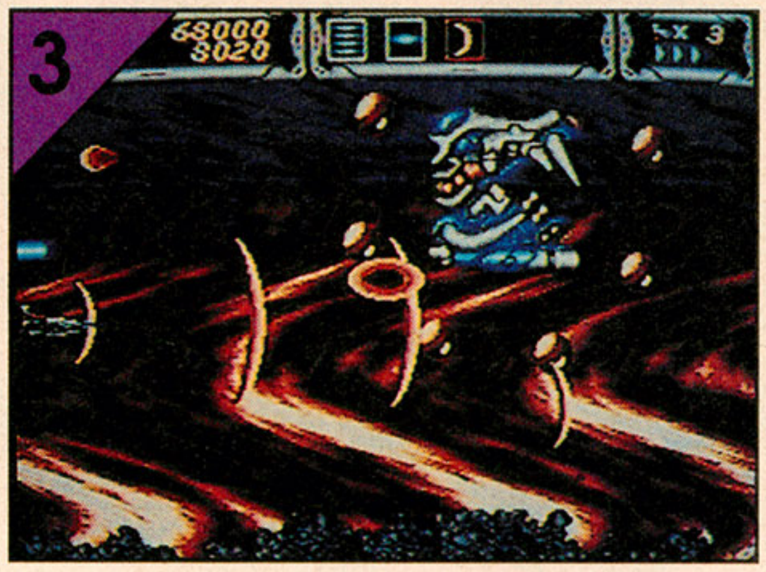
comes closer than the others to re-creating the feel of a real arcade stick. Each button has its own turbo-fire control, and the turbo rate is variable. If you're a real joystick fan, the Arcade Power Stick won't let you down.

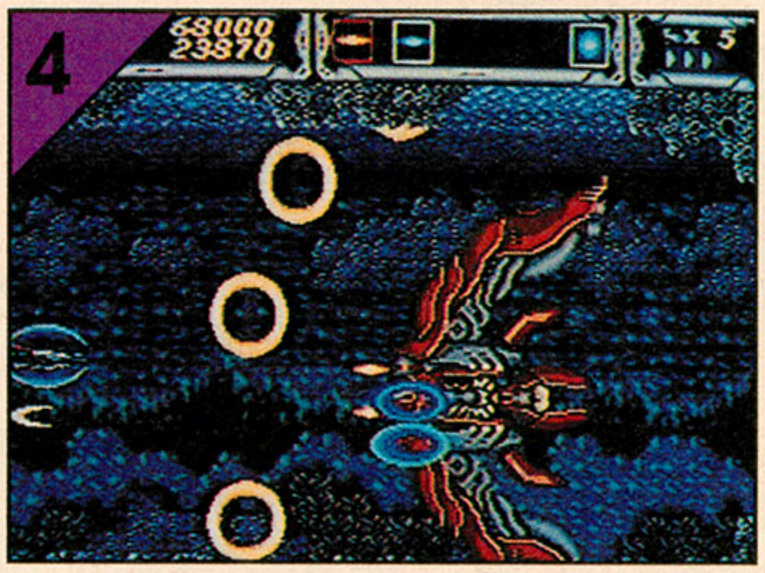
Thunder Force III

Fancy joysticks aren't much use without good, solid games, and we're currently evaluating several new Genesis titles to be released late this summer or this fall. Most of them are from Sega of America, but a few are from independent companies whose first Genesis cartridges are nearly ready to be unleashed. We'll formally review some of these games in future issues, but in the meantime here are some previews of what to expect.

Thunder Force III, from Technosoft, is a side-scrolling shooter — but not just *another* side-scrolling shooter. Technosoft has elevated this old format to some truly incredible new heights.



You'll pilot your ship, the trusty *Thunder Force*, through eight alien worlds, every one an innovative and beautiful display of 16-bit graphics. The backgrounds are brilliantly colored, and the multiple scrolling backgrounds add a real sense of depth. In one scene, you fly through a land of fiery lava with a background of wavering, flaming fire.



Other worlds have oceans in which fish and bubbles will test your skills, or underground caverns filled with falling rocks and monstrous alien creatures.

The Quest For *Tetris*

When *Tetris* came out for the Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy last year, it really shook the videogame world. Although *Tetris* already had a strong following among computer gamers, the NES and Game Boy versions proved that a well-designed puzzle game could compete with the shoot-em-ups that comprise the bulk of videogaming. It also helped bring a new audience to videogames — people who otherwise might never have taken a closer look at game machines.

Many companies have tried to duplicate this feat with puzzle games of their own. But it's not simple to design a puzzler that's as easy to learn and understand as *Tetris* and make it challenging as well.

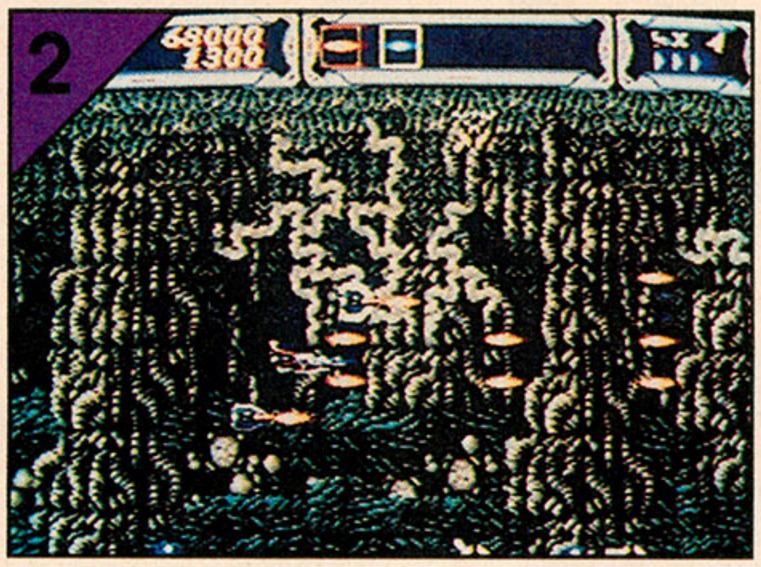
Columns, a new Genesis game from Sega of America, comes as close to *Tetris* as anything we've seen.

The basic format is very similar to *Tetris*: Colored blocks gradually fall toward the bottom of the screen. But rather than fitting shapes together, the object is to match colors, forming lines of three or more "jewels" of the same hue. The lines can run in any direction. When a row of the same color is formed, it disappears and you get points.

Although some players may prefer the geometric design of a game like *Tetris*, *Columns* is sure to gain its own loyal following.

Shooters And Punchers

One of the new independent Genesis licensees, Sage's Creation, is releasing three games this fall. *Ka-Ge-Ki* is a martial-arts/boxing game based on a Japanese coin-op arcade hit. The object is to fight your



1 Sega's Arcade Power Stick.

2 Fast action and multiple scrolling backgrounds make *Thunder Force III* a real standout among shoot-em-ups.

3 The fiery, swirling backgrounds in *Thunder Force III* are so attractive that sometimes it's difficult to keep your eye on your flying.

4 Like some nightmarish Foghorn Leghorn, the boss at the end of this stage in *Thunder Force III* will try to blast you out of the sky.

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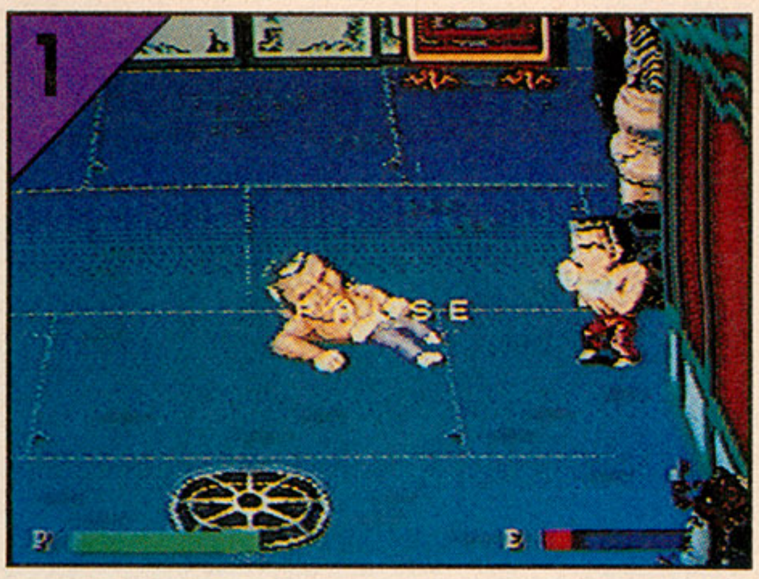
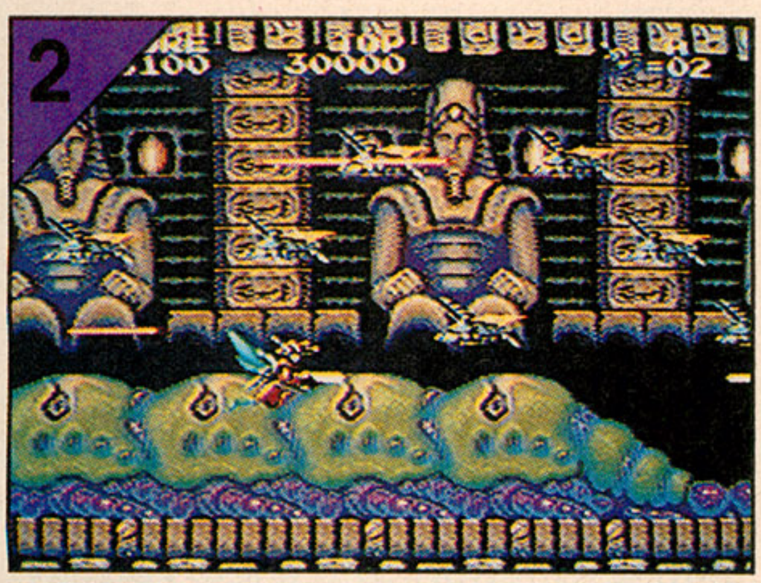


way to the top of a skyscraper, battling the enemies on each of the nine floors. Your on-screen character is a slick-looking greaser who looks like a cross between Johnny Depp and Elvis Presley.

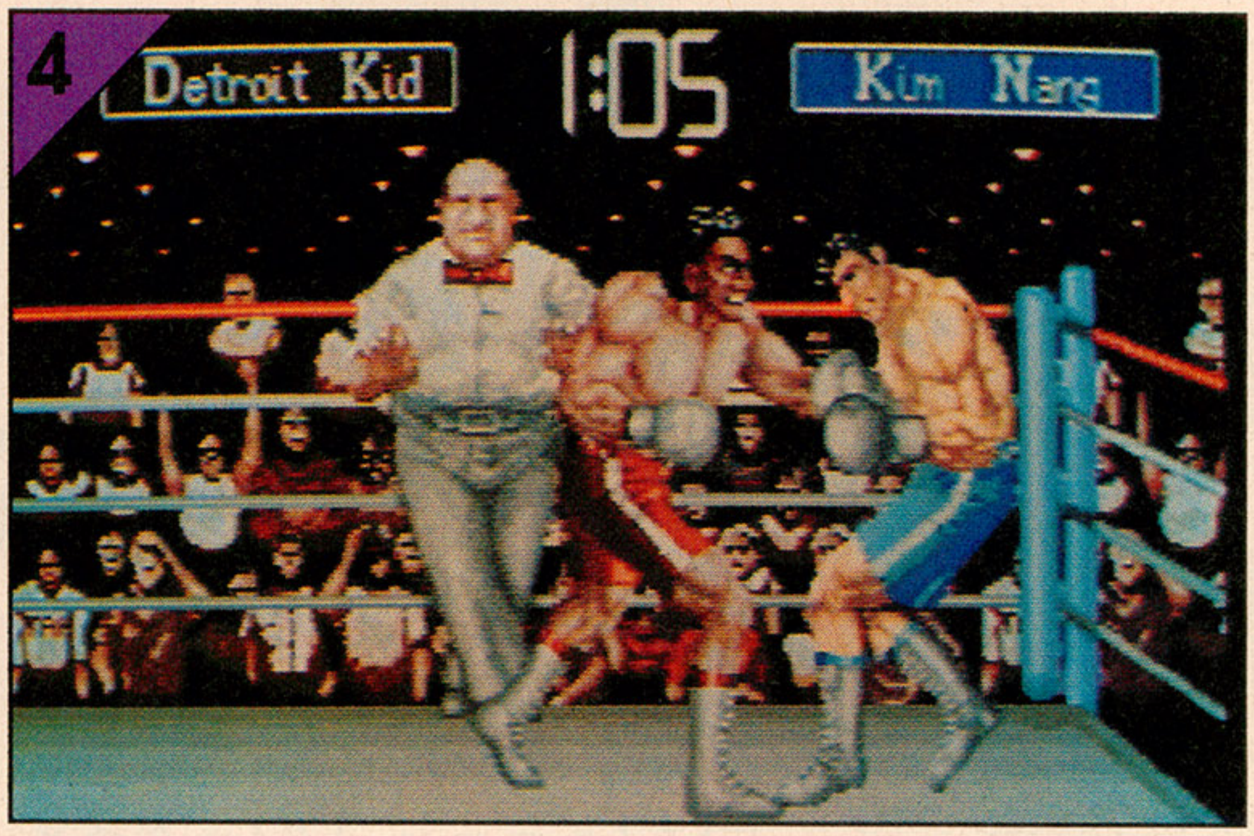
Insector-X, another game from Sage's Creation, puts you in the role of a tiny, insect-sized soldier who's out to battle the evil Insect Empire. You fly through this shooter on mechanical wings, zap-

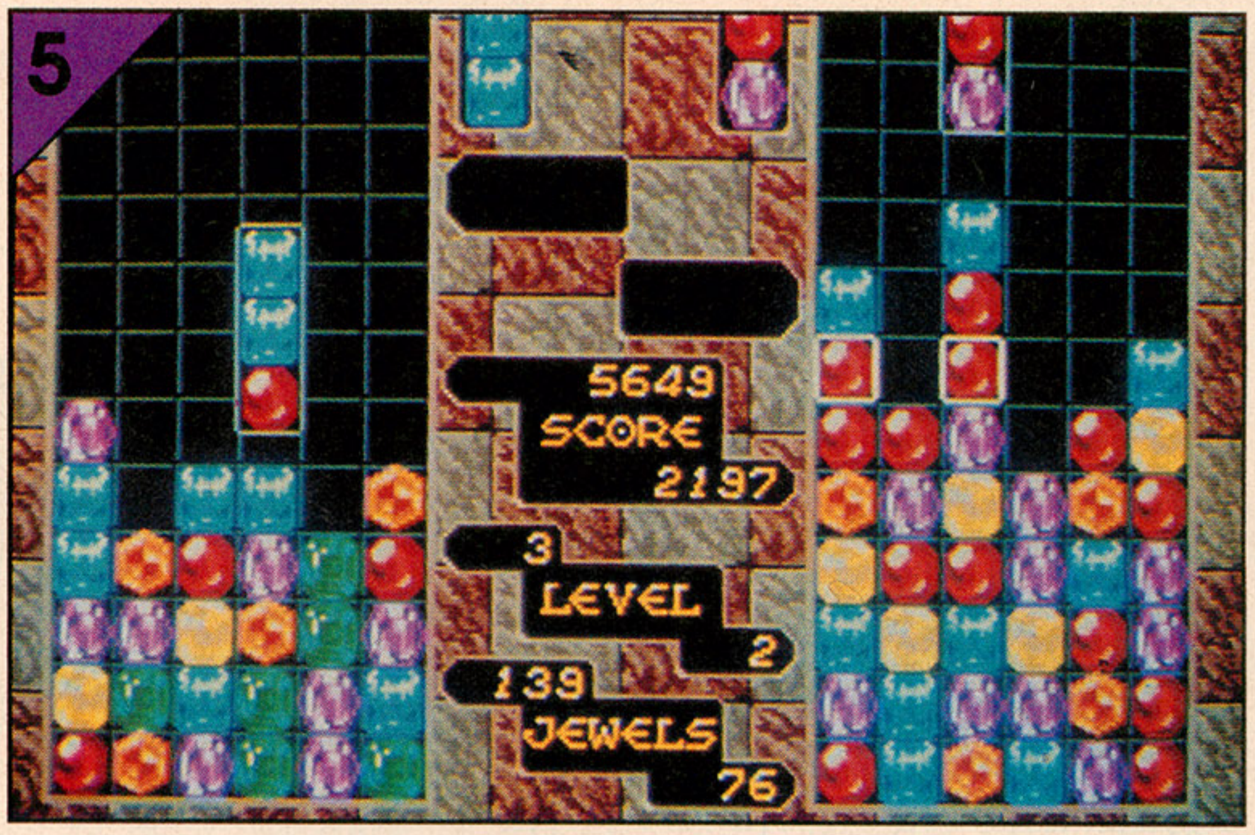


ping giant mosquitos, flies, frogs, and other pests. Some of the monsters are truly spectacular.

The third title from Sage's Creation is a surprise: *Shadow Blasters*, an action-shooter announced only recently. *Shadow Blasters* is scheduled to be available in September.

Sega's hopeful contender for the video-game boxing championship, *James "Buster" Douglas Knock-out Boxing*, looks like it could prove as successful as the champ himself. The graphics we've seen — both the digitized title screens and in the game itself — are very impressive.





Two of the Sega Genesis games we reported on previously will not be released after all. One, Renovation's *Battle Mission*, was a player-perspective shooter along the lines of *Operation Wolf*.

The other game, Activision's *Hard Yardage*, has been canceled because of an interesting arrangement with Sega. Since *Hard Yardage* was already available as a computer game, much of the programming could be recycled for the Genesis version. Sega, anxious to release a certain celebrity football game in time for football season, arranged with Activision to use *Hard Yardage* instead of creating a whole new football game from scratch. Thus *Hard Yardage* is evolving into *Joe Montana Football*, speeding the release of what is sure to be another hit in Sega's all-star sports lineup.

GP

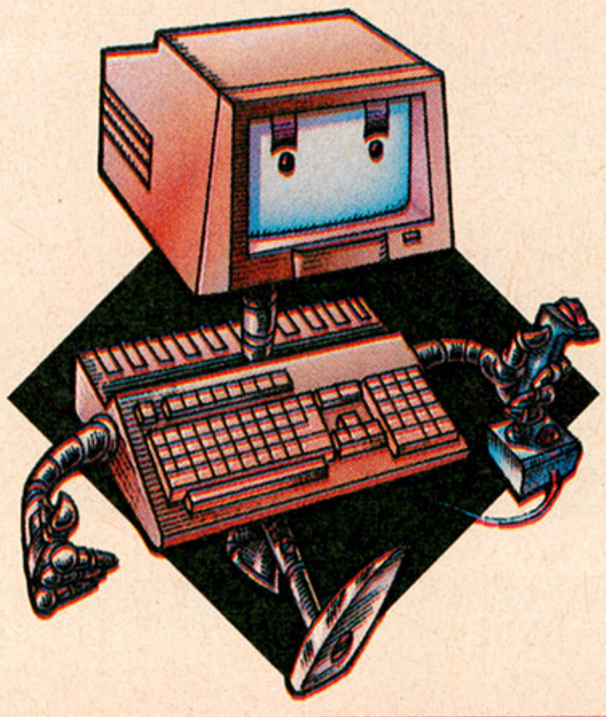
1 With a series of jabs, you send the enemy to the mat in *Ka-Ge-Ki*.

2 You'll have to play exterminator and rid this underground Egyptian tunnel of pests in *Insector-X*.

3 The boss Kallus from *Shadow Blasters*.

4 If the game play is as good as the graphics, *James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing* should be a big hit.

5 *Columns* offers several different variations for one or two players.

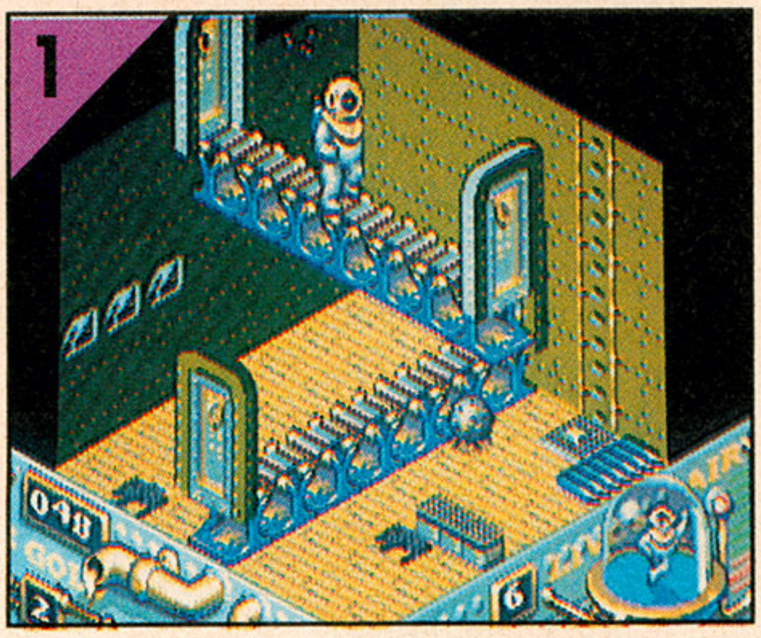


AMIGA PLAYERS

Water, Water Everywhere

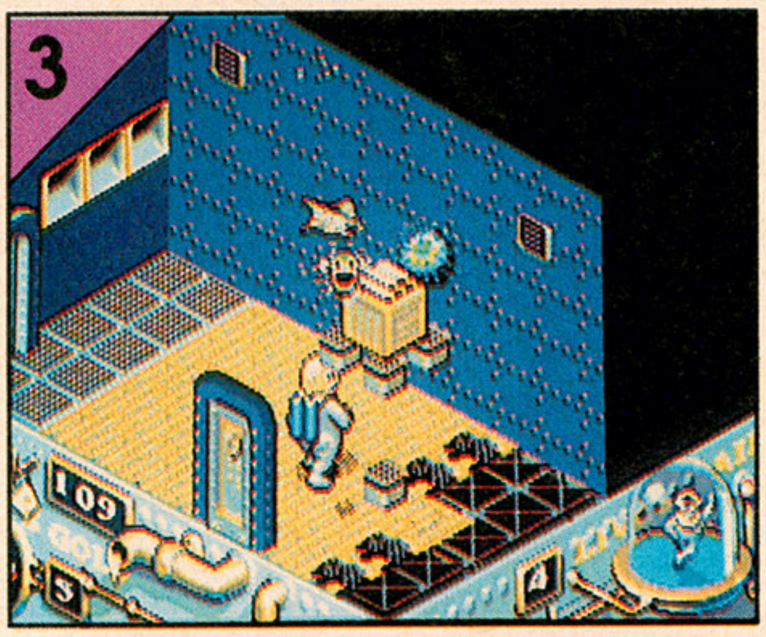
Sheldon Leemon

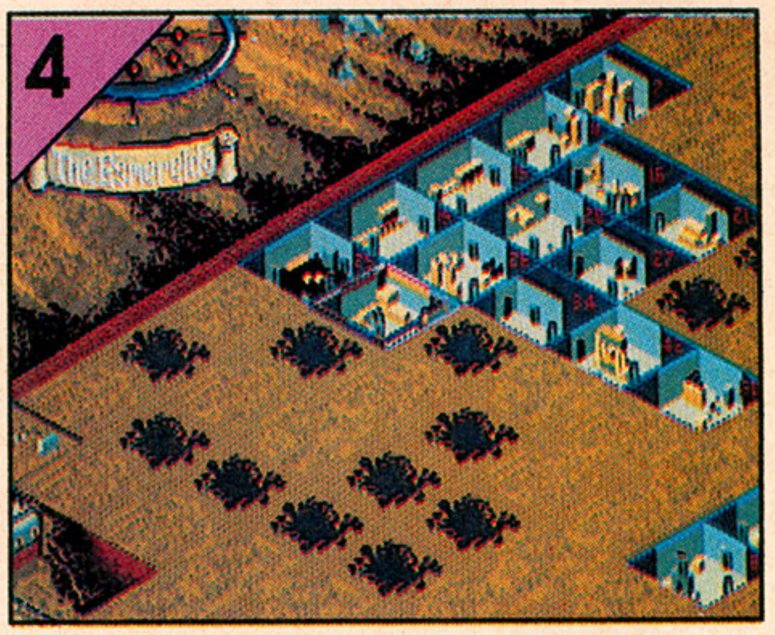
There's something about the Amiga that seems to inspire underwater action-adventure games. When the computer was introduced in 1985, one of its most highly touted games was Electronic Arts' *Return to Atlantis* (which wasn't actually released until much later.) Another long-awaited underwater game for the Amiga is the version of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* that artist Jim Sachs is rumored to be working on for Disney.



Since these games seem to come in waves, it's no surprise that two new underwater adventures have surfaced at almost the same time. *Treasure Trap* from Electronic Zoo and *Aquanaut* from Miles Computing both promise the most underwater fun you can have without really getting wet.

Treasure Trap is the more enjoyable of the two games, thanks to its mix of fast-action play and puzzle solving. You play a diver exploring the wreck of the *Esmerelda*, a ship divided into dozens of compartments, each of which has one or more doors. Many of these compartments contain gold bars, but gathering them isn't always easy. For one thing, the gold is often tucked away in inaccessible locations, either hidden behind something or out of reach atop a pile of crates. For another, the gold is guarded by plenty of crafty sea creatures.

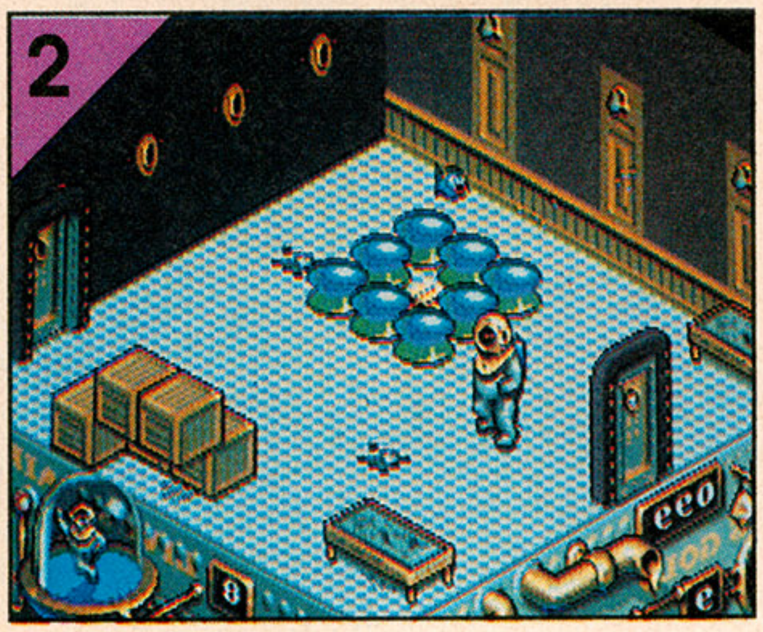




Since *Treasure Trap*'s game play is based on jumping instead of shooting, you've got to either dodge or outwit the schools of eels, crabs, sharks, octopi, stingrays, jellyfish, and starfish that swim in your way. In extreme emergencies, you can use your "smart fish" — the aquatic equivalent of a smart bomb that clears a chamber of all your finny foes. Besides avoiding traps, you must also search for extra air tanks and the keys you need to open some of the doors.

Treasure Trap has lots of those extra touches that make a game a pleasure to play. It's fast, because it loads as much of the game as will fit into memory, thus minimizing disk accesses. (In fact, if you have more than a megabyte of memory, the game never needs to load screens from disk at all.) It has a pause function, and it lets you save a game on disk (but only after you've collected a multiple of 50 gold bars). An automatic mapping function shows all the rooms you have explored on a large, scrolling screen. The game even includes a diver's log, a pad on which you can note the contents of each numbered room.

When you add all these features to the game's excellent first-



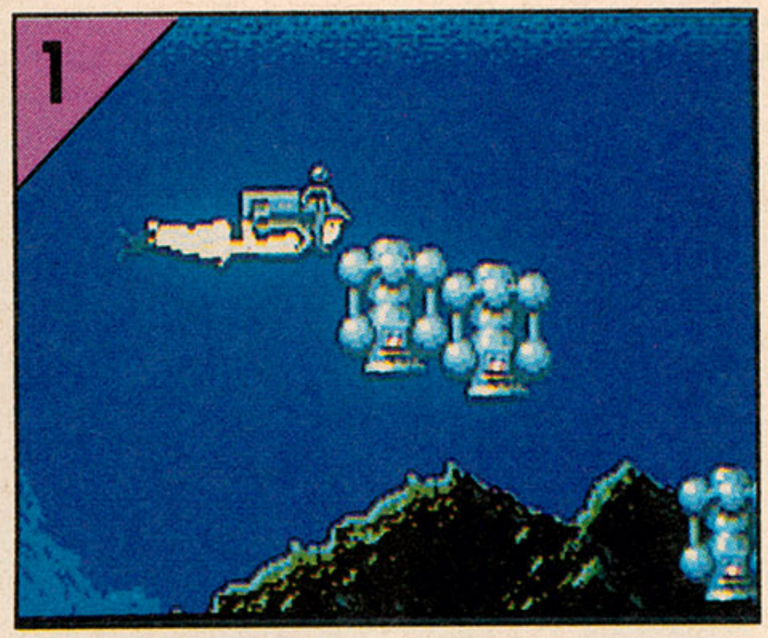
1 *Treasure Trap*: It takes skill and strategy to escape the moving conveyor belts. The oxygen tanks at the lower right help, too.

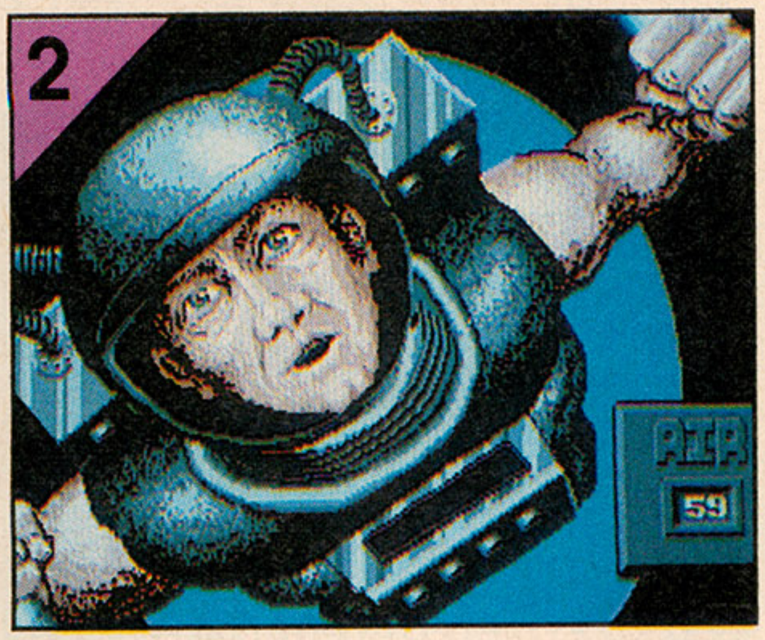
2 There's lots of gold here — if you can get by the jellyfish guards.

3 When you release your green "smart fish," it clears the room of enemies.

4 Sixteen rooms are exposed on the map, but there's still a lot of exploring to do.

AMIGA PLAYERS

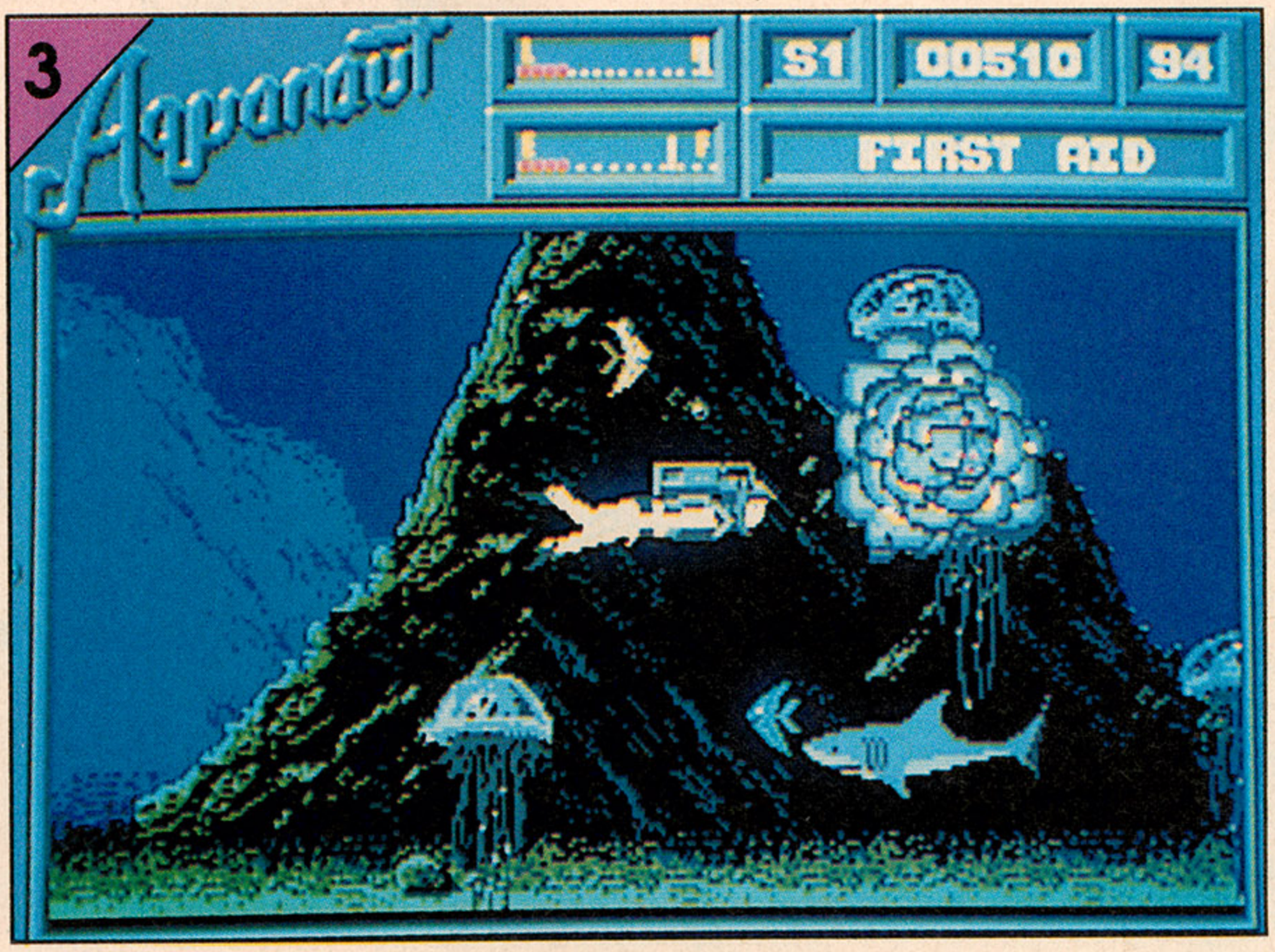




person perspective graphics and sound effects (including a terrific digitized "uh-oh" sound), you get a combination that's hard to beat.

Aquanaut is a seahorse of a different color. Instead of breaking up the adventure into small rooms, it has three long, scrolling episodes. Instead of dodging creatures of the deep, you're shooting them. And instead of comical crabs, you've got sharks, swordfish, and barrels of toxic waste.

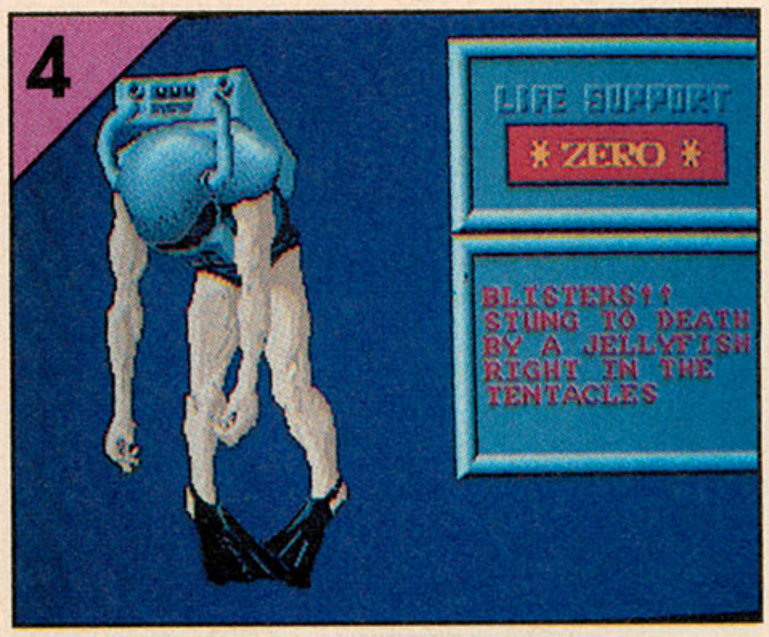
In terms of concept, game play, and graphics, *Aquanaut* is professionally done. But it seems to be missing that spark of originality that might set it apart from the crowd. Almost every aspect of the game seems like something we've



seen before, right down to the plot (an alien invasion force has landed under the sea).

The sealed "mission briefing" manual explains the plot in great detail, but gives almost no information on how to play the game. It won't take long to catch on, though, because *Aquanaut* is a fairly repetitive action game rather than a puzzle game like *Treasure Trap*. On the first level, you'll spend most of your time shooting sharks, swordfish, and jellyfish, blasting open supply barrels, and refilling air tanks. Only one puzzle presents itself before the end of the level. (Hint: When you see the toxic waste barrels, get out of there *fast*.)

One annoyance is that *Aquanaut* employs both on-disk and red-sheet copy protection. Even though you have to enter a code from a



map each time you play, you still can't make a backup copy or transfer the program to a hard disk. That's too bad, because *Aquanaut* goes to disk every time you lose a life, even if your computer has enough memory to load all of the sequences. And although the levels are quite long, there's no way to save a game in the middle of a level.

This doesn't mean you won't enjoy *Aquanaut*. If you like shooting games that challenge the reflexes more than jumping games with lots of puzzles, you'll probably prefer it to *Treasure Trap*. Either way, you're in for some underwater adventure.

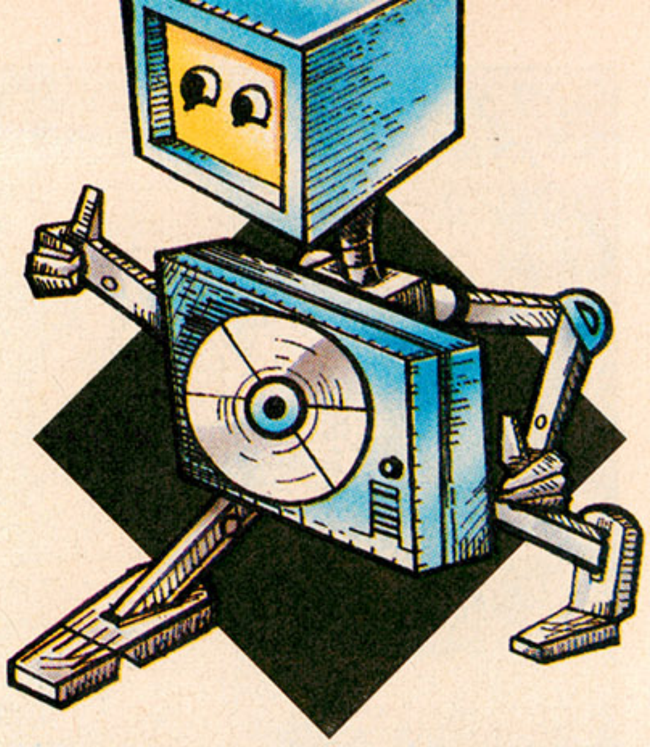
GP

1 *Aquanaut*: Supplies are dropped to you in these canisters, which you must blow open.

2 Remember to refill your oxygen tanks whenever possible.

3 You'll spend a lot of time blasting jellyfish and sharks.

4 You'd better move a little quicker next time.



TURBO PLAYERS

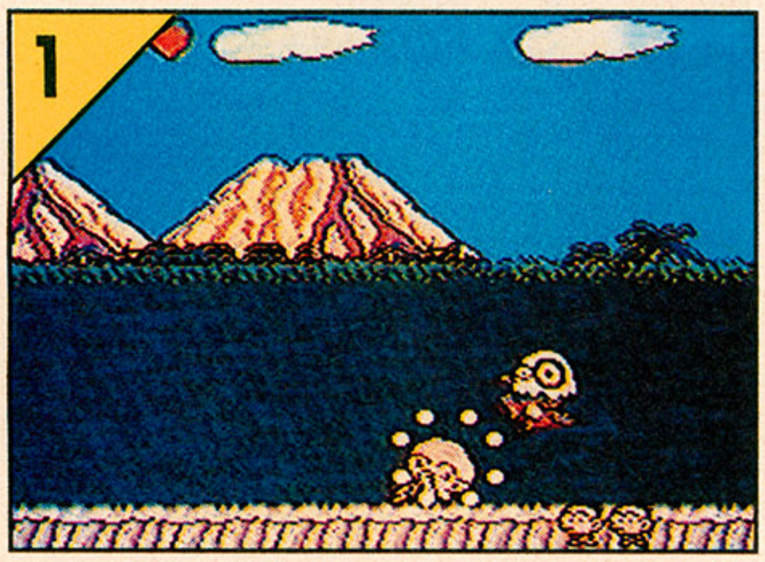
TurboGrafx Goes Bonkers

Neil Randall

Why is Nintendo's *Super Mario Bros.* series so popular? It is, after all, a relatively simple game about a couple of little janitors who go around jumping over things and hitting other things with their heads.

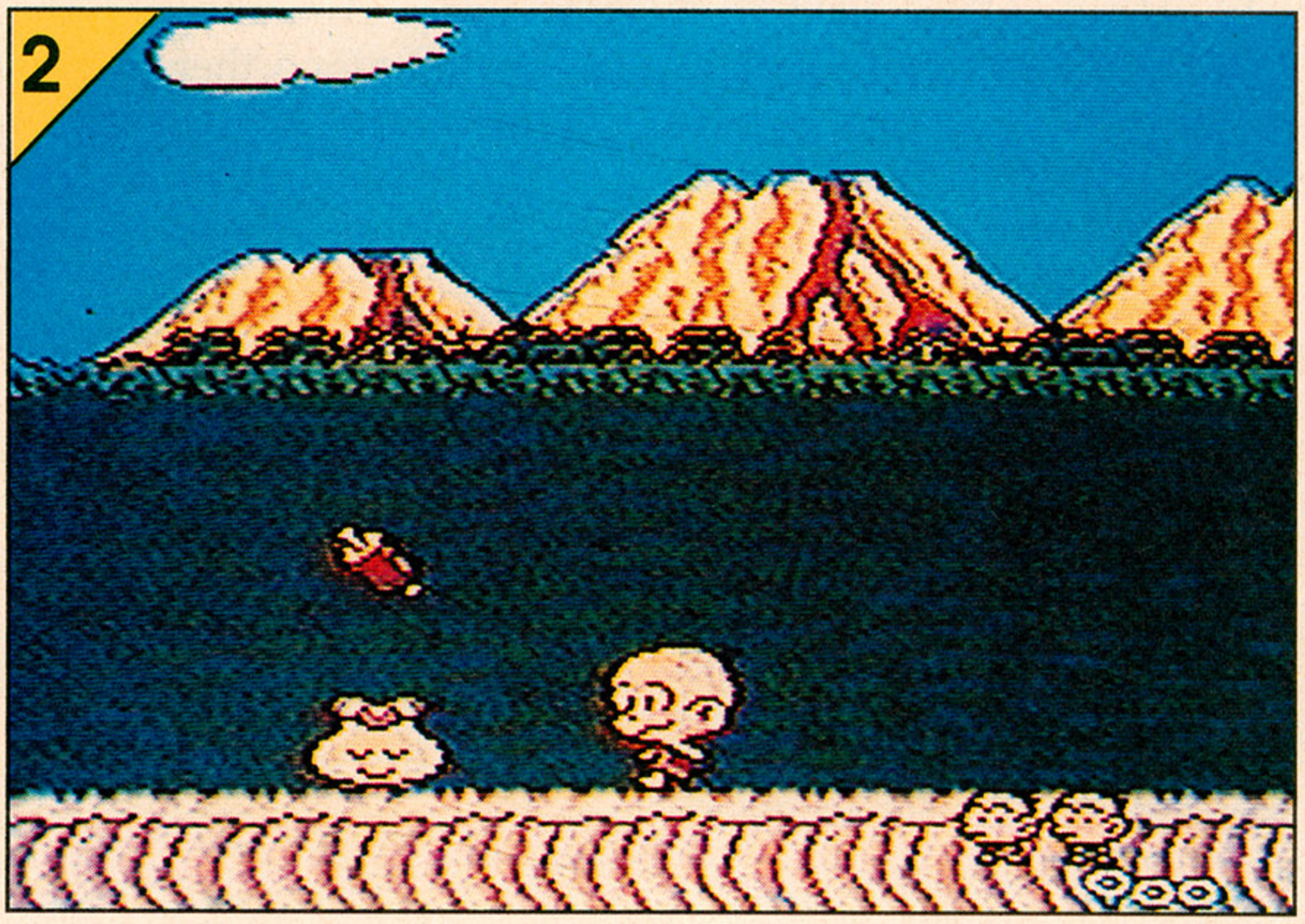
The answer to this question has clearly plagued the designers of the NEC TurboGrafx-16, because *Bonk's Adventure* is NEC's second attempt to emulate Nintendo's phenomenally popular series. The first was *Keith Courage in the Alpha Zones*, and although it's far from a bad game, it just isn't as charming as *Super Mario*.

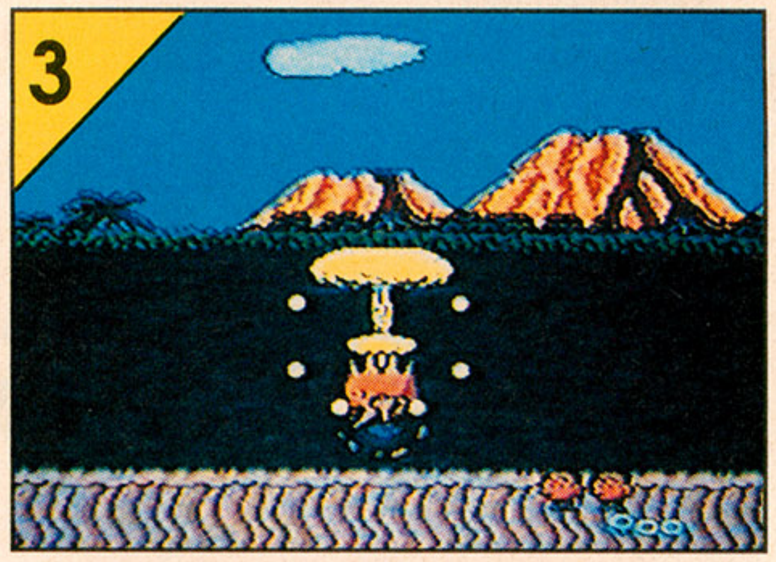
And *charm* is the real answer to the question. The *Super Mario* series is, simply, charming. Bizarre things



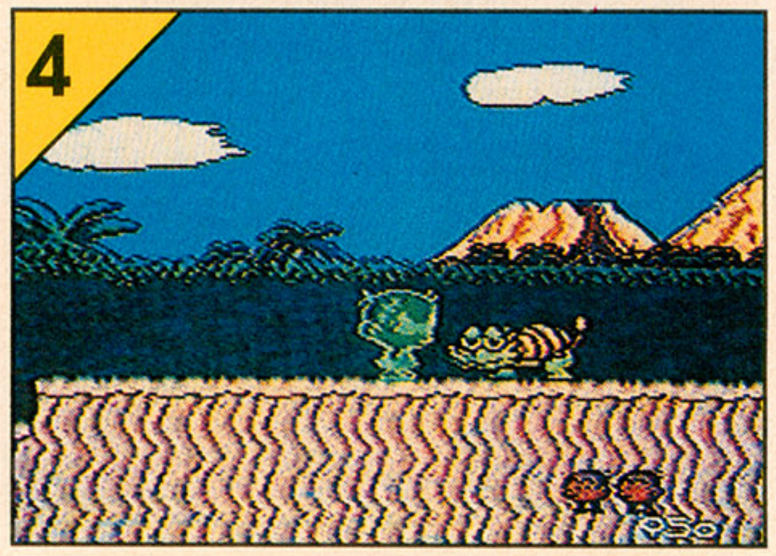
happen, strange creatures show up, and you must take on mushrooms and plants and all kinds of exotic things. Even the background music calms, soothes, and warns.

Bonk's Adventure is placed in a somewhat similar fantasy world, although you don't play the role of an Italian janitor. Instead, you control a misshapen little character named Bonk the Caveman as he





makes his way through the world of 10,000 B.C. Your goal is to save Princess Za from the evil King Drool. You move through six levels of play while taking on such deadly foes as Huey, Gladdis, Kongo Zilla, and T. Ractorhead. Interestingly, these enemies are actually good guys who were corrupted by King Drool, and once defeated they become your friends. In other words, you don't destroy your enemies—you convert them.



1 Bonk demonstrates his standing head-butt, much to the dismay of a hammer-wielding bird. Bonk's enemies often release Smiley Faces when defeated. Collect as many as you can.

2 When Bonk jumps on a flower, many things can happen. It may cough up a big piece of meat — and Bonk *loves* meat!

3 Meat has a mind-blowing effect on Bonk. When he eats a small piece, he takes on a fierce appearance and gains the power to freeze all nearby enemies merely by jumping and landing on his head.

4 If Bonk eats a second piece of meat before the effects of the first one wear off, he glows green and becomes superhuman. He can run right through enemies without being hurt.

TURBO PLAYERS

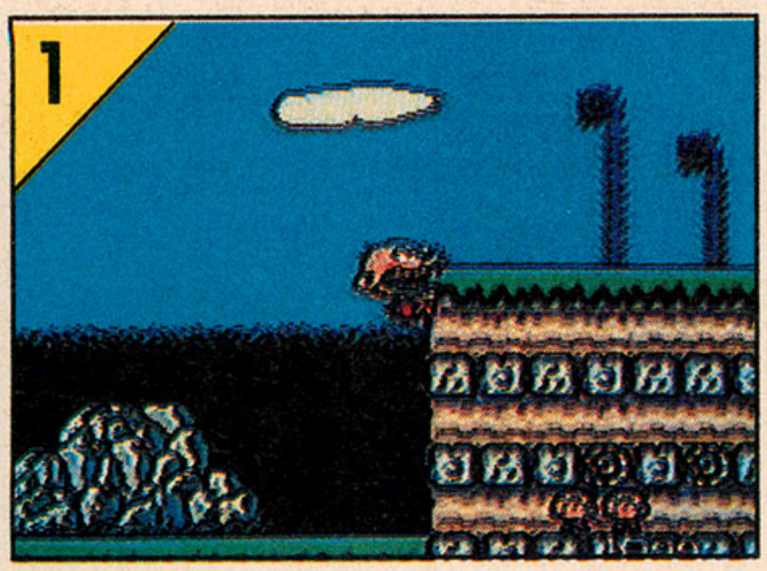
1 When a cliff is too high for Bonk to jump over, press button I to make him climb with his teeth.

2 Suddenly you realize you're standing on the back of a huge dinosaur. There's no place to go, except — *gulp* — into the monster's mouth!

3 Animals like this ferocious fish live inside the dinosaur. On land, at sea, or in a dinosaur, the rule is the same: Use your head.

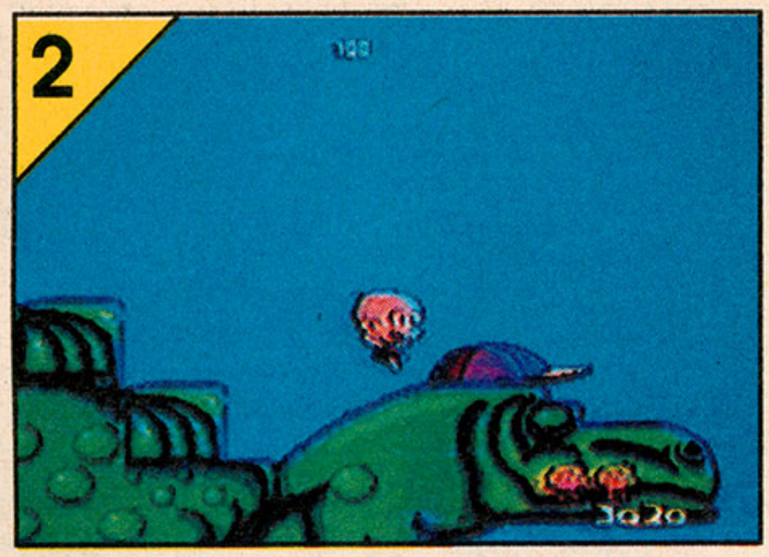
4 Don't be afraid when you come across these great skulls. They are prehistoric elevators, and this one leads to the first boss.

5 To beat the first boss, perform a flying head-butt from the pole at the right. By setting button II on turbo-fire, you can keep Bonk spinning and bouncing after each blow.



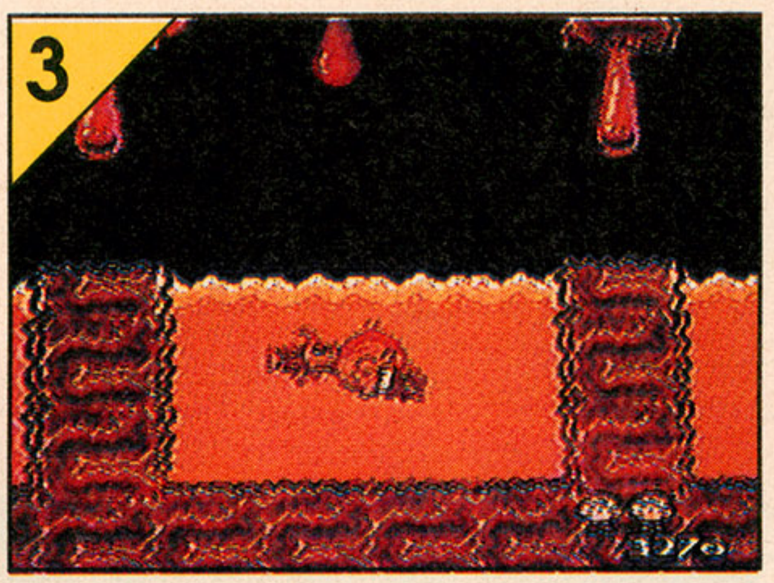
Your only weapon in this crusade is your head. And we're not talking about thinking. To force your way past the numerous creatures and objects blocking your path in *Bonk's Adventure*, you employ the old-fashioned head-butt.

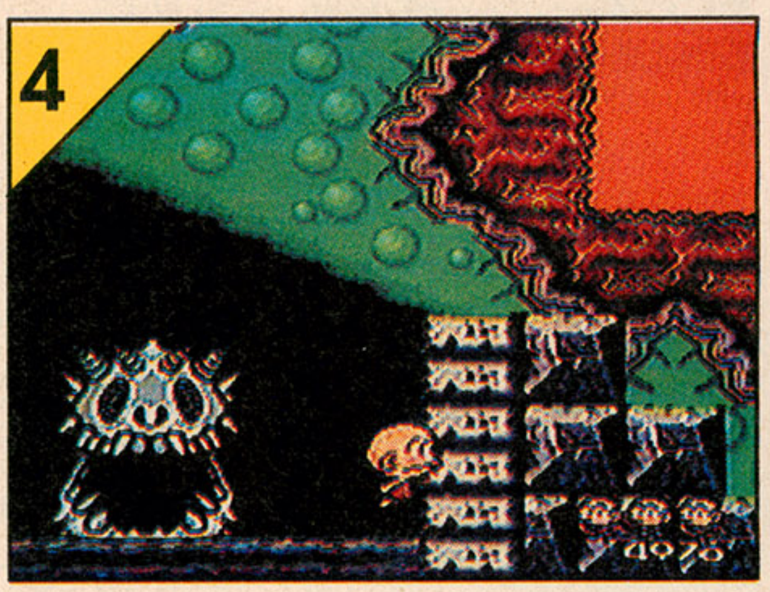
There are two ways to head-butt in *Bonk*. The first is to walk toward your target and press the II button; Bonk's head will snap forward and bash the object. The second is to jump into the air, press the II button, and crash head-first onto your target from above. The jumping head-butt is more effective than the standing head-butt, and it's essential to defeating the boss creatures at the end of each level.



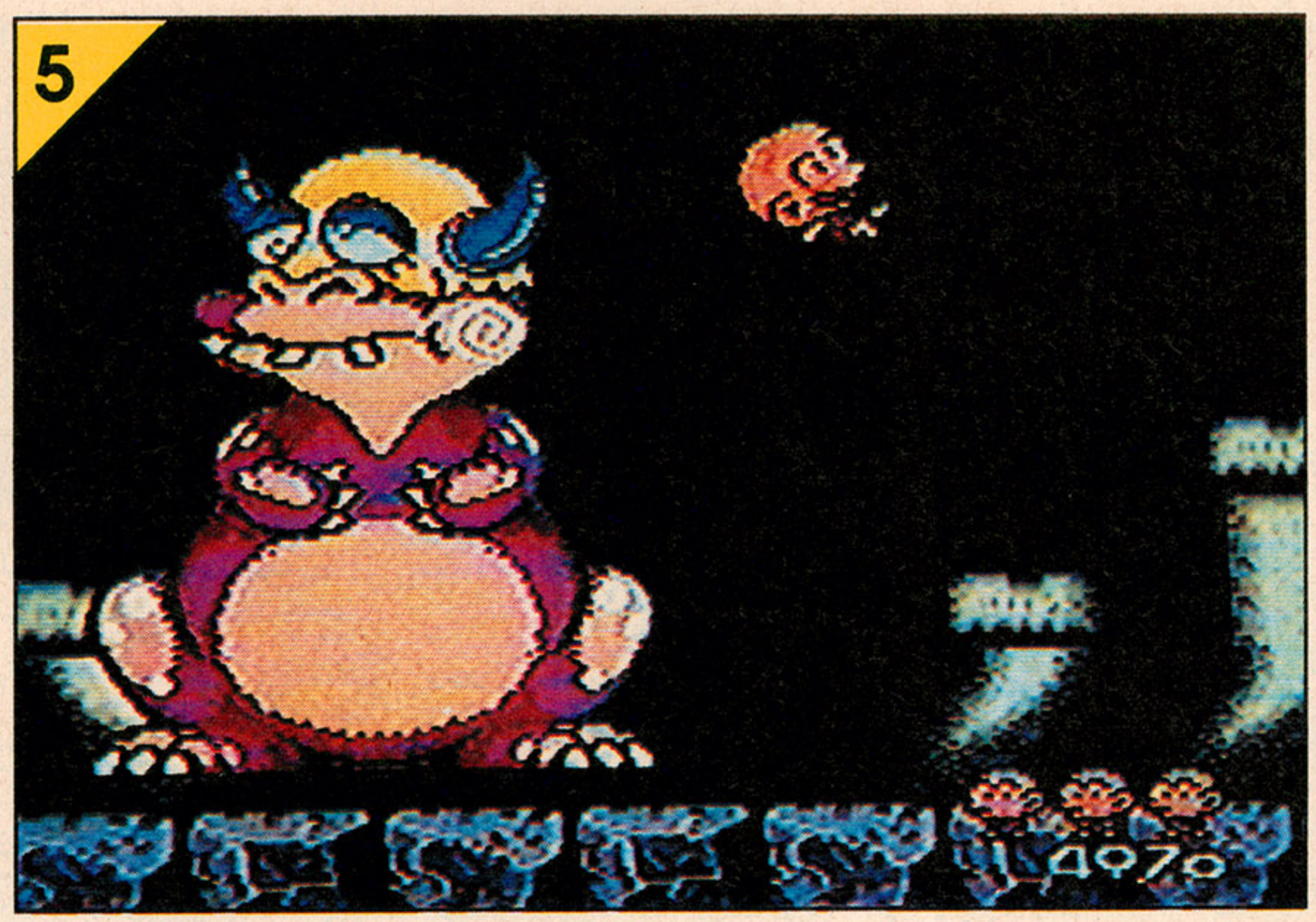
Bonk is a hungry meat-eater, and from time to time he'll come across hunks of meat in two different sizes. By swallowing a small piece, his head-butt becomes doubly powerful. Eating a large piece (or two small pieces in quick succession) makes him invincible. This is the only way Bonk can eliminate objects and creatures by simply running through them. (Incidentally, the graphics sequence after Bonk eats a piece of meat is colorful and humorous, with Bonk zooming into the air in a prehistoric version of a caffeine hit.)

Bonk starts with three lives, indicated by little Bonk symbols at the bottom right of the screen (or as Bonk=4 if you get a fourth life). Each life consists of three vitality hearts, shown at the top left. Whenever Bonk gets hit, he loses part of a vitality heart. When all three vitality hearts are gone, he loses a life. When he loses all three lives, the game is over. As is becoming common in TurboGrafx games, however (*J.J. & Jeff* is another recent example), Bonk can continue where he left off. There is no limit to the number of continues.

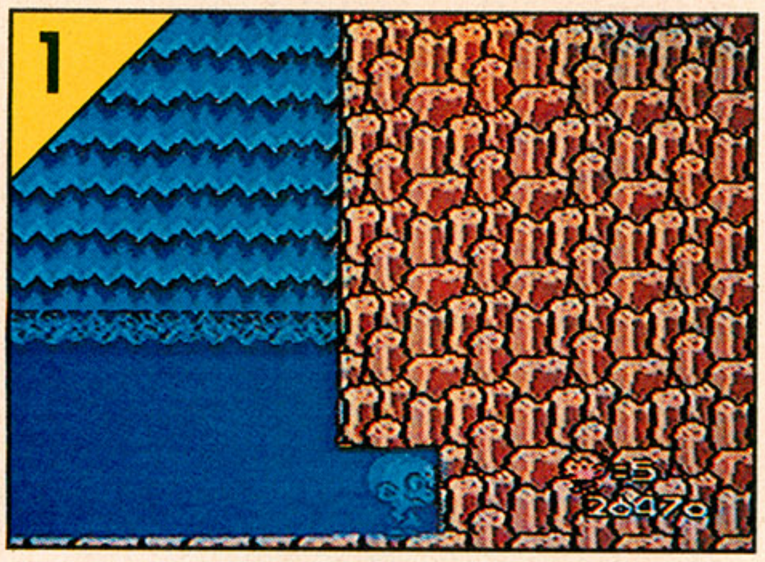




Throughout the adventure,



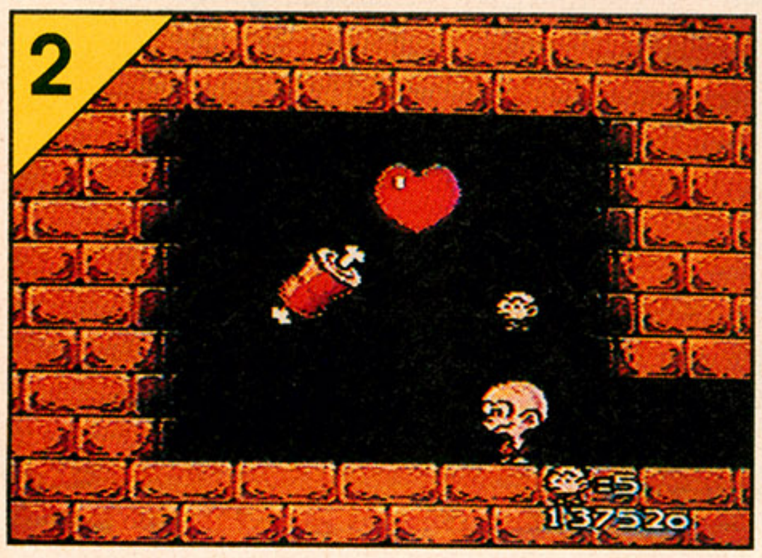
TURBO PLAYERS

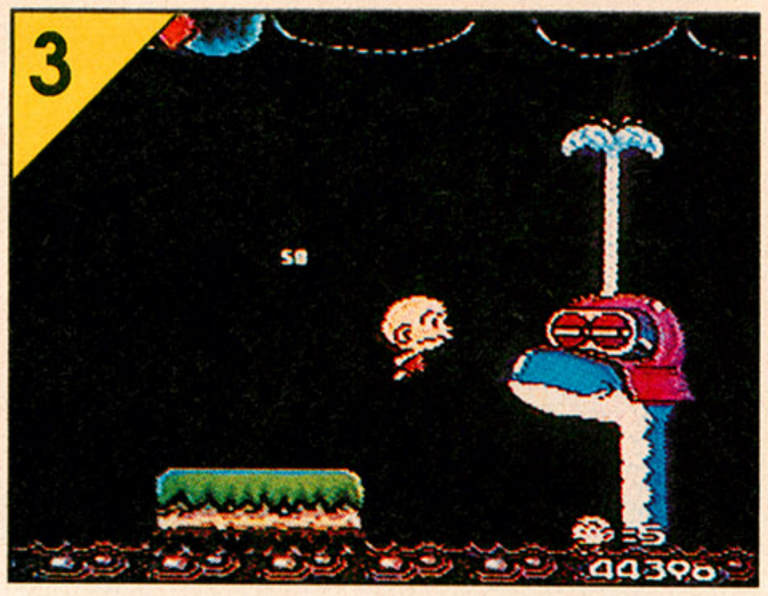


Bonk can obtain extra lives and regain lost vitality. He earns his first extra life at 10,000 points, and others every 20,000 points above that. Bonk gains points by eating fruits and vegetables, by capturing Smiley Faces when they appear on the screen, and, at times, by repeated head-butting. He also gets points by defeating enemies.

Bonk can replenish his vitality hearts by eating fruits and vegetables or by finding hearts. By jumping on a green flower, Bonk can gain one or two additional vitality hearts (for a total of five), which he must energize by eating as many fruits and vegetables as possible.

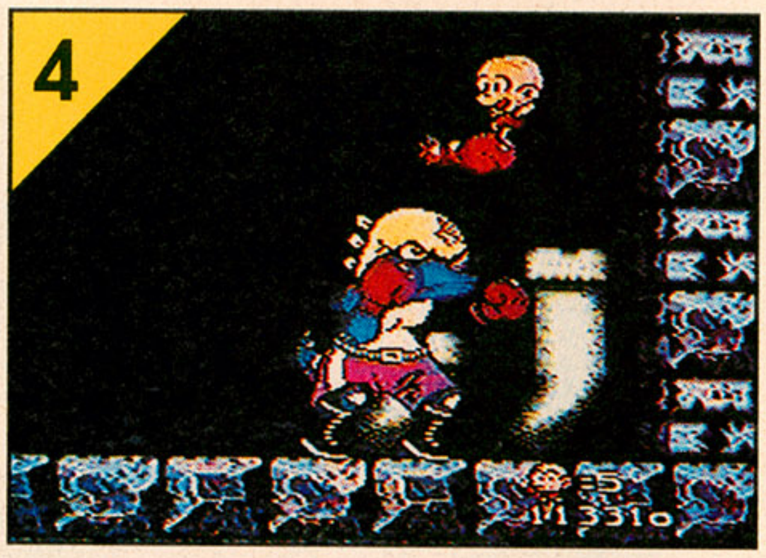
Several hidden areas are scattered throughout the game. Many are bonus stages in which Bonk can gain extra points and restore





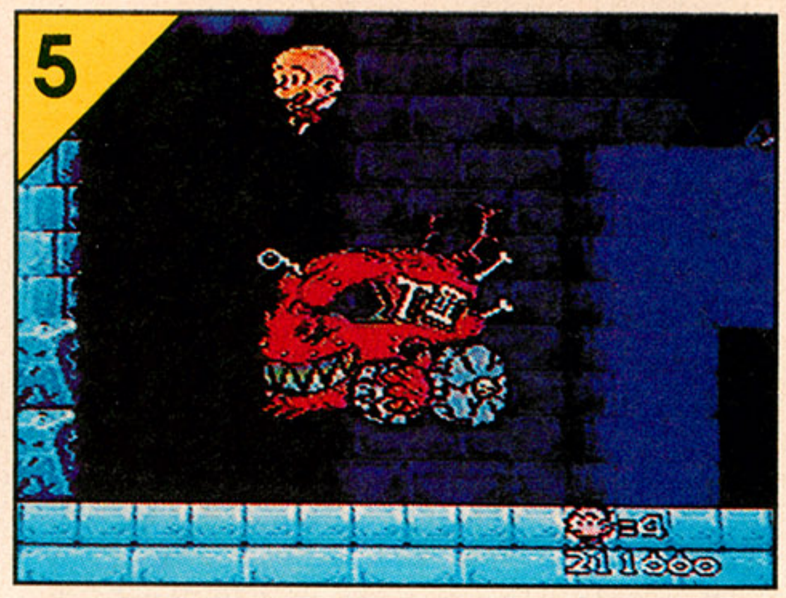
his vitality. In the cliff-climbing bonus, for example, Bonk has to scale a cliff using his teeth (something he must do in other stages of the game as well). In another bonus stage, he must leap off a cliff and turn as many somersaults as he can before landing on his feet (with no points awarded for crashing head-first). Other bonus rounds have Bonk leaping from flower to flower while eating the fruits and vegetables arrayed before him, or head-butting a series of rocks shooting from a volcano.

Bonk's Adventure has all the ingredients to become not only a successful game, but also the first installment of a successful series of games. The main character is cute, the head-butting is superb (particularly the somersaulting head-butt), and the creatures and situations are inventive. The fact that you can reverse direction and go backward in this game is an-



other strong point. The graphics are sharp and, well, charming.

The only flaw in *Bonk's Adventure* is that it isn't long enough. The unlimited continues are partly to blame for this. Although this feature removes the frustration of



starting over at the beginning each time you run out of lives, it also means you can play as far through the game as you want. In *Bonk 2*, more levels are clearly in order.

A testimonial, though, is perhaps the best judgment of all. Two of our informal game testers (ages 10 and 12) have been playing *Bonk* since the day it arrived, and they love it. Each girl takes her turn, and they use the continue feature when necessary. They still haven't conquered King Drool, but they're close. And they're determined to finish the game and then await *Bonk 2*. At a place that's flooded with games of all kinds, this degree of attention speaks for itself.

GP

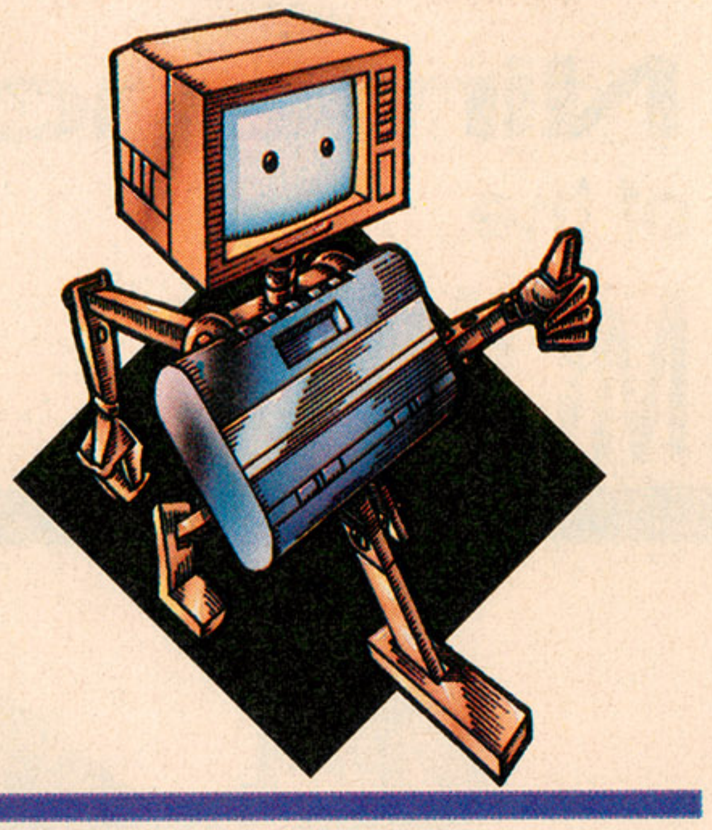
1 Get into the habit of looking for weak spots in the rock walls. They lead to bonus stages, and the more points you earn, the more lives you get.

2 This bonus stage is a real dream come true for a weary caveman — it offers meat, full vitality, and an extra life.

3 This giant is harmless. As a matter of fact, he's a big help. Jump on his head and ride the waterspout to reach some food hidden in the trees.

4 This boxing boss can really throw a punch. In fact, his gloves come off and chase you. Keep above him, duck his blows, and synchronize your attacks with his.

5 Near the end of the game, a motorized monster throws everything at you. Just keep after it and use your head. You're almost done.



ATARI SAFARI

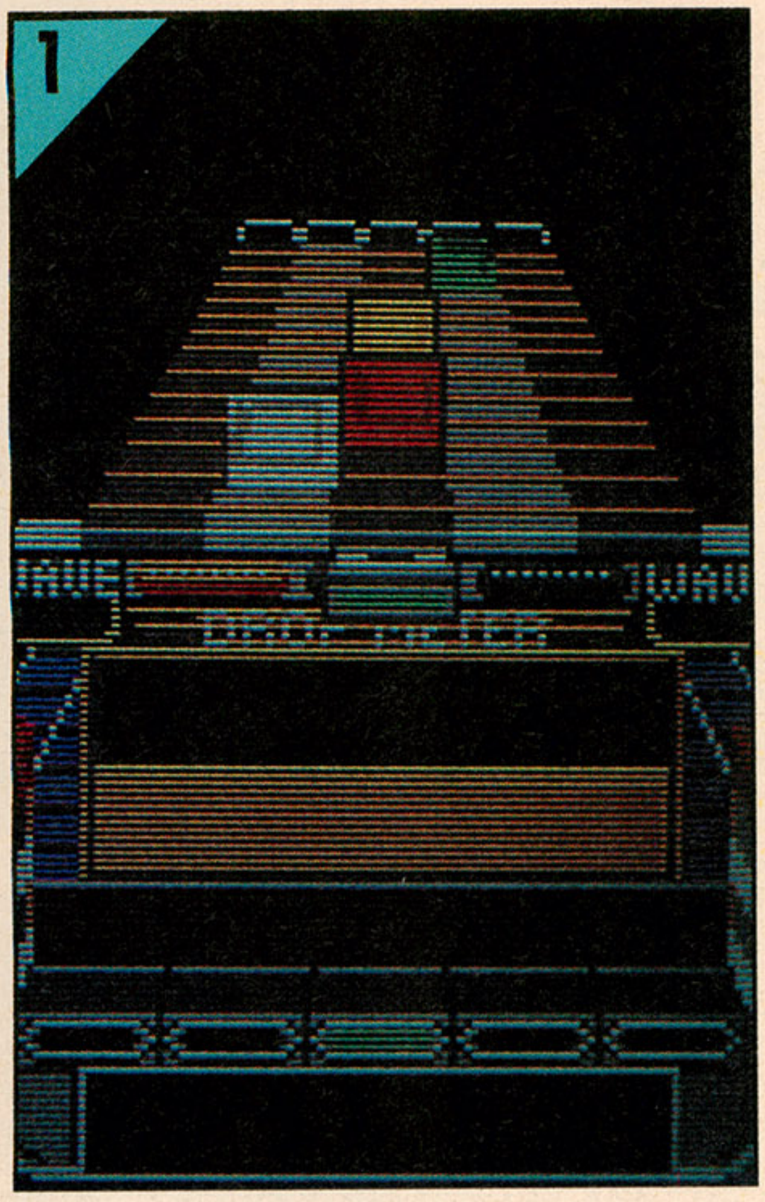
Klax

Tom R. Halfhill

For years, computer gamers have enjoyed a situation that's almost unknown among videogamers: As long as you own one of the two or three computers that are dominant at the moment, you can be fairly certain that any really popular game will eventually become available for your machine.

Unfortunately, videogamers aren't that lucky. Due partly to more restrictive licensing policies among videogame manufacturers, most hit games are available for only one videogame system. You can't play *Super Mario Bros. 3* on a Sega Master System, and you can't play *Phantasy Star II* on an NEC TurboGrafx-16.

Klax breaks that rule. Almost simultaneously, versions of *Klax* are being released for Nintendo, the TurboGrafx, the Sega Genesis, PC compatibles, the Amiga, the Atari ST, the Commodore 64 — and the Atari Lynx. Based on an original coin-op arcade game by Tengen, all of the home versions except the Lynx version are also by Tengen. (The Lynx version, like all Lynx games so far, carries the Atari label.)



1 Like the coin-op arcade game, the Lynx version of *Klax* is played on a vertically oriented screen.

Fortunately, *Klax* lends itself to this diversity. It's basically a simple, fast-action puzzle game that runs well on any system. It wouldn't be misleading to say that if you've seen one *Klax*, you've seen 'em all.

Nevertheless, the Lynx version stands out from the crowd. With *Klax*, the Lynx proves once again that it's more than a match for machines far above its weight class. Especially in terms of sound, the Lynx version outdoes both the Nintendo version (reviewed in last month's *Game Player's*) and the TurboGrafx version, and it even wrestles the Genesis version to a standoff. All that, and you can carry it with you.

Obviously inspired by *Tetris*, *Klax* is the kind of game you can learn merely by watching over someone's shoulder for a few minutes. During each wave, colored tiles come clattering down an incline. Your first goal is to catch them with a paddle that slides back and forth. That's the easy part. Next you have to drop the tiles to the bottom of the screen to form patterns. When you line up three tiles of the same color horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, it's called a Klax and you win points.

You can score even more points with more complex patterns. Four tiles in a row count as a double Klax, and sometimes you can set up a chain-reaction Klax by lining up the tiles in two or more directions at once.

To clear each wave, you have to achieve a certain goal. You might have to score 25,000 points, or get 10 Klaxes, or make 13 diagonals, or catch 55 tiles. If you succeed, you advance to the next wave. But if you miss too many tiles with your paddle, or allow the tiles to stack up too high at the bottom of the screen, the game's over. Fortunately, a continue feature lets you resume play at the current wave.

The Lynx version of *Klax* is the only home version that has the vertically oriented screen of the arcade game (you hold the Lynx vertically to play). The graphics are very good, but it's the realistic sound effects that really grab you. Each wave is introduced by a digitized female voice, and each high-scoring Klax is rewarded with an "Oooooh!" or an "Ahhhhh!" from an unseen audience. If you successfully complete a wave, the spectators applaud; if you fail, they sigh.

As the only *Tetris*-style game available for the Lynx, *Klax* is a welcome addition to the lineup.

GP

SKATE OR DIE 2

Nintendo Game of the MONTH

Unfortunately, while you were pursuing happiness down a seemingly clear sidewalk one day, fate stepped in front of you. Fate, that is, in the form of the mayor's wife and her now late, lamented poodle. In less time than it takes to say "Tex-Mex Chili Fries," the city's first lady puts your beloved skateboard ramp at the top of her husband's demolition hit list.

Money is the only thing that can get you a new ramp now, but — as usual — money is the one thing you don't have. But since you're bright and resourceful (and desperate), you figure that you can earn plenty of loot from odd jobs and street competitions.

Rodney, owner of the local board shop, and his son, Lester, are around to help you from time to time with new boards and rad moves. Even with their help, though, the odds are stacked against you. Of course, with a final foe named Icepick, you probably weren't expecting the spring cotillion anyway.

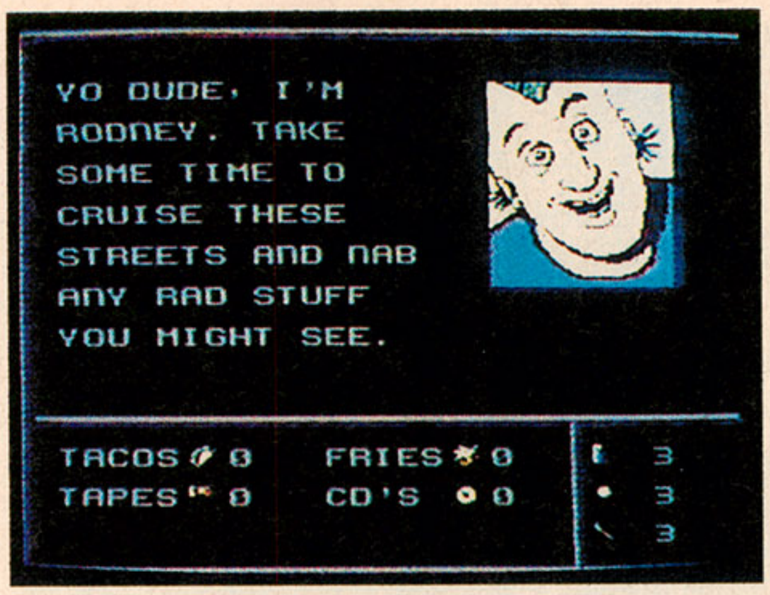
With its interesting storyline and humorous graphics, *Skate or Die 2* is a much-improved and worthy successor to the original *Skate or Die*, which sold over a million copies. So don't sit around moaning about the loss of your ramp. It's a sunny day, the sidewalks are empty, the mall is beckoning, and there's just the slightest hint of chili in the morning breeze.

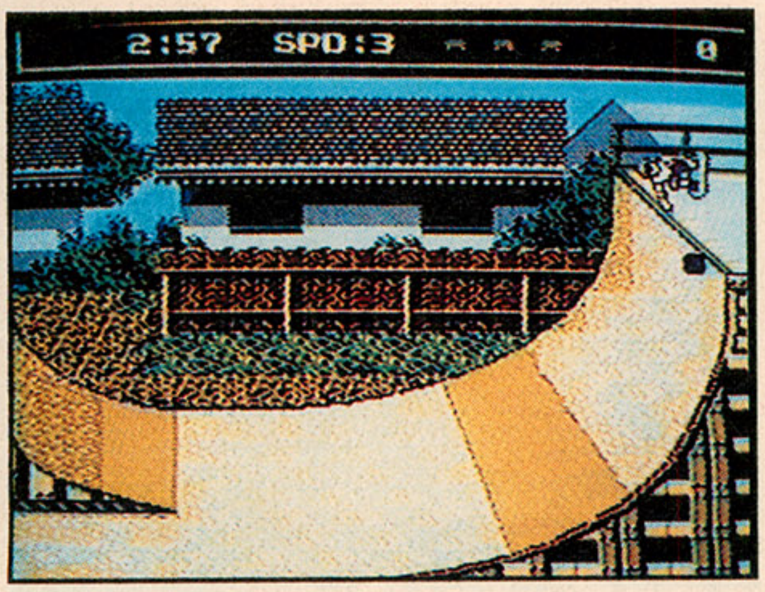
Gary Meredith

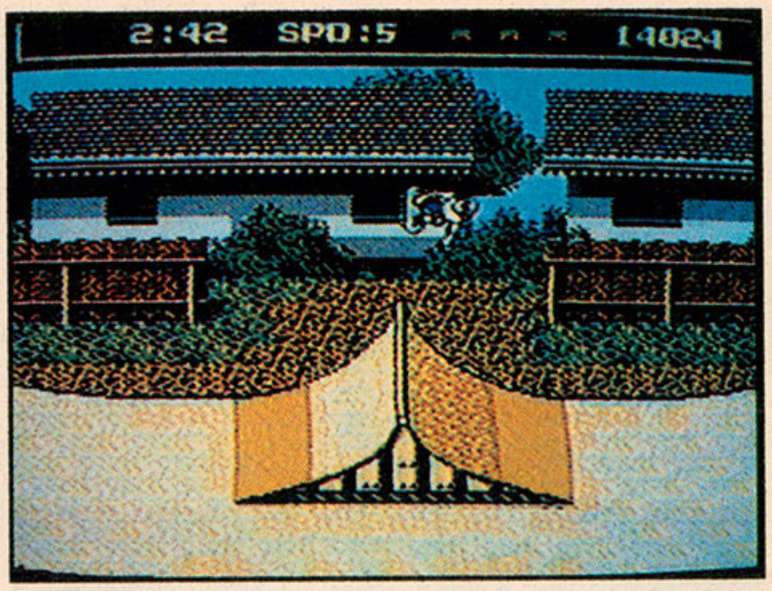
You don't ask much from life — some major munchies, a few excellent tunes for your boom box, and a rad board capable of some serious shredding.

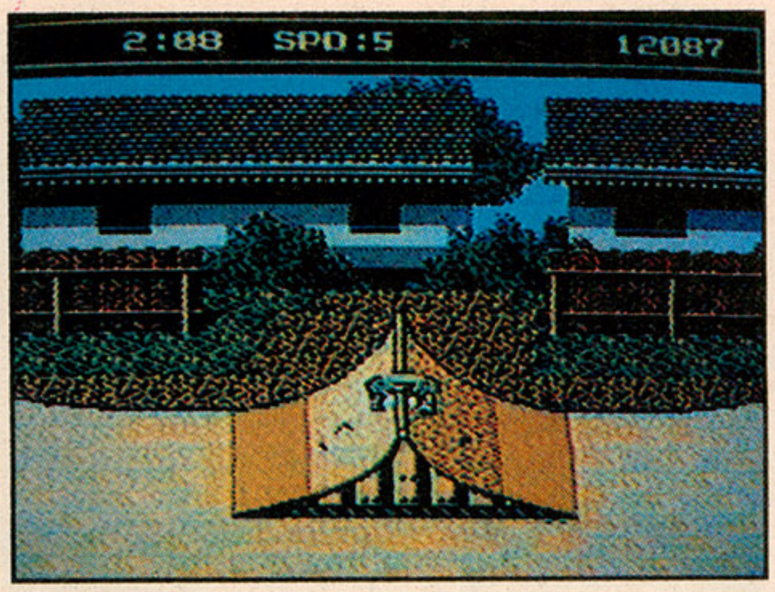
Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404.

Rodney is a really good guy to know. He'll not only sell you new skateboards, but he and his son Lester will also give you tips on how to use them.



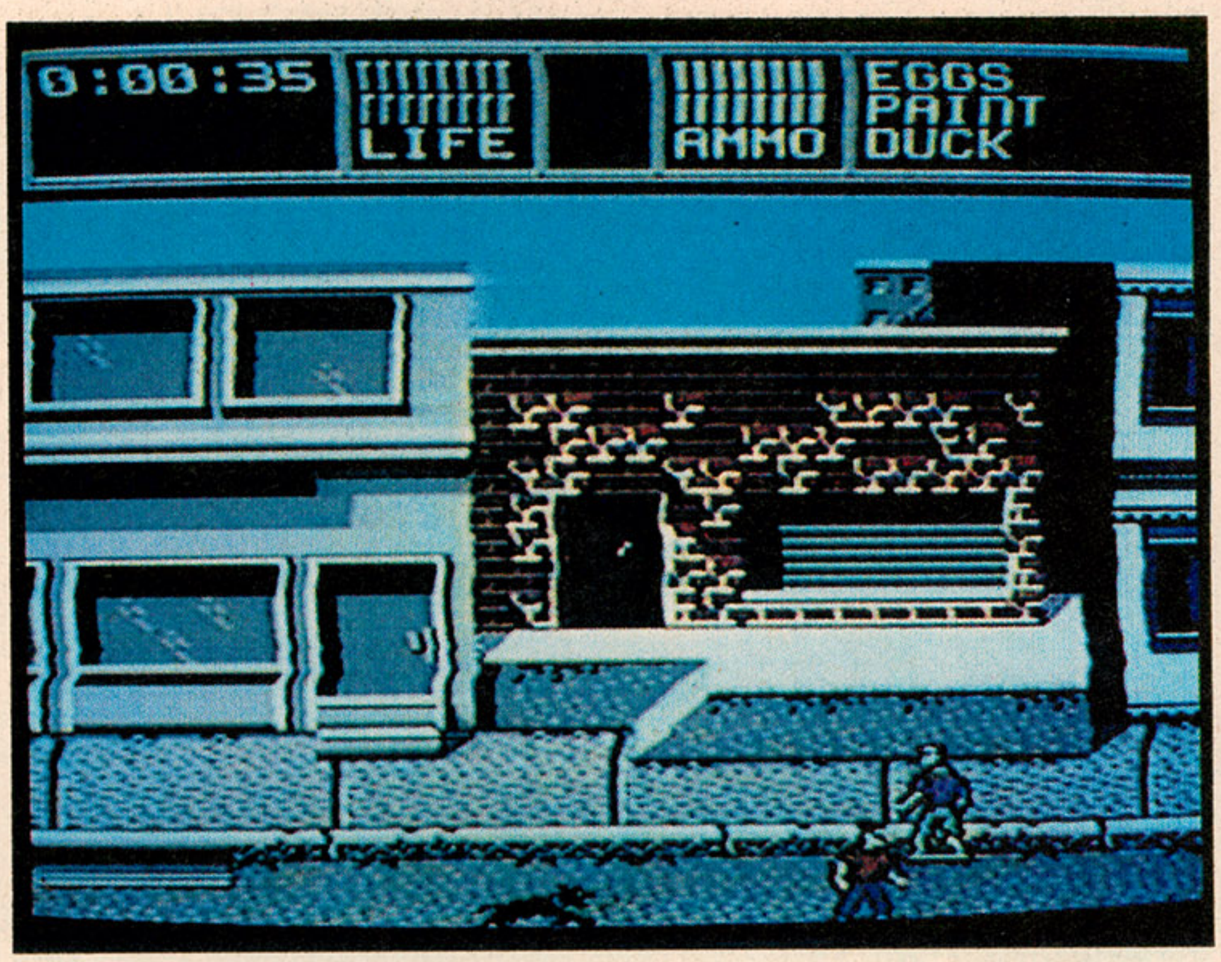






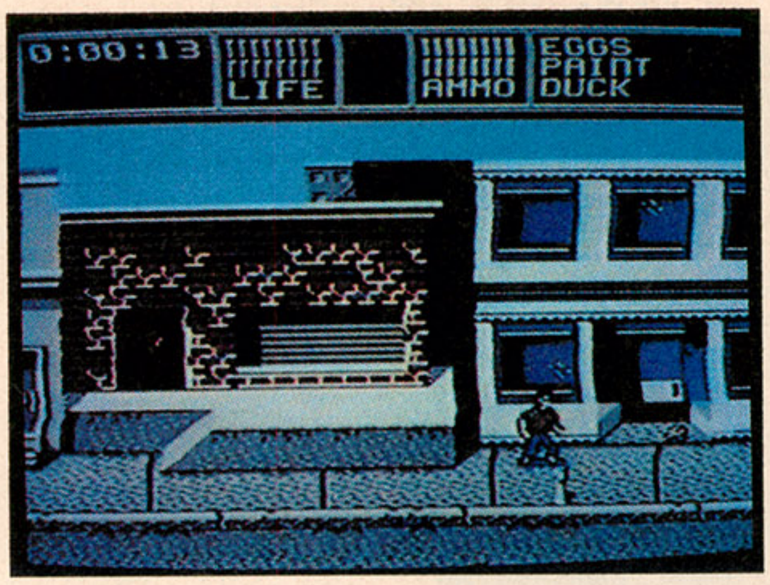
If you're just dying for action, you can skip the game's four stages and get right into the Double Trouble Half-Pipe. You'll have just three minutes to pull out all the tricks you've got in your hat (or helmet). When the girl appears in the window, keep ripping and you'll earn double points. Just watch out for the mini-ramp at the center — it can quickly put an end to your performance.

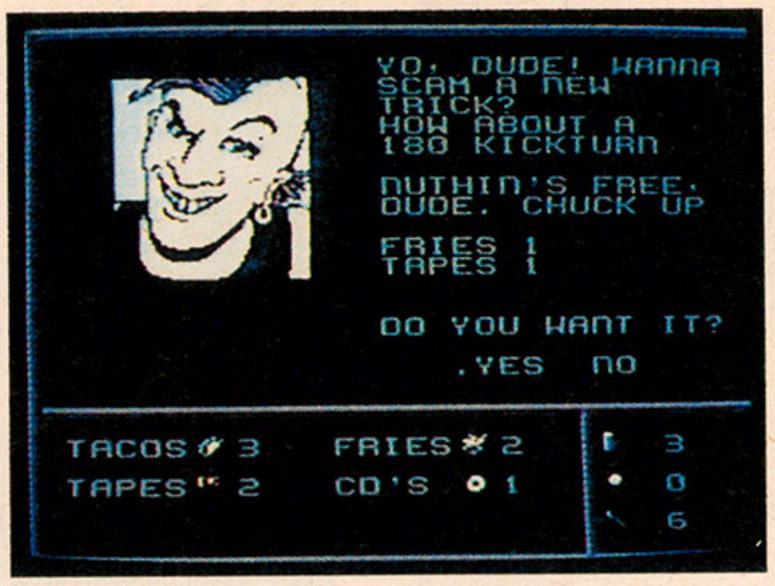
Collect the tacos, cassette tapes, and whatever else you find. You can trade them for a better board or a new rad move.



The dogs in this neighborhood seem to have a taste for skate dudes instead of mailmen. Use the ramps to make your getaway.

Those fries are as greasy as if they'd been cooked in 30-weight motor oil, but you still need to collect them for future use.

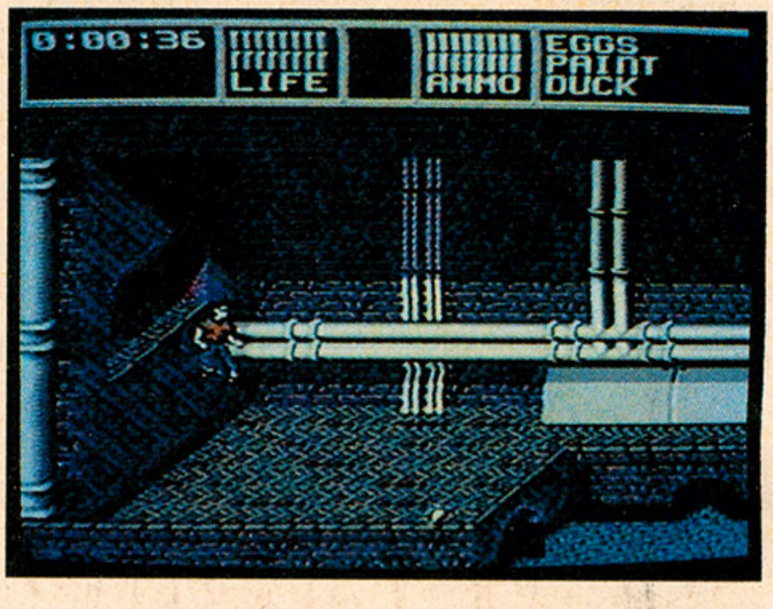




Lester can be a big help. Scam any tricks you can from him, even if you have to give up a few tacos.

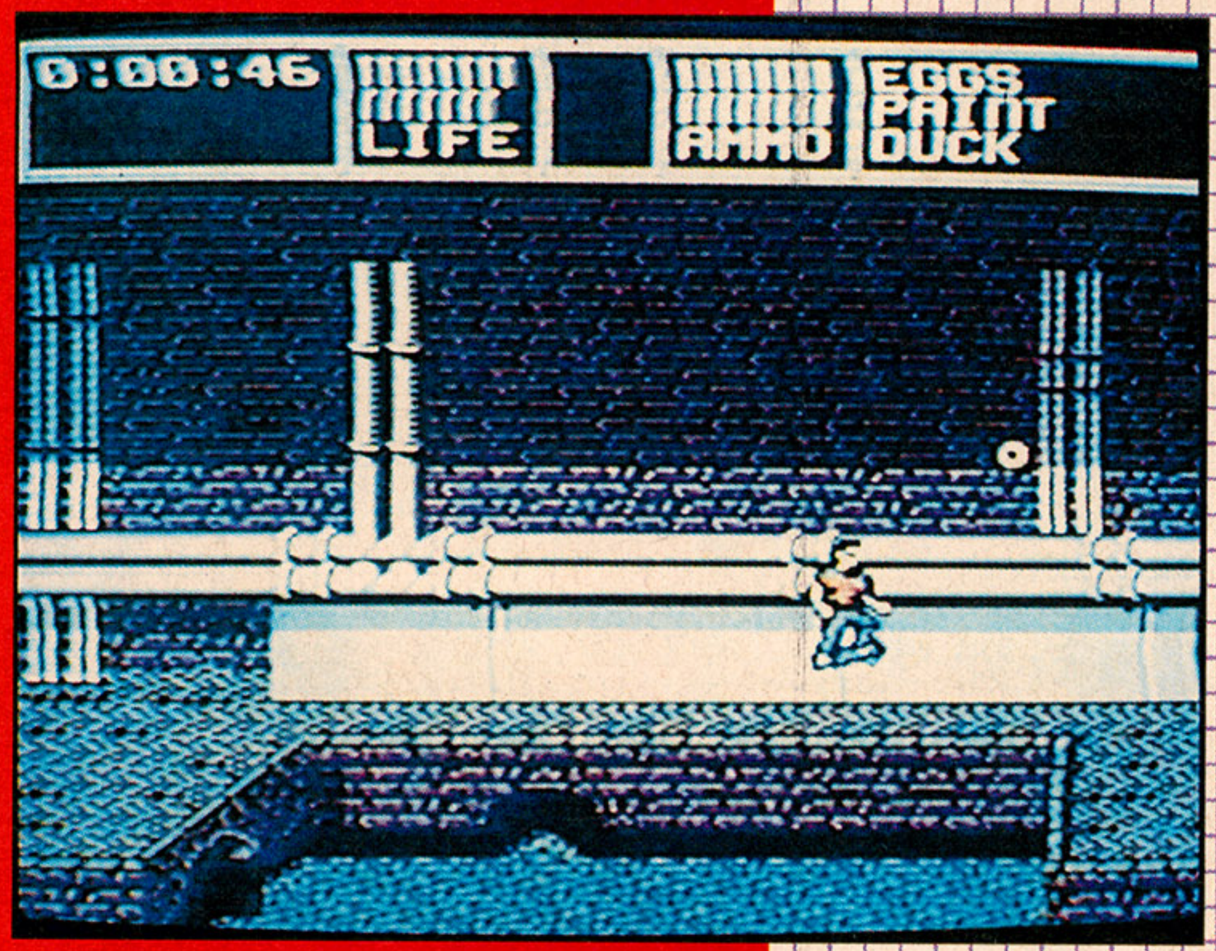
Check your menu often to keep track of what moves and boards you have available. Different situations may call for a change of equipment.

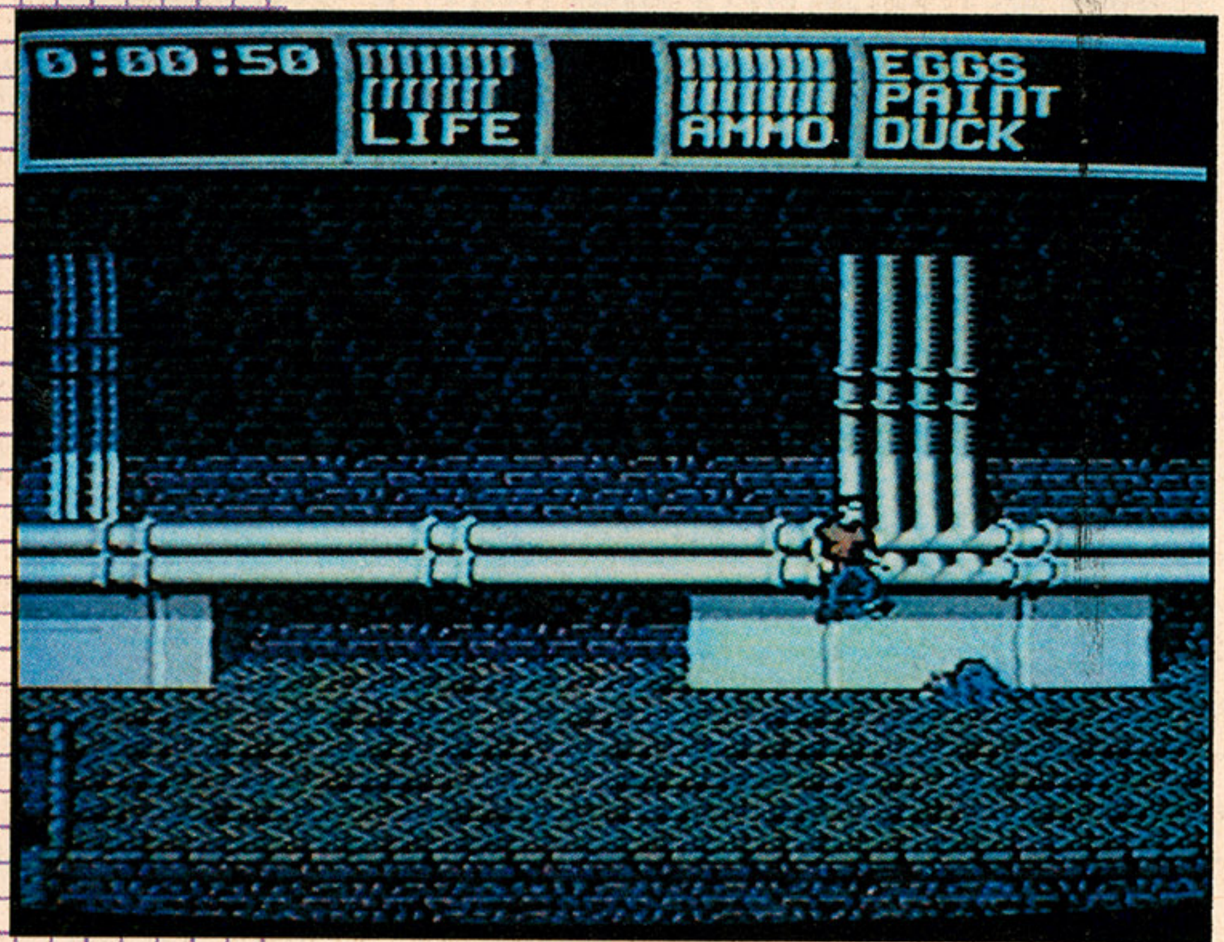
You'll know Rodney when you meet him on the street. He's the only one who's not trying to dump you.



Watch for open doors—sometimes they lead to areas where you can earn bonus points and extra goodies. This one leads to an extra life, but be careful not to lose it with a sloppy jump.

The sewer rats can be deadly, but they're pretty easy to dodge, and the items you can find down here make it worth the risk.

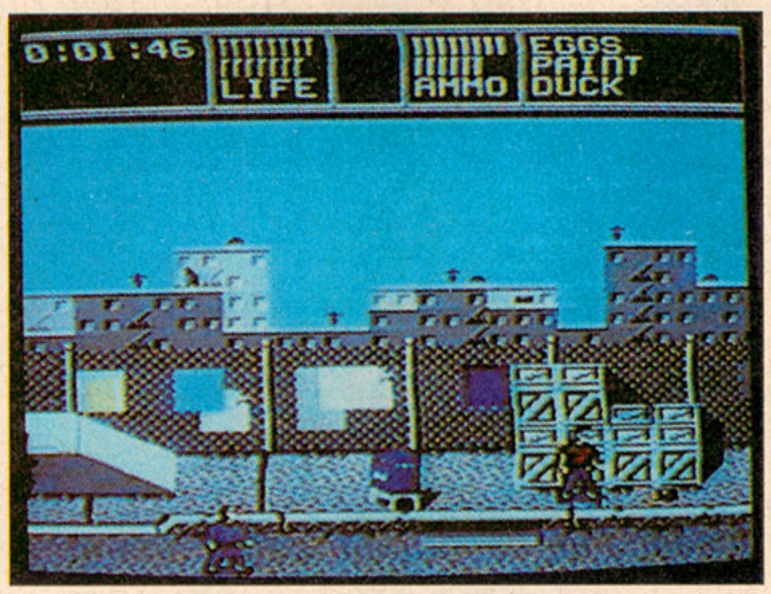


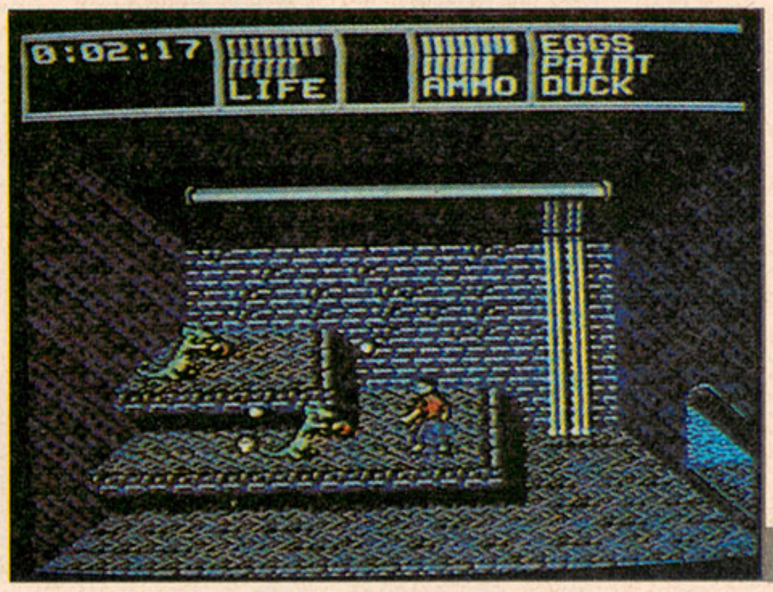


Often you'll find items that are just out of reach. If you've taken Lester's advice, you'll have a 180-degree kick-turn that'll get you high enough to grab just about anything.

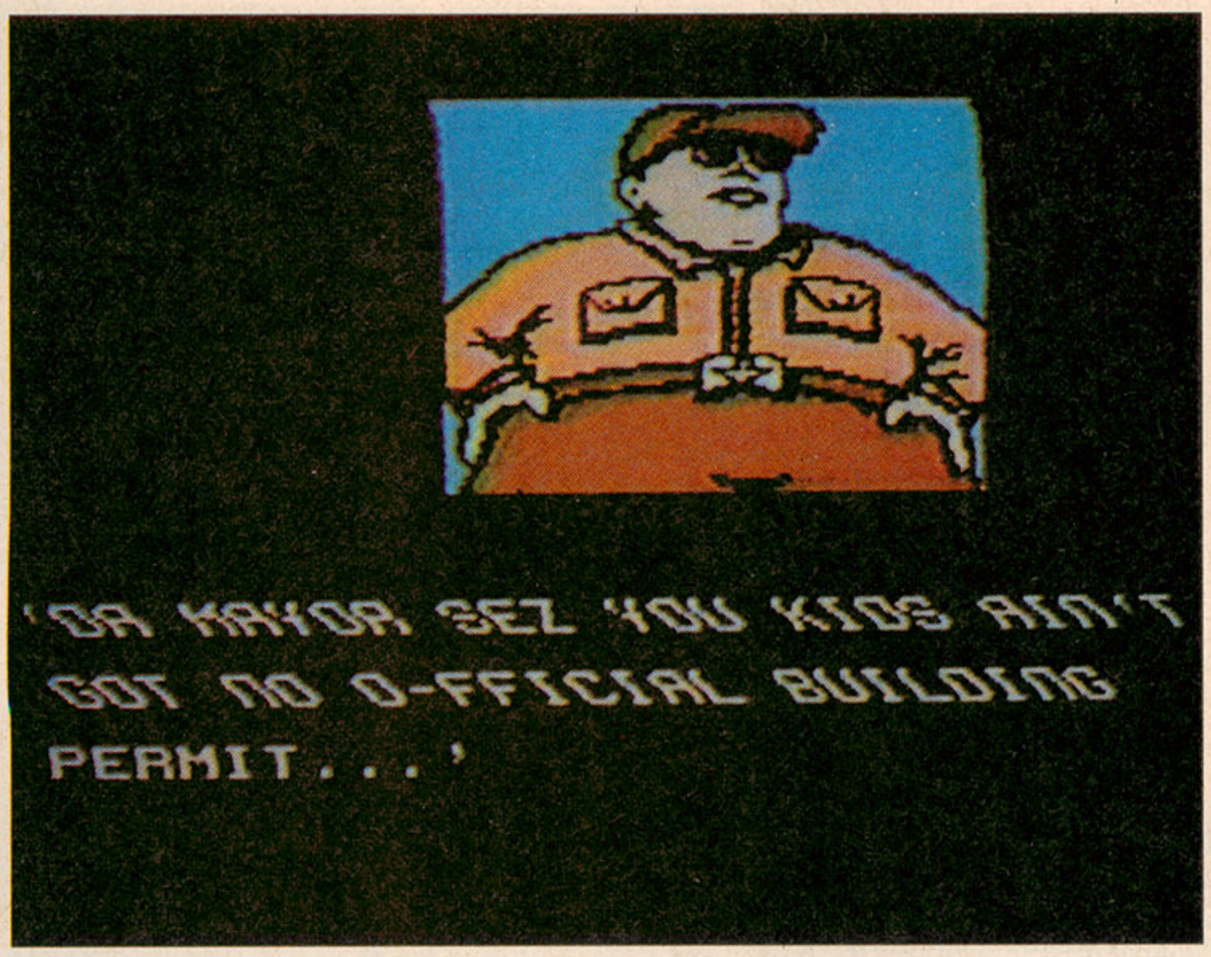
The mayor's wife can really hold a grudge. To get her out of your hair for good, you'll need a paint gun and some eggs.

Use Lester's sure-fire 180 kick-turn to snag that tape.

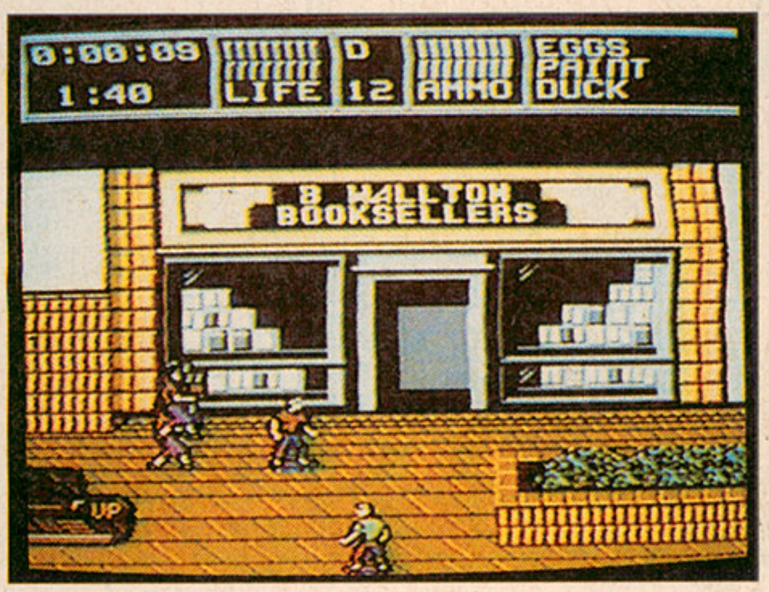




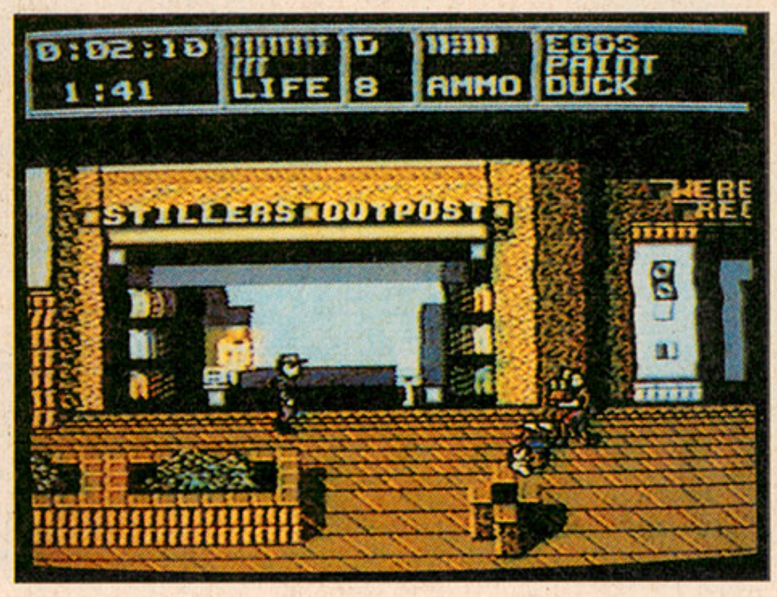
Don't try to go toe-to-toe with the boxing iguanas. Your best tactic is to sit back and lob eggs or M-80s at them.



With the mayor and his wife applying pressure, the building department condemns your prized skateboard ramp. Before you even have a chance to protest, the bulldozers are rolling. Now that the ramp is just a sweet memory, you'll have to find the money to get a building permit for a new ramp.



You land your first real job as a delivery boy at the local mega-mall. You've got only a few minutes for your deliveries, so try to avoid tangles with the shoppers.



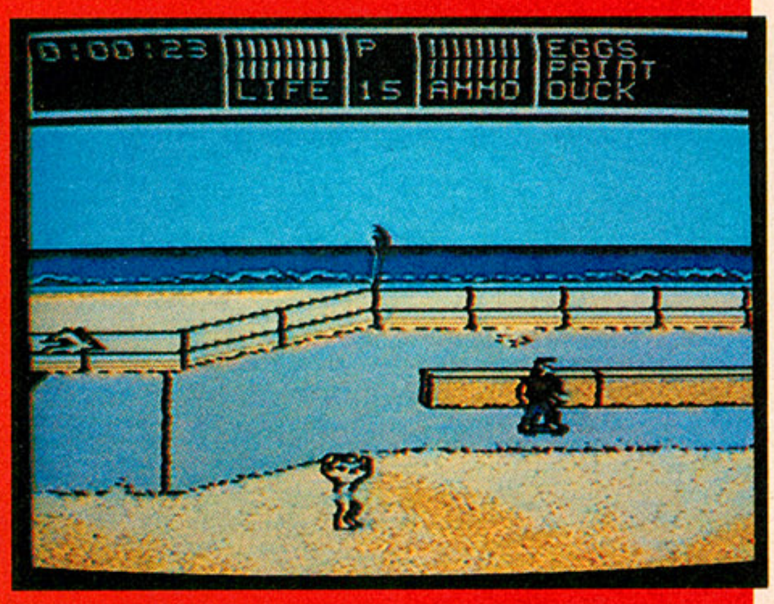
Watch out for Officer Renckley. If he catches you, count on being late for your next delivery. He'll either detain you or move you to another location.

Early deliveries not only put you ahead of schedule, but also earn you bonus items for more board upgrades.

Uh-oh — a late delivery. You won't lose any items for being late, but you will lose time from your total.

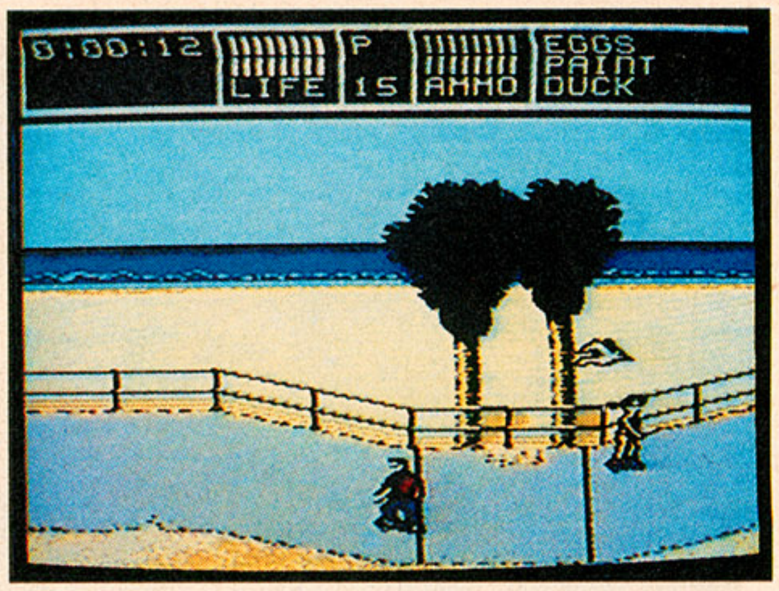
The mall isn't too crowded with shoppers at the moment, but if things start picking up, use the duck move to slip through the traffic.

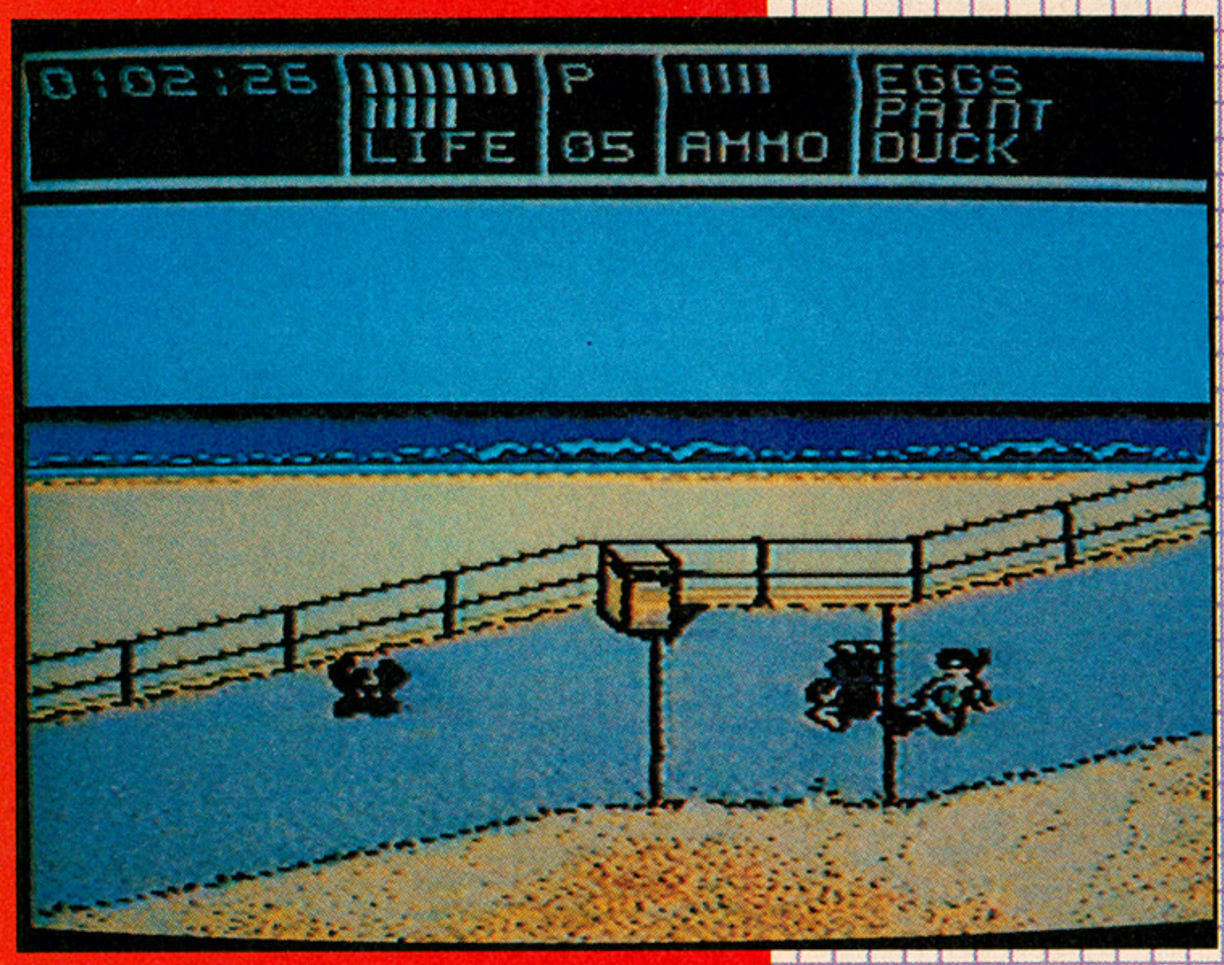
The ultimate penalty — unemployment. If you're late three times, those hopes of a new ramp will last about as long as your career.



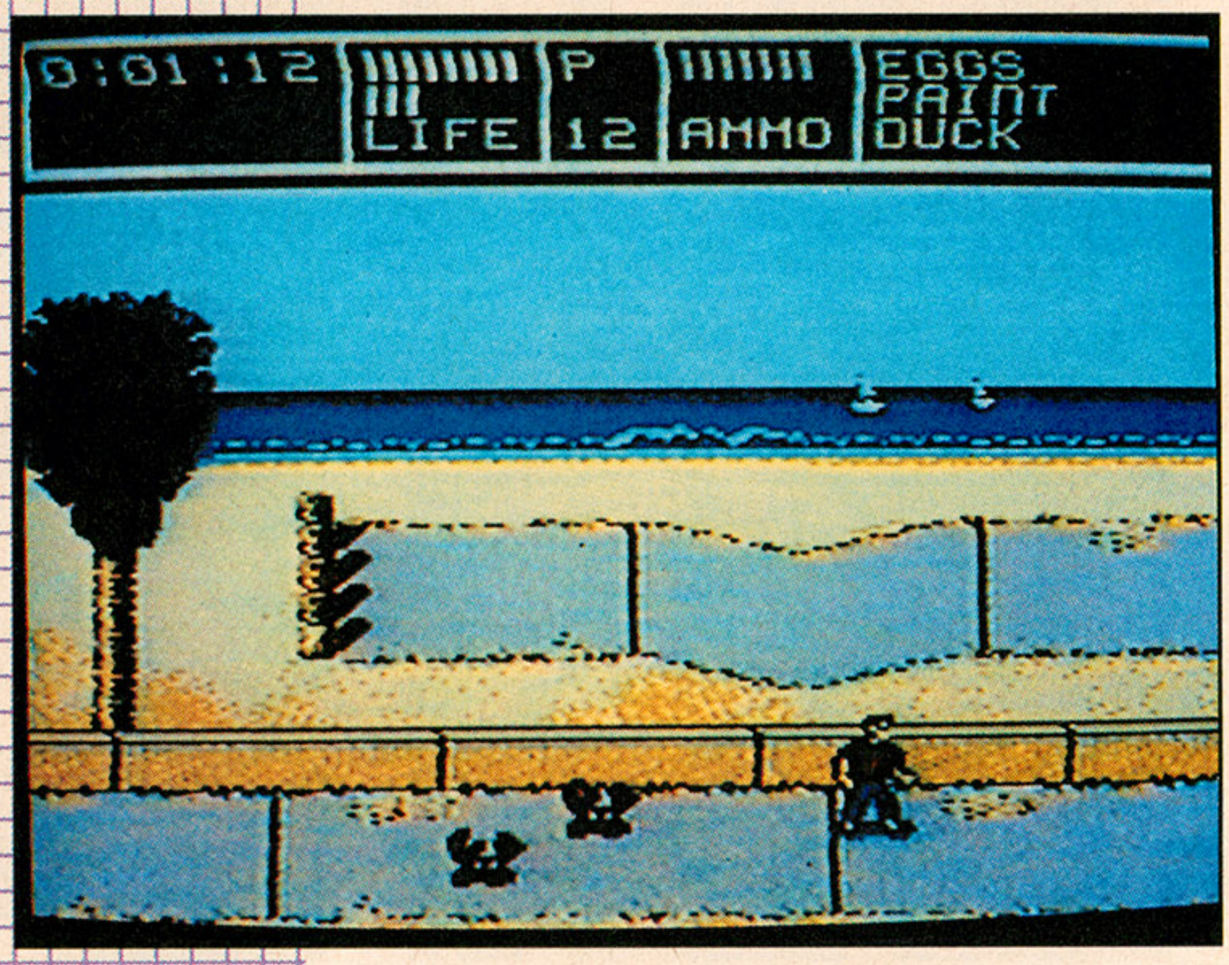
Whoa! Looks like you stepped onto the set of a beach movie. Ignore the muscle-bound guys who are strutting and posing, but watch out for the gulls.

Although it may go against your principles, shooting the other skateboarders will get you a ton of extra points.



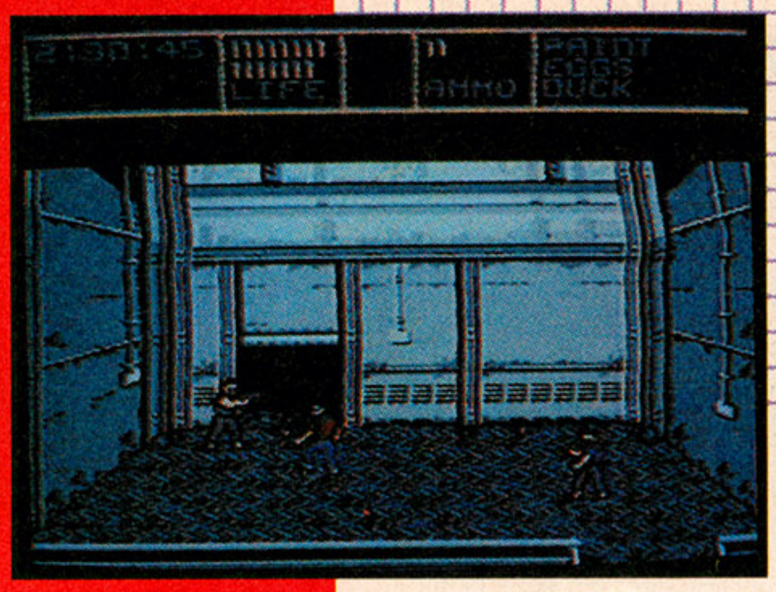


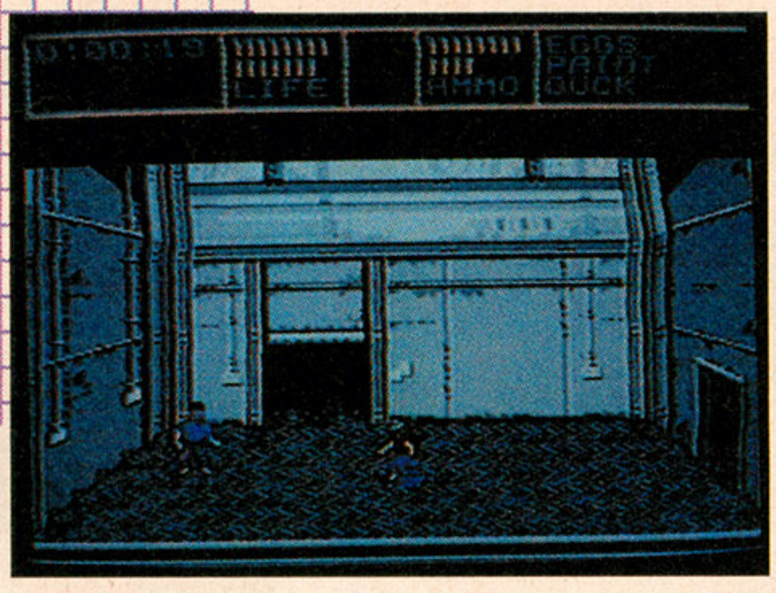
Knocking down the other skaters doesn't count — if you want the points, you've got to shoot them.



Stomping the crabs also earns you extra points, but it can be tricky. If your timing isn't perfect, you're better off just avoiding them.

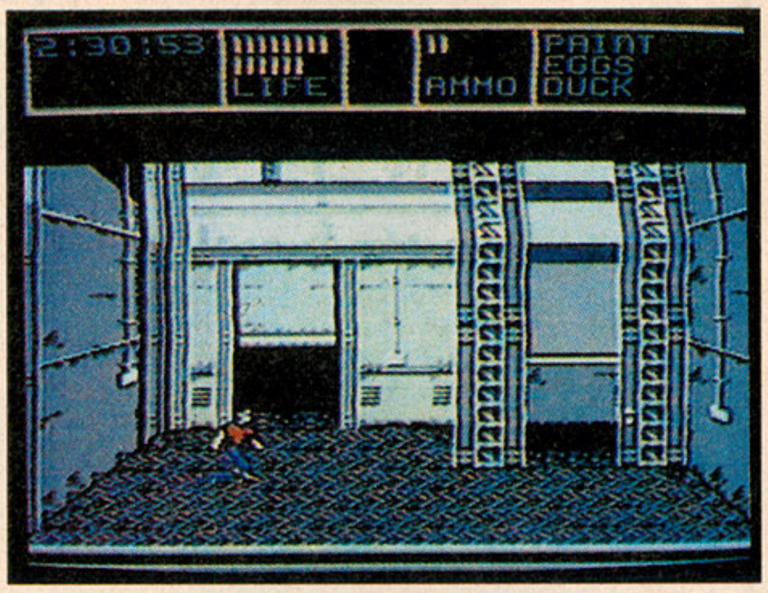
You've finally made your way to the plant, where the gruesome Icepick has taken your girlfriend, C.J.

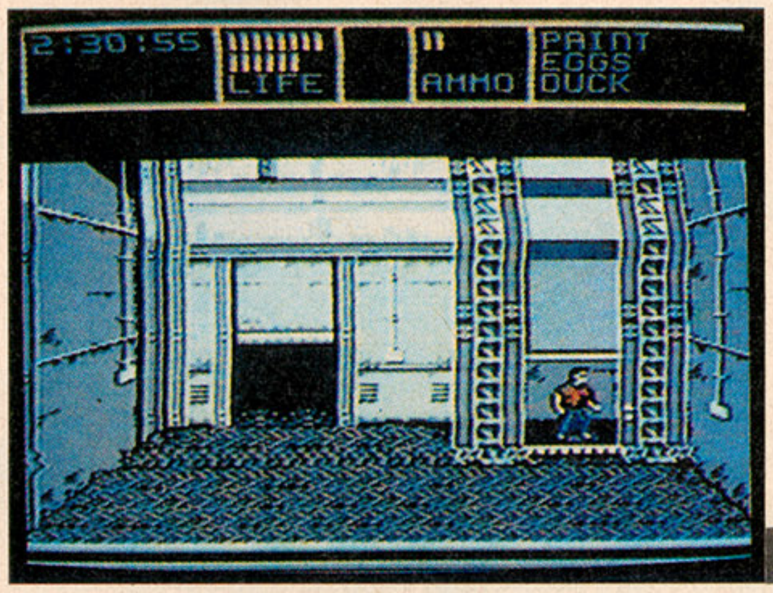




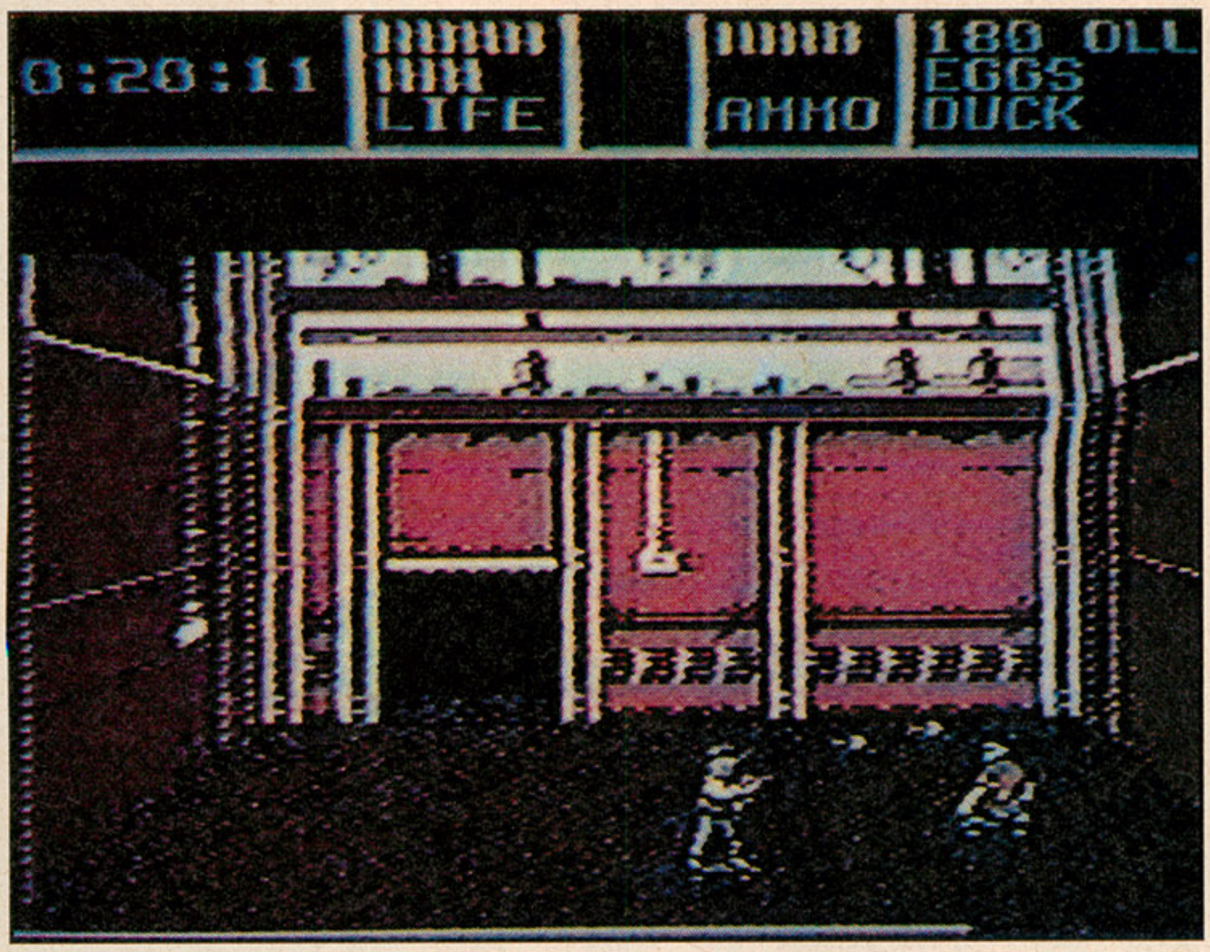
You can tell from the number of thugs you meet in each room how close you're getting to Icepick. The more guys you meet, the closer you are.

Start mapping your progress right away by noting the location of each room, floor, and elevator.

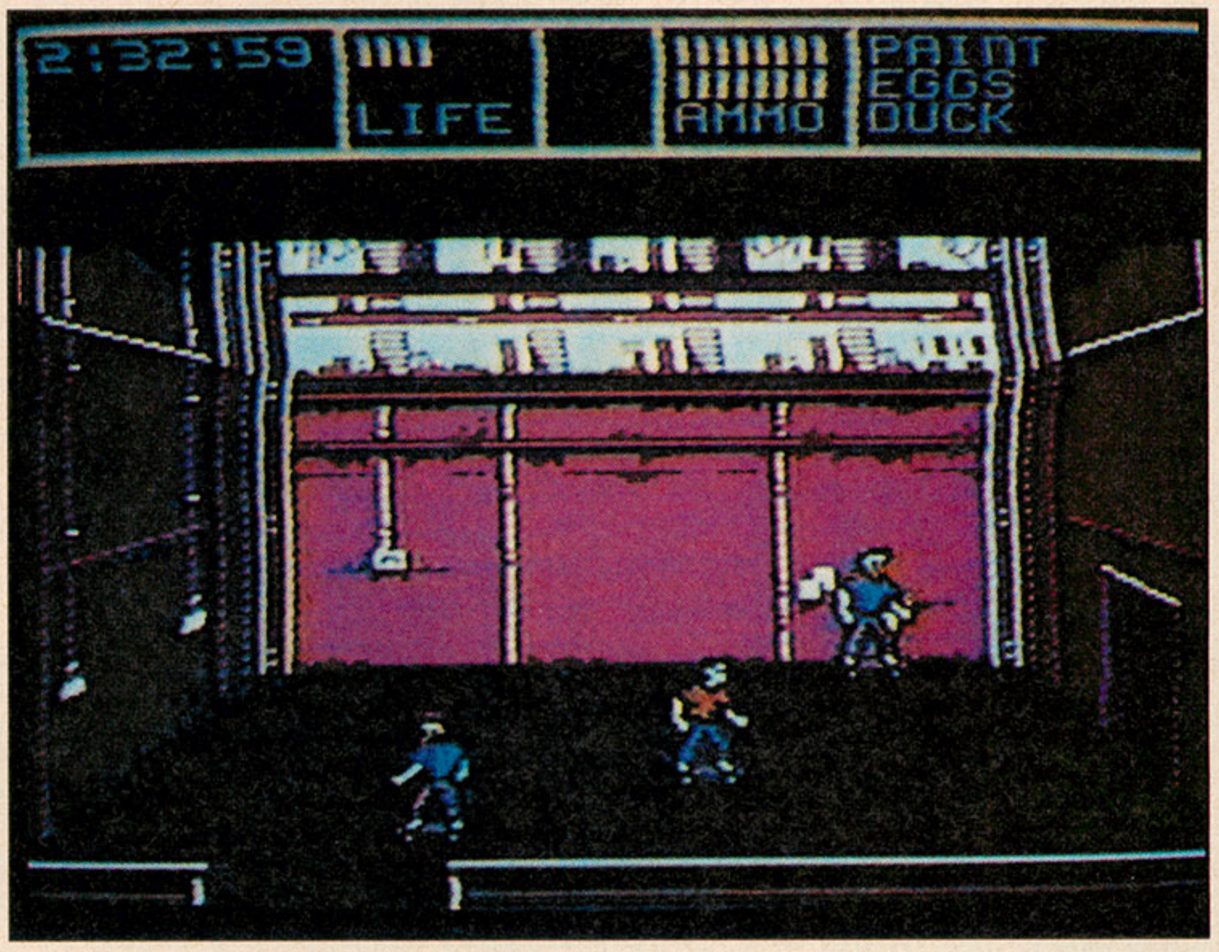




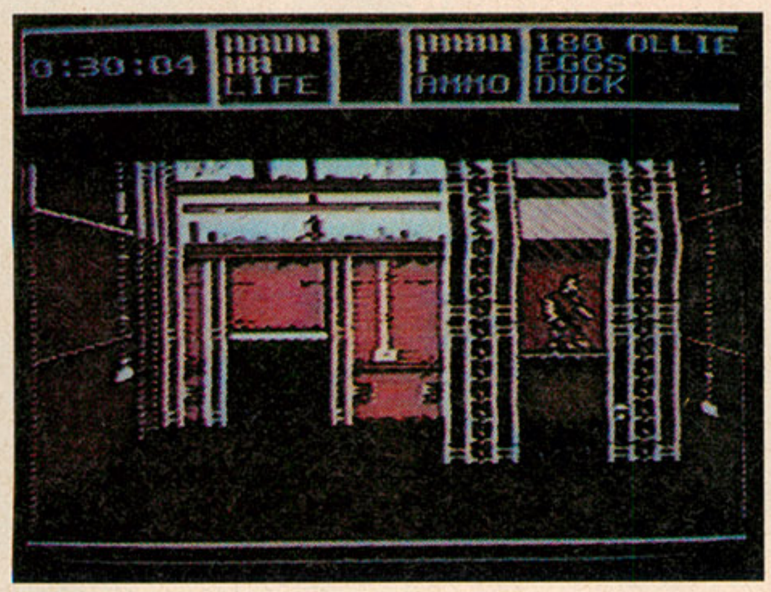
Although the path to the top of the plant may seem straightforward, sometimes you'll have to double back, so your map is extremely important.



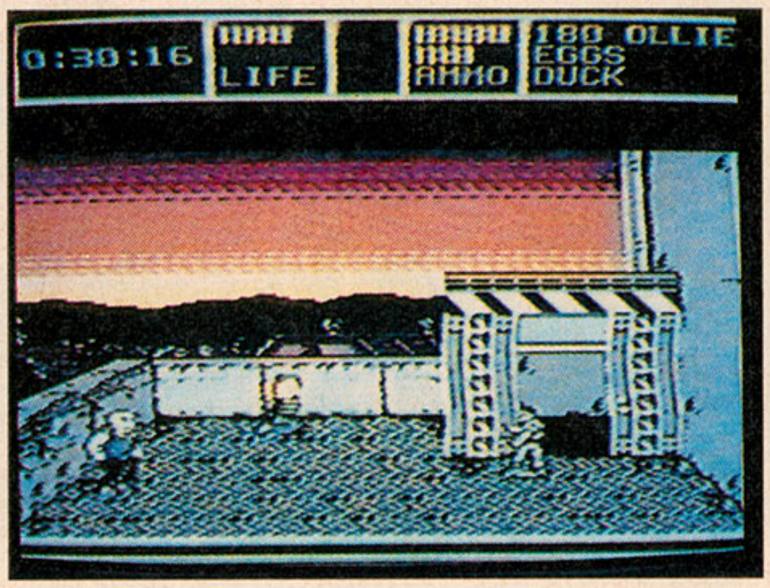
When entering a new room, duck immediately to avoid the onslaught of Icepick's goons. If you stay low, you can make it through most of the rooms.



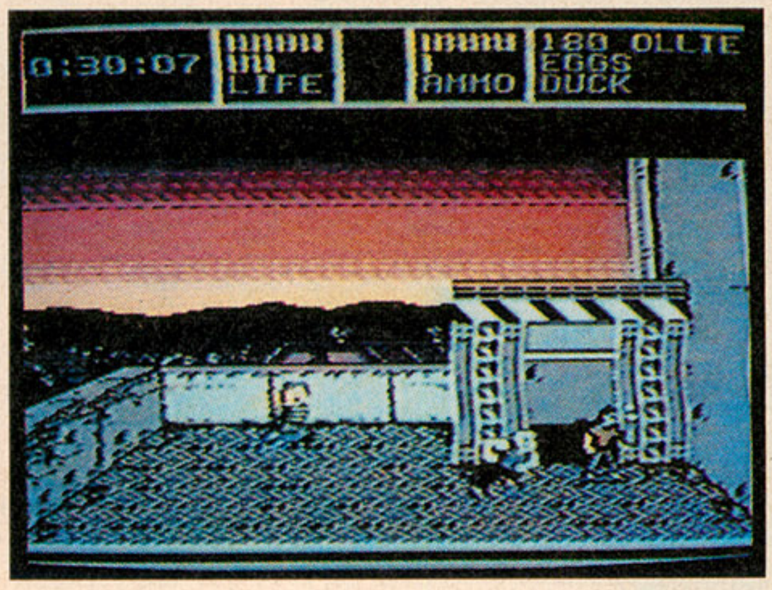
The paint gun is the best weapon against Icepick's henchmen. Be sure to collect the goodies and paint clips they drop when you shoot them.



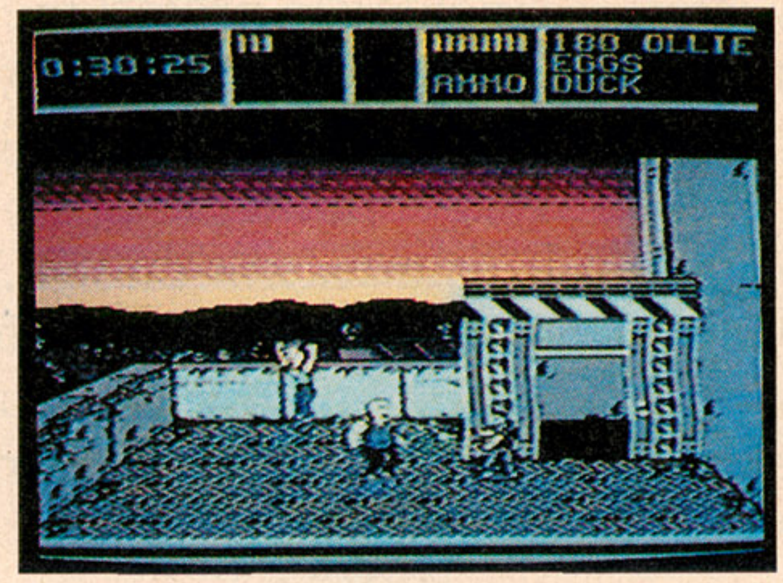
After literally fighting your way to the top, this is the final elevator before your meeting with Icepick. Let's hope you've got your building permit with you.



To successfully fight Icepick, you should stock up with plenty of paint pellets. The building permit will replenish your lives, so your main concern is ammo.

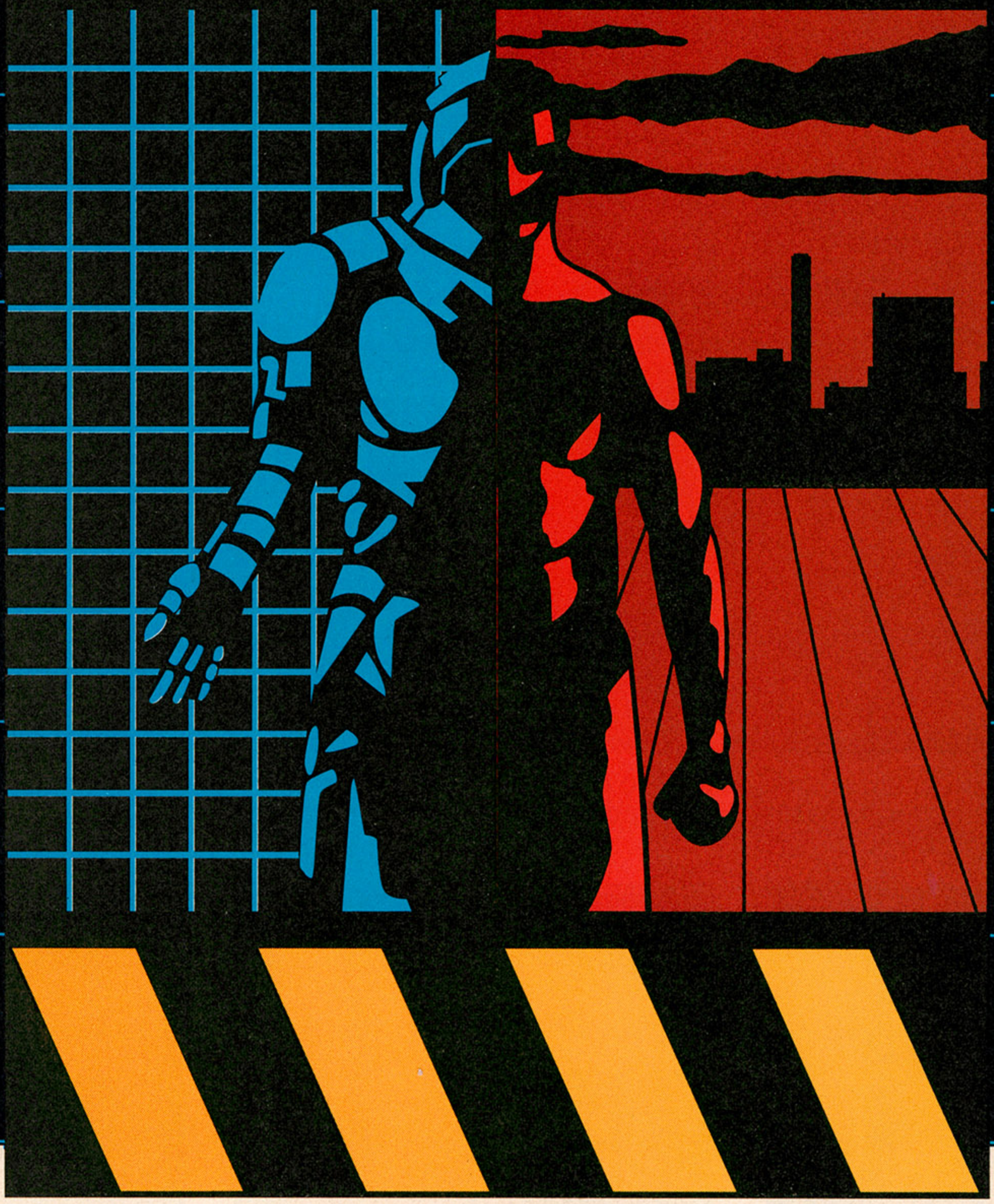


Icepick has a tendency to charge like a wild rhino when attacked, so be ready to move when he lowers his head. This is a good place for your Hangtime board.



Try to fire a steady stream of paint pellets while advancing slowly. From C.J.'s cheerleading, it looks as though you may have Icepick on the ropes.

E-SWAT



Matthew A. Firme

In its ongoing war against terrorism, the government has created the Elite Special Weapons and Tactics team — E-SWAT. This highly specialized force of police officers is the nation's last line of defense against terrorist attacks. They use the very latest technology to protect the public.

One terrorist group, the dreaded E.Y.E., is particularly powerful and dangerous. This gang of thugs even has the resources to challenge E-SWAT, using a high-tech army of robots and cyborgs to terrorize innocent people the world over.

In *E-SWAT*, your job is to battle your way through E.Y.E.'s army of miscreants, penetrate the group's stronghold, and finally overcome their secret weapon. At first, wearing a cop's uniform and carrying only your standard-issue pistol, you'll feel exposed and vulnerable. But if you make it through your first two assignments, you'll get the Ice Suit — state-of-the-art cyber-armor.

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd., South San Francisco, CA 94080.

SEGA GENESIS GAME of the MONTH

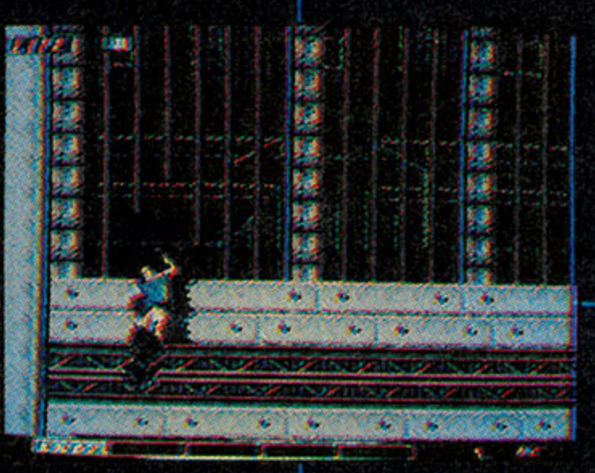
Before donning the powerful Ice Suit, you'll have to walk the beat through some pretty tough neighborhoods.

Get used to leaping to shoot at enemies above you. In many cases you can hit them in this fashion, although sometimes you'll have to stand directly below and shoot up at them.

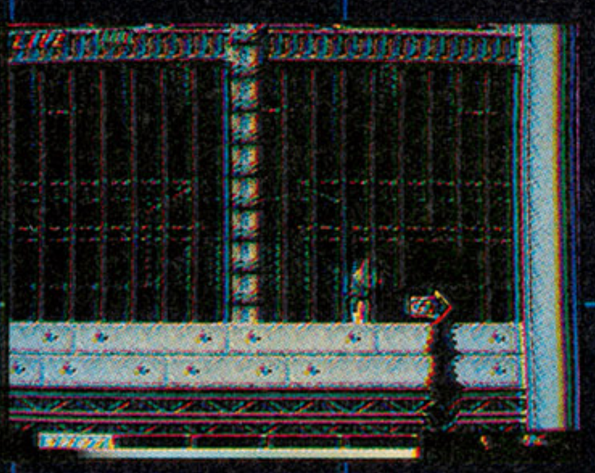
Grab the M-symbol to completely recharge your life meter. This power-up is also a sure sign that you're about to face a tough enemy.

This helicopter is the boss of the first stage. The pilot isn't the most innovative guy in the game, so you'll soon detect a pattern to his attacks.

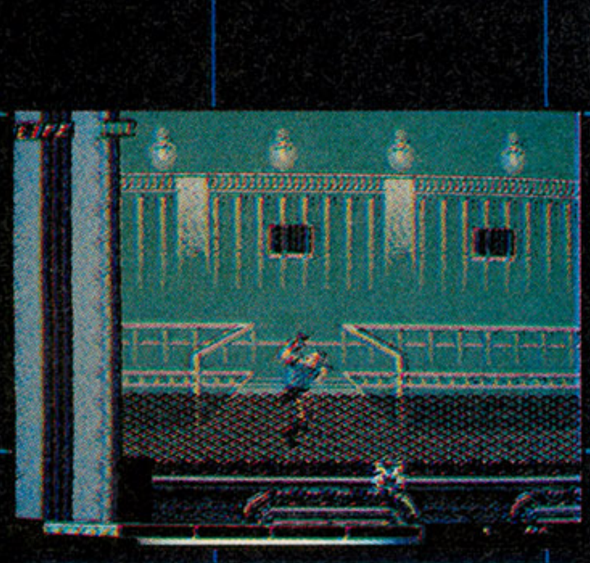
To infiltrate the Cyber Prison, ride the platform to the top right of the complex. Jump inside by leaping straight up in front of the blasted bars. You'll soon run into some mean inmates.



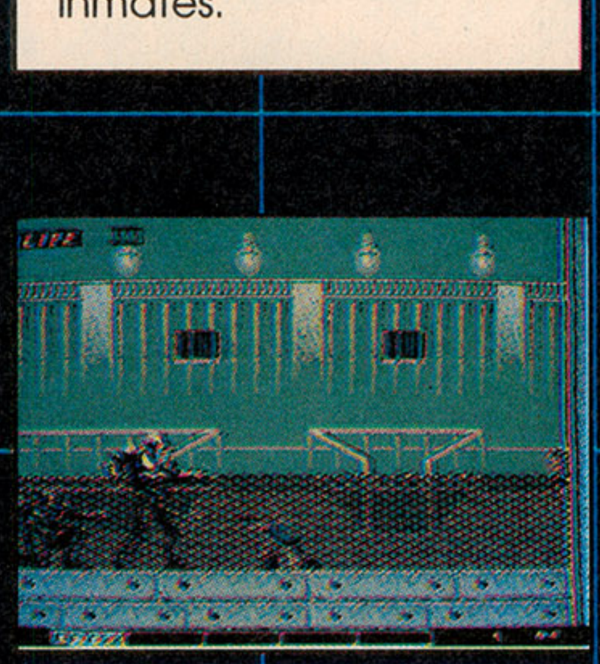
At the end of each floor, you'll fall through a hole to the floor below. Squat as you touch down and be ready to blast away.



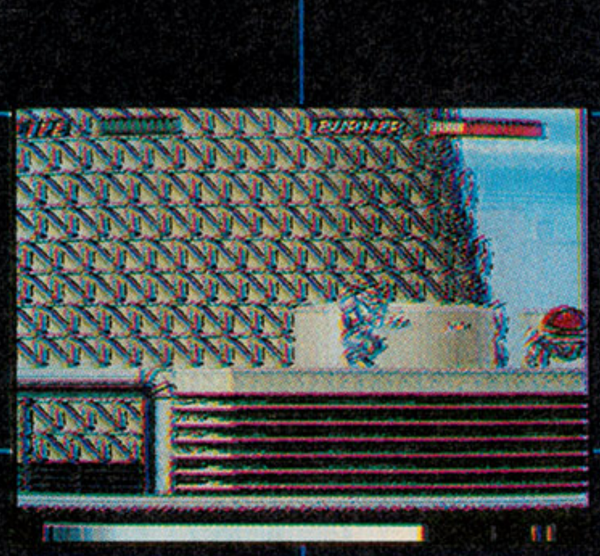
Leap over the last crack in the bottom floor of the prison. You'll pass through to face the cyborgs who control the complex.



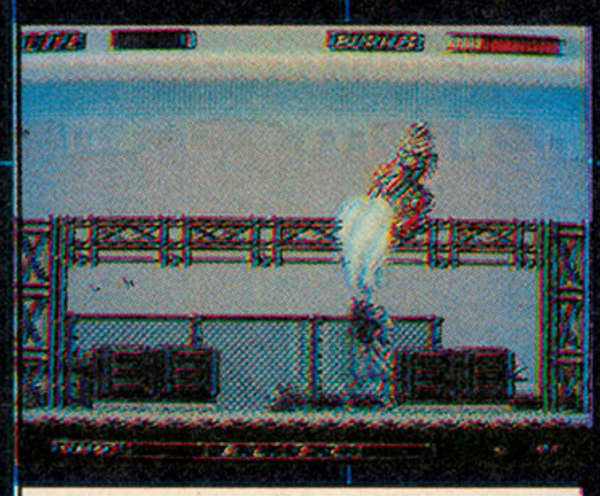
To get the M-symbol on the conveyor belt, press down on the control pad as you leap. Be prepared to immediately jump straight up and back over the fence.



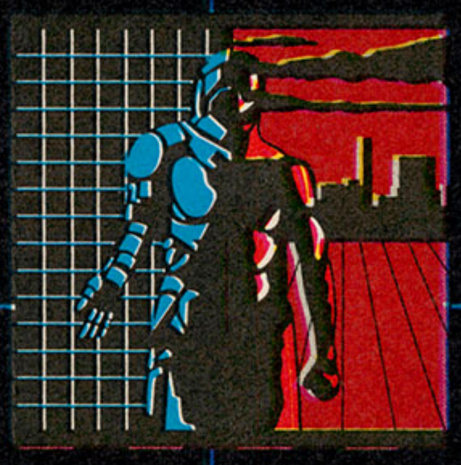
To dismantle this clanking pair of cyborgs, stay down and get between them while firing continuously. Turn to face the one that leaps all the time, and *keep firing*.



Well-armored and well-equipped, you're ready to tackle E.Y.E. Shooting enemies such as this grenade-lobbing tank will reveal additional weapons.

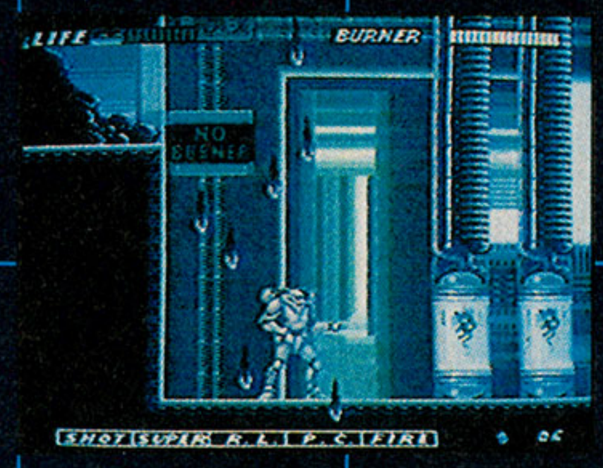


Armed with the powerful cannon, you can swat the bad guys like flies. Tap your jump button twice to take to the skies yourself.

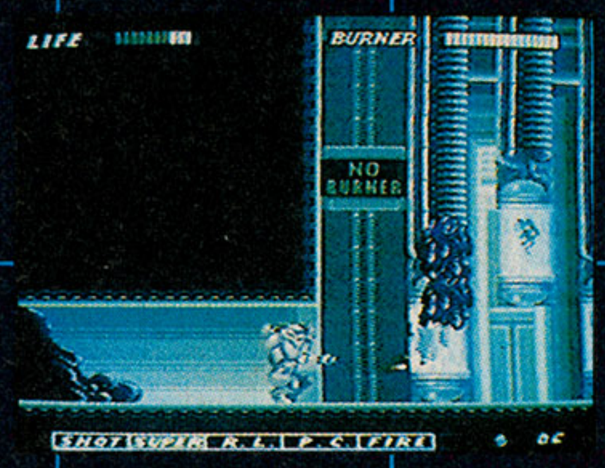


This symbol gives you the awesomely powerful flame weapon. You'll definitely need it later.

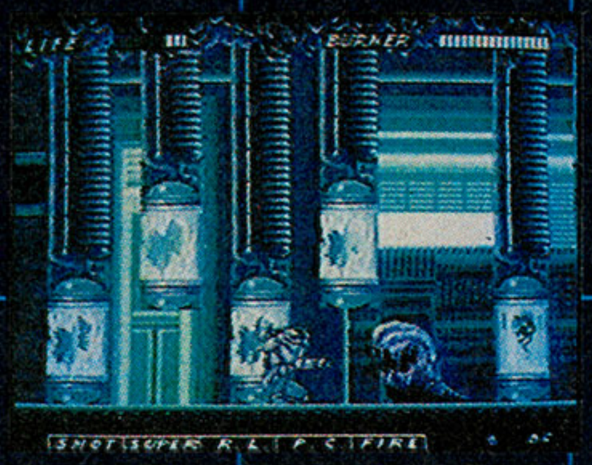
Don't fire at this boss until his helmet flies toward you. When his face is revealed, you can blast him. Don't let the helmet hit you, though, because it really saps your strength.



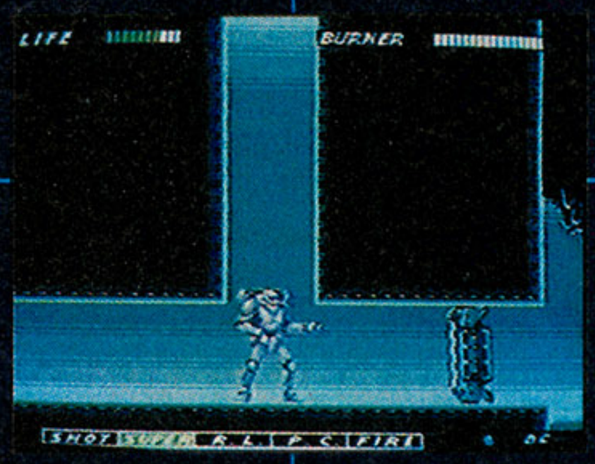
Dangerous goo drips from the ceiling as you move through the mad scientist's lab. It's best to rush straight through — if you try to dodge the drips, you'll probably get hit by even more of them.



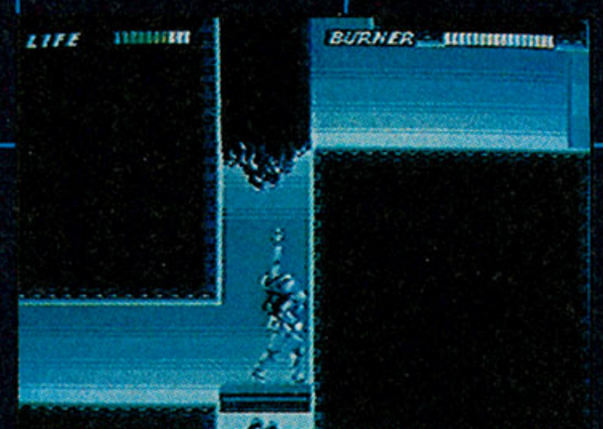
You'll have to shoot the globs before leaving this cramped tunnel. If the slime that's behind you gets too close, zap it a few times to make it retreat.



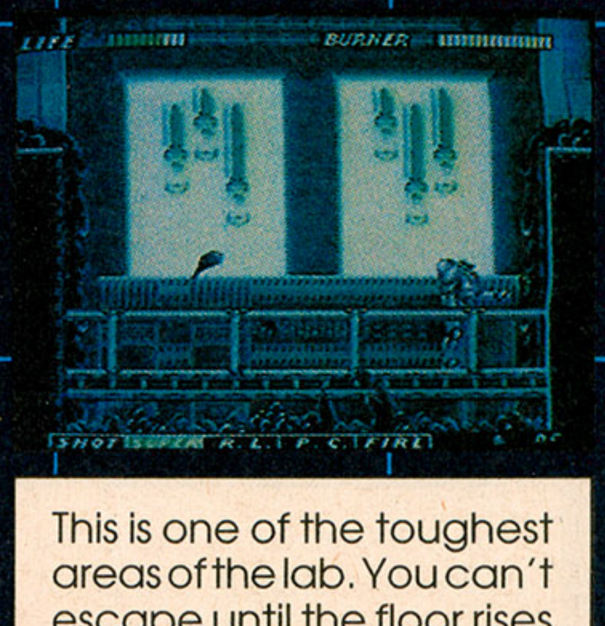
Blast these bigmouths with the super shot. You must destroy them before you can proceed.



To get by the moving wall that blocks this tunnel, keep firing until you can reach the tall, vertical shaft. Then leap as the wall rushes forward and passes under you.

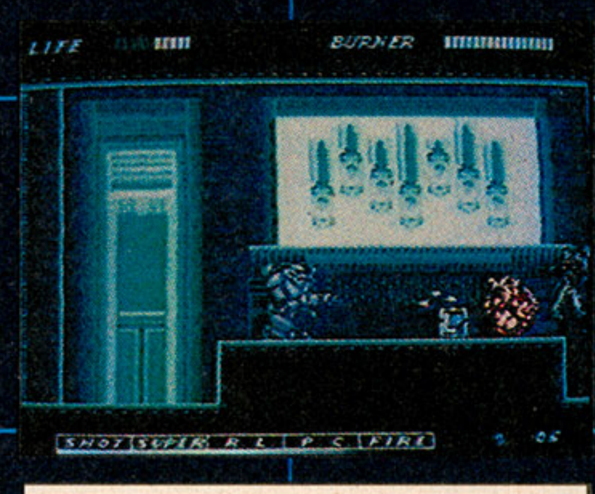


Blast upward as you step on this lift platform to drive the ooze back toward the ceiling.

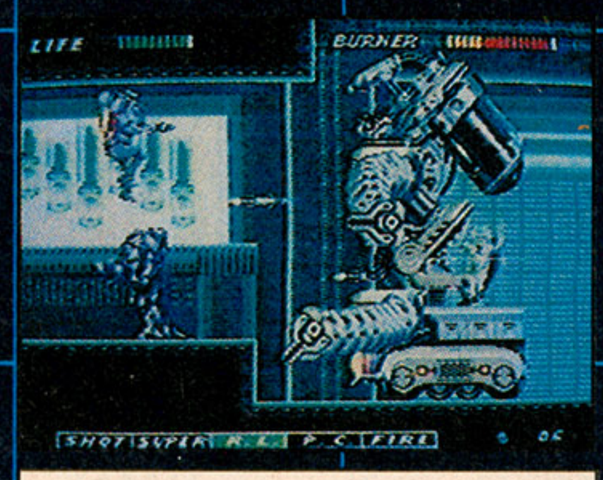


This is one of the toughest areas of the lab. You can't escape until the floor rises to the hallway above and to the right, and you must dodge the globs of goo that leap up at you while you wait.

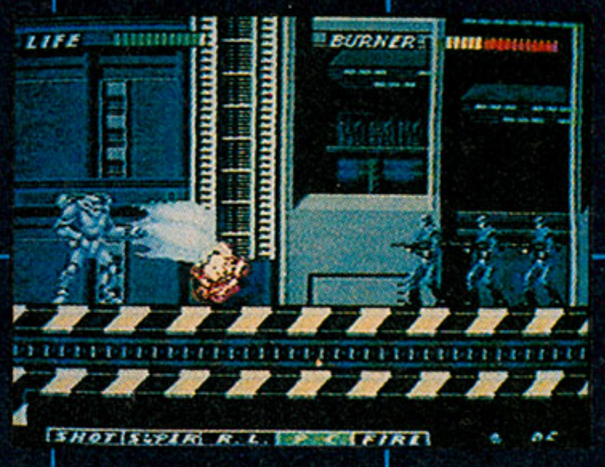
Blast the pontoons hanging from the ceiling to form a bridge across this pond of deadly ooze.



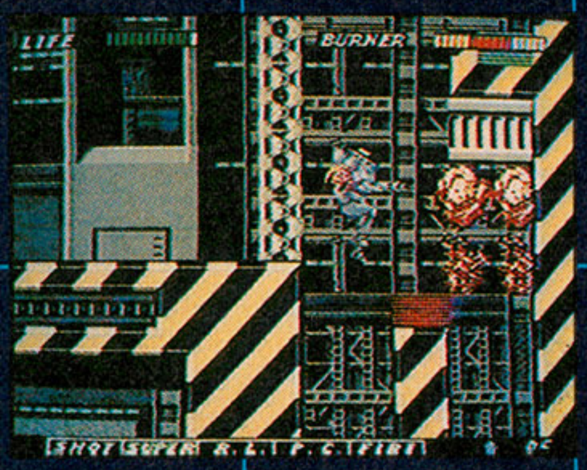
Compared to all that disgusting slime, these terrorists seem almost friendly. But blast them anyway; they'll leave you some valuable power-ups.



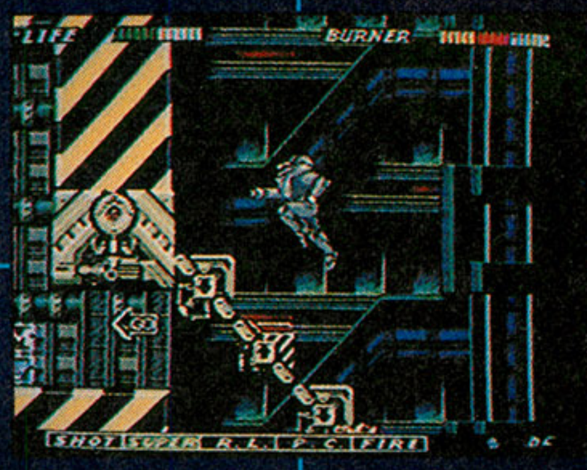
You must destroy three sensors on this boss robot. Fly upward and hover to shoot the top sensor. From this position you can use your rockets to destroy the bottom sensor. Finally, blast the middle sensor.



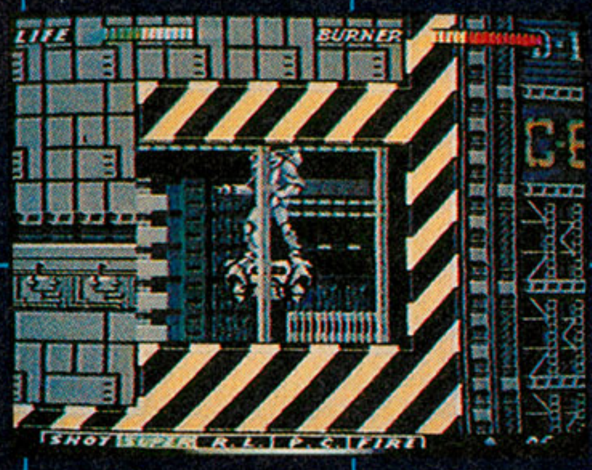
As the next mission begins, a wall stands in your way. A good blast from your pulse cannon will bring both the wall and the soldiers beyond it to the ground.



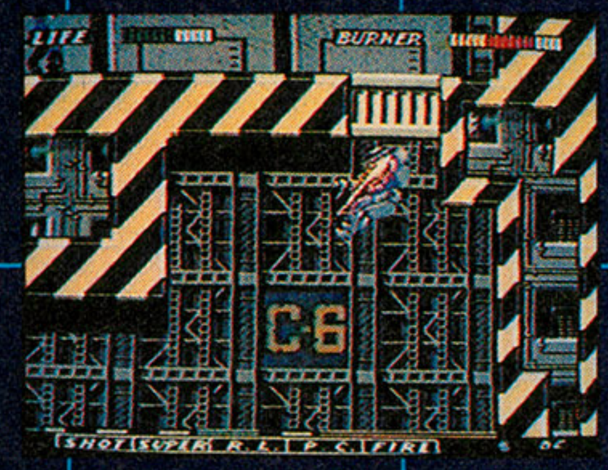
This level requires a lot of flying. But watch where you land — the pulsing red floors are deadly. Here, you must blast the wall while hovering, then fly down the tunnel to the right.



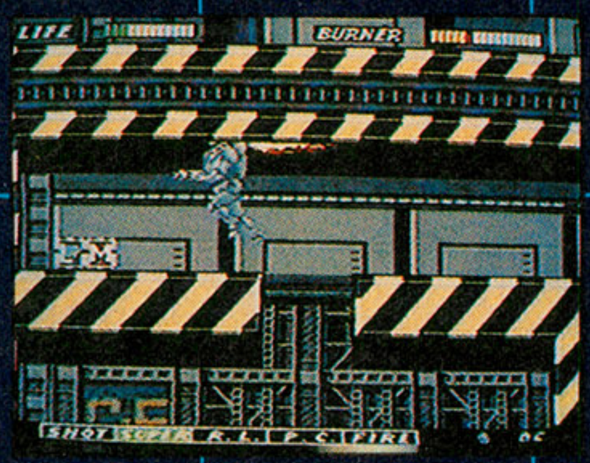
Hop on these stairs until they fall away, allowing you to proceed to the left. Remember not to hop on the pulsing red steps.



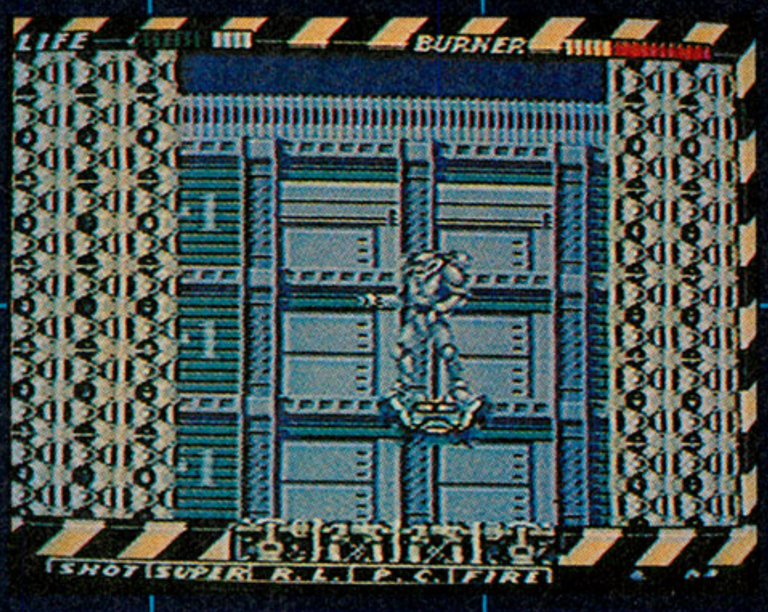
When you leap up into this small room, a moving platform helps you on your way. It not only takes you where you need to go, but it also recharges your burner.



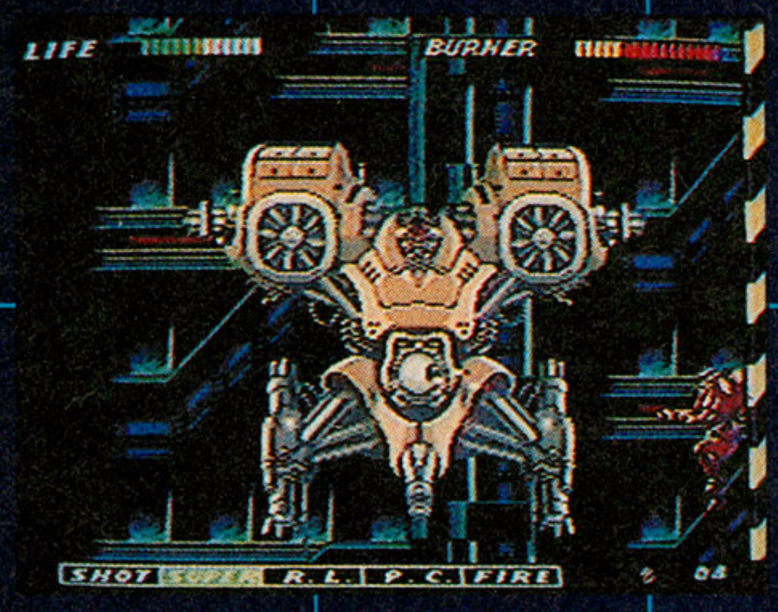
To get through the hatch in the ceiling, maneuver just below it with your jet pack. Then fly down, blasting the hatch with your jets.



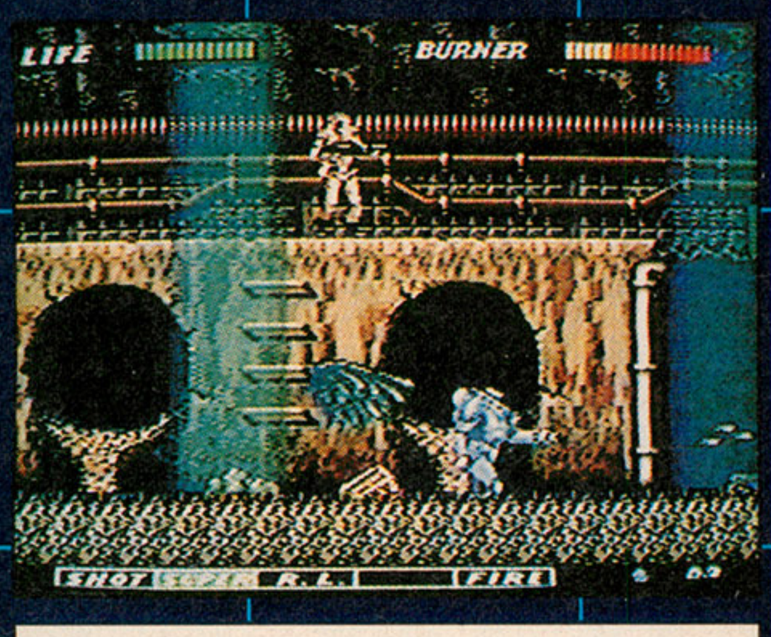
Before stepping through the hole, collect these power items. You'll need them!



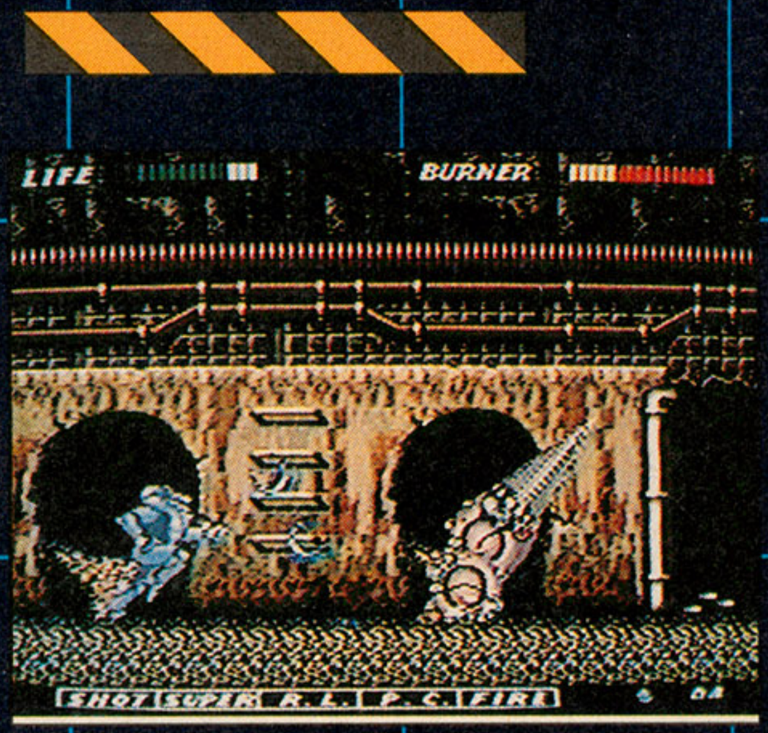
Ride downward on this platform. When the walls close in, your armor will be energized and begin to glow red. You now have unlimited burners for the upcoming challenge.



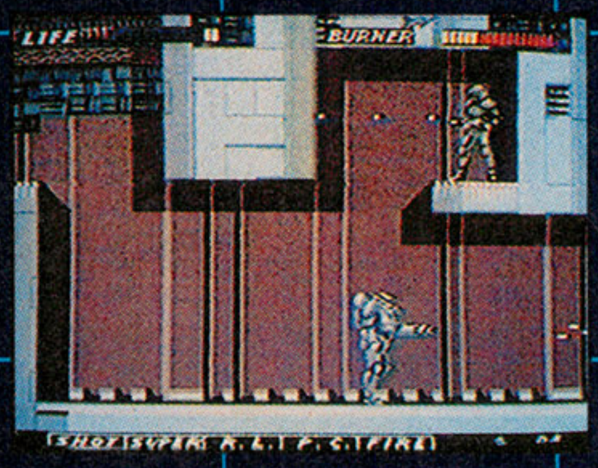
Get in position to shoot the sensor at the center of this giant robot. Be ready to dodge, though — the robot is faster than it looks.



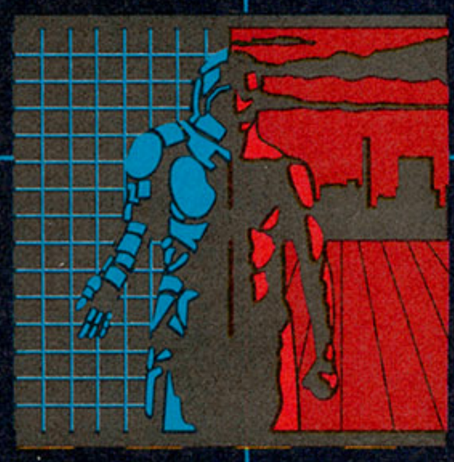
Terrorists are hiding in these vile sewers. Watch for them on the platforms above, as well as in the knee-deep sludge you're wading through.

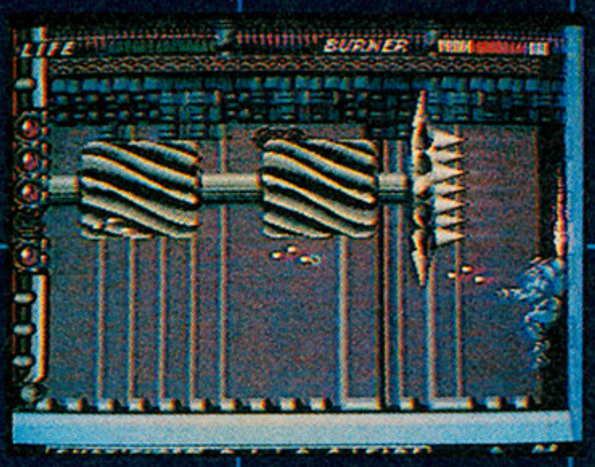


This cyber-worm leaps and whirls, inflicting great damage if you're not careful. Watch his patterns and use the overhead platforms to dodge him.

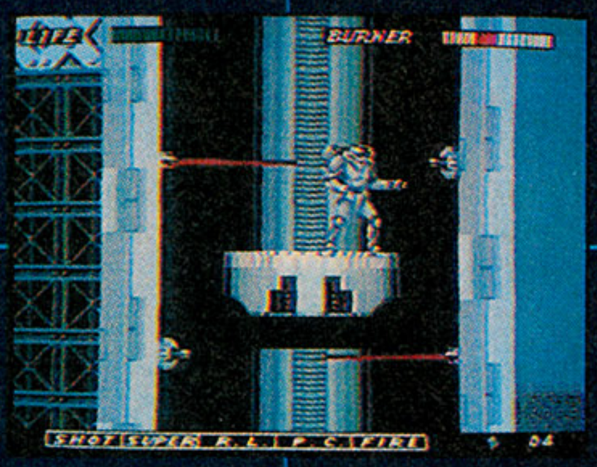


As you move deeper into E.Y.E.'s stronghold, you encounter soldiers wearing sturdy armor. The technology looks all too familiar....

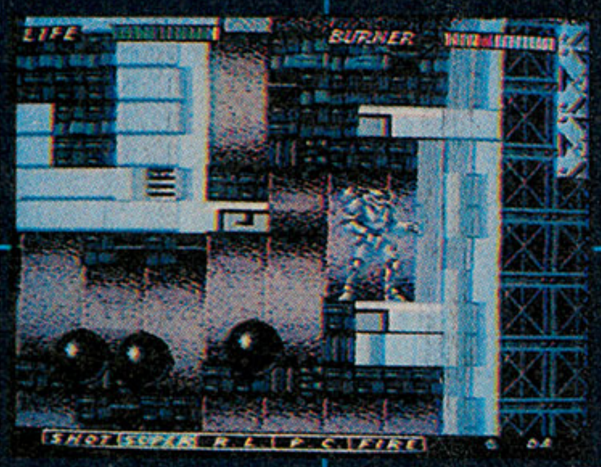




Watch out for these huge, deadly gears. Stay close to the wall, firing at the row of red sensors to the far left.

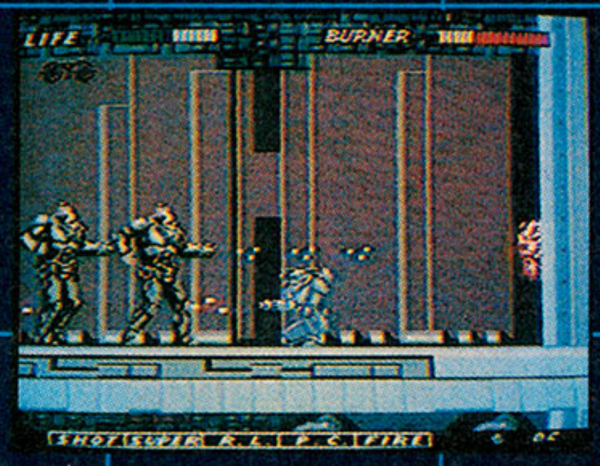


As you are lifted up through this shaft, dodge to alternate sides of the platform to avoid the jets of flame that blast at you from both walls.

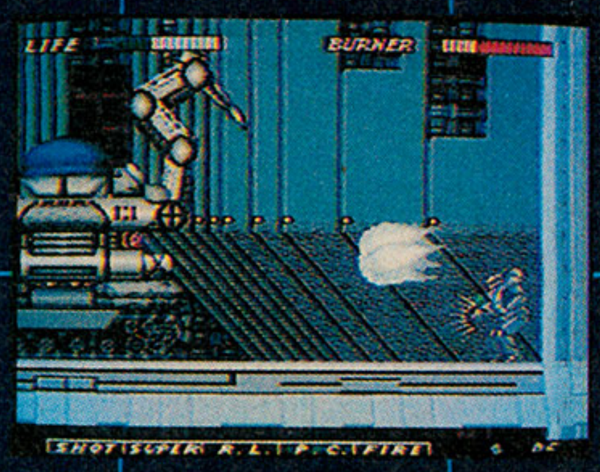


These huge iron balls swing back and forth, threatening to crush you. Remember, if you die you'll lose the weapon you're using at the time, so switch to "shot" if you're in serious trouble.

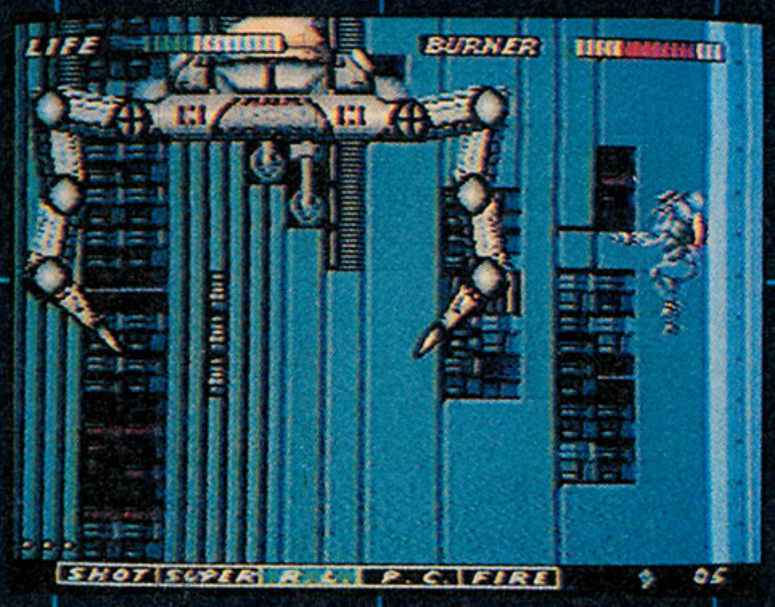
Shoot the enemies below you with your rockets — they can skim downward and blast foes beyond the reach of your other weapons.



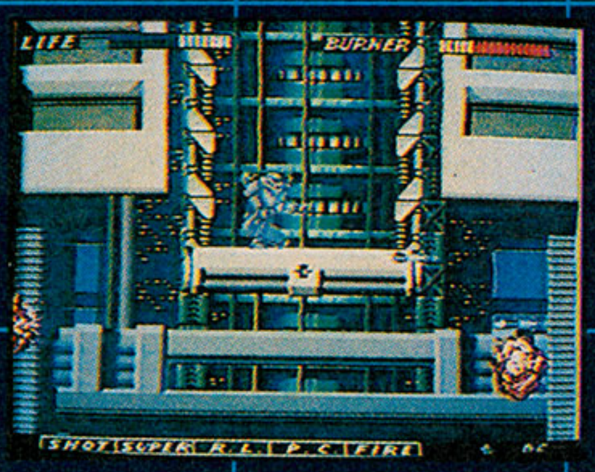
Remember these evil twins? They're back, and tougher than ever. Use the same strategy as before — jump between them and keep shooting. But be careful, for one slip could be fatal.



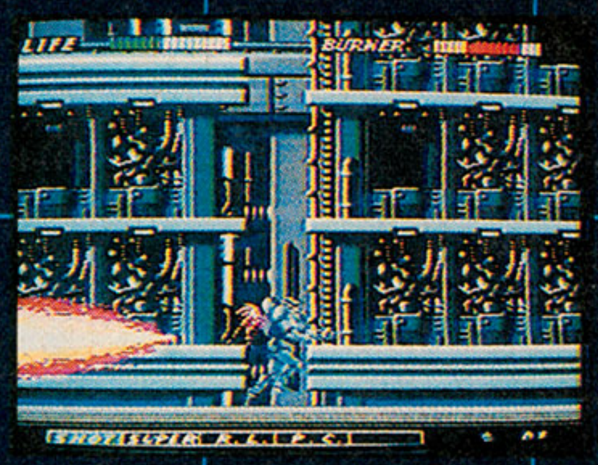
Stay low in the right corner while battling this boss. Only an occasional bullet can reach you there.



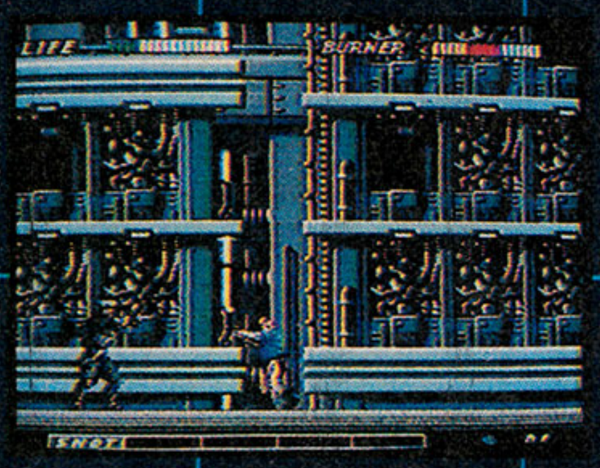
And you thought this boss was destroyed! His top half suddenly leaps into the air, and you'll have to do the same to defeat him.



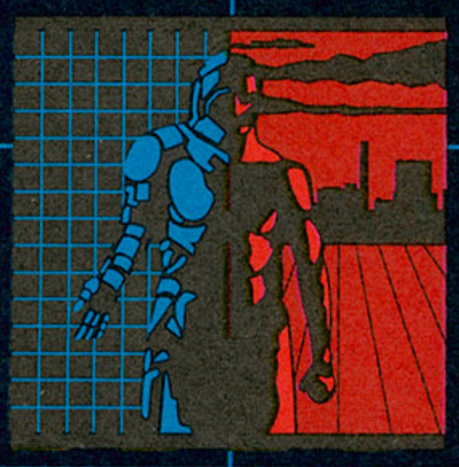
Use your rockets to move down toward your final confrontation with what turns out to be a very familiar enemy.



E.Y.E. has perfected an Ice Suit! It's like battling yourself. Try using flame on him, then be ready for his counterattack.



If you're still standing, swing around and shoot, using the super shot. Both you and the enemy boss will lose your Ice Suits. Then you can destroy him.



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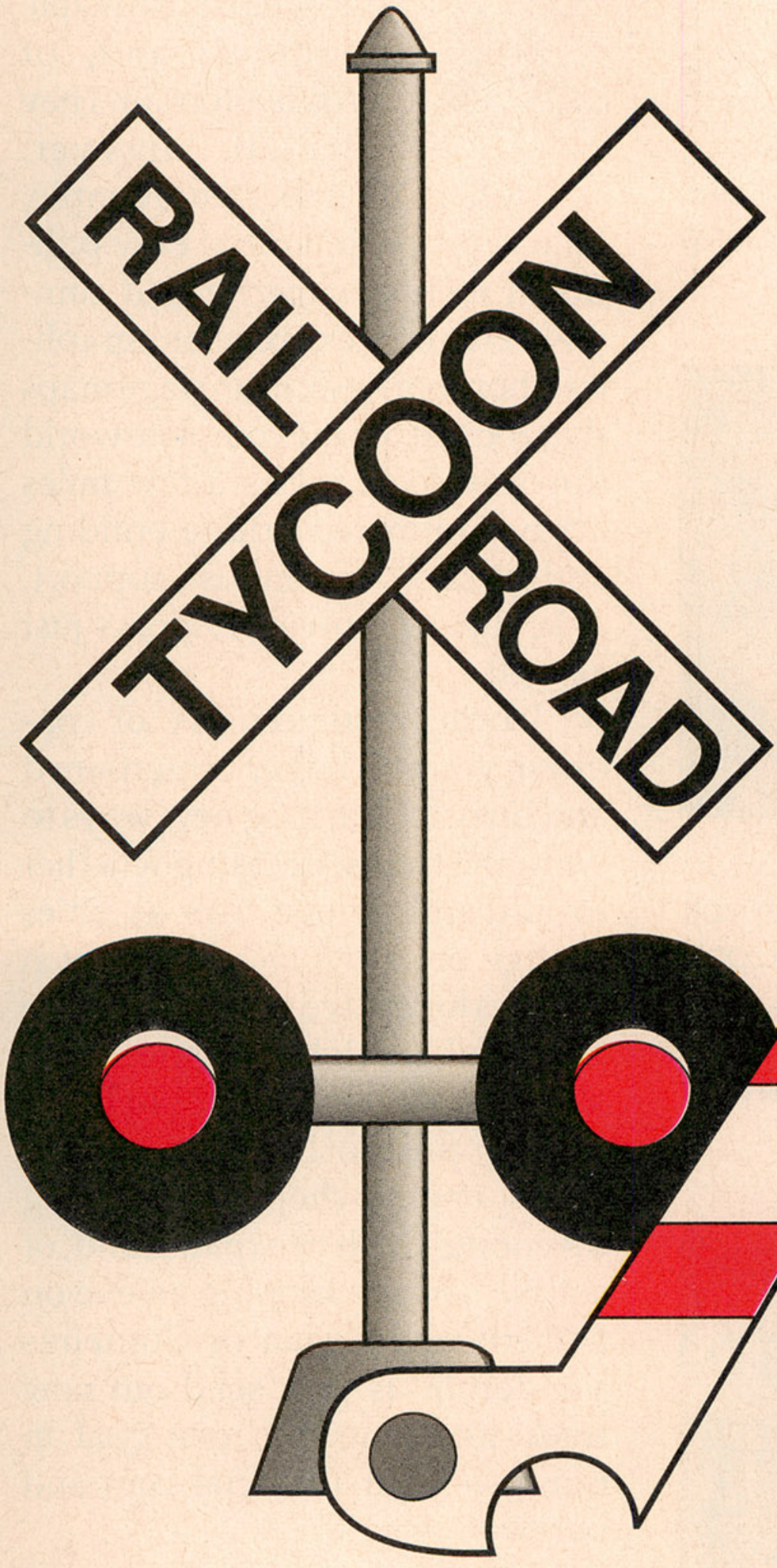


COMPUTER GAME OF THE MONTH

Richard Mansfield

Start off by looking on the regional map for well-located population centers (orange). Then build some mail and passenger trains between cities.

If not the best, MicroProse's *Railroad Tycoon* is certainly among the best computer games ever created for an adult audience.

Like any effective, involving entertainment, *Tycoon* is rich with complexity and beautifully balanced. In fact, a game like this is a preview of what computerized games seem destined to become — alternative worlds so compelling and lifelike that they will someday successfully compete with television and sports as a popular leisure activity.

It is complex, but quite easy to learn and operate. It keeps you busy, not baffled. You start out with $1 million and lay track between cities or factories or sources of raw materials (coal, wood, salt, livestock, etc.).

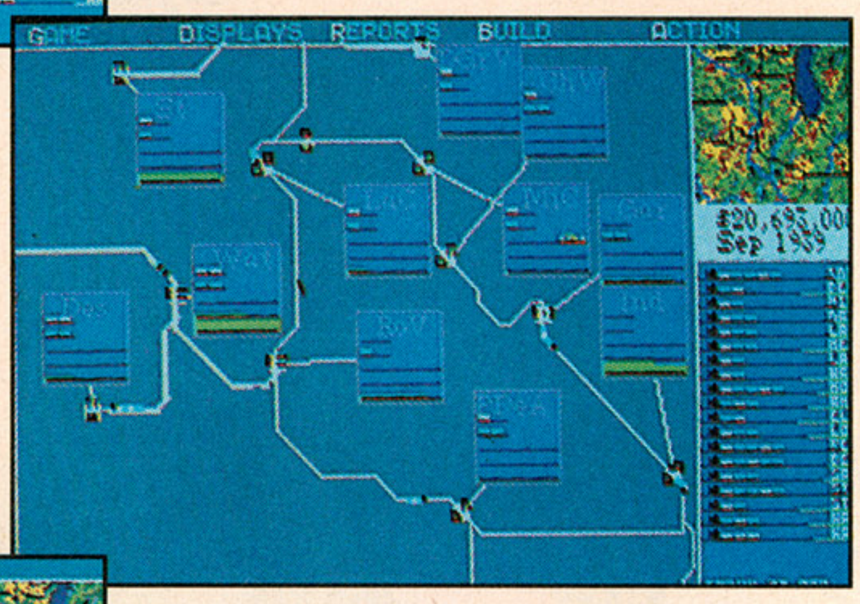
Then your first train starts chugging across the screen, and things quickly begin to get interesting.

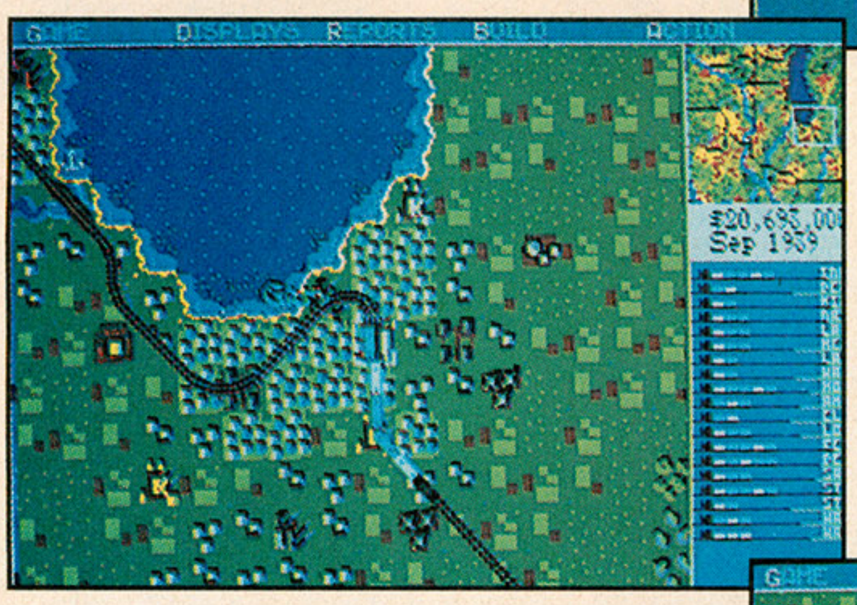
No matter what you expect of a computer game, you're likely to find yourself rapidly absorbed in this engaging, changeable simulation. You can lose yourself in this game. Whether or not you like model railroads or find trains themselves interesting, *Railroad Tycoon* acts and feels like a living *world* — varied and abundant with accurate, interrelated, fascinating possibilities.

An average game played at slow speed (slow or moderate speeds seem best until you are an experienced player) will take about 20 hours. Each of the four worlds — Eastern USA (starts in 1830), Western USA (1866), England (1828), or Europe (1900) — allows you about a century to dominate the economy of the region. The

Turn off the resources option, and the Local Display becomes a bird's-eye view of an entire metropolitan corridor — excellent for watching your trains run like clockwork, and for checking supply and demand.

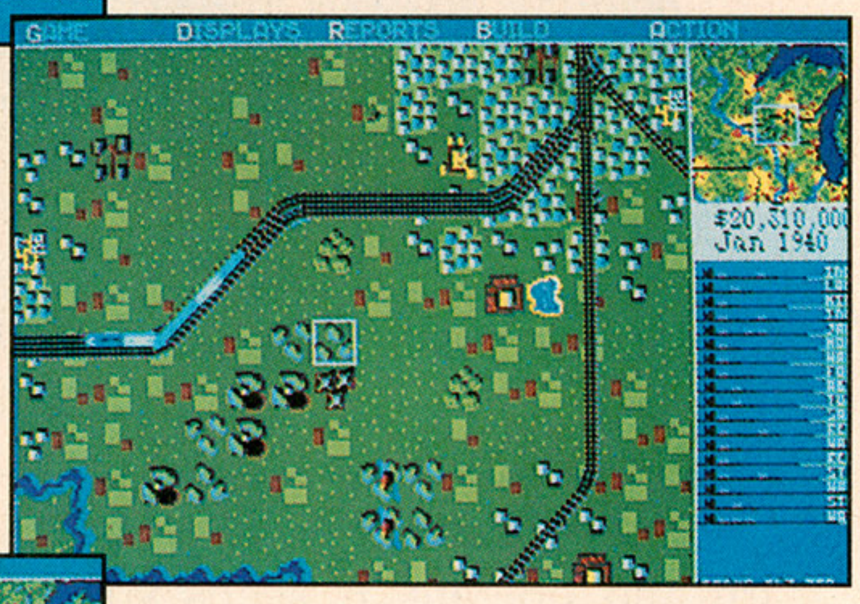
The Area Display. The symbols reveal cargo waiting at depots, the size of the population, the location of sources of wood, coal, livestock, and so forth. Use this display to plan your expansions or improve efficiency.

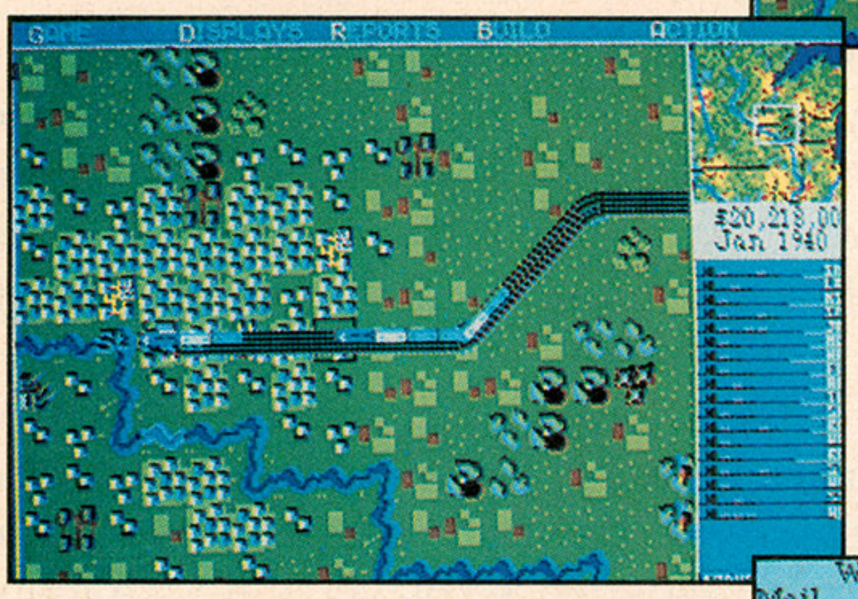




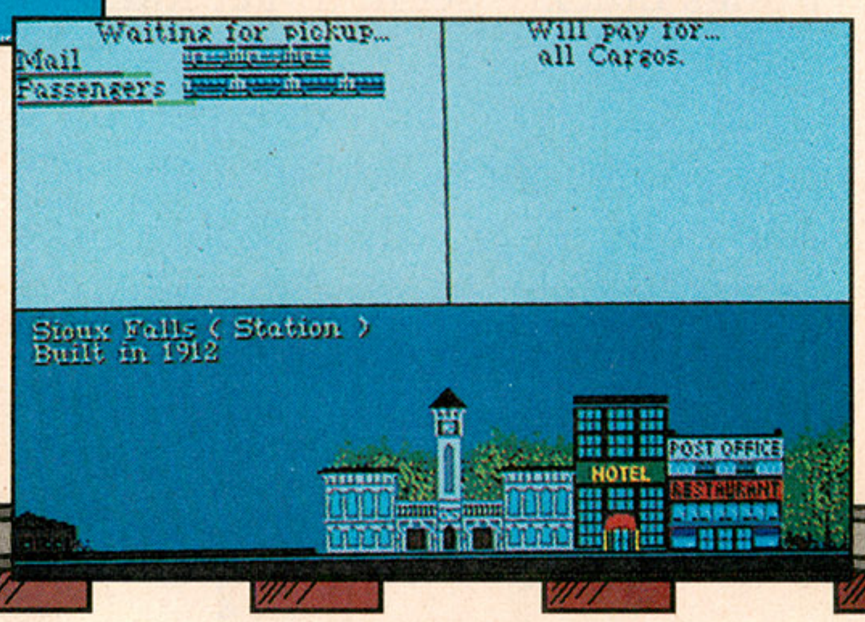
The Detail Display is where you construct engines, lay track, and erect depots. It is also valuable when you are acting as dispatcher, and can route trains by switching signals.

The window on the lower right reveals a lot about each train at a glance: its cargo, any unfilled cars, and its destination and speed.





The window at the upper right shows the entire region. Use it with the large viewing window to get your bearings when moving through unknown territory.



A fairly complete terminal with hotel, post office, restaurant, and switching yard. You can make money through station improvements, but wait until later in the game when you've got lots of extra cash.

RAIL TYCOON ROAD

worlds differ in cargos, cities, available engines, and, of course, terrain. They are all, however, controlled by the same simple, logical player interface: easy pull-down menus; superior and complete status cues; excellent graphics; short-cut keys; four-stage maps that zoom from the complete world down to local views a few miles across; animated bridge-building and crashes; and mouse support. A keyboard, however, works just as well.

During your century of conquest, you will be kept entertained and busy by learning new ways to work the trains; deciding whether to add or remove cars as cities change or grow; choosing which engines to replace as faster or more powerful models become available; determining where to build hotels, post offices, switching yards, engine shops, etc.; saving up enough cash to expand; and, of course, always keeping an eye on J. Pierpont Morgan or Cornelius Vanderbilt as they send out new track like tentacles, one goal in mind — your financial ruin and personal disgrace.

There are other paths to disgrace as well. You can be removed from your presidency by irate stockholders if you make serious blunders too many years in a row. If you expand too quickly, you will find that operating costs can start to exceed income in a downward spiral that may force you to declare bankruptcy.

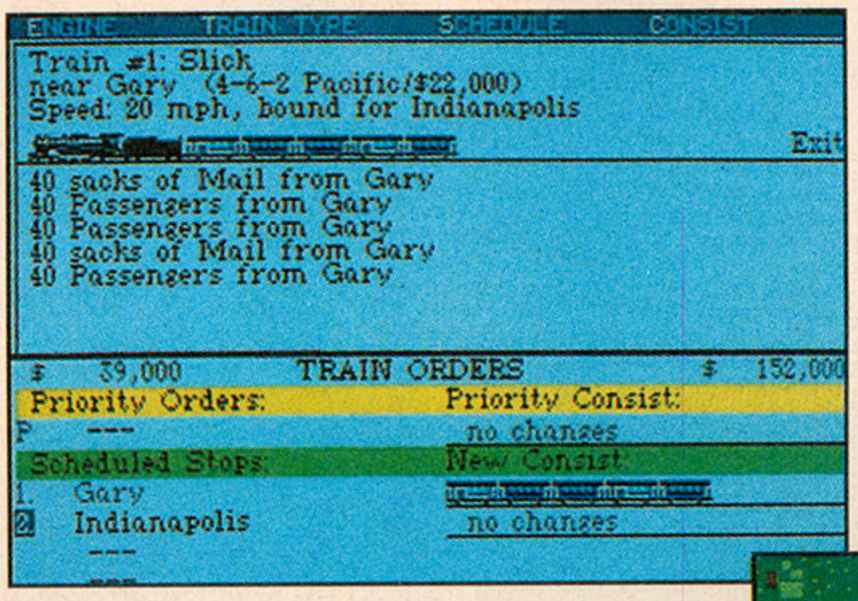
If you play the higher levels of the game, trains can collide or fall through washed-out bridges. Although you can prevent these catastrophes by prompt rerouting and other emergency measures, you must be quick and alert. After a crash, you lose the trains without

any compensation, and frightened customers shun your entire operation for several years, as well they might. As the manual nicely puts it, "shippers find other ways of moving their goods."

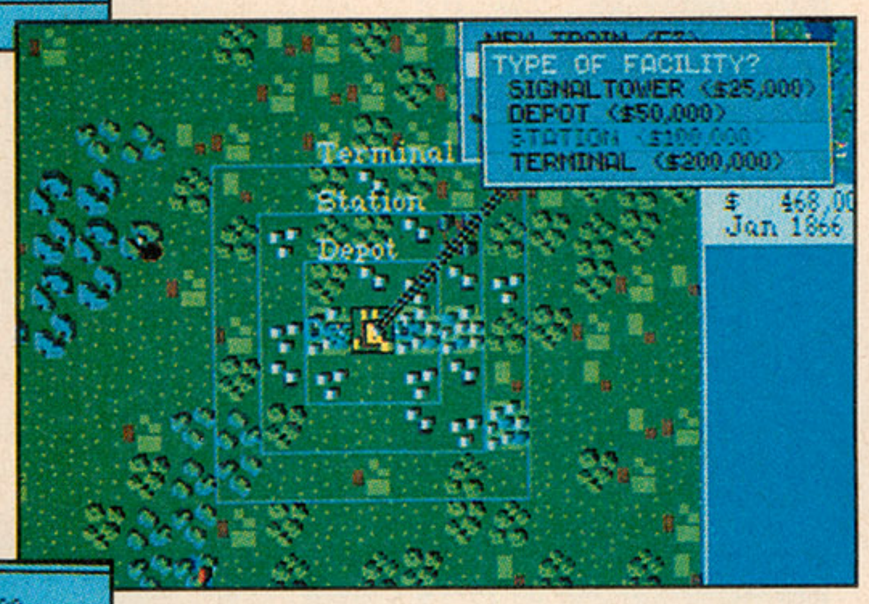
Also, you or your sinister competitors can secretly build track to one another's more lucrative terminals, triggering a rate war. For approximately the next four years, both railroads frantically service the terminal. Then the city council votes, deciding which line will be allowed to provide service on a permanent basis. The winner is the first line to carry more than 66 percent of the appropriate cargo to and from the terminal. The winner gets the terminal and, for two years, double rates. The loser forfeits surrounding track and the right to service the station (and possibly other stations if the rate-war terminal is not at the end of the line, since all lines in a railroad must connect).

Here are some hints for the novice tycoon. Choose the Western USA option, Investor level, No Collision Operation, Friendly Competition, Basic Economy. Press F1 and look on the map for the largest clusters of population in the Middle West (on most screens they will be red or pink splotches). If possible, avoid connecting cities separated by mountains (which slow trains down) or rivers (which require expensive bridges). Since each game begins with random variables, you'll need to check the map to locate cities which are heavily populated.

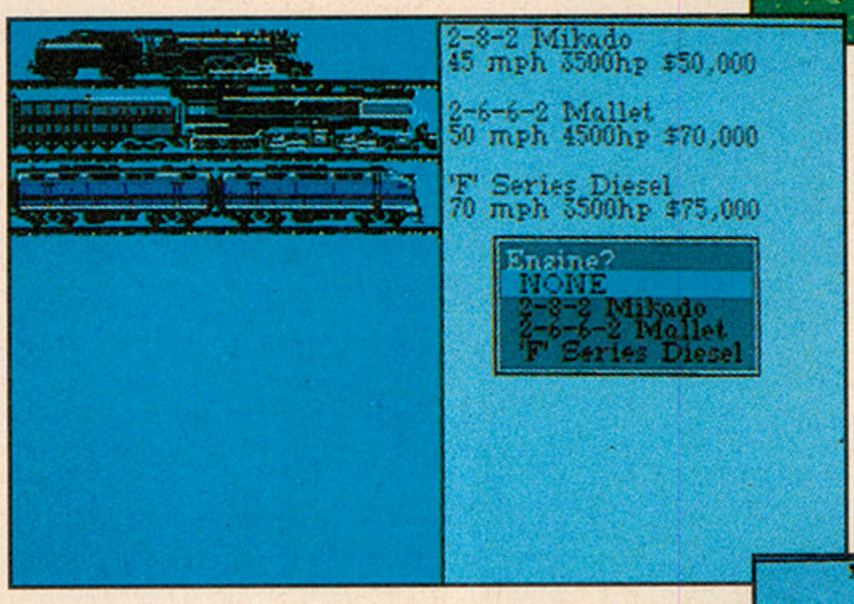
Go to the action menu (press A) and press Enter to call your broker. Select "Cash" and go into debt right away, selling a couple of bonds for another $1 million to finance your first wave of expan-



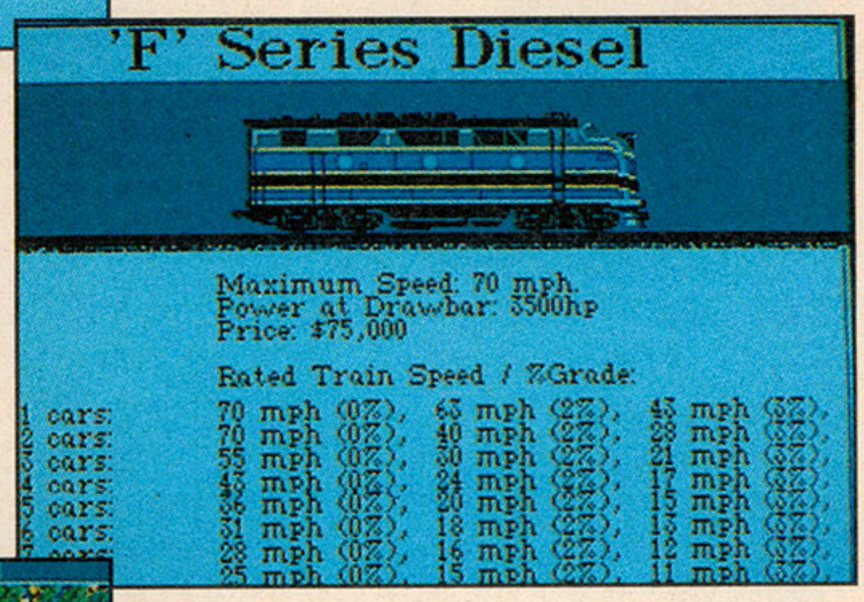
In the Train Report window, you modify cargo car types, set schedules, replace engines, and learn useful information.



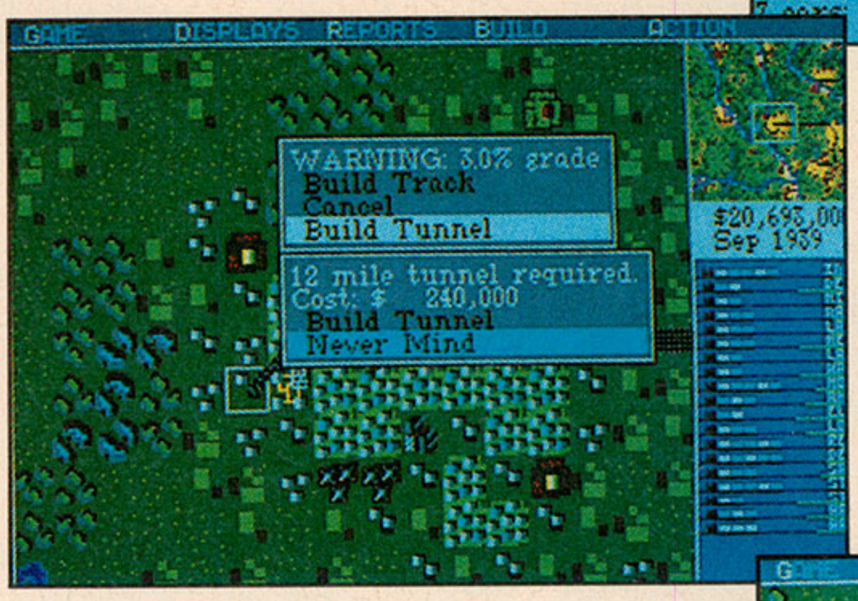
Save money by choosing the smallest station that encloses the greatest number of buildings. You can always build something bigger a decade or two later if the population increases.



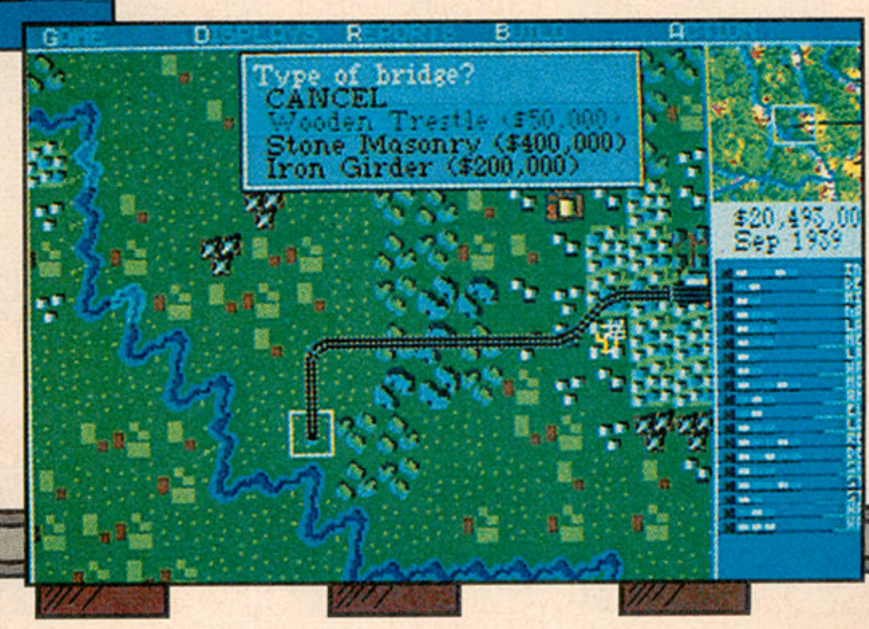
A menu of the engines currently (historically) available, with their speed, power, and purchase price. For small trains on long runs, choose speed over power.



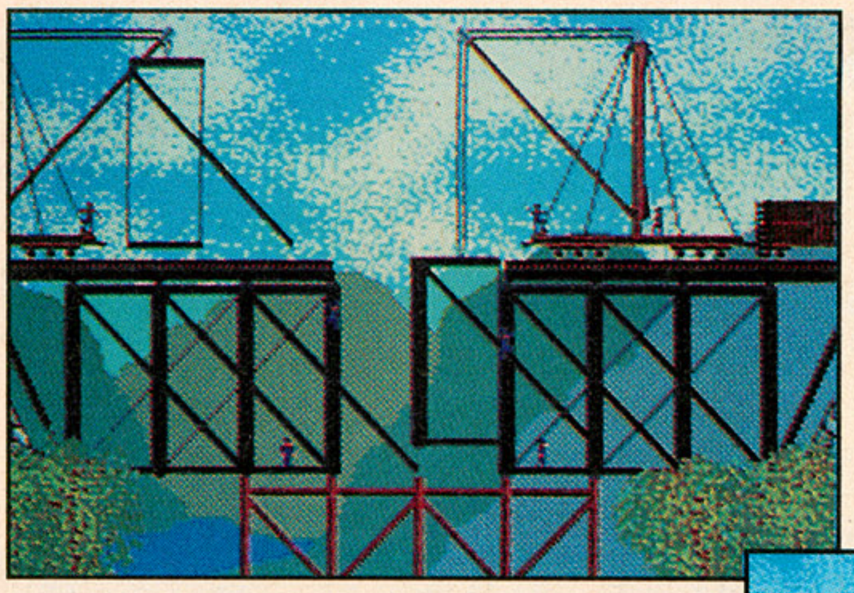
How the Diesel-Electric performs on variously steep terrain, with various cargo weights. Try to lay track around hills and mountains when possible.



Tunnels are tremendously expensive, but if you've got $150 million in cash near the end of the game, you won't care.

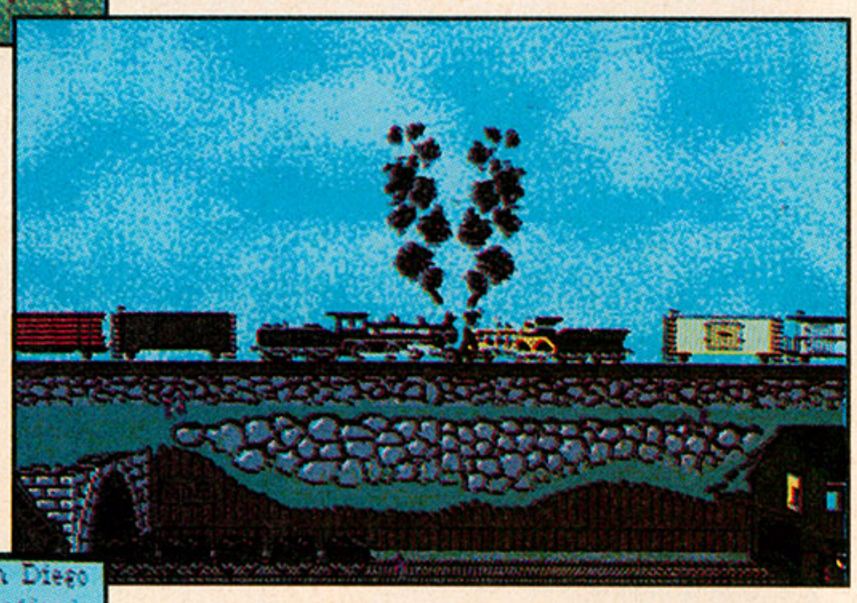


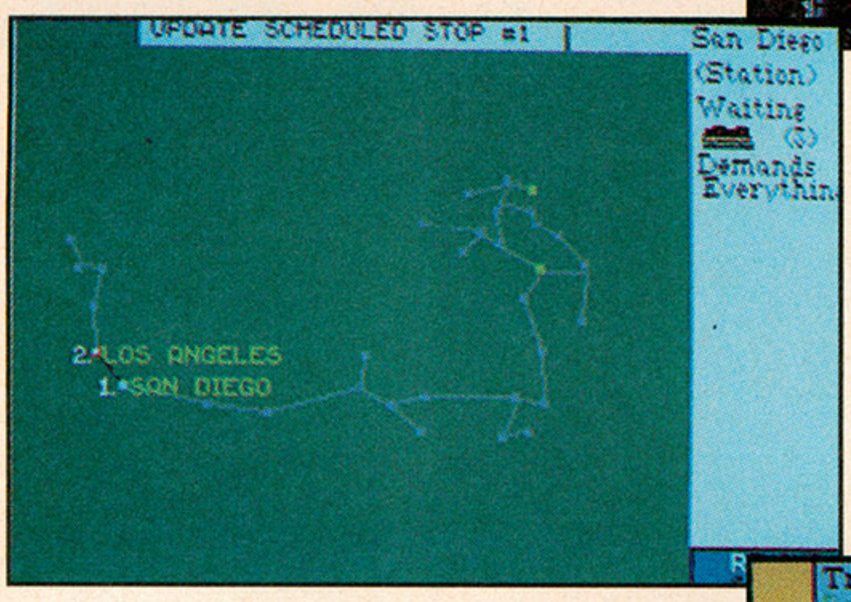
In the novice mode there are no floods, so always save money by building wooden bridges.



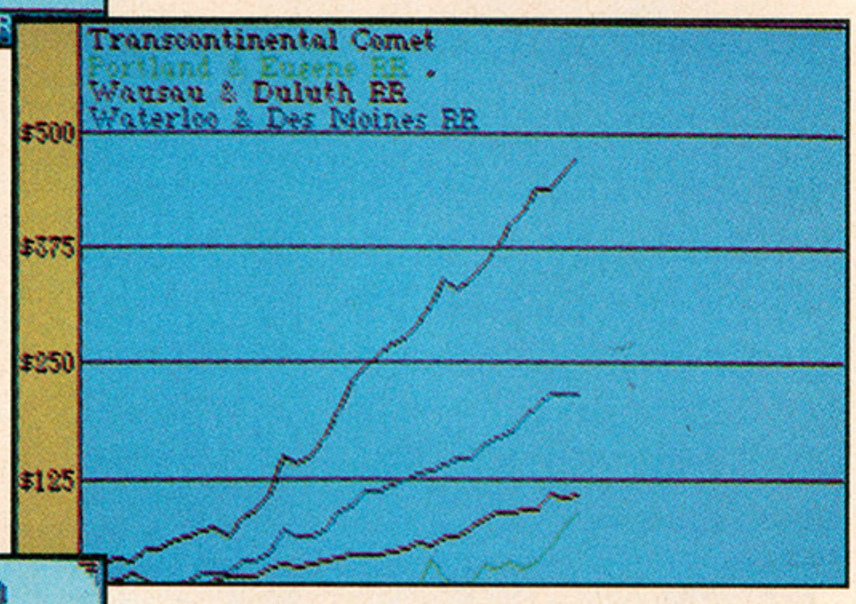
Your bridge under construction.

A collision means a severe, probably fatal, blow to your tycoon ambitions.

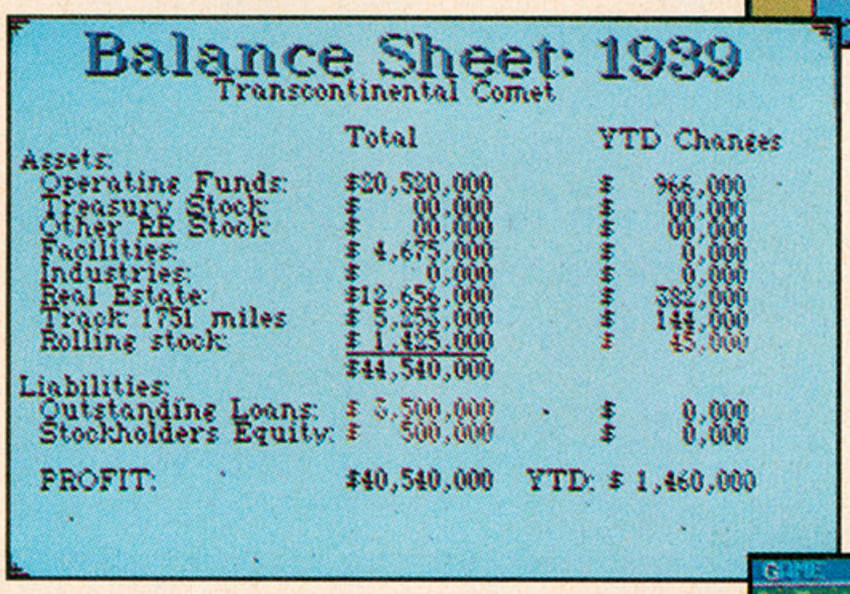




Within the Train Report screen you can examine this train's route in the context of your entire empire. Any priority shipment requests are highlighted.



The stock market. We're black here, and doing well.



A balance statement of income and expenses.

You can shift reality levels whenever you choose. Adding Dispatcher Mode can turn the game into an arcade challenge — can you build or switch signal towers fast enough to stop collisions?

sion. Then lay a straight line of track between the two cities you've chosen. Build a station at each city and then have an engine built. For cargo, choose one mail car and two passenger cars. Then press F3 and watch the action as your train begins to traverse the line, paying you money every time it arrives at a station.

Three other would-be tycoons lurk within the computer, their tiny greedy eyes on the same population centers. Given a chance, they will lay track and connect all the best cash cows before you can. So expand to several other cities right away. Within the first 15 minutes of play, you should try to have at least three trains going, even if you use up all your cash.

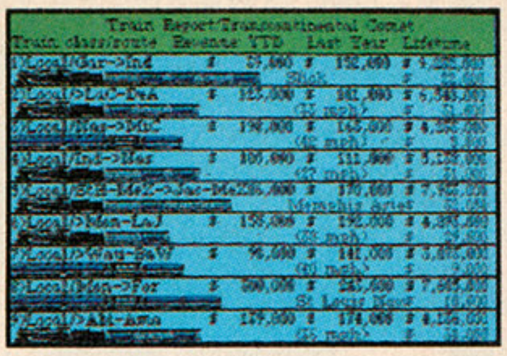
Distance and speed are factors which affect the profitability of carrying passengers and mail, but all other cargo is simply paid by weight — no matter how far or fast you carry it. So ignore chances to transport anything other than passengers and mail. Also, try to resist opportunities to make big killings by rerouting a train to carry a "priority shipment." Now and then a news flash will announce your chance to earn a whopping sum for carrying a congressman or delivering a vaccine from one of your cities to another. You need to become more agile with the mouse or keyboard, and learn to read the game's many visual clues, before priority rerouting becomes practical.

There are many other ways to approach this game, but expanding westward in the fashion described will give you a taste of the drama and excitement *Tycoon* has to offer.

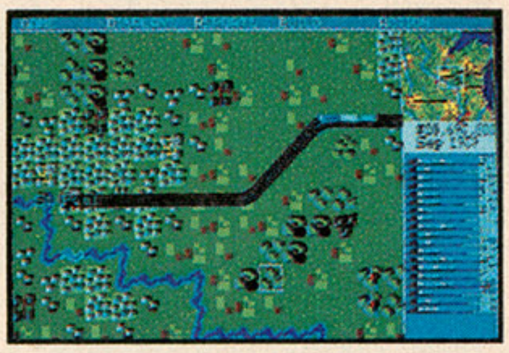
However, if you find yourself in serious trouble, there is a magic

money machine not mentioned in the manual that will give you half a million interest-free dollars whenever you ask. Go to the largest scale map (press F1), press the $ key (Shift-4), and you'll get $500,000. You can keep on doing this until you own the universe, but many players will likely prefer the challenge and symmetry of the game as it was designed to be played.

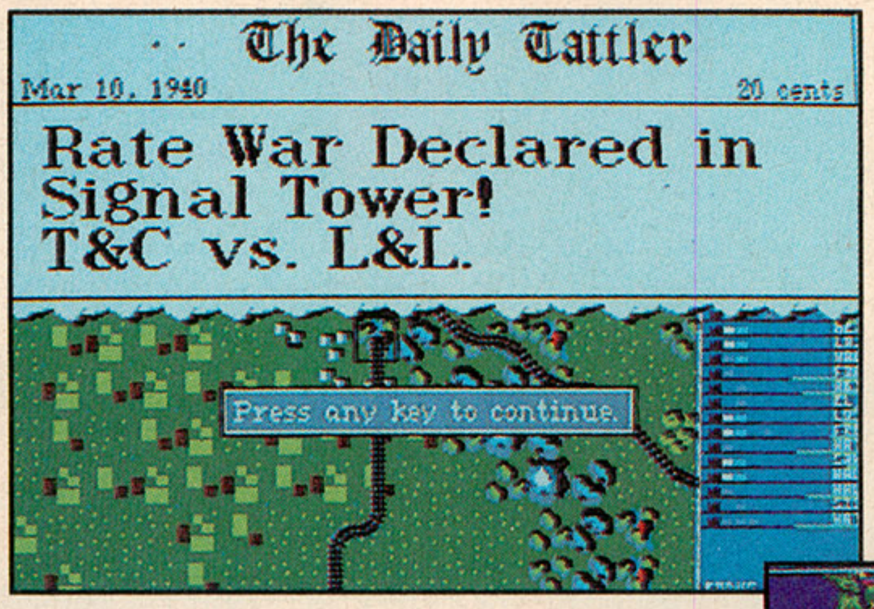
There is much more to *Tycoon* than space permits description — takeovers of entire railroads through stock market manipulations; the complex economy option which, among other things, allows you to establish railroad-owned industries; and the impact of variations in the economic climate, to name three. Nonetheless, you can enjoy this game at its simplest level as an enormous, wonderfully animated, train set. Or you can accept the challenge of matching wits with some of the cleverest foxes to have chosen unfettered Darwinian capitalism as their playing field. However you approach *Tycoon*, though, you will very likely consider it among the best games you've ever played.



A proud line of successful trains.

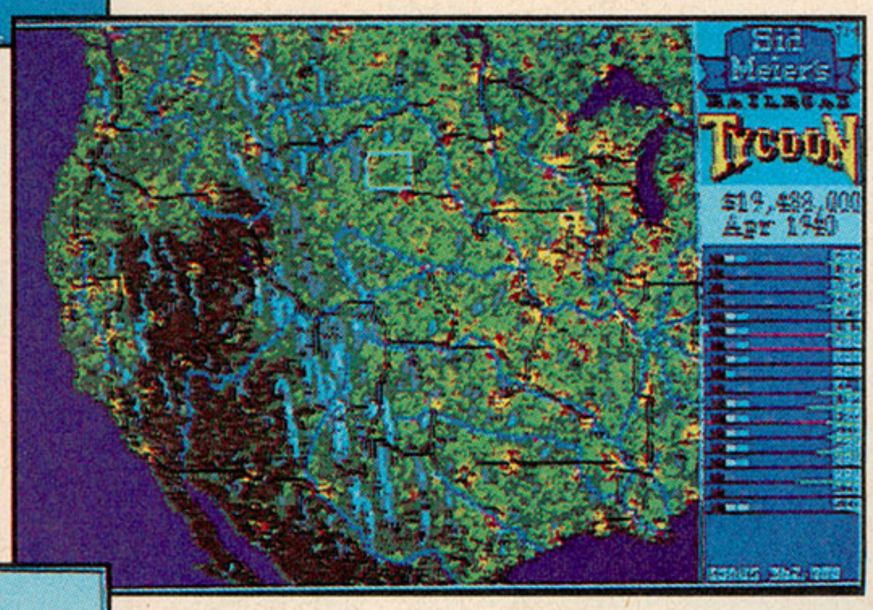


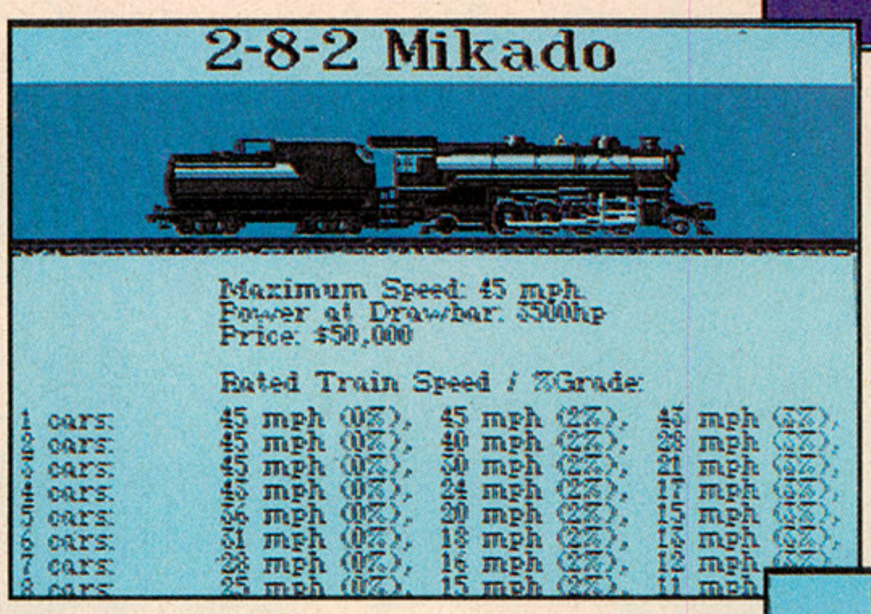
Lay double-track through busy corridors. Trains will never have to wait for each other, and cannot crash.



You may want to "hold" (pause) a train to avoid a collision, to clear a run during a rate war, or to allow easy passage for a priority shipment. The red line indicates a held train. The green lines, and their length, display speed.

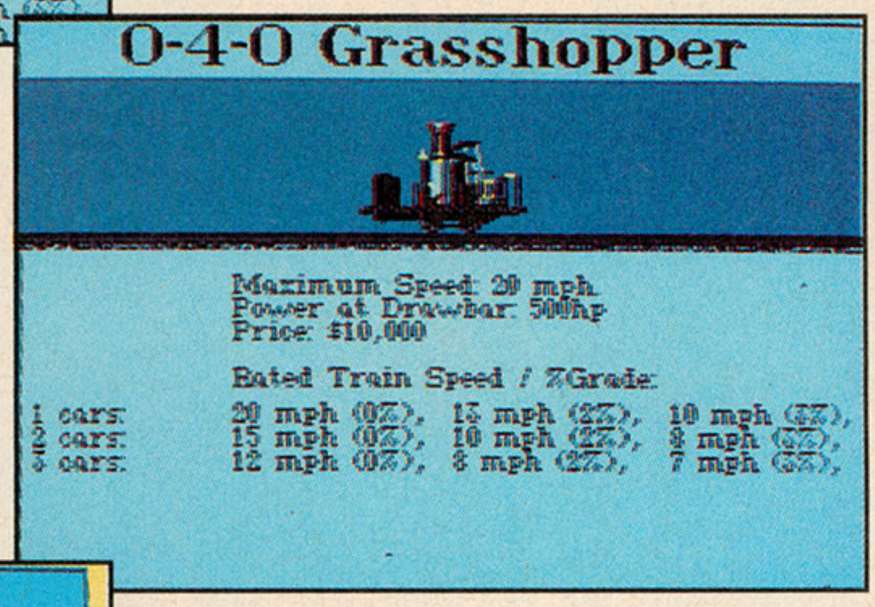
A dreaded Rate War is declared. If *you* start one, have a couple of powerful engines waiting at the nearest city, lay double-track, and check cargos for efficiency during the entire war.

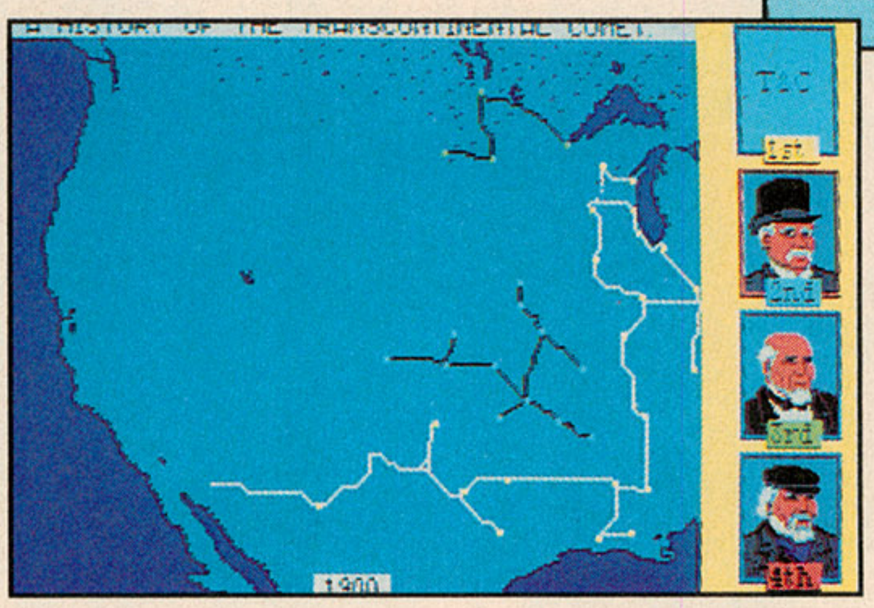




The Mikado engine is great for long, heavy freight trains. It is available for purchase anytime after 1903. Announcements of new, more powerful engines for sale are made several times during the game.

If you choose Eastern USA, you'll find that the only engine available in the 1830s is the charming, but feeble, 0-4-0 Grasshopper. It has trouble *even when pulling only one car*. Replace all Grasshoppers with the Norris engine as soon as possible.





The History option shows an animated "film" (complete with announcements of highlights) of the annals and growth of your empire, and those of your competitors.

System requirements: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA); CGA, EGA, MCGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; color monitor; mouse optional but recommended; supports Ad Lib, Roland, and Tandy sound. MicroProse, 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030.

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NINTENDO REVIEWS

THUNDERBIRDS

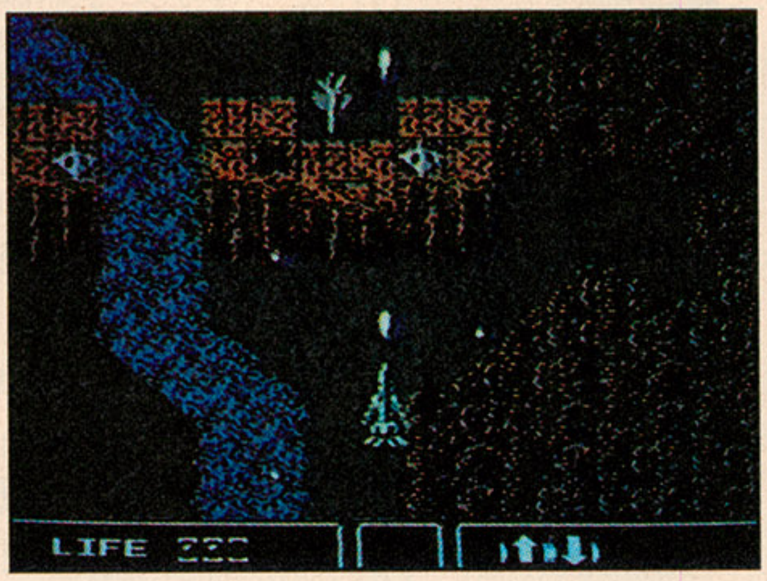
William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Activision, P.O. Box 3047, Menlo Park, CA, 94025.

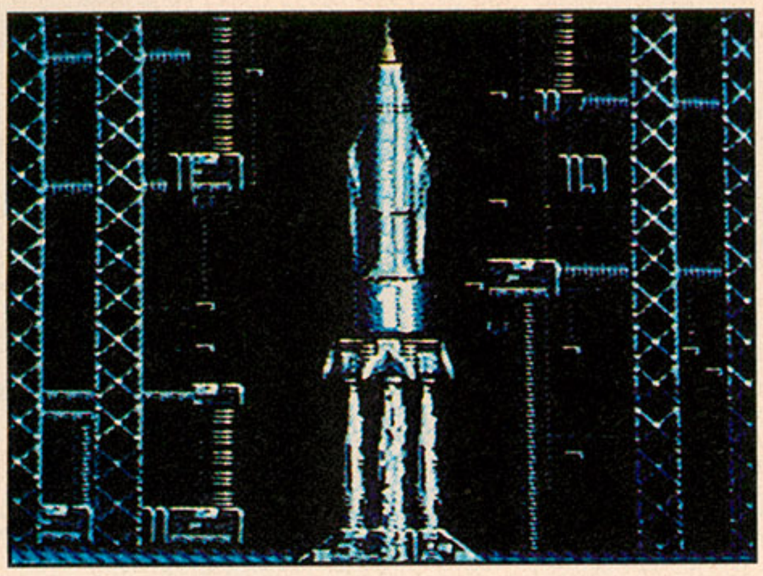
Nintendo games based on hit movies are common enough, but here's one based on an obscure TV series from the 1960s. *Thunderbirds* was unique among half-hour adventure shows in that it used neither animation nor live actors, but puppets — controlled by a now almost-forgotten process called supermarionation.

In the U.S., the TV show still has a ghostly existence in reruns on a few cable stations, but it has largely faded from memory except among a few nostalgic fans. In Japan, however, it evidently commands a larger following. How else to explain Activision's new game?

The Thunderbirds are five pilots (and their father, who runs things from headquarters), all members of the Tracy family. Each Thunderbird flies a different and very powerful aircraft. Their mission is to stop the alien villain HOOD, who schemes to conquer the world. The Thunderbirds' strategic planning is plotted by Dr. Brain, a scientist who monitors HOOD and marks likely targets on a world map. To stop HOOD's latest threat, the Thunderbirds have 60 days — which is not as long as it seems, since a damaged Thunderbird ship takes three days to repair.



The action unfolds against a wide variety of backgrounds.



Sharp, clear graphics are a prime attraction of *Thunderbirds*.

HOOD commands a fearsome array of weapons and creatures. Fortunately for the Thunderbirds, the very creation of these enemies also produces energy sources that the Thunderbirds can collect for their own use. The most important energy sources are the Orbital Device Configurations — secondary sources of firepower which can be joined to a Thunderbird aircraft. With the help of these devices, you can fire in two directions at once or in a circular pattern.

A good part of the game's strategy involves choosing the right Orbital Device for the situation. The most effective device is the Forward-Diagonal, which gives you the broadest arc of fire. To find it, look near China at the end of the third battle zone.

Although *Thunderbirds* is a basic scrolling-shooting game, the slight element of strategy makes it more interesting than the average shooter. Also, the graphics are pleasing and exceptionally crisp. If, by chance, you're a fan of the original TV series, you'll probably find *Thunderbirds* a pleasant nostalgia trip. All things considered, it's a satisfying addition to a class of games that has become almost ridiculously overcrowded.

GP

Fans of the *Thunderbirds* TV show will enjoy meeting some old friends.

NEC REVIEWS

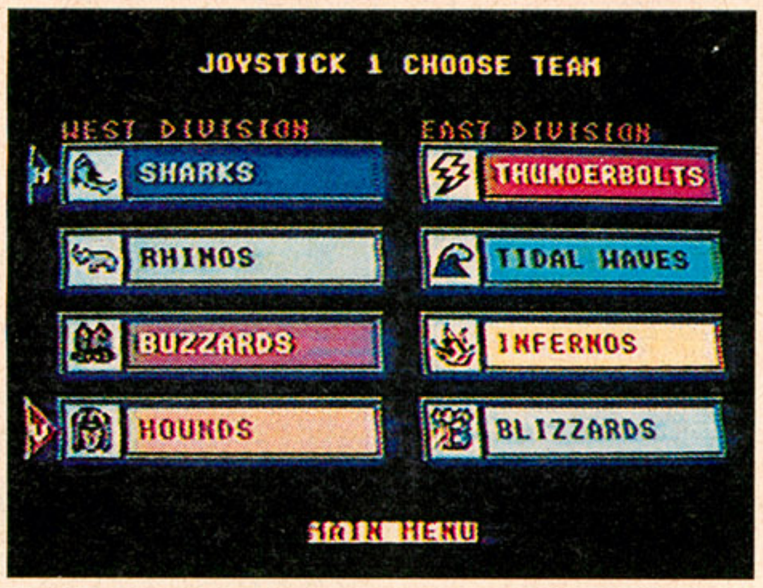
TV SPORTS FOOTBALL

Brian Carroll

Version reviewed: NEC TurboGrafx-16. Also available for IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; the Amiga; the Commodore 64; and the Atari ST. Cinemaware, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Westlake Village, CA 91362.

The sounds of cheering crowds and the crunch of colliding shoulder pads announce that autumn has arrived and it's football season once again. Coinciding with the return of gridiron action is Cinemaware's release of *TV Sports Football* for the NEC TurboGrafx-16.

TV Sports Football is an exceptional sports simulation. It makes good use of the machine's graphics capabilities, pleasing the eye as well as the mind. The players are easily distinguishable from one another and perform much like their real-world counterparts — qualities seen in few other video football games.

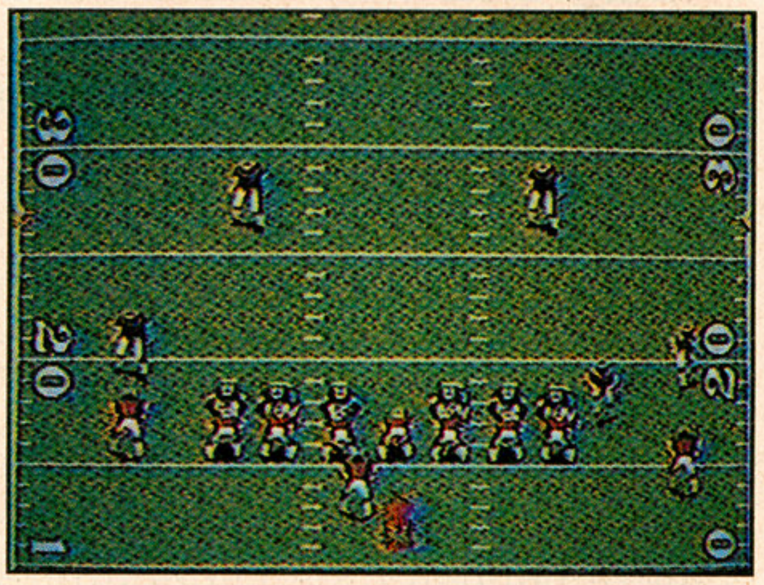


The Sharks and the Infernos are the game's strongest teams. The team to avoid? The Hounds. For an easy win, give them to the computer.

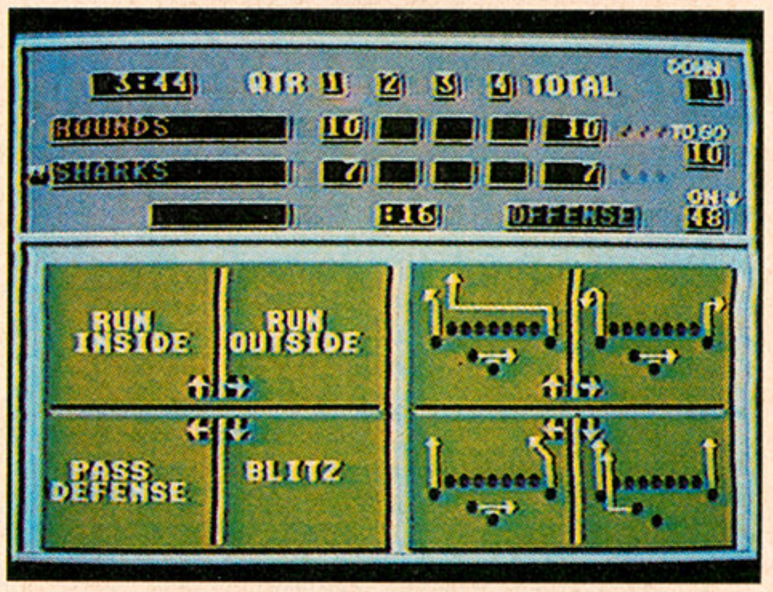
If you enjoy gridiron strategy, you'll appreciate the array of possibilities offered by *TV Sports Football* on both offense and defense. Most of the formations used in pro football are available in this game. However, the statistics-weary football fan can relax. Setting up each play is very easy and will soon become second nature.

Regardless of the formation, anything can happen once the ball is snapped. You aren't locked into running the play you called. In fact, you can (and should) improvise at any point during the action.

And the action is where this game really shines. On defense, you can make bone-crunching tackles and turf-pounding sacks reminiscent of Lawrence Taylor. On offense, you can pretend to be Joe Montana surgically dissecting a defense with short-range passes, or John Elway dropping back to unleash a bomb.



See the two linebackers facing the right side of your line? Prepare to scramble, because a blitz is coming.

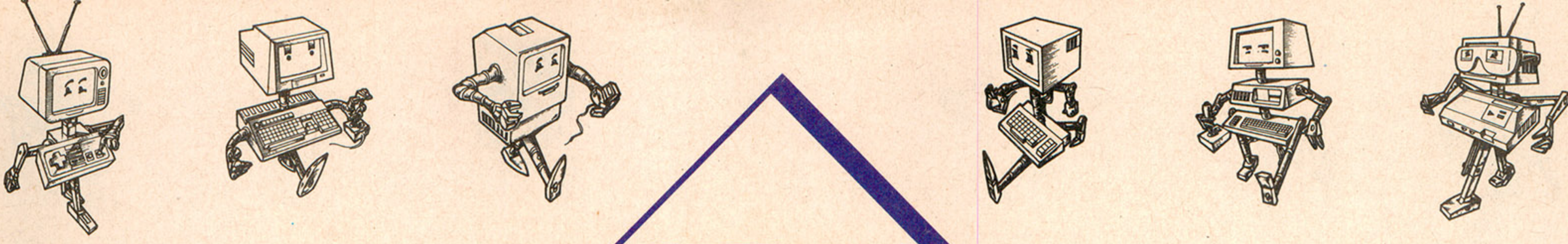


You can choose from four basic offensive and defensive sets.

You'll want to share fun like this, and *TV Sports Football* allows you to do so in a way never before seen in a home videogame. With the TurboTap accessory, as many as five people can play simultaneously (up to four on the same team) — *each with independent control over a different player*. It's exciting to join up with a buddy on pass patterns, blitzes, and even running plays. If two of you are playing on defense, try charging both sides of the line; the quarterback will either end up eating turf or hurrying his pass.

TV Sports Football is simply one of the finest football simulations available for any game system. It skillfully combines realistic sound effects, crisp graphics, and awesome action.

GP



NINTENDO REVIEWS

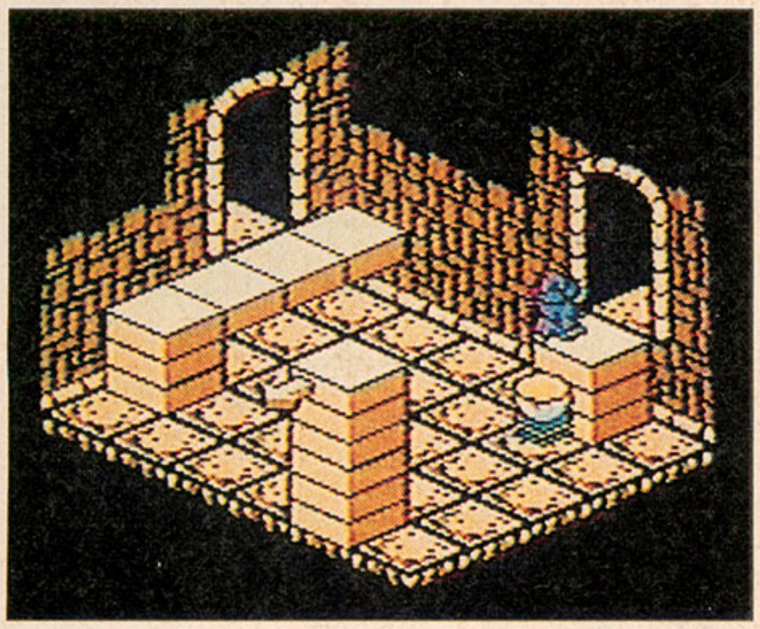
SOLSTICE

Gary Meredith

Version reviewed: Nintendo. CSG Imagesoft, 9200 Sunset Blvd., Suite 820, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

The Princess Eleanor of Arcadia is, to say the least, in trouble. Morbius the Malevolent has imprisoned her in his imposing fortress, Kâstleröck. There he intends to sacrifice her to the forces of darkness. With her death, he will gain world domination.

No one stands in Morbius's way — no one, that is, but the old and weary sorcerer, Shadax.



Until you find a pair of jump boots, you'll have to climb atop other objects in order to reach the ledges.

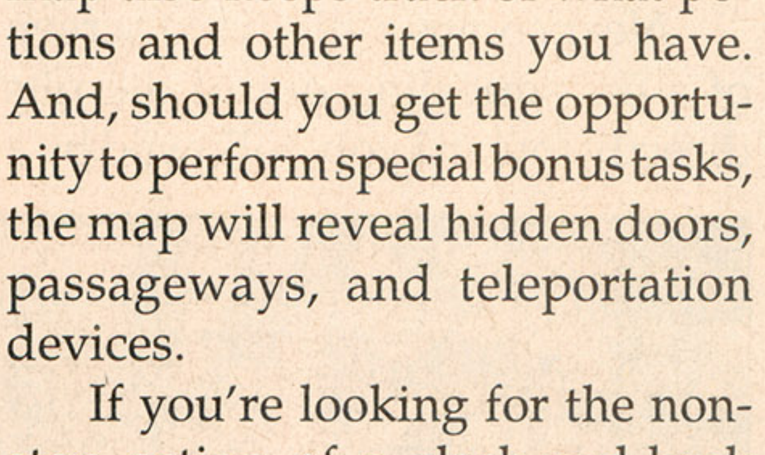
In *Solstice*, you play the role of Shadax as he attempts to travel through more than 250 rooms of Kâstleröck in search of the six pieces of the Staff of Demnos. Only with this holy rod can you hope to vanquish Morbius.

Of course, Morbius has taken great pains to make your journey through his fortress considerably more eventful than a walk in the park. Each room has its own ways of confusing or even killing the brave Shadax. Morbius's henchmen continually patrol the corridors and chambers of Kâstlerock, and other less obvious perils await the intrepid sorcerer as well.

Fortunately, there are items strewn about the fortress that can be of great help to Shadax. Magic potions confer greater powers on the old conjurer; jump boots put a bit more spring into his aging legs; and life hats rejuvenate a body that's sometimes much weaker than his spirit.

There are also ordinary items, such as blocks and balls, which can be maneuvered into advantageous positions. If you're clever enough, you can even use Morbius's followers to help you survive the rooms that are charmingly decorated with poisonous spikes, disappearing floors, and floating mines.

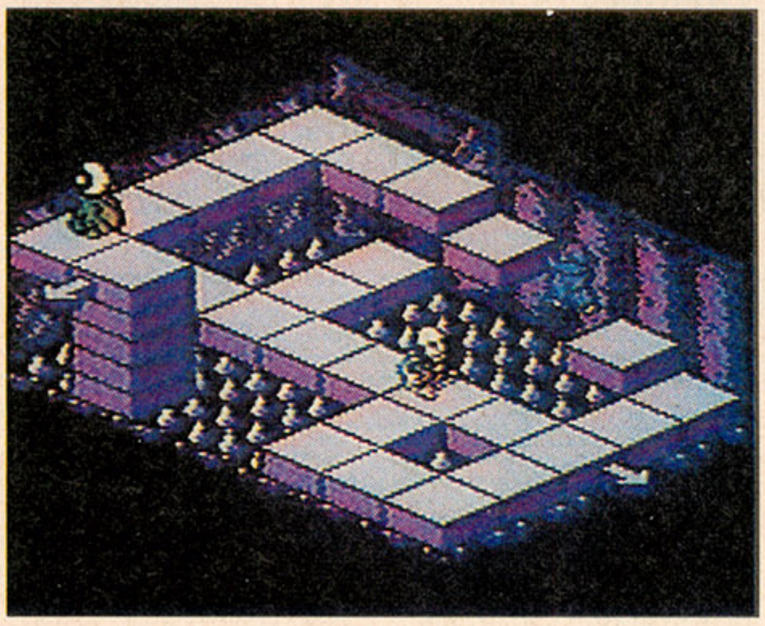
Shadax's Magic Map is his most important possession. With this mapping feature, you can avoid traveling through the same passages over and over again. The map also keeps track of what potions and other items you have. And, should you get the opportunity to perform special bonus tasks, the map will reveal hidden doors, passageways, and teleportation devices.



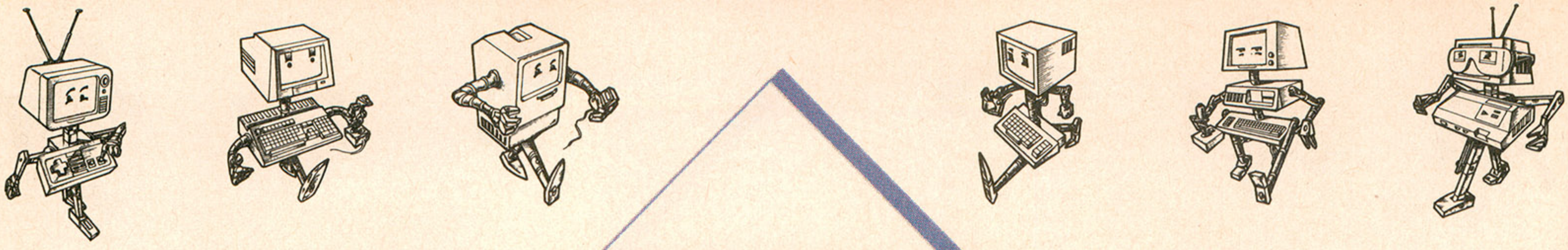
To avoid the poisonous spikes covering the floor, get across the room by using the floating platforms and transparent tiles. (Step lively.)

If you're looking for the nonstop action of a slash-and-hack game, you won't find it in *Solstice*. The action is mostly mental — with only a modicum of hand-eye coordination required — as you try to unravel the many puzzles and traps of Kâstleröck.

GP



Before attempting to use the ramps, carefully watch the patterns walked by Morbius's guards. Also, watch out for tiles that are there one moment and gone the next.



SEGA REVIEWS

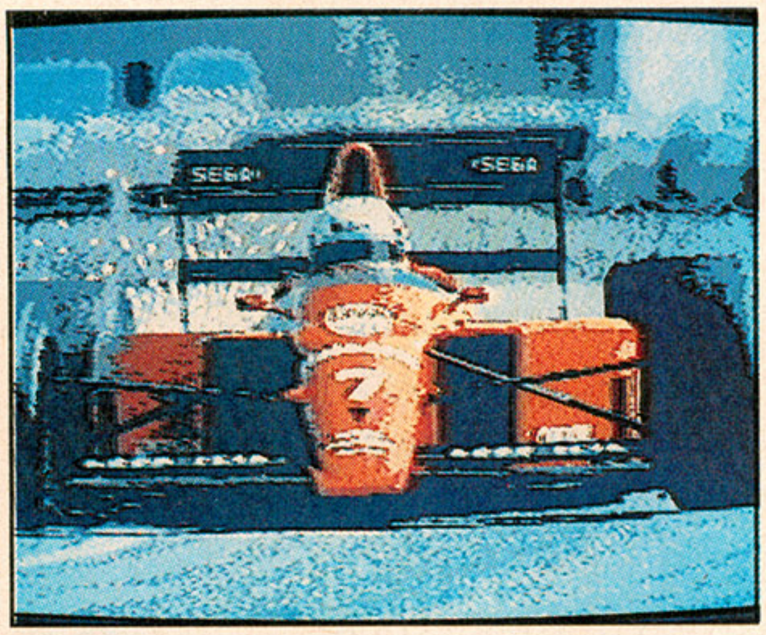
SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX

Matthew A. Firme

Version reviewed: Sega Genesis.
Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd.,
P.O. Box 2167, South San Francisco,
CA 94080.

From the moment you switch it on, it's obvious that *Super Monaco Grand Prix* is an exceptional game. The first screen you see is a near-photographic-quality shot of a woman leaning against a "Sega Grand Prix" sign. Meanwhile, Formula 1 race cars zoom by on the track behind her.

Next comes a digitized screen of a car squealing out of the pits directly toward you, followed by a

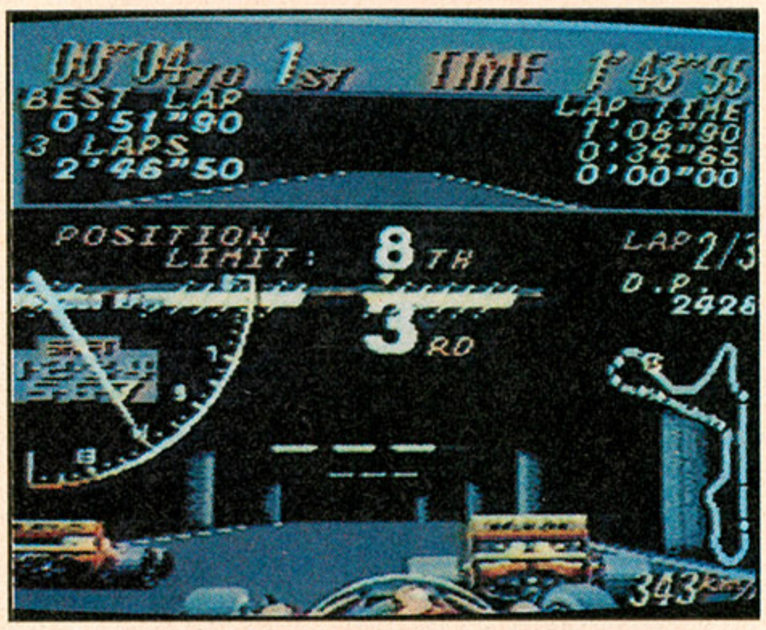


Digitized screens appear throughout the game. Some are animated and look almost like scenes from movies.

close-up of the car's engine — digitized and animated. The whole introduction looks almost like a movie or a top-notch arcade game. But a home videogame? It's hard to believe.

Better yet, there's still plenty more to come. This isn't one of those games that reserves its most impressive screens for the opening and closing credits. *Super Monaco GP* has a lot to offer, both in terms of graphics and game play.

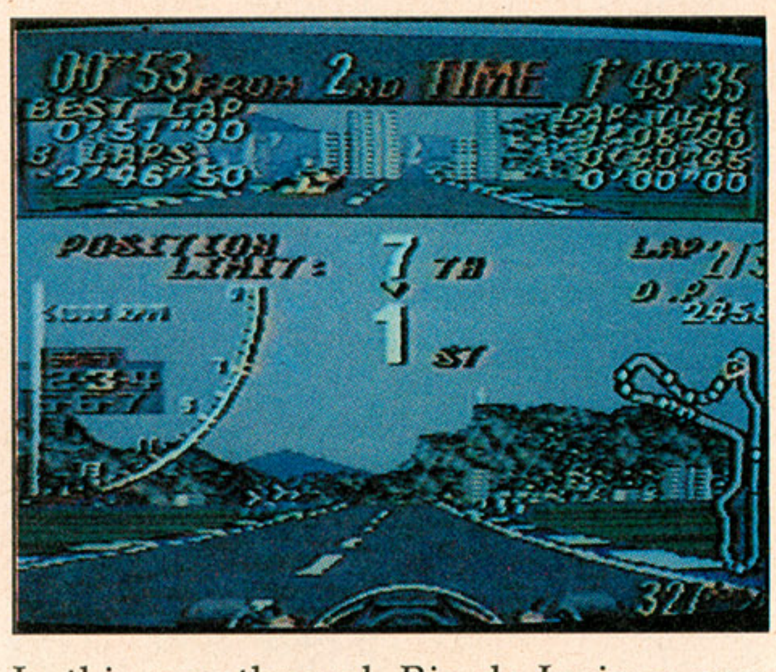
You can choose from several different races and tracks, all of them road courses from around the world. You can race in a single event or compete against other drivers for professional rankings



At the top of the screen is your rear-view mirror. The cars and road behind you are reflected with as much detail as the forward view.

as you move through an entire Grand Prix circuit. You can select from three transmissions: an automatic, or either a four-speed or seven-speed manual. Other options allow you to tailor the controls just about any way you like, letting you select which buttons will control the brakes, accelerator, and gear shifting.

The great graphics and stereo

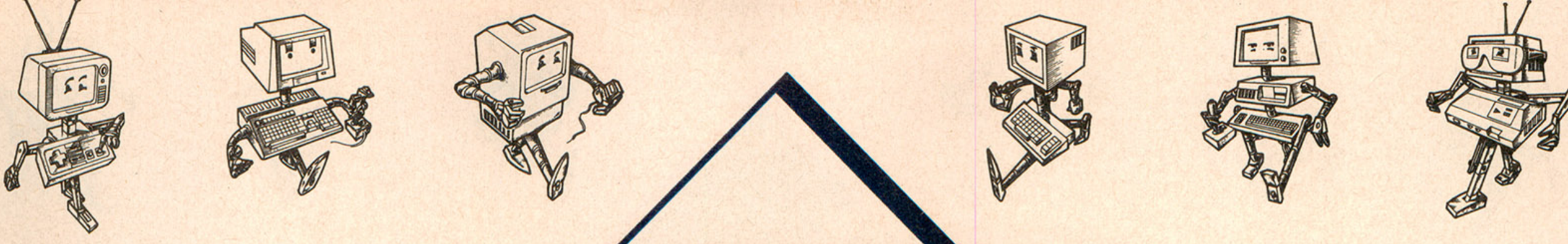


In this race through Rio de Janiero, you can even see the huge statue of Christ on the Corcovado peak.

sound effects continue throughout the game. Especially nice are the pit-stop scenes — full of color and fast, realistic animation — and the actual racing. The roads and surrounding countryside are extremely well-defined, and the backgrounds scroll in perfect unison with your swerving, speeding car.

As you accelerate you'll hear the engine whine, begging you to shift into high gear. Your pit crew will urge you on with clean, life-like shouts, and there's even a Doppler effect as you pass other cars. *Super Monaco GP* is a winner.

GP

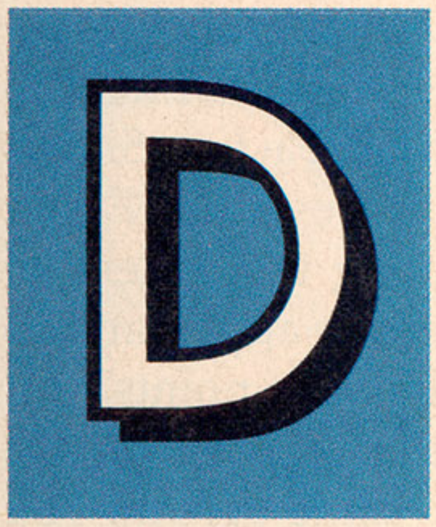


NINTENDO REVIEWS

TOTAL RECALL

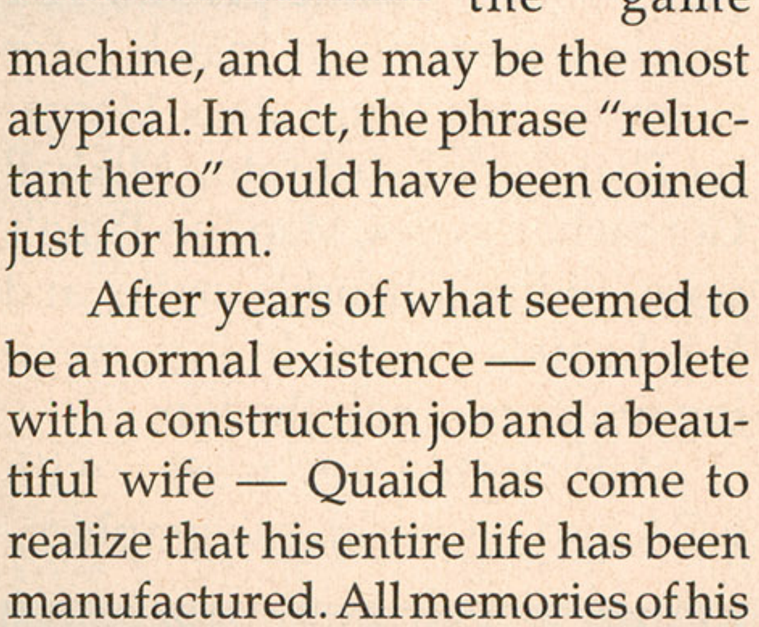
Gary Meredith

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Acclaim Entertainment, 189 South Street, Oyster Bay, NY 11771.



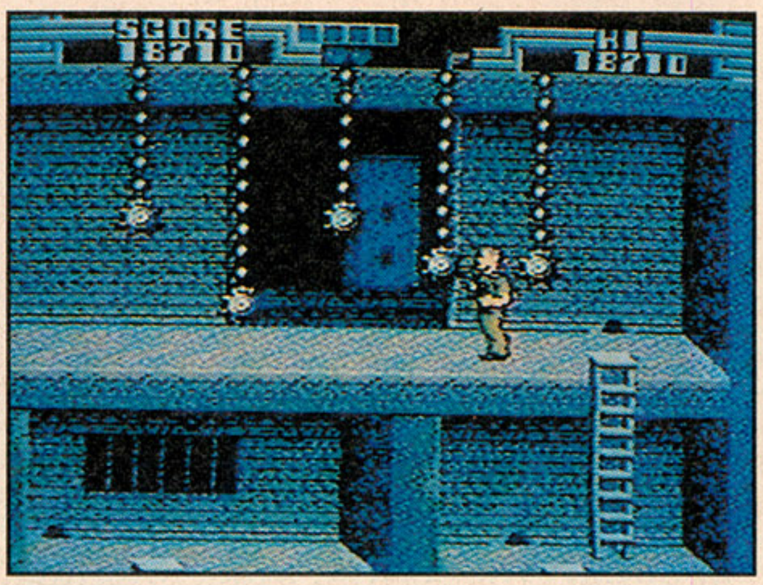
Douglas Quaid is the latest movie character to make the transition from the silver screen to the game machine, and he may be the most atypical. In fact, the phrase "reluctant hero" could have been coined just for him.

After years of what seemed to be a normal existence — complete with a construction job and a beautiful wife — Quaid has come to realize that his entire life has been manufactured. All memories of his true identity and previous life have been wiped out, and those of his new life superimposed. He doesn't know why, or who is behind the scheme. All he knows is that he's compelled to travel to the colony on Mars in hopes of unraveling the mystery.



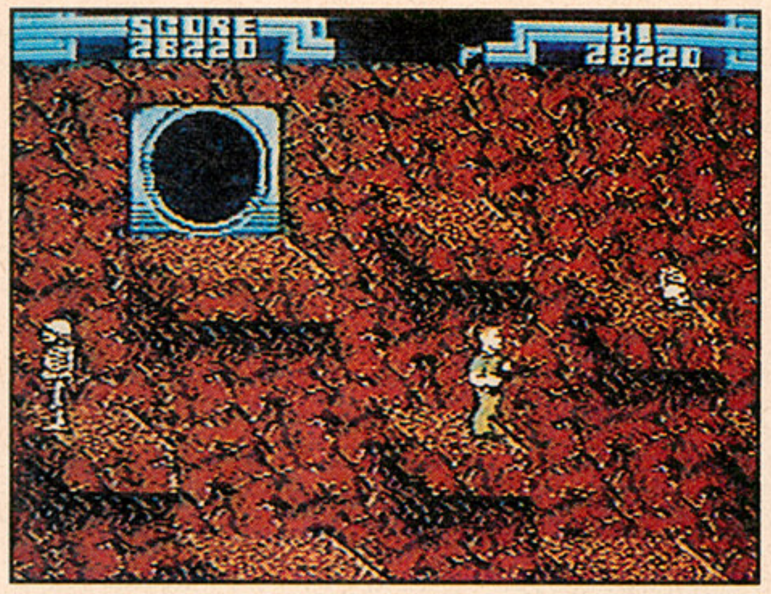
When Quaid discovers that even his wife is just another agent from Mars, he knows it's finally time to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Total Recall is your big chance to follow in the footsteps of Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Austrian bodybuilder plays Douglas Quaid in the movie version of *Total Recall*, and you play Quaid in the Nintendo version. Adhering as closely to the movie as is possible in a Nintendo game, *Total Recall* takes you on a wild, nonstop ride from the back alleys of Earth to the fantastic frontiers of Mars.



Somewhere in the cement plant is a suitcase with a ticket to Mars. These wrecking balls don't make the search any easier.

Along the way, you must battle the agents of the organization which has tried to remake Quaid's life. The agents are hiding a terrible secret, a secret that goes beyond what they've done to Quaid's memory, so they'll try to stop you at all costs. While fighting them, you must also acquire the advanced weaponry necessary for your final duel on Mars.

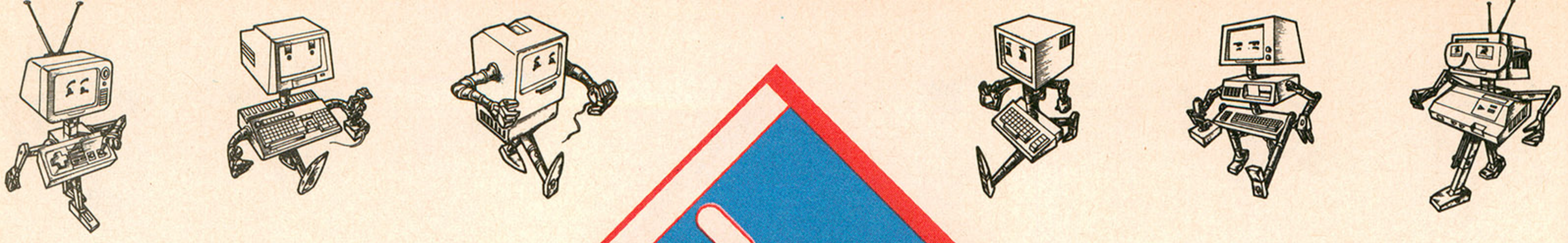


Deep within the mines of the Red Planet, Quaid desperately searches for his true identity and uncovers more than he bargained for.

After battling your way through alleys, a subway, and a cement factory on Earth, you finally take the shuttle to Mars. When you arrive, you discover that the efforts to stop you are even more intense. In addition to more agents, there are also hordes of robotic killers.

If you survive a harrowing chase through the streets of the Mars colony, you'll enter the underground mines of the Red Planet. The final showdown against Cohaagen, your former boss, tests your abilities and your preparation.

Total Recall, more than many other games based on movies or TV shows, offers a real taste of the story which inspired it. For anyone who has seen the film, it's familiar territory. For those who haven't, it's still an exciting and entertaining game. GP



REVIEWS

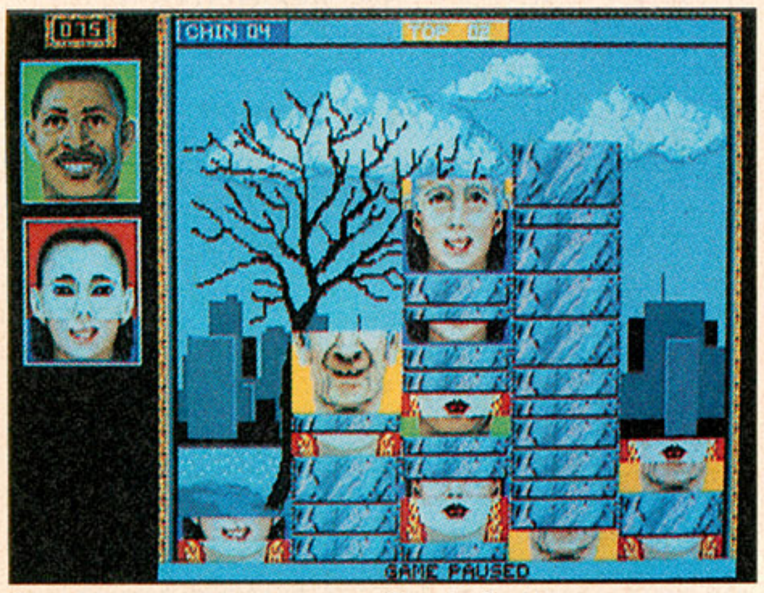
FACES ...TRIS III

Tom R. Halfhill

Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA); monochrome, CGA, EGA, MCGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick optional; supports Ad Lib and Tandy sound. Soon to be released for the Macintosh and Amiga. Spectrum Holobyte, 2061 Challenger Drive, Alameda, CA 94501.

Alexey Pajitnov, the Soviet designer of *Tetris* and *Welltris*, smiled apologetically when introducing his latest game at a recent press conference.

"Over the past year, I keep trying to make a new game," he explained, finding English as challenging as most of us find his puzzles. "But I keep liking quiet, non-destroying games."



Faces seems easy at first, but soon more people begin appearing and the pieces drop faster and faster. (VGA graphics.)

Faces...Tris III is definitely a "quiet, non-destroying game": another nonviolent, engrossing puzzler in the tradition of *Tetris*. Once again, your job is to guide falling puzzle pieces into orderly piles at the bottom of the screen, thereby scoring points and advancing to higher levels in which the pieces fall even faster.

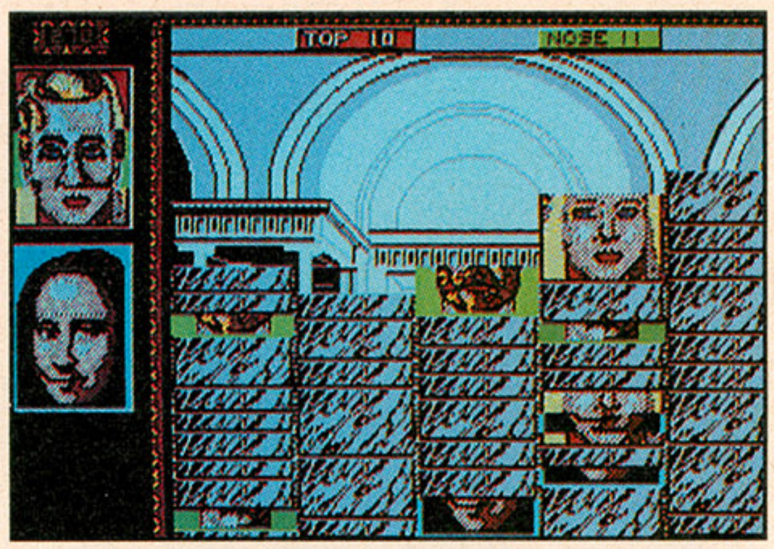
If *Faces* sounds like a clone of *Tetris* and *Welltris*, that's because it basically is. But Pajitnov has added a new element that rejuvenates his formula and turns *Faces* into something delightful. Instead of steering abstractly shaped blocks to the bottom of the screen, you steer parts of people's faces. Chins, mouths, noses, eyes, and foreheads fall relentlessly downward, and you have to assemble them into recognizable portraits.

Try combining parts of different politicians to come up with a leader who can please all of the people all of the time. (VGA graphics.)

Faces is a veritable encyclopedia of famous visages. Einstein, Lenin, Mozart, Gorbachev, Sitting Bull, Dracula, and even the Easter Bunny are among the dozens of notables who make appearances.

To score the most points, you must assemble a face using all five parts from the same person. You can, however, mix 'n' match — for example, you could stack Margaret Thatcher's hairdo atop Mikhail Gorbachev's eyes, Mao Tse-Tung's nose, Indira Ghandi's smile, and V.I. Lenin's goatee. In fact, creating mutants is half the fun.

Although *Faces* works with CGA and monochrome graphics,

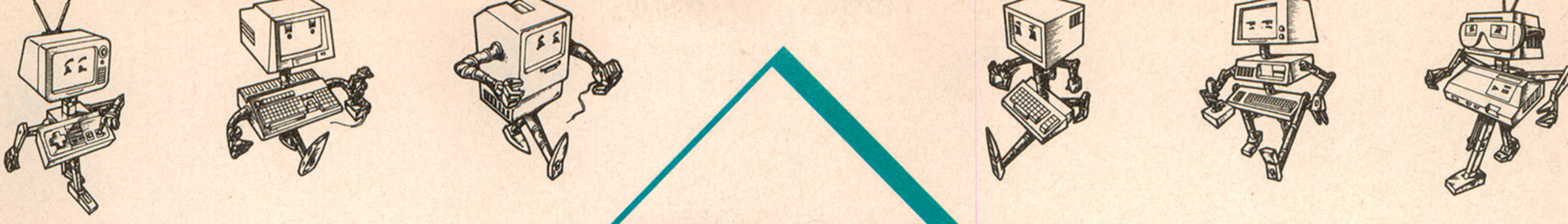


Level 2 introduces famous faces from the art world. Mona Lisa winks at you, and Van Gogh's right ear blinks on and off. (EGA graphics.)

it really needs EGA or better. Otherwise, the faces are difficult to recognize.

Extra features let you play against someone via modem and even create your own faces with a drawing program like *DeluxePaint*. Any way you look at it, *Faces* is a handsome game.

GP



NINTENDO REVIEWS

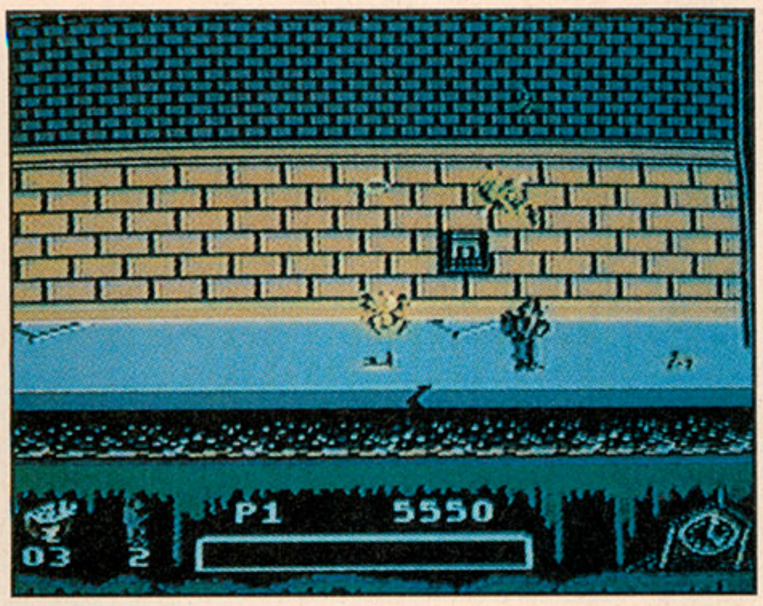
GHOST-BUSTERS II

Lisa Sahlie

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Also available for the Game Boy; IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; the Amiga; and the Commodore 64. Activision, 3885 Bohannon Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Dust off your slime blower and prepare to bust some ghosts. It's New Year's Eve and, once again, New York City needs your help. Apparitions of all kinds are haunting the tenements, the subways, and even Central Park.

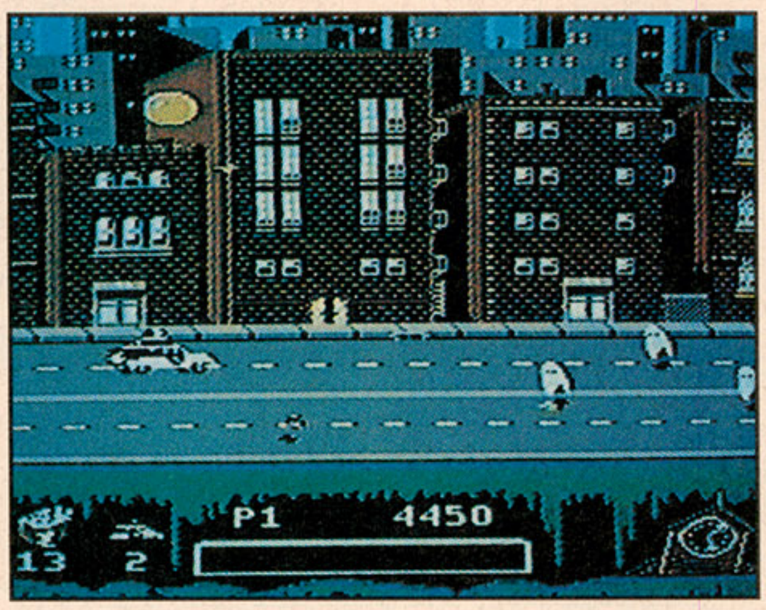
Meanwhile, Vigo, the spirit of a 17th-century tyrant, impatiently



You've got only a few seconds to destroy that green spook. The ghost trap will get the giant spider off your back.

awaits the arrival of midnight. When the clock strikes 12, he'll be released from his otherworldly prison — a painting of himself that hangs in the New York City Museum of Art. Once freed, he can begin his new reign of terror.

Ghostbusters II tests your skill in seven levels of arcade action. You begin with four lives (one for each Ghostbuster) and two continues. Four lives aren't enough, but you can earn an extra life by hitting 20 of the Ghostbusters symbols found throughout the game and in bonus rounds. A two-player option



For a shield or power-up, shoot the glowing green glob and run over the medallion it releases.

allows you to take turns playing with a friend.

Armed with your handy slime blower, you set out on foot through the old Van Horne train station, the courthouse, the subway, and finally the art museum. Flying objects and other paranormal entities must be slimed, dodged, jumped, or eliminated with a well-placed ghost trap.

Another vital weapon in your arsenal is the Ecto-1A Ghostbusters car, equipped with a double-trajectory slime blower to stop spooks in the streets and in Central Park. And when you climb inside the Statue of Liberty, you can make her walk and shoot fireballs from her torch.

As with most shoot-em-ups, the last level in the game is the most difficult. If you don't have at least one continue by this point, chances are you won't complete the game. At the art museum, each Ghostbuster must make his way to Vigo's painting by evading numerous flying objects and slime-throwing ghosts. Once there, the Ghostbusters can eliminate the tyrant's spirit by spraying it with positively charged slime.

Although *Ghostbusters II* features music and characters from the movie, the plot only loosely follows the film. The action is somewhat repetitive, and the last stages are extremely difficult. To complete the game, you must become expert at finishing the lower levels with enough men left over for the end.

GP

A bonus round allows you to shoot Ghostbusters symbols to earn an extra life.

GAME BOY REVIEWS

SKATE OR DIE: BAD 'N RAD

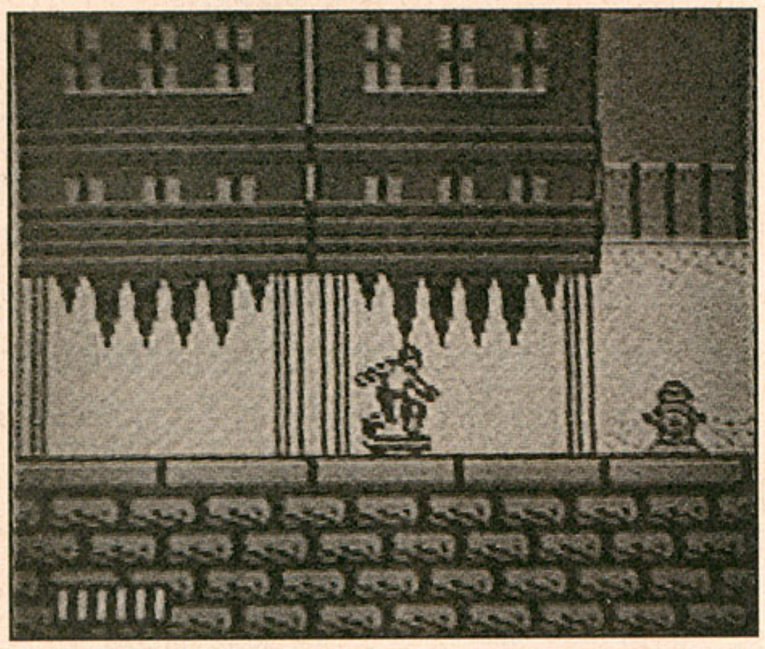
Tom R. Halfhill

Version reviewed: Game Boy. Konami, 815 Mittel Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191.

There's trouble in Vileville. ElRad the Evil One and his criminal comrade, Bionic Lester, have kidnapped Miss Aerial. Not only is she the town's Roller Queen, but she's also the daughter of Great Ben, the last of the legendary Bad 'n' Rad Skateboard Masters.

Miss Aerial also happens to be your girlfriend. If you can rescue her from ElRad's clutches, you'll win her heart and become a Bad 'n' Rad Skateboard Master yourself.

But there's more at stake than



Stage 1 is fairly easy, although you'll get skewered on these spikes if you don't duck.

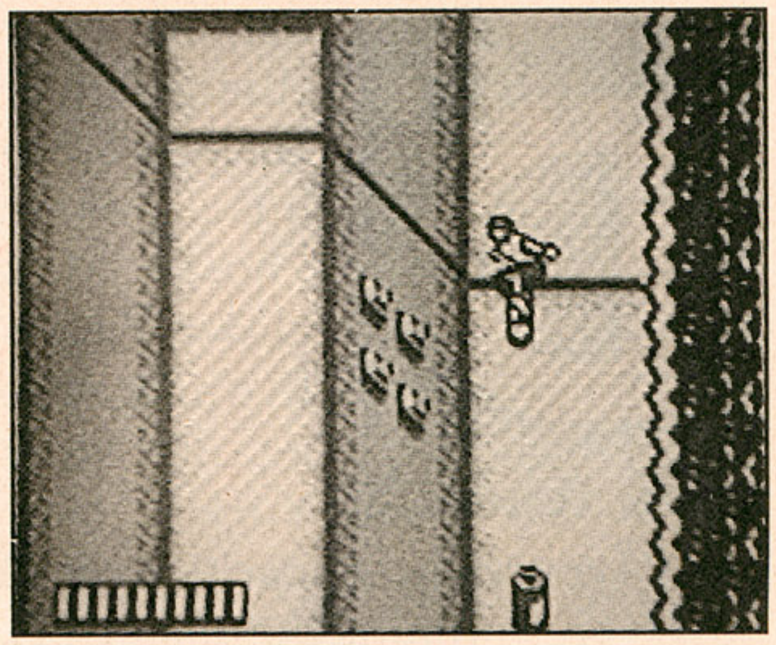
defending Miss Aerial's honor. The kidnapping is merely the latest attempt by ElRad to intimidate skateboarders and conquer the entire skateboarding world. If he isn't stopped, thrashers everywhere will be under his evil thumb.

In *Skate or Die: Bad 'n Rad*, seven stages of action separate you from ElRad the Evil One. The first four are relatively easy Entry Levels. When the game starts, you can begin playing on any of these four stages.

The final three stages are the Bad 'n' Rad Levels. They're much more difficult and can be reached only after you've cleared stage 4. At the end of stage 7, you'll face your final showdown with ElRad.

Stages 1, 3, 6, and 7 scroll horizontally with a side view of your character, and stages 2, 4, and 5 scroll vertically with a bird's-eye view. This adds variety to the game and also requires you to master different skateboarding skills.

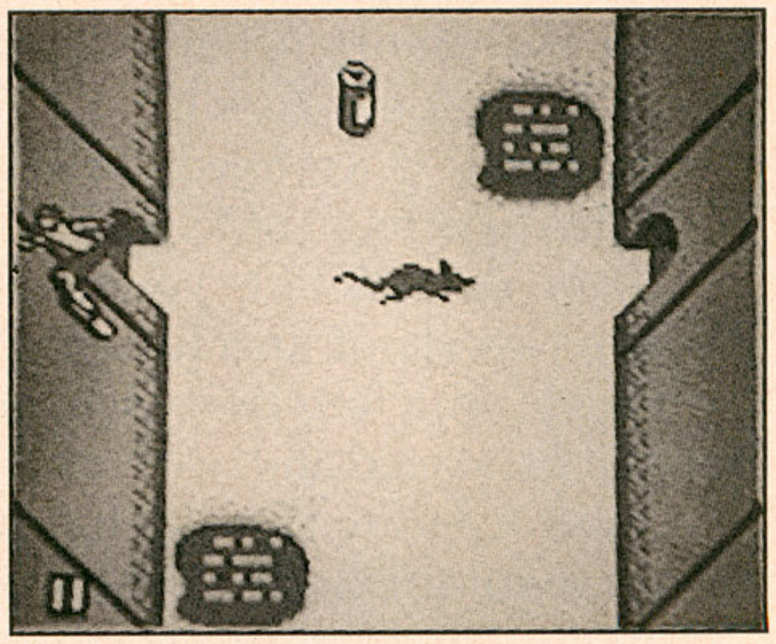
Among the enemies you'll face are the Berserk Not-So-Happy Clown, Mister Wart Monger, the Whopper Chopper, Sir Slice Alot, and Bionic Lester. Fortunately, you can pick up ice cream cones, pizza, and canned goodies to replenish your life force and score points.



Stage 2 changes from horizontal to vertical scrolling. Notice the canned goodies (bottom) and the pounding surf (right).

Unlike the NES version of *Skate or Die* — which emphasized skateboard stunts, obstacle courses, and half-pipe freestyling — *Skate or Die: Bad 'n Rad* is an action-adventure that pits you against bad guys and lethal hazards during your quest to rescue a damsel in distress. Although some of the flavor of California skateboarding has been lost, it's still a dynamite action game. Most beginners should be able to cope with the early stages, while advanced players will encounter plenty of challenge on the Bad 'n Rad Levels.

GP



Among the perils in stage 4 are these oversized sewer rats. Plug in your earphones and listen to them squeal.

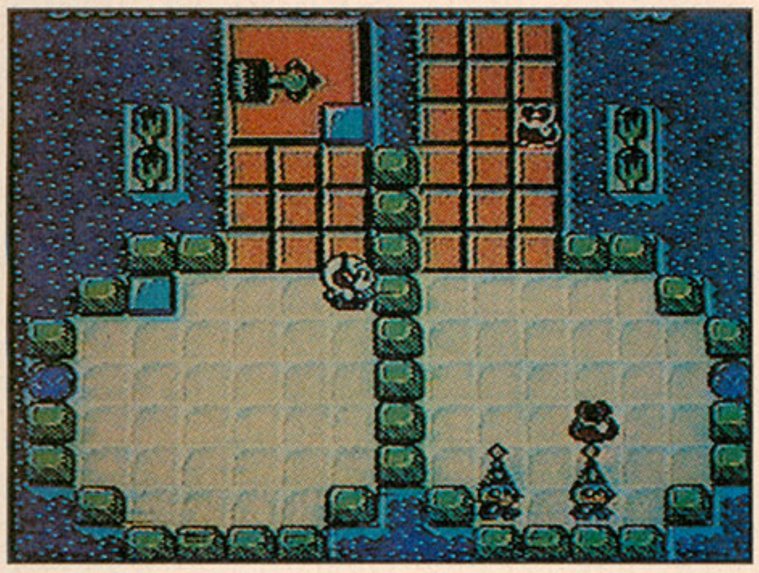
NINTENDO REVIEWS

KICKLE CUBICLE

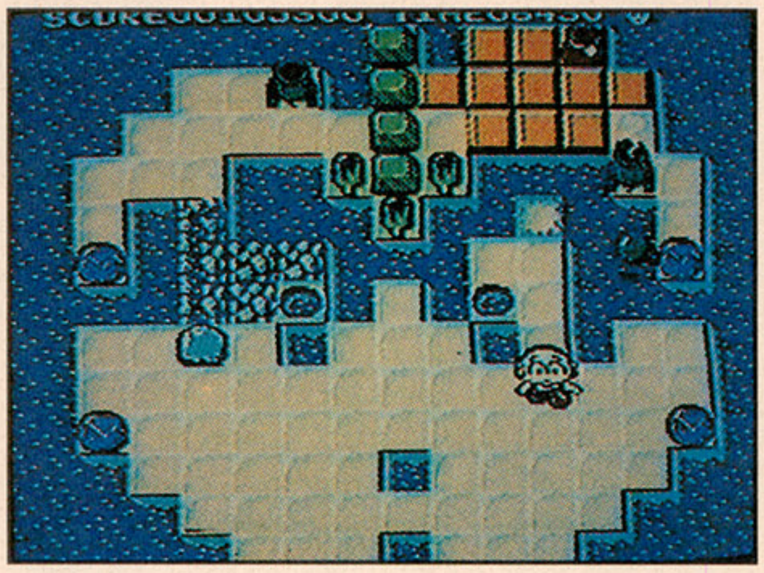
Gary Meredith

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Irem America, 8335 154th Avenue NE, Redmond, WA 98052-9836.

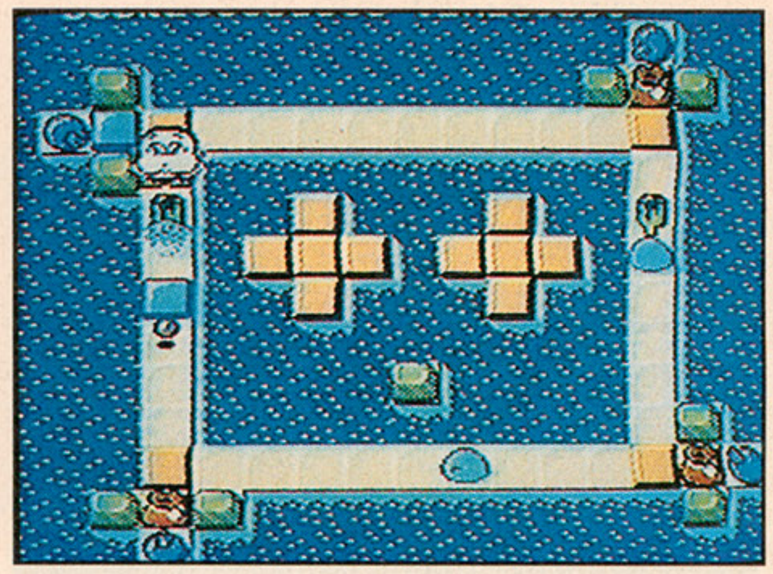
When you go to sleep each night, you usually expect to dream. Some of those dreams may be nightmares, but they're supposed to end when you wake up. Not so for poor little Kickle. He has awakened to a real nightmare — the lovely Princess Mira and everyone else in the Fantasy Kingdom are locked in the icy grip of the Wicked Wizard King.



To reach the Dream Bags on the other side of the water, form a bridge by using the rotating hammer to turn the frozen Noggle 90 degrees to the right.



The cannons seem awfully determined to undo your handiwork. But if you wait a few moments, the ice will refreeze and you can resume chasing Noggles.



Slide the cubes past the Dream Bags to block the creatures in each corner. (Although cubes are useful mainly for crossing water gaps, they can also be used to eliminate enemies.)

The wizard has hidden the people inside Dream Bags scattered around the four lands of the kingdom (Garden Land, Fruit Land, Cake Land, and Toy Land). They'll sleep forever unless Kickle can rescue them.

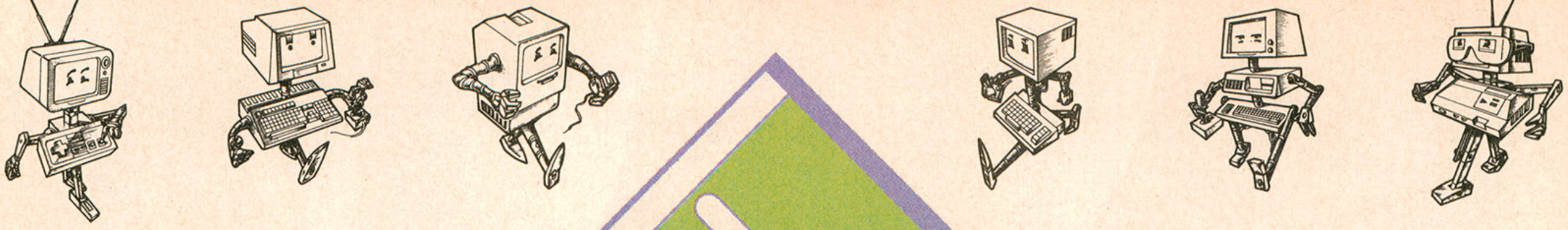
It won't be an easy mission. To bedevil Kickle, the wizard and his minions have planted puzzles throughout the many provinces of each land. To further complicate matters, the Dream Bags are guarded by creatures which make a simple solution to each puzzle nearly impossible. The most numerous of these creatures are the Noggles, watery blobs that plod around and get in Kickle's way. The Noggles can also be of some help, however, if they're used appropriately. When frozen into ice cubes by Kickle's breath, they can be moved to form bridges so Kickle can reach areas where Dream Bags are kept.

Unfortunately, Kickle can shove the frozen Noggles in only one direction without some help. With the assistance of springs, barriers, and rotating hammers, Kickle can change an ice cube's direction of travel. But like normal ice cubes, the frozen Noggles don't stay frozen forever. Kickle has only a short time before they thaw out and start chasing him again. And, of course, he still has to deal with all those other creatures.

There are a few other items that may help Kickle in his quest. Ice Pops bring extra points, hearts give Kickle an extra life, and Princess Mira's ring will take him to a bonus stage. Also, some provinces have power rocks which will freeze everything in a province (except Kickle) for a short time.

Kickle Cubicle is designed mainly for younger Nintendo players. But thanks to its tricky puzzles and cute graphics, it may end up as a favorite of the whole family.

GP



REVIEWS

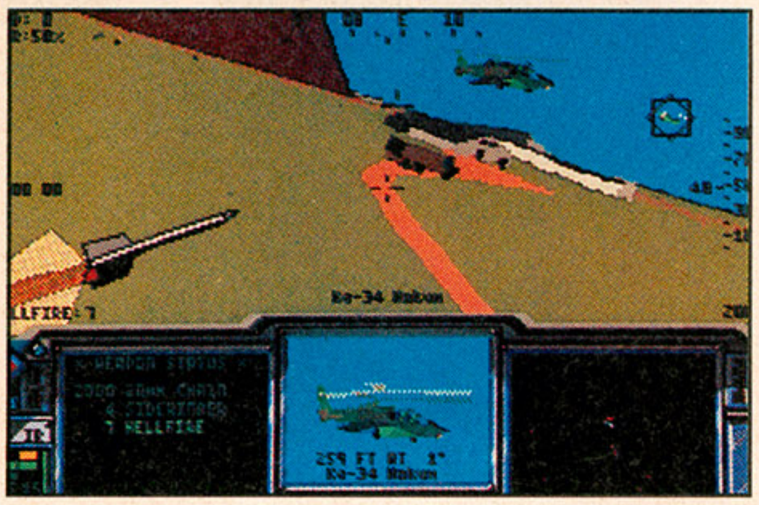
LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA); CGA, EGA, or VGA graphics; joystick or mouse optional; Ad Lib and Tandy sound boards optional.

Culling data from the aviation press (and perhaps from a few inside sources as well), Electronic Arts has produced a plausible and exciting simulation of an aircraft still so secret that no authorized photos of it have ever been released.

Designed to be the fastest, stealthiest, least vulnerable combat helicopter in service, the LHX is a sleek, hot, deadly machine, and *LHX Attack Chopper* convincingly re-creates those qualities. In addition to the LHX, you can also fly the Apache and Blackhawk helicopters, or the fascinating tilt-wing Osprey — an aircraft that can take off and land like a helicopter, then fly and fight like a good piston-engine fighter plane.



Aerial combat against enemy choppers is one of the hairiest missions you can choose — be prepared to face a sky full of missiles.

You can fly any or all of these craft on 12 types of missions in three different theaters of war. Some of these missions require stealth and some demand sheer firepower. Because there are five difficulty levels and the details of the missions are randomized, *LHX Attack Chopper* potentially offers hundreds of hours of entertainment.

Electronic Arts deserves credit for creating a simulation that's both action-packed and easy to use. To be sure, it takes awhile to learn this game (which is true of any self-respecting flight simulator), but once you master one aircraft the others are fairly easy. And the emphasis is on flying and fighting, not on endless high-tech mechanics.

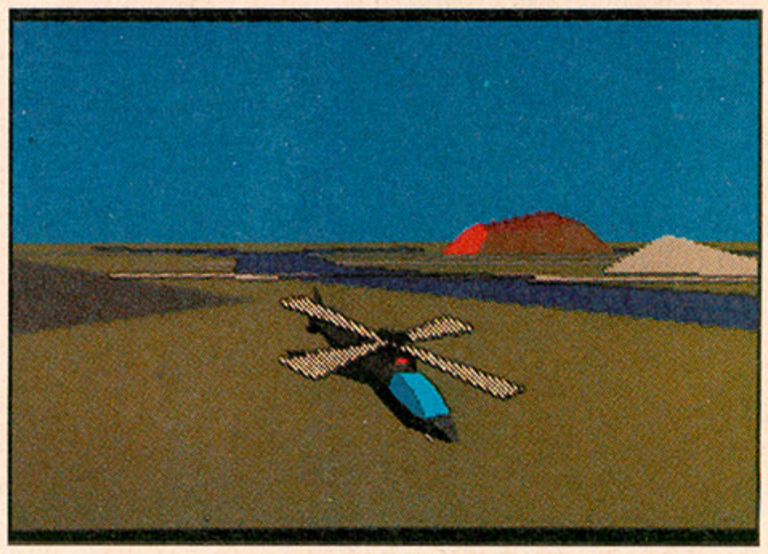
The combat missions are so enthralling that, at one point, no less than four editors at *Game Player's* were spending lunch hours and coffee breaks strafing ground targets and engaging Soviet-made Hind gunships in wild, stomach-

You can pick from five levels of difficulty, and even the easiest missions are challenging for beginners.

lurching dogfights. Considering the sizable number of games we see, it's a rare program indeed that inspires that much enthusiasm.

LHX Attack Chopper offers a nearly ideal blend of challenge and entertainment. Both the graphics and the animation are first-class. (The pyrotechnics during the night missions are especially nice.) The instructions are well-organized and clearly written. And Electronic Arts offers a lot of little extras, too, such as options that allow you to "ride" a missile to its target, or to observe your own attacks from the target's point of view. *LHX* is a worthy addition to the lineup of air-combat simulators.

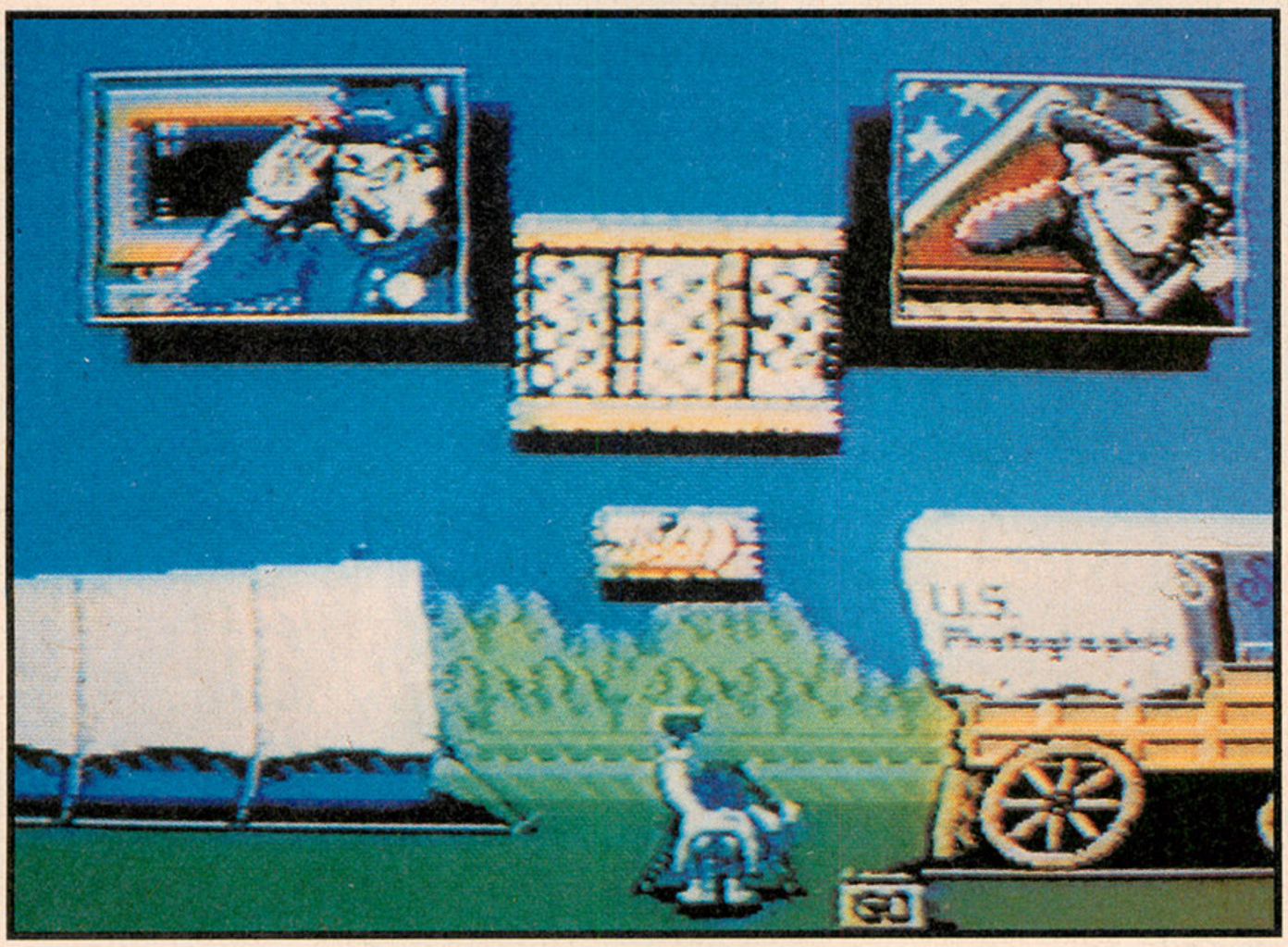
GP



Although the real LHX helicopter is still classified, Electronic Arts' simulation looks and flies quite convincingly.

AND PREVIEWS

New Nintendo Titles



Change the outcome of the Civil War in Kemco-Seika's *North and South*.

Coming later this year from Kemco-Seika are Nintendo translations of the computer games *North and South* and *Deja Vu*.

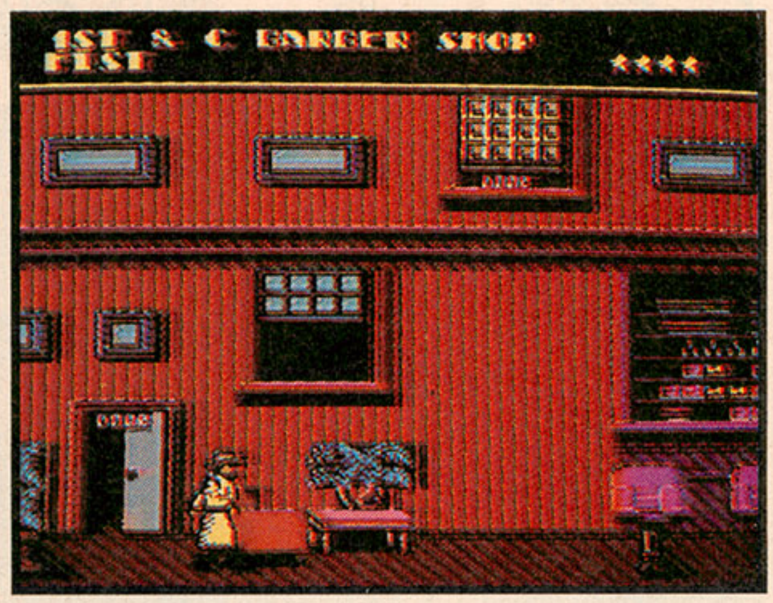
North and South is a cartoonlike game based on the Civil War. It offers both action and strategy as it leaves the fate of the nation in your hands. *Deja Vu* is a mystery game which begins as you wake up in a trashy restroom with a complete loss of memory and a puncture wound in your arm. It's up to you to discover your identity and the circumstances surrounding your predicament.

The famous shipwrecked castaways of *Gilligan's Island* are coming to Nintendo in a new game from Bandai. *Gilligan's Island* includes all the characters from the popular TV series of the 1960s. Your task is to help Gilligan and the Skipper find a way off their deserted island by exploring the jungle and putting together clues from the other castaways.

In Kemco-Seika's *Deja Vu*, regaining your memory is your first challenge.

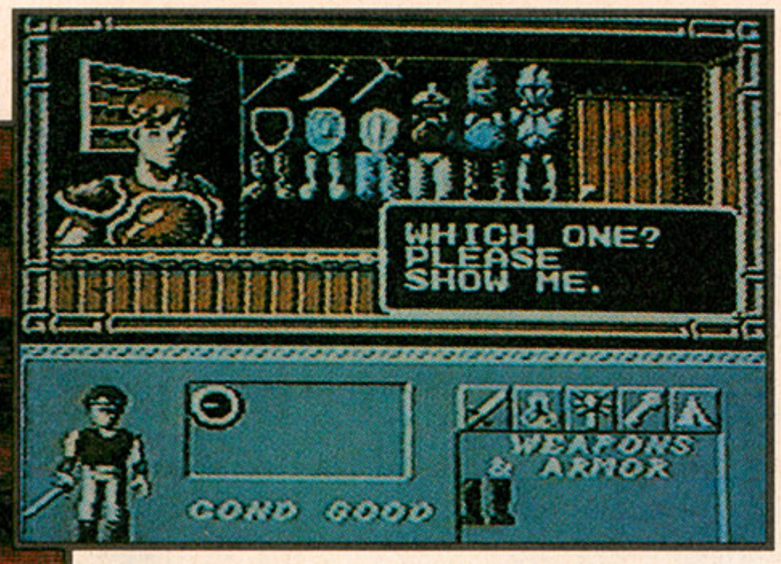
Bandai is also introducing *Dick Tracy*, based on the summer's hit Disney movie. As detective Tracy, your goal is to put Big Boy Caprice, the city's crime boss, behind bars. You must search buildings and patrol the streets to find clues linking the criminal to his crimes. Both *Gilligan's Island* and *Dick Tracy* are scheduled to be on store shelves by Christmas.

Help the castaways find a way home in Bandai's *Gilligan's Island*.



Dick Tracy, based on this summer's hit movie, is coming to Nintendo from Bandai.

Legendary monsters come to Nintendo in Bandai's *Frankenstein* and Data East's *Werewolf*. *Frankenstein* is a kick-and-punch game in which you



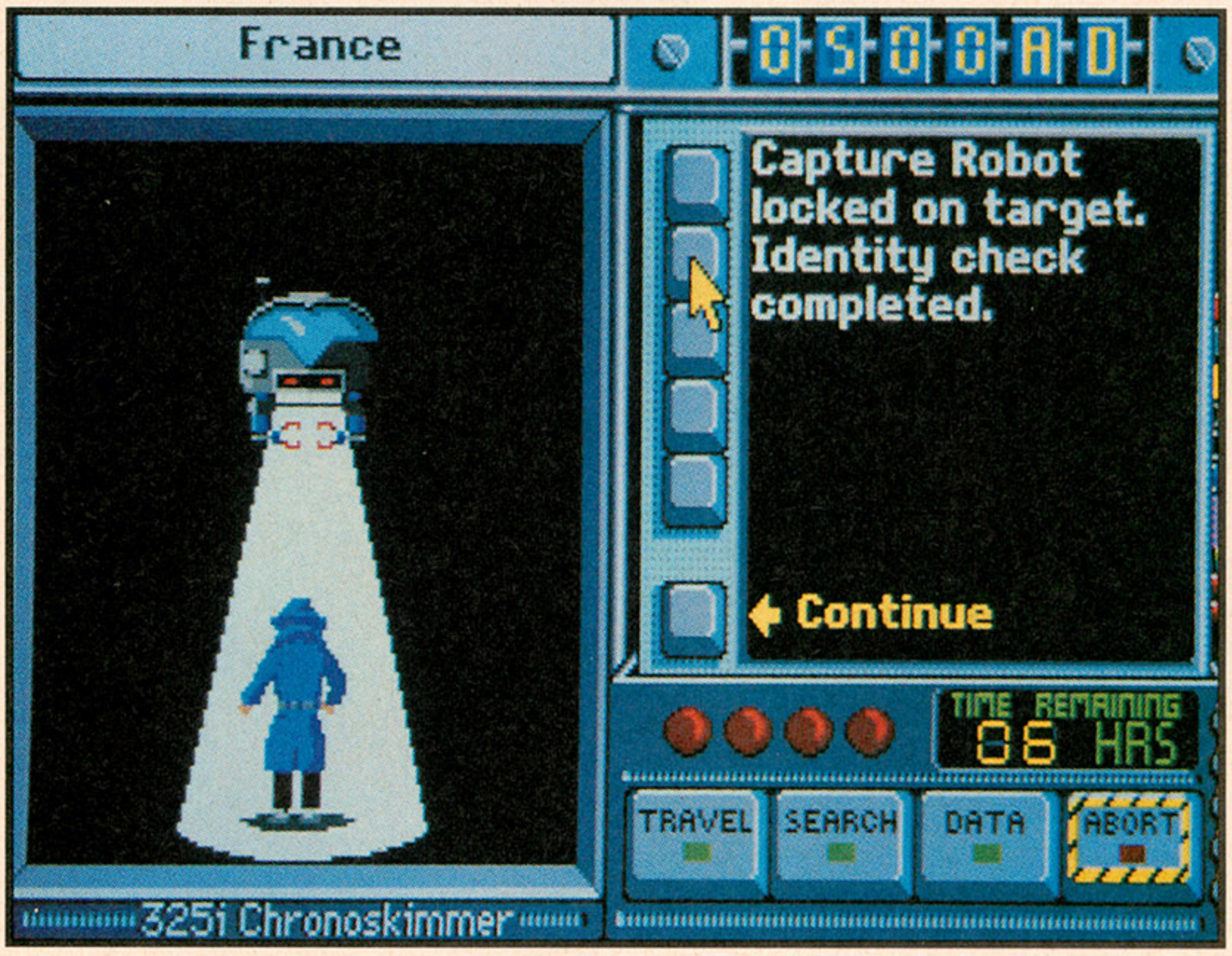
Dungeon Magic is a new role-playing fantasy game from Taito.

Your fighting powers are quite impressive as a man-turned-monster in Data East's *Werewolf.*

must save Emily, a meek villager, by sending Frankenstein's monster back to his grave. In *Werewolf*, your character changes from man to beast. As a werewolf, you have excellent climbing, jumping, and punching skills for your fight against evil.

Look for Taito's latest role-playing fantasy, *Dungeon Magic*, on store shelves in September. In this quest game you must explore medieval dungeons, mazes, and caves to find a prophecy and a magical sword needed to defeat an evil king.

Where In Hollywood Is Carmen Sandiego?



Teenage detectives chase an elusive thief in a new TV series based on the popular *Carmen Sandiego* computer games from Broderbund.

Carmen Sandiego, the cunning woman thief in a line of popular computer games from Broderbund, will soon star in a Saturday morning animated TV series. DIC Enterprises, a producer of children's TV, is working with Broderbund on the new show.

The half-hour show will be closely patterned after the best-selling computer games *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*, *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego?*, *Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?*, and *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?*. The story follows a teenage brother and sister who are detectives in search of Carmen, her henchmen, and the loot they have stolen.

Each episode will be divided into three segments. The detectives search for clues in the first two segments, then, in the third segment, find the treasures Carmen has stolen. Of course, the elusive thief always manages to escape, so the story continues from week to week.

Plans call for the show to be carried by one of the major TV networks. A date for the premiere has not yet been set.

NEC's TurboGrafx-16 Playtour

Before the winter holidays, NEC will host a ten-city PlayTour with free admission for children and teens. Gamers will have a chance to play NEC's latest games for the TurboGrafx-16, including *Bonk's Adventure*, *TV Sports Football*, and *Bloody Wolf*.

Players can also compete against one another by entering the PlayTour Challenge. In this contest, players go head-to-head in *Cybercore* to win TurboGrafx-16 videogame systems. The grand prize includes a TurboGrafx-CD player and an NEC 20-inch color monitor. Contestants can also win prizes by entering their names in a random drawing.

The PlayTour will make three-day stops in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Dallas, and Houston. For more information, call the TurboGrafx-16 help line at 1-708-860-3648.

New Fantasy Adventures For Computers

Two new computer games with exceptional graphics are on the way from UBI Soft, a French software company whose products are distributed in the U.S. by Electronic Arts.

Rescue the beautiful Isolde in the land of *Unreal*.

Unreal, available only for the Amiga, has the best graphics of any computer game we've seen since *Shadow of the Beast* from Psygnosis. You play the role of the warrior Artaban, who must save the beautiful Isolde from a dark guardian. A copper dragon helps you on your journey to find the Changing Sword and to destroy the four elements of evil.

UBI Soft's second game, *B.A.T.*, is being released for the Amiga, Atari ST, and PC compatibles. In *B.A.T.*, the industrial leaders of Earth have been banished to the planet Selena. An evil genius plans to destroy Selena and ultimately gain control of Earth. As a special agent for the Bureau of Astral TroubleShooters (B.A.T.), you must thwart his plans and save Selena. GP

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6. ***Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*** (Broderbund)
7. ***Sim City*** (Maxis)
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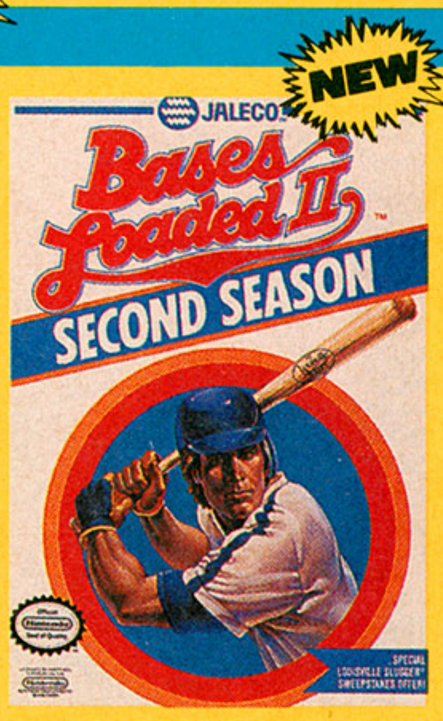

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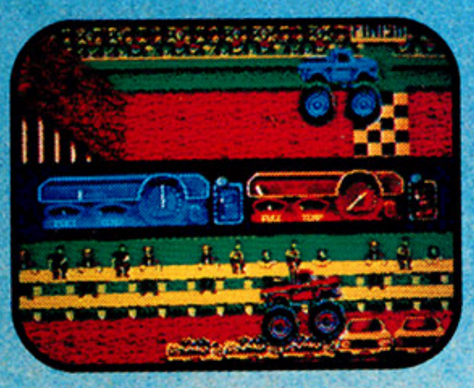

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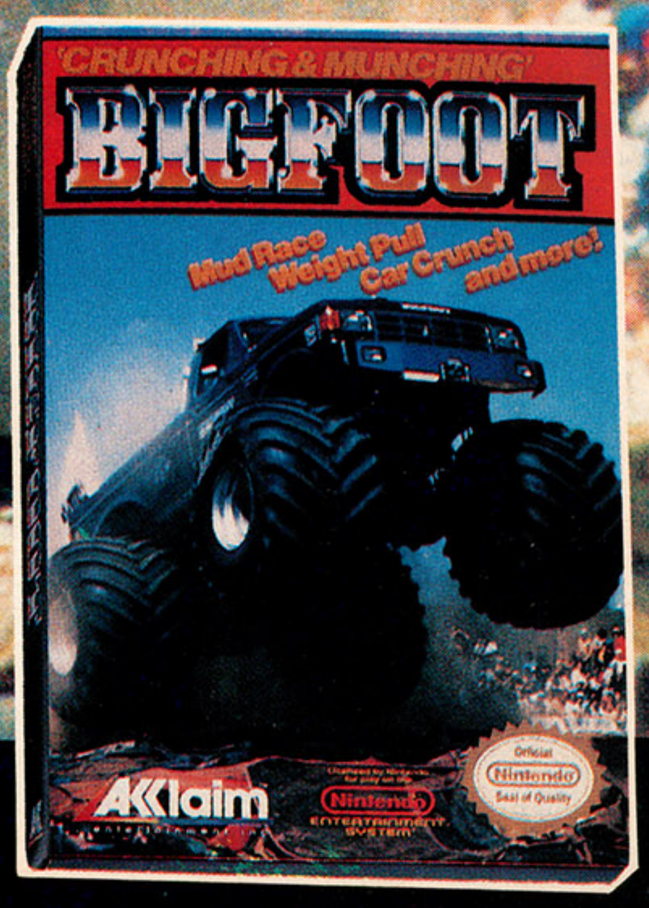

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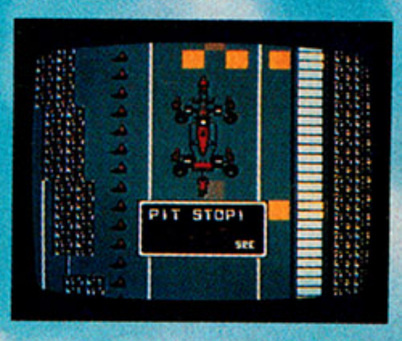

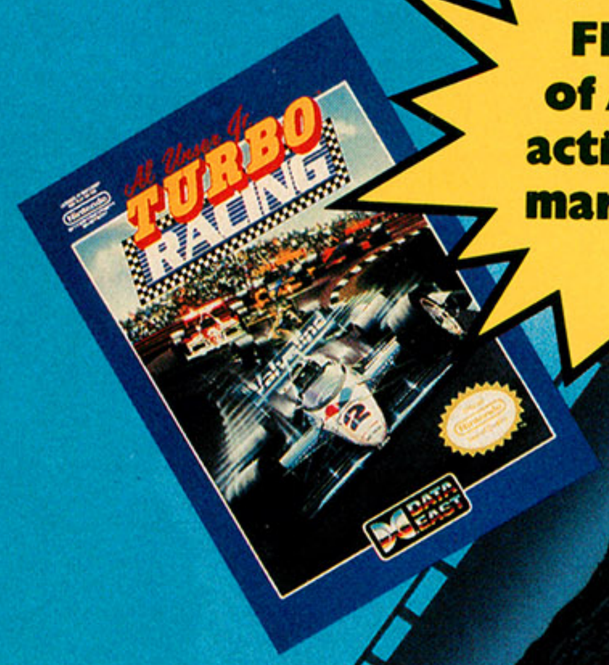

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